

Town of Meeker



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

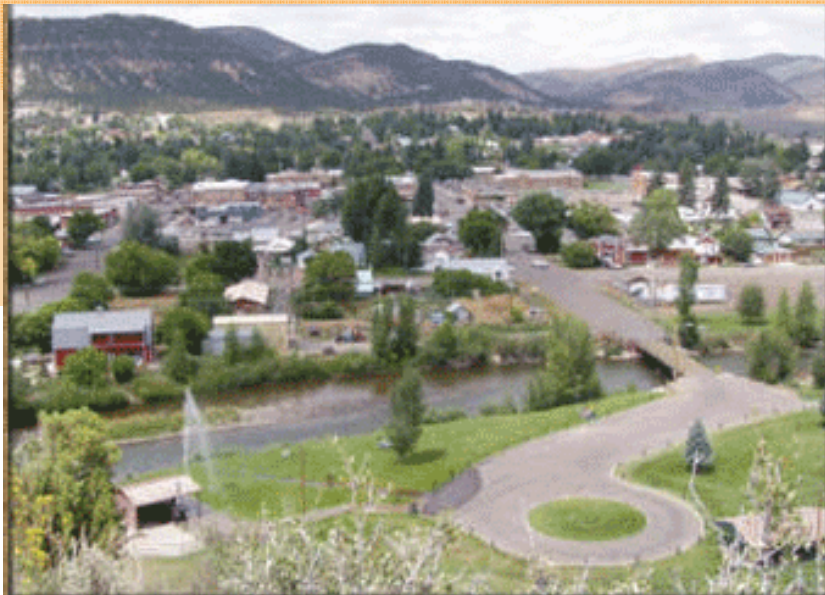
Updated 2006



“The River Runs Through It”

Meeker Comprehensive Plan : Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Growth	9
Existing Conditions	12
Community Economics	21
Future Land Use Map	26
Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails	32
Level of Service	41
Fiscal Considerations	42
Transportation	47



***The following citizens dedicated many hours of their time
and effort to complete this project!***

Meeker Board of Trustees

Mayor

Steve Loshbaugh

Mayor ProTem

Harold White

Mandy Eatheridge

Andy Thomson

Chris Ham

Dixie Jones

Mickey Reagle

Harold White

Meeker Planning Commission

Chairman

Gary Hindman

Co-Chairman

Leslie Sorensen

Martha Griffin

Joy Thayer

Keith Rholl

Citizen Advisory Committee

Mitch Bettis Gary Hindman

Mandi Etheridge Wendy Kiser-Gutierrez

Dondi Glasscock Forrest Nelson

Terry Goedert Sparky Pappas

LD Grove Keith Rholl

Heidi Ham Andy Thomson

Chris Ham Harold White

Staff assistance: Sharon Day (Town Manager) & Denise Sheridan (Town
Planner) Lisa Cook, Kathleen Sizemore, & Julie McNay (Administration),
Shelly Flannery (Tourism Coordinator), Jerry Viscardi (Attorney)
Consulting assistance provided by: Rural Planning Institute

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Introduction

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A Comprehensive Plan is an officially adopted advisory document that outlines a community's goals for the future and provides direction for elected and appointed officials in making choices regarding the needs of the community. Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan, along with the Future Land Use map, provide guidance for decisions affecting growth and annexation, the use and development of land, preservation of open space, and the expansion of public facilities and services. The policy recommendations and maps contained in the Comprehensive Plan are interrelated and in most cases should not be used independently from one another or from other adopted elements of the Plan.

The Town of Meeker authored its first comprehensive plan in 1984 when the Town had only slightly more than 2000 full time residents. The plan has not been updated since that time. This update represents the first major update and begins as Meeker approaches nearly twenty-five hundred residents.

In order to clarify the intent of the plan document, the following is offered. In Meeker, the comprehensive plan is advisory only. It is not mandatory that either the Planning Commission or Town Board follow any adopted plan; however, much time and effort from the Meeker Community contributed to the development of this plan including land use guidelines. To ignore the plan without good and legitimate reason should be unacceptable. Changes to the land use element of the plan should only be made if there is a change in the immediate area that would indicate such. While it is a property owners right to make a request on land use designation, the Planning Commission and Town Board must assign an appropriate land use that benefits the entire community, not just the property owner.

THIS PLAN IS DIFFERENT

Although some of the background information found in this plan is similar to the one that came before it, there are significant changes to the structure and objectives. This Plan is primarily geared to identifying and prioritizing relatively short term (ten years or less) community issues and the outlining of concrete actions to achieve these objectives.

This plan also strives for brevity, conciseness, and transparency so that any existing or prospective citizen, developer, or business owner can read and clearly understand the implications of the entire document in a reasonably short period of time.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Introduction

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



THE PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESS

In May of 2005 the Town of Meeker contracted with Rural Planning Institute (RPI) a Durango based not-for-profit consulting firm to organize and update the comprehensive plan document.

The public process engaged the following elements:

- Personal interviews of all elected and appointed officials & some staff
- Review of comprehensive citizen survey delivered by hand to each residence in Meeker
- Personal Interviews with nearly 30 Meeker Citizens
- Development of a citizens advisory group and detailed policy review over a two month period
- Open session review of policy with planning commission over a two month period
- Public hearings
- Town Board of Trustee review and adoption at open meetings

RPI personally interviewed all of the elected and appointed officials making up the Meeker Board of Trustees and Planning Commission. Each elected and appointed official gave RPI several additional names for further interviewing and consideration as members of a Citizen Advisory Group. Fifteen advisory group members were selected by the Town Administrator and Planner to achieve a diversity of interest on this Citizen panel.

Prior to convening the Advisory group, Town staff had hand delivered comprehensive community surveys to nearly every housing unit within Meeker Town limits. This information was compiled and utilized by the Citizen Advisory Group to investigate specific topics in depth during four meetings. Over two months in the spring and summer of 2005 the working group was able to consider a number of issues in regular meetings and make project priority and policy recommendations to the Town Planning Commission and Board. RPI employees continued to personally interview Meeker residents to further increase opportunities for public input into the planning process.

Finally, RPI submitted sections of the draft document to the Meeker Town Planning Commission for review at public meetings held in the Fall of 2005. The final draft recommendations were made to the Meeker Town Board in late 2005 and the complete plan was approved and adopted.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Introduction

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



HOW OFTEN?

Because this plan is specific and oriented toward achieving objectives it should be reviewed every five to seven years or sooner if Meeker grows more quickly than projected .

Note also that the comprehensive plan is amenable to minor amendments on an annual basis.

MEEKER SHORT HISTORY

The Town of Meeker derives its name from Nathan Meeker, who also founded Greeley, Colorado. Nathan was killed in 1879 by the White River Ute Indians. The present site of the Town of Meeker is approximately four miles east of the historic Meeker massacre site on the north bank of the White River, - at the time, this site was known as the White River Agency. When cavalry reinforcement troops from Fort Steele in Wyoming and Fort Garland in Colorado arrived to rescue the Whiter River Agency, the troops established their headquarters at what is now the present site of the Town of Meeker.

Soon after the evacuation of the army post, the Meeker Town Company came into existence. This company was the first organized move on the part of the new settlers and inhabitants to establish an incorporated Town.

The Town of Meeker was incorporated in 1885 and William H. Clark was elected Mayor—he soon made a plat of the Town and steps were taken at once to procure patent, but it was not until 1887 that final proof of the patent was recorded in Garfield county in Glenwood Springs. Meeker was the first, and for more than twenty years, the only incorporated Town in all Northwestern Colorado. It was the hub of business and banking trade for the surrounding area. The principal industries of the region were the raising of cattle, sheep, hogs poultry and horses and the farming of crops such as alfalfa, wheat, oats, and barley. The Town became the business center for all of Rio Blanco (Rio Blanco legally became a county in 1880). The Town of Meeker has historically been a very stable agricultural community. Now, however, like many of its neighboring communities, Meeker is faced with the boom-bust pressures brought on by the development of oil shale, coal and other natural resources that have caused the regions economy to be so turbulent.

Policy 1: The Town of Meeker Comprehensive Plan will be available for m i n o r amendment once as needed every year. Proposed a m e n d m e n t s must follow the procedure for Comprehensive Plan Amendment as detailed in Meeker Land Use Code.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Introduction

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



LOCATION OF MEEKER

The Town of Meeker is located on the North bank of the White River in the East center portion of Rio Blanco County, in Northwestern Colorado. The 2003 census conducted by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs Demography Section reported a population of 2263. This number has been as high as 2700 in 1982. The growth and development of the Town of Meeker has been primarily limited by topography of the Whiter River and China Wall as well as the lack of a major arterial highway system and the absence of a railroad line traversing the region. The nearest cities to Meeker are Craig located approximately 50 miles to the northeast, Rifle 40 miles to the south and Rangely, located 60 miles west . There are no interstate highways within Rio Blanco county and the primary highway intersecting Meeker is State Highway 13 and 789. State Highway 64 which passes through the Town of Rangely, intersects State Highway 13 and 789 two miles west of Meeker. Like most towns in Northwestern Colorado, Meeker has a semi-arid climate with a mean elevation 6,300 feet above sea level.

FIVE YEAR PLAN & COMPOSITE PRIORITIES LIST

This plan, in addition to providing policy statements to guide elected and appointed officials in future decision making, intends to prioritize short term planning objectives. In recognition that these planning objectives inevitably require prioritization of funding and staff time, the entire number of proposed implementation measures for all plan areas were put forward to the citizen advisory group and planning commission and then finally ratified by the Town Board with minor modifications.

The following broad issue areas were prioritized, they are, in order of priority, as follows:

1. Fiscal Issues

Meeker residents feel strongly that the Town should maintain the levels of service they have become accustomed to. For example a well developed park system, un-crowded roads, excellent law enforcement, high quality schools and personal service from Town employees. Maintaining these services in the face of new growth will require fair share contributions from all new development. To these ends the Town emphasizes the development of appropriate mechanisms to ensure that growth "pays it's fair share" with regard to capital outlays and expansions.

2. Community Economics

Community economic issues were identified as the second most important policy priority. Meeker residents feel that the development of local businesses and capturing of local resident spending is a

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Introduction

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



keystone in generating additional revenue for the Town to pursue other important planning objectives. For example, building and developing parks, trails, recreation facilities, improving roads, and maintaining a full time professional municipal staff requires a significant revenue stream. Developing the commercial base will not only add significantly to the day-to-day shopping convenience of locals and number of local jobs, but will also create a stable sales tax revenue stream which the Town can utilize to expand and enhance public facilities and programs. Moreover, the Town is decidedly interested in promoting tourist development as this seasonal form of revenue has high yields and incurs relatively low impacts on public services.

3. Future Land Use

Citizens feel that the existing land use code requires some revision and allocation of annexable areas into a variety of densities. Varied densities are needed to ensure that new additions contain developments that both allow the retention of Meeker's rural roots while also taking into consideration the economic realities of land prices so that a wide spectrum of income levels can afford to purchase housing in Town.

4. Parks

Parks and recreation, particularly the development and maintenance of a trail system, and improved river access are two top priorities for Meeker residents. The Town desires to maintain its support and working relationship with the Recreation District—while also discovering ways to enhance the parks and trails system and streamline management of these assets with the greatest efficiency.

5. Transportation

Finally, although high traffic volumes are not currently a major problem in Meeker, high priority improvements and the insurance of future connectivity of traffic-ways was considered in some detail with sound engineering principles guiding all future road considerations.

Policy Priorities

1. Fiscal Issues
2. Community
3. Economics
4. Future Land Uses
5. Parks
6. Transportation

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Growth

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Growth

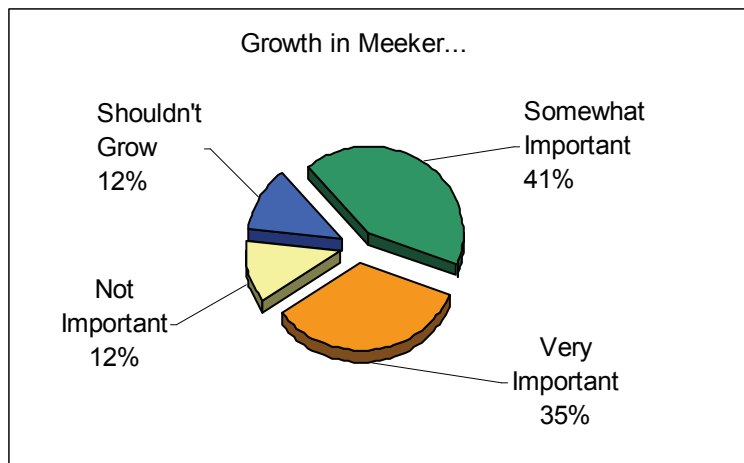
Planning for the future and deciding if, when, and how growth is going to happen is an important concern in Meeker. The community survey revealed that Meeker residents are somewhat split on growth with more three quarters believing growth is important and slightly less than 25% thinking that growth is either not important or that the Town shouldn't grow.

The overall attitude to growth does not seem to have shifted much from the 1984 comprehensive plan. During the writing of that plan, the community was, (and is now) interested in increasing development and growth in the community—although this sentiment is not unanimous. Ultimately, it is a complex issue, with many citizens recognizing a need for additional growth to facilitate the development of local business, while also feeling strongly that growth needs to be managed in such a way as to enhance and not degrade existing community assets.

During the Citizen Advisory Group sessions a definition of managed growth emerged. First, the group firmly defined what managed growth was not. The group determined that managed growth likely did not mean placing artificial restrictions on the pace of growth. For example, allowing only a certain number of building permits to be issued each year, or designating a population or geographical limit to the Town. These artificial restrictions and their consequences have been well documented in cities like Aspen/Pitkin County and Boulder - the implications of these policies were deemed likely too severe to implement in Meeker.

Managed growth was generally agreed to mean that Meeker should:

...promote a range of housing opportunities and choices, maintain safe walkable neighborhoods, rural feel, ensure that land uses are appropriately separated, foster attractive development types, make development rules clear and transparent, increase transportation choices, and make sure that growth generally pays for itself...



Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Growth

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado

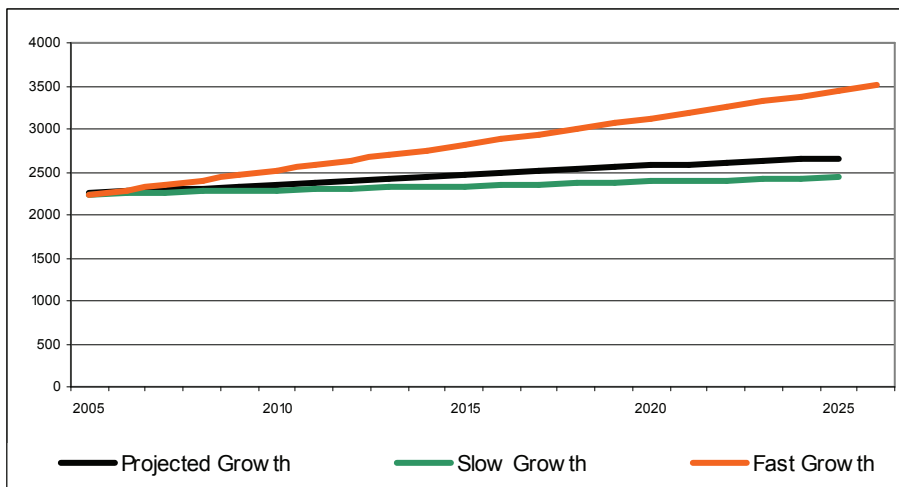


A shorter and simpler policy definition emerged however, stating that:

Managed growth is: growth that adds to our community, utilizes or makes improvements to existing infrastructure, improves and revives the Town's tax base, and pays for itself.

In any event, as is discussed in more detail in the Community Economics Section, some level of growth was seen as desirable. The community survey revealed that nearly 20% of the population desired accelerated growth but 41% of the citizens thought that normal growth would be adequate. On average, surveyed community members felt that a future population of approximately 3500 people would be desirable.

Three ten year growth projections were utilized to consider Meeker's likely future growth rate. The middle (black) line in the graph below represents the Colorado Department of Local Affairs Demography Section estimates. These projections have proven to be accurate over the last thirty years, and it is highly probable that this represents Meeker's growth over the next ten. The top line represents Meeker's growth if the Town consistently grew at the highest annual rate of growth it has ever experienced (approximately 5% annually) for the next ten years—this is also a possibility. Finally, the lowest line suggests what Meeker's population might be if the Town grew at a very slow pace (approximately 0.2% annually). Note that the growth rate is seldom uniform, with spikes in some years and slumps in others – these



Policy 2: The Town will pursue a growth strategy that manages growth through the use of some development fees, development requirements, careful review of subdivisions and land uses so that growth pays for itself and that the current level of services are maintained. Maintaining the character of Meeker as a small rural Town is also important. Artificial caps on development are not recommended. Some self-sufficiency in services and products is desired and is to be encouraged.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Growth

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



numbers simply represent the likely average growth over time.

It is important to emphasize that although subdivisions may be platted in the community with large numbers of lots, the actual population growth rate, that is, people moving into the community and buying those units, does not necessarily increase simply because more housing units are platted. For example, Archuleta county has over 6,000 platted lots, but the growth rate has remained relatively constant in the county over the last ten years. However, there is some chance that local or regional anomalies (for example a natural resource boom) and macroeconomic (that is, national) events might occur and drive growth at unpredictably slow or rapid rates.

Although it may feel at times that the community is growing very rapidly (or not growing fast enough), it is worth remembering that the fastest growing county in Colorado during the economic boom of the 1990's was Douglas county with about an 11% annual growth rate. Meeker may experience some spikes in platting and perhaps even dramatic migration spurts of new working residents in the short term, but in reality, the Town is unlikely to achieve (or endure) the level of growth Douglas county experienced anytime in the near future.

The working group, community survey, and public hearings all reveal that Meeker residents recognize the need to responsibly add citizens to the community in order to provide consumers for local businesses and jobs as well as for the long-term goal of cultivating a more self sufficient and sustainable community.



Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Existing Conditions

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



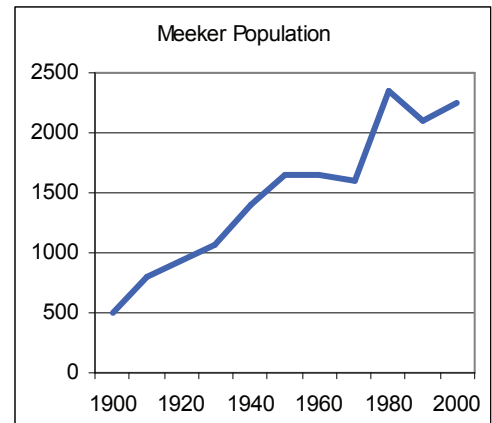
Existing Conditions

This section outlines a variety of historical and, as current as possible, general information about Meeker.

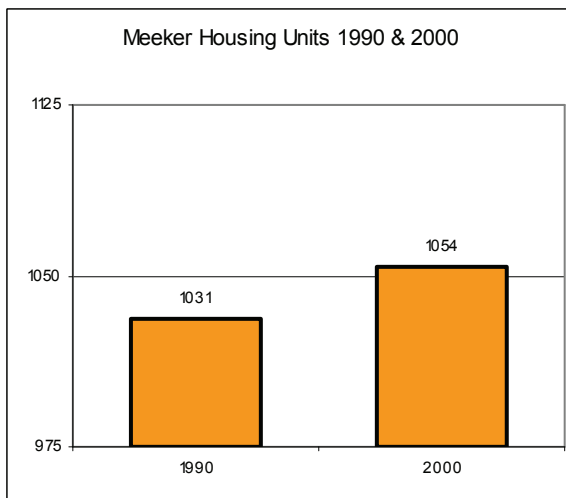
STATISTICS

Between 1990 and 2003 Meeker experienced a 6.9% increase in population and a 12.1% increase in housing units. Housing units increased more slowly than residents because housing vacancy decreased from 20.5% in 1990 to less than 12.8% in 2003 (i.e. new residents moved into existing housing units). A certain amount of the population was absorbed into existing vacant housing during the past several years and so housing unit growth lagged behind population growth somewhat. About 87 new housing units were built between 1990 and 2000.

For comparison, well over 300 new homes were built between 1970 and 1979—given the areas natural resource assets, it is likely that Meeker will see another growth spike similar to this again.



At the writing of this plan (2005) the best available information at the Town level is still the 2000 census. Although the data is somewhat dated, it can be effectively utilized to demonstrate some trends of change in Meeker.



In 2000 the biggest age group in the area was persons between the ages of 40-49 but the median age of 39 is very close to national averages. The twenty to thirty five age cohort is a bit smaller than national and state averages lending some credence to resident perceptions that it is difficult to maintain or attract young people into the community.

Comparing Meeker's housing profile to Rio Blanco County's reveals the role Meeker's housing stock

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Existing Conditions

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



serves in the region. Meeker has a high percentage of owner occupancy and there are only a handful of second homes in Meeker (2.9%), while the Census Bureau was able to identify almost 8% of the Rio Blanco County housing stock as second homes—many of Colorado’s resort Counties and Towns have second home ownership in the 40-60% range.

Housing is still affordable in Meeker. This is evidenced by the fact that the rent and mortgage prices as a percentage of household income are less than 30%, which is the HUD standard for the threshold at which households are distressed by their housing payments.

Comparing Meeker to surrounding resort communities such as Glenwood Springs and Steamboat Springs it is evident why Meeker has a reputation regionally for having a strong selection of affordable housing. However, 2005 housing price trends indicated that Meeker may be losing ground with regard to maintaining housing affordability. There is little evidence to suggest

that Meeker is a bedroom community though. 87% of the labor force worked within the County with only 12% commuting to nearby counties for work. Anecdotal evidence suggests that commuting may be different during energy boom periods—indeed some local lodging facilities note that many of their customers are commuters coming from outside areas to work within Rio Blanco County.

COMMUTING

In County	87%
Outside County	12%

<i>Housing in 2000</i>		<i>% of Total</i>
Total Housing Units	1,054	
Occupied	919	87.2%
Vacant Units - Total	135	
Vacancy Rate (%)	12.8%	
Average Household Size	2.4	
Owner Occupied Units		
Owner Occupied	611	58.0%
Vacant Units - For Sale Only	11	
Homeowner Vacancy Rate (%)	1.8%	
Average Household Size	2.5	
Rental Units		
Renter Occupied	308	29.2%
Vacant Units - For Rent	59	
Rental Vacancy Rate (%)	16.1%	
Average Household Size	2.2	
Vacant Units		
For rent	59	5.6%
For sale only	11	1.0%
Rented or sold, not occupied	12	1.1%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	31	2.9%
For migrant workers	-	0.0%
Other vacant	22	2.1%
Total Vacant	135	12.8%

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Existing Conditions

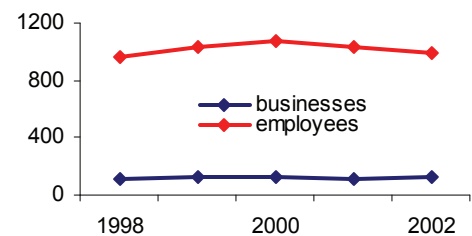
Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



The number and type of businesses located in Meeker remained relatively flat over the data period of 1998 to 2002. It is important to remember that firms are reported in the location of their headquarters — so although additional employment may be created in Meeker by energy interests— unless the paycheck is sent from an office within the County the firm is registered in another County. The bottom line is that Meeker is not creating a large number of jobs within the

Meeker Businesses and Employees

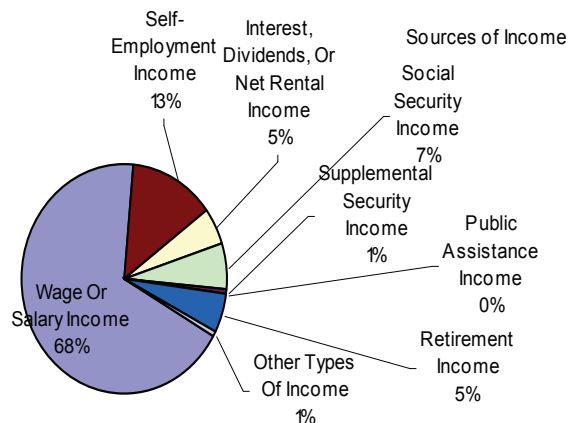


Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	26%
Construction	21%
Public administration	12%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services:	9%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	8%
Retail trade	6%
Profess., scientific, management, admin., and waste management services:	5%
Other services (except public administration)	5%
Educational, health and social services:	3%
Manufacturing	2%
Wholesale trade	2%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing:	2%
Information	0%

County's borders but what currently exists seems fairly reliable.

Meeker is unique in that agriculture and mining make a significant portion of its employment sector — together they comprise 26% - an unusually high percentage for a Colorado Town. Construction follows with 21% of the employment and public administration (general government) trails in third place with recreation and entertainment industries following and various trade and professional services rounding out the sectors. Typically agriculture and mining make up less than 5% of the jobs although many Colorado County residents commonly

believe these numbers to be much higher. Meeker's continuing strengths in these traditional sectors indicates that an authentic rural sector is still very much alive in the region.



Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Existing Conditions

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Meeker is fortunate to both have a functioning agricultural economy and also enjoying the benefits of (typically) relatively high wage mining sector jobs. The lower number of service sector and retail jobs likely reflect the out-of-community shopping that Meeker residents engage in. Other communities such as Rifle and Grand Junction are acting as the regional service providers. Citizen Advisory Group member were somewhat split on whether or not shopping outside of the community was a positive or negative attribute.



Some cited the absence of larger retailers as a benefit to the community (that is, large retailers were seen as detracting from the small rural feel of the community) and were content to drive out of Town occasionally to seek their services and products. Other members bemoaned the fact that local retailers were not more frequently patronized for day-to-day goods and wished that citizens were more active in supporting local businesses. In any event, population (or tourist population) growth is typically what drives the locations of retail businesses—if Meeker grows significantly the Town will likely see mid or large box retail locate in the area—until then these businesses will likely continue to be located in the regional service areas of Grand Junction and Rifle.

The majority of Meeker resident incomes are derived from wage and salary positions with only 13% of the income coming from self employment and only about 10% coming from dividends and retirement income. These two numbers are unfortunately low for a community such as Meeker. Many small Colorado communities possess larger self employment or sole proprietor sectors—indicating higher rates of entrepreneurship. Also, retirees, either 2nd homeowners or year round residents can be a major asset to communities—in that they serve as an effective economic base drivers—that is, they bring in money from outside the community and can also serve to flatten out tourist seasons with relatively consistent year-round expenditures.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Existing Conditions

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



WATER

Currently the Town of Meeker provides water service through a water enterprise fund. The maximum capacity of the plant is approximately 2.5 million gallons of treated water per day with nearly 100% of this capacity utilized during peak summer days. Meeker currently has about 2.5 million gallons in storage capacity and estimates another million gallons is constantly in the 7 1/2 miles of pipe running to the Town. The only capacity issue that Meeker appears to be facing with regard to water is the capacity of its existing five wells. However, the potential of drilling one to two new wells is a future possibility.

WASTEWATER

Wastewater service is provided to Meeker by the Meeker Sanitation District. This District serves Meeker and a handful of properties immediately outside of the Town's borders. The Sanitation District reports that the plant is capable of receiving up to 500,000 gallons per day of effluent and now typically peaks between 230,000 and 300,000 per day during absolute peaks. Due to BOD issues, the plant is probably running at a slightly higher capacity than the influent numbers would indicate—perhaps in the 50-60% range. In any event the treatment center is likely capable of treating Meeker's existing and new residents into the foreseeable future.

HIGH TECH

Recently, fiber optic cable was installed throughout the Town site. Increasing and enhancing the local high tech network not only adds convenience for local residents but serves as an attractor for small and large businesses. The Town possesses DSL and cable internet providers and has area wide cell phone coverage.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE LAST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Installed Radio Telemetry to operate Town Municipal Water System, creating a substantial telephone savings. A bulk water electronic system was installed as well as other electronic controls improving the efficiency and delivery of the system.
- Completed phase II of the Sulphur Creek Drainage project.
- Transferred ownership of the swimming pool to the Recreation District by election.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Existing Conditions

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



- Renovated Town Hall, 236 7th Street and later, after an election, deeded the building to the Fire District to serve their needs.
- Assisted with an elderhostel program for five years.
- After a vote of the citizens, installed fluoridation equipment to the municipal water system.
- Purchased trees and playground equipment (TCI grants and Town Conservation funds)
- Extended Park Street from 1st Street toward 2nd Street. Cooperation of RBC and the Town.
- Purchased Wood Chipper and began wood chipping program, at no cost to the citizen.
- Approved Ute Terrace Subdivision (1996).
- Remodeled a building to house the dog pound and began providing impound facility.
- Replaced bridge on 10th Street over the White River, 1999/2000.
- Began a recycling program and constructed facility.
- Installed red blinking light at 6th and Main Streets, to make the intersection safer.
- Installed 2 miles of new ductile iron waterline extending to Airport Road and received a \$250,000 loan from the energy impact loan fund to assist funding the Market Street waterline replacement project (8" main from 1st to 11 Streets).
- Purchased a building and land at 345 Market Street to relocate Town Hall.
- Obtained over two million dollars in grant funding since 1990.
- Approved re-subdivisions for Sage and Sanderson Hills Subdivisions.
- Purchased 117 acres west of Town.
- Revised zoning codes to allow sheds under 150 sq. feet to be placed within setbacks.
- Asked the voters to raise the County Wide Sales tax 1.6 cents per dollar. Measure passed.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Existing Conditions

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

WESTSIDE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

West of 10th and North of Highway 13 (Market Street to Pinyon) - The Westside residential area is an older part of Town consisting of single family homes, apartments and Townhomes. This higher density housing area is almost completely developed, and is prone to expansive soils.

WATER STREET NEIGHBORHOOD

South of Market Street from 10th Street to 1st Street. This area is similar to the Westside Residential in its mix of housing. However, it is bordered by mobile home parks on the East and West sides and by Highway Commercial zoning to the north. A low income senior housing complex is located in the center of the neighborhood. The area is also comprised of some single family homes located adjacent to the White River. There is a variety of housing and age groups in the neighborhood. This neighborhood has great access to Circle Park which offers fishing and inner tube launching. Most of this area is located in the low hazard flood zone which requires floodplain engineering, provided at the property owner's expense, prior to any construction in the low lying areas. There are a few vacant lots remaining in this neighborhood, but most of it is built out.

CENTRAL RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

East of 10th and North of Park Street to Cedar Street and Sulphur Creek Road. This neighborhood is one of the oldest and highest quality residential neighborhoods in Meeker. Lots are large and the homes in good condition. There are virtually no intruding or incompatible land uses, with the exception of the Rio Blanco County maintenance yards. Many of the residents have long family histories in Meeker. While there are small pockets of multi-family residential use, generally they are well integrated and compatible with surrounding land use. A strong asset of this neighborhood is its accessibility to the public facilities and the core commercial area. The hospital is located here and is somewhat of a landmark itself and although it is an active institution, it is complementary to the quiet residential character of the area. There is adequate parking for the complex.

EAST SIDE SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD

From 3rd Street to School Street and Main to Garfield Streets. Another well-established older neighborhood. Homes are in good condition and land use is fairly consistent. Because the area is directly adjacent to the school sites, playing fields and pool, it is well served by active recreation

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Existing Conditions

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



facilities. This area consists of residential and transitional business zoning which have historically been compatible.

SANDERSON HILLS SUBDIVISION

This area is a relatively large subdivision. The subdivision was approved in 1979, but is only about 50% developed at the present time. There has been renewed interest to install utilities and streets within the last 5 years. Several developers have enlarged the size of the lots through the re-subdivision process, which has mitigated drainage problems and improved the marketability of the lots. The subdivision is accessible to public facilities

SAGE HILLS SUBDIVISION

This area is located adjacent to Sanderson Hills. It is generally well planned and lot sizes have been increased in this subdivision through the re-subdivision process as well. It is approximately 2/3 built out. A tennis court and small passive park are located in the subdivision. Active park space has not been developed. The street and utility infrastructure are fully developed.

UTE TERRACE SUBDIVISION

This area is zoned Rural Residential and has been developed in tracts of 5 acres or more. Ute Terrace is accessed by Shaman Trail, a private graveled street and is comprised of large homes.

HISTORIC ZONE DISTRICT

A portion of the lots located North of Park Street between 5th and 6th Streets. This district, although small, is very important to protect Meeker's heritage. It consists of the museum, and other historic buildings which were originally constructed as a fort. There has been some interest in implementing guidelines to the Central Business Zone, adjacent to the Historic Zone to preserve the character of this area.

CENTRAL BUSINESS ZONE DISTRICT

Main Street between 8th and 3rd Streets. Meeker's commercial core is one of its strongest assets. It is the governmental, office, financial and retail center of the Town and the region. In the heart of it lies the attractive Rio Blanco County Courthouse Square. Other historic buildings in the area add to its image and character and are well maintained.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Existing Conditions

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL ZONE DISTRICT

Market Street from 13th Street to East Market area. This area consists of a long strip along both sides of Highway 13 from the western to the eastern Town Limits and then spilling out into the County. Access roads established on both sides of Market Street, East of School Street, would improve vehicular access and safety along Highway 13.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Community Economics

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Community Economics

A COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

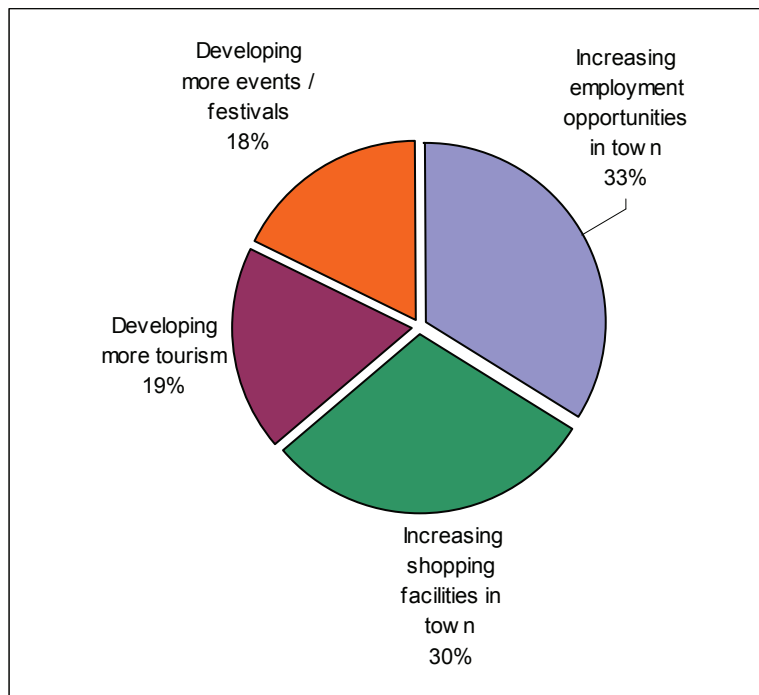
Meeker residents are challenged by the need to preserve and enhance the Town's unique identity while also remaining connected to the regional economy and creating jobs and shopping opportunities locally.

The 2004 community survey revealed a strong majority of residents desired additional businesses in Town so that more employment would be generated and, perhaps more importantly, that more day-to-day shopping could take place locally. Over 50% of residents declared that too few businesses exist in Town to serve their day-to-day shopping needs. Specifically, residents desired department store type shopping and a movie theatre. As previously noted—the Citizen Advisory Group (like the community at large) was somewhat split on this issue.

Meeker has a tremendous opportunity to capture local spending because nearly 35% of local resident dollars are spent outside the community (percentage derived from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs data).

When local residents leave their home community to shop and spend money in another, the lost dollars are typically referred to as "leakage." Bringing local dollars back into the home community requires that an adequate array of business types exists to "capture" those dollars.

There are some in the Meeker community who don't mind shopping outside the Town and prefer to keep Meeker's services small and simple—citing that as a primary reason they moved to the Town in the first place. Others would prefer the convenience and economic assets realized by increasing local shopping opportunities.



Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Community Economics

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Many communities have successfully maintained the balance between maintaining a rural atmosphere and keeping a viable amount of shopping within the home community. In fact, it can be an asset to “rural” communities to have some percentage of shopping taking place in other Towns without requiring the traffic and intense uses that are common to these commercial centers. The balancing act requires that certain services and income categories exist within the home community. For example, it may be desirable to have large scale discount retail in another community if professional services are located within Meeker and the Town is able to attract higher income retirees. Over time and overall, Meeker would like to pursue policies to facilitate natural market forces while working to achieve a resident/business/jobs equilibrium that enhances the towns local and regional identity.

PUBLIC PROCESS

The Citizen’s working group was asked to talk about these tough issues after reviewing considerable information about the Town’s economic past and future trajectories. Discussion yielded a number of policies and implementation measures that were then voted on and prioritized. These policies are crucial to Meeker’s success both as a community and a functioning economy. The following community economic priorities emerged during weighted voting on policy issues and implementation.

Survey results revealed that a large quantity of local dollars are being spent outside of the community – the Town views this as an opportunity to capture additional sales tax revenues not only to improve municipally provided services but also to stimulate the local economy. A number of policies emerged from this sentiment.

Policy 3: The Town of Meeker recognizes the importance of providing an adequate spectrum of commercially zoned land to accommodate new businesses.

Policy 4: Capturing additional local and regional spending is an economic development goal.

Policy Summary

Policy 3: The Town of Meeker recognizes the importance of providing an adequate spectrum of commercially zoned land exists to accommodate new businesses.

Policy 4: Capturing additional local and regional spending is an economic development goal.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Community Economics

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Policy 5: The Town of Meeker will partner with local business development groups and planning efforts to actively recruit new business to the community as well as determining ways to capture additional spending from existing industries such as hunting and fishing.

P5-Action A: Maintain the continuous liaison with Meeker Business in Action including regular Town Board Updates and the development of a joint executive committee "business commission."

P5-Action B: Develop a business recruitment strategic plan in conjunction with the MBA and Region 10.

P5-Action C: Meeker will establish a clear and marketable definition of the towns assets, identity, and core appeal to prospective businesses and potential residents.

P-5 Action D: The Town of Meeker will continue its partnership with the Meeker Chamber of Commerce in the form of support to the Chamber Board through technical and event assistance provided by the Economic Development staff person in an effort to strengthen the Chamber and its ability to serve the business community of Meeker.

P-5 Action E: The Town of Meeker recognizes the economic importance of the regional Cultural Heritage Tourism initiative and will continue to be a dedicated partner in this program, further recognizing that potentially 25-35% of the Economic Development staff person's time maybe absorbed by this function. Participation in this initiative and promoting tourism as it is related to the economic health of Meeker will continue to serve as the primary focus for the Economic Development department.

Increasing the consumer base will facilitate the expansion of existing businesses and/or promote entry of new businesses serving local residents. To this end, Meeker will encourage the increase of its population base, at least, for the foreseeable future.

Policy Summary

Policy 5: The Town of Meeker will partner with local business development groups and planning efforts to actively recruit new business to the community as well as determining ways to capture additional spending from existing industries such as hunting and fishing.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Community Economics

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Policy 6: Meeker will encourage continued managed residential development

P6-Action A: Meeker encourages property owners with property within the future land use boundaries to annex into the Town (see future land use map).

P6-Action B: Managed growth provisions need to be integrated into the existing land use code including but not limited to the assessment of appropriate development fees, aesthetic (property neatness) regulations, and subdivision phasing requirements

Adding and promoting businesses that serve the day-to-day needs of local residents was deemed desirable among survey respondents and working group members. More locally serving businesses has manifold effects including increasing the number of local jobs, reducing shopping commuting, and benefiting the local economy.

Policy 7: The Town of Meeker recognizes the importance of businesses serving local residents day-to-day shopping needs

The maintenance of Main Street is an important element and focal point of community identity and character.

Policy 8: All future municipal buildings will be located near Main street when possible/appropriate. Furthermore all other public entities: state, local, or non-profit will be encouraged to site or maintain their principal offices or buildings on or near Main Street as possible/appropriate.

Again, Main Street and Main Street businesses were identified repeatedly as an important component of the community's identity and core economics.

Policy 9: The Town will cooperate, when appropriate, with existing and future Main Street Revitalization efforts.

Policy Summary

Policy 6: Meeker will encourage continued managed residential development

Policy 7: The Town of Meeker recognizes the importance of businesses serving local residents day-to-day shopping needs

Policy 8: All future municipal buildings will be located near Main street when possible / appropriate. Furthermore all other public entities: state, local, or non-profit will be encouraged to site or maintain their principal offices or buildings on or near Main Street as possible/appropriate.

Policy 9: The Town will cooperate, when appropriate, with existing and future Main Street Revitalization efforts.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Community Economics

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



P9-Action A: Town of Meeker will work to provide adequate parking and other infrastructure for the Main Street area when possible.

P9-Action B: Two additional annual events will be scheduled for and held within Meeker with at least one of those being located on or near Main street. This action item may require the dedication of a significant portion of the Economic Development staff persons time. This action item will definitely require the continuation and expansion of volunteer assistance.

P9-Action C: Key architectural and/or other character features of Main street will be specifically identified and guidelines adopted to preserve them.

P9-Action D: Some aesthetic and property neatness regulations will be implemented to ensure that Meeker as a whole and Market street in particular host development that exemplifies Meeker resident pride in the community and fits the character of existing community structures.

Finally, the Town of Meeker recognizes that a school district renowned for high quality is an excellent fundamental economic base driver as it serves not only to attract new citizens and members of the labor force but also encourages existing residents to remain in Meeker.

Policy 10: Meeker recognizes that high quality school facilities and services are an important attractor of families and the Town will encourage the continuation and/or further improvement of school facilities and services although the Town does not necessarily endorse tax increases.

Policy Summary

Policy 10: Meeker recognizes that high quality school facilities and services are an important attractor of families and the Town will encourage the continuation and/or further improvement of school facilities and services although the Town does not necessarily endorse tax increases.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use Map

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Future Land Use Map

ROLE OF THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

In undertaking a comprehensive plan, Meeker demonstrates its understanding of the critical linkages between land use with economics, government finance, and local culture. The future land use map presents a geographic composite of the community's direction for future land uses in undeveloped areas in the Town Boundaries and the unincorporated areas near the Town boundaries.

The future land use map serves two key roles for the Meeker community:

1. Policy guide for future subdivisions and annexations
2. Geographic representation of community land asset goals

The future land use map is a crucial component of the comprehensive plan because it is a geographically specific policy guide for future annexations and subdivisions and the type of development contained in these future developments.

PUBLIC PROCESS

RPI developed a future land use exercise designed to harness the knowledge of locals in the citizens working group. Working group members were broken down randomly into three groups and given a map of Meeker and surrounding areas. Members were asked to place icons in the area surrounding Meeker that represented four different single family residential densities including: places that may be appropriate for higher density single family developments, places for multi-family development, and both general commercial and industrial land uses. These land uses



were defined and put into context with existing neighborhood examples during a presentation to committee members. Committee members were also given icons to represent future open space, parks, and agricultural land. The three citizen created maps were then digitized into GIS software and RPI analysts analyzed the similarities and differences.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use Map

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



The Draft Future Land Use Map was created as a composite of the ideas presented by the three citizen groups. The analysis began by identifying areas of agreement between icon placements on the maps. Other future land use ideas were shifted slightly on the landscape to mesh more naturally with agreed upon future land uses.

Annexation laws combined with a slow market demand for new platted development make the pace of extending municipal boundaries relatively slow in Meeker. In an effort to avoid planning for an unreasonably large geographic area which would take decades to develop at recent growth rates, many of the land use ideas that extended too far from the current Town boundaries were not included on the Draft map.

After considering staff input, the Draft Future Land Use map was presented to the Working Group for additional comments and then to the planning commission. The future land use map was then revised in light of these comments and presented to the Town of Meeker Board of Trustees.

DEFINITIONS OF LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

LOWER DENSITY SINGLE FAMILY

Single family residential density consisting of larger lots 11,500-20,000 sq. ft. and sometimes even larger on constrained terrain (up to 1 acre).

The block on 4th Street south of Pine Street is an example of homes built in this density range.

OPEN SPACE

Open space is divided into two forms, *passive* and *active*. Passive open spaces include riparian corridors, steep slopes (>30%), wetlands, and natural drainage areas. Passive open spaces will be un-developable and necessarily preserved from all future development using whatever mechanism is appropriate (conservation easements, deed restrictions, and or dedication to the Town of Meeker).

Active open space will include all developed parkland including neighborhood and community parks and trail areas—note that a trails presence through a passive open



Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use Map

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



space area (e.g. a riparian corridor) converts that open spaces designation to active—that is it becomes a component of developed parkland. Golf courses and other similar outdoor recreations facilities will also be considered active open space.

MEDIUM DENSITY SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Single family residential density with lot sizes ranging from 7,500 – to 11,500 sq. ft.

Development on land designated medium density single family residential will provide a wide range of lot sizes. An example of homes built at this density lies at the end of Mark Circle in Sanderson subdivision. This typical small Town residential density corresponds with the R-1A zone district.



MOBILE HOME AND RV OVERLAY

The Mobile home and RV park overlay is intended to designate areas for future development of mobile homes and RV parks. Meeker recognizes that these units are an important component of the affordable housing stock and that developing RV parks can be a beneficial commercial endeavor.

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL OVERLAY

The multi-family designation is the density typically associated with townhouses or 2-storied apartment buildings.

Because the demand for developing multifamily complexes is relatively low in Meeker, it is best not to designate specific areas for multifamily only. The overlay is intended to identify areas in which it may be appropriate to mix multi-family dwelling units with the underlying land use designations subject to full development review under the land use code. The corresponding zone districts in Meeker are the MR and MR-A zones.

Land Use Type	Land Area per Unit	Corresponding Zoning
Medium Single Family	7,500-11,500 sq. ft.	R-1A
Lower Single Family	11,500 - 20,000+ sq. ft.	R-1
Rural Density	2-5 acres	RR or RR-A
Multi-Family	2500 sq. ft.	MR, MR-A
Mobile Home & RV Overlay	2500 sq. ft.	MR, MR-A
Commercial	Varies	HC, TA, TCB
Light Industrial	Varies	LI

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use Map

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



RURAL DENSITY SINGLE FAMILY

Rural Density offers an opportunity for development of rural lots in the Town Limits. The 2-5 acres per unit offer plenty of room for outbuildings and hobby ranching. Ute Terrace is an example of a neighborhood developed at Rural Density.



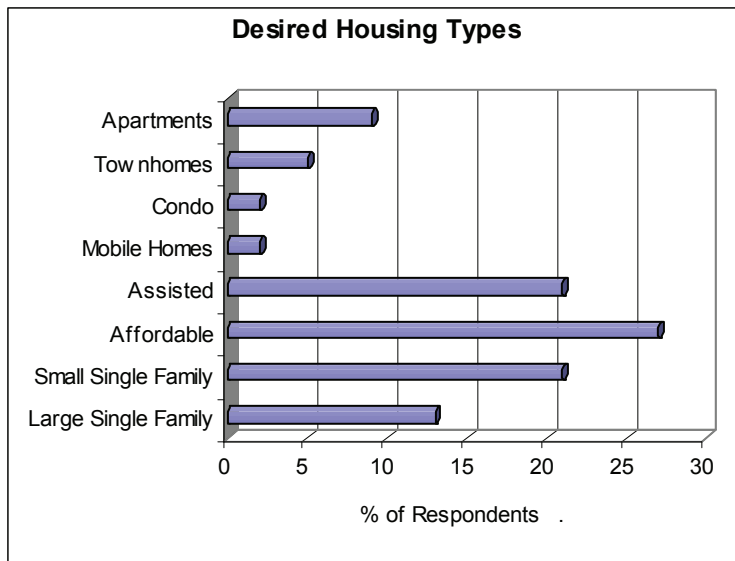
RESIDENT AND VISITOR SERVING COMMERCIAL

A broad designation intended to allow for businesses providing the range of goods and services demanded by the local and visiting population. Corresponding zone districts are TA, HC, and TCB.

INDUSTRIAL/LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

A designation allowing for businesses engaged in the production, storage, and wholesale distribution of products. Land designated as industrial/light industrial is also appropriate for general storage (warehousing and mini warehousing). The Corresponding zone district is the LI district.

WORKING AGRICULTURE



This is a designation that represents Meeker's desire to see existing agricultural tracts maintained as working properties. Rural, agricultural character is important to the community and areas designated as working agriculture on the future land use map are areas the Meeker specifically sees as key agricultural lands around Town.

SURVEY RESULTS

The Future Land Use Map designates much of the area around the river as future open space or agriculture, reflecting concern about development

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use Map

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



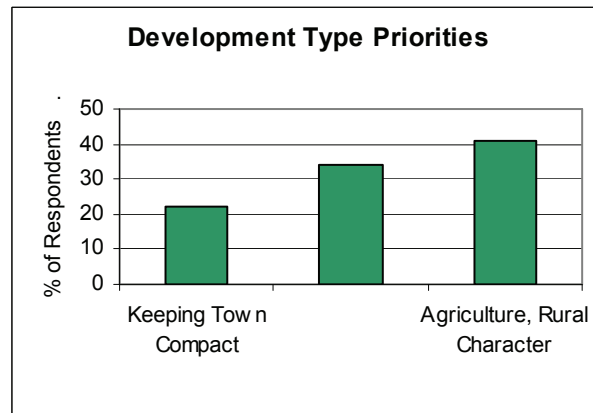
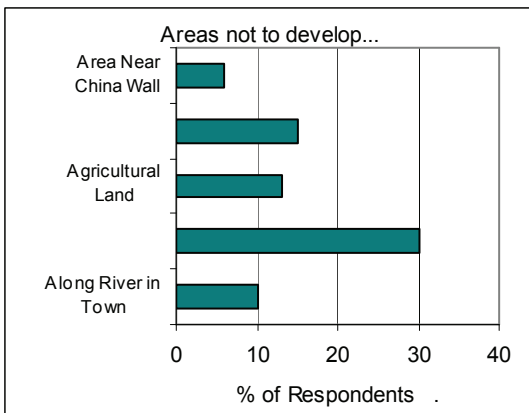
up the White River and the environmentally sensitive floodplain and wetlands along the river. The future land use map merges the goal to maintain the natural setting and accessibility of the river corridor with the desire to see the agricultural landscape in Rio Blanco County stay in tact.

Almost half of the respondents to the community survey want to retain rural character and avoid sprawling urban-like development. The future land use map concentrates future development in and near the currently developed and annexed portions of Meeker. Furthermore, Meeker citizens contemplate accepting some level of future growth by designating residential areas in the future land use plan, which will ultimately take development pressure off of the unincorporated lands around Meeker. Rural sprawl can often be exacerbated by low availability of building lots in area municipalities.

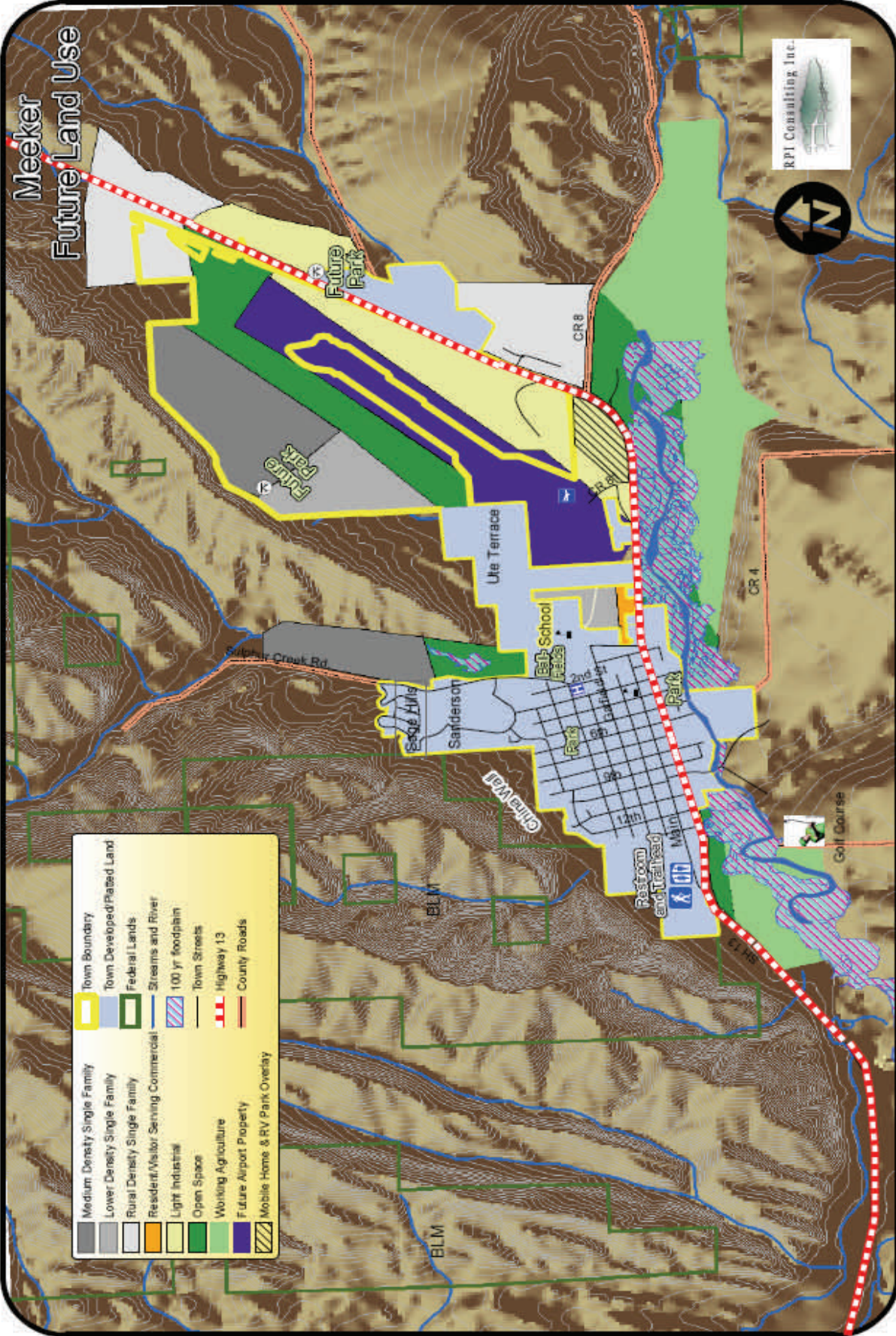
The rural density and agricultural designations on the future land use map were placed where Committee members want to preserve rural character.

The future land use map offers a range of densities to accommodate future housing needs.

Land Use Designation	Uses	Corresponding Zoning
Resident and Visitor Serving Commercial	Retail, Office, Service Commercial, Financial Institution, Restaurant, Lodging	HC, TA, TCB, CB
Light Industrial	Warehousing and other Storage, Transportation facilities, Vehicle sales and service, Light manufacturing and Fabrication, lumber yard.	LI, HC



Meeker Future Land Use



Medium Density Single Family	Town Boundary
Lower Density Single Family	Town Developed/Placed Land
Rural Density Single Family	Federal Lands
Resident/Visitor Serving Commercial	Streams and River
Light Industrial	100 yr floodplain
Open Space	Town Streets
Working Agriculture	Highway 13
Future Airport Property	County Roads
Mobile Home & RV Park Overlay	



Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

Parks and open space are an important part of future planning not only because they are excellent amenities and widely demanded by citizens, but also because if current trends continue, rising property values will make the acquisition of future parklands increasingly expensive.

PUBLIC PROCESS

Survey results, interviews, and the Citizen Advisory Group all considered detailed existing information about Meeker's and other similarly sized communities parks and recreation facilities. After lengthy discussions the working group and planning commission developed and voted on policies to guide the Town's parks and recreation system into the future.

PARK TYPES

Rural communities located in Western Colorado often have distinct park needs that are different from urban or even resort areas. Meeker is surrounded by hundreds of thousands of acres of BLM, Forest Service and State parkland. Because of this, Town of Meeker residents do not see a specific need for the Town to actively pursue the purchase of pure open space but rather want to focus recreation monies on the development of recreation oriented parks. However, Meeker is interested in protecting particular critical areas including steep slopes, drainage areas, and riparian corridors and these areas will make up the Town's future open space.

The following definitions explicitly detail what is meant by each park type and can be referenced directly by the code. Note that each park size listed is preferred - additional park sizes may be considered or accommodated at the discretion of Town staff and elected officials.

Community Park: Community parks are large parks meant to serve the entire community. These parks will not be less than 10 acres and have the full compliment of utilities available on site (water, electricity, etc.) They will contain major, permanent recreation facilities such as ball fields, skate parks, public events venues, and other land intensive usages as well as park benches, picnic pavilions, and play sets. These parks will have automatic irrigation on-site, adequate parking, and full connectivity to the trail system. Due to likely intensive use of these facilities; location, access, and buffering from surrounding neighborhood uses will be required. Paintbrush Park (provided by the Parks & Recreation District) is an example of this type of facility—it is likely that the Parks and Recreation District will be providing this type of park in the Meeker area.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Neighborhood Parks: Neighborhood parks are much smaller than community parks being between 1/4 and 3 acres and are meant to serve those residents who live with walking distance (approximately 1/2) mile. These parks will not typically be served by any utilities other than electricity for limited night lighting. Neighborhood parks will be fully landscaped, provide some seating and picnic benches as well as a small playground. The biggest neighborhood parks may contain court facilities (e.g. tennis, basketball).

Neighborhood park dedications, or portions thereof, may be waived of land dedication requirement in order to secure a fee-in-lieu so as to ensure the focusing of park resources on the development of the Town Park and river enhancements over the short term. However, in developments designated as "high density" neighborhood parks may be required and desirable in order to provide open space and recreational facilities for neighborhoods possessing the smaller residential lots that the high density designation recommends.

Open Space: Open space is divided into two forms, *passive* and *active*. Passive open spaces include riparian corridors, steep slopes (>30%), wetlands, and natural drainage areas. Passive open spaces will be un-developable and necessarily preserved from all future development using whatever mechanism is appropriate (conservation easements, deed restrictions, and or dedication to the Town of Meeker).



Active open space will include all developed parkland including neighborhood and community parks and trail areas—note that a trails presence through a passive open space area (e.g. a riparian corridor) converts that open spaces designation to active—that is it becomes a component of developed parkland.

Meeker does not have an interest in requiring or developing so called "pocket parks" - very small parks that do not have any particular recreational purpose but serve as an

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



aesthetic element of subdivision design – where local parks are required, the Town prefers the development of full quality neighborhood parks with recreation amenities as described under the neighborhood park definition.

MEEKER & THE RECREATION DISTRICT

Currently the Town of Meeker possesses a relatively modest inventory of developed parks and a generous amount of acreage of open space in the form of a 117 acre parcel located at the West end of Town. Given existing amiable relations between the Town and parks district, the area residents are able to access a wide array of parks assets including a large community park, a swimming pool, a senior center, and it appears that progress is moving rapidly toward the construction of a full service recreation and indoor aquatic facility. Given these circumstances and the relative fiscal resources available to the Town and the District it may be prudent to consider granting the Parks and Recreation District full management of all park facilities within Town borders. Indeed, the Citizen Advisory Group considered this possibility and deemed it worthy of serious consideration in light of the fact that certain economy's of scale might be achieved with funding and maintenance of all facilities.

Policy 11: The Town of Meeker will explore the possibility of turning all or most of its parks and recreation operations and facilities over to the Parks and Recreation District.

P11-Action A: Town and Recreation district staff will evaluate existing assets in each agency's recreation inventory, consider usage patterns, maintenance costs, and develop an agreement to manage and fund those facilities that is mutually beneficial and mitigates development and maintenance costs for both party's.

It is assumed that under the Policy 12 scenario the Town of Meeker would retain possession of the 117 acre parcel.

Until such time as the parks facilities and assets are fully merged the Town should consider parks and recreation amenities as part of all of land use developments.

Policy Summary

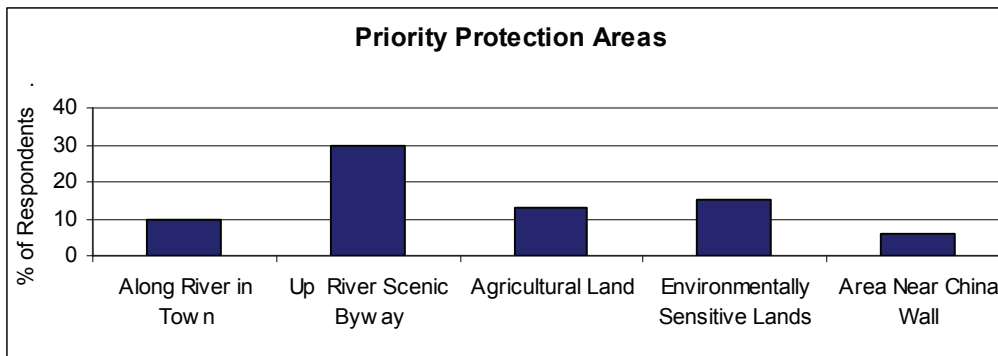
Policy 11: The Town of Meeker will explore the possibility of turning all or most of its parks and recreation operations and facilities over to the Parks and Recreation District.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Policy 12: The Town of Meeker should establish a firm park land dedication/fee in lieu requirement for all new subdivisions at the rate of 15 acres of park land for every 1000 new residents. Furthermore, for the foreseeable future the Town should forgo land dedications in new subdivisions and rather take an established fee in lieu payment so that money can be focused on existing parks and facilities.

Similarly, the citizens desired that all existing monies be focused on existing park resources to ensure the highest quality facilities.

Policy 13: Rather than spending on the acquisition of additional parks, Meeker will concentrate park monies and effort on improving facilities at existing parks.

P13-Action A: Meeker will focus and earmark future revenue to improve facilities on existing parks – prioritizing the development of the Circle Park and ensuring an adequate ongoing maintenance budget for this park.

P13-Action B: A master plan for the River Park should be developed with fishing access, tubing access, and long term trail improvements and easements.

Meeker residents understand that whatever the composition of the parks governing body, parks resources are not infinite and that fiscal monies and their attendant projects need to be prioritized to ensure that those facilities that are most important to the community are developed.

Policy Summary

Policy 12: The Town of Meeker should establish a firm park land dedication/fee in lieu requirement for all new subdivisions at the rate of 15 acres of park land for every 1000 new residents. Furthermore, for the foreseeable future the Town should forgo land dedications in new subdivisions and rather take an established fee in lieu payment so that money can be focused on existing parks and facilities.

Policy 13: Rather than spending on the acquisition of additional parks, Meeker will concentrate park monies and effort on improving facilities at existing parks.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado

Policy 14: Prioritization of parks is as follows: river corridor improvements first (Circle Park), developing facilities on other existing parks lands, additional open space acquisition. Trails and community park enhancements should lead in the facilities category followed by open space and neighborhood parks as the last priority.

Meeker has recently been working on capitalizing on existing parks and recreation assets and programs including the idea of a tourist center and how to better utilize the 117 acre parcel. Several ideas emerged including suggestions for the location of the tourist center, an outdoor performance venue and additional festivals and events.



Policy 15: Town of Meeker should develop a local tourist center.

P15-Action A: Town staff will provide (or reconvene) a brief public process to determine costs and an appropriate local location for a tourist center. The tourist center will likely have some convenience facilities as well as mapping and comprehensive signage to help visitors better understand exactly where Meeker's park facilities and river access points are located.

Policy 16: Town of Meeker should develop a dedicated area for festival and event purposes.

Policy 17: The Town of Meeker should develop an outdoor performance venue



Policy Summary

Policy 14: Prioritization of parks is as follows: river corridor improvements first (Circle Park), developing facilities on other existing parks lands, additional open space acquisition and finally parks and recreation programs. Trails and community park enhancements should lead in the facilities category followed by open space and neighborhood parks as the last priority.

Policy 15: Town of Meeker should develop a local tourist center.

Policy 16: Town of Meeker should develop a dedicated area for festival and event purposes.

Policy 17: The Town of Meeker should develop an outdoor performance venue

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



P16&17-Action A: The Town should allow some portion of the Economic Development staff persons time to identifying a location for and administering construction of an outdoor performance venue. This venue should be applicable to multiple event types (e.g. Sheepdog trials and music events) and will likely need to be able to be easily expanded, stored, and/or movable to different locations.

P16–17 Action B: The Town Economic Development Staff person should be encouraged to participate in the development and promotion of additional festivals and events—moreover this person may serve as a central coordinator for volunteer assistance.

P16–17 Action C: The Town should contract or secure volunteer work to have high quality and interesting signage developed and placed at all park and entrance areas of Meeker to help visitors quickly and easily locate all of the areas assets including parks, trails, downtown, the signage should also clearly indicate all of Meeker’s major festivals and annual special events.

In an effort to maintain Meeker’s and the Recreation District’s currently excellent service levels for parks the Citizen Advisory Group wanted to ensure that all additional growth was assessed its fair share of the costs for maintaining these services.

Policy 18: The Town of Meeker should explore including parks into a comprehensive fair share growth fee on all new development to pay for park facility improvements.

P18-Action A: Direct staff or independent consultants to formulate a parks facility impact fee to be attached to all new development permits.

Policy Summary

Policy 18: The Town of Meeker should explore including parks into a comprehensive fair share growth fee on all new development to pay for park facility improvements.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Policy Summary

Policy 19: Town of Meeker should develop and codify a park land dedication for all new subdivisions development and annexation using the State of Colorado Small Community Parks Planning Standards methodology.

P19-Action A: Use State of Colorado Small Community Parks Planning Standards to determine desirable facility types and number of acres of community and neighborhood parks per 1000 residents (note that 15 acres per 1000 residents will be used in the interim for developed parklands only—does not include open space). The requirement for acreage dedications per 1000 residents will be specified in the Town land use code.

TRAILS

Meeker's relatively small geographic area, allows trails to be used as transportation alternatives as well as for recreation. Their continued development and connectivity will be actively encouraged and pursued.

Policy 20: Short term priority connector trails need to be identified and their improvement undertaken.

Policy 21: Meeker prefers the development of soft surface trails.

Policy 22: Meeker will prefer separated grade trails next to all new collectors within Town limits.

Policy 23: Meeker will require easements for trails in all new subdivisions where indicated in the Meeker trails map as outlined in this plan.



Policy 19: Town of Meeker should develop and codify a park land dedication for all new subdivisions development and annexation using the State of Colorado Small Community Parks Planning Standards methodology.

Policy 20: Short term priority connector trails need to be identified and their improvement undertaken.

Policy 21: Meeker prefers the development of soft surface trails.

Policy 22: Meeker will prefer separated grade trails next to all new collectors within Town limits.

Policy 23: Meeker will require easements for trails in all new subdivisions where indicated in the Meeker trails map as outlined in this plan.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



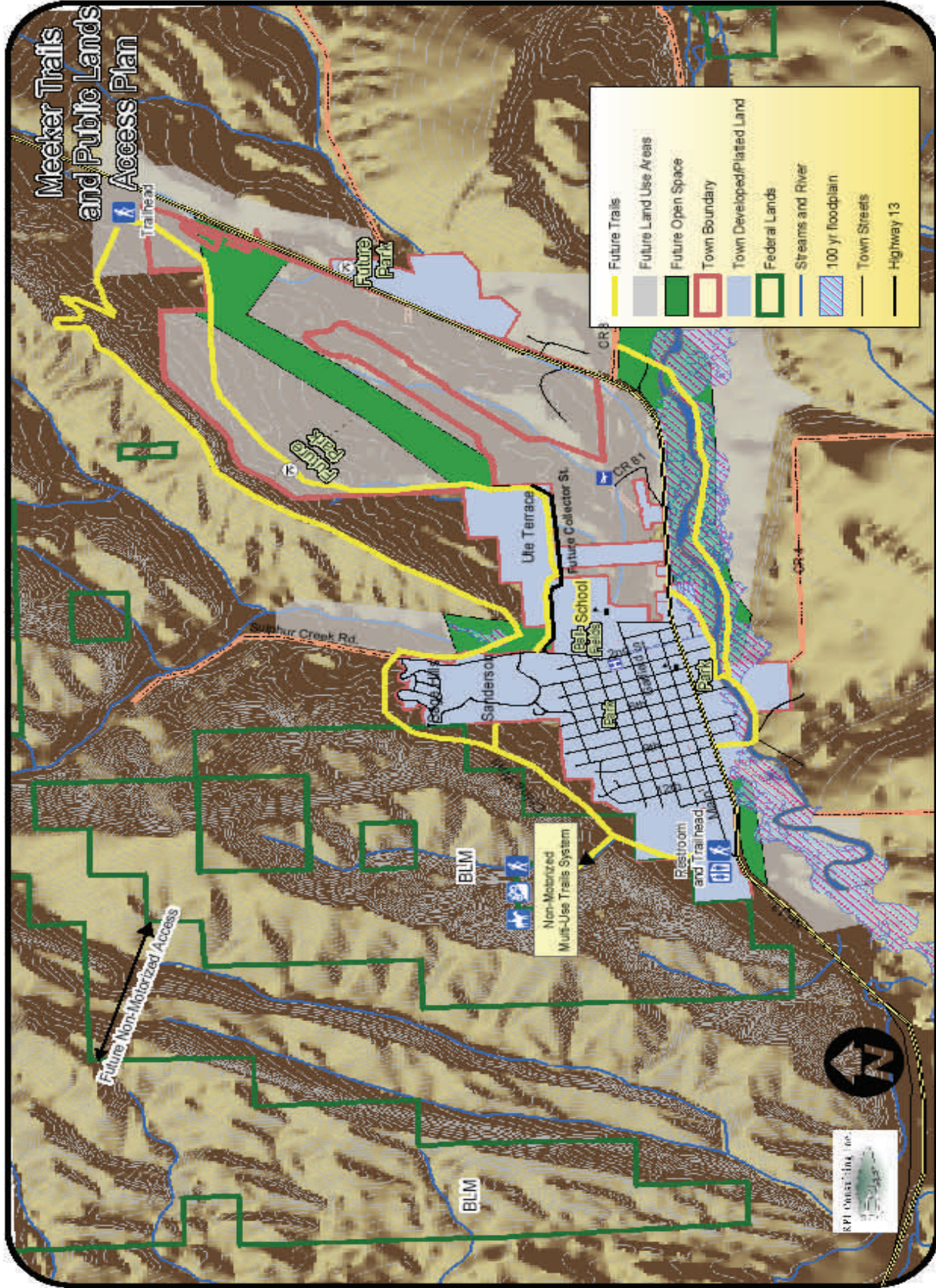
P23-Action A: Meeker will develop and codify trail development standards that will define the width of right of way needed. All new annexation and subdivision development will be required to dedicate the necessary right-of-way to the Town of Meeker.

Policy 24: All new subdivisions will be required to connect and facilitate the development of the trail master plan as it appears in this comprehensive plan.

Policy Summary

Policy 24: All new subdivisions will be required to connect and facilitate the development of the trail master plan as it appears in this comprehensive plan.

Meeker Trails and Public Lands Access Plan



	Future Trails
	Future Land Use Areas
	Future Open Space
	Town Boundary
	Town Developed/Platted Land
	Federal Lands
	Streams and River
	100 yr floodplain
	Town Streets
	Highway 13

Future Non-Motorized Access

BLM
Non-Motorized
Multi-Use Trails System

Restroom
and Trail head



Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Level of Service

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Level of Service (LOS)

Imagine a community with 100 people and 100 acres of parks. Each person would have an acre of parkland to themselves. The level of service would be one acre per person. Now imagine that another 100 people move to that same community but not a single acre of parks is added. Now the level of service has decreased to one half acre of park per person. Of course, the same happens with provision of all government services and infrastructure. If new growth is not accounted for in police, fire, administration, water, streets, and a host of other services while population is being added, we should expect to see a decrease in our overall level of service. Meaning, that perhaps we are stuck in traffic more often, our parks are more crowded, we must wait in line to talk to public officials, that public safety services are slowed, or that our water use is limited to certain times of day.

Considering the level of service also allows communities to see where they stand in relation to other communities or even against national standards. It is a measuring stick from which the community can decide to increase or decrease its existing services. For example, your community has park service that is higher than the national standard, but your administration facilities do not equal that of other, similar sized communities. You may decide to de-emphasize funding priorities for parks and instead focus on increasing administration infrastructure, while imposing a fee structure that ensures that new growth and development will not degrade the parks system that you currently have.

This and the following section outlines community objectives with regard to service levels and directs the community to approximate funding per capita to maintain these services. Costs are generally considered in terms of operations costs – that is annual and ongoing costs to the department to maintain current service levels as well as one time capital facility expansion costs.

The Town of Meeker may decide to do at least a limited development impact analysis at some time to better understand the costs and revenues associated with development—these information and budget analyses can demonstrate what each new housing unit costs in terms of public services and also what revenues are yielded from those properties in the form of taxes, fines, and fees. More sophisticated studies can also examine the secondary and tertiary economic effects of additional residents within the community. Although Meeker's growth has been relatively modest over the last ten years—the Town's history indicates that the area is prone to periods of hyper-inflated growth. Policies to maintain service levels are outlined in "Fiscal Considerations."

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Fiscal Considerations

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Fiscal Considerations

Fiscal considerations are a concrete reality behind all other policy decisions. This section considers how Meeker proposes to pay for many of the policies previously outlined in the comprehensive plan.

Foremost among Meeker's concerns was to develop mechanisms so that all new growth pays its fair share of capital expansion and development costs.

Policy 25: The Town of Meeker will ensure that all new development pays its fair share of impacts on Meeker capital facilities and infrastructure.

Policy 26: Developers and annexors should be responsible for all trunk and off-site infrastructure improvement to development

A number of revenue mechanisms are available to local governments to cope with the cost of growth and also to enhance revenue to pay for and expand existing public services. A brief overview of these mechanisms is provided below.

REVENUE MECHANISMS

Impact Fees – impact fees are a one time charge assessed against new development. These fees recover the capital expansion costs incurred by a local government in providing the public facilities required to serve new development. These fees cannot be used to fix existing deficiencies, only to maintain existing service levels. A water tap fee is an example of an impact fee.

Special Assessment – A special assessment is a charge imposed for the purpose of financing local improvements. The charge must be directed towards the users of an improvement and the revenue derived from the charge must be applied only to the maintenance operation or development of the improvement. It is based on the premise that the property assessed is enhanced in value at least to the amount of the levy. A typical example of a special assessment is when the Town places sidewalks in a homeowner's yard and requires the homeowner to pay a portion of the improvement.

Policy Summary

Policy 25: The Town of Meeker will ensure that all new development pays its fair share of impacts on Meeker capital facilities and infrastructure.

Policy 26: Developers and annexors should be responsible for all trunk and off-site infrastructure improvement to development

Policy 27: Meeker should revise and maintain its user fee schedule for organized parks system users and specify all Town fees and look at when fees should be implemented.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Fiscal Considerations

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Administrative Fees – Include building or plan review fees, park and recreation fees, user fees, inspection fees or fees for other special services. Administrative fees are charged to cover the cost of the specific service the municipality provides. Fees rarely cover the entire cost of the service. The fees cannot exceed the overall direct and indirect costs of the services provided.

School Land Dedication – A school land dedication can be required of all new subdivisions. It requires that a portion of land or a fee-in-lieu of that land be dedicated to the school district to cover the new facilities and land that will be needed to service the children arising from that development.

Sales & Use Taxes – In Colorado, the state sales and use taxes are imposed at the rate of 2.9 percent of the tax base. The total sales or use tax rate imposed by the state and all local governments may not exceed 6.9 percent. The retail sales tax applies to the gross receipts from all of the following activities: retail sales of tangible or exchanged property, telephone and telegraph service, gas and electric service, meals and cover charges where meals are regularly served, and charges for rooms and accommodations.

The Colorado use tax applies to the privilege of storing, using, or consuming tangible personal property in Colorado that has been purchased at retail and is supplementary to the sales tax. The sales tax and use tax are complementary taxes — the use tax is not imposed on sales that are subject to the sales tax. All sales and use tax increases are subject to approval in a public vote.

Other revenue mechanism abound including mill levy increases (subject to complex state laws involving the Tabor and Gallagher amendments) as well as a host of special districting options that require considerable work by the local government and some risk. However, Meeker is amenable to considering all revenue sources on a case by case basis.

Administrative fees assist in ensuring that the ongoing maintenance costs of existing facilities are born, at least partially, by some of the identifiable high intensity users.

Policy 27: Meeker should revise and maintain its user fee schedule for organized parks system users and specify all Town fees and look at when fees should be implemented.

P27-Action A: Meeker will calculate and revise its user fee to be uniformly applied to all organized groups or leagues and it will be based on maintenance costs

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Fiscal Considerations

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado

Although the Town will require dedication of parks land or a fee-in-lieu of that land it is essential that those parks also be developed with facilities that increase both the recreation opportunities and capacity of those parklands.

Policy 28: The Town of Meeker should include parks facilities in its comprehensive fair share growth fee.

P28-Action A: Standard equipment costs for parks by type will be established and a schedule of impact fees will be developed so that all new development pays its fair share into the improvement of those facilities.

One of the most visible and costly impacts of new growth to municipal services accrues on the streets system. Inevitably, more businesses and residences create more traffic. In order to maintain Meeker's currently high level of service for streets (uncrowded, safe, and maintained roads) Meeker will require new growth to contribute its fair share of the impact to this system.



Administrative fees including, planning review fees building department fees and others are an important part in covering the day-to-day operations costs that the Town incurs when new development takes place.

Policy 29: Town of Meeker will review and revise its administrative fee schedule every three years.

Policy 30: Meeker will consider a revised school land dedication/fee in lieu prepared by the school district every two years.

Although the school district will prepare and update the school land dedication and fee-



Photo by Tony Weiss

Policy Summary

Policy 28: The Town of Meeker should include parks facilities in its comprehensive fair share growth fee.

Policy 29: Town of Meeker will review and revise its administrative fee schedule every three years.

Policy 30: Meeker will consider a revised school land dedication/fee in lieu prepared by the school district every two years.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Fiscal Considerations

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



in-lieu, it is important that the fee be updated every two years because it is based on real estate values.

Many of the revenue mechanisms outlined above are geared toward one-time charges for the expansion of capital expansion facilities. But taxes are among the top means for funding the ongoing maintenance of Town facilities and services as well as a source of funding for their expansion.

	Administration	Law Enforcement	Parks	Trails
Current Meeker LOS	2.8 administration FTE's per 1000 residents	1.9 FTE per 1000 residents	Approximately 60 acres of parkland per 1000 residents	?? miles per 1000 residents
Comments	Average to good for communities Meeker's size.	Average small community law enforcement and national standard is about 1.8 FTE per 1000 residents	A high LOS when compared to other similar sized communities	Similar sized Colorado communities possess about 1.6 miles per 1000

The working group and citizens concur that some willingness to raise the sales tax to fund tourism development. It is important to recognize that competition for tourists in Colorado is quite heated among various rural communities—with each touting its assets and benefits relative to others. Rather than re-inventing itself, Meeker may want to capitalize and expand on its existing assets as well as aggressively marketing them. Dedicating money and time to tourist development can be a productive means of not only increasing revenues during tourists seasons, but also in fueling future migration to the area.

Policy 31: Meeker should seek a County sales tax increase to fund community/economic development and tourism

P31-Action A: Meeker needs to determine appropriate revenue requirements for position and project funding for a five year time period—in addition specific tasks and accomplishments need to be established for the position and projects so that the

Policy Summary

Policy 31: Meeker should seek a County sales tax increase to fund community/economic development and tourism

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Fiscal Considerations

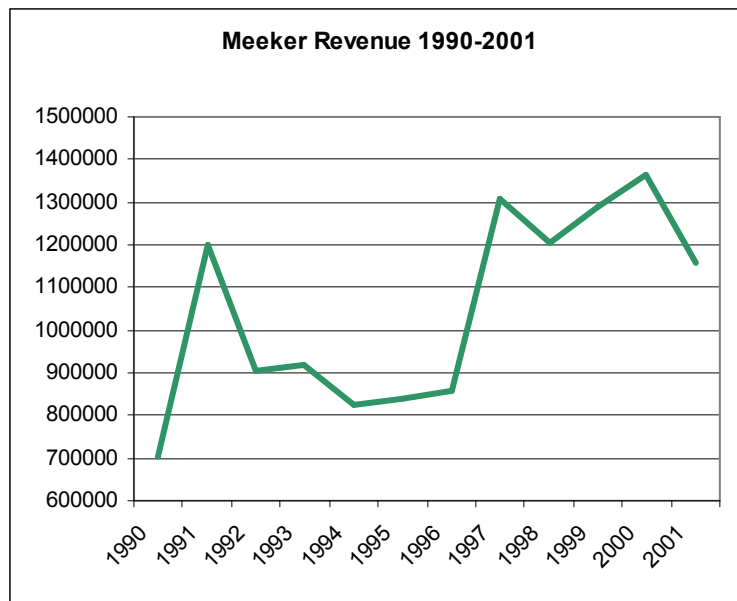
Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



sales tax can be taken credibly before the voters.

As mentioned previously in the Economic section of this document it is beneficial for Meeker to both grow in population while also having some measure of control over new development. Perhaps the best mechanism for doing so is bringing those lands where growth is most likely under the jurisdiction of the Meeker Town Government. The Town has many assets to offer these land owners and prospective developers and should pursue the annexation of properties—both residential and commercial.



Policy 32: Meeker should develop an annexation policy

P32-Action A: Meeker needs to codify a clear annexation policy, annexation area, and process, while also actively participating in pursuing the annexation of surrounding areas—a simple action that the Town may undertake is assistance in gathering landowner signatures for possible annexation petitions. High quality zoning and development processes may also serve as incentives.

Finally, it is notable that Meeker currently has a share of the Rio Blanco County Sales tax revenue. The share of funds is a significant revenue source for the Town and assists greatly in maintaining the ongoing operations and maintenance costs of Town services. The Town needs to revisit the existing IGA to ensure that this revenue source is secure now and in the future.

Policy Summary

Policy 32: Meeker should develop an annexation policy

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Transportation

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Transportation

This section provides the link between future land uses and the necessary improvements to Meeker's transportation system. The following items were of chief consideration of the planners and Citizen Advisory Group when developing this plan.

- Identify key improvements to the existing transportation system made necessary by future growth.
- Generally locate and classify future streets in the future land use areas.
- Identify connections between existing streets and future streets.

EVALUATION OF EXISTING STREET SYSTEM

The existing transportation system can best be described as a hybrid of a curvilinear/hierarchical and grid-style streets systems.

A grid-style streets pattern is a system of straight, parallel streets that intersect each other at right or nearly right angles. A hierarchical streets pattern is based on a streets classification system in which a street's design (right-of-way width, pavement width, etc.) is related to its function.

Curvilinear street system design, like those in the 1980s era Sanderson and Sage Hills subdivisions, lends itself to a hierarchical street system. The hierarchical traffic flow tends to extend out of the more recent subdivisions and into the grid. For example, as depicted on the Future Land Use Map, 3rd and 6th Streets serve as collectors



because they became an extension of the collector streets from Sanderson. Recognizing this reality, Meeker adopted hierarchical streets standards in the 1994 Meeker Subdivision Ordinance.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Transportation

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



Meeker's Current Street Standards		
Type	ROW	Pavement
Local	60-70 feet	40 feet
Collector	80 feet	40 feet
Arterial	80 feet	44 feet

LOCAL STREETS provide frontage for access to lots and carry traffic that has origin or destination and lots adjacent to the street. On street parking is allowed on local streets.

COLLECTOR STREETS serve traffic passing from neighborhoods or commercial centers to arterials and other collector streets as well as serving as direct access to the properties along the street. As such, collector streets are designed to handle higher volumes of traffic at higher speeds than local streets. Collector streets should provide enough shoulder room for parallel parking and bike lanes.

ARTERIAL STREETS provide relatively direct linear movement across the community so that all neighborhoods may be accessed from any other point in Town. They are designed to handle high volumes of traffic and carry a significant amount of "passthrough" traffic not stopping in Town.

Streets are designed to handle more traffic the higher they are upon the Streets hierarchy. The streets layout is designed to funnel traffic out of neighborhoods and commercial districts onto streets with higher capacity until travelers are on an arterial that allow movement into different areas and into and out of Town.

The original Town site provides a grid system while the more recent neighborhoods (Sanderson, Sage Hills) have been developed in a hierarchical fashion. The transportation map provides a classification of the existing streets system in Meeker. Downtown's grid pattern is readily apparent, as is the emergence of hierarchical streets patterns in more recent development. For example, the neighborhood streets in the Northern portions of Meeker all tend to funnel to 3rd, 6th, or 2nd/ Sulpher Creek Road, which connect to SH 13 (after some maneuvering, in 2nd street's case), the arterial road in Meeker.

Policy 33: Meeker should review and revise existing streets standards.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Transportation

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



ADVANTAGES

The existing streets system offers some major advantages for future streets planning:

1. Because the highway curves north in Meeker, the primary Arterial street, Market Street runs both east-west and north-south providing an opportunity for consistent circulation to and from the same Arterials in both directions.
2. The extensive grid system in Meeker offers many options for efficiently tying future development into the existing transportation system.
3. The width of existing Town streets offers flexibility in their future function and capacity.
4. By western Town standards, Meeker is a compact Town, which ultimately results in fewer vehicle miles traveled (less driving) and lower streets costs.

CHALLENGES

The existing streets system also presents some challenges for future streets planning:

Meeker's biggest transportation challenge as it grows is to develop a system of east-west/north-south collectors to carry traffic to and from neighborhoods that is not entirely dependent on SH 13. Accessing the most developable portions of the incorporated property surrounding the airport with an alternate route from the highway is going to require some careful route planning and easement acquisition.

2nd Street is the terminus of Sulphur Creek Road and serves as a collector street. Due to the persistent location of Sulphur Creek itself, 2nd Street dead-ends into the creek. Any set of turns or intersections in a route decreases the capacity and safety of that route.

Policy 34: Second street will ultimately extend through to Market street and serve as an important collector street

Policy Summary

Policy 33: Meeker should review and revise existing streets standards.

Policy 34: Second street will ultimately extend through to Market street and serve as an important collector street

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Transportation

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM POLICIES

The transportation element of Meeker's comprehensive plan identifies specific improvements at specific locations.

Policy 35: Future development streets plans and Town implemented Streets improvement projects will work to achieve connectivity between neighborhoods, focusing on non-Highway route development.

P35-Action A: Specifically, areas of new development need to provide collector streets generally trending north-south and/ or east-west that connect directly with the arterial, SH 13 or feed into existing collector streets with adequate capacity to handle additional traffic.

P35-Action B: In order to achieve connectivity to future development in the airport area, the community envisions the development of a northeast collector street connecting Sulphur Creek road with Highway 13 north of the airport

P35-Action C: To achieve connectivity, developers may be required by the Town to provide developed streets that will serve traffic from other existing or future developments

Policy 36: Enhance connectivity between existing and future development.

P36-Action A: Identify all easements or rights of way in existing subdivisions that could serve as a connection to areas in the future land use map designated for future development.

P36-Action B: The streets system in each new development must provide access to development in future annexation tiers. This means that the Town will often require that future developments include street "stubs" to land that has not yet been formally considered for development.

Policy 37: Mitigate off-site impacts of future development on existing roadways and intersections.

Policy Summary

Policy 35: Future development streets plans and Town implemented Streets improvement projects will work to achieve connectivity between neighborhoods, focusing on non-Highway route development.

Policy 36: Enhance connectivity between existing and future development.

Policy 37: Mitigate off-site impacts of future development on existing roadways and intersections.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Transportation

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



P37-Action A: Intersections between existing collector streets serving future development and arterials are a key concern and impacts upon these intersections must be evaluated carefully, and mitigation guaranteed.

P37-Action B: The roadways of the existing streets must be monitored to determine if future development will warrant improvements (such as an upgrade of a sub-standard roadway to meet collector or arterial street status).

Policy 38: Meeker will develop off street pedestrian and bike ways along all future collector streets.

P38-Action A: Adopt pedestrian way standards into the Street Design Standards that allow flexibility of design while providing durability.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN MAP

The purpose of this map is fourfold:

1. To provide a general blueprint of the location of future collector streets in the future land use areas.
2. To identify the role existing streets will play in serving future development.
3. To identify key connections between existing and future development

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED FUTURE STREETS NETWORK

NORTHEAST COLLECTOR

The future streets network depicted on the Transportation Plan Map establishes a conceptual plan for a future collector street linking the existing core of Meeker to future development on the incorporated property near the airport in Meeker.

The route's first leg beginning in Town could be accommodated with two routes: a northern alternative, traversing from Sulfur Creek Rd. through Rec. District, County, and School property and a southern route, traversing from School Street through private property designated as commercial on the future land use map. This southern route could also traverse south of the High school on the site of the swimming pool

Policy Summary

Policy 38: Meeker will develop off street pedestrian and bike ways along all future collector streets.

Meeker Comprehensive Plan

Transportation

Updated September 2005

Meeker, Colorado



once it is replaced by the aquatic recreation center.

Ultimately this route would skirt south of Ute Terrace and along the airport property boundary and up to the incorporated airport property. One complication is that due to FAA regulations, it will likely be necessary to acquire an easement from the landowners of the southeastern most Ute Terraces lot. The Town will need to work diligently with Airport Officials and landowners in the planning stages of this collector street.

2ND STREET EXTENSION

2nd Street funnels traffic from the County, Sage Hills, and other side streets southward towards the Town core. One of the characteristics that lends greatly to street capacity is the ability to keep moving in a relatively straight line with limited intersections. 2nd street's terminus at Sulfur Creek greatly diminishes its functionality as a collector street by causing the need to jog east or west before making it to the destination. Straight road access to Market street would improve traffic flow and establish 2nd street as a fully functional collector street. Since 2nd Street serves such a critical role in the transportation system, Meeker has determined that it is worth pursuing a feasibility analysis of extending the street through to Market Street.

