



Economic Development Survey

Results

(15 Surveys were completed)

Please work with your table to reach a consensus and provide comments on the following questions. Each table will select:

- One person to record answers of the group; and
- One person to present the findings at the end of the exercise.

1. What does economic development mean to you?

- More retail in Town
- Making the Town a place people want to live
- Establishing the land use and regulatory framework for the economic health of a community to thrive.
- Strong business
- Growing economy through jobs/businesses that benefit th Town and assist in a vibrant community that people are proud to call home.
- Business development that serves the needs of the community and provides jobs at all economic levels to citizens within the community.
- To encourage diverse businesses to commit to our Town and grow our economy.
- Reasonable downtown growth while maintaining small town feel.
- Community development, quality of life.
- Development and exploitation of economic opportunities to enhance the quality of life for a community.
- Systematic and holistic integration of a communities economic, cultural and infrastructure.
- Creating a plan that promotes local and regional economics through the promotion of historic character; arts and entertainment, food and retail, natural resources that improves the quality of life for its citizens.
- Generating wealth and providing people the ability for upward mobility.
- Ensuring the town of la Plata continues to improve availability of jobs, security, and infrastructure; fiscally responsible.

2. When it comes to economic development, what are the Town’s greatest challenges?

Providing adequate job opportunities	6
Providing a suitable range of housing options	4
Protecting its natural resources	1
Protecting its “Small Town” character/feel	7
Providing adequate amenities	6
Other: 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Implementating a sense of place

3. When it comes to economic development, what is the Town’s greatest asset?

Infrastructure	0
Qualified Workforce	5
Sense of Community/Place	11
Accessibility	1
Other: 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive character of residential population

4. Which of the following economic development efforts do you support enhancing?

Job Incentives	5
Downtown Beautification	7
Infrastructure improvements	11
Entertainment	3
Job/Small Business Incubator	6
Other: 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning that allows commercial development • Security

5. What three economic development priorities should the Town focus on?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Housing • Make community attractive to more residents • Quality services • Attract skilled work-professional businesses • Attract high end employers • Upgrading infrastructure • Town Core redevelopment • Quality job attraction • Consider low income housing • Supporting entrepreneurs and local businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Spaces • Encourage redevelopment of underutilized property • Attractive business fronts • Make Charles St. walkable/center of town. • Town infrastructure for access to jobs. • Encouraging larger retail establishments • Small business • Provide policy framework for downtown improvement then implement by Town's operating and capital budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the town a place businesses want to be and people. • Zone land to encourage new investment. • Good value • Business/living space (Mixed use) • Mixed Use • Park once and shop • Arts/Entertainment • Historic Character • Food/Retail • Infrastructure • Security • Jobs
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6. What types of businesses would you like to work at or visit within the Town?

Restaurants	8
Retail	11
Businesses	6
Grocery Stores	6
Other: 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office • Professional other than law/court related. • Federal office • Career focused employment opportunity business

7. What regulations hinder economic development efforts?

- DRB process
- Cost of water/sewage (separate meters for outside use)
- Sign Ordinance/Regulation
- DRB
- Sign
- Lack of political will and vision
- Signs
- Permitting
- The time it takes to get through the process

8. Which capital improvements should the Town prioritize?

Roads	9
Sidewalks	10
Water and Sewer	5
Parks and Recreation Amenities	6

9. How can we facilitate stronger, more inclusive collaboration within our community?

- Host meetings like this and get the word out.
- Offer opportunities for community to interact and discuss issues.
- Efforts like this.
- Bring representatives from each organization/group that have a vested interest in Town's success.
- More work sessions that draw in the business community and citizens
- Supporting and promoting the various business organizations. Having events that provide opportunities for collaboration/promotion.
- Articles in local paper and Town newsletter. Face to face discussions with community and business groups.
- Open, transparent process, leverage social media, online technologies.
- Improve engagement of the Town population.

10. Do you think the community has a clear vision for the present and future?

Strongly agree	0
Agree	5
Disagree	6
Strongly Disagree	0

11. Do you feel that citizens are well informed about economic development activities?

Strongly agree	0
Agree	2
Disagree	11
Strongly Disagree	2

12. What types of business incentives should the Town provide?

Tax Credits	10
Reduction of Impact Fees	6
Grant programs	4
Other: 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None – if business won't open without incentive it is not a good match for the community. It should open because there is a desired customer base or workforce. • Opportunity Zone

13. Do you feel the community is prepared for new business opportunities?

Strongly agree	2
Agree	7
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	0

14. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan States that the Town should “Assist owners of small “niche” businesses with the permit and Board approval process necessary prior to location in the Central Business District.” What specific steps could the Town take to help business owners understand, navigate, and get through the approval process?

- Offer and assistance program
- Provide regular hours for prospective business owners to come ask questions.
- Simplify the process and eliminate the DRB. Assign staff member as “concierge” for incoming businesses.
- From chart of the process in the web where they can click on each step for further clarification.
- Simplify, educate, electronic permit system.
- Create a handbook, waive impact fees, provide grants to assist in the process.
- Streamline the process.

15. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan states that the Town should “Discourage large retailers (+10,000 sq. ft.) from developing in the Town’s Central Business District. Do you agree or disagree with this implementation strategy?”

Agree	13
Disagree	1

Please explain why you agree or disagree:

- Agree - There is an effort to have a small town vibe.
- Agree – To aid downtown walkability storefronts should be closer together.
- Agree – Larger facilities on the out-skirts
- Agree- Large retailers require large parking lots or parking garages placed or outside edge of CBT makes sense.
- Agree – Feel we loose the small town
- Disagree – I believe this discourages growth.
- Agree – Large retailers are not compatible with downtown infrastructure as it is currently. They would also degrade an already poor traffic stretch downtown.
- Agree – keep small town character
- Agree – so as to support the vision of the 2009 Comp Plan to enhance the Town’s central business district
- Agree – Focus on mixed use development, incentives.
- Agree – It would jeopardize its small town character.
- Agree- There is insufficient room in the CBT. There is plenty of room elsewhere in Town.