

2022

ROUTT COUNTY MASTER PLAN

Adopted August 30, 2022



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Municipal Partners

City of Steamboat Springs
Town of Hayden
Town of Oak Creek
Town of Yampa

Other Organizations/Entities Consulted

Hayden School District
Historic Routt County
Integrated Community
Keep Routt Wild
Peabody Energy
Routt Recreation and Conservation Roundtable (RRCR)
South Routt School District
Steamboat Springs School District
Union Pacific
Yampa Valley Housing Authority (YVHA)
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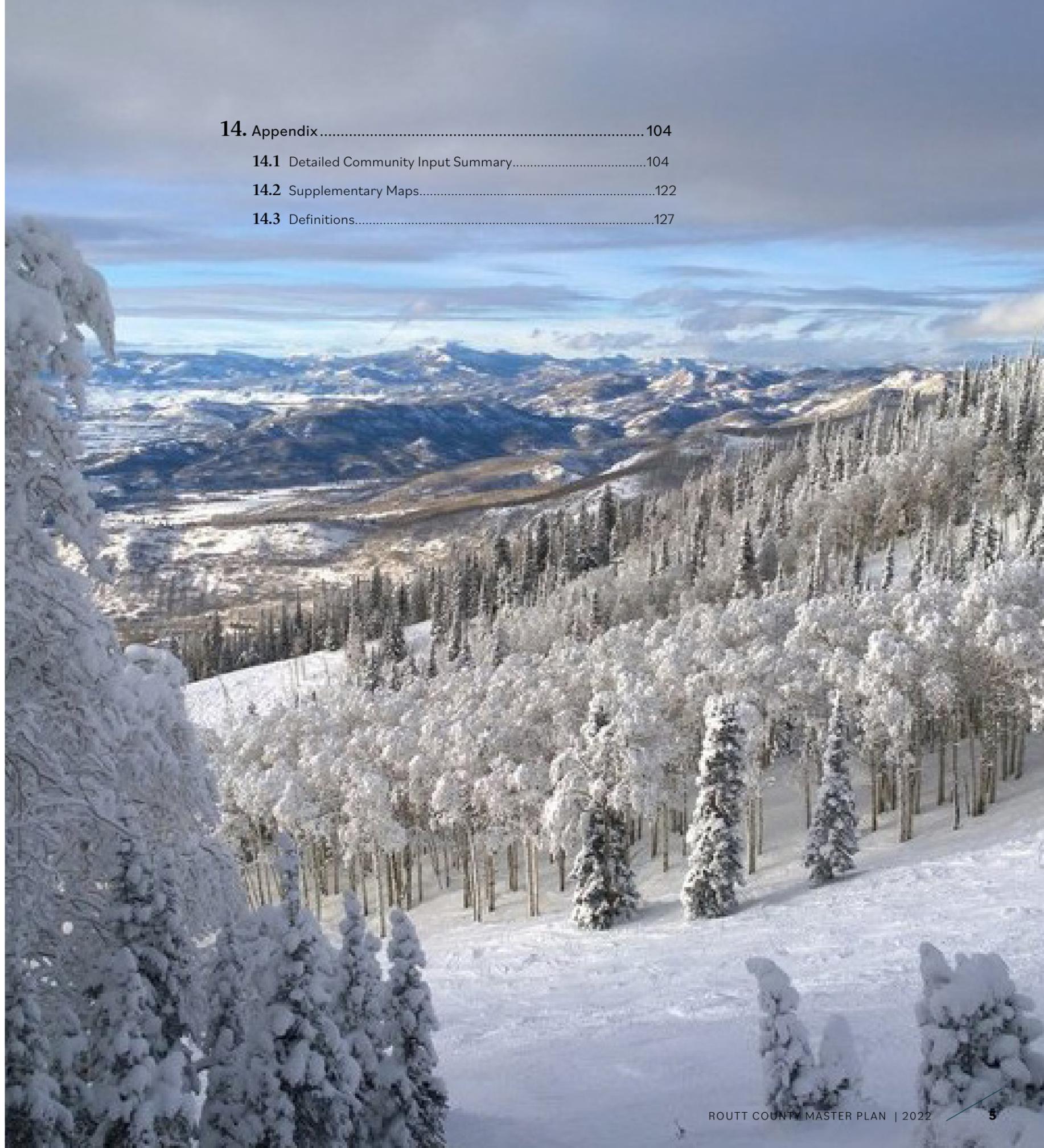
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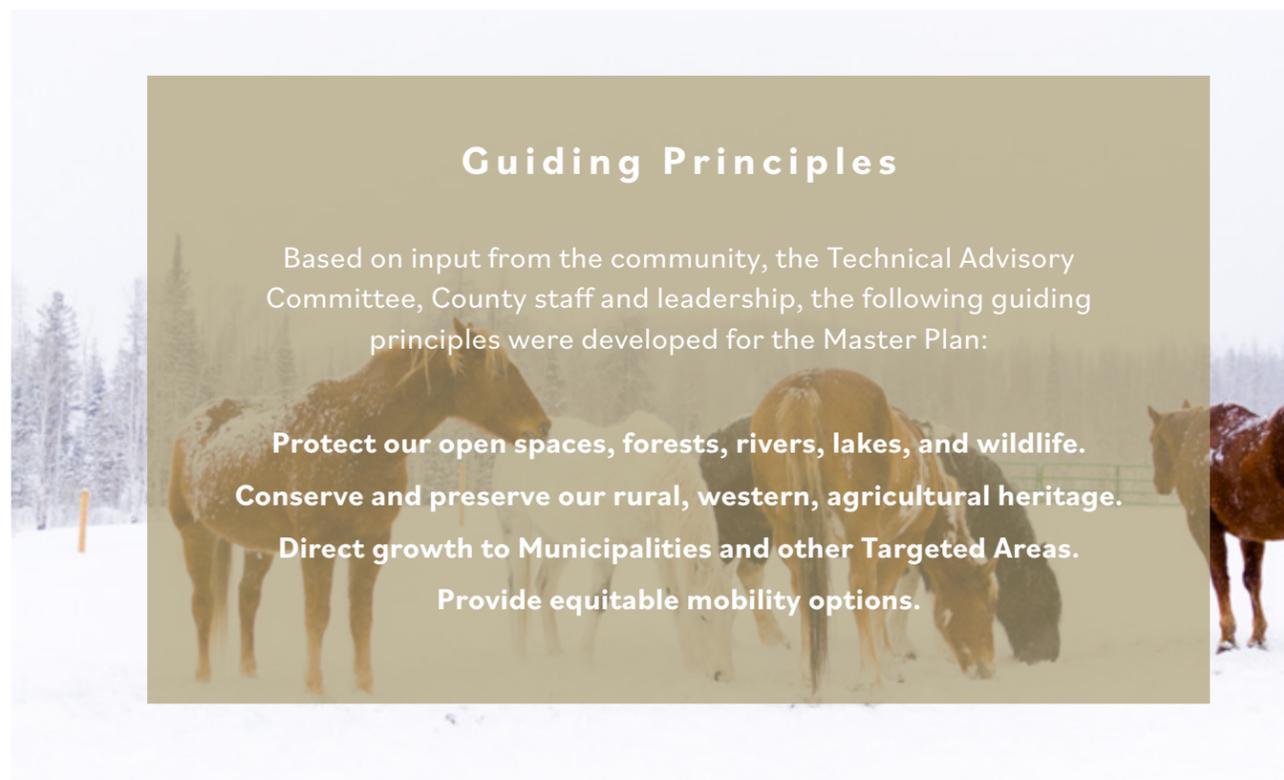


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Need for an Updated Master Plan

The last Master Plan for Routt County was adopted in 2003, almost 20 years prior to this Master Plan’s adoption. Between 2000 and 2018, Routt County’s population grew 30%, changing the dynamics of the community. Changing demographics, strained water resources, growth pressures, rising home prices, regional transportation issues, recreation conflicts, and the continued threats to rural/agricultural character are all pressure points that led County leadership and staff to initiate the development of a new long-range plan for Routt County.

This Master Planning process represents an opportunity for the community to consciously plan what we want Routt County to look like 10, 15, and 20 years from now.



Updated Future Land Use Framework

The 2003 Routt County Master Plan was successful at directing growth to “growth centers” and avoiding dispersed development in rural, unincorporated areas. While the sentiment behind that Plan’s future land use framework is carried through this Plan as a guiding principle, a new framework has been developed to clarify the concept. This new framework, called Future Growth Areas, defines three distinct Tiers of areas suitable for different types of growth in the County. This framework is outlined in detail in Section 3.1.

The three tiers are as follows:

- **Tier 1:** Incorporated Municipal Growth Centers
- **Tier 2:** Targeted Growth Areas (unincorporated)
- **Tier 3:** Small Established Communities (unincorporated)

Tier 1: Incorporated Municipal Growth Centers include: Steamboat Springs, Hayden, Oak Creek and Yampa. Focusing growth on these areas is intended to leverage existing infrastructure and community services to benefit future development. Infill development within Tier 1 Municipalities should be viewed as the principal growth strategy whereby future growth is specifically directed to these key areas rather than to rural areas in the County.

Tier 2: Targeted Growth Areas include select lands located in unincorporated areas such as Stagecoach, West Steamboat Springs and the unincorporated area within Hayden’s Three-Mile Plan. These areas may accommodate future growth in the County based on acceptable development review criteria for each area, infrastructure development, and consistency with prescribed sub-area plans for the specific area.

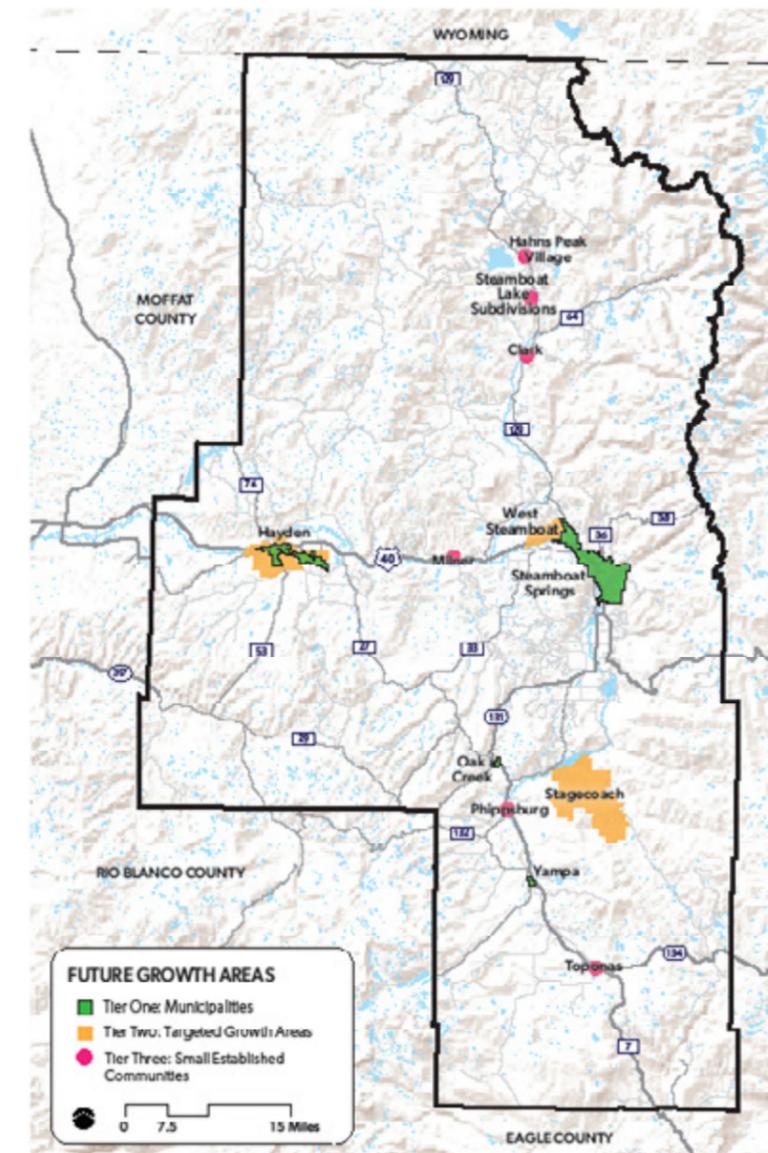


Figure 8: Future Growth Areas

Tier 3: Small Established Communities are the unincorporated communities that exist throughout the County that have historically established development, infrastructure and may accommodate future growth opportunities. These areas may include Steamboat Lake, Phippsburg, Milner, Toponas, Hahn’s Peak and Clark. Routt County recognizes that acceptable, small-scale developments may arise in Tier 3 areas based on a response to market conditions, housing demand and workforce housing needs in the County. Housing projects and commercial activities in Tier 3 areas should support the local residents’ needs. These developments are to be considered on a case-by-case basis and evaluated to determine if they meet the requirements of adopted plans in the County and if adequate infrastructure is available to accommodate the development.

Planning Elements & Goals

The following Plan Elements represent topics that were carried over from the 2003 Master Plan or were identified as significant by the community in 2021 and 2022. Each Element begins with and is organized around a broad goal statement that articulates the community’s vision for the future of Routt County. The policies listed in each Element are derived from the goal and set the standard for future decision-making.

-  **Growth, Land Use & Infrastructure**
-  **Historic & Cultural Resources**
-  **Housing & Economy**
-  **Mobility & Transportation**
-  **Recreation & Tourism**
-  **Open Space & Agriculture**
-  **Sustainability & Climate Action**
-  **Natural Resources & Hazards**
-  **Public Health & Equity**

Implementation Plan

Each Plan Element has a set of policies which are a deliberate set of guidelines that inform decision-making and implementation. Actions, which translate the policies into tactics that departments, organizations or agencies should perform to implement the Plan, are found in the Implementation Matrix. This Matrix will be used by County staff and leadership as a guide to monitor capital improvement projects, programs, and planning projects throughout the life of the plan.

Growth, Land Use & Infrastructure				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Future Growth Areas	4.1	Policy: Direct new growth and development to Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 Future Growth Areas, in that order and as defined in the Growth & Land Use Chapter.		
	4.1.A	Action: Revise the County’s Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to support the policies and goals of this Master Plan.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, Board of County Commissioners (BCC)	0
	4.1.B	Action: Meet with Tier 1 Municipalities, initially in a public forum such as a Council meeting, and thereafter quarterly with relevant department heads, to introduce the Master Plan, discuss shared hopes and perspectives, and convey/reinforce their role in development of the County as a whole.	Planning Department	1
	4.1.C	Action: Develop standards for any future development in Tier 3 Small established Communities.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
	4.1.D	Action: Meet with Tier 1 Municipalities annually to create and review a work plan that outlines coordinated planning activities.	Planning Department, Municipal Planning Departments	0
Infill/ Redevelopment	4.2	Policy: Support appropriately designed infill development and redevelopment within the Future Growth Areas.		
	4.2.A	Action: Encourage municipalities to eliminate common/known issues that impede development and redevelopment.	Municipalities	1

Figure 19: Implementation Matrix

INTRODUCTION

1.1 | Planning Background

Routt County’s first Master Plan was crafted in 1980. Several other land use plans followed, including the Routt County Open Lands Plan and the Steamboat Springs Area Community Plan. In 2003, the Routt County Master Plan was substantially revised to reflect extensive community outreach. The success of that Plan, and its overarching goal of directing new growth to designated growth centers in order to preserve the rural western character of the landscape, is apparent in how the County looks and feels today.

The 2022 Routt County Master Plan update, referred hereafter as the Plan, is aspirational in many ways. It identifies gaps in previous planning efforts in order to guide future decision-making and promotes projects that have overwhelming community support while addressing issues of shared concern.

1.2 | County History

The mountains and river valleys that form Routt County have a long history of human occupation, dating back nearly 11,000 years when indigenous hunter-gatherers quarried quartzite stone for tools on Windy Ridge, located near the border of Grand and Routt Counties just off Rabbit Ears Pass. Beginning around 1,500 years ago, the Yampa Utes, a nomadic people who traveled a seasonal circuit that extended into current-day Utah, spent summers in the Yampa Valley hunting, fishing and partaking of the plentiful mineral springs in and around present-day Steamboat Springs.

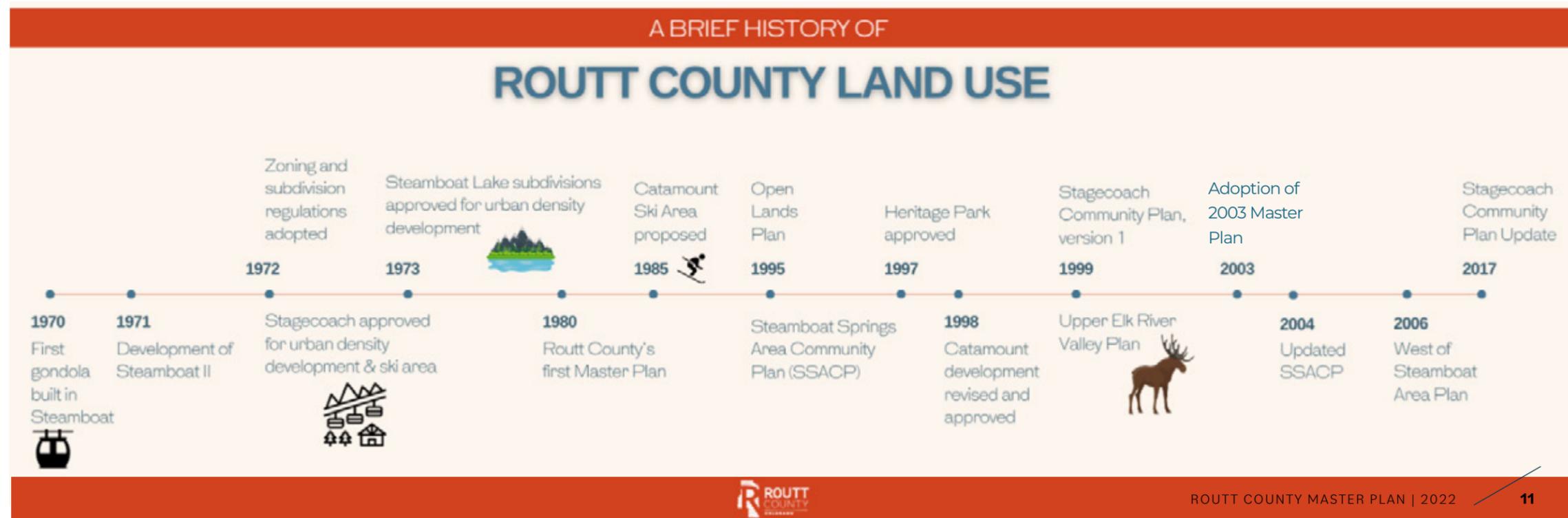
Beginning in the 1820s, beaver trappers and traders from the east explored the area, followed by prospectors. Gold was discovered near what is now Hahn’s Peak in 1861 and shortly thereafter a mining camp was established on what was at the time Ute land. In 1868, a controversial treaty was brokered that ceded all Ute lands in Colorado east of the 107th meridian and north of the 40th parallel, including the Yampa River Valley and all of what is now Routt County, to the United States. This treaty reduced the Ute lands by more than two thirds. The Ute people were forcibly removed from their remaining lands to small reservations in Utah and southern Colorado following a dispute at the Indian Agency near Meeker, Colorado in 1881.

Increasing numbers of non-native settlers came to the valley in the late 1800s, attracted by the fertile land, abundant timber, and coal reserves, not to mention the mineral springs. When Routt County was created in 1877, its territory extended all the way to the Utah Border. In 1911, the area was divided to create Moffat County. Steamboat Springs was founded in 1884 and was incorporated in 1900; Hayden in 1906; and Oak Creek in 1907. Coal became a major source of power

and revenue for the County as early as 1905. The first railroad arrived in 1909, enabling further development, commerce, and industry. Routt County competed on national markets in coal, lettuce, spinach, strawberries, cattle, and sheep.

The population of Routt County grew steadily from 1900 until 1940, and then declined until the early 1970s when the Steamboat ski area experienced its first major expansion. Up until that time the economy of Routt County was based primarily on agriculture and mining. Soon after the expansion of the ski area, and steadily over the following decades, recreation and tourism became an increasingly significant element of the local economy. As more people arrived, demand for housing and services grew. New recreation-based communities were envisioned and initiated in the Steamboat Lake and Stagecoach areas, and later at Catamount. In response to growing concerns about the potential impacts of unmanaged growth on the environment and on the community, Routt County adopted Zoning and Subdivision Regulations in 1972. The population of Routt County more than doubled between 1970 and 1980.

Figure 1: History of Routt County Land Use



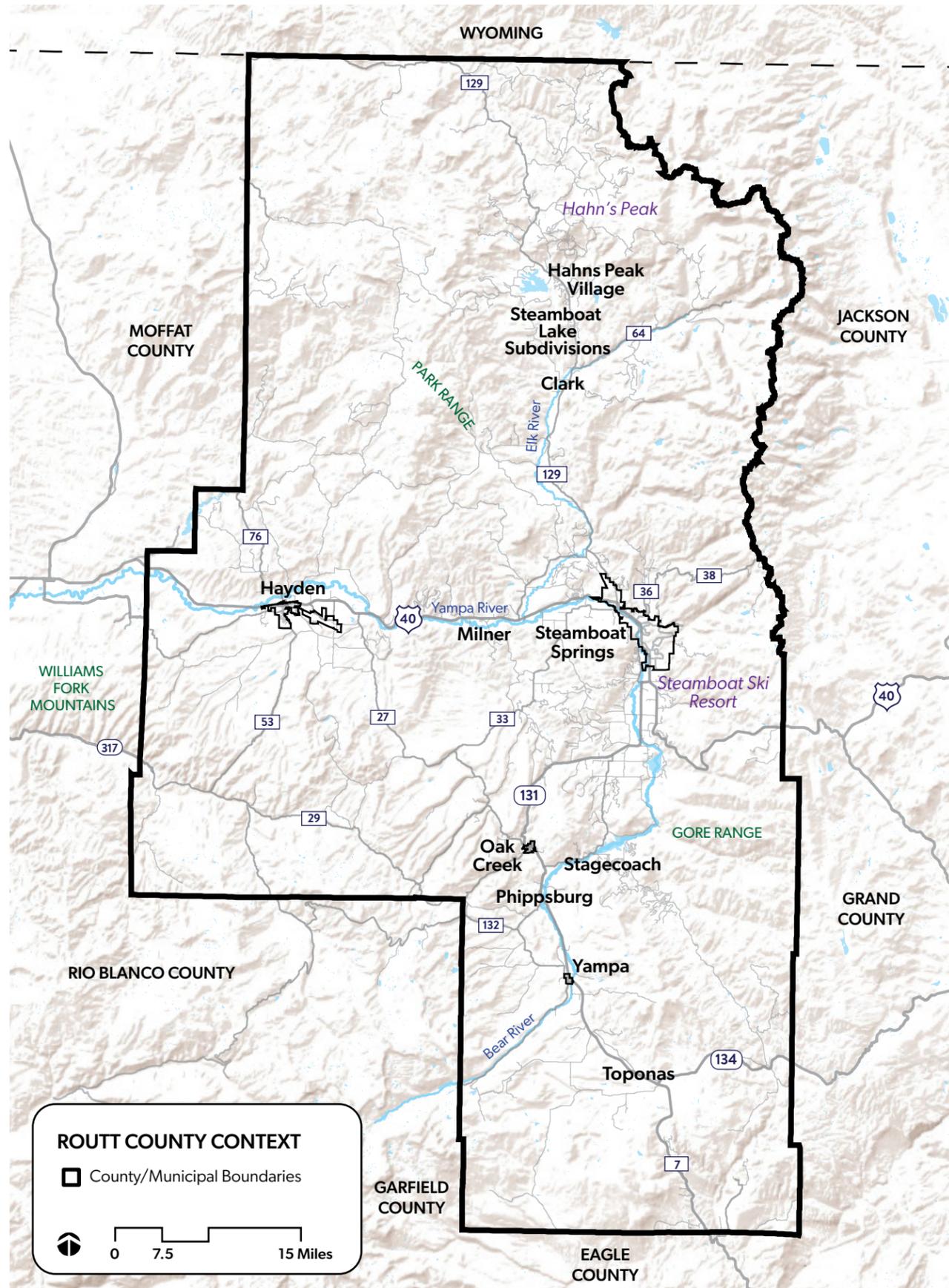


Figure 2: Routt County Context Map

1.3 | County Demographics

Routt County has just under 25,000 residents. Since 2010, the population has increased by 1,400 people or at a rate of 0.6 percent per year (Figure 3). The County is majority white but becoming more diverse. In 2020, the population consisted of 93.4 percent white and 6.6 percent of non-white races. Nearly doubling since 2010, the non-white population grew by approximately 700 people.

The median age in 2022 is 40.5 years, up from 38.9 in 2010, mirroring trends of an aging population in other mountain and rural counties in Colorado. The median household income in 2022 is estimated at \$76,198 and has grown at a rate of 2.3 percent since 2010.

There are approximately 21,400 jobs in Routt County, including wage and salary jobs and self-employment. Jobs grew at an annual rate of 0.9 percent from 2010 through 2020, an increase of 1,851 full and part time jobs.

The average annual pay per job in Routt County is currently approximately \$50,000. Wages grew at 2.6 percent per year from 2010 through 2020. The median household income of approximately \$76,000 includes income from all sources for all people in a household (e.g. wages, investments, business ownership, and social assistance). Household income is about 1.5 times the average wage, indicating that there are multiple workers in most households and multiple sources of income.

Figure 3: County Demographics

Description	2010	2020	Change	% Change	Ann. Rate
Population	23,439	24,840	1,401	6.0%	0.6%
Race					
Population (ACS 5 Yr)	22,924	25,317	2,393	10.4%	1.0%
White Alone	21,948	23,648	1,700	7.7%	0.7%
All other races	976	1,669	693	71.0%	5.5%
% White Alone	95.7%	93.4%	-2.3%		
% All other races	4.3%	6.6%	2.3%		
Median Age	38.9	40.5	1.6	4.1%	
Median Household Income	\$60,876	\$76,198	\$15,322	25.2%	2.3%
Jobs	19,561	21,412	1,851	9.5%	0.9%
Average Annual Wage	\$39,156	\$50,388	\$11,232	28.7%	2.6%

Source: CO State Demographer; American Community Survey; Economic & Planning Systems

Figure 4: Population & Housing Growth

Description	2010	2020	Change	% Change
Population				
Hayden	1,805	1,937	132	7.3%
Oak Creek	882	888	6	0.7%
Steamboat Springs	12,052	13,185	1,133	9.4%
Yampa	427	399	-28	-6.6%
Unincorporated Routt	8,273	8,431	158	1.9%
Total County	23,439	24,840	1,401	6.0%
Housing Units				
Hayden	807	850	43	5.3%
Oak Creek	479	497	18	3.8%
Steamboat Springs	9,457	10,095	638	6.7%
Yampa	195	205	10	5.1%
Unincorporated Routt	4,653	4,970	317	6.8%
Total County	15,591	16,617	1,026	6.6%

Source: CO State Demographer; Economic & Planning Systems

Growth Patterns

Most of the County’s population growth between 2010 and 2020 occurred in the City of Steamboat Springs, which accounted for 1,133 of the total population increase of 1,401 (Figure 3). The unincorporated areas added an estimated 158 residents followed by Hayden which added 132 people, and Oak Creek with an estimated 6 new residents. Yampa lost an estimated 28 residents.

Housing growth followed a similar pattern. From 2010 through 2020, the County added 1,026 housing units with 638 in Steamboat Springs and 317 in the unincorporated area. Hayden’s housing stock grew by 43 units, and Oak Creek’s by 18. Despite losing population, Yampa added 10 housing units.

1.4 | Guiding Principles

Based on input from the community, the Technical Advisory Committee, County staff and leadership, the following guiding principles were developed for the Master Plan:

Protect our open spaces, forests, rivers, lakes, and wildlife.

Conserve and preserve our rural, western, agricultural heritage.

Direct growth to Municipalities and other Targeted Areas.

Provide equitable mobility options.





Photo Credit: Larry Pierce

1.5 | How the Master Plan Works

The Plan is structured to respect the rights of private property owners while considering the best ways to solve problems associated with anticipated future growth and development in Routt County. The general goal of the Plan is to ensure that Routt County's rural character is maintained while accommodating appropriate growth. The Plan is regarded as a living document. Should conditions in the County change significantly, the Plan can, and should be, amended to reflect current realities or be updated completely. A thorough review of the Plan should be conducted every five years.

The Plan is general. It gives broad policies for use of land in Routt County. The Plan is made for flexible guidance rather than rigid control. It addresses County-wide issues, challenges and policies.

1.6 | How to Use the Plan

The Plan outlines how the community defines Routt County's future, vision and priorities. It applies to unincorporated areas where the County has land use authority. This Plan is used as a guide by County staff, the County Planning Commission, and the Board of County Commissioners when making regulatory decisions about land use changes or new development. It informs updates to the Routt County Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, decisions on new capital investments (such as road improvements, new public facilities, and future affordable housing projects), and the implementation of policies and actions. The 2022 Plan supersedes the 2003 Master Plan, however, this Plan combines the relevant plan elements from the 2003 Master Plan with the added elements that were identified as significant by the community in 2021 and 2022.

The Plan is advisory in nature. It serves a different purpose than the County's Zoning and Subdivision Regulations which are legally binding documents. It does not change existing regulation, but rather provides general policy direction while also providing enough detail to set priorities and guide decision-making to further the goals established by the community.

Implementation

The goals of the Master Plan and Sub-Area Plans are intended to be used as guidelines for the decisions regarding new land uses. This Plan applies to proposed changes in land use that are reviewed and evaluated for approval by the Routt County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners, as well as to administrative decisions. Existing structures and uses that were legally created in the past have certain historic rights.

Certain land uses are allowed "by right" in each zone district. When a landowner requests a change in land use that is not allowed by right, that change will only be approved if it complies with the Plan's goals, policies, maps, supporting documentation, and County regulations. The County's Zoning and Subdivision Regulations are based on the goals of the Master Plan and are the means through which the Plan is implemented. In the future, successful implementation will be judged by land use decisions made by the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners.

1.7 | Relationship to Other Plans

Sub-Area Plans

Particular geographical areas of the County have been identified as possessing unique characteristics, interests or concerns. These areas are covered by “sub-area” plans that contain more detailed goals and objectives that apply specifically to these areas. Each Municipality and Future Growth Area in the County has its own particular culture and character that reflects its historical development. Potential developers of land within Sub-Area Plan boundaries should consult the applicable plan, as well as the County-wide plan. The following areas of Routt County have Sub-Area Plans (see Figure 5) that have been adopted or acknowledged by the County.

1. Steamboat Springs Area Community Plan, or SSACP (jointly approved with the City of Steamboat Springs)
2. Oak Creek Comprehensive Plan
3. Hayden Forward Master Plan
4. Town of Yampa Master Plan
5. West of Steamboat Springs Area Plan, or WSSAP (jointly approved with the City of Steamboat Springs) Note: The City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County are jointly moving forward with combining the WSSAP and the SSACP in 2022.
6. Stagecoach Community Plan
7. Upper Elk River Valley Community Plan
8. Sarvis Creek Area Plan

* For items 1 - 4 above, the governing bodies of incorporated areas have the authority to review and approve land use and development plans within their corporate limits and within the plan area.

The goals and policies stated in Sub-Area Plans should not be in conflict with those listed in this Master Plan. In the event that a conflict arises, it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners to determine which shall override. Information used to make this decision should be the result of public input, type and impact of proposed development or use, and any other disclosures presented through the public hearing process.

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)

In 1995, the City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County adopted the Steamboat Springs Area Community Plan. The jointly adopted plan established an Urban Growth Boundary - an area where future growth of an urban density is deemed appropriate and annexation into the City is encouraged, when annexation criteria are met. The plan further committed the City and County to revise an existing intergovernmental agreement (1990) “in order to identify roles and responsibilities as well as the steps necessary for planning, reviewing and approving development [outside the City limits but] within the urban boundaries.” The Cooperative Planning Efforts IGA was most recently reviewed, revised, and jointly adopted in 2019.

The location and extent of the UGB were amended slightly in 1999, 2004, and again in 2015. Its location reflects extensive community input, and is based on natural and topographic features, the protection of sensitive riparian areas, and the existing central water and sewer service capabilities. In 2014, the SSACP was amended to update the procedures for reviewing, revising, and updating the plan, including changes to the Urban Growth Boundary.

Other Adopted Plans

Other long-range plans produced by County departments, such as the Routt County Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Climate Action Plan, have been reviewed and consulted as part of the creation of this Plan. The recommendations in this Plan complement and, in some cases, expand upon the recommendations in these other County Plans.

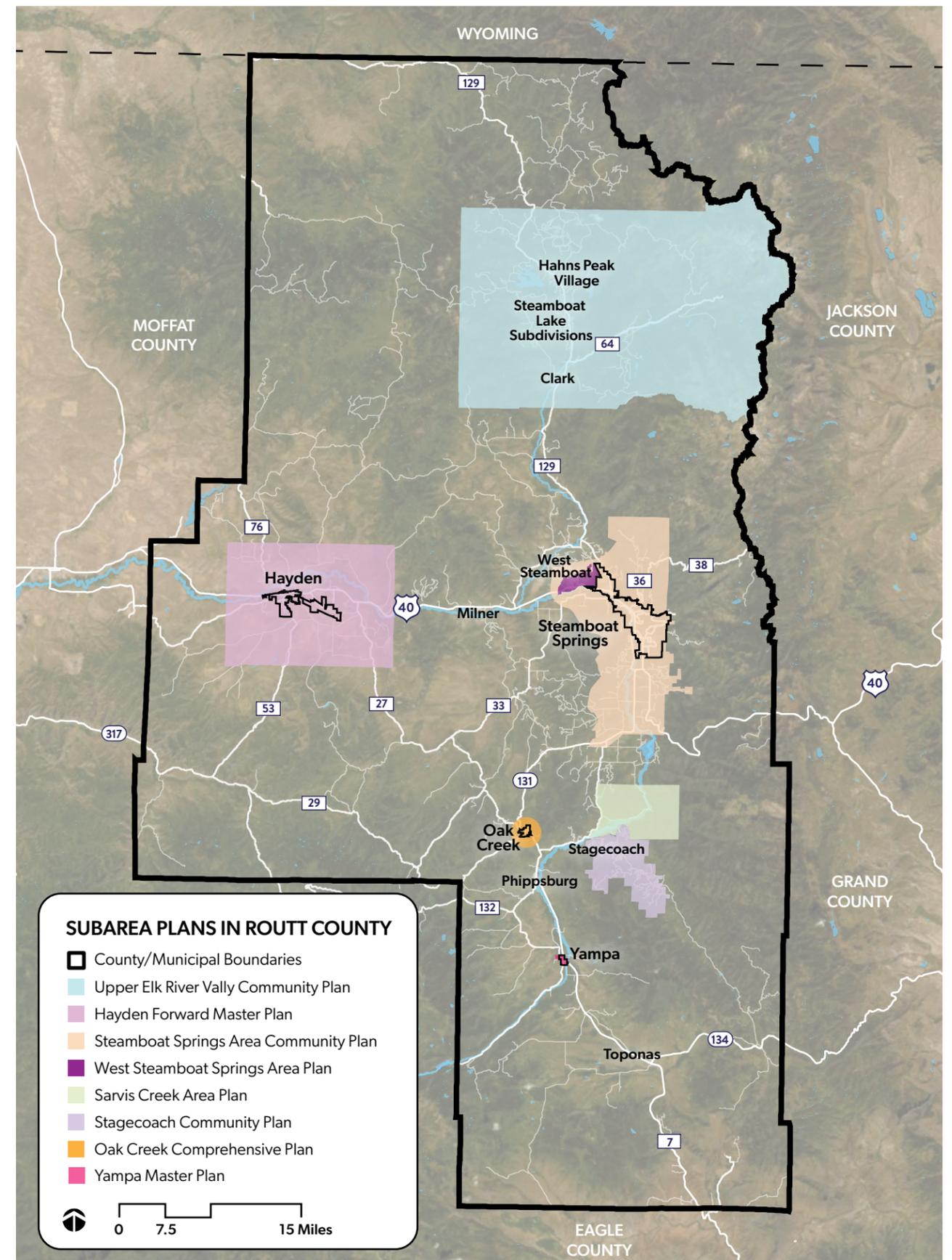


Figure 5: Sub-Area Plans in Routt County

1.8 | Community Engagement Process

Feedback from the people living, working, visiting and leading the community is critical to the validity and success of the Master Plan. The following summarizes the public input process, the results of that process, and how this input, along with other information and data, were used to create the Plan and its implementation measures.

Public Outreach Process and Summary

The outreach process began in 2019 with a County-wide online survey (with 922 respondents) and 14 community meetings. This effort indicated that a full rewrite of the existing Master Plan was unwarranted, but that further in-depth public engagement regarding the Master Plan update was necessary. The following themes emerged from the 2019 outreach:

- Preserve the western rural character of Routt County
- Direct growth to designated growth centers
- Lack of affordable/attainable/workforce housing is a major concern.
- There is increased demand for transportation alternatives between outlying areas and Steamboat Springs, where the majority of jobs and services are located.
- Control of rural sprawl, the protection of open lands, and the increased demand for tourism and recreation must be considered in the Master Plan.

Outreach efforts in 2021 focused on the following four strategies:

1. Build upon the previous outreach efforts.
2. Create a process that works for everyone and especially focuses on the rural areas of Routt County
3. Leverage the experts and resources in the County to bring educated input to the plan
4. Focus on engaging a broad and diverse group of community members.

Over the eight-month course of the public outreach process, thousands of data points were recorded and analyzed for the Master Plan update. These data points included responses to survey questions, comments from open house meetings and statements from individual interviews., Channels included a leadership summit, in-person open houses, two online surveys, subject matter expert focus groups, stakeholder meetings, target area virtual meetings, and municipal presentations. In addition, the Master Plan has had a constant presence at the project website: <https://www.navigateyourroutt.com> where a number of questions were asked and where news and updates were continually posted.

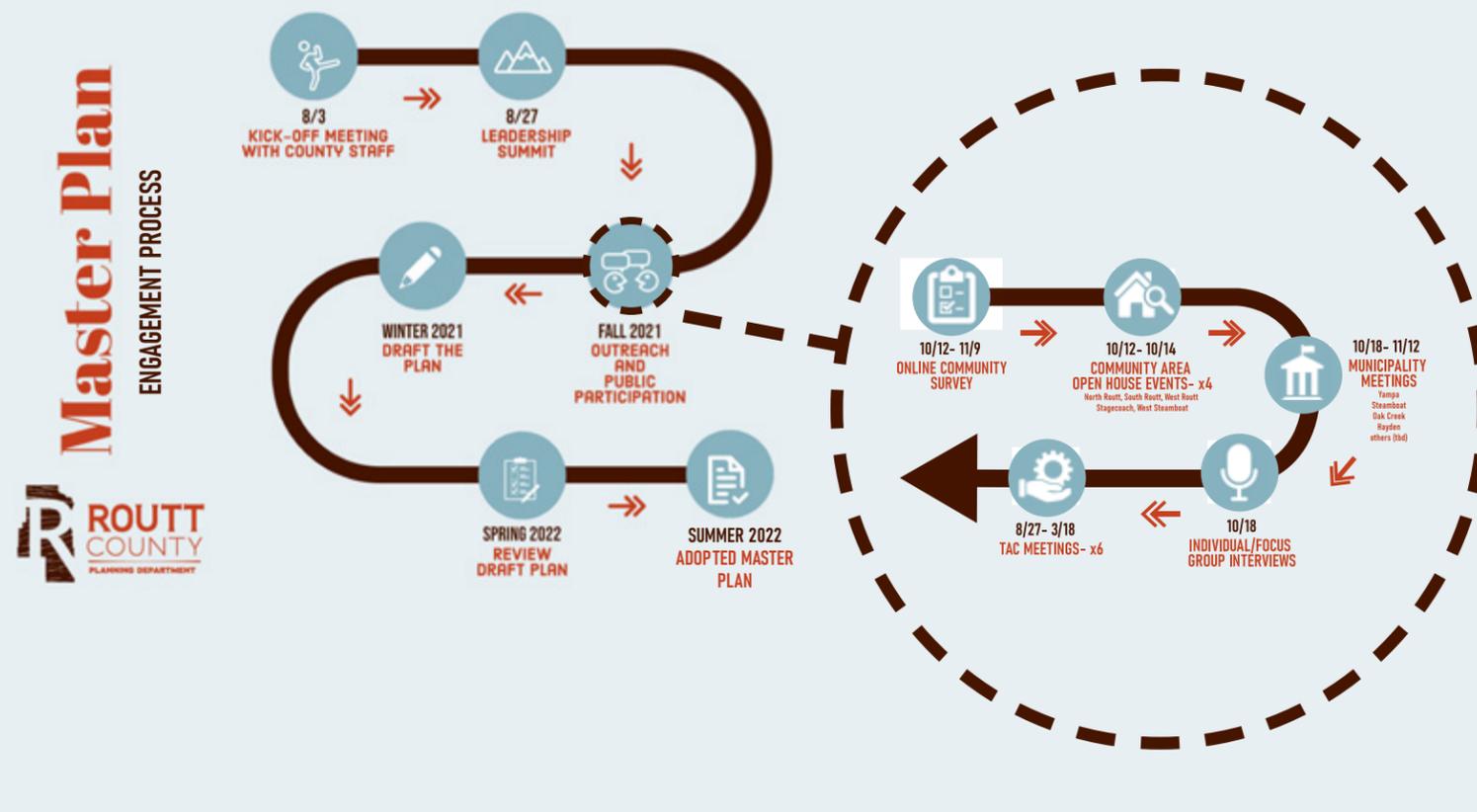


Figure 6: Community Engagement Process

Primary Master Plan Inputs

Leadership Summit. Over 30 individuals attended, including subject matter experts in Routt County History; Health, Wellness, Equity; Housing/Jobs Balance; Mobility Trends; Agriculture/Open Lands; and Sustainability/Resiliency.

Open Houses. Four open houses were conducted in October of 2021. The objective of the open houses was to ensure broad community support for the ultimate adoption of the Master Plan by understanding the priorities of each area of the County, and especially by engaging the outlying rural areas. The desired outcomes of the open houses were to:

- Track the demographics of attendees by age, location, and year-round or part-time residency
- Inform the attendees about the Master Plan so they know what it is, why it is important to them, how they can expect it to affect them
- Gather input regarding their assessment of the previous Master Plan - what worked and what didn't? Prioritize theme statements as County-wide or related to a specific area.

The open houses were conducted in Clark (North Routt), Oak Creek (South Routt), Hayden (West Routt), and Steamboat Springs (Central Routt) respectively. The participants engaged in a series of stations at their own pace and were given the opportunity to provide feedback and express their opinions.

Online Survey. The online survey asked similar questions as those presented in the open houses. The survey targeted a broader, more diverse demographic and gathered data from 925 respondents. It was available in Spanish and English, and the team engaged local non-profit Integrated Community (CiC) to help disseminate the survey to the Spanish-speaking community. CiC also provided input to planning staff regarding the needs and concerns of the Latinx Community.

Subject Matter Expert Focus Groups. Six focus group meetings were conducted with groups of local subject experts ranging from 6-12 attendees. These focus groups centered on the key planning elements of Growth, Housing and Demographics; Rural Preservation and Cultural Resources; Natural Resources and Water; Sustainable Land Use and Infrastructure; Transportation and Mobility; and Tourism and Recreation. Attendees were asked about the greatest challenges their organizations face, what current solutions or programs they are working on to address these challenges, and what a successful Master Plan would look like.

The key takeaways from the focus groups were critical in establishing the Master Plan's goals and policies.

Target Area Virtual Open Houses. Stagecoach and West Steamboat were identified as target areas for potential growth in the 2003 Master Plan and it was crucial that the outreach effort engage the residents of these areas. Due to COVID-19 precautions, these meetings were conducted virtually.

Municipal Presentations. Four municipal presentations were conducted over the course of several months to ensure that all areas of the County were engaged. It was clear from the open houses that while there are many common themes throughout Routt County, each rural community has distinct concerns.

Focused Online Survey #2. A second very focused online survey was conducted in March 2022 that focused on some key topics that came out of earlier outreach: Short-Term Rentals (STRs), home size limitations, secondary dwelling units (SDUs), mobility, special use permits (SUPs), conservation and recreation, and landscape priority. Out of the 823 responses, generally, respondents supported



North Routt Open House October 2021

enforcement of STR regulations, home size limitations, allowing SDUs with specific requirements, and allowing supplemental income sources for agricultural producers. Extending the Core Trail and providing inter-connectivity between growth centers were the key mobility themes. Respondents also wanted see the County work with state and federal land agencies, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), to better manage parking and trailheads, map sensitive areas and wildlife corridors and work with landowners to restrict activities and residential development, and continue the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. Wildlife corridors, waterways, wetlands and riparian zones were identified as priorities for conservation efforts.



Steamboat Springs Open House October 2021

Stakeholder One-on-One Interviews. A number of individual meetings were held with a variety of stakeholders with special interest in the Master Plan and the direction it will provide regarding future land use. The individuals interviewed ranged from utility company representatives to individual landowners. Their feedback was considered in the development of the final plan.

Conclusions

The Routt County Master Plan update received an outpouring of input and support from an active, sophisticated and diverse community. Because of the quality and amount of input received, this Plan was able to capture and represent the identity and future vision of Routt County in the goals, strategies, and assumptions of this Plan.

Special thanks goes out to all those who participated. For additional information and to see all detailed data gathered during this process, see the www.NavigateYourRoutt.com website.

GUIDE FOR LAND USE DECISION-MAKING

The Plan contains three integral components: planning goals and policies, maps, and supporting text and graphics. The Routt County Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners use this plan, which was created through a public process, as the basis for analysis and decisions on land use proposals, along with the facts of the project and input from members of the public. In addition, administrative permits and decisions made through the County Planning Department shall likewise follow the Guiding Principles and Policies contained within this Plan. Land use proposals submitted for County review shall generally comply with the guidelines contained herein. For the applicant, this Plan should be used as a guide while designing projects and gathering the submittal information required for a complete application. By being familiar with the goals, policies, and maps of the Plan, an applicant should have a basic understanding of the community, Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners' vision of the future Routt County landscape and communities.

While consulting the Plan for specific or County-wide information regarding a proposed development or use, the following basic questions should be considered and answered by the applicant.

The answers to these questions should be supported by the goals, policies, maps, and supporting text & graphics.

- Is the proposed project within a Tier 1 Municipality or a Tier 2 Targeted Growth Area or is it “rural development?”
- How will basic infrastructure (access, water, sanitation) be supplied? What impacts will the development or use have on public services and facilities?
- What impact will the development have on the surrounding agricultural, open, and neighboring lands?
- How will the development or use impact the adjacent and nearby properties, neighborhoods, or uses?
- What environmental constraints apply and have geologic and other hazards been avoided or properly mitigated?
- Are critical wildlife habitat areas impacted?
- Can the proposed project be adequately served by emergency and municipal services?
- Is there access to a transportation network?
- Does the development or use put a strain on the existing supply of affordable housing or does it contribute to the stock?
- When nearby developments and uses are considered, what cumulative impacts do these projects have, with respect to the issues listed above?
- Does the proposed development or use put a strain on the existing recreational amenities and spaces?

PLAN ELEMENTS

Overview

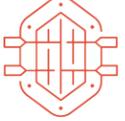
Each Plan Element begins with background information on historic and current conditions that sets the context around the Element and highlights key issues that pertain to the topic. Each Plan Element includes an overarching goal, which is a broad statement that pushes forward the aspirational elements of the plan to help illustrate the community's vision for the future of Routt County. Next, policies are listed that support the goal, but are more detailed in nature and represent recommendations regarding how the County should conduct business in the future to move the goal forward. Actions, which translate the policies into strategic moves that departments, organizations or agencies should perform to implement the plan, can be found in the Implementation Matrix in Chapter 13.



04 | Growth, Land Use & Infrastructure



The following Plan Elements represent topics that were carried over from the 2003 Master Plan or were identified as significant by the community in 2021 and 2022.

-  **04 Growth, Land Uses, & Infrastructure**
-  **05 Historic & Cultural Resources**
-  **06 Housing & Economy**
-  **07 Mobility & Transportation**
-  **08 Recreation & Tourism**
-  **09 Open Space & Agriculture**
-  **10 Sustainability & Climate Action**
-  **11 Natural Resources & Hazards**
-  **12 Public Health & Equity**

Background

This Chapter identifies Future Growth Areas for Routt County. Principal among all policies of the Routt County Master Plan is to direct new growth and development to areas where adequate infrastructure is in place or can feasibly be expanded to achieve long-term, sustainable development in Routt County. It is the policy of Routt County to support our vibrant communities while preserving the open space and rural character that defines Routt County.

Future Land Use Framework

Future Growth Areas represent appropriate areas for anticipated growth in the County. A Future Growth Area is a physical area that generally has or is planned for new growth and development in the County. These areas include land within incorporated municipalities and unincorporated communities, and land areas that are adjacent to these communities that have been identified through existing sub-area plans. These areas are designated for future growth because they have the capacity to provide adequate infrastructure to support the new development.

For this Master Plan, Future Growth Areas are organized into three Tiers that represent a hierarchy of priority growth areas. The Tiers are as follows:

- **Tier 1:** Incorporated Municipal Growth Centers
- **Tier 2:** Targeted Growth Areas (unincorporated)
- **Tier 3:** Small Established Communities (unincorporated)

Tier 1: Incorporated Municipal Growth Centers are the areas located in incorporated municipalities in the County including Steamboat Springs, Hayden, Oak Creek and Yampa. Focusing growth on these areas is intended to leverage existing infrastructure and community services to benefit future development. Infill development within Tier 1 Municipalities should be viewed as the principal growth strategy whereby future growth is specifically directed to these key areas rather than to rural areas in the County.

Tier 1 Future Growth Areas provide the following:

- Diverse, mixed-income housing opportunities
- Walkable and bikeable residential development patterns and community amenities
- Safe multi-modal transportation accessways
- Capacity to provide essential services to residents of their communities. Essential services include: safe roads, potable water, sanitation, and provision for electrical service.
- Suitable locations for commercial development

Tier 2: Targeted Unincorporated Growth Areas include select lands located in unincorporated areas such as Stagecoach, West Steamboat Springs and the area within Hayden’s Three-Mile Plan. These areas may accommodate future growth in the County based on acceptable development review criteria for each area and consistency with prescribed sub-area plans for the specific area.

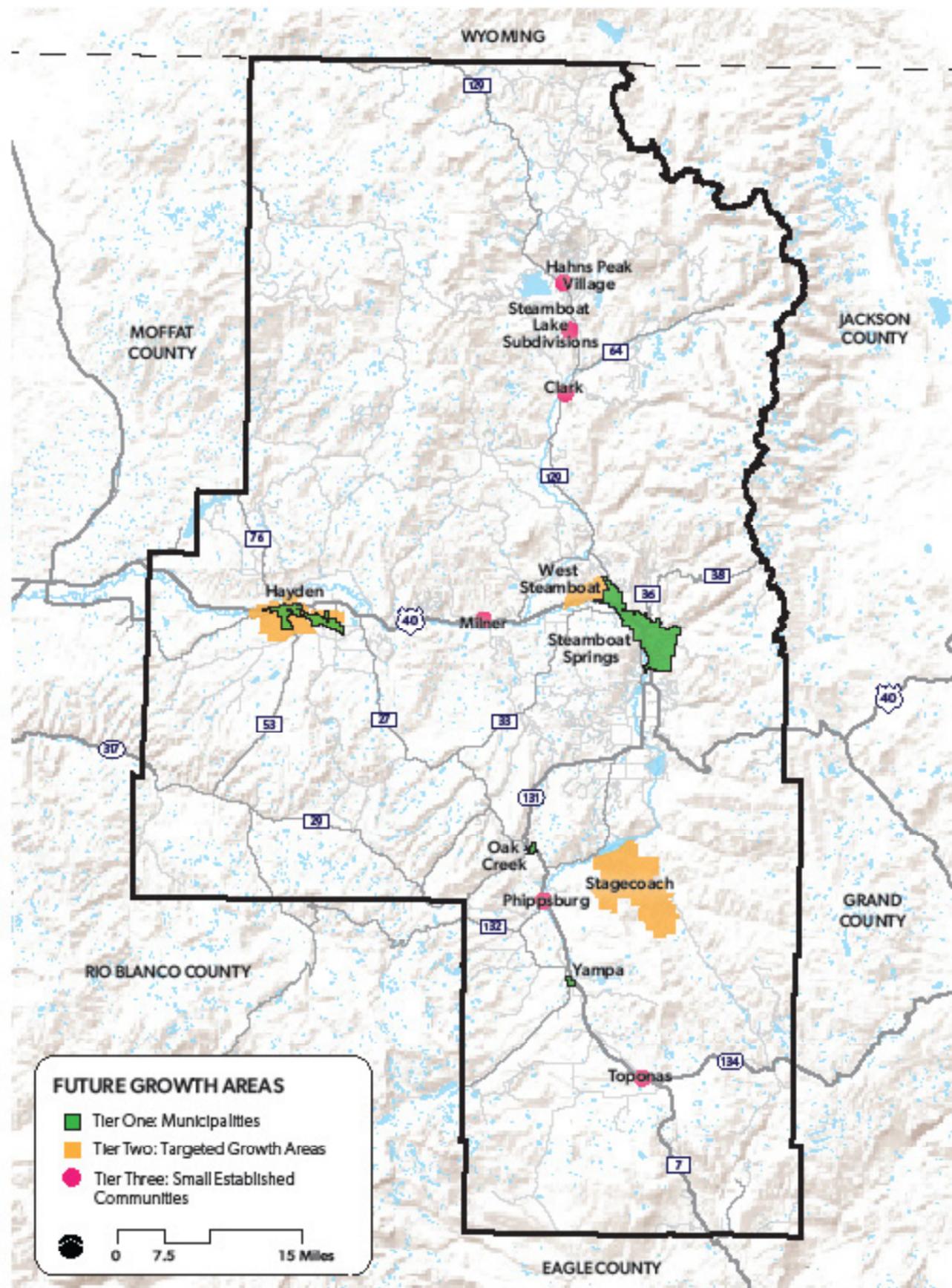


Figure 8: Future Growth Areas

Tier 2 Targeted Unincorporated Growth Areas are located outside municipalities, but are areas qualified for potential development if they meet the criteria as described in the following example:

Stagecoach is considered a Tier 2 Targeted Growth Area because it has an approved sub-area plan, platted lots, zoning appropriate for higher density development, and a special district to support infrastructure needs. To be considered a Tier 2 Targeted Growth Area, an area must have, or have the capacity for the development of, access that can safely accommodate expected traffic flows in and out of the area, central water and sewer facilities that can accommodate the planned growth, physical features that will complement the type and intensity of planned growth, and a County-approved sub-area or community plan.

Tier 2 Future Growth Areas shall provide the following:

- A mix of housing choices and diversity
- Development that addresses an identified community need
- Community amenities (open space, trail access, recreational amenities)
- Assurance that proposed utilities, services and amenities can be delivered within an acceptable time

Tier 3: Small Established Communities are unincorporated communities throughout the County that have historically established development, some infrastructure and may accommodate future growth opportunities. These areas may include Steamboat Lake, Phippsburg, Milner, Toponas, Hahn's Peak and Clark. Routt County recognizes that acceptable, small-scale developments may arise in Tier 3 areas based on a response to market conditions, housing demand and workforce housing needs in the County. Housing projects and commercial activities in Tier 3 areas should support the local residents' needs. These developments are to be considered on a case-by-case basis and evaluated to determine if they meet the requirements of adopted plans in the County and if

adequate infrastructure is available to accommodate the development.

Land Use & Development

Dispersed development patterns and uses in the County are viewed as detrimental to the character of Routt County. Sprawl development increases public and quasi-public service costs, environmental costs, and personal costs. These costs include those associated with basic infrastructure, schools, emergency services, and road maintenance, for example. In addition, dispersed development exacerbates the negative impacts of increased pollution, travel time and traffic congestion, visual blight, and the elimination of prime agricultural land and critical wildlife areas.

Unincorporated Routt County is characterized by open spaces, agricultural and forestry uses and low density rural residential uses. Less than half of the County is held in private ownership. Over the years, the County has seen significant economic shifts in unincorporated areas, as well as changes in traditional agricultural land use. Activities such as private camping, wedding venues and corporate retreats have begun to make an impact on the character of the County. The community has clearly expressed its desire to keep and support agricultural uses and ranch lands. One key to protecting what makes Routt County so great is to incentivize property owners to continue the traditional agricultural use of their lands.

Prominent ridgelines in Routt County are being altered with large structures that are visible for miles. The scars from roads and driveways leading to these structures are also visible from great distances. These structures negatively affect the rural mountain landscape, and are not in keeping with the character or County's working landscapes. See Figure 7 for mapped skylined areas.

Dark Skies and the starry nights that they afford are an iconic aspect of the rural west. To preserve this important element of our quality of life, we must control light pollution.

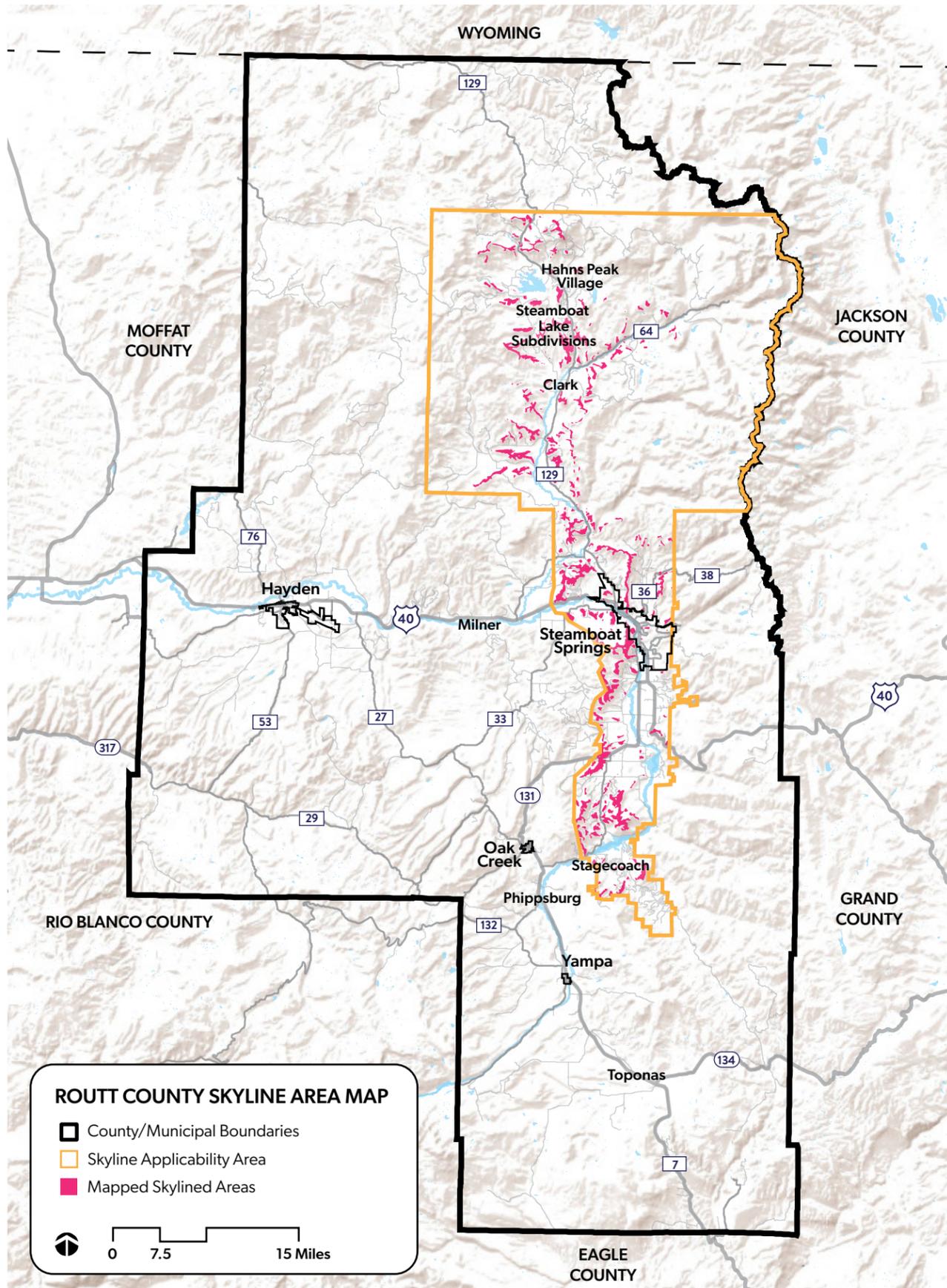


Figure 7: Skyline Area Map



Goal

Development in the County shall be directed toward defined Future Growth Areas and be compatible with adjacent land uses. Future growth shall be managed in keeping with the agricultural character, open space, and rural landscapes in the County. New development shall be accommodated based on available resources and infrastructure capacities and services.

Community Plan Areas

- The City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County are jointly moving forward with combining the West Steamboat Springs Area Plan (WSSAP) and the Steamboat Springs Area Community Plan (SSACP) in 2022. Although West Steamboat is a Tier 2 Targeted Growth Area, the West Steamboat Future Land Use Map is not included in this Plan as it will soon be updated.
- The Stagecoach Community Plan is referenced in this Master Plan in the Appendix. The Stagecoach Community Plan should be reviewed and amended as required at the completion of the Master Plan process. The [Stagecoach Future Land Use Map](#) is included in this Plan as it is a Tier 2 Targeted Growth Area.
- The Upper Elk River Community Plan is recognized in this Master Plan and contains policies that are specific to the North Routt County Area. Updates to this plan should include the [Wildlife Map](#) included in the Master Plan.
- The Sarvis Creek Plan is primarily a conservation plan and will be periodically reviewed and updated as improved mapping becomes available.

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use frameworks in the following adopted sub-area plans are carried through in this document:

- Stagecoach Community Plan (2017, Appendix H)
- West Steamboat Springs Area Plan (2006, Master Plan Map)
- Hayden Forward Master Plan (2020, Future Land Use Map)
- Oak Creek Master Plan (2015, Future Land Use - One Mile Radius) - update review process began in 2022
- Yampa Master Plan (1997, Preferred Scenario Map)

Broadband Infrastructure

There is a need for improved and equitable access to broadband and to data for mobile coverage in rural Routt County. Barriers to learning and economic advancement include a lack of access and cell coverage, which makes broadband and telecommunications infrastructure a high priority.

Trends and impacts related to growth, land use and infrastructure include:

- **Housing supply is not keeping up with job growth** in Routt County, particularly in Steamboat Springs, causing a significant percentage of the workforce to commute from long distances and from outside the County creating significant impacts on traffic, air quality and quality of life.
- **The high cost and low availability of housing have made it difficult for local employers to recruit** and retain employees, creating imbalances in the economy.
- An assumption of 1.5 percent annual job growth means that **1,700 housing units are needed over the next 10 years** to keep up with labor force demand. These units will largely be developed where water, sewer and other infrastructure that can support development are available.
- County residents and visitors alike support the need to **preserve and conserve rural agriculture uses and working landscapes** in the County. Land use policy and regulations shall continue to emphasize the importance of open space and the need for agricultural uses throughout the County.
- **A mix of housing options at densities sufficient to support attainable and sustainable neighborhoods** and with supportive neighborhood services will continue to be directed to Tier 1 and Tier 2 Future Growth Areas.
- **Secondary dwelling units will continue not to be used for short term rentals and will be encouraged** to support long-term local housing supply, as well as housing to support agricultural operations and caretakers.
- **An aging population** in both the municipalities and unincorporated areas will need access to services, as well as housing that accommodates accessibility.
- The capacity for the future growth of each municipality in the County will depend on many factors, including **the total water supply available to serve the central water systems**, which depends on water rights, groundwater resources, and the storage of surface water.

Policies:

1. Direct new growth and development to Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 Future Growth Areas, in that order and as defined previously.
2. Support infill development and redevelopment that is complementary to existing character and consistent with available resources to accommodate evolving community needs within the Future Growth Areas.
3. Promote development patterns that correspond with the natural topography and encourage the arrangement of uses and density patterns to support walkable and bikeable communities and neighborhoods.
4. Support needed housing, economic and infrastructure development to accommodate growth in Future Growth Areas as defined.
5. Apply best practices and data to inform decisions impacting sensitive ecological and wildlife areas throughout the County.
6. Support efforts to maintain Dark Sky lighting to control light pollution.
7. Support the development of telecommunications and broadband infrastructure throughout the County.
8. Discourage development on ridges that result in sky lining.
9. Support the creation of public spaces for recreation adjacent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 Future Growth Areas in order to limit traffic, impacts to rural Routt County, and to reduce human-wildlife conflict.



05 | Historic & Cultural Resources

Background

Routt County’s wealth of historic and cultural resources provides the foundation for the region’s authentic rural character. The social and visual landscape has, for centuries, attracted many to the area who have chosen to live and make a livelihood in the Yampa Valley.

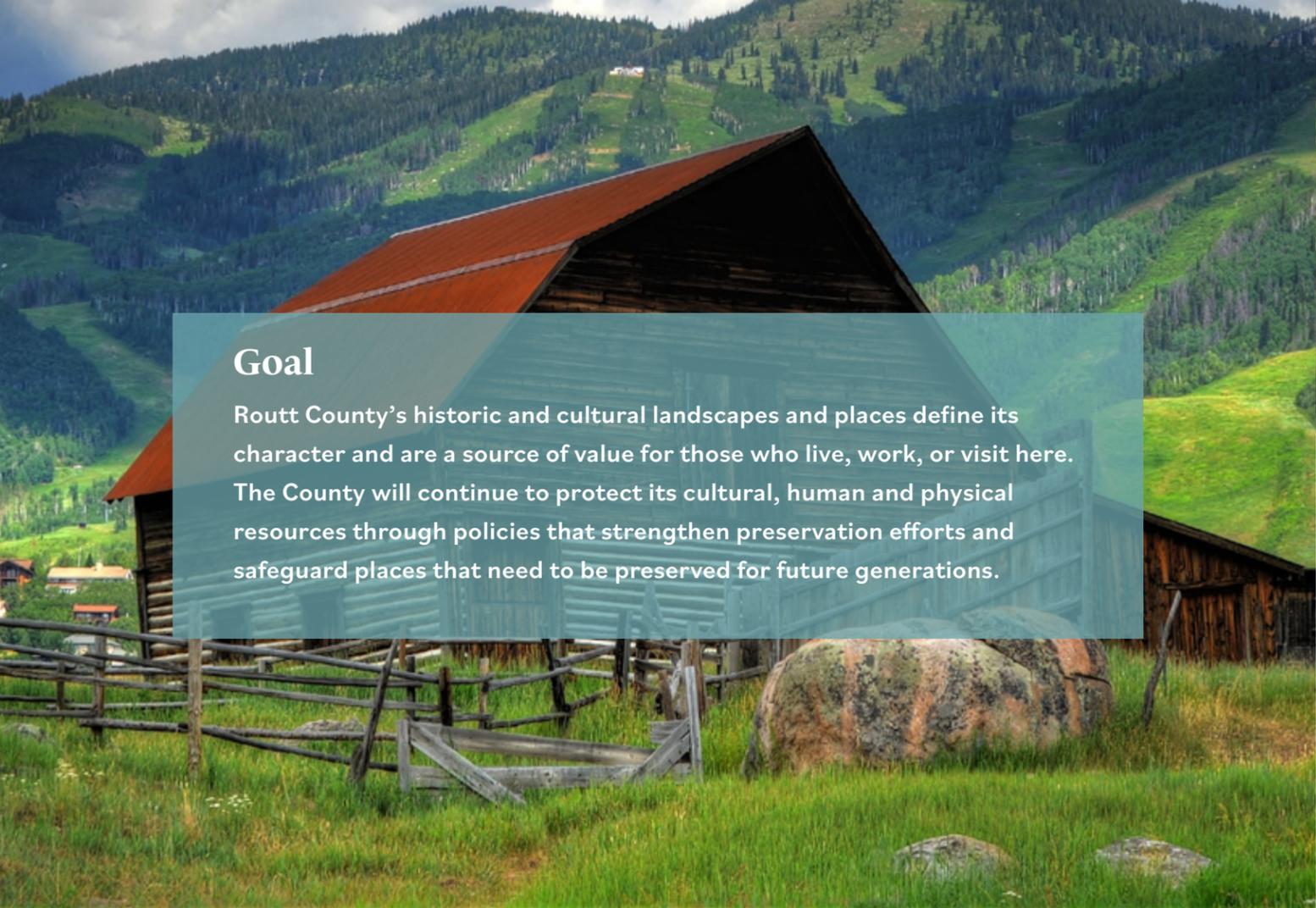
Routt County’s guiding principle of directing new development to Future Growth Areas has been successful not only in preserving open space and agricultural lands, but also in preserving the rural western character that sets Routt County apart from many other popular destinations in Colorado. The development patterns of early ranching in the Yampa Valley make what remains of the historic structures and artifacts widespread and often hard to notice. They are at risk of being erased, yet are significant because of the stories they tell.

The Routt County community has embraced the concept that historic and cultural resources - often characterized as landscapes, buildings, relics, sites, or landforms in the natural and built environment that exemplify the relationships between land and people - deserve recognition and emphasis in the land use planning context. These natural and manmade landscapes have great significance and contribute to the County’s sense of place and community.

This chapter fills a gap in the County’s planning framework by outlining goals and actions related to the question of, “How do we better protect what makes Routt County a culturally significant and authentic western place?”

Impacts to historic and cultural resources in the County include:

- **Losing local cultural resources and landscapes is a threat** which may prove detrimental to Routt County’s value as a place of authentic, bona fide western character.
- **Ongoing loss of agricultural landscapes** (e.g. old barns, pioneer homes, and relics from the County’s historic and ongoing lifeblood) that are falling into disrepair and being demolished may slowly degrade the County’s economic and cultural value.
- **Recreational sprawl and tourism have impacted agriculture** and ranching areas as new or unforeseen activities have developed.
- **Continuing widespread development of 35-acre parcels** in the Agriculture/Forestry zone district has divided formerly agricultural landscapes into rural sprawl.
- **There is a need for expanded education** and communication regarding best practices and stewardship for rural and small-town living.
- **Increasing land cost may make opportunities for agriculture less economically viable.**
- **The County lacks a strong historic preservation policy** or regulation which could lead to the loss of resources.
- **Historic and cultural preservation efforts are underfunded** and lack resources.
- Modern development codes, such as building, zoning, and environmental **regulations should be evaluated to ensure that they support and incentivize development patterns that are not in harmony with historic trends** and incentivize restoration/reuse of existing structures.
- Preservation must address buildings, such as **commercial, residential, and agricultural buildings** intended for occupation, and structures, such as **feed sheds, hay sheds, hay stackers, windmills**, and other generally unoccupied structures.



Goal

Routt County’s historic and cultural landscapes and places define its character and are a source of value for those who live, work, or visit here. The County will continue to protect its cultural, human and physical resources through policies that strengthen preservation efforts and safeguard places that need to be preserved for future generations.

Policies:

1. The importance of preservation of cultural and historic resources, including archeological sites, historic structures, natural areas, and agricultural landscapes should be considered in the review of proposed new land uses.
2. Support adaptive reuse of historic structures.
3. Encourage new development to incorporate, complement, or reuse historic structures and cultural places or elements.
4. Allocate resources and identify additional funding sources to maintain the cultural heritage of structures, lands, vistas and other locations of significance.
5. Recognize that modern needs for technology and connectivity are not incompatible with historical and cultural preservation and can typically be integrated into preservation and adaptive reuse projects without compromise to technological or preservation objectives.



06 | Housing & Economy

Background

This chapter addresses Routt County’s goals and policies on affordable and workforce housing.

Routt County is a desirable place to live both full-time and part-time, and to visit, because of its world class recreation opportunities, scenic beauty, rural character, and high quality of life. Like many mountain and amenity-rich areas of Colorado, Routt County attracts part-time residents, resort development, and high-end luxury housing that caters to people from around the country and the world. The demand for vacation and retirement homes drives the real estate market, often pricing homes beyond the means of the local workforce. The population growth of the Front Range has further increased the demand for real estate in amenity-rich areas of Colorado, putting more pressure on the availability of housing for local residents and workers. The history of many mountain communities in Colorado shows a track record of locals being priced out of the housing market when housing supply is reduced as it is converted to part-time residences and more recently, short-term vacation rentals.

When there is not enough affordable or attainable housing available, Routt County residents and businesses experience impacts on the quality of life, the social fabric, and the environment.

- **Home prices continue to increase**, and inventory remains low. Since 2015, annual home price appreciation rates have ranged from 10 to 15 percent annually in many areas of the County, causing prices in some locations to approximately double, including in traditionally more affordable areas such as Oak Creek, Stagecoach, and Hayden. Several areas have median single family home prices well over \$1 million. As a result, the gap between what people can afford and the available residential inventory has grown. Municipalities, particularly Steamboat Springs, which has experienced significant job growth, have not kept pace with demand for residential inventory.
- **Longer commutes** – People are commuting longer distances from more affordable areas within and outside of Routt County to job centers, particularly in and around Steamboat Springs. More distant and rural areas are costly to serve with public transit and often lack adequate roads to safely handle increased traffic. Vehicle emissions contribute to climate change and other environmental and health impacts.
- **Changing demographics** – Routt County is aging and becoming more affluent. Demographic estimates suggest that there are increasing numbers of residents who do not rely on the local economy for their livelihood. When the cost of housing is out of reach for the local workforce, it becomes difficult for employers to retain young people. The high cost of housing also restrains economic advancement and limits the ability of young families to save for the future. Technological improvements and increased opportunities for remote work have enabled an influx of higher-income location-neutral workers to move to the Valley, contributing to the demand for housing.

- **Quality of life and economy** – Quality of life declines when people cannot find housing they can afford or that meets their needs and preferences. Businesses and visitors are also affected when housing depresses employee hiring and retention.

Yampa Valley Housing Authority

In recent years, some progress has been made on housing in Routt County. In 2003, the Routt County Board of County Commissioners and the City Council of Steamboat Springs formed the Yampa Valley Housing Authority (YVHA). YVHA is a multijurisdictional housing authority, which is distinct from traditional local housing authorities because it has the power to operate in multiple jurisdictions. In 2017, voters approved a 1.000 mill property tax that provides a stable funding source for YVHA. In 2022, the annual mill levy raised just over \$1 million. YVHA has leveraged these funds through partnerships and Low Income Housing Tax Credits to build affordable housing for locals. To address the magnitude of the housing issues in Routt County, more funding is needed.

In addition to seeking more funding for YVHA, revisions to land use regulations should be considered in Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas to ensure that new development contributes to the mitigation of its impacts on housing.

Housing Framework

Routt County recognizes the need for additional housing supply. However, rural Routt County is not the appropriate place for suburban subdivisions. Also, the County is not equipped to provide the infrastructure (water, sewer, utilities, and transportation) needed to make affordable and workforce housing financially feasible in unincorporated areas. Municipalities are the best places to locate housing because of their proximity to jobs, services, transportation, and their ability to provide municipal utilities. The community has expressed its continued support for directing new growth to Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas. The most appropriate areas for growth are the Tier 1 Municipalities, followed by the Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas (West Steamboat, Stagecoach, and Hayden’s 3-mile area). Housing density is a key factor in making housing financially feasible, and the pattern of sparse rural development outside of Municipalities and Targeted Growth Areas does not support a significant quantity of affordable and workforce housing development. The creation of affordable and workforce housing should be consistent with the policies on development form and location in the Growth, Land Use & Infrastructure Chapter.

The West Steamboat Springs Area Plan (WSSAP) was approved in 1999 and was intended to add predictability to the development approval process for this area. After several attempts by commercial developers to annex property in the West of Steamboat area, a large parcel is now owned by the Yampa Valley Housing Authority as a result of a generous philanthropic donation. YVHA plans to build out this property over the next 10 – 15 years with affordable and attainable housing for the local workforce.

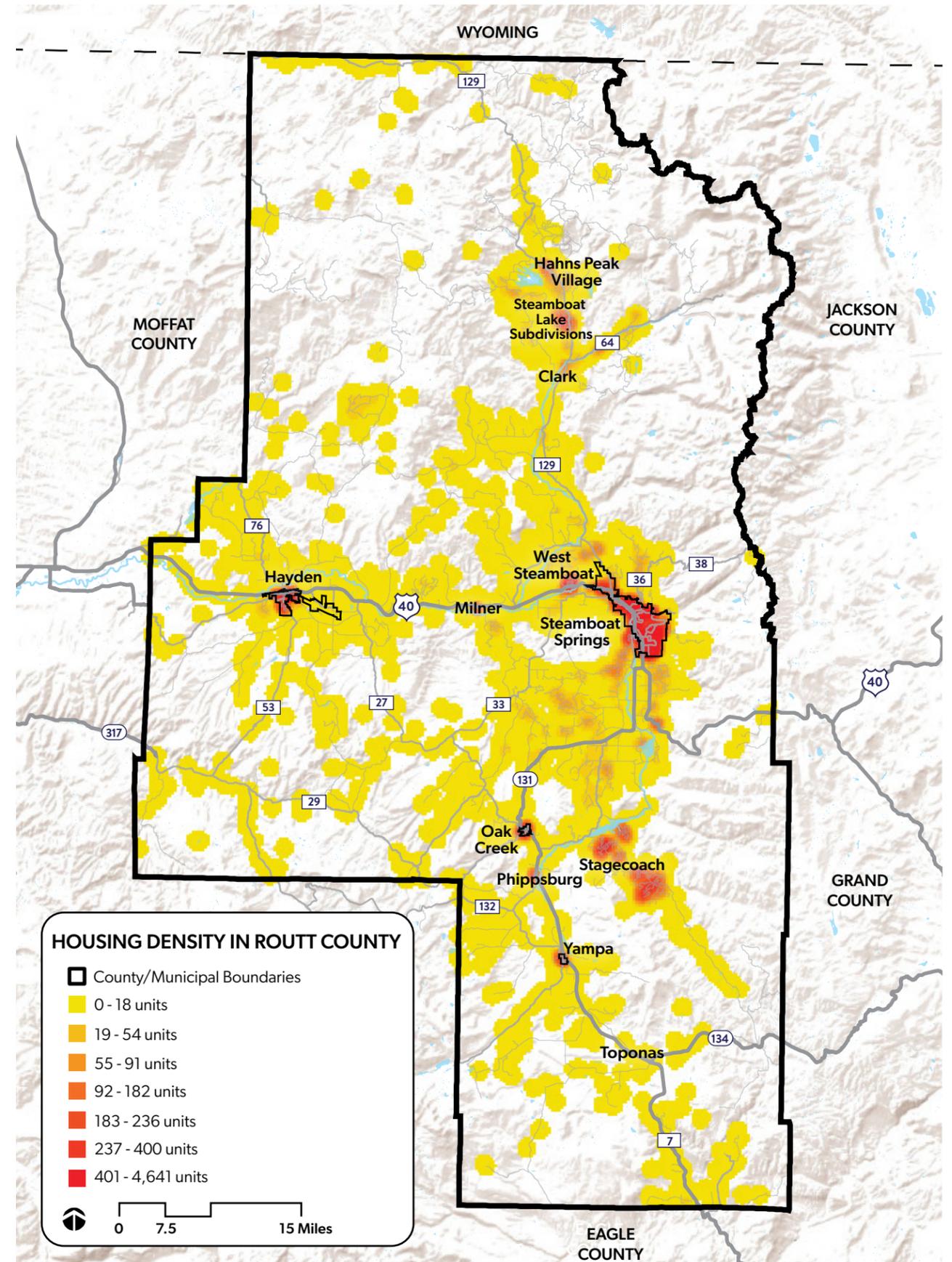


Figure 9: Housing Density in Routt County

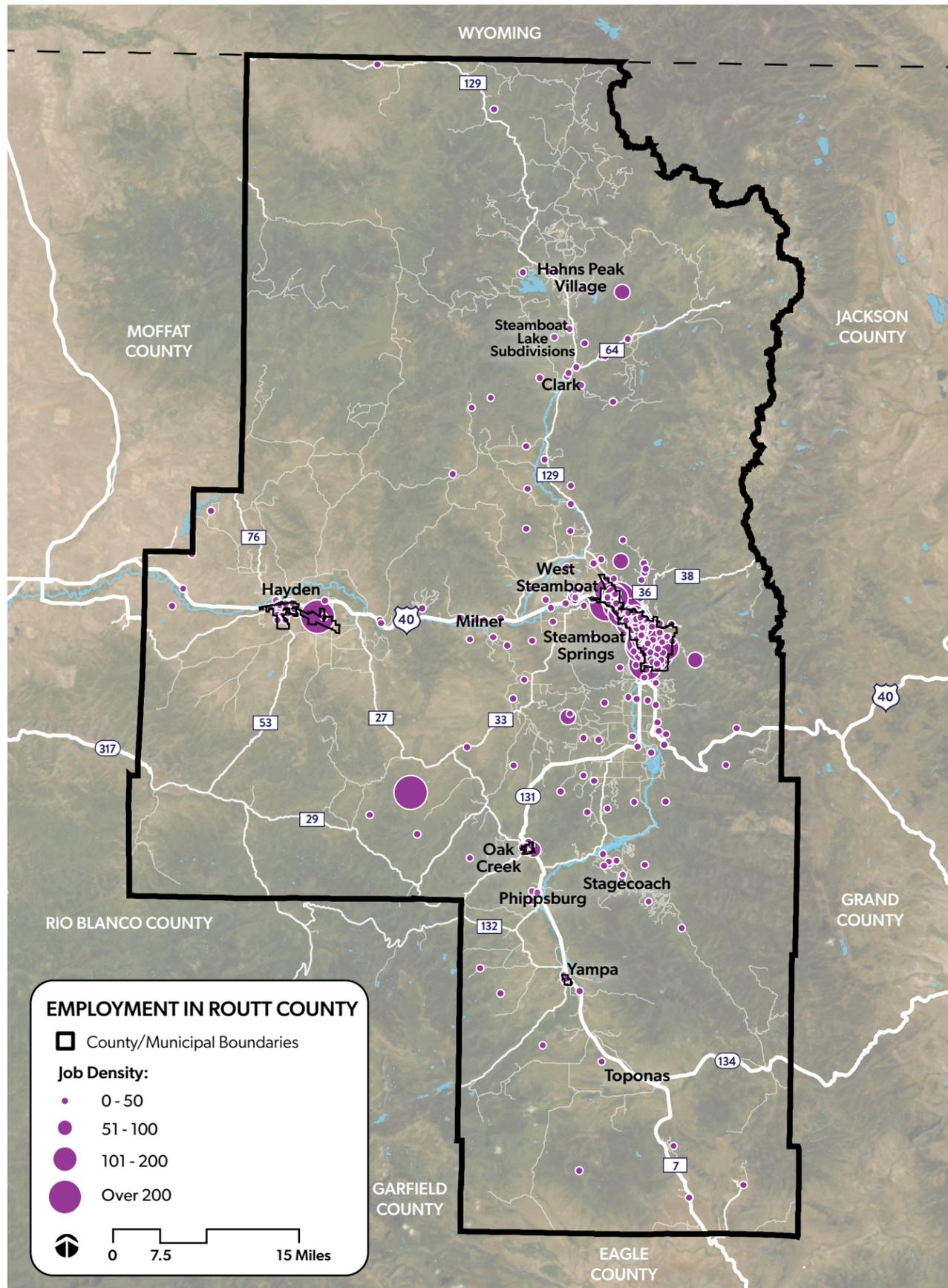


Figure 10: Employment in Routt County

Economy

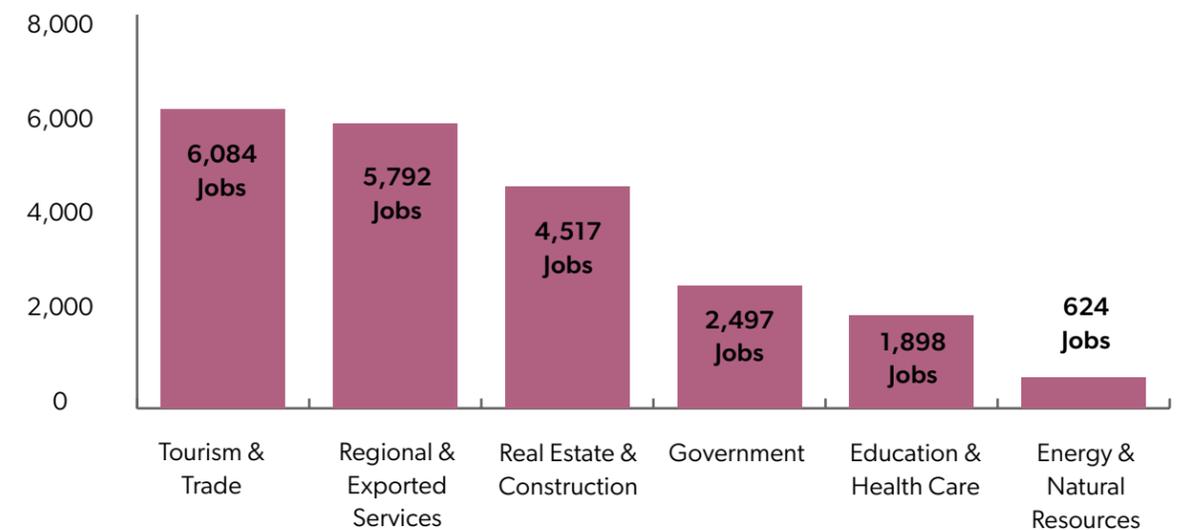
The economy of Routt County, which was once based on ranching and extractive industries, is now led by tourism and the supporting hospitality services of commercial retail, bars and restaurants, lodging, recreation and the arts. Business and community services, including finance and banking, as well as professional services account for almost as many jobs as tourism and are supported by a regional clientele. The third largest sector of the economy is comprised of real estate and construction. There is a great deal of cross-over between these sectors, and many businesses serve local residents and visitors. Steamboat Springs is more than a resort and the economy of Routt County is integrated and transitional. There is also a culture of entrepreneurship and several local start-ups have grown into nationally recognized brands.

Although ranching, agriculture and coal mining now contribute a smaller share to the economy of Routt County than they once did, they continue to be essential to the character and culture of the Yampa Valley. Many policies included in this Plan are intended to support agricultural production and ease the transition away from extractive industries.

In the intersection of land use and the economy, there are several issues to consider:

- Ranching and agricultural resources are under pressure for housing development
- Growth in and near important assets such as forests, rivers and streams, and popular recreation areas, can degrade the value of these resources as recreational amenities.
- A shortage of commercial and light industrial areas to accommodate construction, trades, manufacturers, and other entrepreneurs is a constraint to economic growth
- Some sectors of the economy have not benefited equally from the success of the region
- The cost and limited supply of housing is a major contributor to the labor force shortage
- The South Routt and Hayden School Districts rely heavily on revenue from coal extraction. Alternative funding sources will need to be identified to support these districts in the future.

Figure 11: Job Sectors in Routt County



Goal

Routt County aims to increase the availability and diversity of housing options for local residents and workers. Focus housing creation in Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas that benefit from proximity to municipal utilities, jobs, services, and amenities. Routt County strives to partner with municipalities, employers, and the real estate and construction industries to implement innovative construction and development techniques and to increase funding sources to maintain an environment in which all residents and businesses support and share the responsibility for increasing housing opportunities. Routt County seeks a diverse and sustainable economy with opportunities and career pathways for all current and future residents. The County will help the economy and workforce adapt to changes in technology and markets, especially those related to climate change.

Policies

1. Support the development of regional partnerships to solve the housing problem.
2. Focus housing development within Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas (West Steamboat, Stagecoach, and Hayden's 3-mile area).
3. Continue to prohibit short-term rentals in the unincorporated County outside of commercial zone districts.
4. Small-scale developments should be considered in Tier 3 Small Established Communities like Phippsburg and Milner if they provide community benefits such as low-income or workforce housing, or services.
5. Support a broad range of housing opportunities in Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas. Integrate affordable and workforce housing into existing neighborhoods and communities, preferably close to civic/social amenities.
6. Encourage workforce and affordable housing to be integrated throughout new development rather than concentrated in one location or building.
7. Enable a range of housing and ownership types in Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas to provide a diverse housing stock and a spectrum of sales and rental prices. These options include rental apartments; ownership condominiums, townhomes, and single-family homes; and land-lease homeownership such as manufactured/ mobile homes and tiny homes.
8. Support the use of deed restrictions and other tools to create permanent affordability and access. Use both income-based deed restrictions and less restrictive resident-employee requirements depending on the specific project and housing types.
9. Provide density incentives such as the exclusion of deed restricted units in the calculation for the overall density for residential projects within Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas.
10. Encourage Tier 1 Municipalities to re-evaluate their zoning and subdivision standards to incorporate "gentle density" measures such as lot splits, small multi-family developments, and accessory dwelling units to accommodate growth within the existing urban fabric.
11. Support the use of development agreements and other regulatory tools to ensure workforce housing needs are being met in new projects.
12. Support the use of special districts to provide water and sewer service and other necessary infrastructure in Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas and Tier 3 Small Established Communities.
13. When public funding is used to incentivize housing, secure permanent affordability or resident-employee restrictions through deed restrictions, voluntary development agreements, or other regulatory tools, as appropriate.
14. Encourage zoning and building code amendments to allow innovative construction techniques that can produce lower cost, energy efficient, quality housing.
15. Ensure that existing manufactured/mobile home areas in the unincorporated County are maintained to supply safe and habitable homes.
16. Consider secondary dwelling units as a way to provide long-term affordable housing.
17. Encourage the design of complete communities that incorporate bicycle, pedestrian, transit access, and circulation elements, and include mixed use buildings and neighborhoods where appropriate.
18. Consider additional regulatory tools, funding sources, and programs that create and preserve housing.
19. Allow commercial development in Tier 1 Municipalities, allow appropriately scaled commercial development in Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas and, on a case-by-case basis, in Tier 3 Small Established Communities if determined to address a community need.
20. Support economic partnerships in the County engaged in economic and workforce development.
21. Support housing growth to sustain and expand all sectors of the economy.



07 | Mobility & Transportation

Background

An increasing number of people traveling to employment centers from rural areas requires a vision and plan for how mobility is addressed. Efforts should target improvements to transportation corridors as well as improvements in recreational networks. This chapter aims to give equal consideration to the needs of those who rely on the network to walk, bike, take transit, and drive.

Many existing County roads were constructed as farm-to-market routes without engineering design, adequate subgrade or drainage and they are experiencing significant increases in traffic volume. County maintenance of rural residential roads is difficult and costly since these roads are often in remote locations. New rural residential development does not contribute sufficient revenue to the County to offset the cost of increased road maintenance. Dispersed and random residential development outside of Future Growth Areas increases public and quasi-public service costs.

Often, difficulties arise when people from urban areas expect urban level of service in remote areas. Even if constructed to appropriate standards, rural roads may not be maintained and plowed to allow adequate emergency access. Rural subdivisions are often served by private roads that are maintained privately. The increasing popularity of recreational destination areas on remote roads adds to the need for, and cost of, road maintenance. Increasing traffic on rural residential roads can cause air and water pollution. Dust suppression in the summer is an added maintenance cost.

The main access routes into Routt County for residents and visitors alike, State Highway 131 and US 40, often experience high levels of traffic, but these roads are managed by the Colorado Department of Transportation, not the County.

Increasing real estate prices in and around Steamboat Springs have resulted in a trend towards workers living in outlying communities and commuting to work. Long commutes, particularly in single occupancy vehicles, have negative environmental and social consequences.

The County recognizes the need to think regionally and move forward with big and unprecedented transportation projects due to demands for greenhouse gas reduction and equality of access. The County supports substantial efforts like passenger rail and aims to participate in regional transportation discussions to accomplish these goals. The County also supports efforts to move away from carbon-based modes of transportation as a means of forwarding the goals of the Climate Action Plan.

Impacts from growth, shifts in technology, land use and travel preferences are changing the transportation landscape in Routt County. The following list summarizes the changing trends and identified needs in Routt County's transportation network. The recommended policies at the end of this chapter aim to address these trends and identified transportation needs.

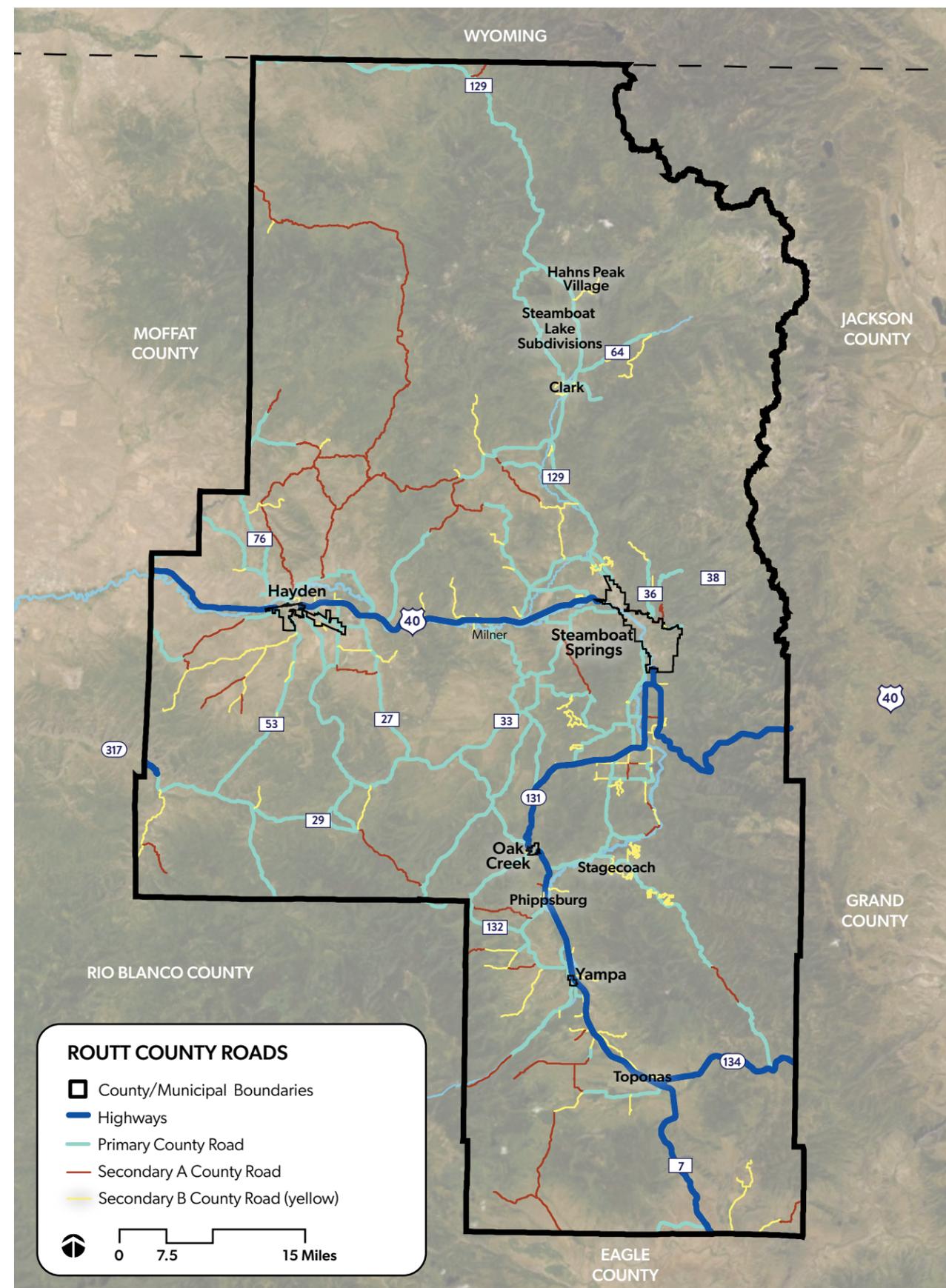


Figure 12: Routt County Roads

Routt County's Road Classification System:

Primary: Primary roads link cities, towns, and larger populations. Traffic volumes on these roads are higher. When resources are constrained, service on primary roadways typically takes precedence over secondary roadways. Primary roads are maintained and passable throughout the year.

Secondary A: Maintenance of secondary roads is conducted after primary roads have been maintained. There may be some travel delays or conditions that restrict travel on secondary roads throughout the year, but secondary roads are generally passable and maintained throughout the summer. During winter, some secondary road segments are maintained and generally passable, but those segments outside of winter maintenance boundaries are not passable.

Secondary B: These roads have lower traffic volume, are not typically maintained during the winter, and receive minimal or no summer maintenance. These roads may end at homes, farms, ranches, or public lands.

As the distance from designated growth centers increases, so does the cost of maintaining public roads.

[Routt County Road Maintenance Plan](#)

You can interact with the Road Classification Map on the County's [Land Use Story Map](#).

Commuting

- **Many families have limited access to vehicles** and also do not have adequate, all-season pathways that allow for safe walking or biking to work from outlying areas and transit service is often not available near their homes or during the times they work.
- **Growing popularity and accessibility of electric bicycles (e-bikes)** increases the distances and topography people are willing and able to bike.
- An aging population makes it critical to **expand convenient transportation options** for those who do not or cannot drive, particularly in remote areas.
- **Remote working means fewer work trips for some types of workers.** Increasing numbers of people moving to the rural areas of the County who work remotely contribute to overall growth and increasing traffic. This population may be changing the peak traffic times and travel patterns.

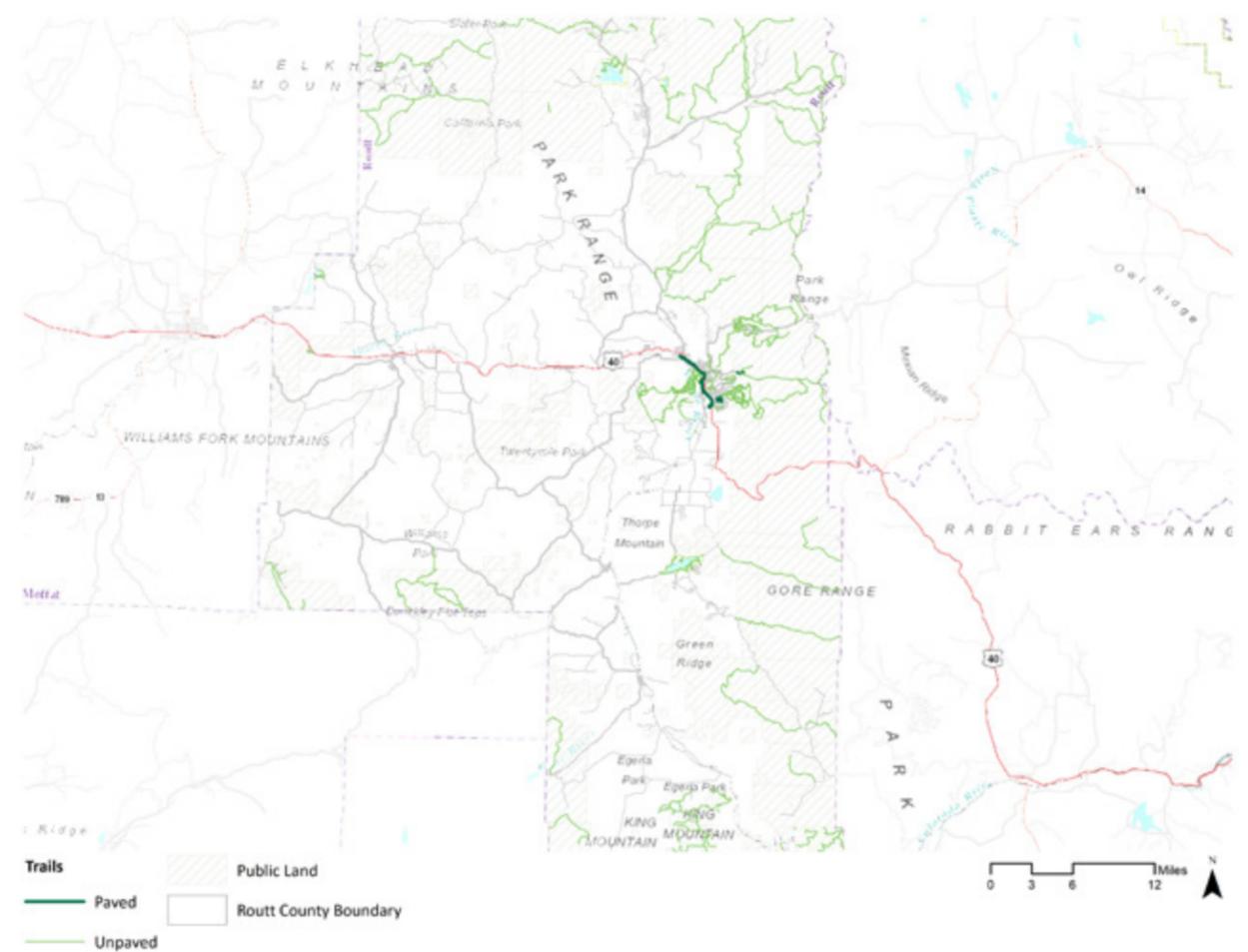


Figure 13: County-wide Trails

Walking, Biking & Trails

- **The Yampa River Core Trail experiences a high volume and range of users** including those walking, running, biking, and e-biking for both transportation and recreation. Public input indicated a desire for the extension of the Core Trail, and more trails regionally that could connect into the Core Trail.
- **Many people increasingly desire to walk and bike** as they seek alternatives to driving.
- **A need exists for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure** to cover the distance between the bus stops and a traveler's origin or destination to make it easier, safer, and more convenient to use public transit. The County can coordinate or partner with local municipalities to prioritize these connections.
- **A need exists for additional bicycle infrastructure in the towns and unincorporated areas of Routt County** outside of Steamboat Springs.
- Population growth and increasing traffic has created **a greater need for safer, enhanced and more frequent bicycle and pedestrian crossings** and treatments on primary roadways outside of Steamboat Springs.



Figure 14: Transit in Routt County

Vehicles, Driving & Freight

- Existing traffic volumes on the main thoroughfares (US 40 and State Highway 131, which are maintained by the Colorado Department of Transportation and not the County) are still at a manageable level in most areas, when they are not affected by extended road closures in other parts of the state.
- Conflicts exist from increased congestion during large events, particularly on County roads, impacting the needs of ranchers and farmers who use the roads to move equipment and livestock. A need was identified for better communication between the organizers of private events and the general public leading up to events and directing people on the day of events.
- Overall traffic volume, including trucks using the County roads as detours, is adding to the deterioration of County roadways (paved and unpaved), which are not designed to carry such a volume of both general vehicle traffic and heavy trucks.

- Road closures, particularly of I-70, have significant impacts on Routt County traffic as drivers detour onto unpaved County roads to get around highway traffic.
- Safety concerns exist at highway intersections around the County where heavy trucks, campers and cars are navigating on and off the highway.
- There is a growing desire for criteria and considerations of thresholds to help the County prioritize which unpaved County roads should be paved and in what order.

Transit

- Regional transit ridership is strong but there is a desire for better transit connections and improved service to outlying areas.
- Traditional fixed-route bus lines may not always be feasible or cost-effective, but more innovative transit options like micro-transit and vanpools may increase the viability of transit options in outlying areas.
- Due to economic shifts within the natural resource/coal industry, other transportation uses of the rail corridor may exist.

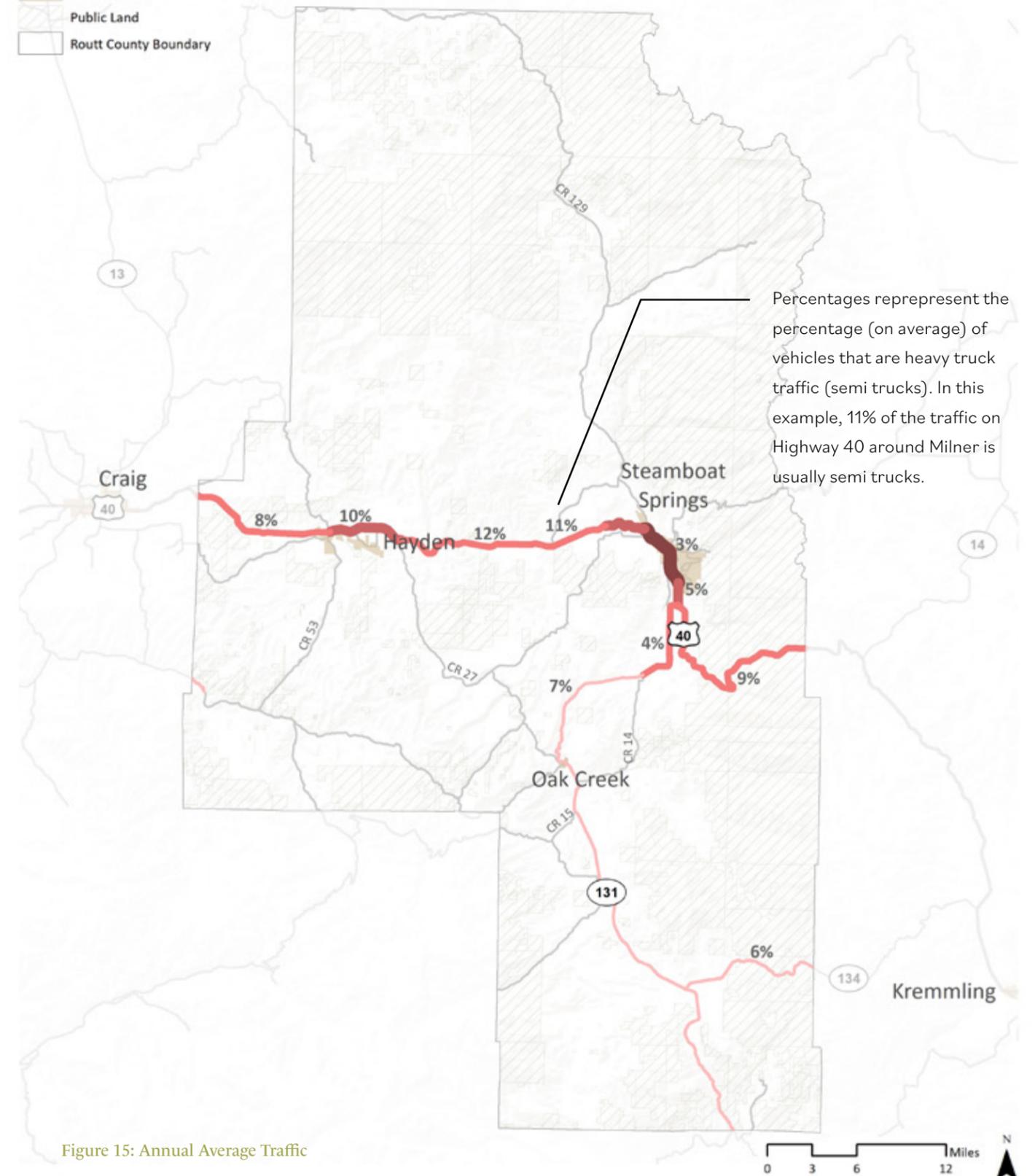
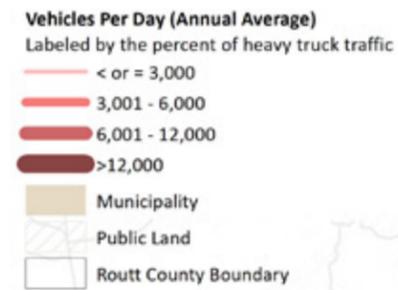
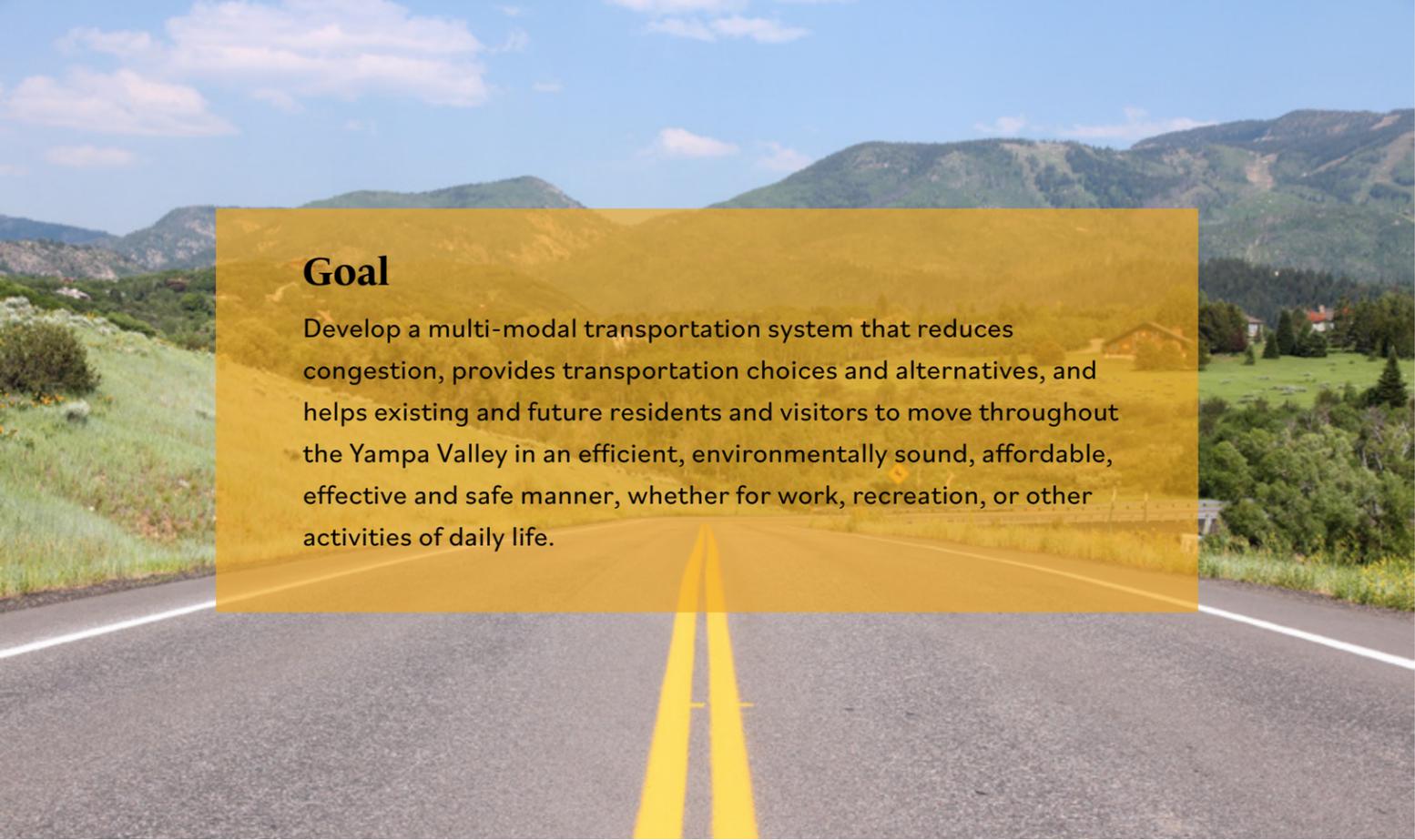


Figure 15: Annual Average Traffic



Goal

Develop a multi-modal transportation system that reduces congestion, provides transportation choices and alternatives, and helps existing and future residents and visitors to move throughout the Yampa Valley in an efficient, environmentally sound, affordable, effective and safe manner, whether for work, recreation, or other activities of daily life.

16. Discourage vacation of any public right-of-way that access public land.
17. Strongly discourage proposals that include driveways, berms, and road-cuts that have visual impacts and erosion issues that cannot be mitigated.
18. To the extent possible, avoid project designs that create excessive intersections onto the County road system and strongly discourage developments that cannot mitigate the impacts of additional intersections.
19. Discourage new railroad crossings or new uses on existing crossings.
20. Ensure that roads used for natural resource extraction are adequate to handle the proposed use.

Policies

1. Support the Regional Transportation Authority and consider changes to land use policies as needed.
2. Encourage a diverse mixture of public and private transportation alternatives both within and outside Future Growth Areas (Tiers 1, 2 and 3) by increasing the number of available transportation options.
3. Encourage mass transit alternatives to popular visitor destinations.
4. Protect and respect the rights of the pedestrian and the cyclist while considering the needs of agricultural operators.
5. Encourage the use of non-motorized and public transit for recreational and local transportation needs and safety.
6. Require that new development proposals include provisions to create and improve links to trail systems both as an alternative to the automobile and for recreational use.
7. Encourage a pedestrian/bike system which connects retail areas, public facilities, recreational areas and neighborhoods that minimizes auto-truck-rail conflicts.
8. Encourage transit-oriented development.
9. Address the impacts of road closures (I-70) that cause traffic to be re-routed through Routt County.
10. Pursue a comprehensive maintenance and funding program for County roads.
11. All roads and driveways used for residential or commercial use must be designed to allow for emergency access.
12. Support the extension of the regional trail system to the west and south.
13. Ensure that roadway design is compatible with topography, soils, vegetation, geology, visual and other natural features and limitations.
14. Encourage the separation of transportation modes as much as possible on County roads and state highways through the use of parallel trails or wide shoulders.
15. Ensure that future development occurs where roads can accommodate projected traffic volumes and patterns.

Photo Credit: Jim Beall





08 | Recreation & Tourism

Background

While recreation and tourism will always be a critical economic driver for Routt County and need to be accommodated, it has become apparent that a proactive approach to balancing the needs of the community and the needs of the tourism and recreation industry must be taken to maintain a healthy quality of life. This balance was identified by the community as the top issue to be addressed by this Master Plan. This chapter provides critical goals and action steps to address this balance in a positive and practical way.

Demand for recreation uses, conflicts between user groups, and the perception among locals that recreational areas are being overwhelmed by tourists has reached a critical level. Trends fueled by changes in the tourism industry and new technologies have resulted in more people recreating on public lands and engaging in new activities. This, combined with a pandemic-driven influx of residents to all reaches of the County, has stretched recreational areas to the breaking point. Overuse impacts such as traffic, parking, pollution, noise, erosion, trail degradation, overcrowding, habitat loss, water quality degradation, and wildlife disruption are affecting surrounding neighborhoods, threatening the ability to conserve sensitive lands, and diminishing the recreational experience. These patterns are no longer focused on Steamboat Springs or the ski area but are being felt throughout the County.

Issues to consider that impact tourism, recreation, and the conservation of lands in Routt County include:

- **Maintaining Routt’s County’s western heritage, rural landscapes and abundant recreational opportunities** is essential to preserving the character of the County. The ranching, agriculture,

and recreational industries should continue to be supported.

- **Rural development and recreation sprawl threaten wildlife** and the conservation of open and sensitive lands.
- Routt County has **no jurisdiction or authority to implement mitigation measures on the 46.53% of land within the County that is publicly owned.** Underfunding and understaffing of state and federal agencies results in a failure to mitigate the impacts of recreational overuse.
- While comments and complaints regarding overcrowded trails, congested camping areas and full parking lots are common, the **County lacks hard data regarding the severity of overuse and its impact on neighborhoods, infrastructure, and sensitive lands.**
- The changing economics of agriculture has motivated many landowners to seek supplemental revenue streams, however, these **secondary uses** (like wedding venues, group event rentals, outfitting, etc.) intended to support ranchers **are becoming more widespread and are creating negative impacts.**
- **Parking in recreation areas overflows into neighborhoods** and onto adjacent roads.
- Understaffing, underfunding, and lack of resources/education mean that many **County partners (Federal and State land management agencies, outfitters, rental companies, etc.) are not educating recreational users appropriately.**
- The growing and increasingly diverse cross-section of the population that accesses public lands to recreate presents an **opportunity for engagement and education** regarding conservation, sustainable recreational practices, and management strategies.

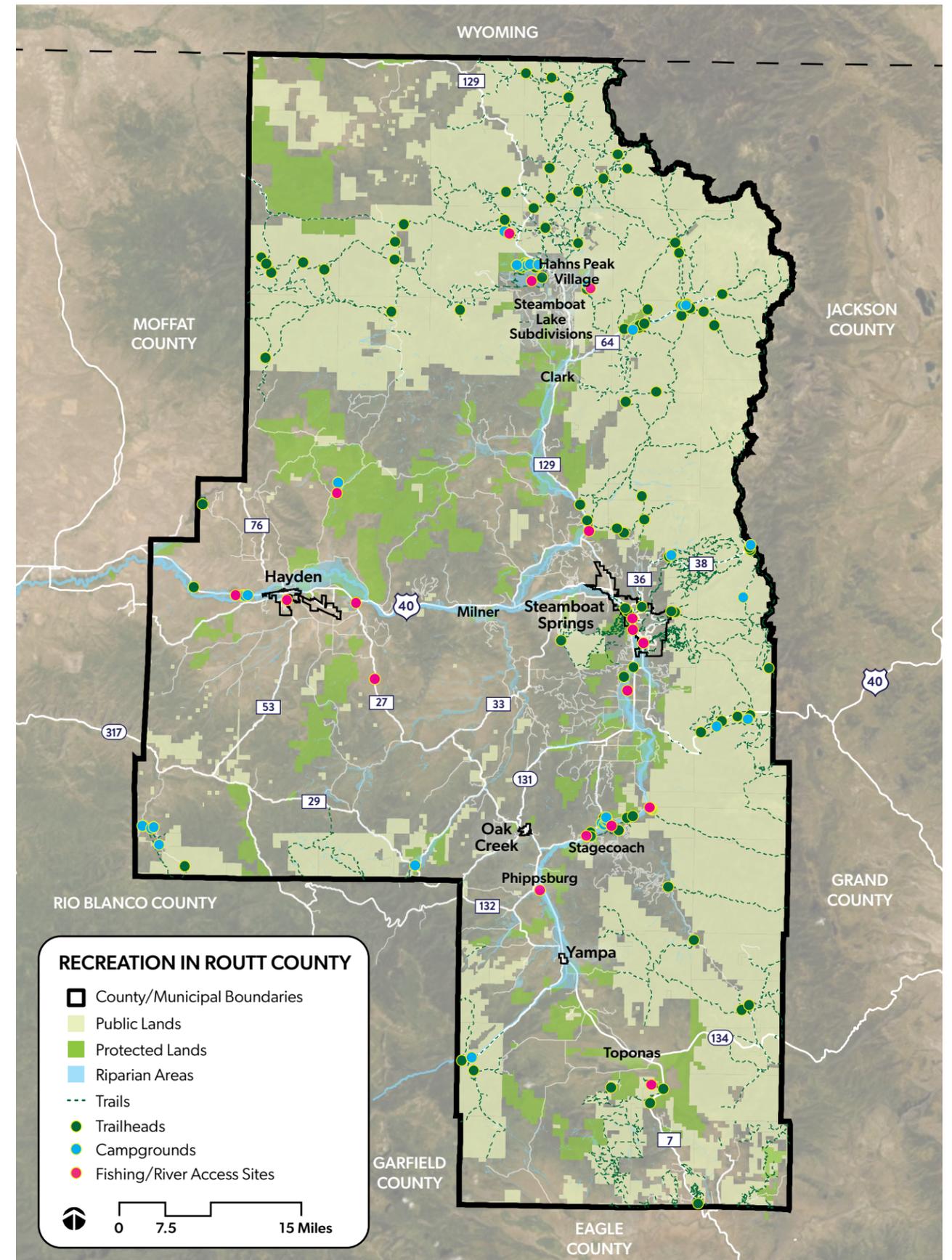


Figure 16: Recreation in Routt County

Goal

Routt County strives to balance the demands of tourism and recreation with the conservation of open lands. While Routt County recognizes the importance of tourism as an economic driver in the community, it will work to improve partnerships with public land managers and local groups and foster a high quality of life for our citizens by managing recreational uses and maintaining the rural character of the valley, its agricultural lands, wildlife habitats and natural areas.

Policies

1. Evaluate the most appropriate areas for recreational use.
2. Encourage recreational activities on agricultural lands that support the agricultural operation, without negatively impacting it.
3. Support the review and potential amendment of allowed uses and zoning standards for recreational uses as a possible tool for improving management of recreation.
4. Commercial recreational businesses should be located on primary roads in the County, when possible. Discourage commercial recreational development that creates traffic on Secondary A and Secondary B County roads.
5. Collaborate with the ranching and agricultural community to ensure that recreational and agri-tourism activities are compatible with their operations.
6. Encourage the establishment of a formal system of cooperation to improve partnerships with land managers, like the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW), outfitters, rental companies, etc. to develop coordinated public access strategies and manage recreational impacts.
7. When considering recreational uses in rural areas, focus on maintaining the high quality of life of the County's residents.
8. Preserve public access to public lands.
9. Provide for open space within all new developments in order to protect and enhance the environment and quality of life.
10. Ensure that usable open space is required for developments that provides active and passive recreational environments.
11. Promote land management practices (e.g. reforestation, restoration, conservation, natural climate solutions) that increase carbon sequestration and storage across forests, wetlands, riparian corridors, and agricultural/rangelands and preserve carbon sinks, especially forests and wetlands, and designate future land uses to maximize carbon sequestration.
12. Support the creation of public spaces for recreation adjacent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 Future Growth Areas in order to limit traffic, impacts to rural Routt County and wildlife, and to reduce human-wildlife conflicts.

09 | Open Space & Agriculture

Background

The Routt County landscape has been shaped by development patterns and industries including ranching, resource extraction, and recreation. These have ebbed and flowed throughout its history, and a heritage of conservation has protected the County's working landscapes for generations.

These industries have created a base of support for the citizens of this area. Recreational, residential and commercial growth has created concerns for the agricultural community. Rural sprawl and 35-acre development has encroached on working ranches resulting in misunderstandings and tension between the rancher/farmer and new residents. Some ranchers have maintained their operations, but many have sold their land for development. Land values have continued to rise while incomes from agricultural stewardship have continued to decline, giving large landowners the opportunity or motivation to sell and/or retire.

The County's scenic beauty and open space is highly valuable to businesses, visitors and residents. Some processes or policies may require fine-tuning to ensure this resource is protected for future generations.

Ongoing impacts to rural and agricultural lands include:

- **Agricultural lands and their visual character have been protected** by long-standing land use policies. Growth will continue to be directed to Future Growth Areas.
- Continued consolidation of smaller ranches into large landholdings **may potentially cause unforeseen changes to the County's agricultural character** as structures are built and activities occur or are unregulated.
- Colorado's Senate Bill 35 states that 35-acre and larger subdivisions are exempt from subdivision regulations. **35-acre subdivisions create rural sprawl** and are rarely used for agricultural production.
- The term "**agriculture**" encompasses a **wide variety of activities, but is often abused by landowners** that do not engage in bona-fide and active agricultural operations. It is important in considering land use permits to determine if a property is being actively used for agriculture.
- New residents may be unaware of **resources or information that will aid them in practicing sound land stewardship** including maintenance of fencing, wildlife management, vegetation management and placement of structures in a way that minimizes visual impacts.
- In some areas, heavy visitation and recreation causes **impacts related to noise pollution, light pollution, and/or causes damage to open spaces and shared lands.**
- **Visual resources and notable County vistas have potential for impacts from development.** These will continue to be maintained as rural working landscapes, particularly at key points or gateways, by revisiting land use and building codes.
- **Conservation easements have been placed on many parcels in Routt County** (see [Figure 39](#)) as a means of preserving open land and ensuring the continuation of traditional agricultural activities. Routt County holds conservation easements on many culturally significant parcels through the Purchase of Development Rights Program and private landowners have placed easements on their own properties in order to protect those lands from being subdivided and developed in the future.



Goal

Routt County celebrates its unique landscapes, sweeping vistas and access to open lands and spaces by protecting and maintaining the vitality of Routt County’s agricultural lands, particularly as they relate to the location of wildlife areas, open spaces, important economic lands, and diverse natural areas. To do this the County supports development patterns that conserve open space and projects that conserve land for viable agricultural activities.

Policies

Agricultural Lands

1. Support bona-fide and viable agricultural operations.
2. Recognize the importance of maintaining the viability of agricultural operations and support them by continuing to allow supplemental uses with appropriate permitting.
3. Discourage development that changes the rural character or historic agricultural uses and/or practices.
4. Preserve open space.
5. Discourage rural residential developments in areas of prime agricultural production.
6. Protect prime agricultural areas from the impacts of developments and commercial recreation.
7. Strongly discourage scattered development and 35-acre subdivisions.
8. Direct new development to Tier 1 and Tier 2 Future Growth Areas.
9. Encourage private landowners to maintain agricultural properties.
10. In extreme cases, restrict subdivisions where there is potential for development to cause damage to irrigation ditches or other sensitive resources.
11. Noxious weeds must be controlled at the expense of the landowner.
12. Enforce the weed management program and educate new or unaware landowners or those that refuse to manage weeds.
13. Domestic predators running at large are not accepted in Routt County. Not only can they pose a threat to livestock, but also to wildlife and humans.
14. Support the smooth interaction between neighboring property owners in rural areas. This support should refer to the Right to Farm legislation, A Guide to Rural Living and Small-scale Agriculture, Land Preservation Subdivision (LPS) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.

Open Space

15. Protect unique view corridors with high aesthetic value, including the south valley floor and the Hwy 40 and CR 129 corridors.
16. Require usable open space and public space within all new developments in order to protect and enhance the environment and the quality of life.



10 | Sustainability & Climate Action



Background

Routt County recognizes the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Communities across Colorado and the mountain West, including Routt County, are taking action because key markers of climate change are affecting the regional economy and environment: including changing snowpack, earlier spring melt, multi-decadal drought conditions, increased risk and impact of wildfire, reduced streamflows, and more. Investing in strategies that reduce current levels of greenhouse gas emissions is both timely and essential.

Sustainable Development and Renewable Energy

Routt County encourages sustainable development practices that reduce the overall environmental impact while being fiscally responsible in the long term. These include development and construction techniques that support sustainable use of land, conserve resources, and reduce energy consumption. On a small scale, local governments and individual property owners are moving away from carbon-based energy sources and making the switch to electrification in their homes, vehicles, and businesses.

Strategic planning at the state and federal level has outlined a process by which clean energy production can be expanded while maintaining support for extraction industries. Such support includes the potential for coal facilities to be adapted for renewable energy uses. Routt County has been identified as an ideal location for solar energy production, but not for wind energy production.

Climate Action

The Master Plan builds upon past and current efforts in the push to take strong climate action. Routt County and its municipalities have taken a step towards reducing community generated greenhouse gas emissions by creating a [Climate Action Plan \(CAP\)](#). The CAP provides a roadmap for reducing emissions from different sectors (e.g., energy, transportation, buildings, waste, etc.). This Plan acknowledges and actively moves forward the CAP's goals, strategies and actions. The Plan will continue to acknowledge CAP updates as they occur.

The 2021 CAP states that climate impacts in the form of drought, extreme heat, flooding, wildfires, and shifts in seasonal weather patterns are evident. The primary elements essential to our community that are most likely to experience adverse climate impacts include agriculture, snowpack, air and water quality, water supply and watershed health.

Routt County Climate Action Collaborative

The Routt County Climate Action Collaborative provides an implementation framework for the CAP through regional decision-making and alignment. Local government partners (Towns of Yampa, Oak Creek and Hayden, the City of Steamboat Springs, and Routt County) have jointly developed and adopted the CAP in support of sustainability efforts that seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with sustainability goals, the 2019 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

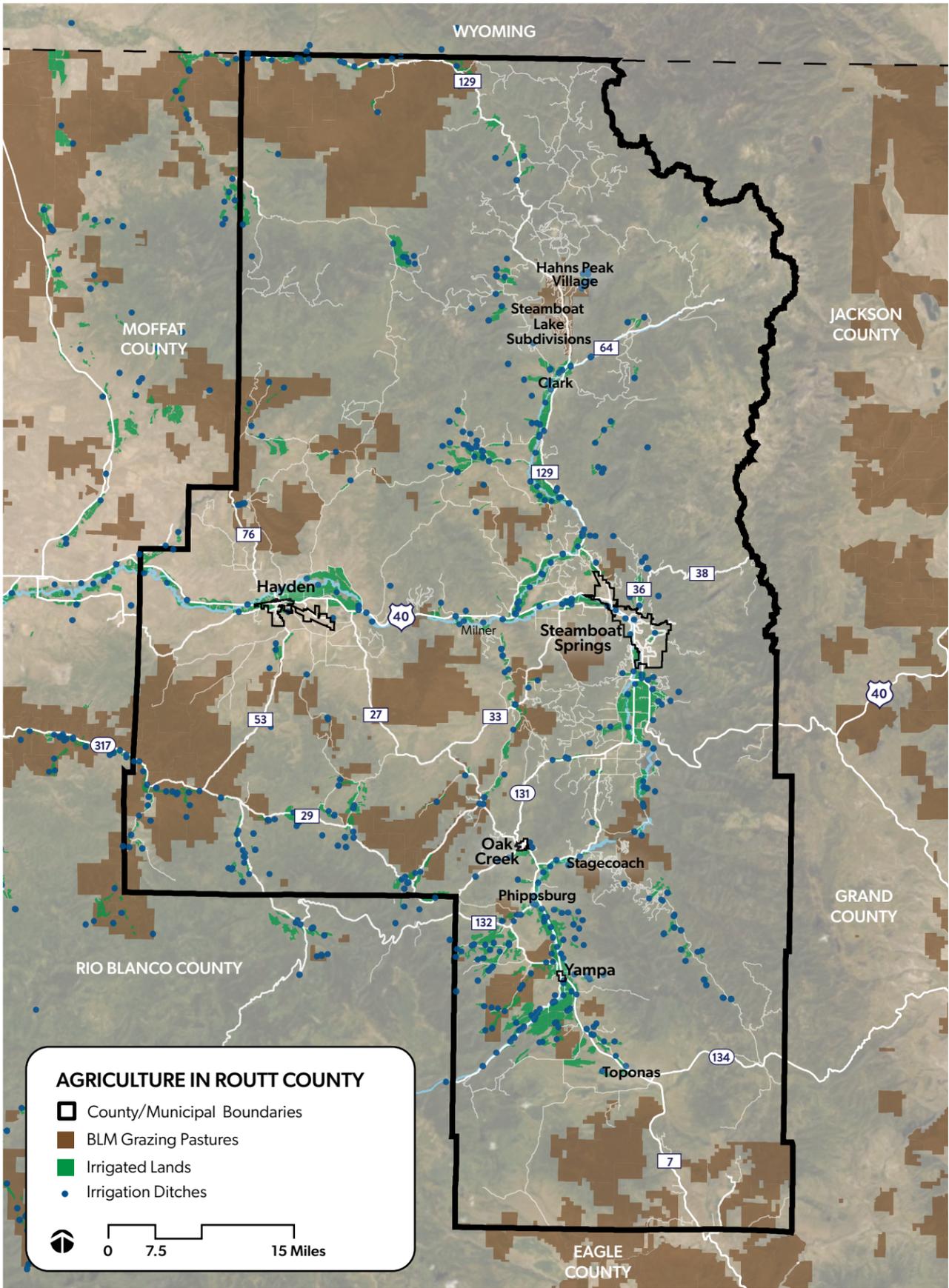
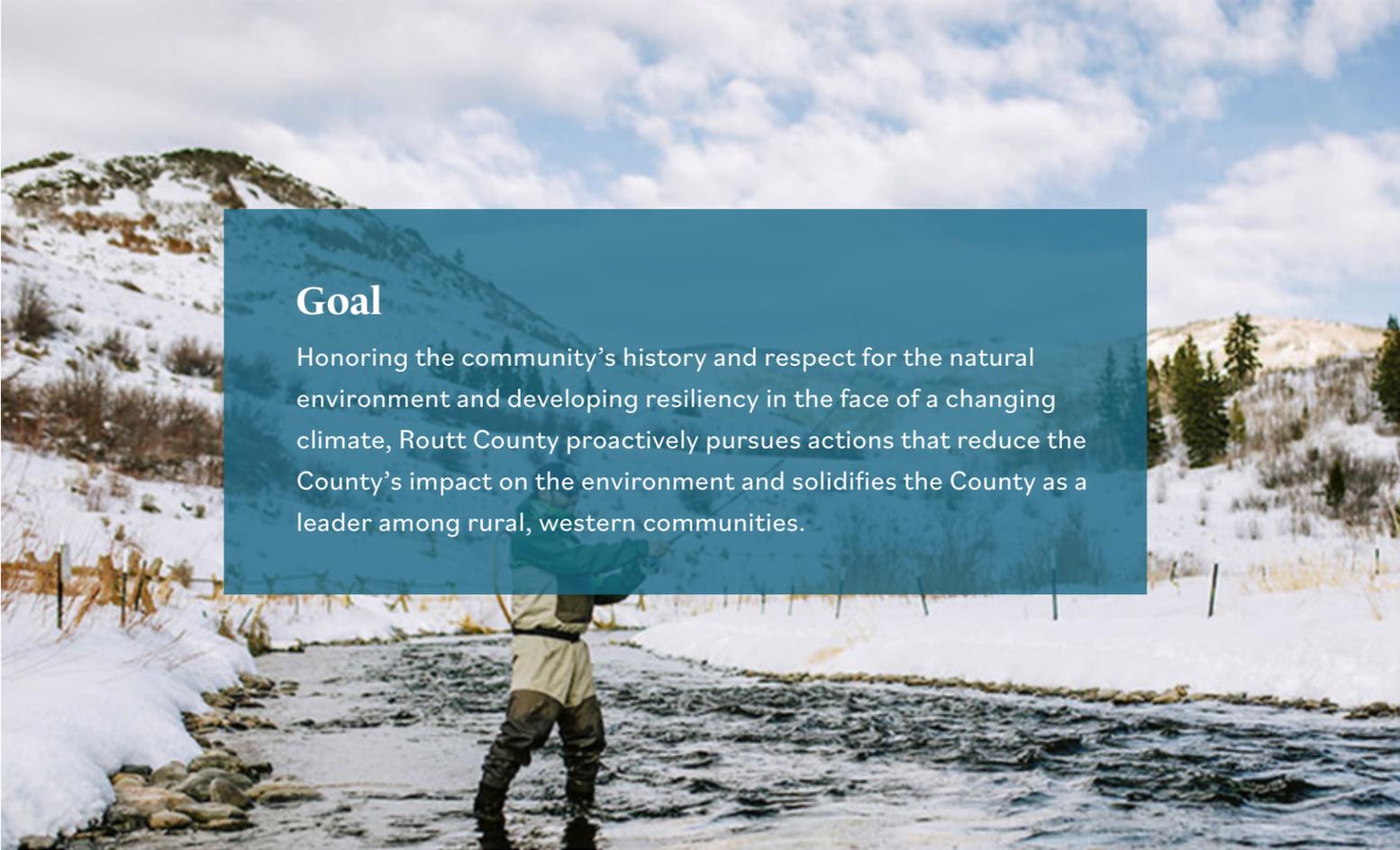


Figure 17: Agriculture in Routt County



Goal

Honoring the community’s history and respect for the natural environment and developing resiliency in the face of a changing climate, Routt County proactively pursues actions that reduce the County’s impact on the environment and solidifies the County as a leader among rural, western communities.

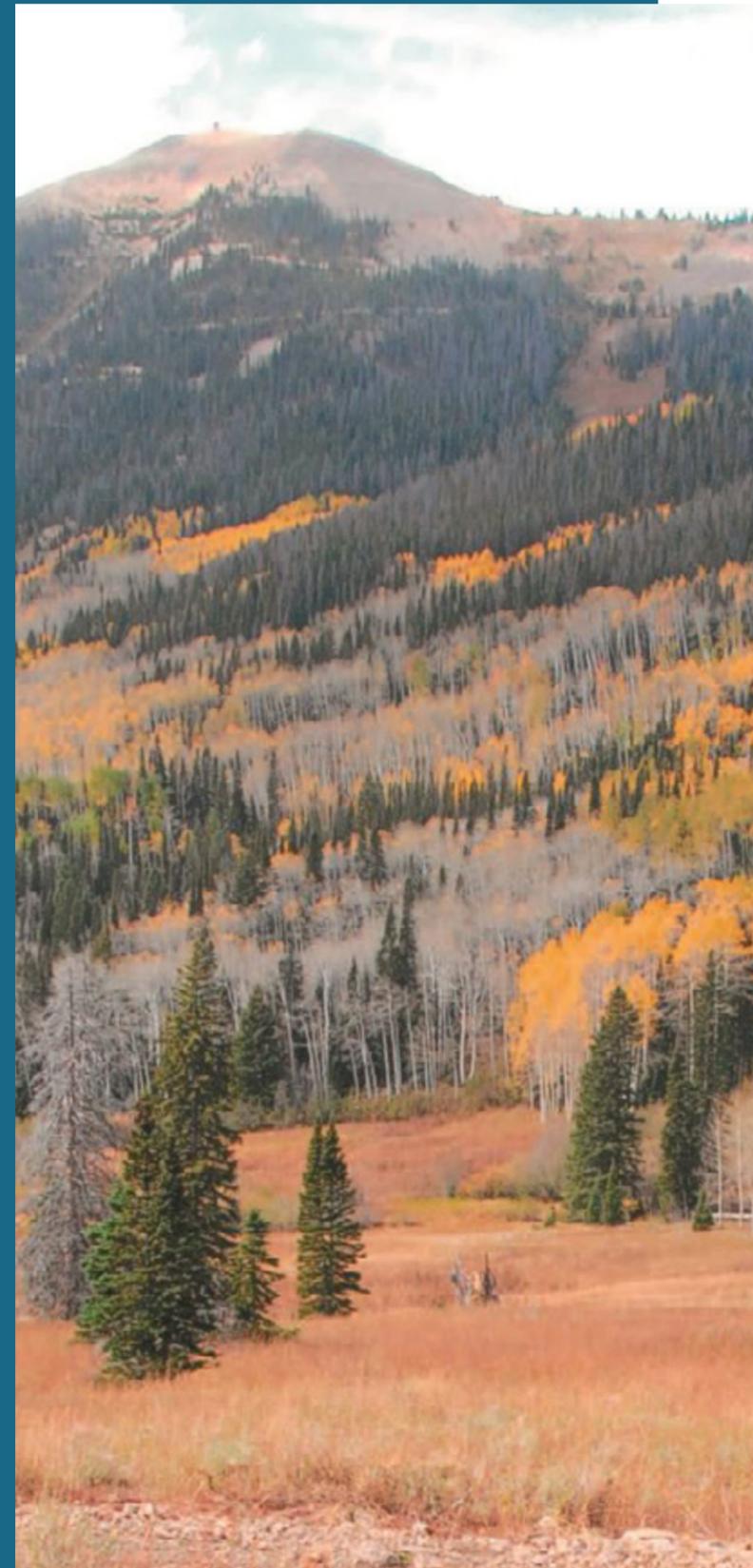
Study, and State goals and efforts. Routt County recognizes the benefits of implementing best practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and draw down carbon levels in the atmosphere at the local and regional levels.

According to an Intergovernmental Agreement signed by Routt County and the five municipalities, the Collaborative is to be governed by a Board with no fewer than five and no more than eleven members, with five of the members representing local government.

Impacts and opportunities related to sustainability and climate action include:

- Routt County is dedicated to **reducing impacts created by the consumption of fossil fuels**, waste and overuse of resources, and is committed to a future powered by renewable and green energy.
- **Growing land use/transportation imbalances create longer commutes**, increasing vehicle miles traveled and tailpipe emissions due to the limited availability of sustainable alternative mobility options.

- **New technologies, building codes and entitlement processes that can reduce energy and/or water usage** will help to reduce the environmental impact of residential development in the County, particularly the impacts of larger homes and scattered developments.
- **Wildfire continues to pose an annual threat** to homes and lives throughout the County.
- **The water supply available to support new development in Routt County is limited.** Every effort should be made to implement water conservation techniques.
- With the closing of the Hayden and Craig power stations, the abundant sunshine the County receives, and the large number of high voltage power lines that run through the area, the **County has the ability to be a leader in the expansion of renewable energy sources.**
- “The urgent need to mitigate and adapt to climate change requires that as much as possible, **preservation standards and guidelines be linked with sustainability and climate action goals.**” - National Trust for Historic Preservation.



Policies

1. Support sustainable design and development practices that encourage the use of low-carbon and renewable energy in land use and development.
2. Support energy, water efficiency and conservation in land use and development.
3. Continue to support a transition of energy production to lower-carbon and renewable sources.
4. Prioritize the Climate Action Plan goals in all land use planning decisions.
5. Encourage new construction to be as energy-efficient and sustainable as possible. (CAP ES1, ES2, ES3)
6. Promote and facilitate renewable energy production or development opportunities in unincorporated areas while balancing impacts to agriculture or other rural assets. (CAP ES1)
7. Implement CAP Waste Sector Strategies and Actions to incorporate policies into the land use framework. (CAP WS)



11 | Natural Resources & Hazards

Background

Many residents have built their livelihood around Routt County’s rural identity, which is defined by its natural resources. These assets include naturally occurring substances and materials that can be extracted and used for economic, social or cultural community benefit, as well as surface and groundwater, rivers, forests, and wildlife. Decades of sound growth management guided by the Master Plan has balanced resource use, economic gain and conservation. A history of resource extraction for energy production has long contributed to the economy of Routt County. As a result of state, national and global trends, as well as market forces, energy production in Routt County is transitioning to renewable sources. This regional energy transition presents both challenges and opportunities for the residents, businesses, and school districts that have depended on the coal industry for decades.

Responsible environmental stewardship is a cornerstone of Routt County character. Environmental stewardship is the act of preserving and protecting the area’s ecosystem, which includes natural and scenic resources, wildlife, open space, and clean air and water. The quality of this ecosystem has attracted residents and visitors to Routt County throughout the years. With development pressure, management and preservation of these resources is important to Routt County’s legacy and lifestyle.

Development has changed water use, which in turn has affected water quality and availability. Management plans and studies find that municipal and industrial water users are concerned with both water quality

and water quantity. Low river flows have resulted in a shortened recreation season. The increasing demands on local water have created challenges and prompted the need to manage this resource carefully. Both recreation and agricultural stakeholders have been impacted by lower annual flows or dry-up points, riverbank erosion, pollution and changes in riverside habitat. The Colorado Division of Water Resources has designated all basins of the Yampa and Elk Rivers in Routt County as over-appropriated. This designation has profound impacts on the availability of new well permits.

Historically, the mineral extraction industry has bolstered the local economy, providing plentiful well-paying jobs and supplying materials for infrastructure and energy. For years, the County’s coal mines supplied fuel for the Hayden power station as well as serving as a regional employer. With the energy transition, the Hayden power station is slated to change to an alternative power source in the late 2020s. The Yampa Valley’s gravel deposits continue to provide the County’s communities with a needed resource and timber continues to be harvested from the National Forests in Routt County.

Routt County’s wildlife habitat and migration corridors are critical to the County’s appeal and identity. The County will continue to support development, land use and recreation management practices that are designed to protect critical wildlife habitat, as shown in the Routt County Wildlife Map in Figure 18 on page 64.

Hazards exacerbated by changes in the natural environment increasingly impact County residents. The [Routt County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) (HMP) offers actions to mitigate threats from wildfire, landslides and flooding to natural landscapes and human life. This Plan recognizes objectives and actions from the HMP and considers the HMP (found at www.co.routt.co.us/751/Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-Update) as an implementation tool for the Plan.

Impacts and opportunities related to natural resources and hazards include:

Water

- **There are significant implications for development when drainage basins are determined to be over-appropriated** by the Division of Water Resources. In over-appropriated areas, new well permits on lots under 35 acres must be covered by augmentation plans that cover all indoor and outdoor uses. New and expanded well-based central water systems in this area would also have to be covered by augmentation plans. In addition, no new secondary dwelling units would be allowed in these areas, unless the existing well serving the property is permitted for more than a single-family residence, or if the well serving the secondary unit is covered by a water augmentation plan. Water augmentation plans can be very expensive and difficult to obtain in some areas. Most of Routt County is designated as over-appropriated.
- The Yampa River corridor has been studied at length and strategic plans have been developed to help balance river activities. An opportunity exists

to **consolidate these efforts to maximize river and human health, resilience and sustainability.**

- Individual towns have an opportunity to **update building and land use codes to promote water efficiency** for new development.
- **A focus on the connection between water resources and forest health** will contribute to watershed sustainability, as much of the County’s water sources and waterways are in forested areas.
- **New farming and ranching practices offer water savings for some agricultural operations** that could help keep water in the rivers and ground.
- New and emergent watershed monitoring infrastructure (e.g. SNOTEL, soil moisture, streamflow, etc.) present opportunities to **better understand how water resources are changing due to climate change** and increased temperature.

Development

- A heritage of conservation has helped **protect the valley floor outside communities from sprawling development.** Continued attention to the ecological integrity of contiguous undeveloped land and landscape resilience should be prioritized.
- **Growth is encouraged in areas that have sufficient resources** to support residential and commercial development.
- The ecosystem of Routt County will increasingly benefit from new **technologies and building codes that can reduce energy and water usage**, particularly in larger homes.



Goal

Routt County will continue building on a heritage of conservation and preservation of the assets and values that create its authentic rural, western identity. The County will support, manage, and maintain all of its natural resources for the economic and environmental resiliency of future generations as the region transitions into a future that is powered by sustainable energy sources.

Wildlife

- The County’s plentiful wildlife resources (e.g. habitat, ranges and migration corridors) overlap with areas of human impact. **A new management strategy is needed to increase knowledge and communication** with affected community groups to minimize human-wildlife conflict.

Hazards

- This Plan acknowledges the goals and actions from the County’s Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and supports capital improvement plans that **actively pursue solutions that mitigate hazards** such as avalanches, dam failures, earthquakes, floods, landslides/subsidence, severe weather, wildfire, and other natural disasters.

Solid Waste

- The County is continually working to divert solid waste from landfills. **The County acknowledges the goals and actions from the Climate Action Plan (CAP).**

Forests

- Recognizing the connection between watershed health and forest health, the County will **focus on protecting and restoring wildland areas including forests, waterways and sensitive wildlife areas** where it can.

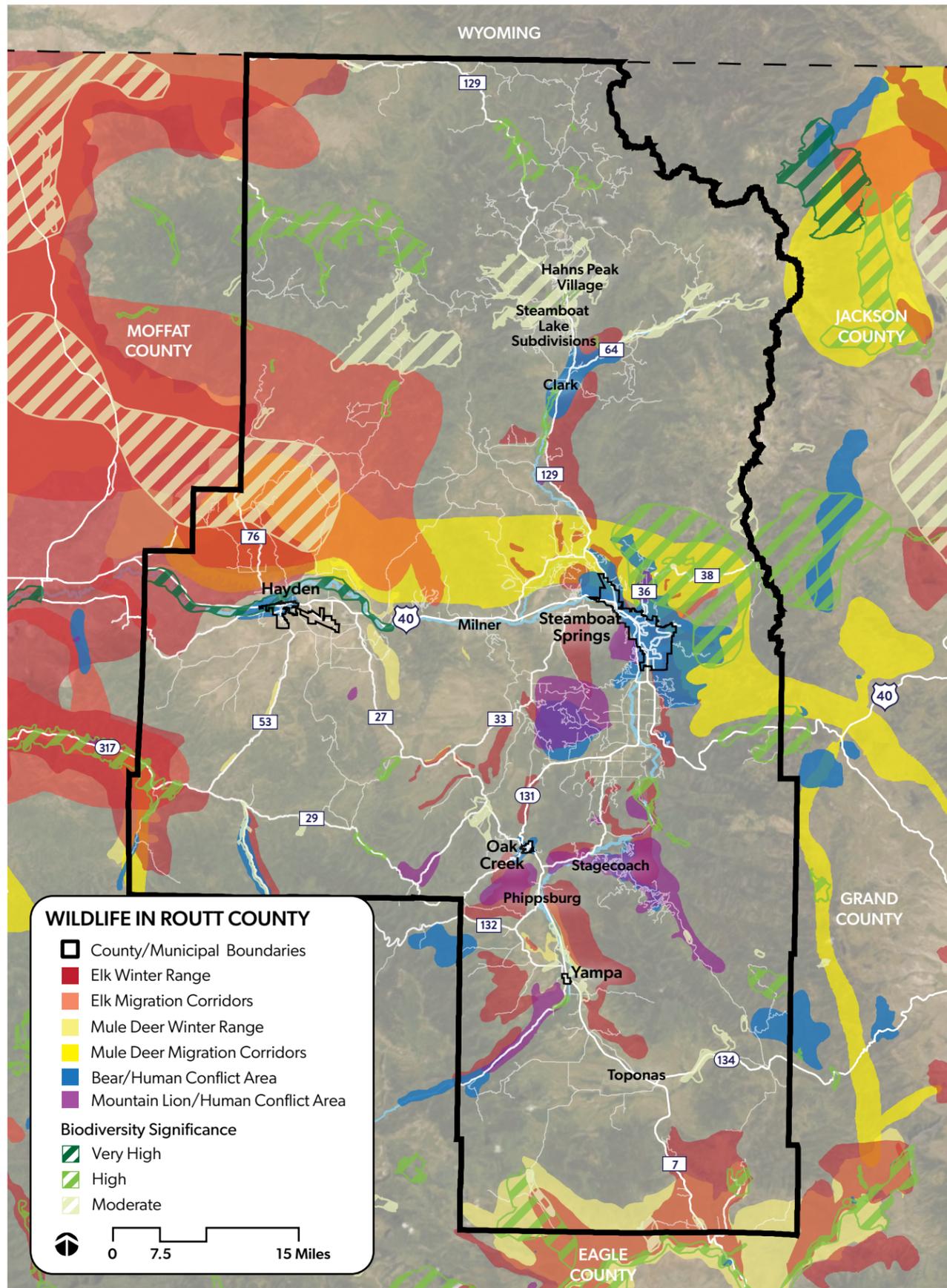


Figure 18: Wildlife in Routt County



Elk River | Photo Credit: Jeffrey Beall

Policies

Forest Health

1. Support forest health improvements.

Water Conservation

2. Support water conservation practices to effectively manage water resources.

Wildlife

3. Protect wildlife species and their habitats.
4. Include wildlife habitat and species information in land use and site plan decision-making.
5. Encourage land use practices that will minimize conflicts between wildlife and human uses.
6. Consider impacts on wildlife before approving new recreational uses, residential developments, and other developments and permits.
7. Minimize the cumulative impacts of development on wildlife and wildlife habitat.
8. Continue to promote the Land Preservation Subdivision (LPS) Exemption processes to preserve large remainder parcels for wildlife habitat.

Native Vegetation

9. Protect and/or improve the diversity of native vegetation.

Hazards

10. Acknowledge the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and its objectives and actions as Master Plan implementation strategies.

Wildfire

11. In addition to the HMP, the Master Plan also recognizes strategies in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in reference to wildfire hazards and acknowledges associated implementation measures including partnering on fuels treatment projects designed to reduce overall wildfire risk.
12. Discourage land uses that increase the potential for wildfires in high risk wildfire hazard areas.
13. Discourage land uses that could place those with mobility issues in high-risk wildfire hazard areas.
14. Construction of structures in all potential wildfire areas may include considerations found in the Implementation Matrix on [page 98](#).



12 | Public Health & Equity



Slope Development

15. Prohibit all development on slopes of 30% or greater. Development in steep draws or valleys, which tend to channel fire movement, is particularly dangerous and is also strongly discouraged.

Flooding

16. Strongly discourage buildings in the 100-year floodplain and in flood prone areas. When an owner chooses to build in a 100-year floodplain, Routt County is not responsible for assisting the owner during a flood event or preventing floods in the area.

Development in Hazard Areas

17. Prohibit all construction and excavations on potential natural hazard areas including landslides, rockfall areas, unstable slopes, mudflows and steep drainages.

Mining Operations

18. Ensure that new long-term (more than one year) mineral extraction operations and associated uses, as well as existing operations, are mitigated for visual impacts to the maximum extent feasible.
19. Discourage the placement of mining operations that would permanently harm significant wildlife habitat, permanently displace wildlife populations or interfere with migration corridors.
20. Encourage the minimization of haul distances for mining extractions.
21. Partner with mining operators to reclaim mining operations for beneficial uses. Where reclamation for wildlife habitat is appropriate, techniques recommended by Colorado Parks and Wildlife should be used.
22. Partner with mining operators to create wildlife parks, reserves, wetland mitigation sites, or other beneficial environmental use as an end result of the mining activity.
23. Long term mining operations and associated uses should be located in areas where they do not greatly impact scenic vistas, where there are compatible agricultural and industrial uses, and where they are not in proximity to residential neighborhoods, recreational, or other incompatible uses. Areas with parcels of 35 acres and greater are not considered residential neighborhoods.
24. Support the recycling of aggregate whenever possible and strive to be current on the best available recycling techniques.
25. Recognize that residents, businesses, and school districts have traditionally depended on the income generated from coal extraction.

Background

The opportunity for a healthy, productive and equitable future for residents of all ages and abilities is critical to maintaining Routt County's quality of life. This chapter provides a blueprint for maintaining and improving the socio-environmental conditions of where people live, learn, work, play, worship and age. Imbalances in these complex, interwoven social and economic systems are largely responsible for community health inequalities.

It is critical that all County residents have access to fresh food, open space, recreational opportunities, safe housing, and education, in addition to essential services such as safe roads, potable water and proper sanitation. All residents should feel free from discrimination. The community's health, well-being and resiliency also rely on the efficient, timely and safe delivery of critical services such as police and fire protection, emergency and routine medical treatment, and mental health services. With the County's rural nature, most public services (childcare, medical services, community centers, grocery stores, etc.) are located within the municipalities.

As the Plan is updated over time, the Public Health & Equity chapter should be revisited to identify gaps in the social and economic determinants of equity and health. Policies should be routinely updated with the objective of prioritizing sustainable, long-term community health goals. Filling these gaps requires land use policies that, for example, encourage growth where young families have access to trails or outside activities, as well as community gathering spaces, childcare and greatly needed mental health services.

Issues that impact equity and community health in Routt County include:

- **Community health services** (childcare, mental health care, multi-generational social services and recreation centers, etc) **are concentrated in the municipalities** (primarily Steamboat Springs), and not all County residents have equal access to them.
- **High costs of living and inadequate access to services** such as childcare challenge a growing number of families and individuals
- **Underserved communities desire to participate in the community planning process** yet find it intimidating or burdensome to attend meetings or join boards due to a limited understanding of the process, lack of childcare, mobility issues or language barriers.
- **Younger and newer lower income residents are bearing the brunt of the housing shortage.**
- **Access to fresh food is critical to health and wellness.**
- An increasingly diverse community will need **inclusive places to gather and recreate.**
- **Gaps exist in comprehensive cellular coverage in rural areas** and access to the internet is unreliable in places.
- **Transitional housing and shelter options are very limited countywide.**
- Public services including **fire departments and emergency service providers struggle to find and retain staff** creating a strain in their ability to serve unincorporated areas.



Goal

Routt County will continue to strengthen the role of social and economic equity and community health in the planning process by incorporating policies, projects and programs to ensure the County provides a safe, flourishing and opportunity-rich environment for residents, workers and visitors of all ages. By promoting diverse recreation areas, housing options, enhanced mobility networks and essential services for existing and underserved populations, Routt County will remain a thriving and healthy place for future generations.

13

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



Policies

Land Use

1. Design healthy and complete neighborhoods where new and existing places have safe roads, gathering areas, and parks as well as access to jobs, commerce, transit, and public services.
2. Encourage development in Future Growth Areas that incorporates essential services (e.g. grocery, medical care, childcare).
3. Avoid and minimize displacement by continuing to support a variety of housing options and employment in Future Growth Areas.

Healthy Lifestyles

4. Support healthy lifestyles by expanding recreation opportunities including walking, biking and exercising in open spaces, trails and parks.
5. Collaborate with the Routt County Public Health and Human Services Departments to ensure the land use framework continues to support public health goals of health equity for underserved populations.
6. Encourage development that provides all citizens with better access to healthy food options- including gardens or locally grown food.
7. Support healthy lifestyles through inclusive and active community design principles that create alternative transportation options.



13.1 | Implementation Matrix

The following Implementation Matrix is a tool to organize the policies and actions and will be used by County staff and leadership as this plan’s Implementation Plan. It should serve as a guide to monitor how the Plan program and decisions will occur over the life of the plan. The policies in bold are carried over from the Plan Elements chapters, and the actions, which represent actionable strategies required to implement the policies, are assigned a responsible party to take a lead role in implementation as well as an estimated timeline for completion. The category column can be used to reference back to different chapters where a topic is discussed.

The framework for the timeline is as follows:

- 0 = Ongoing
- 1 = Short-term: 0-3 years
- 2 = Medium-term: 3-5 years
- 3 = Long-term: 5 + years

Timelines are subject to resource availability.

Figure 19: Implementation Matrix

Growth, Land Use & Infrastructure				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Future Growth Areas	4.1	Policy: Direct new growth and development to Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 Future Growth Areas, in that order and as defined in the Growth & Land Use Chapter.		
	4.1.A	Action: Revise the County’s Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to support the policies and goals of this Master Plan.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, Board of County Commissioners (BCC)	0
	4.1.B	Action: Meet with Tier 1 Municipalities, initially in a public forum such as a Council meeting, and thereafter quarterly with relevant department heads, to introduce the Master Plan, discuss shared hopes and perspectives, and convey/reinforce their role in development of the County as a whole.	Planning Department	1
	4.1.C	Action: Develop standards for any future development in Tier 3 Small Established Communities.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
	4.1.D	Action: Meet with Tier 1 Municipalities annually to create and review a work plan that outlines coordinated planning activities.	Planning Department, Municipal Planning Departments	0
Infill	4.2	Policy: Support infill development and redevelopment that is complementary to existing character and consistent with available resources to accommodate evolving community needs within the Future Growth Areas.		
	4.2.A	Action: Encourage municipalities to eliminate common/known issues that impede development and redevelopment.	Municipal Planning Departments	1
Development Patterns	4.3	Policy: Promote development patterns that correspond with the natural topography and encourage the arrangement of uses and density patterns to support walkable and bikeable communities and neighborhoods.		
	4.3.A	Action: Create an inventory of existing sidewalks and bike paths in Tier 1, 2, 3 Future Growth Areas.	Planning Department, Municipal Partners	1
	4.3.B	Action: Revise the County’s Subdivision Regulations to include standards for block length, connectivity, rights-of-way/easements, and other topographical considerations that support multimodal access with consideration for topography and sensitive areas.	Planning Department	1

Growth, Land Use & Infrastructure				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Housing Growth	4.4	Policy: Support needed housing, economic and infrastructure development to accommodate growth in Future Growth Areas as defined.		
	4.4.A	Action: Periodically evaluate community needs regarding housing, economic and infrastructure development.	Planning Department, Planning Commission	0
	4.4.B	Action: Revise Zoning & Subdivision Regulations and the Building Code to better align with modern needs, known incompatibilities between codes, and seek feedback from builders and developers on problematic code sections.	Planning Department, Building Department	1
	4.4.C	Action: Collaborate with municipalities to discuss interrelated issues on housing, the intended function of the 3 Future Growth Areas, potential code alignment, and come to a shared understanding of everyone's role in providing for orderly and efficient housing growth at multiple price points.	BCC, Planning Department, Municipal staff, Municipal Leadership	0
Sensitive Lands	4.5	Policy: Apply best practices and data to inform decisions impacting sensitive ecological and wildlife areas throughout the County.		
	4.5.A	Action: Create and maintain a sensitive ecological and wildlife area map.	Planning Department, GIS, Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW), Steamboat Springs	2
	4.5.B	Action: Identify best practices from other states and counties to include in Zoning & Subdivision Regulations.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
Dark Skies	4.6	Policy: Support efforts to maintain Dark Skies and control light pollution.		
	4.6.A	Action: Research best practices in Dark Skies policies.	Planning Department, Planning Commission	1
Broadband Infrastructure	4.7	Policy: Support the development of telecommunications and broadband infrastructure throughout the County.		
	4.7.A	Action: Support municipal partners and school districts and work with utility providers to create a "dig once" policy for Tier 1 and Tier 2 and Tier 3 Future Growth Areas for all telecommunications, fiber, broadband, water, sewer, and road work.	Public Works, Municipal staff, utility providers, school districts	3

Growth, Land Use & Infrastructure				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Sky lining	4.9	Discourage development on ridges that result in sky lining.		
	4.9.A	Action: Create a county-wide mapping system with criteria similar to the Skyline Areas to identify high-value areas. Work with GIS to update skyline map for more accurate predictions of skylined properties/locations.	Planning Department, GIS, City of Steamboat Springs	2
	4.9.B	Action: Maintain standards for land use permits that would protect these visual resources from negative impacts.	Planning Department, Planning Commission	0
	4.9.C	Action: Review best practices in sky line policies and update the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations as needed.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
Public Spaces for Recreation	4.10	Support the creation of public spaces for recreation adjacent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 Future Growth Areas in order to limit traffic, impacts to rural Routt County and wildlife, and to reduce human-wildlife conflict.		
	4.10.A	Coordinate with Tier 1 Municipalities to identify appropriate adjacent areas for future public spaces for recreation.	Planning Department, Municipal Partners	0
	4.10.B	As Tier 2 Future Growth Areas develop, identify appropriate adjacent areas for public spaces and recreational amenities.	Planning Department, HOAs, Special Districts	0

Historic & Cultural Resources				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Historic Properties & Landscapes	5.1	Policy: The importance of preservation of cultural and historic resources, including archaeological sites, historic structures, natural areas, and agricultural landscapes should be considered in the review of proposed new land uses.		
	5.1.A	Action: Review and revise Zoning Regulations to encourage that designated historic structures be re-used and to provide flexibility regarding the placement of new structures within historic developments to maintain existing development patterns (e.g. alternative historic criteria for variances or situations where more generous dimensional standards can be applied).	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC, Municipal partners	1
	5.1.B	Action: Establish criteria for sites, buildings and agricultural landscapes that merit historical preservation.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, Historic Routt County, Municipal partners	2
	5.1.C	Action: Encourage partners to create a Historic & Cultural Preservation Plan based on community input.	Historic Routt County, Historic Preservation Board, Extension Office, Agricultural Alliance, Tread of Pioneers, Oak Creek Tracks and Trails Museum, Planning Department, Municipal partners	2
	5.1.D	Action: Work with property owners, County Planning and preservation organizations to create standards to help determine what types of historic structures may benefit from review criteria for redevelopment.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, Historic Routt County, Municipal partners	2
	5.1.E	Action: Support partners in the creation of an inventory and mapping tool that identifies areas of high cultural value to consider in project or application review.	Historic Routt County, Historic Preservation Board, Extension Office, Agricultural Alliance, Tread of Pioneers, Planning Department, Municipal partners	0
Adaptive Re-use	5.2	Policy: Support adaptive re-use of historic structures.		
	5.2.A	Action: Explore ways to encourage or incentivize adaptive re-use of structures that demonstrate historic significance as Secondary Dwelling Units and Accessory Structures.	Planning Department, Planning Commission	1

Historic & Cultural Resources				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Historic Review Criteria	5.3	Policy: Encourage new development to incorporate, complement, or reuse historic structures and cultural places or elements.		
	5.3.A	Action: Evaluate land use codes to support adaptive reuse of historic structures.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
Cultural Heritage	5.4	Policy: Allocate resources and identify additional funding sources to maintain the cultural heritage of structures, lands, vistas and other locations of significance.		
	5.4.A	Action: Establish a program that would allow for Routt County's recognition by the State of Colorado as a Certified Local Government to bolster preservation guidelines and to qualify property owners for grant funding and tax credits for private investment in historic preservation.	BCC, Historic Preservation Board, Historic Routt County	2
	5.4.B	Action: Network and communicate across municipalities to understand where policies may align or need to differ (including geographically) to support continued preservation, to pool resources, and to avoid the creation of conflicting policies.	Planning Department, Municipal partners	1
	5.4.C	Action: Secure funding to identify and document the County's historically valuable landscapes, structures, and artifacts.	Historic Preservation Board, County Grant Coordinator, Planning Department	2
	5.4.D	Action: Secure funding to protect and preserve the County's historically valuable landscapes, structures and artifacts.	Historic Preservation Board, County grant coordinator, Planning Department	2
Technology & Historic Preservation	5.5	Policy: Recognize that modern needs for technology and connectivity are not incompatible with historical and cultural preservation and can typically be integrated into preservation and adaptive reuse projects without compromise to technological or preservation objectives.		
	5.5.A	Action: Evaluate land use codes to support technology and connectivity to co-exist with historical and cultural preservation.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1

Housing & Economy				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Regional Partnerships	6.1	Policy: Support the development of regional partnerships to solve the housing problem.		
	6.1.A	Action: Provide political support and, when possible, financial support for affordable and workforce housing development in Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas.	BCC, Yampa Valley Housing Authority (YVHA)	0
	6.1.B	Action: Convene all relevant stakeholders to help address constraints or to leverage opportunities for affordable and workforce housing.	Planning Department, YVHA, Municipal Partners	0
	6.1.C	Action: Lead and participate in the identification and adoption of new or increased funding and/or regulatory tools for creating and maintaining affordable and workforce housing.	Planning Department, BCC, YVHA, Municipal Partners	1
Future Growth Areas West Steamboat Stagecoach	6.2	Policy: Focus housing development within Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas (West Steamboat, Stagecoach, and Hayden's 3-mile area).		
	6.2.A	Action: Support and recognize the YVHA-owned Brown Ranch, and the West Steamboat Area as priority locations for housing in Routt County.	BCC, YVHA, City of Steamboat Springs	0
	6.2.B	Action: Encourage the City of Steamboat Springs to annex properties that are eligible and whose owners are interested in annexation.	BCC, YVHA, City of Steamboat Springs	0
	6.2.C	Action: Support special districts as an alternative to or supplemental tool with annexation to allow for the creation of affordable and workforce housing with limited long-term financial obligations to future owners.	Planning Department, YVHA, Municipal Partners	0
	6.2.D	Action: Require municipal standards for developments interested in future annexation.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC, Public Works, Municipal partners	0
	6.2.E	Action: Recognize and promote Oak Creek and Hayden as vibrant communities with vacant lots, developable land, and infrastructure capacity to support housing development.	YVHA, Towns of Hayden and Oak Creek, Chamber of Commerce, NW Economic Development Council, Board of Realtors	0
	6.2.F	Action: Support property owners' applications for annexation into municipalities, especially when they provide an opportunity to increase the supply of affordable and workforce housing.	Planning Department, YVHA, Municipal Partners	0
	6.2.G	Action: Encourage housing in Stagecoach by exploring partnerships with landowners, funding incentives, and regulatory tools to encourage and facilitate higher density affordable and workforce housing in appropriate locations.	SPOA, HOAs, realtors, private property owners	1

Housing & Economy				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Short-term Rentals	6.3	Policy: Continue to prohibit short-term rentals in the unincorporated County outside of commercial zone districts.		
	6.3.A	Action: Educate HOAs about the County's short term rental policy.	Community groups, Board of Realtors, Planning Department	0
	6.3.B	Action: Hold community meetings to educate residents on policies and process around roads, STRs, water, etc.	Planning Department	0
	6.3.C	Action: Explore best practices for enforcement of short-term rental regulations and implementing future regulatory techniques.	Planning Department	1
Tier 3 Future Growth Areas	6.4	Policy: Small-scale developments should be considered in Tier 3 Small Established Communities like Phippsburg and Milner if they provide community benefits such as low-income or workforce housing, or services.		
	6.4.A	Action: Identify potential locations for affordable housing.	Planning Department	1
Tier 1 & Tier 2 Future Growth Areas	6.5	Policy: Support a broad range of housing opportunities in Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas. Integrate affordable and workforce housing into existing neighborhoods and communities, preferably close to civic/social amenities.		
	6.5.A	Action: Review land use codes and chart to allow affordable housing.	Planning Department	1
Affordable Housing Design	6.6	Policy: Encourage workforce and affordable housing to be integrated throughout new development rather than concentrated in one location or building.		
	6.6.A	Action: Review land use codes and chart .	Planning Department	1
	6.6.B	Action: Develop incentives such as density bonuses, setback allowances, parking reductions, or other consideration in exchange for incorporating affordable housing in new developments.	Planning Department	1
Diverse Housing Types	6.7	Policy: Enable a range of housing and ownership types In Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas to provide diverse housing stock and a spectrum of sales and rental prices. These options include rental apartments; ownership condominiums, townhomes, and single-family homes; and land-lease homeownership such as manufactured/ mobile homes and tiny homes.		
	6.7.A	Action: Collaborate with municipalities to implement upzonings and code changes to encourage more affordable housing and more diversity in housing types.	Planning Department, Municipal staff, BCC, Municipal leadership	1

Housing & Economy				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Deed Restrictions	6.8	Policy: Support the use of deed restrictions to create permanent affordability and access. Use both income-based deed restrictions and less restrictive resident-employee requirements depending on the specific project and housing types.		
	6.8.A	Action: Collaborate with municipalities to establish a universal template for several types of deed restrictions that provide uniform standards for developers and a shared understanding between jurisdictions on the expectations for orderly, efficient, and widespread development of affordable housing.	Planning & Legal Departments of the County and Municipalities	1
Density Incentives	6.9	Policy: Provide density incentives such as the exclusion of deed restricted units in the calculation for the overall density for residential projects within Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas.		
	6.9.A	Action: Collaborate with municipalities to establish policies for density incentives and a shared understanding between jurisdictions on the expectations for orderly, efficient, and widespread development of affordable housing.	Planning Departments of County and all municipalities	1
Gentle Density Tier 1 Municipalities	6.10	Policy: Encourage Tier 1 Municipalities to re-evaluate their zoning and subdivision standards to incorporate “gentle density” measures such as lot splits, small multi-family developments, and accessory dwelling units to accommodate growth within the existing urban fabric.		
Development Agreements	6.11	Policy: Support the use of development agreements and other regulatory tools to ensure workforce housing needs are being met in new projects.		
Infrastructure for Affordable Housing Future Growth Areas	6.12	Policy: Support the use of special districts to provide water and sewer service and other necessary infrastructure in Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas and Tier 3 Small Established Communities.		
	6.12.A	Action: Consider making the approval of a special district service plan by the County, where it has jurisdiction, contingent on the provision of a percentage of workforce or affordable housing.	Planning Department, Board of County Commissioners, YVHA	2
Maintaining Affordability	6.13	Policy: When public funding is used to incentivize housing, secure permanent affordability or resident-employee restrictions through deed restrictions, voluntary development agreements, or other regulatory tools as appropriate.		
Innovative Construction	6.14	Policy: Encourage zoning and building code amendments to allow innovative construction techniques that can produce lower cost, energy efficient, quality housing.		

Housing & Economy				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Mobile Homes	6.15	Policy: Ensure that existing manufactured/mobile home areas in the unincorporated County are maintained to supply safe and habitable homes.		
	6.15.A	Action: Collaborate with municipalities to create more realistic Zoning Regulations that maintain fire safety while remaining flexible with density and historical development patterns. Ensure all parks in the County and municipalities are properly zoned to prevent unanticipated redevelopment.	Planning Department, Building Department, Municipal Planning, Building, and Fire Departments, YVHA	1
	6.15.B	Action: Establish minimum safety/construction standards for both pre- and post-HUD-code homes that preserves affordable housing and allows for flexibility in upgrading and increasing the viability of homes.	Planning Department, Building Department, Municipal Planning, Building, and Fire Departments, YVHA	1
	6.15.C	Action: Establish an inspection program to identify illegal/unpermitted construction and remediate per standards above. Require park owners to maintain a map of all building improvements (livable and accessory/storage) and the permit associated with each improvement, if required.	Planning Department, Building Department, Municipal Planning, Building, and Fire Departments, YVHA, private property owners	2
Secondary Dwelling Units	6.16	Policy: Consider secondary dwelling units as a way to provide long-term housing.		
	6.16.A	Action: Develop a program to evaluate and monitor secondary dwelling units to determine how they are being used.	Planning Department, City of Steamboat Springs	2
Complete Communities	6.17	Policy: Encourage the design of complete communities that incorporate bicycle, pedestrian, transit access, and circulation elements, and include mixed use buildings and neighborhoods where appropriate.		
	3.17.A	Action: Revise the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to include standards for block length, connectivity, rights-of-way/easements, and other topographical considerations that support multimodal access with consideration for topography and sensitive areas.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1

Housing & Economy				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Housing Preservation Future Growth Areas YVHA Regional Housing Approach	6.18	Policy: Consider additional regulatory tools, funding sources, and programs that create and preserve housing.		
	6.18.A	Action: Consider adopting affordable housing mitigation fees on residential and/or non-residential development in the County. Consider supporting mitigation fees in Tier 1 and Tier 2 Future Growth Areas, with the funding dedicated to housing.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, YVHA	2
	6.18.B	Action: Support YVHA in future pursuits for additional funding. Consider supporting other taxes through ballot initiatives including employee head taxes, occupational taxes, excise taxes on new construction, and dedicated sales and/or lodging taxes.	Planning Department, BCC, YVHA	0
	6.18.C	Action: Continue partnering with municipalities and other quasi-public entities to establish the regional housing need and evaluate whether housing is being sufficiently provided in areas of greatest need.	Planning Department, Municipal Partners, YVHA	0
Commercial Development	6.19	Allow commercial development in Tier 1 municipalities, allow appropriately scaled commercial development Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas and, on a case-by-case basis, in Tier 3 Small Established Communities if determined to address a community need.		
	6.19.A	Action: Present the updated Master Plan to the Northwest Economic Development Council and the Routt County Economic Development Partnership.	Planning Department	1
Economic Partnerships	6.20	Support economic partnerships in the County engaged in economic and workforce development.		
	6.20.A	Action: Support housing growth to sustain and expand all sectors of the economy.	NW Economic Development Council, YVHA, Planning Department	0

Mobility & Transportation				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Regional Transportation Authority	7.1	Policy: Support the Regional Transportation Authority and consider changes to land use policies as needed.		
	7.1.A	Action: Engage in conversations with regional partners.	BCC, City Council, Public Works, Steamboat Springs Transit, City of Craig, Steamboat Ski Area, RTA	0
	7.1.B	Work with the Region III CDOT Transportation Director and the NW Transportation Planning Organization to ensure the state knows the transit, pedestrian and biking priorities for Routt County, especially when CDOT makes funding allocations	CDOT, BCC, Public Works, Steamboat Springs Transit, Municipal partners	0
Public Transportation	7.2	Policy: Encourage a diverse mixture of public and private transportation alternatives both within and outside Future Growth Areas (Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3) by increasing the number of available transportation options.		
	7.2.A	Action: Work with operators to increase frequency of bus service between Steamboat, Hayden, Craig.	BCC, City Council, Public Works, Steamboat Springs Transit, City of Craig, Steamboat Ski Area, RTA	0
	7.2.B	Action: Partner with the appropriate agencies in the region to pursue grants and other funding opportunities to expand public transportation service and frequency, as well as to improve transportation options to and from Yampa Valley Regional Airport.	BCC, City Council, Public Works, Steamboat Springs Transit, City of Craig, Steamboat Ski Area, RTA	0
	7.2.C	Action: Participate in efforts to encourage development of passenger rail service in and to the County, particularly connections to the Yampa Valley Regional Airport and Denver.	BCC, City Council, Public Works, Steamboat Springs Transit, City of Craig, Steamboat Ski Area, RTA, CDOT	0
	7.2.D	Action: Engage in discussions with regional partners to leverage existing assets in the County (i.e. Union Pacific's rail network) to explore public transportation and freight options in Routt County.	BCC, Public Works, Planning Department, Steamboat Springs Transit, City and County Partners, CDOT	1
	7.2.E	Action: Pursue new public transit options, including vanpools, deviated fixed route, or activity buses.	BCC, City Council, RC Public Works, Steamboat Springs Transit, City of Craig, Steamboat Ski Area, RTA	0

Public Transportation	7.3	Policy: Encourage mass transit alternatives to popular visitor destinations.		
Mobility & Transportation				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Bike & Pedestrian Safety	7.4	Policy: Protect and respect the rights of the pedestrian and the cyclist while considering the needs of agricultural operators.		
	7.4.A	Action: Explore ways to improve wayfinding and signage along key bike and pedestrian connections.	Public Works, bicycle advocacy groups	2
	7.4.B	Action: Identify County roads that could accommodate pedestrian/cycling lanes as part of a multi-modal transportation corridor.	Public Works	2
	7.4.C	Action: Partner with and support the appropriate agencies in the region to pursue grants and other funding opportunities to implement pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.	County Grant Coordinator, Public Works, Municipal Partners, CDOT	0
Bike & Pedestrian Safety	7.5	Policy: Encourage the use of non-motorized and public transit for recreational and local transportation needs and safety.		
	7.5.A	Action: Gather data and analyze potential ridership in the Oak Creek/Stagecoach area to determine if a vanpool program or fixed route bus is warranted. Establish thresholds for pursuing these transit options.	Regional Transit Authority	2
	7.5.B	Action: Identify high priority highway crossings and work with applicable agencies to develop safe crossing points: US 40 (e.g. Sleeping Giant School); Hwy 131 (e.g. at CR 14).	Public Works, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Municipal Partners	2
	7.5.C	Action: Widen road shoulders where possible on County roads to allow pedestrians and bikers (will need additional funding).	Public Works, County Grant Coordinator	3
Bike & Pedestrian Safety	7.6	Policy: Require that new development proposals include provisions to create and improve links to trail systems both as an alternative to the automobile and for recreational use.		
	7.6.A	Action: Encourage the development of trail networks that connect neighborhoods and feed into the regional network.	Public Works, Planning Department, Planning Commission	0

Bike & Pedestrian Safety	7.7	Policy: Encourage a pedestrian/bike system which connects retail areas, public facilities, recreational areas and neighborhoods that minimizes auto-truck-rail conflicts.		
	7.7.A	Action: Map areas where potential auto, truck, rail conflicts could occur.	GIS, Public Works, CDOT, and Planning Department, City of Steamboat Springs	2
	7.7.B	Action: Review design standards for open space and trails.	Planning Department, City of Steamboat Springs	1
Mobility & Transportation				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Transit-Oriented Development	7.8	Policy: Encourage transit-oriented development.		
	7.8.A	Action: Encourage land uses that contribute to an adequate housing supply in Tier 1 and Tier 2 Future Growth Areas for the workforce to reduce the need for long commutes.	Planning Department, Planning Commission	1
	7.8.B	Action: Identify and implement convenient locations for park-and-ride lots.	Public Works, Steamboat Springs Transit	3

Highway Closures	7.9	Policy: Address the impacts of road closures (I-70) that cause traffic to be re-routed through Routt County.		
	7.9.A	Action: Support Colorado Dept. of Transportation in identifying improvements to Hwy 131 to accommodate detours.	Public Works, CDOT	0
	7.9.B	Action: Identify County roads that should be used when detours are necessary.	Public Works, CDOT	1
	7.9.C	Action: Work with Colorado Dept of Transportation in identifying funding for the construction of passing lanes on roads under CDOT jurisdiction that see heavier traffic flow.	Public Works, CDOT	0

Mobility & Transportation

Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Road Maintenance	7.10	Policy: Pursue a comprehensive maintenance and funding program for County roads.		
	7.10.A	Action: All roads in rural residential subdivisions should be privately maintained. They will not be accepted for maintenance, except at the discretion of the Board of County Commissioners. This policy should be reflected in the restrictive covenants of the subdivision.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, Public Works, BCC	0
	7.10.B	Action: Allow, but do not encourage private developers to upgrade and maintain County roads to County specifications at their own expense. However, it will not change the County road maintenance classification.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, Public Works	0
	7.10.C	Action: Maintain existing levels of maintenance on rural County roads. Maintenance levels will not be increased to serve new rural residential subdivisions.	Public Works	0
	7.10.D	Action: Continue to measure, track and dedicate funding to road improvements and maintenance.	BCC, Public Works	0
	7.10.E	Action: Identify criteria and considerations for thresholds that will help the County prioritize which unpaved County roads should be paved and in what order.	Public Works	3
	7.10.F	Action: Explore a funding prioritization program for road maintenance and improvements (shoulder widening, bike/ped facilities, increased winter maintenance).	Public Works, County grant coordinator	3
	7.10.G	Action: Explore federal, state, and local grants and other funding solutions to support road maintenance.	Public Works, County Grant Coordinator	0

Emergency Access	7.11	Policy: All roads and driveways used for residential or commercial use must allow for emergency access.		
	7.11.A	Action: Review all subdivision plats to ensure policy is met.	Planning Department, Public Works	3
Trail Systems	7.12	Policy: Support the extension of the regional trail system to the west and south.		
	7.12.A	Action: Develop partnerships with local municipalities and community groups to develop a cooperative year-round maintenance model for the Core Trail.	Public Works, Municipal Partners	2
	7.12.B	Action: Develop partnerships between the County and local municipalities to seek funding for expansion of the Core Trail into unincorporated Routt County.	Public Works, Municipal Partners, County Grant Coordinator	0

Mobility & Transportation

Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Rural Roadways	7.13	Policy: Ensure that roadway design is compatible with topography, soils, vegetation, geology, visual and other natural features and limitations.		
	7.13.A	Action: Ensure that new developments include highly connective transportation networks wherever permitted by geographic constraints to increase the viability of multiple transportation options and reduce traffic. Discourage dead-end accesses unless necessary.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, Public Works	0
Roadway Design	7.14	Policy: Encourage the separation of transportation modes as much as possible on County roads and state highways through the use of parallel trails or wide shoulders.		
	7.14.A	Action: Where separation of transportation modes is infeasible, encourage traffic calming measures such as fog lines or reduced speed limits to increase safety for all transportation users.	Public Works	0
	7.14.B	Action: Advocate with CDOT and identify funding sources to widen shoulders on state and federal highways to improve safety.	Public Works, CDOT, County grant coordinator	0
Traffic Studies	7.15	Policy: Ensure that future development occurs where roads can accommodate projected traffic volumes and patterns.		
	7.15.A	Action: A traffic analysis should be performed for certain development to ensure that adequate access exists.	Planning Department, Public Works, CDOT	0
	7.15.B	Action: Advocate with CDOT and identify funding sources to widen shoulders on State and Federal highways to improve safety.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, Public Works	0
Public Land Access	7.16	Policy: Discourage vacation of any public right-of-way that access public land.		
	7.16.A	Action: Review applications for vacations.	Planning Department	0

Recreation & Tourism				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Recreation Mapping Wildlife	8.1	Policy: Evaluate the most appropriate areas for recreational use.		
	8.1.A	Action: Create a communication and mapping platform based on existing sub-area plans, the Land Use Chart, zoning, existing recreation-based use permits, and other resources to provide information on sensitive areas and recreation hot-spots.	Planning Dept, public land managers, non-profits, Routt Recreation and Conservation Roundtable (RRCR), other recreation advocacy groups, City of Steamboat Springs	1
	8.1.B	Action: Identify areas that are significant for wildlife activity (migration corridors, winter range, etc.) and include in the Routt County Recreation Map.	Planning Department, Public Land Managers, Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW)	1
	8.1.C	Action: Assess the cumulative impacts of recreational permits and mitigate for recreation impact hot-spots.	Planning Department	1
	8.1.D	Action: Support the work of partners to update and coordinate mapping that provides information pertinent to the balance between recreation and environmental health.	Planning Department, RRCR, Public Land Managers, CPW	0
	8.1.E	Action: Staff, Planning Commission, and the Board of County Commissioners should utilize the Recreation in Routt County map when evaluating applications for recreational operations and uses to determine if a proposed location is appropriate.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	0
	8.1.F	Action: Staff, Planning Commission, and the Board of County Commissioners should utilize the Recreation in Routt County map when reviewing/updating the County's regulations to mitigate the impacts of recreational operations.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	0
	8.1.G	Action: Support public land managers' efforts to strengthen conservation action (e.g. forestlands, waterways) and formulate appropriate measures.	Public Land Managers, UYWCD, RRCR	0
	8.1.H	Support the efforts of community groups to manage the impacts of recreation.	RRCR, other recreation advocacy groups	0
	Agri-tourism	8.2	Policy: Encourage recreational activities on agricultural lands that support the agricultural operation, without negatively impacting it.	
8.2.A		Action: Support partners that are exploring ways to develop an agri-tourism program that promotes and focuses on the agricultural way of life.	Planning Department, CSU Extension, Community Agriculture Alliance	1

Recreation & Tourism				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Regulation of Recreational Uses Use Permits	8.3	Policy: Support the review and potential amendment of allowed uses and zoning standards for recreational uses as a possible tool for expanding management of recreation.		
	8.3.A	Action: Undertake a comprehensive review of uses that would be appropriate on traditional agricultural lands. Update the Zoning Regulations in accordance with this process.	Planning Department, Planning Commission	1
	8.3.B	Action: Evaluate uses by right.	Planning Department, Planning Commission	1
	8.3.C	Action: Develop standards by identifying specific criteria for consideration for administrative review for river access and trailhead permitting.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
	8.3.D	Action: Evaluate the need for permitting for special events and consider off-site impacts.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
Road Classification	8.4	Policy: Commercial recreational businesses should be located on primary roads in the County, when possible. Discourage commercial recreational development that creates traffic on Secondary A and Secondary B County roads.		
	8.4.A	Action: Consider the road classification when reviewing applications.	Planning Department, Public Works	0
	8.4.B	Action: Use signage and natural or road boundaries to avoid conflicts between motorized and non-motorized uses.	Planning Department, Public Land Managers, RRCR, Public Works	3
	8.4.C	Action: Evaluate agri-tourism uses to ensure that they support traditional agricultural uses.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	0
	8.4.D	Action: Explore and review standards for specific recreation-oriented uses to address site clean-up, setbacks, noise, air & light pollution, road and parking impacts, congestion, and wildlife impacts.	Planning Department, RRCR, Public Land Managers, CPW	1
Special and Conditional Uses	8.5	Policy: Collaborate with the ranching and agricultural community to ensure that recreational and agri-tourism activities are compatible with their operations.		
	8.5.A	Action: Review list of available recreation-oriented Special and Conditional Uses in the A/F zone district.	Planning Department, CSU Extension, Community Agriculture Alliance, RRCR, other recreation advocacy groups, Public Land Managers	1

Recreation & Tourism				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Inter-agency Partnerships Public Transit	8.6	Policy: Encourage the establishment of a formal system of cooperation to improve partnerships with land managers (USFS, BLM, State Parks), outfitters, rental companies, etc. to develop coordinated public access strategies and manage recreational impacts.		
	8.6.A	Action: Develop a review process to mitigate off-site impacts of current uses-by-right (e.g., river access and trailheads).	Planning Department	1
	8.6.B	Action: Review responsibilities and identify funding sources to improve parking areas and maintenance of popular destinations.	Public Land Managers, Public Works, County Grant Coordinator	0
	8.6.C	Action: Consider shuttle services as a condition of approval where appropriate to minimize recreational traffic impacts.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	0
	8.6.D	Action: Support the effort to develop strategies, funding, and programs to better educate the public on the use of public lands.	Steamboat Springs Chamber, RRCR, Public Land Managers, CPW	0
Local Amenities Open Space	8.7	Policy: When considering recreational uses in rural areas, focus on maintaining the high quality of life of the County's residents.		
Public Land Access	8.8	Policy: Preserve public access to public lands.		
Open Space	8.9	Policy: Provide for open space within all new developments in order to protect and enhance the environment and the quality of life.		
Usable Open Space	8.10	Policy: Ensure that usable open space is required for developments that provides active and passive recreational environments.		
	8.10.A	Action: Consider standards to promote open space in land use applications.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
	8.10.B	Action: Support the creation of public spaces for recreation adjacent to Future Growth Areas.	Planning Department, Municipal partners	0
Climate Action Plan	8.11	Policy: Promote land management practices (e.g., reforestation, restoration, conservation, natural climate solutions) that increase carbon sequestration and storage across forests, wetlands, riparian corridors, and ag/rangelands and preserve carbon sinks, especially forests and wetlands, and designate future land uses to maximize carbon sequestration.		
Public and Recreation Spaces Human-Wildlife Conflicts	8.12	Support the creation of public spaces for recreation adjacent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 Future Growth Areas in order to limit traffic, impacts to rural Routt County and wildlife, and to reduce human-wildlife conflicts.		
	8.12.A	Coordinate with Tier 1 Municipalities to identify appropriate adjacent areas for future public spaces for recreation.	Planning Department, Municipal Partners	0
	8.12.B	As Tier 2 Future Growth Areas develop, identify appropriate adjacent areas for public spaces and recreational amenities.	Planning Department, HOAs, Special Districts	0

Open Space & Agriculture				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Agricultural Lands	9.1	Policy: Support bona-fide and viable agricultural operations.		
	9.2	Policy: Recognize the importance of maintaining the viability of agricultural operations and support them by continuing to allow supplemental uses with appropriate permitting.		
	9.2.A	Action: Revise Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to support agricultural operations.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
	9.2.B	Action: Encourage outreach programs for new residents to educate them regarding activities associated with ranching and their responsibilities to maintain rural lands.	CSU Extension, realtors, HOAs, Community Agriculture Alliance	0
	9.2.C	Action: Work with the agricultural community to better understand their use of County roads and how to reduce conflicts with other road users.	Community Agriculture Alliance, CSU Extension, Public Works, Planning Department	0
Agricultural Character	9.3	Policy: Discourage development that changes the rural character or historic agricultural uses and/or practices.		
	9.3.A	Action: Create a definition of agriculture that helps decision-makers decide whether a true agricultural operation is the primary use of a property or not.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
Preserving Open Space	9.4	Policy: Preserve open space.		
	9.4.A	Action: Encourage subdivision review criteria and standards that provide landowners with clear guidance for preserving open space while maintaining flexibility.	Planning Department	1
	9.4.B	Action: Provide incentives for the preservation of wetlands, scenic areas and other sensitive lands.	Planning Department, City of Steamboat Springs	1
	9.4.B	Action: Develop requirements for buffer areas between urban development, non-agricultural uses and agricultural lands.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
	9.4.D	Action: Support partnerships with organizations that work to preserve open space.	Planning Department	0
Rural Residential Development	9.5	Policy: Discourage rural residential developments in areas of prime agricultural production.		
Conservation Easements	9.6	Policy: Encourage the use of Conservation Easements to protect open space and traditional agricultural activities and operations.		
	9.6.A	Action: Support education and outreach regarding conservation easement programs.	Community Agriculture Alliance, Planning Department	0

Open Space & Agriculture				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Agricultural Lands	9.7	Policy: Protect prime agricultural areas from the impacts of developments and commercial recreation.		
Scattered Developments	9.8	Policy: Strongly discourage scattered development and 35-acre subdivisions.		
	9.8.A	Action: Encourage cluster development and use of Land Preservation Subdivision (LPS) Exemptions to discourage and reduce the desirability of 35-acre subdivisions.	Planning Department	0
	9.8.B	Action: Encourage innovative planning techniques for preservation of irrigated hay meadows, hay production and agriculture operations. Promote the education and use of programs such as conservation easements, Purchase of Development Rights (PDR's) and pursue a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.	Planning Department, Municipal Partners	0
Future Growth Areas	9.9	Policy: Direct new development to Tier 1 and Tier 2 Future Growth Areas.		
Agricultural Property Maintenance	9.10	Policy: Encourage private landowners to maintain agricultural properties.		
	9.10.A	Action: Work with homeowners' associations regarding the proper management of agricultural lands by using consistent communications and messaging.	Planning Department, CSU Extension	0
	9.10.B	Action: The restrictive covenants of subdivisions should have specific wording that addresses the proper maintenance of agricultural properties, including fences and weeds. These restrictive covenants shall be enforced by the homeowners association.	HOAs, Planning Department	0
Irrigation Ditches	9.11	Policy: In extreme cases, restrict subdivisions where there is potential for development to cause damage to irrigation ditches or other sensitive resources.		
Noxious Weeds	9.12	Policy: Noxious weeds must be controlled at the expense of the landowner.		
	9.12.A	Action: Require restrictive covenants for new developments to include weed management provisions.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	0
Weed Management	9.13	Policy: Enforce the weed management program and educate new or unaware landowners or those that refuse to manage weeds.		
	9.13.A	Action: The Routt County Extension Service and Weed Department will assist landowners in weed identification, chemical and non-chemical control and the development of weed management plans for private land.	CSU Extension Service and Weed Department	0

Open Space & Agriculture				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Domestic Predators	9.14	Policy: Domestic predators running at large are not accepted in Routt County. Not only can they be a threat to livestock, but also to wildlife and humans.		
	9.14.A	Action: Require all landowners to manage domestic predators to prevent impacts to livestock, wildlife and humans.	BCC, Routt County Sheriff	0
Rural Residential Subdivisions	9.15	Policy: Support the smooth interaction between neighboring property owners in rural areas. This support should refer to the Right-to-Farm legislation, A Guide to Rural Living and Small-scale Agriculture, Land Preservation Subdivision and PDR program.		
	9.15.A	Action: Encourage and assist in outreach programs targeted towards new residents to educate them regarding activities associated with ranching and their responsibilities to maintain rural lands.	Realtors, CSU Extension, Community Agriculture Alliance	0
	9.15.B	Action: When designing rural residential subdivisions, consider problems that may be created by the application of insecticides and herbicides on adjoining agricultural lands.	Realtors, CSU Extension, Community Agriculture Alliance, Planning Department	0
	9.15.C	Action: Agricultural irrigation ditches can be adversely affected by rural residential subdivision. Developers should address potential irrigation ditch damage by dedicating minimum right-of-way access and setbacks and employing maintenance agreements to address the upkeep of culverts, access roads, fences, and berms, where applicable.	Planning Department	0
	9.15.D	Consider problems that may be created by the application of insecticides and herbicides on adjoining agricultural lands when designing rural residential subdivisions.	Realtors, CSU Extension, Community Agriculture Alliance, Planning Department	0
View Corridors	9.16	Policy: Protect unique view corridors with high aesthetic value, including the south valley floor and the Hwy 40 and CR 129 corridors.		
	9.16.A	Action: Continue to enforce the Skyline standards that have served the County well in protecting these high value aesthetic areas.	Planning Department	0
	9.16.B	Action: Evaluate design standards in the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to mitigate offsite impacts.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
	9.16.C	Action: Protect the natural topography and prevent the spread of noxious weeds by reviewing the appropriateness of allowing soil berms.	Planning Department	1
Open Space	9.17	Policy: Require usable open space and public space within all new developments in order to protect and enhance the environment and the quality of life.		
	9.17.A	Action: Evaluate open space requirements for developments to assess their effectiveness in providing active and passive spaces and to protect identified viewsheds.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1

Sustainability & Climate Action				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Sustainable Design & Development Practices	10.1	Policy: Support sustainable design and development practices that encourage use of low-carbon and renewable energy in land use and development.		
	10.2	Policy: Support energy, water efficiency and conservation in land use in development.		
Sustainable Design & Development Practices Future Growth Areas	10.2.A	Action: Evaluate the Land Use Code and/or Subdivision Regulations to add flexibility for new techniques in designing and building safe, comfortable and energy efficient structures.	Planning Department, Building Department	1
	10.2.B	Action: Discourage energy-inefficient residential design and/or equipment by exploring fees or disincentives for low-performing or excessively large houses.	Planning Department, Building Department	1
	10.2.C	Action: Evaluate building codes to encourage new techniques in designing safe, comfortable, and efficient structures. Encourage the use of building materials and systems that can be reused or repurposed rather than being discarded.	Planning Department, Building Department	0
	10.2.D	Action: Continue to encourage compact development in Tier 1 Municipalities and Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas that considers proximity of transportation options, employment and day-to-day services.	Planning Department, Planning Commission	0
	10.3	Policy: Continue to support a transition of energy production to lower-carbon and renewable sources.		
Renewable Energy	10.3.A	Action: Leverage existing fossil fuel energy generation facilities/infrastructure for reuse for renewable energy production and/or storage.	Planning Department, Xcel Energy, Peabody	1
	10.3.B	Action: Explore standards and codes to mitigate impacts from large-scale renewable energy generating facilities.	Planning Department, Planning Commission	1
	10.3.C	Action: Encourage development to include facilities or features that reduce the amount of fossil fuels consumed, or to generate renewable energy on- or off-site.	Planning Department, Building Department	0
	10.3.D	Action: Remove barriers to community renewable energy facilities, e.g. solar gardens, on-site generation, and virtual net metering of solar PVs.	Planning Department, Building Department	1
Climate Action Plan	10.4	Policy: Prioritize the Climate Action Plan goals in all land use planning decisions.		
	10.4.A	Action: Review strategies and actions identified in CAP to determine what, if any, regulations and codes need to be added to Land Use Code and regulations. Create regulations and adopt them.	Planning Department, Department of Environmental Health, Planning Commission, BCC	1

Sustainability & Climate Action				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Energy Efficient Development	10.5	Policy: Encourage new construction to be as energy efficient and sustainable as possible. (CAP ES1, ES2, ES3)		
	10.5.A	Action: Explore fees for high-consumption residential buildings to offset increased energy and water use and consider implementing energy impact fees.	Planning Department, Building Department	2
	10.5.B	Action: Explore revisions to the Building Code that would require energy efficient appliances, building systems, construction materials and techniques and fuel choice.	Planning Department, Building Department	1
	10.5.C	Action: Consider revising Building Code to limit fuel choice, energy density, use of BTUs, etc. of energy inefficient appliances and energy consuming amenities.	Planning Department, Building Department	1
	10.5.D	Action: Encourage the re-use of existing structures when possible.	Planning Department, Building Department	0
Renewable Energy	10.6	Policy: Promote and facilitate renewable energy production or development opportunities in unincorporated areas while balancing impacts to agriculture or other rural assets. (CAP ES1)		
	10.6.A	Action: Determine criteria that help mitigate visual impacts to air quality, water quality, wildlife habitat or agricultural areas.	Planning Department	1
	10.6.B	Action: Update the Zoning Regulations to address utility and community-scale solar.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
	10.6.C	Action: Work with the power providers and generators (YVEA, Tri-State, and Excel) to understand the capacity available and the current transmission system.	Planning Department, Energy Providers	1
	10.6.D	Action: Work to improve the County's silver status with Sol Smart to achieve gold status.	Planning Department, Energy Providers	2
	10.6.E	Action: Create a mapping application to identify appropriate areas for large-scale renewable resource projects.	Planning Department, City of Steamboat Springs	1
	10.6.F	Action: Support the reuse of former coal or other fossil fuel facilities or infrastructure to aid a transition to lower-carbon and renewable energy.	Planning Department, BCC	0
	10.6.G	Action: Review and update the Land Use Chart to incentivize renewable energy facilities.	Planning Department	1

Sustainability & Climate Action				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Climate Action Plan	10.7	Policy: Implement CAP Waste Sector Strategies and Actions to incorporate policies into the land use framework.		
	10.7.A	Action: Continue to incentivize and encourage waste reduction and diversion.	Planning Department, Department of Environmental Health	0
	10.7.B	Action: Identify areas in the unincorporated County that are ideal for recycling and composting facilities.	Planning Department, Department of Environmental Health, Yampa Valley Sustainability Council (YVSC)	1
	10.7.C	Action: Encourage the recycling/reuse of construction materials to minimize waste to the extent possible.	Planning Department, Department of Environmental Health	0

Natural Resources & Hazards				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Forest & Watershed Health	11.1	Policy: Support forest health improvements.		
	11.1.A	Action: Support public land managers (e.g. U.S. Forest Service, CPW, Colorado State Forest Service) to jointly manage forest health and watershed health and to restore forests following wildfires.	US Forest Service, CPW, Colorado State Forest Service, Public Works	0
	11.1.B	Action: Partner to devise strategies that jointly maintain facilities that allow access to forest lands while minimizing impacts.	US Forest Service, CPW, Public Works	0
	11.1.C	Action: Review land clearing activities in forested private lands to maintain a healthy watershed and incentivize appropriate forest management activities.	Planning Department	1
	11.1.D	Action: Strengthen stream protections through updates to Zoning and Subdivision standards.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
Water Conservation	11.2	Policy: Support water conservation practices to effectively manage water resources.		
	11.2.A	Action: Support the implementation of the Basin Roundtable Integrated Water Management Plan.	Upper Yampa Water Conservation District (UYVCD)	1
	11.2.B	Action: Encourage river organizations to consolidate river management studies and plans.	Yampa White Green Basin Roundtable (YWGBR), non-profits, US Fish & Wildlife, other partners	0
	11.2.C	Action: Work with the Building Department to adopt water conservation/saving codes with a focus on outdoor water conservation/efficiency.	Building Department, UYVCD	1
	11.2.D	Action: Promote water conservation and infrastructure practices (e.g. SNOTEL, soil moisture monitoring networks, streamflow gages, etc.) both in the built environment and in agricultural practices.	Planning Department, UYVCD, CSU Extension, Community Agriculture Alliance	0
	11.2.E	Action: Evaluate Zoning and Subdivision Regulations regarding requirements for proof of water, specifically allowances for hauling water.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
	11.2.F	Action: Support community efforts to improve riparian health, river flows, and agricultural infrastructure upgrades.	YWGBR, non-profits, US Fish & Wildlife, other partners	0
11.2.G	Action: Partner to create incentives for stream and riparian habitat restoration and protection.	YWGBR, non-profits, US Fish & Wildlife, other partners	0	

Natural Resources & Hazards				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Wildlife Diversity	11.3	Policy: Protect wildlife species and their habitats.		
Wildlife & Wildlife Habitat Wildlife Map	11.4	Policy: Include wildlife habitat and species information in land use and site plan decision-making.		
	11.4.A	Action: Review the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to add current mitigation techniques for protecting wildlife and preserving wildlife habitat.	Planning Department	1
Wildlife/Human Conflict	11.5	Policy: Encourage land use practices that will minimize conflicts between wildlife and human uses.		
	11.5.A	Action: Work with partners to identify large remainder parcels and conservation easements. Continue the PDR program and other land conservation programs to mitigate the impacts of climate change.	Planning Department	0
	11.5.B	Action: Develop and implement standards for residential and recreational development to reduce the potential for human-wildlife conflicts.	Planning Department	1
	11.5.C	Action: Develop design guidelines that address building siting, lighting, vegetation, and fencing to minimize the impacts of development.	Planning Department	1

Natural Resources & Hazards				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Wildlife Impacts Recreation	11.6	Policy: Consider impacts on wildlife before approving new recreational uses, residential developments, and other developments and permits.		
	11.6.A	Action: Identify lands where human activity is detrimental to wildlife roaming, migration, calving and nesting areas and consider criteria for impact mitigation or for comprehensive protection from development or human activity in critical habitat areas.	Planning Department, CPW, RRCR	1
	11.6.B	Action: Develop a land use review process that includes the Colorado Parks and Wildlife as Routt County's wildlife and wildlife habitat advisor. Other information sources should be included as deemed necessary by Planning Commission.	Planning Department, CPW, Planning Commission, Keep Routt Wild	1
	11.6.C	Action: Create educational programs for recreation users and home buyers on the negative impacts that their activities can have on wildlife.	CSU Extension, realtors, HOAs, CPW, Keep Routt Wild	1
	11.6.D	Action: Address timing and phasing of construction activities to avoid impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat.	Planning Department, CPW	0
	11.6.E	Action: Review the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to add current mitigation techniques for preserving wildlife.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
	11.6.F	Action: Amend the Routt County Zoning Resolution and Subdivision Regulations to add current mitigation techniques, including requirements for a Wildlife Mitigation Plan.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
	11.6.G	Action: Utilize the list of Beneficial Management Practices as set forth in the Routt County Species Matrix, as developed by Colorado Parks and Wildlife as a valuable tool for identifying possible mitigation techniques.	Planning Department	0
	Wildlife Impacts	11.7	Policy: Minimize the cumulative impacts of development on wildlife and wildlife habitat.	
Habitat Preservation	11.8	Policy: Continue to promote the Land Preservation Subdivision (LPS) Exemption processes to preserve large remainder parcels for wildlife habitat.		
Native Vegetation	11.9	Policy: Protect and/or improve the diversity of native vegetation.		
Hazard Mitigation Plan	11.10	Policy: Acknowledge the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and its objectives and actions as Master Plan implementation strategies.		
	11.10.A	Action: Work with County departments to ensure updates to the HMP are coordinated and not in conflict with Master Plan goals, policies and actions.	Emergency Management, Planning Department	1

Natural Resources & Hazards				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Community Wildfire Protection Plan	11.11	Policy: In addition to the HMP, the Master Plan also recognizes strategies in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in reference to wildfire hazards and acknowledges associated implementation measures including partnering on fuels treatment projects designed to reduce overall wildfire risk.		
	11.11.A	Action: Reach out to and educate HOAs, realtors, and developers about the risk of hazards.	Emergency Management, Planning Department	1
Wildfire	11.12	Policy: Discourage land uses that increase the potential for wildfires in high risk wildfire hazard areas.		
	11.12.A	Action: Reach out to and educate HOAs, realtors, and developers about the risk of wildfires.	Emergency Management, Planning Department, Municipal Partners	1
Development in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)	11.13	Policy: Discourage land uses that could place those with mobility issues in high-risk wildfire hazard areas.		
	11.14	Policy: Construction of structures in all potential wildfire areas may include the following considerations:		
	11.14.A	Action: To avoid insects and diseases destructive to forests and wildfire hazards, all vegetative residue, or other flammable lot-clearing debris will be removed from around homesite areas.	Planning Department, Building Department	0
	11.14.B	Action: Electrical service loops to buildings having individual water wells and pump pressure systems should ensure that fire in the building or its electrical systems would not impair the operation of the pump pressure system.	Planning Department, Building Department, Fire Departments	0
	11.14.C	Action: Stacks and chimneys will be equipped with spark arrestors.	Planning Department, Building Department	0
	11.14.D	Action: Encourage the use of sprinklers in buildings, where appropriate.	Building Department	0
	11.14.E	Action: Properly dispose of slash material that will not be used for specific purposes by removal, chipping or burning under safe conditions.	Planning Department, Building Department, Office of Emergency Management	0
	11.14.F	Action: Install practical fuel break systems approved by the State Forest Service where necessary.	Colorado State Forest Service, US Forest Service	0
	11.14.G	Action: Ensure that the infrastructure to allow emergency vehicle access and water supply for firefighting that are supported by the Uniform Fire Code and/or State Forester's Guide is required for all new subdivisions.	Planning Department, Fire Departments, Office of Emergency Management	0

Natural Resources & Hazards				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Slope Development	11.15	Policy: Prohibit all development on slopes of 30% or greater. Development in steep draws or valleys, which tend to channel fire movement, is particularly dangerous and is also strongly discouraged.		
Development in the Floodplain	11.16	Policy: Strongly discourage buildings in the 100-year floodplain and in flood prone areas. When an owner chooses to build in a 100-year floodplain, Routt County is not responsible for assisting the owner during a flood event or preventing floods in the area.		
Development in Hazard Areas	11.17	Policy: Prohibit all construction and excavations on potential hazard areas including landslides, rockfall areas, unstable slopes, mudflows, and steep drainages.		
	11.17.A	Action: Review mitigation techniques for development within a natural hazard area.	Planning Department, Building Department	0
Mining Activity	11.18	Policy: Ensure that new long-term (more than one year) mineral extraction operations and associated uses, as well as existing operations, mitigate visual impacts to the maximum extent feasible.		
	11.18.A	Action: Review regulations and standards for mining and related uses.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, BCC	1
	11.18.B	Action: Include mining operations and their visual impacts on the Land Use Story Map.	Planning, GIS	1
Mining Activity	11.19	Policy: Discourage the placement of mining operations that would permanently harm significant wildlife habitat, permanently displace wildlife populations or interfere with migration corridors.		
	11.19.A	Action: Employ wildlife maps, updated migration data, LIDAR and other technologies to map areas most and least appropriate for the location of gravel pits.	Planning Department, Colorado Parks & Wildlife	1

Natural Resources & Hazards				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Hauling Natural Resources	11.20	Policy: Encourage the minimization of haul distances for mining extractions.		
	11.20.A	Action: Encourage the payment of impact fees, ton-mile fees, up-front road improvement fees, or other fee system to be used to offset the costs of maintenance and improvements to roads used for hauling minerals.	Planning Department, Public Works	0
	11.20.B	Action: Amend the Land Use Code to formalize the County's current practice of requiring operators to conduct traffic studies and improve roads prior to operations commencing.	Planning Department, Public Works	1
	11.20.C	Action: Discourage the exportation of gravel to surrounding counties.	Planning Department, Public Works	0
Reclamation of Mining Operations	11.21	Policy: Partner with mining operators to reclaim mining operations for beneficial uses. Where reclamation for wildlife habitat is appropriate, techniques recommended by Colorado Parks and Wildlife should be used.		
	11.21.A	Action: Require that reclamation be done to create an aesthetically pleasing site or reclaimed area that will blend with or improve upon the surrounding areas.	Planning Department	0
	11.21.B	Action: Require reclamation that results in productive agricultural land or significant wildlife habitat.	Planning Department	0
	11.21.C	Action: Encourage the reclamation of mine operations to minimize the amount of exposed surface water.	Planning Department	0
Reclamation of Mining Operations	11.22	Policy: Partner with mining operators to create wildlife parks, reserves, wetland mitigation sites, or other beneficial environmental use as an end result of the mining activity.		
Long-term Mining Operations	11.23	Policy: Long term mining operations and associated uses should be located in areas where they do not greatly impact scenic vistas, where there are compatible agricultural and industrial uses, and where they are not in proximity to residential neighborhoods, recreational, or other incompatible uses. Areas with parcels of 35 acres and greater are not considered residential neighborhoods.		
Aggregate Recycling	11.24	Policy: Support the recycling of aggregate whenever possible and strive to be current on the best available recycling techniques.		
Coal Extraction Businesses	11.25	Policy: Recognize that residents, businesses, and school districts have traditionally depended on the income generated from coal extraction.		
	11.25.A	Action: Partner with organizations looking to replace coal extraction with businesses that contribute to the economy and the local tax base.	BCC, School Districts, Chamber, NW Economic Development	0

Public Health & Equity				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Complete Neighborhoods Future Growth Areas Housing Diversity	12.1	Policy: Design healthy and complete neighborhoods where new and existing places have safe roads, gathering areas, and parks as well as access to jobs, commerce, transit, and public services.		
	12.1.A	Action: In Future Growth Areas, encourage residential development to be in proximity to existing or future multi-modal transportation networks such as: trails, sidewalks, bike paths or future transit stops and connections.	Planning Department, Public Works	0
	12.1.B	Action: Diversify the type and cost of the housing supply by emphasizing mixed-income neighborhoods and homeownership in Tier 1 Future Growth Areas.	Planning Department, Municipal partners, Department of Human Services	1
	12.1.C	Action: Develop and maintain a measurement system and regularly evaluate the conditions of neighborhoods and amenities in the context of public health and equity to understand how land use patterns affect health outcomes for all.	Planning Department, Public Health Department, Municipal Partners, Department of Human Services	3
Essential Services Future Growth Areas	12.2	Policy: Encourage development in Future Growth Areas that incorporates essential services (e.g. grocery, medical care, childcare).		
	12.2.A	Action: Ensure land use plans for Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas, particularly West Steamboat and Stagecoach, support a mix of uses that promote walking and biking to amenities and services.	Planning Department, Public Works	0
	12.2.B	Action: Develop alternate transportation options to essential services that accommodate users of all abilities.	Planning Department, Public Works, Municipal Partners, Council on Aging, Department of Human Services	2
Housing Options Future Land Use Framework	12.3	Policy: Avoid and minimize displacement by continuing to support a variety of housing options and employment in Tier 1 and Tier 2 Future Growth Areas.		
	12.3.A	Action: Create a Future Land Use framework that supports non-residential development that includes amenities, day-to-day services and community health facilities in underserved areas.	Planning Department	1
	12.3.B	Action: Support land annexation proposals for areas located adjacent to Tier 1 Municipalities to leverage new and expanded essential services.	Planning Department, BCC, Municipal Partners	1
Active Living Recreation	12.4	Policy: Support healthy lifestyles by expanding recreation opportunities including walking, biking and exercising in open spaces, trails and parks.		
	12.4.A	Action: Ensure Future Growth Areas have adequate recreational space along with growth, and that facilities match local needs and character.	Planning Department	0
	12.4.B	Action: Support partnerships with local, state and federal organizations to develop a methodology to identify underserved populations and barriers to participation or access to recreation areas and programs.	Public Health Department, local/state/federal partners	0

Public Health & Equity				
Category	Ref #	Policy/Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Public Health	12.5	Policy: Collaborate with the Routt County Public Health Department to ensure the land use framework continues to support public health goals for underserved populations.		
	12.5.A	Action: Support the Human Services Department in seeking funding through partnerships and grants to provide health, human care, after school programs and shelter accommodations that serve the unincorporated County.	Public Health Department, Human Services, Municipal Partners	0
	12.5.B	Action: Identify underserved populations by asset mapping or other analyses to assist local partners in expanding access to health care services for these communities.	Public Health Department, Human Services, City of Steamboat Springs	3
Healthy Food Options Agriculture	12.6	Policy: Encourage development that provides all citizens with better access to healthy food options-including gardens or locally grown food.		
	12.6.A	Action: Consider adding land uses and standards for healthy food options (community garden, co-op, etc).	Planning Department, Department of Human Services, CSU Extension	1
	12.6.B	Action: Protect the viability of local agriculture to encourage food production and supply by seeking to address the needs of farmers, ranchers, and other local food producers, and by supporting the adoption of resilient agricultural practices.	CSU Extension, Community Agriculture Alliance, Public Health Department	0
	12.6.C	Action: Encourage local agencies to connect those with agricultural land with those wanting to grow food.	CSU Extension, Community Agriculture Alliance	0
Healthy Lifestyles Alternative Transportation	12.7	Policy: Support healthy lifestyles through inclusive and active community design principles that create alternative transportation options.		
	12.7.A	Action: Ensure Future Growth Areas consider alternative transportation routes between residential development and services.	Planning Department, Public Works, Municipalities, Council on Aging	0
	12.7.B	Action: Support efforts to protect alternative transportation options from conflicts with automobile use where traffic levels and safety concerns are higher.	Planning Department, Public Works	0
	12.7.C	Action: Identify best design practices for the elderly, women, children, and people with disabilities to encourage confidence and use of alternative transportation networks.	Planning Department, Public Health Department, Council on Aging	3



13.2 | Next Steps

This Plan will serve as the guiding policy document for the next 10-15 years. It is anticipated that periodic reviews and updates to applicable plans, codes and policies may be required to advance the Implementation Plan. It is acknowledged that the Plan goals will likely be realized incrementally. Establishing changes to the regulatory process and the adoption of revised guidelines and standards will be a necessary first step. Some required changes to the County’s regulatory framework may require financial investments on the part of the County. Each investment should provide significant benefit to preserving and maintaining the culture, heritage, and aesthetic priorities established by the residents of Routt County. Additional analysis may be required as the Plan goals transition to policy and investments in Routt County.

APPENDIX

14.1 | Detailed Public Input Summary

It is estimated that nearly 1,200 people participated in the various outreach channels and provided the thousands of data points that now form the basis of the Master Plan Update. Using the quantitative, qualitative, anecdotal and direct comment, the team mined the data to find direct commonalities that could be meshed with all other inputs and translated into the Master Plan Update.

Throughout all the outreach there were many similarities in the prioritization of theme statements between different areas of the County. There were also many differences. These differences seem to reflect that each area of the County has a distinct ‘personality’ and different influences and pressures that trigger these priorities. Here are the top theme statements in each category ranked highest to lowest concern based on geographic area.

North Routt

1. Focus programs and resources less on tourists and more on residents
2. Address a diminishing sense of community
3. Educate new residents and visitors about the ‘ethics’ of living in Routt County
4. Growth is going to happen so we need to be smarter about it
5. Large affordable housing projects do NOT belong in unincorporated areas of Routt County
6. Identify West Steamboat as a growth area for YVHA affordable housing
7. Develop a cohesive short-term rental management strategy – then implement and enforce
8. Alternative transportation (like buses, rail, commuter trails, etc.) between communities (like Hayden, Oak Creek, Stagecoach, Steamboat, etc.) is most important
9. Drought or severe drought will severely impact my daily life/livelihood
10. Determine what impacts recreation is having on open lands
11. Extract impact fees for building larger homes that would help pay for affordable housing
12. There is too much human activity in sensitive wildlife areas
13. Promote water conservation measures for residential and commercial structures
14. Determine any areas of recreation overuse
15. Conservation of public/open lands is more important than recreation

Steamboat/West Steamboat

16. Focus programs and resources less on tourists and more on residents
17. Alternative transportation (like buses, rail, commuter trails, etc.) between communities (like Hayden, Oak Creek, Stagecoach, Steamboat, etc.) is most important
18. Address a diminishing sense of community
19. The Master Plan should celebrate our existing community character
20. Develop a cohesive short-term rental management strategy – then implement and enforce
21. Define and protect riparian areas from development
22. Improve safe and equitable multimodal access throughout each community to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
23. Conservation of public/open lands is more important than recreation
24. There are too many marketed large events
25. Promote compact development patterns to preserve natural land use types
26. Ensure basic/modern infrastructure is provided County-wide
27. Growth is going to happen so we need to be smarter about it
28. Ensure adequate funding for the implementation of the Routt County 2021 Climate Action Plan
29. Create more affordability and diversified housing
30. Identify other communities (Hayden, PBurg, Oak Creek, etc.) as growth areas for affordable housing

South Routt

31. Alternative transportation (like buses, rail, commuter trails, etc.) between communities (like Hayden, Oak Creek, Stagecoach, Steamboat, Yampa, etc.) is most important
32. Drought or severe drought will severely impact my daily life/livelihood
33. Encourage local food production
34. The County needs to balance recreation use and conservation of public lands
35. The Master Plan should celebrate our existing community character
36. Ensure basic/modern infrastructure is provided County-wide
37. Young people/families are bearing the brunt of the housing crisis
38. Educate new residents and visitors about the ‘ethics’ of living in Routt County
39. Promote agricultural water conservation measures
40. Focus County efforts in areas outside of Steamboat
41. Access to internet in rural County areas needs to be improved
42. Historic districts should be maintained and protected
43. Develop a cohesive short-term rental management strategy – then implement and enforce
44. Define and protect riparian areas from development
45. Promote compact development patterns to preserve natural land use types

West Routt

46. Encourage local food production
47. The County needs to balance recreation use and conservation of public lands
48. Create (or assist communities in creating) a job transition plan for the impending mine and plant closures
49. Alternative transportation (like buses, rail, commuter trails, etc.) between communities (like Hayden, Oak Creek, Stagecoach, Steamboat, etc.) is most important
50. Increase the use of locally produced clean energy sources
51. Access to fresh food is critical to health and wellness
52. Need a strong historic preservation policy to preserve community character
53. Ensure basic/modern infrastructure is provided County-wide
54. Foster a cultural identity that extends back from the Ute settlement period to now
55. The Master Plan should celebrate our existing community character
56. Create more affordability and diversified housing
57. Extract impact fees for building larger homes that would help pay for affordable housing
58. Define and protect riparian areas from development
59. Incentivize water conservation like grey water re-use, rain barrel collection, and/or residential irrigation reductions (xeriscape)
60. Young people/families are bearing the brunt of the housing crisis

The overall rankings for each planning element are as follows:

GROWTH, HOUSING & LAND USES

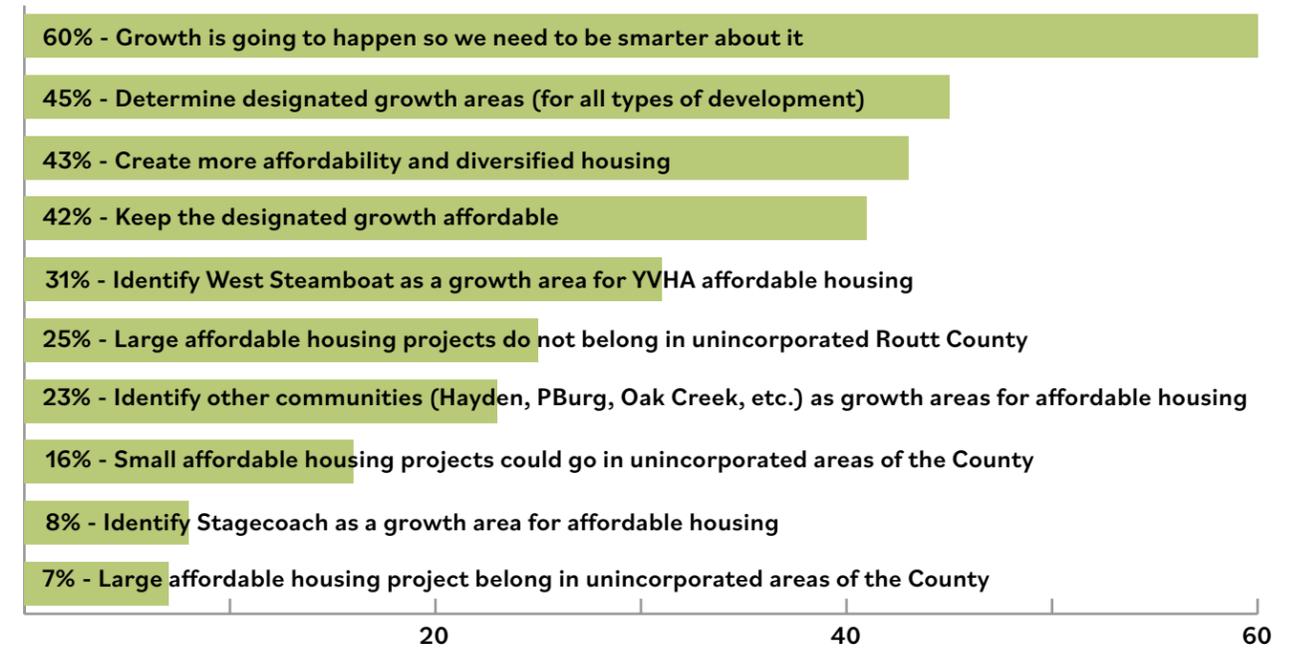


Figure 20: Overall public input on Growth, Housing & Land Uses

Other statements that multiple respondents shared:

- The desire for a County-wide Future Land Use Map (FLUM) with detailed land use categories
- Desire for more flexible land use categories to allow for appropriate commercial uses in the unincorporated County
- There should be more regulation to achieve sustainability of homes that exceed a certain square footage
- LPS is no longer a good enough incentive when subdividing land is significantly less expensive
- Significant growth in unincorporated County causes strain on water and wastewater infrastructure systems
- Affordable should be clearly defined so it provides for many income levels
- Find ways to stop the 35 acre subdivisions as they are contributing to loss of ag feel, loss of affordability, loss of lands for conservation, and contribute to cost of sprawl

HISTORIC + CULTURAL RESOURCES

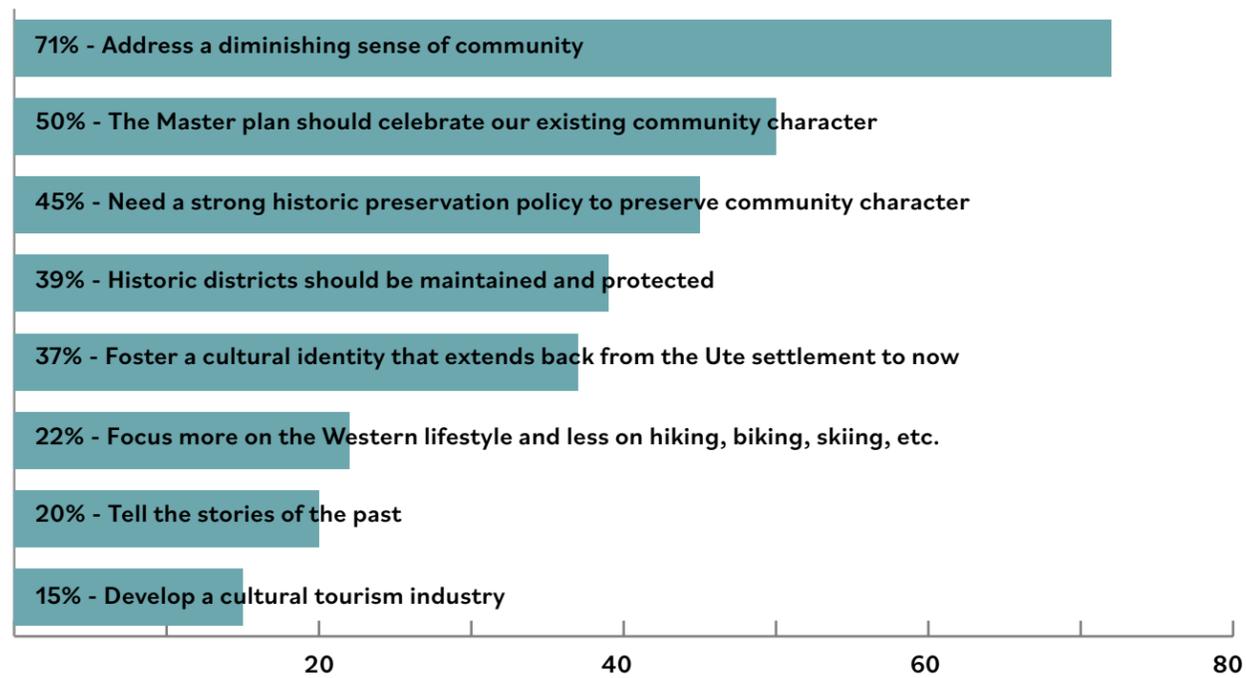


Figure 21: Overall public input on Historic & Cultural Resources

Other statements that multiple respondents shared:

- Need to define Routt County character
- Fear that population/housing growth is changing/diminishing the County's rural character

HOUSING + ECONOMY

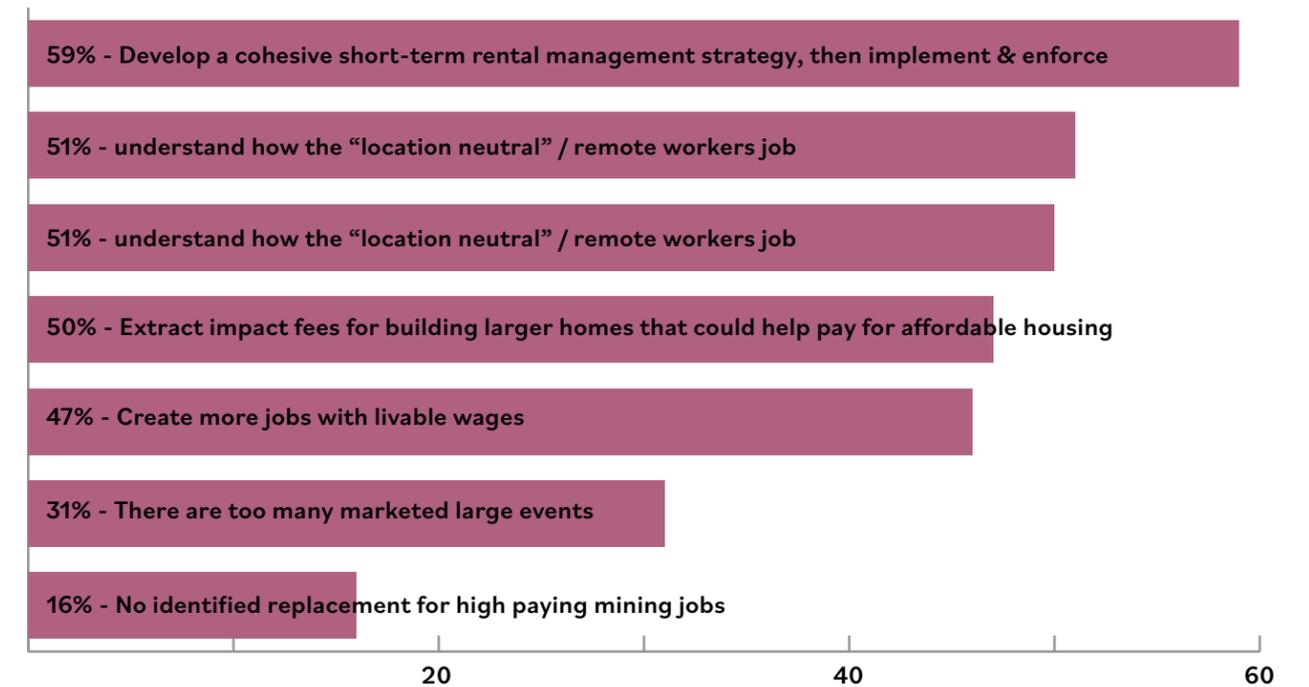


Figure 22: Overall public input on Housing & Economy

Other statements that multiple respondents shared:

- Need to diversify the County's tourism-driven economy to find a better balance
- We have higher education here we can build on
- Focus on locals and the tourism will come

MOBILITY

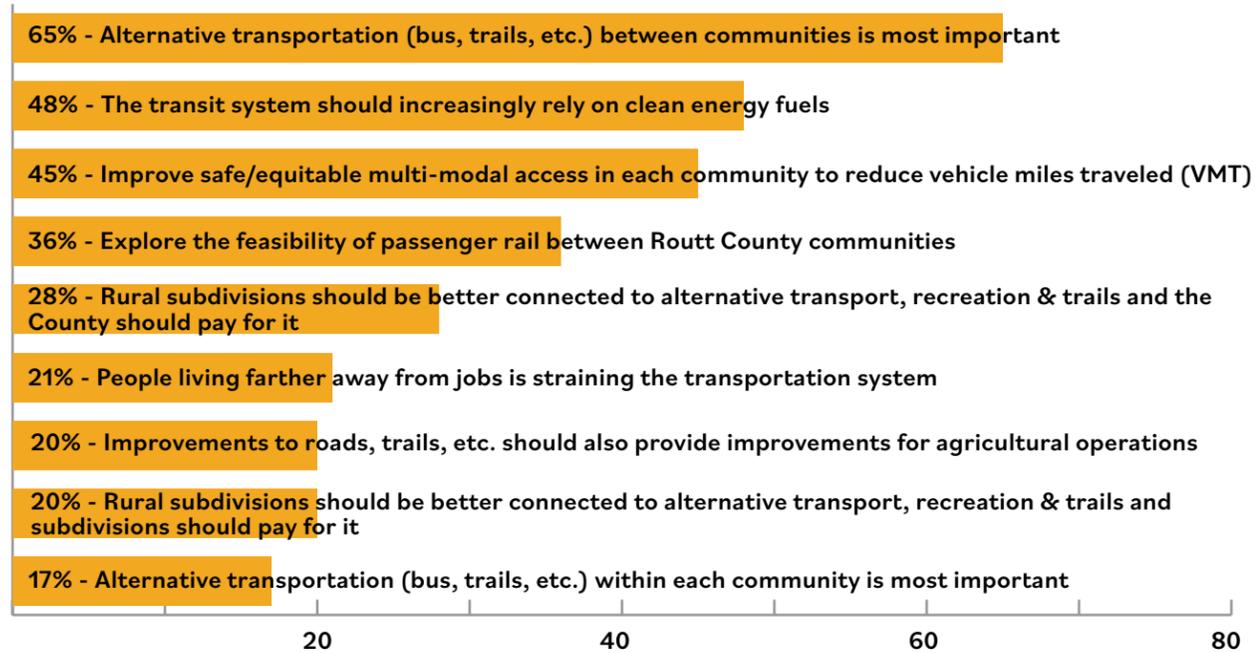


Figure 23: Overall public input on Mobility

Other statements that multiple respondents shared:

- NUMBER 1 THEME IN WRITE-IN COMMENTS. Continue to explore a Regional Transportation Authority for multi-modal transportation infrastructure expansion
- Improve and maintain County Roads
- Opportunity to utilize rail corridors for trails or future commuter rail infrastructure as we move away from coal
- Extend the Core Trail for commuting and recreation and seek funding for ongoing maintenance
- Traffic congestion has increased significantly - especially around/within municipalities

AGRICULTURE, OPEN LANDS + RECREATION

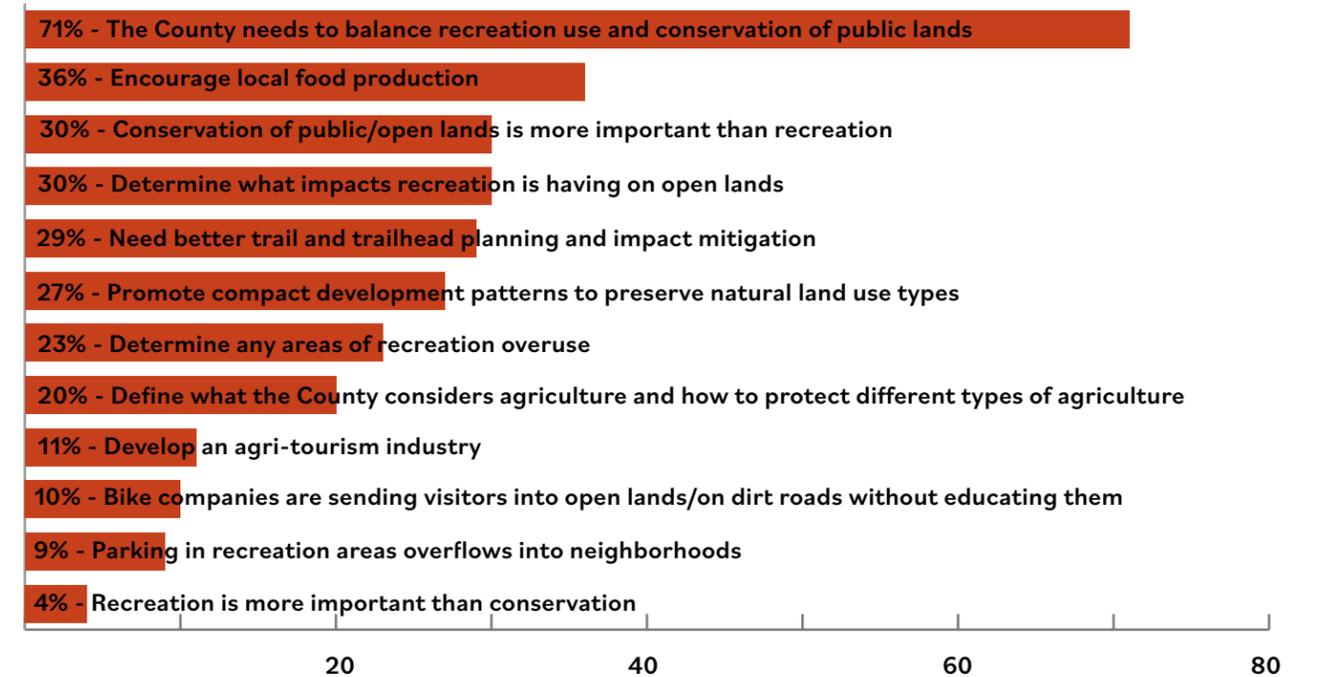


Figure 24: Overall public input on Agriculture, Open Lands & Recreation

Other statements that multiple respondents shared:

- Need to focus on destination management
- Recreational sprawl is impacting wildlife habitat, public lands
- Secondary agricultural uses (like wedding venues, etc.) intended to support ranchers are becoming more widespread and causing impacts
- County's rural/recreational charm is the reason it's a destination and why people love living here
- Support the ranching and agricultural community any way we can
- Engage youth in conservation and recreation management

RESILIENCY + SUSTAINABILITY

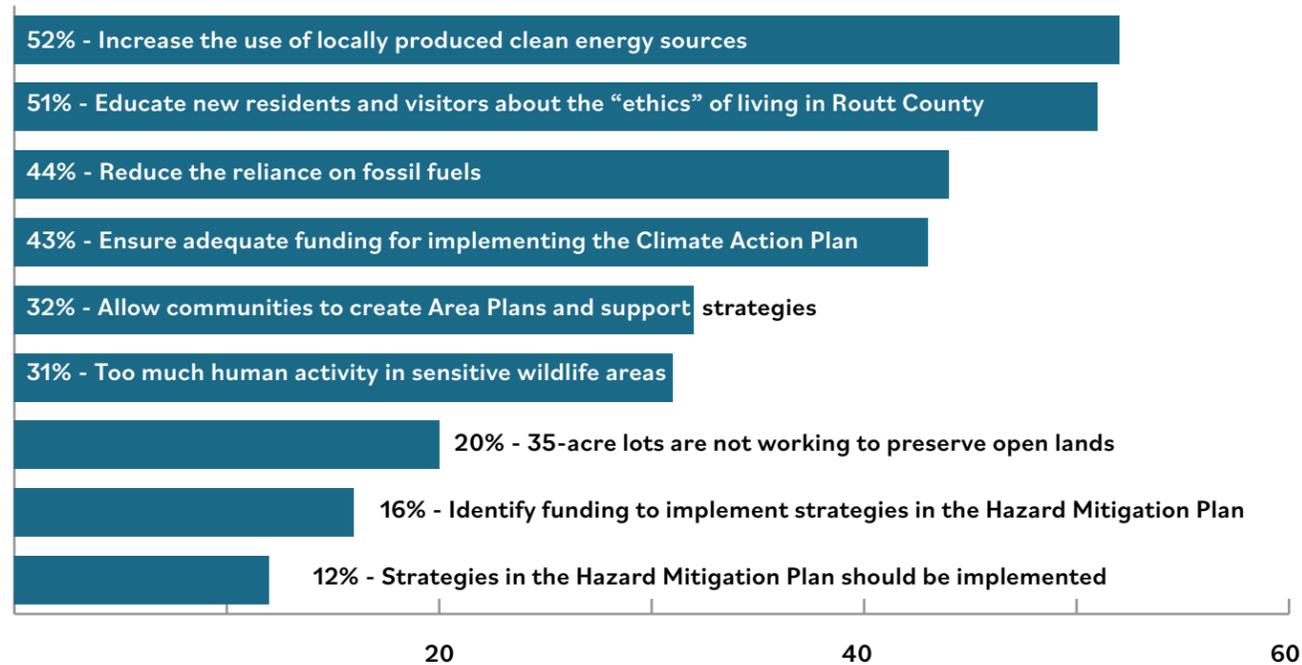


Figure 25: Overall public input on Resiliency & Sustainability

Other statements that multiple respondents shared:

- Many residents couldn’t speak to the Hazard and Climate Action plan and actually spoke to wanting to learn more and that the County can do a better job of sharing these efforts with the community.
- Need for future solid waste management
- Resource extraction is becoming a smaller part of the County’s economy
- Promote green infrastructure

WATER

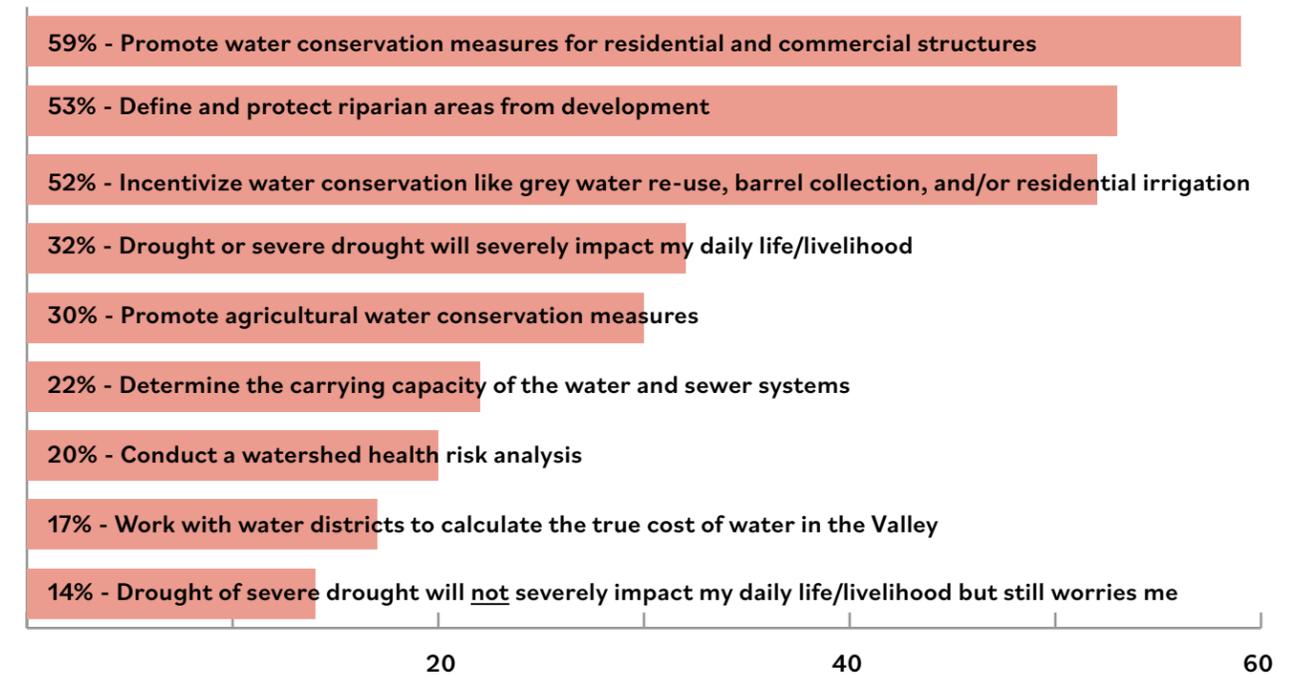


Figure 26: Overall public input on Water

Other statements that multiple respondents shared:

- Address inequities in water use/rights

Focused Online Survey #2 Results

A very focused online survey was conducted in March 2022 that focused on some key topics that came out of earlier outreach: Short-Term Rentals (STRs), home size limitations, secondary dwelling units (SDU), mobility, special use permits (SUP), conservation and recreation, and landscape priority.

Question : Short Term Rentals

Currently, Routt County policy states that short-term rentals are not allowed in unincorporated Routt County.

Check all that apply.

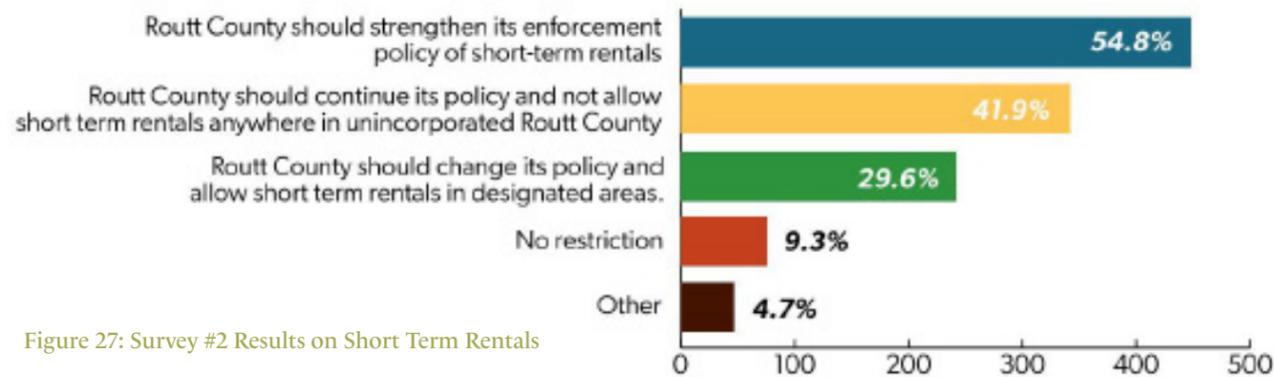


Figure 27: Survey #2 Results on Short Term Rentals

Short Term Rental Themes

- **Generates income for seniors, ranchers and others**
- **Private property rights/fairness**
- **Balance of the needs of tourism that generates income with the needs of workers that need housing**
- **HOA's should decide on STR's**
- **Property Rights:** 16 described how any restrictions were an infringement of private property rights
- **Taxation, Regulation, Enforcement:** 84 commented on taxation need, regulation and/or enforcement. Ideas:
 - Tax as commercial properties
 - Enforce STR policies and make fines steep
 - License/regulate the number
 - Long term renting incentives for owners;
 - Ensure consistency for everyone
- **Geographic Overlay:** 6 gave ideas for where STR's could be located: Steamboat Lake, Stagecoach, Tree Haus, Steamboat II
- **Don't Allow:** 106 commented on negative effects of STRs. Themes for not allowing STR's include: Drives up cost; Changes character; Takes away seasonal worker housing; Disrupts neighborhoods/county fabric.

Question : Home Size Limitations

Some counties have limited the size of homes to reduce energy use and maintain rural character.

Which statements best reflect your opinions?

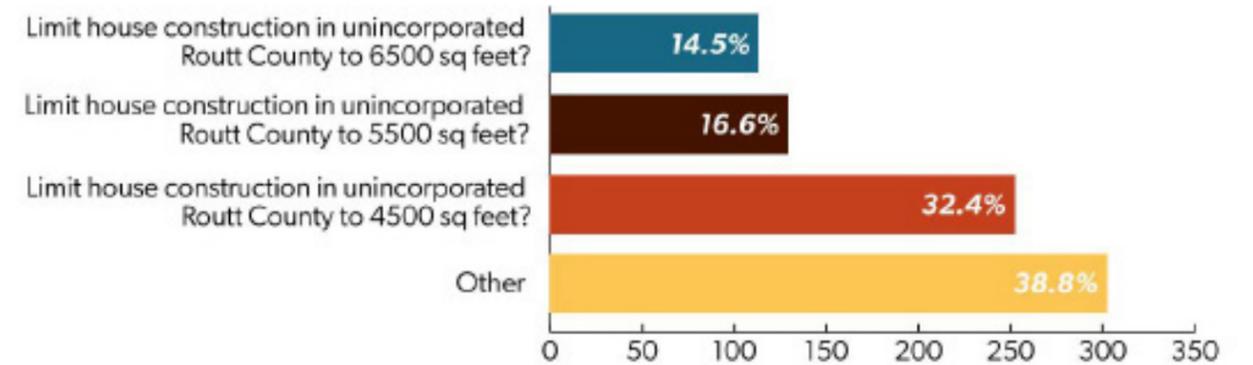


Figure 28: Survey #2 Results on Home Size Limitations

Home Size Limitations Themes

- **Explore restrictions on residential structures to reduce the amount of resources spent on construction, operations, and upkeep**
- **Private property rights/fairness**
- **Implement Restrictions:** 62 are in favor of some sort of restrictions, of whom 28 would like to see a size restriction, and 24 supported some sort of tax or offset instead of a square footage restriction.
- **No restrictions:** 45 believe there should be no restrictions on homes in unincorporated Routt County.

Question : Secondary Dwelling Units

At present, Routt County allows secondary dwelling units on all properties with a maximum habitable space of 800 sq ft. Which statements best reflect your opinions?

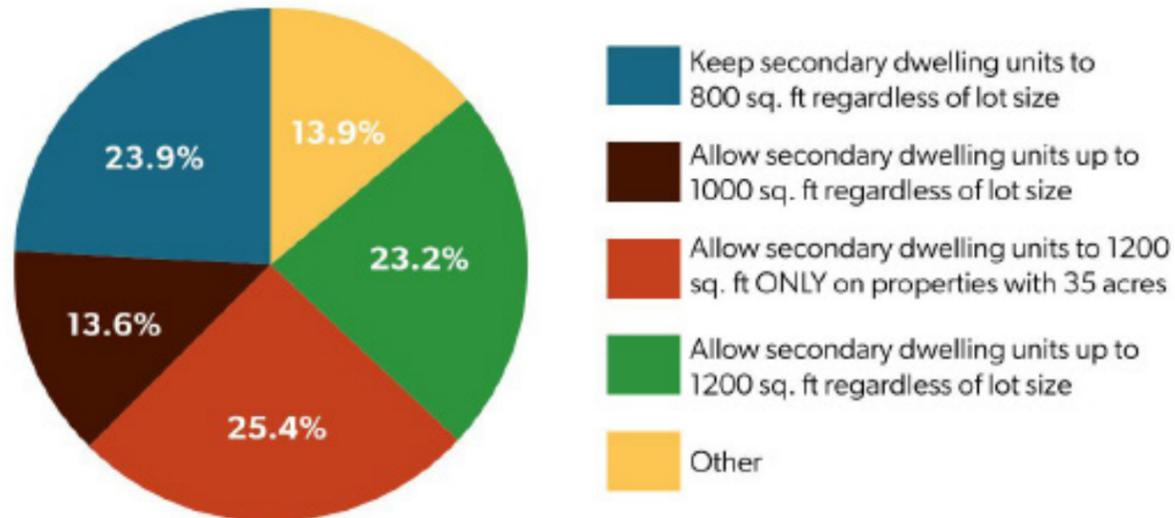


Figure 29: Survey #2 Results on Secondary Dwelling Units

Secondary Dwelling Unit Themes

- Most were generally in support of SDUs
- Many believe that SDUs should not be used as STRs
 - 32 in favor of a long-term rental requirement
- Private property rights / fairness
- Comments related to parcel size:

35+ acres	11
10 - 35 acres	4
<10 acres	6
No restriction	5
Sliding scale	9
- Comments related to dwelling size:

800 sq ft	8
1200 sq ft	19
2000 - 2500 sq ft	4
2500 + sq ft	2
No restriction	9
Supports larger than currently allowed	13

Question : Mobility

Where do you think the County needs to invest resources to improve mobility and transportation in unincorporated Routt County?

List your top three.

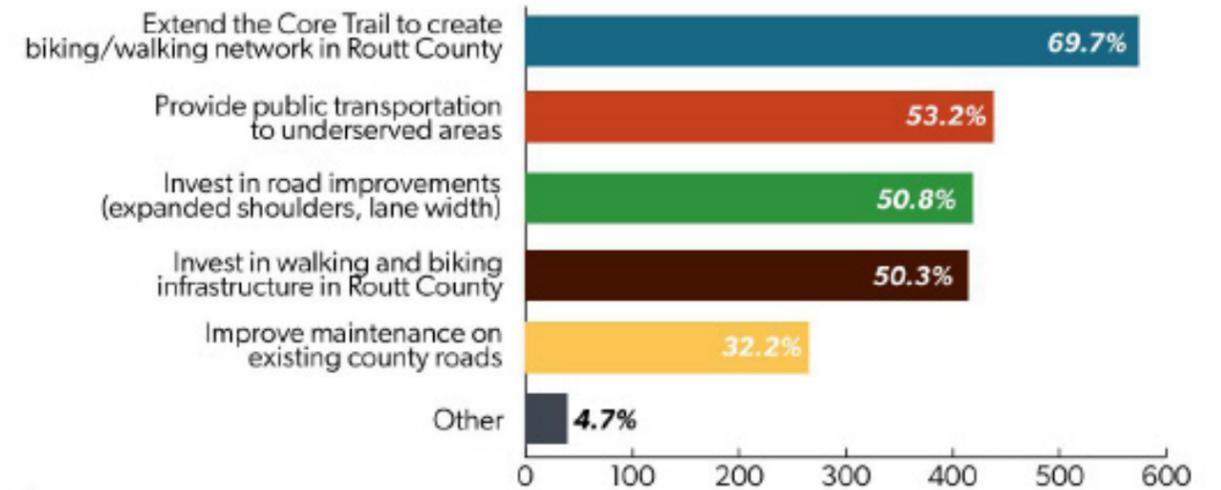


Figure 30: Survey #2 Results on Mobility

Mobility Themes

- Increase the viability of human-powered transportation options
- Increase transit interconnectivity between growth centers and major county destinations
- Expand the Core Trail
- Multi-modal options: 164 want either more transit, more pedestrian/cycling infrastructure, or both; compared to 49 who concerned for roads, maintaining the status quo, or disliking cycling.
 - "All of the above": 30 want to increase/expand transit, bike and pedestrian options/infrastructure, 9 of those specifically mentioned expanding the Core Trail
 - Pro-transit: 55 want to increase/expand transit service, 17 of those expressed interest in new train service
 - Pro bike/ped: 79 want to increase/expand bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, 34 of those mentioned expanding the Core Trail and 33 mentioned safer walking/biking through county road widening.

Question : Special Use Permits

Routt County regulations allow ranchers/farmers to supplement their income with special uses.

Which of these uses do you support? Check all that apply

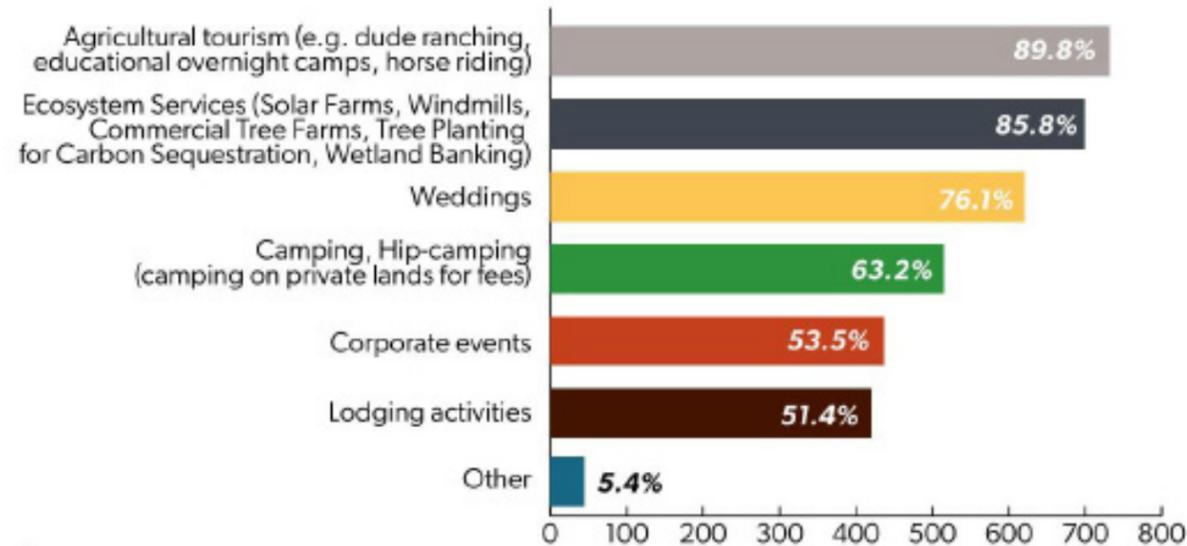


Figure 31: Survey #2 Results on Special Use Permits

Question : Special Use Permits

When ranchers/farmers supplement their income with special uses, how should Routt County verify that the use is the secondary source of income and not the primary source?

Check all statements that apply.

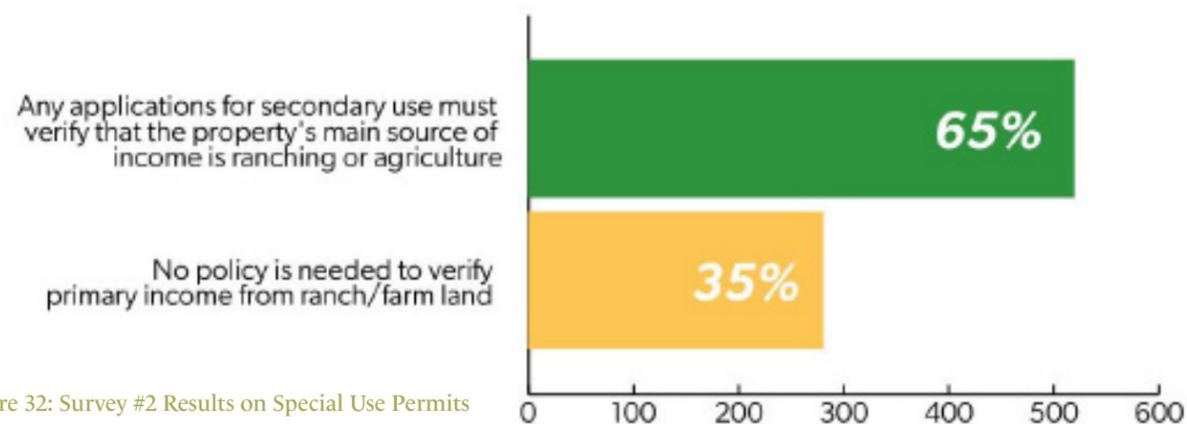


Figure 32: Survey #2 Results on Special Use Permits

Special Use Permit Themes

- **Support our ranching and agricultural community and identity of Routt County in any way we can**
- **Private property rights/fairness**
- **Continue to regulate through a review process**
- **Stay the course:** 64% want to maintain current policy for specific allowances through regulations (e.g. use permits) to supplement ranching income, 19% of those think should be consideration if it's a bona fide Ranch (comments centered around the assessment of taxes)
- **No regulations:** 16% think shouldn't have regulations in ranching community (have it tough enough, should be able to do what they need to survive)
- **Ag uses only:** 10% want to prohibit all non-ag uses to preserve ranchlands and the county character

Question: Conservation & Recreation

Which statements most reflect your opinion?

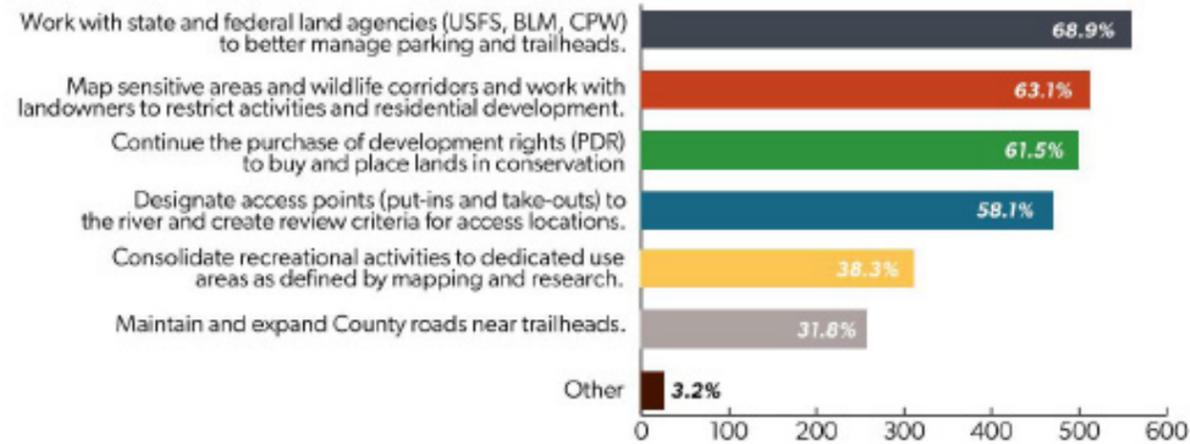


Figure 33: Survey #2 Results on Conservation & Recreation

Conservation & Recreation Themes

- **Continue to support the conservation of natural resources, wildlife habitat, waterways, and open lands**
- **Manage the impacts of development and recreation on wildlife, water, and ecologically sensitive areas**
- **Support conservation: 98** strongly support conservation efforts:
 - 45 of which support general conservation of all types
 - 29 of which support limiting access and restricting recreational use
 - 17 of which support water conservation and river protection
- **Expanding recreational access: 13** support expanding recreational access in unincorporated Routt County

Question: Landscape Conservation

Which landscapes should be the highest priorities for conservation?

Check all that apply.

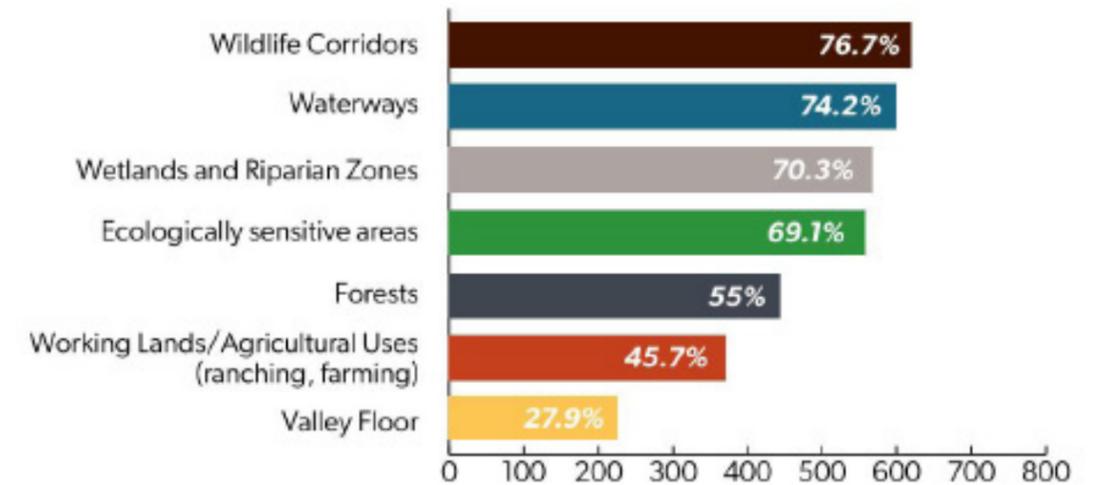


Figure 34: Survey #2 Results on Landscape Conservation

14.2 Supplementary Maps

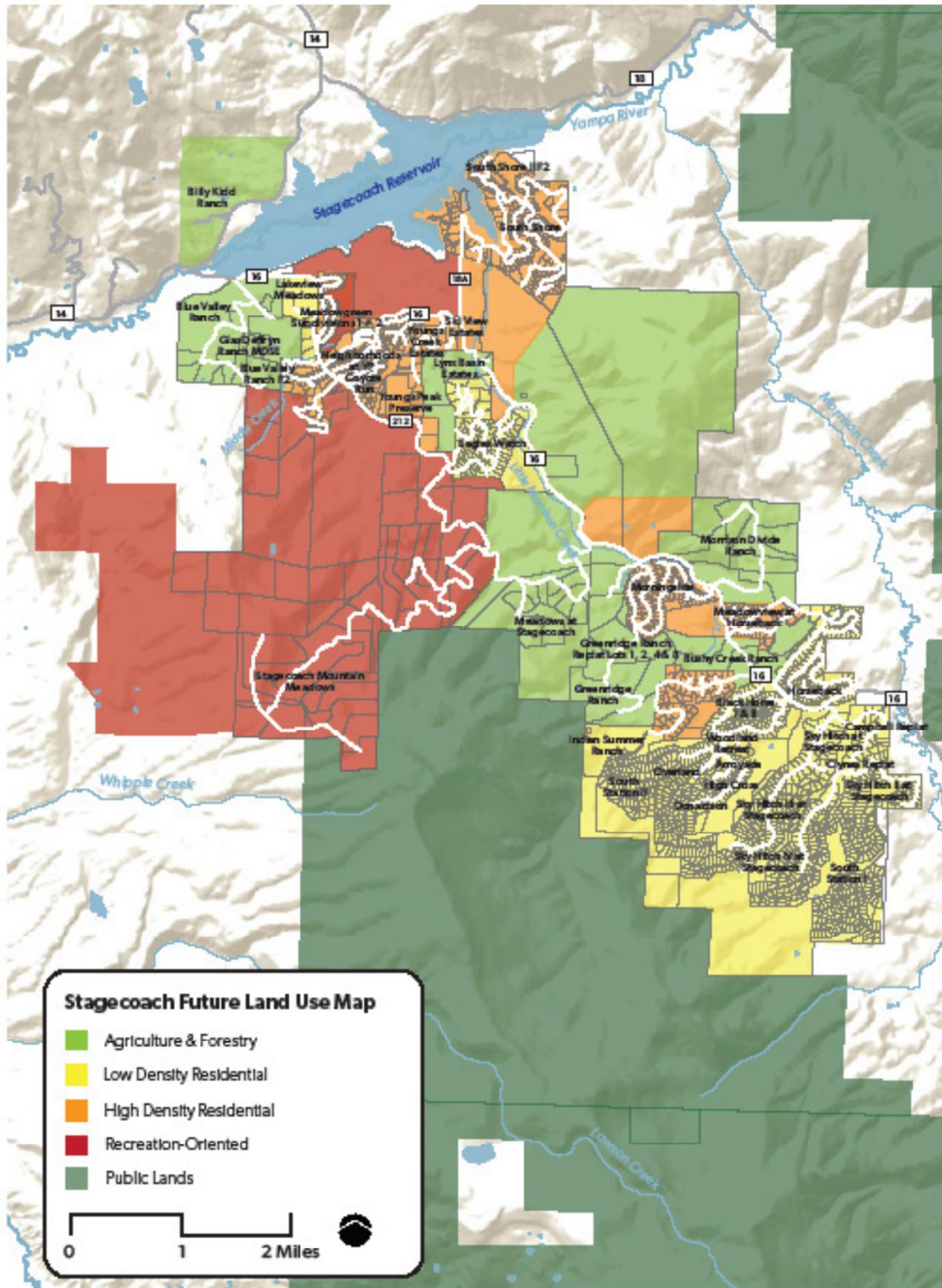


Figure 35: Stagecoach Future Land Use Map

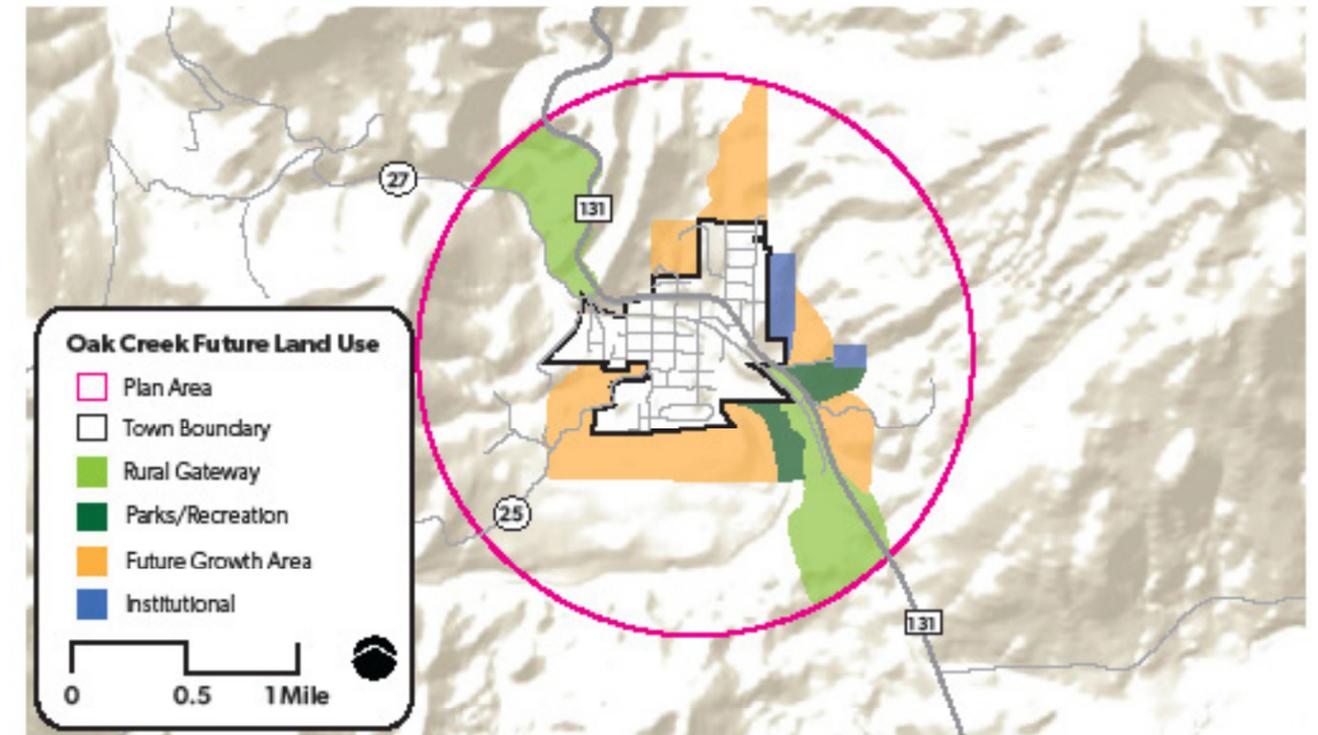


Figure 36: Oak Creek Future Land Use Map

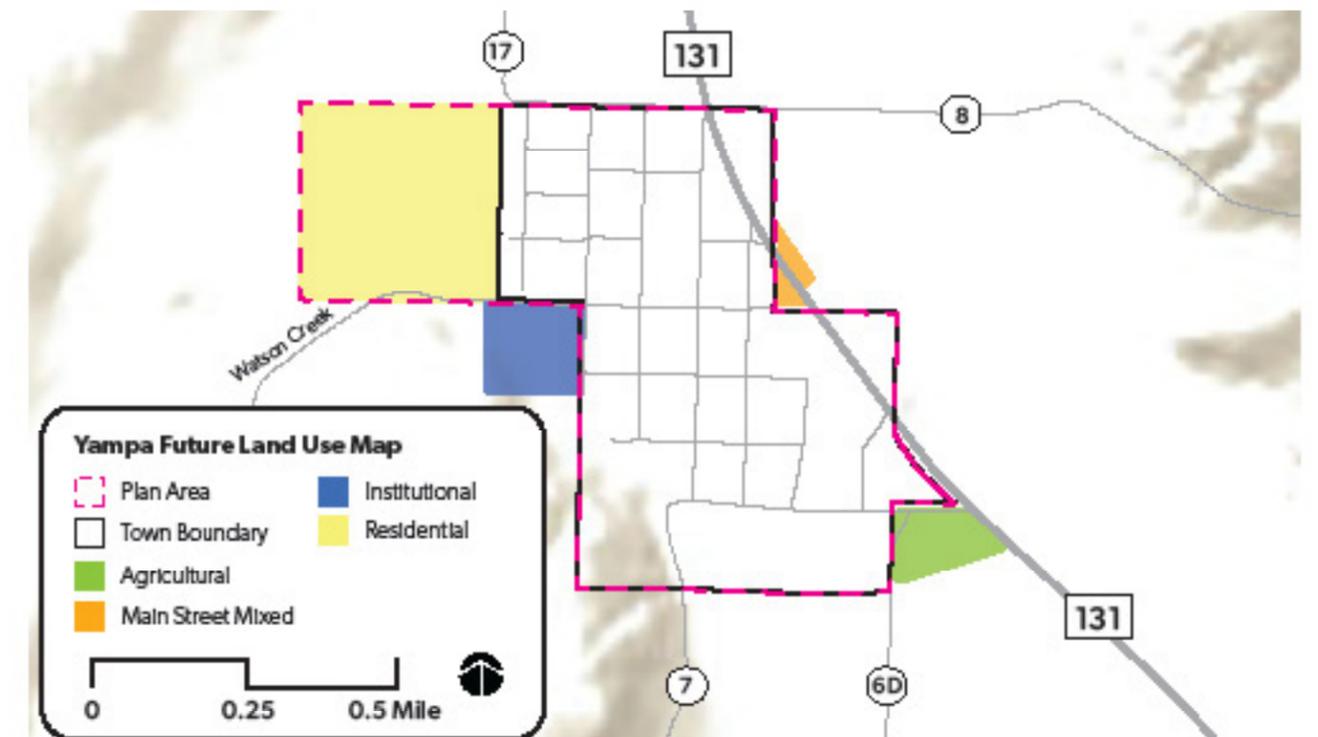


Figure 37: Yampa Future Land Use Map

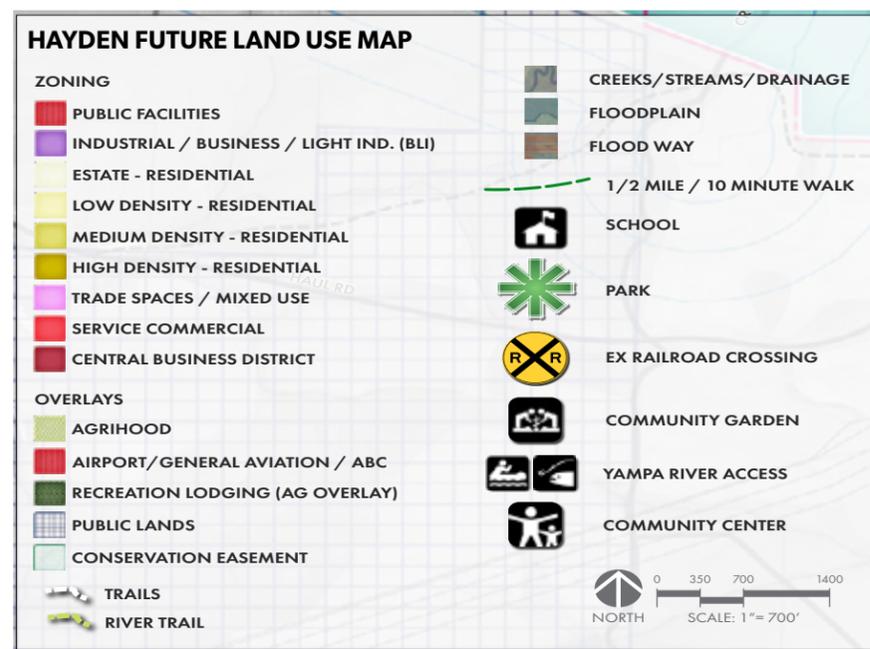
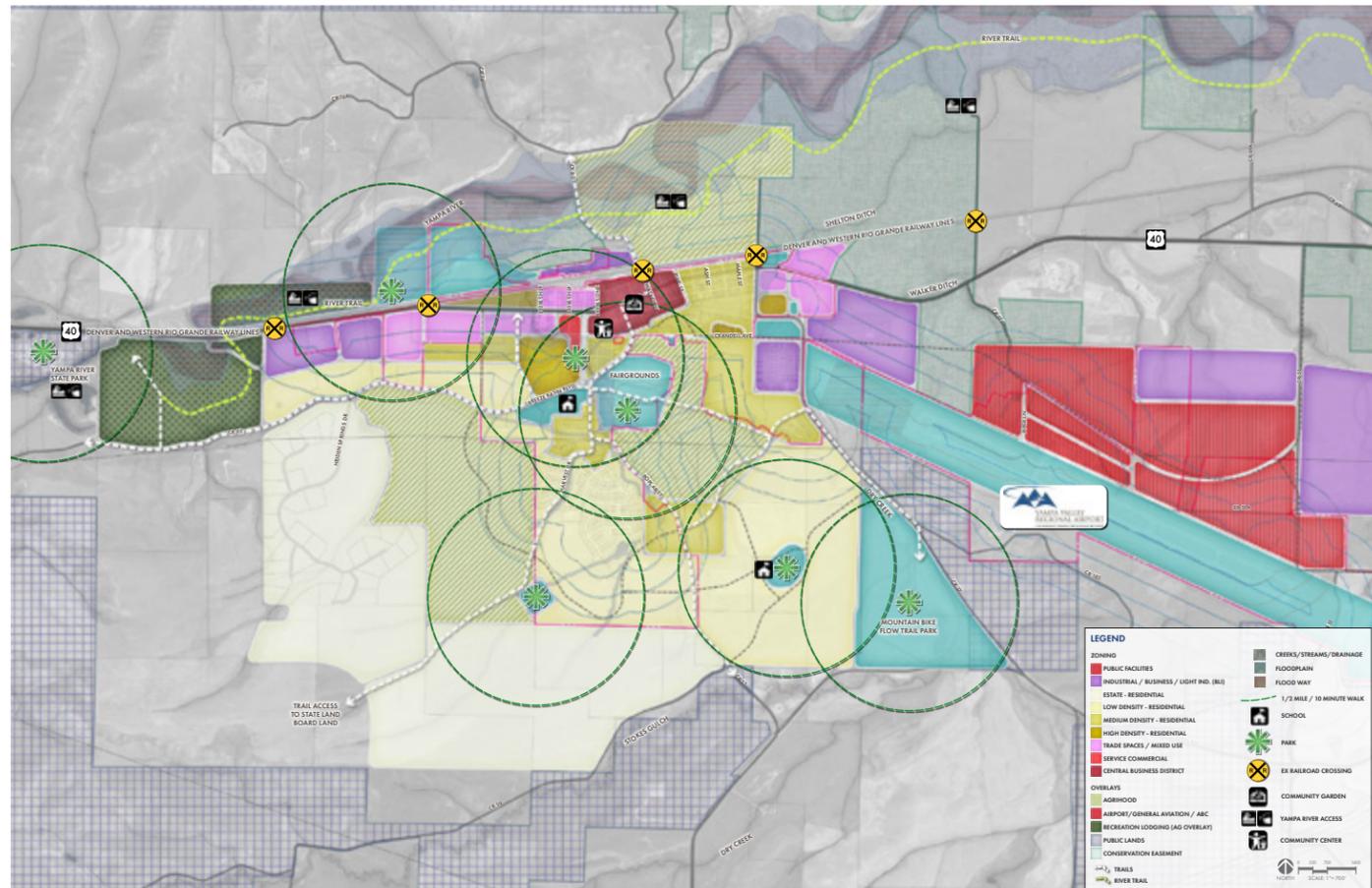


Figure 38: Hayden Future Land Use Map

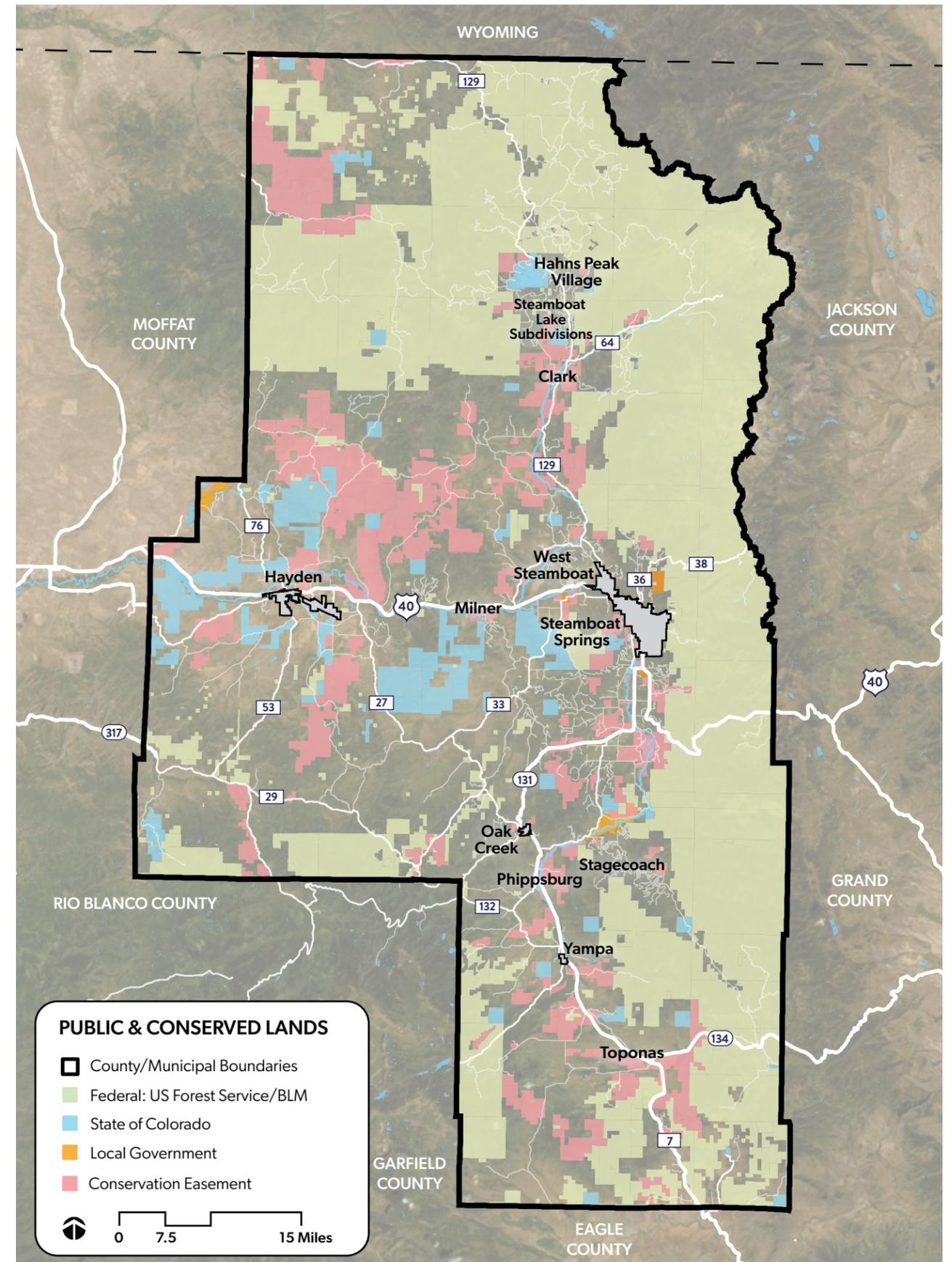


Figure 39: Public and Conserved Lands in Routt County

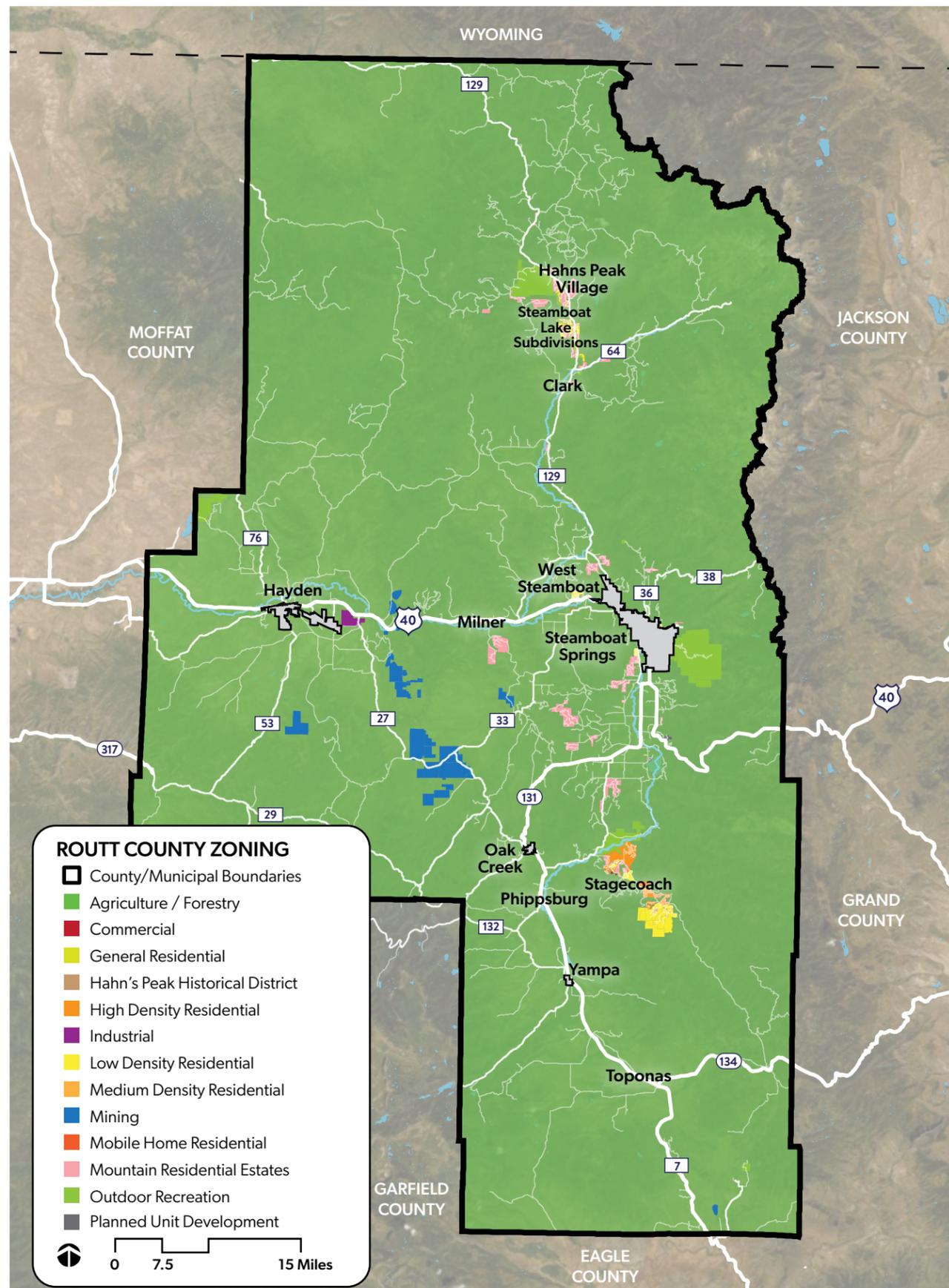


Figure 40: Zoning in Routt County

14.3 | Definitions

Avalanche: The rapid downslope movement of snow, ice and associated debris such as rocks and vegetation.

Buildout: Completed construction of all planned improvements to a subdivision, commercial center, industrial park, town or other similarly planned development.

Cities: See “Municipalities.”

Conditional Use Permit (CUP): A use allowed pursuant to conditions and requirements imposed by the County as a part of the Conditional Use Permit process. A review and approval by the Planning Commission are required. Uses requiring CUPs are listed in the Land Use Chart

Covenants: A binding agreement made by two or more persons or parties. Usually restrictive covenants are created by the developer of a subdivision. They outline the land uses allowed in the subdivision subject to county or town restrictions. Covenants are enforced by the property owners within the subdivision.

Cumulative Impact: The total negative impact to an area of the County resulting from multiple land use decisions that, when added together, change or alter the historical character and/or landscape within a defined area. These negative impacts include but are not limited to: diminution of wildlife habitat and/or migration routes, production areas, winter range; traffic volumes, emergency services including fire, sheriff, ambulance; and loss of historical & cultural environments.

Debris Fan: A sloping, wedge-shaped deposit of loose rock, earth and vegetative debris near or at the junction of a smaller stream with a larger stream valley or where the gradient of a stream abruptly decreases.

Debris Fan Floodplain: A floodplain that is located at the mouth of a mountain valley tributary stream as such stream enters the valley floor.

Debris flow: A mudflow in which the solids in the mass are larger than grains of sand. Rocks, stones, boulders, vegetative material and junk are often included in a debris flow.

Development: Any non-agriculture related, man-made change to a property.

Erosion: The removal and simultaneous transportation of earth materials from one location to another by water, wind, waves or moving ice.

Essential Services: Safe roads, potable water, sanitation, and provision for electrical service.

Flood, Five Hundred Year: A flood that has a 0.2 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year, and a frequency of occurrence of about once in five hundred years on the long term average.

Flood, One Hundred Year: Flood with a peak flow magnitude that has one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year, and a frequency of occurrence of about once in one hundred years on the long term average.

Flood Prone Area: Any area that is usually subject to flooding due to spring runoff, cloud bursts, and flood events at the 100-year level or greater.

Flood Proofing: Any activities taken with the intent of preventing flood water damage to an improvement to or on the land. Activities such as raising all floors of a structure above the expected flood crest height, or construction that will prevent flood water damage, are included in this definition.

Flooding: The overflowing of water onto land that is normally dry.

Geologic Hazards: Naturally occurring geological changes that are detrimental to human health and property.

Future Growth Areas: A Future Growth Area is a physical area that generally has or is planned for new growth and development in the County. For this Master Plan, Future Growth Areas are organized into three Tiers that represent a hierarchy of growth priority areas.

Tier 1: Incorporated Municipalities: The areas located in and adjacent to incorporated municipalities in the County: Steamboat Springs, Hayden, Oak Creek and Yampa. Focusing growth on these areas is intended to leverage existing infrastructure and community services to benefit future development. Infill development within Tier 1 Municipalities should be viewed as the principal growth strategy whereby future growth is specifically directed to these key areas rather than to rural areas in the County.

Tier 1 Future Growth Areas shall provide the following:

- Diverse, mixed-income housing opportunities
- Walkable and bikeable residential development patterns and community amenities
- Safe, multi-modal access ways
- Capacity to provide essential services to residents of their communities
- Suitable locations for commercial development

Tier 2: Targeted Growth Areas: Select lands located in unincorporated areas such as Stagecoach, West Steamboat Springs and the area within Hayden’s Three-Mile Plan. These areas may accommodate future anticipated growth in the County based on acceptable development review criteria for each area and consistency with prescribed Sub-Area plans for the specific area.

Tier 2 Targeted Growth Areas should provide the following:

- A diverse mix of housing choices
- Development that addresses an identified community need
- Community amenities (open space, trail access, recreational amenities)
- Assurance that proposed utilities, services and amenities can be delivered within an acceptable time

Tier 3: Small Established Communities:

Communities throughout the County that lack an approved Sub-area plan, but that have historically established development, adequate access and may accommodate future growth opportunities. These areas may include Steamboat Lake, Phippsburg, Milner, Toponas, Hahn’s Peak and Clark. Routt County recognizes that acceptable, small-scale developments may arise in Tier 3 areas based on a response to market conditions, housing demand and workforce housing needs in the County.

Future Land Use Map (FLUM): The Future Land Use Map is a geographical and thematic representation to guide land use planning in specific areas of the County, consistent with the goals and policies of the Master Plan.

Ground Subsidence: The sinking of land that is over man-made or natural underground voids.

Ground Water: Any water not visible on the surface of the ground under natural conditions.

Growth: The increase or expansion of the population and/or the development of an area.

High Density Development: Development served by central water treatment facilities and secondary sewage treatment facilities (or more stringent sewage treatment facilities as required by the Colorado Department of Health) and that has a general city-like or urban character.

Impact: The effects of a new land use on the environment. Impacts can be positive or negative.

Infrastructure: Improvements to a property or area that provide the services required for development, including, but not limited to, energy supply, water, sanitary waste disposal and access.

Land Preservation Subdivision (LPS): A program that provides a framework to permit alternative land use and lot size patterns to those allowed by Senate Bill 35. This process allows and encourages development patterns that better respond to the characteristics of the specific property, and promotes clustered development and the preservation of open space.

Landslide: A mass movement of natural material where there is a distinct surface of rupture or zone of weakness which separates the slide material from more stable underlying material.

Land Use: The current or proposed use of the land. The physical application or state of a parcel of land.

Land Use Chart: An element of the Zoning Regulations that describes what uses are allowed in each zone district and whether those uses require a permit.

Linkage Fees: Fees on new development based on its employee generation and impacts on workforce housing demand. They function like impact fees and can be charged at building permit. Linkage fees apply to all development, not just residential development.

Master Plan: A guide for future changes. As used in this plan, a master plan is a guide to assist those who make decisions about the physical development of Routt County. Those decision-makers include the Routt County Planning Commission, the Board of County Commissioners, the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Forest Service, and other County, State and Federal agencies required by law(s) to make decisions compatible with the master plan of Routt County. Municipalities are encouraged, but not required, to do the same. Synonym: Comprehensive plan, land use plan.

Mineral: An inanimate constituent of the earth in either a solid, liquid, or gaseous state. When extracted from the earth, a mineral is usable in its natural form or is capable of conversion into usable form as a metal, metallic compound, a chemical, an energy source, a raw material for manufacturing or construction material. This definition does not include surface or groundwater subject to appropriation for domestic, agricultural or industrial purposes, nor does it include geothermal resources.

Mineral Reserve: A vein, deposit, body, bed, field, pool or other grouping of a mineral in its natural state prior to mining.

Mining Operation: The development or extraction of a mineral from its natural occurrences. The term includes, but is not limited to, exploration, open mining, drilling, and surface operations and the disposal of refuse, products, or water from surface or underground mines and wells including injection wells.

Mudflow: A mass of water and fine-grained earth materials that flows down a stream, ravine, canyon, arroyo or gulch.

Municipalities: Incorporated towns and cities that have the following characteristics:

- Center of commerce and civic activities
- Detailed Community Comprehensive Plan adopted
- Full spectrum of supporting and interrelated land uses and services
- Diverse non-residential activities
- Cultural and medical amenities

Municipalities in Routt County include Steamboat Springs, Hayden, Oak Creek, and Yampa

Natural Hazard: A geologic hazard, wildfire hazard or a flood.

Occupation Privilege Tax: Also known as an Employee Tax or Head Tax, a tax imposed on businesses operating in a jurisdiction. Funds from the tax can be used for Capital Improvement Projects, as a general fund revenue source, or allocated to a special fund, such as for housing programs.

Open Space: Undeveloped land.

Over Appropriated: A formal recognition that the total water rights issued for a source of water exceeds the amount of actual water that exists. Senior water rights holders (with the earliest priority dates) will always have access to water before relatively junior water rights holders.

Public Service Costs: Costs for services supplied by governmental agencies.

Quasi-Public Service Costs: Costs for services supplied by private companies or cooperatives that serve all people in an area and are usually regulated by the Public Utilities Commission.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR): A program through which funds from a mill levy approved by the voters are used to buy perpetual conservation easements from voluntary sellers across Routt County.

Recreation Oriented Development: An area where the recreational component, such as but not limited to a ski area, marina or golf course, is the central feature of the development and may include an array of amenities to support the overall use. This typically includes mixed use development of residential and commercial type uses. Land uses and proposed general locations for Recreation Oriented Developments are identified on a concept plan to be evaluated for conformance with the master plan and all other applicable plans prior to moving forward with the applicable regulatory process.

Residential Neighborhood: An assembly of five (5) homes or more located on lots having an average lot size equivalent to the Mountain Residential Estate (MRE) zone district or smaller. Residential neighborhoods are not found in the A/F zone district, unless approved under the Land Preservation Subdivision Exemption, Minor Development Subdivision Exemption, or consist of platted or recorded lots meeting this description that were recorded prior to the adoption of the Zoning Resolution.

Riparian Area: Riparian areas are those plant communities adjacent to and affected by surface or groundwater of perennial or ephemeral water bodies such as rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, playas, or drainage ways. These areas have distinctly different vegetation than adjacent areas or have species similar to surrounding areas that exhibit a more vigorous or robust growth form.

Rockfall: The falling of a newly detached mass of rock from a cliff or very steep slope.

Runout Zone: The lowest portion of an avalanche path where moving snow and entrained debris stop.

Rural Character: The landscape historically found throughout Routt County, typified by large tracts of open land used for agriculture (hay, cattle and sheep grazing, and farming). Traditional agricultural properties often include one or more groupings of buildings used for family/intergenerational housing, barns and corrals, sheds, implement storage, garages, and other out-buildings.

Rural Residential Development: Any residential development or use that occurs outside of Future Growth Areas.

Secondary Dwelling Unit (SDU): An additional dwelling unit on a property that is permitted in all zone districts in Routt County with available water resources.

Special Use Permit (SUP): A use allowed pursuant to conditions and requirements imposed by the County as a part of the Special Use Permit process. Review and approval by the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commission are required. Uses requiring a SUP are listed in the Land Use Chart.

Short Term Rental (STR): A dwelling unit that is rented for vacation/short-term lodging for a time period of less than 30 days.

Significant Impact: Any major change to existing conditions that may be caused by a proposed development or use.

Skylined: A structure, or portion thereof, that creates a silhouette against the sky above the apparent or visible horizon of the Earth when viewed from the designated public roads in Routt County.

Snowpack Telemetry (SNOTEL): A remote backcountry weather station that measures snow and transmits the data wirelessly.

Special Use Permit (SUP): A permit requiring the approval of the Board of County Commissioners obtained for a secondary use (other than the primary use) on a property.

Sub-area Plan: A detailed and specific plan, created to reflect the unique concerns and problems of a defined area.

Subdivision: The division of a parcel of land into two (2) or more parcels, separate interest, or interests in common.

Subdivision Regulations: The rules pertaining to the subdivision of land in unincorporated Routt County, adopted by Routt County in 1972 to comply with Section 30-28-133 of the Colorado Revised Statutes for the purpose of promoting the health, safety and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of Routt County, Colorado.

Towns : See “municipalities”

Unstable Slope: An area susceptible to a landslide, a mudflow, a rockfall or accelerated creep of slope-forming materials.

Upper Yampa Valley Conservancy District (UYVCD): A defined special district with the mission of responsibly conserving, protecting, developing, providing and enhancing the water resources of the Yampa River Basin. The District will initiate and participate in projects that embody and promote the protection of water rights, provide broad benefits to District constituents and develop projects that provide responsible conservation, responsible growth, beneficial water storage and usage, and public awareness within the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District.

Urban Development: A significant amount of high density development which is generally serviced by: central water treatment facilities, secondary sewage treatment facilities and retail sales and services.

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB): The boundary that defines the area within which urban development and future growth should occur around Steamboat Springs.

Urban Sprawl: Development of residential, commercial and industrial land uses that occur in a dispersed, random and/or low density manner outside of the Urban Growth Boundary or beyond a municipal planning area.

Weed, Noxious: A species that exhibits one or more of the following criteria: 1) Aggressively invades or is detrimental to economic crops or native plant communities, 2) is poisonous to livestock, 3) is a carrier of detrimental insects, disease, or parasites; or the direct or indirect effect of the presence of this plant is detrimental to the environmentally sound management of natural or agricultural ecosystems.

Wildfire: An uncontrolled fire that burns in wildland vegetation, often in rural areas, and may spread to structures or other improvements.

Wildfire Hazards: Naturally occurring or man-induced phenomena that create a detrimental wildfire threat to human health and property. Wildfire hazards are usually unfavorable combinations of fuel, weather and topography which cause potentially dangerous burning conditions.

Wildfire Hazard Areas: An area containing or directly affected by wildfire hazard.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI): The zone of transition between unoccupied land and human development. It is the line, area or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.

Wildlife: All species of wild animals native and/or incidental to Routt County.

Wildlife Areas, Critical: The winter range and migration routes between winter and summer ranges and reproductive areas of wildlife. Such areas are shown on maps developed by Colorado Parks and Wildlife..

Wildlife Habitat: A combination of food, water, shelter, and space arranged to meet the needs of wildlife, including all species of aquatic, terrestrial, avian, game and non-game animals.

Zoning: The classification of land for specific allowable uses such as housing, commercial retail service, agriculture, and industrial uses.

2022

ROUTT COUNTY MASTER PLAN