

Foreword

Theobald/RPI Study Group Report to the BOCC

The Ouray County Board of County Commissioners authorized by resolution in April 2007 the formation of a citizen's committee to study two reports on fiscal and land use planning that they had commissioned: the *RPI Fiscal Impact Analysis* and the *Ouray County Build-out Analysis*. The RPI study was done by Rural Planning Institute of Durango, Colorado, and the final report was issued in July 2006. This study was funded by Ouray County. The build-out analysis was prepared by David M. Theobald, Ph.D., Natural Resource Ecology Lab, Colorado State University. The initial report was submitted in October 2006. Subsequently, several interim reports and revisions were submitted. The last revision was submitted in October 2008. This study was funded by CSU and other grants.

The parameters of the RPI study were developed by the BOCC. The parameters of the build-out study were developed by a citizen stakeholder group¹ appointed by the BOCC to work with Dr. Theobald in establishing scenarios and indicators used as the basis of the study. The BOCC approved the final parameters of the study.

After several start-up work sessions, the Theobald/RPI Study Group² conducted its first business meeting in February 2008. The Study group met on a regular basis. All meetings were publicly noticed and open to the public and public comment. Additionally, the Study Group created a website where meeting notices and minutes were posted.

The following report provides a synopsis of both studies and the Study Group's conclusions drawn from these reports. Additionally, the Study Group has made recommendations concerning the application of data and conclusions developed by these reports for future fiscal and land use planning in the county. It is important to note that these findings and recommendations do not constitute county policy and are submitted for the use of the BOCC and other county officials and boards for their consideration in strategic planning.

It is important to note that the Study Group examined and debated these reports thoroughly and extensively over the course of many months. In the case of the Theobald Report, there were several requests made by the Study Group for refinements and clarifications resulting in two major revisions and several iterations. Of particular importance is the addition of potential build-out in the mining claim areas of the county, which was not developed in the original study by design. Another important change to the study was eliminating the Town of Ridgway as the service center for Ouray County. The Study Group concluded that the City of Montrose should be designated as the service center to be used as the basis for calculating miles traveled over county roads.

All study models tend to be generalizations. There are inherent inconsistencies due to differences in data sources, for example: County Assessor's data vs. State Demographer's data. In some cases, the study group was unable to ascertain the basis for some computations. When the Study Group found apparent inconsistencies they consulted with the authors to obtain clarification. The Study Group concluded that any errors, omissions or incomplete data contained in these reports do not substantially affect their overall validity.

The Study Group is confident that these reports and the Study Group's findings constitute an important reference and data source for strategic land use and fiscal planning. The Study Group encourages the BOCC to utilize and build upon this report by initiating a long-range fiscal and land-use strategic plan for Ouray County.

The Study Group acknowledges the ongoing support of County Commissioners Albritton, Batchelder, and Meinert and appreciates their contributions and guidance to the work of the Study Group. The Study Group thanks Commissioner Albritton for recording the proceedings of its meetings. Appreciation is extended to Study Group members Sara Coulter for her efforts in securing the services of Dr. Theobald and to Lynn Padgett for creating and maintaining the web site. Additionally, the Study Group thanks Dr. David Theobald for his willingness to continue working with the Study Group in its efforts to improve and expand the parameters of the study. Finally, it should be noted that the volunteer members of the Study Group worked countless hours and gave their best efforts to develop this report for the benefit of the community.

1. Build-Out Study Stakeholder Working Group Members

John Clark, Ted Collin, Sara Coulter, Tom Harrington, Brian Kolowich, Ken Lipton, Susie Mayfield, John Peters, Karen Risch

2. Theobald/RPI Study Group Members

Dick Allison*, Mike Baker*, John Clark (Vice-Chair), Ted Collin, Sara Coulter, Craig Fetterolf, Bill Fugazzi*, Ken Lipton (Chair), Lynn Padgett, Karen Risch, Alan Staehle*, Rene Tegtmeyer*
Ex Officio Members: Heidi Albritton, Don Batchelder, Keith Meinert.

* Subsequently resigned from the Study Group.