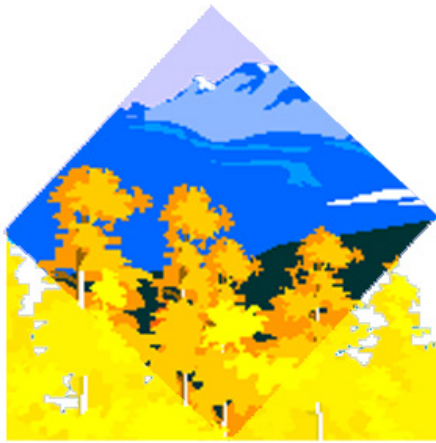


# **Eagle County Comprehensive Plan**

---

Eagle County, Colorado



# **Eagle County Comprehensive Plan**

---

Eagle County, Colorado

**Adopted: December 7, 2005**

**Effective: January 18, 2006**

Prepared by Eagle County Community Development

500 Broadway

P.O. Box 179

Eagle, Colorado 81631

# Acknowledgements

---

## Eagle County Board of County Commissioners

Arn Menconi  
Peter Runyon  
Tom Stone

## Eagle County Planning Commission

John King  
Dan Seibel  
Barbara Brundin  
Ken Neubecker  
Kerry Wallace  
Michael McClinton  
Wendy Jo Haskins  
Kirk Hansen  
Tim Losa  
Don Lemon

## Roaring Fork Valley Regional Planning Commission

Temple Glassier  
Robert Adams  
Tony Vagneur  
Kim Johnson  
Jim Wahlstrom  
William Vannice  
Gary Ferguson  
Tom Newland

## Eagle County Community Development

Keith Montag, Director  
Bob Narracci, Planning Manager  
Cliff Simonton, Long Range Planner  
Rebecca Leonard, Long Range Planner  
Allison Ochs, Assistant Long Range Planner

Eagle County Community Development would like to thank the members of the Comprehensive Plan Technical Advisory Committee and all other individuals, organizations and public agencies that offered input and assistance throughout the comprehensive planning process.

# Table of Contents

---

<b>PART I: BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Purpose of the Plan .....	2
1.2 User Guide.....	2
1.2.1 What is a comprehensive plan? .....	2
1.2.2 Who is affected by this comprehensive plan?.....	3
1.2.3 What does this plan consist of? .....	3
1.2.4 How do I use this comprehensive plan? .....	3
1.2.5 How do I find out about requirements affecting my land? .....	4
1.2.6 Plan Exceptions .....	4
1.2.7 Plan Changes/Revisions.....	4
1.2.8 Need more help? .....	4
1.3 Planning in America and Colorado .....	5
1.3.1 History of Planning in America.....	5
1.3.2 State of Colorado Planning Ethos.....	6
1.3.3 State Planning Authority .....	7
<b>PART II: BASELINE TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 Social Trends & Characteristics.....	11
2.2 Environmental Trends & Characteristics.....	11
2.3 Economic Trends & Characteristics.....	11
2.4 Projections .....	11
2.4.1 Jobs and Population Forecasts.....	11
2.4.2 Growth Scenario Questionnaire.....	13
<b>PART III: PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 General Governance.....	16
3.1.1 Background Information.....	16
3.1.2 Core Values .....	16
3.1.3 Community Involvement .....	17
3.1.4 Governance .....	17
3.1.5 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for General Governance.....	19
3.2 General Development.....	22
3.2.1 Background Information:.....	22
3.2.2 Quality of Life .....	22
3.2.3 Growth .....	23
3.2.4 Development.....	24
3.2.5 Community & Character.....	27
3.2.6 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for General Development .....	28
3.3 Economic Resources .....	35
3.3.1 Background Information.....	35
3.3.2 Economic Vision .....	35
3.3.3 Major Economic Drivers.....	36
3.3.4 Commercial Development.....	37
3.3.5 Other Industries .....	40
3.3.6 Economic Infrastructure .....	42
3.3.7 Working Environment.....	43
3.3.8 Future Economy.....	44
3.3.9 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for Economic Resources .....	46
3.4 Housing.....	58
3.4.1 Background Information:.....	58

3.4.2 Jobs to Housing Balance .....	58
3.4.3 Unlimited Housing Demands: .....	61
3.4.4 Limited Housing Supply .....	63
3.4.5 Development Stakes.....	64
3.4.6 Comprehensive Workforce Housing Approach.....	65
3.4.7 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for Housing .....	67
3.5 Infrastructure & Services.....	75
3.5.1 Background Information:.....	75
3.5.2 Efficient Transportation .....	76
3.5.3 Emergency and Community Services.....	79
3.5.4 Services & Infrastructure Costs .....	85
3.5.5 Population Diversity .....	86
3.5.6 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for Infrastructure & Services .....	88
3.6 Water Resources .....	105
3.6.1 Background Information .....	105
3.6.2 Water Quantity .....	105
3.6.3 Water Quality .....	112
3.6.4 River and Riparian Habitat.....	114
3.6.5 River Recreation .....	115
3.6.6 Land Use near Streams and Rivers.....	117
3.6.7 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for Water Resources.....	119
3.7 Wildlife Resources .....	131
3.7.1 Background Information.....	131
3.7.2 Wildlife Concerns .....	131
3.7.3 Development Impacts .....	133
3.7.4 Habitat Protection at the Landscape Scale.....	134
3.7.5 Habitat Protection at the Site Scale .....	135
3.7.6 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for Wildlife Resources.....	137
3.8 Sensitive Lands.....	146
3.8.1 Background Information:.....	146
3.8.2 Lands with Natural Hazards.....	146
3.8.3 Lands with Cultural Resources .....	147
3.8.4 Public Lands & Open Space .....	148
3.8.5 Policy and Toolbox for Sensitive Lands .....	152
3.9 Environmental Quality.....	160
3.9.1 Background Information.....	160
3.9.2 Air Quality .....	160
3.9.3 Protection of Night Sky .....	162
3.9.4 Noise.....	162
3.9.5 Energy Efficiency .....	163
3.9.6 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for Environmental Quality .....	164
3.10 Future Land Use Map .....	169
3.10.1 Land Use Designation Guidelines.....	169
3.10.2 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for the Future Land Use Map.....	174

<b>PART IV: AREA PLAN PROCESS .....</b>	<b>176</b>
4.1 Establishment of Area Plans.....	177
4.1.1 Area Plan Delineation .....	177
4.1.2 Using Planning Policy Framework and Area Plans Together .....	177
4.2 How Area Plans Are Developed .....	178
4.2.1 Initial Development of Area Plans.....	178
4.2.2 Updates and Amendments of Area Plans .....	178

---

**EAGLE COUNTY REFERENCE MAP**

# **PART I: BACKGROUND**

## 1.1 Purpose of the Plan

---

The Eagle County Comprehensive Plan is a public document, officially adopted by the County's Planning Commission, which establishes a vision and framework for the future of Eagle County. Crafted following numerous public meetings and hearings, it reflects the vision and desires of Eagle County residents. Issues are discussed, goals are established, and the means by which goals can be met are identified. This Comprehensive Plan updates and supersedes the 1996 County Master Plan.

As an initial step, advertised meetings were held throughout the County, and residents were asked the following questions:

- **Where are we now?** What are Eagle County's past trends and what is Eagle County's present situation with regard to population, land use, environmental features, and public facilities? The answers to these questions are in [Section II: Trends & Characteristics](#).
- **Where are we going?** What will happen if Eagle County's Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulations remain unchanged? What alternatives to Eagle County's current direction should we consider and what issues and opportunities should we address? The answers to these questions are in [Section II: Trends & Characteristics](#).
- **Where do we want to be and how do we get there?** What is Eagle County's vision for the future? What actions (planning, regulatory and capital investment) should be taken to achieve Eagle County's vision? The answers to these questions are in [Section III: Eagle County Planning Policy Framework](#).

The Comprehensive Plan guides and influences the following types of decisions:

- It provides a general framework for evaluating individual land development and referral applications submitted to Eagle County Government on an ongoing basis.
- It provides an action plan for revisions to Eagle County's Land Use Regulations and official Zoning Map, which are the regulatory tools by which Eagle County Government can implement this Comprehensive Plan. It also provides a context within which Eagle County Government can make capital improvement investment decisions to implement the Comprehensive Plan.
- It establishes the priorities for more detailed plans which Eagle County Government will likely formulate for specific areas of Eagle County (the sub-area plans) and for specific topics (such as open space, trails, affordable housing and roads).

The following subsections 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 contain information intended to aid in understanding and using this Comprehensive Plan. Objectives, standards related to content, a user's guide, a brief history of planning in the United States and a discussion of planning requirements in the State of Colorado are provided.

## 1.2 User Guide

---

### 1.2.1 What is a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan is a guiding visionary document that shapes the Eagle County Land Use Regulations and government actions in its application. In addition to setting out policies and direction for the use, development, and protection of land, a comprehensive plan sets goals for the social, economic, and natural environment of Eagle County. According to CRS 30-28-106, comprehensive plans are required for counties and municipalities above 25,000 people in Colorado.



## 1.2.2 Who is affected by this comprehensive plan?

In Colorado, comprehensive plans are advisory only. Nonetheless, this plan represents the vision and goals of the people of Eagle County. The degree to which this plan is followed will in large part determine the degree to which the stated vision and goals will be met.

Relevant provisions of this plan should be used to guide all decisions regarding land use, the environment, the economy, transportation, housing or any other topic of potential impact to the quality of life enjoyed by the people of Eagle County. Every landowner, developer, government department, appointed official and/or elected official should recognize the significance of this plan and the implementation tools it contains. General conformance to its policies should be required.

## 1.2.3 What does this plan consist of?

This plan consists of written chapters supported by maps, plans definitions and other related material. It contains:

- Background
- Baseline Trends & Characteristics
- Eagle County Planning Policy Framework
- Area Plans
- Supporting Documents

[Part I: Background](#) covers the purpose and objectives of this document. In addition, a user guide is included to help navigate the plan, and strategic planning issues of state importance are addressed.

[Part II: Baseline Trends & Characteristics](#) illustrates the trends that have occurred, trends that have led us to the state of existing conditions. A comprehensive discussion of Social, Environmental and Economic trends provides a picture of Eagle County today.

[Part III: Eagle County Planning Policy Framework](#) contains vision statements and local planning policies related to governance, development, the economy, housing, community services and the environment.

[Part IV: Area Plans](#) includes a prescription for how to develop and use an “area plan”, as well as copies of all adopted Area Community Plans and related maps.

## 1.2.4 How do I use this comprehensive plan?

Policy frameworks: The State and Local Planning Policy Frameworks contain the long-term directions and outcomes contemplated by this plan. These policies are implemented through Eagle County’s Land Use Regulations, as well as various County, State and municipal capital improvement planning processes. It is important to refer to both frameworks when considering the requirements of the plan.

The Comprehensive Plan maps: Sophisticated GIS mapping was used as an analysis tool during the development of the plan. Several maps, including a reference map, a jobs-to-housing ratio map and the most current Future Land Use Map, are included in the plan. Other analysis maps are available for review upon request at Eagle County’s Department of Community Development.

Area Community Plans: These plans give more detailed policies and descriptions of the future land uses desired by residents of a specific area. Area plans are supportive of general Eagle County Comprehensive Plan policies unless they indicate a specific mechanism for exception. Landowners must refer to both the Eagle County Planning Policy Frameworks in Part III of this document and the applicable Area Community Plan in Part IV for a complete understanding of the future vision for their property.

Definitions: Words used in this plan are assigned their common meaning unless otherwise defined or explained by Colorado Revised Statutes or defined in other relevant legislation. If the meaning of a word in the plan is questioned, please consult Eagle County Planning Staff.

### 1.2.5 How do I find out about requirements affecting my land?

It would be helpful to read the user guide, and to understand the state policies and local policies applicable to your area. The Area Community Plans provide the most detail regarding land use policies in specific regions of the county. The Future Land Use Map may provide helpful information on those areas not covered by existing approved sub-area plans. You should also refer to current Eagle County Land Use Regulations that apply to all unincorporated properties. County planners are available should you have any questions.

The Comprehensive Plan and Eagle County Land Use Regulations are available for inspection at the Community Development Department offices at 500 Broadway in Eagle, or on the Eagle County Government website: [www.eaglecounty.us](http://www.eaglecounty.us).

### 1.2.6 Plan Exceptions

Conformance with the policies of this Comprehensive Plan is a positive finding required for most land use applications. Flexibility in plan policies should be provided, however, for unique or extraordinary proposals or parcels, and to accommodate changing conditions. Important elements in considering the appropriateness of a plan exception are:

- a) Public notification requirements as detailed by Eagle County Land Use Regulations have been met.
- b) All other potentially impacted homeowners, businesses, entities and governing agencies have also received notice of the proposal.
- c) The Applicant has identified all potential conflicts and the measures that will be taken to resolve or mitigate all potential impacts; and
- d) Relevant and germane opposition to the proposal has been adequately and appropriately addressed.

The Planning Commission may approve exceptions for unique or extraordinary situations that were not anticipated when the Plan was adopted so long as the proposal is clearly in the public interest and generally meets the spirit and intent of the guiding policies of the Plan.

### 1.2.7 Plan Changes/Revisions

This plan is not a static document and is expected to change as conditions, attitudes and expectations change over time. Periodic review by County Staff, the Planning Commission(s) and an appointed community group or groups shall occur every five years to ensure Plan goals and policies are still timely and appropriate. Such review will also serve as an overview of any policy changes or plan exceptions that may have taken place.

The County will always provide the most current plan, and any amendments or revisions to the plan will follow the public review process.

### 1.2.8 Need more help?

Contact a County planner if you:

- Have a general inquiry about this plan.
- Are unsure what policies apply to your land.
- Would like to know how this plan may be changed.
- Want to buy a copy of any portion of the plan or an amendment.

Publications that may help include:

[Master Plan Primer, Colorado Department of Local Affairs](#), Office of Smart Growth

[Ten Questions to Ask When Adopting a Master Plan](#), Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Office of Smart Growth

The American Planning Association website: [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)

## 1.3 Planning in America and Colorado

---

*The History of Planning in America* is excerpted from *The Practice of Local Government Planning* (1998), edited by Frank S. So and Judith Getzels; and from the *National Association of Counties* website (August 2005): <http://www.naco.org>.

The *Planning in Colorado* section is drawn from the *Colorado Department of Local Affairs Office of Smart Growth* website (May 2004): <http://www.dola.state.co.us/SmartGrowth/index.htm>. Please refer to this website for the most updated information.

### 1.3.1 History of Planning in America

The European settlers brought their concept of town planning, which based on the European idea of the powers of municipal government, to America. In the northern colonies where populations were more urban, village and town leaders played a major role in the physical development of the community, and in setting social and economic policies. In the south, where populations were more agricultural and spread out, counties performed many of the duties that town government assumed in the north. The first county government in America was formed in 1634 at James City, Virginia.

The American Revolution and the subsequent adoption of the Constitution pushed local authority to state governments, with counties acting as agents of the states. Cities and towns operated under limited powers, focusing mostly on the maintenance of order and the provision of basic services. Authority to control the development of private property was unclear, as states and counties generally did not act in this capacity.

By the late 1700s, rapid land speculation and a strong agrarian ethic lead to an even more nonrestrictive and minimalist role of government in defining land use patterns. In 1800 a plan laying out the development pattern for the future capital city was commissioned by the federal government. It soon became clear, however, that the city itself lacked the authority to enforce it. Plans elsewhere in the country faced a similar fate, as large-scale plans were largely being ignored in favor of a speculative grid-pattern style of development, which provided for a minimum number of public amenities and a maximum number of identical building lots.

As the country became more industrialized, another pattern of development became common. Factories and industrial mills arose at the center of cities, surrounded by large concentrations of tenements to house the needed labor force. As the public became more aware of the tenuous living conditions in these tenements, more emphasis began to be placed on the need for open areas and public parks. The first New York Tenement House Law was enacted in the 1860's, placing requirements on housing to include windows and space between buildings. San Francisco passed an ordinance which prohibited slaughterhouses, hog storage facilities, and hide curing plants in certain districts of the city. The stage for the evolution of land use zoning was set.

America's expansion into the West brought forth a change in local government. Previously, county officials had been appointed by state governors, but the western settlers preferred to elect their own local officials. As the 1800s progressed, a series of court cases further defined the roles and powers of county governments. "Dillon's Rule" established that counties had to have specific enabling state legislation to authorize local functions.

In 1893, the World's Columbian Exposition opened in Chicago. The design of the Expo, which produced the first example in the United States of a group of public buildings and spaces that were conceived in relation to each other for the purpose of impressing a visitor, became known as the "White City". The design team was headed by Daniel Burnham, who became known as the "father of city planning" in the United States.

The American population exploded in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In 1907, the first planning board, the Hartford Commission on a City Plan, was created by the Connecticut legislature. Other planning boards soon followed, most created to sponsor the development of a plan, to oversee its execution, and to encourage financial support of public construction projects. In 1909, Wisconsin passed the first state

enabling act granting municipalities the right to engage in city planning, and the first national planning conference occurred in Washington, D.C. that same year.

In 1915, land use zoning came to the U.S. Supreme Court in *Hadacheck v. Sebastian*, and many interpreted the findings of the case to have granted implicit approval of land use zoning. In the 1920's population growth along with the increases in automobile ownership lead to the start of extensive suburbanization. Planning focused more and more on development control at the perimeters of cities, along with the construction and widening of streets to accommodate the automobile.

The role of county government in planning became more apparent. Comprehensive plans were developed, and became the controlling document guiding growth based on a set of comprehensive, long-term community goals. In *Village of Euclid v. Amber Realty Co.* (1926), the constitutionality of comprehensive zoning was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Depression shifted the emphasis of planning to massive public works projects and social programs. As America entered World War II, planning efforts became largely neglected. Following the war, trends toward suburbanization lead to the creation of well-staffed planning agencies. Though this was not the first wave of suburbanization, it was certainly the most dramatic. Those living outside of city limits expected the same services (schools, libraries, parks, roads, etc.) that had been available within the city. Counties took on numerous responsibilities and greatly increased their financial obligations. The majority of the planning efforts during this period were focused on zoning and subdivision controls.

The physical planning of the 1950s was replaced by social programs of the 1960s. In 1965, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development was created and programs for rent supplements, low-interest loans, and subsidies were created. The 1970s saw a shift to growth management and environmental planning, and as the 1980s approached, historic preservation became a major focus for planners. Comprehensive plans became the centerpiece in many jurisdictions to help direct related activities.

### 1.3.2 State of Colorado Planning Ethos

Effective planning ensures the orderly development of land within a given jurisdiction. Unlike some other states, Colorado does not have a state-wide land use plan. Through enabling legislation, Colorado delegates its "police power" authority to local governments. Comprehensive plans and land use regulations such as zoning and building codes are locally designated, implemented, and enforced. By preparing and adopting effective land use plans, planning commissions and local elected officials accomplish a variety of goals:

- **To protect the public and preserve quality of life:** Effective planning can reduce problems such as school overcrowding and road congestion, and can prevent development in high-risk areas like flood plains and steep slopes. It can also ensure that open space and viable agricultural lands are protected from development – an issue paramount to residents of Colorado mountain communities struggling to preserve their quality of life in the face of rapid growth.
- **To develop community vision and achieve goals:** The creation and adoption of a comprehensive plan provides an opportunity for citizen input, and generates the blueprint a community needs to realize its shared vision for the future. An effective planning process involves the public and builds on the strengths of the community. The comprehensive plan is more than just a list of goals and values; it is a roadmap that allows the community to achieve selected goals through specific land use policies and actions.
- **To protect private property rights:** Too often, planning is seen as infringing on, rather than enhancing, private property rights. While regulations like zoning may place limits on the uses an individual landowner can apply to his or her land, they are, at their core, intended to protect the property rights of all landowners in a planning jurisdiction. Without planning, the impacts of land use decisions may not be properly mitigated, and, as a result, their costs are borne by the entire community. Striking the balance between individual liberties and the public good is critical to every planning effort.

- **To encourage/continue economic development:** Orderly planning provides the kind of certainty and predictability that developers, lending institutions and business owners seek. Planning can help outline the future capital improvements and infrastructure a community will require to strengthen its economic base and can help identify the means to finance these infrastructure needs. Good planning can also ensure that sufficient land is available for employee housing and new business development.
- **To facilitate decision-making on land use:** Decision making by local governments should be done in accordance with comprehensive plans and land use regulations. In the absence of sound planning procedures, land use decisions can often be made haphazardly or by default. Good land use planning is proactive in nature and circumvents potential accusations that related decisions are being made in an arbitrary or capricious manner.

The exercise of this planning police power by local governments must bear a rational relationship to the health, safety, and welfare of the community, and must be exercised in a manner consistent with federal and state constitutional rights.

Colorado's movement towards planning began four decades ago with the passing of planning and zoning enabling legislation. As growth has continued, the state's response to the pressures of growth has changed. In the 1970s and 1980s, Governor Lamm created the Human Settlement Policies and the Front Range Project. During the late 1980s Governor Romer developed the first initiative called "Smart Growth." Governor Owens has taken the "smart growth" concept even further with his "Smart Growth: Colorado's Future" initiative. The Colorado Office of Smart Growth was developed to help local governments wield their powers to guide growth in a more informed manner. Demographic information, technical assistance, and funding are available through this resource to help with planning.

### 1.3.3 State Planning Authority

*NOTE: The following information is intended to provide a general overview of legislative enabling authority for land use planning in Colorado. Before utilizing any of the land use powers cited here, the relevant statutes and case law should be carefully reviewed. This is not a complete review of all Colorado land use law, and is not to be construed as legal advice. All statutory citations refer to the Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS), as amended.*

Through passage of numerous bills with implications for land use planning and regulation, the Colorado Legislature has placed the majority of land use responsibility and control at the local (county and municipal) level of government. The following discussion is limited to those statutes that address land use planning and control directly. There is additional legislation enabling local governments and state agencies to perform a variety of functions that indirectly affect land use. All of the statutes listed below, unless otherwise noted, are enabling legislation only. This means that these are tools for local governments to use at their prerogative in planning; they are not mandated or enforced by the State (unless otherwise noted).

#### Local Government Statutes

Counties (30-28-103) and municipalities (31-23-202) are authorized to appoint a planning commission (except where a county's population is less than 15,000, in which case the board of county commissioners may constitute the planning commission, or appoint a separate body).

County (30-28-106) and municipal planning commissions (31-23-206) are required to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan for the physical development of their jurisdictions. Pursuant to this legislation, adopted master plans must also include a recreation and tourism uses element.

#### Planning Tools

Land use regulation through zoning is available for counties (30-28-111) and municipalities (31-23-301).

The adoption of subdivision regulations has also been required of counties since 1972 (30-28-133), while optional for municipalities (31-23-214). "Subdivisions" or "subdivided land" is defined (30-28-101

(10) for counties, 31-23-201 (2) for municipalities) as any parcel of land which is to be used for condominiums, apartments, or any other multiple dwelling units, or which is divided into two or more parcels unless specifically excluded in this same section. Specifically excluded from the definition of subdivision within counties is any division of land resulting in parcels of 35 acres or more.

Counties and municipalities are authorized to use planned unit developments (PUD's) (24-67-101).

In 1999, the General Assembly updated the vested property rights statutes (24-68-101) to allow municipalities and counties to establish a vesting process and determine when vesting occurs in the development review process within a jurisdiction. Development proposals must go through the review process under the same regulations that were in effect when the completed application was submitted (except in emergency or safety situations).

Counties (30-28-201) and municipalities (31-15-601) may adopt building codes for consideration of and in accordance with the public health, safety, morals and general welfare and the safety, protection and sanitation of such dwellings, buildings, and structures.

In 2001, broad impact fee authority was granted to counties and statutory municipalities, enabling them to better plan for growth and permitting that, to the extent practicable, certain costs of growth will be paid for by new development (29-20-104.5). Home rule municipalities have always had the authority to collect impact fees by virtue of their constitutional home rule powers.

The Local Government Land Use Control Enabling Act (29-20-101, from HB 74-1034) grants counties and municipalities broad authority to plan for and regulate the use of land, with no restrictions, conditions, or procedures prescribed for local governments. According to this statute, each local government within its respective jurisdiction has the authority to plan for and regulate the use of land.

The House Bill 1041 powers" (the name is derived from HB 74-1041) found in 24-65.1-101 allow local governments to identify, designate, and regulate (through a permitting process) 21 statutorily defined "areas and activities of state interest". There are 21 areas and activities listed.

### **Extraterritorial and Cooperative Powers**

In addition to the foregoing statutes regarding the use of land within respective jurisdictions, there exist other statutes that give one jurisdiction certain powers over land use activities in a separate (different) jurisdiction.

- 31-23-212 and 213 enable a municipality to enforce its major street plan on all land within three miles of its boundaries.
- 31-15-401 through 601 allows a municipality to prohibit or regulate nuisances such as bawdy, obscene, or disorderly houses within three miles of city limits, and storage of explosives within one mile. 25-7-138(4) allows municipalities to consent to the location of a new land waste application site or new waste impoundment within one mile of their boundaries.
- 31-15-707 (IV) (b) allows a municipality to construct waterworks outside its boundaries and to protect the waterworks and water supply from pollution (up to five miles above the point from which the water is taken).
- 31-25-216, 217, 301, and 302 allow a municipality to establish, manage, and protect its park lands, recreation facilities and conservation easements (including the water in those parks) located beyond city limits.
- 31-23-225 requires a municipality to notify county Government, as well as the Land Use Commission and State Geologist, of a proposed major activity (covering five or more acres of land), prior to approving any zoning change, subdivision or building permit application associated with that activity.
- 30-28-136 requires counties to submit a copy of any preliminary plan for a subdivision to affected governments, including: school districts, special and other districts, counties, and municipalities located within two miles of the proposal, and other agencies. The statute also requires county Government to allow a twenty-one day review period before taking action.

- In 2001, legislation was enacted requiring jurisdictions intending to adopt or amend a master plan to give notice of the proposed plan or amendments to all neighboring jurisdictions for review. The neighboring jurisdictions may file objections to the proposed plan or amendments and may compel the planning jurisdiction to participate in mediation, prior to litigation, in order to settle the dispute over the master plan or amendments (24-32-3209).

Some statutes specifically address the power of local governments to cooperate with each other:

- 29-20-105 through 107 authorizes and encourages local governments to cooperate or contract with other units of government for purposes of planning or regulating the development of land. Local governments may provide through intergovernmental agreements (IGA) for the joint adoption by the governing bodies, after notice and hearing, of mutually binding and enforceable comprehensive development plans for areas within their jurisdictions. Each governing body has standing in district court to enforce the terms of the agreement and the plan. Local governments may, pursuant to an IGA, provide for revenue sharing.
- 29-1-203 allows local governments to cooperate or contract with one another to provide any function, service, or facility lawfully authorized to each of the cooperating or contracting units. The contract may establish a separate legal entity to do so.
- 30-28-105 enables municipalities and counties to form multi-county and joint city/county planning commissions, known as regional planning commissions, to conduct studies and make and adopt a regional plan for the physical development of the region. 30-28-117(5) enables regional zoning boards of adjustment as well.
- 32-7-101 authorizes at least two counties (upon approval of the electors) to form a regional service authority to perform any of the nearly twenty service functions (e.g., urban drainage and flood control, land and soil preservation, public surface transportation, etc).
- Special districts and school districts may, upon a vote of their boards, overrule development disapprovals by the board of county commissioners (30-28-110).

## **PART II: BASELINE TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS**



## 2.1 Social Trends & Characteristics

---

This section was completed in September of 2003. To review, please follow this link: [Social Trends and Characteristics \(All Chapters\)](#)

## 2.2 Environmental Trends & Characteristics

---

This section was completed in September of 2003. To review, please follow this link: [Environmental Trends and Characteristics \(All Chapters\)](#)

## 2.3 Economic Trends & Characteristics

---

This section was completed in September of 2003. To review, please follow the links:

- [Economic Trends and Characteristics Chapter 1: Employment](#)
- [Economic Trends and Characteristics Chapter 2: Income](#)
- [Economic Trends and Characteristics Chapter 3: Revenues](#)
- [Economic Trends and Characteristics Chapter 4: Working Conditions](#)
- [Economic Trends and Characteristics Chapter 5: Worker Characteristics](#)
- [Economic Trends and Characteristics Chapter 6: Poverty](#)
- [Economic Trends and Characteristics Chapter 7: Cost of Living](#)
- [Economic Trends and Characteristics Chapter 8: Tourism](#)

## 2.4 Projections

---

### 2.4.1 Jobs and Population Forecasts

The State Demography Office of the [Colorado Department of Local Affairs](#) provides population and job projections and forecasts for all counties in the state. The analysis is based on national trends, and expected economic and demographic developments. Local input is strongly encouraged, and the State Demographer's Office (SDO) typically works with members of a local technical sub-committee (herein after referred to as the Committee) in the development and review of each county forecast.

Population forecasts are made in three basic steps: First, a forecast of jobs is prepared by the Center for Business and Economic Forecasting (CBEF). Second, an initial forecast of the population is prepared by the SDO based on past trends and a variety of assumptions. Finally, the two forecasts are reconciled with each other via a "Forecasting Worksheet" which takes account of working-age populations, labor force participation rates, unemployment rates and multiple-job holding rates. A shortened version of the worksheet prepared for Eagle County is shown on the following page.

A strong jobs forecast prepared by CBEF was accepted by the Committee as a starting point for its work in Eagle County. The jobs forecast projects annual growth rates at 4.1% through 2015, dropping to 3.3%, 2.6% and 2.0% respectively each of the following three five-year periods. Normally, anything over 3% is considered very strong growth; however, these were viewed as conservative by many for a county that grew over 6% during the 1990's. Eagle County has the potential for a considerable amount of new construction jobs along with other jobs related to maintenance, transactions, public safety, and services. The county still has land available for development, however, growing sentiment toward impacts from growth will make future expansion onto undeveloped lands increasing controversial.

The forecasting worksheets also include estimates and forecasts of the need for workers to commute in or out of each county. The forecast of commuting is very much affected by the expected growth in jobs

relative to the expected growth in population. A job market that must rely on commuters assumes that workers in neighboring counties will be available and willing to travel.

The Eagle County forecasting effort considered a number of different alternatives. The main differences among the alternatives had to do with the ability of Eagle County to house worker-related populations in the future. Ultimately, two alternatives were presented to the county, one that indicated a higher resident workforce population and fewer daily commuters, and another that reflected a lower resident workforce population and more commuters.

In reaching this conclusion, decision makers noted the numerous variables that are considered in projecting future populations, many of which are speculative. Political and economic forces, social change, environmental impacts, land availability, etc. are difficult factors to quantify in population projections, but each can play a major role in shaping the future growth of the County. County decision makers were somewhat skeptical of the projection, but determined that a lower population forecast and correspondingly higher commuter forecast is more probable given the public's concern for the impacts from growth, and the forecast for a shortage of workforce housing.

As it currently stands, the population growth rate for Eagle County is forecast to remain above 2.6% at least until 2015 and then decline somewhat after that, reaching a total population of 88,000 people by 2030. These growth rates are quite strong compared to national trends, but remain considerably below the population growth rates of 6% that occurred locally during the 1990's. It was felt by the Committee (and accepted by the Eagle County Planning Commission) that second homes and retiree homes would continue to be strong economic drivers, and strong determinants of future land use decisions. The number of service level jobs would continue to grow, but so would land values, and workers would find it increasingly difficult to find housing within the county. Consequently, the number of workers forecast to commute into the county each day is shown to increase from 1000 in 2005 to 33,000 in 2030.

<b>EAGLE COUNTY – JOBS, LABOR FORCE &amp; POPULATION FORECASTS (shortened version)</b>										
January 5, 2005										
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>Total Jobs</b>	18,616	26,398	34,355	33,530	36,993	45,149	55,258	64,979	73,756	81,251
<i>Ave Yearly % Change</i>		7.2%	5.4%	-1.2%	3.3%	4.1%	4.1%	3.3%	2.6%	2.0%
<b>Commuting (net)</b>	500	650	800	800	1,000	6,486	13,588	20,413	26,812	33,153
<b>Jobs Held by Residents</b>	15,738	21,718	29,344	30,175	31,571	34,543	37,550	40,446	42,824	43,978
<b>Residents Holding Jobs</b>	13,110	18,091	25,080	25,791	26,984	29,524	32,094	34,569	36,602	37,588
<i>Ave Yearly % Change</i>		6.7%	6.8%	1.4%	1.5%	1.8%	1.7%	1.5%	1.1%	0.5%
<b>Total Labor Force Participation Rate</b>	74.4%	73.6%	72.6%	72.9%	71.0%	68.0%	65.0%	62.0%	59.0%	56.0%
<b>Population (Census Based)</b>	21,922	30,608	42,963	45,520	49,600	57,300	65,000	72,700	80,700	88,000
<i>Ave Yearly % Change</i>		6.9%	7.0%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	2.6%	2.3%	2.1%	1.7%

*\* The math is not straight forward, as there are statistical discrepancies that must be accounted for when determining final numbers. Readers are encouraged to contact the State Demographers office at 303-866-4147 with specific questions regarding this information.*

*\* A net inflow of commuters is indicated, as there are many residents, especially on the Roaring Fork side, who commute out of Eagle County to work.*

*\* The difference between jobs held by residents and residents holding jobs indicates that many residents work more than one job.*

*\* The decline of the labor participation rate over time indicates an aging population, and the fact that many future residents will be retired.*

## 2.4.2 Growth Scenario Questionnaire

In 2004, Eagle County Community Development Department developed a Growth Scenario Questionnaire in an attempt to capture and define public sentiment regarding future growth in Eagle County. The exercise compared local community-generated predictions to those made by the State Demography Office and Colorado Department of Transportation. Various scenarios that could influence growth and development, such as the widening of Interstate 70, were considered. The exercise also mapped predicted regional growth to help with regional and sub-area planning.

Thirty-eight individuals were asked to take part in Growth Scenario Questionnaire based on their expertise and involvement in projecting growth and development in Eagle County. Town staff, special districts, utilities, economic development organizations, advisory groups, planning commissioners, and applicable county departments were included in the exercise.

The 'Delphi Method' was chosen for the Growth Scenario Questionnaire in an attempt to increase accuracy of the results. The Delphi Method acquires predictions from a number of 'experts' in isolation; the theory being that a number of experts thinking independently from one another will create more accurate results than either one group working together or one expert working alone.

Participants were first asked to place dots on a map of Eagle County based on where they think growth WILL occur, not where they would LIKE it to occur. Each map response was scanned to create the union maps of responses ([Growth Scenario Questionnaire Summary Map](#)). They also were asked to chart out their responses compared to the State Demography Office's population prediction of roughly 80,000 for Eagle County by 2025.

Participants were then asked to list the assumptions they used for determining total population and distribution, and to break down future growth into urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Finally, the participants were given transportation scenarios as outlined in the I-70 PEIS study created by Colorado Department of Transportation. The study projected population changes for each scenario, and the Growth Scenario Questionnaire asked participants to evaluate the predicted influence each scenario would have on population.

The outcomes and responses to this exercise do not represent a scientific study, nor are they intended to be a purely accurate depiction of where growth will occur in the future. The intent of the exercise was to compare predictions from outside sources to those made by locals, and to potentially use the results as a general tool to help shape growth at the county and sub-area levels.

[Growth Scenario Summary Map](#)

# **PART III: PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

## 3.1 General Governance

---

**Goal: Governing decisions in Eagle County reflect the core values of its citizens, utilize input from a broad cross section of the community, and involve intergovernmental cooperation wherever appropriate.**

### 3.1.1 Background Information

Please refer to the following links to gain a better understanding of the issues related to General Governance:

[Department of Local Affairs, Division of Local Government](#)

[Department of Local Affairs, Office of Smart Growth](#)

[Colorado Counties, Inc. \(CCI\)](#)

[Colorado Municipal League \(CML\)](#)

[Special District Association \(SDA\)](#)

[Federal Government \(FirstGov\)](#)

[Colorado Government Links](#)

### 3.1.2 Core Values

#### Policies:

- a. Eagle County Land Use Regulations and other guiding documents such as this Eagle County Comprehensive Plan should accurately reflect the core values of Eagle County residents.
- b. Input from the community should be used to periodically update stated Core Values.
- c. The core values of the greater community should be visible and well known to Eagle County residents, second home owners, Eagle County Staff and Eagle County's elected and appointed officials.

Values are the underpinnings of a society, and reflect the hopes, dreams and the priorities of the people who live, work and recreate in a given geographic area. Understanding the core values of a community is critical to planning and making decisions for that community. This Comprehensive Plan aims to identify the core values of Eagle County so that landowners, developers and decision makers can better determine the most appropriate path for future development.

In order to ascertain the core values of the people of Eagle County, Eagle County Government conducted a comprehensive public participation program that included contributions from over 300 individuals and groups from both incorporated and unincorporated areas. The following summarizes the public input from that program.

#### **Community Values:**

- Eagle County epitomizes economic sustainability, and is a place where decision making balances the environmental, economic, and social needs of its residents.
- Eagle County is a place where residents and visitors can engage in active, healthy lifestyles.
- Eagle County provides abundant opportunities and locations for residents and visitors to reflect, dream, and renew.
- Eagle County is a healthy place for families to live and grow.

- Eagle County embodies the pristine natural settings and ecosystems of the Central Rocky Mountains, which its residents and visitors cherish and strive to protect.
- Eagle County is a place where natural ecosystems are preserved and maintained in order to assure the health and well-being of local wildlife populations.
- Eagle County honors the western tradition of freedom and acceptance of a diversity of people, beliefs, activities, and entrepreneurial endeavors.
- Eagle County fosters a healthy and diverse economic base that functions in accordance with the social and environmental characteristics of the valley.

These value statements clearly express what people like most about Eagle County, and they should serve as a foundation for all decisions that guide the planning of Eagle County's future. Eagle County Government and Town governments should work to make these value statements common knowledge among residents, employees, second homeowners, and visitors.

### 3.1.3 Community Involvement

#### Policies:

- d. The value of the Eagle County Comprehensive Plan should be understood and the plan should be appropriately adhered to.**
- e. The community should be involved with County planning and decision-making processes.**
- f. Public awareness and acceptance of the planning policies and tools expressed by this Comprehensive Plan should be fostered.**

Community involvement is key to any coordinated planning effort. Unfortunately, in Eagle County community involvement tends to be lowest in those areas experiencing the most rapid changes and growth. The cost of living is high in these strong growth areas, and many residents work long hours or more than one job to support their families and make ends meet. Eagle County residents play hard, too, as healthy living and participation in outdoor activities is a primary lifestyle goal. Some are disinterested in local government. Others may be generally satisfied with the performance of their elected officials, or they may believe that there is little they can do as individuals to influence any change. As a result of these and other factors, attendance at public meetings is generally low.

Eagle County must continue to recognize the importance of keeping the public informed, and must do everything in its power to seek involvement from the broadest possible cross section of people when planning for its future. Efforts should be ongoing to promote the content of this Comprehensive Plan as a valuable tool for making and understanding decisions pertaining to growth, development, preservation and enhancement in Eagle County. All forms of media should be used to keep the residents, employees, second homeowners, and visitors of Eagle County knowledgeable about local issues and related public meeting schedules.

### 3.1.4 Governance

#### Policies:

- g. Cooperative planning solutions should be encouraged across jurisdictional boundaries by promoting intergovernmental communication and coordination.**

Eagle County has a strong tradition in leadership, and has strived to be Colorado's "best run county". Based on its solid financial condition, exemplary customer service, outstanding airport facility and its use of cutting-edge computer technologies and geographic information systems, the County was awarded Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI) County of the Year Award in 2000.

Despite its longstanding tradition of excellence, Eagle County and the decisions of appointed and elected County boards and commissions are frequent targets in local newspapers. In contrast to the

typically low turn out at public hearings, residents and visitors seem to enjoy opportunities to comment with letters, editorials or tips in the paper on a broad range of governance issues.

Through the multitude of opinions, an underlying theme usually emerges: government entities need to work together in Eagle County to accomplish common goals. Residential development, commercial development, housing, operating plans, and marketing and promotional plans all have regional impacts, and towns, counties, districts, state agencies, federal agencies, and school boards all need to consider the larger regional picture to make better decisions.

Eagle County Government should lead the effort to involve other jurisdictions and agencies. Open communication and clarity of process are keys to creating a healthy environment for intergovernmental cooperation.



### 3.1.5 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for General Governance

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
<p>a. Eagle County Land Use Regulations and other guiding documents such as this Comprehensive Plan should accurately reflect the core values of Eagle County residents.</p>	Continue to review all planning and regulatory documents to ensure that they are consistent with stated core values.	Eagle County Government
	Utilize the County's Comprehensive Plan as the foundation for all Area Community Plans.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Technical Advisory Groups Planning area representatives Involved Citizens
	Review County budgets and capitol projects relative to conformance with stated core values.	Eagle County Government Funding Applicants
<p>b. Input from the community should be used to periodically update stated core values.</p>	Maintain an open door policy in all County offices and promote the open expression of public opinion	Eagle County Government
	Establish procedures that require Eagle County employees who work in the field to record and report community opinions gathered on the job	Eagle County Government
	Support the efforts of NWCCOG to gain information on public sentiment through local and regional surveys	Eagle County Government Northwest Colorado Council of Governments
	Promote public involvement and expression at Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioner public hearings	Eagle County Government Local Media Groups
	Solicit community input and feedback through the County's web site	Eagle County Government
<p>c. The core values of the greater community should be visible and well known to Eagle County residents, second home owners, visitors, Eagle County Staff and Eagle County elected and appointed officials.</p>	Place the core values on the County's website in appropriate locations.	Eagle County Government
	Communicate the core values and visions of Eagle County residents through various media releases, including the County's own cable TV station.	Eagle County Government Local Media Groups
	Include information on core values in all county training classes, programs and materials	Eagle County Government
	As new County stationary is needed, replace with stationary that has the core values and vision of Eagle County stated clearly on the letterhead.	Eagle County Government
	Update and widely distribute the document called "Western Living Guide" Include new sections to help educate locals and new comers on current concerns for mountain living.	Eagle County Government Local media groups
<p>d. The value of the Eagle County Comprehensive Plan should be understood and the Plan should be appropriately adhered to.</p>	Develop a marketing package for the Eagle County Comprehensive Plan	Eagle County Government

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Promote and utilize the computer interactive nature of the new Comprehensive Plan	Eagle County Government
	Make the Comprehensive Plan available to all municipalities and encourage its incorporation into Town Master Plans as appropriate.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Hold regular informal county open houses around the County to notify residents of what is going on with long range planning.	Eagle County Government Home owner associations Planning area representatives
	Develop an executive summary for the Comprehensive Plan to facilitate ease of use.	Eagle County Government
	Evaluate all plans and proposals for conformance to the Comprehensive Plan	Eagle County Government
e. The community should be involved with County planning and decision-making processes.	Continue to post schedules of upcoming hearings on land use files.	Eagle County Government
	Hold kick-off meetings to help develop the work program for Comprehensive Plan updates, Area Plans, or Plan amendments.	Eagle County Government
	Present analysis early in the Comprehensive Plan update or amendment processes to allow the community time to comment.	Eagle County Government
	Allow at least one month for referral of Comprehensive Plan updates, Area Plans or plan amendments.	Eagle County Government Referral Recipients
	Hold public meetings in convenient locations throughout the County	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Promote continued communication between the Planning Division staff and representatives of a planning area even after the area planning process is complete.	Eagle County Government Planning area representatives
	Strive for increased transparency in County government.	Eagle County Government
f. Public awareness and acceptance of the planning policies and tools expressed by this Comprehensive Plan should be fostered.	Use current communicating tools such as the internet, cable station, and newsletters to list policies and tools, and to keep people informed about upcoming planning decisions	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local media groups
	Work with local media outlets to inform residents, employees, and visitors regarding Comprehensive Plan updates or amendments	Eagle County Government Local media groups
g. Cooperative planning solutions should be encouraged across jurisdictional boundaries by promoting intergovernmental communication and coordination.	Encourage regular joint meetings with the various decision-making bodies.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Initiate joint town/county staff review of development planned within three miles of a town boundary.	Eagle County Government Town Governments

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Utilize mutually beneficial intergovernmental agreements (IGA's) when appropriate.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Service Providers
	Apply town standards in areas where annexation by that town is anticipated.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Facilitate the consolidation of special districts when appropriate and found to be in the best interest of the public	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Discourage creation of additional small service districts and deny the duplication of services among service districts.	Eagle County Government Service Providers
	Request the cooperation of special districts in the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan	Eagle County Government Service Providers
	Collaborate with state and federal agencies on planning processes.	Eagle County Government Public Land Managers Federal agency representatives
	Create citizen task forces to identify and promote the benefits of a more unified county.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Community representatives
	Investigate the possibilities of consolidating County services with other public entities, private entities and non-profit groups.	Eagle County Government Involved entity

## 3.2 General Development

---

**Goal:** The impacts of development in Eagle County are carefully monitored, and future development occurs in a manner that preserves a high quality of life, a diverse and sustainable economy, the area’s scenic beauty, a healthy natural environment and a vibrant, well designed community.

### 3.2.1 Background Information:

Please refer to the following links to gain a better understanding of the issues related to General Development:

[Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography, County Population Projections](#)

[Governor's Office of Energy Management and Conservation, Rebuild Colorado Program](#)

[Urban Land Institute](#)

[American Planning Association](#)

[Colorado Sustainability Project, Inc.](#)

### 3.2.2 Quality of Life

#### Policies:

**a. Those attributes that support quality of life options unique to Eagle County today should be preserved for future generations**

Nearly all development issues are associated with the pursuit and protection of a positive quality of life. “Quality of life” is a term typically used to describe physical and economic satisfaction, and is often associated with adequate wealth, health, and comfort. Quality of life can also include emotional fulfillment and personal satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the cultural or intellectual conditions under which one lives. As such, quality of life may have as much to do with one’s mind and its perceptions as it does with day to day physical experiences; as much to do with the culture of an area as it does with the physical environment.

It is likely that the physical realities of a beautiful mountain environment, world-class recreational amenities, a great climate and a robust economy initially draw people to Eagle County. For many, enjoyment of the life style provided by these characteristics is the primary reason they decide to become fulltime residents. In addition, the small town atmosphere, quiet living, neighborliness, opportunities for a “connection” to nature, clean air and water, abundant wildlife, and a broad spectrum of cultural and educational events and activities all add significantly to the quality of life choices available in the County. These attributes, plus easy access to the cities of Glenwood Springs, Grand Junction and Denver, create a truly rich and wonderful place to call home. This may be why residents who do not ski, do not bike, and do not hike or raft or fish seem to appreciate Eagle County as much as those who do.

Every person has their own definition of what is important in their lives. The physical conditions, amenities and experiences that contribute to a person’s quality of life in Eagle County has changed considerably over the past 30 years. Many of the living experiences enjoyed by residents 40 years ago in Eagle County are not available to residents living here today. On the flip side, there are many quality experiences now available that the original homesteaders could not have even dreamed of. In the face of booming growth, the decisions that face local officials now often relate to which of the many quality of life characteristics currently available to visitors and residents should be preserved for future generations.

Some would say policy makers should do nothing, for as Eagle County grows, and the dynamic of its population changes, so too will expectations change for the quality of life people seek. Others feel that certain characteristics fundamental to the quality of mountain living are at risk, and that greater management and more directed planning by government is necessary.

This Comprehensive Plan assumes that the quality of life that can be found in Eagle County today is worth preserving. As such, it attempts to identify those elements that are significant to the County's current quality of life and to provide a shopping cart of policies and strategies that may be used to help preserve them for the future.

### 3.2.3 Growth

#### Policies:

- b. Population growth, economic trends, and changing environmental conditions should be actively monitored, and the resulting data should be appropriately used in the decision making process.**
- c. Growth should be managed toward future sustainability - a healthy balance between economic success, quality of life and the preservation of the environment.**
- d. There are thresholds that should be considered relative to the amount and form of growth that can be reasonably sustained in Eagle County**

Like quality of life, growth means different things to different people. Long-time locals tend to have mixed feelings about growth, noting on one side the negative impacts of crowds, noise, traffic, and pollution, while acknowledging the benefits of improved public services, better schools, more shopping options and the potential for better jobs. Many new-comers to the valley are of urban origin, and while they might desire living in the mountains, they also enjoy having access to the cultural events, facilities and amenities common to a more urban environment. Many who live here promote reducing or even stopping growth, but most would probably agree that the growth that has occurred in Eagle County to this point in time has enriched their current life style.

Eagle County is a very popular destination. Regardless of their origin, people come to here to seek a better quality of life, and many specifically desire an escape from the commotion of urban living. As people arrive, however, the commotion increases. Between 1990 and 2000 Eagle County was the 10<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county in the United States. During that time its population doubled. By the year 2006, it is estimated that Eagle County's population will reach 50,000. There are presently more jobs in the County than workers, and thousands of workers currently commute to Eagle County each day from surrounding areas. By the year 2030, conservative projections by the State place the county's population at 88,000. Those same projections indicate many more jobs, a potential shortage of attainable workforce housing, and a daily commute from other areas by approximately 33,000 people. Rush hour traffic could become city-like, and many envision an eventual urbanized high-density corridor along both Interstate 70 and Highway 82.

Population growth in Eagle County will continue. A Dwelling Unit Analysis conducted by Eagle County's Department of Community Development in 2005 indicated the existence of already approved but presently vacant lots or parcels within the Towns and in unincorporated areas of the County on which almost 12,000 additional dwelling units could be built. Using this number, and applying the regional average of 2.7 persons per household, Eagle County could physically accommodate 32,000 additional people today, with no further land use approvals other than building permits. Development pressure will likely continue and more lands will likely be up-zoned by the County or annexed by the Towns in the future to allow higher residential densities. A population projection for the year 2030 of 88,000 may well be on the conservative side.

There is an incontrovertible axiom that infinite growth is not possible in a finite system. Most would agree that Eagle County's resources - its land, its water, and its visual and cultural amenities - are not

without limit. Indeed, low snowfall amounts over the past several years has created considerable concern regarding the County's water supply, especially given the need to preserve adequate flows for stream and river environments.

Growth has played an enormous role in shaping the economic success and vitality of the modern day Eagle County. Unfortunately, growth has also produced negative impacts such as traffic, pollution, crowded venues and noise that detract from Eagle County's quality of life and, potentially, the vitality of the county's communities and environment. At present, the County's economy is strong, but it is conceivable that poorly managed growth could begin to diminish the quality of life experience to the point where tourist oriented businesses would be negatively impacted. This is why future planning is so critical.

Given the limited amount of private land, the possibility exists of a time when development patterns along the County's major travel routes become essentially fixed in place. A "fixed in place" development pattern does not mean that the economy would stop growing, as there is always re-development (the county is already seeing this), and there are always gains to be made through economic diversification. In a place that "sells" recreational experiences, pristine natural beauty and healthy, outdoor oriented lifestyles, there is a balancing act that must occur between growth and the need to preserve the physical and social characteristics that support a desired quality of life.

Sustainability, maintenance, preservation, continuation, conservation, safeguarding, keeping, or upholding are all catch phrases used to explain the concept of balance for long-term benefit. Just like treading water or keeping the weight off after a diet, balance is not an effortless state. It is a process that allows growth and expansion in some areas while acknowledging the need for waning and contraction in others.

The key to sustainability or maintenance is monitoring. Understanding the effects of growth and development on the economy, community, and environment is essential to determining the best ways to mitigate adverse impacts. Decision makers in Eagle County must think about the connections between the economy and the environment, society and jobs, housing, quality of life, and the myriad of other indicators of a community's intrinsic well being. Each new development proposal must be viewed against the larger picture of Eagle County's future.

How can growth be managed to achieve the best future for the County? What tools should be utilized to better direct growth and reduce the related impacts? Fortunately, the situation in Eagle County is not unique. Many other communities in Colorado and elsewhere in the United States are actively investigating or are currently employing strategies to find a balance and ensure the future well being of their citizenry. As well equipped and progressive as Eagle County has always been, it must continue to communicate with and study the experiences of others as it formulates its own set of growth management strategies.

A main objective of this Comprehensive Plan is to support and encourage the diversity of Eagle County's economic development and to accommodate a reasonable level of growth, but only if that growth can be provided with necessary facilities and services in a fiscally responsible manner, and only if that growth is consistent with the character of Eagle County, causes minimum impact on environmental and wildlife resources, and is compatible with adjacent land uses. This plan is intended to provide the most current ideas, policies, actions and guidelines that can be used to find an appropriate balance between population growth, economic success, quality of life and environmental preservation in Eagle County.

### 3.2.4 Development

#### Policies:

- e. **Urban and suburban type growth should be appropriately designed and should be located within or immediately contiguous to existing towns and community centers.**

- f. New communities proposed for unincorporated areas of the County should be subject to a thorough and rigorous set of development criteria.**
- g. Redevelopment and/or revitalization of currently underdeveloped, outdated, rundown, or otherwise dysfunctional areas should be encouraged.**
- h. Open corridors between towns and community centers should be preserved.**
- i. A cluster style of development should be encouraged, especially in areas where cultural, environmental or scenic resources are at risk.**
- j. Development should be fully responsible for the mitigation of development related impacts upon both the natural and built environment.**

### **Development Patterns**

Early development in Eagle County mirrored transportation routes, which generally followed streams, rivers and valley floors. Shallow slopes in these areas held good soil and were easy to access, irrigate, farm and ranch. Steeper slopes were of little use or interest to early settlers and, with the exception of mining, were generally left undisturbed. A linear development pattern along valley floors resulted.

In the 1960's, local governments began to see the need to regulate land use, and in 1964 Eagle County adopted its first set of subdivision regulations. In 1974, zoning was applied to all unincorporated county lands. These new land use regulations were designed to control the placement and quality of growth in the county, which generally continued to follow transportation corridors and valley floors, as these areas were still the most suitable locations for development.

It was not long, however, before development pressure and the strong market for real estate began pushing housing and resort construction toward private lands once considered too remote to develop. Side valley benches, hillsides and ridge tops were accessed by long, publicly and privately maintained roads, and became locations for subdivisions, golf courses and gated communities. While these isolated communities require expensive infrastructure and the creation of separate service districts, they generally pay for themselves through property taxes and owner assessments. However, they also tend to create many service jobs and often do not provide affordable workforce housing to offset this impact to the larger community. Their isolated locations often disrupt wildlife habitats and contribute to the perception of development sprawl.

Development pressure remains high in the county today, and land values are consequently inflated. Eagle County has become a place where virtually any large agricultural tract of land with water rights represents a potential gold mine to the owner, as it could one day be successfully developed into a golf resort or high-end second home community.

There are fifteen community centers in the County. Vail, Minturn, Red Cliff, Avon, Eagle, Gypsum, and Basalt are incorporated towns, and all, with the exception of Vail and Redcliff, have been actively annexing adjacent land in the past ten years to accommodate residential and commercial growth. Eagle-Vail and Beaver Creek are essentially unincorporated suburbs of the Town of Avon. The largest population center is unincorporated Edwards. The smallest centers, also unincorporated, are Burns, McCoy and Bond, which serve ranches in the northern part of the county, and Wolcott, which is likely to see significant growth pressure in the foreseeable future given its location on the I-70 corridor. On the Roaring Fork River, unincorporated El Jebel lies near the Town of Basalt between the towns of Glenwood Springs in Garfield County and Aspen in Pitkin County. Finally, Dotsero is an emerging community center located west of Gypsum on the Colorado River where over 400 dwelling units and 20,000 square feet of commercial space have recently been approved.

Continued growth on the valley floor has begun to blur the distinction between once separate communities. It is difficult today to see where Avon ends and Edwards begins, Eagle is only slightly separated from the incorporated boundary of Gypsum, and Basalt and El Jebel are rapidly growing together. Many point to these as examples of ex-urban sprawl in the County, and would note the negative impacts of fragmented wildlife habitat, degraded views and diminished opportunities to develop or retain unique community character. This Comprehensive Plan advocates retaining open

areas between towns and community centers. Undeveloped areas between existing communities in Eagle County have been designated as “community buffer” lands on the Future Land Use Map, which can be found in Section 3.10. Proposals for development in these areas should be considerate of the need to preserve visual separation between communities.

Existing towns and unincorporated communities will continue to be important locations for Eagle County residents and second-home owners. Due to limited land and the growing desire of the community to preserve open space on the valley floors, however, existing community centers will find it increasingly difficult to expand onto previously undeveloped land. Internal re-development with increases in vertical height is one option, but many residents will oppose the increased density and the obstructed views that taller buildings would create. Strategies should be implemented that allow creative and appropriate mechanisms for the renovation of existing towns. There may also be a need in the future to locate new communities in the County where density and infrastructure can be focused. To prevent a sprawling development pattern, a rigorous set of criteria for the site-selection of any future new community should be established. Eagle County Government, Town Governments and developers should utilize Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping and other state-of-the-art analysis tools to help identify areas where development might be appropriate as well as areas where intensive development should not be allowed to occur.

## **Density**

In Eagle County, higher density development is often equated with a diminished quality of life. Mountain residents are rarely in favor of any plan that suggests more people per acre. Unfortunately, a few bad examples of higher densities have undermined public perceptions regarding the important role that more compact living arrangements can play. From a practical standpoint, higher density could be a solution to many of the issues currently faced. There is a need to accommodate growth, but there is an equally important desire to preserve the County’s pristine land, environment and rural character. If used judiciously, increased density in specific areas could be a highly effective tool for achieving these goals.

High housing demand with low housing supply creates shortages and drives home prices up. Focusing development into areas of higher density within existing towns and unincorporated communities can help bring down the costs of development by spreading the cost of land over more residential units. Higher densities can also help meet the demand for workforce housing while at the same time averting sprawl.

Increasing density in existing towns and communities makes sense as it places people near existing infrastructure and services. More density in existing communities can create fiscal savings, as new infrastructure is often unnecessary. Studies have shown that the cost of providing services to outlying areas grows exponentially as development occurs further from existing facilities.

Density can reduce traffic and increase options for mass transit and other forms of transportation. It is often easier in a more compact mixed-use community to ride a bike or walk than it is to try to get around with a car. Visitors often rely on walking or public transportation. By directing residential, lodging and commercial development into denser, mixed-use areas, an environment can be created where the greatest variety of transportation options exists. Transit stops become much more viable when they are located close to areas of high density mixed-use development.

Finally, Eagle County and its incorporated towns need to project the image of a vibrant, active place where all tourist attractions and amenities are easy to find and access. Mixed use development is strongly encouraged. Recreation and the ability to relax within community centers should remain a priority, and areas of open space and public parks should be strategically sized, positioned and otherwise incorporated into all areas of higher density.



## 3.2.5 Community & Character

### Policies:

#### **k. Local communities should establish unique venues, attractions and design standards directed toward enhancing individual community character and developing a sense of place.**

“Know thyself.” The same holds true for a geographic region like Eagle County. Review the local papers and marketing brochures, and it is relatively easy to define many elements of Eagle County’s present-day community and character.

A positive sense of place is difficult to describe. Simply put, it is the feeling that one experiences when they have arrived someplace unique and special. The beauty, topography, open space, climate, and recreation found in Eagle County make it a very special place, indeed, but sense of place involves more than just an area’s physical attributes. It involves community and people - real communities that provide positive lifestyles and quality living, and residents who take pride in their community.

Eagle County residents bring their different perspectives to this beautiful place and spend their time here working together to make something of which to be proud: a thriving community in harmony with the natural environment. They share a common love for the quality of life it provides. Second homeowners and visitors reap the benefits of these efforts, with positive results.

Each community develops its own character, its own unique set of local experiences and venues and amenities, which enables it to boast a special sense of place. Vail successfully created a European village where there once was a sheep pasture. Minturn has long been known for some unique restaurant experiences, and now offers a popular summer Farmer’s Market. Avon is working to create a new main street in its downtown area and a water park on the river, and Basalt works continuously to maintain the attractiveness of its historic main street shopping area. Eagle is home to the annual Rodeo and Fair, and Gypsum hosts its annual Gypsum Daze event. All are examples of efforts to create and retain a unique sense of community that will draw more visitors, support local business and foster happier, more fulfilled residents.

Establishing community character in towns like Eagle, Gypsum and El Jebel that serve as bedroom communities for resort complexes like Vail and Aspen can be a challenge because most of the residents work elsewhere during the day. Community building within resort towns can also be difficult due to a concentration of absentee second homeowners and the transient nature of the service workforce. Eagle County and Town governments must work both separately and together to lessen these impacts, to provide affordable housing units close to the workplace, and to create more year-round jobs and more reasons for people to stay and become involved. Each community should be encouraged to draw on its own history to develop attractions, amenities and events that are unique to it and hopefully different from other towns, thus providing all who live and visit here with a full pallet of entertainment, recreation and shopping options.

### 3.2.6 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for General Development

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
<p>a. Those attributes that support quality of life options unique to Eagle County today should be preserved for future generations.</p>	<p>Ensure that all plans for development recognize the need to preserve the natural beauty and environmental integrity of Eagle County</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Refer to core values as expressed by Eagle County residents when determining quality of life attributes</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service providers</p>
	<p>Continue to seek input from a broad cross section of the community to determine desired quality of life attributes</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Media Groups</p>
	<p>Recognize that the quality of life desired is different for different people, and that quality of life attributes desired by a population can change as the demographics of that population changes</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service providers</p>
	<p>Work to identify and preserve quality of life characteristics like outstanding recreational facilities, open space, clean air and water, uncrowded roads, quiet neighborhoods, unique cultural events and quality services.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service providers Interest Groups Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Work to preserve vestiges of the County's western heritage and the rural quality of life found in outlying areas of the county.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Ranchers advocacy groups</p>
<p>b. Population growth, economic trends, and changing environmental conditions should be actively monitored, and the resulting data should be appropriately used in the decision making process.</p>	<p>Update the Dwelling Unit Analysis and Commercial/Industrial Development Analysis every year.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments</p>
	<p>Invest in software that helps track growth and development.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Consulting agencies</p>
	<p>Develop a long term photo inventory of developed and yet-to-be developed areas from select photo points to monitor changes</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments</p>
	<p>Work with local social and community service groups to track population growth and other social indicators at the county and community level on a yearly basis.</p>	<p>Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Eagle County Government Service Providers Educators Advocate Groups</p>

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	<p>Incorporate population and job growth data compiled by the State Demographer into development decisions and long range planning objectives.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Continue to support studies and surveys conducted by the NWCCOG</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Northwest Colorado Council of Governments</p>
	<p>Work with local groups interested in the economy to produce a yearly economic report tracking economic indicators down to a community level.</p>	<p>Colorado Department of Local Affairs Eagle County Government Chambers of Commerce Tourism Bureaus Major Industries Home Builders Associations Boards of Realtors Economic Development Institutions</p>
	<p>Work with the local environmental groups to assemble an analysis of environmental indicators on a yearly basis.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Public Land Managers Federal and State Permitting Authorities Watershed groups Environmental Advocates</p>
	<p>Access current data and utilize GIS mapping and other state-of-the-art analysis tools to help monitor development trends.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers</p>
<p>c. Growth should be managed toward future sustainability - a healthy balance between economic success, quality of life, and the preservation of the environment.</p>	<p>Promote compact, mixed-use development within or adjacent to existing community centers</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Ensure that all plans for development recognize the need to improve social equity.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Ensure that all plans for development recognize the need to maintain a healthy economy.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	<p>As determined appropriate, utilize powers granted through House Bill 1041 powers to further manage growth and protect the environment</p> <hr/> <p>Implement an appropriate mix of growth management tools, which might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Impact fees</li> <li>▪ Design Standards</li> <li>▪ Clustering</li> <li>▪ Transit-oriented development</li> <li>▪ Urban Growth Boundaries</li> <li>▪ Concurrent development</li> <li>▪ Overlay zoning districts</li> <li>▪ Restrict up-zoning on Resource Lands</li> <li>▪ Conservation easements</li> <li>▪ Ridgeline/steep slope restrictions</li> <li>▪ Intergovernmental Agreements</li> <li>▪ Large lot zoning</li> <li>▪ Land Acquisition</li> <li>▪ Transfer of Development Rights</li> </ul>	<p>Eagle County Government</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicant</p>
<p>d. There are thresholds that should be considered related to the amount and form of growth that can be reasonably sustained in Eagle County</p>	<p>Explore the potential carrying capacity related to various resources such as water quality and quantity, transportation infrastructure, scenic quality, ecosystem integrity, and other elements that contribute to the areas unique quality of life.</p> <hr/> <p>Identify the social, environmental, and economic indicators related to resource carrying capacity.</p> <hr/> <p>Utilize GIS mapping and other state-of-the-art analysis tools to track changes relative to selected carrying capacity indicators.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Service Providers Town Governments State and Federal Permitting Authorities Public Land Managers</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Government Service Providers Town Governments State and Federal Permitting Authorities Public Land Managers</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Government Service Providers Town Governments Public Land Managers</p>
<p>e. Urban and suburban type growth should be appropriately designed and should be located within or immediately contiguous to existing towns and community centers.</p>	<p>During the Area Community Plan planning process, identify parcels that could be suitable for urban and suburban type development.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Technical advisory groups Service Providers Citizen groups</p>

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Where appropriate, direct and encourage high-density, mixed-use development to towns and existing community centers.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Avoid flag pole annexations and instead encourage concentric growth outward from existing community centers	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Require pre-application conferences with planning staff and engineers for all land use proposals	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Intersperse parks and properly scaled public spaces within and throughout areas of higher-density development.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Where appropriate, encourage annexation for development proposed within Town planning area boundaries.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
f. New communities proposed for unincorporated areas of the County should be subject to a thorough and rigorous set of development criteria.	Consistently apply and enforce Eagle County Land Use Regulation development standards	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Require that new communities follow a mixed-use design that purposefully positions neighborhoods, schools, parks, open space and commercial establishments.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Require that new communities contain a diversity of housing of various prices to accommodate local workforce needs.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Require that new communities be appropriately served with necessary services and infrastructure.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant Service Providers
	Require that new communities be pedestrian friendly to reduce reliance on personal vehicles.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Require that new communities be designed to accommodate mass transit to reduce reliance on personal vehicles.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant Eagle County Trails Committee and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority
	Require that new communities be fiscally self-sustaining.	Eagle County Government Service Providers Development Applicant

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Require that new communities incorporate best management practices for resource conservation	Eagle County Government Development Applicant Service Providers
	Position new communities to minimize impacts to the environment and/or visual quality of the area.	Eagle County Government Service Providers Development Applicant
g. Redevelopment and/or revitalization of currently underdeveloped, outdated, rundown, or otherwise dysfunctional areas should be encouraged.	Identify areas within existing communities that would be suitable for redevelopment.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service providers
	Promote and participate in partnerships for redevelopment.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Private Developers Financial institutions
	Develop a streamlined process or offer incentives through modification of local land use regulations for redevelopment projects.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
h. Open corridors between towns and community centers should be preserved.	Promote a land use pattern by which each town and unincorporated community remains visually unique and self-contained.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Target lands between towns and developed areas for acquisition through various open space programs	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts
	Work with Towns to establish growth boundaries to preserve open corridors between Towns.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Analyze development applications for conformance to the County's Future Land Use Map	Eagle County Government Town Government Development Applicant
i. A cluster style of development should be encouraged, especially in areas where cultural, environmental or scenic resources are at risk.	Revise the cluster subdivision option in the Eagle County Land Use Regulations, to include a clear definition for clustered development options	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Consider a zoning overlay that would designate areas of unincorporated Eagle County where clustering would be appropriate.	Eagle County Government
	Ensure that clustered developments create and set aside open space tracts in perpetuity.	Eagle County Government Town Government Development Applicant

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Continue to allow variations from underlying zoning standards to be obtained through a Planned Unit Development but require clustering within the PUD to the benefit of the surrounding community.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
j. Development should be fully responsible for the mitigation of development related impacts upon both the natural and built environment.	Develop a Fiscal Impact Analysis tool that will allow developers and staff to determine the fiscal impacts of any given development in Eagle County now and in the future.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Public Land Managers
	Revise Land Use Regulations to require development applicants to supply fiscal, economic, environmental, and social impact analyses.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Determine and set policy regarding the method and degree to which development should pay its own way.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Revise the Land Use Regulations to include preferred development exactions.	Eagle County Government Service Providers Public Land Managers
	Require new commercial development to provide workforce housing or to provide land for workforce housing.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant Eagle County Housing Department
	Consider regulations which ensure that adequate public facilities and services are available concurrent with the approval for any new development.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Assure that each development application fits the policies and applicable mapping of all master plans and area community plans.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Refer all development proposals to those entities which may be impacted by the development	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Work with other entities affected by development to quantify impacts on their operations, staffing, and revenues.	Eagle County Government Special Districts Service Providers Public Land Managers Development Applicant
Design and locate development to minimize and/or mitigate identified impacts.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant	

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Enforce measures related to on-going mitigation of development impacts.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Homeowners Associations
	Require scheduled maintenance of drainage, storm water, and sewage systems by special districts or other qualified entities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Encourage Homeowners Associations to adopt regulations related to the minimization and/or mitigation of impacts	Eagle County Government Town Governments Homeowners Associations
k. Local communities should establish unique venues, attractions and design standards directed toward enhancing individual community character and developing a sense of place.	Support special events that are indicative of the character of individual communities	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local business groups Special event sponsors Chambers of Commerce
	Support the creation of Design Guidelines unique to individual communities	Eagle County Government Town Government Development Applicant
	Work to create affordable workforce housing within existing communities	Eagle County Government Town Governments Industry representatives
	Work to diversify the economic base, and to attract more businesses and more jobs to the County's bedroom communities	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local business groups Chambers of Commerce
	Support the efforts of local Chambers of Commerce and other special event sponsors.	Eagle County Government Town Government Chambers of Commerce Event Sponsors



## 3.3 Economic Resources

---

**Goal: Eagle County is home to a resilient, sustainable economy that is based on local attributes and provides its residents and visitors with healthy lifestyles and a comfortable standard of living.**

### 3.3.1 Background Information

Please refer to the following links to gain a better understanding of the issues related to the Economy:

[U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages](#)

[Colorado Department of Labor and Employment](#)

[Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade](#)

### 3.3.2 Economic Vision

#### Policies:

- a. **Economic development in Eagle County should be closely monitored, and economic development efforts should be coordinated across jurisdictional lines.**
- b. **A healthy, attractive business environment, appropriate to the area's character and resources, should be fostered.**

Eagle County's economy has transformed over time from a combination of mining and agriculture in its early history to a combination of destination tourism, construction and second homes today. While tourism will continue to be a primary economic driver, some speculate that the next shift in the economy will be towards the knowledge and creative economy with many jobs and activities related to technology, research, design, and entrepreneurialism.

The economy is a vital aspect of any community, and Eagle County needs to be proactive in the economic development of the region. Economic planning should provide clear direction for decision-making, with a resulting economy that is able to weather economic fluctuations, and provide its residents and visitors with a healthy and happy lifestyle. Eagle County's economy should result in the creation of vibrant communities and a comfortable standard of living for all who live and work here.

Given past trends and future projections, the local economy will certainly grow, but absent strategic guidance it may become something different than the local community desires. All residents, business operators, employees, and governing entities should be made aware of present and future economic factors and the important role that each entity can play in the County's economic success. A countywide economic development authority or council should be formed to create a proactive economic strategy or plan aimed at diversifying, balancing, and stabilizing the economy as we move forward in time.

All parties should be invited to the table for economic discussion. Eagle County should participate in and encourage the use of Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) to consolidate and implement economic plans. Strategies employed should be consistent with the development of the community at large, as one will certainly affect the other. Reducing the impacts of the seasonal nature of our resort economy through economic diversification would be an example of a measure that could be actively pursued by all involved players.

The quality of life, the mix of local businesses, a skilled work force, a beautiful natural setting, and the international name recognition provided by Vail, Beaver Creek and Aspen are invaluable underpinnings unique to Eagle County's economy. The County and towns should agree to support the expansion and growth of existing enterprises, all the while remaining vigilant to the fact that new economic drivers could be on the horizon. A stable, well educated workforce is critical to a knowledge/information

economy, and Eagle County should promote the creation of advanced learning and skill development programs and institutions. Safe neighborhoods and affordable, high-quality childcare, transportation, and housing are all considered necessary infrastructure to positive economic development, and should therefore be available in all communities.

Finally, the environment is the economy in Eagle County, and as such all economic development should be done in a manner that protects the integrity of the area's natural resources and scenic beauty.

### 3.3.3 Major Economic Drivers

#### Policies:

- c. **Those qualities that make Eagle County a world class tourist destination and a great place to live, work and play should be identified, promoted and protected.**
- d. **The potential impacts of second-home ownership and an aging resident population in Eagle County should be identified and incorporated into the decision making process.**

#### **Tourism**

Planning for tourism is comprised of two codependent parts. First, tourism is an activity that must be considered as part of the physical, environmental, social, and economic development planning conducted by local governments. Its close relationship to land use, housing, transportation, recreation, the environment and the economy makes coordination between these development components imperative to the success of a tourism economy.

Second, tourism is a business in which a community chooses to engage. Tourism-based businesses conduct a variety of planning activities including feasibility, marketing, product development, promotion, forecasting, and strategic planning that are separate from and independent of the development planning conducted by a local government. If tourism is a significant component of an area's economy, regional or community-wide marketing plans are needed to coordinate the government development planning and the business marketing activities conducted by the various tourism interests throughout the county.

A comprehensive approach to economic planning integrates a strategic marketing plan with more traditional public planning activities. This ensures a balance between serving the needs and wants of the tourists and the needs and wants of local residents. A formal economic development plan provides a vehicle for the various interests within a community to coordinate their activities and work toward common goals. It is also a means of coordinating tourism with other community activities.

#### **Second Homes**

The Northwest Colorado Council of Governments has recently completed Phase I of a *Second Home Study*, which analyzed second homes and the impacts they have on Eagle County and the surrounding counties. Phase II of this project will be initiated in the fall of 2005. According to this study, second homes make up about half of the dwelling units in Eagle County and the region, and they generate 45% of the total jobs available. Another 27% of the regions jobs are generated by summer and winter visitors (separate from second homeowners). This means that 72% of Eagle County's economy is driven by people who are not Eagle County residents.

The County's fiscal reliance on tourists and second homeowners might be cause for some concern, but visitation by these groups tends to stay strong, even in times of economic recession. As a result, the regional economy tends to be stable. Despite its strength, there is an inherent downside to a tourism/second home economy. Both tourism and large home development generate a preponderance of low-paying service jobs. Service level workers require affordable housing and goods and services, which are increasingly difficult to find in a place where second home markets and the resort lifestyle create a high cost of living. Developers and contractors tend to pursue second home development which is

more profitable than the construction of affordable units. As a result, land that might otherwise be used for higher density affordable housing projects is instead consumed by the development of low-density high-end homes.

As evidenced by the *Second Home Study*, second homeowners value living in close proximity to vibrant, fully functioning communities, with neighborhoods, schools, libraries, churches and other amenities. These are the same locations that the local service workforce desires. Service workers are increasingly “forced out”. They live with their families many miles from their place of employment, resulting in lengthy commutes to and from work. As noted earlier, and according to the State Demographer, at least 4000 workers a day now travel into Eagle County from surrounding counties. Unless more is done to accommodate the local workforce, that number is expected to swell to over 30,000 a day by the year 2030. Allowing this trend to continue places the future economy of Eagle County at some risk, for there may come a time when high gas prices, crowded roads or some other combination of factors make commuting less viable. Service workers would seek other, more balanced communities where they can both live and work. This could leave second homeowners without the services they desire, and could conceivably jeopardize the entire tourism base of Eagle County.

Eagle County must plan for the inherent conflicts that occur in second home economies. To allow the County’s current jobs to housing imbalance to continue or intensify could have significant social, environmental, and economic impacts in the future. Therefore, each development’s impact on the jobs-housing balance and on the environment must be considered. Policies should be developed to provide incentives for the construction of affordable homes, and to better provide for the social needs of the service workforce. Efficient mass transit systems and the design of population centers easily serviced by mass transit should be a priority. Attempts should be on-going to diversify the economy to create more, better paying, full-time year-round jobs.

### **Retirees**

Eagle County’s climate, healthy lifestyle and numerous amenities make it an increasingly attractive place for those looking to retire. A growing retirement population and the conversion of workforce housing to retirement housing in Eagle County is inevitable as baby-boomers come of retirement age. While planning policies should reflect current circumstances relating to housing for older people, they should also be flexible enough to respond to changing needs as the demographic mix changes in the future. Eagle County should consider the needs of an aging population as part of mixed-use developments in both existing towns and unincorporated communities, and should otherwise work to create incentives for appropriate housing and amenities to be developed.

Guidelines for the construction of housing for an aging population are needed, and retirement housing should be included as a component of the Local Resident Housing Guidelines used by Eagle County. Sites should be selected with sustainable support services, proximity to emergency services, and accessible transportation in mind.

Finally, while they are a much-desired component of any community, retirees bring with them impacts similar to those of second homeowners. As a group, retirees generally contribute little to the local work force, but their presence tends to increase the need for service level jobs. They often move into homes previously occupied by local workers, or they are local workers retiring in place. In either case, workforce housing is converted to retirement housing. The growing number of retirees in the county could exacerbate the jobs to housing imbalance described earlier.

### **3.3.4 Commercial Development**

#### **Policies:**

- e. Commercial development should occur at a pace commensurate to growth in Eagle County.**
- f. Commercial uses should be appropriately scaled and should be located within towns and community centers.**

- g. Sales tax revenue funds should continue to be distributed in a fair and equitable manner.**
- h. Commercial development should fit a regional economic structure that promotes a coherent regional 'community' while respecting sub-area character and identity.**
- i. The local and regional impacts of big box/retail warehouse type developments should be carefully evaluated by all effected entities through public review and approval processes.**

Town Governments rely heavily on commercial sales tax revenues, and as such compete with one another and with the community centers in unincorporated Eagle County to attract commercial development. This has led to the over speculation of commercial zoning. As of 2003, less than 10 million square feet of commercial space had been constructed in all of Eagle County. At the writing of this plan, it is estimated that zoning has already been approved to allow over 80 million square feet of commercial space to be developed. It is unlikely that this total amount of existing commercial zoning will ever be fully utilized, and policies should be developed that allows for some modification or redistribution of this zoning in the future to account for market demand and deficiencies in various regions of the county. In those areas where adequate infrastructure can be provided, down zoning of currently over-zoned commercial areas should be encouraged as a first step to creating economically viable mixed use communities.

People are attracted to living in Eagle County's unincorporated areas. They pay less in taxes but often receive services and shopping options similar to those found in incorporated Towns. Over the past several decades, the County has frequently up-zoned rural lands to allow for residential development. This is especially true along the I-70 corridor and within proximity to existing community centers. An expanding rural population drives the need for more service and retail development in rural areas. Commercial zoning in unincorporated areas draws businesses out of towns, where sales tax revenues are needed to support municipal operating budgets.

Much of the over-zoning of commercial lands exists within incorporated towns, but in response to the needs of residential developments that have been allowed to grow in unincorporated areas (unincorporated Edwards has become the largest "town" in the county), Eagle County Government has allocated commercial zoning. The lack of municipal taxes and the fact that County zoning tends to be more accommodating to a wider range of uses make these unincorporated commercial parcels very attractive to businesses.

An appropriate balance of development is needed between the County's incorporated and unincorporated areas. Towns should study their zoning standards and related ordinances to make sure that the full spectrum of commercial uses and residential types can be accommodated within their boundaries. Town governments should also work with Eagle County to determine mutually favorable future growth boundaries, and to identify the most suitable places for residential and commercial development both inside and outside those boundaries. While Eagle County is committed to providing adequate commercial areas to serve unincorporated residents, efforts should be made to purposefully direct future commercial development into town and community centers.

Finally, Eagle County should continue to take the lead in tracking the status of commercial and industrial designations and development located both in the towns and in the unincorporated areas of the county. This data is currently summarized in the county's *Commercial/Industrial Analysis Report*. The Towns and the County should work cooperatively to identify areas that are currently "over-zoned", and create incentives to encourage landowners to re-evaluate the most suitable land use for their property in order to provide opportunities for more appropriate or beneficial land use. Encouraging live-work developments that mix residential and commercial uses in appropriate places could be effective in mitigating many of the issues that Eagle County will face in the future.

## Tax Revenue Distribution

Municipal sales tax revenues in Eagle County range from a low of \$5,000 to \$9,000 per year for the Town of Redcliff to a high of \$3 million to \$3.5 million per year for the Town of Vail. Commercial entities in the unincorporated parts of Eagle County (Edwards, Eagle-Vail, and El Jebel) generate nearly as much in sales revenue as the Town of Vail. Currently, Eagle County Government distributes 15% of sales tax receipts back to the town from which the tax was collected. The remaining sales tax revenues are spent by the County to provide county-wide services, public programs and related facilities.

### 2004 Sales Tax Competition

Tax	Unincorporated	Vail	Minturn	Red Cliff	Avon	Eagle	Gypsum	Basalt
State	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%
County	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Town		4.5%	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%	2%
Food		4%						
Lodging		1.4%						
Transit	.5%	.5%	.5%	.5%	.5%	.5%	.5%	.5%
RFTA								.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>

*The State sales tax rate is 2.9%. Eagle County's tax rate is 1.0 %, plus a Mass Transit District sales tax of 0.5 %. Vail's sales tax rate is 4.5 % with 4.0 % added on food for home consumption. There is also a local marketing district sales tax of 1.4 % on all lodging services. The sales tax rate in Avon, Minturn, and Eagle is 4.0 %. Red Cliff and Gypsum's sales tax rate is 3.0%, and Basalt's is 2.0%. The Roaring Fork Rural Transportation Authority also imposes a sales and use tax of 0.2 % in the town of Basalt.*

Since many economic trends and impacts occur across jurisdictional boundaries, analysis of those trends and impacts should be part of any revenue distribution negotiations. Eagle County Government should work with the Town Governments to identify cooperative regional approaches to enhance, nurture and mutually benefit from the interconnectedness of Eagle County's economy.

## Regional Appeal

In addition to providing a flexible, progressive commercial environment that allows for diverse uses throughout the community, local Towns and the County should work together to capitalize upon a growing regional market. Regional commercial demands that could be appropriately accommodated by local infrastructure, resources and facilities should be considered.

It is important to recognize the unique role each town and community center plays in the regional economy. Clear policies to designate appropriate locations for commercial developments that address regional needs should be developed. Once in place, commercial hierarchy will provide structure and assure an appropriate level of service to selected areas within the community. Finally, a healthy customer service attitude from all parties involved in the development and fulfillment of commercial enterprises will contribute significantly to their success and to the success of Eagle County's economy as a whole.

## Big Boxes/Retail Warehousing

Population growth, infrastructure and the presence of major thoroughfares like I-70 and Highway 82 have created an economic environment in Eagle County that is capable of supporting the development of Big Box retail outlets. A Home Depot and Super Walmart have been in operation for several years

now in the Town of Avon, and the Town of Gypsum is contemplating a similar development. These facilities can be highly attractive to towns that depend on sales tax as their primary source of income. While Eagle County can benefit from the more competitive retail pricing that results from these facilities, it should take steps to reduce the negative impacts that Big Box developments have brought to other communities.

Given the amount of traffic and people generated, Big Box developments should be clustered with other existing or planned automobile-oriented uses in appropriate zone districts along major thoroughfares. The most logical placement of Big Box developments in Eagle County is within existing Towns or community centers. Infrastructure should be accessible and adequately sized, and the cost for all on-site and off-site supporting infrastructure should be borne by the developer.

From a quality of life standpoint, traffic is a primary concern. Detailed traffic assessments should be required for all large scale commercial developments. Potential negative impacts to local roads and to existing residential neighborhoods should be identified and avoided. Bus service, intersections, and pedestrian linkages should be planned in advance and carefully coordinated. Big Box and retail warehouse developers typically try to use the company's stock floor plans and elevations, which can conflict with community character and local design standards. Eagle County Government and Town Governments should establish design guidelines for Big Box retail developments, which will provide minimum standards and the opportunity for negotiation on site layout and structure facades.

The maintenance of an equitable economic environment should be a priority in Eagle County, and the developer of a Big Box facility should be required to demonstrate how smaller local businesses will be protected. Big Box development should not be located within industrial zone districts, as these areas and their allowed uses are important to the County and Towns as they try to increase wages through diversification of the economy.

The impacts resulting from big box retailing occur across jurisdictional boundaries. Eagle County Government and Town Governments should consider joint review of such regional facilities, and perhaps develop Intergovernmental Agreements or other such partnerships to better ensure an appropriate analysis and review of large scale commercial projects. A regional fiscal and environmental impact assessment should be required. Coordinated efforts will maximize overall benefits and reduce overall costs. In addition, a coordinated effort would help eliminate "jurisdictional shopping" by developers.

### 3.3.5 Other Industries

#### Policies:

- j. Agricultural land uses should be retained to preserve Eagle County's historical heritage and scenic quality for the benefit of future generations.**
- k. Timber harvesting and mining should be recognized as viable economic activities, so long as negative social, cultural and environmental impacts are appropriately mitigated.**
- l. The important contribution to the local economy from hunting should be recognized and incorporated into the decision making process when appropriate**

#### **Agriculture**

The presence of working ranches with pastures, fences, grazing livestock and clustered agricultural buildings, provides a connection for people to Eagle County's cultural heritage, and helps preserve the open spaces, scenic quality and wildlife habitat considered precious by locals, second homeowners, and tourists. Ranching, however, is a difficult business. Agricultural markets are increasingly competitive, and the value of ranching and farm products has dropped. When compared to the County's surging tourism and second home development business, the contribution of agriculture to the overall economy has lost considerable significance during the past several decades.

Across the United States, agricultural land is becoming an increasingly diminished resource. Since 1992, more than 2 million acres (some 270,000 acres per year) of Colorado farm and ranchland has been taken out of production, converted in most cases to other uses. Once the decision is made to convert agricultural land and/or water to nonagricultural uses (commonly to residential or commercial development), this resource is irretrievably lost. There are many trends prompting agricultural land conversion, including rising land values, the estate tax, encroaching urban influences, fragmentation of existing farmlands, and the state subdivision law known as Senate Bill 35. Regardless of the reasons, Eagle County and the State may continue to lose significant amounts of ranch land in the coming years.

A key to preserving agricultural lands is maintaining a healthy agricultural economy. While there is little that the County can do to influence regional agricultural markets, local Government should work with ranch owners to identify their needs and to develop local programs or policies to assist them in reducing operational costs. Also, the County should continue to encourage and promote agricultural enterprises and activities in Eagle County. The Eagle County Fair Grounds facility is an exemplary resource which should be made available to the ranching community for related cultural events.

Other opportunities should be created for agricultural landowners and their property. A provision for Clustered Developments would allow some residential development to occur on ranches, providing profit for the owner, with the caveat that agricultural uses continue on the remainder of the property. The use of Conservation Easements should also be utilized to encourage landowners to sell the development rights from their land while retaining ownership and full rights to ranch or farm for profit. The owner receives appropriate compensation for the development rights, open space and water rights are preserved at a cost below market value, and the land continues to be worked and maintained for agricultural purposes. The working property remains on the county tax rolls - a benefit to the County - although its taxable value is considerably less - a benefit to the owner.

Recently, Eagle County voters have taken measures to preserve open space and agricultural lands by choosing to tax themselves for dedicated funds. The Eagle County Open Space Program was initiated in 2003, with property tax funds first available in 2004. To date this program has set aside open space in the Berry Creek/Miller Ranch Planned Unit Development, on the Eaton Ranch west of Edwards and has contributed to the purchase of a conservation easement on the Bair Ranch at the eastern mouth of the Glenwood Canyon (on the County's western border).

Notwithstanding Eagle County Government's continued backing of agricultural preservation and activity, it is recognized that there are types and intensities of agricultural use that can have detrimental impacts on land, water and the environment if the owners do not practice environmentally conscientious land stewardship techniques. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes these potential conflicts, and the responsibility of Eagle County Government to carefully balance support for agriculture with the need to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents and its environmental quality.

### **Forestry and Timber Harvesting**

The 2002 Revised White River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Management Plan) identified areas in the county appropriate for timber harvest. These do not include areas designated or recommended for wilderness or areas designated or recommended for wild and scenic rivers status. Many forested areas are healthy. Others are in poor physical condition and susceptible to wildfire or insect infestation. Many of the County's lodgepole trees have fallen victim to the pine beetle in the past decade. Some level of timber harvesting within affected areas has already begun, and continued management should be encouraged to both maintain the health of the forest and to diversify the economy of Eagle County.

In the Forest Management Plan, mitigation measures are required when timber-harvesting activities create potential impacts on water or air quality, wildlife, or the scenic and recreational enjoyment of the forest. This same level of protection should be required on private property. The Eagle County Land Use Regulations should be amended to require a Special Use Permit for timber harvesting on private lands, thus assuring appropriate analysis, studies and mitigations.

## **Extractive Industries**

Mining is a significant element of Eagle County's history. Early mining claims and abandoned ghost towns dot the backcountry. The historic Gilman Mine no longer operates on Battle Mountain, but for many years prior to 1980 it was the economic engine that supported the Towns of Minturn, Gilman and Redcliff. Today, mining is limited to the removal of gypsum for the production of wall board at the plant in the Town of Gypsum, and gravel and rock processing at various locations to provide resources for the county's current building boom.

Mining in unincorporated Eagle County is only allowed in the Industrial, Resource, Resource Limited and Backcountry zone districts. All extractive activity requires a Special Use Permit, which in turn requires traffic and environmental impact analysis. These studies help ensure that the mining activity will have minimal adverse impacts on the land, water, air, wildlife, scenic amenities and roads surrounding the affected property.

The Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Board (MLRB) is the permitting authority for all mining operations in the State of Colorado. A MLRB Permit lists a number of standards that must be met by mine operators, and mandates post mining reclamation of the site. Eagle County requires proof of a MLRB mining permit before it will grant a Special Use Permit. The County regularly places additional conditions on the operation, and often does so to control hours of operation or to further preserve scenic quality both during and following the life of the mine. Applications for mining Special Use Permits near towns are also referred to the affected municipality for comments.

## **Wildlife-Related Industries**

Wildlife-related industries play a key role in Eagle County's economy. Hunting and fishing are often overlooked as major economic drivers related to tourism. According to a study commissioned by the Colorado Division of Wildlife entitled *The Economic Impacts of Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife Watching in Colorado*, the total economic impact of hunting and fishing in Eagle County was nearly \$58 million in the year 2002. Often these activities occur in seasons where other tourism activities are minimal and have similar economic impacts as skiing. Therefore the protection of the environment and wildlife in Eagle County has immense implications on the economic viability of the region. Issues related to wildlife are further discussed in Section 3.6 of this document.

## **3.3.6 Economic Infrastructure**

### **Policies:**

**m. Economic infrastructure should be planned for in advance, and should be adequate to support existing and future business needs.**

Economic infrastructure includes water, sewer, power, telephone and roads, air service, high-speed internet access, seamless mobile telephone capabilities, parks, recreational amenities, educational and training facilities, affordable housing, and health care. Without these amenities, economic development can be hindered. Good economic development is good community development, and where feasible and appropriate, organizations that monitor, promote, and develop the economy and related infrastructure should consolidate their efforts. An Economic Development Council could be a great avenue for transcending political boundaries and barriers to a coordinated economic development plan.

The airport has become an integral part of the success of Eagle County's economy. Residents, tourists and second home owners need efficient and affordable transportation in and out of Eagle County. Enplanements have been steadily increasing and the county continues to invest resources for terminal, radar and a runway improvements.

A broad range of communication options will be required for the County to remain economically competitive, and the county's location along the I-70 and Highway 82 corridors should make access to



state-of-the-art communication infrastructure more feasible. All communication infrastructure providers must focus on the reliability of their product, all systems should be appropriately protected against weather related failures and all should be fully available and reliable.

Outstanding educational facilities must be provided for local youth, the local workforce and retirees. The County should support the current and long range planning efforts of the Eagle County School District and the Roaring Fork School District as they strive to provide excellent public school facilities and programs. Land Use Regulations related to school land dedication and/or impact fees should be monitored for effectiveness and updated as necessary.

For adults, Colorado Mountain College offers two-year programs at several locations in the County. The College is noted for its progressive and aggressive educational philosophy centered on lifelong learning and community service. Fall of 2004 marked the opening of a brand-new facility - the Colorado Mountain College at Berry Creek in Edwards. There have historically been two other CMC centers in Eagle County – in Eagle and in Vail. Current plans are to consolidate the Vail center to the Edwards campus, and to keep the Eagle Center open. There are CMC centers in Carbondale, Spring Valley, and Glenwood Springs that service the Roaring Fork portion of Eagle County.

Eagle County Government should work with local civic, economic, and educational leaders to attract a four-year program to Eagle County. The Eagle County Planning Commission, with support from the Edwards Community, has recently designated Edwards as a future educational center for Eagle County. Lands suitable for a four year college facility were identified in the 2003 Edwards Area Community Sub-area Plan, although their extent has been reduced by the recent approval of the Eagle River Preserve Open Space project.

Eagle County Government and Town Governments should also strive to provide the accommodations necessary to host large training programs and conventions. Criteria used by many conference organizers include both quantitative and qualitative factors such as attractiveness of the site to exhibitors/attendees, potential drawing power of site, community commitment, affordability, exhibitor considerations, availability of preferred dates, configuration of meeting/exhibit space and availability of lodging. Any conference facility built in Eagle County should use these criteria in site planning and design.

Affordable housing continues to be a hurdle to strong economic development. Homes affordable to both service level workers and middle management are limited. The attractiveness of the second home market and resistance by many locals to higher density living arrangements exacerbate the challenge of providing new affordable housing units. Eagle County Government must create appropriate incentives and partnerships to increase the development potential for affordable housing for lower and middle-income workers.

Health care accessibility should continue to be a priority. The average age of county residents is rising, and many baby-boomers are anticipated to retire here. Workers are faced with rising health care costs in a place that already has one of the highest overall costs of living in the country. As a result, health care is likely to become an economic development issue in the future. The County should support efforts to increase the number of health care options, provide medical benefits to employees and small businesses, and keep health and human services programs available to the work force, second homeowners and retirees.

### **3.3.7 Working Environment**

#### **Policies:**

- n. An appropriate job base and wage structure should be encouraged in Eagle County.**

## **Workforce**

Unemployment in Eagle County is generally low when compared to that of the nation (approximately 2% locally compared to 4% nationally). Over three quarters of the jobs in Eagle County are salaried and wage-earning jobs (working for someone else), although the proportion of self employed persons has grown over the past 30 years from 16% to 22% of total employment.

According to the U.S. Census, the percentage of adults with a Bachelor's Degree or Graduate/Professional Degree in Eagle County has increased from 33% in 1990 to 42.6% in 2000. At the same time, the percentage of adults with less than a high school diploma has also increased. In 1990, those adults with less than a high school diploma represented 10.2% of the total. By 2000, 13.4% of adults had less than a high school diploma.

The participation of foreign-born people in the workforce in Eagle County (predominantly Hispanics) has significantly increased over the past several decades. Greater diversity brings potential issues of language barriers and cultural differences. These issues can be softened by inclusion, interaction, education, and support.

There is an elevated high school dropout rate in Eagle County, which may be attributed to job opportunities. The preponderance of service jobs provide a viable option for teenagers, especially if it means being able to help their family with expenses. Unfortunately, most service-level jobs have little potential for education or job advancement. Eagle County Government should support programs designed to keep young people in school, and should also promote creative training programs, better jobs and higher incomes to help working families meet their needs.

## **Living Wages**

The stratification of income levels that exists in Eagle County is a phenomenon typical to resort communities. As a consequence, low-income service workers must compete for goods, services, and housing within a wealthy resort/second homeowner economy. A living wage is defined as the wage a full-time worker would need to earn to support a family above the federal poverty level, ranging from 100% to 130% of the poverty measurement. In Eagle County, the increase in housing values each year is far outpacing the increase in wages. Median residential property values have been increasing at an average yearly rate of 12.2%, while wages have only been increasing at a rate of 4.9%.

The rapid increase in housing values provides obvious benefits to homeowners in Eagle County in the form of increased equity and, potentially, a very a good return on their investment. But the growing disparity between wages and housing prices makes it increasingly difficult for service level workers to make ends meet, let alone achieve home ownership. Most wage earners find it impossible to save enough money for even a small down payment. Employers are able to pay lower wages because of the influx of young transient workers and because of the attractive lifestyle afforded by the region's environment and recreational amenities. In the end, resident workers and their families are forced to live further and further from work.

All of these influences lead to greater levels of commuting and an increase in the transient nature of the workforce. Eagle County must strive for a more favorable balance between workforce wages and the local cost of living. Incentives, regulations, and support programs should be developed to create a more affordable community. At a minimum, Eagle County and Town governments should adhere to a "Living Wage Minimum" policy, and should not contract with or subsidize any employers who pay poverty-level wages.

## **3.3.8 Future Economy**

### **Policies:**

- o. Future economic development in Eagle County should center on the area's existing amenities while encouraging new knowledge and technology based enterprises.**

Eagle County's future economy will continue to rely on the success of its recreation/tourism and second homes industries. Vail, Beaver Creek and Aspen will likely retain their status as three World Class resorts, and other developments will continue to benefit from on the attractions of the Eagle River and Roaring Fork River Valleys. A new exclusive ski and golf resort may soon be developed on Battle Mountain south of Minturn. A significant portion of The Village at Avon has yet to be built. Frost Creek and Brightwater are two gated golf course developments soon to be constructed south of the towns of Eagle and Gypsum, respectively. Second homes and a growing retirement population will continue to drive a significant portion of the economy.

Regional Big Box developments, similar to the Walmart and Home Depot in the Town of Avon, may become a reality in the Gypsum area. Small retail businesses will continue to be important, although they will find it harder to compete with large retail chains. The construction industry will continue to flourish through new construction in Avon, Eagle and Gypsum, and throughout the county as various renovation, re-development and in-fill projects come on line. It is hoped that agriculture will continue to support families and small businesses in the county's rural areas.

Continued diversification of the economy will be important. The County should strive to attract venture capital, and firms looking for new opportunities. The area will likely benefit from a new, technology-based knowledge economy where economic growth and wealth are driven by the accumulation, use and distribution of knowledge.

For the past three decades, Eagle County has been a recreational playground that has attracted people from across the country and around the world. Many who visit here are highly educated and affluent, and they increasingly represent businesses that rely on current technological advances. People in the knowledge economy are increasingly attracted to living and working in places like Eagle County on a full-time basis. The area has the infrastructure needed to supply communication and networking capabilities, and it provides the great lifestyle that cutting edge entrepreneurs often seek. This presents opportunities for improving the long-term strength and health of the economy, so long as infrastructure development keeps pace, the area's lifestyle amenities remain attractive and the cost of living remains reasonable for employees and service workers.

Eagle County Government should embrace the entrepreneurial spirit by promoting new enterprises where ideas advance into new products and new businesses. State-of-the-art communication, transportation and educational systems will be required, and the County should work to maintain a regulatory and tax environment that encourages the kind of creativity and risk taking that entrepreneurship requires. All industries in Eagle County will benefit from the economic enthusiasm, diversification, infrastructure and support the new knowledge-based economy will bring.

Regardless of future directions, lifestyle enhancements, such as recreation, transportation, environmental preservation, open space, and creating livable neighborhoods and affordable communities, should continue to be viewed as critical components of successful economic development.

### 3.3.9 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for Economic Resources

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
<p>a. Economic development in Eagle County should be closely monitored, and economic development efforts should be coordinated across jurisdictional lines.</p>	<p>Establish a countywide economic development authority or organization.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government            Town Governments            State and Federal Agencies            Economic Development Organizations            Business Support Groups            Service Providers            Major Industry Representatives</p>
	<p>Collaborate to create a clear long term investment strategy that encourages local enterprise and supports established economic goals.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government            Town Governments            Economic Development Organizations            Business Support Groups</p>
	<p>Advance the use of Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA's) towards coordinating countywide economic development efforts.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government            Town Governments            Service Providers</p>
	<p>Develop appropriate incentives to retain talented individuals and entrepreneurs;</p>	<p>Eagle County Government            Town Governments            Economic Development Organizations            Business Support Groups</p>
	<p>Encourage enterprises to work as civic partners.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government            Town Governments            Economic Development Organizations            Business Support Groups</p>
	<p>Promote stable employment and revenues by building on local competitive advantages</p>	<p>Eagle County Government            Town Governments            Economic Development Organizations            Business Support Groups</p>

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Develop regional economic infrastructure at a pace concurrent to economic growth	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Promote the importance of the preservation of environmental quality to the success of local businesses	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Consider the "Multiplier Effect" when examining different types of economic growth scenarios	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Utilize current data from local resource centers and the State Department of Local Affairs in the decision making process	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Ensure that public investments and subsidies are regionally equitable, properly targeted, and promote the vitality of all local enterprises.	Eagle County Government Town Governments State and Federal Agencies
b. A healthy, attractive business environment, appropriate to the area's character and resources, should be fostered.	Match the economy to the natural and built characteristics of Eagle County and ensure that it is of a scale and scope that best fits the environmental and social values.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Ensure that commercial / retail development occurs in locations that are compatible with surrounding uses.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Encourage and help existing businesses to remain vigilant and adaptive to changing economic realities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Explore and pursue opportunities that diversify Eagle County's tax revenue streams	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Identify, seek, and recruit new target industries.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Promote economic development in H.E.R.F.T. industries: health, education, recreation, finance, and technology.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Explore the opportunity for land acquisition and infrastructure investment to assist in business retention and expansion.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Establish a Commercial Development Review Team to provide priority land use review as an additional incentive for attracting new, basic, well-paying employment opportunities to Eagle County.	Eagle County Government
c. Those qualities that make Eagle County a world class tourist destination and a great place to live should be identified, promoted and protected.	Investigate Eagle County's sustainable land use and infrastructure capacity as it pertains to recreation, tourism, and second home development.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Integrate a strategic marketing plan that addresses the needs of all user groups in the County.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Coordinate the activities of various interest groups within Eagle County to maintain and enhance a positive resident and tourist experience.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Continue to make Eagle County attractive and convenient for residents and visitors by offering an appropriate mix of recreational experiences and business types, and by enhancing related services and infrastructure.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Advance year-round, multifaceted tourism opportunities to broaden the economy and benefit the residents.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Support events and programs that improve Eagle County's reputation as an international tourist and recreation destination.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
d. The potential economic impacts of second-home ownership and an aging population in Eagle County should be identified and incorporated into the decision making process.	Support the efforts of the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments to quantify the impacts of second homes and the cost of living in the area.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Northwest Colorado Council of Governments
	Consider the impact of each second home development on the jobs to housing balance.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development applicant
	Work to expand affordable workforce housing throughout the County in anticipation of a growing demand for second home-driven service sector jobs.	Eagle County Government Town Governments

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Require proposals that include gated communities or larger lots to fully mitigate identified economic impacts of second home development	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development applicant
	Consider adopting impact fees to off-set second home development impacts	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Locate second home developments in areas where adequate services and infrastructure already exist.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Continue to modify the Workforce Housing Guidelines to ensure a consistent nexus between second home development, jobs and housing in Eagle County.	Eagle County Government
	Encourage the Town Governments to adopt their own Workforce Housing Guidelines.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Develop planning policies that are flexible enough to respond to changing needs for retirement housing, including those generated in rural areas.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups Development Applicants
	Develop the services and businesses that will benefit a growing senior population	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups Development Applicants
	Develop and implement guidelines for retirement housing.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Work to expand affordable workforce housing throughout the County in anticipation of a growing demand for retiree-driven service sector jobs	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Encourage retirement housing as part of mixed-use developments in existing towns and unincorporated communities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants



Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Select sites for retirement housing that are suitable in regards to local support services, emergency services and transportation.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
e. Commercial development should occur at a pace commensurate to growth in Eagle County.	Continue to update the Commercial/Industrial Analysis Report up to date to track the potential commercial development that could occur as a result of zoning and land use approvals in Eagle County.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Implement intergovernmental agreements (IGA's) that eliminate incentives for businesses to engage in jurisdictional shopping between incorporated and unincorporated areas.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Identify areas that are disproportionately zoned for commercial uses.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Work with landowners to determine the most appropriate land use for their property, and develop incentives to encourage zone changes that would accommodate other uses consistent with current community needs.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Amend the Eagle County Land Use Regulations to require a fiscal impact analysis for proposed commercial development projects.	Eagle County Government Development Applicants
	Apply Workforce Housing Guidelines, and require commercial developers to mitigate their project's impact on the jobs to housing balance of the area.	Eagle County Government Development Applicants
f. Commercial uses should be appropriately scaled and should be located within towns and community centers.	Limit the expansion of commercial zoning in unincorporated Eagle County to that necessary to serve the needs of the immediate local population.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Locate a wide range of commercial, residential, cultural, civic, and recreational uses within towns and community centers, and encourage Town Governments to accommodate the region's broad commercial demands within their boundaries.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations
	Identify potential redevelopment opportunities within existing towns and community centers, and promote infill and redevelopment to accommodate commercial development needs.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Implement intergovernmental agreements (IGA's) that designate the most suitable locations for various types of commercial development.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Allow the development of new service commercial and industrial uses in suitable locations provided such uses are properly buffered from surrounding properties.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Discourage additional residential development outside of community centers to avoid creating a need for isolated commercial developments.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Encourage but limit commercial development in residential neighborhoods to local businesses that serve the basic needs of nearby residents.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Provide incentives to encourage relocation of existing industrial and service commercial uses situated in residential areas to designated business parks.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Require potentially impactful commercial and industrial uses to obtain a special use permit, and implement annual reviews to assure compliance with standards or conditions.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Locate regional based warehouse-type commercial development in urban centers where appropriately scaled infrastructure is available.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Access current data and utilize GIS mapping and other state-of-the-art analysis tools to help determine areas where development would be best suited	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
g. Sales tax revenue funds should continue to be distributed in a fair and equitable manner.	Identify cross-jurisdictional fiscal impacts and costs of services, and adjust revenue sharing schemes accordingly.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Apply regional strategies for dealing with the interconnectedness of Eagle County's economy.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Develop and implement adaptable intergovernmental agreements (IGA's) to address future sales tax sharing.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Develop and implement countywide policy on sharing of development benefits as well as the costs of development impacts.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
h. Commercial development should fit a regional economic structure that promotes a coherent regional 'community' while respecting sub-area character and identity.	Determine and work to resolve both the unmet commercial demand and overcapacity of certain commercial types in the region.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Help to develop and identify the unique role each town and community center plays in the regional economy.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Use market impact assessments to determine when market potential has been reached.	Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Encourage live-work arrangements within community centers by promoting compact mixed-use development, pedestrian scaled retail areas and intercommunity public transportation.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
i. The local and regional impacts of big box/retail warehouse type developments should be carefully evaluated by all effected entities through public review and approval processes.	Cluster big box or retail warehouses with other similar uses and locate within town boundaries adjacent to major travel routes.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Implement intergovernmental agreements (IGA's) providing a joint review and approval process for all big box retail developments	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Establish specific functional standards and community centered design guidelines for big box retail developments.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Restrict commercial structures in Eagle County to appropriate scales.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Require developers to pay for their own infrastructure as well as a fair portion of the costs associated with impacts on existing infrastructure.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Require a detailed traffic impact assessment for all big box developments.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
j. Agricultural land uses should be retained to preserve Eagle County's historical heritage and scenic quality for the benefit of future generations.	Encourage and promote agricultural enterprises and activities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Support measure to reduce tax and operational cost burdens for owners of productive agricultural lands	Eagle County Government
	Purchase conservation easements to pay ranchers for the conservation and open space values of their property while allowing continued agricultural uses on the land.	Eagle County Government Local Land Trusts Conservation Organizations

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Encourage the maintenance of water rights on agricultural lands to ensure the long-term viability of agricultural uses.	Eagle County Government Local Land Trusts Conservation Organizations
	Encourage best management practices for agricultural operations, and promote safe, effective, and sustainable agricultural techniques to minimize detrimental impacts on land, water and other components of the environment.	Eagle County Government United States Department of Agriculture Colorado State Cooperative Extension Natural Resources Conservation Service
k. Timber harvesting and mining should be recognized as viable economic activities, so long as negative social, cultural and environmental impacts are appropriately mitigated.	Consider an amendment to the Eagle County Land Use Regulations to require special use permits for timber harvesting	Eagle County Government
	Mandate that forest harvesting be done in such a manner as to protect water quality, air quality, wildlife, scenery, and recreational enjoyment of the forest.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers
	Require an adequate buffer of undisturbed timber between timber harvesting activities and adjoining public lands or private property.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers
	Adopt additional performance standards, based on applicable federal and state standards but modified to address local concerns, for all Special Use Permits related to mining and extraction activities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers State and Federal permitting agencies Development Applicant
	Allow for the extraction of resources in advance of development proposals that are consistent with the policies of this Comprehensive Plan.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
l. The important contribution to the local economy from hunting should be recognized and incorporated into the decision making process when appropriate	Continue to promote local hunting activities and welcome hunters to the area	Eagle County Government Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Local retail shops
	Support local hunting outfitters and retail outlets	Eagle County Government Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Local Business Organizations

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Support efforts of the Division of Wildlife to assure the health and vitality of local and regional wildlife populations	Eagle County Government Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers
	Support efforts of the Division of Wildlife and advocacy groups to maintain healthy streams and access to healthy populations of fish	Eagle County Government Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Advocacy groups
m. Economic infrastructure should be planned for in advance, and should be adequate to support existing and future business needs.	Install communication infrastructure necessary to allow the economy to prosper while protecting quality of life and the environment	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicants
	Develop a sustainable technology strategy to ensure appropriate opportunities for economic development and healthy competition among local service providers	Eagle County Government Town Governments Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups Service Providers
	Work to ensure the availability in all communities of emergency services, medical services, educational facilities and childcare. See related tools in <a href="#">Infrastructure and Services Section</a> .	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Continue to support the expansion of educational programs and career development training opportunities related to entrepreneurialism and the enhancement of locally viable economic activities and businesses	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups Educators
	Seek opportunities to provide or expand accommodations and conference facilities to host large events and gatherings.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Industry Representatives Business Support Groups
	Implement incentives for the construction of affordable workforce housing units in close proximity to job centers	Eagle County Government Town Governments Building Industry Representatives

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Encourage the consolidation of business support groups such as chambers of commerce, tourism bureaus, and economic development authorities, wherever appropriate.	Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups Eagle County Government Town Governments
n. A sustainable job base and wage structure should be encouraged in Eagle County.	Promote and encourage more stable, long-term, year-round job opportunities that pay adequate wages relative to Eagle County's cost of living.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Attract and retain high quality businesses and jobs that raise per capita income.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups
	Continue to pay town and county employees a competitive salary in their field of work.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Develop policies that require contractors and subcontractors hired by the Towns and County to pay adequate wages relative to Eagle County's cost of living.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Develop policies that require those who receive County or Town funding to pay adequate wages relative to Eagle County's cost of living.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
o. Future economic development in Eagle County should center on area's existing amenities, while encouraging new knowledge and technology based enterprises.	Incorporate the concept that that good community development is good economic development into all land use and development decisions	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups Service Providers
	View lifestyle enhancements such as recreational opportunities, cultural activities and affordable services and housing as critical to future economic development	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups Service Providers

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Work to attract venture capital funding to the area	Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Support small business incubator programs in Eagle County.	Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Encourage home occupation (lone eagle) uses.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service providers
	Assure efficient connection for local entrepreneurs to the outside world via state-of-the-art transportation and communication infrastructure.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Provide a positive regulatory and tax environment that rewards viable entrepreneurial activity.	Eagle County Government Town Governments

## 3.4 Housing

---

### Goals:

- 1) Housing is available and affordable for no less than 70% of Eagle County's workforce.
- 2) Housing needs are clearly identified, and housing types are appropriately balanced to meet all community needs, appropriately located to reduce long distance commutes, and appropriately managed to assure long term affordability for Eagle County's workforce.

### 3.4.1 Background Information:

Please refer to the following documents to gain a better understanding of the issues related to Housing.

[The Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Housing Division](#)

[The Eagle County Housing Department](#)

[The Eagle County Housing Needs Assessment Update](#)

[The Northwest Colorado Council of Governments Second Home Study](#)

[The Northwest Colorado Council of Governments Cost of Living Study](#)

### 3.4.2 Jobs to Housing Balance

#### Policies:

- a. Affordable workforce housing should be located near job centers.

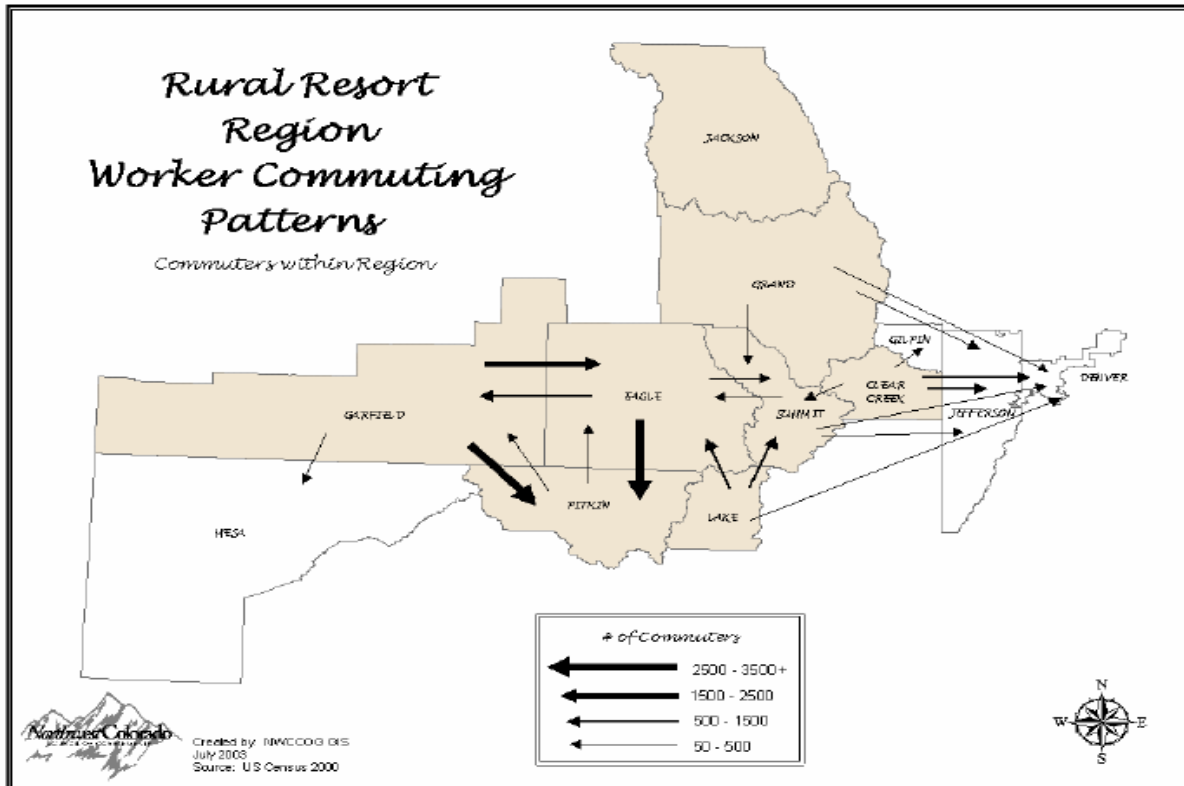
The Jobs-to-Housing balance is the relationship between the number of jobs that pay at or below the average wage in Eagle County and the number of comparably affordable homes in a given planning area, expressed as a ratio. The [Job-to-Housing Ratio Map](#) illustrates the jobs to housing balance in various planning regions of Eagle County, based on information from the 2000 census. A large number of low paying service jobs and few affordable units lead to a significant imbalance in the Vail area, where the map indicates over 800 average and below average paying jobs for every one affordable unit. The same circumstances create imbalance in the Eagle-Vail and Beaver Creek Ski Resort area. In Edwards, Avon, and El Jebel, mobile home parks help to achieve greater degrees of affordability, and therefore better balance. Rural areas are more affordable, but the balance remains skewed due to limited employment opportunities.

The ability of Eagle County to house the majority of its workforce in reasonable proximity to present and future job centers is critical to the long-term success of both the local economy and the local quality of life. While there are certain areas of the County where existing development will make it difficult to house all workers in close proximity to where they work, the County should remain vigilant in its attempts to improve the imbalances that currently exist. Resort development, retail development and the development of upscale residential neighborhoods create a preponderance of lower-paying service level jobs. Approval of these types of land uses must involve careful consideration and accommodation for the workforce housing needs they create.

When workers cannot live near jobs, they commute or the jobs go unfilled. It is accurate to say that in the Eagle River Valley, a significant number of workers live "down valley" and work "up valley". As indicated in the map on the following page, many workers travel into Eagle County from areas as



distant as Leadville and Rifle in Lake and Garfield Counties respectfully. In El Jebel, over 3000 workers leave each day for jobs in Aspen or Glenwood Springs. Morning and afternoon rush hour traffic is experienced each day on the County's major travel routes.



According to this commuter map and statistics from the Demography Section of the Colorado Division of Local Government, approximately 73% of the workforce that filled the 34,365 jobs in Eagle County in the year 2000 lived in Eagle County. The forecast for the year 2030 shows that only 56% of the labor force will live in Eagle County, and that the number of people commuting into Eagle County each day will grow to 33,153. The potential adverse impacts from such a large commuting workforce on the quality of service, the quality of environment and the character of local communities could be significant.

Providing incentives for the private development of affordable housing units within existing communities and near existing job centers reduces future travel impacts, and lessens the need for wider roads, expanded public transportation and subsidized housing. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan attempts to outline the obstacles and possible solutions to a more favorable jobs-to-housing balance in Eagle County.

[Jobs-to-Housing Ratio Map](#)

### 3.4.3 Unlimited Housing Demands:

#### Policies:

- b. Housing projects created through public/private partnerships should result in affordable, price capped units that are restricted to Eagle County residents and/or employees**
- c. Programs to increase home ownership by local workers in Eagle County should be supported.**
- d. Efforts to increase the stock of affordable rental units for local workers should be supported.**
- e. Adequate housing options for Senior Citizens should be available.**
- f. The stock of existing workforce housing should be preserved.**
- g. Well designed mobile home subdivisions, modular home subdivisions, and mobile home parks should be encouraged where appropriate.**
- h. Demographics related to housing needs should be closely monitored and the resulting data incorporated into the decision making process.**
- i. Workforce housing projects should incorporate quality design standards and programs for long term maintenance.**
- j. Land use planning should promote an appropriate amount of workforce housing.**
- k. Accessory Dwelling Units should be allowed within appropriate zone districts.**

As indicated by 2004 employment and sales figures, economic activity in Eagle County remains strong. Construction is booming, and real estate transactions continue to set new records. Service level jobs are plentiful, and there is a seemingly endless supply of people who want to live here. Low to mid priced homes are in relatively short supply and the demand for affordable housing is high.

#### **Living in Paradise**

People are drawn to the beauty, climate, environment, lifestyle and robust economy found in Eagle County. Unfortunately, some of the factors that limit the supply of housing here, like the lack of private land, are the same factors that cause people to want to move here – there is lots of public land to enjoy. Many are adventurous youth who came here to work for just a season before deciding to stay full time. They work two and sometimes three jobs to pay rent, buy food and afford the skis, bicycles and kayaks required to fully appreciate their mountain lifestyle. Some stay in the rental pool for many years, sacrificing the chance to own a home for the healthy living and active lifestyle the area provides.

Many newcomers are young professionals with relatively high incomes. They can pay more for housing, but even they find it difficult to find affordable units in the County's tight real estate market. These workers often support families, and soon discover that raising children in Eagle County is also expensive. Daycare is scarce. Activities for kids, while plentiful, are expensive and can require a lot of commuting. In many cases both parents find it necessary to work to make ends meet.

In Eagle County, wage earners and middle-income professionals increasingly compete for housing with second home and retirement buyers. Retirees and those looking to purchase a second home generally look for mid-priced to more expensive units, but many buy homes in the more affordable ranges. Over time, existing workforce housing tends to be converted to second homes or retiree housing. Second homes and retirement homes create service-level jobs, which increase the number of wage earning workers needed in the area and the demand for affordable housing units. As for renting, the 2001 Eagle County Housing Needs Assessment also indicated that many long-term rental units are being converted to short-term rentals given the demand for lodging and the potential for profit. All of this impacts the affordable home market, which keeps getting tighter and tighter.

High demand and high quality resort-oriented development drives up real estate prices virtually everywhere in the County. As a result, while Eagle County is a wonderful place to live, it is a difficult place for workers to make ends meet financially.

## **Household Types**

A broad variety of household types can be found in Eagle County. Many homes support traditional family units. Others are made up of seasonal workers renting and living together. There is the second home household where the family lives elsewhere and visits Eagle County for just a portion of each year. Some second home owners stay in Eagle County for up to half the year but continue to report their primary residence as elsewhere. There are households where several generations or family units live together and others where money earned within the county supports all or some portion of a family that lives outside the County. Some homes are deed restricted to remain affordable, most are not. Retired couples occupy an increasing number of households.

The needs and desires of each of these household types tend to be markedly different. In Eagle County, many of those households inhabited by non-workers (retirees or second homeowners) generally have higher incomes than the households inhabited by workers. They enjoy great views, open spaces, wildlife, and privacy but also seek the full range of lifestyle amenities one might find in a more urban area. They frequently can afford personal services and generally create service-level jobs.

Workforce households, on the other hand, frequently struggle to get by. These residents appreciate and desire the views, environment and lifestyle afforded by the area, but tend to rank affordability and proximity to work, school and other services much higher.

As the economy in Eagle County changes, so too will the distribution of household types. The anticipated increase in second home ownership and influx of retirees will create new housing demands and new expectations for service. Many older residents will want to live in closer proximity to community centers, which will increase competition for homes that would normally be available to local workers. These trends will affect the affordability of workforce housing in the County.

To ensure the long-term economic viability of the region, Eagle County and the Town governments must be aware of on-going housing trends, and must be willing to implement those measures necessary to provide adequate workforce housing. The emphasis need not be on direct intervention (although some direct intervention given the economic realities of Eagle County may be necessary), but should instead be on developing a palette of incentives to encourage affordable housing development by private industry.

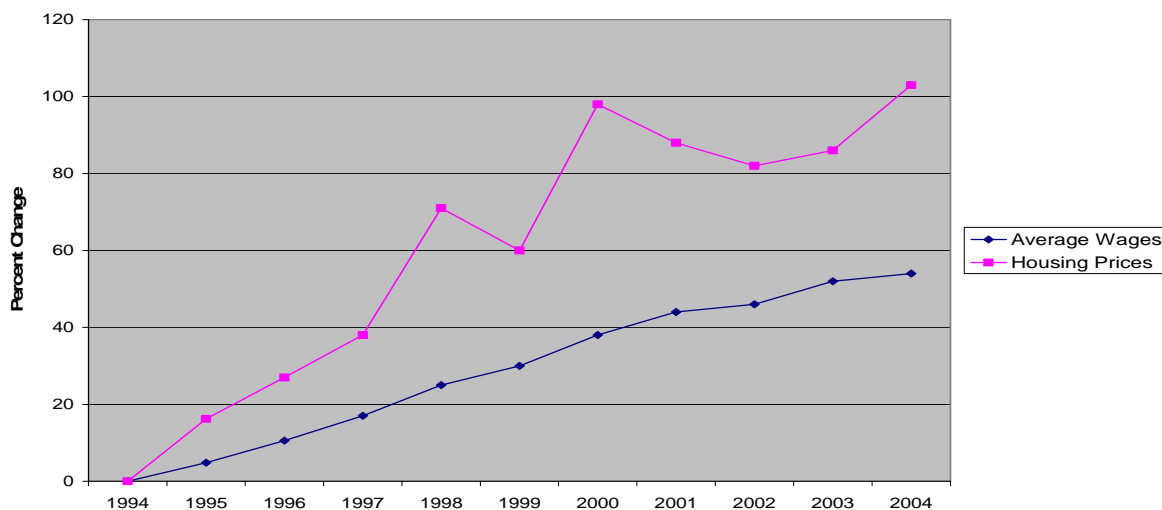
## **Housing Diversity**

A full spectrum of dwelling unit types exists in Eagle County. Townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, quads, apartments and condominiums can be found scattered throughout the County's residential areas. Detached single family homes make up 33 percent of Eagle County's occupied residential spaces. According to the 2000 census, nine percent are mobile homes. Of all units in the county, one quarter is renter occupied.

Diversity in housing types is helpful in providing more living options for workers, but diversity does little to control housing prices. As indicated in the following graph, wage increases have not kept pace with price increases for dwelling units in Eagle County for many years. Condominiums and townhomes, which are often more affordable to workers, have seen recent price increases that are even greater than those seen for single-family homes.

Some residential units in the County are reserved for local resident workers through deed restriction. When units are appropriately deed restricted, they tend to remain in the affordable range over the long term. Eagle County Government and the town governments cannot rely solely on zoning or land use policies to encourage the construction of the variety of housing types needed to achieve a better balance between wages and affordable housing. Significant incentives for private development, combined with appropriate government support and a requirement for deed restriction, are ultimately necessary to create a dedicated stock of employee housing that provides the diversity of housing types, sizes and prices required by the local workforce.

**Cumulative Percentage Increase in Eagle County  
Wages and Housing Prices**



### 3.4.4 Limited Housing Supply

#### Policies:

- I. **Efforts by involved entities to reduce land costs, housing construction costs and carrying costs should be supported.**

#### **Development Obstacles**

Eagle County is blessed with an abundance of natural beauty, but it is short on private land that can be reasonably developed. Only 16 percent of its total land area is held in private ownership, and most of that is located along transportation routes on valley floors. These low land areas are already crowded with fragile river and riparian systems, highway and railroad right-of-ways, irrigated pastures, wildlife habitat, existing community centers, sprawled suburban-type developments, golf courses and gated second home developments.

There are generally insufficient incentives for the private sector to construct affordable units. Contractors find greater profitability in high-end and second home development, for which there has been a steady demand. Federal mortgage guarantees, which can significantly reduce the cost of financing affordable projects, are difficult to obtain in Eagle County due to regulations that require funded projects to be located away from areas of environmental hazards or nuisances like busy highways. Towns also encounter fiscal disincentives to develop affordable units, as the tax revenues generated rarely cover the cost of expanded municipal services.

Higher density development reduces development costs, but high density does not fit well with the common perception of what living in the mountains should be like. The result is a general resistance from the public to projects that would zone land for higher density affordable units. Public hearing rooms are often filled with locals voicing their opposition to potential impacts to their neighborhood from otherwise beneficial higher density developments. Developers note these negative sentiments, and instead pursue low-density residential projects which they feel will have a better chance of making it through the public review process.

Good development includes an appropriate mix of open space areas and parks. In Eagle County, the valley floors serve as the foreground to many outstanding views, and many locals have voiced an opinion that the open space remaining along the valley floors should be set aside to help wildlife and preserve the scenic quality of the area. Given its location and proximity to services and infrastructure,

some of the valley floor land that might be preserved through open space acquisition is also land that could reasonably accommodate workforce housing.

Eagle County has experienced rapid population growth over the past 30 years and public concern appears to be growing regarding impacts that continued expansion might have on the present day quality of life. While most residents benefit in one way or another from the improved amenities and services that growth has brought, many are now saying that population growth should be slowed or even stopped indefinitely to preserve what remains of the county's views, wildlife habitat, air and water quality and rural small town atmosphere.

These obstacles, values, priorities and opinions complicate efforts to construct affordable workforce housing in Eagle County.

### 3.4.5 Development Stakes

#### Policies:

- m. Efforts by employers to address their own employee housing needs should be supported.**
- n. Development should share responsibility for fulfilling Eagle County's workforce housing needs.**

#### **Development Risk**

The seasonal nature of local jobs and a resort economy dependent on the discretionary spending of tourists and second homeowners who themselves adjust their spending habits in response to national economic trends and other factors. Ski resorts and attendant commercial areas employ hundreds of workers in the winter months but carry relatively few positions through the rest of the year. These factors create uncertainty, and make Eagle County a risky place in which to develop affordable housing. In Eagle County, higher rates of return and higher cash reserves are often necessary to attract the capital necessary to construct affordable housing projects.

As previously discussed, and despite the high demand, there is a lack of construction incentive for affordable homes. The economies of scale that can be realized through the development of larger subdivision projects, common along the front-range of Colorado, are generally not available in the mountainous regions of the state. In this environment, profit margins and the nature of wealthy buyers make construction of high-end housing a much safer route to pursue.

#### **High Development Costs:**

In Eagle County, privately owned land is limited in amount and expensive to purchase. Construction materials and requirements are also expensive. Roofs must be constructed to handle high snow loads, and special measures must frequently be taken to protect structures against the threat of wildfires. Construction carries over to winter months, adding costs for additional equipment and reduced job-site efficiency. Higher wages are required given the strong demand for skilled construction workers. Firms occasionally find it necessary to provide housing for their workers given the shortage of affordable units. Impact fees are now assessed to "make development pay its own way", and tap fees for water and sewer service are high. There are expensive design requirements that must be met in many subdivisions. As a result, even small units constructed in Eagle County are relatively expensive to buy.

#### **Other Factors**

Older housing units in towns like Eagle and Gypsum tend to be relatively less expensive, but in Eagle County even these units are now quite costly. Much of the housing stock in Eagle County is newer, and many of the more recent real estate developments are highly "amenitized" with golf courses and other features. The costs of these features are passed on in the form of higher housing prices, and local residents typically must look elsewhere for something affordable.

During the ski season, there is a significant inflow of temporary workers. Given tight rental markets, employers often purchase units that they then rent to seasonal employees. This houses some employees, but also removes potentially affordable units from the “pool”, limiting potential purchase options for others. This can also result in considerable cash drain for businesses that must carry unoccupied units through the off-seasons. Operating expenses are passed on, and the price of goods and services escalates.

While there are a few job sectors in the county that have high wages, overall wage levels are consistently below State and National averages (please note the chart on the following page). This is due in part to the seasonal nature of many jobs, and to the considerable value that is placed on the recreation and lifestyle that is available to those who live here. Employers can pay less and still attract employees to fill their wage level jobs.

**Average Annual Pay in Eagle County Compared to State of Colorado - Statewide**

	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Eagle County</b>	\$31,583	\$32,102	\$33,345	\$34,438
<b>State of Colorado</b>	\$37,952	\$38,005	\$38,942	\$40,285

Source: US Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics

**3.4.6 Comprehensive Workforce Housing Approach**

**Policies:**

- o. Local governments should be encouraged to accommodate 100% of their workforce housing needs, and to contribute to improving regional jobs-to-workforce attainable housing imbalances.**
- p. Efforts to find solutions for workforce housing imbalances should involve both community and industry representatives.**

As illustrated in this section of the Plan, trends suggest that workforce housing will be a challenge in Eagle County’s future. Adequate housing is an integral component to the long-term social and economic health of the region, and a broad group of entities should be responsible for the cooperative implementation of those measures necessary to secure a permanent pool of affordable units.

Town Governments play an important role in these efforts, since many jobs are located within or just outside their boundaries. Infrastructure already exists, and the denser living arrangements that can help bring the price of housing down are generally more expected and more accepted within developments of urban character. Mass transit becomes more viable, and shops, restaurants and other businesses tend to benefit from increased densities. When the workforce moves into unincorporated areas, commercial activity and services follow, which takes potential sales tax revenue out of the towns.

Eagle County Government should also actively participate in and lead efforts to increase the number of affordable units throughout the region. The largest community center in the County is unincorporated Edwards, and affordable housing and higher densities should be encouraged in areas served by its infrastructure. The County maintains many roads and operates the countywide transit system, which would be greatly impacted should future projections for long distance workforce commuting come true. Commuter traffic will increase noise, air pollution and road congestion, degrading the area’s quality of life and lessening its desirability as a place to live or visit. Without more local affordable housing, money made by workers in Eagle County will increasingly be spent where the workers live – in other counties. Service levels will drop as service positions become increasingly filled with individuals who lack local knowledge and who have less commitment to the local community.

Partnerships will be important to the development of “resort communities that work”, and should include employers, local governments, Federal officials, nonprofit developers, for-profit developers, lenders, investors, and Chambers of Commerce. Programs to ensure an adequate supply of workforce housing options should be flexible enough to respond to changing conditions in the market. Each program should have a specific target. As the market shifts and housing needs change, the focus could shift while still maintaining a level of service to all. Requirements for employee linkage (new commercial developments are required to provide employee housing based on the number of employees generated by the development) and inclusionary housing (new residential developments are required to provide some percentage of affordable housing) should be investigated, as these can be directly tied to market and development activity.



### 3.4.7 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for Housing

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
<p>a. Affordable workforce housing should be located near job centers.</p>	<p>Develop requirements for suitable land for housing which should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Close to jobs;</li> <li>▪ Close to existing towns and communities;</li> <li>▪ Close to public infrastructure and services; and</li> <li>▪ Close to commercial and recreational facilities</li> <li>▪ Dispersed throughout the county</li> <li>▪ Integrated into existing neighborhoods</li> </ul>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Utilize Eagle County's <i>Local Resident Housing Guidelines</i> to determine size, quality, and locational standards.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Provide incentives to developers who develop workforce housing.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Locate dormitories (multi-housekeeping unit dwelling units) for seasonal employees within towns and community centers.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
<p>b. Housing projects created through public/private partnerships should result in affordable, price capped units that are restricted to only local residents and/or employees in Eagle County.</p>	<p>Maintain existing deed restriction programs.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments</p>
	<p>Utilize the <i>Local Resident Housing Guidelines</i> to standardize future deed restriction programs.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments</p>
	<p>Deed restrictions shall consistently include requirements for occupancy, income levels, affordable purchase prices, appreciation rates, and employment in Eagle County.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
<p>c. Programs to increase home ownership by local workers in Eagle County should be supported.</p>	<p>Apply for an allocation of bond cap to continue the mortgage credit certificate program.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Develop mortgage assistance programs.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Financial Institutions State of Colorado</p>

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Develop a down payment assistance program.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Financial Institutions State of Colorado
	Purchase points on home loans to buy down the interest rate.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Financial Institutions
	Continue efforts to develop a rent-to-own program.	Eagle County Government State of Colorado
	Work with local financial institutions to meet their obligations under the Community Reinvestment Act.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Industry Representatives Financial Institutions
d. Efforts to increase the stock of affordable rental units for local workers should be supported.	Seek to develop additional low income housing tax credit and tax-exempt bond projects.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Not-for-Profit Organizations
	Support rental developments for households of various income levels.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
e. Adequate housing options for Senior Citizens should be available.	Monitor census data and other available indicators to assess on-going and future housing needs for senior citizens.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Ensure that adopted building codes incorporate current requirements for ADA accessibility.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Seek to develop additional low income housing tax credit and tax-exempt bond projects.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Not-for-Profit Organizations
	Participate in Senior Needs Assessment Surveys	Eagle County Government Advocacy Groups
f. The stock of existing workforce housing should be preserved.	Remain vigilant to the fact that some amount of workforce housing will convert to second home or retiree ownership over time	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Provide stipulations in all deed restrictions that Eagle County Government has the first right of refusal if a Workforce Housing unit is foreclosed.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Provide stipulations on all projects that receive funds from Eagle County Government that Eagle County has the first right of refusal if a foreclosure occurs.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Require that all Workforce Housing units displaced by development are replaced at 100% of the quantity and quality in a nearby location.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Provide financial assistance and other support to struggling Workforce Housing projects.	Eagle <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> County Government Town Governments Development Applicant Advocacy Groups
	Protect existing mobile home parks.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
g. Well designed mobile home subdivisions, modular home subdivisions, and mobile home parks should be encouraged where appropriate.	Ensure that land use regulations accommodate the development of new mobile home subdivisions, modular home subdivisions, and mobile home parks.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Develop community based design standards for mobile home subdivisions, modular home subdivisions, and mobile home parks	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Encourage mobile home parks and subdivisions to meet the affordability standards as laid out in the <i>Local Workforce Housing Guidelines</i> .	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
h. Demographics related to housing needs should be closely monitored and the resulting data incorporated into the decision making process.	Continue to conduct the County's Dwelling Unit Analysis on an annual basis.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Utilize demographic information from the State Department of Local Affairs (DOLA)	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Require that the planning commission regularly revise growth projections and use realistic assumptions to ensure the most accuracy in long range planning.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Require that all Area Plans reflect Workforce Housing in proportion to their anticipated economic growth.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Update the Area Plans as growth projections change.	Eagle County Government Town Governments

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Continue to monitor the progress of the various housing programs	Eagle County Government
	Participate in the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (NWCCOG) Housing Study	Eagle County Government NWCCOG
i. Workforce housing projects should incorporate quality design standards and programs for long term maintenance.	Require that Workforce Housing developments be of comparable quality to surrounding developments.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Develop and enforce design standards for workforce housing units.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Require replacement reserve accounts to guarantee on-going maintenance of workforce housing.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Follow the quality requirements of the <i>Local Resident Housing Guidelines</i>	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
j. Land use planning objectives should promote an appropriate amount of workforce housing.	Continue to require a Local Resident Housing Plan for all new development applications as required by the <i>Local Resident Housing Guidelines</i> .	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Revise land use regulations to allow for variations to development standards, such as height bonuses, density bonuses, etc., for mixed-use developments that include workforce housing units.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Develop incentives and/or regulations for new residential subdivisions to provide a diversity of worker households.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Add a Housing Overlay Zone District to the official Zoning Map of Eagle County	Eagle County Government
	Support efforts to create private and public sector incentives for the construction of affordable workforce housing.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Industry Representatives
	Consider density bonus incentives to encourage the construction of attainable Workforce housing.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Ensure that proposed deed restricted projects are submitted to Fannie Mae (FNMA) for approval prior to construction.	Eagle County Government Town Governments

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Bring together cooperative partners and implement public-private and public-nonprofit partnerships.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Industry Representatives Development Applicant
	Continue to utilize the incentive section of the <i>Local Resident Housing Guidelines</i> in the review of all land use proposals.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Reduce, waive, or defer fees such as those for development review and building permit for Workforce Housing	Eagle County Government Eagle County Housing Department Town Governments
	Revise land use regulations to allow residential uses within commercial developments.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
k. Accessory Dwelling Units should be allowed within appropriate zone districts.	Explore options to ensure that Accessory Dwelling Units are used as workforce housing	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Explore the possibility of condominiumizing Accessory Dwelling Units.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
l. Efforts by involved entities to reduce land costs, housing construction costs and carrying costs should be supported.	Encourage housing that can be expanded or finished incrementally by owners after purchase (i.e. unfinished basements) to bring down initial costs.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Explore options for the acquisition of suitable land for workforce housing from various sources	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Work cooperatively with landowners whose property is conveniently located and well suited for the development of workforce housing	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Hold some of the lands acquired for land banking for future workforce housing use.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Implement public land exchanges to provide sites for workforce housing.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers
	Explore options to use county, town, school district, and special district land for workforce housing.	Eagle County Government Town Governments School Districts Special Districts

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Consider changing the way infrastructure costs are assessed against development so that costs are assessed by the square foot, rather than by the unit, to make smaller units more affordable.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Work with water and sewer providers to change fee structures so that they are assessed to reward small-scale, highly efficient units.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Seek the cooperation of special districts to reduce or waive tap fees for Workforce Housing projects.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Encourage collaboration between developers and lenders to simplify and reduce initial costs.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Financial Institutions Development Applicants
	Provide financial assistance to developers for infrastructure development for Workforce Housing	Eagle County Government Town Governments Financial Institutions Development Applicants
	Modify collateral requirements in subdivision improvement agreements to ease burdens for Workforce Housing	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Encourage developers to build smaller homes on smaller lots.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Assist and encourage developers to use state and federal housing programs.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Where other preferred options are clearly unavailable, accept payment or land in lieu of construction of workforce housing.	Eagle County Housing Department Town Governments Development Applicant
	Consider enacting a tax to fund housing programs.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Enact a workforce housing impact fee	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Encourage investment in apartment projects through equity, buying up bonds, providing up-front development costs, etc.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Industry Representatives Financial Institutions
m. Efforts by employers to address their own employee housing needs should be supported.	Encourage techniques such as sharing in employee down payments and/or closing costs.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Employers Development Applicant
	Encourage master leasing in advance of construction (reserving units at rental projects to encourage private construction).	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant Industry Representatives
	Require major seasonal employers to develop a variety of housing products specifically for seasonal employees and near their places of employment.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant Major Industry Representatives
	Encourage employers to guarantee rental leases.	Eagle County Government Industry Representatives
	Encourage employers to lend funds for second mortgages.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Industry Representatives
	Encourage employers to co-sign or guarantee mortgage loans.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Major Industry Representatives
	Encourage the creation of a damage deposit pool or provide loads to help employees with rental deposits.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Major Industry Representatives
n. Development should share responsibility for fulfilling Eagle County's workforce housing needs.	Mandate that attainable workforce housing be considered part of the required infrastructure for all new development applications	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Continue to utilize Inclusionary Housing and Employee Housing Linkage as defined in the <i>Local Resident Housing Guidelines</i> in the review of development applications.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
o. Local governments should be encouraged to accommodate 100% of their workforce housing needs, and to contribute to improving regional jobs-to-workforce attainable housing imbalances.	Share technical housing information between involved entities	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Consider sharing taxes collected from workforce housing units with the Towns in which the units are located.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Work with each community within Eagle County to absorb a share of the Workforce Housing proportionate to the number and quality of employment opportunities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Consider the development of a financial assistance program for towns that are actively developing additional workforce housing.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
p. Efforts to find solutions for workforce housing imbalances should involve community and industry representatives.	Support the establishment of a countywide housing authority or community housing trust	Eagle County Government Town Governments Community Representatives Industry Representatives
	Maintain and make available an up-to-date assessment of workforce housing demand.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Regional Housing Authority Industry Representatives
	Support the creation of a multi-jurisdictional trust fund, into which all communities and interest groups would contribute.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Housing Authority Industry Representatives
	Establish long-term goals for a workforce housing program and develop measurement criteria for ongoing evaluation of the success of the program.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Industry Representatives



## 3.5 Infrastructure & Services

---

**Goal: Eagle County's infrastructure and community services support all present and future community needs and encourage efficient travel, healthy lifestyles, a stable economy and the preservation of environmental quality.**

### 3.5.1 Background Information:

Please refer to the following links to gain for issues related to Infrastructure & Services.

#### **Transportation:**

[State of Colorado, Department of Transportation](#)  
[I-70 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement](#)  
[Eagle County Engineering Department](#)  
[Eagle County Regional Transportation Authority](#)  
[Roaring Fork Regional Transportation Authority](#)  
[Eagle County Trails Committee](#)

#### **Emergency Response:**

[State of Colorado, Department of Public Safety](#)  
[State of Colorado, Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Safety](#)  
[State of Colorado, Department of Public Health and Safety, Emergency Medical Services Section](#)  
[Eagle County Emergency Management Department](#)

#### **Recreation:**

[Eagle County Recreational Web Links](#)  
[ECO Sports](#)  
[Vail Recreation District](#)  
[Western Eagle County Recreation District](#)  
[Crown Mountain Recreation District](#)

#### **Education:**

[State of Colorado, Department of Education](#)  
[Eagle County Educational Web Links](#)  
[Roaring Fork School District RE-1](#)  
[Eagle County School District RE-50J](#)

#### **Human Services & Facilities:**

[State of Colorado, Department of Public Health and Safety, Health Facilities Division](#)  
[State of Colorado, Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care](#)  
[Eagle County, Department of Health and Human Services](#)  
[Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water](#)  
[State of Colorado, Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division, Drinking Water Program](#)

#### **Senior Services & Facilities:**

[Eagle County, Department of Senior Services](#)

## 3.5.2 Efficient Transportation

### Policies:

- a. **Developed areas in Eagle County should be served by multiple modes of transportation.**
- b. **Pedestrian paths should be safe, well-designed, well maintained and appropriately networked within and between communities.**
- c. **Residential neighborhoods should include an appropriate mix of community services and community centered retail spaces that can be accessed by alternative modes of transportation.**
- d. **Bike paths should be safe, well designed, well maintained and appropriately connected within and between communities.**
- e. **To preserve mountain character, county roads should be adequate and safe for their intended use, but not over-designed.**
- f. **Only those alternatives for improvements to I-70 that best serve the needs and desires of the people of Eagle County should be supported.**
- g. **Eagle County should be adequately and efficiently served by mass transportation systems and facilities.**
- h. **Eagle County's Regional Airport should continue to be the airport of choice for western-slope mountain and resort communities.**

### **A Healthy Place for All**

Eagle County is a place where residents and visitors engage in healthy lifestyles, and it should evolve to become a place where people are not 100% reliant on personal automobiles to get around. Many present-day communities and development patterns, by design, discourage the use of healthier modes of personal transit. In these days of crowded roads, full parking lots, high gasoline prices and rising concern for green house gas emissions, many people are seeking options other than the use of their cars, trucks and SUV's.

Eagle County's 1996 Master Plan discussed the need for public transportation. This updated Comprehensive Plan further integrates the concept of pedestrian, bicycle and multi-modal transportation into the definition of transportation, with the hope that cohesive, mass transit - pedestrian - bike friendly development will result.

The health of the environment, which is the primary attraction for residents, second home owners and visitors to the County, is significantly impacted by transportation. Dust and air pollution increasingly cloud local views; travel routes and parking lots represent a potentially significant source of water pollution in local streams and rivers; and tall landscape berms are now being erected along busy streets with the intent of isolating neighborhoods from traffic noise. Transportation corridors effectively fragment wildlife habitats and reduce options for wildlife migration. Vehicle/animal collisions are increasingly problematic, with over 24,000 reported on Colorado roads in the ten-year period between 1993 and 2003.

Increasing opportunities for mass and multi-modal transportation could reduce the increase in traffic numbers and road and parking lot congestion in the county, thereby lessening potential negative impacts to the environment. Incorporating mass transit and well designed local and regional trails into development plans helps to promote compact, high-density land use and the efficient placement of services and infrastructure. The service-oriented economy provides many workers with low to modest wages, and high housing costs exacerbate the financial hardships they face. Expanded opportunities for public transportation, walking or for riding a bike help wage earners focus more of their budgets on housing, food and other necessities, and less on having to maintain and operate a personal vehicle transportation.

If development is proposed for areas not well served by multiple transportation options, the development proposal must be accompanied by a plan to address transportation needs consistent with the intent of this Comprehensive Plan.

### **Non-motorized Transportation**

It is the goal of Eagle County to promote development that reduces the need to use personal vehicles. Certain design features encourage walking or biking. According to the [Local Government Commission, Center for Livable Communities](#), pedestrians prefer a network and hierarchy of paths. Compact development can provide this hierarchy, allowing convenient walking alternatives to multiple destinations. A mix of neighborhood retail and office locations allows individuals to pick up daily needs, walk or bike to work, and go to lunch without relying on a car. Windows, landscaping and people along the street promote social interaction and feelings of safety. Crosswalks should be well marked, and mid-street crosswalks, where appropriate, can improve convenience. Narrower, shaded streets with medians can slow traffic and provide cooler pedestrian environments.

Children tend to be more active when the activities they desire are available in their own neighborhood, and transportation needs are greatly reduced if kids can walk or ride a bike to school or to the local park. Essential services, including retail and commercial land uses, should be integrated into residential neighborhoods wherever appropriate.

According to the [Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](#), bicycle lanes or paths must be safe and comfortable. Markings and signs must be clear. Part 9 of the Federal Highway Administration's [Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(MUTCD\)](#) describes signs, signals, and markings for bicycle facilities and shared use paths. These standards should be used for all developed pedestrian and bicycle trails in Eagle County.

Secure bicycle parking is also critical to the effectiveness of bicycle transportation. More than 1.5 million bicycles are reported stolen every year in the United States and fear of bicycle theft is recognized as a significant deterrent to bicycle use. Providing good quality bicycle parking facilities is frequently overlooked by developers, and can be more complex than just installing a "fence" or "grid" style rack by the front or back door. Indeed, many agencies are now adopting quite specific bicycle parking design, location, and installation requirements.

The Eagle County trails programs were established in 1996 following the passage of the half-percent sales tax to finance mass-transportation improvements. Revenues collected in the Roaring Fork River Valley of Eagle County are managed by the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA). In the Eagle River Valley, revenues are managed by the Eagle County Regional Transportation Authority (ECO). In 1993 a trails plan for the Roaring Fork side of the County was completed and 2001 saw the adoption of the [Eagle Valley Regional Trails Plan](#).

The Roaring Fork Mid-Valley Trails program focuses on construction of a core pedestrian and bicycle trail on the former Rio Grande Railroad corridor, now owned by RFTA, and on various spur trails with the intent of linking the communities of Pitkin, Eagle and Garfield counties within the Roaring Fork River valley. The Eagle Valley Trails program serves the larger population of the County, and is currently focused on the construction of a 63 mile long paved trail from the top of Vail Pass to the mouth of Glenwood Canyon. As of 2005, 30 miles are complete, including sections built prior to the tax but incorporated into the core trail alignment. The ECO Trails program activities include trail planning, trail construction, special events, public relations, and advocacy on regional and national bicycle and pedestrian issues and backcountry trail projects.

### **Vehicular Transportation**

Again, it is the goal of Eagle County to promote development that reduces the need to use personal vehicles. Congestion on local roads diminishes air quality, reduces scenic quality and negatively impacts the quality of life of those seeking the quieter life style of a mountain environment and small-town community.

Several road segments in Eagle County are reaching or exceeding the capacity for which they were designed. Improvements to the Edwards Spur Road, the airport interchange project, and the Highway 6 Corridor Feasibility Study are all projects meant to address existing and anticipated areas of higher traffic volume. Reliable transportation is important, and the generally linear development and lack of alternate travel routes in Eagle County creates the potential for significant problems when accidents, mudslides or avalanches result in road closures. Accidents have become more frequent as traffic on I-70 and State Highway 82 has increased, and Vail Pass is frequently closed in the winter due to jack-knifed trucks or snow avalanches. Traffic delays between the Front Range and Eagle County has the potential to negatively impact the local economy, and maintenance on the County's main travel routes is therefore a high priority for Colorado Department of Transportation.

The I-70 Programmatic Environmental Impact Study (I-70 PEIS) has been initiated by the Colorado Department of Transportation to identify a preferred alternative that would increase capacity and reduce bottlenecks along the I-70 Corridor from C-470 in Denver to Glenwood Springs. One alternative would be to widen the highway in a variety of locations. While much of this highway work would occur in Counties east of Vail Pass (Summit, Clear Creek), the benefits and disadvantages of increased interstate capacity could be widely felt in Eagle County. Local businesses, for example, could benefit from increased traffic. However, local roads and parking lots could become more congested, air pollution more pronounced and recreational amenities and facilities could become so crowded as to lessen the quality of the related experiences. Improved access to the Front Range might accelerate population growth and urbanization, and diminish the area's quality of life.

### **Multi-Modal Transportation**

A multi-modal transportation approach would solve many of the problems that currently exist on local roads. Nearly 18 percent of Eagle County's workers commute from areas outside the County, a number that is expected to rise significantly in coming years. Many will travel the I-70 corridor from their homes in Garfield County. Others will use Highway 24 to access the county from Leadville. Traffic that moves through the county on Interstate 70 is expected to increase, and the county itself will continue to grow, placing more and more traffic on local streets and highways. All of this has potential social, economic, and environmental impacts.

The existing bus transportation services offered in Eagle County include the Eagle County Regional Transportation Authority, Roaring Fork Regional Transportation Authority, Town of Avon Transit System, and the Town of Vail Transit System. Eagle County Regional Transportation Authority and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority both offer extensive regional service. The town transit systems serve locals and visitors within town boundaries and act as feeders to the regional systems. The search is on-going to find suitable locations for public transit facilities, transit hubs and park- and-ride locations.

The growth in population and jobs that is anticipated over the next twenty years will place additional demands on local transportation providers. Growing numbers of workers, both within and outside the county, will rely on mass transit. Eagle County Transportation Authority and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority should anticipate the need to expand their personnel and bus fleets, and build new facilities to continue their mission as regional mass transit providers. New technologies should be considered to meet growing passenger needs, including automated fare collection and automated passenger counting. In addition, and as technology, time and budgets allow diesel buses should be replaced with cleaner burning vehicles such as hybrid electric buses or even hydrogen powered vehicles, to meet increasingly stringent EPA regulations and a longstanding community commitment to clean air.

The Eagle County Regional Airport offers another transportation option in Eagle County. There were over 190,000 enplanements in 2004, and service was provided by a number of major airlines. Investment in improvements to service at the Eagle County Airport should continue to be a focus. All other modes of transportation should be connected to the airport to allow full multi-modal access.

As a future option, Eagle County would be well suited for a fixed guide-way type transit system, such as commuter rail or light rail. Most of the county's population is located in linear fashion along valley floors, and easily accessed transit stops could be developed along existing rail lines, or new rail lines. Fixed guide-way transit systems can help create denser and more distinctive town centers, preserve open space buffers, promote the use of mass transit, reduce the use of personal vehicles and congestion, reduce the need for more parking and roads, and improve air quality. A county-wide commuter rail system should remain an important priority.

### 3.5.3 Emergency and Community Services

#### Policies:

- i. **Exemplary emergency and community services should be available to all residents, visitors and second home owners.**
- j. **The management and distribution of recreation areas and facilities in Eagle County should be implemented in an environmentally conscientious manner.**
- k. **Adequate and efficient infrastructure should exist within community centers and suburban neighborhoods for the delivery of domestic drinking water and for the treatment of domestic sewage.**
- l. **Solid waste disposal in Eagle County should be efficiently and effectively managed.**
- m. **Communication infrastructure should be sufficient to support all anticipated needs in Eagle County.**

#### **Emergency Services**

Emergency service providers consist of the Sheriff's office, police, fire, and ambulance departments and districts, and the County's Road and Bridge Department and CDOT. Their response in the event of an emergency is essential to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Eagle County.

The Eagle County Sheriff's Office, Colorado State Patrol, Town of Vail Police Department, Town of Avon Police Department, Town of Minturn Police Department, Town of Eagle Police Department, and Town of Basalt Police Department provide police service. The Basalt and Rural Fire Protection District, Eagle River Fire Protection District, Greater Eagle Fire Protection District, the Gypsum Fire Protection District, and Town of Vail Fire Department provide fire service. Eagle County Emergency Services District, Western Eagle County Ambulance District, and Basalt and Rural Fire Protection District provide emergency medical service. New development should be located within "reasonable proximity" to these emergency services. Reasonable proximity is considered to be within five (5) road miles. Local service districts span much greater distances, but outlying areas are subject to delayed responses and the potential for unfortunate consequences. New development that would be located outside the five-mile distance should be required to demonstrate how the proposed development would be served.

#### **Community Services**

There are a large number of basic services that are desirable within a functional community. Schools, medical facilities, childcare, libraries, restaurants, hardware stores, gas stations, auto repair shops, laundry mats, grocery stores, sporting goods and clothing shops, etc. all provide important services to a residential and business community. Given their significant impact on the quality of life available to people living in a given area, the appropriate distribution of essential community services in Eagle County is a primary planning objective. New development should be located within reasonable proximity to existing community service centers.

Eagle County has a well-educated population. A full range of educational opportunities is necessary to encourage life-long learning, and the County should continue to support the development and appropriate distribution of accessible, high quality educational resources.

There are two public school districts that operate in Eagle County: [RE-50J](#), Eagle County Schools, and [RE-1](#) Roaring Fork Schools. The Grand County School District also covers a small part portion of northeastern Eagle County. There are also a number of private schools which provide additional (although less affordable) choices for local students. Colorado Mountain College, community groups, medical institutions, and local chambers of commerce also offer a variety of educational programs. Current information on classes, curricula, locations, fees, etc., should be easy to access, and Eagle County could assist by maintaining an updated directory of all schools, educational facilities and programs on its website.

A shared understanding of where future development will occur will help Eagle County and the affected public school districts plan for future capital improvements. Joint use of existing and new facilities will help stretch limited education dollars and should be encouraged. When new facilities are planned, Eagle County Government, Town Governments, and school districts should work together to find sites that meet the following criteria:

- The proposed site is compatible with surrounding land uses;
- The proposed site has no significant environmental conditions or historical resources which would be damaged by construction and/or the use of the site as a school.
- The proposed site complies with all policies of the Comprehensive Plan;
- The site is close to urban residential areas;
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections can be made from the school to the neighborhoods that it serves;
- Water, sewer, and other infrastructure improvements are available; and
- The proposed site is near other related public facilities such as parks and libraries.

The County will continue to require the dedication of school land or payment of cash-in-lieu-of land dedication as part of all residential development approvals. New public facilities should include classrooms and lecture hall components to accommodate other educational programs.

Future trends point to an aging population in the County. It is expected that the number of retirees will increase significantly, especially given the potential influx of baby boomers seeking recreational opportunities as a part of their retirement plans. Three hospitals service the inpatient needs of the residents of Eagle County: [Vail Valley Medical Center](#), [Valley View Hospital](#), and [Aspen Valley Hospital](#). In addition, there are several urgent care facilities located throughout Eagle County such as the [Eagle Valley Medical Center](#), the Edwards Immediate Care Center, Beaver Creek Medical Center, Eagle Care Medical Clinic, and the soon to be constructed Medical Center of Eagle, a joint facility of the Valley View Hospital and the Vail Valley Medical Center.

Eagle County Government should work with the medical providers to assure that there are adequate facilities and programs for dealing with the changing demographics of the region. New development should occur in areas that are well serviced by public transportation and medical facilities.

A study titled "[The Economic Impact of Child Care in Colorado](#)", which was conducted by the University of Colorado Leeds School of Business and coordinated by the Colorado Children's Campaign, provides considerable insight into the relationship between quality childcare, improved graduation rates and future success in the workforce. The study points to the fact that 90% of human brain development occurs between birth and the age of three, and that quality infant child care provides a critical foundation for future learning. The study further notes that easily accessible childcare attracts quality employees, reduces employee turnover, lowers absentee days and increases worker productivity.

In Colorado, 59% of children under the age of 6 have two working parents. Childcare is therefore an enabling industry because it allows workforce participation by both care givers, which is especially important to those in the lower income brackets. Day care facilities are small businesses, locally owned and operated, often by women. According to the 1999 [Eagle County Housing Needs Assessment](#), there are 1.92 workers per household in Eagle County. Considering the local cost of living, many households have two working parents, and child care provision should therefore be considered a major local issue.

The 1996 County Master Plan encouraged the private sector to provide childcare. In 1999, the Land Use Regulations were amended to allow “day care homes” in every residential zone district as a use by right and “day care centers” in every residential zone district as a use permitted with a Special Use Permit. Eagle County Government should consider modifying Land Use Regulations from time to time to keep them consistent with [state law regulating child care facilities](#).

Eagle County will rely on well educated workers to support future growth in a knowledge and technology based economy. Childcare should be considered an integral component of community infrastructure, and the economic and social impacts of quality childcare should be incorporated into the decision making process whenever appropriate. Day care homes and day care centers should continue to be allowed, as provided by Eagle County Land Use Regulations, and efforts should be ongoing to locate adequate facilities in developed areas throughout Eagle County.

### **Recreational Facilities**

Recreation is the single most important reason for choosing to live or buy real estate in Eagle County for both residents and second homeowners. Sixty-eight percent of residents surveyed in the [Northwest Colorado Council of Governments 2003 Second Home Study Survey](#) rated recreation as the most important reason for living in Eagle County. Eighty-Four percent of the second home owners surveyed said recreation was the most important reason for buying property in Eagle County. According to the survey, the types of recreation used most include downhill skiing, golfing, hiking, walking or jogging, and mountain biking.

Snow sports such as alpine skiing, snowboarding, Nordic skiing, and snowshoeing are not only important to residents and visitors, they are the foundation of the County’s two major economic drivers – tourism and second homes. According to “[Job Generation in the Colorado Mountain Resort Economy](#)” (Lloyd Levy Consulting and Hammer, Siler, George Associates, conducted in association with the Northwest Colorado Council of Government’s Second Home Study) winter visitors are responsible for 22 percent of the basic spending and 20 percent of the total jobs in Eagle County. This is second only to the spending and jobs created by second homeowners, who purchased land here partly to enjoy snow sports. Many residents in the El Jebel and Basalt areas hold ski resort or second home related jobs in neighboring Pitkin County.

Areas formally developed for snowshoeing and Nordic skiing are found within established ski areas, and many residents and visitors also use Nordic equipment to access undeveloped “backcountry” public lands wherever there is adequate snow. Trailheads to key snowshoeing, Nordic skiing and snowmobiling areas within and outside ski area complexes should be provided and maintained throughout the winter. The County should also support efforts to provide educational programs regarding winter safety in the backcountry.

As indicated in the 2003 Second Home Study, hiking and walking rank very high in importance with both residents and homeowners. As growth and development occur in Eagle County and across the state, trails and trailheads are used by ever-increasing numbers of people. Efforts to improve and maintain the trails and associated facilities should be ongoing. In addition to hiking, paths for fitness walking, running and strolling are very popular, and should be planned in association with any residential development.

With 11 existing golf courses and more in the works, Eagle County could be labeled a golfer’s paradise. Approximately 150,000 rounds of golf are played in Eagle County each year. Golfing has helped transform the area into a year-round recreational destination, and has been a boon to the real estate industry as virtually all courses are associated with high-end residential subdivisions. Unfortunately, there are few public courses, and green fees are high on those that are. Finding ways of attracting more affordable golfing opportunities should be a goal for Eagle County and Town Governments.

Both road biking and mountain biking have grown as popular recreational pursuits in Eagle County over the last ten years. Cyclists living in or visiting the area have a wide variety cycling preferences, from flat easy terrain to challenging climbs and descents. The area provides both backcountry roads and

established single track trails for mountain bike enthusiasts, and many increasingly utilize summer lift operations at the ski areas to engage in the relatively new sport of downhill biking. Road bikers use paved recreational paths and/or local roads and highways. Safety is an issue for road bikers who mix with traffic, and efforts are ongoing to work with CDOT to provide wider shoulders on several of the more popular routes.

All trails should be sized to accommodate anticipated uses. Walking trails can be narrow, multi-use trails should be wide enough to handle two-directional bicycle traffic, walkers, and joggers. Consolidating information on existing routes is important to educate the public on what routes may be the most fitting to their desired experience and/or skill level. The completion of the Eagle Valley Core Trail and the addition of new cycling routes should continue to attract destination cyclists as well as enhance the quality of life for Eagle County residents.

The area's rivers and streams support a considerable amount of recreation. Anglers, rafters, and kayakers all share a love for moving water in a natural setting, as do many visitors and residents who simply enjoy the serenity offered by the river corridor environment. Rafters and kayakers frequent the Eagle River and the Roaring Fork primarily in the spring and early summer when flows are high. Anglers prefer the more moderate flows of mid to late summer, when lower volumes mean easier access.

Access to streams is important, but too much access can damage sensitive environments. Eagle County Government should work with local watershed groups, agencies and land managers to identify new access points and those current river accesses that are in jeopardy of over use. In both cases, appropriate improvements should be made to ensure the integrity of riverbanks and the protection of riparian areas.

Healthy rivers are important to the lifestyles of residents, and to the economy of the entire region, and water quality and stream flows should be protected from further degradation. Any development that has a potentially negative impact on either water quality or stream flow levels should be required to fully mitigate those impacts.

Many opportunities for dispersed outdoor recreation such as picnicking, car camping, backcountry camping, or hut stays are available in Eagle County. The United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management oversee many of the areas that support these types of uses. Eagle County Government should work with these agencies to assure that area campgrounds, picnic sites and backcountry facilities remain safe, accessible and enjoyable for use.

Rock climbing in the summer and ice climbing in the winter are popular in a place with so much mountainous terrain and exposed geography. Development plans should ensure continued access to popular locations, and the County should work with involved agencies to provide sufficient facilities and maintenance at identified parking areas and trailheads. Indoor climbing walls are increasingly popular and help promote climbing and improve safety of the sport. These facilities should be encouraged in both existing and proposed recreational centers.

Many residents enjoy motorized sports such as four wheeling, dirt biking, and snowmobiling, and visitors often include jeep tours and snowmobile trips on their lists of things to do while in the county. Plans should accommodate the popularity of these activities, where appropriate. Motor sports can conflict with other user groups, however, and can negatively impact natural environments and wildlife habitat. Eagle County Government should participate fully with land management agencies involved in planning for the future of motor sports to help identify and avoid potential user conflicts.

Equestrian activities have a very long history in Eagle County. From being the principal sole source of transportation to a purely recreational pursuit, horses continue to signify a rural western lifestyle to residents and visitors alike, and efforts to retain this important element of the region's heritage should be encouraged. Horses may be kept on many properties in Eagle County, and ranch homes with horse facilities can be found along many roads, adding significantly to the rural character of the area. Trails used by horses can be subject to some damage, however, and provisions to provide additional maintenance should be included in those areas frequented by horse traffic. The County should work



with involved agencies to provide sufficient facilities and maintenance at parking areas and trailheads used by outfitters and horseback riders.

Another activity that predates modern resort and second home development is hunting. Local businesses gear up for this important seasonal activity, which brings millions of dollars into the local economy. The Division of Wildlife regulates hunting and manages the health of the local big game herds and wildlife production areas. Shooting ranges and sporting clays are related recreational pursuits enjoyed by many. Eagle County Government should work with land managers to maintain the quality of local wildlife habitat, as well as the quality of backcountry experiences. Hunting rights on public and private land should be protected. Formal shooting ranges with proper facilities should be allowed as appropriate to improve hunter safety. Impromptu target shooting areas on public lands are increasingly hazardous, and should be prohibited.

There are several areas of the county where access and wind flow patterns provide excellent opportunities for paragliding and hot air ballooning. Eagle County Government should work with other agencies and interest groups to identify launch and landing sites, and to provide the necessary parking, facilities, and maintenance.

Touring sightseeing scenic driving, and heritage tourism are also valued recreational pursuits that make up a component of Eagle County's economy. Highway 24's [Top of the Rockies Scenic and Historic Byway](#), and the Trough Road's [Colorado River Headwaters Scenic and Historic Byway](#) are designated by the Federal Highways Administration as scenic travel routes. Eagle County Government should work with the Federal Highways Administration and other local land managers to preserve the scenic quality along these roads and to provide supporting facilities and interpretive centers.

Field sports such as soccer, football, baseball, and rugby are popular recreational pursuits available to all county residents. Eagle County Government has helped provide related facilities through development of the Berry Creek and Crown Mountain projects. Other sports like basketball, volleyball, racquetball, and tennis that involve constructed courts are also popular, but indoor public facilities are limited. Eagle County Government has recently completed a public involvement process for a Recreation Center Feasibility Study for the Edwards area. Early indications are that a field house and indoor court facilities are needed in Eagle County.

The maintenance of recreational facilities should be the responsibility of Recreation Districts whenever possible. As the County acquires more open space and park land over time, it may be necessary to form a County Parks and Trails Department to maintain these sites.

Ice skating and hockey are very popular to a broad based user group. The Dobson Ice Arena in Vail and the indoor ice rink in Eagle are used to capacity, and outdoor rinks in Beaver Creek and on Nottingham Lake are busy during the cold months of winter. Additional public facilities would help promote this popular wintertime activity and sport.

Public swimming pools are located at the [Avon Recreation Center](#), [Homestead Court Club](#), the Eagle-Vail Pool, the [Eagle Pool](#) and the Basalt Pool. A [recreation center in Gypsum](#) is currently under construction, and will also have an indoor pool. The Eagle Pool is a popular outdoor facility that is open from April to September.

Finally, many locals and visitors seek opportunities for indoor fitness training. Homeowners associations offer on-site fitness rooms, and there are a variety of private and public spas and fitness gyms equipped with the latest in cardiovascular and strength training devices scattered throughout the county. Eagle County Government should continue to work with local Towns, developers and recreation districts to provide indoor fitness training facilities as needed.

### **Water, Wastewater, and Drainage Infrastructure**

While many homes still rely on private wells and Individual Sewage Disposal Systems (ISDS), many are now served by larger regional domestic water treatment and delivery systems and large wastewater collection and treatment systems. Some older subdivision developments have smaller shared drinking water treatment systems and wastewater plants. Adequate infrastructure for the delivery of domestic

drinking water and for the treatment of municipal waste water should be available within all community centers. Measures should also be implemented to ensure the efficient and safe operation of smaller shared systems in outlying areas. Whenever practicable, smaller systems should be consolidated or incorporated into larger systems. All drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities should be operated and maintained by service districts or other qualified entities.

The [Eagle County Department of Environmental Health](#) regulates the installation and maintenance of Individual Sewage Disposal Systems (ISDS). In cases where there are industrial or commercial wastes discharged into a septic system or in instances where the septic system will receive an average daily flow of 2000 gallons or more, the [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division](#) and [Environmental Protection Agency](#) may also regulate the system.

For guidance on wastewater treatment facilities and septic system design and practices please refer to the following documents:

[Chapter IV, Eagle County Land Use Regulations](#)

[Site Location and Design Approval Regulations for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Works](#), CDPHE, WQCD;

[Guidelines on Individual Sewage Disposal Systems](#), CDPHE, WQCD;

[Suggested Practices of a Septic System to Meet Requirements of Permit](#), CDPHE, WQCD

[Voluntary National Guidelines for Management of Onsite and Clustered \(Decentralized\) Wastewater Treatment Systems](#), EPA;

[Draft Handbook for Management of Onsite and Clustered \(Decentralized\) Wastewater Treatment Facilities](#), EPA; and

[Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Manual](#), EPA.

Water that leaves developed areas and impervious surfaces as a result of rain or snow events is referred to as storm water runoff. This water can transport many contaminants such as fertilizer, oils, pesticides and sediments which can significantly impact the quality of water in Eagle County's streams and rivers. Drainage systems are required to be constructed for new developments by provisions of the County's Land Use Regulations, and can reduce or eliminate negative impacts from storm water runoff. Maintenance of these stormwater systems should be routinely conducted by a service district or other qualified entity.

For additional information on water quality and quantity, please refer to the [Water Section](#) of this Plan.

## **Solid Waste Management**

Solid Waste Management is very important to the taxpayers of Eagle County since Eagle County Government owns the county's only landfill. It is important that every step be taken to protect and extend the life of this facility. The 1996 plan detailed many related policies. This plan refines those policies to make them more achievable.

The adage of solid waste management is to "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle." Eagle County should strive to:

- Implement solid waste management processes that reduce the waste stream,
- Reuse materials when appropriate,
- Promote recycling, and
- Provide for the separation of waste prior to landfilling

Currently, seven public recycling drop-off centers are located in Eagle County. For their locations and information on what can be recycled at each, go to [www.eaglevalleyalliance.org](http://www.eaglevalleyalliance.org) for the Eagle County Recycling Guide. In addition, some local solid waste collection companies provide recycling and free curbside pick-up for residential customers. The Towns of Eagle and Gypsum provide their own waste hauling service to residents within town limits, but at present do not provide curbside recycling. Eagle

County Government has donated land and helped fund the RECON Construction Material Exchange to divert and recycle construction material, which has the potential to reduce landfill input by as much as 50%.

The creation of a regional solid waste management plan, endorsed and supported by all participating jurisdictions, should be investigated. The plan could address construction debris (including dirt), household waste, commercial waste, recycling, reusable goods, and toxic/hazardous waste. A strong education program would be an important component of such a plan.

The County's landfill will be impacted in a number of ways when the construction of a reservoir on Alkali Creek just north of Wolcott becomes a reality. Even if the actual high water mark is below the level of the landfill, a diversion tunnel may have to run through the area, and Highway 131 will need to be rerouted through the Ute Creek Industrial Park. The cut scar of the landfill may then become much more visible to passing motorists.

### **Communications**

Many goals and policies of this plan would not be possible without modern communication and telecommunications infrastructure. Eagle County Government is therefore committed to the rapid development, upgrade, improvement, and deployment of the necessary infrastructure in all key areas of communication.

Over the last several years, the County has invested heavily in its Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Department, radar at the Regional Airport and advanced operations in its Innovation and Technology Department. Each investment has improved Eagle County's ability to handle the anticipated growth in population and economic development in the region.

Eagle County Government should engage the Town Governments, local businesses, chambers of commerce, and service providers in a telecommunications plan. This plan should analyze the information and communication needs of the community, the technology available or needed to meet identified needs, and should outline opportunities and challenges to the development of such infrastructure. Technologies explored should include the following:

- Voice Communications;
- Written Communications;
- Video Communications;
- Internet Communications;
- Data Storage Systems (Geographic Information Systems, Storage Area Networking over Internet Protocol, data archives, etc.);
- Media; and
- Delivery Services.

It is expected that Eagle County will continue to advance its internal information distribution and communication capabilities, and the County website will continue to evolve as a useful communications tool that will be available to citizens, businesses, and visitors.

### **3.5.4 Services & Infrastructure Costs**

#### **Policies:**

- n. The costs of providing community services and infrastructure should be fairly and equitably shared.**

The demand for services typically starts immediately upon the commencement of construction activity on a site. Needs for road maintenance, police service, fire service and even bus service and local resident housing are immediate, but the property taxes and sales taxes expected from the development

to fund services and infrastructure are associated with full build out, and typically lag far behind the demand.

Requiring development to “pay its own way” for infrastructure and services is an increasingly popular concept. The passage of Colorado Senate Bill 15 now gives authority to towns and counties to collect impact fees, which is one way to require developer contribution. By statute, such fees may be used only for capital improvements and may not be spent on staffing or for items with usable life of less than five years. There are also provisions within this statute for protecting local resident housing.

Eagle County Government should take a comprehensive look at the fiscal impacts of development. A full cost of services and fiscal impact analysis could be conducted to determine the costs of various types of development to Eagle County Government, Town Governments, and other service providers. The resulting study could serve as a model to help determine fiscal impacts and appropriately recommend cost recovery strategies for new developments.

The burden of the cost for expanded infrastructure and services should be equitable. Developers feel that impact fees place an undue financial burden on development, so other revenue sources, like mill levy increases and sales tax increases, should be investigated. Other groups do not wish to subsidize development that has little direct benefit for them. A balanced approach that includes open dialogue and full participation of all parties is needed.

As development is proposed, a wide range of infrastructure and service needs must be considered. New development applications should address the steps that will be taken to assure that the residents, employees and customers of the development will be adequately served by all necessary services and infrastructure.

### 3.5.5 Population Diversity

#### Policies:

- o. The service and infrastructure needs of all socio-economic, age and cultural groups present in Eagle County should be fully addressed.**

Diversity creates a vibrant community, and Eagle County provides a number of salient examples. The agricultural roots of the County created a culture devoted to the land, horses and livestock. These traditional western values continue to be strongly held in many parts of the county today. Many of the early residents of Vail were European, and their talents and cultural beliefs and activities added tremendously to the character and flavor of that resort town. The presence of a significant Hispanic population in Eagle County has for many years enriched local communities with the music, food and festivals common to the variety of related cultures.

It is the goal of Eagle County to continue to encourage diversity by paying special attention to the needs of all segments of the population. Specifically tailored programs and services help people from all socio-economic backgrounds feel welcome, and able to fit in with the local melting pot. The area’s youth need more facilities where they can safely gather, recreate and/or be entertained.

As the population of Eagle County ages, the need for senior services and facilities will increase. The 1999 Eagle County Senior Needs Assessment Study identified a number of needs, including specialized medical facilities, community center facilities and assisted living facilities. Retirement housing in close proximity to public transportation and convenient shopping opportunities will be in demand as increasing numbers of retirees move to the area. All of this should be considered in the planning process.

People with similar backgrounds tend to gravitate together, forming mono-cultural neighborhoods. The separation of cultural groups can perpetuate language barriers, discourage interaction and stifle

meaningful involvement in the larger community. Fostering integration, removing barriers between cultural groups and creating fully integrated communities should be a priority.

A variety of housing types and arrangements, distributed throughout the County, should be a goal. Community leaders should be aware of the misunderstandings and stereotypes that occasionally occur among people of differing ages or backgrounds, and should seek to foster cultural integration.

Eagle County Government and the town governments should promote a variety of housing to encourage dispersed diversity and more cultural interaction. Services unique to various segments of the population should be recognized and supported to ensure Eagle County remains a welcoming, comfortable place for everyone. Social capital is a broad concept, but at its most basic level it is like any other type of capital: good investment creates returns allowing for further investment. In the case of social capital, public entities invest in parks, recreation, open space, schools, and places where people can meet and feel safe. The return is a strong and interactive social system that can get things done and contribute to the economy and maintenance of the community. Building this sense of community creates a sense of responsibility and stewardship that increases volunteerism and community pride.

Community Leaders for each cultural group in Eagle County should be contacted for comment on development proposals so that services and facilities unique to each group become standard considerations on all development applications.

### 3.5.6 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for Infrastructure & Services

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
<p>a. Developed areas in Eagle County should be served by multiple modes of transportation.</p>	<p>Promote collaborative region-wide transportation planning.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Locate new development in areas served by adequate roads and paths, and within reasonable distance to a mass transit hub.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Assure that road and trail improvements are completed concurrent to the completion of new development.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Ensure appropriate transportation considerations are included in subdivision improvement agreements.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Work with mass transit providers to expand service.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Expand coverage of the Eagle Valley Regional Trails Plan.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Development Applicant</p>

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Encourage transit oriented development (TOD).	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
b. Pedestrian paths should be safe, well-designed, well maintained and appropriately networked within and between communities.	Promote walking as a viable transportation option.	Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Promote pedestrian malls, and provide adequate parking on the perimeter of shopping areas to encourage walking.	Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Work to complete the 2001 Eagle Valley Regional Trails Plan.	Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Eagle County Government
	Encourage a network of walking trails within towns and community centers that connect typical community destinations (bus stops, schools, businesses, parks, playgrounds, etc.) with seamless pedestrian infrastructure.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Within towns and community centers, retrofit public roads with parallel pedestrian routes and marked street crossings.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant Town Governments
	Design streetscapes to include pedestrian friendly amenities like window spaces, store fronts, landscaping, plaza areas, marked cross walks and traffic speed controls.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant Town Governments
	Work to improve safety for pedestrians at round-a-bouts.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Department of Transportation
c. Residential neighborhoods should include an appropriate mix of community services and community centered retail spaces that can be accessed by alternative modes of transportation.	Integrate schools, churches, libraries, parks and other community services into residential neighborhoods.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant School District
	Promote the use of Planned Unit Developments to increase flexibility in planning and design.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Promote live-work arrangements where appropriate.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Encourage an appropriate mix of retail and office locations in new neighborhoods to reduce reliance on personal cars.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Consider modifying zoning standards to allow a limited, amount of community centered commercial and retail spaces in existing neighborhoods.	Eagle County Government
d. Bike paths should be safe, well designed, well maintained and appropriately connected within and between communities.	Promote biking as a transportation option.	Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Utilize existing standards for the construction of asphalt bicycle paths.	Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Where appropriate, encourage the development of bicycle paths that are separated from roads.	Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Where appropriate, widen paved shoulders on existing roads to allow bicycle use.	Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Colorado Department of Transportation/Federal Highways Administration Eagle County Government



Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Provide adequate maintenance on all bicycle paths and road shoulders.	Colorado Department of Transportation Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Provide clear, consistent signs and markings on all pedestrian and bike trails.	Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Provide public education programs related to biking, and enforce appropriate bicycle etiquette and rules.	Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Eagle County Government
	Require safe, secure and convenient bicycle parking areas and facilities for all new and existing commercial developments and public facilities.	Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
e. To preserve mountain character, county roads should be adequate and safe for their intended use, but not over-designed	Tackle traffic issues in a collaborative, comprehensive manner using state-of-the-art analysis and technology.	Colorado Department of Transportation Federal Highways Administration Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Evaluate all development proposals using Eagle County Land Use Regulation Road Standards.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Follow the recommendations of the Highway 6 Corridor Feasibility Study.	Colorado Department of Transportation/Federal Highways Administration Eagle County Government

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	<p>Provide multiple access points to development, and multiple vehicular routes in and between community centers to disperse traffic and relieve congestion.</p> <hr/> <p>So long as safety considerations are met, apply minimal road standards in outlying areas to preserve the county's agricultural heritage and rural mountain character.</p> <hr/> <p>Assure adequate access for emergency responders.</p>	<p>Colorado Department of Transportation/Federal Highways Administration Eagle County Government Town Governments</p> <hr/> <p>Colorado Department of Transportation/Federal Highways Administration Eagle County Government</p> <hr/> <p>Colorado Department of Transportation/Federal Highways Administration Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
<p>f. Only those alternatives for improvements to I-70 that best serve the needs and desires of the people of Eagle County should be supported.</p>	<p>Identify and prioritize the social, economic, and environmental impacts of I-70 improvements to Eagle County.</p> <hr/> <p>Continue to participate in the I-70 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) and subsequent studies, and to work with Colorado Department of Transportation Federal Highways Administration to select I-70 transportation alternatives that provide the greatest benefit to Eagle County</p>	<p>Colorado Department of Transportation/Federal Highways Administration Eagle County Government Town Governments</p> <hr/> <p>Colorado Department of Transportation/Federal Highways Administration Eagle County Government Town Governments</p>
<p>g. Eagle County should be adequately and efficiently served by mass transportation systems and facilities.</p>	<p>Identify and implement alternative transportation products and systems that meet the social, economic, and environmental goals of the community.</p>	<p>Colorado Department of Transportation/Federal Highways Administration Eagle County Transportation Authority and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority Eagle County Government Town Governments</p>

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	<p>Pursue local commuter rail opportunities.</p> <hr/> <p>Lobby state and federal transportation agencies to encourage more mass transportation funding.</p> <hr/> <p>Continue to enhance and modernize regional mass transit systems and services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ expanding routes</li> <li>▪ exploring a fair-free system to encourage ridership</li> <li>▪ exploring advanced payment options</li> <li>▪ developing appropriate land for transit facilities</li> <li>▪ developing appropriate land for park and rides</li> <li>▪ ensuring efficient connections</li> <li>▪ working cooperatively to purchase and maintain bus fleets.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p>Supplement regional bus systems with town and/or resort transit systems.</p>	<p>Colorado Department of Transportation/Federal Highways Administration</p> <p>Eagle County Transportation Authority and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority</p> <p>Eagle County Government</p> <p>Town Governments</p> <p>Adjacent County Governments</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Transportation Authority and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority</p> <p>Eagle County Government</p> <p>Town Governments</p> <p>Advocacy groups</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Transportation Authority and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority</p> <p>Eagle County Government</p> <p>Town Governments</p> <p>Adjoining County Governments</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Transportation Authority and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority</p> <p>Eagle County Government</p> <p>Town Governments</p>
<p>h. Eagle County's Regional Airport should continue to be the airport of choice for western-slope mountain and resort communities.</p>	<p>View the airport as a primary transit hub, and assure efficient connection to all transportation options.</p> <hr/> <p>Provide for the expansion of wide-body commercial jet service.</p> <hr/> <p>Plan for and fund airport safety and reliability improvements.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government</p> <p>Eagle County Transportation Authority and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority</p> <p>Transit oriented businesses</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Government</p> <p>Airline Operators</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Government</p> <p>Airline Operators</p>

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Continue to provide and enhance world-class traveler amenities.	Eagle County Government Airline Operators
	Refer to the <a href="#">Eagle County Airport Master Plan</a> for policies related to design, marketing, and operations.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Discourage development that would potentially interfere with future expansions of the Eagle County Airport	Eagle County Government Town of Gypsum Development Applicant
	Create incentives for locals to use the Eagle County Airport	Eagle County Government
i. Exemplary emergency and community services should be available to all residents, visitors and second home owners.	Refer all development proposals to potentially affected emergency and service providers for comment.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicant
	Require demonstration that all new developments will be adequately served by emergency and community services.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicant
	Work to develop a clear understanding of the impacts of growth on our social service infrastructure.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Work with local emergency and community service providers to assure expansion of services at a pace commensurate to growth.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Require the dedication of building sites for emergency and community service facilities within large development proposals.	Eagle County Government Service Providers Development Applicant
	Determine appropriate development exactions for smaller projects to off-set impacts to emergency service providers.	Eagle County Government Service Providers Development Industry Representatives Development Applicant
	Consider assessing development or home builder impact fees to support emergency service improvements.	Eagle County Government Service Providers Building Industry Representatives Development Applicant

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Utilize joint planning processes for the coordination of public education facilities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments School Districts Colleges
	Provide affordable opportunities for life-long learning to all Eagle County Residents.	Eagle County Government Town Governments School Districts Colleges Local Employers Private Institutions
	Work to attract new vocational and/or technical programs and schools to the area.	Eagle County Government Town Governments School Districts Colleges
	Work to attract a four-year college program to Eagle County.	Eagle County Government Town Governments School Districts Colleges
	Implement needed improvements on existing educational facilities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments School Districts Colleges Private Institutions
	Collaborate with all affected parties to locate appropriate sites for new educational facilities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers School Districts Colleges Development Applicant Private Institutions
	Support the reduction of health care costs for the benefit of county residents, local workers and Eagle County employers.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Assure that new public facilities include multi-use classrooms and lecture hall components to accommodate other educational and civic needs.	Eagle County Government Town Governments School Districts Colleges Development Applicant
	Continue to require school land dedication or cash in lieu of land as part of development approvals.	Eagle County Government School Districts Development Applicant
	Locate information on educational programs, curriculums, locations, fees, etc., on the County website and in other accessible areas.	Eagle County Government School Districts Colleges Private Institutions
	Work with medical providers to assure adequate number, location and type of facilities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Medical Providers Development Applicants
	Work with medical providers to gain a clear understanding of the costs and impacts to the community associated with not meeting the medical needs of the community.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Medical Providers
	Where appropriate, require new development to provide space for new medical services facilities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Medical Providers Development Applicants
	Work to attract highly qualified medical specialists and specialized practices to Eagle County.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Medical Providers
	Work to provide a full palette of affordable medical services to all County residents and visitors.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Medical Providers
	Update Eagle County Land Use Regulations to ensure they are consistent with state regulations regarding child care.	Eagle County Government Advocacy Groups

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Work to locate childcare facilities where they are most needed throughout Eagle County.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Homeowners Associations Advocacy Groups
	Work with childcare providers to gain a clear understanding of the costs and impacts associated with not meeting the needs of the community with regards to childcare.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Homeowners Associations Advocacy Groups
	Include childcare facilities within existing and future public facilities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Where appropriate, ensure that adequate childcare facilities and services are provided as part of any new development.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Encourage new commercial development to provide childcare as an amenity.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Consider quantifying childcare needs as a nexus for future impact fees.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Encourage businesses to provide childcare services for their employees or that incorporate other childcare strategies such as job-sharing, flextime, and extended maternity leave.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Business representatives
	Encourage the appropriate distribution of libraries throughout Eagle County.	Library Districts Eagle County Government Town Governments
j. The management and distribution of recreation areas and facilities should be implemented in an environmentally conscientious manner.	Provide adequate opportunities and facilities for hiking, walking, strolling, and running.	Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Eagle County Government Development Applicant Public Land Managers

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	<p>Work to retain and improve the quality of skiing and snowboarding experiences by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing adequate parking at ski/snowboard area resorts</li> <li>▪ Providing adequate mass transit options for both local and regional needs</li> <li>▪ Supporting ski area expansions so long as social, economic, environmental and infrastructure impacts are fully identified and mitigated</li> <li>▪ Requiring the monitoring and on-going mitigation of impacts created by ski areas and related activities</li> <li>▪ Encouraging affordable skiing and snowboarding opportunities for local residents</li> <li>▪ Supporting local and State winter tourism marketing programs</li> <li>▪ Supporting appropriate special events at local resort areas</li> <li>▪ Support affordable skiing and snowboarding programs for school age children</li> <li>▪ Consider and plan for the potential impacts from global warming.</li> </ul>	<p>Eagle County Government  Town Governments  Public Land Managers  Industry Representatives  School Districts</p>
	<p>Work to retain and improve the quality of snowshoeing, snowmobiling and Nordic skiing experiences by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing adequate parking and access to snowshoeing, snowmobiling and Nordic skiing sites</li> <li>▪ Providing education on backcountry safety</li> <li>▪ Adequately marking and maintaining trails used for snowshoeing, snowmobiling and Nordic skiing</li> <li>▪ Monitoring impacts to backcountry areas and applying appropriate management strategies</li> <li>▪ Working to lessen user conflicts by providing separate areas for motorized activities.</li> </ul>	<p>Eagle County Government  Town Governments  Public Land Managers  Industry Representatives  Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Support the expansion of high quality local hockey programs and facilities.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government  Town Governments  Advocacy Groups  School Districts</p>



Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	<p>Work to retain and improve the quality of golf experiences by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Considering the approval of new golf courses so long as social, economic, environmental and infrastructure impacts are fully identified and mitigated</li> <li>▪ Exploring public/private initiatives to create affordable public golf courses in Eagle County</li> <li>▪ Supporting affordable golf programs for school age children</li> <li>▪ Exploring the potential for negotiating/subsidizing low cost resident golf passes at specified private courses, particularly during non-peak seasons</li> <li>▪ Allowing the construction of well designed privacy berms on the perimeter of courses, so long as the quality of public and private view corridors are not compromised.</li> </ul>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Industry Representatives Homeowner Associations Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Work to retain and improve the quality of bicycling experiences by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supporting efforts of the Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities to provide and expand quality biking facilities</li> <li>▪ Supporting the efforts of public land managers to appropriately manage bicycling and related uses on public lands</li> <li>▪ Offering separate biking experiences to meet the diverse needs of different cycling groups</li> <li>▪ Providing adequately designed facilities with good marking and proper signage to make bicycling as safe as possible.</li> </ul>	<p>Trails Committees of the Roaring Fork Valley and the Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authorities Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Advocacy Groups</p>
	<p>Work to retain and improve the quality of water related recreational experiences by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preserving the environmental quality of local rivers, streams and lakes</li> <li>▪ Working to secure optimal in-stream flow levels (optimal reflects the needs of the river ecosystem and recreational /aesthetic needs)</li> <li>▪ Securing and developing appropriate river and lake access points and facilities</li> <li>▪ Promoting the distribution of public information on water related activities, river ethics, and river stewardship</li> <li>▪ Supporting the efforts of the Division of Wildlife and advocacy groups to monitor river use and minimize related impacts</li> <li>▪ Considering a permit system to control over exploitation of local river resources by commercial guides</li> <li>▪ Supporting and encourage fishery habitat improvements throughout the area</li> <li>▪ Approving well designed and managed whitewater parks, so long as social, economic, environmental and infrastructure impacts are fully identified and mitigated.</li> </ul>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Colorado Water Conservation Board Advocacy Groups Service Providers Special Interest Groups Colorado Division of Wildlife Development Applicant</p>

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Work to assure that there are adequate opportunities for outdoor activities such as picnicking car camping and backcountry camping	Eagle County Government Public Land Managers Advocacy Groups
	Encourage safe, eco-friendly mountaineering and rock climbing.	Eagle County Government Public Land Managers Advocacy Groups
	Maintain public roads used for back country access.	Eagle County Government Public Land Managers
	Where appropriate and considerate of the environment and other recreation users, provide high quality off-road motor sport opportunities.	Eagle County Government Public Land Managers Advocacy Groups
	Support the Eagle County Rodeo, and appropriately utilize the Eagle County Fair Grounds to support horse and livestock related activities.	Eagle County Government Advocacy Groups
	Maintain and enhance opportunities for public horse back riding and other equestrian activities, so long as impacts to trails and sensitive are appropriately mitigated.	Eagle County Government Public Land Managers
	Work to promote the economic and ecological benefits of hunting, and to maintain the quality of hunting experiences in Eagle County.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Advocacy Groups
	Support paragliding and hot air ballooning in suitable locations throughout Eagle County.	Eagle County Government Public Land Managers Private Property Owners
	<p>Work to retain and improve the quality of sightseeing and touring experiences by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implementing provisions of the Top of the Rockies Scenic and Historic Byway Corridor Management Plan</li> <li>▪ Developing a Corridor Management Plan for the Colorado River corridor</li> <li>▪ Identifying other routes through Eagle County that would be appropriate for Scenic and Historic Byway status</li> <li>▪ Developing pull-outs, sign kiosks and/or interpretive centers along scenic and historic byways, and along other scenic routes.</li> </ul>	Colorado Department of Transportation/Federal Highways Administration Eagle County Government Eagle County Historical Society Advocacy Groups Public Land Managers

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Promote the continued development of public field-sports facilities and court-sport facilities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Special Districts School District
	Promote the continued development of public pools and pool sports facilities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Special Districts
	Promote the continued development of public fitness facilities and encourage affordable rates for existing and future fitness facilities.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
k. Adequate and efficient infrastructure should exist within community centers and suburban neighborhoods for the delivery of domestic drinking water and for the treatment of domestic sewage.	Use House Bill 1041 powers to fully evaluate proposals for new water and sewer lines and proposals for new or expanded water or sewer treatment plants.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Districts Development Applicant
	Require the installation of water and sewer service infrastructure concurrent to development.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Districts Development Applicant
	Size domestic water and sewer lines appropriately in anticipation of future growth.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Districts Development Applicant
	Support efforts to modernize existing domestic water and sewage treatment systems.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Districts Development Applicant
	Avoid the proliferation of wastewater treatment facilities, and consolidate existing wastewater treatment facilities when practical.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Districts Development Applicant
l. Solid waste disposal in Eagle County should be efficiently and effectively managed.	Develop and participate in a regional management plan that collaboratively addresses the appropriate disposal of all types of solid waste.	Eagle County Government Local Town governments Other County and Town Governments

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Track potential threats to the long-term safety, accessibility, and capacity of the landfill.	Eagle County Government Public Land Managers
	Promote recycling, and provide incentives to encourage the reduction of solid waste output from both the public and private sector.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Implement variable rate or “pay as you throw” haul rates for residences and businesses.	Eagle County Government Local Town governments Advocacy Groups
	Collaborate and jointly fund a region-wide recycling program.	Eagle County Government Building Industry Representatives Advocacy Groups
	Locate and develop appropriate markets for reused materials.	Eagle County Government Building Industry Representatives Advocacy Groups
	Develop a construction reuse facility at the landfill	Eagle County Government Building Industry Representatives
	Explore biomass opportunities for the reuse of wood and other biological waste.	Eagle County Government Industry Representatives Advocacy Groups
m. Communication infrastructure should be sufficient to support all anticipated needs in Eagle County.	Pursue a public/private collaboration to develop a comprehensive telecommunications plan.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Economic Development Organizations Business Support Groups Major Industry Representatives
	Invest in technology and communication infrastructure upgrades for Eagle County.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Protect public safety and community aesthetics from degradation due to the installation of above-ground communications infrastructure.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Major Industry Representatives
	Work with Public Land Managers to site communication infrastructure on public property, so long and conservation values of the land are not compromised.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Major Industry Representatives

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Promote co-location of telecommunication facilities when possible.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Major Industry Representatives
n. The costs of providing community services and infrastructure should be fairly and equitably shared.	Perform a Cost of Community Services and Infrastructure Study.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Develop a Fiscal Impact Analysis tool that allows decision makers to factor fiscal impacts into their land use decisions.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Complete a detailed review of the cost of development, the revenue streams that are available, and pros/cons of additional impact fees.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Require that development pay a proportionally equitable share, and develop a county policy on development fees.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Require proof of adequate public facilities prior to development approval at the preliminary approval phase and again at the building permit stage.	Eagle County Government Development Applicants Special Districts
	Require detailed transportation analysis at the preliminary approval	Eagle County Government Development Applicants
o. The service and infrastructure needs of all socio-economic, age and cultural groups present in Eagle County should be fully addressed.	Identify and support the variety of services needed by a diverse population.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Advocacy Groups
	Encourage and support activities that foster integration and celebrate diversity.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Advocacy Groups
	Encourage a mix of accessible and affordable entertainment options.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Advocacy Groups

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Provide safe and convenient public transportation.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Eagle County Transportation Authority and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority Advocacy Groups
	Provide a diversity of housing choices and prices throughout the entire county.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Advocacy Groups Development Applicant
	Refer development proposals to advocates for each potentially impacted cultural group.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Cultural Organizations

## 3.6 Water Resources

---

### Goals:

- 1) **Source water in Eagle County is protected, and contributors of surface and ground water pollution are identified and eliminated to the fullest extent possible.**
- 2) **Sufficient domestic water is available to all developed areas so long as requirements for maintaining healthy natural riparian and aquatic ecosystems are being met.**

### 3.6.1 Background Information

The condition of Eagle County's streams, rivers and aquifers affect the economic, social, and environmental well being of the County. Winter snows and summer rains feed the regions numerous aquifers and drainages. Snow melt contributes the bulk of the water, and snowpack accumulations in the Gore and Sawatch Ranges are usually significant. It would seem, therefore, that the County would have ample water resources. However, downstream water demands on the Colorado River, headwater rights owned by front-range water users, significant seasonal fluctuations in stream flow, rapid urban and suburban development, wildlife needs and growing recreational needs have created complex water quantity and quality situations in Eagle County.

There is a growing concern among residents, especially given prospects of continuing growth and the reality of several recent dry years, that there may not be enough water to meet future demands. Management strategies related to this critical resource must continue to recognize the multitude of water interests, the need to protect sensitive environments and ecosystems and the potential economic impacts of decisions that impact water use.

Please refer to the following links to gain a better understanding of the issues related to Water Resources in Eagle County.

[Colorado Water Conservation Board](#)

[Colorado Division of Water Resources](#)

[The Colorado River Water Conservation District](#)

[Eagle County Watershed Information, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)

[Eagle River Watershed Retrospective Assessment Program](#)

[The Regional Water Quality Management Plan \(208 Plan\)](#)

[AWARE Colorado Water Protection Toolkit for Local Officials](#)

[Case Study 8: Collaborative Water Development in Colorado: The Eagle River Assembly](#)

### 3.6.2 Water Quantity

#### Policies:

- a. **The long term viability of both ground and surface water sources should be protected.**
- b. **Minimum in-stream flows should be maintained and efforts to establish optimum in-stream flow standards in Eagle County should be supported.**
- c. **Water conservation efforts by all water users in Eagle County should be implemented.**
- d. **New water diversions and water storage projects should result in positive impacts to Eagle County's economy and environmental quality.**

**e. Collaborative efforts on regional land and water use planning efforts to address future growth, water supply, and stream flow protection should be encouraged.**

**Water Use**

In the arid west, water quantity is one of the most important considerations for growth. Western states all compete for a limited water supply. Where ample water and water rights exist, communities, agriculture, and more recently, recreation have flourished. While water rights and out-of-basin diversions to the Front Range have been issues in Eagle County for many years, there are now questions regarding the ability of Eagle County streams and aquifers to adequately support future local demands for water, which include the need to keep water in natural channels for recreation and for the maintenance of aquatic and riparian ecosystems.

Some of the water In Eagle County is diverted from the streams and transported out-of-basin for use east of the continental divide, where it supports agriculture or domestic uses. These uses are considered 100% consumptive, since no water is returned to the stream or river from which it originated. Approximately 87,000 acre-feet of water is transported from Eagle County watersheds to the Front Range each year.

In-basin water use does not send water to another drainage, and typically returns some portion of the water back to the stream from which it was diverted. Water can be returned as overland flow, ground water seepage or discharges from domestic sewage treatment plants. Agricultural users in Eagle County, for example, take water out at established head gates, transport it through a system of ditches and release it at selected points to “flood irrigate” fields and pastures. Up to 50 percent of this water eventually returns to the stream, either as direct overland flow or as bank discharge from ground-water aquifers, which are slowly filled by the same flood irrigation. The rest is lost to surface evaporation and evapo-transpiration by plants and trees. Agricultural uses can benefit stream flows, since returns from charged aquifers usually occur during the late summer and winter months when natural stream flows are lowest.

Golf courses also divert water for irrigation. They are considered 100% consumptive because there is typically no measurable return flow. Efficiency is the name of the game, and only that amount of water needed to keep the grass healthy is applied through automated sprinkler systems and state of the art management techniques.

Domestic water suppliers take water out of the stream, treat it, distribute it to homes and businesses, and then treat it again downstream at a wastewater treatment facility before returning it to the channel. While some water is lost, approximately 90 percent is returned (domestic use is considered 10% consumptive). Unlike agriculture, domestic uses continue through the winter when stream flows are at their lowest. In Eagle County some of the highest domestic diversions occur in the winter when lodges and ski slopes swell with tourists. High diversions equate to significant amounts of treated sewage being returned, and water quality and aesthetic quality in the river downstream from sewer treatment plants can be negatively impacted.

Snowmaking also takes water from the river in the early winter when natural flows are lowest. Approximately 20 percent of snowmaking water is lost to evaporation. The rest is returned to the channel as snow melt the following spring.

There are many entities within Eagle County that are involved with water treatment and distribution. Incorporated towns generally own a portfolio of water rights and operate their own systems. Many other water management entities have been created to serve unincorporated areas through the years (listed below), most in response to specific land development projects. Each maintains their own set of water rights.

- |                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| *Arrowhead Metropolitan District    | Lake Creek Meadows Water District |
| *Beaver Creek Metropolitan District | Cordillera Metropolitan District  |
| *Berry Creek Metropolitan District  | Smith Creek Metropolitan District |



*Eagle-Vail Metropolitan District	Squaw Creek Metropolitan District
*Edwards Metropolitan District	Eagle River Water and Sanitation District
Bellyache Ridge Metropolitan District	Mid-Valley Metropolitan Water and Sanitation District
Holland Creek Metropolitan District	Two Rivers Metropolitan District

In 1984, the Upper Eagle Regional Water Authority (UERWA) was formed to consolidate the resources of six (6) separate water districts (those indicated with an \* plus the Town of Avon), and to provide better management and water development services. The Town and the five metro districts lease their water rights to the UERWA, which utilizes the ten million gallon-a-day surface water treatment plant located in Avon as its primary source of water.

Eagle County supports the consolidation of special water service districts whenever it is found to be in the public's best interest.

### **Water Rights**

The use of surface and ground water in Colorado is based on the prior appropriation system, which allows users to divert, store or otherwise capture or control water based on adjudicated water rights. This system of allocation rests on the premise that water can be moved from where it is found and put to beneficial use where it is needed. Water rights specify a quantity of water, a priority date (the year the right was decreed), and a season within which the water can be diverted for use. Those who have diverted and applied a portion of available stream flow to a beneficial use first in time have rights to the water that are more senior to those who have diverted and used water at a later date (a more "junior" right); thus the saying "first in time, first in right". Water rights in Colorado are decreed by the State water courts and are administered by the office of the State Engineer in the Division of Water Resources.

Only previously unappropriated water in a stream or river is available for new diversion rights. The difficulty arises when one tries to quantify and allocate ownership to a resource as variable as water in a natural stream where flows fluctuate considerably through the year. Indeed, given the recent drought, Coloradoans are now acutely aware of the considerable changes in stream flows that are possible from one year to the next. The amount of snow, the rate that it melts, the type and amount of summer rainfall, daily temperatures and evaporation rates, the status of ground water aquifers - all affect the amount of water available at any one time in a stream or river. Some water experts are now saying that water rights established over the past 100 years were based on measurements taken during an unusually wet global weather cycle, and that the amount of annual water yield available in the West has been considerably over-estimated.

The inability to truly quantify stream flows has resulted in many rivers in Colorado being "over appropriated", that is to say, more water rights have been allocated on paper than there is "wet" water in the system. When stream flows begin to drop, and the owners of senior rights begin falling short of their allocation, a "call" is made, and state authorities notify up-stream junior right diversions that they must stop removing water in order to maintain down-stream senior uses.

Water rights in Eagle County are owned by people, agencies, municipalities and water districts. Given the area's agricultural history, many rights are quite senior, with priority dates established in the late 1800's and early 1900's. These rights, when converted from agricultural use to domestic use, retain their seniority. However, only that amount of water that can be shown to have been put to beneficial use historically may be carried forward to the new use, and it may only be carried forward for that time of the year when it was historically used.

During the spring runoff, a great deal of water that is not appropriated flows through the local streams and rivers. Reservoirs can catch and store this water, which can then be released back to the stream under contract during low flow months to supply out-of-priority consumptive uses, or to off-set low-flow impacts. This is referred to as "augmentation". Given the over appropriated nature of our streams and rivers, any land use proposal in Eagle County today that requires water for which a water right does not

currently exist must purchase water rights and receive an approved “augmentation plan” through the water courts.

Augmentation plans are designed in consideration of the water demands (or calls) of senior downstream users. Water purchased for augmentation need not originate on the same river from which the water is being diverted. Eagle County provides a good example of this. The most senior downstream users relative to diversions on the Eagle River are the Shoshone Dam in Glenwood Canyon and the Cameo irrigation headgate in Grand Junction. These users are both located on the Colorado River. As a result, an owner in Eagle County may divert water from the Eagle River, and augment or replace the amount diverted with water purchased from a reservoir located on the Colorado, like Green Mountain Reservoir located north of Silverthorne in Summit County. Water diverted is not replaced in the stream of origin, but downstream water rights are being satisfied. In theory, this option for out-of-basin augmentation could remove all water from a local stream below the point of diversion without a violation of water law. Augmentation plans involving releases from Green Mountain Reservoir are common in Eagle County, which became a serious problem for some local water users in the summer of 2002 when Green Mountain Reservoir ran out of water.

An adequate supply of water is essential for the people of Eagle County, and both ground and surface water sources should be protected. Additional out-of-basin diversions should be discouraged, and proposals for new development should include proof of adequate water for all proposed uses. Water providers should be held accountable to assure the use of the most current data regarding the amount of water that is physically available for domestic use in the County. Water conservation measures should be encouraged for agricultural uses and should be required for all new residential and commercial developments. Improved conservation in all existing developments is important as well, and the County should work with Town governments, water providers and homeowners associations to improve related policies, guidelines and/or regulations.

### **In-stream Flow Rights**

Historically in Colorado, the only way water could be put to beneficial use was to divert it from the stream. Unfortunately, when flows drop water temperatures rise, dissolved oxygen levels drop and contaminants become more concentrated. Fish and invertebrates become stressed and in some cases are not able to survive. More recently, the numerous benefits of leaving water in its natural channel have been acknowledged, and the Colorado Legislature has established rules that now allow the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to file for in-stream water rights, which it has done on many of Eagle County’s streams and rivers (reference the [Streamflow Monitoring Status Map](#)). In-stream rights are based on calculated minimum stream flow requirements, and are intended to reasonably protect the integrity of the natural environment.

Colorado also has a recent statute that allows cities, counties and water districts to obtain water rights for recreational in-channel diversions (RICD) for uses such as boating and kayaking.

### **In-Stream Deficits**

The highest flows in the Eagle River occur during May, June and July in response to melting snowpack. Peak flows can range from 1,200 to 4,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). About 75% of the river’s annual flow travels through the river system during this three month period. The river drops considerably during the months of July and August, when flows generally level off at 100 to 200 cfs (as measured at Gypsum). Through the remainder of the summer flows continue to drop, and can reach levels below 50 cfs during winter months. These are the times when rivers are most susceptible to impacts from additional diversions and pollution. The Roaring Fork River is somewhat larger, but displays similar seasonal fluctuations as it flows through Basalt and El Jebel.

There is some concern that the minimum stream flows that have been established for local streams are actually not sufficient to maintain ecosystem integrity of the natural river system. The fact that the Colorado Division of Wildlife has recorded fish kills when flows in the Eagle River have been greater than minimum flow standards is indicative of a potential problem. A possible solution would be to

## Stream Flow Monitoring Status Map

establish optimum flow levels that recognize the importance of maintaining the natural seasonal variability of flows to preserve the overall ecological function of the river systems.

It is estimated by the Eagle River Assembly Report of 2001 that to currently assure the maintenance of minimum stream flows during low flow periods, an additional 3,300 to 4,000 acre feet of water needs to be stored for augmentation upstream within the Eagle River watershed. The same report estimates that 5,200 to 6,500 acre feet may be needed to address future deficits as the county continues to grow.

### **Existing Water Storage Facilities**

Dams and reservoirs are typically constructed in Colorado to capture spring runoff for augmentation and to provide opportunities for flat-water recreation. Major water storage facilities in the Colorado River Basin include:

- Green Mountain Reservoir: Owned and operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, Green Mountain Reservoir is located on the Blue River approximately twelve miles southeast of Kremmling. Constructed between 1938 and 1943, the reservoir provides compensatory storage to West Slope residents for water diverted to the East Slope via the Colorado-Big Thompson Project. There are significant augmentation plans in Eagle County that rely on Green Mountain Reservoir releases.
- Wolford Mountain Reservoir: Owned and operated by the Colorado River District and Denver Water Board, Wolford Mountain Reservoir benefits both western Colorado and the Eastern Slope, which through contract is allowed to use up to 40% of the stored water. Several more recent Eagle County augmentation plans include water from the Wolford Mountain Reservoir.
- Williams Fork Reservoir: Completed in 1959 and owned and operated by the Denver Water Board, Williams Fork Dam & Power Plant generates electricity and provides both the Western Slope and Denver with stored water.
- Lake Granby Reservoir: Lake Granby is the largest storage reservoir in the Colorado-Big Thompson Project and the second largest in the state. Only Blue Mesa in southwestern Colorado is larger. Water from the reservoir flows through the Alva B. Adams Tunnel to supply users on the Front Range.
- Shadow Mountain Reservoir: Located strategically between Lake Granby and Grand Lake, Shadow Mountain Reservoir receives water from the North Fork of the Colorado River and water pumped from Lake Granby. Shadow Mountain acts as a regulating reservoir to help maintain a constant surface elevation in Grand Lake - which by law can fluctuate no more than one vertical foot while water is diverted through the Alva B. Adams Tunnel.
- Willow Creek Reservoir: Willow Creek Reservoir, Lake Granby, Shadow Mountain Reservoir, and Grand Lake function as a "water savings account" for the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District's West Slope collection system. Willow Creek Reservoir captures snowmelt runoff within the Willow Creek basin. The water is pumped to Lake Granby for delivery through the Colorado-Big Thompson Project.
- Windy Gap Reservoir: Located just west of the town of Granby on Colorado's West Slope, the project consists of a diversion dam on the Colorado River, a 445-acre-foot reservoir, a pumping plant, and a six-mile pipeline to Lake Granby.
- Dillon Reservoir: Completed in September 1963, Dillon Reservoir is the largest water storage facility in the Denver Water system. The project diverts water from the Blue River Basin through the Harold D. Roberts Tunnel under the Continental Divide into the South Platte River Basin.

There are six water storage facilities in the Eagle River Basin, which supply a limited amount of in-basin augmentation to the Eagle River.

- Homestake Reservoir: The largest reservoir is Homestake Reservoir, which is located on Homestake Creek southwest of Red Cliff. Homestake Reservoir delivers approximately 28,000 acre feet per year via the Arkansas River to the cities of Aurora and Colorado Springs. Recently, a three-year agreement was signed between Aurora and a group of local water

provider districts that allows for the release of 300 acre feet of water from the reservoir to augment flows in the Eagle River during low flow events.

- Eagle Park and Robinson Reservoir, which together have a 6,000 acre foot capacity, are located on the east fork of the Eagle near the Climax Molybdenum Mine. These reservoirs can also augment flows in the Eagle River.
- Black Lakes: Black Lakes are enlarged natural lakes located on the west side of Vail Pass. Constructed by the Colorado Division of Wildlife, these small lakes are popular for recreation and augment flows in the Eagle River via Black Gore Creek.
- Nottingham Lake: Nottingham Lake is located within the Town of Avon and has a 100 acre feet storage capacity. The major use of the lake is recreation.
- Sylvan Lake: In November of 1994, the Town of Eagle and the Colorado Department of Natural Resources signed an agreement to utilize Sylvan Lake in Sylvan Lake State Park above Eagle to provide storage for the Town of Eagle. Sylvan Lake holds 511 acre feet.
- Lede Reservoir: This is a small private reservoir on United States Forest Service land south of Gypsum. It was constructed for agricultural uses but some water is leased to Gypsum.

Roaring Fork River Basin water storage facilities include:

- Ruedi Reservoir: Owned and operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, this reservoir was built in the early 1940s as part of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, which makes possible an average annual diversion of 69,200 acre-feet of water from the Fryingpan River to the Arkansas River basin on the eastern slope. Water from Ruedi Reservoir also augments flows in the Roaring Fork River.
- Spring Park Reservoir: This reservoir is located on Cattle Creek above the community center of El Jebel, and provides irrigation water to surrounding agricultural properties.
- Twin Mountain System: Located in Pitkin County, at the head of the Roaring Fork River, this system diverts almost half of the upper Roaring Fork streamflow to the Arkansas River basin.

Future growth will bring increased demands for water in Eagle County, and the pressure to construct additional storage for augmentation will increase. Positive impacts from additional storage include increased recreational opportunities, and the ability to maintain minimum stream flows and aquatic environments downstream from the reservoir during low flow periods. Negative impacts include the flooding of stream and river ecosystems and wildlife habitat, and the reduction of spring runoff volumes, which flush accumulated sediments and contaminants from stream channels, and which support rafting and kayaking, a growing sector of the local economy.

New water storage projects in Eagle County should promote the most beneficial and efficient use of water resources, and Eagle County Government should oppose water diversions that adversely affect Eagle County's population, economy, or environmental quality. Storage projects should be located in areas where the project causes the least possible damage to wetlands and wildlife habitat. Future water demands, the creation or loss of recreation opportunities, and impacts on stream water quality and aquatic habitats throughout the region should all be carefully evaluated in the planning process.

Both agricultural and domestic uses create significant depletions in the stream channel between the point where the water is diverted and the point where it is returned. The Eagle River Watershed Council is currently involved in the Edwards Eagle River Project, a program intended to improve the 1.5-mile section of the Eagle River between the domestic diversion point in Edwards and the sewage treatment facility at Squaw Creek. This river section currently suffers from low flows, shallow gradients and cross sections, accumulated sediments and disturbed river banks.

The relationships between water use, water diversions, return flows and river impacts should continue to be carefully considered in all future water use and delivery system plans.

Eagle County Government needs to support efforts to provide better information regarding water supply, optimum stream flows, and future demand, and should work with other governing entities to develop coordinated policies regarding the same. Additional biological monitoring is needed to

determine the relationship between water quantity, water quality and the health of the region's streams and rivers.

### 3.6.3 Water Quality

#### Policies:

- f. Water quality in Eagle County should meet the highest applicable standards.**
- g. Surface and groundwater supplies should be protected from agricultural, industrial and development related impacts.**

Water quality in Eagle County's rivers and their tributaries generally meets or exceeds state water quality standards for agricultural and domestic uses, recreation and the protection of aquatic life. Most of the development in Eagle County occurs in close proximity to water features, however, and water quality continues to be negatively impacted by agricultural practices, construction activities, mining, road sanding, storm water runoff, and treatment plant discharge. As local watersheds become more developed, the implementation of specific actions to protect water quality are increasingly important.

For a complete list of active drinking water sources in Eagle County, refer to the [Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Information System \(SDWIS\)](#).

#### **Existing and Potential Water Quality Issues**

High metal concentrations as a result of historic mining operations at Gilman have been a problem on the upper Eagle River for decades. Since the late 1800's, workers at the Eagle Mine excavated tunnels under Gilman in search for gold, silver, zinc and lead. Ores were processed on site, and through the years over 8 million tons of mine waste was deposited on the slopes around Gilman and in large tailings ponds south of Minturn. High levels of arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, manganese and zinc infiltrated the soil, contaminating both ground and surface runoff water. Fish were unable to survive, and rocks along and within the Eagle River from Gilman to Gore Creek turned bright orange from the oxidized metals in the water.

The mine ceased operations in 1984, and in 1986 the United States Environmental Protection Agency placed the site on its National Priorities (Superfund) List. In 1988, the EPA, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and the mine owner, Viacom International, Inc, implemented an extensive cleanup program, which continues today. Although metal concentrations in the Eagle River downstream of the Eagle Mine have significantly improved, fish and aquatic insects are still impacted by mine discharges. Eagle County should continue to support monitoring and cleanup operations at the Eagle Mine.

In-stream sediments reduce habitat by filling pools and by smothering gravel zones where aquatic insects live and where fish eggs incubate. Suspended solids can also result in elevated water temperatures, and can increase costs to treat water for domestic consumption. Fishing success is greatly reduced in waters clouded by sediments, and the overall aesthetic quality of a stream or river is negatively impacted.

With the exception of infrequent bank failures or mud slides, few natural contributors of sediment exist in the upper Eagle River and Roaring Fork River drainages where water historically ran clear, even during the spring runoff. Muddy water in the upper reaches of these rivers can almost always be traced to road ditches, construction sites, livestock pens or grazing areas or other sites disturbed by human activities. Further downstream, sediment from natural sources is more common. On the Eagle River, a significant source of natural sediment is found where Milk Creek, Alkali Creek, and Ute Creek basins drain areas of highly erosive and poorly vegetated clay soils. It is estimated that this region contributes up to 2,600 tons of sediment and salt to the Colorado River Basin each year. Spring snow melt and summer rain storms often result in the Eagle River running muddy below its confluence with these three streams.

Since the construction of I-70 over Vail Pass, sediments from traction sanding have significantly impacted fish habitat in Black Gore Creek. Efforts have recently been undertaken by CDOT to try to capture this sand before it leaves the road right of way. Once in the waterway, sand migrates downstream each year, and it is feared that sand could begin to effect water quality in Gore Creek, a Gold Medal fishery. A study conducted by the United States Geologic Survey titled [\*Gore Creek Watershed, Colorado—Assessment of Historical and Current Water Quantity, Water Quality, and Aquatic Ecology, 1968-98\*](#), discussed the potential impacts from sand, and indicated certain other water quality and stream biota impacts from development on that once pristine mountain stream.

Similar issues regarding sediment pollution exist on the Roaring Fork side of the County, where water pollution of any kind is a serious issue in the internationally renowned Gold Medal waters of both the Roaring Fork and the Frying Pan Rivers.

In general, nutrient concentrations in Eagle County streams and rivers are well within established standards. Nutrients like ammonia, phosphorus, nitrate and sulfate are important in a natural stream, as they support the growth of the algae and aquatic vegetation fed on by aquatic insects. Fish in turn feed on these insects. Nutrient concentrations that are too high can be damaging, however, as too much plant growth can reduce habitat and deplete dissolved oxygen levels in the water.

Agricultural uses can be a common source of nutrients in a stream, but hay fields and pastures in Eagle County are rarely fertilized. Instead, urban development, runoff from golf courses and residential areas, infiltration from Individual Sewage Disposal Systems (ISDS) and effluent from domestic sewage treatment plants are the primary sources of excessive nutrients in local rivers.

Other pollutants like metals, petroleum products, and pesticides can enter the aquatic environment from urban land uses through storm water runoff. Metal pollutants in storm water include zinc, cadmium, chromium, copper, nickel, and lead. It is estimated that approximately 1,700 pounds of zinc enter Gore Creek from the Vail area each year (the non-urban “background” contribution was 12 pounds). These stormwater metals are generally toxic to invertebrates and fish, and come mainly from vehicles, litter and other development related sources.

Eagle County Government incorporates appropriate stormwater management concepts into the land use review and approval process. To protect the quality of the water in Eagle County’s streams, best management practices should be followed. These practices are outlined in the following documents:

[Public Education and Outreach Minimum Control Measure \(EPA Fact Sheet 2.3\)](#)

[Public Participation/Involvement Minimum Control Measures \(EPA Fact Sheet 2.4\)](#)

[Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Minimum Control Measure \(EPA Fact Sheet 2.5\)](#)

[Construction Site Runoff Control Minimum Control Measure \(EPA Fact Sheet 2.6\)](#)

[Post Construction Runoff Control Minimum Control Measure \(EPA Fact Sheet 2.7\)](#)

[Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping Minimum Control Measure \(EPA Fact Sheet 2.8\)](#)

[Northwest Council of Governments 208 Water Quality Management Plan](#)

Water temperature is a critical component of a cold water aquatic ecosystem, where temperatures should remain below 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Sedimentation, the removal of stream bank vegetation that provides shade and low-flow events during warm times of the year can all contribute to the rise of water temperature in a stream. Warmer water holds more contaminants but less dissolved oxygen, and fish become stressed and susceptible to disease. The Colorado Division of Wildlife has documented fish kills in the lower stretches of the Eagle River, from Edwards to Wolcott, and from Eagle to Gypsum, as a result of increased water temperature and poor water quality.

Extended periods of low flow compound a multitude of issues. Insect populations decline as wetted surface areas decrease. Stream-bank vegetation begins to encroach upon and constrict the channel, reducing its ability to efficiently convey flood events. In Eagle County, low flows coincide with significant domestic diversions as winter tourists arrive. Outflow rates from sewage plants increase, and the ability of wastewater treatment facilities to meet State water quality standards becomes difficult

as the dilution capacity of the natural stream diminishes. One potentially negative impact from resort and urban development is that at certain times of the year a significant percentage of the water that flows in the Eagle and Roaring Fork Rivers is actually treated sewage effluent.

The quality of Eagle County's ground water aquifers is vulnerable to activities and stream flows on the surface. A Groundwater Sensitivity and Vulnerability Assessment was initiated in 2002 to establish the relationship between surface water and ground water in the Eagle River watershed. Data will be used to track ground water movement, and to determine real and potential impacts from both point source and non-point sources of contamination. This should result in improved education of the public and more informed decision making by local officials. Ground water sampling is not uniform throughout the area, however, and more sampling points are needed.

Eagle County Government needs to bring other governing entities, watershed groups, and special interests together to work towards better and more coordinated water quality controls and monitoring for both ground and surface water. Enforcing provisions for storm water and erosion control, maintaining healthy riparian and stream buffer areas, installing road sand collection systems and requiring prompt revegetation of all disturbed areas can greatly reduce sediment and contaminant loads in local streams. Allowing high spring runoff flows to flush local streams should be a high priority, and minimum stream flow or optimum stream flow requirements should be met at all times.

### 3.6.4 River and Riparian Habitat

#### Policies:

#### **h. Aquatic and riparian habitats should be protected from agricultural, industrial and development related impacts.**

The area influenced by the high water table, including the banks of rivers and the adjacent vegetation, is defined as "riparian". Riparian ecosystems constitute one of the most limited (in terms of land area covered) yet species-rich ecosystems in Colorado. Healthy riparian areas support a variety of unique plant species, recharge ground water aquifers, prevent stream bank erosion, diminish flood impacts and provide valuable wildlife habitat.

In Eagle County an inventory has shown that at least 250 wildlife species are currently residing in or utilizing the riparian areas. These areas provide migration corridors, calving areas and sites for breeding, nesting, and fawning. Some species of wildlife use the riparian area year-round while other wildlife may use the area only seasonally. Great Blue Herons rear their young, and Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles and many other raptors use riparian habitats for wintering, roosting, and hunting areas. Elk and deer usually calve and fawn within 400 feet of free flowing water. A complete list of wildlife using the watershed riparian areas is available at the web site for the [Division of Wildlife](#).

Riparian areas are important for maintaining the kind of water quality required for aquatic insects and trout. Eagle County has several Gold Medal Fisheries, which depend on riparian areas to sustain their quality. Gore Creek, the Fryingpan River, and the Roaring Fork River are all designated by the [Colorado Wildlife Commission](#) as Gold Medal fisheries. The Eagle River is a good cold-water fishery but for reasons discussed earlier it is not considered a great fishery - yet.

#### **Riparian Habitat Loss and Degradation**

Development, roads, industry, agriculture, and recreation all contribute to the loss of riparian and floodplain areas. The Colorado Division of Wildlife estimates that in Eagle County, up to 50 percent of deer winter range has been eliminated since ski resort activity began. Proposed but as yet unbuilt development would likely bring the total habitat loss to 60%. Much of this lost habitat has been adjacent to the rivers and streams, where transportation improvements and utility corridors make



construction most feasible. Housing developments are often found directly adjacent to riparian areas, as these sites are easy to access and are valued for their aesthetics.

Industry in the form of mining and manufacturing has also affected the quality of local riparian systems. As previously discussed, The Eagle Mine in Gilman continues to be a source of heavy metal discharge into the river, although clean up work has improved the situation immensely. Agricultural water use can at times severely deplete the river's tributaries by diversions for irrigation. Livestock use riparian areas for feeding, resting, and as travel lanes, and in the process can severely degrade riparian soils and vegetation.

Riparian areas can also provide sites for quality recreational experiences and activities. Recreation impacts may be more subtle and less understood but includes littering, soil compaction, loss of vegetative cover, recreation site development that results in loss of habitat, the disruption and harassment of wildlife, and human waste disposal.

Eagle County Government should work with other governing entities to continue to protect riparian areas and maintain or enhance the related habitats for wildlife and fish.

### 3.6.5 River Recreation

#### Policies:

- i. **Water-related recreation should be encouraged where appropriate at a level that will not damage related resources, ecosystems and environments.**

Eagle County's streams support a wide range of recreational opportunities and the number of residents and visitors taking advantage of these opportunities increases each year. Eagle County has become a premier year round resort area, as well as an increasingly desirable place to live for those who pursue active lifestyles. The major rivers such as the Colorado, Eagle, Fryingpan and Roaring Fork experience the most use, and provide "close to home" recreation options for residents, business opportunities for fishing and boating companies, and a range of activities for the visitor to choose from.

Fishing, rafting, and kayaking are the most popular activities on the rivers. It is important to also note the contribution streams and rivers make to early season skiing by supplying water for snowmaking. Activities such as hiking, biking, wildlife watching, camping, hunting, golf, rock climbing, picnicking, four-wheeling, horseback riding, and berry picking are all enhanced by the presence of streams and riparian areas.

#### **Use Levels and Quality of Experience**

Overuse of river environments by recreationists is one of the primary environmental issues facing Eagle County. At community meetings, most people indicated that they felt the rivers are not too crowded yet, but that they have the potential to be in the future. With sound management and the determination of an appropriate "carrying capacity", the types of problems facing other heavily used rivers in Colorado can be avoided. Carrying capacity is defined as "*the number (amount) and type of use an area can accommodate without altering either the environment or the user's experience beyond a degree of change deemed acceptable by the management objective.*" It should be noted that the public has also indicated concern for potential "over-regulation" which might result in fees or restrictions for recreational uses. A careful balance of monitoring, management and education should be the goal.

In a place like Eagle County, the feeling and perception of solitude can be an essential aspect of a quality recreational experience. This is particularly true for fishing, hiking, wildlife viewing, rafting, and kayaking. The Eagle River corridor from Minturn to Gypsum is becoming increasingly urban, particularly in the Vail-Avon-Edwards area. The area near the confluence of the Fryingpan and Roaring Fork Rivers is also rapidly urbanizing. Most riparian areas located away from the urbanizing areas are

in private ownership. As a result, the limited riparian areas easily accessed on public lands tend to be overused.

Conflicts between recreational uses along the river are limited at this time, especially since most rafting and kayaking occurs in the early summer when the river is too high for good fishing. Inevitably, though, as use by all recreational activities increases, so does the potential for conflicts. Eagle County Government should participate with other governmental agencies, watershed groups, and special interests to determine recreational carrying capacity or limits of acceptable change.

### **Appropriate Public Access**

As stated above, much of land adjacent to those streams and rivers large enough to generate demand for water related recreation is privately owned, and overuse and crowding can occur on the limited number of public access points currently available. Public access and boating use of the rivers may also become a larger issue in the future as “right to float” court cases are determined and further legislation and court actions affect recreational in channel diversions (RICD’s) for kayak parks. Commercial operations that profit through access and use of local rivers should be held accountable for related river use impacts. Their activities should be monitored by an appropriate agency, and they should be required to contribute to efforts to provide and maintain facilities at popular put-in and take-out points.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife provides fishing access to some significant stretches of river frontage through leases with private land owners, but the leases are not in perpetuity, and there is no guarantee that these areas will remain available to the public in the future. Improving existing access sites or creating new ones where appropriate and possible should be considered. Eagle County Government should participate with other governmental agencies, watershed groups and special interests to review, maintain, and improve fishing and boating access and the distribution of related regulations and information.

### **Economic Impacts of Water and Riparian Area Dependant Recreation**

In 1991, the Colorado River Outfitters Association (CROA) conducted a study of the economic impact of river-oriented recreation: [Commercial River Use in Colorado 2003 Year End Report](#). The study estimates that each person per raft day spent \$98 on average. The multiplier effect (the number of times a dollar is spent in the local area before being spent outside that area) elevates the economic value to \$250 per person per raft day. This number includes secondary economic benefits from lodging, transportation, clothing, and dining. The following chart provides a summary of economic value to the area:

<b>River Segment</b>	<b>Value to Economy 2003</b>
Colorado – Upper:	\$10,276,161
Eagle – Upper:	\$288,606
Eagle – Lower:	\$310,132
Roaring Fork – Upper:	\$500,617
Roaring Fork – Lower:	\$125,154
Total:	\$11,500,670

Using the above figures, approximately \$11,500,000 was spent by people rafting in Eagle County in 2003. Rafting revenues statewide have been growing at an average 9.6 percent per year. Eagle

County stands to benefit from this trend, as it has or is close to some of the most popular commercial river runs in the state.

Similarly, the Colorado Division of Wildlife estimated sportsman expenditures on hunting, fishing and wildlife watching in 2002 statewide to be \$845,300,000 with a total economic impact of \$1.5 billion. Eagle County received a sizable portion of those dollars. The study titled [Economic Impacts of Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife Watching in Colorado](#) estimated total economic benefits in Eagle County of \$57,800,000. Fishing represents about 46% of this amount.

An assessment from the Roaring Fork Conservancy, [Fryingpan Valley Economic Study 2002](#), indicates that fishing at Ruedi Reservoir and the Fryingpan River brings \$1,799,631 into the economies of El Jebel and Basalt and \$3,922,161 into the greater Roaring Fork Valley.

Eagle County should work with all involved agencies, governments, businesses and special interest groups to provide appropriate access to rivers and streams, monitor impacts and environmental conditions, and preserve and protect the quality riparian areas, spring runoff events, and aquatic ecosystems that support such an important segment of the local economy.

### 3.6.6 Land Use near Streams and Rivers

#### Policies:

#### **j. A comprehensive approach to watershed planning and decision-making should be utilized.**

Communities are typically located adjacent to waterways where transportation, water, and utilities are most available and where the land is typically easiest to develop. In Eagle County, all of the towns and community centers are located along streams. Patterns of land use in Eagle County have major implications to the overall health and condition of the watersheds. Local and regional land uses have affected:

1. The quantity of water due to residential, commercial and industrial development demands, both in basin and out-of-basin;
2. The quality of water through additions of sediment, chemicals and organic substances to the water from point sources like mines and treatment plants and non-point sources like urban runoff;
3. The ability for ground water recharge since impervious surfaces quickly funnel storm water back to streams instead of allowing it to seep into the ground;
4. Wildlife habitat that is adjacent to water features, and wildlife access to water sources;
5. Recreational opportunities that depend on a minimum quantity and/or a minimum quality of water, adequate access and solitude; and
6. The aesthetic quality of local water features which are often obscured or degraded by land disturbance and development

#### **Common Goals but Inconsistent Regulations**

Towns and County governments have each responded differently to the need to protect the river and its associated riparian environments as demonstrated by the nature and type of adjacent land uses that have been permitted. As an example, different communities have different standards for set backs from the high water mark. More and more now, the river is seen as a community asset, and attention is increasingly focused on how to both protect it from further damage, and to incorporate it into public spaces for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. Eagle County Government needs to work with other governmental agencies to coordinate and improve watershed planning and other planning activities.

A lack of knowledge regarding the areas best suited for groundwater recharge, which are often associated with deposits of river and glacial alluvium along valley floors, has left decision makers with little guidance regarding the protection of drinking water sources. Land planners, developers, and decision makers should carefully evaluate future proposals to make sure that impacts to potential groundwater recharge areas are fully mitigated.

### 3.6.7 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for Water Resources

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
<p>a. Protect the long term viability of both ground and surface water sources.</p>	<p>Oppose additional out-of-basin diversions.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups</p>
	<p>Require developers to demonstrate that a legal and physical water supply exists for their development</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Use a standard of extended drought conditions to determine the viability of the physical water supply proposed for a new development.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Utilize current water quantity information in all development applications and planning reviews.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Hold water providers accountable to assure the use of most current data when determining water availability.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers</p>
	<p>Promote water conservation.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Advocacy Groups</p>
	<p>Protect source water areas and reduce the potential for source water contamination.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Use pervious surfaces instead of impermeable surfaces when possible.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	<p>Dispose of hazardous materials properly and keep all potential pollutants away from streams and groundwater recharge areas.</p> <hr/> <p>Continue to track the data related to stream flows, precipitation, water rights, ground water aquifers, agricultural use, domestic water consumption, etc.</p> <hr/> <p>Support the use of state of the art technology and methodologies in tracking water quantity data.</p> <hr/> <p>Ensure that development does not adversely affect the recharge of groundwater resources.</p> <hr/> <p>Consider the creation and implementation of a wellhead protection program.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Residents Business owners Industry Representatives Colorado State Health Department</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Public Land Managers</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicants</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers</p>
<p>b. Minimum in-stream flows should be maintained and efforts to establish optimum in-stream flow standards in Eagle County should be supported.</p>	<p>Establish a cooperative effort to determine optimal in-stream flows (eg. those flow patterns that retain seasonal variability and preserve the overall ecological integrity of river systems and related environments)</p> <hr/> <p>Access current data and utilize GIS mapping and other state-of-the-art analysis tools to help monitor the status of local stream segments</p> <hr/> <p>Support efforts by the Colorado Water Conservation Board to expand in-stream flow rights on streams and rivers.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups Colorado Division of Wildlife</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers</p> <hr/> <p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups</p>

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Investigate methods to eliminate in-stream flow deficits, provided said methods are ecologically sound and comply with Colorado water laws.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups Colorado Division of Wildlife
	Adopt a policy that requires “basin of origin” augmentation or employ other strategies to retain optimum flows in local streams and rivers	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Support efforts, where appropriate, to secure Recreational In-Channel Diversion (RICD) water rights.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups
c. Water conservation efforts by all water users in Eagle County should be implemented.	Develop and implement a water conservation program for unincorporated Eagle County.	Eagle County Government Special Interest Groups Service Providers
	Require a Water Conservation Plan for all new residential and commercial developments	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Work cooperatively to provide educational materials and technical assistance to water users regarding water conservation.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups
	Consider the adoption of land use or building code regulations that require the installation of water conservation devices in buildings.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Support the use of water audits to encourage conservation.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups
	Reduce water loss through implementation of leak detection and repair programs.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Establish a meter replacement program to ensure water use is properly monitored.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Encourage the use of water efficient landscape materials and landscape irrigation methods.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Design Review Boards Homeowners Associations Development Applicants
	Restrict certain outdoor water uses that unnecessarily consume water.	Water Providers Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Evaluate efficiencies of non-potable water usage for golf courses and other landscaped areas.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicants
	Identify industrial/commercial opportunities for non-potable water use.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicants
	Implement water reuse and recycling systems.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicant
	Support the implementation of voluntary and mandatory water conservation measures.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicants
	Encourage retrofitting low-flow water fixtures for residential and commercial buildings.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Consider moratoriums on water service connections when appropriate.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Consider differential rate structures and peak or seasonal pricing.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers



Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Work with the agricultural community to improve water conservation measures on local farms and ranches.	Eagle County Government Ranchers Special Interest Groups
d. New water diversions and water storage projects should result in positive impacts to Eagle County's economy and environmental quality.	Prioritize competing water uses (e.g., commercial, industrial, residential, agricultural, and recreational uses).	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups Public Land Managers
	Oppose water diversions that diminish physical water supplies or environmental quality in Eagle County.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups Public Land Managers
	Ensure new water storage projects provide public recreation use.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Special Interest Groups Public Land Managers
	Locate and design water storage projects to minimize damage to wetlands and wildlife habitat	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups Public Land Managers
	Implement monitoring standards to ensure that new water wells will not adversely affect surrounding wetlands, streams, and water tables.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups Public Land Managers
e. Collaborative efforts on regional land and water use planning efforts to address future growth, water supply, and stream flow protection should be encouraged.	Develop an Eagle County Government water policy.	Eagle County Government Service Providers Special Interest Groups
	Encourage consolidation of special water service districts when in the public interest.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Require demonstration of the availability of real (wet) water supply at Sketch Plan stage of development application.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicant
	Conduct 5-year analyses and 20-year strategies to plan for adequate future water supplies and evaluate short and long-term needs.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups
	Adopt a policy that requires “basin of origin” augmentation or employ other strategies to retain optimum flows in local streams and rivers	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
f. Water quality in Eagle County should meet the highest applicable standards.	Participate in water quality monitoring efforts.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Interest Groups Colorado Division of Wildlife Development Applicant
	Develop a public information program about local water quality.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Advocacy Groups
	Support the application of all new technologies and adherence to domestic sewage treatment plant standards	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers State licensing authorities
	Refer to best management practices for septic systems provided by the <a href="#">Eagle County Environmental Health Department</a> , and enforce septic system	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Access current data and utilize GIS mapping and other state-of-the-art analysis tools to help monitor the status of local streams and rivers	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Service Providers

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Follow the recommendations of the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments Regional 208 Water Quality Management Plan.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Follow the recommendations of the Eagle River Watershed Plan.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Work to incorporate current concerns for both water quality and water quantity in the planning process.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Service Providers Development Applicant
	Protect individual and community wells from new sources of pollution.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicants
	Promote watershed protection through the acquisition of open space.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Advocacy Groups
	Promote the appropriate best management practices for the control of stormwater runoff, and work to identify and treat other non-point sources of pollution.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Department of Transportation Development Applicant
g. Surface and groundwater supplies should be protected from agricultural, industrial and development related impacts.	Work with local ranchers to employ irrigation and livestock management strategies to minimize potential impacts.	Eagle County Government Ranchers Industry Representatives
	Require an effective water quality management plan be implemented with new development.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicants

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Access current data and utilize GIS mapping and other state-of-the-art analysis tools to help monitor the status of local stream segments	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Service Providers
	Adhere to established Land Use Regulations, and implement appropriate water quality best management practices (BMP) on all development proposals.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants Water Providers
	Require buffer areas of natural vegetation between new developments and created or natural drainage ways	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
	Minimize the extent of impervious surfaces within new developments and encourage the use of pervious paving systems.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
	Encourage the appropriate storage, application, and containment of road salt and other de-icing materials.	Eagle County Government/Road and Bridge Town Governments Colorado Department of Transportation/Federal Highways Administration Public Land Managers
	Assure the long term maintenance of new road drainage and storm water management systems.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Colorado Department of Transportation Federal Highways Administration
	Continue to refer new development proposals to local water providers and NWCCOG for review and comment.	Water Providers Eagle County Government Town Governments
h. Aquatic and riparian habitats should be protected from agricultural, industrial and development related impacts.	Work with local ranchers to employ irrigation and livestock management strategies to minimize potential impacts.	Eagle County Government Ranchers Public Land Managers Industry Representatives

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Inventory riparian and aquatic habitats, and utilize GIS mapping and other state-of-the-art analysis tools to help monitor habitat status	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers
	Where appropriate, implement habitat improvement projects including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bank stabilization</li> <li>▪ Vegetation maintenance</li> <li>▪ Fishery improvements</li> <li>▪ Wetland restoration and expansion</li> <li>▪ Access control</li> </ul>	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Service Providers Special Interest Groups
	Enforce standards related to proposed wetland, riparian or stream channel modifications to minimize impacts to aquatic wildlife.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Division of Wildlife U.S. Army Corp of Engineers Development Applicant
	Work with local ranchers to implement measures to limit impacts of livestock on riparian areas.	Eagle County Government Ranchers Colorado Division of Wildlife Development Applicants Public Land Managers
	Amend applicable Land Use Regulations to require a site-specific analysis when determining adequate stream setbacks and/or riparian buffers.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Special Interest Groups Colorado Division of Wildlife
	Restrict the development of public trails within riparian habitats unless it is determined to be environmentally and ecologically appropriate.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants Public Land Managers
	Promote the acquisition of open space on lands that contain valuable aquatic and riparian habitat.	Eagle County Government Colorado Division of Wildlife Local Land Trusts Town Governments Special Interests

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
i. Water-related recreation should be encouraged where appropriate at a level that will not damage related resources, ecosystems and environments.	Determine recreational carrying capacity for various river segments to protect the quality of the experience and related resources.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Special Interest Groups
	Monitor the impacts of water related recreation on water quality, riparian habitat, scenic quality, wildlife and quality of experience.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Special Interest Groups
	Continue to assess and track the contribution of water based recreation activities to the local and regional economy	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Special Interest Groups
	Develop recreational maps and related educational materials and make available to the public.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Special Interest Groups
	Make current fishing and boating regulations available to the public.	Eagle County Government Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Special Interest Groups
	Improve existing public access sites.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers
	When feasible and appropriate, create new public access sites on public lands.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Special Interest Groups

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	When feasible and appropriate, require public access to streams and rivers through new private developments.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Install appropriate signage to designate river access.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Support and encourage the continuance and/or expansion of private land leases for the purpose of fishing access.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Land Owners Colorado Division of Wildlife
	Support efforts to prevent spread of infectious disease to local fish populations.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Special Interest Groups
j. A comprehensive approach to watershed planning and decision-making should be utilized.	Create comprehensive watershed maps.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Special Interest Groups
	Develop watershed plans for each of the tributary valleys.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Special Interest Groups
	Develop and intergovernmental agreements (IGA's) to address watershed planning issues	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Implement a cooperative enforcement program of existing regulations.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Special Interest Groups
	Strive for interagency consistency on river/creek setbacks.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Develop design standards for improvements that front rivers and creeks.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Utilize and/or update land use regulations to maximize protection of water resources.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers
	Utilize GIS mapping and other state-of-the-art analysis tools to support watershed planning efforts.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Expand local authority on 35-acre exemptions for the protection of streams.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Involve water system operators/managers in land use decisions in the watershed.	Water Providers Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Investigate comprehensive regional approaches to groundwater protection.	Public Land Managers County Governments State Authorities Water Providers Special Interests
	Encourage the consolidation and restructuring of water and wastewater treatment systems when public health or the environment is at risk, or when greater economies of scale may be realized.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Service Districts



## 3.7 Wildlife Resources

---

**Goal: Preserve and/or enhance the quality of wildlife habitat, and the vitality of wildlife populations in Eagle County.**

### 3.7.1 Background Information

Please refer to the following documents to gain a better understanding of these and other issues related to Wildlife in Eagle County.

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife](#)

[Colorado Department of Natural Resources](#)

[Colorado Division of Wildlife](#)

[Natural Diversity Information Source](#)

[Colorado Natural Heritage Program](#)

### 3.7.2 Wildlife Concerns

#### Policies:

- a. **The integrity, quality and interconnected nature of critical wildlife habitat in Eagle County should be preserved.**
- b. **The well-being of wildlife species of economic importance should be actively monitored and protected.**
- c. **The well-being of wildlife species of less economic importance and those on the rare and endangered species list should be actively monitored and protected.**

The high mountains and valleys of the Central Rockies provide outstanding habitat for wildlife. For many years, Eagle County's generally healthy populations of wild animals and fish have indicated a generally healthy condition of the natural environment, which adds significantly to the perception held by residents and visitors that this is indeed a very special place. In a 2003 Homeowner Survey conducted by Northwest Colorado Council of Governments, 85% of residents and 72% of second home owners ranked the value of wildlife to the region as high or very high. Concern for the condition and well-being of wildlife is a frequent topic in local newspapers.

Wildlife related activities are also an important component of the local economy. A report commissioned by the Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW) indicated that hunting and fishing added \$1.5 billion and more than 20,000 jobs to Colorado's economy in 2002 (BBC Research and Consulting). Eagle County benefited from direct expenditures that year of \$3.2 million, and the overall gain to the County's economy was estimated to be \$57.8 million. At least 820 Eagle County jobs were directly related to hunting and fishing. Along with hunting and fishing, wildlife viewing activities are also valued, as evidenced by the estimated \$940 million contributed to the State's economy as a result of related activities.

The rapid growth of Eagle County over the past 30 years has created a number of local wildlife issues. It would seem that an area that is over 80% public lands would have ample wildlife habitat, and indeed, Eagle County is rich in wild open lands. Unfortunately, the habitat most critical to the well being of many wildlife species is also the land where human activity and development is most likely to be found – the lower elevations along the valley floors. In these areas, open fields and shallower snow depths provide critical winter range for elk and deer. Historic migration routes follow rivers and tributary streams, and the associated riparian areas provide drinking water, cover, and a rich mixture of forage plants. Low elevation meadows support large populations of small mammals, which in turn support healthy numbers of hawks, golden eagles and other predators.

The list of wildlife species of greatest interest from the 1996 Eagle County Master Plan is still valid today. Several species are monitored by the DOW because their health is a general indicator of the health of other species and the condition of the habitat environment. Others are monitored because they are threatened or endangered. Still other big game and bird species are considered important due to the economic value brought by hunting and wildlife viewing. Mountain lions and black bears have been added to the list given the concern for recent human/animal confrontations. The list of species considered for protection under this plan includes:

- Bald Eagle
- Bighorn Sheep
- Black Bear
- Elk
- Lynx
- Mountain Lion
- Mule Deer
- Peregrine Falcon
- Sage Grouse
- Cutthroat, rainbow, brown trout
- Great Blue Heron
- All threatened or endangered species

According to the Division of Wildlife, one of the greatest present concerns is for the area's mule deer population. Eagle County was once home to one of the largest deer populations in the State. Numbers have been declining significantly over the past several decades, however, and some of that decline is certainly attributable to the loss of habitat resulting from development and the construction of roads in traditional migration corridors. The County should assist in the recovery of local deer populations through involvement in educational campaigns and by supporting measures to preserve and protect summer range, winter habitat, calving areas, and migration corridors.

A second major concern is the declining population of the sage grouse. Sage grouse once thrived in Eagle County, but today are only found in limited numbers north of the Eagle River. Sage grouse require sagebrush cover-type habitat in association with riparian areas for successful reproduction and foraging. Many thousands of acres of sage grouse habitat in Eagle County have been lost to agriculture or residential/commercial development, and there is real concern now that sage grouse could one day cease to exist in the County.

A Sage Grouse Recovery Plan was adopted in 2004 for Northern Eagle and Southern Routt Counties. This plan received support from the Eagle County Board of County Commissioners, and includes goals, actions and best management practices for the protection of sage grouse habitat. Eagle County should continue to endorse the practices outlined in this plan, and should support efforts to protect identified sage grouse habitats.

A third concern cited by the DOW is fishery productivity in numerous waters throughout Eagle County. Risk factors to indigenous trout include habitat loss from sedimentation, man-made barriers to fish movement; the degradation of water quality from historic mining, sediment loading, storm water runoff, low flows, nutrient loading and sewage effluent; and the loss of riparian ecosystems. Numerous suggestions regarding the preservation of trout habitat are provided in the Water Resources section of this Comprehensive Plan.

The status of many other wildlife species should be monitored as well. Populations of elk in the area are generally increasing. Elk are large, sturdy animals, but they nevertheless are negatively impacted by man-made barriers to migration, the loss of low elevation winter range and disruption of their traditional calving and production areas. When limited to isolated areas, elk can have significant impacts upon natural forage. They can force deer from their winter range areas, and they also can damage fences and facilities on ranches in their efforts to reach winter stockpiles of hay. Elk cunningly seek cover within the safe confines of residential areas during the hunting season, and often forage on residential landscaping when winter snows drive them to lower elevations.

Elk populations are managed through the hunting license program administered by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. They are an important game species, and wildlife officials are very aware of the need to control their numbers. The County should remain fully supportive of efforts to preserve winter range, provide open migration routes and manage local herds to maintain a sustainable population.

Black bears can be found in most areas of Eagle County. Each bear requires a large range and large sources of food for survival. Threats to black bears include disease and starvation, but human interaction is increasingly responsible for bear deaths due to loss of habitat, vehicle accidents, poaching, and the unfortunate destruction of bears that pose a threat to people or livestock. Drought conditions can influence where bears go to feed, and during lean times they are attracted to residential subdivisions by the smells and availability of food. The County can play an active role in protecting bears by working with involved agencies and homeowners associations to promote education, require bear proof containers and by enforcing related regulations.

Mountain lions are rarely encountered in Eagle County, but they exist in significant numbers. The well-being of mountain lion populations is closely tied to the well being of deer and other small animals, upon which they prey. In a healthy ecosystem, cougars are a top predator, helping to balance wildlife populations. The County can help to ensure their continued existence by working to improve habitat for deer and by supporting the management efforts of the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

Bald eagles were once on the decline due to loss of suitable breeding and wintering habitat, but have recently shown recovery. Eagles are sensitive to human disturbance, and require large diameter trees for roosting, perching and nesting. In Eagle County, bald eagles have been known to nest and winter roost along the Eagle and Colorado Rivers. Development should avoid areas frequented by these magnificent birds, and educational programs should be developed that promote the preservation of Bald Eagle habitat.

Lynx, which generally occupy higher elevations, were historically known to exist in Eagle County, but were extirpated in the late 1970's. Reintroduction efforts in Colorado are now showing signs of success, and it is likely that lynx have or will soon move through the county. These moderately sized cats feed on snowshoe hare and an occasional grouse or ptarmigan. Their habitat is generally the timberlands that provide both shelter and food. Lynx are very sensitive to human activities, especially at night. A key to the success for lynx is the availability of suitable habitat and undisturbed contiguous corridors within which they can move. Public education and cooperation between all public agencies and private interest groups will help to ensure the success of the lynx in the area.

Bighorn sheep are susceptible to stress related disease, hunting impacts, and loss of winter habitat. Small bands are known to exist in higher elevations of the County, including the cliff bands above and to the north of East Vail. The Colorado Division of Wildlife actively manages bighorn sheep and other agencies cooperate by managing habitat and domestic grazing.

There are rare occurrences of Peregrine falcons in Eagle County. Their habitat ranges from 3,500 to 11,500 feet, and they generally nest on high cliffs around reservoirs, rivers and marshes, foraging for food over adjacent coniferous forests and open range lands. The main risk to peregrine falcons is disturbance during courtship and reduction of foraging habitat. Seasonal restriction to known nesting sites and an awareness of habitat within the County can help with recovery efforts.

### 3.7.3 Development Impacts

#### Policies:

- d. Development in areas critical to the continued well being of Eagle County's wildlife populations should not be allowed.**
- e. Where disturbances to wildlife habitat cannot be avoided, development should be required to fully mitigate potential negative impacts.**

Since the 1960's many acres of critical bottom land in Eagle County have been developed. Riparian areas once available to wildlife are now isolated by roads and commercial and residential improvements and activities. The ability of animals to travel from north to south in the County has been significantly impacted by the Interstate 70 corridor and by development patterns that have filled valley floor areas. East-west wildlife movement (important to deer populations, and occurring mostly north of

Interstate 70) has been compromised by residential subdivisions like Eby Creek Mesa, the Cordillera Valley Club, Singletree, Avon Village and Wildridge. The development of other private lands, and future proposals such as the Wolcott Reservoir, will further diminish the utility of this east - west migration corridor.

Second homes have been constructed at higher elevations in historic calving areas and summer range areas. Increased human activity and recreation adjacent to and through these new developments affects the movements of wildlife and the solitude of their living environment. When allowed to run, domestic dogs will pack together and chase deer and elk, which can be devastating to individual animals already weakened during winter months. Domestic cats are efficient hunters of song birds, ground squirrels, chipmunks and other small mammals.

Residents and visitors place wildlife at considerable risk by trying to attract animals to back yards with food and salt-licks. Wild animals are also attracted to residential areas by trash, barbeque grills and bird and pet food left outdoors. Unwanted and potentially dangerous human-animal interactions, especially those involving bears or mountain lions, can result. While concern for human safety is paramount, it is wildlife that ultimately loses in these instances. Bears that habitually visit residential areas looking for food, for example, are destroyed if caught more than once as a result of Colorado's "two-strike law".

The Eagle River downstream from Edwards has had several furunculosis outbreaks in the trout population over the last 5 years. These outbreaks are generally caused by stress as a result of low water flows. In the drought year of 2002, the Division of Wildlife encouraged a voluntary fishing closure on the lower Eagle River to reduce fishing pressure and stress on fish.

The cumulative effects of resort and residential development on wildlife can be considerable. Unfortunately, the full impact of man's activities on some species can take years to become evident. By the time a negative impact is realized, it is often too late to correct the problem. Eagle County strives to be a place where people co-exist in harmony with wildlife, and the County should continue to work to educate residents and visitors regarding ways to appropriately interface with the natural environment. All of the area's wildlife are at some risk due to development, and the well-being and specific needs of all species should be given due consideration as growth continues in Eagle County.

Finally, this Comprehensive Plan recognizes that impacts to wildlife from development and human activity cannot always be fully mitigated. Existing critical wildlife habitats in Eagle County should be identified and preserved, and residential, commercial and recreational development that removes critical habitat, or diminishes the use by wildlife of these habitats, should not be allowed.

### 3.7.4 Habitat Protection at the Landscape Scale

#### Policies:

- f. Broad development patterns and the cumulative impacts of incremental development on wildlife habitat and wildlife populations should be accounted for in the decision making process.**

Urban development influences wildlife at two fundamentally different scales – the broad landscape scale and the more focused site scale. At the landscape scale, development influences the distribution, survival, and persistence of entire wildlife populations and communities. Wildlife habitat requires the right combination of physical features (i.e. topography, aspect, stream flow) and biological characteristics (i.e. vegetative cover, other animal species) needed to provide the necessary habitat types and travel routes. The focus at the larger landscape scale is to avoid wildlife impacts by directing development away from critical habitats. Areas of concern include:

- Migration Corridors
- Highway Crossings
- Winter Concentration Areas
- Winter Range

- Severe Winter Range
- Staging Areas
- Production Areas
- Nesting Areas

Once land is identified as critical to wildlife, Eagle County Government should work with involved governmental agencies and landowners to assure the maintenance of quality habitat. Large undisturbed tracts of land that contain features and vegetative cover important to wildlife should be protected, as should smaller land parcels that serve to connect larger areas with one another. Plans for future growth must require the establishment and maintenance of buffer areas between development and critical habitat and/or migration routes. Open areas should be left between established towns and community centers. Development should avoid riparian areas, stream corridors, and identified migration routes, production areas, winter concentration areas and severe winter range

Automobile-wildlife collisions are common in Eagle County, and result in a high rate of animal mortality and considerable damage to vehicles each year. Several groups are looking into the feasibility of building one or more wildlife overpasses, similar to those found in Europe and Canada, that would connect habitats and allow the safe movement of animals across Interstate 70. These facilities need to be located in areas where suitable migration habitat exists on both sides of the road, a scenario increasingly difficult to find as open areas between communities become developed. One crossing facility is proposed for the west side of Vail Pass. Others would be appropriate between Avon and Edwards, and between Wolcott and Eagle. Development should be directed away from presently undeveloped drainages that are crossed by interstate bridges, as these areas provide current crossing points. Eagle County Government should support efforts to reduce the impacts of automobiles and automobile travel corridors on wildlife.

### 3.7.5 Habitat Protection at the Site Scale

#### Policies:

- g. Wildlife friendly measures should be incorporated into the design of individual home sites and neighborhoods.**
- h. Measures designed to protect wildlife from contact with human activities and disturbances should be implemented and enforced.**
- i. Access to public lands and opportunities for public land recreation should be balanced with the need to preserve quality wildlife habitat**

#### **Residential Development Impacts**

At the more focused “site” scale, habitat protection focuses on the well being of individual animals or localized populations. Strategies at this level assume that development has been approved, and that actions and standards are therefore necessary to reduce stress in animals that will be in contact with the development. Example strategies would include minimizing fences to allow for uninterrupted movement of deer and elk, designing landscaping to be compatible with local wildlife populations, installing screens on chimneys to prevent wildlife visitors, and requiring that trash be placed in bear-proof containers. PUD guidelines and/or subdivision covenants should also specifically prohibit human activities in identified production areas during the calving/nesting season, and during critical winter times.

The County should continue to refer all applicable land use proposals to the Colorado Division of Wildlife for review, and should apply Land Use Regulation standards related to the protection of wildlife at the site scale in its analysis of new land use proposals.

## **Recreation and Wildlife**

Recreational uses on public lands can impact wildlife on both the landscape scale and the site scale. Hunting has a long tradition in Eagle County, is important economically during the fall season, and is a critical management tool utilized by public land managers to control the distribution and numbers of animals in specific areas. Other forms of recreation can create other negative impacts. The mere presence of humans, vehicles and domestic animals in areas frequented by wildlife can have negative psychological effects, causing stress in animals as they must alter their instinctual travel routes and feeding patterns. Stress increases susceptibility to disease and can reduce reproduction rates.

Eagle County should continue to work with public land managers to place the appropriate restrictions on recreational uses and intensities of use in areas indicated by the Division of Wildlife to be important to wildlife. As cited earlier in this section, residential, commercial and recreational development that removes critical habitat, or diminishes the use by wildlife of these habitats, should not be allowed.

Eagle County [Resolution # 98-27](#) identified dogs running at large as a serious threat to wildlife, and sets into law the requirement for leashes and pet control on any animal found off the owner's premise. Proposals for new residential development should include provisions, acceptable to the Division of Wildlife, for the control of dogs. Educational campaigns promoting pet control should be on-going so that new and existing landowners are aware of Eagle County Government's regulations.

In 2001, Eagle County Government amended the Eagle County Land Use Regulations to require wildlife-proof waste receptacles, dumpsters and dumpster enclosures for all new subdivisions, planned unit developments and special use permits. Ways to retroactively require these provisions within existing residential areas should be investigated.

In order to prevent habitual visitation of wildlife to developed areas, Eagle County and the Division of Wildlife have also worked together on a draft of an ordinance regarding the feeding of wildlife, which is being considered by the Board of County Commissioners. Eagle County Government, Town Governments, and Division of Wildlife should work cooperatively to adopt a comprehensive feeding of wildlife ordinance for all of Eagle County. Locally sponsored educational programs can help raise awareness for the unintended consequences that can result from the intentional feeding of wildlife and the improper handling of trash and pet foods.

### 3.7.6 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for Wildlife Resources

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
<p>a. The quality, integrity and interconnected nature of critical wildlife habitat in Eagle County should be preserved.</p>	Map vegetation types associated with critical wildlife habitat	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government
	Develop and implement Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA's) to address wildlife concerns on a regional basis	Eagle County Government Colorado Division of Wildlife Town Governments Other County Governments
	Regularly update wildlife habitat maps	Eagle County Government Colorado Division of Wildlife Special interest groups
	Prioritize land conservation and open space efforts that preserve wildlife habitat and migration corridors.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts
	Encourage owners of large land parcels to protect riparian areas and other identified wildlife habitat	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Prohibit development and limit road and driveway construction in critical wildlife habitat areas and migration corridors.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Require buffer zones between development and critical wildlife habitats.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Discourage public/private land exchanges that will have a detrimental impact on wildlife habitat.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers
	Construct new hiking trails or biking trails to avoid critical wildlife habitats	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Trails Committee Eagle County Government Development Applicants Public Land Managers

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Support projects intent on removing or minimizing man-made barriers to wildlife migration (e.g. highway overpasses)	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Special interest groups Colorado Department of Transportation Development Applicants Public Land Managers
	Develop and implement projects that enhance existing wildlife habitat	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants Special interest groups
	Utilize House Bill 1041 powers to strengthen the County's enforcement powers on issues related to the preservation of wildlife habitat	Eagle County Government Colorado Division of Wildlife
	Protect riparian and aquatic habitats to enhance fishery productivity	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Public Land Managers Commercial outfitters Special interest groups Development Applicants
	Maintain optimum flows in all streams and rivers	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Service Providers Eagle River Watershed Council Colorado Water Conservation District Roaring Fork River Conservancy
	Prevent contaminants from entering local streams and rivers	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Development Applicant Colorado Department of Transportation



<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Recognize the importance of hunting in Eagle County, and support other DOW wildlife management programs.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Special interest groups Public Land Managers
b. The well-being of wildlife species of economic importance should be actively monitored and preserved.	Work with public officials and special interest groups to monitor the status of species of economic importance.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Special interest groups
	Identify the habitat needs for species of economic importance and develop specific management plans for those areas	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
	Continue to implement the recommendations of the 2004 Sage Grouse Recovery Plan	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants Public Land Managers
	Support programs that help ranchers prevent or otherwise receive compensation for damages to ranch facilities caused by large game animals	Ranchers Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Public Land Managers
	Work with public officials to make wildlife data available to the residents and visitors of Eagle County.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Special interest groups
c. The well-being of wildlife species of less economic importance and those on the rare and endangered species list should be actively monitored and preserved.	Inventory specialized wildlife habitats, including but not limited to riparian areas, wetlands, cliffs, and old growth forests.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Special Interest Groups
	Map specific habitats for rare or endangered species.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Public Land Managers Special Interest Groups

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Support the development and implementation of management plans for rare and endangered species	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Public Land Managers Development Applicants
d. Development in areas critical to the continued well being of Eagle County's wildlife populations should not be allowed.	Require Pre-Application meetings for all development proposals	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Direct development away from areas of critical wildlife habitat.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Division of Wildlife Development Applicant
	Hire an independent specialist to assess wildlife impacts, and to evaluate the analysis submitted to the County by development applicants	Eagle County Government Colorado Division of Wildlife Development Applicant
e. Where disturbances to wildlife habitat cannot be avoided, development should be required to fully mitigate potential negative impacts.	Require detailed impact analysis for all developments proposed within or adjacent to critical wildlife habitats or migration routes.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Continue to refer development applications to the Colorado Division of Wildlife	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Division of Wildlife Development Applicant
	Develop and apply a hierarchal approach to mitigation, with avoidance of any impacts as the preferred option.	Eagle County Government Colorado Division of Wildlife
	Hire an independent specialist to evaluate the effectiveness of mitigations proposed by development applicants	Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Develop incentives to encourage development that is considerate of wildlife on large acreage (35 + acre) properties located in wildlife habitat areas.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Division of Wildlife Development Applicant
	Implement and enforce referral recommendations of local wildlife officials.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Division of Wildlife Development Applicant

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
f. Broad development patterns and the cumulative impacts of incremental development on wildlife habitat and wildlife populations should be accounted for in the decision making process.	Consider the impacts of each new development proposal in context with other existing or potential developments.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Guard against habitat fragmentation, and encourage development patterns that result in large, interconnected areas of natural open space.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Preserve open corridors between communities and existing developments to retain interconnected habitats.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Encourage high density development within existing community centers.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Work with public land officials and homeowners associations to implement vegetation management strategies that mimic natural ecologic processes.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Homeowners Associations Public Land Managers Development Applicant
	Promote clustered residential development patterns, especially if development is to be approved in rural areas of the County.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Development Applicant
	Strongly discourage development in areas of high or extreme wildfire hazards.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Development Applicant
	Strongly discourage development within defined floodplains.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Incorporate the formula that is used to determine Colorado Wildlife Heritage Foundation compensations for habitat loss into Land Use Regulations, and continue to require compensation for habitat losses as a result of development.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Adopt a Wildlife Habitat Protection (WHP) Overlay Zone District that protects critical wildlife habitat areas through special development standards.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments
g. Wildlife friendly measures should be incorporated into the design of individual home sites and neighborhoods.	Follow all recommendations provided by wildlife specialists and/or the Colorado Division of Wildlife for the development.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Where ever possible, incorporate features and characteristics of the natural landscape into plans for development	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Retain as much pre-development, high-quality habitat as possible.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Minimize site disturbance during construction.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Require the use of native vegetation in landscape plans.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Homeowner Associations Development Applicant
	If ornamental landscape plants are used, encourage species that are unpalatable to wildlife.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Homeowner Associations Development Applicant
	Enforce DOW fencing standards and avoid fencing that inhibits the movement of wildlife.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Homeowner Associations Development Applicant

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Position utility easements and open space areas within developments to facilitate wildlife movement.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Encourage the installation of visual barriers such as trees or berms to minimize disturbance to wildlife.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Homeowner Associations Development Applicant
	Require the installation of screens on fire place flues to protect birds.	Colorado Division of Wildlife <b>EagleError! Bookmark not defined.</b> County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Require strategically located building envelopes for lots located within or adjacent to identified wildlife habitats.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Require pet owners to install fenced dog runs in areas near wildlife habitat	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Homeowner Associations Development Applicant
	Enforce stream setbacks requirements.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
h. Measures designed to protect wildlife from human activities and disturbances should be implemented and enforced.	Direct development and other disruptive land uses away from wildlife habitat and wildlife migration corridors	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Division of Wildlife Development Applicant
	Require buffer zones between proposed development or disruptive land uses and identified wildlife habitat and wildlife migration corridors	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Division of Wildlife Development Applicant

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Encourage the appropriate management of livestock on ranches and on open range to minimize impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat	Ranchers Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Development Applicants
	Require that pets be kept on a leash in areas with or near potential wildlife habitat	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Homeowner Associations Public Land Managers Recreationists
	Enforce bag limits and other fishing regulations	Colorado Division of Wildlife
	Require wildlife-proof refuse containers for all new and existing subdivisions.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Enforce state law that prohibits the feeding of wildlife	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Division of Wildlife Homeowner Associations
	Adopt rules to prevent impacts from domestic cats on local wildlife.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Division of Wildlife Homeowner Associations
	Support efforts to educate residents about the implications of living with wildlife.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Division of Wildlife Special Interest Groups Chambers of Commerce
i. Access to public lands and opportunities for public land recreation should be balanced with the need to preserve quality wildlife habitat.	Regulate recreational use on public land to minimize impacts to critical habitats.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Development Applicants
	Maintain trails and trailhead areas	Public Land Managers Homeowner Associations

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Provide trail signage informing users of potential wildlife concerns.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Development Applicants
	Encourage recreationists to stay on marked trails.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government
	Provide signage to alert people to sensitive wildlife habitat areas	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
	Support the seasonal closure of key wildlife production areas.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Homeowner Associations
	Support fishing closures recommended by the DOW to protect trout from stress related disease.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Local fishing shops
	Support efforts by public land managers to restrict or manage the use of motorized recreational vehicles in areas important to wildlife habitat.	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Support efforts to monitor impacts of recreational use on wildlife habitat	Colorado Division of Wildlife Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments

## 3.8 Sensitive Lands

---

**Goal: Development in Eagle County avoids or fully mitigates impacts to sensitive lands. Open space is preserved to the greatest degree possible, and scenic quality and cultural resources are protected.**

### 3.8.1 Background Information:

Please refer to the following documents to gain a better understanding of the issues related to Sensitive Lands.

[U.S. Geological Survey](#)

[Colorado Geological Survey](#)

[Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region 8](#)

[Colorado Office of Emergency Management](#)

[U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#)

[Colorado Heritage Report Best Practices in Natural Hazards Planning and Mitigation, Colorado](#)

[Department of Local Affairs, Office of Smart Growth](#)

[Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation \(OAHP\)](#)

[Directory of Colorado State Register Properties, Eagle County](#)

[Public Art in Colorado](#)

[Business Committee for the Arts, Inc.](#)

### 3.8.2 Lands with Natural Hazards

#### Policies:

- a. **Development should avoid areas of significant natural hazard.**
- b. **The mitigation of natural hazards should be done in a manner that protects the integrity of the natural environment and the visual quality of the area.**

Development in mountainous terrain like that of Eagle County can be complicated by the presence of natural hazards. Natural hazards in this region include flooding, erosive soils, rock falls, debris flows, slope instability, snow avalanches, land subsidence, and wildfires. These are all natural occurrences, and only become hazardous when humans visit or permanently occupy affected areas. Humans also have the ability to significantly alter physical landscapes, and human activities can inadvertently aggravate existing hazards or create new hazards by upsetting the natural equilibrium of an area.

Identifying hazard areas is essential to good planning and good land use decisions. Most floodplain mapping in Eagle County was conducted in the 1980's, although several floodplain maps have been recently updated. Updated maps include the Roaring Fork River, the Eagle River from Dowd Junction to Dotsero, the Colorado River from Dotsero to the Garfield County line, and Brush Creek above the Town of Eagle. The Town of Vail is also in the process of updating its maps for Gore Creek.

In 2003, Eagle County Government worked with the Town Governments, special districts, Colorado State Forest Service and United States Forest Service to create detailed wildfire risk mapping. This information supports the implementation of the County's new [Wildfire Regulations](#), and it can also be used more broadly to determine suitability of an area for development based on potential wildlife hazards.

The United States Geologic Survey and Colorado Geologic Survey keep updated maps of steep slopes, erosive soils, rock falls, landslides, slope instability, avalanches, and mine subsidence. In those



instances where natural hazards cannot be completely avoided, measures should be taken to mitigate the hazard. Designs should minimize alteration of the natural landform to the greatest extent possible, thus reducing the potential for slope instability and drainage problems. Building envelopes should be required on any site subject to hazard, and positioned over the safest portion of a given property. Steep slopes should not be cut along the toe or, if cut, should be adequately stabilized with engineered retaining walls. Existing vegetation should be retained to the greatest extent possible, and newly exposed soils should be promptly revegetated with indigenous plant and grass species. Natural drainages should remain in their existing alignment, unstable drainages should be stabilized and storm water runoff should be appropriately controlled on site and released from the site at historic rates.

Eagle County Government should continue to require the evaluation of all geologic hazards and constraints by qualified professionals for any new land use proposal in unincorporated areas of Eagle County, and should strictly enforce existing Land Use and Building Code Regulations designed to minimize risk from natural or man-caused hazards.

Wildfire hazards are currently addressed under the County's adopted Wildfire Regulations Program, which requires a wildfire management plan for all new development. These regulations include more stringent standards for access, fire-resistive building construction, water availability, and vegetation management. Public education has been important to the success of this program. Other mitigation efforts include vegetation management efforts by public land managers and homeowners associations.

The Town Governments, public land managers, and emergency service providers should all participate in the implementation of hazards planning. The [Eagle County Fire Plan](#) and the [Federal Emergency Management Agency Multi-jurisdictional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan for Eagle County](#) were both adopted in the summer of 2005. These plans address the full range of hazards and encourage the implementation of protective actions. Capital plans and development applications should be subject to the policies of both plans.

### 3.8.3 Lands with Cultural Resources

#### Policies:

- c. Development and development patterns should preserve landscapes that include visual, historic, and archeological value.**
- d. The continued evolution of Eagle County's present day culture should be considered integral to the high quality of life desired by residents and visitors.**

Lands with cultural resources are those properties that contain visual, historic, or archeological attributes. Cultural characteristics are highly valued by residents and visitors, and add significantly to the quality of life available in Eagle County.

Locals have ranked the importance of scenery as very high on many surveys, most recently the Homeowner Survey conducted by Northwest Colorado Council of Governments for the Second Home Study (residents = 90% and second home owners = 92%). For the purposes of this plan, visual resources include both pastoral and constructed views from the county's major roads; Interstate 70, Highway 6, Highway 131, Highway 24, Highway 82, and the Colorado River Road. Scenery management areas identified by the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service in their land management plans are also included. Additional research is needed to identify and preserve other important viewsheds, which could include those from recreational areas, parks, neighborhoods, or other sites frequently visited by residents and visitors.

Historic resources reflect the area's heritage and remind us of our past. In a county where 41 percent of the residents in 2000 had been in Eagle County for less than five years, it is important to establish opportunities where historic resources can be viewed, learned about and above all recognized as significant elements of the quality of life available in Eagle County. As people come to the area, they

should have the ability to investigate what has made it a unique and wonderful place. The County's historic resources date back to Native American occupation, and include sites and structures reflective of mining, ranching, army training and finally skiing and resort development. Eagle County Government should promote the identification and protection of the region's historic resources, and should work with the Eagle County Historical Society and the Basalt Regional Heritage Society to develop appropriate guidelines.

Archeology is the study of ancient cultures through the examination of their building sites, graves, tools, and other artifacts. There are many archeologically significant sites in Eagle County, the most notable of which is the [Yarmony Pit House](#) north on Trough Road near Radium. Yarmony Pit House is an outstanding example of the archaic period (circa 7000BC to AD1) and is listed on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

For all proposals, cultural features that may be impacted should be identified and appropriate mitigation efforts taken to ensure the least amount of disturbance to the cultural landscape.

In addition to directing growth away from existing cultural landscapes, Eagle County Government should recognize and support the evolution of present day "cultures" within its jurisdiction. Culture can mean many things to many people. It can include the traditional arts, a tie to some ethnic heritage, exposure to knowledge and sophisticated thinking, or the sharing of beliefs, values, and attitudes between people. A balanced community cannot focus entirely upon economic pursuits, and it is not necessary for cultural pursuits to result in a profit in order to be worthwhile. This quote from the [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](#) addresses the importance of cultural development.

*Development models produced since the 1970s have clearly failed, despite constant revision, to live up to the expectations they raised. Some would claim that this is because development has itself been defined far too exclusively in terms of tangibles, such as dams, factories, houses, food and water, although these are undeniably vital goods. UNESCO defends the case of indivisibility of culture and development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means of achieving a satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence. This development may be defined as that set of capacities that allows groups, communities, and nations to define their futures in an integrated manner.*

Eagle County Government's role in the development and evolution of its own culture is not so much to ensure that all residents share the same ideals and participate in similar "cultural" activities, but is instead to ensure that the freedom for people to explore is protected, that tools and resources are available for the development of individual and social creativity, and that cultural diversity is fostered within neighborhoods and communities.

### 3.8.4 Public Lands & Open Space

#### Policies:

- e. A variety of approaches should be utilized to preserve land as open space.**
- f. Open space should be able to serve different needs in different applications.**
- g. Appropriate access should be provided to public lands and rivers.**

Open space and trails were ranked very high in importance by both the residents and second homeowners of Eagle County in the Homeowner Survey conducted by Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (57 percent of residents and 48 percent of second homeowners ranked it high or very high in importance). There are three basic categories of open space within Eagle County: public lands, privately held open space within developed areas, and open space that has been set aside through the work of a land trust or the County's Open Space Program.

## Public Lands Open Space

Currently, State, Federal and local governments own over 80 percent of the land in Eagle County. The United States Forest Service owns 55.3% of the land, 24.2% is managed by the Bureau of Land Management, 1.3% by the Bureau of Reclamation, 1.2% is owned by the State Land Board, 0.5% by the Division of Wildlife, and 0.2% by the Division of Highways (CDOT). The remaining 17.3% of the land is privately owned.

Each agency has a unique mission and purpose for their land holdings in Eagle County. The United States Forest Service's mission is to *"Lead in the conservation and wise use of the nation's forests and grasslands."*

The Bureau of Land Management mission is to *"Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."*

The Bureau of Reclamation's mission is to *"Manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public."*

The Colorado State Land Board's mission is to *"Manage the assets entrusted to our care for our beneficiaries by producing a reasonable and consistent income with long term protection of economic values, while providing responsible environmental stewardship to ensure the conservation of natural resources."*

The Division of Wildlife's mission is to *"Perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state and provide people the opportunity to enjoy them."*

Finally, it is the mission of the Division of Highways/Department of Transportation to *"Provide the best multi-modal transportation system for Colorado that most effectively moves people, goods, and information."*

None of these statements specifically mentions the preservation of open space, but with the possible exception of the Department of Transportation, the importance of open space is inferred by all of them.

Public lands are viewed to be open space available for the recreational and scenic benefit of residents, second homeowners, and visitors of Eagle County. Public lands contain many valuable characteristics and resources. In Eagle County they provide habitat for wildlife and are the source area for much of the region's high quality water. Recreational uses include hunting and fishing, hiking, rock climbing, boating, camping, sight-seeing, dirt biking and off-road four wheeling, skiing and snowmobiling. Large tracts of public lands can also be leased for the grazing of livestock. Activities like timber harvesting and mining are allowed with appropriate review, and can conflict with recreation and general open space values.

The open space nature of public lands are considered to be perpetual, however, recent public land exchanges and sales indicate that these lands are not necessarily held in perpetuity by the government. Public Land owners like the Bureau of Land Management, Colorado State Parks, the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the United States Forest Service are able to negotiate with land owners to exchange private properties for public lands. Considerable partnership is often involved. The goal for the Government entity is to lessen the number of privately owned in-holdings scattered throughout and surrounded by public jurisdictions. The private land owner benefits from land exchanges by receiving land that is easier to access and that can be develop with fewer environmental impacts. There is potential for disappointment among residents, as once public lands come under new ownership and are developed in a manner contrary to the recreational or scenic desires of the greater community, and as such these exchanges should strive to be win-win deals that avoid negative impacts.

Recently, Sylvan Lake State Park above Eagle was expanded through a series of land exchanges, and work is currently underway to exchange land of considerable development potential at the base of Vail Mountain for lands of considerable environmental value in Eagle County's backcountry.

Eagle County Government must work with each agency, understand their respective missions and find ways of meeting mutual goals regarding the preservation of open space on public lands. The County should continue to look for opportunities to be involved with public/private land exchanges that benefit the public good, and should work to ensure that land uses in and around open space areas are appropriate and that management practices are consistent with the needs and desires of the community.

### **Development Open Space**

Negotiation for land use approvals often results in land being set aside within developed areas for the benefit of homeowners or the local community. Golf courses, significant drainage easements, setbacks from streams and small pocket parks would all be examples of this type of open space. Allowed uses within these areas range from dispersed, passive recreation in natural settings to more intensive activities that require built environments with formal landscaping and structures.

Eagle County Land Use Regulations currently recommend the incorporation of 25% “usable” open space in the design of all Planned Unit Developments. This open space provision is not a requirement, however, and the results within the community over time have been mixed. Some developments (mostly the larger resort complexes) have incorporated significant open areas while others (often smaller residential or commercial projects) have found ways to circumvent the intent and still meet the recommendation.

Eagle County should work with the towns and developers to strengthen provisions that require open space areas within and around community centers and residential neighborhoods. Wherever appropriate, designs of open areas should incorporate concerns for the preservation of scenic quality and wildlife habitat on the larger landscape. Uses occurring on open space areas that provide a buffer between human activities and lands of significant conservation value should conform to the definition of Conservation Open Space provided below.

### **Conservation Open Space**

A third type of open space involves the conversion of private land to open space through donation or acquisition. In November 2002, Eagle County voters passed a referendum to raise property taxes 1.5 mills for the purpose of acquiring or otherwise setting aside lands of high conservation value. The County's Open Space Fund can now be used singularly or in combination with other funds for the purpose of acquiring open space areas, so long as certain criteria are met. Eligible lands are those that contribute to scenic landscapes and vistas; the preservation of regional heritage, agriculture and ranching; the protection of wildlife habitat or environmentally sensitive areas; or that provide physical and visual buffers, dispersed recreational opportunities, and public access to rivers and public lands. To this end, properties can be purchased outright to be owned by the County or conservation easements can be placed on the land.

A Conservation Easement is a voluntary contract entered into between a land owner and a government entity or land trust for the purpose of preserving certain attributes of the affected property. The easement is created by a legal document that restricts the uses or development that can occur on the land, thus preserving its existing character. Some conservation easements are donated by the owner. In other instances, the owner receives direct compensation for the easement. In both instances, the owner benefits from a variety of tax benefits, and from the fact that the land remains in private ownership. The land may be worked for profit, so long as land uses remain consistent with the provisions of the easement. Conservation easements are commonly used to preserve agricultural lands for these reasons. For the benefit of the public, the land remains undeveloped, preserving wildlife habitat and the scenic quality of the area. Public access, however, is usually not allowed.

Conservation Easements can significantly reduce the cost of land preservation, but they require long term monitoring and enforcement of the provisions of the easement. In the summer of 2003, a conservation easement was placed on the Bair Ranch in western Eagle County, and a number of other

conservation easements have either been donated or purchased in the valley and are now held by the Eagle Valley Land Trust or the Aspen Valley Land Trust.

There are times when a property of high conservation value is placed by the owner on the open market. The owner may not be interested in keeping the land, and wants to sell the property. If this land is located near good access and services, it may be highly desirable as development property. In these instances, the outright purchase of the property is necessary to preserve its open space or cultural characteristics. Lands desirable for development in Eagle County are quite expensive, and multifaceted inter-agency partnerships are usually required to raise the funds needed for these kinds of purchases. Long term maintenance needs must also be considered once these lands are purchased and become public open space. The 72 acre Eaton Ranch in Edwards was purchased from the owner in the fall of 2005, and is now owned by Eagle County. To further protect against future development, a conservation easement held by the Eagle Valley Land Trust was also placed on the property.

There continues to be varying views on how Eagle County should spend its open space dollars and what uses should be allowed on the resulting open space areas. Resolution 2003-97, which established Eagle County's Open Space Program, provided a definition of open space which applies to those lands purchased with county open space funds.

*The terms "open space" or "open space lands" shall mean an area of land that is primarily undeveloped, natural or pastoral in character and which may possess values such as fish and wildlife habitat or migration routes; working farms and ranches; scenic landscapes and vistas; wetlands, floodplains or other riparian habitat; public access to rivers and streams or other lands open to the public; geographic or topographic formations; rare or significant flora or fauna; cultural or historic values; or other natural or open space values. Notwithstanding, "open space" or "open space lands" may include lands which can be restored to a primarily undeveloped, natural, or pastoral character if such restoration has been approved as part of an officially adopted Eagle County or municipal plan.*

The above definition is hereby incorporated into this plan as the definition of Conservation Open Space, with the understanding that open space areas on public lands and within planned unit developments (PUDs) may accommodate different uses, as provided by Eagle County Land Use Regulations, the Eagle County Board of County Commissioners and public land managers.

### 3.8.5 Policy and Toolbox for Sensitive Lands

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
<p>a. Development should avoid areas of significant natural hazard.</p>	<p>Require the evaluation of all geologic hazards and constraints as related to new land uses.</p>	<p>Colorado Geologic Survey Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Utilize available hazards mapping ,GIS mapping and other state-of-the-art analysis tools in the analysis of development proposals</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Fully exercise the power granted to Eagle County through House Bill 1041 powers to evaluate development in floodplain areas.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government</p>
	<p>Review and update Eagle County Government’s adopted floodplain regulations as necessary.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Public Land Managers</p>
	<p>Create incentives and negotiate with land owners and developers to locate development away from hazard areas on specific properties</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Development Applicant</p>
<p>b. The mitigation of natural hazards should be done in a manner that protects the integrity of the natural environment and the visual quality of the area.</p>	<p>Minimize alteration of the natural landform by new development improvements to the greatest extent possible.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Avoid the aggravation or acceleration of existing potential hazards through land form or vegetation modification.</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Continue to refer all development plans to the Colorado Geologic Survey (CGS) for comment</p>	<p>Colorado Geologic Survey Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Require the incorporation of all recommendations of CGS and other hazards experts into development plans</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant Technical experts</p>

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Coordinate plans and policies related to natural hazards with public land officials and Town governments.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Explore the opportunity to utilize House Bill 1041 powers in other areas of environmental hazard concern	Eagle County Government
	Enforce policies established by the Eagle County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.	Colorado Geologic Survey Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Require a wildfire management plan for all new development.	Eagle County Government Development Applicant Local Fire Officials
	Mitigate wildfire hazards around individual home sites according to Eagle County wildfire regulations	Eagle County Government Development Applicant Homeowner Associations Local Fire Officials
	Develop incentive programs to encourage existing development and home sites to mitigate wildfire hazards	Eagle County Government Town Governments Homeowner Associations Local Fire Officials
	Encourage larger scale wildfire mitigation by public land managers and homeowners associations.	Public Land Managers Homeowners Associations Eagle County Government
	Enforce policies established by the Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan for Pitkin and Eagle Counties.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Emergency Management Office Eagle County Community Development Department
	Continue educational programs on best practices in wildland urban interface zones.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Homeowner Associations Local Fire Officials

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
c. Development and development patterns should preserve landscapes that include visual, historic, and archeological value.	Identify and inventory significant views, historic sites and structures, and archeological sites in Eagle County.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Historical Societies Technical Experts Advocacy Groups
	Identify and protect historical sites	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Historical Societies Advocacy Groups
	Consider the cumulative impact of incremental development on landscapes that include visual, historic, and archeological value during the decision making process	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Development Applicant
	Develop interpretive programs and walking and driving tours to increase public awareness of the county's history and heritage	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Historical Societies Advocacy Groups
	Incorporate historic buildings or features as amenities into new developments	Eagle County Government Town Governments Historical Societies Advocacy Groups Development Applicant
	When unable to incorporate historic buildings, make every attempt to move buildings prior to development	Eagle County Government Town Governments Historical Societies Advocacy Groups Development Applicant
	Establish one or more sites within the county where historic buildings can be relocated, restored and made available for public viewing or use	Eagle County Government Town Governments Historical Societies Advocacy Groups



<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Identify and protect archeological sites.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Historical Societies Technical Experts Advocacy Groups
	Work to identify and preserve valuable scenic resources through surveys and public forums.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Public Land Managers
	Place a high priority on parcels within scenic corridors for open space acquisition	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts
	Implement controls and programs to maintain air quality at pristine levels	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Department of Health
	Encourage a land development pattern that maintains open space buffers between towns and community centers	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Control the location and design of development on ridgelines preserve scenic quality.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Consider a zoning overlay that controls the types and character of land uses that can occur in open areas that separate community centers	Eagle County Government Town Governments
d. The continued evolution of Eagle County's present day culture should be considered integral to the high quality of life desired by residents and visitors.	Carefully review Eagle County's cultural heritage to help define and articulate its current cultural identity.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Advocacy Groups
	Support a broad range of arts and cultural endeavors and activities that explore the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual aspects of the community.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Advocacy Groups
	Support programs that highlight and promote the benefits of cultural diversity in Eagle County	Eagle County Government Town Governments Advocacy Groups

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Support programs that strive to create greater social equity in Eagle County	Eagle County Government Town Governments Advocacy Groups
	Continue to promote the importance of environmental preservation and the concept of living in harmony with nature in Eagle County	Eagle County Government Town Governments Homeowner Associations Advocacy Groups
	Support cultural education programs offered by local schools and institutions	Eagle <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> County Government Town Governments Local School districts Colorado Mountain College Private institutions Advocacy Groups
e. A variety of approaches should be utilized to preserve land as open space.	Develop and maintain an inventory of potential open space preservation areas.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts
	Strengthen Eagle County Land Use Regulations to strictly require open space with tangible public benefit within all Planned Unit Developments	Eagle County Government
	Include appropriate open space provisions in each sub-area Comprehensive Plan.	Eagle County Government Technical Advisory Committees
	Explore methods to compensate landowners in exchange for open space, including but not limited to a public conservancy, community land trust, development density bonuses, conservation easements, and transfer of development rights.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Development Applicant
	Promote tax advantages aimed at the long term preservation of areas of high conservation value, open ranch lands and the continuation of agricultural uses.	Ranchers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts
	Explore other partnerships and sources of funding for open space acquisition and maintenance in addition to the dedicated open space tax.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Develop an open space overlay map to better understand existing opportunities for the protection of available open space.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts
	Preserve current public land boundaries, except when an exchange is demonstrated to be in the best interests of open space preservation.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts
	Work to ensure all open space management practices, both private and public, are meeting the needs and desires of the community.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Development Applicant
	Work with public land management agencies to protect the open space values of public land.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts
f. Open space should be able to serve different needs in different applications.	Recognize that open space has different values and can accommodate different uses depending on its history, condition and location in the community.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Development Applicant
	Develop guidelines that clearly define the various types of open space available and identify when and where each type would be appropriate.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Homeowner Associations
	Establish a guideline for uses and improvements that would be allowed on each of the various types of open space in Eagle County.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Homeowner Associations

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Determine the features that make a particular open space parcel valuable given its intended use as open space and ensure that these features are preserved.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Development Applicant Homeowners Associations
	Promote the benefits of Conservation Easements to area ranchers	Eagle County Government Local Land Trusts
	Promote the public benefit of open space that remains in private ownership	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts
	Contribute to wildlife movement and the long-term viability of natural ecosystems by interconnecting open space parcels.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Development Applicant
	Work to ensure that all open space acquisitions set aside land in perpetuity	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Development Applicant
	Work to ensure that land uses surrounding open space tracts are compatible with the character and value of the open space.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Development Applicant
	Develop consistent plans for the long-term maintenance of all open space areas in Eagle County.	Public Land Managers Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Development Applicant Homeowner Associations

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Promote the use of clustered subdivisions as a method of obtaining open space in perpetuity	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Consider an Agricultural/Open Space Zoning overlay that would further control uses and development options in areas of high conservation value	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Ensure that the water rights associated with potential open space lands are secured to enable long-term maintenance and productivity of the land.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Local Land Trusts Development Applicant
	Work to streamline the effectiveness of Eagle County's Open Space Program	Eagle County Government
g. Appropriate access should be provided to public lands and rivers.	Where appropriate and considerate of public land management objectives and resource protection needs, provide new access points to public lands in Eagle County.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers Development Applicant
	Where appropriate and considerate of public land management objectives and resource protection needs, encourage access to public lands through private development.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Where appropriate and considerate of public land management objectives and resource protection needs, place high priority on the acquisition of open space that allows access to public lands and rivers	Eagle County Government Town Governments Public Land Managers
	Support efforts by the Colorado Division of Wildlife to lease fishing access to rivers on private property	Colorado Division of Wildlife Eagle County Government Town Governments Advocacy Groups

## 3.9 Environmental Quality

---

### Goals:

- 1) Air quality, ambient noise levels and the quality of the night sky in Eagle County are preserved at levels appropriate to a modern mountain community.
- 2) Eagle County is recognized as a leader in promoting energy efficiency and conservation.

### 3.9.1 Background Information

The environmental attributes of water quality, water quantity, wildlife, and sensitive lands have all been addressed in previous chapters. This section provides information on the remaining elements: air quality, light pollution (night sky), noise pollution and also discusses the need for energy conservation.

Eagle County's residents and visitors hold a high standard for environmental quality. Eagle County's quality of life and economy depend on the health of the natural environment and related ecosystems. The maintenance and/or enhancement of regional environmental quality are recognized as a keystone to a successful future for Eagle County.

Please refer to the following documents to gain a better understanding of the issues related to air quality, light pollution, noise and energy conservation.

[Air Pollution Control Division at the Colorado Department of Health and Environment](#)

[Environmental Protection Agency Office of Air and Radiation](#)

[American Lung Association](#)

[International Dark Sky Association](#)

[The World Atlas of Artificial Night Sky Brightness](#)

[Colorado State Forest Light Pollution Map](#)

[Noise Pollution Clearinghouse](#)

[EPA: Model Community Noise Control Ordinance](#)

[Department of Energy](#)

[US DOE: Colorado Data](#)

[US DOE: Renewable Potential Maps – Mountain Division](#)

[US DOE: Petroleum Profile: Colorado](#)

[Sierra Club Colorado Clean Energy Campaign](#)

### 3.9.2 Air Quality

#### Policies:

- a. Air quality should meet the highest applicable safety standards, as well as the aesthetic expectations of local residents.

Good air quality provides the setting for a healthy lifestyle in Eagle County. The crisp, clean air of the Central Rockies has traditionally allowed for sweeping vistas and clear views, and supports lifestyles centered on the pursuit of outdoor activities. Diminished air quality threatens these attributes. Scenic values are already degraded during certain periods by the haze of airborne particulates and chemicals. Recreational and fitness pursuits of residents and visitors may become less attractive and possibly even a health concern as contaminants increase. Air pollutants fall to the ground, either as particulates or as chemicals in rain water and snow, and increase the potential for secondary impacts to rivers, vegetation and wildlife. Environmental impacts associated with acid rain are well documented.

In Colorado, the State is generally responsible for conducting air quality monitoring programs. Considerable testing was conducted in Eagle County during the 1970's and 1980's, and results showed air quality well within established standards. No formal air quality monitoring has been conducted by the state in the area in the last 20 years, although considerable testing is underway in Garfield County to the west.

While Eagle County's air quality is within Clean Air Act standards, localized impacts are increasingly evident. The presence of air pollutants is mostly due to car, bus and truck emissions, home heating emissions, restaurant exhausts, asphalt batch plants and fugitive dust which originates from roads, gravel pits and construction sites. Carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and ozone are some of the chemicals common to fossil fuel combustion which have been shown to damage the environment and potentially cause long-term health problems in humans. Particulates are perhaps a greater concern in Eagle County, however, as they affect visibility and also pose a health risk. Sources of particulate matter include car emissions, wood burning, roads and disturbed ground.

There is little that local jurisdictions can do to prevent the increased through-traffic on Interstate 70 and Highway 82 that is anticipated in coming years. Technology that results in cleaner burning cars will hopefully reduce some of the impacts these major travel routes will have on local air quality, although any positive effects may be off set by increased traffic numbers. The County and Towns should incorporate viable clean burning technologies, and should support plans for increased utilization of mass transit on a regional scale. Eagle County and the Towns should also strive to reduce the amount of local vehicle miles traveled by providing more public and multi-modal transit options, and by working to minimize the distance between housing and employment centers.

Through the enactment of stringent regulations, the County and the incorporated towns have taken significant strides to reduce the use of wood burning stoves for home heating. This has helped eliminate wood smoke emissions from new subdivisions, and has also significantly reduced emissions from older homes and trailer parks that have converted to cleaner burning options. Air quality in established towns like Eagle and Gypsum and Basalt has been positively impacted, especially during the winter months.

Dust palliatives such as magnesium chloride are increasingly used to suppress dust emitted from roads, and their use should continue to be encouraged, so long as care is taken to protect adjacent environments. County Land Use Regulations and grading permits issued by the County require the submittal of dust control plans for activities that will disturb large areas of land. Continued work is needed in this area however, as dust on windy days is a frequent problem and dust suppression measures are difficult to enforce.

In mountainous terrain, air pollution can be exacerbated by diurnal, or twice daily, air flow patterns. In the evenings, cool air descends from higher elevations and slides beneath warmer air in the valley floors, setting up a temperature inversion (warm air over cool air). These inversions can trap and concentrate pollutants near the ground. The relatively shallow layer of cool air then migrates slowly down the valley floors, carrying collected pollutants with it. The warming of mountain slopes by the sun during the day has the opposite effect, creating up-currents that disperse pollutants. On cloudy days, pollution levels created by evening inversions can persist for many hours.

Given this thermal inversion phenomenon, one can see how the general massing and orientation of buildings constructed on the valley floor could influence pollution levels. Groups of buildings positioned so as to impede down-valley flows effectively trap poor quality air within the zone of their influence, which includes the space frequented by people.

Residents and guests of Eagle County should be made aware of local pollution sources and local air flow patterns. Driving and wood burning should be discouraged during times when inversions are likely. The review of individual site plans and larger development plans should consider the influence buildings can have on air flows and resultant pollution levels.

### 3.9.3 Protection of Night Sky

#### Policies:

- b. Lighting plans that reduce nuisance glare and protect the quality of the night sky should be encouraged.**

The ability to see the stars and planets at night is a characteristic expected of living in the high country. Many communities today, however, generate excessive light pollution, which interacts with particles in the air and prevents clear night sky viewing. For those willing to travel, Eagle County's public backcountry lands provide excellent opportunities for stargazing, but so too could Eagle County's communities if more stringent lighting regulations were put in place.

Proper lighting is necessary for safety, security, and utility function. However, poorly planned and designed outdoor lighting results in unwanted levels of light on adjacent properties and in the sky overhead. This wastes energy, and creates bright spots that potentially impact views and distract from the local ambience. Improved lighting design directs light to where it is needed and screens light from adjacent areas. Eagle County should not only continue to enforce Land Use Regulations which require that lighting not glare on surrounding property, but should improve standards to screen light from the night sky.

### 3.9.4 Noise

#### Policies:

- c. Noise should be minimized to meet the highest applicable safety standards, as well as the aesthetic expectations of local residents.**

Another environmental element of potential concern to residents, second homeowners, and visitors to Eagle County is noise. There are two concerns related to auditory impacts – public health and community character. Eagle County Government currently regulates “Permissible Noise Levels” by measuring inherent and recurring noise and noise peaks that last no longer than 15 minutes in any one hour at the property line. These regulations are designed to address noise related health concerns for individuals in close proximity to the source.

Character issues related to noise are much more difficult to regulate as they rely on subjective analysis instead of hard science. In Eagle County, plans for proposed development must meet a standard for compatibility with surrounding land uses and character. Character is readily translated into intensity of use and/or visual compatibility, but some struggle with the inclusion of noise in the character debate. Eagle County Government should better define compatibility with surrounding character to include noise.

Eagle County has developed in a linear fashion along major highways, which are a source of considerable noise. The sound of vehicles alone often exceeds the noise standards set in Eagle County Land Use Regulations. The County should continue to support efforts by the State to enforce regulations that require vehicles to have adequate and properly maintained engine mufflers.

Many neighborhoods have responded to road noise by installing landscape berms to absorb or reflect the sound. These berms can be effective at reducing noise and providing visual screens, but can also detract from the attractiveness of the area by creating “berm borders” along public travel routes. Attractive elements of the area, including well designed neighborhoods and golf courses, are increasingly removed from the public's view.

Noise is an issue for everyone, and Eagle County should work with the Town Governments and homeowner associations to address noise pollution in a comprehensive manner. Educational



campaigns could be developed to inform residents, second homeowners, and visitors of related policies.

### 3.9.5 Energy Efficiency

#### Policies:

- d. Energy efficiency and the reduction of overall energy consumption should be a primary goal for future operations and developments in Eagle County.**

The focus on planning a more sustainable future requires that Eagle County consider available energy sources and consumption patterns. Currently, the County relies heavily upon fossil fuels to power homes and vehicles. Not only are these a finite resource that will continue to rise in cost, but the combustion of such energy sources releases green house gases and particulates that degrade air quality. Two approaches will lead to a more sustainable use of energy: 1) reducing overall energy consumption and 2) shifting to renewable energy sources.

According to the EPA, half of the energy consumed by an average household in the US is attributed to home heating and the other half to the driving of personal vehicles. Land use, housing and transportation planning, site planning and neighborhood and building design have profound effects on energy efficiency and energy-related air emissions. The development of energy efficient, livable, transit-oriented communities would therefore present one logical approach to help reduce the consumption of energy. The opportunities to utilize this approach in Eagle County are becoming further limited as the area approaches “build out”. Energy efficiency should be evaluated with all new development and re-development.

As gasoline prices continue to increase so too will the incentive for governments and private businesses to find alternate sources of energy for transportation. Eagle County should set a lead example for the community in this regard by taking advantage of new technologies as they are developed and proven to be reliable.

This plan provides an opportunity to work towards building a community that is socially, environmentally and fiscally responsible and sustainable. The planning framework contained herein responds to the increased recognition of the area’s unique quality of life attributes and of the significant economic, environmental, and social costs associated with growth related issues such as urban sprawl, traffic congestion, water and air pollution, loss of local resident housing, loss of neighborhoods and social contact, energy consumption and waste, and the loss of areas of high environmental sensitivity. Eagle County Government should set the example, and should pursue an active role in working towards a more sustainable and energy efficient future by utilizing new technologies, and by adopting appropriate standards, regulations and controls.

### 3.9.6 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for Environmental Quality

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
a. Air quality should meet the highest applicable safety standards, as well as the aesthetic expectations of local residents.	Recognize and incorporate into the decision making process the contribution that clean air makes to healthy lifestyles, scenic mountain beauty, tourism and the economy.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Secure funding and implement a program to monitor local air quality impacts and trends.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Environmental Protection Agency Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
	Implement and enforce local automobile and truck emissions testing programs	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Promote car pooling by employees.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Business Owners
	Utilize high gas mileage/low emission vehicles.	Eagle County Transportation Authority and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Promote the use of multi-modal transportation to reduce personal vehicle trips.	Eagle County Transportation Authority and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Assure access to multi-modal transportation options for all residents, second home owners and visitors.	Eagle County Transportation Authority and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Provide affordable housing opportunities in close proximity to job centers to reduce personal vehicle trips.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Focus development within towns and communities to reduce the need for daily commuting.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
	Continue to enforce Eagle County and Town Land Use Regulations that restrict the use of wood burning devices	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Appropriately regulate the burning of solid waste as a means of solid waste disposal.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Require dust control plans for all development applications that will involve excavation or other land disturbance.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Monitor and enforce dust control strategies on all mining sites, gravel pits, and large scale developments.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Set limits for construction site disturbance, require temporary revegetation of stockpiles, and permanent revegetation of all disturbed areas once final grades have been established.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
	Require periodic watering and track-out control devices at all construction site access points.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
	Implement an escalating fine system for non-compliance with established dust suppression standards.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
	Require and implement appropriate dust control methods on public and private dirt roads.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
b. Lighting plans that reduce nuisance glare and protect the quality of the night sky should be encouraged.	Develop uniform design standards that control the type and quality of lighting used in Eagle County	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
	For commercial uses, require applications for commercial uses submit a lighting plan that conforms to applicable regulations.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
	For residential uses, promote the use of shielded down lighting that does not glare on neighboring properties.	Eagle County Government Town Governments

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Develop standards for road, highway, pathway and parking lot lighting that address safety needs while minimizing excess light.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Colorado Department of Transportation Development Applicants
	Utilize motion detectors to minimize the duration of security lighting.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
	Enforce lighting standards that minimize fugitive light and protect the quality of the night sky.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants
c. Noise should be minimized to meet the highest applicable safety standards, as well as the aesthetic expectations of local residents.	Develop standards for appropriate noise levels based on the character of Eagle County.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Consider updating noise regulations as new science and best practices are developed.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Ensure that noise levels are safe for residents, visitors, and employees.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Include an analysis of potential noise when making the finding of compatibility with surrounding uses for all new development proposals	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Support regulations of the State of Colorado regarding the requirement for adequate car and truck mufflers.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Collaborate with all affected parties to address noise pollution from major highways.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Home Owner Associations Development Applicants
	Where appropriate and properly planned, encourage barriers to isolate residential communities from noise impacts.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
d. Energy efficiency and the reduction of overall energy consumption should be a primary goal for future operations and developments in Eagle County.	Promote transit-oriented development, and encourage plans that minimize reliance on personal motorized vehicles.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant

Policies	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
	Design communities in a way that reduces fossil fuel consumption for heating or cooling.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicant
	Prioritize renewable energy as an optimal energy source.	Eagle County Government Town Governments
	Implement energy efficiency guidelines that promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ multi-use buildings which share energy needs;</li> <li>▪ landscaping which buffers buildings from wind and sun and reduces heating and cooling needs;</li> <li>▪ streets and buildings that are oriented to maximize solar gain in the winter and minimize solar heating in the summer;</li> <li>▪ energy efficient buildings.</li> <li>▪ Green Building techniques</li> </ul>	Eagle County Government Town Governments Development Applicants Service Providers Special Districts
	Implement the following energy saving activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the use of local or recycled construction materials</li> <li>▪ the installation of energy and water efficient appliances.</li> <li>▪ maximum insulation in all buildings.</li> <li>▪ minimum air infiltration in all buildings.</li> </ul>	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Districts Development Applicants
	Encourage conversion to more efficient, clean burning vehicles and buses.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Districts
	Examine the feasibility of renewable energy generation in Eagle County.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Districts
	Encourage the development of other alternative energy supply options including, but not limited to, wind, solar, micro-hydro, biomass, and geothermal.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Districts
	Support initiatives to reduce highway speeds.	Eagle County Government Colorado Department of Transportation / Federal Highway Administration

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Recommended Strategies</b>	<b>Applicable Entities</b>
	Support efforts by local energy providers to offer home and business energy audits	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers
	Develop and implement education programs directed at residents, second homeowners and visitors to encourage energy conservation.	Eagle County Government Town Governments Service Providers Special Districts Homeowner Associations

## 3.10 Future Land Use Map

---

**Goal: Future Land Use Maps are valuable tools, developed through community input, that help guide development in Eagle County.**

**Policy:**

- a. Zone changes and site-specific land use proposals should reflect the written policies of this Comprehensive Plan, the land use designations of the Future Land Use Map and the goals and objectives set forth within Area Community Plans, as applicable.**

The [Future Land Use Map](#) (FLUM), in combination with County adopted Area Community Plan maps, portrays existing development and depicts potential future land use patterns. These maps are intended to serve as a conceptual guide for future land use decisions in unincorporated Eagle County. It is the intent of this Comprehensive Plan that outcomes regarding zone changes and site-specific land use proposals should reflect the written policies of this Plan, the Comprehensive Future Land Use Map and the goals and objectives set forth within Area Community Plans, where applicable. In those instances where Future Land Use Map designations are inconsistent with written policies of this Plan, the land use designation shall prevail; so long as the proposed land use is consistent with the spirit and intent of all other relevant Comprehensive Plan goals, policies and implementation strategies.

The areas covered by County adopted Area Community Plans are indicated on the FLUM, and users should refer to those specific documents for future land use map information. The land use designations indicated by area community plans were created through detailed input from the respective community at the time the area plan was adopted, and as a result may differ from the designations indicated on this Future Land Use Map. This FLUM designates the following land use categories:

Town Jurisdiction	Rural Lands	Public Lands
Rural Center	Existing Approved Developments	Community Center
Outlying Service Commercial	Community Buffer	Countryside

This FLUM and associated area community plan FLUMs do not depict existing zoning, and the recommended land use designations are not intended to substitute for or supersede the County's Official Zone District Maps. Furthermore, it is not anticipated that zone districts will necessarily be changed to correspond to land use designations indicated by the FLUM, as there are many other factors contemplated in the zone change process. Rather, the designations are intended to depict where various land uses and densities may be appropriate. Similarly, the description of uses and densities in the text which follows and in the text that supports Area Community Plans is not meant to substitute or supersede the property's underlying zone district standards. Per Eagle County Land Use Regulations, existing zone district standards will continue to be used to control the type and intensity of use or development a given property may accommodate.

### 3.10.1 Land Use Designation Guidelines

**Town Jurisdiction:** The Town Jurisdiction designation indicates those lands within the present boundaries of Basalt, Gypsum, Eagle, Avon, Vail, Minturn, and Red Cliff.

This Comprehensive Plan encourages collaborative decision making across jurisdictional boundaries, and recommends that: (a) joint Town/County staff review be performed for development planned to occur within three (3) miles of the Town boundaries; (b) the County consider Town standards when development is proposed in areas where annexation is anticipated; and (c) the County enter into intergovernmental agreements with the Towns to more fully address the review procedures for lands located within each town's three mile plan.

**Community Center:** The Community Center designation includes lands in unincorporated Eagle County which do not lie within a designated area community plan and which are established as existing or potential residential, commercial or mixed use activity centers. This designation considers (a) proximity to major transportation interchanges or routes; (b) whether or not public water supply and sewage treatment facilities exist or can logically be provided to support urban-type development; and (c) whether or not impacts to potentially sensitive lands might occur. At the time of this comprehensive FLUM update, Dotsero is the only Community Center designation in Eagle County, as all other lands formerly designated Community Center have since been incorporated into a town or are now encompassed by a sub area.

Community Centers are places where mixes of residential and non-residential activities appropriate to serve the population of the Community Center and surrounding rural areas take place. Community facilities, such as schools and fire stations, are appropriately located within Community Centers, as are community-oriented recreation facilities. Development is intended to be served by centralized water supply and sewage treatment facilities, and not by private wells and individual sewage disposal systems.

Community Centers are appropriate locations for the development of affordable housing. Residential development in Community Centers is expected to be in the range of three to twelve dwelling units per acre, and appropriate amounts of public areas, parks and pathways should be included. Cluster and planned unit development (PUD) options are encouraged for new development in Community Centers. The boundaries of the Community Centers may expand in size when consistent with the policies of this Comprehensive Plan and the applicable Area Community Plan.

It is not the intent of this Comprehensive Plan that new Community Centers be designated in the Rural lands of Eagle County unless it can be demonstrated that a new Community Center will accommodate a specific regional need. If determined necessary, new Community Centers should be required to adhere to strict development standards consistent with Eagle County Land Use Regulations and the policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

**Rural Center:** The Rural Center designation includes those lands within unincorporated Eagle County which have become established as small commercial service centers supporting surrounding agricultural and low density residential community needs. The character of these lands is that of a small rural village or a crossroads development, surrounded by agricultural and resource-oriented uses.

Rural Centers are typically located at or near transportation interchanges or along major or secondary transportation routes. Community facilities, such as schools and fire stations, may be located within Rural Centers if the residential density so warrants, or if the Rural Center is a logical service hub for surrounding Rural Lands. Development in a Rural Center will likely be served by private wells and individual sewage disposal systems (ISDS), although the development of small scale community water service and sewer service systems is encouraged.

Rural Centers are places where a mix of residential and non-residential activities takes place, and are intended to serve the population within the Rural Center, the population in the immediate surrounding area and recreation enthusiasts passing through. Rural Centers are not appropriate locations for regional commercial facilities or other commercial activities intended to draw persons from a broad geographic area on a frequent basis.

The existing Rural Centers in Eagle County are Burns/Derby Junction, Bond, and McCoy. No new Rural Centers designations are anticipated at this time.

When local conditions and development pressures warrant, the County Planning Commission could consider revising Area Community Plans to change an existing Rural Center designation to a Community Center designation, so long as development plans fully comply with the standards for Community Centers, the policies of this Comprehensive Plan and the applicable development standards of Eagle County Land Use Regulations.



**Existing Approved Development:** Included in this designation are those lands that are outside approved area community plans that have been previously approved for more intensive use through the County subdivision or PUD process. That process, and the subsequent approval for the development by the Board of County Commissioners, has determined a density and/or land use that is appropriate to the site, and it is expected by this Plan that those uses and densities will continue in similar fashion and character for the foreseeable future.

New compatible uses may be appropriate within this designation. In keeping with the policies of this Comprehensive Plan, areas of existing commercial development could, through redevelopment, include the addition of residential units, creating a mixed use environment. Existing residential neighborhoods could, through redevelopment, be provided with a limited number of neighborhood-oriented public service facilities, so long as a clear need was demonstrated and any adverse impacts to the neighborhood were fully mitigated. Eagle County Land Use Regulation processes and standards should be applied to any proposal for redevelopment within these areas.

**Outlying Service Commercial:** In keeping with the policies of this Comprehensive Plan, service commercial functions should be located within the Towns, Community Centers and Rural Centers of Eagle County. However, certain uses that are locally or regionally important may not always be compatible with community center uses.

The Outlying Service Commercial designation includes lands which already contain or could be developed to contain a variety of low impact commercial or industrial services. Domestic water and sewer service is generally not available in these areas. Potential uses include warehousing (but not big box retail), lumber yards, brick yards, utility service facilities, contractor service yards, recreation sites, recreation vehicle parks, and other low-impact, non-polluting, industrial, manufacturing or research facilities.

At present, suitable areas for outlying service commercial are located east of the Dotsero Community Center and east of the County Landfill in the Ute Creek/Wolcott vicinity (this area is within the Wolcott Area Community Plan, and is not indicated on the comprehensive FLUM). Lands east of Dotsero are prominently visible to travelers on Interstate 70, and as such specific design and development standards must be implemented to include a requirement for appropriate architecture and the screening of outdoor storage areas.

Eagle County Land Use Regulation processes and standards must be applied to any proposal for development or redevelopment within Outlying Service Commercial areas.

**Countryside:** The Countryside designation includes lands within unincorporated Eagle County which contain low density single family residential development. These lands are characterized by individual homes located in clusters containing a relatively small number of lots. Many of these lots are non-conforming in size relative to the minimum lot size requirement of the underlying zone district, having been created prior the enactment of subdivision regulations in 1964. The gross density of Countryside development is expected to range from two to thirty-five acres per dwelling unit.

Countryside lands provide transition areas between the County's more densely developed areas and its less densely settled rural lands. The clustering of homes is encouraged, with homes positioned on the least impactful portions of the site. Agricultural lands and lands of significant visual, cultural or environmental quality should be protected.

Local-serving commercial uses are generally not provided within Countryside developments, although isolated commercial activities permitted by special review may occur when they are compatible with the character of adjacent uses and satisfy all other applicable criteria of the Land Use Regulations. Public facilities such as schools are also not typically located in developments designated Countryside. Rather, Countryside areas rely on nearby Community Centers or Rural Centers to serve their daily needs. Development on Countryside lands is typically serviced by on-site or small community water supply and sewage disposal-systems.

**Rural Lands:** The Rural Lands designation includes private properties in unincorporated Eagle County which can be categorized as ranch, open range or forested lands. Rural lands are prevalent north of Eagle, north and south of Wolcott, in the Burns and Derby Junction area along the Colorado River Road and north of El Jebel in the Cottonwood Pass area. A large tract of Rural designation encompasses the historic Eagle Mine and Battle Mountain Pass south of the Town of Minturn.

Residential densities on rural lands are limited to one primary residence and one accessory dwelling unit per 35 acres, although some smaller non-conforming residential lots exist. Small clustered subdivisions may also be approved on lands designated "Rural" per applicable Eagle County Land Use Regulations. Clustered developments should result in the preservation of lands of environmental or cultural value, and should otherwise conform to the intents and purposes of the written policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

Other resource-oriented uses such as mining and forestry are allowed, and can be found scattered on lands of this designation throughout the county.

Public facilities are not associated with the development of lands with a Rural designation in Eagle County. Rural lands rely on nearby Community Centers or Rural Centers to serve their daily needs, with commercial activities being limited to isolated uses which are only permitted by special review as provided by Eagle County Land Use Regulations. Development in these areas is served exclusively by private wells and individual sewage disposal systems.

There are a number of existing small recreation areas scattered throughout the County's Rural Lands designation, some of which pre-date County land use and zoning regulations. These include the State Bridge, Anderson Camp, Rancho Del Rio and Piney Lake recreation areas. These small recreation areas are enjoyed by both residents of and visitors to Eagle County and are consistent with, and in many ways define, the County's recreational and rural character. The County's policy towards these areas is that they are viable uses and should be permitted and encouraged to continue. Expansion of these areas and the establishment of new small recreation areas of this type should be considered on a case-by-case basis, considering the suitability of the land, whether necessary services can be provided and whether the expansion or new development is in character with the surrounding rural lands.

**Community Buffer:** These are lands, both public and private, that are located between existing towns and community centers which provide undeveloped visual breaks along the County's main development corridors. Residential densities within the Community Buffer designation are limited to one primary residence and one accessory dwelling unit per 35 acres, although clusters of smaller previously approved residential lots exist. Agricultural lands and lands of significant visual, cultural or environmental quality should be protected. Additional residential development of densities greater than one (1) unit per 35 acres, if approved, should be clustered, with homes positioned in a manner consistent with the intent and purpose of this land use designation and the written policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

Commercial or retail uses are not associated with the community buffer designation, as ample community services should be available in nearby communities.

Lands with this designation encompass significant sections of the County's major rivers and associated riparian environments. The preservation of wildlife habitat should be given a high priority on lands designated as Community Buffer. Obtaining public access to streams and rivers is an appropriate endeavor, so long as sensitive lands and ecosystems are protected. Recreational uses should otherwise be limited to those of a dispersed, low impact nature.

Mining for gravel has historically occurred on lands with a Community Buffer designation, and several pits are in operation today. Gravel extraction requires approval of a Special Use Permit by the Board of County Commissioners. Operations should be screened from public view, and should be closely monitored to assure compliance with applicable State and County standards, as well as any conditions of approval. Upon termination of mining, affected lands should be restored to natural contours, top soiled and revegetated to natural range land conditions.

**Public Lands:** The Public Lands designation includes all lands within unincorporated Eagle County under the jurisdiction of the United States or the State of Colorado. Residential, commercial, or industrial land uses, with the exception of mining and timber harvesting, are not anticipated on these lands. These lands do provide, however, significant recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors. Where appropriate, public access should continue to be provided to Public Lands, so long as public land management objectives and resource protection needs are being met.

While public lands may be sold or traded to private individuals, it is the intent of this Comprehensive Plan that the boundaries of the Public Lands designation be maintained as they presently exist, unless a proposed land exchange demonstrates a clear public benefit to the residents and visitors of Eagle County, is consistent with the policies of this Comprehensive Plan, and is in the best interests of adjacent communities.

### 3.10.2 Policies and Recommended Implementation Strategies for the Future Land Use Map

Policy	Recommended Strategies	Applicable Entities
<p>a. Zone changes and site-specific land use proposals should reflect the written policies of this Comprehensive Plan, the land use designations of the <a href="#">Future Land Use Map</a> and the goals and objectives set forth within Area Community Plans, as applicable.</p>	<p>Make the Comprehensive Plan and FLUM easily accessible and available to all local Towns, Metropolitan Districts, professional land planning agencies, architectural firms, businesses, interest groups, property owners and the residents and workers of Eagle County</p>	<p>Eagle County Government</p>
	<p>Provide surrounding counties and municipalities with a copy of the Comprehensive Plan and FLUM</p>	<p>Eagle County Government</p>
	<p>Require pre-application conferences to discuss the applicability of the Comprehensive Plan for all land use proposals</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Continue to analyze all development proposals to assure conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and FLUM land use designations</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Continue to dedicate a section of all County staff reports to a discussion of Comprehensive Plan conformance</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Development Applicant</p>
	<p>Update the Future Land Use Map and Area Community Plan Future Land Use Maps with each update or revision to the affected Plan</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Eagle County Planning Commissions</p>
	<p>Insert each new Area Community Plan and associated FLUM into the Comprehensive Plan as they are completed</p>	<p>Eagle County Government Eagle County Planning Commissions</p>

FLUM

# **PART IV: AREA PLANS**

## 4.1 Establishment of Area Plans

---

### 4.1.1 Area Plan Delineation

Eagle County has been divided into eleven (11) areas for planning purposes. These areas are illustrated in the [Reference Map of Eagle County](#) and are described below:

- **Colorado River Road Area:** This area covers the entire Northwest corner of Eagle County inclusive of Deep Creek, Sweetwater, Burns, Derby Mesa, McCoy, Bond and State Bridge. An Area Plan has not yet been developed for this region.
- **Northeast Area:** This is the northeast corner of the County and includes Sheep Horn Road, Trough Road, and the Piney River watershed. An Area Plan has not yet been developed for this region.
- **Dotsero Area:** This area includes the area in and around Two Rivers and the commercial land north of the interstate. This area also includes the confluence of the Colorado and the Eagle River. An Area Plan has not yet been developed for this region.
- **Gypsum Area:** The Gypsum Area includes the Town of Gypsum and the Gypsum Creek watershed, as well as BLM lands north of Gypsum. While the Town of Gypsum has a master plan, a County Area Plan has not yet been developed for this region.
- **Eagle Area:** This area includes the Town of Eagle and the Brush Creek watershed. Eby Creek Mesa and a portion of the Castle Peak Ranch located north of the Interstate are also included. The 1996 Town of Eagle Community Plan has been incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan.
- **Wolcott Area:** This area includes Wolcott and Bellyache Ridge, and stretches north along Highway 131 to the Wolcott Divide. The 1992 Wolcott Area Community Plan has been incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan.
- **Edwards Area:** This area includes the unincorporated Community Center of Edwards, the Lake Creek drainage, Singletree and other areas north of the Interstate, and the Cordillera PUD. The 2003 Edwards Area Community Plan has been incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan.
- **Avon Area:** The Avon Area includes the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Avon including the Beaver Creek watershed, Eagle-Vail, and the Wildridge development. While the Town of Avon has a master plan, a County Plan has not yet been developed for this region.
- **Vail Area:** The Vail Area includes the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Vail including the Vail Ski Area and the Gore Creek watershed. While the Town of Vail has a master plan, a County Area Plan has not yet been developed for this region.
- **Highway 24 Area:** This area captures the southeast corner of the county, and includes the Eagle River upstream of the confluence with the Gore Creek. Battle Mountain Pass and the Towns of Minturn and Red Cliff are in this area. While the Town of Minturn has a master plan, a County Area Plan has not yet been developed for this region.
- **Mid Valley Area:** This large area includes the entire southwestern corner of the county, from Upper Cattle Creek Road through Missouri Heights to the communities of El Jebel and Basalt on the Roaring Fork River, and then up the Fryingpan River to Ruedi Reservoir and the rural communities of Thomasville and Meredith. The 1991 Mid Valley Community Area Plan has been incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan.

### 4.1.2 Using Planning Policy Framework and Area Plans Together

Decisions relative to planning, development, management, and growth should refer to guiding policies contained within Eagle County Comprehensive Plan and applicable Community Area Plans. Area plans are intended to provide more detailed guidelines or specific direction for the development of individual areas than is contained in the Eagle County Comprehensive Plan. The area plans recognize

and attempt to capture the distinct character of each planning region. Once developed, area plans shall apply to the entire unincorporated area within the boundaries as shown on the [Reference Map of Eagle County](#).

## 4.2 How Area Plans Are Developed

---

### 4.2.1 Initial Development of Area Plans

Area plans shall be written for all eleven areas as described above. The process for development of area plans shall include at least four phases:

- Data collection and analysis
- Public participation
- Policy Review
- Development of Future Land Use Plan

Area plans shall focus on issues that are unique to the area and at a minimum, include the following:

- Land use maps and accompanying text that describes suitable land uses for the different geographic locations in the area.
- Identification of community's unique role in the region's economy and policies for advancing that role.
- Policies outlining steps to improve the balance between jobs and housing.
- Identification of suitable locations for a diversity of workforce housing types.
- Policies related to infrastructure and service needs. This step must be coordinated with local service providers.
- Policies identifying preferred approaches to open space management in and around the area (use restrictions, forest health policies, trails and trailhead improvements, etc.)
- Policies related to protection and maintenance of natural ecosystems, sensitive lands, wildlife habitat and lands containing cultural resources.
- Identification of locations where development should be encouraged in order to minimize fiscal impacts on governmental service providers.
- Goals, policies, or actions related to area specific issues that are not already addressed in the Eagle County Comprehensive Planning Policy Framework.
- Analysis of implications on policies established by the Comprehensive Planning Policy Framework (e.g., housing, infrastructure, economic development, etc.)
- Implementation strategies to enact stated goals, policies, and actions.

Area plans **shall not** include the following:

- Goals, actions, or policies that are not area specific, and that are instead countywide in nature and therefore already addressed in the Eagle County Comprehensive Planning Policy Framework.
- Goals, policies/actions that directly conflict with the Eagle County Comprehensive Planning Policy Framework.

### 4.2.2 Updates and Amendments of Area Plans

A review and update of area plans should occur at least once every five years, or as needed in response to changed conditions. Any alterations to boundaries should be done at the time of an area plan update. Area plans are in effect until replaced by an update adopted by the Eagle County Planning Commission or Roaring Fork Valley Regional Planning Commission.