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# Appendices

(Attached)

Appendix A – Glossary

Appendix B – Plans Resource Documents and Reports

(Under Separate Cover)

Appendix C – Demographic Profile

Appendix D – Plan Alternatives

Appendix E – Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Plan

*These appendices are available in the City Planning Department Office or online at [www.durangogov.org](http://www.durangogov.org)*
1 Introduction

This Comprehensive Plan is an update of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. While the vision of the 2007 Plan and many of the goals, objectives and policies remain valid, community changes since 2007 necessitate this update. This update, which plans for community growth through 2040 is the product of the efforts of hundreds of citizens who volunteered their concerns, aspirations and problem solving skills over the course of several decades.

The Plan is based on many assumptions, many of which reflect observable regional or national trends, such as the aging of the population; the unsustainability of transportation based on single occupancy automobiles; economic pressures that are reducing Durango’s socio-economic diversity; the importance of Durango’s environmental quality to its economic vitality and quality of life; and the critical need to develop regional solutions to regional challenges, such as transportation, housing, air quality and growth coordination.

A key assumption guiding the formation of this Plan update is that the population will continue to grow in the planning area, in accordance with the State Demographer’s population projections. The policies of this Update are based upon County-wide growth estimates of the State Demographer for the “2040 Trip: The Durango/La Plata County Regional Transportation Study.”

For various reasons described below, this update redistributes jobs and housing to accommodate growth through the year 2040 as projected in the Regional Transportation Study. Although it is unlikely that the planning area will achieve this precise amount of growth in the exact time frame defined by the Study, this Update assumes the validity of these projections as a reasonable estimate of future growth. To ensure the Plan’s effectiveness, local, regional and national conditions that impact growth must be monitored to adjust growth assumptions and the local strategies employed.

While the State Demographer has historically generated reliable growth projections, there are many local or global events or trends that could dramatically alter Durango’s future, including:

- Major national or regional economic events;
- Climatic changes that reduce municipal water supplies or snow needed for the skiing resorts; or
- Natural or man-made disaster that destroys significant portions of the built or natural environment.

These or other events could have significant impacts on the growth assumptions on which this Plan is based.

Throughout the planning process, citizens were provided the opportunity to discuss the issues facing Durango, evaluate the implications of alternative ways to address those changes and voice their opinions about the best ways to address changes in Durango. Some of the changes that necessitated this plan update are:

- The owner’s decision to dedicate Ewing Mesa for a future County Fairgrounds site, recreational uses, cultural and performing arts facilities and conservation areas instead of the urban development envisioned in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan;
The opening of Lake Nighthorse and the City’s agreement to provide water to the La Plata Archuleta Water District through Grandview;

The successful development of Three Springs and the new Mercy Hospital site;

The provision of centralized water service to La Posta Road and the resulting development pressures on Koshak Mesa and Animas Air Park;

The new Arts, Culture and Creative Economy Element defines the City’s roles in supporting the creative community and its contributions to the local culture and economy.

Pressure to increase City-County coordination on many growth management challenges, including transportation, housing, utility and land use issues; and

Dramatic progress on the expansion of recreational facilities, as well as the open space and trail networks

The Plan update process was guided by a 13-member Advisory Committee to consider the City’s growth options and recommend policies and strategies to address the many challenges facing Durango. Public workshops, survey, interviews and other strategies to engage the public were employed throughout the process, including Keypad polling technology, a project website and email blasts.

After reviewing existing conditions, trends and projections, as described in Chapter 3 and Appendix C, the Advisory Committee and the public defined three growth scenarios and evaluated their impacts. After considering the impacts of these scenarios (see Appendix D) and engaging the community to discuss the merits and deficiencies of each scenario, the Advisory Committee recommended a preferred scenario on which this Comprehensive Plan update is based.

This Comprehensive Plan reflects a shared community vision of Durango’s future, and guides decision-makers towards that vision through updated goals and prioritized implementation strategies.
The public participation program informed each phase of the planning process.
1.1 A Guide for Action

Durango’s City Charter states that:

“The Council shall adopt and may from time to time modify a comprehensive plan, which may be integrated into the plans of other governments, and which shall set forth policies concerning the future development of lands, public facilities and public services.”

“The Comprehensive Plan shall serve as a guide for all future Council action concerning land use and development regulations and expenditures for capital improvements.”

“All proposed annexations shall be in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan.”

The Comprehensive Plan is:

- An ongoing exercise of local self-government;
- A tool for democratic discourse;
- The only formal unified overview of life in Durango;
- An ongoing status report on the City’s performance;
- A statement of the City’s view of itself;
- The most basic statement of Durango’s public policy;
- A description of how the City should act to achieve its desired future;
- A means to inform the public and all stakeholders and to enhance their confidence; and
- A tool to assist in the management and stewardship of the City.

The Comprehensive Plan should help guide public and private individuals in decisions about land use, development, housing and a wide range of other issues throughout the City’s Planning Area, illustrated in Figure 1. However, it should not be the only document considered prior to making decisions.

Public and private decision-makers should consider the City’s land use and development regulations, facility master plans, capital improvement plans and other documents that implement this Plan.

The Plan is intended to be a dynamic document that responds to change in the community. Implementation is fundamental to any planning process, and strategies in this Plan have been designed to achieve Durango’s vision, goals and objectives, provide clear priorities, and describe specific tasks. The Plan outlines a strategy to preserve or enhance residents’ quality of life, while addressing the many growth-related challenges facing the City.

Durango’s Comprehensive Plan fulfills the requirements of and is intended to serve as the Three Mile Plan authorized by CRS 31.12.105(1)(E). The three-mile plan is a long-range plan for municipalities to consider where they want to annex, how they will provide service in the newly annexed areas, and how they will sustain adequate levels of service throughout the rest of the municipality. The Policies of this Plan ensure that the City will annex land only when it is consistent with pre-existing plans for the surrounding area.

This Plan describes how Durango will coordinate with the County, private property owners, service providers, businesses and institutions to protect important community resources and make efficient investment decisions to manage growth, maximize the benefits of growth while minimizing its burdens on existing tax and rate payers, and enhance the City’s ability to provide the facilities and services that contribute to the high quality of life that distinguishes Durango. Key directives in this Plan include:

- An emphasis on coordinating growth management efforts with La Plata County – only through an effective partnership can we address our most challenging issues;
- A focus on sustainability – establishing Durango as a model for visionary and pragmatic actions to achieve economic, environmental, energy and socially equitable sustainability; and
- A systematic approach to enhancing the quality of life of all residents.
Figure 1:

Durango Planning Area

Legend
- Major Roads
- - 590 Planned
- Water
- City Limits
- Planning Area Boundary

Date: 3/8/2017
Document Path: C:\Clients\Durango_2016\GIS\urbanizing.mxd
2 Vision

Durango’s Comprehensive Plan defines a long-term vision for the future of the planning area. As the foundation of the planning process, the vision was developed in support of the City’s 2007 Comprehensive Plan update and refined in community forums conducted in 2016. The vision statement helps citizens and decision-makers remember the ends to which the Plan aspires. In concert with the guiding principles and plan goals, it should guide the interpretation, application and amendment of the Plan over time.

The vision and core values are broad statements that are refined through the remaining text in this Comprehensive Plan. The guiding principles are intended to clarify the intent of the vision statement and establish the context for the goals, objectives and policies in each of the Plan elements. The principles are grouped in four categories that arose from the Grassroots Vision Process. The vision and goals of the plan describe the ends to which the community aspires. The objectives are steps to be taken in achieving these ends. The guiding principles and policies describe how the City will achieve its vision and goals. The strategies included in the Plan Implementation Program reflect the short-term priorities for action.
**Vision Statement**

*Durango is an authentic, diverse and creative community living in harmony with its natural environment, pursuing economic, environmental and social sustainability.*

**Core Values**

- **Sustainability:** We embrace public and private actions to preserve and enhance our natural and built environments for future generations.

- **Healthy Community:** We flourish as a community by caring about everyone’s needs and supporting efforts to reach our full potential.

- **Environmental Stewardship:** We honor and respect our natural environment, realizing that our lives are interdependent with the Earth’s well-being.

- **Vibrant Culture:** Our community thrives as a welcoming and creative people who honor and learn from history and tradition.

- **Economic Vitality:** Our community experiences economic prosperity through diversification, self-reliance, interdependence and adaptability.

**Guiding Principles**

- Actively involve and serve all of our residents;

- Respect individual rights, yet be guided by our concern for the common good;

- Minimize our ecological footprint;

- Celebrate our diversity, creativity, history, and inquisitive nature;

- Conserve our natural resources, while protecting our lands, wildlife, air quality and the Animas River;

- Flourish through the sustainable use of our natural resources;

- Model our growth on the beauty, efficiency and resiliency of our natural systems;

- Shop and invest in our community to create jobs and local prosperity;

- Leverage our collective knowledge and ingenuity to anticipate and respond to emerging needs; and

- Develop community wisdom and share knowledge central to our success.
3 Growth Trends

3.1 Overview

Population and employment growth shapes Durango’s needs and opportunities, creating many of the challenges identified in this Plan. Changes in the size and characteristics of the City’s population may have profound impacts on the fiscal, economic, social and natural environment. Population increases generate demands for additional services and facilities where those increases occur. Different age and income segments of the population have different needs, which shape demands for housing, services and infrastructure. A complete assessment of growth trends in Durango is found in Appendix C - Demographic Profile.

The Demographic Profile examines historic and projected population growth, as well as residential and non-residential development trends. These trends provide baseline assumptions upon which future land uses, fiscal needs, housing needs, public infrastructure and service demands will be measured.

The key demographic trends shaping the directives in this Comprehensive Plan are:

- The disparity between wages and the cost of living in Durango;
- The need for a broad range of housing choices for all income and age groups;
- Increasing service demands for all ages and income groups; and
- The diverse and increasing mobility needs of a population that is spread over a wider area.

3.2 Demographic Snapshot

3.2.1 Population Increase

La Plata County’s population steadily increased from 19,225 in 1960 to 43,941 in 2000 (129% increase) and the City of Durango’s population also increased, from 10,530 to 13,922 in 2000 (32% increase) during the same period. Between the years 2000 and 2015, the population of the County and the City increased to 54,688 and 18,006, or by 24% and 30% respectively.

While this Plan is for the City of Durango and its planning area, and not the County, County growth has a tremendous impact on the City from the perspective of facilities and services, employment and traffic. It is projected in 2040 Trip: The Durango/La Plata County Regional Transportation Study that the County’s population is expected to grow at an annual rate of approximately 1.8% over the planning horizon.

The 2040 population of the County is projected to be 85,770, which is an 56% increase over the 2015 population of 54,688.

3.2.2 Age

Overall, the population of Durango is younger than that of the nation – the median age in 2000 in Durango was 29.2 years, while the median age in the U.S. was 35.3 years. In 2015 the median age for the City had increased to 31.9 years and is projected to continue increasing through the year 2040.

3.2.3 Employment

Durango was home to 71% of the County’s total employment in 2015 and its share is projected by the State Demographer to increase to 78% by the year 2040. This increase reflects a reverse in the trend towards increasing population growth outside the City in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2015, 24,100 of the 33,749 jobs in La Plata County were within the City and its planning area. By 2040, the City and its planning area are projected to have 38,200 of the 48,770 jobs in the County.

Durango role’s as a tourist destination will continue, as will its roles as a regional center for health care, education, retail and professional services. The largest occupational sectors for Durango workers in 2010 were “educational services, health care and social assistance” and “arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations and food services,” each of which comprised 20% of total employment. “Professional, scientific,
management, administrative and management services” and “retail trade” each comprised 10% of total employment.

3.2.4 Income

The City’s household median income in 2015 was estimated to be $57,024, with 42% of households earning less than $50,000 per year, 36% earning $50,000 to $99,999 per year and 22% earning $100,000 or more. According to HUD guidelines, households earning less than 80% of median income or $45,619 are considered low income, which includes one-third to two-fifths of Durango’s households.

3.2.5 Housing Costs

Housing unaffordability has long been a challenge in Durango for a variety of reasons. In 2013, the Regional Housing Alliance of La Plata County and the La Plat Homes Fund conducted a Housing Needs Study, which found that:

- 37% of La Plata County households paid more than 30% of their household incomes for housing, which is the threshold for being classified as cost-burdened;
- 47% of renter and 29% of homeowner households were cost-burdened;
- The dramatic slowdown in construction beginning in 2007 had not rebounded as rapidly as the demand for new housing, which led to increased housing costs. From 2010 to 2013, housing units were being developed at half the rate of household growth; and
- Continued governmental support is needed through affordable housing requirements, fee subsidies, in-kind support for affordable housing, increased density allowances and other measures.

4 Natural Environment Element

4.1 Overview

This element addresses Durango’s natural environment -- the source of the community’s primary assets and constraints. Streams, rivers, air quality, abundance of wildlife, easy access to outdoor recreational opportunities and to natural open space areas are highly valued by area residents. At the same time, the underlying geology, topography, soils and floodplains impose constraints on development in many areas. Most of the unconstrained areas in Durango have already been developed. As pressures increase to develop more constrained sites, the community is faced with decisions to balance the demand for additional urban land with issues of public safety, environmental integrity and community character.

“Sustainability” is a cornerstone of the City’s Plan that is supported by most participants in the planning process, especially regarding the natural environment, with many participants voicing a desire to move beyond sustainability to enhance the surrounding environment as Durango grows, rather than minimizing harms. This concept is discussed in greater detail throughout the Plan, including in the Key Issues section of this Chapter.

4.2 Context for Planning

Durango’s natural environment is a valuable community resource - it is the dominant feature of the community’s character; it makes Durango unique; and, ironically, it is the attractiveness of the Animas River, local streams, the hillsides and open spaces that make Durango so attractive for development that could in turn degrade the quality of the natural environment. Because today’s development decisions will shape environmental and open space opportunities for generations to come, it is critical to prioritize natural resources and to maintain a balance between built and natural environments.

4.2.1 Topography and Geology

As shown in Map 1, Durango is in La Plata County, in southwestern Colorado. Downtown Durango is located in the Animas River Valley at an elevation of 6,500 feet above mean sea level (“msl”), surrounded by mountains and mesas of the San Juan Mountains. The edges of these mesas, ridges and mountains are characterized by steep slopes; Map 2 identifies areas with slopes of 30 percent or greater. These slopes generally are less stable, more susceptible to erosion, rock falls, landslides, stormwater and floodwater damage, and increasing development costs.

Geologic constraints, shown in Map 3, include:

- rock falls (areas below very steep slopes or cliffs subject to periodic rock falls);
- potentially unstable slopes that are subject to failure if disturbed or improperly developed;
- unstable slopes (slopes subject to failure, such as creep, but not known for landslides);
- landslides (known areas of slope failure, including avalanches and rotational and translational slides);
- the Fruitland Outcrop, an area in which natural gas is close to the earth’s surface and prone to seeping into wells and the surface;
debris fans (areas subject to torrential wash from tributary streams); and
- seismic faults.

Soil suitability also limits development, as characterized by the following predominant soil types found in the Durango region:

- Zyme-Rock Outcrop-Ustic Torriorthents, which are found on foothills, ridges and terrace escarpments to the south and east of Durango. These soils are moderately fine to moderately coarse textured, drain well and are highly valued for livestock grazing and wildlife habitat. Shallow depth to bedrock, steep slope and high shrink-swell potential are the main limitations to development. Off-site sewage disposal systems are more satisfactory than on-site.

- Pescar-Tefton-Fluvaquents are found in floodplains and low terraces along the Animas River in Durango and running north. These soils are deep and somewhat poorly drained, with a moderately coarse texture. These soils are primarily used for irrigated field crops and pasture, rangeland and wildlife habitat. Frequent flooding, seepage and a high water table frequently require extensive engineering designs, for drainage protection and to minimize flooding, as these sites are developed.

- Shalona-Sedillo-Mikim soils are prevalent on river terraces and alluvial fans along the Animas River south of Durango. These soils are deep and well-drained with a medium texture. These soils are used for irrigated field crops and pastures, non-irrigated crops, rangeland and wildlife habitat. Low soil strength and high shrink-swell potential are the primary development limitations. Moderate to slow permeability may limit on-site sewage capabilities.

- Archuleta-Goldvale-Hesperus soils are found on hills, ridges and mountainsides and in valleys. These soil types are common in the areas north, northeast and northwest of Durango. These soils may be shallow or deep, and typically are well drained, with a medium to moderately coarse texture. These soils support woodlands, livestock grazing, irrigated and non-irrigated crops and wildlife habitat. Depth to bedrock and steep slopes are primary development limitations.

Durango’s planning area encompasses many sub-basins that drain directly to the Animas River and its tributaries, such as Junction Creek, Dry Creek and Lightner Creek. Map 4 shows available information for
portions of the 100-year floodplain, as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”).

Mineral reserves located throughout the planning area, as illustrated in Map 5, include gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, barite, uranium and vanadium. Significant bituminous and sub-bituminous coal deposits are located southwest, southeast and east of Durango, ranging from 150 to 3,000 feet in depth. Natural gas deposits are located south and east of Durango in the Ignacio-Blanco gas fields. Sand and gravel deposits are prevalent throughout the Animas River Valley and on surrounding mesas.

### 4.2.2 Fruitland Formation Outcrop

The Fruitland Formation, shown in Map 3, is a natural gas (coalbed methane) formation that extends southward from Durango underneath the San Juan Basin. The Fruitland Outcrop, where the coal seam crops out at the surface of the Northern San Juan Basin rim, extends for about 90 miles across southwestern Colorado. Gas found at shallow depths in the Fruitland Formation make it a valuable natural resource for gas mining. Many operating gas wells exist in the area, leading to local concerns about the impacts of those mining activities, including increased traffic congestion and the need for new roads to serve the wells; environmental impacts such as noise and/or degraded air and water quality; and potential threats to historical and cultural resources. The Outcrop poses potential threats to public health and safety due to methane seepage, which has caused vegetation in the area to die off as well as underground coal fires.

### 4.2.3 Biology

There are diverse indigenous and introduced vegetation and wildlife in the planning area. Cottonwood trees, willow trees and hardy grasses grow along the Animas River, Junction Creek and Lightner Creek. Piñons, junipers, ponderosa pines and sagebrush are common in the areas surrounding Durango to the south, east and west. A mix of aspen, conifers, ponderosa pine and Douglas fir are found north of the City. Noxious weeds are a concern throughout the planning area. There is abundant wildlife along the Animas River; the river valley serving as a habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, including fish, bald and golden eagles, peregrine falcons, marsh and red-tailed hawks, kestrels, beavers, muskrats, mule deer and elk. Bears and mountain lions are periodic visitors to Durango.

### 4.2.4 Water and Air Quality

The Animas and Florida Rivers are the sources of Durango's public water system. Approximately 40 percent of La Plata County's population relies on some type of unregulated water system. There is limited water quality data available, but existing studies have cited historic contamination of the Animas River from sediment, salts and heavy metals. Naturally occurring sediment in the Animas River is exacerbated by sediment from human activities, which could be better managed. While groundwater from the La Plata, Animas, Florida and Pine Rivers’ alluvium is high quality in many areas, sulfur and other mineral contaminants have been found in some alluvial wells. Non-alluvial water throughout the County can contain a variety of contaminants, including bacteria, selenium, fluoride, methane gas, hydrogen sulfide and salinity. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment recommends the design and implementation of a rural water system.

Durango’s air quality is very good; it is an attainment area for all air pollution criteria, including ozone, carbon monoxide and PM10. Durango occasionally experiences localized air quality problems and decreased visibility common to western slope communities. Despite the City's attainment status, residents have expressed concern about air quality problems from wood stoves and the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, which operates coal-fired trains shuttling tourists between Durango and Silverton. Air quality also depends upon regional policies, particularly energy production throughout the Four Corners region.

Durango enjoys moderate temperatures year-round -- the average summer temperature in Durango is 65°F; the average winter temperature is 28°F, with average winter temperatures ranging from the teens to near 40°F and average summer temperatures ranging from near 50°F to the mid-80s. Durango averages 18 inches of precipitation and 67 inches of snowfall per year (though higher elevations can receive as much as 250 inches of snowfall per year).
Map 1:
Regional Setting
Map 3:
Geologic Constraints
Map 4:
Floodplains
Map 5:

Mineral Resources
4.3 Key Natural Resources Issues

4.3.1 Acting Sustainably

“Sustainability” is one of the key principles on which this Plan is founded – a principle that encompasses actions to enhance economic, social and environmental conditions in ways that preserve or enhance opportunities for future generations. Sustainability is woven throughout the plan because the impacts of our policies and actions ripple through the built and natural environments, affecting the quality of life addressed in each element of this Plan. In terms of the natural environment, sustainability can refer to our use of open spaces; development patterns that minimize the impacts of the built environment; construction techniques in the public and private realms that use “green” alternatives to conventional materials and systems; increased reliance on renewable sources of energy; and an overall philosophy that balances the human impact on natural systems and resources in an effort to achieve positive outcomes for both people and the environment. In concert with the City’s Sustainability Action Plan, the policies and strategies of this Comprehensive Plan focus on local initiatives (including STAR Community certification) to improve the quality of life for citizens of Durango today and tomorrow.

4.3.2 Conserving Energy & Using Renewable Sources

Durango’s 2006 adoption of the Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement, and the subsequent development of the Sustainability Action Plan reflect the City’s commitment to minimize human impact on the environment through energy conservation and increased use of alternative energy sources in our buildings, transportation system, recreational facilities and other portions of the built environment. The City continues to pursue STAR and other benchmarking programs to promote green building, green infrastructure and green mobility strategies to reduce consumption of energy and reduce the carbon footprint of the energy that it consumes. The City purchases 100% of electricity used in municipal operations from environmentally beneficial renewable sources via La Plata Electric Associations “Just One Block” program and has plans to expand on-site renewable generation. In addition, the City continues to pursue benchmarking programs for its green building, infrastructure, mobility and purchasing strategies designed to reduce energy consumption and shrink the carbon footprint of the energy it consumes, both directly and indirectly.

4.3.3 Protecting Rivers and Streams

The Sustainability Action Plan explicitly sets out the City’s intention to conserve Durango’s natural environment, promote sustainable water and wastewater systems and responsibly manage water resources. The majority of Durango’s water demand is currently met using water diverted from the Florida and Animas Rivers. The 2015 Gold King Mine contamination highlighted the vulnerability of our water resources and the importance of coordinating with State and Federal agencies to protect the City’s water supply. The creation of an additional water treatment plant at Lake Nighthorse will provide an emergency buffer and help meet additional water demand as the Durango’s population grows.

Durango will continue to promote water conservation community-wide and develop strategies to reduce per capita municipal water use.

In addition to being an important source of water for Durango and the surrounding region, the Animas River is at the heart of our community, geographically as well as in environmental, cultural and economic terms. Running through the center of town, the Animas is used extensively for rafting, kayaking and fishing and the community has focused considerable
effort on developing the Animas River Trail (ART). The ART is a hard surface, shared-use path stretching nearly 7 miles through Durango’s Animas River Greenway and serves as the spine of the City’s overall trail network.

Protecting the Animas River is essential, not only to securing the water supply for Durango but also safeguarding its environmental, recreational, cultural, aesthetic and economic value well into the future.

4.3.4 Maintaining High Air Quality

The overall air quality in Durango is excellent, though localized pollution from the train, wood stoves, fugitive dust, automobiles and fires cause periodic degradation. In line with Durango’s objectives as a STAR reporting community, the City will continue to explore opportunities to reduce air pollution from the train, wood stoves automobiles and other sources.

4.3.5 Preserving Wildlife Habitat and Corridors

Elk, deer, hawks, eagles, bears, mountain lions, and other wildlife are common sights in Durango. As development occurs in the Animas River Valley and along arterial roads leading into Durango, there will continue to be increasing conflicts between development and wildlife. There is a high potential for disruption of normal movement through open space corridors that could damage local animal populations. By preserving adequate open space corridors in line with the Sustainability Action Plan and increasing awareness in the local community, the City aims to reduce conflicts between humans and wildlife without damaging wildlife populations. Preservation efforts have been bolstered by the citizen supported open space acquisition program, City efforts to preserve valued open spaces through the development process, and the recent proposal to dedicate much of Ewing Mesa for open space, recreational, cultural and other public purposes.
4.3.6 Ensuring Public Safety
As development has consumed most of the readily developable sites in the community, there is increasing pressure to develop environmentally constrained properties, such as the hillsides and floodplains. While limited development may be appropriate in some of these areas, it should be designed to minimize risks from natural hazards such as wildfires and flooding. Infill development opportunities supported by this Plan and other City sustainability initiatives can reduce pressure to expand the City’s physical footprint and capitalize on existing infrastructure (e.g., streets, water, sewer and stormwater management facilities), which further protects residents from wildfire, flooding and other geo-hazards.

4.3.7 Balancing Urban Growth and Environmental Integrity
While sustainability is a simple and appealing concept, it is difficult to measure. Pursuit of STAR Community certification is a way the City can employ objective evaluation criteria. Incremental losses of open space or habitat rarely have measurable or predictable impacts -- the cumulative impact of many decisions over time often have more profound effects than predicted at the time of development. This, combined with the fact that developed land is rarely redeveloped as open space, increases the importance of ensuring that adequate land is set aside to maintain the community’s environmental integrity.

4.3.8 Preserving Access to and Vistas of Natural Areas
To protect hillsides and ridgelines overlooking the community from inappropriate development, Durango has secured significant open space land to supplement state and federal lands. These lands establish and maintain the natural vistas that form an “emerald necklace” around the City. As flat land becomes scarcer, pressure to develop along hillsides has increased, prompting aesthetic, engineering and safety concerns. Development on the City’s tree-covered hillsides is highly visible.

Hillsides outside of the current City limits serve as wildlife habitat areas, yet also represent significant wildfire hazards. While building safety can be improved and some environmental impacts addressed through engineering techniques, these techniques do little to mitigate the aesthetic and wildlife impacts of developing on hillsides and steep slopes. As such, public and private development should be designed to minimize the disturbance of hillsides and to ensure that community residents will enjoy safe access to the public lands surrounding Durango.

4.3.9 Improving Resiliency
The geology and geography that make Durango such a beautiful environment in which to live are accompanied by a wide range of threats, many of which are highlighted in earlier parts of this element. The safety of Durango residents and the community’s long-term viability rely on the identification and minimization, mitigation or abatement of threats such as floods, wildfires, and slope failures. Specific risks are identified in the City’s Emergency Operations Plan as well as the La Plata County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Furthermore, through the Sustainability Action Plan and STAR Community frameworks, the City is committed not only to addressing specific risks but reducing vulnerability and building overall ecological, social and economic resilience for Durango in the long-term.

4.4 Natural Resource Goals, Objectives and Policies
Goal 1: Preserve, conserve and sustainably use natural resources so that future generations may enjoy the benefits of Durango’s natural environment.

Objective 1.1: Coordinate with local, State and Federal agencies to monitor and continually evaluate threats to the City’s natural resources and quality enhancement opportunities.

Policy 1.1.1: Monitor studies from the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (“CPW”) Department and appropriate federal agencies to identify wildlife population trends and opportunities to minimize adverse interactions between people and the City’s land and aquatic life.

Policy 1.1.2: Promote Federal, State, Tribal and other efforts to identify the impact of different sources of pollution in the Animas River and pursue strategies to minimize significant risks of pollution.
Policy 1.1.3: Monitor and participate in State and Federal air quality studies and initiatives as appropriate.

Policy 1.1.4: Monitor forest health in coordination with the Colorado State Forest Service.

Objective 1.2: Adopt and implement cost-effective resource management strategies in collaboration with citizens, businesses, La Plata County and other public agencies.

Policy 1.2.1: Require development to protect or mitigate impacts on natural resources, including surface and groundwater contamination, soil erosion or contamination, air quality degradation and loss of vegetation.

Policy 1.2.2: Continually evaluate and refine the City’s Stormwater Quality Management practices and requirements, including the riverfront development review process, to achieve cost effective outcomes, improve the quality of runoff and comply with Federal standards. Follow best management practices for grading and construction to minimize erosion and sedimentation from public and private construction sites and completed development projects. Promote the use of permeable pavement and other porous paving materials in the development or redevelopment of parking areas.

Policy 1.2.3: Coordinate with the State, residents and employers to reduce significant local and regional sources of air pollution. Continue to enforce the City’s anti-idling policy for municipal vehicles and reevaluate the policy to reflect shifts in city operations and fleet.

Policy 1.2.4: Support growth and water resource management strategies that help maintain the aesthetic, recreational and environmental value of the Animas River Greenway (which includes the river, the riparian zone and the trail system) and the SMART 160 trail corridor. Coordinate these efforts with the Animas River Task Force and other applicable interests.

Policy 1.2.5: Include water quality impacts when evaluating open space acquisitions and when designing roadway, snow storage, stormwater management and other public improvements.

Policy 1.2.6: Favor natural or landscaped drainageways over built drainage systems whenever the natural drainageway can accommodate anticipated runoff. Where projected runoff cannot be accommodated by natural drainageways, seek improvements that retain the natural characteristics of water courses and floodplain areas to the greatest extent feasible.

Policy 1.2.7: Coordinate with La Plata County, State and Federal organizations to implement effective strategies to maintain healthy wildlife populations in open spaces surrounding the community, balanced with human use of open space. Such strategies will include the protection of key habitat and migration corridors and the provision of facilities to reduce wildlife deaths on highways.

Policy 1.2.8: Pursue regional and local strategies to preserve the Animas River Greenway, SMART 160 trail corridor and all trails within the City limits as recreational and environmental amenities for future generations.

Policy 1.2.9: Ensure that mineral and gas extraction activities are consistent with the conservation of other natural resources and are compatible with adjacent land uses and local governmental directives.

Policy 1.2.10: Continue efforts to control and manage noxious and exotic weeds and management of appropriate plant species in the City of Durango.
Policy 1.2.11: Use the development review process to ensure that development activities comply with local, state and federal environmental laws.

Policy 1.2.12: Work with citizen groups, including the Anasas River Task Force and City Council appointed advisory boards on activities along the Anasas River Greenway.

Policy 1.2.13: Allow wood burning fireplace inserts and stoves in residential units only when such units meet or exceed emission standards for EPA Phase II Wood Burning Devices. Allow no more than one open fireplace within hotel and lodge lobbies and restaurants.

Policy 1.2.14: Maintain an up-to-date GIS-based inventory of natural resources (including floodplain, wetland and critical riparian habitat data), monitor the impacts of growth on those resources and use the data to refine the City's Land Use Development Code.

Objective 1.3: Conservatively use and reuse natural resources.

Policy 1.3.1: Serve as a regional leader and cooperate regionally to develop waste reduction programs and facilities, expanding the scope of local and regional recycling efforts and the use of recycled products.

Policy 1.3.2: Develop and adopt a Zero Waste Management Plan.

Policy 1.3.3: Structure City programs, including refuse and cleanup billing practices to encourage waste diversion efforts and promote a zero-waste culture.

Policy 1.3.4: Coordinate with SWCCOG and other entities to monitor waste stream composition through waste audits. Use audit results to establish long-term progress toward Sustainability Action Plan waste reduction targets.

Policy 1.3.5: Continue to monitor water use in the community. Periodically review utility rates and fees for all customer classes, maintaining a tiered rate structure.

Policy 1.3.6: Use a tiered rate structure in concert with infrastructure improvements, public education and other policies to reduce water losses, encourage conservation and make progress towards goals identified in the Sustainability Action Plan and STAR Communities criteria.

Policy 1.3.7: Provide education and leadership by promoting conservation, reuse and recycling of resources in the wider community and raising awareness of public and private opportunities to pursue more sustainable behaviors.

Policy 1.3.8: Support local initiatives to conserve resources, protect our natural environment and encourage sustainable practices. Continue to use and update the City’s Sustainability Action Plan as a tool to improve the sustainability of City operations and public awareness of private options for more sustainable behaviors.

Policy 1.3.9: Update and maintain the City’s Municipal Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory. Use the inventory to set and track progress towards emissions reduction goals.

Policy 1.3.10: Reduce municipal energy consumption in vehicles and facilities in line with Sustainability Action Plan targets.

Policy 1.3.11: Coordinate with La Plata County, La Plata Electric and other entities to promote increased use of other renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, biomass, hydro, geo-thermal, etc.

Policy 1.3.12: Reduce public and private vehicle emissions through a combination of strategies that reduce automobile usage and promote cleaner transportation choices.
Goal 2: Maintain Durango's views of natural hillsides and mountains.

Objective 2.1: Identify key parcels needed to preserve a natural greenbelt along hillsides and ridgelines.

Policy 2.1.1: Limit development on steep slopes of 30% and greater. Do not allow new lots to be created on steep slopes or that take access through steep slopes.

Policy 2.1.2: Maintain setbacks from protected ridgelines and other design standards to retain the natural appearance of skylines that are visible from primary public streets.

Policy 2.1.3: Minimize and manage ambient noise and light levels to protect public health and the integrity of ecological systems. Continue to review and enforce light standards identified in the Land Use Development Code and to foster dark sky compliant lighting throughout the community.

Policy 2.1.4: Retain the natural appearance of hillsides by encouraging dedications of conservation easements for land on steep and moderately steep hillsides, and by minimizing hillside cut and fill for buildings, roads or other development. Facilitate clustering of development to implement this policy.

Policy 2.1.5: Require landscape improvements to reduce the visual and environmental impacts of such work in areas where cut and fill is necessary to provide safe access to development.

Policy 2.1.6: Oppose efforts to use publicly-owned hillside lands for private development or enterprises unless the City finds that the public benefit exceeds the negative impacts and the parcels are not identified as key elements of the scenic backdrop.

Goal 3: Protect sensitive floodplains, hillsides, woodlands, wetlands and wildlife habitat from inappropriate development.

Objective 3.1: Secure and maintain a relatively continuous band of open space through or around the City of Durango to provide habitat areas and corridors for the movement of wildlife populations that work in conjunction with human use in those spaces.

Policy 3.1.1: Preserve public and privately owned open space corridors in coordination with La Plata County, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Department, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and other land owners.

Policy 3.1.2: Support cost-effective habitat conservation strategies such as dedications, targeted acquisition of land or development rights, and mandatory clustering of development.

Policy 3.1.3: Work with La Plata County, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, CPW, the Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project and the Colorado Department of Transportation (“CDOT”) to incorporate design alternatives that provide safe routes for wildlife crossing State highways or reduce the need for wildlife crossings.

Objective 3.2: Protect people, property and water quality by limiting inappropriate development in floodplains and wetlands.

Policy 3.2.1: Minimize grading and construction activities within the Animas River and local stream floodplains. Permit development within tributary floodplains when consistent with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidelines, City floodplain requirements and City stormwater management standards.
Policy 3.2.2: Limit development in the floodway to bridge crossings, utilities, trails and river access improvements. Low intensity recreational uses may be authorized by the City for development in the floodplains.

Policy 3.2.3: Do not allow the creation of new lots with buildable areas located within floodplains.

Objective 3.3: Minimize loss of life or property to natural hazards such as wildfires and geologic hazards.  

Policy 3.3.1: Continue to review and update Hazard Vulnerability Assessment and Emergency Operations Plan in coordination with La Plata County and other regional entities to identify key local hazards.

Policy 3.3.2: Monitor local and regional climate trends and predictions and incorporate most recent climate science into planning processes and infrastructure development.

Policy 3.3.3: Use local planning and infrastructure projects together with public education and awareness programs to build resilience and enhance individual and community capacity to adapt to uncertain future conditions.

Policy 3.3.4: Limit development in or near identified natural hazard areas, unless mitigating measures are undertaken to minimize the risk of injury to persons and loss of property.

Policy 3.3.5: Enforce building safety codes to ensure that development can reasonably withstand impacts from natural occurrences such as heavy snowfall and flooding.

Policy 3.3.6: Work with La Plata County to develop methane seep setback and avoidance strategies to protect people and development from methane seep dangers.

Policy 3.3.7: Ensure that safe and adequate access is provided to wildfire-prone properties prior to development approvals.

Policy 3.3.8: Require defensible site designs that minimize the risks to life and property development in wildfire-prone areas.
5 Community Development Element

5.1 Overview

This element focuses on key development issues facing Durango and surrounding parts of the community including:

- Community character, land use and the built form;
- Growth management;
- Economy and tourism; and
- Cultural and historic resources.

Since the early 1990s, Durango and La Plata County have experienced sustained growth. Growth within the City and in surrounding areas has brought increased revenues, housing and employment, but it also has:

- Developed formerly open lands;
- Increased traffic congestion in the City and County;
- Increased demands for a variety of public utilities, facilities and services; and
- Increased housing costs.

This Comprehensive Plan element highlights the key community development issues facing the community, defines community goals and objectives, identifies local development and environmental policies, and recommends strategies to achieve community goals. The future land use plan and the policies of this element were developed based on extensive input from a broad cross-section of the public.
5.2 Context for Planning

5.2.1 Community Character/Land Use/Built Form

Durango area residents value a unique community character that blends the best elements of small town life, the college community, access to rural land, the Animas River and open space, and the cultural offerings of much larger cities. The planning area encompasses a variety of existing land uses and development patterns, which include agricultural land, recreation and open space uses, low, medium and high-density residential uses, commercial and business uses (primarily in the downtown core and along arterial street corridors), and light industrial uses. Planning for appropriate land use availability, distribution and compatibility will maintain and enhance Durango’s character and quality of life while providing for growth. The land use element proposes a mix of land uses intended to:

- Preserve environmental and natural resources;
- Assure that there is sufficient land available to accommodate projected growth;
- Preserve or enhance the existing areas of the City and its neighborhoods; and
- Indicate appropriate locations for future growth.

The Durango planning area has maintained a relatively compact development pattern, though some sprawl development has occurred at the edges of the planning area.

5.2.2 Growth Management

Durango and La Plata County have grown significantly since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. The County’s growth has been due to many factors, including cheaper, more developable lands, development standards that minimize the cost of non-urban development and the desire for a rural lifestyle with easy access to jobs and services.

While the City has continued to grow, constraints on the remaining land in the City and at the urban fringe limit the City’s future development potential. The City has three remaining areas with significant development potential within the planning area – Webb Ranch, the La Posta Road area, and Grandview. La Posta Road and Grandview are subject to currently adopted area plans that will be modified subject to the recommendations of this Plan. Because these areas are largely outside the city limits, Durango will need to coordinate with La Plata County and affected property owners to manage development so that it:

- Establishes a balanced, compatible and well integrated mix of uses;
- Achieves sufficient densities to support efficient service provision;
- Is coordinated with the availability and efficient extension of adequate public facilities; and
- Is consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and development standards.

5.2.3 Economic Development & Tourism

Durango’s economy has historically been tied to natural resources. Recreational opportunities along the Animas River and in the vast open areas surrounding the City drive the local economy and attract much of the region’s growth. The shift from mining to tourism improved environmental conditions, but did not create a significant source of moderate to high wage jobs. Through the efforts of various local trade organizations and economic development corporations (e.g. Region 9 Economic Development District, Durango Industrial Development Foundation, Durango Chamber of Commerce, The Durango Business Improvement District), the community has increased the
diversity of its economic base and its economic stability. While resource-based tourism will remain an important element of the local economy, it will be subject to fluctuations in energy costs and environmental conditions (e.g., lack of snow, wildfires, drought). The community’s challenge is to foster sustainable and stable employment opportunities that provide a living wage for Durango residents.

The economic impact for the City by visitors is significant. Tourism has been steadily increasing in recent years, with 192,000 riders on the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad and 600,681 visitors to Mesa Verde National Park recorded in 2016. The Durango Area Tourism Office estimates annual visitation at over 1 million visitors.

Tourism in Durango has recovered to the levels before September 11, and prior to the economic recession. Sales tax and lodging tax have recorded 6 straight years of annual gains. The city estimates that tourists produce 1/3 of the sales tax that supports the city’s General Fund. The City is projected to collect $1,100,000 in gross lodgers’ tax in 2017.

While summer tourism accounts for 75% of annual room night rentals, the local ski industry has also rebounded and is expanding under new ownership and capital investment in on-mountain infrastructure. New resort real estate development has added base area amenities and additional room capacity.

Recording some of the highest nightly occupancy and average rental income per room rates in our competitive community set, hotel development has recently surged. Following a period of bed base stagnation, five new flag hotels have opened, with more in the planning pipeline. The Durango Area Tourism Office reports room count within the city of Durango now exceeds 2000 rooms.

5.2.4 Historic Preservation

Historical assets can maintain and improve residents’ quality of life, including Durango’s character and “home town” atmosphere. In addition to the community’s climate and access to wooded mountains, ski slopes, mountain bike trails, the Animas River, desert and other natural resources, Durango’s small-town charm helps drive the tourist industry and make the City a desirable place to live.

While Durango has been concerned about and sensitive to its historic roots. In 1975, Heritage for Tomorrow, a plan for the central business district which included historic preservation, was adopted. It recognized that downtown was the focal point of residents and visitors. Key elements of this plan included provisions for land uses, urban design, historic preservation, circulation improvements (vehicular and pedestrian) and other issues.

While planning for the celebration of the Durango Centennial in 1981, many area residents focused on the need to get the community involved in preserving its legacy of historic buildings. Recognizing that historic preservation (‘HP’) was more than preserving symbols in the downtown area and requiring a community-wide view, Durango began to expand its strategy. Little Pieces of Time, published in 1984, is a pictorial review of the City’s development, complete with background text and captions describing or explaining the photographs (many of which came from personal collections). Although this was not a ‘planning document’, it helped whet Durango’s appetite for a historic preservation plan for the City.

In 1990, The Durango Historic Preservation Plan was adopted. The Preservation Plan summarized local historic preservation issues, inventoried known and potential historically significant properties and areas, made recommendations and identified implementation techniques. A focal point
of the Preservation Plan is to identify, evaluate and protect significant historic resources – significance being the resource’s potential to make a valuable contribution to Durango’s history. While there are sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places located in Durango, the Preservation Plan expands the concept of historically significant to encourage a ‘local register’ that recognizes sites for their contribution to the City’s growth and development and their impact on the region. Preservation Plan goals were designed to:

- Make historic preservation a continuous process;
- Increase public awareness of historic preservation;
- Integrate principles of historic preservation and economic development;
- Preserve historically significant properties; and
- Pursue state and federal historic preservation funding.

Much of Durango’s tourism is dependent upon the region’s climate and access to the energy required to visit this somewhat remote area of the country. Drought, higher temperatures, and higher energy costs are all potential threats to a vital tourism industry.

### 5.3 Key Community Development Issues

#### 5.3.1 Coordinating New Growth with the City’s Ability to Serve

As the City grows, it must expand facilities and services to maintain the community’s desired levels of service. The City has limited resources (e.g., staff, funds, infrastructure for water storage) with which to serve new development. The opening of Lake Nighthorse and the planned construction of a new water treatment plant promise to provide sufficient water for projected growth, but the City must provide for the distribution of that water and other facilities and services required by new development. By establishing adequate level of service standards and phasing development approvals with the City’s ability to meet those service standards, Durango can ensure that new growth does not outstrip its ability to serve. The goal of establishing these standards and appropriate phasing is to help the community grow in an orderly, efficient way that does not diminish quality of life for existing and future residents.

Typically, adequate public facilities are defined by levels of service for public services which are necessary to promote the public’s health, safety and welfare, such as minimum standards for transportation, water, sewer, stormwater and emergency service facilities. See the Housing Element for a more in-depth discussion of housing adequacy.

#### 5.3.2 Maintaining the Community’s Character

Durango’s premier quality of life continues to attract new residents. The resulting increases in housing demand, commercial development, traffic congestion and unfamiliar faces continue to change the community. Changes
such as the downtown revitalization, river corridor development and redevelopment of commercial and industrial sites have improved the quality of life in Durango. Residents are now concerned about changes that affect their neighborhoods and Durango’s small town atmosphere.

As Durango has grown, sub-sections of the community have taken shape with unique characteristics and sense of place. In addition to addressing Durango’s overall character, it is important to look at how these districts contribute to the vitality and uniqueness of Durango as a whole and adapt the regulatory structure to preserve and enhance the character-defining qualities of these districts. Placemaking (see figure below) is a holistic approach towards enhancing existing and creating new places that build community and preserve the identity of distinct places. The City’s development of Character Districts (see Chapter 7) provides an adaptable platform for the distinct design qualities, needs and opportunities for each of the districts.

Additionally, the City has identified Areas of Change and Areas of Stability to help guide land use decisions (See the map on the following page). These areas display graphically where growth and redevelopment can be achieved without negatively impacting the distinctness and quality of life in Durango’s established neighborhoods.

5.3.3 Enhancing the Community’s Built Form While Promoting Infill

A key element of the City’s character includes the predominance of traditional neighborhood development patterns that are consistent with new-urbanist development design principles. These principles have worked well for the Three Springs area and can be used to ensure that infill development along the City’s arterial corridors is compatibly integrated with existing neighborhoods. [see Principles of New Urbanism inset on page 35]. The City should continue to refine its commercial and residential design standards and guidelines in conjunction with its character district initiatives. Durango’s geographic location in a river valley results in limited developable land due to environmental, topographical and geologic constraints. This fact demands that the limited available land be used as efficiently as possible to prevent land supply from further contributing to high land prices. When allowed, infill and redevelopment should be targeted in key areas that have the infrastructure and community facilities in place to absorb the additional intensity. A sequence of ‘centers’ or ‘nodes’ should be identified to target infill and break up the impact of infill within the Areas of Change identified by the community.
Figure 2: Areas of Change and Stability
5.3.4 Providing a Balance of Future Land Uses
Durango is a regional center for employment, shopping, education, health care and other services. Historically, the City has had a mixture of different types of housing and commercial uses. Commercial development has occurred along major arterial corridors; residential development has extended out to the valley walls. As the City reaches its geographical limits, there is a need to find the balance between residential and non-residential land uses.

5.3.5 Coordinating Growth with La Plata County and Other Service Providers
Much of the City’s growth will occur at its edges, with most new development likely to be served by the South Durango Sanitation District to the south and east of the existing City limits. Development pressures are high in unincorporated areas so it is crucial that the City coordinate development review with La Plata County, South Durango Sanitation District and potentially the La Plata/Archuleta Water District. This Plan calls for improved coordination between the City and La Plata County in the areas planned to be developed at urban densities and refinement of the existing Joint Planning Area Agreement between the City and County to better address interim development standards for parcels that do not have immediate access to the City’s water system. The primary goals of an updated Agreement are to provide clarity on the process necessary for reaching a decision on proposed land uses and establish objective criteria for decision-making that facilitates efficient extension of water and other infrastructure.

5.3.6 Providing for Economic Diversity
Durango's shift from mining to tourism promoted environmental quality improvements that have contributed to the high quality of life that draws people to the City. Recent diversification has helped minimize the boom-bust cycles associated with both the mining and tourist-based economy. However, the City’s employment opportunities remain weighted towards lower paying service sector jobs. While tourism will maintain an important role in the local economy, continued increases in light manufacturing, professional services and other sectors will improve the economic stability of Durango and the ability for workers to be able to afford to live in the City. Durango has a vibrant creative culture and a surprisingly high number of technology-related jobs. There are opportunities to capitalize on existing creative culture by providing space for and supporting small-scale artisan and handcrafted industries. To contribute to economic diversity, Durango should research examples and implement support systems for growing artisan production and the technology sector.
5.3.7 Protecting Cultural/Historic Resources

The Durango area has provided a desirable human habitat since pre-historic times. Visitors from locations around the globe who come to view cliff dwellings in Mesa Verde and other regional attractions discover the historic charm of Main Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods in Durango. Historic and prehistoric sites are relatively common in the Durango area. These links with the recent and distant past are a valued part of the community fabric and should be preserved for future generations.

5.3.8 Planning for Ewing Mesa

The City’s 2007 Comprehensive Plan called for a mix of urban development on Ewing Mesa, which the new owner intends to be used primarily for open space, community recreational uses, cultural uses and to accommodate the County’s Fairgrounds. This shift in potential land uses requires the City, County and property owner to coordinate in the development of a new area plan for the mesa as described in Chapter 7.

5.3.9 Planning for the Webb Ranch

The realignment of U.S. Hwy. 550 South (through the Webb Ranch from its intersection with County Road 220 to the interchange with Hwy. 160 located near the proposed Southfork development) creates some future development opportunities on the relatively flat upper reaches of the Webb Ranch. Planning for future development of this area should be coordinated with the property owner, the County and South Durango Sanitation District, which is the likely wastewater service provider for the property.

5.3.10 Engage the Community, Establish Effective Review Processes, and Employ Creative Problem-Solving

The City of Durango is recognized as leader in public engagement and creative approaches to municipal issues. The City should continue to emphasize and nurture robust community dialogue about growth and development issues. Additionally, the City should seek to establish application and review processes which point customers towards and reward proposals that help accomplish the goals outlined in this Plan. In short, the City should align all processes to make the right path, the easiest path for City customers. Within the broad framework of this Plan and the legal constraints of the City’s Codes, City staff should be proactive and responsive to address challenges that arise.
The Principles of New Urbanism

The principles of New Urbanism can be applied increasingly to projects at the full range of scales from a single building to an entire community.

**Walkability**
- Most things within a 10-minute walk of home and work
- Pedestrian friendly street design (buildings close to street; porches, windows & doors; tree-lined streets; on street parking; hidden parking lots; garages in rear lane; narrow, slow speed streets)
- Pedestrian streets free of cars in special cases

**Connectivity**
- Interconnected street grid network disperses traffic & eases walking
- A hierarchy of narrow streets, boulevards, and alleys
- High quality pedestrian network and public realm makes walking pleasurable

**Mixed-Use & Diversity**
- A mix of shops, offices, apartments, and homes on site. Mixed-use within neighborhoods, within blocks, and within buildings
- Diversity of people - of ages, income levels, cultures, and races

**Mixed Housing**
- A range of types, sizes and prices in closer proximity

**Quality Architecture & Urban Design**
- Emphasis on beauty, aesthetics, human comfort, and creating a sense of place;
- Special placement of civic uses and sites within community. Human scale architecture & beautiful surroundings nourish the human spirit

**Quality of Life**
- Taken together these add up to a high quality of life well worth living, and create places that enrich, uplift, and inspire the human spirit.

**Traditional Neighborhood Structure**
- Discernable center and edge
- Public space at center
- Importance of quality public realm; public open space designed as civic art
- Contains a range of uses and densities within 10-minute walk

**Increased Density**
- More buildings, residences, shops, and services closer together for ease of walking, to enable a more efficient use of services and resources, and to create a more convenient, enjoyable place to live.
- New Urbanism design principles are applied at the full range of densities from small towns, to large cities

**Smart Transportation**
- A network of high-quality trains connecting cities, towns, and neighborhoods together
- Pedestrian-friendly design that encourages a greater use of bicycles, rollerblades, scooters, and walking as daily transportation

**Sustainability**
- Minimal environmental impact of development and its operations
- Eco-friendly technologies, respect for ecology and value of natural systems
- Energy efficiency
- Less use of finite fuels
- More local production
- More walking, less driving

*Source: www.newurbanism.org/newurbanism.html*
5.4 Community Development Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 4: Foster sustainable and resilient development that is compatible with established neighborhoods and contributes to reductions in resource consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and improves quality of life.

Objective 4.1: Modify zoning, development and building standards to encourage the sustainability of the built environment.

Policy 4.1.1: Pursue STAR Community certification through appropriate actions to achieve STAR criteria. While initially pursuing 3-star certification, use 5-star criteria to engage the community in discussions about sustainability in general and climate protection in particular (see www.starcommunities.org).

Policy 4.1.2: Reduce commercial and residential building energy consumption through a cost-effective combination of standards, incentives and other measures.

Policy 4.1.3: Consider greenhouse gas emissions in City planning and decision-making processes.

Policy 4.1.4: Foster compact human-scaled, walkable/bikeable centers and neighborhoods that connect to transit, offer diverse uses and services, and provide housing options for families of all income levels.

Policy 4.1.5: Encourage growth in areas that do not require the extension of water, sewer, and road infrastructure or facilitate sprawl.

Policy 4.1.6: Encourage redevelopment in Areas of Change as shown on Figure 2.

Policy 4.1.7: Consider using density, intensity and height bonuses to encourage sustainable, efficient construction methods where they can compatibly be incorporated into development and redevelopment sites.

Policy 4.1.8: Continue to implement the International Building Code, including the International Energy Conservation Code. Periodically update City Ordinance to adopt the most recent version of ICC codes.

Policy 4.1.9: Encourage energy and water efficiency retrofit throughout City facilities and the wider community through a combination of regulations, incentives and public education.

Goal 5: Develop a coordinated growth management strategy in conjunction with La Plata County, the Towns of Bayfield and Ignacio, and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe.

Objective 5.1: Establish collaborative and complementary strategies to address land use, economic development, housing and transportation challenges.

Policy 5.1.1: Schedule and participate in regular forums to discuss mutual growth challenges.

Policy 5.1.2: Seek mutually beneficial ways to address county-wide growth challenges.

Goal 6: Maintain and enhance the diverse, small town charm of Durango as the City grows, focusing on its high quality of life and unique character.

Objective 6.1: Maintain a future land use map that provides guidance on land use decisions for public and private decision-makers.

Policy 6.1.1: Use Table 1 to categorize future land uses. Each category may permit land uses and intensities from...
more than one zoning district, as shown in Table 1. Land uses are listed as examples and should not be considered all-inclusive. Densities are either listed as a maximum gross density or as a range of appropriate densities for each residential use category. Residential densities are expressed in dwelling units ("DUs") per gross acre of a project, including streets and other dedication areas.

Policy 6.1.2: Use the Future Land Use Map (Map 6) in conjunction with the other goals, objectives and policies of this Plan, specific Area Plans and Character Districts to guide zoning and development decisions.

Policy 6.1.3: Coordinate with La Plata County to ensure that:
- City and County decisions about the type and intensity of land uses in the Planning Area are consistent with the Future Land Use Map; and
- The City and County will review development proposals for consistency with the Future Land Use Map and compatibility with site specific conditions. Site specific review is needed to ensure that development proposals are consistent with other City policies, including but not limited to policies addressing natural hazards, environmental protection, neighborhood compatibility/stability, design, and the adequacy of public facilities and services.

Policy 6.1.4: Allow residential dwelling types other than those specifically listed in Table 1 (e.g., small lot, duplex, multi-family, patio homes, zero lot line development) for each residential category using administrative design standards in the Land Use Development Code (LUDC).

Objective 6.2: Achieve neighborhood stability, Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives and economic opportunity through implementation of the Future Land Use Map in conjunction with plan policies and the Land Use Development Code.

Policy 6.2.1: Prior to amending the Future Land Use Map, make findings that the proposed amendment will:
- Be consistent with the Plan priorities;
- Be compatible with future land uses for surrounding areas of the community;
- Not create a shortage of any category of residential or non-residential land; and
- Enhance the overall quality of life in the community.

Policy 6.2.2: Protect neighborhoods from encroachment of incompatible land uses by ensuring that zoning is consistent with the Future Land Use Map, by developing and implementing area plans, corridor plans and character districts, and by enforcing compatibility standards that address noise, traffic and aesthetics.

Policy 6.2.3: Permit the development of limited neighborhood service and retail uses for sites that are sufficiently large to allow such uses to be integrated compatibly with proposed residential development. Standards for these uses should achieve compatibility through a combination of building form, building scale and site and building design standards. Non-residential uses generally should be located on collector or higher order streets.

Policy 6.2.4: Establish standards to ensure that non-residential development occurs at appropriate scales and locations. Standards should ensure that uses (including home occupations) within or adjacent to residential areas are compatible with the residential uses.
Policy 6.2.5: Explore the establishment of minimum building heights, maximum setbacks, maximum surface parking and other dimensional standards which shape the built environment in a way that preserves and enhances community character.

Policy 6.2.6: Use the guidance in this policy in addition to other Plan policies to guide zoning and development of properties marked with an asterisk on the Future Land Use Map. The Future Land Use Map identifies with numbered asterisks areas for which area plans need to be developed, updated or specific policy direction provided within the Plan. These areas include portions of Grandview Ridge, the State School Property, East Grandview, La Posta Road, Ewing Mesa, Webb Ranch, Kroeger Ranch and the Mason Property which are subject to the following specific policies:

1. **Grandview Ridge:** The City will coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management to address transportation, future land use, resource extraction, utility and ownership issues related to this area.

2. **State School Section:** The City will coordinate with the County, State and School District 9R to address planning issues related to land uses, the timing of development, the provision of utilities and transportation, when the School District considers developing the site for a school or other public or private uses are being considered.

3. **Grandview:**
   - Development in Grandview will be guided by the general policies of the Plan and the specific policies of the Grandview Area Plan.
   - The City will allow greater flexibility for the retention or expansion of non-conforming situations, while attempting to mitigate incompatibilities created by historic development patterns in this area.
   - Coordinate with property owners and applicable service providers to develop a phasing and financing plan for extension of adequate water, sewer and transportation facilities throughout the urbanizing areas.

   - Coordinate with property owners, applicable service providers and the County to establish standards for the expansion of the urbanizing area boundary and appropriate modifications of future land uses.

4. **La Posta Road:**
   - Development in the La Posta Road area will be guided by the general policies of the plan and the specific policies of the La Posta Road Area Plan;
   - The City will coordinate with La Plata County and the property owners to update the existing La Posta Road Area District Plan.
   - The City will coordinate with property owners, the South Durango Sanitation District, and the County to plan centralized sewer service extensions to this area; and
   - In the low-density residential areas located along the southern portion of La Posta Road, encourage the development of a mix of residential unit types that incorporate meaningful greenways and open spaces. Also within these areas, allow for limited neighborhood scale retail and service development supporting surrounding residential development.
   - The La Posta Road Future Land Use Map will continue to use the land use categories in the adopted La Posta Road Area / District Plan until the plan is updated.
### Table 1: Future Land Use Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Photos</th>
<th>Future Land Use Categories</th>
<th>Density Restrictions</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
<th>Applicable Zoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural*</td>
<td>Max 1 DU/35 A</td>
<td>Private land that will remain in parcels of 35 or more acres or smaller parcels that will remain undeveloped because of steep slopes, floodplain or other environmental constraints. Most of these parcels will receive no urban level services during the life of the Plan. Appropriate uses include open space, single family homes, and agriculture.</td>
<td>RA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Residential*</td>
<td>Max 1 DU/10 A</td>
<td>Private land that will remain in residential parcels of 10 or more acres. Most of these parcels will receive no urban level services during the life of the Plan. Appropriate uses include single family homes.</td>
<td>RA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential - Large Lot*</td>
<td>Max 1 DU/A</td>
<td>Single family residential lots which typically are served by public water and, depending on location and site conditions, may have access to centralized wastewater services. Appropriate uses include single family homes.</td>
<td>RA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential - Low Density</td>
<td>Max 4.99 DU/A</td>
<td>Single family residential lots generally ranging from 6,000 SF to 1 acre that receive full urban services. This land use allows other dwelling types through the planned development process. Limited neighborhood scale non-residential uses may be established subject to appropriate design and location standards (see Objective 6.2). Appropriate uses include single family homes and compatible public facilities.</td>
<td>RL, PD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential – Medium Density</td>
<td>5-11.99 DU/A</td>
<td>Single family residential lots smaller than 6,000 SF. Other dwelling types, including duplexes, triplexes, patio homes, apartments and townhomes are permitted. Limited neighborhood scale non-residential uses may be established subject to appropriate design and location standards (see Objective 6.2). Appropriate uses include single family homes, attached housing and compatible public facilities.</td>
<td>RM, PD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential – High Density</td>
<td>12-24 DU/A</td>
<td>Includes multi-family dwellings and group dwellings. Limited neighborhood scale non-residential uses may be established subject to appropriate design and location standards (see Objective 6.2). Appropriate uses include attached housing, small-scale retail and service establishments, small-scale restaurants and compatible public facilities.</td>
<td>RH, PD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Sample Photos

### Mixed Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Mixed Use" /></td>
<td>5-24 DU/A</td>
<td>Allows for commercial, residential or mixed-use development at appropriate scales for the setting based on proximity to existing single-family neighborhoods and the size of the site. Uses may be mixed vertically (e.g., upper floor residences) or horizontally (e.g., commercial frontage with residences located beside or behind the commercial development).</td>
<td>MU-N, MU-A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Downtown Central Business District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Photos</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Downtown Central Business District" /></td>
<td>Max 42 DU/A</td>
<td>Permits a mix of residential and non-residential uses, but requires retail, service or office uses on most street level floors. This category currently applies only to Downtown Durango, but may be applied to other areas that the City finds appropriate.</td>
<td>CB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Commercial General

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Photos</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Commercial General" /></td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Permits a wide range of commercial development (e.g., office, retail, service), with all storage being contained within the primary buildings (e.g., grocery stores, the mall, factory outlet stores, hotels, restaurants). Operations are to be contained within buildings or enclosed areas allowed by the applicable use and zoning district.</td>
<td>CG, CR, PD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Business Park/Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Photos</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Business Park/Campus" /></td>
<td>10-24 DU/A</td>
<td>Provide for campus-like environments for colleges, universities, business parks and hospitals. Residential development is considered accessory to the non-residential uses and may be limited to ensure that developments primarily function as employment centers. Storage and operations are contained within the primary buildings except for authorized restaurants, recreational uses and screened areas.</td>
<td>BP, PD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mixed Commercial / Light Industrial**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Photos</th>
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<th>Descriptions</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Mixed Commercial / Light Industrial**" /></td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Permits business park, commercial and light industrial uses with outside storage, display and operations. Additional buffering and more stringent design standards should apply to this category when adjacent to arterial roads or residential land uses.</td>
<td>BP, LI, PD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Industrial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Photos</th>
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<th>Applicable Zoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Industrial" /></td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Allows for light and heavy industrial uses.</td>
<td>LI, PD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Note:**

**MU-N, MU-A**

**CB**

**CG, CR, PD**

**BP, PD**

**BP, LI, PD**

**LI, PD**
### Future Land Use Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Photos</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Parks &amp; Recreation](parks Recreation.jpg)</td>
<td>Parks &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Public and private land designated for passive or active recreational uses.</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Conservation &amp; Open Space](conservation Open Space.jpg)</td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Open Space</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Public or private land which will remain undeveloped as natural open space. Limited improvements such as trails and parking areas may exist to provide access.</td>
<td>OS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Public Facilities/Institutional](public Facilities.jpg)</td>
<td>Public Facilities/Institutional</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Public facilities that are owned by a local, state or federal agency</td>
<td>PB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* While these uses are not urban in intensity, they are included within the City’s planning area to establish appropriately low densities on environmentally sensitive lands or to establish transitional land uses in areas that are not anticipated to receive urban utilities in the next 20 years.

** Maximum densities for these future land use categories are subject to supplemental information. Incentives, and additional limitations described in Area Plans, such as the Grandview Area Plan and La Posta Road Area Plan, and District Plans, such as North Main and Camino District Plans.
Map 6:

Future Land Use Map

Legend
- Special Policy Areas
- Road Class
  - Major Roads
  - Local
  - Planned Roads
- FLUM Categories
  - Park and Recreation
  - Conservation Open Space
  - Rural (Max 1 DU Per 35 Acres)
  - Rural Residential (Max 1 DU Per 10 Acres)
  - Residential - Large Lot (Max 1 DU per Acre)
  - Residential - Low Density (Max 4.99 DU per Acre)
  - Residential, Medium Density (5 - 11.99 DU per Acre)
  - Residential, High Density (12 - 24 DU per Acre)
  - Mixed Use (5 - 24 DU per Acre)
  - Commercial General
  - Downtown Central Business District (Max 42 DU per Acre)
  - Mixed Commercial / Light Industrial
  - Industrial
  - Public / Quasi Public

City of Durango

Date: 8/4/2017
Document Path: C:\Clients\Durango_2016\GIS\flum Tabloid v2.mxd
5. **Ewing Mesa:**
   - Update the Ewing Mesa Area Plan in conjunction with the property owner and La Plata County to provide for a mix of recreational, cultural, open space uses in conjunction with the development of a new Fairgrounds site and other uses approved in the Area Plan;
   - Development of Ewing Mesa will be guided by the general policies of the Plan and the specific policies developed in conjunction with the Ewing Mesa Area Plan;
   - Development of Ewing Mesa should not encroach upon Horse Gulch; and
   - Protect skyline views by requiring building setbacks from the rim of the mesa, particularly for lighting of the property.

6. **Webb Ranch:**
   - Develop a Webb Ranch Area Plan in conjunction with the property owner, La Plata County and CDOT to provide for a mix of residential, employment and related uses.

7. **Kroeger Ranch:**
   - Allow for a mix of residential and limited neighborhood support uses on the site subject to a development agreement that addresses the following:
     - Floodplain preservation and buffering;
     - Buffering from adjacent development;
     - Provision of mixed-income housing with affordable and attainable dwellings consistent with the City’s Housing Program Plan requirements;
     - Clustering of units away from the floodplain and adjacent properties;
     - Establishment of transit facilities to support future bus service by the City;
     - The potential for community gardens or other amenities to facilitate local food production;
     - Improvements to East Animas Road along the frontage of the property that are consistent with the City’s complete streets policies; and
     - Connections to the community trail system, including the Animas River Trail and a potential trail connection along East Animas Road.

8. **Mason Property:**
   - Allow for the extension of utilities and street improvements to support future development consistent with the traditional neighborhood development pattern within Three Springs.
   - Coordinate the timing of such extensions and the development through the City’s plan amendment and annexation.

**Objective 6.3:** Retain a mix of healthy residential, business and tourism uses in downtown Durango.

**Policy 6.3.1:** Maintain most governmental offices in the Central Business District (“CBD”) to enhance the area’s long-term stability.

**Policy 6.3.2:** Protect the residential neighborhoods east of 2nd Avenue from incompatible encroachment from commercial and mixed-use development in the Central Business District or along the College Drive and 8th Avenue Corridors.

**Policy 6.3.3:** Require proposed development along College Drive and Second Avenue to be compatible with adjacent residences. Compatibility standards should address building design, building height, noise, dust, lighting, parking, setbacks, buffering, solar access and traffic flow.

**Policy 6.3.4:** Consider allowing greater heights in certain areas where the location and design do not increase shading of adjacent lots and design standards consistent with adopted Character Districts ensure neighborhood compatibility and the appropriate scale of development for the site.
Policy 6.3.5: Encourage a mix of residential and commercial uses in the CBD to increase the community’s housing stock and the vitality of downtown Durango business areas.

Objective 6.4: Increase the supply of developable business park land.

Policy 6.4.1: Encourage the coordinated development of business parks in mixed commercial/light industrial areas to promote attractive design, lower improvement costs and provide adequate public facilities.

Policy 6.4.2: Work in cooperation with La Plata County, Bayfield, Ignacio and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe on regional matters related to economic development, housing, transportation and growth management.

Objective 6.5: Increase the supply of developable light industrial and industrial land.

Policy 6.5.1: Work with La Plata County to create a light industrial park to allow development of industrial buildings and outside storage and operations that do not cause excessive noise, odor or dust. Outdoor storage and operations shall be screened from adjacent roads and other uses. Light industrial uses that are totally enclosed within buildings, have limited deliveries and company vehicles may be located near residential uses with adequate buffering.

Policy 6.5.2: Work with La Plata County to establish a location for industrial uses that are not appropriate in light industrial parks or business parks. Such uses shall not be adjacent to residential uses and must be properly screened from public roads. Industrial uses shall include but are not limited to gravel mining, batch plants, salvage operations, large scale recycling centers, oil and gas processing facilities, etc.

Goal 7: Create quality places throughout the City.

Objective 7.1: Promote more attractive development and redevelopment along the City’s transportation and recreational corridors by embracing the principles of place-making.

Policy 7.1.1: Require proposed development along corridors such as College and 8th Avenue, North Main and Florida Road to develop compatibly with adjacent residences. Compatibility standards should address building design, building height, noise, dust lighting, parking, setbacks, buffering, solar access and traffic flow.

Policy 7.1.2: Consider allowing greater heights in certain areas where the location and design do not increase shading of adjacent lots and public right-of-way and design standards consistent with adopted Character Districts ensure neighborhood compatibility and the appropriate scale of development for the site.

Policy 7.1.3: Encourage a mix of residential and commercial uses along corridors such as North Main, Camino del Rio, 8th Avenue and College, Highway 160 West, and other areas to increase the community’s housing stock.

Policy 7.1.4: Continue to refine river corridor development regulations to enhance the compatibility of this valuable recreational corridor with adjacent development.

Policy 7.1.5: Develop standards and guidelines to address the scale of development along the Animas River Trail and the interface between the trails and adjacent development so development includes active building and site design along the trail which enhance trail safety and aesthetics.
Policy 7.1.6: Enhance the appearance and safety of the City’s arterial roadways through better site design and public improvements that address the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users as well as motorists.

Policy 7.1.7: Actively participate in the planning and design of State arterial roadway improvement projects and support the development of appropriate landscaping, transit stops and shelters, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and other operational and design enhancements.

Policy 7.1.8: Protect views of the City’s hillsides when traveling along City corridors.

Policy 7.1.9: Provide wetlands and water retention, where feasible, along the river corridor to capture and slow runoff into the Animas River.

Goal 8: To retain or enhance the aesthetic value of Durango’s natural and built environments.

Objective 8.1: Maintain public spaces as strong visual amenities.

Policy 8.1.1: Retain key open spaces in their natural condition where feasible. Where improvements are made in open space areas, those improvements will be designed and located to minimize their visual impacts from public areas.

Policy 8.1.2: Design, construct and maintain parks as visual and recreational amenities. Parking areas, trails, structures and landscaping shall be designed and improved with an emphasis on aesthetics and sustainability.

Policy 8.1.3: Require low maintenance, site-appropriate street trees and, where appropriate, planted medians to enhance the street environment.

Policy 8.1.4: Encourage the State to allow for and improve landscaping within State rights-of-way and on other State-owned land.

Policy 8.1.5: Meet or exceed minimum design standards for municipal facilities to provide examples of the community benefits of good building and site design, as well as models for sustainable development practices.

Policy 8.1.6: Support the establishment of community-based gardens on appropriate public and private lands to foster the production of healthy, sustainable food.

Objective 8.2: Enhance the aesthetic value and sustainability of the built environment through improved development standards and design guidelines.

Policy 8.2.1: Use administrative development standards and the design review process to promote high-quality site
and building design. Design standards should provide flexibility while promoting enhanced aesthetics, traffic safety, land use compatibility, sustainability, and Durango’s unique character.

Policy 8.2.2: Foster the compatible integration of residential development with the public spaces, public facilities and businesses to facilitate access and reduce automobile dependency.

Policy 8.2.3: Limit visibility of existing and future outdoor commercial and industrial operations from roadways, the Animas River, public facilities, residential neighborhoods and tourist related commercial development sites through landscaping and other attractive screening techniques.

Policy 8.2.4: Require that medium and high density residential projects have usable open space incorporated into the project or off-site open space that is reasonably linked to the project.

Policy 8.2.5: Apply landscaping requirements to promote land use compatibility, to increase screening of outdoor storage and operations areas and to provide visual relief within large parking areas. The City will retain flexibility within its landscaping code to encourage design variations and promote public safety.

Policy 8.2.6: Continue City efforts to retain mature trees within development sites. The intent of this policy is to ensure that healthy, mature trees are not removed and replaced with saplings or other immature landscaping.

Policy 8.2.7: Promote the use of signage that is consistent with community character and appropriate for the size, location and use of the site. Reduce unnecessary visual clutter produced by large, garish, brightly lit and over-abundant signage.

Policy 8.2.8: Achieve compliance with the City’s dark skies standards through the capital improvements program, and appropriate zoning requirements applicable to all non-residential and multifamily uses. Additionally, apply dark skies requirements to all new single-family residential development and major renovations and encourage compliance for existing single-family dwellings.

Policy 8.2.9: Establish green building standards and/or performance measures that encourage energy efficient building design and construction.

Policy 8.2.10: Ensure that development is located and designed to minimize contaminants in stormwater runoff and flooding potential.

Goal 9: Encourage public awareness and participation in community activities.

Objective 9.1: Increase opportunities for public access to the public decision-making process.

Policy 9.1.1: Encourage citizen participation in the Comprehensive Plan updates, area plan updates, and character district planning efforts. The City will provide opportunities for “grass roots” participation in the annual assessments and the annual updates of budget priorities reflected in the Plan Implementation Program.

Policy 9.1.2: Use public access television as well as web-based options to keep citizens informed of public decisions and processes.
Policy 9.1.3: Work with the media to cover all significant City activities and decisions and provide informational materials.

Policy 9.1.4: Encourage participation from a broad cross-section of the population in elected and appointed boards, committees and commissions.

Policy 9.1.5: Facilitate citizen involvement in public decision-making processes and supporting grass-roots citizen initiatives where appropriate.

Policy 9.1.6: Encourage broad participation in Citizen Advisory Boards that are open to the public on policy issues for recommendation to the City Council.

Policy 9.1.7: Employ emerging technologies, social media, and open data to encourage public engagement and make it efficient, convenient, and as far-reaching as possible.

Policy 10.1.1: Provide or facilitate provision of services to support urban development throughout the City’s Planning Area, which is shown in Map 7 and is anticipated to experience urban development as adequate water and wastewater services become available.

Policy 10.1.2: Consider Future Land Use designations when extending utilities. Areas designated for urban uses are anticipated to be served over the next twenty years. Areas not designated for urban uses in the Future Land Use Map should remain at Plan densities until urban services are available or be developed in a manner to support future urban development and the efficient extension of urban infrastructure.

Policy 10.1.3: Coordinate with La Plata County and La Plata Archuleta Water District (LAPLAWD) to manage growth in a manner that is consistent with this Plan and applicable improvement standards of the City and the Durango Fire Protection District.

Policy 10.1.4: Manage growth in urbanizing areas by coordinating the timing of development with the ability to provide adequate public facilities in a cost-effective manner for the City.

Policy 10.1.5: Require adequate public services and facilities to be in place or assured prior to the approval of urban development so that capacity will be available concurrently with new demands. Minimum levels of services will be defined in the City’s Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) and will be used to encourage development in areas that have adequate public facilities in place or that provide needed connections of facilities between urban development areas and discourage development that is separate from existing urban services (i.e., "leap-frog" development) unless the City finds that there is a significant public benefit from the development.

Policy 10.1.6: Encourage the County to adopt level of service and concurrency standards for new urban development within the City’s planning area that are consistent with City standards.
Policy 10.1.7: Consider approving all or a portion of the proposed development, subject to any of the following arrangements, if additional improvements are required for a proposed development to meet adequacy standards:

- Installation of improvements at the developer’s expense;
- Joint City/developer participation (joint financing, bonds, improvement districts); or
- Phased development subject to installation of improvements in accordance with the City’s Capital Improvements Program (“CIP”) or another plan acceptable to the City.

Policy 10.1.8: Expand the City’s water service area when urban facilities and services can be extended in a cost-effective manner, subject to the following guidelines:

- Funds are available for construction, maintenance and operation of urban facilities to the new area;
- There is not an adequate supply of land within the existing urbanizing area to accommodate growth for the next ten years;
- There is a long-term benefit to the City’s residents from extending the urbanized area; and
- Utility and other needs of the area will not significantly affect the cost of service to existing City property owners and residents.

Policy 10.1.9: Whenever the extension of water, sewer, drainage or street facilities is required to adequately service new development, require extension costs to be borne by the new development or defer development until the required improvements are in place, pursuant to the schedule in the Capital Improvements Program or another acceptable plan to fund and provide required improvements.

Policy 10.1.10: When utility extensions, street and drainage improvements are required for development activity, require improvements to be extended to the furthest property boundary unless extension of facilities beyond the property is not feasible as determined by the City.

Policy 10.1.11: Extend sewer, water, street and drainage improvements to the furthest property boundary which is created by new subdivision activity or annexation unless extension of facilities beyond the subdivision is not feasible or the City finds that the need for future extension cannot be reasonably anticipated.

Policy 10.1.12: Develop fair and equitable cost sharing or reimbursement policies between property owners for situations in which the installation of public facilities directly benefits an adjacent property such as oversizing of streets and utilities.

Policy 10.1.13: Require interim improvement of streets when it is not appropriate to install full street improvements at the time of development, subject to the execution of agreements providing for the future construction of full street improvements.

Policy 10.1.14: Prior to approval of new development, assess water, sewer, street and drainage facilities that serve or will be impacted by the new development. If deficiencies in any of these systems would result from the development, require the developer to correct the deficiencies or defer the development until the necessary improvements are installed by the City in
accordance with the Capital Improvements Program or another acceptable plan to fund and provide required improvements.

Policy 10.1.15: Require new development to fund its proportionate share of off-site capital improvement costs for transportation, water, sewer, stormwater management and neighborhood parks multi-purpose trails, and to provide all on-site improvements.

Policy 10.1.16: When off-site improvements related to planned CIP projects are required to serve a new development, consider raising the priority of necessary projects within the structure of the Capital Improvements Program when consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, thus achieving savings to both the City and the developer through joint participation.

Policy 10.1.17: When over-sizing of public improvements is required, the City may participate (depending upon availability and priority of funding) in the funding of these over-sizing costs for the additional improvements. If funds are not readily available, require the facilities to be over-sized, but provide for reimbursement of over-sizing costs through subsequent user fees or another equitable funding source.

Policy 10.1.18: When direct benefit is to be gained by a property owner for improvements to the infrastructure system, involve the property owner as an active participant in paying or repaying financial obligations for the improvements. City participation in infrastructure improvements should correspond with the extent to which the improvements benefit the general citizenry.

Policy 10.1.19: Consider the use of general improvement districts, special districts, development authorities and cooperative agreements to fund infrastructure investments for: street improvements, repair and replacement of water, sewer and drainage facilities, and other improvements that benefit the area or neighborhood adjacent to the proposed development.

Policy 10.1.20: Continue to use tiered water consumption charges to encourage conservation and efficient use of water resources.

Objective 10.2: Establish a fiscally responsible annexation program that serves the needs of Durango’s residents.

Policy 10.2.1: Annex contiguous areas where municipal services already are being provided and facilities are designed to City standards.

Policy 10.2.2: Coordinate with residents, property owners and La Plata County to equitably fund improvements required to bring potential annexation areas into compliance with City standards. Require residents and property owners of such areas to bear primary responsibility for required upgrade costs.

Policy 10.2.3: Prior to annexations requiring City commitments to invest in public facilities, prepare an annexation plan that evaluates the costs and benefits of the proposed annexation to the City and the property owners and addresses land use, public improvements and other development issues.

Policy 10.2.4: Use annexation agreements to assign responsibility for resolving infrastructure and design issues and to ensure that development in the areas complies with City plans and standards.

Policy 10.2.5: Annex enclave areas in accordance with State Law upon resolution of public service and improvement issues, including emergency access, street design standards, street conditions, water system needs, wastewater system needs and drainage needs.
Policy 10.2.6: Where feasible, annex land along existing property boundaries and annex all contiguous parcels under common ownership unless subject to a phased development and annexation plan.

Policy 10.2.7: When urban development occurs within the City’s service area but on parcels not eligible for annexation, require an implied consent agreement stating that the project will be developed to City standards, that City water and/or sewer service will be provided and that voluntary annexation will occur when the property is eligible.

Policy 10.2.8: When annexed areas do not comply with existing zoning and site improvement standards, provide for the gradual elimination of non-conforming situations in accordance with annexation agreements or the City’s LUDC.

Objective 10.3: Encourage growth to occur in areas that can be served by existing facilities.

Policy 10.3.1: Maintain an adequate inventory of developable land for medium and high density residential purposes, for commercial purposes and for commercial/industrial purposes. Prior to “re-zoning” from any of these districts, determine that there is an adequate supply of developable land to meet the demand for the district for the subsequent ten years based on historical building trends.

Policy 10.3.2: Encourage development of compatible infill projects, particularly along arterial corridors and in areas designated for mixed-use, downtown, commercial and high density residential future land uses.

Policy 10.3.3: Provide incentives for residential development in mixed-use projects when the residential component is reserved for fulltime, long-term residents. Consider additional incentives when residential units are reserved for affordable or attainable housing. Incentives may include parking reductions, height bonuses or density bonuses based on the location and design.

5.6 Economic Development & Tourism Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 11: Promote a healthy, sustainable, balanced economy that capitalizes on the community’s natural, recreational, cultural and human resources.

Objective 11.1: Encourage sound economic and social conditions by supporting the development and retention of a balanced mix of retail, service, tourism, tech and industrial enterprises in Durango.

Policy 11.1.1: Support tourism through lodging tax revenues.

Policy 11.1.2: Invest in parks, recreation, trails and open space and river whitewater park amenities that serve residents and visitors.

Policy 11.1.3: Continue public investments in the Main Avenue/Central Business District area to enhance access for residents and visitors. (See also the Downtown Area Plan.)

Policy 11.1.4: Support efforts to locate and develop additional business park or industrial land.

Policy 11.1.5: For non-conforming uses, structures or sites, help identify alternatives that enable the business and property owners to expand while maintaining compatibility with adjacent development. If no such alternatives exist, identify areas of Durango where the proposed business can be accommodated by existing zoning.
Policy 11.1.6: Explore the creation of economic development incentives such as special financing districts and link incentives for investment to the fiscal benefits for the community.

Policy 11.1.7: Continue efforts to preserve recreational water rights, whitewater park development and maintenance of in-stream improvements including bank restoration.

Policy 11.1.8: Coordinate with local businesses and economic development entities to foster small business retention and expansion.

Policy 11.1.9: Foster the growth of local artisan and hand-crafted goods through more flexible zoning regulations and other appropriate strategies.

Policy 11.1.10: Explore opportunities to create local a local conference facility that would generate increased tourism. (see policy 23.4.4)
5.7 Historic Resources Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 12: Preserve and enhance historic and cultural resources that symbolize Durango's identity and uniqueness.

Objective 12.1: Identify, preserve and protect significant scenic, cultural, historical and archaeological sites in Durango for the benefit of existing and future generations.

Policy 12.1.1: Maintain a database of buildings, districts and sites of historical, architectural, archaeological or cultural significance that should be protected.

Policy 12.1.2: Encourage rehabilitation of significant buildings, districts and sites by the private sector through the creation of incentives programs, designation of landmark buildings and districts, design review, public improvements and other tools.

Policy 12.1.3: Review and comment on the impacts of public and private development on the community's scenic, cultural, historical, architectural and archaeological resources. Public and private development shall preserve, to the maximum extent feasible, significant buildings and sites.

Policy 12.1.4: Retain historic public buildings as community facilities when the buildings can be feasibly adapted to public uses. When redevelopment is proposed, sensitivity to the existing context and preservation of historic resources will be encouraged or required.

Policy 12.1.5: Continue to develop and implement strategies that preserve the human scale and historical and architectural character of the City’s older neighborhoods and business areas. Ensure that building and site design result in a compatible interface between residential neighborhoods and business areas.

Credit: Animas Museum/La Plata County Historical Society
Map 7:

Durango Planning Area

Date: 3/9/2017
Document Path: C:\Clients\Durango_2016\GIS\urbanizing.md
6 Housing Element

6.1 Overview

The City has historically struggled to meet demands for affordable housing. Since the local economy is rich in lower wage service and retail jobs, many of those who work in the City can’t afford to live in Durango, and a significant portion of the regional low to moderate income housing demand is being met in Bayfield, Ignacio, rural La Plata County and northern New Mexico.

6.2 Definitions

Providing a balance of housing types within the community can be a challenging endeavor. Local housing issues often involve a broad range of considerations and terminology. Before any meaningful discussion can occur on housing policy, it is important to clarify specific definitions frequently used by those who are addressing local housing issues in the community.

There are both national definitions created by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and locally defined housing definitions that should be clarified. According to HUD, the term affordable refers to the ability of a person or household to pay no more than 30% of their (gross) income for housing. Low/Mod income household is HUD’s definition for families earning 80% or less of Area Median Income (AMI). Most federal and state subsidy programs are geared to assist Low/Mod income households.

However, Durango, like many other mountain communities, recognizes that households earning more than 80% are also in need of some form of housing assistance. In recent years, the City has used the term attainable to refer to households earning between 80% and 125% of AMI. The City is currently preparing a Housing Study to define the types of programs, eligibility requirements, income guidelines and other factors contributing to a comprehensive housing strategy. This effort will include the evaluation of whether to include households earning more than 125% of AMI within the definition of those needing attainable housing.
An umbrella term being used locally to refer to both target populations is workforce housing. This term refers to the concept of providing programs that meet Durango’s diverse workforce housing needs and consists of both owner- and renter-occupied housing that is affordable to the local workforce and carefully located to meet their needs. Lack of housing that is affordable to the local workforce causes increased commuting times, increased pollution, increased roadway congestion and less time at home with family. Quality of life suffers and the social balance of the community is disrupted.

There also are special needs populations outside of the workforce who need housing assistance. These groups include seniors, persons with disabilities, and the homeless. The specific needs and possible actions that the City can take to address these needs will also be provided in the housing report.

6.3 Context

Because of the dynamic housing market, the City has historically lacked sufficient numbers of decent homes and rental units that are affordable to these target populations. Since the local economy is reliant on lower wage service and retail jobs, many of those who work in the City cannot afford to live within the city limits of Durango, and a significant portion of the regional low to moderate income housing demand is being met in Bayfield, Ignacio, rural La Plata County and across state lines into northern New Mexico. It is the City’s intent to remain an active partner in the provision of workforce and special needs housing for residents of Durango and the surrounding area.

Housing is central to a community’s quality of life, and the provision of adequate workforce housing helps to prevent neighborhood deterioration and supports economic development. Provisions for adequate housing allow for the continued economic growth of the City, and housing choices allow residents to maintain residency in the City as their life circumstances change, which is especially important to an aging population, many of whom have spent their working lives as residents of Durango.

The 2013 “La Plata County, Colorado Housing Needs Study” highlighted several housing challenges facing the City and County:

- In 2012, the rental vacancy rate was a very low 3.86%, well below the 5% vacancy rate that is generally used to indicate a balance between
supply and demand (In 2016, the average rental vacancy rate was 4.8%);
- The lack of rental availability was even more acute within Durango;
- Subsidized rental housing had only a 0.6% vacancy rate;
- With rents rising due to low supplies, more than 1900 renter households earning less than $35,000 per year were cost-burdened (e.g., paid more than 30% of household income on housing; and
- In 2010, 37% of La Plata County households and more than 40% of the households in Durango were cost-burdened.

To address these challenges, the study recommended:
- Using low income tax credits to develop more affordable units;
- Seeking additional federal, local and private subsidies for special populations;
- Providing incentives for for-profit builders to construct affordable and attainable units;
- Subsidizing the purchase of lower priced, market rate homes; and
- Facilitating construction of affordable homes for non-profit organizations.

Although the 2003 Housing Needs Assessment indicates that most residents in the City and County prefer single-family detached dwellings, it is important to have housing choices for those who cannot afford or prefer not to live in a detached dwelling. Housing diversity allows people to live in the City as their housing needs and preferences change. For instance, some households cannot afford to purchase or rent a detached home, and rely on apartment housing. Students, young householders and retirees often prefer or require housing that is less expensive and requires less maintenance, such as rental or owner-occupied apartments or townhomes.

### 6.4 Key Housing Issues

**Housing the Workforce.** The strong local economy and attractive quality of life have all contributed to increased demand for housing in general, and for more workforce housing in particular. Often, workers must seek housing in other more affordable communities, forcing them to commute long distances to work. The challenge is creating workforce housing opportunities in a community with limited developable land. To achieve affordability, new approaches to creating housing will be considered. Among these strategies are that a significant proportion of workforce housing will need to be constructed at higher densities than conventional single-family housing.

**Meeting Millennials’ Demands.** The 2015 La Plata County Housing Demand Forecast projected that between 2015 and 2040 an additional 10,000 people aged 35-54 would require housing within the County. Based on this cohort’s strong preferences for living close to work in walkable, bikeable neighborhoods with easy access to shopping and other amenities, a significant proportion of this population will be seeking housing within or near to Durango.

**Incorporating Student Housing.** Fort Lewis College accommodated 44% of its 3,556 students on campus in the fall of 2016, which meant that the other 56% (2,151) students had to find housing within or near the City. Demand for student housing typically creates code enforcement challenges and an upward pressure on rents as in some instances, multiple students can afford higher rents than many families in the workforce. While the College plans to increase the number of on-campus beds to 1,700 over the long-term, the City will continue to need to absorb more than half of the student population for the foreseeable future. Not all off-campus students live in Durango, however. Two-thirds of Fort Lewis students meet the threshold for having “financial need,” so many students are vulnerable to the same market dynamics as the rest of Durango’s renters.

**Meeting Senior Housing Needs.** While baby boomers have a greater tendency to age in place than previous generations, the high numbers of people in this demographic are generating demand for increased numbers of attached or higher density detached units (e.g., patio homes). As this population continues to age, the demand for senior housing options also will increase.

**Providing Accessible Housing.** Accessibility will become increasingly important as the older population increases. Given the City’s terrain and the limited supply of land, the provision of sufficient numbers of units that are wheelchair accessible will be challenging. The City should consider whether to incentivize or require the provision of accessible units within multi-family and mixed-density developments.

**Homelessness.** Homelessness has become more of an issue in recent years as the number of both local homeless families and the transient homeless
population has increased and has become more visible. The City is partnering with the County and local nonprofit groups and religious organizations to provide potential solutions. The City will continue to work with partner agencies to address homelessness issues.

**Meeting Rental Needs.** As discussed above, rental occupancy rates are very high, which creates upward pressure on rents and reduces affordability for renter households. This Plan guides the City to explore options for increasing the number of rental units available by increasing opportunities for mixed-use development and increasing densities for infill and greenfield areas.

**Allowing Accessory Dwelling Units.** The City’s efforts to document and legitimize accessory dwelling units are one element of increasing rental unit affordability. The 2007 Plan recommended allowing more accessory dwelling units and the City adopted standards to legitimize existing and facilitate new accessory dwelling units in many City neighborhoods. This Plan recommends that the City explore opportunities to allow accessory dwellings in additional single-family neighborhoods.

### 6.5 Housing Goals, Objectives and Policies

**Goal 13:** Continually improve the sustainability of Durango’s housing and neighborhoods.

**Objective 13.1:** Reduce energy demand and water use on a per-unit basis.

- **Policy 13.1.1:** Routinely update City energy codes to improve energy efficiency and foster use of renewable energy technologies.

- **Policy 13.1.2:** Use building codes, landscaping standards, fee structures and other measures to reduce water demand in new and existing homes.

- **Policy 13.1.3:** Pursue a range of incentives and requirements to measure and improve the energy efficiency of existing and new housing units.

**Policy 13.1.4:** Pursue a range of incentives and requirements to reduce water demands for existing and new housing units.

**Policy 13.1.5:** Enhance mobility options for existing and new neighborhoods through improved bicycle, pedestrian and transit access from homes to goods and services.

**Policy 13.1.6:** Consider environmental justice and priorities in the location and design of new as well as the redevelopment of existing housing and neighborhoods.

**Goal 14:** Provide for the development of a variety of housing types throughout the Durango planning area that meets the diverse needs of the community.

**Objective 14.1:** Promote housing affordability for all residents through efficient development patterns as well as design standards that minimize long-term costs to residents, considering up-front costs, operating costs and health impacts of construction materials. The City will also consider diverse housing types and promote
development patterns that minimize transportation costs.

Policy 14.1.1: Encourage the provision of various types of housing in mixed-use and mixed-income projects.

Policy 14.1.2: Encourage residential development in areas where the necessary public facilities and services can be provided economically and efficiently.

Policy 14.1.3: Encourage high-density residential development in areas that are located near work, retail, service and community facilities (such as parks, playgrounds and schools) to reduce transportation related costs.

Policy 14.1.4: Promote subdivision design that provides bike and pedestrian access to trails and transit routes.

Policy 14.1.5: Protect the existing housing stock by limiting nonresidential uses into residential neighborhoods.

Objective 14.2: Provide for opportunities for a variety of housing types.

Policy 14.2.1: Encourage a mix of housing types and allow greater densities to provide a greater number of workforce housing units.

Policy 14.2.2: Incentivize the construction of smaller units.

Policy 14.2.3: Encourage residential development with convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to schools, neighborhood commercial centers and other public facilities designed to serve neighborhood residents. For large developments, on-site development of such facilities will be encouraged.

Policy 14.2.4: Facilitate development of mixed-density and mixed-income projects and other creative housing options that reduce housing costs and provide adequate amenities.

Goal 15: Increase housing opportunities for workforce and special needs housing populations (target populations) through public/private partnerships.

Objective 15.1: Support local and regional efforts to identify housing needs and advance coordinated public and private sector efforts through the creation of a Regional Strategic Housing Plan.
Policy 15.1.1: Develop a City housing program that will:

(1) Maintain data documenting the demand for and supply of housing for Durango’s workforce and special needs households;

(2) Quantify the linkage (rational nexus) between new residential and non-residential development and affordable housing demand;

(3) Facilitate provision of needed housing options;

(4) Create policies, in partnership with La Plata County, which will facilitate development of housing that is affordable to target populations; and

(5) Create additional funding strategies that will increase access to affordable housing and workforce.

Policy 15.1.2: Assist local and regional efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive toolbox of effective affordable housing strategies to increase housing options for target populations.

Policy 15.1.3: Support the retention of existing housing through active monitoring of the supply of housing by type, condition and tenure, encouraging the maintenance and rehabilitation of units in sub-standard condition and requiring rehabilitation or demolition of dangerous housing units. Illegal units should be brought into compliance with zoning and housing codes or vacated.

Policy 15.1.4: Work with local and regional partners to establish a permanent housing trust fund and its potential sources of revenue. The fund will be used to subsidize the development of workforce and special needs housing.

Policy 15.1.5: Ensure that housing units meet minimum safety codes.

Policy 15.1.6: Encourage the provision of various types of affordable housing in mixed-use and mixed-density projects. Assist local and regional partners in identifying and acquiring land for the development of mixed-income neighborhoods that will provide a range of opportunities to the target populations.

Policy 15.1.7: Permit development of accessory apartments on parcels that are large enough to compatibly accommodate structures and required parking.

Policy 15.1.8: Work with the local and regional housing providers to increase the development capacity of both for profit and nonprofit developers to deliver housing that is affordable to the target populations.

Policy 15.1.9: Support public/private sector housing initiatives to increase housing options that are compatible with market rate housing and surrounding development for the target populations.
7 Area Plans & Character Districts

Durango’s planning history includes the development of plans and studies for sub-areas within the planning area. These area plans tailor detailed goals, policies, specific design and development criteria and implementation measures, for public and private development, for the unique needs and opportunities of the areas in which they apply. Most of these plans contain extensive background analysis, establish policy direction and propose land use patterns.

While historically, the City has relied on area plans that provide wide-ranging guidance on future land uses, development patterns and capital improvements, the 2007 Comprehensive Plan recommended the creation of character districts, which include all the elements of an area plan, plus a more detailed focus on regulating design of both the public and private realms within each district.

This chapter summarizes the existing and proposed area plans and character districts, which are incorporated into the Durango Comprehensive Plan by reference.

7.1 Area Plans

7.1.1 Grandview Area Plan

The Grandview Area Plan, adopted in January 2004, applies to the area east of Farmington Hill straddling US Hwy 160 to both the north and south to the County Road 234 and State Highway 172 intersection. The area includes the Southfork character district, Mercy Regional Medical Center and the Three Springs development. The Grandview area, because of its size and mixture of uses, offers a great opportunity for the creation of dynamic neighborhoods of varying character. This area plan has been partially implemented through the relocation of Mercy Hospital, which is a cornerstone for the Three Springs traditional neighborhood development and the Southfork character district. As the City and County face increasing transportation constraints it is essential that this urban area, which will capture much of Durango’s growth in the next decade, be developed with the mix of uses and designs necessary to achieve high rates of internal trip capture. In other words, Grandview neighborhoods should provide opportunities for residents to shop, work and play, thereby reducing the need to contribute to peak hour traffic congestion on Highways 160 East and 160/550. The extension of the planned SMART 160 Trail (the east/west connector to the Animas River Trail) is a key multimodal transportation component as the Grandview area develops. Including bike/walk connectivity is an important element to the growth of the area and commuting options to the hospital and shopping in the area.

7.1.2 Ewing Mesa Area Plan

This area plan, adopted in January 2004, includes 1,495 acres and was intended to accommodate a large portion of the City’s growth between its adoption and 2030. However, a new owner has brought a new vision to the property that accommodates an outdoor music venue, relocated County Fairgrounds, open space, recreational facilities and cultural resources. This new vision necessitates a complete revision to the adopted area plan. The most significant challenges facing the potentially developable area are provision of infrastructure including access and water and sewer service. These improvements should be planned in conjunction with the redesignation of future land uses on the mesa and the phasing of its development.
revised plan should avoid encroachment of structural development into Horse Gulch and the ridges on the north end of the property.

7.1.3  La Posta Road Plan

Although the La Posta Road Area is not within the City of Durango, it is within the City’s Planning Area. The City and La Plata County coordinated in the development and adoption of the Area Plan so that the area would be eligible to receive City services, particularly water. The area plan was initially initiated in conjunction with the 2007 update of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The plan process was put on hold until it began again in 2012. The plan was adopted in 2013. Input for this plan was obtained from property owners and other interested parties through a series of public workshops, web-based communications and a telephone survey. The principal challenges to the growth and development of the La Posta Road area identified in the area plan were:

- Establishing appropriate land uses and intensities;
- Defining the street layout and other transportation system improvements needed to serve planned land uses;
- Identifying utility improvements needed to serve planned land uses;
- Evaluating options for the provision of needed transportation and utility improvements; and
- Defining the City’s role in facilitating the provision of these public facilities.

The area plan integrates land use and facility planning efforts to ensure that future development in the La Posta Road area is compatible with existing and planned development, as well as the ability to provide adequate public facilities.

The City and County have agreed update the area plan after completion of the City’s Comprehensive Plan update.

7.1.4  Downtown Durango Vision & Strategic Plan

Adopted in 2005, this plan provides for the long-term development of the area known as the Central Business District. It envisions increased public open space along the Animas River and reinforces a strong downtown with the government anchor on the north and the tourism anchor on the south. The Vision for Downtown Durango is to continue to build on its diverse mixed-use consisting of a rich blend of civic and professional services, support businesses, niche retail stores for both locals and tourists, housing, and cultural and entertainment uses. Access to and within downtown is provided by a variety of transportation modes and linkages, especially to and from the Animas River trail.

7.1.5  Hwy 160/550 Corridor Plan

This corridor plan, adopted in the summer of 1996, provides for the long-term development of this primary entry arterial corridor south of Durango. The plan envisions an automobile-oriented highway corridor with a network of independent trails for bicyclists and pedestrians. While the corridor will be developed for commercial uses, the area plan provides for some residential development set back from the highway and recreational amenities along the Animas River.
7.1.6 Hwy. 160 West Corridor Plan

This corridor plan, done in conjunction with its annexation in 2001, provides for mixed-use development along this entry corridor, with commercial services, motels and residential uses. The plan envisions that this entry highway from the west will include additional bicycle and pedestrian amenities for hotel guests and other residents of the corridor. The corridor will continue to be dominated by the arterial roadway, but via the creek and along adjacent trails, improved access for people without automobiles is anticipated.

7.1.7 College Mesa Plan

The College Mesa Plan reinforces the College Mesa Precise Plan, which was adopted in 1997 to address the desire to manage development based on the availability of public services, and in anticipation of the Skyridge Development Plan. Public services that were analyzed include capacity of the Hillcrest water tank (water service limited to 1,000 units), capacity of the vehicular circulation system (identified need for a looped collector along Jenkins Road, minor arterial upgrades for Goeglein Gulch Road – currently underway - and reserving additional land for roadway purposes), land use compatibility (calculations roughly allocated between commercial, residential, municipal and park uses). Capacity and demand was also considered for sewage, drainage, parks, bikeways and schools. Ultimately, timing of development was determined to be based on improvements to Goeglein Gulch Road. The design of the approved Skyridge development has reduced the likelihood that secondary access will be extended from Florida Road to the north side of the Mesa.

7.1.8 Northeast Quadrant Area Plan

This plan, also adopted in 1997, provides additional direction on land use, parks and transportation issues relating to the northeast quadrant of the City. The plan provides for a mix of uses, with higher density residential development along the Florida Road corridor; a moderately-sized commercial node at the intersection of Florida Road and East Animas Drive; and medium to low-density residential development throughout the remainder of the corridor. The plan also identifies some major roadway improvements reflected in the Major Street Plan, including an arterial roadway extension from the intersection of East Animas and Florida Roads south to College Mesa.

7.1.9 Old Durango Residential Plan

This area plan, adopted in 1986, focused on three residential neighborhoods in south Durango. Neighborhood property owners, who were concerned about the conversion of residential properties to non-residential uses, sought assistance in preserving Durango’s oldest residential areas. The Old Durango Residential Plan established goals of maintaining the residential character of "The Boulevard" neighborhood (including insuring that any renovation or expansion meets historic guidelines), minimizing the impact of transitional land use changes in South Durango and preserving the stable Old Durango neighborhood.

7.1.10 Junction Creek Area Land Use Plan

The City Council adopted the Junction Creek Plan in 1986, covering land within the City of Durango as well as some unincorporated areas adjacent to the City. Proposals for several residential developments in the Junction Creek area generated concern about the impacts on public facilities. The plan recommended that all development in Junction Creek area be required to connect to the City's sewer system, which led to an intergovernmental agreement with La Plata County. The agreement described future services and related these services to development approvals. In 2005, Durango purchased approximately 178 acres of land, known as Dalla Mountain Park, abutting Junction Creek for open space preservation.

7.1.11 Animas River Corridor Plan

This corridor plan was adopted by the City Council in June, 1994. The plan focused on the preservation, protection and enhancement of the Animas River and its riverine environment. The plan’s goals included enhancing the visual quality of the river, development of recreational opportunities on the Animas River, increasing River accessibility and maintenance of the River’s natural ecology. River overlay zones were established to control development and use of the River Corridor. The City should continue to implement the Animas River Corridor Management Plan to include the development of whitewater park amenities and bank stabilization. It also should monitor the river corridor downstream of the Animas La Plata Water Project pumping station across from Santa Rita Park and work to minimize the impacts with appropriate agencies.
7.1.12 East Fassbinder Homestead Neighborhood Plan

This neighborhood plan, adopted in September 2006, focuses on the balance between residential property owners and the redevelopment of the old Mercy Hospital campus, including the construction of the new public library. The plan includes policies that address types of uses to be allowed on the old campus, balancing the needs of the property owners to redevelop the site while still addressing neighbors’ concerns. The recently-approved plan will help maintain the desirability of the neighborhood while permitting redevelopment of the site and construction of the new library.

7.1.13 Webb Ranch Area Plan

The Webb Ranch is located at the top of Farmington Hill and will have the proposed realignment of Hwy. 550 to the new Hwy. 160 interchange passing through it. This large parcel provides the opportunity for a unique combination of business park, residential and mixed-use development. This Comprehensive Plan recommends the development of an area plan in coordination with the property owners, La Plata County and the South Durango Sanitation District to establish the best mix and intensity of uses and a plan for the efficient extension of required infrastructure and services.

7.2 Design Guidelines

Though not area plans, Durango employs an array of Design Guidelines to achieve specific design goals and objectives throughout the City.

The first and most venerable of these guidelines are the Downtown Design Guidelines, intended to preserve the character of the downtown area by identifying subareas and providing renovation guidelines applicable to each of these districts. There are three distinct subareas downtown: the Main Avenue District (the "core" downtown, from 5th Street to 12th Street), the Camino del Rio District (described as the gateway to downtown) and the Second Avenue District (a transition area from the Main Avenue District and historic residences on 3rd Avenue). Design guidelines are provided for building alignment, design, color and material composition, entrance ways, architectural style, landscaping, views to the river and site relationships.

The Commercial Use Design Guidelines, the Residential Infill Design Standards and Guidelines, the Three Springs Codes, Standards and Guidelines, and the Twin Buttes Standards and Guidelines are all recent additions to the City’s code, aimed at providing design guidance for specific issues in specific areas.

Over time the City may need to revise these standards, guidelines and area plans, or draft new area/neighborhood plans. Area plans should be developed in conjunction with proposed annexations of large tracts of partially developed land. Neighborhood plans should be drafted to address concerns of existing developed areas of the City.

7.3 Character Districts

The following character districts are under development or planned for completion during the life of this Plan. The following summaries reflect the challenges to be addressed within each district.

7.3.1 North Main Character District

The North Main District, or Uptown Durango follows the U.S. Hwy. 550 corridor from the Animas River north of Downtown to the City’s northern boundary. Primarily developed in the 1960s and 70s, the area has experienced redevelopment that capitalizes on its proximity to transit, parks, the Animas River, commercial goods and services and neighborhoods.

While the high visibility and amenities listed above offer great opportunities for commercial and mixed-use development, fragmented ownership, small lots, traffic along North Main and narrow property depths will make redevelopment of some sites challenging. The east side of the corridor has
opportunities for development at greater heights than portions of the west side that abut single family neighborhoods.

### 7.3.2 Camino del Rio District

This district is the logical westward extension of the Downtown and holds significant potential for commercial and residential development within mixed-use developments. While it suffers from traffic challenges similar to North Main, the larger parcels, parcel access, river access and parking facilitate infill development. Pedestrian access across Camino del Rio will be challenging, but necessary to effectively link Downtown with the River and capitalize on the demand for residential development so close to the amenities offered by both. This will require coordination with CDOT to make Camino del Rio more pedestrian friendly and with property owners to create designs that better support access to the river and highway. This corridor offers good opportunities to provide density or height incentives in exchange for the mix of housing and commercial uses Durango needs.

### 7.3.3 College and 8th Avenue District

This district provides goods and services close to the City’s vibrant historic neighborhoods. Linking Downtown and College Mesa, this area enjoys a walkable and bikeable environment with an eclectic mix of neighborhood scale uses. Parking shortages and fragmented property ownership will limit redevelopment opportunities on some sites, but the gridded block patterns can facilitate infill development while maintaining the historic character of this district. One challenge in this district will be to maintain traffic flows while ensuring that the district’s principal streets are pedestrian and bicycle friendly. Another challenge will be to recognize the importance of solar access in the winter, which suggests that heights along College should be carefully assessed before the standards are changed or variances granted. The mix of uses along 8th Avenue offer great opportunities for more flexible zoning that could accommodate residential, commercial and mixed-use development that could serve students, artists and other populations that are attracted to more active neighborhoods.

### 7.3.4 Rocket District

This district is uniquely situated to accommodate high density residential development. With regional commercial centers located on the north and south ends, the area between offers large tracts of developable land that enjoy river access and great mountain views in addition to access to the regional centers. The lack of compatibility between existing uses is matched by land values that often exceed the value of existing uses, which provides strong incentive for redevelopment. While traffic volumes along the Hwy. 160/550 corridor are high, a gridded street system liking the north and south ends of this district could create a very desirable location for a mix of medium and high-density residential development with neighborhood services to supplement the regional services that sandwich these redevelopment areas.

### 7.3.5 Southfork District

This district, located in the northwest portion of the Grandview planning area, is well situated to serve as a regional retail commercial area at the south and eastern gateways to Durango. Proximity to Three Springs and Mercy Medical Center and easy access from the new interchange of Hwy. 160 and the proposed realignment of U.S. Hwy. 550, enable this underdeveloped area to become a new regional center that supports both retail and mixed-use development. By building on the character of abutting new developments, this area has the potential to support be developed in a pattern that avoids the aesthetic and mobility pitfalls of conventional big-box retail development.

### 7.3.6 160 West District

This district is the western gateway to Durango from the Four Corners region. It has high traffic volumes, which can support diverse land use patterns, but is somewhat constrained by being a narrow valley that accommodates the Lightner Creek floodplain and a wide highway with frequently hazardous winter driving conditions. While corridor lacks pleasant facilities for biking or walking, historic development is giving way to redevelopment that can better support tourist needs and provide some local residential and commercial opportunities.

### 7.3.7 Northeast District

This district has undergone significant changes over the last decade, particularly along Florida Road and East Animas Drive. The reconfiguration of these corridors as complete streets has improved the desirability and function of higher density housing, commercial and mixed-use developments within these corridors. Older development offers opportunities for redevelopment...
which should be used to extend pedestrian infrastructure into the surrounding neighborhoods. Topography in this district is a constraint in some locations, but also offers the opportunities to capitalize on great views of the valley and surrounding mountains.

### 7.3.8 Sawmill District

Located east of the Animas River, along State Highway 3, this district includes the RiverGate mixed-use development and scattered heavy commercial and light industrial development. Topography in the corridor and some of the heavier uses are constraints for redevelopment, but ownership patterns, access to Ewing Mesa and great views of the river, valley and surrounding mountains offer significant redevelopment potential. The rural cross-sections of roads in much of this District make direct access dangerous, so the City should coordinate with the State to facilitate the redesign and reconstruction that better supports the land uses recommended in this Plan. The areas location on the north side of the valley provides good southwestern exposure and the opportunity to become a more desirable corridor.

### 7.3.9 Bodo District

The Bodo District encompasses Bodo Industrial Park and the Durango Mall environs, both of which enjoy prime locations and high traffic counts along the Hwy. 160/550 corridor south of the Downtown. The industrial park has become more of a mixed-use park as office and commercial uses have developed, particularly along the highway. This transition has occurred incrementally and resulted in land use conflicts and inconsistent development quality. A lack of pedestrian facilities has kept most of this corridor strictly automobile oriented, but the depth of developable land on both sides of the highway provides opportunities to create functional infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. Both Bodo and the Durango Mall sides of this corridor have underused land and sites that could be redeveloped. While the west side is likely to remain primarily commercial and light industrial in character, the east side provides the opportunity for a residential component, particularly overlooking the river.
8 Transportation Element

8.1 Overview

The Transportation Element, which along with the Regional Transportation Plan (2030 Trip) jointly developed by the City and La Plata County, identifies key transportation challenges facing the community, establishes goals, objectives, policies and strategies addressing those issues, and serves as the City’s Major Street Plan. 2030 Trip is in the process of being updated to extend projections and identify transportation needs through the year 2040. As Durango seeks to meet the mobility needs of future residents, employees and visitors, it will strive to provide transportation choices that are affordable and accessible for all segments of the community. In addition, Durango will pursue a transportation system that is built and operated in a sustainable fashion. The future transportation system should provide choices between alternative modes, including: automobile, car-pooling transit, cycling and pedestrian travel. The Plan recognizes that continuous expansion of the street and highway system is not a sustainable transportation solution from either a geographic or financial standpoint. The resulting system should effectively serve the anticipated population while being sensitive to the natural and built environments.

System improvements must be within the fiscal means of the City and should provide the flexibility to evolve as needs and technology change. The location and design of new facilities should be compatibly integrated into the community fabric -- protecting the character of individual neighborhoods and the community. Transportation system planning is an ongoing process that should be flexible, comprehensive and open to public participation.

While transportation system facilities and services are the focus of this element, they will not work effectively unless development patterns support a range of transportation choices. These choices become increasingly important as energy prices rise and carbon emissions are limited. Therefore, transportation policies and their implementation are closely coordinated with the Community Development policies in Chapter 5.
8.2 Context for Planning

Transportation Planning. The Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Commission (RPC) serves as the regional planning organization for the Durango planning area for major roadways that are eligible for state and federal funding. The RPC is made up of one representative from each of the seventeen political jurisdictions of the Southwest Transportation Planning Region of Bayfield, Cortez, Dolores, Dove Creek, Durango, Ignacio, Mancos, Pagosa Springs, Rico, Silverton, as well as Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Juan Counties, and the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes. Southwest Transportation Planning Region works on transportation planning and coordination, project, and funding issues throughout the region.

Pursuant to the federal Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act the regional planning organization is responsible for transportation planning. The TPR plan projects traffic needs based on local assumptions about population and employment growth. To the extent that the City and County comprehensive planning programs modify existing assumptions about future development, population and employment projections used to set priorities in the Colorado Department of Transportation’s (CDOT) Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) will need to be adjusted accordingly.

The TPR and Transit Local Coordinating Councils have worked on a regional and statewide transit plan that sets priorities for statewide and regional transit services. Additionally, the City has developed a Multimodal Transportation Plan that examines transportation needs for the next 30 years and recommends strategies to improve mobility.

Streets. A review of the area’s road network indicates the following problems: (i) the seasonal influx of a significant visitor population, (ii) the convergence of federal and state highways and county roads within the planning area, (iii) topographical constraints within the planning area, and (iv) extra-territorial growth dependent on the highway system through the City. Durango has limited opportunity to expand existing roadways or to create new major arterial streets because the narrow Animas Valley is largely developed.

The layout of the existing street network is illustrated in Map 8. The road system consists of major arterial, minor arterial, collector and local streets. Arterials typically are designed to carry through traffic at relatively high speeds, though development and traffic intensity during peak hours limit the flow of traffic on most arterials in Durango. Collector streets are intended to carry traffic from the local street system to the arterial streets. Local streets primarily provide access to individual lots. The steep sides of the Animas Valley have resulted in a transportation system with a predominantly north-south bias. Within the City, east-west roadways primarily provide access via local streets and collectors. On the south side of the community, U.S. 160 intersects U.S. 550 from the east, proceeds north along the U.S. 550/160 corridor and branches off to the west on the southwest side of downtown.

While the downtown area is laid out in a grid street system, major streets radiate out from the downtown, with key spokes extending out U.S. 550 to the north and south, U.S. 160 to the east and west, Florida Road to the northeast, and Junction Street to the northwest. This radial pattern has led to congestion near downtown along U.S. 550 and at the intersection of Florida Road, 3rd Avenue and 15th Street. Other areas of congestion in the planning area include:
• U.S. 160 east of Farmington Hill. The design and mix of uses on Florida Mesa has contributed to delays and automobile crashes due to numerous access points and high volumes of traffic relying on this major arterial. The intersection of U.S. 550 and U.S. 160 at the base of Farmington Hill is a particularly hazardous area, due to poor sight distances, high speeds of traffic, high traffic volume, poor intersection layout and the susceptibility to weather problems. The addition of the second westbound through lane has reduced problems at the base of Farmington Hill. The Colorado Department of Transportation has plans to eliminate this intersection when Hwy. 550 is rerouted to the interchange with 160 in Grandview.

• The intersection of Main Avenue and Camino del Rio at 14th Street. Heavy traffic loads and the number of streets converging near this intersection make this a challenging intersection. CDOT reports that this intersection operates at a level of service F on some peak tourist days in August.

• Florida Road/15th Street/3rd Avenue intersection. The design of this three-way intersection, located on the edge of a hill, creates numerous conflicts. Perhaps due to public awareness of its nonconforming configuration, drivers have managed to keep accidents here to a minimum.

• U.S. 550/160 Corridor. While traffic generally moves well through this corridor, delays at traffic signals have become more prevalent. Increased development along the corridor and in outlying parts of the County will exacerbate these problems, resulting in levels of service E and F, per the Regional Transportation Study. The addition of a third lane or the conversion of a corridor to a limited access freeway would temporarily improve the level of service, but there currently are no plans to pursue either of these projects.

• River Road. This road’s intersection with US Highway 160/550 is critical to the function of La Posta Road. River Road serves as the primary outlet for traffic from La Posta Road, as well as a significant amount of development near the Home Depot. The City will need to coordinate with CDOT and La Plata County to coordinate traffic capacity through this intersection with the approval of development along La Posta Road.

Public Transportation. The City of Durango provides public transportation, paratransit bus and trolley. Durango Transit serves most neighborhoods within the City on 30-minute headways, including Fort Lewis College. Additionally, trolley service travels along Main Avenue between College Drive north to the Iron Horse Inn (northern Boundary of the City limit. The trolley provides a sustainable transportation option to the central business district on 20-minute headways. Durango Transit’s fixed route public transportation system has had a growth in ridership of approximately 20% over the last three years and remains popular with many Durango residents. At present, transit ridership is less than one percent of auto-occupant travel and is expected to remain a small percentage in the foreseeable future, unless service expansions are made to increase service frequency to 15-minute headway at which point significant ridership increases are expected.

Durango Transit’s complementary paratransit service, also known as the Opportunity Bus, provides “door-to-door” transportation to disabled, elderly or other persons unable to use Durango’s fixed route system. This service also operates within the City limits or within ¾ a mile as the crow flies from the fixed routes.

Additional public transportation services are provided by taxi services, shuttles and ride-sharing services. Road-Runner services currently are available within La Plata County and to Grand Junction.

Each of these services are likely to become more convenient and affordable as emerging technologies reduce operator costs.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities. Residents of Durango have a wide selection of trails in the planning area, including paved and unpaved bicycle and mountain bike, hiking and ski trails. These trails provide transportation-related and recreational benefits to many residents. A 1990 City-wide poll indicated that almost 80 percent of the respondents believed that Durango needed more bicycle paths. Since then, there have been several additional surveys, including one completed in 2004, that have reinforced support for the completion of the Animas River Trail and other multi-use trails in the community. In both 1990 and 2000, the Census reported that over 15 percent of Durango’s population commuted to work by foot or on bicycle, which is a much higher proportion than on the State or National level.
The City has a paved Bike Route System that is primarily located on existing streets. A comprehensive paved multi-use trail system is also planned and/or under construction in the City, including the Animas River Trail; the Goeglein Gulch/College Mesa Trail; the SMART 160 Trail; and the Junction Creek Trail. This trail system includes an assortment of grade-separated crossings of U.S. Highways 550 and 160. Non-paved trails include a network of trails in Horse Gulch (City and BLM Land), Overend Mountain Park, Dalla Mountain Park, Animas City Mountain (primarily on Bureau of Land Management “BLM” land), Junction Creek/Colorado Trail (primarily on U.S. Forest Service land), Lightner Creek/Perins Peak Trail, Smelter Mountain/Ridges Basin Trail (part of Bodo State Wildlife Area), Fort Lewis/Goeglein Gulch Trail (including the Centennial Trail), Horse Gulch Trail (partly on private and BLM land), and Missionary Ridge/Haflin Creek/Animas Valley Trail (crossing private land).

As Durango expands its system of trails, it should distinguish between trails that serve transportation purposes from those that primarily serve recreational purposes. This element assumes that bike and pedestrian trails will be an important component of the multimodal system serving Durango’s long term transportation needs.

The 2010 Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Plan and the 2016 Multimodal Plan provide details of the community bike route and trail system.

**Airports.** The Durango-La Plata County Airport and Animas Air Park provide air transport to the Durango area. The Durango-La Plata County Airport is jointly funded by the City and County. It accommodates commercial and general aviation (mostly turboprops), and can serve the Animas Valley’s commercial air passenger and freight transportation needs for the foreseeable future. Though the airport is located twenty minutes from Durango, limousine, van and shuttle bus services are available. Animas Air Park, located southeast of the City along La Posta Road, primarily provides service for private aircraft. Animas Air Park, located southeast of the City along La Posta Road, primarily provides service for private aircraft.

**Rail.** Recreational rail transport is provided by the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, which operates four trains (five during peak periods) from its main station in Durango to Blair Street in Silverton, Colorado, 45 miles away, as well as specialty recreational trains, such as Thomas the Tank Engine, the Polar Express, etc. During the winter months (from January to April), weather typically permits only one daily train to run for only half the route.

### 8.3 Key Transportation Issues

#### 8.3.1 Mobility for Multiple Users and Purposes

As a regional center for tourism, employment, goods and services, Durango must cope with significant external transportation system demands, as well as its internal demands. The community's transportation system should provide mobility for residents and non-residents in automobiles. It must provide for truck access to transport goods to and from the community. It must also provide for movement of significant numbers of residents and visitors on bicycles or on foot. It should provide transit access for those persons who do not own a vehicle, or who choose not to operate a vehicle under certain circumstances. Transportation system design should accommodate a variety of users who travel for a variety of purposes, including business, shopping, school and recreation.

#### 8.3.2 Building in a Constrained Environment

The mountains, the Animas River and existing development severely limit opportunities to increase the capacity of the City's street system. If current driving habits continue, the level of service on Durango's streets will significantly deteriorate during the life of this Plan. Because new traffic routes
are limited, Durango will need to explore all opportunities to manage traffic demands.

8.3.3 Multimodal Approaches

The transportation system provides options for mode choice, such as pedestrian walkways, streets, on- and off-street bicycle facilities, fixed route and paratransit transit services. Currently automobiles are the primary mode of transportation. However, as the street and highway system near capacity, the benefits of other modes of transportation will increase in importance. It will be crucial to plan to expand the public transit service area to a regional bus system. As roads become more congested, the importance of providing alternatives to single-occupant vehicles will increase. This element encourages development of a multimodal system, thereby reducing dependence on the automobile as the primary mode of transportation. Specifically, all roadway improvements should be designed to meet the needs of pedestrians, and cyclists. Collector, arterial and other roads planned for transit services should include pull-out lanes for buses and adequate space for bus stop amenities such as signage and bike racks.

8.3.4 Sustaining Transit Services

The City should continue to implement its Multimodal Transportation Plan and coordinate with regional providers and La Plata County to address increasing regional transit needs, such as expansions in transit service area, frequency, and necessary funding strategies for a coordinated regional transit system. Durango’s local fixed-route service should provide a minimum of fifteen-minute frequency during normal business hours to major commercial centers such as Wal-Mart, Three Springs, Fort Lewis College, and major shopping centers to capture a greater share of trips by serving choice riders as well as transit-dependent riders. The City should assist regional entities in the coordination, planning, and establishment of regional transit infrastructure as may be dictated by service area expansions and service needs. Such infrastructure would include, but would not be limited to, dedicated bus high occupancy vehicle lanes, park and ride facilities, regional transit centers, bus stop shelters and other amenities.

8.3.5 Funding Transit Services

As State and Federal funding for capital and operations of transit systems are uncertain, finding a reliable source of local funding becomes increasingly important. Currently Parking fees are an important source of funding but are inadequate to support operations, maintenance and enhancements to the existing transit services. Adequate funding will likely require a combination of fees, taxes and private sector participation to sustainably fund transit services.

8.3.6 Protecting Neighborhoods and the Environment

The superior quality of life in Durango is directly related to its natural and built environments. The transportation system should increase opportunities for people to enjoy these resources while supporting the viability of existing neighborhoods. Protection of neighborhood edges and mitigation of transportation-related noise will reduce the negative effects of an expanded system. Where feasible, additional traffic should be directed around the edges of neighborhoods. As new roads are developed along hillsides or near the river, they should be designed to mitigate their visual and environmental impacts.

8.3.7 Coordinating Transportation with Land Use

Transportation planning should ensure that planned land uses and the transportation system are mutually supportive. The transportation system should be designed to support higher intensity nodes and encourage infill development, yet it also must be designed at an appropriate scale and character to support existing low density neighborhoods.

8.3.8 Design and Safety

The transportation system must be designed to meet acceptable safety standards -- not only for normal use by traffic and service vehicles, but also for emergency vehicles and during adverse weather conditions. The City will need to balance the desire to provide access to difficult development sites with the need to protect the public health, safety and welfare.

8.3.9 Planning and Evaluation

One of the goals of transportation system planning is to achieve the maximum benefit at the least cost. Each transportation mode will have diverse short and long term implications. The analysis of these implications should include both tangible and intangible consequences. Level of service criteria, social impacts, health impacts, economic impacts, and environmental impacts are important criteria for assessment of individual transportation projects as well as the entire transportation system.
8.3.10 Shared Responsibility

The planning area includes roadways under the jurisdiction of various public and private entities including the City, La Plata County, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, the Colorado Department of Transportation ("CDOT") and private owners. Coordination with other entities is essential to ensure that system improvements will support projected demands.

8.3.11 Cost-Effectiveness and Funding

Finite financial resources must be managed so that the most impact is achieved with the fewest dollars. The City needs creative mechanisms for accomplishing its transportation goals. Facing more limited state and federal funding, local governments will need to explore new funding mechanisms for capital and maintenance costs to increase the effectiveness of each transportation dollar.

8.3.12 Transportation Corridors and Circulation

Important to the effectiveness of Durango’s transportation system is the need for an effective and complete hierarchy of roadways with transportation corridors and nodes that reflect access management strategies and alternatives to corridor access.
Map 8:
Official Road Classification Map

Legend

- Planned Roads
- Hwy 550 S Connection

Road Class

- Arterial
- Minor Arterial / Urban
- Collector
- Local
- Private
- Access
- Water
- City Limits
- Planning Area Boundary
8.3.13 Expanding the Trails Network

Durango's residents and visitors have enthusiastically supported the growth of the City's trail network -- a network that currently consists of formal and informal trail segments. The completion of the Animas River and the SMART 160 trail systems as multimodal, hard surface ADA compliant trails are high priorities. The City must prioritize remaining trail segments that provide connections to other trails, based on its ability to fund initial construction and provide long-term maintenance. Trails are addressed in more detail in the City's 2010 Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Plan and the 2016 Multimodal Plan.

8.3.14 Planning for Autonomous Vehicles

As autonomous vehicles are introduced to the City, transportation needs will begin changing in significant ways. Parking will no longer need to be proximate to uses, which will reduce the amount of parking needed in Downtown and commercial corridors. As costs of driverless shuttle services approach those of car ownership, the number of cars per household will likely decline. Since passengers will not need to park their cars, remote parking facilities can use smaller spaces and be designed more efficiently. Finally, autonomous vehicles promise to gradually increase street capacity as autonomous vehicles coordinate better with other vehicles and respond better to changing driving conditions. As a remote tourist destination, Durango is not likely to be in the forefront of autonomous vehicle use, but as the technology rapidly develops, the City should begin planning transportation systems, parking and passenger drop-off locations to accommodate tomorrow's needs. A key component of facilitating the autonomous vehicle may be frequent transit shuttle service to in the business corridors increasing mobility within the business districts.

8.3.15 Planning for Fewer Cars

As the population ages, multi-car ownership of a household will decline, where a married couple household may start with two cars, add cars as the children age prior to leaving the house, as the occupant’s age the number of cars will decrease. Another trend is car sharing. Millennials have different views on car ownership and embrace alternatives such as car sharing. The City should allow changes in parking standards to account for these trends.

8.4 Future Roadway Network

The future roadway network established in this Plan identifies the approximate alignments and functional classifications of major roadways needed to serve planned development. In outlying areas, the densities and locations of collector roadways will depend on the actual density of development. The design of the future roadway network must be a dynamic process -- planned roads must be adjusted to reflect approved development. Similarly, the City and County should assess the impacts of proposed development to ensure that it can be safely accommodated on the planned roadway system. In addition, ongoing traffic monitoring and periodic system modeling should be conducted to adjust priorities in proposed capital improvements.
8.5 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 16: Increase mobility options for residents, employees and visitors within Durango, and the sustainability of those choices.

Objective 16.1: Increase the proportion of trips that are made by transit users, pedestrians and bicyclists to reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy 16.1.1: Support infill development and new development patterns that improve access to the City’s transit, bicycle, sidewalk and trail systems.

Policy 16.1.2: Improve transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities in both the public and private realms.

Policy 16.1.3: Provide incentives, such as fee reductions, parking reductions and density bonuses for developments that have transit, bicycle and pedestrian supportive designs, locations and support facilities.

Policy 16.1.4: Decreased transit headways and expand routes to capture an increased ridership, subject to funding availability.

Policy 16.1.5: Strive to retain the City’s position as a Gold Level Bicycle Community by increasing connectivity on roads, paths and trails.

Objective 16.2: Reduce vehicle miles traveled per household to reduce traffic congestion, especially by gasoline and diesel powered vehicles, to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy 16.2.1: Encourage businesses and multi-family developments that provide preferential parking for car pools and high-efficiency vehicles.

Policy 16.2.2: Encourage businesses and public entities to provide charging facilities for electric vehicles.

Policy 16.2.3: Coordinate with citizens, businesses and other applicable entities to facilitate car sharing and other creative ways to improve mobility and reduce its reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and the associated costs to people and the environment.

Policy 16.2.4: Encourage businesses to provide facilities and incentives to promote the use of sustainable transportation options.

Goal 17: Maintain a transportation system that safely and efficiently meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.

Objective 17.1: Develop and maintain a comprehensive transportation system that efficiently carries a variety of modes of traffic within and through the community.

Policy 17.1.1: Increase mobility options for all Durango residents through support of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists.

Policy 17.1.2: Reduce demands for new transportation facilities through better integration of land uses that enable residents to work, play and shop in closer proximity to their homes.

Policy 17.1.3: Ensure that land uses, site designs, and street improvements do not limit future mobility options. Unless there are convenient parallel facilities, all major roads, including appropriate highways should safely accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians and transit.
Policy 17.1.4: Require new development to contribute its proportionate share of the costs of transportation system capacity, including the costs of streets, bike lanes, bikeways, transportation-related trails, sidewalks and transit infrastructure.

Policy 17.1.5: Collaborate with regional entities to improve intercity public transportation options.

Objective 17.2: Improve street system capacity to meet increasing demands for all modes of transportation.

Policy 17.2.1: Coordinate with the County and major community employers to implement cost-effective transportation demand management strategies to reduce peak hour traffic. Such strategies may include, but are not limited to, park and ride sites, adjustments to work schedules, transit incentives, ride-sharing incentives and improved bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

Policy 17.2.2: Reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles to alleviate traffic congestion through transit and parking policies.

Policy 17.2.3: Design and construct all existing and proposed streets in accordance with Complete Streets and other adopted standards and policies.

Policy 17.2.4: Maintain street design and construction standards based on the functional classification. Modify standards to safely accommodate significant physical features, such as waterways, trees, buildings or hillsides.

Policy 17.2.5: Recognize that street design influences prevailing traffic speeds and design streets to support traffic speeds that are consistent with the function of the street and the neighborhood through which it travels. Traffic calming shall be incorporated into street designs, but reliance on speed humps should be discouraged. When designing intersections, evaluate the use of roundabouts, traffic circles and other creative designs to improve traffic flow and public safety.

Policy 17.2.6: Design street and road systems to be safe, cost-effective and efficient to maintain, while serving all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users.

Policy 17.2.7: Design streets to balance the need to provide adequate access for emergency services (i.e., police, fire, ambulance), transit services, sanitation services, street maintenance (including snow removal), and utility maintenance with the desire to slow traffic and increase safety for surrounding property owners and other users of the streets.

Policy 17.2.8: Maximize connectivity between streets to increase travel options.

Policy 17.2.9: Maintain and periodically update the Official Street Classification Map shown in Map 8, as part of the Major Street Plan to determine the locations and appropriate classifications of existing and future streets in the community. Future streets that are not shown in this exhibit shall be classified based on their logical function at full development and added to the Official Street Classification Map. Proposed street alignments are approximate; actual alignments in areas undergoing development may be adjusted to reflect future development patterns.

Policy 17.2.10: Use the Official Street Classification Map to identify right-of-way needs where new development is proposed, to set priorities for capital improvements and to help design street improvements. New
development must be designed to accommodate adequate rights-of-way. Proposed streets are assumed to be needed until the City determines that future land uses and traffic, or other factors eliminate the need for a specific proposed street and amend the Official Street Classification map accordingly.

Policy 17.2.11: Maintain a level of service “D” or better on all local and collector streets within the planning area. Maintain a level of service “D” or better on all arterial streets.

Policy 17.2.12: Apply the following strategies to address traffic congestion where it is projected to exceed adopted levels of service (160/550, Camino Del Rio and North Main):

1. Conduct periodic reviews of road segment and intersection levels of service (LOS) that account for existing traffic and approved, but un-built development;

2. Approvals of development that would impact intersections with substandard LOS for which practical improvements have been identified should be linked to commitments to fund these improvements;

3. Minimize the impacts of City development approvals that would deteriorate the LOS through traffic reduction measures or design features;

4. Rezoning or land use map amendments that increase traffic generation on the corridor over existing future land use or zoning designations should be avoided; and

5. Coordinate with CDOT and La Plata County to manage traffic in these constrained corridors.

Comment: While Durango will not preclude development due to traffic congestion in these constrained corridors, it may require site designs to address access and safety concerns, and/or contributions to fund needed intersection or other capacity improvements.

Several possible expansions to 160/550 are likely to be identified in the 2040 Trip study, all of which provide some degree of relief for congestion when measured against post-2030 conditions. A dedicated corridor for public transit separate from 160/550 is an alternative, one that would be unaffected by the level of congestion on the highway system. The City should work with CDOT and La Plata County to explore the full range of transportation options that provide solutions over the long term. Such improvements would provide the basis for revising this policy.

For item (2) above, where conditions warrant, the City may require one or more developers to fund proportionate shares of the costs of the improvements. The intent of this policy is to link the timing of development to the availability of all funds for required improvements.

Policy 17.2.13: Coordinate with CDOT and La Plata County to monitor levels of service using the regional traffic model. Use the results to guide land use and transportation policies and practices, as well as to identify road improvements, transit enhancements and trail linkages required to maintain adopted levels of service.
Policy 17.2.14: Maintain a five-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that prioritizes transportation system improvements based on need, as measured by improved capacity, safety enhancements, maintenance and linkages. The CIP for streets should establish priorities based on the following factors:

- **Demand Management** – improvements that lead to reductions in vehicle miles traveled or effectively reduce demands for new capacity should be considered for high priority.

- **Street Classification** -- high priority should be given to streets designed to carry higher volumes of traffic. In general, local street projects will be assigned lower priority than projects involving collector or arterial streets.

- **Existing volume to capacity ratio** -- the higher the volume to capacity ratio, the worse the level of service and the greater the traffic congestion. Therefore, priority should be given to projects that increase the capacity of streets with high demand to capacity ratios.

- **Design deficiencies** -- streets with inadequate pavement widths, lane deficiencies, poor drainage, lack of bike/ped facilities or other design deficiencies should be given higher priority than adequately designed streets.

- **Location** -- higher priority should be given to streets that serve existing development within the City. Projects which serve planned development or future annexation areas generally should be given lower priority over those that serve existing demands.

- **Maintenance problems** -- timely maintenance is far more cost-effective than waiting until severe problems arise. The CIP should set aside adequate funds for regular maintenance (e.g., resealing, resurfacing, shoulder maintenance) and repair of unanticipated maintenance problems (e.g., pot holes, curb/pavement failure).

- **Functional problems** -- higher priority should be given to resolving areas where traffic problems frequently occur. High numbers of accident reports, severe accidents, and high numbers of complaints can be used to identify locations experiencing functional problems.

- **Alternative funding sources** -- planned projects that can have commitments for funding from federal, state, county or private sources may be given a higher priority, if their principal purpose is to benefit existing city residents.

- **Private development** -- under certain circumstances, the City may increase the priority of a CIP project based on private sector activity. If the City can achieve cost savings by coordinating a planned public improvement with a private development project, then the City should consider increasing the priority of its CIP project. Rights-of-way typically are less expensive if acquired prior to, or in conjunction with, a development project.

- **Sustainable Modes** - The potential to improve transportation system function through development of facilities serving transit, car-pooling, pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Policy 17.2.15: Use the following information, derived from the Regional Transportation and the Multimodal Transportation Plans to guide the initial transportation CIP. The 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (2030 Trip) prepared in 2006 identified 13 roadway network improvements to increase traffic capacity and improve safety. Three of the projects have been
completed. The following table are the remaining recommended projects.

### Planned Road Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E 32nd St / CR 250 from Holly Ave to Florida Rd</td>
<td>Add center turn lane, curb, gutter, and bike lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenkins Ranch Rd from existing terminus to Florida Rd</td>
<td>Extend as Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner Dr. from existing terminus to CR 211</td>
<td>Extend as Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 235 from New Grandview arterial to CR 234</td>
<td>New Arterial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 160 EIS Preferred Alternative</td>
<td>Relocation of the Farmington Hill interchange and widening of US 160 from 2 to 4 lanes east to Bayfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewing Mesa Access (Dominguez)</td>
<td>New Arterial to be constructed as 4 lane parkway or divided one-way pairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewing Mesa Access (Hwy 3)</td>
<td>New Arterial to be constructed as 4 lane parkway or divided one-way pairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewing Mesa Access (Goeglein)</td>
<td>New Arterial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandview Connection (South Alignment)</td>
<td>New Arterial to be constructed as 4 lane parkway or divided one-way pairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Hwy 3 from Ewing Mesa to 8th Ave.</td>
<td>Widen to 4 lanes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2030 Trip identified 16 roadway intersections in need of a variety of improvements to achieve desired levels of service (LOS) or improve safety. Since 2006, six of the intersections have been improved based on 2030 Trip; the intersections that are waiting on improvements are listed in the following table. Improvements to 32nd and Main, 22nd and Main, and Park/17th and Main are programmed for improvements in 2018.

### Needed Intersection Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersection #</th>
<th>Intersection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>32nd and Main – CDOT in 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>22nd and Main – CDOT in 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Park and Main – CDOT in 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14th, Camino and Main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>CR 210 and U.S. 160/550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SH 3 and U.S. 160/550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dominguez and U.S. 160/550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>River Road and U.S. 160/550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>U.S. 550 and U.S. 160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>SH 172 and U.S. 160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 17.3:** Coordinate site development with the region’s multimodal transportation system.

**Policy 17.3.1:** Minimize direct vehicular access from development facing arterial streets.

**Policy 17.3.2:** Before improving streets that pass through residential neighborhoods, balance the desires of residents with the need to maintain a street system that safely and efficiently moves traffic throughout the community. The character and function of existing roadways may be maintained through limited access, improved transit facilities, speed limits and/or parking regulations.

**Policy 17.3.3:** Limit through-traffic within industrial developments to reduce conflicts between automobiles and commercial vehicles.

**Policy 17.3.4:** In areas where there are inadequate street improvements, condition annexation, land use approvals and site development upon agreements being in place to fund improvements needed to bring the street system into conformance with City standards, including necessary upgrades for transit...
service. Areas with private streets that do not meet City standards may be annexed if an assessment district or association provides assurances that the roads will either remain privately maintained or the organization will fund improvements to bring the streets up to City standards.

Policy 17.3.5: In areas where roads cannot be improved to City standards (due to steep grades, inadequate right-of-way or other physical constraints), annex the property subject to an agreement for alternative service arrangements. Such arrangement may include the private provision of sanitation and snow removal services, the installation of enhanced fire safety infrastructure (e.g., residential sprinklers), and/or other measures to mitigate the exceptional costs of service to substandard development.

Policy 17.3.6: Prohibit the use of private streets. This policy is not intended to require public streets in place of common driveways or private alleys with adequate funding for ongoing maintenance.

Policy 17.3.7: When new development is proposed along planned arterial streets and it is impractical to install full improvements prior to development, the City may, at its discretion, allow the development to proceed if partial improvements are made and/or the developer provides assurances for participation in full improvements later.

Policy 17.3.8: Require new subdivisions to be designed so that the internal local street system provides access from lots to collector streets. Whenever possible, access to arterial streets shall be limited to collector and arterial street intersections.

Policy 17.3.9: Require turnouts for school buses and safe waiting areas for school children along minor arterial and collector streets where they enhance public safety. This policy is intended to be carried out in coordination with the school districts.

Policy 17.3.10: Limit new traffic demands on local streets through residential neighborhoods. Large-scale multi-family uses generally should not take primary access through a lower density residential neighborhood unless it is by way of a collector or arterial street. Traffic to and from a commercial land use should not be routed through a residentially zoned area unless it is by way of an arterial street.

Policy 17.3.11: Abandon or vacate rights-of-way, but retain easements, only after finding that:
- there is no short- or long-term need for the right-of-way for street, trail, drainage or utility purposes;
- no parcel will be land-locked by the abandonment;
- no public or private interests will be damaged by the abandonment; and
- no expansion of a non-conforming use would result.

Policy 17.3.12: Use improvement districts to provide and replace sidewalks, trails and bikeways in the community. Jointly fund district improvements through property owner assessments, grants and utility or general fund revenues, as appropriate.

Policy 17.3.13: Plan for transit stop pull-outs and other accommodations for public transit services on minor arterial and collector streets.
Objective 17.4: Provide adequate off-street parking in areas where street-pavement is needed for traffic flow.

Policy 17.4.1: Require off-street parking for all new development, redevelopment projects and changes of use where parking demand is increased.

Comment: This policy is not applicable to changes of use within the Main Avenue overlay district and other locations where the City specifically authorizes the use of on-street parking to meet on-site demands.

Policy 17.4.2: Limit on-street parking when:
  ▪ street pavement width is not sufficient to accommodate desired traffic flow and on-street parking;
  ▪ high on-street parking demands interfere with safe access to adjacent parcels;
  ▪ traffic volumes and speeds are too great to safely allow on-street parking; and
  ▪ special conditions dictate such limitations, such as when snow plowing is required or during special events.

Policy 17.4.3: Address public parking demands in the CBD area in cooperation with downtown businesses and property owners benefiting from the availability of public parking.

Policy 17.4.4: Enhance the safety of parking areas through improved design. Reduce on-street parking through requirements for the provision of adequate off-street parking.

Policy 17.4.5: Limit oversized vehicle parking within public rights-of-way.

Policy 17.4.6: Evaluate existing parking requirements and design standards and revise as appropriate for Durango.

Policy 17.4.7: Reduce parking requirements for residential properties that limit the number of persons per household allowed, and/or provide car share accommodations.

Policy 17.4.8: Reduce the parking requirements for businesses that provide shuttle service or other approved transportation demand management strategies.

Policy 17.4.9: Establish convenient temporary parking within the City parking lots or a temporary parking area during summer months for RV parking in the CBD.

Policy 17.4.10: Encourage increased use of shared parking areas throughout the planning area.

Policy 17.4.11: Evaluate the use of residential parking permits to protect the integrity of downtown neighborhoods.

Policy 17.4.12: Monitor downtown parking demand and assess the viability of structured public parking.

Goal 18: Provide employees, residents and visitors with realistic opportunities to use various modes of transportation.

Objective 18.1: Develop and maintain a transportation network and demand management strategies that minimize
anticipated increases in single occupancy automobile traffic.

Policy 18.1.1: Update the Multimodal Transportation Plan at least every 5 years to evaluate bicycle, pedestrian and transit needs, to evaluate transit expansions.

Policy 18.1.2: Continue to operate the Durango Transit (T) or Durango Public Transportation System. Ridership will be monitored and residents periodically surveyed to assess system demands and needs. Rates, routes, vehicles and pick-up frequencies will be adjusted as needed to improve the efficiency and appeal of this public transit service. Require dedication of transit facilities within major community activity areas (e.g., large shopping, employment or residential developments).

Policy 18.1.3: The Transit Development Plan should be updated at least every five years to evaluate expansions to the Durango Loop, Trolley routes and the Opportunity Bus.

Policy 18.1.4: Develop safe, well-lit and attractive transit stop facilities to enhance the appeal of transit use. Facilities should include well-lit shelters and emergency phones in isolated areas.

Policy 18.1.5: Evaluate alternative transportation demand management strategies to reduce peak hour traffic. Evaluate the establishment of a park and ride site, limits on downtown employee parking, a ride sharing program, improved bicycle parking facilities and other transportation demand management alternatives.

Objective 18.2: Develop a multimodal trail system that is safe, convenient and pleasant for commuting, shopping, educational, cultural and recreational purposes.

Policy 18.2.1: Map 9 shows the planned on and off-street trail system in Durango. Develop and maintain this trail network as a sustainable transportation network and a recreational amenity. On-street bikeways and pedestrian facilities will be constructed in conjunction with planned road improvements. Provide incentives for dedication of key trail segments in the river corridor and in other parts of the community where dedication requirements are not viable.

Policy 18.2.2: Connect activity centers such as schools, parks, employment centers and shopping areas, with safe trails, bike lanes and bike routes. Incorporate educational trail kiosks to address travel safety, environmental and energy conservation.

Policy 18.2.3: Integrate the trail system with public transit to facilitate further use of both systems.

Policy 18.2.4: Separate bicycle and pedestrian trail facilities from arterial roads where space and funding allow, or provide protected bike lanes/separated sidewalks.

Policy 18.2.5: Encourage new development to provide facilities for bicycle and pedestrian users such as secure bike parking, storage and employee locker and shower facilities.

Policy 18.2.6: Incorporate trails with greenway preservation and development projects. Where drainageways are preserved, enhanced and restored, consider trail development projects, when appropriate.

Policy 18.2.7: Construct underpasses, overpasses or other safe and convenient facilities where trails cross major streets and highways. Construct grade-separated crossings of major streets and highways. Underpasses should be well lit and as wide as possible.
Policy 18.2.8: Light all designated hard-surface trails and all underpasses.

Policy 18.2.9: Native plantings should be incorporated with trail corridor projects. Consider trail alignments that minimize traffic noise for the trail user. Use features such as walls, berms and landscaping in the design of trail segments to reduce noise levels on trails. Screen unsightly features from trails where feasible. Plantings, walls, fences and berms shall be incorporated in trail design where appropriate.

Policy 18.2.10: Provide pedestrian amenities along trails in City parks, such as: picnic tables, benches, shelters, lighting, pullout “overlook” at key locations, stream and river access points, restrooms, historic and environmental interpretive information, directional signage, dog waste bags, trash cans, and drinking fountains.

Policy 18.2.11: Incorporate public art into trail projects, both through the overall design process and with stand-alone works.

Policy 18.2.12: Require new developments to provide trail linkages to adjacent neighborhoods.

Policy 18.2.13: Apply AASHTO standards to hard surface multi-use trail construction to the greatest extent practical.

Policy 18.2.14: Ensure public safety by patrolling the trail system with police officers and park rangers.

Policy 18.2.15: Encourage trail use and reduce trail conflicts with signage and education and promotion.

Objective 18.3: Develop an interconnected bike lane network on existing streets, roads and highways that is safe, pleasant, efficient and convenient.

Policy 18.3.1: Use AASHTO and Complete Streets standards for development of bike lanes. Where streets are not wide enough to allow for a standard bike lane of 5-foot width, consider narrowing travel lanes and bike lanes. Stripe and sign bike lanes on all roads with ADT counts of 4,000 or greater.

Policy 18.3.2: Develop highly visible and protected bike turn lanes where desirable and feasible.

Policy 18.3.3: Install traffic-activated signal detectors that are sensitive to bicycles, including those located in left-turn lanes. Bicyclists should not be required to dismount to activate a signal.

Policy 18.3.4: Provide traffic calming measures on neighborhood streets to increase the safety of all mode users.

Policy 18.3.5: Provide signage to inform motorists of the presence of bike lanes and routes and allow bicyclists greater right-of-way at narrow curves and round-abouts.

Policy 18.3.6: Establish a network of striped bike lanes on existing streets and highways that enhance the safety and convenience of bike riding.
Map 9:

Parks and Trails
9 Utilities Element

9.1 Overview

The Utilities Element identifies key water, wastewater, and storm drain issues facing the community and establishes goals, policies and strategies addressing those issues. As Durango seeks to meet the utility needs of future residents, employees and visitors/tourists, it should strive to provide utility services in a reliable and affordable manner.

The City is in the process of making needed enhancements to both its water and wastewater Infrastructure including a major upgrade of the Santa Rita Waste Water Treatment and a capacity expansion of the College Mesa Water Treatment Plant.

When completed, the City’s water and wastewater systems will be adequate to meet anticipated needs in the City’s service area through 2040. However, the 160/550 growth corridor and the Grandview area are served by the South Durango Sanitation District, which currently has sufficient capacity to meet anticipated demands.

As Durango grows, increased development within new and existing drainage basins will create additional stormwater management needs. The existing stormwater management is in the process of being updated in 2017 and will anticipate potential impacts of increased runoff throughout the City and future growth areas. This element establishes policies that will enable the City to apply the stormwater management plan.

9.2 Context for Planning

The City’s infrastructure policies require that water, wastewater, electric, telecommunications, and drainage system improvements are constructed concurrent with new development and are adequate to meet demands from existing and new users. While the City does not currently provide all of these utilities for the entire service area, it does require that adequate utilities be provided for all new development. If facilities are not available, then a developer may:

- wait until facility improvements are installed through the approved Capital Improvements Program;
- seek participation from the City, other service providers or other property owners to finance the improvements; or
- install the facilities.

Water System. The City’s existing water system is shown in Map 10. The City provides water to about 18,500 residents in the incorporated area and unincorporated areas adjacent to Durango. The City’s raw water is supplied from the Florida and Animas Rivers. As the community grows the City will rely more and more on supplies from the Animas River because the supply from the Florida River is limited.

Water from the Florida River supply flows by gravity through a 9-mile water transmission line to Rogers Reservoir located on College Mesa. Water from the Animas River is pumped to Terminal Reservoir from the Santa Rita pump station on the Animas River in Durango. With the installation of a connecting pipeline in the future, the City will also have the capability of pumping Animas River water to Rogers Reservoir from the Durango Pumping Plant that was constructed as part of the Animas La Plata Project. In addition to the potable water supply, the City uses untreated water for the irrigation of public lands in Durango. In addition to treating about 1.5 billion gallons a year at the
Durango Water Treatment Plant, the City provides approximately 200 million gallons per year in raw water irrigation supplies.

The City’s water treatment plant has a capacity of approximately 14 million gallons per day (MGD). Average daily demands are 3.8 MGD, but peak demands have reached as high as 9.9 MGD during the summer months and decrease to an average of 2 to 2.5 MGD during the winter months. The existing water treatment plant was constructed in the 1950s and the plant and some of its distribution mains need significant repairs that will virtually necessitate taking the water plant off-line for up to four months.

The opening of Lake Nighthorse provides the opportunity for the City to build an additional water treatment plant with sufficient capacity to meet the City’s needs while the existing treatment plant is being refurbished and meet future water demands from future growth in its planning area after that project is completed. The design capacity of the new treatment plant should consider the most efficient way to meet:

- The temporary water treatment replacement needs during the winter months while the existing water treatment plant is refurbished;
- Future water demands after the existing water treatment plant is refurbished;
- Emergency water supply needs, such as those created by the 2015 Gold King mine contamination of the Animas River and the 2002 Missionary Ridge and Valley forest fires; and
- Demands from LAPLAWD, with which the City is currently negotiating the sale of up to 1 MGD of water from the proposed treatment plant.

The distribution system provides potable water and fire protection needs for the City’s water customers in a looped network of 14-inch and smaller distribution lines. The existing system meets the water supply and fire system needs now except for some isolated fire protection deficiencies.

The distribution system includes eight pressure zones and nine treated water storage tanks located throughout the City. As the City grows, two new pressure zones with pumping stations and treated water storage facilities will be added to serve the Webb Ranch south of Highway 160 east, Ewing Mesa development east of State Highway 3 and the eastern extents of Grandview.

**Wastewater Collection Systems.** As shown in Map 11, Durango provides sanitary sewer service to an area that extends from approximately one mile north of the current City limits (along Hwy. 550) through Bodo Industrial Park (along the south 160/550 corridor). The South Durango Sanitation District serves the area south of the High Bridge on Highway 160/550 and to portions of the Grandview area. Loma Linda Sanitation District serves the eastern-most portions of the planning area.
Existing Service Population. The population served by the Durango wastewater collection system in 2017 is approximately 17,000. Most of the commercial and industrial property around Durango is served by Durango wastewater collection system including Fort Lewis College, the Central Business District and Bodo Industrial Park. The area south of Bodo Industrial Park is served by the South Durango Sanitation District (SDSD) including the properties around Wal-Mart. In 2006 Mercy Hospital relocated to the Grandview area, which is served in part by the SDSD. In 2017, the SDSD has approximately 1,300 Equivalent Residential Taps. An Equivalent Residential Tap is defined as the average wastewater flows from a typical single family dwelling. Based on an average 2.5 persons per household, the flows to the SDSD plant are equivalent to a “population” of 3,250. However, SDSD does serve a substantial number of commercial and institutional establishments, so the actual residential population in the South Durango area may be substantially less.

The entire population of the Durango wastewater collection system is served by the 3.2 million gallons per day (MGD) Santa Rita Wastewater Treatment facility located along the Animas River at South Camino del Rio and Santa Rita Drive. The entire population of the South Durango Sanitation District is served by the 0.45 MGD wastewater treatment facility located one mile south of Highway 160-east along the Animas River. The Loma Linda Sanitation District is served by a wastewater lagoon located at the south end of the district west of S. H. 172. The Loma Linda treatment facility is scheduled to be upgraded to a mechanical system in 2017.

Existing Wastewater Demands. Wastewater flows to the existing 3.2 MGD plant operated by the City amounted to an annual average daily flow of 1.98 MGD. Wastewater flows to the South Durango Wastewater Treatment plant averaged 0.20 MGD. There is no significant inflow or infiltration to the Durango or South Durango wastewater collection systems. Consequently, any reductions in per capita flows would rely on changes in appliances or user practices.

Annual variation in flows to the Durango wastewater system are the result of increased flows from tourist activities from May through August, and decreased flows from Fort Lewis College from May through August. Summertime flows to the South Durango Sanitation District treatment facilities between May and October are typically 25% higher than during the other months of the year. This is due largely to an increase in commercial activity in the South Durango area during those months.

Sewer Collection Facilities. The wastewater collection system of the City includes 90 miles of lines. The wastewater collection system for the South Durango Sanitation District includes 12 miles of lines. No sewer lines in either system have flows that exceed or are approaching the capacity of the system.

The South Durango Sanitation District prepared a master plan in 2002 describing the proposed sewer system improvements and wastewater treatment facilities needed to service the district over the next 50 years. This plan will be updated upon the completion of this Comprehensive Plan.

City of Durango Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Durango Wastewater Treatment Plant is sized to treat 3 MGD. The hydraulic capacity of the piping at the plant is more than 6 MGD. The plant is designed to provide secondary
treatment of wastewater flows and is not designed for nutrient removal. Changes in regulations that may require nutrient removal or removal of other constituents beyond the capability of secondary treatment may require modifications to the treatment facilities. The wastewater flow to the Durango Wastewater Treatment Plant in 2030 is estimated to be 2.4 MGD based on a service population of 23,000. State regulations require that planning for expansion of treatment works begin when the flows to the treatment facility reach 80% of the capacity of the facility. The City of Durango will initiate construction for expansion of its treatment plant in 2017.

**South Durango Sanitation District Wastewater Treatment Plant.** The SDSD is actively in the process of expanding its facilities to meet future demand. The SDSD plant is now operating at about 50% capacity; however, with the projected growth in both the South Durango and Grandview areas, the SDSD is now exploring an increase to 1 MGD. SDSD requires those requesting new service to pay for the new facilities required to provide that service through tap fees. The financing of expansion of the wastewater treatment plant capacity may determine the rate at which facilities will be available for use. Although SDSD tap fees are substantially higher than the City’s, those tap fees are consistent with the capital cost of providing new wastewater collection and treatment facilities. SDSD reviews tap fees considering actual capital costs and makes adjustment when necessary.

**Loma Linda Sanitation District Wastewater Treatment Plant.** The LLSD plant has a design capacity of 125,000 GPD. Currently, flows are about 50% of that capacity. There has been very little growth in the District for the last several years. LLSD anticipates that a substantial portion of the unused capacity will be utilized by the Vista Montana development located south of Florida Mesa Elementary School. After completion of that development, there are no other known projects which could utilize the remainder of the LLSD plant capacity. There has been some discussion about development in the Elmore’s Corner area; however, without central water, intensive development of that area is unlikely and could probably be served by the existing capacity in the LLSD plant.

**Electricity.** Local electric service is provided by La Plata Electric Association, Inc. (LPEA) through a franchise agreement that was renewed in 2011. The City coordinates with LPEA to ensure that electrical service is safe, reliable and adequate to meet the needs of all users within the City.

**Telecommunications.** Durango is served by an array of telecommunications providers who deliver access to phone, internet and television services via land lines, cable, and satellite. While not directly involved in the provision of these services, the City coordinates with individual providers to facilitate adequate access for businesses, institutions and residents. The City has been a participant in the development and implementation of the “Regional Broadband Plan” an effort through the Southwest Colorado Council of Governments (SWCCOG) to enhance the speed, capacity and reliability of broadband services to and throughout the City. This effort focused on establishing a sustainable financial plan for the existing Southwest Colorado Access Network (SCAN) project.

**Natural Gas.** Atmos Energy Company provides natural gas service throughout the City of Durango.
9.3 Key Utility Issues

9.3.1 Growing into the Future Service Area

This Plan provides for water service to throughout the urbanizing area. City service to the potential urban areas should be determined through negotiations with La Plata County. Extending City service further onto Florida Mesa and Webb Ranch will require a significant initial capital investment and would be costlier on a per unit basis than to the existing service area. The City will need to influence the timing, location and intensity of development through its utility extensions in ways that protect existing ratepayers from subsidizing new development. This will require creative partnerships with property owners to ensure that new development fully funds the capital and operations costs of service.

9.3.2 Securing Adequate Water Supplies

The City has adequate water rights to meet the needs of projected growth under normal rainfall conditions. However, drought or long-term climate changes may limit the availability of water and necessitate more aggressive conservation efforts. The City should explore opportunities to acquire additional water rights from Lake Nighthorse to provide more reliable water supplies during period of extreme drought.

9.3.3 Ensuring Adequate Wastewater Service for Grandview, La Posta Road and South Durango.

The City’s future land use plan anticipates intensive development along the 160/550 corridor, in Grandview and along La Posta Road. Much of the City’s future growth will be served by the South Durango and Loma Linda Sanitation Districts, which may not currently have sufficient capacity to meet long term demands, although the SDSD is actively pursuing facilities expansion. The City’s growth relies on the districts’ abilities to expand their plant and lines to serve future development.

9.3.4 Providing Adequate Stormwater Management.

Historically, the City’s stormwater management system has served the role of safely transporting runoff to the Animas River. As upstream development has increased, the potential for flooding has increased. Cuts and development on the hillsides has resulted in increased volumes of runoff moving at higher velocities. As new development occurs the City must ensure that the risk of flooding to downstream properties is not increased. Historically the City has required management of increased runoff and water quality from individual development sites. As larger upstream development occurs (along the Animas River, Lightner Creek, Junction Creek, Ewing Mesa, Webb Ranch and Grandview), it may be more cost effective to reserve land for regional detention and sedimentation facilities.

9.3.5 Coordinating with LAPLAWD

The City has agreed to provide water from its new water treatment plant near Lake Nighthorse through its system to the La Plata Archuleta Water District (LAPLAWD). This Plan recommends that prior to the extension of water services to LAPLAWD, the City and the District reach agreement on critical coordination issues addressing service area boundaries, level of service requirements within the City’s planning area, operational issues affecting both systems and other matters to ensure that the District’s service policies and procedures are consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and City water service standards.
Map 10: Durango Water Lines

Legend
- • 550 Planned
- □ Planning Area Boundary
- □ City Limits
- Water Line Diameter
  - Below 10'
  - 10' - 20'
  - Over 20'
  - Water

Date: 3/9/2017
Document Path: C:\Clients\Durango_2016\GIS\waterlines.mxd
Map 11: Sewer Lines

Legend
- WW Treatment Plants
- Major Roads
- Planning Area Boundry
- Loma Linda Sanitation
- South Durango Sanitation

City of Durango Sewer Lines
Diameter
- 4in - 8in
- 10in +
- South Durango SD Lines
- Loma Linda SD Lines
- Water
- City Limits

Date: 3/9/2017
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9.4 Utilities Element Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 19: Balance the demand for expanding urban development with the efficient provision of facilities and services.

Objective 19.1: Serve anticipated urban development in a cost-effective manner.

Policy 19.1.1: Provide water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities to all urban development within the planning area when commitments for annexation have been secured.

Policy 19.1.2: Water, wastewater, and stormwater system extensions to serve new development shall be funded by new development. Maintain water system impact fees that recover the full capital cost attributable to new development. Improvement and maintenance costs attributable to existing development shall be borne by all rate payers.

Policy 19.1.3: Work with other utility providers to identify opportunities to increase service efficiencies through joint service provision and coordinated construction arrangements.

Policy 19.1.4: Oppose the establishment of new independent water or sewer systems or districts within the planning area, except:

- for the specified purpose of making improvements which will be transferred to the City when the cost of improvements is paid; or
- for services provided by LAPLAWD pursuant to an agreement that addresses issues related to service area, connections to the City’s system, comprehensive plan consistency, consistency with City and Durango Fire Protection District standards, development review processes and other service matters.

Policy 19.1.5: Any development that is served by City water within the City’s Planning Area, no matter who is distributing it, within the City’s Planning Boundary must be consistent with the City’s Future Land Use Map, Comprehensive Plan policies and development standards.

Policy 19.1.6: Coordinate with La Plata County to establish consistent improvement standards and funding strategies for water, storm, and sewer providers throughout the planning area.

Policy 19.1.7: Exchange land use monitoring and capital improvement programming information with other service providers.

Policy 19.1.8: Evaluate the use of raw water and/or treated effluent to meet irrigation needs in parks and for other large-scale water uses not requiring potable water. Costs for this service should be recovered through user fees.

Policy 19.1.9: Reduce per capita water demands and wastewater generation through on-going conservation efforts addressing education, use practices, fixtures, and system maintenance.

Objective 19.2: Ensure that water, wastewater and storm drainage systems are adequate to meet basic and emergency needs of development.

Policy 19.2.1: Maintain a water supply and distribution system that will meet existing and future domestic and fire protection demands for the urbanizing area.

Policy 19.2.2: Coordinate with the South Durango Sanitation District to ensure that wastewater management systems meet existing and future domestic demands in the urbanizing area.
Policy 19.2.3: Maintain stormwater management systems that will meet existing and future domestic demands in the urbanizing area.

Policy 19.2.4: Continue to implement the Water Efficiency Management Plan to help defer capital investments in increased supplies.

Policy 19.2.5: Systematically upgrade all undersized pipelines in the City as repairs, expansions and other capital improvement projects provide the opportunity. All replacement pipelines shall be sized to provide adequate volumes of water to meet established fire flow standards at full development.

Policy 19.2.6: Require all new development and redevelopment within the City to meet or exceed the City Master Storm Water Master Plan and Drainage Criteria.

Policy 19.2.7: Where natural drainageways cannot effectively accommodate stormwater runoff, use the street system as a key element of the storm drainage collection system. Curbed streets may provide drainage outfall for adjacent properties.

- Wherever possible, street layouts and grades shall be designed to avoid excessive runoff concentrations and to minimize the need for storm sewers.
- Site grading shall provide for runoff from sites toward the streets or off-street stormwater conveyances.
- If major drainageways exist or are proposed through a development, the storm runoff shall be routed to that drainageway.
- Surface drainage channels and culverts and/or storm sewers shall be installed when the carrying capacity of the street is exceeded.

- All storm drainage systems, or portions thereof, shall be approved by the City and constructed in accordance with the City's LUDC and the Development Standards for Public Improvements and Construction Specifications.

Objective 19.3: Ensure that electrical, natural gas and telecommunications facilities are adequate to support the current and future needs of residents, businesses and institutions.

Policy 19.3.1: Continue to coordinate with La Plata Electric Association and future franchisees to provide safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable electric power throughout the City and its planning area.

Policy 19.3.2: Coordinate with LPEA to explore the potential to generate electricity from hydraulic flows in the City's water mains.

Policy 19.3.3: Explore opportunities to use City property for generation of electric power.

Policy 19.3.4: Continue to coordinate with telecommunications providers to improve the quality and reliability of phone, internet and television services throughout the City and its planning area.

Policy 19.3.5: Continue participate in SWCCOG efforts to enhance the capacity, quality and reliability of broadband services.

Policy 19.3.6: Use franchise agreements to ensure that high quality services are available to all residents and businesses at reasonable prices.

Policy 19.3.7: Support private property owners’ efforts to develop funding mechanisms to shift utilities underground.
10 Parks, Open Space, Trails & Recreation Element

10.1 Overview

The Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation (POST&R) Master Plan of the City of Durango includes three closely related, but independent elements which form a stand-alone component of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The existing POST&R Master Plan is available as Appendix E to this Plan. Adopted in 2010, the POST&R Master Plan refines and implements the general directions established in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan, the purpose being to identify the current parks, recreation, open space and trails needs of the community and to ensure that community facilities will be adequate to meet future needs. The POST&R Plan and future updates will be incorporated as a component of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

The POST&R Master Plan was developed through a variety of public inputs, including:
- Focus group
- Interviews
- Public meetings
- Public review of the draft document
- Public hearings

It also incorporates data from opinion surveys conducted prior to the formulation of the Master Plan.

10.2 Parks and Recreation

In addition to many standard park and recreation facilities (tennis courts, baseball and softball fields, etc.), Durango has expanded facilities that enhance its park and recreation system, including:
- A state-of-the-art community recreation center
- An extensive network of hiking and biking trails
- Rafting and kayak put-ins on the Animas River

- A ski hill
- An ice arena
- A gymnastics facility
- An extensive mountain park system, including Dalla Mountain Park, Overend Mountain Park and Horse Gulch.

Durango is a regional center, providing active recreation programs and facilities for a large portion of La Plata County. In addition, Durango also receives several hundred thousand tourist visitors each year, a significant number of whom use portions of the City’s park and recreation system. These non-resident users put an extra burden on the City’s recreation facilities, but also make a significant contribution to the local economy.

10.2.1 Summary of POST&R Master Plan Recommendations

1. Implement the plan to develop one or more major sports field facilities in community or regional parks.

2. Refurbish and make selective improvements to several parks.
3. Complete the Animas River Trail and preserve the Animas River Greenway.

4. Monitor the use of City recreation facilities and evaluate for future expansion.

5. Use a level-of-service methodology for parks planning.

The Plan defines three park types that vary in size and service area radius, and identifies planned new park facilities, several of which have been built in the five years since the adoption of the POST&R Plan. Regional, community and neighborhood parks, which serve the areas indicated by their names, have distinct criteria for size, facilities, access and uses. The Parks Plan recommends policies and standards for the dedication, design, development and maintenance of current and future park types in the City.

Actions, policies and responsible parties are enumerated as part of the Plan’s implementation element to achieve the goals of the Plan. The actions are listed in order of priority, as follows:

1. Ensuring public safety;
2. Preserving future opportunities through effective long range planning;
3. Assuring the cost effectiveness of the park acquisition and development process; and
4. Upgrading the design of new and existing parks.

10.3 Open Space

Unlike in the rest of this Comprehensive Plan, the POST&R Plan considers “Open Space” to be land that is:

- In a natural, or primarily natural state;
- Contains significant natural, visual or cultural features that warrant protection; and
- Permanently protected.

In other portions of this Comprehensive Plan, open space may include more recreational facilities than envisioned within the POST&R Plan.

Although Durango is surrounded by large amounts of public land (Forest Service, BLM, etc.), some of the open space surrounding the City is in private ownership and therefore subject to development. Additionally, public land can also be subject to varying levels of development if not permanently protected (e.g. via land exchange).

Identifying these risks, and the desire for the City to take specific actions to preserve desirable open space, the Plan is intended to guide the preservation of Open Space using various tools and methods. The plan generally identifies desired open space, priorities and potential tools for preservation. It also outlines a variety of ways to work with potential partners to achieve multiple open space objectives, including:

- Ground water recharge
- Stormwater management
- Protection of wildlife habitat
- Preserving visual relief from development
- Air quality improvement
Recreation/trails management

Open space is important from cultural, recreational and environmental perspectives. As there are many methods of preserving open space, and many public agencies that have jurisdiction over land, the Plan is meant to help coordinate the various public and private efforts, and assure that resources of the community are used most effectively in the preservation of open space.

The Plan identifies 24 general open space areas that might be appropriate for preservation and compares the characteristics of those areas to determine the most valuable areas, such as:

- Mountain views
- Unique aesthetic features
- Valuable wildlife habitat
- Cultural and recreational opportunities
- Other areas important to human health and safety, including steep slopes, drainage ways, watersheds and flood plains

The plan assesses the risk and likelihood of development in desirable open space areas, as well as the current degree of protection for those areas and the different local, state and federal programs that are currently in place.

10.3.1 Open Space Strategy

There are several steps that must be taken to implement the open space component of the POST&R Master Plan for Durango, including:

- Build/test public awareness
- Maintain a dependable, ongoing funding source
- Creatively utilize multiple resources to protect Open Space.
- Purchase open space only when necessary
- Work with landowners to find win/win solutions
- Work with partners whenever possible to leverage other resources
- Make acquired Open Space permanent

10.3.2 Preservation Tools

The following include tools outlined in the Plan for the preservation of open space, many of which can be used together:

- Conservation easement
- Cluster development
- Deed restrictions/covenants
- Reserved life estate
- Cash purchase
- Donation or gift
- Land exchange
- Purchase of development rights (PDR)
- Transferable development rights (TDR)
- Estate planning
- Land preservation development
- Intergovernmental agreements (IGAs)
The Plan identifies open space management responsibilities and roles, as well as open space policies, including short and long range action steps for implementation.

10.4 Trails

Durango’s trails and bikeways connect homes to parks, shopping areas, businesses, schools, Ft. Lewis College and to the trails on public land surrounding the City. The Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan provides a vision of Durango’s existing and proposed trail system, and establishes a framework for prioritizing trail development activities. The Plan addresses trail management – priorities, policies and standards regarding design, maintenance, and general stewardship responsibilities.

The POST&R Master Plan identifies objectives and general goals to establish a framework for the City's overall trail system. Specific trail projects are discussed, including detailed descriptions for Animas River Trail (ART) projects. These projects are prioritized and planning level cost estimates are provided in the Plan. Opportunities for obtaining right-of-way for trail construction are discussed. The various users of these trail types are considered in the recommended design specifications. Identifying missing links to a comprehensive trail system and exploring alternative connections to complete the system is an important part of the Plan, as is delineating policies and trail management considerations. Design guidelines for various trail styles are included as well.

- Major trails defined in the Plan include: Animas River Trail and Greenway
- SMART 160 Trail
- Neighborhood Trails
- College Mesa Trails
- Fringe Trails / Public Lands Connections
- Bicycle Commuter Roads

10.5 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails

Element Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 20: Develop and maintain a system of open space throughout the planning area that serves as a visual and/or recreational amenity, allows for appropriate human use while serving the wildlife population, and provides adequate habitat to sustain healthy wildlife populations.

Objective 20.1: Develop an open space system consisting of green belts, greenways, special feature parcels, parks and trails that together will serve one or more of the following purposes: 1) preserve scenic vistas; 2) serve as buffers between land uses; 3) provide increased human access to adjacent public lands, the Animas River and other drainage corridors; 4) provide a mix of active and passive use areas; 5) preserve and enhance important wildlife habitats and migration routes; 6) provide opportunities for environmental education; 7) protect habitat corridors for movement of wildlife in Durango and/or 8) preserve and develop an interconnected trail system throughout the planning area.

Policy 20.1.1: Prohibit the conversion of public open space land to private development except where land exchanges enhance the environmental value of public open spaces.

Policy 20.1.2: Formally request that all State and Federal agencies managing lands within the City’s planning area consult with the City regarding any plans for changing management objectives or ownership of public lands.

Policy 20.1.3: Pursue private dedications of open space land or conservation easements in areas adjacent to public
open space, the Animas River or in other locations that support the community's open space objectives.

Policy 20.1.4: Work cooperatively with other public and private groups to help establish greenbelts and preserved open areas in and around the City consisting of a network of public lands, hillsides and private lands.

Policy 20.1.5: Consider retention of lands that are not suitable for development (e.g. steep grades, poor soils, floodplain areas, etc.) as open space areas, or, where appropriate, the development of recreational uses.

Policy 20.1.6: Preserve areas of outstanding scenic and/or natural beauty and, where possible, include these areas in a permanent open space system. The City will be a partner with numerous local, state and federal agencies and organizations, including, but not limited to the CPW, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), San Juan National Forest, Bureau of Reclamation, State Land Board, Ft. Lewis College, La Plata Open Space Conservancy, Trails 2000, La Plata County, and other interests in the development of these open space preservation strategies.

Policy 20.1.7: Preserve open space buffers around development areas, provide recreational opportunities and visual amenities, and protect ecological systems. Open spaces, greenways and green belts will be used as buffers and to link activity centers, recreation areas and other open spaces with neighborhoods and the community in general.

Policy 20.1.8: Review all utility and public works projects for consistency with the City’s open space goals, objectives and policies. Wherever feasible, utility corridors, easements, drainage crossings, transportation corridors and associated development projects shall be designed and constructed to achieve the City’s open space goals and objectives.

Policy 20.1.9: Use Map 12 as a guide to identify and secure land and facilities needed to retain the quality of life for the community's residents -- humans and wildlife.

Policy 20.1.10: Consult with CPW on all development proposals that could have an impact on wildlife habitat and/or forage diversity to strategically locate housing clusters in a way to minimize negative impacts to game and non-game wildlife and to minimize human-wildlife conflicts.

Policy 20.1.11: When setting priorities for parks and open space, consider the retention of public and private lands that have historically fulfilled public parks and open space needs.

Objective 20.2: Work cooperatively with private land owners to promote open space preservation and access.

Policy 20.2.1: Help establish a land stewardship education and incentive program for existing land owners with property within identified open space areas. These education efforts should be provided in partnership with organizations like the La Plata Open Space Conservancy, Colorado Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service and the CPW.

Policy 20.2.2: Encourage clustering of dwellings on a portion of development sites where the remainder of the site can be reserved for open space.
Policy 20.2.3: Encourage voluntary land dedications, conservation easements, and other forms of open space preservation.

Policy 20.2.4: Pursue fee-title acquisition of open space lands only after all other preservation techniques have been considered.

Policy 20.2.5: Review all new developments to identify opportunities for consistency with the POST&R Plan, as well as the potential for new trails and trail connections.

Objective 20.3: Maintain and continue to develop funding programs and opportunities for open space preservation and maintenance.

Policy 20.3.1: Use all available funding sources for open space preservation and maintenance.

Policy 20.3.2: Explore all available opportunities to team with private individuals and agencies such as GOCO, the Trust for Public Lands, etc., to secure additional funds for open space preservation.

Policy 20.3.3: Encourage public participation and consultation with the Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Citizens Advisory Boards regarding funding for parks, open space, trails and recreation.

Goal 21: Develop and maintain an interconnected system of parks, trails and other recreational facilities.

Objective 21.1: Develop a network of passive and active green belts and greenways consisting of open space, parks and trails.

Policy 21.1.1: Coordinate with trails interest groups to secure and construct a trail system that is consistent with Map 9. Modify routes, on an interim or permanent basis, to promote system connectivity and traffic safety.

Policy 21.1.2: Participate in the development of a full, balanced and readily accessible program of recreation areas, activities and facilities.

Policy 21.1.3: Improve access to neighborhood park facilities in areas that are presently under-served by existing facilities.

Policy 21.1.4: Plan for future development of neighborhood parks to coincide with proposed residential development.
Policy 21.1.5: Pursue opportunities to reclaim and enhance open space and encourage recreational use of public lands along the Animas River and in other areas where such uses are appropriate.

Policy 21.1.6: Take advantage of defined corridors, such as the Animas River, the railroad tracks and the steep slope of College Mesa, to create pedestrian paths and bicycle trails.

Policy 21.1.7: Work with neighborhood groups to provide useable open space in areas where facilities are lacking.

**Objective 21.2:** Develop and maintain a system of parks and recreation facilities, open space and trails that adequately serve the needs of the community.

Policy 21.2.1: Provide recreation facilities that are consistent with local standards and National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) guidelines.

Policy 21.2.2: Use parks and recreation facility level of service (LOS) standards to plan for adequate parks and recreation facilities to meet the needs of the City's population.

Policy 21.2.3: Require new residential development to contribute its proportionate share to the establishment of neighborhood parks through park improvement fees and land dedication requirements.

Policy 21.2.4: Continue to regularly update the parks, recreation, open space and trails capital improvements plan that inventories existing facilities, identifies proposed facilities and acquisitions, estimates improvement and acquisition costs and maintain dedicated funding for parks, open space trails and recreation improvements.

Policy 21.2.5: Identify appropriate locations for parks, recreational facilities, open spaces and trails as part of the POST&R Master Plan update process, which should occur every 5 to 7 years with broad public participation.

Policy 21.2.6: Ensure that new development is consistent with the Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan.

Policy 21.2.7: Obtain land for parks and recreation facility sites through public investment, private contributions, developer dedications or fees-in-lieu and implementation of a development impact fee program. Development projects should contribute to the acquisition or improvement of parks and recreation facility sites proportionate to the demand created by the new development.

Policy 21.2.8: Coordinate parks and recreation facility development and improvements with other service providers, including but not limited to school districts, the County and the State.

Policy 21.2.9: Account for existing and projected deficiencies when planning for facilities.

Policy 21.2.10: Monitor demands for the City's recreational facilities and plan for expansion or the construction of additional facilities when feasible.

Policy 21.2.11: Implement the Durango Animas River Corridor Management Plan and provide sustainable put-in/take-out locations along the river.

Policy 21.2.12: Develop and manage recreational facilities in collaboration with the Bureau of Reclamation for public use at Lake Nighthorse.
Objective 21.3: Complete the Animas River Trail as the major north/south trail artery in the planning area with a connection to the SMART 160 Trail.

Policy 21.3.1: Explore a variety of methods in conjunction with property owners along the Animas River to secure trail easements and dedications where feasible.

Policy 21.3.2: Acquire key parcels for riverfront trail segments where public river access is critical.

Policy 21.3.3: Require land dedications for trail construction in the development review process.

Policy 21.3.4: Maintain public ownership of public lands along the Animas River.

Policy 21.3.5: Protect the Animas River corridor from additional commercial or industrial encroachment.

Goal 22: Develop and maintain a trail system throughout the planning area that serves as a recreational amenity and transportation facility. (Also see Goal 16)

Objective 22.1: Provide a variety of trail experiences for trail users.

Policy 22.1.1: Develop loop trail opportunities along the Animas River Greenway.

Policy 22.1.2: Develop loop trail opportunities from Durango neighborhoods to surrounding drainages and ridges. Acquire land and easements necessary for park access from adjacent neighborhoods.

Policy 22.1.3: Require new development to provide trail linkages to public lands nearby. Natural features such as drainages and ridges may, if appropriate, be the preferred alignments for these trail segments.

Policy 22.1.4: Consider acquisition of property as it becomes available along drainageways, ridgelines and other natural features for open space and trail development.

Objective 22.2: Enhance non-motorized access between Downtown Durango and the Animas River, and elsewhere in the City.

Policy 22.2.1: Develop safe and accessible pedestrian/bicycle linkages across Highways 550, 160 and 160/550. (Also see the Downtown Vision and Strategic Plan)

Policy 22.2.2: Acquire riverfront property between 9th Street and 12th Street for parkland and open space and a pedestrian underpass crossing Camino del Rio.

Policy 22.2.3: Develop the SMART 160 Trail as a multi-use trail between the southern terminus of the Animas River Trail and the Grandview/Three Springs area.

Policy 22.2.4: Develop a safer crossing of Main Avenue at 25th Street near Durango High School.

Policy 22.2.5: Coordinate with 9R to get more children to walk or ride their bikes to school by expanding the Safe Routes to School program.
Map 12:

Parks and Trails

Legend
- Trailheads
- Major Roads
- SFO Planned
- Planning Area Boundary
- City Limits
- Water
- Trails
- Parks

Date: 3/9/2017
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11 Arts, Culture & Creative Economy Element

11.1 Context:

The people of Durango celebrate their city’s beautiful terrain, boundless creativity, and history as well as optimism for the future. It’s an inclusive and active community engaged with the natural environment, civic endeavors, social activity, and its people’s many stories. Durango extends a welcoming and helpful hand to neighbors, visitors, and newcomers alike. Together, the people of Durango value and pursue ongoing learning, continuous problem-solving, and sustainable ways of living.

Arts and culture are vital components of Durango’s life and the local economy. An increasing array of locally made products, arts, crafts, and cultural activities are consumed locally and exported. A growing commitment to keep spending local also stokes the economic engine.

Local artists and crafts people produce valuable goods ranging from paintings, jewelry, and ceramics to clothing and leather accessories for local use, export, and sales to visitors.

Multiple historic, natural and cultural attractions bring many tourists to and through Durango. Three of the most significant include:

- The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, a steam-powered train that began operation in 1882 and now carries passengers on a 90-mile round trip through the scenic Animas River valley from downtown Durango to the historic mining town of Silverton;
- Mesa Verde, a National Park and United Nations World Heritage Site west of Durango contains spectacular, multi-story cliff dwellings of ancient Pueblo peoples unoccupied for about 800 years; and
- Purgatory Resort, (formerly Durango Mountain Resort) just north of Durango, one of Colorado’s major ski slopes with year-round activities and the site of the annual Music in the Mountains festival.

These and other assets help drive many sectors of the local economy, with visitors being attracted to the City’s wealth of cultural assets. Visitors often decide to stay upon discovering the City’s wealth of social and community involvement opportunities, walkable town center, cultural and educational activities. Fort Lewis College is an important element of this attraction, bringing not only dollars and new people but creative and entrepreneurial thinking to the community. Durango’s increasingly mixed local economy and human resource pipeline have increased stability and the potential for growth.

The relative isolation of Durango is considered positive by many who live there, and surely is by most who visit as it has helped preserve much of the historic and natural environment. The Pueblos at Mesa Verde sat untouched for hundreds of years. Hundred-year-old buildings in downtown Durango were largely spared, due partly to preservation activists over the past 30 years. Isolation brings added benefits in terms of a spirit of interdependence.

Definition the Creative Economy: For purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, an inclusive definition is employed, one that embraces human diversity and ways of life and the different ways people form community, learn, and express themselves. Included are the arts and cultures of Durango celebrated and supported through formal and informal nonprofit and for-profit organizations and individuals. They involve the creative arts, cultural traditions or practices, historical recognition, and scientific exploration and activities related to producing, presenting, learning/teaching, and preserving these forms. They include dance, music, theater, literature, visual arts, film and media arts as well as other forms of creative and cultural expression. Business enterprises in the creative sector also include advertising, architecture, crafts, design, games, fashion, publishing, research and development, software, toys, radio and TV. Additionally, and especially important to the culture of Durango, are activities in which people interact with, experience, celebrate, and steward the natural environment as well as practices and traditions related to production, preparation, and collective enjoyment of food. It is understood that individuals and groups of different ethnic, national, or cultural backgrounds make, experience, and share creative and traditional cultural forms, and explore the sciences differently. The City endeavors to recognize, accommodate, and support them through appropriate and equitable policy choices.
The duality of independence and interdependence is recognized as community assets. Participation in civic activities is high and institutions such as the library, local schools, Powerhouse Science Center, Durango Art Center, Animas Museum, and several local theater companies are highly valued and pushed to achieve greater quality of service. Similarly, the quality of local cuisine is widely regarded.

The aesthetics of the natural environment and opportunities for immersive experiences are highly valued. Historic structures and a downtown core built at a scale and speed of people and horses are also highly valued – although perhaps taken for granted. The open and welcoming community favorably distinguishes Durango from other Colorado mountain communities where growing wealth disparities have become a barrier between people and community involvement. In Durango, pride in place is palpable and the creative economy is a vital source of this pride and the City’s quality of life.

11.2 Why Include the Creative Economy in the Durango Comprehensive Plan?

Creativity, the arts, culture, science, and heritage (collectively, referred to as the creative economy) stand out in Durango as in few other places. As a community, Durango is strongly associated with, and its economy is driven by, its unique identity and by ways of life valued by its residents and visitors. The regional economy is tied to the imaginations of those who live in the region, their close relationship to the physical environment, and the historic and natural resources in and near the City. People here have long raised livestock and crops, extracted precious ores, oil, and gas, grown a variety of farm products, and shared enjoyment of the region’s dramatic seasons, slopes, and waterways.

On a day-to-day basis, artists, performers and other creative people harvest the beauty and intrigue of Durango. They put it on canvas, the page and the stage. Residents, visitors, and students who identify with a wide variety of cultures both enjoy and contribute to the social and economic life by celebrating and sharing foods, music, and other cultural practices with neighbors and tourists. Learning about creative and cultural practices is
central to education for people of all ages and to forming a highly functional, inclusive community. Capacity for communication and dialog across differing subgroups of the community and capacity for problem solving that considers those differences is directly linked to the development and exercise of creativity and empathy – both direct outcomes of a strong arts and cultural community.

Research has also shown that arts activities in communities help revitalize neighborhoods, attract and develop talented workforces, and increase levels of innovation and productivity across all kinds of industries.

In addition to the economic impacts, researchers around the world have explored social impacts of participation in the creative economy. In at least several arenas it has become clear that participation improves lives. Specifically:

- Creative economy activities and celebrations bring people together in a shared identity and shared sense of place that promotes stewardship and civic engagement.

- Arts participation in early childhood promotes social and emotional development. For example, teachers report fewer instances of shy, aggressive, and anxious behavior among preschoolers taking dance classes, and toddlers receiving music instruction demonstrate increased social cooperation with other children.

- Student participation in structured arts activities enhances cognitive abilities and social skills that support learning, such as memory, problem-solving, and communication.

- Participatory arts activities help maintain the health and quality of life of older adults. Singing improves mental health and subjective wellbeing; taking dance classes bolsters cognition and motor skills; dancing and playing a musical instrument reduce the risk of dementia; and visual arts generate increases in self-esteem, psychological health, and social engagement.

- Arts therapies contribute to positive clinical outcomes, such as reduction in anxiety, stress, and pain for patients. Music interventions tend to dominate studies in this area.

11.3 Creative Economy Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 23: Enhance the quality of life and regional economy by coordinating, focusing, empowering, and celebrating the community’s creative and cultural resources.

Objective 23.1: Creativity as a Community Resource: Advance understandings of the ways the cultural and creative sectors contribute to the community fabric, economy, and well-being of the people of Durango and the region; strategically apply this knowledge in ongoing decision-making.

Policy 23.1.1: Highlight and enhance the value of Durango’s local art along with other locally made products by including them in economic development investments and incentives.

Policy 23.1.2: Foster a unique tourist experience by promoting the city’s historical and creative character:

- Continue to allocate lodger taxes for tourism marketing, and encourage the investment of some of these dollars to support and promote local creative economy assets; and
- Employ unique creative and cultural assets when developing City character districts to best complement their identity and capitalize on district assets.

Policy 23.1.3: Continue to conduct, interpret, and strategically apply economic research to expand the understanding of the impact of the creative economy on various aspects
of Durango’s economy and quality of life. To carry out this policy:

- Work with economic development, and arts entities to collect and evaluate data on the entire creative sector and identify policy and investment choices that strengthen the creative economy;
- Engage with Colorado Creative Industries, Americans for the Arts, and other research organizations to identify relevant data to illustrate benefits leveraged by the cultural and creative sector; and
- Make strategic investments in arts and cultural resources to achieve City goals.

Policy 23.1.4: Enhance education opportunities for young people by expanding partnerships with area arts, heritage, and science organizations and schools as well as other community organizations.

Policy 23.1.5: Identify synergies, partnership opportunities and complementary relationships to achieve the City’s creative economy goal and objectives.

Objective 23.2: A Naturally Creative and Welcoming Community: Foster and promote an internal and external brand identity grounded in Durango’s breadth of cultural activities, wealth of creative people, and welcoming nature.

Policy 23.2.1: Expand collaborations among educational, tourism, governmental and creative sector organizations of all sizes to incorporate and represent the full range of activities and events into Durango’s creative economy scene (e.g. from Rodeos to Ragtime and from Bear Dances to Beethoven) and adjust messaging and branding to reflect the community’s diversity.

Policy 23.2.2: Create a stronger presence for local artists and cultural offerings within tourism promotion and coordination efforts through:

- Partnerships with entities that promote local and regional tourism through direction of funding to support collaborative promotion activities between tourism and local creative and cultural entities and activities; and
- Coordination and promotion of tours of artist studios, makerspaces, and other creative sites.

Policy 23.2.3: Ensure that the City’s Community Relations Commission, the Youth Advisory Commission and Creative Economy Commission (See policy 23.3.1) work closely with each other to build a more diverse and inclusive community by partnering to support surveys, community dialogues, and other activities.
Policy 23.2.4: Support celebrations that include diverse cultural groups (e.g. Fiesta Days Cinco de Mayo, Pride Festival, festivals at Fort Lewis College, Pow Wows, Taste of Durango, and others) by exploring ways to expand funding for community celebrations and working with appropriate representatives.

Policy 23.2.5: Nurture constructive relationships between the City, School District 9R, Fort Lewis College, Southwest Colorado Community College, and other educational entities and engage with student organizations and their leaders in ongoing cultural activity planning and promotion. Ensure input to the Creative Economy Commission (See policy 23.3.1) from educational entity representatives and representative student groups.

Objective 23.3: Communicate, Convene, Collaborate: Develop a more collaborative and engaged creative and cultural sector capable of marshaling its resources for the improvement of the wider community.

Policy 23.3.1: Form a Creative Economy Commission to serve as a collective voice and coordinative body that includes among its goals and activities to:

- Foster coordinated scheduling among event and cultural activity programmers, tourism attractions, the City, educational entities, and civic organizations;
- Help identify and coordinate opportunities for shared spaces for performance, exhibitions, celebrations, meetings and other needs of artists, cultural programmers, and tourism promoters;
- Explore shared administrative or back office operations among key nonprofits;
- Provide City staff support for Commission activities;
- Support the development of marketing, business, and professional development assistance; and
- Identify and pursue dedicated funding sources.

Durango Trail by Annette LeMaire

Policy 23.3.2: Structure the Creative Economy Commission to include broad interests of the community to best advance goals and objectives established in this Plan; provide the Commission with appropriate authority for making recommendations on policy and distribution of allocated funds from public or private sources.
Policy 23.3.3: Formulate a plan for a creative district that achieves recognition by Colorado Creative Industries (CCI); and join networks of such districts, learn from others, and tap into related funding networks. The planning process should:

- Include and convene key stakeholders, of an identified geographic area, and make application to CCI; and
- Maintain active membership through staff and key volunteer involvement in training, annual gatherings, funding partnerships, and other activities of CCI.

Policy 23.3.4: Support and promote creative entrepreneurs and artists working with economic development and tourism leadership. Adjust definitions of business start-ups and small businesses to include artists and creative sector enterprises.

Objective 23.4: Space to Make and Partake: Improve and expand facilities and spaces needed for creative and cultural activities, artist live/work spaces, and for support of arts and cultural organizations.

Policy 23.4.1: As part of economic development strategies, identify opportunities and facilitate establishment of artist working spaces, maker spaces, and co-working spaces. These efforts should:

- Seek appropriate spaces for varied types of uses including heavier uses among industrial and former industrial areas;
- Develop working studio spaces needed by artists and other makers (e.g., like those within Smiley Building; potentially the firehouse when it relocates; industrial buildings in Bodo; and others);
- Facilitate development of affordable creative workforce housing; explore partnership with Colorado Creative Industries, Artspace and similar entities, to develop new live/work housing; and
- Explore opportunities to create additional live/work and live/work/sell units in appropriate zoning districts.

Policy 23.4.2: Foster development of spaces that support creative activities along the Animas River Trail from the Durango Recreation Center to Santa Rita Park.

Policy 23.4.3: Participate in the Area Plan for Ewing Mesa to explore opportunities to support the creative economy, including:

- Support development of an outdoor music and events venue within Durango to accommodate 5,000 to 15,000 people.
- Support La Plata County efforts to relocate the existing fairgrounds and to explore creative reuse of the existing fairgrounds site.

Policy 23.4.4: Assess the need for and feasibility of establishing a new moderate-size indoor performance facility by engaging with key community groups, performing/presenting entities, and others to review best options and collaborative agreements for widely shared use. To make the most efficient use of available resources, consider the creation of a flexible facility to address the needs for conferences and performing arts.

Policy 23.4.5: Assess opportunities for expansion of spaces for visual arts exhibitions within existing public buildings, retail spaces and other appropriate venues.
**Policy 23.4.6:** Establish a revenue stream for support of the creative economy (e.g., facilities, organizations, events, programs and small enterprises) through an extension of the lodger tax, special assessments, grants or other funding mechanisms.

**Objective 23.5:** **Stories of Place and Legacies:** Expand the City Public Art Program to recognize and tell stories of the City’s geology, diversity, heritage, and aspirations in meaningful places across the City.

**Policy 23.5.1:** Continue and focus efforts to enhance the appearance of State Highways and development along critical corridors and key entry points to commission and install iconic public art that reinforces the identity of the City’s character districts and improves the visitor and daily traveler experience.

**Policy 23.5.2:** Allocate a portion of City capital construction costs for public art, with a set-aside for maintenance.

**Policy 23.5.3:** Consider a development assessment or other source for establishment of public art throughout the City.

**Policy 23.5.4:** Target key public transit hubs, (e.g. the Transit Center, Ft. Lewis College, Mercy Hospital, and the Library) for public art projects to denote and improve aesthetics and function of these destinations.

**Policy 23.5.5:** Formalize public art opportunities in conjunction with the City trail system for commissioning artwork that celebrates and educates about meaningful cultural, natural and historical sites and enhances user experiences.
12 Public Services & Facilities Element

12.1 Overview

Durango’s community benefits from numerous public facilities and services provided by the City and other public and private agencies. This chapter focuses on the facilities and services not previously addressed in this plan, including: fire protection, law enforcement, education and library services.

12.2 Police/Communications Services

12.2.1 Overview

The City of Durango Police Department (DPD) has been serving the needs of the Durango community for over 100 years. The general administration of the Police Department is vested in the Chief of Police, the executive officer of the Department, with authority over the organization.

The Operations Division is the larger of the two divisions and is comprised of the Patrol Bureau and the Investigations Bureau. The Patrol Bureau is responsible for protecting and serving the public 24 hours a day, including active patrol of local residential and business district and emergency response through Central Communications. Patrol also provides security and traffic control and assistance for special events throughout the year, as well as an active DUI detection and apprehension program, funded when possible through DUI grants from the Colorado Department of Transportation Safety.

The Investigations Bureau is responsible for investigating major crimes, processing crime scenes, assisting patrol officers with investigations, conducting crime prevention programs, narcotics enforcement, warrant extradition for municipal court cases, pawn detail, fingerprinting, and liquor investigations for the Liquor Licensing Authority. Members participate in meetings with the Child Fatality Review Board, Four Corners Investigations, Civil Forfeiture Board, Crime Stoppers, Social Services Child Protection Team, Drug Enforcement Administration, Farmington Police Gang Intelligence, and the Southwest Mental Health Community Support Team.

The Administration Division is responsible for records, property, evidence, training, Community Programs and internal investigations. The Division is responsible for the Citizens Police Academy and recruitment, including testing of new hires, promotional testing, employee orientation, field training programs, wellness and fitness program, and the volunteer program. Members of Records are responsible for entering reports into the Department’s computer system, maintaining records, delivering reports and paperwork to the courts and the District Attorney’s office, and reception duties at the front counter.

Crime prevention and community awareness are important aspects of the Durango Police Department’s mission. The Citizens’ Police Academy is a ten-week program designed to provide residents of La Plata County first-hand information on how the Durango Police Department works. The Community Policing office in the Durango Mall has been open since September 22, 1998, and is staffed by volunteers who are Citizens’ Police Academy graduates. The School Resource Officer, classroom teachers and school counselors, utilizing a team-teaching concept, teach a drug resistance program called On TRACK in fifth-grade classes in School District R-9.

Within the Durango Police Department, training is given one of the highest priorities to better serve the community and to reduce liability. In January of each year, command staff review the training needs of the Department and set priorities accordingly.

The Mission Statement of the Department states:

*The Durango Police Department is dedicated to excellence in public safety through promoting community partnerships, protecting our quality of life, and serving with respect, honor and integrity.*

12.2.2 Communications

The Communications division of Public Safety provides the City and County with an enhanced 9-1-1 center and provides central communications to the responding agencies who in turn provide law enforcement, fire, medical and human services.
12.3 Durango Fire Protection District

The mission of the District is to provide an all risk service, consisting of; fire suppression of buildings, wildland and vehicle, emergency medical services/ambulance service including patient transport, rescue (water, rope, confined space, vehicle), fire prevention, fire code enforcement, public education, hazardous material response, to a population of 40,000 in approximately 325 square miles of southwestern Colorado. Durango Fire & Rescue is a combination department with a total of 180 employees and members. The department maintains 16 stations, 4 of which are staffed by paid fire fighters and medics, while the remaining 12 stations are crewed by our dedicated volunteers.

Durango Fire & Rescue Authority was created in 2002 by combining Animas Fire Protection District, Hermosa Cliff Fire Protection District, Durango Fire Department, and Mercy Ambulance. Since 2014, all operations have been run by the Durango Fire Protection District. All the prior districts and authorities have been dissolved by voter approval.

The Durango Fire Protection District is funded by a 5.7 mill levy from property tax and a contract with the City of Durango. The District is governed by a seven-member board of directors, elected at large. The governing board is responsible for, among other things, adopting the budget, appointing committees, and hiring the district fire chief. The fire chief is responsible for carrying out the policies of the board of directors, for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the District.

12.4 Schools

12.4.1 Durango R-9 School District

Durango School District 9-R is a high-performing school district. Its seven elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools serve approximately 4,700 students.

First established in 1881 to serve the new railroad town of Durango, the School District was the ninth in La Plata County. In the late 1950s, the District reorganized and incorporated 12 rural school districts to form the "R" in 9-R - District 9-Reorganized. Today 9-R is known as "a community committed to innovation and excellence in education."

The mission of Durango School District 9-R, an innovative educational system committed to excellence, is to ensure each student develops the skills and attributes for lifelong learning. Through leading instructional models, globally minded learning programs and engaging teaching and learning methods, the district aims to instill in each student the ability to compete and contribute in the global community. Furthermore, the district encourages supportive and safe school environments, guaranteeing equitable educational opportunities for each student.

Durango School District 9-R is one of the largest employers in the area, and with that comes the responsibility to create a positive employee culture, provide professional development opportunities for all employees and offer competitive salaries and benefits.
9-R prides itself on its strong academic programs, and thus the district has adopted academic goals for students that exceed state and federal standards. It has developed academic programs to ensure that students meet those standards, and it has a comprehensive assessment program that allows teachers to determine how they can modify instruction to meet the needs of individual students. Because of the district’s comprehensive approach to student achievement, over all the district scores above state average on the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) tests.

The District’s 2016-17 Strategic Action Plan includes the following:

Core Beliefs

- With our help and support, ALL students can meet or exceed grade level
- expectations and become successful contributing citizens.
- We purposely engage all students in quality instruction in every environment.
- We create a positive environment for all that inspires commitment to the
- mission and vision of the district.
- We, as professionals in 9-R, seek to continue to grow and develop our ability
- to deliver a quality product and service to our students, their families, our
- colleagues, and our community.

Beliefs about Learning

- All students can learn to proficiency or above.
- Learning is a constant process fostered by a growth mindset.
- Students own their learning through voice and choice.
- Learning motivates learning.
- Students must have a clear understanding of their learning goals.
- To achieve academic success, learning, assessment, and instruction must be aligned and driven by standards.

12.4.2 Higher Education

Both Fort Lewis College and Southwest Colorado Community College are located within the City of Durango. Fort Lewis College is Colorado’s public four-year liberal arts institution, with a 2016 enrollment of 3,556 students, offering 24 degree programs in the schools of Arts & Sciences, Education and Business Administration.

The Southwest Community College, a division of Pueblo Community College provides educational programs and services to provide technical training and prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges or a career in business and industry. The school, which is a fully-accredited two-year college with an open-door admission policy, has developed several transfer articulation agreements with Fort Lewis College to help students transfer to Fort Lewis College or to any other four-year college. A partnership with San Juan Basin Area Technical School allows students to complete certificate programs and to obtain associate degrees in Nursing, Electronics, Business and Office Technologies. Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science and Associate of General Studies two-year degrees may also be earned.

12.5 Library

A department of the City of Durango, the Durango Public Library is located along the banks of the Animas River, and is adjacent to the tracks of the popular Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. A short walk from the Animas River Trail, the 42,800-square foot Durango Public Library offers over 108,000 items in print, downloadable, audio and video formats.

The current location opened in December of 2008, and is a LEED Gold Certified Building. Founded in the late 1880s, the original Carnegie Library, built in 1907, was in downtown Durango at 1188 E 2nd Ave. The former location is now home to offices of the City of Durango. The Durango Public Library is funded through the joint sales tax fund of the City of Durango and La Plata County.
The Library system operates branches at Sunnyside Elementary School and Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary School.

The Library system’s 2016-2019 Strategic Plan includes the following mission vision and values statements:

**Mission:**
The Durango Public Library enriches the community by providing an environment where information abounds, ideas flow, and imagination thrives.

**Vision:**
The Durango Public Library Vision:

- The Durango Public Library provides a welcoming place for all people to gather, learn, and discover.
- The Library realizes and accepts that libraries are constantly evolving, and is open to pioneering ideas in an ever-changing world of technology and innovation.
- Library employees are engaged in their work, and are dedicated to serving the community.
- The Library provides a dynamic collection in multiple formats to support learning and recreation.
- The Library staff are responsible stewards of the public’s resources and investments.

**Values:**
The following ideals direct us in our service to and interaction with the community:

- Inclusiveness: the Library’s resources are available to all.
- Community: the Library is the cornerstone of community culture, providing a place to meet, educate, and enrich.
- Learning: the Library is a learning platform, supporting the educational needs and goals of the community.
- Place: the Library is an interactive place for people to connect and collaborate, as well as a comfortable place for individuals to relax and explore their interests. The Library’s space is as engaging as its physical space, allowing access to resources 24 hours a day.
- People: the Library serves a diverse community and is a place where people from all walks of life can explore and investigate in an environment that is welcoming and supportive.
- Discovery: the Library facilitates the exploration and discovery of new and exciting information and materials.
- Staff: Library staff effectively utilize their expertise and knowledge to bring the Library’s mission to life.

12.6 Other Agencies

Because Durango is the largest community in the five-county region, several state and federal agencies have offices in the planning area. All these agencies provide services to the City’s residents, as well as to adjacent counties, all have been an economically stabilizing force for the City, and all have plans and recommendations which will affect Durango’s future. Key agencies include:

- The United States Forest Service, which manages the San Juan National Forest, is a major part of the recreation base for residents and tourists, and is integral to protecting habitat and wildlife corridors (animals migrate across and graze on private lands between federal properties) and providing fire protection in the area.
- The Bureau of Land Management manages public lands around Durango, including administration of gravel leases on the Grandview Ridge. The BLM also has the same interest in trails, wildlife and fire hazards as the Forest Service.
- The Colorado Parks and Wildlife and State Forest Service protect and preserve wildlife habitat and open space areas.
12.7 Key Public Facilities and Service Issues

12.7.1 Providing Adequate Law Enforcement Services.

In addition to providing police services for the City’s resident population, Durango must serve a summer tourist population that reaches up to 12,000 people. As Durango’s boundaries expand, additional patrols will be needed to provide adequate response times throughout the City limits. The City has a new Police Substation in the Grandview area and has budgeted for additional patrols as well to serve the hospital and Three Springs development. As development in rural areas increases the risks and costs of wildfires also increase, additional emphasis should be placed on emergency access and the creation of defensible space around development in areas subject to wildfires.

12.7.2 Supporting Public Education for All Residents

The City has historically supported School District 9-R and Fort Lewis College in their efforts to provide quality education. In addition, the City jointly supports the Library with La Plata County. As the City continues to grow, the use of these facilities will increase. Durango will need continued efforts to coordinate its growth with the growth of these facilities and search for innovative joint service agreements that improve the efficiency of mutually provided services.

12.7.3 Retaining Durango as a Regional Medical Center

As the largest community in southwest Colorado and the second largest community on the western slope in the State, Durango has established itself as a regional medical service center. Durango should continue to support the growth of Mercy Regional Medical Center and other regional medical services.

12.7.4 Providing for Adequate Fire Protection

The City of Durango is served by the Durango Fire Protection District (DFPD), which provides a wide range of fire prevention, fire suppression and other emergency services. The district’s boundaries encompass settings ranging from urban to rural, which requires adequate training and equipment to address wide ranging situations. As the City expands and LAPLAWD extends water services to increasing development at the City’s fringes, the City must coordinate with DFPD, La Plata County and LAPLAWD to ensure that stations are well located to provide adequate response times, water systems are adequate to supply needed volumes of water for fire suppression and the district has sufficient resources to ensure the public’s safety.

12.7.5 Serving Durango’s Youth

Durango devotes significant resources in providing recreational, educational and cultural opportunities for its youth. In addition to merely providing these services, Durango places a strong emphasis on involving youth in the operations of the City so they will develop a better understanding of the importance of engaging with the community through the City’s Youth Engagement Program and the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission. Following adoption of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, the City coordinated with La Plata County and School district 9-R to develop a Children, Youth and Family Master Plan which focuses on the development of assets that will help children succeed in school and become happy, healthy, contributing members of the community.

12.7.6 Serving Durango’s Seniors

Durango also values the experience, energy and talents that its seniors bring to the community. In addition to providing resources through its transit
program and the Senior Center (which is operated by La Plata County and jointly funded by the City and County), the Durango strives to involve seniors in all aspects of City government.

12.8 Public Services Goals, Strategies and Policies

Goal 24: Foster cost-effective services and facilities that enhance the lives of community residents.

Objective 24.1: Provide for fire protection services at adequate service levels.

Policy 24.1.1: Coordinate with the Durango Fire Protection District to relocate the existing station at River City Hall to enhance service capabilities, while maintaining existing response times.

Policy 24.1.2: Pursue joint-use facilities and other cooperative service strategies with the Durango Fire Protection District that enhance the efficiency of fire protection services, while ensuring adequate levels of service for Durango's residents and property owners.

Policy 24.1.3: Coordinate with DFPD to reduce risks and increase emergency access to development subject to wildfires.

Objective 24.2: Protect businesses and residents from crime.

Policy 24.2.1: Promote coordination and cooperation among all law enforcement agencies.

Policy 24.2.2: Use advanced methods and procedures of law enforcement as they become necessary and cost-effective.

Policy 24.2.3: Monitor levels of service as the City annexes new areas and adjust staffing as needed to maintain adequate response times.

Policy 24.2.4: Co-locate police department substations with new fire substations where appropriate.

Objective 24.3: Promote excellence and diversity in educational services and facilities.

Policy 24.3.1: Encourage the provision of well-located educational facilities. Elementary and middle schools should be located near the neighborhoods they serve to minimize the need for students to cross arterial streets and reduce the need for busing, while providing safe access (sidewalks, trails, bike lanes).

Policy 24.3.2: Promote the construction of joint-use facilities for education, community recreation and other appropriate community services.

Policy 24.3.3: Encourage providers of educational services to continually improve educational opportunities for all age groups.

Objective 24.4: Encourage and support cultural activities and facilities that improve the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Policy 24.4.1: Support the development and expansion of cultural activities and facilities for all sectors of the community.

Policy 24.4.2: Increase the amount and variety of meeting facilities in cooperation with public and private entities to better meet the needs of residents and visitors.

Objective 24.5: Support the provision of cost-effective medical services for residents and visitors at adequate service levels.

Policy 24.5.1: Work with the medical community to encourage enhanced specialized medical services where such
expansions can be made compatibly with the community.

Policy 24.5.2: Support the provision of responsive, high-quality emergency services.

Policy 24.5.3: Coordinate with medical service providers to ensure that there are adequate emergency medical services throughout the City.

Policy 24.5.4: Work with other government entities, the medical community and residents to ensure that all residents have access to primary health care.

Goal 25: Strengthen families and improve outcomes for children and youth, and sustain the efforts over time.

Objective 25.1: In collaboration with La Plata County, its citizens, its other towns, and its school districts, help implement the County’s Master Plan for Children, Youth and Families.

Policy 25.1.1: Ensure that the Plan implementation process is inclusive by working with elected officials, citizens, as well as representatives from juvenile justice, schools, youth organizations, youth, parents, businesses, library, economic development, mental and physical health, colleges, civic organizations, the faith community and athletic leagues.

Policy 25.1.2: Commit to engaging both adults and young people in appropriate community activities.

Policy 25.1.3: Increase opportunities for youth to develop as citizens engaged in civic affairs including opportunities to:

i. Obtain youth participation in identifying needs, opportunities and priorities for youth in Durango; and

ii. Continue involving youths through engagement in boards, commissions and committees; and

iii. Encourage youth to participate in public service and volunteer work

Policy 25.1.4: Incorporate perennial training of adults and youth to enable effective and inclusive partnerships.

Policy 25.1.5: Measure progress over time using a community “scorecard” or set of benchmarks that tracks key outcomes and places them within the context of a broader report on the status of children, youth and families.

Policy 25.1.6: Develop a planning program for youth in coordination with the local schools and the State APA.
13 Plan Administration & Implementation

13.1 Overview

Durango's Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a dynamic document -- one that responds to changing needs and conditions. To assess the Plan's effectiveness in responding to changing conditions, the City will need to monitor actions affecting the Plan. Because of these monitoring efforts or private development requests, the City will need to amend the Plan periodically. However, Plan amendments should not be made lightly. City Council and Planning Commission members should consider each proposed amendment carefully to determine whether it is consistent with the Plan's goals and policies. In addition, the cumulative effect of many changes may be a change in policy direction. For this reason, Comprehensive Plan amendments must be evaluated in terms of their significance to overall City policy.

This chapter describes the processes to review, monitor and amend the Plan, Plan goals, objectives and policies and the Future Land Use Plan Map.

13.2 Annual Review/Monitoring

The Community Development Department should provide to the City Manager an annual review of Comprehensive Plan related activities prior to the initiation of the budget process each year. The annual review should be used as a tool to help set budgetary priorities and should:

- Measure the City's success in achieving plan goals through the recommended strategies;
- Propose strategies to be pursued under the coming year's budget; and
- Identify unlisted strategies that will achieve Plan goals.

Periodically, the Community Development Department should:

- Document growth trends and compare those trends to plan projections;
- List development actions which affect the plan's provisions; and
- Evaluate difficulties in implementing the Plan.

These periodic reviews should include statements identifying progress in achieving the goals of the Plan, the impact of the Plan on service provision, and proposed programs to help achieve the Plan's goals.

13.3 Land Use Amendments

The Future Land Use Plan map is intended to serve as a guide for public and private development and land use decisions. The City has adopted a formal amendment process in the LUDC. Land use amendments are anticipated as growth occurs and market conditions change. While land use amendments may occur more frequently than policy changes, they should not occur more than three times per year. By limiting opportunities to amend the future land use plan, the City will reduce the potential for incremental land use changes that result in unintended policy shifts.

13.4 Policy Review/Amendment

To ensure that the Comprehensive Plan remains an effective guide for decision-makers, Durango should conduct periodic major evaluations of the plan policies and strategies. These evaluations should be conducted every three to five years, depending on the rate of change in the community, and should consider the following:

- Progress in implementing the Plan;
- Changes in community needs and other conditions that form the basis of the Plan;
- Fiscal conditions and the ability to finance public investments recommended by the Plan;
- Community support for the Plan's goals and policies; and
- Changes in State or federal laws that affect the City's tools for Plan implementation.

The major review process should encourage input from residents, business owners, neighborhood groups, developers and other community interests through the creation of a citizen review committee. Plan amendments that appear appropriate because of this review would be processed according to the adopted Plan amendment process.
13.5 Plan Implementation Program

Table 3 is an initial list of implementation measures recommended to achieve the goals and objectives in Durango’s Comprehensive Plan. The matrix is intended to guide the City Council and City Staff as they develop work programs during the life of the plan. The matrix:

- Correlates implementation measures with specific Comprehensive Plan goals and policies;
- Sets a general time frame to carry out each strategy;
- Identifies action tools (i.e., existing and proposed codes, ordinances, regulations, standards, requirements and policies) to implement action items; and
- Assigns responsibility for implementing the action items and lists other entities that should be involved in the process.

Table 3 is not intended to be an exhaustive list. The City may pursue different strategies and adjust priorities, depending on changing opportunities and resources. The City should update this strategy table on an annual basis, adjusting time frames and tasks that are included in each year’s budgeted work programs.
### Table 2: Plan Implementation Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Number</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Year Started</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Update the Parks, Open Space, Trails &amp; Recreation Master Plan</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Finalize the 2040 Transportation Plan</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Revise the sign code to be consistent with recent court cases.</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Finalize and initiate implementation of the City’s Housing Study.</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Seek certification by the STAR Community Rating System.</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Finalize the Housing and Transit Linkage Study.</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Update the City/County inter-gov’tal agreement to reflect revisions to</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Comprehensive Plan affecting urbanized, urbanizing and joint</td>
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<td></td>
<td>development areas within the City’s Planning Area.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The agreement should facilitate the long-term extension of water and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sewer services within the urban service area and ensure that development</td>
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<td>in the remainder of the planning area has appropriate levels of service.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Develop a service agreement with LAPLAWD to define common service area</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<td></td>
<td>boundaries, plan consistency and level of service requirements within</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the City’s Planning Area, and other service coordination matters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Update the area plan for La Posta Road.</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Update the Ewing Mesa Master Plan.</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Finalize the Character District for the North Main corridor.</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Finalize the Character District for the Camino del Rio corridor.</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Evaluate the establishment of a stormwater utility to fund capital and</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<td></td>
<td>operations costs for stormwater management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Evaluate adoption of adequate public facility standards for water,</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sewer, stormwater and transportation facilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Following the update of Trip 2040, evaluate the need for changes to</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the major street impact fee, including components for major streets and</td>
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<td>other transportation-related capital facilities.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Coordinate with La Plata County to develop complementary transportation improvements funding strategies.</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Implement a permit tracking system that is linked to the City’s GIS to facilitate analysis of growth trends and to provide better information on the status of development projects.</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Evaluate and update the Downtown Durango Vision and Strategic Plan.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Prepare the Character District for the Rocket District.</td>
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<td>Prepare the Character District for the College and 8th Ave District.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Prepare a Webb Ranch Area Plan.</td>
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<td>Prepare the Character District for the Bodo District.</td>
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<td>Prepare the Character District for the 160 West District.</td>
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<td>Prepare the Character District for the Sawmill District.</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Prepare the Character District for the Northeast District.</td>
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| 26              | Work with local agencies to establish regular multi-agency forums involving Durango, La Plata County, Bayfield, Ignacio, CDOT, and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe to  
|                 |   ▪ discuss transportation (including coordinated funding, transit, trail, and park-and-ride options), affordable and attainable housing, economic development and other inter-jurisdictional growth issues; and  
|                 |   ▪ develop coordinated growth management programs that are mutually supportive of each entity’s goals. | Ongoing      |
| 27              | Implement and periodically update the Sustainability Action Plan          | Ongoing      |
| 28              | Coordinate sewer service provision with South Durango Sanitation District and Loma Linda Sanitation District to develop the most effective means of meeting projected wastewater service demands for the La Posta Road, Grandview and the Webb Ranch areas. | Ongoing      |
| 29              | Implement the Multimodal Transportation Plan                             | Ongoing      |
| 30              | Update the LUDC to incorporate recommendations from all city plans and studies | Ongoing      |
| 31              | Implement the City facilities master plan.                               | Ongoing      |
Appendix A: Glossary

Adequate Public Facilities (“APF”) – The requirement that public facilities and services be available to serve a proposed development at adopted level of service standards concurrent with development timing. Such facilities may include law enforcement, fire and emergency services, transportation, schools or other necessary facilities.

Affordable Housing – Housing capable of being purchased or rented by a household earning less than 80% of area median income, based on a household’s ability to make monthly payments necessary to obtain housing. Housing is considered affordable when a household pays less than 30% of its gross monthly income (“GMI”) for housing costs, including utilities.

Annex / Annexation – To incorporate a land area into an existing district or municipality, with a resulting change in the boundaries of that district or municipality.

Area Plan – Localized plan developed to guide zoning and development decisions for a specific area within a city or county. An area plan builds on the Comprehensive Plan, providing a higher level of specificity for the target area.

Assessment District - A geographic area designated to pay for infrastructure costs for a specific project. Properties within the district each pay a portion of the total project cost premised on the concept that those properties benefit from the improvement project.

Attainable Housing – Housing capable of being purchased or rented by a household earning less than 125% of area median income, based on a household’s ability to make monthly payments necessary to obtain housing. Housing is considered affordable when a household pays less than 30% of its gross monthly income (“GMI”) for housing costs, including utilities.

Attainment / Attainment Area – An area with air quality that meets or exceeds the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) health standards.

Built Environment – Artificially created fixed elements, such as buildings, structures, devices and surfaces, that together create the physical character of an area.

Capital Improvement – An acquisition of real property, major construction project or acquisition of expensive equipment expected to last a long time.

Capital Improvements Program (“CIP”) – A timetable or schedule of all future capital improvements to be carried out during a specific period and listed in order of priority, together with cost estimates and the anticipated means and sources of financing each project.

Central Business District (“CBD”) – The largest, most intensely developed, mixed-use area of a city. The CBD usually contains a significant mix of land uses and is often the same as a city’s downtown.

City Standards – Service provision and development requirements applicable to an area (e.g., development occurring in an urbanized area is required to comply with all urban development requirements, as compared to development occurring in rural areas).

Cluster Development / Clustering – A form of development design that concentrates buildings on lots grouped on a specific portion of the site to allow the remaining land area to be devoted to open space, active recreation, preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, or agriculture.

CDOT – Colorado Department of Transportation

CPW – Colorado Parks and Wildlife Department
Compatible – Capable of existing together or adjacent to one another without land use conflicts, design conflicts or negative effects.

Concurrency – Requirement for the provision of adequate public facilities and/or services at the time the demand for those facilities or services is created.

Conservation – The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction or neglect.

Conservation Easement – The granting of a property right or interest which is designed to protect an area of land in its natural, scenic, open or wooded condition. Typically, a conservation easement is used to protect a specific area of land from further development while maintaining its present use, such as agriculture or open space.

Constraint – A limitation on, or restriction to, development that may be imposed by natural or artificial conditions, e.g., steep slopes, floodplains, air quality standards, financial resources, water rights, soil type, geologic hazards, vegetation, etc.

Dedication – The transfer of private property to public or other ownership for purposes such as roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses.

Density – The number of dwelling units (“DUs”) allowed per unit of land (typically an acre).

Developer – The legal or beneficial owner(s) of a lot or any land included in a proposed development, including the holder of an option or contract to purchase or other persons having proprietary interests in such land.

Development – The physical construction of buildings and/or the preparation of land for non-agricultural uses. Development activities include: subdivision of land; construction or alteration of structures, roads, utilities and other facilities; installation of septic systems; grading; deposit of refuse, debris or fill materials; and clearing of natural vegetative cover (except for agricultural activities). Agricultural activities and routine repair and maintenance activities are excluded from this definition.

Dwelling Unit – A room or group of rooms (including sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation facilities, but not more than one kitchen) that constitutes an independent housekeeping unit, occupied or intended for occupancy by one household on a long-term basis.

Easement – A grant of one or more property rights by a property owner to and/or for use by the public, a corporation or another person or entity. For the purposes of this Plan, most easements grant an affirmative right to the holder to make some limited use of land owned by another.

Erosion – The loosening and transportation of rock and soil debris by wind, rain or running water, ice or gravity.

Extra-Territorial - Those properties located outside of the City limits, but within the City’s regulatory jurisdiction.

FAST-Act – the federal Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act.

Flood, 100-Year – The magnitude of a flood expected to occur on the average every 100 years, based on historical data. The 100-year flood has a 1/100, or one percent, chance of occurring in any given year.

Floodplain / Flood Plain – The land area on either side of the banks of a stream subject to flooding. That part of the floodplain subject to a one percent chance of flooding in any given year is designated as an “area of special flood hazard” by the Federal Insurance Administration.

Floodway – The channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved to discharge the “base flood” without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than one foot.

Functional Classification – A system for classifying streets and highways based on the nature of service they are intended to provide. Examples include: arterial, collector and local roads.
Geologic Constraint / Geologic Hazard – A naturally occurring or man-made geologic condition that presents a risk or is a potential danger to life and/or property.

GIS (Geographic Information System) – A computer-based graphics program that allows the spatial referencing and superposition of thematic elements, such as roads, rivers, land use patterns, and other features to aid in local or regional planning activities.

Goal – Description of a desired state of affairs for the community in the future. Goals are the broad public purposes toward which the policies and programs are directed. Collectively, they establish the standards and principles sought to be embodied by the Plan. Generally, more than one set of actions could be taken to achieve each goal. In this Plan, goals are phrased to express the desired results of the Plan; they complete the sentence, “Our goal is …”.

Greenfield – An area not previously used for built development; undeveloped lands such as fields or forests.

Growth Management – A wide range of techniques used in combination to determine the amount, type and/or rate of growth and to direct it to designated areas. Techniques used to execute growth management policies may include, but are not limited to: zoning, capital improvements, public facilities plans, subdivision regulations, urban growth boundaries, impact fees, phased growth boundaries and adequate public facilities ordinances.

Guidelines – General statements of policy direction around which specific details may be later established.

Habitat – The sum of environmental conditions in a specific place that is occupied by an organism, population or community.

High Occupancy Vehicle (“HOV”) – A motor vehicle carrying at least two or more persons, including carpools, vanpools and buses.

Historic / Historical – An historic building or site is one that is noteworthy for its significance in local, state or national history or culture, its architecture or design, or its works of art, memorabilia or artifacts.

Household – All those persons, related or unrelated, who occupy a single housing unit.

Impact – The effect of any direct man-made actions or indirect repercussions of man-made actions on existing physical, social or economic conditions.

Impact Analysis – An assessment of the positive or negative impact that a development proposal will have on the City’s resources, such as financial or environmental health. A Fiscal Impact Analysis measures the anticipated impact on the City’s fiscal health (the City’s revenues and expenditures for public improvements, delivery of services and net cash flow). An Environmental Impact Analysis measures the anticipated impact on the City’s environmental health (the on-and off-site environmental impacts to the ecosystem likely to be produced by a development project).

Impact Fee – A charge or assessment imposed by the local jurisdiction against new development to generate revenue for funding the costs of capital improvements or facility expansions necessitated by and attributable to the new development.

Implementation – Measures or actions recommended to carry out or fulfill goals, objectives and policies. Including a program or project on a list of implementation measures does not automatically create that program – the City will need to adopt budgets, consider new ordinances and provide staff resources before implementation begins.

Infill – Development of new residential or non-residential buildings or structures on vacant sites in a previously developed area.

Infrastructure – Public services and facilities needed to sustain industry, residential, commercial and all other activities. Infrastructure
includes sewage-disposal systems, water-supply systems, other utility systems and roads.

**Intergovernmental Agreement** (“IGA”) – A document binding two or more governmental units or agencies to act in certain cooperative ways. The term is most often used in a planning context referring to shared or delegated responsibility to review development proposals and/or recognize adopted plans and policies of the governmental units or agencies.

**Issues** – Points of debate, discussion or dispute in the community that are identified in the Plan and dealt with by the Plan’s goals, policies and strategies.

**Joint Development Area** – Area in which the City of Durango and La Plata County should coordinate land use policies and the provision of adequate public facilities.

**Joint Powers Agreement** – An agreement between two or more entities, such as a county, a city and/or a special district whereby the entities agree to jointly perform services, cooperate with, review development, enforce regulations or undertake other similar actions.

**Land Use** – A description of how land is occupied or utilized.

**Land Use Plan** – A graphic and written analysis of a desirable and feasible pattern, or alternative patterns indicating the general location, character, extent and relationship of future land uses at specified times. The plan is based on the goals and objectives of the community and upon necessary research.

**Landscaping** – Planting (including trees, shrubs and ground covers) which may include the placement of some decorative features (including sculpture, patterned walks, fountains and pools) suitably designed, selected, installed and maintained to enhance a site or roadway permanently.

**La Plata Archuleta Water District (LAPLAWD)** – A water district serving the area between Bayfield and Durango’s planning area.

**Leap-Frog Development** – Development that occurs beyond the limits of existing development and creates areas of vacant land between areas of developed land.

**LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)** – A programmed set of standards for environmentally sustainable construction. LEED-certified structures use key resources more efficiently than conventional building standards to create less of an impact upon the environment.

**Level of Service** (“LOS”) – An existing or determined level of manpower expenditure or capital commitment by the City per unit of user demand, typically expressed per capita, per dwelling unit or per square foot of gross floor area (for non-residential uses). Examples include the number of police officers per 1,000 population, or the square feet of public park per 1,000 population.

**LUDC** – The City of Durango’s Land Use Development Code.

**Mixed Use** – Areas in which various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional and residential, are combined in a single building or on a single site in an integrated development project. A single site may include contiguous properties. Traditional development patterns were generally mixed use prior to the advent of single-use zoning districts.

**Objective** – Steps designed to help the City achieve goals. These are more narrowly defined statements of public purpose than goals, and help to clarify, define and identify appropriate policies to achieve broad-based goals.

**Open Space** – Any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use for the purposes of (i) the preservation of natural resources, (ii) outdoor recreation (i.e., active open space), or (iii) public health and safety. Land used for the managed production of resources (e.g., farming, ranching, mining, etc.) is not considered open space.
Parcel – A lot, tract or contiguous group of properties, in single ownership or under single control, usually considered a unit for purposes of development.

Park – A tract of land dedicated to the City that is designated and used by the public for active and passive recreation.

Plan – The formulation and graphic representation of the means to reach a desired end; the act of preparing a land use plan (includes community input and data research and analysis).

Planning Area – The area subject to planning efforts by the City of Durango. This area includes urban, urbanizing, rural/agricultural and open space areas.

Policy – Statements of government intent against which individual actions and decisions are evaluated. Policy statements may be mandatory directives, seeking to require action, or they may be advisory, seeking compliance unless there are compelling reasons to do otherwise.

POST&R Plan – The City of Durango’s Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Plan.

Potential Urban Area – An area that may receive urban services (e.g., water and/or wastewater) by the City of Durango under specific conditions.

Public Transit – A system of regularly scheduled buses, other vehicles and/or trains available to the public, typically on a fee-per-ride basis. Also, called “Public transit.”

Regional – Pertaining to activities or economies at a scale greater than that of a single jurisdiction, and affecting a broad geographic area.

Residential – Land designated for buildings consisting only of dwelling units. May be improved, vacant or unimproved.

Right-of-Way – A strip of land occupied or intended to be occupied by certain transportation and public use facilities, such as roadways, railroads and utility lines.

RPC – the Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Commission.

Runoff – That portion of rain or snow that does not percolate into the ground and discharges into streams instead.

Rural Area – A sparsely developed area, with low population density, where the land is primarily undeveloped or used for agricultural purposes.

School District – A district that serves as a unit for state financing and administration of elementary and secondary public schools.

SDSD – South Durango Sanitation District

Service Area – Area for which the city is planning to provide water and/or wastewater service.

Site – One or more parcels of land used or intended for one use or a group of uses.

Slope – Land gradient described as the vertical rise divided by the horizontal run, and expressed as a percentage.

Smart Growth – Policies, legislation, regulations, procedures and strategies meant to achieve more compact, efficient development patterns served by adequate infrastructure and facilities. Smart Growth minimizes environmental and fiscal impacts of new development.

Soil – The unconsolidated material on the immediate surface of the earth created by natural forces that serves as the natural medium for growing land plants.

Special District – Municipal corporation created by state statute and endowed with a definite governmental organization and revenue raising authority for performing a single function or a few related functions (e.g., sanitation collection and/or treatment, domestic water service, parks, road maintenance, fire protection, etc.)
Sprawl – Uncontrolled growth, usually of a low-density nature, in previously rural areas and some distance from existing development and infrastructure.

Storm Runoff – Surplus surface water generated by precipitation that does not seep into the earth but flows overland to flowing or stagnant bodies of water.

Strategy – Specific actions that the City may choose to take in achieving the goals of the Plan. They are intended to set an initial agenda for adopting regulatory and other programs that implement the Plan. The City can select measures for implementation by considering their cost, urgency and benefit. Thus, some projects may begin shortly after Plan adoption, while others may not begin for five or more years.

Street / Road / Highway – A public way for purposes of vehicular travel, including the entire area within the right-of-way. In rural areas, or in urban areas where there is comparatively little access and egress, a way between prominent termini is usually called a highway or road. A way in an urban area, with or without provision for curbs, sidewalks and paved gutters, is ordinarily called a street.

STIP – CDOT’s Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan.

Subdivision – A division of a lot, tract or parcel of land into two or more parts for sale or building development.

Sustainability – “[To meet] the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Source: World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission).

Sustainable Development – Development based on the tenets of Smart Growth that is designed to balance fiscal, social and environmental considerations and minimize negative impacts to existing communities and the environment. Sustainable development typically includes the following development characteristics: compact form, adjacent to existing development, energy efficient, socio-economically diverse and balanced, low environmental impact and in line with adopted growth management plans and policies.

SWCCOG – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments.

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) – Development using traditional town planning principles such as: a range of housing types, network of well-connected streets and blocks, and amenities and stores within walking distances of residences.

Transferable Development Rights (“TDR”) – A technique to direct growth which involves the transfer of zoning density or development rights from one building site to another. TDR requires the creation of a sending district (where lower densities and less development is desired) and receiving zones (where higher densities and more development is desired).

Transportation Demand Management (“TDM”) – A strategy for reducing demand on the road system by reducing the number of vehicles using the roadways and/or increasing the number of persons per vehicle. TDM attempts to reduce the number of persons who drive alone on the roadway during the commute period and to increase the number in carpools, vanpools, buses and trains, walking and biking.

Trip – A one-way journey that proceeds from an origin to a destination via a single mode of transportation; the smallest unit of movement considered in transportation studies. Each trip has one “production end,” (the origin – often from home, but not always), and one “attraction end,” (the destination).

Unincorporated Area – A region of land that is not part of any municipality.

Urban Area – A highly developed area that includes or is appurtenant to a city or place and contains a variety of commercial, residential and cultural uses that are supported by a full range of public infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.) and services (parks, police, etc.).

Urban Development – Includes all projects of a sufficient intensity to require connection to a centralized wastewater collection and treatment...
system and the provision of other urban services. Urban development includes residential developments on lots smaller than two acres, and non-residential development other than agricultural, mining or approved home occupations.

**Urban Growth Area** – Area that has experienced urban development and has full urban services.

**Urbanized Area** – The area for which the City currently provides water and/or wastewater services to most parcels. Most of this area is already located within the City limits or is subject to short-term annexation plans. Some vacant or undevelopable lands may be encompassed within this area.

**Urbanizing Area** – The area for which the City plans to be the primary provider of water and/or wastewater services by the year 2030 that is not already included within the Urbanized Area.

**Use** – The purpose for which a lot or structure is or may be leased, occupied, maintained, arranged, designed, intended, constructed, erected, moved, altered, and/or enlarged in accordance with the zoning ordinance and Plan’s future land use categories.

**Vacant** – Lands or buildings that are not actively used for any purpose.

**Workforce Housing** – Owner- and renter-occupied housing that is affordable to the local workforce and carefully located to meet their needs.

**Zoning** – The delineation of districts and the establishment of regulations governing the use, placement, spacing and size of land and buildings.
Appendix B – Plans, Resource Documents & Reports

The following plans, resource documents and reports were referenced or used during the planning process, and are available to view in the City Planning Office. Documents will be made available on-line on the City website when possible (www.durangogov.org).

Plans & Guidelines
Southfork Character District Master Plan, 2016
Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan, 2016
Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan, 2010
Municipal Sustainability Action Plan, 2015
Three Springs Codes and Development Agreement
Twin Buttes Development Agreement, 2011
City of Durango Multimodal Transportation Plan, December 2016
La Plata County Hazard Mitigation Plan, URS, September 2012
2007 City of Durango Comprehensive Plan
Animas River Corridor Plan, 1994
Animas River Corridor Management Plan, 2013
College Mesa Area Plan, 1997
Downtown Durango Vision & Strategic Plan, 2006
Design Guidelines for the Downtown Overlay District, 2004
East Fassbinder Homestead Neighborhood Plan, 2006
East Third Avenue Historic District Guidelines, 1998
Ewing Mesa Area Plan, 2004
Established Neighborhood Design Guidelines
Grandview Area Plan, 2004
La Posta Road Area Plan, 2013
Northeast Quadrant Area Plan, 1997
Old Durango Residential Plan
Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan (POST Plan); 2001.
Junction Creek Area Land Use Plan
U.S. 160 / 550 Corridor Plan
U.S. 160 West Corridor Plan

Resource Documents & Reports
City Council Goals and Objectives, 2016-2017
La Plata County, Colorado Housing Needs Study, Werwath Associates, April 19, 2013
La Plata County Housing Demand Forecast, La Plata County Regional Housing Alliance, 2015
2030 Trip: The Durango / La Plata County Regional Transportation Study.
Intergovernmental Agreement Between La Plata County and the City of Durango, Colorado Regarding Joint Land Use Planning,
City of Durango / La Plata County Housing Needs Assessment; 2003.
Durango Historic Preservation Plan; 1990.
Elderly Housing Needs Analysis; 2002.
Expanding Affordable Housing Opportunities in La Plata County.
Heritage for Tomorrow; 1975.
Little Pieces of Time; 1984.
Major Streets Plan, City of Durango.
Transit Development Plan.
U.S. Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement.