



# DELTA COUNTY

## INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

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DRAFT

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## INTRODUCTION

As part of the early stages of the planning process for the Delta County Master Plan Update, consultants conducted interviews with local residents and business owners. The interviews were informal and based on a questionnaire that guided the discussion towards topics that are most important for the master plan. The intent of the interviews was to allow the planning consultants to get more acquainted with the various communities in Delta County and better understand values and planning issues before kicking off the public involvement process. Consultants asked county staff to provide a list of contacts that included a diversity of opinions and geographies throughout Delta County. In total, the consultants interviewed 19 people, 13 general citizens and six Planning Commissioners.

The interviews included the following 10 questions. The results are presented by theme below.

1. What do you love about living here and why?
2. What are the most important things to protect about Delta County?
3. What are the most pressing challenges within Delta County?
4. What community challenges are we not yet talking about but that we need to?
5. What are some examples of things that have been considered successes or viewed positively by the community?
6. What is the county doing that it should stop doing or correct because it is not working?
7. What do you think the opportunities and challenges are for future economic development and growth in Delta County?
8. Have Delta County land use and growth regulations and policies have affected you directly? If so please describe?
9. How would you rate the level of coordination between the county and municipalities? How might they improve coordination?
10. Would you be willing to help us network the upcoming vision workshops and forthcoming community workshops?

## INTERVIEW RESULTS SUMMARY

This summary begins with a narrative summary of each major theme and is followed by a summary of the statements gathered in the interviews sorted by theme and by the interview question that prompted the statements.

### Agriculture

Agriculture and the economy were the two topics discussed throughout the interviews. The continued success and protection of agriculture were important, as well as the “right to farm”. The definition and types of agriculture discussed varied between traditional, organic, small and large scale. Interviewees also identified agriculture as an economic opportunity with increased production and agritourism.

### Quality of life/Community/Community Character/

Overall, interviewees highlighted various aspects of the community and community character such as the rural nature, diverse population, family friendly communities, and low crime as reasons they love living in Delta County, things they want to protect, and successes. Some of the community challenges were fear of change, polarization, the need for an environment that encourages progress, and ways to retain young people.

### Economy

This was the most discussed topic throughout the interviews. The comments show a diversity of economic successes, concerns and opportunities. Successes included the creative industries, agriculture, coal and recreation opportunities, renewable energy and broadband efforts among others. Some of the common concerns included the loss of energy industry jobs, the need for higher paying jobs, and the need to diversify the types of jobs in the county. While the interviewees acknowledged a number of challenges, they also elaborated on the numerous economic opportunities for the county including the cottage industry, web-based employment, home health and healthcare, recreation and tourism and further development of agriculture.

### Government

Two questions specifically targeted the county as the topic: “What is the county doing that it should stop doing or correct because it is not working?” and “How would you rate the level of coordination between the county and municipalities? How might they improve coordination?” Interviewees answered the first question with diverse responses from providing training to County Commissioners and the Planning Commission to wanting more diversity and changing the way the county elects commissioners. Interviewees differed greatly when asked how they would rate the level of coordination between the county and municipalities. Some felt the county was doing a good job, others felt there needed to be improvements and some had no opinion or knowledge on the topic.

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#### Land Use/Regulation/Growth & Development/Private Property

Land use interrelates to other topics including agriculture and the economy. Interviewees differed greatly on the lack of regulation and land use. Some identified the lack of regulation as something they love and want to protect about the county while others identified it as a challenge and an impediment to economic development. Other challenges included the need to balance private property rights with logical development and respect for neighbors and the subdivision of agricultural land. When asked if the current land use and growth regulations have affected them directly, many said the regulations had not affected them directly while a couple responded that they had affected them. One interviewee said the lack of regulation has been great and has allowed them to experiment with alternative land ownership.

#### Infrastructure/Types of Services Available

Better internet topped this category as both a success and an economic opportunity. The hospital and healthcare were both successes. Road maintenance was both a success and a challenge.

#### Environment/Nature/Outdoors/Natural Resources

Clean air and water are highly valued by interviewees along with the rural environment, mountains, soil and access to outdoor recreation. The protection of these resources is very important. Environmental challenges and developing issues included climate change and water grabs. Further development of the recreation industry was considered an economic opportunity. Natural resource extraction was a topic with a wide range of opinions. Some interviewees expressed a desire to fight oil and gas in the county, while others identified it as a potential economic opportunity if done correctly.

#### Master Plan

The ability to follow through with the master plan, more youth engagement in the planning process, and the need to be clear without contradictions were all identified as challenges regarding the master plan. One interviewee identified the need to commit resources towards accomplishing the plan's goals as important for future success.

#### Other Comments

The Delta vocational school and the willingness of the school district to adapt to the needs of locals were identified as successes. The need to cluster housing was identified by one interviewee as a challenge. Improved community outreach by local law enforcement was identified as a developing challenge.

Theme	Questions	Comment
Agriculture	Love about Delta	I love the ability to grow fruit in Colorado.
	Love about Delta	Pro ag. Perfect for dairy farming, get more milk/cow than other areas.
	Love about Delta	Organic produce, raw milk, access to food and produce. Pace of life, mellow.
	Protect	Maintaining the right to farm, encroachment plans to limit farm lands (which fruit hasn't been affected yet). Strike a balance between the right to farm and the right to not impact neighbors adversely: farming is a two-way street.
	Protect	The right to farm
	Protect	Delta County should protect the rural agricultural-based world that exists. "Don't upset the apple cart." This world will continue to exist because people need to eat and Delta County should protect farms and families that are established there, but how I'm not sure.
	Protect	Primary thing to protect is agriculture.
	Protect	Farmland, Especially smaller farms, many view larger farms as the focus of preservation, but many make a living on smaller tracts of land and they are equally important. Right to farm laws focus on protecting larger farms.
	Protect	Protect agriculture, zoning could be a good idea for ag land. Could identify areas for ag and would potentially help with ag land prices
	Protect	Protect open space, wildlife, agriculture
	Protect	Agriculture
	Successes	The community in general views agriculture as positive.
	Successes	Farmers continue to find cash-crops to grow which we need to find a way to support better financially.
	Successes	Foster Farms and the ability for farmers to sell crops to foster farms and store their crops; that has brought a major industry and money to the community.
	Successes	North Fork – Valley Organic Growers Association – Uniting to keep standards up and educating
	Successes	Bio-Dynamic farming starting here, Purchased property and want to use as an educational property
	Successes	Organic farms are making a profit
	Economic Opportunities	There are great opportunities. For example, my packing facilities are organic which means stable economic returns and allows growers to continue their practices. Growing and the potential to be bigger in terms of acreage and people over time that are involved. Food processing within the county could be another niche to fill as there is great possibility for this development.
	Economic Opportunities	Develop the fruit industry. Should look into programs for ag to borrow money at low rate when they have a frozen crop or bad year due to weather.

Theme	Questions	Comment
Agriculture	Economic Opportunities	Opportunities for agri-tourism, orchards, wineries, crops...could capitalize on this. People who visit a place and like it are the ones who will consider moving there.
Community	Love about Delta	I love the community and people that I deal with, who are mostly from Delta County.
	Love about Delta	The sense of community. The rural nature. Access to public land. Small scale. Lack of pretentiousness.
	Love about Delta	(Has businesses in Delta) The people and the community of Delta County. I would live in Delta County if I would, but I have a unique piece of property in Olathe that is hard to sell...
	Successes	Low crime
	Successes	High school scholarship and art show. First ever recipient is now a professor who selected the 25 students this year.
	Challenges	Need an environment that encourages progress.
	Developing Issues	As a retired law enforcement officer, there is a mess within Delta County of today's youth. No one is addressing this problem but there is an increasing problem with youth and delinquency.
	Developing Issues	Lack of political diversity. Failure of the relatively well-to-do newcomers in the North Fork to be integrated into the larger concerns of the County. They do not know where they live. Or care.
	Love about Delta	Family friendly
	Love about Delta	Quiet, like the 1950's. Genuine, honest, helpful. Husband's family has been in the area orchard for 100 years.
Community Character	Love about Delta	The rural atmosphere, the agricultural community, the mining and small industries give Delta County a real small-town feel.
	Love about Delta	I love the location and how small and rural it is. I can go to the city center of Delta 10 minutes from my home.
	Love about Delta	Small, low traffic, friendly, mild climate, beautiful.
	Love about Delta	Moved 15 years ago to raise children away from the Front Range. Rural, friendly, mountains.
	Love about Delta	Rural aspect of life. Clean air, quiet, friendly
	Love about Delta	Open space, entrepreneurial spirit, independence, wildlife, views, diversity or lifestyles and resources, clean water and air
	Protect	Friendliness. Small scale. Not too many people with money.
	Protect	The way of life and pace of Delta County is very enjoyable and hard to find.
	Protect	Protect the rural atmosphere of Delta County.
	Protect	Open space, entrepreneurial spirit, independence, wildlife, views, diversity or lifestyles and resources, clean water and air

Theme	Questions	Comment
Community Character	Successes	The schools, and specifically the sports. The high school teams are the pride of the community.
	Successes	Events – Applefest, community events
	Challenges	It is a community's responsibility to make the area attractive.
	Love about Delta	The People
	Successes	Good diversity of population-old and new residents, backgrounds and talents.
	Challenges	Need to keep younger people here, educate them and get them a degree and then come back to the area.
	Challenges	People taking strong positions, and polarization – had more congenial effort before
	Challenges	Fear of change, need to let go of prejudice
	Developing Issues	Ways to retain young people and encourage them to return after schooling.
	Developing Issues	Lack of a competent newspaper to allow the County to confront its central issues and to educate its citizens. The fact that the old, landed families with some notable exceptions control the county but do not know how to lead it.
Economy	Protect	Job growth if managed correctly (mining, oil, gas) I don't want to introduce any wind or solar power to the area because it doesn't pay off and it ruins surrounding scenery (wind farms/turbines).
	Protect	Economy, politicians always talk about replacing the coal jobs, but nothing ever happens in reality.
	Protect	Agriculture, tourism, recreation
	Successes	Blue Sage Center is another example of positive developments as well as other successes for the lively art community.
	Successes	No specific developments, but instead the preservation of the art community and agricultural heritage of Delta County.
	Successes	The open space areas can promote tourism if we designate areas for agricultural tourism. (DURA is doing so?)
	Successes	Because the county is unregulated with no zoning, a business can come in and start up quickly. Embrace unregulated, it just needs to be functional.
	Successes	Joined DCED, saw what they're doing, see potential.
	Successes	Engage Center – vacant building in Delta that will have offices and offer classes, tasting room, and be a growing center for businesses.
	Successes	Agriculture and coal industries. Recreation opportunities.

Theme	Questions	Comment
Economy	Successes	Broadband is in the works, amount of renewable energy development, the transition to a more diverse agricultural economy (organic).
	Successes	Influx in tourism, opportunity to grow tourism, Gunnison fly fishing.
	Successes	Creative industries
	Challenges	Economic development that doesn't change the current standings. As we plan going forward, not willing to sacrifice interests for development but building on agricultural heritage in the area. Good paying jobs might shy away from manufacturing and mining jobs which is a challenge.
	Challenges	It is hard to make a living in Delta County and it has been that way for a long time. Coal mines have come and gone for about 40 years and that makes it hard in DC because when they are up and running it keeps other businesses away. When they aren't running everyone else can't make a living and it's a struggle to operate a business with good pay and consistent positions because of the coal mines. A challenge is attracting premium businesses to Delta County with a lot of good quality jobs (factories and distribution sites, even).
	Challenges	Right now, it is hard to find good paying jobs, or finding industries that will attract "clean" jobs.
	Challenges	The new, liberal mindset entering into Delta County is bad for the people and the economy and is shutting industries down.
	Challenges	Post-economic crisis- the lumber, coal, mining industries seemed to leave overnight and that's when we sort of hit rock bottom. What's left of industries and businesses are the survivors which means that any growth now is real growth. The economy with qualifications are a challenge for Delta County. Things are improving but they can improve more and faster and the County can help this growth (infrastructure/ recreational opportunities).
	Challenges	Another big challenge right now is the marketing for Delta County, and to tourists which is a fractured attempt. There is an opportunity for Delta County to unify its resources and outreach (there are 4 tourist guide books for Delta County- all are different/same and have their own strengths/weaknesses). It would be beneficial to develop a policy on marketing for the county where all 3 major zones of Delta County can establish themselves and rebrand with iconic pictures or better announce what there is to offer in Delta. Redo the trademark branding (between tourism promotion and the county itself). The county needs to be aware that tourism capital needs to have a further pull and it is clear that Delta isn't affectively marketing from people outside of Delta County (there is a promotional publication on Delta County when you land in Washington D.C. with un-noteworthy information and a picture of a pine tree that doesn't help to distinguish that as a great place in Colorado. This is something that the County could directly work on.



Theme	Questions	Comment
Economy	Challenges	Economy, need to replace the higher incomes that we lost from coal. Yes, tourism and recreation jobs are great, but there need to be higher paying jobs.
	Challenges	There is a lack of (general) leadership, the banks used to provide community leadership and active involvement, but not anymore. There is less investment in local community than there used to be.
	Challenges	Personally, the closure of the dairy processing plant Meadow Gold. Now price for freight has gone up, must transport to Denver for processing.
	Challenges	Markets are set nationally and internationally and we compete on a small level. Not sure what we can do. Focus on agricultural success.
	Challenges	A real lack of tech and computer skills, hard to find skilled workers. Maybe some sort of local education and skills courses?
	Challenges	Replace coal jobs
	Challenges	Cedaredge decided about 15 years ago that it would be a retirement community. This is bad, not bringing in any younger people, and need medical services for retirees. There should be a combo, attract retirees, but you still need people to work and provide services.
	Challenges	Economic, having enough jobs.
	Challenges	Location is a challenge, between two larger cities, Montrose and GJ. See a pattern of only wanting to attract like-minded people.
	Challenges	Jobs, high paying jobs, lack of industry. County working on better internet, this should really help.
	Challenges	Need to adapt to the changing economy
	Challenges	Challenges, people want too much too fast, change is slow.
	Challenges	Need more access to skilled labor, the vocational school is great asset. Need to invest in local institutions.
	Challenges	Employment. Economic base is agriculture & subsistence
	Challenges	Employment, people looking for decent jobs.
	Challenges	Economy, mines are closing must be able to diversify.
	Challenges	Lack of living wage jobs
	Challenges	Residents need to recognize when they shop in Montrose or GJ the county businesses and government lose out. Promote local shopping
	Challenges	Need more diversity in jobs
	Challenges	Ingrained prejudice against small scale farming and organic farming

Theme	Questions	Comment
Economy	Developing Issues	How to encourage new businesses to the area? Never fully bounced back from the recession and Delta gets affected by economic turns a lot. There are a lot of small industries which are good for the county but make zoning and regulations difficult. There is no protection on either side of the fence.
	Developing Issues	There is a niche to fill and we need to find out what will provide high paying jobs.
	Developing Issues	8am lots of traffic headed to Cedaredge and back to Delta at 5pm. Where are they going to work? There are only so many jobs in Cedaredge and they are mostly at the school, the traffic doesn't match the number of jobs.
	Change direction on	The county should be leery of "economic development" schemes that don't show signs of fruition. Easy to fund dreams when there's no possibility they'll play out. There are too many things funded that go nowhere and that it's clear they're going nowhere from the start.
	Economic Opportunities	Some outdoor-type industry would be good for the area. Broadband development could attract small higher-tech businesses to area and increase value for some lifestyles.
	Economic Opportunities	The opportunities are here; the workforce is here. We just need to attract the right kind of industries such as agricultural tourism (which is also questionable because there is no future in this industry) or light-industrial.
	Economic Opportunities	Co-working spaces would be valuable for the community and bring in more quasi-office spaces for rent for a fair price which incentivizes good and productive work and make people who usually just work alone or from home like they're part of a greater network.
	Economic Opportunities	Needs to actively work on agriculture. Lots of economic focus on things like the hotel, and river (Better Cities study) where is the ag?
	Economic Opportunities	Right now Tom is working on IQF (flash freezing) and a dehydrator for agricultural products. Farmers can't get there product out fast enough and go bad. This is an economic opportunity focused on agriculture.
	Economic Opportunities	Opportunity for home health, hospice, and other services for seniors and medical sector. These require skills and certified. Need to encourage younger population to acquire training and skill that are needed locally so they return to the county after college. Also need better funding for local youth to attend college.
	Economic Opportunities	It's affordable, there is a good labor force ready for jobs
	Economic Opportunities	Opportunities for recreation, agriculture, renewable energy.

Theme	Questions	Comment
Economy	Economic Opportunities	Need more support for smaller entrepreneurs with the loss of coal, smaller businesses are driving the economy.
	Economic Opportunities	Focus on making it easier to accomplish business development here. Montrose has done a decent job attracting new business.
	Economic Opportunities	Build the tech college. When coal was flourishing, old school building converted to training center. Need to do the same thing for new industries, provide the training locally for what drives the economy.
	Economic Opportunities	Cottage industry
	Economic Opportunities	Could capitalize on elderly population through more healthcare.
	Economic Opportunities	Incentives offered need to be linked with concrete results – e.g. don't offer a tax incentive unless they actually provide living wage jobs for locals
	Economic Opportunities	Web based industry, nutrition hub
	Economic Opportunities	Web based industry, nutrition hub
Education	Successes	Delta vocational school, new director, see potential for real skills development, could attract students throughout Colorado. Create skilled workers who will fill jobs in Delta County.
	Successes	School district has adapted to needs of locals for a diversity of schooling options (homeschool and charter)
Environment	Love about Delta	Mountains, ability to grow, nice soil and temperature, can grow anything from Artichokes to Zucchini.
	Love about Delta	Open, rural, organic farms, clean air and water, sense of community, small population, little oil and gas.
	Protect	Clean water, air, protect view sheds, not antigrowth, but it should be done thoughtfully.
	Protect	The clean air and water. Access to public lands.
	Protect	Natural assets – rivers, conservation areas, natural beauty.
	Successes	The Citizens for Healthy Community – Watchdog group advocating and working with the BLM to keep drilling out and create alternate plans.
	Developing Issues	Use of herbicides, pesticides, protecting the environment.
	Developing Issues	Climate change
	Change direction on	County should work with federal to support quality land stewardship

Theme	Questions	Comment
Environment	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	Not directly affected by county regulations. Not related to County regulations but we had an open ditch through property, couple years ago they (water district) closed into pipe, lost trees and vegetation, animals affected. Quality of life and property value affected. Piping to protect the Colorado River from salt. Felt the process did not involve locals or property owners, decision only went through water district.
Government	Successes	Current board, updating the master plan.
	Successes	County Commissioners are doing a good job.
	Successes	Balanced budget
	Challenges	The way we elect county commissioners. They represent a district but the whole county elects them.
	Challenges	Control of county government by a single party. So, lack of democracy within the county. Lack of fair jury trials when it comes to controversial cases. Division between Paonia, especially, and the rest of the county.
	Developing Issues	Denver drives the economy and the Western slope (and other areas) get forgotten or pushed to the side. The focus is on the Front Range when policies are considered at the state level.
	Developing Issues	How to create more revenue.
	Developing Issues	Just be forward thinking
	Change Direction On	Bigger picture than your question, the Board of County Commissioners does not have a clue as to where the county's economy is heading or should head. They tried abortively to rezone the county for egg factories a couple of years ago because there was a boom in egg prices caused by the avian flu. They saw it as economic salvation, with several hundred thousand chickens eating grain produced by traditional ag. Then egg prices plummeted. Now they are grasping at some guy who wants to set up a junk yard just north of Paonia – at the eastern entrance to the county. A graveyard for mining equipment. It has good symbolism if you think Delta County died with the recent drastic decline in coal mining (Which was, by the way, a great neighbor and a great economy). But if you think Delta County has a future, then putting a junk yard bleeding hydraulic and other fluids into the watershed is not the smartest thing you can do. It would also endanger the existence of one of the valley's larger irrigation ditches. About 40 farmers, if I remember right. The commissioners are probably focused on the fact that a junkyard would pay commercial rate property taxes while if the land were reclaimed to agriculture, it would pay a pittance. I sympathize, but they are being short sighted.

Theme	Questions	Comment
Government	County Municipal Relations	Seems like the county is doing well at coordinating
	County Municipal Relations	There is quite a bit of coordination, but also room for a lot more growth and collaboration. County is lacking some leadership in a way and County has a great opportunity to lead county instead of 5 municipalities pulling in different directions. The County needs to drop into the driver's seat, which is a difficult task.
	County Municipal Relations	There is always tension but not sure to what level. Not aware of what level.
	County Municipal Relations	The county, munis, hospital, et al, meet quarterly. I haven't seen much cooperation.
	County Municipal Relations	Poor, the municipalities feel empowered to make decisions without considering the county.
	County Municipal Relations	They have a decent relationship. Recently Orchard City had road projects, county fixed roads and billed Orchard City, worked together to fix the issue.
	County Municipal Relations	Has improved but still needs work. Municipalities do things without communicating.
	County Municipal Relations	Could always have better coordination
	County Municipal Relations	This depends on the municipality. There is confusion about county decisions versus city/town decisions among residents. Invited people to the vision workshops, had people say they wanted to talk about issues that turned out to be city and town regulated not county. Need more clarity and public education about what is county managed/regulated and what is city and town.
	County Municipal Relations	Established quarterly meetings, good communications
	County Municipal Relations	Needs to be better. 2 out of 10. Want to see Roeber involved in more Paonia events
	Last thought	One last thing: What progress occurs in this county happens because of non-partisan governmental or quasi-governmental entities, like DMEA, the hospital district, the school district, et al. If those elections were to become partisan, like the BoCC, then Delta County would be doomed. They could easily be politicized, and in isolated elections they have been, but I think everyone understands that that would kill the county. Otherwise, I don't understand why they haven't been politicized. The greatest danger to the future of Delta County is the present system of choosing county commissioners.

Theme	Questions	Comment
Growth & Development	Challenges	Maintain a balance as to grow as a community but not become like Crested Butte West or Denver metro areas and suburbs.
	Developing Issues	Need a better handle on appropriate management of growth, how to integrate growth in appropriate ways
	Developing Issues	How to successfully solicit development?
Housing	Challenges	Housing should be clustered. If you live in an ag area you will have some negatives, smells, potentially spraying and flies.
Infrastructure	Successes	Roads are not great but they are good.
	Successes	The county does a decent job on roads. Kept solvent.
	Successes	Broadband is the big one. Led by a member of an old family – Brad Harding – and by Delta County Economic Development, the county’s establishment came together to force an unwilling DMEA to launch a broadband campaign.
	Economic Opportunities	High speed internet will be a positive improvement for the county, the county is helpful for the community but the City is not business-friendly.
	Challenges	Better internet and cell service
	Challenges	High electricity costs
	Developing Issues	High speed internet, we are talking about this but it should be a top priority. Need to accommodate those who have the ability to work anywhere and want to work in Delta.
	Challenges	Maintain roads. Especially Hwy 50 between Delta and Grand Junction
	Challenges	Lack of broadband is a challenge, but we are working on it.
	Developing Issues	Bike trails and safety. Dangerous on the roads and highways, some roads are just too narrow for it to be safe.
Land Use	Protect	Delta County also needs to protect its people and their zoning requirements and if those change be sure that it doesn’t upset the community too much.

Theme	Questions	Comment
Land Use	Economic Opportunities/ Challenges	This is not the answer I would have given even five years ago, but I think the county's lack of zoning and lack of building codes have protected it from the suburban paving development we see all around us. Investors like protection and regulation and so development has surrounded but avoided us. We are a rural relict in a suburban sea, and that makes us a great place to live for some of us, especially now, with broadband, and the ability to make a different kind of living here. However, this can't go on. The commissioners, confronted by their budget each year, and with the loss of coal mining, realize that if we are to attract development, we've got to zone. I think they lack imagination about how to use our rural status to create a better kind of development. But what else is new. So, the opportunity is to use our rural situation to create a non-suburban future, and the challenge is that we are not equipped to figure out how to do it.
	Challenges	Specific development is negative because originally was to mitigate what people wanted to do with the land but now it has turned into the right to deny people of land rights or requests.
	Challenges	No zoning is a challenge and it might be too late now to get it enforced because there is such a mix of use. There can be conflict between people that have been here for a long time who like their lifestyles versus the people who are new to the area and want to change everything which is bad.
	Challenges	Need to make the process for building easier, whether this includes some form of zoning or not, the process should be easier. We don't want situations like the chicken barn, where so much money was invested into the project while people are fighting it every step of the way. Would like to see the process include: 1. Identify impacted people (immediate neighbors, not someone 5-10 miles down the road) 2. Meet and discuss issues and work to mitigate problems before spending so much money on the application. Not every issue will be solved, but an initial meeting could solve many issues before investment happens. Right now people are afraid of the planning process, this is bad. We want functional. Could have an initial review/application with the minimum and get initial approval to continue, at which point money would be spent on the required documents to continue.
	Challenges	Reputation for Delta county being proud of their lack of zoning and regulations – this is a small but vocal group, many would like to see some zoning.
	Challenges	Ag land getting broken up into 35 acre lots, too small, can't make a living, fields are small.
	Challenges	Maps with usage, zoning is a contentious word but need more definition of what we envision where.
	Change direction on	Need stability in land use planning, investors need to know their investment will be protected.
	Change direction on	Need to locate businesses in appropriate places

Theme	Questions	Comment
Land Use	Developing Issues	Needs to be some form of zoning
	Developing Issues	The lack of zoning and the specific development process leaves uncertainty, can't be sure that you will be approved. Zoning would bring predictability. The current process is fraught with issues, too much litigation and expense
	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	No not directly, I'm not involved with development or cutting land up directly. I don't want to see Delta County begin to cut land up and over-subdivide the land up, especially into random subdivisions which happens more and more.
	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	Not affected my directly. I have good neighbors and regulations have been managed well throughout the county.
	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	No, I have always worked within policies and regulations.
	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	The only time that has affected me is there are a couple of gravel pits near where I live that create a little bit of dust and noise from time to time.
	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	Not affected.
	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	Because Betsy and I worked for a nonprofit for 20 years (Betsy actually for going on 40 years), we didn't have a retirement plan. So we bought two large (for Paonia) commercial buildings in downtown Paonia, and they have proven to be a pretty good investment. Perhaps because money has been dissuaded from investing outside of town so Paonia is vital. Also, the new people moving here want to patronize small town businesses. They don't want to drive 70 miles to Mesa Mall. We live outside of town, so we have engaged in Delta County zoning: We bought the lots on either side of us. And we worry about what will happen to the ag land to our east and south. If it came up for sale, we might try to buy it. And then resell it with protective covenants. We actually did that with the lot to our east. We sold it to an ideal young couple with young children. They are great neighbors.
	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	No, But much of the land he rents for dairy operation is for sale. When a sale occurred for \$9k/acre then others think their land is worth that much, agricultural operations can't operate on that price scale.



Theme	Questions	Comment
Land Use	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	No
	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	No
	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	Not personally. As a realtor, torn on the density regulation.
	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	Lack of regulations has been great, has allowed me to have alternative land ownership.
	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	Density standard for new development. Subdivision denied nearby. Density regulation has been waived for small development. What are we going to do moving forward?
	Affected by Land Use and Growth Regulations	Yes, the lack of regulations – bought property and within a year a gravel pit tried to surround property on three sides.
Law Enforcement	Developing Issues	There is a great Hispanic community and they are sometimes profiled. Would like to see more positive interaction between Sheriff's department and community, maybe better outreach?
Master Plan	Challenges	Current master plan has good ideas but gets blown off. How do you get the updated plan implemented? Current plan talks about the ability for smaller, regional planning areas to develop their own plan. North Fork area? Paonia area? Did this, and the plan was dismissed/ignored.
	Change direction on	This master plan needs to be clear without contradictions unlike the previous plan that catered to all sides resulting in contradictions.
	Developing Issues	One would be engagement with youth and younger professionals and generations of Delta County. When I go to these meetings for the Master Plan I am the youngest one there it seems (32 years old). The county could better involve younger generations into this process. I have a fear that Delta County is building a future for the people that have been here forever and not focusing on the people who are up and coming in Delta or the economies of the future that the county can create a place worth coming to but aren't reaching out enough.

Theme	Questions	Comment
Master Plan	Developing Issues	Another one would be with the county master plan and the cities within the county. The county rises and falls based significantly on the city of Delta. It is beholden to 1 city in particular which is a challenge for the Master Plan that needs recognition that it won't be as successful as possible unless this is addressed or refocused.
	Developing Issues	Commit resources to implementing the plan
Natural Resources	Protect	To maximize and maintain water resources in the area, and the ability to use it sustainably. Water enables farming to exist and allows agriculture to continue.
	Protect	Must protect and deal with water, we have it, but because you can just subdivide into 35 acre lots, water rights can get muddled or forgotten in this process, which causes problems. What role does water play in the master plan? It is seriously important, but not sure what aspects are appropriate for the master plan.
	Protect	Started putting land in trust, locking water to land (has the number four claim on the Colorado River?). Must keep water in the county and tied to the land.
	Protect	Fighting oil and gas
	Protect	There is controversy of the direction of development. Uproar about natural gas, concerns are understandable, but there is a way to address concerns and let something happen.
	Protect	Water
	Successes	Coal mines were successful when they were operating as the operators were good stewards of the land and provided jobs and economic return to the area. It also has undergone successful and responsible reclamation for the land.
Natural Resources	Developing Issues	Water, water grabs
	Developing Issues	Oil and gas development will ruin quality of life. Need to bring in and accommodate new jobs without sacrificing quality of life
Nature/Outdoors	Love about Delta	I love being able to access the incredible recreational and natural surrounding areas.
	Love about Delta	Basically, Delta County is rural as a small-population area. I like being near the mountains and areas of federal lands for recreation (horseback, hiking, etc.).
	Love about Delta	There isn't any light pollution and makes for awesome star viewing. I appreciate the county more and more with time from traveling around so much for work. You can see for miles and miles into the distance and see mountains and see the real Colorado and its beauty.

Theme	Questions	Comment
Nature/Outdoors	Love about Delta	Rural environment
	Love about Delta	Rural Atmosphere
	Protect	Keep recreation assets
	Protect	Scenic aspect. National forest, open space,
	Successes	Ability to access federal lands that surround Delta County is also positive for the community, we need a good master plan that is agreed upon widely for the community that would still protect these things and address new but not imposing growth.
	Successes	Scenic byway program
	Economic Opportunities	Recreation on federal lands for tourism could yield more returns as well as agricultural tourism could be successful in Delta County.
	Economic Opportunities	An opportunity would be to establish a county-wide multi-use trail system for Delta County which would be a direct and positive impact for the community.
Private property & property rights	Protect	Private rights of the people
	Protect	Property rights
	Change direction on	Balancing property rights doesn't happen. When someone feels their property rights have been violated their only recourse is court. Would like some other option such as mediation.
Quality of Life	Love about Delta	Quality of life
	Protect	Quality of life. You can buy directly from a farmer. North Fork is very self-sustaining
Regulation	Love about Delta	Because it's unregulated and unplanned, no building permits.
	Love about Delta	There is plenty of freedom, minimum regulation, appropriate level of government
	Protect	Preserve Delta county as rural, minimal restrictions.
	Protect	Don't want to see places turn into dumps. Better junk ordinance enforcement
	Successes	Torn on the lack of building department in the county, like the freedom, but also a little more regulation might be good, don't want to totally regulate like Boulder
	Challenges	Building fees, new construction is costly. Article in GJ Sentinel May 2, 2017 on comparison building fees for neighboring counties, Delta is way higher.
	Challenges	Would like more direction for startups
	Change direction on	The complete lack of building code causes some problems. Don't completely regulate, but a little bit more would be good. Right now the only building inspections are electricity and sewage.

Theme	Questions	Comment
Regulation	Change direction on	Better enforcement of the junk ordinance. Not referring to residential places that are lived in, but things like destroyed trailers sitting on a property that are vacant.
	Change direction on	Current planning system in regards to businesses, the process takes months
	Developing Issues	This is a Delta City issue but the process for new business in Delta is difficult.
	Developing Issues	Lack of building code causes issues for value and sales but also allows unique and different opportunities. All municipalities have building codes. The county has no idea where new buildings are located and then they go years before they are taxed.
	Economic Opportunities	Need clearer regulations and want more than just a vision statement, need real guidelines that can accomplish. Need harmony for development
Taxes	Developing Issues	Taxation and the Bruce bill. Talking about reducing the tax base, well Delta is not the same as the front range where businesses can provide a significant portion of the funds, we are heavily reliant on property tax, reducing this will leave us struggling for funds. Need to find ways to continue to fund local govt.
Transportation	Developing Issues	Transportation, not everyone can afford to drive a vehicle. Safe bike routes, and potentially some form of public shuttle?
Types of services available	Successes	My interests lay primarily with the hospital and providing health care to underserved people has been a positive for the community.
	Successes	Confluence Park has been a positive thing for the community and a big asset. Another would be the recreation center for the county because people come from pretty far to use it especially in the winter.
	Successes	The Rec Center! - GJ and Montrose are jealous.
	Successes	Hospital is improving, it is adequate, but people still travel to GJ for many services.
	Successes	The hospital, lots of improvement.
	Successes	Fiber installation
Types of services available	Successes	Confluence park and the rec center.
	Successes	Hospital
	Successes	Another example, the Hospital District's willingness to take responsibility for health care in general by managing/taking over practices and opening urgent care and out-of-Delta clinics.

Theme	Questions	Comment
Types of services available	Successes	The School District has also done an excellent job of accommodating the demands for educational diversity, even taking Waldorf and Montessori schools into the system. Amazing to me, who has lived here for 41 years.
	Challenges	Golf courses are struggling, municipal, Delta and Cederadge. Trouble keeping staff. They could be an asset to bring in new residents.
	Developing Issues	Medical situation, should Obamacare be drastically changed or undone, there will be a serious impact on Delta County in particular. This needs to be considered when thinking about the future.
	Economic Opportunities	Another one would be broadband coming to Delta County for young entrepreneurs to come to Delta County that can work from home or rent cheap office space in Downtown Delta County. A challenge for that would be transportation and to bring in manufacturing for that which is very expensive.
	Economic Opportunities	Used to have some programs that provided funding, gave money to outside businesses instead and they almost all went bankrupt with outstanding bills for local businesses. Need to focus on funding/resources for businesses that are already here. Façade, small loans, expansion.