

2020 Gilpin County Comprehensive Plan

WEBSITE

Award Video

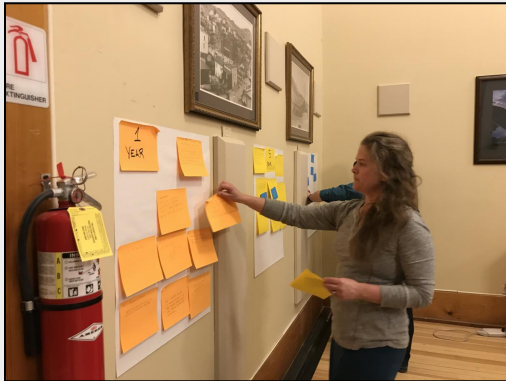


2021 Merit Award: General Planning Project

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The purpose of Gilpin County's first Comprehensive Plan was to position the county proactively for future development that is imminent in a county just 45 minutes outside the City of Denver. The scope and intent of the Comprehensive Plan demanded an integrated planning process to prepare a plan and road map that directs development to be fiscally responsible and environmentally sustainable, while reflecting the

community's preferences to retain the county's rural, mountain character.

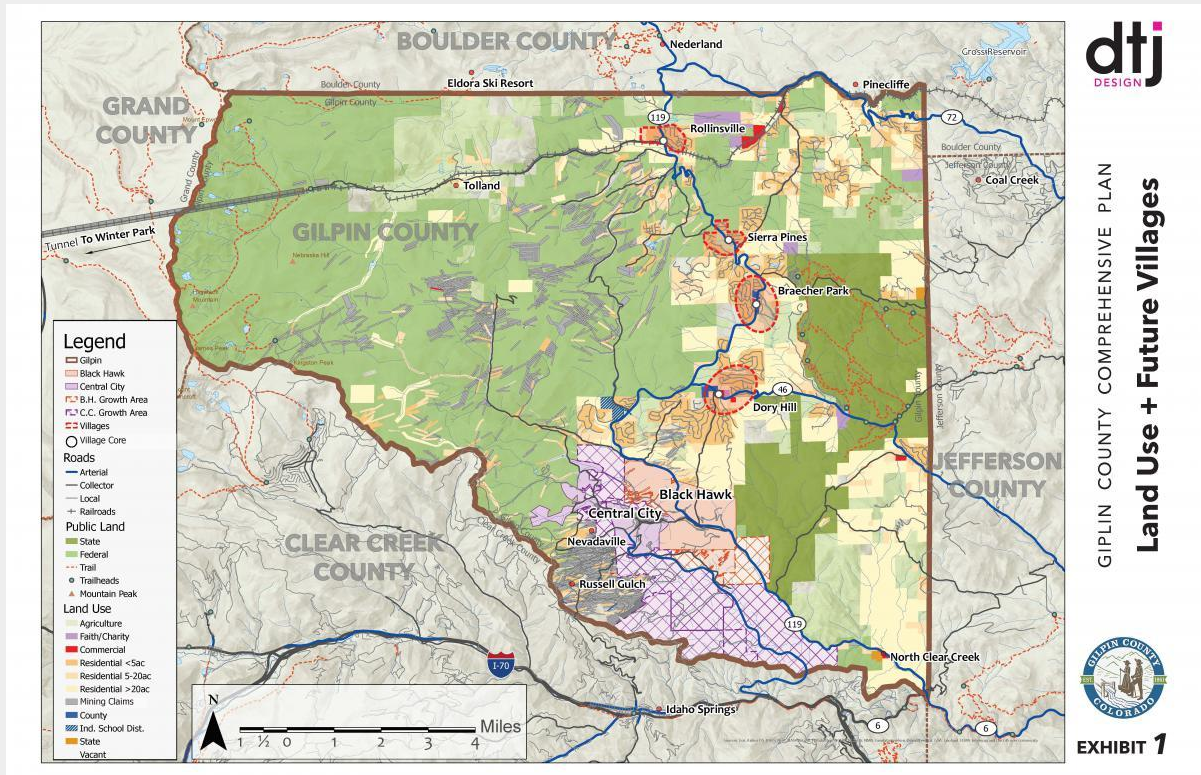


With beautiful views to surrounding mountains, many residents choose to live in Gilpin County for the wide-open vistas, slower pace of life, and simple land use regulations. Within this context, many community participants voiced their opposition to promoting or inviting any development to Gilpin County. During a visioning session, the consultant quoted Daniel H. Burnham with his famous words: "Make not little plans...(instead) Make big plans..." In response, a County Commissioner commented: "In Gilpin County we need to Think Big to Stay Small."

The Comprehensive Plan's Vision Statement reveals a pride of place and forward-thinking future: "High-quality Mountain living that balances environmental sustainability & rural community values with economic diversification & resiliency." This led to three strategies for sustainable growth:

1. Encourage a mix of Residential & Commercial uses;
2. Concentrate development in small, focused areas or nodes with limited footprints;
3. Predetermine and manage growth that allows for predictability AND flexibility.

The planning team worked with the community to develop a strategy to intentionally manage the inevitable development in an orderly fashion, where it has the least impact on the community, and with measures in place to protect the environment. The key to this strategy calls for future development to be concentrated in predetermined nodes.



Resistance to development was reversed during an “A-HA” moment when it was explained that the proposed development nodes, known as “villages,” may take 20 to 50 years to be developed or even 100 years to be fully established. The planning team also helped the community see the positive side of development. The County desires more basic services like high-speed internet, a grocer, medical care provider, and bank. The community realized that by being strategic about where future development occurred, it could increase the likelihood of bringing these types of valued services to the County.

Recognized nationally, the innovative community engagement process saw “unprecedented levels of engagement” in the County’s more than 150-year history. Gathering meaningful, collaborative, and inclusive community input throughout the planning process resulted in substantial and actionable feedback at key planning milestones that directly shaped the Plan’s goals and strategies.

The Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide or road map that WHEN development happens, it is done the right way in the right place. With its first ever Comprehensive Plan, Gilpin County is poised for a bright future; one that respects the rural nature of the County and desire to remain a quiet community, while providing a sustainable approach for economic vitality.