

Unemployment Rate Update

- The unemployment rate in La Plata County was 2.8% in September, 3.1% in October, and 3.2% in November.
- In San Juan County, it was 1.4% in September, 1.9% in October, and 3.5% in November.
- In Archuleta County, it was 2.8% in September, 3.1% in October and November.
- In Montezuma County, it was 3.3% in September, 3.7% in October, and 3.8% in November.
- In Dolores County, it was 2.7% in September, 3.1% in October and 3.9% in November.

Plastic Bag Fee

- In 2021, House Bill 21-1162 was voted into law and has taken effect this month. It imposes a 10-cent fee for every single-use bag (paper or plastic) that a "large" retail store supplies to each customer. A large retail store is defined as a store that has more than three locations within the State of Colorado and/or has stores in other states.
- More details are available here: <https://www.durangogov.org/1660/Bag-Fees-Bans>

Durango Mesa Park Update

- The City of Durango and the DMP Foundation have been working together to develop and implement the DMP Area Plan that was adopted in August 2018. The plans will take years to come to fruition, but planning and implementing Phase 1 has begun. Phase 1 includes the development of a 50-80 acre Bike Park including the relocation of the BMX track currently located at Cundiff Park, trails to connect the DMP with the Horse Gulch trail system as well as a disc golf course and dog park depending on funding.
- <https://durangomesapark.org/>

Durango Parking Study

- Consultants told Durango City Council in December that the city's downtown area does not need more parking inventory or a parking garage at this point. And adding more supply won't address the perception of a shortage of parking. What the city needs is better utilization of existing parking supply in the downtown area, consultants say. Among the ways to accomplish that quickly is better signage and communication with the public.
- In the short term, consultants recommend consideration of neighborhood parking permits, demand-based parking pricing and flexible parking passes, among other ideas.
- The parking study is posted on the city's website here: <https://durangogov.org/1629/Parking-Study> Public comment is being taken now and the city council will consider adopting the study on January 17th.

Chapter 90 (Oil and Gas Regulations) of the La Plata County Land Use Code Update

- La Plata County probably won't initiate its own air quality program following a presentation by staff from the Southern Ute Tribe's Air Quality Program in December. Most of the oil and gas wells in La Plata County are located within the Southern Ute Reservation and tribal staff told La Plata County Commissioners the cost may outweigh the benefits. County commissioners discussed air quality monitoring as part of the process of updating the county's oil and gas drilling regulations.
- The commissioners did not discuss setbacks, opting to leave that topic until the next scheduled meeting on January 17th.
- County Attorney Sheryl Rogers said the second draft of Chapter 90 of the Land Use Code (Oil and Gas regulations) is substantially complete and will aim for release in February.

County Planning Dept. Update

- Kevin Hall, formerly of Durango's Community Development Dept, has been hired as interim Community Development Director by La Plata County. Meanwhile, a nationwide search is underway and an on-call contract for planning services is in place.

County Resident Survey

- In an effort to gain insight on La Plata County resident views about the benefits and impacts of tourism, Visit Durango has launched its County Resident Survey for 2022.
- The survey is opened until January 31, and can be taken here:
<https://engage.durango.org/en/projects/resident-survey-2022>

Project Approvals

- Durango Planning Commission recommended approval of the North Main Apartments Preliminary Plan for multi-family housing on North Main Ave. The plan is currently for a total of 153 apartments to be built in 12 buildings. That's 9 fewer units than were approved in the Conceptual phase. The site will include walking access to X-Rock along with small playgrounds and a dog walk area.
- Durango Planning Commission recommended approval for an amendment to the existing Planned Development Agreement for Mercy Regional Medical Center. That action allows the construction of a maximum 80,000 square foot medical office building to the north of the existing complex. The applicant will be required to complete a major site plan review process before development.

Meetings attended December 1 - January 5

12/5 - 5 pm Durango Planning Commission	12/19 - 10 am BOCC Special Business Meeting
12/6 - 10 am BOCC Meeting	12/20 - 10 am BOCC Meeting
12/6 - 2:15 pm Durango Council Study Session	1/3 - 10 am BOCC Meeting
12/6 - 5:30 pm Durango City Council Meeting	1/3 - 2:15 pm Durango Council Study Session
12/7 - 8:30 am BOCC Discussion Time	1/3 - 5:30 pm Durango City Council Meeting
12/7 - 5:30 pm BOCC Ch. 90 Meeting	1/4 - 8:30 am BOCC Discussion Time
12/8 - 6 pm LPC Planning Commission	1/5 - 3 pm LAC Meeting
12/16 - 10 am BOCC Ch 90 Meeting	