

## COMMUNITY IMAGE/CHARACTER ACTION PLAN

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### Existing Conditions & Findings:

Since the 1999 Plan, there continues to be no commercial or retail development that serves the community's needs. Children are bused outside of the community for education. Buildings of former commercial uses along Highway 50 continue to be in disrepair and increasingly derelict. A motel continues to operate, as well as a seasonal fruit stand and a new bed and breakfast on the east side of Highway 50. However, as the population of Whitewater grows, residents are increasingly interested in having basic neighborhood businesses in the area including a grocery store, gas station, and convenience store. Also, there is interest in having retail space for local entrepreneurs to start businesses.

Throughout the 2006 community plan process, participants expressed interest in the proposed sanitary sewer district:

- to improve the quality of life in Whitewater;
- to achieve commercial development that would both serve the needs of the residents as well as create a focal point in Whitewater; and
- to manage growth in the various neighborhoods throughout Whitewater.

Participants of the planning process also expressed desire for:

- environmentally sensitive future commercial and residential development;
- a regional park at the former Mill Tailings site;
- identified BLM parcels for community uses including a potential school site;
- appropriate location, size and scale of future development (no big box commercial development);
- appropriate adjacent land uses;
- design guidelines to reduce the image of clutter or debris; and
- developing Whitewater into an attractive entryway into the Grand Valley.



Source: [www.pedbikeimages.org/Dan Burden](http://www.pedbikeimages.org/Dan_Burden)

# COMMUNITY IMAGE/CHARACTER ACTION PLAN

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As stated in the 1999 Whitewater Plan: “The Highway 50 corridor is a major entryway to the Grand Valley. The image many people have of Mesa County and the Grand Junction area is based on their visual perception of the landscape and human built features they see from the road. Desert-like conditions along the highway and wide-open vistas give a distinct impression of the area. Low growing, sparse vegetation makes screening outdoor storage difficult. Development in the highway corridor should be particularly sensitive to this circumstance.”



Source: Mesa County

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## Community Image/Character Goals

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Pedestrian-oriented shopping plaza



Source: [www.pedbikeimages.org/](http://www.pedbikeimages.org/) Dan Burden

### Goals:

#### *COMMUNITY*

- Establish amenities and services that support an emerging urban community.
- Mesa County will promote and support design standards for all development that will result in a positive image of the community and reflects positively on the County.
- Mesa County recognizes that Whitewater will be an attractive gateway into the community and new development will create a positive image of not only Whitewater but for the larger community of the Grand Valley and Mesa County.
- To create a self-directed and independent community with adequate urban services, facilities, and amenities.
- Mesa County Code Enforcement will assist with the improvement and maintenance of the aesthetic appearance, health and safety of the Whitewater community.
- Mesa County Code Enforcement will identify key issues and concerns in the planning area and work with residents to prioritize and remedy them.

#### *ECONOMY*

- Higher density residential development that can support future commercial uses.
- To create a balance between residential and commercial development that will move Whitewater toward a self-sufficient community.

## COMMUNITY IMAGE/CHARACTER ACTION PLAN

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- Commercial development that will foster a focal point and identity for the emerging urban community.
- To create a desirable environment for local and entrepreneurial businesses in the plan area.
- A business park (similar to Foresight Park) type of industry in the area.

### *DESIGN & LOCATION*

- To protect and enhance trail access for recreation opportunities including the Old Spanish Trail, Gunnison Bluffs Trail, and the Gunnison River.
- Future development will respect and compliment existing residents and development patterns in the core area of Whitewater, in particular in the neighborhood between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets.
- To assist with the improvement and maintenance of the aesthetic appearance, health and safety of the Whitewater community through code enforcement activities.
- To create a stable, long-term, viable, and self-supporting community of seven distinctly individual neighborhoods as depicted in this plan.
- To protect and maintain the unique features and characteristics of the Whitewater Community which are significant links to the past, present, and future of the community.



Source: [www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org)/Dan Burden

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## Community Image/Character Policies

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### Policies:

#### *COMMUNITY*

- Establish and maintain a well-defined community center to provide a focal point as an emerging urban community.
- Mesa County recognizes and supports local services and commercial activities that will benefit the existing residents and contribute to a positive public image.

#### *ECONOMY*

- Mesa County supports public/private partnerships to help create a strong commercial base to support a growing population.
- Mesa County will encourage commercial, mixed-use, and light industrial uses to generate local employment opportunities and encourage a self-sufficient community.
- Mesa County will work with the Grand Junction Economic Partnership, Business Incubator, and others with an economic development interest to plan for and develop a diverse, sustainable economic climate in Whitewater.
- Mesa County will periodically evaluate economic development opportunities and barriers as the area grows and evolves into a self-sufficient community.

#### *DESIGN & LOCATION*

- Mesa County, developers and others with an interest in the Whitewater Community will work together to protect important rural features, scenic vistas/corridors, and natural areas impacted by proposed development (e.g. large trees, washes, riparian areas, historic structures, farming practices, balance of visual and traffic impacts on location of accesses, etc.) and mitigate such impacts where avoidance is not practicable.
- Mesa County encourages the protection of paleontologic, historic, and cultural resources of Mesa County.
- All new development will be designed to protect critical or sensitive lands (productive agricultural land, floodplains, wetlands, riparian corridors, and important wildlife habitat). Additionally, new development will include measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate threats from wildfire when located in wildfire hazard areas.\*
- Continue to protect natural areas/resources through incentives and flexible options for land development by providing a list of available, voluntary tools and techniques.\*
- Continue to coordinate planning efforts with public land management agencies on land uses and land use activities.
- Continue to provide information about alternative development tools and techniques that further the goals of this plan and are compatible to the landscape and character of the area.\*
- Establish and promote the historical pride and heritage of the Whitewater Community.

## COMMUNITY IMAGE/CHARACTER ACTION PLAN

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- Document potential historic sites and structures as a means for designating properties on local, state and/or national registers.
- Preserve, appropriately reuse, and respect the setting of historic buildings/sites within the Whitewater Community.
- Mesa County Code Enforcement will work with landowners, businesses, and others to improve public perception of the area.

*\*Character Policies are as stated in the 1999 Whitewater/Kannah Creek Rural Community Plan.*



Source: [www.pedbikeimages.org/](http://www.pedbikeimages.org/)Dan Burden

## COMMUNITY IMAGE/CHARACTER ACTION PLAN

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### Community Image/Character Action Items

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#### Action Items:

- Adopt a new zoning map that includes more residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
- Adopt Residential and Commercial/Industrial design guidelines as stated in the Land Use/Growth Management Action Plans to ensure that new development is designed appropriate to location and the environment.
- Mesa County will establish mixed-use standards and incentives in a mixed-use zone district to intensify activity within the Whitewater community center (including those that may take advantage of tourist or highway traffic).
- Mesa County will ensure that mixed-use and commercial facilities are mutually supportive and attract people to complimentary activities (e.g. churches, services, businesses/residential, post office, non-traditional home businesses, etc.).
- Mesa County will include Code Enforcement staff in on-going neighborhood planning, assistance to neighborhood organizations, and assistance with creating citizen watch groups in specific neighborhoods.
- Code Enforcement will work with neighborhood groups to prioritize cleanups with cases involving junk as the highest priority in this effort.
- Code Enforcement staff will continue to talk with and educate residents about available services, staffing limits, and what can be done relative to residents' expectations.
- Mesa County will provide Home Owners Association (HOA) options on how to assist property owners with clean-up of properties, e.g., remove and dispose of and/or recycle large junk items, keep weeds mowed, information on upcoming annual free day at the landfill, household hazardous materials programs, how to keep restrictive covenants up-to-date, etc.
- Mesa County will publish information on Code Enforcement issues, definitions, processes, successes, etc. in homeowner association newsletters and/or insert in utility billings and/or newspapers.
- Mesa County will provide options to encourage and assist neighborhoods with community pride and self-help cleanup programs will be pursued.
- Mesa County will study and assess the potential of a new process where the Pest Inspector hands over valid (i.e. already checked out) noxious weed complaints to the Code Enforcement staff to pursue.
- Implement the Whitewater Transportation Plan.
- Revise the Development Code to require development applicants to demonstrate that "critical or sensitive lands" are protected through the use of design criteria and standards. Avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts.
- Create and adopt design criteria and standards for critical and sensitive lands in the Whitewater Planning area.

## **COMMUNITY IMAGE/CHARACTER ACTION PLAN**

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- Work with public land/resource managers to adopt consistent mitigation standards, review procedures, and criteria for development.
- Evaluate and revise existing incentives /guidelines to protect natural areas specifically in the Whitewater Planning area.
- Require xeriscape for all new developments.