

# Archuleta County Community Plan



Adopted by the Archuleta County Planning Commission  
October 11, 2017

Endorsed by the Board of County Commissioners  
November 21, 2017

# **Archuleta County Community Plan 2017**

**ARCHULETA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
ARCHULETA COUNTY, COLORADO  
RESOLUTION NO. 2017-01 PC**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ARCHULETA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO THE ARCHULETA COUNTY COMMUNITY PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. §30-28-101, *et. seq.*, the Archuleta County Board of County Commissioners has appointed members of the Archuleta County Planning Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. §30-28-106, it is the duty of the Archuleta County Planning Commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the unincorporated territory of the county, and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. §30-28-108, the Upper San Juan Regional Planning Commission adopted the Archuleta County Community Plan by Resolution PC2001-01, on March 21, 2001; endorsed by the Archuleta County Board of County Commissions on May 23, 2001; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. §30-28-108, the Archuleta County Planning Commission has amended that plan from time to time; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. §30-28-107, the Archuleta County Planning Commission has completed careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and probable future growth of the county, and

**WHEREAS**, the Archuleta County Planning Commission conducted a public open house on June 14, 2017, to encourage public participation in and awareness of this review of the Archuleta County Community Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Archuleta County Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on October 11, 2017, to consider proposed amendments in a comprehensive update to the Archuleta County Community Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, public notice of the hearing was given by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the County prior to the public hearing, as required by C.R.S. §30-28-106; and

**WHEREAS**, at the public hearing testimony was taken from all persons appearing and wishing to give testimony; and

**WHEREAS**, the Archuleta County Planning Commission has considered the recommendations for the development of the county contained in the master plan, as a guide for land development decisions.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ARCHULETA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION, AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1. Findings.**

- a. The proposed amended Archuleta County Community Plan, attached hereto as **Exhibit A**, is hereby adopted in accordance with the provisions of C.R.S. §30-28-108; and
- b. The proposed amended Archuleta County Community Plan is hereby certified to the Board of County Commissioners in accordance with the provisions of C.R.S. §30-28-109.
- c. The proposed amended Archuleta County Community Plan is also hereby certified to the municipality of the Town of Pagosa Springs in accordance with the provisions of C.R.S. §30-28-109.

**Section 2. Effective Date.**

- a. The proposed amendments will take effect upon endorsement by the Board of County Commissioners.

**MOVED, SECONDED AND ADOPTED BY THE ARCHULETA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**, by a vote of 3 in favor to 0 against, this 11 day of October, 2017.

**ARCHULETA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

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June Madrid  
Archuleta County

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ARCHULETA COUNTY, COLORADO  
RESOLUTION 2017- 62**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ENDORING AMENDMENTS TO THE ARCHULETA COUNTY COMMUNITY PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. §30-28-101, *et. seq.*, the Archuleta County Board of County Commissioners has appointed members of the Archuleta County Planning Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. §30-28-106, it is the duty of the Archuleta County Planning Commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the unincorporated territory of the county, and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. §30-28-108, the Upper San Juan Regional Planning Commission adopted the Archuleta County Community Plan by Resolution PC2001-01, on March 21, 2001; endorsed by the Archuleta County Board of County Commissions on May 23, 2001; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. §30-28-108, the Archuleta County Planning Commission has amended that plan from time to time; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. §30-28-107, the Archuleta County Planning Commission completed careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and probable future growth of the county, and

**WHEREAS**, the Archuleta County Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on October 11, 2017, to consider proposed amendments in a comprehensive update to the Archuleta County Community Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Archuleta County Planning Commission considered the recommendations for the development of the county contained in the master plan, as a guide for land development decisions; and

**WHEREAS**, the Archuleta County Planning Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to adopt amendments to the Community Plan by Resolution 2017-01PC, making the following Findings; and;

- a. The proposed amended Archuleta County Community Plan, attached hereto as **Exhibit A**, is hereby adopted in accordance with the provisions of C.R.S. §30-28-108; and
- b. The proposed amended Archuleta County Community Plan is hereby certified to the Board of County Commissioners in accordance with the provisions of C.R.S. §30-28-109.
- c. The proposed amended Archuleta County Community Plan is also hereby certified to the municipality of the Town of Pagosa Springs in accordance with the provisions of C.R.S. §30-28-109.



**WHEREAS**, the Archuleta County Planning Commission resolved an effective date of adoption:

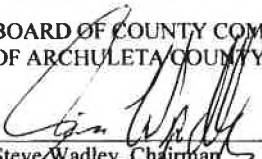
- a. The proposed amendments will take effect upon endorsement by the Board of County Commissioners.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ARCHULETA COUNTY, COLORADO, AS FOLLOWS:**

The Board of County Commissioners of Archuleta County, Colorado, does hereby endorse the amended Archuleta County Community Plan as a guide for land development decisions, as certified to this Board.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 21 day of November, 2017, in Pagosa Springs, Archuleta County, Colorado.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF ARCHULETA COUNTY, COLORADO

  
Steve Wadley, Chairman

ATTEST:

  
June Madrid, Clerk and Recorder Deputy Clerk

Return Copy to Planning

**Exhibit A**  
Archuleta County Community Plan - 2017

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# ***Archuleta County Community Plan –2017***

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B. Planning Process, Definitions and Terms

*For more information, contact:*

*Archuleta County Development Services—Building & Planning Departments*

*1122 Highway 84 / PO Box 1507*

*Pagosa Springs, Colorado 81147*

*970.264.1390*

*[www.archuletacounty.org](http://www.archuletacounty.org)*

Adopted by the Upper San Juan Regional Planning Commission on March 21, 2001,  
and endorsed by the Archuleta Board of County Commissioners on May 23, 2001.

This update adopted by the Archuleta County Planning Commission on October 11, 2017.

#### **Archuleta County Planning Commission 2017**

Michael Frederick, Chairman

Anita Hooton, Vice-Chair

Lisa Jensen

David Parker

Betty Louise Shahan

John C. Shepard, AICP; Planning Manager

Sherrie Vick, Permit Technician

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*Illustrations by staff unless otherwise noted.*

## *Part I. Executive Summary*



*Source: Google Earth*

### **Chapter 1. Introduction**

Archuleta County is our home. Located on the West Slope of the Rocky Mountains, in scenic Southwest Colorado just below Wolf Creek Pass, Archuleta County is home of the headwaters of the San Juan River. Archuleta County is home to farmers and ranchers and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. Archuleta County is home to generations of Coloradoans and second home owners and tourists from our neighboring states—especially to the south: Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas—and all across the world. Archuleta County is home to University of Colorado fans and Colorado State University fans, Denver Broncos fans and Dallas Cowboys fans, all in the game together.

Archuleta County is home to many communities of multiple ages and ethnicities. The Town of Pagosa Springs is our county seat and only incorporated municipality. In the southeast just north of New Mexico, the unincorporated community of Chromo is tucked alongside the Navajo River, with the Blanco cabin sites up Highway 84. Pagosa Lakes is the uptown area of Pagosa Springs, with the Town boundaries ebbing to and fro. Aspen Springs, Chimney Rock and the Piedra River crossing are west on Highway 160. The historic boundaries of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) Reservation extend across much of the Southwest quadrant of the county, including the historic communities of Trujillo, Juanita and Pagosa Junction, along the San Juan River and County Road 500. In the southwest, Arboles provides a gateway to Navajo State Park.

Archuleta County, population 12,854, is your home, too.

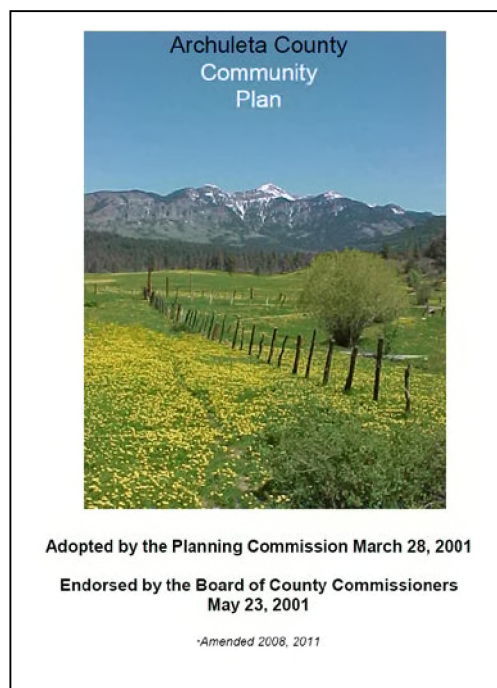
## VISION

*Archuleta County should retain its outstanding scenic and natural qualities while providing quality employment, housing, education, and recreation to its residents. Tourism, recreation, and agriculture will remain major segments of the economy, but attempts will be made to diversify and encourage other types of economic development. The majority of youth should be able to have a career and eventually raise a family without being forced to leave. A healthy and vibrant community will continue to evolve and the rural character and small town atmosphere will be preserved.*

### **Archuleta County Community Plan of 2001**

A community plan presents a vision for the future, based on knowledge of the past and a spirited public discussion of present conditions. A community plan should present what business consultant Jim Collins called “Big Hairy Audacious Goals” that state clearly what we want to be, how we are going to get there, and what investments the County is willing to make along the way.

A community plan is a policy document that considers growth scenarios and gives resilient guidance to decision makers, staff, investors and community members to better balance public interests and private property rights. A community plan—often called a comprehensive plan or master plan—is typically an advisory document, implemented through land use regulations, including zoning and subdivision regulations, building codes and nuisance ordinances.



As Archuleta County began to grow, the community began to do more planning, adopting subdivision regulations in the 1970s, and putting together master plans in the 1980s and 1990s (See Appendix B for more information on the planning process in Archuleta County.) In 2000 and 2001, a major effort was undertaken with extensive public involvement that resulted in the *Archuleta County Community Plan of 2001*, which set out a vision for what the community was and could be.

The 2001 plan included 11 chapters, with 9 covering individual topics from the environment to implementation, including discussion, desired future conditions (goals), policies and action items. Elements of the plan were updated in 2008 and in 2011. Beginning in 2016, the Archuleta County Planning Commission began a comprehensive, staff-level review of the *Community Plan*, re-organizing the chapters and clarifying Policies and Action Items to make the plan more current and useful.

## **Part I Executive Summary**

This section, Chapter 1, introduces the Community Plan, and provides a summary of what follows, including Part II Natural Environment, Part III Built Environment, Part IV Land Use, and the Appendices.

## **Part II Natural Environment**

The Natural Environment sets the context for development in Archuleta County, and each of our distinct local communities.

**Chapter 2 Natural Resources and Hazards** discusses the scenic beauty, abundant wildlife, unique habitat, and free-flowing rivers that attract so many residents to our corner of Southwest Colorado. Conservation lands are important to the county's quality of life and identity, and protect the sources of Colorado's water. Yet natural resources, such as geothermal energy, oil and gas, and aggregate minerals are essential to our local economy and infrastructure. Archuleta County is also home to endangered and threatened species and their habitat, in particular the Pagosa skyrocket listed in 2011. Multiple natural and man-made hazards challenge us in our high-mountain location, with flooding a particular concern for development.

***Natural Resources and Hazards Goal:*** *The scenic beauty of Archuleta County remains intact. The dramatic mountain backdrop with vistas of agricultural buildings, ranches, and open space in the foreground is preserved. The air is clean, rivers run free and clear, and wildlife populations remain healthy through preservation of habitat and migration corridors on public as well as private land.*

**Policy 2.1** – Development and Planning processes will consider preservation of wildlife habitat to minimize the possibility of plant and animal species becoming endangered or extinct.

**Policy 2.2** – New development avoids, minimizes or mitigates damage and disruption to wildlife and unique biological features, wildlife habitat and other environmentally sensitive areas.

**Policy 2.3** – Water conservation should be used in new residential and commercial development.

**Policy 2.4** – New development is encouraged to use landscaping practices that conserve water and enhance the appearance of the built environment.

**Policy 2.5** – New construction and major renovation projects should use energy conservation measures.

**Policy 2.6** – Local government should encourage the use of alternative renewable energy sources, such as active and passive solar energy, geothermal, wind, water, etc.

**Policy 2.7** – Locate new oil and gas wells and gravel pits to minimize visual and environmental impacts. Require site reclamation and site mitigation.

**Policy 2.8** – Property owners should control noxious weeds, as defined by State and County law, under penalty of a fine.

**Policy 2.9** – Mitigate natural and man-made hazards to reduce risk.

**Chapter 3 Community Character** provides insight into the intersection of the place and the people who live here. Ancestral Puebloans made their homes at Chimney Rock National Monument, within the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) Reservation. Spanish, Mexican, and American explorers and miners, ranchers and settlers made their home here, and their descendants still do today. Tourists and new residents are attracted to the area by the scenic beauty and small town atmosphere. Typical “cookie-cutter” development doesn’t necessarily fit.

**Community Character Goal:** *The small town atmosphere, rural character, agricultural and ranching heritage, mix of cultures, and diversity of life styles is preserved.*

**Community Character Goal:** *Developed areas are well designed and architecturally compatible with community character, cultural heritage, and the natural environment. Quiet prevails with a minimum of loud or offensive noise.*

**Policy 3.1** – Historic buildings and historic districts should be preserved.

**Policy 3.2** - New development is architecturally compatible with community character and heritage.

**Policy 3.3** – Commercial, residential, industrial, and governmental development minimizes the effect of night lighting on neighboring properties, public rights-of-way, and the night sky.

**Policy 3.4** – Signage associated with all new development is appropriately designed and located.

**Policy 3.5** – New development is designed so that it is visually compatible with community character and the natural environment.

**Policy 3.6** – Loud and offensive noise is discouraged.

**Policy 3.7** – Preservation of farm and ranch land is a high priority; maintain and promote a sustainable and viable agricultural and ranching community.

### **Part III Built Environment**

The Built Environment describes what we have built in Archuleta County, what we do, where we live and the infrastructure to support our communities.

**Chapter 4 Economic Development and Housing** discusses how our 12,854 local residents earn a living and where they live, and where our many second-home owners and tourists stay when they come to visit. As the county has attracted more active retirees, the Median Age has risen to 50.1 years, compared to the Colorado median age of 36.9. About half of local jobs are self-employment, in line with economic development trends favoring entrepreneurship, and retention and expansion of local enterprises. Affordable housing remains a challenge, as in many attractive mountain towns, as local

wages lag behind rising rent and costs of building. Policy responses will have to consider both incentives (carrots) and regulations (sticks).

***Economic Development and Housing Goal:*** *Tourism, recreation, and agriculture remain important parts of an economy that has become more diverse by expanding other economic sectors, compatible with community character and the natural environment, which provide well-paying jobs for local residents.*

***Economic Development and Housing Goal:*** *The housing stock is safe, well maintained and compatible with community character and the natural environment with a wide price and rental range adequate to house all income levels and age groups.*

**Policy 4.1** – Archuleta County provides a rich environment for entrepreneurial activity, and retention and expansion of local business.

**Policy 4.2** – Archuleta County is an attractive location for existing clean businesses and industries.

**Policy 4.3** – High-speed telecommunication access should be available for all residents of the county.

**Policy 4.4** – Archuleta County encourages construction of new affordable housing units.

**Policy 4.5** – Private property owners have flexibility to add additional dwelling units that fit neighborhood character.

**Chapter 5 Transportation and Public Facilities** covers the general location and extent of public roads and multimodal transport, water and sewer service, schools, public safety, special districts, and private utilities. Water and wastewater treatment are specific and continuing concerns. In some areas, special districts provide water and/or sewer service, but aging infrastructure and practical access to water sources pose a challenge to increasing density. Any new subdivisions must demonstrate adequate water supply with sufficient quality, quantity, and dependability. Roads also limit development potential—the County does not accept new roads for County maintenance, and any new subdivisions must maintain their own local roads.

***Transportation and Public Facilities Goal:*** *Roads are improved and maintained to provide safe and efficient transportation, keeping pace with the demands of increased traffic. Public transit connects major population centers, and a network of trails provides opportunities for non-motorized travel and recreation.*

***Transportation and Public Facilities Goal:*** *Government services and facilities are adequate to serve urban, suburban, and rural areas without excessive tax burdens for individuals, property owners, and businesses. Quasi-public and private organizations provide a variety of cultural, recreational, medical, communications, and other services, activities, and facilities to maintain and enhance the quality of life in Archuleta County.*

**Policy 5.1** – New development will mitigate impacts of new transportation demand.

**Policy 5.2** – Develop a long-range Transportation Plan.

**Policy 5.3** - Assure that the Archuleta County Airport is continually capable of serving the air transportation needs of Archuleta County.

**Policy 5.4** - Support the extension of electricity, central water and sewer service to existing developed areas that need such services.

**Policy 5.5** - Support new high-to-medium density development only with the extension of central water and sewer service (such Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District and the Town of Pagosa Springs).

**Policy 5.6** – Archuleta County is committed to a comprehensive waste management system.

**Policy 5.7** - Maintain the necessary level of public facilities and services (including police/sheriff patrols, fire protection, emergency medical services, health care services, schools, and recreation facilities) to adequately serve the population.

**Policy 5.8** - Archuleta County encourages the development of additional neighborhood and community parks in developed areas.

**Policy 5.9** - Domestic animals should be controlled in a manner consistent with maintaining public health, safety, and welfare.

**Policy 5.10** - Archuleta County is committed to providing an effective and efficient local government.

**Policy 5.11** - Archuleta County is committed to fostering cooperation between local, state, federal, and tribal government entities, including, but not limited to Hinsdale, La Plata, and Mineral Counties, the States of Colorado and New Mexico, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe.

## **Part IV Land Use**

The Community Plan provides the policy to support regulation of Land Use in Archuleta County, as well as support for voluntary improvements to our communities.

**Chapter 6 Growth Management** builds on the foundation of our Natural Environment and Built Environment, relating the growth scenarios developed through public meetings in 2000-2001, describing the Future Land Use Map and *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations* adopted as a result of that public process.

***Growth Management Goal:*** *Growth and development are managed to preserve and enhance the quality of life that attracted original settlers, more recent arrivals, and tourists to Archuleta County.*

**Policy 6.1** – Encourage the design and location of new development to minimize the impacts on Archuleta County’s rural and scenic character, wildlife habitat and mountain vistas.

**Policy 6.2** –New development will be compatible with adjacent, existing agricultural uses in rural areas.



**Policy 6.3** – The current Archuleta County policy, which establishes a base density of 35 acres (the minimum lot size), will be continued in all un-platted areas without central water or sewer services. The County promotes a policy, which may require the clustering of development, for those developments located within wildlife habitat areas, and further, the County provides incentives (such as density bonuses and smaller lots sizes) to encourage such clustering. Lots larger than 35 acres may be required in certain locations, when clustering is not proposed.

**Policy 6.4** – Encourage development on existing platted lots and discourage subdividing large parcels.

**Policy 6.5** – Encourage consolidation of small, unbuildable, or marginally buildable lots and tracts in areas without urban services.

**Policy 6.6** – Locate new commercial development in designated areas to minimize commercial strip development.

**Policy 6.7** – Regularly review effectiveness and efficiency of the Land Use Regulations.

**Policy 6.8** – Where it can be calculated that the cost of providing public facilities and services to new development exceeds the amount the development contributes in taxes for such facilities and services, collect impact fees to make up the difference.

**Policy 6.9** – The County should take an active role in conserving open lands, while continuing to cooperate with organizations that pursue acquisition or donation of conservation easements/ development rights.

**Chapter 7 Implementation** sets out Next Steps—short-term actions for the next five years, and longer-term actions to bring the plan to life. In addition to the usual development review and code evaluation process, certain initiatives have been identified for Planning Commission and Staff attention.

***Implementation Goals:***

1. *Review, Update & Clarify Land Use Regulations*
2. *Implement Hazard Mitigation Plan*
3. *Improve Broadband Access*
4. *Conserve Agricultural & Open Lands*
5. *Conserve Wildlife Habitat (Animal & Plant)*
6. *Economic Development & Affordable Housing*

This plan is a living document, not intended to sit on a shelf. The last chapter also outlines a process for Minor Amendments of the plan in conjunction with development review.

## **Appendices**

The Appendices provide useful descriptive data and information for reference to provide context for the Goals, Policies and Action Items in the *Community Plan*.

*Appendix A. Community Profile* provides demographic and socio-economic statistics for Archuleta County and the Town of Pagosa Springs from federal, state and local sources. Since these statistics change constantly, this appendix is intended to facilitate regular updates without having to re-write and re-format the entire plan.

*Appendix B. Planning Process, Definitions and Terms* documents the original planning process for the *Archuleta County Community Plan of 2001*, and the review process for subsequent updates including this revision in 2016-2017. Appendix B also defines certain development terms used in the plan for easy reference.

## *Part II. Our Natural Environment*

### **Chapter 2. Natural Resources and Hazards**



Archuleta County has been home to many generations, from the Ancestral Puebloans (“Anasazi” or “Old Ones”) of Chimney Rock to today’s migrants from around the world. Our 1,355 square miles of Southwest Colorado—roughly 33 miles north/south by 60 miles east/west—occupy a basin walled on the east and north by the Continental Divide atop the San Juan Range of the Rocky Mountains and on the west by the HD Mountains. The basin is drained by the San Juan River system, fed by the Blanco, Navajo and Piedra River tributaries. Elevations in the county range from 6,000 to 13,272 feet above sea level, with a relatively short growing season (average 75 days).

Scenic beauty, abundant wildlife, unique species and habitat, and free flowing rivers contribute to the environment and lifestyle that are so attractive to residents of Archuleta County. The natural environment plays an important role in the quality of life of the county and the economy. Vistas of majestic mountains, abundant wildlife, wide-open meadows, and the rural atmosphere have aesthetic and economic value. A healthy environment also helps assure public health. Citizens desire to strike a balance between accommodating development and preserving the clean air, clean water, wildlife, unique biological features, and beauty of Archuleta County.

Archuleta County is fortunate to have thousands of acres of permanently protected lands. Approximately 50% of the county is Federal Land, 15% is Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) land, and the remaining 35% is in private ownership. Some of these protected lands are more dramatic, others more biologically significant, but all are important for Archuleta County's quality of life and identity. Protected lands range from federal to locally-managed areas such as:

- **National Forest Lands** - The San Juan National Forest stretches along the northern and eastern edges of the county, offering multiple uses.
- **National Monument** – Chimney Rock National Monument was established on September 21, 2012, with 4,726 acres. The Chimney Rock site was one of the largest communities of the Pueblo II era (900-1150 A.D.).

- **Wilderness** – The 158,700 acres South San Juan Wilderness Area was set aside within the National Forest in 1980 at the headwaters of the San Juan and Blanco rivers. The 500,000 acre Weminuche Wilderness, the largest in Colorado, spans the Continental Divide just north of the county line, with primary access through Pagosa Springs.
- **Bureau of Land Management** – BLM manages approximately 9,800 acres in Archuleta County.
- **Bureau of Reclamation/Colorado State Parks – Navajo Lake State Park.** This 15,000 surface-acre reservoir, with 150 miles of shoreline, extends for 35 miles south into the State of New Mexico. Navajo State Park is located in the southwest corner of Archuleta County at Arboles.
- **State Natural Area** – This 77-acre parcel on Highway 84 south of the Fairgrounds is prime habitat for the Federally-endangered Pagosa skyrocket plant. The Colorado Department of Natural Resources is developing a management plan for the parcel.
- **Conservation Easements** – Approximately 40,850 acres in conservation easements have been set aside to permanently protect private lands from development as of 2015.
- **Reservoir Hill & San Juan River** – The Town of Pagosa Springs manages key parks and open space lands.
- **Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association / Wyndham Resorts Open Space** – The original developers dedicated open space by subdivision plat across the Pagosa Lakes area.
- **Cloman Park** – Archuleta County's 120-acre passive recreation area at the end of Cloman Blvd, near Steven's Field airport.

The **Tracks Across Borders Byway** (TABB) was designated by the Colorado Department of Transportation in 2015 as an official scenic and historic byway. The byway follows the historic route of the Denver & Rio Grande narrow gauge railroad, from Durango thru Ignacio and Arboles, down County Road 500 and 551 to New Mexico. The byway also features a hard-surfaced spur up Hwy 151 to Chimney Rock National Monument.

Many areas of community importance are not currently protected from development pressure. Overwhelming support for the protection of agricultural activity, scenic areas and wildlife habitat has been demonstrated during the County planning process. Some of these unprotected areas include:

- **Major Rivers** - Wildlife species depend on riparian areas for survival. Recreation along rivers is increasing each year. Major rivers where protection may be needed include the San Juan, Blanco, Navajo, Piedra, and their tributaries.
- **Wildlife Areas** - If wildlife populations are to remain healthy, areas that are important to wildlife for winter range, calving, migration, and nesting need to be preserved.
- **Unique Habitats and Biological Features** – Focused management will be necessary to ensure the long-term conservation of unique species, their habitat, and biological features.

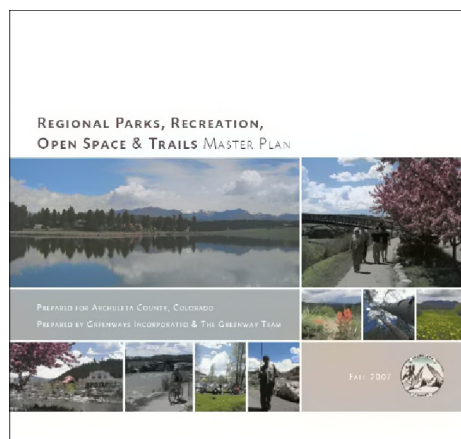
Concerns with climate change—potentially human-induced or natural cycles—highlight the fragility of natural systems, especially water. The State of Colorado adopted **Colorado's Water Plan** in 2015. Colorado's Water Plan is a document based on interstate compacts, Colorado water law, and local control, and contains conservation goals, actionable items, and ideas for managing water problems. Objectives address the supply-demand gap, conservation, land use, agriculture, water storage, watershed health, and funding concerns. Chapter Six, Water Supply Management, in particular discusses likely growth scenarios and potential strategies for water and land use planning. Water conservation should be a consideration in every type of development proposal. One specific local action

item in the document would be development and implementation of Stream Management Plans for major rivers and tributaries. While the Colorado Water Conservation Board is responsible for the process, all local stakeholders need to be involved in implementing the state-wide *Water Plan* in Archuleta County.

### **Regional Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Master Plan**

In 2007, a cooperative team of Town and County leaders were assembled to complete the *Regional Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Master Plan*. The Plan includes an inventory of existing conditions at that time, a needs assessment, and recommendations for a regional system of parks, open space and trails, as well as an operations and management program. The plan examines the needs of both year-round residents and tourists, and the importance of tourism to the local economy.

The plan was funded in part by a grant from the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) program, Archuleta County, the Town of Pagosa Springs and the Joint 50 School Board, and drafted by project consultants Greenways Incorporated with assistance from the National Park Service. The plan was recognized for professional achievement by the Colorado Chapter of the American Planning Association.



### **Natural Resources**

Archuleta County's residents have had a symbiotic relationship with the surrounding forests and fields since the earliest days. Hunting, fishing, grazing and forestry are the reason Native Americans and the first settlers sought out the hills and valleys of the Western Slope. Land use regulations must recognize the need to balance working and passive landscapes. Natural community and biodiversity conservation should be incorporated into planning processes to sustain natural processes and minimize the likelihood of species becoming endangered or extinct.

Minerals and sources of energy were the reasons those settlers stayed here. The geothermal energy of the Great Pagosa Hot Spring offered a respite to weary travelers in the 1800s. More recently, that geothermal energy has inspired local government and entrepreneurs in partnership to study renewable resources of heat and possibility generation of electricity. Geothermal development is regulated as an Area and Activity of State Interest in Section 2 of the *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations*.

Archuleta County's primary mineral resource is coal and coal-bed methane. Local prospectors never found the wide-spread hard rock resources of the mines further north. Several coal mines have operated over the years, and abandoned mines along the Fruitland Coal Outcrop are being monitored by the Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) for potential methane seeps and coal fires. Oil was found in the southeastern part of the county in 1935, with production historically from the Price Gramps Field, but the resource has been limited and declining.



*Lamke 33-5-29 #1*

Natural gas production expanded rapidly with the widespread adoption of hydraulic fracturing and directional drilling technology. As of 2017, there were approximately 150 active oil & gas wells in the county permitted by the COGCC, primarily along the Piedra River and in the Arboles area. In 2016, active wells produced 4,137,934 barrels of natural gas (BOE equivalent), 333 barrels of oil, and 1,390,505 BOE produced water. There were three spills reported to COGCC in 2016, two by Petrox Resources and one by BP America.

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe's Red Willow Production Company operates sovereign of the *Archuleta County Land*

*Use Regulations* as recognized in a Memorandum of Understanding. All of the county was zoned in 2006, and Archuleta County asserts jurisdiction over private development on state and federal lands, but has limited ability to enforce permit requirements.

Colorado Statutes requires the County Planning Commission in more populous counties to study commercial mineral deposits, including coal, sand, gravel and quarry aggregate, and develop a plan for extraction of such deposits. Archuleta County regulates the manner of extraction through subdivision and zoning regulations. Sand, Soil and Gravel Mining is permitted through the procedures in Section 9.1 of the *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations*. Oil & Gas Development is permitted in Section 9.2 of the *Land Use Regulations*.

## Endangered Species

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was enacted by Congress in 1973, in recognition that our rich natural heritage is of "esthetic, ecological, educational, recreational, and scientific value to our Nation and its people." It further expressed concern that many of our nation's native plants and animals were in danger of becoming extinct. The purpose of the ESA is to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. It is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As of April 2017, the FWS has listed 2,325 species (944 plants and 1,381 animals) as endangered or threatened under the ESA in the United States. Colorado has 33 listed species, 17 animals and 16 plants. Eleven (11) of those species occur, have the potential to occur, or may be affected by activities in Archuleta County.

These endangered or threatened species include:

- southwestern willow flycatcher,
- yellow-billed cuckoo,
- Mexican spotted owl,
- New Mexico meadow jumping mouse,
- Canada lynx,
- North American wolverine,
- Colorado pikeminnow,

- razorback sucker,
- Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly,
- Knowlton's cactus,
- Pagosa skyrocket.

Successful implementation of the ESA necessitates development of partnerships between local, State, and Federal governments and private landowners to ensure appropriate measures and incentives are included in local planning processes.



One of those species, the Pagosa skyrocket (*Ipomopsis polyantha*) was formally listed in 2011, due to threats from land development, land management practices (grazing regimes, seeding, mowing, etc.), highway development and maintenance, nonnative species, and the lack of awareness and education. Critical habitat for the species was formally designated under the ESA in 2012. In March 2017, the Archuleta County Board of County Commissioners signed Resolution Number 2017-7 committing to the conservation of the Pagosa skyrocket, thereby demonstrating the County's commitment to recovery and delisting of Pagosa skyrocket and successful implementation of the ESA. Successful implementation of the ESA will enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Archuleta County and Pagosa Springs through the conservation and enhancement of plant and wildlife habitats that cannot be distinguished from preservation of human habitat. Appropriate planning for the long-term conservation and delisting of sensitive species will provide for a significantly higher level of certainty for County residents and property owners.

## Hazard Mitigation

In 2012, the multi-jurisdictional *Archuleta County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan* identified natural and man-made hazards potentially affecting the area, and proposed strategies to mitigate the effects of those hazards. High Significance hazards included: Drought, Flooding, Landslide/Rockfall/Debris Flow, Lightning, Severe Winter Storms, Wildland Fires, and Hazardous Materials Incident. Dam Failure was assessed as a Medium/High significance. This plan will be reviewed and updated in 2017-18.

Archuleta County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), administered through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), so that local property owners can purchase flood insurance. The original Flood Insurance Study was completed in 1978 and the initial Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) completed in 1979. These were revised in September 2009, and incorporated into Section 10 of the *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations*. As of January 2017, there were 82 flood insurance policies in-force in Archuleta County, and 52 within the Town of Pagosa Springs. Analysis by Amec Foster Wheeler for the Hazard Mitigation Plan indicates that the 1% Annual Chance Floodplain encroaches on 249 parcels with 338 buildings in the town & county with a combined value of \$84.5 million. Over \$100 million dollars of property is at risk in the larger 0.2% Chance area.





*San Juan River from Harebell bridge*

To be eligible to participate in the NFIP, the local jurisdiction must commit to regulating ALL development in flood hazard areas, including grading, land clearance, outdoor storage, dredging, mining, drilling, paving, excavation and fill, as well as traditional building. While the Federal Regulations are broad, the County can work with the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to adopt more specific standards tailored to local conditions. In 1992, Archuleta County joined the Community Rating System (CRS), which offers flood insurance discounts for communities which adopt higher protection standards, but later withdrew from the program.

### **Goals, Policies and Action Items**

**Goal:** The scenic beauty of Archuleta County remains intact. The dramatic mountain backdrop with vistas of agricultural buildings, ranches, and open space in the foreground is preserved. The air is clean, rivers run free and clear, and wildlife populations remain healthy through preservation of habitat and migration corridors on public as well as private land.

**Policy 2.1 –** Development and Planning processes will consider preservation of wildlife habitat to minimize the possibility of plant and animal species becoming endangered or extinct.

#### **Action Items:**

- 2.1.1. Natural community and biodiversity preservation will be incorporated into planning processes, to protect habitat to sustain natural processes and minimize the likelihood of species becoming listed or extinct.



- 2.1.2. Work with State and Federal agencies to establish minimum protection standards, and identify sensitive habitats, and methods of protection for incorporation in Development Review.
- 2.1.3. Implement innovative development policies and practices to ensure the protection of natural systems, including evaluation of compatibility of various land uses with surrounding natural systems, and the use of buffers to protect sensitive natural resources.
- 2.1.4. Recognizing the Endangered Species Act is a minimal safety net to protect species, require more restrictive local standards where necessary to achieve protection of sensitive species.
- 2.1.5. Private landowners are encouraged to develop Habitat Conservation Plans, where endangered and threatened species have been identified that require long-term conservation commitments in exchange for the ability to develop land.

**Policy 2.2** – New development avoids, minimizes or mitigates damage and disruption to wildlife and unique biological features, wildlife habitat and other environmentally sensitive areas.

**Action Items:**

- 2.2.1. In consultation with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife and affected landowners, update wildlife habitat and endangered or threatened species habitat mapping.
- 2.2.2. Evaluate need for overlay districts in the *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations*, including the Scenic Overlay District (SO), Watershed Overlay District (WO), and Wildlife Habitat Overlay District (WHO); and consider adding a Sensitive Species Overlay (SSO).
- 2.2.3. Review (and revise as necessary) the standards and guidelines in the land use regulations to protect the environment when reviewing and approving development proposals on steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, and sensitive and unique species habitats.

**Policy 2.3** – Water conservation should be used in new residential and commercial development.

**Action Items:**

- 2.3.1. Encourage water districts to develop incentives for water conservation.
- 2.3.2. In cooperation, the water districts, the County and the Town should appoint a committee to evaluate and recommend the most appropriate water conservation techniques.
- 2.3.3. Develop a public education program to encourage the widespread use of water conservation measures and devices.
- 2.3.4. Evaluate and implement appropriate action items from *Colorado's Water Plan*.

**Policy 2.4** – New development is encouraged to use landscaping practices that conserve water and enhance the appearance of the built environment.

**Action Items:**

- 2.4.1. Develop guidelines and incentives to encourage new development to be landscaped with water-conserving plants (xeriscaping).
- 2.4.2. Develop guidelines and incentives to encourage the preservation of mature growth trees, in commercial, industrial, and multi-family developments.
- 2.4.3. Develop guidelines and incentives to encourage the planting of native trees, in commercial, industrial, and multi-family developments.

**Policy 2.5** – New construction and major renovation projects should use energy conservation measures.

**Action Item:**

- 2.5.1. Archuleta County should work with the local power cooperative to develop incentives to encourage energy conservation for residential and commercial customers, including the use of alternative energy sources, such as solar power.
- 2.5.2. Archuleta County should update building codes as necessary, to require appropriate energy conservation measures.

**Policy 2.6** – Local government should encourage the use of alternative renewable energy sources, such as active and passive solar energy, geothermal, wind, water, etc.

- 2.6.1. In cooperation with the local power cooperative, Archuleta County should develop and distribute public information materials about the use of renewable energy in homes and business structures.
- 2.6.2. To encourage the use of alternative energy sources in homes and business structures, Archuleta County should examine the potential use of tax incentives.
- 2.6.3. Develop standards in the *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations* for solar power structures and other distributed energy sources.
- 2.6.4. Review and update standards in the land use regulations for geothermal energy development.

**Policy 2.7** – Locate new oil and gas wells and gravel pits to minimize visual and environmental impacts. Require site reclamation and site mitigation.

**Action Items:**

- 2.7.1. Review and update county standards and criteria for approving and locating new oil and gas wells and gravel pits, in addition to the State Review Agency requirements and conditions of approval.
- 2.7.2. Develop a plan establishing the long-range need for gravel in Archuleta County, an inventory of gravel resources, and suitable locations for gravel extraction.
- 2.7.3. Continue participation in the Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission’s Local Government Designee (LGD) program.

**Policy 2.8** – Property owners should control noxious weeds, as defined by State and County law, under penalty of a fine.

- 2.8.1. Support and utilize programs to educate private property owners about noxious weeds, so that they can be good neighbors and control noxious weeds on their property.
- 2.8.2. Encourage the use of non-toxic weed control methods to protect the health and safety of our citizens and our environment.

**Policy 2.9** – Mitigate natural and man-made hazards to reduce risk.

**Action Items:**

- 2.9.1. Map comprehensive hazards for development and hazard aversion.
- 2.9.2. Assess the feasibility of adopting the most current international building code standards.
- 2.9.3. Support community wildland fire protection plan development.
- 2.9.4. Continue to implement sound floodplain management practices through participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- 2.9.5. Review and revise Floodplain Regulations in the *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations*.



*Confluence of the Rio Blanco and San Juan River*

### Chapter 3. Community Character



*Lado Del Rio Bridge, National Register of Historic Places*

The community character of Archuleta County springs forth from both this place and the people who live here. The area's history, agricultural heritage, ethnic and cultural mix, small town atmosphere, and low population density all contribute to the quality of life in Archuleta County. Maintaining the character of the community means holding on to each of these components over the long run.

Ancestral Puebloan people first called this area home, as did the Ute tribe of Native Americans when the first Spanish explorers and missionaries arrived from Mexico. Hispanic settlers moved north from Santa Fe, then Anglo fur traders, miners and settlers arrived after the area became part of the United States in 1848, following the Old Spanish Trail. Colorado Territory was formed in 1861 and statehood gained in 1876. After a series of treaties, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe reservation was established in 1874 along the border with New Mexico, although the 1895 Hunter Act opened portions of the reservation to homesteading and sale under the allotment process. In 1878, the US Army established Fort Lewis near the Great Pagosa Springs on the San Juan River—the fort was relocated further west in 1880. The Town of Pagosa Springs developed around the fort site and was incorporated in 1891. On April 14, 1885, Archuleta County was formed out of the western section of Conejos County. The new county was named for State Senator A.D. “Don” Archuleta, a rancher who was representing the area. The US Census Bureau estimates that 12,352 people lived in Archuleta County in 2015.

Archuleta County has a rich agricultural and ranching heritage. Livestock grazing has been a local custom since the Spanish arrived. Ranch claims were established along the San Juan River in the 1870s. Cattle and sheep ranchers were issued grazing permits on the National Forest as early as 1908, and both continue to be important to the local economy. In 2012, the US Census of Agriculture counted 372 farms on 210,194 acres, with 201 full-time operators. Archuleta County counted over 13,000 cattle and calves, and ranked number 19 in



*Western Heritage Events Center*

Colorado for horses and number 27 for sheep and lambs. Livestock sales accounted for 92% of ag products sold. Hay and other forage was the top crop item. Each year, this Western heritage is celebrated at the Independence Day Red Ryder® Rodeo, and at the Archuleta County Fair.

Archuleta County is a community of communities, each with their own character. Pagosa Springs is our county seat and only incorporated municipality. Chromo and Edith are tucked along the Navajo River just north of Chama, New Mexico, and the Jicarilla Apache Reservation. Up Highway 84, a recreational community has grown up along the Rio Blanco with cabin sites and RV parks along the floodplain. Pagosa Lakes—including a number of subdivisions platted by Fairfield-Eaton beginning in the early 1970s—has captured many of the new homes and businesses for the uptown area of Pagosa Springs—some annexed into town, but many remaining unincorporated. Aspen Springs, further west on Highway 160, was also platted in the early 1970s, but never benefitted from water and sewer service, and has its own distinct character. A small settlement emerged at the Piedra River crossing of the state highway, and Chimney Rock (now a National Monument) provides a beacon to visitors and residents. Historic townsites at Trujillo, Juanita and Pagosa Springs remain standing between the San Juan River and County Road 500. Arboles has an active agricultural community closely related to the Ignacio community, as well as seasonal residences and commercial services at the gateway to Navajo State Park.

The National Park Service’s National Register of Historic Places, administered locally by History Colorado, lists properties nominated and accepted for national historic significance. Structures are generally at least 50-years old, maintain historic integrity, and are related to events and activities that are importance to understanding the past and how our communities became what that are today. Individual buildings or groups of structures may be listed, or areas of significance. History Colorado also administers the Colorado State Register of Historic Places for cultural resources with state-wide significance. In Archuleta County as of September 2017, there were three resources listed on the National Register:

- Chimney Rock Archeological Site, at Chimney Rock National Monument
- Lado Del Rio Bridge, constructed in 1913, now located on Navajo Rd. over the Piedra River near Arboles
- Denver & Rio Grande Railroad San Juan Extension, from Antonito, Colorado, to Chama, New Mexico



*Historic Church, Old Gallegos Rd.*

Tourists and new residents have been attracted to the area by the scenic beauty, small town atmosphere, and the serene, rural ambiance of Archuleta County. While growth brings new opportunities, there is also concern with the typical mountain town development seen in other destination resort areas. Typical suburban “cookie-cutter” development doesn’t necessarily fit into this rural setting where property owners are used to doing what they will with their own property. As population and development expand, the County may need to take a more active role in conserving the traditional community character. The County may be able to access state or federal funding sources for



conservation easements and transfer of development rights, such as the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) lottery-funded program.

When considering the built environment, it is impossible to ignore the relationship between what has been created by man, and the surrounding landscape. When residents and tourists visualize Archuleta County, images of the San Juan River, the hot springs, and the breathtaking landscape of the San Juan Mountains and the Continental Divide may come to mind. The human dominance over nature so common elsewhere is not to be found in this isolated corner of the world. Old timers stay, and new residents come, because of the increasingly rare balance between man and nature that can be found in Archuleta County.

Key aspects of preserving the qualities that have been present historically include:

- **Traditional Development Patterns** - The concentrated Pagosa Springs settlement has withstood the test of time through the boom and bust cycles of the last two centuries.
- **Active Farms and Ranches** - Outside of Pagosa Springs, agriculture, forestry, and other resource-based activities have been the land uses found in rural areas, with ranching by far the dominant activity.
- **Darkness at Night** - Residents across the county attended planning meetings where they made it clear that excessive lighting is not acceptable. Dark skies are part and parcel of the life that people have come to expect in Archuleta County.
- **Quiet** - Residents expect to be free of undesirable and excessive noise.



*The unincorporated community of Chromo is on Highway 84 in southeastern Archuleta County.*

## **Goals, Policies and Action Items**

**Goal:** The small town atmosphere, rural character, agricultural and ranching heritage, mix of cultures, and diversity of life styles is preserved.

**Goal:** Developed areas are well designed and architecturally compatible with community character, cultural heritage, and the natural environment. Quiet prevails with a minimum of loud or offensive noise.

**Policy 3.1** – Historic buildings and historic districts should be preserved.

### **Action Items:**

- 3.1.1. Conduct a study to designate places and structures with historic character as historic places and/or districts.
- 3.1.2. Develop incentives to encourage restoration of historic buildings and establishment of historic districts.
- 3.1.3. Develop architectural guidelines to preserve facades of historic buildings.

**Policy 3.2** - New development is architecturally compatible with community character and heritage.

- 3.2.1. Review and update architectural guidelines in the *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations* to encourage new commercial development to be compatible with community character and heritage (excluding agricultural buildings).

**Policy 3.3** – Commercial, residential, industrial, and governmental development minimizes the effect of night lighting on neighboring properties, public rights-of-way, and the night sky.

### **Action Items:**

- 3.3.1. Review and update land use standards and criteria to ensure that all new development minimize the effect of night lighting on neighboring properties and public rights-of-way.

**Policy 3.4** – Signage associated with all new development is appropriately designed and located.

### **Action Items:**

- 3.4.1 **Review and update** sign code standards for the design, size, number and location of permanent and temporary signs, in compliance with Second Amendment protections.
- 3.4.2 Continue to prohibit new billboards (off-site advertising), and support the removal of all existing billboards (acknowledging that local government may have to pay compensation for removal).



**Policy 3.5** – New development is designed so that it is visually compatible with community character and the natural environment.

**Action Items:**

- 3.5.1 Develop guidelines, educational materials and incentives, which encourage the construction of buildings that are compatible with the area and the natural environment.
- 3.5.2 Review and update environmental and infrastructure standards for all new development.
- 3.5.3 Review and update site development standards, including architectural, site planning, and landscape design standards, for all new industrial, commercial, and multi-family residential development.
- 3.5.4 Develop design standards to minimize the occurrence of repetitive, concentrated residential development.
- 3.5.5 Develop specific setback requirements and standards for commercial development along Put Hill, to preserve open space and to create a visual buffer between the Pagosa Lakes area and the Town of Pagosa Springs.
- 3.5.6 Encourage use of private covenants, created by the individual developer, in new subdivisions. These covenants shall be for residential developments to protect features such as unique environmental resources, wildlife habitats, and architectural design.

**Policy 3.6** – Loud and offensive noise is discouraged.

**Action Items:**

- 3.6.1. Review and update noise standards for sounds commonly deemed offensive; such as loud music, generators, barking dogs, loud vehicles, discharge of firearms, and jake brakes on trucks (in specific areas).
- 3.6.2. Review effectiveness and enforcement of the County Noise Ordinance.
- 3.6.3. Develop standards for loud uses such as firing ranges and race tracks.

**Policy 3.7** – Preservation of farm and ranch land is a high priority; maintain and promote a sustainable and viable agricultural and ranching community.

**Action Items:**

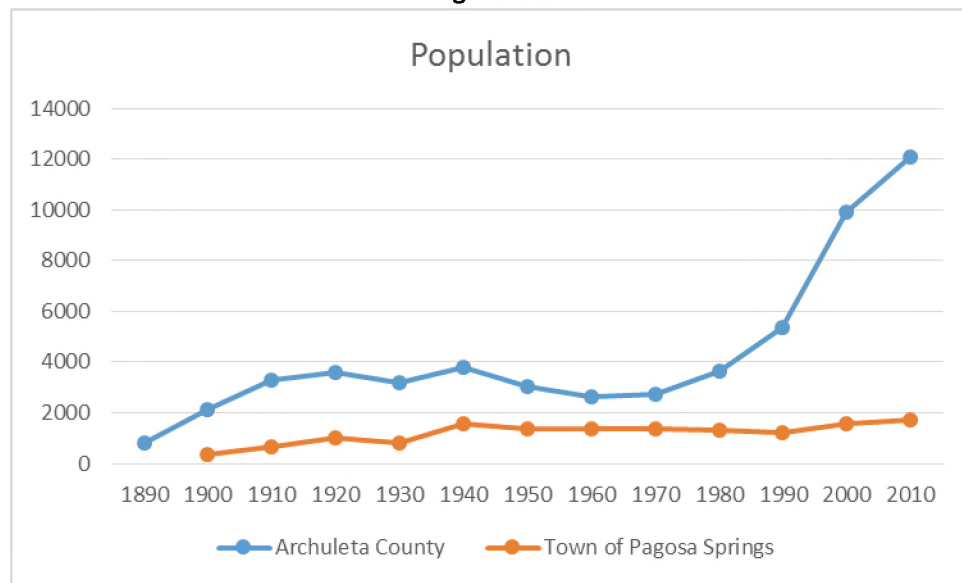
- 3.7.1. Adopt a county right-to-farm policy, which would recognize and strengthen Colorado’s existing right-to-farm State law.
- 3.7.2. Recognizing the need for flexibility to construct and locate farm-related structures, continue to exempt agricultural structures from local building and land use regulations.
- 3.7.3. Work with landowners and public land agencies (such as the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management) to trade portions of private lands that are unusable for agricultural operations, for adjacent public lands that are better suited to agricultural or ranching operations.
- 3.7.4. Develop standards in the land use regulations for on-farm agricultural processing, events and activities.

### Part III. Our Built Environment

#### Chapter 4. Economic Development and Housing

Economic development is the process of adapting to the ever-changing global economy with the resources available to the local community. Change is the only thing that stays the same and Archuleta County has seen several cycles of economic change. While forestry and ranching drew 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century settlers to the San Juan Mountains, the valleys now draw 21<sup>st</sup> century amenity migrants searching for homes with a view and an outdoor lifestyle.

**Figure 4-1**



Source: Colorado State Demographer's Office

Archuleta County's population was 12,854 in July 2016, according to estimates by the Colorado State Demographer and the US Census Bureau. The 2010 Census counted 12,084 residents in the County and 1,727 in the Town of Pagosa Springs (Figure 4-1, see Appendix A for the Community Profile in more detail).

From 1990 to 2000, Archuleta County was one of the fastest growing counties in the entire nation, and in 2016 was again among the fastest-growing counties on a year-to-year percentage basis. Recent growth has consisted of both natural gain (more births than deaths) and net in-migration. These numbers do not account for the large number of seasonal visitors and second home owners in the area. Demographics are also changing, as a larger share of the population is made up of active retirees, 65+ and older. In 2016, the Median Age was estimated to be 50.1 in Archuleta County, compared to 36.9 in Colorado overall.

In the past, economic development might have focused on industrial recruitment or "smokestack chasing" to bring manufacturing jobs from other places. Primary sector jobs are essential to bring new basic income into the community, supporting secondary retail and services. Today, economic development efforts are more likely to focus on creating an environment where entrepreneurs and fast-growing employers can thrive—economic gardening, and retention & expansion of existing firms.



*New Source Gas Office & Staging Yard, Cloman Industrial Park*

Infrastructure, including broadband service, and housing are key to providing economic flexibility. Industrial development must also be balanced with protecting natural resources. The volunteer Pagosa Springs Community Development Corporation (CDC) and the Region 9 Economic Development District (EDD) are active leaders in these efforts.

Employment in Archuleta County contracted during the Great Recession before recovering more recently, with self-employment (proprietors) accounting for about half of all employment. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), total employment was 8,085 in 2015, with 4,164 wage and salary jobs. As documented in Region 9's

*Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* (CEDs), as

recently as 1970 manufacturing (primarily wood products) provided 30% of the county's work income but now accounts for about 2% of local employment and income. Overall, employment earnings only account for about half of Total Personal Income, down from about 70% in 1970, with dividends, interest and rent, and transfer payments each accounting for about a quarter in 2014.

In 2001, the *Community Plan* recommended that Archuleta County designate areas for industrial parks as an attempt to foster diversification of the economy and provide more high paying jobs for local residents. The intention was to attract new heavy commercial and light industrial businesses to Archuleta County, and to provide a location for such businesses in industrial parks. Some existing heavy commercial uses, such as an auto body shop for example, would be more suitable in an industrial park than in a commercial/retail area. The Future Land Use Map designated the Cloman Industrial Park, which has recently started to see more development. However, the area between North Pagosa and Vista boulevards, north of US Highway 160, has continued to build out as more mixed use/heavy commercial in close proximity to residential neighborhoods. Additional areas with appropriate infrastructure and adequately sized lots, buffered from residential property, should be designated for industrial development in cooperation with landowners.

The Colorado State Demographer estimates that Archuleta County's population will return to higher growth, projecting a population of 13,720 in 2020, and 18,400 by 2030. Even at a lesser rate of population growth, expanding employment and migration have resulted in a growing demand for housing. About 70% of people who work in Archuleta County live here, with 7% of jobs filled by La Plata County residents. Of local residents commuting elsewhere, 12% work in La Plata County and 3% in San Juan County (Farmington), New Mexico.

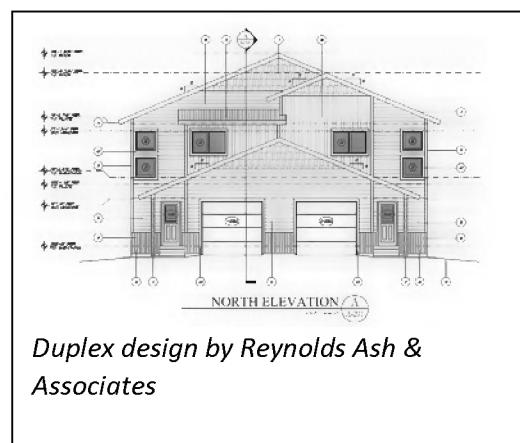
## Affordable Housing

With demographic change also comes changing expectations and needs for the housing stock. The *Archuleta County Housing Report*, prepared in January 2016 by Region 9, found 8,239 housing units on 7,990 residential parcels, in an analysis of Archuleta County Assessor's Office data. Three-quarters of those units were single family dwellings. Growing evidence suggests Baby Boomers are looking to age in place, staying more active while trading larger properties for condos and townhomes where somebody else can shovel the snow. Region 9 surveyed second home owners with property in the county. The average age of respondents was 65 years old, and a quarter indicated they would like to retire to the area. Research by the AARP also indicates retirees are placing more emphasis on walkability and access to services.

Second home owners, tourists and retirees create demand for services, and the people providing those services also need housing. Millennials born from 1980-1999 will fill many of these jobs—as well as jobs that can be performed over the internet to bring new income into the area. Region 9 estimates that about 200 new residential units will be required each year, over the next 20 years, to meet projected demand in Archuleta County. As noted by Region 9, "Millennials will be drawn to communities that combine the best of urban living (convenience and walkability) with good schools and homes with moderate yard space." However, these amenities are locally in short supply at an affordable cost.

The Town of Pagosa Springs and Archuleta County recently engaged Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. to complete an updated housing needs study, providing direction to address affordable and attainable housing in the community in this *Archuleta County Housing Needs Analysis* (2017). Affordable housing is considered to be available to families at no more than 30% of their gross income, including utilities. Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., estimates Archuleta County's Median Household Income at \$50,361, below Colorado's 2016 overall average. (see Appendix A for the Community Profile in more detail.) Typically no more than 1/3 of income should be dedicated to housing and utilities, so about \$1,200 rent or \$211,00 purchase price might be considered "affordable" for the average county household. A glance at the weekly classifieds section may not find much "affordable" housing advertised.

Local building has expanded and contracted with economic cycles. In 2000, Archuleta County issued building permits for 476 new living units, a peak not reached since. Multi-family housing peaked at 56 units permitted in 2006. There were only three multi-family projects started between 2007-2016, all duplexes, and no new apartments since 2003. New single family building started to bounce back in 2015, and 113 new units were permitted in 2016. Property (with infrastructure in place) is available for multi-family development, but builders and investors have not yet taken advantage of the opportunity.





Responses to market gaps in economic development and housing may take the form of incentives (carrots) or regulations (sticks). For example, provision of broadband is an incentive for advanced services employers, while local sourcing requirements (“buy local”) would be a regulatory approach. Incentives for affordable housing may include density bonuses or outright tax subsidies. Regulations could also be revised to streamline multi-family development, or to require a portion of new developments to be dedicated to affordable housing. However, additional density will require additional infrastructure—roads, water, sewer, etc.

The *Archuleta County Housing Needs Analysis* (2017) includes reference to a number of Land Use and Regulatory Tools to address development capacity. A careful mix of strategies must be considered to establish consistent, effective policies that fit Archuleta County.

Local resources for economic development and housing are limited. Archuleta County is a member of Region 9 EDD, and supports the private non-profit Pagosa Springs CDC. The Archuleta County Housing Authority has had limited financial and staff capacity, with a single project under management—the *Archuleta County Housing Needs Analysis* (2017) suggests the Housing Authority may be the appropriate advocate for increased investment in affordable housing. Habitat for Humanity has also been a leader for affordable housing in the Pagosa Springs community.

### Goals, Policies and Action Items

**Goal:** Tourism, recreation, and agriculture remain important parts of an economy that has become more diverse by expanding other economic sectors, compatible with community character and the natural environment, which provide well-paying jobs for local residents.

**Goal:** The housing stock is safe, well maintained and compatible with community character and the natural environment with a wide price and rental range adequate to house all income levels and age groups.

**Policy 4.1 –** Archuleta County provides a rich environment for entrepreneurial activity, and retention and expansion of local business.

#### Action Items:

- 4.1.1. Participate in Pagosa Springs Community Development Corp. efforts to support entrepreneurs and employment retention and expansion.
- 4.1.2. Designate areas for industrial parks for new clean business and light industry and to provide an alternative location for existing businesses.
- 4.1.3. Encourage new flexible, mixed-use development.

**Policy 4.2** – Archuleta County is an attractive location for existing clean businesses and industries.

**Action Items:**

- 4.2.1. Develop incentives to attract new, and expand existing clean businesses and industries and discourage new heavy industry from locating in the county.
- 4.2.2. Require an economic impact study and a needs analysis prior to approving new large commercial development.

**Policy 4.3** – High-speed telecommunication access should be available for all residents of the county.

**Action Items:**

- 4.3.1. Support the Region 9 Economic Development broadband planning efforts.
- 4.3.2. Develop a county-wide “technology plan”, which would include the evaluation of network requirements, technological alternatives, feasibility and risk management (engineering and economic), implementation strategies, etc.
- 4.3.3. Develop a comprehensive strategy to promote the future availability of high-speed telecommunication capabilities.
- 4.3.4. Review and revise regulations for wireless facilities (including cell towers) for compliance with current FCC regulations and industry best practices.

**Policy 4.4** – Archuleta County encourages construction of new affordable housing units.

**Action Items:**

- 4.4.1. Develop incentives for developers to encourage them to build affordable housing units.
- 4.4.2. Develop incentives to encourage integration of affordable housing within market rate developments.
- 4.4.3. Recognizing that manufactured homes are affordable housing units, review current standards for design, landscaping, and screening new and existing manufactured home parks.
- 4.4.4. Encourage infill development where infrastructure (paved roads, water and sewer) is available.
- 4.4.5. Review provisions for Short-term Rentals (Lodging Units) to assure Long-term Rentals are not being negatively impacted.

**Policy 4.5** – Private property owners have flexibility to add additional dwelling units that fit neighborhood character.

**Action Items:**

- 4.5.1. Continue to allow a 2<sup>nd</sup> single family dwelling unit in residential areas, on larger lots in Low Density and Very Low Density areas.
- 4.5.2. Regulate duplexes (single family-attached) the same as other single-family units.
- 4.5.3. Provide for Accessory Dwelling Units (attached or detached) on smaller lots in Medium and High Density areas with infrastructure (roads, water and sewer).
- 4.5.4. Review Land Use Regulation provisions for group homes and congregate living situations, for compliance with the Fair Housing Act and local character.



## Chapter 5. Transportation and Public Facilities

A high quality of life is impossible without adequate community services, activities and facilities. These services are provided by multiple jurisdictions, including Archuleta County, the Town of Pagosa Springs, special districts and private utilities.

- Special districts and metro districts providing water and/or sewer service: Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District (PAWSD), Pagosa Springs Sanitation General Improvement District (PSSGID), San Juan River Village Metro District, and Piedra Park Metro District.
- Metro districts providing road improvements and maintenance: Alpha-Rock Ridge Metro District, Aspen Springs Metro District, Colorado Timber Ridge Metro District, Loma Linda Metro District, Piedra Park Metro District, and San Juan River Village Metro District.
- Water conservation: San Juan Water Conservancy District, and Southwestern Water Conservation District.
- School Districts 50 JT, 11JT, and 10JT-R.
- Pagosa Fire Protection District, Los Pinos Fire Protection District (Ignacio), Upper Pine River Fire Protection District (Bayfield).
- Other special districts and authorities: Archuleta County Airport Authority, Upper San Juan Hospital District, Upper San Juan Library District, San Juan Basin Health Department.
- Private utilities: La Plata Electric Cooperative, Black Hills/SourceGas (natural gas), CenturyLink (telecomm), and US Communications (cable TV).

In addition, there are many property owners associations across the county, the largest of which is the Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association (PLPOA). Town, County and Utility staff regularly meet to coordinate projects and plans. As development pressure increases, it may be useful to bring a larger group together to better plan long-term infrastructure projects.

Much of the recent growth in Archuleta County has occurred in the greater Pagosa Springs area, especially where major utilities are available. The absence of central water and sewer in Aspen Springs and other older subdivisions will likely constrain future growth in these areas. Limited three-phase electric, wireless and broadband service will also constrain development opportunities.

The general location and extent of public utilities and facilities in the development review process includes water, sewer and septic, and multi-modal transportation.

### Water

Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District (PAWSD), San Juan River Village Metro District, and Piedra Park Metro District operate public water systems.



*9-11 Memorial, Pagosa Fire Protection District Station*

The PAWSD water service area currently exceeds 76 square miles, including the original District boundary and multiple additions, including the Town of Pagosa Springs. Currently, as of mid-2017, PAWSD has 5,664 water service connections. There are 5,274 undeveloped properties within the District boundaries that PAWSD has commitments to serve as they are developed. Even without additional boundary inclusions this number of properties will fluctuate as lots are combined or split. PAWSD also operates a potable water fill station on Trails Blvd., north of US Hwy 160, and in 2017, built a new potable water fill station at the County Fairgrounds on Mill Creek Road.

PAWSD owns a number of water rights stemming from the San Juan River and its tributaries. These water rights allows PAWSD to extract water at various locations and feed water treatment plants directly or indirectly into reservoirs throughout the district. PAWSD operates three water treatment plants: Snowball, Hatcher and San Juan. Treatment capacity will fluctuate with incoming raw water quality. Full build-out at current land use densities will require an estimated 5.2 million gallons per day (MGD).

**Table 5-1 PAWSD Treatment Capacity**

Treatment Plant	Treatment Flow (MGD)
Snowball	1.4
Hatcher	1.6
San Juan	3.0*
TOTAL	6 MGD

\* Currently the San Juan Plant can only produce about 0.25 MGD; current design work is being undertaken to expand the capabilities to approximately 3.0 MGD

For PAWSD, as with other districts, controlling water loss will play an integral role in meeting current and future production requirements. Additionally it will be important to move water from the Pagosa Lakes area (area primarily served by the Hatcher and San Juan water plants) to downtown Pagosa Springs (primarily served by the Snowball water plant). This is currently done through two water lines connecting downtown to the Pagosa Lakes area. However only a limited flow of water can be moved and thus may limit the availability of water in town and south of Pagosa Springs along the Highway 84 corridor.

San Juan River Village Metro District serves the San Juan River Resort subdivisions east of Pagosa Springs on Highway 160. They currently have 160 water taps with a maximum build-out of 220. Limited capacity will function as a cap on any increases in zoning density, such as accessory dwelling units or short-term rentals.

Piedra Park Metro District has almost 200 water meters (ERT—encoder, receiver, transmitter devices) and capacity for about 100 more in the Arboles area. They require a minimum 1 acre lot size for new service. Piedra Park Metro District provides a potable water fill station and several fire water service hydrants. Aspen Springs Metro District also provides a potable water fill station.



*San Juan River Headwaters Site, 2016*

The San Juan Water Conservancy District (SJWCD), formed in 1987, continues working on an 11,000 acre-foot off-stream reservoir, the “San Juan River Headwaters Project”, east of Highway 160 north of Pagosa Springs. This project has received support from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB).

For individual wells, the Colorado Division of Water Resources (DWR), also known as the Office of the State Engineer, administers water rights, issues water well permits, and reviews Subdivision Water Supply Plans. Since 1972, any new subdivision must by statute demonstrate adequate evidence that a water supply is available and that the quality, quantity, and dependability is sufficient. Many older subdivisions and exempt tracts in Archuleta County do not have a water system or wells, and residents rely on cisterns to hold water from public fill stations. Cisterns are easily contaminated and create concerns for public health, and may preclude certain sources of home financing.

### **Sewer and Septic**

Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District (PAWSD) sewer service area is more limited than the water service area, generally from Lake Hatcher to the North, East to Piedra Road, South to Highway 160 and to multiple developments just west of North Pagosa Blvd for a total service area of approximately 9 square miles. PAWSD also treats the wastewater generated by the town of Pagosa Springs through an Inter-Governmental Agreement between the Town and the District. The town’s wastewater is pumped to the PAWSD wastewater treatment plant via two lift stations owned and operated by the Town.

The Pagosa Springs Sanitation General Improvement District (PSSGID) is a quasi-municipal corporation and political subdivision of the State of Colorado organized under CRS Title 32, and is operated and managed by the Town of Pagosa Springs providing sewer service in and proximate to the Town boundaries. Some areas within Town boundaries receive their sewer service directly from PAWSD. Currently, the PSSGID has approximately 850 sewer taps serving approximately 1209 equivalent residential units.

The PSSGID decommissioned its old sewer treatment lagoons in 2016 which were replaced by a pumping conveyance system consisting of two large pump stations and approximately 7.5 miles of force

main (pressurized sewer piping). All wastewater produced by the PSSGID is now conveyed to the Vista treatment plant at PAWSD. Generally, the PSSGID sewer flows are approximately 325,000 gallons per day at present and the capacity of the pumping system is approximately 1,000,000 gallons per day. These figures indicate an annual average as flows fluctuate greatly during the year. Essentially, the District is at approximately one-third of its rated capacity, with that capacity reserved for vacant properties within its boundaries.

PAWSD treats wastewater at its Vista Wastewater Treatment Plant located on the District's main campus off of Lake Forest Blvd. The treatment plant is permitted through the Colorado Division of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) for a hydraulic operational flow of just under 4 MGD and a pollutant load of under 4,000 lbs. Currently PAWSD has 3,180 water service connections within the current District boundaries. There are 2,215 undeveloped properties within the District boundaries that PAWSD has commitments to serve as they are developed.

PAWSD treats an average of 1.30 MGD of wastewater with approximately 0.125 MGD coming from the Town of Pagosa Springs. The influent flow fluctuates significantly during spring due to sewer line infiltration with total flows reaching a peak of 4 MGD with approximately 0.7 MGD generated from the town. The pollutant load is approximately 2,700 lbs per day and stays relatively constant. We estimate an additional 2,000 lbs per day of pollutant load if all available lots are developed at current density. Both the Town of Pagosa Springs and the District are working to reduce the infiltration peaks in the wastewater hydraulic flow. Once controlled, the influent pollutant loading will limit PAWSD's ability to serve the community and will require plant expansion.

San Juan River Village Metro District provides sewer service in the same area as water service, and is permitted to treat up to 60,000 gallons per day of sewage, which would require an investment to upgrade the treatment system. Their ponds are located along US Hwy 160 at the south end of the subdivision.

San Juan Basin Public Health Department covers La Plata and Archuleta counties. The SJBH Environmental Health division provides programs in air quality, septic systems, stormwater, and insect and animal borne diseases (among other services) from their main office in Durango. The Environmental Health Division reviews septic site evaluations and issues On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) for non-commercial development. SJBH adopted updated OWTS regulations in 2014, with an update in 2017 following revisions in State of Colorado regulations, including requirements for new OWTS installations to be designed by a professional engineer.

## Multi-Modal Transportation

A multi-modal transportation network is one of the most important services that local government provides. Archuleta County is served by US 160, which runs generally east-west and connects the county with other parts of the state and the nation. State Highway 84 provides access to and from New Mexico on the south, and State Highway 151 links US 160 to the southwestern part of the county and to southeastern La Plata County. A “spider web” network of county roads generally radiates from the Pagosa Hub area, connecting close and distant parts of the county. A network of Forest Service roads provides access to public land from highways and county roads. Creation of road rights-of-way or access easements is governed by both state statutes and the Archuleta County Land Use Regulations. While subdivision regulations require lots to have access to a public road, Archuleta County has had a long-standing policy not to accept new local roads for County maintenance. Transportation policy can also encourage provision of utilities, such as a “dig once” policy that encourages installation of conduit during routine road projects.



*County road, Aspen Springs*

Recognizing that roads were straining to keep pace with a rapidly growing population, Archuleta County conducted a road impact study in 1998, to assess the condition of county roads and recommend needed improvements. The study also recommended adoption of road impact fees to ensure that new development pays a fair, proportional share of needed road improvements. A joint impact fee analysis with the Town of Pagosa Springs was completed in 2006. The Town adopted certain impact fees at that time; the County adopted transportation impact fees in 2007, then suspended all development fees with the onset of the economic recession. There have been no new Major Subdivisions approved since that time. A new impact study is needed to provide updated information for consideration of fair-share impact fees.

In 2017, Archuleta County Public Works completed the *Analysis and Recommendations for Street Network*, with the Utah Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) Center. This study provides the basis for pavement management, with recommendations based on Archuleta County’s current road maintenance budget of about \$2,000,000 a year. The study also identified an annual gap of about \$3,000,000 in unfunded maintenance, just for paved roads.

A functional multi-modal system includes air, transit, and non-motorized transportation. Stevens Field is Archuleta County’s airport, providing private air service that is an important asset in a tourist-oriented economy. Rocky Mountain Express provides paratransit service and a fixed route transit system centered on the Pagosa Springs hub. The 2007 *Parks, Open Space & Trails* (POST) plan outlines a system of off-road pedestrian and bicycle trails.

## **Goals, Policies and Action Items**

**Goal:** Roads are improved and maintained to provide safe and efficient transportation, keeping pace with the demands of increased traffic. Public transit connects major population centers, and a network of trails provides opportunities for non-motorized travel and recreation.

**Goal:** Government services and facilities are adequate to serve urban, suburban, and rural areas without excessive tax burdens for individuals, property owners, and businesses. Quasi-public and private organizations provide a variety of cultural, recreational, medical, communications, and other services, activities, and facilities to maintain and enhance the quality of life in Archuleta County.

**Policy 5.1** – New development will mitigate impacts of new transportation demand.

### **Action Items:**

- 5.1.1. Maintain existing county regulations that require new subdivision roads to be built to county standards before lot sales are allowed.
- 5.1.2. Require a long-range plan for road maintenance and snow removal for each new development.
- 5.1.3. Encourage formation of new metro districts to maintain roads to reduce the burden on the County and to give more responsibility to people who use local roads.
- 5.1.4. Encourage formation of special districts as a cooperative effort of the County and land owners to pave and maintain existing gravel roads.
- 5.1.5. Conduct a study to update transportation impact fees.

**Policy 5.2** – Develop a long-range Transportation Plan.

### **Action Items:**

- 5.2.1. Support Public Works' Five-Year Road Plan for maintenance and improvement.
- 5.2.2. Conduct a study of the existing public transit system, including whether or not the transit system should be expanded, and identify locations for park and ride areas to meet current and projected future needs.
- 5.2.3. Establish a countywide trail system that would eventually link an extensive trail network in developed areas with existing National Forest trails.
- 5.2.4. Support additional local funds for trails, to increase the required match for State funds, thereby creating more trails sooner.
- 5.2.5. Review and update the *US 160-Pagosa Springs West Access Control Plan* (2010).

**Policy 5.3** - Assure that the Archuleta County Airport is continually capable of serving the air transportation needs of Archuleta County.

**Action Items:**

- 5.3.1. Continue to mandate the use of Avigation Easements in the Airport Influence Area and encourage compatible land uses in areas bordering or adjacent to the Airport Influence Area. The Airport Influence Area is generally defined as the area within one-mile from the runway, in all directions.

**Policy 5.4** - Support the extension of electricity, central water and sewer service to existing developed areas that need such services.

**Action Items:**

- 5.4.1. Review requirement in the land use regulation to bury utilities outside Agricultural areas.

**Policy 5.5** - Support new high-to-medium density development only with the extension of central water and sewer service (such Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District and the Town of Pagosa Springs).

**Action Items:**

- 5.5.1. Work with property owners and service providers to plan strategic extensions of service.

**Policy 5.6** – Archuleta County is committed to a comprehensive waste management system.

**Action Items:**

- 5.6.1. Maintain a comprehensive, financially viable recycling program and promote it aggressively.
- 5.6.2. Improve the waste collection system and consider additional solid waste transfer station locations.
- 5.6.3. Review “nuisance” regulations governing trash disposal and removal of unsightly items, such as junk cars.

**Policy 5.7** - Maintain the necessary level of public facilities and services (including police/sheriff patrols, fire protection, emergency medical services, health care services, schools, and recreation facilities) to adequately serve the population.

**Action Item:**

- 5.7.1. Conduct studies of public facilities and services to determine if they are adequate and develop recommendations for expansion of services and facilities where they are needed, or reduction of facilities if appropriate.

**Policy 5.8** - Archuleta County encourages the development of additional neighborhood and community parks in developed areas.

**Action Item:**

- 5.8.1. Amend existing regulations as necessary to encourage or require the provision of new neighborhood and community parks.

**Policy 5.9** - Domestic animals should be controlled in a manner consistent with maintaining public health, safety, and welfare.

**Action Item:**

- 5.9.1. Fund an animal control officer in the county.

**Policy 5.10** - Archuleta County is committed to providing an effective and efficient local government.

**Action Item:**

- 5.10.1. Establish a commission to explore the pros and cons of changing the governmental form of Archuleta County to home rule.

**Policy 5.11** - Archuleta County is committed to fostering cooperation between local, state, federal, and tribal government entities, including, but not limited to Hinsdale, La Plata, and Mineral Counties, the States of Colorado and New Mexico, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe.

- 5.11.1. Consider an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to implement an updated Three-Mile Plan with the Town of Pagosa Springs.



## *Part IV. Land Use*

### **Chapter 6. Growth Management**

Approximately two-thirds of Archuleta County's area is owned and managed by federal, state, and tribal governments. The remainder of the land is privately owned, or owned by local public or non-profit entities. The county has a large inventory of undeveloped and vacant parcels—many Improperly Divided Parcels (IDPs) created since 1972 without required public approval—which is both an opportunity and a challenge for future development. While new Subdivision activity went into hiatus after the Great Recession in 2007, with the return of population growth there is increasing interest in creating new building lots.

The 1999 *Land Use Plan for the Town of Pagosa Springs* and 2001 *Community Plan* anticipated that the Town of Pagosa Springs (TOPS) would annex much of the residential property in the Pagosa Lakes area, while the 2006 *Pagosa Springs Comprehensive Plan* and 2017 update focused more internally. The Town has annexed much of the commercial property along US Highway 160, including the subdivision where Wal-Mart opened in 2015; however, private homeowners have not typically requested annexation. The result has been a stable population for the Town while the County population continues to increase.

The County is not an urban service provider. In the Pagosa Lakes Area in particular, people don't tend to notice the distinction—water and sewer is provided by a special district. Fire protection is provided by the fire district, whether in town or county jurisdiction. As neighborhoods outside the Town continue to grow, public policy will have to address how the County will provide public services such as public safety, road surfacing and maintenance, drainage, sidewalks and trails, wildfire mitigation, parks and open spaces, and other quality of life amenities expected by an urban population.

### **Growth Scenarios**

During development of the 2001 *Community Plan*, four alternative growth scenarios were developed as general concepts to help Steering Committee members and the public to visualize alternative spatial patterns that could evolve over twenty years. Committee members and the public were asked to indicate their preferences, and workshop participants were encouraged to debate the advantages and disadvantages of each scenario prior to indicating their preferences. The four alternative growth scenarios were:

- Continuation of Existing Growth Patterns;
- Open Space Vistas;
- Pagosa Hub; and
- Villages.

After careful analysis of citizen input at public workshops and review of over 100 written responses, a custom Preferred Growth Scenario was developed. This scenario is a blend of many of the elements from the Open Space Vistas, Pagosa Hub, and Villages scenarios. The Preferred Growth Scenario focused on a strong community desire to retain and promote Archuleta County's cultural heritage, as well as preserve its natural beauty. Specifically, residents valued the continued existence of the large

ranches in the county and their associated “open space” benefits. It was recognized by many citizens, particularly during the initial series of “visioning meetings”, that a healthy and viable agricultural community would not only preserve our cultural heritage, but would also provide many of the natural and scenic qualities that Archuleta County’s citizens desire. The primary challenge in this growth scenario is to locate the appropriate balance, between the protection of individual property rights and values, and the overall vision and goals of the community at-large.

In the Preferred Growth Scenario, local government policies and actions actively support citizens’ vision to maintain a high quality of life in Archuleta County. Policies and actions are adopted to preserve wildlife habitat, open space, and the rural and small town atmosphere through a combination of incentives and requirements governing the development of private land, and an aggressive effort is mounted to acquire open space or conservation easements. Economic opportunities are enhanced by diversifying the economy, consistent with maintaining a high quality of life. While most residential and commercial development is located in the Pagosa Springs/Pagosa Lakes area, village centers at Arboles, Aspen Springs, and Chromo provide residents of outlying areas with small, nearby shopping and service centers and additional housing choices.

The Preferred Growth Scenario includes the following elements:

*Designation of the following on a Future Land Use Map:*

- Wildlife habitat areas and migration routes.
- Major rivers, some of which could be included as wildlife habitat, along the Blanco, Navajo, Piedra, and San Juan Rivers.
- General areas that could serve as future industrial parks.
- General areas that could serve as village centers.

*Adoption of guidelines (incentives) and standards (requirements) governing development of private land for, but not necessarily limited to, the following items:*

- Development within wildlife habitat areas and migration routes, to mitigate disruption of wildlife and preserve a healthy ecosystem.
- Preservation of environmental quality, including water and energy conservation, control of gravel pits and weeds.
- Quality of the built environment, including lighting, signs, building design and landscaping, and noise, to preserve and enhance the quality of life.
- Clustering of commercial and residential development to preserve open space and minimize commercial strip development, urban sprawl, and rural sprawl. In rural areas, the 35-acre tract exempted by State Statute is the default base density, but strong incentives exist to encourage clustering, such as increasing density based on specific criteria. In wildlife areas, special standards should apply, including clustering or lots larger than 35 acres.
- Separation of incompatible land uses.
- Provision of affordable housing.
- Development of high density residential areas within village centers and medium density residential areas around village centers.

*Adoption of local government policies that encourage:*

- Purchase of open space and conservation easements, or voluntary dedication of conservation easements and/or development rights.
- Purchase of wildlife easements, (production areas, winter concentration areas and migration corridors).
- Continuation of farming and ranching operations.
- Preservation of historic buildings and districts.
- Expanding economic opportunities by attracting clean, light industries.
- Efficient use of water resources, including central water and sewer systems.
- Effective waste management and recycling.
- Efficient delivery of public safety services
- Provision of parks, trails, and recreation facilities.
- Efficient, safe road network, and a modest, well-run public transit system.

The 2001 Preferred Growth Scenario provided a policy basis for the comprehensive revision of the *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations* and adoption of countywide zoning in 2006.

### **Existing Land Use Map**

The 2001 plan used existing land use as the basis to develop a future land use map. At that time, there were approximately 10,000 undeveloped and vacant parcels of land in the Archuleta County Assessor's records, of which 9,328 were under 35 acres in size. Updated analysis of the Assessor's records of by Archuleta County GIS Department found only 6,761 parcels as of September 2017. This analysis included public and private parcels. (See Figure 6-1 Land Use by Parcel and by Area.) While the largest number of parcels are in Residential use, Exempt (public and non-profit) land comprises the largest single category by acreage, followed by Agricultural land (in single use and in combination with Commercial and Residential use). Maps follow at the end of this chapter.

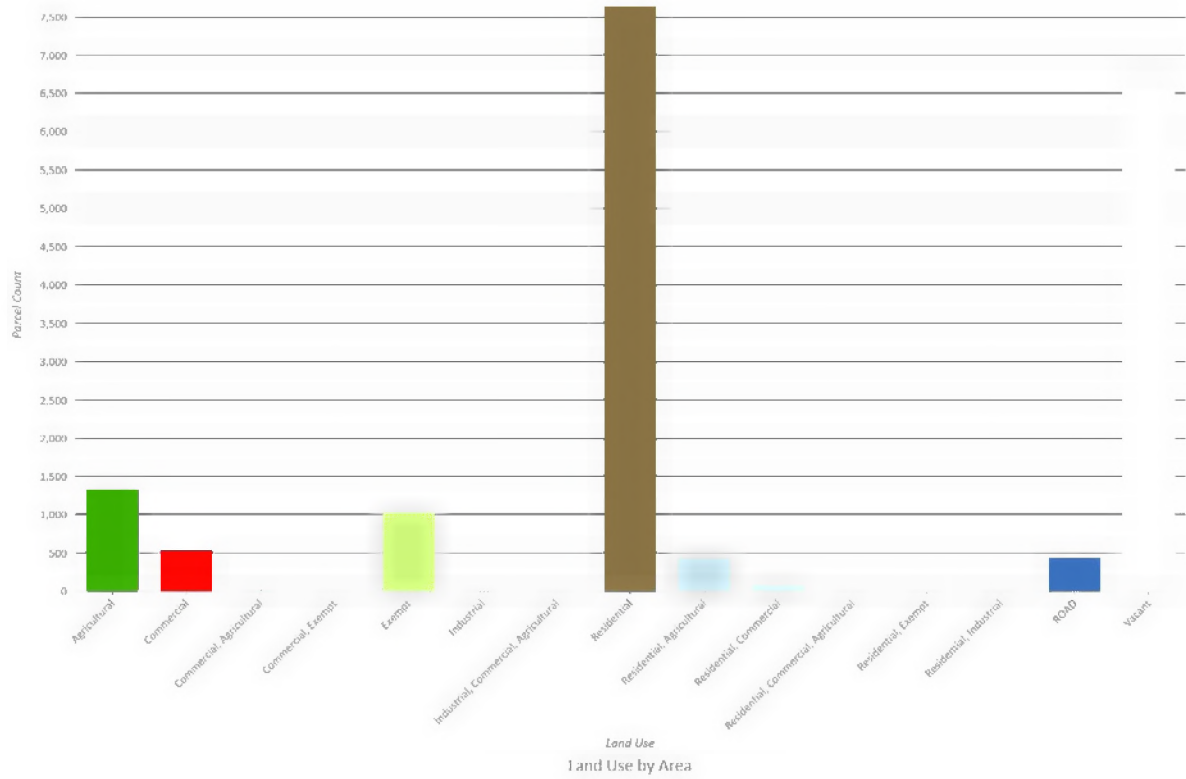
### **Future Land Use Map**

A Future Land Use Map was developed for the 2001 *Community Plan*. This map was intended to guide Archuleta County and the Town of Pagosa Springs in decision making about the use, location and density of land uses that may be proposed in the future. The map, policies, and action items also provided a basis for developing regulations, incentives, and procedures necessary to implement the land use and growth management provisions of the *Community Plan*.

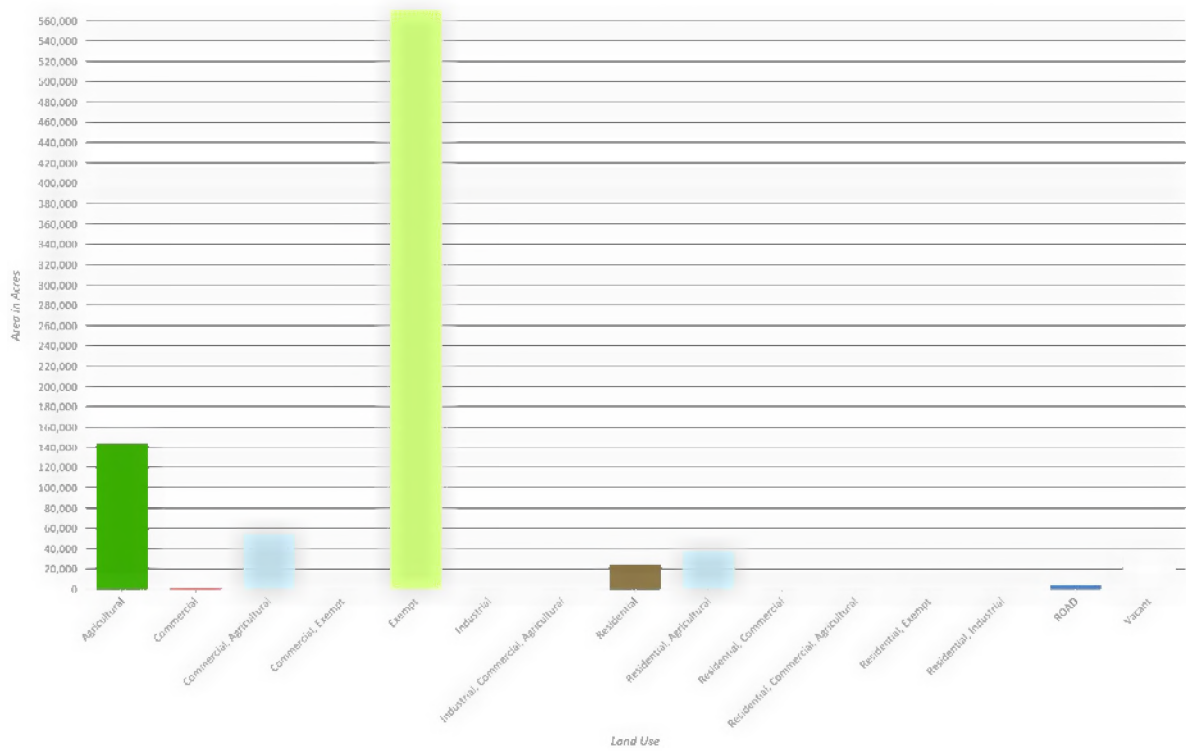
**Very Low Density Residential Land Use Area:** This land use area includes most of the rural land within the county that is in private ownership. The base density is 35 acres per dwelling unit, with incentives for clustering. Although some parcels within this district are smaller than 35 acres, tract consolidations are encouraged to help preserve the open character. However, residential buildings would be allowed on these smaller parcels if nothing more than a building permit were required.

**Figure 6-1**

Land Use by Parcel Count



Land Use by Area



Source: Archuleta County GIS, September 2017

Incentives for clustering will allow a higher average density, if dwellings are clustered on smaller lots, thereby preserving more open space. In areas of special consideration, such as wildlife habitat, it may be appropriate based upon the review and analysis of individual site characteristics, to require clustering or lots larger than 35 acres.

**Low Density Residential:** Residential densities in this land use area range from five to 35 acres. Land within this district is typically located outside of a central water and/or sewer utility. Larger parcels in the Pagosa Lakes area north of US 160, parcels in the area south of US 160 accessed by South Pagosa Blvd., and subdivisions southeast of Pagosa Springs accessed by Highway 84 are included in this district.

**Medium Density Residential:** Residential densities in this land use area range from two to five acres. This district includes the Aspen Springs area, parcels in the Pagosa Lakes area south of Hatcher Lake, and parcels in the area generally south of US 160 accessed by South Pagosa Blvd. Although smaller parcels exist in these areas, the consolidation of tracts and lots less than two acres is encouraged where central water and sewer do not exist.

**High Density Residential:** Residential densities in this land use area should be sufficient for multi-family and mixed use development with infrastructure available or provided by development and density moderated by buffers and open space. This area includes areas adjacent to the Town of Pagosa Springs, most of Pagosa Lakes, and the San Juan River Resort Metro District (northeast of Pagosa Springs). It is the intent of the *Community Plan* to concentrate new development in this density range in the Pagosa Hub area, with small pockets of high density housing at future village centers with appropriate infrastructure.

**Commercial:** National economic trends are posing a challenge for commercial real estate and finance. Four areas of concentrated commercial development are designated across the Town and County jurisdictions—Downtown Pagosa Springs, the junction of U.S. 160 and Highway 84, the junction of U.S. 160 and Piedra Road/Country Road 600; and the existing commercial area at Pagosa Lakes (centered at the junction of U.S. 160 and Pagosa Blvd.).

The 1999 Town of Pagosa Springs land use plan related that, regarding development along U.S. 160 west, “virtually all of those interviewed supported preserving existing open space along U.S. 160 as a way to maintain the character of the community.” The TOPS 2006 Land Use Plan Update further stated “the open and wooded character along the U.S. Highway should be preserved. Future development should be set back into the wooded area to preserve the scenic visual character of the major access roads”. The 2017 update, however, encourages greater density with infill development where infrastructure is available. The majority of the lands fronting U.S. 160, from Great West Avenue to Pagosa Boulevard to the west, are currently located within the municipal limits of the Town of Pagosa Springs. Access along Highway 160 is also controlled by an access management plan. It is the intent of this plan to limit westward expansion, thereby encouraging infill of lots near or adjacent to the existing commercial properties.

**Industrial:** Industrial property provides flexible sites for a variety of uses that may have impacts on their neighbors. The 2001 *Community Plan* designated four areas for heavy commercial and light industrial land uses, including Cloman Industrial Park west of the airport; the existing commercial area at the western edge of Pagosa Lakes; an area east of the old sawmill site on Mill Creek Road near the junction

of US 160 and Highway 84; and an area south of Pagosa Springs along Trujillo Road. When countywide zoning was adopted, only the Cloman Industrial Park and the Strohecker Asphalt Plant on Mill Creek Road were zoned Industrial. Both Cloman Blvd. and Mill Creek Road are over capacity as gravel roads and are in need of improvement. While typically industrial uses would negatively affect parks and open space, the Cloman area is an example where both can fit with proper buffers.

There is a demonstrated need for additional Industrial-zoned property in the county.

**Village Centers:** Village centers were designated at the unincorporated communities of Aspen Springs, Chromo, and Arboles. The Future Land Use Map depicts the general locations with a star, indicating general locations of small-scale commercial and service activities and nearby higher density residential areas where and when public infrastructure can be provided—water, sewer, electricity, roads. The intent of village centers is to provide opportunities for residents of outlying areas to obtain basic necessities and services, without having to travel to the Pagosa Hub or out of the county. Specific plans would be developed through the Development Review process.

**Wildlife Habitat Overlay:** Land depicted on the Future Land Use Map as wildlife habitat was identified by the Colorado Division of Wildlife’s local managers to show where special site planning criteria may be required to avoid or minimize disruption to animal habitat. Actual boundaries of such areas in any proposed development (whether shown as such on the map or not) will need to be determined at the time the development is proposed. These areas include winter concentration areas, calving areas, migration corridors, and riparian areas. Such areas should receive top priority for purchase of conservation easements. Special review procedures should include a case-by-case analysis of the potential effect of proposed development on wildlife habitat and use of appropriate measures applicable to specific sites as needed to mitigate adverse impacts to wildlife. Such measures include clustering, large lots, location of buildings based on terrain, or location and design of subdivision roads.

**Joint Influence Area:** In 2011, the Community Plan was amended for a Joint Influence Area, as a result of a series of joint Town and County work sessions. The “Joint Town County Planning Commission Zoning Discussion 2010” map implements the Town’s Three-Mile Plan required by State Statutes.

The Joint Influence Area is intended as an overlay to encourage a mix of compatible uses which may include commercial, light industrial and/or medium to high density residential. This area also includes areas most appropriate for annexation into the Town of Pagosa Springs as it is included in the Town’s Future Land Use Plan in their Comprehensive Plan existing at the time. Proposals in this area should consider the Town’s zoning districts as described in their Land Use and Development Code.

The Joint Influence Area coordinates land uses between the existing Town boundary and the unincorporated County as described in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan so that unplanned and incompatible uses do not disrupt the quality of life existing residents enjoy. At the same time, it allows for and anticipates commercial activity in areas identified as appropriate in which existing commercial or potential for new commercial may best be located.

**Urban Services Areas:** In an effort to promote the policies and preferred growth scenarios within the Community Plan and to reduce rural sprawl, this plan designated Urban Services Area. In 2008, after adoption of county-wide zoning, the Future Land Use Map was amended to include areas with immediate development potential, based on:

1. Availability of domestic water
2. Proximity to arterial or collector category road or state highway
3. Parcel size and subdivision status

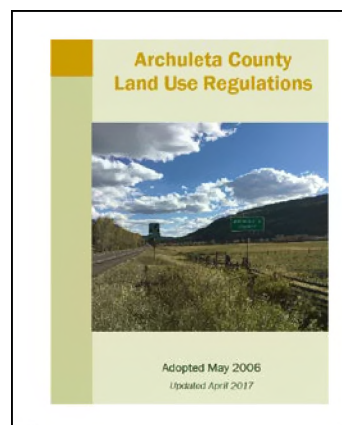
A two tiered approach was used to identify parcels on the map. Tier 1 meets the criteria; Tier 2 meets 2 of the 3 or has the potential to meet the criteria in the foreseeable future. There is no distinction between Tier 1 and 2 for development potential if a Tier 2 parcel meets the criteria (for example, if developers provide their own water supply and therefore don't need access to Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation). The 2006 *Pagosa Springs Comprehensive Plan* also proposed a similar Urban Service Area be designated.

Urban Service Areas and the Three-Mile Plan should be updated as soon as possible following the update of the Town's Comprehensive Plan and the County's master plan, including evaluation of the Joint Influence Area.

### ***Archuleta County Land Use Regulations***

Unified Land Use Regulations were adopted by Archuleta County in the year 2000, with a comprehensive revision and adoption of county-wide zoning in 2006. The *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations* contain chapters (sections) on General Administration, Land Use Review, Zoning Regulations, Subdivision Regulations, Development Standards, Land Dedications, Sign Regulations, Mining (sand, soil & gravel, and oil & gas), Floodplain Regulations, and Definitions. The Land Use Regulations should be reviewed and revised regularly for changes in statutes, case law and real estate development expectations.

The Land Use Regulations state that "Any change in land use, unless expressly exempt from permit requirements...shall require a Land Use Permit before commencing the development or activity..." Exemptions have been granted for one or two single-family homes, and residential accessory structures (i.e. garages and sheds). These requirements need to be reviewed for community acceptance (when people are willing to get a permit), clarity (what actions trigger the requirement for a permit) and the County's capacity for enforcement.



## **Goals, Policies and Action Items**

**Goal:** Growth and development are managed to preserve and enhance the quality of life that attracted original settlers, more recent arrivals, and tourists to Archuleta County

**Policy 6.1** – Encourage the design and location of new development to minimize the impacts on Archuleta County’s rural and scenic character, wildlife habitat and mountain vistas.

### **Action Items:**

- 6.1.1. Lands along major roadways should be considered for the application of special design and site planning criteria. These areas should be evaluated on an area-by-area basis, with serious consideration of the input from the residents of those areas, and any desired site planning or design criteria should be customized to reflect the values of those residing in the area. The intent of this action item is to preserve or enhance the scenic character of the foreground and the more distant mountain vistas.
- 6.1.2. Lands in major roadway corridors and in critical wildlife habitat areas should receive top priority for purchase of conservation easements and/or purchase of development rights.
- 6.1.3. Consider the creation of a purchase of development rights program. Examine all potential funding sources and give serious consideration to a separate and segregated, permanent funding source, such as a voter approved increase in the local mill levy, or impact fees. Local funds should be used to leverage additional State and Federal dollars.

**Policy 6.2** –New development will be compatible with adjacent, existing agricultural uses in rural areas.

### **Action Items:**

- 6.2.1. Include compatibility with agricultural uses as a review criteria for new development in agricultural zoning districts.

**Policy 6.3** – The current Archuleta County policy, which establishes a base density of 35 acres (the minimum lot size), will be continued in all un-platted areas without central water or sewer services. The County promotes a policy, which may require the clustering of development, for those developments located within wildlife habitat areas, and further, the County provides incentives (such as density bonuses and smaller lots sizes) to encourage such clustering. Lots larger than 35 acres may be required in certain locations, when clustering is not proposed.

### **Action Items:**

- 6.3.1. Develop guidelines to encourage cluster development for new commercial and residential subdivision development in appropriate locations, such as in wildlife habitat areas.
- 6.3.2. Consider the use of incentives, such as density bonuses or transfer of development rights, to encourage voluntary clustering of development and the preservation of open space.



- 6.3.3. As an alternative to 35-acre divisions of land (which according to State Statute are exempt from county subdivision review), promote the voluntary and incentive-based “rural land use” process (C.R.S. §30-28-401 – 30-28-404); whereby landowners can create densities of up to two units per 35 acres, provided 2/3 of the overall site is preserved as contiguous open space.
- 6.3.4. Develop standards and criteria for increasing the 35-acre minimum lot size in appropriate locations, such as in wildlife habitat areas, riparian areas, wetland areas, and floodplain areas; or require the clustering of development.

**Policy 6.4 – Encourage development on existing platted lots and discourage subdividing large parcels.**

**Action Items:**

- 6.4.1. Approve high and medium density residential development only in and around the Greater Pagosa Springs Area and the Village Centers, where infrastructure is available or will be provided.
- 6.4.2. Review and amend the *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations* and the Official Zoning Map to facilitate development of affordable housing.
- 6.4.3. Provide a process to legalize Improperly Divided Parcels created prior to adoption of the unified *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations* in 2000.

**Policy 6.5 – Encourage consolidation of small, unbuildable, or marginally buildable lots and tracts in areas without urban services.**

**Action Items:**

- 6.5.1. Identify specific areas where small, unbuildable, or marginally buildable lots without urban services are located.
- 6.5.2. Review Archuleta County’s current procedures to streamline lot consolidations in areas without urban services.
- 6.5.3. Develop incentives to encourage the consolidation of small, unbuildable or marginally buildable lots.

**Policy 6.6 – Locate new commercial development in designated areas to minimize commercial strip development.**

**Action Items:**

- 6.6.1. Review regulations designating areas suitable for commercial development and standards governing the design of commercial buildings and sites.
- 6.6.2. Review regulations for recreation-oriented commercial activities, such as dude ranches, wilderness lodging, outfitters, group camps and special events facilities.

**Policy 6.7** – Regularly review effectiveness and efficiency of the Land Use Regulations.

**Action Items:**

- 6.7.1. Review Zoning districts throughout the county to ensure that incompatible land uses are not located in close proximity.
- 6.7.2. Establish standards in the land use regulations for special events and other uses with potential impacts on neighboring property owners.
- 6.7.3 Review and update Planned Unit Development and other overlay districts.

**Policy 6.8** – Where it can be calculated that the cost of providing public facilities and services to new development exceeds the amount the development contributes in taxes for such facilities and services, collect impact fees to make up the difference.

**Action Items:**

- 6.8.1. Review and update the road impact fee schedule.
- 6.8.2. Conduct impact fee studies for other items, such as open space and public safety services.

**Policy 6.9** – The County should take an active role in conserving open lands, while continuing to cooperate with organizations that pursue acquisition or donation of conservation easements/development rights.

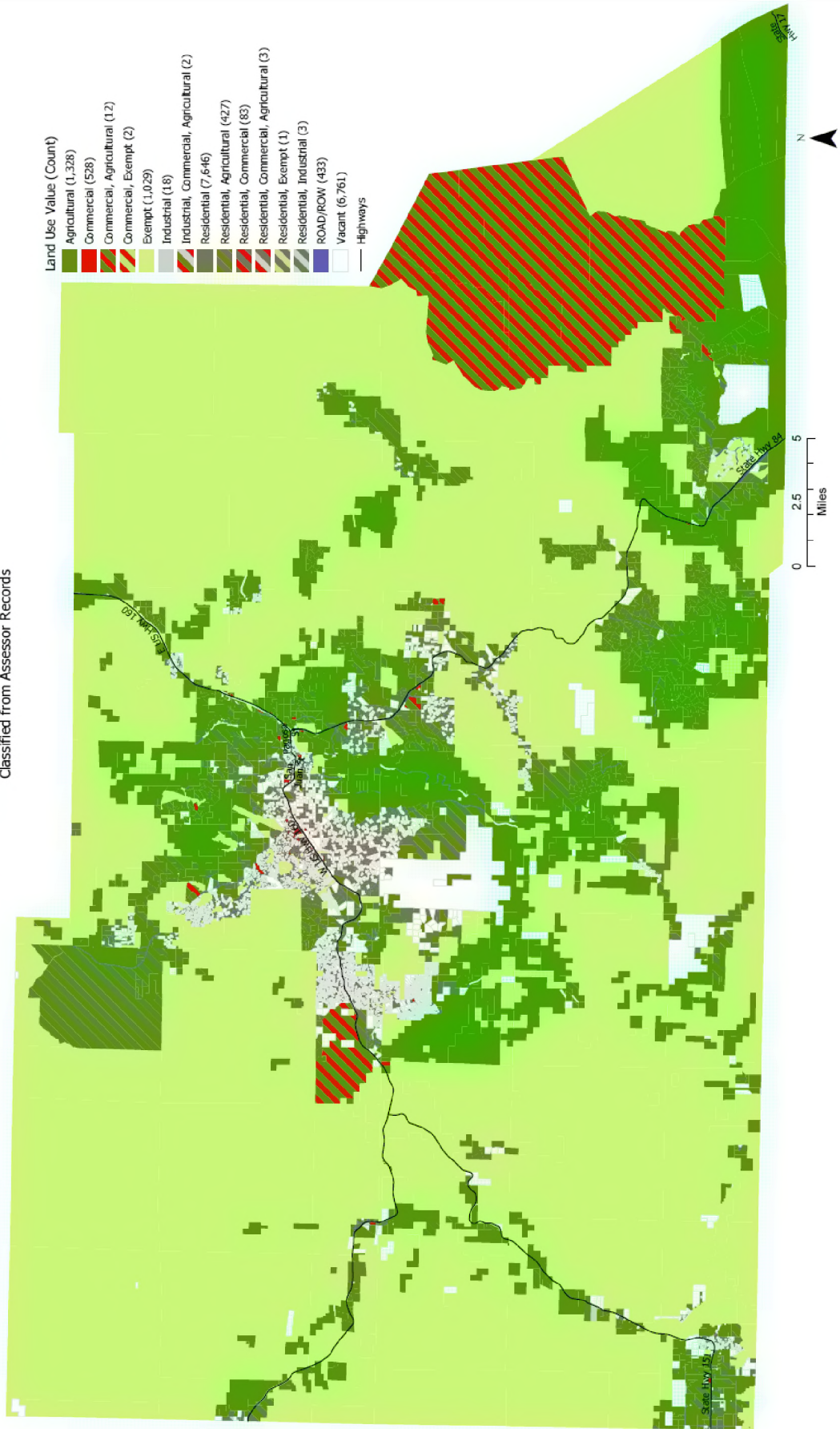
**Action Items:**

- 6.9.1. Establish an open space acquisition program (to purchase land or conservation easements) that would aggressively pursue state, federal and private funding sources including GOCO, Land and Water Conservation Fund, private foundations, and other sources to assist in setting aside key open space parcels.
- 6.9.2. Establish a fund, paid for by local taxes, subject to voter approval, and supplemented by state/federal funds, to acquire conservation easements/development rights on key open space parcels.

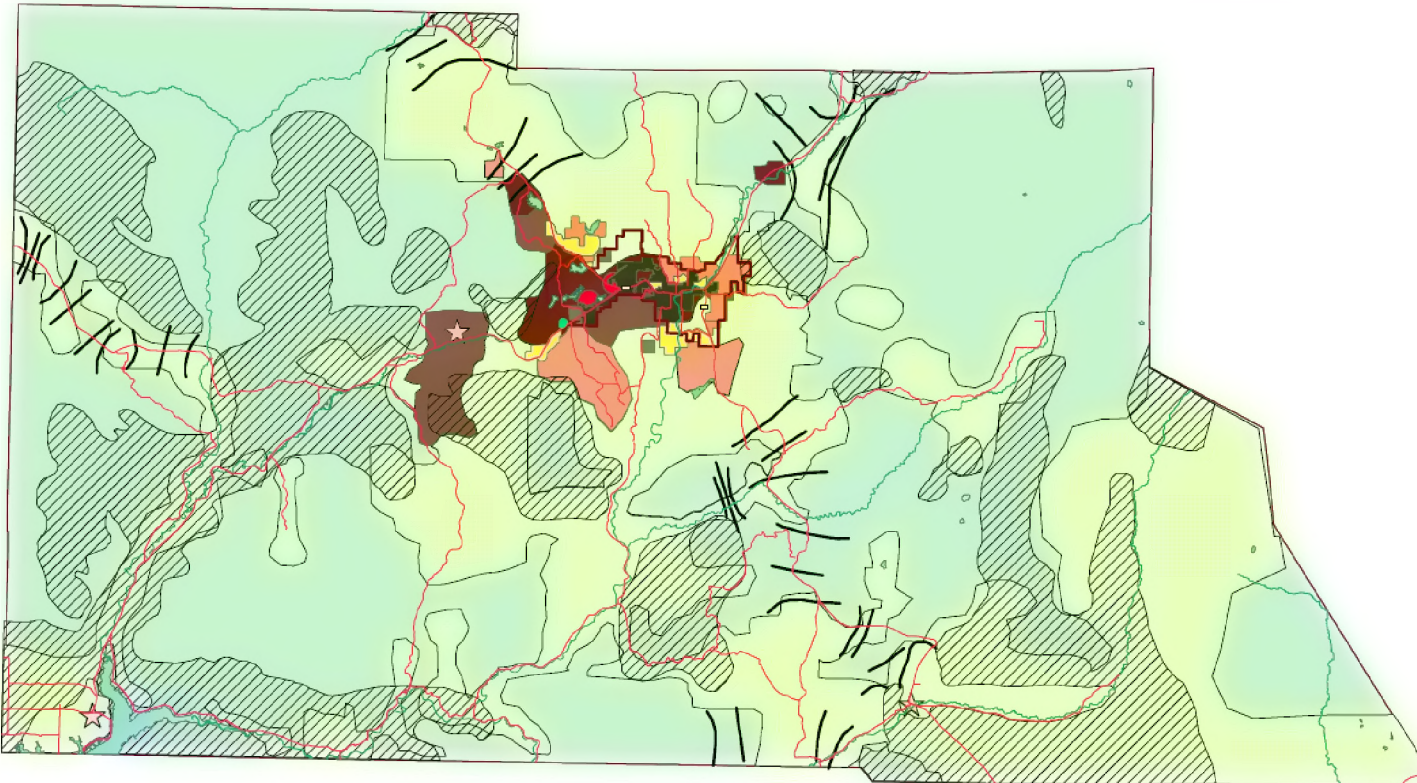
# Archuleta County Existing Land Use 2017

Classified from Assessor Records

Land Use Value (Count)	
	Agricultural (1,328)
	Commercial (528)
	Commercial, Agricultural (12)
	Commercial, Exempt (2)
	Exempt (1,029)
	Industrial (18)
	Industrial, Commercial, Agricultural (2)
	Residential (7,646)
	Residential, Agricultural (427)
	Residential, Commercial (83)
	Residential, Commercial, Agricultural (3)
	Residential, Exempt (1)
	Residential, Industrial (3)
	ROAD/ROW (433)
	Vacant (6,761)
	Highways



## Archuleta County Community Plan: Future Land Use Map



### Legend

- Major Roads
- Rivers & Streams
- Lakes
- Critical Wildlife Habitat
- Migration Corridor
- Joint Planning Area
- Pagosa (2009)
- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Industrial Park
- Commercial Area

### Future Landuse

- High density residential
- Medium density residential
- Low density residential
- Very low density residential
- Public land
- Village Center



Map developed 21 Sept 2011

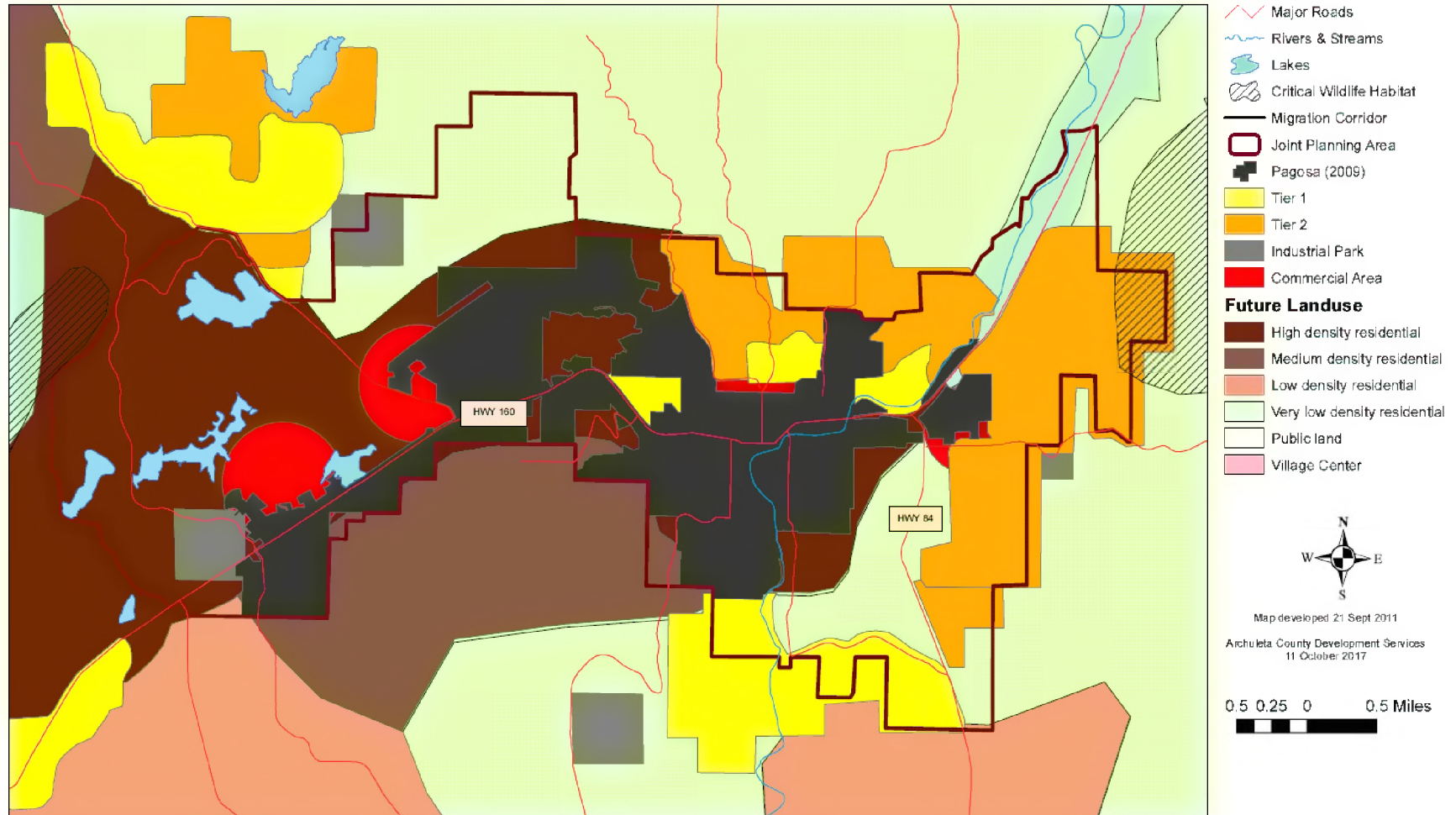
Archuleta County Development Services  
22 August 2017

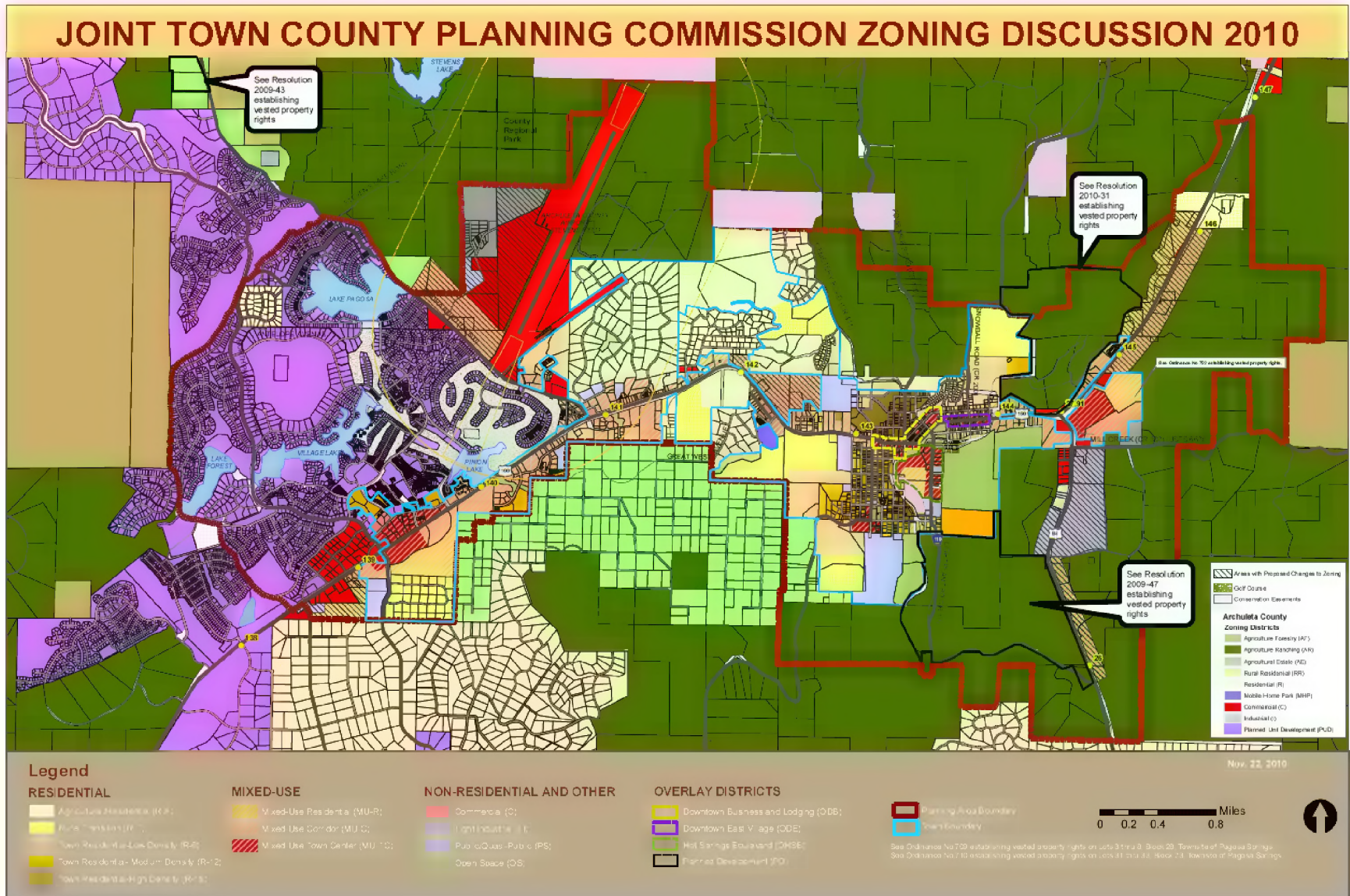
4 2 0 4 Miles



# Archuleta County Community Plan: Future Land Use Map

Pagosa Springs Area





## Chapter 7. Implementation

The 2001 *Community Plan* was developed over the course of a year, based on the community's experience with the 1996 *Master Plan*, and with extensive involvement by the community. The *Community Plan* is intended to be a comprehensive guide for residents, existing and future property owners, business owners, and public officials responsible for the future of the community. The plan has been reviewed and updated periodically, with formal amendments in 2006 and 2011, evolving into the document before us today. Although this plan was intended to provide general direction over 15 to 20 years, it is recommended that this plan be reviewed annually, and updated at least every 3 to 5 years.

The large number of citizens who participated in the public workshops for the 2001 *Community Plan* was a clear indication of public interest in the future of Archuleta County. Many citizens expressed concern about the best way to achieve the desired future conditions, especially since they believe that many undesired changes have already occurred. Many citizens expressed concern with the protection of existing private property rights as well. Good public policy helps achieve these goals—setting achievable objectives while also reassuring investment-backed expectations.

### Next Steps—Short-term Actions

The first action step to implement this plan is adoption by the Archuleta County Planning Commission and concurrence by the elected Board of County Commissioners, as set out by Colorado Statutes. One way to view this *Community Plan* is as a community “to-do checklist”, with 41 Policies and 116 Action Items to check off. Goals function as vision statements for desired future conditions and Policies set the context for that “checklist”.

During the initial plan process and subsequent reviews and updates, the public has had opportunities to provide input on priorities, which continues through the life of the plan. Development review and code enforcement implements the *Community Plan* on a day-to-day basis. After adoption of the plan update, the Planning Commission and County staff will review the *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations* and other County policies for specific updates. The Planning Commission and Staff continue to work on simplifying and clarifying the Land Use Regulations in response to issues that come up during development review. Among the first next steps will be a review the Future Land Use map and the Town's Three-Mile Plan, in cooperation with the Town of Pagosa Springs and service providers.

Certain initiatives are ripe for short-term action, generally within the next five years:

**7.1 Review, Update & Clarify Land Use Regulations.** In particular, Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Land Use Regulations can be more clear for both land owners and public officials. Planned Unit Development (PUD) and overlay district standards need revision to provide predictability to developers. Land Use Categories should be more general, and triggers to improve non-conforming “grandfathered” lots less stringent, in line with recent Board of Adjustment / Board of County Commissioners approvals. Subdivision standards and definitions should be reviewed in particular for Improperly Divided Parcels and buildable lots, New Minor Subdivisions, Plat Amendments, Exemptions from Subdivision Review, creation/vacation of road rights-of-way and access easements, and Lot Consolidations/Un-consolidations.

Policy 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7



**7.2 Implement Hazard Mitigation Plan.** This multi-jurisdictional plan is also being updated in 2017. The Planning Commission should consider, in particular, building code standards, wildland fire protection, and floodplain management (Section 10 of the Land Use Regulations).

Policy 2.5, 2.9

**7.3 Improve Broadband Access.** The Planning Commission and County staff will continue to support the grassroots working groups and private service providers working to improve telecommunications infrastructure, including adoption of a “Dig Once” policy. Standards for Commercial Mobile Radio Systems (CMRS) need to be reviewed for changes in technology and federal regulations as more service is provided by wireless facilities.

Policy 4.3, 5.2

**7.4 Conserve Agricultural & Open Lands.** Traditional farming and ranching and enjoyment of open spaces defines the community character of Archuleta County. The Planning Commission and staff will review the Land Use Regulations to consider how well existing Development Standards encourage conservation, with provisions made for ag processing and special events. The County can work with the Town to plan over the longer term for a more active role in promoting conservation easements and purchase or transfer of development rights.

Policy 3.7, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.9

**7.5 Conserve Wildlife Habitat (Animal & Plant).** Residents and visitors value the diverse wildlife and plant community in our mountain environment. The recent listing of the Pagosa Skyrocket under the Endangered Species Act highlights the need to better incorporate preservation of wildlife habitat in all aspects of County policy and development review.

Policy 2.1, 2.2, 2.7, 6.1

**7.6 Economic Development & Affordable Housing.** As discussed in Chapter 4, housing is a function of both demand and supply. Economic development works to improve local wages. Housing policy works to encourage affordable and attainable housing supply. Infrastructure also significantly limits potential increases in density. The Planning Commission and staff will work with the formal and ad hoc groups working on these concerns in the county.

Policy 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5

Staff has identified certain critical revisions to sections of the Land Use Regulations, such as the Sign Code, necessary to meet changes in statutes and case law. Other action items identified in public comments include affordable housing, water planning, impact fees, oil & gas, outdoor lighting, preventing sprawl, and continued coordination between local governments. The Town and County may also need to go beyond incremental review of the Three-Mile Plan to better harmonize zoning and development standards. Some of these action items can be accomplished by local volunteers, elected officials and staff working together; others will require investments in outside expertise or additional staff to have meaningful effect.

Public involvement process does not end with the adoption of the *Community Plan*. The evaluation and subsequent adoption of the implementation strategies and tools will also include significant public involvement. On certain topics of interest, formal or informal task forces, focus groups and public workshops can add insight and advice for community leaders.



## **Next Steps—Long-term Actions**

Review, preparation and adoption of regulations, design guidelines, and development standards, which are called for in many of the action items contained in the plan, will take some time to accomplish. County leadership and staff will continue to be involved in multi-jurisdictional development issues, such as affordable housing, natural resources and water planning. The plan also calls for the creation of a separate long-range Transportation Plan, including impact fee policies.

Public comments expressed during the *Community Plan* process and updates highlight the diversity of values, issues and needs throughout Archuleta County. During the 2001 process, members of the public indicated an interest in regional planning districts or sub-area plans to be developed in Archuleta County. Future regional plans could be developed within the policy framework established in this *Community Plan*. A major revision of the *Community Plan* should be considered within the next decade to keep the plan relevant to the citizens of Archuleta County.

In the short- and long-term, this Community Plan can be used by County and Town boards and commissions, department heads, residents and business owners, to:

- Provide a framework for planning the future of Archuleta County.
- Guide decision-making in subdivision, conditional use and site plan reviews.
- Serve as a basis for responding to adjoining County, Federal or State project requests.
- Present a framework for updating the County's existing Land Use Regulations.
- Supply data and solutions to planning issues.
- Recommend future planning studies to be carried out.
- Assist in the development of a capital projects budget and program.
- Direct the formulation of departmental policies and strategies.

## **Community Plan Minor Amendments**

As the community moves into the future, it may be necessary to make changes to the policies outlined in the Plan to reflect the current desires of the public and to meet community needs. Colorado Revised Statutes §30-28-108 states that the Planning Commission “may amend, extend or add to the Plan or carry any part of it into greater detail from time to time.” A process for Minor Amendments to the *Community Plan* was adopted by the Planning Commission in 2007.

Minor Amendments may be requested by Staff or an Applicant in conjunction with Development Review, to address potential clarifications in policy or the Future Land Use Map. Proposed Minor Amendments to the Plan may be approved if the Planning Commission finds the proposal meets all of the following criteria:

- The proposed amendment is compatible with the surrounding area.
- The amendment will not create a burden on existing infrastructure or available utilities.
- The amendment will assist in promoting the existing policies of the Plan.
- The amendment will address changing conditions of the area.
- The amendment will meet defined needs for the community.
- The amendment will bring the Plan into conformance with the Desired Future Conditions outlined in the Community Plan, or other related goals and policies.

Minor amendments to the *Community Plan* in relation to a current subdivision proposal will be heard during the Sketch Plan phase. Where a rezoning request is in conflict with the *Community Plan*, requests for minor amendments must be heard prior to approval of such request. Requests for minor amendments may be approved, modified, or denied entirely. Proposed minor amendments will be heard by the Planning Commission at a duly noticed public hearing. Any approved amendments to the Community Plan will be forwarded in a timely manner to the Board of County Commissioners.

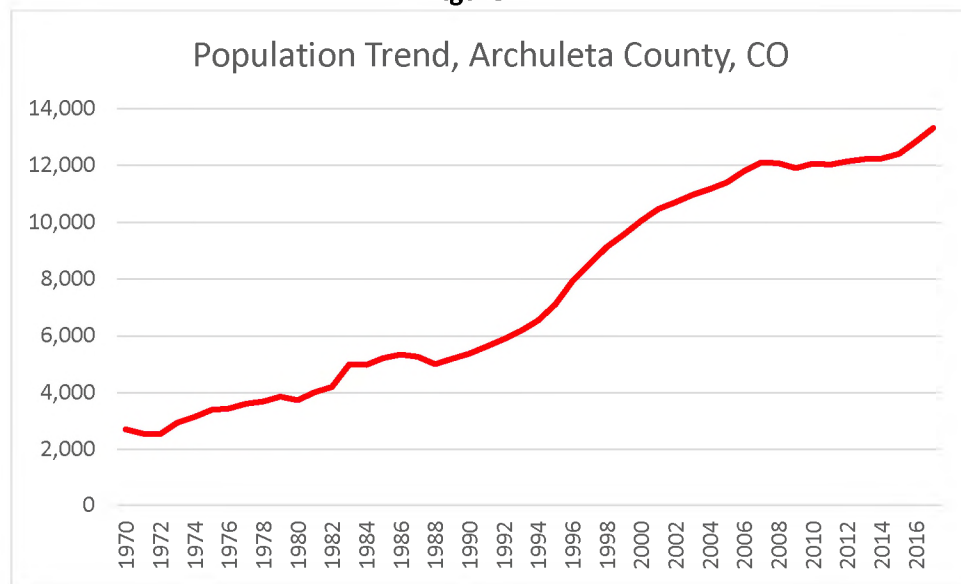
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## Appendices

### Appendix A. Community Profile

Archuleta County, Colorado, is home to approximately 13,765 people (US Census 2018), who occupy about 9,121 housing units (ACS 2017<sup>1</sup>) along with the many second-home owners and tourists who visit the greater Pagosa Springs area each year. Several chapters of this plan discussed demographic and economic trends in greater detail. This Appendix is intended to provide useful descriptive data and information, and summarize socio-economic data available from federal, state and local public data sources, for regular, easy updates.

Figure A-1



Source: <https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/births-deaths-migration/data/components-change/>

### Population

Archuleta County has experienced long periods of stable population with short spurts of fast growth, especially with the expansion of tourism after the 1970s.

- Archuleta County grew by 8.5% annually from 1990 to 2000, the 5<sup>th</sup> fastest-growing county in Colorado and 14<sup>th</sup> nationwide.
- Archuleta County had 9,898 residents in the year 2000 Census, including 1,540 residents in the Town of Pagosa Springs.
- Archuleta County had 12,084 in the 2010 Census, with 1,727 in the Town.
- After a period of stable population during the Great Recession, Archuleta County returned to growth in 2016 as the 4<sup>th</sup> fastest-growing county in the state and one of the top in the nation again, adding population at a 3.8% rate over 2015, according to US Census Bureau and Colorado Demographer estimates. Growth continued in 2017, number 21 by absolute population gain and the 4<sup>th</sup> highest growth rate in the state.

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) five-year moving average.

- The Town of Pagosa Springs, at an estimated 1,838 full-time residents, grew by 4.4% from 2016 to 2015, among the top 20 fastest-growing places in Colorado.

<b>Table A-1: Historical Population</b>							
	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950
Archuleta County	826	2,117	3,302	3,590	3,204	3,806	3,030
Town of Pagosa Springs		367	669	1,032	804	1,591	1,379
	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Archuleta County	3,030	2,629	2,733	3,664	5,345	9,898	12,084
Town of Pagosa Springs	1,379	1,374	1,360	1,331	1,207	1,591	1,727
Source: Colorado State Demographer's Office							

<b>Table A-2: Population Age Distribution</b>		
Archuleta County	2010	2016
0-24	26%	24%
25-64	57%	54%
65+	18%	22%
Median Age	48.2	50.1
State of Colorado		
0-24	34%	33%
25-64	55%	54%
65+	11%	13%
Median Age	36.1	36.9
Source: Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.		

Analysis by Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. found that Archuleta County's number of households (distinct from housing units) has grown faster than the overall population, increasing from 3,980 households in 2000 to 5,267 in 2010 and an estimated 5,454 in 2016. Average household size decreased slightly, then, to 2.25.

- The State Demographer estimated 448 more people moved into Archuleta County than moved out in 2017, compared to net migration of 114 in 2015.
- The State Demographer estimated 136 births and 107 deaths in 2017, for positive natural population change. Births peaked in 2007 at 150.

- The IRS reported that 292 households moved out of Archuleta County in 2015, and 340 moved in (County-to-County Migration Flow, net number of tax returns, Statistics of Income 2016). Almost all migration in and out of the county was domestic (from one state to another).

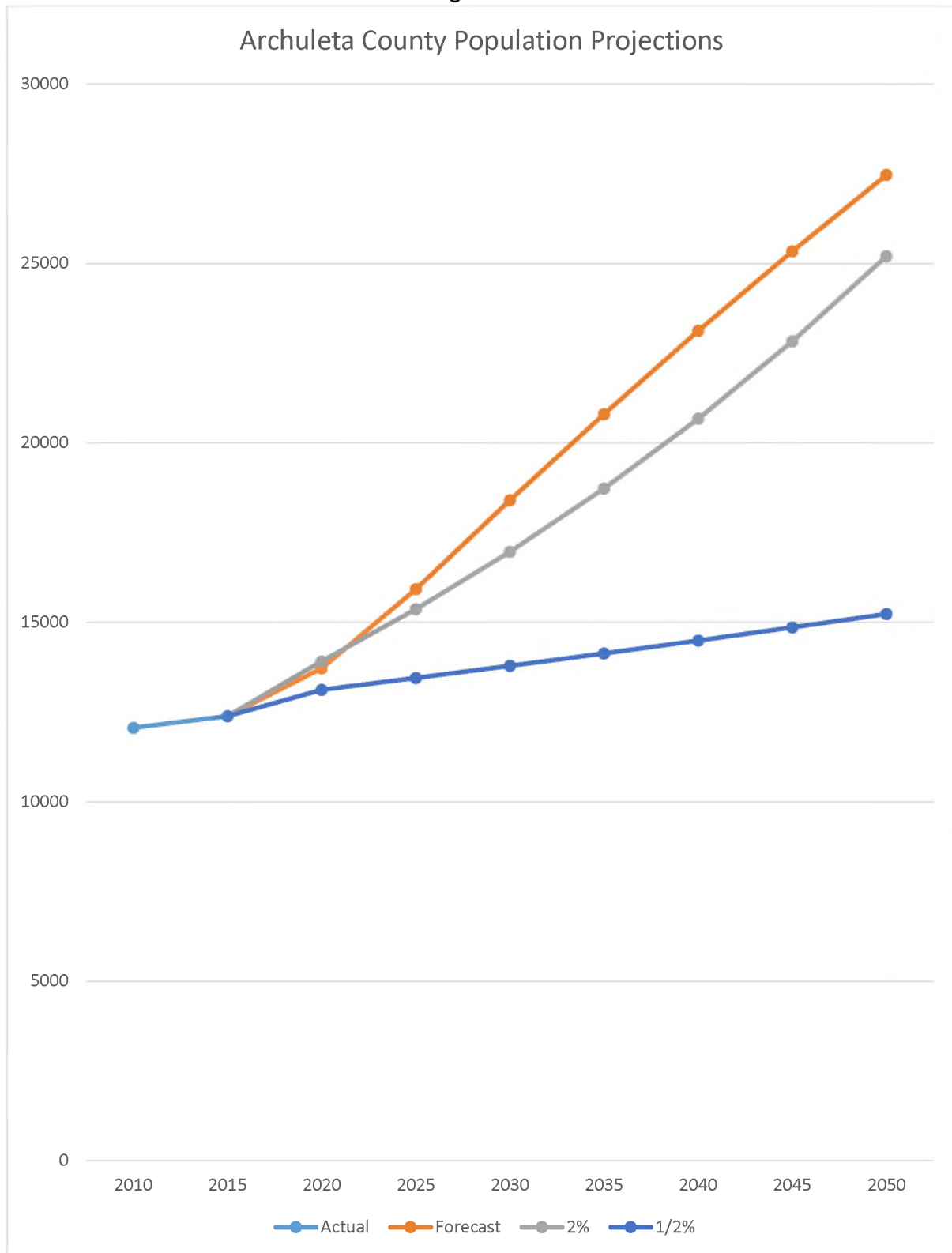
The American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that 88.4% of Archuleta County's population identifies as White, 2.8% American Indian, 1.2% Asian, and 1% Black—18.5% self-identify as Hispanic of any race. (It should be noted that these ACS figures are a 2011-2015 rolling average from a small sample, with margins of error of 0.2% to 2.6% for Race categories).

Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. estimated the median age of Archuleta County residents at 50.1 years old in 2016, compared to 36.9 years in Colorado overall. The US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) estimated the County's median age as 49.6 (2011-2015 rolling average). The median age reflects the county's attractiveness as a location for active retirees, yet also may indicate the difficulty of younger families to find affordable housing.

The Growing Water Smart work group (GWSWG) was formed in February 2018, following attendance at a Sonoran Institute grant-funded workshop in September 2017, by 7 individuals representing public organizations in our community. The workshop generally focused on the sustainability of water resources and inclusion of water into planning documents and application processes. The GWSWG decided and has been focused on analyzing and recommending a base set of growth projection ranges specific for our community. The Chairman of the Archuleta County Planning Commission participated in the workshop and subsequent work sessions, along with representatives of the Board of County Commissioners, the Town of Pagosa Springs, San Juan Water Conservancy District, Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District, Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association and the Fire District.

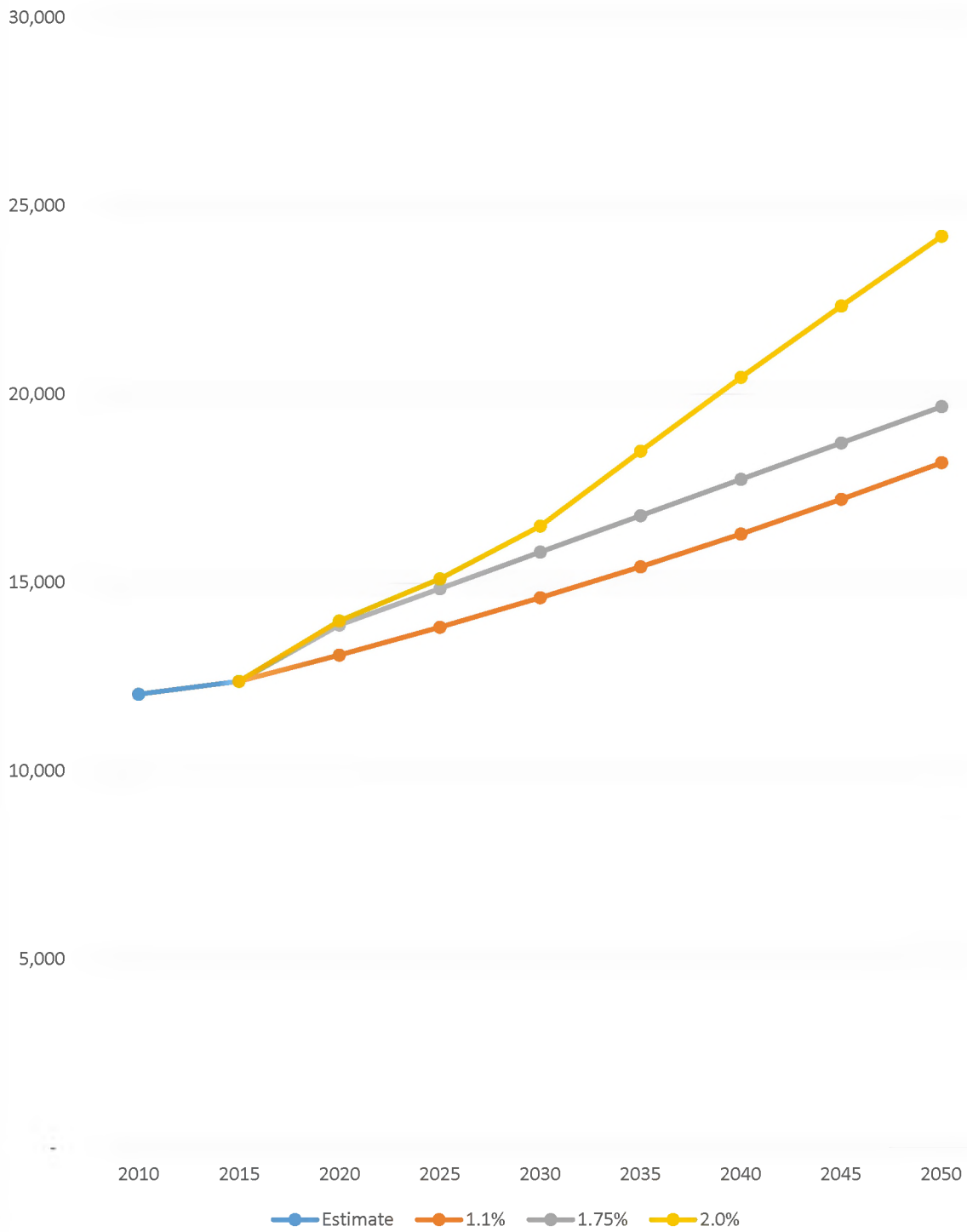
On May 21, 2019, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a Letter of Intent "Adopt the common growth projection range predicted through 2050, for each organization's use for their individual future planning efforts which is attached." The letter also agreed to "Participate in an update to the growth projection range analysis in 2021 following the completion and availability of the 2020 Census data."

Figure A-2



Source: Colorado State Demography Office and Archuleta County Development Services

**Figure A-2a**  
Growing Water Smart  
Archuleta County Growth Projections



Source: RPI Consulting

The Colorado State Demographer projects that Archuleta County's population will reach 20,000 in the next twenty years and top 27,000 by the year 2050, with an annual average growth rate topping out above 3% around 2025 moderating to 1.5%.<sup>2</sup>

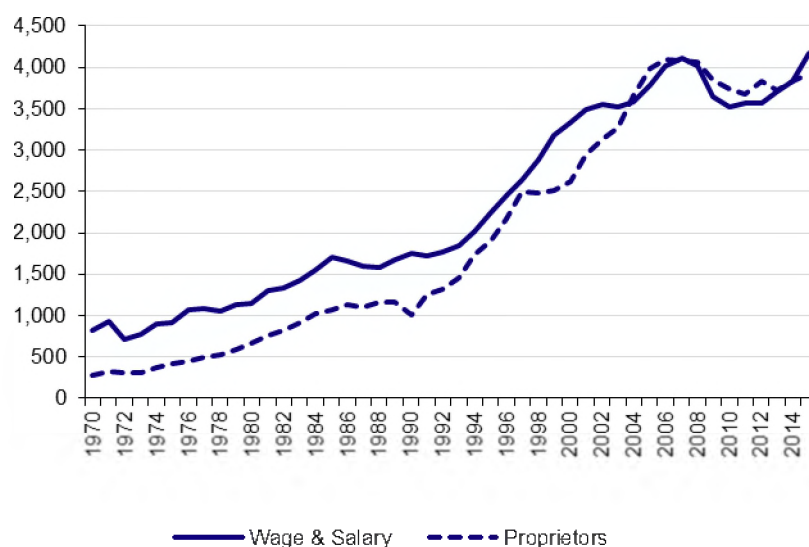
- While these figures may seem overly optimistic, the probability is high that the County's population will double over the next generation.
- A straight-line projection of 2% average annual growth in population would reach 20,000 residents about the year 2040 and 25,000 by 2050.
- Cutting that growth rate to ½ of a percent still raises the population to 15,000 in 30 years.

## Employment

Employment in Archuleta County grew from 2000-2007, reaching a peak of 8,189 jobs, then contracted during the Great Recession. The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) reports employment of 8,085 in 2015, with about 50% single-proprietors (self-employed) and the other half wage and salary jobs.

**Figure A-3**

Components of Employment, Archuleta County, CO



Source: Headwaters Economics Economic Profile System (EPS)

BEA counted over 4,000 wage and salary jobs in 2015. Proprietor employment has grown more rapidly since 2000. About 22% of local employment is in goods-producing (non-services related) sectors such as Farming, Forestry, Mining, Construction and Manufacturing, down from 26% in 2001.

<sup>2</sup> <https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/>



<b>Table A-3: Employment by Sector</b>				
NAICS	2001	2010	2016	Change 2001-16
10 Natural Resources & Mining	78	47	45	(33)
20 Construction	436	188	268	(168)
30 Manufacturing	40	64	151	111
40 Trade, Transport & Utilities	133	124	120	(13)
50 Information	75	64	63	(11)
55 Financial Activities	271	260	299	29
60 Professional/Bus. Services	175	235	244	69
65 Education & Health Services	435	435	596	161
70 Retail, Leisure & Hospitality	1,258	1,295	1,595	337
80 Other services	120	135	141	21
90 Government	292	395	525	233
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,312</b>	<b>3,241</b>	<b>4,048</b>	
Source: Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.				

Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. analyzed Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data, counting 4,048 jobs in 2016.

- The Retail, Leisure, and Hospitality sector currently makes up the largest share of local employment, followed by Education and Health Services.
- Retail & Hospitality jobs—consistently about 40% of the local market—are often part-time without benefits and typically pay much less than average wages.
- Manufacturing employment has grown substantially, but not enough to make up for contraction in Construction—over half of Construction jobs have been lost from the peak of the 1990s building boom.

The BLS offers more detailed tables online for the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).<sup>3</sup> A Location Quotient (LQ) compares the share of local employment or wages to the United States overall, and can identify areas where the local economy is more competitive than average. Archuleta County's highest LQs for high-level categories with annual average employment in 2016 over 100 include:

- Real Estate (NAICS 53) at 3.23
- Accommodation and Food Service (NAICS 72) at 1.98
- Retail Trade (NAICS 44-45) at 1.74
- Construction (NAICS 23) at 1.35

By contrast, categories with low LQs may provide opportunities to expand local employment. In 2016, the larger sectors with over 100 employees included:

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/cew/>

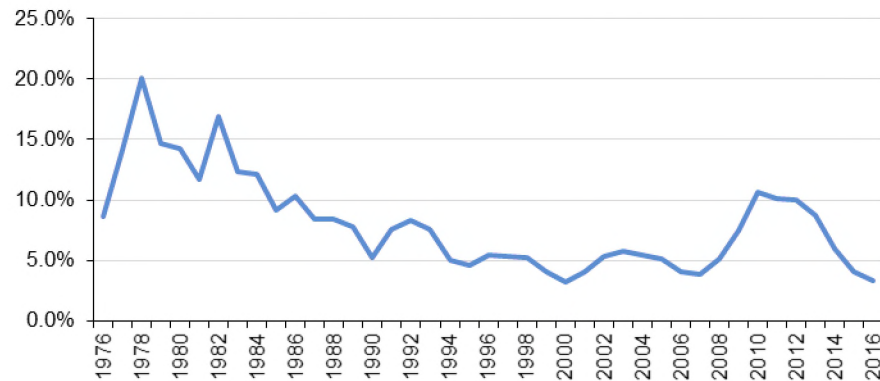
- Professional and Technical Services (NAICS 54) at 0.46
- Administrative Services (NAICS 54) at 0.46
- Manufacturing (NAICS 31-32) at 0.42

<b>Table A-4: Top Employers, 2016</b>	
	# Jobs
Upper San Juan Hosptial District	250
School District 50 JT	214
Walmart	157
Archuleta County	150
Visiting Angels of the Southwest	131
Springs Resort	125
City Market	107
Source: Region 9 Economic Snampshot 2017	

As in many rural communities, local government and schools tend to be the largest employers. The Upper San Juan Hospital District has the most employees in Archuleta County, according to a 2016 survey by Region 9 Economic Development District, with recent expansions at Pagosa Springs Medical Center likely boosting that figure even higher.

**Figure A-4**

Average Annual Unemployment Rate, Archuleta County, CO



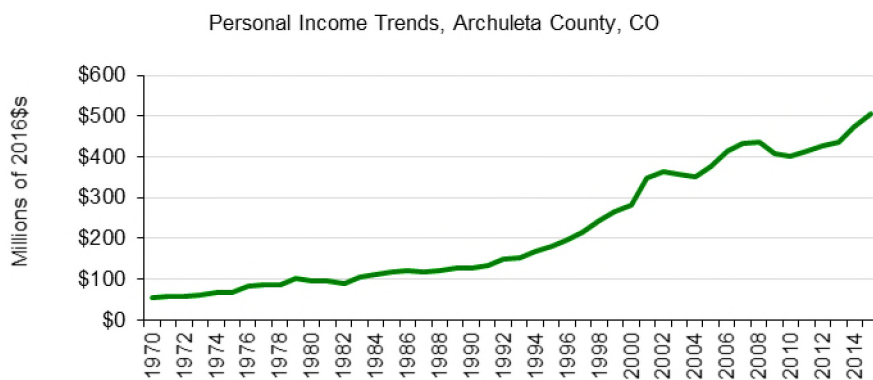
Source: Headwaters Economics Economic Profile System (EPS)

Average annual unemployment was 3.3% in 2016, for the State and the County. While local labor markets follow seasonal tourism demand, overall employment trends in Archuleta County have become more similar to Colorado statewide.

## Income

From 1970 to 2015, personal income grew from \$55.4 million to \$504.3 million (in real terms), an 811% increase. Wage and salary earnings and supplements amounted to about \$174 million in 2015, and proprietors' income of \$79 million.

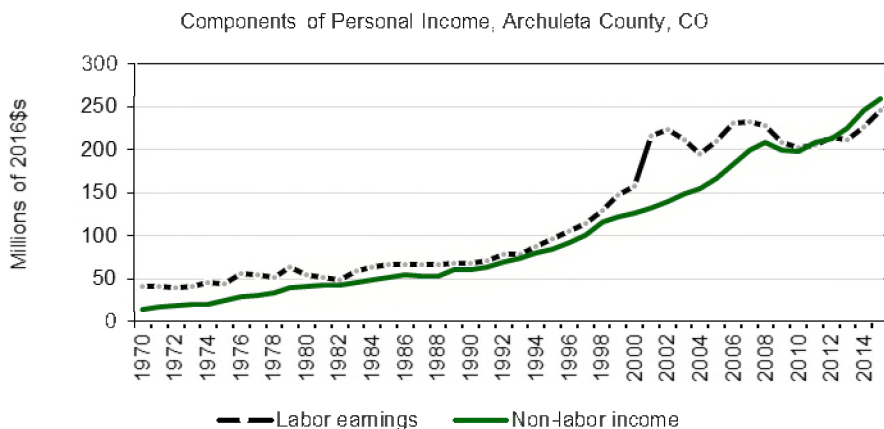
**Figure A-5**



Source: Headwaters Economics Economic Profile System (EPS)

Since 1970, labor earnings have grown 496%, while non-labor income grew 1,725% which includes transfer payments such as Social Security and Medicaid/Medicare, and Dividends, Interest and Rent.

**Figure A-6**



Source: Headwaters Economics Economic Profile System (EPS)

Even with substantial transfer payments coming in from outside the area, Archuleta County has lower than average income compared to state and national benchmarks.

- In 2015, Per Capita Income (PCI) was \$40,307 in Archuleta County, \$50,899 in Colorado and \$48,112 in the United States overall (Bureau of Economic Analysis). While Archuleta County's

PCI grew faster than average from 2014-2015, the County still ranked #37 of 62 counties in the state, just below Gilpin County and just ahead of Morgan County.

- Median Household Income in Archuleta County stood at \$50,361 in 2015, below the figure of \$63,945 for Colorado overall (Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.).
- Analysis by Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. found average wages have increased about 2.2% per year since 2001, but the Retail & Hospitality sector with almost 40% of all jobs still offers the lowest average wages.

## *Appendices*

### **Appendix B. Planning Process, Definitions and Terms**

The *Archuleta County Community Plan* serves as a general vision for the future of our community. This plan tells the story of what we could become, and what we are willing to do to get there. State statutes provide requirements for Statutory Counties to engage in comprehensive planning, which guides future development and redevelopment—including both subdivision and zoning regulations—to promote the public health, safety, and welfare.<sup>4</sup>

A comprehensive plan is typically an advisory document<sup>5</sup>, providing the basis for specific regulations, evaluating development proposals and guiding project review recommendations. The plan serves as the foundation for intergovernmental agreements and detailed studies and programs. The plan provides supporting documentation to guide grant applications for community development projects. The plan is also used to guide residents, property owners, and the development community concerning land use planning in Archuleta County. The plan is broad in scope and does not typically address individual parcels; it should be interpreted to apply generally to all properties in Archuleta County.

The plan recognizes that protection of individual property rights is a fundamental legal and philosophical principle of the nation, the State of Colorado, and Archuleta County. However, the plan also recognizes a common vision, expressed by county residents at 22 public workshops in 2000 and 2001, and during subsequent reviews, to preserve community character and environmental and scenic qualities, while enhancing economic opportunities and creating a more diverse economy. The plan attempts to strike an appropriate balance between the unrestrained exercise of individual property rights and achieving the common vision.

The belief that property rights means, “I can do whatever I please with my private property” must be qualified, by considering the impact of one owner’s exercise of his property rights on the rights of other property owners. In short, one person’s unrestrained exercise of property rights can have the effect of “taking” property values from other owners.

“Where my property rights end, and where yours begin” should be a key consideration in the formulation of any new regulations. Property values are enhanced by a level of regulation and public investment that protects the attractiveness, and supports the development potential, of private property. There is also a point at which over-regulation and excessive public costs can diminish property values. There is an optimal level of regulation and public investment that maximizes property values. This should be the goal of the citizens of Archuleta County.

This community plan contains various elements that address the interrelationships between the physical layout of a community, public facilities, the provision of government services, and preservation of community character. The plan establishes a framework for managing new growth in a manner that attempts to preserve quality of life while fostering or enhancing a healthy economy.

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<sup>4</sup> CRS §§30-28-101 *et. seq.*

<sup>5</sup> Previously, Colorado State Statutes limited a comprehensive plan to advisory status; however, the specific restriction (CRS §30-28-106(3)(XI)(F)(f) ) has been deleted.

## Creating the Plan

Planning is a process—the process is as or more important than the final document. The 2001 *Community Plan* was built on the basis of Master Plans adopted in 1990 and 1997, and by engaging the public with the Steering Committee, 22 public workshops, collection and analysis of socio-economic data; developing a vision statement and desired future conditions for each planning element; development of alternative growth management scenarios; selection of a preferred growth scenario; and drafting the final comprehensive plan.

The 2001 *Community Plan* was updated in 2008 to add Urban Service Areas to the Future Land Use Map, and in 2011 to add the Joint Influence Area and the “Joint Town County Planning Commission Zoning Discussion 2010” map related to the Town of Pagosa Springs’ Three-Mile Plan. Beginning in 2016, the Planning Commission began a comprehensive staff-level review of the *Community Plan*, re-organizing the chapters and clarifying Policies and Action Items to make the plan more current and useful.

**Engaging the Public** - Citizen participation in the planning process was encouraged throughout the initial study. Three primary methods were used to solicit public input: meetings with the Steering Committee, public workshops, and written comments.

The Steering Committee consisted of 13 citizens appointed by the County Commissioners, representing various geographic areas of the county. This committee functioned as the primary working-level citizen’s group, providing detailed comments on consultant presentations and on information that was presented to the public.

Three series of public workshops were held to solicit public input during the early, middle, and late phases of the planning process. The purpose of the first series of workshops was to identify issues, concerns, and special values, and to facilitate the development of a long-range vision. Several questions were asked to stimulate a discussion about the county’s future:

- What do you like about Archuleta County and what would you like to retain?
- What do you dislike about Archuleta County and what would you like to change?
- What is the appropriate balance between catering to tourists and making room for newcomers and maintaining the quality of life and culture that have been part of the area’s heritage for the past century?

Eight workshops were held throughout the county during a two-week period in February 2000. Each meeting was targeted to a particular geographic area, although everyone was invited. The meetings were held at:

- Chromo, for the southeastern part of the county.
- County Fairgrounds (two meetings: one for the northeastern part of the county; and one for the eastern part of the county).
- Chimney Rock area, for the northwestern part of the county.
- Arboles, for the southwestern part of the county.
- Pagosa Lakes.
- Pagosa Springs.
- Pagosa High School (for the entire Junior and Senior classes).

About 860 people attended the first series of workshops in February 2000, including about 230 students at the high school workshop. The total number of participants did not include Steering Committee members, county and town staff, County Commissioners, and County Commissioner candidates.

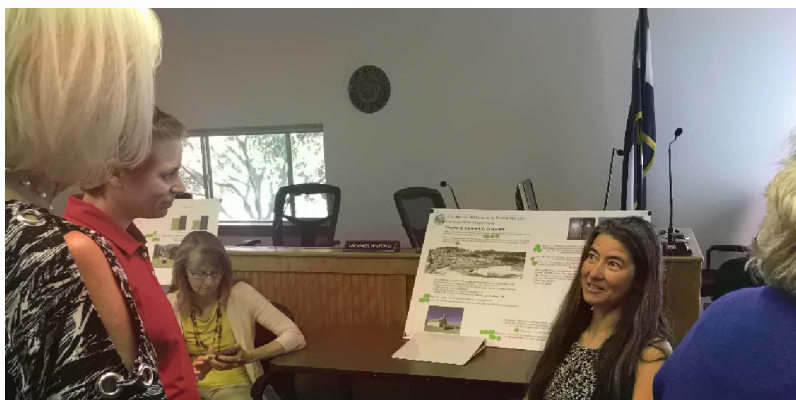
At the second series of public workshops, held in May 2000, for the seven geographic regions, four alternative growth scenarios with accompanying maps and policies were presented. The alternative growth scenarios are summarized in Chapter 6. At each of the workshops, small group discussions were facilitated to examine and debate various policy options in detail. The results of these discussions were then summarized when the workshop participants reconvened into one large group. About 250 people attended the second series of workshops, (not including Steering Committee members, county and town staff, County Commissioners, and County Commissioner candidates).

The Draft Community Plan was presented at the third series of public workshops, also held for the seven geographic regions in September 2000. About 265 people attended the third series of workshops, (again, not including Steering Committee members, county and town staff, County Commissioners, and County Commissioner candidates).



*2000 Community Meetings*

In May 2017, County Planning Commission members participated in the Town of Pagosa Springs' Smart Growth America community planning workshop, which was awarded in a national competition. The Planning Commission then held a Public Open House in June 2017, for discussion of proposed updates to Goals, Policies and Action Items, and to take suggestions for implementation. The Board of County Commissioners and Planning Commission also held a joint workshop to review the update.



*2017 Community Meeting*

**Collection and Analysis of Data** - Existing information and studies were reviewed and analyzed in 2000 and 2001, and updated during subsequent reviews. Data was obtained from interviews with key individuals as well as written reports. Consultants also conducted field studies of scenic corridors and existing land use. An existing land use map was prepared which delineated parcels according to the types of existing land uses, and tables were created summarizing the data. In 2016 and 2017, data was updated from sources such as Region 9 Economic Development District, the Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. Housing Needs study, and Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System.

**Vision Statement and Desired Future Conditions** - Based on input obtained from the first series of public workshops, the vision statement developed for the 1997 Master Plan was modified slightly, and statements of desired future conditions for each planning element were written. While the vision statement is broad and general, statements of desired future conditions reflect more specific values, issues, and concerns. Desired future conditions, often called goals, are defined as long-term ideals or end products that are desired. Since they are ideals, desired future conditions are rarely fully achieved. Statements of desired future conditions are derived from citizens' expressions of special values, issues, concerns, and needs stated or implied at the public workshops.

### **VISION STATEMENT**

Archuleta County should retain its outstanding scenic and natural qualities while providing quality employment, housing, education, and recreation to its residents. Tourism, recreation, and agriculture will remain major segments of the economy, but attempts will be made to diversify and encourage other types of economic development. The majority of youth should be able to have a career and eventually raise a family without being forced to leave. A healthy and vibrant community will continue to evolve and the rural character and small town atmosphere will be preserved.

**Policies and Action Items** - Desired future conditions are achieved by developing and implementing policies that provide guidance to county officials as well as individuals and businesses that present development proposals for approval.

- A policy is defined as a statement describing the general philosophy that guides decision making consistent with achieving a desired future condition.
- An action item is defined as a specific step that should be accomplished to implement a given policy.

As noted above, Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) §§30-28-101 *et. seq.* provide for County Planning. Statutes require that the plan make recommendations for the development of the county, and may be made binding by inclusion in adopted land use regulations.



CRS §30-28-106(3) suggest a master plan should include topics such as:

- Location and extent of roads, rights-of-way, and other transportation plans.
- Location and extent of public places or facilities, including public schools, historic sites, airports, forests, parks, open space and trails.
- Location and extent of an adequate and suitable supply of water, in consultation with entities that supply water.
- Provisions for change of use of any public ways, including coordination with other counties.
- Assurance of access to solar, wind or other alternative energy sources.
- Location and extent of community centers, townsites and housing developments.
- Location and extent of forests, agricultural areas, flood control, and other conservation areas.
- Land classification (land use designations).
- Projections of population growth and housing needs.
- Location of areas of steep slopes, geological hazards, endangered species, wetlands, flood risks, highly erodible land and wildfire hazards.
- Coordination of mass transportation.
- Plans for extraction of commercial mineral deposits.
- Plans for development of drainage basis.
- Consideration of the availability of affordable housing.
- Designation of utility corridors.

Policies and action items are presented in each chapter arranged by planning elements, such as Our Natural Environment or Our Built Environment. In the 2017 update, the Planning Commission reviewed each policy and action item and updated many based on over 15-years' experience with this plan and 10-years' experience with the *Archuleta County Land Use Regulations*.

**Development of Alternative Growth Scenarios** - Four alternative growth scenarios were developed in 2000-2001, with maps and policy options, and presented to the Steering Committee and then to the public at the second series of public workshops for comment. The public was invited to indicate their preferences for growth scenarios and policies. One hundred thirty written responses were received.

Based on input from the Steering Committee, the second series of public workshops, and written comments, a preferred growth scenario and the draft future land use map were presented to the Steering Committee and then to the public at the third series of public workshops.

The Future Land Use Maps should be reviewed and updated regularly, along with the Town/County Three-mile Plan, as a basis for zoning and subdivision decisions.

## **Adoption**

The current *Archuleta County Community Plan* was adopted by the Upper San Juan Regional Planning Commission on March 21, 2001, and endorsed by the Archuleta County Board of County Commissioners on May 23, 2001. The plan was subsequently updated and amended.

State of Colorado statutes give primary responsibility for the plan to the Planning Commission. CRS §30-28-106(1) states:

It is the duty of a county planning commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the unincorporated territory of the county. When a county planning commission decides to adopt a master plan, the commission shall conduct public hearings, after notice of such public hearings has been published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in a manner sufficient to notify the public of the time, place, and nature of the public hearing, prior to final adoption of a master plan in order to encourage public participation in and awareness of the development of such plan and shall accept and consider oral and written public comments throughout the process of developing the plan.

The County Planning Commission will consider amendment of the plan by resolution, as provided in CRS §30-28-108. The Planning Commission will then certify a copy of the master plan to the Board of County Commissioners, for their consideration.