

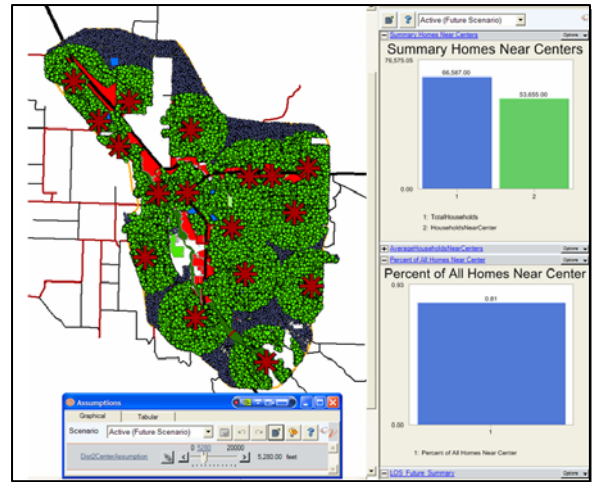
## City Comp Plan

Engaging residents in scenario planning

**Location:** Montrose, Colorado

**Partners:** City of Montrose; Winston Associates, Inc.; Foresee Consulting, Inc.

**Context:** In the past decade, the City of Montrose has grown to become a major commercial center for southwest Colorado's Western Slope. Montrose hosts both a hospital and an airport that serve the three counties of Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel. Major employers include the County, the school district, the hospital, and Russell Stover Candies. The Uncompahgre River Valley skirts the downtown, and the City is close to the vast recreational resources of southwestern Colorado, including the Telluride Ski Area and Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. Montrose is drawing new residents. From 2000 to 2006, the City grew by an average of 4.9% per year, and the 2007 population of about 18,000 is expected to more than double in the next 20 years to 40,000.<sup>1</sup>



Since adoption of Montrose's 1998 Plan, much has changed. Growth has been well supported by increased public services, facilities, and open spaces. At the same time, however, concerns about congestion, housing costs, protection of the river valley, increased costs of services associated with leap-frog growth, and reactive annexations begged to be addressed as the City developed its new Plan. The City retained Winston and Associates to lead a comprehensive planning process that would intensively engage the citizens of Montrose in addressing these and other issues.

*"The combination of the chip game, the keypad polling, and the analyses using CommunityViz<sup>®</sup> worked really well to involve the community and to help us move towards decisions. We had more than usual suspects involved—we had people from all walks of life."*

—Kerwin Jensen, City of Montrose  
Community Development Director

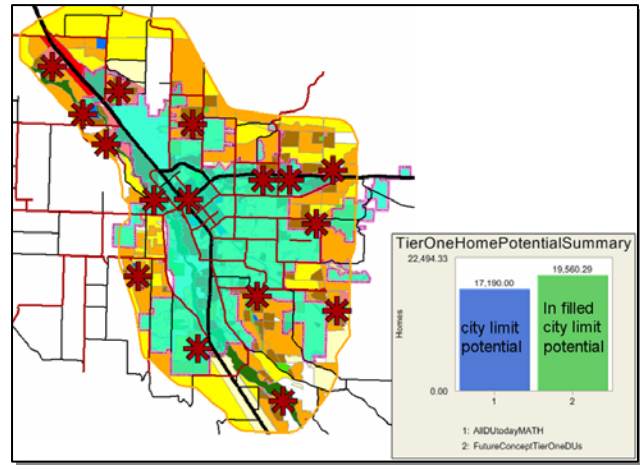
**Project Description:** Four well attended public workshops drew a broad range of local residents to study their community in depth, to learn about planning concepts, and to iteratively develop a land use plan that would incorporate their values and address key issues. At the first workshop, Foresee Consulting facilitated the "Growth Challenge Game," also known as a "chip game." Participants located new housing and new jobs on a "game board"—a detailed map of the community which showed physical features, public lands, and existing land uses including existing residential densities. Workshop participants produced 30 different maps, each of which was digitized by Foresee and studied for commonalities. The plans were synthesized to develop three broad concept alternatives, or scenarios, for further analysis. These were dubbed Current Trend, Major Centers, and Minor Cen-

<sup>1</sup> City of Montrose Comprehensive Plan, 2008

ters. In addition, workshop participants used keypads to indicate their priorities with respect to “sensitivity factors” (such as preservation of agricultural lands, or maintenance of species habitats) and “growth efficiency factors” (such as quick response times for services, or proximity to elementary schools), all of which could be used in analysis of the alternatives.

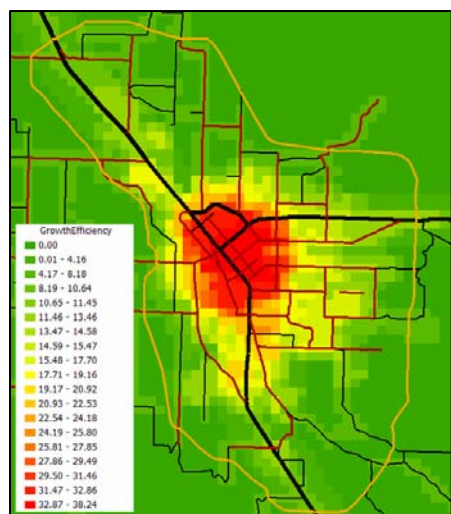
In preparation for Workshop #2, Foresee analyzed the three scenarios using CommunityViz and taking into account the participant-ranked sensitivity and efficiency factors. Workshop participants again used keypad polling, this time to indicate their policy priorities and to comment on the relative merits of each scenario. At Workshop #3, participants learned about and discussed the relationship of transportation to land use, and they used keypads to give the consulting team input on the transportation elements of the Plan.

Finally, at Workshop #4, the consulting team presented a fiscal analysis for the City, relating capital costs and operational costs to the pattern of development, and they also presented a Synthesis Plan. The Plan included a “Tier System” to guide future development, with development policies varying among tiers in large part due to different costs of development depending upon proximity to services. Keypad polling was used as a check to see whether citizens approved of the proposed plan. The resulting Synthesis Plan became the basis for the City’s Land Use Plan, and the input and discussions at the workshops became the basis of the Plan policies, which were organized around eight “Guiding Principles.”



**KEY LINKS**

- CommunityViz  
<http://www.communityviz.com>
- City of Montrose  
<http://co-montrose.civicplus.com>
- Winston Associates, Inc.  
<http://www.winstonassociates.com>
- Foresee Consulting, Inc.  
<http://www.foreseeconsulting.biz>



**Technology and Tools:** Foresee Consulting used CommunityViz Scenario 360™ to input, evaluate and illustrate the alternative plans and the “Synthesis Plan.” The community was engaged through a series of four workshops, which used CommunityViz, keypad polling and the “Growth Challenge Game” to define resident priorities, to develop, analyze, and evaluate alternative scenarios, and to confirm a Synthesis Plan that became the basis of the Land Use Plan. Citizen input was also obtained via survey questionnaires distributed at meetings.

**Outcomes:** The Plan was adopted in early 2008. Since then, several of the recommended implementation measures have been completed or are underway. As a direct result of the focus on the relationship of land use to the cost of services, the City has implemented a City Operations and Police Services (COPS) fee, in which developers pay for services according to the “tier” in which their projects are located.

The City is currently working with Montrose County to revise the sewer service boundaries included in the City-County Intergovernmental Agreement. The City is also working on other implementation measures, such as preservation of lands along the Uncompahgre River Corridor, extending recreational paths, and working on identified transportation improvements including enhanced pedestrian and vehicular neighborhood connectivity.

Sources: City of Montrose; Winston Associates, Inc.; Foresee Consulting, Inc.; City of Montrose Comprehensive Plan, 2008. CommunityViz is a registered trademark of Placeways LLC. Scenario 360 is a trademark of Placeways LLC.