

Ouray County Study Group
Minutes
November 12, 2008
4:00PM
Land Use Office

Those present included Heidi Albritton, Ken Lipton, Keith Meinert, Lynn Padgett, Sara Coulter, Ted Collin, Craig Fetterolf, and John Clark

1. Approve minutes of previous meeting

Minutes from the prior meeting were approved. However Craig Fetterolf noted that he should be listed as 'absentee' from the last meeting.

2. Finalize Theobald Study Report

Sara provided some handouts regarding property rights and encouraged the group to read them. She also presented her Theobald analysis and had not made any changes since the last meeting. Ken asked for comments.

Keith asked what the resolution was in terms of number of mining claims and miles of road. Sara responded that she still needed some input from Lynn. Lynn discussed her work on both issues. The first question of why the vehicle miles traveled had gone down when using Montrose as the center was discussed. Lynn presented several maps that demonstrated different versions of the same information. She presented the tables from varying dates of presentation, which demonstrated that the number of vehicle miles went down proportionately with the decreasing number of units. Lynn couldn't recall why the number of units would have gone down, and no one else recalled either. Discussion ensued as to why the numbers of units would have decreased around 10% or more. Sara stated that the changes may have come from her requests to add and change items based on the group's discussion. Sara pointed out that there is a difference between the numbers presented here and the numbers from the RPI study. Each was given the same reference information. Lynn was not sure if some sort of scaling or normalizing factor would have been added to some of the equations used in Theobald. The real question is what are the VMT's? Theobald uses vehicle miles traveled as opposed to average daily trip (as used in RPI).

Ken felt that it is almost impossible to compare the studies side by side, as they present the data in such different ways. The main things you can present side by side are the gross findings, not the specifics of the data and how it is used. Lynn felt concerned about the discrepancies, and Ken encouraged them to contact Theobald to try and clear them up. Ken stressed that the bottom line effect of growth is clear in both studies, even though the ways that the information is presented may be different. Ken worried about 'getting it perfect', as it may not change the outcome of the studies themselves. Ken discussed people's concerns about these discrepancies interfering with the legitimacy of the studies themselves. He felt that even with the minor discrepancies in both studies, they both still come to the same logical conclusions and he was concerned about getting too mired down in the data. Neither of the studies were coordinated in the beginning, and they cannot be coordinated after the fact. Ted agreed that this should be made clear in the preamble, and that the group should focus on the major themes. Ken pointed out that RPI didn't even include an increase in costs, merely using the '05 data expanded forward. There are numerous deficiencies in both studies. Keith didn't have any problem with the group looking in a more thematic approach at these studies, understanding that the details may not be as clear or as they could or should be. Everyone agreed that the preamble would be very important in terms of setting the context in which the group looked at the two studies were analyzed. Ken suggested that the group approve what Sara has done so far, understanding that if Theobald can be consulted there may be a few details that are left to be filled in.

The next question dealt with the number of mining claims. Lynn produced a map of the south end of the County, and reminded the group that Theobald was going to go back and show building sites. Ken mentioned

that he used 1 per 70 density on the mining claims, which should have made his numbers go down. Lynn pointed out that not only have his numbers not decreased, they are actually higher than those that Karen had provided. It is not known how his numbers show greater density or units than the information that the county has. Lynn needs to know where Theobald's dots fit into what is shown on the maps, and how he is modeling the information we had asked him to model. Craig felt that the discrepancies were not that worrisome when you consider the fact that it is truly a 'moving target'. Lynn was trying to figure out what Theobald had done, and she had run into several issues in her efforts to do that. Sara mentioned that Theobald had said that the final draft included the mining claims, but we don't really know how he had included them. Sara recommended that both issues (which she had omitted from her report since she didn't have the information) should be included as an addendum to her report. Keith had said that previously the group had decided that different versions of the report couldn't be compared based on the changing scenarios and information and wondered why they were going through the exercise now. Sara felt that now there was more factual information available to help understand the versions and that it was a worthwhile exercise.

Ken asked that with regard to the mining claims in particular, there should be as much specificity as possible. Lynn and Sara will try to figure out the discrepancies, either by contacting Theobald or figuring it out themselves. If Theobald has been refining as he goes, then the latest iteration should be the most accurate, but that is what we need to find out.

3. Finalize Synopsis of RPI Study

Ken handed out final versions of the RPI Synopsis and Implications. The numbers in the RPI study are different than Theobald, and also have discrepancies. The RPI study uses a 4% growth rate throughout the study as a constant, but does not account for increased costs or inflation at all. The numbers are true 2005 dollars and should be taken as such. The two studies have fairly significant differences in terms of numbers of housing units and other numbers. That being said, here again they both indicate steady levels of growth with inadequate methods to fund the increased demand for services. Keith discussed the public's perception of the word 'capitol' in comparison to the word as used and understood in reference to the budget. He encouraged the use of the public understanding of capitol; instead of the accounting standard (as this relates more directly to a visible change or improvement in the road system) Ken discussed the implications of the average daily trip vs. vehicle miles traveled. Ken felt that VMT is more useful than ADT in terms of looking at impact to budget and services. On the Total Planned Capital Improvements plan, Ken tried to summarize a fairly convoluted paragraph in RPI. The idea of operating the roads as a utility came up, and Don Bathelder had advocated this for some time. It is unknown if that would survive a legal challenge, but the idea does have its merits. Lynn asked that the phrase 'in 2005 dollars' be used throughout the report to remind readers of the fact that the report. The use of bond issues to fund capitol improvements as well as expansion of commercial tax base. Without the passage of bonds or increased tax base, the only real option left is to increase the tax base. Lynn discussed the impacts of Gallagher at the state level, and perhaps this study could be used to demonstrate this discrepancy to the state in an effective way. The development of light industrial or other types of commercial entities could help offset Ouray's situation.

Ken pointed out several inaccuracies in the report and had already made the corrections; the '2005 dollars' phrase was added in several places. Lynn tried to clarify the 'residential share' of admin services, and it was agreed that it referred to the 2005 demand (in terms of people, not units). Keith discussed the temptation to get more out of the study than is actually there. Discussion about the County's de-brucing status ensued, with some confusion as to whether or not property taxes were de-bruced. It was determined that all County funds and revenues were de-bruced, but Heidi will find a copy of the ballot question to look at the specifics. Both Heidi and Keith felt that the County is entirely de-bruced, including property taxation.

Lynn suggested some minor changes to clarify the difference between administrative and law enforcement conclusions. Lynn also thought that the sales tax leakage of 36% did not seem to be realistic, and the group agreed. The number seemed very low given the spending habits of residents. The group agreed to state somewhere in the conclusions that this number is low. The tax leakage issue is a significant one, and will certainly play a part in the recommendations.

The group had to leave the room to allow the next group to get set up, and didn't get a chance to start the last agenda items.

4. Develop Interpretation of Both Studies

The group will discuss this next time.

5. Develop Recommendations, Pros/cons and implementation Strategy

The group will discuss this next time.

6. Discuss date for presentation

The group will discuss this next time.

7. Public Comment

No members of the public attended the meeting.

8. Next Meeting TBD

The group will pick up where they left off with the remaining agenda items.

The group will meet next Wednesday the 19th at 3:30 at the Land Use Office.