

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOMEPAGE	2	GP1: CONCENTRATED CENTERS	28	DIRECTIONS: RECREATION FACILITIES	67
WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?	3	GOPAs: CONCENTRATED CENTERS	29	OVERVIEW: TRAILS	68
A VISION FOR THE GRAND JUNCTION AREA	4	OVERVIEW: CONCENTRATED CENTERS	30	DIRECTIONS: TRAILS	69
TRANSLATING THE VISION	5	CENTER TYPES: CONCENTRATED CENTERS	31	ACTIONS: GRAND GREEN SYSTEM	71
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - KEY CONCEPTS	6	ACTIONS: CONCENTRATED CENTERS	37	GP5: BALANCED TRANSPORTATION	72
USING THE PLAN	9	GP2: SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN	38	GOPAs: BALANCED TRANSPORTATION	73
FINDING INFORMATION	9	GOPAs: SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN	39	OVERVIEW: BALANCED TRANSPORTATION	74
MAINTAINING CONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING	10	OVERVIEW: SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN	40	DIRECTIONS: BALANCED TRANSPORTATION	76
COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANS AND AGENCIES	11	GROWTH PROJECTIONS AND ALLOCATION	42	GP5: TRANSPORTATION: AGENCIES	79
APPENDICES	12	COST OF SERVICES RELATED TO SPRAWL	43	WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSPORTATION?	79
LAND USE	15	ACTIONS: SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN	45	ACTIONS: BALANCED TRANSPORTATION	80
INTRODUCTION	13	GP3: HOUSING VARIETY	46	GP6: A UNIQUE COMMUNITY	81
GOPAs: LAND USE	14	GOPAs: HOUSING VARIETY	47	GOPAs: A UNIQUE COMMUNITY	82
OVERVIEW: LAND USE	15	OVERVIEW: HOUSING VARIETY	49	OVERVIEW	83
KEY CONCEPTS: LAND USE	17	RECOMMENDATIONS: HOUSING VARIETY	51	DIRECTIONS: COMPONENTS OF A UNIQUE COMMUNITY	84
LAND USE MAP AND CLASSIFICATIONS	21	ACTIONS: HOUSING VARIETY	54	OVERVIEW: FACILITIES AND SERVICES	87
LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS	22	GP4: GRAND GREEN SYSTEM	55	ACTIONS: A UNIQUE COMMUNITY	92
ACTIONS: LAND USE	27	GOPAs: GRAND GREEN SYSTEM	56	FUTURE LAND USE MAP	93
		NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	57		
		DIRECTIONS: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	58		
		PARKS AND RECREATION	62		
		DIRECTIONS: PARKS	64		
		OVERVIEW: RECREATION FACILITIES	66		

The Grand Junction area is a marvelous place to live, work, and visit. We have a livable community, we are surrounded by exceptional natural resources, and we have the perfect climate that allows us to enjoy our assets year-round. We are also a regional center—people come from a significant distance to shop, work, and transact business. The resulting sales tax from visitors allows us to have a higher quality of life than we would have otherwise.

We have grown relatively rapidly in recent years, and are projected to double our current population in the next 25 years. This growth will be due to a combination of our appeal as a community, the growing retirement boom, and the continued growth of the energy industry in the Intermountain West.

However, continuing the spreadout growth pattern of the past will not work for the future. It creates significant challenges to preserve the characteristics that make this area desirable. For example, a local road analysis indicates that, with our current land use practices, to accommodate the growth projected by 2035 Highway 50 would have to become an 8-lane roadway through the middle of our community! (GP5: [Balanced Transportation](#))

This is just one example of the issues we will face in the future. Other growth considerations include:

- ✱ how we can make sure we have affordable housing for our workers
- ✱ where we should locate the schools that will be needed by future residents
- ✱ where and how big the roads, water and sewer lines should be
- ✱ how we can assure that we have adequate land for future businesses
- ✱ how we can maintain our role as a regional center as areas around us grow

For these and many other reasons we need to refocus our vision for the future and develop plans to accomplish that vision. This is the mission of the Comprehensive Plan.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan represents a mix of the old and the new. In some areas it identifies a new way for Grand Junction to grow, reflecting the Guiding Principles developed through extensive public work sessions. In many areas, especially existing stable neighborhoods, it continues the land use pattern that has guided the city for more than a decade. As such it incorporates, builds on, and expands, the Growth Plan and existing neighborhood and area plans.



Figure x.x:

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A Reflection of the Community's Values and Vision

The Grand Junction (and vicinity) Comprehensive Plan is based on extensive public input to identify, among other things, what kind of a community we want to be and ways to achieve a vision and goals through land uses, policies and actions.

A Guide for Land Use and Directing Growth

The Plan describes the community vision and recommends where and how growth and various land uses should take place in order to achieve the community vision.

An Advisory, Not Regulatory, Framework for Other Plans and Regulations

The Comprehensive Plan is an official document but not a regulatory document—it is a basis for other actions and regulations, such as zoning and subdivision regulations. While zoning is applied to parcels, the future land use designations of the Comprehensive Plan respond to topography and other context-sensitive considerations to give direction on how uses should be arranged on the land.

A Regional Plan

The Grand Junction Area Comprehensive Plan is a plan for not only the current city limits but also for the immediate vicinity of Grand Junction that may eventually be developed at city-type densities. This is to help coordinate the land use decisions of the City and Mesa County in this area. As a result, the Plan is a joint effort of the City and County.

Authority

This Comprehensive Plan has been adopted pursuant to Colorado State Statutes (C.R.S. ss 30-28-106 et seq. and 31.23.201 et seq), which establish the general purpose of “guiding and accomplishing a coordinated and harmonious development of the relevant territory, which, in accordance with present and future needs and resources, will best promote the general welfare of the inhabitants.” Knowing that municipalities grow, Colorado law (CRS 31-12-105) enables municipalities to plan for expansion in the 3-mile area surrounding the city limits. This plan goes beyond the 3-mile statutory area because of the joint effort between Mesa County and Grand Junction to plan the region.

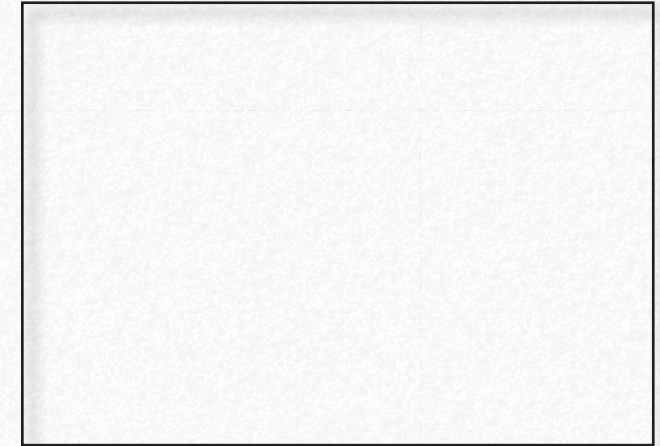


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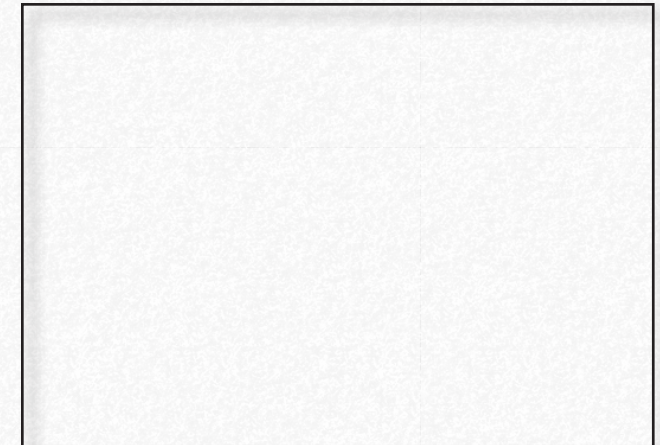


Figure x.x:

*HOMEPAGE**USING
THE PLAN**LAND
USE**1. CONCENTRATED
CENTERS**2. SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH PATTERN**3. HOUSING
VARIETY**4. GRAND
GREEN SYSTEM**5. BALANCED
TRANSPORTATION**6. A UNIQUE
COMMUNITY*

Welcome

Table of Contents

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Vision for the Area

Translating the Vision

Executive Summary

A VISION FOR THE GRAND JUNCTION AREA

“Grand Junction: the Most Livable City West of the Rockies”

WHAT DOES “MOST LIVABLE” MEAN?

- ✧ Fiscal sustainability – remaining a regional center, living within our means, cost-effective growth that doesn’t strain our financial resources
- ✧ Basic services are organized, functioning, and orderly - it “works”, trash gets collected, buses run on time, and quality services are provided
- ✧ Convenient circulation – transportation that provides multiple ways of getting around town (roads, trails, transit); clear, easy-to-read orientation signage; good air service to the region
- ✧ A broad range and balance of land uses – recreation, shopping, working, agriculture, open space, employment
- ✧ Quality employment opportunities with a mix of job types, not focusing on just one job sector
- ✧ A diversity of housing types available to the broad spectrum of incomes that contribute to our city - including (but not limited to) teachers, store clerks, fire and police workers
- ✧ Vibrancy – plenty of ‘happenings’ that attract both residents and visitors, such as the farmer’s market, tournaments, entertainment, education, recreation amenities and activities
- ✧ A healthy lifestyle - opportunities for indoor and outdoor exercise, including recreation centers, trails, parks, access to natural resources
- ✧ Safe and child friendly - both at home and outside; a non-threatening atmosphere
- ✧ Friendly to seniors and the physically-challenged - quality medical facilities, easy-to-use transit, accessible sidewalks and parks

TRANSLATING THE VISION

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Comprehensive Plan is guided by 6 Principles. (Each of the principles is linked to a relevant chapter of the Comprehensive Plan).

- GP1. A System Of Concentrated Urban Centers – Getting Shopping And Employment Closer To Where People Live, And Vice-Versa
- GP2. A Sustainable Growth Pattern – Fiscally, Environmentally And Socially - Enhancing Our Role As A Regional Center – Attracting Visitors, Employers, And Employees
- GP3. Greater Housing Variety for All Life Stages, Price Points
- GP4. A Grand Green System of Parks, Open Space
- GP5. A Balanced, Connected Transportation System
- GP6. A Unique Community For Living

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND ACTIONS (GOPAs)

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Actions are found throughout the Comprehensive Plan. They are summarized in the Appendix. Accomplishing the GOPAs helps achieve the Vision and Guiding Principles of the Comprehensive Plan. The GOPAs are embraced by both the City and the County for the entire Comprehensive Planning Area.

Some of the GOPAs are new, reflecting concepts that evolved through the creation of the Comprehensive Plan. Many of the GOPAs, however, are continuations of goals and policies in the 1996 Growth Plan that have guided decision-making for many years.

Goals describe broad public purposes toward which policies and programs are directed. They express the broad desired results of the Plan; they complete the sentence “Our goal is to...”

Objectives are a more detailed description of desired outcomes. The key characteristic of Objectives is that they are measurable steps toward achieving one or more goals. For example, if an objective is to “foster growth of residential, office, cultural, entertainment and specialty retail business areas within the Downtown area,” one can measure progress toward meeting this objective by annually measuring the number of residences, offices, cultural offerings, entertainment events, and the increase in the types of businesses listed.

Policies are a specific decision or set of decisions designed to carry out broad goals and objectives. They are sometimes described as “decisions made in advance.” They can be referred to as general rules, such as, “as a general rule, the City will...” Policies are intended to bring predictability to government decision-making. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, the public has a right to rely on policies as a guide for how decisions will be rendered.

Actions are specific activities that will help achieve goals, objectives and even policies. They are a “to-do” list to help implement the Comprehensive Plan. There are two kinds of actions: one-time activities, and on-going activities.

	GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3
OBJECTIVE 1	●		
OBJECTIVE 2	●		●
OBJECTIVE 3		●	●

Objectives can apply to more than one goal, Policies can apply to more than one objective and Actions can help implement multiple Goals, Objectives and Policies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - KEY CONCEPTS

Following are the key concepts of the Comprehensive Plan that together help implement the *Vision* and *Guiding Principles*:

1. Achieve an Appropriate Balance of Land Uses

Find an appropriate balance between the residents' respect for the natural environment, the integrity of the community's neighborhoods, the economic needs of the residents and business owners, the rights of private property owners and the needs of the urbanizing community as a whole.

2. Mixed Uses

Residents recognize the value of mixing uses, that is, allowing development that contains appropriate non-residential and residential units of various types and price ranges. However, residents are also concerned that poorly designed projects can degrade a development or a neighborhood. This plan supports a heterogeneous mix of land uses, but calls for the establishment of appropriate standards to ensure neighborhood compatibility.

3. Infill and Enhancement of Downtown

Much of future growth is focused inward, with an emphasis on infill and redevelopment of underutilized land, especially in the core area of the city (downtown). Growing inward (infill and redevelopment) allows us to take advantage of land with services, reduces sprawl, reinvests and revitalizes our Downtown. Maintaining and expand-

ing a 'strong downtown' is a high priority—the Downtown expands horizontally and vertically.

4. Compact Growth Concentrated in Centers

Residents want to preserve the extensive agricultural and open space land surrounding the urban area. They also want the benefits of more efficient street and utility services. More compact development patterns will support both of these objectives. This Comprehensive Plan includes an emphasis on mixed-use 'centers' as a key growth pattern, accompanied by encouragement of infill and redevelopment more than external expansion. These concepts represent important new directions in the community's efforts to balance the pressures for outward growth with the desire to promote infill.

5. Feathering of Density

This Comprehensive Plan coordinates future land uses so that compatible adjoin. When significantly different densities or uses are proposed near each other, they are shown to "feather;" or transition gradually.

6. Locate Public Facilities and Amenities in Centers

Centers are the logical location for public facilities such as fire stations, police substations, and schools. Residential densities are typically higher in the vicinity of a center allowing facilities to be closer to more people. They also help create a synergy of uses that promote vitality in the center such as employees having lunch in nearby restau-



Figure x.x:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

rants. The park and recreational needs of residents of these centers can be met through traditional neighborhood parks or by providing plazas, squares, and public 'greens'. Many new community and neighborhood parks will be needed to serve future growth. The Comprehensive Plan envisions parks located so that most residences will be within a 5-minute walk of a park.

7. Pairing Parks and Schools

Continuing and expanding the concept of combining schools and neighborhood parks on a single site accomplishes three objectives:

- ✱ expand, in a cost-effective manner, recreation and education opportunities
- ✱ reduce (share) the cost of maintaining school grounds, parks and recreation facilities
- ✱ avoid duplication (and cost) in setting aside land for both parks and schools

8. Additional Park Types: Mountain Park, Confluence Park, and Quadrant Parks

A large, mountain park is proposed to take advantage of the City's mountain side watershed lands on the Grand Mesa Slopes; large regional parks are suggested in the four quadrants of the City; and the plan resurrects the previous idea of a park at the confluence of the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers.

9. An Extensive Off-Street Trail System

The region is known for its great bicycling but a complete

trail system is lacking throughout the city. The plan expands on the great trail building efforts along the Colorado River and combines trails, bike paths, bike lanes and bike routes, envisioned in the Urban Trails Plan, to create an alternative system for getting around the city.

10. Mt. Garfield View Protection Area

Mt. Garfield is the most significant gateway to our community and land around its base needs to be protected from development that would mar the majesty of that viewshed entry experience.

11. Managing Our Water Wisely

Grand Junction is an oasis in a desert landscape. While we have abundant water supplies, it makes sense to manage the use and quality of our water. Wise water management includes continuing the separate system of delivering irrigation water, making major efforts to prevent salt and other pollution of our rivers and streams, and expanding the use of low-water landscapes (xeriscape).

12. A New Garfield Neighborhood

The area north of I-70 and west of the Clifton Interchange has been identified to accommodate new industrial land uses.



Figure x.x: The Mt Garfield Gateway

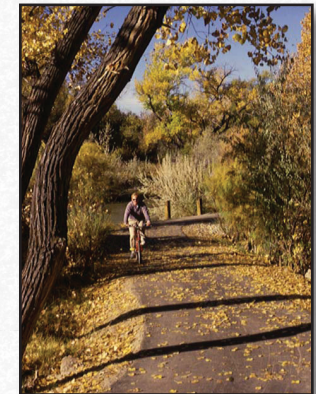


Figure x.x: Off-street trail system

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONT'D)

13. Reserving Rights-of-Way for Future Transit

As energy prices rise and need for alternative transportation grows, an opportunity lies in the northern portion of the railroad right-of-way and the land immediately adjacent. The potential exists to have a rail transit route that spans from Clifton to the Mesa Mall and beyond. Transit-oriented developments may be sited along the transit route.

14. Community Aesthetics

Area residents take pride in their community and have shown an interest in preserving and reinforcing the aesthetics of areas visible to the public. The Comprehensive Plan continues past objectives to enhance the community's appearance. This includes dressing up entryways and improving development standards for commercial and industrial areas. The plan recommends stronger design guidelines, especially in the highly visual areas of the community.

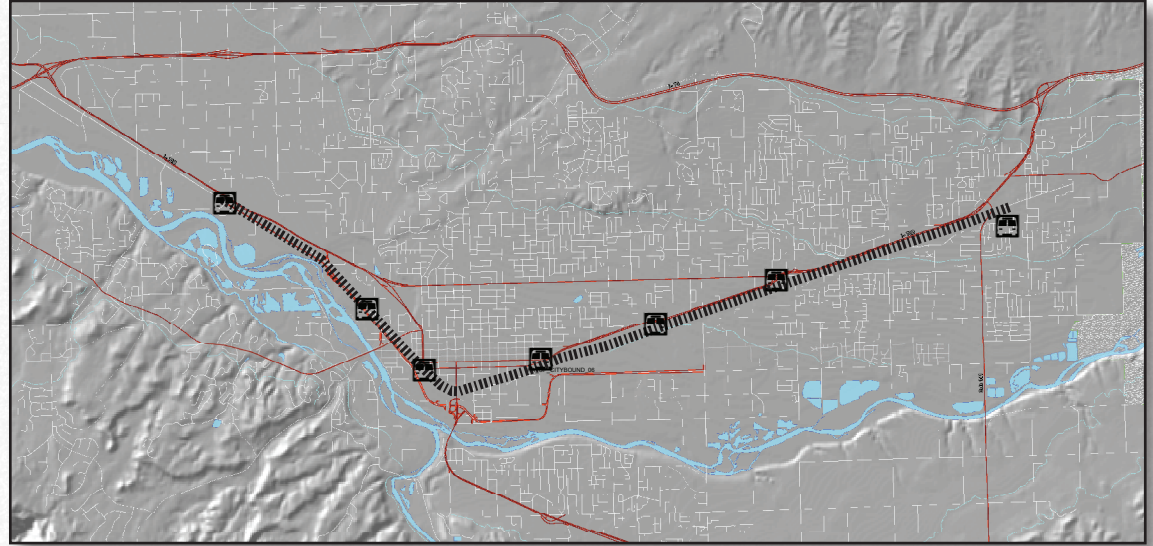


Figure x.x: A future opportunity is to employ a rail system that links the Mesa Mall area and Clifton. Reserving the right-of-way over time will allow the ability for this opportunity to become a reality.



Figure x.x: Example of a rail transit system

<i>HOMEPAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Finding Information	Consistency with Zoning	Coordination with Other Plans	Appendices					

FINDING INFORMATION

There are two basic ways to find information in the Comprehensive Plan:

RESEARCH A TOPIC

Along the top of all pages are tabs representing topical areas of the plan (e.g., housing, transportation). Clicking on a tab will take you to a page focused on that topic. Multiple links on each page will take you to further information that applies. In the Appendix you will also find links to maps and data that provided supporting information for the Comprehensive Plan. *(little video?)*

INVESTIGATE A LOCATION

If you are interested in finding out what the Comprehensive Plan proposes for a specific property or neighborhood, you should start by clicking on the Land Use tab in the Navigation bar at the top of each page, then click on the Future Land Use Map link. The Future Land Use Map indicates the proposed land uses for the entire Grand Junction area. It gives an overall view of how and where the City and surrounding areas are expected to grow.

If you wish to see more detailed information about a specific location, click on a specific parcel to bring up a list of topics related to that location. These topics are linked to various other documents where you can learn more about the land use designation, other influences on the property (floodplain, steep slopes, habitat, sewer availability, etc.), zoning districts, or other plans that may be applicable. *(little video?)*

LINKS AND REFERENCES

[explanation]

[definition](#)

To read a word’s definition, hover over word (about 2 seconds)

MAP GALLERY

[explanation]

MAINTAINING CONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING

It is important that land use decisions (e.g. development projects and re-zoning) be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. If they are not, the Comprehensive Plan will cease to be an effective guide for decision-making and may have legal ramifications – specifically, case law has relied on plans to support zoning decisions.

It is possible that a development may be proposed that is different than the use shown in the Future Land Use Map. If there is an inconsistency between the Comprehensive Plan and a proposed land use decision, it should be resolved by either modifying the proposal or amending the Comprehensive Plan. (see “decision tree” diagram)

If the decision is to amend the Comprehensive Plan, the amendment (unless minor) should have a demonstrated significant public benefit [link to policy] and should be made after a comprehensive analysis and public input, as was this Comprehensive Plan.

Making this additional effort in amending the Comprehensive Plan will prevent spur-of-the-moment changes in direction, perhaps due to pressure from a special interest, that tend to undermine plans.

A “decision tree” to evaluate the consistency of a proposal with the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning.

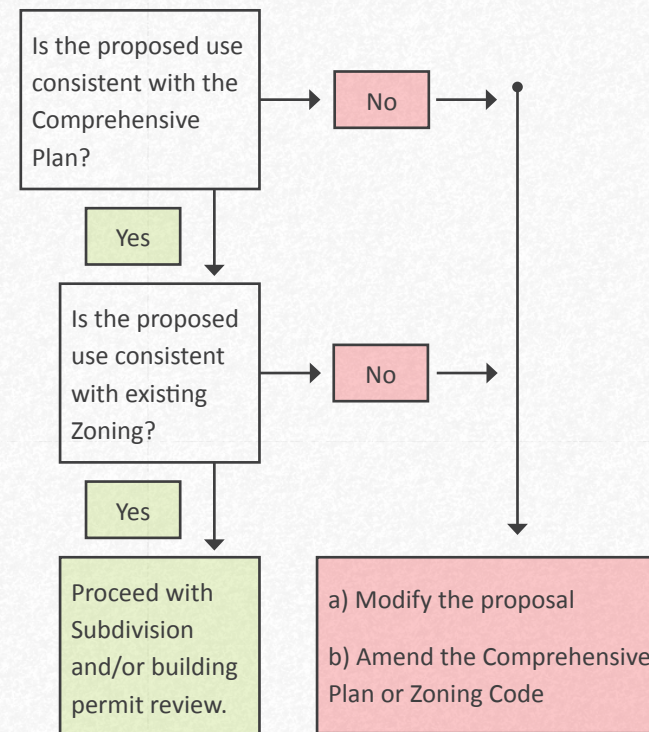


Figure x.x: The “decision tree”

HOMEPAGE	USING THE PLAN	LAND USE	1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS	2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN	3. HOUSING VARIETY	4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM	5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION	6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY
Finding Information	Consistency with Zoning	Coordination with Other Plans	Appendices					

COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANS AND AGENCIES

When considering development within the Urban Growth Boundary [\[link to definition and map\]](#), in addition to the Comprehensive Plan there are a number of other plans and governing agencies that should be considered.

The City and County have also prepared a number of detailed plans for sub-areas within the planning area (such as the [Downtown Strategic Plan](#) and the Whitewater Community Plan), and departmental master plans (such as the Parks and Recreation Master Plan). Most of these plans were consulted, referenced and, where appropriate, incorporated in a generalized way. There are also a number of special districts that provide various services within the planning area, such as Ute Water, Clifton Water, Clifton Sanitation District, and public utilities. Maps of key service providers can be found in [Appendix X.X](#), the Map Gallery. While these service providers will be consulting the Comprehensive Plan as they develop future plans, a party wishing to develop should also refer to the applicable agencies for current plans, capacities and special requirements for service.

In most cases, concepts from the relevant plans have been incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan. In some circumstances, because of regional considerations, the concepts shown in the Comprehensive Plan are different from those in the detailed plans. It is expected that over time, the detailed plans will be updated to reflect the Comprehensive Plan, or if another direction is selected, the Comprehensive Plan will be amended (see [Maintaining Consistency](#)

[Between the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning](#)).

The following plans and studies were considered and incorporated into the 2009 Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan. When digital versions of the plans are available, they can be accessed by clicking on the highlighted text:

DETAILED CITY PLANS AND REGULATIONS

- [Downtown Strategic Plan](#)
- [Mesa College Plan](#)
- [Mesa County Rural Master Plan](#)
- [24 Road Area Plan](#)
- [North Avenue Plan](#)
- [City of Grand Junction Parks Master Plan](#)
- [Comprehensive Parks and Open Space Master Plan](#)
- [Grand Junction Zoning Map](#)
- [Grand Junction Zoning and Development Code](#)
- [Infill and Redevelopment Program](#)
- [Economic Development /Enterprise Zone Maps](#)
- [2020 Vision](#)
- [Grand Junction Strategic Plan](#)

COUNTY PLANS

- [Whitewater Area Plan](#)
- [Mesa County Zoning Map](#)

JOINT PLANS

- [Persigo 201 Boundary Agreement](#)
- [Urban Trails Master Plan and Map](#)
- [2008 201 Sewer Basin Study](#)
- [Redlands Neighborhood Plan](#)
- [Pear Park Plan](#)
- [Grand Valley Circulation Plan](#)

OTHER GOVERNMENTS / AGENCIES

- [Airport Master Plan](#)
- [Town of Palisade Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [Fruita Community Plan 2020](#)
- [2030 Transportation Plan](#)

<i>HOME PAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Finding Information	Consistency with Zoning	Coordination with Other Plans	Appendices					

APPENDICES

- APPENDIX A: MAP GALLERY
- APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS
- APPENDIX C: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROCESS

LAND USE INTRODUCTION

From extensive input, it's clear the public recognizes the value of a broad range and balance of uses throughout the community. They are supportive of reducing commuting demands by located closer shopping and businesses closer to where people live. However, residents are also concerned to avoid poorly designed projects that would degrade the quality of life in their neighborhoods—they want to be certain that new development will not erode their property values or create excess traffic or noise.

With regard to residential uses, single-family housing (one house on one lot) will continue to be the dominant pattern for the Grand Junction area. However, this plan supports an increase in other types of residential development throughout the community. The Plan also identifies general locations for commercial, office and industrial uses throughout the area - with appropriate standards to ensure compatibility between adjacent uses.

VISION:

"The Most Livable Community West of the Rockies"

TRANSLATING THE VISION:

What does "livable" mean for Land Use?

A broad range and balance of uses – recreation, shopping, working, agriculture, open space, employment.

LAND USE CHAPTER CONTENTS

1. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES
2. OVERVIEW
 - Inefficiencies of the Existing Growth Pattern
 - Changing Housing Market
 - Growth Projections
 - Maintain a Balance of Land Uses
 - Incorporating Subarea Plans
3. KEY CONCEPTS
 - Centers
 - Areas of Stability, Areas Subject to Change
 - Infill and Redevelopment
 - Feathering of Densities
 - Agricultural Continuity
 - Reserving Areas for Future Urban Development
 - Cooperative Planning Areas
 - Garfield Subarea
 - Special Use Campus Overlays
4. FUTURE LAND USE MAP
5. LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS
6. ACTIONS

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES: LAND USE

HOMEPAGE	USING THE PLAN	LAND USE	1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS	2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN	3. HOUSING VARIETY	4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM	5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION	6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Key Concepts	Future Land Use Map	Land Use Descriptions	Actions		

OVERVIEW: LAND USE

The Grand Junction Area Comprehensive Plan is a plan for not only the current city limits but also the immediate vicinity of Grand Junction, including land within the Urban Growth Boundary [\[add definition and map\]](#) (anticipated to be developed at urban intensities and densities within the next 25 years). The land use pattern identified in the Comprehensive Plan is influenced by several considerations:

INEFFICIENCIES OF THE EXISTING GROWTH PATTERN

In the last two decades we’ve increased our land area at a higher rate than our population. And development has “leap-frogged” out into the countryside. The growth pattern that has resulted is an irregular, tentacle-like city limit where, in some areas, it is difficult to know whether or not a property is within the city limits. This increases the costs (and reduces quality and efficiency) of public services between the City and the County ¹. In conversations with service providers this issue has become an increasing concern and there is general acknowledgement that a more uniform, concentric pattern of growth is required over the next planning period. The 1996 Growth Plan recognized these same issues and was designed to avoid this pattern.

1 In these areas, often both the police and the sheriff’s office respond to an emergency call, city street crews have to stop in mid block and traverse through county jurisdiction to get to the next city street, trash collection is similarly interrupted, etc.

Consistent and rigorous implementation of the plan is key to ensuring this plan’s vision and goals are achieved. [\[link to Plan amendments or “how to change the Comp Plan”\]](#)

It is increasingly apparent that low density sprawl is also reducing our ability to cost-effectively serve our citizens. Low density, spread out development means, per house, more road surface to repave, longer distances for police and fire, longer commutes, more congestion on country roads, and more air pollution. And with the specter of future gas price increases, everything travel-related will be more expensive: commuting, busing school children, delivering food, etc.

A long range look into future growth allows us to guide development in appropriate areas and reserve land for other uses we will need, such as roads, parks, natural areas and schools. It also allows us to install the proper size of infrastructure (water and sewer mains) and to reserve adequate road rights-of-way today based on tomorrow’s needs and desired development patterns. An economic component [\(GP2: Sustainable Growth Pattern\)](#) of the land use plan will address how to most cost-effectively extend services to new growth areas.

CHANGING HOUSING MARKET

As the ‘baby-boom’ generations reach retirement age, the housing market is reflecting a desire for smaller yards, or no yards to maintain at all. At the same time, a younger

generation is discovering the benefits of urban living: shorter commuting times, more activities, and less expensive housing. As a result of both of these trends, there is a resurging interest throughout the U.S. for smaller homes, townhomes, even condominiums, and urban living. Under these circumstances, providing opportunity for a variety of housing types (including higher density units) is simply sound sustainable planning in preparing to accommodate market pressure. [\(GP3: Housing Variety\)](#)

Grand Junction has become well established as an attractive community for older households. Demographic data suggests that a large share of Grand Junction residents will be retiring in the next decade and the city will likely continue to enjoy an influx of retirees from elsewhere.

Adjusting our development patterns is more than just ‘recoloring’ a land use map. Many of our local development regulations are based on the low density, suburban growth pattern of the last several decades. In some cases the existing regulations discourage the more compact types of development that are emerging elsewhere.

GROWTH PROJECTIONS [\(LINK TO B.4\)](#)

By the Year 2035, the population in the Comprehensive Plan study area is projected to double. This means approximately an additional 41,000 households and 102,500 additional persons for a total population reaching over 200,000. The 2009 Future Land Use Map is designed to

OVERVIEW: LAND USE (CONT'D)

Back to Top of Topic

accommodate the projected growth for the region well beyond (almost tripling) for the Year 2035.

NEED TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE OF LAND USES

As we plan for future growth, it is important to maintain adequate land for both housing and employment. On the [Future Land Use Map](#) (FLU map), enough land for employment uses has been designated to maintain the current jobs-to-housing ratio (1.3:1) up to at least the year 2035 depending on actual growth in the area.

INCORPORATING SUB-AREA PLANS

The Land Use Plan represents a mix of the old and the new. In some areas (Centers) it identifies a new way for Grand Junction to grow. In many areas, especially existing stable neighborhoods, it continues the land use pattern that has guided the city for more than a decade. As such it incorporates and expands the Growth Plan and adopted Neighborhood and Area Plans. It also reflects the plans of the adjoining communities of Fruita and Palisade. The [FLU](#) map incorporates recently adopted or concurrent planning of neighborhood and sub-area plans.

- ✧ North Avenue Plan
- ✧ Clifton-Fruitvale Community Plan
- ✧ Whitewater Community Plan
- ✧ Downtown Strategic Plan
- ✧ Pear Park Area Plan

KEY CONCEPTS: LAND USE

The placement of land uses, and their relative sizes, is governed by a number of planning concepts that emerged out of the public input to the Comprehensive Plan.

CENTERS

A significant amount of the future growth that is projected for our region is concentrated in centers. Centers, of various sizes and at various locations around the region, are envisioned as mixed-use centers (combining housing, working and shopping) in order to reduce driving for many of one's frequent shopping needs and accommodate a large amount of the projected growth. These Centers include Village and Neighborhood Centers. Centers are more fully described in [GP1: Concentrated Centers](#) for form based aspect of mixed use areas. Additional mixed-use development is encouraged along mixed-use opportunity corridors as shown on the [Future Land Use Map](#). Some single-use, "big-box" shopping centers remain along major roadways and single-use neighborhood commercial areas will be allowed in appropriate areas.

AREAS OF STABILITY, AREAS SUBJECT TO CHANGE ([LINK TO LAND USE CHANGE](#))

The Comprehensive Plan assumes that most built neighborhoods will continue to exist as they do today. These are "areas of stability." The land uses for the "areas of stability" remain virtually the same as they were in the

previous Growth Plan.

On the Land Use map, most new growth will occur in "[areas subject to change](#)", which include:

- ✱ Vacant, undeveloped land
- ✱ [Underutilized](#) land

These areas are not likely to remain as they are today. The vacant land will eventually be developed. The underutilized parcels already have some level of development, but the buildings may be older, in disrepair, temporary or only utilizing part of the property. They typically have roads, utilities, and are opportunities for redevelopment.

EMPHASIS ON INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT

Due to the inefficiencies of low density sprawl, a significant amount of projected future growth is focused inward; on vacant and underutilized land throughout the community. This takes advantage of land that already has roads and utilities and public services. Infill and redevelopment is especially focused in the core area of the city (Downtown). Reinvestment and revitalization of our Downtown, maintaining and expanding a 'strong downtown', is a high priority of the Comprehensive Plan. ([GP1: Centers - Downtown](#))

FEATHERING OF DENSITIES

On the Land Use map, residential densities are proposed to gradually transition to higher or lower surrounding densities. That is, in order to keep incompatible land uses from being adjacent to each other, higher and lower densities are usually separated by intermediate densities.

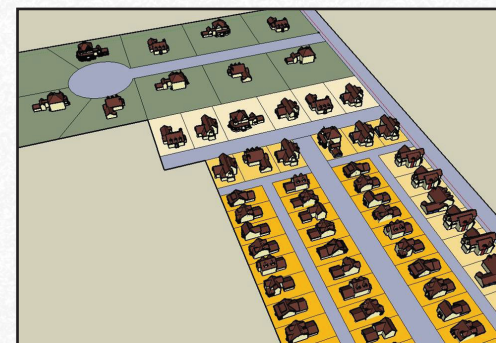


Figure X.X:

AGRICULTURE CONTINUITY

Agriculture has been an important basic industry for Mesa County and the City of Grand Junction. It supported the early growth of the region and, while some forms of agriculture are losing the competition with urban growth, many farms still provide important agricultural produce (hay, cattle, fruit, even vegetables). In recent years wine has grown in popularity, and is attracting tourism. With increasing gas prices, and the disruptions caused by health

KEY CONCEPTS: LAND USE (cont'd)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

issues occasionally associated with national food production, it may be that local food sources will be important to the lower food costs and even the sustainability of the region (see [_____](#), Sustainability).

The City and the County value the continuation of opportunities for agriculture and consider productive agricultural land to be a major natural resource. Both entities encourage the retention of prime and unique agricultural land outside the urbanizing area. On the FLU Map [\[link\]](#) agricultural and rural land use classifications are applied to much of the prime agricultural land outside of the Urban Growth Boundary. It should be noted that there are areas that are historically agricultural but now are not viable operations due to being adjacent to urban levels of development. These properties are given more intensive land use designations.

RESERVING AREAS FOR FUTURE URBAN DEVELOPMENT (UR AND URR) OVERLAY

The City Urban Reserve (UR) [\[link to definition and map\]](#) and the County Urban Residential Reserve (URR) [\[link to definition and map\]](#) future land use are applied in the rural areas within or adjacent to the Urban Growth Boundary where sewer service is expected to be available in the future. This land use designation allows for estate density development (up to one unit per two acres) with clustering of 1-acre lots in order to reserve land for future urban development when public sewer and other urban infrastructure/services are available. (To avoid a future “patchwork quilt” pattern of urban enclaves, planning for

the eventual urban densities must be done at the time of initial subdivision.)

The City UR model is similar to the County URR model. The City UR [\[link\]](#) overlay applies to areas outside City Limits but within the Urban Growth Boundary. It allows a developer or property owner to develop a portion of their property at a lower density (e.g. clustered lots) in a fashion that reserves the remaining land for eventual development in an urban pattern (consistent with the land use shown on the [Future Land Use Map](#)). A plan and plat showing the potential compliance with the Future Land Use Map for the reserved area must be approved.

It should be understood that the UR and URR designations do not preserve the reserved land as open space, they merely preserve it for eventual urban development. Thus, UR and URR are urban transition land uses. When sewer service can be extended to serve a UR or URR subdivision, the reserve lot(s) may be considered for redevelopment at higher densities.

THE COOPERATIVE PLANNING AREAS (“BUFFER” ZONE OVERLAY)

The Cooperative Planning Areas, more commonly known as the Fruita Buffer and the Palisade Buffer or Community Separators, continue to be supported in the 2009 Future Land Use Map. The purpose of the buffers is to ensure rural areas to remain between different communities (i.e., Grand Junction, Fruita, Palisade) in order to help define distinct communities within Mesa County. Land uses in these areas include orchards and other small scale agricul-

tural operations and homesteads in accordance with the Cooperative Planning Agreements. Rural land uses (5 to 35 acre parcels) in accordance with the Cooperative Planning Agreements between Mesa County and the Municipalities and the Mesa County Land Development Code are allowed.

THE GARFIELD SUB-AREA AND MT. GARFIELD OPEN SPACE OVERLAY

The area north of I-70 and west of the Clifton Interchange has been identified as the Garfield Subarea and will accommodate new industrial land uses if developed appropriately. Before development of the area, several elements need to be present including:

- ✱ adequate infrastructure (e.g., roads, water, sewer, electricity, gas)
- ✱ adequate access
- ✱ adequate services (police, fire)
- ✱ appropriate design guidelines/standards

The eastern portion of this subarea, the foot of Mt. Garfield is designated for some form of conservation to protect this scenic gateway to the Grand Valley. This preservation could be accomplished through land exchanges, conservation easements, scenic values overlay districts, or land purchase. [\(GP4: Grand Green System\)](#)

KEY CONCEPTS: LAND USE (cont'd)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

SPECIAL USE 'CAMPUS' OVERLAYS

Several special use areas are designated as overlays on the Future Land Use Map. These are areas of similar uses that are important community assets expected to continue to expand in the future. These areas may have special development considerations applied, such as height exceptions, mixed use and density provisions, design guidelines, etc.

Medical Campus

Providing extensive, high quality health care is a key component of Grand Junction's role as a Regional Center. [\(link to Regional Center section\)](#) Health care enhances our appeal as a retirement community, helps attract employers and employees in other fields, and is a significant source of employment in the community.

Due to the 2015 projected volumes, an expansion project is underway at St. Mary's Hospital [\[web link\]](#). With the expansion, the facility is foreseen to be adequate until at least 2025. The Medical Campus special use overlay is intended for the area around St. Mary's Hospital, the Veterans' Hospital, and also the future Community Hospital sites. It provides the facilities with adequate space to expand, including the hospital itself, as well as associated businesses (clinics, professional offices, medical supplies, etc) along with restaurants, retail and residential uses that support the employees, patients and visitors of the overall facility and related businesses.

Mesa State Campus

Higher education is a key component of Grand Junction's Regional Center status [\(link to Regional Center section\)](#). Mesa State College [\(web link\)](#) helps train workers for local employment, attracts students that contribute to the local economy, is a significant employer in its own right, and brings recreational and cultural activities that appeal to the whole community.

Yearly growth of the facility has recently been between 2 – 5 % and the need to triple the number of dormitory beds, to 3,000 by 2035 is foreseen. A Master Plan for expansion exists that includes locations of future buildings and facilities needed. The Bishop Campus is also land locked and may need expansion by 2035. [\[link to map or website\]](#)

The Mesa State Campus Special Use Area [\[link to map or website\]](#) is intended to allow adequate space around the college that may accommodate school facility expansion as well as associated businesses (book stores, retail establishments, offices, etc), restaurants and residential uses that support the employees and students of the school and associated businesses.

PRIORITIES FOR GROWTH

The extensive public input of this Comprehensive Plan update indicates strong support for Grand Junction to grow in a sustainable, compact pattern. To accomplish this objective, rather than continuing to grow in a random fashion (that is inefficient to serve), the Comprehensive Plan identifies priority growth areas to focus the extension

of new infrastructure and development. Prioritization is based on several factors:

- ✧ proximity to the City core [\[link - definition/map\]](#)
- ✧ accessibility to existing infrastructure
- ✧ adequate access (roads) and emergency access
- ✧ the existence of a subarea plan to guide development
- ✧ proximity to existing commercial and employment areas

Priority 1: (development is encouraged and incentivized)

- ✧ downtown Grand Junction [\[link - definition/map\]](#)
- ✧ infill vacant and underutilized properties that may accommodate infill development (including the creation and/or expansion of centers) within 2009 City Limits
- ✧ Northwest Grand Junction

Priority 2: (development encouraged but not incentivized)

- ✧ Appleton [\[link - definition/map\]](#)
- ✧ Whitewater [\[link - definition/map\]](#)
- ✧ Central Orchard Mesa within the 2009 201 Boundary [\[link - definition/map\]](#)

KEY CONCEPTS: LAND USE (cont'd)

Back to Top of Topic

Priority 3: (development not encouraged until after 2020 or appropriate circumstances exist)

- ✱ Garfield Neighborhood [\[link - definition/map\]](#)
- ✱ Central Orchard Mesa outside the 2009 201 Boundary [\[link - definition/map\]](#)

Interim land uses in Priority 3 Areas

Priority 3 areas are within the Urban Growth Boundary but are proposed for urban development only after the other priority areas are significantly developed and only after water and sewer infrastructure is in place. In the interim, landowners may develop at densities that do not require urban services. However, in doing so they must demonstrate the ability to take advantage of urban densities in the future. This can be accomplished by doing one or more of the following:

1. Applying the City UR land [\(LINK to #6 above\)](#) use overlay
2. Applying for URR zoning through the County

It is acknowledged that growth will continue to occur beyond 2035. As time passes, some of the areas identified as Agriculture and Rural Land Uses in this Plan may become more appropriate for urban development . These will be considered in future updates to the Comprehensive Plan.

LAND USE MAP AND CLASSIFICATIONS

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

[\(link to Map Gallery and/or to City GIS site\)](#)

DENSITY RANGES

The City has a zoning policy that allows a density that is +/- 20% of the land use category. The Future Land Use classifications are created so there is a range of uses allowed in the region that supports Grand Junction's role as a Regional Center. For land uses with an allowed residential (density) component, the land uses classifications overlap in allowed densities (and a range of applicable zoning districts for each range). The intent, in part, is to group compatible densities in classifications. This overlap allows an appropriate choice of density for a specific area without having to be confined to a particular category and not unintentionally higher densities than compatible with adjacent development.

[bar chart land use showing overlaps](#)

[\[image of LU maps and links\]](#)

LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS

[Link to Land Use Descriptions Summary \(pdf\)](#)

The following paragraphs describe each of the use categories in detail. Zoning districts will be used to establish the conditions for the use and development of land in each of the categories. The development codes will identify which district or districts are appropriate for each land use category.

Parks and Open Space

Active park and recreation sites with significant public access, whether publicly or privately owned.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

All
CSR



Conservation/Mineral Extraction

Public or private lands reserved for open space, wild-life habitat, sensitive or hazardous land protection, and other environmental conservation purposes. Mining and sand/gravel operations may be permitted as a temporary use.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

CSR
RR
IO
I1
I2



Agriculture

1 du/35 acres or greater

Private lands with homes on approximately 35 acres or more. Typical uses would consist of the farms, orchards, pastures, and other commercial agriculture operations or open areas. Agricultural parcels will not receive urban level services. This category does not include industrial farms or livestock feedlots.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

RR
RE

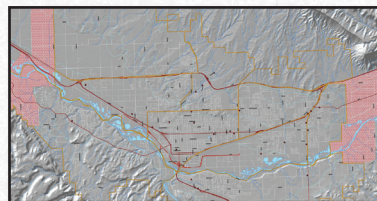


Cooperative Planning Area 5 to 35 acre parcels

In accordance with the Cooperative Planning Agreements between Mesa County and the municipalities.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

RR
RE
PD



Rural

3-17 acre lots

Private land that will remain in parcels of 3 to 17 acres. The uses will vary among low density residential lots, low intensity agricultural operations, orchards and other small scale farm operations. Rural land use areas serve as a transition between urban and agricultural uses. Clustering techniques are encouraged. No urban level services are supplied.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

RR
RE



LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS (CONT'D)

Estate 0.8-3.6 acre lots

Typical “estate” style single family homes on large lots of .8 to 3.6 acres.

Centralized services might be needed depending on site conditions and proximity to existing services. Uses are residential.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

RR
RE
R1



Residential Low Density 1.6–4.8 du/acre

Detached single family residents with typically 1.6 to 4.8 units per acre that receive full urban services. Alternative residential development types, including single-family attached, townhomes, and multi-family units may be permitted in these areas through the planned development process, where gross densities do not exceed 4.8 units per acre and compatibility with adjacent development can be assured.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

R1
R2
R4
R5
R8



Residential Medium Density 3.2-9.6 du/acre

A mix of residential development types with gross densities less than 9.6 dwelling units per acre are anticipated in areas with this designation. Single-family development will be integrated with other dwelling types, including duplexes, and low intensity attached residential development. Some low intensity multi-family development may be permitted through the planned development process where compatibility with adjacent development can be assured.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

R4
R5
R8
R12
PD



Residential Very Low Density 0.8–2.4 du/acre

Single family detached residences with typically 0.8 to 2.4 units per acre. These homes are generally served by a public water and wastewater system.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

R
R1
R2
R4
R5



LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

Residential Medium High Density 6.4-14.4 du/acre

A mix of residential development types with gross densities less than 14.4 dwelling units per acre are anticipated in areas with this designation. Duplexes, manufactured home subdivisions and low intensity attached residential development will be integrated with townhomes, and low-intensity, multi-family development. Larger multi-family developments and/or small (less than 5,000 square feet) neighborhood retail/service centers may be permitted through the planned development process where compatibility with adjacent development can be assured.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

R8	B1
R12	B2
R16	MU
R0	PD



Residential High Density 9.6-28.8 du/acre

All types of residential development may be permitted in these areas provided that gross densities are at least 9.6 and no more than 28.8 dwelling units per acre. Modest amounts (dependant on zoning applied but not intended for more than 10% of a development) of service oriented and retail commercial are allowed in the Residential High Density Land Use Classification. Higher density residential (and neighborhood retail/service center development) may be permitted through the planned development process where compatibility with adjacent development can be assured and adequate community-wide amenities or other benefits are provided consistent with zoning standards.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

R12	B1
R16	MU
R24	PD
R0	



Urban Residential 24+ du/acre

Residential development with a minimum of 24 units per acre is permitted. Modest amounts (depending on zoning applied but not intended for more than 10% of a development) of service oriented and retail commercial are allowed.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

R24
R0
B1
PD



Downtown Mixed Use 24+ du/acre

Employment, residential, retail, office/business park uses allowed. A 50% mix of uses, either horizontal or vertical is expected. Residential densities may exceed 24 du/acre. [LINK to form based building](#)

APPLICABLE ZONES:

R24
B2
C1
MU
PD



LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS (cont'd)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

Village Center Mixed Use 6.4 – 14.4 du/acre

10.2 – 14.4 du/acre, if residential

Employment, residential, service, park and retail allowed. The Large Village Center is intended to be at a smaller scale (1-4 stories and smaller land area) than Downtown Mixed Use. A 50% mix of uses, either horizontal or vertical is expected unless otherwise designated in an adopted Area or Neighborhood Plan. [LINK to form based building](#)

APPLICABLE ZONES:

R8
R12
MU
RO
PD



Neighborhood Center Mixed Use

4.8 – 10.2 du/acre

6.4 – 10.2 du/acre, if residential

Limited employment, residential, open space and limited retail focused on uses that provide convenience items to immediate neighborhood; residential uses are encouraged to be integrated with commercial uses. [LINK to form based building](#)

APPLICABLE ZONES:

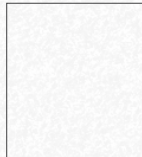
R8
MU
RO
PD



Neighborhood Commercial

Service, retail and office commercial uses that service immediate surrounding area with no outdoor storage.

APPLICABLE ZONES:



Business Park Mixed Use 6.4 – 9.6 du/acre

Business, light industrial employment oriented areas with the allowance of residential units under a Planned Development review.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

RO
B1
C1
C2
IO



Commercial

Permits a wide range of commercial development (office, retail, service, lodging, entertainment) with no outdoor storage or operations. Mixed commercial and residential developments may be encouraged in some areas.

APPLICABLE ZONES:

C1
C2
IO



LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS (cont'd)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

Commercial Industrial

Heavy Commercial, offices and light industrial uses with outdoor storage, but no outdoor operations other than sales (e.g., office/warehouse uses, auto sales, auto repair shops, lumber yards, light manufacturing). Some yard operations may be permitted through the planned development process where adequate screening and buffering can be provided to ensure compatibility with existing and planned development in the vicinity of the proposed use. Residential uses are not appropriate.

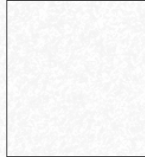
APPLICABLE
ZONES:



Industrial

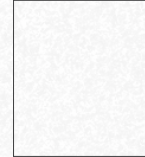
Heavy commercial and industrial operations are predominant in industrial areas. Batch plants and manufacturing uses with outdoor operations are appropriate if developed consistently with zoning regulations. Residential uses are not appropriate.

APPLICABLE
ZONES:



Airport

APPLICABLE
ZONES:



ACTIONS: LAND USE

HOMEPAGE

USING
THE PLANLAND
USE1
CONCENTRATED
CENTERS2. SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH PATTERN3. HOUSING
VARIETY4. GRAND
GREEN SYSTEM5. BALANCED
TRANSPORTATION6. A UNIQUE
COMMUNITY

Introduction

GOPs

Overview

Center Types

Actions

A SYSTEM OF CONCENTRATED URBAN CENTERS:

GETTING SHOPPING AND EMPLOYMENT CLOSER TO WHERE PEOPLE LIVE, AND VICE-VERSA

INTRODUCTION

A key objective of this Comprehensive Plan is to get shopping and employment closer to where people live in order to reduce traffic congestion and its attendant impacts of commuting time, diminished air quality and cost of infrastructure. The Plan includes an emphasis on mixed-use 'centers' as a key growth pattern, accompanied by encouragement of infill and redevelopment, with less external expansion. Chief among the centers is the resurgence of the Downtown as the heart and soul of our community. These concepts represent important new directions in the community's efforts to balance the pressures for outward growth with the desire to promote infill.

Centers have many advantages.

- ✧ allow for a variety of housing types (GP3: [Housing Variety](#))
- ✧ provide sufficient housing density to support alternative modes of transportation (GP5: [Balanced Transportation](#))
- ✧ create walkable neighborhoods that help reduce driving and congestion (GP5: [Balanced Transportation](#))
- ✧ help lessen development pressure on sensitive environments and productive agricultural lands outside the more urban areas (GP2: [Sustainable Growth Pattern](#))
- ✧ add vitality to our City core (GP2: [Sustainable Growth Pattern](#))
- ✧ allow for more efficient services and utilities/infrastructure. (GP2: [Sustainable Growth Pattern](#))

CHAPTER CONTENTS

1. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES
2. OVERVIEW
3. CENTER TYPES
 - Mixed Use Centers
 - Downtown
 - Village Centers
 - Neighborhood Commercial Areas
 - Linking Centers
 - Criteria for Locating Centers
 - Examples of Potential Village Centers
4. ACTIONS

<i>HOME PAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Center Types	Actions				

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES: CONCENTRATED CENTERS

GOAL

OBJECTIVES

Ox.x:

POLICIES

Px.x:

HOMEPAGE

USING
THE PLANLAND
USE1
CONCENTRATED
CENTERS2. SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH PATTERN3. HOUSING
VARIETY4. GRAND
GREEN SYSTEM5. BALANCED
TRANSPORTATION6. A UNIQUE
COMMUNITY

Introduction

GOPs

Overview

Center Types

Actions

OVERVIEW: CONCENTRATED CENTERS

In recent years, growth and annexation in the Grand Junction area has been primarily in a low density, spread-out fashion that extended unevenly into the surrounding rural areas, resulting in development patterns that are inefficient to serve with public services. Residents want to preserve the extensive agricultural and open space land surrounding the urban area. They also want the benefits of more efficient street and utility services. More compact development patterns will support both of these objectives.

To achieve more compact development, a significant effort will be made to encourage future growth to be focused inward, with an emphasis on infill and redevelopment of underutilized land, especially in the core area of the city (the Downtown). Outward growth will continue, but will occur concentrically also with pockets of compact development.

Grand Junction already has a variety of centers scattered throughout the community. Most of these are small, with only a gas station and a convenience store. Some are larger commercial areas with a grocery store and/or complementary convenience-oriented shopping (discount shopping, drug store, craft store, dry cleaner, etc.). There are several single-use “big-box” shopping centers (such as Target, Wal Mart) along major roadways.



Figure 1-1:
A Mixed Use Village
Center



Figure 1-2:
A Mixed Use Neighborhood
Center

HOMEPAGE

USING
THE PLANLAND
USE1
CONCENTRATED
CENTERS2. SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH PATTERN3. HOUSING
VARIETY4. GRAND
GREEN SYSTEM5. BALANCED
TRANSPORTATION6. A UNIQUE
COMMUNITY

Introduction

GOPs

Overview

Center Types

Actions

CENTER TYPES: CONCENTRATED CENTERS

MIXED-USE CENTERS

Centers have a mix of uses: stores, offices, and often, housing. Residential densities in and immediately surrounding centers are moderately high, and taper downward gradually (see Feathering Density) to match the density of existing surrounding neighborhoods.

The most successful mixed-use centers are pedestrian-oriented, where the users and surrounding residents can walk to a destination easily. Centers are the logical location for facilities and schools. Facilities (fire and police substations, schools, etc) and amenities (parks, gathering places) will be located in centers whenever possible. They also help create a synergy of uses that promote vitality in the center such as employees having lunch in nearby restaurants, with their offices close to retail opportunities.

The Downtown will be the primary center, with strong emphasis on increased density and mixed-use development, which expands horizontally and vertically. The Mesa Mall will continue to be a major shopping destination, especially for a broad range of comparison goods in mid-to high-end stores. Intermediate-sized Village, Neighborhood and smaller Neighborhood Commercial areas will be encouraged in major quadrants of the city to reduce driving for many convenience shopping needs. Mixed-use development may occur along mixed-use opportunity corridors.

Parks and/or other public gathering places will be needed to meet the needs of center residents. The Comprehensive Plan envisions parks located in centers, as well as in adjacent locations, so that most residences will be within a 5-minute walk of a park.

Center development will not happen overnight. It will likely happen sooner in areas where the beginnings of a center already exist (such as the Downtown, Clifton, Redlands Market Place, Horizon Drive, North Avenue, etc.). The Comprehensive Plan anticipates that existing commercial centers will gradually evolve by adding additional uses to become mixed-use centers. In a number of communities, "big-box" stores (as the single use) reach their typical life expectancy (approximately 15 years) and have been revitalized by adding mixed-use building types such as office and residential. That pattern is envisioned in Grand Junction, even eventually including the transition of the Mesa Mall to a wider range of uses.

In new development, centers will likely occur in phases beginning with higher density residential uses, followed by office and retail development. Traditionally this process has occurred slowly through development and redevelopment to gradually higher intensity of uses. To allow this process to happen more rapidly and cost-effectively will require reserving some areas for center development while the surrounding areas develop first at higher residential densities.

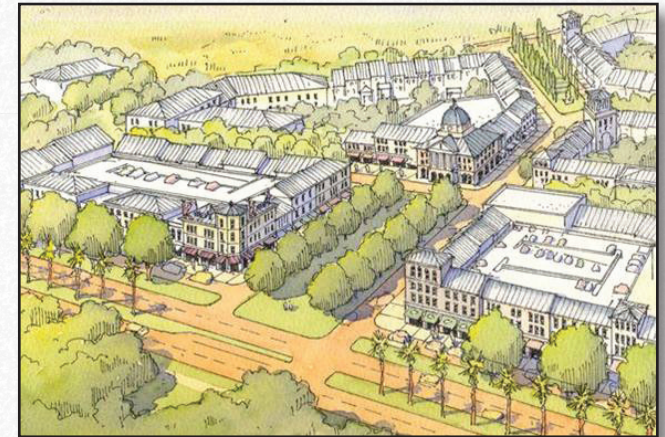
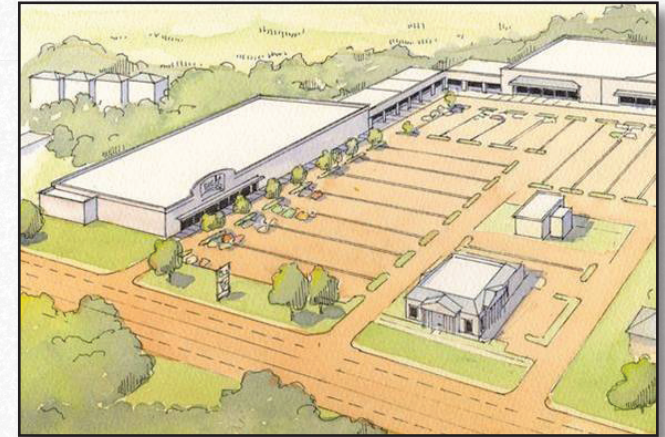


Figure 1-x: Conversion of a shopping mall to a mixed-use center

CENTER TYPES: CONCENTRATED CENTERS (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

The development of centers can be encouraged by several mechanisms: density bonuses, the formation of special districts¹, a streamlined development review process, public or public/private investments in infrastructure, and enhanced streetscapes.

Although in reality centers will evolve along a spectrum, several types or scales of centers are envisioned: the Downtown, Village Centers, Neighborhood Centers, Neighborhood Commercial areas and the continuation of some Single-use retail centers.

1. Map of Centers and density gradients

DOWNTOWN (MAP, ILLUSTRATIONS)

Downtown is seen as the 'heart and soul' of the city and region. On September 26, 1881 the Grand Junction town site² was selected and established by Grand Junction Town and Improvement Company. Over its history it evolved into the primary shopping center of the community. Then, with the advent of the Mesa Mall and the departure of major shopping, the Downtown transformed itself into more of a specialty area with restaurants, small stores, offices, and other ancillary uses (churches, government, etc.).

¹ Such as a tax increment financing district, business improvement district, or special district for infrastructure.

² The extent of their ownership was one square mile, spanning from 1st to 12th Streets and from North to South Avenues, and known as the "Original Square Mile".

A community's downtown is a barometer of its overall quality-of-life. Benefits to the community of a strong downtown are multi-faceted.

- ✱ A thriving downtown is a good recruitment tool for industry.
- ✱ Downtown's enhancement stimulates the economy and adds jobs.
- ✱ A better downtown increases tourism in the area.
- ✱ Downtown is a good investment (according to the National Historic Trust, every dollar a community spends on downtown revitalization brings in \$30 in new investment).

For all intents and purposes, our Downtown is relatively healthy. However, the Downtown needs to receive its proportionate share of the growth coming to the region—residential, non-residential, institutional and public uses that are well-designed and sensitive to existing uses.

In this Comprehensive Plan, the vision for the Downtown is that it maintains its current role as the prime area for office, financial, retail and government/civic uses. The Downtown is the main center for the region. It is envisioned that the Downtown will expand horizontally and vertically — adding more offices and residences in taller buildings (4-7 stories³) which, combined with more residential density in the immediate surrounding area, will

³ The size of the building should still allow personal contact with the street: where one can see faces or communicate to people on the street from the stories above.

provide a 'built-in' clientele that will enable the expansion of shops and restaurants.

The key to the success of the Downtown and what differentiates it from the other center types, will be the variety of uses, public gathering spaces (parks, plazas), the critical mass of workers and residents, and a variety of activities and attractions (including access to the river) that will give the life and vitality that make the Downtown an attraction in its own right. Improved transit will allow access from the outlying areas even with reduced parking and heavier traffic in the Downtown. Accessory Dwelling Units in historic neighborhoods, (see [GP6: A Unique Community](#) for more information on historic areas) increased densities and intensities of uses in South Downtown and surrounding Downtown (North Avenue, Lincoln Park), mixed use areas, potential Transit-Oriented Development in two areas along the railroad line are all components of the vision.

Strategies are needed to keep the Downtown healthy.

- ✱ Keep the Downtown as a regional destination with a diverse mix of land uses, civic and public amenities, art and cultural facilities.
- ✱ Expanded retail and services to capture under-utilized parcels and create additional pedestrian-oriented retail activity.
- ✱ Integrate existing historic and cultural amenities into the commercial heart of Downtown.
- ✱ Keep Civic / Public Uses in the Downtown including the many local, state, and federal services and

CENTER TYPES: CONCENTRATED CENTERS (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

agencies that are employment generators and regional destinations.

- ✱ Infill and Redevelopment Plan ([link](#))
- ✱ North Avenue Plan ([link](#)).

will help sustain the retail. They will have store fronts connected and facing along public streets or around plazas and other gathering areas.

- ✱ Encourage mixed-use projects with retail and/or commercial services on the street level (near high volumes of pedestrian activity) and office or residential uses on the upper floors.
- ✱ Upgrade existing parks and plazas and ensure that publicly accessible plaza and/or park space is incorporated into new large-scale redevelopment projects.
- ✱ Develop guidelines that allow redevelopment while preserving the character (historic as well as non-historic) that distinguishes the core area from other neighborhoods in the City.
- ✱ Enhance the character of the core area by improving streetscapes that are vital to maintaining visual continuity.
- ✱ Improve the visibility of signage to make it easier to navigate to the Downtown and core area destinations.

To ensure the Downtown thrives, the Plan encourages incentivizing development with infrastructure, special fee and/or processing schedule, removing regulation barriers with code revision and public/private efforts for land acquisition and assembling. Plans with more specific actions steps for investing in the Downtown include:

- ✱ Strategic Downtown Master Plan

VILLAGE AND NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS
([MAP ENLARGEMENT](#), [ILLUSTRATIONS](#))

Growth outside of Downtown is to happen concentrically from existing urbanized areas and targeted to Village Centers. Village Centers are essential to the sustainability of Grand Junction. They provide a second level of shopping and working closer to where people live. Each Center is to have its own identity through design and uses.

Village Centers occur in major quadrants of the city. The largest of the Village Centers will continue to be the Mesa Mall area, over time eventually transforming into mixed-use centers by adding close-by residential uses. Other Village Centers will be focused around a large grocery store, complemented with other uses such as home improvement stores, small furniture stores, chain restaurants, coffee shops, video rental and other convenience and office uses.

Neighborhood Centers will also have a grocery store focus that will be surrounded by smaller ancillary commercial uses, smaller discount stores, craft stores, restaurants, and specialty stores. In many cases they are merely modest extensions of centers that already exist. They consist of 3 to 10 buildings 1 to 2 stories in height. They will be drive-to destinations, but also have medium-to-high density residential and office uses mixed in vertically or horizontally adjacent in order to provide a close-by clientele that

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL AREAS AND
TYPICAL SINGLE-USE RETAIL COMMERCIAL

Small Neighborhood Commercial ⁴ areas, can be created in suitable locations (intersections of collector streets or larger) even though they may not be designated on the Future Land Use map—so long as they are tastefully designed to fit with the character and scale of adjacent residential buildings. Many will be located along Mixed-Use Opportunity Corridors: (as indicated on the FLU map)

- ✱ Patterson (F Road)
- ✱ 29 Road
- ✱ 30 Road
- ✱ 32 Road

In developed areas they sometimes occur as residential buildings (in locations less desirable for living ⁵) that are converted to a coffee shop/bakery, insurance office, etc. The locations of small neighborhood commercial areas will be determined by specific site plan review.

⁴ Such as a “corner store” or residential home on a busy street that is converted to a coffee shop/bakery, insurance office, etc.

⁵ For example, due to traffic volumes at a busy intersection, or as a transition between residential and employment uses.

CENTER TYPES: CONCENTRATED CENTERS (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

Table x.x: Summary of Center Types

Center Type	Size/Location Characteristics	Examples
Downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Pedestrian oriented ★ Buildings up to 4-7 stories tall ★ Mix of uses including residential (especially on upper floors), professional offices, retail, service, government offices, conference center/meeting venues, hotels, parking garages ★ Amenities such as parks, plazas and other public gathering spaces ★ Civic, financial and office center of region 	<p>Downtown Grand Junction (includes original square mile)</p> <p>[INSERT PHOTO]</p>
Village Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Pedestrian oriented ★ Located on or at intersection of major roadways ★ 10 buildings or more; 2-4 stories ★ Mix of uses including large to medium sized stores housing some regional commercial, grocery stores, drug stores and convenience-oriented retail ★ Inclusion of community service providers and facilities: libraries, fire stations, police stations, recreation centers, parks, post office, etc. Parks and schools are typically combined facilities. ★ Broader range of densities including medium to high density residential uses (town homes, small apartments/condominiums) integrated within, or immediately adjacent ★ Residential densities taper downward ("feather") gradually to match or complement surrounding neighborhoods. ★ Individual, unique character for each Village Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clifton at I-70 B and Hwy 6 • Mesa Mall • North Avenue at 29 Rd • 12th Street at Horizon Drive • Whitewater (at Hwy 50 / Coffman) • Central Orchard Mesa - 30 Rd / Hwy 50 • Pear Park at 29 Rd / D Rd • Appleton at H Rd and 23 ½ Rd • North Ave and 29 Rd <p>[INSERT PHOTO]</p>

In addition to mixed-use centers, some traditional single-use, "big-box" shopping and strip commercial centers are anticipated to remain along major roadways and at high volume intersections.

LINKING CENTERS

If there is adequate surrounding population, transit may be used to link the individual centers and provide alternative modes of transportation. As the Downtown receives infill development, multiple high frequency bus routes can serve the core area. With the realization of Large Village Centers, relatively high frequency bus circulation can link them to the Downtown and each other. Low frequency service may be provided to surrounding areas. The Plan also reserves a transit corridor along UP corridor that may eventually link Clifton to the Downtown and Mesa Mall areas. For more information on linking the centers, please see [GP5: Balanced Transportation](#) Criteria for Locating Centers.

CENTER TYPES: CONCENTRATED CENTERS (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

The Future Land Use Plan shows general locations for the future Village and Neighborhood Centers. The location for a future center is granted on a first come first serve basis. The location is set when a mixed-use, commercial or high density project is approved through site plan review. The criteria for locating a center are given in [Table XXX, Center Types](#).

Center Type	Size/Location Characteristics	Examples
Neighborhood Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Pedestrian oriented ★ Less than 20 acres in area, 3 - 7 buildings per center; 1-3 stories ★ Compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods ★ Mix of uses including convenience-oriented commercial (gas stations, grocers, dry cleaner, bakery, coffee shop); may include service providers and facilities such as fire station, post office ★ Medium density residential uses (town homes, small apartments/condominiums) integrated within, or immediately adjacent; includes walk-to neighborhood parks, squares 	<p>Orchard Mesa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unaweepe and 26 ¾ Rd • 27 Rd and Hwy 50 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hwy 50 and B1/2 Rd ▪ Hwy 50 and 29 Rd ▪ Hwy 50 / Fairgrounds (future) <p>Redlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hwy 340/Redlands Market Place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hwy 340/Monument Village ▪ Redlands Parkway/Hwy 340 ▪ South Broadway/20 ½ Rd ▪ Hwy 340/23 Rd (future) <p>Northwest GJ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 Rd and I-70 <p>Downtown (greater area) (also see North Avenue Corridor Plan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st St and Orchard Ave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 12th St and Patterson Rd • 12th St and Orchard Ave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ North Ave and 12th St ▪ North Ave and 28 Rd ▪ North Ave and 28 1/2 Rd <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 27 Rd and Patterson St ▪ 1st St and Patterson St (future) <p>Horizon Drive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizon Dr and G Rd • Horizon / I-70 • 26 ½ Rd south of I Rd (future) <p>Clifton – Fruitvale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F Rd and 29 ½ Rd • 30 Rd and F Rd • 30 ½ Rd and F Rd • 30 ¾ Rd and F Rd • 32 ½ Rd and F Rd • I-70 B at Hwy 141 • Hwy 141 south of E ½ Rd, • Hwy 141 and E Rd • Hwy 141 south of D ½ Rd, <p>Pear Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 Rd and D Rd <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 31 Rd and D ½ Rd (future) <p>Appleton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 ½ Rd and I Rd (future) • 22 ½ Rd and H ½ Rd (future)
Neighborhood Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corner store • 1 - 3 buildings • Retail or office on street level, may include office or residential above 	[INSERT PHOTO]
Retail / Commercial Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strip development, big-box centers and small commercial corners (typically one use – commercial / developments) 	Various locations (see Land Use Map)

CENTER TYPES: CONCENTRATED CENTERS (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL VILLAGE CENTERS

The **Clifton Old Town** area is an example of a future Village Center. Many elements of a center exist there today: residences, schools, commercial. Overtime, as the surrounding area grows, a Village Center will evolve. Design standards have been created (by Mesa County) for the Old Town Clifton Area include: building form (such as height, setback, orientation), architecture, street furniture, lighting, and mix of uses. The plan for the center includes a mixed use area and an area for the continuation of typical commercial uses. The plan creates an overall balance of density between existing (higher) and new (medium to low) residential classifications.

Whitewater is envisioned as a new “urban community” where people live, work, and play. Future land uses proposed by Mesa County include approximately 7500 homes. A mixed-use center, near the existing commercial area, will allow a range of densities that average out to a medium overall density. The mixed use area will provide for day-to-day convenience needs (laundromat, coffee shop, daycare center, medical offices, etc.) as well as office and other commercial uses. A more typical commercial area is designated to the south of the mixed use area and medium density residential is located across the highway. The plan also includes industrial uses and low density residential to estate residential densities. Design guidelines have been created to help bring about the vision described in the goals for the area.

A Village Center has been tentatively proposed for property owned by Mesa State College near 29 Rd and D Rd. Plans for the project include residential, commercial, retail and industrial components. Determination has not been made as to whether the project will be horizontally or vertically mixed.

For more information on centers, please refer to the City's Website:

- ★ Whitewater Area Plan
- ★ Clifton-Fruitvale Plan
- ★ Downtown Strategic Plan
- ★ North Avenue Plan

<i>HOMEPAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Center Types	Actions				

ACTIONS: CONCENTRATED CENTERS

<i>HOMEPAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Growth Projections	Cost of Services	Actions			

A SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN - FISCALLY

INTRODUCTION

Fiscal Sustainability means that we grow efficiently and cost-effectively. It means that we avoid growth patterns that cause disproportionate increases in the cost of service such as irregular boundaries that force police, street sweepers, parks maintenance, and other service providers to travel long distances between areas of service. This means much of future growth is focused inward, with an emphasis on infill and redevelopment of underutilized land, especially in the core area of the City (Downtown). Growing inward (infill and redevelopment) allows us to take advantage of land with services. Outward growth that does occur should be contiguous with existing urbanized areas so that it can develop in a fiscally efficient manner.

VISION

"The Most Livable Community West of the Rockies"

TRANSLATING THE VISION

What does livable mean for fiscal sustainability?

- ◆ Fiscal sustainability – remaining a regional center, smart expenditures, smart growth.
- ◆ Adequate employment opportunities with a mix of job types, not focusing on just one job sector.
- ◆ Organized, functioning, and orderly - it "works", trash gets collected, buses run on time, and adequate services are provided.

CHAPTER CONTENTS

1. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES
2. OVERVIEW
 - Benefits and Importance of Maintaining Our Role as a Regional Center
 - Oil and Gas Development
 - Tourism
3. GROWTH PROJECTIONS AND ALLOCATION WITHIN THE GRAND JUNCTION VICINITY
 - Growth Projections
 - Demographic Breakdowns
4. COST OF SERVICES RELATED TO SPRAWL
 - Cost of Infrastructure, Services
 - Efficiencies of Service
 - Cost of Development
 - 201 Boundary and Growth Tools
5. ACTIONS

<i>HOME PAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Growth Projections	Cost of Services	Actions			

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES: SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN

GOALS

OBJECTIVES:

Ox.x:

POLICIES:

Px.x:

<i>HOMEPAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Growth Projections	Cost of Services	Actions			

OVERVIEW: SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN

Over the past two decades, Grand Junction and Mesa County have experienced an extended period of sustained economic expansion, largely due in recent years to the result of increased regional natural gas development. Regardless, the Grand Junction and Mesa County economies are multi-faceted and growth has been occurring in many sectors for both governments. The sectors experiencing the largest growth from 1970 to 2000 include construction, services, finance insurance, real estate, and wholesale and retail trade. The community also strongly benefits from tourism, retiree migration, regional services, and supply distribution operations.

BENEFITS AND IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING OUR ROLE AS A REGIONAL CENTER

The City of Grand Junction is the largest municipality on Colorado's Western slope and traditionally has served as a regional service center for a large portion of Western Colorado and parts of eastern Utah. Grand Junction provides key consumer and business services, including health care, business support and professional services, and comparative retail goods to a seven county influence area.

The main reason that being a regional center is important to our future is that the majority of our public revenue is generated by sales tax ¹.

¹ In 2007, about 64% of General Fund revenues were from sales tax (the statewide average is about 48%) and total city

As a regional center, we currently enjoy above-average sales tax production for a city of our size— about 46% of sales tax revenue in 2007 is from non-city residents. We have a significant influx of people—for business, tourism, and shopping—from whom we receive sales tax revenues but for whom we do not provide a full range of services. This allows us to provide our own residents with a higher level of services than would otherwise be possible.

Being a regional center allows us to provide high quality services and amenities to our community. At the same time, it is the quality and attractiveness of our community and the services and amenities we provide that reinforces the attraction of regional visitors and businesses to the area. This gives our community funding to reinvest in our quality of life and reinvest in improvements to the community that will continue to make Grand Junction the most livable city west of the Rockies. Thus, it is a high priority (a guiding principle of the Plan) to retain and nurture our role as a regional center over the long-term.

OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

Since the turn of the century, the region has realized an increase in oil and gas development. Energy development in Western Colorado is mainly happening in areas to the north and east of Mesa County, but Grand Junction will likely continue to be the center for regional services and

sales and use tax revenue grew by nearly 12% from 2006 to 2007.

the hub for industry-related commerce. Grand Junction, with the help of the regional airport, has attracted a large share of the management, consulting and regional supply side of the area's energy development industry. This growth of basic jobs stabilizes the local economy and is expected to produce continued general growth in retail, professional services and other regional service industry sectors.

Although the energy extraction sector has only attributed about 6 percent of local basic employment, it is likely that that figure under-represents the industry's broader impact. Many businesses that are classified as manufacturing, household direct or regional services are closely affiliated with the energy extraction industry and rely on the industry's spending for success. As a result, the impact of natural gas extraction is not fully captured in the State's classifications.

It is anticipated that gas development will continue for an extended period into the future, however, it remains possible that changes in markets, other supply sources or other factors could curtail development sooner than expected.

[\(Links to charts\)](#)

TOURISM

Tourism has become an important aspect of our economy. This should not be a surprise due to our beautiful setting

OVERVIEW: SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN (CONT'D)

Back to Top of Topic

and numerous activities including mountain biking and wine tasting.

Tourism, broadly defined, makes up about 15 percent of the economic base of Mesa County in terms of overall employment. According to the State Demographer, there were approximately 5,700 direct tourism jobs in the county based on 2006 employment data. Tourism jobs include both activities associated with traditional short-term visitors and economic activity associated with second homes in the region. Tourism jobs span numerous business sectors, with the largest number of jobs in food services, accommodations, construction and retail.

How we grow as a community can influence tourism:

- ✧ compact growth helps remove development pressure on orchards and vineyards
- ✧ investing in and expanding our trail system attracts cycling enthusiasts
- ✧ enhancing the downtown attracts visitors to the city core
- ✧ protection of vistas and landmarks ensures future visitors enjoy the same beauty as current visitors

To promote tourism, the Grand Junction Visitor and Convention Bureau and the Visitor Center (both City run programs) market the Grand Junction area and act as a liaison among visitors, accommodations, facilities, and tourist-related businesses. A [website](#) and [visitors' guide](#) are available.

<i>HOME PAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Growth Projections	Cost of Services	Actions			

GROWTH PROJECTIONS AND ALLOCATION WITHIN THE GRAND JUNCTION VICINITY

GROWTH PROJECTIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWNS

In 2007, Grand Junction had an estimated population of 55,000 persons. Mesa County contains approximately 142,000 residents. Over the past 36 years, the population of Grand Junction has grown by almost 160 percent. This represents a compound annual growth rate of 2.6 percent, compared with 2.2 percent across the state as a whole. Over the same period, Mesa County grew by roughly the same rate as Grand Junction.

The population of the Grand Junction vicinity is expected to nearly double by 2035. This results in an additional 41,000 housing units in the planning area. The growth projection of the area is based on City and County Staff analysis of State Demographer data, Regional Transportation Planning Office (RTPO) modeling, building permit trends, economic / industry trends. If we want to preserve our quality of life, we need to plan for that growth so we can maximize benefits and minimize undesired effects.

[\[link to 2000 census charts\]](#)

<i>HOMEPAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Growth Projections	Cost of Services	Actions			

COST OF SERVICES RELATED TO SPRAWL - IMPORTANCE OF COMPACT GROWTH

We are seeing the benefits from monies collected from outside sources that supplement our city budget. However, this does not mean that regional, national or global economic trends such as higher gas prices or a volatile energy industry will not affect us. Therefore, we still need to spend community financial resources wisely, particularly for infrastructure and public services. It is prudent to increase the efficiency of infrastructure and public services through a compact land use pattern that is more sustainable over time – one that helps us increase the efficiencies of our services and leverages our infrastructure. This Comprehensive Plan includes an emphasis on mixed-use ‘centers’ as a key growth pattern, accompanied by encouragement of infill and redevelopment more than external expansion. These concepts represent important new directions in the community’s efforts to balance the pressures for outward growth with the desire to promote infill and efficient services. ([Land Use](#))

COST OF INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES

Although some City service costs are not closely tied to the urban form of growth (e.g. administration), there are many capital costs (utilities, street maintenance, public safety, for example) that are sensitive to the type and location of growth. Generally, when growth occurs in lower densities, cities incur disproportionate additional costs such as repairing and resurfacing roadways; cleaning and inspecting longer sewer lines; longer roads to plow snow;

and longer trips for police, fire, building inspectors, school buses and parks maintenance crews, when compared to more compact urban land use patterns. These costs may not appear immediately (for example, it is usually several years before repaving is required), but they eventually add additional operating and capital replacement costs borne by the City and other service providers.

EFFICIENCIES OF SERVICE

The growth pattern that the City has followed over the past decade has lead to a tentacle-like city limit where, in some areas, it is difficult to know whether or not a property is within city limits. This increases administrative costs and reduces quality and efficiency of service – who responds to emergency calls, in which areas trash is collected, how far the street sweeper needs to drive, and other service provisions. In conversations with city service providers, this issue has become an increasing concern and acknowledgement that a more uniform, compact pattern of growth is desired over the next planning period.

COST OF DEVELOPMENT

Promoting greater residential density and mixed use projects allows a savings in private development costs through land and capital investment efficiencies that have the potential to reduce per unit housing costs. If a large tract of land purchased at a fixed cost can accommodate

additional residential and business activity, the per unit cost of land as well as per unit on-site water, sewer and road investments will decline proportionally.

(images – lot size vs. road length)

[Map of current irregular City boundary \(link to Map Gallery\)](#)

THE 201 BOUNDARY AND GROWTH TOOLS

Discussions have begun on whether it would be permissible for sewer services to be extended in non-urban areas in response to public health issues. The root of these discussions is addressing responsibility of service provision and cost of services to annexed areas and not necessarily the extent of the City Limits. Under the Persigo Agreement, if new development is proposed, annexation to the City is required. These areas are to develop with urban densities and services will be provided by the City (unless otherwise contracted). A new approach is to decouple the annexation clause from sewer service and revise the Persigo Agreement and then apply another tool as a trigger for annexation.

Ideas for the new approach include:

- ✱ The 201 Boundary may extend beyond the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) into rural areas within the Comprehensive Plan Study Area.

COST OF SERVICES RELATED TO SPRAWL - IMPORTANCE OF COMPACT GROWTH (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

- ✳ Sewer is extended only for public health or safety needs.

- ✳ Sewer service does not trigger annexation at the time of development.

- ✳ Any sewer service allowed outside of the UGB would be an out of district customer that:

- ★ Pays 100% of infrastructure improvements
- ★ Pays 100% of the maintenance costs for that service

- ✳ Sewer service does not require urban land uses. The Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map dictate land use.¹ All land uses except URR Overlay, Rural and Agriculture would be considered urban development.

The Persigo Boundary currently functions as the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) in the area except in the Clifton Sanitation District boundary. In the new approach, a new Grand Junction Urban Growth Boundary would be established for areas intended for annexation if developed (areas designated with urban levels of development on the Future Land Use Map). A second 'General' UGB may be established for areas not required or expected to annex.

To address services, an Urban Services Boundary (USB) may be established. Within the USB, annexation to the City of Grand Junction would be required for new development.

The USB may or may not be the same as the UGB but additional criteria would be established to determine who provides urban services. Ideas include:

- ✳ a Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement created between the City and County to determine who provides what services
- ✳ establishment of a threshold criterion on the number of households or square feet of non-residential development within a given distance that is currently receiving GJ services
- ✳ specified services to new developments located more than a given distance from existing city limits will be provided by Mesa County (if able) when the annexation occurs.

Additional conversations and agreements between the City and County would need to take place before a change in policy can begin.

- ✳ modifications to the Persigo Agreement
- ✳ Intergovernmental Agreement between Mesa County and City of Grand Junction (indicating location of boundary and service provisions)
- ✳ establishment of a Grand Junction UGB
- ✳ establishment of an USB

¹ For example, if the Land Use Plan designation is for URR or Rural, urban development will not be allowed without (1) a plan amendment and (2) adjustment of the UGB to include the area. If both are approved, new development would require annexation for new development.

<i>HOME PAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Growth Projections	Cost of Services	Actions			

ACTIONS: SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN

*HOME PAGE**USING
THE PLAN**LAND
USE**1. CONCENTRATED
CENTERS**2. SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH PATTERN**3. HOUSING
VARIETY**4. GRAND
GREEN SYSTEM**5. BALANCED
TRANSPORTATION**6. A UNIQUE
COMMUNITY*

Introduction

GOPs

Overview

Comp Plan Recommendations

Actions

GREATER HOUSING VARIETY FOR ALL LIFE STAGES, PRICE POINTS - HOUSING FOR A DIVERSE ECONOMY AND DIVERSE COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, coinciding with population growth and despite increase in the number of housing units, Grand Junction has seen an escalation of housing prices. Finding adequate housing at a manageable cost was a top concern from Comprehensive Plan stakeholders across the board, regardless of special interests or background. Cost of housing impacts the ability of employees to remain in or relocate to the region. With growth comes new pressures to make sure that housing is available that is consistent with local wages.

To meet the goals for housing, the main strategies are:

- ✧ range of housing
- ✧ mix of densities and unit types
- ✧ public and private cooperation
- ✧ land banking
- ✧ draw upon tools and best practices (reference tools) used in other communities
- ✧ implement the “finer grained” conclusions of recently completed housing plans

CHAPTER CONTENTS

1. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES
2. OVERVIEW
 - Variety of Price Points
 - Rising Housing Costs
 - Lack of Housing Choices
 - A Variety of Choices
3. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS
 - RANGE OF HOUSING
 - Mix of Densities and Types
 - Public and Private Cooperation
 - Land Banking
 - Reference Tools
 - Implementation
4. HOUSING VARIETY ACTIONS

<i>HOME PAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Comp Plan Recommendations	Actions				

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES: HOUSING VARIETY

HOUSING GOALS

HOUSING OBJECTIVES:

Ox.x:

HOUSING POLICIES

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GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES (CONT'D)

[Back To Top of Topic](#)

OVERVIEW: HOUSING VARIETY

In 2000, Grand Junction had approximately 20,000 housing units ¹. Between 2000 and 2006, Grand Junction housing units increased by 28 percent, which amounts to 4.1 percent per year. These figures document that the Grand Junction region outpaced the state in the rate of growth (2.7% per year) over the past several years.

Over the past decade, coinciding with population growth and despite an increase in the number of housing units, Grand Junction has seen an escalation of housing prices. As of 2000, housing prices in Grand Junction were similar to Colorado Springs and Pueblo. By 2007, Grand Junction home prices were higher on average than their Front Range counterparts by a wide margin ².

Finding adequate housing at a manageable cost was a top concern from Comprehensive Plan stakeholders across the board, regardless of special interests or background. Representatives from St. Mary’s Hospital, Mesa State College, the School District, City of Grand Junction and Mesa County (to name a few) all commented that the cost of housing was impacting the ability of employees to remain in or relocate to the region.

A VARIETY OF PRICE POINTS FOR THE FULL SPECTRUM OF INCOMES IN A DIVERSE ECONOMY

As Grand Junction moves into the future, we must remember to provide housing for the entire workforce to ensure these job positions that support our economy can be filled. Having a multi-faceted economy and being a regional center, we have a spectrum of jobs: commercial, retail, hospital, education, agriculture, financial offices, etc. as well as tourism-related services. This results in a spectrum of incomes that need housing. We expect that job growth will occur throughout all income categories, and housing demand will grow not just in the high income categories but also for service workers, retirees and students.

With growth comes new pressures to make sure that housing consistent with local wages is available. To deal

with local housing issues, public and private cooperative efforts will need to increase, the role of existing agencies will need to expand, and new organizations will likely be created to deal with encouraging and monitoring local housing programs.

“Affordable housing” in Grand Junction is generally defined as:

A housing payment (rent or mortgage) that does not exceed 30% of a household’s gross monthly income (excluding utilities), for a home that is of a sufficient size to meet the needs of the household.

This definition applies to households across a wide range of incomes, indicating that affordable housing issues can impact residents at the low end of the income spectrum, as well as at higher incomes³.

Incomes are defined in terms of the area median income (AMI). For the Grand Junction area⁴, the AMI was \$55,000 in 2008⁵. As a ‘median’ this indicates that 50% of 4-person households make more than \$55,000 and 50% make less. Typically, the AMI income guidelines are

³ The term “affordable housing” is not synonymous with “low-income housing,” a term that is sometimes used to describe many federal programs where housing costs that exceed 30% of gross income are subsidized.
⁴ Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)
⁵ As determined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development for a 4-person household

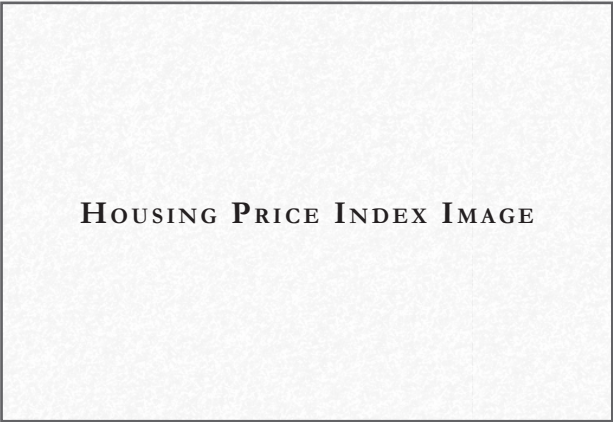


Figure 3.x:

¹ Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs
² According to the housing price index calculated by the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, which is useful in comparing housing affordability across regions or within one region over time.

OVERVIEW (CONT'D)

[Back To Top of Topic](#)

used to establish targets for different housing efforts (including local, State and federal programs). For example, one program may focus on families earning 40 to 80% of AMI whereas another may focus on those earning 100% to 120% of AMI.

RISING HOUSING COSTS VERSUS INCOME

In recent years the cost of housing in Grand Junction has significantly outpaced household incomes, causing an increased **affordability gap**. For example, over the past five years while the area median income increased by 21%, the median single family home sale price increased by about 73%, and the median price for all residential units increased about 50%. **[table or chart?]** This trend is not unique to Grand Junction; in fact, it is present in many Colorado communities where a high quality of life, coupled with rapid growth, is driving housing costs higher.

In the past, western Colorado has experienced a number of boom/bust cycles. Even through the 'bust' cycles, housing costs have not reduced more than incomes, and often less. Therefore, if incomes continue to lag behind housing costs, and affordable housing is not available in Grand Junction, a growing percentage of the working families in our community will invariably be forced to commute greater and greater distances from less expensive housing in outlying communities. Increased commuting will have significant impacts on traffic congestion, air quality, economic benefits and worker satisfaction.

Given that Grand Junction's retail and service job base is heavily dependent on middle and modest income workers, how the community addresses housing will affect other aspects of our quality of life.

LACK OF HOUSING CHOICES

The affordable housing problem in Grand Junction is compounded by the lack of diversity in the local housing stock. **[table or chart?]** The vast majority of the housing units in Grand Junction today are detached single-family homes. This low density development pattern increases the cost of housing. There are relatively few apartment units (compared to many other communities) **[table or chart?]** and the overall density of residential development in Grand Junction is also low. Having a limited product creates a problem for our community to meet its goal of providing housing for all income levels. The Comprehensive Plan encourages a broader range of housing in locations dispersed throughout the Valley.

VARIETY OF CHOICES FOR LIFE STAGES IN A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Over and above affordability issues, Grand Junction also lacks housing products to meet the full range of needs of changing demographics. Our community is made up of many generations, many backgrounds and many varying interests.

With the variety of people in our valley, it is not surprising that no one housing type (single family residential units) provides everyone with the housing fit for their life stage, and it is imperative that we look to diversify the available housing choices in the future.

As individuals and families move through life, their housing needs change. Grand Junction has become well established as an attractive community for older households. Demographic data suggests that a large share of Grand Junction residents will be retiring in the next decade and the city will likely continue to enjoy an influx of retirees from elsewhere. In other parts of the county, retiring Baby Boomers have shown an interest in alternative forms of housing and more "urban" living patterns where housing upkeep does not require large amounts of time.

As energy becomes more expensive, transportation costs rise, and demographics change, the private market is starting to move toward smaller homes, infill and compact development that allows reduced commute times. Many of our development regulations are based on low density, suburban growth and in some cases discourage these new types of development. Under these circumstances, providing opportunity for a variety of housing types (including higher density units) is simply sound planning in preparing to accommodate market pressure.

A broader range of housing choices will help Grand Junction stay competitive in the region and nation as an attractive place for people of all ages to locate and live.

WHAT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RECOMMENDS: HOUSING VARIETY

In Grand Junction, existing housing programs have typically targeted renter households making 50% or less of AMI. Based on housing data evaluations, households with incomes greater than 120% of AMI are identified as generally not needing assistance in Grand Junction. The portion of the community that does not have assistance now but is increasingly becoming unable to afford housing in Grand Junction are those with incomes between 50 and 120% of AMI. The Comprehensive Plan targets this group in its housing policy efforts. It is recommended that an expanded role for the Grand Junction Housing Authority or similar organization be considered in order to deal with existing and anticipated housing affordability issues.

In addition to expanding the range of households that receive housing assistance of various types, the Comprehensive Plan has also identified the need to encourage more diverse housing products.

The Comprehensive Plan adds additional residential land use types to respond to the magnitude and housing preferences of the regional growth anticipated. As we implement the Comprehensive Plan, our residential land use will become more diverse, having more variety in types of rental and for sale housing. Some housing options will be at higher densities and have different land use patterns from those that exist today – particularly in the Downtown and Village Centers areas where a “mixed use” development pattern makes more efficient use of land and thereby reduces housing costs. The Plan also provides

direction for distributing growth to bring shopping and residential uses closer to where people live. As a result, the plan will encourage new, and infill residential development where we anticipate that it will serve the long term needs of the community.

RANGE OF HOUSING

The wider range of housing types and price levels needed by the full spectrum of Grand Junction’s residents is addressed by the land use pattern and densities proposed in the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to the traditional single-family homes, which will continue to be provided, additional housing choices for Grand Junction will also include:

- ✧ small lot single family homes, with a range of floor areas on a mix of lot sizes
- ✧ duplexes
- ✧ town homes
- ✧ condominiums
- ✧ apartments with a range of unit sizes, designed for retirees as well as students and less affluent households
- ✧ accessory dwelling units (residential units above a garage)

Density is typically calculated in terms of “dwelling units per acre” –the more units per acre, the higher the density. For example, for single family homes the larger the lot, the lower the density.

MIX OF DENSITIES AND UNIT TYPES

In the past, most developments in Grand Junction have been comprised of a single density and a single house type (such as single family). The Comprehensive Plan encourages new residential neighborhoods that will contain a mix of densities and unit types — to provide the vitality, variety, and sense of community that currently exists in older parts of Grand Junction. Providing a mix of unit types within each development distributes the various unit types throughout a neighborhood and community, which means a variety of family types and incomes can live within proximity of schools, churches, convenience centers, and other facilities and amenities. It also avoids creating ‘enclaves’ of just one type. A variety of housing options in a development also has the benefit of allowing families and individuals in different life stages (young families, empty-nesters, retirees) to co-exist in neighborhoods. It also permits residents that have established long-term ties to a neighborhood to move to a larger or smaller home without having to move to another neighborhood.

WHAT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RECOMMENDS (CONT'D)

[Back To Top of Topic](#)**'Feathering' of Densities**

As a mix of housing types are provided and density increases in areas, it is important to avoid abrupt differences in densities and compatible land uses. A gradual transition of residential densities and home types of "feathering of densities" should be applied. [\[add pictures for clarity\]](#) For example, if an existing property has been developed at 3 units per acre and a new adjacent development is granted a density of 8 units per acre, the new development should place along the common property line lot sizes that are no more than 4 to 5 units per acre. If the new development has a lower average density it could place slightly higher densities along the lot line that more closely match existing development. Creating high density lots immediately adjacent to very low density lots should be avoided. When large density "jumps" cannot be avoided, they should be mitigated by buffer transitions such as increased setbacks between the uses, gradual changes in building mass, and significant landscape planting. The residential uses adjacent to commercial, industrial, or business uses should generally be designated as medium or higher densities. [\[SketchUP illustration of feathering of densities see pub mtg #6 ppt\]](#)

Importance of Design

When developing mixed-density and higher density projects, design becomes an important aspect. The goal is to build attractive and functional areas for our community; places where residents feel safe, comfortable and enjoy living. We also want to ensure that these more intense developments blend various density types and uses compat-

ible with each other and with their surrounding neighborhoods. This requires adherence to design principles that are not necessarily the same as might apply in traditional single-family developments—such as scaling small apartment/condo units to blend comfortably with adjacent single family homes and townhomes, mixing and matching home types on lots that have the same depth, achieving 'just enough' variety, providing small plazas and sitting areas, and avoiding too many driveways over sidewalks.

Infill Development

Infill development on vacant and underutilized land in downtown, at higher densities, will significantly increase housing affordable to workers. The Village and Neighborhood Centers designated in the Comprehensive Plan offer housing types that will be affordable to workers through higher densities and housing-over-stores spaces. Being in walkable centers that are near transit further impacts affordability by lowering the total cost of living. Retention of existing housing stock is also a means to retain an affordable product.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COOPERATION

There is a role for both the public and private sectors in the creation of the diverse housing stock, as envisioned. The City and County should actively look for opportunities to expand the capacity of both private and public entities in Grand Junction to encourage the production of housing at a variety of price points. This can be accomplished by:

- ✧ *Better addressing home ownership opportunities*

There is presently no local agency in Grand Junction that focuses on creating ownership opportunities. The Comprehensive Plan anticipates that there will be significant growth over time in middle income households, of which a significant percentage will be candidates for first time or "move up" housing. We will actively evaluate this need and work toward creating the organizational capacity to address the demand in Grand Junction.

- ✧ *Demonstration projects to demonstrate new solutions to housing affordability*

These situations are anticipated in the Village Centers as well as in a variety of other locations throughout the planning area. In these areas the City will consider a range of tools, including potential financial assistance, regulatory flexibility and education and marketing assistance to encourage the success of new developments that meet community goals as expressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

- ✧ *Create a different type of planning process for larger "projects," including a combination of more incentives and regulatory oversight*

There are a number of larger parcels (10 acres or more) in [areas subject to change](#), the development of these could fulfill multiple goals of this Plan. To encourage affordable housing in these areas, a new and broader set of planning considerations will need to be applied to these larger development parcels. These planning standards are anticipated to provide more flexibility to address mixed-uses and higher densities

WHAT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RECOMMENDS (CONT'D)

[Back To Top of Topic](#)

but with corresponding requirements that measures will be employed to preserve the affordability of housing created through this program over time.

IMPLEMENT THE “FINER GRAINED” CONCLUSIONS OF RECENTLY COMPLETED HOUSING PLANS

The Comprehensive Plan provides relatively broad goals and objectives related to the direction of the community. A second level of planning, more specific and focused, is provided by the [Housing Strategy](#) (2008), the [Strategic Downtown Master Plan](#), and the [Infill and Redevelopment Strategy](#) (2008). Other housing efforts are currently underway, such as a collaborative effort to develop a “housing strategy” amongst the various agencies with housing responsibilities. These other existing and on-going efforts contain additional specific actions and recommendations that will further the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

LAND BANKING

As opportunities present themselves, both the public and public/private sector will strategically acquire land for housing. The Comprehensive Plan can be used to help identify locations where long-term opportunities for affordable or a mixture of housing products will be acceptable to the public. This will allow assembling land to further our long term goals and vision.

DRAW UPON TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES USED IN OTHER COMMUNITIES

There are various tools and programs that are being used elsewhere with success. These measures should be considered in Grand Junction. Furthermore, various housing-related [indicators](#)¹ should be tracked over time. These statistical measures will provide ongoing guidance to Grand Junction decision makers regarding housing needs and they can help to indicate the timing and appropriateness of the various tools that have been identified as having potential for the community.

¹ For example, the number of houses listed/sold accessible to various income categories

[HOMEPAGE](#)[USING THE PLAN](#)[LAND USE](#)[1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS](#)[2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN](#)[HOUSING VARIETY](#)[4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM](#)[5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION](#)[6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY](#)

IntroductionGOPsOverviewComp Plan RecommendationsActions

ACTIONS: HOUSING VARIETY

Ax.x:

A GRAND GREEN SYSTEM OF NATURAL AREAS, PARKS, AND TRAILS

INTRODUCTION

The Grand Junction area is endowed with abundant public land, beautiful vistas, and of course, two great rivers. Our natural setting, including the views and access to open lands, is one of our most valuable assets and one of the reasons why many are attracted to the community. We also have a variety of large and small parks, as well as the beginning of a diverse trail system. We want to ensure these elements are available to future generations.

Grand Junction envisions a whole interconnected system that links the region's natural areas with a rich variety of park types, via an extensive trail network: the "Grand Green System." The Grand Green System will help promote a healthy lifestyle, allow for recreation and spiritual recharge, and will help us to be more environmentally sustainable* as our community grows.

As a regional center, Grand Junction draws visitors from a broad regional area. They come not only to visit the National Monument and the Grand Mesa, but also to take advantage of our local park system. Many residents of Mesa County take advantage of Grand Junction's park facilities and recreation programs. Grand Junction hosts numerous sporting events that bring in groups from

around the country. Visitors to the region for business or pleasure take advantage of the parks and trails provided by the City. The recreation users from the region, and the added visitors from beyond the region actually exceed the resident users of our amenities, a fact that we need to consider while we plan for our Grand Green System and related recreational opportunities.

The elements of the grand green system include:

- * natural environment
- * parks
- * trails
- * recreation facilities

VISION

"The Most Livable Community West of the Rockies"

TRANSLATING THE VISION

What does livable mean for a grand green system?

- ◆ A healthy lifestyle - recreation centers, trails, parks, access to natural resources.

CHAPTER CONTENTS

1. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES
2. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
3. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT DIRECTIONS
 - Colorado and Gunnison Rivers
 - Water Quality
 - Floodplains
 - Visual Resources
 - Air Quality
 - Public Lands
 - Natural Hazards
4. PARKS AND RECREATION
 - Park Type Descriptions
5. PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTIONS
 - Park Needs
 - Partnering with the School District
 - Other Park Initiatives
 - Park Impact Fees
 - Locating New Parks
6. RECREATION FACILITIES
7. RECREATION FACILITIES DIRECTIONS
8. TRAILS
 - Trail Types
9. TRAILS DIRECTIONS
 - Key Components of the Trail System
 - Trail System Guidelines

* Sustainability means that a system can be maintained indefinitely with no (or very little) outside subsidy (financial, energy, etc.). Environmental sustainability means conserving natural resources so that they maintain themselves naturally (plant and animal species reproduce) while still accommodating growth.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES: GRAND GREEN SYSTEM

GOALS

OBJECTIVES

Ox.x:

POLICIES:

Px.x: The City and County recommend avoiding land exchanges that involve development of parcels known to be high in selenium and salts and/or strongly recommend employing the use of conservation easements which prohibit irrigation and require that developers use Best Management Practices which minimize salt and selenium loading (especially in previously unirrigated Mancos [\[link to soils map\]](#) soils).

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The natural resources of the Grand Junction region include:

- ✱ the Colorado National Monument on the west end, the Bookcliffs and Mt Garfield to the north and the Grand Mesa to the east
- ✱ open federal lands (Bureau of Land Management and National Parks Service) nearly surrounding the Grand Junction vicinity
- ✱ the Colorado River, running from east to west, and the Gunnison River flowing from the southeast, that join in the heart of the City
- ✱ a temperate climate that ensures residents time to enjoy the natural environment
- ✱ clean air that allows these vistas to be clearly seen on virtually a year round basis

To the casual observer it appears that Grand Junction is virtually surrounded by vast amounts of open land. However, much of the land that is currently open may be subject to development in the future. The ownership pattern in the Grand Junction area is a mixture of public and private land. **Map XX** shows public vs. private ownership. The irrigated agricultural land is in private ownership. As development expands, the combination of low agricultural productivity and conflicts with surrounding subdivisions makes conversion to development an attractive option.

There are significant areas of un-irrigated land (dry foothills) that are also in private ownership. These include some of the land at the foot of Mount Garfield as well as southeast of Highway 141. These private lands are also eventual candidates for development.

The two buffer zones have been designated for low intensity development (1 home per 5 acres) but a variety of other, non-agricultural uses are allowed. Mesa County has acquired conservation easements to permanently preserve some private agricultural land in the buffer zones.

With the exception of the Colorado National Monument, even public land may be subject to development under certain conditions (land exchanges, mineral extraction, roads). This presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is to be sure that public land that the community wishes to remain open, should be so designated on the Future Land Use Plan¹. The opportunity is that land exchanges could be used to achieve open space objectives. For example, private land in scenic areas or on a highly visible hillside could be traded for federal land in a developable location, at no cost to the private land owner.

¹ Public agencies are required to take local plans into account prior to making land exchanges.

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

THE COLORADO AND GUNNISON RIVERS

The Colorado and Gunnison River systems serve a variety of purposes, such as providing habitat for a variety of plants and animals, supplying water for domestic and irrigation purposes, transporting snowmelt and stormwater through the community, and providing a recreational amenity for residents and visitors.

The Colorado River is the primary open space corridor through Grand Junction. Access and preservation to the river were among the highest priorities of public input. The Comprehensive Plan places a high priority on increasing access to, and views of, the river, through a continuous trail system from buffer to buffer, co-existing with a mix of public and private uses along the river (employment, commercial, recreation). [\(see Trails below\)](#)

The City, County, State and other public agencies, as well as private agencies/interests have devoted resources to enhance and protect the rivers for many years¹. [\[map of public land along rivers\]](#) Prior to these efforts, the river was largely inaccessible and aligned with industrial uses.

Current Efforts

The Colorado Riverfront Commission has been working with the State and local communities to help conserve the river corridors while increasing access via a trail route.

¹ "Multi-disciplinary Approach to Waterfront Redevelopment and Design [\[complete source\]](#)

The goal is to create a trail system from Fruita to Palisade, and even further in both directions as resources permit. [\[map of public lands along the River\]](#)

The Tamarisk Coalition works with local, state and federal agencies to reestablish native vegetation in the riparian corridor and remove the Tamarisk and other invasive, non-native plants. This unique project covers a 50 mile stretch of the Colorado River from Palisade to the Colorado / Utah state line.

WATER QUALITY

Two major water quality issues facing the Grand Junction area are [salinity buildup](#) and [selenium pollution](#) in the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers and associated tributaries. These are issues that currently have significant fiscal impacts on both public and private interests in the Grand Valley. Without corrective measures these two issues could result in even greater impacts and possibly the imposition of federal restrictions on land use and irrigation practices.

Salinity and Selenium

[Salinity](#), resulting from natural occurrences but often intensified with human-caused sources, is recognized as a major problem in the Colorado River. Historically, much of the salt load contribution is from human activi-

ties including irrigated agriculture². Although some salt is contained in the water originally applied to crops, the salt concentrates after the water dries up then is often washed back into the river system. The high concentration then negatively effects riparian ecosystems and causes down river irrigation waters to have a higher salt concentration to add to the cycle. Increases in salt levels on the soils make growing crops more difficult. While industry and other municipal uses add to the situation, conversion of land from agriculture to urban development actually decreases salt buildup³.

Selenium is a trace element widely found in the Mancos shale soils [\[link to soils map\]](#) that underlie much of the populated valleys of Western Colorado. Selenium is carried to rivers and streams by excess irrigation water and seepage from irrigation ditches and ponds passing through the Mancos soils. Portions of the Gunnison and Colorado Rivers and many of their tributaries exceed Colorado's water-quality standard for selenium. Selenium pollution has been shown to adversely affect reproduction in sensitive and endangered fish species and other wildlife. It has also been demonstrated that in selenium-rich areas, associated salinity-loading causes extensive economic

² "2005 Water Quality Standards for Salinity Colorado River System", Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum, 2005
³ "Estimating the Effects of Conversion of Agricultural Land to Urban Land on Deep Percolation of Irrigation Water in the Grand Valley, Western Colorado", John W. Mayo, USGS Scientific Investigations Report 2008-5086, <http://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2008/5086>

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

impacts to water users in the lower Colorado River basin. These economic impacts, estimated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to exceed \$300 million annually, include reduced crop yields, limiting the types of crops that can be grown, plumbing and appliance corrosion and high water treatment costs.

As population growth occurs and pressure to develop previously un-irrigated Mancos soils increases, dissolved selenium and salts are likely to increase, unless measures are taken to prevent further loadings. The need is for a consistent, effective voluntary approach to reducing selenium and salinity increases, thereby avoiding the potential for additional State and/or Federal controls and regulations.

Current Efforts

The major oversight of salinity buildup is through **The Colorado Basin Salinity Control Program**. This cooperative watershed effort between several federal agencies and seven states, addresses salinity control and other water quality issues for the Colorado River basin with non-point management plans and limitations on point source discharge (through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System). With the implementation of the program, there is a low probability of exceeding the established criteria.

Mesa County and the City of Grand Junction are interested in taking a role in ensuring the program is a success. Selenium issues are being addressed by [The Selenium Task Force](#)⁴. The Task Force is a cooperative consortium

⁴ Gunnison Basin & Grand Valley Selenium Task Force

of Western Colorado public and private stakeholders whose mission is to evaluate, assess and actively address elevated selenium issues while maintaining the area's economic viability, quality of life and agricultural heritage. Over the past 10 years The Task Force and others have worked together to create Best Management Practices (BMP) for selenium reduction. Since the early 90's, over \$270,000,000 has been spent in the Grand Valley and lower Gunnison basin to reduce selenium and salt loading to local rivers and streams.

FLOODPLAINS [MAP OF FLOODPLAINS]

When water levels exceed the capacity of the primary channel, in natural terrain the river usually overflows its banks and spills out onto a broad, shallow terrace (the floodplain) which slows the water down. When floodplains are artificially restricted, such as by adding fill for development or the construction of levees, the river is not allowed to expand and slow down, which results in greater water speeds, downstream flooding, and bank erosion.

In addition to their natural flood storage function, floodplains provide valuable riparian wildlife habitat. Floodplains also offer the potential of linear open areas that can be used for passive outdoor recreation and education. Therefore, preserving floodplains serves many functions including, protecting property and people from flood hazard as well as preserving valuable riparian areas and unique areas for passive recreation.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Scenic resources can be defined as areas of high visual quality. The City of Grand Junction is surrounded by striking environmental features and uncommon scenic quality: from open valleys and irrigated fields to unique and memorable (mesa) landforms.

PRESERVING THE FOOT OF MT. GARFIELD [PHOTO OF MT. GARFIELD, INCLUDING BASE]

The distinctive Mt. Garfield is the gateway to our community. Its image is represented on many logos in the Grand Junction area. A large portion of the land at the foot of Mount Garfield is privately owned. Development of the land around its base would mar the majesty of the eastern gateway to the Grand Valley. The Comprehensive Plan designates this private land for preservation. This could be achieved through a land exchange with the BLM.

Preserving Views from Public Places

A strong interest was expressed in the Comprehensive Plan public meetings to preserve the steep slopes and ridgelines that form a backdrop to the community. These views can best be preserved in the design of public places (parks, plazas, boulevards) through careful placement of buildings and landscape features. Similarly, private developments can be encouraged in the design review process to capitalize on scenic vistas.

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

AIR QUALITY

An increase in growth brings an increase in factors that impact air quality: motorized vehicle emissions, blowing dust from cleared land, smoke from chimneys, power plants. In the Grand Junction area thermal inversions trap air pollutants in the valley, to some degree, approximately 300 days per year and are most severe during winter months.

Comprehensive Plan measures that will help mitigate the air quality impacts of growth include:

- ✱ compact development patterns that reduce travel distances
- ✱ mixed use centers that bring shopping closer to residential areas and encourage walking for some needs
- ✱ planning for transit
- ✱ expanding the trail system to encourage non-automobile travel
- ✱ increasing connectivity to provide more efficient travel routes through the city

PUBLIC LANDS

State and federal agencies manage a significant amount of natural resource lands in the Grand Junction area. These lands have environmental values, scenic values and values as recreational outlets for our residents and visitors. The City and County intend to continue their relations with re-

gional State and Federal agencies to further regional goals and address impacts of growth on our public lands.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Concurrent with the Comprehensive Plan, the BLM is re-evaluating its inventory. An opportunity exists for land exchanges with the BLM to place in public ownership lands that are desired to remain open, and to place in private ownership lands that are more appropriate for development. Public land may also be acquired inexpensively for parks and public uses through the Recreation and Public Purposes mechanism. The BLM Urban Interface Plan is the federal document that identifies land near Grand Junction the BLM may consider for disposal or exchange.

The Comprehensive Plan designates potential uses for federal lands in the vicinity of Grand Junction. The City and County should use (and/or amend) these designations in providing input to the updates of the BLM's Resource Management Plan as well as its Urban Interface Plan.

Colorado National Monument

Local residents are estimated to be half of the 750,000 visitors per year seen by the Park Service. Growth in the region has impacted the Monument both operatively and environmentally (increased trail use, traffic, improper behavior) for the area is not intended to be an urban park. This is compounded by limited funding. The Comprehensive Plan does locate lower densities at the interface of the Monument and the planning area.

State Parks

Colorado State Parks has been working to conserve the Colorado River Corridor. The State owns approximately 1,100 acres along the section between Garfield County and the Utah state line. The overriding objective for this corridor is to balance habitat needs with trail and passive recreation opportunities. There are in-holdings (un-acquired parcels) that create gaps in the system. The City, County, and State Parks will need to continue to partner together to realize the grand green system.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW)

The USFWS and CDOW have a vested interest in the Colorado and Gunnison River corridors. They share the goal of protecting as much of the river habitats as possible, since the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers are critical habitat for migratory birds and threatened and endangered fish. Any activity that can impact the species could be a violation of the Endangered Species Act.

NATURAL HAZARDS

Drainage

Drainage for the region is largely managed by the Grand Junction Drainage District. Maintenance of both natural and man-made drainage systems are important not only to reduce flooding but also to minimize erosion. In addition, several waterways and drainage basins provide significant wildlife habitat and movement corridors.

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

Although the average annual precipitation for the Grand Junction vicinity is only about 9 inches, these relatively dry conditions can compound the drainage problem. First, since large storms are infrequent in the region, drainage issues are often overlooked. Secondly, this arid condition limits the vegetation growth within the natural drainage basins, and consequently, there is little cover to absorb and infiltrate runoff when heavy rainfall does occur, which then leads to flash flooding and rapid runoff.

Generally up to a 20-year flooding event can be handled with today’s system. However, major drainage issues exist in the Redlands area: Monument Canyon, Ute Canyon. Natural storage does not exist in these areas and detention on the National Monument lands is not an option.

Steep Slopes

Steep slopes present a number of difficult problems when subject to development: rock fall, scarring, slope failure, erosion / storm water control and traffic access. In addition to these public safety concerns, development on steep slopes also creates a significant negative impact to the important visual character that defines the community. The most prevalent geologic and slope hazards related to development are slopes in excess of 30%. These areas are prone to rock falls and active landslides and require detailed geotechnical investigation prior to development. Steep slopes along the Colorado River have a demonstrated history of instability. A dramatic example is the relocation of several houses on Orchard Mesa to avoid falling into the river.

The Comprehensive Plan generally designates slopes of

over 30% [\[link to slope map\]](#) to be left in a natural condition and/or carefully mitigated.

PARKS AND RECREATION

OVERVIEW

Parks and recreation facilities are important aspects of a “livable” community. They provide opportunities for relaxation, stress relief, socializing, exercise, and skills improvement. They also provide open areas as relief from development, and add shade and color to the appearance of the City. Less obvious, but no less important, parks and recreation are important economic development tools for a community. A quality park and recreation system can help attract both businesses and workers to Grand Junction. Recreation facilities also can be a source of revenue—for example, Grand Junction has athletic fields and facilities to support regional and national tournaments like the Junior College (Juco) Baseball World Series that generate sales taxes from players and spectators.

The Grand Junction Parks Department provides parks, recreation facilities and numerous activities to the community. The City has a total of approximately 1,200 acres of parkland including a golf course, regional parks, neighborhood parks and a cemetery. The Department maintains 49 developed and 5 undeveloped City parks and multiple “urban open spaces” (medians, parkways, etc.). The department is also responsible for various special projects and a number of special use facilities.

The County owns a regional park site in Whitewater area adjacent to the Gunnison River. The County’s goal is to create a 120-acre regional park in the area.

(Parks and rec matrix – from web)

PARKS DESCRIBED BY TYPES

The City currently has approximately 670 acres of parkland (not counting golf courses and other recreation uses) of which approximately 250 acres are developed. The city’s parkland is divided between several park types [\[link to Park Type descriptions\]](#):

Table x.x:

Park Type	Size Range	Service Area	Examples	Total Acres	
				Developed	Undeveloped
Mini	1/4 - 3 acres	1/4 mile radius	Darla Jean Cottonwood Meadows	9 ac.	0 ac.
Neighborhood	3 - 25 acres	1/2 mile radius	Columbine Duck Pond Westlake	130 ac.	42 ac.
Community	25 - 100 acres	2 mile radius	Lincoln Saccomano	66 ac.	130 ac.
Regional	100+ acres	10 mile radius	Canyon View Matchett	82 ac.	250 ac.
Approximate Total				252 ac.	420 ac.

PARK TYPE DESCRIPTIONS

[these could be in a separate location, with photo examples]

Mini Parks

Mini parks (including plazas), which are normally less than 1 acre in size, serve a specific and important purpose in “centers” and more urbanized areas where larger parks cannot be built due to land constraints. Mini parks can include playgrounds for young children, small turf areas, sitting areas (even tables for board games), interactive fountains and floral displays.

PARKS AND RECREATION (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are generally the most used park facilities in a city. They should typically be located central to a neighborhood, away from busy streets and adjacent to an elementary school whenever possible. Neighborhood parks are walk-to facilities and do not need parking but should be accessible via sidewalks and/or paths. Neighborhood parks are not generally intended or designed for intensive adult sports programs (baseball, softball, soccer), although open turf areas can be provided for youth soccer and informal play.

Community Parks

Ranging from 25 to 100 acres, community parks typically contain active sports facilities such as lighted ball fields and extensive parking facilities but also can incorporate natural features such as water bodies, rivers, and views. Community parks are typically drive-to facilities with a larger service radius of 1-mile but should have pedestrian and trail access. Since active sports facilities attract large numbers of people that result in increased noise, congestion, lights and vehicular traffic, it is important for them to be buffered from adjacent residential areas. Community parks typically serve multiple neighborhoods and act as Neighborhood parks.

Regional/Quadrant Parks

Regional parks, usually more than 100 acres in size, provide the widest variety of uses—including numerous formal sports facilities, picnic areas, as well as natural open and recreation trails. The location of regional parks should be heavily influenced by the presence of natural attractions such as water bodies, rivers, wetland areas, and views. These parks require the highest degree of advance planning due to the acreage required. Regional parks are designated for the major quadrants of GJ (Northwest = Canyon View, North central = Matchett Park, Central = Las Colonias), thus the term “quadrant” parks.

Special Use Areas and Facilities

Special use areas and facilities focus on a major activity. Although usually stand-alone facilities, they are important to the entire park system. They include facilities such as: golf courses, miniature golf, nature centers, amphitheaters, and skate parks. They can also include cemeteries. Special use facilities have no specific service area.

Urban Open Space

“Urban” open lands include landscaped street medians, parkways, greenbelts within developed areas and neighborhoods, and drainage/ditch easements. Although they do not meet the definition of “natural” open space, they provide important relief from the urban environment.

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: PARKS

PARK NEEDS

Parks are a key to the grand green system. The Grand Junction Parks Master Plan identifies both current and future city-wide parks and recreation needs. The most recent Parks Master Plan was last updated in 2001. Below, the Comprehensive Plan provides a basic update to the 2001 plan, including a revised map to aid in development review. However, the Comprehensive Plan cannot go into the same depth of analysis as a parks-specific master plan.

Levels of Service

A level-of-service (LOS) is a ratio of some measurement related to population. With regard to parks, Grand Junction LOS's are usually acres of parks per thousand population. For recreation facilities an example is "3 baseball fields per thousand population." LOS allow a community to measure progress in meeting goals (or maintaining standards) and to allow comparison between communities.

The 2001 Parks Master Plan identified the following levels-of-service¹ for developed parkland of the various types:

- ✳ Mini parks .20
- ✳ Neighborhood parks 3.00

¹ Note that a park can serve more than one purpose. For example, a Community park also serves as a Neighborhood park for the residents immediately surrounding the park. Thus, the levels-of service reflect this dual nature of some parks.

- ✳ Community parks 1.00
- ✳ Regional parks .90

Maintaining LOS Standards

Comparing the existing park acreages, by type, to the current and projected City population estimates (approximately 100,000 in 2008, and approximately 204,000 by 2035) yields the following park needs to maintain current levels-of-service: (the amount of undeveloped parkland in each category is noted).

Thus, to maintain the 2001 standard, by the time we achieve a population of 204,000 (2035), the City will need to acquire approximately 440 additional acres of Neighborhood parks and only 8 acres of community parks. No additional acres of regional parks need to be acquired to meet the standard (we will still have a surplus of 152

acres), however there are additional quadrant park locations identified in the Parks Plan that need to be reserved for the future.

Over and above acquiring park land, to maintain the LOS standards by 2035 we will need to construct approximately 480 acres of neighborhood parks, 140 acres of Community parks, and 100 acres of Regional Parks. While this may appear to be a significant challenge, it can be achieved if we move forward with the park dedication policies identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

PARTNERING WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The largest parks and recreation deficiency is in the Neighborhood park category, especially in Pear Park, Orchard Mesa, Redlands and Clifton. The City and School District

Table x.x:

Park Type	LOS	Existing Acres	2009 Acres Needed	2035 Acres Needed	Undevel. acres available	Addl. acres needed by 2035
Mini	0.2	9	20	41		32
Neighborhood	3.0	130	300	612	42	440
Community	1.0	66	100	204	130	8
Regional	0.9	86	90	184	250	-152

2008 population	100
2035 population	204

DIRECTIONS: PARKS (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

have a partnership to provide recreation and parks to the community - either with City facilities or on school grounds. Maintenance of facilities is then shared.

There are approximately 175 acres of elementary and middle school turf areas that could be used to meet Neighborhood park needs in existing underserved neighborhoods. This may require making improvements to some properties to bring them up to Neighborhood park standards (e.g. adding children's play equipment that meets current standards).

Wherever possible, new Neighborhood and Community parks are also recommended to be located near or in conjunction with schools. As costs of land, construction, and maintenance continue to grow, it will become more and more important to combine resources to accomplish cost-effective expansion of both recreation and educational opportunities, reduce (share) the cost of maintaining school grounds and avoid duplication.

If the Park-School is developed in conjunction with a "center", the school could be located near other public facilities. It is essential that areas and facilities be cooperatively planned for the safety and security of school children as well as to avoid vandalism to school facilities.

OTHER PARK INITIATIVES

New park ideas in the Comprehensive Plan include:

Mountain Park: A large, mountain park is proposed on the slopes of Grand Mesa to take advantage of the City's mountain side watershed lands.

Quadrant Parks: Regional parks are suggested to be located in the four quadrants of the City.

Confluence Park: Planned decades ago, a park to be located at the junction of the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers. It has received strong continued support in the Comprehensive Plan process.

Parks in Centers: At a more local level, many new Community and Neighborhood parks will be needed to serve future growth. The Comprehensive Plan envisions parks located so that most residences will be within a 5-minute walk of a park. Centers, including the downtown, will have a high "livability quotient" when served by numerous smaller parks, plazas, and greenways.

As Grand Junction evolves toward higher density development in some areas (see [Parks in Centers below](#)), it is likely that the overall LOS for Neighborhood parks can, and should, be reduced to reflect the higher level of usage typical of urban parks.

PARK IMPACT FEES

The City currently has a development impact fee of \$225 per new dwelling unit and a park/open space dedication fee of 10% undeveloped land or equivalent monies to assist the funding of park land acquisition, construction and maintenance. Some park development funding also comes from sales tax and lottery monies. At a LOS of 3.0 acres per thousand population, the actual cost of a developed neighborhood park is approximately \$3,000 per

new dwelling unit (approximate 2009 land and construction costs). This can be approximately attributed to 60% construction cost and 40% land cost. In order for new development to meet the LOS objectives above without placing a burden on existing residents (growth paying its own way), the combination of dedication requirements and impact fees needs to be adjusted to more accurately reflect actual land and park development costs.

LOCATING NEW PARKS

The [Parks Plan map](#) portrays existing parks as well as approximate locations of proposed parks. It includes slight modifications to the park locations identified in the 2001 Parks Master Plan. The locations of the proposed parks are conceptual and somewhat flexible, but they generally reflect where parks will be required to support future growth. The locations shown may need to be adjusted (closer or further apart) to reflect actual development densities in the surrounding neighborhoods.

When determining park sites, the Park Type Descriptions above should be used as siting criteria. In already developed neighborhoods that do not meet LOS standards, provide alternative recreation amenities, such as greens, plazas, pocket parks, etc. Accept fee-in-lieu from developments that are too small to justify a whole park. Land for parks may also be acquired from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) through the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) process.

OVERVIEW: RECREATION FACILITIES

Major recreation facilities provided by the Grand Junction Parks and Recreation Department include:

- ✧ Lincoln Park Auditorium
- ✧ Lincoln Park (Moyer) Pool and Waterslide, and the Orchard Mesa Community Center Pool
- ✧ Bookcliff Activity Center¹ (fitness and wellness; enrichment, after school, athletics, drop in, family, and early childhood activities)
- ✧ Tiara Rado and Lincoln Park golf courses
- ✧ Ralph Stocker Memorial Stadium (including football field, baseball fields and track²)
- ✧ Canyon View Park (4 lighted softball fields, 12 soccer/multipurpose fields, 1 professional-quality baseball field, trails and general use open space, 6 tennis courts, 3 picnic shelters, 2 playgrounds, 1 inline roller hockey rink, 2 lighted basketball courts, 2 lighted sand volleyball courts)
- ✧ Columbine Park (2 lighted softball fields, 2 sand volleyball courts, 1 hard surface basketball court, and playground)
- ✧ Kronkright Park³ (2-field softball complex, picnic

shelter, hard surface basketball/play courts, 2 playgrounds)

- ✧ West Middle School Basketball/Volleyball Facility (2 sand volleyball courts and basketball courts)

¹ 10,000 square-foot facility next to the new Bookcliff Middle School (created in partnership with School District 51)

² Used jointly by four high schools and Mesa State College

³ Joint facility with Pomona School

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: RECREATION FACILITIES

The City has not adopted level of service standards for indoor recreation, which should be done in an update of the Parks (and Recreation) Master Plan. However, based on current levels of service and a comparison with other cities, to achieve the goal of livability additional needs to be considered include:

- * additional swimming pools – including 1 outdoor
- * events center
- * enlarged senior center
- * gym space for: indoor soccer, roller hockey, basketball.
- * multi-purpose and meeting space
- * administration offices
- * aquatics for both fitness and leisure
- * general fitness space, (i.e. cardiovascular machines and weights)

Many of these facilities could be accommodated in a full service recreation center—which has become a popular facility in many communities in Colorado.

To maximize cost-effectiveness, City recreation facilities should be developed through expanded partnerships between the City, the County, the School District, non-profit organizations, private sector businesses and citizen sports groups. A new community recreation center would be an

ideal facility to be developed in this manner.

COUNTY RECREATION

The Clifton Master Plan process identified the need for more recreation opportunities, such as swimming, fishing, walking, horseshoes, baseball, basketball, soccer, cards, games, pool, river access, and exercise classes. As the Whitewater area develops, it too will require recreation facilities.

Potential avenues for providing recreation activities in Mesa County exist:

- * in cooperation with public schools
- * through a local metropolitan or public improvement district
- * through contract with the City of Grand Junction Parks department
- * formation of a regional recreation district (which could include the City)

OVERVIEW: TRAILS

Grand Junction envisions a trail running the length of the Colorado River from beyond Palisade to west of Fruita. Combined efforts come from Colorado State Parks and local groups like Urban Trails, the group that advised the City and County on the existing Urban Trails Plan.

Trails address two aspects of livability: ‘a healthy lifestyle’ and ‘multiple ways and modes to get around town.’ The Grand Junction area is already known for its bicycling opportunities – especially soft surface trails as trails typically function more as a recreational feature. However, trails also can become an integral part of the transportation system and can provide a healthy, convenient mode of travel.

Existing and proposed trails are shown on the Trails Plan. This is a simplified version of the more detailed Urban Trails Master Plan, which should be updated. Except for the riverfront trail, trail construction has been a low priority for the City in recent years. The trail system is usually expanded only when new development creates a trail or dedicates an easement for future construction.

TRAIL TYPES

Off-street trails are multi-purpose trails that are intended to provide recreational and commuting opportunities for a variety of user types: bicycles, joggers, walkers and in-line skaters. Off-street trails are normally the most desirable trails because they allow for uninterrupted movement through the City and protect users from vehicular traffic

hazards. These trails generally have both hard and soft-surface components to allow for multiple uses.

On-street bicycle lanes provide transportation corridors for bicycle commuters and serious cyclists. On-street lanes tend to be less desirable for children and casual riders. A grid of on-street bicycle lanes will provide an integral part of the multi-modal transportation system in Grand Junction.

Bicycle routes are local roadways that have low, and slow traffic volumes that are safe bicycle routes. They are usually signed but not striped. A system of these streets could supplement the on-street bicycle lane and off-street trail system.

Back-country trails are soft surface trails, usually found on public lands surrounding the City. They may be used by pedestrians, mountain bikers, equestrians, and where designated, by motorized vehicles.

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: TRAILS

The City of Grand Junction and Mesa County have adopted an Urban Trails Master Plan that defines the type and locations of non-motorized transportation corridors in the Grand Junction urban area, as well as on-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities. However, the plan should be expanded to provide more direction, priorities, policies and implementation strategies.

It is recommended that Grand Junction and Mesa County work toward developing a primary network of off-street multi-use pathways, complemented by on-street bike lanes where an off-street trail is not possible, to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the community. The trails should be sited to take advantage of greenways, waterways, and natural features. Multiple use trails are the preferred type of trail for cost/benefit.

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE TRAIL SYSTEM

Trails along drainageways. Drainageways generally orient in a northeast/southwest direction as they drain toward the Colorado River. Trails can be located within some of the broad drainageways, and may have to be aligned along the edge of narrower drainageways.

Canal Trails

Canals are part of the secondary water system of the valley and generally run along contour lines in a northwest/southeast alignment, following the terrain of the valley.

Only certain segments of canals are needed to make essential trail system connections. These canals are owned by irrigation companies, and are located in easements across private land. Cooperation with the irrigation companies is necessary to assure their ability to maintain the canals. Permission from the underlying land owner will also be necessary, which may include fencing to minimize public impacts on adjacent parcels.

The combination of drainage way trails that run northeast to southwest direction, and canal trails that run somewhat perpendicularly in a northwest to southeast direction, creates a slightly rectangular grid separate from the grid of the street system. With the addition of the River Trail, other trails connecting developments to parks and major recreation facilities, bike lanes and bike routes, a grand green trail system can be realized.

Trail System Challenges

- ✱ Fair compensation of land owners and a release of liability
- ✱ Avoiding compromise of canal maintenance and functionality
- ✱ Avoid conflict between maintenance vehicles and trail users through the design of trails, or regulate their use

- ✱ The use of on-street bike lanes may be necessary where neighborhoods are largely built out and where the railroad or highways create barriers.

TRAIL SYSTEM GUIDELINES

1. New pathways should be paved 10 feet wide with additional width in soft surface for jogging.
2. Grade-separated trail crossings under or over roadways should occur wherever possible. Where not possible, safety-enhanced at-grade roadway crossings should be used.
3. Off-street trails should be allowed along roadways only where they are detached from the curb (with a planting strip) and where a separated alignment is not possible.
4. Where a path crosses a major roadway, the path alignment should follow one of two approaches as dictated by local conditions:
 - ✱ Direct the path to a midblock location with appropriate mid-block street crossing striping and signage.
 - ✱ If a mid-block crossing cannot be achieved, bring the path to a corner crosswalk to make sure that automobile drivers can see the path users in an expected condition.

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: TRAILS (CONT'D)

- ★ If there is a multi-use path, a separate sidewalk along the edge of the roadway is not required. However, there should be sidewalk connections from the pathway to any pedestrian crossing.
- ★ All new arterial and collector roadways constructed should include on-street bicycle lanes, even if there is a parallel off-street trail in the same corridor. This will insure that there are appropriate facilities for bicyclists of all skill levels and help provide multi-modal opportunity in major roadway corridors.

ACTIONS: GRAND GREEN SYSTEM

Ax.x: The City and County, along with other regional entities such as Town of Palisade, a land trust or open space organization, coordinate the acquisition of the properties into public ownership with a conservation easement to keep it as open space. One option might be a land trade with the BLM.

<i>HOMEPAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	5. <i>BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Comp Plan Directions	Transportation Agencies	Actions			

A BALANCED, CONNECTED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM TO MAXIMIZE VIABLE TRAVEL CHOICES AND PERSONAL MOBILITY

Vision:

"The Most Livable Community West of the Rockies"

Translating the Vision:

What does liveable mean for Balanced Transportation?

✱ Convenient, easy access and circulation – transportation with a minimum of congestion, multiple ways and modes to get around town, good way finding and orientation signage, good roads, trails, transit and air routes.

CHAPTER CONTENTS

1. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES
2. OVERVIEW
 - Lack of Alternative Routes
 - Imbalance of Land Uses
3. DIRECTIONS OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
 - Increase Connectivity
 - Become more Transit-Friendly
 - Bus Rapid Transit and Commuter Rail
 - Balanced Land Uses
 - Balanced Travel Choices
 - Rail and Air
4. TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES
 - Regional Agencies
 - Local Agencies
5. TRANSPORTATION ACTIONS

<i>HOME PAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Comp Plan Directions	Transportation Agencies	Actions			

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES: BALANCED TRANSPORTATION

GOAL

OBJECTIVES:

Ox.x:

POLICIES:

Px.x:

<i>HOMEPAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Comp Plan Directions	Transportation Agencies	Actions			

OVERVIEW: BALANCED TRANSPORTATION

The Grand Junction community envisions a convenient, functional transportation network. However, today's reality is increasing traffic congestion, which is a significant concern for the community. Two major elements are contributing to the problem.

- * lack of alternative ways to get around
- * imbalance of land uses

LACK OF ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO GET AROUND

Multiple travel routes provide greater mobility for driving, walking, and biking, and help reduce congestion. The older areas of Grand Junction have a grid system of roads that provides good user distribution and ease of navigation. The well-connected grid diffuses traffic over multiple routes rather than concentrating traffic within several major corridors. A grid makes navigation easier as well; When there is more than one way to reach the destination, if an incorrect turn is made, it can be corrected without retracing the drive.

However, over recent decades, street patterns in new development have changed. The introduction of cul-de-sacs limit the ways to get through a neighborhood, forcing more traffic onto fewer, wider streets with higher speeds (which in turn makes them less desirable for living, walking, and biking). This also often leads to longer trips, since

there is seldom a direct route from one point to another. This led to a strict hierarchical road system that funnels traffic onto major roadways that must continually be expanded to meet the traffic demands.

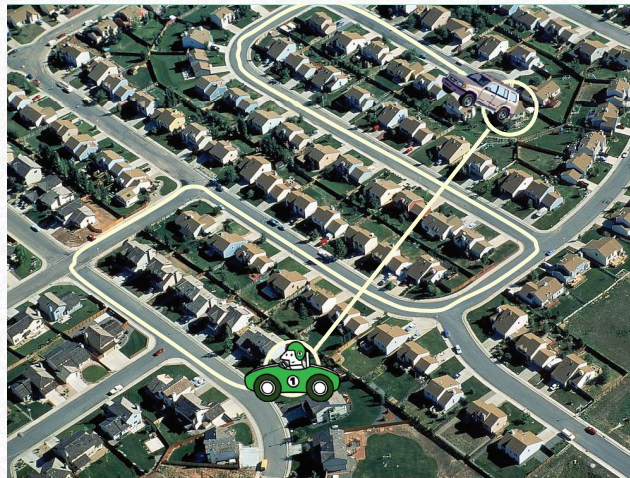


Figure 5.x:

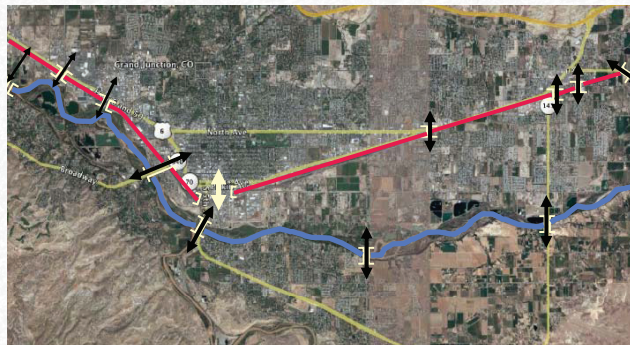


Figure 5.x: Road corridors are constrained by river and rail crossings.

Perhaps just as significant as the changing nature of our road system are the physical constraints that limit where roads can go, such as: the few crossings of the Colorado River, valleys and escarpments too steep for roads, and limited crossings of the railroad tracks. These physical constraints force traffic onto several major corridors, which creates bottlenecks that will only increase as we grow in population.

IMBALANCE OF LAND USES

Another major contributor to the region's transportation challenges is the pronounced distance between residential and non-residential land uses. In the Grand Junction area, the major employment centers and commercial areas (such as the Mesa Mall and other large commercial areas) are in the west and northwest sectors of the city and the majority of residential areas are in the east and southeast sectors. This results in frequent and long driving trips to get from one end of town to another. Combined with few cross-town travel options and lack of travel choices as noted above, it becomes apparent why traffic congestion is of increasing concern, particularly considering the projected growth.

In 2006, the Mesa County Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), the regional traffic planning partnership, modeled future traffic patterns for the region based on current land use patterns and growth projections. It determined that if current trends were contin-

OVERVIEW: BALANCED TRANSPORTATION (CONT'D)

ued, by 2035, sections of Highway 50 would have to be widened to at least an 8-lane roadway to function at an acceptable level of service! Several other roadways would similarly have to be widened significantly to even partially absorb projected traffic and increased congestion.

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: BALANCED TRANSPORTATION

INCREASE CONNECTIVITY

Connectivity means a street network with multiple travel routes that diffuse traffic. Well-connected street networks have been shown to reduce congestion, increase safety for drivers and pedestrians, and promote walking, biking, and transit use.

Connectivity does not mean building more and wider roadways that harm neighborhoods. In fact, the opposite is true. Connectivity specifically includes creating small-scale, low-speed streets as part of a dense street grid with small block lengths¹. Such street networks maximize efficient traffic flow and roadway capacity while increasing safety by holding vehicle speeds to 35 mph or less (which is actually also the most efficient speed to move traffic on urban streets). Small block lengths encourage walking and increase pedestrian safety. To maintain neighborhood integrity, street connections are encouraged to be offset to discourage cut-through. Increasing connectivity is less costly, more cost-efficient, and less impactful than widening arterial roadways to six, eight, or even ten lanes.

Transportation in the Grand Junction area is under the jurisdiction of multiple agencies, which must all cooperate to achieve transportation goals.

- * the City Utility and Street Systems
- * the County Road and Bridge Department

- * the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)
- * Grand Valley Transit
- * Walker Field Airport Authority.

The strategy to increase connectivity is multi-pronged:

- * Plan for the connection of key streets and roadways where discontinuities exist. [\[link to missing links map?\]](#) The RTPO and Comprehensive Plan review have identified areas of the community where discontinuities exist. Completing the gaps in streets and roadways will also allow improvements to bicycle lanes and sidewalks. This does not mean “retrofitting” existing neighborhoods with new

street connections unless they have been identified in the subdivision plan, the Grand Valley Circulation Plan or other city street master plans.

- * Plan for the future development of transportation corridors in key areas. In future updates of the Grand Valley Circulation Plan or any other transportation master plan, identify transportation corridors (bus and rail). These corridors may require additional street widths or a connecting bike or pedestrian link.
- * Adopt street connectivity standards for new development and redevelopment, including connecting streets within subdivisions and adding connections to external streets and adjacent development.

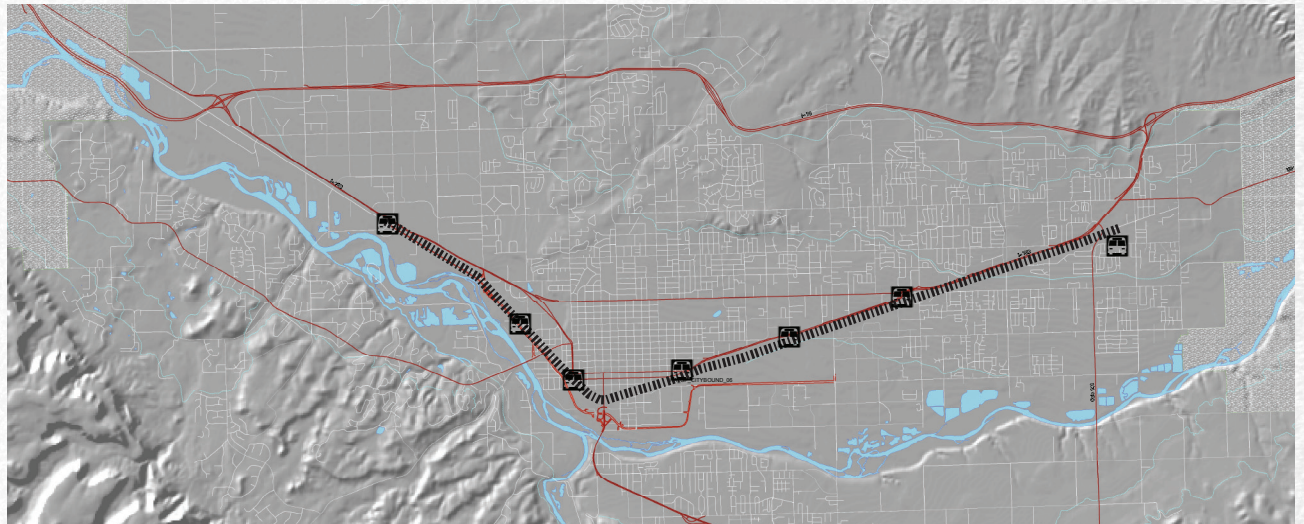


Figure 5.x:

¹ Ideally, block lengths should be between 330 and 530 feet.

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (CONT'D)

Back To Top of Topic

- ✱ Finally, the region should identify and plan for additional crossings of the Colorado River and of the Railroad. Doing so will help alleviate the choke points caused by the limited existing crossings, particularly as growth continues to the east and southeast. From a transportation perspective, potential river crossings should be evaluated on their ability to:
 - ✱ relieve traffic on existing crossings
 - ✱ minimize impacts to neighborhoods and sensitive lands
 - ✱ easily diffuse traffic onto multiple travel routes at each end

BECOME MORE TRANSIT-FRIENDLY

Because roadway investments alone will not solve the Grand Junction region’s existing and future transportation challenges, the role of transit will become increasingly important. Rising gas prices and the need to foster affordable ‘living’ (not just housing) to help employee recruitment

Table 5.x: Return on Transit Scenarios

	Scenario A Current Operations	Scenario B Expanded Operations	Scenario C New Facilities
Investment	\$2.18 m/yr	\$4.2 m/yr	\$9m
Return for Each \$1 Invested	\$2.80	\$2.93	\$3.51
Return for Each \$1 Invested (incl. Property Value)	\$5.06	\$5.26	\$7.39
Jobs Created	96	225	300

Source: *Economic Benefits of Transit in the Grand Valley, GVT and Mesa County, 2008*

- and retention, are 2 other important factors in transit’s importance in helping to meet the region’s future mobility needs.
- A recent Mesa County/RTPO report, “Economic Benefits of Transit in the Grand Valley,” identified the following six major benefits of Grand Valley Transit’s (GVT) public transportation service to the region:
- ✱ mobility and access
 - ✱ economic and financial benefits
 - ✱ energy and environmental benefits
 - ✱ safety and security
 - ✱ social equity
 - ✱ other intangible benefits

As the report summarized: “Public transportation fosters more livable communities and encourages neighborhood interaction. Transit-friendly communities also promote more physical activity.”

As a relatively young and small transit system, GVT’s historical function has been to provide transit service to those populations who most need it and have limited mobility options. However, with route expansions, the construction of a new central transfer facility, and other improvements, the system is beginning to evolve into a viable mobility option for all travelers.

The study evaluated the costs and benefits of various scenarios related to the GVT and concluded that the economic return to the community of transit investments as summarized in following sections.

BUS RAPID TRANSIT AND COMMUTER RAIL

The Comprehensive Plan identifies the potential of a commuter corridor along I-70 B and Highway 50 in the core area of town. This route could link Clifton/Fruitvale to the downtown to the Mesa Mall area. [\[link to map of transit corridor\]](#) Potentially the system could even be expanded to Palisade and Fruita. This alignment links other commercial areas such as North Avenue, the east end of Main Street, and the west end of Ute Avenue. With future infill and redevelopment in the core area of the city this alignment could link a significant portion of the core area population with key shopping and work destinations, and reduce automobile use. Parking lots along the alignment could allow suburban residents to leave their cars outside the core downtown area.

The system could begin as regular bus service and evolve into Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) [\[illustration\]](#). In the long-term,

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (CONT'D)

[Back To Top of Topic](#)

with cooperation by the Union Pacific Railroad, it could even take advantage of a rail line along the north edge of the railroad ROW to create a commuter rail line.

The strategies to become more transit friendly are:

- ✱ Increase local bus service in the core downtown area, other commercial/employment centers, to increase ridership, and set the stage for future investments. Ensure that new and retrofitted roadways be built as “complete streets” that accommodate all travel modes – driving, transit, walking, and biking. Future road improvements are to create multi-modal streets (bicycle lanes, transit capacity and function, sidewalks) rather than merely widening lanes or street width for automobiles and truck traffic.
- ✱ Encourage infill and new development in areas that already have transit service (such as the downtown), and in areas that can be designed to support transit service, such as new mixed-use centers and transit-oriented development.
- ✱ Modify the city and county development regulations to allow transit facilities, connections, and funding to be counted as acceptable traffic mitigation requirements in lieu of traditional measures like road and intersection widening.
- ✱ Revise zoning and land development codes as necessary to remove barriers and provide incentives for development patterns that support transit, walking, and biking.

- ✱ Work with the Railroad and other stakeholders to preserve the ROW and the ability to implement premium transit service (high speed rail, bus rapid transit) in the future as feasibility warrants and opportunities arise.

BALANCED LAND USE

The Future Land Use Plan addresses the current imbalance of land uses by distributing a variety of land uses throughout the region and by encouraging mixed-use centers (residential and commercial together) in order to provide shopping and working closer to where people live. The plan also adds a substantial amount of residential uses to the west and northwest areas to take advantage of the existing commercial and employment uses in those areas.

The strategies to balance land uses are addressed in the [Land Use](#) section of the Comprehensive Plan.

BALANCED TRAVEL CHOICES

Many of the above strategies will also increase and balance travel choices – drive, bus, and walk. To improve walking and bicycle choices, the strategy is to expand the trail system that crisscrosses the region – providing routes that run along roadways, drainages and other corridors – that will allow off-street travel north to south and east to west. Some routes may be a combination of on-street bike lanes and trail sections. Other areas may have a continuous off-street path. The Colorado River trail system can

become a back bone to the rest of the system. This system is described more fully in the Trails section of the [GP4: Grand Green System](#) chapter.

RAIL AND AIR

The railroad and airport are vitally important to Grand Junction’s role as a regional center. Both carry people and freight in and out of the region. They will be increasingly important as we increase our manufacturing capacity and grow into a regional office center. Continued operation of these systems is important for our economy as well as to the overall transportation needs of the region.

Railroad

The railroad corridors basically follow the Colorado and Gunnison River corridors. The corridor includes rail lines, storage areas and freight operations. The AMTRAK passenger rail station is located on South 1st Street in the Downtown.

Grand Junction Regional Airport

The recent update of the [Grand Junction Regional Airport Master Plan Update](#) indicates an expansion of the airport, including an additional runway, infrastructure improvements, and additional ground facilities and structures. The Future Land Use Plan reflects the Airport Master Plan Update, applies an Airport land use category, and identifies the BLM land that is potentially involved with the airport expansion.

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSPORTATION IN THE REGION?

Transportation in the Grand Junction area is under the jurisdiction of multiple agencies, which must all cooperate to achieve transportation goals.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES

A number of agencies are required for federal and state transportation road and transit funding to be programmed and used for the region:

The Grand Valley Regional Transportation Committee (GVRTC) is composed of a single representative from Mesa County, Grand Junction, Fruita, and Palisade. The GVRTC administers the state and federally mandated planning activities for the [Metropolitan Planning Organization \(MPO\)](#), the [Mesa County Transportation Planning Region \(TPR\)](#) and the [Grand Valley Transit \(GVT\)](#) system. The GVRTC adopts a 20-year [Regional Transportation Plan](#) budgets, to the level of funding available over the life of the plan, transportation projects in all modes (road, transit, non-motorized, air and rail). They also produce a short-range plan that identifies projects to be completed over the next six years in the region. The short-range plans from all TPRs and MPOs in the state are wrapped-up into the State Transportation Implementation Program (STIP).

The [Mesa County Regional Transportation Planning Office \(RTPO\)](#) is the staff complement for the GVRTC.

The [Metropolitan Planning Organization \(MPO\)](#) is a transportation policy-making organization led by the GVRTC. MPO policy directions guide transportation planning in the urban areas of Grand Junction, Fruita, Palisade, and adjacent unincorporated Mesa County.

The Transportation Planning Region (TPR) is the planning boundary that covers all of Mesa County.

LOCAL AGENCIES

The [Grand Junction Regional Airport Authority](#) owns and operates the Grand Junction Airport (Walker Field). The Authority is a political subdivision of the State of Colorado. A Board of Commissioners governs the Authority with representatives from the City of Grand Junction and Mesa County.

The [Grand Junction Utility and Street Systems](#) and Transportation Engineering group under the Public Works and Planning Department are the City staff in charge of planning and maintaining the city street system.

The [Mesa County Transportation / Road and Bridge Department](#) is the Mesa County department in charge of road planning and maintenance.

<i>HOMEPAGE</i>	<i>USING THE PLAN</i>	<i>LAND USE</i>	<i>1. CONCENTRATED CENTERS</i>	<i>2. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PATTERN</i>	<i>3. HOUSING VARIETY</i>	<i>4. GRAND GREEN SYSTEM</i>	<i>5. BALANCED TRANSPORTATION</i>	<i>6. A UNIQUE COMMUNITY</i>
Introduction	GOPs	Overview	Comp Plan Directions	Transportation Agencies	Actions			

ACTIONS: BALANCED TRANSPORTATION

Ax.x:

HOMEPAGE

USING
THE PLANLAND
USE1. CONCENTRATED
CENTERS2. SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH PATTERN3. HOUSING
VARIETY4. GRAND
GREEN SYSTEM5. BALANCED
TRANSPORTATIONA UNIQUE
COMMUNITY

Introduction

GOPs

Overview

Components of a Unique Community

Facilities and Services

Actions

A Unique Community

A UNIQUE COMMUNITY FOR LIVING

INTRODUCTION

Grand Junction is a unique community with a high quality of life. The residents take pride in their community and have shown an interest in preserving and reinforcing this unique community through:

- * increased attention to aesthetics and design
- * preservation of heritage and culture
- * more activities, entertainment and amenities for residents and visitors
- * protect established neighborhoods
- * adequate services and facilities provided with new development.

Being a unique, attractive community with culture and activities supports our role as a regional center. Grand Junction is not only a regional draw for retail and commercial opportunities but is also a regional attraction for other services. The Plan sets a course to ensure that quality services continue to be provided and that the other components of our unique community are retained in the future as our region grows.

Preserving our unique community is also related to our goal of Sustainability. While no community can or wants to be totally independent, increasing our level of self sufficiency (sustainability) will improve our ability to survive natural and economic crises and to be able to support each other as a community.

Vision:

"The Most Livable Community West of the Rockies"

Translating the Vision:

What does liveable mean for A Unique Community

- * Vibrancy – plenty of 'happenings', such as the farmer's market, tournaments, entertainment, education, amenities and activities that draw the public.
- * Organized, functioning, and orderly - it "works", trash gets collected, buses run on time, and quality services are provided.
- * Safe and child friendly — both at home and outside; a non-threatening atmosphere.
- * Senior and physically challenged, friendly — medical uses, transit-friendly, visible signage, housing, jobs.

CHAPTER CONTENTS

1. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES
2. OVERVIEW
3. DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: COMPONENTS OF A UNIQUE COMMUNITY

Aesthetics and Design

Retaining our Heritage

4. FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Schools

Domestic Water

Irrigation Water

Wastewater

Fire Protection

Police Services

Neighborhood Services

Solid Waste

Electric/Gas Service

Drainage

Keeping Facilities Downtown and Locating New Facilities in Centers

4. ACTIONS

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES: A UNIQUE COMMUNITY

GOAL

OBJECTIVES:

Ox.x:

POLICIES:

Px.x:

OVERVIEW

Grand Junction's unique heritage and culture have shaped the region into what it is today. Over the city's 130 year history, it has transitioned from an agricultural-based community to a regional commercial and business center. Growth however is challenging local government's ability to keep up with increased traffic, utility demands, park usage and school enrollments. The quality of life in the community is directly related to maintaining an acceptable level of these vital services. The Comprehensive Plan provides general directions for maintaining and improving these functional aspects of our community that we often take for granted but that are essential to "livability."

But in other ways, the Grand Junction area still has small town characteristics: friendly people, knowing neighbors, caring for each other young and old. Activities, entertainment and amenities provide residents and guests with opportunities to socialize, exercise and revitalize. Unique programs as diverse as Art on the Corner, the Main Street Farmers' Market, and the Junior College World Series add to the special lifestyle of the Upper Grand Valley. A broad variety of activities and amenities is a component to a high quality of life.

In the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan the residents of the Grand Junction area evidenced great pride in their community and showed an interest in preserving and improving the aesthetic appeal of the area. Past successful efforts to enhance the community's appearance include Main Street redevelopment, 7th Avenue streetscape

improvements, Art on the Corner, river corridor improvements, etc. They have come about through the combined efforts of citizen groups, business interests, non-profit organization and the City and County. And yet there is much that could yet be done: improving our "gateways" (first impressions), preserving the great buildings that contribute to our heritage, expanding tree-lined streetscapes throughout the community, and landscaping new development and parking lots. The Comprehensive Plan builds on the efforts that are already in place and establishes broader aesthetic objectives for additional improvements to the highly visual aspects of the community.

The planning area includes a number of unique neighborhoods, each with distinct needs and priorities. The downtown area has quite different needs than the rural development at the fringes of the urban area. This plan recognizes the different characteristics of the community's neighborhoods and recommends the use of area plans to identify and address unique neighborhood needs.

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: COMPONENTS OF A UNIQUE COMMUNITY

AESTHETICS AND DESIGN

The way a place looks and feels impacts the way we feel and act. An aesthetically pleasing place is somewhere people want to be and a place people want to maintain. This attitude feeds our community pride and strengthens bonds with our neighbors. It also attracts visitors and invites them to stay here longer. As we grow, we have the opportunity to ensure new development adds to our unique character and provides an attractive built environment.

Achieving Design Compatibility

The Comprehensive Plan encourages growth in mixed-use Centers (GP1: [Concentrated Centers](#)). When developing mixed-use Centers and other mixed-density and higher density residential projects, design becomes increasingly important to blending the community together. With no attention to design the result is disarray—the area doesn't 'feel' like a coordinated place, it doesn't function well, and as a result the merchants are less successful. We all want attractive and functional areas for our community; places where residents feel safe, comfortable and enjoy living. We also want to ensure that mixed-use developments blend various unit types and uses compatible with each other and with their surrounding neighborhoods.

By following a few simple design principles, townhomes and small condominium buildings can be made to blend together and transition comfortably to adjacent single

family homes and townhomes. In neighborhoods with very similar types of homes, repetitive sameness can be avoided by simply mixing home styles and colors, by providing a few small plazas or sitting areas, and by avoiding too many driveways over sidewalks.

Attention to design can also ensure that Centers are able to evolve gradually over time and are not unintentionally compromised by unwise site layout or orientation. The Plan encourages more flexible regulations for Centers that encourage buildings that can accommodate various uses over time—focusing more on the form of the building than the specific uses within it. For example, commercial uses on the ground floor may be the ultimate objective for a building, the space might be used for a time as a residence until the commercial demand grows. Attention to design will allow the use of the building to change without having to be replaced.

Landscaping

- ✱ Landscaping benefits the community in many ways. Landscaping has a significant impact on appearance, comfort and even property values. Tree-lined streets, shaded plazas, colorful accent flowerbeds, hedges that hide parking lots—all increase the livability of our community to residents, and increase our appeal to guests and businesses—which include potential employers and employees. Landscaping also has a significant impact on property

value. [\[Source\]](#) Studies have shown that attractive landscaping can add 10% or more to a properties value.

Xeric-to-Green

Grand Junction is in a high desert climate, but has the luxury of a lush, green river corridor running through the middle of the community. While we have plenty of water to support future growth, it makes sense to conserve water as much as possible, and to reduce the cost of irrigation. The Plan proposes using low water-use planting (xeriscape) in the landscapes around the exterior of the community (such as in gateway features) while retaining green (irrigated) landscapes in the core of the City—parks, trail corridors, medians. This concept will be implemented through landscape design practices of the Parks and Streets departments.

Complete Streets

Prior to the 20th Century, streets were an important social component of the community – a place where people interacted both for business and social reasons. Grand Junction has many examples of great streets – especially in the Downtown core area (e.g. 7th Avenue).

By the mid 1900's street design became focused on the functional aspects related to the growing dominance of the automobile. The result we live with today is streets that are optimized to move traffic, which in turn has

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: AESTHETICS AND DESIGN COMPONENTS (cont'd)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

made them undesirable for walking, homes, and even for pedestrian shopping. We have allowed busy, often walled, streets that are actually barriers in the community. These streets are not inviting to pedestrians, bicyclists or other modes of transportation. On a number of streets pedestrians have to dash across through traffic due to lack of pedestrian crosswalks.

In recent years however, the importance of the total function of streets has re-emerged. The Plan encourages the design of “complete streets” that integrate traffic, walking, biking and aesthetics. Complete streets accomplish multiple community goals: they not only carry traffic but also contribute to unique community identity, safe routes to schools, successful business environment, encourage walking and exercise, and serve as public space for the community.

Over time, steps can be made to transform our streets from raceways to memorable places where residents and visitors will want to visit again and again. Street trees, planting strips, street lights, benches, trash receptacles, and pavers are components to creating a welcoming atmosphere. These components can be varied in different areas of the community to build on the unique characters established for each of the Centers ([GP1: Concentrated Centers](#)).

Public Gathering Spaces

Creation of public gathering space gives people a place to socialize and interact with neighbors. Public gathering spaces include:

- ✱ parks
- ✱ plazas
- ✱ amphitheaters
- ✱ activity fields

With great streetscapes, the sidewalk too can be a public gathering space. Public gathering spaces may be used to create vibrancy: where plenty of ‘happenings’ can occur. Examples are the farmer’s market, tournaments, entertainment, education, amenities and activities that draw the public. The Downtown is a key location for public gathering spaces. Public gathering spaces should also be a component of Village and Neighborhood Centers.

Gateways & Key Corridors

Many communities have created welcoming monuments and landscaped gateways at the entries to their communities. Gateways give visitors a first impression of a community and demonstrate community pride. Grand Junction already has gateway signs along I-70 and Highway 50 but creating a gateway is often more than just signage. Horizon Drive is one key gateway to the community. The City of Grand Junction and Horizon Drive Business Improvement District have cooperatively invested in landscaping, new sidewalks, lighting and public art to improve the overall appearance, pedestrian orientation and functionality of Horizon Drive. There are other gateway opportunities to redevelop to enhance the entry atmosphere. Key gateways and entry corridors have been identified. ([Link to Key corridor / gateway map](#)).

An important gateway element recommended in the Plan is the preservation of the land at the foot of Mt. Garfield. ([Grand Green System-Open space](#)). The focus of this effort is to preserve the striking natural setting of this area, and to avoid development that would detract from Mt. Garfield, which has come to symbolize the Grand Junction area.

Views

The extraordinary views of Mt. Garfield, Grand Mesa and the Colorado Monument from in and around Grand Junction are a key element of the community character. Views are discussed in the natural environment section of the [Grand Green System Chapter](#). To protect this unique aspect of living in the valley, conservation of viewsheds should be considered as an element of quality design and planning, especially in areas of mixed use, mixed density, moderate to high densities and areas of high public visibility.

Dark Skies

Clear, starry night skies are a signature of the ‘West’ and are a component of the “small town feel” desired by community residents. Unfortunately, growth often diminishes the visibility of the night sky. This is, to a large degree, due to the type of lighting used more than the amount of growth. Up-lighting (buildings and landscapes) as well as broadly directed lighting of streets and parking lots all contribute to the glow over the region that obscures the night sky. Using light fixtures that focus light downward and limit its horizontal spread can greatly enhance the

DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: AESTHETICS AND DESIGN COMPONENTS (cont'd)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

visibility of 'dark skies'. The Plan recommends creation of design guidelines for new outdoor lights and a gradual replacement program of existing City and CDOT fixtures that contribute to the glow.

RETAINING OUR HERITAGE

Historic Buildings and Neighborhoods

Many communities have started to capitalize on their best assets such as historic buildings.

Grand Junction has been lucky not to see a historic building scraped and replaced. However, without steps to prevent this, it may happen as the community reinvests in the downtown. Historic buildings should be preserved to the extent possible. Modifications and additions to historic buildings are acceptable if the alterations are constructed to compliment the original character.

The neighborhood just north of the Downtown retains the original grid pattern of tree lined streets and many older homes. To allow the Downtown to grow but not disturb the character of this neighborhood, the Plan recommends that increased density be allowed in this neighborhood through Accessory Dwelling Units.

Individual Neighborhood Character

The Community has expressed the desire to foster neighborhood identity. This can be accomplished through many elements and aspects such as parks, schools, signage, architecture and streetscape that become specific to that neighborhood. Many strategies to foster neighborhood

identity, as well as specific land use issues and goals are addressed in the various neighborhood and area plans adopted by the City and County. The Comprehensive Plan supports these individual neighborhood and area plans of the region. Several of the plans were incorporated into the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. However, others are out of date and need revision. During the revisions, these neighborhood and area plans are to adapt the Comprehensive Plan to each neighborhood at a finer, more detailed level. One concept to adhere to is the feathering of densities.

[\(LINK to concept in housing or definitions\)](#)

For more specific guidelines for individual neighborhoods please refer to [\(LINKS\)](#):

- ✱ North Avenue Plan
- ✱ Clifton-Fruitvale Area Plan
- ✱ Whitewater Area Plan
- ✱ Pear Park Neighborhood Plan
- ✱ Redlands Area Plan
- ✱ Downtown Strategic Plan

Visual and Performing Arts

Grand Junction retains many elements of its heritage as it promotes a culture of today through the visual and performing arts. The Avalon Theater is an example of our heritage and today's culture as a performing arts venue housed in a historic structure. In addition to wonderful art galleries throughout Grand Junction, the town is also home to several unique art centers. The Western Colorado Center is a nonprofit arts organization that promotes the enjoyment and understanding of the arts through educational programs, exhibits and its permanent collection of nearly 300 historic and contemporary works. Art on the Corner is a yearlong outdoor exhibit featuring more than 100 sculptures Downtown helping Downtown become a destination for visitors.

OVERVIEW: FACILITIES AND SERVICES

How we grow impacts our ability to provide adequate services. In the past, in order to encourage new development to annex and be subject to City development standards, the City allowed long, linear outward annexations along its periphery. This resulted in an irregular boundary that forces say, a street sweeper or paving crew to stop mid block and traverse several streets to get to the next maintenance section. This, combined with overlapping services of other providers (water, sewer), has resulted in areas of the community where one side of a street might be in the City, and the other side in the County (and therefore serviced by other providers). Though the City, County and other service providers attempt to cooperate, there are often inefficiencies of multiple responses to a call for service or emergency, and confusion of residents as to where to direct requests. Coordinating public utilities expansion with future population growth and land use decisions is a high priority of the Plan.

As a regional center, daily populations in Grand Junction nearly double when tourists, commuters and regional shoppers are considered. Even though these employees and patrons are not 'residents' of the City, the City still provides parks, amenities, street maintenance, trails and police services to all who frequent the City. This increase needs to be considered to adequately plan for services, infrastructure and facilities.

Services provided by the City of Grand Junction include:

- * Water
- * Solid Waste
- * Parks
- * Wastewater
- * Fire Services
- * Police Services
- * Facilities / Amenities
- * Administrative Services
- * Neighborhood Services

Other services provided in the region by other entities and Mesa County include:

- * Electricity
- * Wastewater
- * Parks
- * Solid Waste
- * Water
- * Schools / Education
- * Administrative Services
- * Facilities / Amenities
- * Sheriff's Office

SCHOOLS

The Mesa County Valley School District 51 currently operates 52 schools in the Grand Junction vicinity. Growth is expected to continue in the School District. Based on their own projections, to obtain the least expensive land possible, the District purchases property for future schools years before the need for the facility. Often, the location of a future school strongly influences where utilities and roads are planned, and thus, to some degree the purchase of school properties dictates the form of the neighborhood and community. The result is not necessarily an optimum location with regard to other community consid-

erations such as maximizing the number of homes within walking distance, proximity to shopping and conveniences, location of parks, and providing an efficient road and utility system. Thus, the siting of new schools has a strong influence on the growth patterns of the community.

At the time of this report, The District was contemplating a bond initiative that would include funds for land purchase. The need for additional elementary schools exists in Pear Park, Clifton and Fruitvale. Short, near-term plans for the District include:

- * high school sites in three areas: Redlands, Orchard Mesa, Pear Park
- * 2-3 elementary schools
- * rebuilding of a middle school

Long term plans include:

- * 2 additional middle schools
- * 2 additional elementary schools

Although the School District collaborates with Mesa County and the City of Grand Junction regarding future school sites, larger, adequately-sized parcels¹ available to accommodate new schools tend to be outside the developed areas of the City. Also, land some distance from existing development tends to have lower land costs. Roads, side-

¹ The District currently requires approximately 10 acres for an elementary school, 20 acres for a middle school and 35-40 acres for a high school.

OVERVIEW: FACILITIES AND SERVICES (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

walks and utilities then have to be extended to these isolated locations. Eventually, other development is attracted by the new roads and utilities, which results in outward, leap-frog expansion of the City, which in turn leads to inefficient use of public resources to provide services.

In addition, transporting children to schools is expensive—for the School District as well as for parents—in terms of equipment, gas, time and even impacts of air quality. Future schools in the planning area should be located within walking distance of as many homes as possible. This suggests considering the locations of mixed-use centers and higher density neighborhoods in determining school locations. Whenever possible, schools should be located adjacent to parks to promote the synergy of uses. Because the location of schools is so important to cost-effective growth and efficient use of resources, the City and School District should continue to collaborate closely in the future to assure that school locations will reinforce the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

DOMESTIC WATER

The Grand Junction area is served by multiple water providers: City of Grand Junction, Ute Water Conservancy District, and Clifton Water District. [\[link to map of water districts\]](#) The City of Grand Junction's water service area is limited by agreement with Ute Water, whose service district surrounds that of the City's service area. The three bodies project that domestic water supply for the region is adequate to serve the projected 2035 population.

The Ute Water Conservancy District obtains water primar-

ily from snowmelt on the _____. Its service area covers the majority of the planning area. They project a 390,000 population for the valley by 2045.

Clifton Water District obtains its water from the Colorado River and serves the east end of the planning area from Interstate 70 to the Colorado River and from 30 Rd to 34 ½ Rd. The Company has a 5-year capital plan to address undersized pipes and other system needs.

Water Conservation

A Water Conservation Master Plan was cooperatively developed by the City of Grand Junction, Clifton Water District, and Ute Water Conservancy District. The Water Conservation Master Plan, has a goal to maintain or reduce water uses for the City water service area.

The Grand Valley Drought Response Information Project (DRIP), a campaign created by Grand Valley domestic water providers and Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service to educate customers about water conservation, has promoted water conservation techniques and practices since 2003.

IRRIGATION WATER

Six irrigation companies, along with the City of Grand Junction, provide irrigation to the region. The Wise Water Council has been created in an effort to standardize development requirements amongst the companies.

The irrigators in the Grand Valley have managed to preserve an extensive canal system to deliver raw (un-

treated) water to property owners throughout the region, including large agricultural interests as well as individual homeowners. The availability of raw water eliminates the need to use treated water for irrigation—which dramatically reduces the cost of irrigation water, and the energy and chemicals typically used to treat it.

The irrigation companies face several challenges due to development and increased growth.

- ✱ private developers building on easements and over canals, blocking access
- ✱ pressure for public trails on canal easements [\[link to Trails section\]](#)
- ✱ increased difficult maintenance due to the urbanization of lands

WASTEWATER

For development serviced by a sewer system, the wastewater of the region is treated at the Persigo Wastewater Treatment, the Clifton Wastewater Treatment Plant, or the Grand Valley or Orchard Mesa Sanitation Districts. The rural areas that are outside of districts use septic systems. [\[link to map of sewer service providers\]](#)

Persigo Wastewater Treatment Plant

The City of Grand Junction and Mesa County cooperatively operate the Persigo Wastewater Treatment Plant. The plant has either capacity or expansion capabilities to meet the future growth estimated in this planning effort.

OVERVIEW: FACILITIES AND SERVICES (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

Concurrent with the 2009 Comprehensive Plan process, a sewer basin study was conducted to determine problem areas in the system and to examine impacts to sewer systems as a result of varying land use patterns. While there are problem areas in the system regardless of land use pattern, it was determined that the Future Land Use proposed with this Comprehensive Plan was not significantly more expensive than alternatives. There is concern that the current fee structure is not adequate to pay for the service. This also will be addressed in the Persigo Sewer Basin Study.

Grand Valley Sanitation District

The Grand Valley Sanitation District services the area from I-70 south to the Colorado River and from Grand Junction City Limits to the west eastward to the Palisade Buffer. The District has 3,000 taps available; 80 percent are currently in the development process. The lack of adequately sized pipes is seen as a limiting factor for future growth (the biggest growth area is seen around D Road in Pear Park). There is a 6-year capital plan that includes the replacement and upgrade to concrete pipe to address growth.

Orchard Mesa Sanitation District

The Orchard Mesa Sanitation District Service area spans from the Colorado River south to the Gunnison River and from Grand Junction City Limits west to 27/30 Road. There are 1500 taps in use and 750 in construction process. Growth pressure is being felt in the district. Most of the growth seen in the district is infill. In accordance with

the Persigo Agreement, the District will dissolve into the Persigo system in 2016. Regardless, the existing plant has the ability to double its capacity and size to accommodate growth in the area.

Clifton Sanitation District

Clifton Sanitation District (CSD) and Clifton Sanitation District #1 (CSD #1) are utilizing approximately 50 percent of the current capacity and a new regional wastewater treatment facility was being constructed in 2008. Planning is also underway to consolidate both districts into one new regional mechanical treatment facility to be owned and operated by CSD.

Whitewater Public Improvement District

A public improvement district (PID) has been established to provide sewer service for the urbanizing area of Whitewater. A recapture agreement will allow developers to recoup their initial installation of public improvements. The PID will eventually become its own provider through incorporation or annexation. For wastewater treatment, the PID plans to install a line northward, along Highway 141 to the Clifton treatment plant. Sewer service may be available as soon as 2009.

A second phase for the PID is a transportation plan to get infrastructure in and improve or realign some of the existing roads. A separate PID is proposed to provide urban services via mil levy and sales tax to support service provision – police, fire, parks, and staffing of public services. The Landsend Fire District serves the Whitewater area now, natural gas and water are available, and electricity is

nearby.

FIRE PROTECTION

The Grand Junction Fire Department provides a variety of services.

- ✱ fire suppression
- ✱ fire protection
- ✱ emergency medical services
- ✱ hazardous materials service
- ✱ special rescue

In addition to emergency response activities, the Grand Junction Fire Department is very active in training, fire inspections, pre-fire planning, public education and project review for major developments.

In 2007, calls for service rose 40% to approximately 12,000, with the highest number of calls for Station 2 located Downtown. Response times have also increased due to expanding City limits and increasing congestion. Fire insurance ratings, based on response times and equipment available, are relatively low but a switch to a coverage model instead of ISO rating would provide a more realistic monitoring of the system.

Growth will require new fire stations. Sites for new stations are difficult to find, especially in older, largely developed areas. The Orchard Mesa and Pear Park neighborhoods are in need of a station as well as a need in the north – northwest area. Ideally, new stations will locate in

OVERVIEW: FACILITIES AND SERVICES (CONT'D)

[Back to Top of Topic](#)

centers. (GP1: Concentrated Centers)

POLICE SERVICES

The law enforcement staff has increased over recent years as concerns for safety and well-being have risen in Grand Junction. Cooperation between the City Police Department and Mesa County Sheriff's Office improves coverage and response times. However, doubling of services between City and County efforts are increasing, especially where flagpole annexations occurred and City Limits and County jurisdiction randomly alternate.

Growth concerns for law enforcement include:

- ✱ planning and designing medium and high-density developments so as to not foster increased criminal activity
- ✱ design for rental units that encourages a feeling of ownership in the community
- ✱ avoiding enclaves (concentrated areas) of low-income housing
- ✱ accomodating a large homeless and transient population

While density itself is not foreseen as a problem, the City embraces the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) [\[link to website?\]](#) when designing higher density projects. These principles are incorporated in the general guidelines for Centers, and include: distributing housing types throughout the community, providing neighborhood layouts and home types that provide "eyes

on the street" and on public places.

It is the City's current intent to keep the police services in a central location. As growth occurs, however, the department should consider placing annex stations away from the central location, particularly in one or more of the mixed-use centers.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Neighborhood Services is a Division of the City Manager's Office. Services include:

- ✱ code enforcement
- ✱ weed abatement
- ✱ neighborhood program
- ✱ affordable housing
- ✱ energy conservation
- ✱ historic preservation

Affordable housing efforts mainly target low income housing and have been funded through Community Development Block Grants and the City budget. However, the community realizes that there is a lack of workforce housing and that workforce housing needs a higher amount of attention. A task force has been established and interest from local housing coalition and a Housing Strategic Plan was prepared concurrently with the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. (GP3: Housing Variety)

SOLID WASTE

The City of Grand Junction Solid Waste Department collects solid waste from all city residents of less than eight units² and also provides commercial solid waste collection if requested. Curbside Recycling Indefinitely (CRI) has a contract with the City to provide curbside recycling.

The Mesa County Landfill is located south of the City and northwest of the intersection of Highway 50 and Highway 141. The landfill and transfer stations are currently operated by Herzog Environmental, Inc. Mesa County owns approximately 1,500 acres in the vicinity of the landfill that acts as a buffer. The landfill has a footprint of 127 acres and ability to expand. The landfill is expected to reach its capacity in 2050. [\[show or link to map of landfill location\]](#)

ELECTRIC / GAS SERVICE

Xcel Energy and Grand Valley Power are the two electric providers for the Upper Grand Valley. The two companies do cooperate in service planning to avoid unnecessary duplication in the systems. There are no known limitations to the system and capacity is expanded prior to any needs. Additional substations may be required by 2035 if growth continues at a similar pace or energy development escalates up valley.

Gas service is provided by Xcel Energy and Kinder Morgan. Both companies indicate they have facilities, and expansion plans, that will accommodate the growth expected

² Larger buildings are served by private trash haulers.

OVERVIEW: FACILITIES AND SERVICES (CONT'D)[Back to Top of Topic](#)

during the life of this plan.

DRAINAGE

The Grand Junction Drainage District serves Grand Valley residents in areas from Palisade to Loma that are north of the Colorado River including Fruita, Clifton and most of the City of Grand Junction. The purpose of the District is to:

- ✱ operate and maintain the existing drainage systems (cleaning, repairing, stabilizing)
- ✱ improve the water quality being discharged from the drainage systems into the Colorado River
- ✱ improve the system for better management of storm waters

According to the District, the current system can handle up to a 20-year flood event. The area's major drainage issues are in the Redlands - Monument Canyon along Ute Canyon – due to the lack of natural storage or detention. Recent floodplain and drainage plans have been established for the Louis Wash and Douglas Wash. It should be noted that stormwater runoff is captured by a separate system than canals use to provide irrigation water.

KEEPING FACILITIES IN THE DOWNTOWN AND LOCATING NEW FACILITIES IN CENTERS

Most of the City's administrative services (such as the City Manager, personnel, council chambers, planning) are located Downtown in City Hall. The Mesa County public services are currently located in the County Courthouse (adjacent to City Hall) and County Administration Building (also Downtown). The County Justice Center, Mesa County Library, and Two Rivers Convention Center are also located in the heart of the City.

City and County buildings are important to the Downtown and should remain in the Downtown. The presence of such facilities historically dictate where the core of the City was giving an important impression of the place. The City and County also have a large number of employees that support Downtown businesses, restaurants and retail. The City and County should retain an active role in creating the synergy needed to create and retain the vital Downtown envisioned in this Plan ([LINK to centers chapter – downtown section](#)). Visitor-oriented uses such as Two Rivers Convention Center should remain in the Downtown so that patrons of Two Rivers can also be patrons to the Downtown business, restaurant and retail establishments.

There are 2 branch library locations in Orchard Mesa and Clifton. In addition to its own resources, residents are allowed to access books through Mesa State College. Library branches can be important components of future centers and should be located near other social activities (such as a post office, shopping or a park where it can

benefit from shared parking, and patrons being able to combine trips for multiple purposes).

Actions: A Unique Community

Ax.x:

1 inch equals 2,000 feet

Grand Junction - Preferred Land Use Plan 12-6-2008

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Future Land Use Map

- Legend**
- Mixed Use Opportunity Corridor
 - Highway/State
 - Streams
 - Canal
 - 2011 Boundary
 - Whitewater Plan Area Boundary
 - Parcel
 - Water
 - Buffer Zone
 - DDA Boundary
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - Grand Junction Regional Airport

- Future Land Use**
- Airport
 - Parks and Open Space (P&OS)
 - Conservation/Mineral Extraction (CDN) (1 DU/Acre)
 - Cooperative Planning Area (CPA) (Average 5 Acres)
 - Agricultural (AG) (> 35 Acres)
 - Rural (RUR) (3-17 Acres)
 - Estate (EST) (8-3.6 Acres)
 - Residential Low (RL) (8-2.4 DU/Acre)
 - Residential Medium Low (RML) (1.6 - 4.8 DU/Acre)
 - Residential Medium (RM) (3.2-9.6 DU/Acre)
 - Residential Medium High (RMH) (5.4-14.4 DU/Acre)
 - Residential High MU (RH) (9.6-28.8 DU/Acre) (4 Jobs/Acre)
 - Urban Residential MU (UR) (24+ DU/Acre) (4 Jobs/Acre)
 - Commercial (COM) (20 Jobs/Acre)
 - Village Center - MU (VC) (5.7 DU/Acre) (10 Jobs/Acre)
 - Neighborhood Center - MU (NC) (8.8 DU/Acre) (28 Jobs/Acre)
 - Downtown MU (DT) (24+ DU/Acre) (96 Jobs/Acre)
 - Industrial (IND) (15 Jobs/Acre)
 - Commercial Industrial (CI) (15 Jobs/Acre)
 - Business Park MU (BP) (8 DU/Acre) (32 Jobs/Acre)

- Future Land Use**
- Bureau of Land Management
 - Downtown
 - Media Mall
 - Village Center
 - Neighborhood Center