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From the Director,

To our regional family and partners everywhere, Here's hoping we can make it through the "high desert hurricane winds" and see through the dust, pollen and wildfire smoke this Spring. We are all bracing for more of the same, as we learn of the light snowpacks in the Rockies and La Platas, and take in the news of continued drought. Through our work on behalf of the City of Gallup on a Bureau of Reclamation grant to produce a Drought Mitigation Plan, we're learning of the stages of drought, and preparing plans for when we reach Stage 3 or – heaven forbid – Stage 4, when severe measures will need to be taken to protect and conserve water supply in our communities. Time now, and going forward, for us to band together on new strategies to use and conserve our water supply in wise and forward-looking ways!

On a more promising front, our colleagues and partners in economic development continue to work together across the spectrum of catalytic activities that are necessary for new breakthroughs for increased opportunity, livelihood and economic well-being for the region's people.

In Washington, where I recently attended the Washington Conference of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), I had a chance to interface with leadership from USDA and EDA, as well as with key staff on Capitol Hill. It's always a struggle and contest for competing agenda and resources, but as regional development organizations, our message remains strong and bipartisan support appears to be there for the work we do as facilitators of development across the country.

Back here in the region, we continue as part of the leadership team for the Four Corners Future Forum, building on the momentum generated by the Forum held last Fall and working toward "Forum 2.0" in the coming Fall. Opportunities coming our way to band together and put action and resources toward some of the many great ideas emerging from the Forum. Keep an eye out for these upcoming regional activities, and in the meantime ... Power On!

Jeff Kiely





Our COG Planning Team attended the annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application Workshop on March 7th in Albuquerque. Staff went to learn about the application process in support of our members and communities, and to learn about program changes, allocations, and tricks to the trade.
~ This article is to inform our members of the top items of note and to share take-aways from the workshop. ~

CDBG 2018 Application Workshop

(1) **National Objectives:** The CDBG program is guided by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and its regulations, but the State is allowed flexibility in setting priorities to best address New Mexico's needs. Local Government Division (LGD), who administers the Small Cities/Communities CDBG program has determined that critical infrastructure in low-to-moderate income communities is NM's top priority. So while, the three HUD national objectives are still as (a) low-to-moderate income (LMI), (b) slum and/or blight removal, and (c) urgent need, LGD is only considering LMI qualifying projects this cycle.

(2) **2018 Cycle Allocations:** The State is waiting the final allocation amount from HUD but is estimating the following breakdown of funding per programs:

- Construction: \$10,000,000;
- Planning: \$500,000 for planning grants; and,
- Economic Development: \$1,000,000

(3) **Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG):** LGD is operating under new guidance to identify entities and their capacity to administer CDBG grants. Based on these criteria, LGD will evaluate entities on how they perform and administer CDBG grants/projects. If an entity is determined "high risk", they will not be permitted to apply in the next cycle.

(4) **Site Control** (Page 24, NMAC guidelines): To receive CDBG funds, an entity needs to control the project site and prove control of real property, easements and rights-of-way by providing deeds of trust or other legal documents proving ownership. The entity should provide maps of the proposed project area and must sign and notarize the CDBG Site Certificate form.

(5) **Public Participation:** An entity that is applying must have at least two hearings prior to application within an one-year window. LGD has added the ability to have a "post-selection hearing" as an eligible hearing to achieve this requirement. A post-selection hearing would occur after the governing body selects its preferred project and would occur in the neighborhood and/or community where the project is proposed. More guidance is forthcoming.

(6) **Project Costs:** Must be consistent from engineer's cost estimate to what is described in application budget section and consistent with the governing body's resolution for both phased and full project. Once funded, these project budgets will be the basis for the grant agreement and budget exhibits.

(7) **Planning Grants:** LGD is allowing water associations and land grants to apply directly for planning grants, rather than having to go through an eligible City or County.

(8) **Presentations:** Rick Lopez, LGD Director stressed that presentations be made by a knowledgeable presenter rather than a group. You can identify and introduce elected officials, but the presenter should "know what the project is" and stick to a powerpoint that describes: (a) your community and project, (b) need, (c) cost, (d) location, and (e) start date.

Upcoming Deadlines:

Applications Due: June 22, 2018

Application Hearings: August 29, 2018

Allocation of Funds: September 19, 2018

Implementation Workshop: October 17, 2018

THE COAL AVENUE COMMONS PROJECT HAS LAUNCHED!

As writers, artists, and musicians know, downtowns are the heartbeats of communities. Downtown is where the energy is, where creativity resides, where the people are, and where possibility lives. And Gallup's downtown is full of possibility. Last year, the City of Gallup, in partnership with GallupARTS and the Northwest NM Council of Governments, received a \$150,000 Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), supported by a \$25,000 grant from the McCune Charitable fund and matched by local contributions, to re-design Coal Avenue in downtown Gallup as an "event street" through a creative placemaking process.

Now, the City and GallupARTS, along with their partners—McKinley County, the Gallup Business Improvement District, the Gallup MainStreet Arts & Cultural District, and the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments—are breaking ground on the "visioning" stage of the newly named Coal Avenue Commons project. And they need the community's help imagining a new era for downtown as a people-friendly, business-friendly, event-friendly creative commons. Neighbors, artists, business owners, property owners, civic leaders—everyone!—is invited to share their ideas and give their input on what the future Coal Avenue Commons should look, feel and function like this spring and summer, starting with the following:

"If you don't have a downtown, you really don't have anything. It's hard to build a community around parking lots and subdivisions."
~ Ed McMahon ~

KICK OFF EVENT
Start something big.
Tuesday, May 1
6pm
El Morro Theatre



COAL AVENUE COMMONS: IN ONE WORD

Shape the future of downtown. All it takes is one word. How?

- Step 1: Imagine your ideal future downtown Gallup? What one word captures your vision?
- Step 2: Post your word on the @ArtsCrawlGallup or @CoalAvenueCommons Facebook pages or e-mail it to artscrawl@galluparts.org by May 5 to have it included in a temporary graffiti mural by local artist Bear Mescale.
- Step 3: The mural will be revealed at ArtsCrawl: Pop! on Saturday, May 12 from 7 – 9pm.

ONGOING

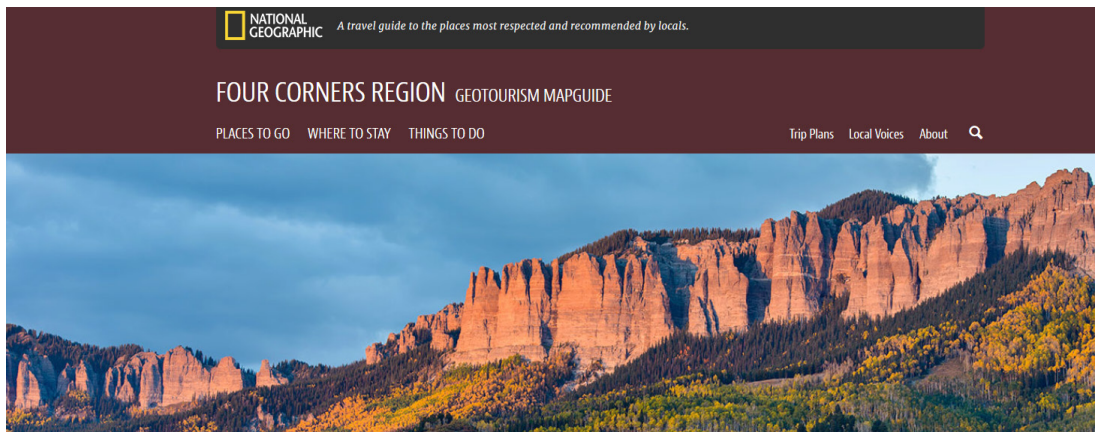
- Check out the project's website: www.coalavenuecommons.com
- "Like" the project's Facebook page @CoalAvenueCommons



McKinley County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The Northwest NM Council of Governments (COG), NM Forest Guild, and McKinley County Fire & Rescue representatives continued collaboration as a project team to conduct the 2018 update to the McKinley Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) through a grant award from the NM Association of Counties.

This quarter, the Forest Guild staff and McKinley County Fire Chief Jason Carlisle spearheaded an online survey for each Volunteer Fire District to contribute their updates, regarding past accomplishments towards risk reduction and recommended priority actions. Forest Guild staff are now completing the first draft CWPP update, and the second core team meeting is scheduled for early May with a second public meeting being scheduled shortly thereafter. The Forest Guild will then complete the final CWPP Update for the Core Team, make changes, and finalize by middle of June.



Four Corners Geotourism Website Upgrade:

<https://fourcornersgeotourism.com/>

This quarter under contract with McKinley County through a NM Tourism Department grant, COG staff contracted with Old Town Creative to upgrade to the NAT-GEO Four Corners Geotourism website to a 2.0 platform. We are asking agencies and stakeholders to take a look and spread the word about utilizing this with unique businesses, places, and beneficiaries within your areas.

Going forward, COG staff will continue to work with the Four Corners Geotourism Stewardship Council, to develop a website maintenance plan, with management from participating agencies in all four states. Secondly, develop a financing plan to sustain the website through minimal annual contributions from participating agencies, and contributions from private sector organizations that benefit from this marketing. Lastly, reinvigorate the Stewardship Council, who will continue to collaborate to maintain, update and manage the website content in collaboration with National Geographic, allowing the site to keep all our marketed attractions current and consistent with our New Mexico True brand standards. Go to <https://fourcornersgeotourism.com/> to view this international marketing tool that we hope will take our regional tourism and hospitality industries to a whole new level.

Northwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization Highlights



Cruising Forward: *The Northwest RTPO staff will be announcing its biennial “Call for Transportation Projects” in June 2018 for FFY2020 & 2021. This open call for projects are for any transportation projects that meet functional classification and/or requirements of specific programs e.g. Transportation Alternative Program, Recreational Trails Program, Highway Safety Improvement Program, Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAC).. Please contact RTPO staff with any questions regarding requirements and coordinate submissions through your associated RTPO representatives. Information coming soon to our Call for Transportation Projects section of <http://www.nwnmcog.com/important-documents.html>*

In the Rear View:



- **Grants Thoroughfare Plan:** April 5th, RTPO staff participated in a transportation visioning session with City leadership and Wilson & Company Engineering to develop a thoroughfare plan for the City of Grants including short-term, mid-term, and long-term actions, priorities, and financing strategies. RTPO staff were able to coordinate two follow-up meetings to discuss funding strategies with NMDOT and Local Government Division.

- **Gallup Transportation Safety Plan:** RTPO staff assisted the City of Gallup and DOT to recruit and setup a project in the City of Gallup to involve a new practice for ramping up proactive community-wide safety planning and project design. The Kick-off meeting was on April 11th.

- **Four Corners Transportation Plan:** RTPO staff engaged a new four-State initiative to collaboratively improve transportation and public transit connectivity across our mega-region. RTPO provided an updated stakeholders list from our regional planning work.

- **Scenario Planning and Federal Infrastructure Package:** RTPO Program Manager began researching the FHWA “Next Generation Scenario Planning” and President Trump’s “Initiative for Rebuilding Infrastructure in America” to anticipate future trends the NWRTPO might participate in for transportation development.

- **Infrastructure Capital Improvement Program:** COG staff worked with several regional development organizations (RDO’s) and state agencies to support an upgrade for the state’s ICIP system to make it more streamlined, flexible, and useable at multiple levels for multiple reasons.

- **Tribal Infrastructure Fund Grant Applications:** Staff assisted in developing a TIF application for just over \$1 million to the NM Indian Affairs Department for improvements of Deer Springs Road in Mexican Springs Chapter. RTPO staff also supported other applications in terms of transportation projects (County Road #19, Manuelito Canyon Bridge & Road)

- **MAP Funding Agreement:** Staff devel-

oped an MOA between Gallup, Grants, Milan and Reserve (Catron County) to share MAP funding in a manner where over a 4-year period each community takes it’s turn at utilizing all of the funds for their respective year. This method significantly increases the value of MAP funding for completing a more significant project, rather than applying a portion of the funding to a small phase accomplishment.

- <https://fourcornersgeotourism.com/> examples:

COG & GGEDC ISSUES FINAL REPORT ON ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE

Recommendations Target Workforce Development in the Construction, Logistics, and Manufacturing

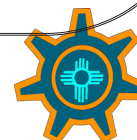
Planning committee for the Economic Roundtable on Workforce Development in the Construction, Logistics, and Manufacturing Sectors, co-facilitated by Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation (GGEDC) and the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments (NWNMCOG), released the final report outlining recommendations to strengthen workforce development efforts in the construction, logistics and manufacturing sectors of McKinley County.

The final report expands on the economic roundtable held in January 2018, where 56 public and private sector leaders from Gallup and McKinley County, as well as from state, tribal, academic and nonprofit agencies gathered to identify action strategies and specific investments of talent and resources needed to overcome barriers and achieve new breakthroughs in building a high-quality, employable workforce pipeline into the trades and professions of the three core economic-base industries in the Greater Gallup region.

Dr. James Malm, new CEO of Gallup's UNM campus, presents findings from logistics group.



"The final report presents recommendations that will help us make real, lasting change in McKinley County with workforce development, and through the Economic Roundtable series, GGEDC is committed to implementing them," said GGEDC Executive Director Patty Lundstrom. "We've already made progress, but there is more work ahead of us. In the coming weeks, we will review these recommendations with our partners in more detail. And we will take appropriate action that will continue to improve the quality and skills of the local workforce."



Recommendations made in the final report included the following:

- Formalize Public-Private Partnerships – to increase opportunities for apprenticeships, internships, mentorships, and on the job training in McKinley County.
- Reprioritize and Develop New Occupation Pipelines – to meet the workforce needs of existing employers in McKinley County.
- Establish a Mobile Jobs Database – to increase connections between employers and potential employees in McKinley County.

Construction group focuses hard on developing workers for an ever-changing industry.



Through a US Bureau of Reclamation grant, the COG is working with the City of Gallup to develop a drought contingency plan. The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project (NGWSP) is designed to serve a future population of approximately 250,000 people by the year 2040. This population could be impacted by drought conditions at any point. The success of NGWSP depends on managing water demand during a variety of minor and major drought situations. In recent years, other cities and states have recognized from these experiences the importance of improved water-supply planning and management, including drought preparedness.



<https://www.gallupnm.gov/662/Water-Commons-Drought-Contingency-Plan>

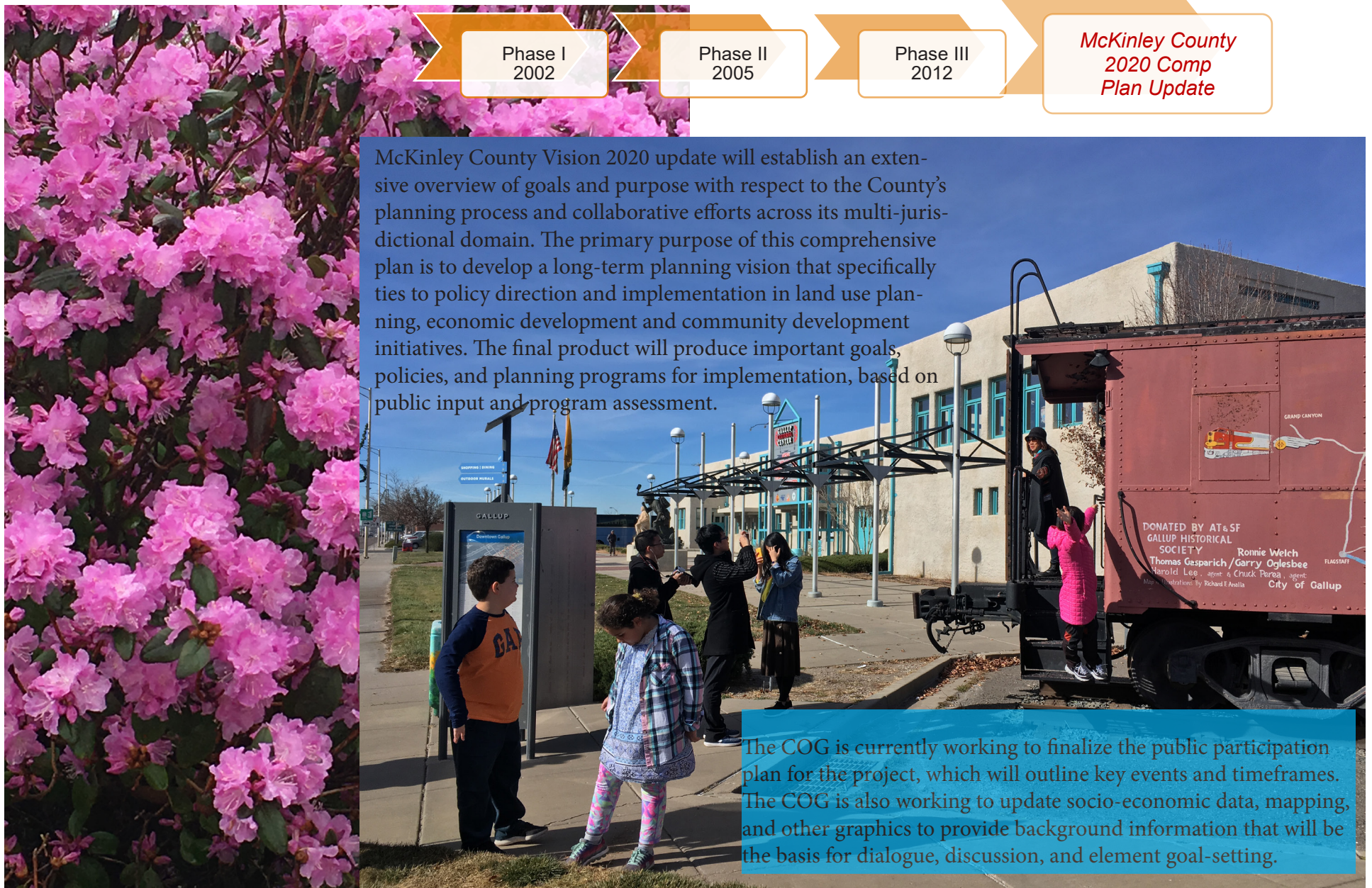


The City of Gallup and NGWSP stakeholders have a dire need for a Gallup/NGWSP "Water Commons" Drought Contingency Plan to evaluate our water capability and demand, while preparing for all stages of droughts impacts. This Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) will be a guide for implementing solutions and including providing answers to the three core questions:

- 1) How will we recognize the next drought in the early stages?
- 2) How will drought affect us?
- 3) How can we protect ourselves from the next drought?

McKinley County Comprehensive Plan

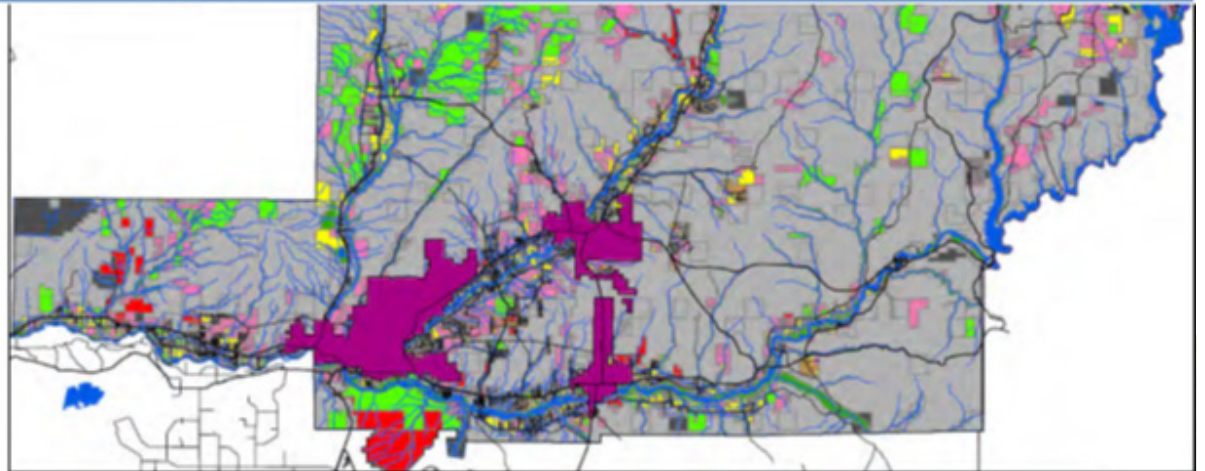
NWNMCOG is working in conjunction with the McKinley County administration in updating the County's Comprehensive Plan. This planning effort will build on the past versions and processes, as shown in the Figure below:



San Juan County Growth Management Master Plan

The Steering Committee will hold its kick-off meeting on April 17th. COG staff will participate and offer recent planning products and reports, such as the POWER report and San Juan County Utility Study as new information for incorporation.

San Juan County Growth Management Plan Update



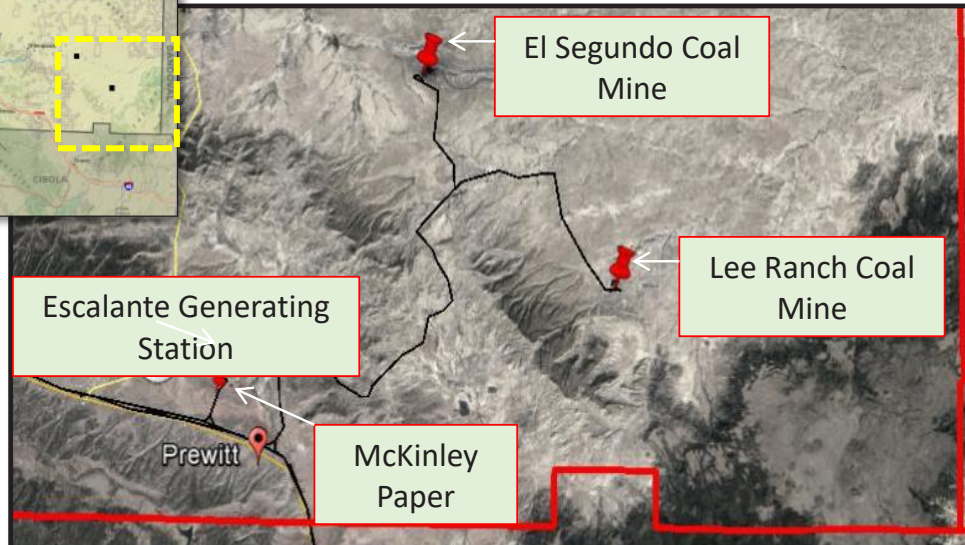
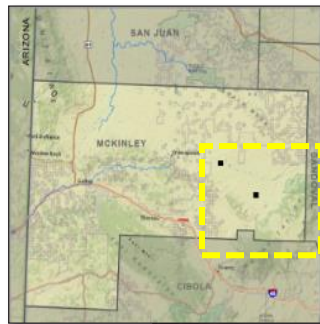
San Juan County has contracted with Architectural Research Consultants, Inc. (ARC) to update its 2012 Growth Management Master Plan. Based on the work of ARC and Council of Governments, San Juan County Commission accepted the Growth Management Plan (GMP) in 2007 and its update in 2012. Since that time, the County has implemented the plan recommendations that were of highest priority to County citizens. The GMP is now five years old, and the County is updating key elements. Beginning in April 2018, the County embarked on an concise planning effort to confirm citizen priorities and develop ordinances that would address the highest priorities.

House Memorial 72 & 41

Prewitt Industrial Cluster Economic Development Planning

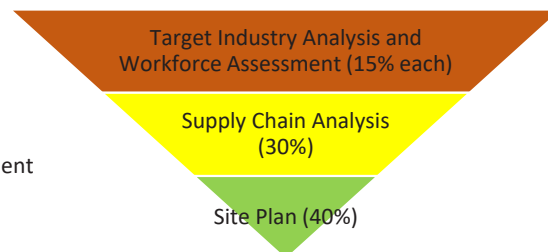


The COG announces that it has hired Foote Consulting Group, LLC to assist with an integrated planning product that will directly benefit the bi-county area of Cibola and McKinley. This work is being underwritten by two NM Finance Authority planning grants and was empowered through two consecutive House Memorials (72/41). This initiative continues the COG's POWER work in the region, supports economic diversification, and cushioning the economic woes in coal-impacted communities. This planning effort will provide a deeper dive into the Prewitt Industrial Cluster area, which is transportation and strategic hub for area base employers including Escalante Generating Station, El Segundo & Lee Ranch coal mines, and Bio-Pappel (McKinley Paper). The COG is planning site visits and interviews with area leaders in mid-May. Currently, FCG is digging into data and analytics of the targeted area and the two-county areas.



Scope-of-Work (Deliverables):

- Identify available workforce skill-sets (Workforce Assessment)
- Identify compatible industries for recruitment (Target Industry Analysis)
- Identify complimentary businesses for recruitment (Supply-Chain Analysis)
- Identify location for business siting (Master Site Plan)





Zuni Mountain Trail Project



- * Finalize trail and trailhead design including COG portion (18 miles) and get USFS approval;
- * Approve work scopes for projects this season and ask if volunteers can ride in portions of the trail;
- * Contract with Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps and recruit trail crew members, and separately with Strider Brown (QA/QC, Cibola County Designer);
- * Line-out and set schedule for the County roads crew to develop trailhead; and
- * Celebrate National Trails Day (June 2) with a ground-breaking event.
- * Start gearing up with Cibola County on their project.

Four Corners Future Forum: Expanding the Partnership

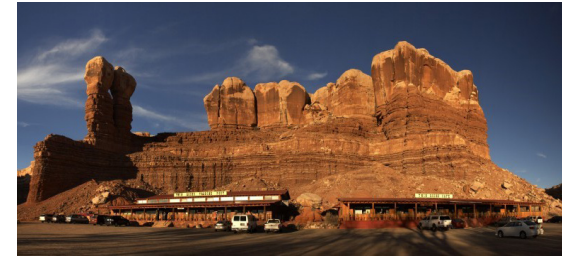
Building on momentum from the Four Corners Future Forum held last November in Farmington, the COG and its partners on the Forum Steering Committee (San Juan College, 4 Corners Economic Development, and 4 Corners Power Plant), tapped further into the successful experience of our colleagues at the Region 5 Development Commission in Minnesota. Forum participants will recall the excellent input provided at the Forum by Region 5 Executive Director Cheryal Lee Hills and her regional partner Arlene Jones of the Sprout Market, and in follow-up several members of our Forum committee made the trip to Minnesota (right around Super Bowl time!) and met dozens of citizen-leaders in their “Resilient Regions” initiative.



A key take-away from the Region 5 experience was the need to reach a broad regional audience in order to get a handle on what needs to be done to develop the region and its communities, and to identify and support new leadership in carrying out the goals and priorities of the initiative.

To that end, on April 4th of this year, the Forum committee hosted a couple of meetings at Ft. Lewis College in Durango: first, a meeting of the COG districts and several economic development corporations from the Four Corners region; and second, a meeting of many of the Forum participants who had indicated an interest in being active members of implementation going forward. All-in-all, more than 50 participants joined us for the day, resulting in new insight and focused input on areas needing to be worked on, as well as on how broad-based meetings could be organized in each of the four states of the Four Corners region.

Coming up this spring will be a series of meetings in each of these quadrants, leading up to “Four Corners Future Forum 2.0,” to be held in Fall 2018 in conjunction with the “Regional Economic Diversification Summit” proposed by the Austin Regional Office of the US Economic Development Administration. Stay alert for announcements of these next regional activities.



Twin Rocks Café & Trading Post – Utah



Mesa Verde – Colorado



Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park (AZ)



McCauley Warm Springs (N.M.)