



RIO GRANDE COUNTY JOINT MASTER PLAN



Adopted 2016

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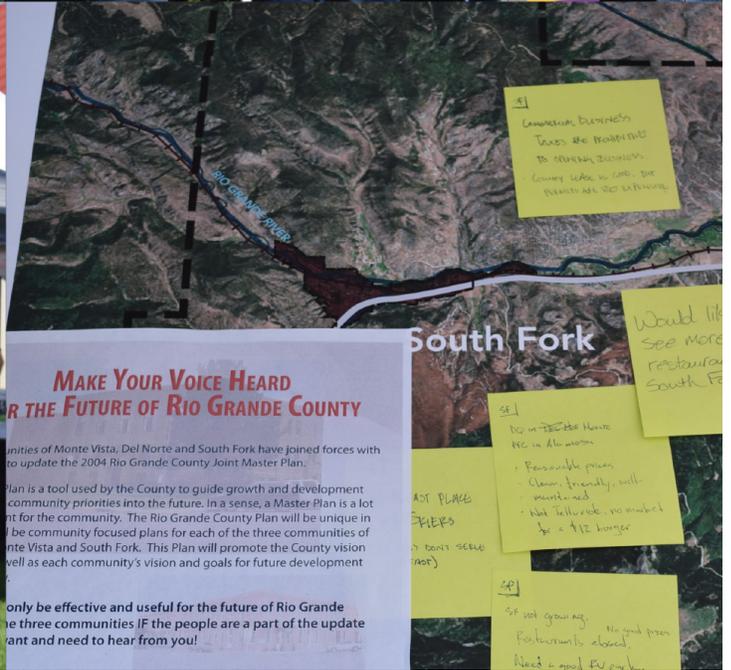
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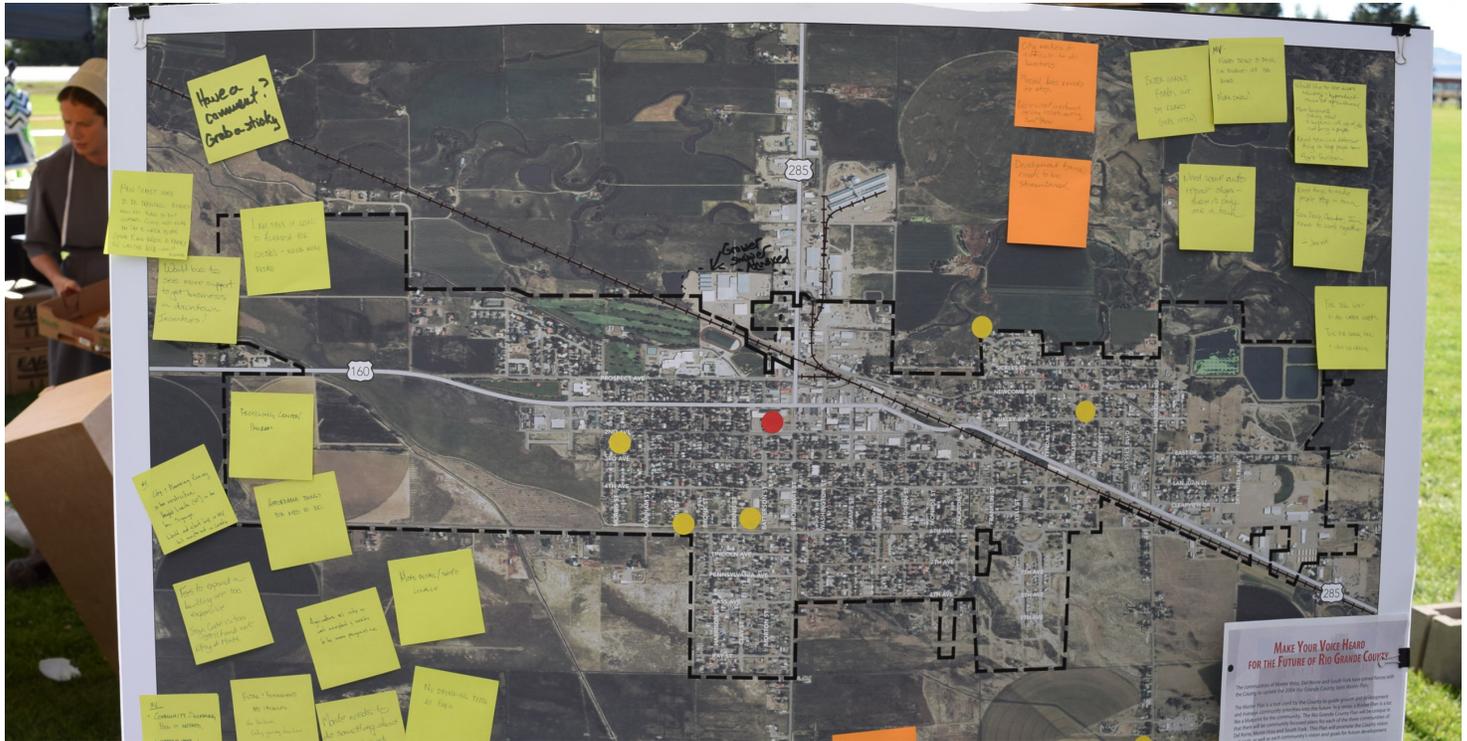
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chapter one Introduction

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1.1 Role and Overview of the Plan

This 2015 Joint Master Plan for Rio Grande County is intended to be an update to the 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan. The Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan was created in 2004 from a compilation of the 1989 Rio Grande County Master Plan, the 1980 Monte Vista Comprehensive Plan, and the 1978 Del Norte Comprehensive Plan.

A Master Plan is a public policy tool for guiding decisions regarding land use and future growth. The goals, policies and recommended actions within this Plan are to be used to guide future growth and change within Rio Grande County, the City of Monte Vista, the Town of Del Norte and the Town of South Fork.

The Plan is prepared in accordance with state statutes that authorize the Rio Grande County Planning Commission to develop a Joint Master Plan containing practical policies that promote the physical development of the County. Per C.R.S. 30-28-107, the purpose of the Plan is “guiding and accomplishing a coordinated and harmonious development of the relevant territory, which, in accordance with present and future needs and resources, will best promote the general welfare of the inhabitants” of Rio Grande County.

Role and Overview of the Plan

Creating an atmosphere of intergovernmental cooperation is an important component of the planning process. Thus, the Plan is also prepared for Monte Vista, Del Norte and South Fork in accordance with C.R.S. 31-23-207, “guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the municipality and its environs.”

Although advisory in nature, the Plan is the basis for regulatory measures, inclusive of zoning and subdivision code updates, as well as project review recommendations. The Plan serves as the foundation for intergovernmental agreements, capital improvement programming, and detailed studies and programs coordinated by public jurisdictions.

PLAN JURISDICTION

Rio Grande County includes three incorporated municipalities: the City of Monte Vista, the Town of Del Norte, and the Town of South Fork. A small portion of an additional municipality, the Town of Center, is located in Rio Grande County, with the majority of its incorporated area within Saguache County. The Plan has jurisdiction within unincorporated Rio Grande County, the City of Monte Vista, the Town of Del Norte, and the Town of South Fork. However, the Plan does not have jurisdiction within the incorporated Town of Center.

Unincorporated Rio Grande County is governed by a Board of County Commissioners. The Commissioners appoint a Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment. They adopt land use regulations for the unincorporated areas of the county and they require a land use application and permits for most building improvements, which are administered by the County Land Use Administrator. The County Building Inspector performs the building inspections for residential and commercial structures. He also enforces some of the zoning regulations, such as field verifying building setbacks during construction. Additional zoning enforcement tasks are performed by the County Land Use Administrator.

The City of Monte Vista is governed by a City Council and City Manager. The City Council appoints the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Adjustment. The Land Use Manager is charged with the interpretation of land use and zoning regulations. A Code Enforcement Officer works with the Land Use Manager to enforce the land use and zoning regulations. The County Building Inspector is contracted to perform the building inspections for residential and commercial structures in Monte Vista.

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Role and Overview of the Plan



The Town of Del Norte is administered by a Town Board and a Town Manager. The Town Board appoints the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustment and Tree Board. The Town Manager is responsible for the administration of the provisions of the Town's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. The County Building Inspector is contracted to enforce the Uniform Building Code in Del Norte for commercial and residential structures.

The Town of South Fork is administered by a Town Board and a Town Manager. The Town Board appoints the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment. In the past, the Town has used a Land Development Steering Committee, made up of local citizens, for providing input into the future development of the Town. The Town Manager is responsible for the administration of the provisions of the Town's zoning and land use ordinances. The County Building Inspector is contracted to perform the building inspections for only commercial structures in South Fork.



PLANNING PROCESS

The 2015 Joint Master Plan Update began in the late summer of 2015, guided by Rio Grande County, the City of Monte Vista, the Town of Del Norte, the Town of South Fork, elected and appointed officials, and a consultant team led by RG and Associates, LLC and MIG, Inc.

The Plan's framework, goals, objectives and action steps were all created as a result of extensive community outreach. Publicity for the public workshops included advertising in local newspapers, poster distribution throughout the communities and invitations to stakeholders throughout the County.

Community Outreach #1 - September 2015



The community outreach portion of the Plan update process kicked off at the 2015 San Luis Valley Potato Festival. The consultants, along with the Land Use Coordinator from the County, had a booth with maps of each community, surveys and copies of the 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan available for viewing and comment. Questions were asked by the consultants and responses were provided by festival attendees in the form of sticky notes on maps and completed surveys.

The week of September 14th, the first series of community outreach meetings were conducted. These meetings focused on educating the community about the plan update process, along with identifying key issues and concerns within the County and each jurisdiction. All meetings were open to community members. At each meeting, RG and Associates and MIG presented information

Role and Overview of the Plan

concerning the role of a Master Plan and why it is important to update the Plan. During this time, the community completed surveys expressing preferences for Plan concepts as well as their main concerns within the County and municipalities.

Community Outreach #2 - December 2015

During the third week of December, the second series of community outreach meetings were conducted. These meetings focused on finalizing each community's Vision Statement, Goals, Objectives and Action Steps. All meetings were open to community members. At each meeting, RG and Associates provided draft chapters and draft maps. During these meetings, the community expressed preferences and concerns for plan components. Meeting attendees were also encouraged to provide input for the Development Capacity Analysis section of the plan. This analysis is the basis for creating a Future Land Use Map, which determines where desired development areas will be located and what the preferred land uses will be for vacant or under-utilized land. In order to receive as much input as possible, the draft plan was also placed on a website (<http://www.planriograndecounty.org>) for further community comment.

Public Meetings/Hearings for Adoption - February and March 2016

A final draft of the plan was presented to the County and the three jurisdictions the second week in February. Comments from these meetings were incorporated into this Plan.

The final steps in the process included having each of the Town Boards/ City Councils and Commissions provide resolutions supporting the County adoption of the Plan. Once this was completed, the Rio Grande County Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the Plan and made a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for adoption of the Plan. The Board of County Commissioners' adopted the Plan in Spring of 2016.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Plan is organized into nine chapters and an Appendix.

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Demographic Trends
- Chapter 3: Accomplishments

Role and Overview of the Plan

- Chapter 4: A New Vision
- Chapter 5: Future Growth
- Chapter 6: Rio Grande County
- Chapter 7: City of Monte Vista
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Chapter 2 provides an examination of demographic trends for the County and each municipality. Population trends, housing, and economic factors are discussed.

Chapter 3 contains a snapshot of the accomplishments that occurred since the last Master Plan was completed. Each jurisdiction implemented at least one of the goals outlined in the 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan update. There are still elements yet to be implemented and those are included in this update.

Chapter 4 is a precursor to Chapters 6 through 9. It contains only the vision statement and the goals outlined in the community and county specific sections of the plan. Each vision statement provides citizens, business owners and future developers an idea of where each of the jurisdictions sees itself in five to ten years.

Chapter 5 includes the Future Land Use Maps for each community, along with a development capacity analysis (narrative of future growth). These maps and their narratives illustrate where the communities desire future growth and development to occur. Development of vacant land is the focus of the Future Land Use Maps, but often redevelopment areas are shown, as they hold a valuable growth potential. In addition, proposed annexation areas are shown so that future growth into the County can be planned and orderly. Government official and citizens both expressed a deep desire to limit growth in the County to within a one mile radius of a municipality in order to preserve as much agricultural land as possible.

Chapters 6 through 9 provide the County and the municipalities with a specific chapter describing the vision, goals, objectives and action steps unique to each locale. A vision statement is an expression of a community's intent on how they want their community to grow so that development is orderly, responsible,

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planned and sustainable. Goals are broad statements, describing objectives to be achieved through this Plan. Objectives further define the goals and are the official position to guide decision-making and ultimately create policy. Action Steps are specific steps that should be undertaken to implement the Plan and ultimately achieve the goals and objectives. The goals, objectives and action steps in these chapters cover land use, economics, housing, public infrastructure, transportation, and recreational opportunities.

Chapter 10 is the Appendix. Information important to the planning process can be found in the Appendix, including all maps, survey results from website and paper surveys, notes from each of the community workshops, and a reference list of supporting documents used in the creation of this plan.

USE AND CARE OF THE PLAN

This Joint Master Plan should be consulted by elected and appointed officials when considering development proposals, updating land use regulations, working on intergovernmental issues, outlining work programs, preparing annual budgets, and reviewing progress toward meeting identified goals. The Plan must always lead development. Development must never supersede the Plan.

The Plan should also be used to guide residents, land owners, and project applicants concerning land use planning and community development objectives. The Plan is a database and can be used as supporting documentation for pursuing grants for community development activities.

The Plan should be reviewed annually by the Planning Commissions of each jurisdiction. It should be revised as specific action steps are accomplished and new actions and strategies are identified. Plan goals should also be reviewed periodically when new circumstances or changing conditions warrant reconsideration. The entire Plan should be updated within ten years, ideally after 2020 Census information is released. The Colorado Revised Statutes recommend that the Plan should be updated every five to seven years.



chapter two
**Demographic
Trends**

2 | Demographic Trends



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2.1 Demographic Trends of Rio Grande County

POPULATION

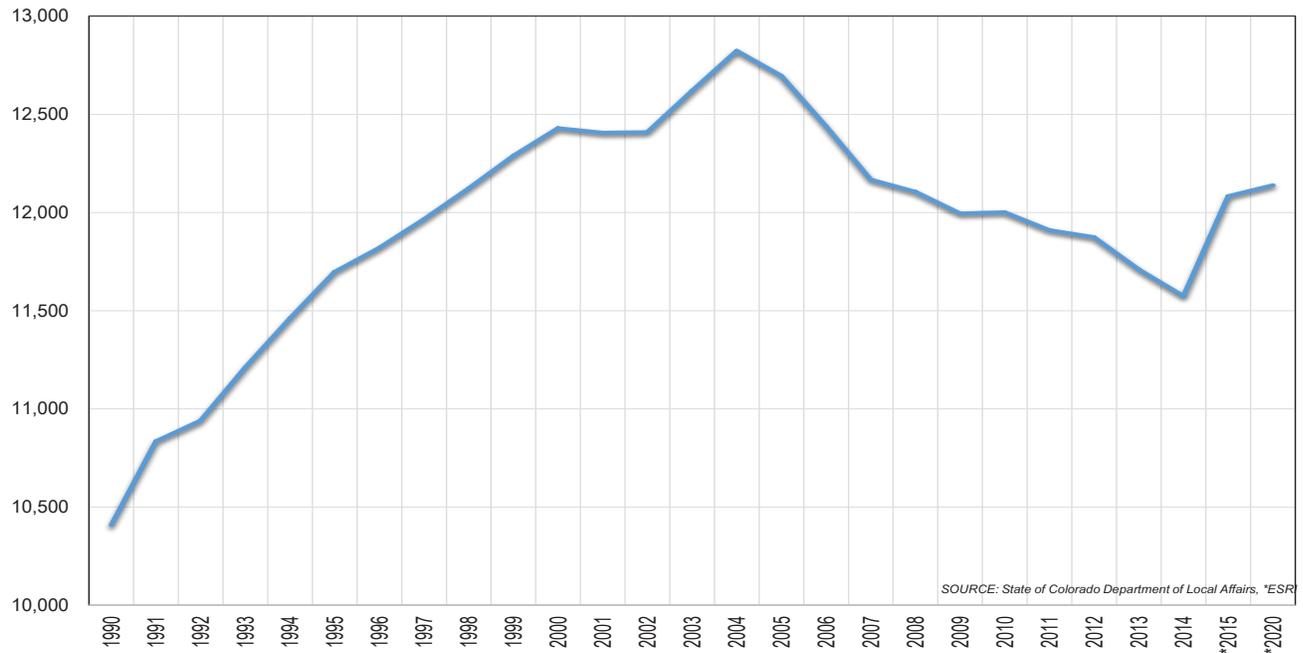
Rio Grande County has experienced an overall population decrease over the past decade. From 2000-2013, the population of 12,429 in 2000, saw modest increase of inhabitants to 12,824 in 2004. Since then a steady population decrease has followed with a population of 11,736 in 2013 - a loss of 5.5%.

Population projections show that the number of inhabitants in the County will rebound. **Rio Grande County is expected to grow at an annual rate of 0.09% from 2015 - 2020, resulting in 12,139 inhabitants by 2020.**

This is an increase of 403 people from 2013 - 2020. This is not on trend with the 2004 Rio Grande County Master Plan, which expected 14,691 inhabitants by 2020, along with a relatively consistent amount of growth per year, leading to a peak in 2020. Growth has not been consistent, but decline has been relatively consistent since 2004. This is now projected to change via slow and steady growth through 2020.

Population - Rio Grande County

Rio Grande County Population (1990-2020)



Rio Grande County is aging. Per the chart below, the largest growth from 2000-2010 included those aged 45 and over, with the 55-65 age group growing by almost 500 people. This will result in more retirees in the area. In the 2004 Plan, the largest growth was projected to be those aged 45-54, so it makes sense that approximately 10 years later the group that is 10 years older has increased by the most people. The group to experience the largest decline was the 35-44 year old age group, who lost 481 people. This age group is the key population of working adults. Children under the age of 19 decreased by 545 people. This decline in younger people and in the key working population may lead to a smaller workforce in the near future, which could jeopardize the County’s tax base.

2 | Demographic Trends

Population/Age and Ethnicity - Rio Grande County

Median Age

41

Per Capita
Income

\$20,557

39.4%

Homes with No
Mortgage

No Health
Insurance

39.4%

People with
Health Insurance

80.4%

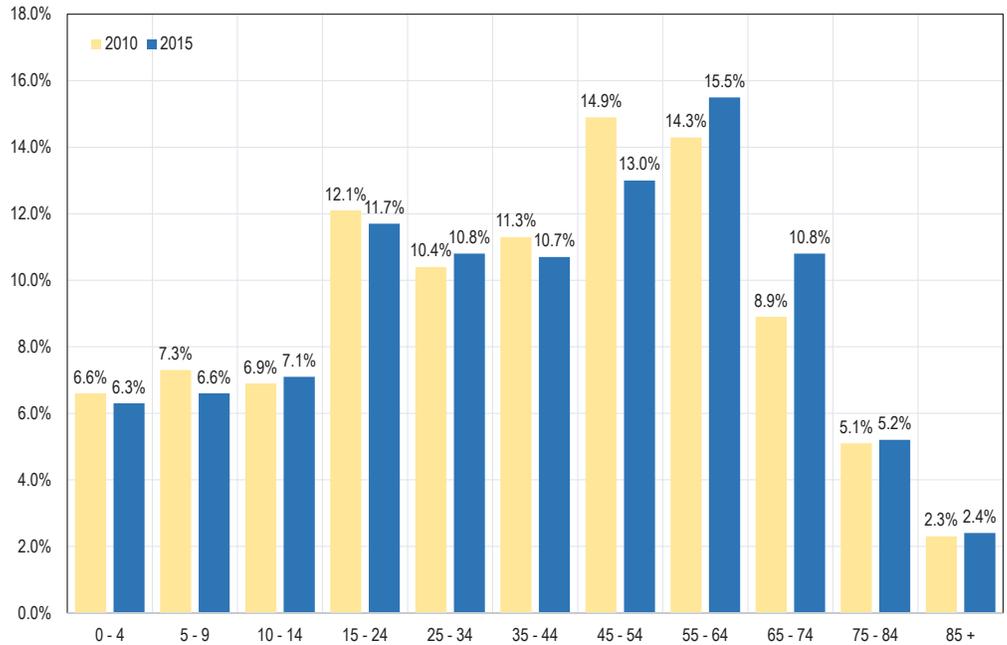
49.7% Male

50.3% Female

54.8%

Married People

Rio Grande County Population by Age Group (2015)



*Demographic facts from DRC & COG, using US Census Data

SOURCE: ESRI, 2015

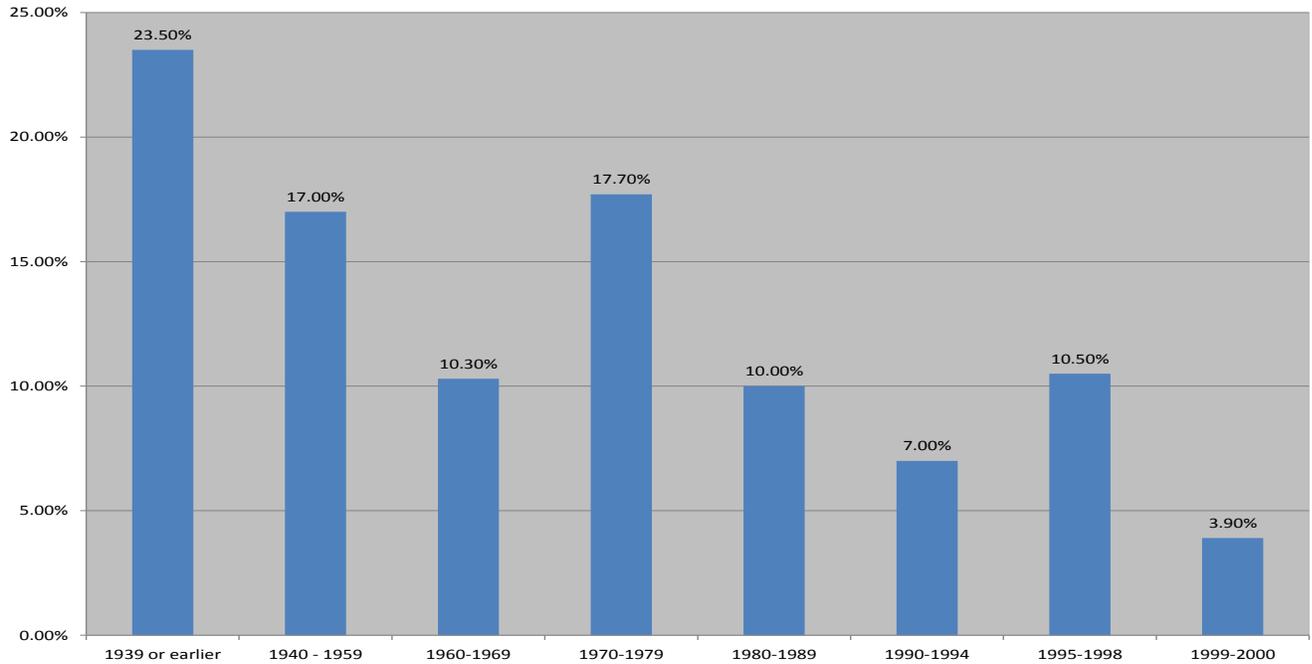
RACE AND ETHNICITY

The majority of the population in Rio Grande County is white, at over 78%, but that is expected to shrink by 2% as the County becomes more racially diverse. By 2020, 76% of the County will be classified as white. The African American population is projected to double from 2010 to 2020 (0.4% to 0.7%), and the Native American population will grow by 0.03%. People who racially identify as “two or more races” and those who identify as “some other race alone” are also projected to increase in population through 2020.

Rio Grande County’s population has a significant percentage of people who culturally identify as Hispanic. The Hispanic population is expected to increase from 42.4% to 45.2% by 2020. The County’s population has twice the percentage of Hispanic inhabitants compared to the State of Colorado, considering that only 20.8% of the State identifies as Hispanic.

Race and Ethnicity/Housing - Rio Grande County

County - Year Structure Built



*Source: US Census Bureau

HOUSING

The County’s housing is aging, as shown in the figure above. Owner occupied housing comprises almost half of the housing in the County (48.6% in 2010). That number is expected to decrease by 2% in the next 10 years as standard rental housing and seasonal rental housing becomes even more popular. In the 2004 Plan, there were more owner occupied homes than that there are now, showing that the rental market is continuing to grow.

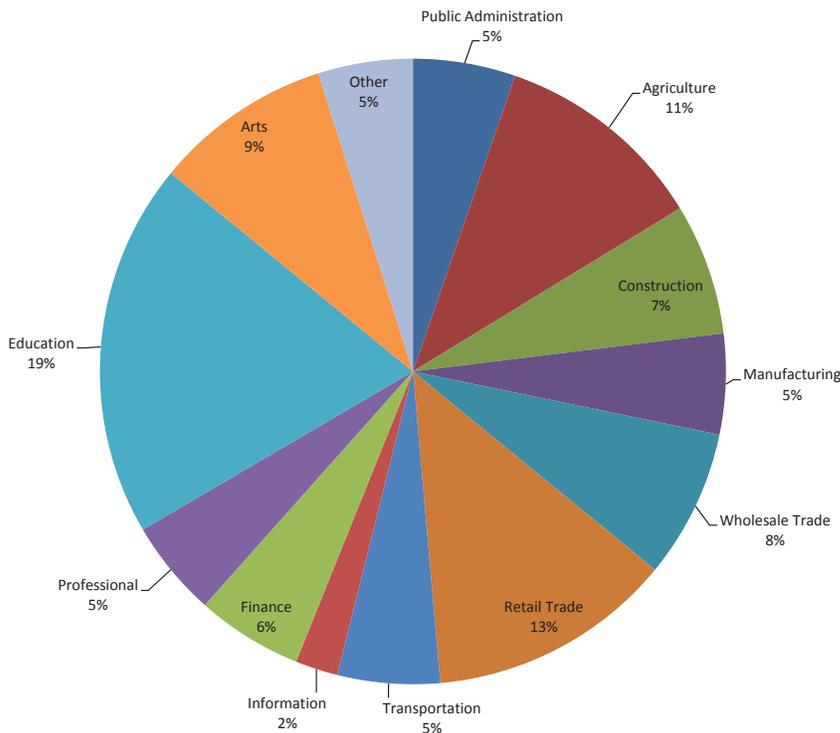
Between 27% - 28% of the County’s housing is considered “vacant housing”, which does not mean abandoned housing. It refers to seasonal/recreational dwellings, along with a small portion of not yet sold and not yet rented units. 70% of “vacant housing” is reserved for seasonal/recreational rental in Rio Grande, which shows that tourism is likely influencing this housing market.

The number of housing units grew by over 600 from 2000 to 2010. Housing is projected to grow by only 220 units over the next 10 years, totaling 6,851 units by 2020, which will be a slower growth rate than in the past.

2 | Demographic Trends

Economy - Rio Grande County

County Employment by Industry (2000)



*Source: Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

ECONOMY

The County's economy has been **historically heavily dependent on agriculture**. As shown in the chart below from the 2004 Plan, the County's economy has diversified. Almost one in five jobs (19.4%) are in the education sector, with the second highest number of jobs (12.7%) in the retail sector. Only 11% of the County's employment is now in the agricultural sector.

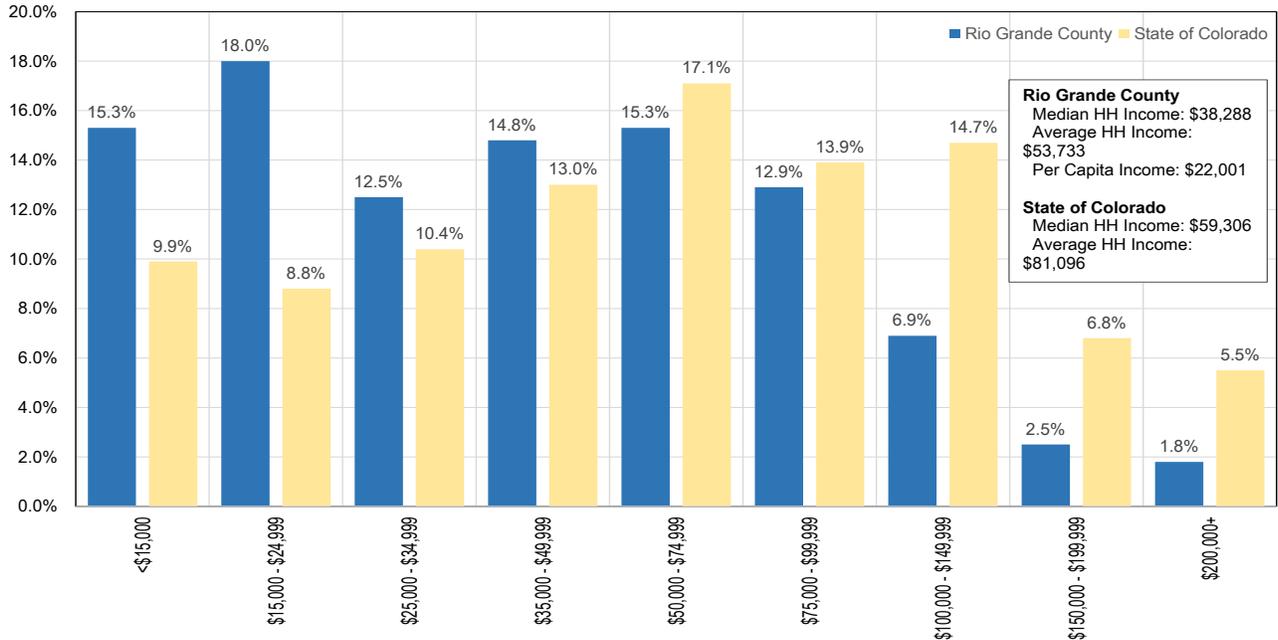
Per the 2004 Comprehensive Plan, the employment base contained 4,811 persons, leaving 7.5% of the labor force unemployed. Per 2015 projections (U.S. Census Data and ESRI Forecasts), there were 4,622 persons in the labor force and 9.3% were unemployed. The former Plan projections indicated that employment levels would increase slowly through 2030, but that trend did not continue.

Unemployment is higher than in 2004, as the County has not fully rebounded from the Great Recession of 2008-2011.

Household income distributions can be seen on the following page. It is evident that **over 30% of the County's populations earn less than \$25,000 per year**, compared with 20% of the State's population earning the same amount. At income levels of \$75,000 and over, Rio Grande County is lagging behind the state, as only 17.8% in the County earn at this level vs. 38.6% of the State. Consistent with the projections shown in their 2004 Plan, **the County is still lagging behind the State in its income distribution.**

Economy - Rio Grande County

State of Colorado and Rio Grande County Household Distribution (2015)



SOURCE: ESRI, 2015

Rio Grande County lags behind the state in inhabitants with a college degree (see chart below). There are only 14.1% with a college degree in the County vs. 23.9% with a college degree in the State of Colorado.

State of Colorado and Rio Grande County Educational Attainment, 25 Years Plus (2015)		
	Rio Grande County	State of Colorado
Less than 9th Grade	7.3%	3.5%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	7.7%	5.8%
High School Graduate	25.7%	17.5%
GED/Alternative Credential	5.0%	3.9%
Some College, No Degree	25.1%	22.7%
Associate Degree	8.0%	8.3%
Bachelor's Degree	14.1%	23.9%
Graduate/Professional Degree	7.1%	14.3%
Total	8,268	3,536,096

SOURCE: ESRI, 2015

2 | Demographic Trends

Population - City of Monte Vista



Rio Grande County's residents take pride in their community.

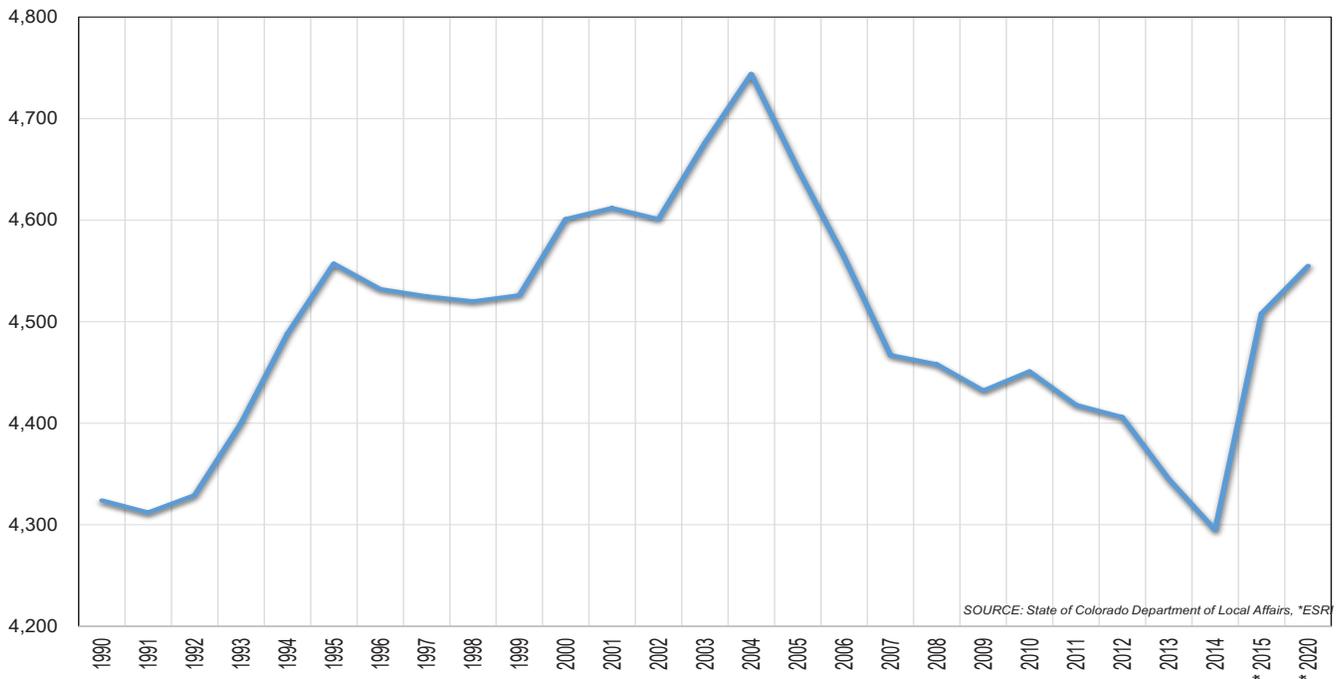
2.2 Demographic Trends of the City of Monte Vista

POPULATION

Monte Vista accounts for slightly over 37% of Rio Grande County's population. However, from 2000-2013, Monte Vista experienced an overall population decrease. Population peaked in 2004 with 4,744 inhabitants, followed by a decline in population through 2013 with only 4,355 inhabitants. Population projections show that the number of inhabitants will begin to rebound and grow, with 4,555 inhabitants by 2020. The 2004 Rio Grande County Master Plan showed a projected decline in population followed by an upturn, but not nearly the decline or upturn recorded through Census data surveys and projections.

Monte Vista has experienced a decline in the key work force population ages 35-44, which could hurt the City's tax base. The largest growth was in the 55-64 age group, which is consistent with the Baby Boomer generation growing into retirement. This trend is expected to continue for at least the next 15 years.

Monte Vista Population (1990-2020)



Race and Ethnicity/Housing - City of Monte Vista

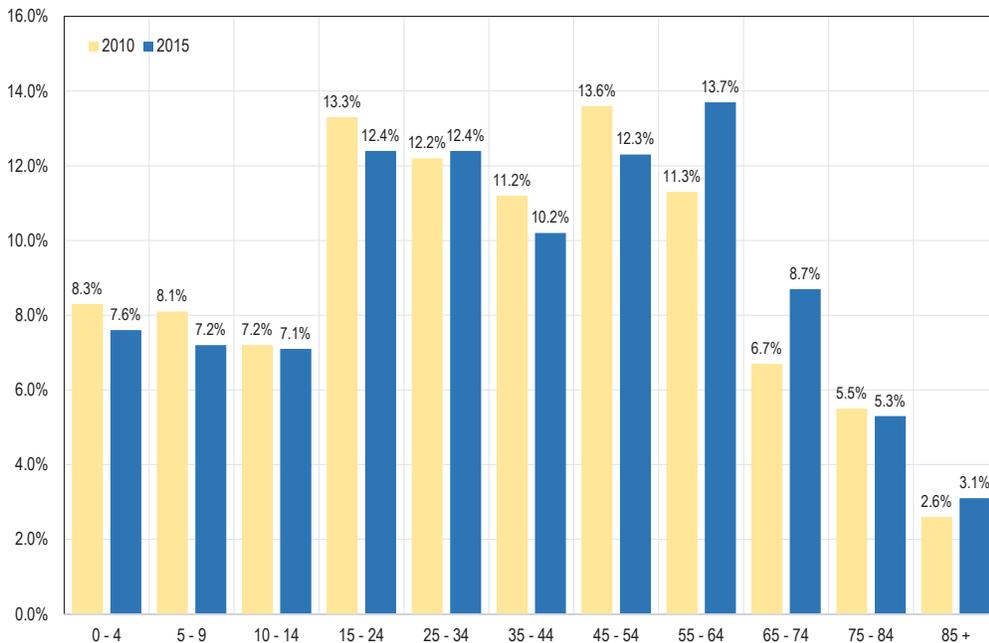
RACE AND ETHNICITY

A majority of the population in Monte Vista is white, at 68.3%, which is 10% less than the County’s population (over 78% white). The white population is expected to decline to 66.9% over the next five years, and then rebound slightly by 2020 to 67%. 60% of the city identifies as Hispanic. Monte Vista reflects a very large diversity of race with a 2010 Diversity Index of 75.4, projected to grow to 76.6 by 2020. As of 2010, 25% of the town’s population identified as “some other race alone,” not black, white, Asian, Native American, or Pacific Islander, which is quite a significant proportion of the population. Minority races will continue to grow through 2020.

HOUSING

Owner occupied housing comprised 54.3% of the housing in Monte Vista in 2010, and that number is expected to stay steady through the next 10 years. Seasonal/recreational dwellings comprise 9.5% of the so-called “vacant housing” market, which is quite low when compared to Rio Grande County. Converse to the County, seasonal/recreational rentals will decrease over the next 10 years in Monte Vista. Total housing units grew by 106 from 2000 to 2010, with only 88 units projected over the next 10 years.

Monte Vista Population by Age Group (2015)



*Demographic facts from DRC & COG, using US Census Data

Median Age

35.6

Per Capita Income

\$17,151

30.9%

Homes with No Mortgage

No Health Insurance

19.4%

People with Health Insurance

80.6%

47.1% Male
52.9% Female
48% Married People

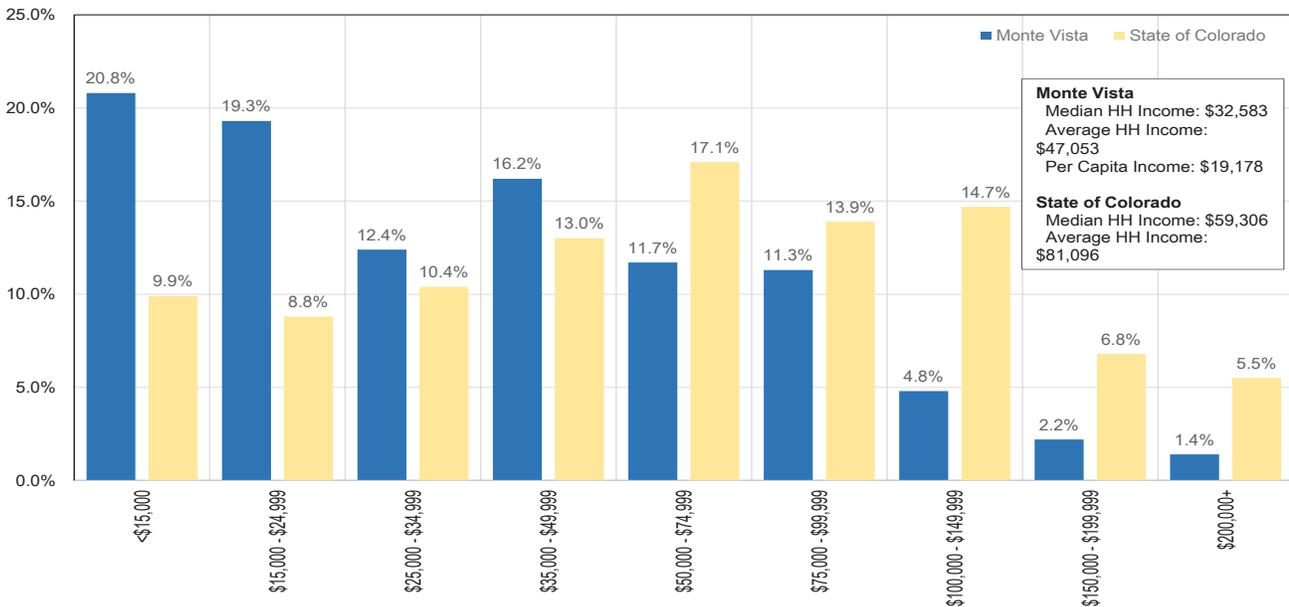
2 | Demographic Trends

Economy - City of Monte Vista

ECONOMY

The charts below show the income distribution, and the educational achievement of Monte Vista in comparison to the State and County. Lower incomes are more prevalent in Monte Vista along with a lagging population behind the state in residents having a college degree. However, Monte Vista has slightly more inhabitants with Associate degrees than rest of the state. A large percentage of the city does have a high school degree and many have had some college education.

State of Colorado and Monte Vista Household Distribution (2015)



State of Colorado, Rio Grande County, and Monte Vista Educational Attainment, 25 Years Plus (2015)

	Monte Vista	Rio Grande County	State of Colorado
Less than 9th Grade	10.2%	7.3%	3.5%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	8.2%	7.7%	5.8%
High School Graduate	28.2%	25.7%	17.5%
GED/Alternative Credential	4.1%	5.0%	3.9%
Some College, No Degree	25.2%	25.1%	22.7%
Associate Degree	8.6%	8.0%	8.3%
Bachelor's Degree	9.7%	14.1%	23.9%
Graduate/Professional Degree	5.8%	7.1%	14.3%
Total	2,960	8,268	3,536,096

SOURCE: ESRI. 2015

Population - Town of Del Norte



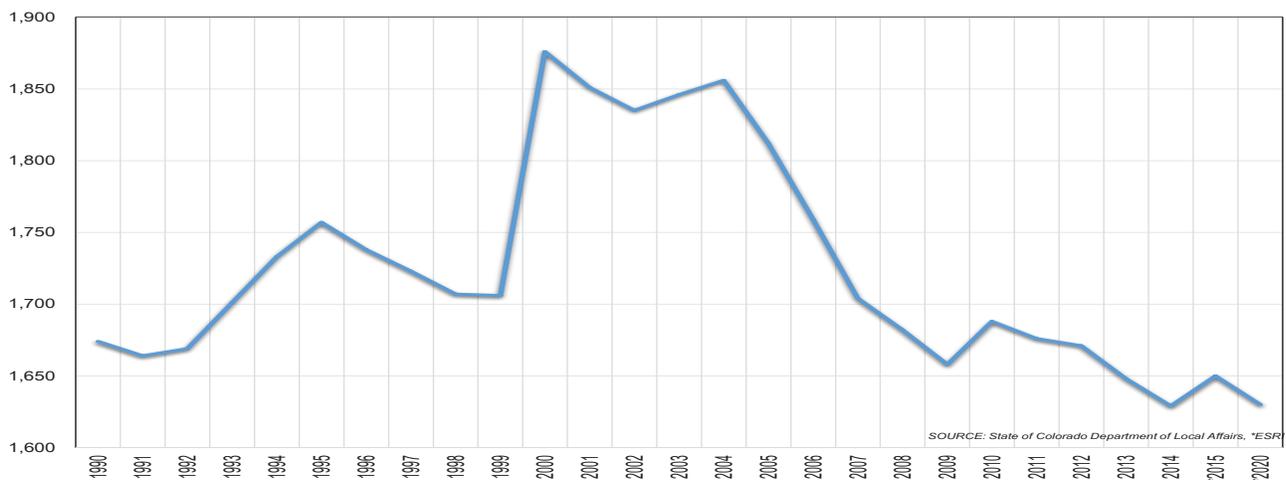
2.3 Demographic Trends of the Town of Del Norte

POPULATION

From 2000-2013, Del Norte experienced an overall population decrease. Population peaked in 2000 with 1,876 residents, followed by a decline in population through 2013 with only 1,652 residents. Population projections show that the number of residents will continue to decrease, with a 20 year low of 1,630 in 2020. The 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan showed a projected decline in population, but not nearly the decline recorded through Census data.

Del Norte has experienced a decline in all population sectors except those ages 15-34 and the 65 and older age group. The over 65 age group grew significantly, leading to more retirees. The 15-34 age group grew by less than 1%, so the workforce is not appreciably growing yet. With children under age 15 decreasing, there are fewer school children and there will be fewer workforce-aged people.

Del Norte Population (1990-2020)



2 | Demographic Trends

Population/Race and Ethnicity/Housing - Town of Del Norte

Median Age

39.2

Per Capita
Income

\$13,804

47.8%

Homes with No
Mortgage

No Health
Insurance

22%

People with
Health Insurance

78%

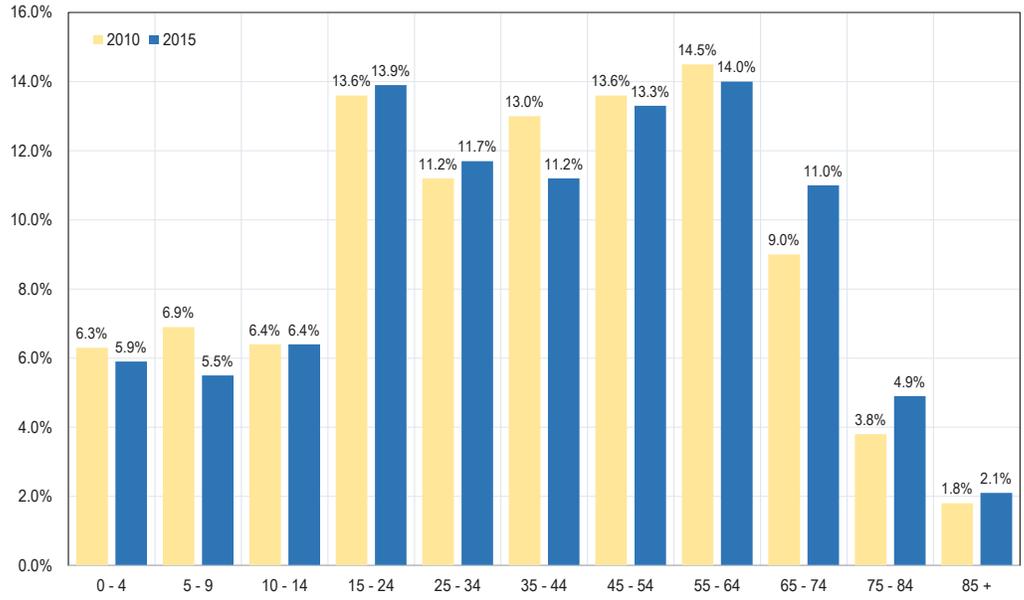
50.8% Male

49.2% Female

54.8%

Married People

Del Norte Population by Age Group (2015)



SOURCE: ESRI, 2015

RACE AND ETHNICITY

The majority of the population in Del Norte is white (73.1%), but that is expected to shrink by 1% over the next 10 years to 72.1% by 2020. That reflects a larger diversity of race than in the rest of the County, which contains a white population of over 78%. The African American population will grow by a fraction, along with those identifying as “two or more races” and as “some other race alone”. The Hispanic population is projected to remain steady at around 56%, which is the majority of the population and almost three times the amount as that in the State of Colorado.

HOUSING

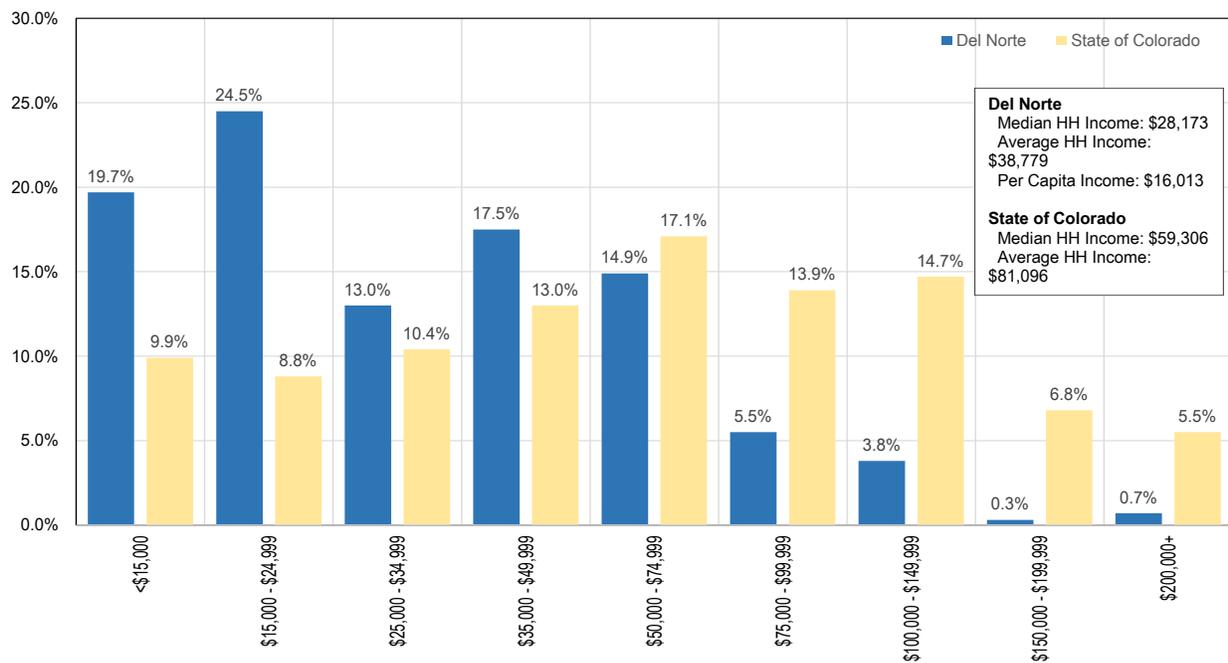
Owner occupied housing comprised 62% of the housing units in Del Norte in 2010, but is expected to drop slightly as rental housing (standard rentals and seasonal/recreational rentals) become more popular. Seasonal/recreational dwellings comprise 35.5% of the so-called “vacant housing” market and this segment is expected to grow over the next 10 years. Total housing units grew by 115 units from 2000 to 2010. However, they are only projected to grow by 8 units over the next 10 years.

Economy - Town of Del Norte

ECONOMY

The charts below shows the income distribution of Del Norte and how the town is lagging behind the state in residents with a college degree. The number of residents with higher incomes is significantly less than the state average. However, a large percentage of the town does have a high school degree and many have had some college education.

State of Colorado and Del Norte Household Distribution (2015)



SOURCE: ESRI, 2015

State of Colorado, Rio Grande County, and Del Norte Educational Attainment, 25 Years Plus (2015)			
	Del Norte	Rio Grande County	State of Colorado
Less than 9th Grade	4.9%	7.3%	3.5%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	15.6%	7.7%	5.8%
High School Graduate	28.0%	25.7%	17.5%
GED/Alternative Credential	7.6%	5.0%	3.9%
Some College, No Degree	24.7%	25.1%	22.7%
Associate Degree	3.6%	8.0%	8.3%
Bachelor's Degree	11.4%	14.1%	23.9%
Graduate/Professional Degree	4.3%	7.1%	14.3%
Total	1,125	8,268	3,536,096

SOURCE: ESRI, 2015

2 | Demographic Trends

Population - Town of South Fork



South Fork is a family and business friendly community.

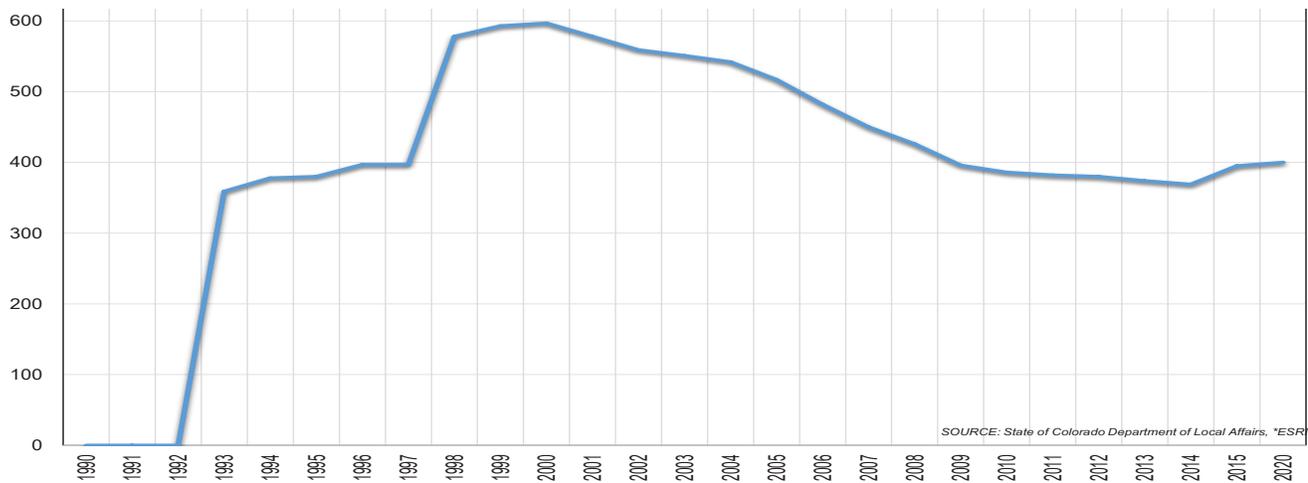
2.4 Demographic Trends of the Town of South Fork

POPULATION

From 2000-2013, South Fork experienced a steady population decrease from 597 to 375. Population projections show that the number of inhabitants will begin to increase, with 400 residents by 2020.

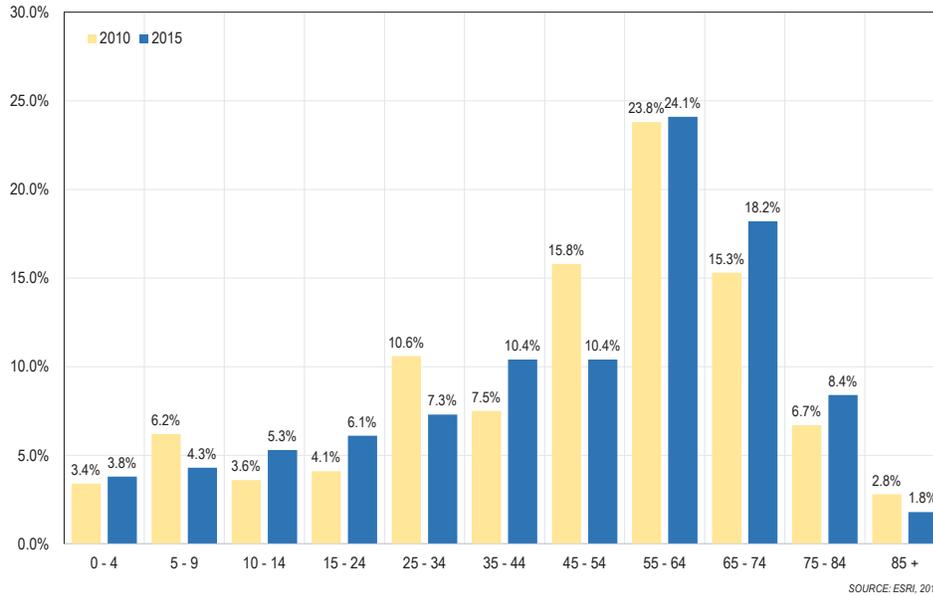
South Fork experienced a decline in all population sectors under the age of 55 from 2010 – 2015. The over 65 age groups grew significantly, leading to a large and growing population of retirees. South Fork also has the oldest median age compared to the County and the other two cities studied.

South Fork Population (1990-2020)



Population/Race and Ethnicity/Housing - Town of South Fork

South Fork Population by Age Group (2015)



*Demographic facts from DRC & COG, using US Census Data

RACE AND ETHNICITY

The majority of the population in South Fork is white, at 94.6%, but that is expected to shrink to 90.7% over the next 10 years. Regardless, the town has the least amount of racial diversity compared to the rest of the County, where only 78% of the population is white. The Hispanic population in South Fork is the lowest in the County at only 7.8% compared to over 42% in Rio Grande County, but is projected to rise to 12.3% in South Fork by 2020.

HOUSING

In 2010, owner occupied housing comprised only 22.1% of the housing stock in South Fork and is expected to drop slightly as rental housing (standard rentals and seasonal/recreational rentals) becomes more popular. Seasonal/recreational dwellings comprise 94.5% of the so-called “vacant housing” market and this segment is expected to stay relatively steady over the next 10 years. Total housing units grew from 580 to 596 units between 2000 and 2010. Additional housing units are projected to grow by 15 units over the next ten years.

Median Age

53.8

Per Capita Income

\$21,275

51.1%

Homes with No Mortgage

No Health Insurance

18.3%

People with Health Insurance

81.7%

49.7% Male

50.3% Female

65.8%

Married People

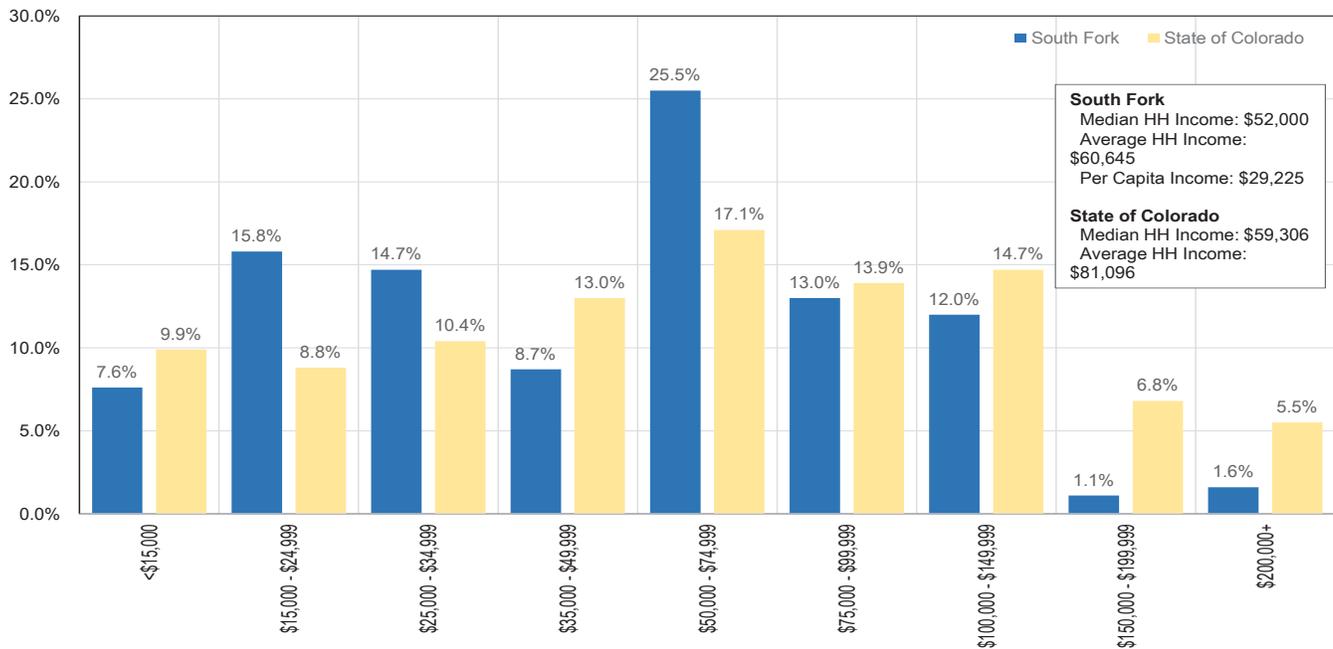
2 | Demographic Trends

Economy - Town of South Fork

ECONOMY

The charts below show the income distribution and education attainment for South Fork and how it compares to the State. Income is fairly comparable to the income distribution in Rio Grande County and a larger percentage of people in South Fork have graduate degrees than in the rest of the State of Colorado. South Fork also has a larger proportion of Associate degrees and high school graduates compared to the State.

State of Colorado and South Fork Household Distribution (2015)



SOURCE: ESRI, 2015

State of Colorado, Rio Grande County, and South Fork Educational Attainment, 25 Years Plus (2015)

	Monte Vista	Rio Grande County	State of Colorado
Less than 9th Grade	0.9%	7.3%	3.5%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	3.1%	7.7%	5.8%
High School Graduate	18.9%	25.7%	17.5%
GED/Alternative Credential	9.1%	5.0%	3.9%
Some College, No Degree	24.8%	25.1%	22.7%
Associate Degree	10.4%	8.0%	8.3%
Bachelor's Degree	13.2%	14.1%	23.9%
Graduate/Professional Degree	19.5%	7.1%	14.3%
Total	318	8,268	3,536,096

SOURCE: ESRI, 2015



chapter three
Accomplishments

3 | Accomplishments



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It is important when updating a Master Plan to identify the issues that were important at the time the plan was last written, and then evaluate whether these issues were addressed over the last 10 years or whether more work needs to be done. The following is a brief account of the many accomplishments of the County and its three communities since the 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan was adopted.

3.1 Rio Grande County Accomplishments

ZONING AND LAND USE IMPROVEMENTS

In response to the 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan goal to sustain the traditional agricultural economy of Rio Grande County, the County created three new zone districts based on agriculture. They are Agricultural Estate, Agricultural/Ranching and Agricultural Forestry. The Rio Grande National Forest occupies over half of the county and is an essential land use. The County continues to work with national partners to protect these lands and minimize the amount of urban land uses close to the forest.

The growing non-conventional community population in the County has led to commercial uses such as chicken farms, furniture making and construction companies, which tend to co-locate with large agricultural farms. While this was not the intent of the additional agricultural zoning districts, County staff continues to work closely with these non-conventional

Rio Grande County Accomplishments

communities to centralize their commercial uses, locating them in the proper zoning district with adequate road infrastructure.

The County adopted a new Outdoor Lighting Resolution as part of the updated Land Use Code in 2008. This resolution protects the night sky and adjacent property owners from light pollution that trespasses off-site. All new lighting must “be directed downward and fully shielded.” Acceptable types of light fixtures are specified, along with legally non-conforming lighting.

MULTI-HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

The County saw several forest fires and experienced flooding of the Rio Grande River in the past decade. In 2010, partially in response to these natural disasters, Rio Grande County coordinated with several local, state, regional and federal agencies, including FEMA. These entities constructed a plan to eliminate or reduce long-term risks to the San Luis Valley residents and property due to natural hazards. This plan, called the San Luis Valley Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (also referred to as the Rio Grande County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan), was adopted via Resolution 2011-38 on August 24, 2011, by the Board of County Commissioners. These hazards include flooding, wildfire, hail, windstorms, severe winter storms, dam failure, lightning, tornadoes, drought, and avalanches. Multiple mitigation actions were identified and are frequently referenced in the land development process at the County level. The Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan is presently being updated, with an anticipated adoption date in September of 2016. The Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan can be found in the Rio Grande County Office and on the Rio Grande County website.

COLLABORATION OF GOVERNMENTAL, NON-PROFIT AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

In an effort to conserve natural resources and preserve the cultural heritage of Rio Grande County for future generations, the County partners with many private, non-profit and other governmental agencies. One such organization is the Rio Grande Headwaters Trust. This organization, through conservation easements with private land owners, preserves the natural beauty and wildlife habitat of the area and promotes a sustainable agricultural way of life. The Headwaters goals are to protect and support working ranches and farms, water resources, wildlife habitat, scenic landscapes, and to inspire a culture of conservation in the San Luis Valley. The County also participates in the Habitat Conservation Program (HPC), which furthers the mission of protecting wildlife habitats.

To further the effort of protecting wildlife habitat, agricultural land, ecosystems, watersheds, and recreational land, the San Luis Valley Noxious Weed Management Plan was created. It is a guide for the San Luis Valley Weed Management Association, which is a public-private partnership with the goal of controlling, managing, and eliminating noxious weeds from land in the San Luis Valley.

3 | Accomplishments

Rio Grande County Accomplishments

The Rio Grande County Museum continues to attract and preserve the photos, artifacts and cultural treasures of the County. Their presence on social media has led to some amazing finds for the museum, preserving and recording the rich heritage of the County.

RIO GRANDE WATERSHED EMERGENCY ACTION TEAM (RWEACT)

In response to a collaborative approach to impacts from the West Fork Complex fire, the Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordination Team (RWEACT) was formed. RWEACT brings together local governments of Hindsdale, Mineral and Rio Grande counties, along with state and federal agencies, organizations, and individuals to develop an effective, coordinated approach for immediate actions addressing fire hazards. This effort results in the protection of human life, property, and the natural health of the Rio Grande River watershed and its environment.

This team has formed five subcommittees, most of whose actions will directly impact land use or the economy in the County. These committees include: Hydrology, Communications, Natural Resources, Emergency, and Economic Recovery. The County works closely with the appropriate committees when reviewing land use applications

RECREATION AND AGRICULTURE BASED TOURISM

The economy of Rio Grande County slowly grew over the last decade with the help of agriculture, recreation, and tourism. The non-conventional communities' cottage industries are becoming destination shopping opportunities. There are new micro-farms that provide goods for the farmers' markets throughout the County in the summer and fall, generating regional dollars for the County. One such micro-farm specializes in growing tomatoes and cucumbers. However, potato farms still lead the agricultural economy in the County. Land use policies that were put in place after the 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan continue to protect agricultural land.

Recreational amenities and a growing number of festivals continue to attract visitors, bringing dollars into the County. The County partners annually with local jurisdictions to make these festivals more successful every year.

AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS

There has been significant infrastructure improvements at the Astronaut Kent Rominger Airport, which is owned by Rio Grande County and is located northwest of Del Norte. A new airstrip that supports Lear jets was built in 2011 and a fuel farm was installed in 2015.



3.2 Monte Vista Accomplishments

The 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan, as well as the 2009 Monte Vista Comprehensive Plan, outlined very similar goals. Below is a summary of the goals, as stated in the 2009 Monte Vista Comprehensive Plan, and an explanation of what the City has done to meet those seven goals.

GOAL 1: Provide a gradual transition from the urban built environment to rural, agricultural, and open lands.

The focus of development is on the core of the city, which has an urban context. As one moves farther from the City Center, the intensity of the land uses decreases into the rural landscape. The past six years have led to more industrial businesses locating on the outskirts of the City. An area on the northern edge of the City was annexed into Monte Vista in the last few years to include some of these industrial businesses. In addition, the zoning ordinance was modified after the 2009 Plan to reflect this community goal. It provided zoning for more intense commercial/industrial uses on the far edges of the City.

3 | Accomplishments

Monte Vista Accomplishments



Industrial/agricultural buildings on edge of Monte Vista.

GOAL 2: Strengthen the overall economy of the City.

The economic recession of 2008-2011 + greatly impacted the City of Monte Vista. The empty store fronts in the downtown area increased and the number of businesses coming into the City declined. At the 2015 Potato Festival, the most frequent comment heard from the community was that there was no place in Monte Vista to buy clothes. There used to be a JC Penney's and other retail stores, but they were not able to financially survive. For a period of time, there was not a cohesive economic development effort. However, the Chamber of Commerce, the City and the Upper Rio Grande Economic Development Council are now working together. They are putting their efforts toward attracting industry, small businesses, and creating better training programs for prospective employees so that workforce skills can match the new business needs. New businesses are starting to open, with many joining forces to pay for the rent of a building. For example, The Valley Art Co-op opened its doors in June 2015. The Co-op features work from 12 different artists from across the Valley. The artists opened the Co-op with the intention of increasing shopping traffic in downtown Monte Vista. These "out-of-the-box" ideas will continue to strengthen the overall economy of the City.

GOAL 3: Provide a diverse range of housing choices for a variety of family types, needs and sizes to ensure continued growth in the community.

Some of the growth areas mentioned in the 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan were constructed. A new housing development south of 6th Avenue is in place and occupied by owners. Zoning was modified to allow for more diverse housing types, but it is evident that even more diversity in housing is needed.

GOAL 4: Achieve a balance of having a multi-model street system that encourages a successful business core.

Since the 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan and 2009 Monte Vista Comprehensive Plan were adopted, Monte Vista (in partnership with CDOT) invested millions of dollars into streetscaping, lane narrowing, bicycle lane additions and sidewalk widening in the downtown business core. This has increased pedestrian, bicycle and motorized traffic through the City.

Monte Vista Accomplishments

GOAL 5: Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services to the community to ensure public health, safety, and welfare.

Due to some emergencies in the infrastructure, portions of the water system were replaced. The City is aware that the aging, and in some cases failing, infrastructure needs to be repaired. The City is working with a consultant to obtain grants and loans to fund these much needed projects.

GOAL 6: Provide active and passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

The City established a new skate park on the eastern part of the downtown that is well-used by the community. The City is working with regional partners to implement the recommendations of the Great San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Master Plan, along with finding creative new uses to add to the Ski Hi facility. There is discussion with the County to create either a recreation district or a recreation department, but there has been no decision made at the time of this plan update.

GOAL 7: Improve Hazard Mitigation.

City officials worked closely with the County, BLM, National Forest Service and other local, state and federal agencies in creating the San Luis Valley Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (aka Rio Grande County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan), adopted in August of 2011. The Mitigation Plan will be instrumental in guiding future development that is more resilient to natural disasters via the location and construction of new structures. Of particular interest and focus for Monte Vista is closely monitoring development within the floodplain along the Rio Grande River. The Hazard Mitigation Plan must continue to be consulted when development occurs within the floodplain.

All of these accomplishments have many things in common, but collaboration among agencies is the most notable. The collaboration with city departments, regional agencies, local economic development entities and surrounding jurisdictions needs to continue in order for Monte Vista and the rest of Rio Grande County to successfully accomplish their goals, as outlined in this Plan.

3 | Accomplishments



3.3 Del Norte Accomplishments

IMPROVED ECONOMY

Del Norte benefits from being the Rio Grande County Seat. The 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan had a goal for Del Norte to develop an attractive and economically successful downtown. New businesses are opening up with more frequency than any of the other communities in the County. Three Barrel Brewery recently outgrew their small Columbia Avenue facility and moved to Grand Avenue/Highway 160. In this location, their outdoor patio and adaptive re-use of an old gas station provides an attraction to the community and to the thousands of cars that drive Highway 160 every day. The historic Windsor Hotel has recently been completely renovated and is now a successful hotel with a restaurant and bar, attracting diners as far away as Taos, New Mexico. In early 2016, a 60-bed nursing home was approved for development and is slated for completion in 2017.

INCREASED LAND AREA AND TOWN PROPERTY

Del Norte has expanded in size since the 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan was adopted. A 45 acre area known as West Del Norte was annexed into the town and added approximately 250 residents. The Town also annexed approximately 70 acres southwest of town along Pinos Creek Road for the new hospital, adding jobs and critical care to the Town and County as a whole. The old Co-op Building was purchased by the town. The Town's future plans are to renovate the old Co-op, add a sprinkler system to meet Fire Code, and then to establish a welding extension for school-aged students to use during the day and adult students to use during the evening.

Del Norte Accomplishments

ZONING CHANGES

The Town adopted new zoning designations and updated its zoning code in the summer of 2015. The two new zoning categories added were Rural (RU) and Industrial (I). These zoning districts were added to accommodate the wide range of densities that exist in both the town and the areas of unincorporated Rio Grande County that are part of a three mile plan between Del Norte and the County. This also addressed the goal of providing a transition from more urban uses, such as higher density residential, to agricultural and open lands.

RECREATION HUB FOR THE COUNTY

Del Norte's Chamber of Commerce motto is "Del Norte -The hub of all season fun." There is a growing attraction with mountain bikers, anglers and hunters to base themselves in Del Norte because there are a variety of restaurants and vehicle services available. This past year, Del Norte's Windsor Hotel was the sponsor hotel for the 12 Hours of Penitence Mountain Bike Race which took place in the nearby Penitente Canyon. Del Norte is also on the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route, which runs through the Canadian provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, continuing through the States of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico. Del Norte also added more parkland and trails since 2004 through the generous partnerships with Great Outdoors Colorado and the Department of Local Affairs. Del Norte continues to capitalize on the recreation tourism industry.

HAZARD MITIGATION

The 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan called for the Town of Del Norte to ensure public health, safety and welfare within designated floodplain areas. This was to be accomplished through partnerships with FEMA, the San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority, Rio Grande Headwaters Trust, and the County. These entities, plus several other regional, state and local agencies, came together in 2010 to create the San Luis Valley Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (aka Rio Grande County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan). This plan, which was adopted on August 24, 2011, addresses many hazards, including floodplain hazards and how future development should occur in these areas to avoid flooding. The Hazard Mitigation Plan now plays an integral part in how and where development occurs in Del Norte.



12 Hours of Penitence Mountain Bike Race takes place annually in nearby Penitente Canyon.

3 | Accomplishments



3.4 South Fork Accomplishments

Since the Town of South Fork’s Comprehensive Plan update in 2003 and the 2004 Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan, South Fork continues to position itself to effectively address the goals, objectives, and action steps outlined within this updated Joint Master Plan. In the years since the last update, much of the Country was affected by an economic climate that saw the freezing and/or dismantling of many municipal programs. The Town of South Fork fared no differently.

GREATER SOUTH FORK FOUNDATION

Despite a challenging economic climate, South Fork has moved forward to implement the current Plan. In 2007, the Greater South Fork Foundation (GSFCF), the South Fork Vision Council and the Town of South Fork raised \$25,000.00 as a cash match for a DOLA Planning Grant to develop the River Walk Town Center Plan. This effort sought to establish a new master plan for the community. As an amendment to the master plan, the town adopted the River Walk Town Center Zone District and associated zoning designation and SmartCode for inclusion in the 2009 Zoning Ordinance update.

South Fork Accomplishments

TOWN CENTER PLAN

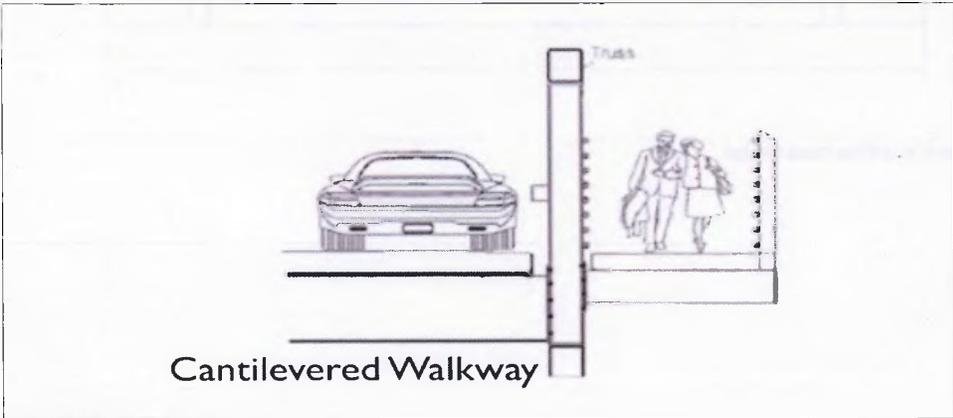
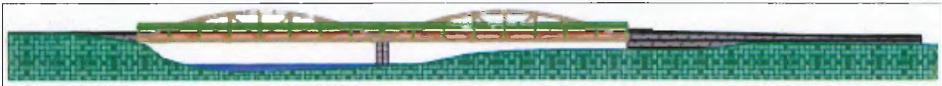
The Town Center Plan proposes a riverfront park, multi-use trails, and a multi-use bridge across the Rio Grande River. This bridge will improve access from the town to public lands and publically accessible private land located on the opposite bank of the river. The Town Center Plan was adopted in 2008 and includes incentives for developers and landowners. These incentives include donating land for parks and trails, along with easements for bridge access, to further improve accessibility.

In 2010, the GSFCF raised money to complete a survey of the bridge site across the Rio Grande River. The group also commissioned a study by CSU students for a preliminary engineering analysis and concept design of the bridge in the Town Center Plan.

The bridge concept design can be seen below, along with the sidewalk that will be incorporated into the bridge design. The sidewalk will allow both pedestrians and bicyclists to use bridge, not just vehicles.



Use of ATVs is a popular recreational choice in the area around South Fork.



RECREATIONAL TOURISM

In 2012, a Master Plan for Parks, Trails, and Recreational Amenities was completed. There was a push by groups in town to legalize OHV/ATV/snowmobiling within town boundaries in order to access the numerous trails that exist within a one mile radius of town. As a result, the Town has approved an ordinance that would allow ATVs to be driven on roads within South Fork. Legislation regarding OHVs is presently being considered by the state which may impact local ordinances pertaining to OHVs. Rio Grande County is determining how to move forward on this issue for county roads.

With the recent re-emergence of economic conditions that are much more favorable for growth, the Planning Commission of South Fork has acquired fresh guidance from some new Commissioners and is set to take a proactive involvement in its growth and development.



chapter four
A New Vision

Rio Grande County



County-wide Visioning Session Wallgraphic

4.1 County Vision

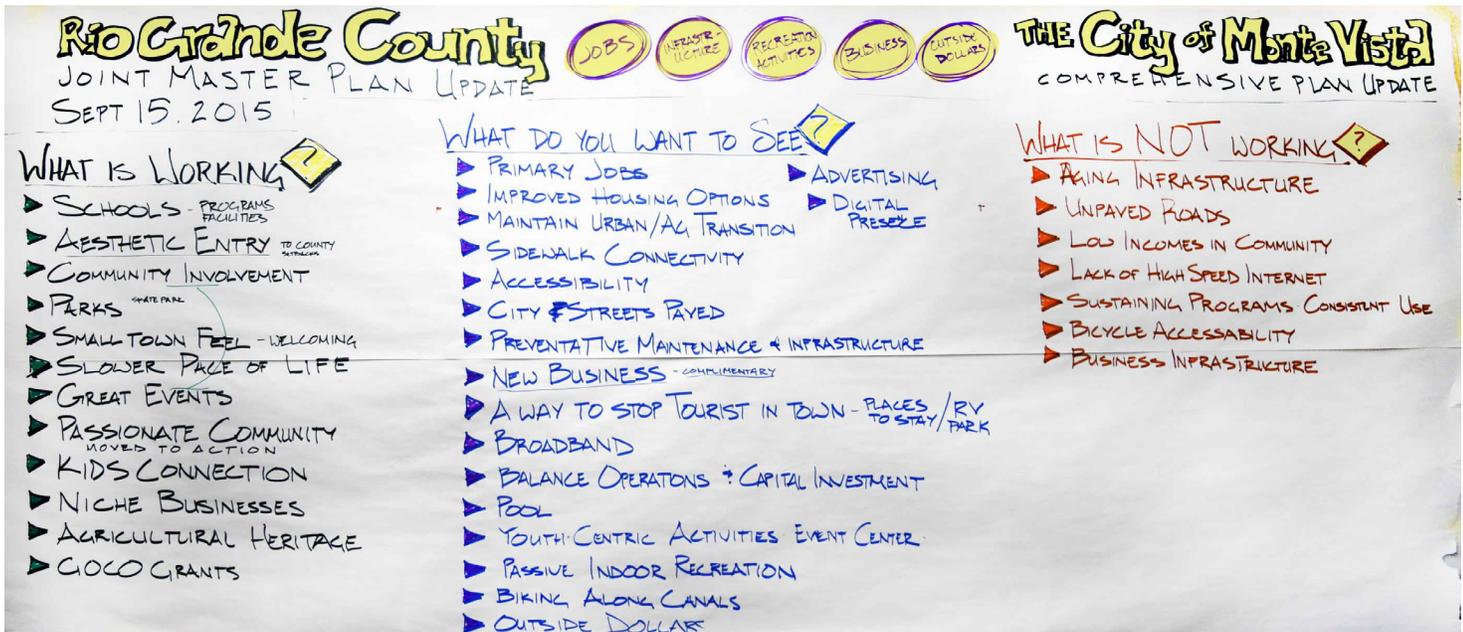
Rio Grande is a rural county of diverse natural resources, outdoor and recreational amenities, unique towns and cultural centers, public facilities and agricultural industries that work together to provide a world-class destination, strong economic base and high quality of life for residents, employees and visitors of all ages.

To help achieve this vision, the following main goals offer a framework for Rio Grande to guide future growth in the county.

1. **Promote the safe, orderly, environmentally and culturally sensitive development** of commercial, industrial, agricultural and residential uses to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents, businesses and visitors.
2. **Promote the Rio Grande County economy** that is productive, sustainable and meets the needs of all residents.
3. **Work to explore the feasibility of, and financing for, a public transportation system** that would connect Rio Grande County towns with each other and the broader region.
4. **Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services** to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.
5. **Preserve and enhance the existence of parks, trails and open space resources** that are sufficient to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents, businesses and visitors.

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City of Monte Vista



Monte Vista Visioning Session Wallgraphic

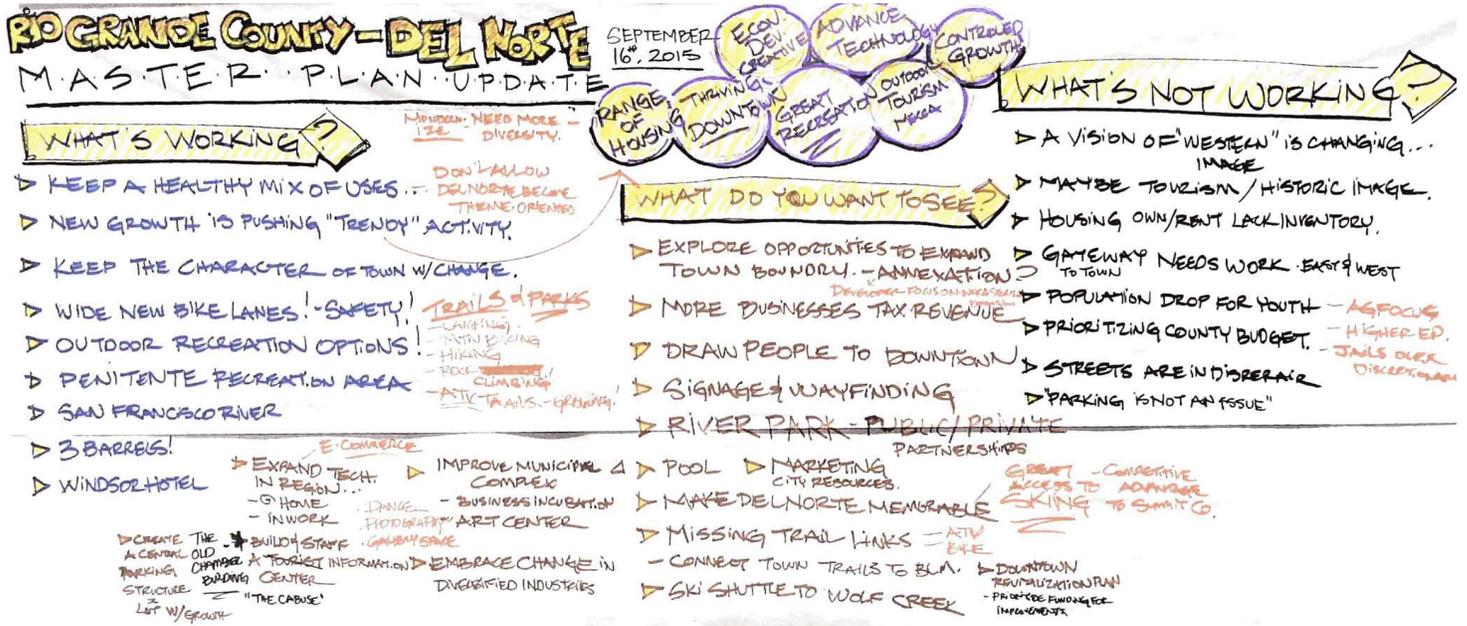
4.2 Monte Vista Vision

With its storybook tree-lined streets and noteworthy architecture, Monte Vista welcomes a diversity of cultures, businesses, and visitors while embracing its agricultural heritage.

To help achieve this vision, the following summary of goals offers a framework for Monte Vista to guide future growth:

1. **Incentivize development that contains a mix of land uses** appropriate to serve the needs of Monte Vista residents, business owners and visitors.
2. **Strengthen the overall economy of Monte Vista** by supporting the creation of primary jobs, supporting the downtown area, and supporting local businesses while remaining a regional agricultural center.
3. **Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services** to the community in order to ensure public health, safety and welfare.
4. **Provide active and passive recreational opportunities** for residents and visitors.

Town of Del Norte



Del Norte Visioning Session Wallgraphic

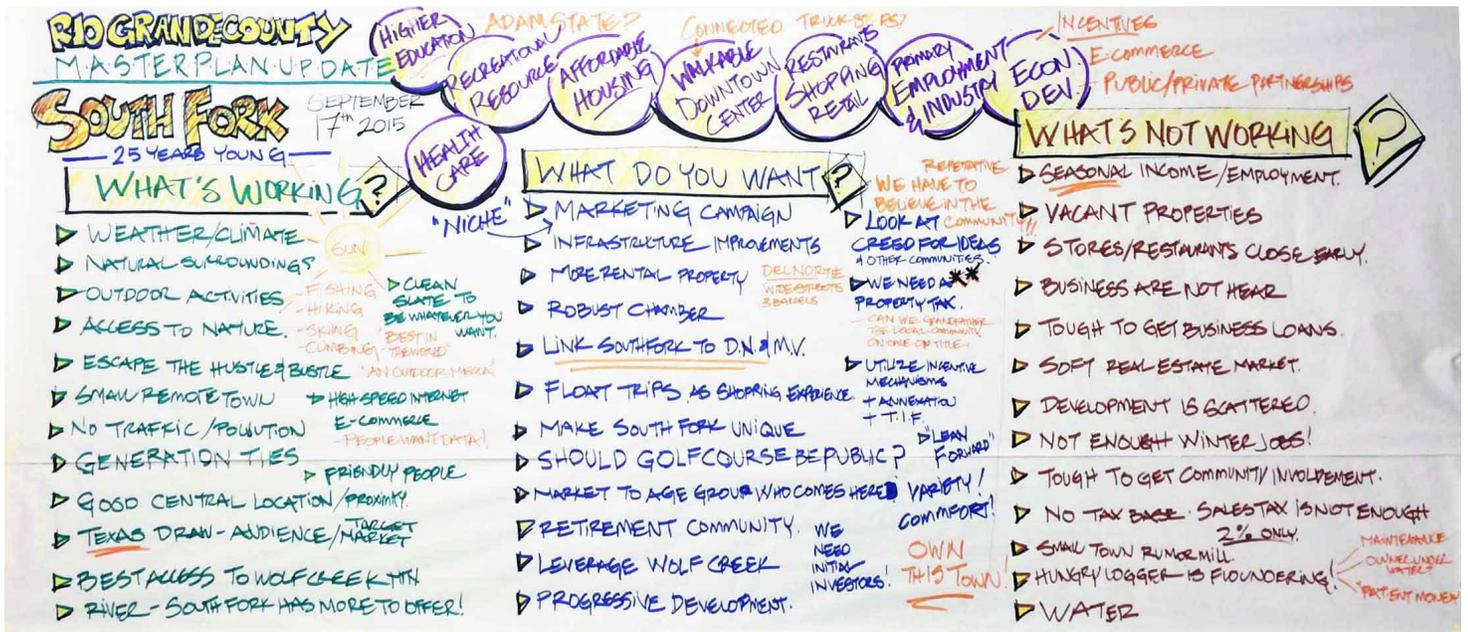
4.3 Del Norte Vision

As the government, healthcare, and recreation center of Rio Grande County, Del Norte will continue to be the economic hub of the region. The abundant natural and historic resources, plentiful outdoor activities, and revitalized historic commercial areas will provide an attractive year-round regional destination from which Del Norte will continue to prosper in the years to come.

To help achieve this vision, the following summary of goals offers a framework for Del Norte to guide future growth:

1. **Provide a diverse range of land uses** throughout Del Norte that attract and serve visitors, businesses and residents.
2. **Strengthen the overall economy** of Del Norte through youth training programs, downtown revitalization efforts and a focus on the outdoor recreational opportunities that surround the Town.
3. **Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services** to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.
4. **Work cooperatively** with the County, BLM, other federal land managers, and adjacent jurisdictions to create a system of parks, historic sites, trails, and open space that connect along and off of the Rio Grande River.

Town of South Fork



South Fork Visioning Session Wallgraphic

4.4 South Fork Vision

South Fork is a world class recreation-oriented, family- and business-friendly community at the base of the San Juan Mountains. Serving as the gateway to the Rio Grande National Forest, the Wolf Creek Ski Area, and many year-round outdoor activities, it aspires to be a walkable basecamp for the County’s outdoor playground. It is an idyllic town with stunning scenery, abundant natural resources, and a rich cultural history.

To help achieve this vision, the following summary of goals offers a framework for South Fork to guide future growth:

1. **Employ strong placemaking principles** to establish a small, compact, and walkable downtown.
2. **Incentivize mixed use development** in order to attract developers, along with local and destination-oriented retail tenants that would leverage the proximity to natural resources.
3. **Establish a mix of residential types** to attract commercial services necessary to balance the diversity of land uses in town.
4. **Leverage conservation-based resources for new primary employment** to diversify and stabilize the local economy.
5. **Explore higher education opportunities** to locate a satellite campus in South Fork.

6. **Pursue public-private partnerships** to create an incubation district for researching and developing innovations in sustainable building materials and other ecologically focused industries.
7. **Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services** to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.
8. **Preserve natural resources and facilities** that enable outdoor activities for all seasons, such as skiing, all-terrain vehicle transportation/snowmobiling, fishing, hiking, rock climbing, golfing, hunting and site-seeing.



chapter five
Future Growth

5 | Future Growth



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5.1 Development Capacity Analysis

DEFINING DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY ANALYSIS

The development capacity of a community is an estimate of how much new development a community can undertake per the existing zoning of the land and the existing land uses. It also takes into consideration land that has already been developed and land that cannot be developed (parks, preservation areas, waterways, environmentally sensitive areas, etc.). The development capacity analysis synthesizes this information to illustrate potential areas of land development and community growth, while also addressing the community's values. The development capacity analysis is a growth management tool which allows each community to grow responsibly and sustainably without putting any undue stress on natural or human resources.

Responsible, sustainable growth is the goal for all of the communities. With this in mind, only land within a 1-mile radius around each municipality will be included for future development, along with the land within each municipality. This will allow public infrastructure, like roads, water lines, sewer lines, and electrical lines, to be extended without creating an undue burden on the existing infrastructure. Extending off of an existing service line is much less expensive and less labor intensive compared to creating new lines of infrastructure. Additionally, keeping new construction close to existing areas of development will reduce or eliminate the need for additional public services, such as police and fire personnel.

Rio Grande County

Preservation of agricultural land is a high priority in Rio Grande County; therefore, this analysis will assume a minimal amount of agricultural land can be developed. It will also exclude already developed land, so redevelopment will not be a consideration in the analysis. In order to identify the land available and suitable for development, maps showing existing land use and existing zoning districts were consulted.

MAPPING CHALLENGES

One difficulty with this section is that GIS layers were not available for FEMA floodplains, utilities, and certain types of environmentally constrained land. If those layers had been available for use, their combinations would have pin-pointed the exact parcels that could easily be developed and would have assisted with the type of land use each of those parcels could contain. In order to have a highly accurate Future Land Use Map, as well as a more in-depth development capacity analysis, these layers are imperative.

IMPORTANCE OF A FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Map is a community's visual guide to future planning. It takes the findings of a development capacity analysis and visually represents the type of development and where it should be located. The Future Land Use maps detailed in this Chapter also represent the desires of community members. These maps are not legally binding, unlike a zoning map. These Future Land Use maps are a vision of what the future could hold for the communities of Rio Grande County. They should be used to guide developers and land use decision makers through responsible future growth.

5.2 Rio Grande County

New development in the County should be focused within a 1-mile boundary of South Fork, Del Norte and Monte Vista. The Future Land Use maps for each community show areas of land immediately adjacent to the municipal boundaries as potential development areas. It is imperative that the County work closely with each town to determine if the possible annexations shown in these maps are mutually advantageous for all entities. Future Land Use maps are found in this chapter with full sized maps located in the Appendix.

A specific Future Land Use Map for the County is not provided with this plan, which again stresses the importance of new development occurring as close to existing municipalities as possible. However, the idea of creating a rural light industrial park for the growing non-conventional communities' cottage industries was discussed at the community meetings. The exact location for this industrial area was not determined, but would be in unincorporated Rio Grande County.

5 | Future Growth



5.3 City of Monte Vista

There are approximately 31 parcels of vacant land available for development in Monte Vista and its 1-mile buffer area. These parcels comprise less than 2% of the acreage and are mainly found in residential areas within the City boundaries. These vacant parcels should be developed with either residential uses or uses that compliment neighborhoods, such as parks and/or other recreational uses.

With such limited land on which to expand, redevelopment within the boundaries of Monte Vista may be needed in order for the community to continue to grow. Additional commercial uses are desired, per the Community Survey, including clothing stores, shops, and cafes. A mixed-use zoning district suits this need and it should be added to the Zoning Ordinance. Such zoning would allow existing buildings to be renovated to house residential uses on upper floors and commercial uses on the 1st floor. This would increase development capacity within the City. For growth adjacent to the City, a detailed annexation plan should be explored to guide future development and offer additional opportunities within the 1-mile buffer area around Monte Vista.

FUTURE LAND USE

At the community meetings held in December 2015, citizens shared their ideas, concerns, and hopes for the future growth of Monte Vista. Using the maps for Zoning, Land Use, and Land Use within Municipal Boundary and a 1-Mile Buffer (all found in the Appendix) as reference tools, the citizens provided input on how they want to see their city grow. Recommendations from the meetings include:

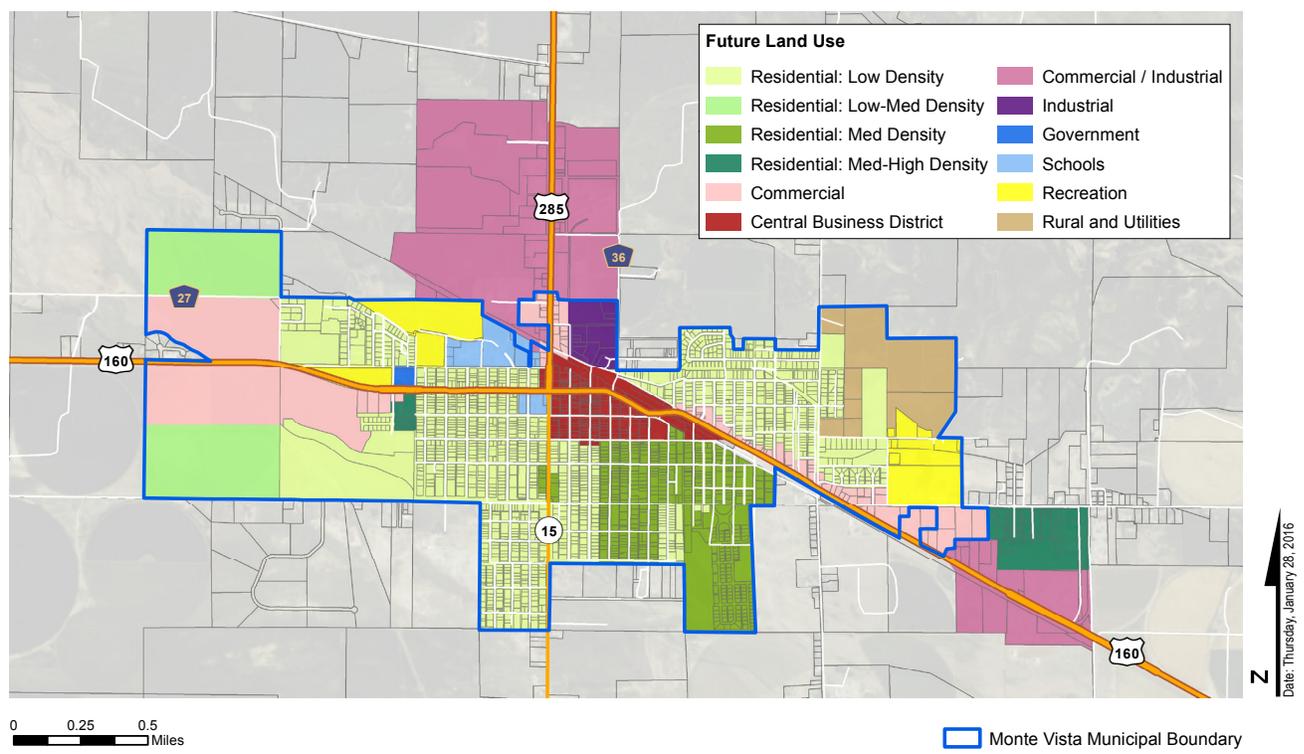
1. Annex land along Highway 285, north of Highway 160, to extend the Commercial/Industrial land uses along this corridor.
2. Annex land to the east of the City, along Highway 160. The parcels flanking the highway will be Commercial/Industrial and the parcels to the northeast will be Medium to High Density Residential.
3. Build homes on the vacant residential lots that are already subdivided on the south side of the City, keeping the same density and character as the surrounding homes.

City of Monte Vista

4. Rezone the northern and southern portions of the far west edge of the City to a zone that allows Low or Medium Density Residential.
5. Expand the Central Business Zoning District which allows for mixed-uses, such as commercial on the 1st floor and residential on upper floors.

The Future Land Use Map for Monte Vista reflects the above recommendations. It is the main tool that should be used to guide future development and all future rezonings. A larger version of this map can be found in the Appendix.

MONTE VISTA, COLORADO Future Land Use



5 | Future Growth



5.6 Town of Del Norte

Vacant land makes up less than 9% of the acreage within Del Norte and its 1-mile buffer area. There is very little vacant land remaining in town, with most occurring to the south and southwest, where large vacant parcels presently exist. Although this land is considered “vacant” by the County GIS mapping system, park land and natural preservation areas exist on these large parcels.

Parks, trails and open space are ideal future uses for flood-prone land. The northern area of Del Norte is located within the FEMA 100-year floodplain and over half of this land has already been developed. The remainder of the land within the floodplain should remain undeveloped, as building in a floodplain is not advisable.

Land already subdivided for residential and commercial use is desirable for immediate development within Del Norte and in the surrounding county, as it has already been reviewed for compliance with local ordinances.

Future growth will need to occur through redevelopment within Del Norte and on land adjacent to Del Norte. With limited vacant land inside the town boundary, Del Norte should focus its attention on redevelopment and on creating a specific annexation plan.

FUTURE LAND USE

At the community meetings held in December 2015, citizens shared their ideas, concerns, and hopes for the future growth of Del Norte. Using the maps for Zoning, Land Use, and Land Use within Municipal Boundary and a 1-Mile Buffer (all found in the Appendix) as reference tools, the citizens provided input on how they want to see their city grow. Recommendations from the meetings include:

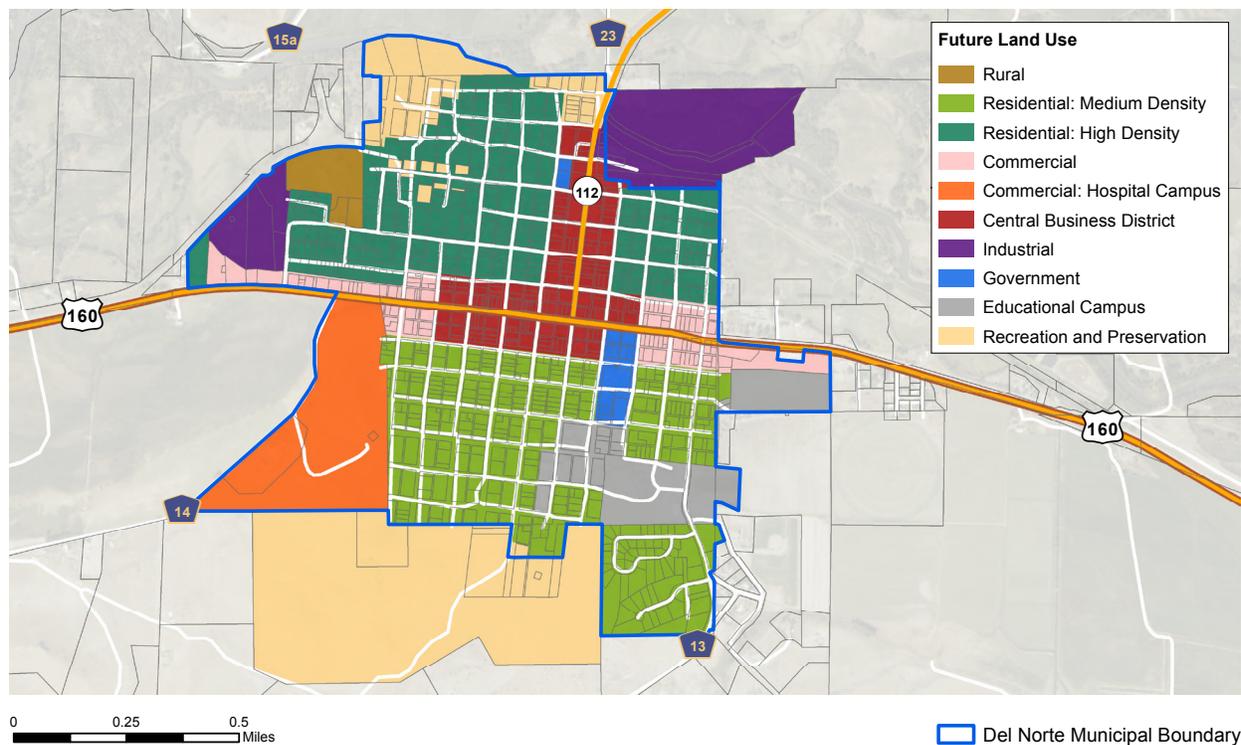
1. New commercial development should occur on vacant parcels along Highway 160 and Highway 112 (on the portion north of Highway 160). Unoccupied buildings in these areas should be redeveloped for commercial uses.

Town of Del Norte

2. Land already subdivided for residential use should be built upon with housing, if it is not environmentally constrained.
3. Environmentally sensitive land must be preserved. This includes marshland found within the residential area north of Highway 160 and in the area around the observatory, which has very steep slopes.
4. Town parks, RV parks, and other recreational areas should not be redeveloped for other uses, but new trails and amenities should be considered.
5. Areas adjacent to town must be studied for desired future land use before an annexation plan can be developed.

The Future Land Use Map for Del Norte reflects the above recommendations. It is the main tool that should be used to guide future development and all future rezonings. A larger version of this map can be found in the Appendix.

DEL NORTE, COLORADO Future Land Use



5 | Future Growth



5.6 Town of South Fork

Within the boundary of South Fork and within a 1-mile radius outside of South Fork, there are 2,122 parcels of vacant land (12% of the area's acreage). These parcels vary in size and, like much of South Fork, they are adjacent to the Rio Grande River and its South Fork Tributary. According to FEMA, much of this land is near or within the 100-year floodplain, making it challenging to develop. Even though development within a floodplain is not advisable, development or redevelopment can still occur in and around South Fork outside of the floodplains. Therefore, South Fork has the opportunity to grow responsibly while accommodating the Rio Grande River and its South Fork tributary.

Vacant land already subdivided for commercial and residential use is desirable for immediate development in and around South Fork, as it has already been reviewed for compliance with local ordinances. Vacant land adjacent to commercial parcels that have been previously developed may be suitable for a variety of commercial uses, including retail, recreation centers, youth activities, nightlife activities and restaurants. Additionally, some of these parcels could be used for mixed-use developments with residential units above 1st floor commercial. This would add affordable housing options, walkable commercial areas, and a more compact growth pattern.

Vacant land that is constrained by floodplains is more suitable for parks, community gardens, and additional greenways for bicyclists, ATV users and pedestrians. This type of recreational growth is desirable due to the large amount of tourism and out-door enthusiasts that flock to this area.

FUTURE LAND USE

At the community meetings held in December 2015, citizens shared their ideas, concerns, and hopes for the future growth of South Fork. Using the maps for Zoning, Current Land Use, and Land Use within Municipal Boundary and a 1-Mile Buffer (all found in the Appendix) as reference tools, the citizens provided input on how they want to see their town grow. Recommendations from the meetings include:

Town of South Fork

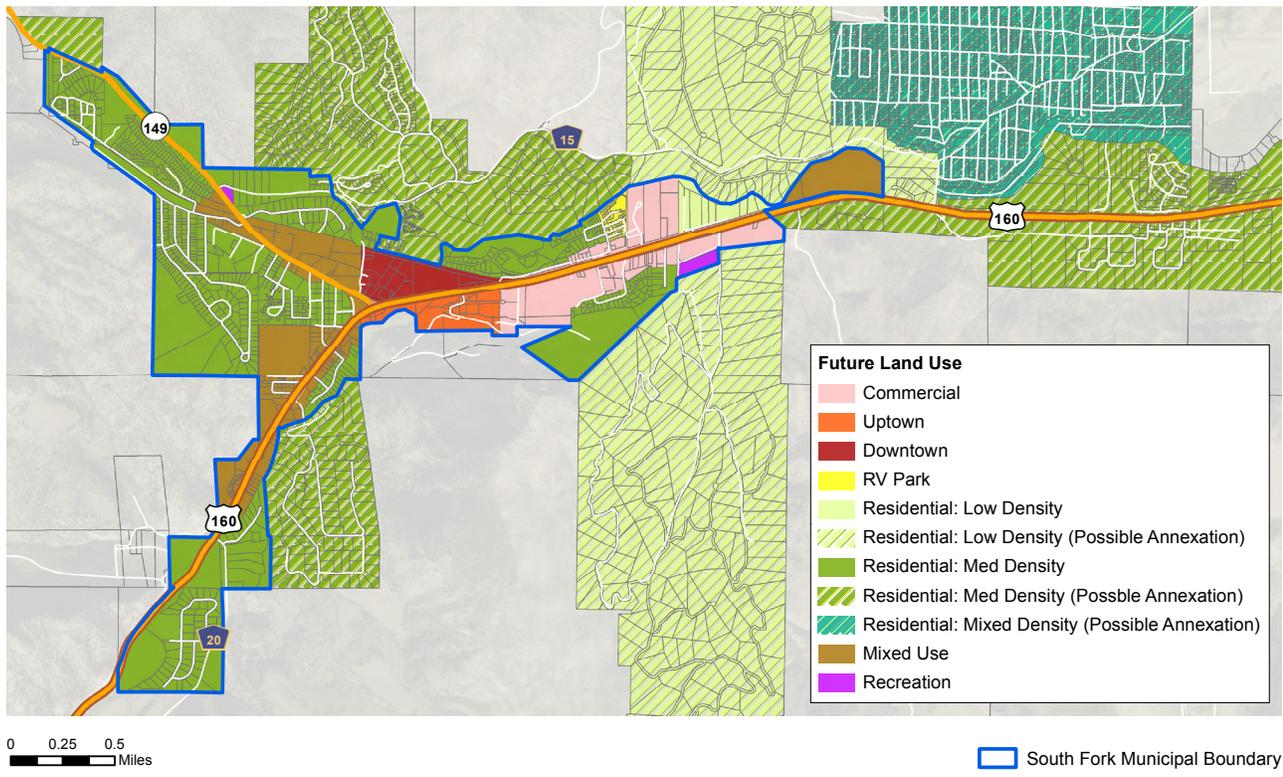
1. A revision of the Wharton Town Center Plan must be developed in order to create the desired new Uptown and Downtown areas.
 - An Uptown boutique commercial area should be studied for development to the east of the Downtown area. It needs to be a walkable area that is bicycle-friendly and must connect multi-modally to the Downtown area.
 - Mixed-use buildings are desirable in both the Uptown and Downtown areas.
 - A new Town Hall should be located in the new Downtown area, but the Visitor Center must remain in its present location.
 - Walking paths from the new Uptown and Downtown areas should connect to multi-modal trails leading into natural areas.
 - A Streetscape Plan needs to be developed along Highway 160 to create a sense of place for the Town.
 - A Parking Plan needs to be developed to efficiently use land in the new Uptown and Downtown areas.
2. New commercial development should occur on vacant parcels and in vacant buildings along Highways 160 and 149. Retail uses, restaurants, entertainment, and mixed-use buildings with residential units above the 1st floor commercial uses are desirable in these areas. Light industrial uses may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. New roads and bridges need to be created for alternative routes through town and in order to connect destinations more efficiently.
4. Land already subdivided for residential use should be built upon with housing, if it is not environmentally constrained.
5. Areas adjacent to town must be further studied for desired future land use before an annexation plan can be developed. Possible annexations include:
 - Existing large lot residential development south of Highway 160, east of downtown.
 - Existing large lot residential development due north of area mentioned above.
 - Creating medium density residential developments on eastern boundary of town, both north and south of Highway 160.
 - Exploring the possibility of enhanced development within the residential area on the east boundary of town, north of Highway 160.

5 | Future Growth

Town of South Fork

The Future Land Use Map for South Fork reflects the above recommendations. It is the main tool that should be used to guide future development and all future rezonings. A larger version of this map can be found in the Appendix.

SOUTH FORK, COLORADO Future Land Use





chapter six

Rio Grande County



- 1 Introduction
- 2 Demographic Trends
- 3 Accomplishments
- 4 A New Vision
- 5 Future Growth
- 6 Rio Grande County**
- 7 City of Monte Vista
- 8 Town of Del Norte
- 9 Town of South Fork
- 10 Appendix

6.1 Natural Environment

LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

Rio Grande County covers 913 square miles of varied terrain. It is located in south-central Colorado, in the west-central portion of the San Luis Valley and is approximately 40 miles north of the New Mexico border.

Stretching approximately 80 miles from north to south and 50 miles east to west, the San Luis Valley is the largest “high mountain” valley in the world. The San Luis Valley floor is between 7,000 - 8,000 feet above sea level, and is nestled between two mountain ranges with peaks as tall as 14,000 feet. The San Juan Mountains border Rio Grande County to the west, with the Sangre de Cristo Range across the San Luis Valley to the east. The Rio Grande River flows through the County from the west to the east and has its headwaters in the San Juan Mountains. The river passes through the valley communities of South Fork, Del Norte and Monte Vista. South Fork and Del Norte are bordered by the San Juan Mountains on each community’s north and south borders. Monte Vista is located to the east of these two municipalities, outside of the mountain range, in “the heart of the valley.” US Highways 285 and 160 are the main transportation routes through the County and intersect at Monte Vista.

Natural Environment

STEEP SLOPES

As slope increases, land becomes less suitable for development. Slopes are the most limiting factor to be considered in the design of access roads and residential subdivisions. Steep slopes generally have the following increased risks: wildfire, unstable soils, road construction and maintenance problems, and difficulty with access by fire protection equipment and emergency vehicles.

Steep slopes are located primarily within the western portion of Rio Grande County, in the San Juan Mountain Range. Slopes are classified into four categories:

Slopes between 0% and 8% - Most road design standards and building codes allow construction within this range.

Slopes between 9% and 15% - Some mitigation may be necessary, with possible structural reinforcement, along with undesired cut and fill activity.

Slopes between 16% and 33% - Significant mitigation is necessary, with need to evaluate proposed construction on a case by case basis.

Slopes greater than 33% - No construction is recommended due to risk of hazards.

CLIMATE

Rio Grande County has a semi-arid climate. Winds are typically from the southwest and strongest in the spring and early summer. Summer is moderate, with average daily maximum temperatures in the mid-80s and daily minimums in the low 40s. Average winter temperatures range from the single digits to the high 30s, with snowfall between 25 and 35 inches per year.

Almost 80% of the County's precipitation occurs between April and October. The highest levels of rainfall are in the western portion of the County, with South Fork receiving an average of 12 inches of rain per year, decreasing to 9.9 inches in Del Norte and 7 inches in Monte Vista.

Air quality in Rio Grande County is considered excellent and meets all federal standards. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment does not currently maintain air quality monitors in Rio Grande County, but does run tests periodically. The lack of permanent air quality monitoring stations is a positive indication of the air quality.



Steep slopes can create architectural challenges.

Natural Environment



Del Norte is home to Lookout Mountain.

GEOLOGY

Geologic occurrences over millions of years have given Rio Grande County a tremendously diverse landscape, including pumice- and sandstone-sculpted formations, alluvial terraces, and precious metal deposits.

During the Laramide Orogeny 65 million years ago, heavy tectonic activity caused the uplift of the ancestral Rockies to occur.

This mountain building activity led to valleys flanking the uplifts. This is how the San Luis Valley was formed. After the Laramide Orogeny ceased, volcanic activity followed. The most significant activity occurred 30 million years ago, when volcanic activity in and around Rio Grande County caused the San Luis Valley to fill in with ash and lava. Water and wind have since eroded the landscape to its current form.

Notable mountain peaks and formations with the San Juan Mountains of Rio Grande County include:

Sentinel Peak	North Mountain
Del Norte Peak	Lookout Mountain
Pintada Mountain	Indian Head
Windy Mountain	Dog Mountain
Green Ridge	Horseshoe Mountain
Hogback Mesa South	

MINERAL RESOURCES

Mineral resources in Rio Grande County include gold, silver, lead, copper, aluminum oxides and pumice. Mining for precious minerals is not presently economical.

Sand and gravel deposits also exist, predominantly along the Rio Grande River corridor. Approximately twenty active sand and gravel pits are operating in Rio Grande County. The potential exists for sand and gravel mining to increase as needed to support construction demand.

About a half dozen oil and gas wells are located in southeastern Rio Grande County. The potential exists for future oil and gas exploration. With no major coal deposits, coal bed methane exploration is not an issue in Rio Grande County.

Natural Environment

NATURAL HAZARDS

In August of 2011, Rio Grande County adopted a report on a County-wide “Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan,” which supports a broader regional effort by the San Luis Valley Authority to address on-going mitigation efforts for natural disasters in the region. Much of the report focuses on FEMA guidelines for profiling hazards and includes the following categories.

- Flood
- Hail
- Windstorm
- Severe Winter Storm
- Dam Failure
- Wildlife
- Lightning
- Tornado
- Drought
- Avalanche
- Landslides
- Earthquake

For further understanding of hazard impacts on Rio Grande County, please review the Rio Grande County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.

SOILS

Soils in Rio Grande County were categorized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service) through a Soil Survey completed in 1980.

Two groups of soil types were established: 1) nearly level and very gently sloping soils in the valley, and 2) very gently sloping to steep soils in the foothills and mountains.

Nearly level and very gently sloping soils. These soils are excessively drained to poorly drained, shallow to deep, and coarse textured to moderately fine textured. They are found at elevations of 7,600 to 8,300 feet, where the annual precipitation is 5 to 11 inches, located primarily in the northeast, north central and southeastern portions of the county. These are the primary agricultural areas of the county where potatoes, alfalfa, and small grains and vegetables are grown with the help of irrigation.

Very gently sloping to steep soils. These soils are well drained and somewhat excessively drained, shallow to deep, and medium textured or moderately coarse textured. They are found at elevations of 7,700 to 11,100 feet, where the annual precipitation is 8 to 20 inches, located generally in the northwestern, western and southwestern sections of the county.

Natural Environment

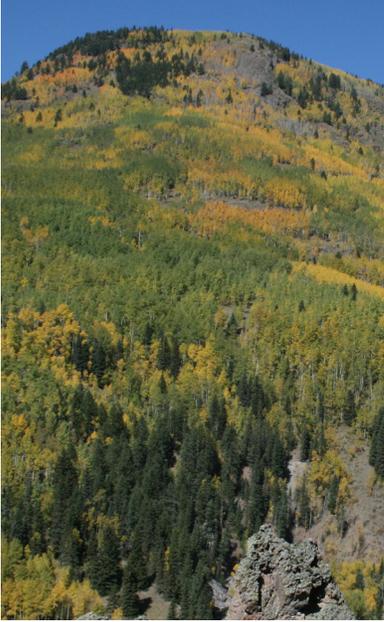


Photo from USDA Forest Service of Rio Grande National Forest.

Soil types can influence design, construction and maintenance of buildings, structures and roads. The soil properties most limiting for these uses are permeability, water-holding capacity, shear strength, compaction, drainage, shrink-swell abilities, dispersion characteristics, plasticity, and reaction. Other influencing factors include depth to water table, depth to bedrock and topography.

Rio Grande County also has alkaline soils, which create problems for farmers. The pH issues with these soils must be addressed through agricultural BMPs (Best Management Practices).

Rio Grande County has areas of farmland surrounding Del Norte and Monte Vista. The largest areas of farmland are in the eastern portion of Rio Grande County.

VEGETATION

There is a wide variety of vegetation in Rio Grande County. Coniferous plants such as spruce, fir, pinon pine, and juniper are found predominantly in upland areas, along with aspen and cottonwood trees. Wild herbaceous plants such as Indian ricegrass, western wheatgrass, alkali sacaton, blue grama, saltgrass, foxtail barley, and alkali cordgrass provide food and cover for upland wildlife. Shrubs including saltbush, rabbitbrush, sagebrush, and greasewood are typical throughout the county. Domestic grasses such as tall wheatgrass, meadow foxtail, Russian wildrye, reed canarygrass, and timothy are found predominantly in the valley. Wetland plants include smartweed, tufted hairgrass, spikerush, sedges, cattails, and northern redgrass.

Narrowleaf cottonwoods are the dominant tree along the Rio Grande River corridor, providing a habitat for birds, elk, mule deer and cattle. Multiple species of willow are found in the river corridor, providing habitat for birds, beavers, rabbits, mule deer and elk, while also providing bank stabilization for the river. In the upstream portions of the river corridor, understory vegetation includes a variety of shrubs, such as Bebb willow, dogwood, and golden currant. The understory in the downstream portion of the river corridor is dominated by grasses, often used for grazing.

Natural Environment

FORESTED LANDS

On July 1, 1908, Theodore Roosevelt formed Executive Order Number 887, creating the Rio Grande National Forest. This forest is part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. It covers the entire southwestern half of Rio Grande County, minus the portion of the San Luis Valley area containing South Fork and Del Norte. Monte Vista is located to the east, outside of the Rio Grande National Forest. The forest ends in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

The Rio Grande National Forest contains 1.83 million acres across portions of New Mexico and Colorado counties, including Saguache, Mineral, Conejos, Hinsdale, San Juan, Alamosa, Archuleta, Custer, and of course Rio Grande. There are four designated wilderness areas within the forest and they occupy $\frac{1}{4}$ of the forest itself. All four wilderness areas extend past the Rio Grande National Forest's borders into adjoining National Forests. These wilderness areas include: South San Juan, Weminuche, La Garita and Sangre de Cristo.

WILDLAND FIRES

Generally, the potential for wildland fire exists on dry, vegetated hillsides. The fire hazard and potential for loss of human life and property from building and development in forest areas is a serious concern. The wildland-urban interface (WUI) is considered the area where increasing numbers of homes, businesses and other forms of urban development are intermingled with high-risk forest fuels. The Colorado State Forest Service has performed the Colorado WUI Hazard Assessment for Colorado's 64 counties. Rio Grande County has areas of wildland fire risk ranging from low risk to high risk.

The Colorado Wildland/Urban Fire Annex to the Colorado Multi-Hazards Mitigation Plan reported a total of 67 wildfires between 1990 and 1994. This 1995 study identified that Rio Grande County had one interface subdivision with 1,062 acres of interface. Since 1995, 91 subdivisions with 14,842 additional acres of interface have been developed in the WUI.

Natural Environment



Photo from the Denver Post of West Fork Complex Fire.

In June 2002, the Million Fire began two-miles south of South Fork, and spread to 6,000 acres in the first day under extreme fire conditions. Ultimately consuming 9,346 acres, the Million Fire threatened four subdivisions, destroyed 11 homes and 2 out-buildings, and damaged 7 other homes. The cost of this fire was estimated to be \$9.4 million.

On June 18, 2013, heat, low humidity, strong winds, and drought conditions helped three wildland fires ignite, creating the West Fork Complex fires that threatened Rio Grande County. The strong winds allowed the fires to grow from 12,000 acres to 30,000 acres overnight, forcing all of the residents of South Fork to evacuate, although the fires did not enter South Fork. According to the US Forest Service and various news sources, the wildfires started from a single strike of lightning. The main reason the fires were able to burn so aggressively is due to the infestation of pine beetles that have been killing pine trees in this region for years. The dead pine trees lack sap, providing dry wood that catches fire much more quickly and easily than live trees filled with sap. Pine Beetles are still killing trees at epidemic levels and will continue to do so until a very cold, wet, and prolonged winter is able to stop their propagation. Presently, the only way to avoid these massive forest fires is to perform controlled burns.

The State Forester is available to work with homebuilders in rural areas in order to mitigate wildland fire hazards using “defensible space” and other techniques. The Rio Grande County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan describes ways to avoid wildland fire and other hazards. The plan was written in 2010 and adopted on August 24, 2011, by the Board of County Commissioners.

Natural Environment

WATER

Rio Grande County is within the Rio Grande River Drainage Basin. The Rio Grande River Drainage Basin drains approximately 8,000 square miles of south central Colorado and accounts for 7.2% of Colorado's surface area.

Major tributaries to the Rio Grande River in Rio Grande County are the South Fork of the Rio Grande River and the Alamosa River. Streams with water rights include Alder Creek, Bear Creek, Beaver Creek, Bennett Creek, Burro Creek, Cross Creek, East Bellows Creek, East Fork Pinos Creek, Elk Creek, Embargo Creek, Kelly Creek, Lost Mine Creek, Middle Fork San Francisco Creek, Park Creek, Pinos Creek, Race Creek, San Francisco Creek, Trout Creek, West Alder Creek, West Fork Pinos Creek, and West Fork San Francisco Creek.

Individual water rights determine the amount and availability of water for parcels throughout the county. In unincorporated Rio Grande County, water is used primarily for crop irrigation. Domestic water use is limited to individual wells.

Rio Grande County has been irrigated with a system of ditches and canals since 1866. The Rio Grande Canal was constructed in 1881, north of the Rio Grande River, followed by the Monte Vista Canal south of the river. Additional irrigation is handled by the Empire, Farmers Union, Travelers, Centennial and San Luis Valley canals, along with the Prairie Ditch.

Groundwater is generally obtainable on the valley floor, but its availability varies in the mountain area. The San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District transports water through a ditch, over the Continental Divide, and then into a storage reservoir. This is done in order to cover deficiencies from well withdrawal. The District's primary mission is to "provide augmented water for non-irrigated wells," meaning for residential and commercial uses, so that the wells are in line with the Colorado Division of Water Resources rules and regulations. The District owns several water rights. It seeks to purchase additional water rights to provide the necessary "augmentation water" to owners of wells in order to bridge the gap between the water their wells produce and the water they consume. The District serves designated areas in Alamosa, Rio Grande, Saguache, and Mineral counties.

Natural Environment

The Statewide Water Supply Initiative, commissioned by the Colorado legislature and the Colorado Water Conservation Board, is currently exploring several issues, including:

- Improving water management
- Recharging aquifer levels
- Creating additional storage capacity
- Seeking financial support to enhance and protect the water supply
- Increasing public education
- Encouraging recreation and tourism without depleting resources

WATER QUALITY

The water quality in the Rio Grande River basin is generally good. As evidence of this, a portion of the Rio Grande River and its tributaries above Del Norte are gold medal fisheries.

The water quality of one of the Rio Grande River's tributaries, the Alamosa River, has been significantly impacted by mining activities. In the 1980s, Summitville Consolidated Mining Company, Inc. (SCMCI) started a large-scale surface gold mining operation using the heap-leach process. Through this process, gold-bearing ore was extracted using a solution of sodium cyanide to leach the gold from the ore. This mining process greatly increased the acidity and dissolved metals in the surrounding streams, along with creating a toxic environment, and eventually reached the headwaters of the Alamosa River. This damaged aquatic life and threatened farmland that was irrigated with downstream river water. In 1992, SCMCI filed for bankruptcy and ceased the operations that had prevented the discharge of heavy metals and cyanide from the Summitville Mine into the river. Halting this preventative measure triggered an emergency response from the Environmental Protection Agency, which subsequently declared the Summitville Mine a Superfund site due to the high toxicity.

Natural Environment

The environmental clean-up of the Summitville mining site is almost complete. A Preliminary Close-Out Report, approved by the EPA in 2013, stated that the Engineering Controls (i.e. new water treatment plant, plugging drainage pits, etc.) have worked to eliminate further contamination and have remediated almost all of the existing contamination. According to this EPA report, the next steps in concluding the remediation process include:

- Developing and issuing an Explanation of Significant Differences report (similar to Institutional Controls) = March 31, 2014
- Institutional Control Implementation, if needed = March 31, 2015
- Five-Year Review = September 30, 2015
- Operation and Maintenance of Site and WTP = September 30, 2025
- Final Close-Out Report = September 30, 2025
- Site Deletion = September 30, 2026

FLOODPLAINS

Construction of new permanent structures should be discouraged within floodplains. If permanent structures are built, they need to meet standard FEMA regulations. However, each community should have more stringent floodplain ordinances. The CWCB (Colorado Water Conservation Board), the state agency charged with evaluating flood activities, often has more restrictive regulations than FEMA. When there are conflicting floodplain regulations, the most stringent regulations always take precedence.

Floodplain areas do have significant potential for open space and recreational development. These options would be the most ideal land uses for the flood-prone land where building structures is not feasible.

Natural Environment

WETLANDS

Rio Grande County has scattered areas of wetlands, predominantly along the Rio Grande River corridor and south of Monte Vista. Wetlands are an important environmental resource for Rio Grande County. Wetlands not only act as a sponge to absorb floodwaters, but also as a kidney that cleans water. Wetlands provide habitat for wildlife and attract a number of bird species. The annual Monte Vista Crane Festival and other bird watching activities contribute significantly to the tourism economy. Therefore, wetland preservation must be seen as an important tool for both the environment and for tourism.

WILDLIFE

There are several Federal and State Wildlife areas within Rio Grande County. The County is home to excellent hunting, fishing and wildlife watching opportunities. Particularly unique to Rio Grande County is the annual Monte Vista Crane Festival.

Sandhill Cranes have been making an annual trek from south to north, stopping off near Monte Vista, for millions of years. There is ancient evidence of this phenomenon via a six-foot long petroglyph in the form of a Sandhill Crane, etched into a cliff face southwest of Monte Vista. The crane migration brings over 20,000 Sandhill Cranes through the San Luis Valley area. The Crane Festival also brings thousands of people to Rio Grande County for workshops, bus tours, a craft fair and a variety of other activities.

Rio Grande County is home to several federally listed threatened and endangered species. Species identified as federally endangered include the southwestern willow flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo, and the whooping crane. Species identified as federally threatened include the lynx, Mexican spotted owl and the bald eagle.

The County is also concerned with the US Fish and Wildlife Service listing of fish such as the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout, Rio Grande Chub, and the Rio Grande Sucker as either endangered or threatened. Should any of these listings materialize, it could have serious impacts for land and water use in the county which in turn could impact agriculture, commercial, industrial, and recreation commerce. Rio Grande County is participating in a 10 county coalition that is working with federal and state agencies in Colorado and New Mexico as well as Tribal nations to be pro-active

Natural Environment

in the protection of these fish. There is a vast amount of science and conservation efforts by the States of Colorado and New Mexico and non-profit groups to conserve them.

Wildlife is impacted by reduction of habitat and barriers to movement, generally resulting from land subdivision, building of structures, and road and fence construction. For example, the forced movement of deer or elk into concentrated areas where foraging is inadequate could result in dwindling herd sizes through starvation, along with destruction of remaining habitat by overgrazing. Problems associated with wildlife displacement can be significantly reduced if the potential for wildlife impact is addressed during the development review process.

WILDLIFE AREAS

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) owns many state wildlife areas throughout Colorado, including locations in Rio Grande County. They also maintain existing easements and leases that protect wildlife. The CPW properties provide the public with opportunities to hunt, fish and view wildlife in their natural habitat. Descriptions of each of these federal and state-owned wildlife areas are provided below, along with a refuge area owned by the federal government:

Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge. The Monte Vista Wildlife Refuge, located south of Monte Vista, was established by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission in 1953. This refuge is a major stopover for the Sandhill Cranes that are celebrated in the annual Monte Vista Crane Festival. In addition to cranes, the refuge is a host to nesting ducks, geese, ibis, herons, egrets, pheasants, bald eagles and rough-legged hawks. A few endangered whooping cranes join the Sandhill Cranes in their migration. In addition to feathered wildlife, a herd of several hundred elk visit the refuge seeking winter food and a sanctuary from hunting activity in the surrounding forests.

Beaver Creek Reservoir State Wildlife Area. Beaver Creek Reservoir is on 120 acres located southwest of South Fork at an elevation of 8,763 feet. Hunting is not permitted in this wildlife area, but lake fishing for rainbow, brown, brook, and cutthroat trout, along with kokanee salmon, is allowed. Boating that does not create a whitewater wake is also allowed.



National Forest access.

Natural Environment

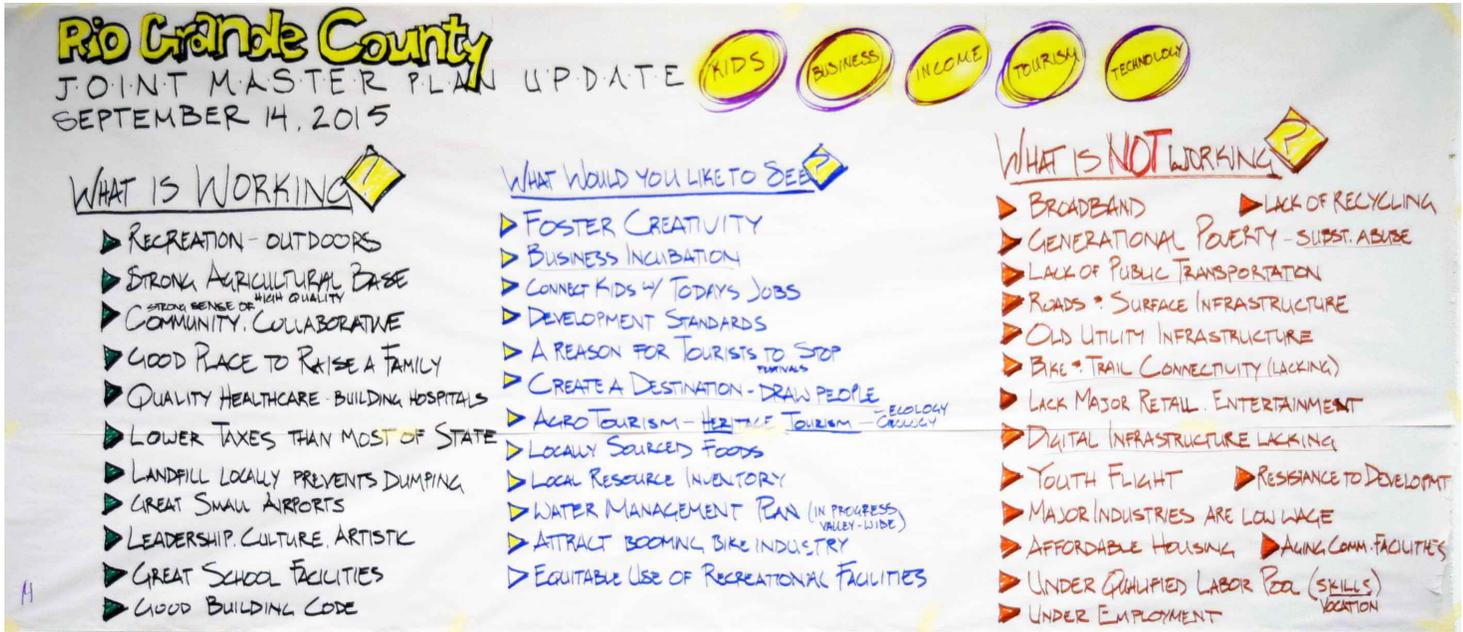
Coller State Wildlife Area. The Coller State Wildlife Area is on 579 acres located northwest of South Fork. The area offers hunting for deer, elk, grouse and small game. Stream fishing is also available.

Rio Grande State Wildlife Area. The Rio Grande State Wildlife Area is on 935 acres located east of Monte Vista at an elevation of 7,630 feet. The area offers hunting for cottontail rabbits, deer, doves, and waterfowl. Stream fishing is available for largemouth bass, channel catfish and northern pike.

Home Lake State Wildlife Area. The Rio Grande State Wildlife Area now includes the former Home Lake State Wildlife Area. Home Lake offers fishing for northern pike, channel catfish and rainbow trout, and permits motorboat activity during limited hours. The area is closed from February 15th through July 15th to avoid interference with nesting birds.

Dry Creek State Trust Land. The Dry Creek State Trust Land is on 1,280 acres located southwest of Monte Vista. The area offers hunting for elk, deer, antelope, coyote, bobcat, mountain lion, and small game. Stream fishing is available in Rock Creek while users are encouraged to respect private property in these limited areas.

Rio Grande River-Del Norte Vicinity. The DOW has easements for fishing the Rio Grande River in the vicinity of Del Norte. Anglers are encouraged to respect private property in these limited areas.



6.2 County Vision

Rio Grande is a rural county of diverse natural resources, outdoor and recreational amenities, unique towns and cultural centers, public facilities and agricultural industries that work together to provide a world-class destination, strong economic base and high quality of life for residents, employees and visitors of all ages.

To help achieve this vision, the following main goals offer a framework for Rio Grande to guide future growth in the county.

1. **Promote the safe, orderly, environmentally and culturally sensitive development** of commercial, industrial, agricultural and residential uses to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents, businesses and visitors.
2. **Promote the Rio Grande County economy** that is productive, sustainable and meets the needs of all residents.
3. **Work to explore the feasibility of, and financing for, a public transportation system** that would connect Rio Grande County towns with each other and the broader region.
4. **Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services** to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.
5. **Preserve and enhance the existence of parks, trails and open space resources** that are sufficient to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents, businesses and visitors.

6.3 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

Goal 1: Promote the safe, orderly, environmentally and culturally sensitive development of commercial, industrial, agricultural and residential uses to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents, businesses and visitors.

Objective: Develop and implement regulations that ensure the orderly entitlement of land and the construction of safe, energy efficient attractive structures.

Actions:

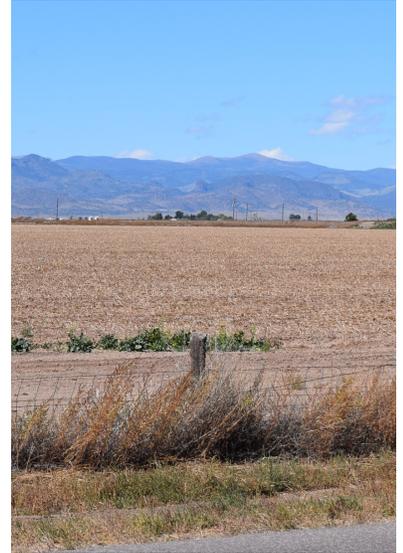
1. Continue to implement the recently adopted building code.
2. Develop and implement a modern Land Use Code to include (but not be limited to) the following:
 - Clear distinction and limitation between the Rural zoning district for development of 35 acre lots and larger, the Rural Estate zoning district for development of lots between 5 and 35 acres in size, and the Residential zoning district for development of lots less than 5 acres in size
 - Access management principles, including but not limited to the provision of frontage roads and cross access easements between multiple properties
 - Prohibition of duplicative street names in rural subdivisions
 - Zoning Transition Program
 - Consideration of the character, density and scale of surrounding existing land uses when reviewing new development proposal
 - Minimum rural road standard for rural subdivisions
 - Identification of Intergovernmental Annexation Agreements with jurisdictions in the County
3. Strengthen Home Occupation Ordinance.
4. Integrate the San Luis Valley Noxious Weed Management Plan into the Land Use Code.
5. Require that all Conditional Use Permits be reviewed for compliance on a periodic basis.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

Objective: Protect public health and safety in environmentally constrained and sensitive areas such as flood plains, wildfire areas and steep terrain.

Actions:

1. Implement the County specific recommendations from the San Luis Valley Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (aka Rio Grande County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan).
2. Update the Rio Grande County Land Use Code to incorporate defensible space techniques for rural residential subdivisions that protect life and property from wildfires.
3. Maintain county access road standards for rural residential subdivisions that will accommodate fire trucks and emergency equipment.
4. Prohibit construction on slopes greater than 33% and require slope stabilization techniques and standards for construction on slopes greater than 16%.
5. Work with FEMA, the San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority and others to prepare updated flood hazard mapping.
6. Work with FEMA, RWEACT, Rio Grande County Emergency Management and others to maintain a Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan.
7. Discourage new developments within the 100-year floodplain so as to minimize the risks of potential flood hazards.
 - Require that any new permanent structure within the 100-year floodplain be certified by a professional engineer so that it will not alter stream flow or create a flood hazard for downstream properties.



Objective: Protect significant natural areas, wetlands, wildlife habitat and cultural resources.

Actions:

1. Work with the Rio Grande Headwaters Trust, land owners and others to establish conservation easements using the Colorado Conservation Tax Exchange Program.
2. Work with the San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority and others to prepare and analyze updated maps that identify significant natural areas, wetlands and wildlife habitat to ensure their consistency with the San Luis Valley Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.
3. Maintain subdivision guidelines that protect significant wildlife habitats and migration corridors.
4. Work with the San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority and others to prepare and analyze updated maps that identify historic places and archeological sites.
5. Require soil evaluations for on-site wastewater treatment systems and include state approved techniques for installing these systems in areas with excessively poor soils.
6. Require that any new subdivision within 1,000 feet of the Rio Grande River have a minimum lot size of 5 acres.
7. Maintain standards for the submittal, review, and approval of development in areas with historic and archeological resources.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

Objective: Protect agricultural and other economically productive natural resources in the County.

Actions:

1. Work with the San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority to use GIS technology to identify large agricultural land holdings and designate prime agricultural land.
2. Acknowledge the work of the Rio Grande Headwaters Trust, land owners and others to establish conservation easements using the Colorado Conservation Tax Exchange Program.
3. Maintain a zoning district in the Rio Grande County Land Use Code to recognize agricultural uses on parcels greater than 80 acres in size.
4. Employ a conservation subdivision process for clustering lots in areas that are agricultural in character or environmentally significant.
5. Discourage the division of corner areas less than 35 acres in size on land that is irrigated with center pivot systems.
6. Encourage Best Management Practices (BMPs).
7. Acknowledge the work of NRCS and other agricultural departments and agencies to encourage farmers to practice sustainable farming techniques.
8. Re-evaluate ordinances for supporting alternative crops, such as industrial hemp.
9. Maintain standards for the submittal, review, and approval of development in areas with mineral and timber resources
10. Work with the San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority and others to maintain maps that identify mineral and timber resources.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards



Astronaut Kent Rominger
Airport

Objective: Facilitate the development of non-agricultural commercial and public land uses in quantities sufficient to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents.

Actions:

1. Use land use regulations to zone land sufficiently to provide for residential needs in the County. Include provisions for quality affordable housing and creating small hubs of retail services and entertainment opportunities in order to avoid sprawling developments.
2. Incorporate community outreach efforts, in cooperation with local economic development agencies, into an overall land use strategy that will address resistance from locals to growth and development.
3. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, Upper Rio Grande Economic Development, and others to attract non-agricultural businesses when and where appropriate.
4. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, Upper Rio Grande Economic Development, and others to encourage cottage industries, e.g. redevelopment of vacant potato sheds as startup business incubators.
5. Coordinate the preparation of Airport Master Plans with Monte Vista, Del Norte and South Fork.
6. Coordinate the Rio Grande County Land Use Code with Airport Master Plans and maintain an airport overlay district.
7. Identify airport overlay district designations on County Zoning Map.

Objective: Provide a diverse range of housing choices to meet the needs of all demographics in Rio Grande County.

Actions:

1. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, the SLV Housing Coalition, local housing authorities, and others to improve the availability of quality affordable housing.
2. Ensure a zoning configuration that encourages a more diverse range of housing types, including stick built single family homes, attached multi-family housing buildings, manufactured housing, and other housing types.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

3. Maintain a Zoning Transition Program for updating the Rio Grande County Zoning Maps that provides for Mobile Home Park and Recreational Vehicle Park zoning.

Objective: Work cooperatively with Monte Vista, Del Norte and South Fork to encourage sound land use planning along municipal boundaries.

Actions:

1. Establish new and update existing intergovernmental agreements with each municipality as necessary to address future land use and growth issues of mutual interest.
2. Continually update the Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan to include any revisions to any land use related plans for Monte Vista, Del Norte and South Fork.
3. Work with Monte Vista, Del Norte and South Fork to explore the feasibility of creating a recreation district with sub-areas based on Fire District boundaries.
4. Ensure County land use regulations are sufficient to encourage the development of RV Parks outside of municipalities.
5. Encourage the orderly transition of residential densities.
6. Provide for the provision of compatible commercial and industrial development along municipal boundaries.

Objective: Support the clean-up and assessment of blighted and contaminated properties.

Actions:

1. Work with local jurisdictions to pursue brownfield grants for edge properties.
2. Pursue DOLA grants to secure funding for property assessments.

6.4 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Economic Sustainability

Goal 2: Promote a Rio Grande County economy that is productive, sustainable and meets the needs of all residents.

Objective: Work to address the related problems of under-qualified labor pools, low-wage jobs, under-employment, youth flight and “generational poverty” in the area.

Actions:

1. Design and implement job training programs to better prepare youth and adults for the jobs that are in demand in modern markets.
2. Work to attract industries to the area that require higher skilled workers and pay higher wages.

Objective: Work to support existing businesses and recruit new ones to bolster the economy.

Actions:

1. Attract new businesses with tax incentives.
2. Work with municipal and county social services to identify possible workers and skill sets that exist within the current population.
3. Create a business incubation program to provide business development services in the region.

Objective: Continue to support the provision of high-quality public services and facilities that make the area more attractive to potential newcomers.

Actions:

1. Continue efforts to maintain and expand existing high-quality health care facilities.
2. Continue efforts to develop and expand existing high-quality educational facilities.

Economic Sustainability

3. Support efforts to maintain and expand existing high-quality airports.
4. Work to provide high-quality, affordable housing to support new industry and associated work force.

Objective: Continue to support agriculture as the county’s traditional economic driver and producer of locally consumed products.

Actions:

1. Emphasize the importance of “eating locally” and supporting local farmers and ranchers.
2. Explore the possibility of agricultural-tourism and other programs to support agriculture.
3. Preserve agricultural land whenever possible through conservation easements, land dedication and other mechanisms.
4. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group and others to attract businesses that add value to the agricultural economy.
5. Work with the State Division of Water Resources, the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, land owners and others to defend against water exportation.



Objective: Acknowledge the unique, non-conventional communities and their businesses.

Actions:

1. Revise land use codes to encourage the clustering of businesses to conserve more agricultural lands.
2. Encourage agricultural-based businesses outside of the 3-mile boundary around municipalities to locate in appropriate zoning districts.
3. Encourage the location of non-agricultural businesses closer to municipal boundaries or clustered together in agricultural areas.
4. Consider the creation of a Rural Industrial Park close to these communities.

6.5 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Transportation, Public Utilities and Services

Goal 3: Work to explore the feasibility of, and financing for, a public transportation system that would connect Rio Grande County towns with each other and with the broader region.

Objective: Research past efforts to establish a valley-wide transportation system and utilize relevant data and action steps from the previous efforts.

Actions:

1. Work with state and federal entities, other communities in the region, and local businesses to evaluate possibilities of a group-funded shuttle system connecting downtown areas, retail/shopping areas, and regional attractions.
2. Develop and implement strategies for the provision of public transportation systems that connect municipalities within Rio Grande County and to the regions beyond.
3. Research forming an entity to run a transportation service (bus, shuttle, etc.).
4. Work with the Council of Governments (COG) and other transportation planning organizations in order to obtain funding for county-wide transportation infrastructure needs.
5. Identify state, federal, regional and private funding resources for system planning and acquisition of equipment for the public transportation system(s).

Goal 4: Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.

Objective: Mandate that development “pays its own way” with respect to the provision of infrastructure and public services.

Actions:

1. Analyze each development proposal thoroughly to determine realistic service needs with regard to roads, water, sewer, school and other services.

Transportation, Public Utilities and Services

2. Confirm that approved developments adequately address impacts to public infrastructure and services.
3. Enforce the codes and ordinances that require development to “pay its own way.”

Objective: Coordinate infrastructure improvements and services with municipalities, utility providers and special districts to ensure orderly growth and development.

Action:

1. Maintain a quarterly meeting with each municipality, special district and service provider to coordinate infrastructure improvements and service provision needs.
2. Ensure that service providers receive relevant referrals regarding development projects and anticipated service requirements.

Objective: Address the problem of existing public facilities and infrastructure that are aging, unsafe and/or otherwise inadequate.

Action:

1. Work with CDOT, property owners and others to address highway speed, local access, and other safety and improvement issues along US Highway 160.
2. Support the maintenance and expansion of local small airports in the County as amenities that attract newcomers and promote economic development.
3. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, service providers, and others to improve telecommunication infrastructure and service, such as broadband internet and Wi-Fi.
4. Work cooperatively with multiple wireless carriers to address the strategic need for wireless voice and broadband services throughout Rio Grande County.
5. Encourage wireless carriers to find alternatives to tall towers, using less obtrusive structures, to promote wireless service while preserving the natural beauty of Rio Grande County.

6. Encourage development of wireless services, including the co-location of wireless carriers, in order to expand and improve wireless service, while maintaining and preserving view corridors.

Objective: Ensure that solid waste in Rio Grande County is collected and disposed of in an efficient and orderly manner to prevent inappropriate illegal dumping in the area.

Action:

1. Support the maintenance and expansion of the local landfill, as needed.
2. Participate in a valley-wide recycling program designed to reduce the volume of trash going into the landfill and onto the landscape as litter.
 - Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, local haulers and others to select a site.
 - Develop a regional recycling facility on this site.

Objective: Acknowledge strategies for the conservation of water in a semi-arid environment.

Action:

1. Support ongoing development of a local water basin plan and water management plan.
2. Acknowledge the NRCS efforts to encourage and educate farmers on BMPs for water usage.

Recreation and Conservation

6.6 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Recreation and Conservation

Goal 5: Preserve and enhance the existence of parks, trails and open space resources that are sufficient to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents, businesses and visitors.

Objective: Work to conserve and expand existing outdoor recreation areas and facilities that attract skiers, hikers, campers, cyclists, recreational ATV/OHV users, etc.

Actions:

1. In coordination with SLVGO and Rio Grande County Tourism Board, develop an inventory (to include a database and map) containing all of Rio Grande County's outdoor resources.
2. Recognize the competitive nature of the outdoor recreation industry and continually look for ways to improve and promote the Rio Grande experience.
3. Improve connectivity within the County's existing bicycle trail network.
4. Encourage the existence of parks to serve the needs of Rio Grande residents, businesses and visitors.
5. Work with municipalities, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife, BLM, US Forest Service, and others to establish new parks and trails.
6. Adopt an ordinance that addresses recreational ATV/OHV use on some of the county roads in compliance with State Legislature.

Objective: Maintain and expand existing natural and cultural attractions to increase tourism in Rio Grande County and in each municipality.

Actions:

1. Work with local farmers, ranchers and land owners to establish agricultural and heritage tourism opportunities in the County and municipalities.



Recreation and Conservation

2. Coordinate with BLM and US Forest Service to conserve outdoor recreation areas and facilities that attract skiers, hikers, campers, recreational ATV/OHV users, etc.
3. Work to pass the county-wide mil-levy proposal to create and financially support a recreation district or recreation department.

Objective: Continue to support existing community, cultural and historic resources in the County as part of an overall strategy of maintaining the Rio Grande County destination brand and high quality of life for local residents.

Actions:

1. Foster collaboration amongst leaders in the County and each municipality.
2. Continue to support the arts and other creative ventures in the County through festivals and cultural events.
3. Develop and maintain human services programs that address symptoms of poverty, such as substance abuse, hunger and homelessness.



chapter seven

City of Monte Vista



- 1 Introduction
- 2 Demographic Trends
- 3 Accomplishments
- 4 A New Vision
- 5 Future Growth
- 6 Rio Grande County
- 7 City of Monte Vista**
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7.1 History of Monte Vista

BEGINNINGS

While there is neither a credited name nor founder of Monte Vista, the beginnings of the City started in 1881 when the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad placed railroad siding at the present day Fullenwider Park. This siding had a switch, water tank and section house. Its purpose was to serve the early settlers of Swede Lane and Rock Creek.

The section house later became a mercantile, as well as a residence, library and post office. The early homesteaders were Lillian L. Taylor, Charles Fassett, Henry Taylor, Maurice Pelton and Hiram H. Marsh – who called the area Lariat.

Theodore C. Henry, a land promoter, brought excursionists from the east who invested in the new town. Chauncey S. and Henry J. Aldrich, excursionists, joined with Henry to form Henry Town and Land Co. They then purchased the Lariat land from Maurice Pelton and changed the town name to Henry, which was incorporated on May 1, 1884.

History of Monte Vista

The area was platted and building was quick to follow. Each land deed that was purchased included a no-liquor clause. Due to extreme debts, Henry left town and the Aldrich brothers were soon pushed out of the town by Travelers' Insurance Co. from Hartford Connecticut who invested heavily in the land and buildings within the town. On July 3, 1886, the town was renamed and incorporated as Monte Vista.

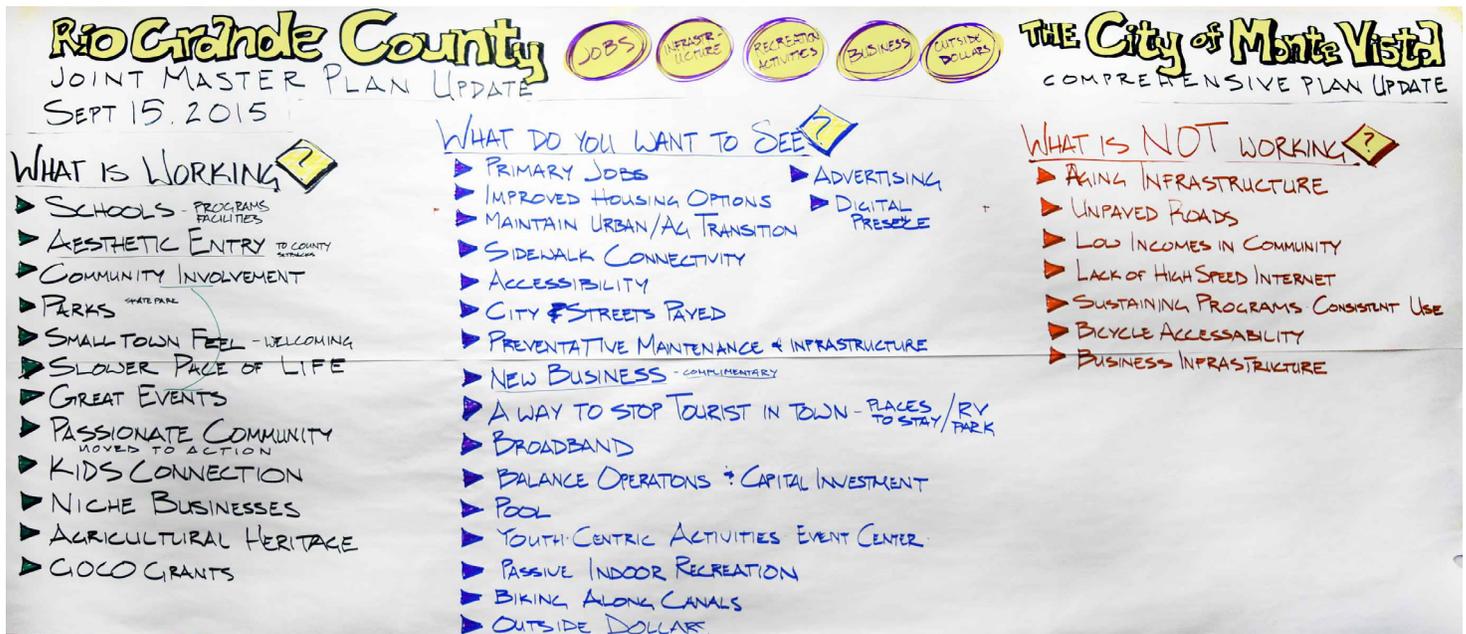
CHARACTER

Monte Vista has been known for fine schools, larger businesses, established homes, churches, a historic library and its festivals. The present day State Veterans Center was acquired in 1892 as the State Soldiers' and Sailors' Home. Ski Hi Stampede, established in 1919, is the oldest Pro-Rodeo in Colorado. Every March, the City hosts the Crane Festival – which is a celebration of the migration of the sandhill crane and the endangered whooping crane. In the Fall, the Potato Festival celebrates Monte Vista's agricultural heritage. The history and festival spirit create a unique and lively character for the City.

HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Monte Vista Downtown Historic District Encompasses much of Monte Vista's current downtown. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Properties. Eleven buildings are currently on both registers, all constructed of locally quarried stone between 1889 and 1921.

Vision



7.2 Vision

With its storybook tree-lined streets and noteworthy architecture, Monte Vista welcomes a diversity of cultures, businesses, and visitors while embracing its agricultural heritage.

To help achieve this vision, the following summary of goals offers a framework for Monte Vista to guide future growth:

1. **Incentivize development that contains a mix of land uses** appropriate to serve the needs of Monte Vista residents, business owners and visitors.
2. **Strengthen the overall economy of Monte Vista** by supporting the creation of primary jobs, supporting the downtown area, and supporting local businesses while remaining a regional agricultural center.
3. **Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services** to the community in order to ensure public health, safety and welfare.
4. **Provide active and passive recreational opportunities** for residents and visitors.



7.3 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

Historical development patterns are reflected in the location of commercial development near the railroad. The City's major commercial corridors and downtown occur to the south of the railroad and along US Highway 160. The downtown "core" occurs between Broadway and Madison Street on US 160. This core goes approximately one block to the north and two blocks south. The City's industrial area occurs to the north of the central area of Monte Vista, across the railroad from the commercial area and to the east of US Highway 285.

A majority of land uses within Monte Vista are comprised of single-family neighborhoods, although there are a few multi-family complexes and assisted living facilities. The zoning ordinance was recently modified to allow a more diverse range of housing types, but it is evident that additional diversity and density is needed to meet the City's housing needs. The current City strategy is to enhance the availability for renewal and revitalization of existing residential and commercial developments while providing opportunities for new infill developments.

Goal 1: Incentivize development that contains a mix of land uses appropriate to serve the needs of Monte Vista residents, business owners and visitors.

Objective: Direct more intense land uses to locate within City limits along Highway 285 while promoting rural and agricultural uses to be located in the County with a gradual transition in between.

Actions:

1. Work cooperatively with Rio Grande County to locate more commercial and industrial uses within or immediately adjacent to Monte Vista boundaries.
2. Continue studying the potential for annexing urban development along Highway 285 North and new development along Highway 160.
3. Refer development proposals and other programs to agencies and governments that may be impacted or have an interest in the project.
4. Rezone undeveloped properties to reflect the Future Land Use Map designations.

Objective: Support the accommodation of diverse businesses and industries.

Actions:

1. Base future expansion and annexation upon the best interests of existing and future residents, property owners and business owners. Any proposed annexation shall have a clear fiscal/economic benefit that outweighs public impact challenges.
2. Review annexation regulations to ensure clear fiscal/economic benefit criteria prior to annexing any property.
 - Monitor the amount of land zoned for commercial and industrial development to ensure an adequate supply; keep an inventory of commercial and industrial parcel sizes to ensure adequately sized lots are available.
3. Conduct a study of the Monte Vista Municipal Airport to determine if it can fill a niche that the Alamosa Airport does not, such as serving recreational pilots or agricultural cargo.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

Objective: Ensure that existing open space is preserved and parks are maintained and that new lands are allocated for such uses to provide active and passive recreational opportunities as the population grows.

Actions:

1. Work with Rio Grande County and others to explore the feasibility of creating a County-wide recreation district or department with sub-areas based on fire district boundaries.
2. Encourage the development of a trail system linking parks, public uses, commercial areas and neighborhoods within the City and County as a whole.
3. Work with the County to implement the San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Master Plan.
4. Amend the development code to require that open space and parks are dedicated as land is developed.
5. Explore opportunities to acquire grant funds through organizations such as Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) for the development of parks, open space and trails.



Objective: Provide a diverse range of quality, affordable housing choices to ensure continued growth of the community.

Actions:

1. Utilize the existing housing studies to accomplish the following tasks:
 - Project population growth
 - Analyze demand for various housing types
 - Inventory existing capacity to meet projected demand
 - Identify projected shortages/overages
2. Take steps to address any anticipated affordable housing problems:
 - Establish a housing authority
 - Explore possibility of acquiring affordable housing grant funds

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards



- Amend development code to require minimum percentages of affordable housing or exactions in each new development
3. Create design guidelines to promote high quality design.
 4. Create new residential zones or modify existing districts to allow for a greater range of residential densities.

Objective: Maintain the traditional character and stability of existing single-family detached neighborhoods.

Action:

1. Encourage the upkeep of existing homes and properties to prevent blight on the neighborhood with programs such as low cost loans or matching funds for exterior improvements visible to the public, volunteer projects to help elderly or physically disadvantaged homeowners.
2. Encourage neighborhood pride with such programs as:
 - Community clean-up day
 - Low cost street trees to homeowners and neighborhoods
 - Annual awards for “the most improved neighborhood”
 - Installation of neighborhood identity signs
 - Continue to expand Neighborhood Watch Program
3. As needed, revise standards for permitted uses, lot area, streets and alleys to reflect existing development patterns.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

Objective: Develop an annexation program designed to thoughtfully expand the City’s boundaries, foster fiscally responsible growth and preserve the adjacent rural County feel.

Action:

1. Maintain existing connections to the agricultural industry while embracing growth in other diverse industries.
2. Evaluate land parcels for infrastructure extension and capacity along the edges of the City to develop an understanding for where the City should grow.
3. Maintain an understanding of current mil-levies and tax structures and be able to communicate potential changes in tax responsibilities to land owners who may want to annex.
4. Develop economic incentives for land owners that annex such as sales tax shareback.
5. Update the City’s Three Mile Plan in accordance with C.R.S. 31-12-105.
6. Prepare a model annexation agreement that includes clauses for a fiscal impact study which includes a cost benefits analysis, infrastructure improvements, and land dedications.
7. Work with property owners to annex existing commercial properties along Highway 160 and Highway 285, north of Highway 160.
8. Work with the County to zone areas surrounding Monte Vista to be consistent with desired land uses.

Objective: Promote public health, safety and welfare within designated floodplain areas.

Actions:

1. Implement the goals for floodplain development outlined in the San Luis Valley Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.
2. Work with FEMA, San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority and others to maintain up-to-date flood hazard mapping.
3. Work with FEMA, Rio Grande Emergency Management, RWEACT and others to prepare a Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan.



7.4 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability refers to the use of various strategies to effectively employ existing resources so that a responsible and beneficial economic balance can be achieved over a long period of time. The future of Monte Vista lies in its ability to be economically successful. In order to achieve this success, economic sustainability must be achieved. Monte Vista must generate new jobs that quite possibly will stem from its agricultural roots. The City also needs to work closely with existing businesses to form partnerships of success. The following goals address ways for Monte Vista to achieve economic sustainability.

Goal 2: Strengthen the overall economy of Monte Vista by supporting the creation of primary jobs, supporting the downtown area, and supporting local businesses while remaining a regional agricultural center.

Objective: Facilitate new job creation and economic development opportunities.

Actions:

1. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, Upper Rio Grande Economic Development (URGED), local businesses and others to:
 - Implement the SLVDRG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.
 - Explore incentives for the reuse of underutilized commercial and industrial properties.

Economic Sustainability

2. Work with property owners to rezone vacant or underutilized non-commercial and industrial properties.
3. Analyze the potential for annexation of commercial/industrial properties along Highway 285 and Highway 160 southeast of the City.

Objective: Work to address the widespread challenge of generally low incomes in the area through economic development activities.

Actions:

1. Work with Rio Grande County, URGED, and other economic development agencies to attract more primary jobs to Monte Vista.
2. Work with nearby Adams State University, Trinidad State Junior College, local high schools, and others to develop job training programs to establish a skilled work force.



Objective: Establish a system for providing more support to local businesses.

Actions:

1. Develop and maintain a digital and social media presence for Monte Vista.
2. Continue to partner with Upper Rio Grande Economic Development (URGED) as a business support resource.

Objective: Continue to improve Monte Vista as a tourist destination in order to attract new and return visitors to the community.

Actions:

1. Support new cultural attractions and events in the area.
2. Support the attraction of new service businesses including:
 - Hotels
 - RV parks
 - Restaurants

Economic Sustainability

3. Hire an economic development staff member to act as coordinator and clearinghouse for the area and/or continue partnership with Upper Rio Grande Economic Development.
4. Continue to enhance a pedestrian corridor with signage and differentiated materials to lead people to points of interest throughout the City.
5. Designate a parking area for larger recreational vehicles near the downtown.

Objective: Promote the downtown as the social, business and historic hub of the community through business recruitment/attraction and physical improvements.

Actions:

1. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, Upper Rio Grande Economic Development (URGED), and others to attract new businesses that will improve the availability of local goods and services.
2. Work with business owners and others to explore options for improving parking in the downtown area.

Objective: Protect and enhance areas that serve as gateways to the community in order to provide a positive impression to visitors and residents.

Actions:

1. Move existing gateways closer to city limits to help define the City's edge.
2. Update the zoning code to prohibit new industrial uses such as junkyards, auto-salvage yards, and unscreened outdoor storage, along Highway 160, Highway 285 and Highway 15.



7.5 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Transportation, Public Utilities, and Services

TRANSPORTATION

Monte Vista contains about 24 miles of paved and four miles of unpaved streets.

Arterial Streets

Arterial streets provide a network of high-volume transportation routes designed to carry the bulk of traffic through the City. In some cases, these streets have partially limited access through a divided median. Limited or partially limited high-volume arterials are referred to as primary arterials. Arterials within Monte Vista include:

- US Highway 160 (1st Avenue)
- US 285 (North Broadway)
- State Highway 15 (South Broadway)

Collector Streets

Collector streets “collect” traffic from local streets and distribute it to higher volume arterials. Like arterials, collectors are designed for relatively high volume and speeds. However, collectors do provide accessibility within the City to neighborhoods and activity centers. As such, both mobility and access issues should be addressed with these streets. Major collectors within the City include:

- Acequia Drive
- 6th Avenue (Lariat Road)
- Henderson Road
- Prospect Avenue

Local or Residential Streets

Local or residential streets comprise the balance of the streets within Monte Vista. Local streets provide access to residential neighborhoods and connect adjacent areas without needing to travel on higher level roads. Traffic volumes and speeds on local streets are very low and allow frequent stops.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Water System

The City of Monte Vista provides water service within its municipal limits and some outlying areas, including the Sherman Avenue area and the Veteran's Center at Homelake. The distribution system consists of 4-inch to 12-inch pipe.

Potable water is supplied from five wells and pumped directly into the distribution system after being treated with sodium hypochlorite for disinfection. On-site chlorine contact tanks at each well house provide the required contact time for drinking water disinfection. Currently there are no water storage tanks or reservoirs in the Monte Vista water system. Typically, water needed to meet a two to three hour fire flow demand is stored in reservoirs or tanks. The capacity of the pumping system is likely insufficient to meet fire flow demands.

In 1998, a Master Infrastructure Plan prepared by Integra Engineering recommended that the city construct new pumping stations, loop water mains, and collect pump flow data for future planning. The City has initiated basic planning to set rates for a yearly water main replacement program as well as operation and maintenance equipment replacement. The city also has preliminary plans to install a supervisory control and data

Transportation, Public Utilities, and Services

acquisition (SCADA) system at each of the raw water well houses to ensure system control and remote access.

Wastewater System

The City of Monte Vista's wastewater collection system consists primarily of 6-inch to 30-inch pipe of varying materials, including PVC and vitrified clay. The wastewater system has high infiltration and inflow due to high groundwater during the irrigation system. Currently, the City of Monte Vista's wastewater discharge permit requires a 100% reduction in inflow and infiltration over a five year period ending in 2020. The City has taken proactive steps to complete this project, with the first phase of construction beginning in spring of 2016. Improvements to eliminate inflow and infiltration include, but are not limited to: trenchless pipe rehabilitation, point repairs, and manhole repairs.

Monte Vista operates two wastewater treatment facilities, the Henderson wastewater treatment plant and the Veteran's wastewater treatment plant. The 3.09 MGD Henderson wastewater treatment plant handles the majority of wastewater flows generated in Monte Vista. The multi-cell lagoon facility was upgraded in 1997 and consistently meets effluent discharge limits.

Located on the east side of Monte Vista, adjacent to the State Veteran's Center, the 0.99 MGD Veteran's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) employs an activated sludge treatment process to treat both municipal and industrial wastewater. The facility was originally designed to treat wastewater from the Sherman Avenue basin and the Staley's Potato Starch Plant. The starch plant, having been abandoned for several years, has not contributed wastewater to the Veteran's WWTP. However, a barley malt company purchased the Staley's site in 2015 and renovation/reconstruction of the plant is underway. It is anticipated that effluent from the plant will be processed at the Veteran's plant beginning in 2016.

The City's wastewater transmission lines, which feed the Henderson WWTP, are currently being upgraded to reduce infiltration. Construction work will start in 2016 and will help to achieve an important goal of allowing the plant to have its current rating reduced to below 1.0 Million Gallons Per Day (MGD). This potential de-rating will allow the City to be exempt from future Regulation 85 nutrient removal limits, reducing the likelihood of costly future treatment plant improvements.

Stormwater System

Monte Vista is presently within four major drainage basins. Storm water facilities are comprised of 12-inch to 48-inch pipe, with several areas of the City not serviced. According to the 1998 Master Infrastructure Plan, approximately 80 percent of the storm drainage system is inadequately sized to handle a two-year storm event. Plan recommendations include improving the outfall system to meet minimum service levels and to provide adequate facilities for future growth.

Goal 3: Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services to the community in order to ensure public health, safety and welfare.

Objective: Explore the installation of broadband infrastructure in the community to attract new businesses, support existing businesses and improve quality of life for residents.

Action:

1. Work with the San Luis Valley Rural Electric Co-operative, telecommunication providers, and others to improve cellular signals and/or explore the feasibility of creating a network of wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi) hotspots in the downtown area.

Objective: Ensure that new development will be responsible for needed infrastructure installments and upgrades.

Actions:

1. Ensure that future annexations foster fiscally responsible growth of the community.
2. Require an analysis of drainage impacts with a development application for development proposals on the west area of the City.
3. Evaluate the adequacy of current impact fees and modify as necessary.

Transportation, Public Utilities, and Services

Objective: Maintain and improve the City street system.

Actions:

1. Update the City's Master Street Plan in accordance with C.R.S. 31-23-212.
2. Continue to explore the extension of Chico Camino to connect Highway 160/1st Avenue to Lariat Road in order to open new annexation area south of the highway for development.
3. As the City grows outward, retain rights-of-way along section and quarter section lines for future connectable arterial and collector streets.
4. New development will be responsible for needed and proposed infrastructure installments and upgrades.
5. Inventory the City sidewalks to determine where sidewalks are needed. Prioritize the need and include in Street Improvement Plans and the Master Infrastructure Plan.
6. Coordinate infrastructure and service investments to ensure orderly growth and development.
 - Update subdivision regulations to include adequate public facility provisions.
 - Update subdivision regulations to require new development to provide water rights or cash in-lieu.
 - Work with the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) and others to secure funding for improving water system storage capacity.

Objective: Expand the role of the Monte Vista Municipal Airport.

Action:

1. Study the potential future uses for the airport where needs are not already met by the Alamosa Airport. Identify potential synergistic businesses and industries to locate adjacent to the facility.

Transportation, Public Utilities, and Services

Objective: Address problems with aging and inadequate roadways of all sizes.

Actions:

1. Create a prioritized timeline program for the paving of all City streets.
2. Continue maintenance on all City streets.

Objective: Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Actions:

1. Improve accessibility for the physically challenged.
2. Support the addition of trails that strategically connect with trail networks in Rio Grande County and in other communities.
3. Encourage the installation of bicycle racks for existing public and commercial facilities and include in designs for new construction.
4. Increase sidewalk connectivity.



7.6 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Recreation and Conservation

PARK SYSTEM

Monte Vista has seven parks, with most of the park acreage functioning as passive park space. The Ski Hi Park Complex is a regional facility, with rodeo grounds, an outdated and unusable swimming pool, volleyball and basketball courts, softball fields, and restrooms. Chapman Park serves as the community park. Chapman Park has a volleyball court, four basketball hoops, playground equipment, picnic facilities with BBQ stands, a walking trail, and restrooms. Montez Park and Fullenweider Park are linear community parks on land leased from the railroad. Montez Park is a small linear neighborhood park, now with a brand new skate park. Fullenweider Park has playground equipment, picnic tables, and a walking path. Marsh Park has picnic tables, a playground, a tennis court and two basketball hoops. Sanchez Park is a neighborhood “pocket park,” with playground equipment, barbeque pits and two basketball hoops. The newest park is the Faith Hinkley Veterans Memorial Park, which provides a tribute to veterans from Monte Vista and those killed in action from the San Luis Valley.

Monte Vista Park Acreage

Name of Park	Acres
Chapman Park	9.0
Faith Hinkley Memorial Park	0.5
Fullenweider Park	1.8
Marsh Park	2.1
Montez Park	3.0
Sanchez Park	0.4
Ski Hi Park	24.3
TOTAL ACREAGE:	41.05

Source: City of Monte Vista

A recognized standard for public parks is 10 acres per 1,000 residents. With an estimated year 2000 population of 4,529 persons, Monte Vista has 9.9 acres of park per 1,000 residents, consistent with the national standard.

Monte Vista also offers a City-owned municipal golf course, the Monte Vista Country Club. Opened in 1928, the Monte Vista Country Club Golf Course is a regulation nine-hole course. The municipal golf course also has two tennis courts.

Monte Vista does not currently have a community or recreation center. Facilities such as the Ski-Hi Park Complex and a private health club provide some of the amenities typically offered in a community center.

TRAIL SYSTEM

Pedestrian connectivity with Monte Vista could be enhanced by providing more trail connections between parks, schools, the downtown business district and other community nodes. Trail connections would also increase the functionality of the park system by facilitating bicycle and pedestrian access.

The Great San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Plan identifies several potential trails, including the Greenway Trail, Chapman Park Trail, Lariat Ditch Trail, Bridge Trail, River Loop Trail, Soldiers Trail, Wildlife Refuge Trail, and Swede Trail. To highlight one opportunity, a connection to the Home Lake State Wildlife Area and the Rio Grande River corridor could be provided via the proposed Greenway Trail (along Sherman Avenue) and Soldiers Trail (along Soldiers Home Road).

Recreation and Conservation

Goal 4: Provide active and passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Objective: Provide passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Actions:

1. Support activities that address the safety of residents in designated floodplain areas.
2. Discourage new developments with the 100-year floodplain so as to minimize the risks of potential flood hazards.

Objective: Encourage the development of a regional, community and neighborhood park system and development of a trail system that links parks, institutional uses, commercial areas and neighborhoods.

Actions:

1. Work with Rio Grande County and others to explore the feasibility of creating a recreation district or recreation department.
2. Continue to work strategically with developers to maximize new park and recreation development concurrent with new development proposals.
3. Consider the recommendations of the San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Master Plan as they pertain to Monte Vista.
4. Review City policy on land dedication, cash in-lieu, and impact fee requirements for development to insure adequacy of exaction.
5. Negotiate acquisition or use of right-of-way to develop as community gateways and park areas.

Recreation and Conservation

Objective: Encourage more recreation facilities and programs for all ages.

Actions:

1. Explore feasibility and financing for:
 - New community pool
 - Youth-centric activities event center
 - Passive indoor recreation opportunities
2. Investigate the feasibility of replacing portions of the Ski Hi Park Complex to include a recreation center for residents of all ages and consider leasing the facility for revenue-generating events.

Objective: Develop and sustain attractions and services to draw tourists to Monte Vista and serve them while they are here.

Actions:

1. Explore opportunities to establish new cultural attractions in the area.
2. Continue to support existing businesses that serve visitors to the community.

Objective: Work to preserve the historic agricultural lands on the urban fringe of the community.

Actions:

1. Work with local farmers and land owners to promote and employ the following preservation tools whenever feasible and appropriate:
 - Conservation easements
 - Land dedications/donations
 - Agri-tourism



chapter eight
Town of Del Norte



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- 2 Demographic Trends
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- 4 A New Vision
- 5 Future Growth
- 6 Rio Grande County
- 7 City of Monte Vista
- 8 Town of Del Norte**
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8.1 History of Del Norte

The Del Norte area was once home to the Old Spanish Trail. This trail was a major trade route running between Santa Fe, New Mexico and Los Angeles, California. Del Norte was originally settled by Europeans who were moving into the area from North New Mexico in the late 1850s. In 1872, Del Norte incorporated as a municipality.

By the mid-1870's, prospectors found the nearby San Juan Mountains rich with gold and silver deposits. As many mining claims were registered, Del Norte transformed into the supply base and financial center at the west end of San Luis Valley. When Rio Grande County was formed in 1874, Del Norte became its County seat.

During Del Norte's booming years, the population swelled to over 10,000 people. The Town featured an opera house, library, saloons and dance halls. In 1883, a man by the name of George Darby established the Presbyterian College of the Southwest. This college also had a church and a dormitory as well as several farmlands to support it. The college also boasted the only telescope west of the Mississippi – built as an observatory on the summit of Mt. Lookout. Unfortunately, the college burned down in 1893. In the final part of Del Norte's boom years, Del Norte was proposed to become the state capital – it failed by one vote.

RIO GRANDE COUNTY - DEL NORTE MASTER PLAN UPDATE
 SEPTEMBER 16, 2015

WHAT'S WORKING?

- KEEP A HEALTHY MIX OF USES
- NEW GROWTH IS PUSHING "TRENDY" ACTIVITY
- KEEP THE CHARACTER OF TOWN W/ CHANGE
- WIDE NEW BIKE LANES! - SAFETY!
- OUTDOOR RECREATION OPTIONS
- PENITENTE RECREATION AREA
- SAN FRANCISCO RIVER
- 3 BARRELS!
- WINDSOR HOTEL

WHAT'S NOT WORKING?

- A VISION OF "WESTERN" IS CHANGING... IMAGE
- MAYBE TOURISM/HISTORIC IMAGE
- HOUSING OWN/RENT LACK INVENTORY
- GATEWAY NEEDS WORK - EAST & WEST TO TOWN
- POPULATION DROP FOR YOUTH - AG FOCUS
- PRIORITIZING COUNTY BUDGET - HIGHER ED. - JAILS OVER DISCRETIONARY
- STREETS ARE IN DISREPAIR
- PARKING IS NOT AN ISSUE

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE?

- EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND TOWN BOUNDARY - ANNEXATION
- MORE BUSINESSES TAX REVENUE
- DRAW PEOPLE TO DOWNTOWN
- SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING
- RIVER PARK - PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
- POOL
- MARKETING CITY RESOURCES
- MAKE DEL NORTE MEMORABLE
- MISSING TRAIL LINKS - ACTV ETC
- CONNECT TOWN TRAILS TO BLM
- SKI SHUTTLE TO WOLF CREEK

Handwritten Notes:

- Don't allow downtown become theme oriented
- Trails & Parks: Camping, Hiking, Pool, Climbing, Active Trails - Growing
- E-commerce: Expand Tech in Region (Home, In-Work), Improve Municipal Complex (Business Incubation, Art Center)
- Build Staff, Gather Info, Embrace Change in Diversified Industries
- Gateways: Create a central old parking structure building center "The Caboose" - Let w/ growth
- Gateway: Focus on west side
- Ag Focus: Higher Ed, Jails over Discretionary
- Actv Etc: Great - Competitive Access to Adventure Skiing to Summit Co.
- Downtown: Revitalization Plan - Prioritize Funding for Improvements

8.2 Vision

As the government, healthcare, and recreation center of Rio Grande County, Del Norte will continue to be the economic hub of the region. The abundant natural and historic resources, plentiful outdoor activities, and revitalized historic commercial areas will provide an attractive year-round regional destination from which Del Norte will continue to prosper in the years to come.

To help achieve this vision, the following summary of goals offers a framework for Del Norte to guide future growth:

- Provide a diverse range of land uses** throughout Del Norte that attract and serve visitors, businesses and residents.
- Strengthen the overall economy** of Del Norte through youth training programs, downtown revitalization efforts and a focus on the outdoor recreational opportunities that surround the Town.
- Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services** to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.
- Work cooperatively** with the County, BLM, other federal land managers, and adjacent jurisdictions to create a system of parks, historic sites, trails, and open space that connect along and off of the Rio Grande River.



8.3 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

The main commercial corridor in Del Norte is to the east and west of the downtown core along US Highway 160/Grand Avenue. It is approximately one half block deep and consists of a mix of commercial, office and residential uses.

A second small commercial/industrial area exists along State Highway 112, extending north of US Highway 160 to the Rio Grande River. Uses along this corridor include warehouse/storage and agricultural-related commercial.

Land use in Del Norte reflects a rural community character with residential neighborhoods north and south of the US Highway 160 corridor. Residential uses within the community are comprised of a mix of single-family detached residences, manufactured homes and mobile homes.

The majority of land uses north of US Highway 160 include scattered single-family residences, manufactured homes, mobile homes and vacant lots. Other land uses north of US Highway 160/Grande Avenue include the Town Hall and community parks. The Del Norte Public Library is located along Grande Avenue/US Highway 160 between Spruce and Oak Streets.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

The majority of the single-family detached homes are located south of US Highway 160. Land uses south of the US Highway 160 also include the County Courthouse and annex as well as the elementary schools, middle school and high school. In addition, the Rio Grande County museum is south of US Highway 160 and it offers exhibits of the history of Rio Grande County.

Rio Grande Hospital is located southwest of US Highway 160. Del Norte annexed approximately 70 acres along Pinos Creek Road for the construction of this hospital, which had been located in the former St. Joseph Hospital Building from 1996 - 2004. Funding to build the facility included a \$10 million loan from HUD and a \$660,000 Mineral Impact grant for infrastructure costs. Rio Grande Hospital moved to its present location on August 11, 2004.



Goal 1: Provide a diverse range of land uses throughout Del Norte that attract and serve visitors, businesses and residents.

Objective: Ensure that a range of housing types and price ranges exist to serve all demographics.

Actions:

1. Undertake a housing study to accomplish the following tasks:
 - Project population growth.
 - Analyze demand for various housing types.
 - Inventory existing capacity to meet projected demand.
 - Identify projected shortages/overages.
2. Amend current zoning map to address issues raised in housing study.
3. Take steps to address any anticipated affordable housing problems such as:
 - Explore possibility of acquiring affordable housing grant funds.
 - Amend development code to require minimum percentages of affordable housing in each new development.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards



- Promote the infill of vacant lots in residential areas north of Highway 160 and elsewhere.
- Work closely with the County Social Services Department to know the needs in the community.

Objective: Maintain the traditional character of single family detached-home neighborhoods.

Actions:

1. Maintain regulations that limit potential density and revise standards for permitted uses, lot area, streets and alleys that are based on existing development patterns.

Objective: Support the recruitment of new commercial uses that attract and serve visitors and improve quality of life for locals.

Actions:

1. Work with the Rio Grande County economic development groups and other municipalities to undertake a market study designed to evaluate the area's supply of and demand for commercial uses, using the vacant land use inventory map for a base.
2. Establish a package of incentives designed to attract new businesses to the area.

Objective: Support the clean-up and assessment of blighted and contaminated properties.

Actions:

1. Work with the County to pursue brownfield grants for these properties.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

Objective: Encourage appropriate public facilities to support local tourism.

Actions:

1. Evaluate potential locations and feasibility for a public parking lot to address on-street parking issues to better serve visitors and locals.
2. Evaluate potential locations and feasibility for a visitor information center.

Objective: Ensure that existing open space is preserved and parks are maintained and that new lands are allocated for such uses to provide active and passive recreational opportunities to the population as it grows.

Actions:

1. Work with Rio Grande County and others to explore the feasibility of creating either a recreation district or a recreation department for the entire County.
2. Encourage the development of a trail system linking parks, public uses, commercial areas and neighborhoods:
 - Work with the County to implement the San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Master Plan.
 - Implement the goals of the Del Norte Trails Master Plan, including sidewalks and trail improvements necessary to link schools and parks to the River Walk.
3. Explore opportunities to acquire grant funds through organizations such as Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) for the development of parks, open space and trails.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

Objective: Develop an annexation program designed to thoughtfully expand the Town's boundaries, foster fiscally responsible growth and preserve the adjacent rural County feel.

Actions:

1. Maintain existing town character as the area grows.
2. Evaluate land parcels along the edges of Town to develop an understanding for where the Town should grow.
3. Maintain an understanding of current mil-levies and tax structures and be able to communicate potential changes in tax responsibilities to land owners who may want to annex.
4. Develop incentives for land owners that annex.
5. Analyze the potential for annexation of commercial/industrial properties along Highway 112 north of Town and Highway 160 east of town.
6. Update the Town's Inter-Governmental Agreement with Rio Grande County.
7. Annually prepare and adopt a Three Mile Area Plan in accordance with C.R.S. 31-12-105.

Objective: Support the development of an attractive, vibrant and economically sustainable downtown.

Actions:

1. Support efforts to improve the downtown area in order to attract visitors and locals to the area.
2. Consider using existing funds to support downtown improvements.
3. Undertake a wayfinding effort to better direct people to attractions in and around Town.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

Objective: Ensure public health, safety and welfare within designated floodplain areas.

Actions:

1. Work with FEMA, San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority and others to maintain up-to-date flood hazard mapping.
2. Work with FEMA, Rio Grande Emergency Management and others to prepare a Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan.
3. Utilize the 2010 Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan specific to Rio Grande County when reviewing new development near the river.



8.4 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability refers to the use of various strategies to effectively employ existing resources so that a responsible and beneficial economic balance can be achieved over a long period of time. The future of Del Norte lies in its ability to be economically successful. In order to achieve this success, economic sustainability must be achieved. Del Norte must generate new jobs that could capitalize on its central location to multiple recreational opportunities. The town also needs to work closely with existing businesses, and regional economic development agencies to form partnerships of success. The following goals address ways for Del Norte to achieve economic sustainability.

Economic Sustainability

Goal 2: Strengthen the overall economy of Del Norte through youth training programs, downtown revitalization efforts and a focus on the outdoor recreational opportunities that surround the Town.

Objective: Facilitate new job creation and economic development opportunities.

Action:

1. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, Upper Rio Grande Economic Development, local businesses and others to continue implementation of a comprehensive economic development strategy and any such efforts that follow.

Objective: Diversify Del Norte's existing economic base.

Actions:

1. Work to establish Del Norte as a hub for e-commerce by working with Rio Grande County and other communities to develop broadband infrastructure in the region.
2. Implement plans for the new municipal complex to include a business incubator.
3. Work with Upper Rio Grande Economic Development to develop a system for recruiting new businesses and industries to the region.

Objective: Address decrease in youth population by developing an environment that encourages young people to stay in, or return to, the area.

Actions:

1. Work with Upper Rio Grande Economic Development to attract industry to the region that will provide a variety of primary jobs.
2. Develop job training programs to help prepare young people to enter the work force.
 - Explore feasibility of using Town-owned co-op in a job-training partnership with Adams State University, Trinidad State Junior College, and the local high schools.

Economic Sustainability

3. Work with Rio Grande Social Services Department to connect underserved youth with jobs.

Objective: Partner with Upper Rio Grande Economic Development to accommodate a unified marketing strategy to clearly articulate Del Norte’s image and identity, advertising the town’s merits for the purpose of attracting visitors and new residents.

Actions:

1. Shift the Town’s existing image from “western” to more focus on being an “outdoor recreational hub” with supporting business, historic and cultural resources.
2. Once needed infrastructure is in place (broadband, job training), establish Del Norte’s emerging identity as an e-commerce hub.
3. Promote the downtown area as an asset that is both supplementary to the Town’s outdoor attractions and business climate, and an economic attraction in its own right.
4. Work to improve the condition of all gateways into and out of Town by addressing signage and cosmetic issues.



8.5 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Transportation. Public Utilities and Services

TRANSPORTATION

The Town of Del Norte contains about 15 miles of paved and eight miles of unpaved streets. During community outreach for this plan, many residents expressed interest in paving more of the streets.

Arterial Streets

Arterials provide a network of high-volume streets designed to carry the bulk of traffic through Del Norte. Arterial streets within Del Norte include:

- US Highway 160
- State Highway 112
- Existing Conditions

Collector Streets

Major collector streets within the town include:

- Cherry Street
- Columbia Avenue
- 5th Street

Transportation, Public Utilities and Services

These streets “collect” traffic from local streets and distribute it to arterial streets. Local or residential streets comprise the remainder of the streets within the Town.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Water System

A Utility Master Management Plan was prepared by Wright Water Engineers for Del Norte in 1997. The study evaluated the Town’s water system at that point in time, which provided water supply, storage, and treatment for approximately 800 homes and businesses within Del Norte and another 65 taps in the West Del Norte Water and Sanitation District.

Treated water is primarily supplied from two wells: the South Well and the North Well. The two wells provide a water supply of 1800 gallons per minute (gpm), slightly less than the summer peak-day demand of 1850 gpm. The study recommended the addition of a third well with a supply capacity of 500 to 800 gpm, and the acquisition of water rights with new development.

Two buried concrete water storage tanks serve two pressure zones within the Town’s water system. The majority of the water distribution system is comprised of 4-inch and 6-inch cast iron pipe. Recommended improvements to the water distribution system include the installation of larger pipelines. The town plans to renovate the lower storage tank and provide a redundant booster pump from the distribution system to the upper tank in the near future. The Town is also replacing water mains on a yearly basis, depending on the availability of funds and manpower.

Wastewater System

As with the Town’s water system, Del Norte provides wastewater collection and treatment for its homes and businesses.

The wastewater collection system contributes significant groundwater and stormwater flow to the wastewater treatment plant. This, along with other factors, has led to significant historic violations of the Town’s CDPHE wastewater discharge permit. These compliance issues have recently been remedied. To address the inflow and infiltration issues, the Town has secured funding to completely renovate the existing collection system, including replacement of manholes, replacement of pipe, and trenchless pipe rehabilitation.

Transportation, Public Utilities and Services

Stormwater System

The Town of Del Norte has very limited defined stormwater outfalls or drainage works. The location of the Rio Grande floodplain and a high seasonal water table indicates that the north half of town is subject to shallow flooding in the event of a 100-year flood.

The 1997 Utility Master Management Plan recommends including the construction of a flood control dike, along with a series of drainage conduit improvements and outfalls for Del Norte.

Goal 3: Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.

Objective: Work with Rio Grande County and other communities to improve communication infrastructure in the region.

Actions:

1. Investigate the scope and cost of a project that would bring broadband to the area.
2. Investigate the availability of grants and other funding for a broadband project.
3. Improve Wi-Fi availability in the area.
4. Explore opportunities to co-locate wireless service on existing towers or add towers to areas that will not obscure the viewshed if co-location is not possible.

Objective: Ensure the availability of water and sewer infrastructure to support existing and new development.

Action:

1. Implement recently awarded grants to construct new and upgraded water and sewer infrastructure.

Transportation, Public Utilities and Services

Objective: Continue to support the maintenance and expansion of police and fire facilities, infrastructure and services as needed.

Action:

1. Work with Rio Grande County and local fire protection districts to coordinate response and training.

Objective: Provide appropriate infrastructure to promote safe and efficient circulation within the County and the region.

Actions:

1. Balance the need to maintain a safe and efficient transportation system with the desire to utilize Highway 160 and portions of Highway 112 for development.
2. Explore creating an ongoing 5-year Capital Improvement Program to address street and drainage maintenance and improvements.
 - Undertake an effort to evaluate existing roadways and determine where improvements and/or expansions will be needed to support existing populations and new growth.



8.6 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Recreation and Conservation

PARK SYSTEM

Del Norte has five improved community parks. North Park and Centennial Park both have restrooms, playground equipment, picnic gazebos and BBQ stands. Ball Park has restrooms and picnic areas with BBQ stands, and a baseball field with dugouts, bleachers, and a concession stand. West Park has a volleyball court and horseshoe pits. The newest park, First Responders Park, is a small area next to the police station along Highway 160.

Del Norte Park Acreage

Name of Park	Acres
North Park	3
Centennial Park	2.8
Ball Park	2.3
West Park/Skate Park	2.2
Lookout Mountain Park	200
First Responders Park	0.25
TOTAL ACREAGE:	210.55

Source: Town of Del Norte

Recreation and Conservation

TRAIL SYSTEM

The 2008 Del Norte Trails Master Plan created five planning areas that each serve different user groups and encourage trail use as a healthy outdoor recreational opportunity and a transportation alternative. The five trail areas include Lookout Mountain, Rio Grande Hospital, In-Town, the Rio Grande Riverwalk/Parks, and the Del Norte Schools.

The Lookout Mountain trail system has varying degrees of difficulty in its 600-foot elevation-gain trail. It provides integrated spaces for people to gather and interact with surrounding areas. The Rio Grande Hospital Trail system is slated to have handicap accessible routes and amenities around the hospital. An informative Lookout Mountain gateway kiosk was installed this past year. The In-Town Trail system partially exists with newly striped bike lanes along Highway 160 and a walking tour map that shows visitors and residents points of interest in town. Addition improvements to this system will include town gateway information kiosks along with historic signage for the Penasco Observatory and the Mineral Well. The Riverwalk/Park Trail system includes the newly created Riverwalk Boardwalk and fishing pier near Centennial Park and new concrete surface trail along the Rio Grande Riverwalk Trail. Finally, the School Trail System includes the new linear park walking trail around the soccer and baseball fields. Future improvements include a school access trail and new trail loops with mile markers and exercise stations.

As noted in the Great San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Plan, there are opportunities to connect the River Walk Trail on the north end of town with the south end of town. This will be done via pedestrian improvements to Del Norte's business district along Spruce Street and a trail connection to Frisco Creek Road. From Frisco Creek Road, the Frisco Creek Trail could provide access to the National Forest south of town. Opportunity also exists to link the River Walk, Centennial Park and Ball Park Trails with acquisition of a 100-foot wide railroad right-of-way west of Town Hall.

FISHING

The portion of the Rio Grande River that runs through Del Norte and all the way west to South Fork is considered a Gold Medal waterway. Float trips and fly fisherman flock to the river in Del Norte. The new pier for fishing further enhances the fishing opportunities along the Rio Grande River.

Recreation and Conservation

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Del Norte is centrally located to internationally recognized mountain biking trails. The Bureau of Land Management has hundreds of miles of trails suitable to hikers and bikers. The Rio Grande National Forest is filled with riding opportunities for every ability level. In addition, there are miles of Forest Service access roads open to cyclists. The Lookout Mountain Trail in town is also open to mountain bikers.

Goal 4: Work cooperatively with the County, BLM, other federal land managers, and adjacent jurisdictions to create a system of parks, historic sites, trails, and open space that connect along and off of the Rio Grande River.

Objective: Work with federal entities and other jurisdictions to support infrastructure that welcomes, assists and guides visitors to local and regional recreational attractions.

Action:

1. Work with governmental agencies to undertake a coordinated signage and wayfinding effort to better direct visitors and locals to local and regional attractions and services.

Objective: Maintain and expand existing parks and outdoor recreation options to attract visitors and improve quality of life for locals whenever possible.

Action:

1. Preserve the majority of the Rio Grande River as a natural asset to the community and realize the economic benefit for the Town and visitors.
2. Explore feasibility of, and funding for, a recreation area on the Rio Grande River.

Recreation and Conservation

Objective: Make Del Norte an outdoor recreational hub with easy access to outdoor activities all year long.

Action:

1. Build on the success of the Penitente Canyon Special Area Recreation Park Management Area and work with Saguache County to make the Town and surrounding area a world-class attraction for mountain bikers.
2. Build on the success of the Stone Quarry and Limekiln trail systems and work with Rio Grande County to attract mountain bikers.



chapter nine

Town of South Fork



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9.1 History of South Fork

South Fork is a small Colorado mountain town that supports a diversity of both permanent residents and those who come to enjoy the bounty of year-round outdoor recreational opportunities the area has to offer. In October of 2015, South Fork was awarded the status of a “Top Adventure Town” in the small-town category for Colorado by the magazine Elevation Outdoors. It was also designated the “First Continental Divide Trail Community” in Colorado by the Continental Divide Trail Coalition in December 2015.

Although incorporated in 1992, the cultural history of the South Fork area extends far beyond the era of the first white settlers and Spanish explorers before them, into the time when the Ute Native American people hunted and gathered throughout the San Luis Valley. The historical chronology of South Fork is like that of many other Western Mountain towns—Native American occupation, European explorers, temporary Settler occupation, then permanent settlement for railroad and resource extraction.

The first and oldest residents of the San Luis Valley were the Caputa band of the greater Southern Ute Native American tribe, which took advantage of the abundant natural resources that could be found within the South Fork area. During warmer months, the Caputa band harvested various plant species and hunted wild game near the confluence of the

History of South Fork

Rio Grande and the South Fork of the Rio Grande river. As harsh winters came, the Caputa band descended to lower elevations for the winter months. Eventually the Utes were forcibly removed from the region by the U.S. Government.

The early years of South Fork settlement, prior to the arrival of the railroad in 1882, branded the site as a rest stop for weary stagecoach travelers heading north. Upon the arrival of the railroad, a new economic connection to larger markets would allow for permanent settlement of South Fork. Emerging economies based on timber, mining, cattle, and sheep would ultimately brand South Fork as a point for resource extraction, helping to support the ever-expanding presence of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad throughout the Mountain West.

In 1916, Wolf Creek pass was built to take advantage of the automobile boom in America. This route, linking South Fork and Pagosa Springs to the southwest, was created to support automobile tourism through the picturesque mountain pass. By 1935, in response to the state of Colorado's push to increase ski tourism, Wolf Creek Ski Area was built along the established Wolf Creek Pass route. The ski area, still very much active today, takes advantage of 10,000+ foot terrain and some of the highest snowfall totals in the state. The site was chosen for the varied terrain that provides snow enthusiasts of every skill level the opportunity to experience Wolf Creek's exceptional conditions.

By the year 2000, South Fork left the historical economy of timber in the past, and began to invest more on reinvigorating the regions outdoor-based tourism industry. A large summer recreational vehicle presence adds an economic injection to the town during the warmer months and additional visitors to Wolf Creek during the winter. Opportunity and an optimistic community are helping to steer the town toward a future with greater economic focus and stability. A dispersed housing and retail amenity stock provides an opportunity to plan for future development with a greater design intent and focus.





9.2 Vision

South Fork is a world class recreation-oriented, family- and business-friendly community at the base of the San Juan Mountains. Serving as the gateway to the Rio Grande National Forest, the Wolf Creek Ski Area, and many year-round outdoor activities, it aspires to be a walkable basecamp for the County’s outdoor playground. It is an idyllic town with stunning scenery, abundant natural resources, and a rich cultural history.

To help achieve this vision, the following summary of goals offers a framework for South Fork to guide future growth:

1. **Employ strong placemaking principles** to establish a small, compact, and walkable downtown.
2. **Incentivize mixed use development** in order to attract developers, along with local and destination-oriented retail tenants that would leverage the proximity to natural resources.
3. **Establish a mix of residential types** to attract commercial services necessary to balance the diversity of land uses in town.
4. **Leverage conservation-based resources for new primary employment** to diversify and stabilize the local economy.
5. **Explore higher education opportunities** to locate a satellite campus in South Fork.
6. **Pursue public-private partnerships** to create an incubation district for researching and developing innovations in sustainable building materials and other ecologically focused industries.
7. **Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services** to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.
8. **Preserve natural resources and facilities** that enable outdoor activities for all seasons, such as skiing, all-terrain vehicle transportation/snowmobiling, fishing, hiking, rock climbing, golfing, hunting and site-seeing.



9.3 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

South Fork is a residential community of rural mountain character with low-density single family homes sitting on multiple acre lots, sprinkled throughout the town. All of South Fork's residences makes up approximately 41% of the town's municipal boundary. The second largest category of land use in South Fork includes vacant land at 38%.

Another 13.6% of South Fork includes lands exempt of property tax (Political Subdivisions, State, Religious Purposes, County, Federal, and Charitable), natural resources, agriculture, and 75 acres of unclassified land described as "no data".

Commercial uses only make up 7% of the town's land use and this category is comprised of the grocery store, general store, lodging and restaurants along Highways 160 and 149. Data is based on information provided by the ESRI database, November 2015.

ORDINANCE HISTORY AND CODE EVOLUTION

In 1996, a new ordinance was passed for this three year old town, adopting the "Highway Corridors 149/160 Overlay Zone." In the ordinance, the new overlay zone defined a set of guidelines for development of the two highway corridors. Guidelines in the ordinance addressed architectural compatibility, building height, site design, storage, landscaping, lighting, fencing and walls, and remodeling.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

In March of 1999, the Town of South Fork officially adopted a broader zoning code with the following land use codes: Commercial Business, Heavy Industrial, Medium Density Residential, Mobile Home, Residential, Rural, and Recreational Vehicle. During 2005, a more complete land use map was refined and added the original Highway Corridor Overlay, along with a Municipal Property/Park zone.

The Town approved an amendment to their Comprehensive Plan in December 2008 that incorporated planning based on a neighborhood scale that included walkability and the ability to use a form based code. This allowed for the Town Center Plan to be adopted that proposed a multi-use bridge to connect the town to public lands and properties in the county on the other side of the Rio Grande River.

In 2009, a new municipal code was adopted to help guide future development within the city limits and to help facilitate an envisioned land use map for South Fork including the specific development areas of: Jackson Heights, Wharton Town Center, and River Mill district. The Code includes general provisions; administrative roles of the Planning Commission, the Board of Adjustment, and code enforcement; procedures for the entitlement process; subdivision regulations; zoning regulations; supplementary regulations; parking regulations; sign regulations; floodplain regulations; the Wharton Town Center traditional neighborhood development; definitions; and supporting indexes.

In the fall of 2012, Ordinance NO.12-03 was passed to amend the municipal code further and reflect recommendations from the planning commission that would improve the review process. It also included revisions to section 4.52 Zone District Use Schedule to clarify use designations as either permitted, conditional, or prohibited. New permitted uses were also added. However, the zoning districts themselves appear to have changed, including initial headings for RR (Rural Residential), R (Residential), MH (Mobile Home), MDR (Medium Density Residential), RV (Recreational Vehicle), C (Commercial), LI (Light Industrial), and HI (Heavy Industrial). Other revisions included changes to Sign Exemptions for Special Events, expansion of the “non-conforming structure” definition, inclusion of a new section on minor subdivisions and boundary line adjustments, and a new section on Security for Improvements that also included a zoning district standards matrix. Note that there are inconsistencies in how zoning districts are listed in each of the lists presented in the ordinances. Where the permitted uses list omits certain

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

zones, Table 8: Zone District Standards includes CB (Commercial Business).

Further revisions were made in Fall 2014 to reflect updates to the Sign Code and Floodplain Regulations. In 2015, additional revisions were made to clarify boundary line adjustments and to streamline the short-term rental process by making it an administrative process.

OPPORTUNITIES

There are several large parcels of property adjacent to Hwy 160 that are underdeveloped that provide opportunity for new development.

Currently, the Jackson Heights development has gone through the first phase of the development process and is being built out. The second phase has not been started.

River Mill is currently going through the PUD process and has changed from the original concept to more of a tiny house, RV, cabin-type resort. This is in response to what is being perceived as desirable in the market – shifting away from larger lots and larger homes to smaller lots and homes. There is concern that such changes to River Mill threaten existing lodging in town and will offer an inferior housing product that will deteriorate over time. Some community members do not want to see River Mill become a dense, small homes/RV park development.

Wharton Town Center is the only area to have completed the official re-zoning process. A SmartCode has been created and adopted for the area, but nothing has yet been developed due to the need for parcel consolidation.

Vista Del Rio is a single and multi-family development adjacent to the Rio Grande River that has just begun to build single family homes.

Goal 1: Employ strong placemaking principles to establish a small, compact, and walkable downtown.

Objective: Create gateway features at town limits along major highways.

Action:

1. Seek funding through state and county transportation grants and programs to finance capital improvements near town limits along Highways 160 and 149 for gateway improvements to celebrate the town.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards



Objective: Utilize street elements, such as street trees, pedestrian and vehicular lighting, ground-floor awnings and transparent building fronts, upper floor articulation, inset windows, balconies, and other streetscape elements.

Actions:

1. Establish design guidelines to begin creating a true sense of place for South Fork that will draw new investors, developers, businesses and residents.
2. Build a new park/plaza for South Fork in a central location near the intersection of Highway 160 and Highway 149.
3. Create a streetscape plan for key areas of town in order to establish a sense of place.

Objective: Promote healthy and active neighborhood development.

Actions:

1. Through the site plan review process for all current and new development, incorporate safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian, bicycle and ATV connections in new developments, redevelopments, and town projects.
2. Identify missing pedestrian and bicycle facilities that link neighborhoods, community gathering spaces, and parks, and develop a prioritization list for implementation.
3. Hold town-wide "Cleanup Days."

Objective: Update the Land Use Ordinance to better reflect the needs of the town.

Actions:

1. Replace or repeal ordinances that are no longer relevant.
2. Adopt a landscape ordinance to beautify the town and enhance the natural environment within the built environment.

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

Objective: Research an appropriate location for a new downtown.

Action:

1. Create a new downtown for traditional commercial, office, and governmental uses, along with a secondary downtown area containing boutique-style retail uses, a boardwalk and entertainment venues with nature areas around it.

Goal 2: Incentivize mixed-use development in order to attract developers, along with local and destination-oriented retail tenants that would leverage the proximity to natural resources.

Objective: Promote a mix of uses in multi-story buildings that locate active businesses and entrances to offices on the first floor, and locates residences on the upper floor(s).

Action:

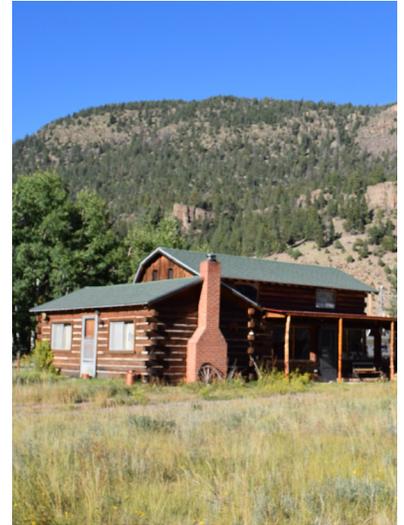
1. Ensure adequate density and intensity of uses in areas designated for mixed-use.

Goal 3: Establish a mix of residential types to attract commercial services necessary to balance the diversity of land uses in town.

Objective: Ensure that a range of housing types and price ranges exist to serve a targeted market of demographics.

Actions:

1. Undertake a housing study to accomplish the following tasks:
 - Project population growth.
 - Determine the target market.
 - Analyze demand for various housing types.
 - Inventory existing capacity to meet projected demand.
 - Identify projected shortages/overages.
2. Amend current zoning map to address issues raised in the housing study.



3. Take steps to address any anticipated affordable housing problems:
 - Establish a housing authority.
 - Explore possibility of acquiring affordable housing grant funds.
 - Amend development code to require minimum percentages of affordable housing in each new development.
 - Continue to promote the infill of vacant lots in residential areas around the intersection of Highways 160 and 149.

Objective: Create and maintain areas that provide smooth transitions between denser neighborhoods in the downtown area to agricultural and open lands on the outskirts of town.

Actions:

1. Promote the development of large lot residential subdivisions in areas along the edge of town by maintaining zoning classifications that result in such uses.
2. Whenever possible, allow flexibility in applying standards regarding road pavement and sidewalks in these areas in order to reduce development costs and promote “edge” neighborhoods that have a rural feel.
3. Work with Rio Grande County to promote sound planning along the edges of the town.
4. Provide multi-modal connectivity from the edges of town to the center of town via local level roads, sidewalks, bike trails, and bridges.
5. Consider building a bridge from town to the golf course area in order to promote better connectivity, utilizing the CSU bridge study completed in 2010.



9.4 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability refers to the use of various strategies to effectively employ existing resources so that a responsible and beneficial economic balance can be achieved over a long period of time. The future of South Fork lies in its ability to be economically successful and generate much needed sales tax revenue. In order to achieve this success, economic sustainability must be achieved. South Fork must generate new jobs that will stem from the nearby recreational and environmental amenities. The Town also needs to work closely with existing businesses to form partnerships of success. The following goals address ways for South Fork to achieve economic sustainability.

Goal 4: Leverage conservation-based resources for new primary employment to diversify and stabilize the local economy.

Objective: Encourage investment in South Fork that creates new employment opportunities and advances the Town's economic goals.

Action:

1. Promote South Fork as the new "green economy" of Rio Grande County.

2. Develop criteria by which to prioritize infrastructure improvements that support economic investment, in addition to other community-wide goals.
3. Offer staff-support to business organizations within town to promote and assist with economic development.
4. Target economic incentives for projects that significantly enhance employment opportunities in South Fork, particularly in the proposed Uptown and Downtown areas, Jackson Heights, the River Mill district, and on vacant parcels of property adjacent to Highway 160, such as the old mill property.
5. Identify and evaluate all opportunities to encourage additional investment in South Fork.

Goal 5: Explore higher education opportunities to locate a satellite campus in South Fork.

Objective: Develop partnerships with higher learning institutions in the region.

Actions:

1. Establish a town liaison to integrate higher education institutions into the town's economic development program.
2. Identify and promote what a higher learning institutions' value could be for the community.
3. Research the need to create a mechanism to adopt campus master plans, ensuring connectivity with the town and surrounding neighborhoods.

Goal 6: Pursue public-private partnerships to create an incubation district for researching and developing innovations in sustainable building materials and other ecologically focused industries.

Objective: Work with the San Luis Valley Development Group and Upper Rio Grande Economic Development to identify potential public-private partnerships.



9.5 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Transportation, Public Utilities, and Services

TRANSPORTATION

South Fork is serviced by US Highway 160 and Colorado State Highway 149. Highway 160 is a 68-foot wide right-of-way (ROW) made up of a 9-foot shoulder, an 11-foot travel lane, an 18-foot turning lane, two 12-foot travel lanes, and a 6-foot shoulder. State Highway 149, the Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway that connects South Fork to Creede is slightly more narrow with a 65-foot ROW consisting of a 8-foot shoulder, 11-foot travel lane, 16-foot turn lane, two 11-foot travel lanes, and another 8-foot shoulder.

A loose grid of local streets provides connectivity to various residential and commercial developments sprinkled throughout town. The typical local street is 26-feet wide with a 13-foot travel lane moving in either direction. Local roads are not striped and are of a rural condition without sidewalks and contain open ditches on either side of the roadway. One existing 12-foot wide sidewalk/trail runs along the north side of Highway 149 from Wharton to Landon Drives.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Water System

As of Fall/Winter of 2015, South Fork did not have a public water system. Residents of the area are served by private water wells or privately-owned water systems. Due to the forthcoming rules and regulations promulgated by the State of Colorado Division of Water Resources, it is imperative that South Fork begin master planning to construct an adequate public water supply system including wells, piping, storage, and adequate water rights. Due to the inadequate design and questionable location (as it pertains to depth and location to the Rio Grande River) of existing private water supply systems, it is likely that state inspections of these systems will result in either major upgrades or a required shutdown, leaving residents without water service.

Wastewater System

The majority of the Town and a portion of the surrounding area is served with sewer collection and treatment by the South Fork Sanitation District.

Stormwater System

The Town of South Fork currently does not have a defined stormwater system.

Other Utilities

San Luis Valley Rural Electric Co-op (SLVREC) provides electricity to the Town of South Fork. SLVREC is also providing high speed broadband service to South Fork through Ciello.

Transportation, Public Utilities, and Services

Goal 7: Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.

Objective: Invest in stormwater, sanitary sewer, and potable water systems in town based on the established street grid.

Actions:

1. Perform an infrastructure analysis to accomplish the following tasks:
 - Determine the location for a main line and laterals for a water distribution system.
 - Delineate the town for key watersheds and drainage.
 - Locate key sources for a public water system.
 - Identify potential locations for public water treatment.
2. Coordinate infrastructure and service investments to ensure orderly growth and development:
 - Update subdivision regulations to include adequate public facility provisions.
 - Update subdivision regulations to require new developments to provide water rights or a fee in-lieu.
 - Work with the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) and others to secure funding for improving water system storage capacity.
3. Encourage developers to design private water systems that could become part of the municipal system in the future.

Objective: Expand electricity and telecommunications throughout town through underground systems along the street grid.

Action:

1. Require all utility expansions for any future development to be located underground.



9.6 Goals, Objectives and Action Steps: Recreation and Conservation

Within the city limits of South Fork, there are a number of facilities that are utilized daily and periodically throughout the year for civic programming and daily town services. These facilities include the town hall, the police department, the Silver Thread Visitor Center, and the South Fork Community Building.

PARK SYSTEM

South Fork has five (5) parks or park areas. Browns Park has 5 acres and is currently passive open space, but there are plans for a boat ramp/ access to river, a loop trail with exercise stations, multi-use areas, a parking lot and potentially a community garden along with a gazebo. Rickel Park is a 3.5 acre park with playground areas, restrooms, and picnic areas. Water Tower Park has a gazebo adjacent to the historic water tower. There is a Vacant Future Park that will be comprised of 10 acres, located west of town near Willow Park. South Fork also has a Community Building with park space. On its 9 acres, it has a basketball/ pickle ball court, a horse shoe pit, and a baseball diamond.

Recreation and Conservation

South Fork Park Acreage

Name of Park	Acres
Browns Park	5 acres
Rickel Park	3.5 acres
Water Tower Park	<0.5 acres
Vacant Future Park	10 acres
Community Building/Park	9 acres
TOTAL ACREAGE:	~28 acres

Source: Town of South Fork

PRIVATE AMENITIES AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

Privately run recreation in South Fork includes a variety of options including the Rio Grande Club and Resort and Wolf Creek Ski Area.

Skiing

South Fork serves as the northeastern gateway to Wolf Creek Ski Area for those traveling from Denver via Highway 160. Only 20 miles away from South Fork, Wolf Creek offers eight lifts to over 1,600 acres of ski trails over Wolf Creek Pass. Slopes range from beginner to expert with 60% of the runs rated intermediate and advanced. Ski season lasts from early November to early April, providing ski enthusiasts with a five month ski season.

Snowmobile Trails

The Rio Grande area contains over 250 miles of maintained and groomed snowmobile trails through the Rio Grande National Forest. The Powder Busters Snowmobile Club and the Silver Threaders Snowmobile Club groom the trails of South Fork. The key trails included are the Del Norte Peak Trail, Beaver Creek Trail, Fox Mountain Trail, and Big Meadows Trail. These trails are located in the south central/western region of Colorado between Wagon Wheel Gap and Del Norte along US Highway 160 and State Highway 149.

Recreation and Conservation

Fishing

From late spring through summer to fall, the Rio Grande River in South Fork and the Upper Rio Grande River between South Fork and Creed offers “gold-medal” fishing experiences for anglers. Much of the stream is populated with cold stream Rainbow and Brown Trout. Rainbow Trout is required to be released after being caught and Brown Trout have a 2-catch limit with a minimum length of 16-inches. Cutthroat and Brook Trout can also be found. The area serves fly-fishing, float fishing, and wading. Non-motorized boats are allowed. Lake and reservoir fishing is also offered in the area with over 80 fishing areas in the vicinity from which to choose.

Mountain Biking

The Rio Grande National Forest is filled with riding opportunities for beginner through advanced riders. Several trails are within a couple miles drive from town and some are specifically listed as multi-use for bikes. Multi-use trails can offer access for hikers, horses, and ATV's. In addition, there are hundreds of miles of forest service access roads open to cyclists of all abilities.

Off-Road Motorized Vehicles

South Fork is an “ATV-friendly” town. An ordinance that would allow ATVs to be driven on roads within South Fork was recently approved by the Town. It is pending a change to County regulations and waiting for CDOT agreements and approvals to be put in place.

The Rio Grande National Forest offers a variety of off-road trails that are scenic, leisurely back roads through technical and challenging routes that push the limits of motorized travel. Routes can include mountain peaks, amazing vistas of the San Luis Valley, creek bottoms, and dense forest growth.

Hiking, Backpacking and Camping

South Fork offers a broad range of hiking and backing trails for all levels from 1/2-mile walks to 5-mile treks that lead to other trails connecting to back-country routes. Camping opportunities range from portable camper trailers, car camping with a tent, and overnight backpacking excursions. Approximately 2 million acres of national forest surrounds the South Fork area and approximately 17 campgrounds have been developed along Highways 149 and 160. Most campgrounds accommodate both camper trailers and tents.

Recreation and Conservation

Forest Service campgrounds usually offer tables, toilets, fire grates, garbage cans, parking spurs and drinking water. Fire rings must be used for any open flame. Visitors are allowed to stay up to 14 days, unless otherwise posted. Reservations can be made for some campgrounds, although most are on a “first come, first serve” basis.

Rafting

The headwaters of the Rio Grande, flowing past South Fork, offer all levels of rafting from Class I rafting to Class II-III rapids. May and June are best for whitewater rafting. Local rafting and outdoor shops offer river trips, gear, and information.

Beyond water sports, skiing, and trail activity, South Fork also offers horseback riding, hunting, and plant and wildlife viewing opportunities throughout the year.

Goal 8: Preserve natural resources and facilities that enable outdoor activities for all seasons, such as skiing, all-terrain vehicle transportation/snowmobiling, fishing, hiking, rock climbing, golfing, hunting and site-seeing.

Objective: Provide adequate parks, trails, and gathering places throughout South Fork.

Actions:

1. Through the site plan review process, ensure that adequate parks, open space and gathering spaces are incorporated as new development occurs.
2. Evaluate where additional trails and bike access are needed in order to provide safe and attractive pedestrian and bicycle access to parks and gathering places.
3. Through the site plan review process, integrate natural features with new development and Town projects.

Recreation and Conservation



Objective: Provide park amenities for residents of all ages and abilities.

Actions:

1. Annually evaluate the needs of the community as demographics change in order to address and update park amenities, as resources permit.
2. Utilize GOCO grants to obtain funding for needed amenities.

Objective: Provide and maintain high-quality recreational facilities that meet the growing and changing needs of all age groups.

Actions:

1. Identify and respond to new trends and community desires to address fitness and wellness opportunities.
2. Maintain high-quality recreational facilities that meet the growing needs of all age groups and that provide venues to encourage family and community gatherings.
3. Research the feasibility of implementing impact fees with new residential developments to offset the associated impacts to the town's recreational system.

Objective: Encourage the establishment of new restaurants, bars, and entertainment facilities.

Actions:

1. Convert the old Hungry Logger into a new multi-use facility that incorporates a restaurant and offers entertainment, which can also be used for a variety of indoor events.
2. Provide additional indoor recreation establishments and facilities for community use, especially for the use of people over the age of 55.

Recreation and Conservation

Objective: Celebrate and promote South Fork’s heritage, culture, and local artists.

Actions:

1. Develop programs and activities to celebrate and promote the Town’s history and culture.
2. Encourage and sustain places and spaces for art, music, and other cultural activities through the following actions:
 - Secure funding and program partners to increase public art in parks and public spaces, via a collaboration of ideas and resources.
 - Utilize art to define the Town’s image by increasing public art in parks, public lands, gateways, and adjacent to streets and sidewalks.
 - Establish a “Culture and Arts District” to promote art as a key element of economic development.
 - Integrate cultural activities in businesses by encouraging development of spaces for exhibits, performances, and sponsorships through programs such as temporary or pop-up exhibits, live music and by developing partnerships with local artists.
3. Collaborate with civic, business, and community leaders to expand, celebrate, and promote the Town’s historic and cultural legacy by implementing the South Fork Marketing Plan.

Chapter 10 - Appendix

MAPS

Rio Grande County Maps:

- Vicinity Map
- Current Zoning
- Land Use
- Vacant Land Use by Selected Types
- Tax Exempt Parcels by Subclass
- Tax Exempt Federal Land Use Types
- Soil Survey Geographic
- Large Perennial Lakes and Rivers
- Transportation Infrastructure
- Topography
- Oil & Gas Well Locations
- School Districts
- Fire Districts
- Trail System Network

Monte Vista Maps:

- Future Land Use
- Current Zoning Map
- Current County Zoning Outside of Municipal Boundaries
- Tax Exempt Parcels by Subclass
- Land Use
- Land Use within Municipal Boundary and a 1 Mile Buffer

Del Norte Maps:

- Future Land Use
- Current Zoning Map
- Current County Zoning Outside of Municipal Boundaries
- Tax Exempt Parcels by Subclass
- Land Use
- Land Use within Municipal Boundary and a 1 Mile Buffer

South Fork Maps:

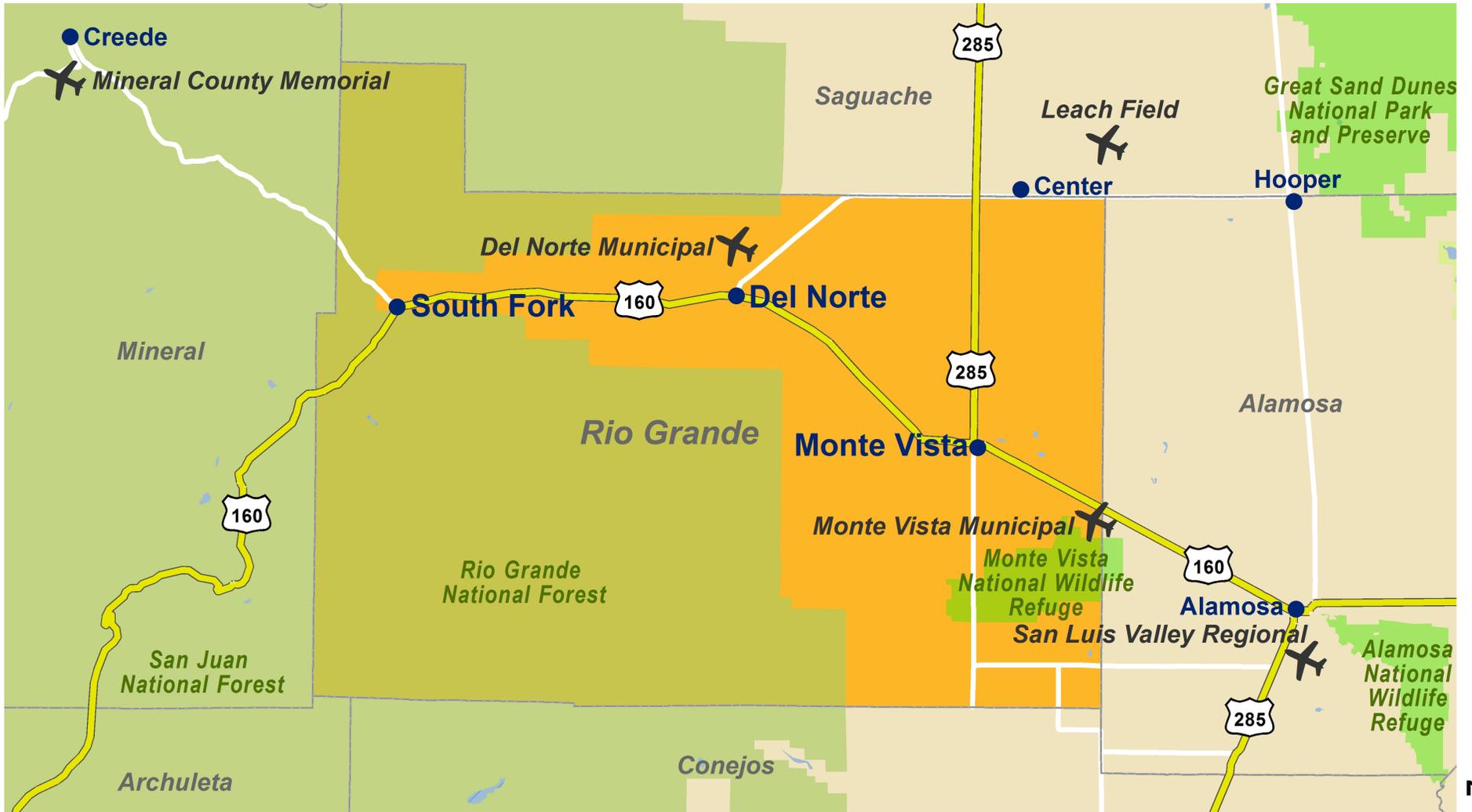
- Town of South Fork Boundary January 2016
- Future Land Use
- Current Zoning and Parks & Trails Masterplan
- Current County Zoning Outside of Municipal Boundaries
- Tax Exempt Parcels by Subclass
- Land Use
- Land Use within Municipal Boundary and a 1 Mile Buffer

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

REFERENCE LIST OF DOCUMENTS

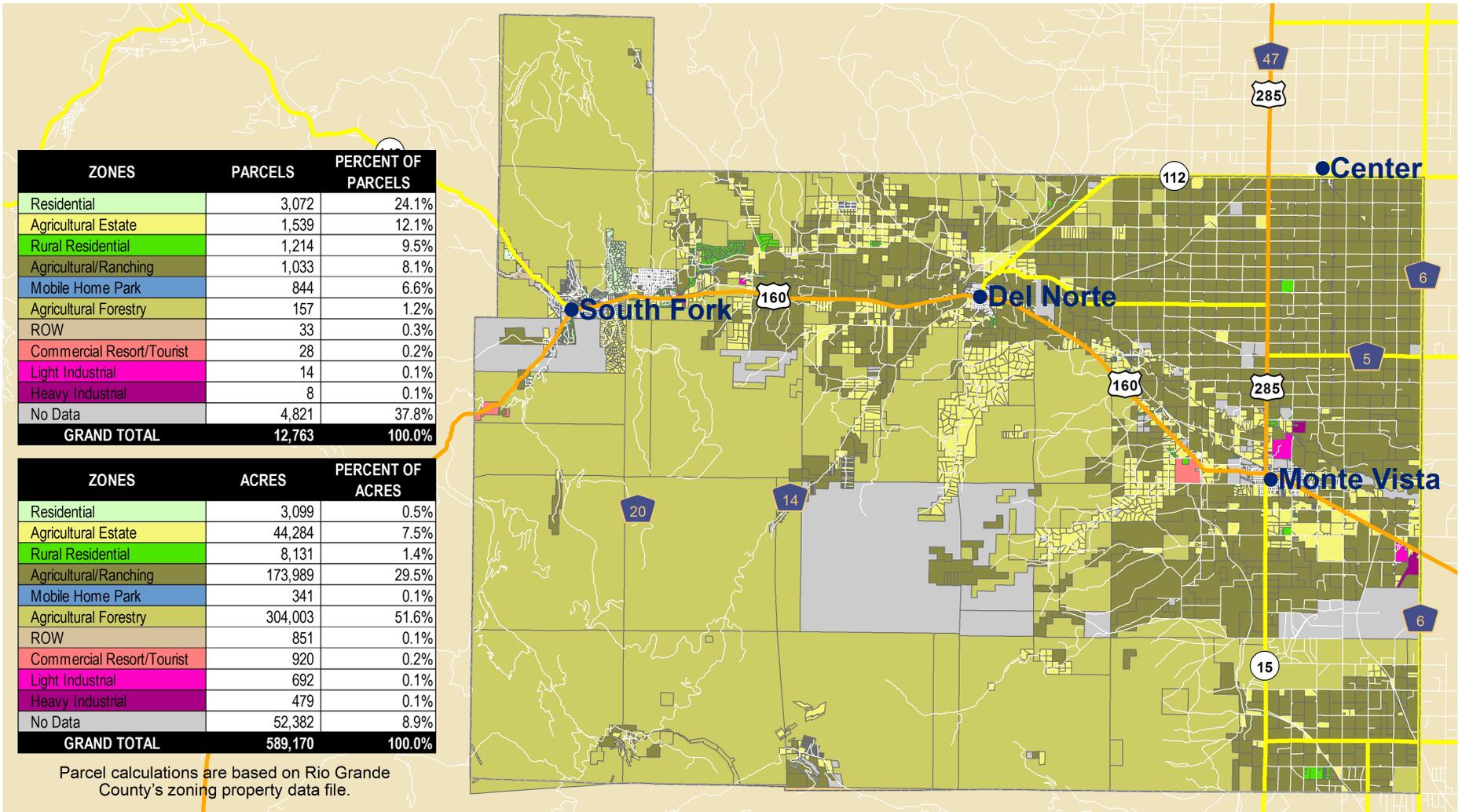
IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Vicinity Map



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Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

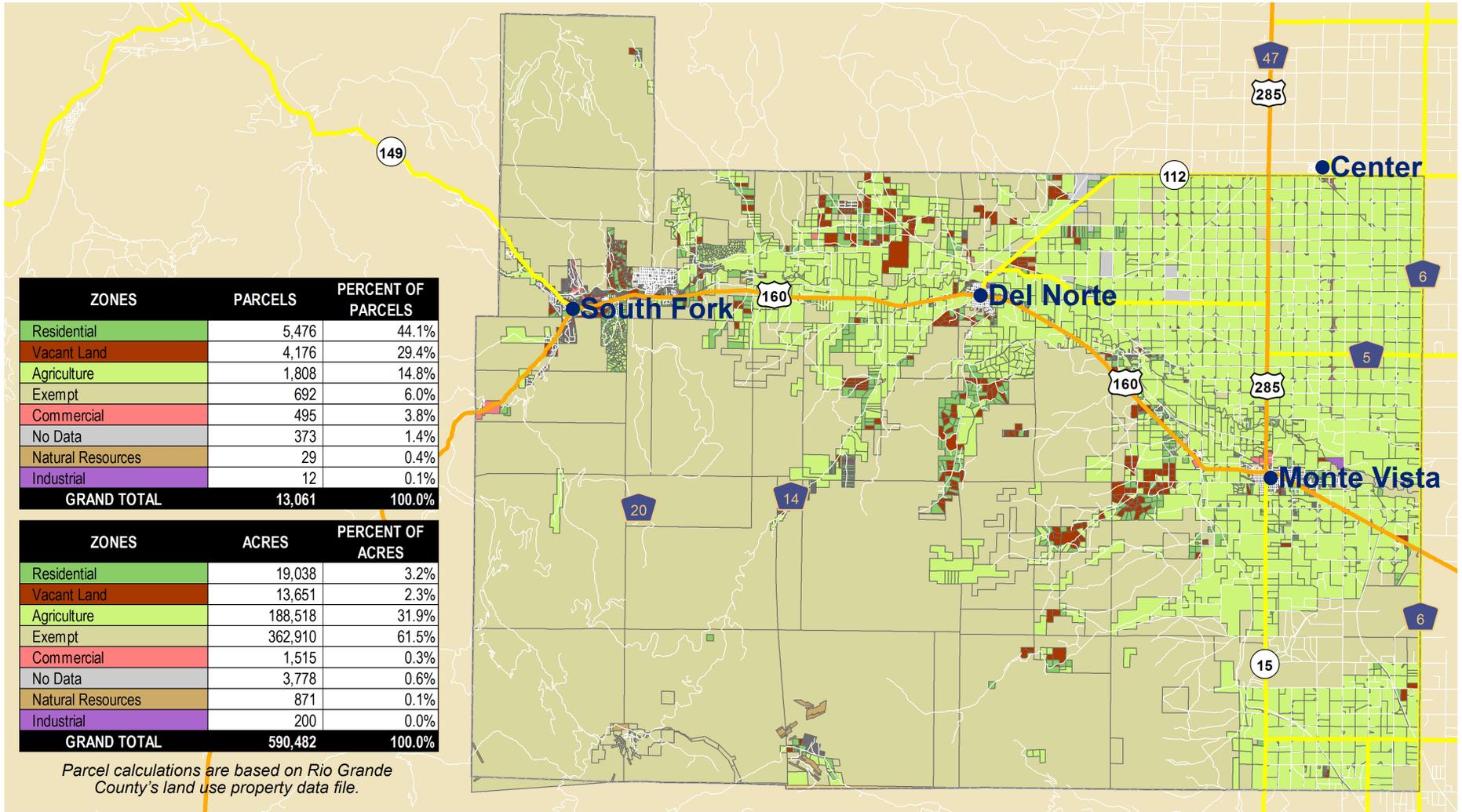
RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Current Zoning



0 5 10 Miles

□ Rio Grande County

RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Land Use

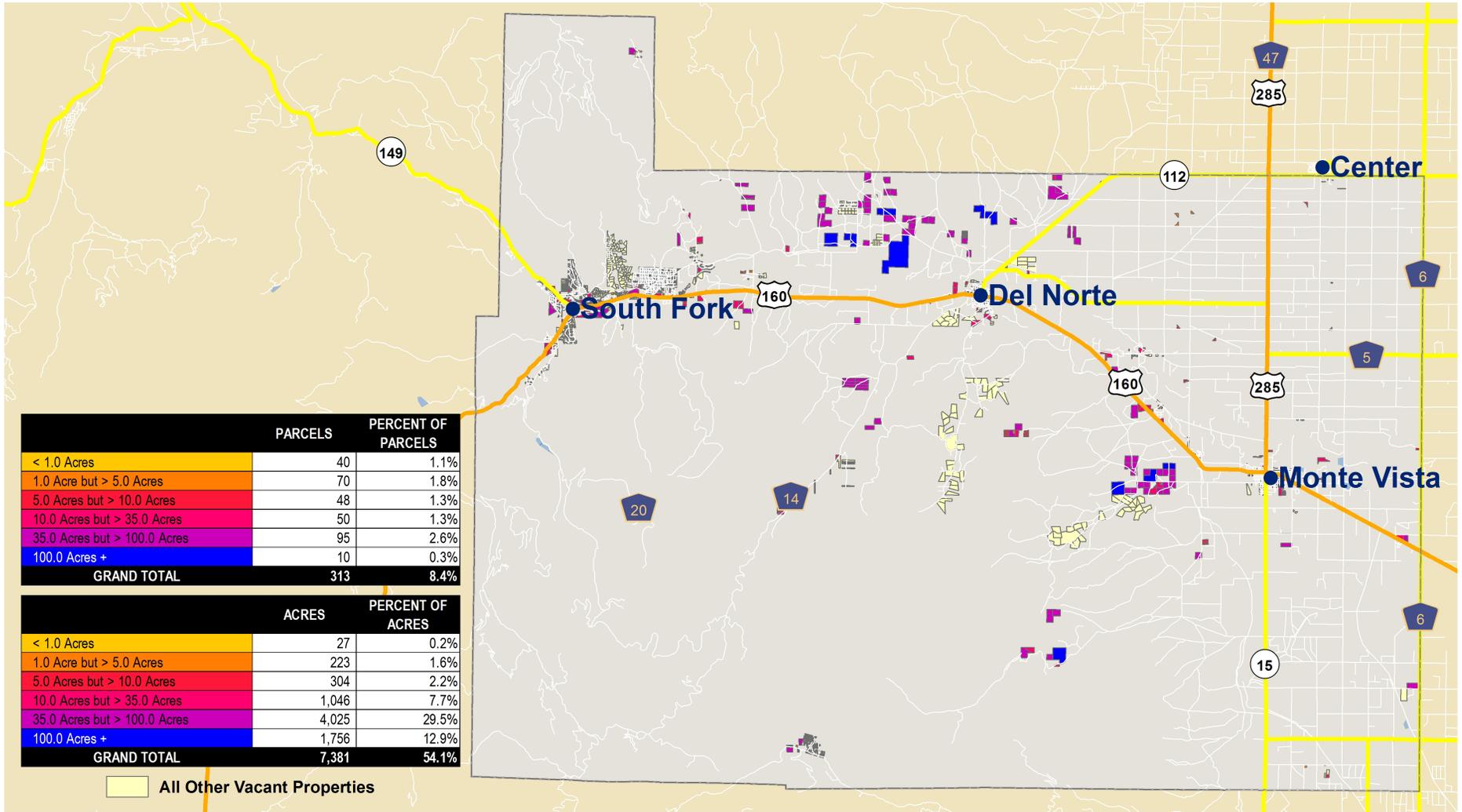


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□ Rio Grande County

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Vacant Land Use by Selected Types

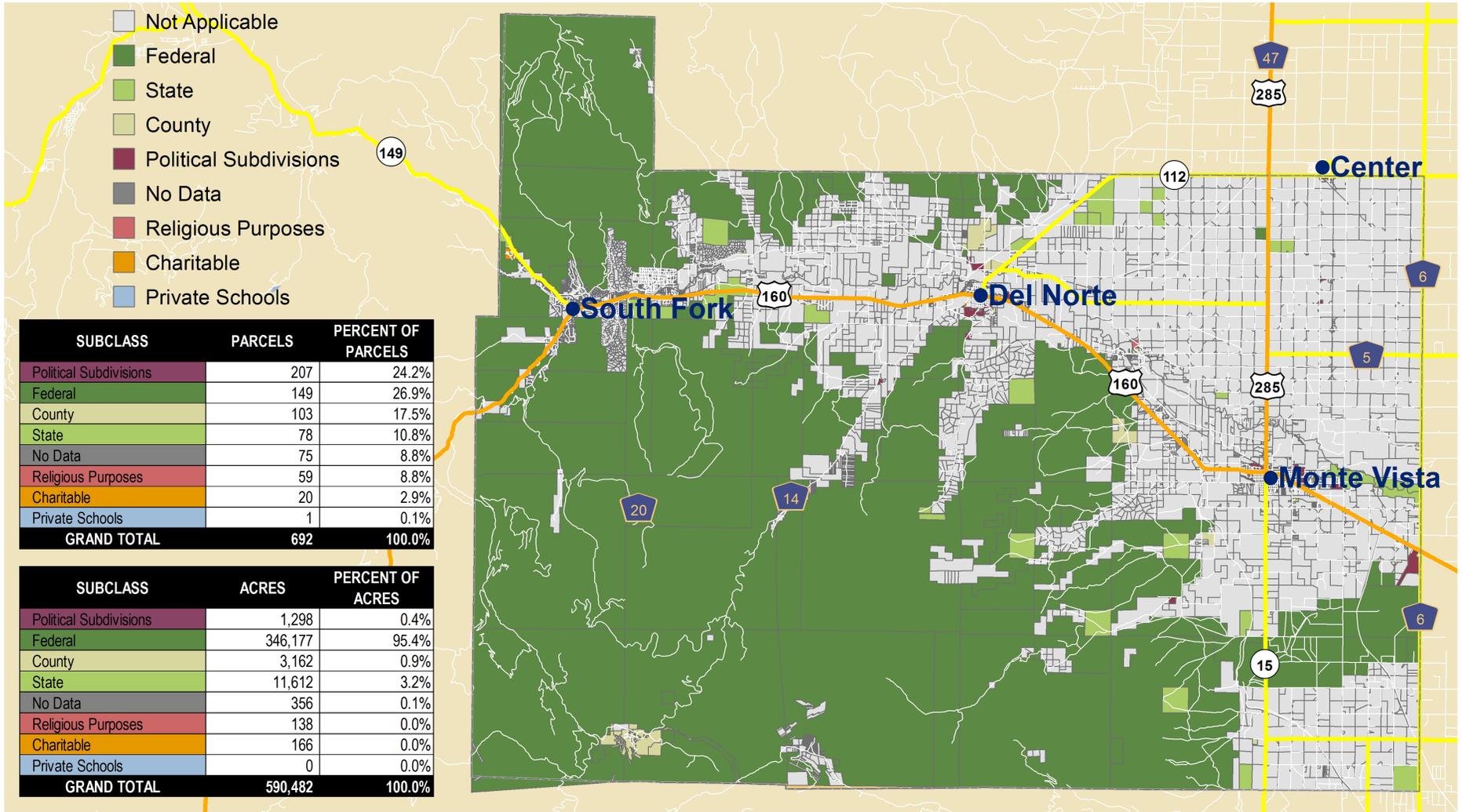


0 5 10 Miles

Rio Grande County

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Tax Exempt Parcels by Subclass



SUBCLASS	PARCELS	PERCENT OF PARCELS
Political Subdivisions	207	24.2%
Federal	149	26.9%
County	103	17.5%
State	78	10.8%
No Data	75	8.8%
Religious Purposes	59	8.8%
Charitable	20	2.9%
Private Schools	1	0.1%
GRAND TOTAL	692	100.0%

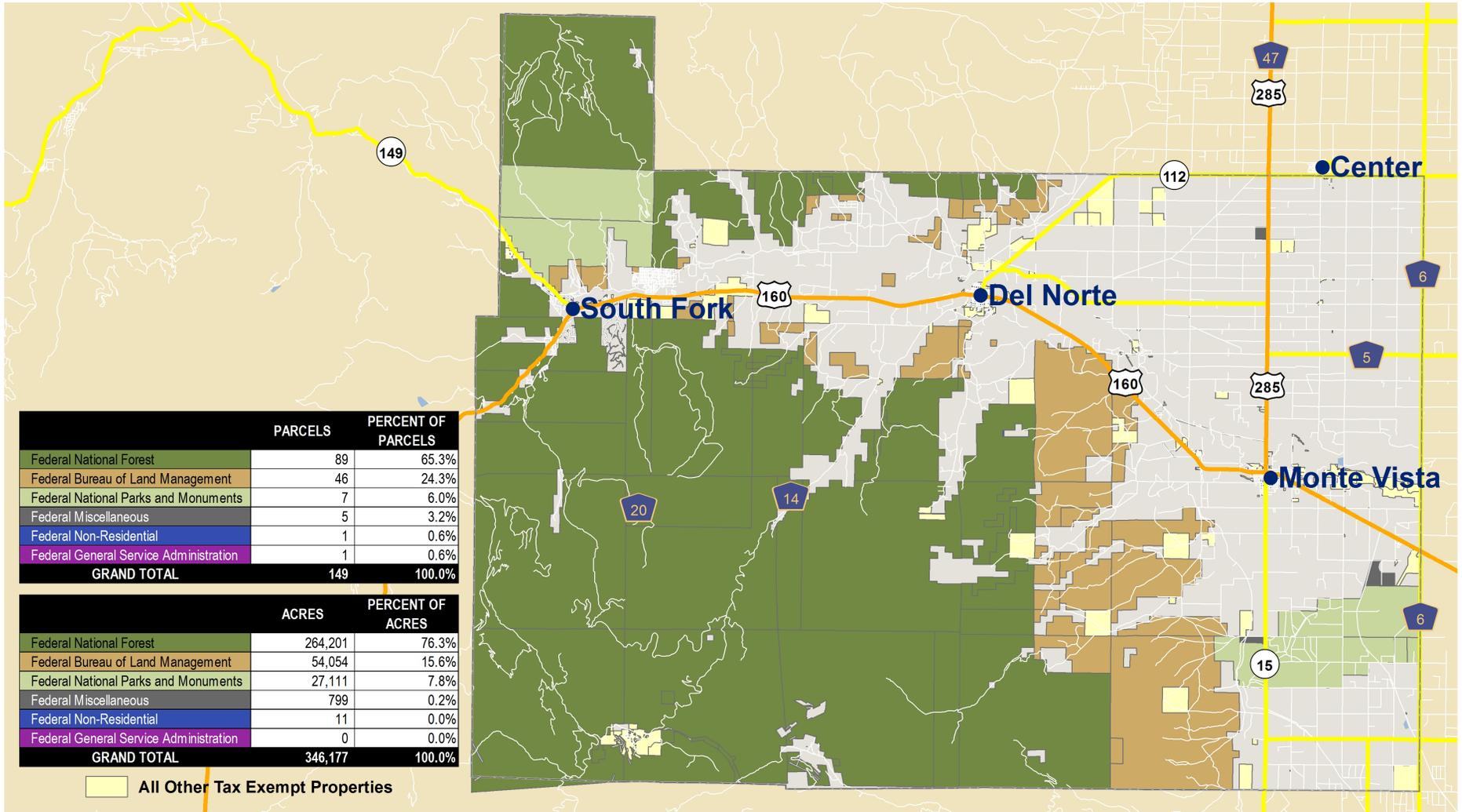
SUBCLASS	ACRES	PERCENT OF ACRES
Political Subdivisions	1,298	0.4%
Federal	346,177	95.4%
County	3,162	0.9%
State	11,612	3.2%
No Data	356	0.1%
Religious Purposes	138	0.0%
Charitable	166	0.0%
Private Schools	0	0.0%
GRAND TOTAL	590,482	100.0%



□ Rio Grande County

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Tax Exempt Federal Land Use Types

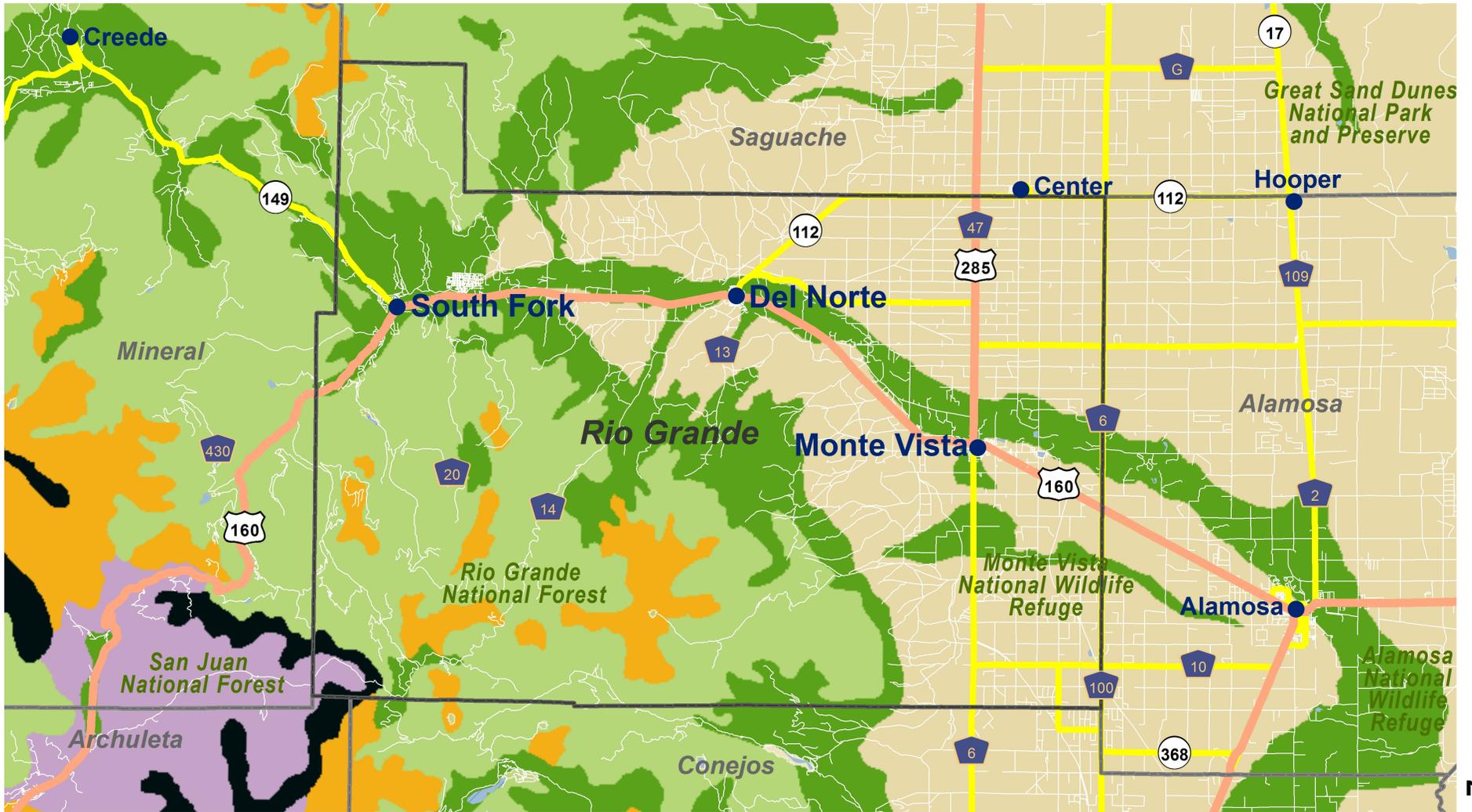


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Rio Grande County

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Soil Survey Geographic

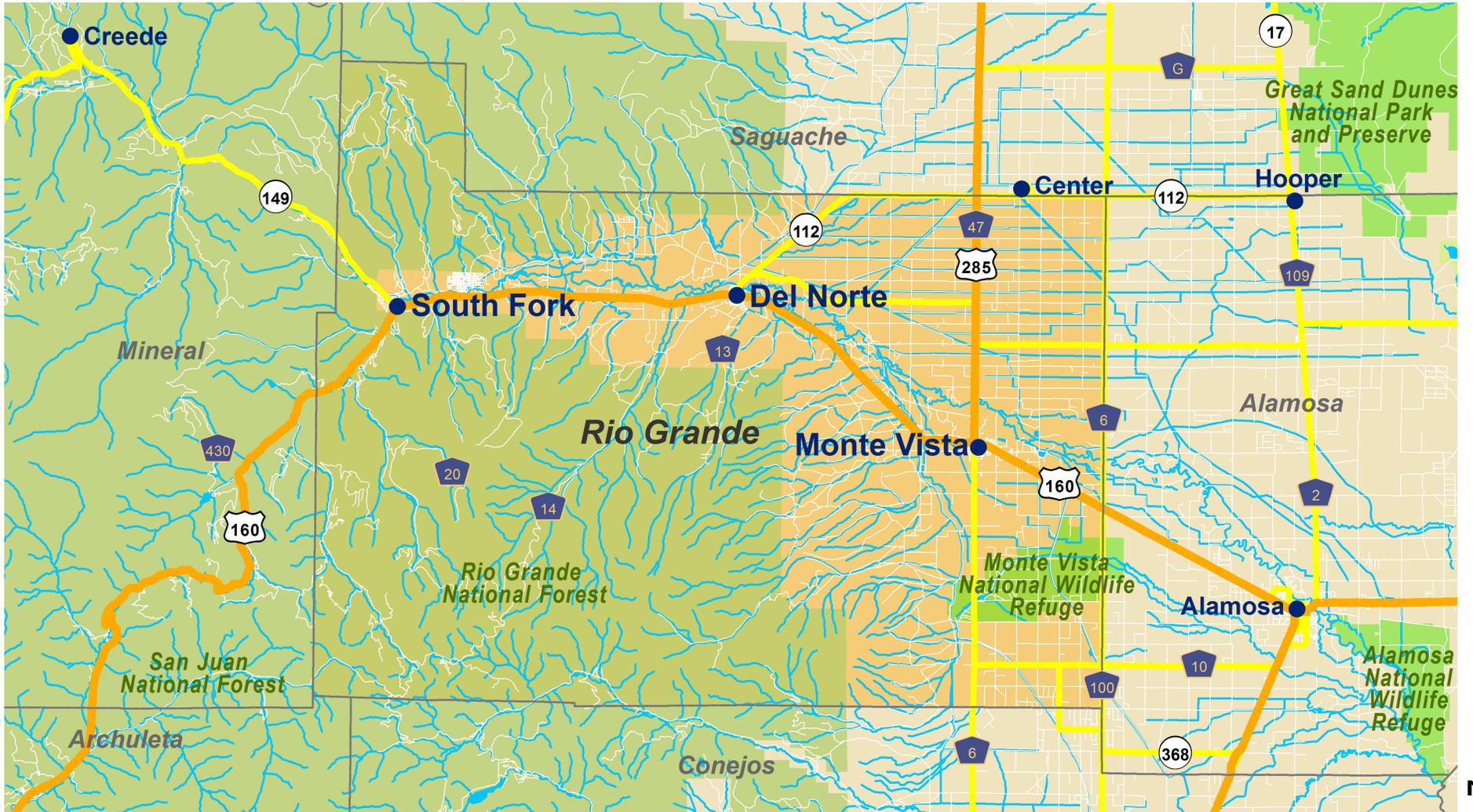


Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

Source: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Esri, 2015

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 4885 Ward Road, Suite 100 • Wheat Ridge, CO • 80033
 303-293-8107 • 303-293-8106 (fax) • www.rgengineers.com

RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Large Perennial Lakes and Rivers



Source: Esri, 2015



Rio Grande County

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Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Transportation Infrastructure

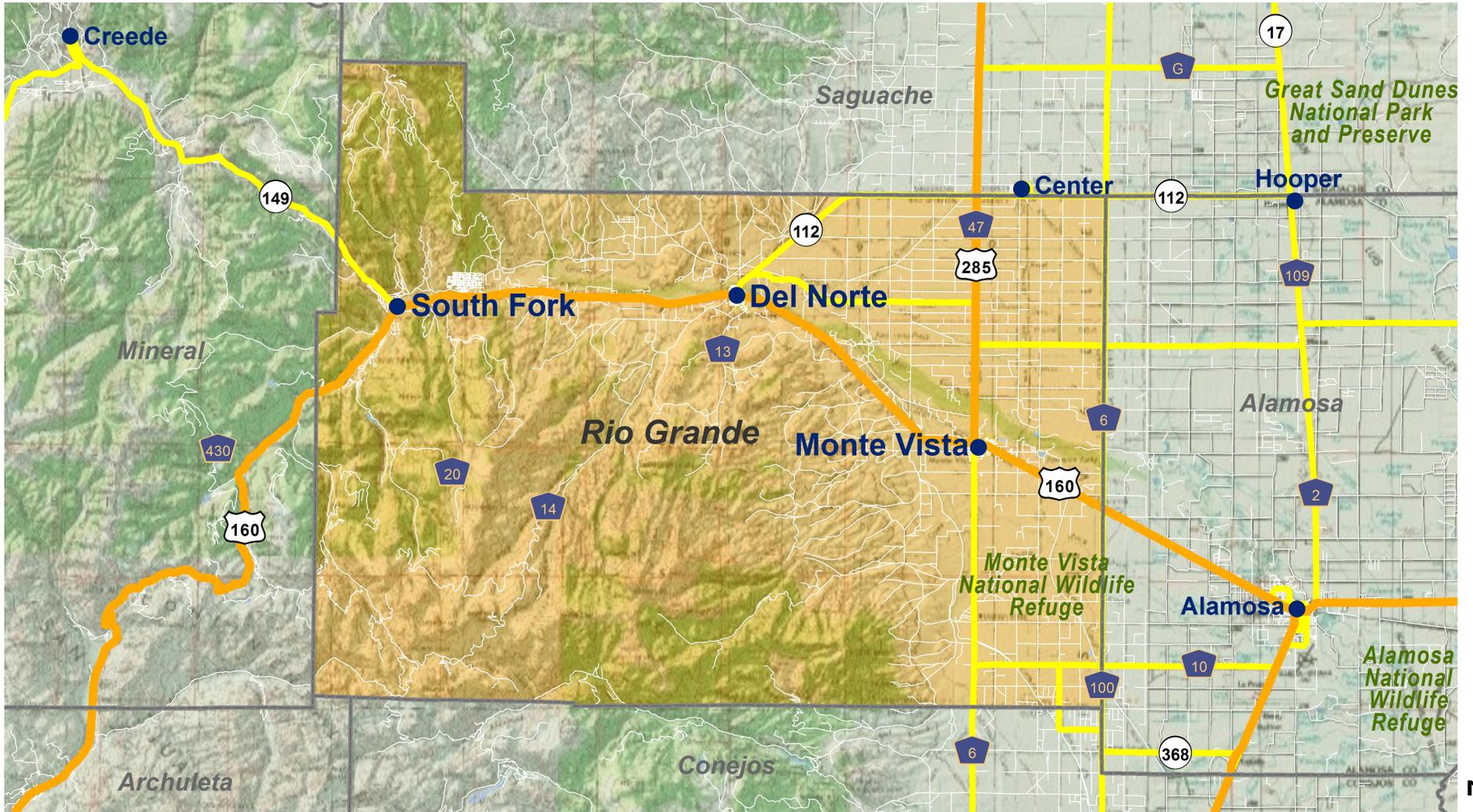


Source: Esri, 2015

Rio Grande County

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Topography



Source: National Geographic Society, i-cubed, Esri, 2013

0 5 10 Miles

Rio Grande County

RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Oil & Gas Well Locations



Source: Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, 2015

0 5 10 Miles

Rio Grande County Oil & Gas Well Locations

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO School Districts

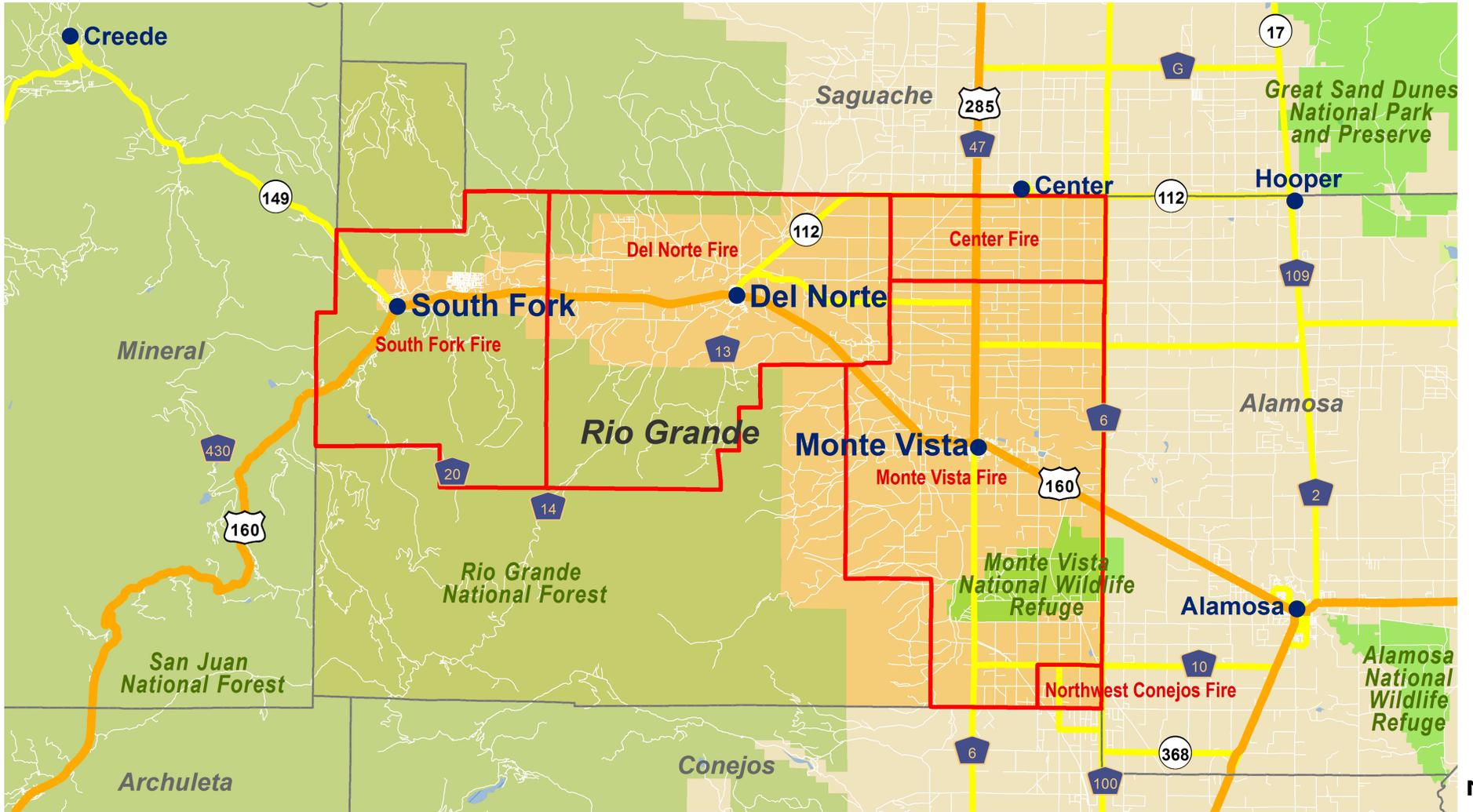


School Districts
 Rio Grande County

Source: U.S. Census TIGER, 2013

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

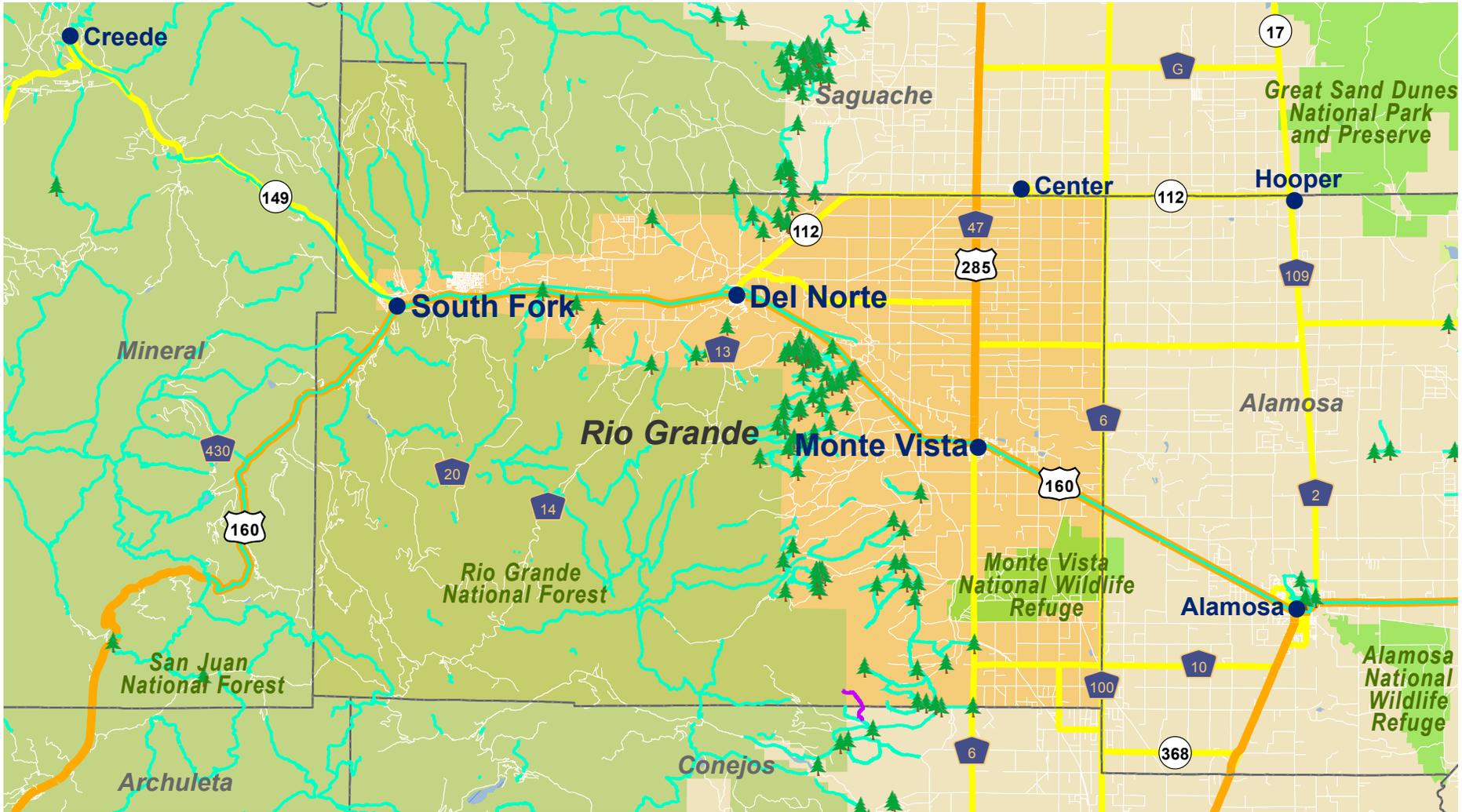
RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Fire Districts



0 5 10 Miles

Fire Districts Rio Grande County

RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO Trail System Network



Source: USFS, State of Colorado, Esri, 2015



- Rio Grande County
- Proposed and Current Trails
- Trailheads
- Recreational Trail
- Bike Lane

Date: Wednesday, March 02, 2016

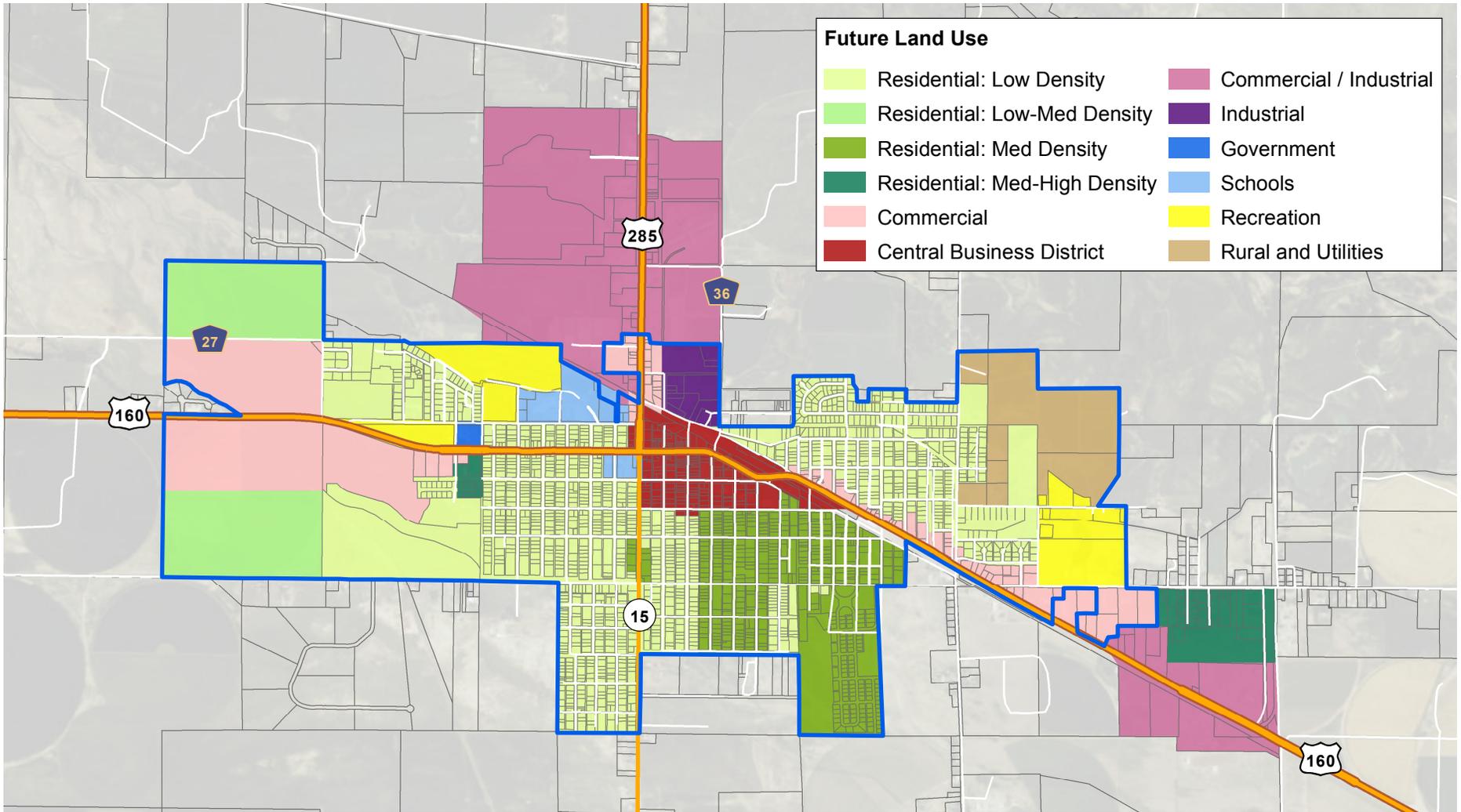


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For more detailed trails and a complete Recreational Trail Map of Rio Grande County please visit the Rio Grande Country website at riograndecountry.com

MONTE VISTA, COLORADO Future Land Use

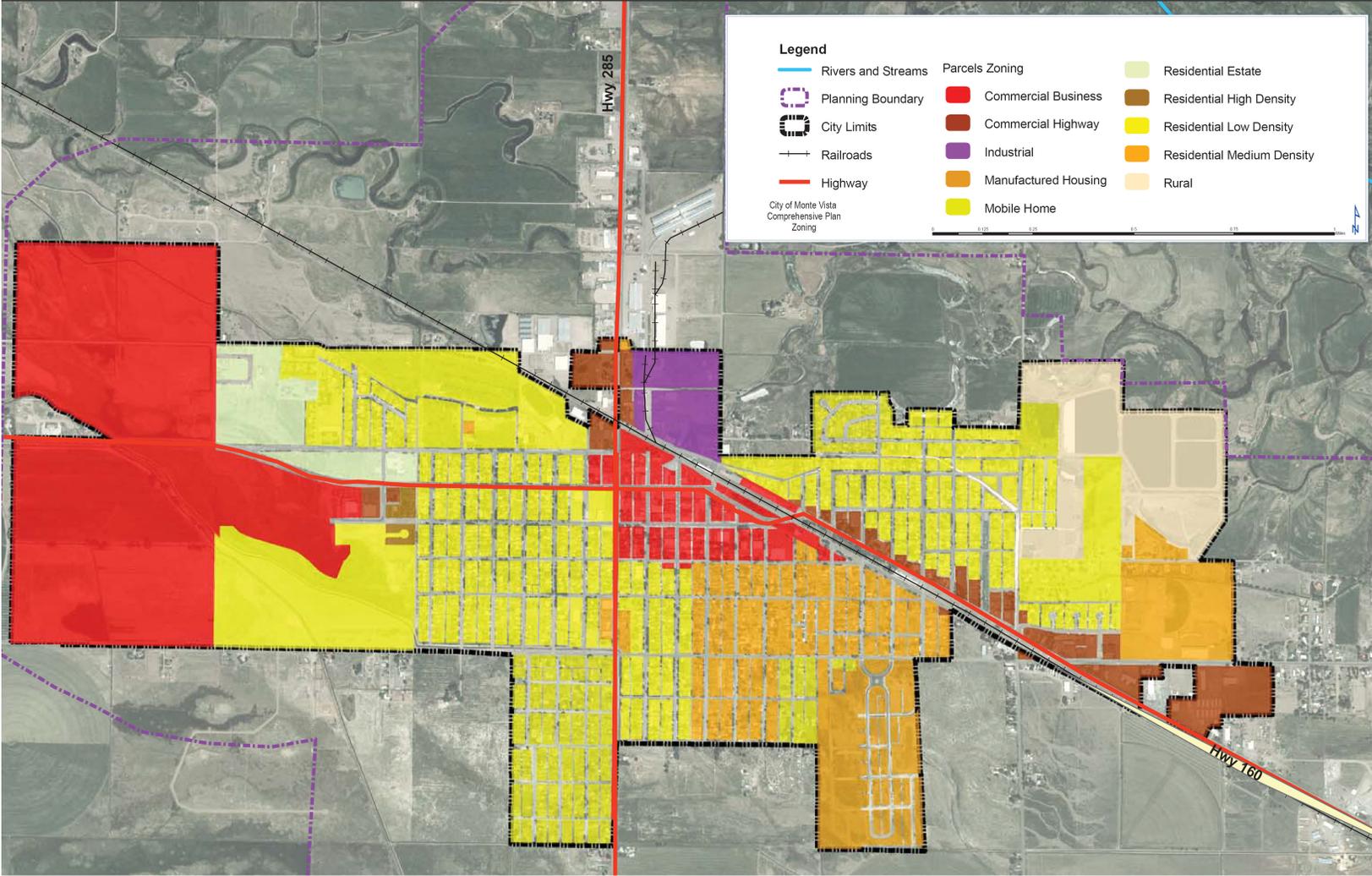


0 0.25 0.5 Miles

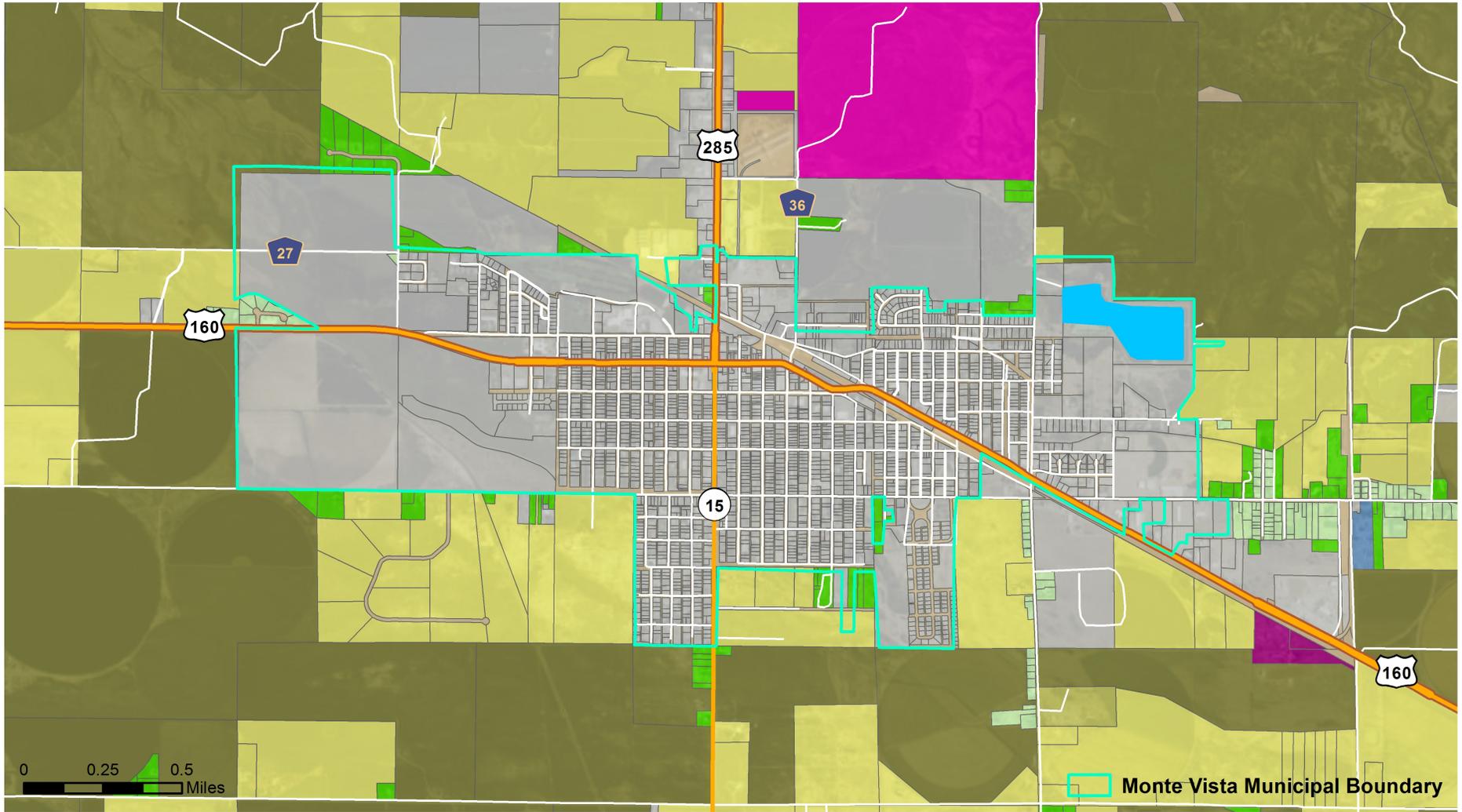
Monte Vista Municipal Boundary

Date: Thursday, January 28, 2016

MONTE VISTA, COLORADO Current Zoning

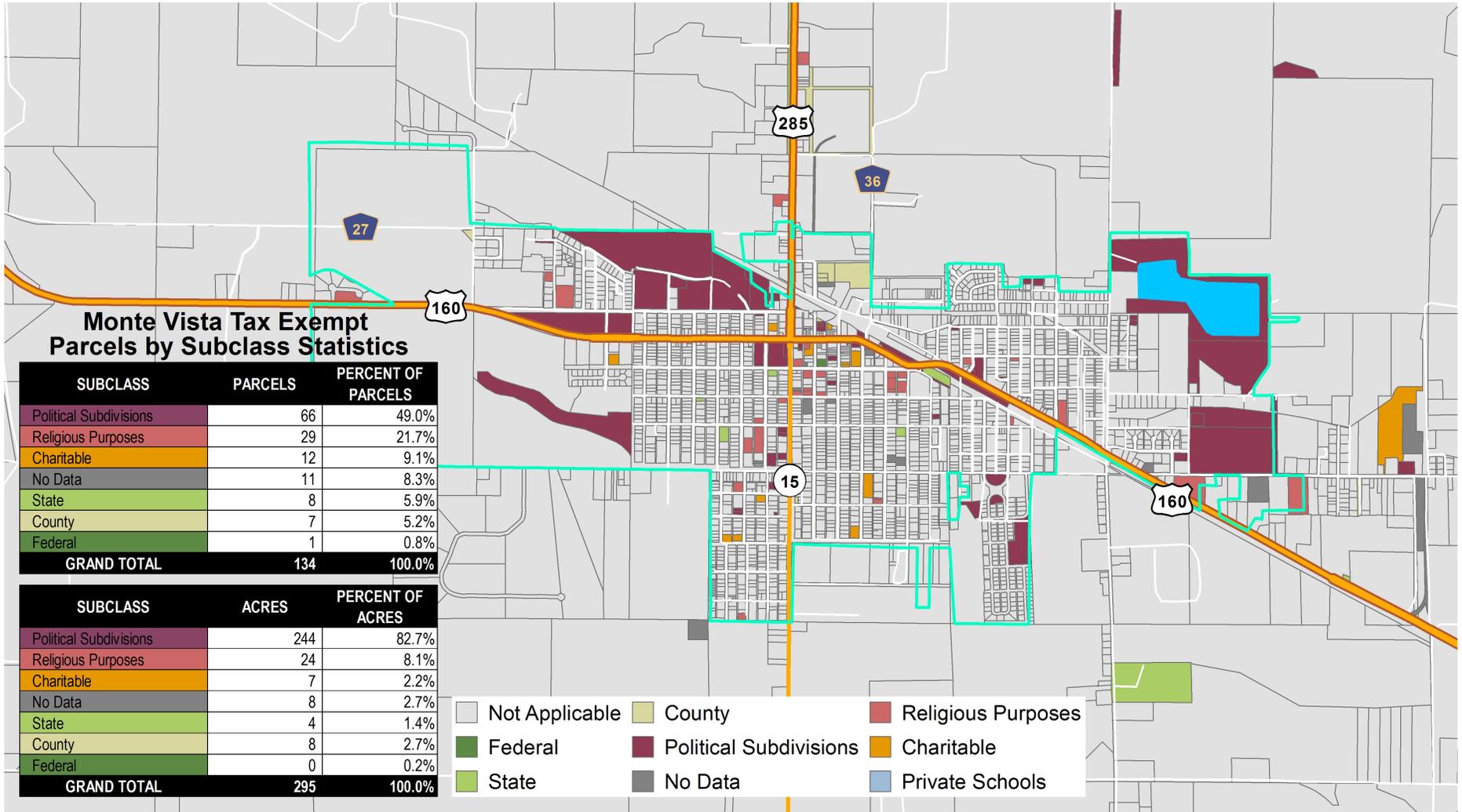


MONTE VISTA, COLORADO Current County Zoning Outside of Municipal Boundary



- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Agricultural Estate | Agricultural/Ranching | Heavy Industrial | Mobile Home Park | ROW | Rural Residential |
| Agricultural Forestry | Commercial Resort/Tourist | Light Industrial | No Data | Residential | |

MONTE VISTA, COLORADO Tax Exempt Parcels by Subclass

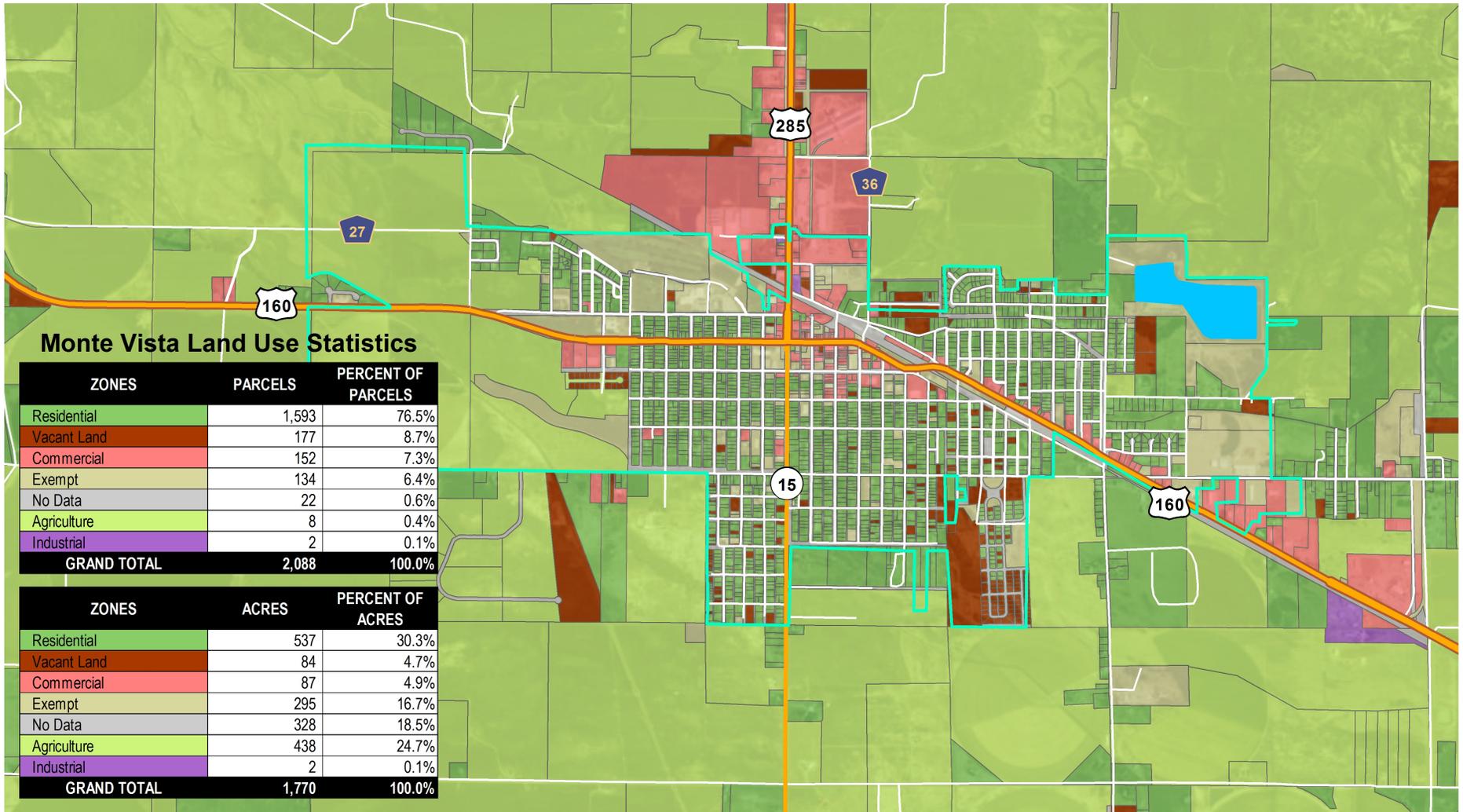


0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Monte Vista Municipal Boundary

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

MONTE VISTA, COLORADO Land Use

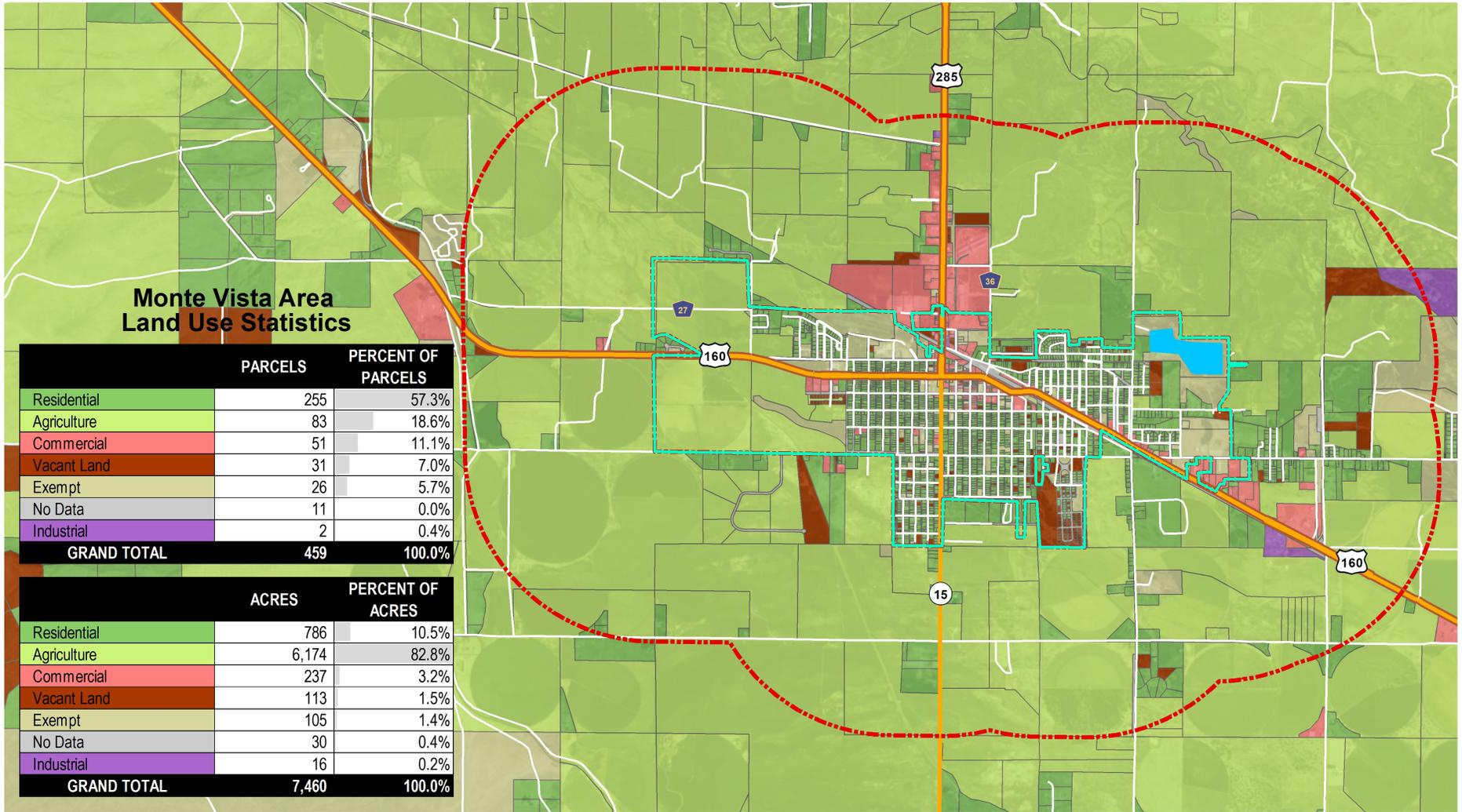


0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Monte Vista Municipal Boundary

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

MONTE VISTA, COLORADO Land Use within Municipal Boundary and a 1 Mile Buffer

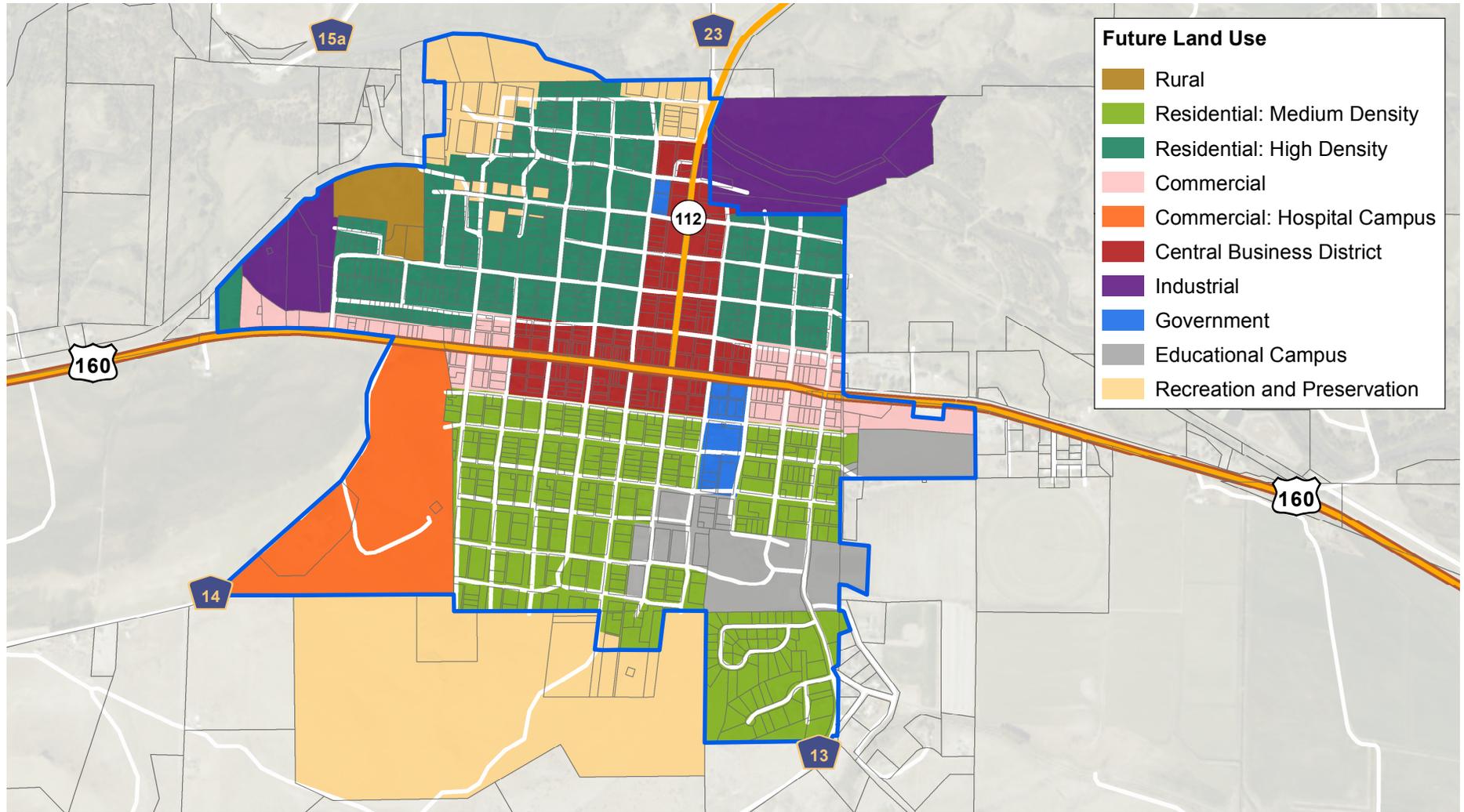


0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

Monte Vista Municipal Boundary 1 Mile Radius from Municipal Boundary

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

DEL NORTE, COLORADO Future Land Use



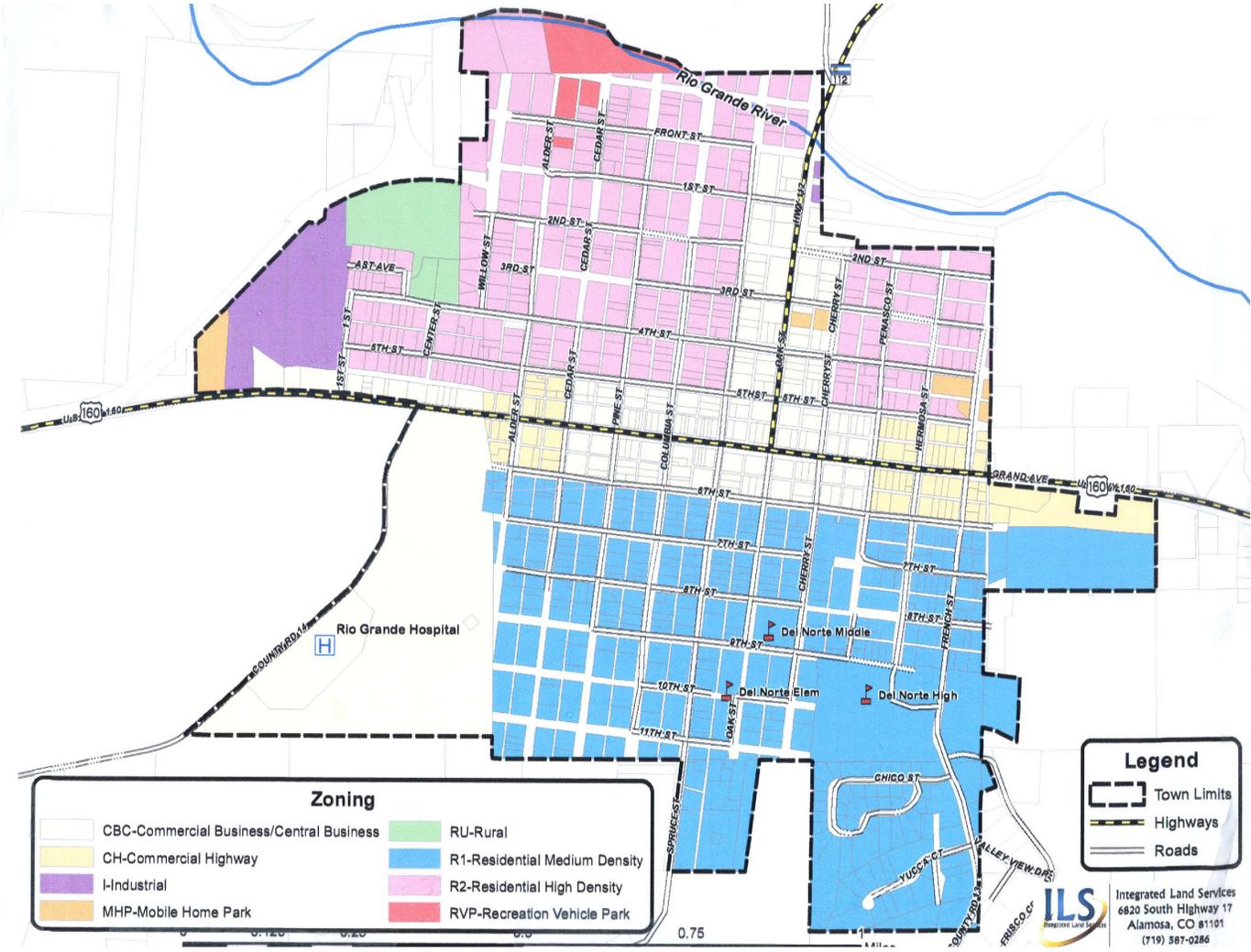
- Future Land Use**
- Rural
 - Residential: Medium Density
 - Residential: High Density
 - Commercial
 - Commercial: Hospital Campus
 - Central Business District
 - Industrial
 - Government
 - Educational Campus
 - Recreation and Preservation

0 0.25 0.5
Miles

Del Norte Municipal Boundary

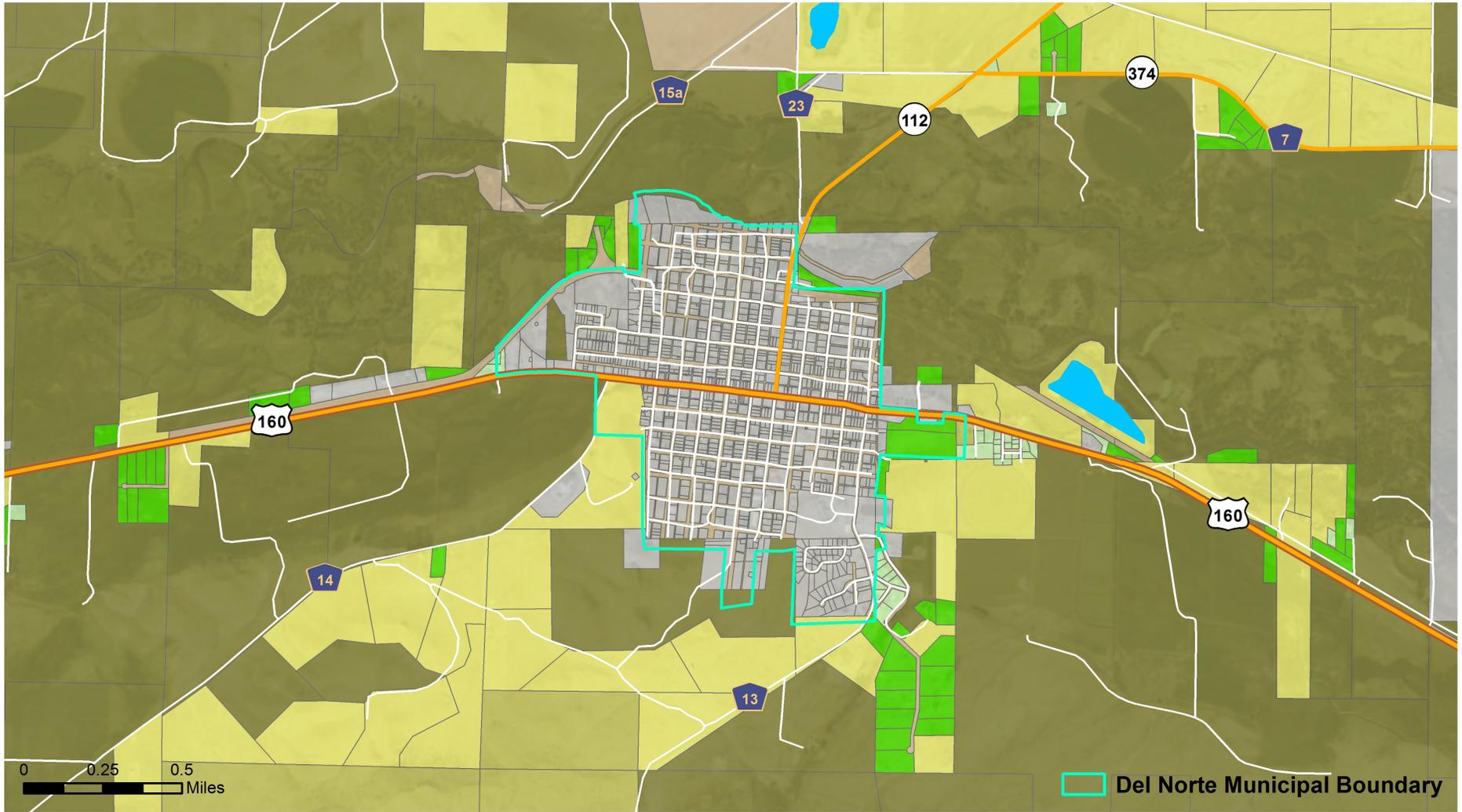
Date: Thursday, January 28, 2016

DEL NORTE, COLORADO Current Zoning



SOURCE: Integrated Land Services (ILS)

DEL NORTE, COLORADO Current County Zoning Outside of Municipal Boundary

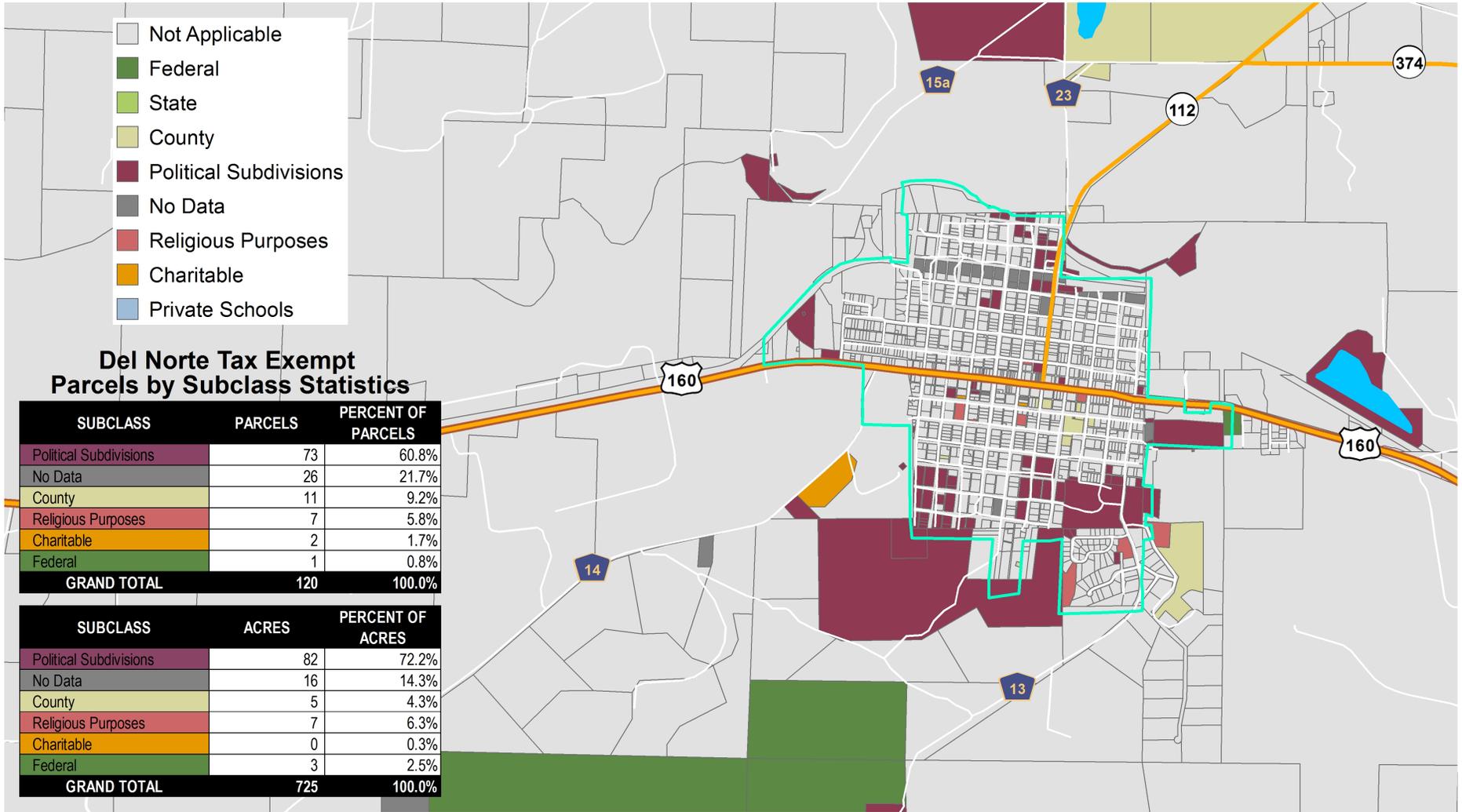


 Del Norte Municipal Boundary

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|
|  Agricultural Estate |  Agricultural/Ranching |  Heavy Industrial |  Mobile Home Park |  ROW |  Rural Residential |
|  Agricultural Forestry |  Commercial Resort/Tourist |  Light Industrial |  No Data |  Residential | |

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

DEL NORTE, COLORADO Tax Exempt Parcels by Subclass



**Del Norte Tax Exempt
Parcels by Subclass Statistics**

SUBCLASS	PARCELS	PERCENT OF PARCELS
Political Subdivisions	73	60.8%
No Data	26	21.7%
County	11	9.2%
Religious Purposes	7	5.8%
Charitable	2	1.7%
Federal	1	0.8%
GRAND TOTAL	120	100.0%

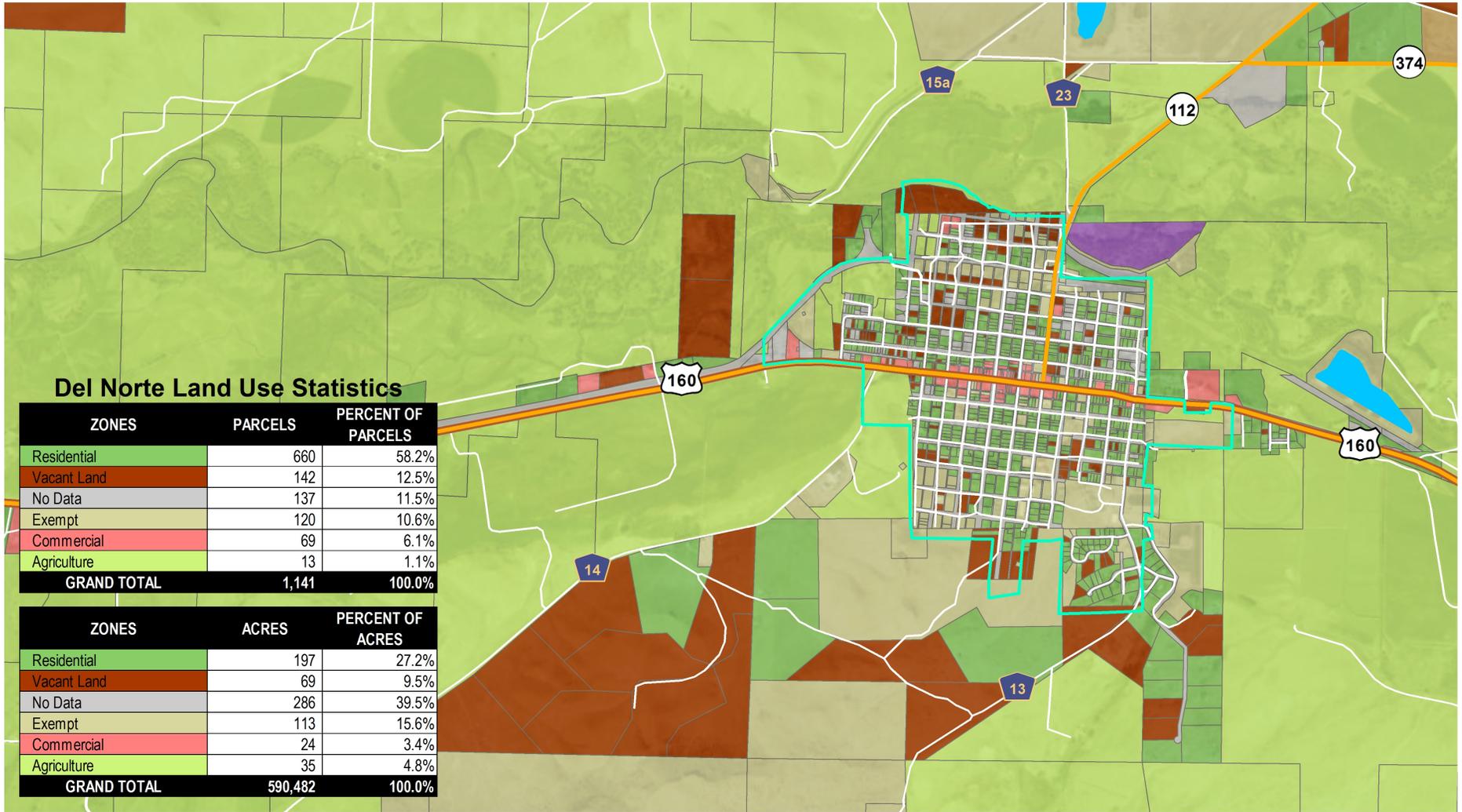
SUBCLASS	ACRES	PERCENT OF ACRES
Political Subdivisions	82	72.2%
No Data	16	14.3%
County	5	4.3%
Religious Purposes	7	6.3%
Charitable	0	0.3%
Federal	3	2.5%
GRAND TOTAL	725	100.0%

0 0.25 0.5
Miles

 Del Norte Municipal Boundary

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

DEL NORTE, COLORADO Land Use



Del Norte Land Use Statistics

ZONES	PARCELS	PERCENT OF PARCELS
Residential	660	58.2%
Vacant Land	142	12.5%
No Data	137	11.5%
Exempt	120	10.6%
Commercial	69	6.1%
Agriculture	13	1.1%
GRAND TOTAL	1,141	100.0%

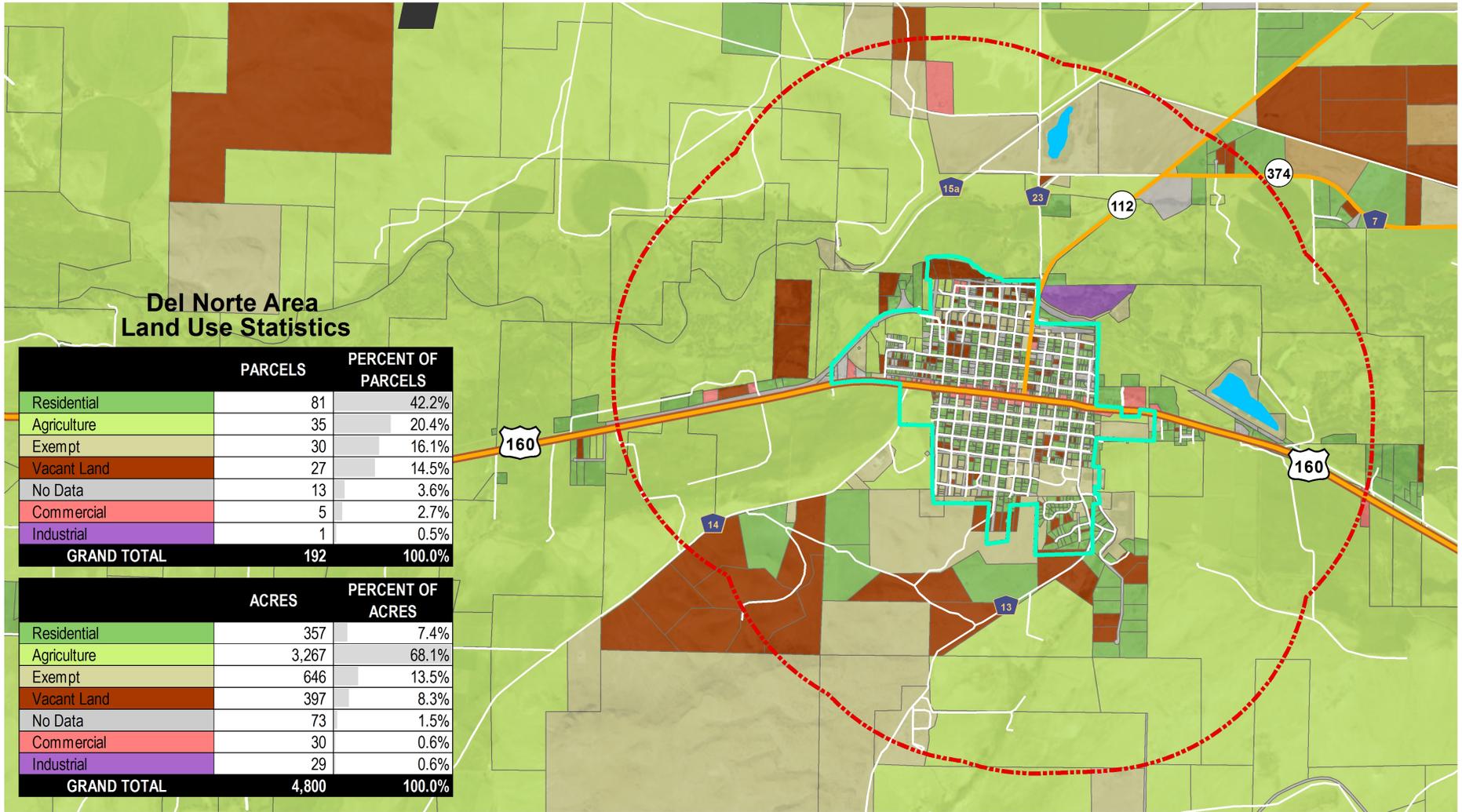
ZONES	ACRES	PERCENT OF ACRES
Residential	197	27.2%
Vacant Land	69	9.5%
No Data	286	39.5%
Exempt	113	15.6%
Commercial	24	3.4%
Agriculture	35	4.8%
GRAND TOTAL	590,482	100.0%

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

 Del Norte Municipal Boundary

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

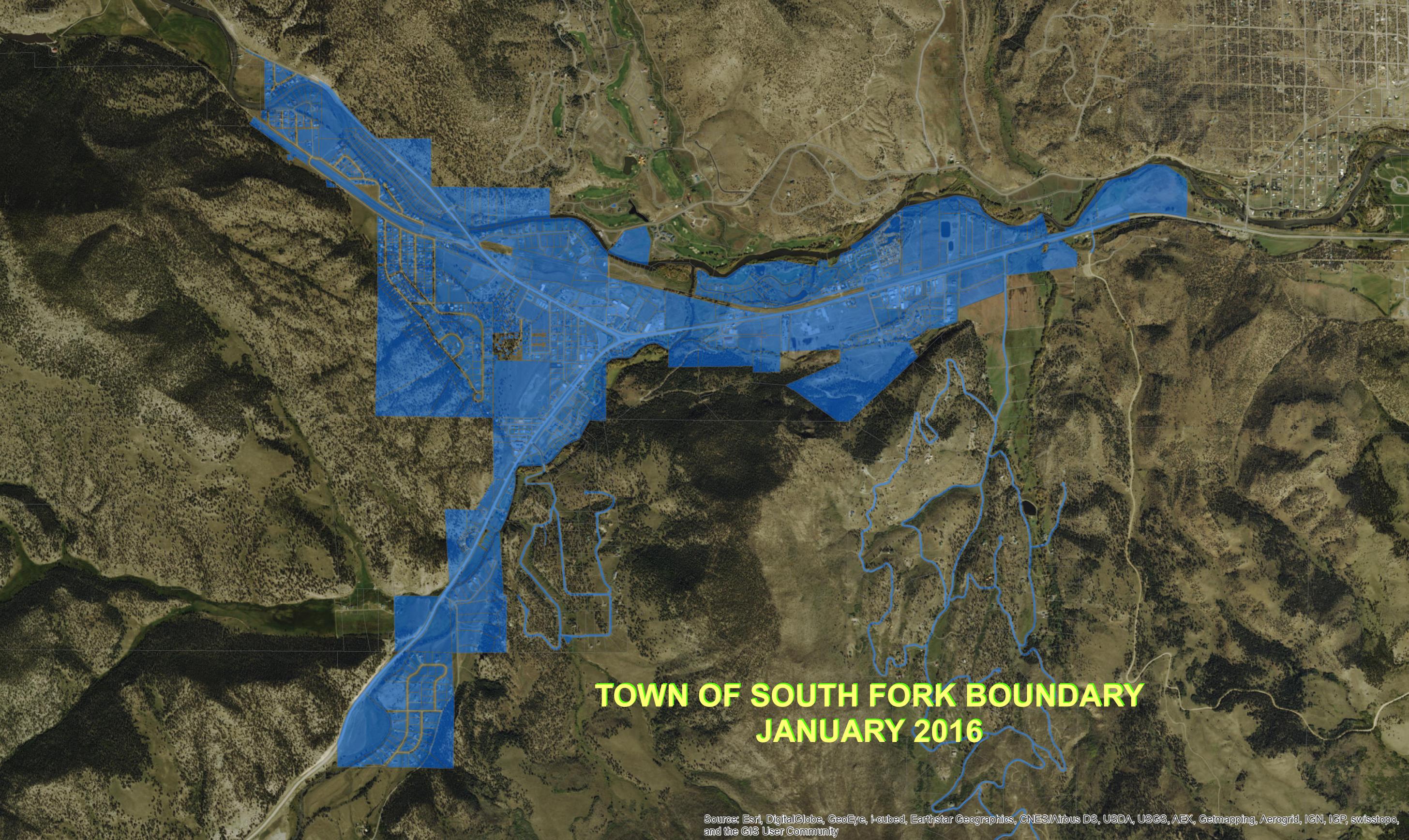
DEL NORTE, COLORADO Land Use within Municipal Boundary and a 1 Mile Buffer



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Del Norte Municipal Boundary 1 Mile Radius from Municipal Boundary

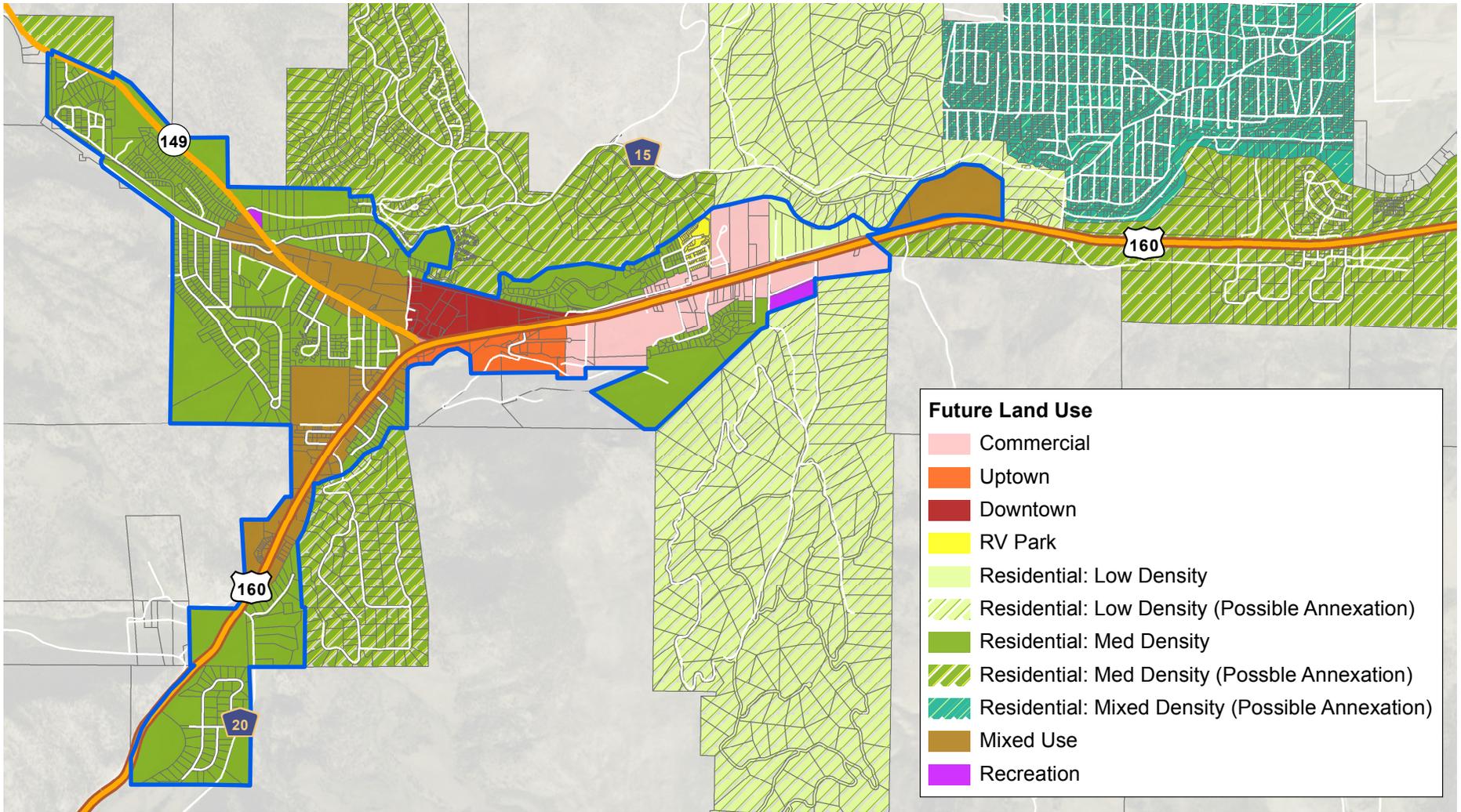
Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015



**TOWN OF SOUTH FORK BOUNDARY
JANUARY 2016**

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, I-cubed, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

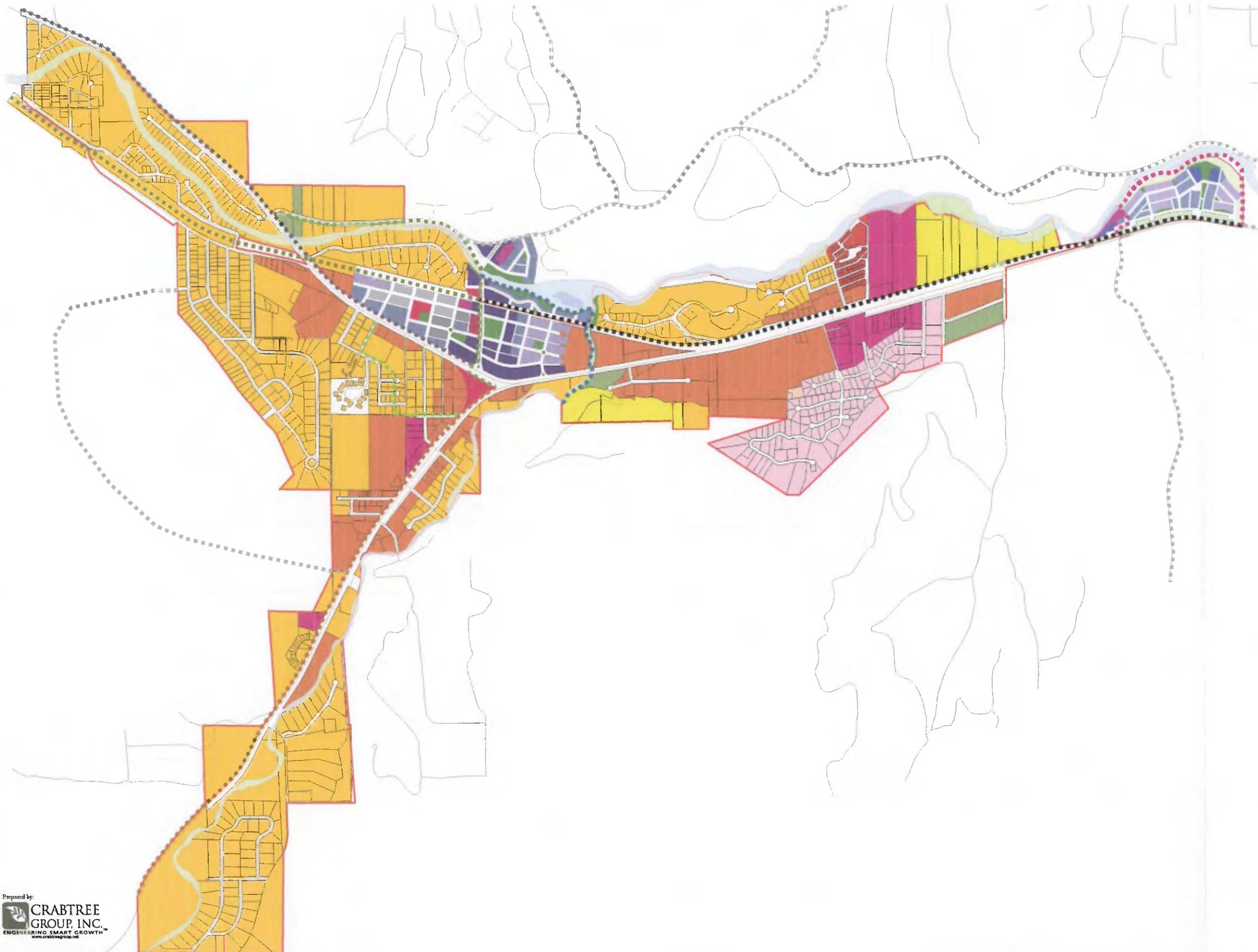
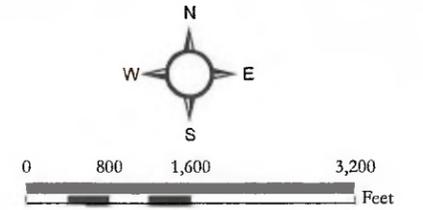
SOUTH FORK, COLORADO Future Land Use



0 0.25 0.5
Miles

 South Fork Municipal Boundary

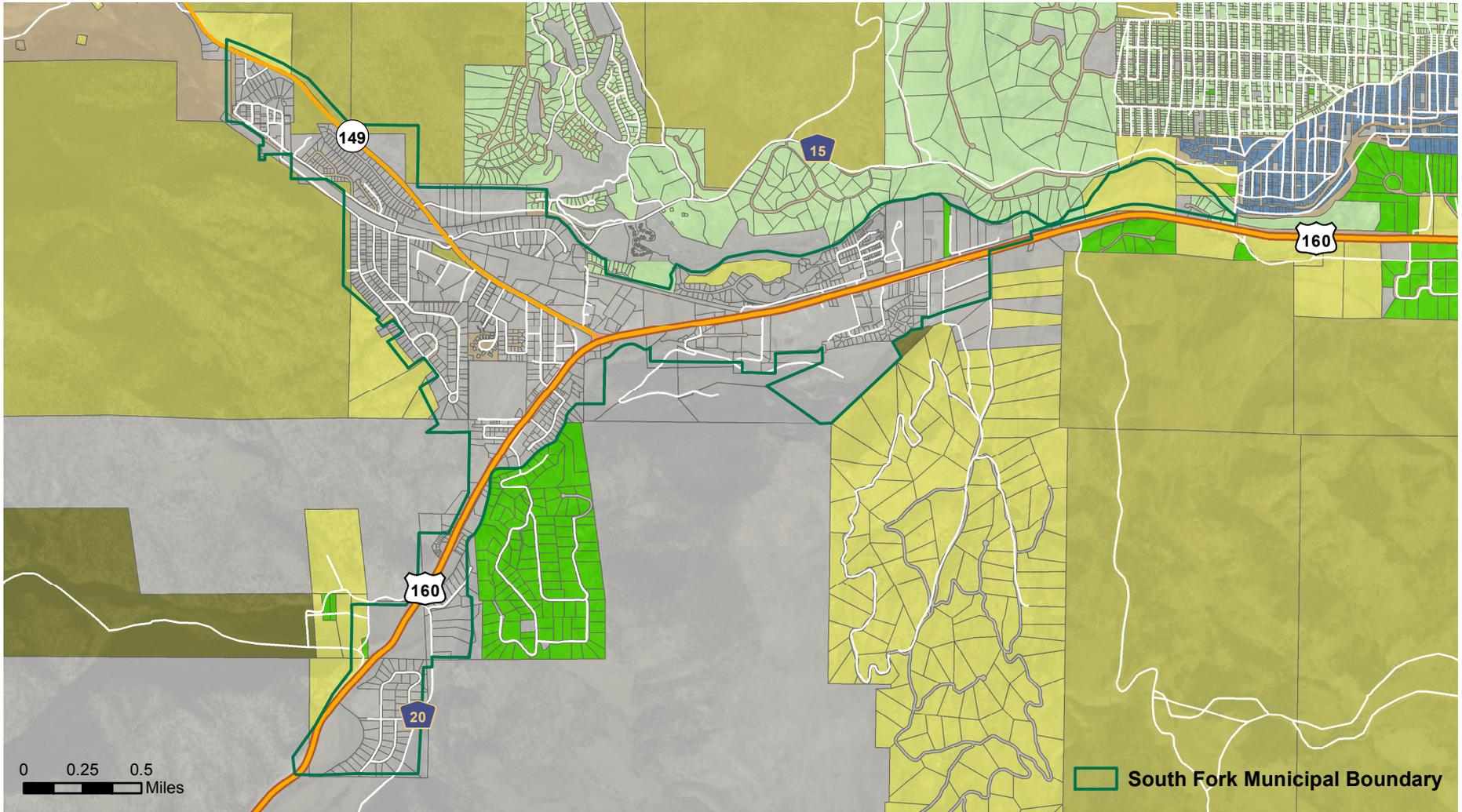
TOWN OF SOUTH FORK PARKS AND TRAILS MASTERPLAN



Legend

- Roads
 - River
 - Town Limits
- ### Zone Districts
- Commercial
 - Commercial Business
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Medium Density Residential
 - Recreational Vehicle
 - Municipal Property/Park
 - Residential
 - Rural
- ### Proposed Trails
- Connection Trails
 - Creed-South Fork Trail
 - Dakota Park Trail
 - HWY 149 Trail
 - HWY 160 Trail
 - Railroad Spur Trail
 - River Mill Trail
 - River Front Trail
 - River Walk Loop Trail
- ### River Mill Zone Districts
- Nature Park Reserve
 - Civic Boat Ramp and Parking Reserve
 - Civic Space Reserve
 - Civic Nature Park and Utilities Reserve
 - T3-Neighborhood Edge
 - T4-Neighborhood General
 - T4R- Neighborhood Riverfront
- ### River Walk Town Center Zone Districts
- CP-Civic Parking Reserve
 - CB- Civic Building Reserve
 - CS- Civic Park Reserve
 - T3-Neighborhood Edge
 - T4-Neighborhood General
 - T5-Town Center
 - Lot Lines

SOUTH FORK, COLORADO Current County Zoning Outside of Municipal Boundary

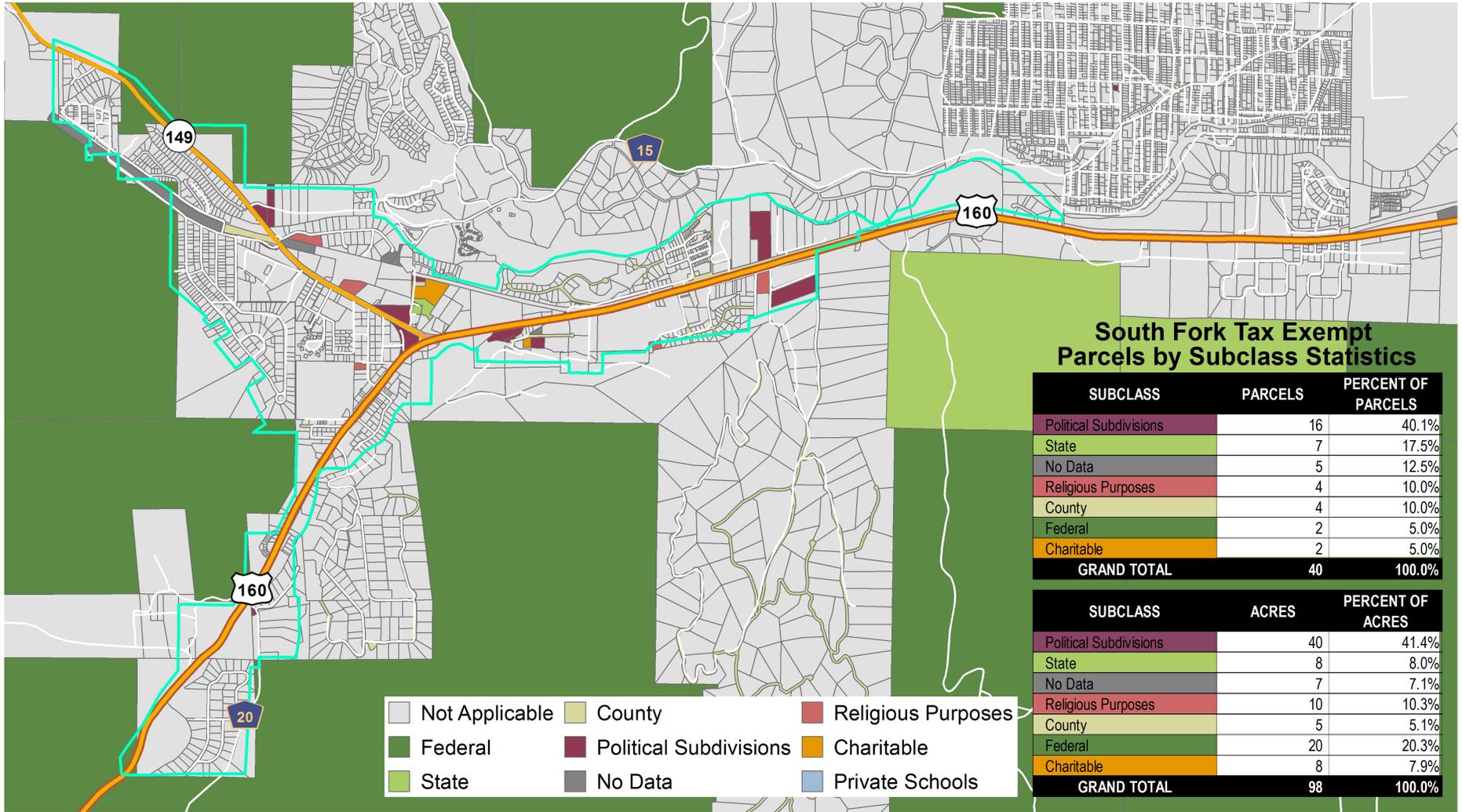


 South Fork Municipal Boundary

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|
|  Agricultural Estate |  Agricultural/Ranching |  Heavy Industrial |  Mobile Home Park |  ROW |  Rural Residential |
|  Agricultural Forestry |  Commercial Resort/Tourist |  Light Industrial |  No Data |  Residential | |

Date: Wednesday, January 20, 2016

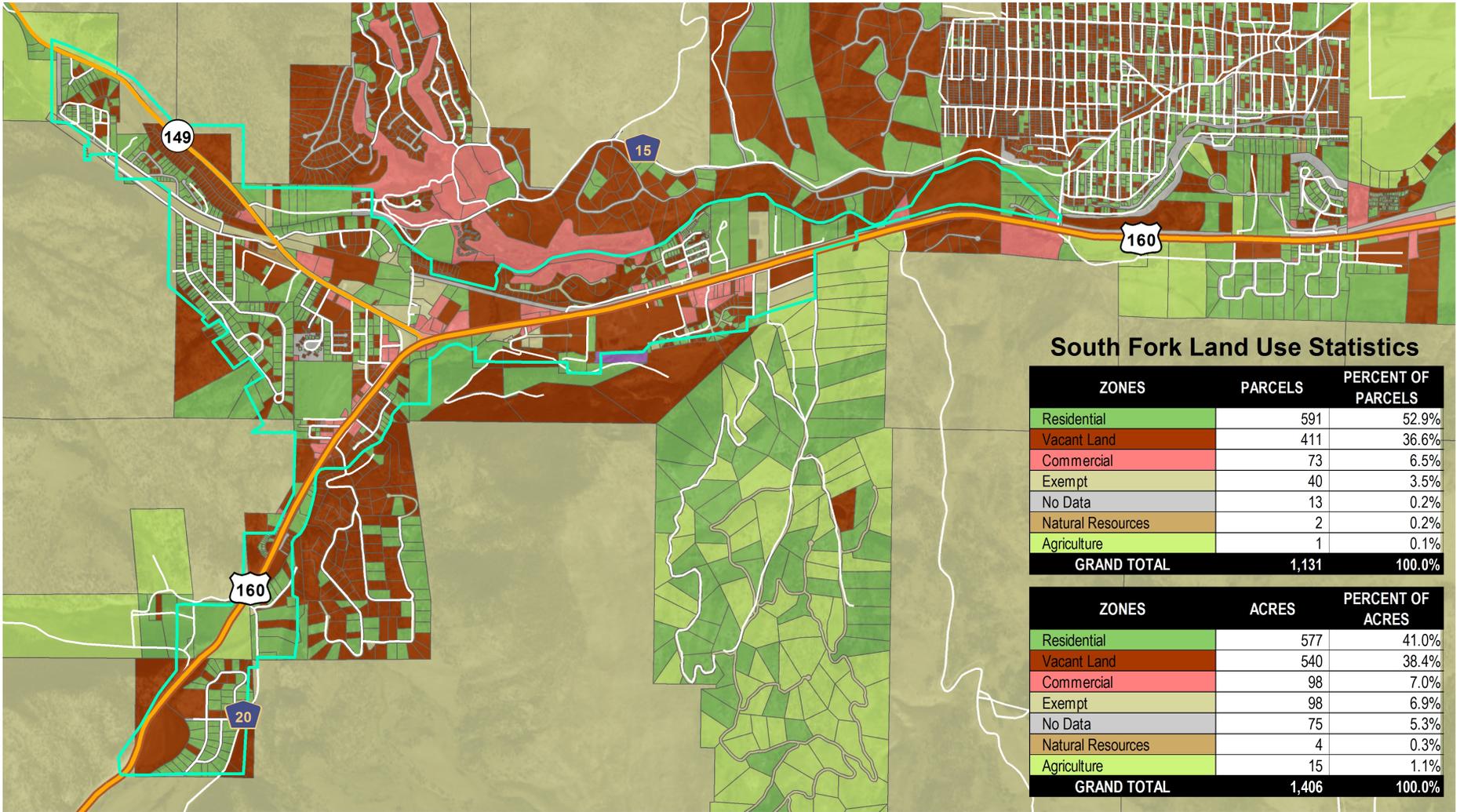
SOUTH FORK, COLORADO Tax Exempt Parcels by Subclass



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

South Fork Municipal Boundary

SOUTH FORK, COLORADO Land Use



South Fork Land Use Statistics

ZONES	PARCELS	PERCENT OF PARCELS
Residential	591	52.9%
Vacant Land	411	36.6%
Commercial	73	6.5%
Exempt	40	3.5%
No Data	13	0.2%
Natural Resources	2	0.2%
Agriculture	1	0.1%
GRAND TOTAL	1,131	100.0%

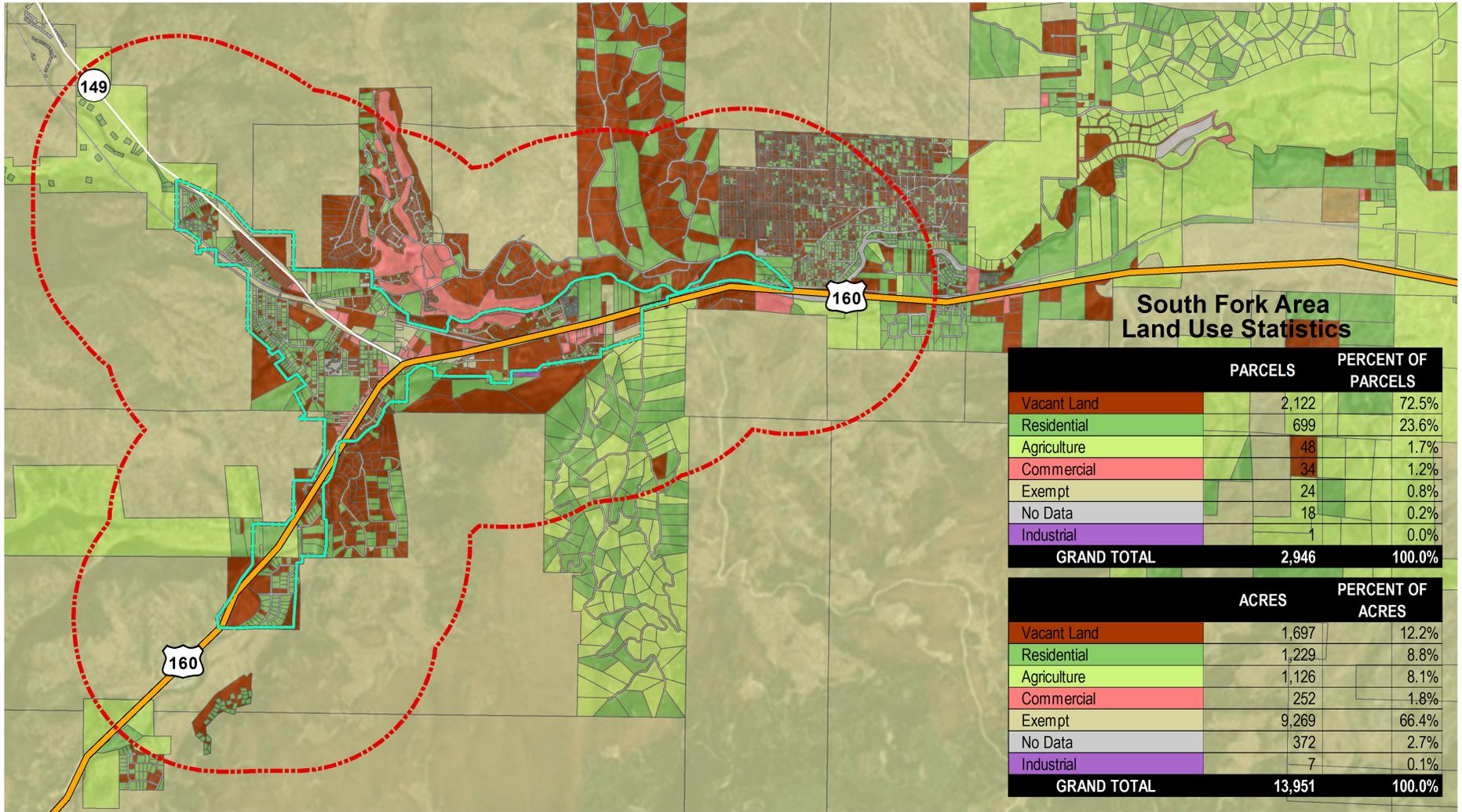
ZONES	ACRES	PERCENT OF ACRES
Residential	577	41.0%
Vacant Land	540	38.4%
Commercial	98	7.0%
Exempt	98	6.9%
No Data	75	5.3%
Natural Resources	4	0.3%
Agriculture	15	1.1%
GRAND TOTAL	1,406	100.0%

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

 South Fork Municipal Boundary

Date: Tuesday, December 01, 2015

SOUTH FORK, COLORADO Land Use within Municipal Boundary and a 1 Mile Buffer



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

South Fork Municipal Boundary 1 Mile Radius from Municipal Boundary

COMMUNITY OUTREACH RESULTS
RIO GRANDE COUNTY JOINT MASTER PLAN UPDATE
SURVEY RESULTS COMPILED DEC. 2015

Sources of Comments:

1. **Aerial Map Comments** - These suggestions were provided via citizen comments placed on sticky notes, then attached to aerial maps, at the Sep. 12, 2015 Potato Fest.
2. **Survey Comments** – These suggestions were taken from the survey on the web site and from the shorter 3-question survey handed out at the Potato Fest.

All suggestions are to be considered in the *Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Update* and will be grouped by the following headers, which are also the headers in the Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps sections of the Plan:

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards
Economic Sustainability
Transportation, Public Utilities and Services
Recreation and Conservation

Rio Grande County Aerial Map Comments

Transportation, Public Utilities and Services

- Better graded roads out by farms, and more often.

Recreation and Conservation

- Lots of free (open and shared) land here in the County.

Rio Grande County Survey Comments

Economic Sustainability

- We need to encourage jobs in the valley that are not Ag. Recreation has high potential for our county.
- RGC already has a building code (IBC); however it is very restrictive at times and discourages new businesses from coming in or new housing. It seems as though the building code is designed more for urban areas than rural/small communities.

Transportation, Public Utilities and Services

- The county should never allow ATV, OHV or any non-licensed vehicle on county roads for any reason.
- Transportation continues to be a concern for residents of the whole SLV, especially for youth, elderly and poor. It could be valuable for the Master Plan to include elements looking at supporting this gap (i.e. incentives to businesses looking at transporting; developing bike routes between businesses, schools, towns; supporting alternatives transportation like buses, trains-if this was ever an option.) As a survey side note -- the "other" section for 1, 2, & 3 and #20 require a response in order to submit.
- Allow more ATV roads.

Recreation and Conservation

- Any recreation tax money should be spent to build bike trails, but not to open a swimming pool or similar endeavor. When you live in a small community, you must understand you are not going to have amenities that those in the City may have. Our "recreation" can come from outdoor activities. Every community at this size cannot have a pool, a hospital, a recreation center, etc.
- County-wide recreation district with pool would be good. If too expensive, maybe work with surrounding counties for cross-county rec center. In terms of business, focus on retaining existing businesses and encourage towns (particularly Monte Vista) to provide downtown parking for RVs & campers so we can encourage folks traveling through to stop and spend money in our county.
- Question 13 - The wording of the question is unclear as far as how it will affect people who live outside of a Fire Protection District. Nevertheless, we are supportive of either County or city rec districts, and would pay increased taxes to fund it. Good recreation opportunities strengthen communities and families. Water issues dictate that the county diversify from the traditional agricultural base.
- Question 10 - What about incentives for preserving private land as wildlife habitat or for recreation? Ag land already gets a huge property tax reduction, but undeveloped residential land is taxed at a rate higher than if it were occupied. That puts pressure on landowners to develop good habitat (big-game winter range, for example). Existing tools (conservation easements) can work well to preserve agricultural land.
- Question 19 - It is difficult to focus on just one. Our county will need to exploit any good opportunities, but water issues are a signal to pursue other types of businesses. The mountain communities in Colorado that have focused on recreation actually seem to be doing better now. (Buena Vista, Salida, Pagosa, etc.)

Del Norte Aerial Map Comments

Economic Sustainability

- Need a Ross Clothing Store.
- More restaurants.

Recreation and Conservation

- Sprinklers need to be adjusted so as to not spray onto the track.
- Trees would be nice.
- Tennis courts need to be resurfaced so they can be used.
- School District and Town need to work together to keep courts and trails well-kept.
- High Valley Community Center needs to be bigger.
- Kids need more things to do.
- Parks and recreation trails – have a trail from Creede to Alamosa.

Del Norte Survey Comments

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

- Del Norte needs to clean up town--there are too many homes with too much junk and it makes the town look bad--roads need paved and maintained--especially alleyways of high traffic. The town needs some sprucing up to look inviting and store fronts need to be appealing--we look run down.

Economic Sustainability

- I plan to move to Del Norte, CO full time within the next couple of years. The problem is lack of opportunities, as well as accessibility to good solid businesses in Del Norte

Recreation and Conservation

- We understand the importance of economic development, but this plan should make "quality of life" a priority. Noise pollution, traffic control, litter, abandoned buildings, etc. are blights on the community that prevent people from choosing Del Norte as a permanent home.

Monte Vista Aerial Map Comments

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

- City and Planning Zoning is too restrictive. Height limits (50') is too low and signage requirements are too restrictive. Would not start a business in MV, but it might not be as restrictive in the rest of the county.
- Fees to expand a building are too expensive. The sign code is too strict and not fitting of MV.
- Agriculture within the City is not accepted and needs to be more progressive.
- Public housing is not working – the temporarily disabled need assistance, but the helpers in the home are being charged rent – shouldn't be penalized for helping.
- Development review needs to be streamlined.
- Resident owns ten shares of water rights, but cannot access Lariat Ditch.

Economic Sustainability

- Needs things to bring the tourists off the road.
- Main Street used to be thriving – there was a Penney's and other retail stores. Now there is no place to buy clothes. Used to come into town every Saturday to watch people – MV was the hub then, but now it is Alamosa.
- We are tired of going to Alamosa for clothes – need more retail.
- Would love to see more support to get business in downtown. Incentives?
- Needs a Recycling Program / Center.
- Retail and restaurants are lacking. No Italian places. Only greasy chicken places.
- More retail and shops.
- City makes it too difficult to do business.
- Monte needs to do something about crime and drugs. It has a bad reputation.
- Racial bias needs to stop.
- Police went overboard giving tickets during the car show.

- More business: clothing, retail. A business with lots of jobs and bring in people.
- Would like to see more industry – byproduct reuse of agricultural.
- Agro-tourism.
- Need some auto repair shops – there is only one in town.
- Need things to make people stop in town.
- Economic Development, Chamber, and Town need to work together.
- Need a Home Depot and a chain restaurant that will attract business.
- Keep the small town feel but breathe life into it.

Recreation and Conservation

- More snow.
- A great place to raise a family.
- Community swimming pool is needed. (A good example is between Blanca and Ft. Garland)
- MV and SF are in decline. There was a Community Center and Pool, but not anymore. They built a skate park, but it is not a desirable place for our kids.
- Need affordable things for kids to do.
- There is no drinking fountain at the park.
- Need new and different thing to keep people here.
- Idea: A “Pool Use” bill goes to everyone in their water bill. Each household gets tickets to use the pool, if you don’t want to use the pool, you can give the tickets back and put them on an exchange to be purchased by other households.

Monte Vista Survey Comments

Economic Sustainability

- The biggest problems in Monte Vista are the negative attitude of many of the residents, few local businesses, and the lack of in-town recreational opportunities.
- The great strengths of this community are the willingness of some members to roll of up their sleeves and do things to make the town better (Vali Theater, Valley Art Co-op among others), the small town friendliness and the scenic beauty.
- Financial accountability and posting of strategic fiscal budget with meeting for public comment
- The city should work with business in respect to #16 and give incentives to help them be a part of the community, work with them, don't chase them away.
- Would like to investigate more details as to the economic history of Monte Vista; the City's plans, its income sources and expenditures; and develop ways to get the community to further support the City and its goals.
- MV and surrounding cities should look at ways to improve the tourism as the scenery is great and there are many avenues open to attract more tourists....
- Where will the money come from to do all of the projects mentioned here?
- What about the empty buildings around the town?

Transportation, Public Utilities and Services

- I think police officers should be paid more. Do that (and) they (will) want to stay here after they are trained.
- City needs to take better care of its employees.
- What about the streets that are in need of repair?

Recreation and Conservation

- The biggest problems in Monte Vista are the negative attitude of many of the residents, few local businesses, and the lack of in-town recreational opportunities.

South Fork Aerial Map Comments

Economic Sustainability

- Commercial business taxes are prohibitive to opening business (wants to own and operate a small-plane hangar).
- The county lease on existing land is good, but the permits to build a new structure are too expensive.
- Would like to see more restaurants in SF.
- Need a breakfast place for skiers – no place in town serves breakfast anymore.
- Needs a restaurant with reasonable prices, that is clean, well-managed, and has a friendly staff. It's not Telluride, no \$12 burgers. The DQ in MV and the KFC in Alamosa are good examples.
- SF is not growing. Restaurants have closed. No good pizza anymore. Needs a good RV park.
- SF is resistant to new businesses.

Transportation, Public Utilities and Services

- Poor AT&T service.

Recreation and Conservation

- Good ATV riding nearby.

South Fork Survey Comments

Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards

- You could save a lot of time and tax -payers' money by dissolving the town and returning it back to a roadside stop, which is all it is anyway.
- In creating a master plan, I think it's important to think about sustainability. Planting trees, building parks and community gardens, putting in bike lanes, etc. are all great ways to create a healthy community. We don't want big box stores like Walmart and Family Dollar, people want to get away from that, and that's why they come here. We can grow in a sustainable way that helps everyone prosper. No fracking wells either!
- We need a stable government with focus on planning for the future. A local property tax is a must as well. If this can't be accomplished, we should unincorporate and go back to the County.

- There should be a push to do away with the town of South Fork. The town has become a waste of all money received. All departments are not being responsible with funds, especially the police and marketing departments. It is a time for change in both. Why hasn't the interim manager been replaced?
- The first thing SF needs to do is clean up and enforce the rules regarding cleanliness of properties. There are too many empty buildings that have garbage and abandoned merchandise. The town needs to embrace a "home rule" system so that persons living outside the town limits are able to vote on issues that ultimately affect them.
- There are spaces in town that need serious cleanup and maintenance-- behind Rainbow--behind the building with Keri's Kutz and the dog groomers-- empty buildings with stuff stored around them and signs that are no longer applicable need removed.
- The Town Board is working together in a positive manner to benefit improvement in the community.

Economic Sustainability

- South Fork shouldn't be focused on amenities. It must focus on business retention and expansion, property tax approval and business climate.
- Legalize marijuana sales within town and the county.
- South Fork is an "adventure town". This needs to be at the heart CORE of all marketing and town activities. We need to bring OUTSIDE dollars in. "SILVER THREAD BYWAY" MEANS NOTHING AND BRINGS NO MONEY. SOUTH FORK MUST HAVE ITS OWN LODGING TAX DISTRICT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- The county has to roll back the tax base on existing business in the South Fork area or there will be no business left for the master plan to apply too.
- Businesses are struggling and the current taxes are creating a burden which business owners will not be able to handle much longer. If the town feels they need a property tax, a better solution would to dissolve the town and revert back to County control. Based on past experience and its present state, the town has no business being a town!

Transportation, Public Utilities and Services

- Infrastructure to enable walking and bike riding not on the highway--it's far too dangerous and we have no other option.
- The town has no business developing and owning a town wide water system. That should be the responsibility of the sanitation district.

Recreation and Conservation

- River Access
- Bike lanes, rec center with all amenities (gym, basketball courts, climbing walls, yoga studio, indoor pool, kids' pool, track, sauna, etc.).
- A nice rec center would be a huge attraction to year round and seasonal residents, and even encourage people with kids to move here. We have plenty of vacationers; we need people here to stay.
- Hot springs, public water park/splash pad area

- Build a multi-purpose recreation facility for indoor use - workout rooms, basketball courts, pickle ball courts, indoor track for walking, events, yoga, meetings, kitchen etc.
- ATV trails through and around town to facilitate easy access to off-road trails
- Tennis Court
- Water park on the river for kayaks and tubes
- Walking trails along river
- More bike trails
- A bar with weekend live music
- Street legal ATV use and access to off-road trails
- The town center should drive this development. Easier access to the river, walking paths, dog parks, children's areas.
- Recreation center--workout area--pool--basketball court--etc.
- Finish Brown's park and establish the picnic area of the park with walking trails--boat ramp and parking--if necessary fence between private property and the park.
- Complete the walking path around the visitor center.
- Would like the Town & the county be more attentive to existing opportunities such as the golf course and build off of that facility. We need to develop and expand on existing infrastructure. The local residents & business can't be taxed to support wild ideas.
- Gym or workout facility for all age groups.
- Bike paths, river walks, river access, more farms, more community.
- As for the county wide recreation district, this also is a bad idea. All we will be doing is taxing the residents to create another facility that will sap the life out of the county. Monte Vista had an adequate facility at ski park and the town and the county let go to rack & ruin. No more please.

REFERENCE LIST OF DOCUMENTS

- Alamosa – Monte Vista Comprehensive Conservation Plan
- Del Norte Zoning Code
- Del Norte Trails Master Plan (2008)
- Monte Vista Comprehensive Plan (2009)
- Monte Vista Historic Preservation Ordinance
- Monte Vista Zoning Code
- Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan
- Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan (2004)
- Rio Grande County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Rio Grande County Land Use Code
- Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Summary
- Great San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Master Plan
- San Luis Valley 2030 Regional Transportation Plan – Transit Element
- San Luis Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- San Luis Valley Family Resource Guide
- San Luis Valley Noxious Weed Management Plan
- South Fork Comprehensive Plan
- South Fork Parks, Trails & Recreation Master Plan (2013)
- South Fork Town Center Plan
- South Fork Zoning Ordinance

****Documents are referenced, but not attached to this plan.***

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Rio Grande County Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards	Goal 1: Promote the safe, orderly, environmentally and culturally sensitive development of commercial, industrial, agricultural and residential uses to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents, businesses and visitors.	<i>Develop and implement regulations that ensure the orderly entitlement of land and the construction of safe, energy efficient attractive structures.</i>	1. Continue to implement the recently adopted building code.		
			2. Develop and implement a modern Land Use Code to include (but not be limited to) the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear distinction and limitation between the Rural zoning district for development of 35 acre lots and larger, the Rural Estate zoning district for development of lots between 5 and 35 acres in size, and the Residential zoning district for development of lots less than 5 acres in size • Access management principles, including but not limited to the provision of frontage roads and cross access easements between multiple properties • Prohibition of duplicative street names in rural subdivisions • Zoning Transition Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consideration of the character, density and scale of surrounding existing land uses when reviewing new development proposal - Minimum rural road standard for rural subdivisions - Identification of Intergovernmental Annexation Agreements with jurisdictions in the County 	DOLA	
			3. Strengthen Home Occupation Ordinance.		
			4. Integrate the San Luis Valley Noxious Weed Management Plan into the Land Use Code.		
			5. Require that all Conditional Use Permits be reviewed for compliance on a periodic basis.		
		<i>Protect public health and safety in environmentally constrained and sensitive areas such as flood plains, wildfire areas and steep terrain.</i>	1. Implement the County specific recommendations from the San Luis Valley Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (aka Rio Grande County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan).	Board of County Commssioners	
			2. Update the Rio Grande County Land Use Code to incorporate defensible space techniques for rural residential subdivisions that protect life and property from wildfires.	County Land Use Administrator	
			3. Maintain county access road standards for rural residential subdivisions that will accommodate fire trucks and emergency equipment.		
			4. Prohibit construction on slopes greater than 33% and require slope stabilization techniques and standards for construction on slopes greater than 16%.	RWEACT	
			5. Work with FEMA, the San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority and others to prepare updated flood hazard mapping.	FEMA, SLVGIS	
			6. Work with FEMA, RWEACT, Rio Grande County Emergency Management and others to maintain a Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan.	FEMA, RWEACT, County Emergency Management Plan	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Rio Grande County Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards	Goal 1: Promote the safe, orderly, environmentally and culturally sensitive development of commercial, industrial, agricultural and residential uses to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents, businesses and visitors.	<i>Protect public health and safety in environmentally constrained and sensitive areas such as flood plains, wildfire areas and steep terrain.</i>	7. Discourage new developments within the 100 year floodplain so as to minimize the risks of potential flood hazards. • Require that any new permanent structure within the 100-year floodplain be certified by a professional engineer so that it will not alter stream flow or create a flood hazard for downstream properties	FEMA	
		<i>Protect significant natural areas, wetlands, wildlife habitat and cultural resources.</i>	1. Work with the Rio Grande Headwaters Trust, land owners and others to establish conservation easements using the Colorado Conservation Tax Exchange Program.	Rio Grande Headwaters Trust, Private Landowners	
			2. Work with the San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority and others to prepare and analyze updated maps that identify significant natural areas, wetlands and wildlife habitat to ensure their consistency with the San Luis Valley Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.	Land Use Coordinator, SLVGIS/GPS Authority, College GIS Program Students	The County needs to pay SLVGIS to obtain all county mapping data.
			3. Maintain subdivision guidelines that protect significant wildlife habitats and migration corridors.		
			4. Work with the San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority and others to prepare and analyze updated maps that identify historic places and archeological sites.	Rio Grande County Museum, History Colorado	
			5. Require soil evaluations for on-site wastewater treatment systems and include state approved techniques for installing these systems in areas with excessively poor soils.	USDA, Health Department	
			6. Require that any new subdivision within 1,000 feet of the Rio Grande River have a minimum lot size of 5 acres.	Board of County Commissioners, Land Use Coordinator	
			7. Maintain standards for the submittal, review, and approval of development in areas with historic and archeological resources.	Land Use Coordinator	
		<i>Protect agricultural and other economically productive natural resources in the County.</i>	1. Work with the San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority to use GIS technology to identify large agricultural land holdings and designate prime agricultural land.	SLVGIS/GPS	
			2. Acknowledge the work of the Rio Grande Headwaters Trust, land owners and others to establish conservation easements using the Colorado Conservation Tax Exchange Program.	Rio Grande Headwaters Trust, Private Landowners	
			3. Maintain a zoning district in the Rio Grande County Land Use Code to recognize agricultural uses on parcels greater than 80 acres in size.	Land Use Coordinator	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Rio Grande County Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards	Goal 1: Promote the safe, orderly, environmentally and culturally sensitive development of commercial, industrial, agricultural and residential uses to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents, businesses and visitors.		4. Employ a conservation subdivision process for clustering lots in areas that are agricultural in character or environmentally significant.	Board of County Commissioners, Land Use Coordinator	
			5. Discourage the division of corner areas less than 35 acres in size on land that is irrigated with center pivot systems.		
			6. Encourage Best Management Practices (BMPs).		
			7. Acknowledge the work of NRCS and other agricultural departments and agencies to encourage farmers to practice sustainable farming techniques.	NRCS	
			8. Re-evaluate ordinances for supporting alternative crops, such as industrial hemp.	Farmers	
			9. Maintain standards for the submittal, review, and approval of development in areas with mineral and timber resources	USFS	
			10. Work with the San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority and others to maintain maps that identify mineral and timber resources.	SLVGIS/GPS	
		<i>Facilitate the development of non-agricultural commercial and public land uses in quantities sufficient to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents.</i>	1. Use land use regulations to zone land sufficiently to provide for residential needs in the County. Include provisions for quality affordable housing and creating small hubs of retail services and entertainment opportunities in order to avoid sprawling developments.		
			2. Incorporate community outreach efforts, in cooperation with local economic development agencies, into an overall land use strategy that will address resistance from locals to growth and development.		
			3. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, Upper Rio Grande Economic Development, and others to attract non-agricultural businesses when and where appropriate.	SLV DRG, URGED	
			4. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, Upper Rio Grande Economic Development, and others to encourage cottage industries, e.g. redevelopment of vacant potato sheds as startup business incubators.	SLVDRG, URGED	
			5. Coordinate the preparation of Airport Master Plans with Monte Vista, Del Norte and South Fork.	CDOT Aviation	
			6. Coordinate the Rio Grande County Land Use Code with Airport Master Plans and maintain an airport overlay district.	Board of County Commissioners, Land Use Coordinator	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Rio Grande County Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards	Goal 1: Promote the safe, orderly, environmentally and culturally sensitive development of commercial, industrial, agricultural and residential uses to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents, businesses and visitors.		7. Identify airport overlay district designations on County Zoning Map.	Planning Commission	
		<i>Provide a diverse range of housing choices to meet the needs of all demographics in Rio Grande County.</i>	1. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, the SLV Housing Coalition, local housing authorities, and others to improve the availability of quality affordable housing.	SLV Housing Coalition, SLV DRG, Habitat for Humanity	
			2. Ensure a zoning configuration that encourages a more diverse range of housing types, including stick built single family homes, attached multi-family housing buildings, manufactured housing, and other housing types.	Land Use Coordinator, Planning Commission	
			3. Maintain a Zoning Transition Program for updating the Rio Grande County Zoning Maps that provides for Mobile Home Park and Recreational Vehicle Park zoning.	Planning Commission, Land Use Coordinator	
		<i>Work cooperatively with Monte Vista, Del Norte and South Fork to encourage sound land use planning along municipal boundaries.</i>	1. Establish new and update existing intergovernmental agreements with each municipality as necessary to address future land use and growth issues of mutual interest.		
			2. Continually update the Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan to include any revisions to any land use related plans for Monte Vista, Del Norte and South Fork.	Land Use Coordinator	
			3. Work with Monte Vista, Del Norte and South Fork to explore the feasibility of creating a recreation district with sub-areas based on Fire District boundaries.		
			4. Ensure County land use regulations are sufficient to encourage the development of RV Parks outside of municipalities.		
			5. Encourage the orderly transition of residential densities.		
			6. Provide for the provision of compatible commercial and industrial development along municipal boundaries.		
		<i>Support the clean-up and assessment of blighted and containment properties.</i>	1. Work with local jurisdictions to pursue brownfield grants for edge properties.	Federal Brownfield Grants	
			2. Pursue DOLA grants to secure funding for property assessments.	DOLA	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Rio Grande County Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Economic Sustainability	Goal 2: Promote a Rio Grande County economy that is productive, sustainable and meets the needs of all residents.	<i>Work to address the related problems of under-qualified labor pools, low-wage jobs, under-employment, youth flight and “generational poverty” in the area.</i>	1. Design and implement job training programs to better prepare youth and adults for the jobs that are in demand in modern markets.	Business Owners, Local High Schools, State Office of Economic Development	
			2. Work to attract industries to the area that require higher skilled workers and pay higher wages.	URGED, SLV DRG	
		<i>Work to support existing businesses and recruit new ones to bolster the economy.</i>	1. Attract new businesses with tax incentives.	Board of County Commissioners, State Office of Economic Development, Enterprise Zone	
			2. Work with municipal and county social services to identify possible workers and skill sets that exist within the current population.	Rio Grande Social Services	
			3. Create a business incubation program to provide business development services in the region.	Adams State University, Trinidad State Junior College	
		<i>Continue to support the provision of high-quality public services and facilities that make the area more attractive to potential newcomers.</i>	1. Continue efforts to maintain and expand existing high-quality health care facilities.	Rio Grande Hospital	
			2. Continue efforts to develop and expand existing high-quality educational facilities.	Local School Districts, Adams State University, Trinidad State Junior College	
			3. Support efforts to maintain and expand existing high-quality airports.	Local Airport Authorities	
			4. Work to provide high-quality, affordable housing to support new industry and associated work force.		
		<i>Continue to support agriculture as the county’s traditional economic driver and producer of locally consumed products.</i>	1. Emphasize the importance of “eating locally” and supporting local farmers and ranchers.	Co-op	
			2. Explore the possibility of agricultural-tourism and other programs to support agriculture.	Rio Grande County Tourism Office	
			3. Preserve agricultural land whenever possible through conservation easements, land dedication and other mechanisms.	Agricultural Land Owners	
			4. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group and others to attract businesses that add value to the agricultural economy.	SLV DRG, Co-op	
			5. Work with the State Division of Water Resources, the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, land owners and others to defend against water exportation.	Rio Grande Water Conservation District	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Rio Grande County Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Economic Sustainability	Goal 2: Promote a Rio Grande County economy that is productive, sustainable and meets the needs of all residents.	<i>Acknowledge the unique, non-conventional communities and their businesses.</i>	1. Revise land use codes to encourage the clustering of businesses to conserve more agricultural lands.	Planning Commission, Land Use Administrator, DOLA grants	
			2. Encourage agricultural-based businesses outside of the 3-mile boundary around municipalities to locate in appropriate zoning districts.		
			3. Encourage the location of non-agricultural businesses closer to municipal boundaries or clustered together in agricultural areas.		
			4. Consider the creation of a Rural Industrial Park close to these communities.	Planning Commission, Rural JumpStart Grants	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Rio Grande County Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Transportation, Public Utilities and Services	Goal 3: Work to explore the feasibility of, and financing for, a public transportation system that would connect Rio Grande County towns with each other and with the broader region.	<i>Research past efforts to establish a valley-wide transportation system and utilize relevant data and action steps from the previous efforts.</i>	1. Work with state and federal entities, other communities in the region, and local businesses to evaluate possibilities of a group-funded shuttle system connecting downtown areas, retail/shopping areas, and regional attractions.		
			2. Develop and implement strategies for the provision of public transportation systems that connect municipalities within Rio Grande County and to the regions beyond.		
			3. Research forming an entity to run a transportation service (bus, shuttle, etc.).		
			4. Work with the Council of Governments (COG) and other transportation planning organizations in order to obtain funding for county-wide transportation infrastructure needs.	SLV DRG, CDOT	
			5. Identify state, federal, regional and private funding resources for system planning and acquisition of equipment for the public transportation system(s).		
	Goal 4: Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.	<i>Mandate that development “pays its own way” with respect to the provision of infrastructure and public services.</i>	1. Analyze each development proposal thoroughly to determine realistic service needs with regard to roads, water, sewer, school and other services.	Land Use Coordinator	
			2. Confirm that approved developments adequately address impacts to public infrastructure and services.		
			3. Enforce the codes and ordinances that require development to “pay its own way.”	Board of County Commissioners	
		<i>Coordinate infrastructure improvements and services with municipalities, utility providers and special districts to ensure orderly growth and development.</i>	1. Maintain a quarterly meeting with each municipality, special district and service provider to coordinate infrastructure improvements and service provision needs.		
			2. Ensure that service providers receive relevant referrals regarding development projects and anticipated service requirements.	Land Use Coordinator	
		<i>Address the problem of existing public facilities and infrastructure that are aging, unsafe and/or otherwise inadequate.</i>	1. Work with CDOT, property owners and others to address highway speed, local access, and other safety and improvement issues along US Highway 160.	CDOT Grants	
			2. Support the maintenance and expansion of local small airports in the County as amenities that attract newcomers and promote economic development.	URGED	
			3. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, service providers, and others to improve telecommunication infrastructure and service, such as broadband internet and Wi-Fi.	SLV DRG, Cielo Communications	
			4. Work cooperatively with multiple wireless carriers to address the strategic need for wireless voice and broadband services throughout Rio Grande County.		

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Rio Grande County Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Transportation, Public Utilities and Services	Goal 4: Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.	<i>Address the problem of existing public facilities and infrastructure that are aging, unsafe and/or otherwise inadequate.</i>	5. Encourage wireless carriers to find alternatives to tall towers, using less obtrusive structures, to promote wireless service while preserving the natural beauty of Rio Grande County.		
			6. Encourage development of wireless services, including the co-location of wireless carriers, in order to expand and improve wireless service, while maintaining and preserving view corridors.		
		<i>Ensure that solid waste in Rio Grande County is collected and disposed of in an efficient and orderly manner to prevent inappropriate illegal dumping in the area.</i>	1. Support the maintenance and expansion of the local landfill, as needed.		
			2. Participate in a valley-wide recycling program designed to reduce the volume of trash going into the landfill and onto the landscape as litter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, local haulers and others to select a site. • Develop a regional recycling facility on this site. 		
		<i>Acknowledge strategies for the conservation of water in a semi-arid environment.</i>	1. Support ongoing development of a local water basin plan and water management plan.	USDA, RWEACT	
			2. Acknowledge the NRCS efforts to encourage and educate farmers on BMPs for water usage.	NRCS	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Rio Grande County Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Recreation and Conservation	Goal 5: Preserve and enhance the existence of parks, trails and open space resources that are sufficient to meet the needs of Rio Grande County residents, businesses and visitors.	<i>Work to conserve and expand existing outdoor recreation areas and facilities that attract skiers, hikers, campers, cyclists, recreational ATV/OHV users, etc.</i>	1. In coordination with SLVGO and Rio Grande County Tourism Board, develop an inventory (to include a database and map) containing all of Rio Grande County’s outdoor resources.	GOCO Grant, Rio Grande County Tourism	
			2. Recognize the competitive nature of the outdoor recreation industry and continually look for ways to improve and promote the Rio Grande experience.		Develop more of an on-line presence for Rio Grande County.
			3. Improve connectivity within the County’s existing bicycle trail network.	USFS, BLM, CDOT	
			4. Encourage the existence of parks to serve the needs of Rio Grande residents, businesses and visitors.		
			5. Work with municipalities, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife, BLM, US Forest Service, and others to establish new parks and trails.	GOCO Grant	
			6. Adopt an ordinance that addresses recreational ATV/OHV use on some of the county roads in compliance with State Legislature.		
		<i>Maintain and expand existing natural and cultural attractions to increase tourism in Rio Grande County and in each municipality.</i>	1. Work with local farmers, ranchers and land owners to establish agricultural and heritage tourism opportunities in the County and municipalities.	Private farmers and ranchers, Rio Grande County Tourism Board	
			2. Coordinate with BLM and US Forest Service to conserve outdoor recreation areas and facilities that attract skiers, hikers, campers, recreational ATV/OHV users, etc.		
			3. Work to pass the County-wide mil-levy proposal to create and financially support a recreation district or recreation department.	Board of County Commissioners, Local Municipalities	
		<i>Continue to support existing community, cultural and historic resources in the county as part of an overall strategy of maintaining the Rio Grande County destination brand and high quality of life for local residents.</i>	1. Foster collaboration amongst leaders in the County and each municipality.		
			2. Continue to support the arts and other creative ventures in the County through festivals and cultural events.		
			3. Develop and maintain human services programs that address symptoms of poverty, such as substance abuse, hunger and homelessness.	Rio Grande County Social Services	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Monte Vista Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards	Goal 1: Incentivize development that contains a mix of land uses appropriate to serve the needs of Monte Vista residents, business owners and visitors.	<i>Direct more intense land uses to locate within City limits along Highway 285 while promoting rural and agricultural uses to be located in the County with a gradual transition in between.</i>	1. Work cooperatively with Rio Grande County to locate more commercial and industrial uses within or immediately adjacent to Monte Vista boundaries.	SLVDRG, URGED, Joint Planning Commission Efforts	
			2. Continue studying the potential for annexing urban development along Highway 285 North and new development along Highway 160.	Develop a Strategy and Plan which proves benefits to existing land-owners.	
			3. Refer development proposals and other programs to agencies and governments that may be impacted or have an interest in the project.	Enhance and follow current procedures for this activity.	
			4. Rezone undeveloped properties to reflect the future land use map designations.	Work with Planning Commission and City Council, City Planner	
		<i>Support the accommodation of diverse businesses and industries.</i>	1. Base future expansion and annexation upon the best interests of existing and future residents, property owners and business owners. Any proposed annexation shall have a clear fiscal/economic benefit that outweighs public impact challenges.	Enhance and update current procedures and follow statutory requirements.	
			2. Review annexation regulations to ensure clear fiscal/economic benefit criteria prior to annexing any property. • Monitor the amount of land zoned for commercial and industrial development to ensure an adequate supply; keep an inventory of commercial and industrial parcel sizes to ensure adequately sized lots are available.	City Planner, Planning Commission, City Attorney and Council.	
			3. Conduct a study of the Monte Vista Municipal Airport to determine if it can fill a niche that the Alamosa Airport does not, such as serving recreational pilots or agricultural cargo.	CDOT Aviation Funding	
		<i>Ensure that existing open space is reserved and parks are maintained and that new lands are allocated for such uses to provide active and passive recreational opportunities as the population grows.</i>	1. Work with Rio Grande County and others to explore the feasibility of creating a County-wide recreation district or department with sub-areas based on fire district boundaries.	Use citizen initiative process and work with County Commissioners between all of the communities.	
			2. Encourage the development of a trail system linking parks, public uses, commercial areas and neighborhoods within the City and County as a whole.	Use the concepts with the SLV-GO Master Plan, work with the City and County and Rec. Department to bring forward	
			3. Work with the County to implement the San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Master Plan.	Use the concepts with the SLV-GO Master Plan, work with the City and County and Rec. Department to bring forward	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Monte Vista Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards	Goal 1: Incentivize development that contains a mix of land uses appropriate to serve the needs of Monte Vista residents, business owners and visitors.	<i>Ensure that existing open space is reserved and parks are maintained and that new lands are allocated for such uses to provide active and passive recreational opportunities as the population grows.</i>	4. Amend the development code to require that open space and parks are dedicated as land is developed.	City Attorney, Planner, Planning Commission and City Council	
			5. Explore opportunities to acquire grant funds through organizations such as Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) for the development of parks, open space and trails.	GOCO Grants	
		<i>Provide a diverse range of quality, affordable housing choices to ensure continued growth of the community.</i>	1. Utilize the existing housing studies to accomplish the following tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project population growth • Analyze demand for various housing types • Inventory existing capacity to meet projected demand • Identify projected shortages/overages 	Assess the current study results with the City Planner and Planning Commission to create a strategy	
			2. Take steps to address any anticipated affordable housing problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a housing authority • Explore possibility of acquiring affordable housing grant funds • Amend development code to require minimum percentages of affordable housing or exactions in each new development 	Planning Commission, City Planner, work with existing housing authority	
			3. Create design guidelines to promote high quality design.	City Council and City Planner	
			4. Create new residential zones or modify existing districts to allow for a greater range of residential densities.	City Attorney, Planner, Planning Commission and City Council	
		<i>Maintain the traditional character and stability of existing single-family detached neighborhoods.</i>	1. Encourage the upkeep of existing homes and properties to prevent blight on the neighborhood with programs such as low cost loans or matching funds for exterior improvements visible to the public, volunteer projects to help elderly or physically disadvantaged homeowners.	URA, Code Enforcement/PD, City Manager and City Council	
			2. Encourage neighborhood pride with such programs as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community clean-up day • Low cost street trees to homeowners and neighborhoods • Annual awards for “the most improved neighborhood” • Installation of neighborhood identity signs • Continue to expand Neighborhood Watch Program 	City Council, Tree Board, City Planner, Planning Commissioner, URA	
			3. As needed, revise standards for permitted uses, lot area, streets and alleys to reflect existing development patterns.	City Planner, Planning Commission, and City Council	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Monte Vista Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards	Goal 1: Incentivize development that contains a mix of land uses appropriate to serve the needs of Monte Vista residents, business owners and visitors.	<i>Develop an annexation program designed to thoughtfully expand the City's boundaries, foster fiscally responsible growth and preserve the adjacent rural County feel.</i>	1. Maintain existing connections to agricultural industry while embracing growth in other diverse industries.	City Planner, Joint Planning Commission efforts	
			2. Evaluate land parcels for infrastructure extension and capacity along the edges of the City to develop an understanding for where the City should grow.	Planning Commission	
			3. Maintain an understanding of current mill-levies and tax structures and be able to communicate potential changes in tax responsibilities to land owners who may want to annex.	Finance Director, City Manager/Planner, Planning Commission	
			4. Develop economic incentives for land owners that annex such as sales tax shareback.	City Planner, City Council, City Attorney	
			5. Update the City's Three Mile Plan in accordance with C.R.S. 31-12-105.	City Attorney, Planning Commission, City Planner and City Council	
			6. Prepare a model annexation agreement that includes clauses for a fiscal impact study which includes a cost benefits analysis, infrastructure improvements, and land dedications.	City Attorney	
			7. Work with property owners to annex existing commercial properties along Highway 160 and Highway 285, north of Highway 160.	City Attorney, City Planner, City Council	
			8. Work with the County to zone areas surrounding Monte Vista to be consistent with desired land uses.	Joint Planning Commission work, City Council, County Commissioners	
		<i>Promote public health, safety and welfare within designated floodplain areas.</i>	1. Implement the goals for floodplain development outlined in the San Luis Valley Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.	City Planner	
			2. Work with FEMA, San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority and others to maintain up-to-date flood hazard mapping.	SLVGIS/GPS	
			3. Work with FEMA, Rio Grande Emergency Management, RWEACT and others to prepare a Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan.	RWEACT, Rio Grande Emergency Management Team	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Monte Vista Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Economic Sustainability	Goal 2: Strengthen the overall economy of Monte Vista by supporting the creation of primary jobs, supporting the downtown area, and supporting local businesses while remaining a regional agricultural center.	<i>Facilitate new job creation and economic development opportunities.</i>	1. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, Upper Rio Grande Economic Development (URGED), local businesses and others to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the SLVDRG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. • Explore incentives for the reuse of underutilized commercial and industrial properties. 	Chamber of Commerce, SLV DRG, URGED	
			2. Work with property owners to rezone vacant or underutilized non-commercial and industrial properties.	Private landowners	
			3. Analyze the potential for annexation of commercial/industrial properties along Highway 285 and Highway 160 southeast of the City.	City Planner, Planning Commission, and City Council	
		<i>Work to address the widespread challenge of generally low incomes in the area through economic development activities.</i>	1. Work with Rio Grande County, URGED, and other economic development agencies to attract more primary jobs to Monte Vista.		
			2. Work with nearby Adams State University, Trinidad State Junior College, local high schools, and others to develop job training programs to establish a skilled work force.	Adams State University, Trinidad State Junior College	
		<i>Establish a system for providing more support to local businesses.</i>	1. Develop and maintain a digital and social media presence for Monte Vista.	Chamber of Commerce	
			2. Continue to partner with Upper Rio Grande Economic Development (URGED) as a business support resource.	URGED	
		<i>Continue to improve Monte Vista as a tourist destination in order to attract new and return visitors to the community.</i>	1. Support new cultural attractions and events in the area.	Chamber of Commerce, City Council	
			2. Support the attraction of new service businesses including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotels • RV parks • Restaurants 	URGED, SLVDRG, City Manager	
			3. Hire an economic development staff member to act as coordinator and clearinghouse for the area and/or continue partnership with Upper Rio Grande Economic Development.	City Manager, City Council	
			4. Continue to enhance a pedestrian corridor with signage and differentiated materials to lead people to points of interest throughout the City.	City Council, Public Works Director, City Manager	
			5. Designate a parking area for larger recreational vehicles near the downtown.	Public Works Director, City Manager, City Council, Planning Commission	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Monte Vista Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Economic Sustainability	Goal 2: Strengthen the overall economy of Monte Vista by supporting the creation of primary jobs, supporting the downtown area, and supporting local businesses while remaining a regional agricultural center.	<i>Promote the downtown as the social, business and historic hub of the community through business recruitment/attraction and physical improvements.</i>	1. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, Upper Rio Grande Economic Development (URGED), and others to attract new businesses that will improve the availability of local goods and services.	Business Improvement District, URGED, Downtown Colorado, Inc. Technical Assessment	
			2. Work with business owners and others to explore options for improving parking in the downtown area.	Business Improvement District	
		<i>Protect and enhance areas that serve as gateways to the community in order to provide a positive impression to visitors and residents.</i>	1. Move existing gateways closer to city limits to help define the City's edge.	City Council, Planning Commission, City Planner	
			2. Update the zoning code to prohibit new industrial uses such as junkyards, auto-salvage yards, and unscreened outdoor storage, along Highway 160, Highway 285 and Highway 15.	City Attorney, Planning Commission, City Planner and City Council	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Monte Vista Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Transportation, Public Utilities and Services	Goal 3: Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services to the community in order to ensure public health, safety and welfare.	<i>Explore the installation of broadband infrastructure in the community to attract new businesses, support existing businesses and improve quality of life for residents.</i>	1. Work with the San Luis Valley Rural Electric Co-operative, telecommunication providers, and others to improve cellular signals and/or explore the feasibility of creating a network of wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi) hotspots in the downtown area.	SLVREC, Viaero Wireless	
		<i>Ensure that new development will be responsible for needed infrastructure installments and upgrades.</i>	1. Ensure that future annexations foster fiscally responsible growth of the community.	City Planner, Planning Commission	
			2. Require an analysis of drainage impacts with a development application for development proposals on the west area of the City.	City Planner, Public Works Director	
			3. Evaluate the adequacy of current impact fees and modify as necessary.	City Attorney, City Council, City Planner	
		<i>Maintain and improve the City street system.</i>	1. Update the City's Master Street Plan in accordance with C.R.S. 31-23-212.	Public Works Director, City Manager	
			2. Continue to explore the extension of Chico Camino to connect Highway 160/1st Avenue to Lariat Road in order to open new annexation area south of the highway for development.	Rio Grande County, CDOT	
			3. As the City grows outward, retain rights-of-way along section and quarter section lines for future connectable arterial and collector streets.	Public Works Director, City Planner	
			4. New development will be responsible for needed and proposed infrastructure installments and upgrades.	City Attorney, City Planner	
			5. Inventory the City sidewalks to determine where sidewalks are needed. Prioritize the need and include in Street Improvement Plans and Master Infrastructure Plan.	Public Works Department	
			6. Coordinate infrastructure and service investments to ensure orderly growth and development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update subdivision regulations to include adequate public facility provisions. • Update subdivision regulations to require new development to provide water rights or cash in-lieu. • Work with the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) and others to secure funding for improving water system storage capacity. 	Public Works and Planning Departments, City Attorney	
<i>Expand the role of the Monte Vista Municipal Airport.</i>	1. Study the potential future uses for the airport where needs are not already met by the Alamosa Airport. Identify potential synergistic businesses and industries to locate adjacent to the facility.	Airport Board, City Planner, City Council			

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Monte Vista Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Transportation, Public Utilities and Services	Goal 3: Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services to the community in order to ensure public health, safety and welfare.	<i>Address problems with aging and inadequate roadways of all sizes.</i>	1. Create a prioritized timeline program for the paving of all City streets.	Planning Department, Finance, Public Works Director, City Council	
			2. Continue maintenance on all City streets.	Public Works Director, City Council	
		<i>Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.</i>	1. Improve accessibility for the physically challenged.		
			2. Support the addition of trails that strategically connect with trail networks in Rio Grande County and in other communities.	GOCO	
			3. Encourage the installation of bicycle racks for existing public and commercial facilities and include in designs for new construction.	Planning Department, Business Improvement District	
			4. Increase sidewalk connectivity.	Public Works Department, Planning Department	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Monte Vista Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Recreation and Conservation	Goal 4: Provide active and passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.	<i>Provide passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.</i>	1. Support activities that address the safety of residents in designated floodplain areas.	Minimal impact in this community.	
			2. Discourage new developments within the 100-year floodplain so as to minimize the risks of potential flood hazards.	Already addressed in development plan reviews.	
		<i>Encourage the development of a regional, community and neighborhood park system and development of a trail system that links parks, institutional uses, commercial areas and neighborhoods.</i>	1. Work with Rio Grande County and others to explore the feasibility of creating a recreation district or recreation department.	Citizen's groups, all three incorporated communities, elected officials	
			2. Continue to work strategically with developers to maximize new park and recreation development concurrent with new development proposals.	Private developers	
			3. Consider the recommendations of the San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Master Plan as they pertain to Monte Vista.	SLVGO	
			4. Review City policy on land dedication, cash in-lieu, and impact fee requirements for development to insure adequacy of exaction.	City Attorney, City Council, City Planner	
			5. Negotiate acquisition or use of right-of-way to develop as community gateways and park areas.	City Attorney, City Manager, City Council	
		<i>Encourage more recreation facilities and programs for all ages.</i>	1. Explore feasibility and financing for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New community pool • Youth-centric activities event center • Passive indoor recreation opportunities 	GOCO Grants, Health related foundation grants	
			2. Investigate the feasibility of replacing portions of the Ski Hi Park Complex to include a recreation center for residents of all ages and consider leasing the facility for revenue-generating events.	Ski-Hi User Group, City Recreation Department, City Planner	
		<i>Develop and sustain attractions and services to draw tourists to Monte Vista and serve them while they are here.</i>	1. Explore opportunities to establish new cultural attractions in the area.		
			2. Continue to support existing businesses that serve visitors to the community.	Chamber of Commerce	
		<i>Work to preserve the historic agricultural lands on the urban fringe of the community.</i>	1. Work with local farmers and land owners to promote and employ the following preservation tools whenever feasible and appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation easements • Land dedications/donations • Agri-tourism 	URGED, City Council, Chamber of Commerce, Rio Grande Headwaters Trust	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Del Norte Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations		
Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards	Goal 1: Provide a diverse range of land uses throughout Del Norte that attract and serve visitors, businesses and residents.	<i>Ensure that a range of housing types and price ranges exist to serve all demographics.</i>	1. Undertake a housing study to accomplish the following tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project population growth. • Analyze demand for various housing types. • Inventory existing capacity to meet projected demand. • Identify projected shortages/overages. 	DOLA grant for housing study			
			2. Amend current zoning map to address issues raised in housing study.	Planning Commission			
			3. Take steps to address any anticipated affordable housing problems such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore possibility of acquiring affordable housing grant funds. • Amend development code to require minimum percentages of affordable housing in each new development. • Promote the infill of vacant lots in residential areas north of Highway 160 and elsewhere. • Work closely with the County Social Services Department to know the needs in the community. 	County Social Services			
				<i>Maintain the traditional character of single family detached-home neighborhoods.</i>	1. Maintain regulations that limit potential density and revise standards for permitted uses, lot area, streets and alleys that are based on existing development patterns.	Planning Commission	
				<i>Support the recruitment of new commercial uses that attract and serve visitors and improve quality of life for locals.</i>	1. Work with the Rio Grande County economic development groups and other municipalities to undertake a market study designed to evaluate the area's supply of and demand for commercial uses, using the vacant land use inventory map for a base. 2. Establish a package of incentives designed to attract new businesses to the area.	URGED, Del Norte Chamber, SLVDRG	
				<i>Support the clean-up and assessment of blighted and contaminated properties.</i>	1. Work with the County to pursue brownfield grants for these properties.	Federal Brownfield grants, EPA grants	
				<i>Encourage appropriate public facilities to support local tourism.</i>	1. Evaluate potential locations and feasibility for a public parking lot to address on-street parking issues to better serve visitors and locals. 2. Evaluate potential locations and feasibility for a visitor information center.	Del Norte Chamber	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Del Norte Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards	Goal 1: Provide a diverse range of land uses throughout Del Norte that attract and serve visitors, businesses and residents.	<i>Ensure that existing open space is preserved and parks are maintained and that new lands are allocated for such uses to provide active and passive recreational opportunities to the population as it grows.</i>	1. Work with Rio Grande County and others to explore the feasibility of creating either a recreation district or a recreation department for the entire County.	Rio Grande County	
			2. Encourage the development of a trail system linking parks, public uses, commercial areas and neighborhoods. • Work with the County to implement the San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Master Plan. • Implement the goals of the Del Norte Trails Master Plan, including sidewalks and trail improvements necessary to link schools and parks to the River Walk.	Health Foundation Grants, GOCO Grants, SLVGO	
			3. Explore opportunities to acquire grant funds through organizations such as Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) for the development of parks, open space and trails.	GOCO Grants	
		<i>Develop an annexation program designed to thoughtfully expand the Town's boundaries, foster fiscally responsible growth and preserve the adjacent rural County feel.</i>	1. Maintain existing town character as the area grows.	Planning Commission	
			2. Evaluate land parcels along the edges of Town to develop an understanding for where the Town should grow.	Planning Commission	
			3. Maintain an understanding of current mil-leaves and tax structures and be able to communicate potential changes in tax responsibilities to land owners who may want to annex.	Town Board	
			4. Develop incentives for land owners that annex.	Town Board	
			5. Analyze the potential for annexation of commercial/industrial properties along Highway 112 north of Town and Highway 160 east of town.	Town Board	
			6. Update the Town's Inter-Governmental Agreement with Rio Grande County.	Town Board, Board of County Commissioners	
			7. Annually prepare and adopt a Three Mile Area Plan in accordance with C.R.S. 31-12-105.	Rio Grande County, Town Board	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Del Norte Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards	Goal 1: Provide a diverse range of land uses throughout Del Norte that attract and serve visitors, businesses and residents.	<i>Support the development of an attractive, vibrant and economically sustainable downtown.</i>	1. Support efforts to improve the downtown area in order to attract visitors and locals to the area.	Business Improvement District	
			2. Consider using existing funds to support downtown improvements.	Enterprise Zone tax credits	
			3. Undertake a wayfinding effort to better direct people to attractions in and around Town.	Del Norte Chamber, URGED	
		<i>Ensure public health, safety and welfare within designated floodplain areas.</i>	1. Work with FEMA, San Luis Valley GIS/GPS Authority and others to maintain up-to-date flood hazard mapping.	SLVGIS	
			2. Work with FEMA, Rio Grande Emergency Management and others to prepare a Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan.	RWEACT, Rio Grande Emergency Management	
			3. Utilize the 2010 Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan specific to Rio Grande County when reviewing new development near the river.	Planning Commission	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Del Norte Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Economic Sustainability	Goal 2: Strengthen the overall economy of Del Norte through youth training programs, downtown revitalization efforts and a focus on the outdoor recreational opportunities that surround the Town.	<i>Facilitate new job creation and economic development opportunities.</i>	1. Work with the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, Upper Rio Grande Economic Development, local businesses and others to continue implementation of a comprehensive economic development strategy and any such efforts that follow.	SLV DRG, URGED	
		<i>Diversify Del Norte's existing economic base.</i>	1. Work to establish Del Norte as a hub for e-commerce by working with Rio Grande County and other communities to develop broadband infrastructure in the region.	SLV REC, Viaero Wireless, Planning Commission	
			2. Implement plans for the new municipal complex to include a business incubator.	State Office of Economic Development	
			3. Work with Upper Rio Grande Economic Development to develop a system for recruiting new businesses and industries to the region.	URGED	
		<i>Address decrease in youth population by developing an environment that encourages young people to stay in, or return to, the area.</i>	1. Work with Upper Rio Grande Economic Development to attract industry to the region that will provide a variety of primary jobs.	URGED	
			2. Develop job training programs to help prepare young people to enter the work force. • Explore feasibility of using Town-owned co-op in a job-training partnership with Adams State University, Trinidad State Junior College, and the local high schools.	Adams State University, Trinidad State Junior College, Del Norte School District	
			3. Work with Rio Grande Social Services Department to connect underserved youth with jobs.	Rio Grande Social Services	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Del Norte Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Economic Sustainability	Goal 2: Strengthen the overall economy of Del Norte through youth training programs, downtown revitalization efforts and a focus on the outdoor recreational opportunities that surround the Town.	<i>Partner with Upper Rio Grande Economic Development to accommodate a unified marketing strategy to clearly articulate Del Norte's image and identity, advertising the town's merits for the purpose of attracting visitors and new residents.</i>	1. Shift the Town's existing image from "western" to more focus on being an "outdoor recreational hub" with supporting business, historic and cultural resources.	Del Norte Chamber	
			2. Once needed infrastructure is in place (broadband, job training), establish Del Norte's emerging identity as an e-commerce hub.	URGED	
			3. Promote the downtown area as an asset that is both supplementary to the Town's outdoor attractions and business climate, and an economic attraction in its own right.	Business Improvement District	
			4. Work to improve the condition of all gateways into and out of Town by addressing signage and cosmetic issues.	Del Norte Chamber, Town Board, URGED	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Del Norte Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Transportation, Public Utilities and Services	Goal 3: Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.	<i>Work with Rio Grande County and other communities to improve communication infrastructure in the region.</i>	1. Investigate the scope and cost of a project that would bring broadband to the area.	SLV REC, Viero Wireless	
			2. Investigate the availability of grants and other funding for a broadband project.		
			3. Improve Wi-Fi availability in the area.	Business Owners	
			4. Explore opportunities to co-locate wireless service on existing towers or add towers to areas that will not obscure the viewshed if co-location is not possible.	Viero Wireless	
		<i>Ensure the availability of water and sewer infrastructure to support existing and new development.</i>	1. Implement recently awarded grants to construct new and upgraded water and sewer infrastructure.	Town Board	
		<i>Continue to support the maintenance and expansion of police and fire facilities, infrastructure and services as needed.</i>	1. Work with Rio Grande County and local fire protection districts to coordinate response and training.	Rio Grande County, Fire Districts	
		<i>Provide appropriate infrastructure to promote safe and efficient circulation within the County and the region.</i>	1. Balance the need to maintain a safe and efficient transportation system with the desire to utilize Highway 160 and portions of Highway 112 for development.	CDOT	
			2. Explore creating an ongoing 5-year Capital Improvement Program to address street and drainage maintenance and improvements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an effort to evaluate existing roadways and determine where improvements and/or expansions will be needed to support existing populations and new growth. 	Town Board	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan Del Norte Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Recreation and Conservation	Goal 4: Work cooperatively with the County, BLM, other federal land managers, and adjacent jurisdictions to create a system of parks, historic sites, trails, and open space that connect along and off of the Rio Grande River.	<i>Work with federal entities and other jurisdictions to support infrastructure that welcomes, assists and guides visitors to local and regional recreational attractions.</i>	1. Work with governmental agencies to undertake a coordinated signage and wayfinding effort to better direct visitors and locals to local and regional attractions and services.	BLM, USFS, CDOT	
		<i>Maintain and expand existing parks and outdoor recreation options to attract visitors and improve quality of life for locals whenever possible.</i>	1. Preserve the majority of the Rio Grande River as a natural asset to the community and realize the economic benefit for the Town and visitors.	Rio Grande Headwaters	
			2. Explore feasibility of, and funding for, a recreation area on the Rio Grande River.	GOCO Grants	
		<i>Make Del Norte an outdoor recreational hub with easy access to outdoor activities all year long.</i>	1. Build on the success of the Penitente Canyon Special Area Recreation Park Management Area and work with Saguache County to make the Town and surrounding area a world-class attraction for mountain bikers.	USFS, BLM	
			2. Build on the success of the Stone Quarry and Limekiln trail systems and work with Rio Grande County to attract mountain bikers.	USFS, BLM, Rio Grande County	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan South Fork Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards	Goal 1: Employ strong placemaking principles to establish a small, compact, and walkable downtown.	<i>Create gateway features at town limits along major highways.</i>	1. Seek funding through state and county transportation grants and programs to finance capital improvements near town limits along Highways 160 and 149 for gateway improvements to celebrate the town.	Adams State University Design Students, DOLA Grants, CDOT, FHWA	Create consistency among signs.
		<i>Utilize street elements, such as street trees, pedestrian and vehicular lighting, ground-floor awnings and transparent building fronts, upper floor articulation, inset windows, balconies, and other streetscape elements.</i>	1. Establish design guidelines to begin creating a true sense of place for South Fork that will draw new investors, developers, businesses and residents.	Adams State University Students, DOLA Grants, DCI Technical Assistance Programs	
			2. Build a new park/plaza for South Fork in a central location near the intersection of Highway 160 and Highway 149.		
			3. Create a streetscape plan for key areas of town in order to establish a sense of place.		
		<i>Promote healthy and active neighborhood development.</i>	1. Through the site plan review process for all current and new development, incorporate safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian, bicycle and ATV connections in new developments, redevelopments, and town projects.	Planning Commission, SLVGO, GSFCF, County, ASFS, BLM, Community Members	
			2. Identify missing pedestrian and bicycle facilities that link neighborhoods, community gathering spaces, and parks, and develop a prioritization list for implementation.		
			3. Hold town-wide "Cleanup Days."		
		<i>Update the Land Use Ordinance to better reflect the needs of the town.</i>	1. Replace or repeal ordinances that are no longer relevant.	Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Board	
			2. Adopt a landscape ordinance to beautify the town and enhance the natural environment within the built environment.		
		<i>Research an appropriate location for a new downtown.</i>	1. Create a new downtown for traditional commercial, office, and governmental uses, along with a secondary downtown area containing boutique-style retail uses, a boardwalk and entertainment venues with nature areas around it.	Planning Commission, URGED, Town Board, Private Developers	
Goal 2: Incentivize mixed-use development in order to attract developers, along with local and destination-oriented retail tenants that would leverage the proximity to natural resources.	<i>Promote a mix of uses in multi-story buildings that locate active businesses and entrances to offices on first floor, and locates residences on the upper floor(s).</i>	1. Ensure adequate density and intensity of uses in areas designated for mixed-use.	Planning Commission	Explore Public/Private Partnerships	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan South Fork Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Land Use, Zoning and Natural Hazards	Goal 3: Establish a mix of residential types to attract commercial services necessary to balance the diversity of land uses in town.	<i>Ensure that a range of housing types and price ranges exist to serve a targeted market of demographics.</i>	1. Undertake a housing study to accomplish the following tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project population growth • Determine the target market • Analyze demand for various housing types • Inventory existing capacity to meet projected demand • Identify projected shortages/overages 	DOLA Grants, Private Housing Developers	Multi-family and affordable rentals are missing.
			2. Amend current zoning map to address issues raised in the housing study.	Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Board	
			3. Take steps to address any anticipated affordable housing problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a housing authority • Explore possibility of acquiring affordable housing grant funds • Amend development code to require minimum percentages of affordable housing in each new development • Continue to promote the infill of vacant lots in residential areas around the intersection of Highways 160 and 149 	Planning Commission, DOLA, USDA	
		<i>Create and maintain areas that provide smooth transitions between denser neighborhoods in the downtown area to agricultural and open lands on the outskirts of town.</i>	1. Promote the development of large lot residential subdivisions in areas along the edge of town by maintaining zoning classifications that result in such uses.	Private housing developers	
			2. Whenever possible, allow flexibility in applying standards regarding road pavement and sidewalks in these areas in order to reduce development costs and promote “edge” neighborhoods that have a rural feel.	County	
			3. Work with Rio Grande County to promote sound planning along the edges of the town.	Rio Grande County	Have a monthly meeting with County.
			4. Provide multi-modal connectivity from the edges of town to the center of town via local level roads, sidewalks, bike trails, and bridges.	Local recreation based businesses, HEAL Grant	Become a HEAL community eligible for grant funding.
			5. Consider building a bridge from town to the golf course area in order to promote better connectivity, utilizing the CSU bridge study completed in 2010.	Rio Grande Club, Greater South Fork Foundation, Business Improvement District	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan South Fork Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Economic Sustainability	Goal 4: Leverage conservation-based resources for new primary employment to diversify and stabilize the local economy.	<i>Encourage investment in South Fork that creates new employment opportunities and advances the Town's economic goals.</i>	1. Promote South Fork as the new "green economy" of Rio Grande County.	URGED, SLVDRG	
			2. Develop criteria by which to prioritize infrastructure improvements that support economic investment, in addition to other community-wide goals.	CIPP, DOLA, USDA	
			3. Offer staff-support to business organizations within town to promote and assist with economic development.	Business Improvement District	
			4. Target economic incentives for projects that significantly enhance employment opportunities in South Fork, particularly in the proposed Uptown and Downtown areas, Jackson Heights, the River Mill district, and on vacant parcels of property adjacent to Highway 160, such as the old mill property.	Rural Jump Start Program through State Office of Economic Development Property Owners, County, URGED, SLVDRG	
			5. Identify and evaluate all opportunities to encourage additional investment in South Fork.		
	Goal 5: Explore higher education opportunities to locate a satellite campus in South Fork.	<i>Develop partnerships with higher learning institutions in the region.</i>	1. Establish a town liaison to integrate higher education institutions into the town's economic development program.	Adams State University, Trinidad University	
			2. Identify and promote what a higher learning institutions' value could be for the community.		
			3. Research the need to create a mechanism to adopt campus master plans to ensure connectivity with the town and surrounding neighborhoods.		
	Goal 6: Pursue public-private partnerships to create an incubation district for researching and developing innovations in sustainable building materials and other ecologically focused industries.	<i>Work with the San Luis Valley Development Group and the Upper Rio Grande Economic Development to identify potential public-private partnerships.</i>		SLVDG, URGEDC, DOLA, USDA	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan South Fork Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Transportation, Public Utilities and Services	Goal 7: Provide adequate infrastructure, facilities and services to the community to ensure public health, safety and welfare.	<i>Invest in stormwater, sanitary sewer, and potable water systems in town based on the established street grid.</i>	1. Perform an infrastructure analysis to accomplish the following tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the location for a main line and laterals for a water distribution system • Delineate the town for key watersheds and drainage • Locate key sources for a public water system • Identify potential locations for public water treatment 	DOLA Grants, USDA, CWCB	This needs to be done ASAP to avoid state penalties.
			2. Coordinate infrastructure and service investments to ensure orderly growth and development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update subdivision regulations to include adequate public facility provisions • Update subdivision regulations to require new developments to provide water rights or a fee in-lieu. • Work with the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) and others to secure funding for improving water system storage capacity. 	Planning Commission, DOLA Grants, USDA, CIPP, CWCB	
			3. Encourage developers to design private water systems that could become part of the municipal system in the future.	USDA, DOLA, CDPHE	
		<i>Expand electricity and telecommunications throughout town through underground systems along the street grid.</i>	1. Require all utility expansions for any future development to be located underground.	SLV REC	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan South Fork Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Recreation and Conservation	Goal 8: Preserve natural resources and facilities that enable outdoor activities for all seasons, such as skiing, all-terrain vehicle transportation/snowmobiling, fishing, hiking, rock climbing, golfing, hunting and site-seeing.	<i>Provide adequate parks, trails, and gathering places throughout South Fork.</i>	1. Through the site plan review process, ensure that adequate parks, open space and gathering spaces are incorporated as new development occurs.	Private developers, Planning Commission, GOCO, SLVGO, USFS, BLM, DPW	Utilize the existing Town of South Fork Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan to apply for grants.
			2. Evaluate where additional trails and bike access are needed in order to provide safe and attractive pedestrian and bicycle access to parks and gathering places.		
			3. Through the site plan review process, integrate natural features with new development and Town projects		
		<i>Provide park amenities for residents of all ages and abilities.</i>	1. Annually evaluate the needs of the community as demographics change in order to address and update park amenities, as resources permit.	HEAL funding	Become a HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) community.
			2. Utilize GOCO grants to obtain funding for needed amenities.	GOCO, DPW	
		<i>Provide and maintain high-quality recreational facilities that meet the growing and changing needs of all age groups.</i>	1. Identify and respond to new trends and community desires to address fitness and wellness opportunities.		Work with County and other towns in County on this.
			2. Maintain high-quality recreational facilities that meet the growing needs of all age groups and that provide venues to encourage family and community gatherings.	Rio Grande County Recreation	
			3. Research the feasibility of implementing impact fees with new residential developments to offset the associated impacts to the town's recreational system.	Development Impact Fees	
		<i>Encourage the establishment of new restaurants, bars, and entertainment facilities.</i>	1. Convert the old Hungry Logger into a new multi-use facility that incorporates a restaurant and offers entertainment, which can also be used for a variety of indoor events.	Rural Jump Start Program through State Office of Economic Development, URGED, SLFDRG, CRC	Explore Public/Private Partnerships
			2. Provide additional indoor recreation establishments and facilities for community use, especially for the use of people over the age of 55.	Greater South Fork Foundation Business Improvement District USDA, DOLA	

Rio Grande County Joint Master Plan South Fork Implementation Matrix

Chapters	Goals	Objectives	Action Steps	Funding Sources/Partners	Notes/Observations
Recreation and Conservation	Goal 8: Preserve natural resources and facilities that enable outdoor activities for all seasons, such as skiing, allterrain vehicle transportation/snowmobiling, fishing, hiking, rock climbing, golfing, hunting and site-seeing.	<i>Celebrate and promote South Fork’s heritage, culture, and local artists.</i>	1. Develop programs and activities to celebrate and promote the Town’s history and culture.	SFVC, RGTB, RGC Museum	
			2. Encourage and sustain places and spaces for art, music, and other cultural activities through the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding and program partners to increase public art in parks and public spaces, via a collaboration of ideas and resources. • Utilize art to define the Town’s image by increasing public art in parks, public lands, gateways, and adjacent to streets and sidewalks. • Establish a “Culture and Arts District” to promote art as a key element of economic development. • Integrate cultural activities in businesses by encouraging development of spaces for exhibits, performances, and sponsorships through programs such as temporary or pop-up exhibits, live music and by developing partnerships with local artists. 	Greater South Fork Foundation Business Improvement District DCI, SFMA, Creative Industries, DOLA, CRC	
			3. Collaborate with civic, business, and community leaders to expand, celebrate, and promote the Town’s historic and cultural legacy by implementing the South Fork Marketing Plan.	Business Improvement District, Rio Grande County Musuem	