



Draft Regional Comprehensive Plan: Public Comments | Results Summary

December 2021

INTRODUCTION

In late 2020, Pueblo County—in partnership with the City of Pueblo and Pueblo West—launched a major update of the Region’s Comprehensive Plan for the first time since 2002. This update is needed to respond to shifting population and demographic trends, a newly diversified economy, and the evolving needs of unincorporated areas. The updated Regional Comprehensive Plan will explore the needs of both incorporated and unincorporated areas within Pueblo County.

This document summarizes the results of the public comments on the Draft Regional Comprehensive Plan. The Draft Plan was available online for public review and comment between October 13 and December 13, 2021, using Konveio—an online tool that allows reviewers to comment directly on the Draft Plan document.

The public was invited to review and comment on the Draft Plan through e-blasts that were sent to all project website subscribers and through social and traditional media outlets (as determined by the public information offices for Pueblo County, the City of Pueblo, and Pueblo West).

NEXT STEPS

Input received will be reviewed by the project team with comments reflected in the updated Draft Regional Comprehensive Plan prior to the plan adoption process.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- WE are very interested in developing a comprehensive plan to help coordinate and share resources between the small water districts in Pueblo County.
- We need housing for everyone rich poor homeless so we need to end the camping ban and allow the homeless to protect themselves this winter and set up safe camping sites around town I would suggest 10 of them one in each zip code
- Minimum wage jobs aren't enough to keep up with rent utilities transportation medical insurance food etc. so we desperately need training and access to these types of opportunities to transform our great City.
- As a resident of Pueblo, I treasure the Arkansas River, the Riverwalk and the hiking, biking trails along the river. The Nature Center is a great place to meet and rest and enjoy nature. The attached Raptor rehab center is an attraction that could be developed but the physical facility needs improvement. The city owned Mountain Park is a great venue for hiking and exploring nature and serves as a valuable educational center for our youth. These three venues are overseen by the Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center which could really use additional support (funding).
- How are these things being defined, evaluated, and measured?
- Would suggest increasing Code Enforcement's budget. The better a neighborhood looks, due to cleanup of weeds, trash, etc., the more people will want to take care of their own properties.
- The easiest way to get more of something is to lower the cost. How about lower permitting fees at PRBD? Free permits to redevelopers who purchase condemned buildings?
- Regional Building is very difficult to work with on creative concepts to expand housing options. This is true for Commercial as well as residential projects. It drives up costs and pushes people away from the area. Additionally, there is a shortage of senior patio home options in the area. This causes seniors to stay in homes that are not best suited for their needs. The results is premature moving into Assisted or Skilled Care and not turning over single family homes. Adding to the senior patio home inventory would greatly impact the housing market inventory. There are not the creative solutions to housing issues that I have seening other communities. I did senior living on a national basis and was a housing commissioner in Colorado Springs. We are just not being progressive.
- What are the steps for collecting the perspectives that will be represented?
- What can be done to use this space for this purpose year?
- "American Farmland Trust References. The American Farmland Trust is a national agricultural land trust. The term "Prime Farmland" and various soil classifications (e.g., Class 1 soils, Class 2 soils, etc.) are designations provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)—designations which AFT uses. The Plan may want to consider this as it looks at attributing references to various designations such as Prime Farmland, which is an NRCS term. The phrase "nationally significant agricultural land" may be an AFT phrase. The Soil Conservation Service (the former name of NRCS) used the term "Farmlands of National Importance." Dr. Michael Bartolo and/or an NRCS staff member might be able to help clarify."
- " This map shows farmlands that are designated Prime if irrigated. The vast majority of these lands are not irrigated and therefore not Prime, even though they have high quality soils. This map needs to be replaced with a map that shows lands that are Prime and irrigated. Such a map will highlight what a precious and limited resource irrigated cropland is to Pueblo County. The 2017 USDA Agricultural Census reports that, of the 895,508 agricultural acres in Pueblo County, only 18,078 are irrigated. Approximately 85% of this land lies in the St. Charles Mesa, Vineland, and Avondale Communities. The

vast majority of this land is irrigated by the Bessemer Ditch. So, these farms, and the water the Bessemer Ditch supplies to these farms, are of extreme importance to Pueblo County. CDSS can provide irrigation data, which can be overlaid with Prime Farmland designations. Palmer Land Conservancy and Innovative Conservation Solutions also have this data. A recent Soil Conservation Service map (which is incomplete and out of date, but very useful) provides an example of how to make these distinctions."

- What accountabilities will be set to ensue this policy is implemented?
- The policy to “support the extraction of subsurface resources in accordance with state law” is misplaced. This policy is fine, but it does not belong under “Guiding Principle 2: Deepen our Agricultural Roots,” or under “Goal 2.5: Conserve and enhance the region’s watersheds and natural resources,” or under any goal in this section. According to Pueblo County Land Use Code, zoning districts A-1 and A-2 are “designed to retain and promote the appropriate use of dry range and irrigated lands and encourage open use of the land in keeping with its natural characteristics and agricultural functions.” This policy may or may not be consistent with than purpose. By putting it in this section, Pueblo County undermines its ability to protect agricultural lands and watersheds. The placement could be read as an effort to: (a) justify previous use permit decisions; or (b) pave the wave for approval of future decisions that impact agriculture and watersheds, using its location in the agricultural section as a justification for approval. This policy is much better located under “Goal 5.1: Leverage the region’s assets and opportunities.” It could possibly even be combined with Policy-5.1.1: Land for Opportunities.” Locating it under Goal 5.1 allows the county to more equitably weigh agricultural objectives and extractive activities described in the plan.
- "The first and third rows, “Acres of Prime Agricultural Land,” should be broken into two rows to distinguish between irrigated and non-irrigated lands as follows: Acres of irrigated farmland that are designated as Prime Farmland maintained in agricultural use with associated water rights (28.2 square miles or 18,078 acres) and Acres of agricultural land not irrigated—but with soils designated as Prime if irrigated—maintained in agricultural/rangeland use (329.7 square miles or 211,008 acres)"
- Market Pueblo County as a birding "hot spot." Invest in updating the Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center- Raptor Center; market this as an attraction- a chance to see birds of prey up close and personal. Birders and wildlife watchers are big spenders and will travel many miles in pursuit of their passion.
- " Suggest adding the phase “existing M&I” to make this policy consistent with irrigated agricultural land protection policies. The revision would read as follows: “Promote the availability of existing M&I water resources as an incentive for new employers and other economic opportunities while also emphasizing the region’s commitment to conservation.”
- Nuclear power should not be considered as green or renewable energy. All the Nuclear waste we created in the last 70 or so years is still with us today we can't get rid of it and Pueblo will have a waste dump for tens of thousands of years to come. They have a plant in Massachusetts that is trying to dump Nuclear waste in the bay of cape cod but they finally just stopped them for now. We used to be called stink town by travelers on i25 because of the mill and we finally got it cleaned up and now it the first solar powered steel mill in the world. What an achievement !!! Now we need to keep going greener wit solar / wind and Battery storage and all the new Technology in the works around the globe. New Technology not old Nuclear waste evenif they call it new small modules it still creates indestructible waste that requires millions of gallons of water to contain it . We can't afford to lose all the clean fresh water to store WASTE!!!
- "1. Market Pueblo County as a birding ""Hot Spot."" Birders tend to be older and financially independent; they, along with wildlife watchers, spend considerable amounts of money pursuing their hobby.
- 2. Always put open space and wildlife habitat at the forefront of planning.

- 3. Plant only native plants. This helps important pollinators.
- 4. Build a new Raptor Center building. The center is the only rehabilitation center for eagles, hawks, owls, etc. in southern Colorado.
- 5. Limit development of Hatchet Ranch and Red Creek Ranch since they are important sites for birds, wildlife, and rare plants.
- 6. Keep ""dark skies"" in Pueblo West.
- 7. Revitalize downtown. Create a '16th Street Mall' vibe with shops accessible by an old-time electric street car reminiscent of 1900s Pueblo.
- 8. Do NOT develop a nuclear plant in Pueblo County. Solar and wind farms, properly sited, are the way to go.
- 9. Thanks."
- Consider adding a new policy under goal 6.3, which could read as follows: "6.3.10 Surplus Water Allocation. Prioritize Intra-county use of surplus water to ensure surplus water serves Pueblo County needs whenever possible—municipal, industrial, and agricultural—ahead of non-Pueblo County needs.
- These water conservation thoughts are in contrast to Pueblo Water's Water Efficiency Report. No incentives, no conservation efforts espoused by them.
- This should be changed to explicitly exclude nuclear power. Pueblo County should never be the site of any nuclear power plant.
- This must be edited to specifically exclude nuclear power. We NEVER want a nuclear power plant anywhere in Pueblo County. Pueblo has the ideal climate for wind and solar energy, and voters were led to believe that our commitment to clean energy would be based on those sources. The risk for nuclear. energy alone is prohibitive. Wind and solar are cost effective and safeguards the health and well-being of the population.
- "This comment applies to both 6.4.2 and 6.4.4. Our county must support development of solar facilities (and some wind) as our greatest resource, besides our people, is the abundant free sunshine we receive. This would allow for economic development as well as for lower cost, actually clean energy to our own people.
- Emerging technologies that aid in implementation of renewable energy should be vigorously pursued, such as energy storage with sodium or lead batteries. We definitely should avoid expensive, dangerous, exploitive technologies such as nuclear power that will burden us with radioactive waste, development killing bad publicity, and dependency on single big dollar corporate tax payments rather than diversifying our economic base. "
- Nuclear power is a non-renewable extractive heavily subsidized industry tied to the military-industrial complex and operated in a corporate manner with a CEO having a legal and fiduciary obligation to return as much profit that is legally possible to its shareholders. Human ignorance, bureaucratic indifference, and corporate greed will automatically reduce public safety and environmental concerns while concentrating on maximizing profits.
- Remember that we are promoting "renewable energy" and that nuclear is not "renewable". It also isn't "clean energy". With the nuclear waste created, there is a need for storage of at least 10,000 years. We are not able to provide for that type of storage. And we don't have the volumes of water necessary to operate a nuclear facility. Let the customers of such an idea help find a location closer to where it is used. Don't sacrifice Pueblo as a provider of electricity using a dangerous industry such as nuclear power.

- No nukes in Pueblo County! This nuke in a bottle concept still has nuclear waste. And nuclear waste lasts a very,very long time. Pueblo County does not have the water to deal with waste. The energy from Comanche 3 isn't used by the citizens of this county. We shouldn't have to deal with the waste. No nukes in Pueblo County.
- Nuclear power is not a clean, safe, green, or affordable industry capable of solving our energy needs. With abundant solar insolation, the county should look to emerging technologies such as wind and solar. A nuclear power plant requires 30 to 40% more cooling water per kilowatt-hour produced than a coal-fired power plant. As there is no guarantee that this water will be available in the near future the county should avoid placing any unnecessary burden on this precious resource. There should be no nuclear power plants of any type allowed in Pueblo County. Someone once said A bright person solves problems, while a WISEMAN avoids them.
- "Where is the Priority Location for Solar map? The only thing displayed are 2 blue windows. If there is such a map please email it to me."
- "Solar and wind farms must be properly sited to avoid the unnecessary killing of federally-protected raptors- eagles, hawks, others- and to protect bats which are important in pest management and pollination.
- Solar and wind are preferable- and safer- than nuclear power."
- BHJE achieved 30% Renewable energy in 2020
- Will 24th St be considered a priority to run into the city with the development on the westside, jail and Joe Martinez Blvd expansion?
- "The County's Long Range Transportation plan and PACOG
- Moves the Region 2045 are the same document. "
- Revitalize downtown- shops accessible only on foot or by an electric street car to get that 1900s Pueblo feel.
- Limit sprawl. Maintain large pieces of undisturbed habitat for wildlife. Pueblo County's prairie ecosystem is the fastest disappearing ecosystem in the country. Prairies sequester carbon and help with climate change. Some bird species are found in no other habitat.
- Water, in drought-stricken Colorado (and the entire Southwest) is going to become the new "gold." The Colorado River is almost depleted. Agriculture uses 80% of Colorado's water. People build golf courses and maintain water-guzzling bluegrass lawns. Consideration must be given to using recycled water, promoting native plants, using xeriscaping as much as possible. Water infrastructure must be modernized- water storage, water quality, protection of watersheds, rivers, streams, wetlands.
- The water systems in these areas are vital to our future. This impacts large geographic areas where growth can occur and that there is ageing infrastructure.
- "Please ensure we are allowed to camp on our own personal property for short duration (up to 2 weeks).
- Currently it is not expressly permitted by the Zoning department, please change that. The logic they use is that if it is not permitted, it is prohibited. In that case allot of things are prohibited, such as hiking, biking, walking your dogs, mowing pastures, driving on your property. To show the absurd aspect, breathing is not expressly permitted, so by there definition, it is prohibited.
- I'm not asking to allow living in an RV, but to allow property owners in the county to be able to camp on the property they bought to do just that. Camping on Holiday weekends, normal weekends and for vacations for be allowed. The few campgrounds in Pueblo county are usually full on weekends. This would allow families to use the property they bought to enjoy our great outdoors. "

- Pueblo has an aging population. Elderly folks need to have accessible grocery stores, shops, car repair, medical offices, etc. Planning could incorporate amenities for older people. Pocket neighborhoods for seniors should be considered with centralized services and community spaces.
- From my understanding, PW is not in the position of being able to keep building and support more homes/townhomes/apartments. Along with the out of state persons who think grass is a good idea. However we do need commercial businesses. Overall the lack of water is very, very concerning for those of us who have lived here for many years. All of CO is having an issue. PW cannot keep building density today, and try and sustain it in the future.
- We purchased a home to be in a rural area with large lots. Mixed use with high density housing increases traffic on roads that are not currently maintained well. Water is already an issue in PW. Adding housing density and commercial use adds additional burden. Most of the “rural” A-3 lots are on septic. Adding higher density into areas that do not have sewer causes a different set of problems. The area along and near Nichols already has increased non-residential traffic with Pueblo Lake traffic. Adding housing density or commercial use in that area will exacerbate the traffic problems. Areas of Pueblo county that are located within PW that are not part of PW should be incorporated and be zoned to match the surrounding residential areas. If the parcel is near an A-3, that is what it should be zoned as, or left to be an open space or park.
- "St. Charles Mesa/St. Charles Mesa Area/the Mesa Terminology. The use of the terms St. Charles Mesa and the Mesa seem to apply to different geographies in different parts of the plan. Sometimes the terms apply to the specific Agricultural Neighborhood call St. Charles Mesa, which lies west of the St. Charles River. Sometime the terms include St. Charles Mesa and Vineland (from the St. Charles Mesa Agricultural Neighborhood to Sixmile Creek; e.g., “the western portion of the St. Charles Mesa,” p. 108). Sometimes the terms apply to the St. Charles Mesa, Vineland and Avondale communities/areas (e.g., “the majority of the County’s prime agricultural land is located on the St. Charles Mesa in the Arkansas Valley Fill Aquifer,” p. 254). This needs to be addressed in a consistent manner throughout the plan to avoid confusion in future decision making."
- What can St Charles Mesa Water District do to help further this goal? We are very supportive and proud of our agricultural history and would like to see it continue into the future
- The Mountain Park is wild with deer, mountain lion, bear, red-tailed hawks, etc. Keep the Park intact. Support the Nature & Wildlife Discovery Center's campus there. Market the Horseshoe Lodge as a tourist attraction where wildlife watchers and birders can find a quiet retreat, and where businesses can hold office meetings and retreats.
- The PMP is important to me as a next door neighbor to the park and a 4+ decades resident of Beulah. I am currently deeply concerned about the mismanagement led by an incompetent non profit Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center that is in charge of the park. I am hoping the City/County will do a review of the organization and make them accountable both fiscally and to the community. My recommendation is that they meet with all current Board members for honest information rather than just the top administration. I think this would be disclosing and important to the county/city of Pueblo that invests in the park.
- Palmer Land Trust needs to be updated to Palmer Land Conservancy
- Pueblo really needs a Unified Development Code. However, it probably won't happen due to their small budget.
- The Parks and Recreation Dept. has no citizen advisory committee. Unbelievable for a city of our size. As a result, no citizen help for updating a Parks Plan as well as applying for Colorado Outdoors Grants.
- Incorporate the 2020 census results instead of the 2019.

- inaccurate map: Belah Water Works District and Pine Drive Water District are separate. the map shows the entire area around Beulah as PDWD. Half of it is BWWD.
- Pueblo Police Department needs to improve their control over speeding, running red lights, running stop signs, temp tag enforcement. The Plan should admit that they need to improve.
- Are we including utilities in these numbers as they are part of housing cost?
- "Why aren't we using 2020 or 2021 statistics here as it is well below 3.1% now"
- "In 2019 Pueblo made national news for its mental health crisis we really need mental health and substance abuse capacity built into supportive housing."
- We have never had a shelter with 200 person capacity in fact in January of 2019 there was no shelter in Pueblo and an estimated 6-700 people living on the streets also these point in time counts are not accurate as they fail to locate all of the homeless consistently.
- The PMP is important to me as a next door neighbor to the park and a 4+ decades resident of Beulah. I am currently deeply concerned about the mismanagement led by an incompetent non profit Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center that is in charge of the park. I am hoping the City/County will do a review of the organization and make them accountable both fiscally and to the community. My recommendation is that they meet with all current Board members for honest information rather than just the top administration. I think this would be disclosing and important to the county/city of Pueblo that invests in the park.
- The park's natural areas and built infrastructure - trails, diverse ecosystems, Horseshoe Lodge - make it an ideal location for Nature-based education and recreation, retreats, as well as what is sometimes referred to as "glamping" (comfortable lodging while deeply immersed in Nature). Its more recent history includes significant educational use of the park through collaborations with local school districts, use that has waned somewhat the last few years. Its potential as a retreat center, meeting place for workshops and other educational endeavors has barely been tapped. With the right leadership and vision, the park could be the premiere facility for training teachers, administrators, and other educators in Nature-based education (just as the Teton Science School is for the northern Rockies). A strong partnership with CSU-P should be developed in utilizing the park and its facilities for students with natural resource, science and education majors (similar to how CSU Fort Collins has the Pingree Park facilities located in the mountains west of Fort Collins).
- Add an Aquatics Center as a goal within the next 20 years.
- The Environmental Education Program that had been developed at the Pueblo Mountain Park was a model for other areas. The infrastructure is in place to make it be the model for this concept. By cultivating more collaboration and developing into a training location - this has the potential to be a shining star in the areas. The Lodge is completely set up to host retreats for nature education.
- "Colorado City Parks and Recreation Greenhorn Meadows Park and Campground offers camping along the Greenhorn Creek and picnic areas, playgrounds, and event pavilion. Lake Beckwith is popular for fishing and hiking the trail around the beautiful lake. Greenhorn Valley Trail Master Plan includes developing more hiking trails to connect much of the Colorado City/Greenhorn Valley area."
- Per HB21-1233, which passed through the Colorado State Legislature in 2021, tax credit certificates are issued for 90 percent of the total donated value of a conservation easement.