



East End Master Plan Community Open House

County Planning Commission seeks public input to define vision for the region

Media Contact: Kaye Simonson, Planning Director
970.728.3083, kayes@sanmiguelcountyco.gov

(March 10, 2023) – San Miguel County, CO --- Creating a vision for the future is a community effort. As part of the East End Master Plan, San Miguel County Planning Department, the County Planning Commission (CPC) and consultant Design Workshop, will be holding two Community Open Houses on Tuesday, March 21. The Open Houses will be held in the Community Room at the Wilkinson Public Library, 100 W. Pacific Avenue, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The East End Master Plan, which will ultimately be adopted by the planning commission, is an intentional road map to guide the community towards its shared vision and future goals. This master plan process draws on the ideas of locals to promote forward-looking policies to sustain our uniqueness of place. The plan will promote resiliency and equitable land use decisions. So far, input has been gathered through focus group and stakeholder meetings, pop-events, and the recently completed community survey. The Community Open Houses will be an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft plan themes and goals, learn more about demographics and regional growth analysis, and hear about the survey results. County officials continue to stress the importance of gathering public input.

"There are two key benefits of collecting all the input we can get, from all segments and sectors of the community: creativity and balance," explained CPC chair, Lee Taylor. "Those of us involved in the planning effort don't have all the answers, and may not be aware of all of the issues, so gathering 'out-of-the-box

canyon' ideas and input gives us a better chance at crafting a 20-year vision that can steer us through the changing conditions ahead. As for balance: the more different voices we hear, the less likely it is that any particular viewpoint can dominate the discussion, unless it represents a broad consensus."

Reassessing the East End Master Plan has long been in the county's sights. County Planning Director, Kaye Simonson, said that when she first came on board in 2018, the Board of County Commissioners indicated that the aged Telluride Regional Master Plan (TRAMP) was in need of an overhaul. By 2020, Simonson had it on the top of the list for the CPC's work plan for that year, thanks to the award of an Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Fund grant from the Department of Local Affairs, which partially funds the update. "This is your baby," she told CPC members then.

"This will replace the Telluride Regional Area Master Plan, which was adopted in 1989. A lot has happened since then," Simonson said. "Things that weren't even an idea in planning back then have become much more important, like sustainability and resiliency. As a community, we've grown so much since then. There has been so much change. We've had Lawson Hill, the airport, incorporation of Mountain Village, and that just gets us through the '90s," she said.

This deliberate and exhaustive process has been underway for years, though the pandemic years served to slow the momentum. Now, as public meetings and gatherings can take place in person, as well as virtually, the county's consultant, Design Workshop, has teamed with county staff to propel the process in earnest. County officials are excited to near the finalization of a new planning road map that better addresses present and future community needs. CPC chair Taylor said the time is now.

"Why now? Well, good planning practices indicate that master plans in general have an effective life of no more than 20 years. The current Plan is 34 years old, and has had only minor amendments since adoption," Taylor said. "Major events have occurred under guidance of the current plan - Mountain Village, Lawson Hill, the Valley Floor acquisition, the airport. Certainly our 'operating priorities' have changed since 1989 - housing, impacts of climate instability, regional transportation, the economic landscape are all front-and-center issues now, and we need the guidance of an updated Master Plan that represents the concerns and priorities of those living in and impacted by the planning region."

The Master Plan update provides a critical opportunity for people who live, work and play in the East End of San Miguel County to come together to create a comprehensive, forward-thinking vision for this region. All residents, employees and stakeholders are encouraged to make your voices heard and attend one of the San Miguel County East End Master Plan Community Open Houses, Tuesday, March 21 in the Community Room at the Wilkinson Public Library, 100 W. Pacific Avenue, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

To find information on upcoming meetings and the plan's progress, visit www.sanmiguelcountyco.gov/eastendmasterplan.