

Commercial and Industrial Existing Conditions & Findings

The residents of Whitewater currently commute to neighboring communities for basic needs. The only commercial uses or services currently available are the post office, a seasonal fruit stand, a bed and breakfast, and a motel. The lack of commercial and other services results in very limited opportunities for neighborly, social interaction among existing residents. This is in part due to inadequate infrastructure to support commercial development, such as sanitary sewer and water service sufficient for fire protection. The possibility of future commercial development will be heavily dependent on the services that can be provided in the future by the Whitewater Public Improvements District which was established in November 2006 to initially provide sewer service to a limited area.

A commercial center or natural gathering place would help to foster a sense of place and community identity. Through a combination of mixed-use and commercial uses, neighborhood-scale shopping opportunities may be developed.



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Small-scale commercial uses will create places for social interaction and help the community grow from its current role as a rural bedroom community to that of an urban community. Commercial additions such as a grocery store and pharmacy, will serve immediate resident needs. Other small-scale commercial development might relate to the recreation and tourism potential of the Whitewater area.

Heavy commercial and light industrial development may be appropriate for certain areas adjacent to gravel extraction areas or the Mesa County Landfill. Commercial/Industrial Design Standards will ensure that future industrial development is appropriately designed to reduce impact to the community. Any heavy commercial or light industrial development will be carefully reviewed for its impacts to ensure that it does not detract from the residential and recreational qualities of the area. It's anticipated and expected that commercial and/or industrial development will generate local employment opportunities and in turn will be an important component of creating a self-sufficient community.

LAND USE - COMMERCIAL and INDUSTRIAL



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The landfill vicinity, in particular, presents opportunities for commercial and/or industrial development. In 1994, Mesa County acquired approximately 1,500 acres from the Bureau of Land Management. Upon acquisition, the 1994 Solid Waste Management Plan was implemented. While the landfill currently uses only 60 acres, the plan allows for expansion to a total of 126 of the 1,500 acres. The remaining land will be used for various appropriate purposes including buffers to adjacent land uses and recreational trails.



Figure 12. Mesa County Landfill Site



Currently, most residents of Whitewater commute to Grand Junction for work and basic necessities, contributing to environmental and traffic impacts. Businesses serving local needs may reduce trips out of Whitewater and, in many cases, be within walking distance for many residents. Residents shopping in Whitewater will enjoy the convenience and should be willing to invest in their community.

Area residents repeatedly indicated that commercial uses should contribute to a sense of place by providing areas where residents can have regular informal interactions. Commercial uses should therefore be designed with walk-able outside areas that invite shoppers to spend more time in these public oriented areas. Commercial uses should specifically serve the immediate community needs. Retail and office spaces should be smaller and/or located in mixed-use buildings that make local entrepreneurship feasible. Inviting pathways should connect commercial uses to provide easy navigation and quick access to storefronts and outdoor spaces.

Throughout the planning process, community members acknowledged that there is market demand for land zoned to accommodate heavy commercial and industrial uses. However, as Whitewater grows, future development should reflect the character of the community. Along Coffman Road, immediately adjacent to the Mesa County landfill, an area has been identified on the Future Land Use map as a potentially acceptable site for light industrial uses. Development of light industrial uses in this vicinity should be heavily screened so as not to impact the natural gateway to the Grand Valley (via Orchard Mesa to the north), the Whitewater Community at the intersection of Highway 50 and 32 Road, and the existing residential uses at the Elk Run subdivision.

A section in the southern portion of the Whitewater planning area, adjacent to the railroad tracks and abutting a proposed regional park at the former Mill Tailings Site, was zoned in the 1980s for planned industrial uses and does have some limited industrial activities.

Commercial/IndustrialGoals

Goals:

Future commercial and industrial uses in Whitewater should serve a dual purpose – contribute to defining a sense of place and character of the area, as well as serving the needs of the residents. Quality of life would improve in the Whitewater Community by it becoming more than simply a residential community. Residents require places that support greater connection to their neighbors through regular interaction at a grocery store, neighborhood shops, schools, community center, or other natural gathering places and local employment.

COMMUNITY

- To strengthen Whitewater as both an urban community and a potential area for recreation and tourism.
- To develop, enhance and protect the aesthetic image of the Whitewater community.



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ECONOMY

- To improve and promote economic sustainability and development as a vital role in improving the quality of life for the Whitewater community.
- To create small business developments to serve the Whitewater community.
- To create a healthy and diverse economic base that supports the local economy and potential tourist industry.
- Economic sustainability through diversified commercial, mixed-use and industrial development that pays careful attention to environmental, cultural, aesthetic, and social impacts.

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- To periodically monitor economic development in the area and respond to opportunities and barriers as they arise.
- Efficient use of mineral resources with minimal impacts to related natural resources and adjacent neighborhoods.

DESIGN & LOCATION

- To create places and opportunities for social interaction and lifestyle diversity.
- To create a standard of design that is of high quality and compatible with historic features, the environment, and community.
- Commercial uses that will set a tone (through the design of landmark buildings) that identify places in the community and enhance the identity of the community as a whole.
- To eliminate, minimize, or mitigate significant drainage collection and conveyance problem areas.



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Commercial/Industrial Policies

Policies:

COMMUNITY

- Commercial uses shall be designed on a scale that directly serves Whitewater residents.

LAND USE - COMMERCIAL and INDUSTRIAL

- Commercial uses shall be limited in physical size to encourage local businesses (no “big box” development).
- Commercial uses shall support and promote local tourism, such as convenience needs of cyclists, river users, hunting, fishing, historic ranching operations, etc.
- Commercial uses shall include connections to a pathway system encouraging pedestrian activity, multi-modal transportation options, and human interaction.
- Non-residential development shall not detract from or diminish the community character or scenic values of the area.
- A concentrated business district (B-2) zoning may be appropriate to implement mixed use designations on the Future Land Use map in the “Outer Old Town”.

ECONOMY

- Encourage commercial and industrial uses that generate employment opportunities for the Whitewater community.
- Mesa County and its economic development partners will evaluate strategies and opportunities for assistance and program development in the Whitewater area; foster economic development opportunities that encourage private investment within the planning area; encourage employment (especially that offering higher wage jobs at or above the County average); and encourage development of employment opportunities.
- As the community grows Mesa County will evaluate opportunities and barriers to business retention and expansion in the Whitewater area.
- Capture revenues generated by commercial and industrial uses and direct them to reinvestments in the Whitewater community to improve community services, amenities and overall image.
- Non-retail (such as professional offices, medical clinics, etc.) as well as retail businesses are encouraged rather than service jobs.
- Commercial and industrial uses will reflect the long term goals of Whitewater in addition to responding to current market trends.

DESIGN & LOCATION -- Commercial

- Commercial uses and structures shall be designed to create a destination and sense of place within Whitewater.
- Commercial uses shall be pedestrian-oriented, ideally with parking located behind buildings.
- Commercial uses on either side of Highway 50 shall be linked with an improved pedestrian underpass between 1st and 3rd Streets.
- Commercial uses shall be located at nodes which utilize existing intersections.
- Frontage roads along the east side of Highway 50 are preferred over multiple access points from Highway 50. Limited signalized intersections will maintain circulation and safety (see transportation).
- Implement “Commercial Design Guidelines” to ensure that buildings are designed to a scale and character compatible with the existing community and its location as a gateway to the Grand Valley.
- Mixed-use zoning will allow integration of residential uses with opportunities for commercial or retail businesses.

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- An emphasis on commercial uses with subordinate residential uses is appropriate east of Coffman Road.
- An emphasis on residential uses with subordinate commercial uses is appropriate east of Highway 50.

DESIGN & LOCATION -- Industrial

- Industrial uses will be located where traffic and visual impacts will be minimized.
- Industrial traffic will be encouraged to use the future intersection at Coffman Road and Highway 50 and minimize traffic in the “Post Office Vicinity.” (see Transportation section)
- Coffman Road and Mesa County owned property near the Landfill may be an appropriate location for an area of limited industrial uses, heavy commercial uses if adequately screened from Highway 50.
- Industrial uses are appropriate in South Whitewater where rail access is feasible. (see Future Land Use map)
- Implement “Industrial Design Guidelines” to ensure that such uses are designed to a scale and character compatible with the existing community and its location as a gateway to the Grand Valley.
- The County will collaborate with gravel mining interests to develop innovative approaches to reclamation that will provide wildlife habitat, restoration of native landscapes, recreational opportunities, limited development, and other public values.



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Commercial/Industrial Action Items

Commercial/Industrial Action Items:

- Mesa County will work with the Grand Junction Economic Partnership, the Industrial Development Inc., Business Incubator Center, and Whitewater area landowners to explore the potential to develop a business park in the Whitewater area.
- Establish Mixed-Use Zones in the Mesa County Land Use Code; one which emphasizes residential uses; and one which emphasizes commercial uses.
- Implement the Future Land Use Map for the “Outer Old Town” Neighborhood through zoning. Specific future land uses and corresponding zoning districts are designated as follows:
 - “Outer Old Town” area. Mixed-Use (MU - with an emphasis on residential) or (B-2) respects existing commercial and residential uses on the east side of Highway 50 (from approximately Highway 141 & Highway 50 intersection) north to “Rancho Dos Rios” area; Near 3rd Street to Highway 141. Zone districts C1, B1, and B2 may be appropriate. B2 allows mixed uses, permits existing small lots as well as promotes the opportunity for development of neighborhood-oriented commercial and retail uses.

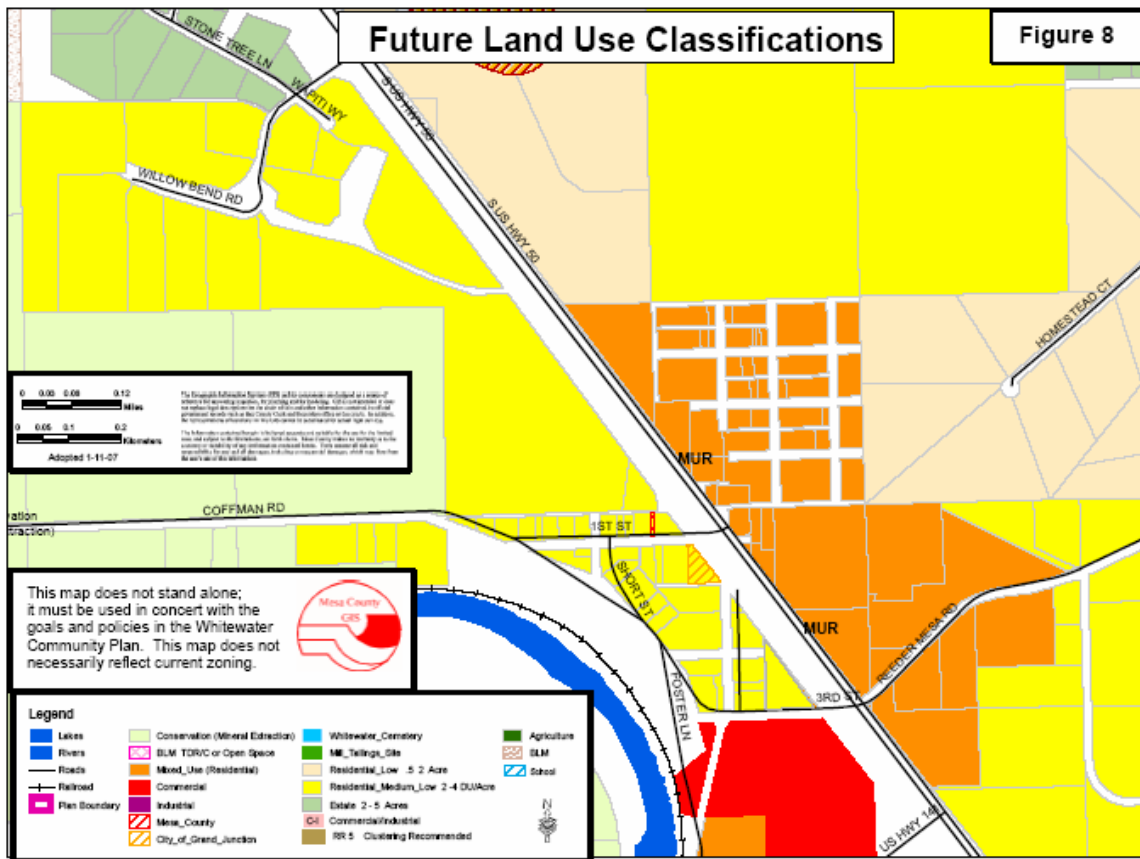


Figure 8 Outer Old Town Core vicinity

- Maintain land use status of Mesa County owned property surrounding Landfill. Similar types of uses may be considered in the future, however no action is suggested as part of this update.
 - Mesa County and developers will work to eliminate, minimize, or mitigate significant drainage collection and conveyance problem areas.
 - Mesa County will include Code Enforcement staff in on-going neighborhood/commercial/industrial planning, assistance to neighborhood organizations, and assistance with creating citizen watch groups in specific neighborhoods.
 - Code Enforcement staff will continue to talk with and educate residents about available services, staffing limits, and what can be done relative to residents' and business/industry expectations.
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- **Commercial Design Standards** will be created to insure that site planning, architectural design and landscaping are compatible with the desired commercial/industrial Community Image goals. This document will address, at a minimum:
 - Community Image
 - Neighborhood Character
 - Linear, “strip” development
 - Architectural theme
 - “Franchise” architecture
 - Relationship of buildings
 - Variation in building height, roof form, wall planes
 - Screening and mechanical equipment
 - Entrances
 - Building and site signage
 - Site furniture
 - Trash enclosures
 - Screen walls
 - Landscaping design
 - Landscaping
 - Reclamation water
 - Right-of-way maintenance
 - Lighting



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- **Industrial Design Standards** will be created to minimize visual, noise, and other impacts. These standards will address, at a minimum:
 - Site planning
 - Setbacks
 - Landscape buffer strips
 - Parking
 - Fencing
 - Berms
 - Drainage
 - Lighting
 - Architectural style and massing

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- Materials and colors
- Landscape features and minimum requirements
- Building signage
- Traffic control and directional signage
- Drainage conveyance and collection areas.





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