

2010 Mineral County Comprehensive Plan

Section 8: Vision of the Future

Introduction

At first glance, the future vision of Mineral County looks very much like the present vision of Mineral County. However, when things come into focus, it becomes apparent that the desired state of the county is much more refined than the current state. The natural areas of the county are still open and beautiful. Natural resource extraction and utilization is occurring, but it is currently being done as sensitively and as unobtrusively as feasible. Development has occurred and in some places expanded. But it has happened in places where it made the most sense, resulting in both an environmentally-friendly and economically-sound approach to development.

As a result, the county will remain a place where people want to live, work, and play. That is the intent of the comprehensive plan. It should be noted that this document paints with very broad strokes. This is intentional since the comprehensive plan is a foundation document. What else may come to pass should be referenced in some way, shape, or form in the comprehensive plan. In other words, to quote the axiom of an old planner, “it is better to be approximately right than precisely wrong.”

This should not be construed to mean that details are not important. In fact, the contrary is true as detailed descriptions of work to be done are essential to transform the recommendations found within this comprehensive plan. For the comprehensive plan, such details will be found in the subdivision ordinance and related land use regulations put into place for the county. They will be found in the other ordinances enacted on matters ranging from beautification to “adult entertainment.” And they will be found in the topical plans developed by other agencies and entities that serve Mineral County.

There are five major subject areas in the comprehensive plan: Land Use, Community Design, Infrastructure, Community and Economic Development, and Public Safety. Of course, these divisions and the different activities within them are not mutually exclusive by any means. For example, land use patterns impact infrastructure demands. Community design decisions can

influence public service needs. And development plays a role in almost everything else the county will plan to do.

These interconnections are not just hypothetical. There are several instances where very similar points are made in more than one section in the plan. Topics related to beautification are addressed in the plan under both Community Design and Development Activities. Targeted growth patterns are discussed in both the Land Use and Development sections. Tourism is brought up under Development Activities and again under Public Services. Historic preservation gets talked about in the Community Design and the Public Service sections. The cross-listing of such subjects underscores their importance to the county as it plans for the future and as it works to make its vision a reality.

Summary of Recommended Actions

The plan has five main subject areas, each with its own section. Under each section, there are generally three or four broad subtopics where recommendations are made. Then for each subtopic, there are one to several recommendations. In total, the plan has 64 recommended actions to help the county achieve its vision. Some of these require very little time and incur almost no cost; others represent long-term projects with substantial resource investments. The scope of the recommendations for each subtopic is discussed below. A matrix listing each goal individually, along with information related to time frame, responsible entity, and potential funding sources appears at the end of this section.

Land Use (8 Goals)

- The two goals related to agriculture and forestry involve recognition of current activities, education and outreach, and the possible use of regulation. Such activities have little-to-no cost, although some operational activities may incur some incidental expenses. They can be done in a relatively short period of time (months) to a medium time frame (1-2 years) as well as be an on-going concern.
- The three goals related to natural resources involve recognition of current activities, the possible use of regulation, research, communication, and potentially lobbying decision-makers. Such activities generally have little-to-no cost, although lobbying efforts and some operational

activities may incur some incidental expenses. They can be done in a relatively short period of time (months) to a medium time frame (1-2 years) as well as be an on-going concern.

- The two goals related to housing and other developments involve recognition of current activities, research, and the possible use of regulation. Such activities have little-to-no cost. They can be done over medium time frame (1-2 years) but will be an on-going concern.
- The one goal related to proposed land uses involves recognition of current activities, regional cooperation, and the possible use of regulation. Such activities have little-to-no cost. They can be started in a relatively short period of time (months), though it may take a medium time-frame (1-2 years) to complete and will be an on-going concern as well.

Community Design (11 Goals)

- The two goals related to development patterns involve recognition of current activities, the possible use of regulation, and capital investment. Such activities have little-to-no cost while infrastructure work will require large investment, with grants, bonds, and intergovernmental transfers being the main sources of funding. Some activities can be done in a relatively short period of time (months) and will be an on-going concern while infrastructure investment will take several years (3-5 years).
- The five goals related to general aesthetics involve recognition of the current situation and actions, organizing activities, developing projects, regional cooperation, and lobbying. Such activities have varied costs. The projects will need some operational funding from county sources. Lobbying efforts may incur some incidental expenses. They can be started in a relatively short period of time (months) but will easily continue for a medium time frame (1-2 years).
- The three goals related to historic preservation involve recognition of current activities, the possible use of regulation, regional cooperation, promotion, and education and outreach. Such activities have little-to-no cost, though educational efforts may incur some incidental expenses. They can be done in a relatively short period of time (months) but will be an on-going concern.

Infrastructure (14 Goals)

- The six goals related to water, waste water, and solid waste involve recognition of current activities, research, regional cooperation, the possible use of regulation, oversight and inspection, and capital improvement. These activities have varied costs. Oversight activities and research studies will require some modest funding from county operations. Capital improvement will require large investment, with grants, bonds, and intergovernmental transfers being the main sources of funding. The activities can be started in a relatively short period of time (months) but will require at least a medium time frame (1-2 years) and most projects will be long-term (several years).

- The five goals related to transportation involve recognition of current activities, lobbying, the possible use of regulation, regional cooperation, and capital improvement. These activities have varied costs. Lobbying efforts may incur some incidental expenses. Capital improvement will require large investment, with grants, bonds, and intergovernmental transfers being the main sources of funding. The activities can be started in a relatively short period of time (months) but will require at least a medium time frame (1-2 years) and most projects will be long-term (several years).

- The three goals related to facilities and services involve recognition of current activities, lobbying, research, and capital improvement. These activities have varied costs. Lobbying efforts may incur some incidental expenses. Capital improvement will require large investment, with grants, bonds, and intergovernmental transfers being the main sources of funding. The activities can be started in a relatively short period of time (months) but will require at least a medium time frame (1-2 years) and most projects will be long-term (several years).

Community and Economic Development (17 Goals)

- The nine goals related to economic development strategies involve recognition of current activities, research, education and outreach, encouragement, promotion and lobbying, regional cooperation, possible use of regulation, and capital investment. Most of these activities have low costs. Education and outreach as well as promotion and lobbying efforts may incur some incidental to small expenses that will have to be funded out of county operations. Meanwhile,

capital improvement will require large investment, with grants, bonds, and intergovernmental transfers being the main sources of funding. The activities can be started in a relatively short period of time (months) but will require at least a medium time frame (1-2 years) and most projects will be long-term (several years).

- The four goals related to renewal and redevelopment involve recognition of the current situation and actions, organizing activities, developing projects, regional cooperation, and lobbying. Such activities have varied costs. The projects will need some operational funding from county sources. Lobbying efforts may incur some incidental expenses. They can be started in a relatively short period of time (months) but will easily continue for a medium time frame (1-2 years).

- The four goals related to preferred development areas involve recognition of current activities, the possible use of regulation, regional cooperation, and lobbying and promotion. Such activities have little-to-no cost, though lobbying and promotional efforts may incur some incidental to minor expenses to be funded from county operations. They can be done in a relatively short period of time (months) but will be an on-going concern.

Public Services (14 Goals)

- The six goals related to education and culture involve recognition of the current situation, research, organizing activities, developing projects, communication, lobbying and promotion, and eventually capital improvements. Such activities have varied costs. The projects will need some operational funding from county sources. Lobbying efforts may incur some incidental expenses. Capital expenditures would need funds from bonds, grants, or intergovernmental transfers. These activities can be started in a relatively short period of time (months) but will continue for a medium time frame (1-2 years).

- The four goals related to recreation and tourism involve recognition of the current situation, research, organizing activities, developing projects, lobbying and promotion, regional cooperation, and eventually capital improvements. Such activities have varied costs. The projects will need some operational funding from county sources. Lobbying efforts may incur some incidental expenses. Capital expenditures would need funds from bonds, grants, or

intergovernmental transfers. These activities can be started in a relatively short period of time (months) but will continue for a medium time frame (1-2 years) to the long-term (several years).

- The four goals related to safety and security involve recognition of the current situation, organizing activities, developing projects, communication, lobbying and promotion, regional cooperation, the possible use of regulation, and potentially capital expenditures. Such activities have varied costs. The projects will need some operational funding from county sources. Lobbying efforts may incur some incidental expenses. Capital expenditures would need funds from bonds, grants, or intergovernmental transfers. These activities can be started in a relatively short period of time (months) but will continue for a medium time frame (1-2 years) to the long-term (several years).

Concluding Comments

This plan allows Mineral County to have met the state-mandated 10-year plan update requirement. It provides information and guidance to other levels of government and to potential funders as to the direction the county desires to move.

However, for the comprehensive plan to have utility beyond these perfunctory activities, it must be a “living, breathing document” rather than a “shelf document.” It must serve its function as the guiding document for the county, or else much of the potential benefit (and the rationale) for the effort put forth by the Mineral County Planning Commission over the last three years will have been lost.