

2022-01-11 LAC Report

Legislative Affairs Coalition Update for January 11, 2022

Unemployment Rate Update

- La Plata County unemployment rate was 4.2% in November 2021. This is on par with the national rate of 4.2% in the same time period and lower than Colorado's rate of 5.1%. October's rate was 4.0%
- San Juan County was 4.9% in November. It was 3.6% in October.
- Archuleta County was 4.0%, up from 3.6% in October.
- Montezuma County was 4.8%. October was 4.3%.

See more here: <https://www.colmigateway.com/vosnet/analyzer/resultsNew.aspx?session=labforce&pu=1&plang=E>

COVID Update

- Public Health officials say the recent explosive growth in cases is likely due to the Omicron variant, which has been confirmed in La Plata and Archuleta counties. ICU beds at Mercy in early January were at full capacity.
- La Plata County Manager Chuck Stevens said on January 5th that county employees were being asked to work remotely, if possible. Those who cannot work remotely will follow safety protocols such as social distancing, hand washing and mask wearing.
- City of Durango offices are open but City staff are required to wear masks and maintain social distancing and visitors to city facilities are asked to do the same.
- Masks are required on all Durango Transit buses and trolleys and at the Durango La Plata County Airport.
- Civilian employees with the Durango Police Department will work remotely to lessen the number of people in offices working in close proximity to one another. Officials warn that some services will be limited as a result.
- The Southern Ute Indian Tribe reverted back to Phase II "Safer at Home", Level 3. The Tribal offices remain open to the public; however, all individuals will be required to make an appointment with all departments that provide direct services to the membership prior to entering any tribal building and by calling the department directly. Gatherings are restricted to 10 people or less.

Durango - La Plata County Airport Update

- Director of Aviation Tony Vicari said in December that passenger traffic at the Durango-La Plata County Airport continues to be very strong. The airport has had record breaking traffic for the last six months and its recovery continues to outpace the national average. Strong performance from parking lot revenue reflects high local use. Looking ahead, Vicari is forecasting strong enplanements for 2022.

Durango URA Update

- Durango's Renewal Partnership (URA) is working on the creation of an urban renewal area on North Main Avenue that would be about 15 acres in size, with 23 properties owned by 17 property owners. It's zoned mixed use and there's potential for a 'gateway' feature on City-owned property at 32nd and Main.
- The first major project of the North Main Urban Renewal Area could be a 22-unit townhome project at 33rd and E 2nd Ave. URA staff is working on a proposal that involves the City investing \$250K plus a URA loan from the Housing Impact Fund to put a total of \$600K toward the costs of development. In return, the developer would have 10 of the 22 units as deed qualified units. Four of the units would sell at a reduced price of about \$399K, there would be an appreciation cap, an owner-occupancy requirement and local worker income qualifications. Six of the units would sell at market rate of \$499-529K but would have local worker occupancy qualifications. The remaining units would be unrestricted.
- Plans for an Urban Renewal Area on North Main in Durango are moving forward. Next steps include talking to City and County partners about the proposal and pinning down terms for agreements. Once the agreements are drafted, the URA will go before the Durango Planning Commission.
- There was a La Posta area property owner meeting in December, where staff said feedback was positive. Staff will be surveying property owners to gauge interest in annexation into Durango. Then there will be a staff meeting to lay out investment strategies and identify top priorities for infrastructure development.
- The URA has been approached by a landowner in the area of the Florida Road and CR 250 intersection. The City of Durango owns 3.78 acres in the area. The landowner is expected to put forth a proposal by the end of the month to partner on a project there. .

La Plata County Land Use Code Update

- La Plata County staff compared a year under the previous Land Use Code with this past year under the new Land Use Code to find the average number of days it took to process land use permits. According to Director of Community Development Neal Starkebaum, the average number of days to process major projects has gone down from an average of 92 days to an average of 66 days under the new code. However, the number of average days for minor projects went up a bit. There were only 2 minor projects processed through the new Land Use Code during that time period. Starkebaum said his expectation is that the average days for minor projects will trend down as staff gets more used to the new Code.
- The first round of changes to the new Land Use Code have been approved by the La Plata County Board of County Commissioners. The changes were mainly verbiage related, meant to aid clarity.
- More substantive changes are expected later this year.

Durango Sales Tax Revenue

- November Revenue Analysis
 - Expected revenues collected: 82% Actual revenues collected: 97%
 - Variance: Ahead \$6.6 Million of projected budgeted collections for revenues
 - Year to date revenues exceeded expenditures by \$4.6 Million
 - Sales and use Tax are at 115% year to date
 - All combined Taxes and Fees are at 107% year to date,
 - Charges for Services are at 69%, Miscellaneous at 89%, Intergovernmental 72%, Licenses & Permits at 71%, Fines at 88%, Assessments at 46% and Other Financing Sources at 88% for a total average of 97% of total budgeted collections.
 - The performance indicator is POSITIVE because the percentage of budget received is higher historical budget received by 15%. Compared to cumulative historical monthly actuals the City is ahead or behind in each category listed below making up the majority of the \$6.6 Million revenue collections over budget.
 - Taxes and Fees are ahead \$5.0 Million due to strong rebound and conservative budget estimates for 2021
 - Charges For Services behind \$198K recreation center is rebounding on daily passes but continues to lag on monthly memberships
 - Miscellaneous ahead \$535K

Meetings attended November 30 - January 11

12/6 - 6 pm Durango Planning Commission	12/16 - 3 pm LPC Planning Commission
12/7 - 10 am BOCC Meeting	12/17 - 1 pm BOCC Special Planning Meeting
12/7 - 2:15 pm Durango Council Study Session	12/17 - 2:30 pm BOCC Special Business Meeting
12/7 - 5:30 pm Durango City Council Meeting	1/4 - 10 am BOCC Planning Meeting
12/8 - 8:30 am BOCC Discussion Time	1/4 - 2:15 pm Durango Council Study Session
12/9 - 6 pm LPC Planning Commission	1/4 - 5:30 pm Durango City Council Meeting
12/13 - 4:30 pm Durango Renewal Partnership	1/5 - 8:30 am BOCC Discussion Time
12/14 - 10 am BOCC Meeting	1/10 - 4:30 pm Durango Renewal Partnership
12/15 - 8:30 am BOCC Discussion Time	1/11 - 9 am LAC Meeting