

City of Fruita Comprehensive Plan



PLAN LIKE A LOCAL

FRUITA
IN
MOTION

FEBRUARY 2020

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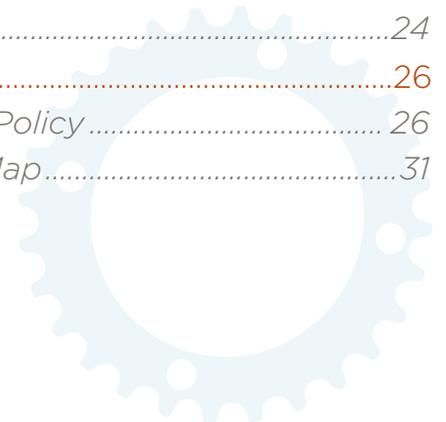
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Chapter 1

Introduction



Introduction

Fruita is an exceptional community. Throughout this comprehensive plan process, residents brought up how much they love living in Fruita, its small-town character, and their desire to preserve the community's most desirable qualities into the future. This plan starts by declaring what makes Fruita special. In turn, these community values are the foundation of the plan—shaping the plan vision, goals, policies, and actions. The following list represents what Fruita residents value about their community.

Community Values

- Fruita is a place where you run into neighbors, friends, and acquaintances at local stores and restaurants, parks, and the community center.*
- Fruita is a place where children, adults, and the elderly feel safe walking and biking to schools, parks, or downtown.*
- Family-friendly events and festivals are well-attended and gather the community.*
- Fruita is a community where people are invested and constantly work to make the community better.*
- Fruita residents appreciate the stunning natural beauty surrounding the city.*
- Fruita has incredible access to outdoor recreation. This access supports local businesses and fosters an active, healthy community that inspires visitors to come play like a local.*
- Fruita is funky and has a vibrant downtown filled with small businesses.*
- Farming is a part of Fruita, from the agricultural lands surrounding the city, to the farmers market that takes place downtown.*
- Fruita is innovative and open-minded—the government and its residents are willing to try new things.*
- Fruita takes a community-first approach—the City prioritizes residents in making decisions.*
- Fruita provides quality services efficiently to its residents and businesses.*
- Fruita is a distinct community—geographically separate from others in the Grand Valley.*
- Fruita is committed to a land use pattern and supporting policies that promote access to housing across the income spectrum of its residents.*

Plan Vision

Influenced heavily by the Community Values, the following Vision was created for Fruita:

“The City of Fruita values quality of place. It’s an inclusive city, with a small-town feel and vibrant downtown, surrounded by public lands. People love to live, work, and play in Fruita because the City facilitates community, safe neighborhoods, family-friendly events, and walking and biking. The City governs in a way that’s responsive to its citizens and prioritizes high-impact services and projects. Fruita fosters a fun and funky ambiance around the arts, agriculture, and recreation.”

How values shape the plan:





The community values and vision were informed by the Fruita City Council strategic outcomes. In 2014, City Council developed the strategic outcomes (below) to guide council and ensure that actions and policies that council enacts align.

The community values in this plan evoke many of the same ideas and priorities as these strategic outcomes and ensure that the comprehensive plan stays true to both the council and the community's visions for Fruita.



The City of Fruita focuses on three strategic outcomes built upon a base of providing quality core services. The Community Values, Plan Themes, and Plan Vision are meant to complement the strategic outcomes that is already used to guide the city.

Plan Organization

This plan begins with Chapter 1, which describes the community values that inform all elements of the plan. From these, an overarching vision statement describes what Fruita wants to be in the future. Chapter 2: Community Snapshot offers the necessary context around where Fruita is today and trends that will influence its future. The remaining chapters of the plan are the plan topic areas, where specific goals, policies, and actions are laid out. These six topic areas or chapters are:

Chapter 3:
Land Use + Growth

Chapter 4:
Economic Development

Chapter 5:
Parks, Health, Recreation, Open Space, + Trails

Chapter 6:
Transportation

Chapter 7:
Infrastructure + Services

Chapter 8:
Education, Arts, + Historic Preservation

Each chapter has a specific vision statement for that topic area that nests within the plan's overarching vision statement. Each chapter vision has several goals underneath it, broad primary outcomes and strategies for how the community can achieve that vision. The policies and actions to work towards the goal are listed below each goal.

Plan Themes

The goals, policies, and actions of the plan are intended to support and preserve the community values. Based on these values, the following key themes emerged:

Efficient Development

The City of Fruita encourages infill over sprawl and development within the existing city limits and Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Efficient development reduces the demand for infrastructure and city services, supports community connectivity, and encourages a thriving downtown core.

Community First, Tourism Second

The City of Fruita prioritizes its residents and provides them a high quality of life. Tourists are attracted to Fruita for this and the opportunity to "play like a local."

A Thriving Downtown

The City of Fruita supports a thriving downtown with strong local businesses, an inviting streetscape, and events and places that encourage the community to gather. Flexible design standards support creative uses of downtown spaces, and higher-than-existing surrounding residential densities creates a variety of housing units and types for residents to frequent businesses.

Connectivity

It is easy for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians to get around Fruita and to visit local destinations. The City of Fruita offers a safe, intuitive, and well-connected on- and off-street trail network for pedestrians and cyclists.

Strategic Economic Development

Fruita's approach to economic development focuses on expanding existing businesses while also making Fruita an attractive place to live and do business. Rather than compete with Grand Junction, Fruita is strategic in recruiting businesses that are well-suited for the Fruita community.



About this Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is the city’s guiding document towards land use and other community development decisions. According to the Colorado State Statutes Section 31-23-206, “it is the duty of the [planning] commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside its boundaries, subject to the approval of the governmental body having jurisdiction thereof [City Council].” According to the statute, a master plan, or a comprehensive plan for is an “advisory document to guide land development decisions,” and is not binding, unless incorporated into land use regulations. In Fruita, the Land Use Code states that the City intends for the planning policies of the comprehensive plan to be incorporated into its Land Use Code (Chapter 17).

The plan also provides guidance for City Departments and Boards: a vision to work towards and goals, actions, and policies to get there. The plan’s policies and actions include funding strategies for achieving the goals or pursuing other actions, to ensure that all elements of the plan can be implemented as appropriate.

The following suggests how different entities should use this plan.

City Department: *Budgeting, capital improvements, applying for grants, intergovernmental coordination and partnerships, prioritizing, seeking new sources of funding, future planning efforts*

City Council: *Reviewing development proposals, budgeting, approving funding sources*

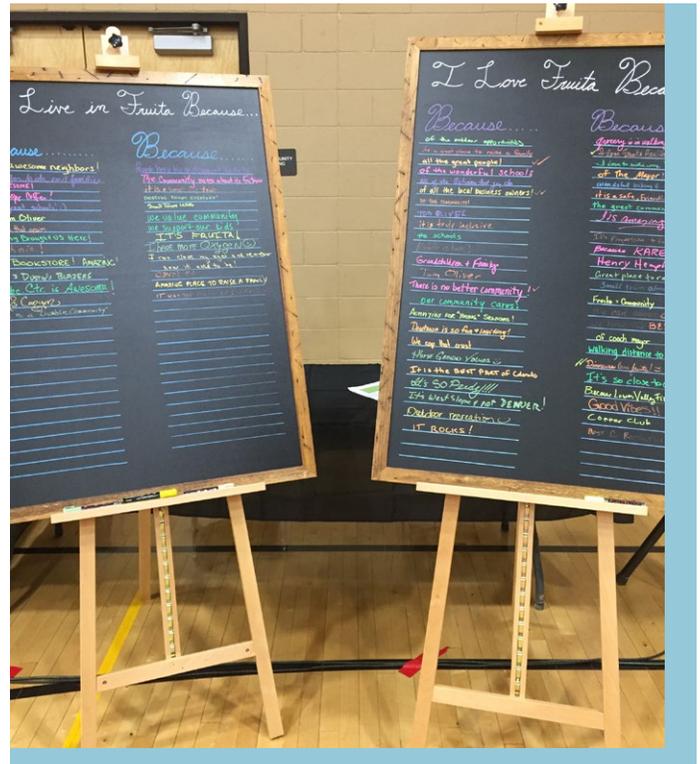
Planning Commission: *Reviewing development proposals, updating the Land Use Code*

Developers: *Understanding appropriate types of and locations for development*

While residents’ use of the plan may be limited, the plan, with its associated public process, is derived from their vision and values, and represents their direction to the City in making decisions.

Update 2020

This plan is an update of the 2008 Community Plan, to better reflect where the city is today and its desired growth into the future. To better understand the changes the city has seen since 2008, see Chapter 2: Community Snapshot. An update should remove already met goals and implemented policies and actions, and establish new policies based on the current community values and new opportunities and challenges. Several of the 2008 plan’s visions, policies, and actions were retained in this plan, although funding and implementation strategies were added to ensure that the City would be able to implement them in the coming decade. Other actions and policies were modified to match the new plan vision and goals. Comprehensive plans are typically revisited every ten years in order to ensure alignment with the community’s vision and adjust as necessary.



WHAT'S IN A NAME

The Fruita Comprehensive Plan process is entitled “Fruita in Motion: Plan Like a Local.” This title was selected by the advisory committee at the start of the plan process to reflect Fruita’s character and intentions for the process.

Fruita is in motion, ever evolving. The advisory committee members felt that this plan must lead the community into the future, rather than leave it stuck in the past. Motion also connects to Fruita’s logo, the gear, that is based on the city’s agricultural and biking influences.

“Plan Like a Local” is a variation on Fruita’s tourism slogan “Play Like A Local.” This slogan speaks to when visitors come to Fruita, they feel like part of the community and have that local-driven experience, going to friendly coffee shops and riding on locals’ favorite trails. Just like the visitor experience, this plan process must be guided by locals and their vision for the community. This plan seeks to preserve that small-town feel that “play like a local” is all about, amidst growth and tourism.

Public Process

Fruita in Motion: Plan like a Local speaks to the community’s significant role in the planning process. Residents helped shape every element of the plan, from sharing what they valued about Fruita and identifying issues for the plan to address, to reviewing drafts, and providing feedback on goals and policies. The process reached a large swath of the community, through traditional outreach (open houses, an advisory committee) and meeting people where they are, with booths at farmers markets, the art stroll, and other city events and the draft plan tour, where City staff met with HOAs and other local groups to share the plan and hear input from the community. Public engagement for this plan included the following:

- *Plan Advisory Committee* – a group consisting of local residents, council members, business owners, and developers met frequently during the process to provide input, feedback, and review initial ideas.
- *Stakeholder Discussions* – the planning team held stakeholder discussions in March 2019 to gather initial ideas about community values and pressing issues from those deeply involved in the community. The planning team met with local service providers, developers, education officials, the livability commission, business owners, and economic development groups.
- *Kickoff Open House* – the planning team held a Kickoff Open House at the Fruita Community Center on May 23, 2019. The open house informed the general public about the comprehensive plan and process and asked residents to provide feedback on the last ten years in Fruita, Fruita’s place in Mesa County, downtown, the community values, the plan vision statement, and pressing issues. The event drew approximately 100 Fruita residents.
- *Design Workshop* – the planning team held a design workshop on August 22, 2019 with members of the plan Advisory Committee, City Council, the Downtown Advisory Board and the Planning Commission. The workshop asked participants to think critically about the existing design standards and envision downtown, the State Highway 6&50 corridor, and the transition zones beyond it.



- *Presence at local events:* Farmers Markets, Art Stroll
- *Draft Plan Party* - The planning team held a Draft Plan Party on October 3, 2019 to share the draft comprehensive plan with the public. The event, held at Civic Center Park, informed attendees about the plan's values and vision, key themes, future land use map, and topic areas. Attendees provided feedback through write-in question responses, dot exercises, and a prioritization dollar exercise. Members of the planning team and advisory committee were available for smaller discussions with attendees as well. The sign-in sheet recorded 112 signatures and an estimated 150 people attended.
- *Plan Road Show* - The Planning and Development Director and the City Manager presented the Draft Plan before the Fruita Chamber of Commerce, the Mesa County Planning Commission, the Fruita Rotary Club, the Fruita Lions Club, and held additional Open Houses at various schools throughout the community.
- *Plan Adoption* - A joint meeting between the Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission and City Council was held on December 12, 2019. This meeting discussed all the feedback received from the Draft Plan Party, the Road Show, and from various meeting attendees. The Planning Commission reviewed the edited draft plan on January 14, 2020 and held a joint workshop with City Council on January 28, 2020. The final plan was adopted by council on February 4, 2020.

Additional public engagement materials can be found in Appendix D.



The Draft Plan Party was a well-attended community event held on October 3, 2019 to introduce the draft comprehensive plan to the public.

Chapter 2

Community Snapshot





This plan must suit the needs of the current Fruita community and remain relevant as the city changes and grows in the future. Thus, a thorough analysis of city and regional demographic and economic trends was conducted for this plan. This data-driven approach has informed many elements of this plan, from the future land use goals, to economic development strategies and education policies. Key takeaways are presented below, with a full report available as Appendix B.

Mesa County’s economy is showing signs of a sustained recovery and diversification.

Following the 2008 recession, Mesa County shifted away from its historic reliance on energy extraction. The county’s unemployment rate, 11% at the peak of the recession, has dropped to 4.1%. Since 2010, health care has been one of the fastest growing industries in the county, although this aligns with the national trend. Manufacturing is currently a notable growth industry with firms moving to the area due to limited and expensive real estate in the Colorado Front Range. Mesa County has a diverse mix of manufacturing firms making products ranging from machinery, food and beverages, outdoor recreation equipment, aerospace components, electronics, and textiles. Manufacturing’s growth speaks to the county’s relatively affordable real estate compared to other parts of the state and pool of skilled workers that may have previously worked in oil and gas.

Economic growth in Mesa County is accelerating, countering a long trend of slow growth.

In 2018 and 2019, Mesa County experienced job growth over 3% per year. Job growth over the past decade has been concentrated into the last few years. Since 2010, Mesa County has added 7,000 jobs, with about two-thirds of those since 2016. Some of this growth is the result of people, businesses, and jobs relocating from Colorado’s Front Range to Mesa County and its lower cost business and housing environment.

Fruita’s mix of jobs is a reflection of its recreation appeal and its function as a suburb of Grand Junction, with many commuting residents.

Fruita’s economy is similar to Mesa County’s but with higher concentrations of jobs in tourism and related leisure industries including restaurants, hotels, and retail. This is characteristic both of a suburban community and of a recreation gateway community. The majority of Fruita’s employed residents work in Grand Junction, approximately 60%. About 15% of Fruita’s employed residents work in the city.



Fruita has seen an increase in local businesses, which have had a positive impact on tourism and the economy.

Mesa County's recent population growth has been concentrated in Grand Junction and unincorporated Mesa County.

Mesa County added nearly 6,500 people since 2010 with 4,700 in Grand Junction, 1,100 in unincorporated areas, and nearly 600 in Fruita. From 2010 through 2018, most of Mesa County's population growth—nearly 90%—has occurred in Grand Junction and unincorporated Mesa County. Grand Junction's population is growing faster as well, with 1% annual population growth from 2010 to 2018, compared to Fruita's at 0.6% annually.

Fruita has a higher concentration of young families than the county as a whole.

Fruita's population has a comparatively younger median age and a larger average household size than Mesa County. The city is seen as very desirable for young families in the county. However, older residents are becoming a larger percentage of city residents, as retirees flock to the area for its desirable climate and community amenities.

Housing growth in Mesa County is accelerating, but Fruita's housing stock is growing relatively slowly.

Grand Junction issued an average of 280 new construction building permits annually from 2010 to 2018. In 2018, there were nearly 500 new housing starts there. In Unincorporated Mesa County, there were nearly 200 new housing starts annually during this time period and nearly 300 in 2018. In contrast, Fruita has issued an average of 62 new construction building permits per year, with 95 in 2018.

Housing affordability is a growing issue in Fruita and Mesa County, in general. Fruita has some of the highest home prices in Mesa County and home prices are appreciating rapidly.

The average 2018 resale home price in Fruita was \$271,684. The quality of life in Fruita, including its schools and small-town feel, are the major factors driving home prices. Home prices are also appreciating throughout Mesa County and the Rocky Mountain region due to other macroeconomic factors such as labor and material costs and an overall shortage of housing.



Young families are finding Fruita an attractive place to live.



Price appreciation has been rapid, with nearly 10% annual growth in Fruita over the last four years.

1. The trends in new construction pricing may be the best indicator of the future direction of Fruita's housing market.

New construction pricing in Fruita is rising. The average price for a single-family home built in 2018 is estimated at \$455,200. The average resale price for a single-family home in 2018 was \$279,675, or 60% lower than new construction. The average price of new construction single-family homes has increased from \$364,850 in 2014, an increase of \$90,000.

The rise in new construction pricing shows that there will be fewer options for housing at an attainable or affordable price point if trends continue.

2. Regardless of price, the dominant housing product in Fruita is single-family homes, which comprise 97% of new construction from 2010 through 2018.

Of the 557 total new homes permitted during this time period, 538 (97%) were for single-family detached homes. Building exclusively single-family homes means limited diversity of housing types and often, few housing options at lower price points.

3. Housing prices outside city limits are about 10% higher, which will affect Fruita's housing market and costs.

The average home price in the 81521 zip code was \$327,902 for 2019, as of November of that year and \$303,663 in 2018. Within the Fruita city limits, in 2018, the average home price was \$271,684, or 11% lower than the zip code average during that same year. Some of the housing inventory outside the city is on large acreages that support higher prices. If at some point any of these areas are annexed, those homes would be in the city and bring up the city average. Housing market boundaries also do not always follow jurisdictional boundaries and some buyers may not differentiate between being inside or outside a city's incorporated limits.

Housing affordability is also a growing issue for renters in Fruita and Mesa County.

Affordability issues are greatest among renters in Fruita, with about half of all renters paying more than 30% of their income towards housing costs. This is defined as being cost burdened, wherein a household is paying too much towards housing.

The rental supply in Fruita is extremely limited with essentially zero vacancy, allowing landlords to charge higher rents. The percentage of renters in Fruita has increased, even though most housing being built is in the form of single-family homes. Some people may be renting single-family homes by choice; for others it may be the only option and they would prefer a lower cost option such as an apartment or duplex.

Housing affordability issues affect the ability of local businesses to attract and retain employees. This is a threat to economic sustainability if left unchecked.

These findings point to key areas for the City to address through this plan. This plan seeks to address managing growth at the edges and encouraging development within the city, supporting affordable housing to retain the local workforce, and working with Grand Junction on economic development while promoting a Fruita-specific brand to attract companies that are a good fit.

Chapter 3

Land Use + Growth



Introduction

This chapter includes a vision as well as goals and policies that will guide Fruita’s growth, development, land use, and community character in the future. The ideas contained within this chapter were developed from: conversations reflecting on lessons learned in the last ten to twenty years, an analysis of existing land uses and market conditions, and public meetings discussing the desired character for Fruita and how it should grow and change in the future. This chapter includes the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), informed by core concepts that are meant to guide Fruita’s future growth.

Context and Update

Every land use plan is a product of what has happened in the past—where new development has occurred and how much has occurred, what type and character of buildings have been built, how they are used, and where they are located. This section is meant to set the stage for Fruita’s future by reflecting on the lessons learned from the past.

- ▶ Very little housing growth has occurred, but trends show that development is picking up again. From 2010 to 2018, on average, Fruita permitted 62 new residential buildings per year. In 2018, the City permitted 95 residential buildings, a 98% increase over the previous year.
- ▶ Much of the residential growth that has occurred has been single-family residential. From 2010 to 2018, there was an increase of 464 single-family residential units. Comparatively, there are 27 fewer attached (2-4 units) housing units, 53 additional multifamily (5+ units) housing units, and 49 fewer mobile homes. Single-family housing units make up 81% of total housing in Fruita.
- ▶ Very little growth has occurred in the downtown. Most of the structures in this area were built prior to 1970. There have been some recent renovations within downtown and a few new structures in the last few years. Many single-family home subdivisions were built at the city’s edge during the 1990s and early 2000s.
- ▶ The Grand Valley is growing, with Fruita only taking up a small share of that growth. From 2010 through 2018, most of Mesa County’s population growth—nearly 90%—has occurred in Grand Junction and unincorporated areas of the county. Fruita’s population growth represents about 9% of the county’s growth.
- ▶ Rigid design standards implemented after the previous comprehensive plan, while intended to preserve downtown character, have restricted development and redevelopment in the Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) zone.
- ▶ The Commercially zoned area on the south side of I-70, known as “Kokopelli,” has filled out over time and most parcels are occupied with businesses.

- There is a vibrant downtown with more businesses than were there ten years ago. The streetscape along Aspen Avenue was upgraded by the City and now includes bulb-outs, wider sidewalks, and functional public art such as bike racks, trash cans, and benches.
- A new zoning district, CMU, was created out of the last plan. There are very few developments that have gone forward in this zoning category. It hasn't had the desired effect of creating small neighborhood commercial centers. It is confusing for developers to navigate the development process in this zone.
- There has been good balance of residential development and commercial development over the last ten years. With Grand Junction as a nearby commercial center, the development pressure in Fruita is primarily for housing, not for retail or office space.
- Affordable housing is becoming an issue as housing prices rise. Median housing prices in the Fruita zip code (81521) have gone from \$247,865 in 2016 to \$327,902 in 2019. There are very few options for those looking to rent, live in smaller houses, or live in multifamily dwellings.
- Tourism in both Fruita and the Grand Valley region has increased—drawing visitors, second homeowners, and short-term rental investors. These trends are starting to affect the character of the community and the real estate values.
- The State Highway 6&50 corridor continues to be an unattractive gateway into Fruita.
- Fruita adopted the 2015 Mesa County Hazard Mitigation Plan as the multi-hazard mitigation plan for the city. The plan identifies floods and wildfires as high-level hazards for Fruita.

Community Process

Community engagement surrounding this topic was robust. The FLUM, and the goals and policies in this chapter, were discussed at length, vetted by various groups, and tackled from different angles.

- Three Advisory Committee meetings focused on land use (June 13, June 20, and September 12, 2019). The first one was to discuss ideas and considerations for Fruita's growth. The second meeting was to provide feedback on the draft chapter and FLUM. The main themes were to: keep a rural edge so that Fruita is separate from Grand Junction; protect and enhance downtown as the heart of the community; avoid sprawl, especially eastward towards Grand Junction; and add housing diversity.
- An Open House was held on May 23, 2019 where participants were asked where Fruita should and shouldn't grow, where the city should be improved, and where they felt you "arrived" in Fruita. Participants were concerned about growth at the northern and eastern edges of the city and wanted to promote growth downtown, in the commercial area south of I-70, and in the industrial wedge between I-70 and State Highway 6&50 heading westward. The area most in need of improvement were the State Highway 6&50 corridor.
- A Draft Plan Party Open House was held on October 3, 2019. This event shared the draft Future Land Use Map, and goals, actions, and policies for land use, growth, and community character. A draft Downtown Subarea map was revealed with activities for participants to choose what housing types were appropriate for each subarea and whether they agreed with the future direction of each subarea.
- A Community Character Workshop was held on August 22, 2019. Members of the Fruita in Motion Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, City Council, and the Downtown Advisory Board were invited to participate. The purpose of the workshop was to understand the constraints of the existing Land Use Code and design standards, envision a future character for the downtown, and define where the boundaries of downtown should be.



Land Use Analysis

The observed building density of built-out neighborhoods was compared to what is permissible by existing zoning standards in the Land Use Code at the time this plan was written, 2019 DMU densities are well below the zoning maximums with 3.8 buildings/acre observed, compared to the 12 dwelling units/acre permitted. Residential densities in the community residential (CR) zone district are relatively in line with the established maximum, at 3.62 dwelling units/acre compared to the 4-6 dwelling units/acre allowed. Beyond the Community Residential (CR), the other zoning districts tend to be very low density, well below the maximum allowed by existing zoning.

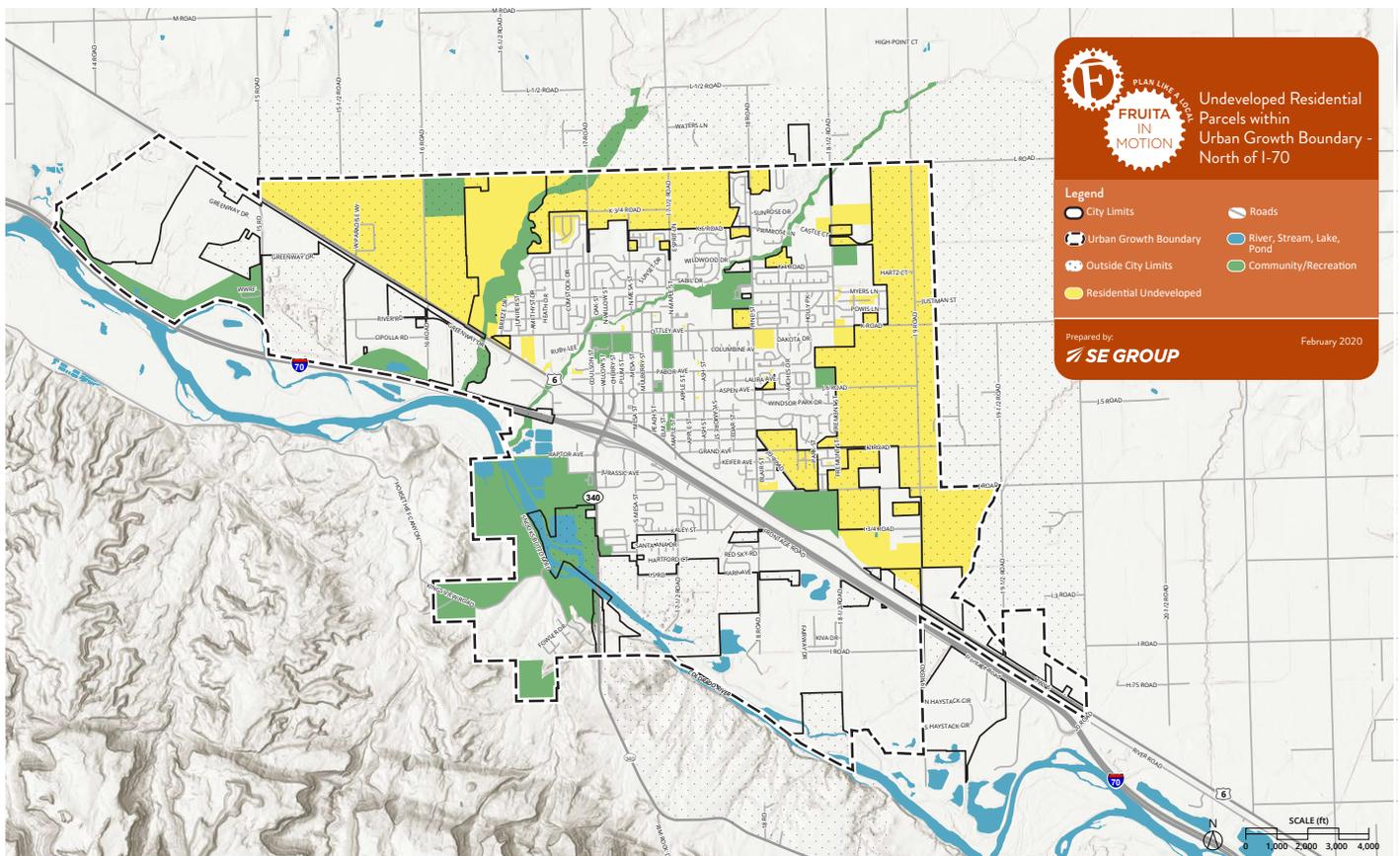
TABLE 1. OBSERVED RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES UNDER 2019 LAND USE CODE

Zone District	Zone District Name	Maximum Residential Density Allowed by Zoning	Observed Densities
AR	Agricultural Residential	0.1 du/acre	Not enough data
RE	Rural Estate	0.3-0.5 du/acre	0.3 bldg/acre
RR	Rural Residential	1-2 du/acre	0.13 bldg/acre
CR	Community Residential	~4-6 du/acre based on minimum lot size	3.62 bldgs/acre
LLR	Large Lot Residential	3 du/acre	1.39 bldgs/acre
SFR	South Fruita Residential	2-3 du/acre	0.28 bldg/acre
DMU - Core	Downtown Mixed Use - Core	12 du/acre	3.8 bldgs/acre
DMU - Outside Core	Downtown Mixed Use - Outside Core	12 du/acre	3.8 bldgs/acre
CMU - Comm	Community Mixed Use Commercial Development (including Mixed Use Buildings)	2-5 du/acre	1 bldg total observed
CMU - Res	Community Mixed Use Residential Development	2-5 du/acre	Not enough data
GC - NR	General Commercial - Non-Residential	n/a	n/a
GC - MF	General Commercial - Multifamily Residential	depends	Not enough data
I	Industrial	n/a	n/a
MP	Monument Preservation	1 du/2 acres	Not enough data
CSR	Community Services Recreational	n/a	n/a
PUD	Planned Unit Development	depends	0.71 bldg/acre

Note: Observed densities are based on residential buildings, while the residential densities are based on dwelling units. Given that most residential buildings in Fruita are single-family homes, it is expected that real densities, in terms of dwelling units, would be slightly higher.

The planning team calculated the capacity for new housing in different growth areas: the city limits, the previous plan's Urban Growth Area (UGA), and this plan's UGB. Within the city limits (at the time this plan is adopted), there are 578 vacant acres, offering 2,890 potential dwelling units if developed at 5 dwelling units/acre. This city limits analysis used parcels of land deemed vacant by city data. The 2008 plan's UGA included 2755 additional acres of non-commercial or industrial lands between the city limits and the boundary. This plan's UGB is slightly smaller, with 1,984 acres of non-commercial or industrial land between the city limits and the boundary. If these acres were to be developed at 5 dwelling units/acre this would yield an additional 9,920 dwelling units. Combined with those parcels within the city limits, Fruita has room to grow by 12,810 units—more than what is anticipated by growth projections. The previous plan anticipated a major growth trajectory which did not pan out. The current growth trajectory is much more modest. Therefore, a smaller growth boundary was deemed appropriate. **Map 1** shows the undeveloped residential land within the new UGB.

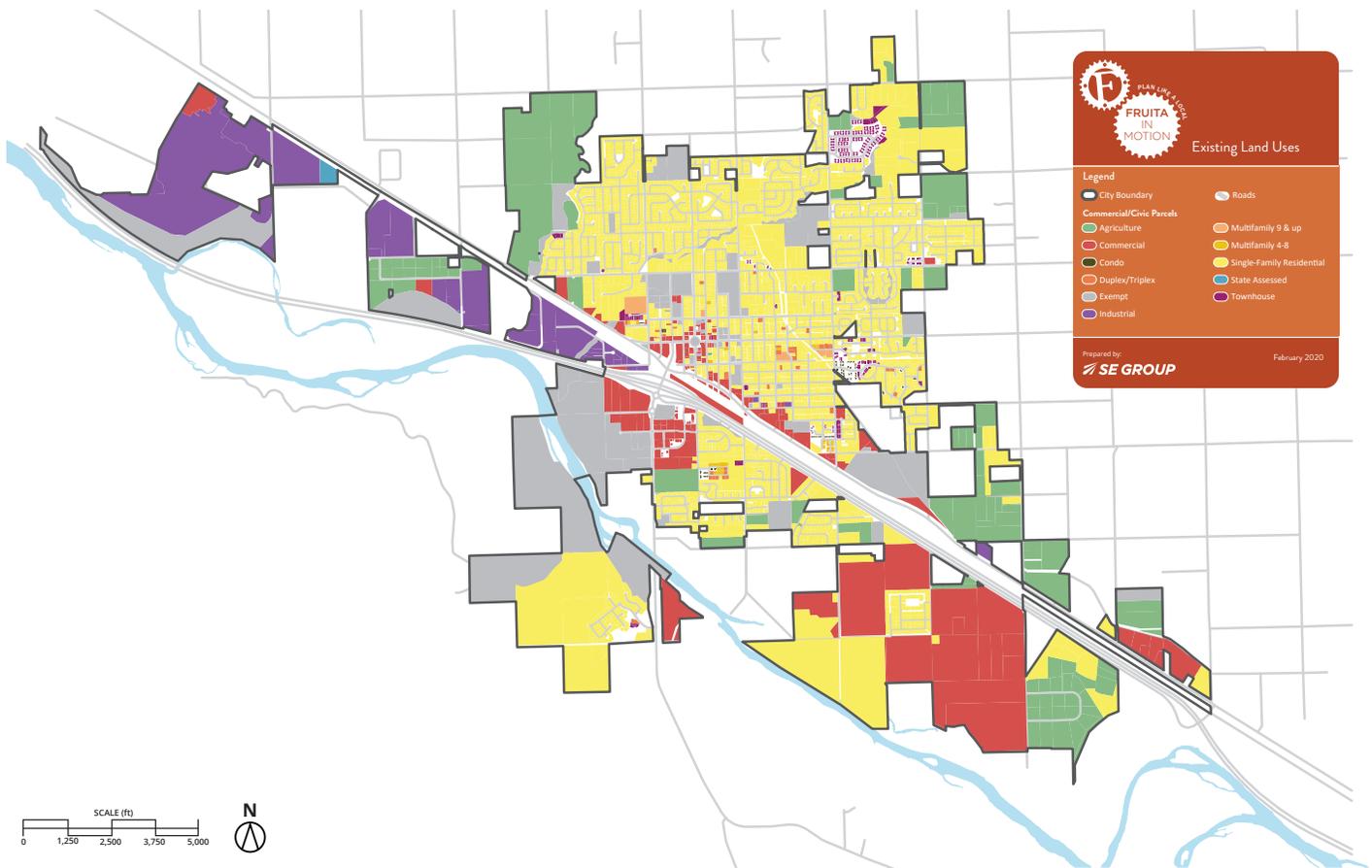
MAP 1. UNDEVELOPED AND DEVELOPED RESIDENTIAL PARCELS





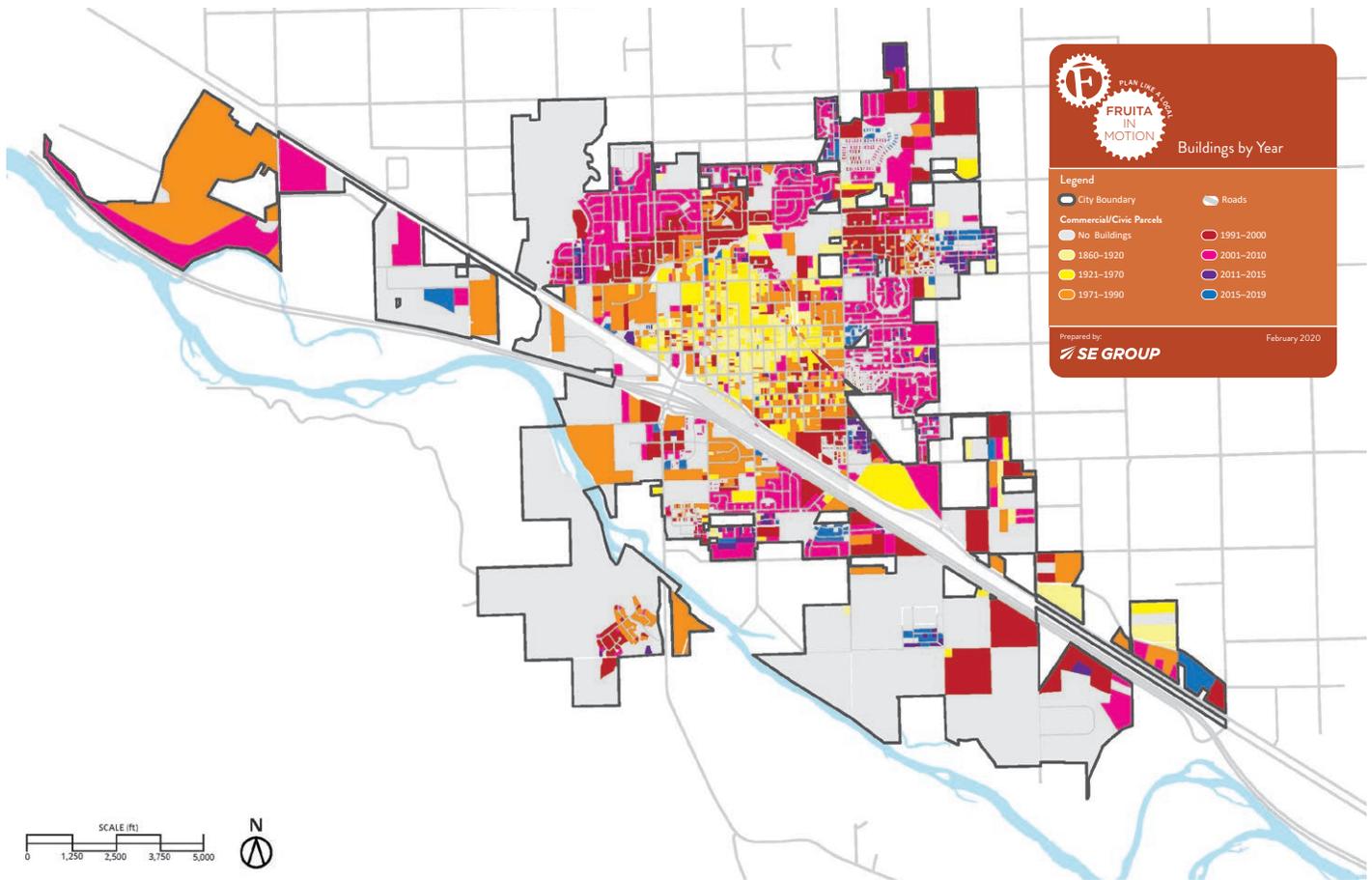
Map 2 shows existing land uses within the city limits. Commercial uses are concentrated in downtown, the Kokopelli Business Park, and along the State Highway 6&50 corridor. The golf course is also classified as commercial. Residential development extends outward from the commercial areas, largely to the northwest and east of downtown. Condos, duplexes, triplexes, and multifamily are scattered throughout the residential areas but are few and far between. Agricultural lands exist on the outskirts of residential development, and industrial lands are located on the western edge of the city. Exempt properties, largely parkland other public institutions, are well dispersed through the city. In downtown, the land area is 51% commercial and 49% residential.

MAP 2. EXISTING LAND USES



Map 3 shows the city’s built-out parcels by year of construction. Early development largely occurred in the downtown area, with development emanating outward from there over time. There was substantial residential growth to the northwest, north, east, and south between 2001-2010. Minimal development has occurred since 2010, with small developments constructed on the edges of the city.

MAP 3. BUILDINGS BY YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION

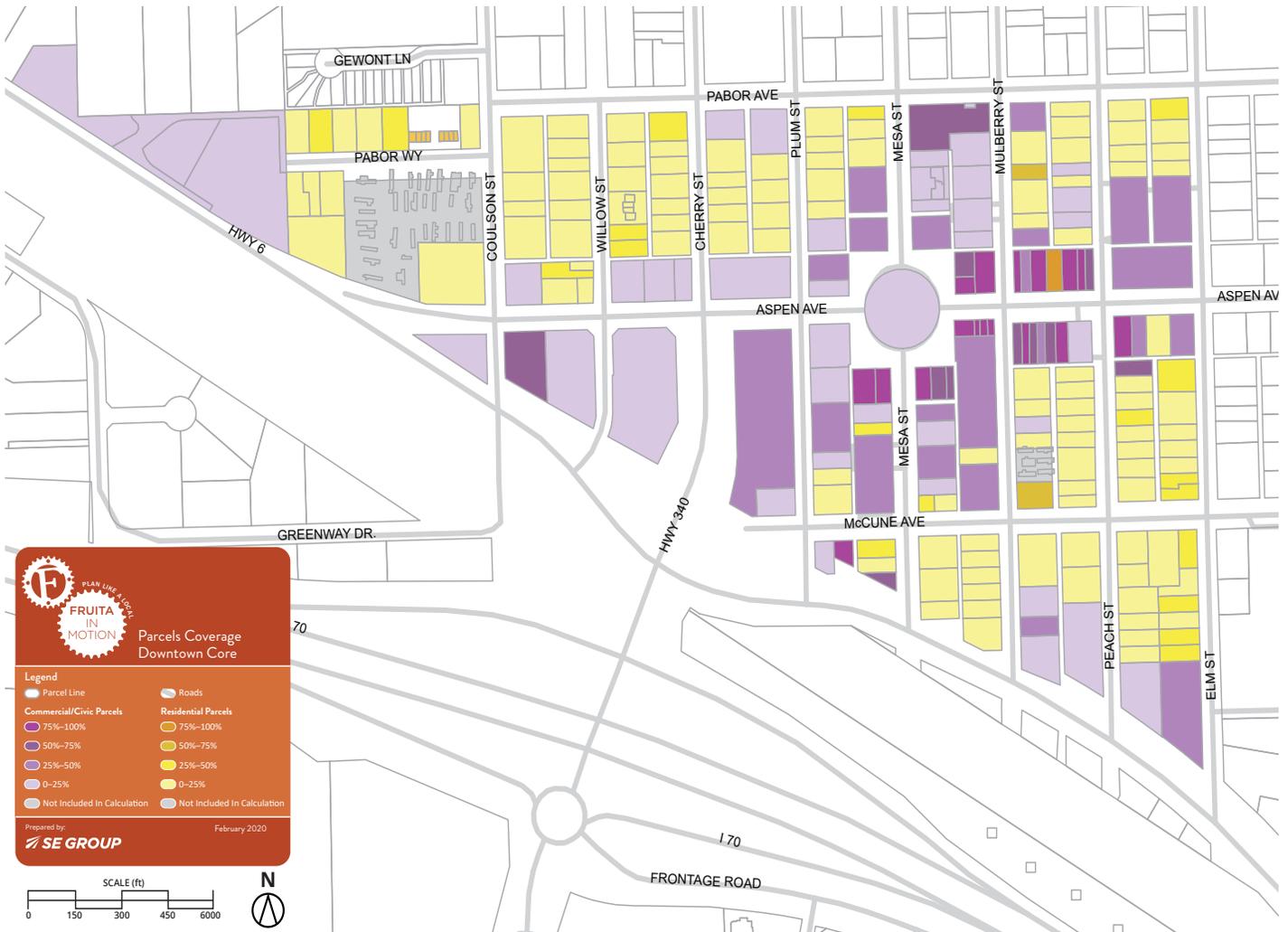




The planning team conducted an audit of the downtown design standards to understand how existing development aligned with those standards and the opportunities and constraints of the standards going forward.

Map 4 shows lot coverage in the downtown area. High lot coverages are allowed in the existing Land Use Code (90% in DMU core, 80% in GC, and 60% in DMU outside the core). However, lot coverages are typically well below those maximums except along Aspen Avenue east of Circle Park. Of residential parcels, 97% have under 60% lot coverage, with the vast majority under 25%. Commercial developments also tend to have a low lot coverage percentage, with almost 50% below 25% coverage.

MAP 4. PARCELS COVERAGE: DOWNTOWN AREA



Map 5 shows lot sizes in the downtown area. Most residential lots in the downtown are between 3,000 and 7,000 square feet. Duplexes and multifamily units are not allowed on those lots, with duplexes requiring 7,500 square feet and multifamily requiring 10,000+ square feet. Only 26% of lots are above 10,000 square feet. The typical residential lot is 7000 square feet (0.16 acre), allowing for one to two units per lot. The commercial lots in the DMU core are either modest size (3,000–7,000 square feet, 38% of lots) or larger (above 10,000 square feet, 44% of lots). For the whole downtown core area, the average lot size is 14,810 square feet (0.34 acre). On parcels with this larger lot size four units or more could typically be included per lot for a multifamily development.

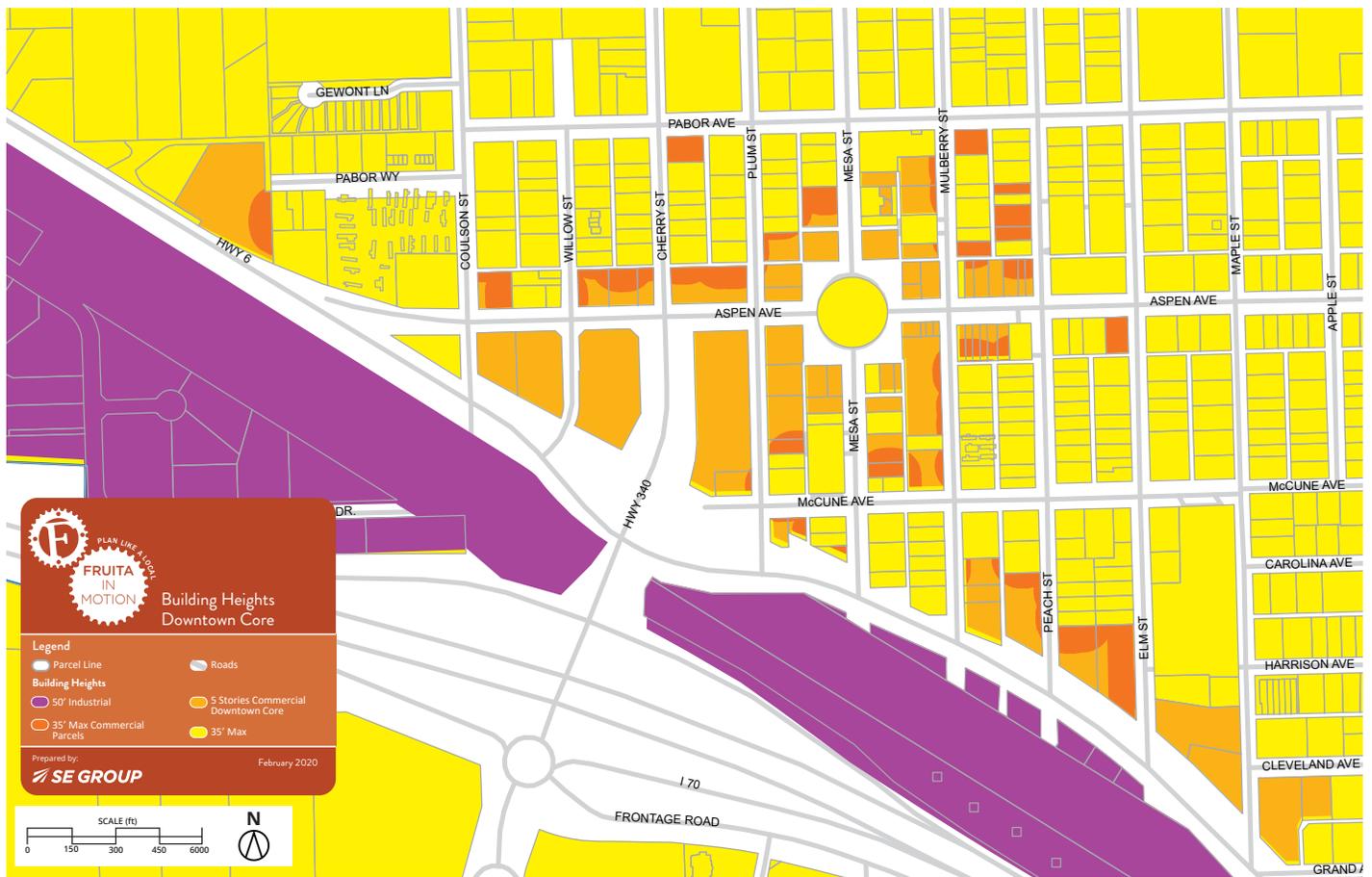
MAP 5. LOT SIZES IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE





Map 6 shows the allowed building heights in Fruita. At present, 35 feet tall buildings are allowed in the DMU, CMU, and GC districts, with five stories allowed in DMU core if it is residential over commercial and not within 100 feet of residential. As shown on the map, there are limited places where five stories would be permissible. There has not been significant interest in constructing taller buildings in downtown Fruita and the tallest building in downtown today is about 30 feet.

MAP 6. BUILDING HEIGHTS IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE



The following massings show allowed building types in Fruita based on the design standards and identify potential issues.



In the DMU core, five stories are allowed, with a third-story setback required, creating a “wedding cake effect” that limits creativity. A setback is not required and along a narrow sidewalk, which can lead away from “pedestrian-friendly” design. With a maximum density of 12 dwelling units/acre, it would be difficult to build to five stories and utilize the lot.



The model shows a DMU core structure in a transition area, where a five-story building feels out of place next to smaller buildings.



Conclusions

- The current build-out of residential dwellings is well below the densities allowed for and intended by each zoning category. This contributes to an inefficient development pattern. City service provision (sewer, roads, etc.) is more fiscally prudent at higher density levels. Especially in the DMU area, more dwelling units/acre would create more housing that is within walking distance of shops, restaurants, parks, and civic spaces.
- The vacant parcel analysis shows that there is more than enough land within both the existing city limits and the UGB for Fruita to “grow from within” rather than continue to expand beyond its borders.
- The existing land use analysis shows the core commercial areas in the center of the city surrounded by primarily single-family residential neighborhoods and agricultural uses on the outskirts. The main ideas in this plan are not intended to change this pattern, but to enhance and modify the land uses that currently exist.
- The map showing the age of all buildings within the city shows that very little development has occurred in the downtown since the 1970s. To ensure that Fruita continues to be vibrant, encouraging and allowing new development and redevelopment in the downtown is essential.
- The analysis of lot coverage shows that buildings within the DMU could expand their lot coverage under the existing code. This means there is potential for additional residential units or commercial space through redevelopment or upgrades to existing buildings.
- The lot size requirements for various types of development make it hard to build housing types other than single-family homes unless it is on a very large lot. This plan encourages a diversity of housing options. Changes to the Land Use Code to allow different housing types on various lot sizes will help remedy this issue. Set-back requirements and other dimensional standards should be re-examined.
- Even though buildings up to five stories are allowed by code, there are no buildings in the DMU over 30-35 feet tall. Other constraints in the code such as dwelling unit densities and mixed-use requirements (residential over commercial) may be responsible for this. Perhaps other criteria (form, design, etc.) should be substituted for height restrictions in the 2020 Land Use Code update.
- The planning team analyzed conceptual buildings that meet the existing Level 2 design standards. The allowed buildings do not necessarily fit with the desired character for downtown Fruita. A re-examination of building types for the downtown both in this plan and the 2020 Land Use Code update will help resolve this issue.



VISION

Fruita is a distinct city within the Grand Valley. It is an efficiently laid-out community with small-town character situated among agricultural lands and a breathtaking desert landscape. It has a thriving downtown vibrant with businesses, residents, and civic gathering spaces. Surrounding the downtown are well-connected neighborhoods that provide a variety of housing sizes, types, and styles.



Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) (**Map 8**) provides the basis for guiding the type, intensity, and location of different land uses within the current and future city limits. It is a spatial representation of the concepts and ideas discussed throughout the planning process. The goal of this map is to turn the Community Values (from Chapter 1) and the Land Use & Growth Vision (previous page) into changes on the ground. It will lay the groundwork for future neighborhoods, a thriving downtown, a rural city edge, and a revitalized State Highway 6&50 corridor. Recommendations for potential rezonings or changes to the Land Use Code within existing zoning categories may follow from the implementation of this Future Land Use Map.

Map 7 (opposite page) is the Three Mile Plan, which shows the Three Mile Planning area surrounding the city. Per the Colorado Revised Statutes 31-12-105(e), municipalities are required to conduct long-range planning around annexation within 3 miles of their boundary. The FLUM guides growth adjacent to the city within the UGB, to inform the city's Three Mile Plan.

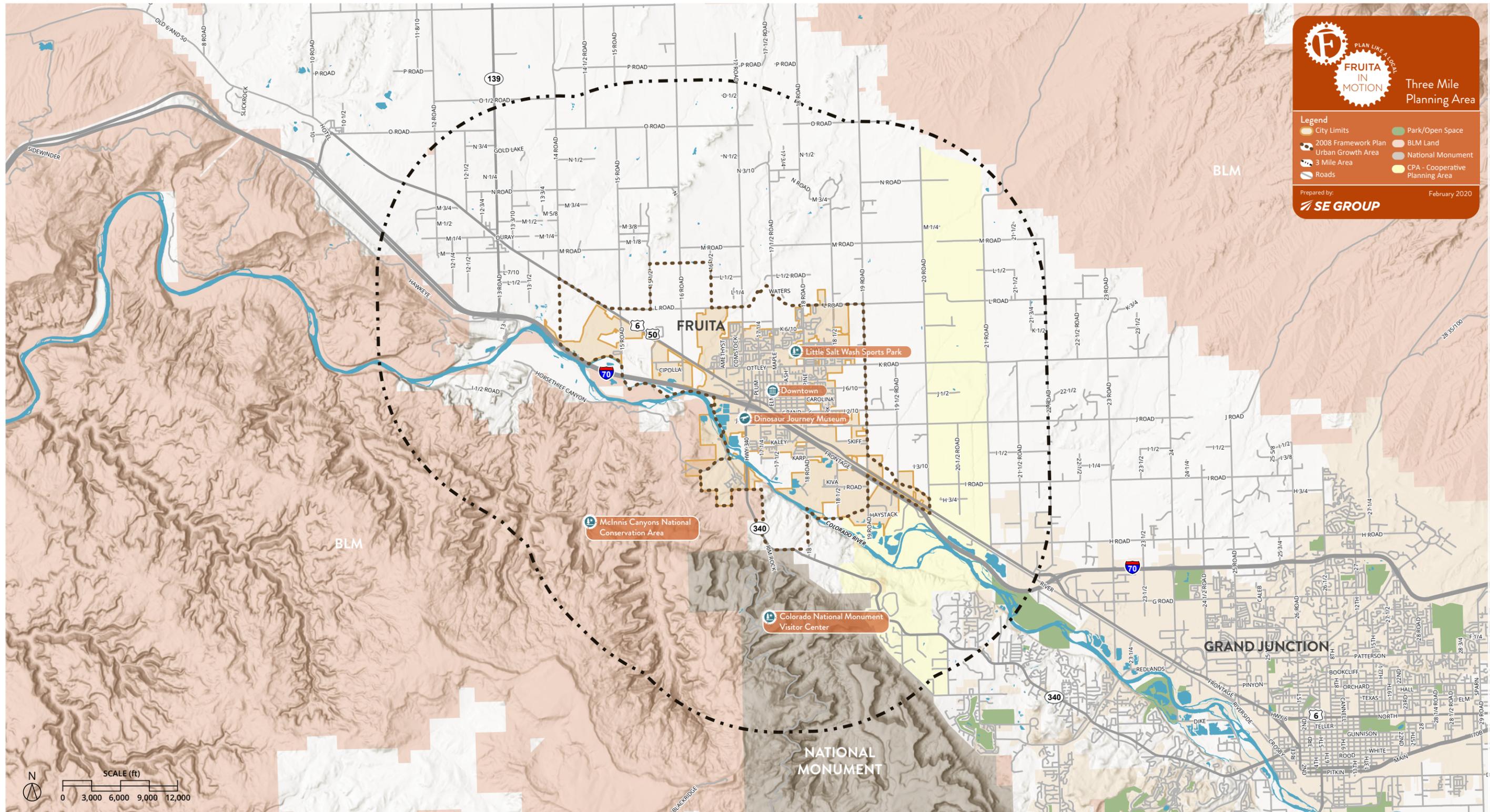
Core Concepts of the Future Land Use Map and Land Use Policy

- **Edges.** An urban-rural edge defines Fruita as a freestanding community separate from Grand Junction. Edges discourage sprawling growth, encourage the preservation of rural areas, and allow for a more efficient use of infrastructure and urban services. Undeveloped parcels within the edge are encouraged to develop at higher densities than beyond the edge where rural densities are desired. An UGB depicts where moderate density development ends and rural density development starts.
- **Corridors.** Roads, sidewalks and off-street trails contribute to the sense of small-town character and a high quality of life by ensuring safe travel throughout Fruita. Recognizing that land use and transportation policies have a strong connection to each other, the Future Transportation Map (see Chapter 6) identifies transportation corridors that have different

priorities: Downtown Enhanced, Multi-modal, Safe Route to School, Enhanced Arterials, and Future Collectors. Each corridor type is chosen due its surrounding land uses, destinations along the corridor, and its existing Right-of-Way (ROW) width. This plan also identifies high priority future roadways that will need to be completed as Fruita grows and neighborhoods continue to develop at the city's edge.

- **Downtown Flexibility.** Very few buildings have been built or parcels redeveloped downtown since 1970. The existing design standards are onerous to development. Creating more flexibility in what types of building forms are allowed may spur both development and redevelopment, encouraging new businesses and homes downtown while maintaining community character.
- **Infill.** The Future Land Use Map prioritizes infill over sprawling residential development at the edge of the city limits. The policies in this plan aim to spur residential development within the existing city limits and UGB. It aims to transform the State Highway 6&50 corridor by allowing and encouraging multifamily housing on parcels and blocks adjacent to this corridor.
- **Strengthen Existing Commercial Areas.** During the public process, many expressed a strong desire to not let commercial sprawl occur between Fruita and Grand Junction, and rather to focus on the existing commercial areas in the center of the city. The market analysis shows that there isn't a huge need for additional commercial space within Fruita. Therefore, the policies in this plan aim to support the existing commercial areas and the businesses within those areas.

MAP 7. THREE MILE PLAN



PLAN LIKE A LOCAL
FRUITA IN MOTION
 Three Mile Planning Area

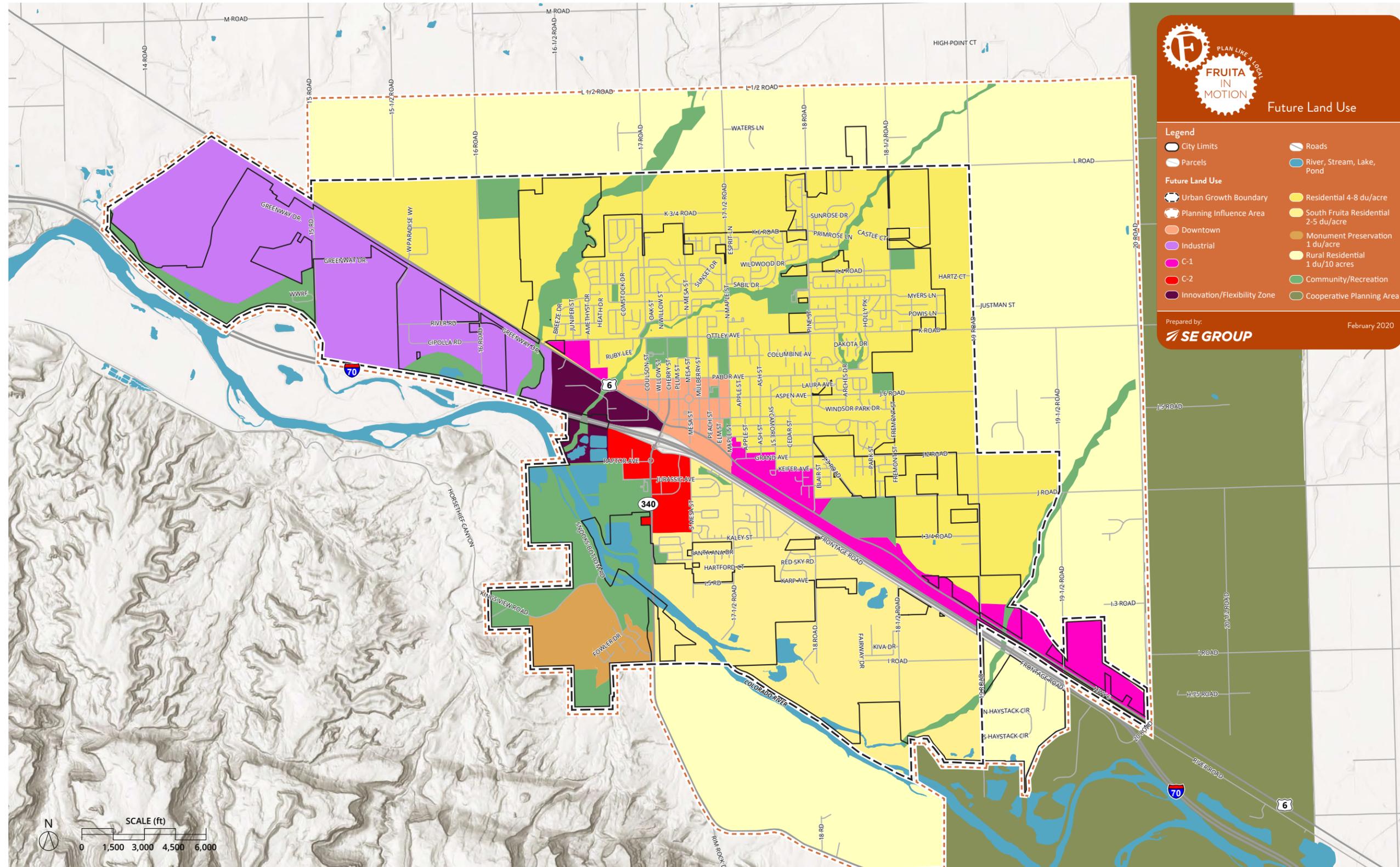
Legend

- City Limits
- 2008 Framework Plan Urban Growth Area
- 3 Mile Area
- Roads
- Park/Open Space
- BLM Land
- National Monument
- CPA - Cooperative Planning Area

Prepared by: **SE GROUP** February 2020

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MAP 8. FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM)



Note:
The urban growth boundary may be amended for parcels that petition to develop on the eastern side of 19 Road on a case by case basis.

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Land Use Category Descriptions for the Future Land Use Map

DOWNTOWN

The Downtown land use category contains a mix of building types and uses. The intent is for the area to be a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented commercial and residential area and act as the civic heart of the community. Mixed-use development, such as commercial on the ground floor and residential above the ground floor, is encouraged within this area. Or alternatively, a block could contain commercial uses next to residential uses. Rather than have a maximum density allowed for this area, design criteria, use, and urban form should be considered instead. Allowing a mix of housing sizes, types, and styles encourages keeping Fruita's "funky" character, while giving flexibility to builders. Inviting streetscapes and multimodal corridors are a priority in this area to encourage walking and biking to and from downtown destinations.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

The Rural Residential land use category is intended to retain rural character outside of the Fruita city limit. This designation also functions as a transitional area between increased development and open and resource lands. Continued use of these areas for agriculture is encouraged. The recommended gross density (1 unit/5-10 acres) can be flexibly applied to result in a variety of lot sizes, with the ultimate goal of retaining some larger parcels for resource preservation or agricultural uses. City sewer will not be provided to these lots. At the recommended density, should these areas be developed in the far future, it will be easier to redevelop than a more sprawling pattern of 1-2 units/acre. Clustering-type developments are not encouraged in this land use category.

SOUTH FRUITA RESIDENTIAL 2-5

The South Fruita Residential 2-5 land use category is intended for residential neighborhoods south of I-70. Much of this land is already built out at 1-4 units/acre. Being next to the river, some of this area is in the 100-year floodplain and not suitable for higher density development. Additionally, the access to the area from the rest of Fruita is constrained to Highway 340 and a frontage road that crosses under I-70 at 20 Road.





RESIDENTIAL 4-8

The Residential 4-8 land use category is intended for undeveloped areas where public infrastructure and services are available and proximal. This land use is also recommended for developed or semi-developed areas that are built out at a minimum of 2 units/acre. In areas that are currently built out at below the minimum density of this zone, it is expected that the minimum density (4 units/acre) is achieved when redevelopment occurs. This plan recognizes that many already-developed areas will remain in their current form for decades to come. However, there are still redevelopment opportunities throughout the city. In areas designated as Residential 4-8, there should be a clear and easily recognized pattern with a regular order to the lots and a recognizable geometry to the spaces between buildings. Innovative neighborhood designs in this land use category are encouraged. Neighborhoods in this area can be developed up to 8 units/acre in order to incentivize developers to provide amenities such as parks and trail connections and different types of housing. Rather than a complex bonus density program to get up to the maximum allowed density, the new Land Use Code should outline the requirements so that up to 8 units/acre can be done as a use-by-right.

TYPICAL FRUITA BLOCK

- DENSITY - APPROX. 5 DU/AC
- LOT SIZES - 7,500 - 10,000 SF
- PRODUCT - SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOMES
- GARAGE - SOME ATTACHED; SOME DETACHED

This view is modeled after a typical block in Fruita. Fruita's traditional neighborhoods have very modest homes, typically around 1,000 square feet. Some blocks have alleys and some do not. This example shows an alley. Even when an alley is present, the majority of homes have driveways. Some garages are attached and some are detached, behind the home.

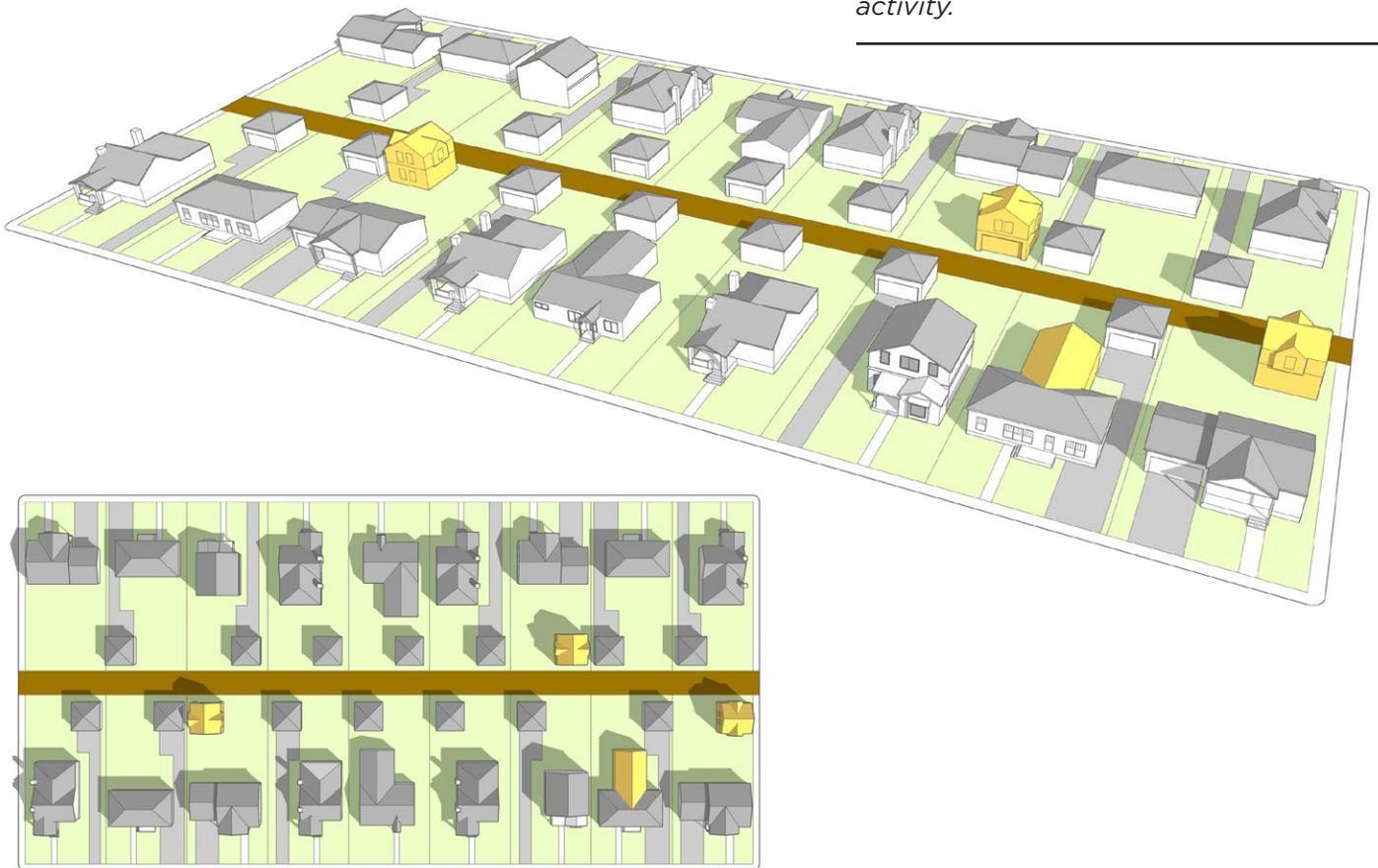


A typical block in Fruita (source: Google Earth)

TYPICAL FRUITA BLOCK WITH INFILL

DENSITY - APPROX. 6-8 DU/AC (6.3 DU/AC SHOWN)
 LOT SIZES - 7,500 - 10,000 SF
 PRODUCT - FAMILY DETACHED HOMES +
 ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT + TANDEM OR COTTAGE HOME
 GARAGE - SOME ATTACHED; SOME DETACHED

This view is showing how a modest increase in density could occur to existing blocks to provide more affordable housing options. Essentially, a second unit could be added to an existing lot, typically in the form of an accessory dwelling unit (a.k.a. "granny flat" or "carriage house"), a cottage or tandem house. These types of housing were the most popular choices in the Comprehensive Plan housing choices activity.





NEW 10 ACRE DEVELOPMENT

DENSITY - 4-8 DU/AC (8 DU/AC SHOWN)

LOT SIZES - 3,000 - 5,000 SF

PRODUCT - SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOMES +
COTTAGES

GARAGE - SOME ATTACHED; SOME DETACHED

This example illustrates what a new, 10-acre housing development might look like at 8 dwelling units per acre (the maximum proposed.) This still allows for single-family detached housing, but on smaller lots. This allows for more affordable units because the cost of land is less. It also provides opportunity for a variety of housing types, such as duplexes, cottages, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs).



MONUMENT PRESERVATION

The Monument Preservation category is intended to be a low-density area that is compatible with the surrounding lands of the Colorado National Monument and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) parcels. The intent is to preserve open space and for recreational uses to be integrated with low-density residential development.

INDUSTRIAL

The purpose of this land use category is to encourage non-polluting industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, and research and development activities designed to meet acceptable state and locally established standards for noise, dust, effluent (e.g., sewage pre-treatment), odor, and other impacts typically associated with industrial uses.

C-1 (COMMERCIAL)

This land use category is intended for land uses that are compatible with the future vision for the State Highway 6&50 Corridor as discussed in this plan. As a heavily traveled corridor for residents, local-serving businesses such as restaurants, retail sales and services are encouraged. Multifamily residential is also encouraged in this zone, especially on side streets adjacent to the highway corridor. Allowed lot sizes may be smaller than the C-2 category with lesser parking requirements. Maintaining walkability and safe bicycle access while also controlling vehicular access from State Highway 6&50 is a key consideration for lots in this area. For lots adjacent to the highway itself, an attractive frontage will help improve the character of this corridor.

C-2 (COMMERCIAL)

This land use category is envisioned for commercial uses that may not be as compatible with downtown Fruita. Hotels, offices, restaurants, and retail are encouraged in this area. With good I-70 access, this area is envisioned as serving both residents, tourists, and pass-through traffic. Lots in this area may be larger than in C-1 and have more parking available.

COMMUNITY/RECREATION

This category includes schools, parks, and the Community Center. It also includes state parks and preserved areas that are located within the city limits but are controlled by state or federal agencies.

INNOVATION/FLEXIBILITY ZONE

This category is currently zoned industrial but has close proximity to both downtown and commercial areas. It has a recently completed paved trail that runs through it, connecting the downtown area and nearby neighborhoods to the Colorado River and recreation opportunities on the south side of the highway. The area still has many barriers to development such as limited road access. It may take a large master development in order to overcome the cost of these barriers. Live/work space and light manufacturing/retail co-spaces are some of the ideas imagined for this area. Innovative multifamily residential could also be appropriate here. This area could be considered for multiple types of underlying zoning to give it maximum flexibility for development.



credit: Scott Belonger/Otak, Inc.



Goal #1.

Remain a “freestanding” community within Mesa County, with distinct municipal borders and a clear separation from other communities in the Grand Valley.

WHY?

A distinct border contributes to Fruita’s identity as a small town separate from other communities in the Grand Valley. An “edge” where one side is more developed, and the other side is more rural allows for a clear understanding of where development is appropriate and where agricultural lands, open space, and preservation are prioritized. Additionally, a boundary contributes to more efficient development, directing growth to where there is already transportation infrastructure and services such as water and sewer.

POLICIES

- 1.A Continue to have an UGB policy that defines desired densities and land uses surrounding the city. This policy is redefined in this plan through the FLUM.
- 1.B Collaborate and coordinate with Mesa County on land use decisions within the Three Mile Plan area and the area beyond Fruita’s city boundary but within the UGB.
- 1.C Approve annexation of parcels within the UGB at the desired densities as described in the FLUM. Annexation should help ensure that new development at the edge of the city (or county parcels within the city) is consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.
- 1.D Encourage the conservation and preservation of agricultural lands and open space surrounding the city. Consider the purchase of open lands, the use of conservation easements, and cluster development as tools to preserve the rural lands outside of Fruita.

ACTIONS

- 1.A Propose and negotiate an intergovernmental agreement with Mesa County to maintain and/or redefine the “rural edge” low density zoning beyond the Fruita city limits and UGB. Collaborate on an update to the Rural Planning Area Future Land Use Plan for Mesa County as it pertains to the areas that surround Fruita.
- 1.B Reconsider the value of zoning categories that allow between 1-3 units/acre (LLR, SFR, RR) and consider allowing either higher densities (4-8 units/acre) or lower densities (1 unit/10 acres) in these areas to create a more efficient development pattern with a more distinct edge.
- 1.C Do not provide city services (sewer, road improvements) beyond the UGB. For developments between the city limits and the UGB, ensure that the provision of services aligns with the goals and policies in this plan.
- 1.D Consider de-annexing developments beyond the UGB.
- 1.E Develop a list of “triggers” or special circumstances that would dictate either expanding the UGB beyond that depicted in the FLUM or providing sewer and road improvements beyond the UGB boundary.



Goal #2.

Prioritize infill development over development at the edge of the city limits.

WHY?

There is enough vacant and undeveloped land within the city limits and the UGB to absorb the growth that is projected over the next ten to twenty years. Development within the city boundary is less costly for both the developer and those providing infrastructure and services such as sewer and roads.

Residential development within the city will be able to take advantage of existing nearby roads, parks, trails, and community resources. Infill development will create more customers for the existing downtown and commercial centers, rather than customers for sprawling, highway commercial developments. Infill development at a minimum of 4 dwelling units/acre will likely produce more affordable housing products than what has typically been built over the last ten years.

POLICIES

- 2.A Advocate for design flexibility in building heights and densities for infill parcels in the Downtown land use area. Allow for different bulk standards for different types of housing products. Allow for innovative site plans such as alley-loaded, courtyard style, and multifamily of various architectural styles.
- 2.B Consider allowing up to 8 units/acre for residential development outside of downtown. Additional density would be allowed in a new development for performance on the following measures: location (proximity to city center), amenities (open space, trail connections), size and diversity of housing types, and alternative street sections that meet certain criteria.
- 2.C Consider annexing county enclaves to get land use jurisdiction over these areas and bring them up to City of Fruita standards (roads, sewer, water) and zoning densities.

- 2.D Promote commercial infill especially in the Downtown and C-1 zones. Encourage buildings to have higher lot coverages, attractive street frontages, and safe bicycle and pedestrian access.

ACTIONS

- 2.A Adopt the land use categories from this plan into the Land Use Code and rezone accordingly.
- 2.B Rewrite the Design Standards chapter of the Land Use Code to allow enough flexibility to encourage more infill development.
- 2.C In the Land Use Code, allow for more flexibility in each category by-right, or with administrative review.
- 2.D Communicate frequently with the development community regarding what the barriers are to infill development and what would be helpful to overcome these barriers. Start hosting a “Design and Development Roundtable” to make a regular open meeting where community members can discuss character and design ideas for the city.
- 2.E Identify vacant land or foreclosed properties within city limits and/or UGB and consider buying and then providing this land at low or no-cost to developers as an infill incentive or for affordable housing.





Goal #3.

Build upon the success of Fruita’s downtown as the social and civic hub of the community. Work towards improving existing civic spaces, parks, and streetscapes to be inviting to residents and visitors of all ages; creating more local businesses, and expanding residential options within the walkable, historic downtown area.

WHY?

Fruita’s downtown is the heart of the community with beloved shops, restaurants, and civic spaces. Community members value seeing each other downtown and supporting local businesses. Additionally, downtown densities are far below what the zone district allows. Higher density infill development that helps achieve the allowed densities will contribute to an even more vibrant downtown, with more nearby, walking-distance residents that can support more small businesses.

POLICIES

- 3.A Adopt the Downtown Subareas Plan as a way to express the desired character for different areas of downtown. This would take the place of the “Core” versus “Outside Core” distinction that exists presently.
- 3.B Consider a Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) or Urban Renewal Authority (URA) in downtown Fruita as a way to support downtown businesses and infrastructure improvements.
- 3.C Establish a dedicated funding source and program for downtown streetscape and park improvements and building upgrades.
- 3.D Consider a Downtown overlay that would expand compatible commercial uses beyond the downtown along the street corridors of Aspen, Cherry, Pabor, and Maple.

ACTIONS

- 3.A Rewrite the Design Standards chapter of the Land Use Code to encourage downtown development of the types of buildings desired by the community that are appropriate in each Downtown Subarea. Heights, setbacks, and lot coverage dimensions may be slightly different for each Subarea.
- 3.B Amend the Land Use Code to only allow three to four story buildings (down from five) and only in particular Downtown Subareas.



3.C Implement the following key downtown park and civic space projects, incorporating kid-friendly elements:

- a. Circle Park Improvements. Establish an implementable action plan to complete improvements to Circle Park. This key public space is the center of downtown, and, therefore, the community. Follow concepts from the Downtown Streetscapes Improvement Plan and revisit components, as necessary, based on today's goals and desires for the community.
- b. Other Downtown Park Improvements. Establish a programming plan for downtown parks to ensure that each park includes unique functions. Determine if any programming elements are missing from downtown and if so, where they should be placed. Encourage publicly accessible open spaces in new development, especially in key areas where access to open space is lacking (refer to Map 11 for potential locations). Improve access and encourage shared use of school grounds in downtown for residents to use in off-hours.
- c. Downtown Enhanced Street Improvements. Mesa Street, Pabor Avenue and Aspen Avenue are defined as "Downtown Enhanced Corridors." Since Aspen Avenue has had recent improvements, focus on Mesa Street and Pabor Avenue. Include traffic calming elements, continuous and comfortable sidewalks, and safe bicycle facilities.
- d. Multi-modal Corridor Improvements. Cherry and Maple Streets are key streets that border downtown. Cherry Street is a gateway to downtown from I-70. Additions such as rhythmic lighting with banners, public art in the median, and other pedestrian and bicycle improvements should be considered. Maple Street is a transition street between downtown and adjacent residential neighborhoods. Features such as wider, consistent sidewalks, safe bike facilities, and wayfinding and signage are recommendations.

Goal #4.

Allow and encourage a diversity of housing types to fit the needs of the Fruita community and provide the diverse "funky" character that is treasured by residents.

WHY?

Fruita's housing stock is getting more homogenous and more expensive. As a community that prides itself on being inclusive, this ethos should extend to providing types of housing for people of different ages, income ranges, family structures, and aesthetic preference. Allowing and encouraging more apartments and/or townhomes in appropriate locations could contribute to more affordable housing options.

POLICIES

- 4.A Update the Land Use Code to encourage a diversity of housing types in both Downtown and residential districts.
- 4.B Consider reducing lot size minimums for some of the residential zone districts as a way to encourage smaller more affordable housing units and add density that is in scale with Fruita's existing character.
- 4.C Work with the Grand Junction Housing Authority, Housing Resources of Western Colorado, Habitat for Humanity, and other nonprofit, low/moderate income housing agencies to identify potential affordable housing opportunities for Fruita residents.

ACTIONS

- 4.A Examine which density caps and dimensional barriers are prohibiting building types that may be desired by the community both in Downtown and in other land use categories.
- 4.B Change the Land Use Code to allow more than 12 units/acre for apartment buildings in appropriate locations.
- 4.C Undertake a Housing Needs Assessment to more fully understand the housing needs and gaps for different groups of people within the Fruita community.

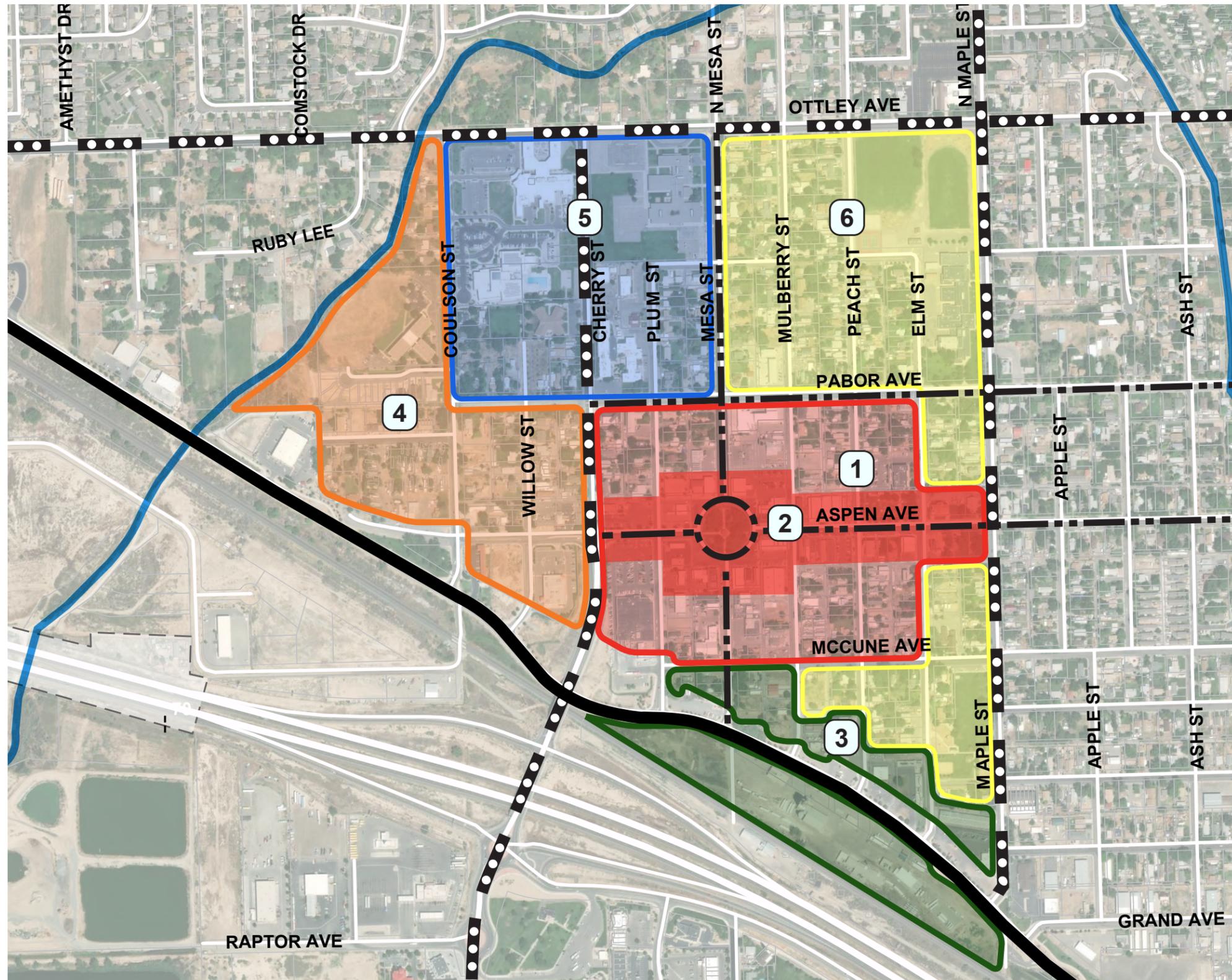


DOWNTOWN CHARACTER SUBAREAS

The Downtown Subareas Map geographically defines each subarea. Below are descriptions about the future character for each subarea. Start each description with “In 2040...” to imagine the future, as opposed to today. These subareas were defined and vetted through the Community Character Workshop and Draft Plan Party elements of the public engagement process. Additional information on this topic can be found in Appendix C.

1. **Downtown Core:** The Downtown Core is the heart of downtown. It has the highest concentration of businesses, although there is a mix of residential as well. It is the most walkable area within downtown and the sidewalks and streets have lots of activity. There is also a higher concentration of buildings in this area compared to other parts of downtown.
2. **Aspen Avenue:** This specific portion of the Downtown Core is decidedly unique and serves as the primary destination within downtown. As Fruita’s historic “Main Street,” this area has the most activity of anywhere in downtown. New buildings are similar to historic buildings in scale, placement, and materiality. Parking is located behind buildings or along the streets, and café seating and other activity along the sidewalk is prominent.
3. **Downtown South:** The 6 & 50 corridor is an extension of downtown with a unique character and serves as a “gateway” for those who enter from this corridor. Old buildings have been given new life and new buildings have been added that expands this area’s use of land to take advantage of its location and views. Improvements to the street, such as landscaping and a wide pathway for pedestrians and bicyclists, has given new life to this corridor.
4. **Downtown West:** This area has a mixture of housing types and recreation opportunities. The proximity to the Downtown Core, community services, trail access, Little Salt Wash and recreation opportunities is ideal. Properties along Aspen Avenue and Cherry Street, due to their visibility, continue to include a mixture of uses, such as offices, commercial, and residential.
5. **Downtown North:** The area between Cherry and Mesa Streets and Pabor to Ottley includes community services such as the Fruita Library and Community Center, local hospital, elementary school, and other small services. Some residential homes are mixed in as well, but for the most part, the character in this area includes buildings set back from the street with large parking areas and lawns.
6. **Downtown East:** Downtown East provides a transition from downtown to Fruita’s single-family residential neighborhoods. This area includes a mixture of single-family homes, converted homes to professional offices, and new housing types such as duplexes, ADUs, cottages and townhomes. The Fruita Middle School and Reed Park continue to be an anchor for the community and this part of downtown.

MAP 9. DOWNTOWN SUBAREA MAP



LEGEND

- Downtown Core
- Aspen Avenue
- Downtown North
- Downtown East
- Downtown South
- Downtown West
- Multi-modal Corridor
- Downtown Enhanced Corridor
- Enhanced Arterial

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Goal #5.

Encourage and support commercial uses in existing commercial areas.

WHY?

Fruita has three distinct commercial areas: downtown along Aspen Avenue, the commercial district along State Highway 340 south of I-70, and the State Highway 6&50 Corridor. Through the public engagement process, community members expressed concerns about commercial continuing to sprawl between Fruita and Grand Junction. Additionally, the market analysis completed for this plan shows that additional office/retail acreage is not in demand.

POLICIES

- 5.A Collaborate with the Grand Junction Economic Partnership and the Business Incubator Center to match appropriate businesses with Fruita's existing commercial spaces.
- 5.B Continue to collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to foster a positive business culture in Fruita.

ACTIONS

- 5.A Update the Land Use Code to divide General Commercial into two commercial zones, one that is appropriate for the State Highway 6&50 corridor and one that is appropriate for South Fruita.
- 5.B Continue to define the underlying zoning for the Innovation/Flexibility area as identified on the FLUM in the Land Use Code update.
- 5.C Work with City Market to upgrade or expand their Fruita store.

Goal #6.

Revitalize the State Highway 6&50 Corridor as an important gateway to the community.

WHY?

This corridor has historic significance for the community. It features the railroad and iconic grain elevator and serves as the primary regional thoroughfare for locals. This corridor has incredible visibility and potential for land use changes to help revitalize the corridor and improve access to downtown and regional trails.

POLICIES

- 6.A Create a State Highway 6&50 Corridor Plan that envisions upgrades to the transportation corridor as well as land uses along both sides of the corridor. Use the ideas in this plan as a starting point.
- 6.B Collaborate with the Mesa County RTPO and CDOT to advocate for changes on the State Highway 6&50 corridor that fit the vision and goals in this plan.

ACTIONS

- 6.A Update the commercial zoning along the corridor to reflect the desired uses (multifamily, local-serving businesses, retail and personal services.)
- 6.B Update the Design Standards chapter of the Land Use Code to encourage unique architecture and a mix of uses in this area.
- 6.C As part of a Corridor Plan, create a streetscaping plan for the roadway from Grand Avenue to Coulson Street that:
 - a. Implements the missing multimodal link from Grand Avenue to Coulson Street. Determine the best design solution for this section based on available ROW and future land use potential.
 - b. Introduces gateway design features and wayfinding signage at key streets such as Coulson, Mesa, and Maple Streets.
 - c. Includes beautification elements such as landscaping, lighting, appropriate street furniture, and public art.



Goal #7.

Ensure that development is compatible with the natural landscape and hazard areas and limit the risks of hazards to people and property.

WHY?

The Fruita area has many sensitive natural resources. The following policies ensure that future development is located away from the most sensitive areas and all development review processes consider hazards and natural resources.

POLICIES

- 7.A Discourage development within the 100-year floodplain as defined and mapped by FEMA or state or local floodplain management entity, whichever has been done most recently.
- 7.B Place appropriate buffers and setbacks between environmental resources (i.e., canals and drains; washes and creeks and wetlands; and the Colorado River) and proposed development to ensure that the proposed development does not degrade the existing habitat or interfere with environmental resources.
- 7.C Proposed land uses or development identify hazardous areas, i.e., floodplains, drainage areas, steep slope areas, geologic fault areas, and other areas hazardous to life or property.
- 7.D Development is not allowed in hazardous areas, to minimize the risk of injury to persons and loss of property, unless appropriate mitigation measures are taken.
- 7.E Proposed land uses or development address soil, erosion, and surface geologic characteristics of the development site through proper design, engineering, and construction.
- 7.F If sensitive resources are disturbed, such as wetlands, compensate by on-site or off-site wetland restoration of equal or greater amounts.

- 7.G Protect buffers and setbacks in perpetuity through development agreements by donating or selling the land, or a conservation easement on the land, to an accredited land trust or relevant public agency.
- 7.H Maintain the visual integrity of Fruita’s landscape by identifying distinctive scenic or topographic features, such as ridgelines or unique vegetation, and either avoiding them or using innovative design techniques to integrate them cohesively into new development.
- 7.I Strengthen partnerships towards hazard mitigation with the Lower Valley Fire District, RiversEdge West, and Grand Valley Irrigation Company.
- 7.J Collaborate with the BLM, Mesa County, and Grand Valley communities to identify regional solutions to hazards. Continue to work with Mesa County on hazard mitigation planning and response and work to update the 2015 Mesa County Hazards Mitigation Plan as necessary.

ACTIONS

- 7.A Update the Land Use Code to establish regulations for stormwater discharge to minimize the detrimental effects of filling and disposal of debris along washes and creeks.
- 7.B Evaluate the Big Salt Wash drainage structures under US 6, I-70, and the railroad for suitability in serving as trail underpasses during non-flood periods.
- 7.C Address gaps identified in the 2015 Mesa County Hazards Mitigation Plan Fruita Capacity Assessment including a formalized public information program around hazards and ensuring that all critical facilities are protected.
- 7.D Update the Land Use Code with any new best practices and standards for flood provisions to minimize public and private losses and promote public health and safety.

Chapter 4

Economic Development



Introduction

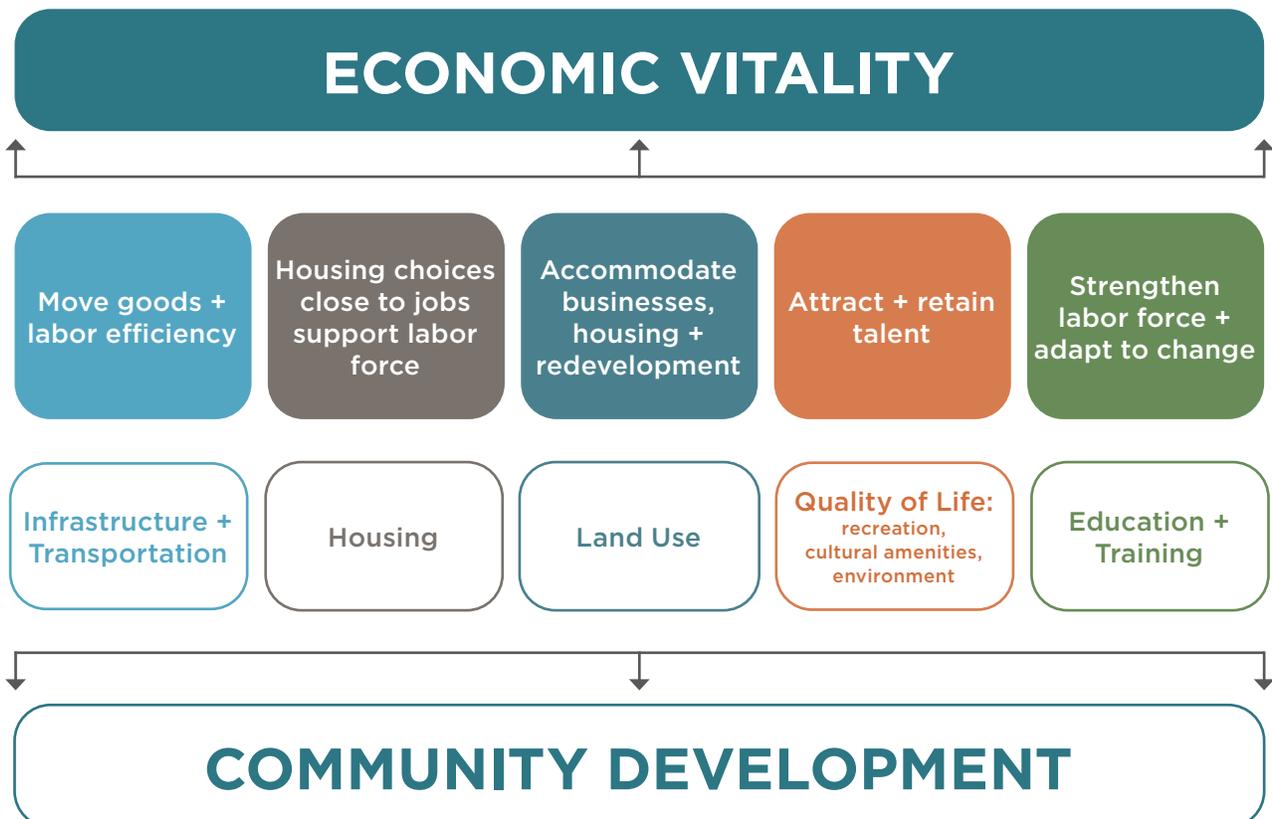
This Chapter provides guidance on economic development, and on the relationship between the land use and community character aspects of the Plan and the long-term economic health of Fruita.



Economic Development Definitions

Economic development has a broad meaning encompassing all of the activities a community engages in to advance the economic and social well-being of its residents. Some activities like business recruitment and retention or incentives are very specific economic development actions. More broadly though, many community development areas are also important to economic development, as illustrated below.

Fruita takes this broad view of economic development and recognizes the importance of building a strong community in its long-term economic success and resilience.



There are three general approaches to economic development described below. Many communities use a combination of the approaches, but with more or less emphasis in each area depending on the local needs.

- **Recruit and incentivize** – This is a traditional approach in which economic development staff and City officials proactively market their community to businesses and work to attract new growing or existing businesses to their community. Often this approach is combined with an incentives program which requires a commitment of financial resources or a willingness to contribute a portion of new revenues generated by an employer back to the employer, often to assist with real estate or relocation costs. Recruiting and incentivizing can be a low probability but high reward effort.
- **Place-based or amenity driven** – In this approach, a community places most of its efforts on building a desirable community in which to live and do business. The focus is largely on community development: schools; parks, open space, and recreation; cultural facilities; aesthetics; and overall quality of life. The theory is that businesses, high skilled workers, and entrepreneurs will seek places where they want to live and work, and economic growth will stem from this concentration of talent and ideas. There is truth to the effectiveness of this place-based strategy in the knowledge-based economy. When this is the sole approach however, it can ignore the needs of existing local businesses. It also can focus on the needs of higher wage and income workers resulting in an exclusive community.
- **Economic gardening** – This approach recognizes the fact that most job growth comes from the expansion of existing businesses. It also focuses on supporting new business formation and entrepreneurship. It is a “grow from within” strategy that focuses on leveraging unique local strengths and opportunities. Economic gardening also incorporates place-based aspects and therefore has some overlap with a place-based strategy.

Stakeholders in the Comprehensive Plan process have indicated that Fruita’s economic development approach should be a combination of economic gardening, and place-based economic development, but with strategic targeted recruiting as opportunities present themselves.

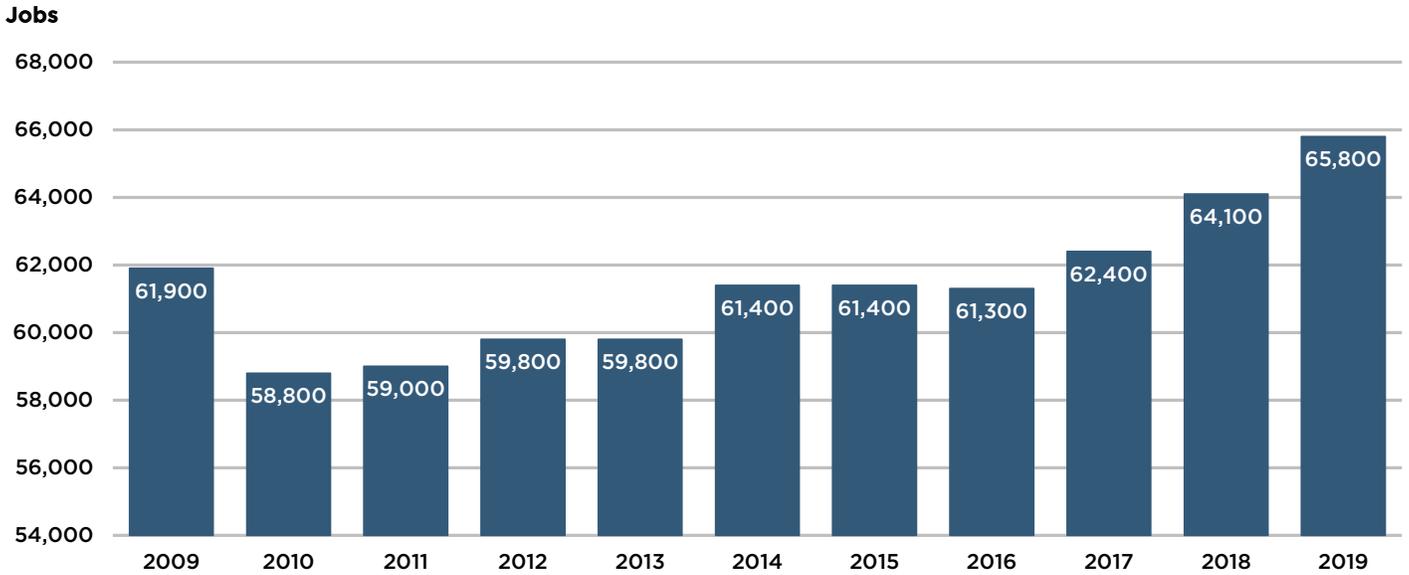
Context and Update

Since the 2008 Plan, several important trends and changes have emerged as summarized below.

- **Resurgence of job growth** – Mesa County had a slow recovery from the Great Recession. In 2009, there were 61,900 jobs which fell to 58,000 in 2010. Mesa County added approximately 7,000 jobs since 2010, however 4,500 (just under two-thirds) of the new jobs were added between 2016 and the second quarter of 2019 indicating the acceleration in growth that is occurring. **See Chart 1.**
- **Diversifying economy** – Extractive industries (oil and gas and mining) have been historically the primary economic drivers in Mesa County and along the Western Slope. Employment in extractive sectors has been declining since 2010, with a loss of over 400 jobs. The largest industries in Mesa County are education and health services comprised mainly of health care jobs. This sector grew by nearly 2,000 employees since 2010, accounting for 44% of new jobs. In addition, manufacturing has gained approximately 500 jobs and is poised for continued growth with outdoor and precision manufacturers expanding to and within Mesa County. **See Chart 2.**

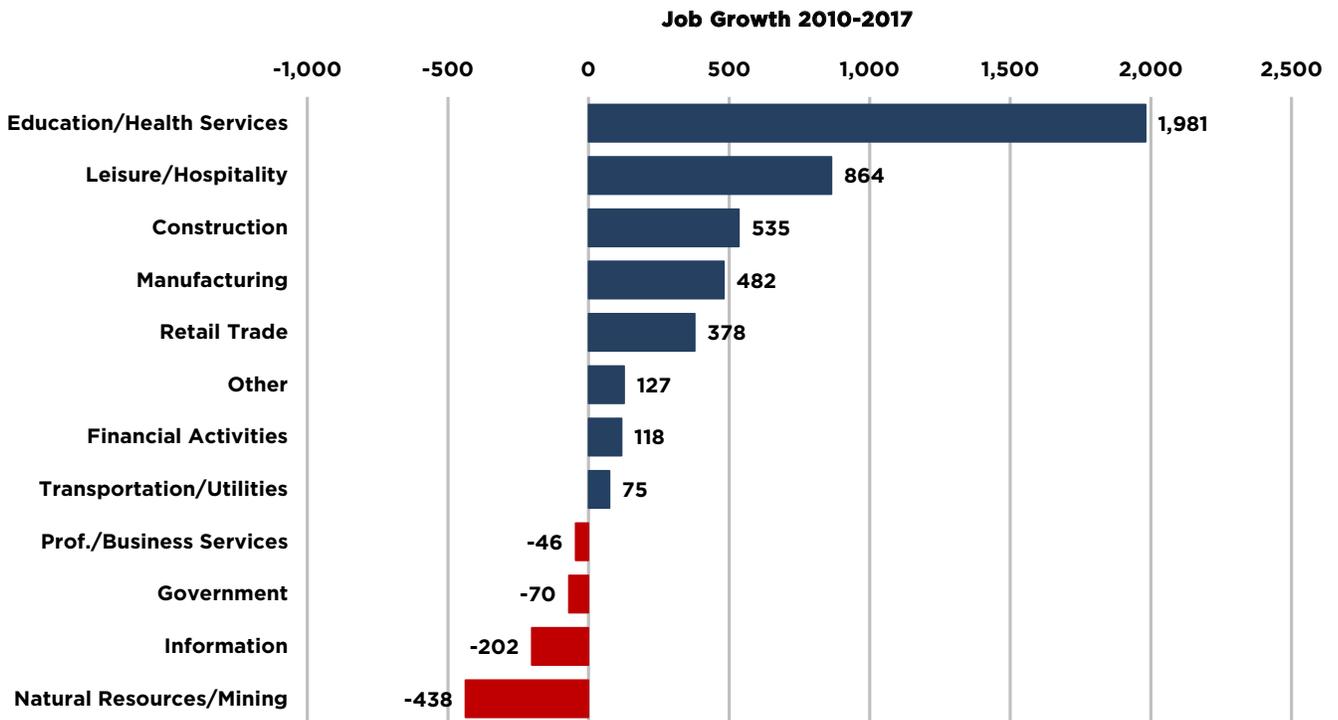


CHART 1. JOB GROWTH IN MESA COUNTY (2009-2019)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; Economic & Planning Systems

CHART 2. MESA COUNTY EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BY INDUSTRY, 2010-2017

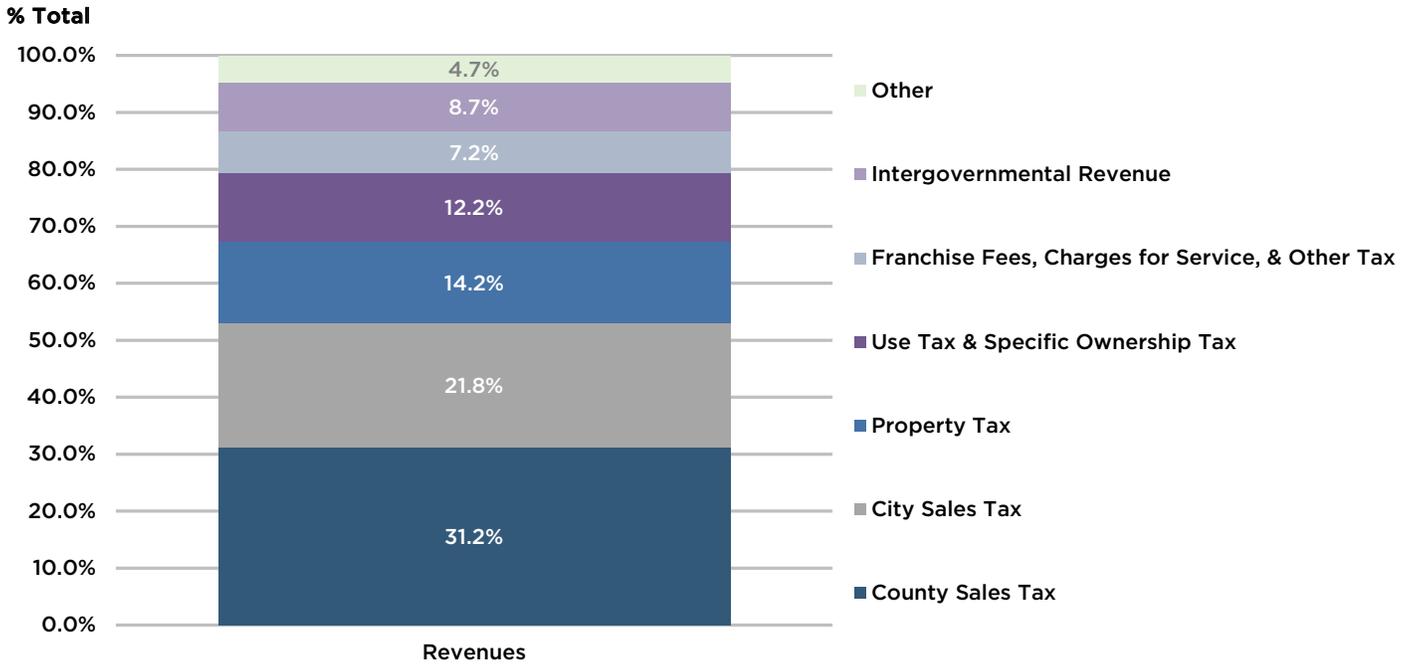


Source: QCEW; Economic & Planning Systems

- *Retail evolution* – Since the previous 2008 Plan, the retail industry has undergone a downsizing and transformation resulting from the rise of e-commerce. The year 2017 was labeled by the retail industry as the “Retail Apocalypse” when there was a record number of store chain and brand closings and bankruptcies. In Colorado municipalities, sales tax often comprises about two thirds of General Fund revenues; it is 54% of Fruita’s General Fund. Attracting major retail anchors was often a central part of local economic development in many communities. The 2008 Plan included recommendations on attracting anchor retailers as well. Retail recruitment is increasingly competitive, as the number of major stores who are actively expanding has been reduced dramatically. The market is also shifting to food and beverage including dining out and congregating in coffee shops, casual eateries, and breweries. Operating a successful retail business now requires strong skills in merchandising, activity/experience programming, and marketing to compete.
- *Dual economic roles* – Fruita has two roles within Mesa County and Western Colorado. Part of Fruita’s growth has been as a desirable bedroom community to Grand Junction. The majority of employed Fruita residents work in Grand Junction—between 55-60%. Fruita is also an international destination for mountain biking and cycling and is a gateway or jumping off point for the Colorado National Monument, Moab and other Utah national parks. These visitors have economic impacts in local restaurants, hotels, short term rentals, bike shops, and other specialty retailers. For the many visitors who camp however, their economic impacts are lower. Fruita has developed a brand and community identity around cycling and other outdoor recreation. Fruita is also experiencing an increase in remote workers who live and work in Fruita but are tied to other employers or other regional economies through communications technology.
- *Large and expanding employers* – A few large employers have located in Fruita. FHE is a manufacturing firm that designs highly specialized equipment for the safety of oil, gas, and mining drilling operations. FHE is expanding and adding approximately 100 jobs in Fruita. Family Health West has been in Fruita for over sixty years providing health care and employs over 280 people. Colorado Canyons Hospital is owned by Family Health West and provides a full-service hospital and emergency department in Fruita.
- *Fiscal sustainability* – As Fruita has grown and matured it has assembled more infrastructure that needs to be maintained including roads, trails, parks, and a new community center. Due to Colorado’s tax structure under the Gallagher Amendment, residential property generates about a third of the property tax on the same value as commercial property and often does not cover its full cost of services. Commercial property is assessed at a higher rate and is needed to balance out the costs and revenues of growth. Fruita needs to strategically pursue commercial development opportunities while at the same time managing the costs of residential growth. Commercial development also generates important sales and lodging tax revenues. **See Chart 3.**



CHART 3. TAX REVENUES



Source: City of Fruita 2019 Budget; Economic & Planning Systems

Community Process and Analysis

Public Engagement

Several economic themes were identified in the engagement process with the plan advisory committee, business owners, and the public.

- Workforce - Local businesses are experiencing a shortage of workers especially in retail, food and beverage, and tourism sector jobs. This affects customer service and visitors' and residents' experience at local businesses. The availability and cost of suitable rental housing was cited as a major factor.
- Downtown - Many in the community desire a more vibrant downtown with a larger mix of business, particularly restaurants, plus activities for children and families.
- Grocery and Food Stores - The community would like to see improved grocery and food store options in Fruita, as there is only one full-service supermarket at present.
- Living wage jobs - More good paying jobs are needed in Fruita to offer opportunities beyond service and tourism sector jobs.
- Quality of life and community character - People value Fruita's identity and quality of life. If or as the community grows, it will need to ensure that city revenues keep up with growth in order to maintain a high quality of life. Quality commercial development that maintains community character is needed to help balance the city's revenues.

STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Fruita’s economic development strategy is also informed by an evaluation of strengths and opportunities and challenges summarized below.

Strengths and Opportunities

STRENGTH	OPPORTUNITY
<i>Growing region</i>	Mesa County’s economy and population are growing. Managed well, Fruita can leverage the growing economy and population to achieve community benefits and goals.
<i>High quality of life</i>	Economic developers have stated that business owners moving to the Grand Valley often live in Fruita even if their business is in Grand Junction or elsewhere. The lifestyle, quality of life, and schools are major attractors in Fruita.
<i>Brand and identity</i>	Fruita’s brand may be attractive to businesses in the outdoor products and services industries as consumers, especially young consumers, are increasingly interested in brands that are compatible with their identity and values. Other successful brands have associated themselves with their host communities as part of their marketing strategy such as Smartwool and Moots Cycles (Steamboat Springs, CO); Simms Fishing and Oboz Shoes (Bozeman, MT); New Belgium Brewers (Ft. Collins, CO); and Mountainsmith (Golden, CO).
<i>Direct interstate access</i>	Fruita and the Fruita Business Park have direct access and excellent visibility from I-70. Buildings with highway visibility can showcase their logos and presence in Fruita. Proximity to the interstate also facilitates shipping and truck access.
<i>Business Park</i>	The Fruita Business Park is roughly 100 acres between State Highway 6&50 and I-70 on the west side of Fruita. It has full utilities available including fiber optic and three phase heavy power. These sites are excellent opportunities for attracting employment in good paying economic base industries and for diversifying the city’s tax base away from residential development.
<i>Downtown</i>	Fruita has a downtown that can be strengthened into a more vibrant center of the community and component of its identity. There has been a trend of suburban communities trying to create new downtown areas where none existed; Fruita already has a recognized center of the community to build on.



Challenges

In implementing a community plan, it is useful to consider market-based challenges or constraints so that efforts and resources can be prioritized to achieve realistic goals and outcomes.

CHALLENGE	OPPORTUNITY
<i>Proximity to Grand Junction</i>	As a larger community with a larger labor force at the center of the region, Grand Junction has approximately 90% of the county commercial real estate in retail, office, and industrial space. Cities tend to attract the most development due to the economic principle of agglomeration in which jobs and development catalyze additional jobs and development. With a larger population and workforce than Fruita, Grand Junction is a more competitive location for most retail and commercial development. Fruita should therefore be strategic and target businesses that fit Fruita’s identity and local market. See Chart 4.
<i>Development Costs and Feasibility</i>	Today for many businesses considering Fruita it has been more cost effective for them to lease existing buildings in and around Grand Junction than to build a new building in Fruita. There has been a large inventory of vacant industrial buildings as the energy industry has contracted, and lease rates are competitive. This inventory is absorbing however, and demand will trigger the need for new construction. In Fruita, developers are not building speculative space as it is not yet a major proven location for office and industrial space due to the agglomerations in Grand Junction. However, a business that wants to locate in Fruita because of the identity and brand may look at these economics differently. In downtown, small businesses cannot afford the rents needed to support the construction of new space.
<i>Community Scale</i>	Fruita is a small community with a small labor force at the edge of the Grand Valley region. It will struggle attracting large employers who require access to a large labor force. This is not so much a constraint as a recognition that Fruita should prioritize its efforts and focus on attracting small businesses and growing existing businesses in Fruita.
<i>Downtown Critical Mass</i>	To be more vibrant and create a stronger draw and center for locals and visitors, the number of businesses in downtown needs to be expanded. “Critical mass” refers to the co-location of a sufficient number of businesses and activities in a downtown to create a stronger draw that results in people visiting downtown more frequently and spending more time there during their visits. To achieve critical mass in downtown, a combination of economic and community development efforts are needed to attract and grow businesses and improve the physical and real estate development environment. To achieve critical mass, a minimum of 3-6 blocks of contiguous ground floor retail/commercial and mixed-use space is recommended, on both sides of the street.

Goal #1.

Fund and implement the Downtown Streetscape Improvements Plan.

WHY?

Public investment to improve the look and feel of a downtown can encourage private investment in the form of new businesses, new development, and improvements to existing buildings. Downtown Fruita would benefit from investments to manage parking, improve the streetscape, and add amenities (benches, play/entertainment features for families, landscaping). Reconfiguration of the paving and travel lanes surrounding Civic Center Memorial Park could create new development parcels or improve customer access to the area which may strengthen business conditions around the Park and create a perception of a larger downtown, as the current configuration creates a perceived barrier or separation.

Goal #2.

Explore formal organization and funding and financing options for downtown.

WHY

Implementing the Downtown Streetscapes Improvement Plan will be costly. The city's General Fund and Capital Funds are already overcommitted in capital project and maintenance needs. There are funding and financing tools that could be used to invest in the downtown area. A more formal organization of downtown business advocates could also work with the City on downtown management, marketing, real estate, and business development efforts.

POLICIES

- 1.A Explore the feasibility of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID), Downtown Development Authority (DDA), or Urban Renewal Area or Authority(URA).
 - a. A Business Improvement District (BID) can collect property tax and assessments on commercial property within the district upon approval through a vote of affected property owners. It is a separate political subdivision with the capacity to construct and maintain facilities as well as assume marketing and promotion activities. BIDs may authorize the construction and maintenance of a range of public improvements (streets, sidewalks, drainage facilities, decorative structures and art, parking facilities, public meeting facilities). BIDs may also provide a range of economic development and promotion activities such as marketing, special events, business recruiting, security, and design review. A BID can also be used to complement URAs and DDAs, as neither of those entities is authorized to oversee marketing and promotion programs.



- b. Tax increment financing can be use through either a DDA or URA. In tax increment financing a base level of tax revenue is set at a defined date and any new tax revenue resulting from new development, new businesses, or property value appreciation is directed to the Authority for a period of twenty-five to thirty years. These are powerful financing tools when established and used strategically. The revenues and associated financing proceeds (bonds or a loan) can be used to build improvements and rectify blighted conditions. There are pros and cons to both types of Authorities that can be evaluated in more detail at the appropriate time. Both are widely used in Colorado.
- 1.B Consider a formal program to reimburse or waive impact fees on new buildings and expansions in downtown. This would help incentivize development and redevelopment by lowering development costs.
 - 1.C Establish a revolving loan (low interest) or grant fund for assisting with downtown business real estate costs. Eligible costs could be renovating or expanding existing space, façade and sidewalk improvements, and rebating (or waiving) impact fees.

Goal #3.

Work with City Market representatives and other property owners and businesses to expand and improve food and grocery shopping options in Fruita.

WHY?

Stakeholders in the plan process expressed desire for better grocery options in Fruita to reduce shopping trips to Grand Junction. Having quality grocery stores is a key factor in quality of life.

POLICIES

- 3.A Work with City Market representatives on options for renovating, expanding, or possibly relocating.
- 3.B Support any efforts to establish a specialty foods store or market in downtown.

Goal #4.

Collaborate with other economic development organizations including the Fruita Area Chamber of Commerce and Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP).

WHY?

Economic development requires coordination with the public and private sectors and with other economic development and related organizations. Each organization or entity should focus on its strengths and avoid overlap to make the most of limited resources.

ACTION

4.A Clearly define the city's relationship with GJEP and their mutual expectations.

GJEP is the regional economic development group that represents the Grand Valley region. It is often on the front end of marketing and recruitment activities and fields many prospects and tours from businesses interested in locating in Mesa County. Due to Grand Junction's critical mass in the real estate market and larger labor market, much of the new economic development activity ultimately lands in or just outside Grand Junction. However, Fruita is part of the Grand Valley economy and can compete for many of the same targeted industries. GJEP has adopted six targeted industries which are the focus of its marketing, recruitment, and retention efforts:

- Agriculture, Food and Beverage;
- Aviation and Aerospace;
- Energy and Renewables;
- Information and Creative Technology;
- Medical and Healthcare; and
- Outdoor Recreation (largely manufacturing, and product design and marketing)

Fruita can attract many of these industries as well and could benefit from representation at GJEP. Fruita should develop a more intentional policy on how it wishes to be involved with GJEP, its level of funding, and what it expects from GJEP given that GJEP is organized to represent the region, not individual communities.

4.B Support and collaborate with the Fruita Area Chamber of Commerce on addressing local business growth and retention.

The Chamber represents the largest group of Fruita businesses and organizes and promotes numerous community events. The Chamber's role with the city could be adjusted to put additional focus on understanding the needs of local businesses and determining where the city has the power or ability to address impediments. A business retention program could be comprised of regular check-ins with the Chamber and follow-up with individual businesses to identify new business prospects as well as issues to be resolved (e.g. building code, tax reporting, parking, marketing, workforce development).



Goal #5.

Continue refining Fruita’s strategy and targeted business types for proactive marketing and recruiting. Balance recruiting and marketing with essential community development activities and supporting local businesses.

WHY?

Some amount of marketing and recruiting could be worthwhile for Fruita to continue building name and place recognition, especially among outdoor products brands and services. However, business recruiting is a high effort and low probability endeavor. Fruita can continue its targeted work in this area and determine the appropriate balance given staff and financial resources.

ACTIONS

5.A Consider refining the GJEP targeted industry list to a shorter and more specific list of business types that Fruita is interested in attracting. Tying this short list to the community’s values and identity would help further focus recruitment efforts.

Goal #6.

Define an incentives policy appropriate for targeted industries and specific areas of the city.

WHY?

Fruita could use limited and targeted incentives to help attract and expand businesses (and associated real estate) in the Business Park and downtown.

- Fruita should develop an incentives policy that guides the targeted use of incentives. Initial guidelines are that incentives can be considered when there are mutual benefits to the city and public and the recipient. Examples of

public benefits and reasons for using targeted incentives include:

- » Partnerships and cost sharing on infrastructure;
 - » Substantial net new sales and use and property tax;
 - » Redevelops/reinvests in obsolete, vacant, or blighted property;
 - » Creates living wage jobs;
 - » Will be recouped within a reasonable time period; and
 - » If there were no public investment, the project would not proceed.
- Incentives in the Business Park and for other economic base employers could include tools such as personal property tax rebates, sales and use tax rebates or sharing, and/or impact fee reimbursements.
 - In the downtown area, consider formal programs to assist businesses.

ACTIONS

- 6.A Determine the incentive types and tools to be used in specific areas of the city.
- 6.B Define criteria for receiving each incentive (e.g., job wage levels, construction quality, public benefit requirements, overall tax base contribution and payback period and ROI, etc.)
- 6.C Establish a rigorous review process for incentive requests following best practices. In particular, consider a threshold test for tax increment financing wherein a project would not proceed without the public investment. Ensure that public benefit requirements are met, particularly with tax increment financing.
- 6.D Promote Fruita and Mesa County as an Enterprise Zone

Goal #7.

Support local business growth through business retention and support programs and assistance with real estate.

WHY?

Existing local businesses are often the greatest source of job and economic growth.

ACTIONS

- 7.A Within the context of an incentives, loan, or grant program, define a means and criteria of assisting with renovation, expansion, and redevelopment costs for businesses in downtown and the Business Park.
- 7.B Conduct regular business outreach to determine if there are issues the City can assist with to help expand and retain local businesses.
- 7.C Promote the programs managed by the Grand Junction Incubator and GJEP including their several revolving loan funds, the Maker Space, and Business Incubator Center which provides coaching, advising, and mentoring.

Goal #8.

Reserve areas for commercial development towards long-term growth.

WHY?

Fruita has a strong residential market and may experience pressure to rezone important commercial land to allow for residential development. Fruita, like other cities, needs to think long term about its fiscal sustainability and ensuring that there are opportunities for future commercial development is part of this strategy. A strong tax base is needed to keep up with the infrastructure, maintenance, amenities, and high-quality municipal services needed to maintain quality of life.

ACTIONS

- 8.A Every five to ten years assess the commercially-zoned land within the city and the Three Mile Plan area against market conditions and assess whether the amount of space is appropriate.
- 8.B Periodically identify the best commercial development sites for marketing, in partnership with local real estate brokerages.
- 8.C Create a policy that defines criteria for rezoning applications on prime commercial sites. Criteria could include creating affordable housing or redeveloping economically obsolete or long-vacant property.



Goal #9.

Support flexibility in zoning and the development of diverse housing types as part of an economic sustainability strategy.

WHY?

The availability of workforce housing is now an economic development issue in Fruita. Additionally, businesses are looking for the right fit in terms of buildings, land, and space to move, expand, or start businesses. Fruita can look to the experience of high cost mountain resort towns to observe the risks of waiting too long to act. Local businesses are experiencing workforce shortages. The Land Use & Growth chapter of this plan (Chapter 3) contains strategies and policies on increasing the diversity and supply of housing in Fruita. For workforce housing, emphasis is on market rate and affordable (income restricted) rental housing and attainably priced ownership housing. For commercial spaces, Land Use Code changes can lay the groundwork for being an attractive place for a new or existing business. Flexibility in the design and types of buildings that can be built would be a business-friendly approach.

POLICIES

- 9.A Support changes in the Land Use Code update that will promote a business-friendly environment.
- 9.B Support changes in the Land Use Code update that will promote a diversity of housing types that will keep existing residents in Fruita and attract future employees.

Goal #10.

Align city budget priorities with community and economic development values.

WHY?

The City implements policy through its budgeting and spending priorities. Fruita should annually review its capital projects and operations funding priorities for conformance with this Plan.

Chapter 5

Parks, Health, Recreation, Open Space + Trails



Introduction

This chapter includes a vision as well as goals, policies, and actions to guide parks, health, recreation, open space, and trails in and around Fruita. The ideas contained in this chapter were developed from: conversations around the current state of recreation and upcoming needs, an analysis of existing parkland, and community engagement. This chapter includes the Future Parks, Recreation, Open Space, Trails, and Connectivity Map, informed by past planning, recent growth, and emerging needs.

Context and Update

In the past ten years, the City of Fruita has elevated its recreational offering and partnerships. With a new community center, the city now holds a wide range of recreational programming. The City's programs and events bring the community together and draw people to the city. Fruita has also taken a leading role in efforts to enhance the surrounding trail systems and regional connectivity.

- The Community Center opened in 2011. This has completely changed the recreational landscape of Fruita. Through the center, the City has been able to vastly expand its recreational programming for all ages, from youth to seniors. The center includes a gymnasium, senior center, library, meeting space, indoor and outdoor pools, and fitness spaces.
- The City has expanded the number of events it holds and the number of local events that come through. This increase has placed pressure on existing event space (Civic Center Park) and outside groups have expressed interest in holding larger events in Fruita. However, there are not appropriate facilities to accommodate those events.
- Fruita has not acquired or developed parks as prescribed in the 2008 Community Plan and 2009 Parks, Open Space, and Trails (POST) Plan. If development continues around the perimeter of the city, acquisition of land for parks will be

vital. Fruita acquired 5 acres of land adjacent to Little Salt Wash Park for future expansion.

- Several new park facilities have been completed in the past ten years on previously owned lands: Fruita Riverfront Park (Disc Golf Course), Fruita Bike Park. Residents have requested new types of park facilities such as a dog park, upgraded skate park, and pickleball courts.
- Fruita currently provides 1.94 acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 residents (including the three city-maintained pocket parks and 5 acres of Little Salt Wash that acts as a neighborhood park). This is below the standard of 4.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents established in the 2008 Community Plan.
- According to the Trust for Public Land, 76% of Fruita residents are within a 10-minute walk of parkland. However, only 3% of land within city limits is parkland—the national average is 15%. City parks are important, even if Fruita is lucky to be surrounded by public land which provides additional recreation opportunities.
- Funding proved to be a major obstacle in implementing many of the actions and policies of the 2008 Community Plan and the 2009 POST Plan.
- The City's parks and recreation impact fee was created ten years ago, but the City has significantly increased what they provide since that time. The current POST impact fee is \$1,850 per new dwelling unit constructed.

- The City has completed numerous new trail segments including the Kokopelli Trail, the Colorado Riverfront Trail - Monument View Section, and a short section of the Lower Little Salt Wash Trail (about 10 miles of new paved trails) thanks to grants and partnerships with the Colorado Riverfront Commission, Grand Junction, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), and CDOT. The City has not been able to develop the wash/irrigation canal trail system as outlined in the POST Plan.
- Many of the washes are in need of maintenance and there is uncertainty around who is responsible and how maintenance is provided.
- Fruita has supported and funded regional trail projects on public lands, namely BLM lands at 18 Road and at the Kokopelli trailhead. A Fruita Trails Initiative group was recently founded as an informal group for the local mountain biking trail systems.
- The Parks and Recreation department recently began initiatives around community health in partnership with the school district and Mesa County Public Health department.
- Parks and Recreation is one of the city's highest rated departments. However, staff is becoming concerned about being able to maintain facilities as programming, events, and facilities expand.
- Fruita has a lot of big recreation projects planned for the future and needs to prioritize and budget for them in the short, medium, and long term.
- Fruita has received a grant to support an update to the POST Plan in the coming year, 2020. This plan will be known as the Parks, Health, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PHROST) Plan.



The Fruita Community Center opened in 2011 and hosts a gymnasium, senior center, library, meeting space, pools, and fitness spaces.



Community Process and Analysis

The planning team analyzed residents' distance to parks and the park acreage per 1,000 residents. These analyses found that most residents live relatively close to a park, but there is limited park acreage for the city's residents. The city has 1.94 acres of parkland for a 1,000 residents, well below the standard of 4.0 set in the 2008 Community Plan and the 9.5 acres on average as reported in the 2016 National Recreation and Park Association Field Report.

The Trust for Public Land's Parkscore analysis was used as well. Parkscore, a nationwide analysis of city park systems, found that 76% of Fruita's residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park. This is well above the national average of 54% within a 10-minute walk. Only 3% of Fruita's city land is used for parks and recreation compared to the national median of 15%.

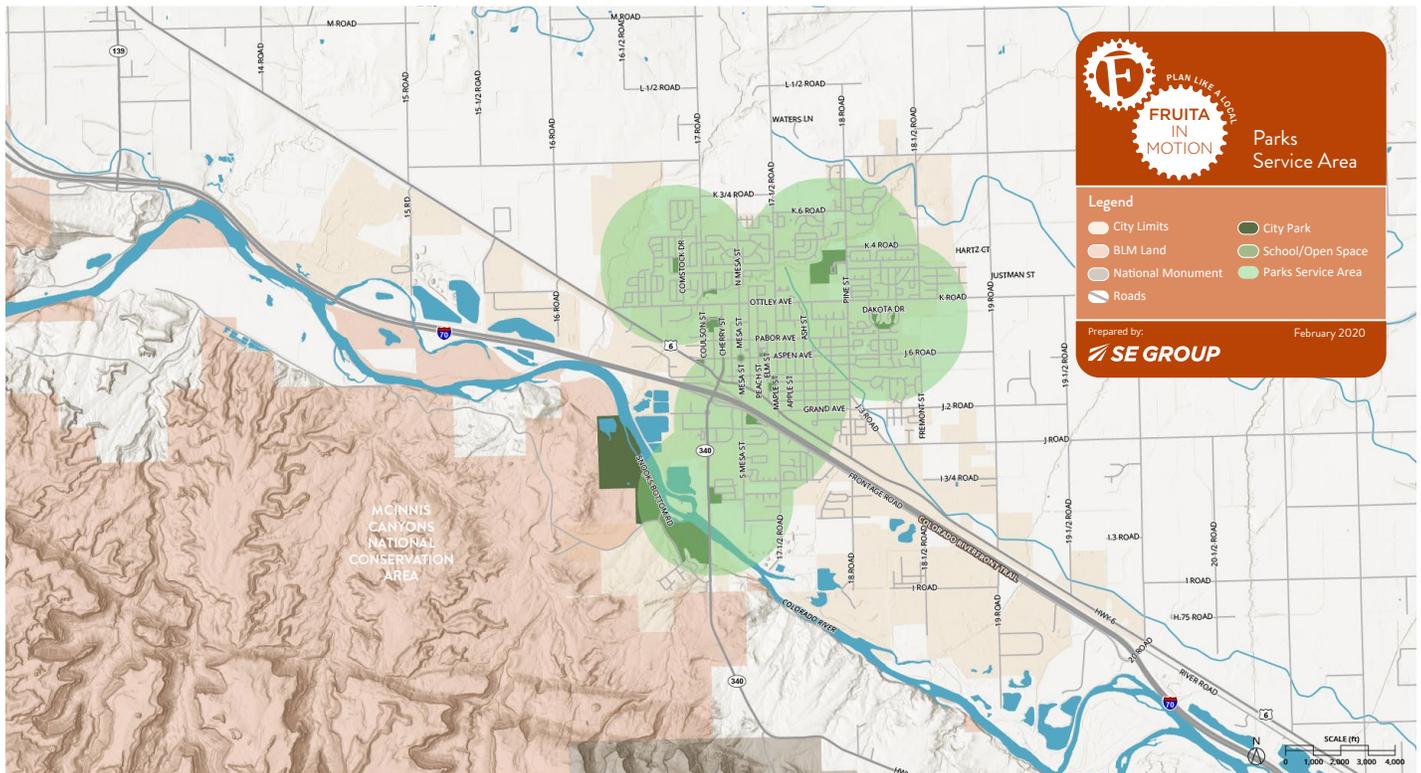
Map 10 identifies where parks are located and the area within half a mile of each of those parks. Neighborhoods not included in the parks service area should be considered high priority areas for adding a new park. The Plan Kickoff Open House touched on topics contained in this chapter. Many attendees mentioned the walkability, recreation opportunities, outdoor recreation access, community center, and events as elements of Fruita they really value. In terms of issues, many residents marked "difficult to bike" as an issue and a small number also named "difficult to walk" and "parks" as issues. Others brought up overcrowding at the community center, crossing I-70 on foot or bike is challenging, and the lack of connections to the bike park. Many felt Fruita should be known as the recreation center of the Grand Valley.

The plan advisory committee and livability commission met to discuss the vision, goals, and policies for this chapter.



Parks positively impact the health of a community.

MAP 10. PARKS SERVICE AREA





VISION

Fruita leads the Grand Valley in parks, health, recreation, open space, and trails. The City provides unparalleled recreational programming and events, well-maintained parks and recreational facilities that are accessible to all residents, and a well-connected network of bike and pedestrian facilities. The city drives local efforts for world-class outdoor recreation opportunities and regional connectivity. The recreational programming, events, and outdoor recreation opportunities bring the community together around a lifestyle to positively impact the community's health. The City takes initiative to protect the natural environment within and surrounding Fruita.

Goal #1.

Put on recreational programming and events that provide opportunities for residents to be mentally, physically, and socially active.

WHY?

Supporting residents active and healthy lifestyles and holding events and programs where residents can gather is a key priority for Fruita. However, there are concerns about accessibility, sufficient funding and facilities, and the appropriate balance of events. Many of these items will be further explored in the upcoming PHROST Plan.

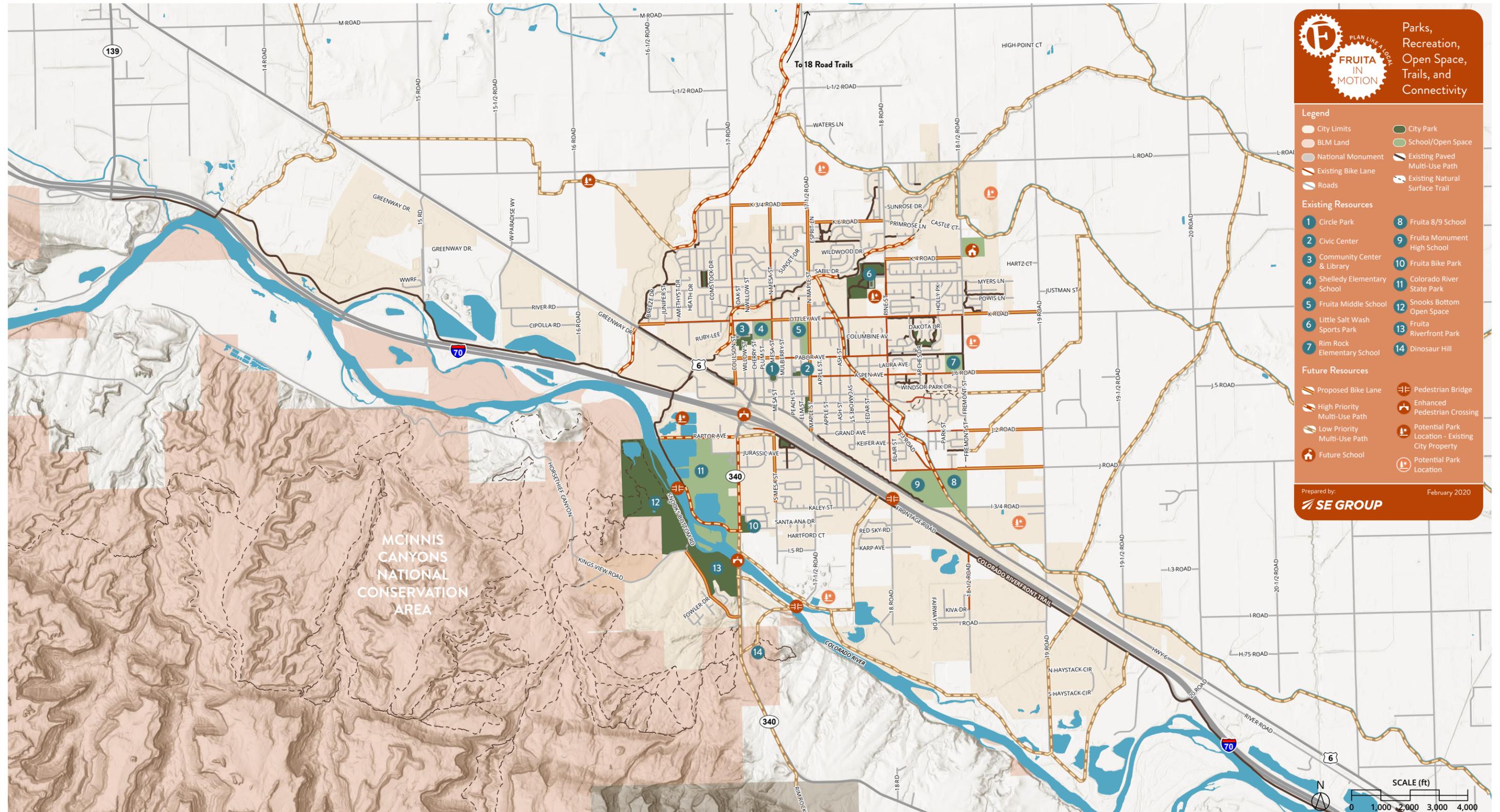
POLICIES

- 1.A Provide recreational programming and events that are accessible for all ages and financial backgrounds.
- 1.B Clearly communicate to the community what recreational offerings are available.

ACTIONS

- 1.A Explore opportunities for new event space that will enhance the appeal of Fruita for events. Ensure that the new space has connectivity to downtown and other key destinations
- 1.B Develop standards and solicit feedback to ensure that recreational programming meets the needs of all residents.
- 1.C Through the PHROST Plan, identify a funding source for recreational programming and develop a cost recovery model. Create a program pricing model for programs and events that encourages participation while achieving set cost recovery ratios. Set higher cost recovery ratios for specialized/individualized programs and lower cost recovery ratios for community-based and benefit programs.

MAP 11. PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, TRAILS, AND CONNECTIVITY





- 1.D Consider increasing or restructuring the POST impact fee to incorporate and provide necessary funding for recreational programming and events.
- 1.E Develop and provide informational resources to the community on events, programs, and facilities. This includes, but is not limited to, trail maps, activity guides, and enhanced electronic resources such as websites, social media, and interactive maps.
- 1.F Look for alternative locations to host programs and events. Work with schools as places for events and programming.
- 1.G Develop a continual vetting process for new and existing events.
- 1.H Analyze the capacity of Civic Center Park for events in terms of frequency and size of events.
- 1.I Address the limited recreational facility space for hosting and providing programming through feasibility studies of a Fruita Community Center expansion, fieldhouse, and additional athletic fields.

Goal #2.

Invest in the health of the local community and make a positive impact through programming initiatives, partnerships, and infrastructure.

WHY?

The City of Fruita, in supporting healthy lifestyles for its residents, has recently started developing initiatives and partnerships around community health. This plan offers initial policies and actions for the city before health-related guiding principles, policies, and initiatives are fully developed through the PHROST plan. Supporting community health in Fruita extends across many of the plan topics, such as walkability and education.

POLICIES

- 2.A Continue partnerships with the school district, Family Health West, and Mesa County Public Health and identify opportunities for new partners. Consider forming a coalition with those partners to tackle health issues in the city.
- 2.B Ensure that recreational programming is accessible to all residents (location, cost, timing, etc.).
- 2.C Ensure that health initiatives and other recreational programming engage all ages, especially older youth (13-18).
- 2.D Collaborate with the Community Alliance for Education and Hunger Relief, the Mesa County Leadership Forum on Hunger, and other partners to ensure that all Fruita residents have access to enough food for an active and healthy life.
- 2.E Support the Mesa County Public Health Department and its Child Care 8,000 initiative in seeking to increase the number of available spaces for childcare in the county.

ACTIONS

- 2.A Develop guiding principles, policies, and initiatives to promote health through the PHROST Plan.
- 2.B Develop initiatives that encourage healthy habits among residents.
- 2.C Develop measurable goals around health through the PHROST plan.
- 2.D Develop pedestrian and bicycle facilities to encourage residents to walk and bike.
- 2.E Find a funding source for health initiatives and pursue grants to supplement funding.

Goal #3.

Enhance the city’s trail system to allow residents and visitors to walk and ride safely within the city and to surrounding trail systems.

WHY?

Fruita residents value their access to outdoor recreation and ability to walk and bike safely around the city. The city should act as a trailhead, where residents and visitors can easily walk/ride out their door to surrounding trail systems or city destinations. This has been a key focus for the city with many connectivity enhancements in the past decade. However, further enhancements are essential to plan for and implement over the coming decade. **Map 11** in this chapter showcases future trail, connectivity and recreation ideas.

POLICIES

- 3.A Encourage new schools to be located on well-connected parcels and develop safe routes to the new and existing schools.
- 3.B Continue to collaborate on regionally important trail projects with the BLM, One Riverfront, and COPMOBA.
- 3.C Continue to develop the primary trail system within the city, as identified on the 2009 POST Plan, this chapter of the comprehensive plan, and the 2020 PHROST Plan.

ACTIONS

- 3.A Develop wash and irrigation canal trails to enhance local connectivity. Work with oversight agencies to secure easements.
- 3.B Prioritize major trail projects through the upcoming PHROST Plan (i.e., connection to North Fruita Desert Trails, bridge over I-70, wash and irrigation canal trails). Base prioritization on level of improvement to community connectivity.

- 3.C Improve access to Snooks Bottom and McInnis Canyon through bridges and other connectivity projects.
- 3.D Integrate off-street trails with on-street trails and bike routes and add wayfinding signage.
- 3.E If development expands at the perimeter of the city, expand the trail system to connect the new neighborhoods. Add infrastructure on State Highway 6&50 to accommodate a multi-use trail safely separated from the road

Goal #4.

Strengthen outdoor recreation in greater Fruita through partnerships, funding, and city facilities.

WHY?

The Fruita area is renowned for its outdoor recreation opportunities. While most opportunities are outside the city limits, it is important for the City to support and maintain the opportunities for its residents, visitors, and economy. These efforts should not detract from Fruita’s community-first ethos.

POLICIES

- 4.A Actively partner with the BLM, USFS, CPW, COPMOBA, and local businesses to support the trail and river-based outdoor recreation opportunities on surrounding public lands.
- 4.B Support outdoor recreation initiatives with the potential for economic development.
- 4.C Fund trail development, a trail maintenance crew, and trail studies/plans to maintain and enhance local trail systems.
- 4.D Make the city the trailhead for the surrounding outdoor recreation opportunities. Continue to maintain area trailheads but focus on strong connectivity to bike or walk from the city.
- 4.E Continue to develop partnerships to make Mountain Properties open to the public for outdoor recreation. Explore alternate opportunities to manage the Mountain Properties.



ACTIONS

- 4.A Formalize the Fruita Trails Initiative into an organization that works to support the trail systems and connect them to the city.
- 4.B Explore a funding source that supports outdoor recreation initiatives such as a lodging tax. Continue to be creative around funding for these initiatives.

Goal #5.

Ensure the City’s parks and recreational facilities are a well-maintained, accessible resource of active and passive recreation spaces for all residents.

WHY?

Parks and recreational facilities are important spaces for Fruita residents to be active and gather. The city is below the national standards in terms of parkland and existing facilities are overtaxed. As Fruita continues to develop and grow, providing sufficient parks and recreational facilities and expanding existing facilities will be increasingly important.

POLICIES

- 5.A Develop new neighborhood and community parks and upgrade existing to provide sufficient parkland within an easily accessible distance for all residents.
- 5.B Continue to encourage development to include pocket parks, open space areas, and connector/secondary trails. These pocket parks should be open for community use but maintained through the HOA, with the maintenance plan incorporated in the development review. The Parks and Recreation Department will then primarily focus on community and neighborhood parks, open space, and the trail system. In the development review, ensure that the pocket parks are usable space that will be enjoyed by the development’s residents.

- 5.C Maintain the high quality and high citizen rating for the parks and recreational facilities of Fruita.
- 5.D Be proactive to acquire land as development occurs or beforehand for parkland.
- 5.E Develop new parks and update existing parks taking the irrigation demand and water conservation into account.
- 5.F Locate new parks along washes or other areas with strong connectivity to local neighborhoods and work to enhance connectivity to existing parks.
- 5.G Continue working with the school district to share and develop recreational spaces as needed.
- 5.H In the 2020-2021 Land Use Code update, explore adjusting the impact fee and fee-in-lieu to further support the development of parks.

ACTIONS

- 5.A Consider raising or restructuring impact fees in order to fund the development of new parks and the upgrading and maintenance of existing parks.
- 5.B Explore opportunities to expand the community center or develop a new indoor facility to meet existing and future demand.
- 5.C Explore opportunities for a new community park and athletic fields with lighting and a synthetic surface.
- 5.D Actively seek new funding sources for park development and maintenance, especially through grants.
- 5.E Further understand the Fruita parks and recreational needs through the public engagement process of the PHROST Plan.
- 5.F Explore the potential of public-private partnerships, foundational support, and other donations for the development of future parks.

Goal #6.

Preserve the natural features of the city and surrounding landscape through partnerships with local land managers and organizations.

WHY?

Fruita has important natural features both within and beyond the city limits. Preserving and protecting these natural features is a key responsibility of the City. Especially for the features beyond the city limits, working with partners is essential.

POLICIES

- 6.A Conserve water quality, natural hydrology and habitat, and preserve biodiversity through conservation of the Colorado River, major stream corridors and washes, as well as associated wetlands, floodplains, drains, and riparian areas as important green spaces, wildlife habitat, waterway corridors, and trail linkages.
- 6.B Actively manage the washes by determining who at the City should be responsible for this, allocating resources, securing easements to clean up the washes, stabilizing the banks, and maintaining the washes. Work closely with RiversEdge West, Grand Valley Drainage District, and private landowners.
- 6.C Protect sensitive resources by preserving natural buffers from the edge of natural features or 100-year floodplain (whichever is greater). Recommended buffers include: ponds, creeks, streams, drainages, canals, and wetlands at 50 feet; Adobe Creek, Reed Wash, Little Salt Wash, Big Salt Wash; rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife habitat at 100 feet; the Colorado River at 300 feet.

- 6.D Protect sensitive areas and other important resource values within the area contained by Fruita’s Three Mile Plan. These may include:
 - a. Lands that are constrained due to environmental sensitivity or geologic hazards.
 - b. 100-year floodplains designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
 - c. Lands with important scenic values or that contribute to the visual quality of Fruita.
 - d. Lands with important cultural and historic values.
 - e. Rare vegetation.
 - f. Wetlands.
 - g. Severe slopes.
 - h. Land with important wildlife habitat or other natural value such as nesting and production areas.
 - i. Winter ranges, feeding areas, and concentration areas for threatened and endangered species, species of special concern, or indicator species.
 - j. Wildlife migration corridors.
 - k. Lands that have important recreational values.
- 6.E Work closely with regional land managers (CPW, BLM, Mesa County) to preserve natural features in the lands surrounding Fruita.

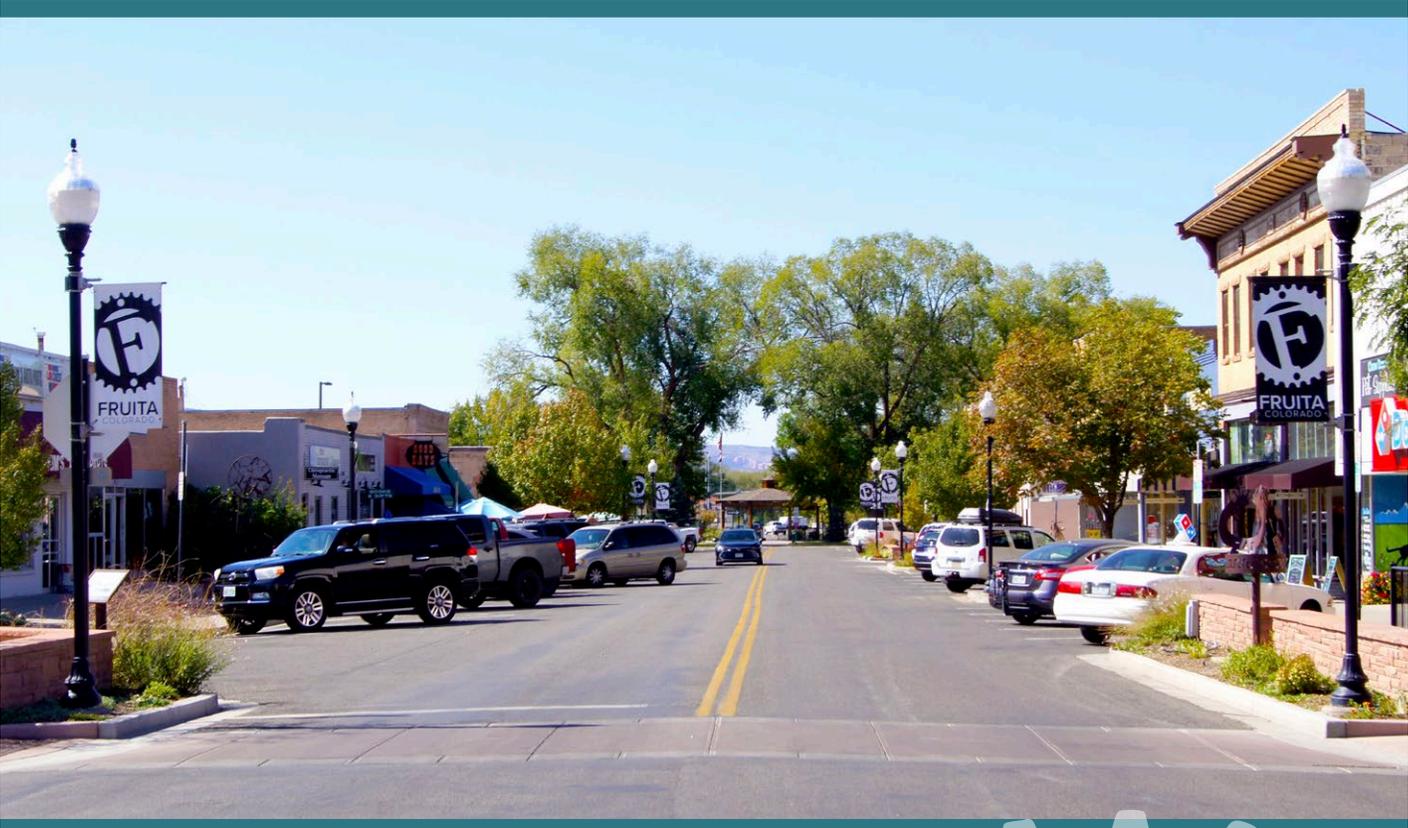
ACTIONS

- 6.A Consider implementing a drainage fee that would create an enterprise utility fund to pay for some of the policies listed under this goal.



Events in Fruita are popular and generally well attended by residents and visitors alike.

Chapter 6 Transportation



Introduction

This chapter includes a vision as well as goals, policies, and actions to guide Fruita's transportation infrastructure planning and implementation. The ideas contained within this chapter are developed from: conversations on gaps, safety concerns, and other pressing needs; an analysis of the existing street and bike-ped network, a review of existing area transportation-related plans; and public meetings to discuss key corridors and priorities for improvements. This chapter includes the *Road Classifications* and *Future Transportation Map* which highlight important driving and pedestrian routes around the city.

Context and Update

What has happened in the past ten years? What are the pressing issues?

- The 2013 Land Use Code update lowered downtown parking requirements. South of I-70, the parking minimums are higher for commercial properties and are frequently exceeded.
- A 2017 study of downtown parking found that there is ample parking around downtown.
- A Pedestrian Bicycle Circulation Study was completed in 2011, and Fruita has been able to implement many of the projects.
- Following the financial crisis and facing slow growth, in 2008, the Public Works department had a constrained budget yet still used reserves to fund projects that had a lot of momentum.
- The 2008 Community Plan Land Use Framework encouraged development in areas that required significant new infrastructure, including roadways.
- The 2008 Community Plan designated certain roadways as Enhanced Travel Corridors but did not fully define that term. No enhancements were made to those corridors.
- A Gateway Enhancements and Wayfinding Plan was completed in 2016, and Fruita has implemented wayfinding around the interstate interchange and the hospital/community center. Additional wayfinding signage may be needed around downtown and Little Salt Wash Park.
- Traffic is well dispersed through the city. However, as traffic increases, close attention will be paid to certain intersections to maintain traffic flow.
- A study of State Highway 6&50 found that the highway would have adequate capacity going forward. The highway does have issues at some intersections, where a turn lane may be necessary. The highway could also be enhanced through beautification projects. CDOT has a large Right-of-Way to make such changes and enhancements.
- The 2008 Community Plan named 19 Road as an enhanced travel corridor. However, the full build out of 19 Road is unlikely to happen in the next ten years. As it builds out, it may take on a more arterial-like form in the southern portion while remaining more like a rural collector in the northern portion. Managing the evolving cross-section of this road as development occurs will be important.
- A designated truck route map was developed. Trucks are only allowed to use State Highway 6&50, 16 Road, and 19 Road.

- A new elementary school is being constructed near the intersection of 18.5 Road and K.4 Road. Enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be needed on both roadways. K.4 Road currently has no pedestrian facilities and 18.5 does have sidewalks in some sections, but the road is not fully built out. In existing sections, residential driveways back out onto the sidewalk.
- The existing I-70 interchange area is challenging for both vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists. State Highway 340 across the interstate has more traffic than it was designed for and there is little space for pedestrians and cyclists on the bridge. Vehicular circulation around the interstate is also challenging, especially towards State Highway 6&50. CDOT has not planned for new interchanges through Fruita.
- The City needs to replace the bridges over Little Salt Wash and repave many road sections throughout the city. This presents an opportunity for restriping with bicycle and pedestrian accommodation.
- Fruita adopted a Downtown Streetscape Improvements Plan in 2013. The City did improve a few blocks of Aspen Avenue but that was very expensive and funding has not been available to implement other items in the plan.
- In 2018, an impact fee study was conducted for Mesa County and the local governments to assess the appropriate level of transportation impact fees for residential and commercial new development. It's important to note that Mesa County and the cities have not raised the transportation impact fees for over a decade, yet capacity-related improvements are needed to keep pace with Fruita's growing community. As it currently stands, the newly adopted impact fee (2019) does not fully cover the costs of improvements. The new impact fees are planned to adjust with the cost of inflation but are not anticipated to be able to fully fund the capacity needs of the transportation system.
- City Council has encouraged the Public Works department to prioritize maintenance of existing infrastructure over new construction. Recent new construction has been funded by grants and there is concern towards funding new projects in the future, as grants are not a consistent funding source. These new projects, once completed, will add to the city's maintenance load as well.
- The City has a long list of maintenance projects but is not keeping pace with the projects at the current rate of funding.



credit: Scott Belonger/Otak, Inc.

The Fruita Trail has improved connectivity and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.



- A Safe Routes to School audit was conducted of Shelledy Elementary, Rim Rock Elementary, and Fruita Middle School in 2016. The audit found that a high percentage of students received rides to school, with few students carpooling. At Fruita Middle School, near downtown, few students biked to and from school, and many students walked home but drove in the morning. Traffic around the schools is increasingly an issue, with school drop-off and pick-up times aligning with peak commuting periods. The Safe Routes to School audit suggested intersection and sidewalk improvements for the City to complete.

Community Process and Analysis

The plan Advisory Committee discussed the Future Transportation Map and other important transportation priorities. Committee members expressed that connectivity, wayfinding, and enhancements to State Highway 6&50 must be important elements of this chapter.

An open house was held where participants were asked about issues facing Fruita and areas in need of improvement. “Difficult to bike” was a top issue among participants. A moderate number of participants selected “traffic” and “parking” as issues, with very few participants selecting “difficult to walk.” Areas marked as in need of transportation improvements included the State Highway 6&50 corridor just east of Cherry Street, the intersection of 19 and K Road, and along Highway 340 near the Colorado River crossing.

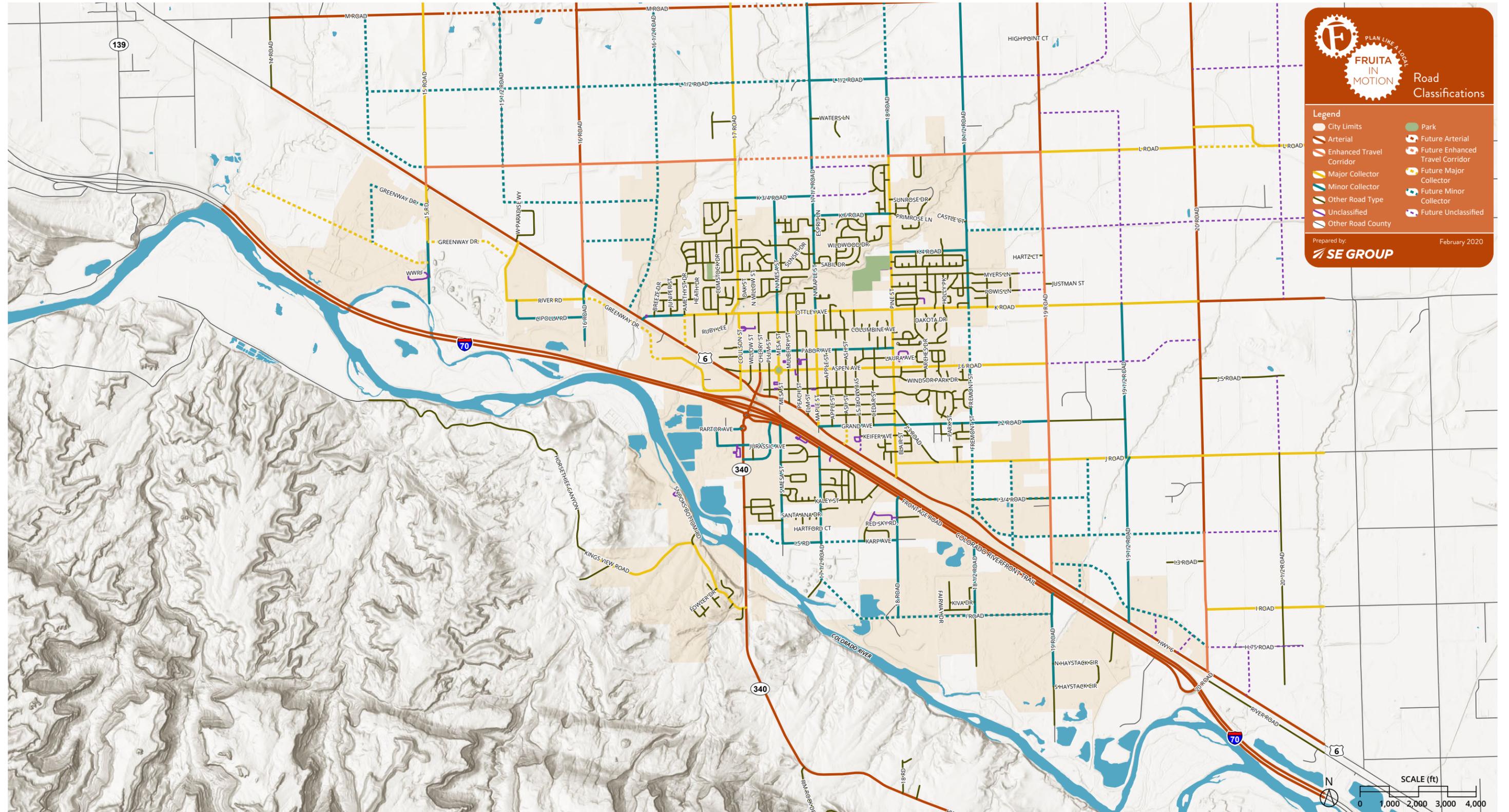
The planning team analyzed the existing conditions of the city’s roadways in terms of level of traffic and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The analysis identified key roads, sidewalks and trails that would make the city easy to get around on foot, by bike, or by car. The planning team also reviewed past transportation studies and reports to incorporate previously identified gaps and recommendations under a comprehensive vision and develop implementation strategies.

The following **Road Classifications Map (Map 12)** shows the existing road system and what is planned for. The **Future Transportation Map (Map 13)** shows the key roads towards enhancing connectivity in the city.

VISION

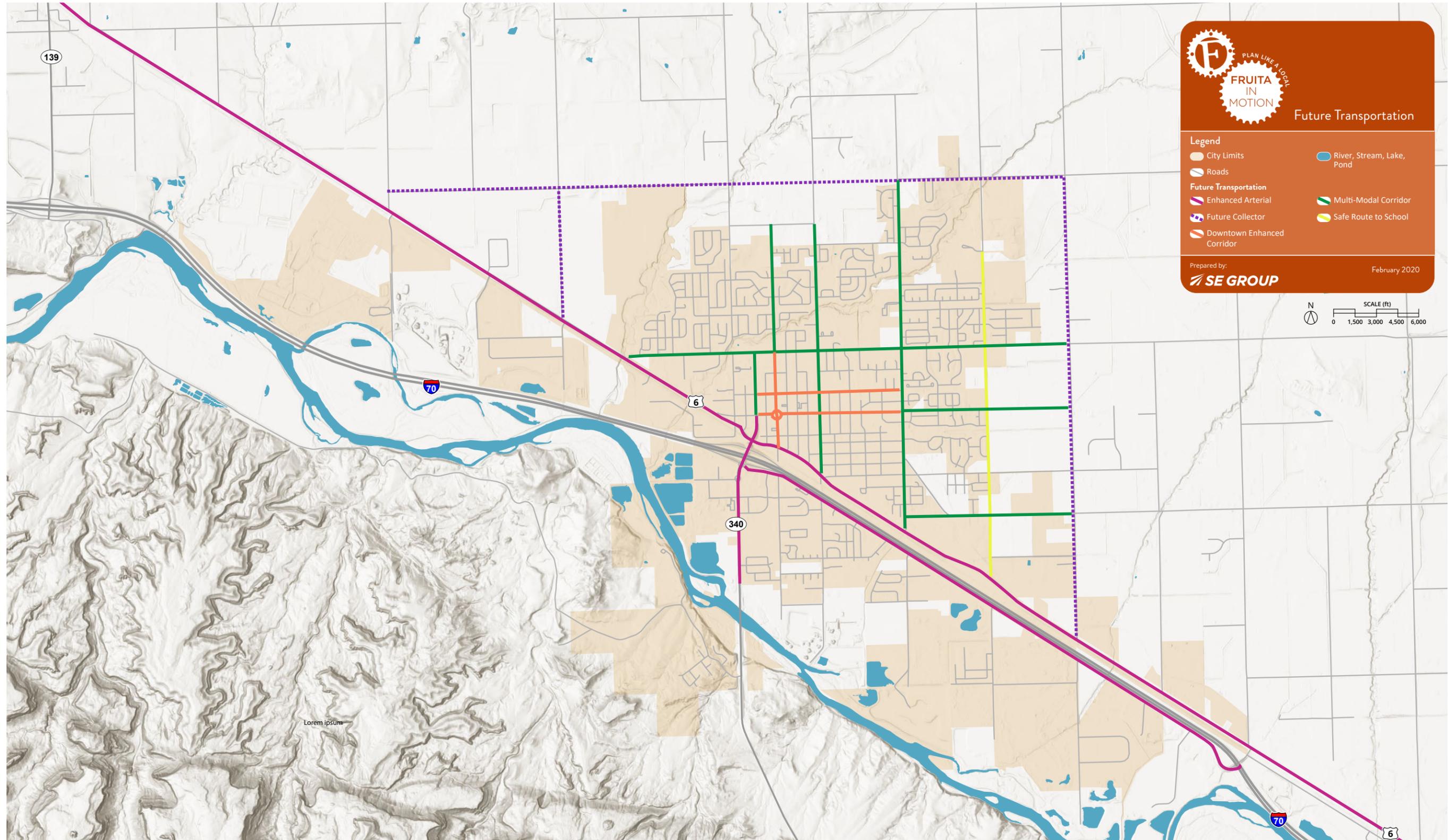
The City of Fruita has well-maintained and safe roadways, intersections, sidewalks, and trails. It has a transportation system that balances access and mobility through multimodal improvements on existing roads as well as coordinated planning with new development. Transportation facilities contribute to the character of the community by providing inviting streetscapes, off-street connections, and attractive gateways to the community.

MAP 12. ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS



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MAP 13. FUTURE TRANSPORTATION



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Goal #1.

Design the city's streets for their level of traffic, adjacent land uses, and connectivity context.

WHY?

Fruita's grid system allows people to get around the city easily. Residents especially value feeling safe while walking and biking to schools, parks, and downtown. The following designated streets are intended to facilitate safe walking and biking, with easy vehicular travel as well.

**POLICIES**

- 1.A Downtown Enhanced Corridor - these corridors have slow speeds through traffic calming projects, easy access to downtown businesses, wide and enhanced sidewalks, and bike facilities (Mesa Street, Pabor Avenue, Aspen Avenue).
- 1.B Safe Route to School - this corridor along 18.5 Road includes traffic calming, wide and enhanced sidewalks and bike facilities. Many schools are along this route so it was identified as a key street for safe walking and biking (18.5 Road/Fremont Street).
- 1.C Multi-modal Corridor - these corridors support higher vehicular traffic volumes, bikes, and pedestrians, and often connect to off street trails. (Highway 340/Cherry Street, Mesa Street north of Ottley Avenue, Maple Street/17.5 Road, Pine Street/18 Road, Ottley Avenue).
- 1.D Enhanced Arterial - this designation is given to State Highway 6&50 and the I-70 Frontage Road. It is envisioned to feature safe intersections, easy access to and from side streets, and beautification through landscaping and hardscaping.
- 1.E Future Collector - these streets are existing truck routes that will be built out as development occurs around them. Corridor plans should be completed for each road corridor to ensure they develop as envisioned rather than in a haphazard manner.

ACTIONS

- 1.A Establish minimum construction standards and cross-sections for trails and bike lanes.
- 1.B Conduct a circulation study of the city in light of the land use changes associated with this Comprehensive Plan in 2020. Incorporate new design standards and cross sections into the updated Land Use Code.



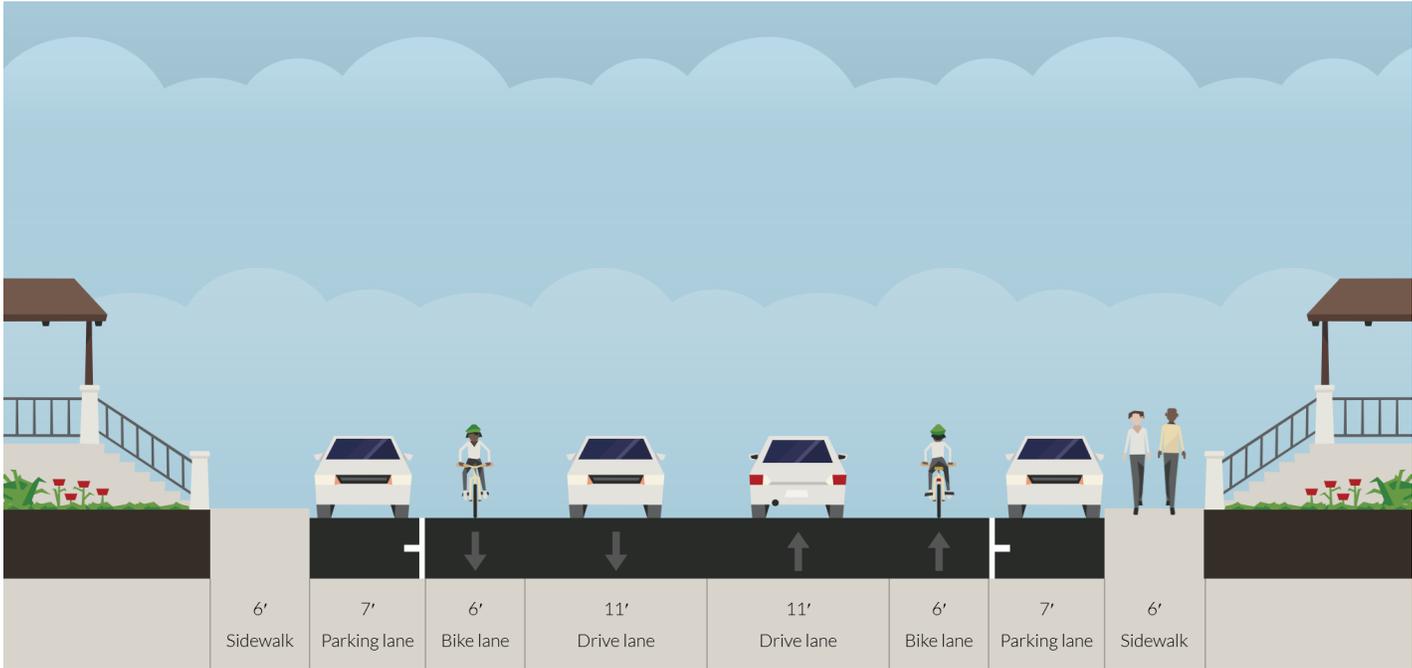
Downtown Enhanced Corridor

Angled parking may vary depending on street segment



Safe Route to School Corridor

Safe crossing every two blocks; two-way turn lane would alternate with median; left-hand sidewalk is a multi-use path



Multi-modal Corridor

Parking may be eliminated from one side as ROW width varies



Future Collector Corridor

Many of these roads are currently two-lane roads with no shoulder. Ensure turning lanes and pedestrian/bike facilities are built as development occurs.



The 6&50 Corridor from Maple to Plum streets has great potential to transform from an auto-oriented and service-related “pass through” into a destination with a mix of uses. The visibility of the corridor from I-70 and connection to downtown is a major opportunity. Working with CDOT to make safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists and connecting to the trail networks will help catalyze land use changes.

BEFORE



AFTER



The future vision for the corridor allows properties to **evolve and change over time**. Some properties may choose to redevelop while others may not. Merging new and old is part of the desired character of the corridor.

Continue to **allow parking** in the CDOT ROW. Also allow other “non-structure” improvements to occur, such as **patios, lawns, landscaping, and signage**.

Connecting the trail system along 6&50 with a **multi-use path** protected from the roadway with **landscaping and trees** (like the pathway to the east along 6 & 50, but straight) is desired. The City should work with CDOT to develop a design and path to implementation.

Locate **parking** to the rear and sides of properties instead of all in front.

Create **“bulb-outs”** on streets that intersect with 6&50 and allow on-street parking. This helps **define where parking is allowed** and **shortens the crossing distance** for pedestrians and bicyclists. It also **slows down travel speeds** of cars.

Generally, promote more **pervious surfaces** (less asphalt and concrete) that reduce stormwater runoff and beautify and “soften” the corridor experience.

The future vision for the corridor includes **reusing existing buildings** where feasible, while adding **new structures** that contribute new uses to help **enliven the corridor** and support downtown.

Goal #2.

Create and maintain safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists to go from their door to local destinations (school, downtown, the Community Center, local parks, Kokopelli Business Park, and local trail systems).

WHY?

Residents explicitly stated the ability to walk and bike safely to local destinations as a key community value. This goal and the subsequent policies and actions are measures Fruita can take towards preserving and further strengthening this community value. While residents appreciate the existing walkability and bike-ability, physical improvements and programs are necessary to create a fully connected network and encourage safe behavior from pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

POLICIES

- 2.A Encourage the provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in existing developments and require them to be included as an integral element of transportation plans for new developments.
- 2.B Support educational programs to enhance cyclist safety such as motorist awareness programs and K-12 bike education programs.
- 2.C Encourage off-street trails within new developments with connections to existing or proposed trails.

ACTIONS

- 2.A Develop wash and irrigation canal trails to enhance local connectivity. Work with oversight agencies to secure easements where development has already occurred. For new development, ensure that these easements are dedicated during the site planning process.
- 2.B Create policy to encourage bicycle accommodations when restriping a roadway in consideration of expected use.
- 2.C Consider additional measures to keep up with sidewalk maintenance such as local block-by-block beautification competitions, enforcement, etc.
- 2.D Add design amenities to improve the safety and comfort of all road users, with a particular focus on behaviors and attitudes that cause motor vehicle/bicycle crashes.
- 2.E Continue implementation of the 2011 Fruita Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation Study.
- 2.F Integrate the on-street trail system with off-street trail system.
- 2.G Explore bicycle and pedestrian improvements south of the interstate in the PHROST Plan.
- 2.H Update the Land Use Code to consider alternative street sections in conjunction with other provided amenities in development review.
- 2.I Maintain and update a city connections map that includes safe existing routes (off-street trails and designated on-street routes) with trail type. This would be appropriate as part of the 2020 PHROST Plan effort. Currently some routes are on transportation maps and others are on trail maps.



Goal #3.

Make downtown pedestrian-oriented and easy for visitors and vehicles to navigate.

WHY?

Throughout the planning process, residents expressed their love for downtown and its friendly and welcoming atmosphere. They appreciated the public art, running into neighbors and friends, and the busy, active feeling of Aspen Avenue. The following policies and actions seek to preserve that experience and make downtown more conducive and pleasant to walk around.

ACTIONS

- 3.A Implement the Downtown Streetscape Improvements Plan. Additional actions around this plan are in Chapters 3 and 4.
- 3.B Implement parts or all of the 2016 Gateway Enhancement and Wayfinding Plan.
- 3.C Add wayfinding signage downtown and on designated bicycling and walking routes through the city to lead to destinations and connect the on and off-street networks.
- 3.D Explore parking solutions to support a park once strategy and pleasant walking experiences in downtown (i.e., fee-in-lieu, shared parking lot).

Goal #4.

Support safe and efficient circulation through the city from I-70 and along State Highway 6&50.

WHY?

The two major transportation corridors of Fruita, I-70 and State Highway 6&50, currently present challenges to circulation for residents and visitors. For pedestrians and cyclists, crossing I-70 along Highway 340, the only option, is dangerous. North of I-70, it is not straightforward to get from Cherry Street to State Highway 6&50. Access to State Highway 6&50 is difficult from many of its cross-streets and the streetscape is lacking. During the planning process, residents frequently brought up improving State Highway 6&50 and the interstate interchange area as community priorities.

POLICIES

- 4.A Collaborate with CDOT on future planning, including upgrades to the I-70 interchange and possible future interchanges, and State Highway 6&50 access control.

ACTIONS

- 4.A Explore a bicycle/pedestrian overpass over I-70, either near Highway 340 and/or near the high school.
- 4.B Enhance vehicular circulation near the interchange for those accessing State Highway 6&50.
- 4.C Enhance the pedestrian/cyclist facilities on the current Highway 340 bridge over the interstate.
- 4.D Create a State Highway 6&50 Corridor Plan that includes how to better interface with the I-70 interchange, streetscape enhancements, and access and intersection improvements.

Goal #5.

Maintain existing transportation infrastructure and services.
Implement new transportation infrastructure, as appropriate.

WHY?

Fruita has both a long list of deferred maintenance and new infrastructure projects on the horizon. In recent years, limited funding has made completing maintenance projects and implementing new projects and plans challenging. The following policies and actions are strategies to allow the City to provide well-maintained and new transportation infrastructure.

**POLICIES**

- 5.A Continue to monitor traffic volumes and add traffic control devices as necessary.
- 5.B Work through deferred maintenance projects to be able to be more proactive with respect to maintenance.
- 5.C Continue to support the Grand Valley Transit dial-a-ride service for seniors in Fruita.
- 5.D Continue to support the Grand Valley Transit Fruita route and look for ways to encourage ridership.

ACTIONS

- 5.A Restructure the Transportation Impact Fee to provide adequate funding for transportation impacts associated with development.
- 5.B Examine the Gateway Plan, Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Study, and Downtown Streetscape Improvements Plan to identify small project phases that can be implemented as funding allows.
- 5.C Update the Land Use Code to encourage new development in areas with fewer road construction demands.
- 5.D Use the PHROST plan to identify and prioritize off-street connectivity routes.
- 5.E Update the Land Use Code to require Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations at larger commercial businesses.



Roundabouts, like the one at Circle Park, help improve traffic flow.

Chapter 7

Services and Infrastructure



Introduction

This chapter includes a vision as well as goals and policies to address services and infrastructure within and surrounding Fruita. The ideas contained within this chapter were developed from conversations with relevant departments and service providers, reflections on past and current opportunities and challenges, and public meetings to vet the goals and policies contained within.

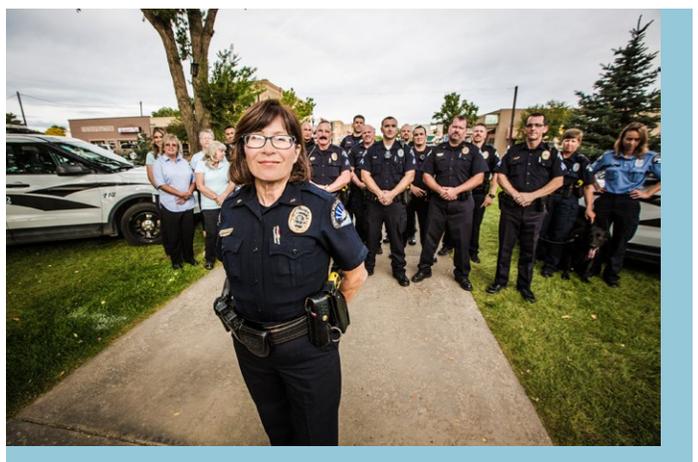
Context and Update

What is different now than ten years ago? What has been accomplished? What has changed? What worked and what didn't?

- A new wastewater treatment plant was constructed on the west side of the city. However, development pressure is greatest on the east side. A new trunk line was completed eastward to serve the Iron Wheel development and other developments along 19 Road.
- City departments collaborate well with each other and regional partners (CPW, Lower Valley Fire District, BLM, etc.).
- Current impact fees are higher for residential development than commercial; however, this has not spurred significant commercial development.
- The Public Works department upgraded electrical wiring downtown to limit the need for generators during events.
- The Lower Valley Fire District works closely with the City and is hoping to achieve a Class 3 ISO rating.
- Maintaining the mountain water system is becoming increasingly expensive for Public Works.
- After the 2008 recession, the Public Works department had a constrained budget and used reserves to fund the projects with a lot of momentum.
- Fruita is considered a very safe community which is why many people choose to live here.

Community Process and Analysis

The planning team met with the Public Works Department, Mesa County, Lower Valley Fire District, and the Fruita Police Department to discuss infrastructure and service needs in the area. An audit of the 2008 Community Plan was completed to bring relevant goals and policies forward into this plan while leaving irrelevant or completed goals out.



VISION

Fruita provides efficient and effective public services to its residents and businesses. Service providers and agencies both within the city and beyond its borders collaborate towards regional goals. Infrastructure is planned in accordance with the city's land use and transportation goals and policies.

Goal #1.

Provide services efficiently to residents through collaborations with local entities and regional partnerships (Grand Valley Irrigation Company, Lower Valley Fire District, Ute Water Conservancy District, Mesa County etc.),

WHY?

The community values that Fruita provides quality services efficiently to its residents and businesses. However, the City is not responsible for many of these key services (i.e., water, fire protection, etc.) and must work with the local entities and other regional partners that provide those services.

POLICIES

- 1.A Continue to seek ways to capitalize on the mountain water system and have it pay for its maintenance. Consider fee-based recreation or irrigation options.
- 1.B Maintain the irrigation distribution system and expand where appropriate in collaboration with the Grand Valley Irrigation Company.
- 1.C Encourage the connection of neighborhoods to centralized water and wastewater providers. Do not encourage separate metro districts that provide their own services.

1.D Maintain long-term infrastructure expansion plans, which will indicate where growth can be most efficiently accommodated and what the associated costs are.

1.E Participate in conversations with regional partners (water district, fire district) to advocate for Fruita's needs and to collaborate on regional issues and solutions.

Goal #2.

Require new developments to support the provision of infrastructure and services in an efficient and sustainable manner.

WHY?

The primary goals of this plan are to promote efficient development and infill in order to keep Fruita from sprawling, especially eastward towards Grand Junction. Providing services to new homes and businesses in existing neighborhoods and to nearby new neighborhoods is much less expensive for the community than providing services to lower density sprawling neighborhoods.

POLICIES

- 2.A Encourage developers and landowners to landscape with low-water plants and to develop sustainable, energy-efficient buildings.
- 2.B Ensure development impact fees are adequate to support the community's need for upgraded infrastructure.



- 2.C Do not provide infrastructure to development beyond the UGB. Collaborate with Mesa County to keep development beyond the UGB at a low density that will not need urban-level services.
- 2.D New developments within the UGB should demonstrate the provision of adequate infrastructure during the subdivision and site plan review process.
- 2.E Ensure that new development pays its own way and does not burden the existing community with additional capital or operating costs. Ensure that new annexations at the city's edge share appropriately in the costs of connecting all utility, park, drainage, pedestrian, and road systems.
- 2.F Consider shouldering more of the infrastructure cost of inholding annexations that are proposed to be developed at the appropriate density as recommended by the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) as a way to encourage infill.
- 2.G Avoid "leapfrog" developments that leave discontinuous street and utility systems. Consider annexation proposals on the basis of the logical and cost-effective extension of utilities, pedestrian connections, parks, drainage, and road systems. Also consider the fiscal burden of the annexation in terms of major capital investments that would be needed by the City (wastewater, roads).

Goal #3.

Keep existing infrastructure well-maintained by prioritizing maintenance projects over new infrastructure.

WHY?

Fruita has both a long list of deferred maintenance and new infrastructure projects on the horizon. In recent years, limited funding has made completing maintenance projects and implementing new projects and plans challenging. The following policies and actions are strategies to allow the City to continue to provide well-maintained infrastructure, with new infrastructure added as appropriate.

POLICIES

- 3.A In all city department planning, fund maintenance in the short, medium, and long term on an equal footing with budgeting for new projects.

Chapter 8
**Education, Arts, and
Historic Preservation**



Introduction

This chapter includes a vision as well as goals and policies to address education, the arts, and cultural resources within the City of Fruita. The ideas contained within this chapter were developed from conversations with various stakeholders in the community, reflections on past and current opportunities and challenges, and public meetings to vet the goals and policies contained within.



Context and Update

What is different now than ten years ago? What has been accomplished?

- Pabor Days and the Fruita History Fair are an annual celebration, begun in 2013, to inform residents and visitors about the city's past.
- The Historic Preservation Board has inventoried many of the historic buildings around Fruita.
- Funding is a barrier to the preservation and/or restoration of many of Fruita's historic buildings.
- The Arts and Culture Board was founded in 2008 to create and enhance art and culture in Fruita. The board began as an advisory board but has become a working board in order to raise funds for the arts in Fruita. The board primarily raises funds through the annual Arts Stroll.
- The Arts & Culture Board works to bring the arts, in all forms, to the residents and visitors of Fruita and support the local arts community. The board is leading initiatives around murals, art education scholarships, and adding artwork at the Community Center and other local buildings.
- The City has installed public art on Aspen Avenue in conjunction with other streetscape improvements and as funds become available.
- The grain elevator was painted in 2016 to serve as a gateway into Fruita.
- The new Community Center has become a space for after school enrichment and senior programs.
- Arts education programs in Fruita are relatively limited but expanding. The City is starting to offer programs and there may be opportunities to expand school students' participation in the city arts offerings.
- There are limited public venues for the performing arts in Fruita.
- The schools in Fruita are highly regarded but also overcrowded. Fruita's schools serve students from the city and the surrounding communities.
- An increasing number of Fruita school students are on free or reduced lunch.
- The school district is building a new elementary school in Fruita near the intersection of K.4 Road and 18.5 Road.
- The Mesa County Regional Transportation Office and City of Fruita conducted a "Safe Routes to Schools" audit of Fruita Middle School, Shelledy Elementary, and Rim Rock Elementary in 2016. The audits identified walking routes and students' frequent mode of transit to school, surveyed parents, and suggested solutions. The audits found that a high percentage of students ride to school in a family vehicle typically due to distance and traffic along the route.
- The Fruita Youth Action Council was formed to provide youth input on community issues and programming, support area schools, and promote activities, programs, and events among youth. The council also advises on the Fruita Youth Initiative, a new community effort to decrease youth substance use and promote mental health awareness.

Community Process and Analysis

Representatives of the Arts and Culture Board, Historic Preservation Board, and the education community were actively involved in the planning process. Each group reviewed the 2008 Community Plan, described what has changed, and provided current priorities and funding needs.

VISION

Historic preservation, the arts, and educational opportunities enrich the lives of Fruita residents of all ages and preserve what makes Fruita special: its landscape, family-friendly community, artistic talent, and heritage.





Goal #1.

Keep Fruita’s history alive through the preservation of historic structures and education to teach residents and visitors about the area’s past. Identify new funding sources towards historic preservation and education.

WHY?

Honoring the past is in Fruita’s motto. The city has many historic structures and a rich history to share with residents and visitors. These policies and actions are intended to help preserve and restore historic buildings and support educational opportunities related to Fruita’s history.

POLICIES

- 1.A Ensure that the updated design standards in the Land Use Code support architecture and development that would be compatible with Fruita’s historic structures and character.
- 1.B Provide incentives for the restoration of historic buildings, through the use of grants and other funding sources.
- 1.C Prioritize and provide funds for historic restorations that positively contribute to Fruita’s character such as Circle Park or the downtown core.
- 1.D Promote and educate visitors about Fruita’s history and historic resources. This includes events, interpretive signage and walking tours, and supporting new and existing museums.

ACTIONS

- 1.A Explore the creation of a historic district to allow for board review of restorations of Fruita’s historic buildings and projects adjacent to historic sites in order to maintain the character.
- 1.B Explore additional funding sources to facilitate restoration projects and incentivize re-use over teardowns, such as a lodging tax.
- 1.C Utilize the Historic Preservation Board to inventory downtown historic buildings. Explore grant opportunities to conduct a full assessment of downtown structures.
- 1.D Develop a cultural/historic tourism brochure and webpage that promotes cultural and historic tourism in the area.
- 1.E Nominate properties for the local, state, or national historic register.
- 1.F Partner with public and private organizations that could assist in identifying and preserving Fruita’s historic structures. Potential organizations include Colorado Historical Society, Colorado Historical Foundation, Colorado Preservation, inc., Colorado Archaeological Society, and the Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists.

Goal #2.

Celebrate the artistic talent and heritage of the community through public art, performances, educational programming, and festivals.

WHY?

Fruita has a talented local arts community and a rich cultural heritage to share with residents and visitors. The following policies and actions seek to provide greater financial support, to enhance the visibility and accessibility of the arts, and to engage residents in arts programming.

POLICIES

- 2.A Include public art funding in streetscape and new facility projects.
- 2.B Engage the Arts and Culture Board to work on public art installations and future maintenance.
- 2.C Display art and support artists whose work celebrates the community identity, scenery, and city heritage (i.e., dinosaurs, agriculture, recreation).
- 2.D Work with the school district to support arts education in schools and explore opportunities to include students in art programming and installations around the city.
- 2.E Work with the Parks and Recreation department on arts programming for residents of all ages.
- 2.F Work to expand fundraising for the arts in Fruita through grant applications, arts and culture board fundraisers, foundations, and a dedicated funding source.
- 2.G Provide incentives and encourage collaboration among businesses and private organizations to use existing facilities for events and educational programming.

ACTIONS

- 2.A Add public art across the city, including extending art south of the interstate. Key focus areas include the State Highway 340 roundabout, Welcome Center, the Dinosaur Journey Museum, and the multi-use bike paths.
- 2.B Explore opportunities to better integrate local art into existing festivals and for new arts-related festivals and fundraisers.
- 2.C Explore the feasibility of a dedicated community space for visual and performing arts with spaces for classes, studios, display, and indoor events.
- 2.D Inventory and publicize the public art and art events around the city online and through brochures.
- 2.E Explore a requirement in the Land Use Code for public art in larger commercial and residential developments.
- 2.F Explore obtaining Colorado Creative District Certification from Colorado Creative Industries (CCI) for an area(s) of Fruita that meets certification guidelines



Goal #3.

Support excellent school education and educational facilities in Fruita that integrate with the community.

WHY?

The schools in Fruita are highly regarded and a reason many people choose to move to Fruita. The City must work with the district to maintain the high quality of education. Given the schools' desirability and potential population growth in the area, new schools may be necessary. These schools should be located carefully and easy to walk and bike to. In addition, school recreation facilities present a key opportunity for the Parks and Recreation department.

POLICIES

- 3.A Encourage the school district to improve the education system by supporting a high level of education programs, staff retention, training, and citizen involvement.
- 3.B Support the school district in improving and expanding Fruita's schools as necessary to keep pace with the growing student population and provide high quality facilities.
- 3.C Work with the school district to select appropriate locations for new schools in Fruita. New schools should be located near residential neighborhoods and with the potential for multimodal connectivity.
- 3.D Provide appropriate bicycle and pedestrian facilities and safety features to support walking and biking to new and existing schools.
- 3.E Work with the school district to develop school recreational facilities that can meet the needs of the Parks and Recreation department and departmental programming.

Goal #4.

Provide educationally enriching opportunities for residents of all ages.

WHY?

The following policies for lifelong learning support high quality of life, community engagement, and economic development for the city. Early childcare opportunities improve long-term educational attainment and encourage greater parental participation in the workforce.

POLICIES

- 4.A Continue to provide educational programming through the senior center.
- 4.B Hold programming to support the health and wellbeing of Fruita's youth through the Youth Initiative and Youth Action Council.
- 4.C Offer educational programming to make Fruita's recreational and cultural resources accessible to residents of all ages (i.e., learn to mountain bike, archaeological programs).
- 4.D Support ample, affordable early learning and childcare centers for city residents.

Appendix A:
Additional Maps

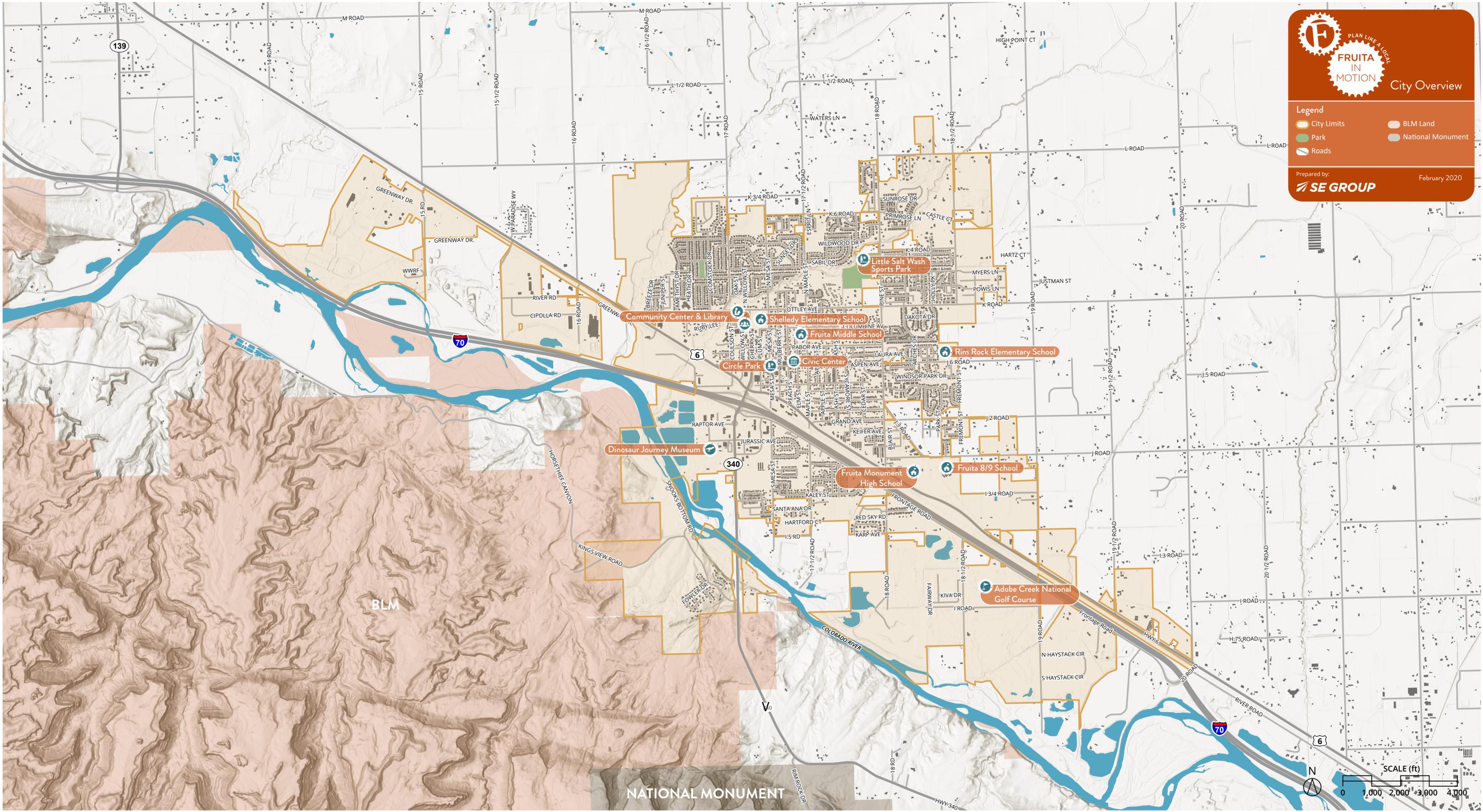


PLAN LIKE A LOCAL
FRUITA IN MOTION
 City Overview

Legend

- City Limits
- Park
- Roads
- BLM Land
- National Monument

Prepared by: **SE GROUP** February 2020

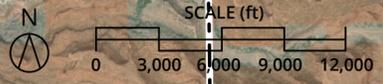


Regional Map

Legend

- City Limits
- Roads
- BLM Land
- National Monument

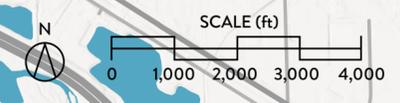
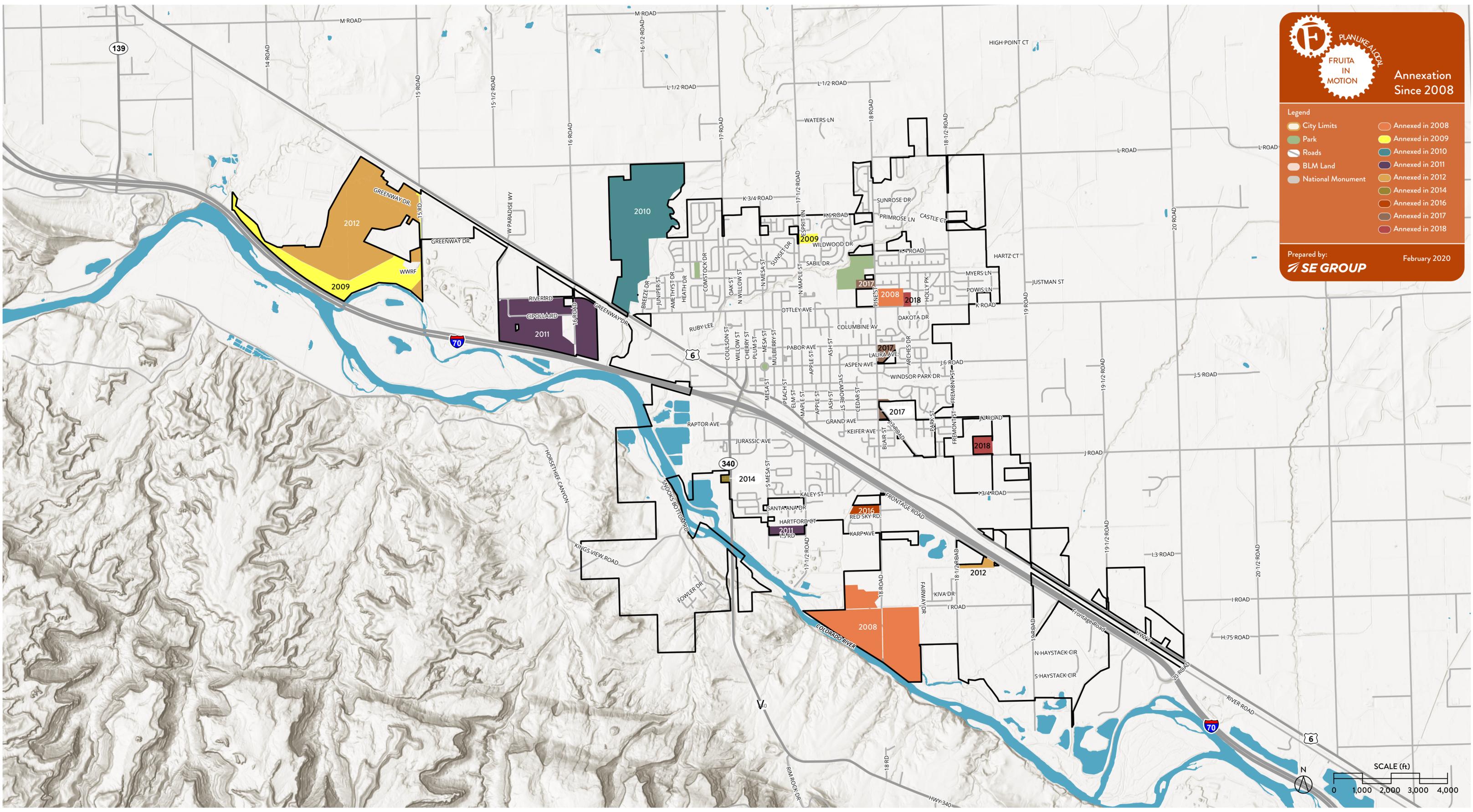
Prepared by: **SE GROUP** February 2020



PLAN LIKE A LOCAL
FRUITA IN MOTION
Annexation Since 2008

- Legend**
- City Limits
 - Annexed in 2008
 - Park
 - Annexed in 2009
 - Roads
 - Annexed in 2010
 - BLM Land
 - Annexed in 2011
 - National Monument
 - Annexed in 2012
 - Annexed in 2014
 - Annexed in 2016
 - Annexed in 2017
 - Annexed in 2018

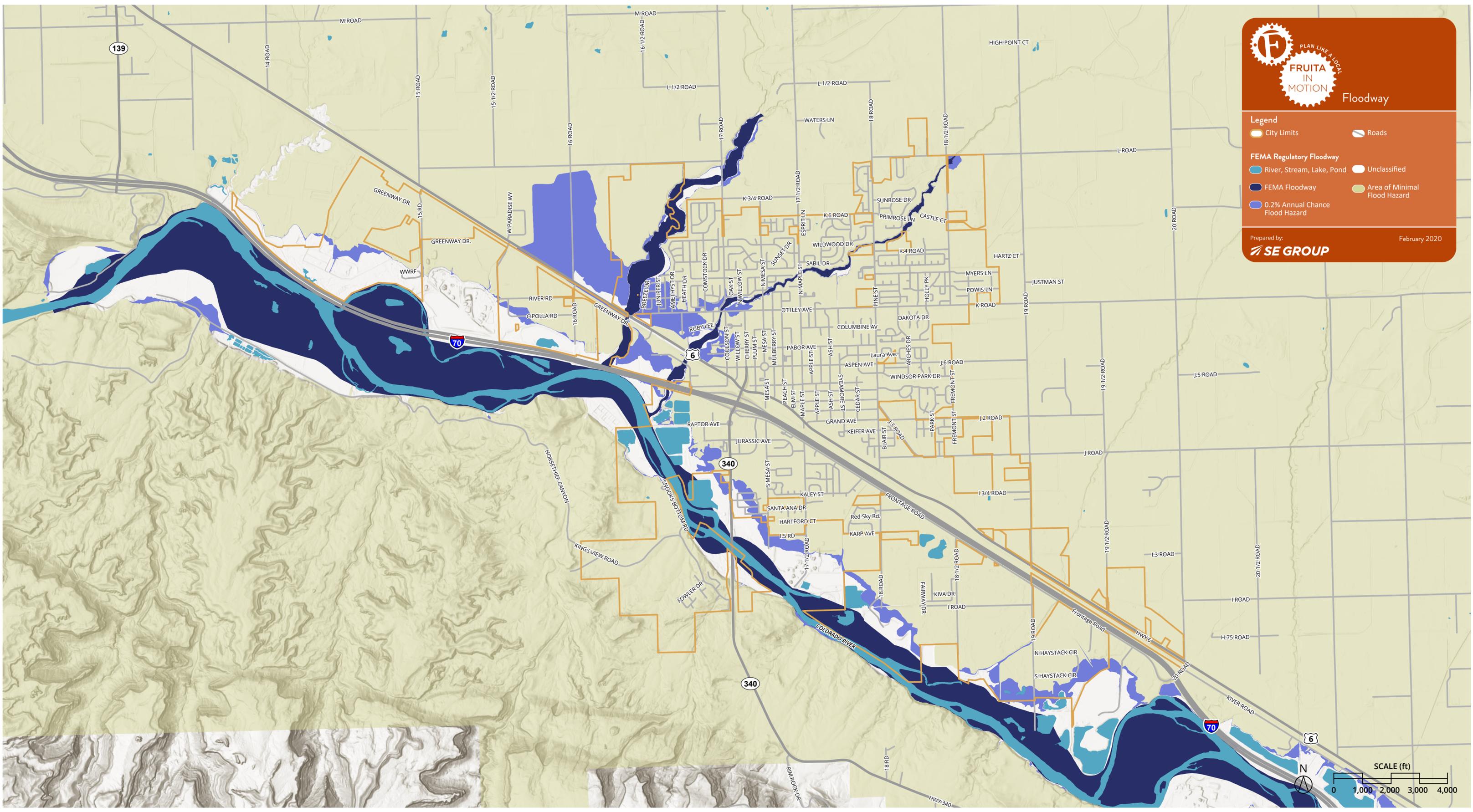
Prepared by: **SE GROUP** February 2020



PLAN LIKE A LOCAL
FRUITA
 IN MOTION
 Floodway

- Legend**
-  City Limits
 -  Roads
 -  River, Stream, Lake, Pond
 -  Unclassified
 -  FEMA Floodway
 -  Area of Minimal Flood Hazard
 -  0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard

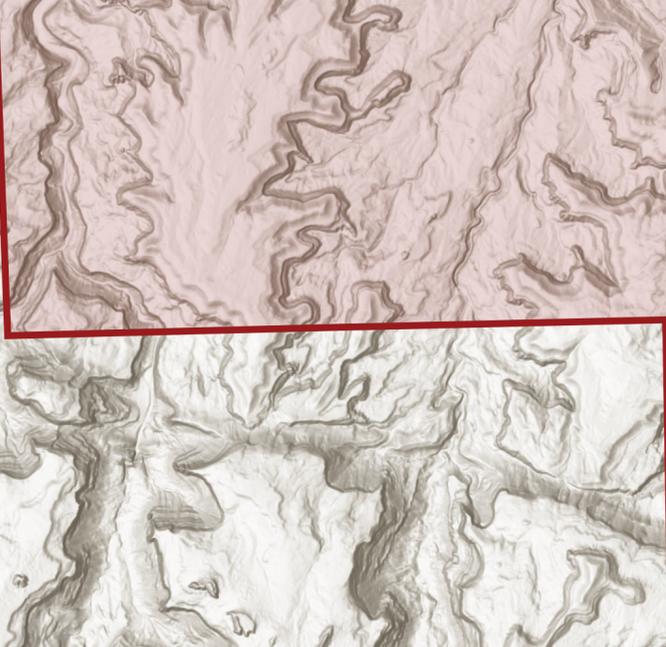
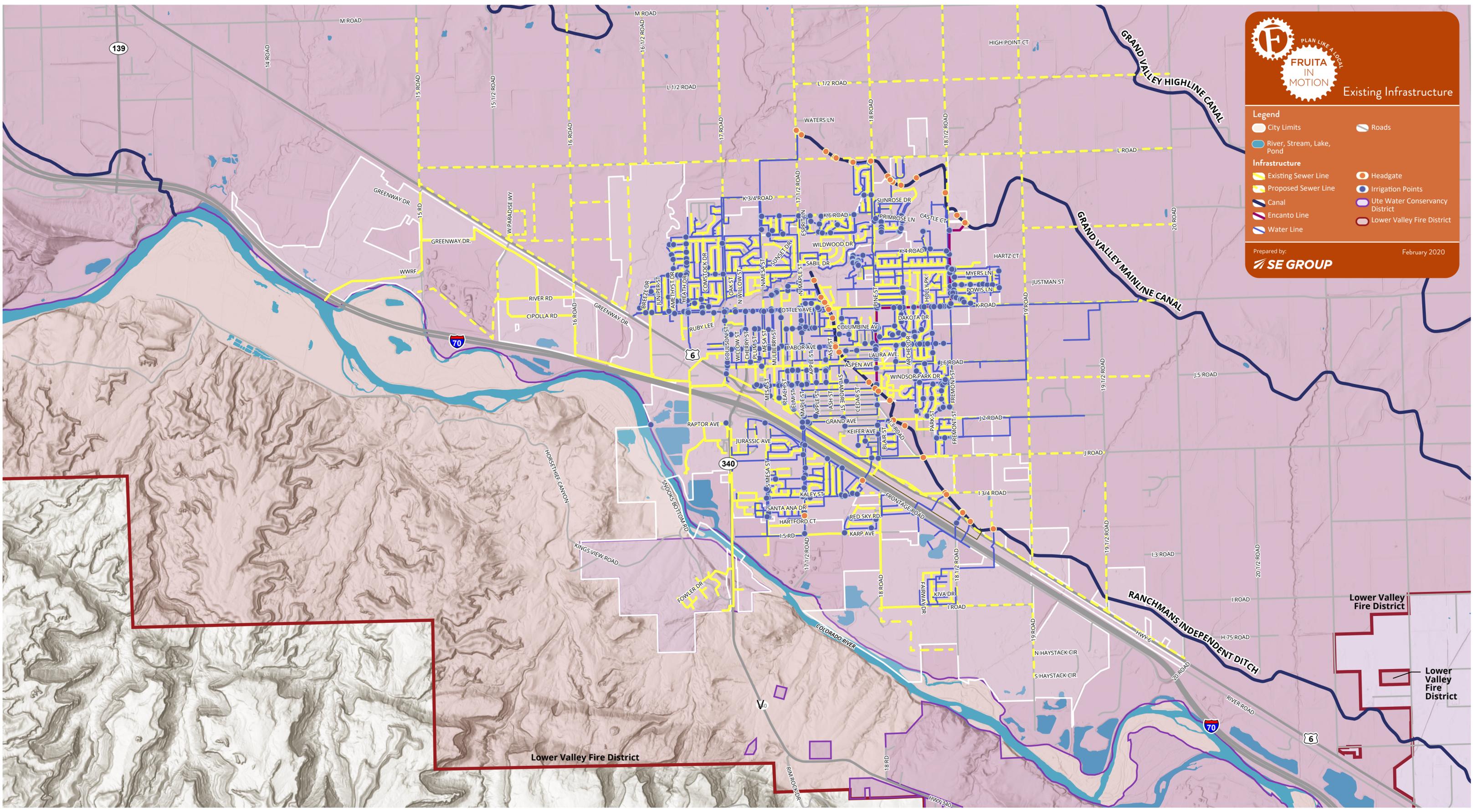
Prepared by:
SE GROUP
 February 2020





- Legend**
- City Limits
 - River, Stream, Lake, Pond
 - Existing Sewer Line
 - Proposed Sewer Line
 - Canal
 - Encanto Line
 - Water Line
 - Roads
 - Headgate
 - Irrigation Points
 - Ute Water Conservancy District
 - Lower Valley Fire District

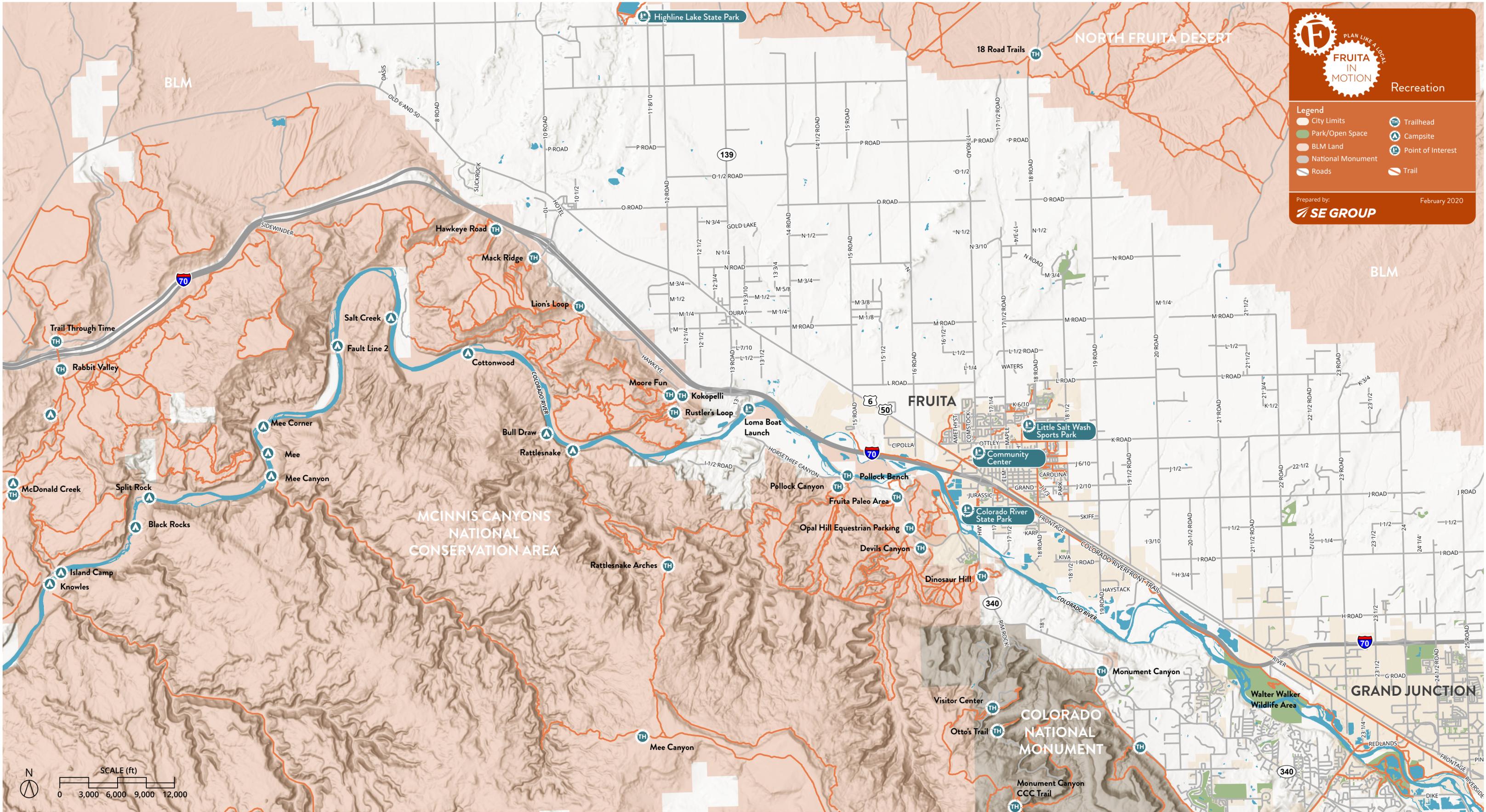
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Lower Valley Fire District

Lower Valley Fire District

Lower Valley Fire District

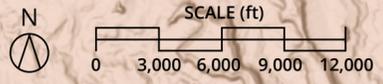


PLAN LIKE A LOCAL
FRUITA IN MOTION
 Recreation

Legend

- City Limits
- Park/Open Space
- BLM Land
- National Monument
- Roads
- Trailhead
- Campsite
- Point of Interest
- Trail

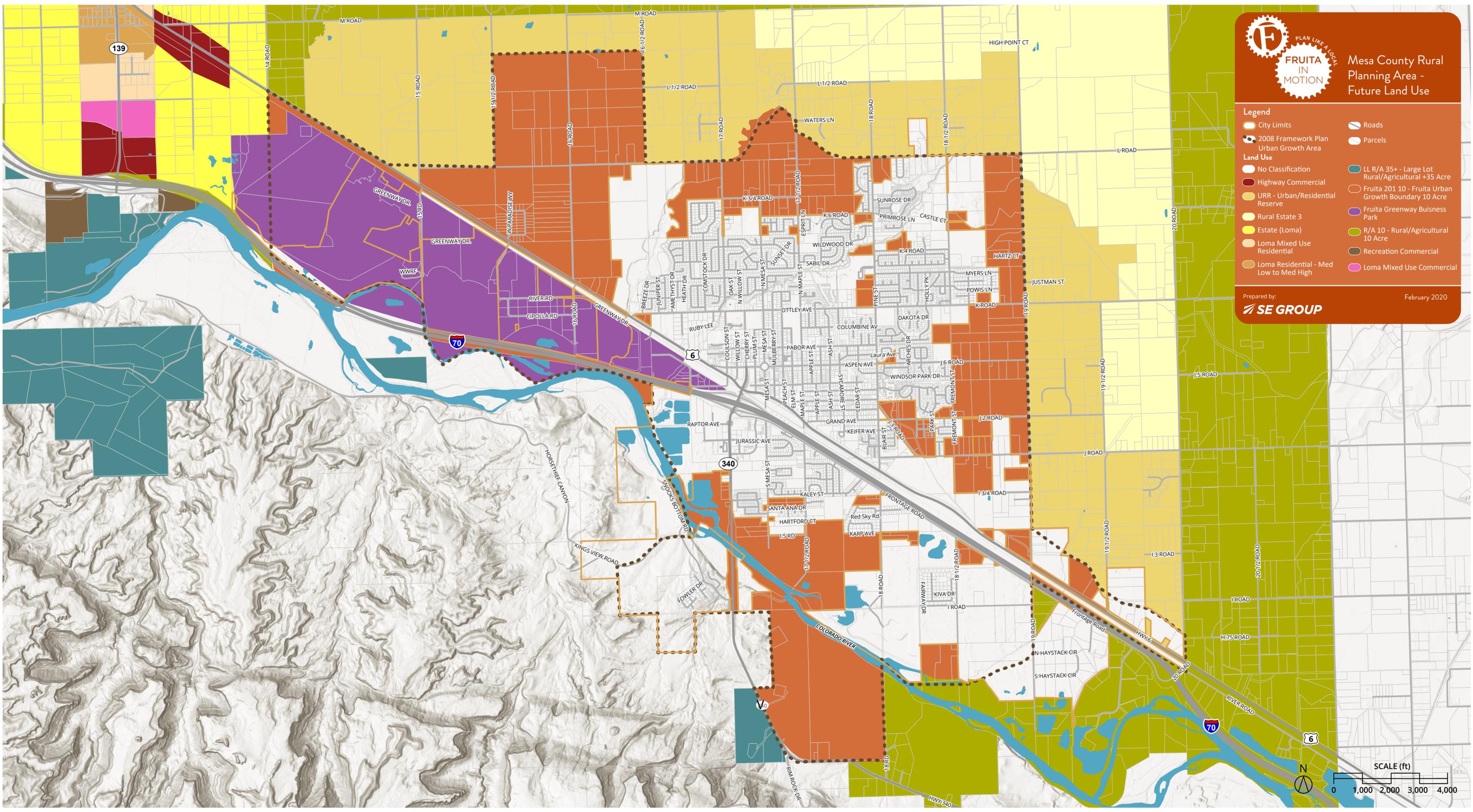
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PLAN LIKE A LOCAL
FRUITA IN MOTION
 Mesa County Rural Planning Area - Future Land Use

- Legend**
- City Limits
 - 2008 Framework Plan Urban Growth Area
 - No Classification
 - Highway Commercial
 - URR - Urban/Residential Reserve
 - Rural Estate 3
 - Estate (Loma)
 - Loma Mixed Use Residential
 - Loma Residential - Med Low to Med High
 - LL R/A 35+ - Large Lot Rural/Agricultural +35 Acre
 - Fruita 201 10 - Fruita Urban Growth Boundary 10 Acre
 - Fruita Greenway Business Park
 - R/A 10 - Rural/Agricultural 10 Acre
 - Recreation Commercial
 - Loma Mixed Use Commercial
 - Roads
 - Parcels

Prepared by: **SE GROUP**
 February 2020



Appendix B:
Community Profile



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Report

Fruita in Motion: Community Profile

The Economics of Land Use



Prepared by:
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January 27, 2020

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1. Introduction and Summary

This Report provides an analysis of Fruita and Mesa County economic, demographic, and real estate market data to inform the stakeholders and City staff involved in updating the City's Comprehensive Plan: Fruita in Motion. The Report identifies several trends, both positive and potentially negative for the community that should be considered in the planning process and especially in the development of policies and strategies.

The Report is organized into four chapters including this Introduction:

- **Regional Trends and Context** – Presents trend data on growth trends and patterns in population, housing, and jobs within Mesa County. This section illustrates how the pace and location of growth varies throughout the County compared to Fruita.
- **Fruita Economy** – Presents more detail on Fruita's local economy compared to Mesa County.
- **Fruita Demographics and Housing** – Documents Fruita's housing mix, prices, and presents affordability metrics for renters and owners.

Growth Trends and Patterns

1. Economic and population growth in Mesa County are accelerating, countering a long trend of slow growth.

Mesa County had job growth over 3.0 percent per year in 2018 and 2019 YTD. Mesa County added approximately 7,000 jobs since 2010. Illustrating the acceleration in growth, 4,500 (just under two-thirds) of new jobs were added between 2016 and the second quarter of 2019. Some of this growth is the result of people, businesses, and jobs migrating from Colorado's Front Range to the lower cost business and housing environment offered in Mesa County. Mesa County added nearly 6,500 people since 2010 with 4,700 in Grand Junction, 1,100 in unincorporated areas, and nearly 600 in Fruita.

2. While population and housing growth in Mesa County overall are accelerating, Fruita is growing relatively slowly.

Grand Junction issued an average of 280 new construction building permits annually from 2010 to 2018. In 2018, there were nearly 500 new housing starts. In Unincorporated Mesa County, there were nearly 200 new housing starts annually during this time period and nearly 300 in 2018. In contrast, Fruita has issued an average of 62 new construction building permits per year, with 95 in 2018.

3. Growth in Unincorporated Mesa County around Fruita may have an impact on community identity and character.

A little more than a third of Mesa County's growth is occurring in unincorporated areas such as Clifton, Fruitvale, and Orchard Mesa. Some of this growth is also in the area around Fruita's edges. Fruita's control over land use in this area is limited. Fruita still has a distinct separation from the City of Grand Junction, which contributes to its small town rural feel and identity. As unmanaged unincorporated growth encroaches on Fruita, the community character will change. Strategies are needed to work with Mesa County to better manage growth on the edges of Fruita.

Economy

4. Mesa County's economy is showing signs of sustained recovery and diversification from its historic reliance on energy extraction.

Health care was one of the fastest growing industries, although this reflects a national trend rather than a unique specialty for Mesa County. Manufacturing is currently a notable growth industry. Firms are moving to the area due to real estate supply constraints in Metro Denver and Boulder and the much lower cost of real estate and housing in Mesa County. Mesa County has a diverse mix of manufacturing firms making products ranging from machinery, food and beverages, outdoor recreation equipment, aerospace components, electronics, and textiles. Some of Mesa County's pool of skilled labor in manufacturing and machining comes from the energy industry that has declined in total jobs over the years. This labor force is adaptable to many types of manufacturing.

5. Fruita's mix of jobs reflects both its draw as a recreation destination and its function in the larger Mesa County economy.

Fruita's economy is similar to Mesa County's but with higher concentrations of jobs in tourism and related leisure industries including restaurants, hotels, and retail. This is characteristic of a small town, some suburban communities, and of a recreation gateway community. The majority of Fruita's employed residents work in Grand Junction, at approximately 55 to 60 percent. About 15 percent of Fruita's employed workforce lives and works in Fruita.

Housing

6. Home prices in Fruita are appreciating rapidly, and new construction prices have risen to a level 63 percent higher than the overall average price.

Fruita and the 85121 zip code are on the upper end of Mesa County home prices. The average home price in 85121 was \$327,902 as of November 2019. Data for Fruita City limits was only available through 2018, which shows an average price of \$271,684 in City limits which is 11 percent lower than the average in 85121 of \$303,663 (in 2018). The average price in Grand Junction in 2018 was \$201,031 which is 35 percent lower than Fruita. The quality of life in Fruita, including its schools and small-town feel, are the major factors driving home prices. Home prices are also appreciating throughout Mesa County and the Rocky Mountain region due to other macroeconomic factors such as labor and material costs and an overall shortage of housing.

New construction pricing in Fruita is also rising. New construction values are a strong indicator of the direction of a housing market as it shows the prices a market can support. The average price for single family homes built in 2018 is estimated at \$455,200 which is over 60 percent higher than the average single family resale price of \$279,675 in 2018. In comparison, the average price of single family homes built in 2014 is estimated at \$364,850, an increase of \$90,000. Data for 2019 was not available as of this writing.

7. Housing affordability is a growing issue in Fruita and Mesa County in general.

Affordability issues are greatest among renters, with about half of all renters paying more than 30 percent of their income towards housing costs. This is defined as being cost burdened, wherein a household is paying too much towards housing which takes away money available for other needs such as healthcare, transportation, and healthy food.

The rental supply in Fruita is extremely tight with essentially zero vacancy. The fundamentals of supply and demand allow landlords to charge higher rents. Fruita has not built a significant number of apartments, which creates constrained supply conditions. The percentage of renters in Fruita has increased, even though most housing being built is in the form of single family homes. Some people may be renting single family homes by choice; for others it may be the only option and they would prefer a lower cost choice.

Constraints in the housing market are affecting the workforce supply and retention for local businesses. This is a threat to economic sustainability if left unchecked.

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2. Regional Trends and Context

This Chapter presents data on growth and economic trends in Mesa County to put the City of Fruita in context with the rest of the Grand Valley region. The chapter covers:

- Trends in population and housing growth and residential construction;
- The Mesa County economic base;
- Commuting patterns; and
- Commercial real estate construction trends.

Mesa County Geography

Fruita is located along Interstate 70 and 10 miles west of Grand Junction. Fruita is the second largest incorporated city within Mesa County with a current population of 13,398 residents. Grand Junction is the largest city with a population of over 64,000. Given the proximity and I-70 access, many Fruita residents work in Grand Junction or elsewhere in the Grand Valley. As an amenity, Fruita offers easy access to many outdoor attractions such as the Colorado National Monument, the Book Cliffs, and the Colorado River. Additionally, it is one of the premier mountain biking destinations in the U.S., drawing national and international visitors.

Population Trends

Mesa County reached a population of 153,629 in 2018, which is an increase of over 37,000 residents since 2000 as shown in **Table 1**. Most of this growth occurred prior to 2010 when Mesa County grew by approximately 3,000 residents per year or an average annual rate of 2.4 percent. Households over this time period grew by 1,200 households per year or an average annual rate of 2.4 percent. A household is a group of people, related or unrelated, living in one occupied housing unit. From 2010 to 2018 population growth slowed to an average of 800 new residents per year or an average annual rate of 0.5 percent. Over the same time period, households grew by about 300 households per year or an average annual growth rate of 0.5 percent.

From 2010 through 2018, most of Mesa County's growth—nearly 90 percent—has occurred in Grand Junction and Unincorporated Mesa County. Over 70 percent of the population growth occurred in the Grand Junction, and nearly 20 percent occurred in Unincorporated Mesa County.

Figure 1. Fruita and Grand Junction



Table 1. Population and Households, 2000-2018

Description	2000	2010	2018	2000-2010			2010-2018		
				Total	Ann. #	Ann. %	Total	Ann. #	Ann. %
Population									
Fruita	6,781	12,803	13,398	6,022	602	6.6%	595	74	0.6%
Collbran	589	709	710	120	12	1.9%	1	0	0.0%
De Beque	486	505	502	19	2	0.4%	-3	0	-0.1%
Palisade	2,627	2,748	2,792	121	12	0.5%	44	6	0.2%
Grand Junction	48,130	59,502	64,191	11,372	1,137	2.1%	4,689	586	1.0%
Unincorp. Mesa County	<u>57,642</u>	<u>70,888</u>	<u>72,036</u>	<u>13,246</u>	<u>1,325</u>	<u>2.1%</u>	<u>1,148</u>	<u>144</u>	<u>0.2%</u>
Total Mesa County	116,255	147,155	153,629	30,900	3,090	2.4%	6,474	809	0.5%
Households									
Fruita	2,576	4,779	5,004	2,203	220	6.4%	225	28	0.6%
Collbran	171	189	190	18	2	1.0%	1	0	0.1%
De Beque	161	190	189	29	3	1.7%	-1	0	-0.1%
Palisade	1,062	1,190	1,202	128	13	1.1%	12	2	0.1%
Grand Junction	20,128	24,374	26,141	4,246	425	1.9%	1,767	221	0.9%
Unincorp. Mesa County	<u>21,725</u>	<u>27,225</u>	<u>27,661</u>	<u>5,500</u>	<u>550</u>	<u>2.3%</u>	<u>436</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>0.2%</u>
Total Mesa County	45,823	57,947	60,387	12,124	1,212	2.4%	2,440	305	0.5%

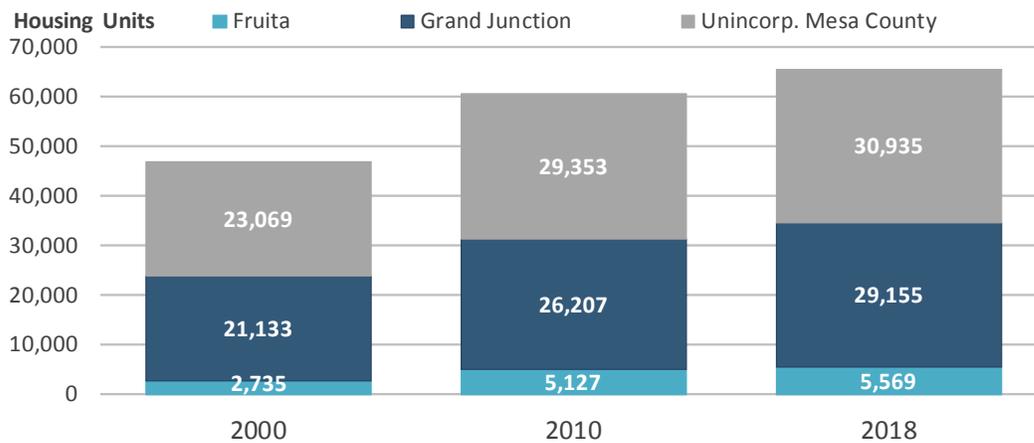
Source: DOLA; ESRI; Economic & Planning Systems

Fruita makes up 8.7 percent of the County's total population and had a population of 13,398 in 2018. Similar to the County as a whole, much of this growth occurred from 2000 to 2010, with an average of 600 new residents per year or an average annual growth rate of 6.6 percent. Households over this time grew by about 200 households per year or an average annual growth rate of 6.4 percent. From 2010 to 2018 Fruita's growth slowed to 74 residents per year or an average annual growth rate of 0.6 percent and the household growth rate fell to only 28 new households per year or an average annual growth rate of 0.6 percent. In recent years, Fruita has grown more slowly despite an increase in growth in the surrounding region. Currently, most of the growth in Mesa County is occurring in Grand Junction and in Unincorporated Mesa County.

Housing Growth Trends

This section presents data on regional housing growth trends. Chapter 4 provides more detail on Fruita’s housing market and housing characteristics. As with population and households, there was a large amount of growth in housing units from 2000 to 2010 in each jurisdiction. During this time Fruita gained approximately 2,392 housing units, to have just over 5,000 housing units in 2010, as shown in **Figure 2**. Since 2010, the construction of new units has slowed.

Figure 2. Housing Unit Trend, 2010-2018



Source: DOLA; ESRI; Economic & Planning Systems

From 2010 to 2018 Fruita had a total of 557 residential building permits issued or an average of 62 residential building permits per year, as shown in **Table 2**. In comparison, Grand Junction issued a total of 2,533 permits over this time period or an average of 281 permits per year. Unincorporated Mesa County issued 1,705 total permits or an average of 189 permits per year. Grand Junction and Unincorporated Mesa County are the fastest growing areas within Mesa County for residential development. Overall in Mesa County, most residential development consists of single family detached units, followed by manufactured homes.

The “market share” of new housing construction in each community from 2010 to 2018 was as follows:

- Fruita accounted for 11 percent of new housing construction in Mesa County;
- Grand Junction had 52 percent;
- Unincorporated Mesa County was 35 percent; and
- Palisade, Debeque, and Collbran made up the remaining 2 percent of new housing construction in the County.

Table 2. Residential Building Permit Trends, 2010-2018

Description	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2010-2018	
										Total	Avg.
Fruita											
Single Family	74	47	60	69	54	34	61	47	92	538	60
Single Family Attached	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multifamily (3+ units)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manufactured Home	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	75	50	63	70	55	37	64	48	95	557	62
Grand Junction											
Single Family	169	112	178	225	228	247	296	465	478	2,398	266
Single Family Attached	6	3	1	1	1	0	4	7	3	26	3
Multifamily (3+ units)	4	6	9	0	4	1	2	3	0	29	3
Manufactured Home	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>9</u>
Total	188	127	197	234	243	253	314	482	495	2,533	281
Palisade											
Single Family	8	17	10	4	3	3	0	10	3	58	6
Single Family Attached	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multifamily (3+ units)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manufactured Home	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	8	18	12	4	5	3	2	10	4	66	7
Unincorp. Mesa County											
Single Family	97	108	140	145	167	161	122	144	226	1,310	146
Single Family Attached	0	0	7	0	5	0	2	1	1	16	2
Multifamily (3+ units)	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
Manufactured Home	<u>51</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>377</u>	<u>42</u>
Total	148	148	196	194	215	190	158	184	272	1,705	189
Mesa County Total											
Single Family	348	284	388	443	452	447	480	667	802	4,311	479
Single Family Attached	6	3	8	1	6	0	6	8	4	42	5
Multifamily (3+ units)	4	6	9	0	6	1	2	3	0	31	3
Manufactured Home	<u>61</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>485</u>	<u>54</u>
Grand Total	419	344	468	502	518	485	539	725	869	4,869	541

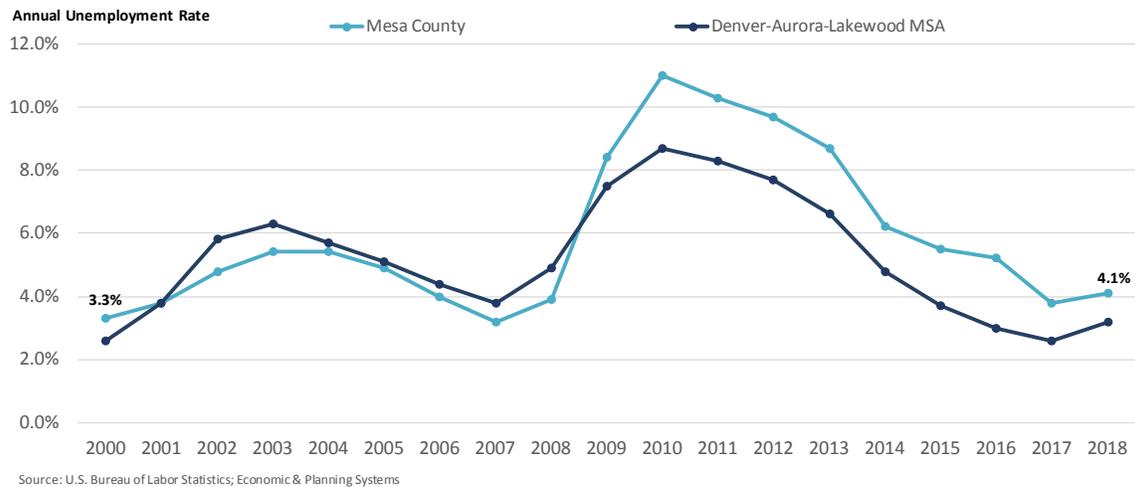
Source: Mesa County; Economic & Planning Systems

Mesa County Economy

Unemployment Rate

Mesa County has made a strong recovery from the Great Recession when unemployment peaked at 11 percent. It has since dropped to 4.1 percent, as shown in **Figure 3**. Mesa County followed a trend similar to the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood MSA with the unemployment rate rising during the recession. The unemployment rate in Mesa County has typically been higher than the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood MSA, but the gap may potentially be narrowing as Mesa County’s economy continues to diversify.

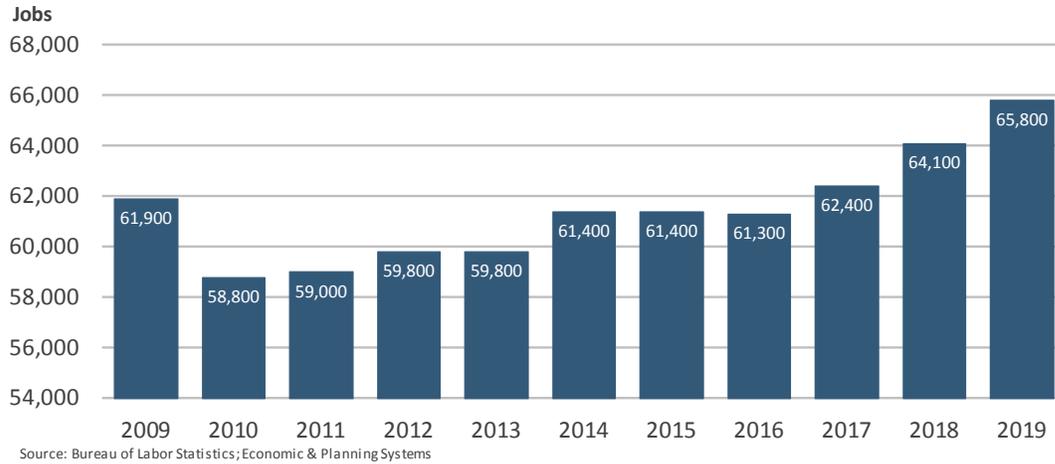
Figure 3. Annual Unemployment Rate Trend, 2000-2018



Employment

Total employment in Mesa County from 2009 to 2019 Q2 (April, May, and June) is shown in **Figure 4**. Since 2010, employment has grown to reach a total of 66,000 jobs in the second quarter of 2019. Mesa County added approximately 7,000 jobs since 2010. Illustrating the acceleration in growth, 4,500 (just under two-thirds) of new jobs were added between 2016 and the second quarter of 2019.

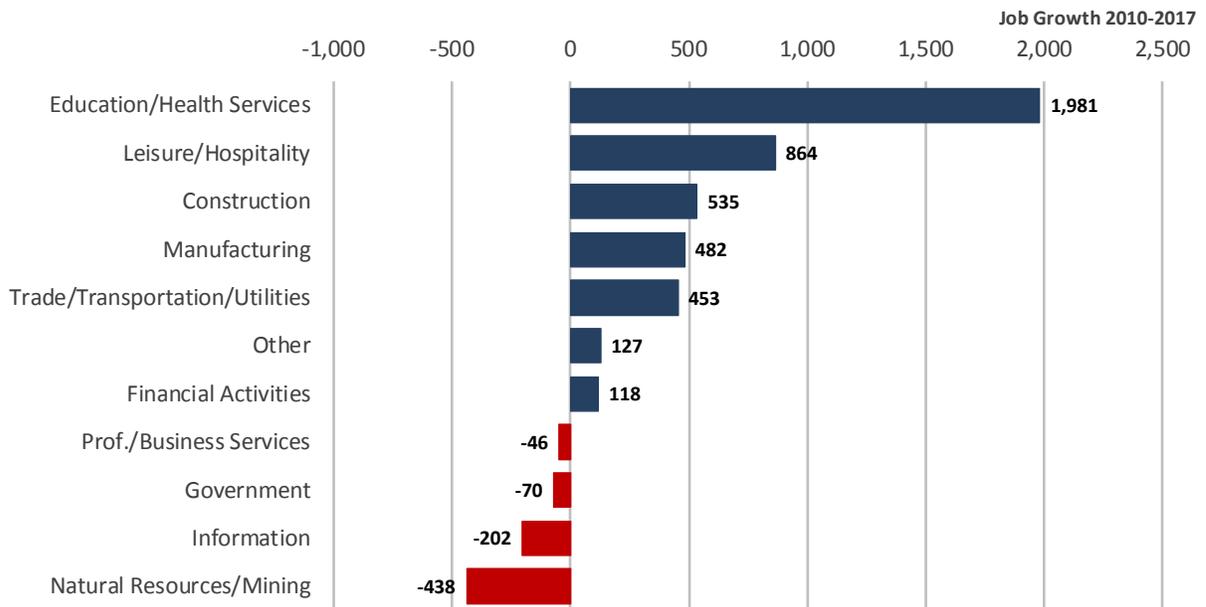
Figure 4. Mesa County Total Employment, 2009-2019Q2



Major Industries

The largest industries in Mesa County are education and health services, which have grown by 2,000 employees since 2010—mostly in the health care segment—as shown in **Figure 5**. During this time, Mesa County has gained about 4,500 jobs, with education and health services providing almost half of those new jobs. Mining (principally oil and gas) historically has been a top industry in the County but has been in decline since 2010, losing about 400 jobs. On the other hand, manufacturing has gained about 500 jobs and is on the rise with outdoor manufacturers and precision manufacturers expanding to and within Mesa County.

Figure 5. Mesa County Employment Growth by Industry, 2010-2017



Source: QCEW; Economic & Planning Systems

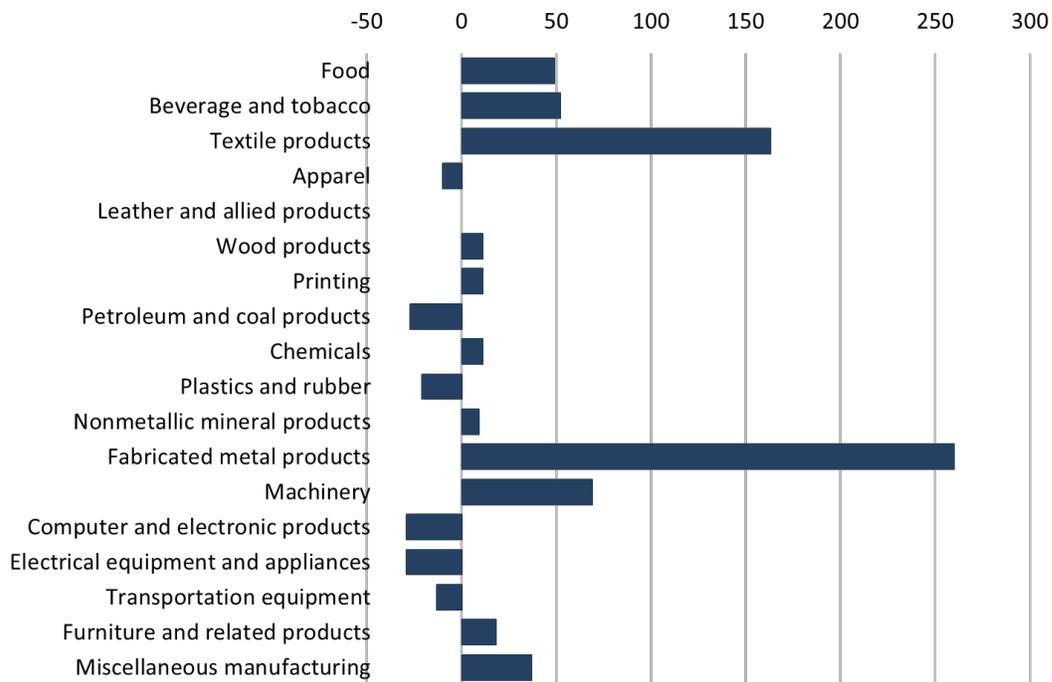
The energy industry supported a workforce highly skilled in machining, mechanical engineering, and other aspects of manufacturing. The presence of this skilled workforce is appealing to manufacturing industries. Some of the new firms that have located in Mesa County have relocated from Metro Denver and Boulder due to space and real estate supply constraints as well as high housing costs there.

Manufacturing in Mesa County covers a range of markets and product types. Notable firms include the following:

- Leitner-Poma – Engineering, manufacturing, and installation of ropeway transportation systems for the ski industry (ski lifts and gondolas), amusement parks, and urban transport (aerial tramways).
- Manufactured housing – Modular housing and commercial structures manufacturing, and assembly from imported components.
- FHE – Based in Fruita, FHE designs and manufactures highly specialized equipment that increases safety in oil and gas and mining drilling operations. FHE is expanding and adding approximately 100 jobs in Fruita.
- Outdoor Equipment – Outdoor recreation products are in the “miscellaneous manufacturing” category. Firms in this category include DT Swiss, a high end bicycle component manufacturer; Rocky Mounts, a vehicle rack manufacturer that relocated from the Boulder, CO area; and Mountain Racing Suspension, another high-end cycling components firm.
- Bonsai Design – Adventure course providers based in Grand Junction. Bonsai develops and manages a wide variety of aerial adventures.
- Wiggy’s – Manufacturer of sleeping bags, boots, and outdoor clothing and outerwear. Wiggy’s corporate office, factory, and a retail store are located in Grand Junction.
- Reynolds Polymer Technology, Inc. – Manufacturing firm specializing in acrylic and polymer material products. The firm provides products for aquarium, architectural, signage, furniture, and scientific industries. Reynolds is an international firm headquartered in Grand Junction.
- Coors Tek Inc. – A manufacturing firm that produces technical ceramics for various industries including aerospace, energy, medical, and agriculture.
- Capco Inc. – A manufacturing firm of energetics, weapons and accessories, and electronics. Capco produces various products for the U.S. military. The Capco Inc. headquarters is located in Grand Junction.
- United Companies – Manufacturing firm that produces sand and rock products, ready-mixed concrete, and hot mixed asphalt. United Companies also offers construction services including grading and paving of highways streets, parking lots, and driveways.
- Western Filament, Inc. – Manufacturing company in Grand Junction that specializes in industrial oriented products using synthetic materials such as polyester, nylon, and ceramic. These products are used in motor manufacturing, automotive, aerospace, medical, and recreational industry markets.

The industry subsectors within the manufacturing industry are shown in **Figure 6** by employment growth in Mesa County. The manufacturing subsector in Mesa County with the largest increase in employees from 2011 to 2018 is fabricated metal products with 260 employees, followed by textile products with 163 employees. Additionally, the machinery subsector has grown by 69 employees. Outdoor equipment firms are typically classified under “miscellaneous manufacturing,” which added about 40 jobs through 2018. This figure does not account for some recent relocations to the Grand Valley such as Rocky Mounts, a sports equipment roof rack manufacturer.

Figure 6. Manufacturing Employment, Mesa County, 2011-2018



Source: BLS; economic & Planning Systems

Largest Employers

Nine of the top 10 employers in Mesa County are public institutions, as shown in **Table 3**. The largest employer is Mesa County Valley School District 51 with over 2,700 employees. St. Mary’s Hospital is the second largest employer with 2,300 employees followed by Mesa County with 1,025 employees. Ten of the major employers are in the health care industry, which corresponds to Health Care being one of the largest industries in Mesa County.

Table 3. Mesa County Major Employers, 2018

#	Employer	Industry	Employees
1	Mesa County Valley School District 51	Education	2,715
2	St. Mary's Hospital	Health Care	2,300
3	Mesa County	Public Admin	1,025
4	State of Colorado	Public Admin	1,012
5	Colorado Mesa University	Education	1,006
6	Community Hospital	Health Care	800
7	VA Medical Center - Grand Junction	Health Care	720
8	Star Tek Inc.	Prof. & Tech Services	700
9	City of Grand Junction	Public Admin	629
10	Hilltop Community Resources	Health Care	600
11	West Star Aviation	Prof. & Tech Services	413
12	Rocky Mountain Health Plans	Health Care	370
13	HopeWest	Health Care	350
14	STRiVE	Health Care	350
15	Primary Care Partners	Health Care	304
16	Mind Springs Health	Health Care	272
17	Capco Inc.	Manufacturing	254
18	United Companies	Manufacturing	232
19	Navarro	Prof. & Tech Services	186
20	Coors Tek Inc.	Manufacturing	150
21	The Daily Sentinel	Information	146
22	Union Pacific Railroad	Transport./Warehousing	136
23	Reynolds Polymer Technology	Manufacturing	130
24	Mantey Heights Rehab & Care	Health Care	130

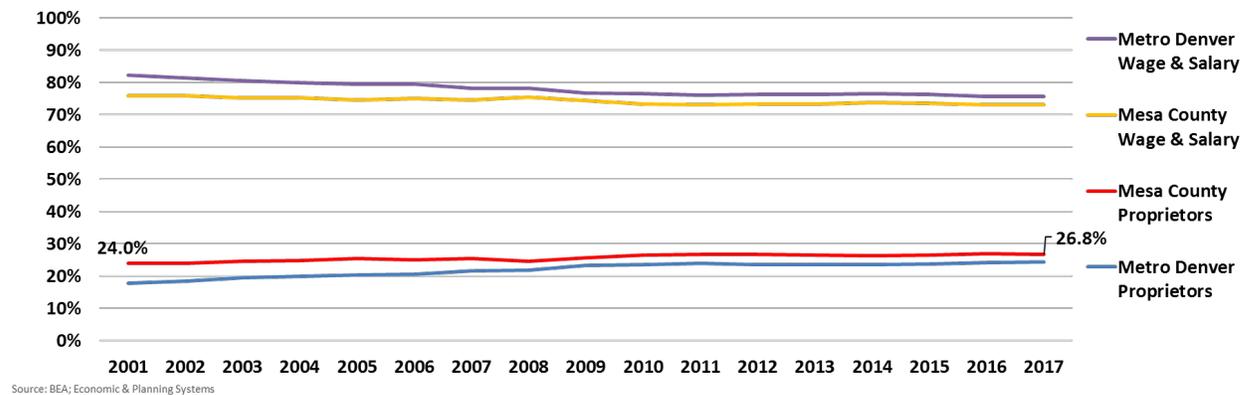
Excludes Hotel/Restaurant related businesses

Source: Grand Junction Economic Partnership; Economic & Planning Systems

Proprietors Employment

Total employment consists of wage and salary employment and proprietor employment (self-employed). In Mesa County, proprietor employment is about one-quarter of total employment. From 2001 to 2017, proprietor employment has steadily increased from 24 percent to 27 percent of total employment, as shown in **Figure 7**. Proprietors are a significant amount of the overall economy in Mesa County. Proprietors work mainly in construction (13 percent), retail (10 percent), real estate (15 percent), and professional and business services (20 percent). The proportion of proprietors in Mesa County is similar to that of Metro Denver, and has followed the same trend of proprietors making up a larger share of employment. Part of this is due to the nature of the “gig economy” in which many workers piece together multiple jobs or “gigs” to make ends meet. Also, the growth in reliance on independent contractor labor rather than salaried employees contributes to this trend.

Figure 7. Proprietors Employment, 2001-2017

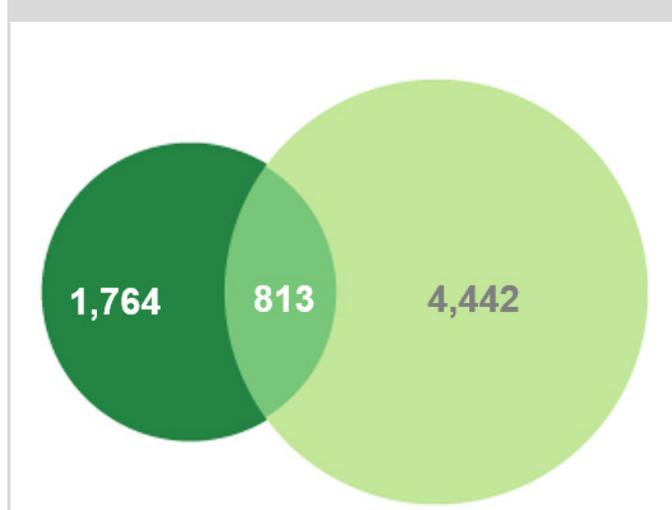


Commuting Patterns

The Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program is part of the Center for Economic Studies at the U.S. Census Bureau. States agree to share Unemployment Insurance earnings data, and the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) data with the Census Bureau. LEHD uses this data to create statistics on employment, earnings, and job flows at detailed geography. This allows for LEHD to create data on workers’ residential patterns. The job flows in relation to a worker’s residents are the in and out commuting patterns described below for Fruita’s residents and workers.

Fruita has about 1,764 people who commute into Fruita for work, as shown in **Figure 8**. There are about 800 people who live and work in Fruita. Approximately 4,442 people commute out of Fruita for work.

Figure 8. Fruita Inflow and Outflow of Jobs, 2015



The majority of employed Fruita residents work in Grand Junction—between 55 to 60 percent in 2015, the latest data available. About 15 percent of Fruita’s employed workforce lives and works in Fruita, as shown in **Table 4**. Since 2002, there have been minor changes in these commuting patterns, likely due to other employment growth in Mesa County outside of Grand Junction. An interesting figure is the increase in workers whose paycheck is associated with a Metro Denver-based firm. These workers could be working remotely out of their home or working for a firm based in Metro Denver with an office in Mesa County.

Table 4. Fruita Residents Place of Work, 2002-2015

Place of Work	2002		2015	
	Amount	% Total	Amount	% Total
Grand Junction	1,773	61.6%	2,969	56.5%
Fruita	489	17.0%	813	15.5%
Denver	44	1.5%	171	3.3%
Other	<u>570</u>	<u>19.8%</u>	<u>1,302</u>	<u>24.8%</u>
Total	2,876	100.0%	5,255	100.0%

Source: LEHD; Economic & Planning Systems

For businesses located in Fruita, approximately 30 percent of their workers also live in Fruita. The other 70 percent of workers commute from other areas. About 20 percent of Fruita's workforce lives in Grand Junction, as shown in **Table 5**. The remaining 50 percent, approximately, come from other areas of Mesa County and some from outside Mesa County. The data does not provide sufficient detail beyond the primary sources of commuting.

Table 5. Fruita Workers Place of Residence, 2002-2015

Place of Residence	2002		2015	
	Amount	% Total	Amount	% Total
Fruita	489	36.3%	813	31.5%
Grand Junction	268	19.9%	525	20.4%
Clifton	104	7.7%	146	5.7%
Redlands	54	4.0%	84	3.3%
Fruitvale	23	1.7%	52	2.0%
Other	<u>410</u>	<u>30.4%</u>	<u>957</u>	<u>37.1%</u>
Total	1,348	100.0%	2,577	100.0%

Source: LEHD; Economic & Planning Systems

Commercial Real Estate

Fruita has about 4 percent of the commercial real estate market in Mesa County with approximately 747,000 square feet of development. Since 2007, Fruita has gained about 96,000 square feet of commercial development, most of which has been retail development in the Kokopelli commercial area with 41,000 square feet constructed over this time period, as shown in **Table 6**. There has also been 33,000 square feet of new office space built. From 2007 to 2018, office development in Fruita has grown at an average annual growth rate of 5.6 percent and retail development has grown at an average annual growth rate of 1.1 percent. From 2007 to 2010, Fruita gained 22,000 square feet of industrial space.

Grand Junction has about 91 percent of the commercial real estate market in Mesa County with about 17 million square feet of development. Since 2007, Grand Junction has gained about 900,000 square feet of commercial development for an average annual growth rate of 0.5 percent.

Table 6. Commercial Development Inventory, 2007-2018

Inventory (Sq. Ft.)	2007	2010	2018	2007-2018			2018 Market Share
				Total	Ann. #	Ann. %	
Fruita							
Office	39,545	72,349	72,349	32,804	2,982	5.6%	2.3%
Retail	319,635	334,125	360,570	40,935	3,721	1.1%	4.4%
Industrial	<u>292,336</u>	<u>314,336</u>	<u>314,336</u>	<u>22,000</u>	<u>2,000</u>	<u>0.7%</u>	<u>4.5%</u>
Subtotal	651,516	720,810	747,255	95,739	8,704	1.3%	4.1%
Grand Junction							
Office	2,850,678	2,954,387	3,049,125	198,447	18,041	0.6%	96.0%
Retail	6,771,405	6,971,238	7,188,832	417,427	37,948	0.5%	88.1%
Industrial	<u>6,033,992</u>	<u>6,196,807</u>	<u>6,316,436</u>	<u>282,444</u>	<u>25,677</u>	<u>0.4%</u>	<u>91.1%</u>
Subtotal	15,656,075	16,122,432	16,554,393	898,318	81,665	0.5%	90.6%
Mesa County							
Office	2,944,420	3,080,933	3,175,671	231,251	21,023	0.7%	100.0%
Retail	7,686,860	7,910,248	8,163,527	476,667	43,333	0.5%	100.0%
Industrial	<u>6,619,092</u>	<u>6,811,587</u>	<u>6,933,776</u>	<u>314,684</u>	<u>28,608</u>	<u>0.4%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
Total	17,250,372	17,802,768	18,272,974	1,022,602	92,964	0.5%	100.0%

Source: CoStar; Economic & Planning Systems

Grand Junction's dominance in the commercial real estate market is likely to continue. For office and industrial development, it has a larger local labor force and is more central than Fruita to the even larger Grand Valley labor force. Office and industrial developers and firms are often averse to risk and look for proven locations where other firms have located. This results in an agglomeration effect in which business districts form and grow. Fruita however can still be competitive for office and industrial businesses that want to be closely associated with the Fruita brand. The Fruita Business Park has available sites with good interstate access and visibility, and is a good long term strategic asset.

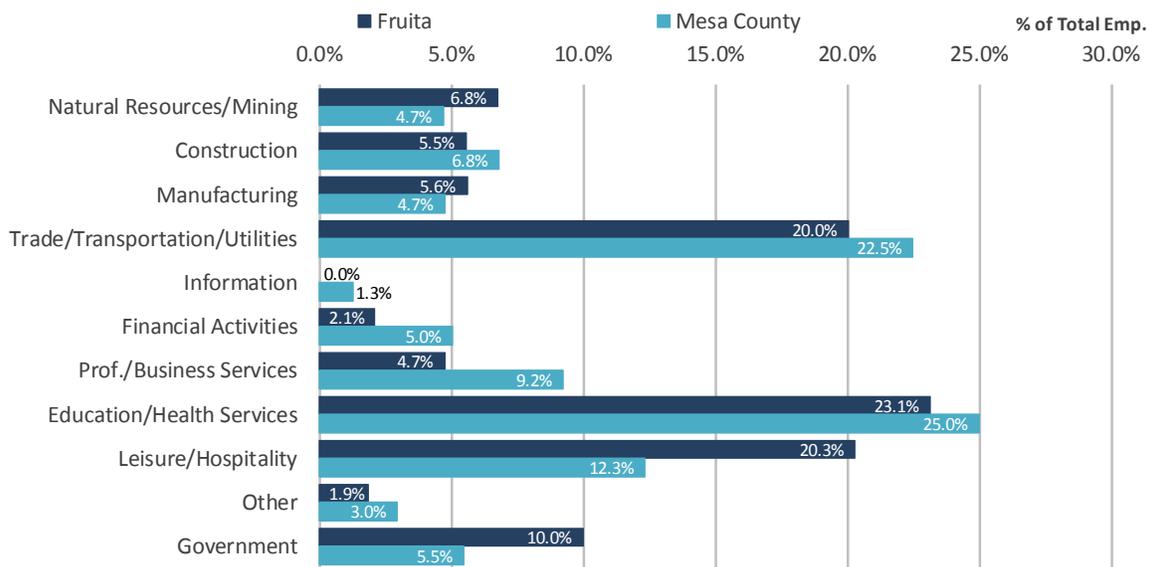
3. Fruita Economy

This Chapter provides more economic information specific to Fruita. The data show that Fruita’s economy largely mirrors the larger Mesa County economy, but with a larger concentration (percentage) of jobs in leisure tourism-related industries such as hotels and restaurants. Fruita’s economy has the characteristics of both a satellite community outside a larger central city and a recreation and tourism destination.

Economic Base

The largest industry in Fruita, like Mesa County, is education and health services which is 23 percent of all jobs in Fruita and 25 percent in Mesa County, as shown in **Figure 9**. The Family Health West hospital is one of the largest employers in the City with approximately 500 jobs. Leisure and hospitality is the second largest industry in Fruita with about 20 percent of all jobs. This is higher than in the County as a whole, where 12 percent of all jobs are in leisure and hospitality. Small and suburban communities tend to have a higher concentration of retail and service jobs than the central city areas that often contain more of the economic base type jobs. Additionally, Fruita has a similar percentage of jobs in government, manufacturing, and natural resources. Fruita has a lower percentage of jobs in professional and business services, financial activities, and information compared to the County.

Figure 9. Wage and Salary Employment by Industry, 2015



Source: LEHD; QCEW; Economic & Planning Systems

The industry mix of active businesses within the City is shown in **Table 7**. In 2018, Fruita approved or renewed 260 business licenses. The trade, transportation, and utilities industry supersector has 55 businesses or 21 percent of all the businesses in Fruita. Additionally, education and health services has 39 businesses or 15 percent of the total and construction has 38 businesses or 14.6 percent.

Table 7. Fruita Business Licenses by Industry, 2018

Industry	Business License	% Total
Natural Resources & Mining		
Ag./Forest/Hunting	1	0.4%
Mining	<u>1</u>	<u>0.4%</u>
Subtotal	2	0.8%
Construction	38	14.6%
Manufacturing	16	6.2%
Trade/Transportation/Utilities		
Utilities	1	0.4%
Wholesale Trade	8	3.1%
Retail Trade	37	14.2%
Transport/Warehousing	<u>9</u>	<u>3.5%</u>
Subtotal	55	21.2%
Information	0	0.0%
Financial Activities		
Finance	3	1.2%
Real Estate	<u>12</u>	<u>4.6%</u>
Subtotal	15	5.8%
Prof./Business Services		
Prof./Tech Services	19	7.3%
Management	2	0.8%
Admin/Waste Management	<u>14</u>	<u>5.4%</u>
Subtotal	35	13.5%
Education/Health Services		
Education	2	0.8%
Health Care	<u>37</u>	<u>14.2%</u>
Subtotal	39	15.0%
Leisure/Hospitality		
Arts/Rec	10	3.8%
Hotel/Restaurant	<u>23</u>	<u>8.8%</u>
Subtotal	33	12.7%
Other	26	10.0%
Public Admin	1	0.4%
Total	260	100.0%

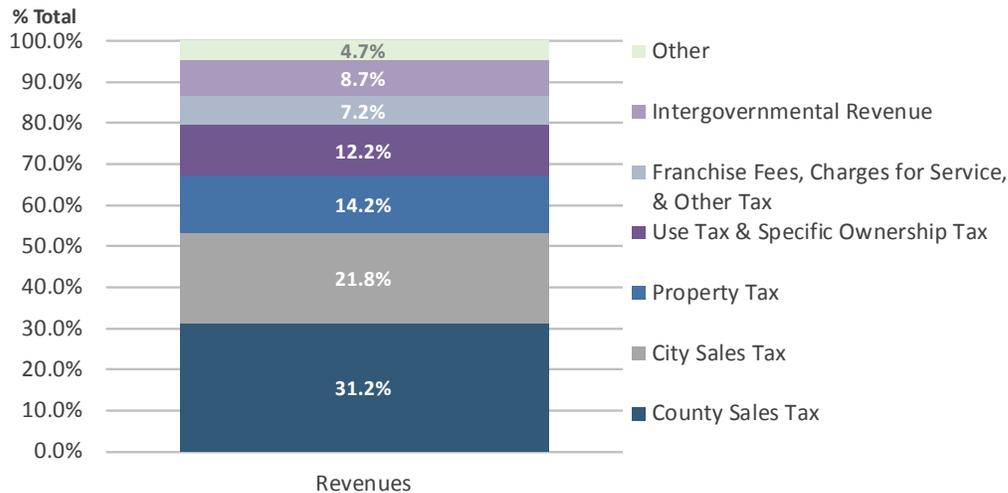
Source: U.S. Census; Economic & Planning Systems

Tax and Revenue Base

As in many Colorado municipalities, most of Fruita’s revenue base is sales tax. In Fruita’s 2019 budget, sales tax represents 53 percent of the total revenues. Fruita charges a 3.0 percent sales tax. The first 2.0 percent goes into the general fund and represents 21.8 percent of the total revenues as shown in **Figure 10**. The remaining 1.0 percent is dedicated to the Community Center Fund (debt service). The General Fund supports general governmental operations including public safety, administration, community development, general government, recreation programs, and maintenance of roads, parks, trails, and public buildings. The City also receives 1/10 of 1.0 percent of the County’s 2.0 percent sales tax, and 4.01 percent of the County’s 0.37 percent public safety sales tax. The County sales tax is 31.2 percent of general fund revenues.

Property tax represents 14 percent of the total revenues, followed by use tax and specific ownership tax at 12 percent. The other sources of revenues include licenses and permits, fines and forfeits, miscellaneous, and transfers.

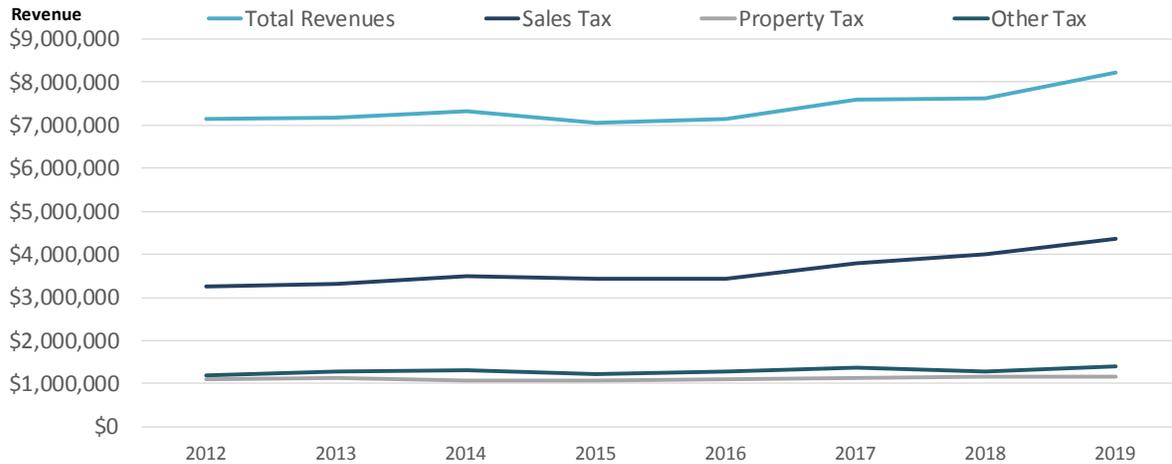
Figure 10. Fruita General Fund Revenues, 2019



Source: City of Fruita 2019 Budget; Economic & Planning Systems

Beginning in 2016, Fruita’s total revenue has steadily increased each year. This increase is largely due to the growth in sales tax, as shown in **Figure 11**. Property tax has been flat since 2012.

Figure 11. Fruita Revenue Trend, 2012-2019



Source: City of Fruita Budget 2015-2019; Economic & Planning Systems

The amount of sales tax revenue Fruita receives from each industry is shown in **Table 8**. In 2018, Fruita received \$2.9 million in sales tax revenue. This is an increase of \$500,000 over the last four years or an average annual growth rate of 5.2 percent. The largest contributing industry is retail trade accounting for 41 percent of sales tax, which increased by \$270,000 from 2014 to 2018. The second largest sales tax contributor is leisure and hospitality, which increased by \$179,000 over this time period.

Table 8. Fruita Sales Tax Revenue by Industry, 2014-2018

Industry	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2014-2018		
						Total	Ann. #	Ann. %
Natural Resources/Mining	\$136,193	\$36,209	\$15,816	\$19,872	\$223,477	\$87,284	\$21,821	13.2%
Construction	\$10,707	\$19,812	\$16,362	\$11,783	\$15,704	4,996	1,249	10.0%
Manufacturing	\$15,124	\$15,835	\$21,518	\$25,572	\$25,208	10,084	2,521	13.6%
Retail Trade	\$901,319	\$915,043	\$977,757	\$1,126,796	\$1,171,871	270,552	67,638	6.8%
Trade/Transportation/Utilities	\$308,120	\$284,165	\$264,904	\$310,214	\$299,623	-8,497	-2,124	-0.7%
Information	\$184,245	\$173,106	\$156,329	\$161,511	\$161,522	-22,723	-5,681	-3.2%
Financial Activities	\$148,390	\$102,207	\$102,886	\$104,148	\$143,195	-5,195	-1,299	-0.9%
Prof./Business Services	\$13,355	\$10,995	\$10,534	\$11,964	\$16,258	2,903	726	5.0%
Education/Health Services	\$7,922	\$9,573	\$11,747	\$11,909	\$12,799	4,877	1,219	12.7%
Leisure/Hospitality	\$578,444	\$588,205	\$645,900	\$703,189	\$757,351	178,906	44,727	7.0%
Other	\$49,281	\$40,024	\$39,984	\$46,845	\$53,240	3,959	990	2.0%
Government	<u>\$438</u>	<u>\$439</u>	<u>\$471</u>	<u>\$610</u>	<u>\$748</u>	<u>310</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>14.3%</u>
Total	\$2,353,538	\$2,195,614	\$2,264,208	\$2,534,413	\$2,880,993	\$527,455	\$131,864	5.2%

Source: City of Fruita; Economic & Planning Systems

4. Fruita Demographics and Housing

This Chapter provides an overview of demographics and housing conditions in Fruita. Most attention is given to housing conditions, which have a large influence on the demographics of community.

Demographics

In this section, the demographics of Fruita are summarized and compared to Mesa County as a whole and to Metro Denver. The Metro Denver comparison is included to compare two large metro areas in Colorado, and because of the recent increase in people and businesses moving from Metro Denver to Mesa County.

Household incomes are slightly higher in Fruita compared to Mesa County overall with average household income at \$79,190 and median household income at \$63,819, shown in **Table 9**. Fruita's average household size is 2.67 people, which is larger than that of both Mesa County and the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood Metro area. This indicates a younger and more family-weighted household composition. Compared to Mesa County, Fruita's median age is lower at 36.5 years old, than 39 years old in the County.

In both Fruita and Mesa County, about 36 percent of the population 25 years and older have a college degree or above. That is lower than the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood Metro area where 51 percent of that population has a college degree or above. Fruita has a higher rate of homeownership than both areas with 70 percent of the housing units being owner-occupied and 30 percent renter-occupied.

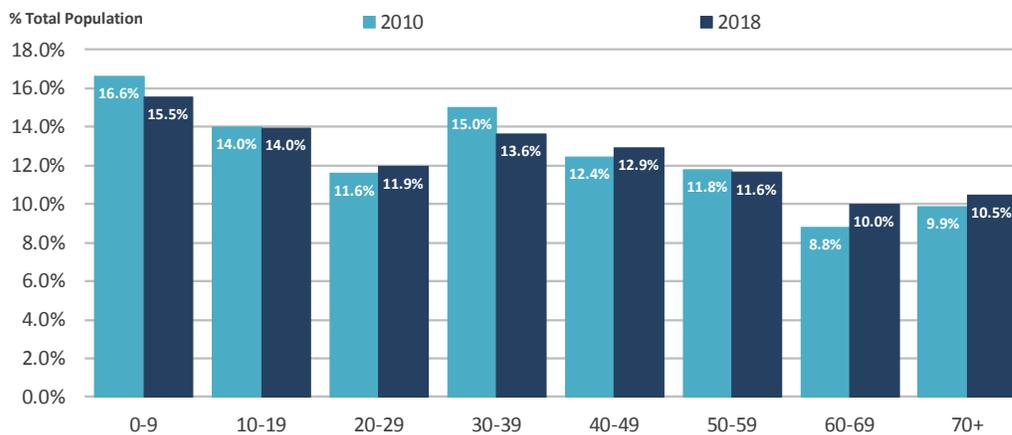
Table 9. Demographic Summary, 2018

Description	Fruita	Mesa County	Denver-Aurora-Lakewood MSA
Household Income			
Average Household Income	\$79,190	\$77,865	\$98,830
Median Household Income	\$63,819	\$57,191	\$71,904
Average Household Size			
	2.67	2.48	2.52
Median Age			
	36.5	39.0	37.0
Education			
High School or Equivalent	23.9%	29.8%	20.5%
College Degree or Above	36.2%	36.5%	51.1%
Tenure			
Renter Occupied	30.2%	33.9%	37.5%
Owner Occupied	69.8%	66.1%	62.5%
Households			
Families with children under 18 years	30.7%	26.4%	29.4%

Source: ESRI; U.S. Census; Economic & Planning Systems

As shown above, families with children under 18 make up 31 percent of Fruita’s households compared to 26 percent in Mesa County, highlighting Fruita’s appeal to young families. This is also reflected in the age distribution shown in **Figure 12**. The largest population groups are people 0-9 years old at 15.5 percent of the total population, and people between 10 and 19 at 14 percent.

Figure 12. Fruita Age Distribution Trend, 2010-2018



Source: ESRI; Economic & Planning Systems

Housing Stock

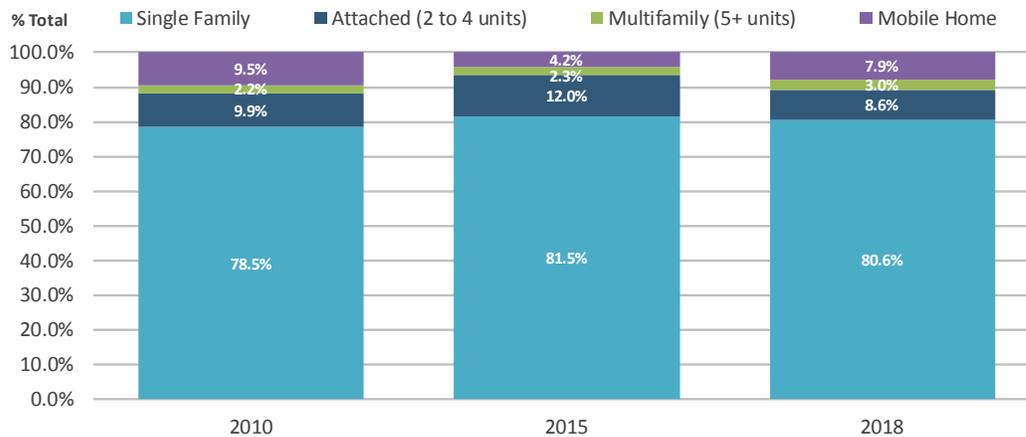
The majority of housing units in Fruita are single family homes. In 2018, there were 4,486 single family homes, which represent 80.6 percent of all units, as shown in **Table 10** and **Figure 13**. From 2010 to 2018 multifamily units have increased by a total of 53 units, resulting in an inventory of 165 units in 2018. In contrast, 464 new single family homes were built during that time.

Table 10. Fruita Housing Types, 2010-2018

Housing Type	2010		2015		2018		2010-2018	
	Amount	% Total	Amount	% Total	Amount	% Total	Total	Ann. #
Single Family	4,022	78.5%	4,424	81.5%	4,486	80.6%	464	58
Attached (2 to 4 units)	506	9.9%	649	12.0%	480	8.6%	-27	-3
Multifamily (5+ units)	112	2.2%	127	2.3%	165	3.0%	53	7
Mobile Home	486	9.5%	229	4.2%	437	7.9%	-49	-6
Total	5,127	100.0%	5,429	100.0%	5,569	100.0%	442	55

Source: U.S. Census; DOLA; Economic & Planning Systems

Figure 13. Fruita Housing Types, 2010-2018



Source: U.S. Census; DOLA; Economic & Planning Systems

Housing Occupancy and Tenure

As would be expected, household growth closely parallels housing unit growth, but household growth is slightly slower due to the inclusion of vacant units (built but not yet sold or occupied) in unit growth. Since 2010, renter households have been growing at a faster rate than owner households in each jurisdiction of Mesa County, as shown in **Table 11**. From 2010 to 2018, owner occupied housing has declined at an average annual rate of 0.4 percent in Fruita and 0.3 percent in Grand Junction and Mesa County. This slight decline is a national trend that reflects growth in low wage service jobs and lower levels of wealth or savings, especially for younger people and recent graduates. These income and wealth trends favor renting over home ownership.

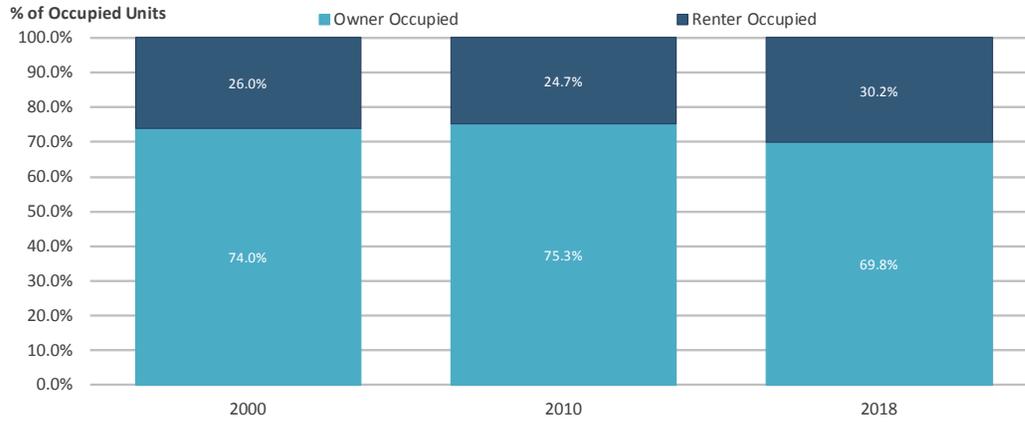
Table 11. Housing Occupancy, 2010-2018

Description	2010		2018		2010-2018
	Amount	% Total	Amount	% Total	Ann. %
Fruita					
Owner Occupied	3,595	70.1%	3,723	66.8%	0.4%
Renter Occupied	1,180	23.0%	1,610	28.9%	4.0%
Vacant	<u>352</u>	<u>6.9%</u>	<u>236</u>	<u>4.2%</u>	<u>-4.9%</u>
Total	5,127	100.0%	5,569	100.0%	1.0%
Grand Junction					
Owner Occupied	15,285	58.3%	15,696	53.8%	0.3%
Renter Occupied	9,077	34.6%	11,539	39.6%	3.0%
Vacant	<u>1,845</u>	<u>7.0%</u>	<u>1,920</u>	<u>6.6%</u>	<u>0.5%</u>
Total	26,207	100.0%	29,155	100.0%	1.3%
Unincorp. Mesa County					
Owner Occupied	21,482	73.2%	21,231	68.6%	-0.1%
Renter Occupied	5,691	19.4%	7,640	24.7%	3.8%
Vacant	<u>2,180</u>	<u>7.4%</u>	<u>2,065</u>	<u>6.7%</u>	<u>-0.7%</u>
Total	29,353	100.0%	30,935	100.0%	0.7%
Mesa County Total					
Owner Occupied	41,350	66.3%	41,671	61.8%	0.1%
Renter Occupied	16,527	26.5%	21,394	31.7%	3.3%
Vacant	<u>4,532</u>	<u>7.3%</u>	<u>4,393</u>	<u>6.5%</u>	<u>-0.4%</u>
Total	62,409	100.0%	67,458	100.0%	1.0%

Source: DOLA; ESRI; Economic & Planning Systems

The percentage of owner occupied housing units in Fruita has declined over the last eight years, decreasing by 5.5 percentage points. Renter occupied housing in Fruita has increased to 30 percent of the total housing inventory, as shown in **Figure 14**. This trend indicates that many new renters are renting single family homes, as that product type has dominated the new housing construction in Fruita.

Figure 14. Fruita Housing Tenure, 2000-2018



Source: ESRI; Economic & Planning Systems

Housing Prices and Affordability

A person or household is defined as “cost burdened” if they spend 30 percent or more of their monthly income on housing costs. This is the standard established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In 2018, 29 percent of home owners in Fruita were cost burdened, which is higher than Mesa County where 24 percent of owners were cost burdened, as shown in **Table 12**. The cost burdened are likely a mix of people on fixed incomes aging in place, working families, and people who recently purchased their first home that they anticipate will become more affordable based on their future jobs and earnings potential.

For renters, however, the picture is different. Nearly half of the renters in Fruita—48 percent—were cost burdened, which is similar to the 51 percent of renters cost burdened across Mesa County. It is common for renters to have more challenges affording housing than owners. Factors that affect cost burden levels for renters include:

- A tight supply of rental housing that supports higher rents (supply and demand);
- Younger demographics, which often translates to lower household incomes; and
- Growth in lower wage service jobs.

Table 12. Monthly Housing Cost as a Percentage of Household Income, 2018

Description	Fruita		Mesa County	
	Amount	% Total	Amount	% Total
Owner-Occupied				
Less than 20 percent	1,704	45.8%	22,696	54.5%
20 to 29 percent	890	23.9%	8,734	21.0%
30 percent or more	<u>1,075</u>	<u>28.9%</u>	<u>9,879</u>	<u>23.7%</u>
Total	3,723	98.6%	41,671	99.1%
Renter-Occupied				
Less than 20 percent	257	16.0%	4,503	21.0%
20 to 29 percent	452	28.1%	4,702	22.0%
30 percent or more	764	<u>47.5%</u>	10,853	<u>50.7%</u>
Total	1,610	91.5%	21,394	93.8%

Source: DOLA; U.S. Census; Economic & Planning Systems

The Grand Junction office of Land Title maintains housing market statistics for areas in Mesa County back to 2016. Land Title's data for Fruita is for the city limits plus the larger 81521 zip code that includes some of unincorporated Mesa County. The 81521 zip code has an average price of nearly \$330,000 year to date as of November 2019, as shown in **Table 13**. The average price in this zip code is about \$100,000 higher than Grand Junction which had an average price of \$229,644. Price appreciation has been rapid, with 7.4 percent annual growth in 81521 over the last four years. These figures represent mostly re-sales of existing homes as new construction is typically direct to a buyer from a builder and does not usually go through the same process.

Table 13. Grand Valley Home Prices, All Unit Types, 2016-November 2019

Description	2016	2017	2018	Nov-2019	2016-Nov 2019	
					Pct. Change	Ann. %
All Unit Types						
Fruita (81521 Zipcode)	\$247,865	\$260,983	\$303,663	\$327,902	32.3%	7.4%
Fruita City Limits	\$204,390	\$217,279	\$221,003	\$249,787	22.2%	5.3%
Redlands	\$349,225	\$356,253	\$377,923	\$446,676	27.9%	6.5%
Collbran, Plateau Valley, Molina, Mesa	\$427,669	\$274,491	\$314,245	\$379,417	-11.3%	-3.0%
Palisade	\$271,522	\$291,411	\$319,552	\$465,563	71.5%	14.8%
Orchard Mesa & East Orchard Mesa	\$214,272	\$218,726	\$246,350	\$278,421	29.9%	6.9%
Fruitvale	\$186,181	\$203,034	\$219,260	\$239,751	28.8%	6.7%
Grand Junction	\$169,871	\$187,499	\$201,013	\$229,644	35.2%	8.0%
Clifton	\$155,096	\$155,619	\$182,030	\$200,430	29.2%	6.8%
Single Family Detached						
Fruita (81521 Zipcode)	\$253,662	\$266,952	\$308,698	\$337,605	33.1%	7.6%
Fruita City Limits	\$208,866	\$224,023	\$226,442	\$248,784	19.1%	4.6%
Redlands	\$365,591	\$373,283	\$399,552	\$441,814	20.8%	5.0%
Collbran, Plateau Valley, Molina, Mesa	\$441,853	\$281,062	\$318,431	\$315,588	-28.6%	-8.2%
Palisade	\$279,124	\$295,206	\$322,141	\$364,927	30.7%	7.1%
Orchard Mesa & East Orchard Mesa	\$218,575	\$225,631	\$250,802	\$272,175	24.5%	5.8%
Fruitvale	\$188,989	\$205,972	\$222,307	\$239,235	26.6%	6.2%
Grand Junction	\$174,504	\$191,751	\$205,970	\$225,989	29.5%	6.8%
Clifton	\$164,767	\$163,282	\$193,116	\$201,086	22.0%	5.2%

Source: Grand Junction Land Title Office; Economic & Planning Systems

The 81521 zip code includes areas with homes on large acreages which are priced higher and influence the average. Using data from the Mesa County Assessor’s Office, EPS estimated the average home price within City limits from 2014 through 2018. The Assessor’s data portal does not have 2019 data available as of this writing. As shown in **Table 14**, the average price within City limits is \$271,675 for all unit types as of the end of 2018. This is 11 percent lower than the 2018 average price of \$303,663 in all of 81521. In 2018, the average single family detached home price was \$279,675 which is 9 percent lower than in 81521. Appreciation rates within City limits were about the same, at 7.6 percent per year.

Table 14. Home Prices in Fruita City Limits, 2014-2018

Description	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2014-2018		
						Total	Ann. #	Ann. %
Avg. Sale Price								
Single Family	\$208,866	\$224,023	\$226,442	\$248,784	\$279,675	\$70,809	\$17,702	7.6%
Townhome	\$175,329	\$183,995	\$203,504	\$224,057	\$236,418	\$61,089	\$15,272	7.8%
Duplex/Triplex	\$198,000	\$199,167	\$189,375	\$266,667	\$205,000	\$7,000	\$1,750	0.9%
Condo	\$79,000	\$87,782	\$93,270	\$258,529	\$141,033	\$62,033	\$15,508	15.6%
Multifamily	<u>\$183,000</u>	---	---	<u>\$1,347,500</u>	---	---	---	---
Average	\$204,390	\$217,279	\$221,003	\$249,787	\$271,684	\$67,295	\$16,824	7.4%

Source: Mesa County Assessor; Economic & Planning Systems

Prices for newer construction in Fruita city limits are trending upward and are significantly higher than the average resale price. New construction pricing is a strong indicator of the direction of a housing market as it shows the prices a market can support; new construction is often more expensive than resales. Using Mesa County assessor records, EPS calculated the average price for homes built and sold from 2014 through 2018. In other words, the 2017 column in **Table 15** shows the average price of a home built in 2017 and sold during 2017 and 2018, or the average price of a home built in 2014 and sold anytime between 2014 and 2018. The average price for single family homes built in 2018 is estimated at \$455,200 as shown in **Table 15**, which is over 60 percent higher than the average single family resale price of \$279,675 in 2018 shown above in **Table 14**.

Table 15. Average Sale Price for Homes Built and Sold 2014 through 2018, Fruita City Limits

Unit Type	2014	2015	Year Built			2018	2014-2018	
			2016	2017	2018		Change	Ann. %
Single Family	\$364,850	\$339,900	\$344,100	\$345,000	\$455,200	\$90,350	5.7%	
Townhome	<u>\$237,900</u>	---	---	<u>\$275,550</u>	---	N/A	N/A	
Average	\$339,460	\$339,900	\$344,100	\$310,275	\$455,200	\$115,740	7.6%	

Source: Mesa County Assessor; Economic & Planning Systems

Housing Market Observations

This section offers some qualitative observations from Economic & Planning Systems gained from interviews with local professionals in the residential building and development, economic development, and real estate professions.

- Fruita commands higher home prices because of the quality of its schools and the amenities. The trails and parks are particularly attractive to existing and prospective residents.
- Fruita is seeing a modest increase in residents bringing jobs from other locations and working remotely. Cash buyers comprise a larger percentage of these purchases than local area residents. Some are also moving from higher cost areas such as Metro Denver where housing costs are substantially higher, enabling them to bring more equity into their home in Fruita. Retirees moving to Fruita also make up a portion of these new buyers.
- There is a tight supply of multifamily rental housing (apartments) in Fruita which contributes to affordability issues for renters. It is also affecting the workforce supply for local businesses.

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Appendix C:
Community Character



Introduction

The triangular boundary of Downtown, as defined by the FLUM and current zoning, consists of approximately 250 acres of land. While the primary goal for future growth is to direct new development inward, there is also a strong desire to maintain the quaint and quirky character of downtown. Therefore, new development should respond to the traditional character in ways that reflect appreciation of the past. With such a large area that could experience new development, it is important that a context-sensitive approach, rather than a one-size-fits-all set of rules, is taken.

The concept of “character subareas” was tested during the planning process and community members responded positively to this idea. Community members then helped define the future character of each subarea as well as list which types of buildings and uses they thought were appropriate for each subarea.

Intent

It is the intent of this section to elaborate on the downtown subareas in an effort to direct future zoning and design standards updates to properly reflect the true community character and desires of the community.

Community Process

Community Character Workshop

In August 2019, property owners, developers, city employees and community members gathered to discuss the character and desires for new development within downtown and the 6 & 50 corridor. Attendees were asked to define boundaries for what they considered to be the “downtown core” and the “6 & 50 corridor.” Then, they defined a “transition area” that serves as the blocks and properties between downtown and residential neighborhoods. The exercise included using words and pictures to describe the future vision for each area.

This exercise and discussion led to the idea that downtown is made up of a few distinct areas that each have their own unique character and potential for fulfilling future growth.

Draft Plan Workshop

In October 2019, a draft “Downtown Character Subareas” map was revealed showing six different subareas within downtown. Community members responded to descriptions of each area and then chose appropriate housing types that would be appropriate for each area. A “road show” of the community workshop had the same exercises at various community functions.

The refinement of the subarea descriptions, as well as the feedback on appropriate land uses and building types is defined in this segment of the plan.

Feedback on character subarea descriptions are shown below. The majority of respondents agreed with the future visioning descriptions for: Downtown Core, Aspen Avenue, Downtown South and Downtown North. There was more disagreement and neutrality for Downtown West and Downtown East descriptions. These subarea descriptions were amended before the final plan document to reflect the feedback received at the Draft Plan Party.

	Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	
1 - D'town Core	0	1	68	99%
2 - Aspen Ave	0	2	67	97%
3 - D'town South	7	14	38	64%
4 - D'town West	3	22	29	54%
5 - D'town North	1	8	34	79%
6 - D'town East	9	27	30	45%

Feedback on Housing Types for each subarea are shown below:

	Accessory Dwelling Units	Tandem House/Duplex	Cottage Cluster	Multi-plex	Townhouse	Rowhouse	Apartments	Mixed Use Residential
1 - D'town Core	9	7	19	2	7	6	5	8
2 - Aspen Ave	19	8	21	0	7	11	3	46
3 - D'town South	8	3	15	4	4	9	14	20
4 - D'town West	4	1	2	0	2	2	0	1
5 - D'town North	9	13	11	3	6	8	6	7
6 - D'town East	14	11	10	5	8	5	6	10
TOTALS	63	43	78	14	34	41	34	92

Overall, the top three housing choices include:

- 1) Mixed Use Residential
- 2) Cottage Cluster
- 3) Accessory Dwelling units

This indicates that there is a strong desire to meet housing demands by infilling with higher density mixed use buildings, where appropriate, as well as providing smaller-scale, sensitive infill to existing residential lots in downtown.

The top three housing types by Character Area are listed below:

Downtown Core	Aspen Avenue	Downtown South
1. Cottage Cluster 2. ADUs 3. Mixed Use Residential	1. Mixed Use Residential 2. Cottage Cluster 3. ADUs	1. Mixed Use Residential 2. Cottage Cluster 3. Apartments
Downtown West	Downtown North	Downtown East
1. ADUs 2. Townhouse/Rowhouse/ Cottage Cluster	1. Tandem House/Duplex 2. Cottage Cluster 3. ADUs	1. ADUs 2. Tandem House/Duplex 3. Cottage Cluster/Mixed Use Residential

Housing Types



Accessory Dwelling Unit or “Granny Flat”

ADUs can be detached from or attached to the primary home. They are a “sensitive” way to add a unit to a lot, which often cannot be seen from the street. These are often used to house extended family or as a way for the original owner to downsize, but remain on-site.



Tandem House, Twin House or Duplex

These types are like ADUs in that there are two units on a lot, but they are often of similar size and scale. They can be attached to one another or detached. They can also be beside one another or one in the front half of the lot and one in the rear half of the lot.



Cottage Cluster or “Wee Homes”

These are smaller-than-average homes that are clustered together on a large lot. They often share a central courtyard and other amenities.





Multiplex

These are buildings that include multiple units under one roof. The forms are compatible to single-family residential homes, but they include more than one unit. Open space is usually shared amongst units.



Townhouse

Townhouses are attached single-family units. They often include a detached garage and small back yard for each unit and are generally set back from the sidewalk with a small front yard with landscaping.



Rowhouse

Rowhouses differ from Townhouses in that they are often more vertical and include attached garages. Individual yards are not as common and setbacks are fewer.



Small-Scale Apartment Complex

These buildings include multiple units with varying sizes within a single building or cluster of buildings. They usually include shared open space for residents and parking is usually in a surface lot.



Mixed Use Residential

These are buildings that include commercial uses on the ground floor and residential units on upper floors. Open space is generally in the form of balconies, terraces and roof decks.



Appendix D:
Public Engagement Summaries



FRUITA IN MOTION

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS NOTES

On March 14 and 15, 2019, SE Group and Economic and Planning Systems (EPS) conducted discussions with seven groups of stakeholders who live and/or work in the City of Fruita. The stakeholders discussed their favorite aspects of Fruita, changes over the past ten years in the city, the 2008 plan, and Fruita's place in the larger valley.

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION 1: CITY AND COUNTY STAFF & EMERGENCY SERVICES

Represented: County Planning Department, Lower Valley Fire Protection District, City Parks and Recreation Department, City Manager's Office, Police, City Planning Department

Fruita as a choice community

- Fruita is the desirable community of the Grand Valley
- Home prices are rising but strong demand continues
 - Limited entry level homes, Grand Junction is the source for that
- People want the small-town feel, sense that it is easy to integrate and get to know people
- Lots of town pride (support at football games, attendance at community events)
- Known as a very safe community in the county

Growth

- 2000 to 2007 was a huge period for growth which stopped/slowed in the decade since. Most of the recent growth has been small, incremental and oil and gas is slowly returning
- Lack of job opportunities is preventing significant new growth
- Sense of being discovered, new retirees and families from the Front Range
- City will need to keep up with growing demand for services
- Increasingly, development has occurred in unincorporated areas where it is expensive for the city to provide services
- Mesa County is looking for city to fully develop those areas with density to limit the cost of the development versus how much money it brings in
- As city grows, want to preserve neighborhood connectivity, ability to walk to downtown
- Concerns about environmental impacts of additional growth (residential and tourist) and need to work with BLM and other land managers

Past 10 years

- Efforts to diversify the economy, get away from dependence on oil and gas boom and bust cycles
- More focus on outdoor recreation (recruiting outdoor business, valley wide outdoor recreation coalition, tourism)

City governance and services

- City departments collaborate extremely well (longevity amongst department heads have led to strong working relationships)
- Fruita is known as the area municipality willing to collaborate (with CPW, BLM, Fire District, etc.)
- Opportunities do exist to collaborate more with the county (do contract out to county for building department)
- Strong sense of city goals and departments working towards them (revisit these goals with council every two years)
- Want to lay groundwork for partnerships to manage natural amenities
- Expecting this plan to provide direction for the PHROST plan
- Fire district is very involved with the city, hoping to get to ISO 3 (lower insurance rates)

2008 Plan

- Providing city philosophical way of discussing growth
- Smaller commercial nodes never came to fruition (no interest in building such uses)
 - Discussion of broadening allowable uses (health offices)
- Plan did not identify much potential city parkland

Additional items, Follow-ups

Follow up with Kent, City Public Works Director who could not attend discussion

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION 2: DEVELOPERS AND REALTORS

Builders, developers, engineers, and Robinson & Co Realty.

What makes Fruita special

- Hometown neighborhood feel, kids playing, narrow roads, downtown, walkable and bikeable to downtown, sense of community, events, mountain biking
- Differentiated by the small-town feel, kids can wander, mountain biking

Current state of Fruita

- Schools significantly over capacity
- Increasing number of out of state retirees
- New construction price now over \$400,000
- Home sales are low due to lack of inventory (sales may go back up if more becomes available, at a variety of price points)

- Commercial development is tough in Fruita as limited market (few Grand Junction residents shop in Fruita)
- Lack of railyard makes industry more difficult and expensive
- Demand for housing and local/community-serving businesses (restaurants, grocery store) in Fruita, with larger commercial and industrial in Grand Junction

The future of Fruita

- Uptick in growth expected due to “quality of life” (must be correlated with strong economy)
- Commercial ventures priced out of the Front Range may come here
- Some remote workers but expecting a significant increase
 - Grand Junction Airport is adding flights to make commuting easier
- Number of new retirees could potentially overwhelm the healthcare system
- Colorado Mesa University and medical services as future drivers of growth

Developers and Fruita

- Largely worked outside the area in the last 10 years due to limited growth in the area
- Fruita represents unrestricted development potential due to lack of geographic barriers
 - Lack of infrastructure in outlying areas is a major challenge (may have hit northern, northeast limits from sewer standpoint)
- Find Fruita easier to work with than the City of Grand Junction
- Have had to increase cost of new construction due to national dramatic increase in construction costs

2008 Plan, Land Use Code, and Current Development Process

- In 2008 Plan, assumed that Fruita was in such high demand that they could up their standards. However, due to limited demand, the code and plan made development more challenging
- Project approval has gotten more difficult and expensive (many departments to go through)
- Strong desire to set a better tone towards development with this plan, want a plan that allows for projects towards the betterment of the community
- 2008 Plan and Land Use Code did not really support a diversity of housing types
- Struggled with infill development, downtown development as a result of the plan and code
- Designated zones haven’t been developed as a result of the plan/code’s complexity
- Local population has not always been on board with new development and has used the 2008 Plan to stop/modify development projects
- Developers want an easier process, otherwise will start looking to develop in the county and potentially land-locking Fruita with 1-2 acre parcels, forcing the city to extend services without the density to make it feasible

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION 3: SCHOOLS

Principals of all Fruita schools, the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, and Buildings and Grounds

What makes Fruita special

- Community feel
 - Running into people you know, central gathering spaces, feeling like a part of something (i.e., turnout at high school events), generations staying in Fruita
- “Small town vibe with an outdoor feel”
- “Always something to do that’s family friendly”
 - A large variety: festivals, accessible outdoor activities
 - Big community assets for a small town
- Other aspects of value: community center, agricultural heritage, separation from Grand Junction, Hot Tomato (and what it embodies), support from businesses and city for schools

Past 10 years

- New elementary school (Rim Rock) and plans for an additional
- Free and reduced lunch population up (at High School about 30% of students but varies by school)
- Lots of new houses, particularly around Rim Rock
- With less reliance on oil and gas, less transient population
- New fast food options but few family friendly dining options

Issues and interests

- Overcapacity schools
- Want to improve pedestrian connectivity and congestion (safer routes to schools)
- In the future, having a Fruita High School where all the Fruita kids go (may need a new high school that would divide Fruita)
 - At present, all Fruita kids go to Fruita High but Fruita kids are only about 50% of all students. High School is approaching 2,000 students in grades (10-12)
- Farms being sold for housing development – concerns around preserving agricultural feel
 - Have struggled to place conservation easements on farms
- Real shortage of rental units
- Growing costs of housing means that more generations are living together in a single home
- Limited housing supply with houses going off the market immediately
- No housing for homeless youth

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION 4: LIVABILITY COMMISSION

Largely retirees, council member, planning commission member, high school student, young family.

Appreciate about Fruita and want for its future

- City is futuristic and progressive
- Walkability of city and the ease of getting around on foot, by bike, or by car
- Uncrowded feel

- Resident involvement in the city's future – “having a say”
- Small town feel
- Something for everyone to do (accessibility of activities)

Past 10 years

- Downtown has emerged – social place with more businesses
- The Community Center – a gathering place with a purpose beyond recreation
- Growing pride and ownership in Fruita among residents

Housing

- Limited inventory of housing, particularly affordable housing near downtown
- Front porch-oriented developments are appreciating the fastest
- New construction has not been affordable
- Most new development requires single family homes
- Ideas about ADUs, home shares for seniors, and other creative solutions as affordable options and allowing seniors to remain in their homes
- Strong interest in walkable developments, within walking distance of downtown
- Want zoning regulations that are flexible to allow for creative solutions
- Incentivizing tools for builders to develop types of housing
- Concerns that smaller homes are becoming short term rentals
- Want the city to be more receptive to home-sharing for seniors and have programming around it

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION 5: CITY COUNCIL, MAYOR, & PLANNING COMMISSION

State of Fruita and Downtown

- Population has felt relatively flat in recent years, although surge of retirees in last two to three years
- New feeling of energy downtown, now want to take it to the next level
- Need to determine exactly where downtown is
- Want businesses in downtown that would bring foot traffic (i.e., restaurants not mortgage or real estate businesses)
- Downtown rents are really high, lots of fluctuation amongst businesses and no one can afford to renovate these spaces
- City Market: limited parking spaces, people want another grocery store but not the residential growth necessary to support it
- Unclear if there's a market for businesses not catering to meat and potatoes (i.e., sushi and thai restaurants have closed)
- Have been working on a year-round farmers market facility
- Affordable homes downtown are no longer as affordable but are better maintained

2008 Plan and Framework Map

- Done at a time of rapid growth
- Framework map as “lots of hopes but failed dreams,” particularly community mixed use that never happened
- Want to rethink the framework map so that it can actually be built
- The 2008 framework map focused density within the city and limited cookie cutter development to a point that was not economically feasible
- High cost to build mixed use really created a challenge
- Never got a chance to implement the plan and framework because of the recession
- Western Slope recovered from the recession much more slowly, but Fruita was the first in the valley to recover
 - Just now completing projects planned before the recession
- Kokopelli development not really mentioned in 2008 plan
- The economic sustainability guiding principle really missed the mark
- Allowable building height in downtown (5 stories) feels excessive

Recruiting businesses

- Lots of new partnerships to do so (primarily GJEP)
- Attempts to recruit outdoor recreation businesses did not exactly succeed – many chose to locate in Grand Junction
- Need to look to smaller businesses for recruiting, success with larger businesses unlikely
- Have jumped on board with state incentives but not going to give up city fees (some one has to pay)
- Not an opportunity zone and unclear if that is feasibility

If the boom occurs

- Mitigating traffic will be key, particularly on the 19 Road Corridor
 - Traffic is a very visible way to tell that a place is getting busy
 - Making sure we aren't building congestion
- Will be more desirable to build smaller homes
- Community health, the environment, and inclusion need to be planned for
- Education: better collaborative planning
- Continue to implement multi-modal transportation

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION 6: BUSINESS OWNERS

Hot Tomato, Copper Club, Aspen Street Coffee, Happy Trails, Suds Brothers, Thrive Yoga Fruita, one industrial business.

Owning a Business in Fruita

- “It's awesome!”

- Local business owners are very collaborative, supportive, frequently cross-market, tight-knit community
- The downtown business owners are generally in it for the long haul, working to create a wonderful experience for residents and visitors
- Challenge is seasonality, winter is very slow and spring and fall are too busy to keep up
 - Summer is getting busier
 - April will quadruple existing business on the year
- Costs of goods is going up, another challenge
- Business owners don't price things at tourist prices, couldn't survive offering locals discounts off current prices
- Employees typically struggle to live in Fruita due to very limited supply of affordable, rental housing but many make the financial sacrifice in order to do so

Downtown

- Downtown businesses are very relationship oriented and have a unique feel. Across the highway is more business-oriented
- People have expressed interest in opening businesses in downtown or expanding existing but can't see the numbers play out or find available, affordable space
- Significantly easier to find business space to rent in Grand Junction
- Interest in place in downtown where people can go and do something that isn't eating or shopping
- Sense that the business owners can drive the future of downtown
- Have done nothing with Downtown USA Study (major rec: tax-based account for downtown improvements)
- Fall Fest tents block the local businesses – want events that highlight these businesses

Who supports Fruita businesses

- Tourism is key and includes both mountain bikers and those passing through on I-70
- Lots of residents unaware of downtown businesses (estimate that 85% don't go downtown)
 - Lots of people have tunnel vision to City Market and back
 - Downtown businesses largely supported by a core group
 - Fruita population has lots of subgroups that hang out in different places, but Copper Club and Hot Tomato are unifying spaces
- Most businesses are supported by underserved local residents (i.e., seniors are primary clients of yoga studio)
- Lots of people riding bikes in from Grand Junction each weekend

Other

- Industrial business considered moving elsewhere due to high cost of receiving and transporting goods but stayed due to the strong workforce
- Lots of potential commercial space along Route 6 and 50

- Want a venue to really host events

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH

Family Health West, Fruita Area Chamber of Commerce, Business Incubator Center, Mesa County Director of Public Health, Mesa County Workforce Center

What do these groups do

- Family Health West – largest city employer, sponsoring community events and programs
- Business Incubator Center – loan funds, advice, enterprise zone, coworking space, recruit businesses, work with businesses in all stages
- Chamber of Commerce – economic development forum, sharing information with city and partners, lots of community events
- Mesa County Workforce Center – posting jobs, allowing local companies to test out employees, recruitment help, education, training, and resources
- Generally all work together on initiatives and events – no one knows who organizes what

State of the economy

- Last two years have been good for the economy, seeing growth in labor force, decline in unemployment rate
- Struggling to find people to fill entry-level health jobs, construction-related jobs, and doctors.
- Manufacturing is relatively strong valley-wide
- Wages are very low in the valley, especially compared to the Front Range
- Oil and gas remain a very important part of the economy and will need to be incorporated into future planning
- Niche manufacturers have wanted to be located in Fruita, but no appropriate space
 - Fruita has an identity that people are drawn to, which Grand Junction struggles with
- Migration largely driven by people looking for small town feel – concern that will be lost
- Very short on childcare opportunities valley-wide
- Lack of affordable housing for rentals
- Small businesses not allowed in residential zoning

Looking forward

- Want to entice more people to come downtown and support businesses
 - Train residents to go downtown during off-season
 - Mountain bikers spend more money in the city
 - Keep Aspen Street vibrant into the night
- Want to market Fruita as a family-friendly destination
- Develop partnerships to encourage restaurants to open
- Want to incorporate agriculture into economic development
- Interest in new industrial space with residential above

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Fruita is a choice community. People want to live here for the small town feel, family-friendly and accessible activities, community-oriented downtown, and walkability.

Over the past 10 years, the city has seen limited population growth. Downtown did become more vibrant but developers struggled to build under the requirements of the 2008 Plan and Land Use Code. The community mixed use nodes never came to fruition.

People really cherish Fruita's small town feel and want to preserve that as the city grows. Recently, many retirees are moving to Fruita.

Housing prices have risen significantly, but due to the limited inventory, houses move off the market quickly. There is a very limited supply of affordable, rental housing.

Recent efforts to attract outdoor businesses to Fruita struggled, as the city did not have ready-built industrial space for interested businesses.

There is a very collaborative environment amongst local business owners, city departments, and economic development organizations.

The local schools are a victim of their own success and are over capacity.

FRUITA IN MOTION

DRAFT PLAN PARTY SUMMARY

The City of Fruita held a Draft Plan Party on October 3, 2019 to share the draft comprehensive plan with the public. The event, held at Civic Center Park, informed attendees about the plan's values and vision, key themes, future land use map, and topic areas. Attendees provided feedback through write-in question responses, dot exercises, and a prioritization dollar exercise. Members of the planning team and advisory committee were available for smaller discussions with attendees as well. 112 people signed in and an estimated 150 people attended.

RESPONSES

The following paragraphs describe attendees' responses and comments on the Draft Plan Party boards.

Future Land Use Map – In conversations at the Future Land Use Map board, attendees generally agreed that the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) made sense and that there was adequate land within the city and the UGB to absorb future development. Written comments about the map focused on commercial. Attendees were excited by downtown flexibility but expressed interest in commercial within walking distance of neighborhoods, the poor aesthetics of commercial along Highway 6/50, and the barrier of I-70 between north and south side commercial. One person redrew the UGB at the existing eastern boundary of the city.

Land Use, Growth and Community Character – Attendees were enthusiastic about infill, Fruita remaining a freestanding community, and diverse, affordable housing. Comments called for capping VRBOs and other improvements around the city (a Riverwalk, whitewater park, and I-70 off-ramp beautification). In other comments and conversations, attendees expressed a strong desire to see agricultural land preserved, with growth occurring elsewhere.

Fruita's Future Places – Attendees felt these vision statements describe the existing condition and could be more visionary. Attendees strongly agreed with the future vision for Downtown Core and Aspen Avenue. With Downtown South (the 6/50 corridor), some attendees strongly agreed, while others were closer to neutral or disagree. Many attendees felt that the vision should call out residential if that is to occur in the area. With Downtown West, North, and East, most attendees were neutral to strongly agree. Some attendees expressed trepidation about new uses and additional commercial, particularly in Downtown East.

Downtown Fruita's Future Housing Types – Attendees expressed the strongest preferences about what should be built on Aspen Avenue and in Downtown South and had fewer preferences about other areas of downtown, especially with attendees living outside downtown. Attendees were very positive about mixed-use residential on Aspen Avenue and were interested in strategies that could support additional mixed-use residential there. In Downtown South (along Highway 6/50) attendees were generally receptive to mixed-use residential and small-scale apartments, although some expressed concern about the appeal of living along 6/50. Some attendees felt that rowhouses or multiplexes may be appropriate there as well.

Attendees were very enthusiastic about Accessory Dwelling Units, with many feeling they could be appropriate anywhere in the downtown. Attendees were generally enthusiastic about townhomes, duplexes, or cottage clusters anywhere in downtown, except Downtown South or the already built-out Aspen Avenue. Cottage clusters did receive the most stickers of those three, suggesting that attendees were most excited about that housing type. Attendees generally reserved multiplexes for Downtown East, Downtown South, and the Downtown Core. A few attendees were not excited about the idea of rowhouses, but those that were felt they could be appropriate in any downtown place.

TBD – For the TBD area, attendees were very supportive of a community green space and fairly supportive of mixed-use development and innovative commercial. A few attendees were supportive of light industrial spaces and moderate or high density residential. Attendees also brought up office space, low income housing, a community garden, a bowling alley and a movie theater, a trail system, and the development of riverwalk mixed use green space as potential uses of the area. A few attendees brought up in-town camping, but others were opposed to the idea.

Economic Development – Attendees were very supportive of the goals around enhancing downtown, the grocery store, incentives policy, and supporting local business growth. Attendees also suggested tax incentives for new businesses and adding more office space to attract small businesses. Attendees felt that the section was missing a discussion of the south side, Aspen Street's mixed-use potential, and entertainment businesses and promotion beyond bikes, food, and bars.

Parks, Health, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails – Attendees were very enthusiastic about these plan goals. The comments demonstrated the high value the community places on walking and biking facilities, and attendees brought up the need for more bike lanes and creating connections between bike-ped facilities that already exist. Others mentioned the need for dog parks and upgrading the skate park. Requiring green space within new subdivisions, preserving old growth trees, and transfer of development rights to preserve agricultural lands were also important to attendees.

Transportation – The transportation comments largely focused on bike-ability and walkability and their importance to Fruita. Desire for additional bike lanes was brought up repeatedly, along with bike lane-related education, curb ramps, and bike lanes towards desert riding to support bike tourism. Other comments included a pedestrian bridge over I-70, more public transportation, more speed limit enforcement, raising impact fees on greenfield development, and making the L and 19 road corridors more attractive.

On the future transportation map and proposed corridors, an attendee suggested switching to parking protected bike lanes on the multi-modal corridors and adding a bike lane on the safe route to school corridor.

Attendees were very enthusiastic about the 6/50 corridor improvements displayed.

Historic Preservation, Arts, and Education – Attendees were very excited about this set of goals. Many comments focused on making it more challenging to tear down old buildings and keeping a historic character to downtown, with people bringing up creating a historic district and incentivizing preservation as ways to do so. Other comments included making the current chamber of commerce building a history museum, civic and planning education in schools, more arts events, and vocational education programs.

Infrastructure and Services – Attendees were very supportive of prioritizing maintenance over new infrastructure and the other goals of this topic area as well. Attendees felt that the section was missing environmental sustainability as a priority (i.e., incentivizing solar, licensing composting, water conservation, and enhancing recycling), opt-outs for septic use, raising impact fees so growth pays for itself, and more inspections on new development and redevelopment. There was disagreement on the mountain water system, with some urging the city to get rid of it, while others felt it was important to reserve as a water source for a growing city.

Short-term rentals – A strong majority of attendees felt the city should consider limiting the number of short-term rentals as a percentage of total housing units. A majority also supported an additional fee on short-term rentals to address attainable housing for the community. Others commented that ADUs should be treated differently than homes, becoming a local is hard if surrounded by short-term rentals, Fruita should be a community where locals can afford housing and don't have to commute in (many mentions), many other communities are charging a high fee for short-term rentals, and the need to distinguish between short term rentals and vacation rentals.

Dollar Exercise – Attendees were asked to choose how to allocate \$500,000 for downtown improvements. Given five options, many attendees felt they were all important and distributed their dollars evenly. Overall, supporting business development received the most dollars (129), downtown streetscape improvements received 114, affordable housing projects received 74, Circle Park received 60, and downtown signage/wayfinding received the fewest (33).

General – Attendees really appreciated the chance to participate in the plan process. Other aspects of the plan that attendees appreciated include: the plan's inclusion and emphasis on affordable housing, the grocery store, and historic preservation.

Attendees were concerned about farmland being converted to residential. Individuals also raised infill and addressing affordable housing as aspects of the plan they disagreed with. Other general comments included pedestrianizing Aspen Street, enhanced landscaping on Aspen Street and gateways, supporting community-based projects (i.e., community gardens, a flea market), and being more business friendly to attract retail. Attendees did comment "Don't Moab Fruita" or "Don't Front Range Fruita," but not in responses to any specific plan elements.

A comment was received about the need to incorporate Family Health West in the plan, across multiple plan sections (community values, PHROST, economic development).

Specific comments beyond the scope of this plan include: more bike racks, better boat launch, mountain bike classes, adopt a block for volunteer weed removal, potholes on Highway 340, expanding the Farmers market into the fall, better signage for the bike path between the State Park and Grand Junction, and maintaining and checking storm drains.

Land Use, Growth, and Community Character

Context

- Very little housing development has occurred in the past decade, but trends show that development is picking up again. The development that has occurred has largely been detached single-family homes on the edge of the city.
- Most of Mesa County's recent growth has been concentrated in Grand Junction and unincorporated areas of the County. With Grand Junction as a nearby commercial center, the development pressure in Fruita is primarily for housing, not for retail or office space.
- Downtown is becoming increasingly vibrant, but rigid design standards have discouraged downtown development and redevelopment in recent years. Downtown is significantly less dense than how it is zoned.
- Average home prices have increased 32% in the last three years.
- There are almost 600 vacant acres within Fruita's city limits, or 3,000 possible new dwelling units, assuming build out at 5 units per acre.

Vision

Fruita is a distinct city within the Grand Valley. It is an efficiently laid-out community with small-town character situated among agricultural lands and a breathtaking desert landscape. It has a thriving downtown vibrant with businesses, residents, and civic gathering spaces. Surrounding the downtown are well-connected neighborhoods that provide a variety of housing sizes, types, and styles.

Goals

- #1. Remain a "freestanding" community within Mesa County, with distinct municipal borders and a clear separation from other communities in the Grand Valley.
- #2. Prioritize infill development over development at the edge of the city limits.
- #3. Build upon the success of Fruita's downtown as the social and civic hub of the community. Work towards improving existing civic spaces, parks, and streetscapes; creating more local businesses, and expanding residential options within the walkable, historic downtown area.
- #4. Allow and encourage a diversity of housing types to fit the needs of the Fruita community and provide the diverse "funky" character that is treasured by residents.
- #5. Encourage and support commercial uses in existing commercial areas.
- #6. Revitalize the State Highway 6/50 Corridor as an important gateway to the community.
- #7. Ensure that development is compatible with the natural landscape and hazard areas, and limit the risks of hazards to people and property.

What did you like in this section?

#1 incentives for infill
 INFILL #1, 2, 4
 #2 + #4
 #3
 #6 needs to be changed up into one entryway into Fruita affordable housing!

What did you disagree with?

Develop riverwalk w/ whitewater park
 More VRBO's

What is this section missing?

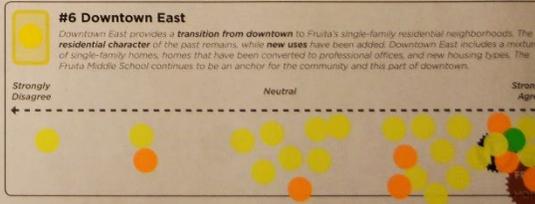
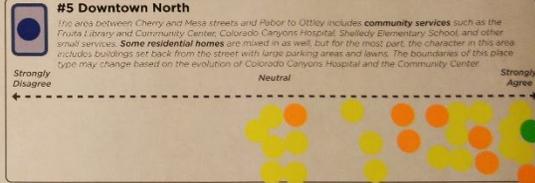
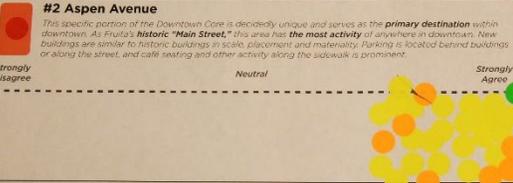
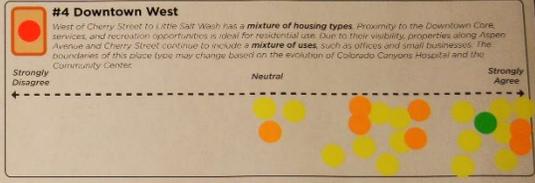
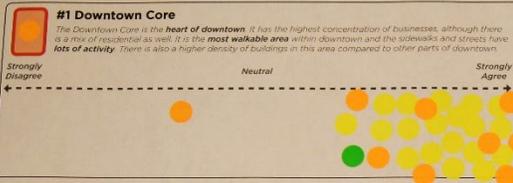
Cap on VRBO's?
 I-70 OFF-RAMP
 BETTER HOME LANDSCAPING CHOICES



DRAFT PLAN PARTY | OCTOBER 2019

Downtown Fruita's Future Places

Place a dot to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the future vision for each place type in downtown.



DRAFT PLAN PARTY | OCTOBER 2019

Downtown Fruita's Future Housing Types

Downtown Fruita has potential to add a diversity of housing types, price points, and unit types to meet the needs of existing and future residents. Concentrating new housing types downtown will allow the perimeter of downtown and the rest of Fruita to maintain its character. Refer to the Future Places Map and place up to three dots of the same color in the sections below to represent the three housing types you think are most appropriate for each place.

<p>Accessory Dwelling Unit or "Granny Flat" An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a second, smaller dwelling unit on the same lot as a larger home. An ADU can be an apartment above the garage, a detached garage, or a self-contained building on the same lot as the main house. They are often no more than 1,000 sq ft.</p>	<p>Townhouse Townhouses are attached single-family units. They often include a detached garage and small back yard for each unit and are generally set back from the sidewalk with a small front yard with landscaping.</p>
<p>Tandem House, Twin House or Duplex These types are the most common and are built on a lot, but they are often of similar size and scale. They can be attached to one another or detached. They can also be built one another or one to the front half of the lot and one in the rear half of the lot.</p>	<p>Rowhouse Rowhouses differ from townhouses in that they are often more vertical and include more windows. They usually include shared open space for residents and parking is usually in a shared lot.</p>
<p>Cottage Cluster or "Wee Homes" These are smaller than average homes that are clustered together on a large lot. They often share a central courtyard and other amenities.</p>	<p>Small-Scale Apartment Complex These buildings include multiple units within a single building or cluster of buildings. They usually include shared open space for residents and parking is usually in a shared lot.</p>
<p>Multiplex These are buildings that include multiple units under one roof. The forms are compatible to single-family residential forms, but they include more than one unit. Open space is usually shared amongst units.</p>	<p>Mixed-Use Residential These are buildings that include commercial uses on the ground floor and residential units on upper floors. Open spaces are generally in the form of courtyards, terraces, and roof decks.</p>

To Be Developed

On the future land use map, the lagoons property and the triangle area between State Highway 6/50 and I-70, between Cherry Street and existing industrial uses, is shown as TBD, or To Be Developed.



The triangle area is largely vacant, proximal to downtown, and—thanks to the new bike path segment—has strong pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to the rest of the city. As the area is a blank canvas, the City wants your ideas on how the area should be used and what it should look like.

The City has completed a conceptual plan for the lagoons property and will soon undergo further planning to develop the property in accordance with the community's vision.

Ideas

Ideas that have been mentioned for this area include live/work spaces, light manufacturing/retail, and innovative multi-family housing. It is expected that the area would have many uses.

Place a dot under all the uses you would like to see in this area.

<p>High-density Residential</p>	<p>Moderate-density Residential</p>	<p>Mixed-use Development</p>
<p>Light Industrial Spaces</p>	<p>Community Green Space</p>	<p>Innovative Commercial</p>

What other ideas do you have for the triangle area?
Low Income Housing
Intentional camping development + NO! Yes Intentional Camping
Comm. Markets
Beer Met.
bowling alley, movie theater, warehouse based businesses
Trail system to connect new school to existing bike paths.
development of a universal multi-use green space similar to the plaza at the University of Northern Iowa

Economic Development

Strengths + Opportunities

- Mesa County's economy and population are growing.
- Fruita has a high quality of life that is attractive.
- Fruita has a strong brand and identity to attract outdoor product industries.
- Fruita has direct interstate access and excellent visibility from I-70.
- The Fruita Business Park has full utilities available.
- Fruita has a recognized, vibrant downtown as the center of the community.

Challenges

- With a larger population and workforce than Fruita, Grand Junction is a more competitive location for most retail and commercial development.
- Limited vacant industrial buildings in Fruita mean high development costs for new businesses in the city.
- Fruita is a small community with a small labor force.
- To be more vibrant and create a stronger draw, the number of businesses in downtown would need to be expanded to create a critical mass.

Vision

The City of Fruita supports existing businesses to prosper and grow in Fruita and attracts small businesses through its quality of place.

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Goals

- Enhance downtown by implementing streetscape improvements, securing a funding source for downtown improvements, and incentivizing downtown development and business improvements.
- Work with City Market representatives and other property owners and businesses to expand and improve food and grocery shopping options in Fruita.
- Continue participating in the Grand Junction Economic Partnership.
- Continue refining Fruita's strategy and targeted business types for proactive marketing and recruiting. Balance recruiting and marketing with essential community development activities and supporting local businesses.
- Define an incentives policy appropriate for targeted industries and specific areas of the city.
- Support local business growth through business retention, programs, and assistance with real estate.
- Reserve areas for commercial development towards long-term growth.

What did you like in this section?

- #1 suggest better trip destination center
- #6 #1 support shopping, community activities
- #3 TAX INCENTIVES FOR NEW BUSINESS
- BE MORE BUSINESS FRIENDLY (community + city govt)
- #2 #3, 4, 7
- #5 #6
- #1
- #2
- #5

What did you disagree with?

- Get a 2nd grocery store
- Focus on businesses that involve entertainment apart from bars, cafes and a food
- Add more office space to attract small business

What is this section missing?

- only mention to estimate
- Aspen St. mixed use development AND TRAILERS
- Fruita employs over 525 employees
- Very high income earners return our streets! Block + streets
- Fruita has a full healthcare system! Family physician, Applied EA, Specialists, etc.

Parks, Health, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails

Context

- The Community Center opened in 2011, vastly expanding Fruita's recreational programming and other offerings.
- Fruita Parks and Recreation is currently one of the highest rated departments, although continuing to provide that level of service as programming and facilities expand is a concern.
- The number of events held in the city is increasing, placing pressure on the existing event facilities.
- Only 3% of land within the Fruita city limits is parkland, compared to the national average of 15%.
- The City has completed new regional trails and worked with public agencies to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities on surrounding public lands.

Vision

The City of Fruita leads the Grand Valley in recreation. The City provides unparalleled recreational programming and events, well-maintained parks and recreational facilities that are accessible to all residents, and a well-connected network of bike and pedestrian facilities. The City drives local efforts for world-class outdoor recreation opportunities and regional connectivity. The recreational programming, events, and outdoor recreation opportunities bring the community together around a healthy, active lifestyle. The City takes initiative to protect the natural environment within and surrounding Fruita.

DRAFT PLAN PARTY | OCTOBER 2019

Goals

- Put on recreational programming and events that provide opportunities for residents to be mentally, physically, and socially active.
- Invest in the health of the local community and make a positive impact through programming initiatives, partnerships, and infrastructure.
- Enhance the trail system to allow residents and visitors to walk and ride safely within the city and to surrounding trail systems.
- Strengthen outdoor recreation in greater Fruita through partnerships, funding, and city facilities.
- Ensure the city's parks and recreational facilities are a well-maintained, accessible resource of active and passive recreation spaces for all residents.
- Preserve the natural features of the city and surrounding landscape through partnerships with local land managers and organizations.

What did you like in this section?

- #1 like these goals - my family, friends enjoy all of the new growing bike trails
- Green space to be incorporated w/ every subdivision built to allow for the events in neighborhoods as well.
- Love the idea of enhancing trails - but we would need bike lanes. And we need to create more!
- Encourage developers not to build a parking lot as main as possible but also bring our bike & walk lanes to surrounding areas!
- Love it!
- Share park desperately need help/enhancements! - 1/3 share park
- Agree. The 4th park would be way smaller with even just 2 of 3 small patches. 10 build the small accessible walking paths

What did you disagree with?

- #6
- Intelligence Village across from Dog Park
- Discontinue dog park programming
- need a better Bark Lined
- What is this section missing?
- Incorporating Family Health Center with health initiatives, community
- MIN Bike Classes!
- connectable existing bike paths while we have many trails we DISCONTINUE a DIFFICULT TO CONNECT
- 4 neighborhood hood park
- 5 Dog Park

General Feedback

What aspects of the plan did you appreciate?

Human SCALE
 CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE (50)
 Emphasis on affordable housing options
 Historic preservation
 Better grocery shopping options (near downtown city)
 Market has become crowded + dangerous
 Public involvement

Develop Saltwater Bike path to have a dog park!!

Improve landscaping with native plants
 1/20 (open)

IN FILL

BE MORE BUSINESS FRIENDLY TO ATTRACT RETAIL

Additional ideas, comments, or concerns... Thank you!

Great ideas + display - Thanks!
 KEEP BUILDING COMMUNITY!
 LET IDEAS RISE FROM RESIDENTS, TOO
 COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES - DOWN GRADERS
 ART PROJECTS, SHOWS
 BRILLIANT! good job!

Have downtown circle park area with trees. Restaurant entry on the street + parking could be enhanced + sound free. Encourage more walking in the downtown.

I like the idea of limited parking in town but we will need appropriate parking lots for residents + tourists.

Perserve the Farm + Field

Walking district on Aspen between circle Park + Peach - like Pearl St.

Close Aspen St. to vehicles or put in speed bumps.

Build riverwalk w whitewater park.

Need another grocery store

What aspects of the plan did you disagree with?

I feel like we have plenty of affordable housing in Park!
 I N FILL
 I have to see farmland converted to housing - it provides a place for a variety of animal life, oxygen + general health.
 Farming is an important part of our community.
 Family Health West: the value and impact it has to Fruita was omitted/ignored.

Heck Yes! Info kiosk downtown with maps of businesses downtown + Southside. Plus combi/lo!



FRUITA IN MOTION**OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY**

The City of Fruita held an Open House on May 23, 2019 to kick off the comprehensive plan update process with the public. The event, held at the Fruita Community Center, informed attendees about the plan process and sought their input about Fruita's future. Attendees wrote in question responses, placed dots next to their key issues and favorite vision statement, and indicated key locations for growth and improvement on a large-scale map of Fruita. Other boards covered demographics, Fruita's community values, and downtown. Members of the planning team and advisory committee were available for smaller discussions with attendees as well. 73 people signed in and an estimated 100+ people attended.

RESPONSES

The following paragraphs describe attendees' responses to the questions posed on the Open House Boards.

Demographics: Now vs. 2010 – Many attendees expressed surprise that population growth has been relatively stagnant, as they felt the population had noticeably increased. Many said the town felt busier and mentioned the increased number of visitors. Other responses focused on new facilities (community center, hospital expansion, trails) and improvements to downtown.

Demographics: Fruita in Mesa County – Attendees were very enthusiastic about Fruita's role in Mesa County. Many responses focused on Fruita being a leader or model for the rest of the county and Fruita being the best place to live especially for families. Other responses stressed the outdoor recreation, progressivism, and inclusivity of Fruita.

Fruita's Community Values – Attendees provided a great variety of responses to what else they value about living in Fruita. The access to outdoor recreation, the community events, community diversity and friendliness, and feeling like you have a voice were brought up repeatedly. People also wrote down healthcare, public safety, walkability, agriculture, access to services, and the schools.

Downtown – When asked what they loved about downtown, attendees repeatedly mentioned specific businesses, the friendliness of business owners, and the general friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Others appreciated the public art and bicycle parking, community events, and Circle Park. When asked why they come to downtown, attendees mentioned specific businesses, eating and drinking, community events, to socialize, and to support local businesses. Attendees had many thoughts about what could be done to improve downtown. Popular or repeated ideas include: more restaurants, a grocery store, a bookstore, more seating, an ice cream/dessert shop, non-chain businesses, a place for kids to play and teens to hang out, non-alcoholic events, and more spaces devoted to the arts. Many suggested making downtown more pedestrian friendly, including by making Aspen Street pedestrian only.

Issues – Attendees placed a dot sticker on the key issues they felt the plan should address. The following is an ordered list of those issues from most dots to fewest, with the number in parentheses.

- 1) Downtown character (18)
- 2) Not enough jobs (16)
- 3) Housing options are limited (15)
- 4) Difficult to bike (11)
- 5) Hard to attract businesses (11)
- 6) Housing is expensive (11)
- 7) Parking (9)
- 8) Hard to start a business (7)
- 9) Too much growth (6)
- 10) Traffic (6)
- 11) Not enough growth (5)
- 12) Parks (5)
- 13) Too many tourists (4)
- 14) Difficult to walk (2)

Based on this list, attendees would like the plan to heavily focus on downtown character, jobs, and housing options, with less attention needed for balancing tourism, growth, parks, and walkability.

Other issues people mentioned are adequate irrigation for all subdivisions, gateways and the view from the interstate, bicycle connections over I-70 and at Coulson, retail and restaurant variety, the difficulty and expense of the development process, sustainable growth, the grocery store, VRBOs, and city communications.

Vision – By a slight margin, (29 to 23), attendees preferred Draft Vision 2 (see below). No one expressed a preference for the 2008 plan vision and many hoped that the final vision would encompass aspects of both Draft Vision 1 and Draft Vision 2 and be succinct. Attendees underlined key words that they felt were important to include in the final vision: public lands, inclusive, fun and funky ambiance, the arts, and recreation.

Draft Vision 2: The City of Fruita values quality of place. It's an inclusive city where people love to live, work, and play because the city facilitates community, safe neighborhoods, walking, and biking. The city governs in a way that's responsive to its citizens and prioritizes high impact services and projects. Fruita fosters a fun and funky ambiance that celebrates the arts, agriculture, recreation, and family-friendly events.

Mapping Exercise – Attendees placed different color dots on the map for their neighborhood, places to encourage growth, places to discourage growth, where they feel like they've arrived in Fruita, and places in need of improvement. Attendees were from a variety of city neighborhoods, although the largest concentration was from the downtown area. For areas to encourage growth, attendees largely placed dots on the Kokopelli Business Park, downtown, the city's western edge, and down by the golf course. No one placed dots on the city's eastern or northern edge. For areas not to encourage growth, attendees largely placed their dots south near Snooks Bottom, near Fruita Monument High School, along 19 Road, and along the city's northern edge. Attendees generally felt they arrive in Fruita near Circle Park or when they pass Fruita Monument High School on the interstate. Notably, few people placed their dot right at the interstate exit. For areas in need of improvement, most dots were placed along 6 and 50 just east of Highway 30/Cherry Street. Other dots were placed in downtown, near the community center, at the intersection of 19 and K road, and along Highway 340 near the river crossing.

FRUITA IN MOTION

ROADSHOW SUMMARY

DATES OF ROADSHOW

October 8, 2019: Fruita Lion's Club

October 9, 2019: Fruita Chamber

October 10, 2019: Mesa County Planning Commission

October 15, 2019: Beer or Rootbeer with the City Manager

October 15, 2019: Fruita Rotary Club

October 17, 2019: Fruita Economic Development Forum

October 24, 2019: Rim Rock Elementary Open House

October 29, 2019: Coffee with the City Manager

October 29, 2019: Fruita Middle School Open House

October 30, 2019: Fruita Youth Action Council

November 4, 2019: Walk/Light Hike with City Manager

November 7, 2019: Senior Potluck

November 18, 2019: Fruita Monument High School Open House

November 18, 2019: Board and Commission Appreciation

November 21, 2019: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Open House

December 2, 2019: Shelledy Elementary School Open House

December 11, 2019: Coffee with the City Manager

ROADSHOW KEY FEEDBACK

Future Land Use

- No major takeaways

Land Use, Growth, and Community Character

- Importance of keeping Fruita's small town feel was highlighted.
- Some disagreement with idea of diverse funky housing.
- Concerns about the proliferation of HOAs.
- Mixed comments around housing. Some support for creating affordable housing opportunities, others very opposed to new housing development.

Downtown Fruita's Future Places

- Strong support for vision for downtown core and Aspen Ave. More mixed opinions on vision for downtown east, west, and south.

Downtown Fruita's Future Housing Types

- Overall greatest interest in cottage clusters and mixed-use residential. Limited desire for multiplexes and small-scale apartment complexes. Unclear how well stickers recorded location preference.

TBD

- Most interest in green space and mixed use development. Some interest in innovative commercial. Other comments around interest in national chains.

Economic Development

- Want to encourage small businesses, work from home economy

Transportation

- Desire for better transit to workplaces, light rail in the future.
- Strong desire for ped bridge over I-70 by high school
- Desire for more crosswalks and better labeling of roundabouts

PHROST

- Interest in enhancing accessibility of parks, sidewalks.
- Repeatedly mentioned desires for dog park, pickleball courts, skatepark.

Historic Preservation, Arts, and Education

- Concerns about school overcrowding.
- Desire for greater funding/incentives to support the restoration of older houses.
- Interest in community college or technical school

Infrastructure and Services

- Strong support for keeping mountain reservoirs for rec purposes.

- Desire for citywide WIFI

Short-term rentals

- Strong debate, overall ended up being relatively mixed in results, slight support for city measures.
- More support for ADUs and primary residents being able to rent their units while on vacation.