



Jefferson County Comprehensive Master Plan



Table of Contents

2	Introduction
2	History
7	Demographics
8	Land Use Recommendations
11	General Policies
20	Maps

Introduction

This Area Plan is an update to the 1992 North Mountains Community Plan. The creation of the North Mountains Community Plan started in June of 1989, and involved rigorous participation from a Community Advisory Group comprised of 13 people, chosen by the Board of County Commissioners as representatives of the community. The update of this Plan was started by Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Staff in the spring of 2012 with the intent of incorporating the Community Plan into the Comprehensive Master Plan. Six public meetings were held throughout the update process to gather comments on the Plan. The goal of the update was to re-evaluate the existing conditions related to land use and then create a land use recommendation map and policies that are specific to the North Mountains area.

The recommendations in this North Mountains Area Plan supersede the recommendations in the North Mountains Community Plan. This Plan is shorter than the 1992 plan because any goals or policies that were duplicated in the Comprehensive Master Plan have been removed. This Plan now only contains information, land use recommendations, and policies specific to the North Mountains Area.

History

The research and writing of these historical sketches was done by Jan Brescia, Coal Creek Canyon and Mary Ramstetter, Golden Gate Canyon. Some information was updated in 2013 by Heather Gutherless.

Coal Creek Canyon

Coal Creek, named for deposits of coal found along its banks from Marshall through Louisville and Lafayette to Erie, carved the canyon that bears its name.

Coal Creek Canyon runs from the top of Wondervu Pass, with its breathtaking views of the Arapahoe Range, to the Rocky Flats, where the Front Range of the Rockies meets the plains. Although the Community Plan applies only to the Jefferson County section of the canyon, this historical survey will address all of Coal Creek Canyon.

State Highway 72, which provides easy access to the canyon today, was once the Coal Creek and Black Hawk Wagon Toll Road. It was formally approved for operation by the Colorado Territorial Session on February 2, 1866. Teamsters hauling supplies to miners in Black Hawk paid 60 cents at the mouth of the canyon and another toll at Black Hawk. The 1870 Federal Census listed 57 people living in the Coal Creek precinct. Most of the men listed their occupation as teamster, while others were farmers, sawmill workers, or laborers. There were eight women keeping house, and 20 children. Among the names were 25 year old Michael McNamara and his wife Ellen; their great-great-grandsons, William and Edward Hogan. Today, the Hogan ranch is protected through a conservation easement.

In 1883, Jefferson County Commissioners agreed to survey Coal Creek Canyon Road, and to appoint an overseer to maintain it. After a flood washed out the road in 1894, the commissioners paid laborers \$1.75 a day to rebuild it. The road followed the creek and was maintained by residents hired to grade it with a team of horses and a plow. A line of rocks, pushed by these plows, can still be seen today north of Highway 72 at the mouth of the canyon.

After mining declined and the Homestead Act made land available to settlers, the canyon was populated by immigrants from Germany, Sweden, and England. Charles Anderson was granted the first homestead patent in 1873 for 160 acres in Section 18. Other early pioneers in the 1880s and 1890s were August Brumm, whose grandson, Leavitt Booth, continued to live in the canyon, John Caspar, George Rand, Robert Eckhardt, Nils Nilson, James O'Brien, and Bruce Edwards, whose decedents, the Ransons, still live in Plainview. Charles and Louisa Caspar Wilson settled at the mouth of the canyon, and their grandson, John Boyle, lived on the family ranch until he sold it recently. Between 1900 and 1920, Harry Jackson homesteaded the present Copperdale Ranch, Nels Bengson ranched at Beaver Creek north of Twin Spruce Rd., William Seeley lived on the north slope of Blue Mountain, and Arthur G. Seaver bought land on the north and south sides of the road near the present Chapel-in-the-Hills. The property at 30410 Highway 72, served as a stagecoach stop, inn, and dance hall. There was a stable for the horses, and a veranda porch for socializing. The homesteaders erected a one-room log cabin as a school on Twin Spruce Road. In 2002, that school was relocated to the Coal Creek Canyon K-8 school site. A picture of the school, dated 1893, shows Leavitt Booth's Aunt Alvina and Uncle Gus Brumm as students. Children attended school from May 1 to September 30, because it was too difficult to travel in the winter, and some children boarded out with relatives in Golden or Nederland if no teacher was available. The families ranched, farmed, and cut timber for railroad ties, mine props, fences and buildings. Supplies were purchased in Arvada or in Golden.

David Moffat, Denver mining king and financier, brought the Denver Northwest & Pacific Railroad to the canyon at the turn of the century. He wanted to build a line from Denver west to Salt Lake City in order to bypass the southern route previous railroads had taken to avoid the treacherous mountains. Known as the Moffat Road, the line was surveyed from July to November of 1902, and work began in December, 1902. Steam engines could not be brought to the steep site, so the men used mule packs, dug the grades by hand, blasted the rocks with dynamite, and drilled the tunnels by hand. On June 23, 1904, the first train steamed into Mammoth, today's Tolland, bringing sightseers from Denver to picnic and pick wildflowers at Yankee Doodle Lake. The trestle crossing Coal Creek was 265 feet long and 60 feet high. It stood until 1938 when a devastating flood washed out the road and damaged the bridge. It was replaced with the current 40 foot span, built 250 feet west of the old bridge. A post office and grocery store also were built at the Crescent Station train stop, where the railroad tracks cross Gross Dam Road today.

The canyon population grew very slowly from 1910 to 1940. A new school was built at 29280 Highway 72 in 1916. It was known as the "Columbine School", in Jefferson County District 27; in 1948 it was expanded into a home. Another school was built near Plainview off the main road in 1935; this was used until May, 1951, when children were bused to Golden. A small grocery store and restaurant was built in 1932 on the southwest corner of Highway 72 and Twin Spruce Rd., described as "soup kitchen for wood haulers." The site later became Marten's store, owned by Lester and Ruth Marten, and has since been used for other commercial uses, such as real estate offices.

After World War II, the population had grown sufficiently to require community services. In 1946, residents formed the Coal Creek Improvement Association and the volunteer fire department. In 1947, the Community Hall was built with volunteer labor on land donated by Henry Zeller. The Coal Creek Women's Club was organized in June, 1949, meeting twice monthly at members' homes. Through dinners, bake sales and bazaars, the women raised nearly \$5,000 toward expanding the community hall, drilling its well, putting on a new roof, and equipping the kitchen. In December, 1949, the first firehouse was built, bermed into the side of the hill on the north side of Highway 72 and Crescent Park Rd. The fire engine, a surplus Army Command car, was donated by the State Forestry Department,

and equipment was purchased through local fundraising and donations. Association members persuaded the Rural Electric Association to run lines for electricity in November, 1947. Telephone lines, with eight parties, were installed in November, 1950 from the Boulder office. A committee of Leavitt Booth, Charles Ruble, Verne Houlton, Pat Berry, and Francis Evans worked to get Coal Creek Canyon Road paved. The mouth of the canyon to Twin Spruce Rd. was paved in 1952; up to Wondervu in 1955, to Pinecliffe in 1956, and to Highway 119 in June, 1958. Property owners along the road donated rights-of-way and it was designated as a state highway. Funds were provided by Jefferson and Gilpin counties, the state, and matching federal monies.

The opening of Rocky Flats, or the Dow Chemical Plant, as it was called then, in 1951 brought new residents to the canyon. The population increased to about 500, and in October, 1958, new telephone equipment was installed, bringing the dial system to the canyon. The work was completed on February 28, 1959; the area was assigned a Glendale 8 exchange. Later known as 458, this exchange was changed to 642 in July, 1963.

In April, 1957, heavy snows of over 5 feet caused the roof of the firehouse to collapse. A new building, now Station 1, was constructed east of the old one in 1959. Station 2 was completed in 1980 and Station 3 in 1989. Fundraising was a never-ending task, so on August 10, 1959, a public hearing was held to establish a tax district for the fire department. There were no protests, and the district lines were drawn to include the three counties of the canyon: Jefferson, Boulder, and Gilpin. The volunteers fought many small grass fires sparked by trains and several large fires: in 1951, the Community Hall's floor was damaged; in 1954, a fire broke out during the construction of Gross Dam; and in 1971, 25 acres burned east of Blue Mountain Estates.

Coal Creek Canyon was first zoned by the Jefferson County Commissioners as Agricultural One (A-1) and existing businesses as "commercial" in September, 1951. Platting had begun in 1948, with the Hilltop as the first development of E.R. (Emrich Rudolph or "Rudi") Kuhlmann. These first homes were summer cabins. Mr. Kuhlmann, and later his wife, Elsie, and son-in-law, Lionel Brook, platted Georgian Woods and Sylvan Heights in 1952, Blue Mountain View, Lillis Lane, and Vonnie Claire Heights in 1953, and Coal Creek Heights in 1961. Roads were named for family members. In 1955, Walter Burke developed Burland Ranch, and in 1959, Leavitt Booth platted Blue Mountain Estates, and then Crescent Park in 1965.

In the 1960s the population had grown sufficiently to support a local school. On November 5, 1962, 60 students attended the new Coal Creek Elementary School. The architect designed the building to complement the ruggedness of the mountains, with the roof sloping to accommodate northwest wind patterns.

Today, Coal Creek Canyon is a thriving community of about 2,400 people. There are two local monthly magazines, the Coal Creek Canyon Mountain Messenger, LLC, and the Highlander. There is a local day care center, two gas stations, an auto repair shop, a coffee shop, a liquor store, a Kwik Mart, and a US Post Office. Residents enjoy a place of spectacular beauty and the spirit of community that can be experienced in the holiday dinners, blood drives, and fundraising efforts to help victims of fire and auto accidents. Through the Area Plan, we hope to sustain the North Mountains area as a place that people are proud to call home.

Golden Gate Canyon

The Golden Gate Canyon area is bounded on the south by Clear Creek Canyon, on the west by Colorado 119, on the north by the northern boundaries of Golden Gate Canyon State Park and Ralston Creek, and on the east by the uplift of the foothills.

Prehistoric sites excavated in the Van Bibber drainage, incorrectly called Magpie Gulch, revealed the presence of Woodland Occupation, 600-1000 A.D. Highway construction in 1975 unearthed a prehistoric human burial in the Guy Gulch creek bed directly south of Robinson Hill Road. The bones, those of a man, 30-35 years of age, left-handed, 5-1/2 feet tall, were thrown in a gunny sack and the site destroyed without further archaeological investigation.

Beginning in the 1800s historic Indian tribes, chiefly Arapahoe, migrated through the region and campsites have been found on the backs of the mountains. Horace Greeley made extensive mention of the Arapahoe Travois Trail between Golden and Black Hawk and early settlers referred to the gulch, by which the trail descended to the prairie, as Indian Gulch. A U.S.G.S. error gave this name to another gulch which the settlers called Magpie Gulch for the large number of magpies which wintered there. The settlers' Magpie Gulch opens on Clear Creek Canyon and is extremely steep and difficult to climb through. As a result of this transposition, confusion exists between historical accounts and mapped locations. The Arapahoe travois trail left the prairie through the original Indian Gulch, used the backs of the mountains to reach Guy Gulch, crossed into the Elk Creek drainage and turned northwest to follow Smith Hill Road to the junction with Clear Creek.

In 1820, Major S. H. Long assigned the first known English names to landmarks. They were Cannonball Creek, now called Clear Creek, and Cannonball Gulch for the canyon through which the creek flows. In the 1830s, mountain man Louis Vasquez gave his name to this creek by locating his trading post at the creek's junction with the South Platte. Ralston was the next name to surface but it has not been determined if the name came with gold seekers in 1850 or in 1858. The earliest known written description of Golden's nearby foothills was by Rufus Sage in 1841.

Indian names for landmarks were swept away by the rapid settlement that resulted from the 1859 Pikes Peak Gold Rush. No attempt seems to have been made to preserve Indian culture, although Indian migration continued into the 1900s. Early settlers spoke of shoeing Indian ponies and of Indian amusement at the wagon roads crawling through the bottoms of the canyons instead of staying to the rolling backs of the mountains. Reports of harassment on the part of the Indians are minor, having to do with stealing baked goods and chickens from the settlers.

By Spring 1859, an estimated 50,000 gold seekers lived in the prairie settlements within sight of the mountains. Their inability to find great stores of gold in the creek beds was exceeded only by their reluctance to explore the headwaters of those creeks. In May 1859, John Gregory, an experienced gold miner who offered his services to a party from Indiana, found lode gold on Clear Creek's north fork. The news reached Denver like a thunderclap. Gold seekers poured by the thousands up the road Gregory had engineered to accommodate the Hoosiers' supplies. Today's highways follow Gregory's original route from Centennial House in Guy Gulch to Black Hawk via Colorado State Highway 119.

This road ascended the approximately 7,150 foot peak immediately north of the entrance to Golden Gate Canyon. The miners called it Enter Mountain and all lamented its steepness. A few pointed out the beauties which could be seen from the top. One of the most detailed descriptions of the road was written by Horace Greeley, who noted the grave on the face of Enter Mountain of a youth who accidentally shot himself.

This route in its entirety was used approximately 2-1/2 months. By the time a wagon toll road was punched through the canyon south of Enter Mountain, two miners' supply towns had sprung up near the canyon entrance: Golden Gate and Rocky Mountain cities, the second and third cities in what would become Jefferson County and the first two cities to supply the Gregory diggings.

Golden Gate was literally Golden's Gate City, founded by Tom Golden and named for two tall rock columns immediately inside the canyon entrance. From a distance, the columns resembled Mother Hubbard and a man wearing a flat hat. Both columns were toppled when the road was moved from the south side of the creek and up the mountainside in the 1900s. The tumbled remains of a portion of the rock gate are visible on the hillside above the road. Golden's Gate City, also known as Gate City, was also called Baled Hay City for the large amounts of baled hay sold there.

Rocky Mountain City, east of Golden Gate, appears to have lasted only a year or two at best. The canyon to which Golden Gate gave its name was also called Eight Mile for the distance from the prairie to the top of the canyon. In the 1860s the canyon got another name which came to be the official name for the water drainage itself: Tucker Gulch.

Alfred Tucker settled in Golden Gate City in the early 1860s and claimed the land previously surveyed for townsites. He also claimed the toll road up the canyon and took the road's builder, Dan McCleery, to court. The court awarded Tucker possession. In 1862, Tucker began collecting tolls in the canyon. The demise of Golden Gate City has been laid to Tucker. It has also been laid to the opening of Clear Creek Canyon in 1863 to wagon traffic. This latter reason was probably invalid as the Clear Creek wagon road washed out constantly and was eventually abandoned. By 1872, when the railroad was built up Clear Creek Canyon, Golden Gate City had already withered away. But Tom Golden's name remained: a mountain called both Mt. Tom and Golden Peak, the town of Golden, Golden Gate State Park, and Golden Gate Canyon.

The base of the original Gregory road and the sites of several Golden Gate buildings, including a hotel, were located east of the Golden Gate Canyon entrance at approximately the Jefferson County Shop site.

Other well-known names dating from gold-rush days are Michigan Hill, named by freight haulers from Michigan; Mt. Douglas, possibly named for Illinois Congressman Stephen Douglas, Lincoln's unsuccessful opponent in the 1860 presidential race; Smith Hill (Gilpin County) for road builders E.B. and N.K. Smith; Belcher, Bowser, Drew, Guy, and Robinson hills, and Crawford and Guy gulches, all for early settlers.

Some of the five one-room grade schools took their names from their locations. There was also one unnamed school on Belcher Hill prior to the opening there of the Belcher Hill School. All served as community centers for a wide variety of get-togethers including dances and Sunday School. One church, no longer in existence, was erected near the Belcher Hill Road.

The Union Pacific Railroad (using the Colorado Central name) operated through Clear Creek Canyon until 1941, with seven stops within the canyon itself. There was also a Union Pacific railroad stop at the mouth of Ralston Creek.

The Golden Gate Canyon environment has been more or less under siege since gold seekers arrived on the scene, a pick in one hand, a match in the other. The fires, set to locate rock outcroppings, were called the "miners' fires" and took a considerable toll on human life. Eventually the fires were declared illegal by a court in Denver.

Travelers plinked away at every animal in sight for target practice.

The traffic in the canyons stirred up so much dust that dray animals choked and died and the resulting stench caused travelers to insist that the dead animals be hauled away.

Prior to World War II agricultural and timbering interests severely depleted the native pastures and greatly reduced wildlife habitat. Meadowlands were plowed up and, as a consequence, washed away. Extensive timbering denuded the hillsides and resulted in severe gullies. Ironically, many of the trees cut down were so huge that they were left to rot where they fell. Wildlife was overhunted and well into the 1940s hunters searched for days to find a track, and then tracked that track for days to find the animal.

The Schwartzwald Mine produced uranium the 1950s to the late 1990's.

In more recent years, the public and private sectors have extracted gravel from area pits and mining operations continue to be proposed.

Since World War II, the region has evolved into a bedroom community. This change has gradually reduced pressure on the native grasses, timber and wildlife. Jefferson County's White Ranch Open Space Park and Golden Gate Canyon State Park are jewels in the crown of the area. Another asset has been Senate Bill 35 which required County regulation of subdivision development. Then in 1996, the citizens of Crawford Gulch requested the County create a new low density zone district to limit development to 1 home per 35 acres. The Agricultural Thirty-five (A-35) zone district was formed and residents of the area voluntarily down-zoned to this new district.

The two historical sites remembered by markers in the Golden Gate Canyon area are inside the mouth of Tucker Gulch at what is called Quarter-mile Gulch. A plaque on a granite rock commemorates Tucker's toll road. The second marker is located at Centennial Ranch house on Golden Gate Canyon Road. It is hoped that our historical heritage will be better commemorated than the Indian culture has been.

Demographics

Demographics for the Area Plans are updated when an individual Area Plan is updated. Demographic information, such as trends in economic data, population forecasting and aging, influences the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Master Plan. Data is gathered primarily from the US Census, Colorado State Demographer, Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), Jefferson County R-1 School District and the Jefferson Economic Development Corporation (Jeffco EDC). The most current demographics can be found on the Jefferson County Demographics website.

Plan Area Boundaries do not always correspond with census tract data, therefore, staff derives information from the best data available.

Land Use Recommendations

Specific land use recommendations are shown on the Land Use Map. Some areas have additional policies that apply. Those policies are listed below.

Open Space

Land already acquired with Jefferson County Open Space funds, land identified as park land and held by a Homeowner's Association or other similar organization and land owned by local, state, or federal government for use by the public as park lands should be preserved, and increased, where possible. Proposals to rezone open space should be evaluated against the criteria for rezoning open space in the Zoning Resolution and the recommendations in the Comprehensive Master Plan.

Residential Uses

This rural, mountain area is characterized by expansive views of natural terrain, abundant wildlife, quiet, relatively low levels of traffic, and high levels of privacy. These features, plus proximity to metropolitan Denver, are reasons the North Mountains area is a "place of choice" for residents. The natural environment in the area should be respected and enhanced when development occurs.

The recommendations in this section are intended to accommodate future housing needs in a way that is compatible with the unique resources of the North Mountains area. When development is proposed, the characteristics of the site are identified and development impacts are evaluated. It is during the development review process that wildlife and visually sensitive areas are identified, the capacity of the roads to carry additional traffic is determined, the water and sanitation service is verified, and the availability of essential services identified.

Policies

1. Provide for housing opportunities consistent with the unique resources and constraints of the North Mountains area. Density recommendations are based on slope, wildfire hazard, wildlife habitat, compatibility and mineral quality.
2. Use the natural terrain to create a high level of privacy for existing and future residents.
3. New residential development should complement the character of the community, comply with the recommendations in other sections of this Plan, and comply with the applicable criteria in the Mountain Site Design Criteria section.
4. No transfer of density should be allowed from areas inside the Geologic Hazard Overlay Zone District.
5. In Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and County designated floodplain hazard areas, no credit for the transfer of density should be given. Development within the floodplain should only be allowed when the development is meeting the Floodplain Development Regulations.

Note: Policies 4 and 5 are based on the premise that the Geologic Hazard Overlay Zone and the Floodplain Overlay Zone District maps adopted by the County currently restrict development and therefore it is not reasonable to give a development transfer credit.

6. Housing densities shown in this Plan should not be construed as guarantees of the number of residential units which may be built upon a site. The actual number of units is determined by applying the recommendations in this Plan and by the degree of compliance with criteria in the Mountain Site Design Criteria section.

7. There are areas of good quality sand, gravel, and quarry aggregate (highest level identified in the Mineral Extraction Policy Plan) around Coal Creek Canyon. If these areas are developed for housing, they should remain at low densities (at least 1 du/10 acres) in order to minimize impacts should those resources be extracted.

Specific Land Use Recommendations

Reference the Coal Creek Canyon Land Use Map and the Golden Gate Canyon Land Use Map at the end of this Plan for the specific land use recommendations for each parcel.

Area 1: Area of Stability

These areas have already been subdivided, in many cases under previous regulations that allowed for lot sizes smaller than what would currently be allowed. Any redevelopment in these areas should be consistent with the character and typical lot sizes of the area.

Area 2: 1 dwelling unit(du)/5 acres with a Forest Management Plan

These areas are shown as Severe Wildfire Hazard Areas, however, they do not correspond with steep slope, therefore, the hazard may be able to be mitigated. To determine whether mitigation is feasible and the 1 du/5 acre lot size can be achieved a Forest Management Plan, as specified in the Land Development Regulations, should be submitted at the time of rezoning. Planning Staff will evaluate that Plan and determine whether the reduced density recommendation is appropriate or if the property should be developed at a density of 1 du/10 acres.

Area 3: 1 du/5 acres

Area 4: 1 du/10 acres

Area 5: 1 du/35 acres. Note: Some of these areas have additional density restrictions imposed by conservation easements.

Mixed Use and Non-Residential Uses

The amount and location of retail stores, office buildings, restaurants, commercial services, and light industrial operations help determine the character of the community. Proper planning is necessary to maintain the balance of these uses with residential development and maintain the mountain rural community and its natural setting. The absence of public water and sewer districts could constrict the type and amount of retail, office and light industrial development in the North Mountains. Access to goods and services in Golden, Boulder and Arvada reduces the demand for extensive commercial and light industrial activity in the area.

Policies

1. Accommodate retail, office and light industrial land uses which:
 - a. demonstrate compatibility with the surrounding land uses in terms of visual appearance, traffic generation, water and sewer requirements, noise and air quality impacts;
 - b. are scaled to support the convenience needs of local residents; and
 - c. provide limited employment opportunities.
2. Generally, these uses should be located within one of the designated activity centers to avoid strip development along canyon roads, concentrate employment and traffic, provide convenience, and to avoid proliferation of light industrial development outside of designated centers.
3. Activity centers should serve the daily needs of residents and tourists.

4. Outside activity centers, non-residential uses should follow the criteria in the “Other Potential Uses in Designated Residential Areas” in the Development Review Section, except that Cottage Industry Heavy Uses are not recommended within this Plan area.

Specific Land Use Recommendations

The activity centers proposed for the North Mountains area are intended to minimize the pressure for strip development along the roads. By designating areas where commercial development should occur, sprawl of commercial development will be minimized. These centers would provide convenient access to goods and services needed by local residents and should be sited and designed to be compatible with the surrounding area.

The centers should offer benefits to residents by providing services within the area. This could lead to a reduction in miles driven and would contribute to better air quality in the mountains and the metropolitan region, and lower transportation costs. The centers are not intended to provide the major employment opportunities or duplicate the diversity of goods and services found in the metropolitan commercial areas.

Maps of each center are located at the end of this Plan.

Area 6: Coal Creek Canyon Center

1. This activity center is designated for Mountain Scale Neighborhood Commercial and mixed use center where the services and goods available are needed daily by residents within the community.
2. A minimum of 25% landscaped area should be provided for each development.
3. A limited amount of attached or detached residential or a mix of residential and commercial in one building may be appropriate in this center.
4. All properties in this center that front State Highway 72 should gain access from Highway 72, where feasible. Access from Skyline Drive or Twin Spruce Road should be minimized.
5. The property in the northwestern portion of the center that is located behind the Sinclair Station and the Auto Repair shop should only have commercial uses on approximately the eastern half of the property. The western half of the property should either transition to residential uses or should be a buffer area with no development.
6. The County should create a specific area plan for this center and include all appropriate stakeholders. The purpose of this plan should be to draft a conceptual design for redevelopment of this center. The objectives for the plan should be to:
 - a. rehabilitate the stream corridor;
 - b. improve the quality and extent of services;
 - c. improve physical appearance and architectural standards;
 - d. provide pedestrian access;
 - e. improve access and parking capacity;
 - f. provide landscaping and visual impact mitigation;
 - g. create a stream-side park and other community facilities;
 - h. incorporate the existing commercial uses; and
 - i. increase the economic viability of the center.

7. The specific area plan should include the following:
 - a. Access and parking plan for the center, including the expansion parcels.
 - b. Landscape plan for the center which identifies the mitigation measures necessary to reclaim mountain scarring and unvegetated areas.
 - c. Design for a park and other public community facilities.
 - d. The County maintenance facility on SH 72 should be substantially landscaped to minimize visual impact. Improvements to this site should be identified.
 - e. Designated location for ride sharing and Regional Transportation District (RTD) buses, if service is restored in the future.
 - f. The funding source(s) required to implement the Plan recommendations. Techniques which could be used include creation of special overlay zone or improvement districts, public/private joint ventures, grants, and awards.
 - g. An implementation schedule which establishes completion dates and assigns responsibilities for each action.

Area 7: Golden Gate Canyon Center

1. This activity center should be a convenience center with a minimum of 25% open space. The level of commercial uses should follow the Limited Commercial definition. The development should have the appearance of small storefronts and offices and avoid an unbroken expanse of walls.
2. While the County Shops and Golden Gate Grange are in operation, these areas should be supported as Community Uses. If these uses cease, the property may be appropriate for Limited Commercial or Community Uses.
3. The objectives for this center should be to provide for convenience shopping and enhance fire protection for area residents. The plan for this center should include:
 - a. access and parking plan which provides for shared parking;
 - b. criteria for structures which would blend with the existing terrain, i.e., the structures should avoid expanses of unbroken walls and should have an architectural design compatible with the rural mountain setting;
 - c. established setbacks from the roads for structures;
 - d. techniques which make maximum use of the topography and existing vegetation to provide screening; and
4. The Golden Gate Fire District should be consulted about locating a fire station at this site.

General Policies

Hazards

The protection of the environment, property and life should be considered in the planning and land development review process. All three factors need to be examined to properly locate residential and commercial development. The policies in this section identify hazards in the North Mountains area and appropriate mitigation techniques.

Wildfire Hazards

The threat of wildfire is a constant hazard faced by mountain area residents. As development and related human activity continues to increase in the North Mountains area, wildfire risk will increase. It is important to reduce the risk of wildfire through mitigation, maintenance, education, and by providing adequate access for fire protection equipment and water supplies.

1. There are three fire districts that provide service to this area, the Golden Gate Canyon Fire Protection District, the Coal Creek Fire Protection District, and the Fairmount Fire Protection District. Each of these districts has created a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). These Plans are a valuable resource for mitigation techniques for specific neighborhoods and specific roads. These Plans should be reviewed for mitigation strategies that can be implemented when new development is proposed. Some of the strategies especially applicable to rezonings and special uses are:

- a. Thinning of vegetation along access roads.
- b. Completing Shaded Fuelbreaks along primary evacuation routes, main roads, and secondary evacuation routes throughout the Plan Area.
- c. Forest thinning
- d. Construction of cisterns and/or emergency water supplies.
- e. Evaluation of secondary evacuation or emergency access routes. Options for completing these connections should be considered when development proposals occur near these road segments. Substandard road templates should be considered when providing emergency access.
- f. Designation of helicopter dip sites.
- g. Designation of community safety zones.

Specific locations for each of these mitigation strategies are called out in the CWPP's.

Radiation Hazards

Radioactive elements are natural components of the mineral rich rocks of the North Mountains Area. Radon is emitted from the earth and can accumulate inside buildings where it can become a health hazard. Preventive and corrective measures can be used to avoid and mitigate the hazard and it is less expensive and more efficient to construct a home using simple radon mitigation methods than trying to retrofit an existing structure once high levels of radon are discovered. Some of the Uranium deposits occurring in the North Mountains area have been mined. Uranium mines have been mapped and are not considered suitable for construction purposes by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

1. If radioactivity is above standards set by Public Health agencies, it should be mitigated or the types of land uses and densities should be limited to reduce impact to current and future citizens.
2. Development occurring in areas of high natural radioactivity should use building techniques that prevent high radon levels.
3. Uranium mines should not be built upon, nor should mining residue be used for construction purposes.

Floodplain Hazards

Construction in or any alteration to a floodplain can cause a potential danger to life, property, and the environment. The Jefferson County Floodplain Overlay District regulates development in the floodplains.

1. Small impoundments under 10 feet, not regulated for safety by the State Division of Water Resources, should be examined by the County and/or the State to determine if a potential flood hazard exists.

Hazardous Materials & Waste

The generation, transportation and disposal of toxic and hazardous wastes are a serious concern. However, the extent and nature of such activities in the North Mountains area is currently unknown.

1. Additional waste transfer or recycling stations should be located in the North Mountains area when the demand for them exists. One criterion for location should be close access to major arterials or freeways.

Historic Resources

The North Mountains area of Jefferson County is rich in prehistorical, historical and archaeological resources which provide links to the past, chronicle change, and mark growth. They are often fragile, limited and nonrenewable, and their destruction would be an irreversible loss to the community.

1. When new development is proposed, the Historic map adopted as part of this Plan should be reviewed to determine the presence of historical sites and structures, and the development proposal should be referred to the appropriate organizations and state agencies for review and comment. Any site specific information related to archaeological resources should be secured and restricted.

2. An incentive program should be considered to expand awareness of the heritage of the North Mountains area. It should encourage people to report archaeological finds, while respecting public and private ownership. Examples include: projectile points, e.g., arrowheads, pottery shards, etc., and the locations where they are found. Both prehistoric and historic artifacts should be kept in its found location and documented.

3. There are three areas with historic designations in this Plan area. As development occurs, a way should be found to maintain the integrity of these resources. These resources include:

- a. The Tallman Ranch, which is a State Registered Site
- b. The Earl Cooper Family Residence, which has County Landmark Designation
- c. The Baughman Family Ranch, which is a Centennial Site

Mountain Site Design Criteria

The dramatic beauty of the surrounding natural landscape is a major asset in the mountains. Scenic or high quality elements of the natural landscape need to be maintained or enhanced, while disturbed areas may need to be rehabilitated or enhanced. All development should be integrated, through location and design, with the existing natural character.

The purpose of these criteria is to assist and encourage landowners and their designers in creating high quality development which respects the environment and to encourage creative and flexible approaches to site design. By using the criteria listed below, it is anticipated that more sensitive development will occur. It is encouraged that these criteria be used not only during rezoning and

special use cases, but also for subdivision plat, exemptions from platting, and site development plan cases.

The varying characteristics of individual sites will determine which of the following criteria may be applicable. In some cases, all of the criteria may be applicable, while in others, only some may apply.

Policies

1. Naturally occurring wet meadows are scarce and should not be disturbed.
2. Group buildings and design development to ensure privacy between homes.
3. Limit large, uninterrupted expanses of parking areas by incorporating landscaping, utilizing building placement, landform, or other techniques. Berms and landscaping are preferred to screen parking lots.
4. Use only wall mounted, under canopy, or monument style signs. Integrate monument signs into the landscape with vegetation, or into the architecture of the buildings.
5. Use privacy (opaque) fences only to provide private areas immediately around buildings or for noise attenuation.
6. Screen satellite dishes, or select design and color that will blend with the surrounding environment.
7. Screen propane tanks and trash containers from adjacent off-site views.
8. Use pitched roofs or a design solution that prevents the appearance of large roof planes.
9. In high wind areas, structures should be sited to avoid adverse impacts from blowing snow on adjacent roads and building entrances.
10. Revegetation of disturbed land in mountain areas is difficult given the lack of irrigation water, the thin layer of top soil, and the short growing season; therefore, land disturbance should be minimized.
11. Preserve existing vegetation for screening and erosion control.
12. Landscaping should emphasize the use of native vegetation that is hardy and drought tolerant. Earth shaping in conjunction with the creative use of rock are alternative techniques which should be considered.
13. The Viewshed Analysis maps should be reviewed when development is proposed and the design standards in this section and the Visual Resources element of the Comprehensive Master Plan should apply.

Open Space and Trails

Public and private undeveloped land is essential to maintaining the mountain community character. The large amounts of natural, undeveloped open area is integral to the character of much of the North Mountains area. As of 2013, there is approximately 6 acres of publicly owned open space per person in the Plan Area. It is important to retain this open character as development occurs.

Much of the study area is within a sensitive and valuable environmental zone. These lands are an important source of food and shelter for numerous wildlife and plant species.

Agriculture and ranching, although a declining activity, are supported as important land uses and amenities of the community. There are no incentives in the present system of land use controls and tax assessment policies for owners of larger, privately-owned, undeveloped lands to maintain them as agricultural uses. The State's requirement of annual verification of agricultural use, to qualify for

agricultural tax status, and other restrictive rules regarding tax assessments, makes it difficult to maintain large land holdings.

Open Space Recreation

1. Active and passive recreational sites should be located throughout the Plan area to diffuse the impact of growth on any one area. These recreational areas could create greenbelt separations that would help preserve the uniqueness of this area.
2. When communities which are not served by a recreation/park district want to provide recreation and community facilities, and formation of a district is not feasible, the County should assist them with design, construction, and funding. Park fees dedicated by development in the area would be one source of funding. The Jefferson County Open Space Department would be another resource for communities. The Douglas Mountain/Robinson Hill Road community is one example of an area where residents have expressed an interest in providing some multiple-use paths, playing fields, and other small-scale community facilities.
3. Open Space should continue to be secured in the North Mountains area as properties become available.
4. Designated private open space should be used to provide a link to the community's cultural and historic ranching heritage.

Trails

1. Trails should be unpaved and marked, and where appropriate, tunnels should be considered.
2. Trails should be separated and buffered with landscaping from streets and roads when possible.
3. The Open Space and Trails map in this Plan shows the major trail corridors, existing and proposed, for the North Mountains area.

Public Facilities, Services, & Utilities

The perception of the quality of life in a community depends, in part, on the quality of the schools, fire, sheriff and emergency services, and utilities. These services should be compatible with this mountain environment, consistent, reliable and adequate for the development it serves, and appropriate for the North Mountains area and should not be expected to duplicate the level of service found in urban areas.

The conditions relevant to fire protection are the location of wildfire hazards, road network, proximity of fire stations to development, training of personnel, the type of equipment, and availability of water. It should be recognized that fire protection and rescue services are provided by volunteer personnel in this community.

1. New community uses should be designed to complement the mountain environment in scale, building materials, and architecture. Separate and distinct facilities and activities should be close to each other to create true community centers, i.e., youth centers, senior resource centers, and libraries.
2. New development should address the funds necessary to expand the capacity of the district as needed for the development, including buildings, equipment and training.
3. Fire District Master Plans should be considered as an Addendum to this Community Plan as they are developed. The fire districts should be encouraged to include in the master plans, a capital improvements and training budget, map of the district, etc.
4. Intergovernmental and interdistrict agreements on joint responsibility for outlying areas should

be adopted to ensure that response time is as short as possible.

5. Consolidation of fire districts should be explored to maximize fire protection capabilities.
6. Employers in the North Mountains should coordinate with local fire districts to support fire protection service. Examples vary widely from providing additional water storage to allowing employee release time for volunteer firefighters.
7. Installation of sprinkler systems should be encouraged in new development, residential and commercial, when there is adequate water supply and pressure. The districts and insurers should consider incentive programs for the installation of sprinkler systems. When sufficient water pressure is not present, then a modified sprinkler system which protects exit paths should be considered.
8. Planning for school locations should:
 - a. reduce commuting time and distance;
 - b. ensure facility design that is sensitive to the mountain environment;
 - c. ensure facility design that provides for shared use of facilities by the community; and
 - d. provide continued community involvement in decisions on school facilities.
9. Jefferson County R-1 Schools and Jefferson County should continue to monitor growth, the impacts of development proposals on school facilities, and seek alternatives to the overcrowding of schools.
10. Applicants and operators of group homes should be knowledgeable about the unique problems and opportunities associated with mountain living. The adequacy of support services to meet the special needs of group home residents should be carefully considered.

Sensory Impacts

Air quality and lack of urban noise are part of the character of the rural community in the North Mountains Area. Air quality can be addressed through adherence to existing standards and regulations, Transportation Demand Management, and improved dust control. High noise levels associated with certain land uses would not be considered compatible unless mitigation can decrease the number of noise sources or alter how the noise is heard.

1. RTD and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) should do a survey of commuter patterns in the North Mountains area which can guide the development of car and van-pool programs and public transit service. These should be publicized through community organizations and local publications.
2. New Developments should minimize noise. Quietness is highly valued in the North Mountains Community.

Transportation

Maintaining the mountain community character of the North Mountains area is a primary concern of residents.

Golden Gate Canyon, State Highway 72 (SH 72) and US Highway 6 (US 6) are weekday commuter routes for local and neighboring county residents, as well as routes for pass-through recreational users. The topography of Golden Gate, Coal Creek, and Clear Creek Canyons constrains expansion of these roads because of increased costs and visual impacts. The different priorities of local residents

and travelers through the community should be resolved in a way that preserves the visual amenities and the integrity of the mountain community.

This system should provide local road links that foster a sense of community and the facilities and programs needed to support alternatives to single occupancy vehicle travel, i.e., pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle paths, park-n-ride locations, and increased ride-sharing opportunities.

Policies

1. The design and maintenance of the North Mountains road network should recognize the traffic generated in neighboring counties, especially Gilpin and Clear Creek.
2. Roads should be limited to two through lanes with appropriate turning, acceleration and deceleration lanes, climbing lanes and other safety improvements. Given these system constraints, the Plan fully recognizes that during certain times of the day a lower level of service may occur on some area road segments which will result in more congested roadways. Residents of the area prefer, some occasional congestion, over major roadway widening.
3. The Plan accepts Level of Service (LOS) D during peak travel times and recommends that when LOS D extends into nonpeak travel times (given current road and lane configuration) the County should implement road improvements to avoid a LOS below D.

This recommendation is intended to ensure that a level of service lower than D during off peak travel times does not become the norm by default, and that road improvements are made concurrently with new development to avoid a LOS lower than D as long as possible. When it becomes apparent that all appropriate road improvements have been made and continued build out of the Plan will result in LOS E during nonpeak travel times, the County and the community should work together to resolve the problems.

4. Encourage the installation of paved shoulders, delineation of the roadway, and installation of roadside safety features with new development or road improvement projects. Specific concerns identified by the residents include:
 - a. Steep drop-offs on Douglas Mountain Road
 - b. Intersections of SH 72 with Copperdale Lane, Ranch Elsie Road, Twin Spruce Road and Skyline Road
 - c. Site distance at the intersection of Golden Gate Canyon Road and Guy Hill Road
 - d. Visibility along the curve just east of mile marker 16 on Golden Gate Canyon Road
 - e. Ability to pass slow traffic on SH 72. CDOT will be evaluating the feasibility of passing lanes with the Denver Water Board-Gross Reservoir permit.
5. Road improvements and right-of-way dedications by developers should include sufficient width to accommodate multi-use paths, where appropriate. Maintenance and liability coverage agreements for these paths should be secured.
6. Sand should be removed from paved roads as quickly as possible to reduce vehicle damage, air pollution, vegetation damage, and to improve the safety of cyclists.
7. Public transportation should be encouraged as a viable alternative to private vehicle travel. It can reduce the number of vehicles using the roads and, in effect, extend the capacity of the roads for a longer period of time, as well as reduce the amount of air pollution. For these reasons, the following actions should be encouraged:

- a. Public transit service should be encouraged to serve the travel needs of the community's residents.
 - b. Park-n-ride sites should be provided as demand increases.
 - c. Commuter rapid transit should be provided when the ridership demand exists, and feeder bus routes should be established to serve rapid transit stations.
8. Public telephones and restroom facilities should be provided at park-n-ride sites when there is sufficient demand.
 9. Communication and coordination between Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the County should be enhanced, especially to provide for bicycle facilities and signage on and along state maintained canyon roads. An example of this coordination is the Peak-to-Plains trail currently funded as a joint Clear Creek and Jefferson County multi-use trail along US 6.
 10. Acknowledge the increasing number of bicyclists using both Golden Gate Canyon and SH 72 and make road improvements that will increase bicycle safety and decrease conflicts between motorists and bicyclists.
 11. The County should work with affected property owners to acquire the necessary right-of-way on heavily traveled roads that are not maintained because of the lack of right-of-way.
 12. Where private roads are maintained by the County through prescriptive right, the County should continue to work with the owner to clarify the survey and legal description, then reduce the property tax obligation on the portion of the property used as a public road, usually done through a quit claim deed.
 13. Monies generated for road improvements to mitigate the traffic impacts associated with new development in the North Mountains area should be earmarked for road improvements in the community.
 14. Provide multi-use parking areas with restrooms along canyon roads. (similar to Mayhem Gulch)

Water and Sanitation

Water has defined the history and progress of the West and the physical availability of water is a significant determinant of the development capacity of the North Mountains area.

The health of the community's residents and its environment depends on an adequate and safe supply of water. While some residents in the community are served by a water district, most depend on groundwater supplies drawn from individual wells and must dispose of waste water through a septic system. In many areas, severe limitations exist for septic tank absorption fields because of steep slopes, depth of rock and coarse textured soil. Land development affects both the quantity and the quality of the groundwater. Because of this direct link, the impacts of existing and future development on this sensitive resource should be studied and managed effectively.

1. To create a more dependable water and sanitation or public water district, the water source should be legally and physically available. Two water sources are preferred as the source of water for new water and sanitation or public water districts, except for small districts. Wells outside the stream alluvium should not be allowed as the sole or primary source of water for a public water district.
2. If a new or expanded water and sanitation district is to be formed for a mountain community center, provision should be made to allow existing well and septic systems to remain in use until the property is sold, the user voluntarily chooses to become part of the district, or the property is phased into the system.

Wildlife

Protection and management of wildlife resources is important in maintaining the quality of life people have come to expect in the North Mountains area. Wildlife is a unique resource and one of the factors attracting people to the area. Wildlife needs should be considered in land use decisions. While some species of wildlife can adapt to human encroachment to a certain extent, careful planning is needed to ensure that important wildlife habitats are not destroyed and that wildlife/human conflicts are minimized.

1. Appropriate buffers should be provided between human activity and maximum quality wildlife habitat. The extent of these buffers should be defined in consultation with the Division of Wildlife and should consider the needs of wildlife for cover, food supply, and water. Development encroachment on wildlife habitat should be minimized by using effective mitigation techniques.
2. Offer incentives to new developments that accommodate wildlife needs in their projects.

Maps

All maps related to the Comprehensive Master Plan can be access through **jMap**, Jefferson County's online interactive mapping application. This can be viewed on any computer or mobile device.

jMap is made up of mapping layers that can be turned on or off. "PZ Comprehensive Master Plan" is the name of the layer that displays the Land Use Recommendations. Once that layer is selected by clicking the check mark by the name, a view of the Area Plan Boundaries will be shown. The data displayed is scale-dependent, meaning once you zoom in to the map the specific recommendations will appear. The red Activity Centers have a further scale-dependent aspect that will show recommendations within the Activity Center.

Clicking on a parcel or area creates a pop-up with information about the Comprehensive Master Plan, details about that specific recommended land use, as well as links to the overall plan and any supplemental maps significant to that specific area. To see all the information for the layers currently turned on, it may be necessary to click the next feature arrow at the top of the pop-up to scroll through all available pages.