

Mesa*Together*

Mesa County Master Plan



COLORADO
Department of Local Affairs

Adopted May 18, 2023



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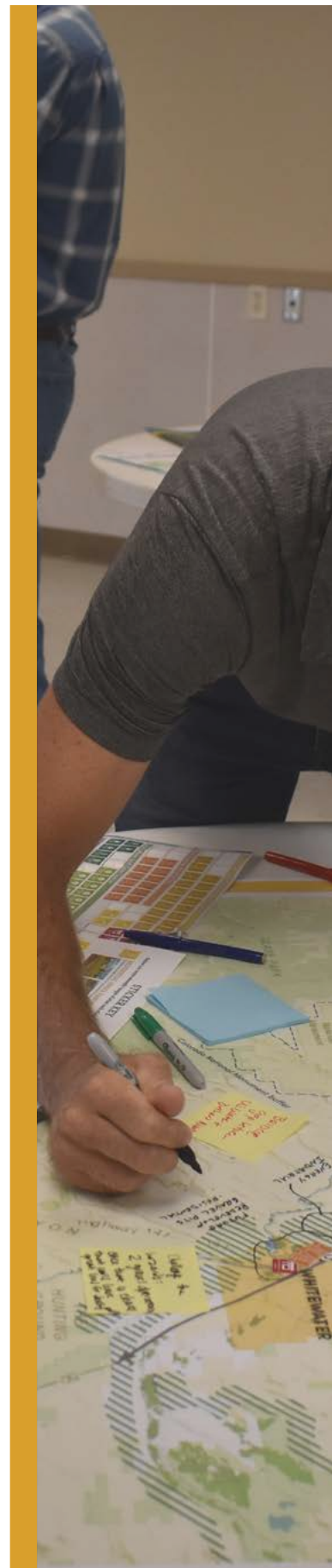
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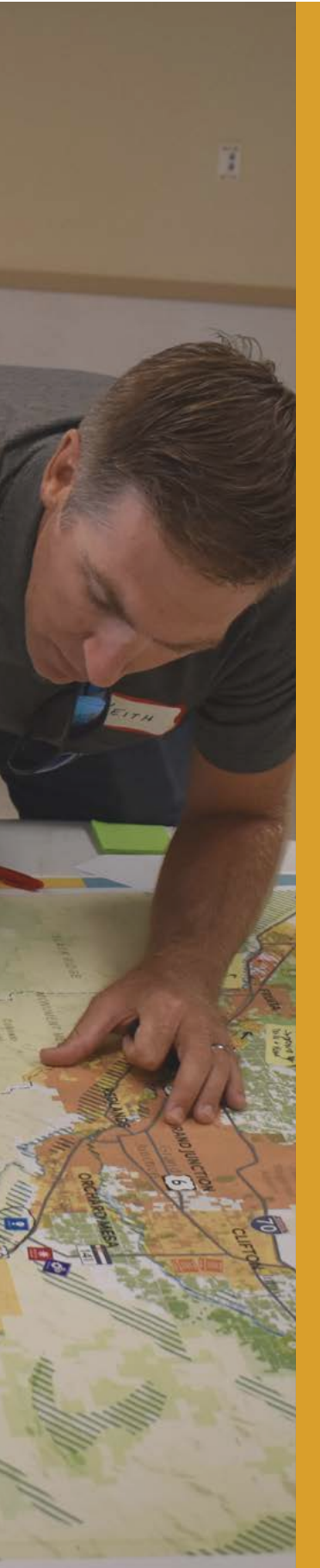
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Executive Summary



Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)

ABOUT MESA TOGETHER

INTRODUCTION

Mesa County is home to a diversity of special places, from the cities and rural communities to renowned agricultural areas and beloved public lands, including its namesake mesas and the Colorado National Monument. Mesa County is also evolving, with developing recreation and tourism industries, a diversifying economy and a growing population across both unincorporated and incorporated areas of the County. The previous Mesa County Master Plan, adopted in 1996, is no longer conducive for fostering economic resilience and sustaining qualities necessary to create a desirable place to live, work and visit.

The communities and lands of Mesa County have changed dramatically over the last few decades. With a history of boom and bust cycles in the energy industry, rapid growth in the region and increasing popularity of high desert recreation, Mesa County is facing new horizons. While change is inevitable and much of it has been positive for Mesa County, it is important to recognize what is collectively valued and strike a balance between growth with preservation of landscape, sense of community, history and culture. Mesa Together, or the Master Plan (the Plan), is a community-driven plan that brings the Mesa County community together to align around a desired shared future.

The Plan sets the stage for Mesa County's future. It serves a critical role of capturing a shared vision of what is most important to the people of Mesa County today and how the County and its communities promote these values amid continued development and growth. The Master Plan is a comprehensive review and update to the County's 1996 Master Plan, which was subsequently updated seven times since 1996. To ensure that the Master Plan continues to reflect the value and priorities of the community, this document will be updated regularly as environmental, social and economic conditions of the County change. The Plan is meant to be a living document that continues to reflect and respond to the current state of Mesa County.

The Master Plan integrates multiple plan elements, such as economic development, land use, transportation and recreation, which are often interrelated. The community vision and core values provide Mesa County with a 10-year strategic vision to guide policy and decision-making for the future. Through exploration of land use patterns, population, economic drivers, environmental factors and transportation needs, the planning process is rooted in data and supported by robust community engagement to craft a plan that is uniquely Mesa County.

The logo for 'Mesa Together' features the word 'Mesa' in a bold, red, sans-serif font, followed by 'Together' in a teal, sans-serif font. The text is set against a background of a hazy, mountainous landscape. A yellow brushstroke underline is positioned beneath the word 'Together'.

Mesa Together is a Master Plan that addresses the changes and opportunities in the County and creates a shared vision with tools for planning the future. All members of the Mesa County community have been an integral part of each step of the transparent and inclusive process.

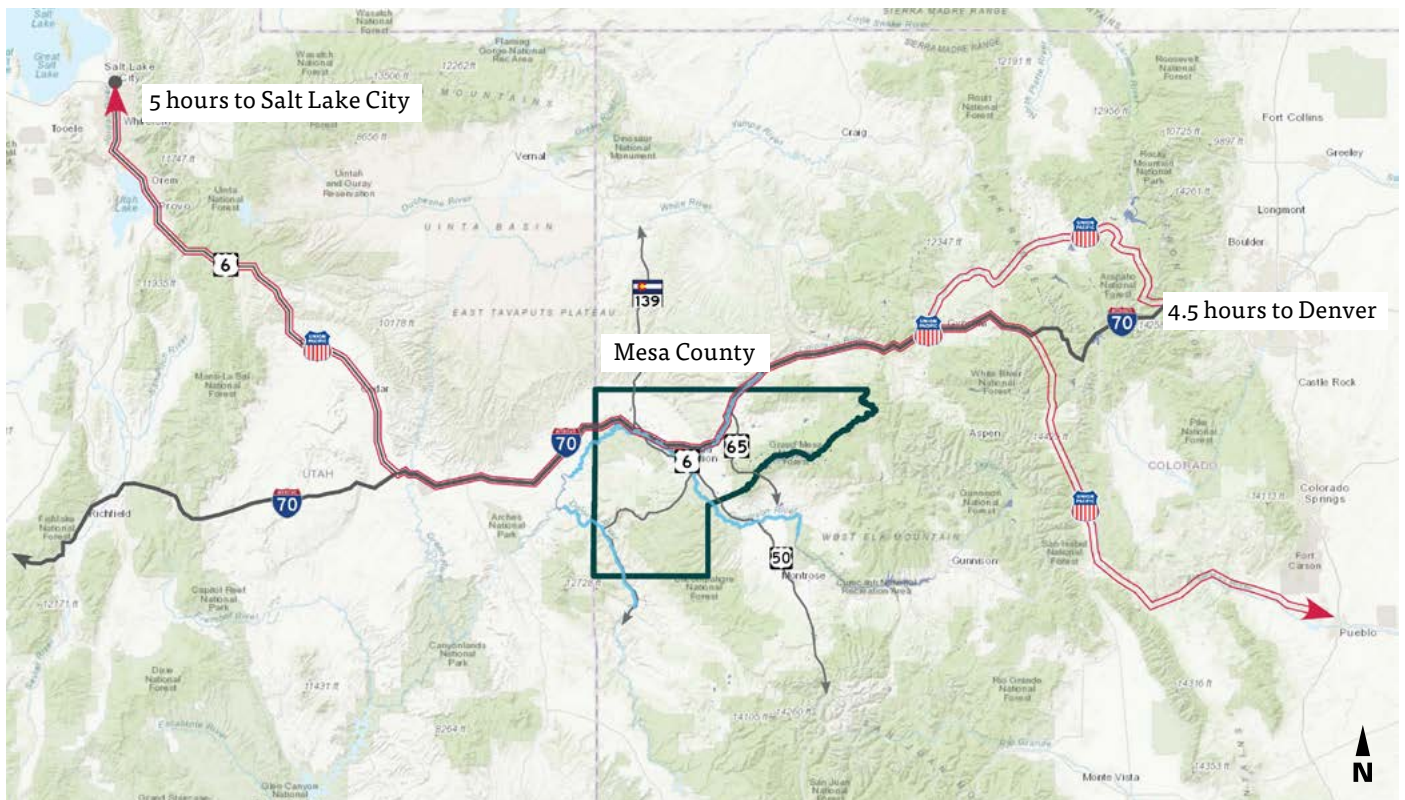
53% of Mesa County residents live in the five cities or towns that are incorporated.

47% of Mesa County residents live in unincorporated areas.

(Source: 2020 Decennial Census)

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Mesa County, Colorado is located at the western boundary of Colorado, equidistant between the major cities of Salt Lake City and Denver (Figure 1). Mesa County includes two cities (Grand Junction, Fruita), three towns (Palisade, Collbran, De Beque), five census-designated places (Clifton, Fruitvale, Loma, Orchard Mesa, Redlands) and several unincorporated rural communities and neighborhoods (Gateway, Mesa, Powderhorn, Glade Park). The population of Mesa County was estimated to be 155,703 by the US Decennial Census in 2020. Nearly equal proportions of the County's population live in incorporated and unincorporated areas, 53% and 47%, respectively (Figure 2). The County's population centers, both incorporated and unincorporated, are concentrated along the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers and transportation corridors Interstate 70 and US Highway 50 (Figure 3).



Legend

- County Boundary
- Highway/Interstate
- Railroad
- River

Figure 1: Regional Context Map
(Source: Design Workshop)

Mesa County Population Total: 155,703

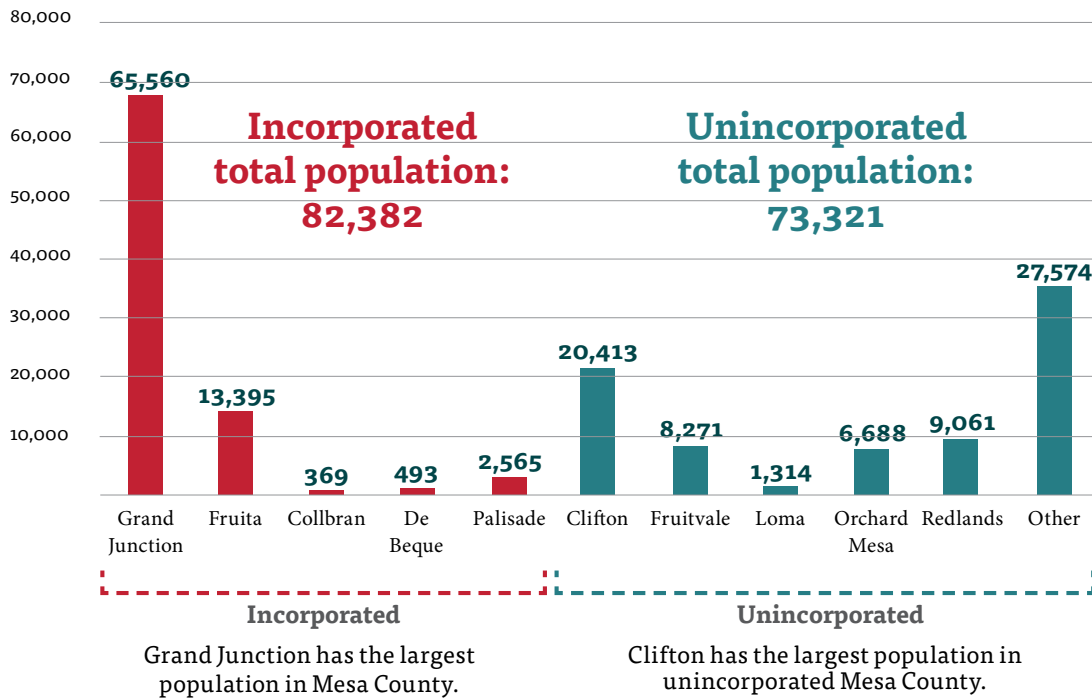


Figure 2: Incorporated vs. Unincorporated Populations
(Source: 2020 Decennial Census)

*The following are additional unincorporated areas but are not included due to lack of census data: Molina, Mesa, Powderhorn, Glade Park, Gateway, Unawep Canyon, Whitewater, Kannah Creek.

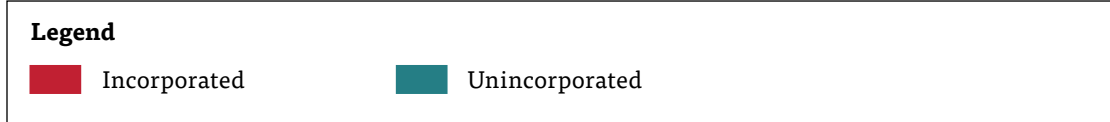
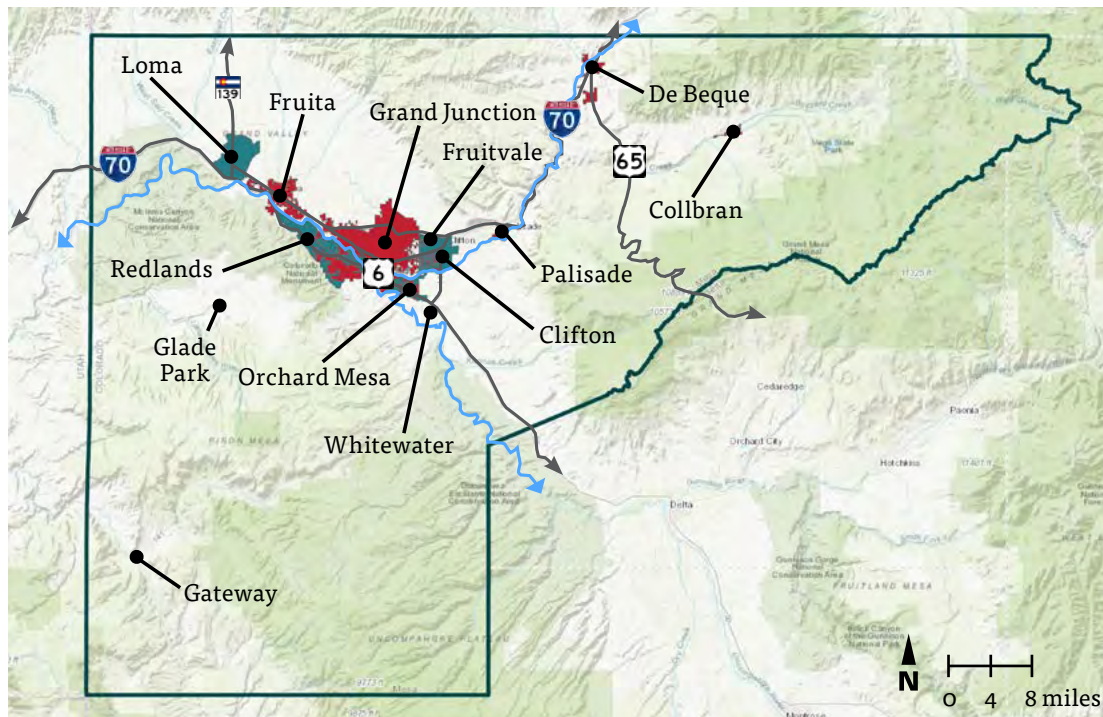


Figure 3: Incorporated vs. Unincorporated Areas Map
(Source: Mesa County)

What is the difference between incorporated and unincorporated?

Incorporated areas are governed via a municipality, such as a city or town, which provides its own plans.

Services are primarily provided by the municipality.

Unincorporated areas do not have a municipal government and are overseen by the County.

Utility services are provided through Special Districts, private operators, or are the responsibility of the land owner.

MASTER PLAN PROCESS

The Mesa Together Master Plan process took place within three phases to establish a clear vision for the County. The Plan highlights what makes the County special—and sets the stage to preserve those qualities for the future.

GENERAL

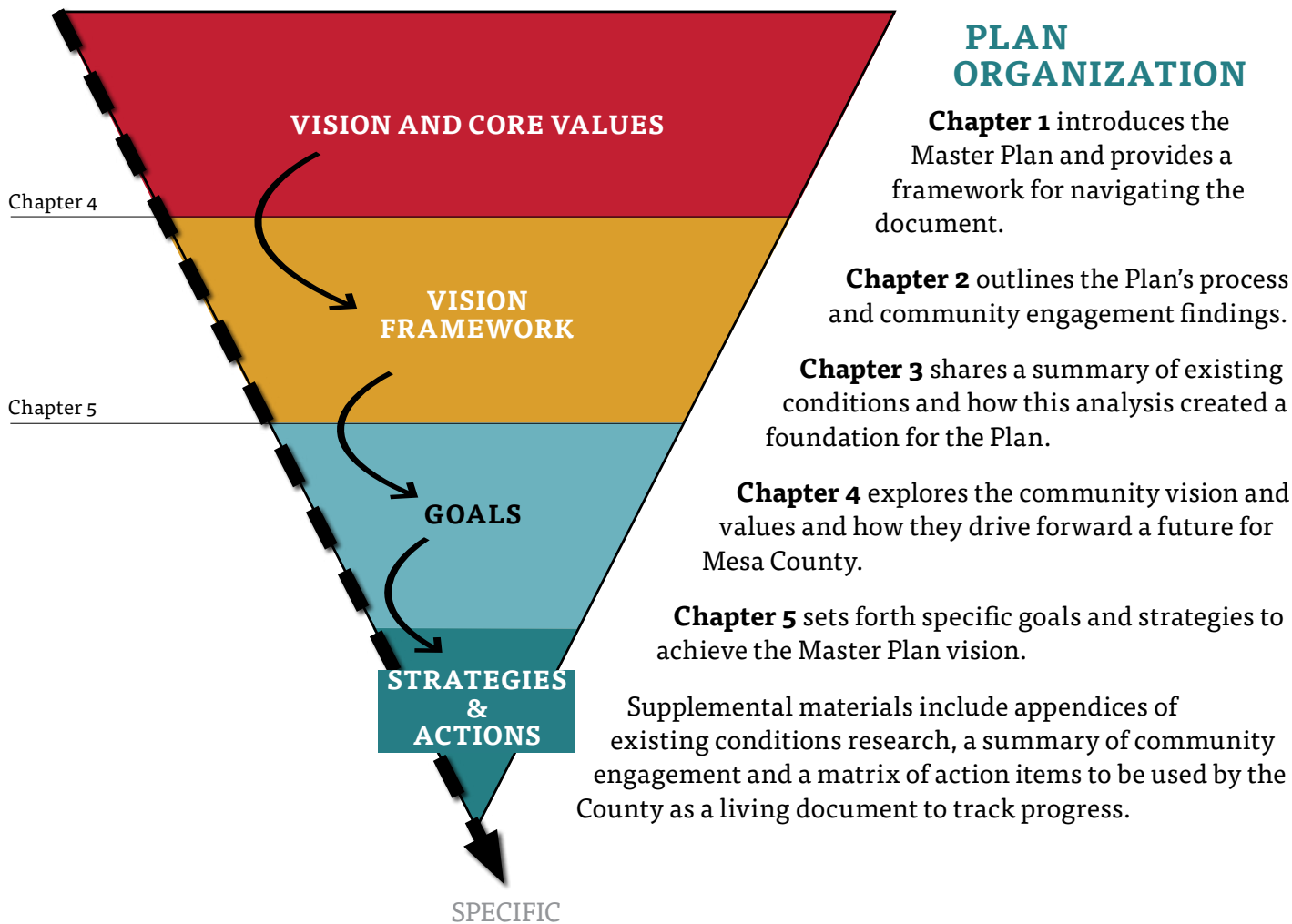


Figure 4: Master Plan Vision Framework
(Source: Design Workshop)

MASTER PLAN FRAMEWORK

The Plan vision describes the aspirational direction for the County, and the core values serve as guideposts for how to achieve that vision. These were developed based on current conditions and driving forces outlined in Chapter 3. The Vision Framework includes the Vision Maps and associated placetypes, crossroads and corridors, which are detailed in Chapter 4. The Plan includes nine overarching goals and key elements of the plan, which are laid out in Chapter 5. Goals and the associated strategies and actions create the path forward for how to achieve the vision (See Figure 4).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The voices of community members have been key to understanding existing conditions, establishing a vision and values, examining scenarios, and developing the plan vision, values and goals. The Master Plan is an outcome of the efforts of many, including County staff, Planning Commission (PC), the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members, focus group participants and the thousands of community members who gave their time taking surveys and attending meetings. Figure 5 highlights the voices that came together in the formation of the Master Plan.

All materials were shared on the Mesa Together website and via email to promote transparency at all stages of the project. Throughout this document, sidebars of ‘What We Heard’ callout specific findings from community input.

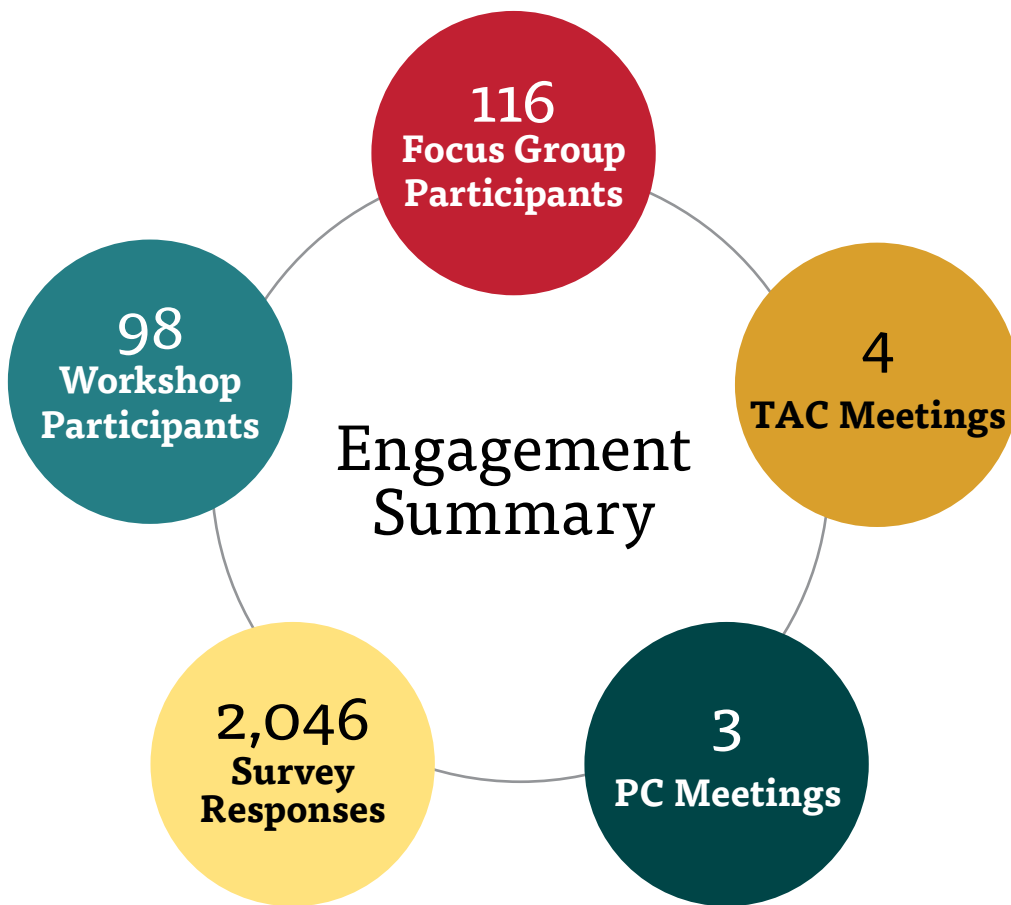


Figure 5: Engagement Summary
(Source: Design Workshop)

What We Heard... Key Findings

61% of respondents feel the quality of life in Mesa County is good or excellent while 27% feel it is about average, and 12% say it is not so good or poor.

The Mesa County Community would like to see this plan address housing costs and affordability.

Intentional planning for future growth is an important consideration.

The Mesa County Community values a high quality of life and small town feel.

Access to recreation and the beautiful setting are what many residents love about living in Mesa County.

There are some concerns around the unhoused population, crime, traffic and implementation of community aesthetics.

VISION AND CORE VALUES

The Plan’s vision and core values (Figure 6) work together to create the future vision for Mesa County. Mesa County is a place of contrasting communities - small, unincorporated towns driven by historic agriculture and urban settings. These four core community values were formed from community input about what is most important for Mesa County to focus on enhancing and protecting. The figure below describes these guiding core values of “Build Community,” “Economic Diversity and Strength,” “A Legacy of Rural Character,” and “Environmental Preservation and Resilience.”

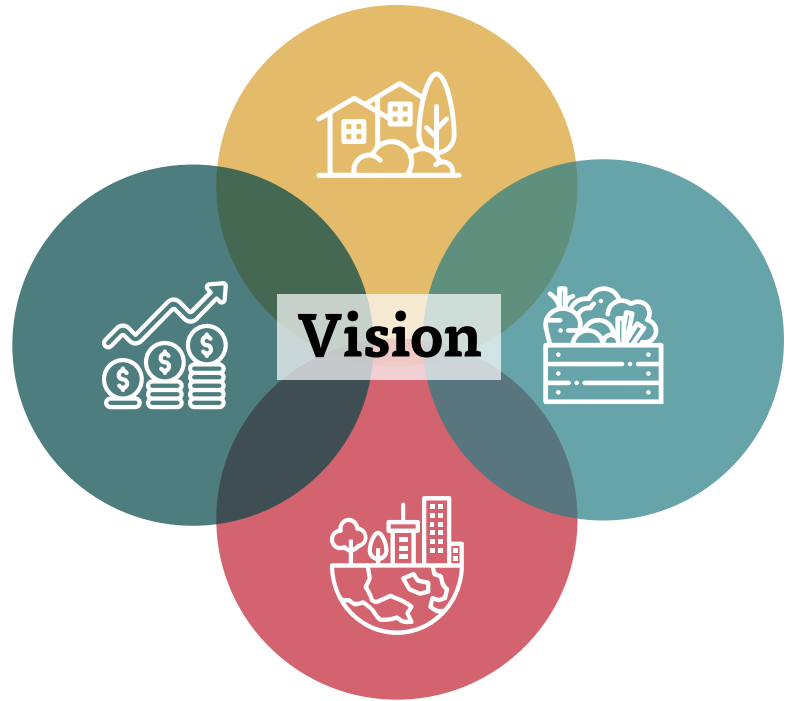


Figure 6: Vision and Core Values

CORE VALUES



Build Community

Mesa County communities are proud of their high quality of life, access to recreation and ease of mobility. A continued building of community that supports people with access to housing, transportation and job opportunities for all ages and stages of life is essential for the ongoing success of the County.



Economic Diversity and Strength

Mesa County prides itself on a strong and diversified economy that supports local industry. Continued economic development and diversification will promote stability and financial security for Mesa County residents into the future.



A Legacy of Rural Character

Mesa County’s rural and agricultural landscape is fundamental to local character and quality of life. The community has expressed a desire to protect and enhance agricultural and natural lands for future generations.



Environmental Preservation and Resilience

Mesa County’s abundance of natural areas is central to both the local character, agricultural traditions and economic future. Protecting and maintaining natural resources is a primary objective when looking to the future.

PLAN CONTENT HIGHLIGHTS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

An understanding of current trends and issues informs decision-making around future growth for the County. This is organized by the four core values. The existing conditions, as described in Chapter 3, are a result of extensive data collection, analysis and synthesis to set a strong foundation to guide the vision, values, goals and strategies in subsequent chapters.

BUILD COMMUNITY

The community survey demonstrated the desire for intentional planning to address future growth. There is an opportunity to preserve this community character and prevent sprawl that encroaches on agricultural lands and open space.

ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

The natural beauty of the region, recreational opportunities and quality of life are assets which provide a solid foundation for Mesa County's diversifying economy. Community engagement participants expressed a desire for a stronger economy that offers high-paying jobs, encourages local young adults to stay, and fosters the retention and expansion of small local businesses.

RURAL CHARACTER

For many Mesa County community members, the special quality of the rural setting, agricultural history and natural areas are defining features for a high quality of life. There is strong community support for agriculture, which has been a pillar of Mesa County's economy and a key part of its culture since the 1800s.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Grand Mesa, Colorado National Monument and Mount Garfield are iconic landscapes strongly associated with the visual image of Mesa County. As such, 90% of survey respondents chose the quality of the natural environment as their favorite aspect. These rural and remote areas of Mesa County are valued both environmentally and recreationally.

AREA OF STABILITY AND AREAS OF CHANGE ANALYSIS

The areas of stability and change mapping studies in Chapter 3 (Figure 21) consider where new development is less feasible and determine where areas of development could occur. It was identified that over 76% of the county land area is not suited for significant development and that scenario planning should focus on the remaining 24% of land area.

POTENTIAL FUTURES ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

Scenario planning answers, "If we grow like x, we can expect y." It helps a community imagine where and what growth might occur, what impacts it may bring and what resources are needed to ensure a good quality of life in the future. Scenario Planning is discussed in Chapter 3 (Figure 22-24).

The community workshop focused on the question, "How does the County want to grow?" and offered three growth alternatives. Overwhelmingly, community members indicated they prefer the majority of development to be directed toward denser areas and the capacity of existing roads and infrastructure to be considered. This understanding became the foundation for the Future Vision.

VISION FRAMEWORK

The vision maps highlight the different character areas of Mesa County. These maps convey the collective vision for the future, including areas to direct potential land uses through placetypes, crossroads and corridors.

The Overall Vision Map (Figure 7) and Supporting Vision Maps in Chapter 4 are a result of extensive land analysis and community feedback with an emphasis on key understanding from the community workshop and scenario planning. The vision focuses growth towards incorporated communities and growing communities, such as Clifton and Whitewater, that have the greatest potential for extension of supportive infrastructure and utilities. Crossroads, areas of focused amenities and services, are aligned with corridors, roads and pathways that connect the communities. This guiding direction for growth discourages significant land use changes to agricultural lands and areas that possess valued environmental qualities. The vision for Mesa County is one that incorporates the four core values to build community and support economic diversity while balancing the rural character and areas of high environmental quality.

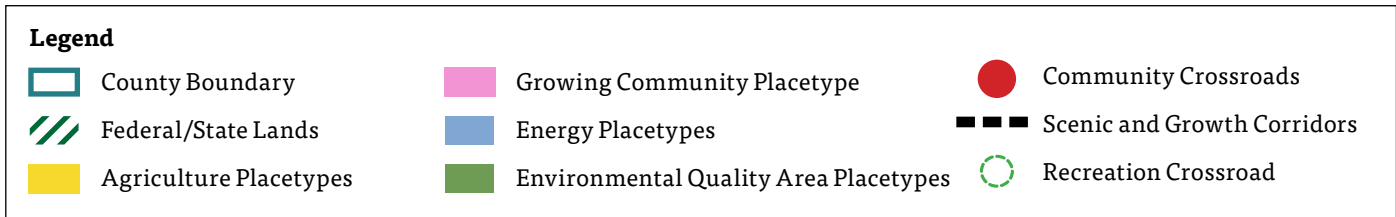
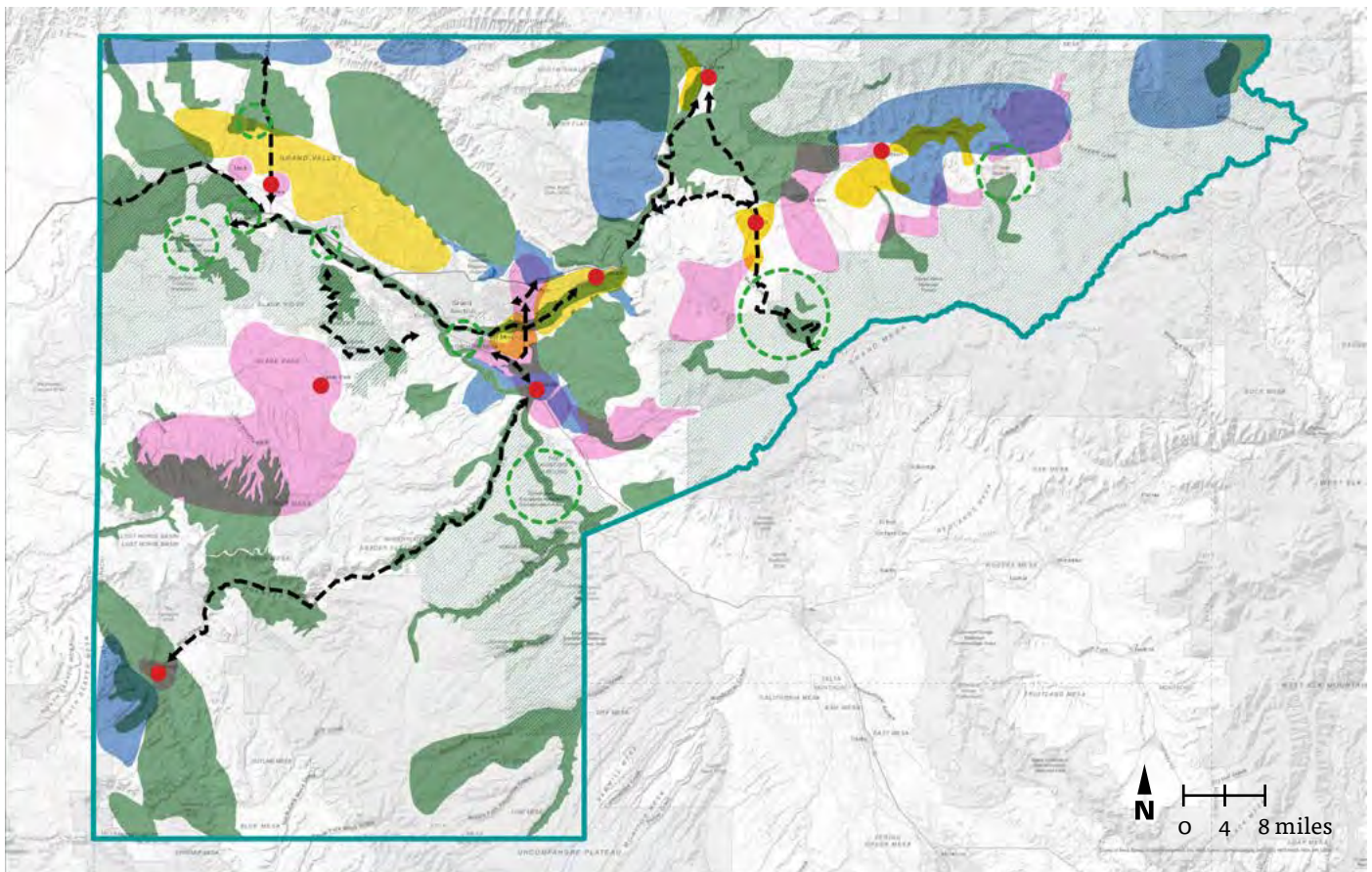


Figure 7: Overall Vision Map
(Source: Design Workshop)

GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

To achieve the vision, nine goals—each with an overarching aspirational statement—organize the key elements of the Master Plan (Figure 8). The goals were derived from topics the community identified as important and align with the core values and future vision of the Master Plan. Each goal is supported with several strategies and corresponding actions as detailed in Chapter 5.



Figure 8: Goals, Strategies and Actions Summary
(Source: Design Workshop)

2

Mesa Together Plan Process



Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)

PROCESS OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Mesa Together Master Plan is an integration of extensive community feedback, interwoven with research and analysis efforts. The process has gathered input from residents of Mesa County’s unincorporated areas, municipalities and stakeholders. This chapter describes the plan process, including plan reviews and community engagement findings, serving as a foundation of the Plan and setting the stage for subsequent chapters.

PROCESS

The following outlines the activities that occurred within the three phases (Figure 9):

- **Phase 1-Pre-Plan Development:** (September 2021 through February 2022) This phase created the foundation for the plan effort. September 2021 began with a project kickoff meeting and the development of a Technical Advisory Committee and Community Engagement Plan. A review of previous plan efforts served as an invaluable resource for understanding both existing conditions and projections for the future of Mesa County. In addition, a series of topic-based focus group meetings informed an initial understanding of plan issues and opportunities. This understanding was to be used for analyses in Phase 2.
- **Phase 2-Plan Development:** (March 2022 through November 2022) This phase began with a community survey to provide an understanding of the community values. In addition, research was conducted on existing conditions for all plan elements. Community values collected through surveys, focus groups and public meetings were shared with the community through presentations and the website. This foundation was critical to craft potential future growth scenarios, which were shared through a series of open house workshops. Community feedback led to the development of the Plan vision and identified future land uses to support those vision and goals.
- **Phase 3-Plan Adoption:** (December 2022 through May 2023) The final phase involved the development of a draft and final plan document and a poster campaign to share the outcomes with the community. The Mesa Together Master Plan was finalized and adopted in May 2023.

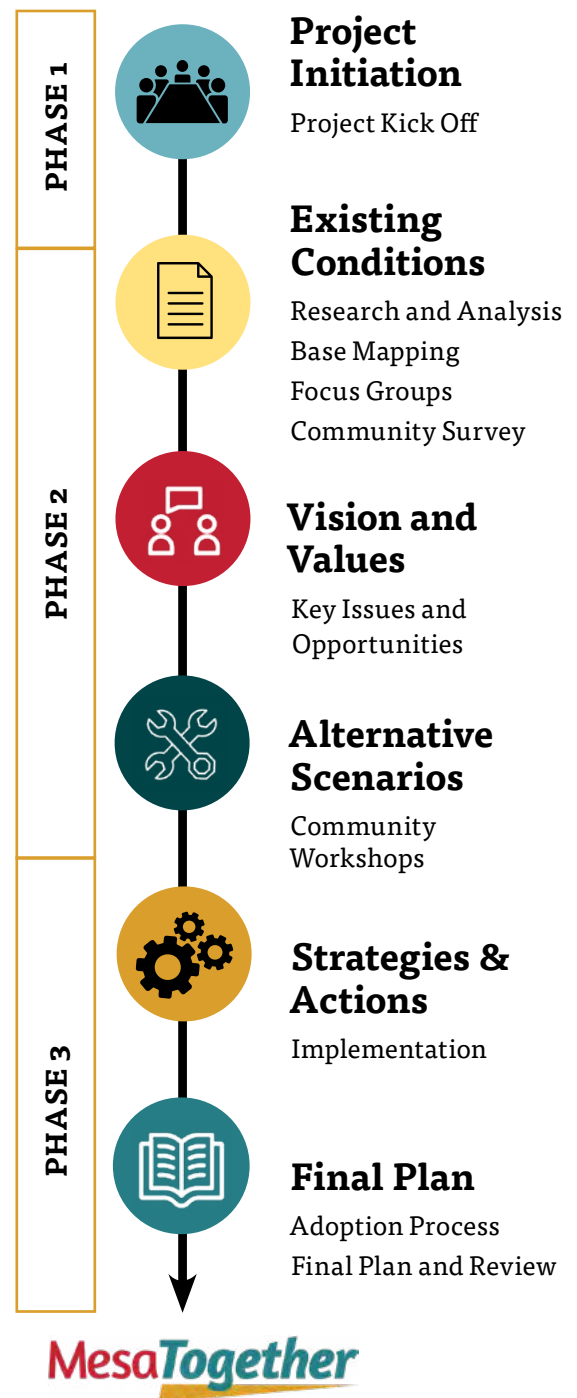


Figure 9: Process Diagram
(Source: Design Workshop)

MASTER PLAN REQUIREMENTS: WHAT IS THIS MASTER PLAN?

Mesa Together is an official public document adopted by the County's Planning Commission that guides the physical development for unincorporated Mesa County and is an update to the County's 1996 Master Plan. It is a comprehensive master plan, required by the state, that promotes broad community values and provides a planning process for orderly growth and development that balances competing demands in the built and natural environment while considering regional impacts. The Plan guides County policy decisions by outlining shared long-range priorities and goals. It is not a binding regulatory document and does not create or mandate policy. The Plan was created in accordance with the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) and Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Comprehensive Plan standards.

The Plan provides essential goals and strategies that County staff, residents and businesses can share. After adoption, Master Plan policies can be incorporated into the Land Development Code to ensure future development reflects the intention of the Plan.

A Master Plan is...

A strategic guidebook for policy decisions and priorities.

An integration of existing planning work.

A long-range tool for planning, policy, financing + action.

A reflection of the community's desires.

Aspirations to establish goals.

Required by State Statute.

A Master Plan is not...

Zoning.

A set of land use code standards.

Detailed budget document.

Specific regulations, requirements mandates or ordinances.

MESA COUNTY OVER THE PAST DECADE



2010 - 2020:
8,000+ population
increase



5.9%
population growth
over 10 years



Development
pressures on
agricultural
land



Industry
shifts



Expanding
economic and
business
development

Source: Colorado State Demographer, 2020

PLAN ALIGNMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN

Mesa County initiated a six-month strategic planning process to craft an action-oriented roadmap to guide internal decision-making in Mesa County. The Mesa County 2022 Strategic Plan identified seven core values of Mesa County to inspire action for the next one to five years using definitive criteria for achieving the County's vision. The Strategic Plan provides alignment with this Master Plan, which is able to dive deeper into specific strategies from the Strategic Plan, specifically around Initiative 3: Build Community, Together.

The vision for the Master Plan, set forth by the strategic plan, is "to be the builders of the best place to live, work and play for all generations."

Mesa County Strategic Plan Vision Statement:

*We are the builders of the best
place to live, work and play
for all generations.*

Values from the 2022 Mesa County Strategic Plan

- » Excellence: We set the pace with great employees.
- » Collaboration: We work together, leading toward a shared purpose.
- » Transparency: We are open in our decision-making to build trust.
- » Communication: We listen to each other, communicate openly and value everyone's input.
- » Principled: We stick to what we believe and are innovative in our approach.
- » Servant Leadership: We put our community first.
- » Proactive: We are active problem solvers for a better future.

The Master Plan seeks alignment with Initiative 3: *Build Community, Together*. Mesa County serves a *broad and diverse community*. Initiative 3 demonstrates a unified effort from all Mesa County staff to build trust with citizens and to promote a high quality of life to all residents.

Support community efforts that improve public health, welfare and safety: This goal identifies the responsibility of Mesa County to provide services that support health, welfare and safety of all people in the community, especially those with limited resources or decreased capacity to maintain a standard of care.

Ensure proactive services to areas with growing and/or changing demographics: This goal recognizes the nature of change as the Mesa County community continues to grow and cultural shifts require intentional and thoughtful planning for a bright future.

Source: 2022 Mesa County Strategic Plan

EXISTING PLAN REVIEW AND PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

Previous planning efforts, including both county-level and community-level plans within unincorporated Mesa County, provide a foundation of understanding for this plan. The Master Plan utilizes these past plan efforts as an essential component to build upon during the planning process. A full summary of the plans has been provided in the Plan Review Summary Memo (see Appendix C), which identifies a more detailed assessment of findings, including recommendations that directly and indirectly impact this Master Plan.

The review process included the identification of common ground between plans where there are synergies between each community’s perspectives on future growth. A common theme of the plans reviewed is a desire to maintain quality of life by initiating policies and actions that will accommodate and encourage future growth while also ensuring the preservation of the natural resources and rural character. Another theme that emerged is the need for coordination between federal, state and local jurisdiction.



Figure 10: Existing Plans
(Source: Various)

EXISTING PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY

Clifton-Fruitvale Community Plan (2006)— The Clifton-Fruitvale Community Plan was prepared to help guide future development necessary to keep up with the significant growth in the area. It gives direction to specific management topics that together build a sustainable future for growth, development and redevelopment.

Community Health Needs Assessment (2021)— The three primary goals of this assessment are to provide a current snapshot of the health status of Mesa County, bring attention to areas of concern needing community action and fulfill assessment needs for all partners of the local public health system. This assessment is based on five social determinants of health: Economic Stability, Education, Health Care and Access, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Social and Community Context.

Gateway Rural Community Plan (2004)— The purpose for Gateway Rural Community Plan was to identify and articulate the needs of the area that had changed over the years. It was designed to help achieve community goals by providing specific direction for implementation.

Glade Park (2014)— The Glade Park Plan gives more detailed and specific direction than what is provided in the 2006 Rural Master Plan. The Goals, Policies & Actions were written to reflect the issues that were most important and relevant to the community of Glade Park.

Grand Valley 2045 RTP Update (2022)— The document identifies the types of investments, priorities and strategies needed to address transportation needs in the region. In addition, it will guide future investments that reduce congestion, improve safety, promote alternatives to the private automobile, enhance connectivity and comfort for ped/cyclists, and increase reliability and frequency of the system.

Loma Community Plan (2009)— The Loma Community Plan acts as a guidebook on how to best continue growth based on stated conditions and future projections. The document, made in conjunction with the public, touches on public facilities, transportation, neighborhoods, land use and community appearance.

Mack Community Plan (2012)— The Mack Community Plan guides growth to preserve the existing conditions while preparing for future growth impacts.

Mesa County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2012)— This document was developed to address wildfire threat to Mesa County communities and provide recommendations to abate catastrophic wildfire and minimize the impacts. Multijurisdictional agencies (federal, state and local), organizations and residents

joined together to develop the Mesa County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (MCCWPP).

Mesa County Resource Management Plan (2020)— The Mesa County Resource Management Plan was adopted to influence development and implementation of federal policies, programs and other decision making for resources that affect Mesa County. It helps evaluate, articulate and protect the County's interest and access to surrounding federal and public lands and resources.

Mesa County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020)— The Mesa County Hazard Mitigation Plan was created to offer recommendations and mitigation tactics to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property which may be vulnerable to natural hazards.

Mesa County Mineral and Energy Resources Master Plan (2011)— The Mesa County Mineral and Energy Resources Master Plan offers strategies for Mesa County to analyze its current mineral and energy resources. It sets goals for the future of these resources to help preserve and/or make them more sustainable. In addition, it may help in minimizing the impact such resources have on the environment.

Mesa Countywide Land Use Plan, Chapter 4 Rural Planning Area and Future Land Use Plan (last updated in 2013)— Chapter 4 of the Mesa Countywide Land Use Plan provided direction for Mesa County on how best to develop. Many of the goals and strategies recommended in the document were implemented into County policies and ordinances. Moreover, it provided direction for general growth and acted as a backbone for the community plans.

Whitewater Community Plan (last updated in 2011)— The Whitewater Community Plan was needed to determine and prepare for an acceptable level of growth and development. It recognized that new growth pressures faced the area and suggested policies that accommodated present and future community needs.

Mesa/Powderhorn Plan (2012)— The Mesa/Powderhorn Plan identified many unique characteristics, including rural and pastoral character, a strong sense of community and key natural amenities. In order to maintain and grow upon these qualities, as well as others, the plan developed goals, policies and actions. Components of the document include services, transportation, land use, community image and character, environment, parks, recreation, open lands and economic development.

COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement process was designed to weave technical content with community input and utilize several methods to encourage broad participation (Figure 11). A cornerstone of the engagement process was a countywide community survey, which captured demographically representative feedback from residents throughout the County. A full report of this survey is included in Appendix D. Several other components, including focus group meetings, popup boards, and open house workshops, supported and reinforced what was learned from the survey. The Mesa County Planning Commission was updated monthly on the progress of the Master Plan. The following provides a summary of findings from each engagement effort. This included four Technical Advisory Committee meetings, 116 focus group participants, 2,046 survey responses, 98 community open house workshop participants and three planning commission meetings. A full report of community engagement, including methods and findings, is included in Appendix E.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

METHODOLOGY

The Mesa County Master Plan Survey was intended to gather a broad cross section of community feedback on a variety of Master Plan topics. The survey addressed quality of life, community assets and challenges, growth, economic development, transportation, environment and natural resources, parks and recreation, and additional topics.

The survey was fielded between March 31 and May 12, 2022. The survey yielded 2,046 responses from residents throughout Mesa County (including municipalities and unincorporated areas). The survey utilized two methods: 1) a random sample mail back survey with an option to complete the survey online, and 2) an open link survey made available to all residents, which was widely publicized by Mesa County and partner governments and organizations.

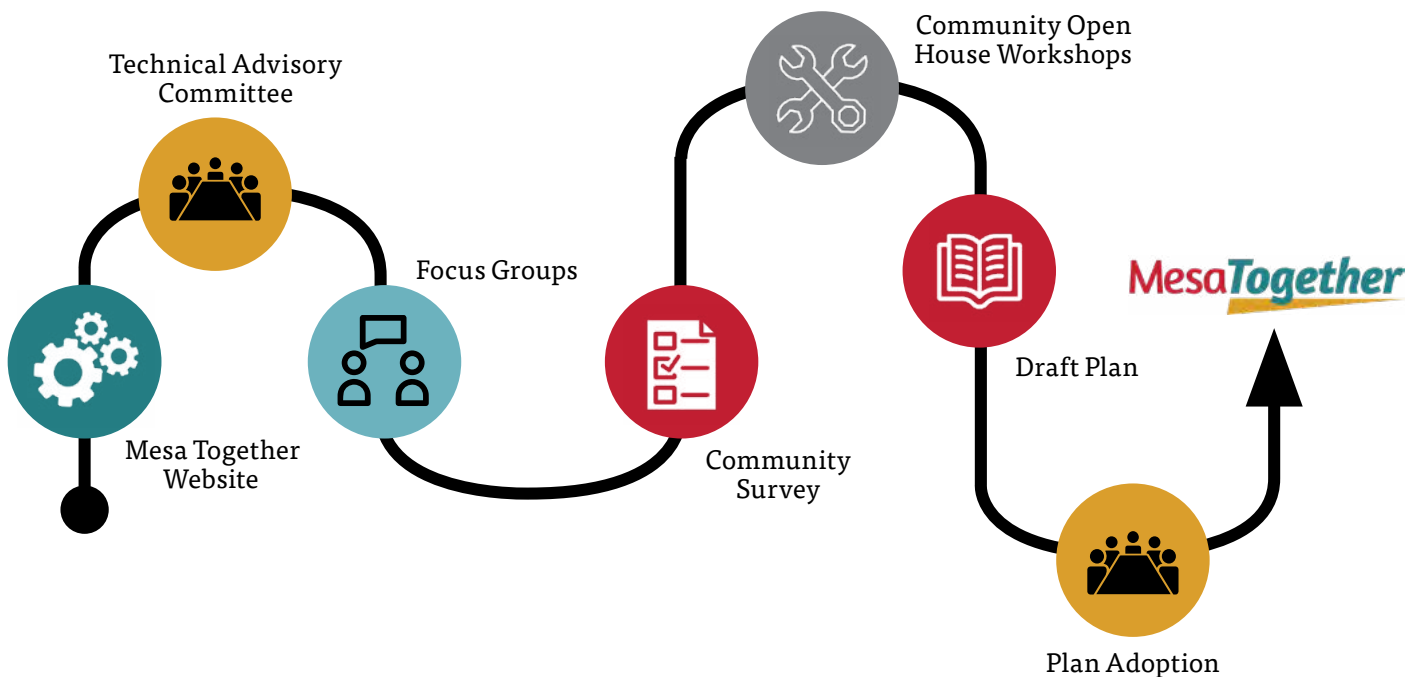



Figure 11: Community Engagement Process
(Source: Design Workshop)

For analysis and reporting purposes, the responses from each survey were weighted to match population norms for Mesa County to ensure the results were demographically representative. The random sample survey was mailed to 4,600 Mesa County households, with a total of 4,412 surveys delivered. Smaller and less affluent communities were deliberately oversampled to ensure meaningful response volumes for these communities. The cover letter accompanying the mail survey was written in both English and Spanish, and a Spanish version of the survey was made available online. A follow-up reminder postcard, with English and Spanish instructions, was sent approximately five days after the initial survey mailing. A total of 955 responses were received, for a response rate of 21.6%. Separately, the open link survey yielded 1,091 responses from throughout Mesa County. Many responses were from Grand Junction (Figure 12); however, response rates were generally in alignment with the representative population of the entirety of Mesa County.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

The Mesa County Master Plan Survey provides a useful foundation for understanding community goals and priorities on Master Plan topics.

- Most respondents feel the quality of life in Mesa County is good or excellent (61%), while 27% feel it is about average and 12% say it is not so good or poor.
- Amid the highest rated characteristics of Mesa County are the natural beauty of the area, the recreational opportunities and “overall ease of getting to places you usually have to visit.”
- Lower-rated characteristics include the variety of housing options.



Is Mesa County headed in the right direction?

78% of respondents believe so.

(Source: Community Survey 2022)

Where is your residence located?

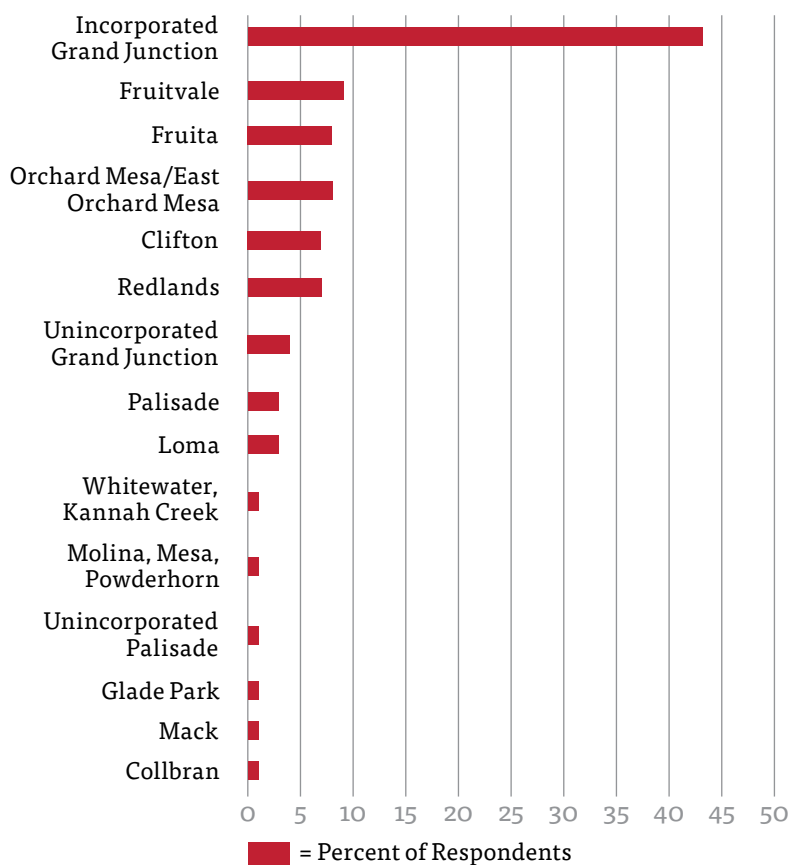


Figure 12: Respondents
(Source: Community Survey 2022)

Two Survey Methods

1. Paper Invitation



955 Responses

Survey mailed to 4,600 households (4,412 delivered), with options to complete paper survey or respond online

2. Open Link



1,091 Responses

Online survey available to all residents through mesacountysurvey.com and www.mesasurvey.com

(Source: Community Survey 2022)

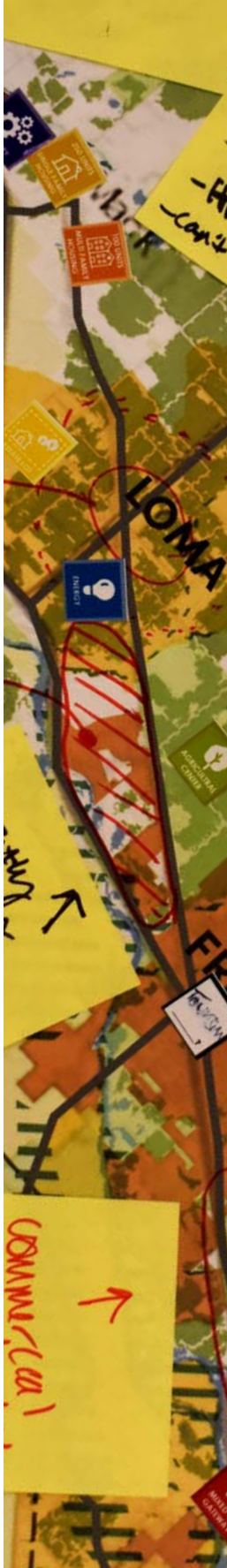
UNINCORPORATED VS. INCORPORATED RESPONSES

Due to the number of responses from more populated areas of the County, survey data was cross tabulated. Cross tabulation does not indicate significant differences in responses for residents living in unincorporated Mesa County compared to residents who live in municipalities (incorporated Mesa County). Overall, there are only moderate differences in the opinions of residents of the incorporated versus unincorporated areas of the county; the two groups exhibit a much greater degree of commonality than difference.

- Unincorporated residents give somewhat lower ratings than incorporated residents for the overall quality of life in Mesa County. Unincorporated residents are also somewhat more likely to feel that Mesa County has improved as a place to live over the past 5-10 years.
- Unincorporated residents give somewhat lower ratings than incorporated residents for sense of community, overall feelings of safety and opportunities to participate in community matters.
- Unincorporated residents are less likely to cite the following attributes as things they like best

about living in Mesa County: friendliness /sense of community, proximity to groceries and daily shopping needs, ease of walking and biking around the area, overall sense of personal safety, quality of public services (safety, sanitation, water, etc.), proximity to eating and drinking establishments, quality of local neighborhoods and cost of housing. Conversely, unincorporated residents are more likely to cite the importance of agricultural / ranching / rural areas as one of the things they like best about living in the county.

- Unincorporated residents put somewhat less priority than incorporated residents on the following transportation improvements: increase availability and quality of sidewalks, increase availability of walking paths and biking trails, add street lighting (nighttime lighting) and improve long-distance bus service (e.g., to Denver). Conversely, unincorporated residents put somewhat higher priority than incorporated residents on improving maintenance of streets.
- Regarding economic development, unincorporated residents place somewhat lower priority on encouraging and supporting renewable energy development while incorporated residents place less emphasis on supporting natural gas extraction.



TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) includes representatives from the County and the County's incorporated municipalities, boards and commissions, regional transportation, and utility districts. This group met four times throughout the plan process to review existing conditions, growth scenarios and potential futures, vision framework, land use classifications and the draft plan. The TAC played a key role in developing the plan goals and strategies. Their roles included reviewing information and data from the project team, providing feedback on deliverables, and serving as a project ambassador to inform municipal and public interests about the effort.

FOCUS GROUPS

In November 2021, eight focus group meetings brought together groups of 10 to 20 stakeholders, industry experts and members of the public to discuss a preliminary understanding of the foundational issues and opportunities that are central to the themes of this Master Plan. Discussion aimed to establish the current state of the County, to define trends and explore potential future trajectories and desired directions. These meetings focused on economic development, energy, land use and capacity, building trust in government and civic engagement, recreation, culture and tourism, rural lifestyle and housing, sustainability and resilience, and transportation. Discussions within each meeting covered a diverse range of topics, including the importance of supporting a diverse and locally based economy, growth that preserves rural and natural lands, the need for expanded services in

unincorporated areas, considerate and paced expansion of recreation tourism, pragmatic approaches to renewable energy transitions and the importance of considering future drought forecasts within various industries.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE WORKSHOPS

In September 2022 community members provided critical feedback on the plan drivers and potential futures at a community open house workshops. Three meetings were convened during the morning, afternoon and evening at the Mesa County Fairgrounds. Each workshop included an informational session, questions using keypad polling and a mapping activity for participants to locate potential development and growth. Following the meetings, an online option was shared to the website on the platform Social Pinpoint, which offered a virtual format of the activities provided at the open house.

Both in person and online, community members emphasized the importance of protecting Mesa County's agricultural lands and natural resources. Participants favored focused growth within select unincorporated areas and prioritize minimal impacts to existing agricultural areas. Feedback supported a mix of housing typologies, especially affordable housing. Community members expressed an interest in green energy transitions close to the population centers. Participants expressed a desire for improved connectivity of recreational corridors and expanded recreational use within open space lands as well as for measures that might prevent overuse and undue harmful impacts on those lands.



Photo - Community Open House Workshops (Source: Design Workshop)

MESA TOGETHER WEBSITE

The Mesa Together website was created to share information with the community. Every effort was made to post process documents and notice opportunities for engagement to ensure transparency throughout the plan process. The website provided key background information about the project, including existing conditions and a focus group summary. The community survey and virtual engagement from the community open house were made available, as well as public notices for engagement events. The County also linked the project website to the county webpages to encourage participation.

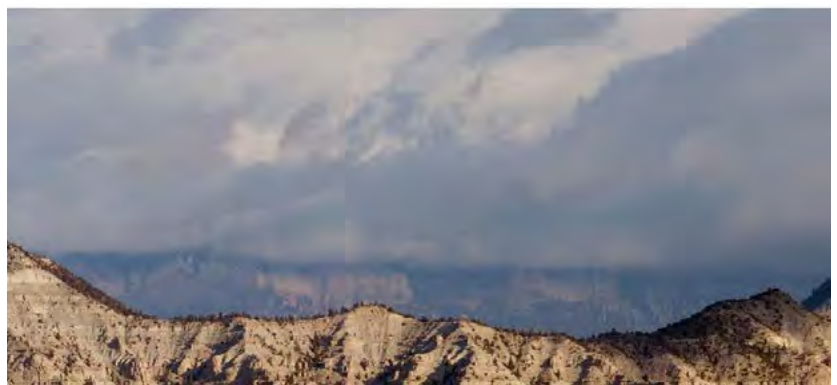
MesaTogether



[About](#)

[Background](#)

[Engagement](#)



(Source: Mesa Together Website, Mesa County)

KEY COMMUNITY FINDINGS



Most respondents feel the quality of life in Mesa County is good or excellent (61%), while 27% feel it is about average, and 12% say it not so good/poor.



Mesa County's existing rural development policies have broad support, such as minimizing impacts on natural areas and scenic vistas and protecting agricultural practices.



Amid the highest rated characteristics of Mesa County are the natural beauty of the area, the recreational opportunities and "overall ease of getting to places you usually have to visit".



Growth that is intentional was a common desire of the community. However, opinions are mixed regarding the rate of growth of single-family and multifamily residential development. A significant share of respondents feel that housing growth has been too little or about right. There is broad agreement that Mesa County has too few starter homes, and some feel that Mesa County has too few apartments and housing for seniors.



Homelessness, crime, drought and traffic congestion were commonly identified as concerns in the survey.



There is broad support for a variety of economic development actions; the most supported are retaining and expanding local businesses, attracting high-quality jobs and supporting agriculture.



The overall direction the County government is taking and the economic health of the county response was mixed from poor to favorable.



The highest priority transportation improvements include improved maintenance of streets, better management of traffic flow on major roads and expanding air travel service.



When asked what they most like about their neighborhood, top responses include 'general level of safety in neighborhood' (63%), 'low noise and traffic levels' (55%), and 'proximity to groceries and other basic services' (51%). Leading neighborhood dislikes are 'lack of affordability' (32%), 'the places I go are further than a 15-minute walk' (26%) and 'too much traffic' (20%).

(Source: Community Survey 2022 and Workshops, Design Workshop)

3

Existing Conditions



CURRENT TRENDS AND COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes community demographics followed by analysis and understanding organized around the four core community values, (1) Build Community, (2) Economic Diversity, (3) Rural Character and (4) Natural Resources. Each section includes data and analysis, feedback derived from the community and a key understanding which informs the Plan’s vision and goals.

Data sources include discussion with staff and stakeholders, Colorado State Demographer population projections, publicly available American Community Survey and Census data from ESRI, and GIS data available from Mesa County. A complete summary of Existing Conditions can be found in Appendix A and detailed analysis of the topical areas can be found in the Technical Memos in Appendix B.

Core Values



Build Community



Economic Diversity and Strength



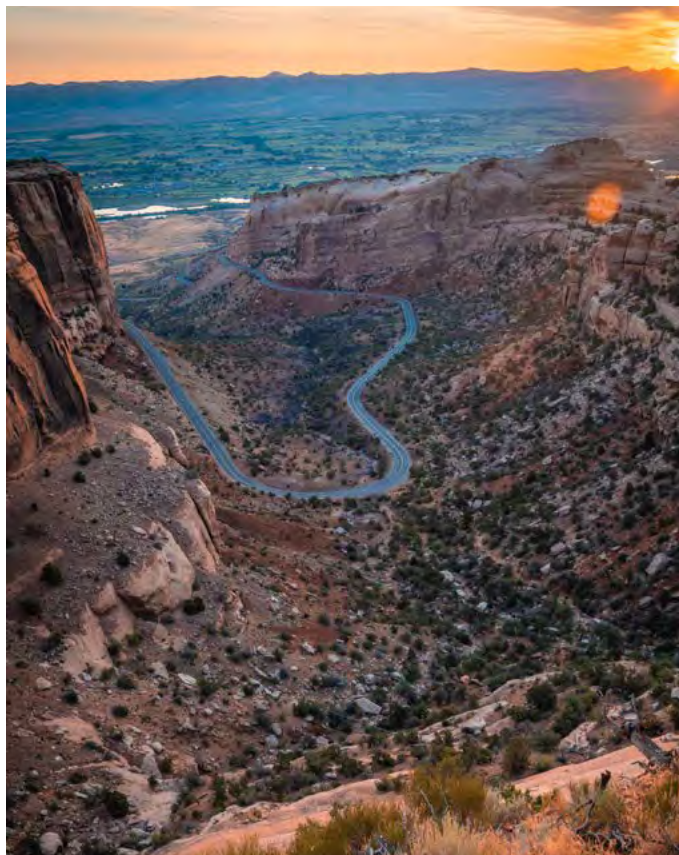
A Legacy of Rural Character



Environmental Preservation and Resilience

CONTEXT & HISTORY

Mesa County is the most populous county of the Western Slope of Colorado and includes the City of Grand Junction as the urban center. The historic presence of rail and highways has played a significant role in the region for access and connectivity. The Grand Junction Regional Airport is an increasingly important regional asset for the growth of Mesa County’s communities and tourism industry. Mesa County is renowned for its varied natural assets—striking mesas, red sandstone monoliths, canyons, rivers and agricultural areas. The local geology, from the confluence of the Gunnison and Colorado River to the surrounding mesas are significant contributors to the County’s natural lands which include the Colorado National Monument, McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area, the Grand Mesa and the Book Cliffs. These natural assets are also an important draw for tourists and residents who enjoy the many recreational opportunities that these areas offer.



Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)

DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

Mesa County totals a population of 155,703 and 63,133 households (Figure 13). Most of the population is centered in Grand Junction and Clifton, and along the I-70 / Colorado River corridor. Population density is relatively low in all other areas of the county.

AGE

The average age is 39.9 (Figure 14), which is older than the Colorado average of 37.1. The average age of the population has been increasing yearly since 2015. Clifton and Fruita have lower median ages, comparative to the state average at 37.1, having a greater percentage of households with children in these communities. The single largest age group is 60-64 age group, suggesting a significant retiree or emerging retiree population.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Strong educational institutions can play a major role in quality of life, public health and economic growth. Mesa County provides multiple access points to education including multiple K-12 schools within the county and higher education from Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College. Thirty percent of Mesa County residents have college degrees (Figure 15).

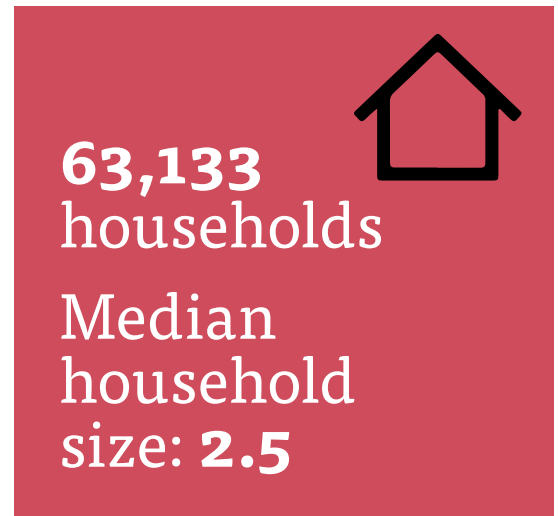


Figure 13: Households
(Source: United States Census, 2020)

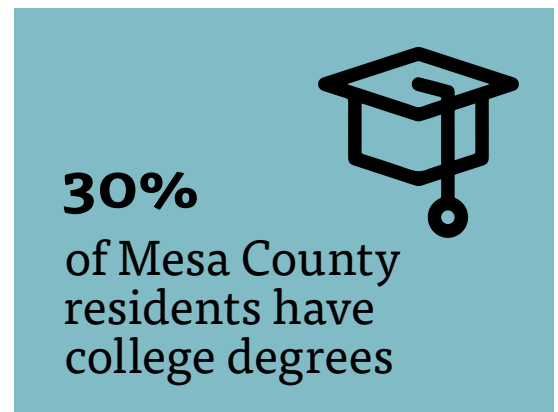


Figure 15: Educational Attainment
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Community Survey (2019)



Figure 14: Mesa County Age Distribution
(Source: United States Census, 2020)



BUILD COMMUNITY

VALUE STATEMENT

Mesa County communities are proud of their high quality of life, access to recreation and ease of transit access. A continued building of community that supports people with access to housing, transit and job opportunities for all ages and stages of life is essential for the ongoing success of the County.

WHAT WE HEARD

Housing Needs:

- » 65% of respondents believe that there are too few starter homes.
- » 44% of respondents believe that there are too few apartments.
- » 41% of respondents believe there are too few housing options for seniors.
- » 69% of respondents rated variety of housing options as fair/poor.

Transportation Needs:

- » Most survey respondents highly rated the ease of access to key destinations.
- » Top priorities include:
 - Improving roadway maintenance (68%).
 - Better management of traffic flow and congestion (60% on major roads and 53% on local roads).
 - Expanding air service to the Grand Junction airport (59%).
 - Increasing availability of active transportation facilities (52%).

FUTURE GROWTH IN MESA COUNTY

Mesa County residents value the small-town feel and high quality of life. Many survey respondents stated a love for living in Mesa County attributed to a strong sense of safety and community. There is also a tension that growth on the Western Slope might impact the sense of community, culture and history of why residents choose to call Mesa County home. Population growth is projected to occur across the age spectrum, from children to adults to seniors, with the greatest percentage increases among persons aged 75 and older.

PROJECTED GROWTH

Mesa County has experienced ongoing growth over the past several decades, and this growth is expected to continue. Mesa County's population is projected to grow from 155,703 in 2020 to approximately 202,000 by 2040 according to the State Demographer, an equivalent increase of about 2,300 people per year. The projected percentage increase over this future 20 year period is approximately 30%; a slightly lower rate than the 34% experienced over the previous 20 years.



Palisade (Source: Mesa County)

HOUSEHOLDS

Similar to population increases, the number of households are projected to grow significantly, from an estimated 63,133 in 2020 to approximately 83,000 by 2040, according to the State Demographer (Table 2). Unincorporated areas account for 45.5% of the county’s total households, with municipalities accounting for the remainder. The county’s total households grew by 8.7% from 2010 to 2020, with three-quarters of the growth (75%) occurring the county’s municipalities, and a one-quarter (25%) occurring in unincorporated areas (Table 3).

Mesa County Population and Households: 2000-2040 projections			
Year	Population	Households	Source
2000	116,255	45,823	2000 Decennial Census
2010	146,723	58,095	2010 Decennial Census
2020	155,703	63,133	2020 Decennial Census
2030 proj.	176,032	71,831	Colorado State Demography Office*
2040 proj.	202,388	83,089	Colorado State Demography Office*
Avg annual growth 2000-2010	3,047	1,227	
Avg annual growth 2010-2020	898	504	
Avg annual growth 2020-2030	2,033	870	
Avg annual growth 2030-2040	2,636	1,126	

*Population projections State Demographer: vintage 2021, prepared Oct. 2022. Household projections: vintage 2020, created October 2021.

Table 1: Mesa County Population and Households: 2000-2040 projections
(Source: US Decennial Census 2000, 2010, 2020 and Colorado State Demographer Office 2021, 2022)

Mesa County Population and Households: Unincorporated Areas and Municipalities, 2000 - 2020						
Year	Population			Households		
	Total Mesa Co.	Unincorp. Mesa Co.	Mesa Co. municipalities	Total Mesa Co.	Unincorp. Mesa Co.	Mesa Co. municipalities
2000	116,255	64,373	51,882	45,823	24,148	21,675
2010	146,723	71,607	75,116	58,095	27,502	30,593
2020	155,703	73,321	82,382	63,133	28,744	34,389
2020 v. 2010	6.1%	2.4%	9.7%	8.7%	4.5%	12.4%
2020 v. 2000	33.9%	13.9%	58.8%	37.8%	19.0%	58.7%

Table 2: Mesa County Population and Households: Unincorporated Areas and Municipalities, 2000-2020
(Source: US Decennial Census 2000, 2010, 2020)

HOUSING TYPE

Throughout the community-wide survey, Mesa County residents identified a desire for more housing affordability and diversity. The housing profile differs in the unincorporated versus incorporated parts of the county. Per 2017-2021 Five Year Estimates by the US Census, the unincorporated areas have a higher share of owner-occupied units (78.0%) than incorporated areas (64.2%), and a lower share of renter-occupied units (22.0% rental in unincorporated areas versus 35.8% rental in municipalities). The unincorporated areas also have a higher share of single-family detached units (76.3%) than incorporated areas (65.2%); a higher share of mobile homes (12.8% versus 6.9%); and a lower share of attached units (10.8% versus 27.8%) (Table 3). Housing costs are diverse across different subareas of unincorporated and incorporated Mesa County. Areas with generally higher housing costs include Loma, Redlands and parts of Grand Junction, while areas with generally lower housing costs include Clifton, Collbran and De Beque (Table 4).

HOUSING DEMAND

Future growth and housing could be accommodated in several ways. How much growth captured by unincorporated Mesa County will depend on an array of market factors and planning decisions. Historically, unincorporated Mesa County has captured around a quarter of the overall growth in the county. Over the past decade, from 2010-2020, unincorporated Mesa County accounted for 24% of the Mesa County's total housing unit growth, which is a decrease from the previous decade, 29% growth from 2000-2010.

The 2021 Grand Valley Housing Needs Assessment identified a variety of housing issues in the more urban areas of Grand Junction and Fruita, including rising housing prices, low availability of housing and affordability challenges in both the rental and for-sale markets. (2021 Grand Valley Housing Needs Assessment, Root Policy Research). The community survey supported this research many respondents indicated that affordable housing is an important issue to address in the future. When asked what respondents like least about living in Mesa County, "There is a lack of diverse and affordable housing" was a top comment. When asked where and how new growth should occur in the county, "There is a need for affordable housing" was common response. When asked about the rate of growth, many respondents indicated that "Single family housing is unaffordable".

Housing Type



69%

Single Family Residential



21%

Attached Residential



10%

Mobile Homes

Source: American Community Survey, 2015-2019

**Selected Mesa County Housing Characteristics: Unincorporated Areas and Municipalities
2017-2021 5-Year Estimates**

	Total County	Unincorporated	Municipalities
UNITS IN STRUCTURE			
Total housing units	66,608	30,649	35,959
1-unit, detached	70.3%	76.3%	65.2%
Attached	20.0%	10.8%	27.8%
Mobile home	9.6%	12.8%	6.9%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
HOUSING TENURE			
Occupied housing units	61,977	27,971	34,006
Owner-occupied	70.4%	78.0%	64.2%
Renter-occupied	29.6%	22.0%	35.8%

Table 3: Selected Mesa County Housing Characteristics: Unincorporated Areas and Municipalities 2017-2021 5-Year Estimates (Source: US Census American Survey 2017-2021 Five Year Estimates)

**Selected Mesa County Housing Characteristics: Unincorporated Areas and Municipalities
2017-2021 5-Year Estimates**

	Median value of owner-occupied units	Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs*		Median gross rent**
		Housing units with a mortgage	Housing units without a mortgage	
Mesa County total	\$264,100	\$1,385	\$375	\$982
MUNICIPALITIES				
Collbran (town)	\$163,400	\$1,150	\$348	\$890
De Beque (town)	\$164,400	\$1,214	\$356	\$1,067
Fruita (city)	\$259,300	\$1,235	\$344	\$1,280
Grand Junction (city)	\$271,100	\$1,435	\$385	\$921
Palisade (town)	\$225,500	\$1,469	\$495	\$878
UNINCORPORATED CENSUS DESIGNATED PLACES (CDP)				
Clifton CDP	\$166,900	\$1,087	\$511	\$997
Fruitvale CDP	\$230,000	\$1,231	\$306	\$1,453
Loma CDP	\$457,500	\$1,779	\$530	N/A
Orchard Mesa CDP	\$241,900	\$1,378	\$335	\$1,256
Redlands CDP	\$359,800	\$1,610	\$341	\$1,529

Table 4: Selected Mesa County Housing Characteristics: Unincorporated Area and Municipalities 2017-2021 5-Year Estimates (Source: US Census American Survey 2017-2021 Five Year Estimates)

*Includes payments for debts on the property, real estate taxes, insurance, utilities, fuels, condominium fees and mobile home costs.

**Includes contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities and fuels.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is integral to future growth in the County. A focused approach will target infrastructure improvements, including roads, transit service, bike lanes and sidewalks, to create connectivity between communities. The County currently serves on the Grand Valley Regional Transportation Committee (GVRTC) to advocate and align public transit, services and ridership throughout the county. According to the survey, there is a common perception that traffic is getting worse. A need for the County to improve roadway maintenance, develop more bike lanes and sidewalks, and improve transit service (particularly frequency) was emphasized.

REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Mesa County and the City of Grand Junction have long represented a crossroads of the west. With connections east to Denver and numerous mountain towns, and west to Moab and Salt Lake City, Utah and Las Vegas, Nevada, significant passenger and freight traffic travels along I-70. Rail infrastructure also serves as an important regional asset bringing residents, tourists and freight across Mesa County. These passengers and goods pass through Mesa County, with many of them stopping en route to their final destinations. The success of the local and regional economy depends on these lines of connectivity.

MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

Mesa County has a growing multimodal transportation network-infrastructure that supports non-vehicular modes of getting around, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use paths. According to the survey, residents most like their neighborhoods for their quiet streets, proximity to groceries and basic services, ease of walking and biking, and access to trails and open space. Many respondents also noted a desire for more walkable destinations and lower traffic volumes. In addition to survey results, members of focus groups expressed the need for multimodal connectivity, including transit service, connected bike networks and

walking routes, especially in unincorporated areas with higher densities of population.

The desire for multimodal connectivity has increased as urban areas within the county continue to expand and travel preferences shift. There are several opportunities for improvement to ensure travel by all modes is comfortable and convenient. There are areas within the municipalities and urban areas of the county where the sidewalks and bike lanes are well connected, however, Clifton area residents expressed a notable lack of sidewalks in the area. The Colorado River Trail is a regional trail which travels across the county from Loma through Fruita, Grand Junction and Palisade, and is a community asset for those walking, rolling and biking in the Grand Valley as a separated facility for outdoor recreation and transportation both locally and regionally. Mesa County also has a network of designated bicycle facilities, which include both striped bike lanes and signed bike routes. However, the bike network lacks some key connections, and existing facilities may not be comfortable for all users. Incorporating multimodal options and connecting existing infrastructure networks will be an important step to maintain and improve multimodal transportation in the county.

LOCAL TRANSIT SERVICE

Local transit service in Mesa County is provided by Grand Valley Transit (GVT). Ridership of Grand Valley Transit increased between 2000 and 2011 and declined between 2011 and 2016; service cuts were implemented in 2021, resulting in an even greater decrease in ridership. Regional transit options that have stops in Mesa County are provided by Bustang, Greyhound and Amtrak.

SERVICES AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Mesa County maintains approximately 61 County-owned buildings with an emphasis on creating, maintaining and improving the county's physical environment to ensure the functionality, safety and security of its physical assets and human resources. These include Animal Services, Roads and Bridges, Criminal Justice, Motor Vehicles, Fire Protection Districts and the Mesa County Fairgrounds. In addition, Mesa County Public Works provides for the physical improvements through design and maintenance of roads, bridges, traffic control systems and building inspections including solid waste management of the landfill, floodplain management and stormwater management.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Unincorporated areas of Mesa County are protected by the Mesa County Sheriff's Office. The Mesa County Sheriff's Office is responsible for public safety in the 3,300 square miles of Mesa County. In addition to emergency response and criminal investigations, their other duties include operating the Mesa County Detention Facility, providing security at the Mesa County Justice Center, search and rescue operations, emergency management, and wildland firefighting. The more urban areas, including Clifton, require more police and law enforcement services than many other parts of the County.

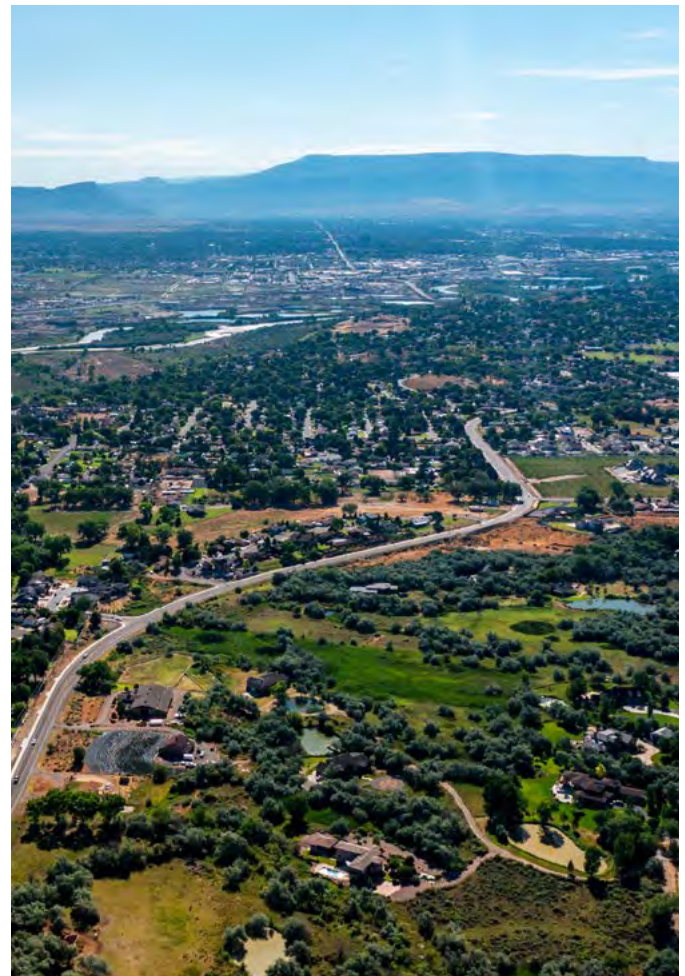
WATER, SANITATION AND STORMWATER

Mesa County relies on the Upper Colorado Basin for surface water. These basins provide water stored in numerous reservoirs in the county and managed by various special districts including Mesa County Lower Valley Public Improvement District (Mack), Southwest Mesa County Rural Public Improvement District (Gateway) and Mesa County Whitewater Public Improvement District (Whitewater). There are six major irrigation water providers serving about 85,000 acres in Western Colorado's Grand Valley. All but one entity uses water from the Colorado River. Redlands Water and Power Company diverts its water from the Gunnison

River at a point about three miles upstream of the confluence with the Colorado. These providers serve a diverse group of customers ranging from small household yard and garden users to large agricultural enterprises.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Some public services are provided for many unincorporated residents through special districts, including water, sewer and fire protection services. Special districts provide a means of delivering selected services that county governments are typically not set up to provide. There is the potential for better services via the combination of special districts. For examples, the Grand Junction Fire Dept. recently contracted to combine services with the Clifton Fire District to better utilize resources (such as expensive fire equipment), funding and staffing.



Redlands (Source: Mesa County)



DIVERSITY AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH

VALUE STATEMENT

Mesa County prides itself on a strong and diversified economy that supports local industry. Continued diversification of economic resources will promote stability and fiscal security for Mesa County residents into the future.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMY

Mesa County is at an important regional crossroads to provide goods and services not only for Mesa County residents, but for much of the Western Slope and Eastern Utah. I-70 and the railroad are important corridors for Mesa County for supporting freight shipping, regional economic connections and tourism. The Grand Junction Regional Airport also provides important access for the region and is a significant driver of the local economy. A burgeoning health care sector as well as Colorado Mesa University (CMU) help supply good, well-paying jobs, enhance quality of life and help foster a more productive workforce. Additionally, the 2021 Grand Vision survey by the Grand Junction Economic Partnership highlighted the connection between economic development and quality of life, with respondents underscoring the importance of quality schools, outdoor recreation opportunities, transportation and broadband infrastructure, and air and water quality as means of fostering economic development, among other strategies. A diversified economy in Mesa County looks to provide good jobs and opportunities for residents to purchase goods and services, supports quality public services, and leverages the many assets and competitive advantages of the region. Health care and higher education economies, including students at Colorado Mesa University, and self-sustaining local industries are vital to support services in population centers and the provision of basic services in rural areas.

WHAT WE HEARD

Economic Development Priorities:

- » 92% of respondents support/strongly support retaining and expanding local businesses.
- » 88% of respondents support/strongly support attracting high-quality jobs.
- » 87% of respondents support/strongly support encouraging and supporting agriculture.
- » 57% of respondents rated the overall economic health of Mesa County as poor/fair.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Mesa County has a diversified economy, with several sectors bringing outside dollars into the local economy. These include healthcare, agriculture, tourism, federal and state government, varied services to the surrounding region, manufacturing, oil and gas, technology/software and other sectors. Mesa County benefits from relative affordability of the cost of living and doing business compared to much of the rest of Colorado, although housing costs have been rising.

JOB GROWTH

Current weaknesses of the Mesa County economy, as reemphasized from survey results and stakeholder feedback, include workforce shortages, low wages relative to the cost of living, high housing costs, and challenges in keeping local graduates in the area. Mesa County has also experienced a series of booms and busts in its economy in the past, often correlated with ups and downs in the energy and construction industries. Extensive job loss, followed by slow recovery, occurred as a result of the 2008/09 Great Recession. However, job growth has picked up considerably in more recent years,

Job growth projections suggest substantial job growth and diversification of the job market.

77,598 jobs in 2020

93,027 jobs in 2030

104,829 jobs in 2040

Source: Colorado State Demography Office, 2020

and the economy staged a quick recovery from the COVID-19 recession. Looking ahead, Mesa County is anticipated to experience substantial job growth over the next three decades. The number of jobs in Mesa County is projected to grow from 81,335 in 2021 to approximately 102,600 in 2040, an increase of about 1,100 per year. Jobs are projected to grow across a range of industry sectors over the next 10 years including health and education services, business services, accommodations and food services, construction in most other industry sectors as wells.

RECREATION AND TOURISM

Scenic beauty, the natural environment and recreational opportunities are among the highest rated elements from the community survey for why people love Mesa County. Mesa County residents enjoy thousands of miles of trails as well as access to multi-use recreational areas on BLM lands, USFS lands and national and state land which has been driving an increase in tourism in the past several years, notably around hiking and biking. The County is also within a three-hour drive of three national parks, three national monuments, two national conservation areas, six national forests and three scenic byways. Additionally, while not focused on recreation,

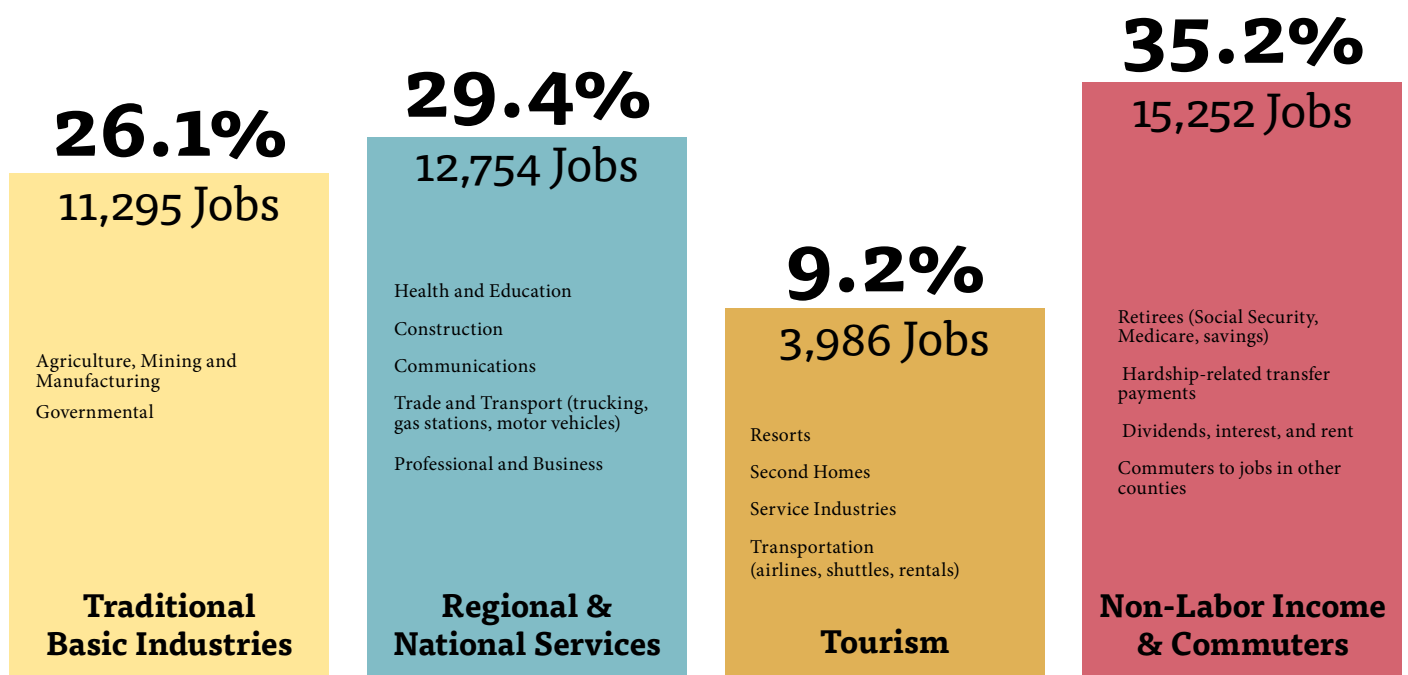


Figure 16: Mesa County Jobs Profile 2020
(Source: Colorado State Demography Office, 2020)

Colorado Mesa University and health care services also contribute to travel and tourism. They attract people from across the Western Slope of Colorado and parts of Utah to visit, bringing out-of-area money into the hospitality industry.

As documented in a study of the Mesa County tourism economy from 2016 by Summit Economics, outdoor recreation is a growing and attracting visitors to Mesa County and the most popular activities include mountain biking, skiing (Nordic and downhill), hiking, horseback riding, off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding, scenic drives/tours, target shooting, river boating and hunting. This study also identifies key challenges from the impacts of increased recreation including management of overused areas, available lodging, coordination across the County and other infrastructure needs to support a sustainable level of tourism.

A strong recreation and tourism industry contributes millions of dollars to the Mesa County economy. In 2021, travel spending in Mesa County totaled \$332 million, up from \$277 million in COVID-impacted 2020, albeit down

from a peak of \$396 million in 2019. Pre-pandemic, travel spending had been trending up in Mesa County, rising 19.7% from 2012 (\$331 million) to 2019 (\$396 million), according to Dean Runyan Associates. To support this, tourism accounted for 9.2% of the base industry jobs in the County in 2020.

The Master Plan survey results indicate that a majority of residents feel that Mesa County should continue to invest in trails and improve management of recreational areas. Across Mesa County, outdoor recreation, including tourism and agritourism, will continue to be central to economic development. It is essential that the County play a strong role in promoting growth of these industries while also facilitating how and where recreation should be distributed and partnerships to manage impacts.

Photos (clockwise)
 Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)
 Fruita Mountain Biking (Source: Over The Edge)
 Hiking public lands (Source: Go Fruita)
 Palisade vineyards (Source: Flickr)



Colorado National Monument



Mountain biking in Fruita, Grand Junction and Palisade



Wineries, museums, cultural activities, concerts, festivals, and special events



Visiting public lands, skiing, hiking, OHV, boating and hunting

ENERGY ECONOMIES

TRADITIONAL ENERGY

Natural gas development has been an important economic driver and has supplied a significant tax base in Mesa County for decades and includes abundant underground natural gas infrastructure. However, historically, the region has experienced notable boom and bust cycles from the natural gas industry, which have impacts to regional growth trends. Natural gas exploration potential is ongoing, and while there are limitations on future development imposed by regulatory and physical issues, it is anticipated to continue as natural gas demand remains high on the national and international level. The natural gas transmission infrastructure is mature and capable of delivering natural gas to national markets and the pipeline has the potential to be used for potential future energy transmission. The location of Mesa County is prime for serving a regional hub of gas transmission. An increased understanding of where the existing natural gas pipeline infrastructure is located allows for better distribution to major markets. Respondents to the community survey expressed an interest in continuing to grow this segment of traditional energy through the community survey and it will be important to the economy and to the residents that natural gas development continue to grow.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

The energy sector is rapidly diversifying beyond Mesa County's traditional industries. The plentiful sunshine and relative scarcity of potential wind resources have led to residents and businesses utilizing solar photovoltaics as a new source of energy. According to Xcel Energy, there are at least 2,300 solar photovoltaic systems connected to their system in Mesa County. A relatively high percentage of residents and businesses participate in solar energy programs, energy conservation programs, carbon offset programs, and demand reduction programs. When asked in the community survey about other types of economic development activities the County should pursue, respondents indicated a desire to see further development of the energy industry. There is an opportunity for Mesa County to add more renewable energy to increase the resiliency of Mesa County's energy infrastructure to diversify the energy market and reduce the reliance on imported water for the energy industry. Since wind energy is not typically a good resource in the County, this would primarily consist of the development of utility-scale solar electrical facilities, pumped hydroelectrical storage reservoirs and small-scale hydroelectrical generation. Grid geothermal resources are an emerging renewable resource in Mesa County. Overall, a grid geothermal system for institutions, subdivisions and small scale residential uses, may provide an additional alternative for installations seeking energy efficiency, environmental impact, and cost savings.

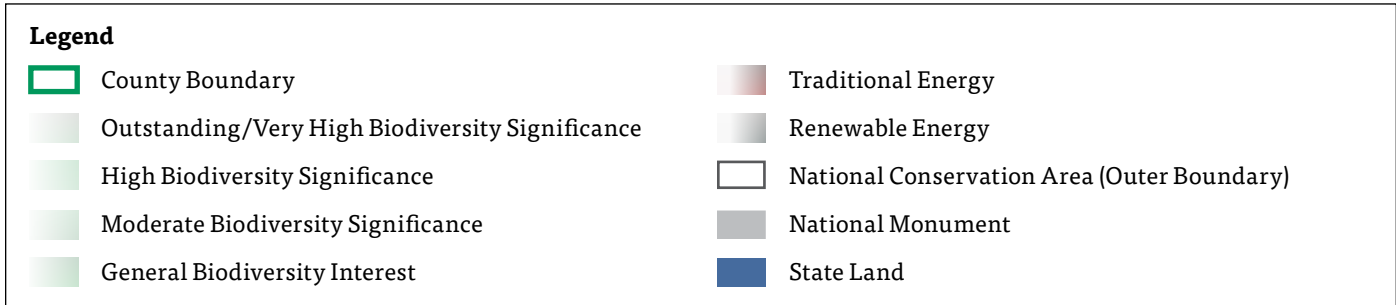
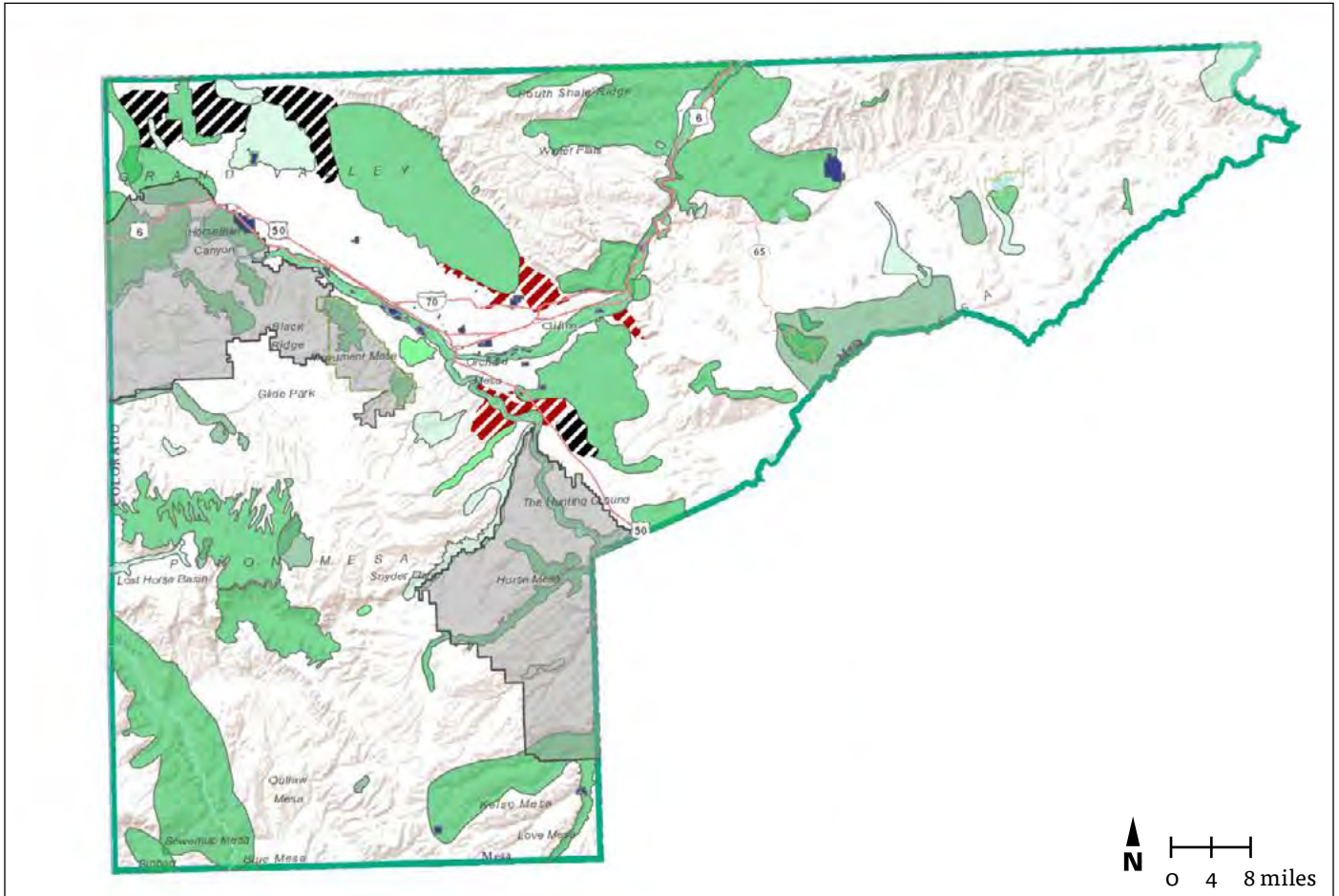


Figure 17: Renewable Energy Map
(Source: Spirit Environmental)

*Note: Traditional Energy in the above map is illustrated based on the natural gas transmission line network instead of existing oil and gas wells to represent the areas that are more likely to be utilized for expansion. This may omit a number of more oil heavy and geographically distant operators. While these operators do have future fracking potential, this map focuses on the greatest potential opportunities and highlight the existing pipeline infrastructure.



A LEGACY OF RURAL CHARACTER

VALUE STATEMENT

Mesa County's rural and agricultural landscape is fundamental to local character and quality of life. The community has expressed a desire to protect agricultural and natural lands for future generations.

WHAT WE HEARD

- » 68% of respondents want to conserve working agricultural lands.

Rural Development Policies:

- » 87% of respondents support minimizing impacts on natural areas, scenic vistas and other rural features.
- » 84% of respondents support protection of agricultural practices.
- » 39% of respondents selected agricultural/ranching/rural areas of the County as a reason they like living there.
- » Agriculture was one of the top responses when asked what respondents believe are the County's greatest assets or strengths.
- » A common theme regarding the rate of growth was to avoid expanding into agricultural areas.

NATURAL SETTING

Natural and agricultural lands play a significant role in the County's rural identity. A majority of Mesa County is zoned as Agriculture, Forestry and Transitional (AFT). Developed lands, as defined by County GIS data, constitute only 3% of the county and are primarily located along the Grand River Valley (Figure 18).

The 2022 Community Survey demonstrated broad support for rural development policies such as minimizing impacts on natural areas and scenic vistas throughout Mesa County. There is a desire to balance a growing economy, for both tourism and future growth, with a balance of the conservation of resources such as lakes, rivers, streams, and open spaces to ensure that these residents and visitors can continue to enjoy these special assets.

AGRICULTURE

Protecting agricultural lands and practices had broad support in the 2022 Community Survey. In addition, fruit growing and wine production are drivers of agritourism in Mesa County, which help differentiate the County from other tourism regions of Colorado, and elevate and define the County's image and visibility.

Mesa County represents 1% of agriculture sales in the State of Colorado. The US Census of Agriculture Data's most recent report shows that in 2017 the market value of agricultural products sold in Mesa County was \$94.2 million (increased by 11% since 2012). According to the National Land Cover (2019), about 4% of the total land area in the county is agricultural, primarily crops and livestock with pockets of fruit production (Figure 18). The number of small farms in Mesa County is vital to the community's economy and well-being. However, the average size of farm in acres has decreased by 19% from 2012 to 2017, yet there has been a 9% increase in the number of farms from 2012 to 2017, suggesting that this is still a growing industry but that there has been a shift to smaller and more local and/or hobby operations. In addition to the economic benefits of traditional agriculture, support of farm enterprises can also enhance agritourism, create a more resilient food system, potentially reduce food miles to market, build stronger communities, and protect a core piece of Mesa County's heritage, culture and landscape.

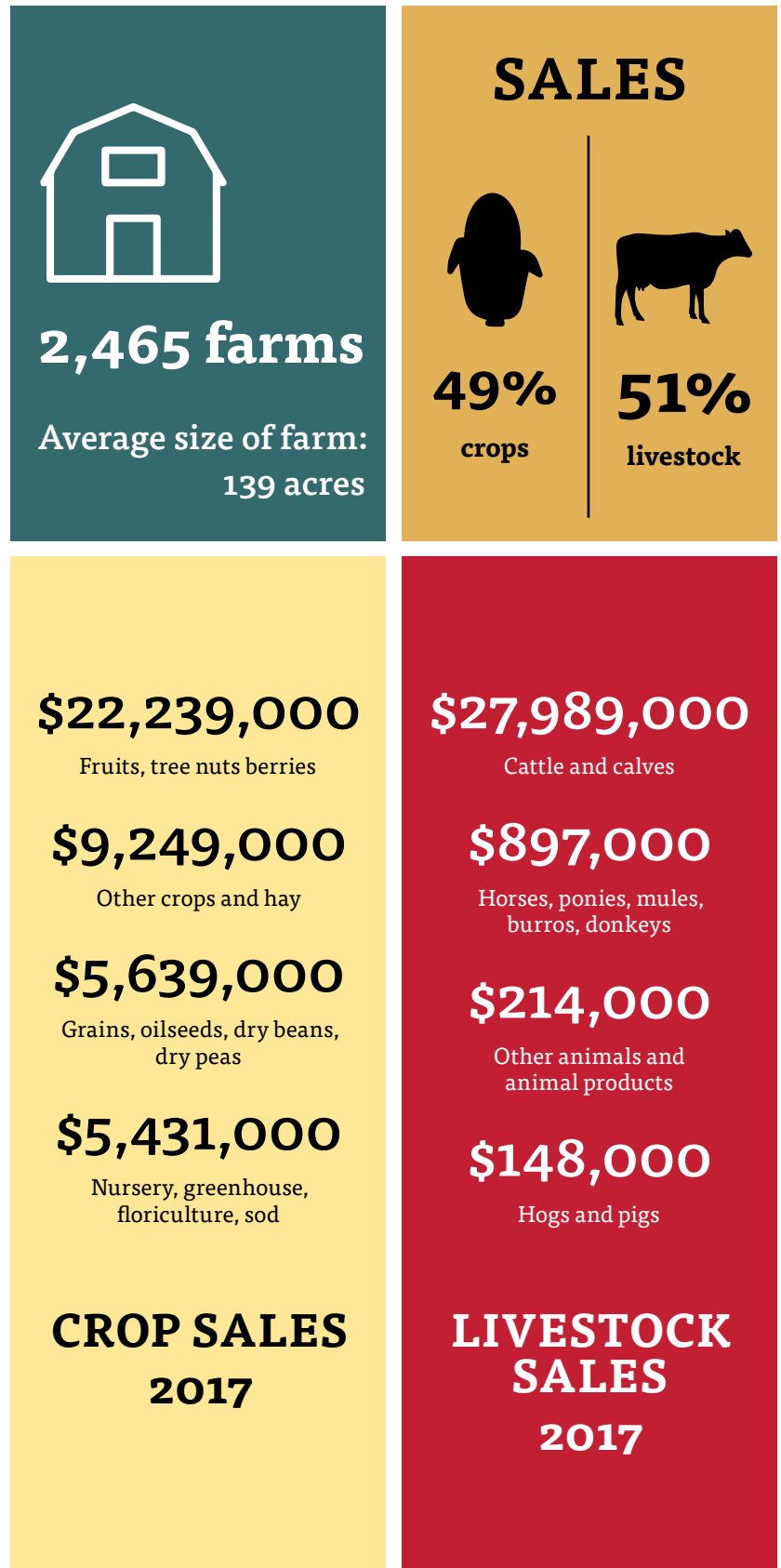


Figure 18: Mesa County Agriculture Summary
(Source: United States Department of Agriculture, 2017)



ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION AND RESILIENCE

VALUE STATEMENT

Mesa County’s abundance of natural lands is central to both the local character, agricultural traditions and economic future. Protecting and maintaining natural resources through hazard mitigation, as well as water and land preservation is a primary objective when looking to the future.

WHAT WE HEARD

- » 90% of respondents chose the quality of the natural environment as their favorite thing about the area.

Top Environmental Priorities:

- » 69% of respondents desire more natural land/open space preservation
- » Water preservation/drought mitigation was a top response when asked the most important issue(s) currently facing Mesa County

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Much of the land in Mesa County can be described as a high desert landscape with a semiarid climate. 72.9% of land in the County is federally owned/managed, including the Colorado National Monument, The McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area and the Grand Mesa National Forest. The majority of federal lands in Mesa County are owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (46%) and 26% by the Forest Service. The percentage of ownership by the State in Mesa County is relatively low at 0.2%.

The ecoregions of Mesa County include the Colorado Rocky Mountains, the Colorado Plateau, the Grand Mesa and the Grand Valley. These areas provide habitats for deer and elk as well as opportunities for hunting. These areas of high environmental quality are vital to the health and prosperity of Mesa County and contribute to the high quality of life.

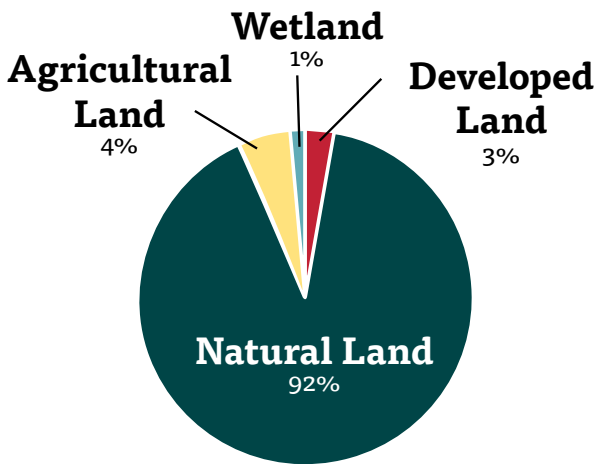


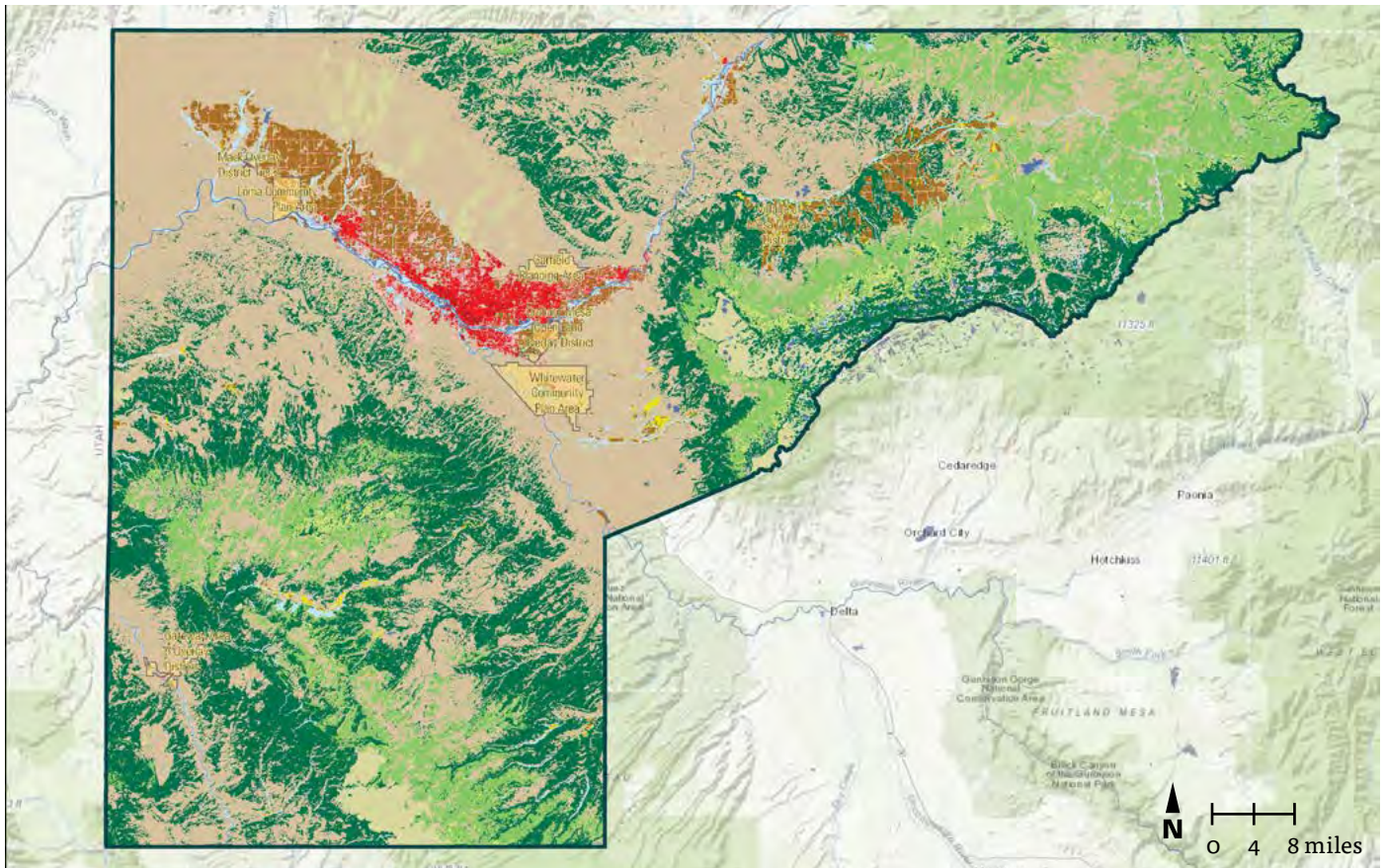
Figure 19: Land Cover Breakdown (Source: National Land Cover, 2019)

Land Cover	
Natural Land	Barren Land
	Deciduous Forest
	Evergreen Forest
	Mixed Forest
	Shrub/Scrub
	Herbaceous
Agricultural Land	Hay/Pasture
	Cultivated Crops
Developed Land	Developed, Open Space
	Developed, Low
	Developed, Medium
	Developed, High
Wetland	Woody Wetlands
	Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands

Table 5: Land Cover Descriptions

72.9% of land in the County is federally owned and managed

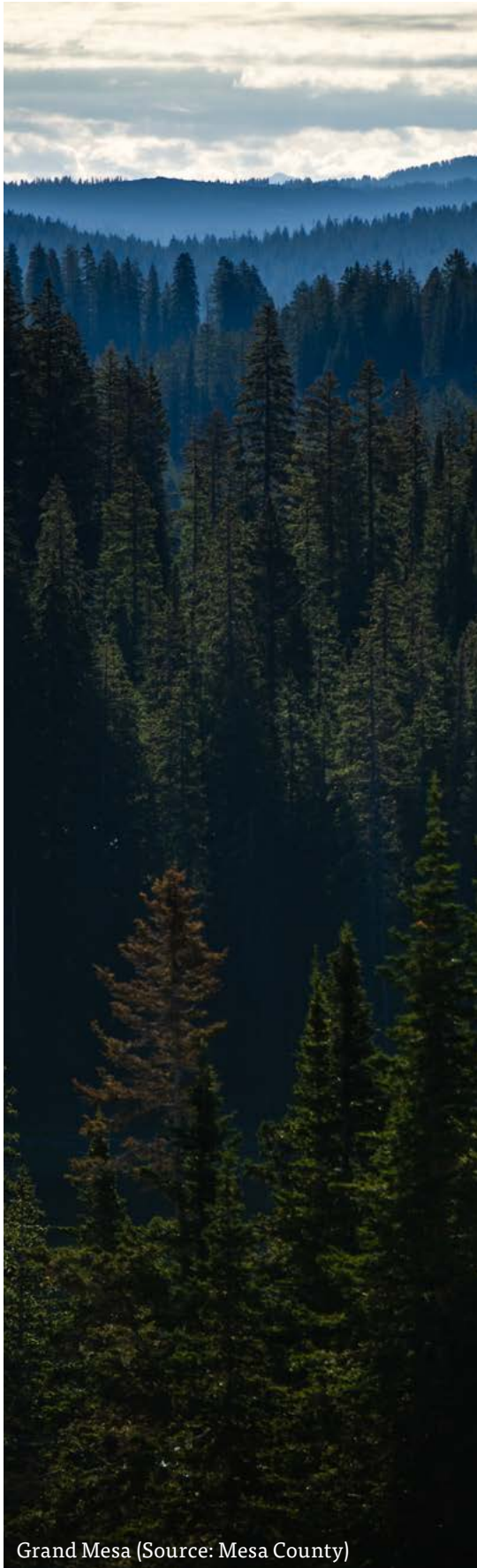
Source: A Profile of Public Land Amenities for Mesa County produced by EPS in 2018



Legend

County Boundary	Open Water	Perennial Snow/Ice
Developed, Open Space	Developed, Low	Developed, Medium
Developed, High	Barren Land	Deciduous Forest
Evergreen Forest	Mixed Forest	Shrub/Scrub
Herbaceous	Hay/Pasture	Cultivated Crops
Woody Wetlands	Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands	

Figure 20: Land Cover Map
(Source: National Land Cover, 2019)



Grand Mesa (Source: Mesa County)

NATURAL HAZARDS

Mesa County faces numerous potential threats from both natural and human-made hazards. According to the Mesa County Hazard Mitigation Plan, the highest natural hazard threats are wildfire, floods and rockfall. Mesa County is rated as high risk for fire due to drought conditions which can lead to flooding and rock/mudslides over the burn scar areas. Natural disaster management incorporates strategic preparation and response to disasters and includes a systematic approach to disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery to mitigate these risks in the future.

WILDFIRE

Data reveals Mesa County's snowpack is dwindling and melting earlier. While the planning horizon is uncertain, the current pattern of drought conditions may persist for some time. As these seasonal temperatures vary, forests ecosystems experience a cycle of dryness due to lessening snowpack and early snowpack melt, making them more prone to wildfires. Current wildfire mitigation efforts fall on the County, the Sheriff's Wildland Fire Team, fire districts and partnerships with state and federal agencies. The Mesa County Wildfire Protection Plan (2012) includes strategies around homeowner and community awareness, public education, and agency collaboration and treatments to reduce wildfire risk.

AIR QUALITY

Wildfires, regionally and in other states as far as California, produce particulate matter which is a major contributor to poor air quality. A higher incidence of wildfires and increased traffic within the region can generally be correlated with more frequent unhealthy air quality days in Mesa County. About 30% of the days in 2021 registered above the national standard level for air quality in Mesa County. However, air quality in Mesa County is still generally very good relative to the rest of the state and the country.

WATERSHEDS & RIVER CORRIDORS

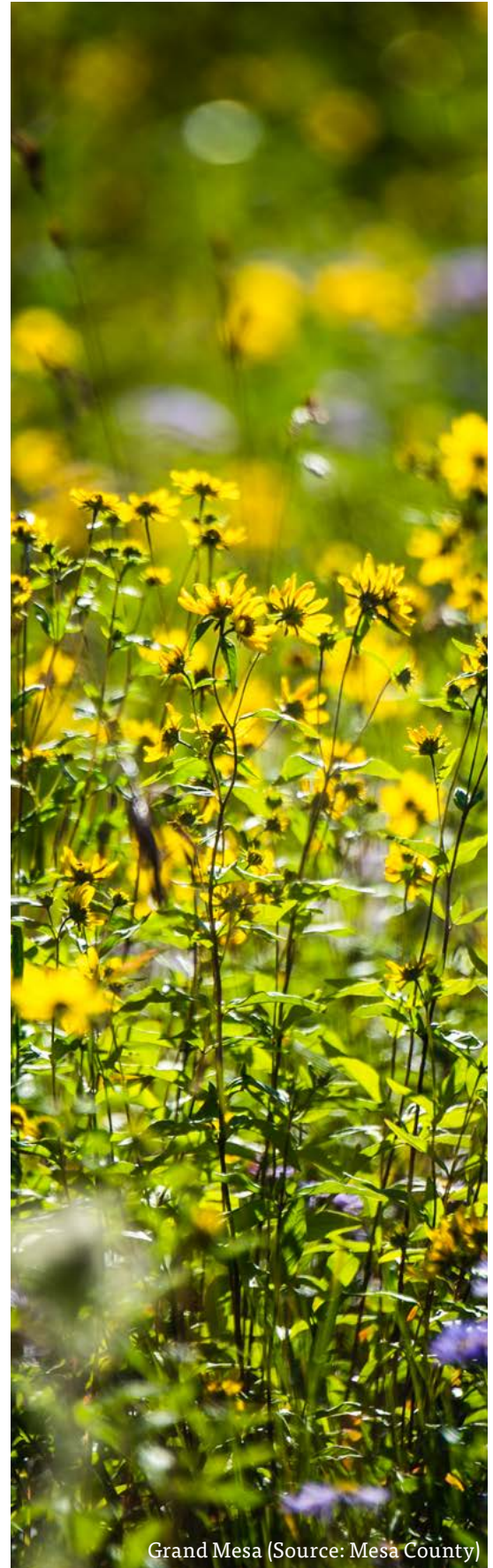
The Colorado and Gunnison Rivers are influential to Mesa County, with their confluence in Grand Junction. These rivers include trout fisheries, public recreation areas, heritage ranches and recreation opportunities. Historically, there have been increases in the concentration of some minerals because of irrigation and other human initiated activities that have resulted in a need for remediation. In particular, mercury and selenium have been ubiquitous contaminants for fish residing in the Upper Colorado River Basin. Rivers and stream corridors may contain floods and other hazards and sensitive habitats. Areas of high environmental quality, such as riverine habitats influence the biodiversity levels to help protect, restore, and manage natural resources for current and future generations.

WETLANDS

Essential ecological components of Colorado's landscape, like wetlands, are invaluable for water retention and flood attenuation, water filtration, stormwater runoff, nutrient removal and transformation, groundwater recharge, groundwater discharge, sediment stabilization and retention, and wildlife habitat. The 2003 Colorado Natural Heritage Program's "Survey of Critical Wetlands and Riparian Areas in Mesa County" found that numerous wetlands have been lost or severely altered from their pre-settlement state. The main contributing factors were agriculture, grazing, development, construction of reservoirs, water diversions and gravel mining.

HABITATS

Priority habitats are located primarily along streams, rivers and lakes throughout the County. These warrant a higher sense of conservation based on the County's Resource Management Plan. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designations are BLM-managed areas "where special management attention is needed to protect important historical, cultural and scenic values, or fish and wildlife or other natural resources" (Bureau of Land Management, 2016). Increasing the biodiversity of County lands can have a variety of ancillary benefits as well including building soil capacity, water retention, increased sequestration of carbon, and reducing the spread of noxious weeds.



Grand Mesa [Source: Mesa County]

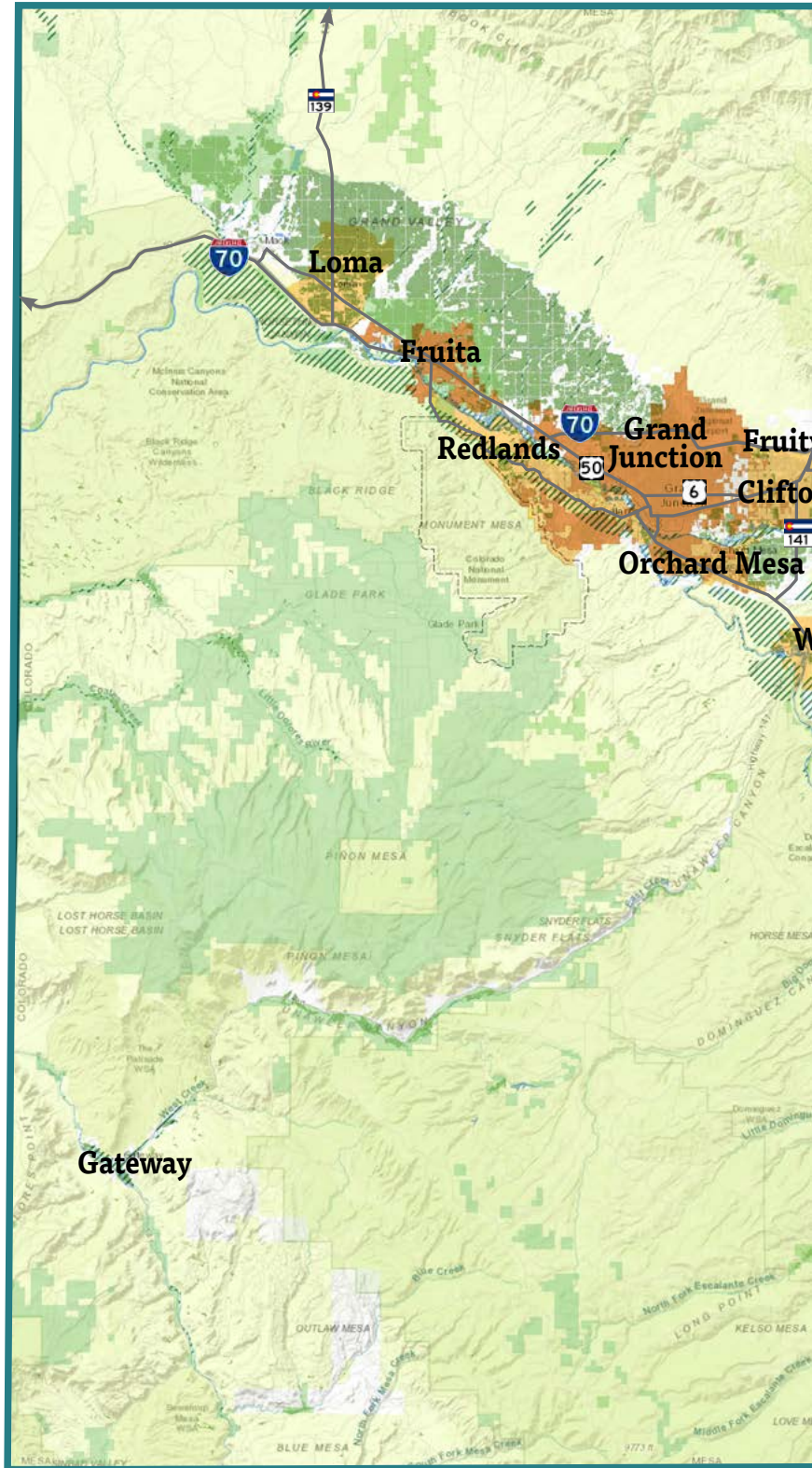
GROWTH CONSIDERATIONS

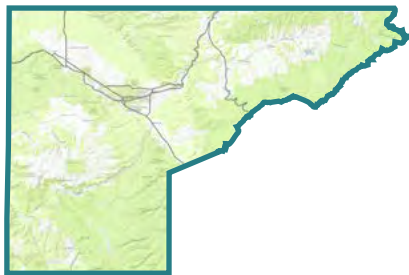
AREAS OF STABILITY AND CHANGE:

The Areas of Stability and Areas of Change Map (Figure 21) was developed through a series of data map overlays to identify where significant development is/is not feasible and determine where areas of development could occur in the future. Areas of stability are likely not to change significantly, such as agricultural land or areas where Mesa County has limited or no jurisdiction such as federally and state-owned lands or municipal areas governed by local jurisdictions.

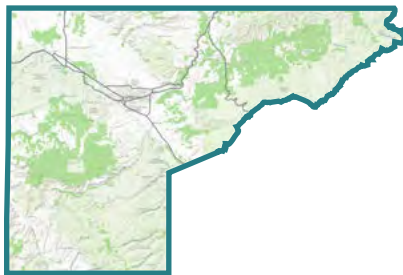
- Area of No Change: Federal, State and other public lands.
- Area of Stability: areas zoned URA 35, URR and Fruita 210.
- Agricultural Area: currently lands in agricultural production.
- Areas of Constraint: hazard areas including steep slopes and poor soils.

Areas of change have been identified through growth projections, community input and a process of elimination. After removing these areas of no change, stability or constraint, the remaining land area, about 24% of the County (525,627 acres), may or may not be suitable to capture potential growth in the county. Community input has indicated these areas should be primarily in areas where existing roads and utility infrastructure may be able to support growth. The Clifton/Whitewater and Mack/Loma areas, indicated in light orange on the map, are the locations identified through this mapping process as most capable to capture projected growth in the region and become the area of focus for scenario planning.

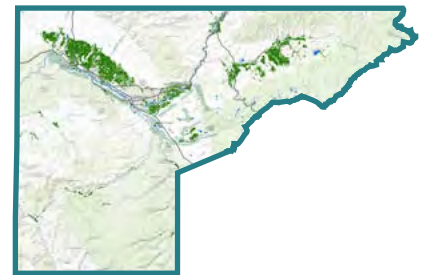




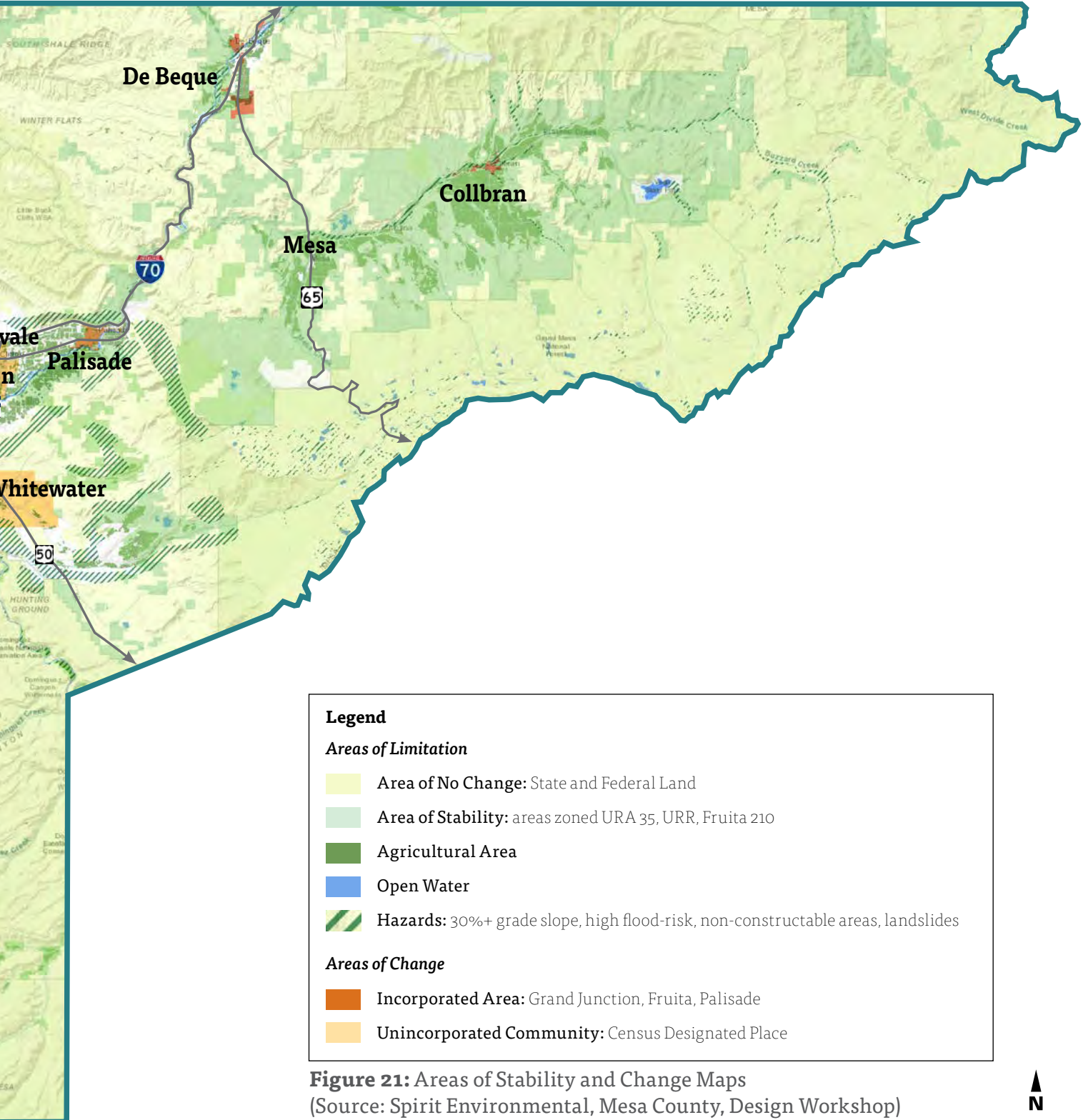
Area of No Change Overlay



Area of Stability Overlay



Agriculture, Open Water, Hazards Overlay



Legend

Areas of Limitation

- Area of No Change: State and Federal Land
- Area of Stability: areas zoned URA 35, URR, Fruita 210
- Agricultural Area
- Open Water
- Hazards: 30%+ grade slope, high flood-risk, non-constructable areas, landslides

Areas of Change

- Incorporated Area: Grand Junction, Fruita, Palisade
- Unincorporated Community: Census Designated Place

Figure 21: Areas of Stability and Change Maps
 (Source: Spirit Environmental, Mesa County, Design Workshop)



**Projected Growth for all
of Mesa County
(Incorporated and Unincorporated)**



1

12,436

household units projected
in 2022—2032

3,109

Unincorporated Mesa County
household growth at 25% share
of total County growth
(low scenario)

3,627

Unincorporated Mesa County
household growth at 29% share
of total County growth
(mid scenario)

4,415

Unincorporated Mesa County
household growth at 33% share
of total County growth
(high scenario)



= 1,000 household units

Source: American Community Survey, 2015-2019

SCENARIO PLANNING

Scenario planning is a process to explore different potential futures, examining impacts and outcomes. Through the community survey and discussions with staff and stakeholders, the process explored three alternative scenarios for how growth might occur. These future growth scenarios have been created using the areas of stability and change map overlays, growth projection data and community values.

Growth projections addressed earlier in this chapter indicate a 5.9% population growth, which could suggest as many as 12,436 new households or 22,450 people are expected to increase the population in Mesa County by 2030. This, in combination with about 24% of Mesa County's land area, is appropriate for current and future intensity of built environment development suggests a significant need to identify where and how potential growth could be accommodated over the next 10 years.

Scenario planning considers this future growth in connection with the areas of stability and change. Areas of notable influence are the areas with the most potential to change, including Loma, The Redlands, Orchard Mesa, Clifton, Whitewater and Gateway. Other challenges to be considered include water and sewer service, which would need to be built to accommodate future development. Utilities and infrastructure in these areas to be considered, specifically include water service in Whitewater and sanitary service in Mack and Loma.

Three scenarios, A,B and C (Figures 22-24), explore potential futures to accommodate growth in the areas identified above. These scenarios capture differing proportions of anticipated growth to balance alternative ways of accommodating commercial growth and agricultural preservation.

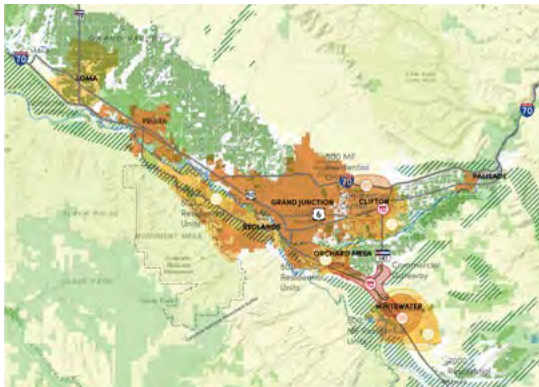
Maps next page

Figure 22: Scenario A Map - Focused Growth in Unincorporated County

Figure 23: Scenario B Map - Minimal Growth in Unincorporated County

Figure 24: Scenario C Map - Undirected Growth

HOW MUCH GROWTH SHOULD THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF MESA COUNTY CAPTURE OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS?



SCENARIO A- FOCUSED GROWTH IN UNINCORPORATED COUNTY

- Assumes approximately 5,000 Housing Units (60% projected growth is captured in municipalities)
- Growth directed to centers to minimize agricultural land impacts
- Commercial growth along 141 and Hwy 50 Corridors



SCENARIO B- MINIMAL GROWTH IN UNINCORPORATED COUNTY

- Assumes approximately 2,500 Housing Units (80% Projected Growth is captured in municipalities)
- Preserves agricultural land
- Commercial growth along 141



SCENARIO C- UNDIRECTED GROWTH

- Assumes most growth is captured in municipalities and on large estate lots in rural areas
- Preserves private property rights but loss of some productive agriculture
- Nodes of commercial at key intersections

Legend

Encouraged Future Activity

- Agricultural Center
- Energy Center
- Industrial Center
- Estate Lot Housing
- Single Family Housing
- Multi-Family Housing
- Recreation Node or Trailhead
- Commercial Center

Area of Limitation

- Area of No Change
- Area of Stability
- Agricultural Area
- Open Water
- Hazards

Areas of Potential Development

- Incorporated Area
- Unincorporated Community

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The scenarios were shared internally with staff then shared at the community-wide open houses and online through a series of questions and mapping exercises. Overall feedback suggests that the community would like to see a combination of ‘directed growth’ and ‘focused growth toward municipal areas’. Mapping exercises showed strong support for directing growth toward unincorporated Clifton and Whitewater, while preserving agricultural areas outside Mack, Fruita, Loma and Palisade (Figure 25).

A full summary of engagement, including the open house and mapping exercises can be found in Appendix E.

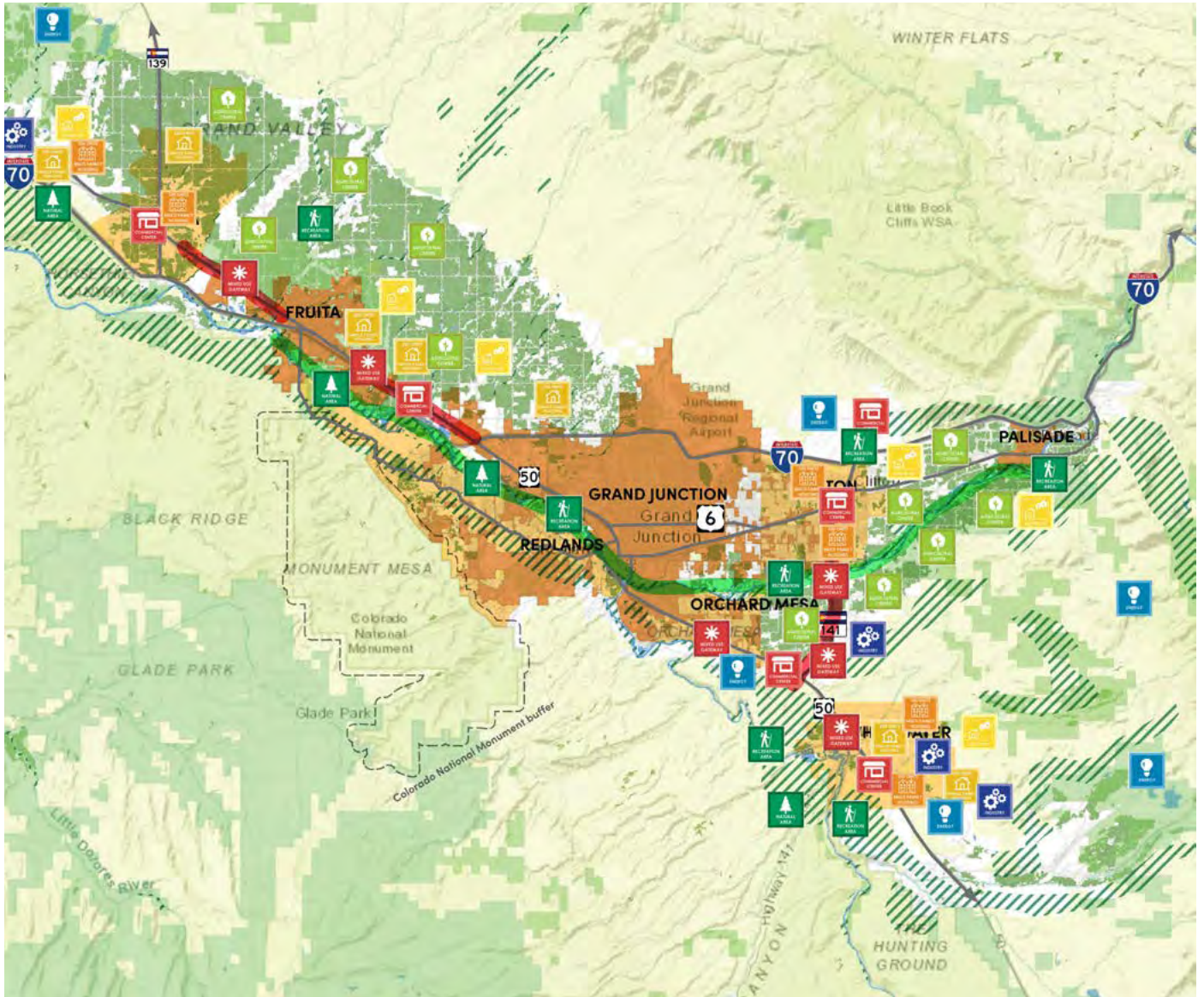


Figure 25: Scenario Planning Community Workshop Summary of Results

SCENARIO PLANNING KEY



RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY

Residential single family is characterized by a single home on a small, medium or large lots.



ESTATE LOT

Estate lot is comprised of a home, outbuildings, supporting farmland and woods that surround gardens and ground of a residential property.



RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY

Residential Multifamily consists of attached and stacked units and could include duplexes, townhomes, apartments and condominiums.



COMMERCIAL CENTER

A commercial center offers various types of office, services or shopping amenities.



MIXED USE GATEWAY

A commercial gateway is often at a key intersection, offering services and amenities.



NATURAL AREA

Natural areas compose of developed/wild lands that are preserved, restored, or managed for their natural features, including parks, forests, refuges, wetlands, etc. on public and private lands.



RECREATION AREA

Recreational areas are designated areas for active play, recreation or public assembly in parks, sports field, picnic ground, amphitheaters, trails, golf courses, etc.



AGRICULTURAL AREA

Agricultural areas are made of land that is suitable for use in farming.



INDUSTRY

Industry is designated for workforce, ranging from factory to office use.



ENERGY

Energy is designated land used to produce resources for residents to utilize, including light, water, gas, etc.

4

Vision Framework



Fruita (Source: Mesa County)

VISION FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

The County has a long history of planning and has tools in place that guide future development, preserve agriculture and protect the natural environment. This chapter outlines the future vision framework maps and tables to achieve the desired outcomes within different areas of the county. This vision is a result of extensive community conversations around aspirations for Mesa County's future.

FUTURE VISION FRAMEWORK

The diverse nature of the County geographies makes it apparent why different considerations and smaller area planning is important to account for describing Mesa County's desired future. The Future Vision Map can be used in the consideration of an amendment to the Future Land Use Map in determining if a proposed amendment is in alignment with the future vision maps, placetypes, corridors and crossroads and the goals of this Master Plan. The vision maps in this section explore how the core values of the community are applied in different character areas and at different scales. These maps display areas of character, referred to as placetypes, how they connect through corridors, and nodes of activity, referred to as crossroads.

- Placetypes provide more specific direction on the character of intensity of potential development. The placetypes have been identified as Growing Communities, Recreation Areas, Rural Communities, Agricultural Communities, Ecologically Sensitive/ Environmental Quality Areas and Energy Areas.
- Corridors are linear assets such as roadways and trails that have ease of access for future land use or recreational development with an emphasis on their ability to contribute to the adjacent areas.
- Community Crossroads are 'nodes', or centers of activity that promote accessible locations at key intersections supported by walking, biking or driving access to goods and services. Three types of community crossroads have been identified: Village Center, Community/Neighborhood Crossroads and Rural Community Crossroads.

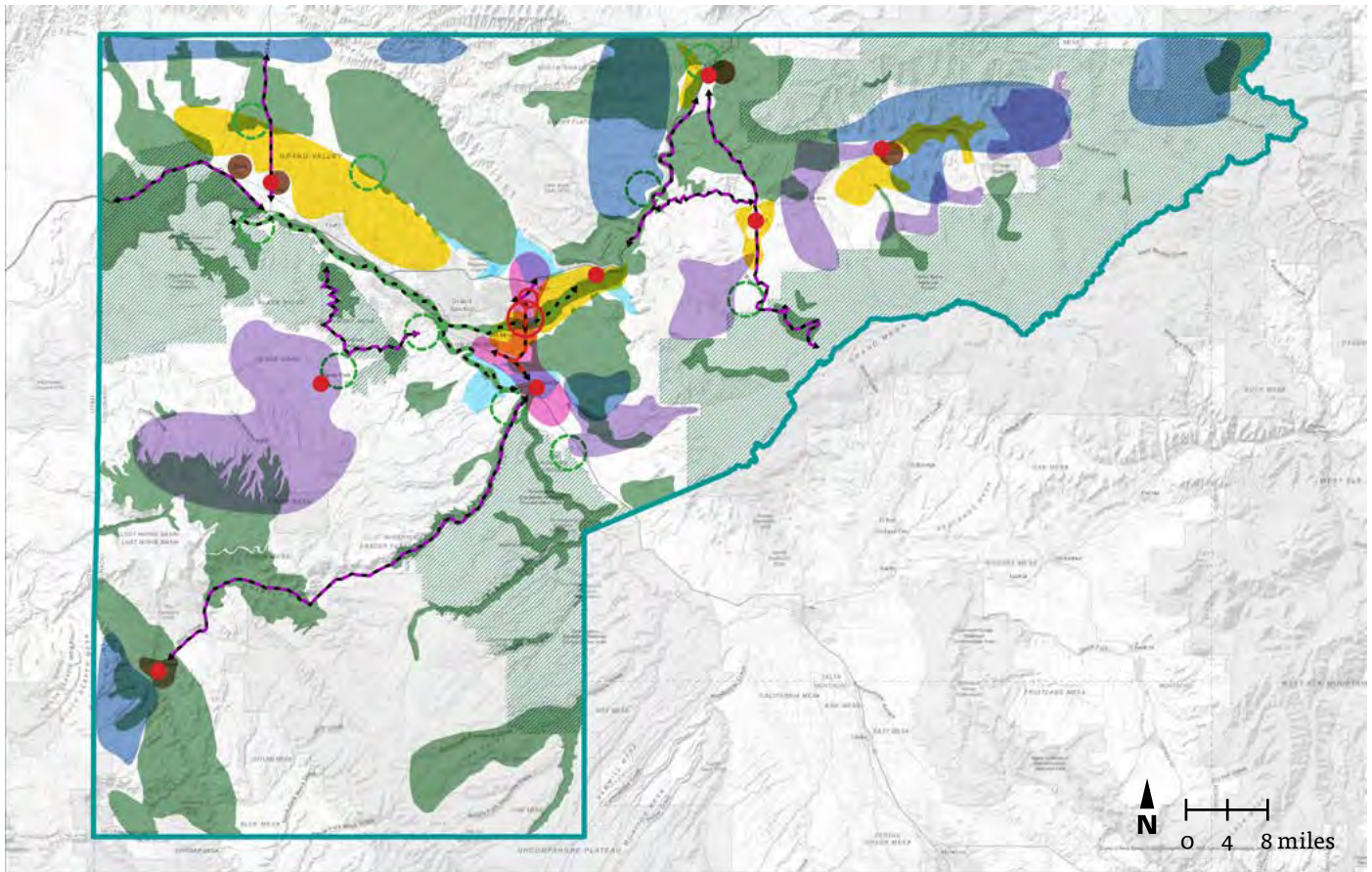


Photos (top to bottom)
Fruita (Source: Mesa County)
Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)
Palisade (Source: Mesa County)

VISION MAP

The Vision Map Overview (Figure 26) highlights the different character areas and future opportunities described for Mesa County. This map, and breakouts of supporting information in other maps in this chapter, convey the collective vision for the future, including areas to direct potential land uses through placetypes, crossroads and corridors.

This chapter includes maps and tables with a description of Placetypes, Crossroads and Corridors which identify unique character areas of the County. The vision map sets the framework for the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), which provides a greater detail to align with the specific land use classifications.



Legend

County Boundary	Rural Community	Recreational Crossroad
Federal Public Lands	Energy	Growth Corridor
Environmental Quality Area	Renewable Energy	Scenic Byway Corridor
Agriculture Community	Village Center	Recreational Corridor
Growing Community	Community/Neighborhood Center	
Large Lot Community	Rural Community Crossroad	

Figure 26: Vison Map Overview
(Source: Design Workshop)

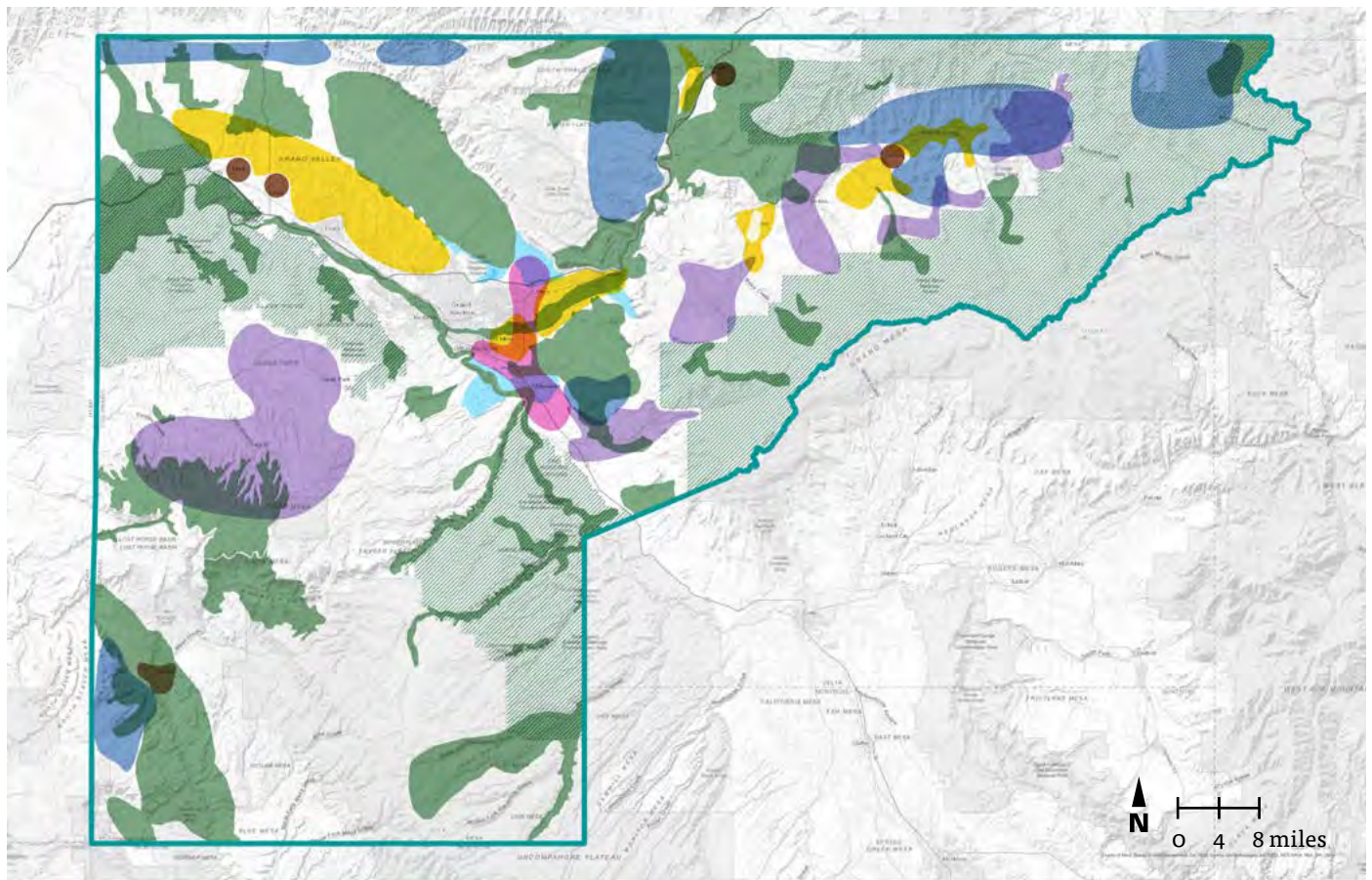
Note: Locations shown on map indicate desire future uses but should not restrict allowable uses in other areas of the County.

PLACETYPES

Placetypes are different character areas of the county that may have unique considerations for future planning.

Each of the following Placetype categories include a table that will assist in guiding the vision and intent as identified on the Placetypes Map (Figure 27). The following definitions are listed below for each table:

- **Description:** A general description of the desired characteristics of this placetype
- **Areas in Mesa County:** Key locations of where this placetype would apply.
- **Primary Land Uses:** Preferred and/or allowed uses that support the desired characteristics of this placetype.
- **Connectivity Network:** The roads, sidewalk and trails that support the desired uses.
- **Visual Character:** Images that illustrate the visual intent of the category, these are intend to be representational and illustrative and are not comprehensive.



Legend		
County Boundary	Large Lot Community Placetype	Renewable Energy Placetype
Federal Public Lands	Rural Community Placetype	Environmental Quality Area Placetype
Growing Community Placetype	Energy Placetype	Agricultural Community Placetype

Figure 27: Placetypes Map
(Source: Design Workshop)

Character Imagery



GROWING COMMUNITY PLACETYPE

Description

Growing Community consists of a mix of land uses, support the development of complete neighborhoods and encourage a diversity of housing types -in both size and price point. Neighborhoods are connected by street networks and sidewalks. Community center nodes are present at intersections consisting of retail, office, parks, schools, etc. to meet needs of the community. Mixed-use communities are also included.

Areas in Mesa County

- Whitewater: Encourage Residential and Light Commercial
- Clifton: Encourage Infill Development including Mixed Use and Residential.

Primary Land Uses

- Neighborhood
- Mixed-use buildings
- Higher density
- Single-family detached, townhouse, multifamily housing, apartments, condominiums, etc.
- Office/retail
- Institutional

Connectivity Network

- Encourage growth to occur at community crossroads and direct circulation to these centers.
- Suburban blocks
- Urban blocks
- Multimodal streets for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians
- Greenways and multiuse paths

Coordinated Efforts

- Clifton-Fruitvale Community Plan
- Whitewater Community Plan

Photos (top to bottom)
 Redlands (Source: Mesa County)
 Palisade (Source: Mesa County)
 Grand Junction (Source: Mesa County)
 Palisade (Source: Mesa County)

LARGE LOT COMMUNITY PLACETYPE

Description Large lot communities consist of rural residential in agricultural areas. These areas are intended to maintain the status quo and celebrate the area’s rural nature. In some cases, clustering may be encouraged to support the preservation of agricultural lands. Roadway networks are often unpaved. Rural crossroads at key intersections are encouraged to provide basic services to residents.

-
- Areas in Mesa County**
- Glade Park
 - Plateau Valley
 - Kannah Creek

-
- Primary Land Uses**
- Large Lot- 35 and greater Single-family detached homes
 - Estate homes
 - Rural crossroads node: center for retail service to meet the needs of the community

-
- Connectivity Network**
- Rural streets
 - Rural intersections



Photos (top to bottom)
 Mt. Garfield (Source: Mesa County)
 Palisade (Source: Mesa County)
 Collbran (Source: Mesa County)
 Collbran (Source: Mesa County)

Character Imagery



RURAL COMMUNITY PLACETYPE

Description

Rural communities are identified by the LDC to include Loma, Mack, Whitewater, Mesa, Powderhorn, and Gateway as Rural Communities. These communities have specific uses, zones and standards. Rural communities serve the surrounding rural area. De Beque and Collbran are incorporated communities and have their own uses, zones and standards.

Areas in Mesa County

- Gateway
- Mesa/Powderhorn
- Whitewater
- Loma
- Mack

Primary Land Uses

- Single-family detached homes
- Multifamily
- Mobile home communities
- Light commercial
- Rural crossroads node: center for retail service to meet the needs of the community

Connectivity Network

- Suburban blocks
- Urban blocks
- Multimodal streets for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians
- Greenways and multiuse paths

Coordinated Efforts

- Whitewater Community Plan
- Loma Community Plan
- Mack Community Plan
- Mesa/Powderhorn Plan
- Gateway Rural Community Plan

Photos (top to bottom)
 Redlands (Source: Mesa County)
 Fruita (Source: Mesa County)
 Fruita River (Source: Mesa County)
 Palisade (Source: Mesa County)

ENERGY PLACETYPE

Description Traditional Energy areas primarily include BLM and State owned land, as well as privately owned lands. Energy development is ideally near already-developed natural gas transmission pipelines and infrastructure.

Areas in Mesa County Built off the Energy Policy Opportunities Map focusing on and encouraging responsible natural gas development in the northwest corner of Mesa County, where access to already-existing multiple primary connections exist, allows for better distribution to major markets while reducing the need to disturb more BLM and State Land than what's necessary.

- BLM Land in northwest Mesa County
- BLM Special Areas in northwest Mesa County
- Public Land in northwest Mesa County
- Public and private land in Plateau Valley and northeastern Mesa County
- Gateway

Primary Land Uses

- Agricultural, managed forests and pastureland ideally near existing energy infrastructure
- Rural residential single-family
- Industrial

Connectivity Network

- Rural streets
- Rural crossroads

Coordinated Efforts

- Mesa County Resource Management Plan
- Mesa County Mineral & Energy Resources Master Plan



Photos (top to bottom)
 Fruita (Source: Mesa County)
 Oil and Gas (Source: Mesa County)
 Collbran (Source: Mesa County)
 Mt Garfield (Source: Mesa County)

Character Imagery



RENEWABLE ENERGY PLACETYPE

Description

Ideal Renewable Energy areas include non-irrigated private land and private land outside of the urban areas and Rural Communities. Other areas could include marginal lands, such as landfills, contaminated or poor-quality soils, and previously developed sites that are located relatively close to a power station. Development patterns consists of energy use and light industrial but may include residential and commercial use.

Areas in Mesa County

- BLM Special Areas south of Palisade
- BLM Land around Garfield Planning Area
- BLM Land, BLM Special Areas, and State Land around Whitewater Community Plan Area
- County Land adjacent or within incorporated municipalities
- State Land near Grand Junction Regional Airport

Primary Land Uses

- Marginal lands (landfills, poor quality soils)
- Limited and General Industrial
- Commercial Districts
- Medium Intensity Developed Land
- Agricultural, managed forests and pastureland ideally near existing power station infrastructure
- Rural residential single-family land

Connectivity Network

- Rural streets
- Rural crossroads
- Urban roads

Photos (top to bottom)

Grove Creek Oil and Gas (Source: Mesa County)

Grand Valley Irrigation Headgate (Source: Mesa County)

Mesa County Landfill (Source: Mesa County)

Collbran Irrigation (Source: Mesa County)

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AREA PLACETYPE

Description Environmental Quality areas include land that is under or minimally developed and possess high quality natural resources, vegetation, wildlife habitat, and/or water resources. Many of these areas are already conserved by public agencies, private or public conservation easements, or other policies such as for natural hazard protection. However, some of these areas possessing high quality natural resources are represent aspirations for conservation.

- Areas in Mesa County**
- BLM land
 - USFS land
 - CODEX Potential Conservation Areas
 - Colorado National Monument
 - Colorado State Parks

- Primary Land Uses**
- Natural areas are publicly and privately owned and managed
 - Protected lands
 - Parks and open spaces for recreation and trails
 - Landmarks
 - Scenic view corridors

- Connectivity Network**
- Greenways and trails along rivers, scenic corridors and environmental buffers
 - Scenic view corridors

- Coordinated Efforts**
- Mesa County Resource Management Plan
 - Mesa Countywide Land Use Plan



Photos (top to bottom)
 Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)
 Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)
 Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)
 Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)

Character Imagery



AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY PLACETYPE

Description

Agriculture Community areas include large lots for farming and ranching, conservation-based subdivisions and preserved open space.

Areas in Mesa County

- Fruita Agricultural Area: Agricultural Pasture and Recreation
- Palisade Agricultural Area: Agricultural Recreation and Tourism Village
- Grand Valley Agricultural Area
- Orchard Mesa Agricultural Area

Primary Land Uses

- Estate homes
- Farmland
- Agriculture
- Managed forests and pastureland
- Mobile home communities
- Rural crossroads node: retail service center to meet the needs of the community
- Tourism hubs: information and lodging

Connectivity Network

- Greenways and trails along rivers, scenic corridors and environmental buffers
- Rural streets
- Rural crossroads
- Rural greenways and trails

Photos (top to bottom)
 Palisade (Source: Mesa County)
 Palisade (Source: Mesa County)
 Palisade (Source: Mesa County)
 Collbran (Source: Mesa County)

CROSSROADS

Crossroads are places where people and pathways come together. These should promote a mix of uses, diversity of housing types and walkable patterns to support the surrounding community. Centralizing development at core locations can ensure quality of life for rural residents and access to basic needs, while also conserving the rural character of the surrounding areas.

Each of the following crossroad categories include a table that will assist in guiding the vision and intent as identified on the Crossroads Map (Figure 28). The following definitions are listed below for each table:

- **Description:** A general description of the desired characteristics of this Crossroad.
- **Areas in Mesa County:** Key locations of where this Crossroad would apply.
- **Primary Land Uses:** Preferred and/or allowed uses that support the desired characteristics of this Crossroad.
- **Connectivity Network:** The roads, sidewalk and trails that support the desired uses.

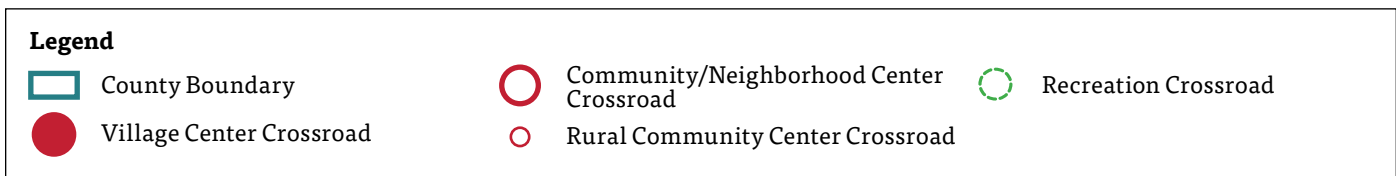
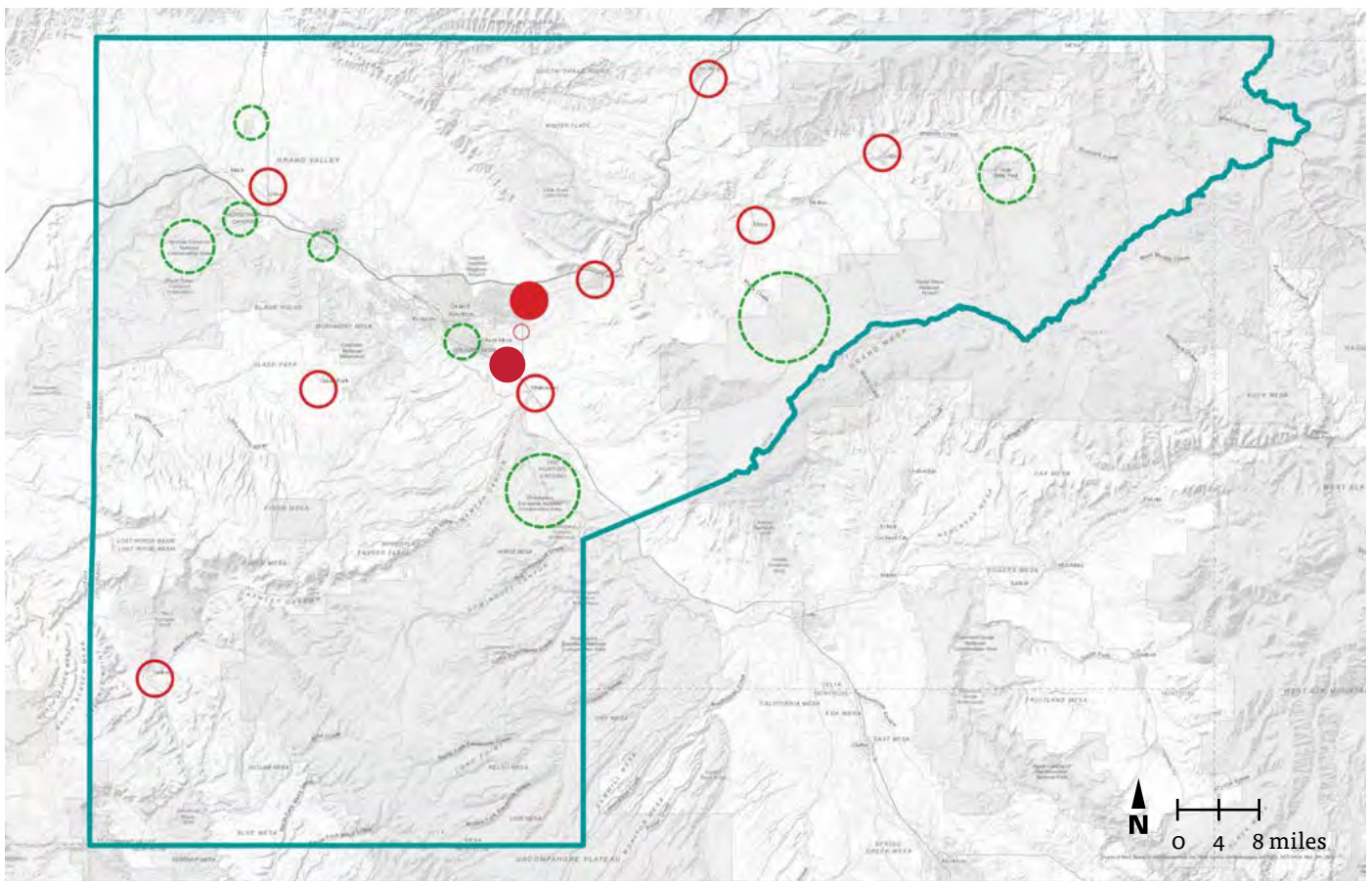


Figure 28: Crossroads Map
(Source: Design Workshop)

Character Imagery



VILLAGE CENTER CROSSROAD

Description Located in more urban areas and promote a mix of uses such as grocery, restaurants and local businesses and small office. Community gathering places such as civic buildings, libraries and schools are encouraged.

Areas in Mesa County

- Hwy 6 and 32-Road
- Hwy 50 and Hwy 141

Primary Land Uses

- Mixed Use Development
- Medium to High Density Residential

Connectivity Network

- Ideal locations for transit stops
- A hub of bike and walking infrastructure
- Crosswalks, sidewalks, bike lanes, bike parking
- Complete street design

Photos (top to bottom)
 Palisade (Source: Mesa County)
 Palisade (Source: Mesa County)
 Grand Valley Transit (Source: City of Grand Junction)
 Grand Junction (Source: Mesa County)

COMMUNITY/NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER CROSSROAD

Description Less densely populated areas and might include small scale local services such as neighborhood retail, a gas station, farmstand, restaurants, shops and smaller-scale businesses.

Areas in Mesa County

- 32 Road and B ½ Road
- 32 Road and D Road
- Roan Creek Road in De Beque

Primary Land Uses

- Mixed Use Development
- Medium Density Residential
- Office or Light Industrial (Maker Spaces)

Connectivity Network

- Sidewalks and bike lanes
- Complete street design
- Scenic byways



Photos (top to bottom)
 De Beque (Source: Wikimedia Commons)
 Grand Junction Downtown Market (Source: WidEarth Guardians)
 Loma School (Source: Mesa County)
 Fruita (Source: Mesa County)

Character Imagery



RURAL COMMUNITY CROSSROAD

Description

Rural Community Crossroads are local centers, or nodes that can serve as community places. These would typically include a convenience store that provides basic daily needs and can include restaurants, shops and smaller-scale businesses.

Areas in Mesa County

- Glade Park Store
- Downtown Mesa
- Gateway at Hwy 141
- Mack

Primary Land Uses

- Medium and Low Density Residential
- Office or Light Industrial (Maker Spaces)
- Services such as general store, gas station, food/feed store, laundromat, etc.

Connectivity Network

- Sidewalks and Crosswalks
- Safe crossing at key intersection
- Signalization (as applicable)

Photos (top to bottom)
Gateway (Source: Wikimedia Commons)
Collbran (Source: Mesa County)
Grand Junction Downtown Market (Source: Mesa County)
Clifton (Source: Wikipedia)

RECREATION CROSSROAD

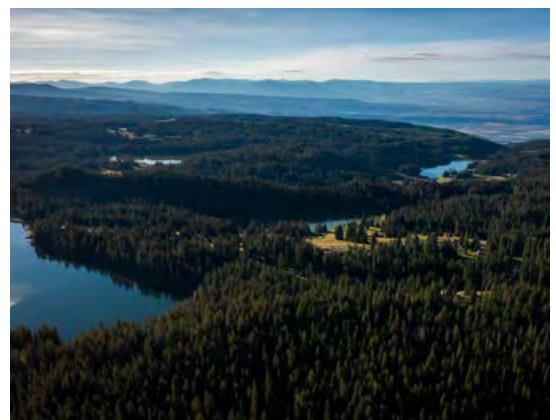
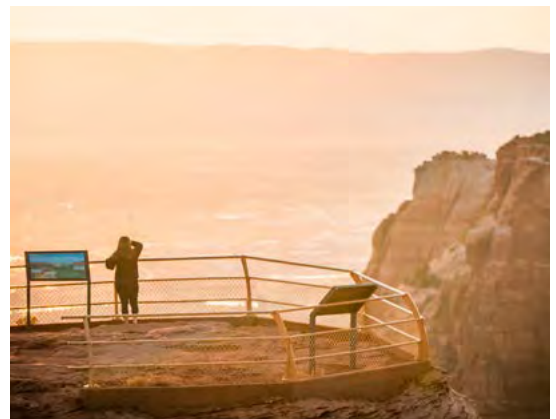
Description Recreation Crossroads are the gateways to outdoor activities and include protected open spaces and natural areas. They might include supportive industries for outdoor recreation such as camping/lodging, trailhead parking, outfitters, and commercial recreation.

- Areas in Mesa County**
- Grand Mesa/Mesa Recreation Area
 - River Recreation Area along Colorado and Gunnison Rivers
 - Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area
 - Rabbit Valley Recreation Area
 - Canyons National Conservation Area
 - Colorado National Monument

- Primary Land Uses**
- Public Land
 - Open Space and parks for recreation and trails
 - Natural areas that are publicly and privately owned and managed
 - Protected lands
 - Landmarks
 - Scenic view protection and corridors

- Connectivity Network**
- Greenways and trails along rivers, scenic corridors and environmental buffers

- Coordinated Efforts**
- Mesa County Resource Management Plan
 - Mesa Countywide Land Use Plan, Chapter 4 Rural Planning Area and Future Land Use Plan Open Lands and Trails (OLT)



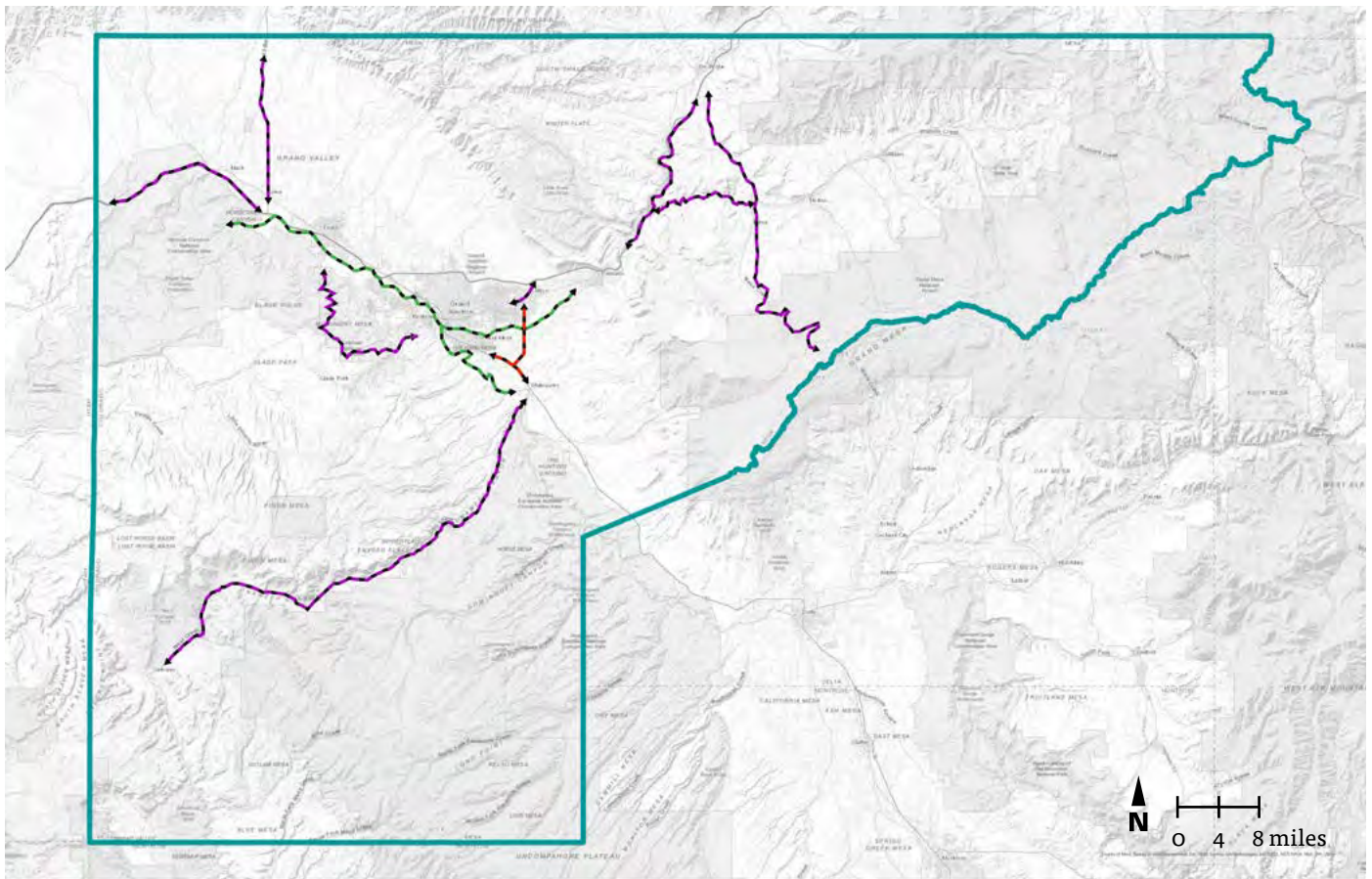
Photos (top to bottom)
 Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)
 Fruita River (Source: WidEarth Guardians)
 Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)
 Grand Mesa (Source: Mesa County)

CORRIDORS

Corridors are linear facilities such as a road or river, that serve as a connection from one point to another and have a common character or use along the length, such as commercial uses or recreational uses.

Each of the following crossroad categories include a table that will assist in guiding the vision and intent as identified on the Corridor Map (Figure 29). The following definitions are listed below for each table:

- **Description:** A general description of the desired characteristics of this Corridor.
- **Areas in Mesa County:** Key locations of where this Corridor would apply.
- **Primary Land Uses:** Preferred and/or allowed uses that support the desired characteristics of this Corridor.
- **Connectivity Network:** The roads, sidewalk and trails that support the desired uses.




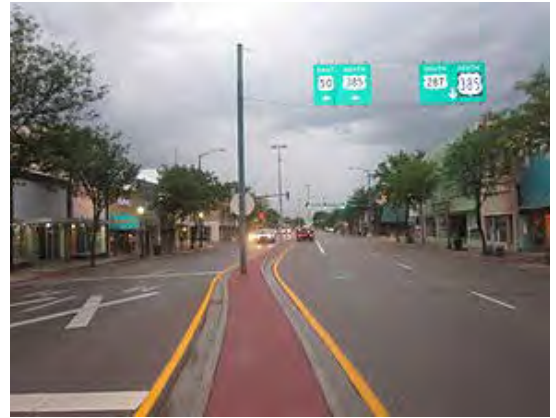
Legend					
	County Boundary		Scenic Byway		Recreational Corridor
	Growth Corridor				

Figure 29: Corridors Map
(Source: Design Workshop)

GROWTH CORRIDOR

Description Growth corridors include commercial and retail, office, residential and associated land uses such as schools, parks and community centers to meet the needs of a growing community. Growth corridors should avoid strip style commercial and aim to provide goods, services, jobs, convenience shopping, and gathering places that create a sense of place and identity. These are often areas suited for reinvestment and redevelopment. Placemaking is incorporated to encourage quality places that people want to live, work and play. Street design considers building setback, heights and facilities to support a strong sense of place. Landscaping, trees, access improvements, and intersection improvements support a complete street design to support all modes of travel.



Areas in Mesa County

- Colorado 141 and I-70 Business/US 6 through Clifton

Primary Land Uses

- Commercial and Mixed Use Residential
- High to Medium Density Residential
- Retail
- Office
- Institutional / community



Connectivity Network

- Roads are designed for Complete streets, often through Corridor plans.
- Sidewalks- Encourage walkability and bikeability.
- Multiuse paths



Photos (top to bottom)
 US Route 50 (Source: Wikipedia)
 Palisade (Source: Mesa County)
 Mesa County (Source: Mesa County)
 Mesa County (Source: Mesa County)

Character Imagery



SCENIC BYWAY CORRIDOR

Description

Scenic Byways are roadways recognized by the USDOT for their archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic characteristics.

Areas in Mesa County

- Dinosaur Diamond Scenic Byway - Colorado State Highway 139 through Loma (existing)
- I-70 through Mack and Loma (existing)
- Colorado State Highway 65 south of Mesa (existing)
- Colorado State Highway 65 between I-70 and Mesa (existing)
- I-70 from De Beque to Palisade (proposed)
- Rim Rock Drive - Colorado National Monument (existing)
- Unaweep/Tabeguache Scenic Byway - Colorado State Highway 141 from Whitewater to Gateway (existing)
- Grand Mesa Scenic Byway: Colorado State Highway 65 (existing)

Primary Land Uses

- Agriculture
- Residential
- Commercial
- Public Land
- Open Space and parks for recreation and trails
- Natural areas that are publicly and privately owned and managed
- Protected lands
- Landmarks

Connectivity Network

- Trails or shoulders for bicycling
- Highways

Photos (top to bottom)

Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)

Palisade (Source: Mesa County)

Grand Mesa (Source: Mesa County)

Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)

RECREATIONAL CORRIDOR

Description Recreation Corridors preserve open space and natural areas for outdoor recreation use. Includes land that is undeveloped or minimally developed and is protected by local, state and federal agencies or by public, private and nonprofit organizations. Trails and multiuse paths line the corridor.

Areas in Mesa County

- Colorado River
- Gunnison River (From Whitewater to the confluence)

Primary Land Uses

- Agriculture
- Residential
- Commercial
- Public Land
- Open Space and parks for recreation and trails
- Natural areas that are publicly and privately owned and managed
- Protected lands
- Landmarks
- Scenic view protection

Connectivity Network

- Trails
- Multiuse Paths



Photos (top to bottom)
 Hiking Mesa County (Source: Mesa County)
 Fruita River (Source: Mesa County)
 Fruita Mountain Biking (Source: Wikimedia Commons)
 Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)

FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

The Future Land Use Map is a tool to guide near-term future land use planning. Along with policies set forth in the Mesa County Master Plan, it may strongly influence consideration of requests for changes to the zoning of property; however, it is not a zoning map. Chapter 5 of the Mesa County Land Development Code establishes the County’s zoning districts and contains statements of purpose and site development standards for each of those districts. Additionally, this chapter contains a matrix that, for purposes of rezoning, indicates which zoning districts implement each future land use classification Vision vs. Future Land Use vs. Zoning (Table 6) outlined some key differences between the three:

Vision Map	Future Land Use Map	Zoning Map
Reflects a long-term community vision for the desired future development pattern	Reflects short-term opportunities to direct future development and development density	Regulates what kinds of uses are allowed on specific parcels and protects landowner rights
Placetypes, crossroads and corridors as identified in the Vision Map guide character and potential future development opportunities. It informs the Future Land Use Map	Future Land Use classifications that could affect future land use decisions and recommend conceptual improvements to the Land Development Code	Zoning as a part of the Land Development Code refers to entitlements and regulation of use, height, density and other characteristics
Advisory	Advisory	Enforced

Table 6: Future Land Use vs. Zoning (Source: Design Workshop)

The following page contains an overview map (Figure 30) of Future Land Uses and enlargements of the three areas identified are in Figures 31-33. Municipalities are required to adopt a three-mile plan to guide annexation within their comprehensive plan or master plan per state statues. Note that municipal plan areas and 3-mile joint planning areas land use designations are based on current best data and are subject to change by the municipalities.

The City of Grand Junction and Mesa County have an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) in place for the Persigo 201 area. This 201 Persigo Boundary is based on current best data and is subject to change. Proposed developments located within the Persigo 201 area may require annexation by the City of Grand Junction.

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FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM)

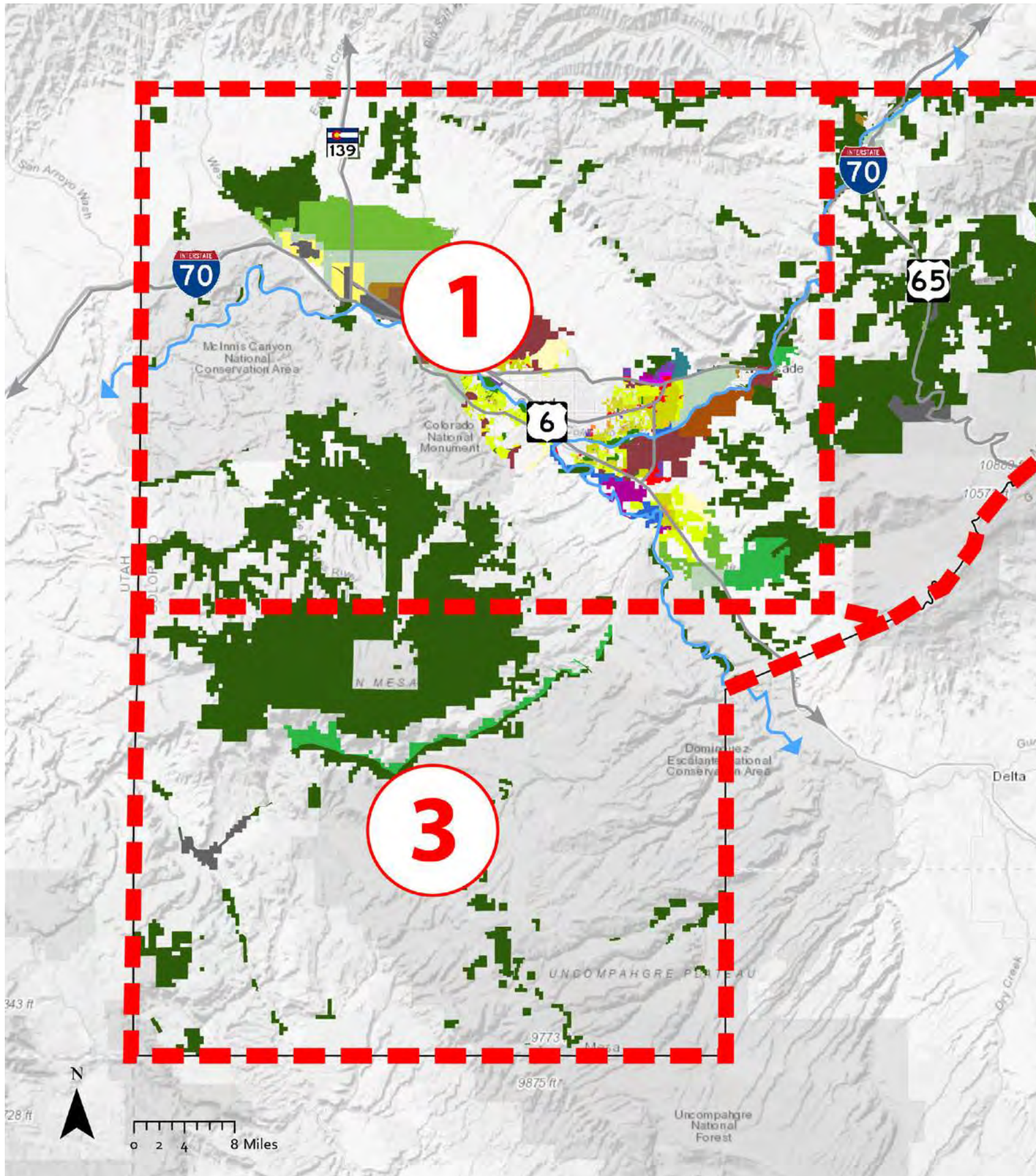
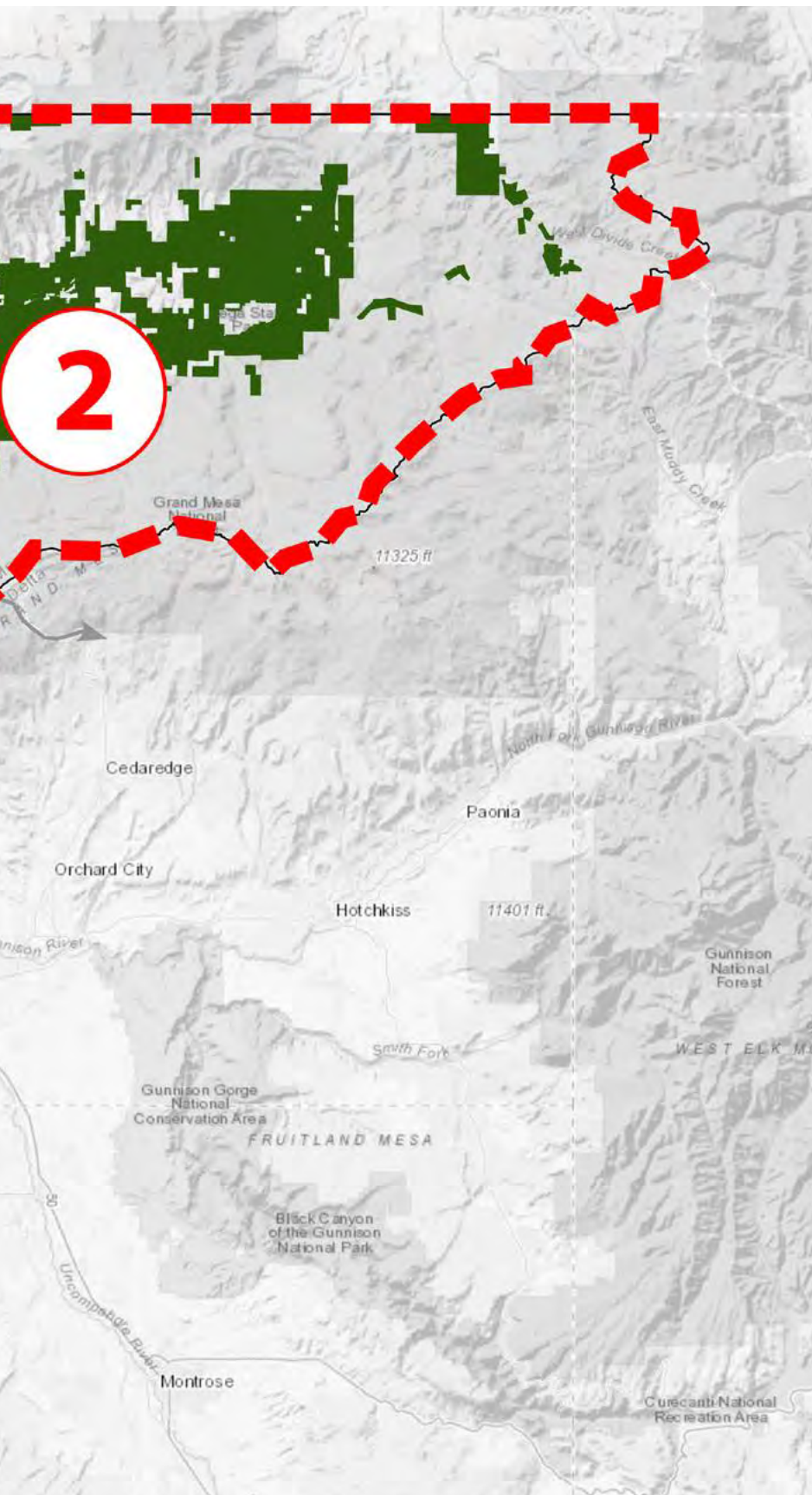


Figure 30: Future Land Use Map - Overall
(Source: Mesa County)



Rural Residential

- Estate
- Estate 2
- Estate 3
- Urban Residential/
Residential Reserve
- EOM 10
- Fruita 201 10
- Rural
- Rural Agricultural 10
- Rural Agricultural 17
- Rural Agricultural 20
- Rural Agricultural 35

Urban

- Commercial
- Commercial Industrial
- Conservation/Mineral Extraction
- Business Park Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Parks and Open Space
- Residential Low
- Residential Medium
- Residential High

Special Areas

- Mt Garfield View Protection Area
- Overlay
- Persigo 201

RURAL RESIDENTIAL FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

This classification is intended to accommodate low density large lot residential development. Classifications that overlay the AFT zoned areas which can administratively allow densities above 1 dwelling per 35 acres. These classifications are defined in the Rural Residential Classifications Table (Table 7). The Rural Residential land use classifications determine density in areas zones as Agricultural, Forestry, Transitional (AFT) in the LDC. Many of the classifications allow bonus density that encourages clustering and preservation of agricultural lands.

Vision Alignment: This classification is ideally suited for agricultural placetypes, conservation placetypes and other rural areas.

Rural Residential Future Land Use Classifications		
Land Use Classification	Zoning Alignment with the LDC	Description
Rural Agricultural 10 (R/A 10)	LDC Rural Zoning Districts: • AFT	Lot Size Range: 1 dwelling/10 acres to 1 dwelling/5 acres Bonus density is allowed.
Rural Agricultural 17 (R/A 17)	LDC Rural Zoning Districts: • AFT	Lot Size Range: 1 dwelling/17 acres to 1 dwelling/9 acres Bonus density is allowed.
Rural Agricultural 20 (R/A 20)	LDC Rural Zoning Districts: • AFT	Lot Size Range: 1 dwelling/20 acres No bonus density is allowed.
Rural Agricultural 35 (R/A 35)	LDC Rural Zoning Districts: • AF-35 • AFT	Density Range: 1 dwelling/35 acres
Estate (EST)	LDC Rural Zoning Districts: • RSF-E	Density Range: 1 dwelling /1 acre Must be rezoned from AFT to RSF-E. No bonus density allowed.
Estate 2 (EST 2)	LDC Rural Zoning Districts: • RSF-E	Density Range: 1 dwelling/2 acres Must be rezoned from AFT to RSF-E. No bonus density allowed.
Estate 3 (EST 3)	LDC Rural Zoning Districts: • RSF-E	Density Range: 1 dwelling/3 acres Must be rezoned from AFT to RSF-E. No bonus density allowed.
Urban Residential/ Residential Reserve (URR)	LDC Rural Zoning Districts: • URR	Density Range: 1 dwelling/2 acres Must be rezoned from AFT to URR. Bonus density is allowed.
EOM 10 (EOM 10)	LDC Rural Zoning Districts: • AFT	Density Range: 1 dwelling/10 acres No bonus density allowed.
Fruita 201 10 (Fruita 201 10)	LDC Rural Zoning Districts: • AFT	Density Range: 1 dwelling/10 acres No bonus density allowed.

Table 7: Rural Residential Future Land Use Classification

RESIDENTIAL FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

For the purposes of the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), many of the Land Use Classifications have been consolidated for ease of use. The Residential Future Land Use Classification Table (Table 8) outlines the proposed land use classifications on the FLUM (Figure 30).

Residential Uses Classifications		
Land Use Classification	Zoning Alignment with the LDC	Description
Residential Low (RL)	LDC Urban Residential Zoning District: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSF-1 • RSF-2 • RSF-4 	This classification is intended to accommodate a transition from rural and agricultural areas to more urban areas and corridors where utility infrastructure is available. Vision Alignment: This classification is ideally suited for stable communities and growing community placetypes and along commercial corridors and around community crossroads in rural areas. Density Range: 1-4 dwellings/acre.
Residential Medium (RM)	LDC Urban Residential Zoning Districts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMF-5 (5du/1ac) • RMF-8 (8du/1ac) • RMF-12 (12du/1ac) 	This classification is intended to accommodate medium residential development in urban areas and corridors where utility infrastructure is available. Vision Alignment: This classification is ideally suited for stable communities and growing community placetypes and along commercial corridors and around community crossroads in rural areas. Density Range: 5-12 dwellings/acre
Residential High (RH)	LDC Urban Residential Zoning Districts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMF-12 (12du/1ac) • RMF-16 (16du/1ac) • RMF-24 (24du/1ac) LDC Urban Nonresidential Zoning Districts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R-O • B-1 	This classification is intended to accommodate higher density growth in urban, unincorporated areas and limited office and commercial uses. Vision Alignment: This classification is ideally suited for growing community placetypes, along commercial corridors and at community crossroads in rural areas. Density Range: 12-24+ Units Per Acre

Table 8: Residential Future Land Use Classification

COMMERCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT AREAS LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

For the purposes of the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), many of the Land Use Classifications have been consolidated for ease of use. The Commercial and Employment Land Use Classification Table (Table 10) outlines the proposed land use classifications on the FLUM (Figure 25).

Commercial and Employment Areas Use Classifications		
Land Use Classification	Zoning Alignment with the LDC	Description
Mixed Use (MU)	<p>LDC Urban Residential Mixed Use Zoning Districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MU-R • RMF-8 • RMF-12 • RMF-16 • RMF-24 <p>LDC Urban Nonresidential Mixed Use Zoning Districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R-O • B-1 • B-2 • C-1 • MU-C • MU-OTC 	<p>This classification is intended to accommodate increased service areas at key locations and includes commercial, business and residential uses. Transit connections are important at these locations, and design should promote multimodal options.</p> <p>Vision Alignment: This classification is ideally suited for growing community placetypes, along commercial corridors and at community crossroads.</p> <p>Density: 8-12+ Units Per Acre</p>
Commercial (COM)	<p>LDC Nonresidential Zoning Districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R-O • B-1 • B-2 • C-1 • C-2 	<p>This classification is intended to accommodate increased service areas at nodes and along corridors.</p> <p>Vision Alignment: This classification is ideally suited for growing community placetypes, specifically along commercial corridors.</p> <p>Density Range: 8-24 Units Per Acre</p>
Commercial Industrial (CI)	<p>LDC Nonresidential Zoning Districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C-2 • I-1 	<p>This classification is intended to accommodate heavy commercial, offices and light industrial uses with outdoor storage and some outdoor operations (e.g., office/warehouse uses, auto sales, auto repair shops, lumber yards, light manufacturing, oil and gas businesses).</p> <p>Vision Alignment: This classification is ideally suited for growing community placetypes, specifically along I-70 and major corridors.</p>
Business Park Mixed Use (BPMU)	<p>LDC Urban Residential Zoning Districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMF-8 (8du/1ac) • RMF-12 (12du/1ac) <p>LDC Nonresidential Zoning Districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C-2 • I-1 	<p>Residential uses are limited to the business park mixed-use development.</p> <p>Vision Alignment: This classification is ideally suited for growing community placetypes, specifically along commercial corridors, with consideration of community crossroads as synergistic use areas.</p>

Commercial and Employment Areas Use Classifications		
Land Use Classification	Zoning Alignment with the LDC	Description
Industrial (IND)	LDC Nonresidential Zoning Districts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-1 • I-2 	This classification is intended to accommodate industrial and production related business. Residential is not encouraged. Vision Alignment: This classification is ideally suited for growing community placetypes and energy centers Industry should be located so as not to disrupt residential or commercial uses.

Table 9: Commercial and Employment Areas Land Use Classification

SPECIAL AREAS LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

For the purposes of the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), many of the Land Use Classifications have been consolidated for ease of use. The Special Areas Land Use Classification Table (Table 10) outlines the proposed land use classifications on the FLUM (Figure 30).

Special Areas Uses Classifications		
Land Use Classification	Zoning Alignment with the LDC	Description
Parks and Open Space (PK)	No Current Land Use Designations in the LDC Alignment with the 201 Allowed in every zone	This classification is intended to identify areas for active and passive community recreation and gathering. Parks are allowed, build when needed. Vision Alignment: This classification is ideally suited for growing communities such as Whitewater and Clifton to provide services in more urban areas.
Conservation/Mineral Extraction (CON)	LDC Nonresidential Zoning Districts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AF 35 	This classification is intended to preserve areas primarily used for aggregate mining. Vision Alignment: This classification is ideally suited for the environmental quality area placetype.
Overlay	Land Uses within Community Area and Community Plans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway Overlay • Loma Overlay • Mack Overlay • Mesa/Powderhorn Overlay 	This classification is intended to allow for unique areas such as downtowns, civic centers, gateways and historic districts to provide special considerations for planning and include the needs of urban areas within the county to provide extended services through districts such as sewer, water, parks and other needs to be managed outside the county. Vision Alignment: This classification is ideally suited for community crossroads that may have areas of historic importance in a downtown or smaller community special consideration and is ideally suited for growing communities in needs of extended services.

Table 10: Special Areas Future Land Use Classification

FUTURE LAND USE MAP- ENLARGEMENT AREA 1

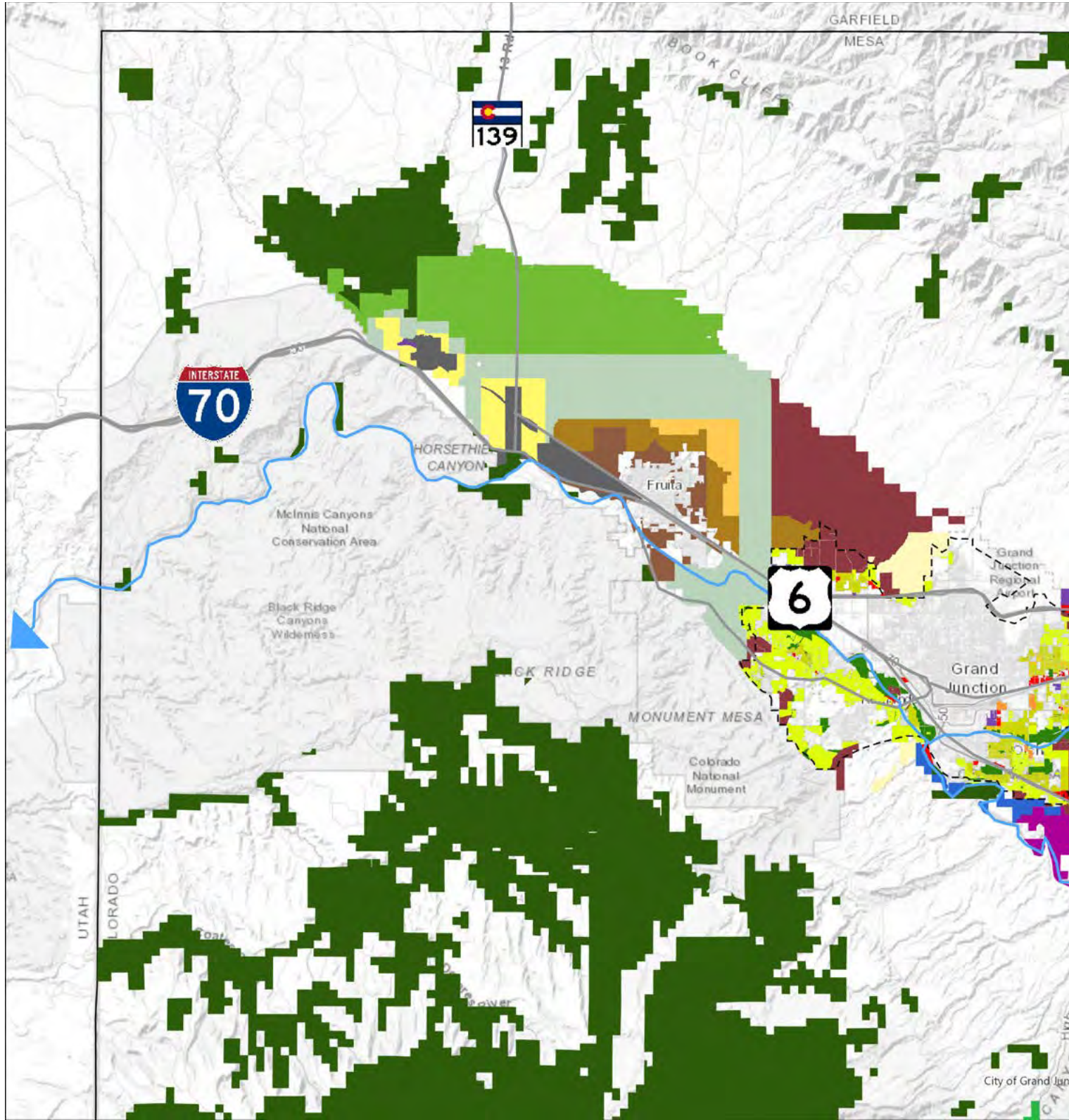
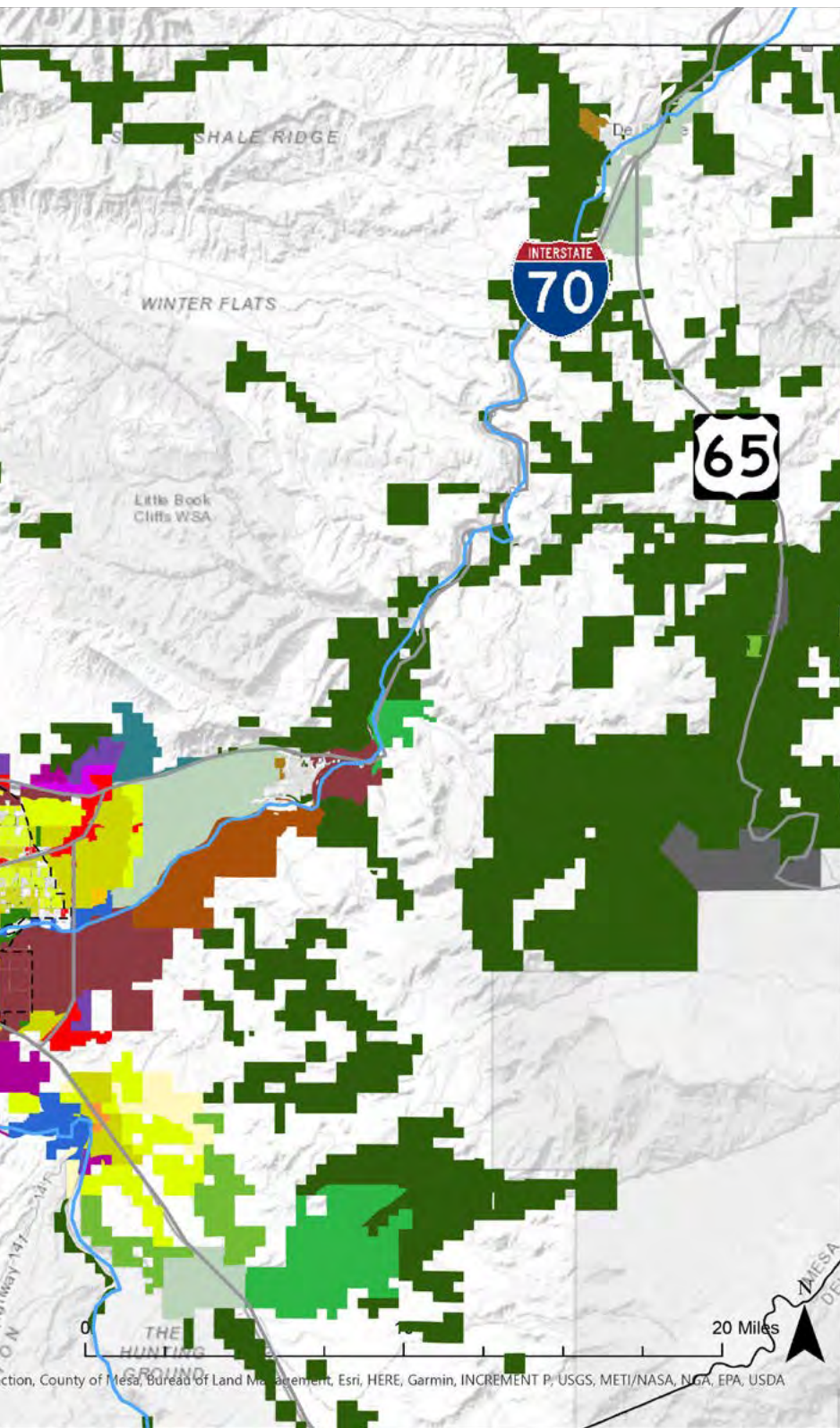


Figure 31: Future Land Use Map - Area 1
(Source: Mesa County)



Rural Residential

- Estate
- Estate 2
- Estate 3
- Urban Residential/
Residential Reserve
- EOM 10
- Fruita 201 10
- Rural
- Rural Agricultural 10
- Rural Agricultural 17
- Rural Agricultural 20
- Rural Agricultural 35

Urban

- Commercial
- Commercial Industrial
- Conservation/Mineral Extraction
- Business Park Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Parks and Open Space
- Residential Low
- Residential Medium
- Residential High

Special Areas

- Mt Garfield View Protection Area
- Overlay
- Persigo 201

ction, County of Mesa, Bureau of Land Management, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/NASA, NGA, EPA, USDA

FUTURE LAND USE MAP- ENLARGEMENT AREA 2

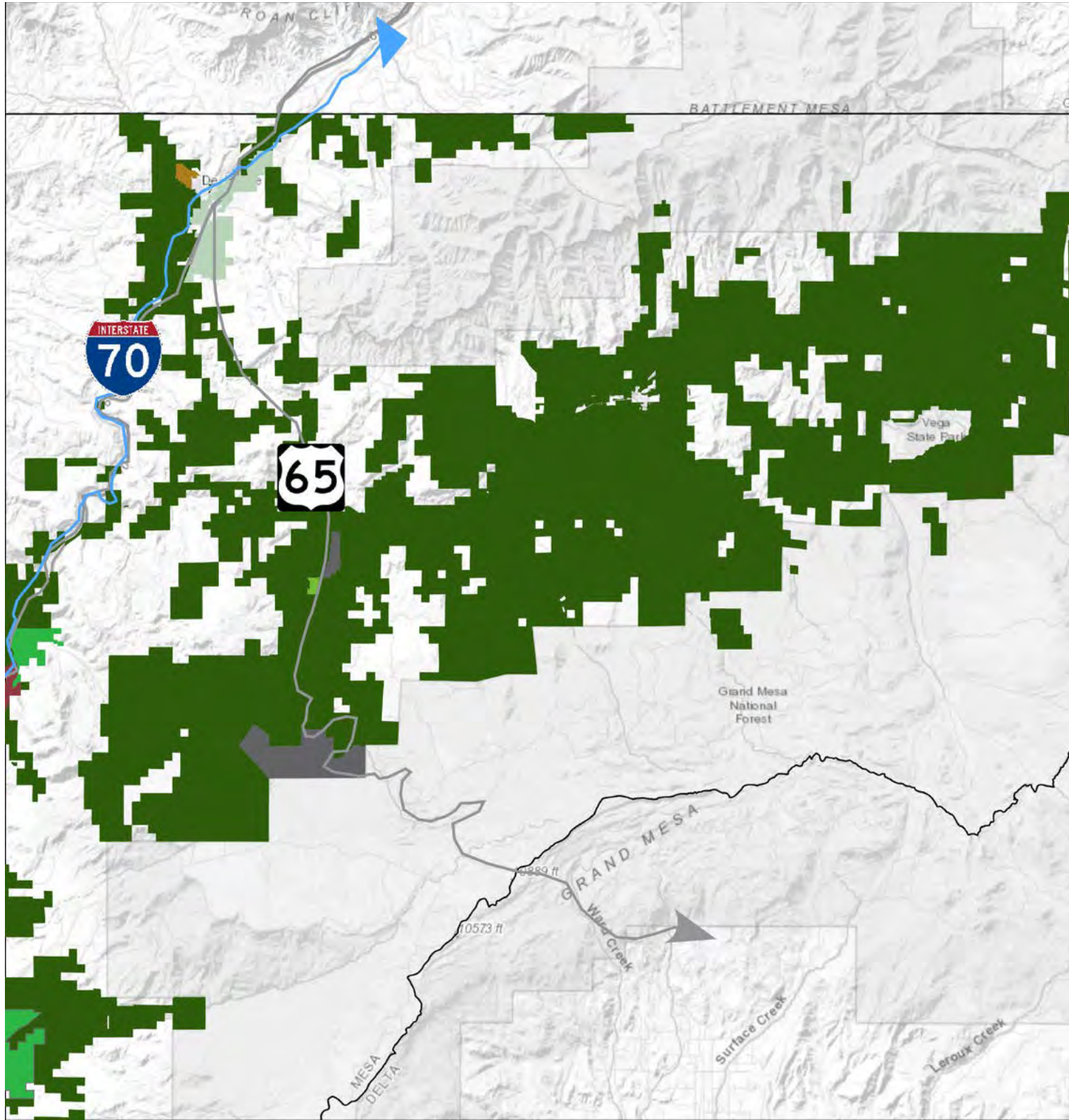


Figure 32: Future Land Use Map - Area 2
(Source: Mesa County)



Rural Residential

- Estate
- Estate 2
- Estate 3
- Urban Residential/
Residential Reserve
- EOM 10
- Fruita 201 10
- Rural
- Rural Agricultural 10
- Rural Agricultural 17
- Rural Agricultural 20
- Rural Agricultural 35

Urban

- Commercial
- Commercial Industrial
- Conservation/Mineral Extraction
- Business Park Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Parks and Open Space
- Residential Low
- Residential Medium
- Residential High

Special Areas

- Mt Garfield View Protection Area
- Overlay
- Persigo 201

FUTURE LAND USE MAP- ENLARGEMENT AREA 3

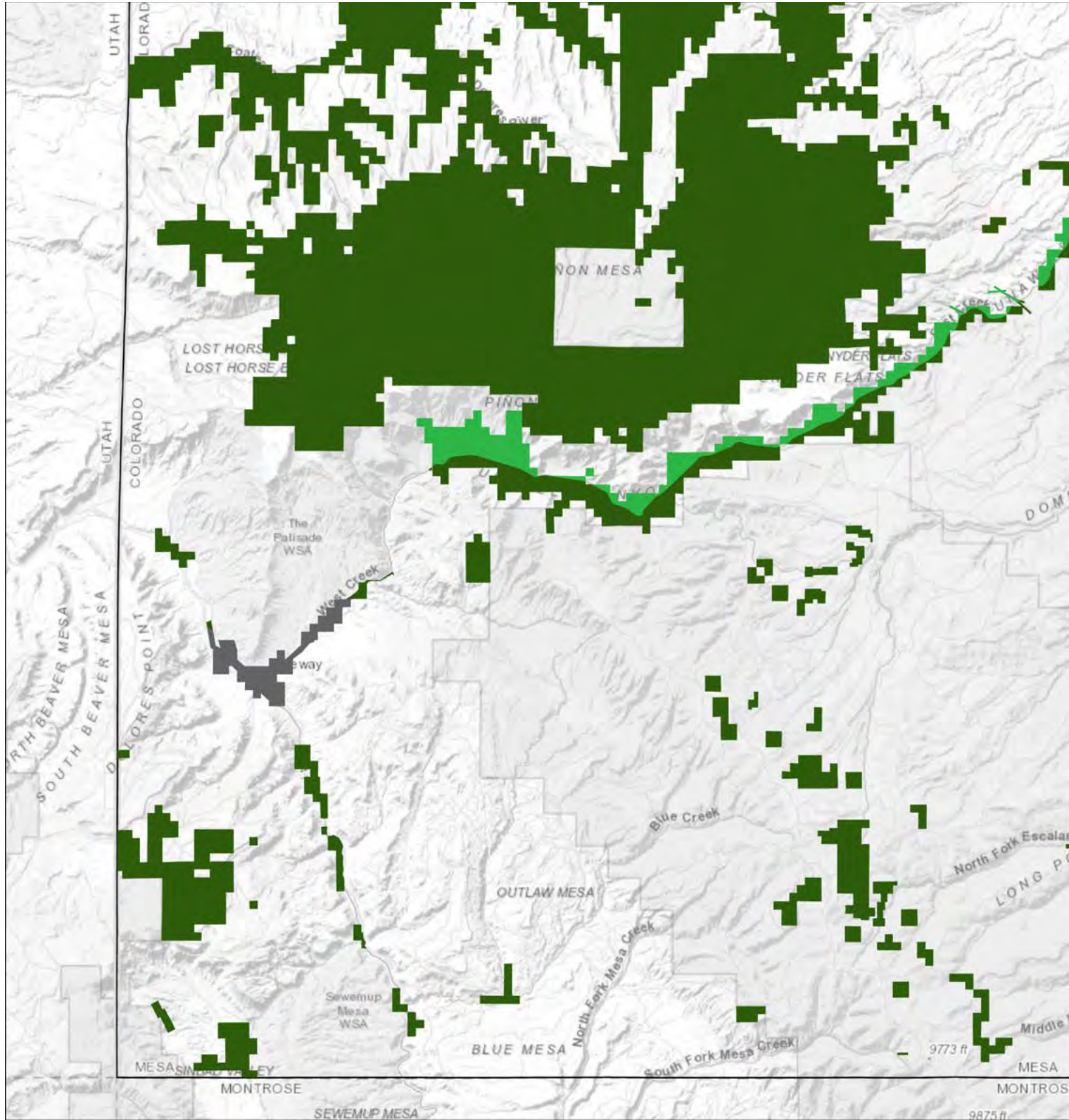
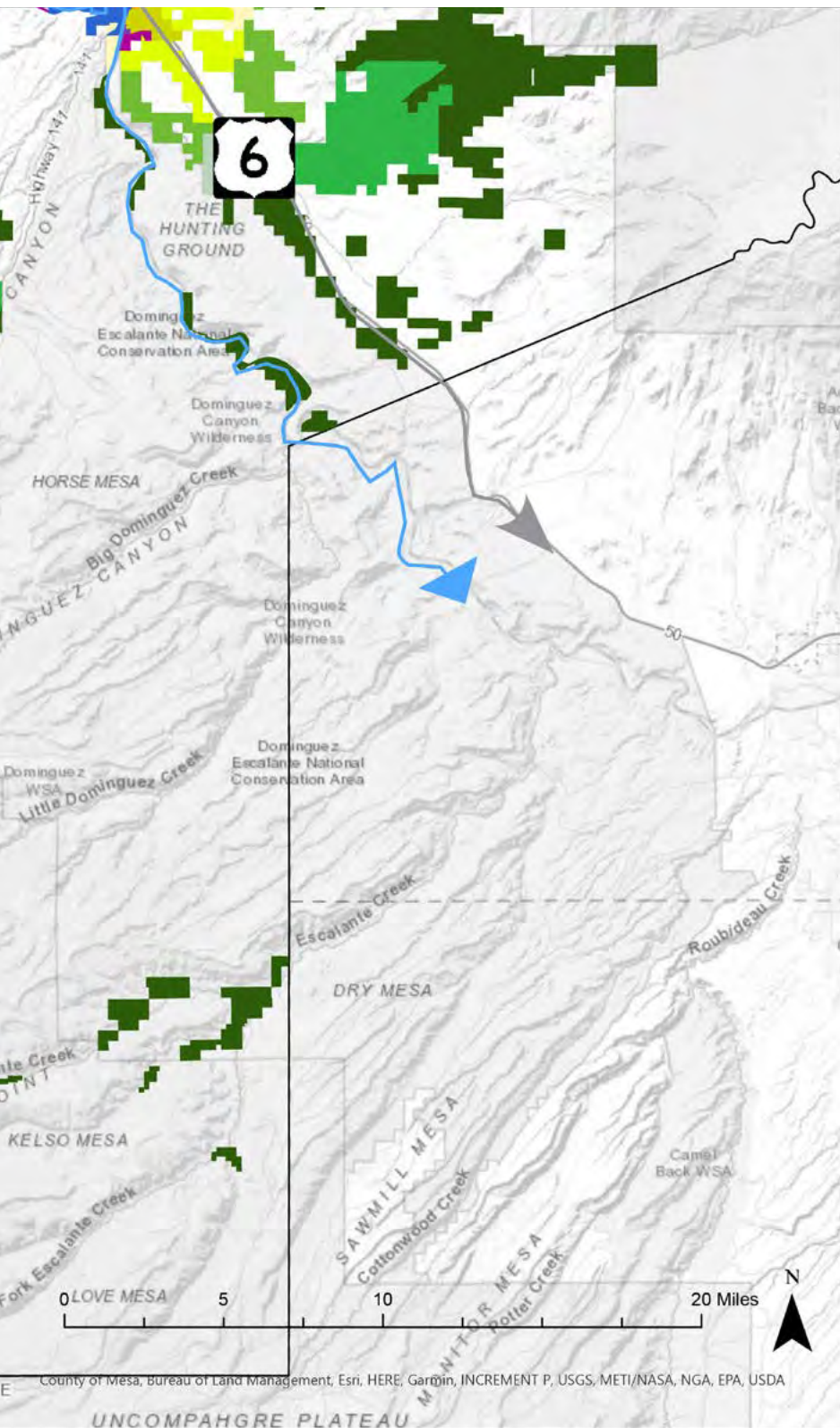


Figure 33: Future Land Use Map - Area 3
(Source: Mesa County)



Rural Residential

- Estate
- Estate 2
- Estate 3
- Urban Residential/
Residential Reserve
- EOM 10
- Fruita 201 10
- Rural
- Rural Agricultural 10
- Rural Agricultural 17
- Rural Agricultural 20
- Rural Agricultural 35

Urban

- Commercial
- Commercial Industrial
- Conservation/Mineral Extraction
- Business Park Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Parks and Open Space
- Residential Low
- Residential Medium
- Residential High

Special Areas

- Mt Garfield View Protection Area
- Overlay
- Persigo 201

County of Mesa, Bureau of Land Management, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/NASA, NGA, EPA, USDA

5

Goals and Strategies



The Palisade in Gateway (Source: Mesa County)

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

This is a critical time for Mesa County to consider how to influence development in order to preserve and celebrate its core values. The Goals Framework diagram (Figure 34) outlines how the goals, strategies and actions in this chapter guide the County in alignment with the vision and core values expressed in Chapters 3 and 4.



Figure 34: Goals Framework Diagram
(Source: Design Workshop)

GOALS

Nine goals, each with an overarching statement, are organized by the key plan elements. The goals were derived from topics the community identified as important and align the core values of the plan.

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

The strategies are potential approaches to County decisions and actions (such as policies, plans, or projects) which are recommended for the County undertake over the next ten years and provide transparency about the County's long-term intentions. Strategies are not regulatory or prescriptive but provide advisement for potential County approaches. Strategies are intended to be flexible to allow for adjustment over time in response to changing circumstances and opportunities. These actions may be fulfilled through annual work plans, capital projects, partnerships, and modifications to regulatory tools.

CONNECTION TO THE VISION MAP

The Vision Map and 'placetypes' in Chapter 4 define a future vision for the County based on the community's desire to see intentional and directed growth that will encourage agricultural industries to thrive, enhance quality of life and conserve natural resources. The goals and strategies refer to specific placetypes, crossroads and corridors as applicable to direct strategies to the areas identified on the Vision Maps.

CONNECTION TO THE FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

The land use classifications and Future Land Use Map (FLUM) describe the general characteristics and density to guide future development. The classifications and FLUM together designate more detailed locations where the goals and strategies listed below may apply.



GOAL 1. PROMOTE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Goal Statement: Maintain the quality of life and local culture of Mesa County by promoting economic and community health to ensure a safe and prosperous future.

Colorado River (Source: Mesa County)

The following are specific strategies and actions to achieve Goal 1.

1a. Recognize and support the continued development of existing communities as growth areas.

- » Review 'Community Plans' to determine if the plans continue to be relevant. These area plans provide specificity to update the Future Land Use Map, plan for investment in infrastructure, and provision of county services. Revisions to the 'Community Plans' should reference 'placetypes' described in chapter 4 as guidance for high-level intentions for their character and build-out.
- » In unincorporated areas, direct the majority of development to 'growing community placetypes', such as Whitewater and Clifton, that have existing or attainable access to infrastructure, utilities and services. These locations should be prioritized for 'Community Plan' creation or update to specify how higher density, a mix of uses and community design are encouraged.
- » Review the LDC mixed use and commercial zones to ensure compatibility with the Master Plan categories of community crossroads, corridors and area plans.
- » Encourage or participate in infrastructure development and provision of services in selected areas where community growth potential has been identified in the Vision Map. This can act as an encouragement to development and support the creation of more complete communities.
- » Discourage burdening the County with cost for extending infrastructure to support future development in areas that have been identified for other intentions such as agricultural or natural resources preservation.

1b. Coordinate with local jurisdictions and rural communities to align growth policies.

- » Continue to support the Cooperative Planning Areas between the City of Grand Junction, Fruita and Palisade.
- » Review opportunities to enter into Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) to encourage cooperation and collaboration with municipalities, rural communities and special districts to ensure all interests are represented.
- » Conduct annual reviews of ‘Community Plans’ and other area plans to evaluate progress of implementation and challenges.

1c. Support complete neighborhoods to provide local access to services in communities.

- » For the ‘placetypes’ of Growing Communities, Rural Communities, Growth Corridors and Community Crossroads, support complete neighborhoods that integrate multiple land uses and encourage a wide range of household income levels with diverse housing types. Encourage service to these areas by multimodal transportation options (such as sidewalks and transit), public places (such as trails, community facilities, and civic uses) and essential services such as grocery, schools, medical and childcare.
- » Encourage ‘placetypes’ of Community Crossroads development at key locations in rural areas serviced by utilities. These Community Crossroads provide basic needs and services to nearby residents and businesses supporting agricultural and recreational economies.
- » Coordinate with the County Public Health Department in aligning mutual goals

to anticipate evolving and future needs of neighborhoods for provision of services.

- » Examine current code community benefit and impact fee developer requirements and update to reflect community needs.

1d. Support the maintenance and enhancement of rural character.

- » Review the possibility of developing rural design guidelines for new development and scenic byway design guidelines to provide more specificity regarding views to be preserved and means of conserving and celebrating rural character through design.
- » Continue and expand the recent neighborhood cleanup program in urban neighborhoods.
- » Continue to support the Code Compliance Division in addressing potentially unsafe and unsightly properties. Provide code compliance education and resource information to citizens.

1e. Recognize the need for decision-making to be transparent and accountable

- » Create meaningful opportunities for citizens and stakeholders to participate in all stages of the planning process.
- » Continue to review how public processes engage community members, including under-served and under-represented individuals.
- » Encourage active and meaningful community involvement and strengthen the capacity of individuals and communities to participate in planning processes.



GOAL 2. STRATEGICALLY ADDRESS GROWTH

Goal Statement: Focus a diversity of housing options in growing communities and community crossroads that will support the local community to provide all residents with safe and attainable housing.

Palisade (Source: Mesa County)

The following are specific strategies and actions to achieve Goal 2.

2a. Increase access to attainable and workforce affordable housing options.

- » Collaborate with Grand Valley partner organizations and municipalities to develop appropriate solutions for Mesa County to contribute to addressing housing needs in alignment with the 2021 Grand Valley Housing Needs Assessment findings.
- » Encourage the creation of attainable housing in the 'placetypes' of growing communities and community crossroads.
- » Explore public-private partnerships for attainable and workforce housing.
- » Fund existing programs and resources for attainable housing and support non-profits such as Habitat for Humanity and Housing Resources of Western Colorado.
- » Explore initiatives and/or partnership potentials for attainable housing preservation and creation tools such as:
 - » allocation of county-owned land for attainable housing development/ lease;
 - » partnership or acquisition of strategic land for attainable housing development and mobile/ manufactured homes;
 - » creation of regulations and incentives to encourage private development to provide more diverse and attainable housing types;
 - » formalize incentives and requirements for developer contributions such as deed restricted units and impact fees;
 - » promote accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and accessory use creation and occupancy;
 - » emergency rental and housing assistance programs; and

- » create short term housing policy and lodging tax rates to support retention and creation of attainable housing.

2b. Encourage conservation and creation of a diversity of housing types and sizes including smaller, denser and more attainable housing types.

- » Direct the majority of housing growth to 'placetypes' of growing communities and community crossroads to support a 15-minute community by providing transit connections, basic services and amenities to support community needs.
- » Encourage broad distribution and integration of affordable and attainable housing throughout the County to increase access and limit centralizing to limited locations.
- » Encourage a mix of housing types (including ADUs and mobile/manufactured homes, senior housing, and tiny homes), price points, and densities.
- » Examine regulations to ensure support of innovative building practices and incentives to produce lower priced housing.
- » Support housing opportunities for senior housing, continuum of care facilities, and age-in-place housing to support aging populations.





GOAL 3. ENCOURAGE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Goal Statement: Ensure adequate transportation connections in the county through walking, biking, and transit facilities.

Fruita (Source: Mesa County)

The following are specific strategies and actions to achieve Goal 3.

3a. Foster active transportation by providing a regionally connected network of safe and accessible facilities that are safe for people walking and people biking.

- » Support the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian projects identified in planning efforts, including the Grand Junction Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, Grand Valley Regional Transportation Plan, the City of Fruita Circulation Plan, and the Towns of Palisade, Collbran and De Beque.
- » Identify new opportunities to promote and connect on-street bicycle facilities to Mesa County’s existing and planned off-street multiuse path network.
- » Identify new opportunities to promote regional travel on foot or bicycle that supplement previous plans by identifying gaps in the off-street multiuse path network that connect major population centers, major employment centers, parks and public lands across Mesa County.
- » Explore a five-year sidewalk and crossing improvement plan that identifies funding sources and a prioritization model to fill in critical pedestrian infrastructure gaps through the region.
- » Improve the pedestrian and bicycle experience by prioritizing capital improvements like sidewalks, bike facilities and crossings that connect to bus stops, parks, schools, grocery stores and public lands to support safer and more walkable and bikeable neighborhoods.
- » Explore opportunities to implement active transportation facilities on corridors that provide comfortable and low-stress connections for the

first-last mile gaps between transit stops and key destinations, including parks and public land trailheads.

- » Expand the County's wayfinding signage program in unincorporated Mesa County. Prioritize adding signs that point to key destinations such as public recreation opportunities, public services, community and environmental assets, scenic byways, and economic hubs.
- » Consider a reduction or elimination of off-street parking standards for small-scale businesses and encourage site designs that place parking at the back of the building. This will create a pedestrian-oriented environment and encourage access via alternate modes and walkable commercial corridors.
- » Support the Grand Valley Transit (GVT) to improve multimodal access to transit stops that serve unincorporated areas and rural communities.

3b. Provide reliable, viable and efficient transit options for local and regional travel throughout Mesa County.

- » Support Grand Valley Transit (GVT) service by implementing recommendations from the Grand Valley Transit Strategic Plan and other adopted transit planning studies and documents.
- » Consider how the County can contribute to increased public transit ridership. This might include addition of stop amenities such as shelters, signage and benches to high-frequency stops, service enhancements for areas with transit supportive land uses and densities, and ridership incentive programs.
- » Encourage transit-oriented development by incorporating requirements into development review.

- » Consider piloting an on-demand, first-last mile program that increases the connectivity of Mesa County residents to transit service and fills in gaps where there currently is not transit service.
- » Promote and support continued regional and state connections such as Amtrak passenger rail, Bustang and private carriers with service to Mesa County.

3c. Ensure driving in Mesa County is efficient, safe and comfortable.

- » Identify Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies that are cost-effective in improving roadway operations and can be implemented countywide.
- » Implement a regional access management program for keeping travel times consistent over time on major corridors like I-70.
- » Identify gaps on transportation corridors to help multimodal travelers overcome barriers like waterways, railroads and highways.

3d. Make the multimodal regional transportation system safe for all users by using proven methods for lowering crash rates, ensuring roadways are in good repair, increasing personal safety and providing low-stress facilities for people walking, biking, driving or taking transit.

- » Implement a countywide roadway safety program that uses engineering, educational and enforcement countermeasures to improve safety outcomes in high-crash rate locations.
- » Conduct a countywide Level of Traffic Stress assessment for active transportation facilities to determine specific locations for improving bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- » Review the possibility of adopting a countywide Vision Zero program.
- » Encourage active modes of transportation by using national best practices and safety

standards for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements.

3e. Provide a transportation system, operating parameters and policy-framework that support the safe, efficient and reliable movement of goods within, to and from Mesa County; and identify programs and strategies to support the economic viability of freight-dependent industries in the region.

- » Implement solutions for addressing safety “hot spots” and other areas of concern along truck routes and truck-serving corridors.
- » Support improvements to the freight network and programs, incentives and opportunities that support the timely delivery of goods.
- » Identify opportunities for improving connections to the rail yards, major urban centers (Denver and Salt Lake City), other states and seaports to ensure the timely and efficient movement of inputs to production, exports and imported consumer goods.
- » Support continued development and improvements of the airport’s physical assets to increase the number of airlines, flights and routes serving the airport.

3f. Bring roadways, sidewalks and multiuse paths to a state of good repair.

- » Consider a regional roadway maintenance tracking process that tracks data from each agency responsible for roadway maintenance within the Grand Valley.
- » Consider developing a sidewalk maintenance inventory that catalogs all sidewalks with major cracks or other impediments, with a primary focus in Clifton.
- » Maintain striping for bicycle lanes and crosswalks at a high level of visibility.

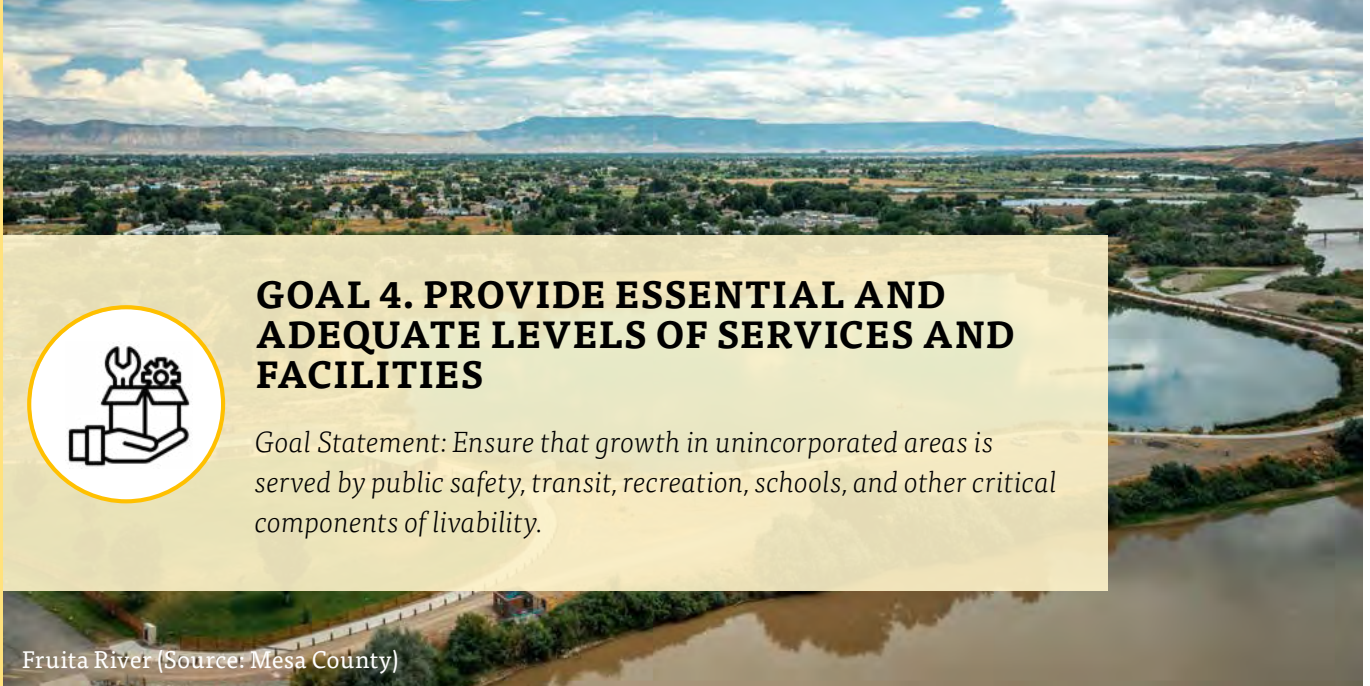
3g. Leverage all available resources and prioritize projects to fulfill the transportation vision for Mesa County.

- » Continue with implementation of a Transportation Impact Fee (TIF) to be applied to new development across the Grand Valley and used to fund transportation infrastructure.
- » Where possible, identify opportunities to re-program and leverage capital funding for roadway expansion and repaving to implement active transportation infrastructure.
- » Balance construction of new infrastructure with maintaining existing roadways and investing in operational improvements to minimize need for replacement and rehabilitation.
- » Consider a range of different funding sources and leveraging opportunities including proactively pursuing grants and state and federal funding.

3h. Establish guidelines for new development along designated scenic byways and recreational corridors.

- » Add to the inventory of scenic byways the additional locations identified in the Vision Maps by nominating as National Scenic Byways and to provide for the conservation and enhancement of qualities along the roadway, which may include investment in recreational opportunities.





GOAL 4. PROVIDE ESSENTIAL AND ADEQUATE LEVELS OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Goal Statement: Ensure that growth in unincorporated areas is served by public safety, transit, recreation, schools, and other critical components of livability.

Fruita River (Source: Mesa County)

The following are specific strategies and actions to achieve Goal 4.

4a. Continue to focus growth to areas with existing utility services.

- » Promote special districts as a tool to ensure services levels are adequately sized to address the needs of the community.
- » Work with communities seeking new or improved services to create Public Improvement Districts. Consider publicly funded services in growing communities including the creation of new service district to encourage growth.
- » Support the use of special districts to provide utility and services in growing communities and community crossroads.
- » Support future infrastructure, specifically sanitary and water, in Whitewater.
- » Work cooperatively with municipalities and special districts to align projects that address regional issues.

- » Coordinate service areas and expansion plans with future development.
- » Support upgrades in transmission lines to make the electric grid more resilient and allow for greater integration of renewable resources.

4b. Maintain a five-to-10-year capital facilities/improvements program.

- » Review and consider rural and urban levels of service and relate them to the Capital Improvements Program (CIP).
- » Coordinate capital facilities in area plans.
- » Review the location of County facilities and services to identify those locations where inadequate alignment occurs with current and future land uses.

4c. Ensure fair and equitable access to schools and libraries in all areas of Mesa County.

- » Cooperate with school districts by regularly updating the County’s school land dedication requirements, ensuring that development mitigates the demands for land that it places on the school systems.
- » Cooperate with the library districts to ensure access to libraries in growing community placetypes.

4d. Provide safe and secure physical and community infrastructure throughout the County.

- » Support efforts to upgrade schools/public education for public safety and health.
- » Encourage the development of childcare facilities in commercial and residential neighborhoods.
- » Support municipal parks and recreation departments and special districts in their provision of services and spaces to rural communities.
- » Continue to implement and review the Mesa County Resource Management Plan for management of cultural resources, forest, wildfire, water, air, geology, agriculture, and public land recreation management.
- » Encourage enhanced broadband quality, service and affordability.





GOAL 5. INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL AND LOCAL ECONOMY

Goal Statement: Strive to foster a diverse economy which is resilient through varying business cycles, fosters innovation and provides workers with varied opportunities to apply their skills with different employers.

Palisade (Source: Mesa County)

The following are specific strategies and actions to achieve Goal 5.

5a. Support the recruitment and startup of new businesses and retention of businesses and professionals.

- » Encourage collaborative economic development efforts within Mesa County, including partnerships with Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP) and local chambers of commerce, to focus on ways to achieve benefits for the region.
- » Support with economic policies to encourage opportunities for business development in target industry sectors such as manufacturing, health care, agribusiness, energy and renewables, technology, outdoor recreation products and tourism.
- » Support and encourage small, locally owned businesses, which can produce enhanced multiplier effects, add to the diversity of the economy and strengthen the fabric of the community.

- » Strive to foster or attract employers who pay high or moderate wages.
- » Consider attracting 'destination retailers' and other businesses which might stimulate expanded shopping and visitation by residents from the wider region.
- » Encourage the availability of resources to support entrepreneurs, such as affordable business and professional services, mentoring and startup incubators.
- » Seek to minimize potential negative effects of economic development, such as increased housing costs, traffic impacts, environmental impacts, etc.

5b. Promote diverse opportunities for the local workforce and educational community.

- » Continue to support Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College in

the development and training of professionals and skilled employees for local and regional industries.

- » Strive for alignment between education, economic development, and workforce to meet labor needs, including vocational skills, agricultural industry innovations, and other skills in demand by employers in target industries.
- » Encourage and support workforce training and education programs that address worker shortages and provide workers with high-wage, meaningful jobs.
- » Encourage and support programs which provide pathways between one phase of education or employment to another.
- » Consider equity issues in business development efforts and seek to encourage economic development that generates jobs for workers across a spectrum of education levels and skill types.
- » Consider the relationship of jobs, educational facilities, and location and affordability of housing so graduates of local schools (high school, community college and university) may be sustained within the County.
- » Encourage child care in the proximity of work centers to support a stable work force. Support home child care where permitted.

5c. Encourage commercial development to locate in growing community areas currently served by infrastructure and in proximity to customers and employees.

- » Review the commercial categories in the LDC to ensure alignment with the Master Plan.
- » Focus commercial growth at community crossroads in unincorporated areas, such as in Clifton/Fruitvale, Loma and Whitewater to serve nearby resident.
- » Explore the potential for revitalizing historic downtown Clifton in conjunction with Highway 6 upgrades.
- » Encourage the revitalization or redevelopment of empty storefronts.



5d. Coordinate with organizations and partners to support access, maintenance and development of recreation facilities.

- » Support the implementation of the Mesa County Resource Management Plan.
- » Support the Outdoor Recreation Coalition of the Grand Valley.
- » Where consistent with County goals and policies, support organizations in their efforts to provide recreational trails, facilities, parks, maintenance and education.
- » Coordinate with the BLM, CNM and USFS on the development and maintenance of trailheads, trails and access to public lands.
- » Continue coordination between the Sheriff's Office, Mesa County Search and Rescue, and area emergency services to provide needed response to remote and difficult to reach areas.
- » Support volunteer and non-profit organizations in their water access and trail maintenance and expansion efforts.
- » Support land trusts and conservation groups in the creation of additional recreational open space preservation and public access creation.

5e. Develop policies and standards for outdoor recreational uses and educate the community on the importance of land management practices.

- » Coordinate resources with BLM information and best practices for use of natural lands including trail use, recreational vehicles, overnight camping and other activities.
- » Increase access and education around water recreation such as fishing guidelines, boating safety, river and

lake stewardship and other water activities.

- » Collaborate with USFS, Grand Nordic Ski Council and Powderhorn Ski Resort to promote safe winter activities on the Grand Mesa.
- » Explore local partnerships to develop resources and information around land stewardship and management best practices. This includes maintenance of fencing, wildlife management, vegetation management, safe water access, visual impacts and what is allowed versus not on public land.
- » Coordinate with federal, state, and municipal land managers to encourage people to responsibly explore more parks, public lands and waterways, and trails and offer information, such as park and trail guides.

5f. Support the local tourism industry by promoting commercial recreation.

- » Support and encourage efforts to preserve and enhance access to recreation resources. Encourage locating outdoor retail and support services at the locations for recreation gateways shown in the Vision Map.
- » Balance commercial development along highways with preservation of key view corridors along Colorado 141, Colorado 65, US 50, and other scenic highway corridors to help maintain Mesa County's attractiveness as a nature and recreation destination. Designate additional highways as scenic byways.
- » Consider how to best support the recreation economy drawn to state

and federal public lands and if the County should play a stronger role in outdoor recreation space provision and support services (such as campgrounds and visitor centers).

- » Utilize recreational resources with tourism to preserve and enhance recreation resources for local access.
- » Support efforts to attract, retain, and grow companies that provide recreational products and services to regional, national and international markets.
- » Support efforts to promote Mesa County as a recreation destination to prospective visitors.

5g. Plan for increased participation in outdoor recreation from both visitors and residents and mitigate negative impacts.

- » Explore tactics to mitigate impacts of overcrowding at popular outdoor recreation destinations, such as the Lunch Loop trails, Kokopelli Trail and Rabbit Valley Recreational Area, which have experienced an increase in use in recent years.
- » Increase trash receptacles, bathrooms and other support facilities at popular trailheads.



Colorado National Monument (Source: Mesa County)



GOAL 6. SUPPORT ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Goal Statement: Support diversity of energy industries including traditional and alternative production.

Palisade (Source: Mesa County)

The following are specific strategies and actions to achieve Goal 6.

6a. Continue the support of the natural gas industry in Mesa County.

- » Update natural gas policies and standards to consider changes in the industry and changes to State of Colorado regulations.
- » Support updated and new energy production, processing, storage and transmission infrastructure in the areas identified for energy on the Vision Map.
- » Ensure any abandoned facilities are fully mitigated and the land restored to pre-development conditions or better.
- » Consider reintroducing a streamlined Energy Opportunity Mapping tool consistent with current policy.
- » Wherever possible encourage energy development on marginal lands that otherwise would not be prime for development such as landfills and/or contaminated or poor-quality soils, and previously developed sites.

- » Leverage the working lines and/or right of ways to move other fuels to markets.

6b. Expand opportunities for alternative energy.

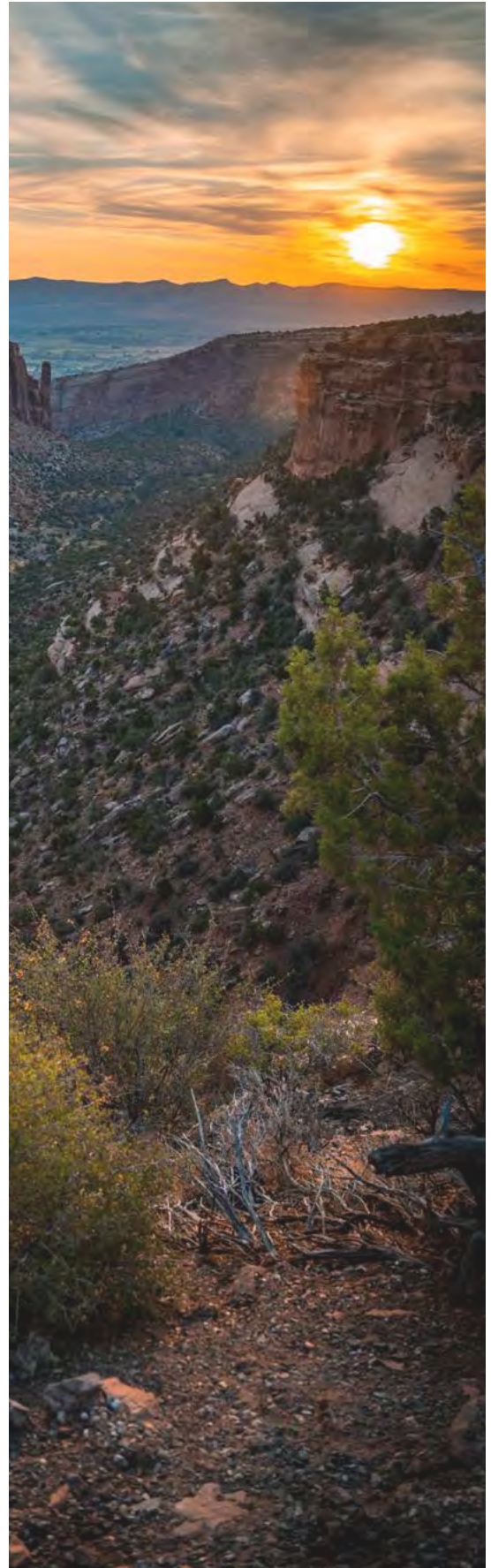
- » Support continued development and investment in solar photovoltaics to increase the resiliency of Mesa County's energy infrastructure and diversify the energy market.
- » Consider adoption of 1041 Rules for pumped hydroelectrical storage reservoir development.
- » Develop policies and standards for the location and development of solar facilities, with a focus on underutilized lands where feasible.
- » Encourage renewable energy sources that reduce the reliance on imported water for the energy industry.

6c. Provide a clear framework for mineral extraction.

- » Balance mineral rights holders' access and ability to extract those minerals with habitat protection and landowner rights and privileges.
- » Consider updating the Mineral and Energy Master Plan on a regular basis to ensure consistency and transparency for energy and mineral developers and citizens.

6d. Review policy to ensure alternatives energies are feasible for future development.

- » Consider installation of solar facilities on public structures.
- » Encourage rooftop solar and energy efficiency upgrades in the broader community.
- » Review permitting procedures to relieve limitations on solar installs and lower cost for these projects where possible.
- » Influence the regulatory environment around permitting, management of infrastructure-related habitat impacts and maintenance of existing infrastructures like pipelines.





GOAL 7. SUPPORT PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE AGRICULTURE

Goal Statement: Conserve and protect the County's agricultural lands in balance with private property rights.

Collbran (Source: Mesa County)

The following are specific strategies and actions to achieve Goal 7.

7a. Promote growth patterns that avoid fragmentation and loss of significant agricultural production.

- » Encourage new development on land least suitable for productive agricultural use and prime agricultural soils.
- » Review and streamline the process which allows limited creation of small parcels from larger bona fide lands in agricultural production to assist agricultural operations to remain viable.
- » Work with development applicants to support conservation easements on property, when applicable for preserving quality agricultural lands or encouraging ongoing production.
- » Continue to permit Agricultural Land Divisions that encourage continuation of agricultural production and economic sustainability.
- » Continue to offer incentives (bonus density) that encourages clustering with the R/A 10, R/A 17, etc.

7b. Continue policies that protect agricultural areas of Mesa County from large scale development.

- » Continue to employ the Mesa County Right to Farm and Ranch Policy by honoring agricultural production practices when development is allowed adjacent to or near productive agricultural lands.
- » Review and possibly implement land planning tools such as conservation easements and Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) to protect ecologically valuable areas, key scenic views, and lands important for agricultural production.
- » Consider the creation of a Transfer Overlay Zone to encourage development to be in growing community placetypes and encourage partnerships for infrastructure development.
- » Provide all applications with the right-to-farm/ranch policy and provisions to the

characteristics of an agricultural economy (e.g., noise, spraying, dust, traffic, etc.)

- » Recommend consultation with the appropriate land and resource manager and host neighborhood meetings to minimize and mitigate conflicts.
- » Continue to require the minimum buffering requirements between agricultural uses and new development per the LDC.
- » Consider creation of a Mesa County Open Space program and funding that would provide resources for conserving agricultural lands and education for improved agricultural productivity and water conservation.

7c. Consider historical areas to preserve a connection to the rural past.

- » Continue to utilize the County historic register.
- » Identify specific lands and buildings to preserve that demonstrated cultural or historic value.
- » Consider incorporating cultural and historical value into the planning review processes.
- » Support the reuse and adaptation of historic and cultural structures.
- » Coordinate the Historical Society and a Historic Preservation Board to
- » Ensure preservation of historic and cultural resources. This can include the Riverfront Trail, Colorado National Monument, and etc.

7d. Improve efforts around water conservation to encourage reduced water use and innovative water practices.

- » No new development will interfere with irrigation water. Dedicated water shares are required on new developments.
- » Discourage development that strips the water rights from the land.
- » Review the recommendations and strategies in the forthcoming Colorado Water Plan to maximize opportunities for success and resources.
- » Support protections of water rights for agricultural lands through conservation easements, working with land trusts and other mechanisms to further tie water rights to the land.
- » Support Collaborative Water Sharing Agreements (CWSAs) as a mechanism for preserving agricultural use while allowing for partnerships and alternative use strategies.
- » Consider convening stakeholders currently utilizing existing grants and programs to share their knowledge and experiences with agricultural landowners to help identify alternative best value uses of their agricultural lands that could benefit from a reduction or elimination of irrigation on those portions.
- » Promote crop and livestock shifting to local agricultural producers to provide alternatives for lower water using alternatives that can adapt to drier conditions (alfalfa to barley for example).
- » Encourage regenerative farming practices such as the planting of

diverse crops to restore soil health, increase wildlife habitat and conserve water use.

7e. Support agritourism expansion and promotion.

- » Promote multiple compatible uses of agricultural lands.
- » Participate with the Town of Palisade in their agritourism initiatives.
- » Support efforts to provide local and regional markets for locally produced agricultural products such as farmers’ markets, public markets, festivals and other events.
- » Coordinate a multi-agency approach for the preservation of cultural assets, viewsheds and sensitive lands, and management of recreation activities.

7f. Review the current classifications determining density in AFT zone districts.

- » Consider revision to the LDC to allow for rural residential land uses in the Future Land Use Classifications to be incorporated into the LDC to minimize plan discrepancies and encourage regulation through the LDC.
- » Consider the consolidation of the Estate, Estate-2, Estate 3 land use classifications.
- » Consider review of the Urban Residential Reserve classification and zoning district to determine if a better alternative exists.





GOAL 8. PROTECT SENSITIVE LANDS AND ENVIRONMENTS



Goals Statement: Continue existing partnerships and tools and develop new policies and standards to protect Mesa County's iconic landscapes from inappropriate development and effectively manage these landscapes to encourage greater habitation of a variety of native and beneficial species for residents to enjoy.

Grand Mesa (Source: Mesa County)

The following are specific strategies and actions to achieve Goal 8.

8a. Continue to coordinate land use planning and consultation with all applicable local, state and federal land and resource managers.

- » Continue to support the implementation of goals in the Resource Management Plan.
- » Continue to coordinate through review agency consultation, intergovernmental agreements and a variety of cooperative and coordinated efforts.
- » Support development that meets air and water quality standards of the county, state and federal governments.
- » Support dark sky regulations to control light pollution in areas of dark skies.
- » Provide incentives/guidelines to protect natural areas/resources by directing development to rural communities which allow multi

uses (e.g., residential/business/commercial PUDs).

- » Where appropriate, ensure land development standards offer sufficient protection for sensitive resources including buffer zones, construction guidelines and guidelines on wildlife/human conflicts.
- » Maintain strategic buffers between densely developed land use types and rural land use types, including the current 201 Boundary and IGAs.

8b. Protect river and stream corridors and watersheds.

- » Mitigate impacts of development on water quality and enhance water quality in streams and rivers through zoning, Low Impact Development (LID) requirements and a countywide water quality monitoring program.

- » Consider a comprehensive wetland protection and management program that proactively plans for administering human activities and overseeing the species or habitat of interest.
- » Explore partnerships for riparian, wetland and other habitat restoration projects. Include a study of invasive plant species along riverbanks and potential remediation strategies.
- » Preserve the floodplain of the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers, major stream corridors and associated wetlands as important green spaces, waterway corridors and trail linkages.
- » Where appropriate, encourage development that considers the conservation and protection of native wildlife and vegetation habitat, water, natural land, vistas, minerals, etc. so as not to diminish these systems.
- » Consider a Gunnison River and Colorado River Overlay or a River Management Plan to ensure use, access and other natural features are preserved and protected.
- » Continue to promote the development of best practices and mitigation when evaluating development within the 100-year floodplain.

8c. Coordinate multiagency and community-driven action to keep Mesa County’s forest lands connected and healthy.

- » Review land clearing activities in forested private lands to maintain a healthy watershed and incentivize appropriate forest management activities.
- » Coordinate conserved and natural lands managed by other federal, state and nonprofit entities to promote a connected network of county recreational open spaces.
- » Provide educational materials to the public on locally important cultural and natural resources

through partnerships with CMU and/or Tri-River Area Extension.

8d. Review the Development Code (LDC) to improve policy standards for the review of critical and sensitive lands.

- » Explore the addition of wildlife disturbance mitigation techniques.
- » Encourage developments occurring in identified human/wildlife conflict areas to use practices aimed at reducing possible conflicts with wildlife.
- » Consider the development of standards for evaluating impacts on wildlife for new recreational uses, residential development and other developments and permits.

8e. Play a role in making space for critical wildlife and the habitats that support them.

- » Coordinate with the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to mitigate impacts on winter range areas.
- » Encourage corridor mitigation practices for migratory species, such as deer and elk.
- » Preserve significant landscape features whenever possible.
- » Use CODEX data and wildlife surveys to confirm the presence of specific species on identified high priority areas and tailor management plans appropriately.

8f. Lead cooperation between Mesa County, local, state and federal agencies to manage environmental assets.

- » Continue to coordinate land use planning with public land and resource management agencies during development application review.
- » Continue IGA with the Division of Wildlife.

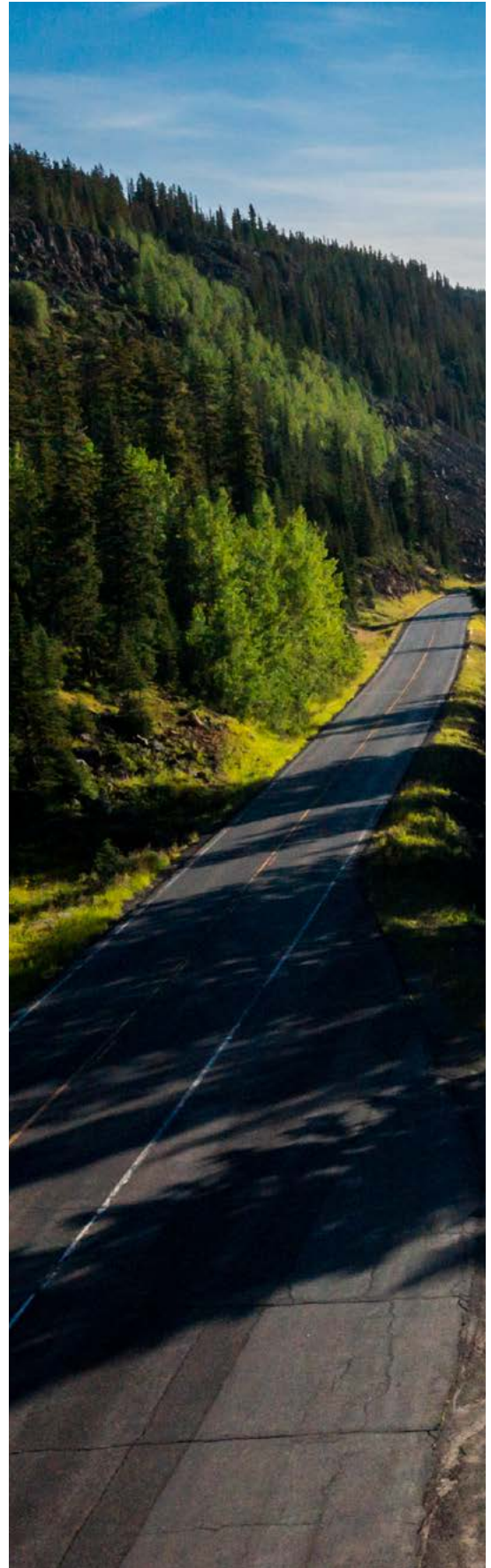
- » Work with public land/resource managers to address mitigation standards, review procedures and criteria for development.

8g. Protect Mesa County’s growing communities from the full spectrum of natural hazards.

- » Ensure the LDC continues the identification of hazard areas, i.e., floodplains, drainage areas, steep slope areas, soils, geological fault areas, and other areas hazardous to life or property on proposed land use or development.
- » Reduce the threat of wildfire through coordination with landowners and appropriate agencies to identify fuel hazard areas.
- » Explore a defensible space program.
- » Collaborate regionally and with local and state partners to address best practices for hazard mitigation and resiliency planning.

8h. Advance proactive strategies for managing water as a limited shared resource.

- » Incentivize water conservation in residential and commercial developments as it relates to plant selections and irrigation practices.
- » Provide infrastructure to decouple potable and irrigation water sources.
- » Provide public education on water-wise planting and irrigation practices for residential and commercial property owners. Partner with CSU Tri-River Area Extension. Consider revisions to the LDC to allow a wider range of acceptable plants, trees, shrubs and substitutions.





GOAL 9. ENSURE ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE AND LANDS

Goal Statement: Prioritize high quality of life by providing adequate parks opportunities in urban areas and support of recreational uses in rural areas.

Fruita River (Source: Mesa County)

The following are specific strategies and actions to achieve Goal 9.

9a. Align current planning efforts with previous planning to support the future of parks and open spaces.

- » Support the Energy and Resource Management Plan which may result in conservation of important wildlife habitats.
- » Review and revise the Mesa County Parks Policy adopted by the BoCC. Resolution MCM 2001- 183 and as may be revised.

9b. Preserve public access to public lands.

- » Encourage the preservation of recreational open space open space required for new developments to be located adjacent to public lands.
- » Encourage the dedication of access easements across private property to public land for public access in coordination with the appropriate

land or resource management agencies.

- » Consider producing a natural lands plan.

9c. Encourage new development to provide buffers and setbacks adjacent to public lands.

- » Consider revisions to the LDC that encourages new development to provide access easements or dedications to public lands in conjunction with federal, state and local land managers.
- » Consider the acquisition of access easements through private lands to appropriate public lands which are otherwise difficult to reach.
- » Promote the use of density bonuses for open space preservation.

9d. Provide recreational open spaces and trails throughout the urban areas.

- » Encourage recreational open space in new development be located adjacent to public lands wherever feasible.
- » Encourage new development to provide connections to and within the existing trail network.
- » Develop and inventory the joint study of a countywide system of trails throughout private and public lands.
- » Coordinate and participate in the development of a countywide trail system with linkages to a regional network.
- » Collaborate with state, regional and local entities to develop an efficient connected trail network.
- » Support the preservation of historic trails.
- » Manage and maintain heavily utilized recreation trails for diverse users
- » Encourage new developments to provide or pay for equitable shares of necessary improvements to existing trail networks to help connect incorporated and unincorporated areas.

9e. Support land use policies that will preserve the community and economic assets of public lands.

- » Consider the implementation of growth policies to preserve agriculture and ranching.
- » Continue to improve partnerships with organizations like the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, etc. to develop coordinated public access strategies and manage recreational impacts.
- » Compile and assess current land data to understand the use impacts of land,

trails, camping areas, parking lots, etc. has an impact on neighborhoods, infrastructure and sensitive lands.

- » Encourage private and public lands to maintain, restore and enhance natural ecologic function of forests, shrublands, natural lands, river corridors, Riverfront trail, etc.

ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY PLANS

COMMUNITY AREA PLANS

The County includes areas that are unincorporated areas and incorporated as individual local governments. The incorporated communities of Grand Junction, Fruita, Palisade, Collbran and De Beque are regulated through their individual comprehensive planning efforts. As Mesa County continues to grow - the survey participants indicated that there are concerns regarding sustainable growth, economic development and infrastructure demands. To the greatest extent possible, this master plan seeks alignment and compatibility with these Cities and Towns and these plans should be complimentary with the Mesa County Master Plan. Ongoing coordination between Mesa County and local municipalities on standards, limits of growth and natural resource protection, will benefit all citizens and visitors to the region. The remaining unincorporated areas, including the census designated places and rural communities, are governed by the land use designations set forth in this Plan as well as in specific area plans.

Rural communities are unincorporated areas of Mesa County that serve as centralized hubs of services for rural areas, such as Gateway, Mack, Loma and Mesa. These areas are recognized as unique in character from other rural areas of Mesa County. Many of these rural communities have existing community plans that gained more specific intention from the local community than this countywide master plan. Mesa County seeks alignment with the desires of each community and this master plan. Most of these plans are over a decade old and have not been reviewed as to whether they are still relevant. Furthermore, these communities have limited or no sewer capacity to allow for increased commercial activity or residential density. All existing community plans should be revisited to confirm that they are still in alignment with this Master Plan.

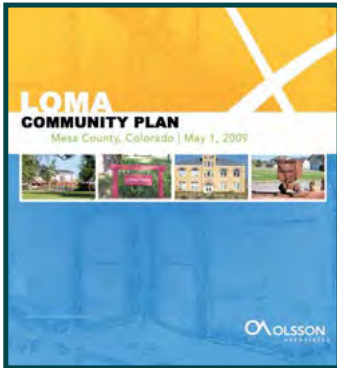
Future planning efforts in these locations should consider availability of infrastructure and services that are capable of being provided possibly in

partnership with Mesa County as the regulating body for these unincorporated rural communities.

- Loma: Preserving agriculture heritage while accommodating growth in a sustainable way is Loma's goal. Understanding Loma's current conditions and unique qualities will be key to achieving this goal.
- Clifton-Fruitvale: Mesa County should work to upgrade the infrastructure and services provided in this historically underserved area, including attention to complete streets, public safety, new development/redevelopment, sidewalks/trails, parks, health care services and other needs, in alignment with the Clifton-Fruitvale Community Plan.
- Whitewater: Whitewater and Mesa County must work together to achieve its goal to make Whitewater a self-sufficient, emerging urban community. Mesa County will work to ensure land use and development is compatible and services will extend to Whitewater.
- Mesa/Powderhorn: Mesa/Powderhorn would like to preserve its agriculture, wildlife, recreation, and natural amenities while also preparing for the future. To achieve this, the focus needs to be on transportation connectivity, increased economic development and strong strategic partnerships.
- Gateway: Gateway and Mesa County will coordinate to achieve a vision for the future. Mesa County should work to ensure land use and development is compatible and that services extend to Gateway community.

Area Plan Considerations for Mesa County Master Plan and Future Planning Coordination

Loma Community Plan (2009)



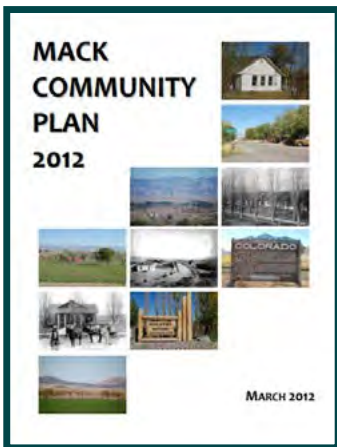
Considerations

- Develop and adopt into Mesa County’s Land Development Code to align with Highway Commercial and Highway Recreational Zone district and design guidelines.
- Work with Mesa County during phasing plan to minimize development impact costs.
- For transportation planning, implement CDOT and partner US 6 Access Management Plan.
- Mesa County must adopt the Loma Transportation Plan into its Regional Transportation Plan.
- Emphasize rural character and architectural distinctness in commercial design.

Land Use Alignment

- Estate (2-5 Acres)
- Mixed Use Residential
- Mixed Use Commercial
- Main Street Commercial
- Residential Low to Residential Medium High
- Recreational Commercial
- Highway Commercial

Mack Community Plan (2012)



Considerations

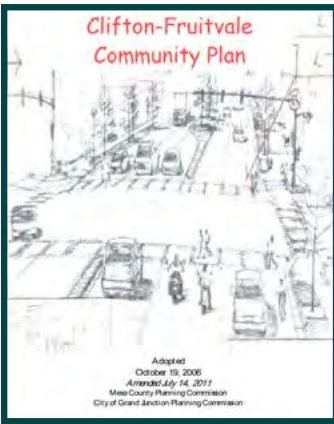
- Expansion of urban services in Mack Community must be viable and financially self-sustaining.
- Provide public services for growth.
- Identified as Western Gateway to Colorado.

Land Use Alignment

- Industrial
- Core Area
- Estate (2-5 Acres)

Area Plan Considerations for Mesa County Master Plan and Future Planning Coordination

Clifton-Fruitvale Community Plan (2006)



Considerations

- Mesa County will work with ongoing neighborhood planning in Clifton-Fruitvale to support regulatory and design guidelines. Goal is to have distinct neighborhoods.
- Protect and maintain the unique features and characteristics of the community. This includes implementing design guidelines of the Land Use Development Code.
- Mesa County Urban Enterprise Zone = includes Clifton-Fruitvale business and industrial areas.
- Mesa County will have a redevelopment plan for the “Old Town” (F Road corridor)
- Implement the Urban Trails Master Plan
- Mesa County will revise Land Development Code to accommodate parks in new developments.
- Provide adequate services in coordination with all Special Districts.
- Clifton Sanitation District will coordinate with Mesa County and Town of Palisade to create a master plan for land use.

Land Use Alignment

- N/A

Whitewater Community Plan (2011)



Considerations

- Mesa County will create a comprehensive multimodal transportation network for Whitewater.
- Mesa County and School District 51 will coordinate for quality schools in the area.
- County will ensure adequate levels of services area provided to Whitewater.
- County will contribute to the Whitewater Public Improvements District and Future Land Use Map to provide infrastructure and services for accommodated growth.
- Protect and enhance trail access.
- Protect and maintain unique features of the Whitewater Community.
- Implementation of Whitewater Transportation Plan.
- No big box development.

Land Use Alignment

- Rural
- Large Lot 35+
- Estate 91-3 Acres)
- Residential Low
- Residential Medium Low
- Commercial/Industrial
- Industrial
- Residential High Mixed Use
- Business Park Mixed Use
- Village Center Mixed Use
- Conservation Mineral Extraction-Conservation
- Parks and Open Space

Area Plan Considerations for Mesa County Master Plan and Future Planning Coordination

Gateway Rural Community Plan (2004)



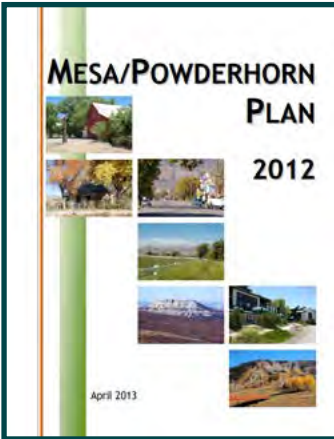
Considerations

- Section 5.05 F. in the LDC has codified the Gateway Overlay District
- Site design and historic structures in alignment with community character.
- Support infrastructure including water and sewer in rural services district.
- Future development enforces LOS Standards for transportation
- Emergency Series.

Land Use Alignment

- Parks and Open Space
- Historic Preservation
- Civic Existing
- Residential Existing
- Low Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Gateway Area B

Mesa Powderhorn Community (2012)



Considerations

- Establish development standards and respective fees schedules for levels of service.
- Work with Mesa County and Plateau Valley Fire District to provide fire protection to all development.
- Provide adequate public services to accommodate growth.
- Highway 65 to comply with State Highway Access Code.
- Rezones are consistent with Mesa County Master Plan.
- Range of housing types, densities and affordability.
- Community features unique setting of each area.
- Update Mesa Rural Community Design Standards with Mesa County Land Development Code.
- Develop along Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway to enhance visual character of Highway 65.

Land Use Alignment

- N/A

IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This section connects the Master Plan, the Land Use Code (LDC) and other strategies and actions to provide direction for County staff and County leadership in the decision-making process. The vision for the County should serve as an umbrella to guide progress over the next 10 years. The Vision Map applies the vision through physical planning to encourage development that aligns with community values. The goals and strategies serve as the 'To-do' list to make progress towards that vision. The following section includes considerations for making progress on the Master Plan.

PLAN UPDATES

This plan has been consciously designed with a focus on flexibility to accommodate changing demands and needs of the Mesa County community now and into the future. This plan should be reviewed by staff at yearly intervals to evaluate actions and revised as needed to ensure forward progress for the County.

AMENDMENT PROCESS

Comprehensive updates to this Master Plan are recommended to take place every 10 years. At which time, a new plan process with community input should be initiated to review the future vision, core values and revise goals and strategies to meet the trends of the future. This process should engage the community, stakeholders and local leaders. The Planning Commission will adopt the updated plan as required by Colorado Revised Statutes.

Major amendments, such as revisions to the Vision Framework or Future Land Use Classifications, should be addressed as needed due to major economic shifts or other disruptions that should require redirection for the County's future. Major amendments should require the involvement of the Planning Commission and formal adoption of plan revisions.

Administrative updates, such as text revisions or minor map update, should be led by staff and do not require formal adoption.

PRIORITIZATION

FUNDING

Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) occurs on a yearly basis and serve as an effective tool to identify funding for targeted projects or programs as outlined in the actions of this plan. Staff should determine priority projects each year from this Master Plan and integrate into the CIP to support long-term progress on goals.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND ANNUAL WORK PLANS

The Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) recently created the Strategic Plan, which will be updated on a yearly basis. In addition, the BoCC crafts yearly work plans. Coordination and alignment of this plan with the BoCC directives will support implementation.

PERFORMANCE METRICS AND MONITORING

Targeted metrics can help to measure outcomes on progress for the future.

These are specific, measurable actions that indicate meaningful progress and are revisited on a specific timeframe. Metrics could be tied to budgeting, CIP funding or be easily trackable data such as the number of building permits or gross square footage of commercial/retail space over an annual timeframe. Below are some suggestions for the County to explore as performance measures.

- Incorporate some questions from this Mesa County Master Plan around growth into the annual community-wide survey.
- Coordinate with the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services to track measures important to community wellness throughout the county.
- Track development applications in unincorporated census designated places to understand changes in growing community areas.
- Track acres of agricultural land that is either changed in use (from productive lands to developed land or placed into a conserved area)

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation relies on the coordination between many partners. The following outlines the roles of local leaders, County staff and partners to be proactive in bringing forth the ideas of this Master Plan.

- The Board of County Commissioners is responsible for supporting the core values and goals of this plan through their annual workplan. Efforts should

continue to align with the Strategic Plan, as it is updated on a yearly basis.

- Planning Commission is responsible for applying the vision framework, goals and strategies as they apply to land use decisions, updates to the Land Use Code, and in the update or adoption of future area plan updates for unincorporated areas.
- Other boards and commissions are responsible to partner with the County in supporting implementation in alignment with the strategies and actions in this plan.
- Planning Department staff are responsible to steward the Master Plan through yearly reporting, coordination with other departments, presentation of plan alignment with goals and strategies in this plan to decision makers for consideration in development proposals and plan amendments.
- Other County departments are responsible to work in partnership and through yearly reporting to coordinate and align relevant strategies and actions in this plan.
- Municipal partners are responsible to coordinate planning efforts, especially those within the three-mile planning area of their comprehensive plans, with the County to ensure alignment and mutual understanding.

DEFINITIONS

- **Agricultural Lands:** Agricultural land is devoted to the permanent production of crops and pasturelands.
- **Bureau of Land Management (BLM):** The Bureau of Land Management’s mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. “The BLM manages 8.3 million acres of public lands and 27 million acres of federal mineral estate in Colorado, ranging from alpine tundra, colorful canyons and sagebrush steppe to mountains rising more than 14,000 feet above sea level. Most public lands are concentrated on Colorado’s Western Slope. We manage this land for a variety of uses like recreation, energy development, conservation, wild horse and burro habitat, cultural resource protection and livestock grazing.” (Colorado | Bureau of Land Management (blm.gov) For more information visit: Home | Bureau of Land Management (blm.gov)
- **Directed Growth (Managed Growth):** Directed growth is intentionally directing growth to align transportation, open space and economic conditions that support the development of communities and protect the natural environment. Principles behind directed growth look at multimodal roads, concentrating commercial and retail development and a diversity of housing types to promote thriving economies and community places.
- **Corridors:** Corridors are linear assets such as roadways and trails that have ease of access for future land use or recreational development with an emphasis on their ability to contribute to the adjacent areas.
- **Crossroads:** Community Crossroads are ‘nodes’, or centers of activity that promote accessible locations at key intersections supported by walking, biking or driving access to goods and services. Three types of community crossroads have been identified: Village Center, Community/Neighborhood Crossroads and Rural Community Crossroads.
- **Future Land Use Classifications:** Land Use Classifications identify the planned categories of use and cover for an area of land, organized by rural residential, residential, commercial, business and overlay areas.
- **Future Land Use Map:** The Future Land Use Map is a tool to guide near-term future land use planning. Along with policies set forth in the Mesa County Master Plan, it may strongly influence consideration of requests for changes to the zoning of property.

- **Land Development Code (LDC):** Land Development Code is adopted policy serves ‘the purpose of preserving and improving the public health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens and businesses and implement the purposes, goals, and policies of the Mesa County Master Plan’. Chapter 5 of the Mesa County LDC outlines specific Land Use Designations, which establish Mesa County zoning districts and contains statements of purpose, density and dimensional standards, future land use classification compatibility and overlay standards. For more information visit: [Codes for the Planning Department | Mesa County](#)
- **Natural Lands:** Natural lands are areas undisturbed by building, roads and development and include forested habitats on the Mesa, local waterways and canyons and/or high desert landscapes. These lands may be privately owned or publicly owned, serving as an undisturbed habitat or environment.
- **Open Space:** Open space is developed land that is not used for residential, commercial or industrial development and may be privately or publicly owned, and is often devoted to developed parks, trails, and/or recreation facilities.
- **Placetypes:** Placetypes provide more specific direction on the character of intensity of potential development. The placetypes have been identified as Growing Communities, Recreation Areas, Rural Communities, Agricultural Communities, Ecologically Sensitive/ Environmental Quality Areas and Energy Areas.
- **Public Lands:** Public lands are areas owned by State or Federal jurisdiction including BLM lands, state park land, national monument lands, national conservation areas and/or wilderness areas.
- **Undirected Growth (Conventional Development):** Undirected growth, sometimes referred to as urban sprawl, is when development happens haphazardly creating inconsistent patterns and spreading development that can negatively impact natural and agricultural lands.
- **Vision Framework:** The vision framework includes all three vision maps (overall, growing communities and natural areas), which explore how the core values of the community are applied in different character areas and at different scales. These maps display areas of character (placetypes), how they connect through corridors, and nodes of activity (crossroads).



MESA COUNTY



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