



Grand Valley
Family Learning

244 Grand Valley Way
Parachute
Branch Library



**PARACHUTE 2022
COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Town of Parachute would like to extend special thanks to community members for their dedication to this project and their time spent analyzing, discussing, reviewing, and editing the 2040 Town of Parachute Comprehensive Plan. Below is a small list of community members participating in the project. While not all contributors are identified, their valuable input is greatly appreciated.

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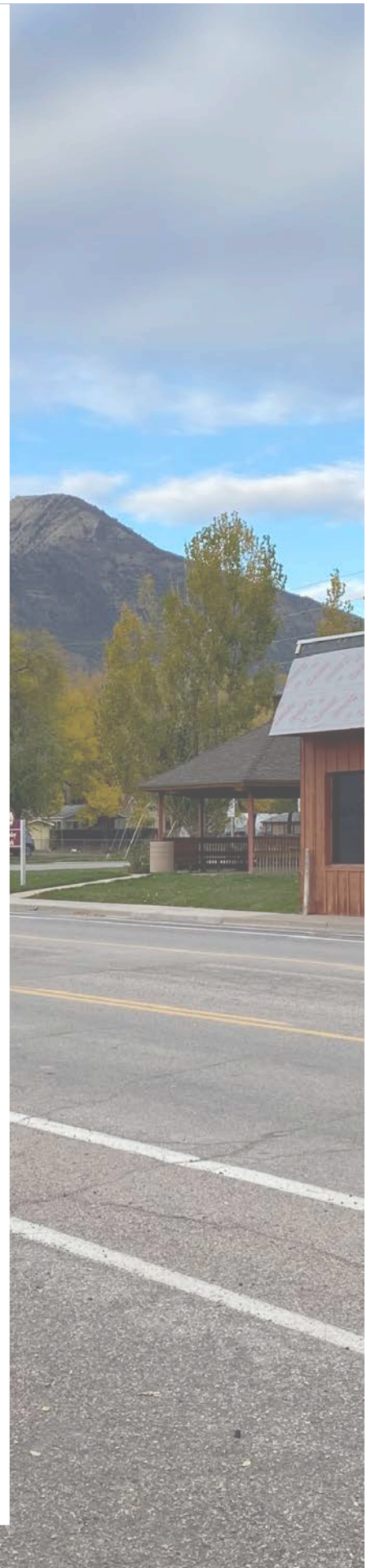
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PLAN AT A GLANCE

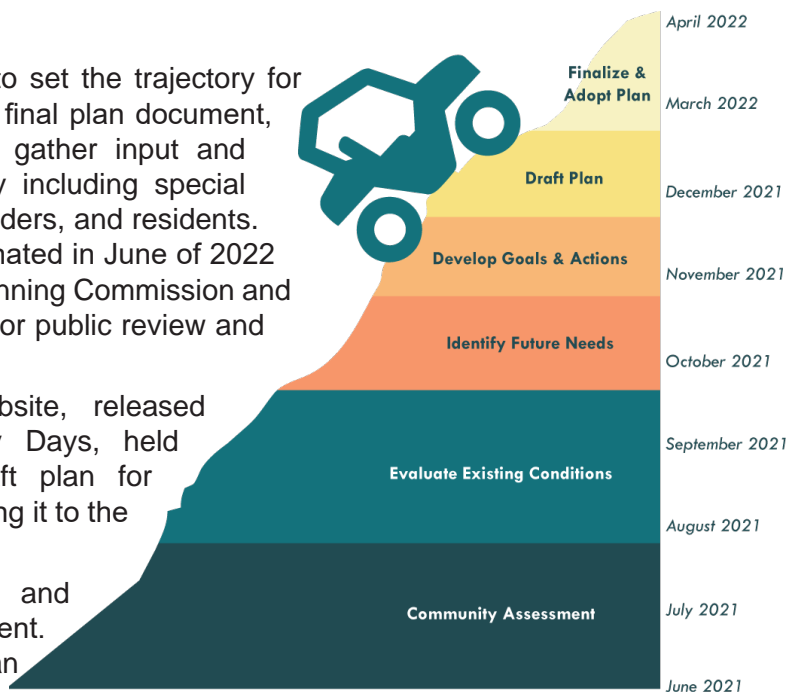


INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive plan is a planning tool used to set the trajectory for the Town over the next 20+ years. To reach the final plan document, there was a public engagement campaign to gather input and feedback from the members of the community including special interest groups, business owners, community leaders, and residents. The project kicked off in June of 2021 and culminated in June of 2022 when the plan was adopted by the Parachute Planning Commission and Town Council. Drafts of the plan were available for public review and comment beginning in April 2022.

The project team developed a project website, released a community survey, attended Grand Valley Days, held stakeholder meetings, and released the draft plan for comments before finalizing the plan and presenting it to the Planning Commission and Town Council.

Through the course of the community input and analysis, five overarching themes become evident. Those themes spanned topical elements of the plan and were refined into Objectives and Strategies for the Town to implement the plan.



THEME 1: DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY

THEME 2: MAINTAIN A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY

THEME 3: CREATE A RANGE OF RESIDENTIAL HOUSING TYPES

THEME 4: ENHANCE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THROUGH TRAILS AND PATHWAYS

THEME 5: PROTECT AND LEVERAGE THE REGION'S NATURAL ASSETS AND RESOURCE



CHAPTER 1:

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

PARACHUTE PROFILE:

The Community Assessment is a baseline of existing conditions within the Town and Battlement Mesa.

The Town population was estimated at 1,363 people in 2020, and the population of Battlement Mesa was 5,438 people according to the 2020 Census, making it larger than the incorporated Town. While Battlement Mesa is not included

within the Town limits, the two communities rely on each other, and both communities' populations fluctuate with the economy. The Town is projected to grow by approximately 2.25% over the next ten years. During that same period, growth rate projections in Garfield County are estimated to be 1.5%. Growth projections are not available for Battlement Mesa because it is a Planned Unit Development in unincorporated Garfield County.

The average age of the Town's residents is lower than in unincorporated Garfield County. Specifically, the highest population is between 35 to 44 years. The median age for the Town is 32.8 years, which is lower than Garfield County's median age of 36.5 years. The population of Battlement Mesa is more in line with Garfield County, with a median age of 36.2 years. As the community's population ages, resources and services shift to meet the needs of an older demographic. The Town is predominately male, with 54.6% of the population and 45.4% female.

During the 2021-2022 school year, Grand Valley High School, located in the Town, served 327 students. The number of minority students enrolled in Grand Valley High School is 38% compared to other public schools in Colorado at 45%. The graduation rate for Grand Valley High School is 82% compared to the Colorado average of 81%. Historically, higher educational levels have translated to a community having a higher median household income. Most residents in Town do not have a bachelor's degree or higher, which could be a factor in the lower overall median household income.

In 2019, the American Community Survey (ACS) stated, the Town had a median household income of \$52,500, and Battlement Mesa had a median household income of \$68,188, which are both on average lower when compared to the County, the State, and the nation. The ACS data went on to say that the average household size of the Town is 2.61, which is slightly higher than the state average of 2.49 and the national average of 2.53.

According to the ACS data from 2019, which includes only residents living within the Town limits, the most common employment is in the construction and extraction industries. People in those industries are 3.03 times more likely to live in the Town. The second most common occupation is in the office and administrative support positions. The third most common occupation is sales and occupations related to sales.

According to the ACS 5-year estimate in 2019, the largest demographic living in poverty in the Town are Males 55 - 64, followed by Males 6 - 11, and then Males 45 - 54. In addition, the most common racial or ethnic group living below the poverty line in the Town is White, followed by Hispanic and Native American.

Community engagement with the residents and business owners was conducted to obtain recommendations for the Town's future direction. Community engagement in any area is challenging because there can be little trust between the government and residents. Community engagement fosters and enhances confidence as a critical element in long-term, sustainable employment, and effective governance.

OBJECTIVES:

Objective 1-1: Partner with community organizations to address poverty rates and educational gaps.

Objective 1-2: Enhance community connection and trust between the Town government and the residents of the community.

Objective 1-3: Create additional advisory boards to engage more residents in Town governance and assist the Town in implementing the Objectives of this Plan.



CHAPTER 2:

LAND USE AND BUILT FORM

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Land use and the built form create the foundation for the Town. The 2022 Plan is separate and distinct from the zoning districts defined in the Title 15 Land Use Regulations of the Parachute Municipal Code. The land use regulations provide a detailed means for the 2022 Plan's vision to be implemented legally through the Parachute Municipal Code, Title 15,

Land Use Regulations. Zoning classifications guide how land use is distributed throughout the Town. The Town should strive to provide a balance of land uses to ensure adequate areas for housing, retail and services, and employment centers. Housing land uses should be sufficient to meet future population growth and diversity in housing types and costs; furthermore, retail and service areas should be adequate to support local needs and ensure economic sustainability by generating sales tax revenue. Lastly, employment centers, which allow office, warehousing, manufacturing, and similar employment opportunities, should be available to meet local workforce needs, provide well-paying jobs, and support local economic characteristics.

The Town's most prominent land use classification is General Industrial. General Industrial is for land uses that include manufacturing, industrial processing, resource, and energy production/service and distribution without infringing on the enjoyment of residential land uses. Approximately 43.2% of the Town is zoned for some commercial use, and about 26.1% of the Town has zoned for some type of residential. The focus of the 2022 Plan is to identify the Town's future land use needs and ensure these needs are met through a balanced future land use map.

FUTURE NEEDS:

Based on the future housing needs, there is adequate land available through future development areas along the Cardinal Way corridor and future Town expansion to the west to meet the bulk of the anticipated growth. While limited land area is available given the level of development in Battlement Mesa and the abundance of public lands that surround the Town, a mix of uses that will allow the Town to meet future demand will need to be carefully monitored as development projects are proposed and reviewed.

There is limited information about the current amount of square footage for commercial space within the Town. For example, the types of commercial uses (i.e., restaurant, retail, service, office, etc.) existing in Town, the number of employees, and current vacancy rates. A strategy to address this as outlined in the 2040 Plan, is to complete a commercial assessment and asset report for the Town to have a baseline of information for future economic development efforts. This assessment and asset report would inventory existing commercial uses, categorize types of uses, and identify vacant buildings.

Anticipated future needs for the Town include:

- Access to broadband
- Maintaining a diverse housing stock
- Adequate space for commercial uses

OBJECTIVES:

Objective 2-1: Ensure water and sewer utilities are adequately sized and installed for future growth.

Objective 2-2: Provide reliable, efficient broadband service to all residents and businesses in Town.

Objective 2-3: Maintain and create attainable housing opportunities for all of the Town residents.

Objective 2-4: Maintain and improve community aesthetics through the creation of standards to enhance the built environment and preserve valuable natural amenities.

Objective 2-5: Implement property rezoning and development projects that are consistent with the Future Land Use Map to ensure the housing, retail, service, and economic needs of the community are being met.

Objective 2-6: Develop a resiliency plan to identify where improvements are needed to create redundancy in land use.

Objective 2-7: Balance growth with community preservation to maintain a sense of community.

CHAPTER 3:

PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Parks, trails, and open spaces improve our physical and psychological health, strengthen pride in our communities, and make the Town an attractive place to live and work. Located at the confluence of the Colorado River and Parachute Creek, the Town is home to popular recreation destinations. The Colorado River flows east to west bisecting the Town limits. The Colorado River provides a beautiful natural amenity. It drives recreation and outdoor

uses for various activities such as hiking, fishing, floating, rafting, and other water-based activities. Public lands, under the management of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), and United State Forest Service (USFS), surround the Town and are accessible from different areas within the community. Because of this natural location, the Town is positioned for many year-round outdoor activities both locally and regionally.

There are approximately 154.3 acres of parks, trails, and open spaces within the Town limits. Per capita, there are 0.12 acres of locally accessible parks and open space per resident of Parachute. Given the Town's size and rural character, this is a high amount of locally accessible recreational opportunities available for Town residents and visitors to enjoy the natural amenities of the area available within Town limits.

The Parachute/Battlement Mesa Parks and Recreation District and the Town provide parks and recreation services. The Town currently maintains four parks. In addition to District and Town managed parks, there are privately owned and maintained parks and recreation amenities. The Cottonwood Apartments, which is home to approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Town's residents, offers their residents recreational amenities, including basketball courts and volleyball courts. Residents also have access to the Grand Valley Recreation Center, which provides indoor and community recreational activities, including a swimming pool, fitness room and classes, indoor running track, community room, outdoor patio, and children's playground.

There is vast publicly owned open space throughout the Grand Valley. Directly to the north and west is Bureau of Land Management land; however, much of this land is inaccessible due to the property's active oil and gas leases. In August of 2020, 189.25 acres of open space was annexed into the Town under the ownership of Battlement Mesa Metro District. These parcels were dedicated as open space during the Garfield County PUD process and have dirt trails weaving throughout them. Currently, no dedicated multi-use trails exist within the Town limits. The only trails used by bikers and pedestrians are in the Battlement Mesa neighborhoods. The Town could consider developing a trail network collaborating with homeowners associations and district partners as part of their public works programs or local, state, or national grants. The Town should identify possible trail alignments, affected properties, and property owners, and, as funding and opportunities become available, land should be acquired to make this regional connection. In addition to pedestrians and bicyclists utilizing the Town trail network, there is also a desire for OHV trails. Unless an OHV is street legal, residents and visitors cannot

operate these vehicles on any town, county, or state road within the Town limits.

The current park and recreation amenities, coupled with other community event spaces such as Cottonwood Park and the community center, are highly valued by the community. When speaking with residents, it became apparent how important and valued public spaces are to residents - especially families - in the community. Dedicated multi-use trails for activities like biking and walking are an essential need. The lack of infrastructure within Town limits prohibits people from getting around without using their cars. But having access to a trail network that commuters, kids, and visitors could use would improve the quality of living for residents. Greater access to parks and recreation is often heard from the community and aligned with the Town's goals to develop connections to the river and trails.

FUTURE NEEDS:

Given the Town's geographic location, there is ample opportunity to build off existing parks, connect to the Colorado River, and create new opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and the like. Parks and recreation are vital to the Town's and region's economy and the health of residents. As the Town grows, parks and recreational assets should continue to improve and expand, which will be critical in attracting tourism revenue and building a more robust economy. Land must be acquired early to limit the Town's premium as Parachute develops and land becomes more desirable. Creating a master plan for parks and recreation will help the Town reach ample land for its vision. As funds become available, the Town should receive the ground and make appropriate improvements to meet the recreation needs of residents and visitors.

OBJECTIVES:

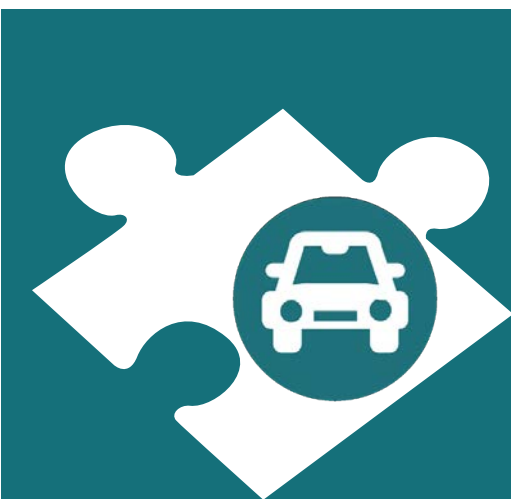
Objective 3-1: Create a network of trails connecting parks, neighborhoods, and the Colorado River.

Objective 3-2: Enhance parks and recreation facilities to meet desired community level of service.

Objective 3-3: Identify prime open space areas and pursue their acquisition and preservation.

Objective 3-4: Develop a trails management plan to ensure proper design, construction, and maintenance of the trails throughout the Town.

Objective 3-5: Partner with regional stakeholders and jurisdictions to leverage and maximize existing Parks, Trails, and Public Land assets in the community.



CHAPTER 4: TRANSPORTATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Transportation systems significantly impact the Town's development, inclusive of public transit, non-motorized infrastructure, and shared roadways. Bisecting the Town is I-70, a central interstate corridor connecting the east and west coasts. There is an interchange with I-70 at County Roads 215 and 300 providing direct and convenient access to regional, statewide, and nationwide travel and distribution opportunities.

The transportation network within the Town ranges from older facilities in disrepair to systems installed within the last few years. Other than County Road 215/300 and 1st Street (US HWY 6), there are no regionally significant corridors running through the Town. Therefore, most of the traffic on the Town's road network is local. However, due to the extensive oil and gas production in the surrounding area, the regional corridors see significant heavy truck traffic.

There are a variety of roadway cross-sections currently in use throughout the Town because the Town does not have standard cross-sections or roadway classification specifications memorialized in the Town's Land Use Regulations or the Public Works Manual. Therefore, roadway design was completed on a development-by-development basis. In 2019, the Town adopted Design Guidelines, which have been adopted as Appendix 6 of Title 15, Land Use Regulations.

In addition, Cardinal Way, First Street, and Parachute Park Boulevard are growing to be large commercial corridors. Located adjacent to I-70 with easy access and abundant vacant land, the Cardinal Way corridor serves several existing businesses, residential developments, Grand Valley High School, and Cottonwood Park. As the Town grows, this corridor is prime for greenfield development and redevelopment opportunities. However, the functionality of Cardinal Way needs to remain essential to ensure adequate and efficient access to these destinations remains.

In October of 2020, the Town established its first local transit operation. Parachute Area Transit System (PATS) provides Parachute and Battlement Mesa residents transit service. Current routes include stops throughout Parachute and Battlement Mesa. PATS also offers an express route service to and from the community of Rifle, with two (2) routes in the morning and two (2) routes in the evening. Additionally, residents can pick up a bus from the Roaring Fork Transit Authority (RFTA) to continue on from Rifle to Aspen.

Rail lines in Town provide both passenger and freight rail service across western Colorado. Amtrak runs daily between Grand Junction and Glenwood Springs, passing through Town; however, the closest station for Amtrak is in Glenwood Springs or Grand Junction.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railways owns and operates freight rail service along the tracks that run directly south of I-70. BNSF has a rail yard in Town, named Parachute Yard, accessed by a dirt road off US-6 just east of Parachute, at the American Soda spur crossing. A BNSF office is located at the west end of the yard.

There are currently two (2) separated grade crossings. The first is a pedestrian bridge crossing from Wasson-McKay Park, and the second is Hwy 215/300. Both crossings are above ground and cross the tracks and I-70.

The Town's Street network does not currently accommodate cars, bikes, and walking transportation options. Therefore, the first step would be to engage with the Town's residents to ensure a street network allowing for multiple forms of transportation options is desired. If it is, the next is conducting an asset inventory of what is in existence and what is a challenge to creating a streetscape that allows for people who desire to bike, walk, take public transit, or drive their car.

Specifically, for pedestrians, the Town should consider an inventory of the existing assets of sidewalks and crosswalks. The assessment would identify missing connections, dangerous intersections, and sidewalks in disrepair. The assessment could also identify the areas where designated bike lanes are appropriate. Future plans for Cardinal Way may incorporate either a dedicated bike lane or a shared bike lane.

Commuting habits reflect how well infrastructure and land-use patterns support different types of travel to work, recreation, and obtaining necessary goods and services. According to the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS), using averages, employees in the Town have a commute time of approximately 30.5 minutes. The typical United States worker's commute time is about 25.5 minutes. Additionally, 7.08% of the workforce in the Town have "super commutes" of over 90 minutes. The commuting time data shows what the residents have anecdotally shared: goods, services, and jobs are not readily available in the Town. According to the US Census Bureau data, approximately 251 people commute into the Town for work from Battlement Mesa. The next highest commuting population of roughly 63 people who commute daily are from Grand Junction. Around 39 people commute for jobs from Rifle, and about 30 people commute from unincorporated west Garfield County.

FUTURE NEEDS:

As development occurs, traffic is expected to increase steadily. With what is currently known about new residential projects in Battlement Mesa, impacts are most likely to be seen on the bridge over the Colorado River connecting CR-300 from the east side of I-70 to the community of Battlement Mesa. With I-70 dividing Parachute, circulation between Old Town and the Cardinal Way Business Center is limited to the interstate interchange at CR 215 and the pedestrian bridge. To facilitate programmed economic growth in both districts, there must be a proper connection between the two commercial centers as they both grow. Good circulation will include:

- Well-integrated public transit routes.
- Complete streets.
- Pedestrian and bicycle paths.
- Off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails.
- Including a redesign of several existing roads to better accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

As the Town grows, new routes will be necessary to connect commercial centers. Relevant stakeholders such as Town residents, the Town public works department, Garfield County Road & Bridge Administration, and the Colorado Department of Transportation will be consulted with each project.

The Town may need to adopt a formal street design manual to create a unified street network that will adequately function for planned use intensity and alternative modes. This document would create a streets hierarchy based on anticipated land uses, which is essential to creating a safe and high-functioning network for anticipated development. In addition, the standards will need to be established for arterial, collector, and neighborhood streets.

OBJECTIVES:

Objective 4-1: Ensure that any adverse transportation effects (i.e., intensified maintenance and congestion) caused by future development are mitigated by codified processes.

Objective 4-2: Enhance public transit experience.

Objective 4-3: Connect residents to destinations through all modes of transportation.

Objective 4-4: Adopt design standards for different types of streets.

Objective 4-5: Foster and plan for the future growth and economic development of the Town.



CHAPTER 5: ECONOMIC VITALITY

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Economic vitality is essential to the Town's success, which strives to provide a range of employment, retail, service, and recreational opportunities for all community members and visitors. Economic vitality is essential because it allows for a thriving, sustainable community and helps achieve the overall objective of the 2022 Plan.

Historically defined by the mining and natural resource extraction industry, particularly oil shale and natural gas, the Town's economy experienced boom and bust cycles, hurting long-term residents and non-extraction industries. However, more recently, the Town experienced steady residential and economic growth coming on the heels of broader regional development due to the influx of tourism revenue, particularly with marijuana legalization. The Town's growing tourism industry is mainly due to its ease of access to and from Interstate 70, the recreational opportunities afforded by the Colorado River, and its central location between Grand Junction and Glenwood Springs.

Despite having an economy based on volatile industries, the Town has maintained an unemployment rate consistent with the national rate. The employment rate has steadily increased since the Great Recession, which

lasted from 2007 to 2009, but had long-standing impacts on the local economy. The Town's 2019 unemployment rate of 4.0% was not much higher than the national rate, which was just under 4%. The Town workforce had 628 employees in 2019, 14.8% higher than the 547 employees in 2018.

The Town residents are primarily employed in the top five following occupations: construction and extraction (15.3%), office and administrative support (9.87%), sales and related occupations (8.92%), building and grounds cleaning and maintenance (7.96%), and transportation (7.8%).

When asked about the economic assets of the Town, residents and officials cited the Town's connection to regional employment centers via I-70. The regional economic growth from the tourism industry has been repeatedly identified as an opportunity to leverage. Interstate access has allowed the Town to draw in regional travelers and capture their tourism dollars. With the proximity to Grand Junction, Glenwood Springs, and other cities along I-70, residents feel that they have easy access to employment opportunities and that this is a strength for the Town. While the Town has grown in recent years, it retains its strong sense of community, uniting its economically diverse community. The improved housing and per capita income in Battlement Mesa, an unincorporated area outside of the Town, was identified as a strength to leverage as a potential customer base for the Town's small businesses.

While the Town has a growing economy, there are weaknesses and threats which can be addressed to create an even faster-growing economy. When asked about economic weaknesses, residents cited the lack of essential services and amenities, which requires commutes to other towns in the region. Residents specifically desire a grocery store, a hardware store, and more dining and entertainment options. Moreover, they also cited a lack of acceptance and attainable housing for the local workforce. The Town can attract more residents and visitors by addressing these weaknesses and growing the economy.

FUTURE NEEDS:

Obstacles to growth were identified through the public input process as well. The Town's boom and bust economic cycle make investment difficult due to the uncertainty. Stakeholders identified bureaucratic obstacles to business development, such as design standard rules for historic buildings. Additionally, blighted and vacant properties have been identified as obstacles to attracting new investment. Vacant or blighted parcels often do not meet the collective community vision or maintenance standards outlined in the Town code. Residents also identified the Town's aging infrastructure and increasing taxes as additional barriers preventing investment.

New growth will be at a higher density than existing development to preserve the Town's open spaces and critical recreational assets. The 2022 Plan supports sustainable growth that protects the Town's community identity and environmental integrity while allowing for continued economic and residential development.

The actions identified in Chapter 5 will impact the Town by:

- Supporting sustainable development that is consistent with the Town's identity.
- Creating a plan for the Town to evolve and change as demand changes.
- Establishing a plan to provide attainable housing for existing and future residents.
- Growing the local economy through investment in high-paying, next-generation jobs.

OBJECTIVES:

Objective 5-1: Work to revitalize commercial centers.

Objective 5-2: Recruit industries and businesses that meet the needs of existing and future residents.

Objective 5-3: Meet the future housing needs of the Town.

Objective 5-4: Improve the homeownership rate.

Objective 5-5: Diversify the local economy and attract high-paying, next-generation jobs.

Objective 5-6: Expand services and amenities.

Objective 5-7: Develop and create community gathering spaces and opportunities to promote dialogue.

Objective 5-8: Encourage alternative careers.

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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

The Parachute 2022 Comprehensive Plan identifies specific recommendations and strategies necessary to achieve the community vision and will be a reference point for staff and elected and appointed officials to make sound planning decisions. Because conditions change over time, the community needs to regularly re-evaluate and update the Plan. The Plan should be revisited in the next 5 to 10 years, depending on how things progress and how conditions change over time.



Outdoor Recreation

- A** UTV Trails
- B** Local Parks and Amenities
- C** River Access

WHY PLAN

A Comprehensive Plan is long-term in nature and acts as a roadmap to guide the community's future, inform policies, decision-making, and even capital budgeting. It helps to create a unified vision to address the needs and concerns of the community, as well as project future land uses, community needs, and economic strategies. Although a comprehensive plan is long term in nature, there are many short-term initiatives and strategies included in the Plan to help the community accomplish its vision for the future. Because conditions change over time, it is vital for the community to re-evaluate and update the Plan on a regular basis. The Plan should be revisited in the next 5 to 10 years, depending on how things progress and how conditions change over time.

THE PLAN PARACHUTE PROCESS

Town staff recognized the need to update the Comprehensive Plan based on recent economic changes in the community and the desire to pursue grant funding for improvements to better serve the community. The last time the Comprehensive Plan was



FIGURE 1: PROJECT TIMELINE

updated was in 2015, and much of the plans' focus at that time was to identify assets and opportunities to help achieve a higher level of economic prosperity. Since the 2015 Plan adoption, the Town has identified what some of these key assets and opportunities are, and are now ready to expand on these and identify recommendations that will help to achieve the community's vision in creating a more prosperous and livable community.

The primary objectives of the Plan for the Town of Parachute are to identify the existing conditions as they stand today, evaluate future needs, recognize key issues and opportunities, and set forth a plan allowing the community to attain an improved quality of life through prioritized public and private investment in the community. Another key element to this process is the creation of an implementation strategy, which lays out actionable steps for achieving the vision of this plan.



CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT



CHAPTER 4: TRANSPORTATION



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE AND BUILT FORM



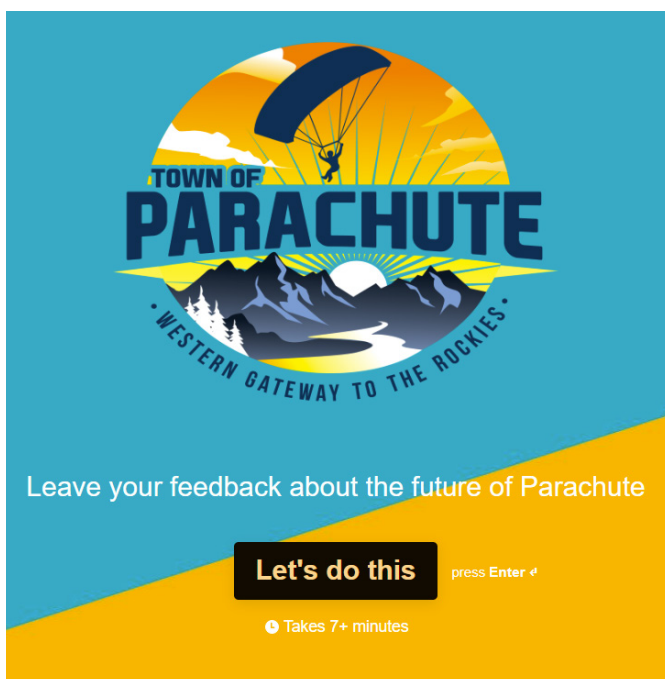
CHAPTER 5: ECONOMIC VITALITY



CHAPTER 3: PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

Five chapters have been identified as part of this Plan. Each chapter will detail the existing conditions, identified future needs, and goals and strategies related to each chapter. Economic vitality is comprehensively covered in Chapter 5 of the document. However, each chapter has a short section that also speaks to the importance of economic vitality and resiliency. For the purposes of the Plan, resilience is creating a network of systems that compliment and reinforce each other.

On the previous page is a comprehensive time line of this plans' process. The project kick-off began in June 2021, with engagement efforts being conducted in late Summer and early Fall. After developing implementation strategies and recommendations based on evaluating the existing conditions and meeting with stakeholders and the public, a draft plan was made available for public review in early April 2022. After updating the plan based on public feedback, the Plan was finalized and adopted by the Planning Commission on June 9, 2022 and the Town Council on June 16, 2022.



UPDATES & AMENDMENTS

The following procedures will be followed for any amendment proposed to this plan, including the Future Land Use Map.

PUBLIC MEETING:

1. The requestor shall plan and schedule a public meeting to present the proposed amendment(s). The meeting shall be open to all residents and interested individuals and groups to learn about the request and provide feedback and input. This meeting will be an opportunity for the requestor to present the request and the justification for such request. The presentation should include an appropriate level of analysis consistent with the submitted materials.
 - Notice of the hearing shall be posted at Town Hall, on the Town's website, and in a newspaper of general circulation a minimum of 15 days prior to the date of the meeting.
 - The requestor shall cause detailed notes and attendance records to be kept of the discussions had at the meeting.
 - The meeting location shall be held in an accessible public space within Town limits.
2. Following the meeting, the requestor shall meet with Town staff to discuss the meeting and next steps.
3. The requestor shall submit the updated materials addressing all comments and feedback heard through the process to date to the town for review.

SUBMITTAL:

4. The party or parties interested in amending or updating the Town of Parachute Comprehensive Plan ("Comprehensive Plan") and/or Future Land Use Map submit their request in writing to the town along with the following materials:
 - Narrative explaining the intentions of the amendment, the reasoning for the request, and how the request furthers the themes, strategies, and objectives identified in the Comprehensive Plan
5. In instances where the amendment also includes an amendment to the Future Land Use Map, the following shall be submitted as well:
 - A map depicting the area(s) to be changed on the Future Land Use Map indicating the current Land Use Classification and proposed Land Use Classification.
 - Proof of public notice to all affected property owners, and immediately adjacent property owners, shall be documented and provided to the Town.
 - An analysis of how the change in land use classification will impact the provision of town services including, but not limited to, water, sewer, roadways, emergency services, etc., and the anticipated economic impact in the short-term and long-term. Such an analysis should include capital expenses and long-term maintenance and replacement costs of any assets or infrastructure.

COMPLETENESS AND REVIEW:

6. The submittal will be reviewed for completeness by the Town prior to distribution.
 - If necessary, Town Staff may request further information prior to determining the submittal as "complete" and ready for review.
7. Upon determination of completeness, the Town will distribute the request to affected entities such as fire protection districts, water/sewer districts, school districts, Garfield County departments, utility providers, and other agencies or entities who may have an interest in the Comprehensive Plan amendments.
8. Town Staff will review the submittal against the following Amendment Criteria:
 - The proposed amendment does not conflict with the overall intent and goals of the Comprehensive Plan

- Strict adherence to a current theme, strategy, or objective of the Comprehensive Plan would result in a situation neither intended by nor in keeping with the themes, strategies, or other objectives of the Plan
- The proposed amendment will not have a negative impact to adjacent properties
- The proposed amendment is compatible with the surrounding area (when amending the Future Land Use Map or Plan) and/or the theme, strategies, or objectives of the Comprehensive Plan
- The proposed amendment will have minimal effect on public services and facilities and current or planned service provision
- The proposed amendment is not adverse to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the Town.

PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING:

9. Once all comments have been addressed to the satisfaction of Town staff, the requestor shall submit the final request including all pertinent information related to the request, including, but not limited to:
 - Narrative
 - Justification
 - Updated Map
 - Detailed analysis of the provision of services
 - Community Engagement report that includes all materials presented at the public meeting, the date and time the meeting and discussion, the participants of the meeting, and the notes taken at the meeting.
10. Once accepted by Town staff, the application will be set for consideration at a hearing before the Planning Commission.
 - The application packet will be sent to necessary agencies who reviewed the packet initially
 - Town Staff will prepare a staff analysis and staff report
 - The requestor shall be responsible for presenting the request and answering any questions or concerns raised by staff, commissioners, or the general public.
 - The hearing shall be noticed by posting at Town Hall and one posting in a newspaper of general circulation at least 15 days prior to the Planning Commission hearing date.
 - The Planning Commission shall review the materials and all testimony at the hearing against the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Criteria and render a decision to either adopt the amendments, adopt the amendments with conditions, deny the amendments, or continue the amendments for additional information to be gathered.
11. Hearings will be scheduled for the next available meeting date with agenda availability, as determined by the Town Manager or designee.

TOWN COUNCIL RATIFICATION:

12. Unless the Planning Commission continues the hearing, the request, with the Planning Commission action, shall be forwarded to the next available Town Council meeting (not necessarily the immediately following meeting) for their consideration.
 - The Town Council Meeting is not a public hearing.
 - Town staff will update the analysis and staff report provided to the Planning Commission and forward it to the Town Council.
 - The requestor shall be responsible for presenting the request and answering any questions or concerns raised by staff, commissioners, or the general public.
 - At the end of the presentation, the Town Council may either adopt, adopt with conditions, deny, or continue the request based on the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Criteria.

COMMUNITY INPUT



Direct involvement and insight from community members, Town Officials, community leaders, and business owners was an essential element of the planning process. The analysis, strategy, and recommendations contained within the Plan are largely guided by this feedback received from local stakeholders.

Several key themes surfaced in speaking with the community. What we heard most often from both the community and Town Officials, was that Parachute is lacking a community presence that keeps people engaged with the Town. Goods and services, such as a grocery store and hardware store, are not available locally and people are forced to travel to nearby cities such as Grand Junction or Rifle for some of their most basic needs. People expressed interest in staying local if amenities like restaurants and entertainment were available in town. Another theme we encountered was a lack of communication between the Town and residents including transparency with decision making.

PROJECT WEBSITE

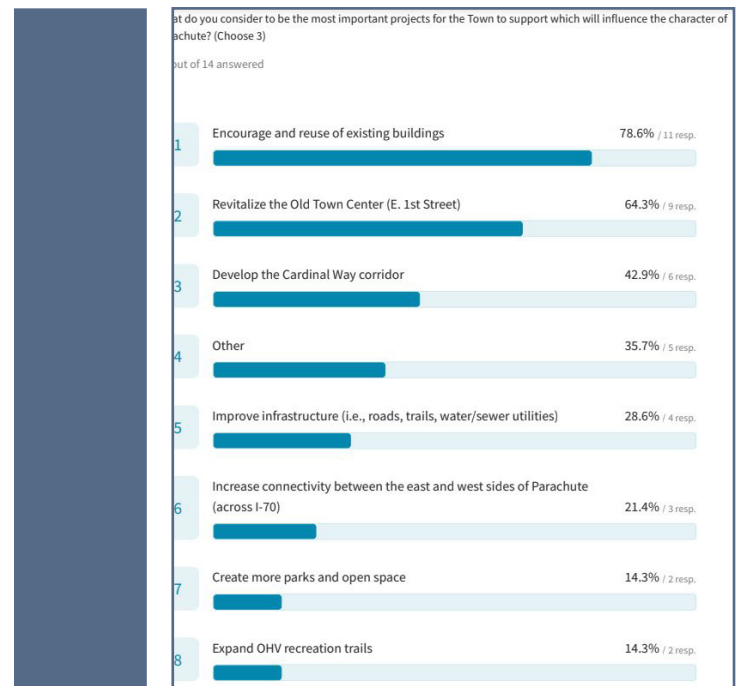
A project website was created to host information and updates about the Plan. Several pages on the website helped garner feedback. The public input process page included information on all the ongoing outreach efforts that were being conducted, the discussion board page kept a running blog of current trends and questions related to community planning that people could read about, provide comments, and there was a contact page for people to reach out if they wanted to get in touch or sign up to receive updates throughout the process. In total, the project website had over 1,200 visitors and 102 within the month of May 2022, when the draft plan was published for review.



SURVEY

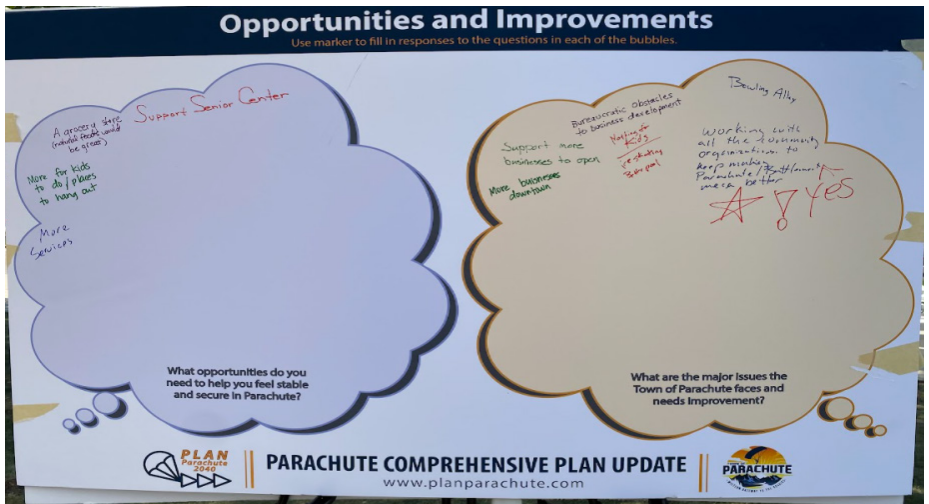
On August 4, 2021, a survey was posted to the project website to gather information from community members. The survey included 10 questions asking participants some general demographic questions, such as whether they live and/or work in Town and what age bracket they belonged, as well as more in-depth questions about what they felt the Town could improve on and whether they felt that they had a voice in the community. The survey was kept open through September 15, 2021 and received a total of 24 responses.

Similar to in-person conversations, the survey respondents shared their desires for more local goods, services, and entertainment. The survey responses included people who were interested in seeing more revitalization projects in places like Old Town Center (1st Street). Full survey responses can be viewed in Appendix A.



GRAND VALLEY DAYS

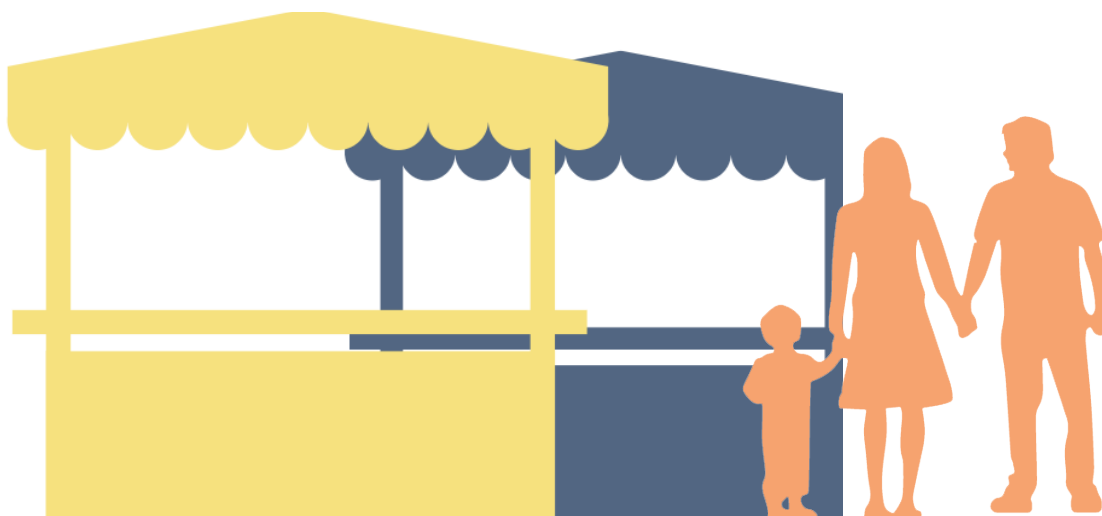
Every year, the Town is home to Grand Valley Days, which is the longest-running annual event in Parachute. The event hosts a popular rodeo that brings in many tourists, along with a parade that includes various vendor activities. On August 28th, 2021, the project team attended the parade event and hosted a booth with interactive activities to engage community members. The event was a big success, and the Plan booth received visits from interested community members. People stopped by to ask about the project and to participate in the questions related to their community. Many of the themes mentioned above were discussed with residents. Community members shared the importance of having community events, much like Grand Valley Days, to gather residents and attract outside tourism. During discussions at the booth regarding economic development, most people responded that small businesses should be prioritized over national retail chains. Many residents spoke positively about their community and how they'd like to see more local events to foster a connection to Parachute.



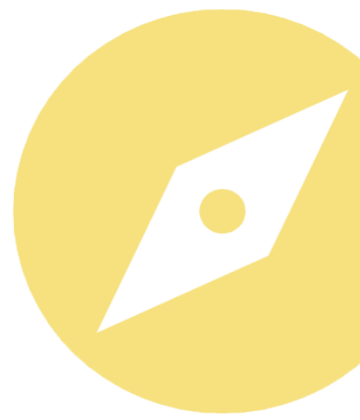
COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

In an effort to garner more targeted input, the project team reached out to 32 community representatives to meet and discuss the project and the Town's future needs. The representatives were selected based on the team's interactions at Grand Valley Days, and also in speaking with Town Staff about community stakeholders. Two stakeholder meetings were hosted on Wednesday, October 27th, 2021, one at 2 pm and one at 6 pm. The afternoon meeting had a total of five representatives, and the evening meeting had a total of four representatives in attendance. The goal of these meetings was to discuss the existing conditions data that the team had started to compile and brainstorm as a group the community's visions, needs, and goals. Both meetings garnered informative feedback and provided valuable conversations about existing conditions and where stakeholders felt it was important the Town be striving towards.

Once the draft was complete, community engagement continued. The draft of the 2022 Plan was presented to the Town Council on March 17, 2022, and the draft 2022 Plan was placed on the project website with a survey to provide comments. The Town Manager presented the 2022 Plan at the State of Grand Valley on March 29, 2022, and the Kiwanis on April 5, 2022. The Town Manager also sent out individual emails to over 100 people inviting them to provide additional input on the 2022 Plan. The 2022 Plan was presented to the Town Planning Commission at a work session on April 14, 2022. A presentation was made, followed by an interactive discussion



with the public and Planning Commission members. Some of the takeaways from the Planning Commission meeting include the following:



- Trails should be multi-use and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- A recommendation that community groups adopt trails to reduce the possibility of crime or trash being left behind;
- Building trails create minimal liability to the Town;
- The Town needs to be appealing to workers;
- Cottonwood Park is a great space;
- People desired a crossing for UTVs and pedestrians to get from one side of Town to the other;
- The future trails plan should show trails along Parachute Creek and extend the future trail further on the map, possibly to the new rodeo grounds;
- Everyone ends up paying for the infrastructure, but don't pass it on to the existing residents and business owners;
- Locate restaurants along the river with balconies that overlook the river is ideal;
- The Town wants to encourage development and is trying to make it easier to develop in the Town. The Town wants to make it welcoming to business;
- Future development needs to pay for itself, but not upfront because they will walk away;
- People would like to see nice residential homes with various types and sizes of dwellings, including workforce housing.

STATE OF THE GRAND VALLEY

The draft plan was also presented at the “State of the Grand Valley” meeting on March 29, 2022. Over 100 attendees from Parachute and Battlement Mesa attended the meeting, which was held at the Recreation Center and hosted by a various community stakeholders. Most of the comments received at the meeting focused on area recreation. There was a desire to emphasize specific types of recreation, namely hiking and pickleball. Attendees were also encouraged to visit the project web page and take the draft plan survey.

CONSTRAINTS IDENTIFIED

Community input proved to be essential in understanding the vision and goals. Just as the 2015 Comprehensive Plan had indicated, the community and stakeholders expressed a desire in revitalizing the Downtown Core (1st Street), create additional recreational opportunities, and create more retail development and entertainment-related amenities.

The Community is lacking a sense of place or an amenity that serves as a unique focal point and gathering place. As a result, businesses in the Town's downtown core have struggled historically due to a lack of traffic and activity. To create a sense of place and bring investment back into the Town, it is proposed that the Town designate and create new Business Improvement Districts (BID) for the Downtown Core and Central Business District business centers. These two new designated BIDs will serve as the two main centers of commercial activity for the Town, and will provide permeable access for vehicles and pedestrians to go from shopping and entertainment venues within the district, to adjacent recreation opportunities enabled by several small lakes and the Colorado River.

To fully leverage and utilize the local recreational assets, a recreational corridor is discussed that includes newly proposed parks and a Mixed-Use Commercial zone that will allow development and recreation activities to occur in concert. Biking and walking trails throughout this area will connect commercial and residential neighborhoods to the river. Chapter 3, Parks, Recreation and Open Space, provides a conceptual master plan for Cottonwood Park, which integrates the surrounding businesses into a seasonal venue for special events.

Traffic counts are expected to increase as new development occurs within the BIDs. Thus, additional strain will be created on existing roads near the BIDs and areas of recreation. Improvements will be needed along Veteran's Parkway/County Road 215 in order to accommodate the increased traffic. It is also proposed that Cardinal Way be extended further to connect to the southwest interchange on I-70.

OVERALL THEMES

Creating the Plan and the community engagement process revealed four overarching themes the Objectives and Strategies identified throughout this plan.

1

DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY:

The first is the desire to diversify the economy. As has been seen throughout its history, the Town's population rises and falls with industry boom and bust cycles. Chapter 5, Economic Vitality, speaks directly to this theme and addresses ways to provide different streams of income and taxes to the Town. The theme is also addressed in Chapter 2 with recommendations including mixed-use commercial districts in the future land use map.

2

MAINTAIN A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY:

The second theme is maintaining a sense of community by preserving the historic places and spaces that are the foundation of the Town. While it is this strong history that binds the community together, it needs to be enhanced, built upon, and shared to ensure the rich sense of community continues to support Parachute into the future. This sense of community can be built upon through increasing community events, creating community gathering spaces and places, and developing programs to allow small businesses to grow, invest, and thrive in the Parachute community. Maintaining a sense of community is created through the strategies in Chapters 2 to 5.

3

CREATE A RANGE OF RESIDENTIAL HOUSING TYPES:

The third theme is to create a range of residential types from multi-family to large, single-family homes. As communities throughout the Western Slope face a shortage of affordable housing, Parachute has the unique opportunity to provide a range of housing options to attract future workforce, business owners, and community leaders. The theme of the range of residential types is encouraged in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5.

4

ENHANCE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THROUGH TRAILS AND PATHWAYS:

The fourth theme is making community connections through trails and pathways in Town, addressed in Chapter 3. These connections not only connect people to places, but they will increase public health through increasing access to outdoor recreation as well as enhancing the community economic development efforts through adding amenities, increasing time spent in town, and diversifying the types of visitors and users of the Town's networks of trails and pathways.



























5












PROTECT AND LEVERAGE THE REGION'S NATURAL ASSETS AND RESOURCES:



























The fifth theme is to protect and leverage the region's natural assets and resources. The Town of Parachute is surrounded by public lands and open space. There is a strong desire to protect these resources and maximize their benefits to the community by enhancing public access and promoting outdoor recreation tourism.

OBJECTIVES SUMMARY MATRIX

What came out of the Plan process was a comprehensive list of objectives and strategies based on the identified community needs. These recommendations were categorized into themes. Based on conversations with the public, community partners, and Town Staff, a recommended implementation timeframe is identified in the matrix as well. The matrix is a simplified list of all objectives and the plan elements they encompass. A full list of objectives and strategies is provided at the end of each chapter.

Objectives	Objective Number	Timeframe	Elements Addressed				
THEME #1: DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY			Community Assessment	Land Use and Built Form	Parks, Trails, and Open Space	Transportation	Economic Vitality
Provide reliable, efficient broadband service to all residents and businesses in Town.	2-2	2-5yrs					
Ensure that any adverse transportation effects (i.e., intensified maintenance and congestion) caused by future development are mitigated by codified procedures.	4-1	0-1yr					
Support future growth and economic development with proactive evaluation and design of public infrastructure.	4-5	0-1yr					
Promote the redevelopment of underutilized commercial and industrial spaces and infill development to accommodate new businesses.	5-1	0-1yr					
Recruit industries and businesses that meet the needs of existing and future residents	5-2	2-5yrs					
Diversify the local economy and attract high-paying, next generation jobs.	5-5	5+yrs					
Expand services and amenities offered locally.	5-6	5+yrs					
Work with stakeholders to identify missing workforce needs and encourage alternative careers.	5-8	0-1yr					

Objectives	Objective Number	Timeframe	Elements Addressed				
THEME #2: MAINTAIN A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY			Community Assessment	Land Use and Built Form	Parks, Trails, and Open Space	Transportation	Economic Vitality
Partner with community organizations to address poverty rates and educational gaps.	1-1	2-5yrs					
Enhance community connection and trust between the Town government and the residents of the community.	1-2	0-1yr					
Create additional advisory boards to encourage more residents to participate in Town governance and assist the Town in implementing the Objectives of this plan.	1-3	0-1yr					
Balance growth with community preservation to maintain a sense of community.	2-7	2-5yrs					
Enhance public transit experience.	4-2	2-5yrs					
Adopt design standards for different street classifications.	4-4	0-1yr					
Develop and create community gathering spaces and opportunities to promote dialogue.	5-7	5+yrs					

Objectives	Objective Number	Timeframe	Elements Addressed				
THEME #3: CREATE A RANGE OF HOUSING TYPES			Community Assessment	Land Use and Built Form	Parks, Trails, and Open Space	Transportation	Economic Vitality
Ensure water and sewer utilities are adequately sized and installed for future growth.	2-1	5+yrs					
Maintain and create attainable housing opportunities for all of the Town residents.	2-3	5+yrs					
Implement property rezoning and development projects that are consistent with the Future Land Use Map to ensure the housing, retail, service, and economic needs of the community are being met.	2-5	5+yrs					
Develop a resiliency plan to identify where improvements are needed to create redundancy in land use.	2-6	2-5yrs					
Meet the future housing needs of the Town.	5-3	5+yrs					
Improve the homeownership rate.	5-4	5+yrs					
THEME #4: ENHANCE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THROUGH TRAILS AND PATHWAYS			Community Assessment	Land Use and Built Form	Parks, Trails, and Open Space	Transportation	Economic Vitality
Create a network of trails connecting parks, neighborhoods, and the Colorado River.	3-1	5+yrs					
Enhance parks and recreation facilities to meet desired community desired level of service.	3-2	5+yrs					
















Objectives	Objective Number	Timeframe	Elements Addressed				
Develop a trails management plan to ensure proper design, construction, and maintenance of the trails throughout the Town.	3-4	5+yrs					
Connect residents to destinations through all modes of transportation.	4-3	2-5yrs	   				
THEME #5: PROTECT AND LEVERAGE THE REGION'S NATURAL ASSETS AND RESOURCES			Community Assessment	Land Use and Built Form	Parks, Trails, and Open Space	Transportation	Economic Vitality
Maintain and improve community aesthetics through the creation of standards to enhance the built environment and reserve valuable natural amenities.	2-4	0-1yr	  				
Identify prime open space areas and pursue their acquisition and preservation.	3-3	5+yrs	  				
Partner with regional stakeholders and jurisdictions to leverage and maximize existing parks, trails, and public land assets in the community.	3-5	0-1yr	   				

TABLE 1: OBJECTIVES SUMMARY MATRIX



CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The Community Assessment provides a baseline of information that makes it critical to the rest of the Plan. Chapter 1 is a snapshot of the Town and the surrounding community of Battlement Mesa in 2021 and 2022 utilizing the most recent available data. The Plan casts the vision for the Town into the next decade. The first section delves into the history of the Town and its physical characteristics. The next section provides the demographic trends such as age, gender, education levels, and poverty rates. The last section discusses community engagement.



1.1 PARACHUTE PROFILE

HISTORY

The history behind the name of Parachute recognizes it as having dual origins. Tracing the most commonly accepted origin of the name is when the Ute Indian Tribe inhabited most of the State of Colorado. Due to the two prominent peaks that lie just north of the Town near Parachute Creek and the separation created by the river between them, the Utes named the area “pahchouc,” meaning “twins.” The other possible origin for the Town’s name dates back to the late 1800s when the watershed patterns of the Roan Plateau (North of Parachute, resembled the lines and canopy of a parachute. Although the area was initially known as Parachute, in 1908, the Town was incorporated under the name of the Town of Grand Valley. It remained under the name of Grand Valley until the 1980s when the name was changed back to the Town of Parachute (the “Town”).

The Town has always been connected to its surrounding lands. Battlement Mesa, now a large development above the Colorado River valley to the southwest of the Town, provided fruitful soils for agricultural production. The crops produced on the mesa were brought to the railroad in Town to be delivered to processors and consumers. Still today the communities of Battlement Mesa and the Town of Parachute are interconnected socially and economically. Furthermore, residents of Battlement Mesa must utilize the Town’s roadways to access I-70 and regional amenities.

The Town has one building listed on the National Register of Historic Places. On August 5, 2010, Wasson-McKay Place received the designation of a Historic Place under site number 5GF.4249, most specifically located at 259 Cardinal Way. The home was built around 1902 and is considered an example of pioneer log construction and Victorian style.

BATLEMENT MESA

The 2015 Comprehensive Plan for the Town provided extensive information regarding the potential annexation of Battlement Mesa into the Town. As part of the 2040 Plan, an annexation plan was not incorporated because it was thoroughly covered and is still valid through the 2015 Comprehensive Plan.

Battlement Mesa continues to develop and subdivide in unincorporated Garfield County through a 3,200 acre Planned Unit Development Guide (the “PUD”) approved in 1982 and amended over the years including as recently as 2014. The Town is provided the opportunity to send referral comments regarding each subdivision. However, the impacts from the development of both residential and commercial properties within the PUD to date have not



been mitigated. The Town feels the impact of increased traffic and population but does not reap the economic benefit of the commercial properties located in the PUD. The continued recommendation from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan is to encourage the annexation of Battlement Mesa into the Town. For the purposes of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan, the objective and strategies provided consider Battlement Mesa as within the Town's service area. The 2022 Comprehensive Plan considers the incorporated Town for the data utilized.

Regardless of the legal boundaries, Battlement Mesa residents are considered part of the broader Parachute community. Approximately 5,438 residents reside in Battlement Mesa, and many work, shop, eat or pass through the Town. A demographic discussion of Battlement Mesa is included in Chapter 1 - Community Assessment.

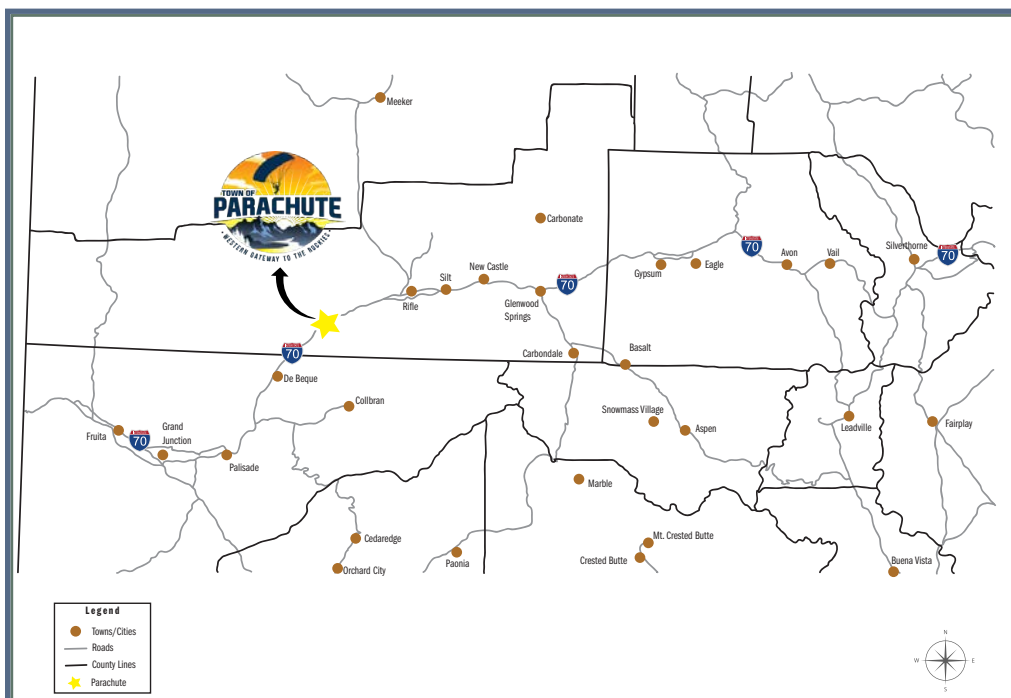
Battlement Mesa, the community in unincorporated Garfield County, is home to the historical Battlement Mesa School House. Constructed in 1897, with a rear addition in 1907, this one-story stone rural schoolhouse replaced an earlier log structure. It was listed on the National Historic Register on April 21, 1983, under Site Number 5GF.135.

An extensive history of the Town and Battlement Mesa is provided in the Appendix with the document entitled, "Lest We Forget". The document provides a rich history from the time when the area was utilized by the Ute Indian tribe, through the first settlers and the families that still resided in the region during the writing of the document in the 1970s.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Today, the Town mainly acts as a bedroom community to nearby employment centers such as Grand Junction, Rifle, and Glenwood Springs. In addition, some residents travel to the Eagle River Valley and the Roaring Fork Valley for jobs. As a result, the Town is considered an affordable housing option for those who work in Garfield, Mesa, Pitkin, and Eagle Counties.

The Town is open to advances in the marijuana industry. With its proximity to both I-70 and the Colorado River, the Town sees travelers passing through the community and desires to capitalize on this traffic by creating destinations that are attractive to tourists. The natural gas industry plays a vital role in the Town's economy and demographics, attracting workers and families when this industry is booming, but losing these same residents when the industry struggles. The cyclical nature of the natural gas industry leads to transient residents, creating a community challenge.



MAP 1: VICINITY MAP



COMMUNITY EVENTS

The community conversation doesn't end with the adoption of the 2040 Plan; it's only the beginning. The 2040 Plan is a living document with amendments from time to time. Part of the conversation is meeting residents and visitors where they are in the community. The most convenient way to have conversations about the Town's future is through local events. In 2022, local events will include Parachute Pick Up Day, a community cleanup event with a picnic afterward, Rockmageddon, which is a music, and off-highway vehicle festival, taking place at Cottonwood Park, Grand Valley Days, a celebration of the community's western roots, and Holidays in Grand Valley, including awards for holiday decorating. Not only are these events an opportunity for open dialogue with residents, but they are an economic driver for the Town. Other events in the future should be encouraged, creating a sense of community and bringing diversity to the economy.

PHYSICAL PROFILE

The 2.88 square mile Town is located in Garfield County, on the western slope of Colorado. I-70 bisects the Town, and the Colorado River traverses the southeastern edge of Town, flowing adjacent to I-70. Across the river and bordering the Town to the southeast is the unincorporated community of Battlement Mesa.

The Town lies between two iconic mesas located on federal lands owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the United States Forest Service (USFS). One of the federal areas located to the north named the Naval Oil Shale Reserve, allows the natural gas industry to operate. The Town is known for its abundant oil shale and natural gas reserves, which has led to many drilling sites constructed within and around Town limits over the years.

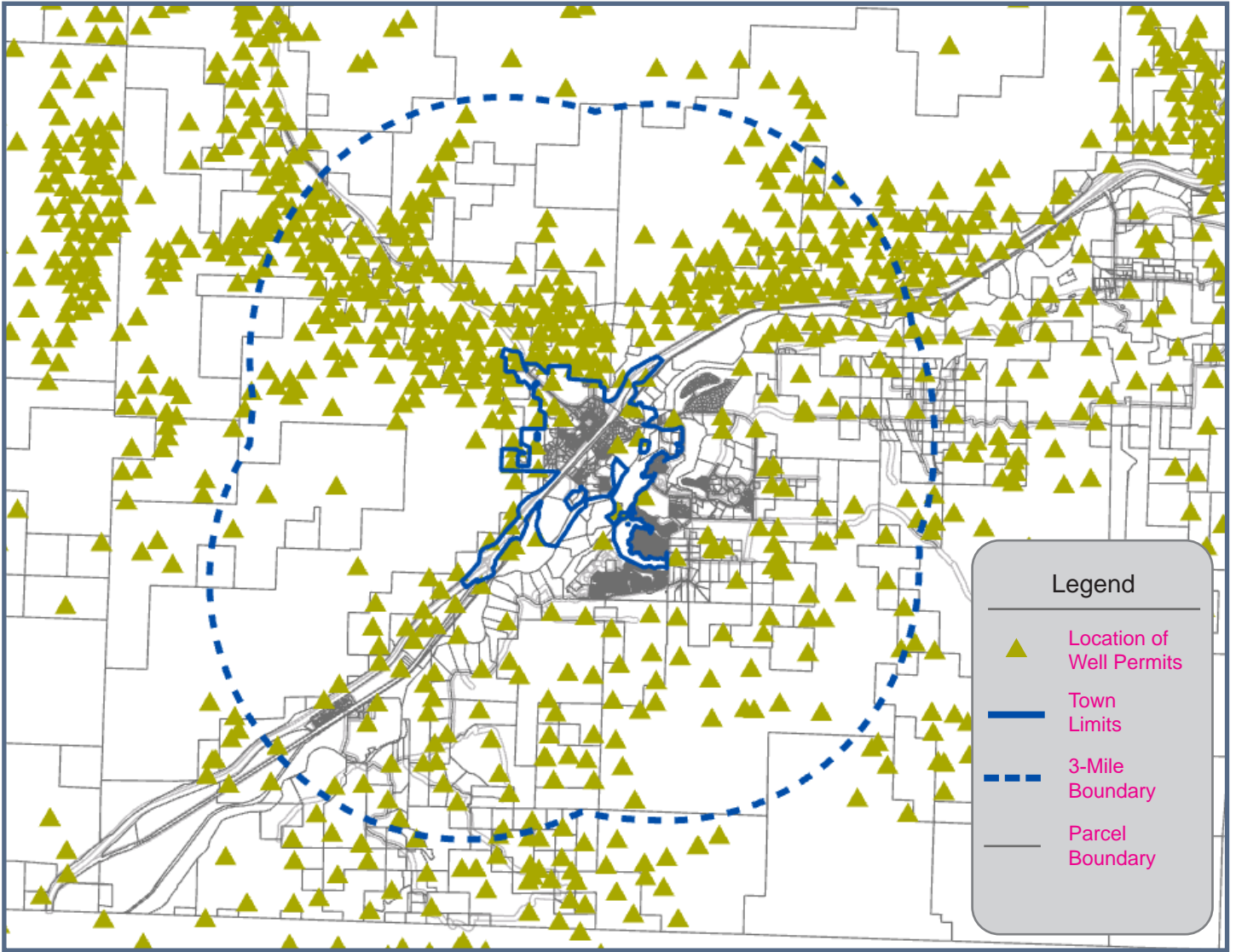
However, the oil shale and natural gas reserves are not a reliable economic base. During one particularly difficult bust during the early 1980s, Exxon pulled out of the area in a single day, causing May 2nd to be referred to as Black Sunday by the community, leaving Battlement Mesa to be acquired by private investors that continue to own the remaining developable areas today.

Because of the Town's proximity to these federal lands, residents and visitors have a unique opportunity to access numerous hiking and off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails, and recreation, including camping, hunting, and fishing. However, because of oil and gas leases, direct access to adjacent public lands is limited.



MAP 2: PHYSICAL FEATURE MAP





MAP 3: EXISTING OIL & GAS LOCATIONS



1.2 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

POPULATION

The Town had an estimated population of 1,363 people in 2020, according to the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS). Compared to other nearby jurisdictions, as seen in Table 1, the Town has experienced drastic changes in population growth. In 1995, the growth rate for the Town was at an all-time high of 9.1%, but within five years, the Town saw a dramatic downturn with a growth rate of -0.2%. These previous fluctuations are attributed to the boom and bust of the oil and gas industry. As industry production ramps up, more employees move to the Town, but when there is a downturn, people move out and the Town experiences a decrease in population.

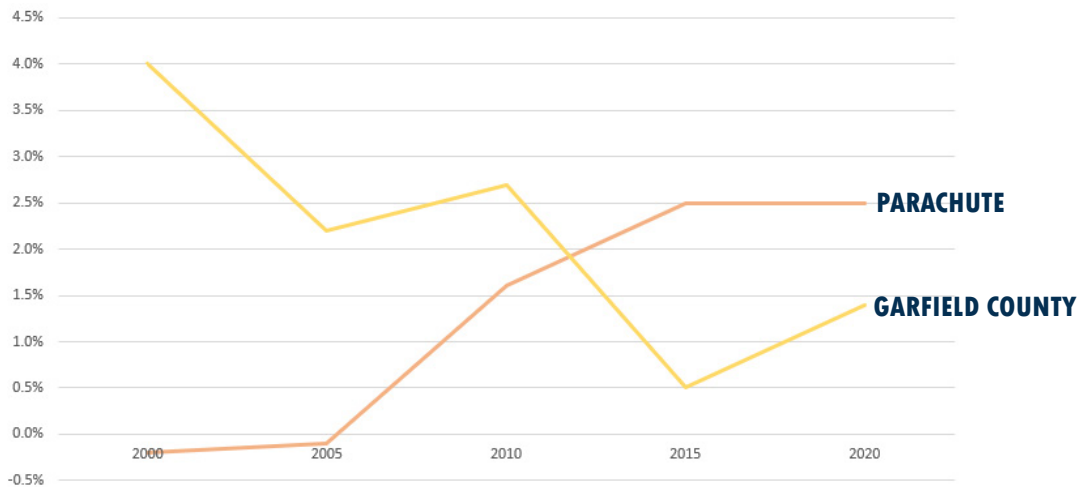


FIGURE 2: PERCENT POPULATION CHANGE

Battlement Mesa has an estimated population of 5,438 according to the 2020 Census, making it larger than the incorporated Town. Battlement Mesa is a Planned Unit Development (the “PUD”) community and was originally projected to support approximately 25,000 residents. Similar to the Town, Battlement Mesa’s population appears to fluctuate with economic factors as well.

While Battlement Mesa is not included within the Town Limits of Parachute, the two communities are reliant on each other. Battlement Mesa is home to many amenities such as recreation centers, and trails that Parachute residents enjoy while services and amenities such as infrastructure, restaurants, and libraries are located within the Town limits but enjoyed by the broader Grand Valley community. The two communities are intertwined. That connection should be built on to meet the needs of the greater community.



AGE AND GENDER CHARACTERISTICS

Age characteristics of a community also play a significant role in how growth is projected and how resources are allocated. For example, the highest percentage of the population in the Town is between 35 to 44 years. Figure 3, Age Distribution Comparison. Categorically, the Town has a younger population when compared to Garfield County. The median age for the Town is 32.8 years, which is lower than Garfield County’s median age of 36.5 years. The population of Battlement Mesa is more in line with Garfield County with a median age of 36.2 years. As the community’s population ages, resources and services shift to meet the needs of an older demographic. However, if the Town continues to see lower age distributions, the anticipated population projection may rise faster than other jurisdictions because of higher birth rates and lower death rates.

The Town’s gender distribution is 54.6% male and 45.4% female. However, Battlement Mesa’s gender distribution is 56% male and 44% female while Garfield County is 51.1% male and 48.9% female.

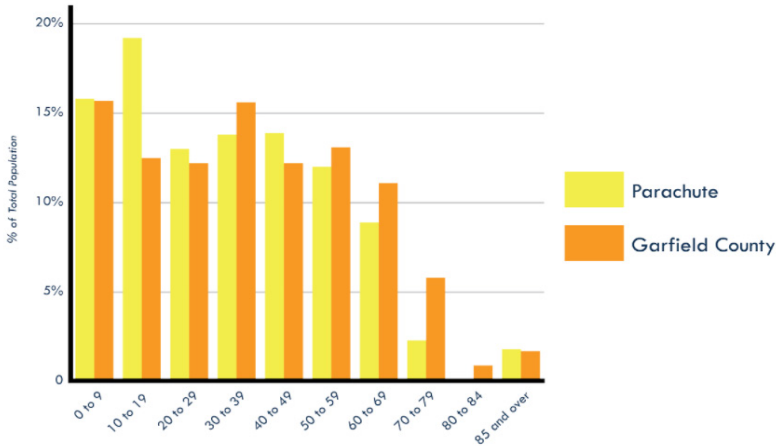


FIGURE 3: AGE DISTRIBUTION CHART

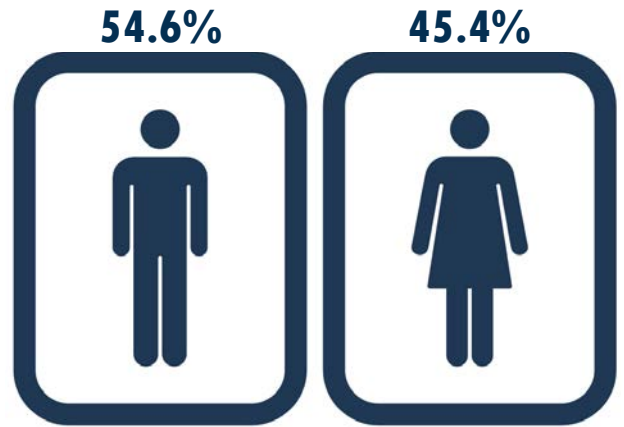


FIGURE 4: PARACHUTE GENDER DISTRIBUTION



EDUCATION

Education attainment and the quality of education available to the residents build a thriving community. Per Public School Review, during the 2021-2022 school year, Grand Valley High School, located in the Town, served 327 students. The number of minority students enrolled in Grand Valley High School is 38% compared to other public schools in Colorado of 45%. The graduation rate for Grand Valley High School is 82% compared to the Colorado average of 81%.

While the graduation rates are higher than the state of Colorado for public schools, based on average test scores, the students may not have the skills necessary to enter the workforce or move towards higher education. For example, the average math and reading proficiency rates of graduating students are significantly lower than the state average.

Historically, higher educational levels have translated to a community having a higher median household income. Most residents in Town do not have a bachelor's degree or higher which could be a factor in the lower overall median household income.

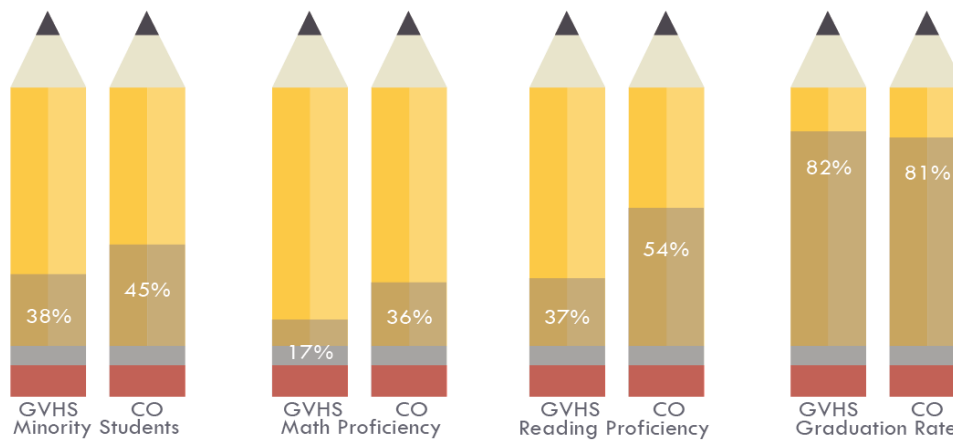


FIGURE 5: STUDENT METRICS

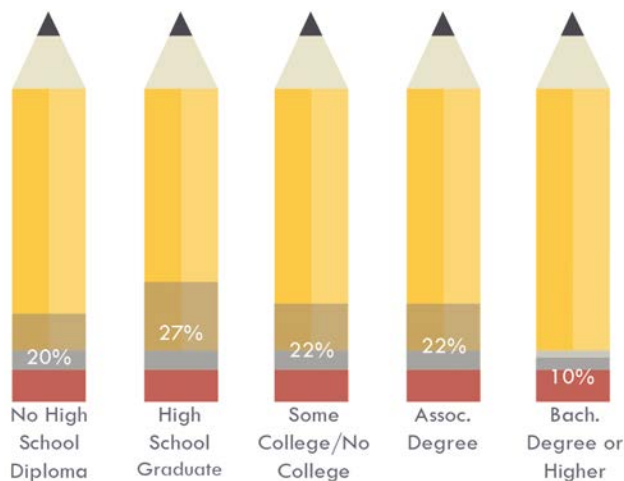


FIGURE 6: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED



HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND SIZE

In 2019, the ACS stated, the Town had a median household income (MHI) of \$52,500, and Battlement Mesa had a median household income of \$68,188, which are both on average lower when compared to the County, the State, and the nation. The ACS data went on to say that the average household size (AHS) of the Town is 2.61, which is slightly higher than the state average of 2.49 and the national average of 2.53. Experts anticipate that as people have fewer children, the average household size will decrease. However, with the Town being at a slightly higher average, the average household is still expected to be similar to the national rate. Housing types, distribution, and costs are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 2 and 5.

Measure	Parachute	Garfield County	Colorado	United States
Median Household Income (MHI)	\$52,500	\$75,937	\$72,331	\$62,843
Average Household Size (AHS)	2.61	N/A	2.49	2.53

TABLE 2: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME & SIZE



REGIONAL COMMUTING

Glenwood Springs, Vail, and other regional economic drivers have accounted for most of the economic growth in Garfield County. As these communities continue to grow, residents are drawn to the Town for its low cost of living. This daily commuting workforce has resulted in the Town becoming a bedroom community for these regional employment centers. This is evident by the number of individuals reported as commuting as 593 out of a projected total employment population of 606, with an average commute time of 31.2 minutes. Additional figures that support the statement that the Town has become a bedroom community are outlined below:

- 25.3% of all workers leave their home for employment between 6:00 and 6:29 AM (US Census Bureau Table S0801, Parachute geographic boundaries)
- 80.9% of all individuals commute to work by “driving alone” (US Census Bureau Table S0801, Parachute geographic boundaries)

In winter months, this commute grows significantly due to snowfall, resulting in up to two hours spent in the car at certain times of the year. The lengthy commute is unsustainable for Town residents. The Town desires to attract more local, high-paying jobs to support these residents. Mainly, there is a desire to attract teleworking individuals, young professionals, manufacturing industries, and company headquarters.



EMPLOYMENT

Despite having an economy based on volatile industries, the Town has maintained an unemployment rate consistent with the national rate. Figure 7 paints a picture of how steadily the employment rate has increased since the Great Recession, which lasted from 2007 to 2009, but had long-standing impacts on the local economy. The Town's 2019 unemployment rate of 4.0% was not much higher than the national rate, which hovered at just under 4%.

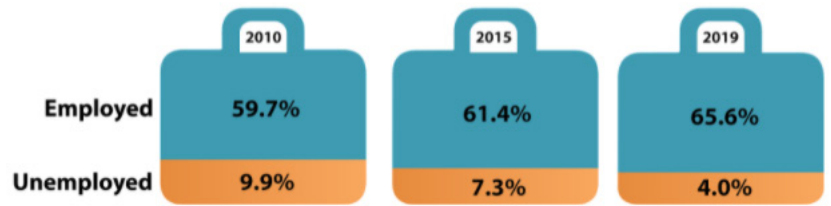


FIGURE 7: EMPLOYMENT VS UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

While the unemployment rate remains low, the Town's poverty rate of 17.1% is higher than the county, state, and national averages. As stated in Chapter 1, according to the ACS 5-year estimate in 2019, the largest demographic living in poverty in the Town are Males 55 - 64, followed by Males 6 - 11 and then Males 45 - 54. The most common racial or ethnic group living below the poverty line in the Town is White, followed by Hispanic and Native American. This is significant given the highest employment types in the Town. There are well-paying oil and gas jobs that are male-dominated fields. When those employees lose employment due to the bust cycle or age, they may not have had the retirement benefits to sustain the same lifestyle but do not want to leave the Town community. This is likely due to the region's strong dependence on tourism, a historically low-wage industry. Tourism industries drive poverty or low-income households due to:

- Lower than average wages, coupled with higher-than-average living expenses
- Reduced housing options
- Higher than average taxes or service fees
- Limited options for livable wage jobs outside the tourism industry
- Higher cost of living for residents due to tourism-based pricing

Town residents were employed in various industries for 2019 based on ESRI data. The industry data provided by the ACS reports the following as the top five industries: retail trade (15%), construction (13.4%), health care, and social assistance (12.4%), accommodation and food services (10%), and administrative and support and waste management services (8.12%) (Figure 8). The Town workforce had 628 employees in 2019, 14.8% higher than the 547 employees in 2018 (Census Bureau). It is important to note that Census Bureau data is associated with a residential address, not a work address. These people live in the Town but do not necessarily work in the Town. Moreover, residents of other towns may work in the Town but are not counted in these numbers.

Broken down by occupations, however, the numbers paint a much different picture. Within each industry, there

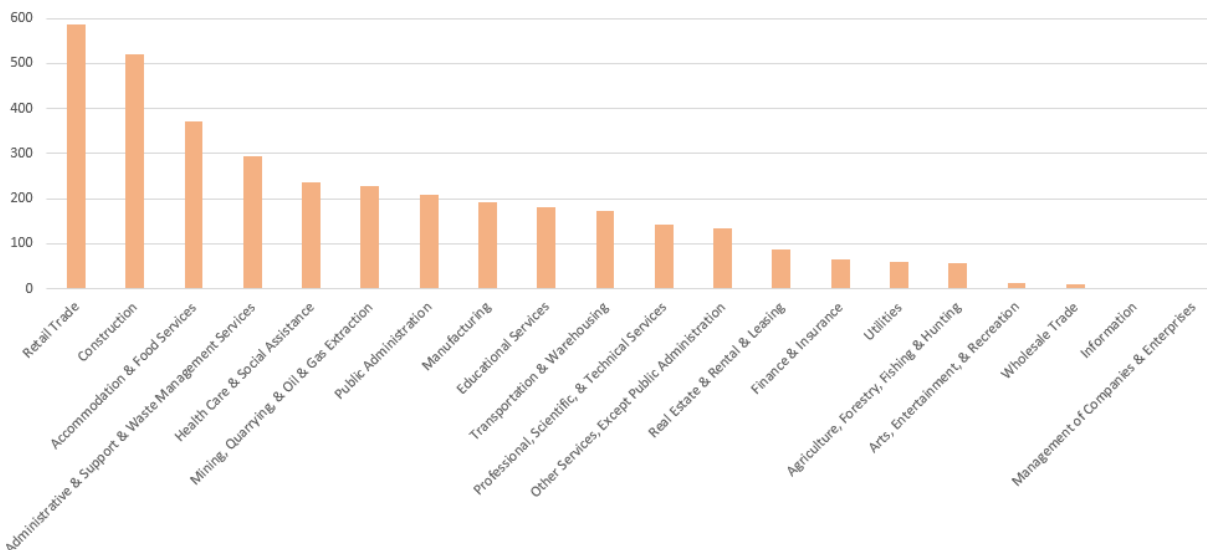


FIGURE 8: WORKFORCE BY INDUSTRY



are different categories of jobs grouped. The Town residents are primarily employed in the top five following occupations: construction & extraction (15.3%), office and administrative support (9.87%), sales and related occupations (8.92%), building and grounds cleaning and maintenance (7.96%), and transportation (7.8%). Figure 9 illustrates the breakdown of the primary occupations held by the Town residents.

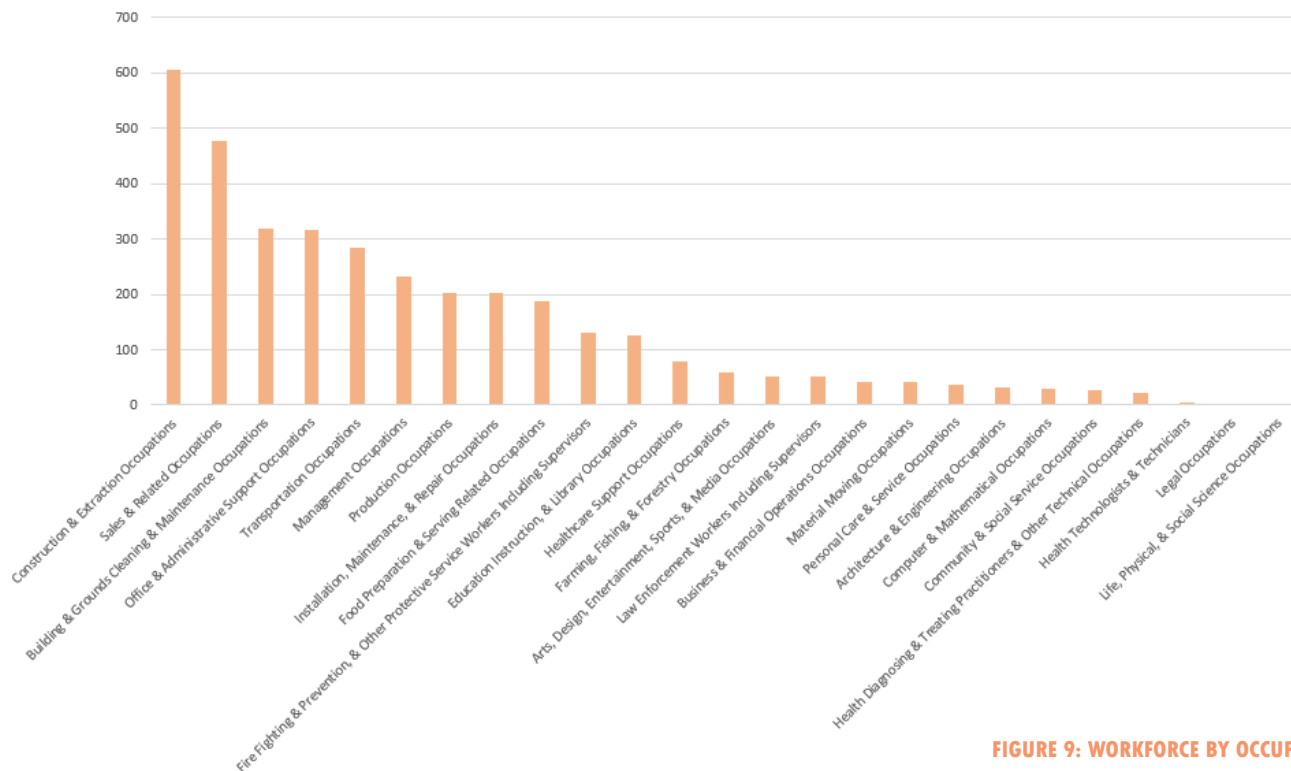


FIGURE 9: WORKFORCE BY OCCUPATION

Many of these occupations are tied to the same industry, such as construction and extraction, transportation, material moving, and others, all overlap with the natural resource extraction industry. This dominance of the natural resource extraction industry and supporting industries, and a high level of retail trade occupations signals that the workforce is not diversified or trained for potential economic changes. This makes the Town’s residents vulnerable to an increasing flux economy as numerous health, environmental, and economic factors converge.



POVERTY RATES

Poverty impacts all aspects of a community's well-being. High poverty rates have a ripple effect. For example, when residents cannot afford healthy food, they eat less healthy options, leading to other long-term health issues. Unfortunately, health issues are neglected, because most residents in poverty do not have health insurance coverage, so they only seek out emergency medical care rather than preventative health care. High poverty rates can also lead to other issues that impact the community's overall well-being, such as substance abuse and mental health issues. Increases in crime, violence, and demand for resources can result.

Poverty rates also impact education. Children without food in their homes attend school hungry. The percentage of Grand Valley High School students on free and reduced lunch assistance was 52.5% in the 2020-2021 school year from the Colorado Department of Education. The percentage of students on free and reduced lunch programs is higher than the state of Colorado, which is 36.7% for high schools. Grand Valley Center for Family Learning is at 59.0%, and Grand Valley Middle School, located in Battlement Mesa, is at 64.8% for students on the free and reduced lunch programs.

When residents' basic needs can't be met due to poverty levels, residents can't be involved in other aspects of the community. So the focus of these community members is getting basic needs (i.e., food and shelter) met.

The US Census Bureau measures poverty by calculating a family's total income against a monetary income threshold that varies based on the family size and composition. Household composition is determined by the people living together and their relationships with one another. The composition of the household determines a person's household size. One person may live in another's household, but not be part of his or her household composition or household size. If a family's income is calculated as less than the threshold, then the family and individuals are considered in poverty. In 2019, the Town had a poverty rate of about 17.1% compared to Battlement Mesa's 3.2%, Garfield County's 8.6%, the State's 10.3%, and the United States rate of 13.4%; this figure is significant for all the reasons mentioned above.

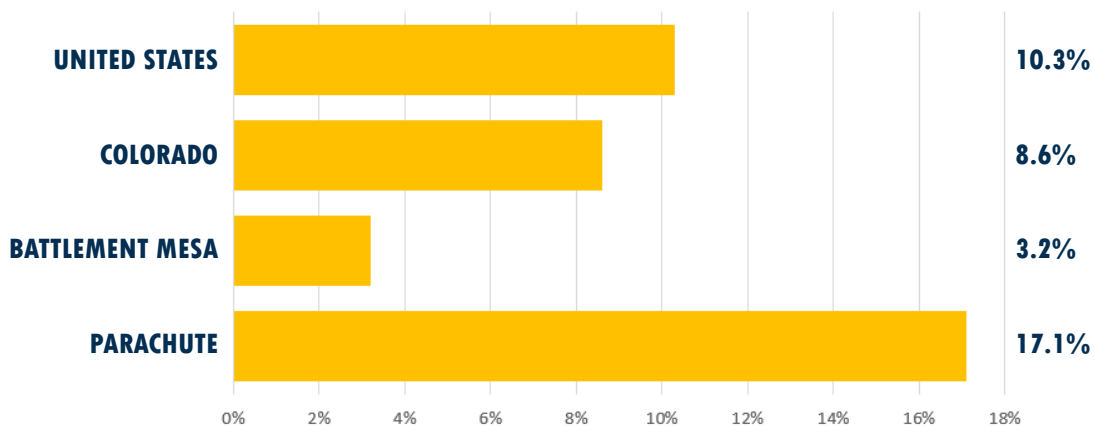


FIGURE 10: POVERTY RATE COMPARISON

According to the ACS 5-year estimate in 2019, the largest demographic living in poverty in the Town are Males 55 - 64, followed by Males 6 - 11 and then Males 45 - 54. The most common racial or ethnic group living below the poverty line in the Town is White, followed by Hispanic and Native American. This is significant given the types of employment which are highest in the Town. There are well-paying oil and gas jobs that are male-dominated fields. When those employees lose their employment due to the bust cycle or age, they may not have had the retirement benefits to sustain the same lifestyle, but do not want to leave the Parachute community.



1.3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement in any area is challenging because there can be limited trust between the government and residents. Community engagement is a framework of guiding principles, strategies, and approaches. The framework is based on the premise that all community members should be informed, consulted, involved, and empowered in the planning of their community. Community engagement places a premium on fostering and enhancing trust as a critical element in long-term, sustainable engagement, and effective governance.

As stated in the Introduction, under Community Input and more specifically, the Survey section, community members feel disconnected from Town staff. Any future updates to the Plan should include a robust community engagement process. However, before engaging community members in a planning process, relationships must be established. An objective and the associated strategies are included in Section 1.5 addressing community engagement. There are numerous organizations identified as stakeholders which the Town should include in future community engagement activities. Below is a list of the types of these organizations:

- Government Organizations and Districts
- Emergency Services
- NonProfit Organizations
- Schools
- Library
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Business Community
- Residential Community



1.4 PAST PLANS, STUDIES AND INITIATIVES

The Town has completed several planning projects and initiatives over the years. The Plan builds upon previous data, economic, and community-driven efforts incorporated into each of these earlier efforts. Below is a list of the plans and studies used in evaluating existing conditions and helping to guide the planning process for Parachute 2022 Comprehensive Plan:

TOWN OF PARACHUTE




Photo by Lynn Shore

2022 Budget

2021-11-10
Page 1 of 130

PARACHUTE DESIGN GUIDELINES









Town of Parachute

2015 Comprehensive Plan

(Includes Battlement Mesa)

Town of Parachute
A Safe Place to Land
MUNICIPAL CODE

Home
Code Home
Contents
Track
Share
Settings

Municipal Code --

Title 15

LAND USE REGULATIONS


🔍
🔄
📄
🗑️

Chapters:

- 15.01 General Provisions
- 15.02 Zoning
- 15.03 Subdivision Regulations
- 15.04 Development Standards
- 15.05 Flood Damage Prevention Regulations
- 15.06 Sign Regulations
- 15.07 Supplemental Regulations
- 15.08 Fence Regulations
- 15.09 Parachute Design Guidelines
- 15.10 Recreational Vehicles and Trailers
- Appendix 1: Submittal Requirements
- Appendix 2: Plat Certificates
- Appendix 3: Fee Schedule
- Appendix 4: Development Improvements Agreement
- Appendix 5: Cost Reimbursement Agreement
- Appendix 6: Design Guidelines

What's Nearby

TITLE		
← 14	15	App. A →
CHAPTER		
← 15.01 →		



Garfield County

Hazard Mitigation Plan

August 2017

CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

27

1.5 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Objective 1-1: Partner with community organizations to address poverty rates and educational gaps.

Strategy 1-1A: Develop an engagement system with community organizations as outlined in Appendix A: Stakeholders assisting those needing financial help, including financial planning services for those in volatile industries.

Strategy 1-1B: Develop a community tutoring program for students struggling academically.

Objective 1-2: Enhance community connection and trust between the Town government and the residents of the community.

Strategy 1-2A: Develop an engagement system with community organizations as outlined in Appendix A: Stakeholders. Consider applying for the Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program which provides \$10,000 in funding for resident-driven groups in small cities and towns to start the Community Heart & Soul model. Grant funding requires a \$10,000 cash match from the participating municipality or a partnering organization.

Strategy 1-2B: Utilize existing community spaces (e.g. the historic Battlement Mesa Schoolhouse, to host local and regional activities and bring outside visitors.

Strategy 1-2C: Foster relationships and trust between the Town, its partners, and the community.

Strategy 1-2D: Host community dialogue and educational opportunities for the residents of Parachute to learn about municipal government functions, project prioritization, and budgeting. Provide opportunities for conversation and collaboration through this process. The focus of these events is to build community trust, increase transparency on Town leadership decision-making, and build relationships with community leaders.

Strategy 1-2E: Dedicate Town staff time and resources to building relationships with community partners and participating in ongoing planning efforts.

Strategy 1-2F: Seek feedback and input from community members through the use of a community survey and dialogue.

Strategy 1-2G: Develop relationships with oil and gas industry leaders.

Strategy 1-2H: Create consistent avenues for communication with the community through community surveys, regular newsletter publication, and the installation of a new marquee sign to communicate with residents and the general public.



Objective 1-3: Create additional advisory boards to engage more residents in Town governance and assist the Town in implementing the Objectives of this plan.

Strategy 1-3A: Identify existing community organizations, boards, or committees which a Town liaison could be added or memorialized.

Strategy 1-3B: Identify gaps between current community organizations, boards, or committees and community priorities and enlist interested community members to guide the vision and strategy of those priorities.

Strategy 1-3C: Town Council should reaffirm their desire to collaborate with these organizations on an annual basis through the adoption of a Resolution identifying liaisons and establishing Town committees and boards.





CHAPTER 2: LAND USE AND BUILT FORM

Land use and the built form create the foundation for the Town. Land use planning is essential to optimize the combination of different development projects. These can include residential, commercial, transportation, industrial, recreational, retail, and public uses, further covered in the additional chapters. The first part of the chapter reviews the existing conditions. The second section discusses future land uses, and the third section covers future needs identified in the Town. The final section provides actionable objectives and strategies for the Town to get from where they are to where they want to go in the future.



2.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

ZONING

The Plan is separate and distinct from the zoning districts defined in the Title 15 Land Use Regulations of the Parachute Municipal Code. The land use regulations provide a detailed means for the Plan's vision to be implemented legally through the Parachute Municipal Code, Title 15, Land Use Regulations. The Town's Plan includes recommendations on land use, housing, and other areas described and enforced the zoning ordinance. Individual parcels are regulated by the Town in terms of what the allowable uses are, as well as developmental regulations such as building height, setbacks, lot coverage, and parking requirements. Zoning classifications provide guidance on how land uses are distributed throughout the Town. Zoning classifications are shown in the Existing Land Use Map (Map 4), guiding how existing, and future land uses are distributed throughout the Town. The Town should strive to provide a balance of land uses to ensure there are adequate areas for housing, retail and services, and employment centers. Housing land uses should be adequate to meet future population growth and diversity in housing types and costs. Furthermore, retail and service areas should be adequate to support local needs and to ensure economic sustainability by generating sales tax revenue. Lastly, employment centers, which allow office, warehousing, manufacturing, and similar employment opportunities should be available to meet local workforce needs, provide well-paying jobs, and support local economic characteristics.

ZONE DISTRICTS AND DESCRIPTIONS

All land within the Town is zoned one of the following 11 zone districts as regulated by the Parachute Municipal Code.

RA – RURAL AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

The Rural Agricultural Zone District is intended to provide areas that are most suitable for agricultural and agriculture-related purposes due to location, soil quality, existing land use, and the availability of irrigation water. Other rural, nonagricultural uses such as large lot single-family residences that do not require water and/or sewer service may also be appropriate in the RA Zone District.

LDR – LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

The Low Density Residential Zone District is intended to provide for single-family residential uses as a transition between rural agricultural areas and higher density residential development.

MDR – MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

The Medium Density Residential Zone District is intended to accommodate a wide variety of residential housing types, including traditional single-family homes, patio homes, paired homes, townhouses, and lower density apartment units.

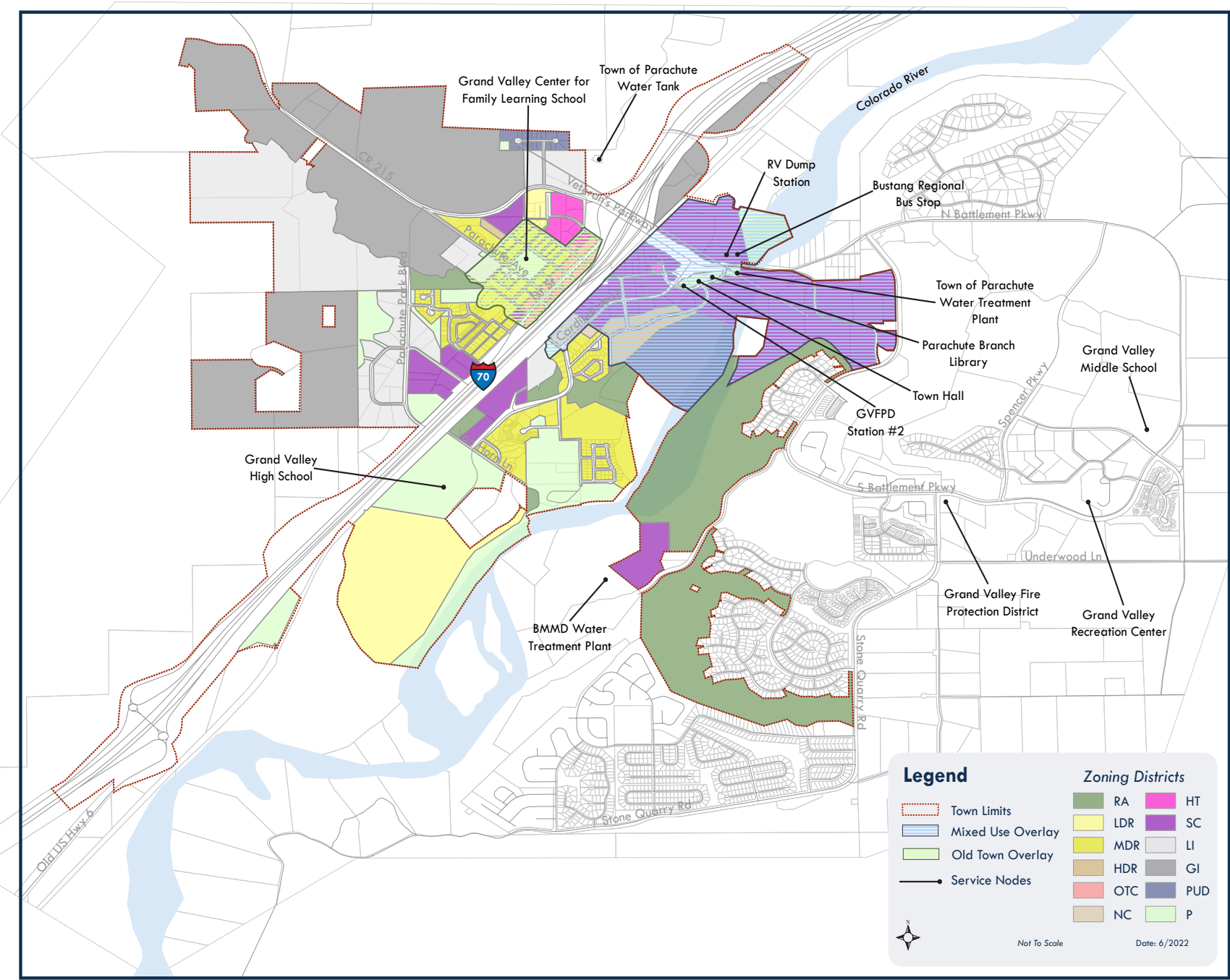
HDR – HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

The High Density Residential Zone District is intended to accommodate all housing types, including higher density townhouses and apartment units.

OTC – OLD TOWN CENTER DISTRICT

The Old Town Center Zone District is intended to provide community and tourist commercial uses in the First Street area. The OTC District offers opportunities for attractive street and pedestrian areas designed to attract visitors from the highway-oriented tourist area. The OTC District also provides a unique office setting for smaller establishments.





MAP 4: EXISTING LAND USE MAP

Not To Scale Date: 6/2022

NC – NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

The Neighborhood Commercial Zone District is intended to provide distinct residential neighborhoods with convenience retail and personal service establishments.

HT – HIGHWAY TOURIST DISTRICT

The Highway Tourist Zone District is intended to provide areas for highway and nonresident oriented uses in accessible locations near the highway entrances to the Town.

SC – SERVICE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

The Service Commercial Zone District is intended to provide areas for wholesale and service commercial uses located near major highway intersections.

LI – LIMITED INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

The Limited Industrial Zone District is intended to provide sites for moderate- to low-intensity industrial uses, commercial services, and light manufacturing. The regulation of uses and standards of development set forth in the LI District are those deemed necessary to provide the proper environment for the efficient and desirable use of this type of industrial land, and to provide the proper safeguards to protect nearby residential, commercial, and public uses.

GI – GENERAL INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

The General Industrial Zone District is intended to provide sites for the full range of manufacturing, industrial processing, resource, and energy production/service and distribution. The purpose of the GI District is to preserve the lands of the Town appropriate for heavy industrial uses, to protect these lands from intrusion by dwellings and inharmonious commercial uses, to promote uniform and orderly industrial development, to protect property values, to foster an efficient and aesthetically pleasing industrial zone, to attract and encourage the location of desirable industrial plants, to provide an industrial environment which will be conducive to good employee relations and pride on the part of all citizens of the community, and to provide proper safeguards and appropriate transition for surrounding land uses.

P – PUBLIC DISTRICT

The Public Zone District is intended to accommodate public facilities and parks and to recognize lands owned by federal, state, or local government agencies.

Figure 11 shows a breakdown of the Town's different types of zoning classifications as exists today. As is evident in the existing conditions map, residential areas on the northwest side of I-70 are centered around the Old Town Center District and adjacent residential district, while much of the northwestern portions of Town consist of industrial and service commercial parcels. On the south side of I-70, much of the residential stock is on the outskirts of Town in the Battlement Mesa community, while service and neighborhood commercial districts are focused around Cardinal Way. Without updating the zoning ordinance, many planning goals may not be attainable. Zoning is essential to promote and manage growth and help residents and businesses manage expectations about what they and their neighbors can do with their property.





LAND USE DISTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

A well-balanced distribution of land uses helps clear the way for the Town's long-term fiscal and economic viability, including the revitalization of economically challenged areas, preservation of existing residential neighborhoods, efficient distribution of public resources, conservation of natural resources, provision of adequate infrastructure, and a reduction of traffic congestion. Broad land uses should be in balance to ensure the community's future housing needs are met while also ensuring revenue producing land uses such as retail sales and material production and providing services for residents and visitors. A balanced land use distribution reflects the goals and vision of a community.

The Town's most prominent land use classification is General Industrial. As described above, General Industrial is for land uses that include manufacturing, industrial processing, resource, and energy production/service and distribution without infringing on the enjoyment of residential land uses. Approximately 43.8% of the Town is zoned for some level of commercial use and approximately 26.1% of the Town is zoned some sort of residential. The focus of this plan is to identify the Town's future land use needs and ensure these needs are met through a balanced future land use map.

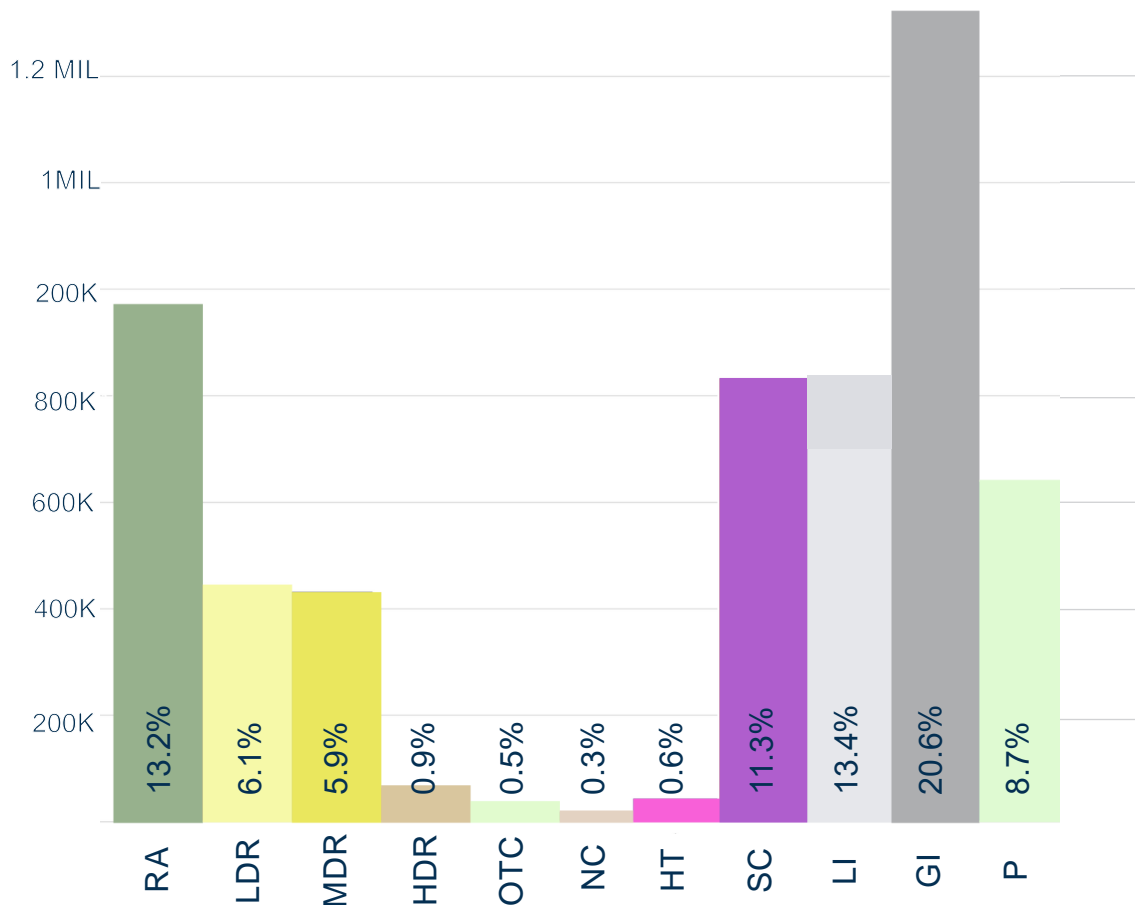


FIGURE 11: LAND USE DISTRIBUTION



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Town's built environment includes features that have been modified from their natural conditions frequently; this includes visible examples such as buildings, streets, sidewalks, and parks. The built environment creates a sense of place for a community in the Town. Creating a sense of place spotlights the unique qualities and characteristics, making the physical surroundings worth caring about for the residents. Furthermore, they create places where residents and visitors enjoy spending time. Whether it's a vibrant and engaging Old Town Core, a regional park such as Cottonwood Park, an experience with nature along the Colorado River, or a well-designed plaza within the future development along Cardinal Way, the Town's built environment can enhance the user experience and enjoyment. The Zoning Regulations of the Municipal Code, Public Works Construction Manual, and the Parachute Design Guidelines guide the built environment in the Town.

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

Commercial property is the core of economic development. In the Town, four commercial zone districts cover 21.6 acres. The commercial land uses are located within the Old Town Center area along 1st Street, the Cardinal Way corridor, and the Parachute Park Business Park area, where a business park for offices and light industrial uses is being developed. Old Town Core is the Town's historical downtown where many storefronts are vacant and need revitalization. The Cardinal Way corridor has vacant property poised for new mixed-use development between Cardinal Way and the Colorado River. The area has underground utilities installed and more significant properties subdivided for individual end-users or redeveloped as large-scale, multi-building development.

HOUSING

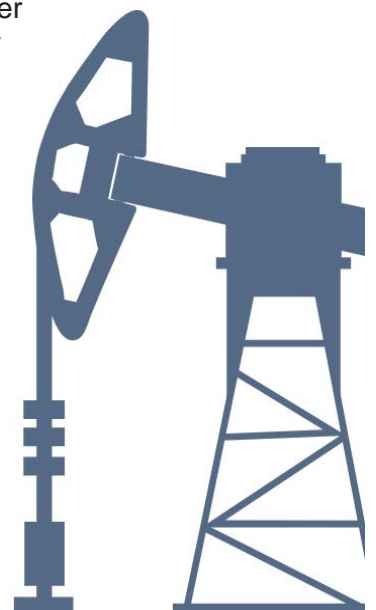
In 2019, there were estimated to be 658 total housing units in the Town. Of this total, most consist of single-family detached homes. While the Town has an adequate number of housing units, this stock is mainly one type of housing option - single-family detached homes. The Town desires a wide range of choices for residents, from more affordable options to larger and more expensive single-family residences for community members looking for a higher price point than is currently being provided in Parachute. Additional analysis on the cost of housing options and strategies to attract this type of workforce are outlined in the economic development scenarios in the Appendix. As depicted in Figure 13, the median housing price has been steadily increasing and is anticipated to increase through 2040. Compared to surrounding communities, the Town is a more affordable place to buy a home. In 2019, the average cost of a house in the Town was \$171,100 compared to Garfield County's average housing cost of \$360,600.

The rate of homeownership has increased and is expected to keep growing compared to renting. As shown in Figure 14, the rate of homeownership has increased and is expected to outpace the renting rate by 2040.

To keep housing attainable, a stated objective of this plan is to maintain and create attainable housing opportunities through implementing a range of strategies. Further evaluation and refinement are needed to determine the most appropriate strategy for the Town which can be accomplished by completing a Housing Assessment and Strategy. These strategies may include the following:

1. Allowing and incentivizing the development of a mix of housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, multi-family dwellings, accessory dwelling units (ADU), and other market-rate housing opportunities in the Zoning Regulations,
2. Creating a development incentive program through the regulations to update to allow for density bonuses that include deed-restricted units for new or redeveloped residential and mixed-use development,
3. Developing a library of pre-approved design concepts to expedite the approval process for accessory dwelling units and
4. Creating regulations to ensure short-term rentals do not negatively impact community character.

For more information on affordable housing for the Town, please see Chapter 5, Economic Vitality.



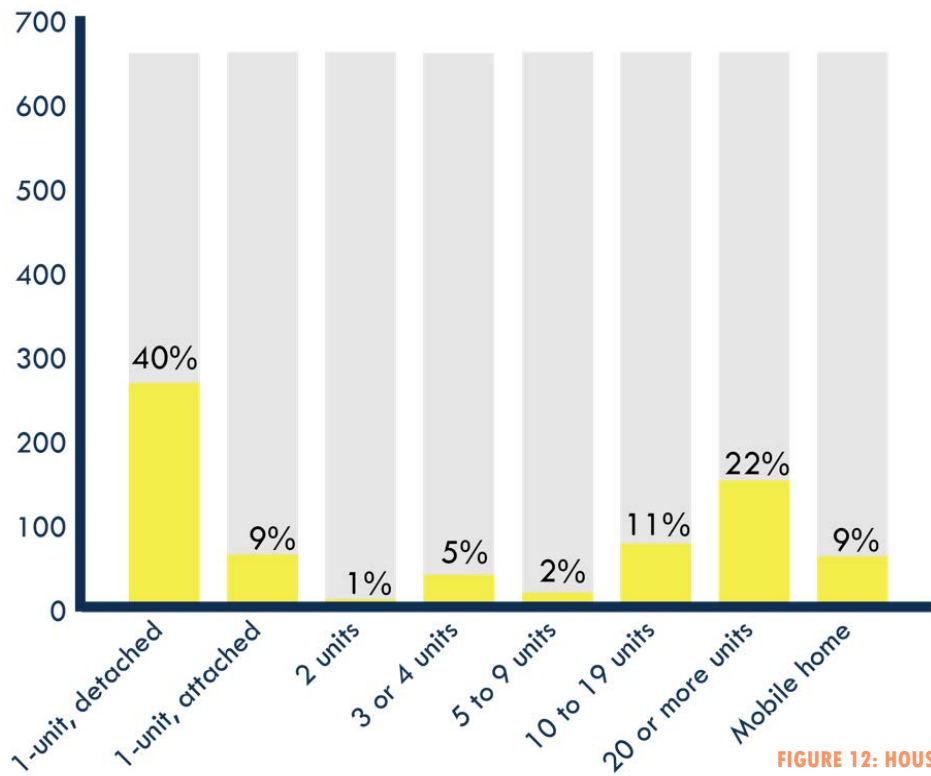


FIGURE 12: HOUSING DISTRIBUTION BY TYPE

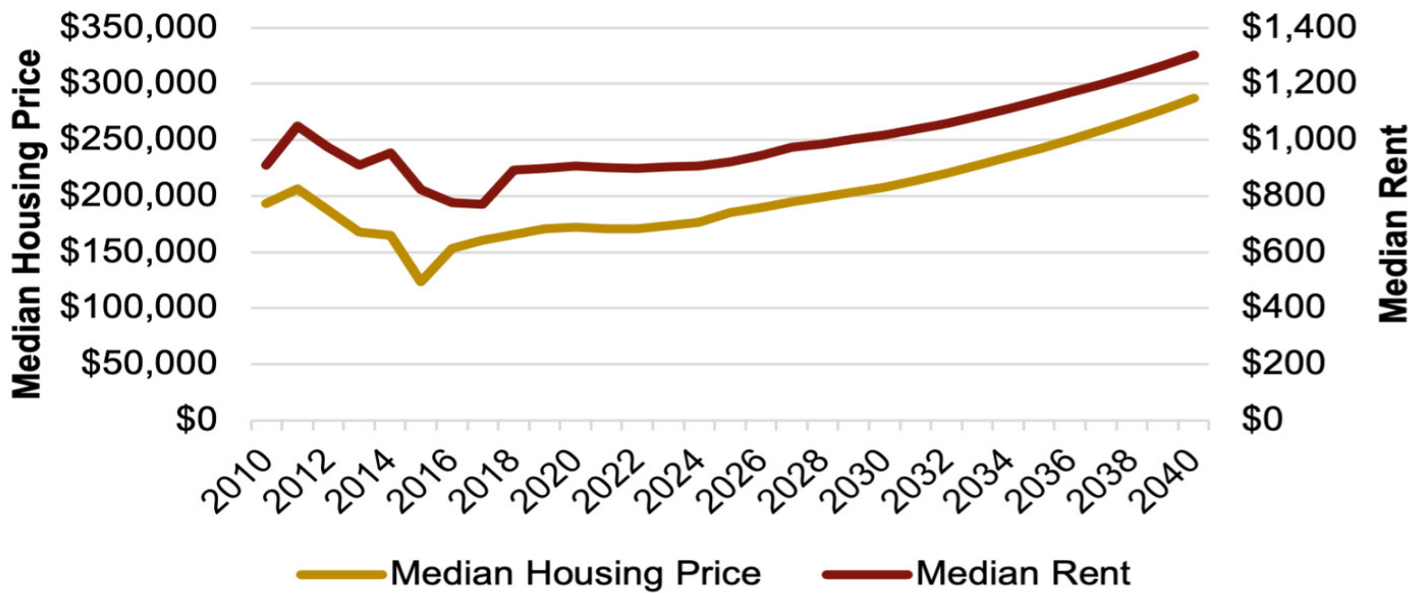


FIGURE 13: HOUSING COSTS



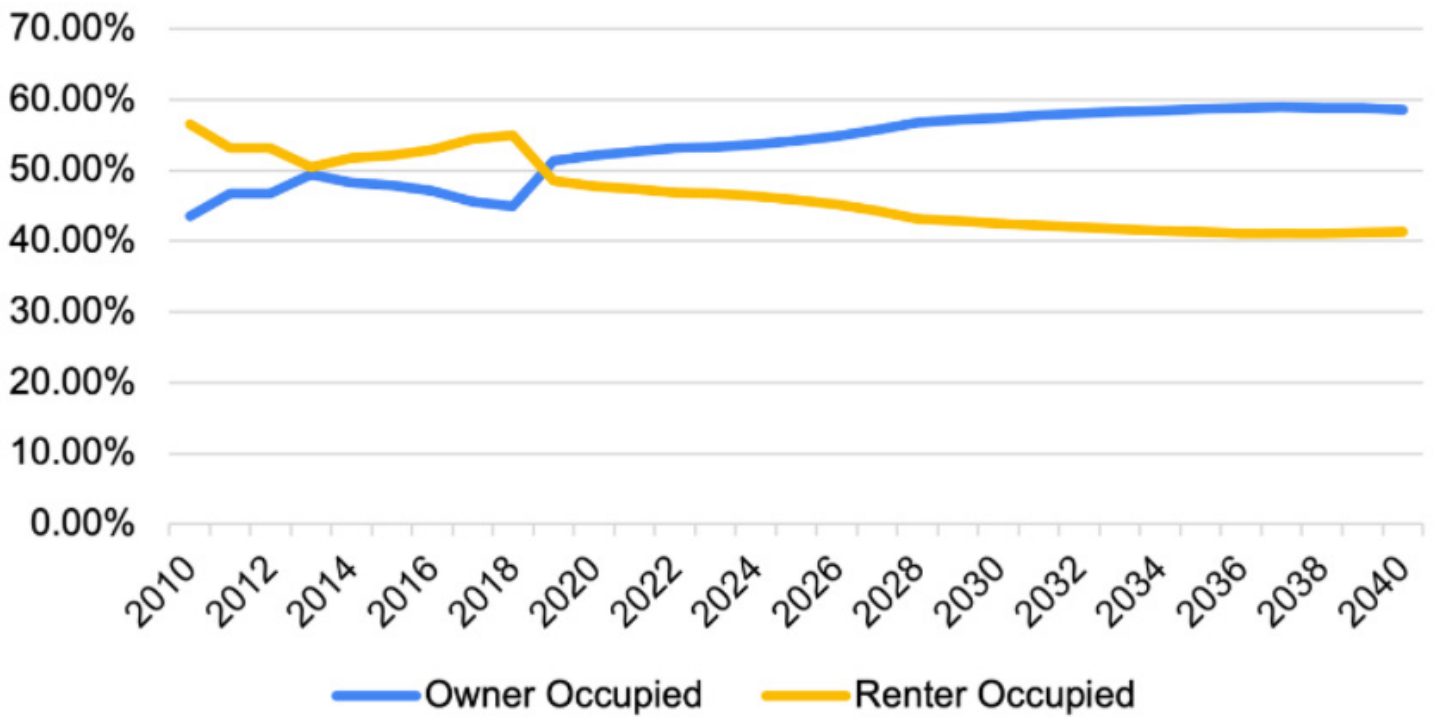


FIGURE 14: OWNER VS. RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING



RESOURCES, UTILITIES, & INFRASTRUCTURE

ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

The Town's Public Works Department maintains the public roadways throughout the Town limits. Based on the 2022 Budget, the department includes seven full-time positions and one three-quarters time position to support public services. Maintenance activities include snow plowing, regular maintenance and repairs, and minor construction projects. The department also coordinates closely with Garfield County Road and Bridge and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) since some roads either in Town limits or on the periphery are maintained by those entities. For example, CR215/CR300/North Battlement Mesa are maintained by Garfield County Road and Bridge and 1st Street/SH6 is maintained by CDOT. CDOT also has jurisdiction over the I-70 interchange so infrastructure projects or development applications impacting the interchange must be coordinated with CDOT Region 3. The Town utilizes contracted engineering services to support public works projects and roadway expansion.



Roadways are generally expanded and installed as warranted by development and many of the roads outside of the original town area north of I-70, have been constructed and installed within the past 10 to 15 years and are generally in good shape and well maintained. As development increases, there will be a need to reevaluate the transportation network to balance the various modes of transportation and function based on adjacent land uses.

ELECTRIC AND GAS SERVICES

Xcel is the provider for gas and electricity for the Town. Holy Cross provides services after crossing the river towards Battlement Mesa. Infrastructure to support the electric power grid throughout the Town includes a combination of above ground and underground facilities. Most of the Town is powered by transmission lines, utility poles, and substations. Underground facilities are provided in newer developments such as Parachute Park Business Park and the Cardinal Way corridor.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

A solar farm was recently approved in April 2021 by Garfield County providing a renewable energy source for the Town. The 3-megawatt direct-current installation consists of approximately 20 acres of a 114 acre parcel located between I-70 and US Highway 6 south west of the Town. The facility, when operational, should provide enough power to run 400 to 500 homes in the area. However, the solar facility would require purchasing into the program.



Inside Town boundaries, a number of other solar energy projects exist. In 2010, the Town, in cooperation with the Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative, installed solar flowers at the rest area adjacent to I-70, traditional arrays at Town Hall, and at the water treatment plant. Per Garfield Clean Energy, the three facilities generate 22.9 kilowatts of power of clean electricity, saving the Town money on its energy bills. Additionally, private property owners have installed solar arrays on their property. While these are not major contributors to the power grid, two other notable installations are the one at the senior center property north of Old Town Center adjacent to CR215 and one at the east end of town adjacent to I-70

While the Town is supportive of renewable energy, solar arrays proposed in the Parachute area should be placed outside of prime commercial corridors. A recommendation is provided in the Objectives and Strategies section encompassing this suggestion.



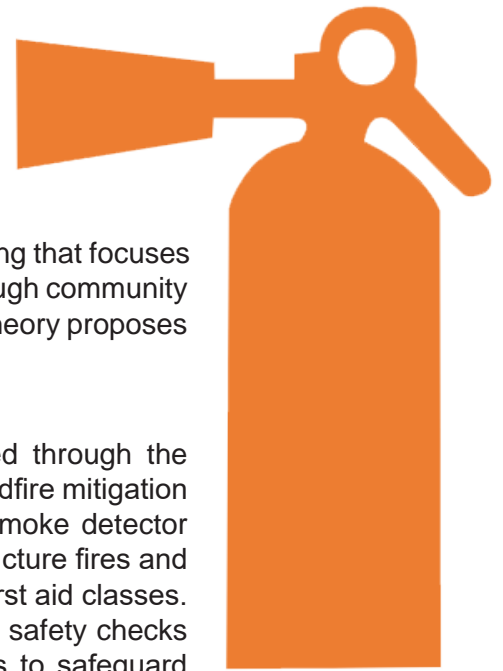
EMERGENCY SERVICES

Police Service

The Town provides 24/7 police protection for its residents with a staff of five full-time employees. According to the 2022 adopted budget, a major concentration of the Parachute Police Department is Community Policing. Community Policing, or community-oriented policing, is a strategy of policing that focuses on building ties and working closely with members of the community. Although community policing mostly targets low-level crime and disorder, the broken windows theory proposes that this can reduce more serious crimes.

Fire Protection

Fire protection and emergency medical transport services are provided through the Grand Valley Fire Protection District (“GVFPD”). GVFPD also works on wildfire mitigation projects, serves the community through arranging requested in-home smoke detector inspections, providing public education on reducing the occurrence of structure fires and fire deaths, conducting fire extinguisher training, and teaching CPR and first aid classes. One of the most impactful services provided by the GVFPD is residential safety checks for preventing fire and injuries by providing safety tips and suggestions to safeguard homes. The Town is covered by Station #2, where equipment and personnel are staged to provide immediate coverage. Of note, the GVFPD also has a five-acre piece of property located along County Road 215, on the north end of the Town that it will be developing as a training center in the future.



EDUCATION AND LIBRARY

As outlined in Chapter 1 - Community Assessment, four schools currently operate within the Town; the Grand Valley Center for Family Learning School that houses preschool through 1st grade, a 2-5 elementary school called Bea Underwood Elementary (BUE), Grand Valley Middle School, and Grand Valley High School.

The Town has access to one locally operated library, which opened its doors over 38 years ago. The Parachute branch is run by Garfield County and provides many services and resources to the Town’s residents. The library



offers amenities such as laptops that the public can check out for up to three weeks, virtual and in-person children storytimes, specific sections for young adults and children, and an interactive sensory activity area and community events for adults. There is also a designated room for community meetings. The library is a hub of information and activities for the community.



WATER AND WASTEWATER

The Town currently supplies water and wastewater service to residents and businesses. The Town's wastewater is treated at the Battlement Mesa Wastewater Treatment on the south bank of the Colorado River through an intergovernmental agreement between the Town and the Battlement Mesa Metropolitan District (BMMD). There is also a water system interconnect between the Town and BMMD to ensure adequate fire protection coverage, if needed. This interconnect is located to the north of N. Battlement Mesa Dr., east of the Colorado River. On May 19, 2016, the Town of Parachute Board of Trustees approved Ordinance 695. The Ordinance outlined the billing fees for water, wastewater, irrigation, and bulk water usage for the Town and became effective on July 1, 2016. The system services properties in Town limits, and for a higher cost, residents, and businesses outside the Town can obtain water, wastewater, and irrigation services. The prices of the services are based on the amount used.

The Town should consider reviewing water consumption and future water availability to ensure water supplies meet future demand for the Town and the surrounding community. Therefore, a recommendation has been added to the Objectives and Strategies section.

NON-POTABLE IRRIGATION WATER

The irrigation ditch is available to some residents where there is existing infrastructure. Water is supplied by Parachute Creek as it flows through the Town from the north to the Colorado River. Irrigation water is owned by the Town and utilized by the Parks and Recreation District. The ditch flows into the slough behind Cottonwood View Apartments and is used to water the ball fields. The Town has the first right of all the water that comes down Parachute Creek which flows into the Cornell ditch and feeds the irrigation ponds for the raw water irrigation system. 95% of the Town gets irrigation water from the ditch. Residents access the water from a tap at each lot. There is a plan to eventually provide the irrigation service to the remaining 5% of the Town, but there isn't a timeframe for including the additional service area.

BROADBAND

The high school is the fiber hub for the Town as it is connected to the high-speed fiber line within the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) I-70 right-of-way. Through a cooperative effort between the school district, Town, Garfield County, and other municipalities within the County, grant opportunities are being pursued to expand the broadband infrastructure and accessibility.

According to the ACS, in 2019, 76.5% of households had access to the Internet in the Town. Figure 15 [Households with Internet Access] The number is lower than the national average of 86.6%. As demand grows for telecommunication and broadband/high-speed Internet connectivity, additional infrastructure and capacity will be necessary. Lack of access to broadband services creates a digital divide in the community. Access to high-speed internet means being able to attend higher education classes virtually, to meet with a medical professional through telehealth appointments; and the Internet grants opportunities to interact with other community members through online engagement.

The year 2020 saw the rise of broadband users due to the pandemic and stay-at-home orders. Companies and government organizations continue to host meetings and operate in a virtual environment in the post-pandemic world. Broadband access creates diversity in the workforce, because people can choose where they live based on broadband access rather than the physical location of their workplace. Also, national supply chains and distribution networks require access to high-speed Internet to track and manage their networks. Parachute is located such that it is within travel times that are of interest to these industries. Increased broadband access, at a minimum, trunk lines, will increase the Town's competitive advantage to attract these desirable businesses.

Further discussion of broadband is included in Section 2.3 Future Needs.

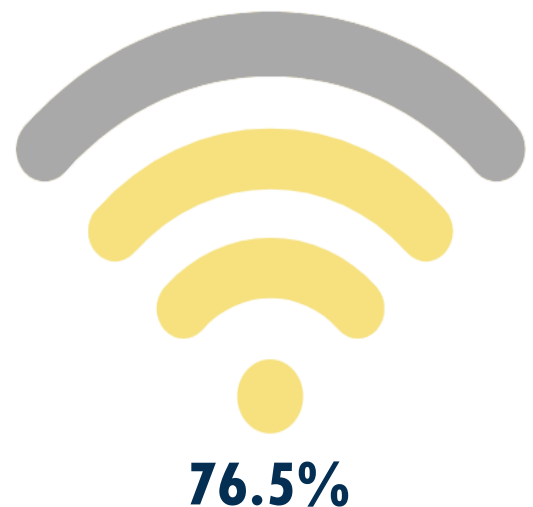


FIGURE 15: HOUSEHOLDS WITH INTERNET



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESILIENCY

The Town sits in a unique natural area, settled along the banks of the Colorado River, with extensive riparian areas impacting adjacent land uses while also creating a recreational amenity for community members and visitors. The large bluffs and mesas surrounding the Town yield oil and gas production, driving the local economy for decades. The BLM manages public lands under the jurisdiction of the BLM for oil and gas leases and active wells on these properties. With the Town’s proximity to I-70, accessibility to oil and gas leases, and the railroad running through the Town, the Town has become the location for many oil and gas industry businesses, from corporate offices to storage tanks and equipment yards to loading and unloading facilities.

While this location caters to the extraction and transportation of natural resources, the conflicts with the potential hazards these uses have on the community and the surrounding natural resources; specifically, the potential hazards on the Colorado River and the ecosystem surrounding this natural amenity cannot be ignored. Having a well-planned community leads to a well-prepared community. According to the 2017 Garfield County Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Town risks several natural and manmade hazards, including flooding, wildfire, winter storms, and hazardous materials spills. Due to the proximity of I-70, the rail line, and the oil and gas industry, the Town is inherently vulnerable to a hazardous material accident.

The Town’s proximity to the Colorado River could create flooding issues during the spring snowmelt. The water plant, CR 300 bridge, and Cottonwood View Apartments are areas of specific concern. If the Cottonwood View Apartments were to flood, it would affect one-third of the Town population.

The Town experiences a power outage in nearly every storm. The water plants are shut off during power outages, creating supply issues for residents. The lift stations and Town hall have emergency generators during the outages.

The 2017 Garfield County Hazard Mitigation Plan identified several projects to help curb the Town’s risk vulnerability and prepare itself. A number of these projects have been completed or are currently underway. Garfield County is in the process of updating the 2017 Garfield County Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2022.

New and Ongoing Actions:

Action and Description	Hazards Addressed	Goals	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding	Timeline	Priority	Lead Agency	Status
Relocate or Floodproof Critical Facilities: Relocate or floodproof critical facilities	Flooding	1,2	Varies by project	Parachute General Fund, CDOT	5+ Years	High	Public Works, Town Manager	This is a new action. Identified that water plant is in floodplain and in need of relocation or floodproofing. Cottonwood Park has had berm installed.
Purchase Equipment: Purchase snow plow to aid in snow removal	Winter Storms	1	Varies by Project	Parachute General Fund	2-5 Years	Medium	Utilities	This is a new action. Not yet started
Table Top Exercise: Conduct table top exercise for hazardous materials	Hazardous Materials	1,2,3,4,5	\$15,000	Parachute General Fund	2-4 Years	Medium	Town Manager, Garfield County Emergency Manager	This is a new action. Not yet started
Update Code: Update code to improve the structural integrity of fences	Severe Wind	1,5	Staff Time	Parachute General Fund	1 -2 Years	High	Town Manager	This is a new action. Not yet started
Stream Bank Stabilization: Implement stream bank stabilization projects as identified.	Flooding	1,2,4,5	Varies by Project	Parachute General Fund, FMA	5+ Years	Medium	Town Manager, Public Works	This is a new action. Not yet started
Road Improvements: Work with CDOT to improve state maintained routes through the county.	Hazardous Soils	1	Varies by Project	CDOT	Ongoing	High	Town Manager	This is a new action. Parachute regularly communicates with CDOT to identify areas of needed improvement.
Implement Infrastructure Master Plan: Implement the projects within the Infrastructure Master Plan.	Flooding, Wildfire, Drought	1,2,4,5	Varies by Project	Parachute General Fund, DOLA	5+ Years	Medium	Public Works, Town Manager	This is a new action. Parachute will implement projects from the master plan as funds are available.

TABLE 3: PARACHUTE ACTION ITEMS FROM 2017 GARFIELD COUNTY HMP



2.2 FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map (the “FLUM”) graphically depicts the Town’s preference for using its public and private lands within a given timeframe. For the 2040 Plan, the timeframe is approximately 18 years. In addition, the FLUM shows the Town’s shared vision demonstrating where future houses and businesses should be located, where open spaces should exist, and where recreational opportunities should expand.

The FLUM is not an exact prediction of future land use patterns, although it allocates land uses in the preferred locations. The FLUM estimates what the Town may look like if the population, housing, and employment forecasts prove accurate and if land policies implemented to reach the desired future are successful. The FLUM is not a required standard to meet, but rather a guide for land use decisions. The Planning Commission and Town Council should develop land use regulations achieving the desired future land use pattern delineated on the FLUM. The FLUM is not a zoning map. It is a guide for policymaking. The FLUM, once adopted as part of the 2040 Plan, can be used to gauge the performance of policymaking. If land uses are not changing as planned, the Planning Commission and Town Council must reconsider land policies or reassess planning objectives and strategies.

FUTURE PROJECTIONS

Population projections forecast a population increase for the Town, with 2040 seeing a projected population count of 2,871 people. With a 2020 population estimate of 1,363, the Town’s population is projected to more than double by 2040. based on these growth projections, providing a range of housing options from affordable to upper middle class as well as access to jobs for those future residents in a range of industries will be a key component in creating positive growth for the Town.

As a starting point, the Colorado State Demographer's Office population projections were utilized. They project that the Town will experience a steady increase in population growth through 2040 to a total population of roughly 1,900. Based on a number of factors, the Town anticipates growth to occur at a slightly greater rate. The State Demographer’s flat-line growth was amended to include market forces that will adjust the annual growth rate. DRS projects that there will be a steady 2.2% growth year over year through 2040 with the potential for two growth bursts through 2040. The first may occur around 2025 and the second in 2030. The exterior factors which are anticipated to create growth projections greater than the State Demographer’s projection are:

- Availability of affordable, larger parcels of land within Town limits;
- Increased housing needs for the regional workforce;
- Private investment in the development of land in Parachute; and
- A political and administrative environment that welcomes private investment and development.

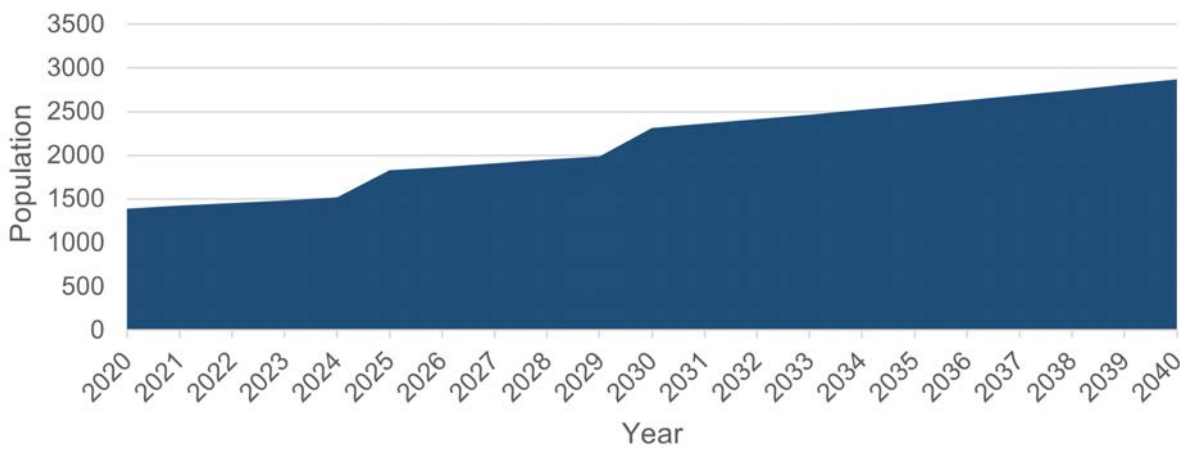


FIGURE 16: POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2020 - 2040



As outlined in Chapter 1 and per the ACS, the growth rate in the Town has fluctuated since 1990. The growth rate has ranged from -.2 percent in 2019 to 9.1 percent in 1995 in relation to the oil and gas boom. At the end of 2019, the estimated population of the Town was 1,350, an increase of 122 over the population in 2015. The growth rate for the Town between 2015 and 2019 was 2.4 percent compared to 1.3 percent for Garfield County and 1.3 percent for the State of Colorado.

The population of Garfield County is forecast to reach 61,724 by 2020 and 85,224 by 2040. Please be aware, future population forecasts are only provided for Colorado counties and are not broken down by individual municipalities. Overall, the growth rate for Garfield County is expected to increase between 2020 and 2040. Between 2010 and 2020 the forecast growth rate was 1.0 percent, between 2020 and 2030 the forecast growth rate is 1.5 percent, while the forecast growth rate between 2030 and 2040 is 1.7 percent. The change is due in part to the population aging and changes in the proportion of the population in childbearing ages.

HOUSING NEEDS

The housing needs of the future Town residents are discussed in Chapter 5 and in Table X. Based on the future housing needs, there is adequate land available through future development areas along the Cardinal Way corridor and future Town expansion to the west to meet the bulk of the anticipated growth. While limited land area is available given the level of development in Battlement Mesa and the abundance of public lands that surround the Town, a mix of uses that will allow the Town to meet future demand will need to be carefully monitored as development projects are proposed and reviewed.

TYPES OF HOUSES	Bed/Bath Mixture	Price Points	Average Rent	Square Footages
Single-Family	3 bed 2 bath	\$295,000 - \$335,000	\$1,395	1,750 - 3,000
Multi-Family	3 bed 1.5 bath	\$173,000 - 199,000	\$1,075	850 - 1,250
Apartments	2 bed 1 bath & 1 bed 1 bath	\$158,000 - \$171,000	\$750 - \$900	650 - 950
Senior Housing	2 bed 2 bath	\$225,000 - \$255,000	Unknown	1,350 - 1,500

TABLE 4: FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS

FUTURE COMMERCIAL NEEDS

There is limited information about the current amount of square footage for commercial space within the Town. For example, the types of commercial uses (i.e., restaurant, retail, service, office, etc.) existing in Town, the number of employees, and current vacancy rates. A strategy to address this in the future, a strategy in the 2040 Plan, is to complete a commercial assessment and asset report for the Town to have a baseline of information for future economic development efforts. This assessment and asset report would inventory existing commercial uses, categorize types of uses, and identify vacant buildings.

MARIJUANA INDUSTRY

The Town is home to six retail marijuana businesses which account for 30% to 40% of the Town's sales tax revenues. While the businesses have diversified the Town's economic base, the Town would like to see the marijuana industry grow from only recreational shops, manufacturing facilities, and cultivation operations to a strong industry cluster encompassing agricultural best practices, research and development, and manufacturing. The Town should evaluate the various uses within the marijuana industry, assess the impacts of each use, clearly identify where each use may be allowed in Town, and define any additional standards or performance measures needed to mitigate any adverse effects on adjacent properties or residents nearby.



LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS

The following land use designations are utilized to create a well planned and developed land use pattern for the future growth of the Town. These designations are intended to guide future development decisions, including land uses, densities, and zoning classifications.

R - RESIDENTIAL

The residential designation is intended to provide for a range of residential uses including single-family, duplex, triplex, and multi-family residential developments. Although limited commercial uses could be contemplated as conditional uses, it is anticipated that little commercial activity will be allowed within the residential designation. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) should be allowed in areas designated Residential.

Residential densities may range from 2-8 dwelling units per acre.

HDR - HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

The high density residential designation provides for a range of residential uses, including duplex, triplex, and multi-family residential developments. It is anticipated that commercial uses could be allowed in this designation as a conditional use provided they are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood characteristics.

Residential densities may range from 6 to 15 dwelling units per acre.

C - COMMERCIAL

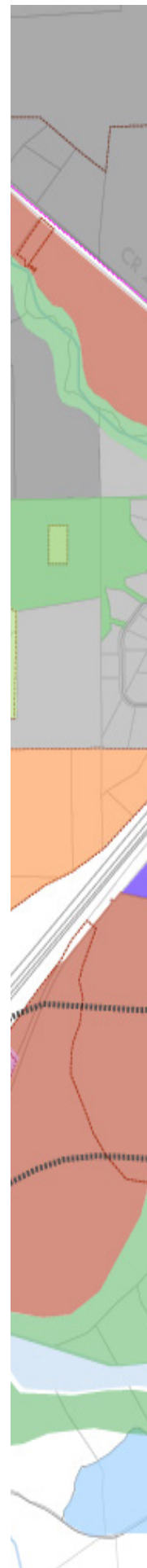
The commercial designation is intended to include retail, convenience stores, office space, hospitality, restaurants, and auto-oriented uses such as truck stops or rest areas. Areas designated as commercial land uses may also include light manufacturing with on-site sales provided the manufacturing activities are limited to the building and shall not produce any odor or dust which impacts adjacent properties. Lands classified as this designation should provide a range of services to residents and visitors. In turn, these are the areas to generate sales tax for the Town. Uses that do not contribute to the overall tax base should be limited in this designation. Higher density residential uses may also be allowed in the Commercial designation in order to provide buffers between districts and uses, where reasonable.

BP - BUSINESS PARK

The Business Park designation is intended to allow the same uses permitted within the Commercial category, along with the addition of light industrial uses such as light manufacturing, production, assembly, indoor farming, research and development, office parks, etc. Business Park uses should be located away from residential uses and any negative impacts of the light industrial uses should be mitigated through site design and buffering strategies.

I - INDUSTRIAL

The Industrial designation is intended to allow both light and heavy manufacturing, natural resource collection, storage, refining, and other similarly focused industries. The industrial designation may also be overlaid with an agricultural designation to allow current agricultural activities to continue within the designation. Other uses may include outdoor parking and storage of equipment. These uses should be located on larger parcels of land in locations with easy access for large trucks or in close proximity to the railroad line or spurs to be able to transport materials out of the area to be further processed or to receive goods and materials to be processed in the Grand Valley.



DC - DOWNTOWN CORE

The Downtown Core designation is intended to continue to be the historical anchor of the Town that creates a vibrant destination with a mix of uses throughout the district and on each parcel. The Downtown Core allows for residential housing, retail, and commercial uses in mixed-use buildings with historic development patterns. This designation is more broadly defined by the character and design of architecture than the actual uses allowed. Additional standards should guide the architectural design and character of the Downtown Core area.

Residential densities may range from 9 to 12 dwelling units per acre. Each parcel should be allowed at least one dwelling unit above ground-floor commercial uses.

CBD - CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Central Business District designation is intended to support a range of commercial uses that serve residents and visitors. Developments within these areas are more auto-oriented than those found in the Historic Downtown but should consider the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the area. Ultimately, the CBD is a mixed-use development pattern that allows for multi-family housing, office space, and commercial uses ranging from national chain stores, boutique shops, restaurants, and development. This area, too, should prioritize uses that contribute to the overall tax base, where appropriate.

Residential densities may range from 12 to 15 dwelling units per acre.

MU - MIXED-USE

The Mixed-Use designation is intended to allow a wide range of uses mixed within buildings and/or mixed-use developments. Areas designated as Mixed-Use should include commercial and retail uses on the ground floor with offices, lodging, and residential uses on upper floors. The building design and site orientation should strive to activate the areas surrounding and adjacent to the buildings. This designation also allows for community and civic uses such as municipal buildings, community centers, fire stations, schools, and other public uses needed to serve the community. The Mixed-Use designation is intended to allow flexibility in attracting developers that are interested in creating a product type that caters to individuals that want to live, work, and play within the same neighborhood. These areas should consider the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians as well as accessibility to the community trail system and transit routes.

MU-R - MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL

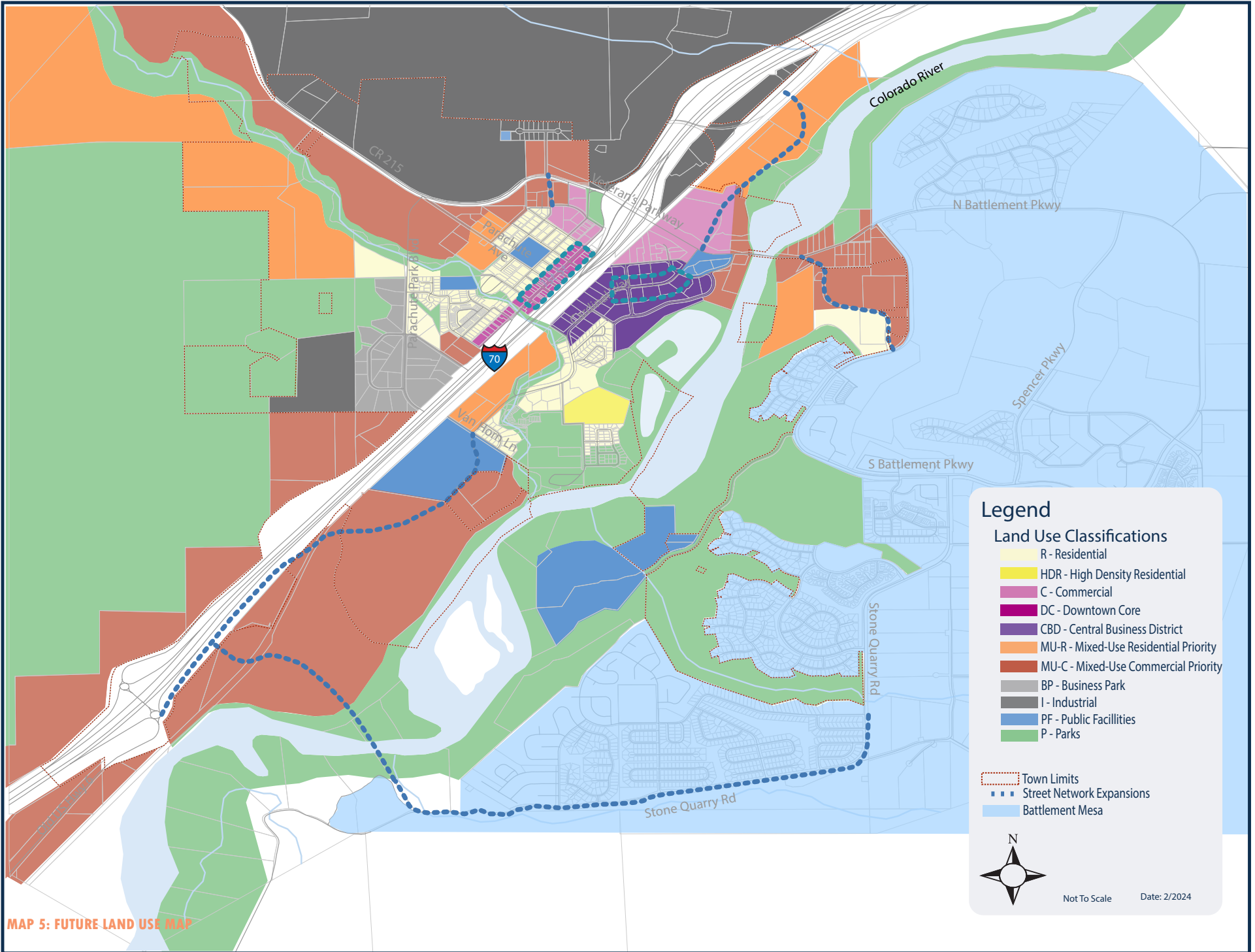
Areas classified as Mixed Use-Residential provide a mix of residential and commercial uses, however, a majority of the project, land area, floor area, or other metric provided should be residential uses while commercial, retail, and service businesses serving the local neighborhood needs can be provided on ground floors or stand-alone buildings. The mix of uses can be provided in one building or in multiple buildings in a campus setting.

MU-C - MIXED-USE COMMERCIAL

Areas classified as Mixed Use-Commercial provide a mix of commercial and residential uses, however, a majority of the project, land area, floor area, or other metric provided should be commercial uses tailored to meet the services, purchasing, or entertainment needs of visitors and residents.

Residential densities may range from 12 to 15 dwelling units per acre. Floor Area Ratios may be as high as 1:1 including residential and commercial areas.





Legend

Land Use Classifications

- R - Residential
- HDR - High Density Residential
- C - Commercial
- DC - Downtown Core
- CBD - Central Business District
- MU-R - Mixed-Use Residential Priority
- MU-C - Mixed-Use Commercial Priority
- BP - Business Park
- I - Industrial
- PF - Public Facilities
- P - Parks

Town Limits

Street Network Expansions

Battlement Mesa



N

Not To Scale Date: 2/2024

MAP 5: FUTURE LAND USE MAP

P - PARKS

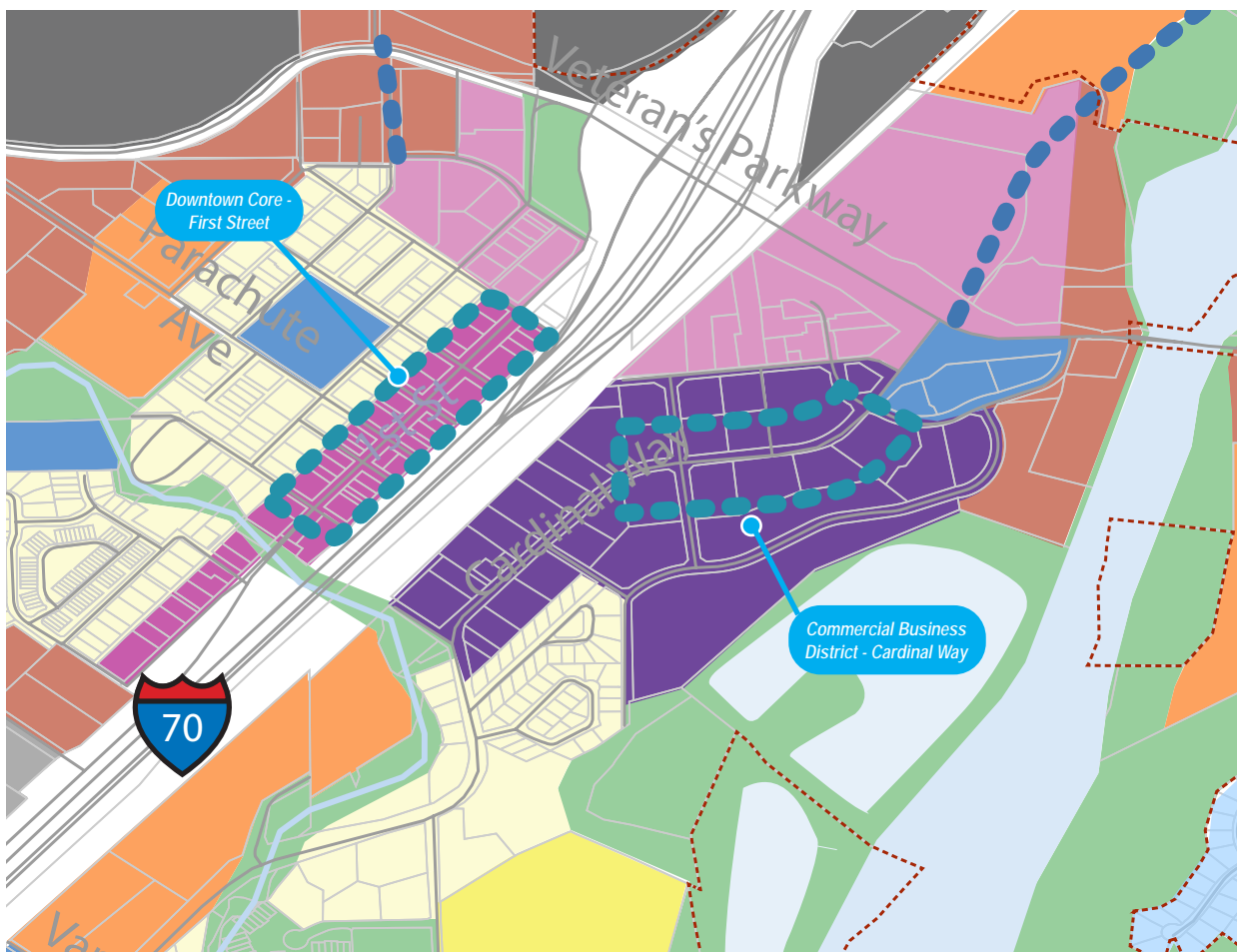
The Parks designation is intended to comprise public and potentially privately owned land that has open access for the purpose of creating opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the variety of outdoor activities that are possible within the community. Not all of the land currently designated as Parks is publicly owned, and a transition period is expected to allow current uses to conform to the proposed designation. A Parks designation may take many forms and include a range of amenities ranging from trail corridors to regional parks with programming to open space that preserves vistas, habitats, or other environmentally sensitive properties.

PF - PUBLIC FACILITY

The Public Facility designation is allowed in any zone district. This designation also allows for community and civic uses such as municipal buildings, community centers, fire stations, schools, and other public uses needed to serve the community.

COMMERCIAL CENTERS

The Town has two commercial centers. The first is the First Street Corridor within the Downtown Core Land Use Classification and the second is the Cardinal Way Corridor within the Central Business District Land use Classification. Map 5 below illustrates those two districts as insets to the Future Land Use Map that is presented in the previous page.



MAP 6: COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

2.3 FUTURE NEEDS

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

In conversations with the community, it became clear that having opportunities for basic, affordable businesses that provide necessary goods is critical to creating a livable Town.

ANTICIPATED NEEDS

Access to Broadband: For future growth to occur, the Town must be able to provide cost-effective services and infrastructure. One of the key elements in providing service is ensuring broadband is sufficient for residents since broadband. The Town should pursue any grant opportunities available to install trunk and service lines where service is currently unavailable or lacking.

Maintain a Diverse Housing Stock: Provide an adequate area for housing development for the future workforce as well as a changing and aging population. The Town will need to ensure a variety of housing types (i.e., duplex, triplex, multi-family, for sale, and for rent units) at a range of price points is maintained. As today's residents' age, younger generations will want a place to call home when they move out of their family homes and aging populations will desire turnkey homes with reduced maintenance. This diversity will allow today's residents to stay in Parachute and will meet the needs of tomorrow's new residents.

Adequate Space for Commercial Uses: The long-term vitality of the community will rely on the Town's tax base, a majority of which is derived from property taxes and sales tax. Ensuring that adequate areas are allocated to support sales tax-generating uses will be necessary as the community vision is built out. A key strategy of this plan is to ensure land uses do not change from tax generating designations to residential uses to a level that puts the local economy out of balance.

ECONOMICS

Land use distribution directly impacts economic development opportunities. Land is among the most valuable assets to the Town, not only for public infrastructure, but for taxing purposes. The value of land is a function of how the land is used and what is allowed to be built on it.

How uses are distributed and how easily accessible those uses and goods are to the residents and visitors to the Town plays a vital role in successful future economic development. Placing job centers near housing allows residents shorter commute times and a better quality of life.

However, land use regulations based on the vision the community wants can impact the location and cost of housing. To prevent housing costs from outpacing what the community can afford, an objective of this plan is to maintain and create attainable opportunities.

For more information on the economic opportunities for the Town, please see Chapter 5, Economic Vitality.

RESILIENCY

One of the objectives below is to develop a resiliency plan to identify where improvements are needed to create redundancy in land use, such as creating an emergency shelter if I-70 is closed for a snowstorm and visitors are stranded for the night or a few nights. Or in the event of a wildfire emergency, use the resiliency plan to address the impacts after the event. Land use planning that considers natural hazard risk is the single most crucial mitigation measure in minimizing the increase in future disaster losses in areas of new development. Planning requires balancing development with a range of community requirements and updating appropriate planning tools, such as the land use regulations. Land Use Regulation that considers resiliency can direct new development to suitable locations, avoiding or reducing the exposure to natural hazards and the impact of new development on the behavior of natural hazards. Mitigating the effects of natural disasters requires a collaborative approach across various sectors, and capabilities are necessary, including land use planners, built environment professionals and developers, natural hazard and emergency managers, and community members.



2.4 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Objective 2-1: Ensure water and sewer utilities are adequately sized and installed for future growth.

Strategy 2-1A: Complete an infrastructure capacity assessment and apply findings to any new development.

Strategy 2-1B: update existing Infrastructure Master Plan from 2015.

Objective 2-2: Provide reliable, efficient broadband service to all residents and businesses in Town.

Strategy 2-2A: Pursue grants and other funding opportunities to install trunk and service lines for broadband service.

Strategy 2-2B: Cultivate public and private partnerships to aid in the installation of broadband infrastructure and services, including, but not limited to Garfield County's efforts

Objective 2-3: Maintain and create attainable housing opportunities for all of the Town residents.

Strategy 2-3A: Complete a housing assessment study to understand current housing stock characteristics, community housing needs, and what affordable housing means in Parachute. The study may also include a program to track affordable housing inventory and future stock.

Strategy 2-3B: Update the Land Use Regulations to allow and incentivize the development of a mix of affordable housing types such as duplexes, multi-family, accessory dwelling units, and other housing opportunities.

Strategy 2-3C: Create a development incentive program through the Land Use Regulations to allow for density bonuses that include deed-restricted units for new or redeveloped residential and mixed-use development projects.

Strategy 2-3D: Develop a library of pre-approved design concepts to expedite the approval process for accessory dwelling units.

Strategy 2-3E: Create regulations to ensure short-term rentals do not negatively impact community character.

Strategy 2-3F: Create more opportunities for a range of housing types in each zone district to increase the socioeconomic diversity of neighborhoods.

Objective 2-4: Maintain and improve community aesthetics through the creation of standards to enhance the built environment and preserve valuable natural amenities.

Strategy 2-4A: Update the Parachute Design Guidelines to balance community aesthetics with development and redevelopment costs.

Strategy 2-4B: Develop a wayfinding program that will further define the Town's sense of place and incorporate the Town's history and future in its design. A wayfinding program provides various levels of signs to direct residents and visitors to community amenities such as parks, business districts, and attractions.

Strategy 2-4C: Update landscape standards to require the installation and maintenance of drought-tolerant, xeriscaping landscaping that is compatible with the local climate.

Strategy 2-4D: Provide adequate human and financial resources to ensure code enforcement efforts are able to uphold and enforce Land Use Regulation requirements.

Objective 2-5: Implement property rezoning and development projects that are consistent with the Future Land Use Map to ensure the housing, retail, service, and economic needs of the community are being met.

Strategy 2-5A: Ensure a balance in land use is provided to generate adequate revenue amounts to support Town services.

Strategy 2-5B: Complete a buildout analysis to have a comprehensive understanding of existing uses and potential capacity for development and redevelopment.

Strategy 2-5C: Create new zoning districts and update the use table within the Zoning Regulations to reflect the land use designations identified in this Ch. 1 and on the Future Land Use Map.

Objective 2-6: Develop a resiliency plan to identify where improvements are needed to create redundancy in land use.

Strategy 2-6A: Work with emergency service providers to enhance communication channels before an emergency.

Strategy 2-6B: Create a balance in land uses that allows for a diversity in jobs, services, industries, and housing, as well as providing parkland and open space.

Strategy 2-6C: Work with Garfield County to routinely assess potential hazards to the community and update Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP).

Objective 2-7: Balance growth with community preservation to maintain a sense of community.

Strategy 2-7A: Adopt new zoning regulations that balance growth with community preservation.

Strategy 2-7B: Define growth and density designations where the community desires mixed-use and commercial development.





CHAPTER 3: PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

Parks, trails, and open spaces improve our physical and psychological health, strengthen pride in our communities, and make the Town an attractive place to live and work. Overwhelming evidence demonstrates the social, community, environmental, individual, and economic benefits of parks, trails, and open spaces. Publicly-accessible parks, trails, and open spaces can serve as essential community development tools. They make communities more livable by offering recreational opportunities for everyone. This chapter identifies existing parks and open space amenities in and around the Town of Parachute. The chapter then identifies the future needs of park improvements and the development of new parks and trail connections to existing open spaces. Finally, this chapter lays out a network that will connect all residents and visitors of Parachute to easily access the parks, trails, and open spaces provided in and around the Town.



3.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

Located at the confluence of the Colorado River and Parachute Creek, the Town is home to popular recreation destinations. The Colorado River flows east to west along the south side of the Town limits. The Colorado River not only provides a beautiful natural amenity, but also drives recreation and outdoor uses for a wide range of activities such as hiking, fishing, floating, rafting, and other water-based activities. Public lands, under the management of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), and United State Forest Service (USFS), surround the Town and are accessible from different areas within the community. Because of this natural location, the Town is positioned for many year-round outdoor activities both locally and regionally.

Off-highway vehicles (OHV) have become a popular sport for residents of the valley. The Town’s unique location centered between many areas of publicly-owned land allows for the potential to expand OHV activities. The Town currently operates TOP adventures, which promotes recreation amenities within and close to the Town.

There are approximately 154.3 acres of parks, trails, and open space within the Town limits. The distribution of the parks, trails, and open space is visually depicted in Map 7. Per capita, there are 0.12 acres of locally accessible parks and open space per resident of Parachute. Given the Town’s size and rural character, this is a high amount of locally accessible recreational opportunities available for Town residents and visitors to enjoy the natural amenities of the area available within Town limits.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The Parachute/Battlement Mesa Parks and Recreation District and the Town provide parks and recreation services. The Town currently maintains four parks, which can be seen in Figure 12 [existing conditions map]. They include;

1. Beasley Park, which is a pocket park downtown with a gazebo,
2. Parachute Rest Area Park, which includes playgrounds, a dog park, and an ample lawn space to play,
3. Cottonwood Park, which is a 39-acre park including numerous amenities utilized for special events and community gatherings, and
4. Wasson-McKay Park which is a small park that has been recently developed into a pocket park with a walking trail.

In addition to District and Town managed parks, there are privately owned and maintained parks and recreation amenities. The Cottonwood Apartments, which is home to approximately 1/3 of the Town’s residents, offers their residents recreational amenities including basketball courts and volleyball courts.

Cottonwood Park, Beasley Park, Rest Area, and Wasson-McKay Park all accept reservations through the Town to use the facilities located in the parks. At Cottonwood Park, residents and visitors can rent a grill, pavilion, basketball court, and an open grass field. At Beasley Park, interested parties can rent a pavilion and the grounds. At Wasson-McKay Park, only the grounds can be rented at this time.

Residents also have access to the Grand Valley Recreation Center, which offers an array of indoor and community recreational activities including a swimming pool, fitness room and classes, indoor running track, community room, outdoor patio, and children’s playground.

An inventory of amenities and activities offered at each Town owned park was completed to create a baseline inventory and to guide future investments into each park. Table 5 identifies the amenities provided by each park and open space.



Amenity	Beasley Park	Cottonwood Apartments	Cottonwood Park	Parachute Ponds State Wildlife Area	Parachute Rest Area Park	Wasson-McKay Park
GENERAL INFORMATION						
Size	0.25 Ac	Unknown	39 Ac	23.13 Ac	2.45 Ac	1.5 Ac
Reservations Accepted						
Public						
Private						
AMENITIES						
Baseball / Softball Field						
Basketball Court						
Benches						
Bike Racks						
Boardwalk						
Boat Launch						
Dog Bag Station						
Dog Park						
Grills						
Horseshoe Pits						
Informational Kiosks						
Multipurpose Fields						
Parking Lot						
Pavilion / Gazebo						
Picnic Table						
Playground						
Restrooms						
River Access						
Rodeo Grounds						
Solar Panels						
Splash Park						
Trash Cans						
Visitor's Center						
Volleyball Court						
Walking Trails						
Fishing						

TABLE 5: PARK AMENITY INVENTORY



OPEN SPACE

There is vast publicly owned open space throughout the Grand Valley. Directly to the north and west is BLM land, however, much of this land is inaccessible due to the property's active oil and gas leases. Public lands also border Battlement Mesa to the south with access to trailheads and Forest Roads. Other open spaces within Town limits are within the Colorado River corridor. Colorado Parks and Wildlife owns approximately 30 acres of land adjacent to Cottonwood Park, providing direct river access through the Parachute Ponds State Wildlife Area. However, there are restrictions associated with using the property, such as float tubes being permitted for fishing only, and camping, fires, and swimming are prohibited activities.

Lastly, in August of 2020, 189.25 acres of open space was annexed into the Town under the ownership of Battlement Mesa Metro District. These parcels were dedicated as open space during the Garfield County PUD process and have dirt trails weaving throughout them. Deer can regularly be seen grazing through this open space, and the views of the Town and the Grand Valley from the upper side of the property are stunning.

TRAILS

Currently, no dedicated multi-use trails exist within the Town limits. As seen in the existing conditions map, Figure 13, the only trails used by bikers and pedestrians are in the Battlement Mesa neighborhoods.

The Town could consider developing a trail network collaborating with homeowners associations and district partners as part of their public works programs or local, state, or national grants. For example, the Lower Valley (LOVA) Regional Trail is within the Colorado River corridor connecting Glenwood Springs to Rifle. Linking to this regional trail amenity will open a wide range of recreational and economic opportunities for the Town residents and visitors. Therefore, the Town should identify possible trail alignments, affected properties, and property owners, and, as funding and opportunities become available, land should be acquired to make this regional connection.

In addition to pedestrians and bicyclists utilizing the Town trail network, there is also a desire for OHV trails. Unless an OHV is street legal, residents and visitors cannot operate these vehicles on any town, county, or state road within the Town limits. Additionally, the Town supports the OHV culture by offering OHVs for rent from T.O.P. Adventures. However, since there are no legal OHV routes in Town, non-street legal OHVs must be trailered to the trailhead.

3.2 FUTURE NEEDS

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

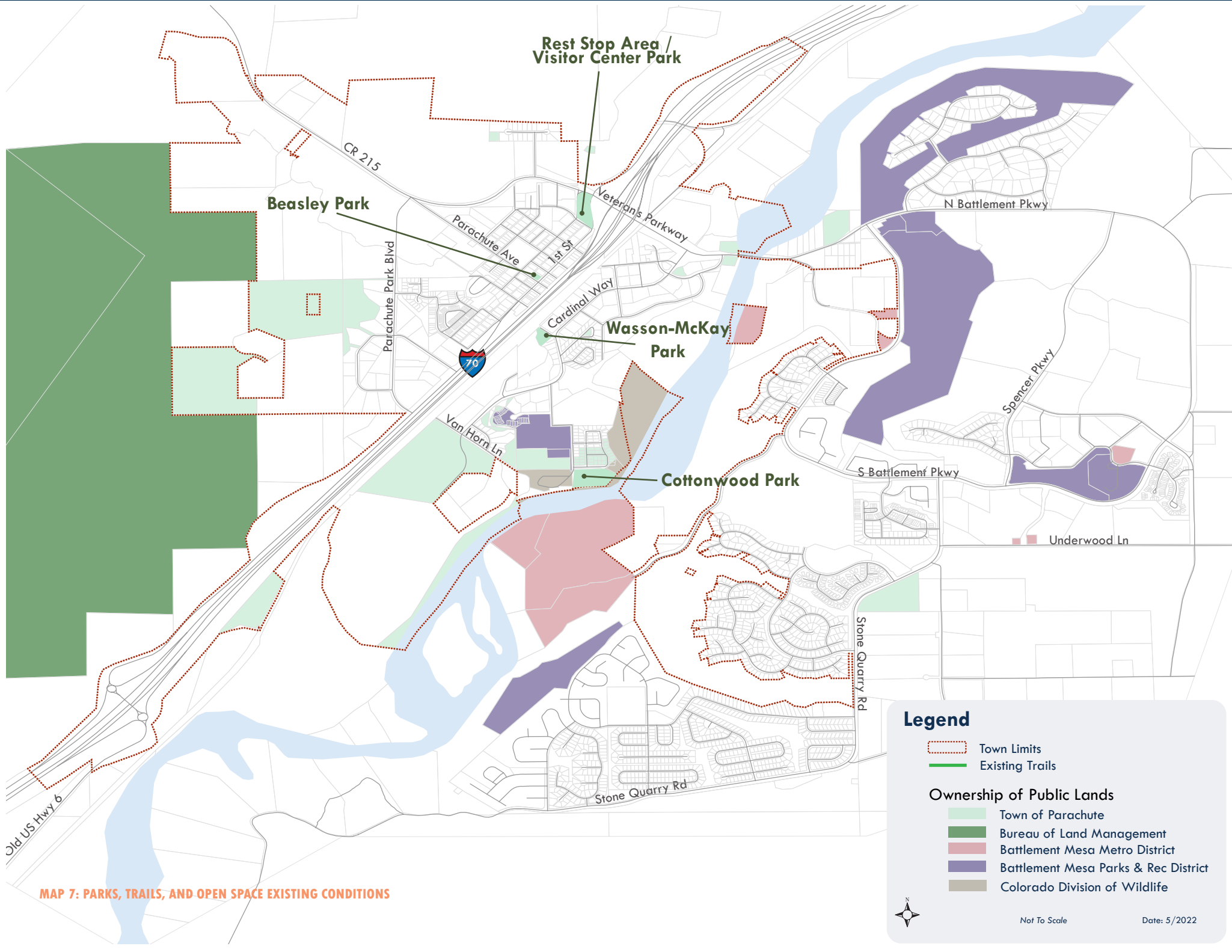
The current park and recreation amenities, coupled with other community event spaces such as Cottonwood Park and the community center, are highly valued by the community. When speaking with residents, it became apparent how important and valued public spaces are to residents - especially families - in the community. Having access to local parks, trails, and open spaces to enjoy was one of the highest priorities when speaking with community members. We also heard from residents that improving access to recreation opportunities such as hiking, ATV trails, pickleball, and river access is essential.

ANTICIPATED NEEDS

Dedicated multi-use trails for activities like biking and walking are an essential need at the moment. Lack of infrastructure within Town limits prohibits people from getting around without using their cars. But having access to a trail network that commuters, kids, and visitors could use would improve the quality of living for residents. Building off existing trails in Battlement Mesa will be a good start in creating a comprehensive network in Town. As shown in the future trails map, future connections should include on-street and off-street pathways and allow connections to parks, open spaces, and other community amenities such as Old Town, schools, and businesses.

Greater access to parks and recreation is often heard from the community and aligned with the Town's goals to develop connections to the river and trails. Given the Town's geographic location, there is ample opportunity to build off existing parks, connect to the Colorado River, and create new opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and the like. The future trails map identifies where the key areas of investment are to help build these connections between parks, open space, and community amenities.





**Rest Stop Area /
Visitor Center Park**

Beasley Park

**Wasson-McKay
Park**

Cottonwood Park

CR 215

Parachute Ave
1st St

Veterans Parkway
Cardinal Way

N Battlement Pkwy

Parachute Park Blvd



Van Horn Ln

S Battlement Pkwy

Spencer Pkwy

Underwood Ln

Stone Quarry Rd

Stone Quarry Rd

Old US Hwy 6

Legend

- Town Limits
- Existing Trails

Ownership of Public Lands

- Town of Parachute
- Bureau of Land Management
- Battleme Mesa Metro District
- Battleme Mesa Parks & Rec District
- Colorado Division of Wildlife

Not To Scale Date: 5/2022

MAP 7: PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE EXISTING CONDITIONS

Parks and recreation are vital to the Town's and region's economy and the health of residents. As the Town grows, parks and recreational assets should continue to improve and expand upon. This will be critical in attracting tourism revenue and building a more robust economy. Land must be acquired early to limit the Town's premium as Parachute develops and land becomes more desirable. Creating a master plan for parks and recreation will help the town reach ample land for its vision. As funds become available, the Town should receive the ground and make appropriate improvements to meet the recreation needs of residents and visitors. Parks and recreation should be appropriately placed throughout the Parachute. Every resident has a park within walking distance of their home or place of work, generally defined as 0.5 miles. During the public input process, residents and officials noted that they desired recreation activities oriented to the Colorado River. The Town can leverage its recreational assets to generate recreational tourism through proper marketing and business development, drawing in tourists throughout the region. Making public investments in parks and recreation will not only improve the quality of life for residents but also improve the economic vitality of the Town.

Specific to Parachute, a "park once" concept should be encouraged. The Town receives a high number of visitors who travel through town in order to access the extensive public lands surrounding Parachute. A "park once" concept would provide facilities and legal connections between town services (e.g., lodging, restaurants, etc) and surrounding trail heads so visitors can park their campers, trailers, or vehicles when they arrive in Town and travel throughout town and access the surrounding trails without having to tow their UTVs, ATVs, dirtbikes, or other off-highway vehicles before and after enjoying the trails. To better evaluate the specific trail connections, alignments, and implementation strategies specific to trails, a Trails Plan will be developed separate from this Comprehensive plan update and its elements.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

A level of service for parks and open space should be established by the Town and incorporated into the land use regulations to implement and reach the desired standards as development applications are reviewed, and the community grows. These standards should include the number of park spaces for levels of population and the approximate size of each.

Pocket Park

Pocket parks serve a neighborhood where larger parks are unavailable. These parks are generally less than two (2) acres in area. They would include simple amenities as allowed by the park's size, such as picnic tables, benches, shelters, playgrounds, basketball courts, open fields, plazas, and other elements that create an inviting space for the public to enjoy.

Pocket parks should be a requirement with any future development to serve the future residents of each development. The specific amenities included should be determined at the time the development application is reviewed.

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood parks should be within ½ mile walking distance of the population served and should provide two (2) acres per 1,000 residents. These parks should generally be between 2 and 7 acres in size.

Based on future population projections, the total acreage of Neighborhood Parks should be approximately five acres. $(2,391 / 1,000 = 2.391 \times 2ac = 4.78ac)$

Community Park

Community parks should be a maximum of three (3) miles apart, serving an area of approximately 1.5 miles surrounding the park, and should provide six (6) acres of developed parkland per 1,000 residents. These parks should be greater than ten (10) acres in size.

Based on future population projections, the total acreage of Community Parks should be approximately five (5) acres. $(2,391 / 1,000 = 2.391 \times 6ac = 14.35ac)$. Cottonwood Park is a community park and is approximately 39 acres in area. This park is adequate to meet the current and future needs of the Town's community park needs.



TRAILS NEEDS

Per the future trails plan, future development projects should be responsible for dedicating and improving community connections at a level commensurate with the proposed development. To guide these exactions, a variety of trail classifications and design parameters. The future trails map indicates the proposed trail classification. The trail classifications that are further defined and discussed in this plan are:



Dirt Trail

Dirt trails are footpaths that allow users to access areas where more extensive facilities cannot or should not be installed due to physical and/or natural constraints. Dirt trails are generally single-track paths in natural settings. These trails may be designed and constructed or maybe formalized social trails, which become more apparent the more they are used. Furthermore, dirt trails may be used as a temporary connection where future development is planned but not yet designed or funded.

These trails are generally 1' - 3' wide with a wider clearing. For alignments where a dirt trail is the designated trail type, a minimum of an eight feet (8') trail easement or strip of land should be obtained to allow adequate development and maintenance of the dirt trail. No easement or land dedication is needed when a dirt trail is on public property. However, the entire easement or property should be obtained for future trail classification for alignments where a dirt trail is being used as the interim connection.

On-Street Bike Lane

A priority for the Town is to connect all residents and visitors to amenities, businesses, and other attractions within the community through a variety of means such as vehicles, walking, OHV, and bicycles. Because the Town cannot make all trail connections as multi-use paths, on-street facilities will be needed to make certain connections. Bike lanes within all roadway classification types will be necessary to make those connections.

A bike lane is a designated and exclusive space for bicyclists to use in a low-stress environment on a roadway. This facility type is best suited for low-speed streets that reach maximum speeds of 25 miles per hour. This concept is achieved by using pavement markings and signage to delineate the travel way visually. Conventional bike lanes run adjacent to vehicular travel next to the curb, ribbon edge, sidewalk, or parking lane and flow in the same direction as traffic.

However, bike lanes may be buffered with bollards or run in the opposite direction of traffic, known as a "Contra-lane," allowing users to see the traffic in front of them. Both buffered and contra lanes are safety enhancements allowed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

According to AASHTO, the desirable bike lane width adjacent to a curb-face is six (6') feet, with a minimum



width of three (3') feet. In addition, a physical barrier such as a guard rail exists; an additional two (2') feet should be added to these minimums.

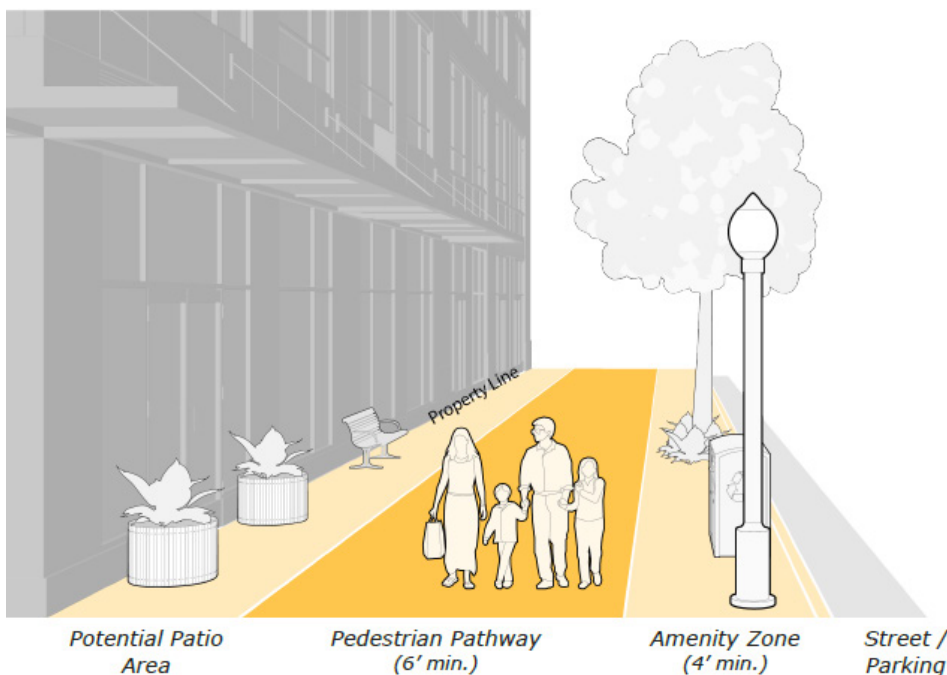
Per the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), bike lanes must be visually delineated from vehicular traffic by using cues such as bike lane words, symbols, and or arrow markings. In addition, these visual cues must be painted outside of the vehicular path at intersections, driveways, and merging areas to minimize wear from traffic tread. Lastly, a solid white 6- to 8-inch line must bind the lane.



Sidewalk

A well-maintained and contiguous sidewalk system are vital for transportation and recreational users. In addition, sidewalks serve as the primary pedestrian facility for movement and expand community engagement and health. Lastly, sidewalks activate public spaces and economic corridors, connecting people and local commerce.

According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), sidewalks have the desired minimum through the zone of six (6') feet and an absolute minimum through the zone of five (5') feet. In areas where a sidewalk abuts travel lanes, the AASHTO desired minimum width is eight (8') feet that help buffer pedestrians from vehicular traffic, and allows proper utilities and street furniture.





Multi-Use Path

Multi-Use Paths are the optimal facility type to be used, as they are the most accessible option within a network. However, they are also the most expensive to design and construct and could take years to develop. This facility type provides a fully separated connection from roadways and generally within a natural setting.

All multi-use paths are to be designed to be ADA compliant and should be at least eight (8') feet in width with a two-foot (2') soft surface trail beside the concrete or asphalt path. For regional trails, such as the Lower Valley Trail, the trail width should be a minimum of ten (10') feet in width. Depending on the adjacent topography, the minimum easement or tract should extend a minimum of two (2') feet beyond the edge of the path and/or soft surface trail. If additional grading is needed to tie the trail into existing grades or other construction-related constraints, additional easement or trail width will be required.

While the multi-use paths should not allow motorized vehicles, where there is adequate space, a minimum of a five (5') foot crusher fines shoulder may be added to create alignment for OHVs.

Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV)

There is a desire to develop a “Park Once” concept where visitors can park their camper and/or trailer once when they arrive in Town and travel, legally and safely, throughout Town to access services, restaurants, and trailheads during their visit. This concept is reliant on identifying connections, developing adequate infrastructure, and enforcing the use of the Town’s trail connections. This network will include both on and off-street OHV lanes.

On-Street OHV

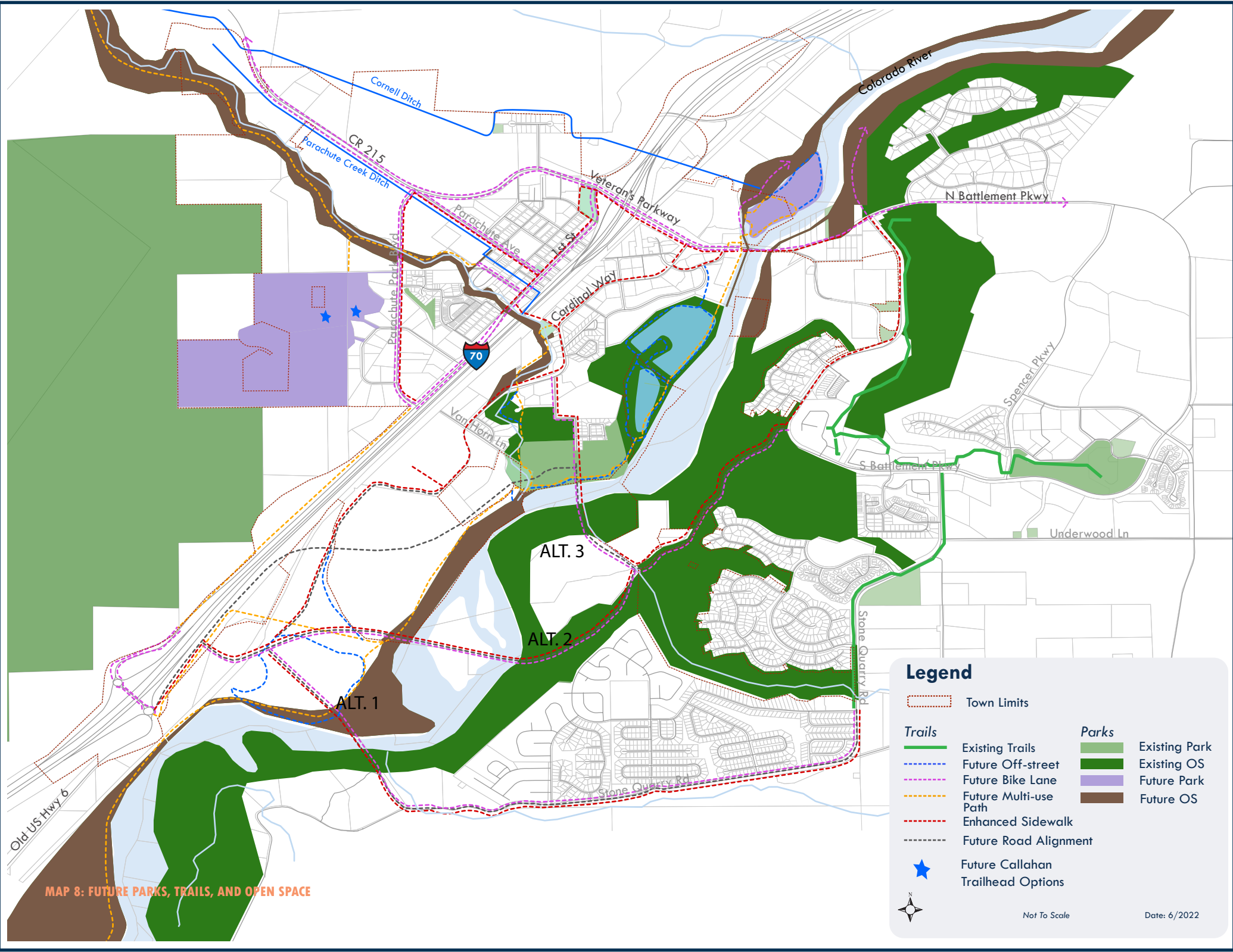
Colorado State Law allows for the operation of OHVs with a valid Colorado OHV registration and permit, by operators 10 years and older with direct supervision of a licensed driver or by operators 16 years and older. With this allowance, the Town can designate OHV routes with signs and provide OHV route maps to the public through community outreach or through TOP Adventures.

Off-Street OHV

OHVs are anticipated to be a prevalent mode of transportation throughout Parachute. While the prominence will only increase once a network is implemented, the future trails plan identifies potential opportunities to supplement OHV on-street system with an off-street system. There should be separated paths for each travel direction for heavily used corridors, or trails should be one-way. Because most of Parachute is built out, identifying corridors where two-way travel can fit may be challenging to find.

Off-street OHV paths should be a minimum of five feet in width and be constructed of an adequate base material and topped with 2” - 3” of road base. A separation between the off-street OHV paths should be provided where there is two-way travel.





MAP 8: FUTURE PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

Legend

- Town Limits
- Trails**
- Existing Trails
- Future Off-street
- Future Bike Lane
- Future Multi-use Path
- Enhanced Sidewalk
- Future Road Alignment
- ★ Future Callahan Trailhead Options
- Parks**
- Existing Park
- Existing OS
- Future Park
- Future OS



Not To Scale

Date: 6/2022

PARACHUTE ISLAND PARK

Parachute Island Park will give residents and visitors the opportunity to access the Colorado River close to town. While all infrastructure should be designed to be flood resistant, several amenities could be placed on the island. The concept shown, provides a large picnic area, natural playground, a nine-hole disc golf course, a greenway, and ADA accessible fishing piers.

The Picnic and Playground Area

This area will provide a place for users to enjoy the river and allow children to play in a location that is a short walk/ride from the parking lot. The concept also calls for a larger pavilion as this location would be ideal for community gatherings and private events.

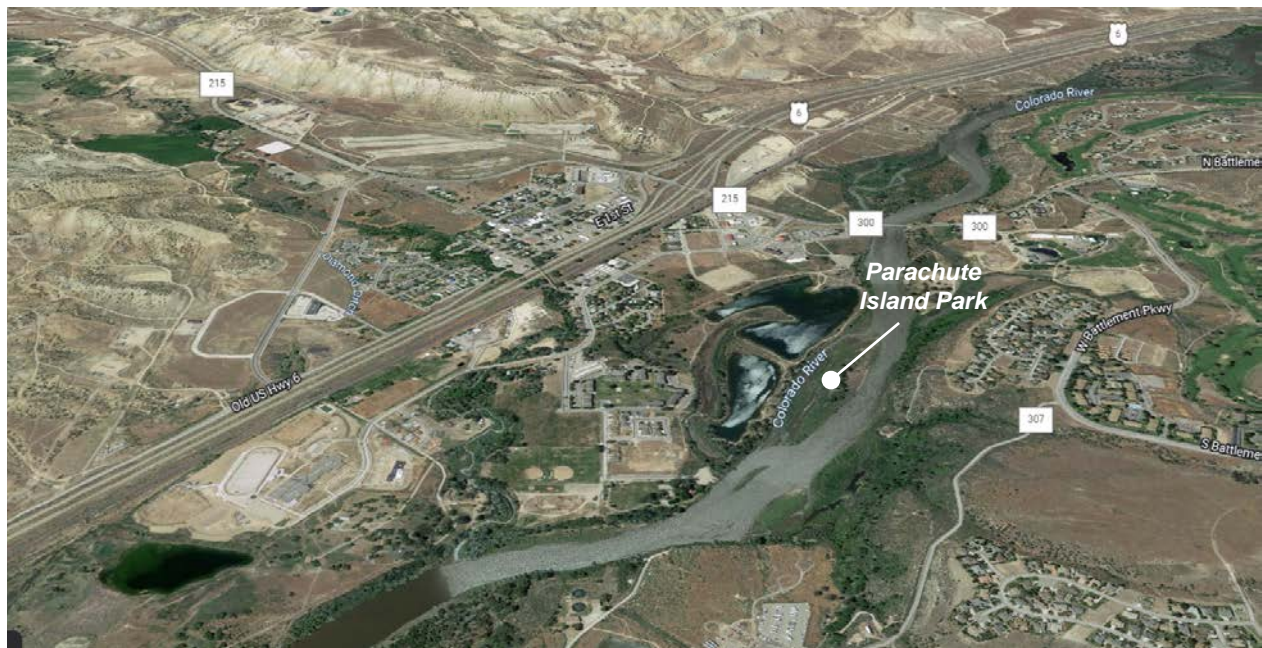
Disc Golf Course

While it would be ideal to have an 18 hole disc golf course, due to site size and topographic constraints, a 9 hole course will offer a better experience. While more holes could be added, in order to do so fairway lengths would have to be shortened. The concept configuration also keeps players further removed from the trail so potential user conflicts can be avoided.

Fishing Piers

While there have been several designs for Parachute Island Park, one common feature that is always proposed is fishing piers. The concept provided keeps with this thought by providing several ADA accessible piers along the Colorado River.

VICINITY MAP



MAP 9: PARACHUTE ISLAND PARK VICINITY MAP



CONCEPT MAPS

The following renderings and maps are conceptual and should be used for illustrative reasons only. Additional community engagement, planning, and design work is needed to refine these concepts of the amenities that could be conceived at Parachute Island Park.



FIGURE 17: PAVILION WITH PICNIC TABLES



FIGURE 18: DISC GOLF COURSE



COTTONWOOD PARK CONCEPT PLAN

Cottonwood Park is the largest and most developed park in the Town’s network. So far, the Town has made many improvements and added several amenities. Currently the area is used for a range of uses from summer concerts to playing fields. Recently a splash pad and playground were added, and the Town has plans to make improvements to develop soccer fields in the near future. As the historic use of Cottonwood Park has been a multi-use facility, the concept shown further builds on this characteristic, but adds passive areas as well. Primarily, the concept seeks to help activate the unused spaces around La Plata Circle and turn the corridor into a place where park visitors can find community in a semi-natural setting.

Food Truck Corral

As food truck dining becomes more popular, Cottonwood Park provides a great location to allow a corral in an area that is removed from the traditional restaurants in town. By providing a place for food trucks to congregate, the Town has more control over the use, while providing a community asset where users can enjoy eating outdoors. The picnic area will also allow users a place to rest and take cover from the sun, while enjoying the other amenities throughout the park.

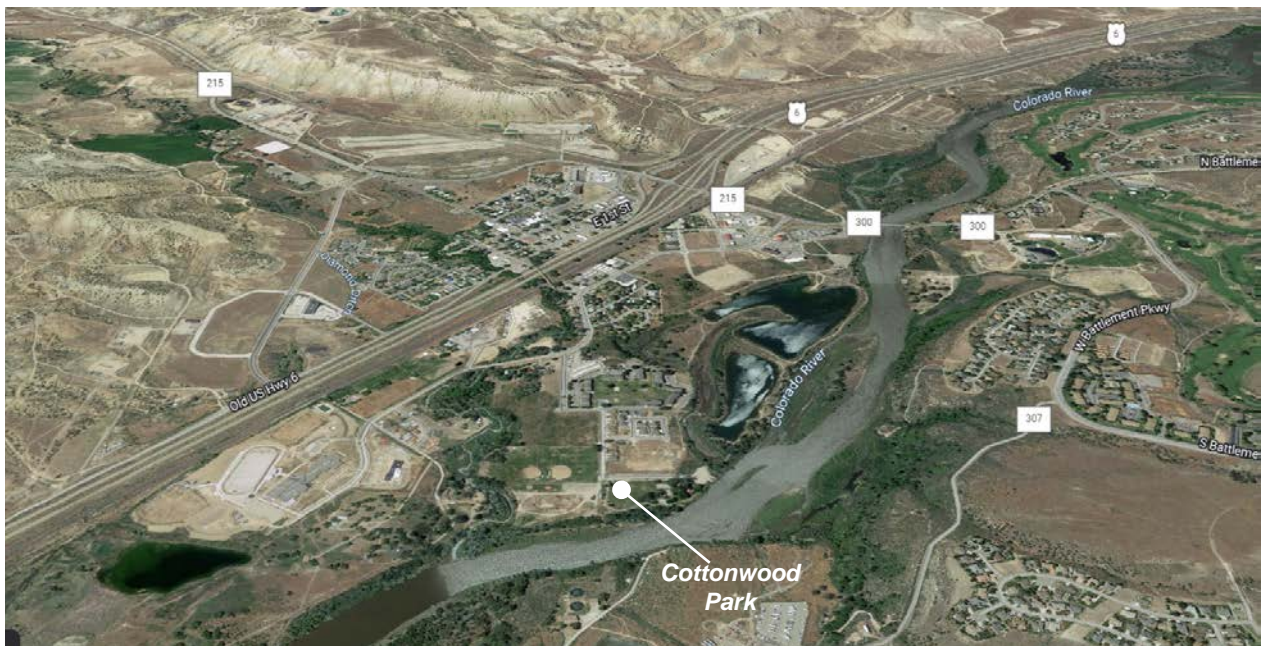
Community/Sensory Garden

To further align the use with the community, one passive amenity that could be provided is a community garden area. If well planned, community gardens can serve a range of purposes from education to park aesthetics. Community gardens will give residents a space to engage each other and take ownership of their community’s public space.

Amphitheater

The Town currently holds many large events on the multi use field to the north of the Cottonwood Park parking lot. Many of these events include renting a portable stage and installing it at the east end of the multi use field for these events. Given the use of the area, a permanent stage which is wired for sound and power can be pursued in Cottonwood Park.

VICINITY MAP



MAP 10: COTTONWOOD PARK VICINITY MAP





FIGURE 19: COTTONWOOD PARK CONCEPTS





ECONOMICS

The economic impacts of parks, trails, and open space are direct and indirect. For example, the direct effects reflect the spending by Parachute/Battlement Mesa Park and Recreation District for operations or capital programs, including wages and benefits for agency employees, investment in equipment, utilities, goods, and services for the community.

Indirect effects capture the spending associated with Parachute/Battlement Mesa Park and Recreation District's vendors. An example is a current project of installing new carpeting at the Grand Valley Recreation Center. The carpet company hires employees to complete the job who might spend money in the Town for local goods and services before heading home.

According to the University of Washington, living near a park boosts property values less than half a mile away. Therefore, homeowners can see an increased value anywhere between 8% to 20% for their homes near a park or open space. Other factors affecting property values include usage rate, meaning that property values decrease with more park users. In addition, when the parks include athletic fields and games, property values are lower up to 500 feet away, and care and upkeep, meaning lower maintenance equals lower property values. For instance, the values of properties close to heavily used or unkept parks are typically lower than similar properties farther away.

For more information on the economic opportunities for the Town, please see Chapter 5, Economic Vitality.

RESILIENCY

Parks, recreation, and open space are essential features of a resilient community. The Parachute/Battlement Mesa Park and Recreation District positively impact the community by providing diverse amenities and programming spanning from no or low-cost fitness opportunities, such as walking along a trail or taking an affordable fitness class. The preservation of open space in the Town provides cleaner air and water and a visual break from the built environment. Also, preserving wetlands and other riparian corridors that historically flood with the ups and downs of the Colorado River flows reduces the risk of flooding on properties close to the river corridor.



3.3 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Objective 3-1: Create a network of trails connecting parks, neighborhoods, and the Colorado River.

Strategy 3-1A: Enhance accessibility to the Colorado River through the extension of Lower Valley (LoVa) Trail connecting Parachute Island Park to Cottonwood Park.

Strategy 3-1B: Develop a multi-use trail system along Parachute Creek connecting Callahan Trailhead and the CR215 northern corridor to the Colorado River.

Strategy 3-1C: Identify partnerships and actively support connecting the river corridor trail within Parachute to the LoVa Trail system to the east.

Strategy 3-1D: Create standards that encourage development that engages regional trail and river corridor frontages.

Strategy 3-1E: Partner with private outfitters and guide businesses to increase the use of the Town's boat launch and river access.

Strategy 3-1F: Create a community area combining recreational amenities, regional events (e.g., Grand Valley Days, rodeo, sports tournaments), micro commerce (e.g., food trucks, merchandise vendors, farmers markets, etc.) services adjacent to Cottonwood Park.

Strategy 3-1G: Foster partnerships with landowners and lessees to connect Town trailhead and trail facilities to adjacent public lands.

Objective 3-2: Enhance parks and recreation facilities to meet desired community level of service.

Strategy 3-2A: Update land development regulations to implement community park levels of service identified in this Chapter to improve the Town's parks and recreational assets.

Strategy 3-2B: Create a funding mechanism to maintain and expand park facilities in a safe and accessible manner.

Strategy 3-2C: Pursue grant funding to replace playground and park facilities.

Strategy 3-2D: Invest in kid-friendly and accessible public spaces and amenities.

Strategy 3-2E: Develop revenue stream from new development such as an impact fee or fee-in-lieu, to allow the Town to develop pocket parks throughout Town in areas where access to town parks is difficult or inaccessible.



Objective 3-3: Identify prime open space areas and pursue their acquisition and preservation.

Strategy 3-3A: Create an open space acquisition plan based on community-identified values and needs.

Strategy 3-3B: Identify a funding source to implement and maintain trail signage and Callahan Trailhead.

Objective 3-4: Develop a trails management plan to ensure proper design, construction, and maintenance of the trails throughout the Town.

Strategy 3-4A: Identify the maintenance requirements of each trail classification and determine the amount of town staff needed to keep up the desired level of service on trail maintenance.

Strategy 3-4B: Develop construction standards that include best management practices, erosion control, drainage and erosion control measures, and trail design tactics.

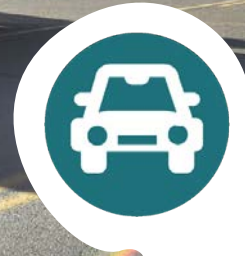
Objective 3-5: Partner with regional stakeholders and jurisdictions to leverage and maximize existing parks, trails, and public land assets in the community.

Strategy 3-5A: Partner with the BLM to develop management plans, allow public access, and create new recreational opportunities on the public lands surrounding Mt. Callahan.

Strategy 3-5B: Partner with the Parachute Battlement Mesa Parks and Recreation District and BMSA to connect and develop a network of trails that encompasses the broader region, including Battlement Mesa.

Strategy 3-5C: Leverage relationships with oil and gas leaders to negotiate access to public lands that are leased for oil and gas production.





CHAPTER 4: TRANSPORTATION

Transportation systems significantly impact the development of a community in the Town, inclusive of public transit, non-motorized infrastructure, and shared roadways. Transportation systems can bring together a community through well-planned options. Each transportation system component has different needs and its own infrastructure and operations, making it critical to understand each element through data analysis. In the future, the goal is for each component to be well connected and work to support each other. A transportation system should include complete streets, where appropriate, to accommodate a range of transportation options such as walking, bicycling, public transit, and cars. Different transportation options provide reliable and timely access to jobs, community services, housing, and schools while helping create safe streets and expand business access to different markets. This Chapter sets forth existing transportation conditions, including commuting habits, public transit options in the Town, future transportation needs while utilizing different transportation options and designs.



4.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Bisecting the Town is I-70, a central interstate corridor connecting the east and west coasts of the US. There is an interchange with County Roads 215 and 300 providing direct and convenient access to regional, statewide, and nationwide travel and distribution opportunities.

The transportation network within the Town ranges from older facilities in disrepair to systems installed within the last few years. Other than County Road 215/300 and 1st Street (US HWY 6), there are no regionally significant corridors running through Town. Therefore, most of the traffic on the Town’s road network is local. However, due to the extensive oil and gas production in the surrounding area, the regional corridors see significant heavy truck traffic.

There are a variety of roadway cross-sections currently in use throughout the Town because the Town does not have standard cross-sections or roadway classification specifications memorialized in the Town’s Land Use Regulations or the Public Works Manual. Therefore, roadway design was completed on a development-by-development basis. In 2019, the Town adopted Design Guidelines, which have been adopted as Appendix 6 of Title 15, Land Use Regulations. The document identified architectural design guidelines, site layout, and streetscape designs directly related to adjacent land uses and street functions such as bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists. For example, streets that should be focused on pedestrian connections and activities prioritize those functions in the design. The streetscape design section of the Design Guidelines forms the basis for the recommendations and roadway classifications recommended in this Chapter.

COMMUTING HABITS

Commuting habits reflect how well infrastructure and land-use patterns support different types of travel to work, recreation, and obtaining necessary goods and services.

According to the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS), using averages, employees in the Town have a commute time of approximately 30.5 minutes. The typical United States worker's commute time is about 25.5 minutes. Additionally, 7.08% of the workforce in the Town have "super commutes" of over 90 minutes. The commuting time data shows what the residents have anecdotally shared: goods, services, and jobs are not readily available in the Town. As a result, they drive long distances to get basic needs met. The long commuting times also impact the overall health of residents.

Type of Commute	# Of People
Employed in Parachute, but live elsewhere	755
Employed elsewhere but live in Parachute	491
Employed in Parachute and live in Parachute	62

TABLE 6: TYPE OF COMMUTE

The Sycamore Institute study conducted in 2017 for Tennessee showed people traveling 15 miles or more are associated with increased odds of obesity and decreased odds of being physically active. A person's odds of being obese increase by 6% when they are in a car for 60 minutes per day. However, each mile walked per day decreases the odds of obesity by 7.7%.

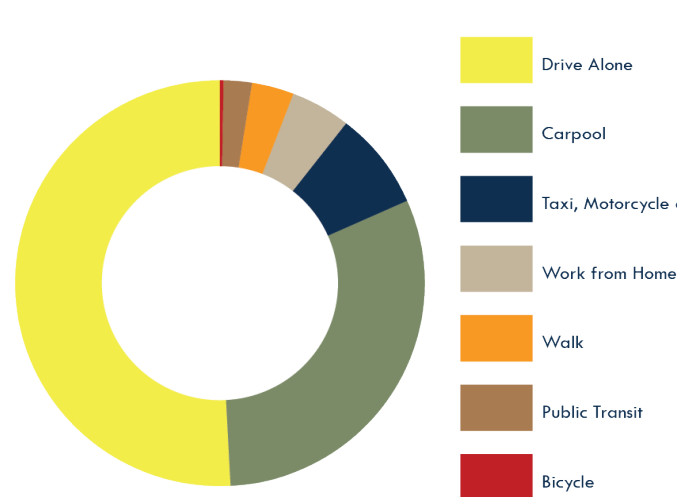


FIGURE 20: COMMUTE BY MODE

Long commute or "super commute" times such as above 90 minutes can significantly stress the human mind and body and strain family relationships. Several studies show that long-distance commuters suffer from mental and physical disorders at much higher rates than people with short trips to work.

The types of transportation used impact commuting patterns. According to the ACS, in 2019, 80.9% of workers in Town drove alone to work, followed by those who carpooled to work (11.2%) and those who walked to work (3.96%). The same data indicate that only five (5) households used public transportation in 2019. Transit services started in the Town in 2020, so these numbers could go up with future Census data. One (1) household rode a motorcycle, and one (1) household took a taxi to



work. No households rode a bike to work in 2019.

According to the US Census Bureau data, approximately 251 people commute into the Town for work from Battlement Mesa, the next highest commuting population of approximately 63 people commuting on a daily basis are from Grand Junction. Approximately 39 people commute for jobs from Rifle and approximately 30 people commute from unincorporated west Garfield County.

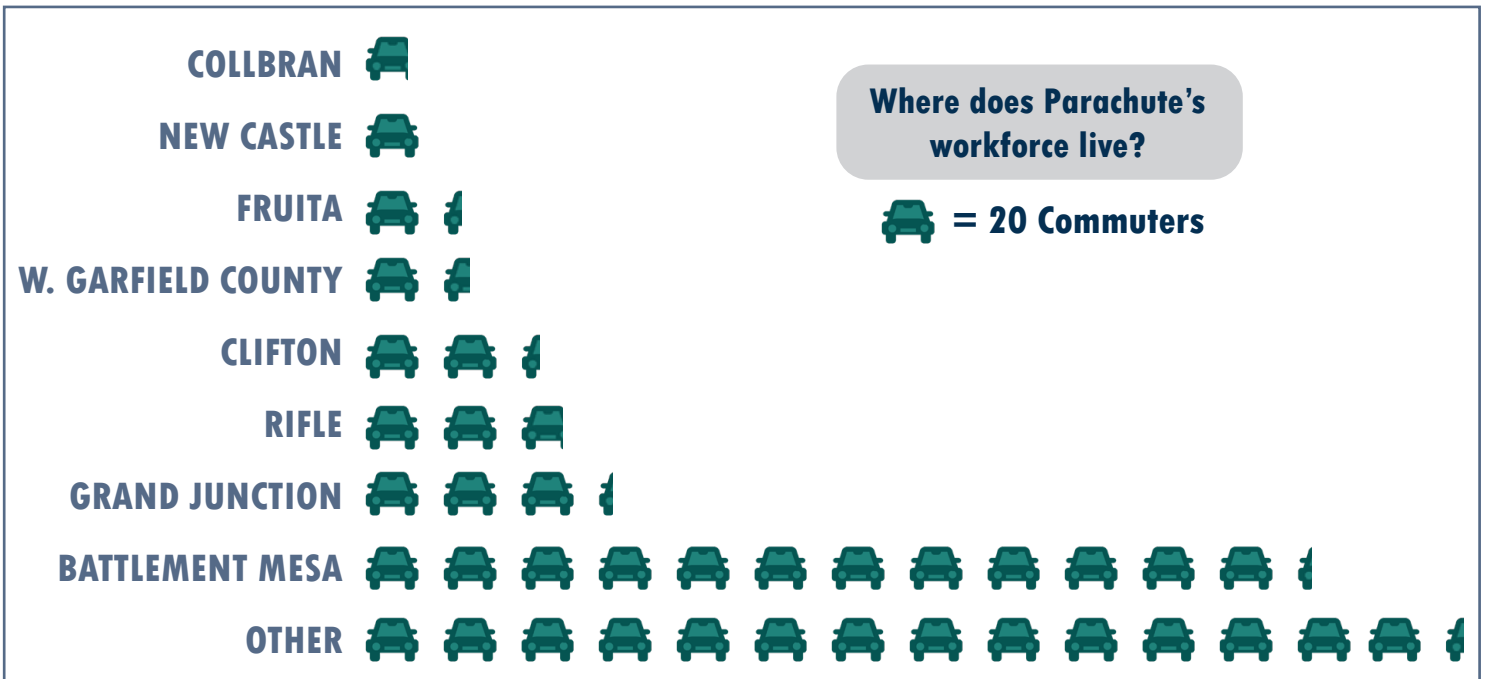


FIGURE 21: WHERE PARACHUTE'S WORKERS LIVE

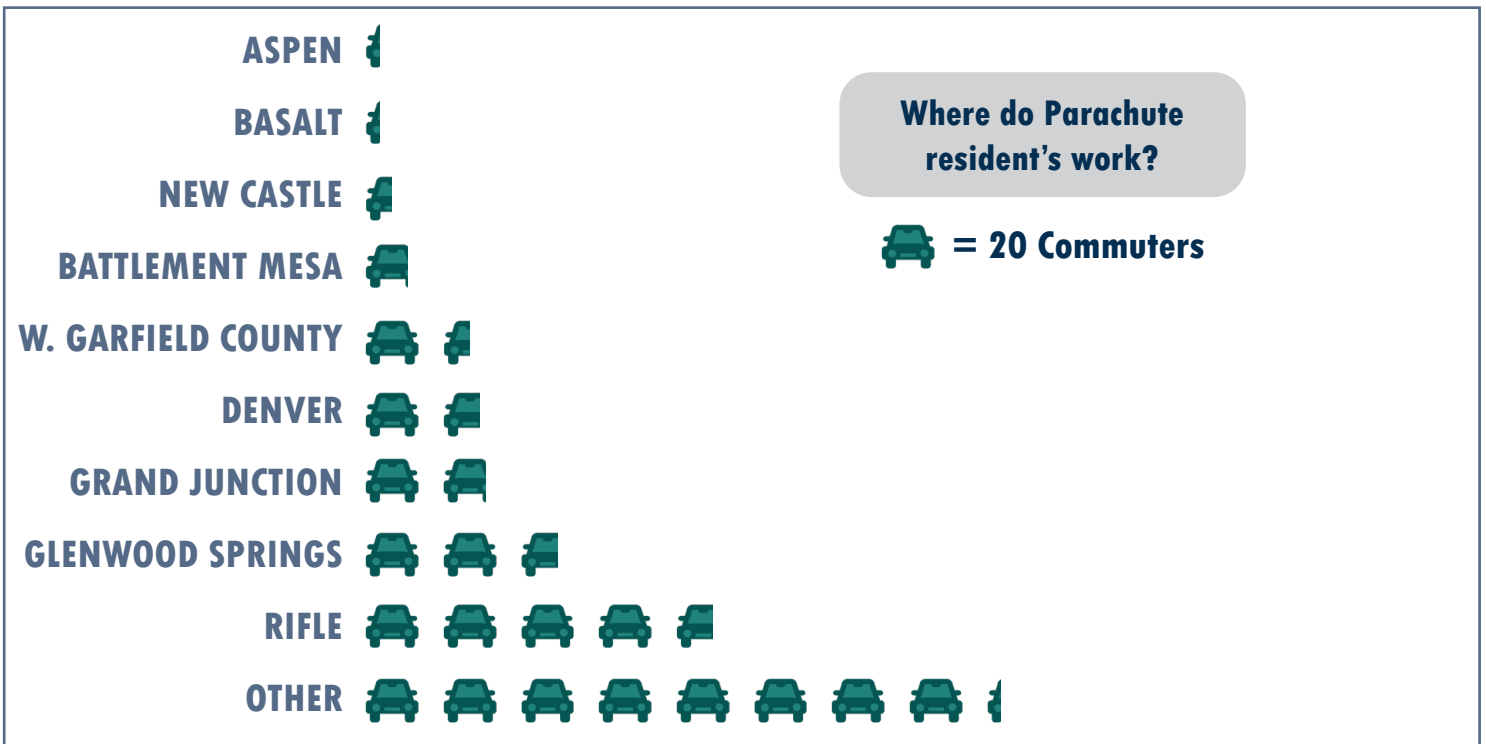


FIGURE 22: WHERE PARACHUTE RESIDENTS WORK



TOWN CIRCULATION NETWORK

Downtown consists of a small grid circulation network, which connects local businesses and residential uses to the Town’s core area. Outside of downtown, road networks are more meandering and less based on a grid layout. Each development has designed its own road network within the development to connect to the main arterial and collector network of the Town.

I-70, County Road 215/300, and Parachute Parkway are the most significant corridors into Town. In addition, Cardinal Way, First Street, and Parachute Park Boulevard are growing to be large commercial corridors. Located adjacent to I-70 with easy access and abundant vacant land, the Cardinal Way corridor serves several existing businesses, residential developments, Grand Valley High School, and Cottonwood Park. As the Town grows, this corridor is prime for greenfield development and redevelopment opportunities. However, the functionality of Cardinal Way needs to remain important to ensure adequate and efficient access to these destinations remains. The existing conditions map, Map 11, gives a visual representation of the Town’s existing network.

TRANSIT

In October of 2020, the Town established its first local transit operation. Parachute Area Transit System (PATS) provides transit service for Parachute and Battlement Mesa residents. Current routes include stops throughout Parachute and Battlement Mesa. PATS also offers an express route service to and from the community of Rifle, with two (2) routes in the morning and two (2) routes in the evening. Residents can pick up a bus from the Roaring Fork Transit Authority (RFTA) to continue on from Rifle all the way to Aspen.

Parachute is also a stop on CDOT’s Bustang’s West Line, connecting Grand Junction to Denver. Currently, the Bustang picks up at the Parachute Rafting Center I-70 and CO 215. The full route is detailed below in the Bustang West Line map.

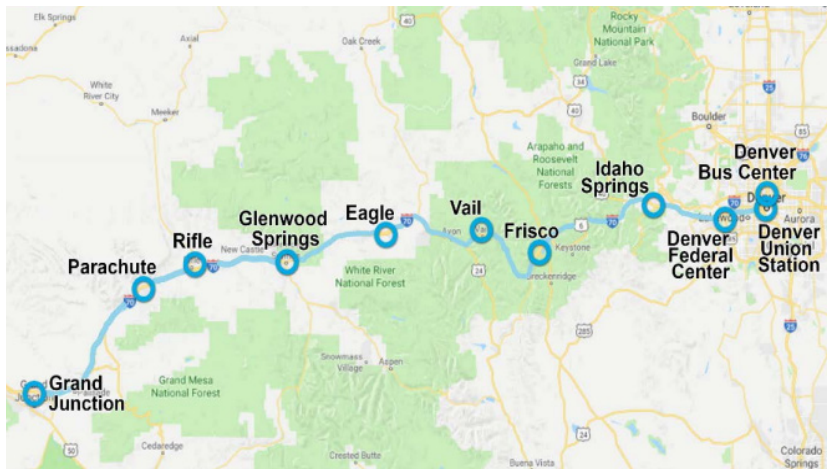
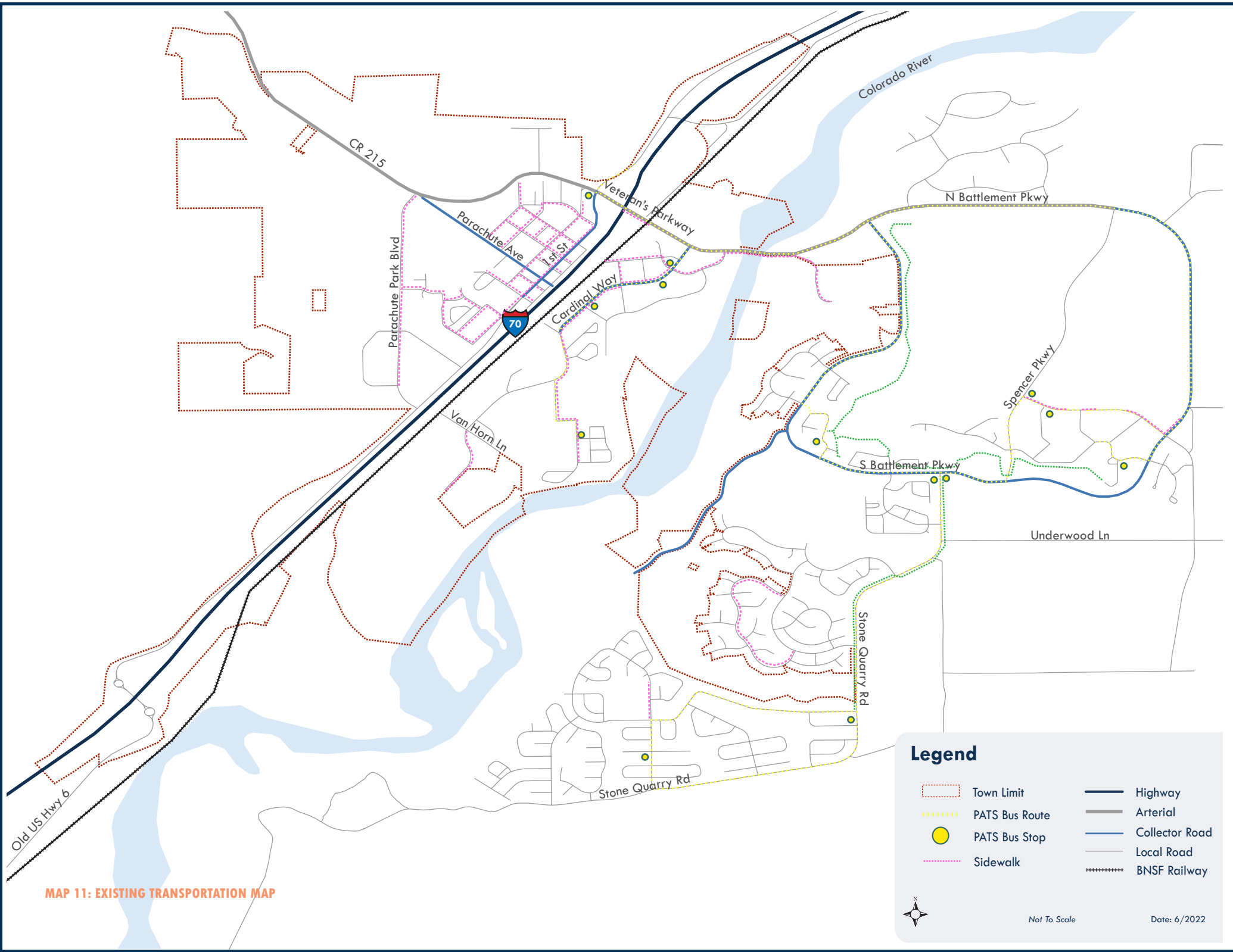


FIGURE 23: BUSTANG WEST LINE












FIGURE 24: PATS TRANSIT SYSTEM



MAP 11: EXISTING TRANSPORTATION MAP

Legend

	Town Limit		Highway
	PATS Bus Route		Arterial
	PATS Bus Stop		Collector Road
	Sidewalk		Local Road
			BNSF Railway

 Not To Scale Date: 6/2022

RAIL

The railroad tracks in Town provide both passenger and freight rail service across western Colorado. Amtrak runs daily between Grand Junction and Glenwood Springs, passing through Town, however, the closest station for Amtrak is in Glenwood Springs or Grand Junction.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railways owns and operates freight rail service along the tracks that run directly south of I-70. BNSF has a rail yard in Town, named Parachute Yard, accessed by a dirt road off US-6 just east of Parachute, at the American Soda spur crossing. A BNSF office is located at the west end of the yard.



There are currently two (2) separated grade crossings. The first is a pedestrian bridge crossing from Wasson-McKay Park, and the second is Hwy 215/300. Both crossings are above ground and cross the tracks and I-70.



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

The Town's street network does not currently accommodate cars, bikes, and walking transportation options. The first step would be to engage with the Town's residents to ensure a street network allowing for multiple forms of transportation options is desired. If it is, the next is conducting an asset inventory of what is in existence and what is a challenge to creating a streetscape that allows for people who desire to bike, walk, take public transit, or drive their car.

Specifically, for pedestrians, the Town should consider an inventory of the existing assets of sidewalks and crosswalks. The assessment would identify missing connections, dangerous intersections, and sidewalks in disrepair. The assessment could also identify the areas where designated bike lanes are appropriate. Future plans for Cardinal Way may incorporate either a dedicated bike lane or a shared bike lane.

As discussed in Commuting Habits, single occupancy travel is the predominant form of commuting for the community and there is limited use of public transit or bikes. The reason behind the limited amount of bike usage for obtaining goods or services could be because the infrastructure is not in place.



4.2 FUTURE NEEDS

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

As development occurs, traffic and the necessitation of road maintenance will inevitably increase. Due to this, the Town may need to consider requiring developers to pay infrastructure-based impact fees that will ensure that the new development pays its fair share for its effect on public infrastructure. In addition, as Battlement Mesa is slated for the most residential growth, impacts will likely be seen on the bridge over the Colorado River connecting CR-300 from the east side of I-70.

ANTICIPATED NEEDS

As development occurs, traffic is expected to increase steadily. With what is currently known about new residential projects in Battlement Mesa, impacts are most likely to be seen on the bridge over the Colorado River connecting CR-300 from the east side of I-70 to the community of Battlement Mesa. As outlined in Chapter 2, the expected population build-out in Battlement Mesa is expected to be up to 25,000 residents. Assuming 10 vehicle trips a day for each single family home as stipulated by the Institute of Transportation Engineers Trip Generation Report, 10th Edition, the traffic impacts based on residential units alone would be approximately 90,500 vehicles per day crossing CR-300 to access I-70. There are additional traffic impacts from schools and commercial development in the Battlement Mesa community.

With I-70 dividing Parachute, circulation between Old Town and the Cardinal Way Business Center is limited to the interstate interchange at CR 215 and the pedestrian bridge. To facilitate programmed economic growth in both districts, there must be a proper connection between the two commercial centers as they both grow. Good circulation will include well-integrated public transit routes, complete streets, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails. Including a redesign of several existing roads to better accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. As the Town grows, new routes will be necessary to connect commercial centers. Relevant stakeholders such as Town residents, the Town public works department, Garfield County Road & Bridge Administration, and the Colorado Department of Transportation will be consulted with each project.

ROADWAY CLASSIFICATIONS

The Town may need to adopt a formal street design manual to create a unified street network that will adequately function for planned use intensity and alternative modes. This document would create a streets hierarchy based on anticipated land uses, which is essential to creating a safe and high-functioning network for anticipated development. In doing so, the standards will need to be established for arterial, collector, and neighborhood streets. A description of each of these classifications and depiction of possible cross-sections have been generated and are attached, in full, in Appendix C. An over view and snapshot of each classification are provided below.

Arterial:

Arterials include interstates, expressways, and roadways that carry most of the traffic traveling to and through the Town. An arterial road may range from a two-lane road to a multi-lane road and may be divided or undivided. Access is controlled or limited on Arterials, allowing for higher traffic volumes and speeds. The priority of arterial roadways is to facilitate many vehicles traveling through the Town safely and efficiently. These roads should also accommodate multi-modal transportation options, including detached sidewalks generally eight 8' feet or greater in width, on-street bike lanes, bus pullouts for areas where transit is desired, and a landscaped median between travel lanes.

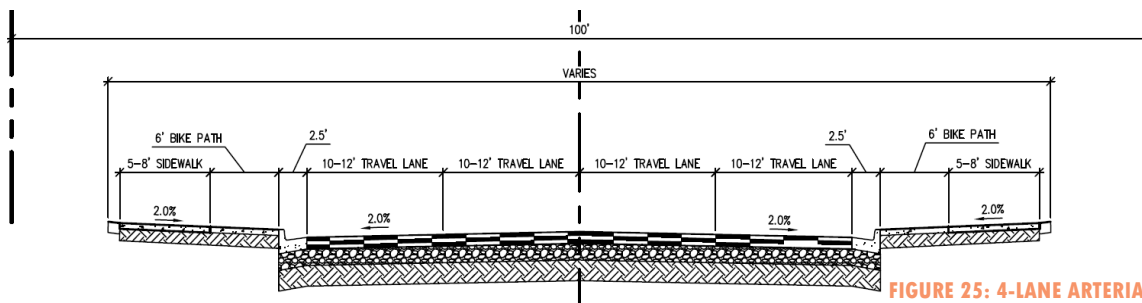


FIGURE 25: 4-LANE ARTERIAL CROSS SECTION



Collector:

Collector streets provide traffic circulation within residential, commercial, and industrial areas and carry vehicles to and from arterial roadways. Access points are managed and spaced at appropriate distances. Accesses onto collector roads may be from local streets or commercial driveways. Direct access should be limited based on traffic impact assessments provided for development applications. These roads should include sidewalks, on-street bike lanes, and on-street parking.

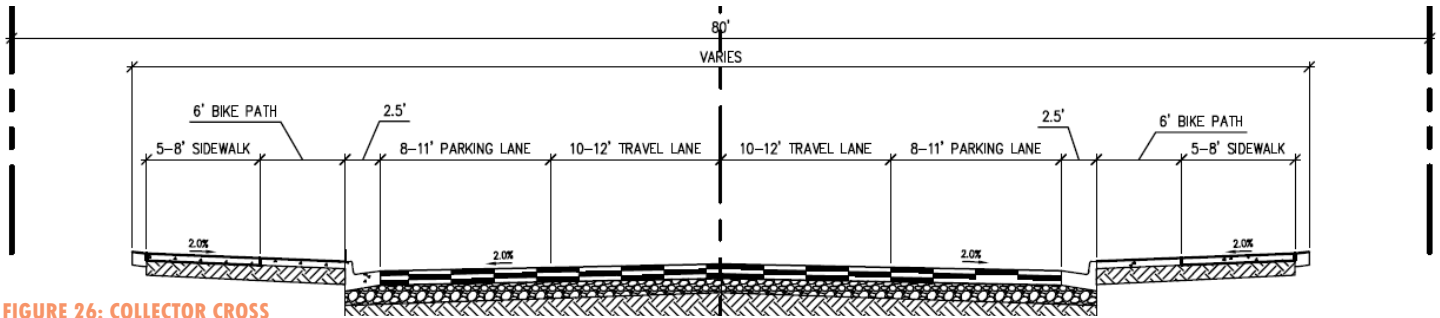


FIGURE 26: COLLECTOR CROSS SECTION WITH PARKING

Local:

Local roads access residential, farms, businesses, and other smaller streets. Thru traffic is local and provides connectivity to Collector and Arterial roadways. Local roads tend to have slower speeds (20 - 30 MPH) and conform to natural terrain conditions such as topography, adjacent land use, and type of facility, which often require slower speeds. These roads should include attached or detached sidewalks, on-street bike lanes, and on-street parking. Additional consideration should be given to drainage due to pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles to maintain safe conditions.

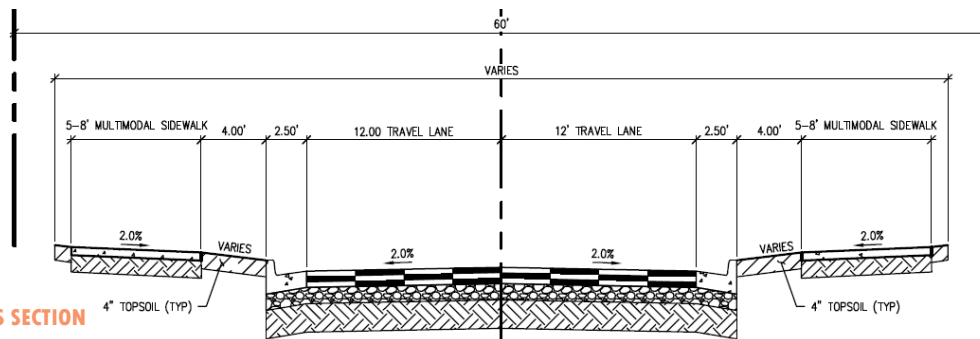
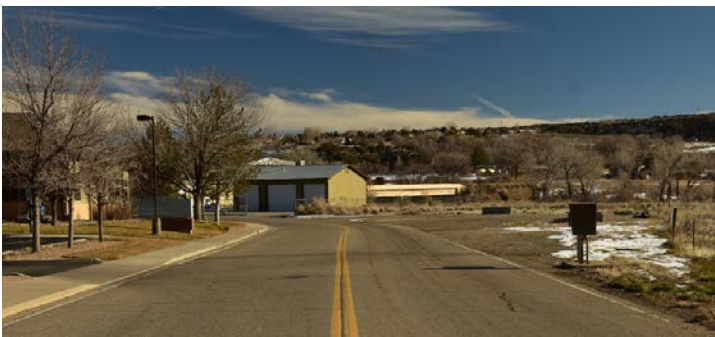
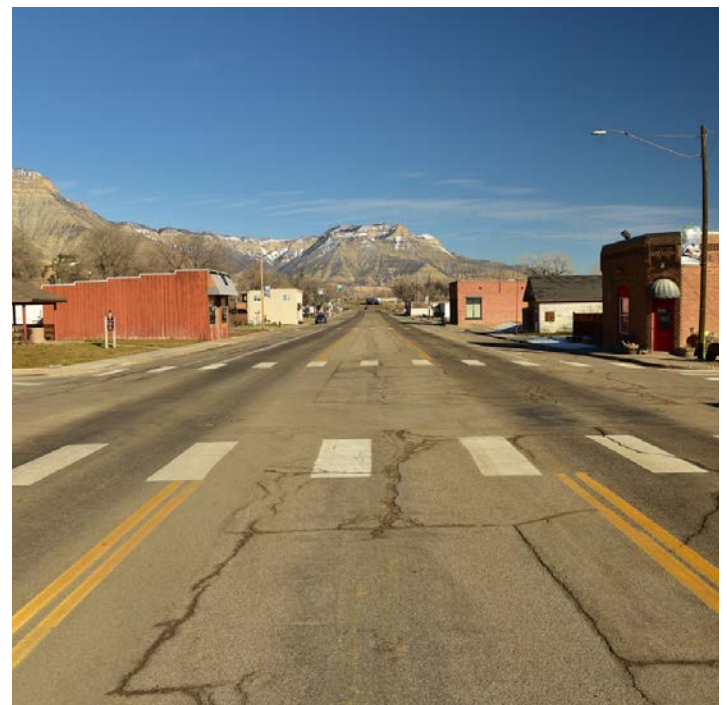


FIGURE 27: LOCAL CROSS SECTION



Cardinal Way

Cardinal Way is the central corridor within the Central Business District (CBD). The CBD also expects significantly more traffic as adjacent properties redevelop. As the Town looks to the future, improving this corridor in terms of safety, connectivity, and access are top priorities for enhanced circulation of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles alike. Additionally, as the Cardinal Way corridor continues to develop and redevelop, improvements to the road and its appearance will attract small business development and impactful investments into the Parachute community. This corridor is a major connection to and through the community connecting highway traffic to Grand Valley High School at the western end, providing the main vehicular access to Cottonwood Park, and will prove to be a necessary multi-modal corridor that balances vehicular, bicyclist, pedestrian, and transit users of the corridor.

Much planning has been done within the Cardinal Way corridor and below are possible street cross-sections that can be implemented through various sections of the corridor to balance the many competing needs of the corridor.

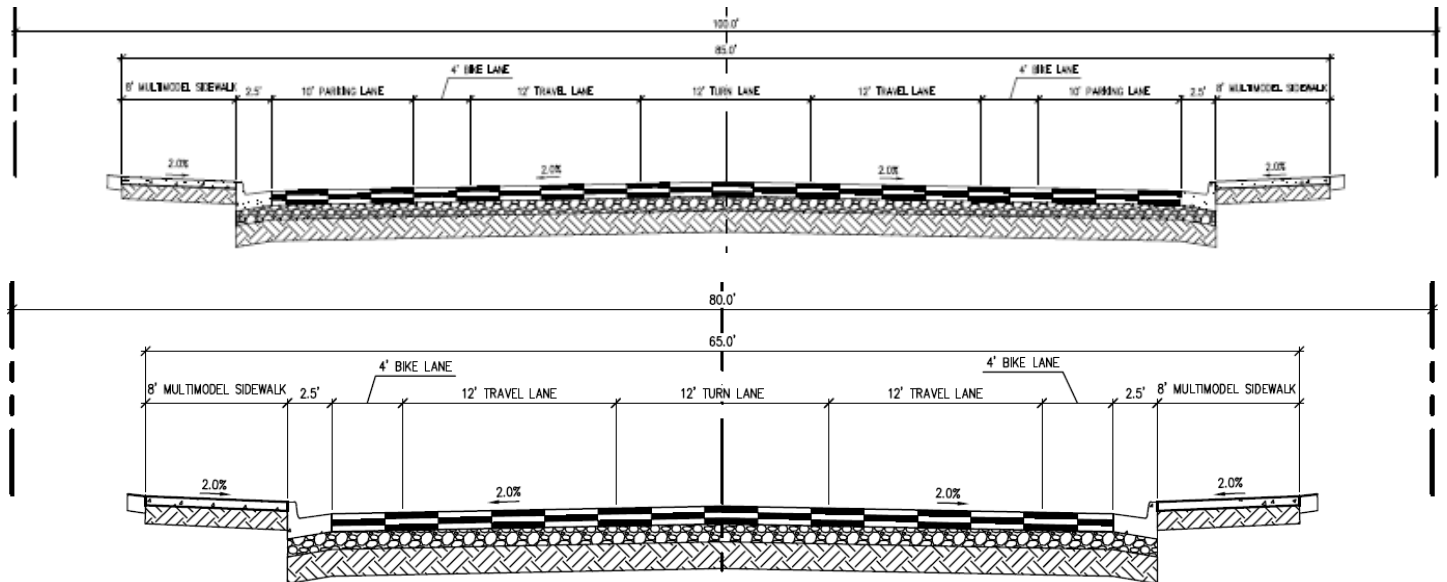


FIGURE 28: POTENTIAL CARDINAL WAY CROSS SECTIONS

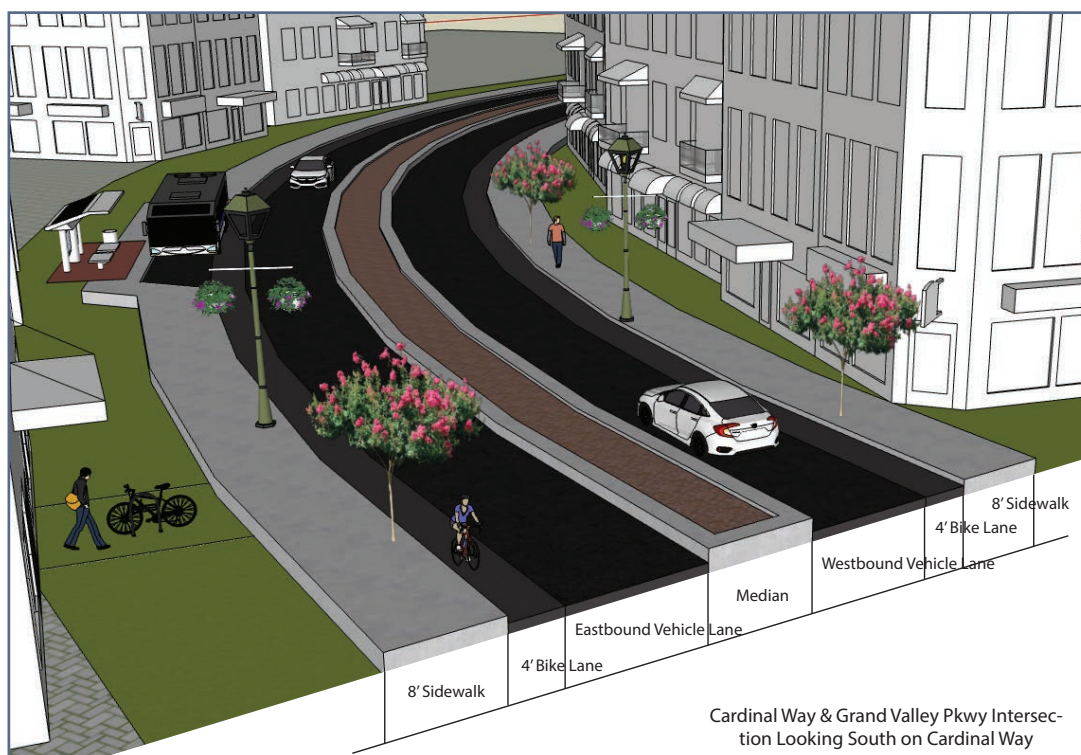


FIGURE 29: CONCEPT DESIGN OF CARDINAL WAY



First Street

First Street is the main artery giving life to the Downtown Core (DC), which is affectionately referred to as Old Town Center, and generally zoned Old Town Center (OTC) on the north side of I-70. This corridor, the historic main street of Parachute, is CDOT right-of-way as it is the old US HWY 6 alignment before I-70 was built. This roadway includes extensive pavement and right-of-way width ample for a redesign that will prioritize the pedestrian scale of the area. This area should include wide sidewalks, on-street parking, pedestrian bulb-outs that will create shorter street crossing distances and safer pedestrian crosswalks, the ability to be used for public gatherings and events, and other capital and programmatic investments to create a thriving downtown. Turn to Chapter 5, Economic Vitality, and Chapter 2, Land Use and Built Environment for additional discussion on this very important neighborhood within Parachute.

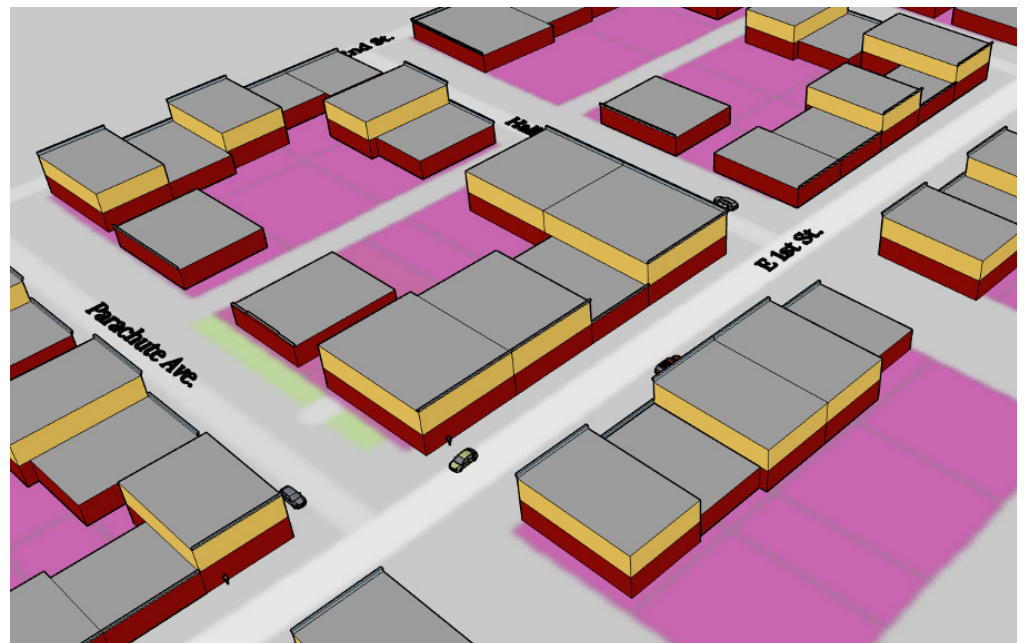
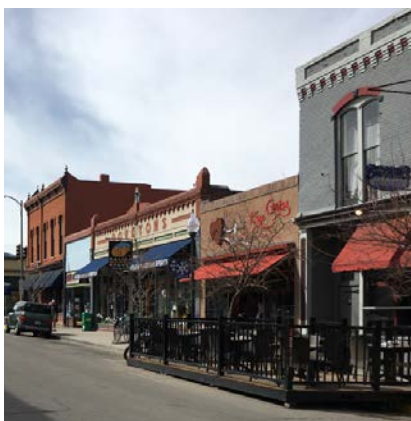
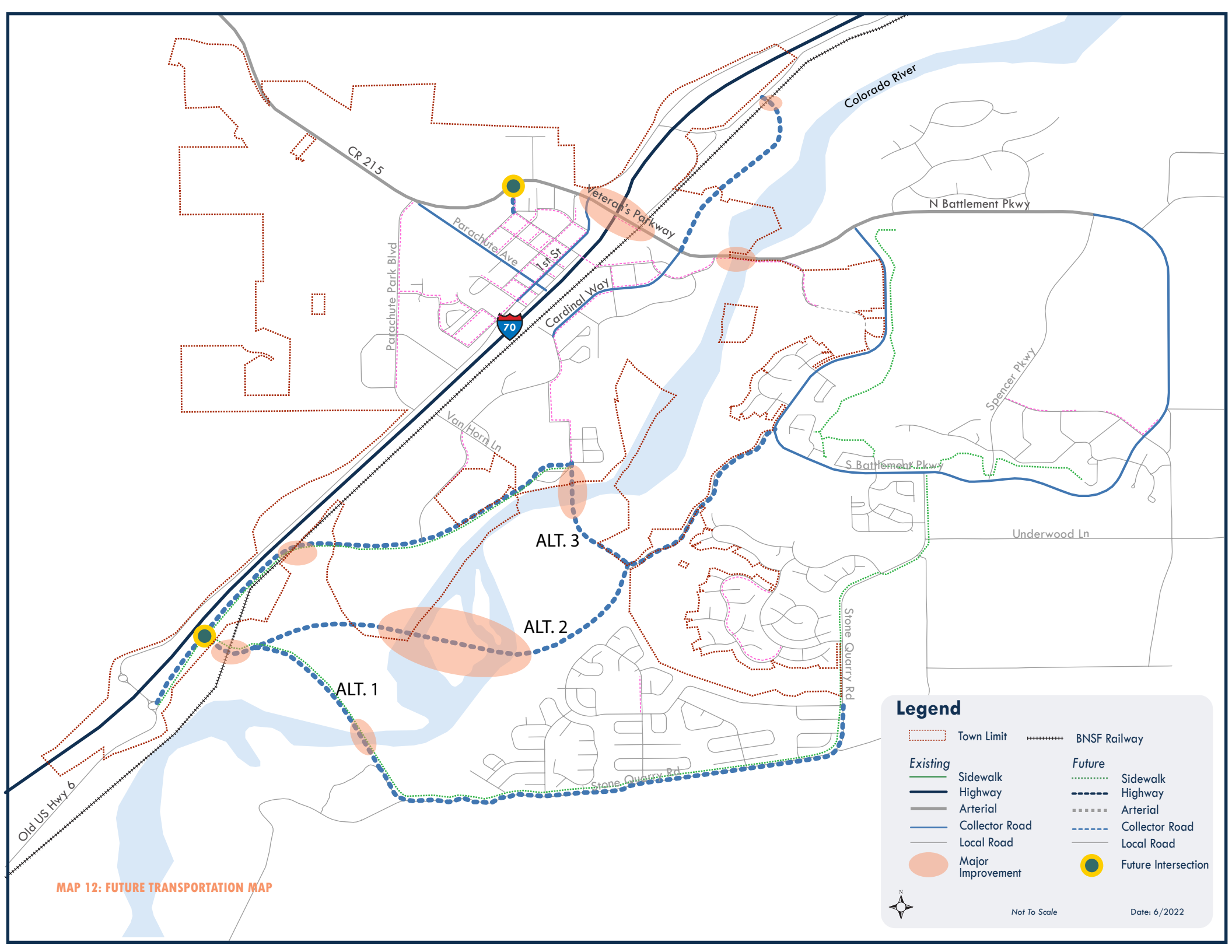


FIGURE 30: CONCEPT DESIGN OF FIRST STREET





MAP 12: FUTURE TRANSPORTATION MAP

Legend

	Town Limit		BNSF Railway
Existing			
	Sidewalk		Future Sidewalk
	Highway		Highway
	Arterial		Arterial
	Collector Road		Collector Road
	Local Road		Local Road
	Major Improvement		Future Intersection



Not To Scale

Date: 6/2022

IDENTIFIED IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Capital improvement projects have been identified as needed to support the Town's future growth.

A. FIRST STREET IMPROVEMENTS

The Town intends to improve and enhance the streetscape along First Street (U.S. Highway 6.) Limits of the project would generally be between Parachute Avenue and Parachute Creek Road (CR 215).

B. RAILROAD AVENUE CONNECTION

A new grade-separated connection linking South Railroad Avenue and North Railroad Avenue, for use by pedestrians, bicycles, and Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) could be constructed across I-70 and the Union Pacific Railroad corridors. This grade-separated connection would provide a vital transportation link between the southern and northern portions of the Town. The demand for this connection and its proposed location was established in the report entitled: Draft Non-Motorized Travel Demand Evaluation, Town of Parachute, Proposed Trail Crossing #2, by Turn Key LLC, dated April 19, 2016.

C. PARACHUTE PARK BOULEVARD

The northern portion of Parachute Park Boulevard could be restriped to increase its overall vehicle carrying capacity. The overall length of the boulevard is approximately 4,500 feet. The southerly 3,000 feet is currently striped with four (4) lanes, plus turning lanes. However, the northern 1,500 feet of the boulevard is striped with only two (2) lanes. To maximize the boulevard's overall vehicle carrying capacity, the northerly 1,500 feet could be restriped to have a total of four (4) lanes, to match the southerly segment. From aerial photographs, it appears that there is sufficient pavement width along the northern segment to accommodate four (4) lanes, but verification with precise field measurements would be necessary.

D. NORTH BATTLEMENT MESA PARKWAY

North Battlement Parkway (County Road 300N) could be widened from its current width of two (2) lanes to four (4) lanes. In conjunction with the widening, the bridge would need replacement. A raised center median in places would separate the inbound and outbound lanes. The widening would begin at Interstate I-70 Exit 75 and continue approximately one (1) mile east to the intersection of West Battlement Parkway (County Road 300W).

According to the Colorado Department of Transportation, the most recent traffic counts on this segment of I-70 were collected at Station ID: 103008, during 2019, as follows:

- I-70 Average Daily Trips: 20,000 vehicles per day
- I-70 Forecasted 20-year traffic increase percentage: 1.30%
- I-70 Percentage of Trucks: 14.7 %

E. RIVER BLUFF BYPASS (SEE ALTERNATE ALIGNMENTS)

A new River Bluff Road bypass connection could be constructed across the Colorado River and provide a vital transportation link between the Town and the Battlement Mesa community. The new bypass road connection would begin at River Bluff Road and West Battlement Parkway and extend to Cottonwood Park, ending at the intersection of Colorado Avenue and Rio Grande Avenue.

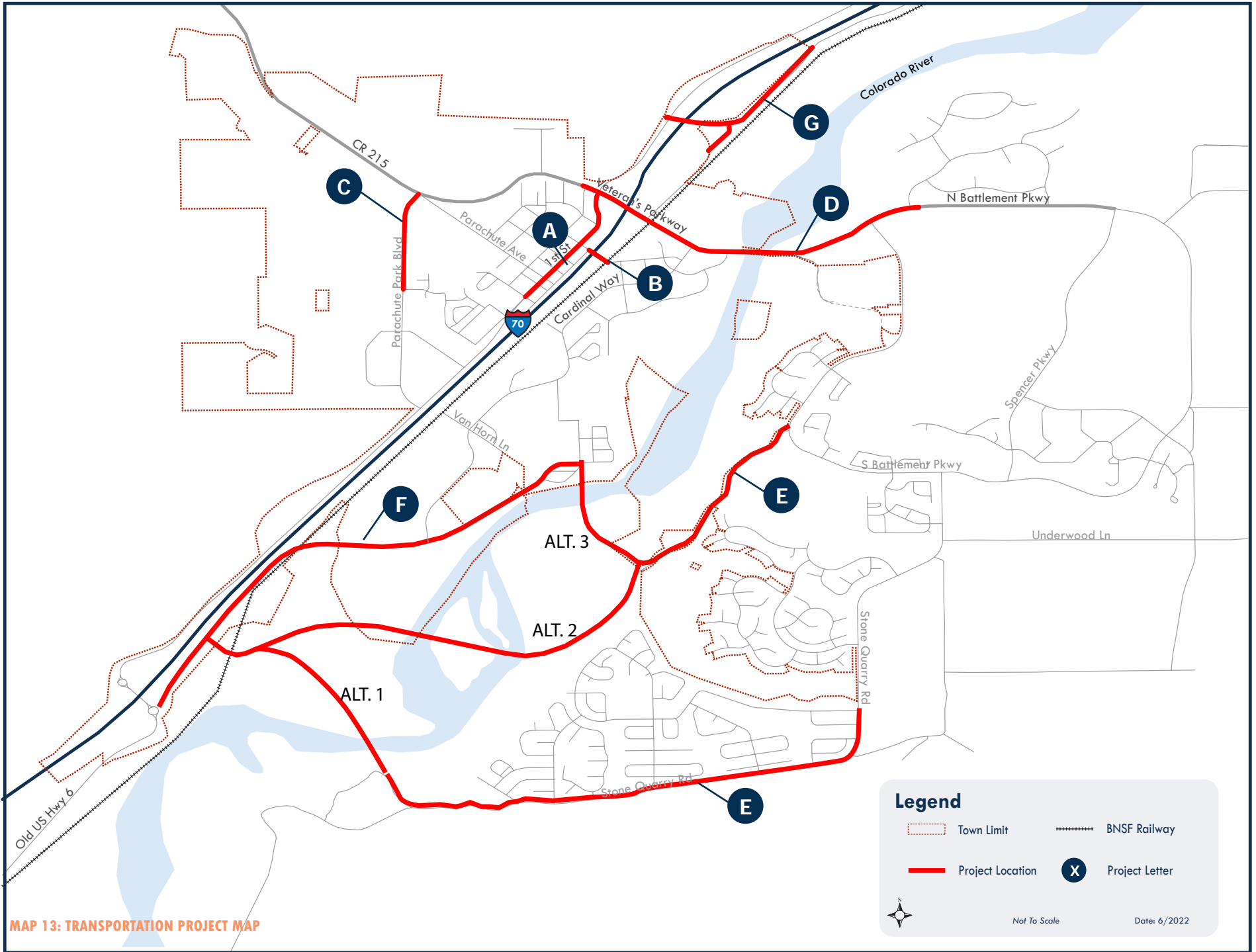
F. RIVERSIDE ROAD BYPASS (SEE ALTERNATE ALIGNMENTS)

A new Riverside bypass road could be constructed south of Interstate I-70 and north of the Colorado River. The new bypass road would begin at the West Parachute Interstate I-70 West Parachute Exit 72 and extend easterly, ending at Cottonwood Park. The new bypass road would also run parallel to the north bank of the Colorado River in places terminating with the I-70 frontage road at the West Parachute exit (72).

G. CALLAHAN COURT

East and West Callahan Court are unpaved single-lane, dead-end roadways, which could be improved by widening and paving to meet the current Town roadway standards. The work would begin at Callahan Court and U.S. Highway





ECONOMICS

The economic activities in the Town are most lucrative when there are multiple efficient transportation options. The Town exists along a major interstate, and Main Street is under CDOT jurisdiction, meaning CDOT has authority over improvements and maintenance. Each one of these roads provides delivery services for goods and job centers. Efficient, well-planned transportation systems enhance and provide access to economic and social opportunities that result in positive outcomes such as better accessibility to commercial centers, employment opportunities, and additional investment opportunities. When transportation systems are deficient in safety, capacity, or reliability, they can have an economic cost such as reduced or missed economic opportunities and lower quality of life. Living in a rural community where services are spread across miles, convenient transportation options become even more critical.

For more information on the economic opportunities for the Town, please see the Economic Vitality Report in Chapter 5.

RESILIENCY

Resilience is essential for transportation in the Town as wildfire, flooding, and other natural hazards create mass evacuation needs; infrastructure must be built to withstand natural disasters. However, the costs of retrofitting the Town's transportation can be high. Therefore, the first step is to identify missing connections in the transportation system, including sidewalks, trails, and bus stops.

Inadequate or substandard transportation infrastructure can prevent people from walking or biking, which is even more important in low-income communities that may be more dependent on walking and biking to their destinations. In addition, missing connections prevent redundancy in the transportation system and can make walking and biking unsafe, leading to higher crashes involving people walking and biking and people driving cars.



4.3 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Objective 4-1: Ensure that any adverse transportation effects (i.e., intensified maintenance and congestion) caused by future development are mitigated by codified processes.

Strategy 4-1A: Adopt and apply an impact (roadway impact) fee that developers will be required to pay for any new development or significant redevelopment.

Strategy 4-1B: Work with Garfield County to complete a traffic and capacity analysis of the CR-300 bridge connection to Battlement Mesa.

Strategy 4-1C: Regularly review and update, as necessary, the Town's Public Works Manual to ensure work within the right-of-way and any impacts are properly repaired and mitigated.

Strategy 4-1D: Ensure proper connection between commercial centers to facilitate programmed economic growth.

Objective 4-2: Enhance public transit experience.

Strategy 4-2A: Utilize partnerships and grant opportunities to pay for transit amenities such as bus shelters, street lighting, maintenance, and visibility.

Strategy 4-2B: Investigate new technology and transit tools, such as General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) and Next Bus technology, to provide users and map applications with accurate trip planning and real-time transit schedule information.

Objective 4-3: Connect residents to destinations through all modes of transportation.

Strategy 4-3A: Adopt a complete street and or Bike and Pedestrian Master plan to guide investment in pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout Town.

Strategy 4-3B: Partner with CDOT to enhance pedestrian bridge experience and maximize the connection between Cardinal Way and 1st St.

Objective 4-4: Adopt design standards for different street classifications.

Strategy 4-4A: Collaborate with local and regional transportation agencies to develop design standards for different types of streets.



Objective 4-5: Support future growth and economic development with proactive evaluation and design of public infrastructure.

Strategy 4-5A: Investigate the feasibility and implement the capital improvement projects identified within this chapter.

Strategy 4-5B: Investigate the feasibility, costs, and benefits of devolution of 1st Street/Highway 6 from CDOT.





CHAPTER 5: ECONOMIC VITALITY

Downtown Redevelopment Services (“DRS”) provided the baseline data and the recommendations in Chapter 5 - Economic Vitality. Economic vitality is essential to the Town's success, which strives to provide a range of employment, retail, service, and recreational opportunities for all community members and visitors. Economic vitality is essential because it allows for a thriving, sustainable community and helps achieve the overall objective of the 2040 Plan. All data utilized for baseline and existing conditions analysis was collected from the US Census Bureau and ESRI information databases. This Chapter identifies strategies the Town can implement to enhance and expand the economic vitality of the current and future residents of the Town.



5.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Historically defined by the mining and natural resource extraction industry, particularly oil shale and natural gas, the Town's economy experienced boom and bust cycles, hurting long-term residents and non-extraction industries. However, more recently, the Town experienced steady residential and economic growth coming on the heels of broader regional development due to the influx of tourism revenue, particularly with marijuana legalization. The Town's growing tourism industry is mainly due to its ease of access to and from Interstate 70, the recreational opportunities afforded by the Colorado River, and its central location between Grand Junction and Glenwood Springs.

While the Town has experienced economic growth, the population continues to be a bedroom community to regional job centers and workers who follow the demands of regional tourism. Commuting habits and additional discussion on the workforce are discussed later in this chapter. Regional tourism jobs in the Town generally include those services related to off-highway vehicles, mountain biking, hiking, and other outdoor sports; thus, these jobs are highly dependent on the changing season. The fluctuation of residents over the years resulted in the Town missing many essential services and amenities to meet the needs of long-term residents and small business owners.

The Town is projected to grow at a rate that out paces the County over several decades as discussed earlier in Chapter 2.

Through the projected residential growth, the Town is poised to grow economically, filling the gaps in amenities and services that have been historically missing. Providing for residents' needs and desires, the Town can continue to improve the quality of life and attract new residents to the Town.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY

Natural gas extraction in Garfield County began in 1924 but would take another 30 years to define the regional economy. By the end of the 1950s, the first of many boom-and-bust cycles was underway. The massive influx of extraction-related businesses and their employees allowed the Town region to experience dramatic growth and prosperity. The community of Battlement Mesa was established during the height of one of the oil shale booms as oil and gas companies, specifically Exxon, built housing for the industry's workforce. While the Town has reaped many benefits from the growth of the extraction industry, the reliance resulted in the community being highly susceptible to boom and bust cycles, as discussed previously in this document.



The natural resource extraction boom and bust cycles have long defined the lives of residents. Unlike other surrounding cities such as Rifle and Grand Junction, the Town does not have a diversified economy, instead of being concentrated in limited retail, natural resource extraction, and supporting industries such as trades and personal services. As a result, much of the local economy and local workforce is directly impacted by crude gas price slumps resulting in economic downturns. However, a growing desire among the residents, particularly business owners, is for a more predictable economy to operate and grow a small business that does not fluctuate significantly with global commodity prices.

MARIJUANA INDUSTRY

The State of Colorado legalizing recreational marijuana in 2012 led to a booming new industry. Based on marijuana sales alone from 2015 to 2021, the state collected over \$1.6 billion in new tax revenue between the various taxes assessed on the industry. The marijuana industry and associated tourism have come to define a significant portion of the state's economy.

In 2015, the marijuana industry came to the Town when elected



officials approved an ordinance allowing recreational marijuana businesses to operate within Town limits. The decision allowed the Town to become less reliant on the cyclical revenue streams of the natural resource extraction industries. As of 2021, there are six retail recreational stores in Town providing about 30% to 40% of the total sales tax revenues for the Town. While the marijuana industry has allowed the Town to diversify its economy, retail recreational stores are lower-wage jobs, and there is little desire for further expansion of retail establishments. However, residents and officials desire to attract well-managed symbiotic industries to complement this existing industry.

5.2 FUTURE NEEDS

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

When asked about the economic assets of the Town, residents and officials cited the Town's connection to regional employment centers via I-70. The regional economic growth from the tourism industry has been repeatedly identified as an opportunity to leverage. Interstate access has allowed the Town to draw in regional travelers and capture their tourism dollars. With the proximity to Grand Junction, Glenwood Springs, and other cities along I-70, residents feel that they have easy access to employment opportunities and that this is a strength for the Town. While the Town has grown in recent years, the Town retains its strong sense of community, uniting its economically diverse community. The improved housing and per capita income in Battlement Mesa, an unincorporated area outside of the Town, was identified as a strength to leverage as a potential customer base for the Town's small businesses.

As the town grows, residents and officials hope to leverage unique opportunities to maintain the community's character. Due to its location along the Colorado River, the Town's natural resources and recreational opportunities are immense. Off-highway vehicles are prevalent in this region, and their popularity creates a unique market need. The public repeatedly highlighted the desire to capitalize on the natural assets and spur new growth related to these assets. Officials hope to primarily capture growth, recreation-based and otherwise, in two central districts - Old Town Center (First Street) and the Cardinal Way Corridor. The Town desires to grow these two districts through infill development and, where appropriate, adaptive reuse. Residents want new growth to fit with the existing community character through more local events and increased support for small businesses and the Parachute Valley Senior Center.

While the Town has a growing economy, there are weaknesses and threats which can be addressed to create an even faster-growing economy. When asked about economic weaknesses, residents cited the lack of essential services and amenities, which requires commutes to other towns in the region. Residents specifically desire a grocery store, a hardware store, and more dining and entertainment options. Moreover, they also cited a lack of acceptance and attainable housing for the local workforce. By addressing these weaknesses, the Town can attract more residents and visitors, growing the economy.

Obstacles to growth were identified through the public input process as well. The Town's boom and bust economic cycle make investment difficult due to the uncertainty. Stakeholders identified bureaucratic obstacles to business development, such as design standard rules for historic buildings. Additionally, blighted, and vacant properties have been identified as obstacles to attracting new investment. Vacant or blighted parcels often do not meet the collective community vision or maintenance standards outlined in the Town code. Residents also identified the Town's aging infrastructure and increasing taxes as



additional barriers preventing investment. These challenges can be addressed through objectives and strategies outlined in Section 5.3 to correct the course and build an even stronger Town economy.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

New growth will be at a higher density than existing development to preserve the Town's open spaces and critical recreational assets. The 2040 Plan supports sustainable growth that protects the town's community identity and environmental integrity while allowing for continued economic and residential development.

The action items below will impact the Town by:

- Supporting sustainable development that is consistent with the Town's identity
- Creating a plan for the Town to evolve and changes as demand changes
- Establishing a plan to provide attainable housing for existing and future residents
- Growing the local economy through investment in high-paying, next-generation jobs

PROBABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AREA IDENTIFICATION

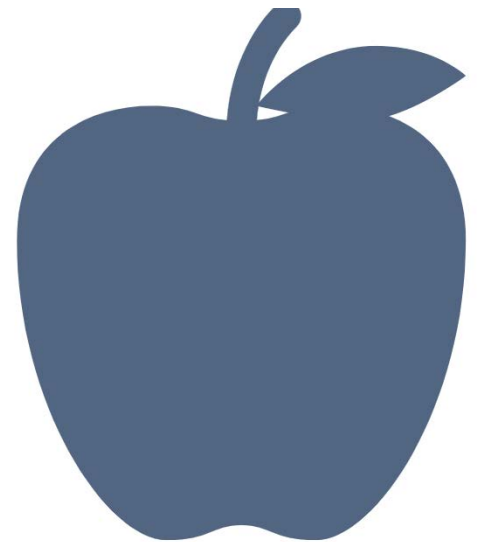
In completing a community needs assessment, the information gathered was cross-referenced with available market analysis data to identify gaps and opportunities for economic growth within the community. This task was completed as part of the Business Diversification and Retention Strategy, a document prepared alongside the 2022 Plan and provided in Appendix D. All information is reviewed and analyzed to determine where potential service or amenity gaps are within the revenue capture process, their impact, and how they can be clustered to serve an unfulfilled need within the community. Outlined below are several business types identified during the gap analysis as probably areas for economic growth:

Necessity Food Purchases

The Town's residents are currently being forced to commute to other communities for regular food purchases to be prepared at home. This includes pre-made foods and essential foods. The gap analysis has identified that the community is currently devoid of a location to purchase good products at a fair rate. To fulfill this, a full-service grocery store is recommended to allow for increased access to dining and staple food purchases. Given the market gap identified in Table 7, the construction of a grocery store within the Town will meet a significant unmet need. Moreover, this economic opportunity will also serve Battlement Mesa, nearby unincorporated areas, and passing travelers.

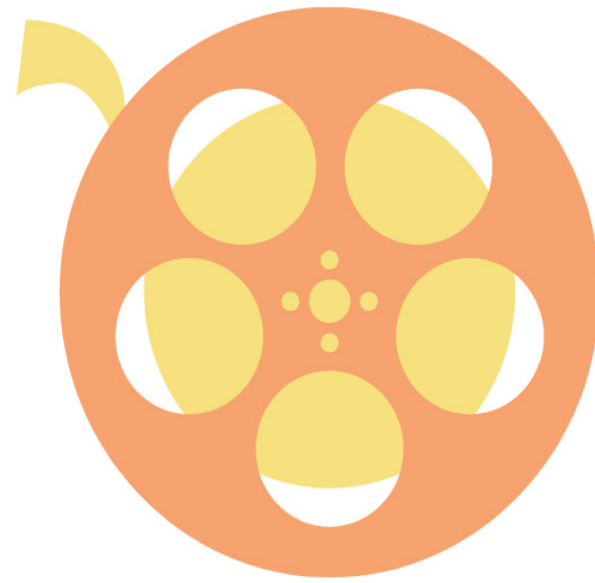
Transportation Sales & Service

While the community spends an above-average amount of their annual budgets on transportation, there are limited locations in Town where vehicles (on-highway and off-highway) can be repaired or purchased. There is a significant consumer need for an automotive dealer/service department and several maintenance shops within the Town to fulfill the on-highway vehicle needs. Although the Town has several stores that offer parts for purchase or tool rentals (e.g., NAPA auto parts), research shows considerable potential in this market. Additionally, it is recommended that a targeted development be dedicated to using off-highway vehicles, both sales, and service. Providing supportive services for off-highway vehicles incorporates well into the forthcoming regional attraction for recreational tourism development.



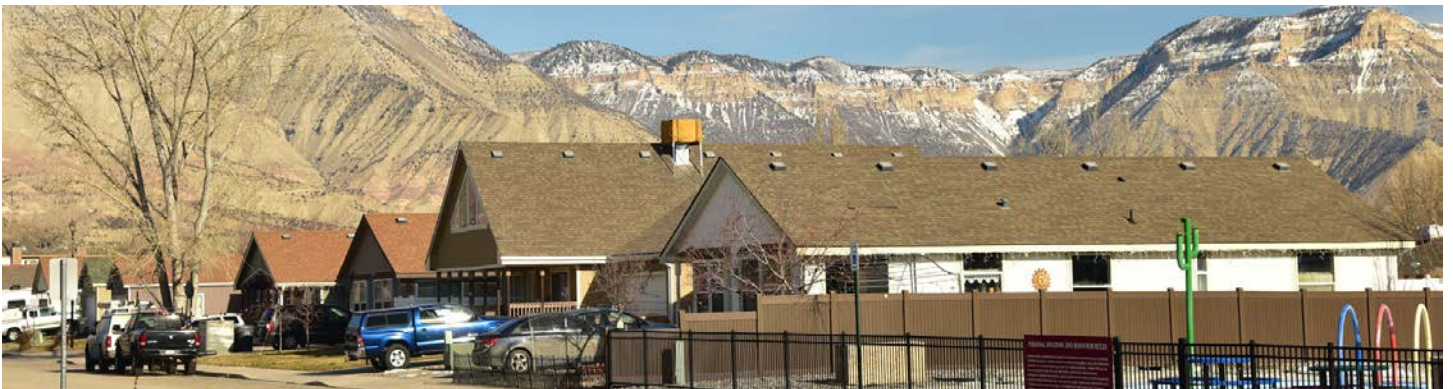
Entertainment and Casual Dining

This specific service gap focuses on providing the “dinner and…” category of downtown amenities. These services allow the Town merchants to capture customers for the “golden 90 minutes” – the highest return on investment (“ROI”) for tax revenue generation. The “golden 90 minutes” is a term utilized to explain the best mixture of turnover and revenue capture for visitors and residents. In the 90-minute window, patrons can eat at an establishment and often have time for some shopping. After the 90-minute window, the ROI diminishes, caused by lack of turnover and limited purchases for more extended stays. These services or amenities should be casual or comfortable dining options that take 45-60 minutes to turn a table. These are often favorite regional dining styles (e.g., Brewpub, pizza place, fried chicken). The ancillary or secondary use is the “entertainment” portion. These options fulfill an additional 30-45 minutes after the dinner. Entertainment amenities can include arcade games, billiards, shuffleboard, bars, and other attractions.



Types of Business	Annual Estimate of Revenue Captured	Retail Gap	Projected Full-Time Jobs
Grocery Store	\$74,684.55	\$1,991,588	20
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$15,235.65	\$406,284	5
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Music Instrument Store	\$6,785.13	\$180,937	2
Recreational / Sporting Goods Store	\$28,125.00	\$750,000	6
Specialty Food Store	\$7,420.88	\$197,890	5
Clothing	\$15,239.43	\$406,379	3
General Merchandise	\$65,293.43	\$1,741,158	3
Microbrewery/Evening Entertainment	\$15,562.50	\$415,000	5
Ghost Kitchen	\$11,137.50	\$297,000	6

TABLE 7: MARKET GAP



Recreational Tourism Supportive Activities

The gap analysis has highlighted that there are limited amounts of amenities for targeted recreational tourism endeavors. This can include bike shops, microbreweries, kayak or camping supply stores, etc. These facilities would provide a large amount of tax generation based on the cost of goods and before/after services that can be ancillary purchases to the standard. As recreational tourism increases in the Town and the region, supportive activities will increasingly become areas for economic growth. Currently, there is a significant retail gap in this NAICS category (Table 7), which is expected to grow in the coming years.



Specialty Food Stores

As the town's demographics change with an increasing median household income, the need for an organic or local grocer grows accordingly. A common consideration for high-income families in selecting their residence is the proximity to such facilities. Currently, the market analysis for the Town is demonstrating a retail gap of nearly \$200,000 with anticipation of growth as the demographics continue to shift (Table 7). A retail gap compares the anticipated demand for a good or service in the area verse the documented revenue capture. To attract high-income individuals/families and support existing residents, a specialty food store is identified as a potential economic growth area. These facilities are small in scale and average 5,000-10,000 square feet in size.



Clothing and General Merchandise Stores

General merchandise stores are critical for a non-urban community looking to provide housing. These facilities offer one-stop shopping for residents', eliminating their need to own a car or travel to a big box store regularly. The Town currently has a retail gap for clothing stores approaching \$500,000, which is expected to grow. Moreover, the retail opening for general merchandise stores is approaching \$2,000,000 (Table 7). A clothing and general merchandise store is a potential economic growth area to attract and retain residents. These stores are a great anchor facility and can drive traffic. The facility should be between 10,000 and 15,000 square feet, offering a variety of goods, both staples and desires.



Gathering and Social Clubs

Currently, the Town lacks necessary gathering spaces or amenities for adults to enjoy during nighttime or non-work hours. This essential "third" space is critical to the social atmosphere. In the Town, these spaces would be evening activities such as movie theaters, fun parks, event/performance venues, museums, galleries, etc. Additionally, there is a need for an adult gathering space that serves a reasonable food selection at a fair price, with other amenities and activities such as shuffleboard and billiards. This facility should not be considered a restaurant but a gathering facility where drinks and food can be purchased. The Cardinal Way or Old Town Center districts are likely candidates for these services. Through implementing these services, the community will be provided with a way to increase their human interaction and social attributes.



PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT CLUSTERS

Development clusters are targeted styles of private development that would fulfill an underserved community goods or service. These private development clusters are strategically selected as they will help create a sustainable local economic ecosystem, as well as attract strong private investment. Outlined below are the preferred development clusters to attract which support the community economically.

Professional services or remote accessible jobs

Professional service providers are individuals or firms such as CPAs, engineers, architects, and similar professionals. These individuals can work remotely and provide a solid/stable economic base that requires little to no cash contribution for the community to attract.

Recreation-based retail amenities

In addition to attracting more recreational-based amenities, there is a need for supportive retail amenities, explicitly serving the goods and services desired by the people recreation attracts. These facilities are bicycle repair shops, ATV parts or service facilities, etc. These amenities should be carefully drawn to match the implementation of any outdoor recreational amenities.

Experiential amenities and services

Individuals and families are no longer just searching for a place to have dinner. They want a place to have a memorable experience. This targeted development cluster includes things like nightlife and family bonding activities.

Grocery and home-based goods

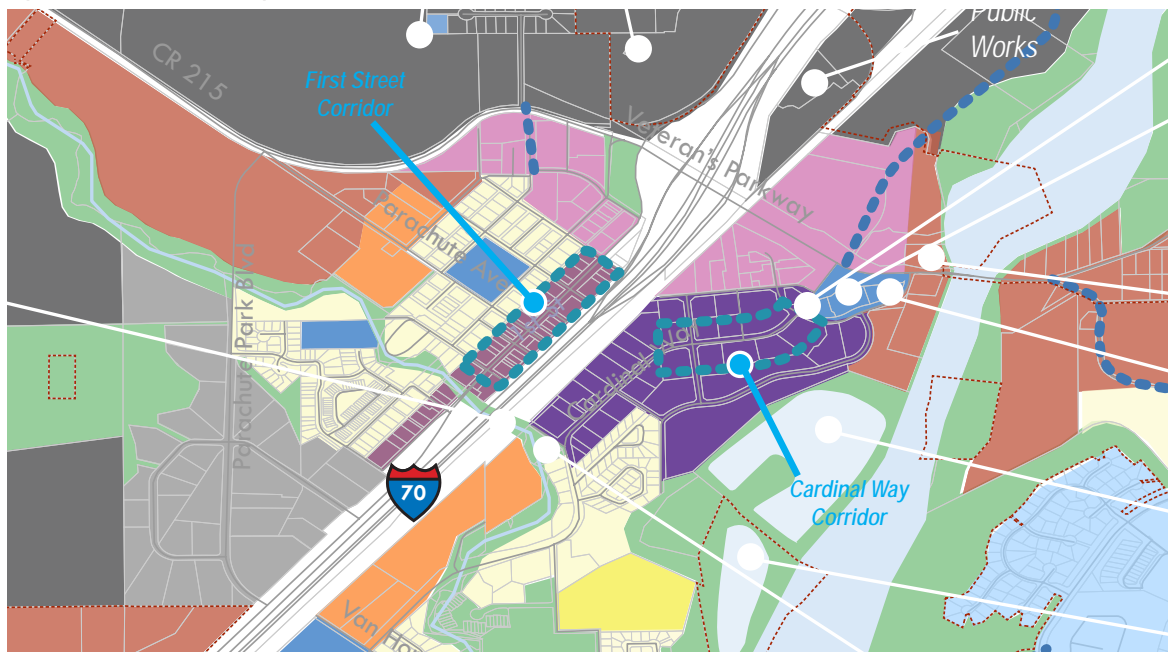
Currently, the community is underserved in a grocery store and a general goods/purchase store. This style of preferred development should focus on attracting a store that provides the purchase of necessary goods and provides opportunities for tourists to purchase items forgotten or needed on-site.

Office supplies and printing services

As the community expands and hopefully provides more spaces for individuals or remote workers, an office supplies store will be required to support the local economy.

TARGETED DEVELOPMENT SITE MAPS

The Town has two central commercial corridors - Downtown Core (First Street) and Central Business District (Cardinal Way). These commercial corridors have been identified as priorities for new commercial development, and they are prime for redevelopment.



MAP 14: COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS MAP



A series of scenarios with varying levels of commercial and residential development was created to explore potential future uses for parcels North and South of East First Street and East 2nd Street in the center of the Town and parcels bounding Cardinal Way and South Railroad Avenue, South of I-70. See Figures 31 and 32 for the small area maps. The full Small Area Plan is attached in Appendix B. All affected areas were split into 0.5-acre sections. Potential new land uses contain a range of possible residential and commercial options. The possible ranges analyzed are as follows:

Main-Street Mixed-Use:

- Residential: 10 to 18 units per acre
- Commercial: 5,000 to 20,000 square feet per acre



Mixed-Use Commercial:

- Residential: 10 to 22 units per acre
- Commercial: 15,000 to 35,000 square feet per acre

Low-Intensity Strip Commercial

- Residential: 0 to 4 units per acre
- Commercial: 10,000 to 25,000 square feet per acre

Single-Family Detached

- Residential: 4 to 8 units per acre
- Commercial: 500 to 1,000 square feet per acre



Single-Family Attached

- Residential: 12 to 24 units per acre
- Commercial: 1,000 to 2,000 square feet per acre

Multi-Family:

- Residential: 16 to 32 units per acre
- Commercial: 1,500 to 3,000 square feet per acre

Based on the demographics provided and desired projection of economic/community growth within the Town, a preferred scenario was defined, precisely balancing retail and residential needs while remaining true to the local character. The results of the preferred method are available in the small area plan, which can be found in Appendix B. The proposed scenario maintains the mixed-use land classification on the Northside of I-70. Yet, mixed-use spaces on the south side will include a mixture of densities for commercial, including single through three-story facilities. These facilities would have limited residential, primarily on upper floors and inner lot areas.





FIGURE 31: FIRST STREET SCENARIO



FIGURE 32: CARDINAL WAY SCENARIO



The preferred scenario offers a balanced approach to achieving municipal goals of a diverse local economy with an ample commercial sales tax base. Anticipated benefits of the preferred method are as follows:

- A balanced infrastructure cost to tax collection ratio.
- Lowest environmental impact with moderate density.
- Creation of a new, more urban scaled, downtown corridor along Cardinal Way.
- Sustainable amounts of local retail, commercial, restaurants, and other service industries.
- An attainable part of projected growth.
- Diversification of housing types by expanding townhome attached multifamily housing types in addition to detached single-family housing.
- Draw for different age cohorts looking for teleworking and a balanced space for live, work, and recreation activities.

ECONOMIC IMPACT IDENTIFICATION

To make an economic impact on the Town, a series of clusters and targeted development should be implemented in catalyst sites, as outlined above. These specific elements will substantially impact the community, aiding in creating a more resilient and diverse local ecosystem. Outlined below are the anticipated financial results (both qualitative and quantitative) for the Town.

Qualitative

- More diversified businesses, offering improved opportunities for residents' employment.
- A broader variety of jobs (both in quality and tenure), offering an employment opportunity for all available or non-disabled individuals
- Reduced long-term blight or deferred maintenance

Quantitative

- Reduced unemployment figures
- Improved homeownership rates
- Increased job placement opportunities, including non-collegial opportunities
- Reduced levels of resident super commuters

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY REVIEW

Businesses and industries have current and future needs that go unmet now. This is explored in detail in the prepared Diversification & Retention Strategy, which is found in the Appendix of this document. During the Diversification & Retention Strategy preparation, trades, professional services, and arts and music were identified as the three most effective economic development strategies for the Town to pursue. These strategies will help meet the needs of business and industry and attract and retain the workers necessary to meet their needs.

TRADES

Currently, the community is vastly underserved in trades to support the community with building or rehabilitation professionals. As the community revitalizes itself, there will be an increasing need for carpenters, masons, roofers, plumbers, and HVAC professionals. These professions should be highlighted and encouraged to locate within the region. Additionally, as the Parachute area continues to grow and expand, serving as an affordable housing alternative to the Eagle, Pitkin, and Summit County areas, the Town is ripe for developing small trades-based businesses into regional businesses over time.

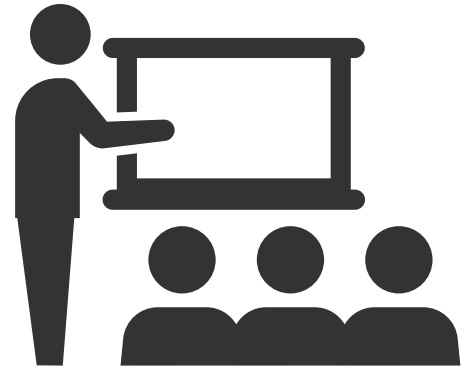
Programs necessary to develop the trades in the Town include:

- Middle school and high school trade prep program
- Professional trades training programs and incubator spaces



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

In addition to construction or trades-based services, the community must have various professional services to support a community looking to grow or expand. Supportive professional services include architects, engineers, banking professionals, attorneys, and real estate professionals. These industries are ideally situated to help develop the uses of upper floors within Old Town Center and Cardinal Way buildings. These professions have an added benefit as their above-average incomes and local spending will drive further economic diversification and expansion into niche or specialty stores and higher-quality restaurants.



Programs necessary to develop the professional class in the Town include:

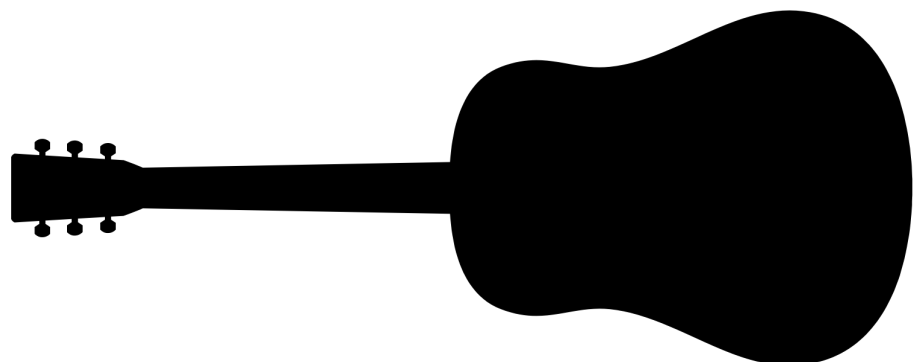
- SBDC entrepreneurial training
- Small business training
- Training and location incentives for small businesses

ARTS AND MUSIC

As a final category of professionals to help drive sustainability, artisan or music professionals should be targeted to join the Parachute community. Arts and cultural assets should be leveraged as the community diversifies its economic ecosystem. Additionally, the availability of arts and cultural programs is now a primary consideration for families relocating or having the potential to work from home. Their desire for skills and cultural elements is based on a quality of life increase due to the proximity of services and the ability to include them into local lifestyles.

Programs necessary to develop the arts in the Town include:

- Location incentives for artists (e.g., reduced rents)
- Municipal funding for the arts (e.g., rotating displays throughout Old Town and Cardinal Way)
- Local musician concert series
- Creation of a public arts program



5.3 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Objective 5-1: Promote the redevelopment of underutilized commercial and industrial spaces and infill development to accommodate new businesses.

As the Town's economy grows, businesses will require commercial and industrial spaces to operate from. Yet, many of the existing holes are in disrepair and cannot meet the anticipated needs of the Town businesses. The Town should utilize strategies for promoting commercial and industrial infill and redevelopment to ensure that companies find spaces for their needs. These strategies can include preparing due diligence reports to market to investors, offering tax abatements to developers, and reducing onerous regulations such as eliminating minimum parking requirements. Moreover, redevelopment and infill development should be of a slightly higher density than existing development, when possible, to gradually grow the Town to not be out of character. According to available research, mixed-use developments can reduce congestion in the Town while boosting potential revenues for nearby businesses by increasing the count of pedestrians, which spend more at businesses than drivers.

Strategy 5-1A: Create a building and business inventory.

Strategy 5-1B: Create a new page on the municipal website to outline underutilized parcels/buildings and demonstrate the availability.

Strategy 5-1C: Document underutilized parcels on an ESRI storyboard map and place the map on the website.

Strategy 5-1D: Establish a Business Improvement District (BID) or similar agency for Old Town Center (First Street) and Cardinal Way to generate revenue for the two identified commercial centers.

Under Colorado Revised Statutes §§ 31-25-1201 - 31-25-1228, the Town Council should work with commercial property owners to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) to represent and further the interests of the Town business community. The BID should be set to encompass the boundaries of Old Town Center and the Cardinal Way commercial district. A BID is a defined area within which non-residential users must pay an additional property tax levy to fund projects within the district's boundaries. Using the revenue generated, the Board can support projects to support the community's services: consulting services for district planning or development, maintenance of improvements, marketing services, event programming, business-supporting activities, security, snow removal, or refuse collection and design assistance. As the BID grows its commercial property valuation, its levy revenue generation will increase, providing more services to its members. BIDs have a long track record of helping to revitalize commercial areas, and these same benefits can be realized in the Town. The geographic boundary identified for the BID can also be the boundary for a blight/vacant property transformation plan, outlining how the community can maximize the area.

Action Items:

- Organize articles for a BID/URA/CRA
- Define the geographic boundary of influence for the new organization
- Conduct a vacant/blighted property survey for the newly created area

Strategy 5-1E: Institute a vacant property ordinance

Vacant properties generate less tax revenue for the municipality and have a blighting effect on the rest of the community. An empty property ordinance exists to ensure that buildings do not remain purposefully blank for extended periods. The law should provide a certain amount of time (e.g., six months) before the property leases or sells again. If properties are not in compliance with the ordinance, fines should exist and should be gradual based on the length and reoccurrence of the offense. Exceptions should be made granted the property owner is actively and reasonably seeking a tenant(s) for their property. For example, the property should be priced according to market rental prices. This will ensure that properties are leased to the extent that the market conditions allow. The commercial districts can become more vibrant by activating vacant properties, and the tax base will improve.

Action Items:

- Prepare and implement a vacant property ordinance

Strategy 5-1F: Identify and help market available properties as prime development opportunities.

As the Town grows, they have an opportunity to steer development investment by marketing specific properties. Identifying undeveloped or underutilized parcels will help maximize potential and meet the growing needs of the Town. Town staff and officials should work with property owners to identify prime development opportunities and create due diligence reports. These reports are property-specific documents that provide relevant property and community information to potential tenants or buyers and the highest and best use of the property. This must be done with the permission of the property/business owner, and often they can aid in the development of this document. By determining the highest and best use of the property, owners will be lured by the potential for higher profit margins into changing land-use types to meet the community's needs. Over time, this process will allow communities to begin dictating development details through an incentive approach. Moreover, providing these reports minimizes the burden of research for developers, making it much easier to arrive at a decision, likely increasing the investment chance.

Action Items:

- Prepare marketing materials and due diligence sheets for catalyst properties.
- Conduct feasibility studies for underutilized anchor buildings

Objective 5-2: Recruit industries and businesses that meet the needs of existing and future residents

Strategy 5-2A: Improve access to healthy food through short and long-term strategies.

Grocery shopping is one of the primary reasons residents make a trip out of the Town. Residents and officials desire to improve access to healthy food at a fair price. There are short-term and long-term policies to do this. The town should establish a weekly or bi-weekly farmer's market to connect area farmers and bakers to buyers in the short term. A farmer's market provides access to fresh food and improves regular event programming, and diversifies the Town's economy. The first step in accomplishing this is identifying stakeholders and creating a steering committee that will shape the farmer's market development. The town should attract a reputable grocery store to the community in the long term. This will come as the Town grows, but creating incentive packages and proactively seeking out developers will move up the timeline of its development. Any available non-profit, state or federal funding should be leveraged to improve access to healthy food, such as the Colorado Fresh Food Financing Fund (CO4F).

Strategy 5-2B: Dedicate a prominent space for a farmer's market.

Strategy 5-2C: Advertise and support the farmer's market

Strategy 5-2D: Work to recruit businesses that fill current voids in the market with particular attention to the areas identified in this chapter, "Economic Growth Areas."

Attracting the right business mixture is critical to ensuring a local economy is sustainable long-term.



While this process can happen organically, some strategies can often be undertaken if a community is desirous of making catalyst changes and not waiting for private development. The proposed elements or action items that will help the community recruit the missing or gap amenities are outlined in the Business Diversification and Retention strategy document, attached in Appendix D.

Action Items:

- Targeted business feasibility study
- Education campaign
- Marketing/attraction services
- The Business Diversification and Economic Retention Strategy report presented a series of elements or action items.

Strategy 2E: Create walkable community corridors and neighborhoods.

Walkable communities have numerous well-documented health, economic, and general quality of life benefits. As the Town grows, redevelopment and infill development should focus on providing a built form that is equitable for all transportation methods, ensuring a substantial qualitative and quantitative impact to all community members. The Town would help create a more vibrant, healthy, and physically connected community by creating walkable communities. These critical elements are completed by prioritizing spaces for pedestrians, bicycles, mopeds, and other transportation methods, all in coordination with the standard vehicular traffic. Action items listed earlier in this document support the ideal of a walkable community with highly implementable projects.

Action Items:

- Construct on-street and off-street connections identified in Chapter 3.
- Adopt roadway standards that prioritize walkability.

Objective 5-3: Meet the future housing needs of the Town.

Strategy 5-3A: Anticipate the future needs of housing for the Town.

As the area grows in population, the Town must have enough attainable housing to meet its future needs. This includes having a variety of accommodation at a variety of price points. The table below lays out the town's future needs with various bed/bath mixtures, price points, and square footage.

To ensure that future needs are met, the Town can partner with desired housing development specialists for new development. With accurate housing market data, for-profit entities can quickly identify the Town's needs and construct accordingly. Moreover, the Town should also partner with the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) and the Department of Local Affairs Division of Housing (DOH) to conserve and rehabilitate the current housing stock and ensure that the Town housing remains attainable to current and future residents. The CHFA offers financing directly to homeowners and developers to help improve housing stability in communities throughout the state, such as down payment assistance and low-income housing tax credits. The DOH assists developers and municipalities in creating more attainable housing through gap funding for acquisition, rehabilitation, and new construction projects. Leveraging CHFA and DOH funding opportunities and other financing measures, for-sale housing units at various price points should meet annual target growth. The table below shows the recommended yearly growth for three price points.

Additionally, proper code enforcement will assist in the conservation and rehabilitation of the existing housing stock by ensuring properties are in safe, habitable conditions. Code enforcement standards should be met and upheld by the municipal staff. Yet, proper building maintenance ultimately requires property owners to take ownership of their parcels to an acceptable state.

Action Items:

- Encourage the development of lower and higher-end homes within the Town
- Encourage infill development (smaller scale incremental development) for housing projects



Objective 5-4: Improve the homeownership rate.

Strategy 5-4A – Partner with CFHA or other agencies.

Filling the missing middle housing in a community is often challenging and lengthy. By partnering with state and federal housing agencies, the Town will provide a variety of funding mechanisms and incentives that will help drive the correct scale and style of residential development. These state and federal programs often work directly with a private developer or entity yet incorporate the municipality as an interested party or potential concession provider. It is recommended to investigate the available funding programs and secure partnerships with each agency that would merit moving the residential development forward for the Town.

Strategy 5-4B: Identify potential funding or tax opportunity for private residential developers

Attracting private development, both for residential and commercial uses, often requires a series of partnerships or strategies that will help maximize the private investment. These strategies are often broken down into two (2) categories, specifically 1) tax incentives, and 2) project funding assistance. While tax incentives or forgiveness strategies are often employed by a municipality, they can regularly lead to a no gain scenario where the construction and community impact is actually costing the community more than is being collected. It is recommended to explore creating a series of tiered scenarios for tax abatement or alteration, ensuring the proposed cuts or reductions will be matched by an appropriate level of return on investment. This can be completed by a simple excel spreadsheet to create generic ROI calculations, or it can include a complex forecasting and modeling software to project economic impacts. Either way, the purpose is to provide a series of well rounded parameters and guidance to the Town Council so an informed decision can be made. Project funding often required working with granting or outside of municipal agencies to acquire assistance to offset costs for private development. Often these programs are limited to work within the public ROW or infrastructure investments, but they can be leveraged to help lower the potential construction costs for site development. It is recommended to create a matrix of funding options, broken down by intended use, that will outline areas or programs where the Town may be able to partner with private developers on funding assistance. This list will require regularly (yearly) updates to ensure it has the most up to date grant lists possible. The information included on this matrix should include: funding source name, annual opening/closing date, average award, award ceiling/floor, necessary steps or background to make application, point person's contact information within the appropriate agency.

Action Item:

- Create an incentives impact spreadsheet
- Create a government funding & grant matrix.

Strategy 5-4C – Investigate CDBG or USDA home down payment programs

Communities eligible for USDA or CDBG funding are often allowed to utilize their funds for various programs, including first-time homebuyer assistance. Under these types of programs, municipal CDBG or USDA entities received grant funds and made sub-grants to home buyers under these types of programs. Through this process, a set amount of funds (averaging \$3,000) is provided to the new buyers, helping cover closing costs or down payments. This program has been successfully utilized in many states yet should be reviewed for applicability for the Town. Assuming this program is eligible for the Town, it is recommended to partner with the right agency to acquire funds and manage the first-time homebuyer assistance program.

Action Items:

- Coordinate with CDBG or other federal/state programs to inquire about starting a first-time homebuyer program

Strategy 5-4D – Offer a homeownership class

To help raise awareness of available resources to local first-time home buyers, it is recommended to facilitate a class or seminar. These styles of events allow the municipality to announce available resources, document the public agencies who can help, and drive partnerships between prospective



buyers and necessary assistance programs. Homeownership classes can be facilitated online or in-person but should have the same format and content provided for each. Often, these types are required to become eligible for CDBG or other grant-funded first-time homebuyer programs.

Action Items:

- Coordinate with CFHA for, or create a first-time homebuyers education program

Strategy 5-4E: Establish design guidelines and best practices with grant funding.

In addition to growth and density designations, community design guidelines can serve as guardrails for renovation, rehabilitation, and new construction, helping prevent developments that do not fit the community identity. While design guidelines currency exists, they are not directly tied to property maintenance or buildings standards that are enforceable within the Town. Defining character areas and outlining a geographic boundary for design guideline enforcement will help the Town retain the community identity and shape new development. Identifying the architectural features of the current building stock and a shared vision for the future of the Town's identity will provide a descriptive blueprint for redevelopment. These guidelines should give an in-depth evaluation of the current architecture and set best practices for features present in new construction, such as façade elements, height, setback, and pedestrian access. Ensuring a certain degree of continuity between the historic buildings and new construction will help maintain the community's architectural integrity, creating a timeless appearance.

Moreover, the document should set best practices for other design practices such as signage, lighting, and pedestrian access. These best practices will help retain the architectural integrity and community identity while facilitating growth. While this document should outline strategies to personify community character, they should be cognizant of associated increases in costs for improvements due to the guidelines. To the extent deemed appropriate by the community, the design guidelines should balance community identity preservation with economic growth.

Moreover, as resources allow, the Town should implement a program to incentivize property owners to comply with the guidelines through grants and a revolving loan fund. This program will help property owners, particularly historic buildings, modernize their façades while maintaining architectural and historical integrity. This program can identify the most deserving proposed projects and award dollars accordingly by creating a competitive application process. It is recommended that the Parachute Area Chamber of Commerce take the lead in coordinating and executing this program. Funds can be sourced from various institutions such as state and federal grants, the Chamber, the Town, and regional financial institutions.

Action Items:

- Refine the design guidelines
- Create character areas or neighborhoods
- Define geographic boundaries for design guidelines

Strategy 5-4F: Document and preserve historic sites and buildings through financial incentives.

As the community grows and evolves, historic preservation will be vital to protecting the Town's identity. The Town should establish a Historic Preservation Review Commission under state and federal guidelines and apply for a Certified Local Government (CLG) status. By obtaining CLG status, the Town will leverage numerous federal grants and loans for buildings it deems historic. The State Historical Fund offers numerous grants to property owners. Additionally, History Colorado and the US Department of the Interior offer Preservation Tax Credits and CLG grants to spur historic preservation investment. Obtaining CLG status and leveraging these financial incentives will improve the economic outcomes of the Town while preserving its history for future generations.

Action Items:

- Conduct a historic property database



Objective 5-5: Diversify the local economy and attract high-paying, next-generation jobs.

Strategy 5-5A: Identify regional partners for job diversification

To diversify the area's economy, the Town must evolve and adapt to meet the market's changing needs. This is true for all types of employment, but most specifically for high-paying employment opportunities. Understanding this, the Town must begin to work with OEDIT, DOLA, or federal agencies to become development ready. TO become development-ready, the Town will likely have to prepare a series of upgrades or initiatives to provide the necessary infrastructure, housing, and economic generators attractive to the desired sectors. The Town can solicit private investment and job growth by developing offer packages and compiling information required to recruit potential employers. Regional partners should include professional jobs and trades or non-collegial career facilities, including advanced manufacturing and information technology.

Action Items:

- Work with OEDIT to complete readiness training and documentation
- Utilize state programs or agencies to market available resources and desired end-users
- Conduct an assessment on business and employment infrastructure (internet, electricity, traffic, etc.) to determine missing services that must be supplemented.

Strategy 5-5B: Prepare a trade or retail area.

When attempting to diversify a local economy, it is essential to understand where your primary, secondary, or even tertiary users are from, their socio-economic characteristics, and their draw to the destination. This is where a retail or trade area is identified. A retail or trade area defines the geographic boundaries for which a community may attract individuals, families, or businesses. It also notes and documents the level of impact or economic expenditures (by region) within the trade area. Through this area determination, a community can look at the trade area's socio-economic conditions and community characteristics, pairing an attractive or desired series of services. These services can be a destination or serve a symbiotic purpose, drawing in more residents from the extends of your retail or trade area. By determining this trade area, a community can understand what will diversify and provide a more robust local economy.

Action Items:

- Determine geographic boundary for trade area
- Conduct a retail or trade area identification

Strategy 5-5C: Identify community and regional implementation partners.

As the community grows and draws in a new industry, regional community partnerships will strengthen the economy and locate certain firms. In each effort, the community and regional implementation partners will change. Two partners that will be critical in diversifying the Town's economy are the Colorado River Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade. These two entities can provide the Town with the resources needed to attract and retain investment. These partnerships are crucial to coordinating marketing efforts and boosting tourism. Working with other municipalities can help coordinate events, reduce competition, and build on each other to generate larger turnouts and more tourism revenue. While these partnerships will prove beneficial in attracting tourism, partnering with other communities can reduce competition and duplicative efforts such as economic development and workforce training.

Action Items:

- Conduct a roundtable meeting with community and regional partners
- Prepare a resources matrix to highlight services or amenities each agency can offer

Strategy 5-5D: Work with investors to develop executive and Class B office space.

Office space will be critical to the future of the Town's economy as the national economy shifts towards an information-based market. Executive and Class B office space are two great strategies to meet the needs



for missing middle commercial spaces. Class B office space is currently missing from the Town. Working with investors to develop this nonexistent market as a more affordable alternative to regional businesses than the office space in Grand Junction, Glenwood Springs, or other nearby towns will help improve and diversify the Town's economy. Moreover, as the economy changes in the age of COVID-19, a flexible real estate market will help the Town better respond to the fluctuating demands. Working from home is becoming increasingly prevalent, and executive office spaces react well to this market need. These spaces are between 250 and 500 square feet and offer flexibility depending on individual needs. Many administrative office spaces serve as incubators for smaller firms that do not require ample office space. For example, this provides an excellent opportunity to host a traveling CPA or for regional companies to host satellite offices. As firms grow, they can move into larger office spaces.

Action Items:

- Conduct necessary feasibility studies to empower small-scale developers

Strategy 5-5E: Create KPI or metrics, track, and document success.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are the critical progress indicators towards an intended result. These provide a focus for strategic and operational improvement, create an analytical basis for decision making, and help focus attention on the most pressing issues. As the Town works towards accomplishing the goals outlined in this document, there should be benchmarks to check progress and reevaluate each. Well-constructed KPIs provide objective evidence of progress towards achieving the goal, accurately measure the target to help inform future decision making, can track efficiency, effectiveness, timeliness, performance change, and other performance metrics, and are balanced between leading and lagging indicators. The town can produce documentable results to build public confidence in the Council's actions by tracking KPIs. These KPIs should be publicly and readily available to residents and investors who wish to analyze the Town's progress towards its own goals.

Action Items:

- Ideate, implement, and track metrics for community development efforts.

Objective 5-6: Expand services and amenities available locally.

Strategy 5-6A: Conduct NAICS-level detailed market analysis.

A North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) level market analysis identifies markets with more excellent demand rent supply. This will help the Town identify what businesses exist, the targeted types of end-users, and the community's amenities and services gaps. By completing this analysis and identifying needs, targeted efforts can be made to fill these gaps. This information will also improve investor confidence and draw investment to specific needs by demonstrating the strong potential for a good return on investment. Various banks can accomplish this through data acquired through credit card transaction processing.

Action Items:

- Have a detailed market analysis conducted for the Town and surrounding areas

Strategy 5-6B: Prepare incentives to prioritize necessary services.

Through the public input process and the NAICS-level detailed market analysis, the Town Council can identify which services and amenities are missing or underserved. With this information, the Town can prepare incentive packages to recruit businesses that will help meet its needs. The Town Council should leverage available state and federal programs to incentivize companies to locate in the Town. Additionally, the Town should explore local tax abatement programs to fill in final gaps in services and amenities. Local tax incentives should be approached cautiously to avoid preemptively eliminating the potential tax base as the Town grows. When possible, the Town should preference local and regional businesses to receive tax incentives.



Action Items:

- Identify maximum and minimum range for each incentive
- Prepare a document outlining potential “packages” of incentives for developers

Strategy 5-6C: Create an entity or individual tasked with attracting missing services and amenities.

The Town has a documented lack of essential services and amenities that are limiting its sustained growth by not fulfilling the needs of its existing and potential residents. The Town should work with the Colorado River Valley Chamber of Commerce to establish an entity solely tasked with attracting and retaining missing services and amenities. This entity should solicit bids, preferably from local and regional businesses, to fill the existing identified gaps. Further, investment in the Town should not be a cumbersome and burdensome process, and creating a single point of contact (SPOC) within the new entity can reduce barriers by consolidating access to information. The designated person will provide investors with the necessary information, documents, and deadlines upon request. This streamlines the process and eliminates misinformation and confusion while creating more investment opportunities.

Action Items:

- Hire an employee or consultant to assist with business attraction
- If a consultant is selected, have them train a municipal staff on the process

Objective 5-7: Develop and create community gathering spaces and opportunities to promote dialogue.

Strategy 5-7A: Investigate building a food truck court area

This location would unlock a circulator transportation pattern, driving traffic to Cardinal way.

Action Items:

- Submit a DOLA (or another implementation program) grant for the food truck court

Strategy 5-7B: Consider taking the lead on leasing space to create a community center, meeting room, coffee shop, and shared office space/business incubators.

Some amenities or services are not set up for private development to fulfill. These services are often community-based and have a limited return on investment. However, these amenities are often as impactful, if not more impactful, than private development, driving qualitative improvements to the resident’s quality of life. As these items are not commonly completed through personal growth, the Town must step in to help initiate these projects and move the efforts forward. To help the community realize their need for a variety of spaces, precisely a multi-purpose gathering space, and a shared office/business incubator, the Town will likely have to review the opportunities for serving as the local developer and property owner. To ensure that local tax-payer dollars are well expended, a series of feasibility studies should be undertaken. This style of study will determine the applicability, need, and feasibility of the proposed facility use and rehabilitation efforts. These studies should be completed before purchasing or leasing a facility, allowing for sound financial decisions to be made before construction dollars are expended. Additionally, if properly run by the municipality, these facilities can empower and foster local businesses to drive catalyst changes in the local economy.

Action Items:

- Identify a parcel/building for a co-working or shared workspace
- Complete a feasibility study for the shared workspace or executive offices



Strategy 5-7C: Attract new mid-grade dining and entertainment options.

There is a documented lack of mid-grade dining and entertainment options in the Town. Without these amenities in the Town, residents currently must travel to nearby municipalities for dining and entertainment. The Town wishes to attract and develop mid-grade dining and entertainment options within the municipal boundaries, allowing the residents to gain improved access and generating new tax revenue. As the Town continues to grow, these amenities will be increasingly necessary. They will be vital in attracting and retaining residents as well as tourism.

Action Items:

- Work with property owners to identify parcels that can be transformed into a dine-in, mid-grade restaurant.

Strategy 5-7D: Attract and develop professional services.

There is a documented lack of professional services such as lawyers, insurance agents, and physicians. Without necessary services within the Town, residents currently must travel to nearby municipalities for said services. The Town wishes to attract and develop professional services within the municipal boundaries, allowing the residents to gain improved access and generating new tax revenue. As the town grows, these professional services will be increasingly necessary. They will be vital in attracting and retaining residents and other businesses.

Action Items:

- Identify executive office spaces within the town that can serve professional service providers.

Strategy 5-7E: Expand and improve events that celebrate the area's cultural heritage.

Grand Valley Days (GVD) is the Town's only annual event that highlights and celebrates the Town's identity. Residents hope to build on GVD by expanding the calendar of events to include more regularly scheduled events. The Town Council should partner with local and regional cultural organizations to develop and sustain new events that capture a more diverse target audience. Moreover, events should be marketed to regional audiences to increase tourism revenue. Increased consumer spending at community events will help provide the funding source to continue hosting and expanding the offerings.

Action Items:

- Create a single community calendar to highlight the variety of events for people to participate in.

Strategy 5-7F: Add recurring events that bring people together consistently and promote vitality within the Town's commercial centers, such as farmer's markets, free weekly concerts, etc.

When a community meets together, they experience a sense of place or community. This is a critical step in determining how people perceive the Town and influencing how much overall pride residents have for their home. Increasing the sense of place requires people to gather and interact, experiencing how each person plays a part in the general community fabric. Maximizing this effort requires preparing a clearly outlined and reputable calendar of events that documents how the community will gather regularly. These events can be formal, such as community revitalization meetings, or informal, like ice cream socials. Offering the most impact for these events will require them to be provided in easy-to-access locations such as the commercial corridors. However, rotating the areas and facilities is a fantastic opportunity to highlight underutilized amenities.

Action Item:

- Conduct a monthly event for the public
- Track attendance and metrics to ensure the entire population is being represented
- Amend and alter monthly events to maximize participation from all groups



Objective 5-8: Work with stakeholders to identify missing workforce needs and encourage alternative careers.

Strategy 5-8A: Conduct a business needs assessment to gauge the missing workforce and document the specialties required.

Identifying missing workforce needs is the first step in attracting new industry to the Town. By documenting what skills are needed, Town stakeholders can effectively allocate resources in training the residents for alternative careers. The Town Council should partner with the Colorado River Valley Chamber of Commerce to identify missing workforce needs. This effort should consist of surveying existing industries and identifying the skills needed to attract new initiatives such as information technology firms.

Strategy 5-8B: Partner with educational institutions in creating and promoting workforce training programs.

As employment opportunities become increasingly technical, it is necessary for the Town's workforce to have the technical skills required to thrive in the new economy. By partnering with educational institutions, the Town can create and promote workforce training programs. These programs will provide the Town's residents with the skills necessary to obtain jobs in the skilled trades and information technology sectors. Moreover, a skilled workforce will help the Town in attracting new employers. The prepared Business Diversification & Retention Strategy explores further how a workforce training program and dedicated facility will help meet the needs of the Town industries and provide residents with the skills needed to enter the workforce and earn competitive benefits. Moreover, the prepared document further explores how a trades training program and facility operations in the Town.





APPENDIX

