



La Plata County
Colorado

Board of County Commissioners

Julie Westendorff, Chair • Clyde Church, Vice Chair • Gwen Lachelt, Commissioner

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Durango, CO 81301
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February 5, 2019

Dear Residents of La Plata County:

The La Plata County Board of County Commissioners extends its sincere thanks to all residents who have volunteered their time to participate in the process of updating the County's Comprehensive Plan, including its localized District Plans and Maps. Your ideas and input are vital to the land use planning process. In particular, the organization and mobilization of coordinated volunteer efforts is commendable insofar as it furthers unity and efficiency in elected officials' and staff's collaboration with the public.

The Commissioners have been made aware of circumstances of public confusion surrounding some third-party volunteer organization and their role in the District Plan revision process. While some members and groups have assumed names and titles that suggest that they are officially affiliated with La Plata County government, they are not. This confusion has led some county residents to mistakenly believe that meetings hosted by the groups were official county meetings, that the leaders at the meetings were county government representatives and other misplaced assumptions.

To avoid confusion and its negative impacts on the public process, the Board wants to clarify that there are no official County positions specific to individual District Plans. Only the County Planning Department, the County Attorney and Planning Commission have authority from the Board of County Commissioners to process the Plans' updates.¹ While third-party organizations may play a role in helping like-minded residents to organize and present their input on the district plans, all county residents are encouraged to participate, whether as an individual or member of a group.²

The Board wants to emphasize that this advisement does not discourage residents from organizing to present a unified voice as the process continues. But individual residents should be aware that:

¹ For more information on the role of the Planning Commission in the preparation and adoption of the District Plans see the Policy Memorandum adopted by the Planning Commission at its December 6, 2018 meeting.

² *E.g.*, Resolution Nos. 1996-6 (Florida Road) and 1996-8 (Florida Mesa).

- leadership roles in these volunteer, third party organizations do not carry any delegation of authority from the Board of County Commissioners;
- only persons identifying themselves as Planning Department staff, County Attorney staff or Planning Commissioners have a County-appointed role in the District Plan updates. County staff will generally possess County issued identification;
- County-organized meetings will be advertised by the County Planning Department, and posted on the County website at http://www.lpcds.org/planning/land_use_codes_and_plans/district_plan_update.
- **all** residents of the County can, and are encouraged to, communicate their questions and/or positions about the District Plan update process directly to County staff, Planning Commissioners, or County Commissioners.

Again, we sincerely thank all the County’s residents who have devoted their time and energy to participating, either as individuals or through a volunteer organization, in the District Plan updates. And we encourage residents to continue their engagement as we try to update plans that are decades old. This is not a short or easy process, but it is one that will pay dividends for our community going forward.

Sincerely,
 LA PLATA COUNTY
 BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Julie Westendorff
 Chair

Clyde Church
 Vice-Chair

Gwen Lachelt
 Commissioner