Gilpin County Comprehensive Plan

Think Big to Stay Small: From Skepticism to Community Endorsement

2021 APA COLORADO ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Introduction
Live Poll

When was the last time you were in Gilpin County?

Response options:
- In the last month
- In the last year
- It’s been a couple years
- Never been

Poll done from conference app
Gilpin County is characterized by mountain panoramas

Once of Colorado’s smallest counties, it remains isolated with little tourism

Purpose of the county’s first Comprehensive Plan:
- Position the county for growth & development
- To create a FLUP informed by economic realities & supported by transportation strategies
- Revision of development regulations

Funded with a 50% DOLA grant contribution
Planning approach of:

INTEGRATION & COLLABORATION

- Integration of disciplines
- Collaboration between disciplines
- Collaboration between all role players
...make no small plans...

They have no magic to stir humanity’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized.
....Make big plans...

Aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical plan once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency...

Think big!

Daniel Burnham, Architect and City Planner
....Make big plans...

Aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical plan once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency...

Think big!

*Daniel Burnham, Architect and City Planner*
THINK BIG

to

STAY SMALL!

Commissioner Ron Engels, Gilpin County BoCC
Gilpin County
Comprehensive Plan Timeline

2020

Phase 1
Project Kickoff and Discovery

Phase 2
Establishing a Vision

Phase 3-4
Developing Plan Elements

Phase 5
Finalizing Plan and Reporting

*Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) and Planning Commission updated throughout
County Values

1. Collaborative
2. Responsive
3. Innovative
4. Respectful
5. Sustainable
6. Trustworthy
Quality of Life Survey

- Spring 2019: Gilpin County conducted a county-wide quality of life survey in partnership with the Center for Research & Public Policy

- The survey collected citizen input on the following:
  - Programs & Services
  - County Workforce
  - Community Needs
  - Economic Development & Housing
  - Emergency Planning
  - Taxation
Quality of Life Survey

- 75.4% stated that the highest-ranking goal was to secure a health care facility
- 72.7% willing to pay more in taxes to help secure a health care facility
- 56.8% supported higher density housing
- 77.8% agreed that Gilpin County should encourage business development
- 82.1% named grocery stores as a community need
Key Issues

- Economic Diversification
- Growth
- Rural Character
- Community Services
- Affordable Housing
Hopes & Objectives

What outcomes do you hope this project will achieve?

1. Preserving the rural mountain character of Gilpin County
2. Advancing policies for responsible economic and commercial development
3. Improving access to health care services
4. Improving access to fresh food and grocery stores
What do you envision Gilpin County being in 30 years?

1. An enclave for rural mountain living within an hour’s drive from the city

2. At the forefront of environmental sustainability policies and trends

3. One of the most economically diverse rural counties in Colorado

4. A model for affordable and accessible rural health care services
Must Haves

At a minimum, what must this comprehensive planning process achieve?

1. Develop a clear land use plan to guide zoning, development review, etc.

2. Develop a clear capital improvement and funding plan

3. Provide ample opportunities for community input

4. Develop a clear transportation plan
Common Ground Values

- Community Pride & Identity
- Collaboration & Inclusivity
- Economic Diversification
- Environmental Awareness
“Think Big to Stay Small.”
Gilpin County Commissioner, Ron Engles
Summary of Community Survey #2

Your favorite places
Summary of Community Survey #2

One place you would improve
Quantitative & Qualitative

- Community Workshops & Survey
- Analog & Digital Materials
- BoCC Presentations
- Planning Commission Meetings
- Interagency-Task Force Meetings
“High-quality mountain living that balances environmental sustainability & rural community values with economic diversification & resiliency.”
Glowing Mt. Evans, photo courtesy of Gilpin County resident Jason Kallen

Fiery Sunset, photo courtesy of Gilpin County resident Jason Kallen
Summertime View, photo courtesy of Gilpin County resident Jason Kallen

Artwork: Gilpin County resident Brian O'Donnell
How It Started
How It Finished

“It [the comprehensive planning process] provided us with a template for how to do large projects...”

Gilpin County BoCC, Chair, Linda Isenhart
FAQ: How was community input incorporated into the ultimate plan?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Values ...</th>
<th>... Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Pride and Identity:</strong> Preserving the rural mountain character + high-quality of life</td>
<td>Create a land use plan + codes/regulations to <strong>protect the community values</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Think Big about staying Small:</strong> Protecting our values requires strategic thinking + being prepared</td>
<td>Develop a roadmap that includes <strong>protective measures</strong> for all levels of growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration + Inclusivity:</strong> Community outreach and input are essential for the success of this plan</td>
<td>50+ interagency partners for existing &amp; future <strong>collaboration</strong>; <strong>Community-driven</strong> plan directly informed by 3 workshops; 3 surveys; and over 800 survey responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Diversification:</strong> Advancing policies for responsible economic + commercial development</td>
<td>Encourage <strong>low impact</strong> home occupations; improve <strong>telecommuting</strong> infrastructure and services; attract <strong>healthcare</strong> and <strong>food services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Awareness:</strong> At the forefront of environmental sustainability policies and trends</td>
<td><strong>Sustainability</strong> best practices and principles at the foundation of policies + future growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☐ **A Community-Driven Comprehensive Plan**
Gilpin County’s economy is largely centered around the cities of Black Hawk & Central City and their gaming economies.

The gaming industry generates significant income, employment, and tax revenue, but it has not stimulated much economic diversification.

The county’s small and dispersed population makes it difficult to attract or support businesses like healthcare providers, grocers, and banks, while raising the cost of providing services.

Setting the stage
Setting the stage

- County services financed through combination of sources
- Gaming taxes are the largest source of tax revenues and often account for 50 percent or more of annual tax receipts
- Property taxes account for the next largest share, but relatively low mill levy limits property tax revenue
- There is no county sales tax, limiting fiscal benefit of commercial development
- Low mill levy and no sales tax limit fiscal benefits to growth
- Gaming taxes make up difference between tax revenues from development and costs of County services
- If residential and commercial growth exceed growth in gaming taxes, the County will run a fiscal deficit
- Financially sustainable = growth in harmony with gaming revenues while reduce service costs of new development
Assessment Goals

- Assess how County’s revenues and taxes react to different growth and development patterns
- Evaluate three future land use scenarios representing possible outcomes for the County
- Use the analysis to help inform strategies to “Think big to stay small.”
Three population projections were developed using projections from the State Demographer’s office and discussions with County staff.

Commercial development projections are based on attracting businesses like a grocer, healthcare provider, and bank.

Budget analysis identified the fixed and variable revenues and costs associated with residential and commercial development.

### Gilpin County Population Projections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Status Quo</th>
<th>Middle Path</th>
<th>High Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2,785</td>
<td>2,785</td>
<td>2,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>2,794</td>
<td>3,248</td>
<td>3,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>2,842</td>
<td>3,711</td>
<td>4,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>2,835</td>
<td>4,174</td>
<td>5,674</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Gilpin County Development Projections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Status Quo</th>
<th>Middle Path</th>
<th>High Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>4,850,550</td>
<td>5,007,300</td>
<td>5,007,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,027,300</td>
<td>5,047,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,047,300</td>
<td>5,087,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,067,300</td>
<td>5,127,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

- The status quo could mean very little growth, with the State Demography Office projecting only a few hundred additional residents over the next three decades.

- Growth would be dispersed on previously platted parcels in rural areas of unincorporated parts of the County.

**Fiscal Impact: Status Quo**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Development Period</th>
<th>Cumulative Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2020 to 2030</td>
<td>2030 to 2040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Revenues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family (Low Density)</td>
<td>$0.09</td>
<td>$0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family (Medium Density)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family (High Density)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$0.09</td>
<td>$0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Expenditures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family (Low Density)</td>
<td>$0.27</td>
<td>$2.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family (Medium Density)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family (High Density)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$0.27</td>
<td>$2.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Surplus (Deficit)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family (Low Density)</td>
<td>$(0.18)</td>
<td>$(2.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family (Medium Density)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family (High Density)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$(0.18)</td>
<td>$(2.07)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Values for 2035 exclude construction use tax revenues to demonstrate the fiscal impact of those revenues.
Source: BBC Research & Consulting.
A middle path scenario could fall in the middle between status quo and substantial growth. The County could manage and benefit from this growth by zoning for denser residential and mixed-use development in villages or nodes accessible on the County’s main transportation arteries.

This type of development could bring some of the services residents would like to see, but less so than under the substantial growth scenario.
Substantial growth scenario driven by development in the growing Denver Metro area and finding creative solutions to alleviate current housing supply constraints leading to a doubling of the current County population over the next three decades.

Denser zoning for residential and mixed-use commercial space in villages accessible on the County’s main transportation arteries and sufficient population levels would attract more of the services residents would like to see.

### Fiscal Impact: Substantial Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Development Period</th>
<th>Cumulative Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2020 to 2030</td>
<td>2030 to 2040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Revenues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family (Low Density)</td>
<td>$3.53</td>
<td>$16.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family (Medium Density)</td>
<td>$1.18</td>
<td>$5.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family (High Density)</td>
<td>$0.90</td>
<td>$3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>$0.46</td>
<td>$1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$6.06</td>
<td>$27.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Expenditures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family (Low Density)</td>
<td>$10.59</td>
<td>$55.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family (Medium Density)</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>$15.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family (High Density)</td>
<td>$2.05</td>
<td>$8.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>$0.32</td>
<td>$0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$15.95</td>
<td>$79.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Surplus (Deficit)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family (Low Density)</td>
<td>$(7.06)</td>
<td>$(38.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family (Medium Density)</td>
<td>$(1.82)</td>
<td>$(10.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family (High Density)</td>
<td>$(1.15)</td>
<td>$(5.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>$0.15</td>
<td>$1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$(8.89)</td>
<td>$(52.18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

- Sensitivity scenarios adjust assumptions, and future land use development projections
- Residential development in rural areas negatively impacts County’s finances
- Reducing municipal service costs by 25% has the largest fiscal impact on County finances
- No recovery from COVID until 2035 = large negative impact under all three scenarios

Fiscal Impact: Sensitivity Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitivity Analysis Scenario</th>
<th>Status Quo</th>
<th>Middle Path</th>
<th>High Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scenario Baseline</td>
<td>$64.09</td>
<td>$3.78</td>
<td>($91.44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario 1: New residential growth is all single-family homes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>($5.04)</td>
<td>($43.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario 2: Property taxes increase by 25 percent</td>
<td>$0.08</td>
<td>$1.97</td>
<td>$2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario 3: Municipal service costs in villages decrease by 25 percent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$7.15</td>
<td>$17.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario 4: Gaming Revenues do not recover until 2035</td>
<td>($39.66)</td>
<td>($39.66)</td>
<td>($39.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario 5: Commercial development lower than projections by 50 percent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$0.19</td>
<td>$0.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

- Low property tax rate & lack of sales tax limits development to pay for itself
- Gaming revenues needed to offset County’s costs to serve new development; implication is for development to follow growth of gaming revenues
- Directing growth to villages helps to increase benefits of development & minimize impacts
- Other actions include:
  - residential mill levy
  - introducing a sales tax
  - efficiencies in service delivery
Integrated Land Use
Growth Management Goals

1. Economic Diversification
2. Protect and Sustain
3. Prevent Overuse
4. Maintain Gilpin County’s Unique Character
5. Manage Growth to Protect Community Values
Three Sustainable Growth Strategy Principles:

1. Managed Growth
   To occur in a manner predetermined by the county – that allows for predictability AND flexibility

2. Concentrated Development
   In small focused areas or nodes – called villages with limited footprints

3. Mixed Used Development
   Residential + commercial, including retail, hospitality, entertainment, etc.
Proactive Land Use Strategy

- Community resistance to development and/or skepticism about it
- Collaboration and consensus building based on common ground (values)
- Manage the inevitable development in an orderly fashion with:
  - Least impact on the community
  - Protection of the environment
- Key to this strategy:
  - Concentration of future development in predetermined nodes, called “villages”
- Concentration of development with a mix of uses achieves three goals:
  - Economic opportunity
  - Economic diversity
  - Environmental protection

- The “A-HA” moment:
  - A village may take 20, 50 or 100 years to be fully established
Organic Growth of a Village

Crossroads, Hamlet, Village, Town
Design Characteristics of Traditional Neighborhoods, Old and New
Randall Arendt

Excerpt from Randall Arendt’s Crossroads, Hamlet, Village, Town
APA PAS Report

Figure 21. These six maps of Sturbridge, Massachusetts, show how slowly the New England village developed in many communities; it did not become a true center until the early 1900s, a century or more after original settlement. Source: Wood (1997)
Mixed Use Villages

- **Concentrated residential development** leads to:
  - Reduced cost of providing County and other services
  - Serving as a catalyst for new commercial development

- **Concentrated commercial development** leads to:
  - Reduced cost of developing
  - More and additional commercial services

- A **Mix of Uses** is inherently the result of a village concept with benefits of:
  - Variety and diversity
  - More options and opportunities
  - Increased quality of life
FAQ: How did the PC and BoCC respond differently to the idea of future development in Gilpin County?
Government Perspective
Sending Areas for:
Transfer of Development Rights

TDR sending areas:
1. Tolland Valley to East Portal
2. Mammoth Gulch
3. Elk Park
4. Dory Hill/GGCSP buffer
5. Black Hawk north

A: Elk winter range
B + C: Mule deer winter range

Wildlife corridors shown as blue rectangles

TDR receiving areas:
• Rollinsville Village
• Sierra Pines Village
• Braecher Park Village
• Dory Hill Village
Decision-Making Framework:

- **Community**: Input Throughout
- **Inter-Agency Task Force**: Advisors & Ambassadors
- **Planning Commission**: Prepare & Approve
- **BoCC**: Ratify & Fund
County Perspective

Interagency Task Force Representation

DOLA
Colorado Department of Transportation
Colorado Division of Mining
Colorado Division of Water Resources
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
NoCo Places 2050
Black Hawk Central City Sanitation District
Clear Creek County
Boulder County
Jefferson County
Grand County
Central City
City of Black Hawk
Town of Nederland
Gilpin Ambulance Authority
Gilpin County Senior Leadership Team
CSU Extension Office
DRCOG
Timberline Fire District
Trout Unlimited
Eldora Mountain Resort
Monarch Casino
“The Comprehensive Plan gave us a template to do big projects; now we are educated and informed about what the possibilities are.”

Gilpin County BoCC, Chair, Linda Isenhart