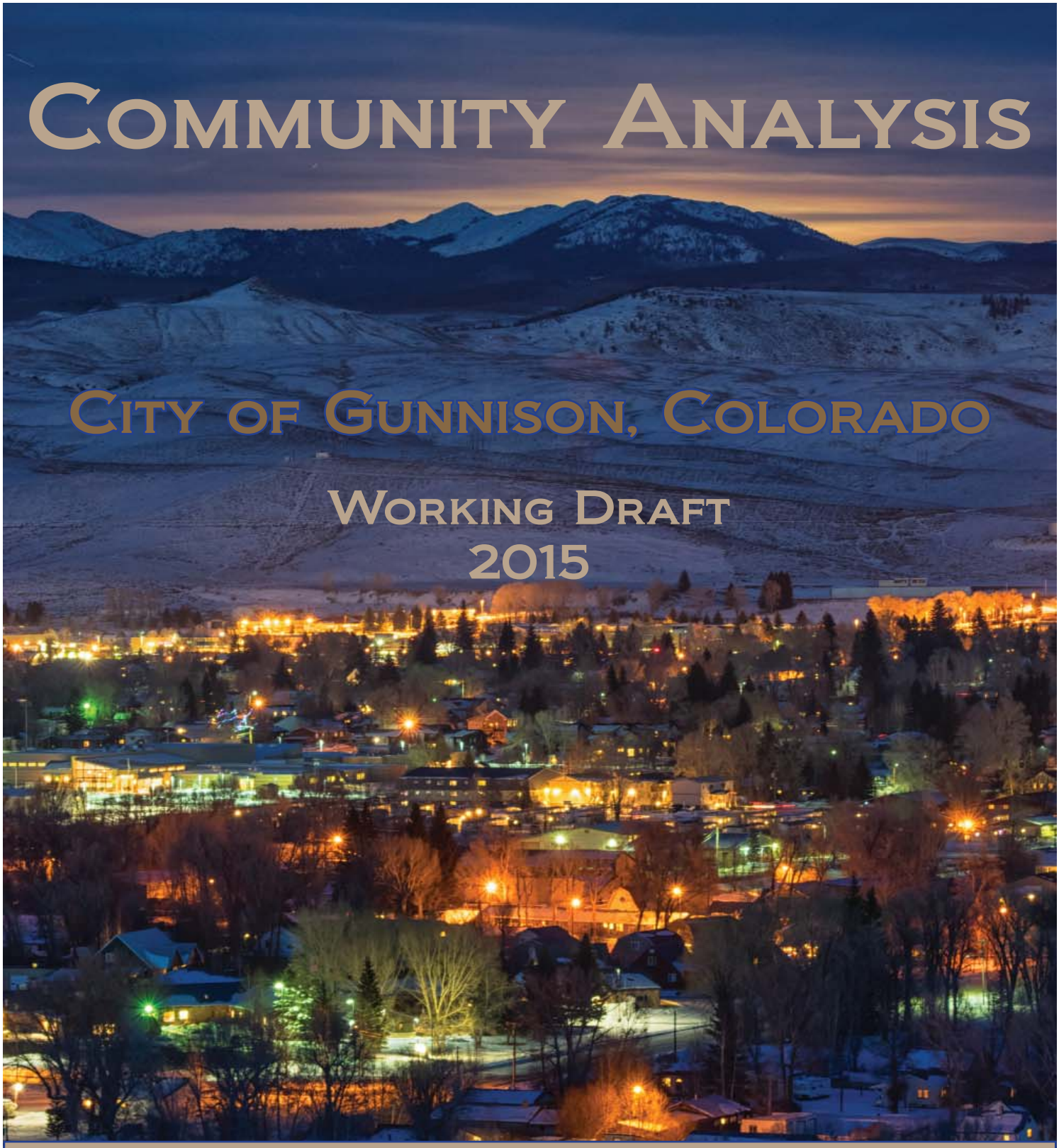
Community Analysis

City of Gunnison, Colorado

Working Draft
2015



This Community Analysis comprises the first step in the development of the City of Gunnison Comprehensive Plan. It provides measures and observations pertaining to the existing conditions of the community.

Matt Burt photo

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1.1 Introduction

This Community Analysis comprises the first step in the development of the City of Gunnison Comprehensive Plan. It provides measures and observations pertaining to the existing conditions, future community trend projections, and input observations established during the public engagement process which included personal interviews, public workshops and a community survey. Observations established in this analysis highlight trends and potential externalities that may influence the future of the community. Data sources are varied and many observations are based on the community input process as well as sources such as the Colorado State Demographers Office.

Numerical figures and statistical trends, while essential to understanding the community trends, do not necessarily tell the community's story. Therefore, this analysis also presents anecdotal and historic community perspectives, because a contextual understanding of the community is seen as being crucial in planning for the future.

The first Master Plan was completed in 1980. Subsequent updates occurred in 1986, 1997 and 2007. Since 2007, three other significant comprehensive planning documents have been completed: the West Gunnison Neighborhood Plan, the VanTuyl Ranch Management Plan, and the City of Gunnison Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Many goals and objectives stated in these previous plans have been accomplished, while other aspirations continue through time and have the same relevance today that they did in the past.

Eliciting a Community Vision is an integral element of the upcoming planning process and this draft Community Analysis is intended to help facilitate a meaningful dialog for the citizenry as this vision is derived. This plan is composed of eleven sections and the reader may easily review subject matter by the related section headings. Each section concludes with observations that may help tie specific content of the individual sections to the larger community context.

1.2 Brief History of Gunnison

The Gunnison country is an area of lush valleys, high mountains, deep canyons and fast flowing rivers. Recorded human habitation in the Gunnison country dates back approximately 12,000 years, as indicated by evidence found at the Mountaineer Archeological Site on Tenderfoot Mountain (W Mountain). This Folsom Period site is significant because it contains one of the oldest sites found in North America. This discovery, made in 2003, was identified as one of the top 100 scientific finds of the year by Discovery Magazine.

The Ute Indians inhabited Colorado long before the first Spanish explorations of the Western Slope. The Ute Indian culture does not address folklore about migration, believing that "our people lived here since the beginning of time." Chief Ouray was one of the most famous tribal members in U.S. history because of his negotiations with the government. Ouray traveled to Washington, D.C. in 1863 to discuss a treaty with President Abraham Lincoln. Ouray told Lincoln and other government officials: "We do not want to sell a foot of our land; that is the opinion of our people. The whites can go and take the land and come out again. We do not want them to build houses here." Unfortunately for the Utes, they were forced to sign 4 treaties - 1863, 1868, 1873, and 1880 - which moved them out of the Gunnison country and Western Colorado so miners, ranchers and farmers could come in.

During the 1700's, several Spanish expeditions explored western Colorado and the Gunnison country looking for gold, and attempting to find an overland route to California. Following the Lewis and Clark and Zebulon Pike explorations in the American West in the early 1800's, fur trappers or mountain men searched for beaver - "Black Gold" - in the Gunnison country. In 1853 the U.S. Congress appropriated $150,000 for 4 railroad surveys in the American West hoping to choose the best one for a transcontinental railroad. One of the surveys was led by Captain John Gunnison who came over Cochetopa Pass and passed through the Gunnison country in the Fall of that year. Gunnison was later killed by Paiute Indians in Utah but his expedition found that the Gunnison country was not fit for a transcontinental line. There were too many canyons and steep terrain and the Indians told the expedition of the heavy snow and cold weather that was prevalent.

The great surveyor, Ferdinand Hayden came to the Gunnison country in the 1870's as part of a U.S. sponsored GREAT SURVEYS OF THE AMERICAN WEST. Hayden climbed Mt. Teocali near the Elk Mountains and spied two high mountains nearby - he named them "the Crested Buttes." Later, one was renamed Gothic Mountain and the other Crested Butte Mountain. Hayden surveyed much of the Gunnison country and one of his men, Samuel Emmons, has a mountain named for him outside of Crested Butte.

The decade of the 1860's was dominated by placer miners who flocked into the Gunnison country, panning every mountain stream. Pockets of prospectors were found in Taylor Park, Washington Gulch, the head of the Crystal River, Gold Creek, and Snowblind Gulch near White Pine. Approximately 1,000 prospectors took out between $3,000,000 and $6,000,000 in gold during the 1860's.

The Gunnison country's great cattle industry began at the junction of the Tomichi and Gunnison Rivers in 1871 when the U.S. government established a cow camp. The cow camp supplied cows for the nearby Los Pinos Indian Reservation. The following year, Alonzo Hartman came in to head the camp; he eventually became one of the town fathers of Gunnison and one of the founders of the cattle industry.

Sylvester Richardson, who had been in the Gunnison country in 1873 with the Parsons Geological Expedition, returned the following year with the Gunnison Colony of twenty settlers. They hoped to become farmers but a 70 day growing season forced them into ranching. Silver was found in the Gunnison country in 1879 and 25,000 to 40,000 people rushed in. Soon, the promising mining was known as "the Gateway to the Elk Mountains" and along with Gunnison became a supply, smelting and railroad hub. The thousands of people in the Gunnison country created a boom for the ranching industry because of the great demand for horses. The town of Gunnison was incorporated in 1880 but because of a split over real estate, the location of railroad lines, and politics, it was divided into West Gunnison and East Gunnison for the next few years.

Railroads, crucial to the development of the Gunnison country, came into Gunnison in the early 1880's. The Denver and Rio Grande narrow gauge was the first to arrive - coming in from Denver, the Arkansas River Canyon and over Marshall Pass, and then into Gunnison in August, 1881. The Rio Grande was followed in 1882 by the famed Denver South Park and Pacific narrow gauge which came in through the highest railroad tunnel in the world - the Alpine Tunnel. The railroads insured the success of the ranching and mining industries.

The silver boom ended in the early 1880's. The Gunnison country did not have the high grade ore of the nearby San Juans. Crested Butte turned to coal with 8 major coal mines and became one of the top coal towns in the state with a population of 1500. Most of the miners from that coal town came from Austria, Italy and what later would become Yugoslavia and Czechoslavakia. Gunnison became the center of one of the great ranching regions of the United States.

In 1911, the Colorado State Normal School opened in Gunnison with 11 students, as a teacher education 2 year school. The two year college became Western State College, a 4 year institution in 1923 and in 2012, the college became Western State Colorado University with world class programs in Environmental Studies, Geology, Archaeology, Exercise and Sports Science and Land and Resource Management. The university today is a $60,000,000 business in the Gunnison country.

In 1956, the federal Upper Colorado River Storage Act created a series of dams in the Upper Colorado River Basin to hold water to meet downstream commitments to Arizona, Nevada and California. Nine years later, the largest body of water in Colorado, the Blue Mesa Reservoir, was created when the Blue Mesa Dam was built. Nearly a million acre feet of water is stored in the reservoir which is the second largest tourist attraction in Colorado with a million tourists a year. Two other dams also exist downstream from Blue Mesa - Morrow Point and Crystal.

The Gunnison country was hit with two disasters in the early 1950's. The coal mines at Crested Butte closed and in 1955, the Denver and Rio Grande pulled its tracks. From that time on, the Gunnison country has had three economic drivers - the great ranching industry, Western State Colorado University and tourism. The Crested Butte Ski Area opened during the winter of 1961-62 and today has 350,000 skier visits a year. The Monarch Ski Area across the Divide, 42 miles east of Gunnison began in 1939 and has 186,000 skier visits a year and also has an impact on the Gunnison country.

During the last decade (2004-2014) the Gunnison country has greatly been influenced by the federal government which owns 79% of all the land, the coal industry highlighted by mines near Somerset, tourism - the second largest industry in the county, and the ski industry. The Gunnison country looks toward the future with optimism. The university, with 2200 students, has a strategic plan to raise enrollment to 3,000 during the next decade and is a sleeping giant. Tourism remains strong and the Gunnison country has attracted people from al over the world because of its great amount of public land, the Blue Mesa Reservoir, winter sports, and the unbelievable scenery of the Rocky Mountains.

2.1 Population

Population change is largely dependent upon changes in the region and local economy which influence the number and type of employment opportunities and their associated earnings and benefits. Gunnison's historic population trends[1] reflect this dependency, and Section 4 (Economics and Fiscal Functions) will address the contemporary economic drivers affecting the community.

Population growth descriptions from the 1880s boom portrayed a transient community with approximately 8,000 city residents and 40,000 total persons residing in the county. However, the hard rock mining bust (late 1880s) was followed by an agrarian economic dominance, and slow population growth trends occurred through the middle of the 20th Century.

Population growth dynamics beginning in the 1960s corresponds to the development of Crested Butte Mountain Resort (CBMR) and the growing tourism economy. This spurred modest population growth in the city of Gunnison and more rapid growth in the upper Gunnison Basin and other resort communities on the western slope of Colorado.

Population growth trends on Colorado's western slope between 1990 and 2007 were robust. During this period Summit, Garfield, and Eagle counties along the I-70 corridor saw growth of 15 to 47 percent per decade, due to the growth in the resort industry; this growth trend was greatest during the 1990s. Mesa County, which is influenced by oil and natural resource extraction, grew 12 to 20 percent per decade. During this time, growth rates in Gunnison County averaged about 2.5 percent per year and the city's population growth hovered at about one percent annually.

Growth distribution in Gunnison County during the past 25 years has been significantly skewed, with the largest population increases found in unincorporated portions of the County in the upper East River Valley and areas surrounding Gunnison.

Population Growth Comparison					
Year	Other County Areas	CB / MT CB	3-Mile Area	City of Gunnison	County
1990	3,078	1,214	1,345	4,636	10,273
2000	3,533	2,250	2,738	5,468	13,989
2010	4,254	2,280	2,908	5,867	15,309
Average Annual Growth	1.9%	4.4%	5.8%	1.3%	2.5%

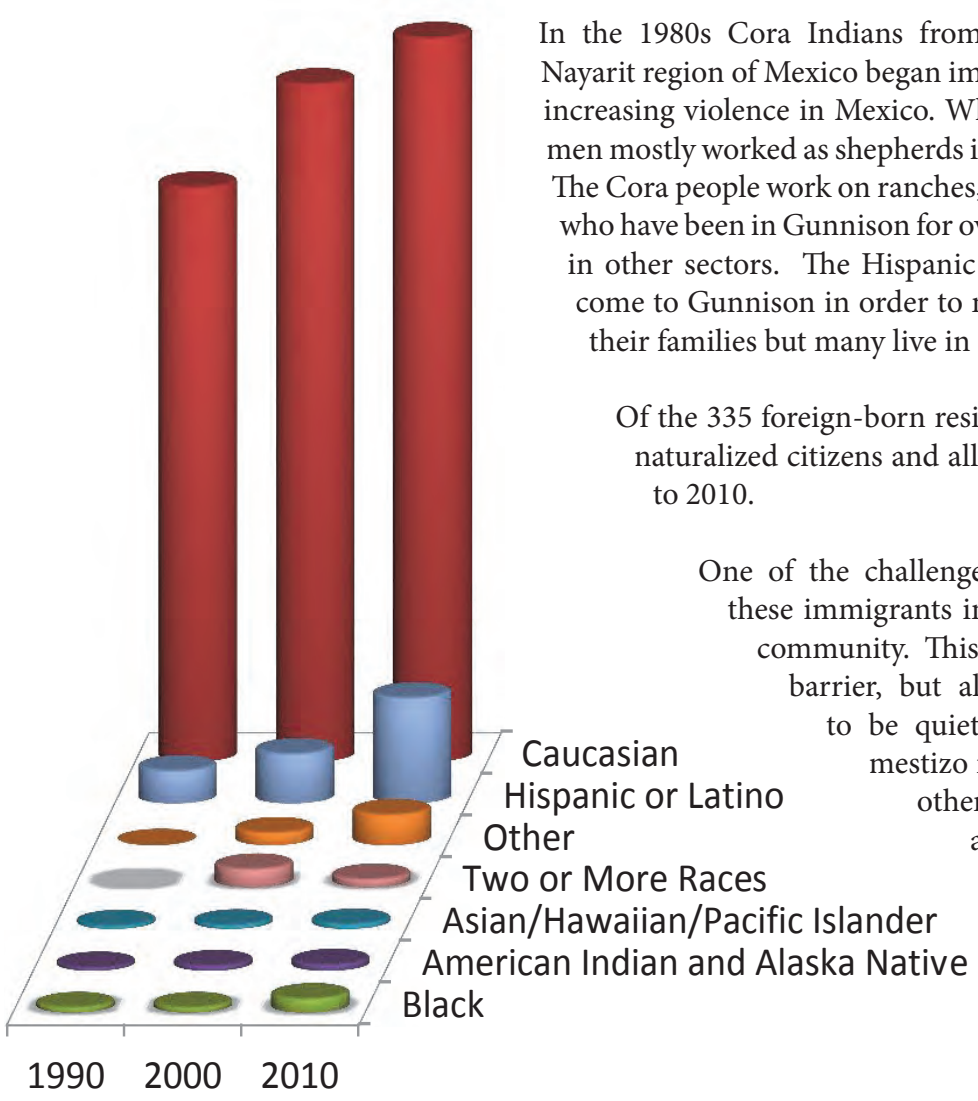
Based on State Demographer population growth projections, future population growth rates for Gunnison County are projected to average about 1.2 percent annually for the next 27 years.

Projected Population Growth Rates - Gunnison County						
July 2010	July 2015	July 2020	July 2025	July 2030	July 2035	July 2040
15,324	15,507	17,987	19,217	20,273	21,222	22,107
Projected Percentage Change						
	1.6	1.7	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.8

1 Data related to population; race and ethnicity; gender; age; households; employment; and education are from the US Census for the years indicated.

2.2 Race and Ethnicity

The population of the city and county of Gunnison has become more culturally diverse during the past two decades. Although the total population has increased, the Caucasian population has remained at about 92 percent while the Hispanic, Black and "Other" sectors have increased. This can be attributed to several factors.



In the 1980s Cora Indians from Jesus Maria in the mountainous Nayarit region of Mexico began immigrating to Colorado to escape the increasing violence in Mexico. When they first came to Colorado the men mostly worked as shepherds in the Uncompahgre National Forest. The Cora people work on ranches, in construction and in hotels. Many who have been in Gunnison for over a decade have found employment in other sectors. The Hispanic people who have immigrated have come to Gunnison in order to make better lives for themselves and their families but many live in sub-standard housing conditions.

Of the 335 foreign-born residents of Gunnison in 2012, 52 were naturalized citizens and all had entered the United States prior to 2010.

One of the challenges the community faces is helping these immigrants integrate into the social fabric of the community. This is partly because of the language barrier, but also because the Cora people tend to be quiet and stick to themselves and the mestizo immigrants do not intermingle with other residents of the valley. Gunnison attracts residents from other parts of the country as well. Of the 5,522 people living in Gunnison in 2012, 58 percent were born in another state.

2.3 Age of the Population

The City of Gunnison, with a median age of 23, is the youngest incorporated city in the state of Colorado. Obviously this figure is significantly influenced by the student population at Western State Colorado University. Since 1990, 90 percent of the population of the city has been less than age 60.

Most parts of the country are contending with an aging population but Gunnison, largely because of the university's influence, is actually getting younger. In 2000, 17.7 percent of the population was born between 1956 and 1965; in 2010 the number decreased to 6.45 percent. Winter climate is a primary factor for this migration trend; many people who reach retirement age choose to go to warmer climates. Also, there is a constant replenishing of college-age residents that makes Gunnison's demographic profile unusual. This Census demographic may be skewed by the absence of retired residents who wintered in warmer climates during the winter/spring when the 2010 Decennial Census occurred.

2.4 Life Expectancy

According to "The Places in the US Where People Live the Longest," a March, 2014 report released by the Business Insider, Gunnison County has the highest life expectancy for men in the United States (82 years); and the life expectancy for women in Gunnison is the fourth highest in the country (84 years). Life expectancy is based on a variety of factors including gender, race, income, smoking habits, physical activity, hypertension, and obesity. The report is based on health statistics from 1989-2010. This data is based on indirect indicators about health: Gunnison has low levels of inactivity, smoking and obesity; it also has a few wealthy people which drive up the median income. So while the data could be a bit misleading, Gunnison does have a large number of persons who live a healthy lifestyle and a few wealthy people living in the area, both of which contribute to a very healthy population.

2.5 Educational Attainment

The Gunnison community is well-educated, with 89.9 percent of the population being high school graduates or higher and 36.7 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher. Because of the relatively young age of the population of Gunnison and the influence of the university, in 2010, 46 percent of the population over age three was enrolled in school.

2.6 Household Composition

The average number of persons per household in Gunnison is 2.20. Since 1990, Gunnison has had more "non-family" households than "family" households. In 1990, 15 percent of the family households had a female head of household. By 2010 female heads of family households increased to 23 percent. For non-family households, about 61 percent are comprised of a single person alone. These household composition trends are a national phenomenon and will be a significant influence the future of many communities including Gunnison. In Gunnison, household composition is also influenced by the university students and young median age of the population.

2.7 Observations - Demographic Trends

- Population change is largely dependent upon changes in the region and local economy, i.e., changes in the number and type of employment opportunities and their associated earnings and benefits.

- The largest population increases in Gunnison County have occurred in the unincorporated portions of the County in the upper East River Valley, while population increases in and around the city of Gunnison were much slower.

- The population of the city and county of Gunnison has become more culturally diverse during the past two decades, and between 2000 and 2010, the Latino population grew by 80 percent. These ethnic shifts reflect national trends, and on a local level have affected social service needs, educational practice and other government service functions.

- The City of Gunnison, with a median age of 23, is the youngest incorporated city in the state of Colorado.

- Published life expectancy rates for Gunnison are significant and these figures are attributed to life-style choices and the relatively high affluence level of seniors in the community.

- The composition of households has been shifting both locally and nationally from traditional family units to single provider households and households comprised of non-related members. This demographic shift will likely influence market shifts for housing types and increase demand for smaller units and a variety of multi-family units.

- The average number of persons per household since 1990 has remained constant at 2.2 persons per household.

3.1 Historical Context

Today's developed urban layout is largely the product of the first subdivision plat maps for the towns of Gunnison and West Gunnison which were recorded in the 1880s. These early plat maps have wide streets, enabling a four-horse wagon team an adequate turning radius. Individual lots, with a general dimension of 25 feet by 125, are the norm of these early plat maps. These plat layouts provide easy and convenient circulation that still benefits the community. They also provide a relatively dense land use pattern, which helps to facilitate efficient utility service extensions.

Current city land use patterns are also influenced by the regional rail system and the location of the local rail yard facilities. Commerce functions were located along the main streets and residential uses were planned and integrated into the plats.

Land use decisions implemented during the 20th Century also have profound influence upon the current land use pattern. Land dedications in 1901 associated with the establishment of the Colorado State Normal School (now Western State Colorado University) are a significant factor affecting the today's land uses. In 1934 Ben Jorgensen dedicated land to the City for the development of Jorgensen Park, which provides an appealing city entrance to this day. Purchasing the VanTuyl Ranch for the protection of the city's well-head recharge area fulfilled not only that intention, but is also providing recreation and educational opportunities for the community. Other examples include the development of the County Fairgrounds at its present location, development the Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport and several annexations throughout the past that have increased the incorporated land area.

3.2 Existing City Land Uses

Downtown Central Business District. The downtown area provides many amenities including the Arts Center, restaurants, galleries, retail shops and services. Over the last few decades there have been multiple attempts to explore the physical design elements of the downtown district to determine whether there are capital improvements that may help enhance the neighborhood functions of the Central Business District (CBD). It is important to understand that downtown revitalization is a fairly complex topic and generally involves discussions including:

- architectural thematic style (design guidelines and standards);
- streetscape design (landscaping, street furniture, lighting, signage, utilitarian items);
- traffic circulation needs;
- parking demand and proximity;
- pedestrian and non-motorized circulation;
- utility service functions;
- snow removal;
- prioritizing capital expenditures needs; and,
- anticipating budget implications for long term maintenance needs.

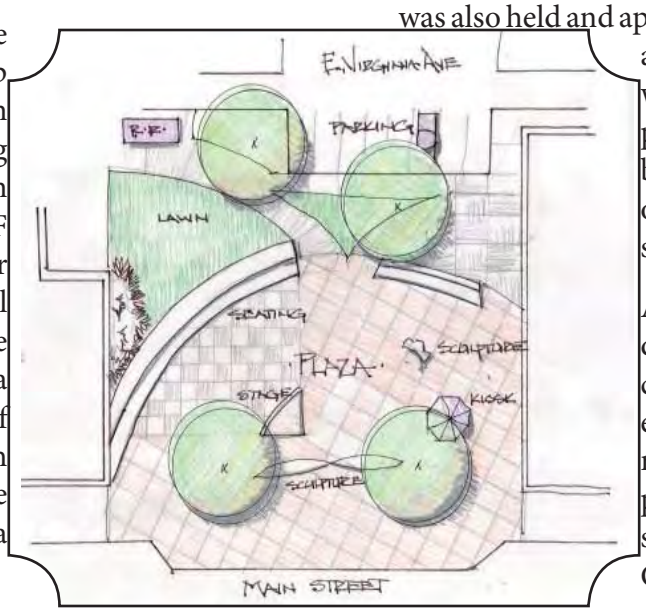
Community discussions regarding downtown revitalization go back to the mid-1990s. In 1995 City Council took on the topic and began a process to develop a Downtown Improvement Plan, although a plan was never adopted.

At that time, the Main Street irrigation ditch system terminated on the street-edge and the sidewalk section was approximately eight feet wide. Streetscape trees were immature or did not exist, and planters were sparsely distributed along the road corridors. The asphalt mat was deteriorated on Main Street and Tomichi Avenue.

Actions taken as a result of the 1995 downtown revitalization process were significant. The City's capital project expenditures, implemented over a four year period, exceeded $396,000. Streetscape improvements included two-foot sidewalk extensions on both sides of the first three blocks of North Main Street; a planter and additional pedestrian space was developed in front of the Arts Center; utilitarian features (benches, trash receptacles, etc.) were added; a water feature was developed at the IOOF park; a drip irrigation system was added to sustain the new street tree plantings; and the intersection of Tomichi Avenue and Main Street was repaved with a concrete apron.

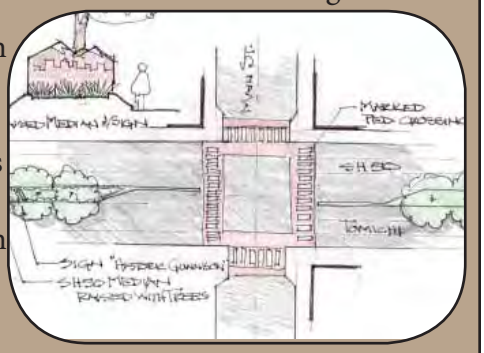
Revitalization actions have continued to take place since the 1990s. Perhaps the most striking change has been the increase of organized activities occurring downtown. For example, the Farmers Market is now a summer mainstay, but in 2004 when it was first proposed there was a community debate about the ramifications of the street closure. The IOOF Park has also become the staging point for numerous events including the Growler Bike Race, the Colorado Pro-Challenge, and July 4th events. In 2014, the City purchased the IOOF Park from the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

Between 2008 and 2012 the Council once again took up the discussion of downtown revitalization. During this timeframe, discussion focused on the IOOF Park and the potential for creating a pedestrian mall area. The west half of the 100 block of East Virginia Avenue; the northern half of the 100 block of South Main Street; and half of the 100 block of West Georgia Street were identified as possible sites for a road closure. At that time, Virginia Avenue (IOOF Park) seemed to be the primary site for considering a pedestrian mall.



In 2009 the City invited a Community Revitalization Partnership team to visit the community and critique the physical attributes of the downtown area. The resulting Community Revitalization Partnership Report addressed a streetscape plan that focused on the following elements:

- pedestrian usability
- landscaping
- utilitarian items
- signage
- irrigation system
- parking



The Community Revitalization Partnership Report noted that the city lacked a branding identity; there was little collaboration between downtown interest groups; historic architecture in downtown helps create a unique downtown district; downtown is easy to walk; pedestrians can easily commute to the downtown; and the night lighting of the street helps to denote an active area.

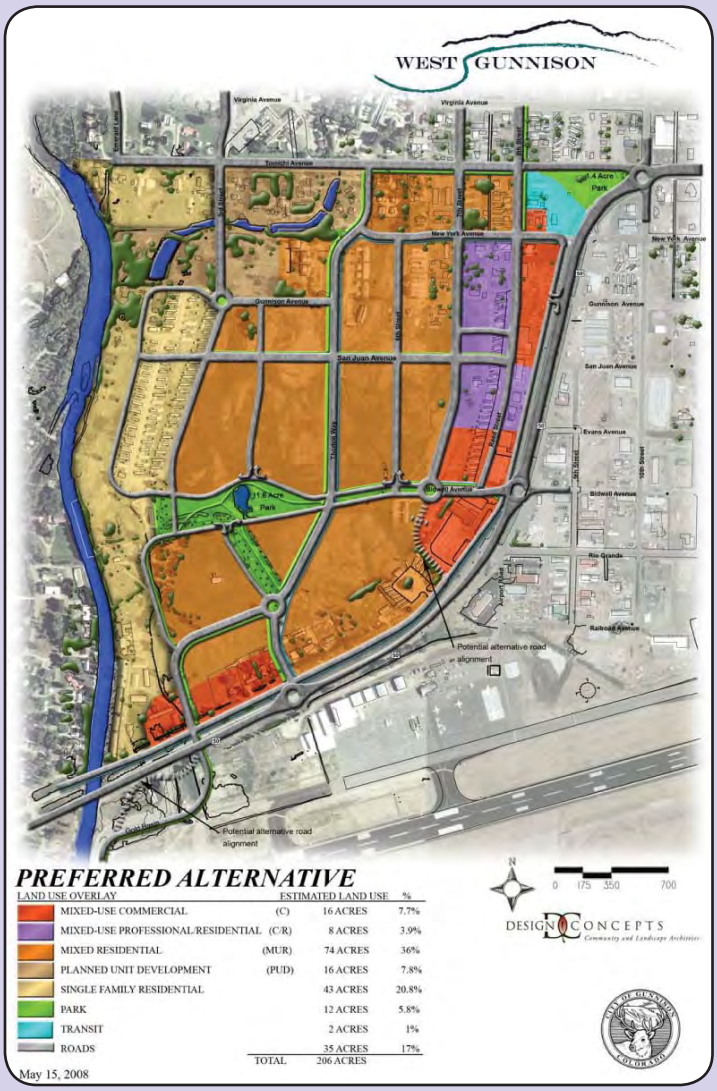
In 2010 the City embarked upon a public outreach process regarding the pedestrian mall revitalization project. A survey was developed by City staff and distributed to 354 members of the Chamber of Commerce. A total of 97 surveys were completed and returned. An open house was also held and approximately 20 community members attended the event. The consensus was that a pedestrian park would be a positive attribute for the community, but it was also recognized that some of businesses could experience significantly negative effects.

A combination of factors stalled the discussion of the pedestrian mall concept. These included concerns expressed by potentially affected retailers who would lose street-front parking; the effects of diminished street connectivity; the fact that the City did not own the IOOF Park; the

costs associated with developing site plans and civil engineering plans for the project; and, other funding priorities that were considered to be very important for maintaining community service levels.

It is important to note that the downtown is not necessarily broken. Actions taken during the past 20 years, including easy parking access, have been integral in attracting tourists to downtown. The sidewalk system is intriguing and inviting to visitors. Sandwich board signs help retailers reach clients, and merchandise displays also attract shoppers. The existing street trees are becoming more mature with taller canopies that are less obtrusive to the walking experience. Organized events are also helping to stimulate downtown activity.

West Gunnison. Several significant land use actions have been initiated since the adoption of the *City of Gunnison Master Plan* (2007). The *West Gunnison Neighborhood Plan*, adopted in 2008, focused on defining appropriate strategies for the infill development in the southwestern quadrant of the city. Water and sewer services in this part of the city were historically served by a metropolitan district and there was no organized plan to address development of the area. The plan focused on extending a street grid system into this under-served area and on providing connectivity to the existing city street system; the plan proposes sidewalks and trails to local streets; identifies the conceptual engineering design needs to manage stormwater runoff; describes the future land use types and densities; and elaborates upon utility services and capabilities. At the time the *West Gunnison Neighborhood Plan* was adopted, 83 acres were undeveloped. In 2014 approximately 53 acres remain undeveloped. The majority of the undeveloped area is in Residential Mixed Use (RMU) or Multi-family Residential (R-3) zoning. Several natural constraints, including wetlands, floodplains and irrigation ditches are found in the neighborhood and will affect development plans in some of the planning area.



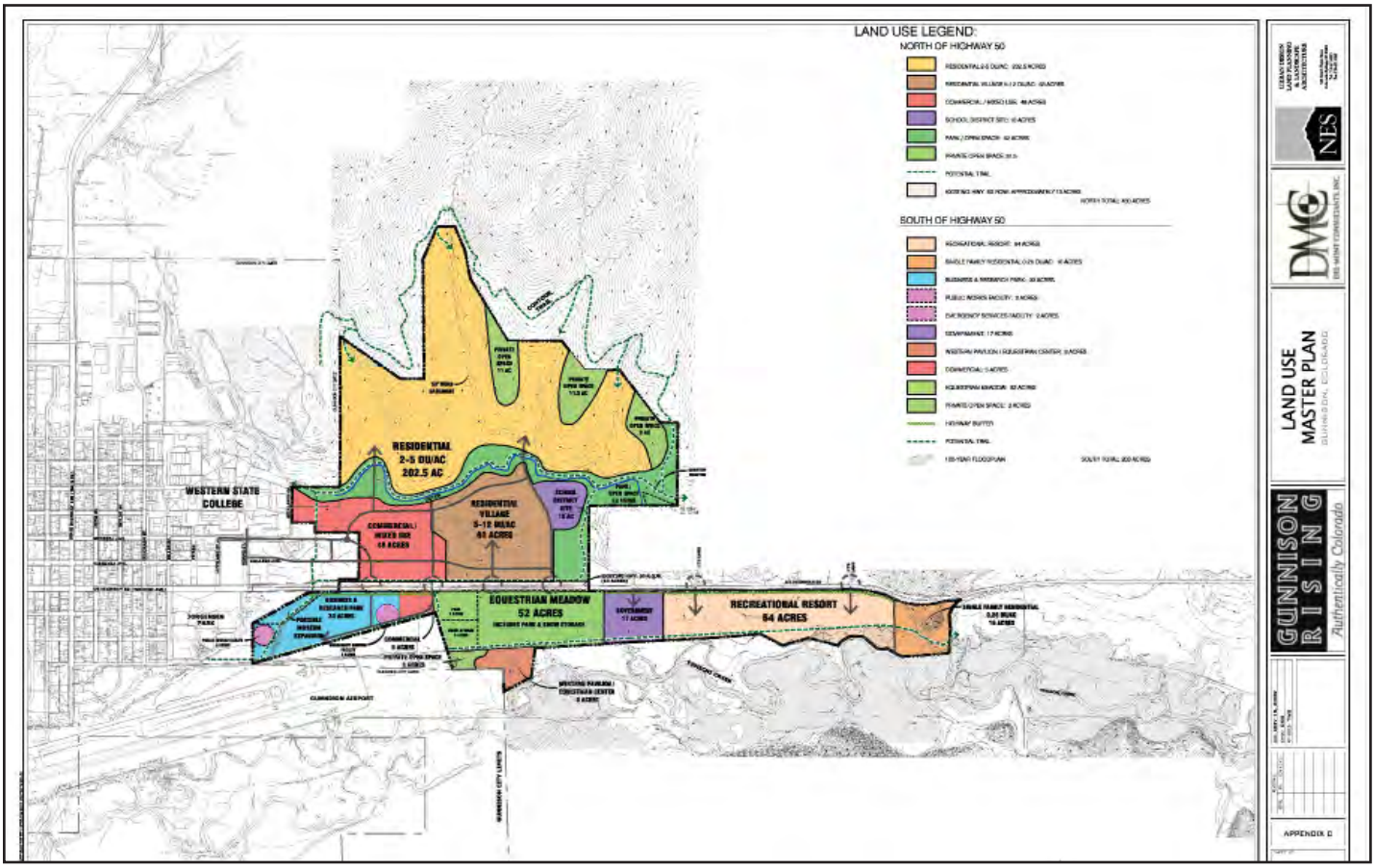
Gunnison Rising. In 2007 the City entered into discussions with Gunnison Valley Properties, LLC about the potential of annexing the Gunnison Rising property located directly east of the city. Discussions and processing of the annexation took approximately three years and was completed in early 2010. This annexation territory, encompassing approximately 633 acres, is bisected by US Highway 50 and extends nearly two miles past the previous city limits. The annexation was thoroughly deliberated in the public process and the developer and the City benefited because future development will follow a detailed master plan.

SECTION 3: LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

The annexation is zoned as a Planned Unit Development (PUD), and there are a variety of land uses envisioned for the site. Specific emphasis is placed upon the integration of land uses and street corridor extensions in relation to the Western campus and the other parts of the existing city urban core. Contemplated uses include residential, commercial development, open space and trails, an RV park, and a government campus area adjacent to the Tomichi Creek Wildlife Area. The land use types are summarized in the table below. The plan also includes a regional stormwater master plan and the *U.S. Highway 50 Access Control Plan* approved by the Colorado Department of Transportation.

Gunnison Rising Land Use Types			
Land Use Type	Acres	Maximum Units	Non-Residential Use
Single-Family Residential	16	4	Per Conditional Use
Residential	234	340	Per Conditional Use
Multi-Family Residential Village	73	270	Per Conditional Use
Commercial	5	N/A	20,000 sq.ft.
Commercial/Mixed Use	48	120	174,000 sq.ft.
Commercial RV Resort	64	350 sites	10,000 sq.ft.
Commercial Western Pavilion	12	N/A	I-Bar Pavilion
Industrial Modified Business & Research Park	37	N/A	250,000 sq.ft.
Government	17	N/A	70,000 sq.ft.
Open Space	114	N/A	N/A

There has been no development in Gunnison Rising as of January, 2015. The Commercial Western Pavilion (I-Bar Ranch) is being used for summer concerts and a road accessing the property directly from Highway 50 was constructed in spring 2014.



In 2012 the Western Foundation was gifted approximately 18 acres of land in and adjacent to Gunnison Rising, bordering the campus. A portion of the gifted land is located in the Wilson Tract subdivision which borders Highway 50. It also includes a portion of the hay meadow bordering Escalante Drive the eastern fringe of the campus. Preliminary discussions with WSCU representatives have indicated future land uses may include faculty housing and recreation fields. Development on this donated land area may require some changes to the approved Gunnison Rising PUD Development Standards, but conceptual ideas regarding these future uses seem to be compatible with the existing master plan documents of the PUD.

VanTuyl Ranch. The VanTuyl Ranch (Ranch) area was purchased from the United States Land Office in 1881and changed hands through the years until Raymond and Louis VanTuyl purchased the property in 1960. Portions of the original ranch were within the City boundary and other segments of the property were later annexed into the City. The original ranch included the Palisades and Gills Addition, VanTuyl Village, the 40-acre Community School site, and the Gunnison County Library site.

In 1993 the Ranch was purchased by the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) and was subsequently sold to the City of Gunnison and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). The property owned by the City was then leased back to Raymond VanTuyl, who continued agricultural operations and lived on the Ranch until his death in 2008.

A 1.25 mile segment of the City's Outer Loop trail system was constructed on the Ranch in 2008, which resulted in a significant increase of public use on the property. As the area becomes more accessible to the community it is important that the fundamental ecological processes, agricultural operations and water protection be maintained, and that the human influences on them are monitored and managed.

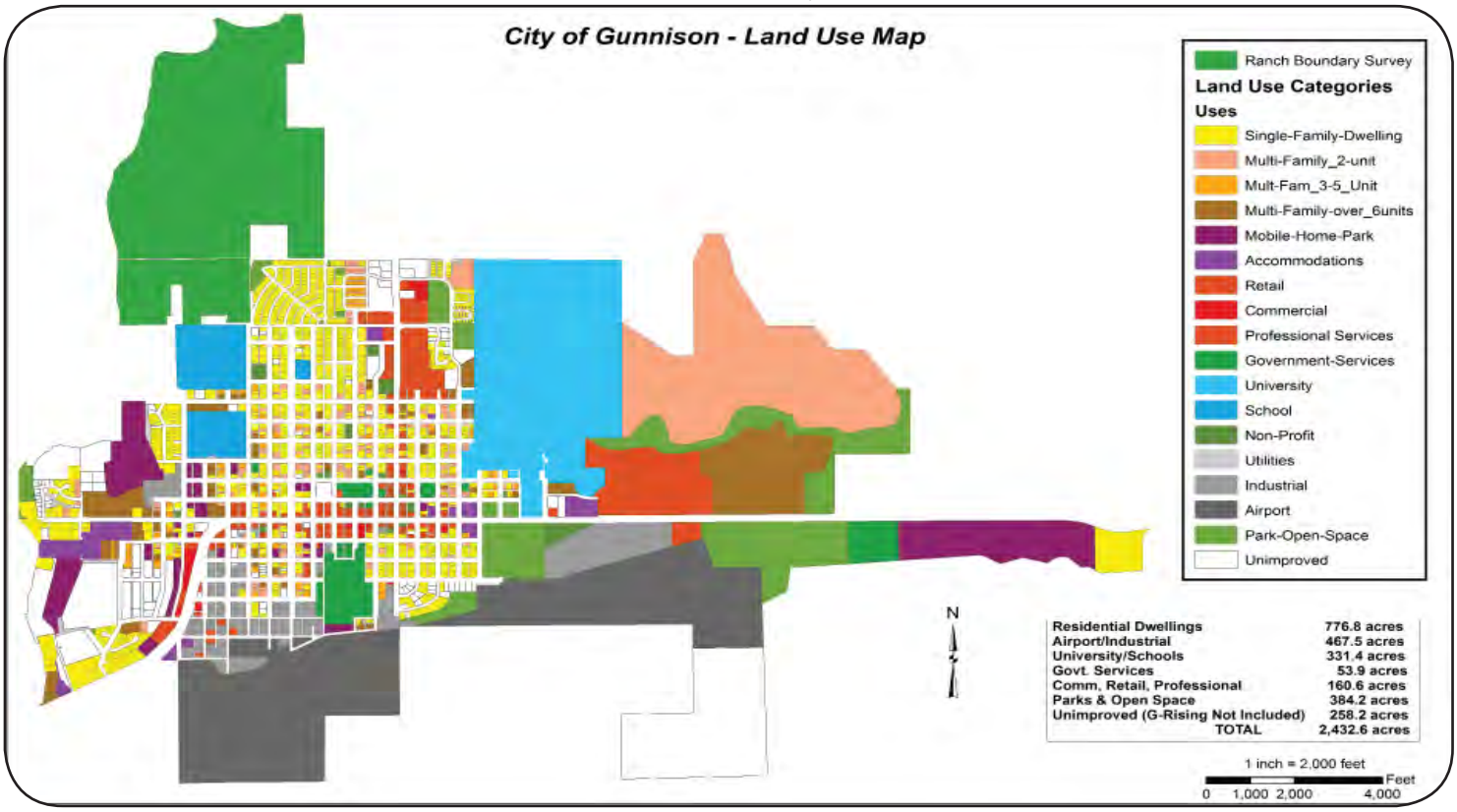
In spring 2009 the City received a $50,000 Planning Grant from the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Board (GOCO) to develop the *VanTuyl Ranch Management Plan* (Management Plan). The Management Plan provides the City with a means to use the Ranch to the greatest benefit to the citizens while protecting the valuable resources on the property and preserving the ranching heritage that has been so important to the Gunnison Valley.

Between 2008 and 2013 approximately 2.5 miles of additional trails were added to the Ranch, and in 2013 the Ranch was annexed into the city. Work on the Ranch properties continues today. In 2013 the Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and the City submitted a grant application to the Colorado Water

Conservation Board, and were awarded $450,000+ grant to design and complete a river restoration project focusing on improving fish habitat. The total grant value, which will be completed in two years, is approximately $750,000. The project will include a trail to access the Gunnison River for fishing and recreation.

Today's Land Use Profile. Historic actions discussed to this point highlight only some of the decisions influencing land use configurations found in the city today. The *City of Gunnison Master Plan* (2007) included a model of future development potential. This model indicated that the city was about 75 percent built out, and undeveloped land, excluding Gunnison Rising, could accommodate development for the next 25+ years, based on historic and existing building trends. The major undeveloped areas consisted of the VanTuyl subdivision on Highway 135 and the West Gunnison Neighborhood. The Gunnison Rising Annexation substantially increased the buildable area and it is anticipated that future development within the city will include infill development of the historical city boundary, and development of Gunnison Rising.

Growth and development during the recession of the past six years has been minimal. Between 2008 and 2013 new residential development was slow with the low point in 2011 when only two new dwelling units were constructed. During this same time period however, several major public construction projects occurred. The RE-1J School District initiated major remodels at Gunnison High School, the Gunnison Community School, and the Lake Elementary School. City Market completed a 10,000 square foot addition to the local store. Gunnison County constructed the County Public Safety Building and the City constructed the new police department building. During the past year (2013) the Blue Mesa Mall was subdivided and utilities were installed. During this same period the WSCU campus saw many new capital facility projects including construction of the Borick Building, new University Center and field house, and the remodel of Taylor Hall.

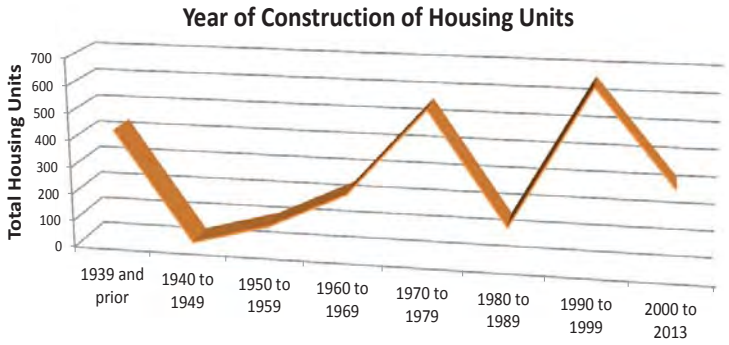


3.3 Housing Trends.

Home Ownership. Nationally, homeownership reached an all-time high of 66 percent in 2000. In Gunnison in the year 2000, only 43 percent of the housing units were owner-occupied and by 2010 that number decreased to 35 percent. Conversely, approximately 59 percent of the housing stock in the City is rental units, a function of rental demand driven by university students and transient employees who work in the service and recreation industries.

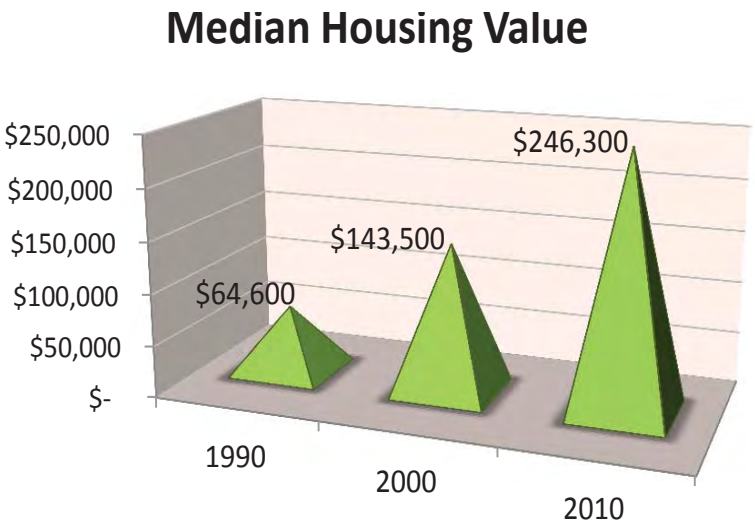
Since 1990 Census data has tracked renter-occupied housing units. The number of rental units in Gunnison has increased by 451 units since 1990, bringing the percentage of the housing inventory that is in rentals to 58 percent. The median contract rent has increased from $258 in 1990 to $801 in 2010 (a 68 percent increase). The vacancy rate of rentals is 11.8%.

Housing Inventory. The number of housing units increased 24 percent between 1990 and 2010, with the greatest increase between 1990 and 1999. In 2010, 90 percent of the housing units were occupied. This number includes 480 building permits issued in the city for new residential buildings between 1990 and 2014. The housing units included 347 single-family dwellings and 133 duplex and multi-family units. In 2014 Western State Colorado University has lodging capacity for 1,252; an increase of 23 beds since 1990.



Affordable Housing. In 1990 only four owner-occupied housing units were valued at over $150,000. In 2010 there were 622 housing units valued over $150,000. The median home values have changed as indicated in the adjacent chart.

Based on the data, between 2000 and 2010 the median household income increased 34 percent and median housing value increased 42 percent. Assuming a 30 year mortgage, 10 percent down payment, and five percent interest rate, only 18 percent of the population would be able to meet the minimum qualification to purchase a home but representations about affordability are skewed by the large university population and people employed in entry-level service positions, which are generally paid lower wages.



The 2014 *Land Development Code* (Section 13) establishes density bonus incentives for land uses that include the development of affordable housing. Incentives for affordable housing must comply with the provisions of the Gunnison Valley Regional Affordable Housing Guidelines. The City has also supported recent housing projects implemented by Habitat for Humanity and Community Rebuilds.

3.4 Adjacent Land Uses Outside of the City

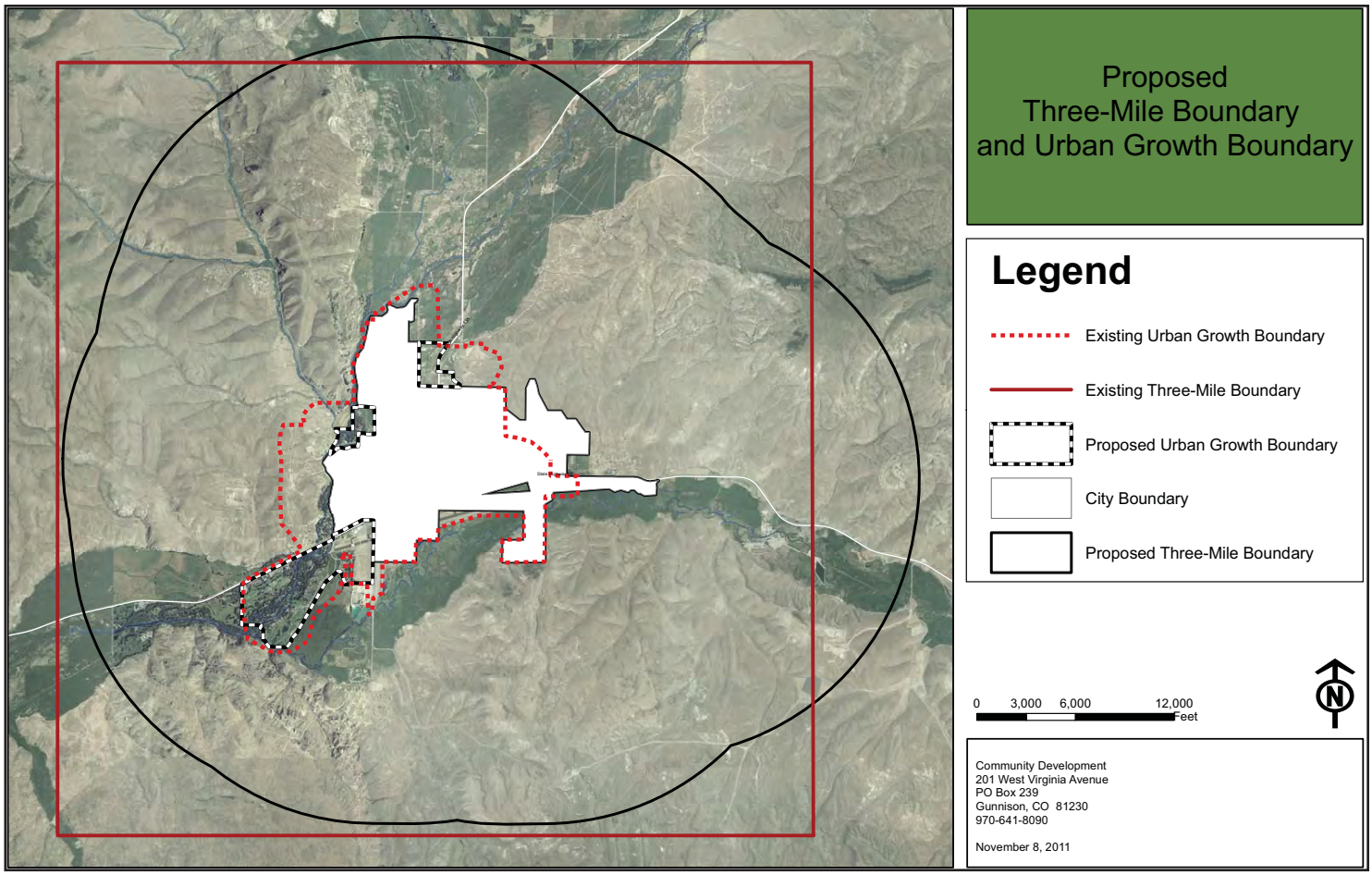
Land uses immediately outside the city limits are largely residential, with some existing commercial and agricultural uses in the entrance corridors. Moving further away from the urban fringe, large lot residential development becomes more prominent (e.g., one unit per five-acre parcel). While the large lot residential developments were historically popular and promoted by state laws exempting 35-acre tracts from certain local county review standards, they have some inherent disadvantages. Automobile dependence is one of the major problems with sprawling development and utility service capabilities are not efficient. Fortunately, the majority of development outside the city limits has been focused in subdivision areas that provide central utilities. In fact, during the past 30 years, over 70 percent of the new residential construction in the Three Mile planning area of unincorporated Gunnison County has occurred in subdivisions with central utility services. Buyers recognize value in land areas served by central water and sewer utilities, and development patterns can be influenced by decisions associated with extending central utilities.

Three-Mile and Urban Growth Boundaries. The Three Mile boundary is a standard measurement for the area that exists within three miles of 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 wastewater, domestic water, storm sewer and roadway utilities, and integrating compatible land uses with the existing urban core.

The purpose of an Urban Growth Boundary is to define specific geographic areas that can be efficiently serviced by existing or extended infrastructure facilities (roads, water, and wastewater) and public services (police, fire, etc.). Focusing development into an urban core increases service efficiencies, preserves open space and reduces automobile dependency.

The Urban Growth Boundary was first mapped in 1997 with projected land uses identified within that boundary. The UGB and Three-Mile boundaries have been revised by the Planning and Zoning Commission during their annual review of the City's Three Mile Plan. These amendments reflect changing conditions of the area including annexations, infrastructure extensions, and transportation system functions.

In many instances, historically developed areas around the city do not lend themselves to consideration for annexation and extension of City services. For example, Island Acres, west of the Gunnison River was platted without any real consideration of future extension of internal streets across the river. Furthermore, many parcels north of the city



were created by deeds before the time of subdivision powers and/or the platting of 35-acre tracts which is allowed by the Colorado State Statutes. Airport facilities located on the southern fringe of the city preclude the potential city expansion into Gold Basin. However, the most significant factor relates to providing municipal services for future development contemplated within today's incorporated city boundary.

Intergovernmental Planning and Service Agreements. 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. The Three Mile Plan/Urban Growth Boundary agreement has been helpful, but should be revised to reflect changes in the City's Master Plan and Land Development Code, and Gunnison County's Comprehensive Plan.

3.5 Observations - Land Use and Development Summary

- The 1995 downtown revitalization process was very successful in transforming the downtown streetscape appeal. Wider sidewalks, combined with coordinated utilitarian features and additional street trees helped transform the pedestrian experience. Numerous events occur in downtown area and the existing facilities are essential for conducting these events. Retailers have been allowed to use public sidewalks for merchandise displays and sandwich board sign advertising. However, narrowing Main Street has been viewed with mixed results. The narrow lane geometry is confining; large trucks are constrained by lane widths; vehicle lane changes can be difficult during peak hours; and exiting and entering parked cars on the street-side can be daunting.

- The concept of a pedestrian mall has a lengthy history. While a pedestrian mall may provide appeal to the downtown, it will impact street connectivity, reduce the amount of public parking, and eliminate direct parking access to several retail businesses.

- Prior to the annexation of Gunnison Rising, approximately 75 percent of the city land area was developed. The annexation of Gunnison Rising has resulted in a detailed *PUD Master Plan* addressing land use, transportation and utility services to accommodate future development of this area. The City has gained certainty for controlling the growth in this urban fringe area, and the developer has gained certainty through land use entitlements granted by the annexation.

- Prior to the Gunnison Rising Annexation, there was enough vacant land to accommodate population growth projections for 25 years.

- Affordable housing needs in the City differ significantly from the housing needs of Crested Butte, Mt. Crested Butte and the Upper East River Valley. A significant portion of the city housing demand is generated by WSCU students, and on-campus student housing facilities accommodate 50 percent of the student body. The City's *Land Development Code* incorporates an incentives-based approach for affordable housing. The City supported recent housing projects implemented by Habitat for Humanity, Community Rebuilds and the Gunnison Regional Housing Authority.
- Future development within the city limits depends upon private investment to finance development of infrastructure services to support these entitlement rights.

- Future extensions of City utilities and services into unincorporated lands governed by Gunnison County will be an important discussion topic in the upcoming *City Comprehensive Plan* update. A greater understanding of service capabilities for utilities, streets, and highway corridors will be an important element to consider during the public input process of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

- Listing of the Gunnison Sage-grouse as a Threatened Species has a direct and significant impact upon the future development both within the city boundary and in the three-mile area. While most of the

City's territory is not subject to the decision listing, the Gunnison Rising Annexation is subject to the Threatened Species listing.

- The *City of Gunnison Land Development Code*, adopted in 2014 after many years of debate, includes provisions to address protection of the environment as well as protecting the small-town character of the community. This includes solar setbacks; lighting standards to protect the dark skies and neighborhoods from excessive illumination; standards for alternative energy sources; pedestrian circulation facilities to reduce the need for vehicle transportation; natural resource protection standards; and large-scale retail development standards.

4.1 Population Change and Local Economy

As noted previously in Section 2, population change is largely dependent upon changes in the regional and local economy which impact the number and type of employment opportunities and their associated earnings and benefits. Population forecasts are prepared in the context of perceptions and/or forecasts of the local economy along with other factors that influence population change.

Employment trends in the city and county through the first half of the 20th Century were stable with agriculture, education and recreation (hunting/fishing) employment sectors being the mainstay of the local economy. Beginning in the 1960s the ski industry rose to prominence and continues to be a central component of the local economy, while the agriculture sector experienced steady declines since the end of World War II.

4.2 Employment Sector Trends

The early settlers of Gunnison turned to ranching when the mining boom ended in the late 1800s. According to the Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy, ranching is the oldest continuous industry in Gunnison County, employing upwards of 350 people on 175,000 acres. Ranching contributes $46 million annually to the local economy. Irrigated meadows produce 41,000 tons of hay each year and 15,000 head of cattle live in Gunnison County.

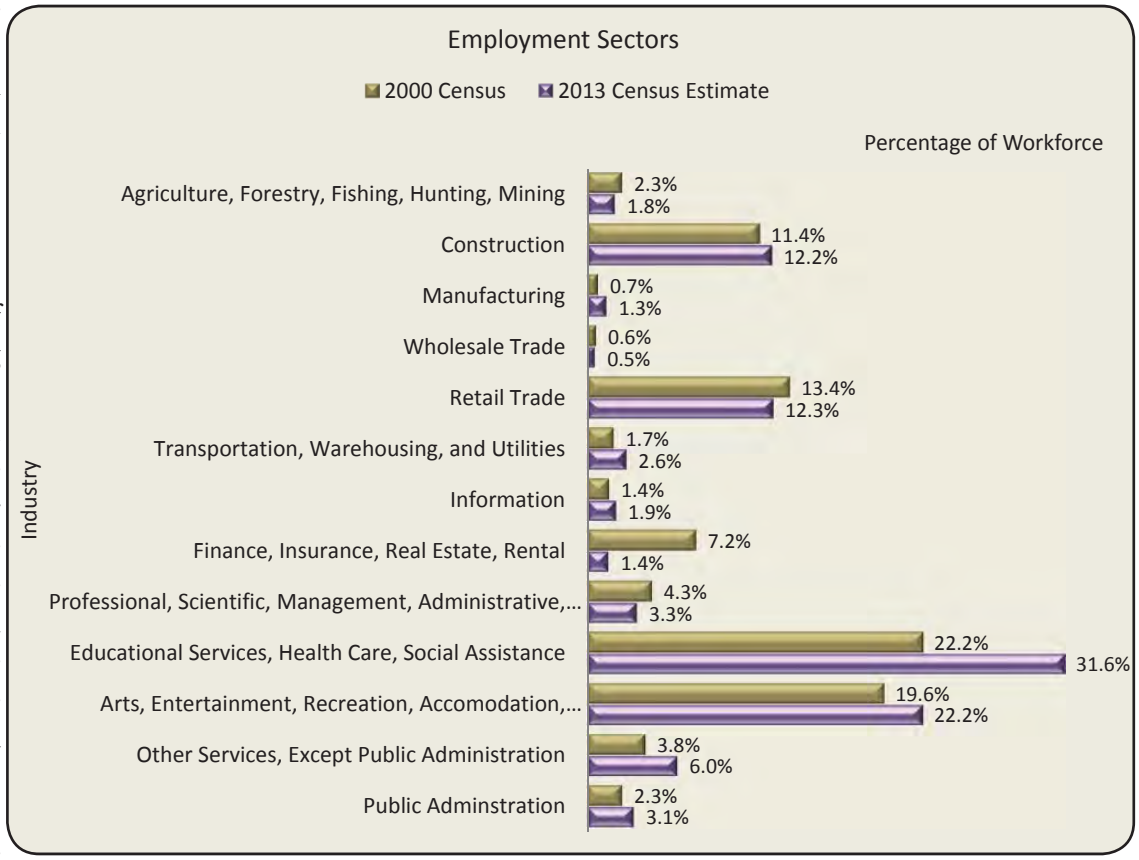
It is becoming increasingly difficult for ranching to be economically sustainable. According to www.citydata.com the average value of agricultural products sold per farm is $49,133 while the average production expense per farm is $43,255. The low profit margin of ranching combined with skyrocketing real estate prices in the 1990s and early 2000s threatened the ranching industry, resulting in conversion of some agricultural land to development. However, since 1996 efforts to conserve the agricultural heritage have resulted in the conservation of 30,000 acres of land in Gunnison County through the Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy.

While the economic influence of the community's historic agrarian dominance of the 20th Century has waned, the value of open space is enormous and is a dominant draw for tourism. A report titled *Economic Impact of the Livestock Industry in Gunnison County, Colorado* (CSU Extension Office, 2006), notes that agriculture uses account for approximately 96 percent of total private land use, implying that a small proportion of the county is currently found in high intensity or irreversible land uses (e.g., houses, stores, factories). However, like Colorado in general, the number of agricultural operations and the amount of land in agriculture are on a downward trend. From 1997 to 2002 the number of farms and ranches in Colorado decreased by 7 percent and the average size decreased by 15 percent suggesting some conversion of agricultural lands to higher intensity uses (Colorado Agricultural Statistics Service, 2005).

Major employment sectors in the city are related to education (the university and school district); federal and state natural resource managers (BLM, USFS, NPS); and tourism-related businesses (accommodations and food service).

During the past 30+ years the city service employment sector associated with tourism has increased significantly. Construction, professional services and retail sales jobs also increased significantly. Today, these employment sectors remain strong, but employment

numbers in agriculture and forestry, retail trade, finance insurance, and real estate have seen substantial reductions since the 2008 national recession.



Between 2000 and 2013 persons over the age of 16 who were working remained steady at 67 percent of the population (16 years and over). The employment sectors for Gunnison during this time saw a significant increase in educational, health and social services sectors. The percentage of the workforce in management and professional occupations decreased over the decade. This is likely due to people losing professional and management positions and replacing them with service occupations. Between 2000 and 2013 the City of Gunnison saw the following industries grow and decline as a percentage of the workforce:

Growth Industries From 2000 to 2013	
Industry	**Percent Change**
Construction	+0.83%
Manufacturing	+0.57%
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	+0.84%
Information	+0.47%
Educational, health, social services	+9.40%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	+2.56%
Public Administration	+0.79%
Other Services	+2.15%

Decline of Industries From 2000 to 2013	
Industry	**Percent Change**
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining	-0.45%
Wholesale Trade	-0.05%
Retail Trade	-1.09%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	-5.77%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management	-0.98%

4.3 Employment Trends

While the most recent national recession was very difficult for local businesses, and some establishments did not survive the economic downturn, several small scale basic sector businesses have made Gunnison their home and provide employment in the community while exporting their products and services.

Diversification of the basic sector, by promoting science, technology, and small business manufacturing, could be pursued to help balance cyclic trends associated with tourism, service and construction employment sectors.

4.4 Tourism Trends

Gunnison Chamber of Commerce. The Gunnison Chamber of Commerce tracks the number of people who come to the visitor center each day, excluding locals. During the past three years an average of 60,000+ customers visited the Gunnison Chamber offices annually.

Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism Association (TA). The Tourism Association is a destination marketing organization (DMO) dedicated to advertising and marketing Gunnison County as a year-round visitor destination. The TA operates as a contractor to the Local Marketing District (LMD) which is governed by the Gunnison County Board of Commissioners. According to the Tourism Association, in 2012, total direct spending by visitors to Gunnison County reached $150.6 million, generating more than $5.5 million in city taxes and representing more than 1,870 tourism-related jobs. This is an increase of 43.36 percent in total tourist spending between 2000 and 2012.

National Park System. Gunnison is a gateway community because it is an entrance host to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and the Curecanti National Recreation Area.

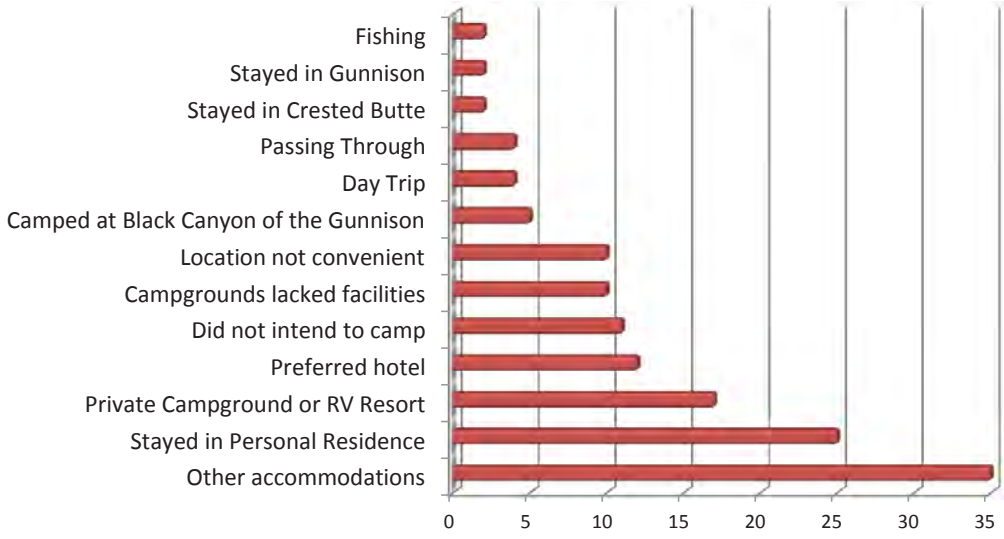
The Black Canyon, established as a National Park in 1999, had 175,852 visitors in 2013 and generated $10.2 million in local spending. In 2013 National Park Service (NPS) statistics indicate that 814,162 people visited the Curecanti National Recreation Area and spent $33.3 million near the park. Visitor spending at the Black Canyon and Curecanti supported 519 jobs in 2013.

The correlation between visitor statistics during drought years in the past 14 years span seems to be strong; the three drought years of 2002, 2012, and 2013 correspond to the lowest three years of recorded visitations during the drought and recession.

The NPS conducted a visitor study in 2010. Of those who responded, 47 percent were from Montrose, Mesa, Gunnison, and El Paso counties. The survey found that 75 percent of the visitors obtained information about the Curecanti NRA prior to their visit either from previous visits (51percent); word of mouth (40 percent); or from the Curecanti NRA website (31 percent). Fifty four percent indicated that they would use the park website to obtain information for future visits. This indicates that Chamber of Commerce visitations and the Curecanti Recreation Area headquarters are not visitors' main source of information and that the internet and websites have a major influence on tourism.

The survey also reported that the average length of stay was 2.2 days at Curecanti and 4.8 days within a 50-mile radius of Gunnison. Approximately 30 percent of the visitors who stayed overnight in the area camped at the Curecanti NRA – that is to say, many park visitors stay at other locations in the Basin, but include the park visit as part of their vacation venue. The chart summarizes the reasons visitors did not stay at the recreation area:

Reasons Visitors Did Not Camp at Curecanti



Crested Butte Mountain Resort (CBMR). As a destination ski resort, CBMR has also endured the impacts of the national recession and drought during the past several years. In the late 1990s annual reports exceeded 550,000 skier days. Conversely, during the 2011-2012 season, the resort saw a 15.7 percent decline in overall skier visits and a 10 percent drop in season pass visits. The resort was also more than 15 percent down in destination visits. CBMR attributed the drop in attendance to the weather, but the decline in airline seats into the valley also played a role. There were about 11 percent fewer seats flying into the Gunnison-Crested Butte Airport compared to the 2010-2011 ski season.

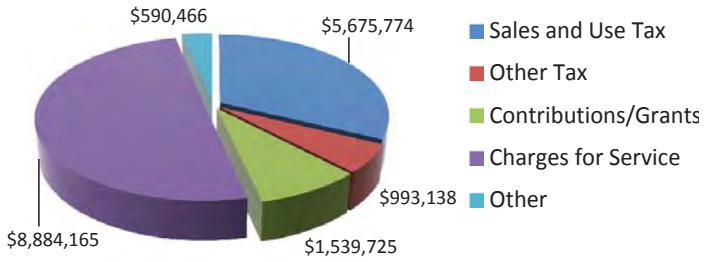
Skier visits since 2012 have increased and 367,659 skier days were reported for the 2013-2014 season. Airplane flight load factors increased 9 percentage points in the 2013-14 winter season and the air-flight visitors, the majority of whom were winter visitors, contributed approximately $4 million to the local economy. About 23 percent of the 99 CBMR employees reside in Gunnison.

Community Events. Numerous annual events attract visitors to the city and Gunnison valley. Some of the traditional events include the July 4th fireworks show, Cattlemen's Days, and the Gunnison Car Show. Newer events include the Colorado Adventure Sports Festival and the Gunnison Growler mountain bike race. Road bicycle events, such as the USA Pro-Challenge, Ride the Rockies, and the Bicycle Tour of Colorado often include the Gunnison hub for their routes.

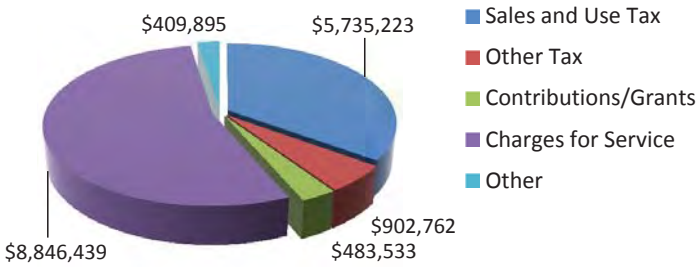
4.5 City Government Budget Trends

General Fund. The majority of revenues for the City of Gunnison are generated through charges for service and sales and use taxes. While these revenue sources remain fairly constant year-to-year, contributions and grants experience greater variation because the grants for projects vary from year-to-year. Because the City budgets revenues conservatively, unanticipated revenues accumulate into cash reserves on an annual basis and are available for capital expenses in subsequent years.

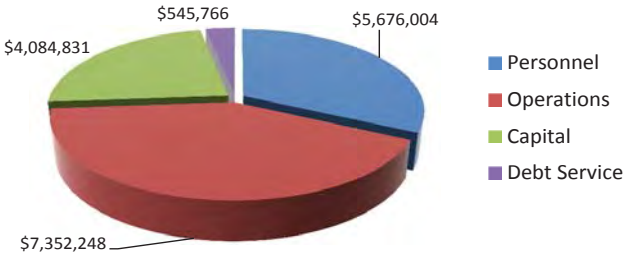
2013 Projected Revenues
(All Funds Combined)
$17,683,268



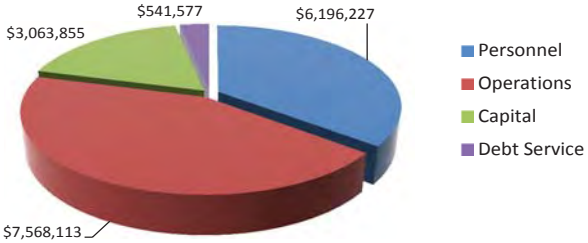
2014 Budgeted Revenues
(All Funds Combined)
$16,377,852



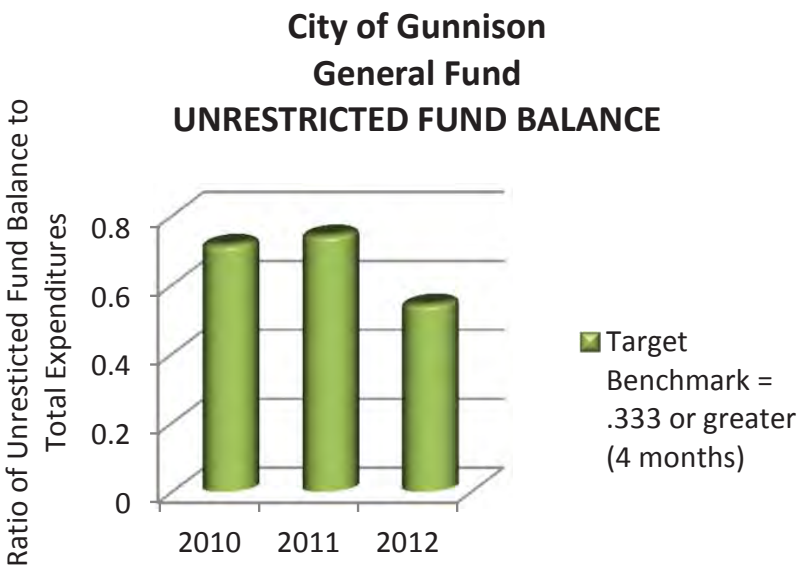
2013 Projected Expenses
(All Funds Combined)
$17,658,849)

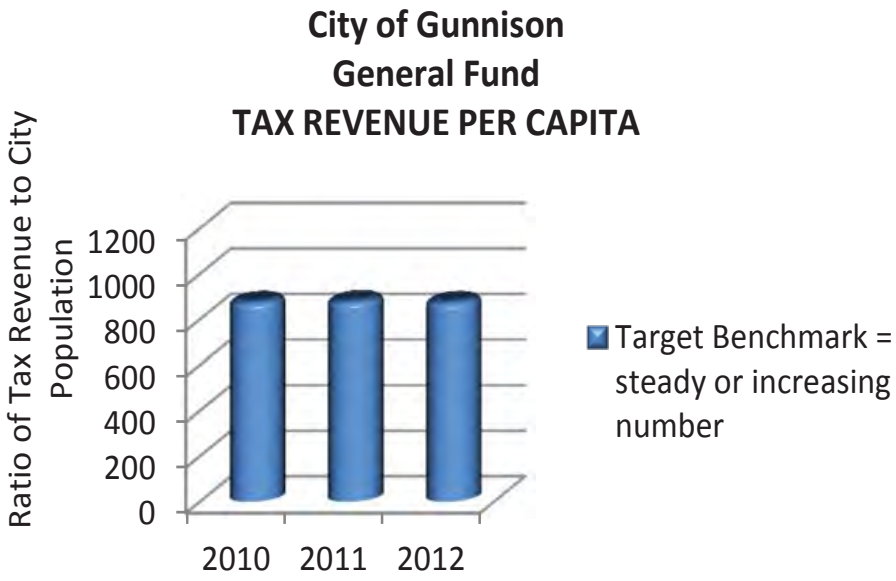


2014 Budgeted Expenses
(All Funds Combined)
$17,369,772
(cash reserves used for capital projects totaling
$1,548,700)



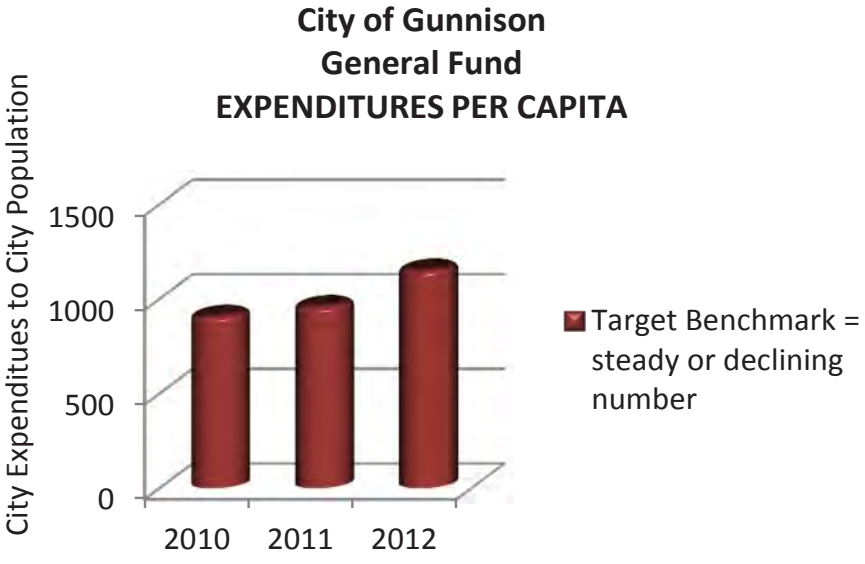
Unrestricted Fund Balance. This chart shows the fund balance (cash reserves that are not designated for a specific purpose) to cover annual expenditures (net of transfers and capital assets). The general fund maintains a healthy fund balance that is available for emergency situations and capital improvements. City Council recently approved a policy to maintain a minimum 40 percent fund balance amount.



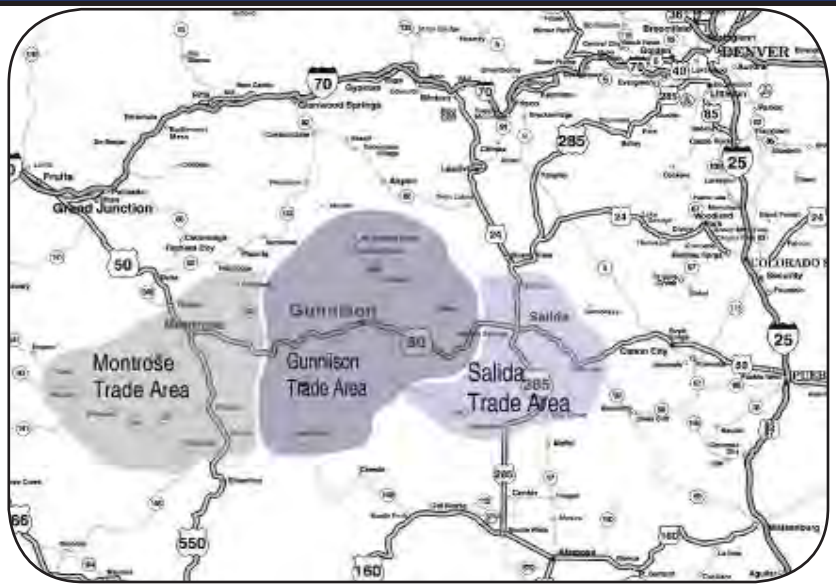


Tax Revenue Per Capita. Based on the city's population of approximately 5,860 people, per capita tax revenues have remained fairly constant at $875 per person. These revenues include sales and use taxes, property tax, motor vehicle tax, and franchise fees. Other revenues, such as grants and charges for service cover the remaining expenses in the General Fund. This is a significant per capita rate and is influenced by sales tax generation from tourist spending and shopping by residents who live outside the city limits.

Expenditures Per Capita. Annual expenses for the General Fund are on a slight increase while population estimates from the Colorado State Demographer's office have shown a slight decrease. Therefore the ratio of expenses to population has shown a slight increase over the past three years.



In 2005 the City contracted for the development of the Big Box Retail in Gunnison - Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis. While this study is somewhat dated, the economic profile of the community has not changed significantly and the conclusions of the report are still relevant. As noted by the analysis, the retail trade area of Gunnison is large because of the rural nature of the community and the fact that Gunnison is geographically positioned to serve a large geographic area.



The analysis included development of a dynamic model to analyze two well understood phenomenon: leakage, which is loss of potential retail sales to other markets as residents travel for the purpose of shopping in other communities; and, a product of tourism referred to as import substitution. Import substitution is a remedy to leakage—as a tourist destination and gateway community, Gunnison has the potential to increase local spending by nonresidents.

As the cost of goods and services increases over time, sales and use tax revenue also increases. The City tracks tax receipts by the following categories:

Sales and Use Tax Categories	
Sales Tax	Use Tax
Apparel and Clothing	Building Permits
Building Materials	Vehicles
Department and Hardware Stores	
Utilities	
Furniture and Appliances	
Vehicle Sales, Parts and Service*	
Miscellaneous Retail Sales*	
*Prior to 2008 Vehicle Sales, Parts and Service and Miscellaneous Retail Sales were categorized as Use Tax, but for comparison purposes of this report, they are included in Sales Tax for all years.	

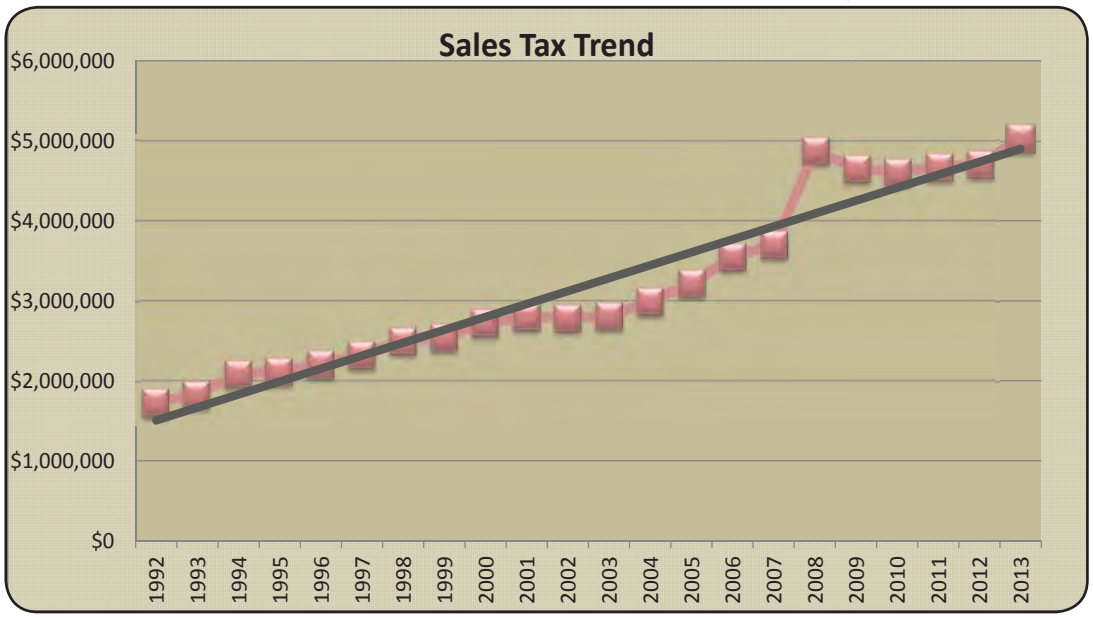
Sales Tax trends from 1992 through 2013 demonstrate that business sectors including clothing and apparel, building materials, and furniture and appliances have seen fluctuations. These categories reflect the discretionary income that people have as a result of the general economy.

Use Tax revenue from Building Permits has been more volatile than Sales Tax revenue. There are several factors influencing the extreme fluctuations in building permit activity, including lending practices and market speculation driving demand between 1990 and 2007, and the effects of the national recession. In 2011 only two new residential buildings were constructed. While there have been several large commercial projects in the city during the recession that had a positive impact on the local economy, in most instances the City Use Tax was waived because these capital projects were developed by tax exempt entities.

Construction projects on the Western State Colorado University campus have also been substantial but these projects are not subject to City Use Tax or building permits. Large increases in Use Tax occurred in 1997 when the City Market was built on North Main Street; in 2005 when the Holiday Inn was built; and in 2005, 2006, and 2007 when there was a "boom" in construction of residential units.

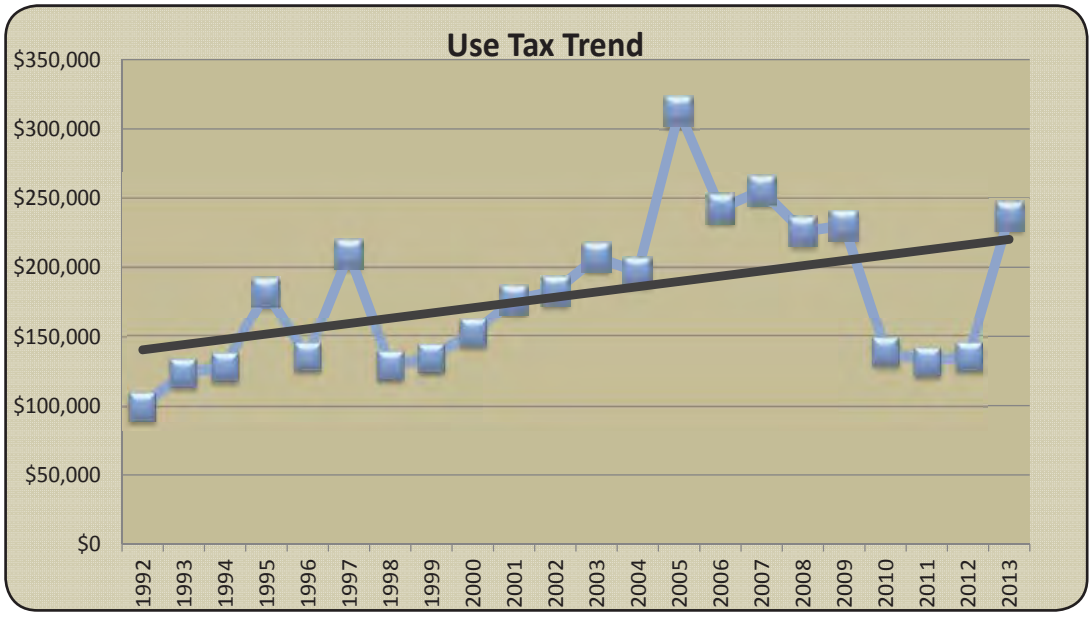
4.6 City Revenue Overview

Revenues used to fund city services come from a variety of sources, with the primary dollars being derived through sales tax and billings charged for utility services. Other revenue sources include grants, property tax and charges for recreation programs. The City General Fund accounts for the monies required for police, city administration services, parks and recreation and street maintenance and improvements. Utility services, which include water, wastewater, electrical and refuse, are operated as Enterprise Funds, meaning that their operations are funded through service use billing. Descriptions of these City services are discussed in more detail in Section 10 of this document.



4.7 Sales and Use Tax Collection

During the past 20+ years, sales tax collection for the jurisdictions in the Gunnison Basin reflect the general state of the national economy, with healthy growth between 1990 and 2007, then a sharp downturn in 2008. Tax collections have increased since 2011. Additionally, municipal sales tax trends in the Basin reflect the increasing importance of the summer tourism market.

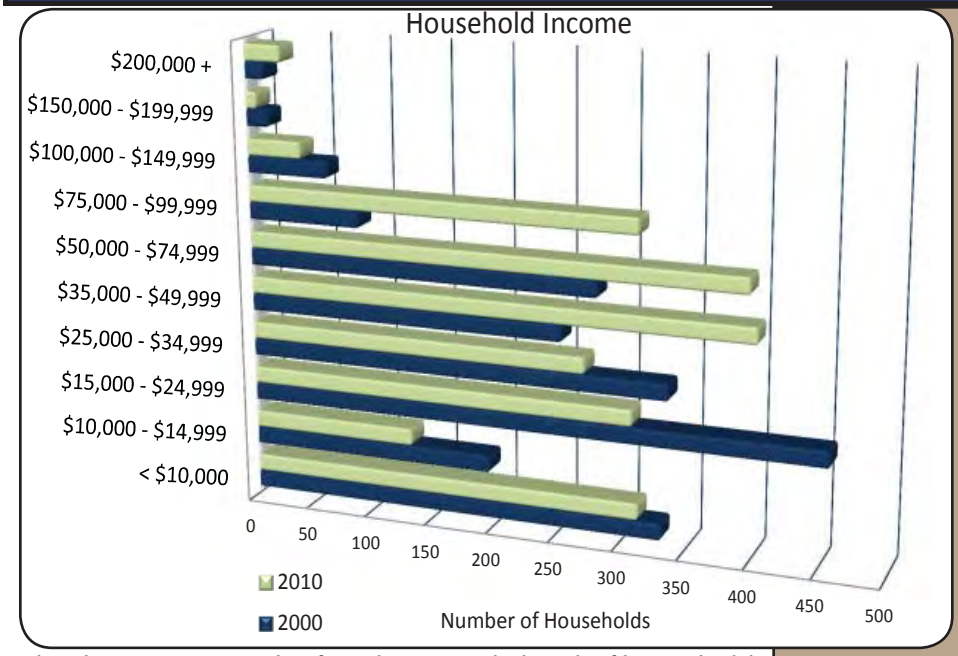


4.8 Family Income

In the decade between 2000 and 2010, Gunnison County median household income rose by 34 percent, from $25,768 to $39,181, while during the same time, the median housing value increased 42 percent. Nationally, the cumulative inflation rate during the decade was 37.2 percent.

In 2000 the per capita income was $15,196 and in 2012 it had increased 14.5 percent to $17,776.

According to the US Census, in 2000, 10 percent of families in the city of Gunnison were living below the poverty level; in 2010 this number had increased to 18.9 percent. In 2000 23.8 percent of families with children under the age of 5 were living below the poverty level and in 2012 this number increased to 49 percent. This has implications for the educational and health systems because the families require more resources as children enter school. The census did not break household income down by any demographics. One explanation for the increase in the number of people living below the poverty level could



be the increase in the female or single head of household as well as the increase in the number of immigrants.

4.9 Observations - Economic and Fiscal Trends

- The fact that 49 percent of the families in Gunnison with children under the age of five are living below the poverty level is alarming.

- On May 6, 2014, *Cities Journal* posted a ranking of the top twelve small cities in Colorado and ranked Gunnison as number one. While these types of rankings can be subjective, the social media exposure can have a significant impact on tourism.

- Population change is largely dependent upon changes in the region and local economy which influence the number and type of employment opportunities and their associated earnings and benefits.

- A reduction of professional services jobs occurred between the 2000 and 2010 Census. This sector constitutes higher paying jobs and such reductions are problematic for economic prosperity.

- The city of Gunnison is the County seat and principal service center for the entire county. The local economy is generally supported by tourism, construction, ranching, and the university. While many of the businesses in the city are "Main Street" retail and service-oriented, there are examples of small scale manufacturing and science/technology businesses helping to diversify local employment opportunities.

- The second home market was a driving force of the construction employment during the past two decades. While the Upper East River Basin is platted with a significant number of undeveloped lots, it is unclear how the second home construction market will fare in the future. Additionally, the housing development in and around Gunnison would be significantly affected if the Gunnison Sage-grouse is listed as an endangered species.

- Tourism activity is dependent upon discretionary spending and tends to fluctuate with national economic trends. The primary source for tourist information about the Gunnison Basin is the internet.

- Gunnison's economy was disrupted by the 2008 recession and recovery has been slow. Continued softness in the Crested Butte Mountain Resort and the upper valley construction industry has hurt the city's service economy, but summer tourism has grown and agriculture, hunting and fishing have remained stable. Guest services and eating and drinking establishments are the most vibrant elements of the local economy, while retail is unlikely to increase significantly in the future. Operations of Western State Colorado University have been an important stabilizing influence on the Gunnison economy.

- While there is no real advantage for small manufacturing or technology-related firms to locate in Gunnison, there seems to be an opportunity to attract small niche service and production businesses.

- Gunnison has historical roots to mining but the current gas and oil prices are prohibitive for new exploration in the Upper Gunnison Basin. Another contributing factor is local opposition to mining operations, such as the Red Lady Molybdenum mine above Crested Butte and public opposition in the state to fracking for oil and gas extraction.

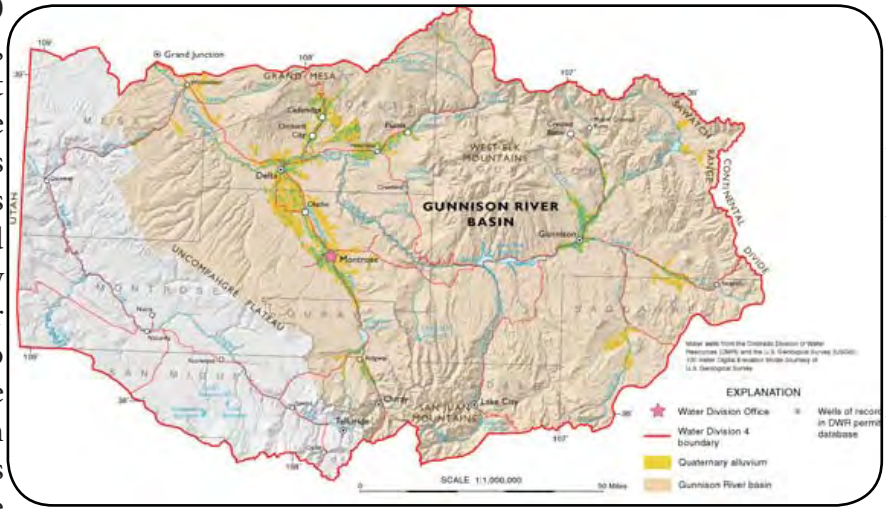
5.1 Introduction

The Upper Gunnison Basin is located within portions of the Colorado Plateau Geological Province and the Rocky Mountain Geological Province (United States Geological Survey). Major drainages in the Basin include the East and Slate River drainages, the Taylor River, Tomichi Creek and Ohio Creek. These drainages encompass over 3,330 square miles. The physiographic interface creates strongly differentiated landscapes and biological life zones, and the "headwaters" system is a fundamental element of the diverse ecological system comprising the Basin.

5.2 Water Resources

Background. Issues, laws and policy topics associated with water resources are broad and cannot be thoroughly discussed in this report. In a general context the role of the City in water resource matters is associated with water use, flood hazards and water quality.

The annual precipitation level in Gunnison is approximately 10 inches annually, while the adjacent headwaters of the Basin receive as much as 23.5 inches of precipitation and 200 inches of snow annually. River reaches are also variable with ravine channels found in mountainous areas and relatively wide floodplains found in the lower valleys.



The floodplain landscape found in and around the city is comprised of porous alluvium with cobble rock, gravel and sand. The alluvium creates aquifers that store ground water. The alluvial aquifer comprises the City's domestic water source. Protection of the quality and quantity of the City's water source has been an ongoing emphasis for many years. These efforts are very diverse in context and range from the implementation of contemporary flood hazard mitigation standards, to protection of the aquifer recharge area through management of the VanTuyl Ranch and extension of sewer mains to adjacent unincorporated residential developments in the recharge area that otherwise would be serviced by individual sewage disposal systems.

The entire Upper Gunnison Basin has been designated by the Office of the State Engineer as "over appropriated," meaning development of new domestic water sources, such as individual wells, can only occur through an augmentation plan involving the acquisition of existing water rights to offset any consumption caused by the new development. The City possesses an excellent water rights portfolio, which can facilitate future development demands. This resource asset will play a critical role in the future to direct growth and development within the designated City water service area, which can help to minimize sprawl development outside the urban fringe.

State Water Plan. Based on existing trends, the State of Colorado has determined that the current statewide water trajectory is neither desirable nor sustainable. Governor Hickenlooper has tasked the Colorado Water Conservation Board to assess Colorado's future water needs as a whole and plan for how they will be addressed. The Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District and the Gunnison Basin Roundtable have been working on these issues for decades, and this new state-wide planning effort may have significant impacts on the Upper Gunnison Basin in the future.

5.3 Gunnison Sage-grouse Listing Decision.

In November, 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published a decision to list the Gunnison Sage-grouse as a Threatened Species. Original determinations by the FWS concluded that population growth and development was the principal threat to the species - the final ruling reversed this original supposition. The final rule states that "...Based on these reasons, we find that residential development is currently a threat of low

magnitude to the Gunnison Basin population of Sage-grouse, but that it is an increasing threat in the future." In fact the FWS mapping of Critical Habitat in the final decision, excluded all of the existing urbanized area within the city limits, but this mapping did include portions of the airport, the VanTuyl Ranch, and the entirety of the Gunnison Rising annexation territory.

Since the November, 2014, FWS listing decision, the State of Colorado and Gunnison County have filed formal intent to sue document notifications. Obvioulsy, final outcomes to court actions will be pending for some time and until court cases are finalized, many development activities will be hampered by the listing decision. In fact, two major city projects contemplated in 2015 will be subject to formal review and approval by the FWS. The first project is a $530,000 grant application to the Great Outdoors Colorado for new trails in the VanTuyl Ranch and within Gunnison Rising. Informal consultation has started for these projects but gauging the outcome of this consultation process is not possible at this point in time.

5.4 Scenic Resources

People are attracted to the Gunnison area in part because of the mountains, rivers, and lakes that provide abundant opportunities for recreation. Blue Mesa Reservoir, just 10 minutes from town, is the largest body of water in the State of Colorado. The shoreline is 20 miles long and is enjoyed by anglers, boaters, wind surfers, and ice skaters. Blue Mesa is part of the Aspinall-Storage Unit, which also includes Crystal and Morrow Point reservoirs. Taylor Reservoir is also a popular destination.

Gunnison is surrounded by mountain ranges and the West Elk, Raggeds, Maroon Bells, Fossil Ridge, Powderhorn, Uncompahgre, and LaGarita wilderness areas, and the Gunnison and Uncompahgre National Forests. These areas provide endless opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, jeeping, four-wheeling, and skiing.

5.5 Observations – Natural Resources

- The economic sectors of tourism and development are directly linked to natural resource management. The unspoiled landscapes found in the valley are intrinsically captivating and appealing to visitors.
- The land ethic practiced by local ranchers has a profound contribution to the habitat resources found in the Basin.
- During the past 20 years the acquisition of conservation easements and/or public open space purchases has led to the protection of approximately 30,000 acres of private lands in the Upper Gunnison Basin.
- Listing of the Gunnison Sage-grouse will affect development within the city limits, particularly within Gunnison Rising. Impacts on the VanTuyl Ranch will also be subject to review. The listing action will also affect development proposals within the three-mile planning area.
- There are several other species of concern and habitat issues that will affect Gunnison's future. For example critical winter deer and elk habitats are found throughout the Gunnison Basin.
- Aquatic species and riparian habitat issues exist and are being addressed by the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife and local government efforts.
- The Environmental Protection Agency is implementing new water quality standards for nutrient and arsenic levels, which affects the operations of the City wastewater treatment facilities.
- The *State Water Plan* is of critical importance and local efforts by the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District will help to ensure that local opinions will help influence the outcome of the report.

6.1 Gunnison Valley Health

Gunnison Valley Health is the community-owned health system for Gunnison County. It offers health care ranging from the Gunnison Valley Hospital, Gunnison Valley Emergency Medical Service, the Family Birthing Center, Senior Care Center, Cancer Center and hospice and palliative care, home health and Gunnison Valley Health Foundation.

Hospital services are provided by Gunnison Valley Hospital, a 24-bed, short term, acute care hospital. The hospital is owned by Gunnison County and governed by a 7-member Board of Trustees. It is staffed by specialists, surgeons, physician assistants, nursing staff, technicians and technologists who work in conjunction with local family practice physicians. As a Level IV Trauma Center, local physicians staff the Emergency Room 24-hours per day, seven days a week. General surgery, orthopedic and OB/GYN consultants are available on an on-call basis.

In fall 2013, Gunnison Valley Hospital qualified as one of the Top 100 rural hospitals in the country for the second year in a row. As one of 1,331 hospitals in the US designated as a critical access facility and one of 29 in the State of Colorado, the hospital is a vital resource for the community.

Gunnison Valley Emergency Medical Service (EMS) has provided emergency ambulance care to the City and County since 1987. The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) department is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, medicines and training to provide emergency response 24 hours per day. The service also has the ability to respond in many different situations; the EMTs are trained to deliver care via horseback, snow cat, snow mobile or ATV. The EMS assumes medical responsibility for most situations in the county, including the medical component for the HazMat team and special events such as football games, Cattlemen's Days, and motorcycle and bicycle races.

Tri-State CareFlight offers flight-for-life helicopter service for transportation to larger medical centers when necessary.

Senior Care Center. The Senior Care Center has 59 licensed beds and provides clients aged 60 and over with skilled nursing care, a special care unit for Alzheimer's and Dementia, and hospice and palliative care.

6.2 Social Services

Gunnison County operates the Department of Health and Human Services, which includes Social Services, Public Health, and the Multicultural Resource Office. The Social Services department provides adult protective services; child care assistance; child support services; child and family services; the foster care program; and public assistance.

The Public Health Department provides services funded through grants and private donations. Some services have income qualifications and some require a fee. Services include immunizations; family planning; women's wellness; senior resources; multicultural services; access to health care; tobacco prevention; emergency preparedness; nurturing parenting program; childcare health consultation; the WIC (women, infants, and children) program; health care for children with special needs; disease surveillance; TB screening; and restaurant inspections.

The Multicultural Resource Office (MRO) is part of the Department of Health and Human Services and helps facilitate communication between non-English speaking people and medical service providers, the education system, legal services, Human Services, and other businesses and services. Since 2001, the Health Navigator position has been funded by grants and it was recently reduced to part-time. In 2012 the MRO served

174 families, impacting 537 people, which included 272 children. The majority of the clients are women between 36 and 40 years old. The Multicultural Resource Office reported in March 2013 that it served fewer clients in 2012 than previous years. This is due to the economy causing some people to return to their native country, others moved away looking for employment and some agencies in Gunnison have hired Spanish-speaking personnel.

6.3 Observations – Social/Health Services

Gunnison Valley Hospital is a vital resource for the community.

The Multicultural Resource Office helps facilitate communication between non-English speaking people and medical service providers, the education system, legal services, and Human Services, as well as other businesses and services.

Existing poverty levels for families with children under the age of five years are likely straining these related services, but to what degree has not yet been defined and discussed.

7.1 RE1J School District

The RE1J School District operates all of the public schools in Gunnison County, including Marble, Crested Butte and Gunnison. For purposes of this summary, data is for the schools in Gunnison only.

students that moved away) at Gunnison High School is 79.75 percent with a 2.38 percent dropout rate. Of the 1,257 students enrolled in the Gunnison schools, 173 (13.7 percent) are ESL (English as a Second Language)

Gunnison School Enrollments

School	Enrollment (Spring 2014)		Capacity
Lake School (Pre and K)	185		250
Gunnison Elementary School (1-5)	449	746	900
Gunnison Middle School (6-8)	297		
Gunnison High School (9-12)	326		525
Total in Gunnison	**1,257**		**1,675**

Source for enrollment numbers: RE1J School District and http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview

The Gunnison Community School opened in 1998 and houses grades 1-8. The new school consolidated the operations of six buildings into three buildings. In 2009 the School District began a renovation and 32,000 foot expansion of the Gunnison High School, built the Valley School alternative high school and renovated and expanded the Lake School. The projects were completed in 2011. Enrollment and building capacity numbers indicate that the facilities are adequate to serve the community and future growth.

There are 86.5 full-time employed teachers in the Gunnison schools, with a student:faculty ratio of 13.5:1. The graduation rate (number of students that completed 9th grade through 12th grade and does not include students. About 400 (31.8 percent) of the students in Gunnison are bused to school.

7.2 ORSCH School

In 2009 ORSCH (One Room School House), a private K though 8 school, was created. The school does not have the traditional age-based classes and allows students to learn at their own pace. ORSCH served grades K-12 and had an enrollment of 67 students and eleven teachers in fall 2013. In the fall of 2014 ORSCH opened the doors of their new school at 200 N. Spruce, adjacent to the County Social Services offices.

7.3 Tenderfoot Child and Family Development Center

The Tenderfoot Child and Family Development Center is a non-profit early childhood education center located on the Western State Colorado University campus. The center opened in 2006 and was a collaborative project between the Western State College Foundation, the City of Gunnison, Gunnison County, the Buell Foundation, and private contributors. In 2013 there were 6 children in the Pre-Kindergarten class. Tenderfoot is also a daycare for infants and toddlers.

7.4 Western State Colorado University

Founded in 1901 as "Colorado State Normal School," Western opened its doors in 1911 as a teacher's college. In 1923 it was renamed Western State College of Colorado

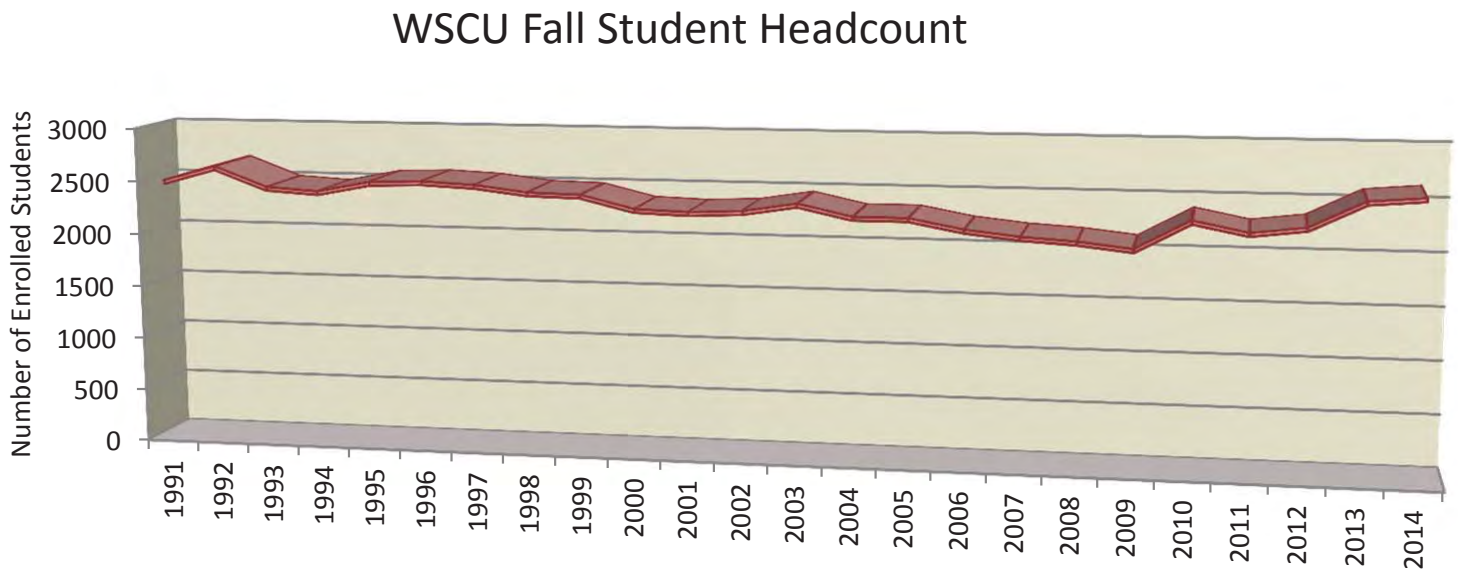
offering undergraduate liberal arts and sciences degrees, as well as graduate teacher-education programs. In the early 1980s the graduate programs were discontinued by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. The graduate programs had a major economic influence on the city because of the number of graduate students and their families who came to Gunnison in the summers.

In 2003, Western was designated as a regional education provider for Chaffee, Gunnison, Hinsdale, and Lake Counties, and for parts of Saguache County. The university is an important educational, cultural, and economic development resource for the region. Western fulfills its responsibilities as a regional education provider through the academic curriculum, summer programming, extra- and co-curricular programming, public service, and research.

In 2012 the institution was renamed Western State Colorado University and expanded its programs to include graduate degrees, pre-professional studies and professional centers.

Obviously Western is a major economic driver for Gunnison. The 2013-14 budget from all sources (state appropriation, tuition, fees, grants, and private funding) is $42,626,065. This includes $17,453,370 in total compensation for the 317 employees. In addition, the university budgeted $1,107,805 for utilities, a large portion of which is paid to the City for water, sewer, and electricity.

Because of increased competition with in-state schools in the larger metropolitan areas, on-line education, and the cost of non-resident tuition, the university has struggled to grow its enrollment despite implementing numerous recruiting strategies over the years. The fall headcount enrollment has remained around 2,400 for the last 24 years, with a few fluctuations during that time. In fall 2014



student headcount increased to 2,584 due to increased enrollment in master's level and on-line courses.

To better serve students with more modern facilities

and technology, and to address recruitment, the campus has been transformed over the last two decades. The transformation included construction of new student housing, new and remodeled academic buildings, and a new university center and field house. Since 2005, $128 million has been invested into the university's physical plant. These construction projects have positively impacted the local economy. The project manager for the $16 million Pinnacles Apartment construction project stated that the project injected $3.7 million into the local economy. Extrapolating from that figure, the local economy has been impacted by approximately $29 million from the total $128 million in construction projects. In September 2014 the university was awarded $25.8 million from the state for renovation of Quigley Hall, which will also contribute to the local economy.

7.5 Observations – Education

- Modern educational facilities in the community, both in the public schools and at Western are a source of pride for the community and students.

- RE1J Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) test scores show that RE1J students' are consistently above state-wide scores in reading, writing, math, and science. Gunnison students' proficiency scores in reading have averaged 76% over the past three years and proficiency scores in writing, math and science are about 60%.

- Recurring state funding cuts to public education have resulted in significant operating shortfalls, and this past year was supplemented by an infusion of the district's reserve funds. The school district placed an initiative on the local ballot, that passed a property tax increase to off-set the ongoing funding cuts by the state.

- There are opportunities for alternative education for grades K-12 at the ORSCH School, the Alternative High School program at Gunnison High School. Additionally, high school students may enroll in concurrent enrollment programs at Western State Colorado University. Community members may also enroll in Extended Studies courses at Western.

8.1 Gunnison Pioneer Museum

The Gunnison County Pioneer and Historical Society began in 1880 with early settlers of the valley. It was reorganized and incorporated in 1930. The society's goal of sponsoring a museum did not come to fruition until 1963 when the Adams and Wilson families donated land to be used for the Pioneer Museum. Operation of the museum began in 1964. The Pioneer and Historical Society is run by a ten-person governing board and a curator. Approximately 60 volunteers work at the museum, which is open from May 24th to September 30th.

The museum features pioneer buildings and implements, an antique car museum, and railroad exhibits. The museum is funded through donations and summer ticket revenue ($7 for adults, $1 for children aged 6-12). Approximately 4,700 people from outside the community and 650 from the city and county visit the museum annually.

8.2 Gunnison Arts Center

The Gunnison Council for the Arts, a volunteer organization, was started in 1983 by a handful of individuals in the back room of a local restaurant. Most of these individuals had been active in Webster Players, a local theatre group, which could not find suitable performing venues. At the same time, the local dance instructor was outgrowing the space for her classes. In January 1984, the

group was incorporated as the Gunnison Council for the Arts and a membership drive was held in 1986 during which 75 members were recruited. In May 1988, the Council leased one of the community's oldest buildings from First National Bank of Gunnison to house most of the council's activities, including an art gallery, a 72-seat theatre for drama and music, special exhibits and a variety of classes. The building was purchased in 1992 by the Council through the generous support of Gunnison citizens, private foundations and other philanthropists. Programming at the Gunnison Arts Center has grown to include year-round programming for children and adults.

8.3 Gunnison Valley Observatory

The Gunnison Valley Observatory is a public-owned facility that was built from fundraising efforts to enhance the local economy through science tourism. The observatory is located south of Gunnison near the Hartman Rocks Recreational Area. The first public viewing began in June 2008. The observatory is open to the public on Friday and Saturday nights from mid-June to mid-September. The observatory features public viewing on a 30-inch scope, a lecture on a variety of astronomy-related topics, viewing through a variety of smaller telescopes and occasional special events. During the 2013 season, 1,300 people visited the observatory.

8.4 Tenderfoot Archaeological Site

Tenderfoot Mountain (W Mountain) is immediately adjacent to the southeast boundary of the city. Archaeologists have determined that one of the oldest archaeological sites in North America is on top of Tenderfoot Mountain. Western State Colorado University has conducted field schools on the Tenderfoot Site since 1991 and each summer free tours are given to the general public and to groups.

8.5 Western State Colorado University

The university Art, Music, and Theatre departments offer art shows, conferences, guest speakers, summer camps, athletic events, concerts, and theatrical productions throughout the year. All of these offerings are open to the public.

8.6 Observations – Community Culture

- The Gunnison Pioneer Museum contributes to tourism as well as preserving relics of the community's agricultural and pioneer heritage.

- The Gunnison Arts Center contributes to the cultural life of the community and provides a venue for local artists and thespians.

- The Gunnison Valley Observatory is an educational resource utilizing local scholars to provide "hands on" educational opportunities not available elsewhere in the Valley.

- The Tenderfoot Archaeological Site is a noteable cultural resource that has helped scientists determine the origins of human habitation of the Gunnison Valley.

- Western State Colorado University is a significant educational institution attracting students from all over the United States and is a primary economic driver of the community.

- Other opportunities to become engaged in the community include art walks, concerts in the park, the Farmer's Market and entertainment at local eating and drinking establishments.

9.1 City Transportation System

The city's street system is configured in an efficient grid pattern and there are approximately forty miles of streets existing today. City streets are categorized as arterial, collector, local, and sub-local streets.

A highway traffic analysis conducted during the past seven years indicates that the existing traffic functions on Highways 135 and 50 are adequately accommodated by these highway corridors. The highway system capacity is a function of vehicle trips occurring during peak hours – generally morning and evening commutes. The stoplight on Tomichi Avenue (Highway 50) and Main Street (Highway 135) is the busiest intersection in the city. Intersection function or the lack thereof, can cause traffic delays and, in the worst case, lead to gridlock situations. Presently, vehicular movement at the Tomichi and Main Street intersection functions adequately, even during the highest volume times occurring during the summer months. However, traffic studies have shown that in the future, traffic volumes are anticipated to increase and the highway corridor and intersection functions will become less efficient.

The Gunnison Rising Transportation Master Plan proposes that Georgia and College Avenues will eventually be extended into Gunnison Rising and these streets will help diffuse traffic volumes and reduce traffic demand on Highway 50. The Gunnison Rising Annexation Agreement requires that Georgia Avenue will be developed under a corridor plan funded by a real estate transfer fee applied to land sales in the Gunnison Rising development.

In 2013 the City initiated the Highway 50 Access Control Plan which was a requirement of the Gunnison Rising PUD and annexation. Development of this plan was jointly coordinated by the Colorado Department of Transportation, Gunnison Valley Partners, Gunnison County, and the City. It entailed the development of a plan addressing the Highway 50 corridor from the Tomichi and Main Street intersection to the Signal Peak Industrial Park, located approximately three miles to the east of the Pioneer Museum site. The plan identifies the basic highway design needs in terms of future lane configurations and intersection location and function that must be considered in relation to future traffic volumes. The resulting plan provides a basic blueprint to help ensure that future traffic volumes in this corridor can be efficiently accommodated by the road system.

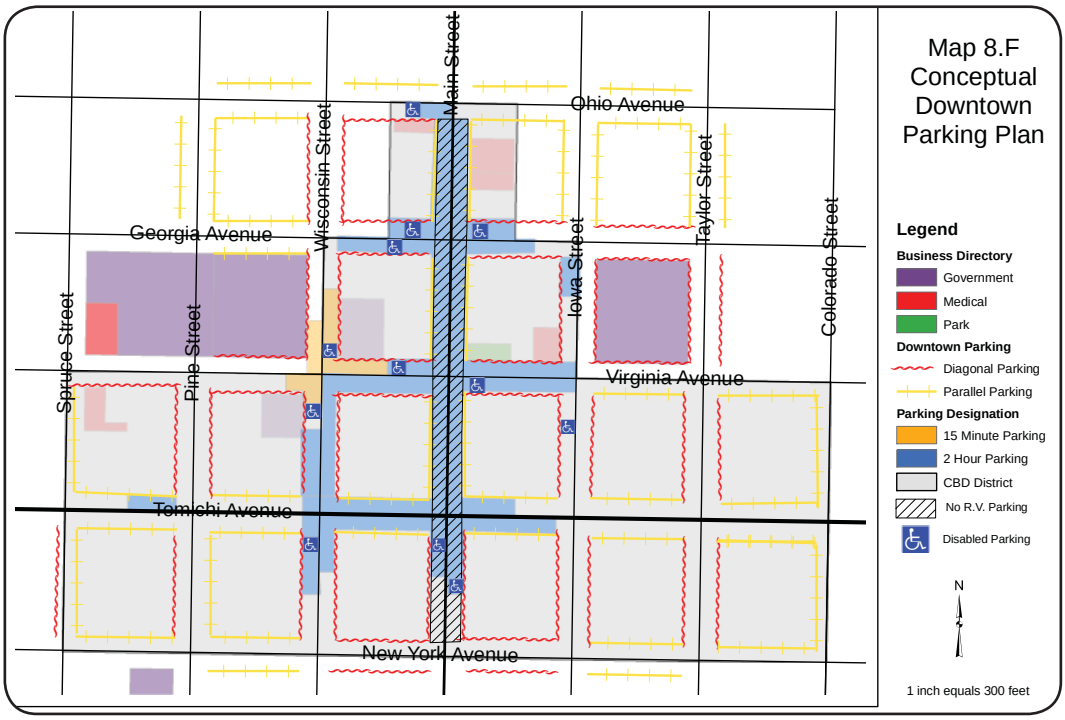
Traffic patterns and volumes are a function of land use and development patterns found within the city. Given the land use assumptions in the West Gunnison Neighborhood Plan, the West Gunnison Neighborhood is projected to add 10,000 trips per day by the year 2035. The plan includes recommendations for street extensions and a proposed roadway system configured in a grid pattern as well as traffic calming devices.

In 2012 City staff surveyed students at Western to determine their travel behavior and preferred routes between the campus and the greater community. The survey showed that students primarily walk, bike, drive, or skateboard to North Main Street via Colorado Street or Denver Avenue and that their main destination is City Market.

When Western completed construction of the Pinnacles Apartment complex the traffic pattern shifted from Georgia Avenue to Ohio Avenue. Neighbors on Colorado Street north of Ohio Avenue have anecdotally reported that traffic has decreased in their neighborhood because students access the campus via Ohio Avenue. It is also likely that the extension of Denver Avenue into the new field house parking lot has changed traffic patterns as well. A focal key to movement between the campus and the Greater community is to provide multiple choices for both motorized and non-motorized commuters.

9.2 Downtown Transportation

The downtown Central Business District is bisected by Tomichi Avenue (Highway 50) and Main Street (Highway 135). The intersection where these roadway cross is the busiest intersection in the city and the main route for many large construction and delivery trucks. Presently, the peak daily traffic volume is about 12,000 trips per day on Tomichi Avenue and 7,500 vehicle trips per day on Main Street, both are well below their daily capacity. The pavement width of Main Street is 70 feet and Tomichi Avenue is 96 feet in width. Both streets have four lanes of traffic with turning lanes and parallel parking.



Parking has long been considered an issue in the downtown area. Whether the potential parking issue is perceived or real has never been determined. Parking can be an issue for vehicles towing trailers or RV's. The City has obtained permission to use the 400 block of West Virginia Avenue (the old City Market site) as a parking option for these large vehicles.

Most of the downtown area has a two-hour parking time restriction between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Along Main Street on the north 100-300 blocks, there are 72 parallel parking spaces. Side streets one block to the east and west within the 100-300 blocks contain 146 diagonal parking spaces. The entire Central Business District has a total of approximately 610 parallel and diagonal parking spaces.

Pedestrian safety has always been of primary importance to the City. Pedestrian crossing signs and painted crosswalks help manage the interaction of pedestrians and automobiles. Crossing Main Street safely is a function of law abidance. The width of Tomichi Avenue makes it difficult for pedestrian crossings. Discussions have ensued regarding bulb-outs or pedestrian islands to increase pedestrian safety. These devices are problematic with Gunnison's climate and the need to plow snow during the winter months and the accommodation of seasonal stormwater flows.

The City's *Master Plan* policy for transportation regarding downtown states, "Realizing that downtown is the vital core for Gunnison's civic life, create a transportation environment that is both inviting and safe." Additional policy items include:

- special event parking sites serviced by public transit
- evaluate and relocate objects (control boxes, signs, furniture, etc.) that constrain pedestrian movement;
- construct pedestrian devices to shorten crossing distances on Main Street and Tomichi Avenue (curb extension or islands);
- evaluate traffic-calming devices to provide additional safety for pedestrians; and
- complete a parking utilization study.

The *City of Gunnison Master Plan* also contemplates the extension of Georgia Avenue. Additionally, during the Gunnison Rising Annexation an agreement between Western State Colorado University and the City addressed future improvements to Georgia Avenue as the pedestrian gateway to- and from- downtown and the university campus. The agreement includes a pronounced university entrance with widened sidewalks and other streetscape amenities to tie the campus to the city.

9.3 Complete Streets

The concept of Complete Streets embodies the development of street corridors to serve all transportation modes with equal emphasis placed upon non-motorized and vehicular facility needs. The Complete Streets concept should also consider other functions such as utilities and landscape design to ensure safe, more accessible and efficient transportation routes for everyone.

Initial community outreach efforts for the Comprehensive Plan update indicate that citizens support the creation and expansion of non-motorized facilities and crossing the highway arterials is seen by many to be a problem. Therefore, the City is embarking on a process that will serve as a Complete Streets design and implementation program for the urban highway system. Improvements may include, but not be limited to, focusing on highway crossings; traffic signal sequencing; traffic code and signage updates; narrowing lane widths; establishing center-lane dividers and refuge medians for pedestrians; developing bulb-out sidewalk extensions; reducing highway speed limits; implementing streetscape design improvements; and other relevant actions to improve non-motorized functions on the arterial streets. Ultimately, this program can facilitate transformational changes to the physical character of Gunnison.

It was recognized very early that Complete Streets discussions should be the contextual focus of the comprehensive planning process. That is to say, the existing highway corridors were developed for moving vehicles and alternative transportation modes were secondary thoughts, which have created an undesirable set of circumstances and issues.

Goal. Collaborate with residents, stakeholders and CDOT on complete street reconstruction plans for the Highway 50 and Highway 135 corridors that improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit services, motor vehicles and persons of all abilities.

Objectives.

1. Develop a work plan to be followed throughout the process.
2. Involve the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Region 3 engineering, the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, City staff and consulting team throughout the process. This includes CDOT's support and guidance based on their recent policy direction and design guidelines for complete streets.
3. Involve the community and stakeholders in developing a complete streets implementation program.
4. Gain an immediate understanding of the existing conditions, primary issues, CDOT permitting requirements, and other factors that will affect the design and implementation of complete streets.
5. Incorporate complete streets design principles into the implementation and monitoring program.
6. Develop a final program addressing specific implementation strategies (short term and long term) including preliminary civil engineering drawings detailing corridor improvements and changes to stormwater and other utility functions; data and documentation of sufficient detail and context to fulfill CDOT review and permitting processes; estimates of capital costs; and, potential funding sources.

9.4 Non-Motorized Transportation

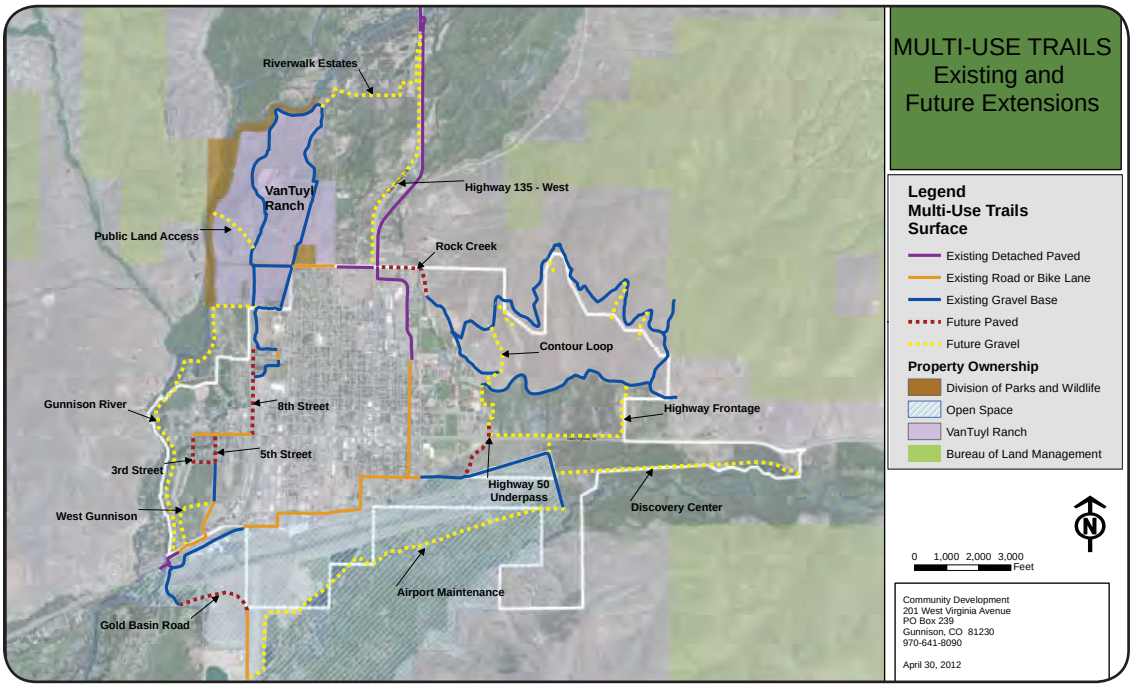
In April 2013, the City adopted the *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan* which contains recommendations for bikeways, pedestrian routes, and multi-use trails to increase connectivity and make the transportation network of the city safer and more accessible for all users.

Sidewalks. In many instances historic development in the city precluded the development of continuous sidewalks in the developed neighborhoods. This makes improvements challenging because of varying right-of-way widths and private use of the rights-of-way where sidewalks do not exist.

Bike Lanes. In May 2012 the League of American Bicyclists designated Gunnison as a Bicycle Friendly Community. This is due in part to the development of bike lanes on designated streets in the city. The existing 8.5 mile bike lane network serves every neighborhood in the city. Additionally, approximately 18 miles of hard-surfaced multi-use trails are developed in and around the city to accommodate non-motorized travel.

Multi-Use Trail System. Since it was adopted in 2008, many recommendations from the *Trails Master Plan* have been implemented. These trail segments and bikeways have provided access to recreational amenities for residents of the city, as well as a safe route to the schools and the city core for residents of outlying neighborhoods. These segments include the Twin Bridges; Whitewater Park; West Gunnison Neighborhood; Railroad Grade; VanTuyl Ranch; County Road 13; and North Bridge multi-use trails. These facilities have been funded by the one percent recreation tax approved by city voters in 2008. Under the ballot initiative, the City is obligated to spend $1 million on the development of trails – this ballot obligation was fulfilled in 2014.

Non-Motorized System Capital Planning. The *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan* contains a fifteen-year prioritization and implementation plan for improvements of non-motorized transportation facilities. Funding of these facility improvements will be based upon capital planning prioritization for recreation facilities including trail extensions, park improvements and improvements to the community center, ice rink and other park facilities.



9.5 Land Based and Air Transit

Gunnison Valley Regional Transportation Authority. The mission of the Gunnison Valley Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is to provide and improve transportation to, and from, the Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport on a year-round basis, and to develop a long-term and energy efficient public ground transportation system within Gunnison County. The district boundaries include all of Gunnison County except Marble, Pitkin, Ohio City, and Somerset.

The RTA operates as a special district, with revenues generated by a sales tax. The RTA tax is not collected on grocery or energy purchases. The sales tax levy is allocated at 3.5 cents on a $10.00 sale in the city of Gunnison and 6 cents on a $10.00 sale in the rest of the district. Depending upon the retail economic activity in the district, this generates anywhere between $900,000 and $1.2 million annually. The RTA also applies for, and receives, grants for buses and bus operations. The RTA

receives federal dollars each year from CDOT to help with the operation of the buses. The RTA purchased four buses in 2007 with a $980,000 grant from the State of Colorado. This grant was the first state grant ever given for transit and the RTA was one of a handful of agencies to be awarded the grant. The RTA also receives grants from the federal government which can only be used to fund capital projects.

Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport. The Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport is a County-owned public airport serving the Gunnison Valley and Crested Butte. It is in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems and is designated as a primary commercial service airport, meaning that it has more than 10,000 enplanements per year. The airport had 36,035 enplanements in 2008; 42,130 in 2009; and 37,316 in 2010. Seasonal (winter) flights are offered by American Airlines to Dallas/Fort Worth, United Airlines to Houston-Intercontinental, United Express to Chicago O'Hare, and year-round flights to Denver are provided by United Express. The airport also serves general aviation and military aircraft.

During the next year, Gunnison County will embark on an update of the Airport Master Plan. The coincidental timing of this new airport plan and the City's plan update are seen to be advantageous. Common coordination between the two projects has been discussed by County and City staff members.

Ground Transportation. In addition to rental cars, transportation within the Gunnison Valley is provided by the Alpine Express Shuttle (from the airport to Crested Butte); Crested Butte Specialty Services, Dolly's Mountain Shuttle, and the Mountain Express provide transportation between Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte; the RTA bus provides free bus service in Gunnison and between Gunnison and Crested Butte. The 2008 Upper Gunnison Valley Transportation Plan contains recommendations for a transportation system in the Gunnison Valley. In the plan, the issue of a Gunnison Transit Circulator was examined. This would be a bus route that circulates in the city of Gunnison only, which would run every 10-20 minutes and connect at least three unique destinations. It was determined that Gunnison does not have enough population density to support a circulator transit system. The plan does contain a recommendation that the City or the Gunnison Valley Regional Transportation Authority should explore the provision of social service transportation for people who cannot use the traditional transit service.

9.6 Observations – Transportation

- Presently, the intersection of Tomichi and Main Street functions adequately, even during the highest volume times occurring during the summer months. However, in the future traffic volumes are anticipated to increase and the highway corridor and intersection functions will become less efficient.

- Gunnison has very wide streets, and to some extent this has become part of the city's identity, yet street width influences vehicular speed and pedestrian crossing safety. Is the community willing to explore alternative roadway cross-sections that narrow the streets while ensuring that multi-modal mobility is addressed?

- The *Highway 50 Access Control Plan* identifies the basic highway design needs, in terms of future lane configurations and intersection location and function that must be considered in relation to future traffic volumes. The resulting plan provides a basic blueprint to help ensure that future traffic volumes in this corridor are efficiently accommodated by the road system. In addition to Gunnison Rising, other land use increases in and around the community will add to this issue. How important are "traffic growth" and "increased congestion" when considering the future of Gunnison?

- There have been historic conversations about a "bypass" between US 50 (East Tomichi) and State Highway 135 (North Main Street) in the northeast quadrant of the City, although implementation would be extremely difficult and expensive. How important is this "state highway bypass" idea as future land use issues are being considered?

- The *Comprehensive Plan* will place specific emphasis upon development of "Complete Streets" along the city highway corridors. What does "Complete Streets" mean to the community and how will it be implemented?

- Improvements to increase pedestrian crossings often involve curb extensions (bulbouts) and refuge islands (medians) in the roadway to shorten the exposure to vehicular traffic. Unfortunately these improvements complicate snow removal efforts.

- Opportunities to extend the city's street grid system, and maintain or improve street system connectivity should be explored as infill and new development occurs.
- The City has adopted plans for non-motorized

transportation but obligations to spend $1 million from the recreation tax initiative will have been met in 2014 and not all of the trail segments have been completed. Funding for trails will be based upon capital planning budget prioritization or grants.

- It is logical to assume that the Gunnison Regional Transportation Authority tasks will increase in the future. Trends indicate that airlines continue to push for increased seat guarantees and the bus service ridership between Gunnison and Mt. Crested Butte is also increasing.

- Enhanced senior transportation is being advocated by a group of citizens.

- The Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport is an important variable in the local economy. However the airport facilities limit utility and street extension and their operations are not compatible with many municipal land uses. Development of a new airport master plan began in 2014. The concurrency of the City *Comprehensive Plan* and the Airport master planning processes provides an excellent opportunity to address existing conflicts.

The City organizational structure is comprised of six primary departments: Clerk, Finance, Police, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Community Development. As required by the City Charter, the operations are conducted under a Council/Manager structure whereby the five-member elected Council is tasked with setting policy and approving annual budgets and expenditures. The City Manager is responsible for the management of all employees and oversight of the City departments.

10.1 Public Works

Public Works is the largest department in the City. Responsibilities are directed at the continued operations and maintenance of streets, trails, water, wastewater collection and treatment, stormwater, irrigation ditch system, refuse, fleet service, and electrical systems. The departments of Electric, Water, Wastewater and Refuse are defined as Enterprise Funds, meaning their operations are funded through service fee collections.

Water Department. The Water Department is responsible for the City's potable and raw water services. The potable water system is comprised of the distribution facilities, water storage tanks which account for fire flow protection needs, and nine wells drawing groundwater from the underlying alluvial aquifer system.

The Gunnison Water Distribution System Master Plan (2007) provides the City with a comprehensive framework to address short and long-term needs for the finished water distribution system. Other major areas evaluated include well production capacity, transmission and distribution capacity, and storage requirements. These evaluations help in the direction and preparation of project implementation plans, design, construction, and financing of facilities to meet the city's anticipated water demands as a result of population growth and commercial development.

In 2007 the maximum daily demand was equal to about 82 percent of well capacity. Additional well capacity will be needed to support future growth. The majority of the "infill" developments are located on the west side of the city. Limited distribution system transmission capacity from the storage reservoirs makes it difficult to provide adequate fire protection in new developments on the west side of town and it is contemplated that a new well in West Gunnison will meet fire-flow demands.

Gunnison is one of only two cities in the State of Colorado that has a ditch irrigation system. Decreed water rights for the ditch system and town pipeline date back to the late 1800s and early 1900s and these water rights are one of the city's most valuable resources. The open ditches flowing through town and the green lawns and parks in the city contribute to the summer appeal of the community.

Wastewater Department. Facilities managed by the Wastewater Department include the wastewater collection system and the wastewater treatment plant. The collection system consists of buried pipes of varying sizes that gravity-flow wastewater to the treatment plant, located approximately three miles west of the city. The wastewater treatment plant, built in 1980, operates under permits issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. In addition to serving development within the city boundary, subdivision developments in the vicinity of the city are also served by the wastewater treatment plant. This regional service provision is critical to ensure that the underlying domestic water aquifer source is not contaminated by the proliferation of individual sewage disposal systems (leach fields) that tend to fail over time.

The City of Gunnison Wastewater Master Plan (2006) provides the City with a comprehensive framework to address short and long-term needs for the wastewater collection system. The plan uses future development trends to model the system and identify needs for

maintaining the system's future integrity. The plan found that infiltration of groundwater that enters the collection system through pipe cracks and other defects taxes the service capacity of the wastewater treatment plant. Since 2006 the City has funded a repair program of the collection system that incorporates a "slip-line" into existing collection pipes, which has significantly reduced groundwater infiltration.

Electric Department. The Gunnison Electric Service Territory comprises 11.8 square miles. Power is supplied to the City from a combination of sources. Approximately 28 percent of the city's power supply is from the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) who markets and delivers hydroelectric power services within a 15-state region of the central and western U.S. The other major power supplier is the Municipal Electric Agency of Nebraska (MEAN). MEAN provides power supply, transmission and related services to more than 65 communities, one public power district and one joint-action agency in four states: Colorado; Iowa; Nebraska; and, Wyoming. Approximately 17 percent of the city's electric purchase portfolio is from renewable energy sources.

City electric facilities include two substations and an extensive distribution system. The system is designed for redundancy so that if service is impeded at one juncture of the system, alternative electric service can be provided from another power feed source, helping to minimize disruptions. The fixed asset value of the system is approximately $2.5 million. The 4,406 customers (meters) have the fourth lowest electric fee rates in the state.

Streets Department. The Streets Department provides a variety of services necessary to maintain safe streets. Snow removal operations dominate the winter months and summer work entails improvement projects to maintain the system. Street maintenance is a priority with funding dedicated to crack sealing and slurry sealing operations in order to maximize the life of asphalt. Annual funds for asphalt replacement has increased in the past several years to help keep up with aging street surfaces. During the past five years the annual budgets and appropriations for street maintenance and improvements have averaged $650,000 per year.

10.2 Parks and Recreation

City Recreation Facilities and Operations. The City of Gunnison Parks and Recreation Department operates youth and adult recreation programs. In 2012, 3,938 people participated in 105 programs and in 2013 there were 3,436 participants. The department is responsible for maintaining seven parks comprising 38 acres, as well as the Community Center, Ice Rink, Cranor Hill Ski Area, Gunnison Mountain Park and the Hartman Rocks base area facilities.

The Community Center opened in 2005 and the pool addition was completed in 2009. In addition to organized events, the Community Center is heavily used by members of the community. In 2013 there were 71,974 patron visits to the facility. This includes people using membership cards, drop-ins, people involved in programs, the Young at Heart and Boomers group.

The Jorgenson Park Complex includes fields for soccer and football, four softball fields, baseball fields, a skate park, PacMan Pond, BMX track and the indoor and outdoor ice rinks. The indoor ice rink was constructed in 2008 and was also part of the recreation tax obligation. In 2012 a new skate park was constructed at Jorgenson Park and the baseball field was revamped with new fencing, dugouts and backstop.

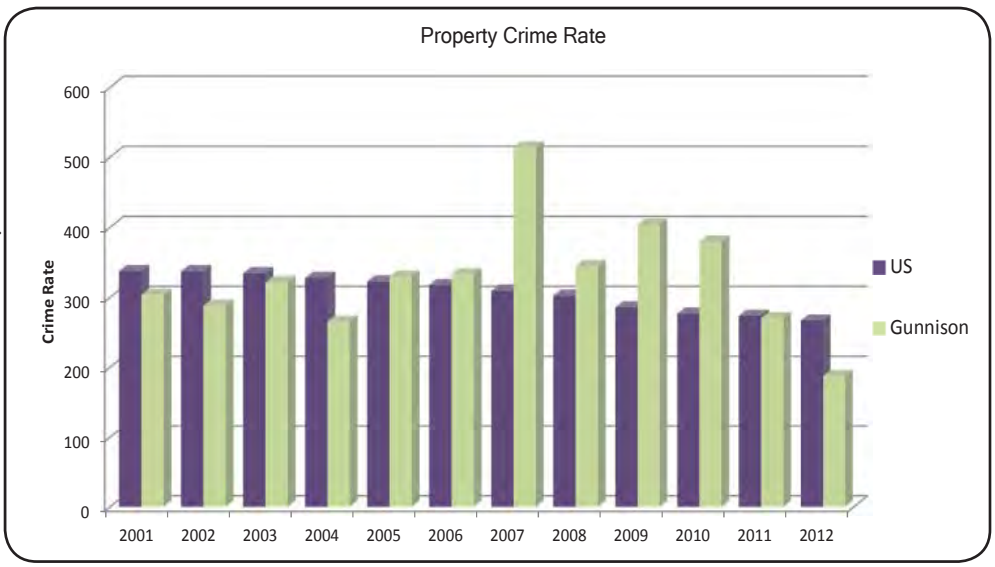
Recreation Collaboration. Gunnison is an active community and recreation is, in many cases, supported through collaborative efforts. For example, the Gunnison Valley Hockey Association (GVHA) offers youth and adult hockey programs and the Association rents the Jorgensen Ice Complex for their programs. Other examples include Gunnison Nordic which grooms Nordic tracts in a variety of areas including the VanTuyl Ranch, Hartman Rocks and various urban park facilities. Gunnison Trails is another important partner collaborating with the City on trail system development and other recreation endeavors.

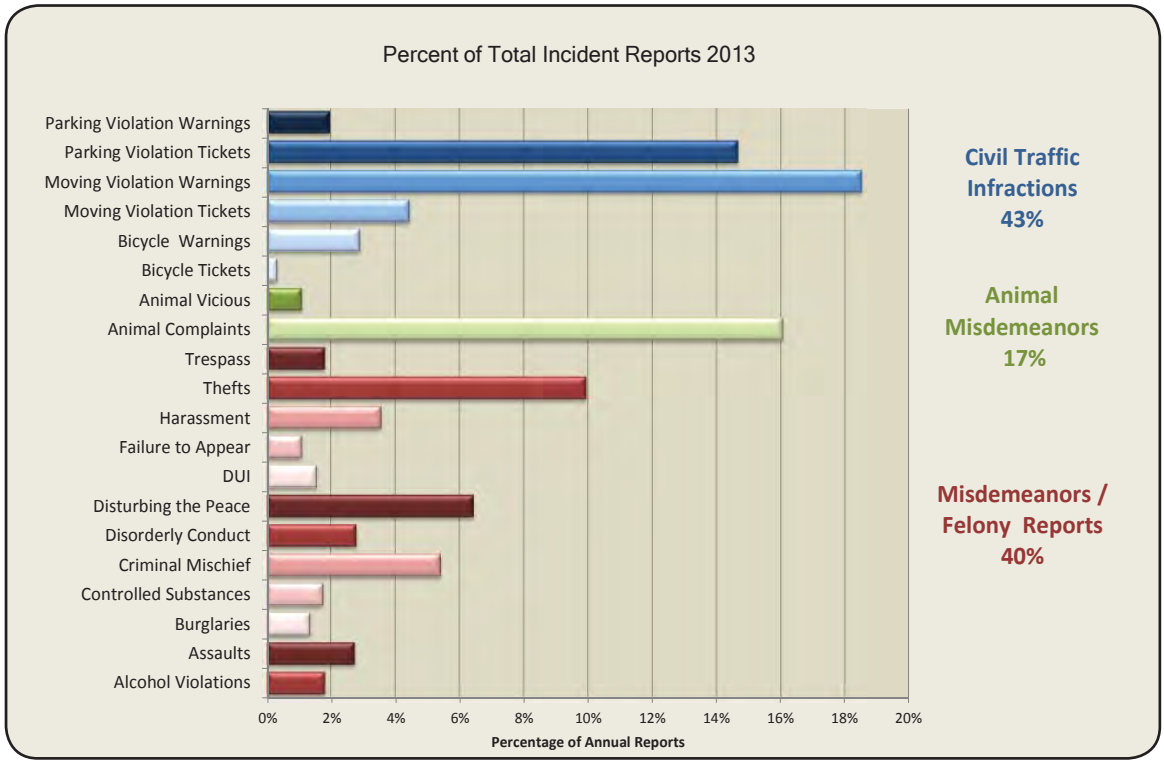
Park and Recreation Master Plan Update. In June 2014 the city received a $50,000 grant from Great Outdoors Colorado for the update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will focus on a variety of topics, including facility capacities, program demands, staffing and funding. The simultaneous update of the Comprehensive Plan provides opportunity for sharing ideas in both planning efforts.

10.3 Police and E911

The Police department is responsible for public safety functions including the operation of the E911 system for Gunnison and Hinsdale counties. The department now operates out of the new facility completed in 2014. The department consists of 14 sworn officers, two administrative and ten Emergency Services employees.

The Gunnison Police Department reported 1,944 incidents in 2013. Of those, 40 percent were misdemeanor and/or felonies, 43 percent were traffic infractions and 17 percent were misdemeanor animal offences. The chart displays statistics for the 2013 Incident Reports.





Overall, Gunnison's crime rate is lower than national averages and falls in the "average" range (200-449)[2]. Because the population is small, a one-person crime spree can have a large influence on statistics for any given year; as can be seen in the chart, the number of burglaries and thefts increased significantly in 2007.

2 Crime rate is calculated by dividing the population by the number of crimes and multiplying by 100,000.

10.4 Administrative Departments

While every City department has administrative staff services, the general administration functions are provided by the Finance, Clerk and Community Development departments. The Finance department is responsible for budget preparation coordination, accounting, audits, utility service billing, and human resources. The Clerk department is responsible for records retention, council administration, and city court. The Community Development Department manages planning, building, and fire-safety services.

10.5 Observations – City Services

- During the national recession, various departments in the City lost employees through attrition. Additionally, employee wages were frozen for three years. While public safety and customer services were adequately maintained, productivity in certain departments was reduced. In the past year revenues have been increasing and the 2015 revenues are projected to continue in an upward trend. Some positions previously vacated through attrition are projected to be filled.

- Maintaining a quality workforce is supported by the City Council.

- Recently promulgated water quality standards for nutrients and arsenic have been implemented, which may require additional modifications to the wastewater treatment facility.

- Limitations on in-fill development exists because of limited fire-flow capacity in West Gunnison. An additional water well is required to address this limitation.

- The Threatened Species listing of the Gunnison Sage-grouse will have a significant impact upon several City service operations; in particular the electrical services, wastewater treatment plant operations, Gunnison Rising development and certiain improvements to the VanTuyl Ranch.

- Parks and Recreation activities continue to grow and facility use needs are also increasing. The Parks and Recreation department is working with the Boomer's Senior Citizen organization and funding for an addition to the Community Center to facilitate increasing needs has been secured.

- Maintenance of the City's trail system facilities and non-motorized transportation needs continues to increase. These service demands will continue and funding projections will increase through time.

- Growth and development in the city has been slow and steady. However, County growth management policies have attempted to focus development within and adjacent to the municipal limits. Residents in the unincorporated area around the city rely upon many municipal services including electric service, wastewater treatment and recreation.

- Major improvements implemented by the City are funded through a five year Capital Improvement Plan process. Additional focus has been placed upon capital planning to maintain funding reserves at an appropriate level. However, certain fund reserves must be kept at relatively high level because some facilities, such as electrical substations and the pool have extremely expensive equipment and adequate reserves must be maintained in the event of equipment failure.

11.1 Introduction

In July 2014, a community engagement process began in association with the development of the Comprehensive Plan update. The initial step of engagement was small group conversations or coffee sessions with citizens representing a broad cross-section of the community. The second structural component involved a series of public workshops. Many topics posed to the public in these sessions were defined and refined from input gathered during the informal coffee sessions. The administration of a community survey was the final part of the engagement structure. Section 11 provides a description and summary of the community engagement processes.

11.2 Executive Summary of Results

A variety of thematic conclusions can be drawn from this public engagement, with possibly the most important concept being the Gunnison community, as a whole, is very engaged and its citizens are engendered with a positive outlook for the future. However, several themes garnered from the public engagement processes will be critically important to remember as development of the Comprehensive Plan update moves forward.

Overwhelmingly, citizens support the idea of maintaining existing infrastructure and existing City services. Citizens also support a future with a variety of facilities, services and amenities that serve to enhance a general quality of life.

The economy and jobs are often cited as a major concern throughout the public engagement processes. In fact, approximately 69% of survey respondents believe the community lacks a coherent direction for economic development and there is a significant lack of good paying jobs. The lack of affordable housing is also seen as a significant issue, but a noteable minority of the community opposes the direct funding of affordable housing.

Managing growth and development patterns are central elements of the Comprehensive Plan update. Public feedback reveals that citizens support the need to plan for growth and manage related changes in a strategic manner. The community survey reveals that citizens support the policy that development should pay its own way; development in floodplains should be avoided; and downtown building architecture and streetscapes should follow prescribed design guidelines. However, juxtaposition reveals that regulations for business developments should be flexible.

Transportation system functions are also a central emphasis of the Comprehensive Plan update. Many of the workshop participants expressed a need to establish bypass truck route due to the heavy industrial traffic on Main Street. Steady input from all three methods (coffee sessions, workshops, and survey) stressed that non-motorized transportation facilities are very important. Survey results note that citizens are satisfied with the existing non-motorized system, but there is a lack of connectivity to schools and open spaces. Citizens also indicate that pedestrian crossings on the highways are lacking and improvements to these pedestrian crossings are needed.

A variety of ideas and thoughts regarding downtown improvements exists among citizens. Again, highway crossings are seen as a deterrent to the viability of downtown. Survey data indicates that respondents are slightly dissatisfied with the variety of retail stores and restaurants, but seemingly satisfied with the convenience of shopping and restaurants. Similarly comments from workshops concur that the community lacks viable night-life, restaurant venues are limited and shopping opportunities are also limited. The idea of a pedestrian mall was also addressed in public workshops and the community survey. While citizens support downtown events, there was less than a majority consensus regarding development of a pedestrian mall. Workshop comments regarding a pedestrian mall were mixed and the survey results indicate that citizens do not support a mall design involving the permanent closure of streets.

11.3 Initial Meetings with Selected Individuals

Methodology. To begin Phase Two of the Comprehensive Planning project, a list of 70 locals were contacted in June 2014 via email or phone and invited to a 60-minute "coffee session" attended by two or three other subjects, Steve Westbay, and Terry Schliesman (facilitator). In addition, for feedback from Hispanic immigrants, Westbay and Schliesman met with fifteen members of Immigrantes Unidos de Gunnison on August 21, 2014.

In all, 55 people attended these sessions. From the notes and recordings, a summary was prepared, covering a total of fourteen hours of dialogue. (See Appendix A for extended notes on coffee sessions.) The interviewees represented a cross section of the local population, and included business owners, non-profit leaders, governmental workers, teachers, administrators, planners, retirees and homemakers. Past and present politicians were also recruited. Gender was nearly split down the middle (F=29, M=26).

These sessions were guided by a set of 24 questions generated by staff, consultants and members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, and examples include:

- Why do you live in Gunnison?
- Specifically, what don't you like about Gunnison?
- Are you aware of regulations that conflict with goals of the community, like affordable housing or development of businesses?
- What do you think are the pros and cons of developing a pedestrian mall near the IOOF Park?
- Today, people and businesses have more choices than ever before about where to locate. Who do you think Gunnison should try to attract and what do you think Gunnison could do to be more competitive in attracting them?
- As you drive around town, you see parks and open spaces, flowering planters, city lights, irrigation ditches, etc. What are your thoughts regarding the maintenance of our city? Is there something missing that you've seen that works well, elsewhere?

Findings. Coffee session findings included the following (not ranked in order):

Affordable Housing – A service town needs employees, and elected leaders ought not forget affordable housing as a value statement.

Economic Development – Gunnison could and should grow with knowledge-based industries.

Use of Vacant Land—The county has made it "very difficult" to build on vacant lots outside of city limits (not selling well per one real estate agent), which will likely drive developers to build within city limits.

Downtown Area – Can we do anything to attract a wider variety of merchants to the downtown core? Towns listed as having a "fun" downtown include Durango, Salida and Grand Junction.

Signage – City could do more to welcome visitors to the community, particularly from the west. Would a visitor know where to go for Chamber information if they drove in from Montrose?

Transit – Our bus system should be enhanced and people voiced their support of the city playing a more active role in that process.

Airport Corridor – Would like to see a more eye-appealing corridor from airport to downtown. Current situation is "ugly," "scary," and "Not very welcoming".

Regional Issues – The city can help promote the message the natural resources are finite and that we don't want to take for granted the public lands that surround the community. More than one person commented on the need to finish the trail system in the region.

Pedestrian Mall – Mixed support for the idea. Must have a plan for specific events in order to draw people there.

Bilingual Integration and Communication – Would like to be able to cash checks (resolve ID issue) and be included in the community while preserving thier culture. The City could do more to communicate in Spanish with billing, announcements, etc., and encourage other organizations to do the same by example.

Internet stability and data redundancy – we have one fiber optic connection to Montrose. When that goes down, so do 90% of the organizations in the valley.

11.4 Facilitated Sessions in the Community

Methodology. After the coffee session interviews were complete, a series of community workshops were organized by City staff and facilitated discussions occurred in the fourth week of July, 2014. The purpose of the facilitated workshops was to gain a better understanding of the community's perspective towards future growth and development, land use and transportation. Four sessions were open to public participation, one involved the Comprehensive Plan Technical Advisory Committee and one was a joint meeting with the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission.

The facilitated sessions were structured the following way: Attendees were randomly assigned to a table or a discussion group upon entering the room. On average 20-25 people participated in each session. After a quick welcome and explanation of instructions, each group was given a discussion question printed on a 2'x3' sheet of paper, with plenty of blank space on the sheet for writing answers. In each 90-minute session, groups addressed three separate discussion questions, for example:

> *The concept of complete streets, which places equal value on non-motorized mobility and automobiles, is being explored as part of this planning process. Do you believe that planning for multiple travel modes is warranted and, if so, what street corridors are most important to consider for improvement?*

As groups completed their answer for one discussion question, they were provided another question until each group had answered three questions. When finished, the 2'x3' sheets were posted on the wall within view of the groups, and each session ended with a "reporting out" of answers to the discussion questions as well as a larger group discussion, in most cases. Observations from each workshop were recorded and are included in Appendix B.

Findings. Findings from the sessions reinforced themes developed in the first step of Phase 2, the informal coffee sessions. Here's a summary of findings for the community sessions:

Community Facilitation Session #1 - The participants at this meeting were mostly active community members, business owners and long -time residents of Gunnison. Attendees considered a myriad of factors that would contribute to development. The standard responses fell along the lines of:

- How to effectively expand off Main Street.
- How to make Main Street more pedestrian friendly while accommodating the traffic.
- Gunnison ought to (or ought not) designate a specific route from the county airport to the downtown.
- Public transportation is valued between lower and upper valley, but could be improved with regard to schedule and route (primarily within the city limits).

Community Facilitation Session #2 - The make-up of attendees at this public session was quite different from session one. Participants were primarily active seniors, with a fairly proportional split of long -time residents and residents who relocated during their retirement years. Overwhelming consent voiced the need to address seniors as both active participants in the community and a desirable market for growth and recruitment. Within this context there were several ideas/concerns posed about the future Comprehensive Plan for the City of Gunnison:

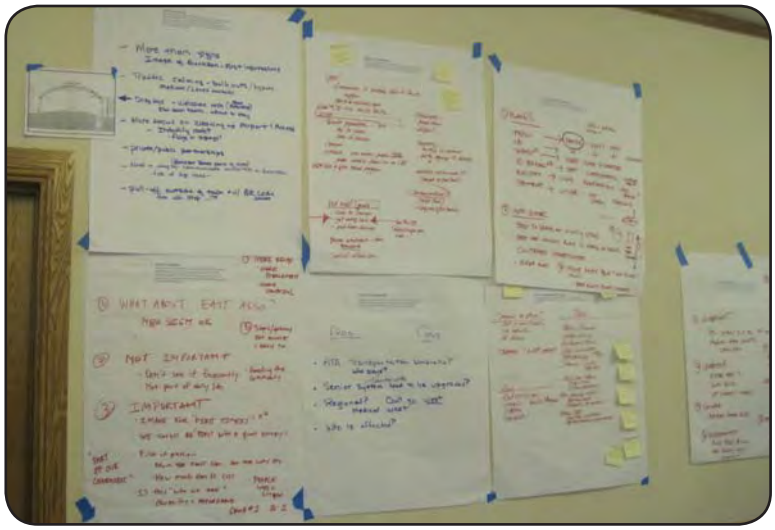
- The City must fund and facilitate the hiring of a full-time Senior Center Director
- We need more one-story affordable housing to accommodate the senior market
- Attention must be paid to the safety of pedestrians and bikers – safe routes and regulations should be established
- Although the airport corridor is a non-issue, Highway 50 and Tomichi must be addressed in the new plan with the intent of raising both safety and aesthetics
- The plan should be clear about which sections work to bring in more people and which work to facilitate those who are already here – these objectives are different and they must be accommodated differently
- Can the new plan address how the City incentivizes and supports partnerships between existing entities? (i.e. churches and senior transportation or zoning and seniors)

Community Facility Session #3 – Participants in this session were diverse in the ages and length of residency in Gunnison. Many attendees either operated businesses and several participants were either County or City employees. Much of the dialog focused on economic development and beautification of the City - these topics were not as prevalent during the previous public workshop discussions. The suggestions for adding economic development to the City's Comprehensive Plan included:

- In order to improve Main Street and the overall appearance of our City we must address multi-modal travel with a concrete plan for the future. This includes planning, improvements, and facilitating more safety.
- Downtown merchants need assistance to improve the appearance and entice more visitors. It was suggested that the Visitors Center be relocated to Main Street. Creation of a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was suggested as a potential way to fund physical improvements.
- Gunnison will have to solve Crested Butte's housing issues so why not pursue this intentionally with economic development in mind?
- A downtown pedestrian mall is thought of as a possible contributor for economic development. It would be prudent to focus all efforts on "fixing" Main Street.
- We should include current and forward-thinking energy regulations on all economic development plans.
- The Chamber of Commerce structure, service and administration needs to be overhauled to better serve the economic needs of the future.
- We need stronger internet capabilities and foundations for both visitors and the attraction of future residents. (amenities for telecommuters)
- Gunnison urgently needs a larger pedestrian presence on Main Street, and corridor design improvements are needed to improve pedestrian activity.

Summary. On the macro level, two important themes were voiced during the public workshops. First, there seemed to be an internal/external dichotomy of community issues. Internal issues revolve around needs and issues of existing residents. External concerns such as attracting new residents and tourists and the changes were deemed to be somewhat divergent and may be categorized and addressed separately. Every time this dichotomy was addressed there was palpable apprehension about the value of internal versus external, and how this would contribute to the funding, staffing and pursuit of each facet of the Comprehensive Plan.

The other theme that appeared repeatedly throughout the sessions was the necessity of a Comprehensive Plan that reflected the interdependent nature of this community. In building a plan that balances the traditional values of Gunnison (familiarity with each other, hard work ethic, natural resource management, etc.) with a vision for the future, the City should incentivize and support working partnerships between citizens and organizations whenever possible. Participants of these workshops stressed that, through collaboration, the people of Gunnison can do much in meeting the demands and opportunities of the future.

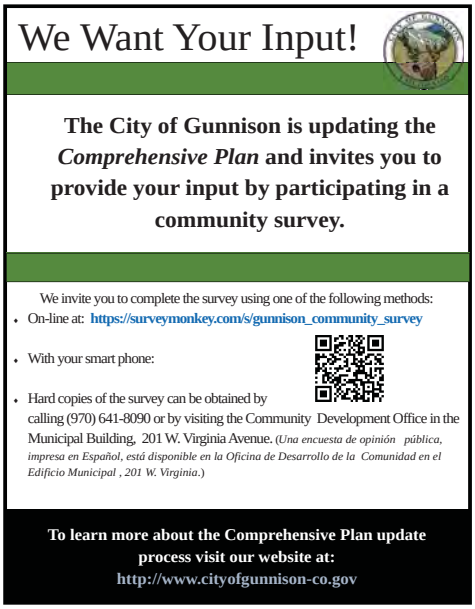


11.5 Community Survey

Methodology. The City of Gunnison Community Survey was created by the City staff in partnership with project consultants. The Planning and Zoning Commission and Advisory Committee provided detailed input about the questions and survey structure. The purpose of this survey was to measure public satisfaction, attitudes and opinions with regard to existing services, quality of life, growth and development, transportation, downtown characteristics, and preferred future actions as they may pertain to the Gunnison community.

The survey was administered via Surveymonkey.com. It went live on October 8, 2014 and concluded on November 18, 2014. Paper copies (Spanish and English) were available to anyone without access to Surveymonkey.com. A total of 598 responses were collected for the survey. Responses submitted on paper copies (N=79) were entered into Surveymonkey.com, including responses in Spanish (translated back to English with the help of Spanish faculty and students at Gunnison High School).

The survey was promoted in the community in various ways. In October 2014, 3,000 postcards were mailed to local residents informing them of the survey and providing the online link to the survey. Approximately 762 City utility customers received an email notice about the survey. Other outreach methods included newspaper advertisements, the City's website, the City's Facebook page, Public Service Announcements on local radio stations, attending meetings of local organizations (Young at Heart, Kiwanis, etc.) and posting flyers throughout the community.



We Want Your Input!

The City of Gunnison is updating the *Comprehensive Plan* and invites you to provide your input by participating in a community survey.

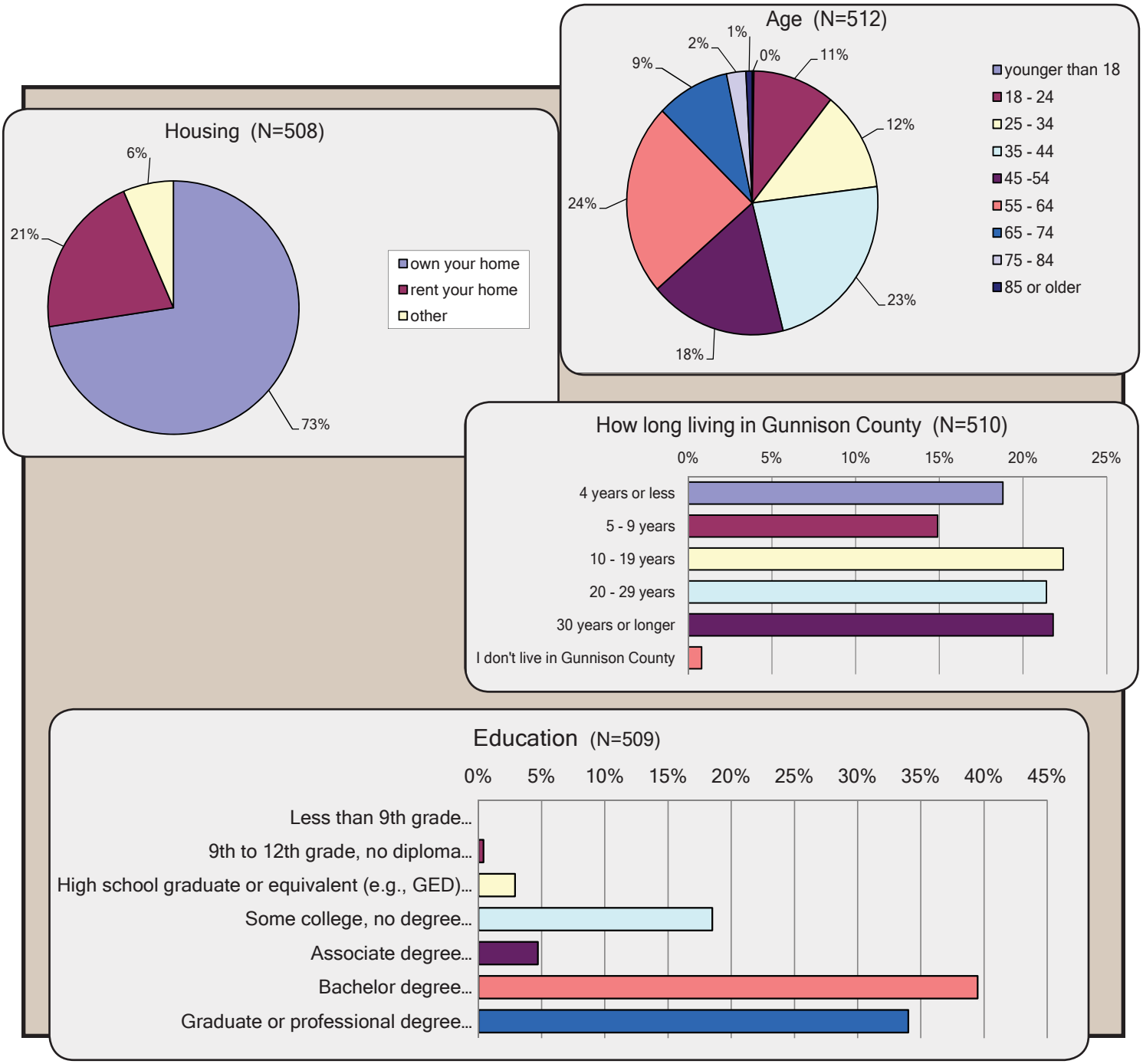
We invite you to complete the survey using one of the following methods:

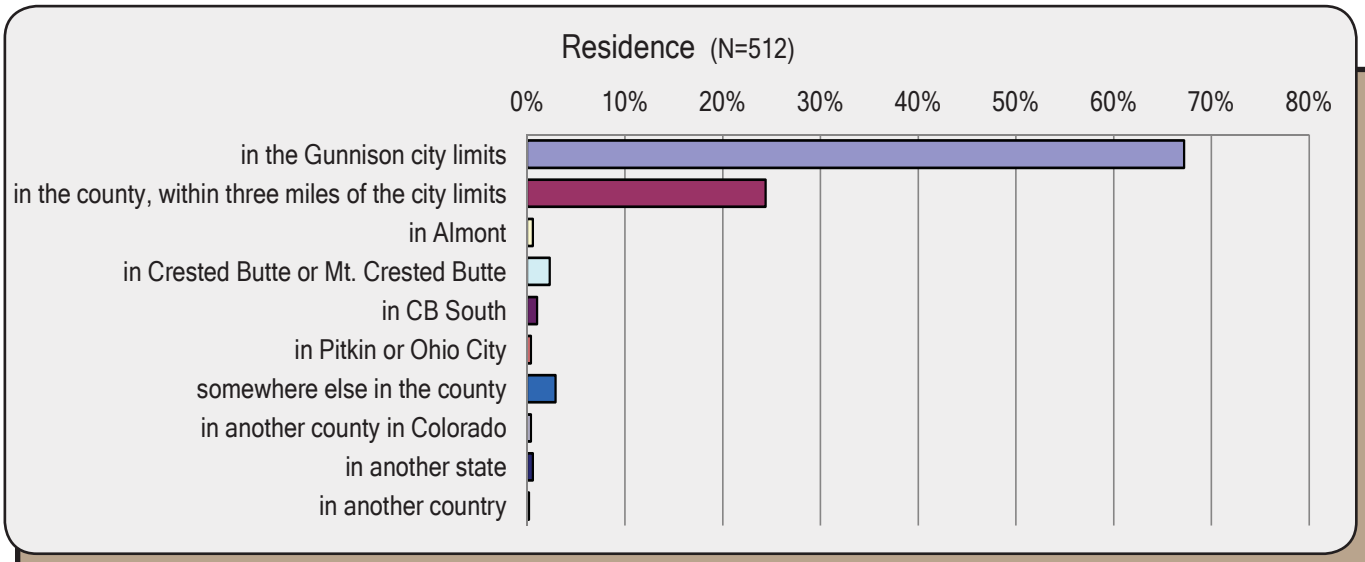
- On-line at: https://surveymonkey.com/s/gunnison_community_survey
- With your smart phone:
- Hard copies of the survey can be obtained by calling (970) 641-8090 or by visiting the Community Development Office in the Municipal Building, 201 W. Virginia Avenue. (*Una encuesta de opinión pública, impresa en Español, está disponible en la Oficina de Desarrollo de la Comunidad en el Edificio Municipal , 201 W. Virginia.*)

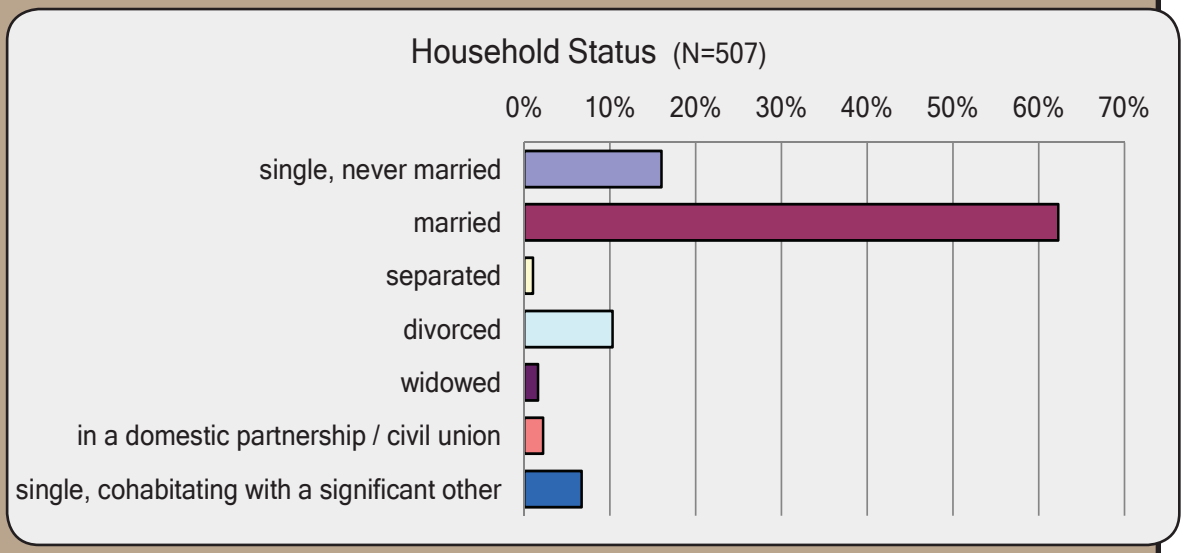
To learn more about the Comprehensive Plan update process visit our website at:
http://www.cityofgunnison-co.gov

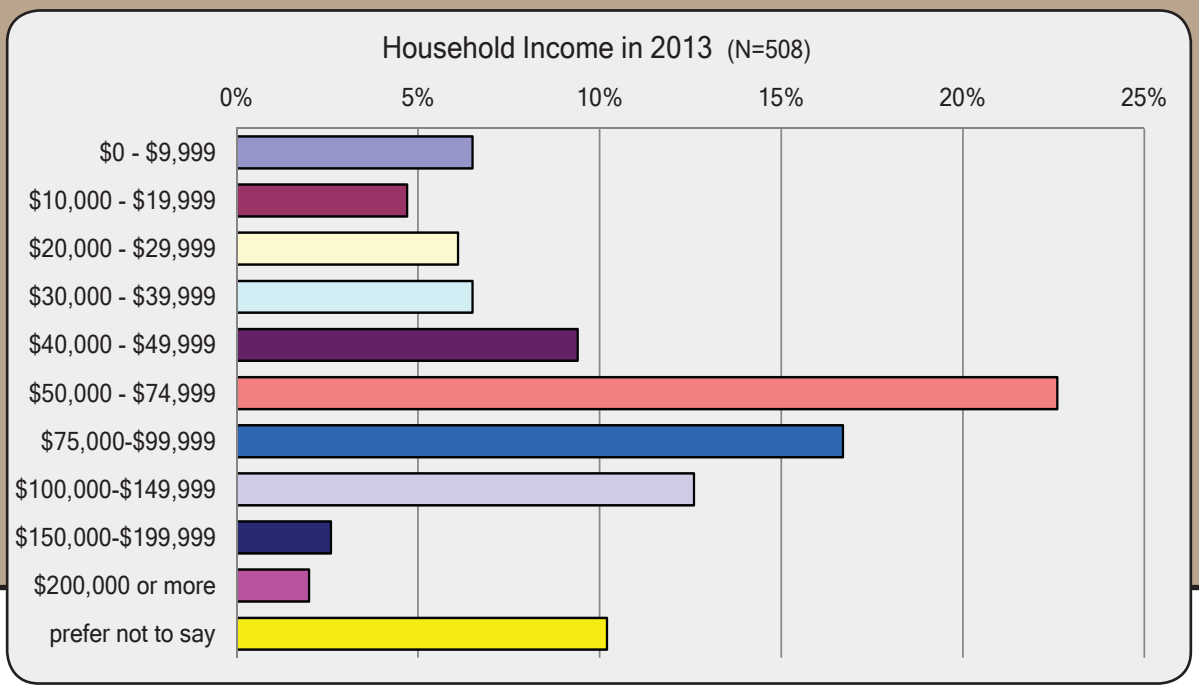
Respondent Profile. Of the 598 surveys submitted, demographic information gathered identifies 50.2% of the respondents as female, 62% as married, and the mean age was 35-44. Of the respondents, 91.6% lived within three miles of or inside the Gunnison city limits. The majority of the respondents (72.6%) own a home. In regard to race/ethnicity, 94.07% were White not Hispanic, and 1.98% of respondents were Hispanic or Latino. While the survey respondants' profile is not identical to community demographics (See Section 2: Demographics on page 9), it is representative for the purposes of this report. See Appendix D for complete survey results. (Note: Because ~90 respondents did not provide demographic information, figures presented herein represents the sum of all respondents. However, when demographic cross tabulations are cited, they account only for those survey responses that included demographic information.)

The following graphs depict species profiles of persons who participated in the survey.




Residence (N=512)
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
in the Gunnison city limits
in the county, within three miles of the city limits
in Almont
in Crested Butte or Mt. Crested Butte
in CB South
in Pitkin or Ohio City
somewhere else in the county
in another county in Colorado
in another state
in another country

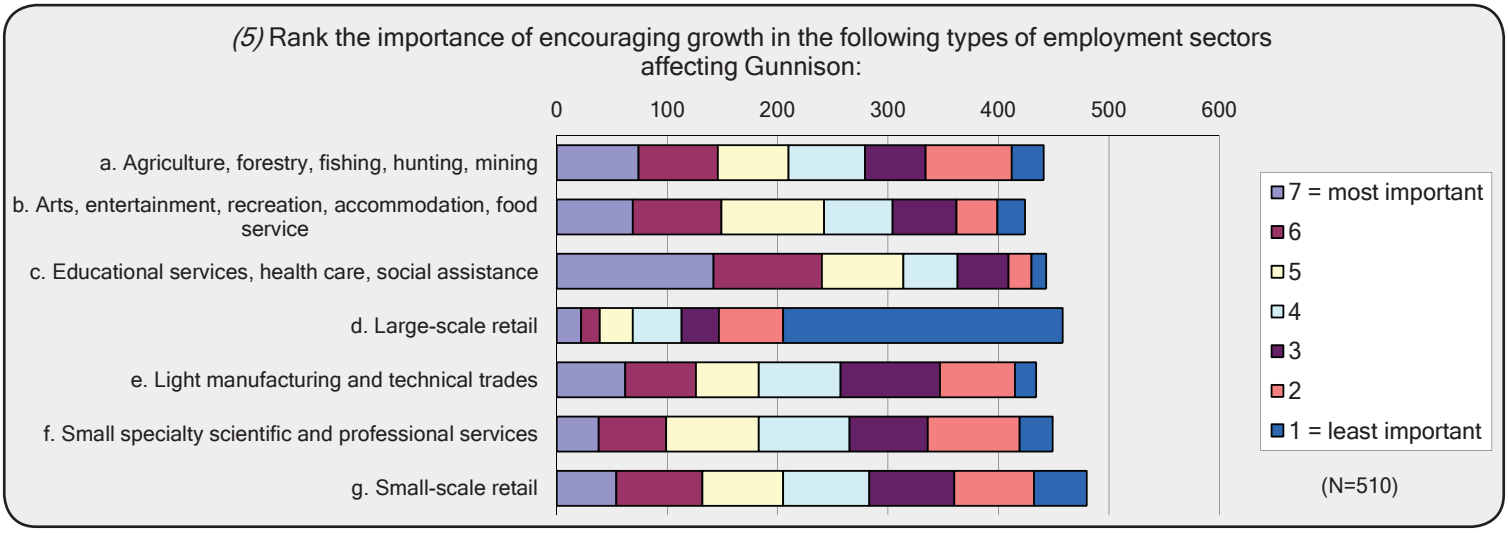

Household Status (N=507)
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
single, never married
married
separated
divorced
widowed
in a domestic partnership / civil union
single, cohabitating with a significant other


Household Income in 2013 (N=508)
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
$0 - $9,999
$10,000 - $19,999
$20,000 - $29,999
$30,000 - $39,999
$40,000 - $49,999
$50,000 - $74,999
$75,000-$99,999
$100,000-$149,999
$150,000-$199,999
$200,000 or more
prefer not to say

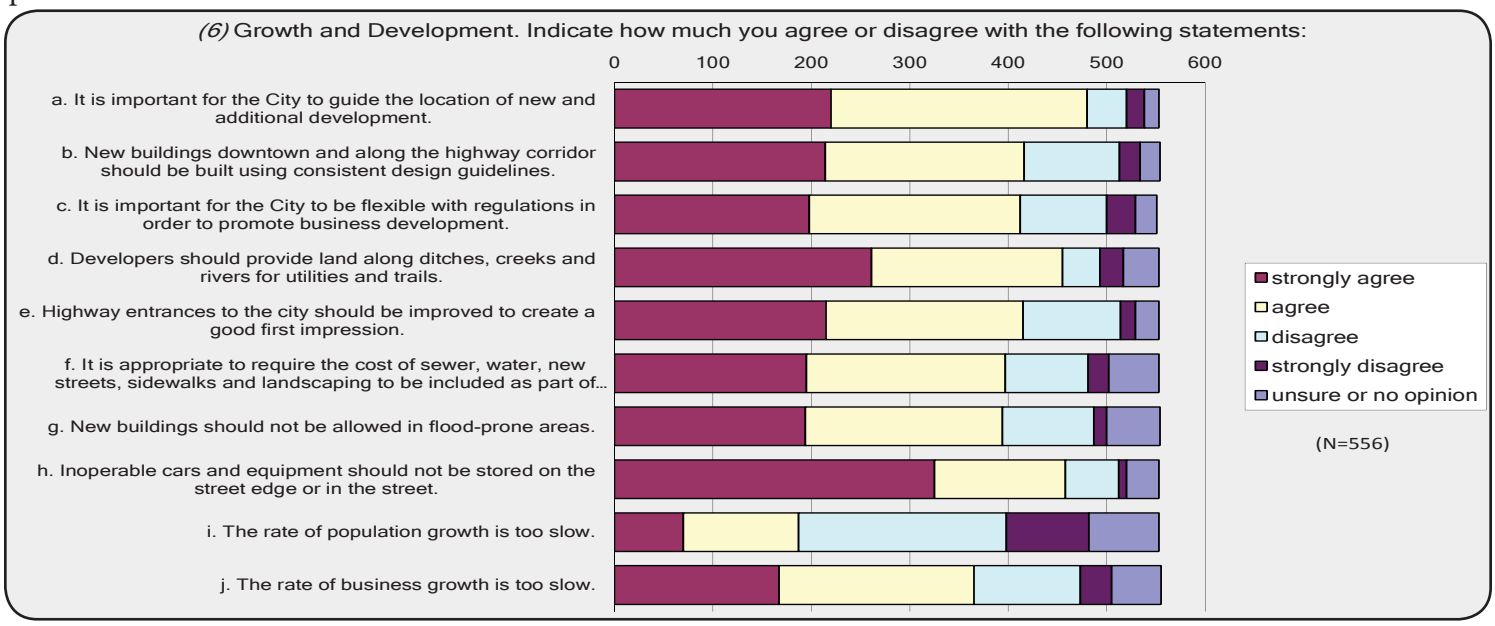
Results are reported by the four themes of the survey: Future Desires, Government Spending Priorities and the Economy, Existing City Services and the Quality of Life, and Transportation.

Findings: Summary of Future Desires. A primary intent of the survey is to garner input about the desired future direction of the community in terms of job growth and physical development strategies. Four survey questions (Questions 5, 6, 10, 11) examine the themes for job growth and future development.

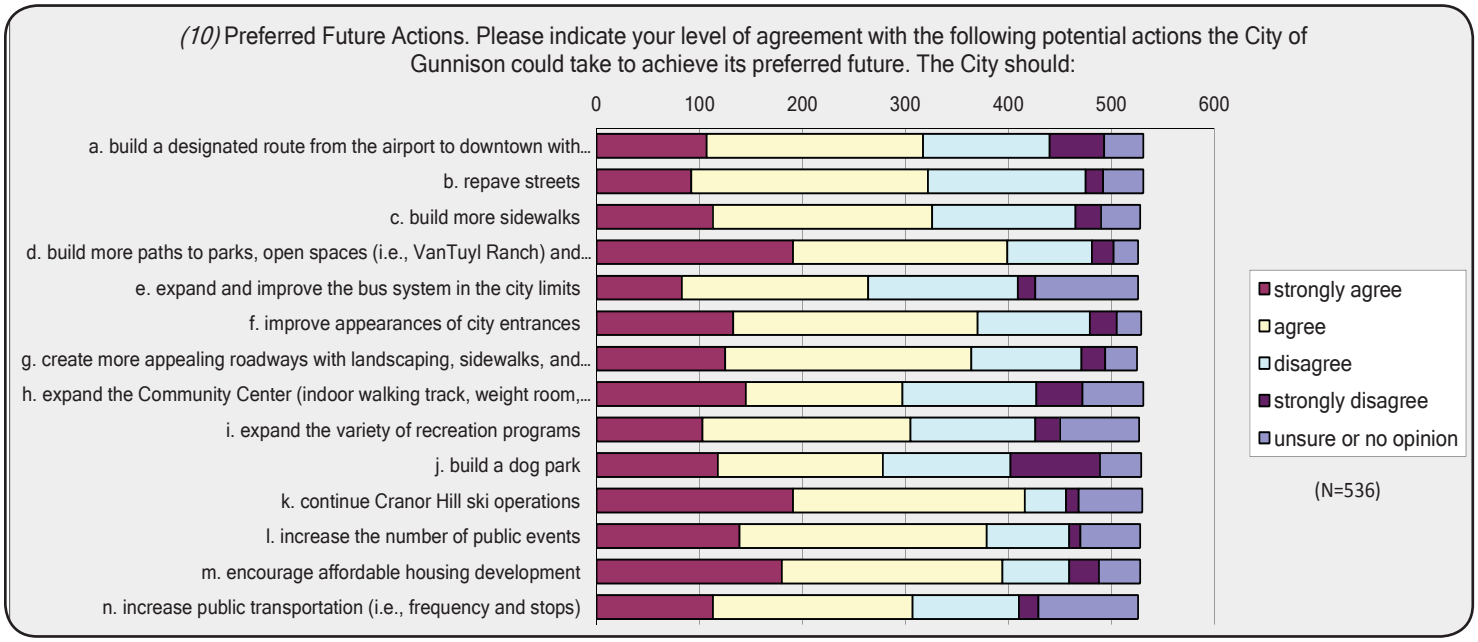
Question 5 examines the residents' opinions about growing specific employment sectors. The varied distribution of responses implies that job growth should target a variety of job sectors rather than focusing on a single job sector. Respondents strongly support growth in the educational services sector, indicating the economic importance of Western State Colorado University as a major contributor to the local job market. Respondents also indicate a preference to maintain local business job growth.



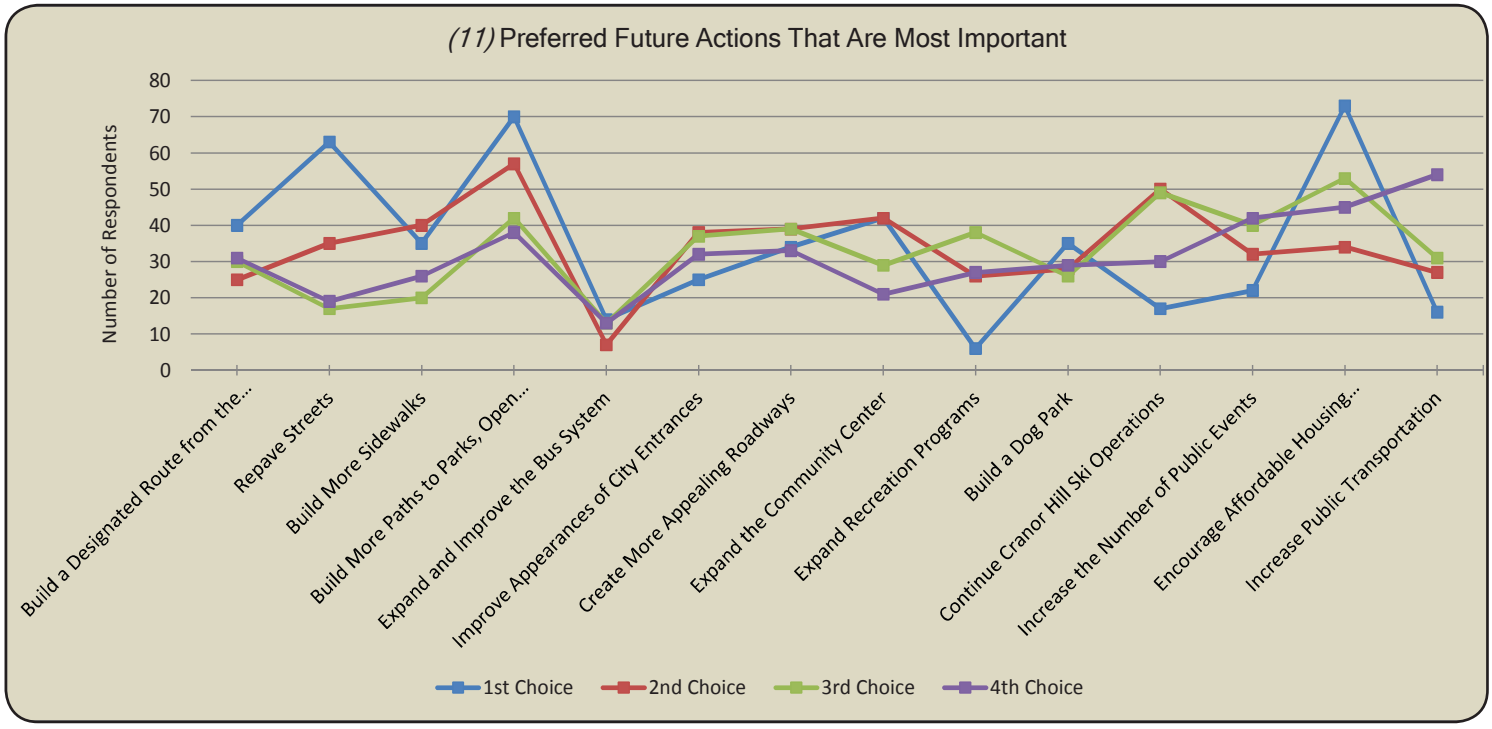
The thematic context of Question 6 addresses community perceptions related to land use controls and future desired growth patterns within the urban area. A significant majority of citizens believe that inoperable cars and equipment should not be stored on the street edge or in the street. Results seem to imply that street appearance is important, and a more specific question would have been helpful. Specifically, further insight regarding the willingness of the community to accept the consequences associated with increased policing of street nuisances would help planning policies.



Question 10 explores opinions regarding possible future physical development, including the importance of maintaining and expanding infrastructure, improving urban design and community appearance, and municipal services. Results indicate that residents desire a future with quality pedestrian facilities, public open spaces and continued Cranor Hill Ski Area operations, and providing such amenities is a priority – this future desire trend is also supported by the survey data regarding existing city services, which is summarized on page 60 of this report.

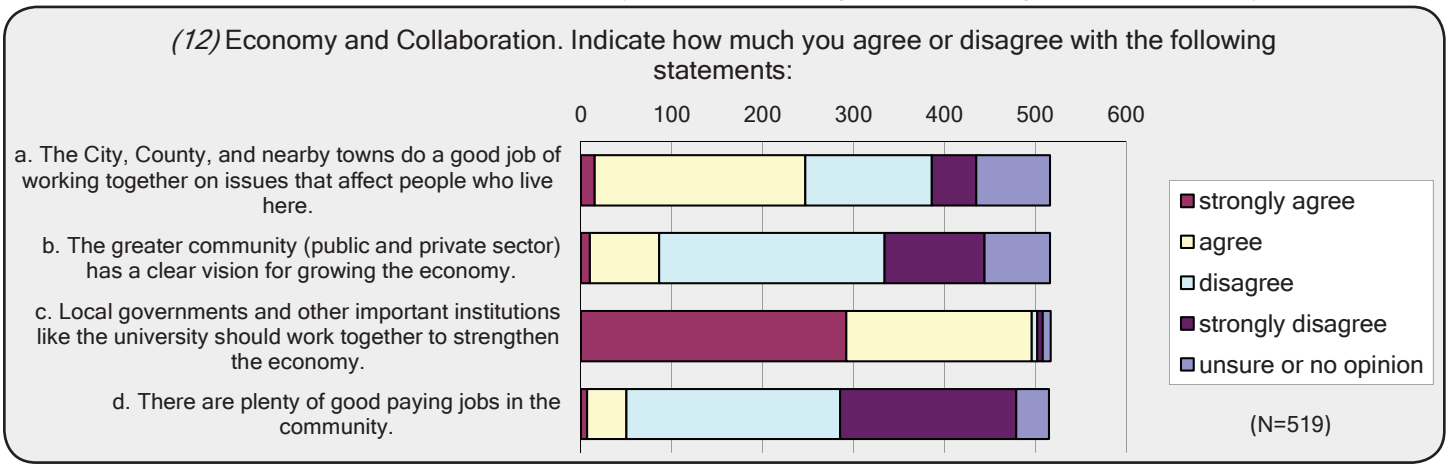


Survey participants were then asked to rank the importance of actions to be taken by the City to achieve desired future conditions. In summary, the community is enamored with paths to open spaces and schools and the ecouragement of affordable housing are considered to be an important future desire. Future expansion of public event venues is also supported. Citizens support a future with a variety of facilities, services and amenities that serve to enhance a general quality of life, and the need for affordable housing in the future will be an important talking point in the Comprehensive Plan update, as demonstrated in responses for question 10 and 11.

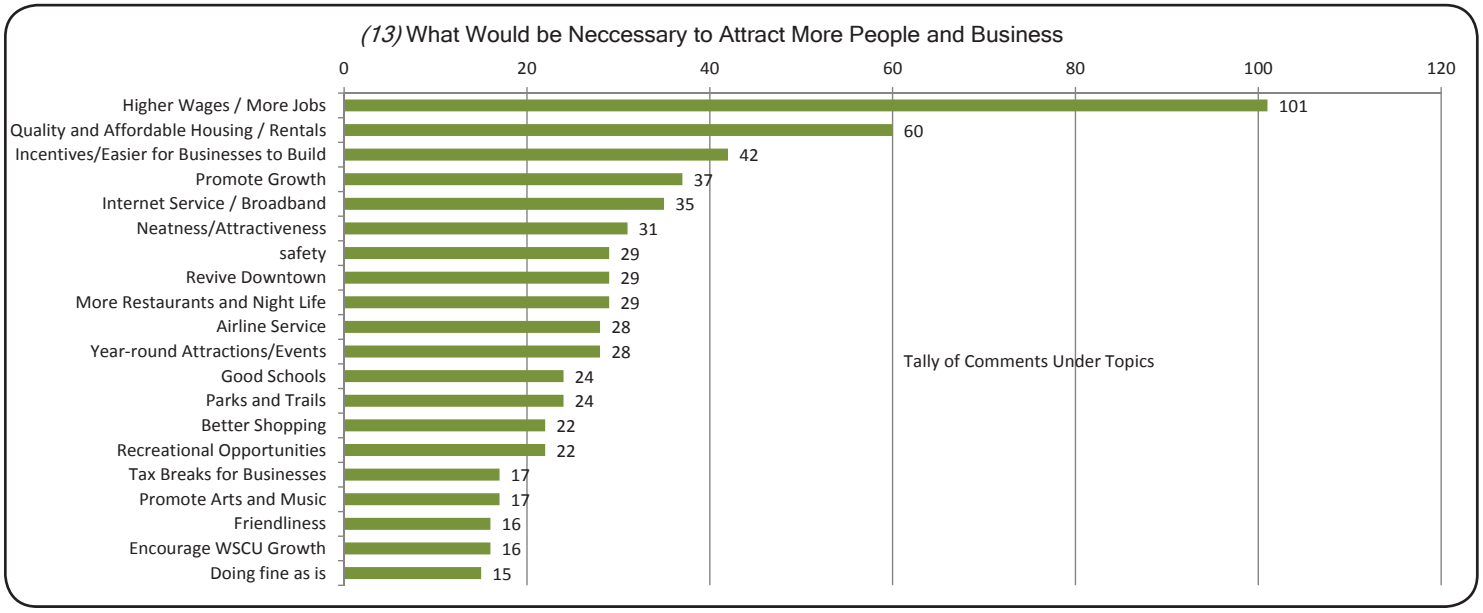


Findings: Government Spending Priorities and the Economy. The Survey also probed community attitudes toward local government spending on economic conditions. Below are responses to Questions 12, 13, 14 and 15.

Question 12 assesses the perception of collaborative efforts between the various local government entities; 37% of the respondents indicate that local governments are failing to collaborate with each other for the general benefit of residents and, conversely, 48% percent of respondents believe that local collaboration efforts are appropriate. A larger proportion of the respondents (68%) believe there is no clear vision between public and private sectors for growing the local economy. Approximately 83% of respondents believe the community lacks good-paying jobs, while only 10% of respondents feel that good jobs are available. Finally, nearly all respondents (96%) felt "local governments and other important institutions like the university should work together to strengthen the economy."

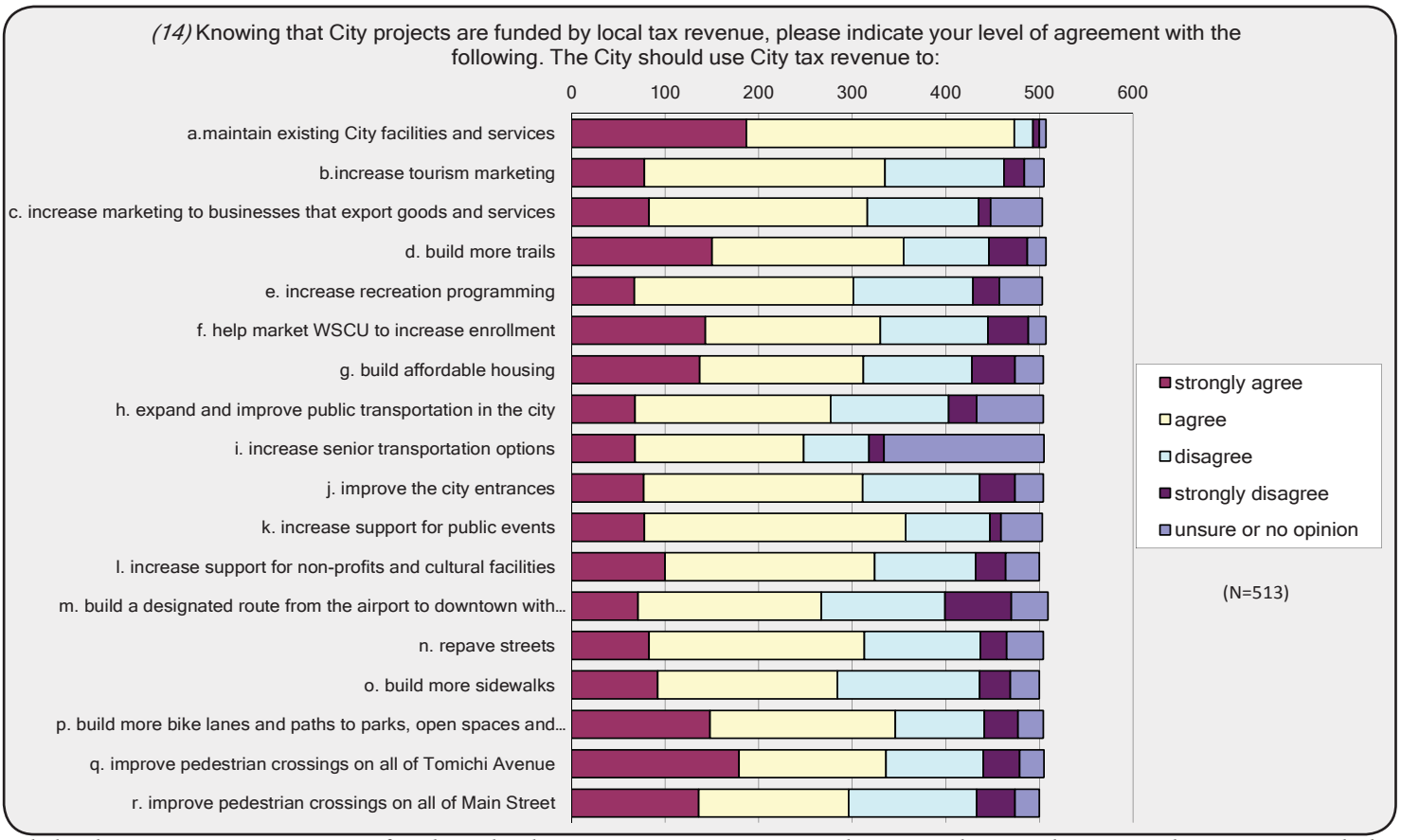


Question 13 is an open-ended question soliciting comments about how the city could attract more people and business. While the range of responses span largely, several specific thoughts are repeatedly cited. Most of the comments are in reference to the city as a whole, however, a few of the comment categories are more specific. For example, under neatness and attractiveness of the City, three comments are in reference to design guidelines. In the safety category, five comments suggest lower speed limits, 10 are in reference to pedestrian crossings and seven are related to non-motorized trasportation throughout the City. A complete list of comments can be found in Appendix E.

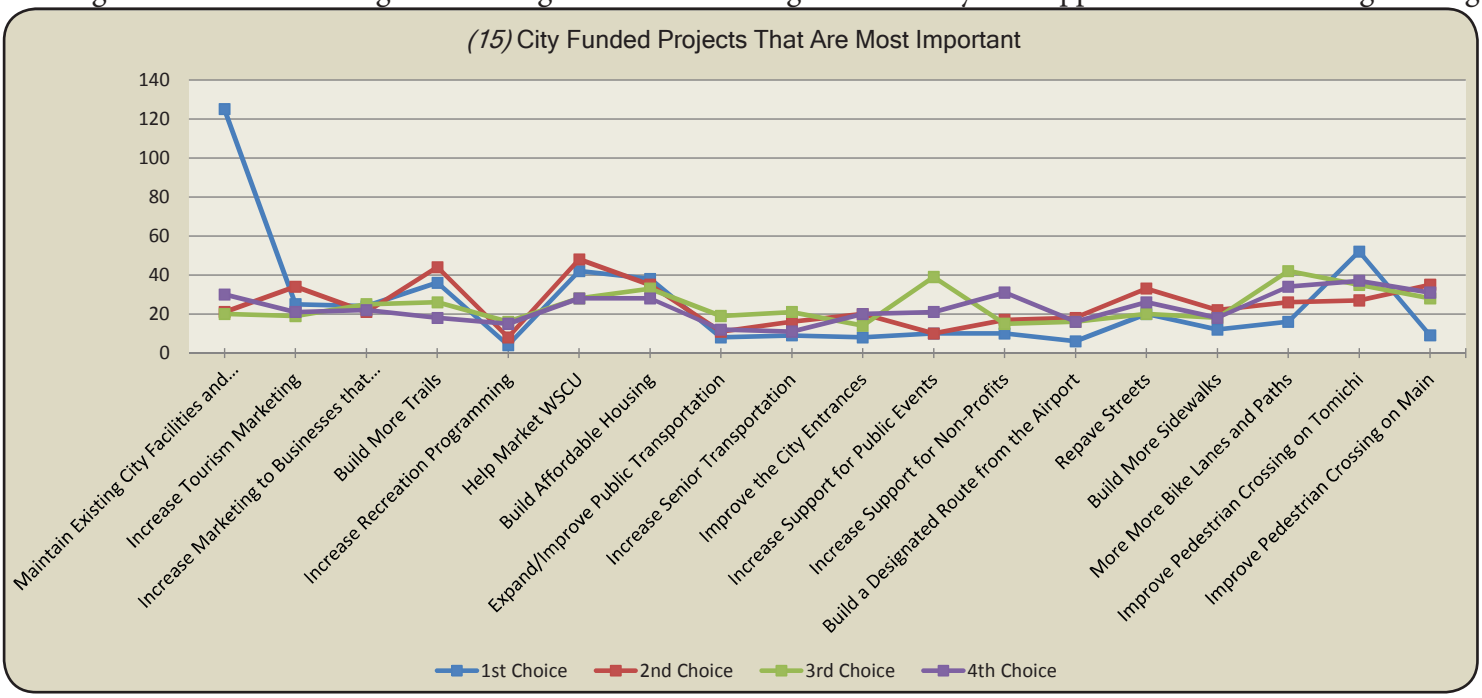


Question 14 explored how the City should prioritize budget expenditures, which are primarily associated with General Fund revenues derived by sales tax collection. Overwhelmingly, citizens favor the continued funding of existing

City facilities and services, and the consensus for funding multiple improvements is supported. Improvements to the City trail system and safer crosswalks on Tomichi Avenue also have strong citizen support. Tourism and WSCU enrollment marketing are nearly equal in their relative degree of support, and citizens indicate that both endeavors are important. Citizens also agree that affordable housing and street paving are priorities.



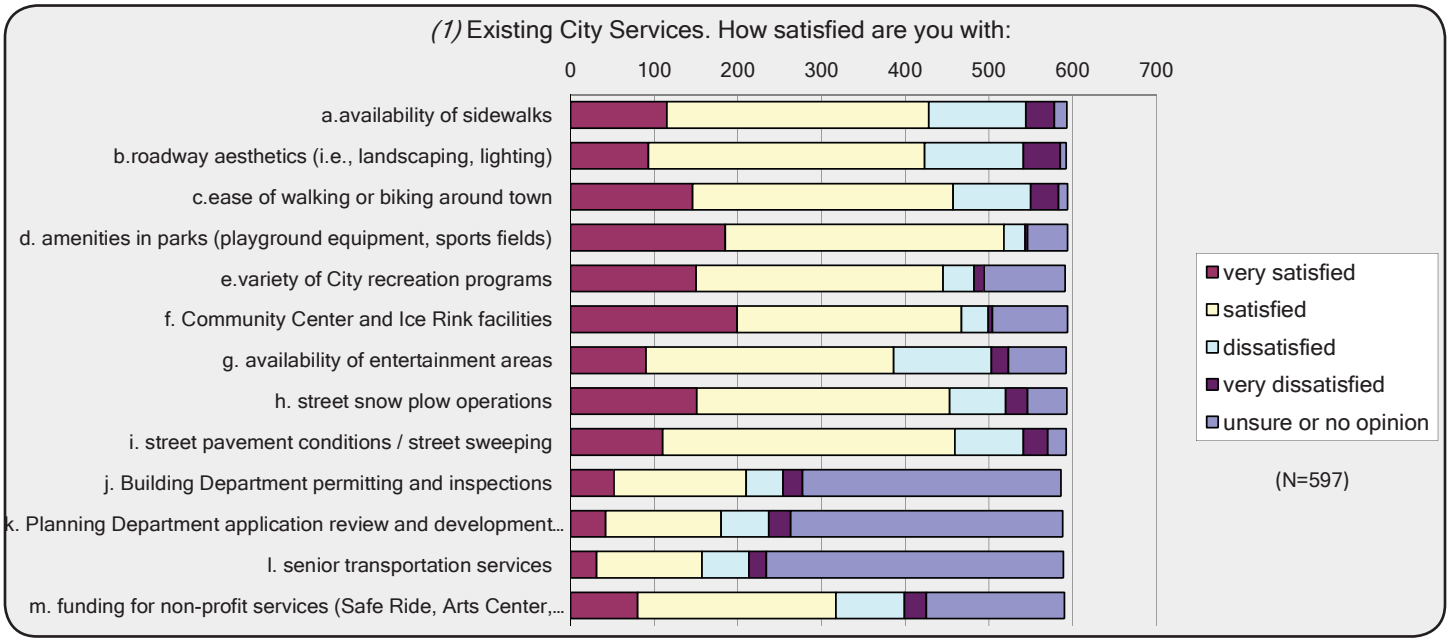
While there is a consensus to fund multiple projects, improving a designated route between downtown and the airport is not supported by a large number of respondents. There is also a noteworthy minority who opposes direct funding for affordable housing and funding Western marketing. There is very little opposition to maintaining existing



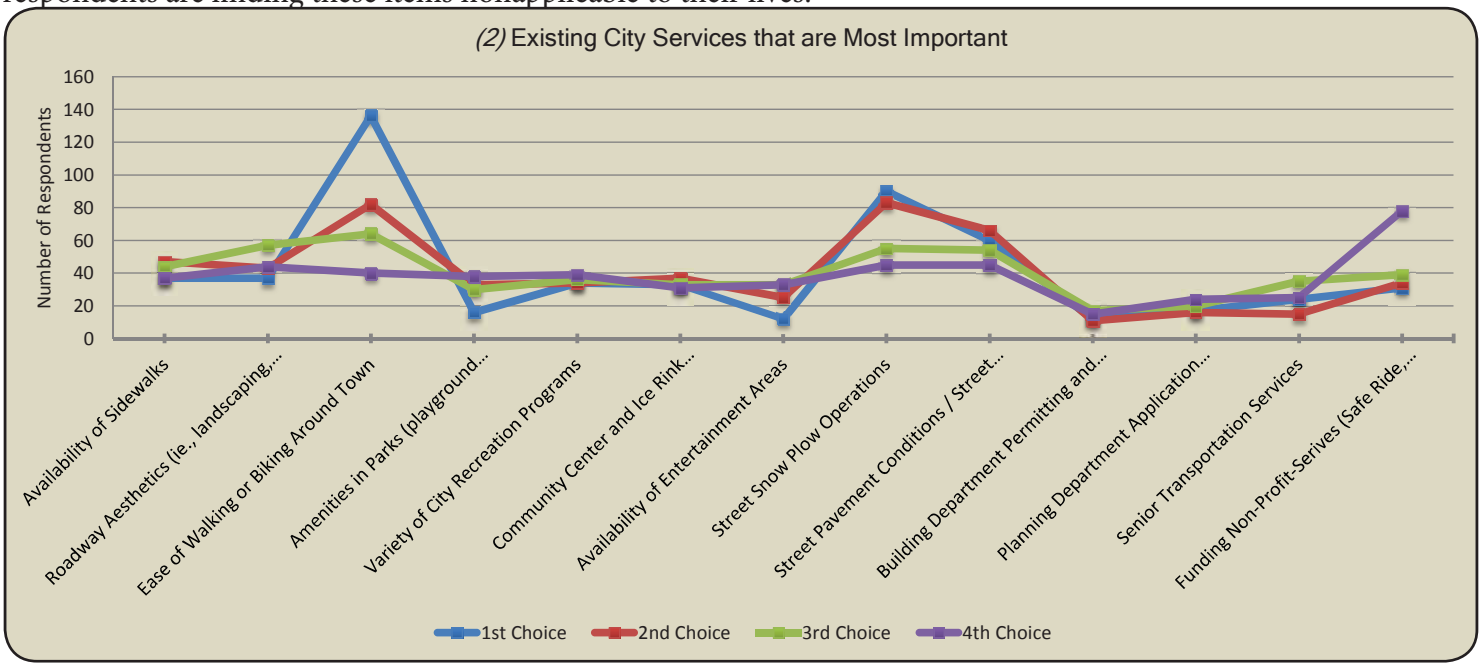
facilities and services and a very large contingency of citizens have no opinion about increasing senior transportation options. This is demonstrated by Question 15, which asked respondents to rank the importance of City projects.

Findings: Existing City Services & Quality of Life. The survey also asked questions to gage the community's perceptions regarding existing conditions of the City with Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9. Existing conditions inquiries focus on service functions, general life-quality inputs and perceptions of the downtown conditions.

Question 1 identified a variety of existing services and asks respondents to gage their satisfaction with those services. In general, citizens are very satisfied with existing City services. Park and recreation facilities and programs were given high marks of satisfaction. Roadway aesthetics, sidewalk connectivity and availability of entertainment facilities

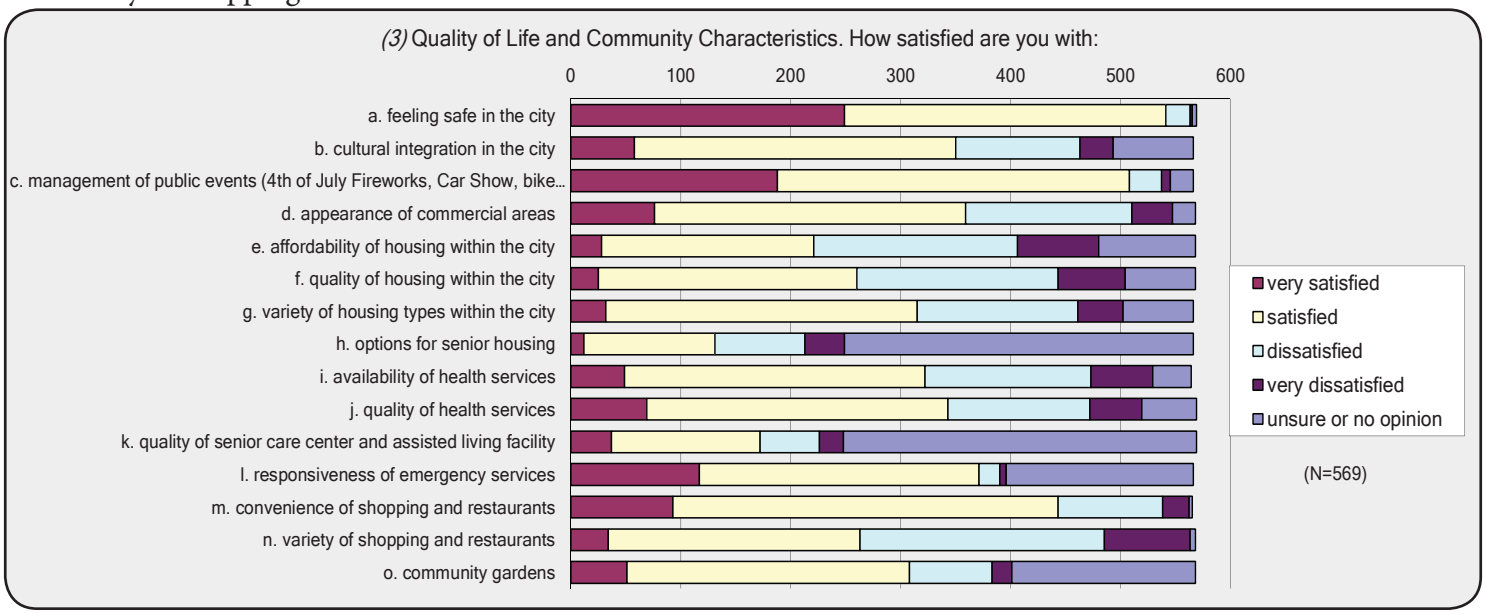


tended to have a relatively higher amount of dissatisfied results as compared to other categories. Results associated with Planning and Building Department services and senior transportation services indicated a significant amount of indecision (unsure or no opinion), with over one-half of the responses indicating uncertainty. Most likely the respondents are finding these items nonapplicable to their lives.

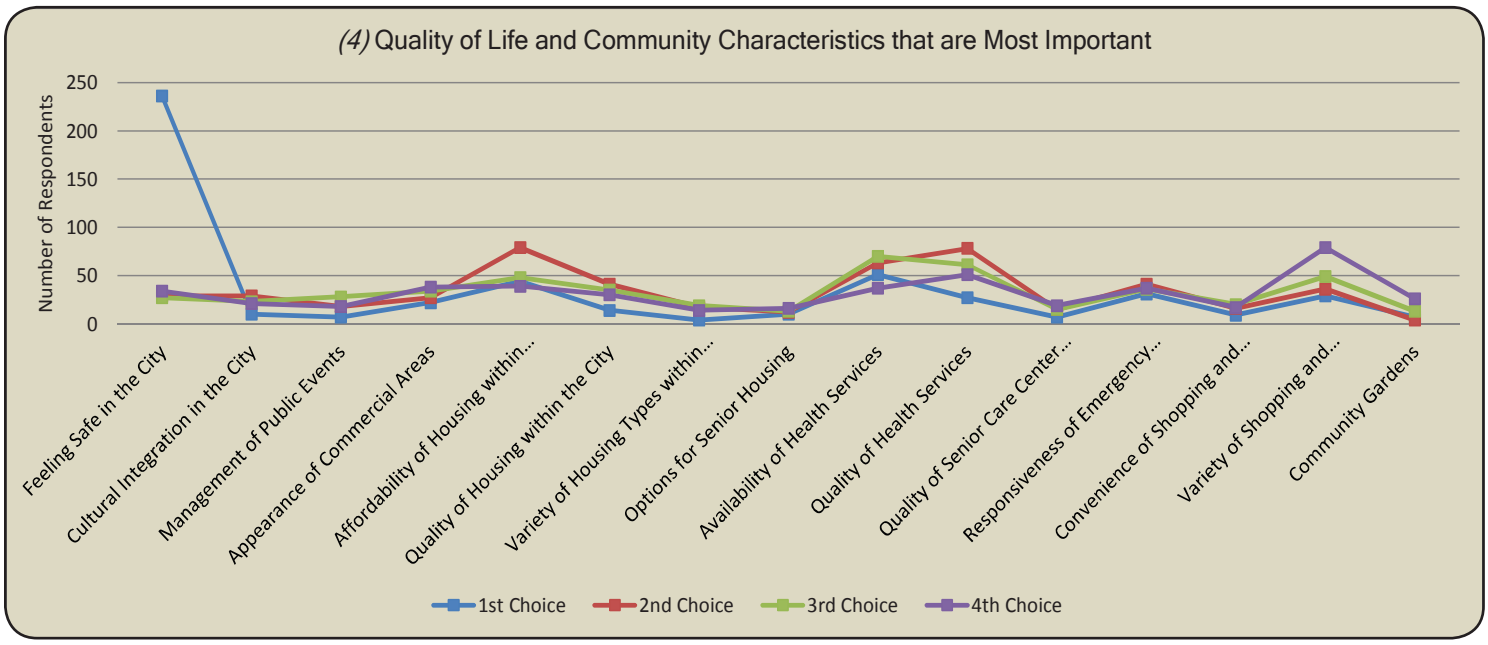


Ease of walking and biking around the community is the most important service function identified by the respondents, and snow removal operations are also cited as a very important service, when asked to rank the importance of City services (Question2).

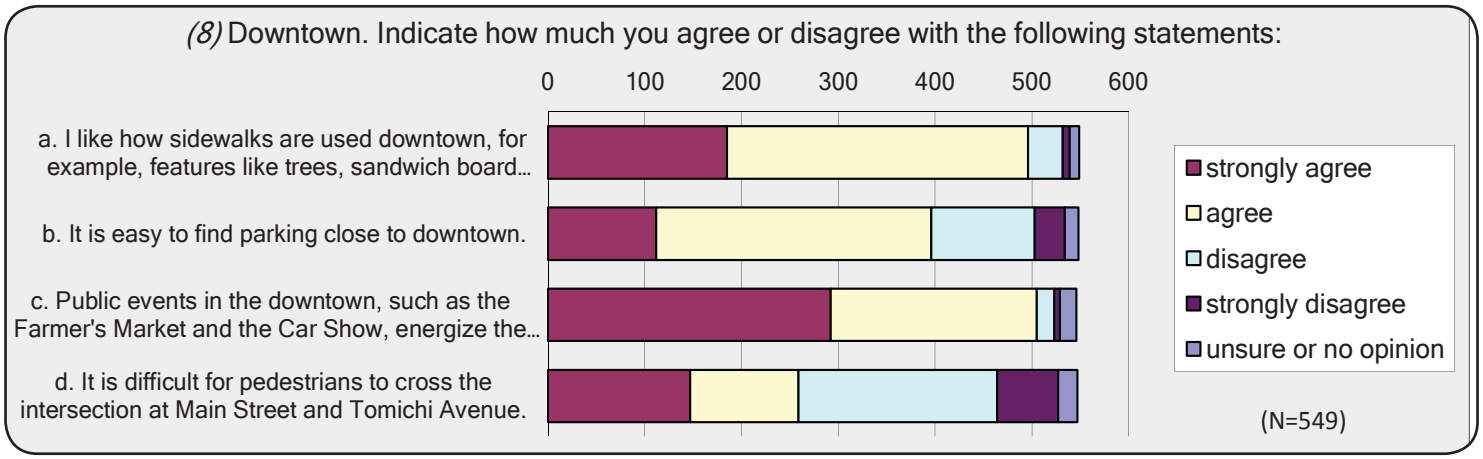
Question 3 focuses on perceptions regarding community character and quality of life. This question, possibly more than any other in the survey, addresses value-based perceptions of the community, not controlled by the city government. Citizens of Gunnison feel safe, which is a great community attribute. Management of public events received positive marks and, as noted previously, more events are also highly valued. The convenience of shopping and restaurant venues received very positive marks, while respondants expressed higher levels of dissatisfaction with the variety of shopping and restaurants.



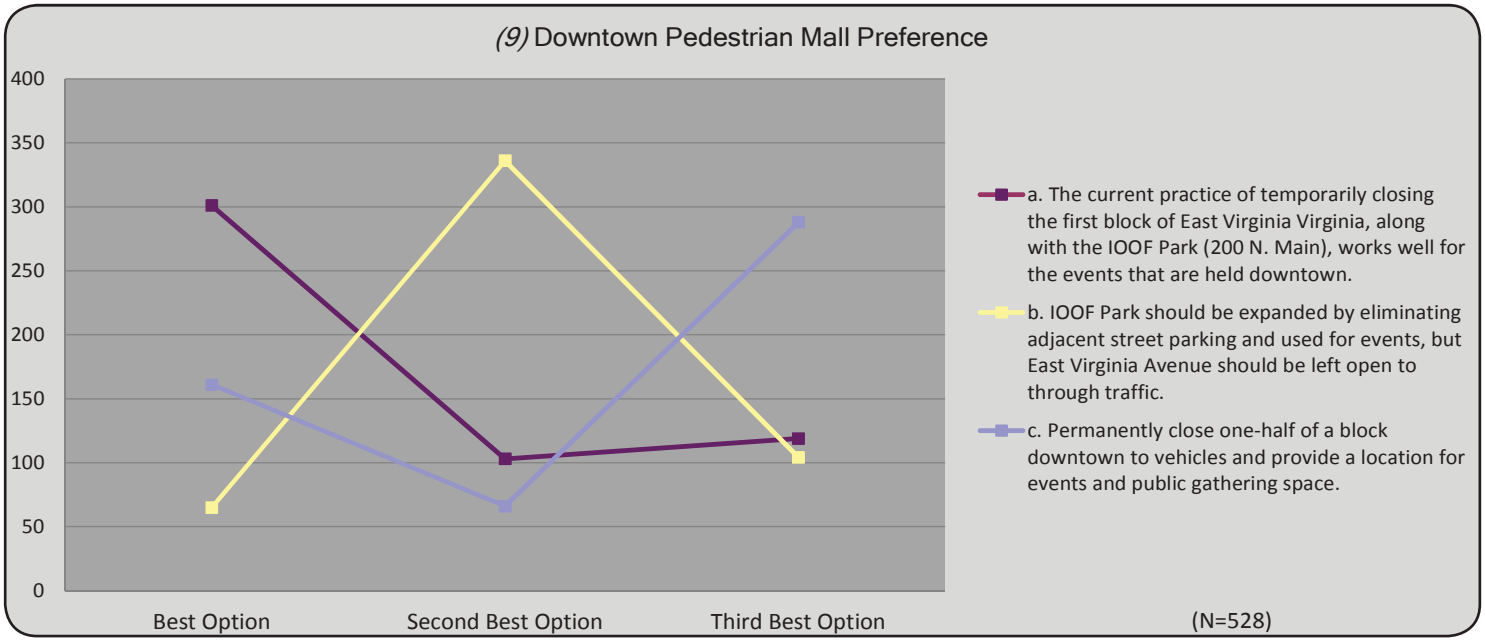
Results indicate a strong perception that the community lacks quality housing and housing affordability, and as stated previously in this report, affordable housing is a significant issue. The availability and quality of health services received a relatively lower approval rating; however, the majority of respondents ranked responsiveness of emergency services favorably. Question 4 ranks the quality of life and community characteristics that are most important. The majority of respondents ranked feeling safe in the City as the most important.



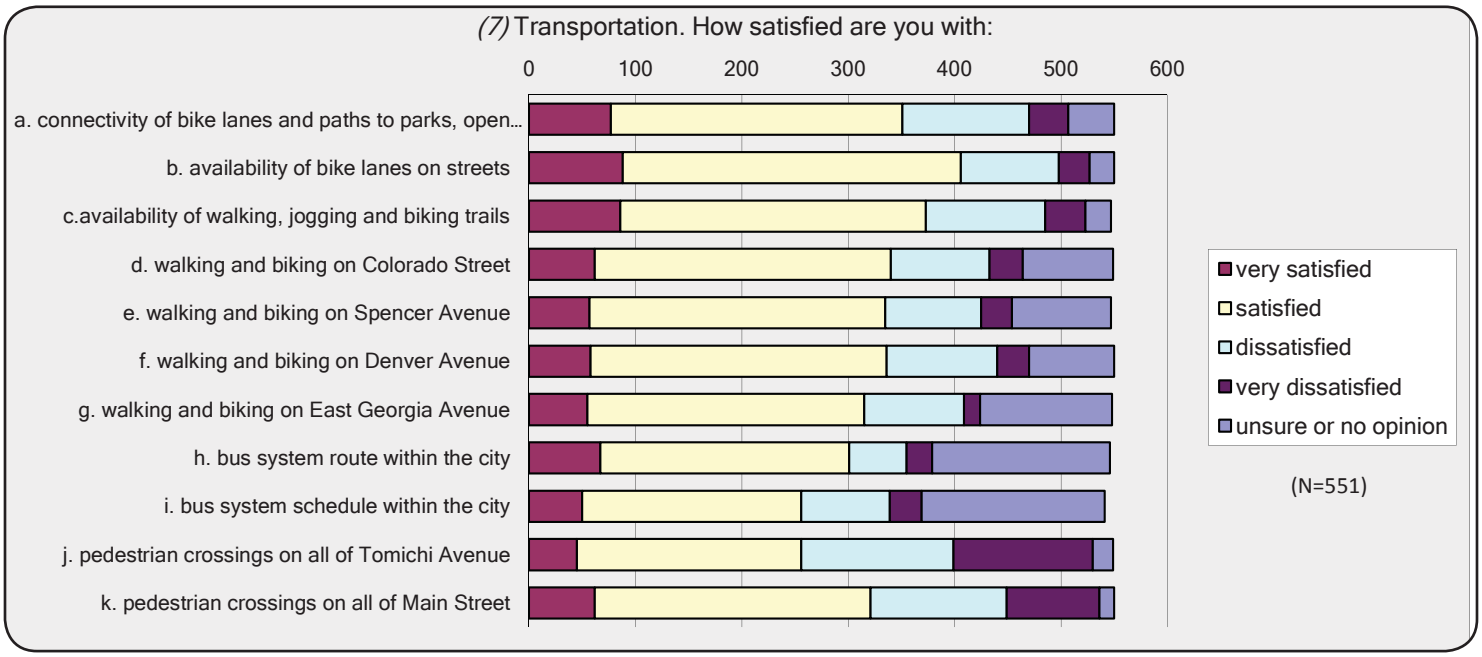
The viability of downtown has been a topic of community interest and discussed on various occasions in the recent past, and even for decades. For Question 8, while approximately 25% of the respondents indicate that the availability of parking is a problem, the vast majority indicated that parking close to downtown is easy to find. Citizens also like how downtown sidewalks function and they like street trees, benches, sandwich-board sign and other related features. Respondents were evenly split about the pedestrian crossing at Main and Tomichi: 49% indicate that crossing is not difficult and 47% believe it is difficult to cross at this intersection.



Responses for Question 9 (Pedestrian Mall Best Option) indicate the strongest support (N=301) for the current practice of temporary closures that occur for events. The second strongest option (N=161) was the permanant closure and creation of a mall. The option to keep Virginia Avenue open for vehicles and implement design improvements to make the IOOF park area more attractive and functional for such events was not favored (N=65), however, this alternative was the strongest second best option (N=336).



Findings: Transportation. Question 7 focused on perceptions related to existing and future multi-modal transportation facility and service needs, with an emphasis on non-motorized and public transportation functions. Additionally, the topic of Complete Streets (which are transportation systems designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities) was recognized as a contextual focal point early in the public input process. In fact during the survey period, a group of citizens came before the City Council requesting that immediate action be taken to improve pedestrian crossings on the Highway 50 and Highway 135 corridors. Such concerns are supported by the data from Question 7.



In general, survey results indicate that citizens are satisfied with the existing non-motorized transportation facilities. However, significant dissatisfaction was noted for highway pedestrian crossings. Approximately, 50% of the respondents cited dissatisfaction with the pedestrian crossings on Tomichi Avenue, while 39% of the respondents noted concern with Main Street crossings. The bus system received modest favorable marks (55% approval for bus route and 47% for bus scheduling) overall and results indicate there is not a great need for an internal bus system. However, based on Regional Transportation Authority numbers the transportation system is providing a substantial community service.

Suggestions/Open-ended Comments. The last survey question (Question 30) offered respondents the opportunity to provide any comment or thought. Appendix F includes a complete listing of general remarks provided in the survey.

Survey Question/Demographic Correlations. In viewing the results and controlling for particular demographic variables like age, annual income and level of education, results did not vary considerably. All correlations were categorized in the range of "weak" (-0.3 to 0.0 and 0.0 to 0.3), though reported with statistical significance ($p<.01$). In general:

- When cross tabulating age with overall results, the older the respondent, the less likely the support for funding recreation programming (r= -.202), public events (r= -.217), and nonprofits and cultural facilities (r= -.199). Also, there was a weak negative correlation (r= -.206) between increasing age and the belief that the community has a clear vision for growing the economy.
- Likewise, when considering annual income, higher wage earners were less likely to believe the community has a clear vision for growing the economy (r= -.217).
- Higher educated persons reported less satisfaction for pedestrian crossings on Tomichi Avenue (r= -.201), increased agreement that developers should provide land along ditches, creeks and rivers for utilities and trails (r= .212), increased agreement that our city should guide the location for new and additional developments, (r=.181) and less agreement that our community has a clear vision for growing the economy (r= -.194).
- Also, increased levels of education correlated with support for public events (Farmers Market, Car Show, etc.) in the downtown (r=.219).

For a complete listing of correlations between key demographic variables and results, please see Appendix G.