



**RESOLUTION NO. 2019-14-PC**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE LA PLATA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
ADOPTING THE 2019 NORTH COUNTY DISTRICT PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the La Plata County Board of County Commissioners (“Board”) appointed the La Plata County Planning Commission (“Planning Commission”) pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-103; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-106(1), in 2001 the Planning Commission adopted the La Plata County Comprehensive Community Plan (“2001 Comprehensive Plan”) to serve as the master plan for the physical development of the unincorporated territory of La Plata County; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2014 the Planning Commission initiated a process to update the 2001 Comprehensive Plan and thereby the 2017 Comprehensive Plan (the “Comprehensive Plan”) was adopted pursuant to Resolution No. 2017-03-PC; and

**WHEREAS**, the County has established 12 separate planning districts based upon geographical areas throughout the county and these districts have developed district plans which establish goals, objectives and policies to help guide future growth based on the unique characteristics of each district; and

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Plan incorporates these district plans as appendices and these appendices form part of the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, on October 8, 1996, by Resolution No. 1996-7, recorded at reception no. 719171, the La Plata County Planning Commission first adopted the North County district plan; and

**WHEREAS**, after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and under the direction of the La Plata County Planning Commission, a public process to update the district plans was undertaken, including an update to the district plan of the North County District; and

**WHEREAS**, the North County district plan update process sought input from resource management agencies, service providers, special interest groups, involved citizens, including district planning committees and other interested parties; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-107, the Planning Commission has reviewed and considered the proposed draft of the 2019 North County district plan update and revisions in accordance with its general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of La Plata County and the North County District which, in accordance with present and future needs and resources, will best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, or general welfare of the inhabitants, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development, including such distribution of population and of the uses of land for urbanization, trade,

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industry, habitation, recreation, agriculture, forestry, and other purposes as will tend to create conditions favorable to health, safety, energy conservation, transportation, prosperity, civic activities, and recreational, educational, and cultural opportunities; will tend to reduce the wastes of physical, financial, or human resources which result from either excessive congestion or excessive scattering of population; and will tend toward an efficient and economic utilization, conservation, and production of the supply of food and water and of drainage, sanitary, and other facilities and resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the North County district plan will allow for more orderly and predictable growth patterns by serving as a guide to the current County Land Use System and addressing the compatibility of land uses; and

**WHEREAS**, in reviewing and considering the updates and revisions contained in the 2019 North County District Plan, the Planning Commission evaluated the matters set forth in C.R.S. § 30-28-106(3) and made careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and probable future growth of the unincorporated territory of La Plata County and, more specifically the area within the North County District; and

**WHEREAS**, having undergone the considerations summarized above, and having accepted oral and written public comments, noticed and conducted public meetings, and otherwise encouraged public participation in and awareness of the process of updating and revising the North County District Plan, the Planning Commission wishes to adopt the 2019 North County District Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission has noticed and conducted a public meeting, in compliance with C.R.S. § 30-28-106(1), to further consider and accept public comment concerning adoption of the 2019 North County District Plan on November 7, 2019; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission need not submit the 2019 North County District Plan to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (“DOLA”) Division of Planning for advice and recommendations, under C.R.S. § 30-28-122, based upon a memo from DOLA stating, that due to a lack of resources, DOLA is unable to provide official review or comment as a referral agency on most documents; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-108, the Planning Commission is to adopt the 2019 North County District Plan by resolution carried by the affirmative votes of not less than a majority of its entire membership, with express reference to the maps and descriptive matter interred by the Planning Commission to form said Plan, and the action taken shall be recorded on the map and descriptive matter by the identifying signature of the Secretary of the Planning Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-109, the Planning Commission is to certify copies of the 2019 North County District Plan to the Board of County Commissioners of La Plata County, and to the planning commissions of all municipalities within La Plata County.

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**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LA PLATA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION:**

1. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-106(3)(a), the 2019 North County District Plan shows the Planning Commission's recommendations for the development of unincorporated territory of La Plata County in the North County and serves as an advisory document to guide land development decisions for the County.

2. The Planning Commission hereby adopts the 2019 North County District Plan, including all maps, land use classifications, and descriptive matters the Planning Commission intends to form part of the plan, attached hereto as Exhibit A, by the affirmative votes of not less than a majority of its entire membership, and directs that such Plan shall be Appendix 11 to the Comprehensive Plan.

3. The Planning Commission hereby directs the Chairperson and Secretary to sign the 2019 North County District Plan pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-108.

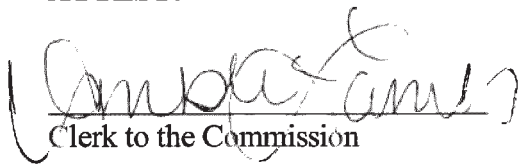
4. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-109, the Planning Commission directs its Chairperson to certify copies of the 2019 North County District Plan to the Board of County Commissioners of La Plata County and to the planning commissions of all municipalities within La Plata County by delivery of the 2019 North County District Plan and this Resolution to each.

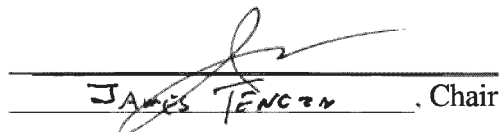
**DONE AND ADOPTED IN DURANGO, LA PLATA COUNTY, COLORADO, THIS 7 DAY OF NOVEMBER 2019.**

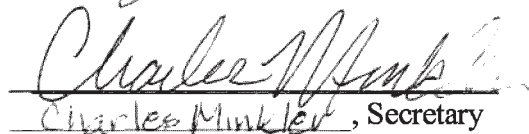
**LA PLATA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

(SEAL)

**ATTEST:**

  
Clerk to the Commission

  
James Tencen, Chair

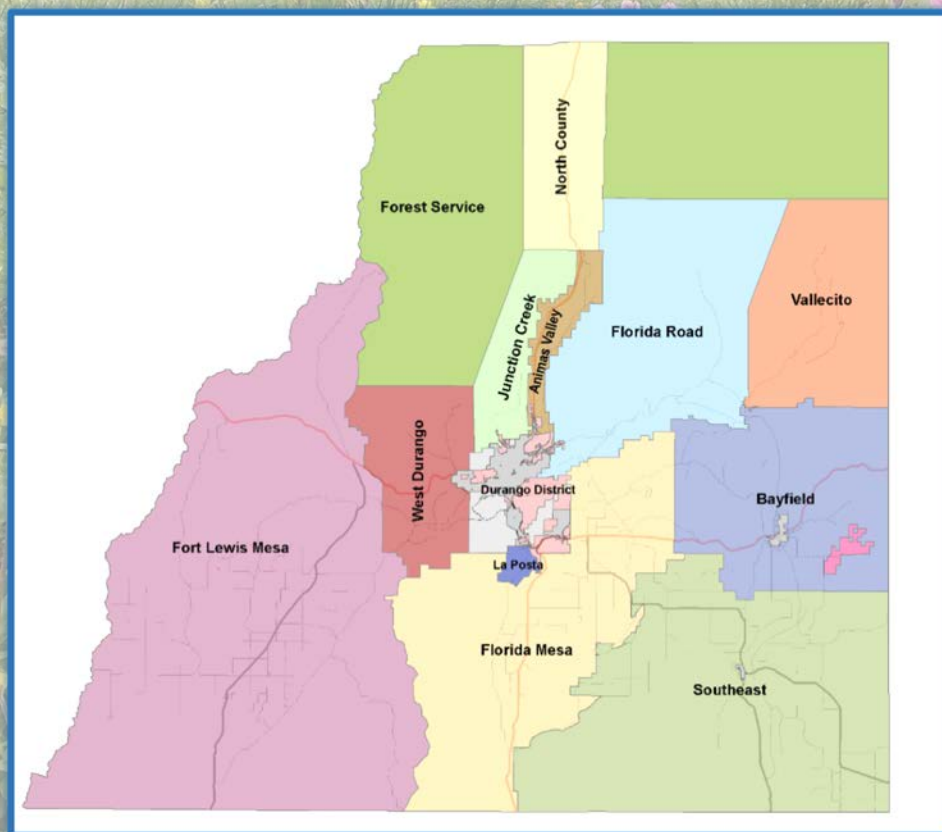
  
Charles Minkler, Secretary



*La Plata County*  
Colorado

# North County District Plan

November 7, 2019  
Appendices to the Comprehensive Plan



NORTH COUNTY DISTRICT PLAN

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# NORTH COUNTY DISTRICT PLAN

## **I. PURPOSE**

### **a. Purpose and Authority**

The La Plata County Comprehensive Plan is a public document, officially adopted by the County's Planning Commission, which establishes a vision and framework for the future of La Plata County.

District plans are intended to provide more detailed analyses of physical attributes, opportunities and constraints of a particular geographical area within the County than that provided by the more generalized comprehensive plan. Twelve planning districts that encompass distinct geographical areas in the County are illustrated in the map above. District plans recognize and attempt to capture the distinct character and values of each of the distinct geographic areas in the County. Public input, especially from local residents of the district, property owners, and business owners and public agencies was critical in the development of the district plan. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-106, district plans are made and adopted by the La Plata County Planning Commission and are appendices to the Countywide La Plata County Comprehensive Plan.

### **b. Planning Process and Application of a District Plan**

The comprehensive plan is a guiding visionary document. As an appendix to the La Plata County Comprehensive Plan, this District plan is intended to be consistent with the intents and purpose of the Comprehensive Plan.

Although district plans are advisory, not regulatory, they represent the more specific vision and goals of the residents in the District. The plans serve as: (1) a foundation and guide for land use regulations and maps; (2) a guide and resource for recommendations relating to local initiatives such as water protection, recreation or open space and housing; (3) a source for planning studies to develop courses of action on a specific need; (4) a resource for the development of regional plans or regional programs; (5) a source of information for local boards, commissions, organizations, residents and business; and (6) a long-term guide by which to measure and evaluate public and private proposals that affect the physical, social and economic environment of the community.

With respect to land use proposals that require approval, La Plata County Land Use regulations often require a finding of "consistency with the Comprehensive Plan", of which this plan is an appendix. Therefore, district plans perform an important function in the compatibility analysis as required by the County's performance-based zoning system and the district plan's goals, objectives, policies and land use classifications, or Euclidian zoning classifications in the Animas Valley, are relevant to reviewing such development applications. Other planning documents such as those identified as references to the County's Comprehensive Plan should also be considered.



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Citizen participation helps guide the Planning Commission in making decisions and promotes community understanding of planning needs and issues. A successful plan requires a thorough and inclusive planning process that engages community residents and stakeholders. There was effective participation by the residents, property owners, and business owners of the District, which led to the submittal of a draft plan by residents of the District. Although some parts of a draft plan may not have been incorporated as part of this district plan, the submitted draft informed the foundation of the adopted plan and more thoroughly captures the unique character of the district and communicates to residents, developers and others the type and locations of future development the community will support.

This plan is not a static document; it is expected to change as conditions and expectations change over time. Review by County staff, the Planning Commission and community members shall occur on a periodic basis, and as often as every 3-5 years<sup>1</sup>.

## **II. OVERALL GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

### **a. Preamble/Vision Statement**

Until the adoption of this District Plan in 1996, development proposals in the North County District were considered on a case-by-case basis. The case- by-case review did not provide an opportunity for citizens, planning staff, the Planning Commission, and County Commissioners to consider the cumulative impacts that individual projects could have on the County. This District Plan was prepared, and updated over time, in order to provide the citizens and County with a framework for evaluating development proposals with the perspective of how the project relates to the District and County as a whole. This Plan will also provide the citizens and County the opportunity to begin to shape future development within the District to ensure that it is compatible with the current lifestyles, businesses, homes, and natural features. The Plan is intended to provide citizens with more predictability about what kinds of communities, commercial developments, recreational areas, residential areas, and agricultural areas may exist in the future within the District.

The overall vision of the North County District is to promote:

- The importance of open space preservation
- Best management practices so that future growth occurs in a compact pattern with a mix of residential and commercial to enhance the surrounding community
- Mixed-use centers with municipal-grade infrastructure containing denser commercial,

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Commission policy memo dated April 4, 2019



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residential and recreational uses

- A range of housing choices to provide options for all incomes and ages
- Connectivity for pedestrians, equestrians, bicyclists and motorists
- Development designs that are socially responsible, environmentally friendly and economically sound and that protect the air quality

District Plan amendments may be proposed by the Planning Commission or by property owners and/or property owners' representatives. Issues to be considered when reviewing plan amendments include but are not limited to:

- Road Capacities
- Water and Sewer Availability
- Wildlife Impacts
- Support for Goals/Objectives
- Compatibility with the District Plan
- Air Quality
- Natural Resource Protection
- Open Space
- Visual Impacts
- Density
- Workforce Housing

## **b. Property Rights**

As recognized by Section 3, Article II of the Colorado Bill of Rights, all persons have certain natural, essential and inalienable rights, among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties; of acquiring, possessing and protecting property; and of seeking and obtaining their safety and happiness. One of the essential elements of property is the rights to its unrestricted use and enjoyment and that use cannot be interfered with beyond what is necessary to provide for the welfare and general security of the public morals, health, safety or welfare.<sup>2</sup> Within this context, Colorado counties have the authority to adopt and enforce ordinances and resolutions regarding health, safety and welfare issues as prescribed by law,<sup>3</sup> including, but not limited to, the ability<sup>4</sup> to regulate uses of land for trade, industry, recreation<sup>5</sup> and the authority to plan for and regulate the use of land resulting in changes in

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<sup>2</sup> *City & County of Denver v. Denver Buick, Inc.*, 141 Colo. 121, 347 P.2d 919 (1959)

<sup>3</sup> C.R.S. § 30-11-101(2)

<sup>4</sup> C.R.S. §§ 29-20-101 *et seq.* and 30-28-101 *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> *Bd of Cty Comm'rs v. Thompson*, 177 Colo. 277, 284, 493 P.2d 1358 (1972).



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population density based on the impact of development on surrounding areas and the community.<sup>6</sup> Such regulations are valid unless it is clear that there is no foundation in reason and there is no substantial relation to the public health, the public morals, the public safety or the public welfare.<sup>7</sup>

## **III. OVERVIEW OF DISTRICT**

The area is visually dominated by the Hermosa Cliffs, which rise sharply to the west, and by the San Juan Mountains including the rugged Grenadier Range and the Needles and West Needles Mountains, which are seen to the east. The Weminuche Wilderness Area is found here in North County and contains over 400,000 acres of pristine terrain (Colorado's largest wilderness area). The private lands within the District range from an elevation of about 6,800 feet at Baker's Bridge to over 9,000 feet in the Durango Mountain Resort area. The North County contains four major life zones - the Foothills, Montane, Sub-Alpine and Alpine zones. The North County area has cooler temperatures and receives more snowfall than most other areas of the County and is generally thought of as a high-country environment in contrast to the valley and mesa areas found elsewhere in the County. The forest areas consist of large stands of aspens as well as mixed conifers including ponderosa pines to the south, which give way to spruce and fir at the higher elevations. Most of the conifer stands are of mixed ages and it is not uncommon to find individual trees in excess of 200 years old. An abundance of wildflowers are found within the forests and throughout the numerous open high alpine meadows

The North County District has a diversity and abundance of wildlife including mule deer, elk, black bear, mountain lion, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, river otter, beaver, wild turkey, blue grouse, various small mammals, neo-tropical bird and other species. A number of wildlife species that have been designated as species of special concern, threatened and/endangered also migrate through or make the North County District their home. These species include the Canadian lynx, Bald Eagle, the Peregrine Falcon and the Colorado River Cutthroat Trout. The Colorado Division of Wildlife manages the wildlife in La Plata County and across the State.

In addition to the Animas River, several smaller streams and creeks traverse the District, including Cascade Creek, Little Cascade Creek, Hermosa Creek, Elbert Creek, Lime Creek, Purgatory Creek, and Goulding Creek. Electra Lake, Haviland Lake, Columbine Lake, Lake Purgatory, and a number of smaller ponds are also found in the North County adding to the area's popularity for fishing and other lake-based recreation.

U.S. Highway 550, which is an All-American Byway as well as the San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway, runs through the North County District. The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge

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<sup>6</sup> *Wilkinson v. Bd County Comm'rs*, 872 P.2d 1269 (Colo. App. 1993)

<sup>7</sup> *Nectow v. City of Cambridge*, 277 U.S. 183, 48 S. Ct. 447 (1928)



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Railroad follows the Animas River through the North County on its way to Silverton. This is a particularly scenic area of La Plata County. The vast majority of the land is owned by the United States Forest Service and the relatively small portion of privately owned lands where future development could occur are generally very close or immediately adjacent to U.S. Highway 550. Visual impacts are an important consideration in the design of future development.

Purgatory Resort is a year-round alpine resort located 25 miles north of Durango. Lauded as one of the most scenic places in the nation, it attracts over 400,000 visitors annually with 11 lifts and 1200 acres of skiable terrain within a 2500 acre permit on U.S. Forest Service land. In 2002, the resort received approval of a Master Plan and 25 year development agreement to develop 1659 residential units and 410,000 gross square feet of commercial uses on the 600+/- acres of private land adjoining Purgatory Resort.

The Glacier Club Community at Tamarron is a private residential golf community situated on 730 acres. In 2002 an Amended Development Agreement and Master Plan was approved by La Plata County that allows, in addition to the 407 residential units and 18 holes of golf and golf amenities previously developed, an additional 18 holes of golf and golf amenities, a new clubhouse, and 473 single-family residential units. In recent years a secondary access road, a new clubhouse, second 18 hole golf course, and second clubhouse have been constructed. It is anticipated that approximately 236 single family home lots and 237 townhomes will be developed, up to the total approved 880 residential units.

### **Major Relationships of the District to Durango**

Numerous factors are responsible for a constant interaction and interdependence between the North County and Durango. Much of La Plata County's economy is based on tourism and the North County Planning District contributes heavily to the region's attractiveness to visitors. In the spring, the Ironhorse Bicycle Classic brings in bike riders for the annual bicycle race/tour from Durango to Silverton. Throughout the spring/summer/fall, road and mountain biking, hiking, jeep/OHV touring, and fishing draw many visitors as well as locals to the North County. During fall, the spectacular autumn color changes and hunting season bring many out of state visitors to the area, which helps to sustain the off-season economy. Alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, snowmobiling, and other winter sports offer activities for winter visitors.

Many of the North County's residents work in Durango while many of the seasonal employees who work at the Purgatory Resort and Tamarron/Glacier Club resorts live in Durango and commute to the North County. Purgatory Resort is a major employer and skiing helps bring needed visitor revenue into the County during the slower winter months while the array of summer activities, programs and lodging offered at Purgatory boosts summer visitation. Like Purgatory Resort, Tamarron/Glacier Club is one of the major employers in the County. Tamarron/Glacier Club is nationally recognized for its golf course and has lodging and many



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other resort amenities.

There are no supermarkets or large stores in the North County, so the local residents must travel to Durango or to Trimble Crossing in the Animas Valley to do the majority of their shopping. During the winter, Durango skiers travel to the North County for skiing at Purgatory Resort or in the backcountry. Likewise, the summer brings Durango residents to the cool of the mountains in the North County for camping, hiking, biking, fishing and other outdoor activities.

## Existing North County Conditions

**Community Recreation** — Recreational uses include lift service and snow cat alpine skiing, groomed and informal cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, hunting and fishing, biking, hiking, camping, guide services, horseback riding, golfing, sleigh rides, tennis and many other outdoor recreation and resort activities. The Durango Mountain Resort community park, when completed, will be a significant addition to the North County District’s recreation amenities.

**Residential** — Residential development ranges in density from 100+ acre ranchettes to multi-unit condominiums and high-rise resort accommodations. There has been substantial residential development over many decades in the District.

**Commercial** — Tamarron/Glacier Club and Purgatory Resort are the two most significant commercial areas. The resorts facilities include restaurants, shops and other services, which are operated seasonally. Needles Square is a neighborhood and highway commercial center which is open year-round. Other commercial areas are located at Silverpick Village and at the entrance to Haviland Lake.

**Lodging** — Lodging facilities and condominiums are located at Durango Mountain Resort and Tamarron/Glacier Club. Smaller facilities such as Silverpick and Needles Townhomes also offer overnight accommodations and there are numerous private residences used as short-term rentals in the area.

**Agriculture** — Due to the high altitude and short growing season, the most common agricultural activities are cattle grazing and timber harvesting. Cattle operations typically use both private and publicly leased land for grazing. Timber harvesting on both public and private land also occurs in North County producing saw timber and firewood for commercial sale.

**Public Lands** — Approximately seventy percent of the District is held in public lands, which are primarily managed by the United States Forest Service.

**Open Space** — The conservation of Open Space as a top priority in the North County District.

La Plata Open Space Conservancy holds conservation easements today in the District and has potential protect additional open space in the future.



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**Roads and Transportation** — North County is served by U.S. Highway 550, which is a two or three lane highway and the major arterial through the District. The Colorado Department of Transportation estimated 2016 traffic at 3,900 average daily trips (ADT) between Shalona Lake and Purgatory Resort and 1,900 ADT between Purgatory Resort and Molas Pass. County Road 250 serves the southernmost part of the District, and County Road 200 provides an access to Rockwood. Various Forest Service roads access the National Forest while most other roads are private, serving individual properties and subdivisions. Maintenance varies on the private roads, and many, having been constructed prior to existing County regulations; do not meet standards as to material, width, grade, or emergency access. Subdivisions are responsible for their own road maintenance. Multiple companies provide taxi and shuttle services to visitors and residents.

**Domestic Water** — All domestic water in the District, either individually or in piped distribution systems, comes from groundwater wells. Well production is very inconsistent ranging from one gallon per minute to as much as one hundred gallons per minute within relatively close proximity. Well depths also vary significantly from very shallow to over five hundred feet in depth.

The Purgatory Metro District operates a system of wells, water treatment facilities, storage tanks, and distribution lines. All of the Purgatory Metro District wells produce at a rate of 100 gallons per minute or better. Water taps can be purchased by properties within the Metro District. The system currently serves properties in the immediate vicinity of the Purgatory Resort. The Needles Townhomes, Silverpick Water Utility, Twilight Peaks Subdivision, Rockwood, Farview, Needles Square and Tamarron/Glacier Club Resort all operate their own private water systems. Almosta Ranch also is on a private system serving just that property. The Tamarron/Glacier Club system also provides water for Rockwood Estates and the Village at Rockwood. The Elbert Creek Water and Sanitation District was formed in the 1980s, but has not extended any infrastructure to date.

The Lake Purgatory subdivision operates a community irrigation water system during the summer months and does not guarantee the potability of the water. Individual wells are required to provide water on a year round basis in the Lake Purgatory Subdivision. Compliance for the water system is required by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)

Other properties within the North County depend entirely on individual private wells. Water supply appears to be generally sufficient in the District and is not yet viewed as a significant constraint to development. Much of the North County is classified as water critical, requiring an augmentation plan for more than one well per 35 acres. Well permits (issued by the State Engineer) may be limited in number and scope and in the future water rights for augmentation plans may be increasingly scarce. There are, however, various adjudicated water rights for domestic and irrigation purposes that can be purchased.



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**Wastewater Treatment** — There are several central wastewater systems in the North County District. The Purgatory Metro District operates a wastewater collection system and treatment plant consisting of outdoor lagoons and is working to expand and upgrade to a state-of-the-art mechanical plant. Existing collection lines serve as far south as the Silverpick complex.

The Needles Townhome HOA operates a private wastewater treatment plant serving the Needles Townhomes, the Needles Country Store complex, The Olde Schoolhouse restaurant, the Twilight Peaks subdivision, Two Dogs, and Castle Rock. The Needles system has no capacity to serve additional users. The Tamarron/Glacier Club Resort operates a private wastewater treatment plant as does the Almosta Ranch, located just north of the entrance to Haviland Lake. The Elbert Creek Water and Sanitation District was formed in the 1980s but does not operate any wastewater treatment facilities nor does it have any current plans to develop such infrastructure within the foreseeable future.

Other properties in the North County utilize Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS, generally a septic tank and soil treatment area) permitted and monitored by San Juan Basin Public Health (SJBPH).

**Utilities** — Electricity is provided to area residents by La Plata Electric Association. Telephone, cellphone and wireless service are provided by Century Link and various other providers. Internet service is available through a variety of providers and means.

Natural gas pipelines now extend as far north as the Rockwood area and Tamarron/Glacier Club Resort. Residents/Businesses north of Tamarron/Glacier Club must have individual propane storage tanks, which are refilled by tank trucks. Television service is primarily provided by satellite or Century Link in the areas north of Tamarron/Glacier Club. DMR and Purgatory Resort's propane gas service is currently provided by Durango Mountain Utilities under a CPUC license authority.

**Trails** — Numerous hiking/biking/equestrian trails exist throughout the District. Most of them are located on National Forest Lands. Popular trails include Elbert Creek Trail, Hermosa Creek Trail, Goulding Creek Trail, Pinkerton-Flagstaff Trail, Purgatory Trail, Worlds Trail, Colorado Trail and the Castle Rock Trail. Trail connectors and new trails are identified and developers are encouraged to use the Trails Plan 2000 when planning new development in the District. Trails Plan 2000 was adopted by the Planning Commission and shows general areas where trails and trailheads are desired. Work has been done connecting trails and new public trails have been provided in the Two Dogs and Castle Rock Subdivisions and as part of the Purgatory Resort expansion plans. Numerous snowmobile trails in the District are groomed throughout the winter.

**Emergency Services** — The Durango Fire Protection District (DFPD) provides fire protection and emergency medical services. There are three fire stations in the North County District: one



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just north of Tamarron/Glacier Club, one across from the entrance to Purgatory Resort and the main station located across from the entrance to Electra Lake. Station 15 near Electra Lake Road is staffed 24 hours a day.

Water supplies for fire protection purposes in some of the earlier subdivisions are inadequate based on national fire standards and in many areas no fire hydrants exist at all. The fire district has several tanker trucks which can be used to shuttle limited amounts of water to a fire, however, this is not as effective as having adequate water supplies readily available at the site. DFPD encourages the development of dry hydrants in conjunction with existing ponds, large cisterns or new water sources to help mitigate this issue. Durango Fire Protection District requires all new residential and commercial construction to have automatic fire sprinkler systems. The district also requires that each homeowner provide defensible space around structures.

In the event of a major fire or wildfire, wherever it may be located, the various fire protection agencies provide mutual aid to each other.

**Police** — The area is served by the La Plata County Sheriff's Department and the highway is patrolled by the Colorado State Patrol.

**Schools** — The North County is part of Durango School District 9R. Elementary school children are bused to the Animas Valley Elementary School, and middle school and high school students are bused into the City of Durango. Elementary school students face bus rides of over an hour each way for those children living at the north end of the County while middle school and high school students can spend even longer times on the bus. In addition to the public school system, several private and parochial schools are located in the Durango area.

### **IV. POPULATION**

La Plata County has been experiencing continued growth since the 1990's increasing in population from 32,466 in 1990 to an estimated 55,619 in 2017. This growth has been seen in the North County and will continue to occur according State Demographer forecasts. North County currently has an estimated population of 3,149 and is forecasted to grow an estimated 964 people to a population of 4,113<sup>8</sup> over the next 20 years using the estimated average growth rate of 1.53%, which correlates with the State Demographer's estimates. If growth were to remain at the existing rate of 1.1%, the District would grow an estimated 289 people and if the growth were to exceed the projected average and grow at a rate of 2%, the District would grow an estimated 1,260 people. To accommodate this anticipated range of growth, an approximate

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<sup>8</sup> This was calculated using an estimated 1.53% growth rate with an average household size of 2.4; household size and County population data are from the U.S. Census and Colorado State Demographer



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289 to 525 units will need to be added to the District over the next 20 years, which equates to an average of 14 to 26 units a year.

## V. KEY ISSUES

### **Growth**

There has been substantial new residential development. Private lands are generally close or immediately adjacent to U.S. Highway 550, therefore, any development has more of a visual impact to the community and those traveling on the highway. Development should be carefully reviewed for compatibility with surrounding uses and preserve existing scenic views. Both non-residential and dense residential growth should be located in areas identified as nodes where existing density exists to maintain the rural community feel.

### **Transportation Infrastructure**

Maintenance varies on the private roads, and many, having been constructed prior to existing County regulations do not meet standards as to material, width, grade, or emergency access. Subdivisions are responsible for maintaining internal roads. As growth continues, these internal roads will continue to need maintenance and potentially be upgraded. The need for more trails and bike lanes to promote alternative transportation is essential to curbing traffic and associated air pollution. Trail connectors and new trails should be encouraged when planning/designing new development in the District. Carpooling programs and transit services should be encouraged to provide an alternative mode for both out-commuters and in-commuters.

### **Water and Sewer**

All domestic water in the District, either individually or in piped distribution systems, comes from well water. Well production is very inconsistent ranging from one gallon per minute to as much as one hundred gallons per minute within relatively close proximity. Well depths also vary significantly from very shallow to over five hundred feet in depth. Groundwater is considered to be hard, but of good quality. Much of the North County is classified as water critical, requiring an augmentation plan for more than one well per 35 acres. Irrigation may not be appropriate due to impacts on other residents and well permits may be limited in number and scope. There are, however, various adjudicated water rights for domestic and irrigation purposes that can be purchased. The Lake Purgatory subdivision operates a community water system during the summer months only and does not guarantee the potability of the water. Water supply appears to be generally sufficient in the District and is not yet viewed as a significant constraint to development providing sufficient water rights are present or augmentation plans are approved. However, since much of the District is classified as “Water Critical,” water may not always be obtainable in the future. Existing streams and other surface waters have occasionally been tested in recent years for bacteria (coliform and others) and in



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general are considered unsafe to drink for humans without treatment. Most of the North County uses septic and some are on parcels as small as one acre or less, which were created before existing standards were adopted. It is now required that no parcel size of three acres or less be allowed with both a well and septic.

## **Fire Mitigation**

Water supplies for fire protection purposes in some of the earlier subdivisions are inadequate based on national fire standards and in many areas no fire hydrants exist at all. The fire district apparatus includes several tanker trucks which can be used to shuttle limited amounts of water to the site of a fire if necessary, however, this is not as effective as having adequate water supplies readily available at the site. DFPD encourages the development of dry hydrants in conjunction with existing ponds, large cisterns or new water sources to help mitigate this issue. In practice, the DFPD requires all new residential and commercial construction to have automatic sprinkler systems. It should be noted that DMR is a “Fire Safe Community” and thus all its buildings have fire sprinkler systems. Another area of concern for the fire district is the development of homes within the forest. The fire district requires that each homeowner provide defensible space and will work with them in developing a plan. All development and re-development shall be in accordance with DFPD regulations.

## **Preservation of Natural Resources**

As growth continues in the North County, the pressure for development to move into sensitive areas and view corridors will increase. Care should be taken to locate structures and improvements in a manner that preserves the existing open space and meadows to the maximum extent practicable. There are key locations along the road where for a measured distance, the vistas open up to spectacular far-off scenery and briefly expand the confines of the narrow corridor. Great care must be given to preserving these unique vistas as identified by the Scenic Corridor Overlay Map<sup>9</sup>. The Land Use Classification Map identifies the general location of Slopes over 30%, and lands classified as Landslides and Unstable Slopes, however, floodplains and wetlands are not currently designated. To prevent unnecessary development and to protect development from these areas, these areas will need to be identified and considered during the review process.

## **Economy**

Much of La Plata County's economy is based on tourism and the North County District contributes heavily to the region's attractiveness to visitors. The District is commonly identified as a "Resort" area. This is due to the presence of the Purgatory Resort and Tamarron/Glacier

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<sup>9</sup> See 1997 District Plan for map.



## NORTH COUNTY DISTRICT PLAN

Club Resort complexes and the abundance of recreational opportunities. The Purgatory Resort is a major employer and helps bring needed visitor revenue into the County during the slower winter months. The Purgatory Resort area attracts summer visitors, albeit in lesser numbers, to its alpine slide, chairlift rides, mountain biking, zipline, bungee trampoline and its popular Music in the Mountains concert series. There are few sources of year round employment in the District and nearly all of the seasonal employees at the two major resorts commute from Durango. Many of the full time residents of North County commute to work in Durango. Creating a diversified economy in the North County could be beneficial to residents and to protecting the future of the North County.

### **VII. LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS<sup>10</sup>**

The proposed land use plan is based on a vision for North County that is constantly evolving. The following section discusses the land use classifications that are included in the Land Use Classification Map accompanying the text of this plan. The Map is an integral part of this plan and cannot be separated from it. No changes may be made to the Map distinct from the text as together they form the complete plan. The Land Use Classifications/ Descriptions Table of the Plan references the various land use classifications. The permitted land uses, their locations and the minimum and maximum densities are based upon the goals and objectives in this Plan, and are guided further by the need to maintain compatibility with adjacent and neighboring existing uses. Public Benefit Criteria determines allowable density beyond the minimum for each land use classification. Development proposals shall demonstrate compatibility with the North County Land Use Plan's goals, objectives, and Land Use Classification Map.

#### **RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The predominant land use on developed private lands within the District is residential. Existing and proposed residential development densities vary considerably throughout the District. A variety of residential land use classifications are included in the Plan. It must be noted that the residential densities contained within land use classifications are to be used for the purpose of calculating overall density within a project. Actual density will be based on compliance with the Public Benefit Criteria. Actual lot sizes and dimensions are determined through application of standards in the subdivision requirements of the Land Use Code.

Residential development in the North County is encouraged to follow the goals, objectives and policies set forth in this document and are required to follow all standards in the adopted La Plata County Land Use Code.

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<sup>10</sup> Note: The land use classifications are derived from the existing District Plan prior to November 2019 and will remain in effect until the County revises the land use classifications and system.



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## **SUBURBAN DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**

This category includes existing platted subdivisions. Lands in this category are classified with a maximum density of one unit per acre, contingent upon the ability to meet subdivision standards contained in the land use code. (Including water, sewer, and access requirements). No new Suburban Density is indicated on the North County District map. A District Plan Amendment would have to be approved for any new suburban density residential areas

## **LARGE-LOT RESIDENTIAL**

The majority of un-subdivided private lands within the District are classified as Large Lot Residential. The overall development densities permitted under this classification are 1 unit per 3 to 10 acres. Development densities within this range are determined through utilization of the Plan's Public Benefit Criteria.

## **HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**

High density residential provides housing options and an opportunity to fulfill the needs of the broader community. High-density, multi-family developments are encouraged in areas proximate to existing or planned central water, sewer service and mobility options. This classification is generally located adjacent to commercial areas/job centers and existing high-density development. High Density Residential development shall incorporate appropriate buffering strategies for transition zones between adjacent residential uses or public roadways. New High Density development is not indicated on the District Map at this time, except within the Resort Classification. A District Plan Amendment should be approved for new High Density Residential areas.

## **SCENIC CORRIDOR**

One of the primary objectives of the North County Master Plan is the protection of the significant view corridors and scenic meadows identified in the District. The linear configuration of the District necessitates special attention when considering development projects along the highway corridor. There are key locations along the road where for a measured distance, the vistas open up to spectacular far-off scenery and briefly expand the confines of the narrow corridor. Great care must be given to preserving these unique vistas as identified by the Scenic Corridor Overlay Map<sup>11</sup>.

The State of Colorado has classified Highway 550 through the North County as part of the San

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<sup>11</sup> See 1997 District Plan for map.



## NORTH COUNTY DISTRICT PLAN

Juan Scenic Byway loop through Southwestern Colorado. There is a possibility some of the key view parcels along this corridor may be targeted for purchase by the State and others. In the absence of outright purchase, the Scenic Byway Commission has encouraged La Plata County to establish measures and practices to promote and sustain the Scenic Byway.

The Land Use Classification Map identifies the general location of specific scenic vistas located along Highway 550. A primary goal of this plan is to preserve the visual and scenic appeal along this corridor. The Scenic Vista classification serves as an overlay to all underlying land use classifications. Areas not visible from the major roadways can be excellent areas for future development to cluster. When clustering development in the District, care should be taken to locate structures and improvements in a manner that preserves the unique scenic vistas as identified on the District Map. The public benefit criteria included in this Plan will be used to achieve this goal.

### **CRITICAL LANDS**

This classification is an overlay category, which identifies areas that possess significant constraints to development and public safety hazards. Critical Lands means land containing unstable or potentially unstable slopes ; floodplain/flash flood areas; expansive or evaporative soil areas and risk of subsidence or upheaval; slopes over 30 percent; avalanche; landslides, rock falls, mudflows, ground subsidence; seismic effects; liquefaction areas; identified wildlife migration corridors and habitats; historical/archaeological lands; and wildfire areas.

The base density for lands in this category is 1 unit per 35 acres. If Critical Lands within a proposed development are protected and permanent development exclusions or dedicated open space, such as conservation easements are established, a density bonus may be granted to transfer development to more suitable portions of a project. Such density bonuses should not exceed 1 unit per 17.5 acres of critical lands, i.e., if Critical Lands are protected, allowable densities are 1 unit per 17.5 acres versus 1 unit per 35 acres if Critical Lands are developed.

The Land Use Classification Map identifies the general location of some of the District's Critical Lands. In most cases, however, site-specific studies must be conducted to determine the location and extent of these lands. The Land Use Classification Map identifies the general location of Slopes over 30%, and lands classified as Landslides and Unstable Slopes. Floodplains and wetlands are not currently designated on the Land Use Classification Map.

### **RESORT**

These are areas that combine recreational and resort uses, commercial operations, and various high-density residential developments, including condominiums and town homes as well as less dense residential uses. The resort classification has been applied to lands within the Durango Mountain Resort, Tamarron (Glacier Club), and Silverpick Resorts as well as some immediately



## NORTH COUNTY DISTRICT PLAN

adjacent properties. The commercial uses contained within this category include typical resort-related commercial services, such as restaurants, retail shops, etc. As stated in the Overview, Durango Mountain Resort and Tamarron/Glacier Club have separate development agreements and corresponding land use regulations that specifically govern their development(s) and hold to a different standard than contents in the north County District Plan and portions of the Adopted Land Use Code. All of the uses described above may not necessarily be appropriate for all land contained within the boundaries of a particular resort area. Planned uses within a resort should be compatible with surrounding uses and the resort's master plan will be reviewed for conformance with the goals and objectives of this plan. Single-phase projects may not be required to submit a master plan; however, compatibility with surrounding uses will be determined at the time of the Class II or subdivision plat review.

Development within this designation should provide pedestrian-oriented spaces. Building materials and architectural style shall be compatible with the District's mountain setting. Careful consideration must be given to preservation of important natural features such as trees, ridges, and drainages.

All resort lands should meet the Public Benefit Criteria in order to qualify for maximum density.

Additionally, any development within the Resort classification should be encouraged to provide Workforce Housing, as defined by the Durango Homes Fund.

It is also important to note that resort developments such as Durango Mountain Resort and Tamarron/Glacier Club are subject to their own development agreements are separate legally binding documents in which a different set of development standards. Therefore, the North County District Plan applies in conjunction to development within the Durango Mountain Resort or Tamarron/Glacier Club boundaries.

### **COUNTRY TOURIST**

This category includes smaller scale developments than those in the Resort Category or other commercial categories. Bed and breakfasts, small scale lodging facilities and complementary, commercial uses that are primarily accessory to the lodging are the main elements of this category, which may also include equestrian features (boarding, horseback rides, pack animals)

### **LOCAL COMMERCIAL**

Several commercial sub-areas are designated according to the uses that primarily or historically occur there: the Local Commercial areas are in the vicinity of The Needles Store, the entrance to Haviland Lake, and the entrance to Lake Purgatory. The Needles Store is the primary established Local Commercial area in the District. There are a variety of uses within the classification that serve visitors and local residents. Since this is the main commercial



## NORTH COUNTY DISTRICT PLAN

designation outside of resort areas, development will be carefully reviewed for compatibility with surrounding uses. Public Benefit Criteria will influence the design. The degree that Public Benefit Criteria are met will determine density of land use.

Additionally, it is envisioned that new developments will combine parking lots in order to minimize entrances / exits from highways and County roads and provide clear internal circulation, lighting, pedestrian spaces, and landscaping and walkways.

Neighborhood businesses are encouraged under the Local Commercial classification. These small commercial operations require minimum parking, service, and delivery. These types of uses are also encouraged to cluster around existing commercial facilities as shown on the Land Use Classification Map.

Local commercial development may be of mixed use, which may include second floor residential units (over the shops), or bed-and-breakfast type lodging.

### **PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

This land use designation accommodates public and community facilities. Currently, three fire stations are located within the North County District. Several trailheads are also located in the District. Future public and community facility needs of the District have not been identified. A public park at Purgatory Resort is envisioned.

### **AGRICULTURE/TIMBER/RECREATION**

A large portion of the District is on US Forest Service lands. This category identifies public lands within the District that are used primarily for agricultural, timber and recreational uses. These lands are given a base density of 1 unit per 35 acres in order to discourage a land trade undertaken for speculative purposes.

### **MEADOWS**

Along the Highway 550 corridor there are numerous open meadows visible from the roadway. These meadows contribute significantly to the appeal and character of the District. The general locations of these meadows are identified on the Land Use Classification Map in order to highlight their importance. When undertaking development in meadow areas, care should be taken to locate structures and improvements in a manner that preserves the meadows to the maximum extent practicable. Any construction spoilage occurring during the development period should be hidden from public view to maintain meadows or open space. The public benefit criteria included in this plan will be used to achieve this goal.

### **LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS/DESCRIPTIONS**



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Land Use	Density / Size Restrictions	Description
Agricultural/ Timber/Public Recreation	1 unit per  35 acres	Public land that is used primarily for agricultural, forestry or land/water recreation uses. Public lands that are transferred to private ownership will retain a 1 unit per 35 acre density designation.
Large Lot Residential	1 unit per  3-10 acres	Private land that can be developed at a density of 1 unit per 3 to 10 acres. Will typically be served by wells and septic systems.
Suburban Density Residential	1 unit per  1 -3 acres	Will be served by both central water and central sewer.
High density residential	3 - 12 units per  acre maximum	Attached single family and multi-family units. Central water and sewer required. Currently only allowed in the Resort classification.
Local Commercial	As per approved Master Plan Subdivision Plat or Class II Land Use Permit	Small-scale commercial development (not malls or large establishments) providing goods and services primarily oriented to the needs of the local and tourist community (e.g., convenience stores, hair salons, video stores, liquor stores, restaurants and gas stations). May include 2nd floor residential units (over the shops), or bed-and-breakfast type lodging.



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Country Tourist	1 unit per 3 - 10 acres	Day use, Overnight accommodations, recreational uses and incidental commercial uses such as gift shops, and restaurants. Uses may entail the boarding of horses and use of horses for public rides and pack animals. May be converted to single family residential uses at the designated density without plan amendment.
Critical Lands	1 unit per 35 acres	Land containing unstable or potentially unstable slopes ; floodplain/flash flood areas; expansive or evaporative soil areas and risk of subsidence or upheaval; slopes over 30 percent; avalanche; landslides, rock falls, mudflows, ground subsidence; seismic effects; liquefaction areas; identified wildlife migration corridors and habitats; historical/archaeological lands; and wildfire areas. If density is transferred to non-critical lands, a density bonus of 1 unit per 35 acres will be granted (Maximum Bonus = a total of 2 units for each 35 acres of critical land that is left permanently undeveloped).
Public and Community Facilities	Per Code	Public and quasi-public uses, such as schools, fire stations, government facilities, cemeteries, hospitals and churches, trail heads, recreation facilities.
Resort	As per approved master plan, subdivision plat or Class II land use permit	A mix of residential (single and multi-family) and commercial development within approved master planned resorts. The approved master plan and Public Benefit Criteria will be used to determine allowable density. Any property located within the Resort classification on the North County Land Use Plan Map which is not subject to a development agreement may apply for development according to the other land use classifications within this table.



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## PROTECTED AREAS

Meadows	Per underlying land use classification	Open meadows visible from the Hwy. 550 and other public roads. When undertaking development in meadow areas, care shall be taken to locate structures and improvements in a manner that preserves the meadows to the maximum extent practicable. The public benefit criteria included in this plan should be utilized to achieve this goal.
Scenic Corridor	Per underlying land use classification	Identifies the general location of scenic vistas that are located along Hwy. 550. When clustering development in the District care should be taken to locate structures and improvements in a manner that preserves the scenic vistas along Hwy. 550. The public benefit criteria included in this plan should be utilized to achieve this goal.
Open Space	Per recorded legal agreements	Lands which have been deed- or plat-restricted in perpetual undisturbed, visually unimpeded open space; this includes areas used by developers to obtain higher density in development projects. Categories may include active and passive open space.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT CRITERIA

In order to determine the allowable density for a project within the North County Land Use Plan Classifications, the County will allocate densities above the minimum density upon demonstration that there is a public benefit in doing so. To make this determination as objective as possible, the density range should be granted based upon the following criteria and percentages:



## NORTH COUNTY DISTRICT PLAN

- 25%: Clustering the units so as to preserve the maximum portion of the land in contiguous, undisturbed open space and to preserve wildlife habitat. This undisturbed open space shall be owned by one single entity or multiple entities with undivided interests, or overlain by undisturbed open space or agricultural easement. A minimum of 30% of the total acreage must be set aside as undisturbed open space to make a project eligible for any density bonus, which would increase on a sliding scale up to 60%. The full density bonus of 25% can only be accrued when 60% of the land is designated as undisturbed open space and this same land is contiguous to public lands and/or other privately dedicated undisturbed open space, if such a linkage is feasible.
- 25%: Structures not located on ridgelines or skylines or within view corridors as seen from public roads.
- 25%: Structures located so as to preserve open meadows, located in or against trees if present and not within flood plains or critical areas. Artificial water features, gazebos, playground equipment, and entry gates visible from the highway and similar installations are considered structures in this plan.
- 25%: Granting of easements for trails and public lands access or other public uses and/or platted areas for parks and/or playgrounds.

100% Total

Full compliance with all of the above would result in granting of 100% of the density range. For example, if the range is 1 unit per 3-10 acres, and all of the criteria were fully met, the proponent would qualify for a density of 1 unit per 3 acres. If only the first two criteria were met (25% + 25% = 50%) the owner would qualify for only 50% of the range, or 1 unit per 6.5 acres.

If site conditions do not permit compliance with any specific criteria, credit for compliance will be granted. i.e.: If a site does not possess any ridge lines, view corridors or sites visible from public roads, then the applicant would receive the full 25% density bonus for avoiding ridge lines etc.

## **VII. GROWTH HUBS**

The 2017 La Plata County Comprehensive Plan identifies growth hubs as locations where the County has recognized the opportunity for future development due to the availability of infrastructure, or the potential for expanded infrastructure. These infrastructure components include reliable water supply, adequate sewer capacity, and a roadway network that supports increased traffic. Growth hubs may contain development and/or characteristics that are compatible with and already serve as a community hub/activity center. These growth hubs



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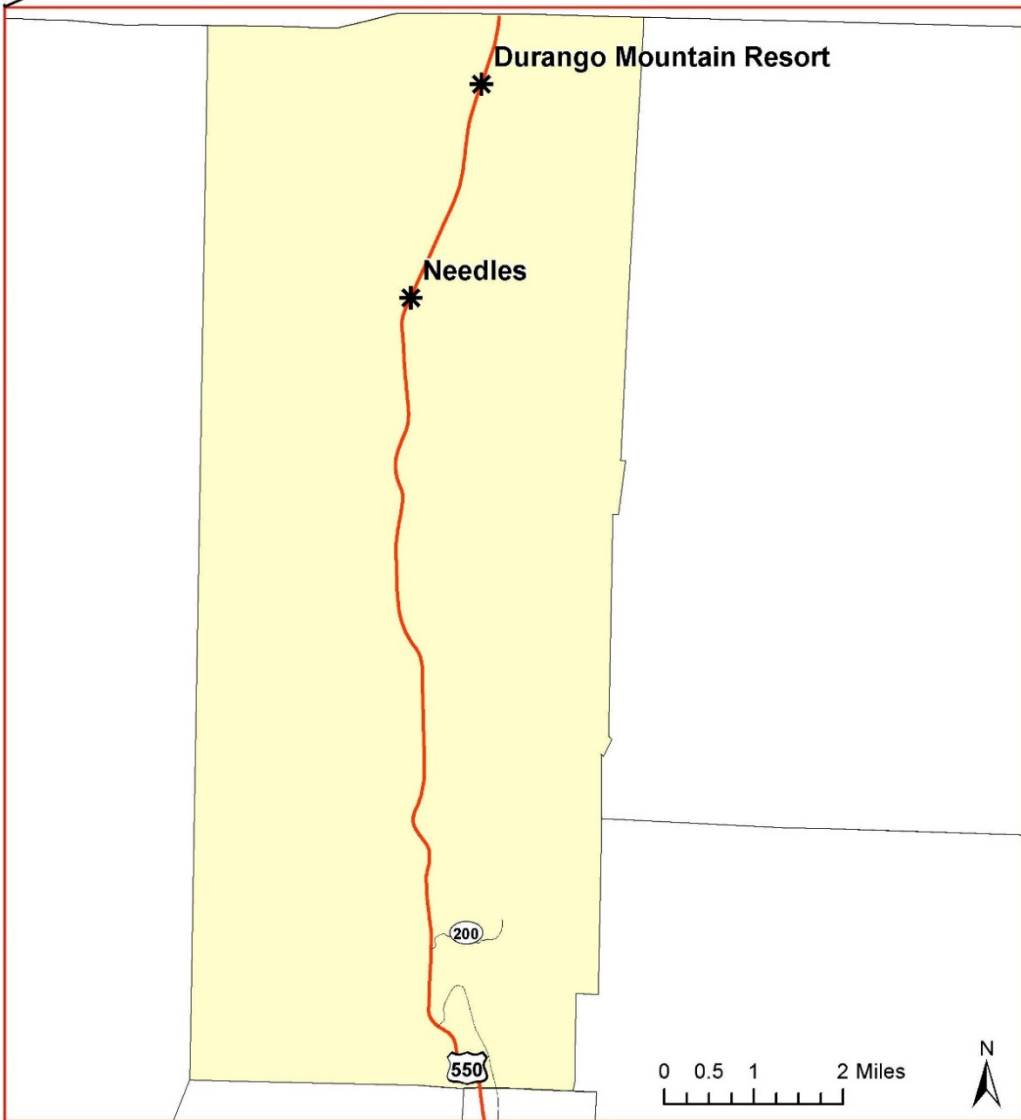
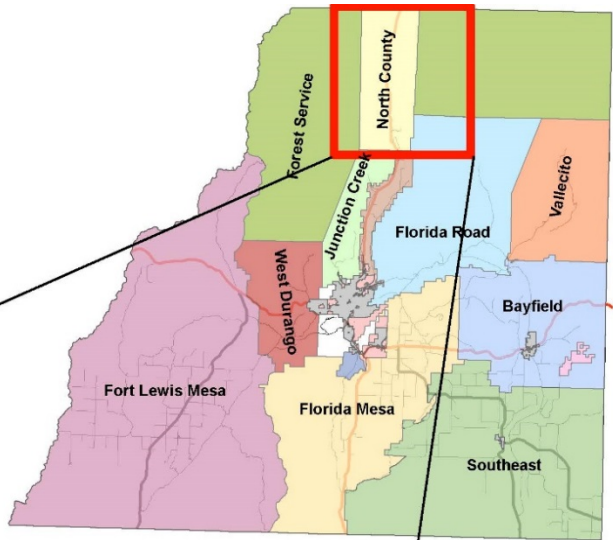
indicate areas that have land use characteristics and existing infrastructure or potential infrastructure to support future development. These areas are not specific to a certain type of use such as residential or commercial. While these areas may be more suitable to support future growth, this is not an assurance that these locations will see future development or that growth is restricted only to these areas.



# North County Growth Hubs

## Legend

- \* Growth Hubs
- ~ COUNTY
- ~ STATE
- ~ US



## **VIII. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES**

Residents, property owners, and business owners of the District provided the direction articulated in the Goals, Objectives and Policies through an extensive public process. Goals, Objectives and Policies can be used to protect the District’s unique qualities. Goals, Objectives and Policies also serve as a guide to property owners and developers to help them understand the desired future of the District, to provide general guidance for desired development patterns and to help them make informed land use decisions. Goals, Objectives and Policies are written to provide general policy direction while also providing enough detail to set priorities and guide decision-making.

Goals provide broad statements of WHAT the community aims to accomplish in the future in the District.

Objectives are specific actionable measures for HOW to implement the goals.

Policies articulate specific direction to the Planning Commission and/or the Board of County Commissioners regarding the implementation of a goal or objective.

Goal 1: Preservation of scenic view corridors and visual integrity of the District, located as it is on The San Juan Skyway and a Great American Byway. View corridors are identified on the North County District Map<sup>12</sup> and are to be protected.

Objective 1.A: Maintain primary scenic view corridors to the maximum extent possible, through standards in the adopted Land Use code, best management practices and as identified on the North County District Plan map and Land Use Table.

Policy 1.A1: Encourage clustered development and avoid development in open meadows, on ridge tops, or other areas where it will interrupt the natural tree line or obscure major topographical features.

Policy 1.A2: Encourage utilities for new development to be located underground or, if not feasible, to be visually unobtrusive and not on ridgelines whenever possible.

Policy 1.A3: Encourage development site plans to show entrance gates and other developed features such as mailbox stops, waste disposal containers, fountains and man-made ponds. Developed features

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<sup>12</sup> See 1997 District Plan for map



## NORTH COUNTY DISTRICT PLAN

should be placed along tree lines rather than in open areas that are highly visible from Highway 550.

Policy 1.A4: Encourage the use of natural materials and natural colors. Avoid steel or concrete block buildings and use of bright colors that do not blend with the surrounding environment. Encourage compatibility with existing architecture, history, and culture.

Policy 1.A5: Encourage planning and design of future commercial development, denser residential development and development within growth hubs that reduces visual impacts by considering setbacks, parking areas, lighting, building massing, landscaping, signage, and snow removal/storage.

Goal 2: Preservation of a quality of life centered around a rural lifestyle, open space, and a feeling of distance from urban activity. Preserve culture and ranching heritage of the area.

Objective 2.A: Encourage future land uses that promote country lifestyle, contiguous open space and wildlife habitat.

Policy 2.A1: Support livestock grazing operations by encouraging new developments to continue livestock grazing on historic grazing lands. Encourage livestock operations to provide adequate fencing and use of gates/cattle guards while adhering to open range and fence laws.

Policy 2.A2: Explore financial incentive programs that encourage voluntary and permanent conservation of agricultural land and open space.

Policy 2.A3: Discourage gated developments, which can create a feeling of alienation. Where gates are necessary, reduce the visual impact using setbacks and other site planning and design techniques to minimize their visibility from public rights of way.

Policy 2.A4: Encourage the use of fence and gate styles and materials that are historic to the District (i.e. wire, rail, and stone) to avoid a patchwork or fragmented look throughout the North County.

Policy 2.A5: Support site designs that include buffer areas (setbacks, berms, vegetation or landscaping) between differing land uses and that also ensure that buffering material does not degrade scenic resources within the Scenic Corridors.



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Policy 2.A6: Encourage the County to explore options for mitigating the impacts of single-family home short-term vacation rentals on neighbors, taking into consideration impacts such as parking, noise, trash, and traffic.

Policy 2.A7: Carefully manage transition areas on the fringe of urban centers through land use code regulations and incentives for high density development.

Objective 2.B: Encourage the preservation historic and cultural elements, such as the historic Rockwood town site.

Goal 3: Strive for compatibility of future land uses with adjacent uses, with the surrounding environment, and with the indigenous character of the North County District.

Objective 3.A: Encourage commercial and high-density residential development to cluster near major recreational amenities and in areas that can be served by municipal-grade infrastructure. Promote a village ambiance within growth hubs and encourage a radiating density concept with careful transition areas between growth hubs and rural lands surrounding the growth hubs.

Policy 3.A1: Locate commercial, mixed use, multifamily, and other more intense land uses in and near established growth hubs such as Purgatory, Needles, and Glacier Club and allow the balance of the North County to remain non-urban in character.

Policy 3.A2: Promote transitional land uses of intermediate density and intensity as a functional buffer between high and low intensity land uses.

Policy 3.A3: Encourage small businesses within growth hubs that will benefit the community and provide services and jobs for local residents, for example, country tourist establishments and cottage industries.

Policy 3.A4: Strive to permit the right uses in the right location, recognizing that not all land uses are appropriate in the North County.

Goal 4: Promote North County as its own community and provide local facilities to maintain the District as a place where residents can live, work and play.

Objective 4.A: Encourage development of local parks, playgrounds, garbage collection, post office and possibly a community center to serve area residents.



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Policy 4.A1: Utilize the guidance contained in the Trails 2000 Countywide plan to develop a trails system that connects neighborhoods. Such trails are intended for both recreation and as an alternative to driving/riding on the highway, thus promoting more neighborhood interaction and improving safety.

Policy 4.A2: Encourage new development to provide public benefits such as conservation easements, recreation areas, trail systems, needed public facilities, employment, and workforce housing. (See Public Benefit Criteria)

Policy 4.A3: Monitor quarterly NEPA updates, which lists all USFS proposed land trades and permit applications for easements across USFS land.

Goal 5: Manage growth based on the availability of infrastructure and land capability to serve existing and new development.

Objective 5.A: Consider impacts of development, collectively and individually, on existing infrastructure, natural resources, water quantity and quality, and air quality.

Policy 5.A1: The County should review all proposed development relative to adopted land use plan, goals, objectives and policies and require mitigation of any adverse impacts.

Objective 5.B: Maintain and promote the long-term stability and economic foundation of tourism and diversified businesses in the North County. In future development and redevelopment of mixed-use growth hubs include elements that will advance North County as a cohesive community and contribute towards a sustainable harmony and quality of life for North County residents.

Goal 6: To the extent practicable, promote availability of affordable housing in the North County for employees in the North County to meet the existing need and future demand.

Objective 6.A: Promote collaboration with local agencies such as the Durango Homes Fund and other local housing agencies to bring about affordable housing in the North County.

Policy 6.A1: Support provisions in development agreements that provide affordable housing proportional to residential and commercial



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development, for example, the Durango Mountain Resort Development Agreement and Tamarron/Glacier Club Development Agreement.

Policy 6.A2: Support a range of affordable housing mitigation options such as construction of accessory dwelling units, deed restriction of condos/townhome units, and payment of fee in lieu.

Policy 6.A3: Ensure that affordable housing that is included in future development is priced, located and designed to meet workforce housing needs.

Goal 7: Adopt rural road standards so that new roads have minimum impacts on the mountainous terrain, vistas, meadows and vegetation while meeting the minimum standards for day-to-day and emergency access.

Policy 7.A1: Encourage new development to provide internal circulation within and between sites so as to minimize the number of driveways and associated turn movement conflicts along the highway.

Policy 7.A2: Encourage contoured and curved roads that conform to terrain to maintain rural look, rather than straight lines and grid patterns.

Goal 8: Preserve, monitor and improve air quality.

Objective 8.A: Work with appropriate agencies to monitor and improve air quality.

Policy 8.A1: Encourage new subdivision development to use gas stoves or gas fireplaces. Allow EPA-approved wood-burning stoves where gas is unavailable. Discourage open wood-burning stoves, fireplaces and coal burning stoves or furnaces.

Goal 9: Minimize traffic by encouraging alternative transportation methods.

Objective 9.A: Identify potential non-motorized trail systems connecting subdivisions and the resorts.

Policy 9.A1: Encourage developments to provide trail easements.

Objective 9.B: Encourage the use of commuter vans to/from the resorts and possibly neighborhoods and advocate a public transportation system.



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## **IX. DEFINITIONS**

*Affordable Housing* means housing for which households with an Area Median Income (AMI) of 80% or lower, as determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), pay 33% or less of their household gross monthly income on monthly housing costs.

*Agriculture* means the production, keeping or maintenance for sale, lease or personal use, of plants and animals useful to people including, but not limited to: forages and sod crops; grains and seed crops; dairy animals and dairy products; poultry and poultry products; livestock, including beef cattle, sheep, swine, horses, ponies, mules or goats, or any mutations or hybrids thereof, including cattle, sheep, swine, horses, ponies, mules or goats, or any mutations or hybrids thereof, including the breeding and grazing of any or all such animals; bees and apiary products; fur animals; trees and forest products; fruits of all kinds and vegetables.

*Attainable Housing* means housing for which households with an Area Median Income (AMI) between 80% - 125%, as determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), pay 33% or less of their household gross monthly income on monthly housing costs.

*Critical Lands* means land containing unstable or potentially unstable slopes; floodplain/flash flood areas; expansive or evaporative soil areas and risk of subsidence or upheaval; slopes over 30 percent; avalanche; landslides, rock falls, mudflows, ground subsidence; seismic effects; liquefaction areas; identified wildlife migration corridors and habitats; historical/archaeological lands; and wildfire areas.

*Development* means the division of a parcel of land into two or more lots; the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation or enlargement of any structure or use; any mining, excavation, and landfill or land disturbance; any new use or extension of the use; the extension or alteration of the scope of an existing use.

*Economic Growth* means an increase in a geographic area's economic output, as measured by comparing year over year indicators.

*Growth* means the process of increasing in amount, value or importance.

*Open Space* means any land or area the preservation of which in its present use would serve a variety of purposes, including, but not limited to, the preservation of wild plant and animal habitat; protection of streams or water supply; to offset clustered development; buffering of noise, dust, and lighting glare between adjacent land uses; providing land for recreational uses; avoidance of hazards; and the mitigation of impacts to scenic resources. Depending upon the ownership or dedications upon these open spaces, they may be accessible to the public at large or held by private landowners.

*Population Growth* means the increase in the number of people that reside within a geographic area.

*Performance Based Zoning* is an approach to land use planning based on performance standards that regulate the intensity of land use to mitigate adverse impacts on abutting and nearby



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properties. Performance standards assure conformance within acceptable limitations and are typically applied in two categories: regulating the site (i.e. lot size, setbacks, height, parking, infrastructure, etc.) and regulating the activity, including the intensity or outputs of the use (i.e. noise, glare, odor, traffic, water use, hazardous materials, etc.).

*Rural Lands* means not urban. Generally characterized by sparsely developed areas where the land is primarily used for farming, resource extraction, low-density residential uses or open space uses.

*Scenic Corridor* means the area within view from a defined publicly accessible travel route.

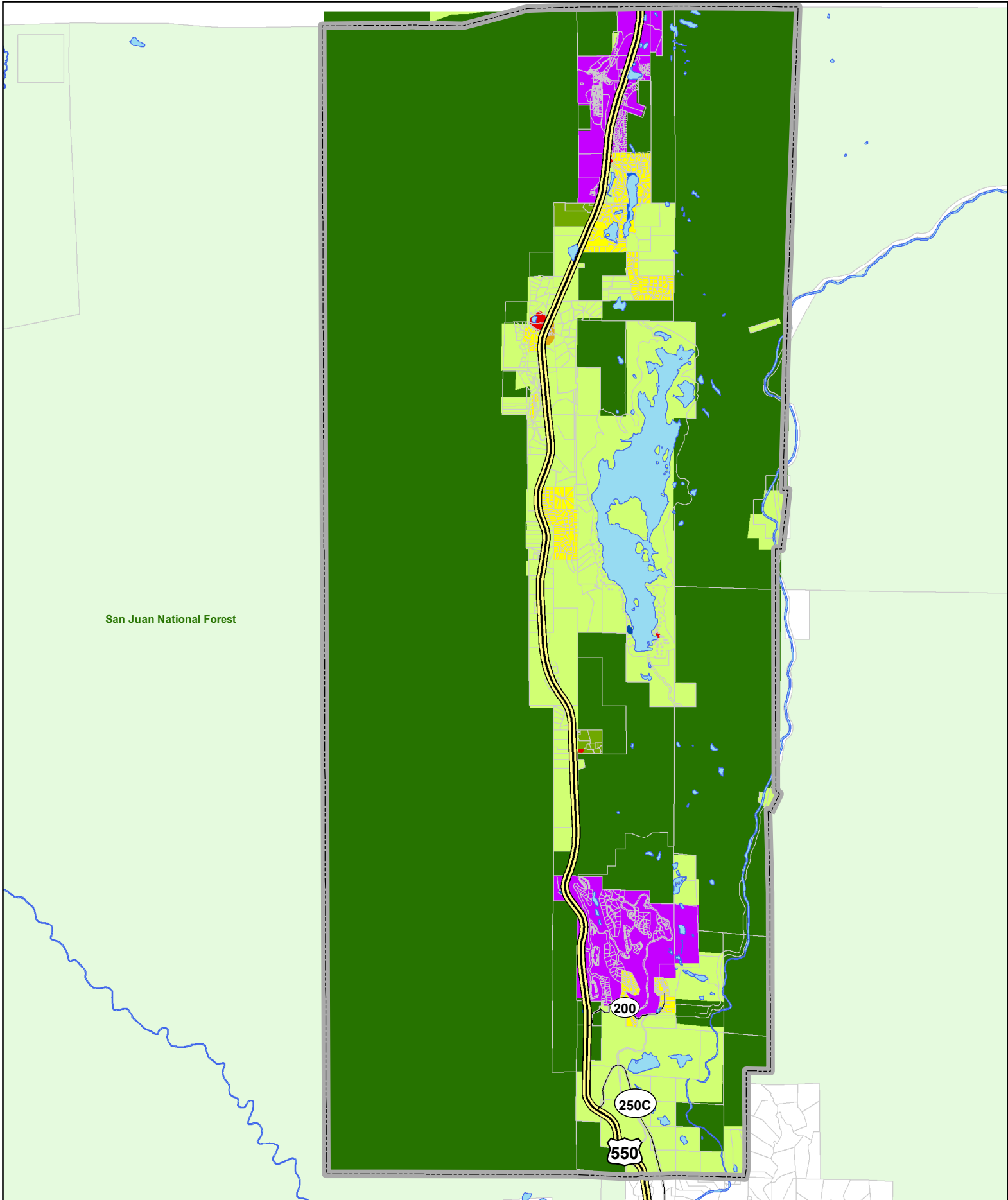
*Senior Housing* means housing located, designed and priced for persons 55 years or older.

*Urban* means of, relating to, characteristic of a city. Urban areas are generally characterized by moderate and higher density residential development, commercial development and industrial development, as well as the availability of public services required for that development, such as central water or sewer.

*Urban Growth Boundary* means an area surrounding existing municipalities or unincorporated settlements that is delineated and regulated by one or more local governments within which urban development is encouraged and outside of which urban development is discouraged or limited.

*View Shed* means the area within view from a specific publicly accessible observation point.





San Juan National Forest

# North County District

## Land Use Classifications

COUNTY	Ag/Timber/Public Recreation	Lake	Public and Community Facility
STATE	Country Tourist/Dude Ranch	Large Lot Residential	Resort
US	High Density	Local Commercial	Suburban Density Residential
		City Limits	Public Lands

N  
▲

0 0.275 0.55 1.1  
Miles

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**Drawn By: Planning**

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**Sheet No.**  
1 of 1

**Checked by: Planning**

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**Date: 10-25-2019**