

PUEBLO'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Pueblo Area Council of Governments

The Pueblo Regional Development Plan, undertaken by the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG), is one of the most important initiatives in regional planning recent history. This initiative is a joint venture of the City of Pueblo, Pueblo County, the Metro Districts of Pueblo West and Colorado City, the towns of Beruloh and Rio, School Districts 60 and 70, the Pueblo Board of Water, Parks, and the Salt Creek Sanitation District under the auspices of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments.

Decisions made as a result of this initiative will have an impact on the area's quality of life for many years into the future. These decisions ultimately affect the area's land use, economic development, recreation and public facilities, infrastructure development, traffic circulation, as well as the direction of residential, commercial and industrial growth in the community.

The plan was prepared to assist the Pueblo Region in accommodating a future population of 200,000 people. The Region is projected to reach by 2030. The plan is meant to be an evolving document that provides guidance for a variety of growth-related issues. The plan is intended to be general in nature, defining broad development principles, policies, and strategies to guide land use decisions that shape the Region's pattern of physical development.

The Comprehensive Development Plan was developed over a two-year period with the assistance of the Burnham Group, a consulting firm that spent substantial time becoming familiar with the community and its issues. The Plan charts the course of growth and development for future generations, with significant input from citizens and interest groups incorporated into the Plan.

VISION FOR PUEBLO REGION

- Character of Pueblo maintained and preservation of natural setting and cultural history while allowing for economic growth.
- Well-planned and maintained infrastructure and public services.
- Efficient/multi-modal transportation system serving all citizens.
- Strong interconnected neighborhoods with all services and activities.
- Strong and diverse job market and employment opportunities.
- Well-planned and attractive community, particularly in older areas.
- Pedestrian and bicycles or greenspace that thoughtful planning.
- Maintain natural beauty, while still allowing reasonable and rational growth.
- Intimate rural setting will be maintained with changing neighborhood.
- Continued preservation of open space and agricultural land.
- Recreational facilities that meet the full lifecycle of all citizens.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Many opportunities were provided for respective governmental units and citizens to influence the Regional Development Plan. Community outreach meetings, developer briefings and community event surveys were a few of the ways used throughout the Region to measure community views on growth and development. These feedback tools were repeated at various stages of the Plan's development.

COMMUNITY ISSUES

Throughout the process of listening to public and community leaders through surveys and interviews, a significant number of land use issues were raised. Many of these issues related to mobility, such as the lack of connectivity from one area of the region to the other, traffic congestion or the lack of pedestrian-friendly transportation systems. Other concerns included land use conflicts between residential and commercial, redevelopment of older areas within the City of Pueblo, and the suburbanization of rural areas. Also, issues frequently raised in focus groups included the economy, and overcrowding within the school system by increasing suburban areas.

REGIONAL OPEN SPACE SURVEY

Pueblo County is distinguished as the only county in the Pueblo Regional Development Plan, a survey was identified that asked questions related to growth and development in the region. Excellent response was received, with over 400 people completing the survey while attending the annual CHOP and Friends of the Plan Alternative Meetings.

Managing growth

96% of local government should take the initiative to guide growth within the Pueblo Region, with 30% said this was the role of the City of Pueblo.

Location of commercial and industrial development

79% agreed commercial development should be concentrated in planned areas, rather than as strip development along I-25 and major roadways.

Landscape and signage

94% agreed landscaping should be required to improve the look of commercial and industrial development.

88% agreed limiting the size and number of signs improves the look of commercial and industrial development.

Agricultural or environmentally sensitive lands

90% agreed programs should be developed to protect productive agricultural/environmentally sensitive lands.

77% were willing to pay 3 cents/day to fund programs.

BRIEF HISTORY

The land that now makes Pueblo County was for many years in two countries. With the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the US acquired the Western lands, including the territory of Colorado. Pueblo County was formally incorporated in 1808, New Spain and the US.

In 1849, the Mexican War ended and the land north of the Arkansas became part of the US. In 1858, the gold rush in Colorado and Pueblo became an important trading post. Much of Pueblo's ranching history has its roots in cattle being driven from Texas on the Goodling/Leitch Trail to feed the military posts and mining activities in 1857. The City of Pueblo was formally incorporated in 1860.

In 1880, the Colorado Coal & Iron Company emerged as the steel company that would shape Pueblo for most of the next century. The area's abundant water resources provided the development of rail access to the mines and the shipment of steel ship for processing. Soon Pueblo became known as the "Steeling Capital of the American West."

In 1880, the towns of Pueblo, South Pueblo, and Central Pueblo consolidated into the single town of Pueblo. The town of Bessemer was annexed in 1884. With these consolidations and annexation, the total population of the new city of Pueblo reached 20,000 residents.

In 1948, the city limits of Pueblo were not-quite-quadrupled. The decades of the 1950s and 1960s saw the largest population increase Pueblo has experienced. Approximately 140,000 new residents. Pueblo continued to grow and prosper until the 1970s, when the oil shock led to a population of approximately 97,000.

In the 1970s, single-family development within the City of Pueblo began slow and has only increased by 5500 to 6000 units in the 30 years. However, in recent years, much of the 1970s, single-family development within the incorporated areas of Pueblo County. In the last 30 years, the County's unincorporated population has increased by 15, 700 persons, much of it within the Pueblo West Metro District and the St. Charles Mesa.

LAND DEMAND AND CAPACITY

LAND DEMAND

The land demand analysis is an estimate of the amount of land needed to accommodate future population. This analysis estimates future land demand in three broad categories:

- Residential uses to accommodate household growth.
- Nonresidential uses to accommodate employment growth.
- Public sector land needs for parks and school.

Population Demand

In 1970, Pueblo County had a population of 183,000, of which 82% was within the City of Pueblo. By 2030, the region's population had reached 146,000. The City's share of the region's population had declined to 74%. It is estimated that the County's population will reach 200,000 by 2030, of which only 62% will be in the City.

	1970	2000	2030
Pueblo County	118,732	139,523	199,792
City of Pueblo	92,774	103,296	124,246
City %	77.7%	74.1%	62%

Employment Demand

Projecting future employment assists in determining the demand for future nonresidential land. Table 2 provides estimates for total public and private sector jobs for Pueblo County from 1997 to 2030.

	1997	2030
Services & Retail Trade	30,794	46,478
Government	10,863	10,438
Manufacturing & Construction	5,182	4,810
Health, Public Assistance	2,627	2,777
Transport, Comm, Utilities	2,374	4,053
Wholesale Trade	2,669	2,669
Agriculture/Forestry	1,128	2,226
	60,027	139,283

Total Demand

Table 3 presents a summary of the gross acres needed to accommodate projections for population, housing, and employment growth. It summarizes the projected land demand needed to accommodate an additional 60,000 residents and 73,000 jobs by 2030.

	Regional Demand	Open Acres
Single-Family	24,348 units	19,500
Multi-Family	2,728 units	1,676
Commercial	1,624,470 sq ft	4,400
Office	7,830,225 sq ft	26,130
Industrial	4,262,000 sq ft	2,000
Total Acres		34,506

Regional Development Needs

Based on population growth in the region and existing parkland deficits in the unincorporated areas, there will be an additional parkland demand of 472 acres. Approximately 80% of this additional acreage is due to the growing unincorporated areas of the region. Recreation facilities may vary considerably based on the area served. The more densely developed urban areas of the city may have a need for neighborhood level parks within walking distance of homes, while the less densely populated areas of the County may have a need for large district parks.

Public School Demand

Pueblo County is served by two public school districts: District No. 60 covering the City of Pueblo, and District No. 70 covering the remainder of the County. Population projections by age are only available for the city level therefore, future demand for new school acreage is on a countywide basis. Current enrollment is estimated at 35,964 students (public and private schools). By 2030, it is projected that enrollment will rise to 34,333 students, creating a demand for an additional 210 acres (Elementary: 70 acres, Middle: 40 acres, and High: 100 acres).

LAND CAPACITY

The land capacity analysis examines the capacity of the Region's vacant land to accommodate additional development based on how the land is currently used. This determines how much future development can be built on existing vacant land as it is currently used.

The Pueblo Region has a growth capacity of 1,225,550 vacant, developable acres (1915 square miles or three-fourths of the Region's 2,400 square miles). This is vacant land unsuitable by environmental factors such as steep slopes, flood plains, rivers or land in public ownership such as right-of-ways, parks, depots, national forest, etc. This growth capacity, however, includes land that is active agricultural use and is not necessarily suitable for development. But because there are currently few operations on agricultural lands being converted to "developed urban" uses, they were included in the growth capacity uses.

SUMMARY OF CAPACITY AND DEMAND

By year 2030, it is projected the Region's population will reach 200,000. Future population growth will add an estimated 30,000 dwelling units to the County's 20% increase. Additional residential development over the next 30 years will create a gross land demand of 12,220 acres.

The Region may add over 73,000 new jobs over the next 30 years.

Job growth will have a gross land demand of 9,790 acres.

Of the Pueblo Region's 2,400 square miles, over 1900 square miles are classified as vacant (much of which is agricultural and environmentally unsuitable).

It is projected that two-thirds of the future housing development will occur outside the City of Pueblo, containing a total of more people being in the area than in the City of Pueblo.

Land use densities in rural areas currently consume land at a rate of 180 acres per 1000 additional dwelling units (1 unit per 60 acres compared to 3 units per acre in the urban area).

The vacant land capacity (under current zoning classification) can accommodate 80,000 additional dwelling units and land uses for future employment of 72,000 additional jobs.

NEIGHBORHOOD PRINCIPLES

- Promote both historic and economic neighborhood revitalization & preservation.
- Promote new suburban developments that are reflections of Pueblo's historical neighborhood mix of housing types and sizes, street-oriented streets, neighborhood commercial and office, pedestrian-friendly, accessible to parks, an abundance of street trees, etc.
- Address open space and recreation in new neighborhood development.
- Update ordinances & building codes to provide more design flexibility.

PLAN OVERVIEW

Previous sections of the Plan have reviewed the history of the Region, the Plan's community outreach efforts, community issues and the Region's capacity and demand for development. These sections serve as the historical, factual and perspective foundation for the Regional Development Plan. The Regional Development Plan outlines this information into four Plan components: 1) The Plan's Guiding Principles, 2) Development Action Areas, 3) Future Land Use, and 4) Regional Transportation Plan.

Regional Plan Guiding Principles

This establishes the Plan's overarching goals and objectives related to future region needs, urban needs, rural needs, neighborhood needs and design/environmental needs. These Guiding Principles are built on the issues, ideas and visions gleaned through the community outreach initiatives as well as the factual foundation established in the Capacity and Demand Analysis.

Development Action Areas

This defines development timing and/or character, and infrastructure policies by geographic subareas of the Region. This is the growth management component of the Plan. Based on the provision of public services and proximity to existing urban areas, the timing of development is addressed. Likewise the "capacity" of the growth areas to accommodate projected 2030 population and economic growth is reviewed.

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use component identifies and defines the specific land uses that are appropriate within the Region, also identified are recommendations on development densities by land use category. The Future Land Use is the Plan's more "fine grained" aspect of the development picture, after examining the Region's large undeveloped "level" land component identifies the more site-specific "niche" level of appropriate land use.

Regional Transportation Plan

This addresses the future circulation system to accommodate growth and ensure the continuation of the street network plan as well as the future transportation plan that will be updated in the future to reflect the Regional Development Plan's 2030 planning horizon.

REGIONAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Regional Plan's "Guiding Principles" set the framework for the Plan by establishing the overarching goals and objectives for the Region's future development, redevelopment or preservation.

The Guiding Principles are divided into the categories: 1) Regional Development, 2) Urban Development, 3) Rural Development, 4) Open Space, 5) Environmental Quality and Environmental Quality. These Guiding Principles shape the physical layout of the Plan and the implementation strategies for future growth and development, as well as preservation and rehabilitation of existing urban and rural areas within the Region.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Encourage efficient and prudent extension of infrastructure in a manner that considers impacts to both service providers and taxpayers.
- Develop efficient development regulations that consider geographic locations, physical infrastructure conditions, and desired densities, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.
- The type and intensity of development should conform to the recommendations of the Development Plan and should not be hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.
- Identify appropriate transportation infrastructure future growth.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Provide public services and infrastructure to areas of the Region that are environmentally and economically suitable for urban growth.
- Identify environmental & economic factors that make land suitable.
- Support a zoning consistent with the guiding principles.
- Support a Regional Plan that maintains a strong/highly urbanable.
- Maintain development in the urbanized area easier by providing design standards that are flexible and market driven.
- Clearly define the role of the Metro Districts within the Region.
- Provide a Regional Land use plan that recognizes the relative importance of Pueblo's Downtown to the City of Pueblo.
- Encourage economic planning consistent with the Regional Plan.
- Create a Regional land use plan that reduces the impact of development on the Region's transportation system.
- Adequately address arterial roadway system improvements in advance of development.
- Create a Regional Plan that creates alternatives to the automobile.
- Provide for mixed use and multi development that make it convenient for employees to walk to bike to work.
- Improve and extend access to the bike paths.
- Provide a balance between growing new commercial and industrial sites and maintaining the viability of existing development.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Advance a balance between urban and agricultural interests.
- Main protective program rights a spot program.
- Preserve agricultural land by promoting development in areas adjacent to the urbanized area.
- Discourage "big-box" development on prime agricultural land.
- Preserve rural through purchase or donation of development rights, including landowner education of the estate planning benefits of such conservation activities.
- Provide for environmental protection and open space in the region.
- Preserve character of the Region's rural areas and communities.
- Promote "highlights-in" land use.
- Promote the benefits of the local agriculture industry.
- Encourage suburbanization in rural areas to develop "cluster developments" with smaller lots surrounded by large areas of common open space.

DESIGN, CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY PRINCIPLES

- Promote the benefits of the local agriculture industry.
- Determine methods to enhance and preserve the natural and historic features (e.g. preservation via conservation easements).
- Promote the benefits of the Region's aesthetic quality.
- Create an "aesthetic vision" that reflects the resident desires.
- Encourage development in existing areas where existing infrastructure is provided (e.g. encourage the integration of new open space into the Region).
- Define open space by habitat, agriculture, parks, beliefs & wildlife corridors.
- Provide a Regional Plan that recognizes the importance of the natural environment to the Region's future.
- Identify those lands deemed valuable to be maintained as part of the natural environment.

NEIGHBORHOOD PRINCIPLES

- Promote both historic and economic neighborhood revitalization & preservation.
- Promote new suburban developments that are reflections of Pueblo's historical neighborhood mix of housing types and sizes, street-oriented streets, neighborhood commercial and office, pedestrian-friendly, accessible to parks, an abundance of street trees, etc.
- Address open space and recreation in new neighborhood development.
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DEVELOPMENT ACTION AREAS

THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT COMPONENT

The Pueblo Region has a vast amount of land area - 2400 square miles or 1.5 million acres. Of this, 1915 square miles, or 12.1 million acres, is considered developable. A Regional Plan assists in identifying the timing for when areas should develop and to articulate the required infrastructure policies. Without a Plan, it can be extremely costly to provide services to meet the demand in remote, sparsely served, and/or scattered developments. Without a Plan, planned and financed development growth impacts the natural environment or the established agricultural/rural settlement patterns.

DEVELOPMENT ACTION AREAS

The Regional Development Plan identifies "Development Action Areas," which are geographically delineated development areas identified for future growth. The six Development Action Areas are listed below.

Developing Urban Area - City of Pueblo
Developing Urban Area - Urban Fringe
Developing Metro Area - Pueblo West
Developing Metro District - Pueblo West
Developing Metro District - Colorado City
Mid-Term Growth Area
Long-Term Growth Area

Develop Urban Area implies "ready for development - all infrastructure in place" and Long-Term Growth Area implies "highly premature for development - no infrastructure in place". In the Developing and Developing Urban Area much of the infrastructure is in place and the cost for the extension of services is more efficient for local government and utility boards to serve.

DEVELOPING URBAN AREA - CITY OF PUEBLO

Existing Character
The Developing Urban Area encompasses the City of Pueblo's existing city limits and developed urban areas in close proximity to the City. Much of this area is fully developed with schools, sewer and water.

Future Character
The future character of the Developing Urban Area will be mixed use development (residential, office and commercial), as well as cultural / governmental facilities within the downtown area. Medium to high density residential, as well as detached and attached single-family residential will continue to be the dominant land use feature throughout the area. Compatible multi and redevelopment with density and intensity of development will be consistent with established patterns of development. The Developing Urban Area will also continue to serve as the major retail, office and service center for the Region.

DEVELOPING URBAN AREA - COLORADO CITY

Existing Character
The Developing Urban Area will continue to develop in its urban residential pattern. The Southern Pueblo Developing Urban Area will continue to develop in its urban residential pattern. The Medical Center and arterial commercial with emphasis on the hospitality industry will continue to flourish along I-25 Highway 50. Future efforts should enhance the arterial corridors as growth with access management as a major component. Lighting impacts associated with commercial development should be addressed. As well as protection of future right-of-ways and Pueblo Boulevard. Coliseum development should be encouraged to land at Highway 50 and Pueblo Boulevard.

Future Character - University Park
The University Park Developing Urban Area will continue to be dominated by suburban residential development with a major regional commercial center along Dillon Drive, between Fountain Creek and I-25. High density residential is considered appropriate in a transitional land use between commercial and lower density suburban development. Future development should continue to grow commercial uses with improved pedestrian facilities and vehicular circulation. Neighborhood commercial services should be encouraged in a village setting near the University. Substantial efforts should be made to protect 100-year floodplain at Fountain Creek.

Future Character - Northridge
The Northridge Developing Urban Area will continue to develop as urban residential with high density residential as a transitional land use between commercial and urban residential development. The Medical Center and arterial commercial with emphasis on the hospitality industry will continue to flourish along I-25 Highway 50. Future efforts should enhance the arterial corridors as growth with access management as a major component. Lighting impacts associated with commercial development should be addressed. As well as protection of future right-of-ways and Pueblo Boulevard. Coliseum development should be encouraged to land at Highway 50 and Pueblo Boulevard.

Future Character - SouthPointe
The SouthPointe Developing Urban Area is an 1800 acre planned development with a

20-30 year build out horizon south of the city. The northeastern section of SouthPointe will be developed as commercial, business park and high density residential. The central/south sections of the development will be commercial, business park, high density residential and institutional uses. The third and western sectors will be developed as eight urban villages with low to medium intensity development.

Future Character - Southwest Pueblo
The Southwest Pueblo Developing Urban Area will continue to develop in its urban residential pattern by Highway 78 and the connection of arterial commercial along I-25, primarily along the west side of the intersection with a small amount on the eastside. Further commercial development on the east side will be constrained by the Fountain Creek Flood Plain. Much of the commercial development will be urban residential development. The western boundary of this Mid-Term Growth Area will be the extension of Pueblo Boulevard for which protection of future right-of-ways will be a priority. Coliseum development should be encouraged along Pueblo Boulevard extension with access control standards as part of the development process. To the east of Fountain Creek will be a continuation of suburban residential with neighborhood commercial as strip and detached.

Future Character - Bastrop/Airport Area
The Bastrop-Airport Mid-Term Growth Area stretches eastward from the City of Pueblo to the Bastrop-Airport Industrial Park. Its southern boundary is the Arkansas River and its northern boundary generally Highway 96 and 50 Bypass. Arterial commercial and light industrial roads will be developed along U.S. 50 with primary access from existing north-south roads. Suburban residential will continue north of the Arkansas River to about 200 feet north of U.S. 50.

Future Character - SouthPointe
SouthPointe is fully addressed in the "Developing Urban Area - SouthPointe" narrative.

Future Character - Southwest Pueblo
The Southwest Pueblo Mid-Term Growth Area, located generally between and on either side of Highway 78 and 96, will continue to be a continuation of the urban residential pattern seen in the "Developing Urban Area," with appropriate neighborhood commercial services. Areas closer to the Arkansas River will be more appropriately developed as suburban residential. Much of the development will be primarily residential, with some commercial services. Areas closer to the Arkansas River will be more appropriately developed as suburban residential. Much of the development will be primarily residential, with some commercial services. Areas closer to the Arkansas River will be more appropriately developed as suburban residential. Much of the development will be primarily residential, with some commercial services.

Future Character - Northeast Pueblo/Baculite Mesa
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