



THE CITY OF GUNNISON

2007

MASTER PLAN



ADOPTED APRIL 25, 2007

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Acknowledgments

City Council

Stu Ferguson, Mayor
Rick Miller, Mayor Pro Tem

Ellen Harriman

Bill Nesbitt
Jonathan Houck

Planning and Zoning Commission

Diane Lothamer, Chairperson

Harvey Harriman, Vice Chairperson

Ellen Harriman, City Council Representative

Bob Beda
Jim Seitz
Delaney Keating
John Taliaferro

People who contributed their valuable time and effort:

Mike Avery, **Eddy Balch**, Carol Barton, David Baumgarten, Eric Bergman, Ian Billick, **Dick Bratton**, Reta Calkins, Jane Chaney, Butch Clark, **Marlene Crosby**, Pam Cunningham, **Paul Duba**, John DeVore, Maryo Ewell, Hugo Ferchau, Joellen Fonken, Bill Fox, Richard Grice, Sandy Guerrieri, Anne Hausler, Jay Helman, Dave Houghton, **BJ Johnson**, **Richard Karas**, TL Livermore, Tom Maynard, Pam Montgomery, Pat Montgomery, Sally Palmer, Mike Pelletier, **Gary Pierson**, Mike Potoker, Jon Nelson, Kathy Ridgeway, Kevin Nelson, Jim Oates, Sue Oates, Joe Puchek, Ramon Reed, Dave Roberts, Vince Rogalski, Kimberly Romano, Tammy Scott, **George Sibley**, Kathy Tonneson, Shannon Sprott, **Neal Starkebaum**, Rob Strickland, Scott Truex, Cory Watt, **Joanne Williams**, Denise Wise

City of Gunnison Staff

Dan Ampietro	Parks and Recreation Director
Greg Anderson	Police Chief
Kim Antonucci	Planner 1, Master Plan Coordinator
Tex Bradford	Public Works Director
Ken Coleman	City Manager
Gail Davidson	City Clerk
Joe Doerty	Water and Sewer Superintendent
Wendy Hanson	Finance Director
Kyla Leonard	Recreation Coordinator, Parks and Recreation Department
Tracy Meehan	Web Master
Tom Pollard	Electric Superintendent
Andie Ruggera	Planning/GIS Technician
Beverly Seidel	Assistant Web Master
Mark Sniffen	Building Official
Dennis Spritzer	Fire Marshal
Steven Westbay	Community Development Director
Patricia White	Parks and Recreation Assistant Facility Manager
Terry Zerger	City Engineer

Bold denotes Master Plan Steering Committee members

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Executive Summary

This Master Plan is a tool for the City to achieve its goals for the next twenty years. The Plan contains twelve chapters and addresses the relationships among public facilities, land use and planning, community character and government services. The first chapter is introductory and the last chapter discusses the Plan's implementation. Chapters two through eleven provide background information, goals and action statements. While each chapter addresses a specific topic, the Plan has been guided by eight recurring themes, which persist throughout each chapter.

1. Collaboration with other public- and private-sector entities in Gunnison County will contribute to the future success of the City.
2. Gunnison's small-town atmosphere and community character must be nurtured for aesthetic attractiveness and civic pride.
3. The Gunnison valley must begin the transition to utilize more sustainable and renewable forms of energy due to reductions in global energy supply and rising energy costs.
4. Mixed-use zoning will cultivate and enhance the small-business economy and the social qualities of the community.
5. Sprawl must be avoided and open space should be preserved.
6. Individual property rights will be balanced with the protection of public interests and investments.
7. The development of multimodal transportation is important for social and economic vibrancy.
8. City policy makers believe that the City can support economic viability by emphasizing their role in the area of housing, transportation and communication infrastructure development.

In addition to the recurring themes, chapters two through eleven define specific goals which include policies and action statements. These goals are expected to be achieved before the year 2027. The goals for each of these ten chapters are summarized here:

Chapter 2. Community Character and Design

Community character and its sense of place will be the backbone for development in the City. Gunnison's historic character, downtown, and Western State College continue to enhance the town's unique identity. The built environment provides diversity in design and incorporated efficient energy techniques. Attractive streetscapes draw people into the community contributing to a friendly, tolerant small town with a strong sense of place.

Chapter 3. Education, Arts and Literacy

An informed community will exercise its civic responsibilities and the City will continue to collaborate with all governmental and private agencies to nurture educational opportunities in the City.

Chapter 4. Environment and Natural Resources

Natural features and resources will be preserved. Area river systems remain a focus for conservation, protection, and recreation. The air continues to be clean, stars illuminate the dark nighttime skies and rivers run clear.

Chapter 5. Land Use and Growth

Growth and development will preserve and enhance the quality of life which makes Gunnison unique and attractive. Edges of the community remain clearly defined. New developments will demonstrate high-quality urban design while protecting the rural landscapes surrounding the City. Sprawl will be avoided through effective infill and compact growth. Residential, commercial and industrial land uses are appropriately located and interspersed with parks and open space, providing a balanced environment in which to live, work and play.

Chapter 6. Housing

Gunnison's housing inventory includes diverse housing types in mixed use areas. New construction will be based on energy efficiency. New homes are compatible with community character with respect to density, design and demographics. A wide price range is sufficient to meet the needs of all income levels including a healthy rental market with well-maintained rental units.

Chapter 7. Economics

A diversified local economy will support the economic and employment needs of residents and account for social character, land use patterns and global economic and global energy concerns.

Chapter 8. Transportation

Gunnison's transportation system will emphasize alternative modes of travel including pedestrian, bicycle, and a well-integrated public transit system. Growth continues to be accommodated through a planned system of streets and trails which contributes to the vitality of the City's core.

Chapter 9. Utilities and Infrastructure

The City will efficiently deliver its public utilities and continue to be fiscally responsible in the construction of high-quality public infrastructure, making forward-looking decisions that maintain low operational, maintenance and energy costs. The City will continue to increase its utilization of renewable energy sources when possible and will encourage citizens to make the wisest decisions for resource conservation in building and land development.

Chapter 10. Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Community parks and facilities will provide year-round, affordable recreational opportunities for residents and visitors balancing open space with private property

rights. The City will collaborate with public and private entities to provide access to public lands.

Chapter 11. Public Safety

Public safety services will be readily available to serve and protect the community. The agencies providing these services continue to understand the community, its citizens and trends affecting public security.

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Vision Statement

We, the citizens of Gunnison, will nurture the tangible and intangible qualities that create Gunnison's sense of place. We will preserve and enhance our natural surroundings, our friendly, tolerant community and our small-town atmosphere. We will balance our economic well-being with preservation of those qualities that brought us here in the first place. We believe that all community citizens will continue to have the opportunity to participate in an open, democratic process of governance. Each of us has a responsibility to do what we can to keep Gunnison distinctive. Together we can direct our growth so that it benefits our entire community, taking on challenges by joining together, mindful of the generations to come.

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1 Introduction

This introductory chapter discusses the reasons to plan for the future and how the Plan was established based upon public input.

- I. Purpose of the Plan
- II. Creating the Plan
- III. Data Collection
- IV. Engaging the Public
- V. Community Assessment
- VI. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)
- VII. How to Read This Plan



Photo Courtesy of Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism Association

I. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This Master Plan proposes a framework for managing growth that will preserve the quality of life and foster a healthy economy in the City of Gunnison. It is a guide to be used by citizens, developers and Gunnison public officials when making decisions about future development within the City and its three-mile planning boundary.

While this Plan is primarily an advisory document, it is the basis for revising existing regulations, enacting new regulations and making land use decisions. Existing development will not be affected; however, voluntary compliance with the new policies will be encouraged.

The Plan recognizes that protection of individual property rights is a fundamental, legal and philosophical

principle of the United States, the State of Colorado, Gunnison County and the City of Gunnison. The Plan also presents a vision shared by the citizens of Gunnison to preserve and enhance the character, environment and scenic qualities of the community while working toward a more diverse economy.

II. CREATING THE PLAN

Long-range planning involves many steps, including public participation as well as professional data collection techniques. Results of the process determined the current conditions, examined trends, and identified goals. After this information was collected, a vision statement was drafted, and a projected growth scenario was developed.

Data Collection

Land use inventories and other data sources were used in the formation of this Plan. Many regional documents were used as valuable sources to determine the preferred growth patterns. These regional documents are listed in Appendix 1A.

Land Use Inventory

The projected land use map that is illustrated in later chapters was created using several sources:

1. Consultants and staff inventoried industrial, commercial and residential land during August and September of 2004 and the summer of 2005.
2. County Assessor parcel data from 2006 was used as a cross reference to the physical inventory.
3. County GIS data, physical inventories and parcels were manually entered into the City's GIS system.
4. US Census data.

Using GIS and Community Viz[®] modeling software, staff prepared land use scenarios for discussion with the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) resulting in the final projected land use scenario presented in *Chapter 5, Land Use and Growth*.

Engaging the Public

Telephone Public Opinion Survey

A telephone public opinion survey was conducted in November of 2004. Four-hundred households were contacted. Of these, 247 (two-thirds) lived in the City limits, and the remaining third lived within the three-mile planning area. Important issues

such as housing, economic viability, and community facilities were explored.¹

Interviews

Community leaders gave invaluable, multi-faceted perspectives when interviewed by the consultants. These individuals were helpful sources of information throughout the process.

Public Outreach

Staff participated in outreach sessions by presenting drafts of this Master Plan to various groups in the valley including the Gunnison Valley Contractors Association, the Gunnison Country Board of Realtors, the Gunnison Arts Center, Kiwanis, Western State College, Gunnison Valley Community Alliance, and the Gunnison County Planning Commission.

The Steering Committee

This committee consisted of residents of the City and County of Gunnison who were appointed by the Gunnison City Council. This collaboration of citizens provided critical direction to the consultants and the Planning Commission regarding the content of the plan. The steering committee met approximately 20 times throughout the course of development of the Plan and they were instrumental in critiquing policy ideas.

Planning and Zoning Commission

The P&Z hosted a Master Plan "Kick-Off" meeting in August of 2004, for the purpose of establishing a vision for the Plan. P&Z held numerous joint meetings with the Master Plan Steering Committee, the City Council and the

¹ Tosch Public Opinion Survey, 2004. Located in the Office of Community Development, City of Gunnison

County Planning Commission. Further, between December 2005 and February 2007, the P& Z held approximately 35 public work sessions to critique policy statements and approximately 15 public work sessions to edit the draft chapters of the plan.

Smart Growth Workshop

The City sponsored a Smart Growth Workshop in March 2006 for planners, developers and officials, (appointed and elected.) This workshop focused on the *Ten Principles of Smart Growth* and how well they were being implemented by the communities in Gunnison County. The Ten Principles of Smart Growth are listed in Appendix 1.B.

III COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

A roadmap for the future should include a realistic assessment of Gunnison's relationships to the local environment and to the larger world. It should also include an analysis of trends affecting Gunnison in the future. Staff and citizens assessed the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats:

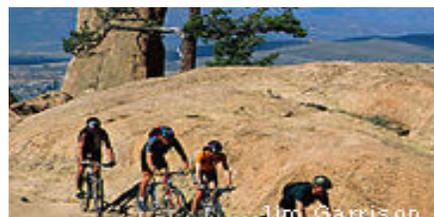
Strengths

Gunnison has many attributes that contribute to a high quality of life and a viable economy, including:



Photo by Andie Ruggera

- A healthy tourism industry.
- Western State College and the cultural and economic benefits of a college town.
- A good hospital and emergency medical services.
- A functional airport capable of handling commercial passenger jet aircraft.
- A sunny climate with moderate summertime temperatures.
- A beautiful environmental setting.
- Many elements of historic and archeological interest.
- Extensive recreation opportunities, including parks, public lands and a bicycle-friendly atmosphere.
- An engaged, well-educated public that is interested in the community's well being.
- An attractive built environment with good infrastructure, roads and other amenities.
- An active and viable arts community.
- Easy access to public lands surrounding the City.



Mountain Biking at Hartman Rocks
Photo courtesy of Jim Garrison and the Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism Association

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- An attractive community character.
- Location on Highway 50, an increasingly popular east-west corridor.

Weaknesses

Some weaknesses are inherent to Gunnison's remote mountain location, such as:

- Severe winters.
- Isolated location limits some services and products.
- High cost of living resulting from being associated with a resort area.
- Limited public transportation.
- Limited economic opportunities.

Opportunities

Foresight and thoughtful planning can avoid or mitigate some of the weaknesses and threats as described herein:

- Undeveloped and underdeveloped parts of West Gunnison present opportunities for quality infill within the present city limits.
- A sunny climate that facilitates solar-generated energy production
- Tracts of land bordering the city within the Urban Growth Boundary could be annexed, providing opportunities for high quality, sustainable development.
- Heritage Tourism is an opportunity that has, for the most part, been untapped, and could provide economic gain valley wide.

- Local and regional entities are dedicated to promoting economic development which could create opportunities for a more diversified, sustainable economy.

- The land development code can be modified to preserve open space; to provide mixed use development opportunities; to encourage green building practices; to encourage renewable energy practices; to encourage affordable housing; and to implement more efficient code administration.

- Physical links between WSC and downtown can be better established, which will enhance the partnership between the City of Gunnison and Western State College, cultivating student involvement in the community and vice versa.



Taylor Hall
Western State College
Photo by Andie Ruggera

- Improved transportation networks will enhance economic viability. Efforts include coordination with the Colorado Department of Transportation.



Therese Tantraw and students
Gunnison County County Literacy
Photo courtesy of
Paul Duba

- The changing demographics of Gunnison’s ethnic composition add diversity to Gunnison's economic base and community character.
- Beautify highway corridors (US 50 and SR 135); enhance valley-wide public transportation; and create new opportunities for bicycle, pedestrian, and other multimodal connectivity.
- Evaluate rising energy costs which can be mitigated through the following:
 1. More energy-efficient architectural design.
 2. Land use patterns and building practices that will require less use of automobiles and encourage greater use of alternative forms of transportation.
 3. Encouraging changes in lifestyle that are less energy intensive.

Threats

- Gunnison's high quality of life and long-term sustainability could be threatened by rising energy prices, which could impact construction, heating and transportation as well as reduce tourism.
- The lack of affordable housing, which negatively impacts existing and projected workforces.
- Gunnison’s growing racial and ethnic minority population must be integrated

into the social and civic fabric of our town to preserve the positive nature of our community character.

- Pressure from land development could reduce surrounding agricultural and open space, negatively impacting our community character and the economic viability of the ranching industry.

IV. HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

Each of the substantive chapters (Chapters 2 through 11) in this Plan is formatted similarly. The chapters begin with an introduction, a discussion of current conditions, and finally the chapter sets forth a specific goal along with policies and action items to implement the goals.

<u>An Example</u>
A <u>goal</u> would be that the City remains clean and attractive.
A <u>policy</u> of the City would be to create visually interesting City entrances.
An <u>action item</u> to implement this policy would be to design and construct entry features.

Chapter 12, Implementation presents a general framework of how the policies are prioritized.



Hay Meadow near Gunnison
Photo courtesy of
Tom Maynard

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2 Community Character

Gunnison's Community Character is the backbone of this Master Plan. It reveals Gunnison's history, quality of life and the distinct elements that create Gunnison's "sense of place". The information in this chapter guides the community in enhancing its character, now and in the future.

- I. Background
- II. The Built Environment
- III. Landscaping and Xeriscaping
- IV. Community Edges
- V. Goal, Policies, and Actions



Cattlemens Day Parade 2006
Photo, Courtesy of Gunnison-Crested Butte
Tourism Association

I. BACKGROUND

A Brief History

The Gunnison area has been inhabited for approximately 8,000 years, as indicated by archaeological evidence found at the Tenderfoot Site (W Mountain). In recorded history, the Ute Indians began hunting in this area around 1650 after the horse was introduced by the Spanish.

During the late 1700s, several Spanish expeditions explored the area that is now western Colorado, which included parts of the Gunnison River Basin. As early as 1830, trappers or "mountain men" searched for fur pelts in the Gunnison area.

In 1853, Captain John W. Gunnison and his party of U.S. Army surveyors camped near the present site of the City of Gunnison. The first prospectors

arrived in the Taylor Park region northeast of Gunnison around 1860, and in 1871, a government cow camp was established near the junction of Tomichi Creek and the Gunnison River.

Sylvester Richardson of Denver arrived with a group of settlers, in 1874; and in 1877, the town became the seat of Gunnison County. An influx of miners occurred in 1878-79 and the City of Gunnison was incorporated in 1880.

Over the decades, Gunnison has transitioned alongside the changes in American culture; however several key elements that originally drove settlers to the valley still exist today. While many of the historic mines have closed, ranching and hunting remain a critical element of the local economy.

Quality of Life

Gunnison's quality of life can be attributed to many tangible amenities,

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from beautiful surroundings to short commutes and wide-open streets to friendly, familiar faces and considerate neighbors. People have always been attracted to this area for its ranching mystique, unhurried lifestyle and recreational opportunities. The sense of community is powerful and residents eagerly take care of each other in times of difficulty.

Many Western State College graduates who may have lucrative opportunities elsewhere, choose to live in Gunnison for its healthy outdoor lifestyle. This creates a highly educated community composed of recreationists, ranchers, students, second homeowners, democrats, republicans and athletes, joined together by a common thread--an enviable way of life.

The high education level of Gunnison contributes to the easy tolerance that people have for one another. A deep respect is common in Gunnison, where most everybody aspires to emulate someone else in the community. Gunnison has good people with strong handshakes and a respectable work ethic. The town reflects the eclectic spirit of people willing to try new ideas and styles. This visual eclecticism reflects a "live-and-let-live" tolerance of individual expression.



Main Street Sidewalk
Photo by Andie Ruggera

Gunnison's community character also has intangible qualities that reflect the diversity of backgrounds and aspirations of its residents. Gunnison's people have come from many different places for many different reasons. Although difficult to articulate, Gunnison's "sense of place" is undeniably like no other.

Sense of Place

"Sense of place" develops when the people who inhabit a geographic place give meaning to the place through their experiences and their memories.¹ Cultural geographers, anthropologists and urban planners study why certain places hold special meaning to particular people. Places said to have a strong sense of place have a strong identity and



Cottonwood Sculpture
Photo by Andie Ruggera

¹ Yi Fu Tuan, Geographer. Sense of Place as defined on the website wikipedia.org.

character that is deeply felt by local inhabitants and many visitors. Sense of place is a social phenomenon that exists independent of any one individual's perception, yet is dependent on human engagement for its existence.²

Gunnison's sense of place is derived from the natural environment, Western State College, the ranching heritage, and cultural traditions. Although economic struggles have always been a source of discontent among residents, the ones who typically stay are hearty, outdoor-oriented people who desire a rich life.

Gunnison is a place with an extreme yet stable climate. The climate tends to create people of character. Stories are often told of friends and acquaintances who craft innovative ways to survive the lifestyle. Not everyone can muster up the strength to live here and it fosters a source of pride.

Residents often describe their experiences with natural surprises, such as watching the red-orange sunrise climb above the Tomichi Creek fog. These impromptu natural experiences are captivating and breathtaking. Just when one thinks they cannot handle the low wages or the cold weather, they come across a natural scene that evokes wonderment. These experiences tend to override the hardships and people generally feel fortunate to live here.



View from the Ohio Creek Valley
Photo courtesy of Western State College

² University of Illinois at Urban-Champaign. East St. Louis Action Research Project.

As the community of Gunnison grows, it will become necessary to continue to cultivate a sense of place that will evoke distinct memories for young and old. The common fear is that Gunnison might become "placeless", and could be located anywhere. Residents want to avoid the strip shopping malls, fast food chains and department stores that often define a placeless landscape. To avoid becoming placeless, a substantial effort to articulate the intangible qualities of the community should be actively pursued.

II. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Located at the intersection of U.S. Highway 50 and Colorado Highway 135, Gunnison serves as the regional trade center for Gunnison County and parts of Saguache and Hinsdale Counties. Gunnison also serves as a gateway for public land access.

Street Grid Pattern/Streetscapes

The character of the built environment is largely defined by a traditional street grid pattern with wide streets. Wide streets have been a unique feature of Gunnison which provides benefits, such as unobstructed views to adjacent public lands and emergency snow storage. In some locations the streets take the place of sidewalks, and they also provide extra space for bicyclists.

Some of the newer subdivisions have modified grid systems with cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets that are not consistent with the traditional grid pattern. In many of these subdivisions, the developers used innovative street designs instead of installing costly wide streets.

In some locations, the grid pattern cannot be followed due to property ownership patterns, physical constraints, as well as environmental constraints, such as flood zones. Street standards are more specifically addressed in *Chapter 8, Transportation*.

Architectural Diversity

The City has a wide variety of residential and commercial architectural styles. Residential building styles range from single family bungalows to large apartment complexes. New residential buildings are replacing older buildings, and building activity has increased in recent years.

Commercial buildings have varied architectural styles, including simple structures such as pre-fabricated metal buildings, false-front ("old-west") buildings, log designs and big-box retail stores.

The City's Historic Preservation Committee was established in 1997, and their charge is to educate the community



200 Block North Main Street
Circa 1910
Photo courtesy of LR "Mac" McGraw

and protect historically significant buildings. The Committee collaborates with Gunnison County's Historic Preservation Commission under the

provisions of an intergovernmental agreement. The City can make recommendations to Gunnison County on whether or not a City building should be placed on the County's historic register. These buildings are another source of pride for residents, and some believe that the City should adopt design standards that mimic some of characteristics of historic buildings.

Some residents prefer the eclectic mixture of buildings that reflect the diversity and independent nature of the region. However, others believe that design standards should be implemented for buildings in the City. Policy makers have been reluctant to create such regulations, as they may interfere with economic development. Others argue that an increased aesthetic standard would eventually add to economic growth because unique community character attracts more tourists. It may be appropriate to experiment with simple design standards in select neighborhoods (e.g., the West Gunnison Neighborhood).

Downtown

The core of Gunnison's commercial activity is the Central Business District, or "Downtown". The varied architecture and storefront designs of downtown are an important component of community character. It creates a place where people gather for shopping, sharing coffee, and eating out.

The professional business district (B-1 District) is located north of the Central Business District area on Main Street, and encourages service businesses such as professional and medical offices, salons and home businesses. The setbacks and uses in the B-1 District are closely related to residential districts, and in fact, many of the businesses are modified homes. These buildings are



100 Block Main Street, Gunnison
Photo by Andie Ruggera

distinct and represent much of the community's small-town nature.

The B-1 district acts as a buffer between the Central Business District and surrounding residential neighborhoods. This area could be a model for future expansion of the downtown as an alternative to large retail stores and malls.

Superstores

As with many other small towns, superstore design has become a concern in recent years. Numerous residents have expressed their belief that superstores are incompatible with Gunnison's character, both visually and economically. Consultants, staff and concerned residents researched the impacts of superstores; and as a result, in May 2005, the City Council adopted a design standards ordinance for large format retail stores.

III. LANDSCAPING AND XERISCAPING

City Ditches

The City's irrigation ditch system is distinct to Gunnison and is a community feature that is a source of pride for residents. The ditch system continues to be improved for the benefit of City residents. It also functions to utilize the City's water rights.

The irrigation ditch water is freely accessible to property owners located adjacent to it for the purpose of irrigating lawns and gardens. This encourages innovative landscaping: Property owners enjoy decorating their ditches and sometimes line them with river rock or install water wheels or other features. Ditch water is used for PacMan Pond at Jorgenson Park, as well as the water feature located downtown at the IOOF Park. See *Chapter 9, Utilities and Infrastructure* for information on the ditch system.

CityScape Grant

The City sponsors a "CityScape" grant program designed to improve the visual appearance of the City through cooperation between the City and its residents and businesses. Property owners wishing to improve the appearance of the public rights of way adjacent to their property may apply for grant funds.

50/50 Concrete Grant Program

The 50/50 Concrete Grant program provides funds to property owners in existing neighborhoods who would like to install or repair sidewalks or curb and gutter adjacent to their property.

Street Tree Program

The "Street Tree" program has been an extremely successful program in the City. The City provides various tree species to interested property owners along the City's rights of way to enhance landscaping along street fronts. Street trees in the downtown area provide a certain ambience that fosters community interaction. Gunnison has been nationally recognized for many years as a "Tree City USA".

In locations where properties do not border the ditch system, implementing xeriscape standards would be beneficial. It was recommended by residents that the City develop a "model" for xeriscape systems to educate people about incorporating these drought-resistant techniques.

Community Clean Up

Gunnison's unique community character is also demonstrated by residents' pride in a clean city. Each April, citizens embark on a collaborative effort, "Community Clean Up" which brings together the City and County governments, Western State College and citizens to clean up the town after a long winter. It is a fun event with a pancake breakfast, contests, and face painting and games for children.



Cleaning up the Community!
Landon Ruggera
Photo courtesy of Andie Ruggera

IV. COMMUNITY EDGES

Clearly defined, nicely landscaped entrances are important to Gunnison residents. The City adopted standards for an Entrance Overlay District which establishes landscaping, parking and setback standards for development along

the primary entrances to the City. The purpose of the Entrance Overlay District is to retain the distinctive character of the City and avoid a strip commercial development pattern along the major highways.

East Entrance

The east entrance to the City has traditionally been the most well defined edge to the City, and residents take pride in the open space that clearly demarcates the City boundary.



East Entrance to Gunnison
Photo by Andie Ruggera

The "Welcome to Gunnison" sign is a prominent feature. As the City is approached from the east, more open space exists to the north and south with Jorgenson Park and Legion Park. Western State College is also clearly marked with an entry way of open space that functions as a multi-use field that is used by marching bands and club-sport teams. A future challenge to the City will be to maintain this distinct edge in light of annexation potential and subsequent development.

West Entrance

This entrance to the City provides the best view of the "W" on Tenderfoot Mountain, but is characterized by the presence of large airport hangars on the south side of Highway 50. To the north is a mix of residential uses, followed by commercial strip development. Efforts continue by City staff and the County Beautification Committee and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to create more pleasing entrances

to the airport and to the City. This entrance should be monitored so that the community edge is clearly defined.

North Entrance

This area is characterized by a commercial strip corridor with retail stores and parking lots visible from State Highway 135. This entrance has been evolving in recent years, and urban design standards with pedestrian trail systems are being developed for this region that will connect Gunnison to public lands outside of the City.

This entrance is most affected by "sprawl", and within the three-mile planning boundary of the City, there is the potential for further subdivision. A future concern for the City is to address the random land uses and traffic implications on Highway 135 adjacent to the City. This is discussed in more detail in *Chapter 5 Land Use and Growth* and *Chapter 8 Transportation*.

South Entrance

Although not connected by a major arterial, the south entrance to the City is the entrance for those entering Gunnison by air. Gunnison County has made significant improvements in recent years to improve the aesthetics in the vicinity surrounding the airport. However, this remains an area of concern for the Gunnison County Beautification Committee and the City. Residents in this vicinity are encouraged to pursue CityScape grant funds.

The southern entrance has been a difficult location to beautify in part because much of the irrigation ditch system does not reach to the entire industrial zone. This region presents an opportunity to implement xeriscape techniques that can be used as a model for other regions in the City.

V. GOAL, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Goal

Community character and its sense of place will be the backbone for development in the City. Gunnison's historic character, downtown, and Western State College continue to enhance the town's unique identity. The built environment provides diversity in design and incorporated efficient energy techniques. Attractive streetscapes draw people into the community contributing to a friendly, tolerant small town with a strong sense of place.

Policy 1. Encourage Historic Character and Compatible Design

The City encourages the preservation of buildings with historic character and design of new buildings that are compatible with this historic significance. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 1.1 Implement design guidelines utilizing streetscape standards and open space requirements for new residential and commercial buildings.
- 1.2 Evaluate the Land Development Code for issues relating to non-conformities and consistency with maintaining community character.
- 1.3 Determine appropriate height restrictions for residential buildings, commercial buildings, and accessory buildings.

Policy 2. Promote Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel

The City of Gunnison will promote non-motorized travel, including links to downtown and outlying recreational areas. Action items to implement this policy include:

2.1 Update multimodal transportation standards, such as sidewalk standards for both sides of the streets, bike lane standards, and road design standards to allow for more pedestrian walkability and non-motorized transportation.

2.2 Work with the County Trails Commission to develop pedestrian trail standards.

2.3 Prioritize locations for trails and other accesses for pedestrian and bicycle transportation (for example the Central Business District, school zones, and the Van Tuyl Ranch recreation area) and include these in the Capital Improvements Budget.

2.4 Continue the 50/50 concrete grant program, and develop additional incentives to encourage sidewalks in existing developments.

2.5 Evaluate sidewalk regulations in the Central Business District and determine appropriate locations for vendors to offer sidewalk service during special events.

2.6 Pursue any grant funding, such as GOCO (Great Outdoors Colorado) funds for pedestrian walkways.

Policy 3. City Appearance

New developments along the City's edges will improve the entrances and complement the City's community character and sense of place. Action items to implement this policy include:

3.1 Prioritize improvements at entry points to the City along US 50 and SH 135 and create a detailed capital improvements plan for such.

3.2 Continue to work with the Gunnison County Beautification Committee to improve the appearance of the south entrance.

3.3 Develop lighting standards for residential and commercial developments that are aesthetically pleasing and functional, while preserving dark night skies.

3.4 Collaborate with Gunnison County and CDOT to improve the south entrance near the airport.

Policy 4. Landscape Architecture

Where possible, continue to plant trees and shrubs throughout the community and preserve existing trees threatened by new construction. In locations where ditch water is limited, determine alternative beautification standards. Action items to implement this policy include:

4.1 Continue to support the "Street Tree" program and the CityScape Grant program.

4.2 Educate the community on plants that will thrive in Gunnison's climate to better facilitate the live cover requirement in the Land Development Code.

4.3 Develop a plan to ensure that the ditch system is maintained and expanded where possible. Ditches should remain open in lieu of pipes and culverts to ensure they continue to be a valuable component of the City's community character.

City of Gunnison Master Plan

4.4 Evaluate the Land Development Code for altering landscaping requirements in locations where irrigation water is not available.

4.5 Continue the CityScape program, and continue to encourage functional streetscapes, such as benches, gardens, street edge landscaping, ornamental light fixtures, water features (where feasible), hanging flower baskets, banners, sculptures and other works of art.

4.6 Create xeriscape design guidelines and develop a parcel to be used as a model for such standards.

4.7 Collaborate with the Gunnison County Extension Office and the Master Gardener Program to create "model" landscapes for educational purposes, including xeriscape designs.

Policy 5. Define Gunnison's Sense of Place

Create a specific document that articulates more clearly Gunnison's sense of place and describes the vision of Gunnison residents. Action items to implement this policy include:

5.1 Sponsor visioning workshops to understand community perspectives on Gunnison's unique identity.

5.2 Update the Community Character chapter of this Master Plan.

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3 Education, Arts and Literacy

This chapter discusses the City's role in education and literacy within the community, as well as the need to collaborate with appropriate educational entities.

- I. Public Schools
- II. Child Care Facilities
- III. Western State College
- IV. Arts, Science and History
- V. Literacy
- VI. Goal, Policies and Actions



I. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

As the county seat, the City of Gunnison has traditionally served as the center for public education for many of the rural areas outlying Gunnison. The City was originally one of 30 small districts in Gunnison County during the boom days of the 1880s. The City's oldest public school that remains standing is the small brick building on the corner of Eighth Street and Tomichi Avenue, dated 1881.

In the 1920s the Blackstock Building became the City's main Elementary School. It was eventually supplemented by the O'Leary School in 1954 and the Lake School on North Boulevard in 1963. In 1960, all of the county's districts were joined together as the Gunnison Watershed School District RE1J (RE1J). Later, Gunnison High School was built in 1963.

In 1995, a large bond issue was passed to build community schools in both Gunnison and Crested Butte. In 1996, the Crested Butte Community School was established which serves kindergarten through Grade 12. In 1997, the Gunnison Community School opened and serves kindergarten through eighth grade. In 1996, the Gunnison Valley School, as part of RE1J, was established to provide alternative high school opportunities.

Based on the Gunnison Watershed School District Facility Master Plan (October 2006) population and demographic changes will require facility expansion as well as a consideration of student composition. RE1J is expected to grow from 1,602 students in 2006 to 1,820 in 2012.

The City supports the public school system by providing programs such as Youth City Council, Career Days, Youth Challenge Grants, and the El Pomar

Youth in Community Service Grant program.

II. CHILD CARE FACILITIES

The City recognizes that to keep young families in the Gunnison Valley, child care services must be readily available and affordable. It has been perceived that bringing young families to the valley is difficult due to low wages, inflated home prices and expensive child care programs.

In recent years, the City has been supportive in the creation of the Tenderfoot Child Care Facility which opened in December of 2006. It provides services for infants, toddlers and it also offers an after-school program.

As another means of addressing child care needs, RE1J utilizes the historic Lake Elementary School as a pre-school. Full day and half day pre-school is available, which has been a valuable service for the community.

III. WESTERN STATE COLLEGE

Western State College (Western) in Gunnison has served this area and the state of Colorado for more than 100 years. Degrees are offered in more than 20 fields of study including outstanding programs in the liberal arts and sciences, teacher education and pre-professional studies.

Western is known as a “destination college” and its approximately 2,500 students represent every state in the nation, every region in Colorado and many foreign countries. Surrounded by the natural splendor of the Rocky Mountains, students enjoy an exciting

blend of strong academic programs, diverse campus and community activities and year-around opportunities for a wealth of recreational activities.

Western's alumni and friends have demonstrated continuing loyalty to the college through their vocal and financial support. Every fall hundreds of Western



Taylor Hall
Western State College

alumni return to campus for Homecoming weekend.

Construction is underway on the Borick Business Building which will house the School of Business, Accounting and Economics. It will be the only privately funded academic building at a public college or university in the state.



Architectural Rendering - Borick Business Building
Photo courtesy of Western State College
and H&L Architecture

Western received two \$1 million gifts to endow a Petroleum Geology program, along with another recent \$1.5 million gift to help develop a program in Professional Land and Resource Management.

IV. ARTS, SCIENCE AND HISTORY

Pioneer Museum

The Pioneer Museum is located on six acres on the east entrance of the City. The Museum was established in 1964 and has been staffed mainly by volunteers and displays the true cultural heritage and history of the Gunnison country.

Gunnison Arts Center

The Gunnison Council for the Arts, a non-profit organization was incorporated in 1984, and in 1992, purchased the historic stone building on the corner of Main Street and Tomichi for the Gunnison Arts Center (GAC). The building purchase, re-model and expansion was made possible in part by the support of the City of Gunnison. The GAC has over 350 members and provides a wide range of classes for youth and adults. It also provides a venue for community theatre, choir groups, art shows and many other activities.



The Gunnison Arts Center
Corner of Main and Tomichi
Photo by Andie Ruggera

Sculptour

The City began investing in public art in 1993 with the "SculpTour" project. Each year, artists display their sculptures in various locations around the City. In October, citizens vote for their favorite, which will typically be purchased by the City as the "People's Choice Award".



The 2006
People's Choice Award

Mural Program

In 2005, the Gunnison Valley Public Arts Program began a mural project to add interest as well as beauty to some of the blank walls in the community.

Gunnison Valley Observatory

The Gunnison Valley Observatory is under construction and hopes to open in the next year or two. The facility presents unique educational opportunities in the field of astronomy.

V. LITERACY

In addition to the public schools and the college, the Upper Gunnison Valley has a number of education opportunities for adult residents.

Library/Literacy Action

Through its library system and literacy action program, Gunnison County offers a GED program for those without a high-school diploma, and a range of literacy and language programs for those seeking to learn to speak, read and write in English (including English as a Second

Language) that helps to integrate immigrants and guest workers with the local culture.

Western's State College Extended Studies Program

The Extended Studies program at Western offers as many as 60 courses each term, ranging from computer and yoga classes to academic courses available for college credit. These courses are available to the public, without being formally enrolled in the college.

Ann Zugelder Public Library

The Ann Zugelder Public Library offers a collection of over 35,000 books, magazines, newspapers, and journals. In addition, the library provides computers and access to the Inter-Library Loan Program. In 2006 long-time rancher and Gunnison resident Raymond Van Tuyl generously donated approximately 5.2 acres for the relocation of a library facility.

Leslie J. Savage Library

Western State College's Leslie J. Savage Library provides County residents access to research-grade library services. The Leslie J. Savage Library has a collection of over 100,000 books, 750 magazines, journals and newspapers and selected documents published by the United States and Colorado governments. The library holds a large collection of Colorado history books, and a collection of local newspapers dating back to the early 1900's.

VI. GOAL, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Goal

An informed community will exercise its civic responsibilities and the City will continue to collaborate with all governmental and private agencies to nurture educational opportunities in the City.

Policy 1. Community Interaction

Support collaborative efforts with governmental agencies and educational institutions. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 1.1 Continue to provide in-kind services, materials and grant support to RE1J.
- 1.2 Provide links on the City's website to education and cultural entities in the County.
- 1.3 Continue to actively participate and take a leading role where possible in the monthly Mayor and Managers meetings to encourage collaboration among all entities in the Valley.

Policy 2. Western State College

Support Western's efforts to enhance quality programs and highly qualified faculty in preparing students for their futures. Actions to implement this policy include:

- 2.1 Support high quality graduate and undergraduate programs at Western.
- 2.2 Help the college develop stronger experiential education programs by providing City staff resources. (For example, create service-learning projects and internships of value to the City).
- 2.3 Work cooperatively with college officials in the review of land use decisions that may affect the college.

Policy 3. Foster Student Relationships

Foster a strong relationship with students and the community. Actions to implement this policy include:

- 3.1 Provide City staff resources for mentoring programs and government internships.
- 3.2 Continue outreach sessions on campus for renters' rights and safe living practices.
- 3.3 Continue to support Youth City Council, the Youth Challenge Grant program, and the El Pomar Youth in Community Service Grant program.
- 3.4 Actively participate in the Civics curriculum for RE1J.

Policy 4. Facility Improvements

Support improvements and expansion of educational facilities. Actions to implement this policy include:

- 4.1 Encourage the expansion of facilities to meet the needs of the community.
- 4.2 Provide input for requests for proposals, when possible.
- 4.3 Provide input during facilities capital plan updates that are consistent with the City's Master Plan.
- 4.4 Where possible, share in construction mobilization costs for concurrent public projects.

Policy 5. Encourage Education, Arts & Literacy Programs

Provide support to other community entities that offer education arts, and cultural programs. Actions to implement this policy include:

- 5.1 Continue to encourage and support the development of high quality

community oriented programs at the Arts Center.

- 5.2 Support additional funding mechanisms for the "SculpTour" program.
- 5.3 Continue to support the Pioneer Museum.
- 5.4 Support the Immigration Integration Committee and efforts to expand multi-cultural programs.
- 5.5 Encourage events at the Gunnison Valley Observatory that enhance scientific education for locals and tourists.
- 5.6 Support library programs at the Ann Zugelder and the Western State College Savage libraries.
- 5.7 Support adult literacy and English as a Second Language programs.

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4 Environment and Natural Resources

The natural features of the Gunnison Valley are the primary reason that people are attracted to this area. This chapter discusses how natural features and land use patterns are interrelated. Conservation of these resources is becoming increasingly important.



City of Gunnison Mountain Park
Taylor Canyon

- I. Introduction
- II. Regional Context
- III. Climate
- IV. Geology and Soils
- V. Water
- VI. Vegetation
- VII. Fish and Wildlife
- VIII. Visual Resources
- IX. Air Quality
- X. Soundscape
- XI. Goal, Policies and Actions

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Gunnison is located in the heart of the Gunnison River Valley where Tomichi Creek joins the Gunnison River and where US Highway 50 intersects with State Highway 135. Gunnison sits in a high basin, at an elevation of 7,703 feet. Gunnison is known for its long, cold winters and short but pleasant summers.

As the City considers expanding its boundaries through annexation, the preservation of environmental and natural resources becomes a major concern within the City's three-mile planning area.

Gunnison residents feel strongly that resource management and conservation of natural systems are important

components of the City's comprehensive planning process.

II. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Map 2.A (Upper Gunnison Basin) demonstrates that over 85 percent of the land area surrounding Gunnison is owned by the federal or state government.

The City is in close proximity to nine designated federal wilderness areas:

- 1. West Elk Wilderness
- 2. Powderhorn Wilderness
- 3. LaGarita Wilderness
- 4. Collegiate Peaks Wilderness
- 5. Fossil Ridge Wilderness
- 6. Maroon Bells/Snowmass Wilderness
- 7. Uncompahgre Wilderness
- 8. Big Blue Wilderness
- 9. Ragged Wilderness

In addition to the wilderness areas surrounding Gunnison, other public lands are available nearby including state wildlife areas, Bureau of Land Management public lands, as well as the Gunnison National Forest.

III. CLIMATE

The climate is relatively cool and arid, averaging only 71 frost-free days per year. The average daily temperature is 10°F in January and 62°F in July. Most precipitation falls in winter and early spring--about 11 inches annually. Gunnison has over 300 days of sunshine annually, but rain showers occur almost every afternoon in late July and August.

Four drought periods have been documented for the Western United States during the past 110 years. The drought in 2002 impacted much of the Western U.S., and was particularly severe in Colorado.¹ Although 2002 was not the driest year on record, the largest wildfire in Colorado occurred that year.

"The outstanding scientific discovery of the twentieth century is not television, or radio, but rather the complexity of the land organism. Only those who know the most about it can appreciate how little we know about it."
-Aldo Leopold

Droughts hurt not only resources, but also the region's economy and peoples' lives. The effects of drought can be reflected in scarcity of water, lessened hydro-electric capacity, wildfires,

diminished tourism and decreased agricultural/ranching production.

Climatologists predict that during the next century global mean annual air temperature will rise between 2.5 and 10.8 degrees Fahrenheit.² Higher temperatures may result in increased rain-to-snow ratios, premature winter runoff, and decreased summer river flows.

Climate is known to affect water systems in profound ways. Christensen, et.al. concluded that that the existing Colorado River system is very sensitive to climate change because the river flows are not much more than the demand. If inflow decreases even slightly, there will be a substantial degradation of water quality. Christensen's work shows that, "even with a conservative climate model, current demands on water resources in many parts of the West will not be met under future climate conditions – much less the demands of a larger population and a larger economy."³

In September of 2006, the Mayor of the City of Gunnison signed the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement that calls for



Lilly Westbay
Photo courtesy of Steve Westbay

cities, communities and the federal government to take actions to reduce global warming pollution. The Agreement urges local and

¹ IPCC: Houghton, J.T. and Y. Ding, eds., 2001: Climate Change 2001: The Scientific Basis, Cambridge: Cambridge UP

² ibid

³ Christensen, et al., "The Effects of Climate Change on the Hydrology and Water Resources in the Colorado River Basin," *Climatic Change* (2004).

state governments to adopt emission reduction targets by using a variety of tools. One such tool is to "adopt and enforce land use policies that reduce sprawl, preserve open space, and create compact, walkable urban communities." Other actions in the Agreement include the increased use of clean, alternative energy and make energy efficiency a priority through retrofitting city facilities with energy efficient lighting.⁴



The Palisades
An example of West Elk volcano flow
Photo courtesy of Mark Sniffen

IV. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Geology

The Gunnison Basin is bordered on the north and west by the West Elk Mountains. To the east, another range, the Elk Mountains join the Collegiates at Monarch Pass to form the spine of the Rocky Mountains (continental divide). The San Juan Range lies to the south.

Much of the rock around Gunnison has been formed from volcanoes from the West Elk Mountains and the San Juan Mountains. Otherwise, Gunnison's base rock is Precambrian.

Very recently in the geologic time scale, alluvial gravel and cobble material have been deposited along local stream channels. The City of Gunnison has been laid out on these alluvial materials, and the deposits form the skeleton of the local aquifer which is the city's water source.

Gunnison's geology presents constraints for urban development, for example, severe slope angles accelerate erosion rates significantly. Cut and fill methods for slopes exceeding 15 percent contribute to high erosion, especially if

not mitigated with reseeded and carefully engineered drainage control plans. Further, development on unstable slopes cause rock fall and slide hazards.

Soils

The majority of soils in the area are classified as Aridisols (arid regions), and Mollisols (grasslands).

Aridisols (including "Bosler" and "Fola" series) are primarily suited for range, wildlife, and recreational uses. Because of the dry climate in which they are found, they are not used for agricultural production unless irrigation water is available. Aridisols are susceptible to erosion, particularly on steep slopes.

Mollisols (including "Dewville", "Duffson," "Irim" and "Gas Creek" series) are the soils of grassland ecosystems and are thick, dark and fertile. They are derived from organic materials such as plant roots, and are the productive agricultural soils in this area. Mollisols do not typically form on steep slopes and are generally not subject to erosion except through overgrazing.

⁴ The US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement can be found in the Office of Community Development, City of Gunnison.

V. WATER

The Upper Gunnison River Basin is famous for its high-quality water resources. Rivers and lakes within the basin provide water storage, habitat for wildlife and excellent recreational opportunities. They sustain agricultural activity, and serve as the recharge source for the basin's aquifer. They also serve as a source for hydro-electrical power.

Surface Water

Over 625 miles of headwaters perennial stream channels within the Upper Gunnison River Basin drain into the Blue Mesa Reservoir. Blue Mesa Reservoir, located nine miles west of Gunnison, is the largest body of water in Colorado. Drainages close to the City of Gunnison include Ohio Creek, Tomichi Creek, Gold Basin, Antelope Creek and the Gunnison River. The Gunnison River is the source for the City's irrigation ditch water.

Ground Water

The City's drinking water is supplied from an unconfined aquifer, meaning that the aquifer is physically linked to the river channels, with rising water table conditions corresponding to increased river flow. During dry periods the aquifer water table drops as it releases water into the surface stream channels. More information on the City's potable water system is located in *Chapter 9, Utilities & Infrastructure*.

Water Quality

Water quality standards for the Gunnison Basin are set by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission, utilizing several sets of standards (basic,

anti-degradation standards, classification, and temporary modification standards)⁵.

The Colorado Water Quality Control Commission has designated portions of the Upper Gunnison River to include:

- Class I Aquatic system;
- Class 1A Recreation system;
- Agricultural classification; and
- Domestic Water Supply classification.

The Aquatic and Recreation Class 1 designations are the highest quality thresholds. The Colorado Water Quality Control Commission mandates the Gunnison River be maintained under these standards with no degradation of water quality allowed.

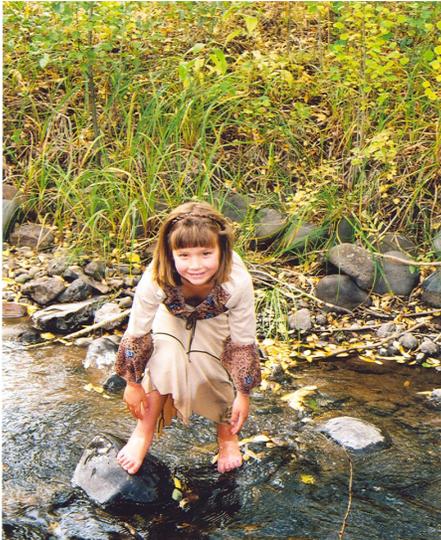
Urbanization has a direct causal relationship to water quality degradation. For example, the USGS established that Gore Creek (near Vail, Colorado) ⁶ has high concentrations of nitrite, nitrate, and total phosphorus which cause excessive plant growth in the stream system (referred to as algal bloom). When the plants decay and eventually die, they deplete the amount of dissolved oxygen in the system which negatively affects aquatic habitat (eutrophication).

Eutrophication promotes excessive plant growth and decay, favors certain weedy species over others, and is likely to cause severe reduction in water quality. Eutrophication decreases resource value of rivers, lakes, and estuaries such that recreation, fishing, hunting and aesthetic enjoyment are hindered.

In 1995 the City and other entities established a water quality monitoring

⁵ Water Quality Control Act C.R.S. 1973, 25-8-101 et. seq (Cumm Supp 1981).

⁶ U.S. Geological Survey, Circular 1214



Ericka (Antonucci) Bremer
Photo courtesy of Kim Antonucci

program culminating in a USGS report⁷ for two gauge stations in the Gunnison basin. Data from the gauge station near the confluence of the Gunnison River and Antelope Creek shows that the levels of pH, nutrients, E. coli and other constituents have historically been excellent.

However, 2002 data from the gauge station at the confluence of the Gunnison River and Tomichi Creek shows evidence of eutrophication--depleted levels of dissolved oxygen, elevated trace levels of manganese, and reduced levels of dissolved oxygen levels.⁸

The City's Water Department conducts semi-annual water quality tests on its well system, including organic, inorganic and radiological testing. This information is reported to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and an

⁷ Comparison of 2002 Water Year and Historical Water- Quality Data, Upper Gunnison River Basin, Colorado (USGS Data Series 101)

⁸ *ibid*

annual Consumer Confidence Report is available. The 2006 Consumer Confidence Report stated that domestic water supplies have met all state and federal standards.⁹

It is critical that the City continue to monitor the water systems in the City. Individual septic disposal systems (ISDS) outside of, but in close proximity to the City limits, pose a potential threat to the City's water supply. An ISDS has an anticipated life expectancy of about 20 years. Properly functioning ISDS's provide a safe means for treatment of wastewater, but repairs and maintenance are ongoing, and accordingly, so are the threats of their failure. The City and County have worked together to provide central sewer to those areas close to the City's water source (the North Sewer Extension) to eliminate further threat.

A well-functioning ISDS is dependent upon soil properties, geology, design and maintenance. Soil properties include the water percolation rate, the depth to bedrock below the soil horizon, the depth of ground water and other factors. The proliferation of ISDS in areas with inadequate soil properties may lead to health, safety and welfare issues.

VI. VEGETATION

The City of Gunnison is located in an historic flood plain, and is surrounded by two basic vegetative communities 1) sagebrush steppe, and 2) riparian communities along the rivers and streams. Further away from Gunnison are the montane, subalpine and alpine habitats (that produce brilliant wildflower blooms in the summer).

⁹ For a copy of the Consumer Confidence Report, contact the City's Public Works Department.

City of Gunnison Master Plan

The most prevalent plant community surrounding Gunnison is the sagebrush-steppe found between 7500 – 9500 feet; it is characterized by sage brush, bunch grasses, juniper stands, serviceberry shrubs, aspen trees, ponderosa pine, Douglass fir trees and gambles oak.

Most of the floodplain surrounding the City has been used agriculturally. Irrigated lush green hay meadows in the summer are grazed by cattle in the winter and spring. In locations where agricultural uses are not present, extensive groves of cottonwood trees provide habitat for wildlife.

Riparian habitats typically have trees, shrubs and grasses that form vertical canopy coverage critical to birds and mammals. Development within the riparian area should be very limited, and a management plan should be implemented that accounts for both human and natural resource perspectives.



Aspen Grove
Photo courtesy of Mark Sniffen

Surrounding Gunnison is the montane forest community, which usually begins at elevations above 8,000 feet, and consists of coniferous trees as well as the the much-loved aspen tree.

VII. FISH & WILDLIFE

The riparian zones within and adjacent to the City provide habitat for great blue

herons, mule deer, elk, fox, weasels, small rodents, raptors, small mammals, amphibians, waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, and fish and other aquatic life.

A critical wildlife habitat is found between the sage brush and the riparian habitat. This interface habitat is crucial for Gunnison sage grouse, which has been subject to threatened and endangered status with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Data compiled in 2004 noted that the Gunnison Basin has the only viable population remaining (2,400 birds out of 3,200 total).

The city is surrounded by significant wildlife habitats, and as a result, inherent wildlife/urban conflicts are inevitable. Loss of habitat and habitat fragmentation are of concern. Continued development in critical wildlife areas should be avoided. The City is committed to work with Gunnison County to consider wildlife needs as growth occurs within the three-mile planning area.

VIII. VISUAL RESOURCES

Gunnison is surrounded by rugged mountain ranges in the background, with open prairie-like vistas in the middle and foreground. Residents value the long



The Castles, West Elk Wilderness
Photo courtesy of Stewart Johnson

views these landscapes afford, sharpened by the thin dry air of the valley. To the southwest of the city, Hartman Rocks provides a visually interesting horizon, as do the Palisades to the west.

At night, the open space and a relative lack of ambient human-caused light make the night sky breathtaking in spread and depth. These visual qualities in the environment are important to the quality of life of the residents of Gunnison.

IX. AIR QUALITY

Gunnison's air is a fragile resource, due to altitude as well and high-desert dryness. At 7,700 feet above sea level, the air is thin, which gives a desirable heightened sharpness and clarity to views; but that thin dry air is more easily degraded by pollutants generated both locally and from distances (distant forest fires).

The City sits at the bottom of several large valleys and inversions are common in the winter. Large volumes of cold air flow down the valleys and "pool up" in the Gunnison vicinity. The only egress from the valley is down through the narrow canyons of the Gunnison River, and the cold air often times becomes backed up. The more stable warmer temperatures from regions outside of the valley tend to settle over the cold air in the valley, and these inversions can often last for weeks.

Inversions in the winter can create an accumulation of pollutants (carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide), from wood stove smoke, road sanding and car and truck engines. Although these inversions have the potential of degrading air quality in the winter, the State of Colorado recently eliminated the monitoring station in Gunnison, declaring that the air quality has not come close to exceeding

any air quality standards for the period 2001 through 2006. As population and development increases, however, air quality may become jeopardized.

X. SOUNDSCAPE

An unhurried, peaceful and relatively noise-free environment is an amenity that Gunnison residents hope to maintain. With 5,000 residents, Gunnison is not a "hustle-bustle" City. With a few exceptions (airport, trucks on Main Street, idling trucks in residential areas), noise pollution has not been a major complaint of residents. This amenity, however, could be threatened with economic growth and increased motorized transportation systems. Particularly, the Gunnison County Airport (which is located in the City limits) creates the most significant impacts with respect to noise pollution.

XI. GOAL, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Goal

Natural features and resources will be preserved. Area river systems remain a focus for conservation, protection, and recreation. The air continues to be clean, stars illuminate the dark nighttime skies and rivers run clear.

Policy 1. Protect Water

Protect water resources and the city's water rights by implementing the following actions:

1.1 Continue to protect the City's absolute and conditional water rights through efficient and expanded uses of water.

1.2 Develop a wetlands ordinance, (including the creation of setback buffers near well head and along river corridors) that will function to preserve the quality and quantity of wetlands within the region, especially those areas which affect the city's water resources.

1.3 Develop and implement a watershed protection program which integrates policies for planning and development in the three-mile planning area.

1.4 Maintain surface and ground water quality to ensure healthy drinking water, recreation opportunities and viable habitat conditions for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

1.5 Develop water rights, including conditional water rights, as needed for future uses.

1.6 Continue the city's active role in the opposition to transmountain water diversion.

Policy 2. Conserve & Enhance Terrestrial and Aquatic Habitat

Conserve and enhance where possible natural resources and critical fish and wildlife habitat by working with the County of Gunnison and other entities to:

2.1 Support policies for sage grouse preservation.

2.2 Support efforts that maintain and/or enhance wildlife/fisheries habitat.

2.3 Support the Parks and Recreation Department in their efforts to emphasize habitat protection including the VanTuyl Ranch.

Policy 3. Dark Skies

Preserve and enhance night-time dark skies. Action items to implement this policy include:

3.1 Amend the Land Development Code for exterior lighting standards to consider (1) nuisance factors, (2) safety factors, and (3) preservation of night-time dark skies.

3.2 Monitor backscatter from night skies to understand trends in the Gunnison Valley.

Policy 4. Air Standards

Work with the County of Gunnison and the State of Colorado to re-implement an air quality monitoring program.

Policy 5. View Sheds

Maintain existing view sheds by working with the County to implement a view shed preservation policy (or intergovernmental agreement) for hillside developments oriented toward the City (i.e., Antelope Hills).

Policy 6. Noise Pollution

Minimize noise pollution within and near the city. Action items to implement this policy include:

6.1 Work with the County to evaluate airport operations to reduce the impacts of noise pollution from the airport.

6.2 Work with the county to prohibit the use of compression released exhaust brakes (commonly known as "Jake" brakes) in and near the City.

6.3 Evaluate the feasibility of alternative routes, such as a vehicle bypass, to reduce traffic noise on Main Street.

Policy 7. Support the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement

The City of Gunnison will strive to reduce global warming pollution as defined in the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Action items to implement this policy include:

7.1 Inventory global warming emissions in City operations and in the community, set reduction targets and create an action plan.

7.2 Adopt and enforce land-use policies that reduce sprawl, preserve open space, and create compact, walkable urban communities.

7.3 Promote transportation options such as bicycle trails, commuter trip reduction programs, incentives for car pooling and public transit.

7.4 Increase the use of clean, alternative energy by, for example, investing in "green tags", advocating for the development of renewable energy resources, recovering landfill methane for energy production, and supporting the use of waste to energy technology.

7.5 Make energy efficiency a priority through building code improvements, retrofitting city facilities with energy efficient lighting and urging employees to conserve energy and save money.

7.6 Purchase only Energy Star equipment and appliances for City use;

7.7 Practice and promote sustainable building practices using the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program or a similar system.

7.8 Increase the average fuel efficiency of municipal fleet vehicles; reduce the number of vehicles; launch an employee

education program including anti-idling messages; convert diesel vehicles to bio-diesel.

7.9 Evaluate opportunities to increase pump efficiency in water and wastewater systems; recover wastewater treatment methane for energy production.

7.10 Increase recycling rates in City operations and in the community.

7.11 Maintain healthy urban forests; promote tree planting to increase shading and to absorb CO2.

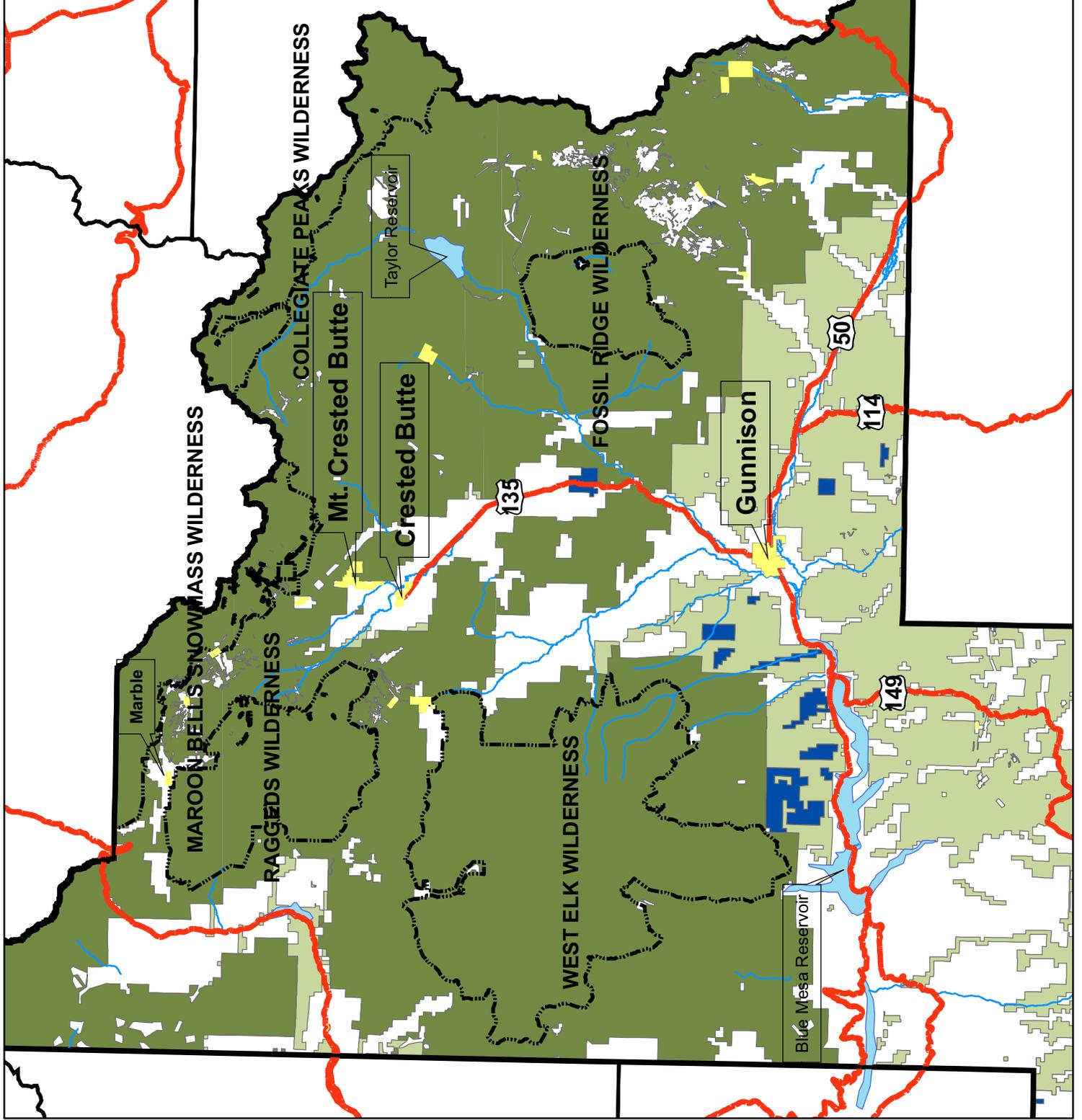
7.12 Help educate the public, schools, other jurisdictions, professional associations, business and industry about reducing global warming pollution.

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Map 4.A Upper Gunnison Basin

Legend

- Towns
- Colorado Highways
- Wilderness Areas
- Gunnison County Boundary
- Public Lands
- Bureau of Land Mgmt
- Department of Wildlife
- Forest Service
- Streams



5 Land Use and Growth



View of Gunnison from a Hot Air Balloon during Cattlemen's Days
Photo Courtesy of Jeff Bolstead (via Sue Toreson)

This chapter analyses population trends, along with current and projected land uses within the City and its three-mile planning area.

- I. Population Trends
- II. Land Uses and Zoning in the City
- III. Land Uses outside of the City
- IV. Goal, Policies and Actions

I. POPULATION TRENDS

Historical Trends

During the past century, the population of the City of Gunnison has experienced moderate, steady growth. The long-term average annual growth rate from 1950 to 2000 was 1.9 % annually. Figure 5.1 demonstrates growth trends

for the City of Gunnison from 1900 to 2000.

Since the 1980's, population in rural western United States, including Gunnison, has grown through migration, rather than natural increases (births minus deaths) largely due to improved transportation and communication systems. In Gunnison, growth is also driven by ski area expansion, second-home development,

Table 5.1 Growth Projections			
Area	Growth Variable	2000 Census	Projected Population 2025
City	Low growth (0.5%)	5,409	5,876
	Moderate growth (1.5%)		7,285
	Robust growth (2.5%)		8,717
Urban growth boundary	Low growth (0.5%)	6,443 (includes City)	7,262
	Moderate growth (1.5%)		9,208
	Robust growth (2.5%)		11,653
Three mile plan area	Low growth (0.5%)	8,114 (includes City & UGB)	9,145
	Moderate growth (1.5%)		11,599
	Robust growth (2.5%)		14,677

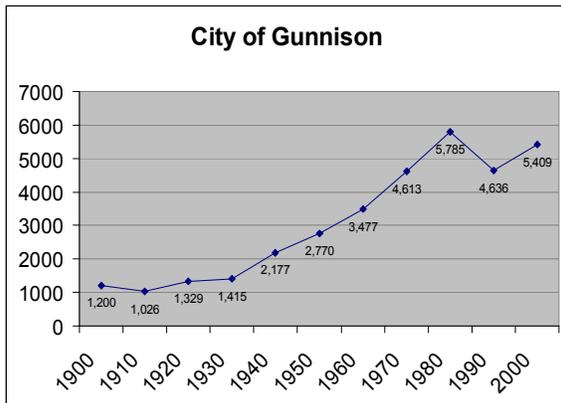
The City is projected to grow to 7,300 people by the Year 2025

Western State College, and year-round recreation.

Population Projections

Table 5.1 demonstrates the existing population figures for the City, Urban Growth Area, and the Three-Mile Plan Area. The table projects population based on low, moderate and robust growth scenarios. The three population growth scenarios for Gunnison County are based on historic trends as well as labor force projections developed by the Colorado Office of Demography (COD).

Given the uncertainty of future local, regional, national, and international



conditions, the City’s projected population growth is considered as a range rather than as a single number. The rationale for each alternative growth rate is described below:

Low growth (0.5% average annual growth rate): The average annual growth rate from 1970 to 2000 was 0.58 percent.

Moderate growth (1.5% average annual growth rate): Between 1990 and 2000, the City’s population increased from 4,636 to 5,409, an average annual growth rate of 1.67 percent. The long-term average annual growth rate from 1950 to 2000 was 1.9 percent and the rate was 1.38 percent from 1960 to 2000.

Robust growth (2.5% average annual growth rate): From 1930 to 1940 average annual growth rates for the City of Gunnison were 5.39 percent. From 1960 to 1970 the growth rate was 3.27 percent.

Conclusion – 1.5 Percent: Although alternative growth scenarios are possible, this Master Plan utilizes the State Demographer’s prediction of an average annual growth rate of 1.5 percent for the

next 20 years. The variables driving this prediction relate to tourism trends, construction activity, demographic trends (retiring baby-boomers) and other related economic growth trends.

by the segregation of land uses into specified geographic districts and dimensional standards stipulating limitations on development activity. Chart 5.1 depicts three broad zoning categories within the City of Gunnison: residential, commercial, and industrial.

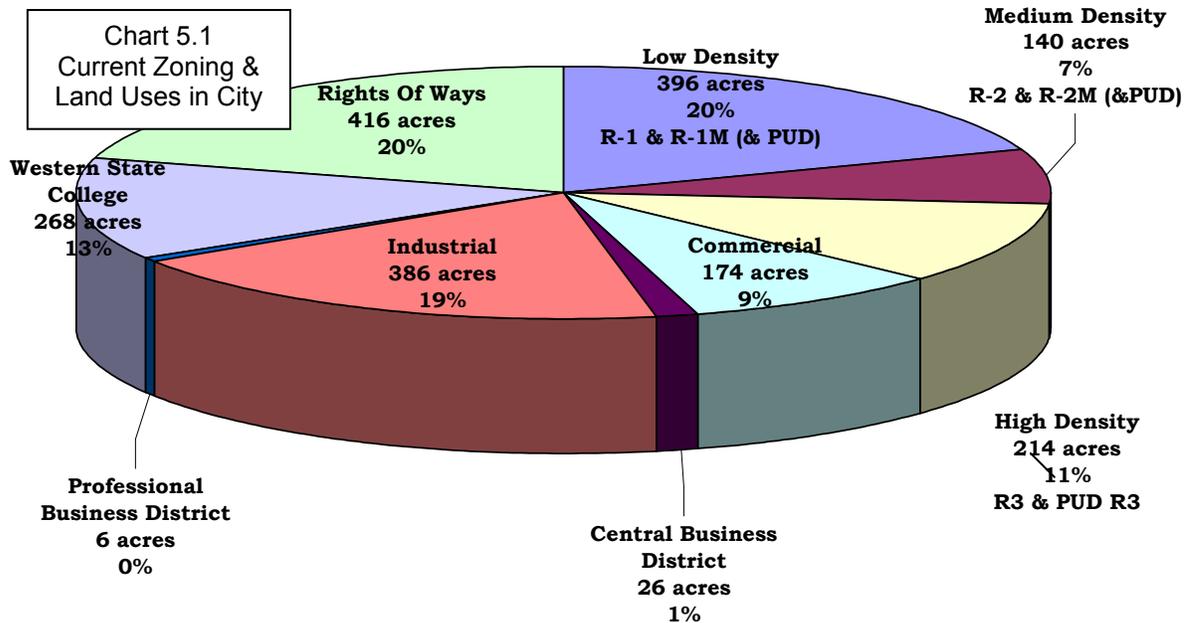
II. LAND USES AND ZONING IN THE CITY

The City of Gunnison has a variety of land use types within its boundaries making it a visually interesting and a generally self sufficient small city, accommodating many land uses. The City comprises about 2,025 acres, of which 20 percent is City-owned rights of way (ROW). Chart 5.1 demonstrates the percentage and acreage for the City's zoning.

The residential zones have varying densities (3.5 to 30 units per acre). The commercial zones include the central business district (pedestrian oriented), the commercial district (vehicle oriented), and the B-1 district (professional office/residential mixed use.) The City currently has one industrial zone located in the south-central portion of the City.

The existing zoning districts in the City of Gunnison were created using traditional "Euclidian Zoning" techniques. Euclidean zoning codes are characterized

At the center of the City lies the central business and professional business districts with an assortment of businesses, including offices, restaurants, services and retail businesses. Many local and federal government offices are located in the core of the City. Downtown is accessible to pedestrians and supports



the largest concentration of employees in the City.

The City's Commercial District is located north, east and west of the B-1 and CDB districts, along Highway 50 and Highway 135. This district caters to the driving public and is dominated by hotels, motels, restaurants, gas stations, convenience stores, retail and service outlets.

Comprising almost 300 acres, the Gunnison County Airport commands the use of the industrial lands at the southern boundary of the City. The east-west runway extends almost the entire length of the City. Just north of the airport are the majority of the City's industrial uses. Businesses located here include manufacturing industries, storage units, automobile services and trucking companies.

Western State College encompasses a large portion of the lands located on the City's eastern boundary, with 132 acres of campus and over a thousand undeveloped acres (only some of which are located within the City limits).

A variety of residential uses comprise the majority of the remaining lands. In the earlier platted additions to Gunnison, the traditional 125-foot by 25-foot lots caused a consistent settlement pattern in some of the residential neighborhoods. Other neighborhoods do not follow the traditional grid patterns, and the City's residential neighborhoods have an interesting mix of configurations. Uses range from high density, multi-family development (30 units/acre) to low density, single-family residential development (3.5 units/acre).

Community Character

Population and economic conditionals may change the residential and commercial nature of the City, and will likely affect Gunnison's community character. When discussing land use, two potentially contradictory issues must be considered:

- Citizens oppose sprawl and want to maintain open space around the city.
- Citizens want to retain a distinctly residential character to their neighborhoods with large yards and neighborhood open space, which leads to low density within the city.

The opposition toward sprawl suggests that citizens are amenable to increased density if it does not compromise the sense of openness in their neighborhoods.

Demand for Industrial Zones

Although the calculations show that the industrial zone comprises about 19 percent of the City, the Gunnison County airport occupies most of it—300 out of 386 acres. The remaining 86 acres in the industrial zone is largely built out, and industrial space is truly lacking.

As a consequence, many light industrial uses have been allowed to operate in the Commercial zone with a conditional use permit. This situation results in an over-utilization of light industrial uses in the existing commercial zones. As a result, less space is available for new retail or service businesses, which has the potential to threaten the economy. Further, light industrial uses in the commercial zone can sometimes be considered incompatible, which compromises the quality of life for those individuals residing or working in or near the affected commercial zones.

During its Land Development Code update, the City will need to address whether the existing industrial zone is sufficient. Gunnison County also struggles with a lack of industrial space near the City of Gunnison, and collaboration with the County will be critical. The City and County may also wish to adopt similar definitions for light and heavy industrial uses to address compatibility concerns in the three-mile planning area.

Airport Overlay Zone District

The location of the airport within City boundaries necessitates the creation of an airport overlay district. The purpose of an airport overlay district is to provide for compatible land development in areas subject to frequent aircraft flyover and aircraft noise. The district is designed to mitigate the effects of aircraft flights that could increase risks to public health, safety, and quality of life.

Annexation

Annexations present opportunities for the City, and given the right circumstances, could address deficiencies in available space for residential, commercial and industrial uses. In addition, a large annexation has the potential to create its own market, and draw people in excess of anticipated growth rate.

Annexations do present challenges to the City, including possible threats to community character, the environment, and the economy. Annexation applications will need to be approached methodically and wisely, taking into account benefits and costs to the community.

Desire for mixed uses

Living closer to work is becoming increasingly important. Traditional

Euclidian Zoning¹ has placed a dependency on the automobile, as well as an expensive demand for better roads. In light of rising fuel costs as well as social trends, residential and commercial uses should be permitted in the same area if the uses are generally compatible.

Examples of mixed-use neighborhoods include a blend of high and low density residential uses, as well as residential and business combinations. Building configurations can be designed to accommodate retail on the bottom floor or on the street front, and residential uses on the second floor or on the alley.



High-Density Residential Area
North Colorado Street
Photo Courtesy of Andie Ruggera

The ratio for current number of dwelling units in residential zones to dwelling units in non-residential zones is approximately 7.7:1. Using the same ratio the future number of units in non-residential zones can be conservatively projected at approximately 165 units (See Table 5.2). However, considering recent trends in mixed use neighborhoods as well as the City's role in encouraging mixed uses, the ratio could be higher: for

¹ Euclidean Zoning is characterized by the segregation of land uses into specified geographic districts and dimensional standards within each type of district.

example, achieving a ratio of 5:1 would yield 255 mixed-use units (in this case, the city would have a total of 3,840 housing units at buildout).

Creating the foundation for a thriving economy

City policy makers have established that the City should create an environment for businesses to thrive. With respect to land use, the City's role can be proactive in responsibly amending the zoning and business regulations to allow attractive and efficient commercial districts.

City of Gunnison Projected Land Use Alternative

Residential Zones

Many of the existing residential areas have not maximized their infill potential. For example, the 208 acres in the R-3 Zone, which allows 30 units per acre, could potentially build out to 6,240 units, yet only 805 units exist. The City

currently has 2,045 units in the residential zones, yet maximum density in these zones could allow as many as 10,764 units (See *Appendix 5.A*). However, maximum density (i.e., full build-out) is not anticipated nor preferred. Table 5.2 shows that 3,750 units are projected. *Chapter 6, Housing* discusses the projected density and housing units based on population.

The Planning and Zoning Commission and the Master Plan Steering Committee applied a more realistic build-out projection, based on an assessment of anticipated land use patterns and growth, as well as the public sentiment relating to community character. To develop the model, the following assumptions were entered into modeling software (CommunityViz®):

Assumptions:

1. Open Space/ Agricultural/ Recreation Zones. An open space zoning district could be evaluated to include agricultural and recreation uses. For example, the area southeast of the airport (R-1) may be rezoned to open space, which would result in approximately 10.6 million square feet (MSF) of open space within the current City limits. Considering annexation potential of rural lands outside of the present City boundaries, an open space zoning designation may be desirable. (This will need to be evaluated in more detail by City policy makers and the City Attorney.)

2. West Gunnison Neighborhood. The size of the commercial zone located in the West Gunnison Neighborhood may be reduced and/or replaced with residential zoning.²

² The West Gunnison Neighborhood Plan is under evaluation at this time. For further information, and maps of this area, please see the Community Development Department.

Zone	Current Units (As of 2006)	Projected Additional of Units (build-out)	Total Units (build-out)
R1	275	177	452
R1M	128	115	243
R2	496	156	652
R2M	137	372	509
R3	805	442	1,247
Rural Res	0	13	13
PUD R1M	50	0	50
PUD R2	55	0	55
PUD R3	99	0	99
Subtotal	2,045	1,275	3,320
C, PUD C, B1 & I	265	165	430
TOTALS	2,310	1,440	3,750

3. Low Impact/Rural Residential Zone. Low impact zones take into consideration the natural features and topography of the land. A low impact zone should be established near the Gunnison River.



4. Modeling and Data Manipulation. Modeling software calculated the projected land use scenarios based on floor area ratio variables. Different variables were substituted in the model and analyzed by staff and Planning Commission. The most appropriate variables have been implemented in the model.

Table 5.2 (preceding page) illustrates the model, where the projected residential build-out result in a total of 3,750 dwelling units in the City. Map 5A at the end of this chapter also depicts the projected residential (and non-residential) build-out.

Non Residential Build-out

Build-out potential of non-residential zones (Commercial, Central Business District, Industrial and B-1 Districts) was based on square footage and floor areas. In the City, approximately 1.5 Million Square Feet (MSF) of non-residential space is currently available, while approximately 5.5 MSF is vacant.

Based on Table 5.3, the projected commercial square footage of the vacant land is about 3.05 MSF. Combining existing (1.49 MSF) and vacant parcels (3.05 MSF), approximately 4.54 MSF of commercial floor space is possible.

Although the City could have as much as 4.5 MSF available for non-residential uses, it is questionable if the population can support this much commercial and

Zone	Vacant Parcel Size* (Sq. Ft.)	Maximum Structural Coverage	Projected Floor Area from Vacant Land (Sq. Ft.)	Existing Floor Area (Sq. Ft.)	Projected Non-Residential at Build Out (Sq. Ft.)
C	2,155,324	50%	1,077,766	500,338	1,608,104
CBD	29,018	100%	29,018	476,333	505,351
I	2,545,077	60%	1,527,046	223,643	1,750,689
PUD C	778,037	50%	389,019	98,427	487,446
B1	0	40%	0	20,118	20,118
TOTAL	5,507,456		3,052,849	1,487,994	4,540,843

***See Appendix 5.B**

industrial competition. The current ratio for non-residential square footage per person is roughly 275 square feet per person. If built to 4,540,843 MSF, at 7,300 people, the ratio becomes 622 square feet per person.

III. LAND USES OUTSIDE OF THE CITY

Two distinct land use areas are important for planning outside of the City limits, the three-mile planning boundary and the urban growth boundary. The purpose of an urban growth boundary is to concentrate growth into an area that can be efficiently serviced by existing or extended infrastructure, thereby preserving open space beyond the boundary. The *Three Mile Plan* identifies where the City anticipates lands will become urbanized, including areas where services such as street extensions can logically be provided, and where urban densities and uses are appropriate.

The three-mile boundary is a standard measurement for the area that exists within three miles from the City limits. The urban growth boundary (UGB) is identified by a mapped boundary, separating land that is urban, or is planned to become urban, from that which is to remain rural. It accounts for lands which may eventually seek to be annexed because of the feasibility of connecting to central sewer and water, roadways, and compatible land uses.

The land uses immediately outside of the City limits are largely residential, with some existing commercial and agricultural uses in the entrance corridors. Moving further away from the urban fringe, residential ranchette

development becomes more prominent (e.g., one unit per five-acre parcel.)

Colorado Revised Statutes §31-12-105 specifically allows cities and counties to enter intergovernmental agreements to encourage cooperative land use planning between the two.

Two intergovernmental agreements between the City of Gunnison and Gunnison County are relevant for land use purposes. The first is the *Wastewater Treatment Facility Agreement* of July 3, 2001. The second is the *Three Mile Plan/Urban Growth Boundary Intergovernmental Agreement* also adopted on July 3, 2001. As part of these Agreements, the City and County jointly review Land Use Change Permit applications for projects within the three-mile planning area and urban growth boundary. These agreements have been helpful, but will need to be revised to reflect the changes in the City's *Master Plan* and *Land Development Code*, and Gunnison County's *Comprehensive Plan*.

1041 Regulations

1041 Regulations were authorized by the State of Colorado through the adoption of HB-1041. These Regulations authorize counties to adopt "Regulations for Areas and Activities of State Interest", which include the establishment of new communities, siting of municipal water and wastewater facilities, siting and selection of airports and highway systems, and protection of significant wildlife habitat. The 1041 Regulations are intended to allow for public input and require mitigation for any impacts which may result from one of the specific activities.

Gunnison County may exercise its right under HB-1041 for areas within the three-mile planning area, for example, the

County could declare part of its jurisdiction as a wildfire hazard area, or it might declare the activity of selecting a site for mass transit a matter of state interest.

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)

The urban growth boundary (UGB) was last mapped in 1997 with projected land uses identified within that boundary. The UGB and Three-Mile Boundary has been moderately revised for this plan to reflect changing conditions in the area, such as population growth, infrastructure extensions, and transportation needs. However, the *Three-Mile Plan* will need to be reviewed by both the City and the County and revised accordingly.

Consequences of Existing Land Use Development Patterns

Existing land use patterns within the urban growth boundary are problematic in several respects. Most of the residential ranchette properties that have been developed in recent years have a "sprawling" nature to them, and are contrary to compact land development patterns.

What is Sprawl?
According to the Vermont Forum on Sprawl (nationally recognized authority), it is defined as "dispersed, auto-dependent development outside of compact urban and village centers, along highways, and in rural countryside."

Secondly, these properties typically rely on individual septic disposal systems (ISDS's), and not a central sewer system. As a consequence, the City's water quality and potable water systems could be threatened.

Thirdly, traffic patterns are placing increasing pressure on existing roads, particularly on Highway 135 just north of

the City limits. (See Chapter 8, *Transportation*).

Transfer of Development Rights

A transfer of development rights (TDR) is a technique that has been utilized in other jurisdictions in recent years to fight sprawl, to provide amenities to cities, and to preserve agricultural land.

TDR programs allow landowners to sever development rights from properties designated as low-density, and sell them to purchasers who want to develop at a higher density in an appropriate area.

The *Gunnison County Comprehensive Plan* recommends utilizing a TDR program. TDR's not only preserve open space, the current culture and economy, but they are also an equitable means to compensate landowners (via conservation easements) who cannot develop due to density restrictions.

Projected Land Use Alternative – 3 Mile Planning Area

The projected land use scenario for the three-mile planning area was chosen based on the following criteria:

1. To discourage sprawl.
2. To allow greater density where utility services are available.
3. To have adequate roadway access to the City.
4. To account for environmental constraints.
5. To be compatible with existing land use patterns.

The assumptions used to develop the projected urban growth boundary include the following:



Antelope Hills area, west of Gunnison
Photo courtesy of Tom Maynard

Assumptions:

1. Dos Rios Subdivision. Although the Dos Rios Water and Sewer utility system can accommodate high density residential, road access is limited to County Road 38 and Highway 50. This area is unlikely to be annexed due the existing availability of utility services as well as the lack of contiguity to the City limits.

2. Industrial Zones. Industrial lands are needed in or near the City. The most appropriate locations for industrial zoning are adjacent to existing industrial lands south of the airport (near the present-day Valco concrete plant).

3. Existing Entitlement Rights. Many of the existing residential subdivisions have been excluded from any alternative land use patterns. For example, North Elk Meadows, a residential subdivision north of the City, is probably built out and will not likely change in density.

4. Environmental Assumptions.

- a. Water quality will be diminished if development occurs in or near the City's aquifer.

- b. During major storm events, storm water drainage will create erosion problems.
- c. Development will likely impact critical wildlife habitats.
- d. Urban densities are not appropriate on steep slopes.

5. Transportation Assumptions. Additional development will continue to place pressure on existing road systems.

6. Locational Assumptions. Specific areas surrounding the City have unique attributes and needs:

South of the City. The area south of Tomichi Creek will not likely be annexed due to a lack of access to the City, engineering constraints, as well as numerous environmental constraints.

East of the City. In past years, property owners of Tomichi Heights Subdivision had been previously opposed to being annexed into the City. The projected urban growth boundary does not include the Tomichi Heights Subdivision.

North/Northeast of the City. The North Sewer Service extension was engineered to accommodate suburban residential use, and is included in the urban growth boundary. The parcels bordering Highway 135 on the east side have access issues due to parcel configuration, and will be difficult to annex. The northeast urban growth boundary mimics the northern most City boundary due to environmental constraints (erosion and wildlife issues). The boundary does not include Sun Park Subdivision due to environmental and engineering constraints.

Northwest of the City. Most of the Van Tuyl Ranch (owned by the City of Gunnison) will remain open space for well-head protection and aquifer recharge. However, the southern most

portion adjacent to the City limits may be suitable for residential development. It is included in the urban growth boundary because of its annexation potential. The UGB terminates south of the RiverWalk Subdivision.

West of the City. Ridgeline developments along the Antelope Hills and the MacIntosh Mountain region are of concern to the City, and are included in the urban growth boundary. The Antelope Hills Subdivision is not included due to a lack of contiguity with the City. Overall, the area is not likely to be annexed due to environmental constraints and the cost of utility and road extensions.

Map 5.B shows the projected Urban Growth Boundary, the three-mile planning area and the proposed uses and densities within these areas.

IV. GOAL, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Goal

Growth and development will preserve and enhance the quality of life which makes Gunnison unique and attractive. Edges of the community remain clearly defined. New developments will demonstrate high-quality urban design while protecting the rural landscapes surrounding the City. Sprawl will be avoided through effective infill and compact growth. Residential, commercial and industrial land uses are appropriately located and interspersed with parks and open space, providing a balanced environment in which to live, work and play.

Policy 1 - Amend Zoning

Amend the City of Gunnison Zoning Map and Zoning Boundaries. Action items to implement this policy include:

1.1 Amend the zoning standards and the zoning boundaries for the existing multiple family districts (R-2, R-2M, R-3) to promote infill and to increase housing opportunities.

1.2 Evaluate the possibility of using density controls, such as floor area-to-parcel size ratios, to preserve community character.

1.3 Work with the County to explore Transfers of Development Rights that would function to protect open space and consolidate development in urban areas.

1.4 Amend standards to encourage mixed use developments and modify the Land Development Code accordingly.

1.5 Implement a neighborhood plan for West Gunnison that considers land use, infrastructure, wetlands, storm water control, transportation systems, and zoning entitlement.

1.6 Develop a "low impact" residential district for those areas that may have sensitive environmental features such as high water tables.

1.7 Develop a "recreational open space" zone district and determine appropriate locations for this district.

1.8 Assess extensions to the Central Business District, the B-1 District, and Commercial District, and incorporate these districts into neighborhood developments where appropriate.

1.9 Establish criteria that discourage down zoning and evaluate mitigation

techniques to preserve high density zoning districts.

1.10 Evaluate locations for additional industrial zoning within the City.

1.11 Evaluate the criteria in the Land Development Code for light industrial uses that are permitted to operate in the commercial zone with a conditional use permit.

1.12 Establish a City annexation policy by resolution that defines annexation procedures and criteria.

1.13 Discourage sprawling commercial strip corridors.

1.14 Develop and implement architectural design standards for an overlay district on Highways 50 and 135.

Policy 2 - Collaborate with Gunnison County

The City of Gunnison is committed to working with Gunnison County to facilitate compatible land uses within the three-mile planning area. Action items to implement this policy include:

2.1 Work with the County to amend the land use designations within the three-mile plan in relation to: service availability (water/sewer/roads); storm-water management and erosion control; the protection of the quantity and quality of water resources (ground and surface water); impacts to critical habitats; protection of view sheds; protection of access to public lands; and compatibility to surrounding land uses.

2.2 Work with the County to amend the provisions of the Intergovernmental Agreement concerning the review of development proposals within the three-mile planning area.

2.3 Update the Street Extensions plan (See *Chapter 8, Transportation*).

2.4 Work with the County to determine suitable locations for light and/or heavy industrial areas within the three-mile planning area boundary.

2.5 Develop a definition and development standards for light industrial areas, including low impact development; and amend the Land Development Code accordingly.

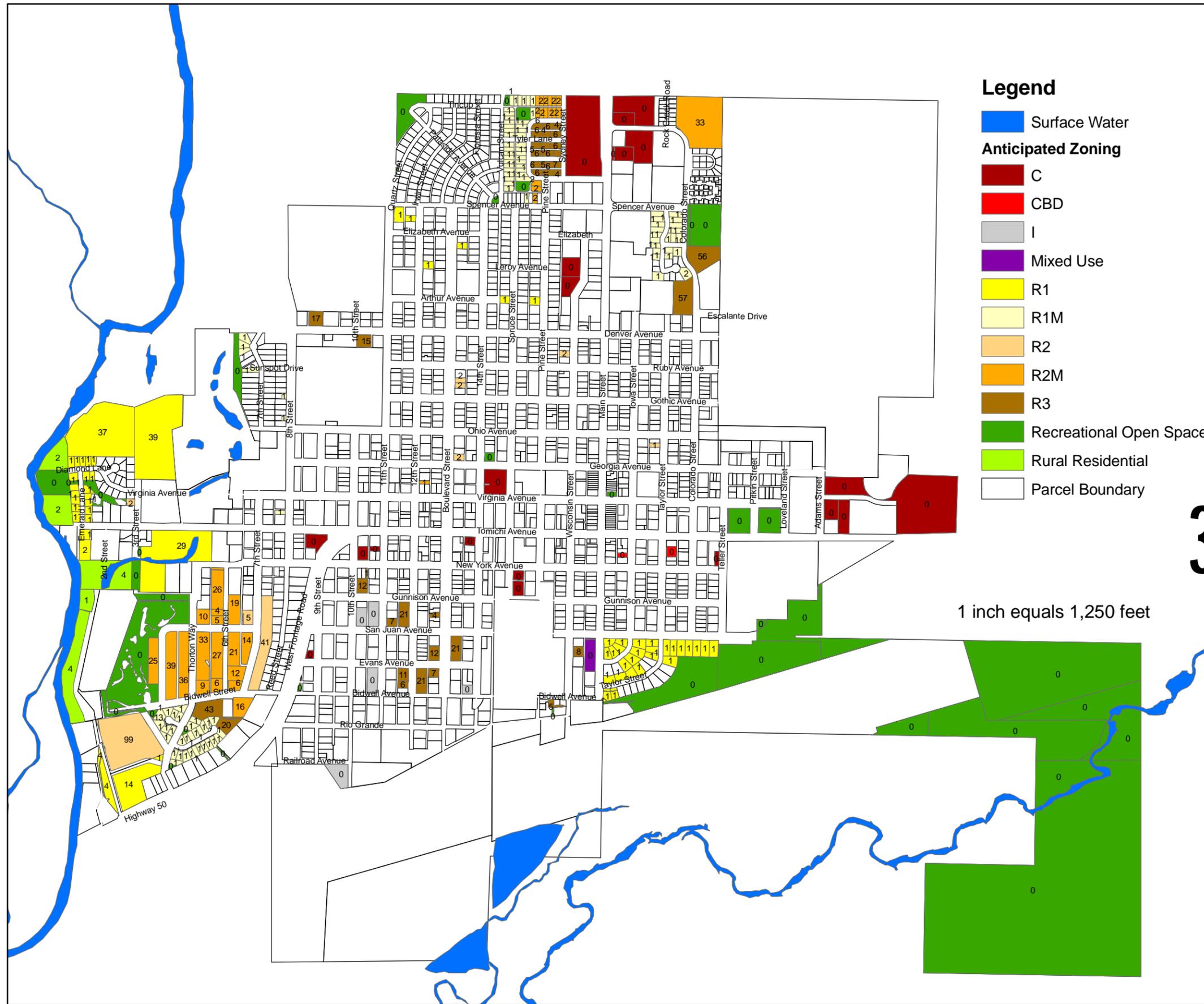
2.6 Extend the entrance overlay standards to the three-mile planning area along Highways 50 and 135.

2.7 Rezone the County Fairgrounds to a Planned Unit Development for public assembly and governmental use.

2.8 Annex the City-owned Van Tuyl Ranch to protect the City's wellheads and the aquifer recharge area and to provide an opportunity for housing.

2.9 Work with the County to create an Airport Overlay District for public health, safety, and quality of life.

Map 5.A Vacant Parcels Projected Future Buildout City of Gunnison



Legend

- Surface Water
- Anticipated Zoning**
- C
- CBD
- I
- Mixed Use
- R1
- R1M
- R2
- R2M
- R3
- Recreational Open Space
- Rural Residential
- Parcel Boundary

1 inch equals 1,250 feet

3

Projected Residential Buildout Chapter 5 Land Use Table 5.2 (GIS Data – March 20, 2007)			
Zone	Current Units	Projected # of Units	Total Units
R1	275	177	452
R1M	128	115	243
R2	496	156	652
R2M	137	372	509
R3	805	442	1,247
Rural Res	0	13	13
PUD R1M	50	0	50
PUD R2	55	0	55
PUD R3	99	0	99
TOTALS:	2,045	1,275	3,320
C, PUD C CBD, B1, & I	265	165	430
CITY TOTALS:	2,310	1,440	3,750

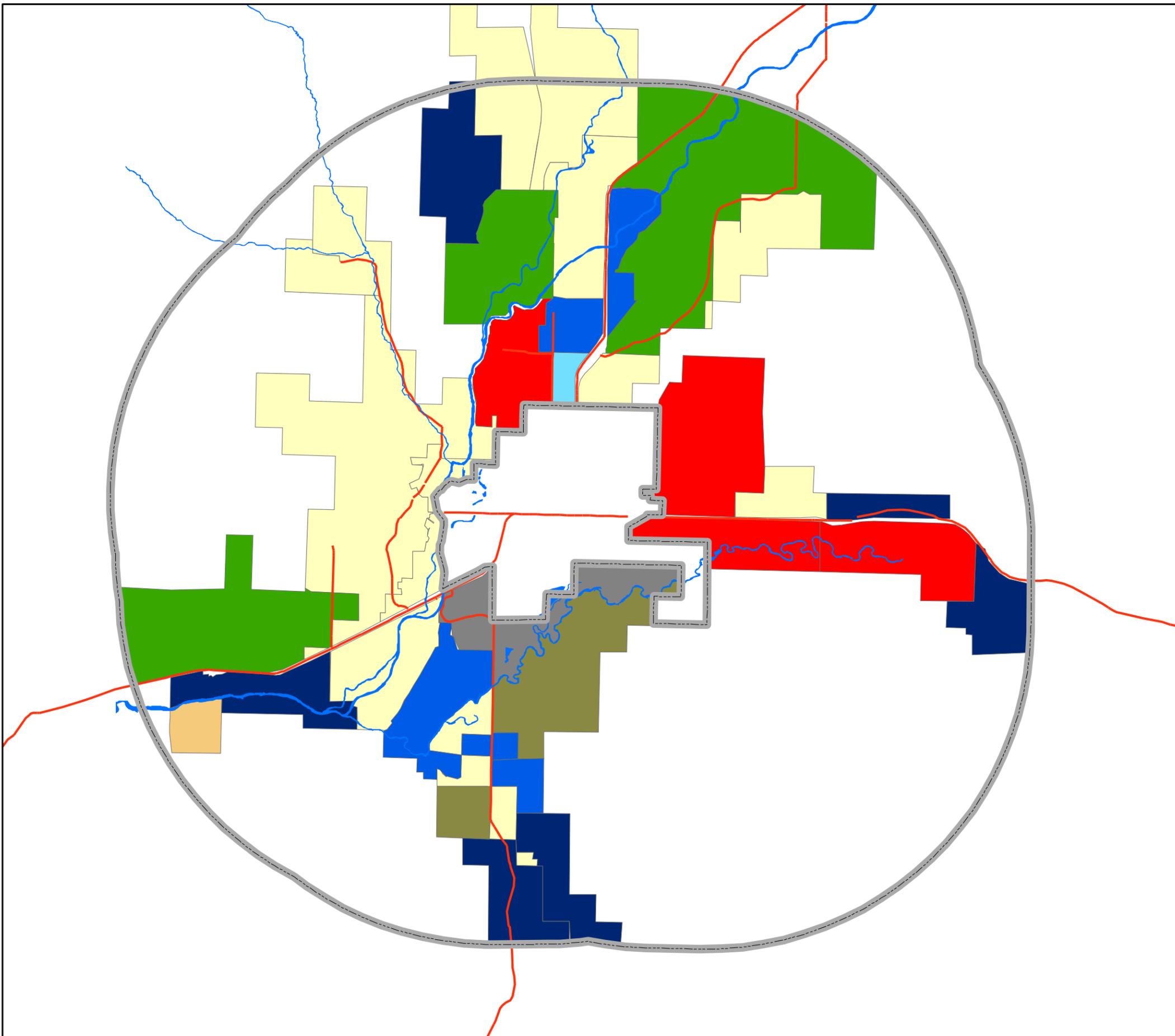
Projected Non-Residential Build Out Vacant Parcels Chapter 5 Land Use Table 5.3			
Zone	Projected Vacant Land to be Utilized (Sq.Ft.)	Existing Floor Area (Sq.Ft.)	Projected Non-Residential Build Out (Sq.Ft.)
C	1,107,766	500,338	1,608,104
CBD	29,018	476,333	505,351
I	1,527,046	223,643	1,750,689
PUD C	389,019	98,427	487,446
B1	0	20,118	20,118
TOTAL	3,052,849	1,487,994	4,540,843

The number in each undeveloped parcel indicates the number of units allowed on a parcel.

Map 5.B Preferred Urban Growth Boundary and Three Mile Area Projected Land Use

Legend

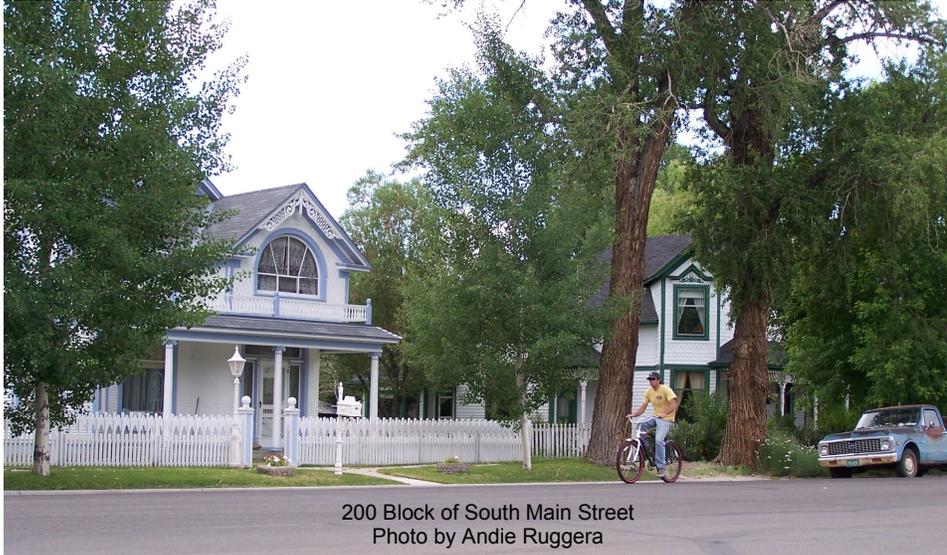
-  Three Mile Buffer
-  State/Federal Land
-  Preferred UGB
-  Surface Water
- Projected Land Use Area**
-  1 to 4 units/ acre
-  1 unit per 35 acres
-  1 unit per 5 acres
-  Agricultural
-  Airport Operatoins
-  Annexation Tract
-  Existing Entitlement
-  Open Space
-  Public Utilities
-  Unincorporated 3-Mile Parcels
-  Highways and County Roads



3

1 inch equals 5,000 feet

6 Housing



This chapter details the specific housing issues that affect the City of Gunnison, and the role of the City government.

- I. Introduction
- II. State Perspective
- III. Social Perspective
- IV. Local Issues
- V. Affordability
- VI. Potential Residential Development
- VII. Community Character
- VIII. Tools for Consideration
- IX. Goal, Policies and Actions

I. INTRODUCTION

While market conditions typically determine the quantity and price of new residential units, it is sometimes necessary for local governments to take proactive steps to encourage affordable housing in the community. These are important considerations in the development and sustainability of Gunnison's quality living environment.

In recent months, the City has collaborated with Crested Butte, Mt. Crested and Gunnison County to consider involvement in economic development, particularly housing, transportation and communications. This chapter discusses housing needs in the City and potential housing tools that are available for the City to utilize.

The quality of life in Gunnison depends on the presence of adequate, available housing. Further, housing is a

key factor in attracting and keeping families and businesses in the area.

II. STATE PERSPECTIVE

Colorado's population is growing and the demand for affordable housing continues to increase. In 1980, Colorado's population was about 2.9 million, and as of July 2005, the population was about 4.7 million.

According to the State Demographer, growth in

Colorado will likely

continue at about 1.5

percent annually,

with the population

increasing to approximately 5 million by 2020.

Year	State Pop
1980	2,889,735
1990	3,294,473
1995	3,811,074
2000	4,301,261
July 2005	4,722,755

In Colorado, housing construction has increased rapidly to shelter all these new residents, with building permits tripling in a ten-year period between 1990 and 2000. Despite all the new construction, Colorado continues to have a shortage of affordable housing.

III. SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

A larger social issue is speculated to be part of the affordable housing problem—the difficulty for people to be fiscally responsible in a technological environment. Many people struggle with prioritizing their expenses because of the availability of revolving credit, the necessity of possessing cellular telephones and computers, the high cost of energy and the convenience of purchasing on the internet with easily acquired credit cards. Saving money for a

down payment on a house is becoming a lower priority.

The Gunnison County Housing Authority currently offers credit and budgeting classes and homebuyer classes. Both classes are open to anyone in the community free of charge. The classes help individuals gain control of their financial situation to qualify for home loans.

The City's role with this social issue can be to collaborate with the Gunnison County Housing Authority, RE1J and Western State College to make this information available to interested residents.

IV. LOCAL ISSUES

In addition to national and state trends, the City of Gunnison is located in close proximity to a resort area, which brings forth another set of obstacles to affordable housing. In Crested Butte, land values have substantially increased and housing prices have become out of reach for those who are employed in the less-than-median income service jobs. The City is subject to the "down valley" syndrome, where people live in the City and commute to Crested Butte.

Affordable housing is considered a major planning and social issue for the entire Gunnison Valley.

TABLE 6.1 Housing Types Within City 2000 Census City Population: 5,409		
2,276 Units (2.37 people per dwelling unit)	46% single family	1,047 units
	30% three or more units	682 units
	14% mobile homes	319 units
	10% duplex	227 units

TABLE 6.2
Affordability of Single Family Home & Condominium
For the Period January 1, 2006 to January 1, 2007

Actual Area Median Family Income*	Home Affordability* (3.8 times gross annual income)	Median Sales Price of a Single Family Home**	Monthly Payment including taxes, insurance***
\$66,200 (120% of AMI)	251,560	\$245,000	\$1,987
\$55,166 (100% of AMI)	209,631		
\$44,133 (80% of AMI)	167,705		
\$33,100 (60% of AMI)	125,780		
\$27,583 (50% of AMI)	104,815		
*Gunnison County Housing Authority Calculations **Gunnison County Board of Realtors Multiple Listing Service System (January 1, 2006 through January 1, 2007) ***Based on 0 points, 7% interest, 30-year mortgage, zero down payment, 3% closing costs, estimated taxes & insurance.			

According to the 2000 Census, the City's population was 5,409 and the number of dwelling units was 2,276 (approximately 2.37 persons per household). Almost half of the housing mix was single family dwelling units.

The United States Census calculated 2,276 units as of the year 2000. Of these dwelling units, approximately 40% were owner occupied, 52% were renter occupied and the rest were vacant.

Housing issues and the economic climate of the community are unavoidably interrelated. The data provided in *Chapter 7, Economics* shows that job growth patterns are an important indicator to understand the gap between wages and living costs. Approximately 62% of all jobs in Gunnison County as of the 2000 census were in the service and professional sectors, which pay far below Colorado state averages.

V. AFFORDABILITY

The information and tables provided in this section demonstrate that Gunnison area residents pay a premium for monthly housing costs.

Affordability for Homeowners

Area Median Sales Price¹: According to the Gunnison Country Board of Realtors, the median sales prices in the City of Gunnison for a single family home for the period January 1, 2006 through January 1, 2007 was \$245,000.

Area Median Income²: The Household Area Median Income (AMI) for a household of three for Gunnison County was \$55,166³ as of March of 2006.

¹ Area Median Sales Price reflects the middle value of the price range, not the average.

² The Household Median Income reflects the middle value of the price range, not the average.

³US Department of Housing & Urban Development (used by Gunnison County Housing Authority)

Affordability Index: Based on the Gunnison County Housing Authority, the affordability index is the ability of an average household to afford a home worth approximately 3.8 times its gross annual income. When calculated, the median family income can afford a home costing \$209,631, yet the median-priced home is \$245,000. As shown in Table 6.2, only households that earn 120 percent of AMI can afford the median priced home.

Affordability for Renters

Of the households that pay rent, 31% spend more than 50% (half) of their household income on rent and utilities. Table 6.3 shows rents per unit and

bedroom in the County; it also shows the hourly wage needed at 40 hours per week to pay for such rent. Since rents are the lowest in the City of Gunnison area, many employees live in the City and commute to their jobs elsewhere in the County.

VI. POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 5, Land Use and Growth discusses existing residential densities and projected build-out. Except in several locations, residential densities are typically much lower than maximum densities allowed by the Land Development Code. For example, the Twin Pines Mobile Home Park located in West Gunnison could have 30 units per acre, but it has only 5.5. (See *Appendix 6.A* which compares the approximate actual and allowable densities for sample neighborhoods within the City of Gunnison).

Sufficient Housing Availability

As demonstrated in Table 6.4, the City of Gunnison will have a net surplus of approximately 676 dwellings in the year 2026, and the three-mile planning area will have an excess of 861 units. This data suggests that the City and its three-

Table 6.3
Data from Rees Consulting, Inc.
prepared for Gunnison County
December 2005

Location	Average Rent	Average Monthly Rent/ Bedroom	Hourly wage needed to pay rent
Mt. Crested Butte	\$1,100	\$550	\$11.46
Crested Butte	\$1,298	\$608	\$12.67
Riverbend	\$1,230	\$512	\$10.67
CB South	\$1,191	\$484	\$10.06
Gunnison	\$ 792	\$375	\$7.80
Gunnison Rural	\$ 796	\$386	\$8.04

Table 6.4
Population and Housing

Planning Area	2000 Census Pop	2000 Census # Units	Projected # of New Units	Total # of Units	Population at 2.37 persons per unit (ppu)	2026 Population at 1.5% annual growth rate	Population Difference	Net Surplus of Units at 2.37 ppu
City	5,409	2,276	1,440*	3,750	8,888	7,285	1603	676
UGB	1,034	581	508**	1,089	2,581	1,923	658	277
3 Mile Planning Area	1,671	777	159**	936	2,218	2,391	173	73
TOTALS	8,114	3,634	1,251	4,885	11,577	11,599	1,338	861

*Based on Projected Land Use Scenario in Chapter 5

**Based on build out of nearby parcels

mile planning area will have sufficient housing stock to accommodate population through 2026.

Gunnison County is currently undertaking a "housing needs assessment" which could shed additional light on these challenges facing the City. Further collaboration will be required, and the City will likely need to adopt an affordable housing policy in conjunction with Gunnison County's efforts.

VII. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Existing Densities

Although future development of vacant land zoned R-2, R-2M and R-3 to maximum allowable densities could accommodate population growth, it could also significantly change the City's residential character. As a result, the projected growth scenario presented in *Chapter 5, Land Use and Growth*, anticipates a more realistic growth scenario, which is far less than if the zoning districts were maximized to full density potential.

The Land Development Code is currently under revision. Its update should consider the following issues:

- New development or redevelopment in residential zones to maximum allowable densities could change the residential character of the city and/or present environmental challenges.
- Lowering maximum allowable densities would allow for a density bonus under special circumstances (affordable housing or TDR) without significantly altering existing residential character.
- If densities are to be changed in the updated Land Development Code, they

should be commensurate with the goal of "promoting infill within the City to avoid sprawl in the county's remaining open space."

- Forces such as:
 - affordability,
 - energy efficiency,
 - local transportation patterns and
 - available land in the valleywill likely necessitate higher densities in and around Gunnison.

Mobile Home Displacement

Mobile homes comprise an important part of the City's affordable housing inventory and should be preserved. According to the April 2000 census, 323 mobile homes were present in the City, and represented about 6% of the total number of housing units in Gunnison. There are approximately 48 mobile homes that were unoccupied at that time.

Mobile home units older than June of 1976 were not subject to regulatory requirements at that time. It was not until after June of 1976 that mobile homes were required to meet modern building standards. These types of homes are permitted to continue based on the current land development code as a non-conforming building. However, they must be replaced with new units that meet current building codes.

This presents a unique problem, termed "mobile home conversion issues". Oftentimes, the replacement cost is unattainable for the owner. At this time, the municipality's role with mobile home issues is ambiguous, and should be considered in an affordable housing policy.

VIII. TOOLS FOR CONSIDERATION

Taking a leadership role in creating productive partnerships can allow local governments to address the critical needs of their communities in a cost-effective manner. The Gunnison City Council has given direction to City management staff to create an affordable housing policy.

Some of the tools that the City of Gunnison might use to assist with affordable housing can be categorized into land strategies, construction strategies, regulatory strategies, and financial strategies. These need to be evaluated for their feasibility.

Land Strategies

1. Create sufficient zoning for all housing types
2. Reduce minimum lot sizes
3. Increase densities for residential development in commercial areas
4. Amend the current Planned Unit Development Code to be more user friendly
5. Reduce lot setbacks
6. Allow zero lot-line development in certain residential zones
7. Encourage clustering of housing units
8. Encourage accessory dwellings
9. Reduce street widths
10. Modify curb, gutter and sidewalk requirements
11. Modify landscaping and parking requirements

Construction Strategies

1. Enact building codes that are accepted by all local governments
2. Enact rehabilitation codes that allow flexibility
3. Promote use of infill strategies

4. Require infrastructure to accommodate future potential development
5. Allow innovative construction strategies

Regulatory Strategies

1. Allow parallel permit processing (consolidated applications)
2. Set time limits for multiple agency reviews.
3. Conduct pre-application conferences
4. Resolve historic and natural resource protection issues prior to or during the planning process to eliminate delays.
5. Enact deed restriction policies and inclusionary zoning techniques.
6. Allow density bonuses for developers who install affordable housing.

Financial Strategies

1. Implement Tax Increment Financing techniques.
2. Utilize Private Activity Bonds.
3. Implement efficient utility reimbursement policies. This concept is also mentioned in *Chapter 9, Utilities and Infrastructure*.
4. Assess impact fees.
5. Utilize development agreements
6. Utilize federal finance assistance programs.
7. Implement Special Improvement Districts where feasible.
8. Utilize property tax exemptions if appropriate.

Education Strategies

Educate young people on how to survive financially in the modern world.

IX. GOAL, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Goal

Gunnison's housing inventory includes diverse housing types in mixed use areas. New construction will be based on energy efficiency. New homes are compatible with community character with respect to density, design and demographics. A wide price range is sufficient to meet the needs of all income levels including a healthy rental market with well-maintained rental units.

Policy 1. Public/Private Partnerships.

The City of Gunnison encourages and supports research efforts regarding affordable housing. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 1.1 Realizing that the City is the locale for much of the housing in the area, the City will assist the County Housing Authority with housing needs assessments as appropriate.
- 1.2 Support housing research efforts by other entities which the City can utilize for evaluating housing policies, (e.g., Region 10's Second Home Owner Study.)
- 1.3 Collaborate with the Gunnison County Housing Authority to offer Home Buyer Education courses to be offered on a regular basis.
- 1.4 Collaborate with RE1J to introduce a mandatory finance class at the high school level that would teach students how to survive financially in the modern world.

Policy 2. Create an Affordable Housing Policy

The City of Gunnison is committed to create an affordable housing policy that addresses the needs of low to moderate

household incomes. The policy will include:

Collaboration:

- 2.1 Establish a procedure to evaluate requests for City contributions to public/private efforts to provide additional affordable housing.
- 2.2 Foster partnerships among other governmental entities, Western State College, major employers, and other private-sector entities to consider methods that maintain affordable housing, including work force housing and mobile home conversion issues.

Funding Mechanisms:

- 2.3 Evaluate the budget annually to determine available funding to be used toward affordable housing issues.
- 2.4 Utilize, where feasible, public funding mechanisms for housing benefits, such as tax increment financing, property tax abatements, land trusts, special assessment districts and split estates.
- 2.5 Collaborate with the County and other governmental entities to evaluate the feasibility of requiring impact fees for county-wide development that will affect housing in the City.

Regulatory Mechanisms:

- 2.6 Evaluate the development of an inclusionary zoning ordinance.
- 2.7 Consider the implementation of impact fees policy for developments in the City.

Accessory Dwelling Units:

- 2.8 Review the standards and dimensions for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and revise the standards, if appropriate.
- 2.9 Evaluate the Land Development Code to determine appropriate locations

that could allow for ADUs without a conditional use permit.

Housing Incentives

2.10 Implement density bonuses in exchange for affordable housing.

Dimensional Standard Changes:

2.11 Review the dimensional standards in the Land Development Code to encourage residential home affordability.

4.3 Create a mobile home policy that addresses “mobile home conversion issues” so that when older mobile home units are eliminated, a resident can find an alternative place to live with no net loss of affordable housing.

Policy 3. Safe Dwelling Units

Recognize that dwelling units should be built and maintained for safety and efficiency and that rental units are a vital part of the community’s housing stock.

3.1 Continue to educate the public on safety standards and renter’s rights.

3.2 Continue to enforce the building codes for safety purposes.

3.3 Provide information to homeowners and renters on how to keep their homes safe and efficient.

3.4 Continue to participate in outreach session at Western State College to educate college students on rental rights and responsibilities.

Policy 4. Mobile Homes

Recognizing that existing mobile home parks are a critical component of the affordable housing market, the City of Gunnison will implement incentives or requirements to improve design, landscaping, and screening of existing facilities where relevant. Action items to implement this policy include:

4.1 Update the Land Development Code to amend design standards for new mobile home parks.

4.2 Create incentives or otherwise address the issue of landownership for mobile home owners so that land is well maintained and aesthetically pleasing.

7 Economics



The Gunnison Farmers Market
Photo Courtesy of Mike Avery of Gunnison

This chapter discusses the primary factors affecting Gunnison’s economy and the City of Gunnison’s role in helping to facilitate economic vitality in the area.

- I. Introduction
- II. Sustainable Economy
- III. Economic Factors, Trends and Drivers
- IV. Goal, Policies, and Actions

I. INTRODUCTION

Government’s role in promoting a healthy, sustainable, local economy spans the spectrum between a “hands off” approach and one that actively seeks public/private partnerships. Gunnison’s leaders have opted for the latter approach.

In keeping with this active role, the City Council has determined that although many factors affect economic viability, the City can be most effective in enhancing and maintaining the infrastructure upon which a vital economy rests: the city’s Housing, Transportation, and Communications.

Housing

First-time home ownership is one of the largest challenges facing City

residents: households earning Gunnison’s Area Median Income or less (i.e., half of the households in the City) do not qualify for a standard, fixed-rate mortgage on a median-priced, detached, single family residence. As a consequence, businesses, schools, and public service agencies experience severe difficulty in filling critical positions.

Chapter 6. Housing delves into population trends, the need for housing, and some of the tools that the City can pursue to help lower housing costs.



Home Under Construction in Van Tuyl Village
January 2007

Transportation

The distance between the valley’s residential centers and its employment and commercial locations constrains the City’s economy. So, too, does the distance between Gunnison and its sources of manufactured goods, energy, and food. Apart from private vehicle use, transportation links in the Gunnison

“Economic problems have no sharp edges; they shade off imperceptibly into politics, sociology, and ethics. Indeed it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the ultimate answer to every economic problem lies in some other field.”
-Kenneth E Boulding

Valley are largely built and maintained through collaborative efforts between governmental agencies and private transportation entities. The City is actively participating in a number of projects and task forces to develop new links and enhance existing ones. Chapter 8. Transportation provides a description of the region’s transportation systems and the City’s involvement with them.

Communications

The City believes that ubiquitous, affordable broadband Internet services are no longer an amenity, but a necessity. Residents, schools, agencies and firms expect to conduct business, access educational materials, and otherwise interact digitally wherever they are.

To meet this need, Gunnison began exploring the viability of a citywide wireless broadband network in Gunnison during 2006, initially at the request of the Police Department, which needed a mobile wireless solution. The City is currently discussing potential partnerships to provide this service.

II. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

The City recognizes that long-term economic viability requires attention to sustainable energy resources to lessen local dependence on national and world conditions. And because both the tourism and agricultural sectors of the Gunnison economy depend on climate, the City is taking steps to address global climate change: in 2006, for example, the City Mayor, with the endorsement of the City Council, signed the Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement. See Chapter 4, Environment and Natural Resources for information on the Mayor’s Agreement and related policy statements.

III. ECONOMIC FACTORS, TRENDS AND DRIVERS

Factors and Trends

Rural economies tend to have weaker business environments due to low population densities; for example:

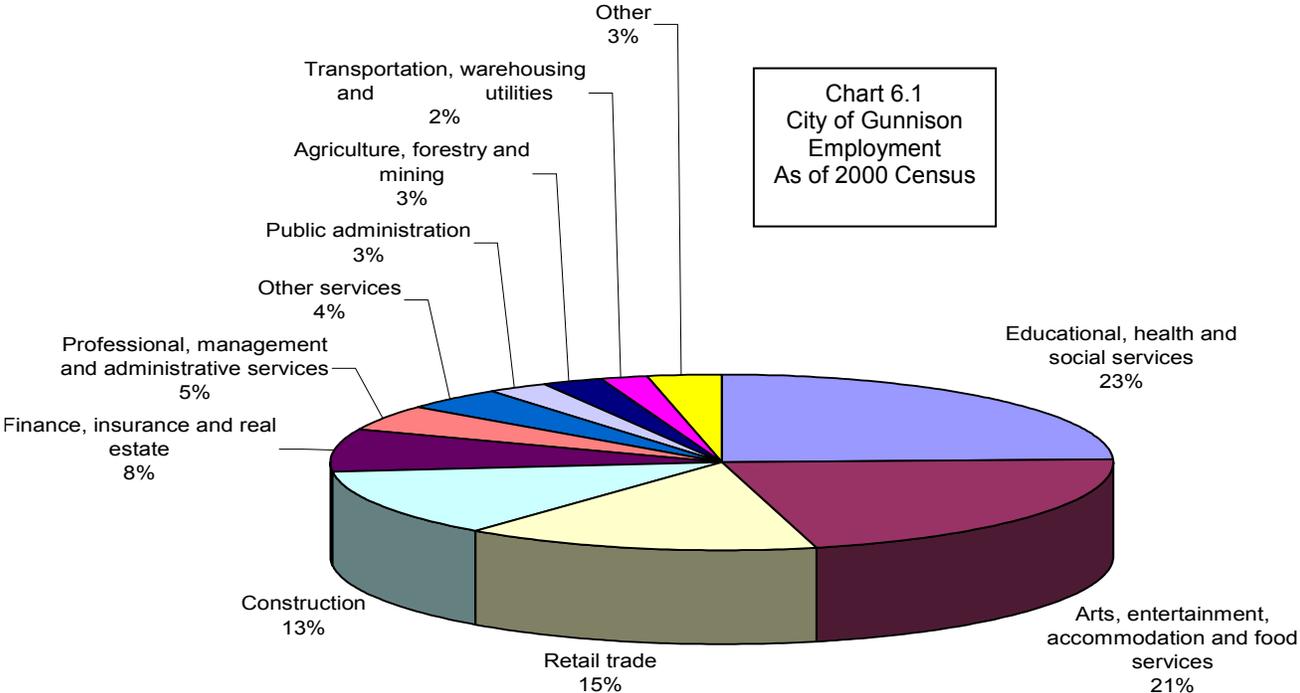
- ◆ Lower population increases the per capita cost of physical infrastructure.
- ◆
- ◆ Rural regions support a smaller number of local competitors.
- ◆
- ◆ Financial resources (corporate donations, philanthropy, etc.) are limited, which often results in a larger tax burden for residents.

City Employment Trends

Chart 6.1 shows the distribution of employment, by industry, in the City of Gunnison as of the 2000 Census. Jobs in education, health and social services comprise the largest segment (23%). The tourism-related sector (arts, entertainment, accommodation, and food services) is nearly as great. Manufacturing jobs are conspicuously absent.

Social Vibrancy: Mixed Neighborhoods

Social vibrancy is intertwined with economic viability. One means of achieving social vibrancy, a rising trend nationally, is to create mixed commercial/residential neighborhoods that offer amenities and services within walking distance of home. These not only encourage community interaction, they also reduce dependence on cars. Gunnison may take advantage of this as it considers new development within the city limits.



Sales Tax Trends

Commercial activity within the City has grown considerably in recent years. From 1990 to 2006, the City sales tax revenues more than doubled from \$1.45 million to \$3.6 million. Over this same period, the U.S. Consumer Price Index increased by approximately 50%, so roughly half of this increase can be attributed to increased sales volume, and the remainder to inflation. ¹

Regional Growth Trends

With anticipated growth in Western Slope cities such as Montrose (which is expected to grow to 50,000 within the next twenty years²) more people will visit the Gunnison area to recreate. Blue Mesa Reservoir and the Black Canyon of the Gunnison will continue to be strong attractions, and Gunnison will be a close urban area to serve visitors' needs.

Tourism and Baby Boomer Trends

Tourism is becoming increasingly sophisticated and diverse, largely driven by baby boomers, the majority of whom seek leisure-time adventure.³ Tourism now includes culinary tourism, heritage tourism (currently the largest single segment in the U.S.), events tourism, “girlfriend getaways” and bike touring.

Trips taken by “baby boomers” (those born between 1946 and 1958) represent over 40 percent of all trips taken in the United States. This group’s portion of the nation’s leisure travel has grown steadily since 1998, and has had a large impact on destination regions such as Colorado.⁴

Tourism in Gunnison County is measured by tools such as lodging tax, retail sales, and restaurant sales. The

¹ Colorado Department of Labor
² Colorado Office of Demography
³ Colorado Tourism Office, Travel Trends Newsletter
⁴ Ibid.

predominant indicator is the "Local District Marketing Tax" which is collected countywide by hotel/motel facilities. Gunnison’s sales tax related to lodging has increased from \$92, 289 for the year 2003 to \$133,854 for the year 2006.⁵

Energy Costs

Fuel costs have escalated in recent years and are expected to continue to do so. Rising fuel cost may lessen local residents’ discretionary spending, but it has not hurt tourism. Airline passengers, who comprise about 65% of winter tourists, tend to "fly anyway". The Crested Butte-Gunnison Tourism Association’s data show that the third quarter of 2006 produced a record increase in tourist visits, up 9% over the same period in 2005.

Drivers



At the Gas Pumps in Gunnison
Photo by Andie Ruggera

Second Home Ownership

Second home ownership is a newly recognized economic driver for the Gunnison Valley, one which creates service industry jobs for the initial construction and subsequent maintenance of seasonally-occupied dwellings. The emergence of this driver

⁵ City of Gunnison Finance Department

largely stems from the impending retirement of baby boomers, who have substantial incomes and who choose to build in communities with attractive amenities.

A recent study by the Northwest Council of Governments⁶ estimated that, across the northwest region of Colorado (Counties of Jackson, Grand, Eagle, Summit and Pitkin), construction and spending related to second homes was the region's largest economic driver, supporting about 38% of all jobs. People with two homes spent, on average, five times as much as those with one home – their additional spending covered items such as lawn care, home security, pest control and housecleaning. As the number of Gunnison Valley second homes increases, so too will the demand for low-paid workers to support them.

Natural Resource Extraction

Because Gunnison County contains an abundance of natural resources, the escalating national and global demand for minerals and energy has significant potential impact on Gunnison's economy. The development of resources such as coal bed methane, as well as molybdenum and titanium ores may bring in additional population, investment, and business, and with them, increased demand for public services.

Agriculture

Livestock production has been an important economic driver since the City's inception. According to a 2006 report by the Colorado State University Cooperative Extension⁷, agriculture contributed about

\$46 million to the Gunnison Valley economy in 2003.

As tourism, minerals extraction, and more recently, second home ownership have grown, ranching has waned in relative importance. According to the study's authors, "agriculture accounts for 96% of total private land use in Gunnison County," however, from 1990 to 2003 agricultural employment dropped from 11% to about 3% of county employment. More ominous is the fact that over the same period, "total agricultural production expenses regularly outstripped ... cash receipts." The study noted, however, that the increasing number of small farms ("hobby" or "lifestyle" farms) skew the data: such farms are often not operated for the purpose of making a profit, and this depresses the aggregate figures for incomes. County sales from livestock and crops actually increased from 2002 to 2003 by 11%; however, it is clear that livestock production will continue to face economic pressures for the foreseeable future.

Western State College

Western State College makes a vital contribution to Gunnison's economic viability by attracting college students and their families to this area. A 2005 study⁸ found that the college's total impact on the Gunnison Valley economy amounted to \$56.6 million:

- College operations - \$34.1 million
- Student spending - \$18.9 million
- Visitor spending - \$3.6 million

These figures did not include impacts from one-time projects on construction and renovation.

⁶ Northwest Council of Governments second homeowner study, 2002 through 2004.

⁷ Omer Tadjion and Andy Seidl, "Economic Impact of the Gunnison County Livestock Industry", Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, May 2006

⁸ Economic Impact of Western State College; Development Research Partners, Inc.; Littleton, CO; 2005

IV. GOAL, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Goal

A diversified local economy will support the economic and employment needs of residents and account for social character, land use patterns and global economic and global energy concerns.

Policy 1 – Partnerships

Actively pursue partnerships with businesses, philanthropic organizations, and local and regional groups, including Western State College, Chambers of Commerce, Gunnison County, Region 10 Economic Development District, and private businesses to define and promote mutual economic interests. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 1.1 Create an economic development task force consisting of private and public entities, whose mission will be to formulate a valley-wide economic plan that includes follow-up and accountability.
- 1.2 Continue ongoing efforts to expand City/WSC partnerships for the long-term protection and growth of the college.
- 1.3 Collaborate with WSC and other local governments to establish a business incubator facility.
- 1.4 With Gunnison County, identify locations for new business/light industrial land uses and apply for grants to develop these facilities.
- 1.5 With the County and other entities, develop cultural, social and recreational amenities such as a new library, an indoor pool, linked trails, and a refrigerated ice rink.

1.6 Support efforts to encourage local food production, which could enhance local income and replace some of the costs associated with food importation. An example would be to continue support of the local farmers market, and to loosen zoning regulations for greenhouses.

1.7 Support Western State College as an economic driver that creates job opportunities for residents.

Policy 2 – Financial Strategies

Develop and implement financial mechanisms that encourage the growth of new and existing businesses, ones that bring in and keep money in the Valley, focusing on value-added manufacturing, assembly and high tech businesses. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 2.1 Explore funding strategies such as cash reserve policies, bonds, land banking and other mechanisms to provide incentives for new businesses.
- 2.2 Determine the feasibility of establishing special tax districts or federal and state tax incentive programs for improving or expanding infrastructure and other municipal services for developed and undeveloped areas in the City.
- 2.3 Explore modifications to Gunnison’s infrastructure reimbursement policy to allow the City to extend infrastructure and recoup costs from the beneficiaries at a later date.
- 2.4 Pursue economic development grants from state and federal agencies, such as the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade or the U.S. Economic Development Agency.

Policy 3 – Sustainable Businesses

Encourage independent businesses that do not rely on the importation of goods or services. An action item to implement this policy is to utilize public-private partnerships for import-replacing efforts and value-added businesses.

Policy 4 – Commercial Businesses

Assure attractive and financially strong commercial zone districts. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 4.1 Determine funding mechanisms to conduct a parking utilization study and implement a parking plan in the central business district. *(See Transportation chapter for more information.)*
- 4.2 Evaluate and install traffic calming devices and other means to ensure a pedestrian-friendly environment in commercial areas.
- 4.3 Expand alley businesses, create additional pocket parks in the CBD, and encourage and support community events in the CBD such as the Gunnison Farmers Market.
- 4.4 Revise sidewalk vending regulations and signage to promote commercial vibrancy, taking into account pedestrian circulation and safety issues.

Policy 5 – Home Businesses and Home Occupations

Encourage home occupations that are compatible with the residential character of neighborhoods. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 5.1 Evaluate and amend, where necessary, the definitions, criteria and

standards for home occupations and home businesses.

- 5.2 With the County, create consistent definitions of home occupations in the Gunnison Land Development Code and County Land Use Regulations in an effort to encourage development of compatible, small business in the three-mile area.

- 5.3 Revise the list of permitted uses and dimensional standards for the B-1 zone in order to encourage mixed uses.

Policy 6 – Tourism

Work with appropriate entities to attract multiple forms of tourism. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 6.1 Collaborate with entities such as the Tourism Association, the Arts Center, local historic preservation boards and committees, and the Chamber of Commerce to design a strategy to develop cultural and heritage tourism in the Gunnison valley. (Examples include developing an information center and creating a 30-minute informational video that is played in locations frequented by visitors.)
- 6.2 Support endeavors that promote the City as a hub and gateway community to adjacent public lands.
- 6.3 Create a master plan for the Van Tuyl Ranch that includes scientific agricultural research and cultural resources (working ranch in progress) attractive to tourists.
- 6.4 Work with Gunnison County to determine an appropriate location for a new RV dump station.

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8 Transportation



200 Block North Main Street
Photo by Andie Ruggera

This chapter discusses the transportation needs of existing and future development in Gunnison and its surrounding, three-mile planning area.

- I. Introduction
- II. Regional Context, Data and Trends
- III. Community and Social Character
- IV. Multimodal Transportation Systems
- V. Parking
- VI. Development Review and Transportation Issues
- VII. Goal, Policies and Actions

I. INTRODUCTION

Government's Role in Transportation

Transportation infrastructure is normally provided by local municipalities, which forecast need and then build as appropriate. Many analysts claim that in the past, most cities overbuilt their transportation infrastructures, saddling them with heavy maintenance and

operations burdens. Modern transportation systems are more sophisticated and less burdensome, yet they still profoundly affect their communities.



A new term, *Sustainable Transportation*, describes a shift in transportation policy that emphasizes

matching supply to demand, environmental respect and prudent use of natural resources. Sustainable transportation affects social character, economic viability, healthy lifestyles, financial and capital improvement planning, safety, land use compatibility and energy consumption.

Understanding transportation systems requires not only an in-depth evaluation of data regarding vehicle counts, population growth, trips per day, accident trends and real estate trends, it also involves an understanding of social implications. If people are not well connected to their community by roads and trails, they are not well connected socially. Gunnison residents live here in part because of the social fabric and community character that Gunnison offers.

Real estate trends, particularly the development of dispersed subdivisions outside the City's core are separating work from home, requiring auto dependency and increasing commuter traffic. As a result, environmental quality and the amenity of unhurried mobility may diminish. Gunnison must protect its residents' quality of life by addressing these challenges.

Gunnison's City Council recently identified transportation as an issue that has a significant effect on the city's economic health and that is highly susceptible to the city's improvement efforts. This chapter addresses policy development considerations and specific management tools to enhance transportation in the City and the surrounding area.

II. REGIONAL CONTEXT, DATA AND TRENDS

The City of Gunnison is located in Gunnison County in west-central Colorado. Gunnison County had an estimated 2005 population of 14,226, of which 5,298 were City residents.

Gunnison is located on the West Elk Loop Scenic Byways Corridor¹ at the intersection of U.S. Highway 50 and State Highway 135 (Map 8.A). The major highway access to and from the area is U.S. 50, which runs east-west across Colorado, interconnecting with Interstate 70 at Grand Junction to the west and providing access to the Front Range to the east. State Highway 135 is the principal north-south arterial in Gunnison, extending 28 miles north to Crested Butte from its terminus at U.S. Hwy. 50. The region is also served by the Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport, located in the City of Gunnison.

Highways near Gunnison are experiencing increased traffic, particularly Highways 149 and 114. Highway 149 connects Gunnison with Lake City and beyond, to the southwestern portion of the State. Highway 114 connects Gunnison with Saguache and the San Luis Valley and allows access to the southeast portion of the State. The West Elk Scenic Loop also attracts people to the vicinity.

According to a 2006 report prepared by Bechtolt Engineering, traffic volume has increased at an annual growth rate of 1.33 percent since the City's 2000 Transportation Update². While Bechtolt's report projects that roadways within the

¹ www.byways.org/browse/byways/2120/

² City of Gunnison's Update to the Transportation Element of the City Master Plan, April 2000.

City will operate at acceptable traffic volumes, it also projects that by 2026, the approaches to Gunnison along U.S. Highway 50 and S.H. 135 may be unacceptably congested. City, County and State agencies must conduct additional analyses to determine if these highways should be widened.

Since it is a regional center, Gunnison is affected by development outside the City's jurisdiction. Resulting pressure on the City's transportation infrastructure will continue to grow. It will be prudent for the City to pursue transportation studies in the immediate future and create a Transportation Master Plan.

Mineral extraction in other parts of Gunnison County provides a good example of the potential impact: in 2006, the owners of the Mt. Emmons molybdenum mine above Crested Butte proposed to reopen the facility. Full development of the mine would cause a spike in the County's population, with an attendant upsurge in traffic generated by commuting and ore hauling.

External growth will require re-evaluation of land development policies, particularly in the three mile planning area, as provided under Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S. 31-12-105 (e)). The City intends to update these policies in cooperation with the County in the near future. In certain circumstances, the County may classify a proposed development as being "of statewide concern" and invoke its "1041 powers." If warranted in these instances, the County may require mitigation of traffic impacts (e.g., a bypass system).

Regional Challenges

The following list summarizes the challenges that regional growth presents

to the City of Gunnison's existing transportation system:

- The City's primary reliance on automobiles and trucks for personal transportation has negative impacts on traffic congestion, Main Street businesses, energy consumption, air pollution, and citizens' wellbeing.
- Although the City of Gunnison's growth rate is expected to be 1.5% annually, growth in the Gunnison Valley is greater³. Gunnison may become a "bottleneck" and the traffic impacts will likely be detrimental to public safety and community character.
- Additional growth in surrounding areas of Gunnison will likely impact the traffic and possibly the economic viability of the downtown area.
- Visual impacts at the major entry points are of great concern to the City.
- A poorly connected community may create social impacts and negatively affect Gunnison's sense of place.

III. COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL CHARACTER

In Gunnison's early days, streets needed to be wide enough to accommodate the maneuvering of horse and wagon. In 1879, Sylvester Richardson, one of the City's founders, wrote, "the town was beautifully laid in the spring of 1879, with wide streets and avenues...." Gunnison's heritage is still evident and today, the vistas afforded by its wide open streets continue to be cherished by Gunnison residents.

³ Gunnison County Comprehensive Plan expects population to be 20,915 in 2020, which suggests an annual growth rate of 3 percent.

In the 21st century, the community still prides itself on the wide streets of downtown and the fact that there is little rush hour traffic. Most places are easily accessible to pedestrians: the entire City, which is not quite two miles square, can be considered a "pedestrian district". Residents who work in the City believe they should be able to live in close proximity to where they work.

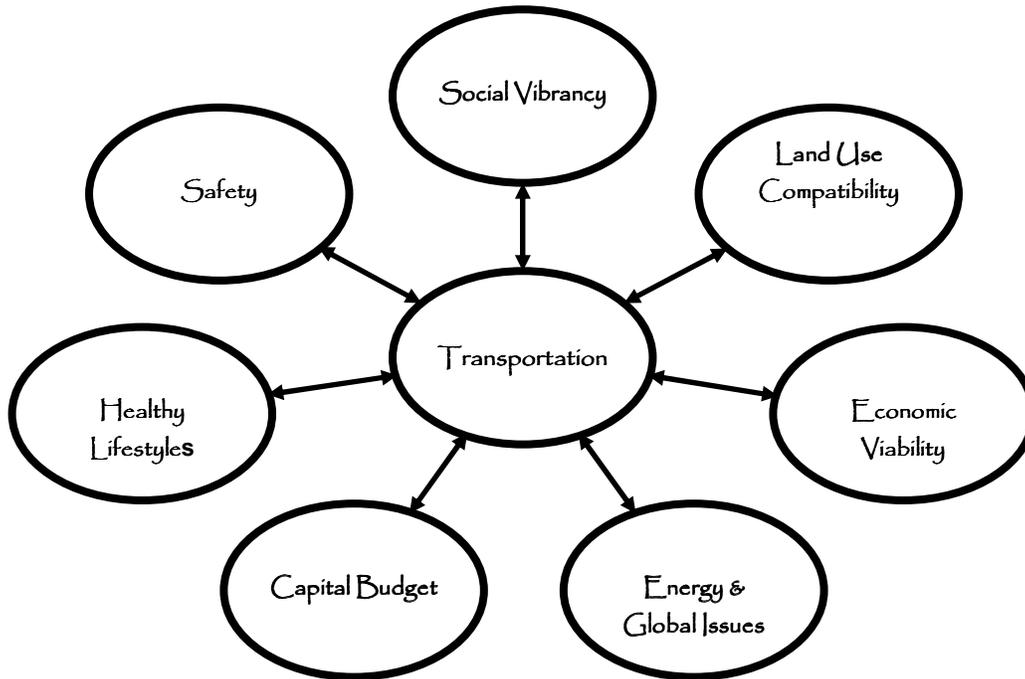
Transportation systems can be used to unify a community⁴. The Gunnison community includes individuals with widely varying transportation needs, among them, the elderly, children, students, immigrants, tourists, physically and mentally disabled persons, construction workers and service staff. Gunnison's transportation system must

provide them with multiple, efficient means of meeting their needs. Multimodal transportation systems (both motorized and non-motorized) are discussed later in this chapter

Travel Demand Management

Travel Demand Management (TDM) is a sustainable transportation strategy that focuses on the cooperation of people with similar commuting schedules. TDM is a new way of thinking, which is a result of increasing demand for more road space and the limitations of traditional traffic management techniques.

A travel demand management (TDM) program encourages people to use alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle. TDM aims to modify commuter behavior, optimize use of road space and



⁴ Colorado Department of Transportation, Transportation and Community and System

Preservation Program. Case studies for Houston, TX, Hartford, CT. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp>.

integrate diverse transport modes so as to improve safety and energy efficiency, minimize adverse environmental impacts and promote socioeconomic benefits.

TDM programs can be employer-based or community-based, focusing on the work and school commute trips that often occur during peak travel periods. Some TDM tools that might succeed in the Gunnison area include ride-match services, carpooling programs, bus pass subsidies and work schedule changes (e.g., flex time, compressed work weeks and telecommuting).

Because Gunnison’s population and traffic are both increasing, the city must educate residents and employers about TDM options now - successfully implementing TDM practices requires understanding and behavioral changes. TDM approaches are discussed throughout this chapter.

Entry Features

Entry features at its major access points along U.S. Hwy. 50 and Colorado Hwy. 135 contribute to Gunnison’s aesthetic and social character. They also help to reduce travel speeds through the downtown area. In many cities, entry features, sited on roadway medians, may contain landscaping, public art or signage.

Three entry points on U.S. 50 and S.H. 135 have been identified as potential mid-block sites for median entry features, which might also serve as pedestrian and bicycle refuge points:

1. Western entry: on U.S. 50 between 11th Street and 10th Street in the existing median
2. Eastern entry: on U.S. 50 east of Teller Street between the VFW park and Jorgenson park

3. North entry: on S.H. 135 north of Denver Avenue, or possibly north of Spencer Avenue

These locations need to be further analyzed in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to determine compliance with CDOT regulations and to ensure that placement will not intrude upon any left-turn lanes or driveways or violate required sight distances.

IV. MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

Recent studies reveal that transportation practices are linked to health⁵. Gunnison residents’ healthy lifestyles will likely make alternative, non-motorized transportation increasingly important. The predominant travel mode in the County is the automobile, but many residents walk or ride their bikes, especially for travel around town. As energy costs escalate, more residents may come to prefer public transportation or non-motorized travel, especially those who also work in the City. In order to facilitate the shift from private, motorized travel to public transportation and non-motorized travel, the City will need to make alternative transportation safer and more convenient.

Pedestrian Systems

Most of Gunnison is laid out in a grid pattern, which facilitates the safe movement of pedestrians. This is especially important for those who are most dependent on pedestrian travel: children, teenagers and the elderly.

Additional improvements to the City’s pedestrian systems could further facilitate

⁵ American Obesity Association

walking. For example, the current Land Development Code states that sidewalks must be at least of three feet wide. This is insufficient. Traffic engineers suggest that sidewalks be at least five feet wide to accommodate comfortable two-way pedestrian traffic and wheelchair



Main Street Sidewalk

accessibility. In addition, sidewalks should be accompanied by landscaped buffers, at least four feet wide, between the street and the walkway, to accommodate snow storage without interfering with sidewalk usability.

In the City, pedestrian activity occurs primarily in three areas: downtown, on 11th Street near the public schools and around Western State College. These areas should receive priority for the pedestrian improvements recommended in this plan. Map 8.B shows the City's pedestrian circulation pattern.

Recent growth trends in the City suggest that more children must cross Highway 135 at Spencer Avenue to commute to and from school. This poses a safety issue, as this intersection is pedestrian unfriendly. Alternative crossing methods at this intersection should be pursued such as a pedestrian

overpass, a refuge island or other pedestrian amenity.

Western State College Area

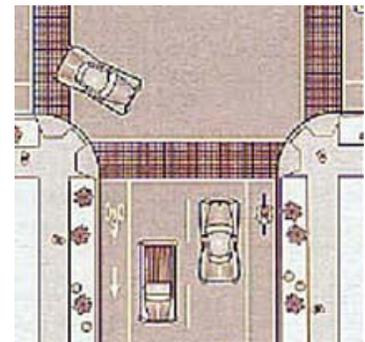
Pedestrian and bicycle travel routes between the college and the rest of the City are widely perceived as inadequate, in spite of extensive discussions on attracting students to the Central Business District. Additional collaboration between Western State College and the City will be important to improve this necessary link.

The Downtown District

The downtown area provides pedestrian amenities such as lighting, benches, trash receptacles, landscaping and ramps at intersections and crosswalks. However, in places, some of these actually hinder walkers.

The intersection of Tomichi and Main Street is perhaps the busiest intersection in Gunnison. Tomichi Ave. has a 95-foot pedestrian crossing, which can be a problem not only for pedestrians, but also for automobile drivers who must wait for walkers to cross the street. To mitigate pedestrian safety issues in the downtown area, it may be appropriate to seek alternative measures, such as creating additional pedestrian routes, constructing pedestrian refuges or implement alternative infrastructure (curb bulb-outs, textured crossings or curb extensions) within or around the downtown area.

- ♦ **Textured crossings**, using non-slip bricks or pavers, raise drivers' awareness through increased noise and vibration.



Textured Crossing

- ♦ **Curb “bulb-outs” and extensions** reduce crossing distances and improve pedestrians’ visibility to motorists.



Bulb-out

These measures must comply with Department of Transportation regulations, and the City must closely examine the ramifications of each of its options. For example, trucks might not be able to make safe turning movements with some types of improvements in place.



Curb Extensions

11th Street School Area

The elementary school, middle school and high school are all located on the west side of 11th Street, north of Tomichi Avenue, generating a large amount of pedestrian traffic. Most of the west side of 11th Street between Ohio and Arthur

Avenues includes a ten-foot wide sidewalk. Segments of the sidewalk on the east side, however, are missing. Many 11th Street crosswalks do not connect to the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street, or to the sidewalk along a cross street. As a result, children must walk in the street or along muddy surfaces, especially in the winter when snow is piled beyond the curb. Missing sidewalk links should be completed along 11th Street, as well as along major east-west travel corridors. Crosswalk delineations should be properly maintained.

The width of 11th Street is also a barrier to safe pedestrian travel for children. No signalized crossings, curb bulb outs, or median refuges are provided. The City should consider alternatives to the existing three-lane roadway (dual left-turn center lane) in this area, along with construction of median refuges and curb bulb-outs at east-west crosswalk locations.

Bicycle Circulation

Gunnison's core area is approximately 1.5 square miles, an extent small enough to make cycling attractive for intra-city travel. Bicycle facilities have been installed in recent years with great success. The City should continue to implement the bicycling circulation plan that was designed during the 2000 Transportation Update.



Map 8.C shows the proposed bicycle circulation plan, which would facilitate north-south and east-west travel through the city. The plan also connects downtown, Western State College, the

north Gunnison commercial area and the public schools. Bicycle facilities include bike lanes, signed routes, parking racks and the development of multi-use paths.

The type of signage, striping and other bicycle corridor improvements proposed vary according to street cross-section, traffic volumes, projected bicycle volumes, street corridor purpose and opportunities for facility development. On roadways with wide cross sections and low traffic volumes, signed bicycle routes are adequate. Roadways with heavier traffic volumes often require delineated bicycle lanes. In areas where right-of-way is available, separated pathways could be installed.



On-Street Bicycle Lane
Colorado Street

Transit

Transit refers to transportation systems in which the passengers do not travel in their own vehicles. Improved regional transit is critical to the Valley's continued economic success and requires collaboration between public and private entities.

The Gunnison Valley Regional Transportation Authority was created in November 2003, funded by sales tax revenues from the three municipalities and the unincorporated county (excepting

Marble, Pitkin, and Ohio City). The RTA's 2007 budget is about \$1.2 million.

In addition to its efforts promoting tourist air transportation to and from the Gunnison Valley, the RTA recently expanded its focus to include intra-valley public transit between Gunnison and Mt. Crested Butte. In 2006, the RTA obtained grants from the State of Colorado (\$880,000) and the U.S. Government (\$130,000). The state funds will be used to acquire buses while the federal funds will be used to purchase land for parking along bus routes.

At this early stage of public transit development, the RTA contributes funds to the "Shuffle" program, which is managed by the privately-owned Alpine Express. The "Shuffle" schedule includes a total of ten trips per day during the ski season. Five trips leave Gunnison between 6:30am and 5:00pm; and five trips leave Mt Crested Butte between 7:30am and 6:00pm. For the 2006 ski season, the one-way fee is \$2.00.

Three public transit entities provide service for the disabled and elderly:

1. Six Points/Community Options serves the needs of disabled persons with a mix of scheduled/fixed-route and on-demand service.
2. Gunnison Health Care Center provides on-demand service for disabled residents over age 60.
3. Gunnison County Young at Heart provides scheduled and on-demand service for persons over age 60.

Gunnison Valley residents and governments have discussed rail service between the ends of the valley for many years. The feasibility of valley rail service in the future depends upon actions taken today. An operating corridor must be preserved to prevent right-of-way costs

and impacts from becoming prohibitive and future development and transit facilities must be sited to take advantage of the rail corridor.

Whether in support of bus or rail transit, local jurisdictions need to consider locations for park-and-ride sites. The City has identified a future park-and-ride site at the City-owned Meadows Park (Spencer Avenue and Colorado Street). This site is located in close proximity to local commercial developments, the community center and residential areas. It is located in the northern portion of Gunnison, which allows the majority of northbound residents to travel to the site without backtracking, and can be readily served by regional transit routes.

Currently, the City is discussing possible transit options with Mt. Crested Butte, Crested Butte, Gunnison County and the Gunnison Valley Regional Transportation Authority in order to create a transit plan that is appropriate for the entire Gunnison valley. (See Map 8.D Transit Circulation).

Air Transportation

The Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport is located on the southern boundary of the City of Gunnison. The major facilities at the airport include a 9,400 foot by 150 foot primary runway, a 25,000 square foot commercial terminal, commercial and general aviation aircraft ramps, fueling facilities and a 4,000 square foot general aviation terminal. The Airport runway is planned to be shifted to the east in the future.

According to the 2006 Gunnison-Crested Regional Airport Master Plan, skier visits to Crested Butte between 1993 and 2002 totalled 460,000, while Monarch averaged 144,936. There is a direct relationship between the number of

available seats on passenger aircraft flown by commercial airlines into Gunnison and the number of skier visits on a per-season basis.

Historically, ski season passengers at Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport have represented approximately 72 percent of the annual passenger traffic. Forecasted traffic for the year 2022 is approximately 78,303 passengers, of which approximately is 43,072 ski-related, and the remaining is commuter-related.⁶

With the purchase of the Crested Butte Ski area by owners who are expanding the resort significantly, additional commercial flights will likely be necessary.

General aviation operations are predicted to grow 3.5 percent annually between now and the year 2014 according to the 2006 Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport Master Plan.

The airport's facilities are accessed by combinations of Rio Grande Avenue, Boulevard Street, 12th Street, 11th Street and U.S. 50. As part of the 2006 Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport Master Plan, the County has proposed that access to the airport be modified, with 11th Street serving as the entrance, and Boulevard Street as the exit.

Consolidating airport traffic on 11th Street and Boulevard Street could substantially increase traffic on those streets. A study needs to be undertaken to determine if these streets would best serve the airport and City of Gunnison and also determine what mitigation measures, if any, may be needed.

⁶ Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport Master Plan, page B.13

Since the airport is located in close proximity to developed industrial and residential areas, planning and zoning in the airport vicinity are critical: the City should work with the County to develop an airport overlay district, specifying clear zones, structure and tree heights and building setbacks around the airport.

Portions of the airport are located in the City, while other parts are located in the County; consequently:

- ♦ procedures and responsibilities of the various City and airport emergency response teams merit periodic review and revision;
- ♦ depending on the location of future improvements, airport administration will need to obtain building permits from the City or the County; and
- ♦ sales tax operations will need to remain within the City limits.

V. PARKING

Parking standards in Gunnison are determined by two criteria in the City's zoning regulations, (1) maximum lot coverage for uncovered parking and access based on zoning district, and (2) minimum parking spaces required based on residential and commercial uses (excluding the central business district.) Map 8.E shows the Conceptual Parking Plan in the City.



Customers and employees of downtown businesses, delivery trucks and recreational vehicles all demand downtown parking. Main Street and Tomichi Avenue provide parallel parking. Other north-south and east-west streets downtown provide diagonal or parallel parking, or a combination of the two. The majority of downtown parking has a two-hour time restriction, generally between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The Downtown Parking Plan is shown in Map 8.F.

During peak summer tourism season, recreational vehicles (RVs) often take up multiple parking spaces in the downtown area, blocking commercial storefronts. Alternatives solutions for RV parking problems include the signing of downtown streets (i.e. Main Street) to prohibit RV parking and directing RVs to other streets. All RV-designated parking stalls or lots require good signage both to direct vehicles to the parking locations and to direct vehicle occupants to the downtown area.

Continual attention to parking requirements is essential. The number of parking spaces based on commercial and residential uses is based on the Institute of Traffic Engineers recommendations. These standards change from time to time and will need to be evaluated in more detail during the Land Development Code update.

In the long term, after local transit service is implemented, satellite parking should be provided on the City's perimeter. Preserving parcels of land for this purpose would be prudent in order to reduce the impacts and costs of future site development. Using these outlying parcels, local transit could also be used to shuttle visitors to the Rodeo and other City events.

In order to understand future impacts to downtown parking, the City must conduct a parking utilization study to document existing usage, insure that parking restrictions are effective, and determine if parking should remain a free amenity.

VI. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCEDURES

Compliance with Master Plan transportation policies should guide the development review process. Each application should be evaluated not only on the basis of the criteria in the Land Development Code, but also with an eye to the intent of the Master Plan. To facilitate a more predictable development review process, new development applications should address transportation systems in the following context:

1. Continuity and connectivity
2. Street extensions
3. Functional classification
4. Alley systems
5. Access management
6. School and high traffic areas
7. Multimodal transportation systems
8. Traffic accident patterns
9. The City's Transportation Impact Guidelines

Continuity and Connectivity

Continuity means that roads and streets continue in a more or less linear fashion across neighborhoods and areas of the City. Connectivity is a measure of how many intersections each roadway has with other roadways. The two concepts — continuity and connectivity — are interrelated in that improving one tends to improve the other.

Although long loops and cul-de-sacs are desirable for privacy and marketability, they force traffic onto a

small number of collector and arterial roadways, causing greater auto dependency, increased traffic congestion, longer average trip lengths and increased daily vehicle miles of travel.

A well-connected system of roads and streets with good continuity and connectivity benefits the City by distributing traffic more efficiently, increasing route redundancy for emergency access; shortening trips and enabling a public transit system to operate efficiently.

Functional Classification

Classifying roads based on function provides guidance to the City and developers when planning land use. Functional classification also takes into account the character of each roadway based on abutting land uses. Please see Map 8.G, which shows existing functional classifications and preferred street extensions.

Each road classification is different with respect to:

1. Roadway design: cross section, lane configuration, roadway widths, and bicycle lanes. For example, a collector street may require bike lanes, while a local street may not.
2. Traffic mitigation: For example, local streets may need traffic calming or speed reduction measures.
3. Access management. For example, arterials may require an access permit from the Colorado Department of Transportation.

Proposed developments will need to consider these types of classifications and will need to provide adequate justification for their proposed street system.

Alley System

An alley is currently defined in the City's Land Development Code as a strip of land located on the side or rear of lots, providing a secondary means of vehicular access. Recent development patterns have utilized alleys as the primary access to garages which reduces traffic on local streets, but creates more traffic on the alleys. The City Public Works Department currently treats alleys as a lesser priority than streets for plowing and maintenance. As a result, alley design will need to be further reviewed during the Land Development Code update.

The predominant alley system in Gunnison runs north-south and is used for underground utilities. East-west alleys do not typically have utilities located in them but they can serve as an alternative transportation route, particularly for pedestrian and bicycle traffic by virtue of their low automobile traffic volumes and their connectivity to the rest of the transportation system.

Further vacation of alleys (and road rights of way) in the City should be discouraged since they may be needed for utility linkage and pedestrian and bicycle circulation, rear access to homes and garages, and for alternative vehicle routes.

The City of Gunnison will encourage the construction of new alleys for new developments. New alleys should connect to the existing grid system.

Access Management and Driveways

The integrity of Gunnison's road and street system can be compromised by excessive or poorly planned vehicular access points. For example, several of the commercial driveways along Tomichi Avenue and Main Street create turning movement conflicts and potential safety problems. Some parcels have multiple driveways or continuous access along their frontage which can create traffic hazards.

Classification	Spacing	Cross Section	Minimum ROW Width	Traffic Control
Arterial	One E/W	Up to 5 lanes	122 feet	Generally unimpeded with traffic signals as warranted and stop signs at cross streets
Major Collector	¼ to ½ mile	Up to 3 lanes	84 feet	Through streets which stop only for other major collectors or arterials. Stop signs at cross streets or traffic signals as warranted.
Minor Collector	1/8 to ¼ mile	Up to 3 lanes	84 feet	Stop signs at major collectors and arterials. Stop signs for all connecting local streets.
Local	300 to 400 feet	2 lanes	68 feet	Stops for all higher classification streets. No stop signs with other local streets unless warranted.
Alley	Varies	1 lane	20 feet	Stops for all streets

Where possible and appropriate, as parcels develop or redevelop, access driveways should be combined or shared to concentrate site access in regular, predictable locations. This will minimize turning movement conflicts and improve the safety and efficiency of traffic flow along the arterial roadways. Review of access control measures should be based on the State Highway Access Code.

CDOT classifies U.S. 50 as a Non-Rural Principal Arterial, which means that direct access to parcels on U.S. 50 is subordinate to providing service to through traffic movements. CDOT classifies S.H. 135 as a Non-Rural Arterial, which can allow more direct access.

In all cases, if new developments will create impacts to arterials managed by CDOT, CDOT must be informed and included in the development review process.

Access Management – Alleys and Streets

Although vacations of alleys and streets have been permitted in years past, the City is now seeing the consequences of lost connectivity. In retrospect, many believe that if these alleys and streets were not vacated, the City would have better linkages for bike or pedestrian trails or locations for transit system stops. The City should discourage the vacation of any alley or street, even if there is no obvious linkage at the time of the vacation request.

Traffic Signals

The Colorado Department of Transportation maintains all of the traffic signals within the City. Currently, the signals run on a free-timing system where an upstream traffic signal is not coordinated with downstream traffic

signals. If the signals were programmed, they could provide for more efficient vehicle access to downtown, reduce congestion and delay and minimize air pollution from idling vehicles. Coordination of signals will need to be reviewed in more detail, particularly when new developments will affect the traffic signals.

Future developments will need to comply with CDOT regulations if they affect traffic on U.S. 50 and S.H. 135. Additional traffic may warrant additional signals, which the developer will need to include in its pro forma. For example, the intersection of County Road 13 and S.H. 135 will probably see increased traffic in the next few years, and a traffic signal may be warranted at this location.

There are six signalized intersections at the current time:

1. Tomichi Ave. and Main St.
2. Main St. and Virginia Ave.
3. Main St. and Denver Ave.
4. Main St. and Spencer Ave.
5. Tomichi Ave. and Spruce St.
6. Tomichi Ave. and New York Ave.

Street Extensions

The City has the potential to shape and direct the areas of future growth by identifying appropriate street extension locations in advance of development. A street extensions plan provides a guideline for developers as to future locations of infrastructure to serve the specified growth areas.

The recommended street extensions shown on Map 8.G (along with functional classifications) are either minor or major collector streets. It will be important that new developments conform to or extend the existing grid system. Future street extensions include:

1. East Georgia Ave. east to the cemetery

2. East College Ave. east to the cemetery
3. Spencer Ave. west to the Gunnison River
4. Denver Ave. west to the Gunnison River
5. Ohio St. west to the Gunnison River
6. Bidwell Ave. west to the Gunnison River
7. Third St. north to Denver Ave.
8. 7th St. north to Virginia Ave.
9. 6th St. north to New York Ave.
10. 5th St. north to Gunnison Ave.
11. A new north-south street along the east side of the Gunnison River in the West Gunnison neighborhood
12. Thornton Way south to the Highway 50 Frontage Road
13. A bypass on the east side of Gunnison connecting Highway 50 to Highway 135

Bypass systems may warrant consideration based on long-range growth potential, including a pending annexation (Gunnison Rising). As noted above, for example, a Highway 50 bypass has been suggested to redirect north-south Highway 50 traffic around the center of town. The most obvious route for this bypass lies directly south of the airport; however, this area has environmental and private property constraints that prevent its use.

The growth to the west of the City in the Antelope Creek valley is expected to be primarily residential. Increased population in the area will require connections to downtown, where services exist. The only current river crossing is provided at U.S. 50, which concentrates traffic on the existing access point at U.S. 50 west of the Gunnison River.

A bypass via an alternative river crossing has been suggested in the past to disperse the increased traffic volumes associated with this western growth area and to direct some of the traffic to

community services in the northern portion of the City. A river crossing could be created at Spencer or Denver Avenues; however, environmental and physical constraints will need to be considered, as well as the financing of a new bridge.

The Street Extensions Map (Map 8.G) provides a preliminary schema to guide planning; however, more detailed evaluation of the best alignment and location of future streets and alleys must be undertaken in connection with future development, and will include consideration of sensitive habitat areas, physical limitations, property values, concerns of existing residents and other significant factors.

Street Standards

Since it is desirable that existing wide streets be retained, street cross sections for these roadways should be revised to include narrower vehicle lane widths, but wider pedestrian and bicycle lanes. New streets may not need to be this wide: the current street standards will need to be revised to include non-motorized travel, which should include pavement widths, vehicle lane widths, bicycle lane requirements, sidewalks at least five feet wide on both sides of the street, and parking considerations for each roadway classification.

VII. GOAL, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Goal

Gunnison's transportation system will emphasize alternative modes of travel including pedestrian, bicycle, and a well-integrated public transit system. Growth continues to be accommodated through a planned system of streets and trails which contributes to the vitality of the City.

Policy 1. Encourage Multimodal Transportation and Recreation Opportunities

Realizing that a good portion of Gunnison's identity is based on recreation and healthy lifestyles, the City of Gunnison should encourage alternative travel methods. Action items to implement this policy include:

1.1 Designate, construct and sign bicycle lanes or bicycle routes in appropriate locations within the City, taking into consideration routes to Western State College, the public schools, outlying recreation areas and downtown.

1.2 Collaborate with the Gunnison County Trails Commission to, for example:

- a. implement trails policies on the City's perimeter, including improvements to S.H. 135 and U.S. 50 for non-motorized travel;
- b. provide connections to outdoor recreation areas such as Hartman Rocks, Curecanti National Recreation Area, the proposed Gunnison Loop;
- c. install "share the road signs"; and
- d. develop greenways in the Gunnison River floodplain, and the Tomichi Creek corridor.

1.3 Create multi-use pathways (for example, the Van Tuyl River Trail and the Spencer Ave. bicycle extension) that access recreation areas and school areas and that can be used by pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users, skateboarders, roller skaters, and other non-motorized travelers.

1.4 Develop or enhance bicycle and pedestrian crossings, including refuges throughout the City, such as a pedestrian amenity at Spencer and 11th Street, or a pedestrian overpass at Spencer and Highway 135.

1.5 Improve undeveloped alleys and streets for bicycle and pedestrian circulation where possible.

1.6 Require five-foot wide, detached sidewalks, as well as four-foot wide landscaped snow storage buffers on both sides of new streets and retrofit these amenities wherever feasible on existing streets.

1.7 Develop trailheads where appropriate. (See *Chapter 10, Parks Recreation and Open Space.*)

1.8 Discourage the use of loops and cul-de-sacs in new developments. Require continuous sidewalks on cul-de-sacs, as well as access easements for bicyclists and pedestrians to connect more efficiently to the City.

1.9 Establish driveway standards based on the number of units served.

1.10 Redefine alleys and their design standards.

1.11 Complete missing sidewalk links throughout the City, particularly near the schools.

1.12 Discourage the vacation of alley or street rights of the way in an effort to integrate them into multi-use travel corridors.

Policy 2. Collaborate with Regional Entities

Understanding that transportation systems are the link to other regions in the county, state and nation, collaborate with other entities to create a sustainable transportation system. Action items to implement this policy include:

2.1 Develop and implement a regional employer- and community-based travel demand management program.

2.2 Continue to support the Rural Transportation Authority and continue to collaborate with it and its members on items of mutual concern.

2.3 Coordinate with Western State College to develop additional multimodal pathways that access the campus.

2.4 Support planning efforts among public entities and private property owners to preserve a corridor along S.H. 135 for a future rail or alternative transit system.

2.5 Work with CDOT and other entities to consider additional connectivity within the City and surrounding areas, including vehicle bypass systems or pedestrian overpasses in appropriate areas.

Policy 3. Sustainable Transportation Systems

Develop a sustainable transportation system. Action items to implement this policy include:

3.1 Implement access design standards that increase efficiency of major collectors (for example, put in combined or shared driveways on newly developed parcels along Tomichi Avenue and Main Street).

3.2 Implement the travel demand management system discussed in Policy 2.

3.3 Periodically review and amend the City's zoning regulations to maintain up-to-date parking requirements and adopt nationally accepted standards, if appropriate.

3.4 Implement street widths and design standards that take into consideration safety, social vibrancy, maintenance costs and non-motorized travel.

3.5 Determine if coordination of traffic signals will reduce congestion and air pollution from idling vehicles and implement signal coordination if appropriate.

3.6 Continue to monitor traffic accident data and learn about best accident reduction practices. Implement measures to reduce traffic accidents at accident-prone locations.

3.7 Implement a street extensions plan that considers existing road connections. Place new roads and evaluate bypass opportunities where continuity and connectivity are maximized and where new connections benefit the community.

Policy 4. Downtown

Realizing that downtown is the vital core for Gunnison's civic life, create a transportation environment that is both inviting and safe. Action items to implement this policy include:

4.1 Plan for special event parking sites that can eventually be serviced by public transit.

4.2 Evaluate and relocate objects in the downtown district that constrain pedestrian movement, such as control boxes, traffic signal poles, etc.

4.3 Construct pedestrian devices to shorten crossing distances on Main Street and Tomichi Avenue, such as bulb-outs, refuge islands and curb extensions.

4.4 Evaluate traffic-calming devices in the downtown area that provide additional safety for pedestrians, such as

textured crossings or artistically-painted rights of ways (e.g., a sunflower at the intersection of Main and Tomichi).

4.5 Complete a parking utilization study for the downtown area that includes:

- (a) Modifying parking width/ design requirements;
- (b) Determining parking enforcement policies;
- (c) Evaluating a possible parking fee system;
- (d) Determining suitable locations for special events parking;
- (e) Determining suitable locations for RV parking;
- (f) Implementing RV parking restrictions
- (g) Evaluating possible land acquisition for a parking lot near the Central Business District.

4.6 Create a bypass around Gunnison between U.S. 50 and S.H. 135 to reduce traffic, pedestrian hazards, and noise levels on Main Street.

Policy 5. Transit

Prepare for the implementation of a public transit system: Action items to implement this policy include:

- 5.1 Designate, plan and provide financing for Park and Ride facilities.
- 5.2 Evaluate potential impact fees to support a public transit system.
- 5.3 Protect right-of-ways that may be used for future transit systems.
- 5.4 Research satellite parking opportunities for all vehicles, including RV's, on or near the City's perimeter.
- 5.5 Determine the need for intercept parking areas in appropriate areas.

5.6 Provide bicycle parking facilities at possible public transit linkage points.

5.7 Designate locations, plan, and provide financing for enclosed bus shelters.

5.8 Coordinate existing public service transit with other types of transit in the area.

5.9 With other governmental agencies, contribute to the long-term viability of the Gunnison Valley Regional Transportation Authority.

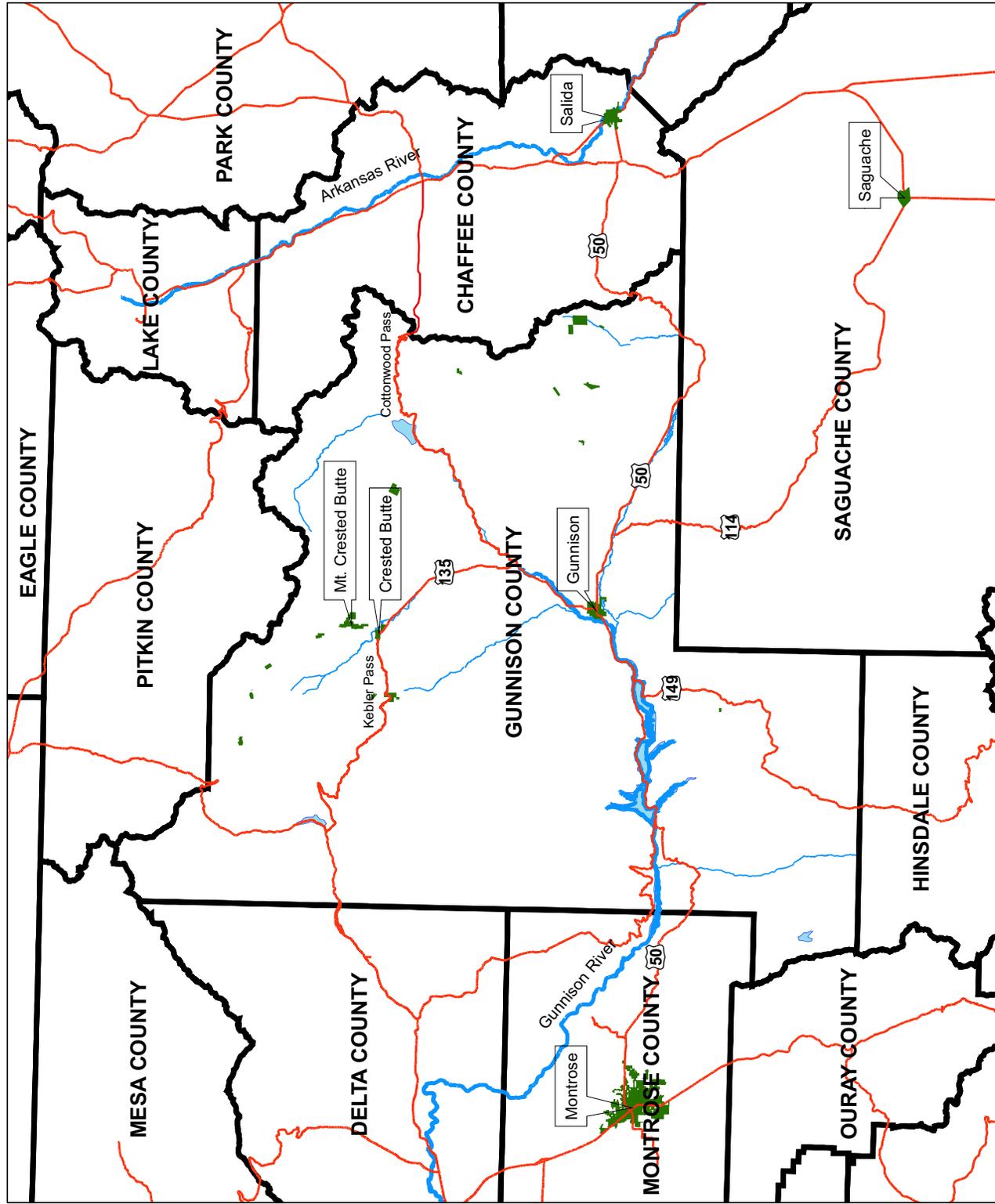
Policy 6. Entry Features

Create visually interesting entrance features that enhance Gunnison's aesthetics and force traffic to slow down. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 6.1 Work with CDOT to design and construct clearly-delineated entry features at the three entry points to the City on U.S. Hwy. 50 and State Hwy. 135.
- 6.2 Include pedestrian and bicycle refuge islands within the proposed entry features.

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Map 8.A Regional Transportation Map



- Legend**
- Towns
 - Counties
 - Colorado Highways
 - Rivers and Streams



Map 8.B Conceptual Pedestrian Circulation Plan

Legend

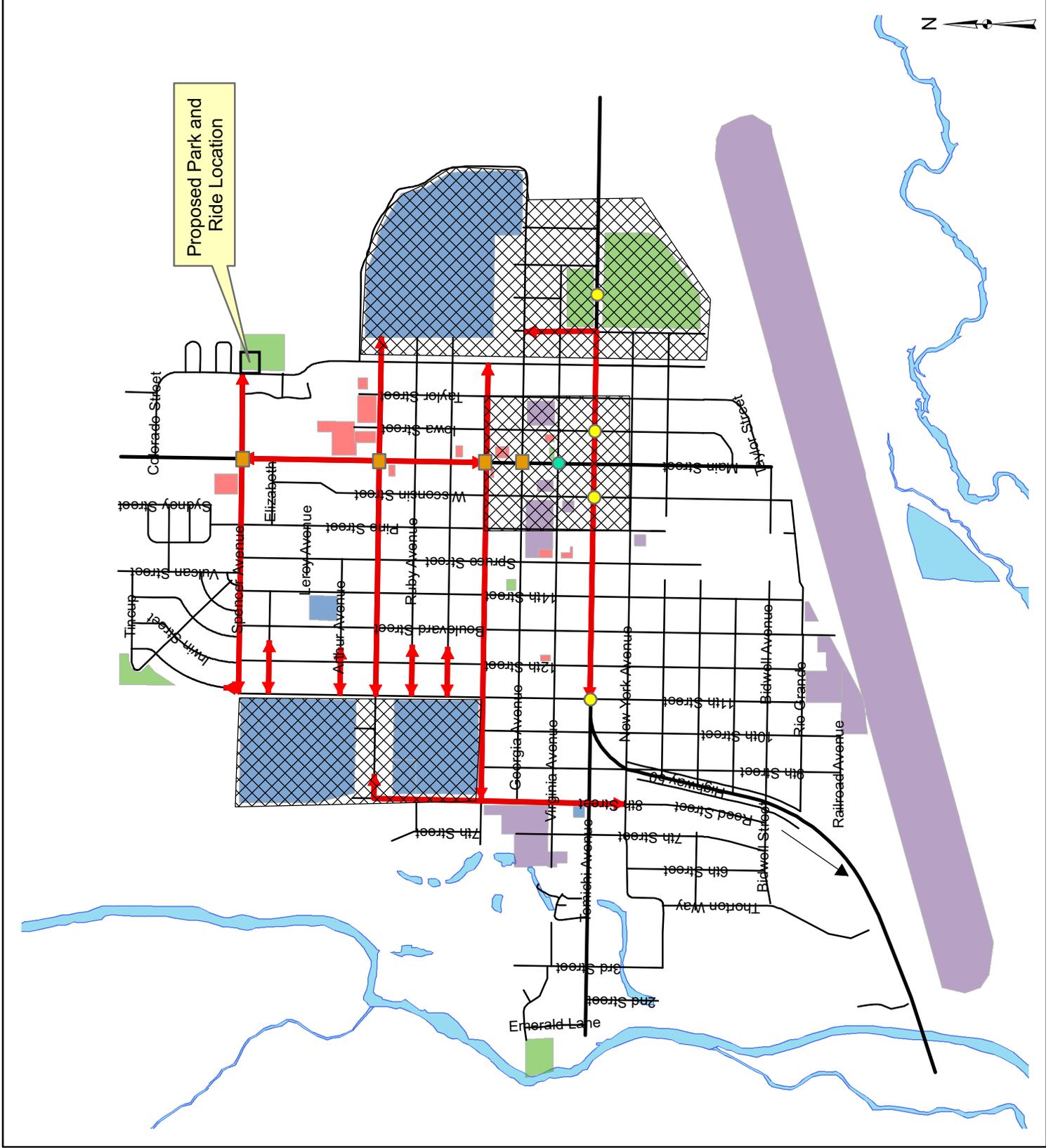
Business Directory

- Government
- Medical
- Park
- School

Pedestrian Circulation

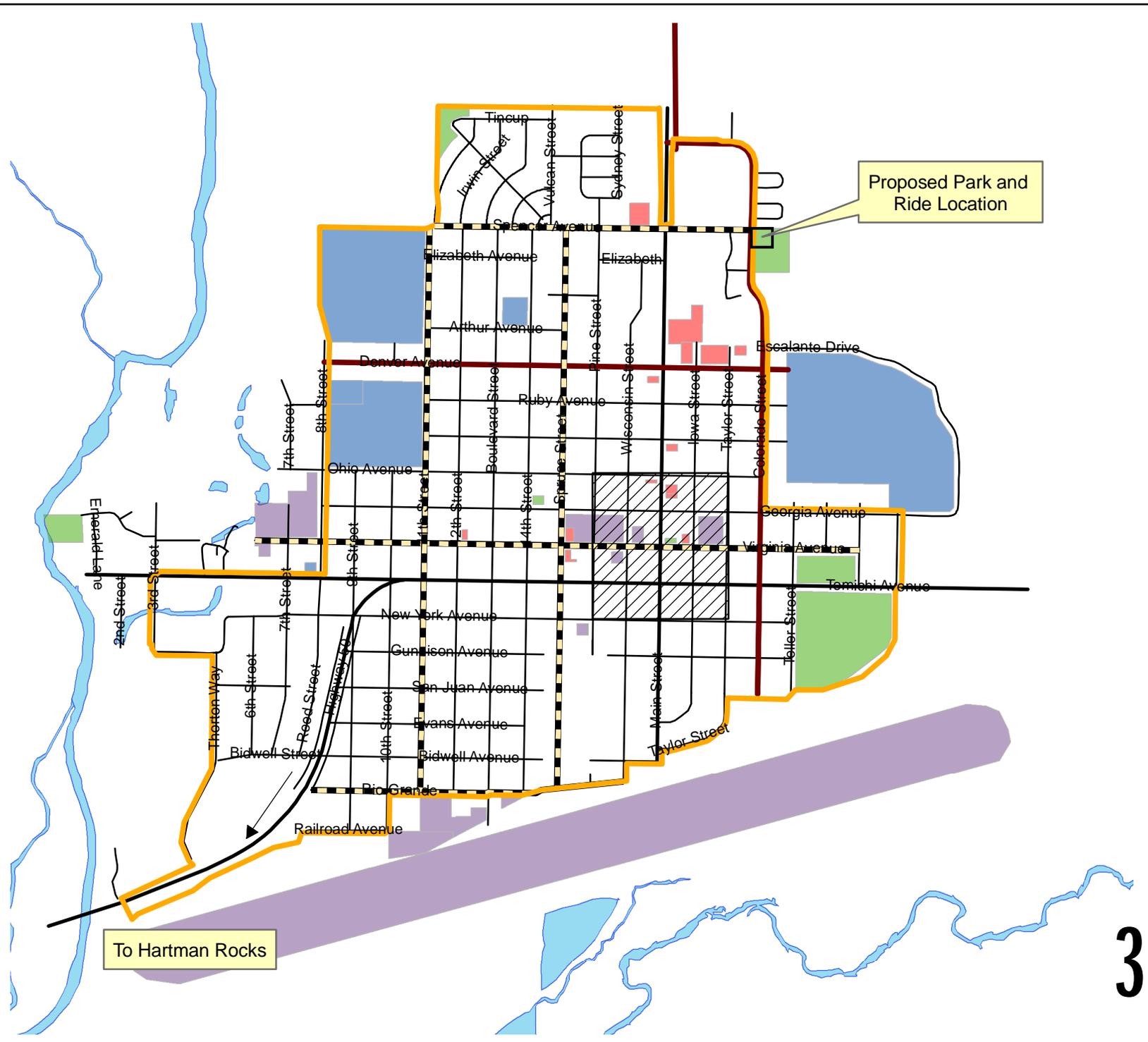
- Major Pedestrian Districts
- Bulbouts N and S side of Intersection
- Bulbouts E and W side of Intersection
- Bulbouts All sides of Intersection

Proposed Park and Ride Location



1 inch equals 1,500 feet

Map 8.C Conceptual Bicycle Circulation Plan



- Legend**
- Business Directory**
- Government
 - Medical
 - Park
 - School
- Bike Paths**
- Existing
 - Proposed
 - Proposed Trail System
 - Bike Friendly Area

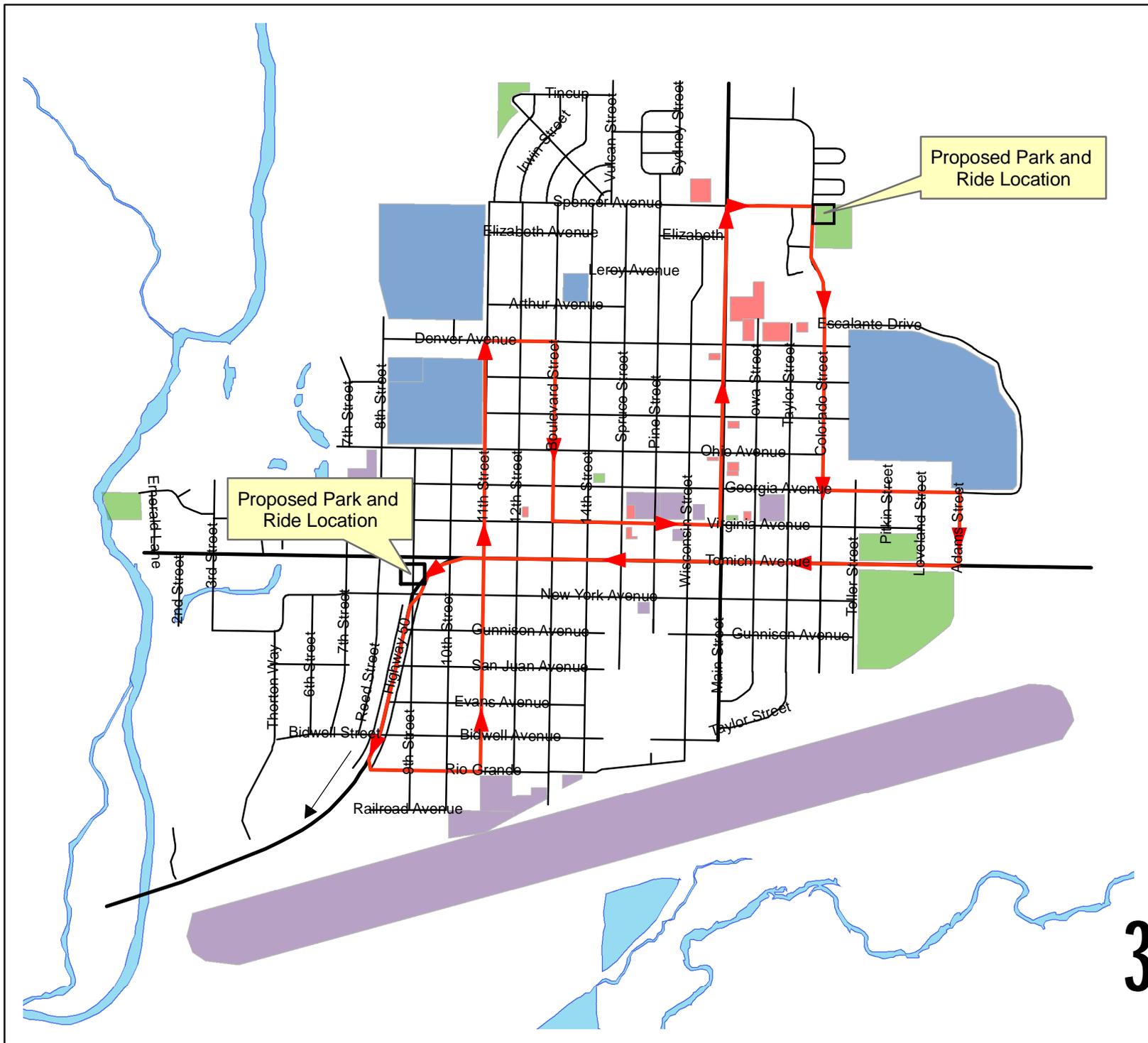
To Hartman Rocks

Proposed Park and Ride Location

3

1 inch equals 1,500 feet

Map 8.D Conceptual Transit Circulation Plan

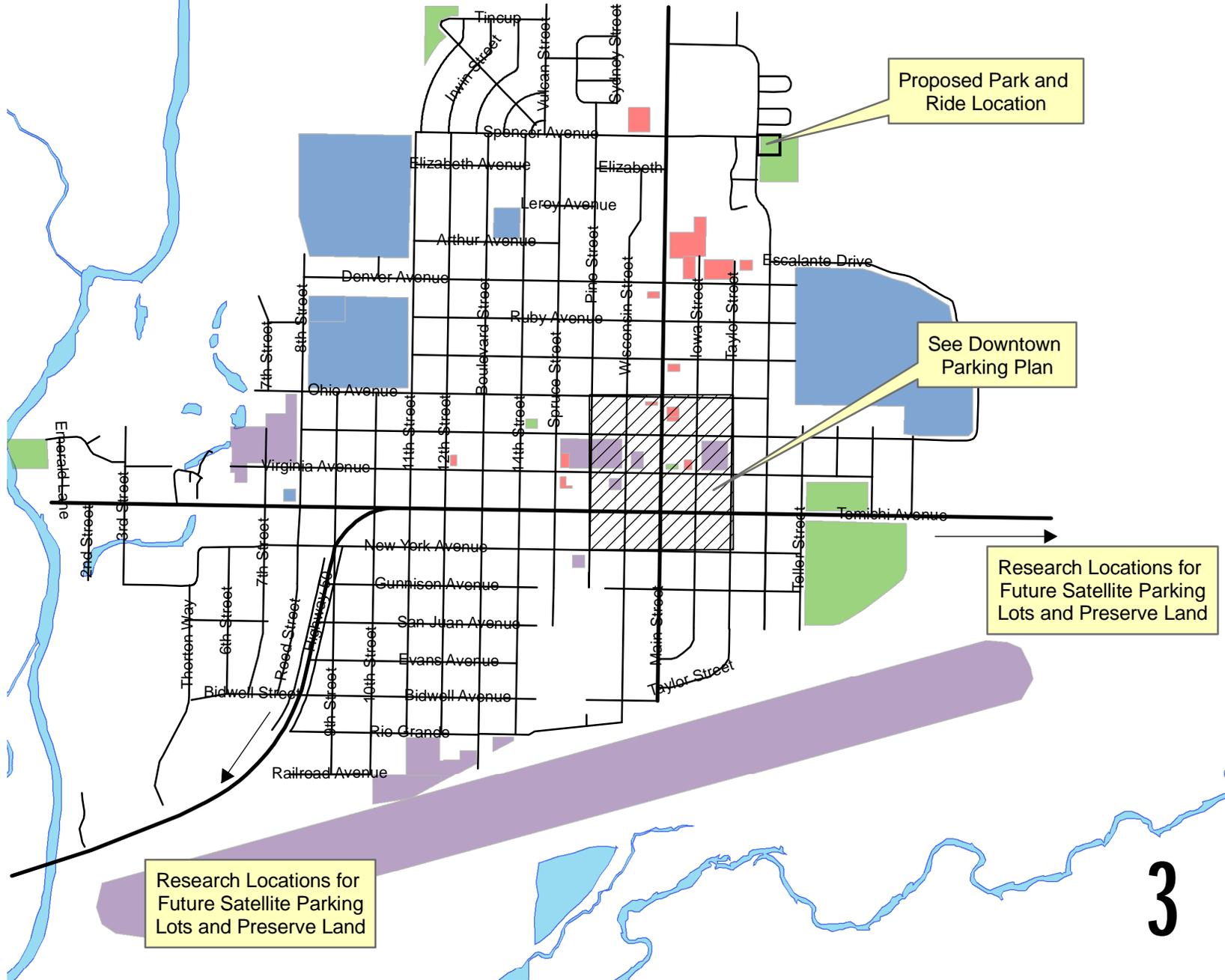


- Legend**
- Business Directory
 - Government
 - Medical
 - Park
 - School
 - Conceptual Transit Service

3

1 inch equals 1,500 feet

Map 8.E Conceptual Parking Plan



Legend

Business Directory

- Government
- Medical
- Park
- School

1 inch equals 1,500 feet

Map 8.F Conceptual Downtown Parking Plan



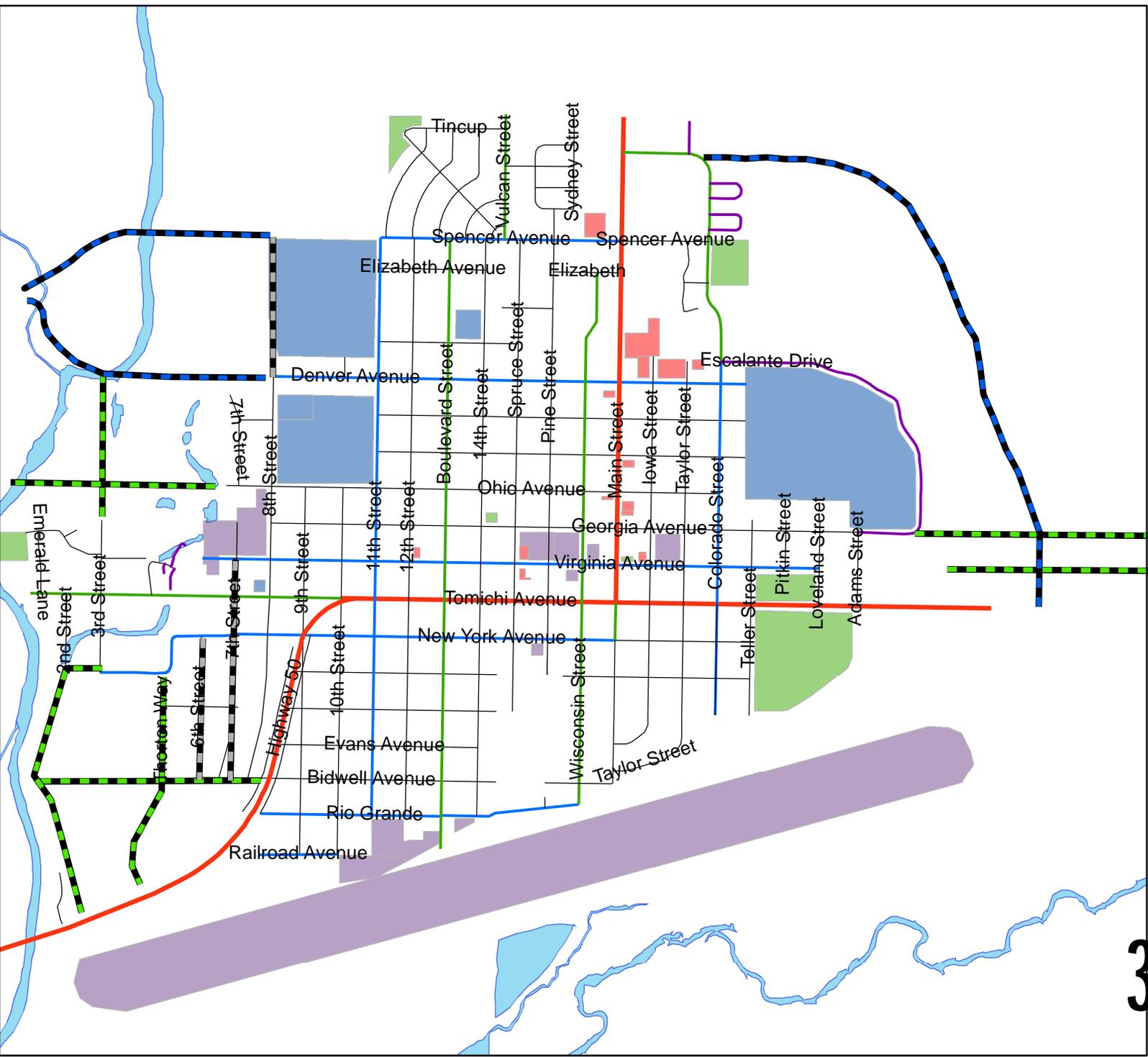
Legend

- Business Directory**
 - Government
 - Medical
 - Park
- Downtown Parking**
 - >>>> Diagonal Parking
 - + + + + Parallel Parking
- Parking Designation**
 - 15 Minute Parking
 - 2 Hour Parking
 - CBD District
 - No R.V. Parking
 - t Disabled Parking

3

1 inch equals 300 feet

Map 8.G Functional Classification & Preferred Street Extensions



Legend

- Future Street Extensions**
 - Projected Local
 - Projected Major Collector
 - Projected Minor Collector
- Street Designation**
 - Arterial
 - Local
 - Major Collector
 - Minor Collector
 - Private
- Business_Directory_Layer**
 - Government
 - Medical
 - Park
 - School

3

1 inch equals 1,500 feet

9 Utilities and Infrastructure



City's Waste Water Treatment Facility
Photo Credit Unknown

This chapter examines the public utilities available to support future growth.

- I. Introduction/Background
- II. Water System and Natural Waters
- III. Wastewater System
- IV. Stormwater Drainage
- V. Electrical Power
- VI. Renewable Energy Sources
- VII. Solid Waste and Recycling
- VIII. Goal, Policies and Actions

I. INTRODUCTION/ BACKGROUND

Public utilities are an essential service for the community. The City Public Works Department provides utility services for water, sewer, electric, refuse, and streets/alleys.

Population growth projections are important when determining the needs for utility system expansion. As stated in *Chapter 5. Land Use and Growth*, population growth is expected to be 1.5 percent annually.

II. WATER SYSTEM AND NATURAL WATERS

Potable Water

The City of Gunnison potable water system is supplied from nine wells constructed in an historic subsurface alluvial aquifer. The aquifer consists of unconsolidated sands, gravels and silts, and ranges in thickness from 20-80 feet. It is a substantial resource now and for the future. Chlorine is injected into the wells for treatment and all except one has

a sand separator. The average yield for the nine wells is 2,700 gallons per minute or 6 cubic feet per second (Table 9.1.) See Map 9.A for the location of the well heads.

Table 9.1 Well Yields	
Well No.	Average Yield (GPM)
1	0
2	225
3	300
4	300
5	300
6	250
7	250
8	275
9	400
10	400
Total	2,700 GPM or 6 c.f.s.

The City's Water Department maintains storage tanks with a combined capacity of 2,047,000 gallons. The tanks are located immediately northeast of WSC and are used for regulation and flexibility to meet peak water demands, fire flows and water pressure throughout the system. When use exceeds well system capability, supplemental water is supplied by the tanks.

The City Water Supply and Water Study of December 1992 (JW Patterson & Associates) addressed the City's water rights and their capability of satisfying projected water requirements for the City. The City has a substantial quantity of water rights and one of the oldest proven collections of rights on the Upper Colorado River system.

The Patterson study concluded that if additional recommendations were implemented (i.e., water conservation

measures, increased water storage, additional well construction), the City would have sufficient water to support a population exceeding 30,000. For example, if additional wells were constructed on the Van Tuyl Ranch, the overall water supply could increase by approximately 50%.

The City acquired the Van Tuyl Ranch northwest of the City boundary in 1992, because it is considered the "aquifer recharge area" for the City's water supply. Although the water supply has not been contaminated, it is vulnerable due to potentially failing septic systems in the area. City ownership of this property, as well as the extension of the north Gunnison sewer line has eliminated much of this threat.

The City of Gunnison completed a Distribution Master Plan in 2007. The consultants (Black & Veatch) built a hydraulic model of all water pipes, and have projected requirements for future growth. The consultants provided recommendations for City management staff to consider.

Non-potable Water

Gunnison has an extensive system of irrigation ditches with a consistent flow of irrigation water from May through September. The ditch system traverses most of the City and runs along the street system within the City of Gunnison. These waters are taken from various channels and points of diversion from the Gunnison River and other sources. Early City leaders acquired water rights and had the foresight to plan for growth of the community and utilization of the water rights.



Irrigation Ditch along sidewalk in the City
Photo by Andie Ruggera

Ditch water is available to property owners adjacent to the ditch. It serves as a source of water for lawns and gardens, making Gunnison a lush, green community during an extended period of the year. Demand for the ditch system to parts of town where it currently does not exist has increased.

Utilization and extension of the system would serve to further protect the water rights of the City as well as make Gunnison a more attractive place by allowing vegetation and landscaping to grow where it otherwise would not thrive.

III. WASTEWATER COLLECTION SYSTEM

The City's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) was constructed in the mid-1980's and became operational in 1987 providing the City with an EPA certified, state-of-the-art treatment facility. The facility provides secondary treatment through an extended aeration/oxidation ditch method.

Treatment consists of pre-treatment of raw sewage, then biological treatment utilizing an oxidation ditch, a final clarification process, and finally

disinfection of waters by ultraviolet light. The treated waters are discharged into the Gunnison River at the treatment plant located off of McCabe's Lane west of Gunnison.

In 1997, the City constructed an aerated static pile composting system which uses individual blowers to aerate the piles. The compost consists of dewatered sludge, shredded wood chips, and recycled finish compost. Lab analysis of the compost has shown that the finished product ("Gunnison's Black Gold") is one of the best for amending clay soils.

According to the Gunnison 201 Wastewater Facility Plan Update (1998), the treatment plant has the capacity to treat 4.2 million gallons per day. Currently summertime treatment handles approximately 3.5 million gallons while wintertime treatment approximately 1.2 million gallons per day. Although population does fluctuate some, the volume difference is actually due to ground water infiltration during the summer.

The 201 Plan estimated that the existing city WWTP has sufficient capacity to meet city growth requirements of 17,140 people which may not be reached until the year 2043.

In 1998, the service area population for the city WWTP was 7,920 (46% of capacity). That population included the City of Gunnison, Western State College, the Dos Rios and the Antelope Hills Sanitation Districts.

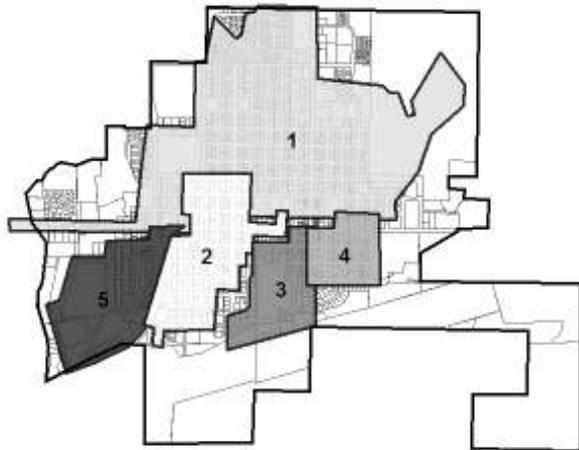
In 2001, a supplemental update was conducted for the Northern Interceptor Sewer Extension Proposal ("North Sewer District"), that would accommodate growth centers on either side of Highway 135, north of the Gunnison city limits to

the North Elk Meadows Subdivision (approximately 3 miles).

Projected population through 2025 for the City and its three-mile planning area continues to be well below the WWTP's design capacity of 17,140. Black and Veatch are updating the Wastewater Collection System Master Plan. The Update will utilize population projections and hydraulic models to determine impacts and future capacity of the WWTP. The consultants will provide recommendations for City management staff to consider.

IV. STORMWATER DRAINAGE

The City of Gunnison's storm drainage system consists of five collection systems, based on the topography of the City and existing storm sewer infrastructure.



Storm Basins in the City of Gunnison

The first storm drainage system has a main interceptor that runs east and west

along Tomichi and Virginia Avenues with laterals extending north to Denver Avenue and beyond. Pipe sizes vary from 48" on the west to 12" for some laterals on the north end. This system surcharged (overflowed) in 2004 and is considered at maximum capacity.

The second system is located in the southwest quadrant of the City near the airport. It has varying pipe sizes from 36" to 18". This system has not been fully constructed, and its completion should be considered in conjunction with a master storm water drainage plan.

The third storm drainage system serves the area south of New York Avenue between 14th Street and Wisconsin Street (vicinity of the rodeo grounds). The construction of this system was completed in 2006.

The fourth system is located east of Wisconsin Street and south of Virginia Avenue. It consists of undersized 18" pipe from the 1950's sanitary sewer collection system, and is not a "true" storm drainage system. It is recommended that additional manhole covers be installed for cleaning and maintenance, where possible. This area should be considered in a master storm water drainage plan.

The fifth storm drainage system is located in the West Gunnison Neighborhood and has not been designed nor constructed at this time.

Infiltration/Inflow

The City Waste Water Treatment Plant has a maximum allowable inflow/infiltration rate (I/I).

Infiltration occurs in locations where *ground water* may seep into the sewer collection system. Some sources of

infiltration include deteriorating clay sewer laterals, broken or cracked lateral lines and main lines and leaking manholes.

Inflow occurs in locations where large amounts of *stormwater* runoff may enter into the sewer collection system. Some sources of inflow include holes in the collection system, missing sewer cleanout caps, missing manhole covers and household guttering being connected to sewer laterals.

Traditional storm water management methods require the costly installation and maintenance of underground pipe that eventually drains into the Gunnison River. Low Impact Development (LID) is an alternative approach.

In Gunnison, LID practices can be utilized that will reduce storm water runoff by using detention and retention areas, or by reducing the amount of impervious (impermeable) areas, such as asphalt and concrete. Storm water can then maintain natural environmental features such as wetlands and riparian buffers.

It would be prudent for the City to create a master storm water drainage plan to evaluate the existing drainage systems, and determine alternatives where those systems have or will exceed capacity. Storm water is also subject to point and non-point source pollution, which should be considered. Best Management Practices and Low Impact Development (or other alternatives) should be incorporated into the proposed master storm water drainage plan. In addition, the City will need to plan for Phase II Storm Water as established by the Environmental Protection Agency.

V. ELECTRICAL POWER

The City of Gunnison purchases its electrical power from two sources. The Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) supplies the base load, while the Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska (MEAN) supplies supplemental power. WAPA provides hydroelectric power from the various hydro-electric plants on the Colorado River system, including the Blue Mesa Reservoir. MEAN utilizes coal, wind, hydro, natural gas, and purchased power (including nuclear power) from other locations.



City of Gunnison Electric Department
"On Scene"

In recent years, the City Electric Department surveyed City residents to determine if a voluntary green power program would be of interest. Based on the response, a number of customers now support electricity generated by renewable resources. The City negotiated with MEAN to purchase blocks of wind power that is offered to electric consumers. Many residents appreciate having this option to utilize renewable energy sources, and are willing to pay little extra per month (currently \$1.70 per 100 kwh).

The City of Gunnison also has a green program where the City will accommodate the installation of wind-generation or

photovoltaic equipment, which can tie to the City of Gunnison's electric grid. This program is currently being used as a pilot study and the future of this program will need to be re-evaluated.

The City electrical service area boundaries encompasses the area from Antelope Hills southwest to Fairway Lane, near Gold Basin Road, to the end of the pavement (including the Golf Course), and North to the Lower Castle Mountain cutoff near Wild Horse Estates. Areas of service overlap with Gunnison County Electric Association (GCEA). The City closely coordinates with GCEA.

The City's electrical infrastructure is composed of overhead lines, and in some newer developments, buried lines. It would be preferable, from a visual standpoint, that all electrical lines be buried.

The City has sufficient electrical infrastructure to accommodate typical residential growth and small to medium sized retail businesses. However, large manufacturing operations or very large superstore developments that require substantial amounts of energy may present some challenges and could require additional infrastructure.

VI. RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

Renewable energy is important for the environment and our economy. Alternative energy is the use of non-conventional energy sources to generate electrical power and fuel vehicles for residential, commercial and industrial energy applications. This includes emergency power systems, transportation systems, on-site electricity generation,

uninterrupted power supply, combined heat and power systems, off-grid power systems, electrical peak-shaving systems and many more innovative applications.

Some renewable energy sources include hydrogen, compressed natural gas blend, liquefied natural gas, solar power, biomass, biodiesel, geothermal, water power, methanol and ethanol, landfill gas and wind power.

Environmental Reasons

Conventional fuels such as gasoline, diesel, coal and wood are being reconsidered in light of worldwide concerns of non-renewable energy consumption, pollution, ozone layer depletion and global warming. Utilizing power from clean, sustainable, alternative energy sources has become a necessity.

Economic Reasons

Increased energy demands have contributed to higher prices for gasoline, natural gas and electricity. Cost effective, sustainable power sources providing residences and businesses with alternative energy solutions could eventually be less expensive in the future. Many alternative energy sources are renewable so the supply never diminishes.

VII. SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

The City of Gunnison utilizes Gunnison County's services and facilities for both trash disposal and recycling.

Solid Waste

The City of Gunnison owns three trash trucks (one is a backup and one is used for cardboard recycling), with routes

scheduled five days a week (M-F). Trash is delivered to the Gunnison County Landfill located east of the City. Each truck can hold 25 cubic yards, and usually one truck delivers to the landfill daily. The City is charged by each truck load, and is billed monthly. The monthly bill averaged \$6,000 in 2006.

The City is experiencing increased demand for trash pickup with each new residential development. The City is also seeing an increase in commercial accounts. As continued growth occurs, landfill facility expansion or additional equipment will need to be considered.

The use of automated trash trucks has been discussed in recent years as a way to reduce labor costs in the long run. Essentially one operator could handle trash pick up, using an automated arm to unload trash containers. Currently, three people are on the crew.

Residents have also suggested that the City evaluate biomass-generated heating systems. Biomass is organic matter that can be processed into energy for heat, liquid fuels or power generation. Sources of biomass include wood, plants, agricultural residues, animal waste and the organic components of municipal and industrial wastes.

It may be possible that biomass technology will become cost effective to implement at some point, and it should be considered by current policy makers to lay down the foundation for the future.

Recycling

Recycling is offered free to City and County residents. The City utilizes the services of the Gunnison County Recycling Center where recycling products are accepted daily. The Gunnison County Recycling Center is

located within the City limits near the airport.

VIII. GOAL, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Goal

The City will efficiently deliver its public utilities and continue to be fiscally responsible in the construction of high-quality public infrastructure, making forward-looking decisions that maintain low operational, maintenance and energy costs. The City will continue to increase its utilization of renewable energy sources when possible and will encourage citizens to make the wisest decisions for resource conservation in building and land development.

Policy 1: Financial

The City will remain fiscally responsible as both the utility provider and the advocate for the consumers. In financing public infrastructure, the City will ensure that new development pays its fair share. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 1.1 Continue to annually evaluate the Capital Improvements Plan which provides for the City's major purchases and implements capital-intensive projects.
- 1.2 Provide opportunities for consumers to save money (e.g. off-peak rates).
- 1.3 Implement cost-saving alternatives for refuse, recycling and composting activities.
- 1.4 Keep the City electric rates as affordable for consumers as possible.

City of Gunnison Master Plan

1.5 Explore funding mechanisms such as connection fees or user fees for the ongoing operation, maintenance and capital improvements of the irrigation ditch system.

1.6 Explore funding mechanisms that help defer and/or reduce infrastructure costs, including energy performance bonds.

1.7 Determine the feasibility of utilizing assessment districts (property tax) or special improvement districts (bond issue).

1.8 Amend the existing utility reimbursement policy to include review standards or criteria, procedural guidelines, and a sample contract or agreement.

1.9 Utilize federal and state tax incentives, grants and loan programs for the improvement/expansion of infrastructure and other municipal services.

1.10 Enforce regulations against electric utility theft.

1.11 Continue to investigate line loss and replace outdated meters to conserve electricity.

1.12 Develop a strategy to address inflow/infiltration concerns.

Policy 2: Utility Extensions

Extend utilities to areas that are appropriate for growth within the City and three-mile planning area. Action items to implement this policy include:

2.1 Allow the extension of sanitary sewer collection lines on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with Gunnison County.

2.2 Extend sewer services to areas within the three-mile planning area boundary that have been determined as critical for water quality preservation.

2.3 Extend utility services only where land uses are compatible with the City of Gunnison's Three Mile Plan.

2.4 Implement the West Gunnison Neighborhood Plan to extend utilities to vacant parcels of land west of Highway 50 and south of Tomichi Ave.

2.5 Continue to extend the ditch system and require new developments to install ditches where practical.

2.6 Require that utility lines be placed underground for new development or for major utility upgrades within the City and the urban growth boundary.

2.7 Work with the County to determine an appropriate site for an RV dump station.

Policy 3: Renewable Energy

Encourage the City and consumers to use alternative energy sources. Action items to implement this policy include:

3.1 Create a feasibility study and actively pursue the use of alternative energy at City facilities, including biomass-generated or geothermal heating facilities, additional wind power, hydro-electric power sources, etc.

3.2 Continue the net metering program for wind, solar and biomass production (which reverses electric meters and reduces the City's need to purchase supplemental power).

3.3 Continue to publish "time of use" rates and policies in the City of Gunnison Municipal Code for those customers

wishing to lower their electric bill by using electricity during "off-peak" times.

3.4 Continue to conduct energy audits on all City buildings to save operational costs and take a leading role in energy conservation measures.

3.5 Continue to offer energy audits at no cost to customers.

Policy 4: Collaboration

Collaborate with other entities and the public to address regional needs. Action items to implement this policy include:

4.1 Support the County in their efforts to develop innovative and economical alternatives for regional solid waste management.

4.2 Continue to participate in training and information sharing with organizations such as Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska, Colorado Association of Municipal Utilities and American Public Power Association.

4.3 Coordinate the provision of services, with the Gunnison County Sewer District, the Dos Rios Sewer Division, the Antelope Hills Sewer District, and the North Gunnison Sewer District.

4.4 Support and utilize the services of the Office for Resource Efficiency as appropriate.

4.5 Continue to work with other agencies to sponsor community-wide efforts such as Community Clean Up and Household Hazardous Waste Clean Up.

Policy 5: Education

Disseminate information to builders and homeowners to increase community awareness about design, renewable energy, solid waste management, etc.

Action items to implement this policy include:

5.1 Disseminate information brochures or sponsor workshops to increase awareness of alternative energy sources.

5.2 Continue to work with the County to educate the public on the costs associated with trash and the benefits associated with recycling.

Policy 6: Protection & Safety

Protect the environment and natural resources. Action items to implement this policy include:

6.1 Protect the City's water rights.

6.2 Monitor and protect the quality of ditch water flowing through the City.

6.3 Implement a policy for reducing light pollution, such as utilizing full cut off light fixtures.

6.4 Continue to maintain adequate records of the use of the sewage treatment facility and current capacity in order to plan for future expansion.

6.5 Create a Master Storm Water Drainage Plan and implement Low Impact Design (LID) standards for erosion control and storm water management. The Plan should include possible demonstration projects, LID retrofit suggestions, and a LID overlay district.

Policy 7 – Recycling

The City of Gunnison encourages recycling of waste. Action items to implement this policy include:

7.1 Work with the county to increase opportunities and capacity for recycling and composting organic waste.

City of Gunnison Master Plan

7.2 Increase the number of recycling drop off locations in the City.

7.3 Educate the public on the high cost of trash disposal.

7.4 Offer incentives to reduce waste per household.

7.5 Educate contractors on how to utilize existing recycling and trash facilities to reduce the likelihood of job site pollution.

Map 9.A Wellhead Location

Legend

Business Directory

- Government
- Medical
- Park
- School

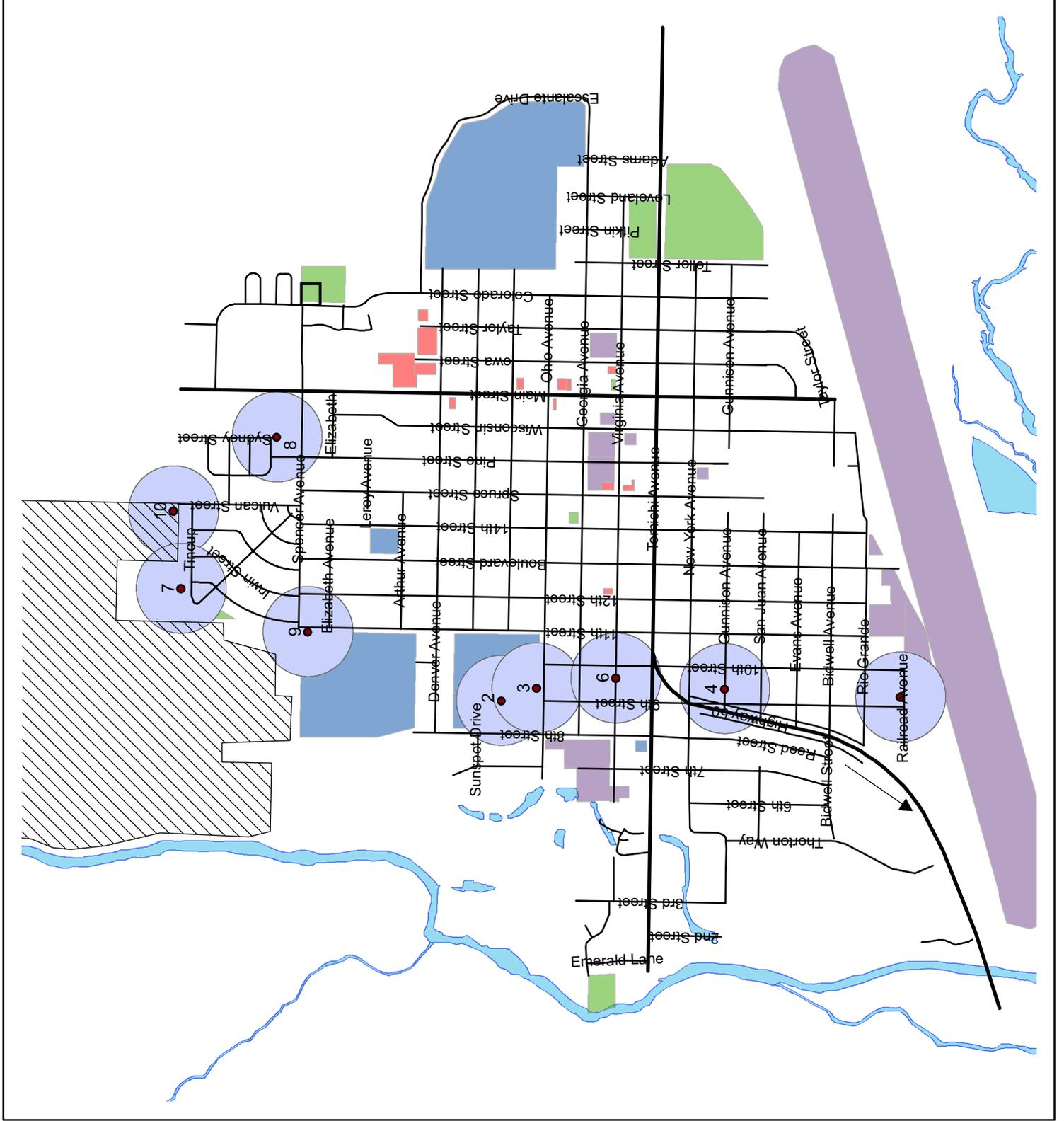
Well Head Locations

Well Head Location Buffer

Poss Annex Property



1 inch equals 1,500 feet



10 Parks, Recreation and Open Space



The Fishing Derby at PacMan Pond
Jorgensen Park
Photo courtesy of City Parks Dept.

This chapter discusses the opportunities and implications of recreation in and around the City of Gunnison.

- I. Introduction
 - II. Inventory of City recreation facilities
 - III. Other Recreation Opportunities
 - IV. Collaborative Efforts
 - V. Goal, Policies and Actions
-

I. INTRODUCTION

Recreation is an important component of Gunnison's quality of life not only for the residents' enjoyment, but also for the community's economic livelihood.

The City of Gunnison is located in a vast playground featuring numerous recreational opportunities, from listening to live music at the Jorgenson Park Gazebo, to ice skating at PacMan Pond or Blue Mesa Reservoir to high

City of Gunnison Master Plan

adventure mountaineering in the nearby public lands.

The City of Gunnison will continue to see increasing recreation visitors, largely due to retiring baby boomers who are generally adventurous travelers.¹ To this end, recreation facilities will need to meet the needs of the residents, as well as attract visitors to the region for economic purposes.

The City of Gunnison Park and Recreation Department has consistently done an outstanding job of anticipating the needs of the community with respect to organized facilities and programs. The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan of 1996 outlined six recommendations to be implemented based on community needs. Most of those recommendations have been implemented, and the rest are currently being pursued.

In addition to the recreation opportunities, scenic beauty is an important part of Gunnison's quality of life.



Jorgensen Park
The lemonade stand at CityFest

¹ Colorado Tourism Association, Colorado Tourism Office Travel Trends ~ July 2005

The 1996 Parks & Recreation Master Plan will continue to guide development of parks, recreation and open space in the City of Gunnison. It also served as the basis for this chapter. Updates to this plan are expected in the coming years.

II. INVENTORY OF CITY RECREATION FACILITIES

Facility Name	Acres
Jorgensen Park	17
Legion Park	4.5
I.O.O.F. Park	0.25
Bill's Park (AKA Endner Park)	0.5
Charmar Park	1.0
West Tomichi Riverway	7.6
Meadows Park	4.5
Cranor Ski Hill	55.5
Hartman Rocks Recreation Area	160
Taylor Canyon City Mountain Park	160

The City of Gunnison Parks and Recreation Department has been a proactive force in the community for years. More than 250 recreational programs have been developed by the City's Park and Recreation Department including wrestling, trapeze, gymnastics, dance, rock climbing, taekwon-do, ball sports, and many more programs too numerous to list here.

In 2005, the Community Center opened. This facility accommodates all of the recreation department's indoor organized sports. It provides space for community organizations, such as the Young At Heart. Additionally, it is available for rent to groups and individuals for meetings, birthday parties and other private functions.



City of Gunnison Recreation Center

The City also has acquired many neighborhood, community and regional parks over the years. Gunnison offers 110 acres per 1,000 residents (the national average is 10 acres per 1,000 residents). Most recently, the City developed the West Tomichi Riverway Park in 2004 and the Meadows Park in 2002. The City supports activities at the White Water Park on the Gunnison River, which was established in 2001. The City owns facilities outside of the City limits including the Taylor Canyon City Mountain Park and the Cranor Hill Ski Area. The City is also a 50/50 partner with Gunnison County for the Hartman Rocks Recreation Area.

III. OTHER RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Recreational activities within the Gunnison Basin contribute to the high quality of life our citizens enjoy and

contribute to the economy of the local area. The recreational opportunities and people they attract are largely responsible for Gunnison's community character.

Alpine skiing

Three ski areas are within an hour of the City of Gunnison:

- Crested Butte Mountain Resort
- Monarch Ski and Snowboard Area
- Cranor Hill Ski Area

Crested Butte Mountain Resort has accounted for approximately 350,000 skier visitor days per season during recent years. Monarch Ski and Snowboard Area provides fresh powder skiing 45 minutes to the east of Gunnison. Cranor Hill, owned by the City, provides alpine skiing and is located five miles north of Gunnison.

Nordic skiing

Skiing comes in many forms including traditional cross country skiing, skate skiing, ski touring, and backcountry skiing. The Gunnison Nordic Club (GNC) has been gaining momentum with various funding sources and new equipment purchases.



The GNC is focusing on grooming areas close to the City, such as W Mountain Ranch Loop, Hartman Rocks Recreation Area, the College Loop, and is researching other areas, such as Mill Creek.

Hunting

The Gunnison Basin is world renowned for quality big-game hunting. On average, about 3,000 elk tags and 600 deer tags are purchased on an annual basis in the Gunnison area.

Whitewater Sports

Gunnison area has many rivers for kayaking, rafting, and tubing. Gunnison features a whitewater park and an annual whitewater festival. The economic impact in 2002 from rafting on the Gunnison and Taylor Rivers was \$3.1 million.² In 2002, there were 14,587 user days on the Taylor River and 2,350 user days on the Gunnison River. The Whitewater Park on the Gunnison River, developed in 2002, attracts many whitewater enthusiasts.



Kayaker at the Gunnison Whitewater Park, photo courtesy of the Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism

Fishing

Blue Mesa Reservoir, the largest body of water in Colorado, is considered one of the best fishing resources in the state. The pristine water quality of the county's rivers, including the Gunnison River, the Taylor River, the East River and Tomichi Creek, attract fishermen casting for rainbow trout, brown trout, brook trout and Kokanee salmon. The Taylor River Reservoir commonly produces state records for trout fishing. Both Blue Mesa and Taylor Reservoirs are used by ice fishing enthusiasts.

² Colorado River Outfitter's Association, 2003.

Hiking & Trails

The Gunnison Basin contains more than 1,000 miles of backcountry trails. These trails are managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and Colorado State. Near Gunnison, a new trail is planned for land purchased by the Bureau of Reclamation along Tomichi Creek east of Gunnison.

Biking

Hartman Rocks south of Gunnison offers excellent single-track trails that local mountain bikers respect and love. Road bikers utilize the highway systems, and "share the road" signs are being installed. The City hosts various cross-country bike tours, such as "Ride the Rockies" and "Bicycle Tour Colorado". Crested Butte has become a magnet for mountain bikers and has established a "Fat Tire Week" to promote the sport.

Boating

The Curecanti Recreation Area (Blue Mesa Reservoir) attracts nearly one million visitors per year. According to a Visitor Satisfaction Survey conducted in 1999, fishing and pleasure cruising are the most important activities.

Ice Skating

Jorgensen Park offers a wide array of hockey and figure skating programs. Speed skaters enjoy the many lakes and reservoirs which freeze over in the winter.

Equestrian Activities

Considering that this region is rooted in ranching, many equestrians continue to enjoy the primitive surroundings. Stables are located throughout the County, and Cattlemen's Days at the

Rodeo Grounds attract local, regional and national equestrians.

Waterfowl/Wildlife Viewing

The Gunnison area is a haven for several bird species that are unique to this region, including sage grouse and peregrine falcons (in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison). Waterfowl on the Tomichi Creek attracts birders from all over the world.

Rock Climbing

The rugged mountains surrounding Gunnison have challenged mountain climbers for many years. Climbing routes have been developed in most of the canyons in the county, including Taylor Canyon, Spring Creek Canyon, the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, The Gunnison River Canyon and Lost Canyon. Hartman Rocks also offers its share of bouldering and climbing routes.

IV. COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

The City collaborates with other entities in the valley in an effort to capitalize on the local assets in order to enrich the quality of life in the area.

One of the more recent efforts involves the development of a looped trail system. City staff, along with the Gunnison County Trails Commission, is researching a pedestrian/bicycle/roller blade circulation system that connects various parks and activity centers, including the Gunnison River Greenway, Western State College, Hartman Rocks and downtown, and to recreation areas in the County.

Gunnison County

Gunnison County is committed to nurturing open space. The County adopted its Comprehensive Plan in 2005. In Section I of the Plan, the County describes the undeniable linkage between agricultural preservation and viewshed protection along the US 50 and SH 135 highway corridors. The plan concludes that the viability of agriculture is crucial to retaining the rural lifestyle and visual appeal of the county, particularly within these major highway corridors.

Gunnison County Trails Commission

The Gunnison County Trails Commission (GCTC) has made significant progress in the area for the development and maintenance of trail systems throughout the County. Funded predominantly by the County Public Works Department, the GCTC has taken on an ambitious mission of advising the Gunnison County Board of Commissioners on how to protect, plan, develop and manage trails. They do this by working with private property owners, developers, federal, state, and local governments, trail users, and visitors. Each year, the GCTC update their comprehensive Master Plan, where collaboration is encouraged.

Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism Association

The Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism Association (TA) is committed to working with all of the entities in the Valley to market the attributes of the area. The TA is funded by local lodging taxes and provides a wealth of information to businesses, and governmental agencies on how to market the area. The TA also provides a complete service for visitors using a

well-developed website and other marketing strategies.

Western State College

The City of Gunnison has formal and informal agreements with Western State College of Colorado (Western) related to the use of recreation facilities within the valley. The City utilizes the college swimming pool, gyms, tennis facilities, and fields. In return, the City allows the use of Jorgensen Park, CharMar Park and Legion Park facilities for sports and school-related events.

Many students take advantage of fee-based programs through the City Parks and Recreation programs and drop-in facilities at the Recreation Center. They also participate in internships for the City Parks and Recreation Department.

RE1J School District

The City works collaboratively with the RE1J school district to develop an extensive set of programs for school-aged children, including the "after-school" program. Summer activities at the Community Center can also provide an alternative to daycare.

Gunnison County Extension Office

The Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Office offers an annual Master Gardener Class. The City is willing to pursue collaborative efforts with the CSU Cooperative Extension Office to develop viable community gardening systems that promote local food production and other agricultural alternatives. The City will support gardening efforts on any available property, such as land owned by the City, Western State College, RE1J School District, or private owners.

V. GOAL, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Goal

Community parks and facilities will provide year-round, affordable recreational opportunities for residents and visitors balancing open space with private property rights. The City will collaborate with public and private entities to provide access to public lands.

Policy 1. Adapt City Parks

The City of Gunnison will maintain, improve, replace or establish new City park lands and facilities and plan park resources to meet the future needs of residents. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 1.1 Explore and evaluate funding mechanisms to expand developed recreation facilities, such as a community aquatic center and skating facility with a refrigerated ice rink.
- 1.2 Update the 1996 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, including a well-developed plan for the Van Tuyl Ranch.
- 1.3 Work with other governmental agencies and private land owners to ascertain trail development strategies that will discourage "social trails" to preserve the integrity of the area.
- 1.4 Take steps to assure new subdivisions and other developments have recreational opportunities: For example, update the City's zoning regulations for open space and recreation provisions.

Policy 2. Adapt Recreation Programs

Maintain, improve, replace or establish new City recreation programs to meet the changing demographics (age, family size, income levels) of the citizens. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 2.1 Coordinate the City’s efforts with private and public entities to provide a wide variety of recreation programs.
- 2.2 Work with Western State College to develop and implement recreation programs, such as a summer camps (e.g., gymnastics camp), where the City implements the programs, and the College allows use of dormitories and other college services.
- 2.3 Engage the public by creating advisory boards or steering committees where appropriate for specific recreation projects.

Policy 3. Support Conservation

The City of Gunnison will support the county and other entities in their efforts to conserve viewsheds, open space and agricultural uses of City interest through conservation easements, land acquisitions and other implementation methods. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 3.1 Work with the ranching community to identify open space and agricultural areas that should be preserved.
- 3.2 Explore use of incentive techniques such as transfers or purchases of development rights, when mutually beneficial.

Policy 4. Alternative Energy Sources

The City of Gunnison will lead by example and utilize alternative energy sources (geothermal heat pump systems, solar orientation designs, etc.) when upgrading or developing new parks and recreation facilities.

Policy 5. Community Gardens

The City of Gunnison supports efforts for community gardens on private or public lands, including vegetable and botanical gardens, and supports implementation of educational programs for community gardens. An action item to implement this policy is to educate the public on the locations of City property available for public gardening.

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11 Public Safety



This chapter discusses the growing needs for public safety and services based on population growth and demographic changes.

- I. Police Department
- II. Fire Department
- III. Hazard Materials Crew
- IV. Hospital/Emergency Medical Services
- V. Trends
- VI. Goal, Policies and Actions

I. GUNNISON POLICE DEPARTMENT

The City of Gunnison was incorporated on February 28, 1880, and the Gunnison Police Department established on June 5, 1884 by the town Trustees. The Department was originally housed in a 22 by 25 foot jail/office/dog pound building

located in the 100 block of South Wisconsin Street (near the present-day Forest Service garage).

Today, the Police Department is located on the second floor of the historical City Hall (the old fire station) and the Dispatch office is located in the County Court House.

The patrol division of the police force consists of the Police Chief and ten officers. The officers are assigned to one

of two squads, each squad having a sergeant. Often considered the backbone of a police agency, the officers in the patrol division are the first responders to all police calls. Officers must have the skills, knowledge and ability to prepare for and handle virtually every aspect of public safety. Duties include crime reduction and prevention strategies and problem solving which requires proficiency in oral and written communication and specific law enforcement training.



A philosophical transition has occurred within the Police Department. When the department was first organized, its traditional objective was to “catch the culprit”. Now, the police department focuses on crime prevention and outreach. The police department is committed to working in partnerships with other entities in the area to implement proactive strategies to maintain a high quality of life.

The Gunnison Police Department strives to be visible, friendly and approachable in an effort to maintain a healthy and safe community. Their mission statement is “The Gunnison Police Department exists to maintain a high quality of life through the prevention of crime, fair and equal treatment of all, and education in partnership with the

citizens of Gunnison and its visitors: Prevention, Education, Partnership.”

II. FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Gunnison Fire Department was first established as a volunteer “hose company” in 1880 wherein a hose cart was pulled to the site and connected to the water system to extinguish the fire. The Fire Department remains an all volunteer department with a maximum membership of 40.

As of 2006, there are two fire protection entities available to City of Gunnison residents: the City of Gunnison Volunteer Fire Department, and the Gunnison County Fire Protection District. Each has their own funding source: the City Fire Department is funded from City sales tax, while the County’s FPD is funded from property taxes. Each has different jurisdictions and their own equipment, but they work as a team and offer mutual aid for other districts when necessary. The fire station located at Spruce and New York houses all of the vehicles and equipment for both entities.



Some of the Gunnison Fire Department Crew
Photo courtesy of Nate Melby

The City of Gunnison Fire Department is composed of a chief, two assistant

chiefs, four lieutenants and a captain. The chief and the assistant chiefs are paid positions (flat rate) and are funded equally from the City of Gunnison and the Gunnison County Fire Protection District. The Fire Marshal is a regular full-time City employee whose salary is paid entirely by the City of Gunnison.

Discussion has ensued in years past about consolidating the fire districts into one entity. The most important advantage is that the administrative functions would become more organized and less expensive to operate. The disadvantage has mainly been due to taxation issues. For example, the City of Gunnison residents do not currently pay property taxes for fire protection, but County residents do. A well devised plan could perhaps solve this issue, but it will need to be a community decision.

The fire department has also seen a shift of responsibility. Instead of merely responding to calls, outreach efforts are pursued.

III. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS CREW

The City of Gunnison and Gunnison County formed a hazardous materials team in 1987 to mitigate the hazards caused by the accidental or suspicious release of hazardous materials. The team originally consisted of eight volunteer members trained to the operational level of response. Now the team is made of 24 volunteers who participate in ongoing training. Volunteers are paid per call by the City or the County depending on the location of the call.

The hazardous material crew is also evolving with respect to outreach and education. For example, the crew

collaborated with the City of Gunnison, Gunnison County, Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte to host a "Household Waste Clean-Up Day" in 2006. The Hazardous Materials Crew hopes to continue this event annually. The crew is also considering a workshop to educate homeowners on how to handle and store toxic household chemicals, such as cleaning supplies and paints.

To effectively implement a hazardous materials program, equipment and vehicles need to be purchased and maintained. Much of the equipment is funded equally by the City and County, and often times, Homeland Security grant funding is available. A hazardous materials vehicle was purchased in 2005 and was funded by a grant from Homeland Security. The hazardous materials team also has a 20-foot trailer, as well as masks, suits and other personal protective equipment.

A mutual aid agreement between Gunnison County, the City of Gunnison, the Bureau of Land Management and the Colorado State Patrol exists for assistance with hazardous material mitigation.

IV. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Since 1987, emergency medical services (EMS) have been provided to both the City and County of Gunnison by the Gunnison Valley Emergency Medical Service, which is operated by the Gunnison Valley Hospital. Gunnison EMS provides 24 hour emergency calls by ambulance, aids the Gunnison Fire Department and provides mutual aid for neighboring rescue organizations (WSC Search and Rescue).



Hazardous Materials Vehicle
Photo courtesy of Nate Melby

EMS has four ambulances with advanced life support (paramedic equipment). The staff ranges between ten and fifteen people who are trained in advanced and basic life support. The EMS has the ability to respond to unique situations in unique locations with 6-wheelers, snow machines, rope rescues (with the mountain rescue team), sleds, horseback, and all-terrain vehicles.

The EMS assumes the medical responsibility for most situations in the County, including the medical component for the hazardous materials team, special events (football games, Cattlemen's days, motorcycle and bicycle races, etc.)

The EMS also takes a leading role in public education for first aid and CPR classes (2,000 people per year), and emergency medical technician training.

V. TRENDS

As population increases, so does the need for police, EMS and fire services. This requires administrative support staff, engineers, mechanics, training facilities and training equipment.

Subdivision applications are reviewed by safety agencies, but the developer has not been required to pay additional fees

for extra community services. It may be appropriate to begin assessing mitigation fees for new developments in the City.

VI. GOAL, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Goal

Public safety services will be readily available to serve and protect the community. The agencies providing these services continue to understand the community, its citizens and trends affecting public security.

Policy 1. Public Safety Services

The Police Department will provide adequate public safety services to meet the changing needs of the community. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 1.1 Maintain certifications and participate in ongoing education for all public safety officials.
- 1.2 Continue to provide education to the citizens of Gunnison to encourage proactive citizens.

Policy 2. Collaboration

Form public/private partnerships with businesses and local and regional groups, including Western State College, and Gunnison County to promote community involvement with police services. Action items to implement this policy include:

- 2.1 Utilize "problem oriented policing" to identify and address chronic criminal behavior.
- 2.2 Develop a strategic plan with other entities to evaluate service demands and mutual aid policies that will benefit the community by implementing cost savings approaches.

Policy 3. Police Visibility

Increase police visibility by participating in local functions and events. Action items to implement this policy include:

3.1 Strengthen links between the police and the community by participating in programs and events such as: Toys for Tots, Cityscape, Cattlemens' Days Parade, Car Show, Ride the Rockies, homecoming events, parades, GVH Charity Run, 4th of July Fireworks, Emergency Services Exposition, etc.

3.2 Continue to offer an annual "Police Academy" to WSC students and citizens, which began in 2005.

Policy 4. Financial Responsibility

Evaluate options for fiscally responsible police and safety services. Actions items to implement this policy include:

4.1 Explore funding strategies including grants and other mechanisms (e.g., fee in lieu or land dedications) to install future police and fire facilities.

4.2 Develop and implement a strategic plan that addresses public safety trends, population growth and demography changes, and the costs associated therewith.

4.3 Evaluate the feasibility of consolidating fire districts to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

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12 Implementation

Success of the Master Plan depends upon the implementation of its policies. This chapter sets the framework for the implementation of the action statements that were provided in each chapter throughout the Plan.

- I. Implementation
 - II. Accountability
 - III. Priorities
-

Implementation

Implementing this Master Plan may be accomplished on an individual level, departmental level, in conjunction with multiple departments, or it may require coordination on a multi-jurisdictional level. Implementation is dependent upon staffing and budgetary guidelines.

The City of Gunnison implements projects based on the capital improvement budget, the operating budget and departmental work plans. The capital improvements and the budget are analyzed by all of management staff on an annual level.

The department budgets, along with the Capital Plan list are assessed in relation to the revenues projected to be available for the upcoming year; this is the point where compromise occurs because the budget is never large enough to facilitate all of the proposed needs.

Every year, City management staff presents a balanced budget to the City Council during the annual Council/Staff budget review meeting. The annual department work plans are created with input from all staff

personnel (i.e., it's not a top-down approach).

This Master Plan will be considered during the budget and work plan reviews. Capital improvements are considered during the mid-summer months, the annual budgets are considered immediately following the capital budget process. Work Plans are established based on the both the capital and departmental budgets. Staffing concerns are also considered, and each department's identifies its goals, and which quarter they are expected to be complete.

Accountability

The Master Plan contains a series of action statements at the end of each chapter. In some cases the actions are stand-alone, while in other cases they are part of more comprehensive program

To ensure that City business is conducted in a financially responsible manner with proper resource allocation, the City utilizes the Likert Prioritization Scale. Implementation of Master Plan projects will be considered as a Likert Prioritization 3, unless they meet the

criteria for a Prioritization 5 designation.

Likert Prioritization Scale		
5	3	1
Legal Mandate	Advisory	No Legal Requirement
Leveraged \$ Grants/Contracts	Budgeted	Unfunded
Political Priority	Departmental or Management Goal	Personal Goal

Priorities

The following is a list of major implementation tasks that are presently underway or will be integrated into work plans and capital budget requests in the near future. This list is intended to provide the important broad directives and does not identify the smaller tasks identified in the plan.

- **Revise the Land Development Code.** The revision of the Land Development Code has been initiated and is anticipated to be completed either later this year (2007) or early next year.
- **Update the Three Mile Plan.** The master plan represents the starting point to updating the *Three Mile Plan*. This update process will be initiated in 2007, but it is anticipated to be completed sometime next year (2008).
- **Revise the Three Mile Plan IGA.** In conjunction with the completion of the *Three Mile Plan*, the *City/County Intergovernmental Agreement* will be amended and presented for ratification by the elected officials.

- **Complete the West Gunnison Neighborhood Plan.** The West Gunnison Neighborhood Plan is about at the mid-point of completion and should be finished by July 2008.
- **Adopt the West Gunnison Neighborhood Plan.** After completing the West Gunnison Neighborhood Plan it will be presented to the City Council for potential adoption as a “sub-area plan” integrated into this *Master Plan*.
- **Annex the VanTuyl Ranch.** Initial surveying work has been completed on the VanTuyl Ranch. It is anticipated that the annexation process will begin during 2007, but the annexation will not be complete until sometime in 2008.
- **Update the Park & Recreation Master Plan.** Update of the *Park and Recreation Master Plan* has been programmed into the *Capital Plan* for FY2008. It is anticipated that the development of the plan will take about one year to complete.
- **Create a Transportation Master Plan.** In light of recent developments, pending annexations and growth in Gunnison County, the City will see increased traffic concerns, which may affect public safety and Gunnison's sense of place.
- **Continue Regional Transportation Authority.** The tax initiative that has funded the operation of the Regional Transportation Authority is scheduled to sunset in 2009. The success of regional transportation programs is a very positive element for the Gunnison Valley. Inter-

governmental efforts need to be initiated to ensure the long term viability of the Regional Transportation Authority is maintained.

- **Continue Economic Development Programs.** The City is working on housing, communication and transportation as the three primary legs to support economic development. Programs to further

these causes will be carried forward in the upcoming years.

- **Promote Environmental Sustainability.** In the upcoming years, city programs will be designed to protect water and air quality, promote green building techniques, reduce automobile emissions, and improve habitat quality.

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Appendix 1.A

Data Sources/Websites

City of Gunnison Master Plan, Volumes I and II, 1994
City of Gunnison Parks, Recreation, Open Space Master Plan, 1996
Update to the Transportation Element of the 1994 Master Plan, 2000
City of Gunnison 201 Wastewater Facilities Update
City/County of Gunnison
 Three Mile/Urban Growth Boundary Plan, 1997
City/County of Gunnison Three-Mile Plan/Urban Growth Boundary
 Intergovernmental Agreement, 1997
City of Gunnison Construction Standards
City of Gunnison Finance Office - sales tax data
City of Gunnison building permit data
City of Gunnison. www.cityofgunnison-co.gov
Wastewater Master Plan (Black and Veatch, January 2007)

Gunnison County Trails Master Plan, 2006
Gunnison County Comprehensive Plan, 2005
Gunnison County Community Indicators Project 2001
Gunnison County Soils Study
Gunnison County Mapping Department data
Gunnison Sage Grouse Conservation Plan
Gunnison County Assessor data and parcel maps
Gunnison Airport Master Plan (June 2006)
County of Gunnison, www.gunnisoncounty.org

Curecanti Resource Protection Study
Gunnison Valley 2020 Transportation Plan
The Gunnison Valley 2030 Transportation Plan, 2005
The Upper Gunnison Valley Transportation Plan (Charlier, 1999)
Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism Association, gunnisoncrestedbutte.com
Gunnison Chamber of Commerce, www.gunnisonchamber.com
Pioneer Museum, sangres.com/places/gunnison/pioneermuseum
West Elk Loop Scenic and Historic Byway Master Plan
Western State College Economic Impact Study, 2005

Colorado Demography Office, www.dola.state.co.us/demog, US Census data
Colorado Department of Labor and Employment data, www.coworkforce.com
Colorado Region 10, www.region10.net

Appendix 1.B

Smart Growth Principles

1. Mix land uses.
2. Take advantage of compact building design.
3. Create a range of housing opportunities.
4. Create walkable communities.
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
7. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
8. Provide a variety of transportation options.
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

Appendix 5.A Potential Residential Build-Out Current Densities

Residential Maximum Build-Out Based on current zoning & densities					
Zone	Acreage	Density (units per acre)	Current Units	Add'l Units, if Built Out	Total Units
R1	309.7	3.5	275	809	1,084
PUD R1	33.5	3.5	0	118	118
R1M	34.8	6	123	86	209
PUD R1M	18.4	6	46	162	208
R2	72.9	12	496	379	875
PUD R2	5.6	12	55	819	874
R2M	39.5	16	135	497	632
PUD R2M	21.7	16	0	347	347
R3	208.2	30	805	5,441	6,246
PUD R3	5.7	30	99	72	171
Totals	750		2,034	8,730	10,764

Based on City GIS Data as of 1.26.07

Appendix 5.B

Vacant Non-Residential Parcels

COMMERCIAL		
378702113003	108 S. 10th St.	20,453
378702102001	501 W. Tomichi Ave.	12,451
378701201006	411 W. Tomichi Ave.	8,692
370136206004	801 N. Wisconsin St.	39,894
370136206003	821 N. Wisconsin St.	50,369
370136007002	Lot 2, Meldrum Subdivision	103,110
378702200072	Tract in W2W2 Sec 2, West Gunnison	389,354
370136003002	Tract B, Wilson Sub-Next to Holiday Inn	512,689
378702300058	1008 W. HWY 50	215,441
378702200089	230 W. Bidwell St.	44,479
370136007003	Lot 3, Meldrum Subdivision	41,051
370136007004	Lot 4, Meldrum Subdivision	54,003
370135445002	401 N. Spruce St.	78,860
378702113007	L 18-19 + E/W Alley, Blk 23 West Gunnison	7,024
370136000006	Van Tuyl Village	469,497
378702115008	L 18-24, Blk 21, West Gunnison	40,048
378702125004	Part of L11-12, Blk 50, West Gunnison	3,305
378701229001	Parcel west of the W Mountain Subdivision	49,793
378702123003	Part of L13-16, Blk 46, West Gunnison	8,641
370135331011	113 1/2 N. 8th St.	6,172
Total Commercial		2,155,324
COMMERCIAL BUSINESS DISTRICT		
370136312010	L 11-12, Blk 13, Original - IOOF Park	6,227
378701204010	113 S Iowa-next to Qwest storage	6,227
378701202010	106 1/2 S. Taylor St.	15,564
Total CBD		28,018
INDUSTRIAL		
378702118001	L 13-24, Blk 37, West Gunnison	37,359
378702118001	L 4-12, Blk 37, West Gunnison	28,019
378702139005	L 21-24, Blk 54, West Gunnison	12,989
378702127001	L 13-24, Blk 52, West Gunnison	37,349
378702403005	Airport	54,171
378700000100	Airport	116,605
378900000047	Airport	745,924
378702139008	L 1-12 + E/W Alley, Blk 54, West Gunnison	37,342
378900000046	Airport	1,475,319
Total Industrial		2,545,077
PUD COMMERCIAL		
378702200091	Blk 119, West Gunnison, Part of Diamond K	39,345
378702200092	1415 W. Tomichi Ave.	405,409
370136212001	Lot 8, Gunnison Center Phase 1C	111,553
370136211002	Lot 9, Gunnison Center Phase 1C	40,030
370136211001	Lot 10, Gunnison Center Phase 1C	138,084
370136212007	Lot 3, Gunnison Center Phase 1C	43,615
Total PUD C		778,037
GRAND TOTAL		5,506,456

Appendix 6.A

Neighborhood Density Comparison

Location	Existing Density (units/acre)	Zone	Maximum Zone Density
Apartments adjacent to WSC campus at Colorado/Gothic/Denver	25	R3	30
Block between Virginia/Georgia/11 th /12 th	12	R2M	16
Meadows Loop	8.8	R2	12
Block between Evans/San Juan/11 th /12 th	7.4	R3	30
Twin Pines Mobile Home Park	5.5	R3	30
Rock Creek	4.9	R2	12
Palisades Subdivision	3.2	R1M	6
Blocks between Boulevard/Wisconsin/Ohio/Gothic	2.8	R2	12