Ouray County, Colorado
Theobald/RPI Study Group
2008-2009

Supplementary Reading

Supplementary reading recommended by David Theobald and Sara Coulter. Summaries of journal articles provided to the Study Group by Sara Coulter.

Coupal, Roger and Andy Seidl. "Rural Land Use and Your Taxes: The Fiscal Impact of Rural Residential Development in Colorado." Agricultural and Resource Policy Report, Colorado State University Extension, March 2003.

This study estimates the cost to rural counties in Colorado of dispersed residential development. In all counties in Colorado the cost is greater than the income. In Ouray County, the cost to the County is $1.29 for every $1 of income. The data and analysis for all Colorado counties incorporates six years of annual revenue and expenditures from 1994-1999.

Milder, Jeffrey C. "A Framework for Understanding Conservation Development and Its Ecological Implications." BioScience 57.9 (2007): 757-768.

Abstract: Suburban, exurban, and rural development is a leading cause of biodiversity loss and natural resource degradation in the United States. In response to this threat, conservation development has been advanced as a way to combine land development with functional protection for conservation resources. This article provides a review, analysis, and ecological critique of the four principal types of conservation development: (1) conservation buyer projects, (2) conservation and limited development projects, (3) conservation subdivisions, and (4) conservation-oriented planned development projects. Each approach can contribute to landscape-scale conservation, with benefits that include reducing the off-site impacts of development, buffering and connecting protected areas, and conserving imperiled species and ecosystems. However, the benefits of these approaches depend significantly on project density, design, and context. Accordingly, this article offers a framework for differentiating and analyzing these approaches to conservation development for the purposes of research, land-use planning, public policy, and conservation practice.

Mohamed, Rayman. "The Economics of Conservation Subdivisions, Price Premiums, Improvement Costs, and Absorption Rates." Urban Affairs Review 41.3 (2006): 376-399.

Abstract: The environmental benefits of less land consumption and a growing interest in addressing the negative economic and social impacts of sprawl have resulted in calls for more sensitive subdivision designs. One such design is conservation subdivisions. However, not much is known about these subdivisions, in particular

about their economics. This article addresses the issue by examining price premiums, investment costs, and absorption rates for lots in conservation versus those in conventional subdivisions. The results show that lots in conservation subdivisions carry a premium, are less expensive to build, and sell more quickly than lots in conventional subdivisions. The results suggest that designs that take a holistic view of ecology, aesthetics, and sense of community can assuage concerns about higher density. However, the potential negative consequences of conservation subdivisions require further study.

Pejchar, Liba, Peter M. Morgan, Margaret R. Caldwell, Carl Palmer, and Gretchen C. Daily. "Evaluating The Potential For Conservation Development: Biophysical, Economic, and Institutional Perspectives." Conservation Biology ms. accepted 6/8/2006.

Abstract: The widespread conversion of rural land to low-density residential development poses an immediate threat to biodiversity and to the provision of ecosystem services. Given that development will continue and environmental stakes are high, analyzing alternative growth strategies is critical. Conservation development is one such strategy that has the potential to benefit ecosystems and diverse stakeholders including developers, homebuyers, governments, and society as a whole. Conservation development clusters homes on one part of a property to manage the most ecologically important land for the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. We draw on lessons learned from landscape ecology, open-space development, and regional planning to weigh the biophysical, economic, and institutional evidence for and against conservation development. Conservation development offers many potential environmental and economic advantages: relatively high home values and appreciation rates, lower development costs, and social and ecological benefits to society including landscape connectivity, protection and active stewardship of important ecological assets, and the maintenance of ecosystem services. But this approach also has shortcomings: it may require enlightened institutional regulations and regional planning (and/or ecologically aware developers), it is not always more profitable than conventional development and thus may require subsidies or incentives, and additional research is required to fully understand its benefits and drawbacks. With more information on the effects of clustering, the development of flexible zoning laws, and effective regional planning, conservation development could be a viable strategy for sustaining biodiversity and ecosystem services in changing landscapes.

"This Land Is Your Land." Planning Commissioners Journal 60:Fall 2005.

Articles discussing property rights and government regulation, including "takings" claims, balancing property rights and local government regulation, the Oregon experience, and the Supreme Court Kelo decision. Legal and historical background of these issues is also provided.