

# The City of Salida 2013

## *Comprehensive Plan*



Adopted April 16, 2013



# Salida 2013 Comprehensive Plan

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# Chapter 1

## Vision Statement and Introduction

### Vision Statement

Salida's vision for the future emerged during the public meetings held during the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan and was refined during work sessions with City Council and the Planning Commission. The vision statement is a broad but concise description of what we want the community to be in the future. This vision describes Salida's assets and values and focuses on moving the community toward achieving longer-reaching ideals.

*Salida recognizes the importance of conserving and enhancing its historic small town character and embraces a future that preserves the natural environment and offers its residents and visitors a multi-generational community with an eclectic range of housing, jobs, education, business, shopping and recreation opportunities.*



## Community Overview

The City of Salida (“City” or “Salida”) is organized as a statutory city under the constitution of the State of Colorado. The city operates under a council-mayor form of government and provides the following services: public safety (fire and police); public works; recreation and culture; community development; water and wastewater treatment; and general administrative services, including licensing.

Salida is a small mountain community located in Chaffee County near the center of Colorado. Like many mountain towns, economic activity within the city centers on tourism. Salida is also a shopping and services hub for nearby residents in the region. Tourists are attracted to the community by the nearby Monarch Mountain ski area, the historic downtown, summer activities on the Arkansas River and the many outdoor recreation opportunities associated with the Pike-San Isabel National Forest and other public lands surrounding the city.

Despite these many amenities, it was not until recently that Salida was ‘discovered’ as a destination. The city has worked hard in recent years to improve its attractions including an improved theater and conference center, Riverside Park amenities, US Hwy 50 streetscape, and trail systems within and surrounding the city. The influx of people and development activity over the last decade creates a dynamic environment that offers many challenges as well as opportunities for the city to navigate in the coming years. In addition, we must consider the immediate and potential long-term impacts of the economic downturn which began in 2007.

Salida is the county seat of Chaffee County and its largest city. The 2010 Census shows a decline in population for the City of Salida from 5,504 in 2000 to 5,236 in 2010. In the same period the number of housing units in the city increased from 2,748 to 2,894. This decrease in population of 268 people at the same time as an increase of 146 housing units may stem from a number of causes. This decline is mainly due to an influx of second homeowners within the city. There has been a steady flow of building permit applications over the past ten years. While the majority of them are for remodeling of existing structures there are also some for new residences and commercial buildings.

**Residential Building Permits issued (2003 through 2012)**

Type	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Single-Family Dwelling	5	8	11	14	30	9	7	10	4	18
Multi-Family Dwelling	4	27	2	9	28	11	8	3	2	2
Residential additions	23	35	22	30	55	32	46	36	20	32
	Units	Units	Units	Units	Units	Units	Units	Units	Units	Units

**Commercial Building Permits issued (2003 through 2012)**

Type	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Commercial	1	0	3	0	3	20	5	0	1	3
Commercial addition	16	20	13	8	15	5	23	12	18	13



## Changes Since 2000

Some of the changing conditions since the adoption of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan are highlighted below.

In 2004 the city purchased the 192 acre Vandaveer Ranch on the southeast side of the city limits for its water rights future development. The City of Salida has annexed the property and is now working towards developing a natural resource center and possibilities for higher education. This property is also located along the southern gateway into the City along Hwy 50.

In August of 2007 the City of Salida selected a developer for the Vandaveer property. Their proposal showed approximately 640 residential units; 470 single-family lots, 80 town home/condominium units and 90 multi-family rentals. In total, 114 acres of the Vandaveer property would be residential, 34 acres along Highway 50 would be commercial and the remaining 43 acres would be used for open space, R.O.W., Community Center and trails. Additional property was to be obtained to construct a golf course. With the financial crisis beginning in 2008 the developer's financing fell through and they were unable to complete purchase of the Vandaveer property.



Vandaveer Ranch

The City Council is revisiting priorities for the Vandaveer parcel. In 2010 the City of Salida is working with Forest Service, BLM, AHRA and DOW agencies to build a new Natural Resource Center on 36 acres of the Vandaveer property. The city also hopes to attract an institution of higher learning to the campus to complement the natural resource agencies. This is discussed further in Chapter 4 Economic Sustainability.

The Salida Historic Preservation Commission was formed in 2002 when the City of Salida determined that preservation, protection and the enhancement of the city's historic buildings, sites, neighborhoods and overall character is essential to the future and economic health and welfare of the community.

In 2002 the city added a provision to the Land Use Code for the creation of condominiums. The new provision allows property owners to condominiumize multi-unit buildings which can function as affordable housing. From 2002 through 2012 the city has approved 62 condominium subdivision exemption applications and of those 13 were commercial properties and 49 were residential properties.

Since 2002 the Planning Commission and City Council have approved 13 subdivisions and planned developments. The approved subdivisions created 241 residential lots and 23 commercial lots.

Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center (HRRMC) was first established in 1885 as the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad hospital for railroad employees at 448 East First Street. In 1976, the Salida Hospital District was formed and in 1989 the name was changed to the current to better fit area needs. In 2005, HRRMC decided to sell their property on First Street and build a new facility.

The City of Salida made a trade of land with the Division of Wildlife and then sold the land to HRRMC. The hospital built a new state-of-the-art facility 1.1 miles west of the old facility on Hwy. 291 and opened their doors on April 1, 2008.

The City of Salida and Chaffee County purchased the site of the old hospital and moved in to the

remodeled structure in March 2010. The repurposed structure now houses City Hall, Police, Health & Human Services as well as other Community non-profit organizations.

The city has had some difficulty in maintaining a clear direction over the past decade. There have been eight different individuals in the position of City Administrator or Acting-Administrator since 2000. This condition along with staggered Council terms have made it difficult at times to know which direction the city was headed.

### Purpose of the 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 decisions regarding proposals for new development and the future needs of the community. It is a strategic tool to help a community guide development and investment decisions to achieve a healthy and balanced community. While this plan is primarily an advisory document, it provides guidance for decisions affecting growth and annexation, the use and development of land, preservation of open space, transportation systems and the expansion of public facilities and services.

The City of Salida adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in June of 2000 and as conditions of the city change it is important to revisit and update the plan. This update to the Comprehensive Plan builds upon and succeeds the 2000 City of Salida Comprehensive Plan.

The plan is a vehicle for the city to accomplish goals set forth for the next five, ten and twenty years. This plan establishes the community’s shared vision for the future of Salida and the policies and implementation mechanisms that the city will use to achieve that vision.

### Creation and Adoption of the Plan

Public involvement from a diverse group was a central component of the planning process. The city

received regular input from members of the community, elected, and appointed officials and city staff to help guide and shape the plan.

Multiple levels and types of community participation were used to facilitate the preparation of this plan. The process was led by the Salida Planning Commission assisted by staff of the community development department. City-wide meetings, direct mail and internet surveys, radio interviews, television coverage on Channel 10, input from community organizations, the city website, joint meetings with the City Council and outreach through local coffee shops were all utilized to solicit input during the process.

The public engagement process was critical to the success of this project. The public meetings were open to all, locally advertised and were conducted to encourage group discussion and to surface com-



January 12, 2010 Public Meeting

munity preferences for the future of Salida. Those community preferences are reflected in the policies and actions in the plan.

Following drafting of the plan a formal process of public hearings with the Planning Commission and the City Council were held to adopt the plan.

### Organization of the Plan

Salida’s Comprehensive Plan is an advisory document that articulates a clear and concise vision for

the future of Salida, contains adopted principles and policies and presents realistic action steps for achieving that vision.

Each chapter of the plan is focused around one of nine plan components representing an area of interest based on citizen input.

- Community Character
- Land Use and Growth
- Economic Sustainability
- Environmental Sustainability
- Housing
- Recreation and Open Space
- Tourism
- Transportation
- Public Safety
- Community Services

Each of the substantive chapters (Chapters 2 – 10) is formatted similarly. The chapters begin with an introduction and a discussion of current conditions. Each chapter then includes several guiding principles along with policies and action items to implement the principles.

**Principles & Policies:** Within each chapter, general principles and their guiding policies related to that chapter's specific plan component are outlined, these are intended to be used for decision making throughout all levels of city government.

**Action Items:** In addition, within each chapter action items intended to implement the principles and policies are provided, specifying the steps necessary to make the chapter's principles become reality. These action items can be implemented by local organizations, through development and growth or by the fiscal decisions made by the City Council.

Chapter 11, Implementation, presents a general framework of how the policies and action items are prioritized. The prioritization is the result of community input and review by the Planning Commission and City Council and calls out various action items to achieve implementation. This chapter is considered to be evolving and should be reviewed annually to note items that have been accomplished and revisit priorities.

## How to Use and Update the Plan

Salida will use the plan to guide its developing character, improve economic health, and maintain its position as a significant place in the region. The plan is advisory in nature and will serve as a guide to the City Council, Planning Commission, appointed boards, residents and city staff for decisions on regulations, investments, and programs related to land use and development, utilities, facilities, services and other city initiatives.

To maximize the benefit of the plan, it will be used by the city to help:

- Influence the city's annual work programs and budgets, as well as long-term initiatives and capital improvement projects.
- Guide creation of new and revised city ordinances.
- Guide city decision-making on issues regarding growth, land use, economic development, environmental quality, infrastructure improvements, and public services.
- Coordinate with community service groups and local agencies or businesses in joint community goal setting and action plans.
- Advise all private individuals and developers in initiating, preparing, and finalizing any type of land development or land use request to the city.

To help ensure that the Comprehensive Plan is a valid and up-to-date working document, it will be reviewed on an annual basis. The review will involve the following:

- Evaluate the city's decisions and activities relative to the plan's principles and policies.
- Review the plan's usefulness in providing direction for the decisions that were made during previous years (i.e. if different topics or format would be helpful, then they are to be duly noted for inclusion in the next revision).
- Identify any major changes in conditions and new priority items affecting the community, and

include these for implementation in Chapter 11.

- Highlight specific action items that were completed and report on their status to the community.

The review will also allow the public to understand the city's progress in implementing its plan and any proposed policy changes affecting the community. The dialogue stimulated through the planning process should not end with the successful completion of the plan, for success will depend on this ongoing partnership. Public education about how to use the Comprehensive Plan will ensure that the community fully understands its future direction, thus empowering the citizens of Salida to guide their future.



## Chapter 2

# Community Character

The City of Salida is rooted in the railroad history from which the city was born but since the decline of the railroad the city has grown into a diverse multi-generational community that offers a safe, friendly and peaceful atmosphere for residents and visitors alike. Protection of our unique small town character is commonly identified as the most important priority for community members in discussions about the future of the city.

The history, heritage and surrounding natural environment of Salida exemplify the essential spirit of the community. Here, historic neighborhoods and development patterns are highly valued and there is a desire for new development to respect and respond to the existing historic character. At the same time, there is a strong desire to maintain, provide and improve opportunities for individuals and families of all backgrounds and sizes to reside within the community.

In this chapter we briefly describe the character that is unique to Salida touching on our cultural history, streetscapes, architectural style, natural environment and other important elements of the community character. This chapter is intended to reveal our history, quality of life and distinct elements that create Salida's sense of place. The chapter includes consideration of the strengths we see in the character that we would like to build upon, weaknesses we do not wish to continue and new trends that we want to utilize in the future. Map 2.1 Community Character highlights the location of these important places.

### History

The Upper Arkansas Valley was a popular summer hunting and camping spot with indigenous peoples, particularly the Utes, due to its plentiful game, numerous hot springs, and mild climate. The area also experienced much activity during the period of Spanish and American exploration, serving as a natural

pathway to several mountain passes. Among those examining the region were Gov. Don Juan Bautista de Anza, Lt. Zebulon Pike, and John Charles Fremont.

The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad ("D&RG") bypassed the existing settlement of Cleora to establish Salida in 1880. Salida became a major division point for the D&RG, which erected extensive railroad facilities north of the commercial district on the opposite bank of the Arkansas River. The city developed quickly and became the hub of a prosperous mining and agricultural region within a decade of its founding.

Salida experienced devastating fires in its business district in 1886 and 1888, but rebounded to build a substantial commercial area consisting principally of two-story brick buildings. Although Salida did not become part of a direct line to Denver, it would become a major division point for six of the D&RG's branches. With employment opportunities available in railroads, the prosperity of mining, and the growth of agriculture, the city became the largest population center in Chaffee County.

Railroad activity began to decline in the 1950s and, in 1971, Salida ceased to be a division point for the D&RG. After the railroad declined many people commuted to Leadville to work in nearby mines until the mines started to decline in the mid 1980's. Tourism, recreation, and arts-related enterprises grew in importance during the second half of the twentieth



Salida 1884. Salida was platted in 1880





Lighting of Christmas Mountain USA.  
Photo Courtesy of Kevin Hoffman

century. Through this transition the city has remained a regional shopping hub.

There are several detailed histories of Salida and the Chaffee County area. One can be found in the “Downtown Salida Colorado Historic Buildings Survey 2001-02” prepared by Front Range Research Associates and available on the history page of the city’s website.

## Design of the Built Environment

The original town plat for Salida was filed on August 12, 1880. The plat showed Front (Sackett) through Fifth Streets, and D through L, an area reserved for the railroad, and a park between Fourth and Fifth from E to F streets (Alpine Park). Blocks were 325 feet square, with lots measuring 25’ X 150’.

The earliest Sanborn map of Salida, showing the location and use of buildings in the downtown area, was completed in September 1883. The map illustrates that the heart of the commercial district was found along F Street, between Second Street and Front Street, and First Street, between E and G. Single-family dwellings were scattered along the fringes of these business areas, with several multi-family boarding houses found along First Street.

The downtown area was largely established by 1920. Following several fires, most buildings were constructed or reconstructed as two story brick structures. Many of the buildings constructed during the early boom of the city are still in place today and make up the Salida Downtown District listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The architectural resources in the downtown are protected through the historic preservation ordinances of the city and the work of the city’s Historic Preservation Commission appointed by the Council to serve as an advisory committee to help safeguard historic resources in the community.

The historic downtown continues to be a focal point for the community. While the business district along Highway 50 provides most of the commerce in the city, the downtown is the gathering place for residents and visitors alike. Many events are hosted in the downtown throughout the year drawing the community together. Recent investment in downtown by the city, county and civic organizations include the redevelopment of Riverside Park and the SteamPlant Theater and Events Center and creation of the riverwalk and whitewater park. These improvements have helped to revitalize downtown bringing renewed interest and traffic by both residents and visitors alike.

The residential development pattern in the city was fairly consistent from 1880 through the 1930’s with a variety of housing types constructed throughout much of the early city. Residential construction included larger, more architecturally significant dwellings that represent architectural styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as smaller middle class houses, two-story terraces, and workers’ housing built following a standard plan.

The early residential neighborhoods followed the original lot and block pattern with 60’ street widths running in a regular grid with shade trees planted along the right of way. This pattern included alleys through each block for infrastructure placement and access to the rear of lots. The 1950’s and later decades saw the introduction of larger lots, cul-de-sacs, ranch-style homes and other, more modern development patterns and architectural styles at the periphery of the grid.

The historic neighborhoods including the architectural character, streetscape patterns and neighborhood scale are highly valued by Salida residents. Along with the historic downtown, the historic residential areas help form what we value in the character of the community.

Development has increased in recent years including new construction, additions to existing structures and replacement of aging buildings. Some residents prefer the eclectic mixture of buildings that reflect the diversity and independent nature of the city. However, others believe that design standards should be implemented for buildings in the city. 2008 saw two efforts to bring design standards to different residential neighborhoods in the city. Design guidelines were adopted for the Sackett's Addition neighborhood while efforts to create a historic district for residential F Street failed.

Policy makers have been reluctant to create such regulations as they may interfere with economic development and create additional burden on city staff. Others argue that an increased aesthetic standard would eventually add to economic growth because higher quality development and unique community character attract more investment as well as tourists.

## Natural Surroundings

The beautiful natural environment surrounding Salida forms the identity of the city and residents. Salida is located along the Arkansas and South Arkansas Rivers in a valley surrounded by mountains and high peaks. Recreation opportunities abound and like the arts, have attracted many residents and visitors in recent decades. The mild mountain climate, access to public lands, proximity to the river and pace of life all contribute to the local enthusiasm for recreation and enjoyment of the natural environment.

The heritage of Chaffee County and the City of Salida includes ranching and irrigation on the lands west of the city. The open lands, green fields and grazing cattle form an important component of the community identity. This is not an area of sprawling suburbs such as can be found in Colorado's Front Range, but

rather a rural area where much of the valley floor remains undeveloped and forms an uninterrupted foreground for views of the surrounding 14,000 foot peaks.

As ranching becomes less viable in changing economic times and the value of those lands for development increases, the community risks the loss of the asset that so many take for granted. The government of Chaffee County has struggled in recent years with balancing the desire to maintain the ranches and the economic expectations of private landowners. As citizens of the county and beneficiaries of the open ranchlands, Salida residents must be prepared to support the County in efforts to maintain ranches and irrigated lands if we are to continue to enjoy the benefits they provide.

## Sense of Community

Salida's quality of life can be attributed to many tangible amenities, from beautiful surroundings to short commutes and tree-lined streets to friendly, familiar faces and considerate neighbors. People are attracted to this area for the unhurried lifestyle and cultural and recreational opportunities. The sense of community is palpable and residents demonstrate this when they come together in times of celebration or to willingly lend a hand in times of difficulty.



Ranching and agricultural lands are the scenic backdrop that defines the Salida region.  
Photo Courtesy of Alan Robinson

The community is made up of a mix of life-time and long-time residents, young families, retirees, second homeowners, working class, recreation enthusiasts, conservatives, liberals, children and elderly all joined by the common thread of their community. The city reflects this diversity through the variety in the built environment from strong brick structures to whimsical art. It is further reflected in the capital investments made by the city in maintenance of streets and parks and improvements to facilities like the SteamPlant Theater and Event Center and the Hot Springs Aquatic Center.

Recent growth has meant changes in the city’s population characteristics. In the face of this change Salida seeks to protect its small town atmosphere, heritage and sense of community. Residents enjoy the casual atmosphere, the opportunity to raise a family, community events, and willingness of people to pitch in, volunteer and be engaged in their community. This chapter promotes strategies to continue fostering this civic spirit throughout the community.

## Principles / Policies / Action Items

### Principle CC-I. History

*Preserve, enhance and promote the historic resources in the community.*

**Policy CC-I.1** – Preserve, enhance and promote the Salida Downtown National Register District and the city’s older residential neighborhoods.

**Action CC-I.1.a** – Maintain the HPC to advise City staff on the city’s preservation ordinance and provide education to the community about historic preservation and the associated economic benefits of preservation.

**Action CC-I.1.b** – Pursue grant funding and leverage city funds to inventory the historic resources in the community, particularly in the residential neighborhoods as identified in the 2001-02 survey completed by Front Range Research Associates.



Shriners saluting during the FIBArk Parade

**Action CC-I.1.c** – Actively review and work to implement the action items identified in the Historic Downtown Improvement and Economic Sustainability Plan adopted by the City Council in 2007.

**Action CC-I.1.d** – Work within the Property Maintenance Code to enforce maintenance of commercial and multi-family structures in the city.

**Action CC-I.1.e** – Create gateways to the Downtown along the major traffic corridors of the city.

**Policy CC-I.2** – Maintain a connection to the history of the city and the railroad heritage that established the city.

**Action CC-I.2.a** – Provide interpretive panels along the riverwalk or future trail along the Arkansas, providing information about the railroad history adjacent to downtown.



**Action CC-I.2.b** – Encourage relocation of the Salida Museum and visitor center to the downtown area.

**Action CC-I.2.c** – Encourage public transit opportunities that simulate the railroad history.

**Policy CC-I.2** – Provide options for local food production in the community.

**Action CC-I.2.a** – Review the Land Use Code to ensure it promotes and encourages backyard CSAs, local food production and local markets, and community gardens.

**Principle CC-II. Design of the Built Environment**

*Maintain the valued structures and streetscapes within the city and allow new development that is compatible in design and also meets new goals for innovation and energy and resource efficiency.*

**Policy CC-II.1** – Encourage the preservation of buildings with historic character and design of new buildings that are compatible in scale and site design.

**Action CC-II.1.a** – With the support of neighborhood residents, investigate design guidelines that will determine appropriate height limitations, setbacks and other design elements for buildings in established residential neighborhoods.

**Action CC-II.1.b** – Local landmark designation for historic residential neighborhoods may also provide an alternative method for achieving the same goal as Action CC-II.1.a.

**Action CC-II.1.c** – Maintain the Salida Downtown Historic District as a Certified Local Government with the State of Colorado.

**Action CC-II.1.d** – Review the variance provisions of the Land Use Code to ensure adequate reuse opportunities for non-conforming structures in keeping with the neighborhood character.

**Action CC-II.1.e** – New development should be compatible with the traditional built neighborhood character and be subordinate in mass and scale.



Continue to provide wayfinding signage to the historic downtown

**Principle CC-III. Natural Surroundings**

*Salida will sustain and enhance the beauty and health of the natural environment, working landscapes and provide multi-modal access to the many surrounding recreational opportunities.*

**Policy CC-III.1** – The Arkansas River should be maintained as a focal point of the community to be enjoyed from both the shore and in the current.

**Action CC-III.1.a** – Seek ways to improve or provide additional public access to the Arkansas River.

**Policy CC-III.2** – Maintain the passive experience of openness in the rural lands surrounding the city that will accommodate ongoing agricultural use.

**Action CC-III.2.a** – Encourage agriculture and low density residential development in the open lands within the Municipal Planning area around the city.

**Action CC-III.2.b** – Actively participate in the Chaffee County Heritage Area Advisory Board.

**Principle CC-IV. Sense of Community**

*The city should strive to maintain a healthy and safe community that ensures opportunities for a multi-generational community to live, work, play, and raise a family.*

**Policy CC-IV.1** - Continue to promote the cohesive community of Salida which includes full-time residents, businesses, second homeowners, and a diversity of ages.

**Action CC-IV.1.a** – Continue providing cultural activities through the recreation department that engage citizens of all ages, particularly those programs which encourage participation of multiple generations.



**Policy CC-IV.2** – Encourage the casual atmosphere of the small town lifestyle.

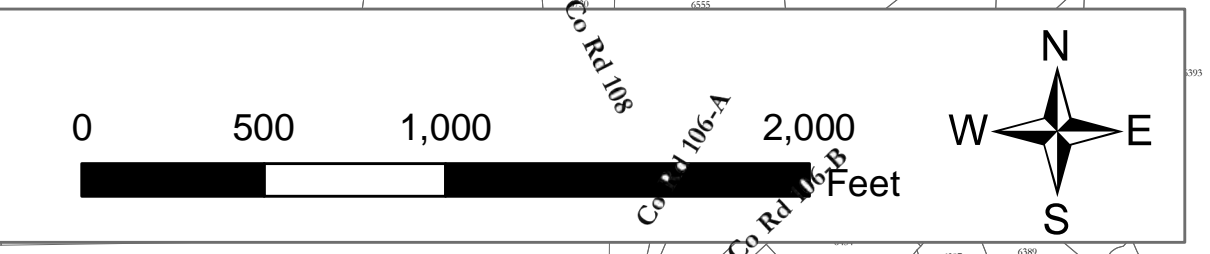
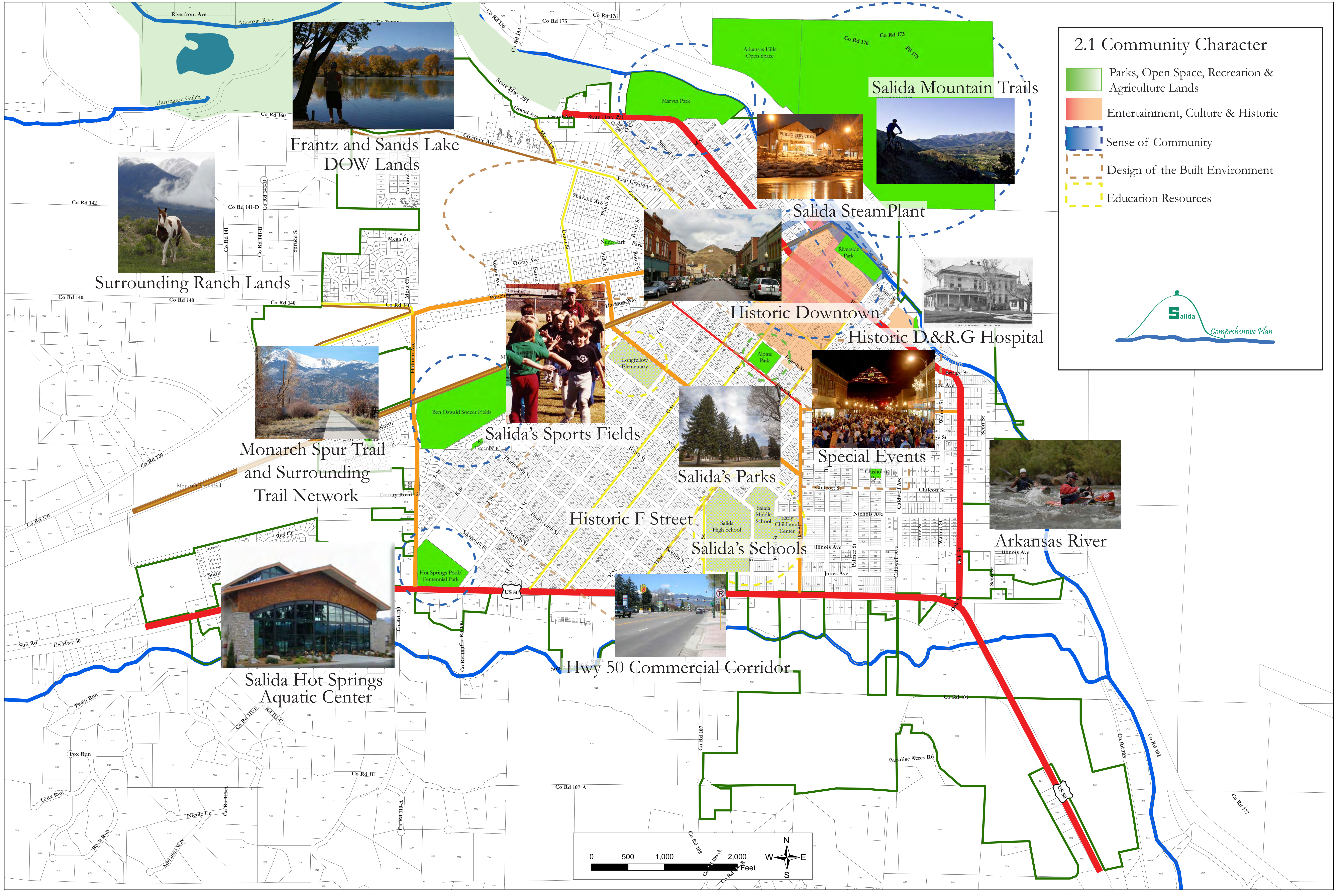
**Policy CC-IV.3** – Promote an engaged citizenship that is involved with civic activities, long range planning and volunteer opportunities.

First Street in the Historic Downtown



## 2.1 Community Character

-  Parks, Open Space, Recreation & Agriculture Lands
-  Entertainment, Culture & Historic
-  Sense of Community
-  Design of the Built Environment
-  Education Resources





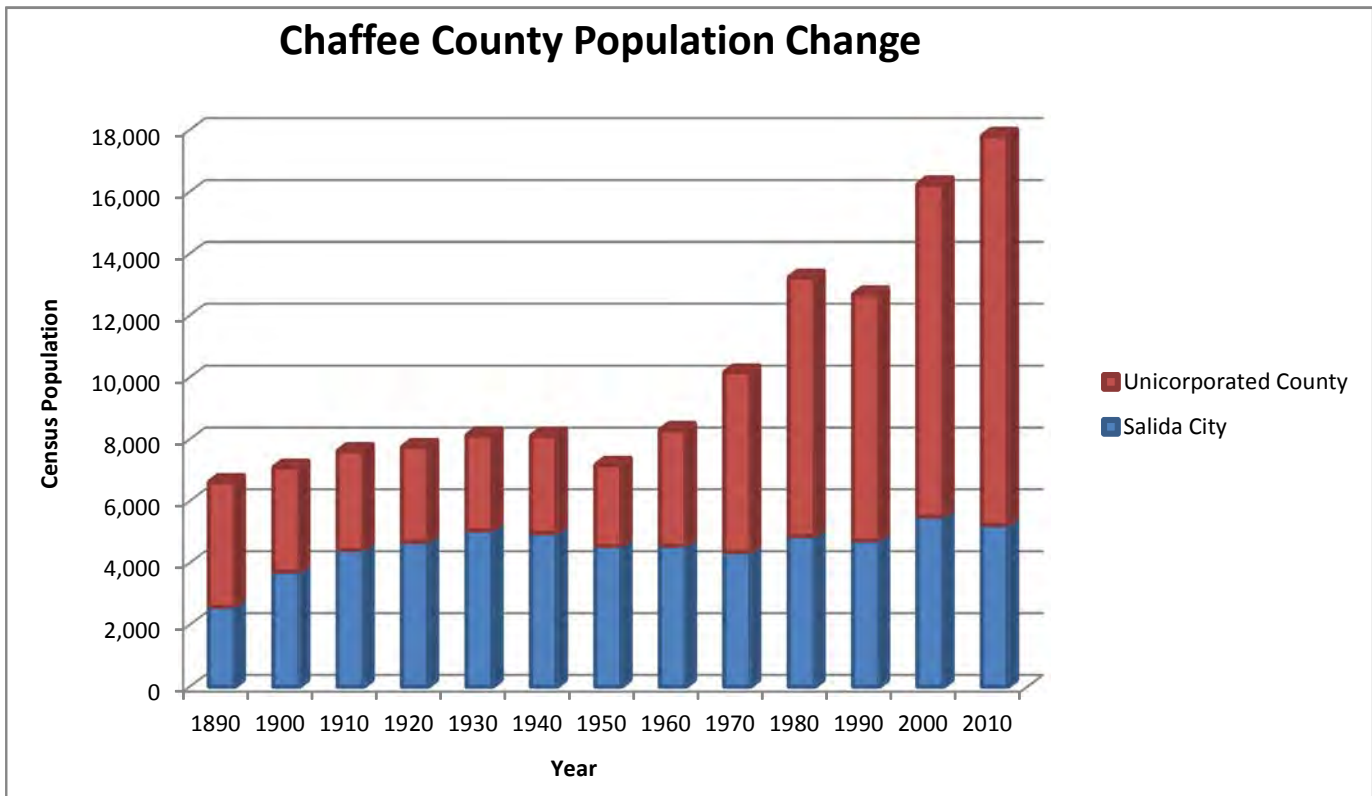
# Chapter 3

## Land Use and Growth

This chapter looks at historic growth trends and projections made by the state and other sources. Considerations include the potential consequences of growth, the challenges of servicing that growth and the options for accommodating growth through practical land use changes. It will be important for the city to carefully make policy changes that will not detract from the character of the city but rather enhance the character valued by today’s citizens. Several steps have been taken already by city staff and appointed and elected officials to create zoning districts that match the built environment. This process will continue that effort by identifying additional growth options that logically direct growth to take advantage of existing facilities and infrastructure.

### Growth Historic Trends

The population of the City of Salida has not changed considerably over the last 120 years. Historical Census records indicate that the population of Salida was 2,486 people in 1890 which is approximately half the population in 2010. Steady growth occurred between 1890 and 1930 at which time the population was nearly equal to today’s population. Population numbers began to decline through the mid part of the 20th Century until 1980 which marks the beginning of a 30 year period of steady growth to today’s population of 5,236 residents.



Population ebbs and flows are typical and can usually be correlated with some historical event. For example, likely causes of population decrease around 1930 may be attributed to the Great Depression. World War II in the early to mid 1940's would be a likely cause for population decrease. The population increase seen in the 1970's is correlated with the mining boom at Climax Mine and a subsequent population decrease can be attributed to its closing in the early 1980's. Since that time the population has increased and is expected to continue with the anticipated retirement of the baby boomer generation to the Salida area.

## Building Permits

Building permit information can be used as an indicator for growth activity as well as market performance. It may also help to validate the population projections made by the state. According to the 2008 Crestone Heights Market Feasibility Study, Chaffee County is largely a custom or built to suit new home market as opposed to a speculative market. This would lend validity to the ability to gauge building permit activity with population growth and market demand. It is important to note however that second home ownership has been on the rise and does not contribute to population increases. It does have effects on the local economy and will remain a part of the growth sector so anticipating the characteristics of that growth will be important in the future land use scenarios for the city.

The following chart is a compilation of building permits from 2000 through 2012. The first section represents the total number of building permits for all categories of construction while the second is for new residential construction only. The chart shows that most of the residential construction activity is occurring in unincorporated Chaffee County. Salida's permits have fluctuated throughout the ten year period but show an increase in 2008. The building permit numbers for construction dropped during the recession in 2009 and 2010. However, the past two years have seen an increase in construction permit activity. New residential construction counts each new dwelling as a new permit. For example, a duplex would account for 2 new permits.

### Chaffee County Building Permit Data

**New  
Construction  
Permits, Total**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Unincorporated County</b>	383	435	384	417	362	307	307	366	338	268	210	247	
<b>Salida</b>	117	77	87	156	163	154	144	193	212	164	56	129	
<b>Poncha Springs</b>	31	11	25	23	27	15	22	41	80	22	11	14	
<b>Boena Vista</b>	76	70	76	107	79	56	71	88	25	82	40	66	

**New  
Construction  
Permits,  
Residential**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Unincorporated County</b>	169	184	149	154	125	120	105	140	93	65	80	52	
<b>Salida</b>	27	19	16	9	36	13	23	58	20	15	11	8	
<b>Poncha Springs</b>	7	1	16	11	12	5	17	19	7	7	3	7	
<b>Boena Vista</b>	36	28	30	23	31	17	28	34	20	12	15	8	

## Population Projections

Annual growth projections anticipate that over the next twenty-five years there will be a positive net change of nearly 500 people per year within Chaffee County. A 2007 Market Analysis completed by THK Associates, Inc. cited Salida's share of overall population growth in the county between 1990 and 2007 was 15.4%. Other sources indicate an expected growth rate in the city of 2% annually for the next twenty-five years. If this is true, assuming the city has enough developable land to accommodate such growth, the city's population could reach nearly 10,000 residents by 2033<sup>1</sup>. The numbers from these sources may need to be tempered as the recession was not considered when those numbers were released. Nevertheless, the overall growth projection may still be relevant.

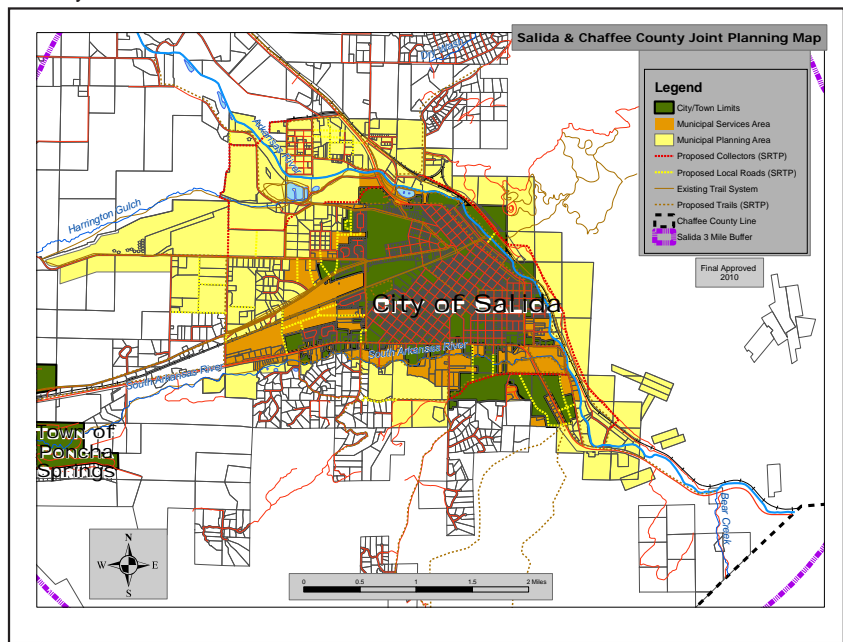
According to the same Market Analysis completed by THK Associates Inc., there were 1,501 second homes in Chaffee County which represents 15% of the total units in the county. In Salida, second home purchases have been on the rise, representing 79% of the total change in housing stock occupancy from 2000 through 2005 as opposed to 14% from 1990 to 2000. Second home ownership does not account for a year round increase in population so the current and projected population estimates should be adjusted to recognize this type of ownership.

Salida experiences population fluctuations throughout the year due to the influence of tourism, second home ownership and seasonal service industry employees. Summer is the height of the tourist season with fall and spring shoulder seasons experiencing more tempered population ebbs and flows.

## Cooperative Planning

The City of Salida and Chaffee County entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) in 2008 for the purpose of directing growth in accord with the city and county comprehensive plans and coordinating management of development activities in the Salida area. The results of the cooperative planning efforts are intended to maintain the identity of the Salida community, promote the efficient provision of public services (central sanitary sewer and water, streets, police protection and other services) and protect open lands and agricultural lands.

The IGA identifies a Municipal Services Area (MSA) and Municipal Planning Area (MPA). The MSA, identified on the Joint Planning Map, is an area adjacent to the city's boundary that is eligible for annexation and can be served by city utilities and infrastructure. The MPA is an area outside the city boundary for coordinated planning efforts with the county and which maybe developed at urban or rural intensity, depending on the specific area. The Joint Planning Map identifies the MSA to be wholly contained within the MPA.



1. Summit Economics, LLC, 2008, Market Feasibility Crestone Heights Affordable Housing Salida, Colorado, p. 32

2. Aplegate Group, Inc., 2009, Raw Water Master Plan, City of Salida, Colorado, P. 12

Development applications within the Municipal Planning Area are reviewed by a Regional Planning Commission (RPC) made up of six members. The county and city each appoint three members. The RPC makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners and City Council.

## Demand for Residential and Commercial Space

The demand for residential and commercial space has increased steadily in Chaffee County since 1970. Such demand can be measured by indicators, which according to the THK Market Analysis are identified as employment and population trends. Employment trends are an indicator for economic growth and when there is a positive trend in employment, all sectors of the economy will typically experience growth. Similarly, a positive trend in population and household growth will dictate the demand in the real estate market.

Employment growth in Chaffee County has grown from 3,182 jobs in 1970 to 10,740 jobs in 2006. This represents 3.4% annual growth over the 36 year period. The increase in employment has spanned all employment sectors but the services industry has experienced the largest increase. Other sectors that have experienced strong growth include retail, construction and FIRE (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate). It is expected that these employment sectors will continue to experience positive growth estimated at a 2% annual increase.

Population growth will continue with an expected addition of 12,500 people to the county over the next 25 years. As discussed earlier, the city could expect an additional 4,000 residents by 2033 bringing the population total to approximately 10,000.

The projected demand timeline for residential and commercial development cited in the THK study will need to be adjusted based on the fact the economic downturn has led to a measurable reduction of population and employment in the county. Additional sources state that real estate brokers in Chaffee County have reported a 30% reduction in demand

and the horizon for a strong real estate market is not anticipated until 2010 with pre-recession demand levels not expected until 2012.

While the Market Analysis is specifically relevant to the Vandaveer Ranch site and plans for development for that are no longer in place, it demonstrates the need for additional commercial and residential uses within the region. It also anticipates an overall projected market performance and population increase whose timeline may need adjustment but whose overall demand projections are likely accurate. Assumptions for population and market growth in Salida can be supported by the pre-recession activity and the looming en masse retirement of baby boomers. Salida has also received attention through national publications, reporting Salida as a desirable place to live because of the active lifestyle, local culture and temperate year round climate.

## Consequences of Growth

It is inevitable that growth will occur within the city limits as well as in the unincorporated county surrounding Salida. City staff has been anticipating such growth and setting a course for the future, attempting to yield the best results for the city's residents. These efforts include working with county staff to develop municipal planning and municipal services areas, memorialized in an intergovernmental agreement. The city has adopted several overlay zoning districts within the city limits in an attempt to match the existing built environment and encourage more creative development. Despite the efforts made by the city, there will still be consequences of growth which will be discussed here and will translate into principles and policies so that the city can set a definite course for growing responsibly and efficiently.

It is first important to discuss two different scenarios for growth: suburban sprawl and traditional neighborhood development. Suburban sprawl is the result of a system of planning that separated uses and is dependant on the automobile to move through its landscape to accomplish ones basic daily needs. It often occurs as neighborhood clusters unattached to existing development and requiring extension of city infrastructure. Implemented largely after World War

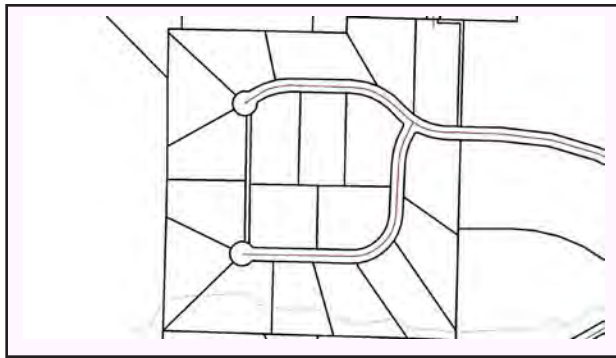


II and supported through the Federal Housing Administration and Veteran Administration, it focuses on new, single family detached housing. Separate from the housing or residential neighborhoods, zoning codes allow shopping centers, office parks, civic buildings and the roads to connect them together. There is no integration of uses so in most cases a trip to the library, to the grocery store or to work all require a car ride. Alternatively, the traditional neighborhood, which is still the dominant pattern of habitation outside the United States and represents the original neighborhood model in Salida, is representative of mixed-use, pedestrian friendly communities. The traditional neighborhood has proven to be a more sustainable form of growth that has allowed development to occur without excessive infrastructure cost and more limited destruction of the countryside.

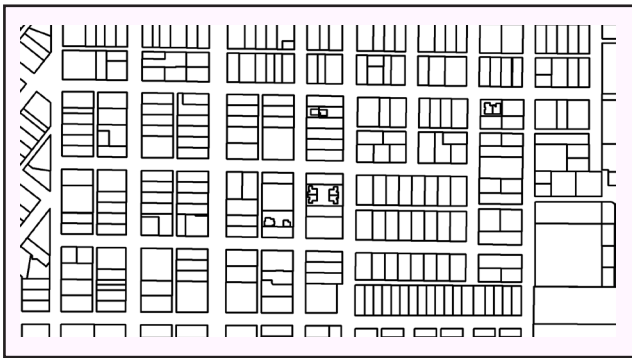
The city should anticipate the consequences of growth and plan carefully in order to maximize its benefits. For example, growth will create jobs both in the short term with the construction and trades industries as well as long term in the retail, services and FIRE (Finance, Insurance, Real Estate) industries.<sup>2</sup> It also brings in sales tax to support the local government.



Monarch Spur Pocket Park



2 Acre Sprawl Development



Traditional Neighborhood Development

Growth can lead to overcrowding of existing civic and green spaces, cause traffic congestion, overburden existing infrastructure and change the local culture. It is therefore important that the city plan for and mandate that development occur at a net benefit to the community. New development should create or contribute to parks, trails and open space. It should occur as a logical extension of existing development to avoid costly extension of city owned infrastructure. It should be done so that the social fabric of the city remains intact and new residents can be part of the community. This can be accomplished through the integration of uses, creation of community places and emphasis on the pedestrian and bicycling environment.

5. Duany, Andreas, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Jeff Speck. Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream. New York: North Point Press, 2000.

# Zoning and Development

## Zoning Districts

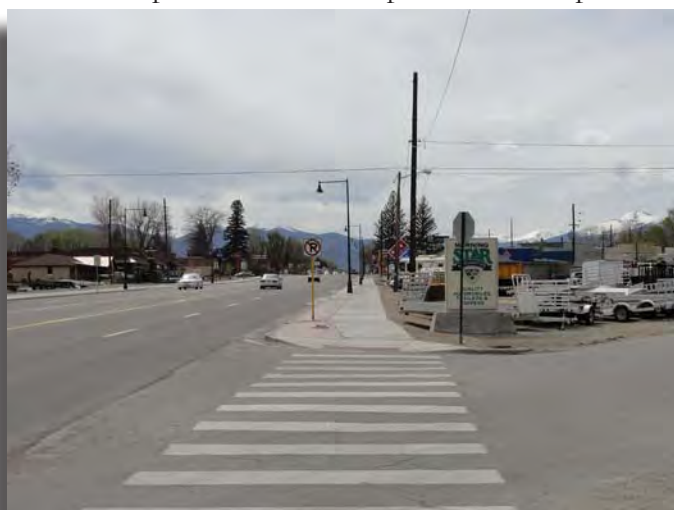
Salida has been divided into nine zoning districts that are meant to regulate the type and intensity of land uses. The goal of these districts is to achieve a compatibility of uses and character with the existing built environment which is guided by the vision of the city's Comprehensive Plan. The City's 2000 Comprehensive Plan established a direction for growth that was generated by the residents of the city and was broken into nine separate components. These are as follows:

1. *Improved standards for structures, landscaping, and signage will improve the overall attractiveness and livability of Salida.*
2. *New development will be focused within or adjacent to the city to preserve the rural, scenic character of the surrounding area's open spaces and agricultural lands.*
3. *Highway 50 will be an attractive commercial corridor that safely and efficiently accommodates pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles.*
4. *Community gateways along major roadway corridors will create a positive and unique identity.*
5. *A balanced and sustainable economy will offer a variety of quality employment opportunities.*
6. *An appropriate range of housing types will be available to serve the varied lifestyles, ages, and income levels of residents.*
7. *A vibrant Downtown will be the cultural activity center of the community and the region, and provide a variety of shopping, entertainment, civic, residential, and recreational uses.*
8. *A system of interconnected parks, open spaces and trails will protect important natural areas and open spaces around Salida and serve the recreational needs of residents and visitors.*
9. *Public facilities and services will be provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner.*

City staff has been working to achieve this direction by making changes to the Land Use Code. Since the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, staff has created 7 new zoning districts/overlays that will protect the

historic built environment, balance the need for commercial and residential property, protect quality of life, protect property values and respect the rights of property owners. These districts are as follows: Salida Downtown Historic District Overlay; Residential Mixed Use District; Historic Protection Overlay; SH 291 Corridor Overlay; Highway 50 Corridor Overlay; Local Historic Landmark Overlay; Sackett Overlay.

The city's land use code was overhauled in 2002 using the code from the City of Gunnison as a model. During that revision lot sizes in the existing neighborhoods were reduced to accommodate subdivision of 75' x 150' lots and encourage infill development. In addition, accessory dwelling units were added as an allowed use as long as lots met certain minimum size and density requirements. In 2012, the land use code was updated to create expedited review proce-



Goal # 3 Hwy 50 Improvements



Goal # 7 A Vibrant Downtown



dures for applicants, to bring the code up to date with statute, and condense relative code sections together.

Additional changes that have been made that include requirements for affordable housing, creation of the planned development process, revisions to land dedication requirements for parks, trails and open space and allowance of duplex and townhouse units rather than condominiums in some cases.

The changes to the land use code have identified the need for more responsible and sustainable development. This includes the need for extensions of the non-motorized transportation network, use of sustainable building materials and expansion of the urban forest. These modifications will lay the groundwork for maintaining a healthy and sustainable city.

## Expansion/Establishment of Zoning Districts

In order to encourage the type of development desired by city residents and elected officials it will be important for the city's Land Use Code to provide an avenue by which developers and builders can meet the impending demand. Salida's codes were not immune to the post World War II sprawl model of planning. They were overlain on a built environment that was the traditional neighborhood model. As a result, the implementation and administration of the codes was difficult and began to change the look and feel of the city.

There has been an ongoing effort since the adoption of the city's Comprehensive Plan in June of 2000 to enhance the zoning districts to allow for development more akin to the traditional neighborhood. One such effort has been to match the built environment and its uses with the land use code. An example of this is the Residential Mixed Use zoning district, which will be looked at in this process and likely expanded to allow for more flexibility and encourage the extension of similar development already existing in the City. Another example is the establishment of a Parks and Open Space zoning district. Currently, there is no such district nor guidelines for development within publicly owned parks and open spaces. City staff has

also discussed the expansion of industrial zoning and commercial zoning.

The Highway Corridor Improvement Plan discusses opportunities for enhancing the highway corridor and highlighting the character of the city. Smelertown in the Municipal Growth Area is identified as a potential site for expanding industrial uses.

There remain several areas of the land use code that



The 1st Street highway corridor outside the downtown has a mix of residential, office and retail which match the Residential Mix Use (RMU) Zoning



There is currently no Parks or Open Space Zoning

are out of date or which contradict other sections. The Land Use Code should be cohesive with other sections of the Salida Municipal Code. The schedule of uses in the Land Use Code was particularly antiquated and was overhauled in 2012 to address changing development patterns, new uses, business that have emerged in the past decade, and impacts associated with various types of users.

## Infill/Redevelopment

The option for infill development on vacant and underutilized parcels presents an opportunity for the city to encourage creative and innovative design. The city has the option to offer certain incentives that may make development within the city more attractive than other development options. One incentive that already exists is the proximity of public utilities and infrastructure, which will keep development costs down. Other options may include density bonuses for residential development and offering other incentives to infrastructure standards for built connections to pedestrian and bicycle transportation corridors.

Infill development can benefit the city, developers and residents of Salida. It offers an opportunity to take vacant or underutilized parcels and using existing infrastructure create new commercial and residential options in the city. Land costs will often increase the price of homes and commercial spaces, but building within the city core or adjacent to it will often allow greater density, spreading the land cost among more units and creating a more affordable product. Pedestrian accessibility is also a benefit as proximity to existing sidewalks and trails offers options to reduce vehicle trips. It will offer a built environment that already has mature trees and established parks and open spaces for recreation. There are social benefits, too, as there is an existing community which makes meeting new people easier. Finally, it creates a continuity of the built landscape. It fills in the gaps that existed, which can create a sense of prosperity and social cohesion within the city.

Many of the vacant and underutilized parcels exist outside the downtown area but are within areas that have been developed or at least in areas that have been through the entitlement process and are ap-

proved for development. The majority of the underutilized or vacant commercial parcels exist in the downtown core, along Highway 50 and Highway 291. These locations can be served by city utilities. The Vandaveer Ranch site, which includes both commercial and residential, would require extension of city utilities and infrastructure.

The city has identified several areas of vacant residential parcels for infill development. In fact the majority of land identified for infill has been identified for residential development. Most of the vacant residential land exists to the west of the city and much of it exists within the city's Municipal Services Area, which would require annexation to develop it to city standards.

Other identified parcels of land include vacant and underutilized industrial properties. Similar to the residential parcels, these exist in the county and would require annexation to develop to city standards. Much of the land available for industrial development is located in Smelertown and near Harriet Alexander Field and would require major extension of public utilities.



Vacant Parcels Along the Hwy 50 Corridor

## Annexation

Annexation allows the city an opportunity to expand its borders, address deficiencies in available space for industrial, commercial or residential lands and may create financial opportunities for the city. Such opportunities need to be studied carefully including the fiscal impact so that the city is not subsidizing development by assuming the additional burden onto its facilities and services.

## Utilities and Infrastructure

The task of maintaining and replacing public utilities and infrastructure has been challenging for the city. New growth, especially when it requires the extension of utilities and infrastructure, places an added burden on the city. The additional infrastructure must be maintained and replaced over time and the existing infrastructure has an increased rate of deterioration because of the added use.

The city will need improvements to all its utilities and infrastructure as outlined in the recently completed water and wastewater utility studies. Each of these improvements will require expenditures by the city that will depend on growth to help pay the debt service for the costs associated with constructing the improvements. In some cases, like for streets, water and sewer lines, there is a better economy of scale for encouraging development to occur around existing infrastructure and higher density development.

Utilities and infrastructure are discussed in more detail in Chapter 10, Community Services.



Public Works Repairing Water Lines



## Principles/Policy/Action Items

### Principle LU&G-I. Community Character

*Maintain and protect Salida's community, historic small town character and diversity.*

**Policy LU&G-I. 1** – New development within the city shall make the most appropriate use of the land using design standards that enhance and complement the historic built environment of the city.



Residential Neighborhood Currently Zoned Industrial

**Action LU&G-I. 1.a.** – Amend Salida's Land Use Code and Zoning Map to advance the objectives of this plan and consider appropriate zoning designations, densities and overlays that utilize setbacks and promote the traditional historic built environment.

**Action LU&G-I. 1.b.** – New development should complement the neighborhood's mass and scale.

**Policy LU&G-I. 2** – Infill and redevelopment should be encouraged and will advance the objectives of this plan.

**Action LU&G-I.2.a** - Encourage projects to use maximum density allowances to make the best use of the available infra-

structure.

**Action LU&G-I.2.b** – Encourage and incentivize the provision of affordable units where they were removed to make room for new development.

**Action LU&G-I.2.c** – Focus new development in the Salida area within the Municipal Services Area to ensure adequate provision of services and limit sprawl development around the city.

**Policy LU&G-I. 3** – Uses on city owned parcels shall accommodate the needs of city residents.

**Action LU&G-I.3.a** – Use public process to determine the most appropriate use of vacant city owned parcels.

**Action LU&G-I.3.b** – Amend the city's Land Use Code to include a parks and open space zoning district.

**Policy LU&G-I.4** – Respect rights of private landowners through open and inclusive public processes.

**Action Item LU&G.-I.4.a** – Changes to the Land Use Code and Zoning Map shall include public process in accordance with local and state laws.

### Principle LU&G-II. City Infrastructure

*Maintain, enhance and protect the city's infrastructure, utilities and resources so the viability of these public assets remains intact.*

**Policy LU&G-II. 1** – Annexation should occur only when it is determined to be a net benefit to the city with the expectation that development pays it own way.

**Action LU&G-II.1.a** – Proposals for annexation should demonstrate that the development will not create a fiscal burden on the city.

**Action LU&G-II.1.b** – Any proposal for annexation will be evaluated with an expectation of urban density levels, inclusion of connections to pedestrian and bicycle corridors, water availability, and promotion of innovative, creative and energy efficient design.

**Principle LU&G-III. Existing Structures and Streetscapes**

*Maintain valued structures and streetscapes within the city and allow new development that is compatible in design and also meets goals for innovation and energy efficiency.*

**Policy LU&G-III.1** – Ensure adequate public spaces as part of new development.

**Action LU&G-III.1.a** – Public spaces should be inventoried and a requirement for providing additional space should be a condition of approval for new development.

**Action LU&G-III.1.b** – Encourage the creation of an eclectic range of infill recreation opportunities in existing neighborhoods for all residents of the community to enjoy.

**Policy LU&G-III.2** – Ensure community separators to define and maintain Salida’s identity to avoid blending of communities as growth occurs.



Loyal Duke Dog Park

**Action LU&G-III.2.a** – Work with the Town of Poncha Springs, Chaffee County and private land owners to maintain a substantial buffer of undeveloped land between the two municipalities.

**Policy LU&G-III.3** – Reduce barriers and encourage more energy efficient construction.

**Action LU&G-III.3.a** – Work with the Chaffee County Building Department to ensure updates to the Building Codes allow for sensible adaptive sustainable building practices and use of the abundance of natural resources to heat and power existing structures in Salida.

**Action LU&G-III.3.b** – Investigate changes in the Land Use Code to allow the use of alternative energy such as wind power, solar and to ensure solar access.

**Principle LU&G-IV. Natural Environment**

*Salida will sustain and enhance the beauty and health of the natural environment and provide access to recreation opportunities.*

**Policy LU&G-IV.1** – Development should not detract from the natural character in and around the city.

**Action LU&G-IV.1.a** – New development and infill/redevelopment should complement the natural environment and should not compromise identified natural and/or protected resources.

**Principle LU&G-V. Sustainable Development**

*Salida will promote and provide opportunity for efficient and sustainable development opportunities.*

**Policy LU&G-V.1** – Salida will establish a regular schedule of review for chapters within the Land Use Code, building codes and Comprehensive Plan to ensure they are up to date and provide opportunity for sustainable development.

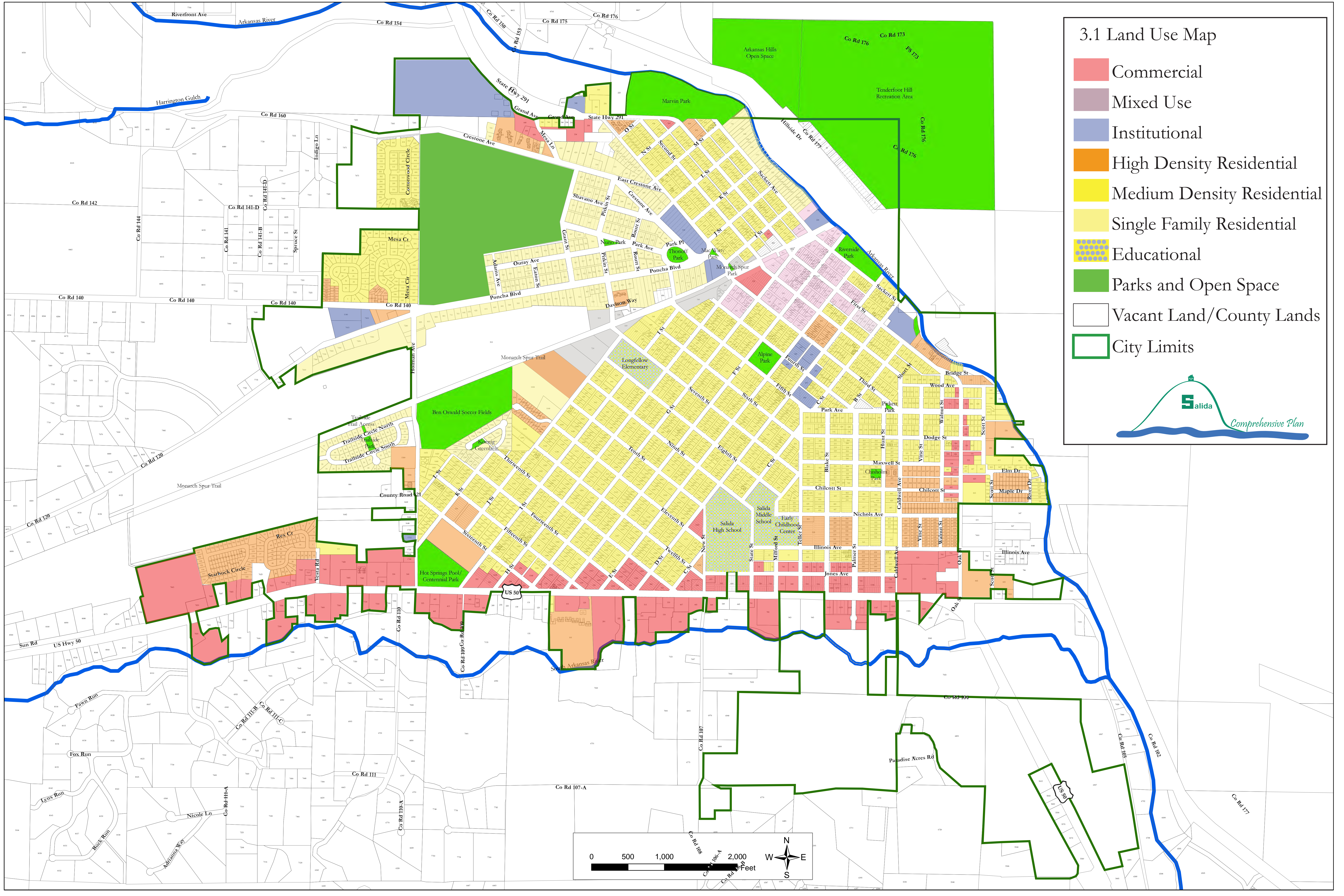
**Policy LU&G-V.2** – Planning staff will perform an in-depth review of neighborhood densities compared to those allowed in the zoning code.

**Action LU&G-V.2.a** – Use public process to determine ideal densities in existing neighborhoods.

**Policy LU&G-V.3** – Salida and Chaffee County should continue to work together to carry out the objectives of the 2008 Intergovernmental Agreement and update and enhance the policies contained within, when necessary.


**Action LU&G-V.3.a** – Work with the County to develop land use policies to maintain agricultural lands, develop appropriate sites to urban density and mitigate negative effects of sprawl development.

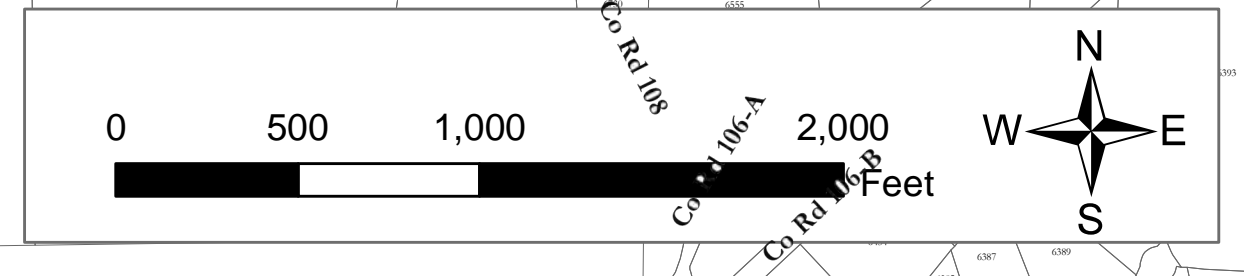




### 3.1 Land Use Map

- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Institutional
- High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Single Family Residential
- Educational
- Parks and Open Space
- Vacant Land/County Lands
- City Limits







# Chapter 4

## Economic Sustainability

Salida's economy saw major changes with the turn of the 21st Century. Once a center for the mining and rail transport economy of the Central Mountain region, Salida is now faced with redefining its declining industrial economic past. Salida has struggled since the late-20th Century to establish a diverse, sustainable year-round economy. The rich historical past, moderate climate, small town atmosphere, recreation opportunities and centralized location in the Arkansas Valley gives Salida a variety of potential markets on which to expand for its future financial viability and sustainability. To fully understand Salida's economic potential, it is important to understand several key economic indicators that will allow Salida to continue to retain and grow the economic sustainability it enjoys today.

### Economic Infrastructure

There are several components that comprise Salida's economic infrastructure. These include the transportation infrastructure, current and future utilities needs, developed and developable lands, and the available workforce.

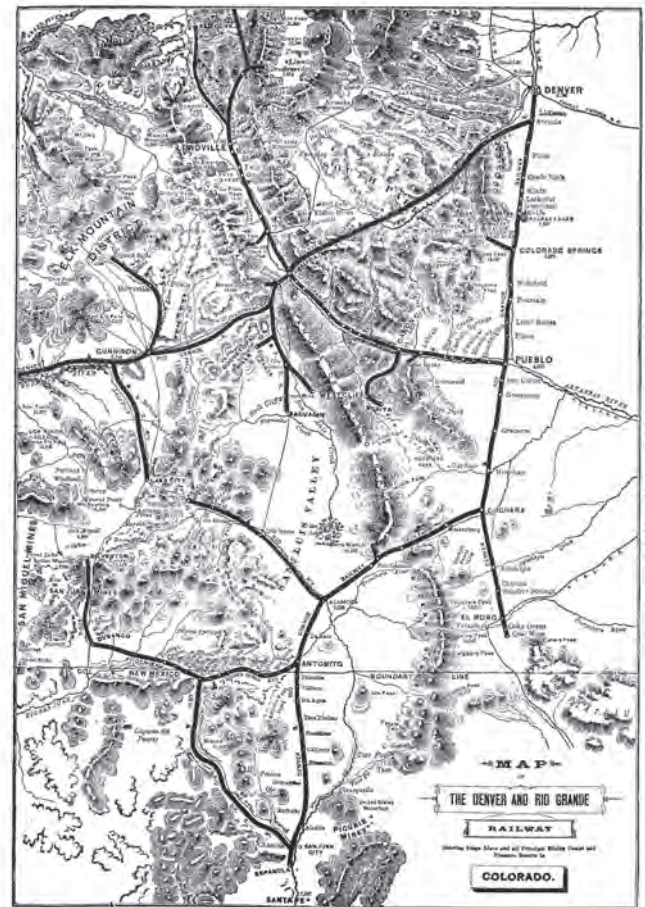
### Transportation Infrastructure

Salida is blessed with a rich transportation history that was defined at the turn of the 20th Century. As discussed in previous chapters Salida was founded as a central railroad hub of the D&RGW Railroad which was later bought by Union Pacific. The original rail lines and service connected Salida with Denver, Pueblo, Leadville, and Gunnison. The railroad no longer functions as a mode for transporting goods throughout the region. The once expansive rail yard on the northern bank of the Arkansas River is now vacant in Salida. If regional and national transportation needs in the future expand to once again include rail in this area, significant investment would be needed to rehabilitate the rail infrastructure in the region and bring back rail operations in the valley.

The separation of the railroad yard and the down-

town by the Arkansas River has allowed Salida's road grid to expand without any major interruptions or conflicts allowing the introduction of the automobile to Salida's economy to be seamless in the 1950's. Unlike many historic mining towns of the mountain west, Salida's historic downtown is not divided by a major Highway. Rather the historic built environment has maintained a walkable, viable pedestrian environment that has become a major commodity in the current commercial retail market even with SH 291 in the center of the city.

SH 291 functions as the primary route for commercial freight in and out of the historic district. Alleys allow deliveries to be removed from the highway corridor and directed to the rear of businesses. The traditional neighborhood scale of the highway right-of-way allows for safe pedestrian access between busi-



**MAP OF THE DENVER & RIO GRANDE RAILWAY**  
 Showing the Proposed Route Between Acequia (south of Denver) and Salida  
 The location work was started in February of 1879 and was completed in May of 1879. The final location of the grade ended at Mile 29.7, of which there was grading on the first 25 miles.  
 All work stopped on January 30, 1882.

Map taken from Trails Among the Columbine

nesses along the commercial corridor.

SH 291 serves as a vital transportation connection to US Hwy 50 and SH 285 which lead to urban centers north and east of Salida including Buena Vista, Denver, Canon City, Pueblo and Colorado Springs. Current traffic counts conducted by CDOT total 3,500 daily one way trips along this corridor. Estimates by CDOT for 2015 total 4,190 daily one-way trips along this corridor amounting to a 20% increase in the next seven years. Table 4.1 shows traffic projections for both SH 291 and US Hwy 50 into 2030.

US Hwy 50, the primary artery for commercial freight as well as regional transportation, is on the southern edge of Salida. This corridor continues to grow and receive national attention from many corporate businesses and retailers. The corridor developed to functionally serve the automobile and its users. Implementation of the Highway Improvement Plan, adopted in 2005, has improved access for multimodal transportation options to Salida’s traditional neighborhood grid for patrons of this business corridor.

The most recent traffic counts for 2011 provided by CDOT tally over 13,000 daily one way trips along this corridor. Traffic estimates for 2015 indicate an increase to 14,103 daily one way trips, an increase of 8% in the next four years along this corridor.

The Harriett Alexander Field currently serves a limited clientele of glider and small plane enthusiasts, private jet owners and several commercial interests. At the time of this plan, there are no plans to expand this airport to allow for commercial travel. Studies have shown to allow for this market to be expanded would require heavy subsidization from a variety of interests that do not currently exist.

In 2009, Salida and Chaffee County adopted the Regional Transportation Plan identifying Salida’s trail network is a major outlet for both transportation and leisure. The Salida Regional Transportation Plan directs the city and county to include trails and consider multimodal transportation options as development occurs in the planning areas around Salida.

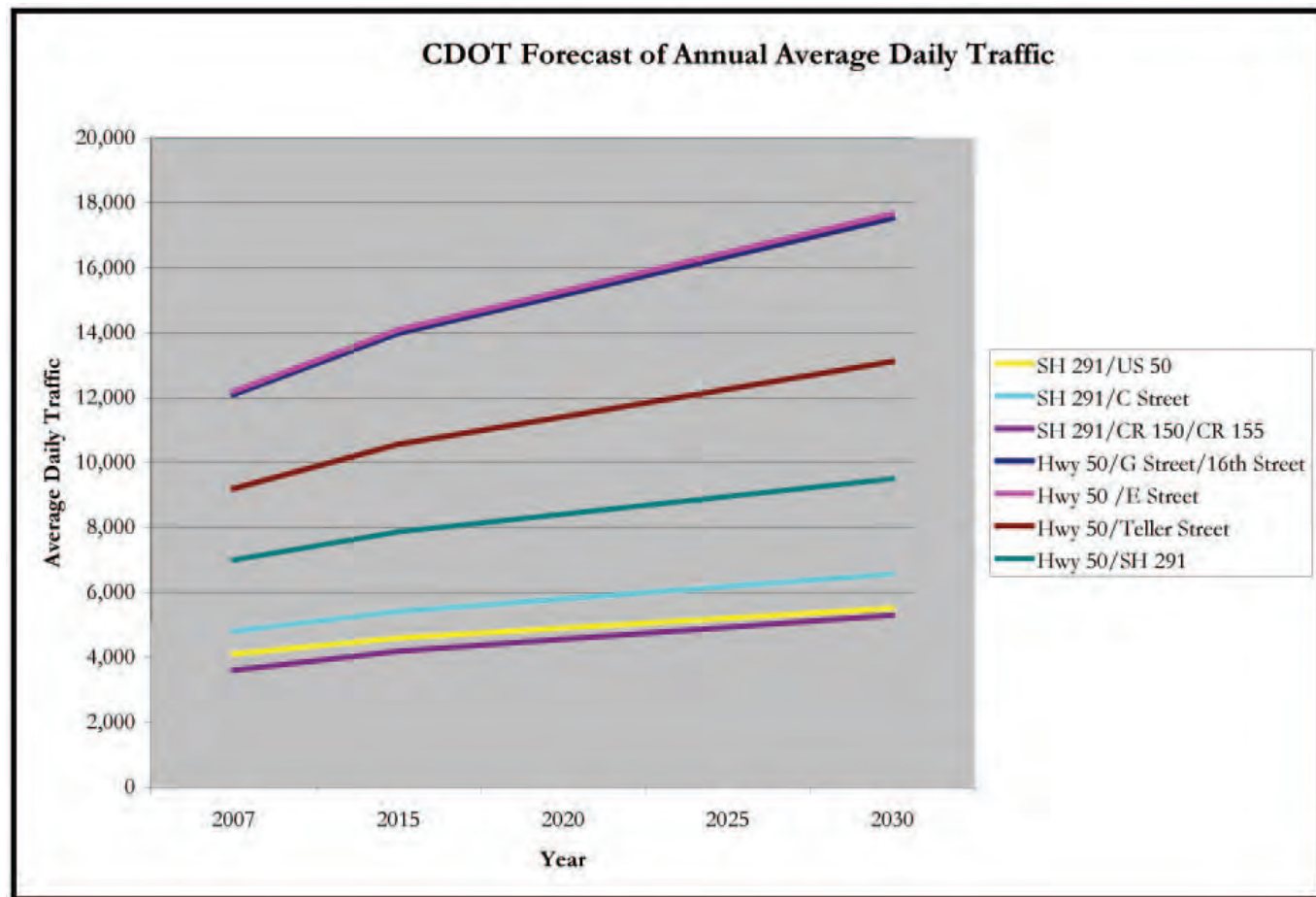


Table 4.1



## Current and Future Utility Needs

Available utilities play a large role in the future development potential of the Salida regional economy. The city provides and maintains sewer and water utilities for the Salida and the immediate regional area. Salida has a comfortable water portfolio that will accommodate a community of 10,000. The water portfolio, sources and treatment are discussed further in the chapter on Environmental Sustainability. Water treatment falls under the purview of the city's Water Department while the distribution system is the responsibility of the Public Works Department.

Sewer treatment for the Salida area is provided at the Wastewater Treatment Plant on County Road 102. The plant was originally constructed in 1956 with several improvements over the years. In 2011 the city began a major overhaul of the plant to modernize treatment to meet current and anticipated regulations. This project will include a modest expansion of the design capacity to a 2.7 million gallon per day capacity and will be completed in mid 2013.

The city provides wastewater treatment for the Town of Poncha Springs. In 2010, the City of Salida assumed management of the Poncha Springs wastewater system including customer billing and maintenance of the collection system.

Energy needs for the region are currently being met by the local providers Xcel Energy (electric) and Atmos Energy (natural gas). Chaffee County, in conjunction with the Governor's Energy Office, is conducting a study on the potential for alternative energy production. This study will serve as a guiding document for the feasibility for the future expansion of the alternative energy industry in the Salida region. If major industrial or commercial development is proposed, it will be imperative that the city and local energy providers coordinate efforts to ensure that adequate power can be provided to meet the needs of these new economic industries.

Micro energy initiatives have been under way for years in Salida. Solar panels can be seen throughout the city and the city has adopted a sales tax exemption

to encourage the use of this alternative energy.

The continued expansion of the information technology markets in the United States demand a high-tech infrastructure including high speed fiber optic service lines and telecommunication networks. Although there are a variety of service providers locally, currently Qwest Communications controls the one data transportation line in and out of the city. The Chaffee County Economic Development Corporation has been successful in creating redundancy in internet service in the valley and there are continued plans to create additional redundancy by connecting the data transportation line with the I-70 corridor. If Salida intends to attract technology dependent types of businesses to the valley, it will need to invest heavily on updating and installing the needed infrastructure to support this industry. Smaller scale businesses can be supported at a local level with the current available services; however future expansion of internet dependent businesses will require upgrades to the current network.

## Developed and Developable Lands

Many mountain towns that have seen home and land values skyrocket in the second half of the 20th Century no longer have the means to grow in a substantial manner to produce new economic markets. Salida is an exception to this reality that many mountain recreation destinations face today. Available lands, combined with the livability of the area have placed Salida in a unique position to be a sought after destination for travel and relocation.

Today there are two areas that function as the city's primary commercial commerce districts. Each of these districts has unique characteristics that allowed them to maintain separate identities. These characteristics are important for the economic stability of the city because this helps minimize competition in the market place and has created separate micro economies.

The historic downtown functions as a retail district featuring many local art galleries, small local businesses,

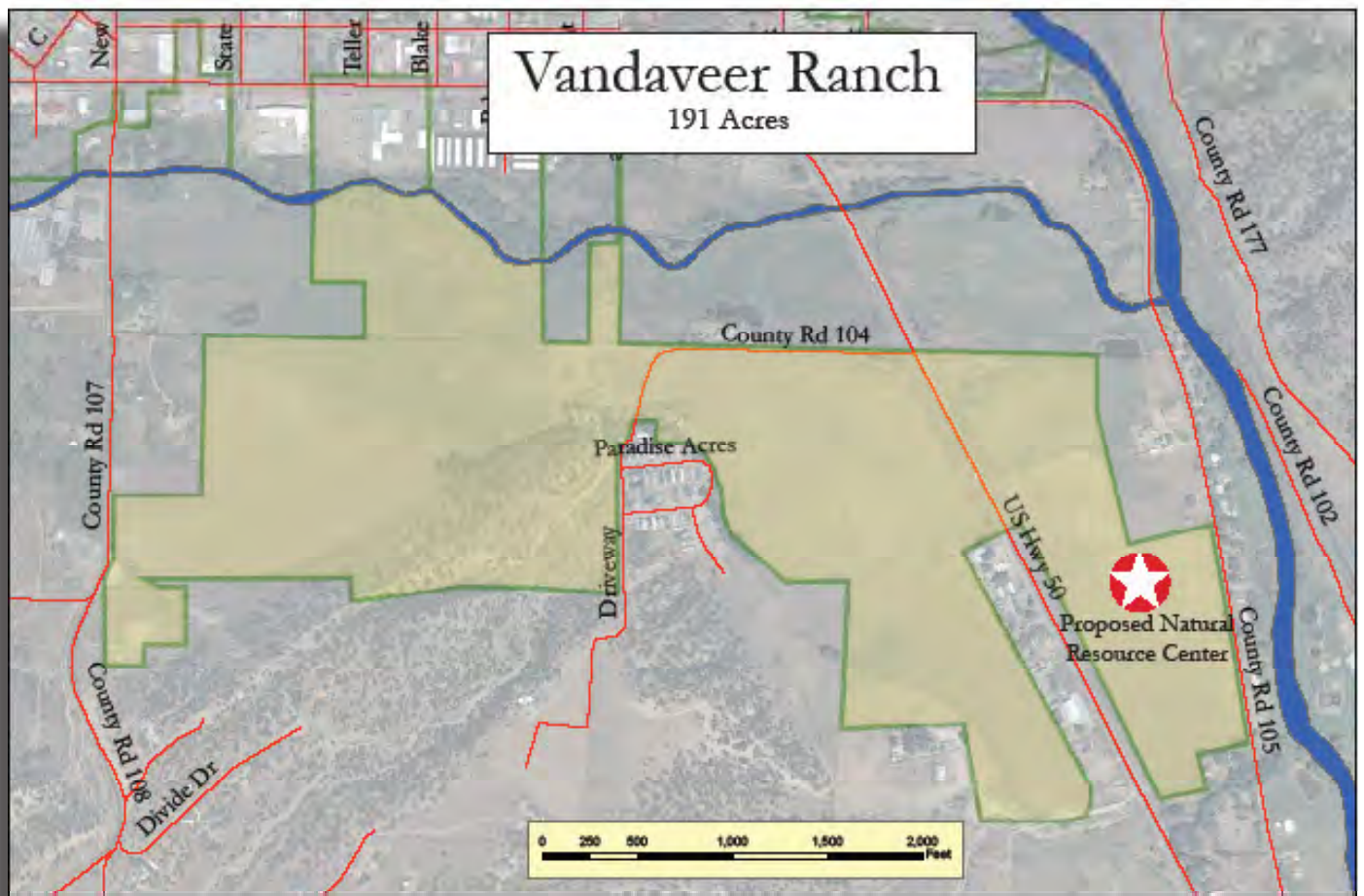
entertainment venues and restaurants and bars. This area has experienced a revival over the past ten years from the heydays of the early 20th Century. However, there are still several prominent vacant storefronts in the district. The adoption of the International Property Maintenance Code in 2007 along with a substantial commitment by local property owners has restored the commercial core of the downtown. It is anticipated that this area will continue to see revival and new business with a focus on visual arts, heritage tourism and recreational based tourism. The downtown was recently designated one of two of Colorado's Creative Districts. The State Historic Fund and other tax incentives for the downtown's revitalization should continue to be explored to support local business owners' efforts to make this National Register Historic District a regional destination.

The US Hwy 50 corridor is Salida's highest volume retailer's market and functions as a gateway into the city. As a major regional traffic corridor, this area's commercial potential has been recognized by many national retailers and hotels. Available utilities and land along the corridor will allow new businesses to move into this regional market. There are still many

residential properties along the corridor with the potential to redevelop as infill commercial properties.

Vandaveer Ranch is a 191 acre site acquired by the city in 2004. This site includes frontage along US Hwy 50 east of the existing commercial core along with additional lands appropriate for residential and recreation uses. The Vandaveer Ranch property provides the opportunity to create a substantial gateway to Salida and the Arkansas Valley. Efforts are currently underway to locate a multi-agency Natural Resource Center along US Hwy 50. The community has also identified this area as a potential site for an institution of higher education.

Another important economic market in the region is new residential construction. According to the THK Market Analysis, which identified the major sources of employment for Chaffee County and Salida, 28% of employment in the valley is related to either construction or FIRE (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate). New development in this market has occurred around the periphery of the city and as infill development. Much of this new construction is targeting 2nd homeowners who are buying places in the valley





for retirement or as a recreational destination. Salida and Chaffee County have the potential to develop many of the agricultural lands into residential lands. Currently, there are many outlying large parcels of land in the Salida region that are ripe for the future expansion of this market. Demand for new residences competes with community desires to maintain local agriculture and a pastoral feel in the surrounding undeveloped lands.

There are very few remnants of the industrial businesses of the first half of the 20th Century. However, the infrastructure and land where this large market force once stood still exist today. The out-migration of the industrial age of manufacturing, mining and the railroad left Salida with an abundant infrastructure that could be a viable reuse for another economic activity. To create suitable alternatives at these sites Salida must actively market the reuse of this resource, rather than adjusting to a permanent loss of these economies.

Smelertown located in the Salida Planning Area is one example of where there is an ample amount of developable land that is ripe for new manufacturing or industrial businesses. This area, zoned in the County as industrial, is also home to the historic

Ohio-Colorado Smelting & Refining Co. smokestack. This prominent historical feature serves as a lasting reminder of the true potential for new industry in this area. While there are currently no municipal services available to this area, a large scale business locating to Smelertown could extend municipal services. The City's adaptive reuse of these areas once occupied by the rail industry have become gateways to Salida's new recreational market. The Monarch Spur line has been transformed into the Monarch Spur Trail serving as the backbone of the Salida trail system. The rail yard on the northern bank of the Arkansas River is currently vacant of any industry with the exception of the Calco Plant and creates a barrier to access the popular recreational amenities of the Salida Mountain Trails system.

### Available Workforce

For Salida to grow existing businesses or attract new businesses to the region, it must be able to provide a workforce to support any possible new industries. The current downturn in the economy has created a shortage of available jobs in the city and county. The unemployment rate for Chaffee County in December 2009 was 7.5%. This is lower than the national average at the time of 10%; however unemployment for the County is the highest it has been in over a decade. A market analysis conducted by THK in 2007 prior to the recession indicated that 10,179 of 19,322 or 53% of Chaffee's County residents were employed in the county. This is an indication that there is a large retirement community in Chaffee County.

According to the 2010 Census 92.6% of Salidans have received a high school degree. Another 25.4% have a Bachelor's Degree and 8% have a Graduate or Doctorate Degree. These numbers are likely to change in the future due to the shift in demographics Salida has seen with the increase in the retirement market.

Many local students currently leave Salida after high school to attend college around the State and Country. Few return to start careers in the valley citing the lack of jobs and low wages along with the high cost of housing. The tourism economy attracts many service industry workers for the winter and summer



Vacant industrial lands around the Smelertown Smokestack. Photo Courtesy of Earle Kittleman

seasons. However, the lack of employment during the two shoulder seasons makes it hard to retain these workers for the long term.

Salida's location is ideal for research and development companies that are able to telecommute. The proximity to military installations of the Front Range and the wealth of government lands make Salida an attractive location for research and development.

Research [and Development] and technology production means uses such as medical, optical and scientific research facilities, software production and development, clinics and laboratories, pharmaceutical compounding and photographic processing facilities, and facilities for the assembly of electronic components, optical equipment, and precision instruments. In the mountain west this industry has been expanded to include the development of specialized recreation equipment. These businesses require a specialized work force. Recruiting to the region while providing jobs to those already located in the region will be a crucial component to the success of this new economic market.



The D&RGW Railroad was once the largest employer in the valley. Photo Courtesy of Steve Frazee

### Market Factors and Trends

Two industries have emerged over the last 20 years replacing the railroad as the backbone of the Salida economy. The early half of this decade saw an average increase of around 200 jobs per year in the Salida region. Of these new employment opportunities,

the construction and FIRE industries have seen an annual growth of 130 jobs. The services industry has also seen large increases in employment with the annual average of 55 new jobs. Growth in employment in these two industries has primarily been seen in the creation of a 2nd home residential market that caters towards the recreational tourism economy seen in many Mountain West communities. This market is most prevalent in Colorado in the ski communities of the I-70 corridor.

A study conducted in 2004 by the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments<sup>1</sup> studied the effects that the 2nd home economy has on the communities it has engulfed along this highway corridor over the last 40 years. Conclusions from this study that Salida can use to plan for this future are the demands that this market places for employees in the construction and service industries and the need to retain these workers in the community. As these communities have experienced, this market will cause significant increases in property values in the community limiting housing options for the workers that support this economy. Lastly, this study highlights the disconnect these property owners have with the communities where they purchase these homes, citing an average of only 4% of 2nd homeowners surveyed in many of these communities plan on becoming full time residents in the future.

The reality of the consequences and burdens this market will bring to the valley are contradictory to the vision for the City of Salida to be a place that is affordable for multi-generational population to live, work, play and raise a family. Planning for these second home market shortcomings will allow the city to be proactive in creating opportunities for current and future residents to remain in the community.

As the alternative energy industry continues to evolve, Chaffee County is positioned to utilize the potential natural resources that are available in the valley. A recent study, EnergyNow, revealed that Chaffee County has the potential for producing solar and geothermal power. This study also revealed that wind energy is only potentially effective in the high mountains,

1. Northwest Colorado Council of Governments, The Social and Economic Effects of Second Homes Silverthorne, Colorado 2004

which would have negative effects on surrounding viewsheds and create problems for installation and future maintenance. Future studies will need to be conducted to determine if there is a potential for a viable solar or geothermal power plant in the Salida region.

## Economic Incentives

The cornerstone to any economic development plan is an examination of ways to provide meaningful economic incentives that can be utilized by local businesses to allow them to prosper. These incentives can be provided by a variety of different agencies and governmental policies. Most notably tax incentives provided through the Federal, State and Local governments can be utilized to help cut the costs of starting a new business, expanding resources or upgrading the capital investment of the business. Local municipalities can apply for grants and other matching funds from the State or Federal Government to help with capital improvement projects. Other incentives include strong grassroots campaigns by local organizations that support local business.

At this time there are several tax incentives that local businesses can utilize to help mitigate the costs of doing business in the valley. The Upper Arkansas Enterprise Zone offers tax cuts to businesses opening or reinvesting in the Salida region. This enterprise zone has been established to help local small businesses mitigate start up costs. Income tax credits have been utilized by several businesses located in the historic downtown to offset the expense of repairs and maintenance of their historic structures. In an attempt to encourage the use of alternative energy, the City of Salida has created a sales tax exemption for anyone installing photovoltaic power.

Grants from the State and Federal governments have helped with numerous capital improvement projects in the city. These projects are completed by local contractors, surveyors, engineers, architects and construction companies. These funds are an important tool for helping to improve the municipal infrastructure which serves the businesses of Salida.

Local organizations such as the Salida Business Alliance and the Heart of the Rockies Chamber of Commerce provide support for businesses in the Salida

region. Local grassroots campaigns supporting local businesses are provided through these organizations and the recently formed Chaffee County Economic Development Corporation.

## Business Retention

The recent economic recession has been exceptionally hard on local businesses. These businesses provide employment and are important contributors to the local economy. Maintaining a local business economy has allowed Salida to have a rich diversity of commerce that has situated Salida in a unique position to serve a variety of clientele. With an economic development plan, emphasis should be placed on supporting local businesses and helping them to grow and expand. As the community looks to bring in new industries, it will be imperative to find businesses that are not in direct competition with the current local businesses that exist in Salida.



# Principles/Policy/Action Items

## Principle E&S-I. Existing Businesses.

*Salida will retain and help expand unique and independent local businesses.*

**Policy E&S-I. 1** – Buying locally supports local businesses, keeps funds in the community and helps pay for municipal services.



Shopping local. Photo Courtesy of Kevin Hoffman

**Action E&S-I.1.a** – Partner with the SBA, Chamber and others to create an on-going ‘buy local’ campaign and educate the community on the benefits of buying local.

**Action E&S-I.1.b** – Investigate steps the city can take to foster local markets for regionally and locally produced goods.

**Action E&S-I.1.c** – Consider enacting regulations limiting the number of national or chain businesses locating in the Downtown or community.

**Action E&S-I.1.d** – Promote retail and service related businesses being open on Sundays and into the evening to help to cater to the growing tourism economy.

**Policy E&S-I. 2** – Zoning should not be an impediment to the Downtown and other areas and should not restrict innovative commercial development.

**Action E&S-I.2.a** – The Planning Commission should review the current zoning map and uses allowed in commercial zone districts to ensure the zoning allows for appropriate new development and redevelopment.

**Action E&S-I.2.b.** – Zoning for the Central Business district should accommodate future and existing uses in Creative District.

**Policy E&S-I. 3** – An understanding of the current businesses will help the city and business owners make informed decisions.

**Action E&S-I.3.a** –Periodically conduct a retail market demand analysis and make the information available to existing local retailers so they can utilize the information in making business decisions based on information about local demand, retail leakage, market saturation and market opportunities.

**Action E&S-I.3.b** – Create a system of licensing that enables the city and other economic organizations to track businesses within the city.

**Policy E&S-I.4** – Maintain positive relationships with local business development groups.

**Action E&S-I.4.a** – The city should maintain memberships with the Heart of the Rockies Chamber of Commerce (HRCC) and Salida Business Alliance (SBA) and should appoint a Council member or

staff person to regularly attend meetings of these organizations.

**Action E&S-I.4.a** – Participate in supporting community sponsored economic development efforts such as the Chaffee County Economic Development Corporation and the Small Business Development Center.

**Principle E&S-II. New Businesses**

*Support new businesses and new employment opportunities that are compatible with our community character.*

**Policy E&S-II.1** – Direct economic growth in a fiscally responsible way that maintains community character and high service levels for residents.

**Action E&S-II.1.a** – Review and enhance commercial design standards to ensure that franchises and corporate businesses develop in a manner that fits Salida’s character.

**Policy E&S-II.2** – Attract and pursue new green industries and renewable industries to the valley.

**Action E&S-II.2.a** – Adopt land use policies that allow for development of commercial and industrial sites in the City to attract investment in green renewable industries.

**Principle E&S-III. Infrastructure**

*A strong utility and transportation infrastructure will allow for growth and sustainability of commerce.*

**Policy E&S-III.1** - Utilities should be adequate to serve existing and desired business opportunities.

**Action E&S-III.1.a** – Monitor water and sewer treatment capacity to ensure current and future needs can be met.

**Action E&S-III.1.b** – Promote the expansion of information technology infrastructure to the Arkansas Valley.

**Policy E&S-III.2** – Reduction of fluctuation in utility expenses will ensure stability in expenses for businesses and residents.

**Action E&S-III.2.a** – The city should investigate the feasibility of geothermal electricity generation at the Poncha Hot Springs site.

**Principle E&S-IV. Workforce**

*Residents should have opportunities for a high quality education and lifelong learning in the community.*

**Policy E&S-IV. 1** – Opportunities for high quality education are an excellent economic base driver serving to attract new citizens and preparing local residents to enter the workforce.

**Action E&S-IV.1.a** – Look for opportunities to support the R-32-J school district through collaboration and cooperation.

**Action E&S-IV.2.a** – Look for ways to expand the educational infrastructure including the possibility of creating a college district to support the development of higher education in the valley.

**Policy E&S-IV. 3** – Quality service sector employees and business owners provide a better experience for locals and visitors and enhance sales.

**Action E&S-IV.3.a** – Cooperate with other entities to provide customer service training for local merchants and their employees.

**Action E&S-IV.3.b** – Support access to training and education opportunities for local entrepreneurs and those who would like to open a new business.

### **Principle E&S-V. Financial Strategies**

*Develop and implement financial mechanisms that encourage the growth of new and existing businesses and enhance the long-term financial health of the community.*



Red Cross Nurses. Photo Courtesy of The Salida Museum

**Policy E&S-V.2** – Seek additional financial incentives for new and existing businesses to grow in the Salida community.

**Action E&S-V.2.a** – Determine the feasibility of establishing special tax districts or federal and state incentive programs for improving and expanding infrastructure for infill development or lands within Smelertown or the Municipal Services Area.

**Action E&S-V.2.b** – Explore modifications to the city’s infrastructure reimbursement policy to allow the city to extend infrastructure and recoup costs from the beneficiaries at a later date.

**Action E&S-V.2.c** – Pursue economic development grants from state and federal agencies, such as the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, Governor’s Energy Office or the U.S. Economic Development Agency.

**Policy E&S-V.3** – Utilize existing financial incentives for businesses and property owners.

**Action E&S-V.3.a** – Promote existing financial incentives such as benefits of the Upper Arkansas Enterprise Zone and state and federal preservation tax credits.



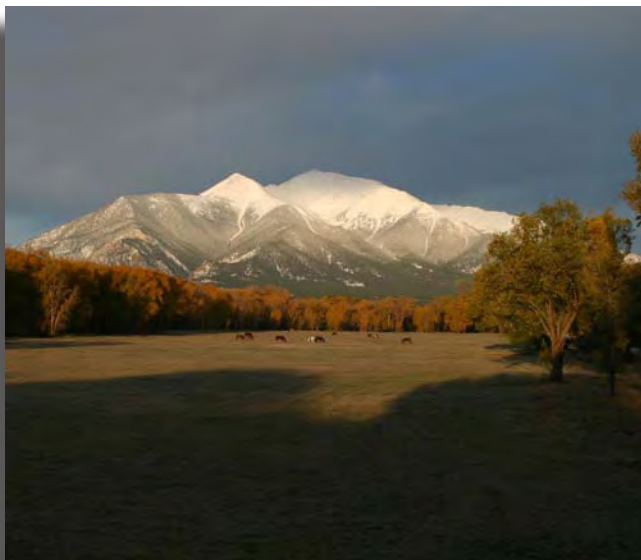
# Chapter 5

## Environmental Sustainability

Salida's identity can be characterized by the incredible natural landscape and the outdoor recreational opportunities that surround the city. It is bordered on all sides by majestic mountain ranges and the historic downtown is situated on the banks of the Arkansas River. The South Arkansas River runs parallel to Highway 50 on the south end of Salida until its confluence with the main stem of the Arkansas River just east of the city.

Waters from these rivers irrigate ranch lands that dot the landscape throughout the region. These lands help maintain the gorgeous views that lead into the city from all directions and are an integral part of the economy in Chaffee County. The Arkansas River is also a destination for white water enthusiasts and fisherman alike.

The views from the city are dominated by incredible mountain ranges that are used by locals and tourists for all forms of recreation including skiing, biking, hiking, fishing, hunting and much more. Much of the land in these mountain ranges is publicly owned and



Mt. Shavano. Photo Courtesy of Alan Robinson

therefore has been used to the benefit of the public since Salida's early days. However, the valley foreground is generally privately owned.

The climate in Salida is temperate, often dubbed as the "banana belt," this area receives over 300 days of sunshine a year and receives approximately 10 inches of precipitation annually.<sup>1</sup>

The identity and sense of community derived from the use and enjoyment of these resources will be the focus of this chapter. As growth in the region puts pressure on resources such as water, clean air and wildlife habitat, it will be important to focus efforts toward identifying such resources and creating solutions for maintaining them for this generation as well as those yet to come.

### Regional Context

Salida is situated in the upper Arkansas River basin, on the east side of the Continental Divide, which drains large volumes of winter snow melt from the surrounding mountain ranges. This water drains to the east and south where it eventually flows into Kansas. The headwaters of the Arkansas River are near Leadville, north of Salida by approximately 60 miles. The Arkansas River is spatially the largest river basin in Colorado, covering 27 percent of the surface area and draining approximately one-quarter of the state.<sup>2</sup>

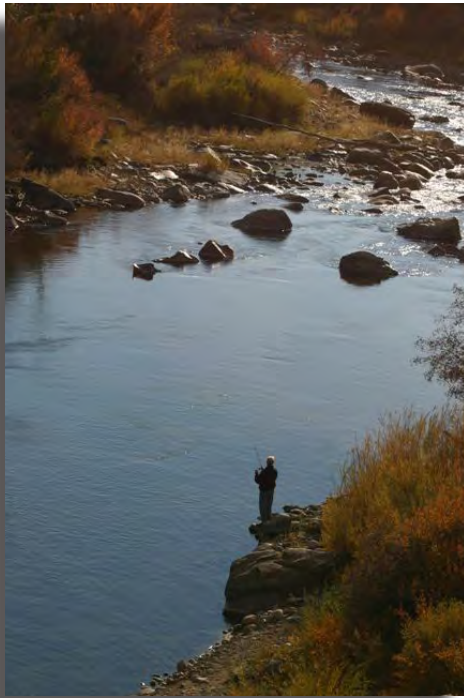
Much of the land surrounding Salida is either state or federal land which represents approximately 80 percent of the land ownership in Chaffee County. The surrounding mountain ranges are largely managed by the federal government, particularly by the Forest Service with smaller pockets under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The State of Colorado owns and manages several in-holdings of State Trust land throughout the county.

1. Watts, K.R., 2005, Hydrogeology and quality of ground water in the upper Arkansas River Basin from Buena Vista to Salida, Colorado, 2000-2003: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2005-5179, p. 2

2. Colorado Water Conservation Board, 2006, Statewide Water Supply Initiative Fact Sheet: accessed April 23, 2009, at URL <http://cwcbweblink.state.co.us>

The Sawatch Range, to the northwest of the city is best characterized by its 14,000 foot peaks. There are 15 of these “14ers” in the Sawatch Range. South of the city is the Sangre de Cristo Range. Salida is at the northern reach of the Sangre de Cristo’s which extend south from here into New Mexico. These mountains, like the Sawatch, can also be characterized by their tall snow capped peaks, reaching heights of 14,000 feet. North of the city is the Mosquito Range which is not as tall as the other two ranges but offers great recreation opportunities and interesting visual character to the Arkansas Valley.

Several wilderness areas are contained within the surrounding ranges and are under the management of the National Forest Service. Some of these include the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness, Collegiate Peaks Wilderness and Buffalo Peaks Wilderness.



Fishing on the Arkansas River.  
Photo Courtesy of Alan Robinson

Several regional trail systems exist within the surrounding mountains including the Salida Mountain Trails, Rainbow Trail, Colorado Trail and Continental Divide Trail. These trails can be accessed easily from Salida and in some cases via local trail networks.



Night skies in Salida

### Visual Resources

As described in the previous section, the mountains surrounding Salida are a significant part of the visual resources in the area. The views of Methodist Mountain, Tenderfoot Mountain and Mt. Shavano are among the most recognizable local features. In addition, the Arkansas River corridor and adjacent irrigated pasture lands form world class views all along the Arkansas River valley. The thin dry air in the valley punctuates these views with great clarity making them even more dramatic.

The nighttime skies in and around the city have been reasonably well preserved by local lighting restrictions and the undeveloped open spaces. It will be important to work with other local jurisdictions to align these values to maintain the integrity of the nighttime sky as growth occurs.

### Climate

Salida’s climate is mild and temperate, with summertime highs ranging from about 77 to 84° F and winter highs ranging from 40 to 52° F, with lows in the teens. There is little humidity in this semiarid region, resulting in very comfortable conditions throughout much of the year. Salida receives only about 10 inches of precipitation annually while the surrounding mountains may receive up to 30 – 40 inches of precipitation annually, mostly in the form of snow.<sup>3</sup>

3. Watts, K.R., 2005, Hydrogeology and quality of ground water in the upper Arkansas River Basin from Buena Vista to Salida, Colorado, 2000-2003: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2005-5179, p. 2

The dry conditions in the city allow locals to hike and bike most of the winter and ski in fresh, deep snow just a short ride away at Monarch Mountain Ski Resort. It is not out of the ordinary for people to do any combination of snow sports and dry land sport activities in the same day.

These conditions may be changing however as research shows that the climate in Colorado has increased approximately 2° F since 1977. Climate models project that this trend will continue and warming in the state will increase another 2.5° F by 2025 and 4° F by 2050. The models also indicate that summers will warm more than winters but the winter snow pack will continue to decline, most notably below 8,200 feet in elevation. The snow pack above this elevation (8,200 feet) is expected to decline 10 – 20 % by 2050.<sup>4</sup>

The implications for these weather changes will have far reaching affects for the residents of Salida. These could include economic, environmental and social effects. Examples include increased water requirements for agriculture, increasing frequency of forest fires, increased tree mortality by native forest insects, complications in the administration of water rights due to earlier runoff, degraded water quality, shifting of mountain habitat toward higher elevation, changes to riparian habitats and fisheries, affects to water and snow based recreation and groundwater availability.<sup>5</sup>

It is not too late to get involved in a solution, several of which have been suggested, that can be actively promoted by the community as well as local governments. Some of these could include adopting regulations to promote and build infrastructure for alternate modes of transportation and encouraging new development to be compact, accessible to the alternative transportation infrastructure and within close proximity to city services.

4. Colorado Water Conservation Board, 2006, Climate Change in Colorado: accessed April 27, 2009, at URL <http://cwcbweblink.state.co.us>

5. Colorado Water Conservation Board, 2006, Climate Change in Colorado: accessed April 27, 2009, at URL <http://cwcbweblink.state.co.us>

## Water

Water resources in the Arkansas River valley are highly sought after and have been the subject of controversy for well over a century. While it may seem there is plenty of water flowing in the Arkansas and South Arkansas Rivers to support all the municipal, recreational and agricultural demands, every last drop is owned and has a destination. Water rights in Colorado and much of the arid west are based on a system known as Prior Appropriation which is often described as “first in time, first in right.” This system of allocation sets controls on who uses how much water, the types of uses allowed and when that water can be used. An appropriation is made when a person physically takes water from a water source like a river or aquifer and uses a quantity of that water for beneficial use. The first person to appropriate the water and use it for a beneficial use has the first (senior) right. Those that come after and appropriate water, hold rights that are junior to their predecessor but senior to their successors.<sup>6</sup>

Salida has secured several water rights in its portfolio that come from the South Arkansas River, Pasquale Springs and the South Arkansas Gallery System (Galleries). Some of the water resources are still in agricultural uses and would need a decree from water court for municipal use. This can be a costly and lengthy process which should be done well in advance of the city’s need to use the water.

In 2004, Chaffee County was successful in getting a decreed water right, called a recreational in-channel diversion (“RICD”), which is a court decreed water right to maintain water levels in the Arkansas River in specific locations for boating and related recreational uses. Salida has two diversion structures adjacent to its downtown in the Arkansas River that are the subject of the RICD. This guarantees a certain amount of water to be delivered to those diversion structures during certain times of year.<sup>7</sup> Salida’s is set up to coincide with its big summer whitewater event, FIBArk.

6. Watts, K.R., 2005, Hydrogeology and quality of ground water in the upper Arkansas River Basin from Buena Vista to Salida, Colorado, 2000-2003: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2005-5179, p. 4

7. Colorado Water Conservation Board, 2006, Decreed RICD Applications: accessed April 27, 2009, at URL <http://cwcb.state.co.us>



This event is an important economic and social event for the community and this water right will ensure that water is available each year to hold this event.

Water quality for water delivered to Salida residents is routinely tested in accordance with state standards. There is some concern with a few of the city's water sources that contamination could become a problem. Likely sources of contamination include up gradient development as well as agricultural runoff (non-point source) that would affect the Harrington ditch.<sup>8</sup> This could limit the water resources available to the City if contaminant levels exceeded their ability to safely treat and deliver the water to City residents.

### Air

The air quality in the city is generally excellent with some affects from wood burning, car and truck traffic and construction activities. The State of Colorado did not have any information on air quality for this area, which generally speaks to their lack of concern for air quality issues.

The Arkansas valley does experience cold air inversions in the winter months where colder air will move along the Arkansas River corridor and carry pollutants which can degrade the air quality. Other effects to the air quality may come from distant sources such as forest fires or dust storms but these events are typically gone within a few days.

### Noise

Noise effects from Harriet Alexander Field (airport), construction activities, Highway traffic, freight transportation and industrial uses are currently moderate within the city. As growth continues within the city and at its borders, this will become more of a concern. There are several strategies that can be put into place by the city to help avoid degrading the quiet enjoyment of one's property. One such strategy is the separation of residential uses from industrial uses. Another is the physical buffering of residential uses from commercial and industrial uses. Also limiting the hours of operation for industrial uses and or construction activities will reduce noise impacts.

8. City of Salida, 2009, City of Salida Water Conservation Plan; accessed April 28, 2009, at URL [http:// www.cityofsalida.com/pdfs/WCPdraftpubliccomment.pdf](http://www.cityofsalida.com/pdfs/WCPdraftpubliccomment.pdf)

Greater noise impacts may be noticeable if airport traffic increases. Further, as development occurs closer to the airport or along established flight paths this will also increase the impacts from noise to those properties. It will be important to include specific plat notes that identify these impacts if developments do encroach in the airport influence areas.

### Vegetation

The Arkansas valley can be described as a semiarid environment. This type of environment will produce vegetation that requires low amounts of precipitation to survive. The riparian areas along the Arkansas and South Arkansas Rivers will host plant species that are more water dependent. It is typically along these riparian areas that the irrigated crop lands exist.

The general region around Salida has a varied vegetative regime because of the elevation differences. In general, the area is dominated by piñon and juniper and ponderosa pine but aspen, lodgepole pine, spruces and firs are also present at higher elevations. Many grasses, forbs and shrubs can also be found. Grasses include Arizona fescue, mountain muhly, needle and thread, junegrass, blue grama and sand dropseed, western wheat, Indian rice grass and hairy grama. Forbs include lupine, pingue, hymenopappus, scarlet globe mallow, allium and annual forbs. Shrubs include mountain mahogany, gambel oak, winterfat, rabbitbrush, salt bush, green sage and fringed sage.



Aspens on Monarch Pass Photo Courtesy of Kevin Hoffman

Invasive species have become a concern, especially in disturbed areas where new development is occurring. These invasive plants are carried into the disturbed areas by vehicles, wildlife and natural conditions such as wind. Proper management can prevent many of these species from becoming established. Reseeding areas that have been disturbed with native grasses can help eliminate the spread of these species.

Salida has made efforts to enhance the urban forest by mandating landscape plans for new development. Trees were planted in the historic downtown and in other public spaces which have developed into an impressive inventory which greatly enhances the urban forest. Efforts should continue so when the older trees die they are replaced by new trees. These will provide shade and help absorb carbon dioxide.<sup>9</sup> The shade will also help prevent the absorption of heat into the paved surfaces, keeping the city cooler during the summer months.

## Fish and Wildlife

The Arkansas River is increasingly an important fishery in the state. It is a destination for many anglers trying their luck on its swift waters to land a prize fish. The sport fish present in the river are brown and rainbow trout and the occasional Snake River cutthroat. The native greenback cutthroat is federally listed as threatened and according to local fishing experts, is not present in the waters of the Arkansas River near Salida.

Terrestrial wildlife species are valued resources for maintaining the ecological stability and diversity of both the watershed and adjacent uplands. These species range from amphibians and reptiles to birds and mammals. The riparian habitat contains the most species diversity and is the most significant to their survival. Degradation of this habitat from encroaching development is the biggest threat to wildlife in the area.<sup>10</sup>

9. Colorado State Parks, 2008, Arkansas River Recreation Management Plan: accessed April 29, 2009, at URL [http:// www.parks.state.co.us](http://www.parks.state.co.us)

10. Colorado State Parks, 2008, Arkansas River Recreation Management Plan: accessed April 29, 2009, at URL [http:// www.parks.state.co.us](http://www.parks.state.co.us)

Some examples of species that can be found are big horn sheep, mountain lion, rattlesnakes, mule deer, bear, coyote, migratory birds, water fowl and raptors.



Bighorn Sheep. Photo Courtesy of Kevin Hoffman

## Sensitive Lands

Floodplains, wetlands and riparian corridors are rare and valuable resources in the Arkansas River valley. Salida is fortunate to have such a unique asset in the Arkansas and South Arkansas Rivers and their associated habitats. These resources have been greatly modified however, starting with the settlement of the valley in the mid to late 19th Century to today with urbanization encroaching into these desirable environments. Effects from road, railway, dam construction, irrigation, conversion of land to agriculture and urban development have all contributed to the depletion of these resources. According to the Arkansas River Recreation Management Plan, much of the alteration has occurred as a result of the following:

- Vegetation Manipulation - land uses such as grazing, introduction/invasion of exotic vegetation and OHV traffic change the vegetation present.
- Watershed Alteration - road construction, logging and grazing affect infiltration rates changing runoff, sediment supply and water quality.
- Direct Modification - channelization of streams, draining or filling of wetlands and conver-

sion of land to other uses reduces wetland areas.

- Hydrologic Alteration - water diversions, water importations and dam construction have changed the seasonal pattern and quantities available to wetland areas.

The riparian and wetland resources in the vicinity of Salida are confined naturally by the rock formations that create the relatively narrow river channel. This channelization has been exaggerated by the roadway, residential/commercial development and railroad construction that exist at the banks of the rivers. Despite these encroachments, several riparian species are well established along the corridors. These include grasses, sedges, rushes, willows, alders, birch and cottonwood.<sup>11</sup>

The riparian vegetation along the Arkansas River is typically limited with respect to acres per mile as compared to other river systems.<sup>12</sup> Some of this is due to the channelized nature of the river and the tendency at higher flows to scour sediment deposits and vegetation that would normally establish a more predominant riparian and wetland substrate.

## City Government

Local governments have an opportunity to lead by example and create regulations that will have long term positive effects on the environment. Several initiatives exist that would set the city in a direction of becoming more environmentally sustainable. One example is the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Other examples could include Built Green or LEED certified construction for new government buildings or incentives for private industry to build to these standards.

In May, 2010 Salida adopted “[energynow](#) - Chaffee County’s Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy”. All of the municipalities and the County government have adopted this strategic plan. With support

11. Colorado State Parks, 2008, Arkansas River Recreation Management Plan: accessed April 29, 2009, at URL [http:// www.parks.state.co.us](http://www.parks.state.co.us)

12. Colorado State Parks, 2008, Arkansas River Recreation Management Plan: accessed April 29, 2009, at URL [http:// www.parks.state.co.us](http://www.parks.state.co.us)

from the Governor’s Energy Office, Chaffee County has hired a coordinator to assist with implementation of the plan.



# Principles/Policies/Action Items

## Principle ES-I. Visual Resources

*Identify, preserve and enhance existing visual resources that are of value to the community.*

**Policy ES-I. 1** – Development and/or expansion of existing development should not encroach on important visual resources.

**Action ES-I. 1.a.** – Engage the public to develop a visual resources map.

**Action ES-I. 1.b.** – Work with Chaffee County to develop an intergovernmental agreement to prevent hillside development in areas adjacent to the city that would detract from identified visual resources.

**Action ES-I. 1.c.** – Amend Salida’s Land Use Code to locate construction or development activities to avoid detracting from valued visual corridors and resources as seen from the public right-of-way.

**Action ES-I. 1.d.** – Obtain private in holdings adjacent to the railroad corridor northeast of the Arkansas River.



Rural lands around Salida.  
Photo Courtesy of Kevin Hoffman

**Policy ES-I. 2** – Protect the ability to view the night sky through limiting light pollution, glare and light trespass.

**Action ES-I.2.a** – Continue to promote and enforce Dark Sky standards for new construction projects.

## Principle ES-II. Climate

*Identify and promote measures to reduce emissions of climate changing greenhouse gases.*

**Policy ES-II. 1** – Climate change prevention measures will be identified and implemented through amendments to existing building and land use codes.

**Action ES-II. 1.a.** – Sign and actively support the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

**Action ES-II. 1.b.** – Educate the public through public meetings, school seminars and city website on the local effects of global warming and ways to help reduce global warming pollution.

**Action ES-II. 1.c.** – Lead by example through city policies for fuel efficient fleet vehicles, building to LEED or Built Green standards on all new construction and renovations, purchase only Energy Star equipment for city use.

**Action ES-II. 1.d.** – Join state or regional groups that focus on what smaller communities can do to

slow global warming. The Rocky Mountain Climate Organization has set up the Colorado Climate Network that will help with solutions such as grant opportunities and education for communities.

**Action ES-II. 1.e.** – Adopt and enforce land-use policies that promote compact communities with access to services and alternate transportation networks. This should include amendments to the building code to improve energy efficiency.

**Action ES-II. 1.f.** – Evaluate land-use policies and make amendments where limitations exist that prevent alternative energy resources.

**Action ES-II.1.e** – Implement the adopted energynow plan.

**Principle ES-III. Water**

*Preserve and enhance Salida’s water quality and supply.*

**Policy ES-III. 1** – Continue to actively protect and preserve groundwater and surface water resources.



Snowstake Bowl. Photo Courtesy of Kevin Hoffman

**Action ES-III. 1.a.** – Require drainage/grading plans for new or expanded development to reduce non point and point source pollution. Also encourage use of natural run-off filtration such as bio-swales, pervious pavement, etc. for on-site retention.

**Action ES-III. 1.b.** – Enforce the watershed protection district that would regulate ISDS systems in upstream development and locate development to avoid contamination of surface and ground water. Also educate people of the effects of recreation and other uses that could be detrimental to the watershed.

**Action ES-III. 1.c.** – Increase drainage design requirement from 25-year to 100-year storm event.

**Policy ES-III. 2** – Promote and enhance water conservation methods.

**Action ES-III. 2.a.** – Educate the public on water conservation strategies and effects of excessive water consumption in an arid environment.

**Principle ES-IV. Air**

*Maintain and enhance the air quality in the City by providing ways for residents, the construction industry and city departments to make adjustments to their transportation, construction methods and heating needs.*

**Policy ES-IV. 1** – Cooperate with local groups and governments to implement strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Action ES-IV.1.a** – Require the installation of alternatives to wood burning stoves and create requirements that wood burning devices be high-efficiency and low emissions.



**Action ES-IV.1.b.** – Actively monitor possible violations of air quality permits issued through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment for construction and industrial activities.

**Action ES-IV.1.c.** – Incentivize use of alternative transportation by easing parking requirements for commercial uses in exchange for installation of bike racks or connections to alternative transportation network. Alternatively, a fund could be set up to pay a cash-in-lieu fee for parking space reduction that would be used for alternative transportation network.

**Principle ES-V. Noise**

*Preserve, enhance and promote quiet noise levels in and adjacent to the city to allow for quiet enjoyment of property and community places.*

**Policy ES-V.1** – Enforceable and measurable noise standards should be implemented in cooperation with local and regional government agencies.

**Action ES-V.1.a.** – Amend land use requirements to mandate the installation of physical buffering such as berming, fencing, planting or a combination thereof between residential and commercial/industrial uses.

**Action ES-V.1.b.** – Encourage new construction to implement site design strategies that will reduce noise from adjacent uses by installing landscaping and buffers that will also enhance the quality of the design.

**Action ES-V.1.c.** – Work with Chaffee County and CDOT to mandate installation of noise buffering on all highway improvements and non-residential developments adjacent to the city’s residential areas.

**Action ES-V.1.d.** – Enforce current noise ordinance and amend, if needed, to prohibit use of engine (“jake”) brake for heavy trucks within the city limits.

**Principle ES-VI. Vegetation**

*Protect and enhance native vegetation and the urban forest while working to prevent the spread of non-native invasive plant species.*

**Policy ES-VI.1** – Implement management strategies for non-native invasive plant species and protect existing landscaping and native species.

**Action ES-VI.1.a.** – Manage city right of ways and work with other public agencies to do the same to prevent seeding of invasive plants.

**Action ES-VI.1.b.** – Mandate reseeding with native grasses and plants of disturbed areas as part of a landscaping plan or condition of building permit.

**Action ES-VI.1.c.** – Educate city staff and residents on ways to recognize and prevent the spread of invasive species.

**Policy ES-VI.2** – Encourage expansion of the urban forest.

**Action ES-VI.2.a.** – Maintain the adopt-a-tree program on city rights of way adjacent to existing resi-



dential and commercial uses with a condition that the trees be maintained by the property owner.

**Action ES-VI.2.b.** – Actively prune and replace dead or diseased trees in public right of way and in city parks and public spaces.

**Action Item ES-VI.2.c.** – Promote the use of xeric plantings for mandatory landscape plans associated with new development.



Swans near Frantz Lake.  
Photo Courtesy of Alan Robinson

**Action Item ES-VI.2.d.** – Manage the urban forest with a permit system that mandates proper pruning techniques and replacement (one for one) of trees when removal is necessary.

**Action ES-VI.2.e.** – Amend the land use code so new development shall be required to replace all trees removed during preparation of land in addition to required street trees.

**Action ES-VI.2.f.** – Seek grant funding to create a GIS file to help inventory and maintain public trees in the City.

**Principle ES-VII. Fish & Wildlife**

*Maintain and improve habitat for fish and wildlife species.*

**Policy ES-VII.1** – Work with local, state and federal agencies to provide strategies for minimizing negative affects to critical wildlife habitat.

**Principle ES-VIII. Sensitive Lands**

*Protect, maintain and enhance sensitive lands for the enjoyment of the community and to benefit the environment while providing an opportunity for educating the public on the importance of habitat preservation.*

**Policy ES-VIII.1** – The Arkansas and South Arkansas Rivers should be viewed as an asset and opportunity to demonstrate techniques for sustainable building practices in a sensitive environment.

**Action ES-VIII.1.a.** – City will actively seek access rights along river corridors and create trails and maintain habitat.

**Policy ES-VIII.2** – Sensitive lands within the municipal planning area should be protected.

**Action ES-VIII.2.a.** – Work with FEMA to update floodplain mapping.

**Action ES-VIII.2.b** – Work with the county to align strategies for development near sensitive lands in the 3 mile planning area.

**Action ES-VIII.2.c.** – Amend land use requirements to include a mandatory setback from identified sensitive lands including river corridors and prohibit most building and fill in flood plains.

**Principle ES-IX. City Government**

*The city will be a leader in employing sustainable building practices, improved energy efficiency and other strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving environmental quality.*



**Policy ES-IX.1** – Provide strategies for reducing vehicle emissions, energy efficient building practices, reducing water consumption, improving water quality, improving air quality and improving recycling programs.

**Action ES-IX.1.a.** – Plant xeric landscaping in public places, where appropriate.

**Action ES-IX.1.b.** – Explore possibility of gray water system or non-treated supplies for irrigation of public spaces.

**Action ES-IX.1.c.** – Replace lighting in city owned buildings with energy efficient bulbs.

**Action ES-IX.1.d.** – Look at strategies for improving energy efficiency with treatment and delivery of water and wastewater.

**Action ES-IX.1.e.** – Use Built Green or LEED certified building practices for renovations and new construction of government owned buildings.

**Action ES-IX.1.f.** – Promote recycling through provision of bins in downtown and public parks.

**Action ES-IX.1.g.** – Reduce waste generation and encourage landfill diversion practices such as composting and recycling.

**Action ES-IX.1.h.** – Promote Dark Sky standards by installing and/or retrofitting lighting in the downtown to have fully cut off lighting.

**Action ES-IX.1.i-** Review internal practices with the goal of reducing environmental impact of government operations such as paper reduction, recycling, reuse, etc.

## Chapter 6 Housing

The existing pattern of a mixture of housing types, family sizes and incomes in Salida neighborhoods is integral to the character of the community. Decent housing should be attainable by all citizens of Salida whether to rent or to own.

Affordable housing has been a growing concern in recent years as the increase in housing costs has outpaced wage increases. While Salida may seem to some like an affordable alternative to other Colorado resort communities, rising housing costs have put pressure on local residents to live outside of the municipality, live in sub-standard housing or leave the community.

Ensuring diverse housing opportunities are available will enhance and support the city's economic and social diversity, and help maintain the sense of community. There are a variety of recent studies and ongoing efforts to address the growing problem of cost-burdened households.

### Neighborhoods New & Existing

New neighborhoods or infill homes should be compatible with community character with respect to density, design and demographics. The city recognizes that the cost of infrastructure per household is reduced as density increases and dense housing should be encouraged to the extent possible without negatively impacting the character of existing neighborhoods. New neighborhoods should mirror traditional patterns of nearby neighborhoods, offer connections to other parts of the community, and provide a variety of compatible housing types as well as amenities.

Downtown neighborhoods contain older homes on smaller lots within a short distance to services, schools and recreation. These neighborhoods are experiencing new development, such as condominiums and duplexes, and provide a mix of housing with a variety of home styles.

The historic downtown was constructed with storefronts on the ground level and often included housing or lodging units on the second floor. Many of the second floors have been vacant for some time; however, there has been a resurgence in downtown living in Salida and reuse of those upstairs units. This type of mixed-use living should be encouraged where appropriate in both the downtown and the SH 291 corridor within the city.

### Design Guidelines

The residential neighborhoods surrounding downtown Salida have certain characteristics that are highly valued by residents and visitors alike. Although there is not a distinct architectural style in these early Twentieth Century neighborhoods, there are definable qualities that contribute to their attraction. The scale,



Cottage houses at 4th and F Street across from Alpine Park

pedestrian friendliness, front yards, and variety of materials all contribute to the highly-valued character of these neighborhoods.

Efforts began in 2007 in the neighborhood east of downtown to explore ways to maintain the character of the neighborhood through regulation. The result was the creation of a zoning overlay for the Sackett's Addition neighborhood along with the Sackett's Addition Design Requirements and Recommendations. This document informs residents and prospective buyers of the requirements of the overlay as well as suggestions to ensure that new construction and



remodels are compatible with the character of the neighborhood. This was the first instance of residential design regulations specific to the character of an existing neighborhood in Salida.



Victorian house in the Sackett Overlay

### Diversity of Housing

Salida is not a city of gated communities or income defined neighborhoods. The city was built with functional neighborhoods constructed with a variety of home sizes, styles and income levels. Small multi-family structures were integrated into neighborhoods of large and small single-family homes providing neighborhoods which housed a variety of household sizes and incomes.

The diversity of housing types drives the integrated feel of the neighborhoods in Salida and this quality is highly valued. With Ordinance 2008-33, the City Council adopted several changes to the Land Use code to allow for duplex and townhouse configurations as well as address affordable housing in new annexations and planned developments. These changes provide a regulatory mechanism to help ensure a variety of housing types are possible, and in some cases required, in neighborhoods.

### Affordable Housing

In the recent 2009 and 2013 Salida Community Survey, affordable housing repeatedly ranked as one of the greatest concerns of the community. This issue ranked highly with both new members of the community and long-time residents. The concern about housing is not just for young people getting started in their careers, but also for their parents who risk losing their children who must move to other areas to make ends meet. Salida has historically been a community where multiple generations can grow up and live out their lives. Increasing housing costs along with lack of employment are beginning to erode that valuable social fabric of the community.

The City of Salida does not directly provide affordable housing for the community. However, many of the policies and regulations set forth by the city affect the overall cost of providing housing in the community. The possibility exists for the city to implement an inclusionary zoning ordinance to include affordable housing requirements with other residential projects or providing meaningful incentives to developers that provide affordable housing. Other efforts from the city could include the possible allocation of city owned lands for affordable housing projects or offering reduced fees associated with the cost of developing affordable housing.

There are organizations in the community which provide low-income housing or assist low income households with housing improvements. The Salida Housing Authority (“SHA”) manages Mt. Shavano Manor which provides rental units for low income seniors and disabled adults. Through discussions with the director and board members it is evident they feel that there is a need for additional units to serve this population. This need is evidenced through the waiting list for units.

Mt. Shavano Manor was constructed in 1969 on land provided by the city. The site and units are well-constructed and maintained. The project is funded through rental payments and funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”).

SHA provides 29 efficiencies; 16 – 1 bedrooms; 2 – 2 bedrooms and 3 – 1 bedroom fully handicapped ac-

cessible units. SHA serves qualified individuals who earn 30% - 50% of median income. SHA continues to have a waiting list for those in need of low income housing.

The Salida Development Corporation manages the Riverbend Apartments on Holman Avenue. Construction of the development came through a variety of funding sources including low income tax credits and the Colorado Division of Housing. Units at Riverbend Apartments are rented to low income families. There are 30 units including 22, 2-bedroom units and 8, 3-bedroom units. Ongoing expenses at Riverbend are funded through rental payments. The board has noted that they consistently have at least three families waiting that are pre-qualified and they generally have a wait time of six months to a year.

The Salida Development Corporation is interested in finding a suitable site to construct a similar development. They would like their next project to include single-family homes rather than the apartments they currently provide. Riverbend Apartments does accept Section 8 vouchers and serves families who earn 40% - 50% of area median income. Members of the board also feel there is a need for housing to serve families who earn 60% of area median income. Utilizing tax credits to off-set construction costs ensures that for at least 30-years the tenants of the units must meet income restrictions.



<http://www.chaffeehabitat.org/>

Chaffee County Habitat for Humanity (Habitat) was established in 2001 and is actively constructing units throughout the county. Eight units have been constructed with plans to serve an additional five families by 2013. Four single family homes include two in Poncha Springs, one in Nathrop, and one in Buena Vista. One duplex has been completed in Buena Vista and one in Salida. Applicants must be residents of the county for at least one year and meet three basic criteria: need, willingness to partner, and ability to pay their mortgage. Habitat operates on a ‘sweat equity’ model where selected applicants contribute

300-500 hours of work on the home during construction. Volunteers from inside and outside the county jointly build the home, significantly reducing the cost of construction. Selected applicants become homeowners when they purchase the home at cost from Habitat with an affordable mortgage. Habitat plans to expand their services to include rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes for those in the 30% - 50% area median income range they serve. Both new construction and rehabilitation bring community members together to ensure decent, affordable housing for families, young and old.



Wall raising at Starbuck Dairy Subdivision duplex Habitat for Humanity



[www.UAACOG.org](http://www.UAACOG.org)

The Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments (“UAACOG”) is a Community Housing Development Corporation and has a variety of housing programs in the area. UAACOG administers the Section 8 program in Chaffee County. There are 70 Section 8 vouchers available in Chaffee County and 78 families on the waiting list. In addition to the rental program,



UAACOG offers the Section 8 Voucher Homeownership Program. The program allows a person or family who is receiving Section 8 rental assistance to use the voucher as assistance for the mortgage payment. UAACOG administers the Section 8 Family Self-Sufficiency Program that helps families increase income and begin to set aside savings.

The Mutual Self-Help Program administered by UAACOG requires the prospective owners provide at least 65% of the construction of their new home in sweat-equity. This equates to about 30 hours per week from the household and friends during construction. UAACOG has built thirteen homes in Poncha Springs through the Mutual Self-Help Program.

All of these organizations have noted that while they recognize the need for affordable housing in Salida and would like to build more units, they have difficulty finding land with appropriate services that is within their ability to purchase.

UAACOG has additional housing related programs including a Home Improvement Program, Homebuyer Counseling and Homebuyer Financial Assistance. More information about UAACOG programs can be found at [www.uaacog.com](http://www.uaacog.com).

The City of Salida has begun to approach the issue of housing affordability on a variety of fronts. In 2007, the Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment (“Needs Assessment”) was completed by Economic & Planning Systems (“EPS”). This assessment recognized the pressures being created in the local housing market due to the influx of higher income households, telecommuters, and a growing second home market. The report found that one in four Chaffee County households are cost burdened meaning more than 30% of their income is going towards rent or mortgage payments.

Following the findings in the Needs Assessment, the City Council adopted the City of Salida Strategic Housing Plan (“Strategic Plan”) created by the Rural Community Assistance Corporation. The Strategic Plan identifies twelve implementation measures for the city.

Adoption of the Strategic Plan was followed closely by the creation of the Chaffee Housing Trust (“Housing Trust”), a community land trust. Implementation measure #9 from the Strategic Plan states that the city should provide direct support for the Housing Trust. General Fund allocations were provided to the Housing Trust in 2009 and 2010. The Housing Trust is currently a dormant organization with no future projects at this time.

The Housing Trust commissioned a market feasibility for the Crestone Heights project completed in February, 2009. This study confirmed the findings of the Needs Assessment emphasizing the need for affordable priced units in the housing market. The Needs Assessment, Strategic Plan and Housing Trust market feasibility are all good sources of economic and demographic information related to housing in Chaffee County and Salida. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing website is also a good source of housing related information: <http://www.dola.state.co.us/cdh/index.html>.

The variety of housing programs that exist along with the Needs Assessment show that a variety of household types are in need of housing assistance in our community. Needs range from seniors to struggling families and individuals with disabilities.

## Energy Efficient, Safe and Sustainable Housing

In this era of growing concerns about climate change and uncertainty about the longevity of fuel supplies, energy efficiency is a prevalent concern. High energy costs impact the ongoing operating expense of a home and thus the affordability of housing. Environmental concerns should also be considered with regard to housing both from the perspective of the impact of renewable resources and health of the interior living environment.

Effective January 1, 2008 the city and county adopted the 2006 International Code for Energy Conservation. Adoption of this code is a first step by local government to consider the energy efficiency of structures and sets basic requirements for construction. UAACOG and Chaffee County both have programs to provide assistance for low-income homeowners and for landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their housing units. In 2009, the City Council passed an ordinance to allow the refunding of city sales taxes incurred during the purchase of photo-voltaic systems in the city.



New Habitat for Humanity duplex at Starbuck Circle



# Principles / Policies / Action Items

## Principle H-I. Neighborhoods – New & Existing

*Existing neighborhoods will continue to thrive and new neighborhoods will fit the traditional pattern and style of older neighborhoods.*

**Policy H-I.1** – Provide a mix of housing types and densities throughout the city to address a variety of incomes and lifestyles.

**Action H-I.1.a** – Develop guidelines for multi-family housing projects.

**Action H-I.1.b** – Review regulations for accessory dwelling units to ensure compatibility in neighborhoods and also provide another avenue for affordable housing.

**Action H-I.1.c** – Review condominium regulations to ensure compatibility in neighborhoods and to provide for additional density and housing types.

**Policy H-I.2** – The character of existing neighborhoods should be protected.

**Action H-I.2.a** – Design and construction standards should be reviewed so that infill development in existing neighborhoods is compatible with the valued character features.

**Action H-I.2.b** – Identify the different neighborhoods of the city and the characteristics that make them unique.

**Action H-I.2.c** – Important view sheds, solar access and privacy should be protected with new infill development in existing neighborhoods.

**Policy H-I.3** – Infrastructure should be maintained and improvements made in existing neighborhoods.

**Action H-I.3.a** – Work with neighborhoods to identify and prioritize infrastructure deficiencies such as sidewalks, curbs, lighting, stormwater drainage and street trees.

**Policy H-I.4** – New neighborhoods should contain a mix of housing types, a variety of lot sizes, open space, parks and amenities and should be connected to services.

**Action H-I.4.a** – Review the annexation, subdivision and development standards of the Land Use Code to ensure new neighborhoods contain a mix of housing types, a variety of lot sizes, open space, parks and amenities.



Mixed-Use Development in the downtown area

**Action H-I.4.b** – Annexation proposals shall comply with the affordable housing recommendations in the City of Salida Strategic Housing Plan.

**Action H-I.4.c** – Review the Land Use Code to allow for small areas of commerce and business in new neighborhoods where appropriate.

## **Principle H-II. Affordable Housing**

*Salida will continue to be a city where working people, families, and residents of all generations and income levels can continue to afford to live in the community.*

**Policy H-II.1** – Promote new development projects that contain a variety of housing, including affordable units.

**Action H-II.1.a** – Any residential development at the Vandaveer Ranch should include a significant affordable housing component.

**Action H-II.1.b** – Consider adoption of an inclusionary zoning ordinance.

**Action H-II.1.c** – Seek changes to the Land Use Code to ensure that affordable housing is interspersed throughout the city, maintaining diversity in existing neighborhoods.

**Action H-II.1.d** – Revise development standards, procedures or fee structures that are barriers to the free market development of affordable housing.

**Action H-II.1.e** – Design affordable housing that fits with the character of the neighborhood.

**Policy H-II.2** – Monitor demographic and market shifts to understand the needs for affordable housing in the community.

**Action H-II.2.a** – Periodically update the Needs Assessment.

**Policy H-II.3** – Work cooperatively with other agencies to provide affordable housing and home improvements.

**Action H-II.3.a** – Maintain and strengthen relationships with affordable housing providers in the community and examine ways the city can provide both monetary and non-monetary support for housing agencies in the community.

**Action H-II.3.b** – Help to educate the public about current housing assistance programs in the community and provide educational opportunities on affordable housing for 1st time home buyers, realtors and builders.

**Action H-II.3.c** – The Salida Regional Planning Commission should consider appropriate areas for implementation of density bonuses related to preservation of undeveloped lands in the County and affordable housing close to the municipality.

**Action H-II.3.d** – When affordable housing units are provided, ensure the city has a mechanism or



partner organization to keep track of and enforce the deed restrictions or land ownership arrangements to ensure the housing remains attainable in the long-term for low and moderate income residents.

**Action H-II.3.e** – Facilitate discussions with major employers (e.g. R-32-J, Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center, Heart of the Rockies Chamber of Commerce, etc.) in the southern part of the County to understand the needs of their employees and possibly forge new partnerships to help meet employee housing needs.

**Policy H-II.4** – Seek financial strategies to support affordable housing efforts.

**Action H-II.4.a** – Explore funding mechanisms to supplement affordable housing such as impact fees, grants and public/private partnerships.

**Action H-II.4.b** – If opportunities arise to acquire land suitable for housing, the city should consider pursuing the option, possibly in conjunction with the county or another affordable housing provider.

## **Principle H-III. Energy Efficient, Safe & Sustainable Housing**

*Dwelling units should be built and maintained for safety and efficiency.*

**Policy H-III.1** - Energy efficient housing reduces the operating costs of the household and as well as environmental impacts.

**Action H-III.1.a** – Continue to implement building code revisions that ensure safe and energy efficient housing.

**Action H-III.1.b** – Work with UAACOG and Chaffee County to promote energy efficiency upgrades for existing homes and rental units.

**Action H-III.1.c** – Continue to enforce the 2006 International Property Maintenance Code to ensure that multi-family housing and mixed use structures are well-maintained and energy efficient.

**Action H-III.1.e** – Ensure that updates to the Building Code allow for alternative energy to be used in residential construction.

**Action H-III.1.f** – Provide educational lessons to builders and other design professionals on the construction of energy efficient and healthy homes.

**Action H-III.1.g** – Expand energy efficiency codes for new and existing buildings to support weatherization and energy efficiency audits and upgrades for low income families.

# Chapter 7

## Recreation and Open Space

Salida’s high quality of life can be attributed in part to the recreational activities located in and around the city. Organized annual events, youth and adult activities, the Salida Hot Springs Aquatic Center, natural open space areas, trails, parks and the scenic backdrop of the Arkansas River Valley make up the recreation and open space areas offered through the city, state and federal agencies and various community organizations to residents and visitors to the city.

The 2009 and 2013 Community Survey ranked Recreational Amenities third and fourth behind Small Town Atmosphere, Climate, and Friendliness as the top reasons why residents choose to live in Salida. The City of Salida retains a year round staff to maintain and provide recreation programs in the community. There are over 16 city owned parks and facilities. The Public Works Department and the Recreation Department have been charged with the task of providing staffing to fulfill these positions within the City. Currently, 2 full time employees and two seasonal employees (Memorial Day to Labor Day) from the Public Works Department maintain the city’s parks and trails. The Recreational Department has one full time director and over 40 part time employees that staff the Aquatic Center and provide activities and



Riverside swing set  
Photo Courtesy of Kevin Hoffman

events throughout the year.

Recent years have seen a push from local organizations to create additional recreational amenities within the city. It is important that the city consider that they will need to provide adequate staffing to maintain these new amenities.

### City of Salida Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan

The “City of Salida Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan” (Master Plan) adopted in 2008 was created to serve as an assessment, vision, and an action plan for implementation for existing and future recreation uses in the city. This guiding document has been successfully utilized over the past four years to set priorities for many of the city’s recreation based projects.

This Master Plan details an inventory of the city owned recreation facilities and budgetary findings for each of these facilities. The Master Plan outlines goals and objectives and suggested areas of focus. This detailed analysis should be utilized when reviewing the future and existing needs of the community.

Since the adoption of the Master Plan, the Salida Recreation Advisory Board was created to review and make prioritization recommendations to the City Council for future recreation projects for the city. This Board is currently working towards formalizing its relationship with the Recreation Department and other city departments, boards, commissions and Council. As this Board formalizes its role, annual reviews of the Master Plan should be conducted to ensure that the priorities and goals are still consistent with the mission of the Board.

Implementation has begun for some notable city recreation projects that were prioritized in the plan. Upgrades to the Aquatic Center including improvements to the hot water lines and the remodeling and reopening of three soaking pools have been completed. Master plans have been completed for Centennial Park and also Chisolm Park. This plan has been important for receiving grants for the expansion of the Riverside Park white water park and the acquisi-



tion of the Arkansas Hills Open Space.

Other recent and ongoing projects are the creation of the Salida Mountain Trails on Tenderfoot Mountain, Milk Run Trail, phase four of the White Water Park including a new play hole, permanent restrooms at the Coors Boat Ramp, and a climbing wall at Riverside Park. These projects were heavily supported by local organizations in the community.

Annual updates to the Master Plan should address shortcomings such as the lack of a financial forecast for the recreation facilities in the city that include items such as cost recovery for recreational services, marketing strategies to bring more residents and tourists to the city facilities and ways to create additional revenues. The Master Plan should be expanded upon to include specifications for new parks and trails. Map 7.1 Park ¼ Mile Walking Radius, highlights areas of the City that are currently not within a ¼ mile walking radius of a park. Lastly, the Master Plan should look at ways to address access to public lands and the Arkansas and South Arkansas River, formalizing the process for the acquisition of open space lands, and the continued prioritization



Riverside Park is the crown jewel of the Salida park system with its proximity to the river and downtown area. The Arkansas River Whitewater Park and Greenway (Whitewater Park) was begun in 2003 and expanded in 2009 and also in 2010 thanks to a local government grants from GOCO and an array of local and foundation donors. The improved river corridor has created a vibrancy which has radiated out into the community and has created an anchor for public and private projects in the downtown business district. The construction of the Rotary Amphitheater within Riverside Park, and the SteamPlant Event Center, have all come on the heels of the increased traffic of both tourists and locals in the Whitewater Park and greenway area.



of city recreation projects.

## Principles/Policy/Action Items

### Principle R&OS-I. Master Plan

*The “2008 Salida Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan” (Master Plan) should be utilized as the guiding document for recreation related decisions.*

**Policy R&OS-I.1** - Implement, update and continue to promote the Master Plan for the continued maintenance and development of Salida’s parks, recreation, trails and open space.

**Action R&OS-I.1.a** – Yearly prioritization of the implementation goals outlined in the Master Plan should be set in accordance with the yearly fiscal budget cycle.

**Action R&OS-I.1.b** – In an effort to identify new priorities and innovation, missing content from the Master Plan should be identified by staff and the Recreation Advisory Board and the plan should be amended and adopted to reflect these new additions.



**Policy R&OS-I.2** – Collaborative efforts to discuss short and long term recreation priorities for the community should be conducted between the Recreation Advisory Board, Planning Commission, City Council, other city boards and local organizations.

Ice hockey on Frantz Lake.  
Photo Courtesy of Kevin Hoffman

**Action R&OS-I.2.a** – The Recreation Department should work with local organizations, other city boards and other city departments to help provide guidance on the creation and maintenance of recreation amenities in the city.

**Action R&OS-I.2.b** – The Recreation Department should actively engage in discussions with Chaffee County, Buena Vista, and Poncha Springs regarding regional recreation needs.

**Policy R&OS-1.3** – The Master Plan should serve as a guiding document for new development that includes new recreation amenities or open space for the community.

**Action R&OS-I.3.a** – Update the Land Use Code to reference the Master Plan for the review of land use development applications.

### Principle R&OS-II. Recreation Advisory Board

*The Recreation Advisory Board was established to provide informed guidance to the City Council and Planning Commission.*

**Policy R&OS-II.1** – Define the formal role of the Recreation Advisory Board.

**Action R&OS-II.1.a** – Create guidelines and formalize process for the responsibility of the Board to



make updates and recommendations to the Master Plan and development applications.

**Action R&OS-II.1.b** – The Recreation Advisory Board should meet at least annually with the City Council and with the Planning Commission.

**Principle R&OS-III. Fiscal Planning**

*Fiscal planning is integral in order to provide recreational activities, programs, and facilities that benefit residents and visitors of the city.*

**Policy R&OS-III.1** – Recreation amenities are a service provided to the community with an acceptable level of subsidy provided through the General Fund.

**Action R&OS-III.1.a** – Create a marketing plan for recreation programs, events, and facilities to help attract tourists and residents.



**Action R&OS-III.1.b** – The Recreation Advisory Board should provide an annual recommendation to the City Council with suggested priorities for funding capital projects related to recreation.

**Action R&OS-III.1.c** – Actively pursue grant opportunities for funding future recreation projects for the City.

**Action R&OS-III.1.d** – Investigate the possibility of the creation of a regional recreation district for the future funding of recreational amenities in Southern Chaffee County.

**Action R&OS-III.1.e** – Determine expectation for cost recovery and evaluate recreation programs for

revenue generation and cost recovery.

River Boarding on at the new playhole at River Side Park  
Photo Courtesy of Kevin Hoffman

**Action R&OS-III.1.f** – Maintain and possibly expand recreation amenities and programming.

**Principle R&OS-IV. Trail and Parks Planning**

*Continue planning for existing and future trails and parks to provide desired amenities in a fiscally responsible way.*

**Policy R&OS-IV.1** – Work with the Public Works Department to create specifications for the construction and maintenance of new and existing trails and parks.

**Action R&OS-IV.1.a** – Ensure that the expansion of new recreational infrastructure does not create an unreasonable fiscal burden on the city.

**Action R&OS-IV.1.b** – Create standards for park features such as playground equipment, benches, bathrooms and other recreation amenities including park and trail construction.

**Action R&OS-IV.1.c** – A plan identifying current and future maintenance needs and amenities for each park should be created.

**Policy R&OS-IV.2** – Support local organizations that volunteer and help provide new recreational amenities and help to maintain the current infrastructure.

**Action R&OS-IV.2.a** – Work with local organizations to provide maps to the Salida’s park and trail network and public parking areas.

**Action R&OS-IV.2.b**- Continue to provide community support funding for projects brought forward by local organizations with demonstrated community support.



Remodeled soaking pools at the Salida Aquatic Center

**Policy R&OS-IV.3** – Regional collaboration should be utilized to provide new parks and trails.

**Action R&OS-IV.3.a** – Continue to work to help implement the land management plans of the Bureau of Land Management, State Parks, Forest Service and Division of Wildlife and establish working partnerships to help with their goals of preservation and wilderness awareness.



Salida Mountain Trails- Frontside Trail being built by local volunteers

## Principle R&OS-V. Land Acquisition

*Open space, parks and trails in and around the city are important amenity for residents and visitors.*

**Policy R&OS-V.1** – Identify and prioritize parcels around the city for the future acquisition for parks, trails and open space.

**Action R&OS-V.1.a** – Establish a working relationship with the Land Trust of the Upper Arkansas to streamline future open space projects.

**Action R&OS-V.1.b** – Continue to look for additional sources of funding for acquiring open space lands and constructing trails.

**Action R&OS-V.1.c** – Utilize the Salida Regional Transportation Plan in reviewing land use applications in the Municipal Planning Area to ensure trails are created with new development.

**Action RO&S-V.1.d** – The logical extension of existing or proposed bicycle/pedestrian trails across a property proposed for annexation shall be a condition of the annexation.

**Action R&OS-V.1.e** – Create an Open Space plan for the management and prioritization of acquisition of parcels in and around Salida.

**Action R&OS-V.1.f** – Pursue opportunities to provide parks in areas of the city that are underserved.



**Principle R&OS-VI. Access to Public Lands and Rivers**

*Access to the Arkansas River, South Arkansas River and nearby public lands is a critical component to recreation in the Salida area.*

**Policy R&OS-VI.1** – Create and implement a plan for multimodal access to Public Lands.

**Action R&OS-VI.1.a** - Work with the Union Pacific to formalize access to Salida Mountain Trails.

**Action R&OS-VI.1.b** – Capitalize on opportunities for future access to public lands and access to the Arkansas and South Arkansas Rivers.

**Action R&OS-VI.1.c** - Work with recreation groups and land management agencies to create appropriate trailheads and amenities such as parking, picnic areas and restrooms.

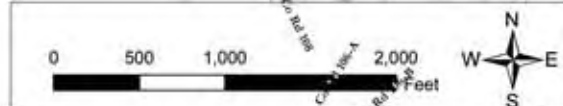
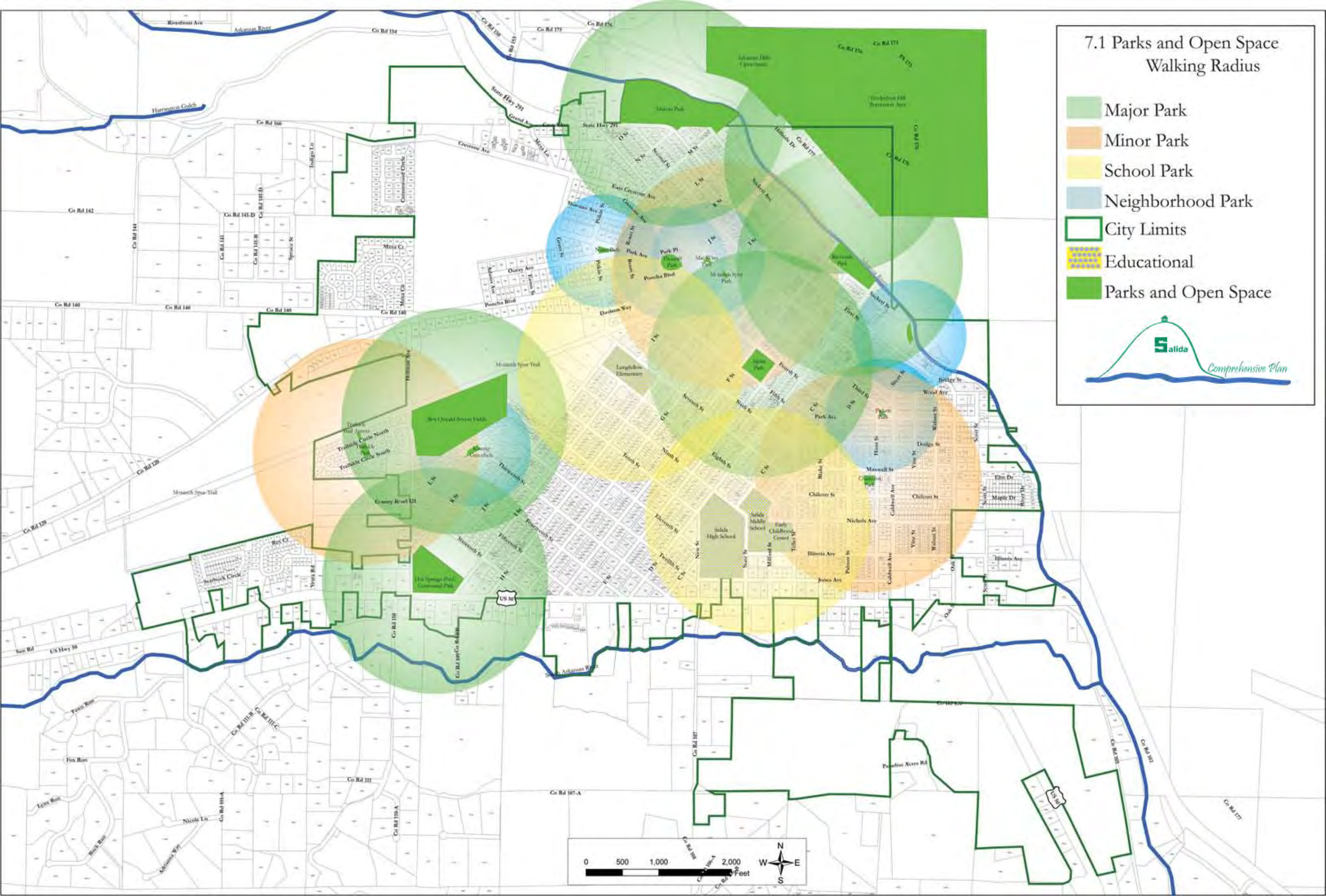


Downriver Race FIBArk 1950  
Photo Courtesy of the Salida Museum



# 7.1 Parks and Open Space Walking Radius

- Major Park
- Minor Park
- School Park
- Neighborhood Park
- City Limits
- Educational
- Parks and Open Space





# Chapter 8

## Tourism

Salida’s lifestyle and economy are intertwined with the outstanding natural environment, ample opportunities for recreation, surrounding public lands and rich sense of community. The City is becoming a mecca for outdoor and art enthusiasts who are investing their time and money visiting the community for special events, soaking in the hot springs pool, visiting historical sites, or participating in the wide variety of recreational opportunities. Over the past 10 years the regional economy has begun to shift to relying more on tourists visiting the community throughout the year. While the tourism industry is just one of the City’s economic industries, it is gaining importance for vitality of many local businesses.

As discussed in pervious chapters the City’s community character, environmental sustainability, recreation and open space play important roles in attracting tourists to the community. The principals, policy and action items contained in those chapters as well as those identified in this chapter are important to continue to improve the tourism experience for both citizens and guests to our community.

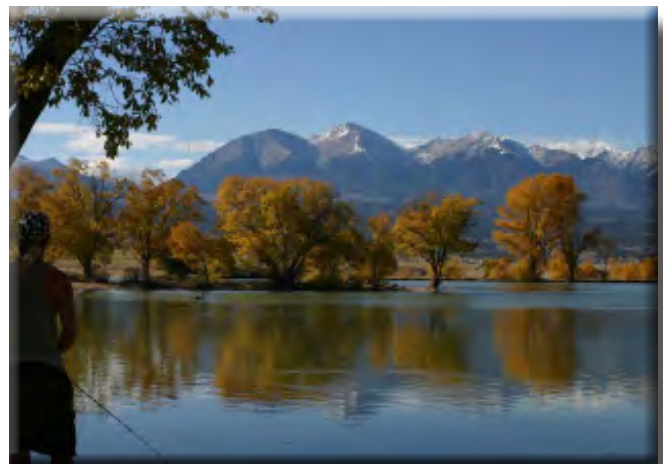
### Events

The character of the tourism industry is also shaped by the many community events that are held throughout the year. Events range in size and type from the FIBArk summer festival and the Lighting of Christmas Mountain to the Alpine Park Farmer’s Market to free Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners provided by local churches and volunteers. Most events are hosted and organized by local non-profits or other civic organizations. These events, many of which are free to attend, promote civic pride, a sense of community and a spirit of volunteerism in the city. While each event caters to different types of tourists, there is something for almost everyone. The additional visitors provide local merchants the chance to showcase their business and benefit financially during these peak event seasons.

The city provides support for many of the larger events generally through coordination with the recreation department and support by public works, police and fire departments. Public safety, sanitation and the use and maintenance of the City’s public spaces are provided by the fire, police, public works and environmental health departments. The city’s recreation department organizes several events throughout the year including the Salida Bikefest, free summer concerts, FIBArk running and biking races, and specialized recreation classes for youths and adults. Events are often hosted in municipal facilities including the Salida Hot Springs Aquatic Center, local parks, Scout Hut and the SteamPlant Event Center.

### Culture

With the decline of the railroad and mining industries, Salida began to form a niche as an arts and recreation community. There are many artists who call the area home and the city has become a recognized destination for cultural heritage, arts and recreation related tourism. These artists, as well as the downtown property owners, have revitalized the downtown and filled many vacant store fronts with new galleries, businesses, restaurants and bars that cater to the tourism industry. During the 2008 recession, property owners both along the highway and in the downtown took proactive roles in restoring and maintaining their properties which in turn has attracted tourists to the community as Salida has become known as an afford-



Fishing on Franz Lake

able alternative destination to the ski resort communities located on the I-70 corridor.

Recently, the City was designated as one of two of Colorado’s Creative Districts. The Creative District boundaries, as shown on Map 8.1 Creative District, include the Central Business (“C-2”) zone district and expand to include other key anchor arts and cultural organizations, parks and pedestrian thoroughfares. The District includes public institutions including the Salida Regional Library, Toubert Building, Colorado Art Ranch Headquarters, Riverside Park and Amphitheater and the SteamPlant Events Center. A major expansion of the city-owned SteamPlant Events Center was completed in 2008 and has become the anchor institution of the District that complements the many galleries and art studios in the historic downtown by offering a venue for the performing arts, galley space and conference center.

The economic engine of the Creative District includes a variety of different enterprises including the 21 artists-owned studios and galleries, creative design firms, architects, interior designers, carpenters, graphic designers, filmmakers, microbrewers and micro distilleries, and 13 locally-owned restaurants. These local businesses continue to attract and provide services to visiting tourists.

The designation of the Creative District has led to the creation of the “Salida Creative District, Strategic Report and Action Program.” The vision and goals for the Creative District are outlined in this report.

## Lodging

The growth of the tourism industry has created a greater demand on the available lodging located in the City limits. New hotels have increased the available rooms and the City currently has 18 hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts offering guests nearly 700 rooms. Over the past 10 years the City has also experienced an expansion on the vacation rental market. Many second home owners have begun to explore this option to bring in additional revenue for their second homes when they are not visiting the community.

## Recreational Based Tourism

Recreational opportunities attract thousands of visitors to the City every year. Activities include hiking, climbing, biking, swimming, soaking in hot springs pools, running, rafting, kayaking, horseback riding, skiing, snowmobiling, fishing, hunting and off-road vehicle use among others. While some residents and visitors enjoy these activities on their own, many local businesses have grown to accommodate the desire to enjoy the outdoors by selling supplies and equipment or offering guided trips. The Arkansas River is rafted, kayaked



Mountain Biking on Little Rattler Trail

or fished by several hundred thousand users each season. River recreation is an anchor for the summer tourist season with other activities such as shopping, hiking and mountain biking rounding out the opportunities. Downhill skiing at Monarch Mountain, 25 miles west of the city, provides winter recreation and ensures a steady stream of visitors to the city through the winter.

The close proximity of public lands to the north, south and east of Salida and the rivers running through the community form a backdrop to the community and ensure access to recreation and the natural environment. Ongoing cooperation with public land managers and local groups can maintain and expand the access to recreation for a variety of users.



## Principles / Policies / Action Items

### Principle TO-I. Tourism & the Local Economy

*Salida depends on tourism to support the local economy and will support tourism related land uses, businesses, events and marketing.*

**Policy TO-I. 1** – Work with appropriate entities to attract multiple forms of tourism.

**Action TO-I.1.a** – Collaborate with entities such as CCVB, SBA, CCHAAB, Historic Salida, Inc, Art of the Rockies, the Chamber and others to design a strategy to develop cultural and heritage tourism in the Salida area.

**Action TO-I.1.b** – Work with SPOT, SMT, BLM, AHRA, USFS, DOW, and others to promote Salida as a hub and gateway community to adjacent public lands.

**Policy TO-I. 2**– Continue to look for opportunities to bring small conventions and music to the City.

**Action TO-I.2.a** – Create a marketing strategy to target Front Range communities to promote Salida as a destination for small conventions.

**Action TO-I.2.b** – Encourage local businesses to coordinate with one another to market special events.

### Principle TO-II. Special Events

*Special events attract visitors to the community and promote civic pride, a sense of community and a spirit of volunteerism in the City.*

**Policy TO-II. 1** – Work to maintain and promote existing special events that have strong local support.

**Action TO-II.1.a** – Collaborate with special events entities to provide the necessary City support to allow events to be held every year.

**Action TO-II.1.b** – Create policies and regulations that allow City assets to be utilized effectively and equably.

**Action TO-II.1.c** – Work with the various special event boards to promote events throughout the calendar and to reduce the overlap of events.

**Policy TO-II. 2**– Continue to look for opportunities to bring new events to the City that promote the community values.

**Action TO-II.2.a** – Support the creation of special events that occur during the spring and fall shoulder seasons.



River rafting Brown's Canyon

**Principle TO-III. Culture**

*Preserve, enhance and promote the cultural resources in the community.*

**Policy TO-III.1** – Support the existing arts and music community in Salida and develop relationships to help increase the identity as an arts community and the financial viability for artists in the community.

**Action TO-III.1.a** – Strengthen collaborative relationships with entities such as ArtWalk, Art Works, StageLeft Theater Company, and others to promote art in the city.

**Action TO-III.1.b** – Utilize the SteamPlant Events Center as a venue to bring exhibits, events and productions into the community as well as to showcase local artists.

**Action TO-III.1.c** – Investigate the viability and interest in creating a program that would place art on publicly owned property in the community.

**Action TO-III.1.d** – Work with the local art community to establish a community art studio for artists to display their work and receive educational classes.

**Action TO-III.1.e** Encourage outdoor art displays.

**Action TO-III.1.f** – Continue to partner with other organizations such as Historic Salida, Inc, the Chaffee County Heritage Area Advisory Board, Salida Museum Association, Hutchinson Homestead, Salida Regional Library and Buena Vista Heritage to promote the heritage of Salida and Chaffee County and heritage events.

**Action TO-III.1.** – Promote, support and market the Creative District as it continues to gain recognition across the state and country.

**Policy TO-III.2** – Encourage public events in the community that engage, educate, entertain and enrich the community.

**Action TO-III.2.a** – Continue to provide support for community events through the recreation, public works, fire, police and City Hall offices.

**Action TO-III.2.b** – Assess the fee structure for park rentals, street closures and event liquor permits to balance the demands on staff time with the public benefit provided by public events.

**Principle TO-IV. Lodging**

*Support existing and new lodging facilities that provide guests with overnight stay opportunities.*

**Policy TO-IV.1** – Support the existing lodging facilities by providing access to City services and facilities that cater to guests.

**Action TO-IV.1.a** – Promote events and the use of City facilities that create overnight stays for guests.

**Action TO-IV.1.b** – Utilize the SteamPlant Events Center as a venue to bring tourists to the community for weddings, parties and other special events that typically require overnight stays.



**Action TO-IV.1.c** – Continue to utilize 2b funding to enhance City facilities such as the Hot Springs Aquatic Center, SteamPlant Events Center, City Parks and Salida Mountain Trails system that offer guests recreational and entertainment opportunities while they stay in the City.

**Policy TO-IV.2** – Support the development of new lodging services to ensure there is adequate supply of rooms for guests coming to the community.

**Action TO-IV.2.a** – Support economic development studies for future development of the lodging industry.

**Action TO-IV.2.b** – Create land use regulations that support the growth, development and redevelopment of new and existing lodging facilities.

**Action TO-IV.2.c** – Promote the use of vacation rentals during peak events.

**Principle TO-V. Recreational Based Tourism**

*Promote Salida’s natural environment and recreation opportunities attract thousands of guests to the community every year.*

**Policy TO-V.1** – Continue to expand City’s recreational infrastructure in parks and open space areas.

**Action TO-V.1.a** – Promote and support SPOT and SMT efforts to expand the trails around the City.

**Action TO-V.1.b** – Maintain the River Park improvements and look for opportunities for future expansion.

**Action TO-V.1.c** – Work to find opportunities to leverage grant funding for recreational projects.

**Action TO-V.1.d** – Create opportunities to dedicate park enhancements for citizens.

**Policy TO-V.2** – Support conservation efforts that preserve the natural environment that tourists come to the City to enjoy.

**Action TO-V.2.a** – Support conservation organizations on efforts to acquire public lands for future projects.



Snowboarding at Monarach Mountain

# Chapter 9

## Transportation

Salida enjoys a transportation network that allows for a variety of different users to navigate around town with choices in addition to the automobile. The traditional neighborhood grid of roads and alleys, and a system of interconnected trails has allowed Salida to become a unique model of traditional neighborhood development that supports a safe, walkable, and livable community that all residents enjoy. As Salida’s transportation system continues to expand to accommodate new growth, so too should the values of connectivity and safety for all residents of Salida.

### History

The City of Salida’s current transportation network is a culmination of over a hundred years of growth and development from the central railroad hub of the mountain west to the rich recreational and cultural destination it is today. From the invention of the steam engine to the age of the automobile, Salida’s transportation network has continued to evolve to accommodate new users.

In 1880-1950, the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Western (D&RGW) constructed extensive railroad facilities adjacent to downtown Salida which became the natural base for the vibrant community of downtown Salida. The Salida railyard was in a constant state of evolution as new rail lines continued to be expanded into the Rocky Mountain West making Salida the central rail station for the entire region.

As Salida grew, the downtown grid expanded and the residential districts developed along the same grid layout surrounding the downtown. The grid pattern continued to expand through the 1950’s, stretching to Rainbow Boulevard/US Hwy 50.

By the middle of the 1950’s prosperous mining activities began to decline and railroad activity diminished, leading to railroad lands being sold to private landowners in various locations. In the 1970’s and 1980’s

residential growth began replacing agricultural lands around the periphery of Salida, farther away from the city’s core, which created more dependence on automobiles. This growth, combined with topography, road and easement widths, county development patterns, rivers and ditches, has resulted in developments that were created without considering regional context and interconnectedness.

This growth trend continued into the late 1990’s, when the railroad finally ceased operations in 1998. The automobile has now become the primary source of transportation in the valley, and truck traffic has increased on the major arterials.

Today, there has been a resurrection of the bicycle as the primary source of transportation for many local trips done daily by residents in Salida. The newest components in the area’s transportation network are non-motorized trails that connect different neighborhoods of town. The last ten years have seen substantial efforts to create a trail system in and around the city including a rails-to-trails project creating the Monarch Spur Trail. Since the creation of the Monarch Spur Trail, the backbone of the system, several other trail projects have successfully been completed and are widely used by citizens for recreation and transportation.



D&RGW railroad line  
Photo Courtesy of Salida Museum



## CDOT Right-of-Ways

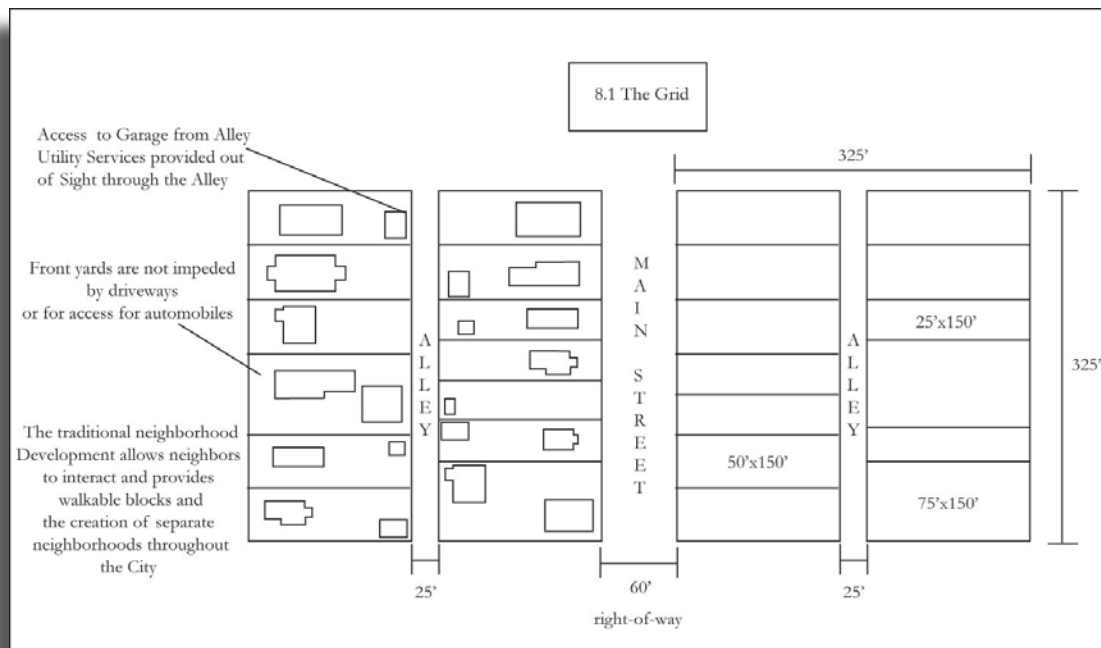
The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) governs and maintains the right-of-ways for US Hwy 50 and SH 291. These two corridors have unique characteristics that need to be planned for in coordination with CDOT. Both these arterials serve to connect the City of Salida with other parts of the state and country. Opportunities to work collaboratively with CDOT on developing corridor plans should be explored for the management of access, maintenance, and future enhancement projects.

The City of Salida working with property owners along the corridor produced the Highway Corridor Improvement Plan adopted in 2007. The plan details streetscape improvements aimed at improving vehicular access and creating safe pedestrian connections along the corridor. Implementation of the plan has begun with new commercial projects along the corridor and with grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009 channeled through CDOT. These funds allowed for implementation of the streetscape improvements from Holman Ave to D Street. Efforts should continue to obtain grant funding for extension of the streetscape improvements. In 2012 the project expanded these improvements to CR 107 with help from CDOT enhancement funds. Phase III is anticipated to continue these improvements to Palmer Street in 2013.

State Highway 291 which includes the rights-of-ways along First Street and Oak Street are maintained and governed by CDOT. Improvements for this corridor must be approved by CDOT and city staff works to facilitate this process for new development. A highway access and management plan should be developed for SH 291. Issues to be addressed are improved provisions for pedestrians and bicycles, drainage studies, access management, and developing a cohesive streetscape.

## Local Street Design

The City of Salida was platted in 1880 utilizing the grid pattern and was a major railroad hub which supported the mining and agriculture in the Salida region. This grid pattern was primarily utilized until 1949. Blocks of 325' x 325' were platted northeast to south by the railroad expanding from the river southwest along the F Street corridor. This block formation, as pictured in Figure 9.1 (The Grid) below included a 60' right-of-way for streets and a 25' alley between blocks. Typical blocks have building lots ranging from 25' x 150' to 75' x 150'. Access to residential homes for automobiles traditionally has been from the alley with minimal curb cuts for driveways along the main streets. This grid continued to develop over the early half of the 20th Century with F Street as the central street to connect US Hwy 50 to the Downtown and the railroad station on the north side of the river.



The original streetscape design has evolved over time as transportation technologies have advanced. The current 60' streetscape that exists throughout the grid, pictured in Figure 9.2 has provisions for pedestrians on sidewalks and on street parking. The current street section does not have bike lanes or large enough parkways for mature trees over 100 years old. The grid was expanded in 1904 to include what today are known as the named streets east of the lettered streets. This new grid was platted in a direct north south orientation. Although the right-of-way width is available, much of this section of the grid lacks curb and gutter, sidewalks, and parkways. The residential character of this section of town only experiences local traffic and does not face the pressures from nearby commercial development that the downtown grid experiences.

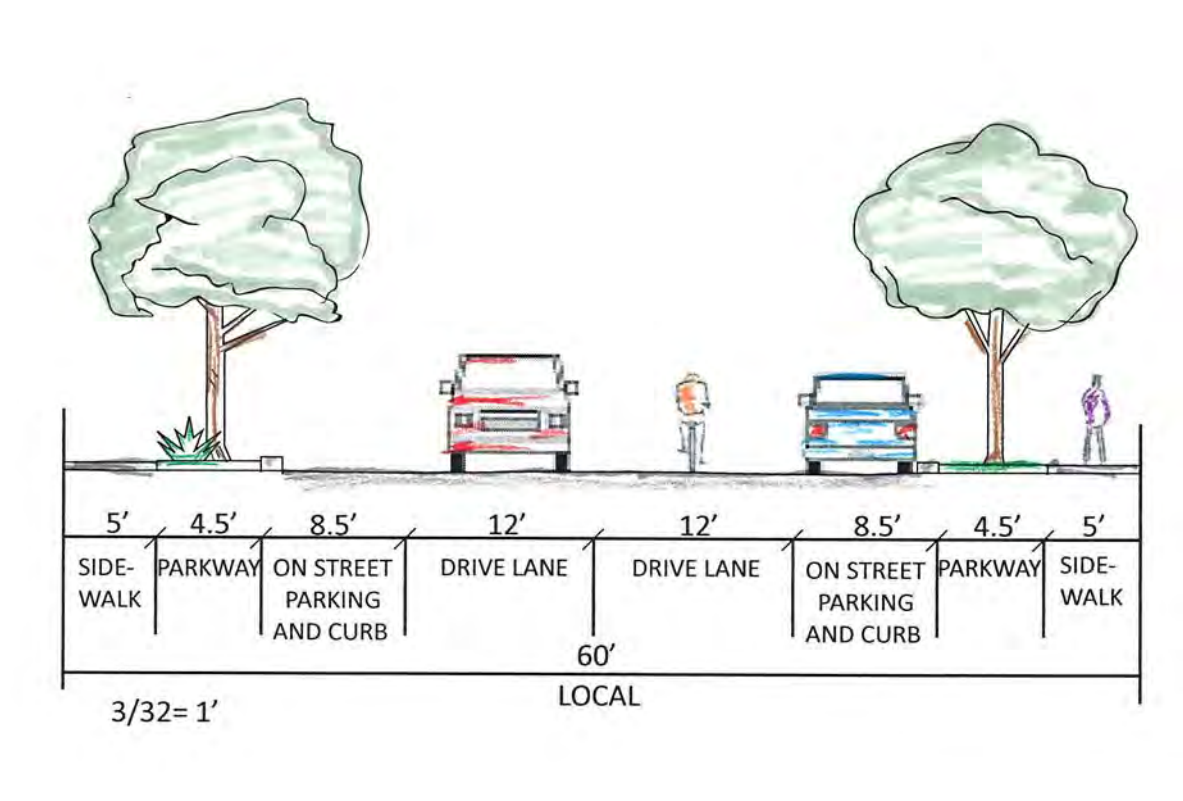


Figure 9.2

The Mesa, originally platted in 1888 by the Eddy Brothers, expanded the right of ways to 80' and Poncha Boulevard was platted with a 100' right-of-way. It was expanded again to Grant Street in 1949. This area has a unique road layout with the incorporation of several pocket parks and is bordered to the north and south by the topography of the Mesa. Throughout most of this area of town there are no curbs, gutters, sidewalks or formal parkways.

Many of the streets on the Mesa do not experience significant pressure from traffic with the exception of Poncha Boulevard and Crestone Avenue. Both of these streets have seen an increase in traffic over the recent years due to the sprawling developments on the periphery of city limits and in the county lands surrounding the city. Grant Street has seen increased use as a cross connection between SH 291 and destinations south of the Mesa. Provisions for pedestrians and for bicyclists will need to be provided for in the future as these streets continue to see an increase in pressure from new development.

Alleys were also platted in the grid with a width of 25' and split the blocks of lots east and west to allow for outhouses, stables, and the delivery of goods. Today, these alleys are used for utilities, access, and for the de-



livery of goods and services.

New developments that have occurred on the periphery of the city lack multiple connections to the grid. These subdivisions were typically developed after 1950 and are centered around automobile transportation. Cul-de-sacs and garages off the street are typical in these newer developments which lack provisions for pedestrian connections to other areas in the city. This type of development has created congestion on the collector roads of Holman Avenue, County Road 120, County Road 140, Poncha Boulevard, and Crestone Avenue.

Where this disconnected transportation system collides with the traditional neighborhood grid is typically where the city has problem intersections. The intersection of the two grids also creates many problem intersections. These intersections experience problems with alignment, increased traffic, and lack of adequate provisions for crossing for pedestrians and bicycles. Creative solutions will need to be engineered in the future to improve the safety of these intersections. Traffic circles and other creative means for controlling traffic will need to be explored as possible solutions for these problem areas. New development in and around intersections will need to make adequate provisions to insure the community safety including the dedication of right-of-way and improvements to current intersections that serve new development.



Intersection of Hwy 50 SH 291 and Gateway to Downtown



Public parking along F Street



Multi-modal transportation Downtown

US Hwy 50 was widened during the 1970's. At that time many existing businesses lost their parking areas. On street parking is allowed on almost every local street in the city. The commercial district of Hwy 50 developed during the 1950's and was designed to cater to the automobile. Many of the newer larger commercial retailers on the highway have large parking lots in front on the stores. There is no on street parking along the Highway corridor, so it is vital to the existing businesses that parking is provided by the business. The city does not have any public parking areas along this corridor.

The Historic Downtown traditional built environment did not have provisions for automobile parking. Several newer businesses that were constructed dur-

ing the 1950's have small parking lots however, most of the downtown business clientele utilize on street parking. There are several municipal parking areas in the downtown that provide additional parking. Curb cuts for many old businesses still exist today that are no longer being used by the existing business. Areas for motorcycle parking should be explored to maximize the parking in the downtown. The city should continue to explore options to provide additional parking in this area.



Chip seal project F Street

Capital Improvement Fund to be used to provide streets and other capital improvements or to pay debt service on bonds or other obligations of the city issued to provide for such capital improvements. Additional ballot measures, such as 2A (approved by voters in 2008), have been approved to provide additional funding for maintenance and construction of roads and public infrastructure through additional sales tax revenue.

A variety of grants can help to contribute towards funding for future transportation projects. CDOT has grants that can be used for projects ranging from rail crossings, intersection improvements, safe routes to school and scenic byway funds. Many of the trail projects in the Salida region have received funding from grants from the CO Division of Wildlife, CO State Parks, CDOT, and the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). The US Environmental Protection Agency also has programs to implement smart growth policies, which may be utilized to enhance transportation systems.

Funding for transit can come from a variety of sources. Typically, transit serves multiple communities and regions. A collaborative effort will be needed to provide future funding for the transit needs of the Salida region.

## Maintenance and Funding

The City of Salida's transportation network is a collection of roads, trails, and sidewalks that link the city's neighborhoods to one another. The task of maintaining this infrastructure is primarily accomplished by the Public Works Department. These tasks include repairing, resurfacing, rebuilding roads, and seasonal maintenance such as striping and plowing. CDOT maintains the rights-of-ways along the corridors of SH 291 and US Hwy 50. Several other organizations help with the maintenance and construction of trails in Salida.

Funding for the upkeep of the transportation network is constrained in several ways. Tax revenues are restricted by statewide ballot measures, such as Tax Payer Bill of Rights (TABOR), state legislative bills such as the Gallagher Amendment, and distribution of fuel taxes (Highway Users Tax Fund- HUTF), as determined by a state formula. The city's sales tax currently dedicates 35% of the 2% to the Sales Tax

## Other Transportation Plans

Recently there have been several plans that address transportation needs for the City of Salida and the surrounding county lands. These plans include the "Salida Regional Transportation Plan," "Highway Corridor Improvement Plan," "Chaffee County Heritage Area and Collegiate Peaks Scenic and Historic Byway Management Plan 2008," "Salida Park, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Plan," "Safe Routes to School" and "Harriet Alexander Field: Chaffee County Master Plan." The Chaffee County Transportation Advisory Board was formed with the objective to develop a plan for the public transit in county. All of these plans were adopted to serve as guiding documents for the development of transportation services in the Salida region. These plans should be used in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan to guide the future transportation needs for the city.



# Principles/Policy/Action Items

## Principle T-I. Alternative Modes of Transportation

*Promote the continued development of a safe and efficient transportation system that offers alternative modes of transportation options in addition to the automobile.*

**Policy T-I. 1** – Create and maintain provisions for pedestrians and bicycles.

**Action T-I. 1.a** – Amend the street sections in Salida’s Land Use Code to create ample provisions for pedestrians and bicycles.



Monarch Spur Trail.  
Photo Courtesy of Alan Robinson

**Action T-I. 1.b.** – Maintain the current requirements for new development to provide improvements including sidewalks, trails and open space areas that allow for viable connections to other neighborhoods for pedestrians and bicycles.

**Action T-I. 1.c.** – Create safe pedestrian and bicycle connections across US Hwy 50 and continue to implement the Highway Corridor Improvement Plan.

**Action T-I. 1.d.** – Where feasible, extend sidewalks and trails to connect to the Historic Downtown Commercial District and throughout the different neighborhoods of the city.

**Action T-I. 1.e.** – Improve ADA access by providing ramps, curb cuts and improving sidewalks throughout the different neighborhoods of the city.

**Action T-I. 1.f.** – Encourage a bike share program for residents and visitors to the city.

**Action T-I. 1.g.** – Implement Safe Routes to School improvements along local streets within the City.

**Action T-I. 1.h** – Promote the installation of on-street public bike racks to help alleviate the parking problem downtown.

**Action T-I. 1.i** – Promote accountability within the community to obey traffic laws for pedestrians, bicycles, and motorists to eliminate conflict.

**Action T-I. 1.j** – The City should endeavour to create a sidewalk plan for the prioritization construction of sidewalks.

**Policy T-I. 2** – Improve access, circulation, and connectivity for all modes of transportation throughout the city.

**Action T-I. 2.a.** – Identify and improve intersections that receive large amounts of traffic and congestion or function poorly.

**Action T-I. 2.b.** – Provide multiple connections between neighborhoods in town.

**Action T-I. 2.c.** – Encourage city employees, city officials, and other business owners and their employees, who work in the Historic Downtown Core, to use alternative modes of transportation to get to work, and/or to park on side streets.

**Action T-I. 2.d.** – Evaluate the transportation needs of the elderly and disabled to determine the best ways to help this population.

**Policy T-I. 3** – Eliminate conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users.

**Action T-I. 3.a.** – Work with local law enforcement to continue to promote safe driving and bike riding.

**Action T-I. 3.b.** – Implement crosswalk improvements throughout town and along the Salida trail system.

**Action T-I. 3.c.** – Identify and implement bike lanes where needed along well-traveled corridors.



Salida Bike Club  
Photo Courtesy of the Salida Museum

**Action T-I. 3.d.** – Enforce speed limits on designated bike routes in the city.

**Policy T-I.4** – Streetscapes should be inviting for all users providing a safe travel environment with calm and efficient traffic movement.

**Action T-I.4.a** – Review streetscape standards for parkway widths to allow adequate space for large, long-lived street trees.

**Action T-I.4.b** – Investigate grant or partnership opportunities to bring sidewalks to all established neighborhoods that desire sidewalks.

**Action T-I.4.c** – Execute and develop streetscape plans for Hwy 50/ Hwy 291 in coordination with CDOT. Create gateways for these commercial corridors into the city.

**Action T-I.4.d** – Develop sub-area plans to foster safer travel for pedestrians and bicyclists for streets like Poncha Boulevard, Park Avenue, and Teller Street that have expanded right-of-ways and higher traffic volumes.

## Principle T-II. Street and Trail Safety

*Safety within the transportation system is a high priority for the community.*

**Policy T-II. 1** – Improve the safety of the transportation infrastructure.

**Action T-II. 1.a.** – Create gateways, architectural elements, and creative streetscape designs that give the unique districts of the city a sense of place and reduce conflicts between transportation user groups.

**Action T-II. 1.b.** – Identify problem intersections and design creative solutions including the use of traf-



fic circles and other traffic calming designs that allow for safer provisions for all modes of transportation.

**Action T-II 1.c** - Promote street and trail safety and compliance by local residents and visitors through education, signage, signals, landscaping, and the separation of pedestrians from vehicles.

**Policy T-II. 2.** – Clear, adequate signage helps to direct visitors to the community and supports local businesses.

**Action T-II. 2.a** – Create a comprehensive sign plan for the city for the replacement of old signage and the future placement of new signage.

**Action T-II. 2.b.** – Continue to utilize wayfinding signage to direct visitors to public parking areas and attractions.

## Principle T-III. Transit

*Transit provides valuable opportunities to residents and visitors to the community.*

**Policy T-III.1** – Efforts to create and maintain local and regional transit should be supported.

**Action T-III.1.a** - Promote the use of local and regional transit and create transportation facilities, such as Park-and-Rides and trail systems that provide regional and local connections.

**Action T-III.1.b** – Continue to promote the use and the expansion of public transit to Front Range cities.

**Action T-III.1.c** – Support the creation of a multimodal transportation network between Buena Vista, Poncha Springs, and Salida.

## Principle T-IV. Public Parking

*Continue to provide and maintain public parking areas for the downtown commercial district.*

**Policy T-IV. 1** – Actively pursue acquiring additional places for public parking.

**Action T-IV. 1.a.** – Conduct a parking study to understand the parking needs for the commercial areas around the city.

**Action T-IV. 1.b.** – Seek opportunities to provide additional public parking in the Downtown either north of the Arkansas River or on an underutilized parcel.

**Action T-IV. 1.c.** – Investigate ways to improve and create parking areas for motorcycles.

**Action T-IV. 1.d.** – Close or reduce curb cuts that are no longer used in an effort to create more on street parking.

## Principle T-V. Existing Infrastructure

*Provide maintenance of existing infrastructure.*

**Policy T-V. 1** – Identify and prioritize areas of the city that need maintenance or improvements to the transportation system.

**Action T-V. 1.a** – Determine timelines for street rebuilds, repairs, and overlay projects and intersection improvements within the existing transportation network.

**Action T-V. 1.b** – Coordinate new development projects with plans for maintenance and repairs to existing infrastructure.

**Action T-V.1.c** – Evaluate opportunities to partner with property owners to maintain existing sidewalks to a safe and useable standard.

**Action T-V.1.d**- Consider reduction of surface width of some streets such as Poncha Blvd., Crestone Ave., and Park Ave.

**Principle T-VI. Extension of Transportation Network**

*Fiscally responsible extension of the transportation network.*

**Policy T-VI. 1** – Create structures so that new development installs, maintains, and is responsible for transportation infrastructure.

**Action T-VI. 1.a.** –Implement the Salida Regional Transportation Plan with new development in the Salida area to provide adequate motorized and non-motorized connections to services and recreation.

**Action T-VI. 1.b.** – Continue to execute the Highway Corridor Improvement Plan with new or infill commercial development.



Trail building day Salida Mountain Trails

**Principle T-VII. Airport**

*Execute the “Harriet Alexander Field: Chaffee County Master Plan” for any new expansion of the aviation facilities in Southern Chaffee County.*

**Principle T-VIII. Railroad**

*The railroad corridor is an opportunity for transportation, economic, recreational and tourism pursuits.*

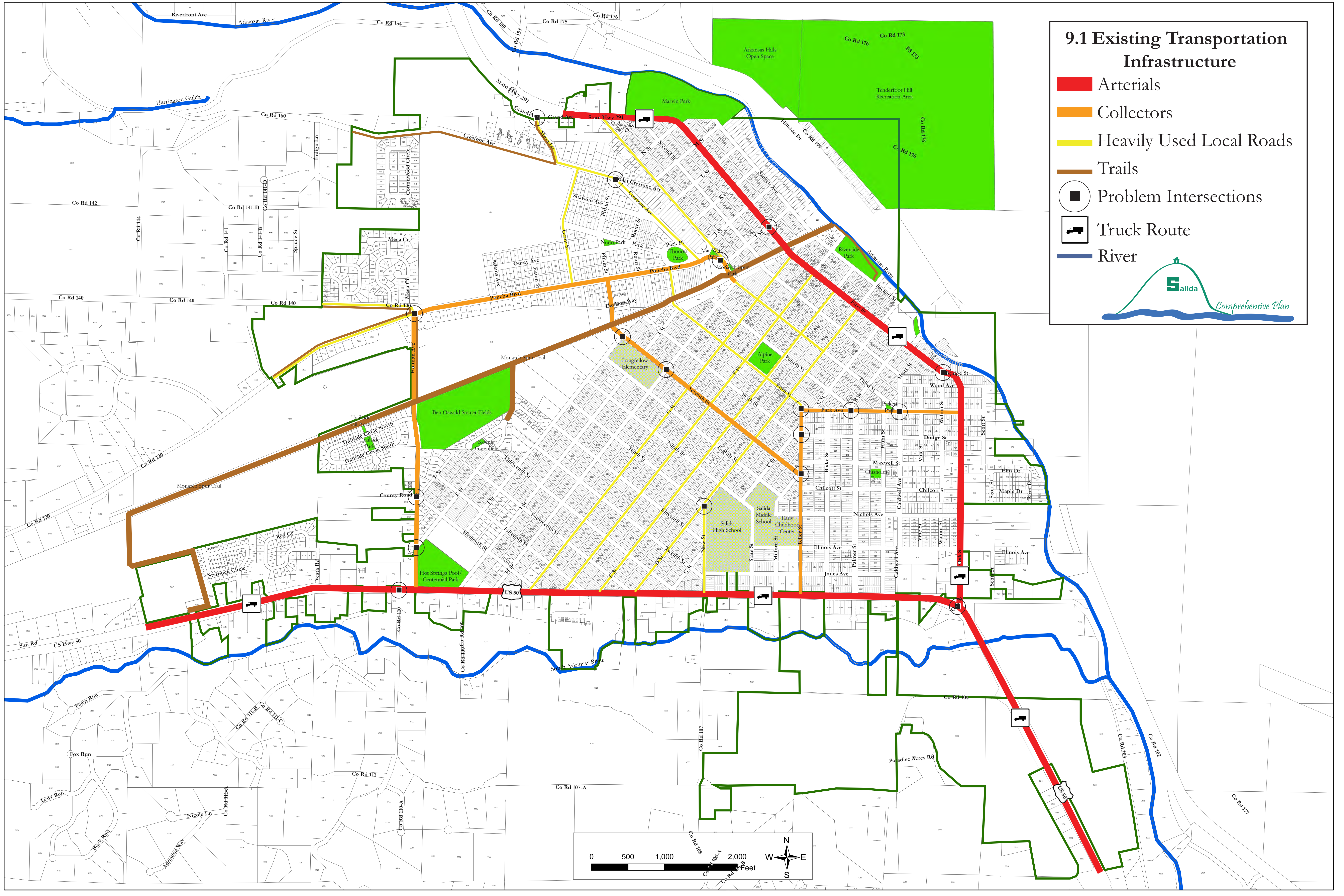
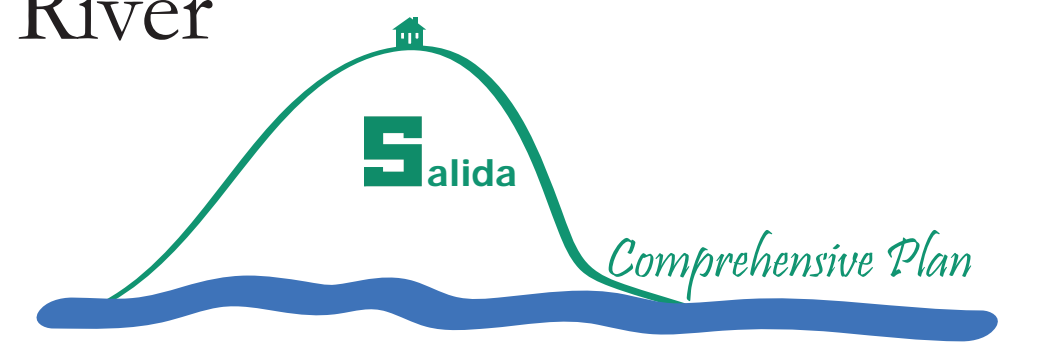
**Policy T-VIII.1** – Access to and use of the railroad corridor should be investigated.

**Action T-VIII.1.a** - Investigate possibilities for use of the railroad corridor for expanding commerce to the valley.









# 9.1 Existing Transportation Infrastructure

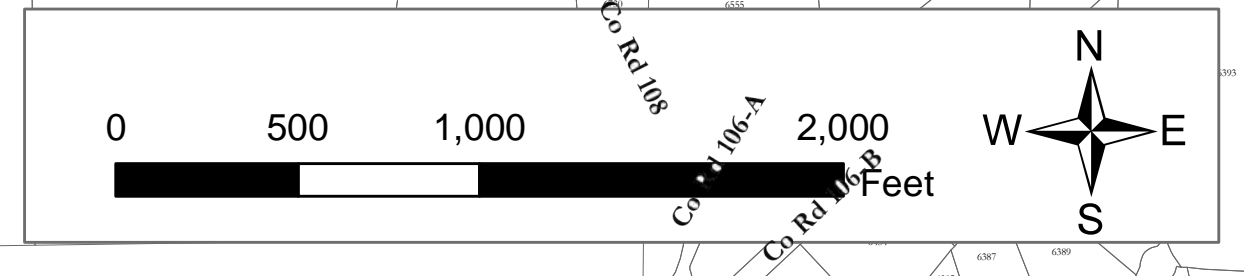
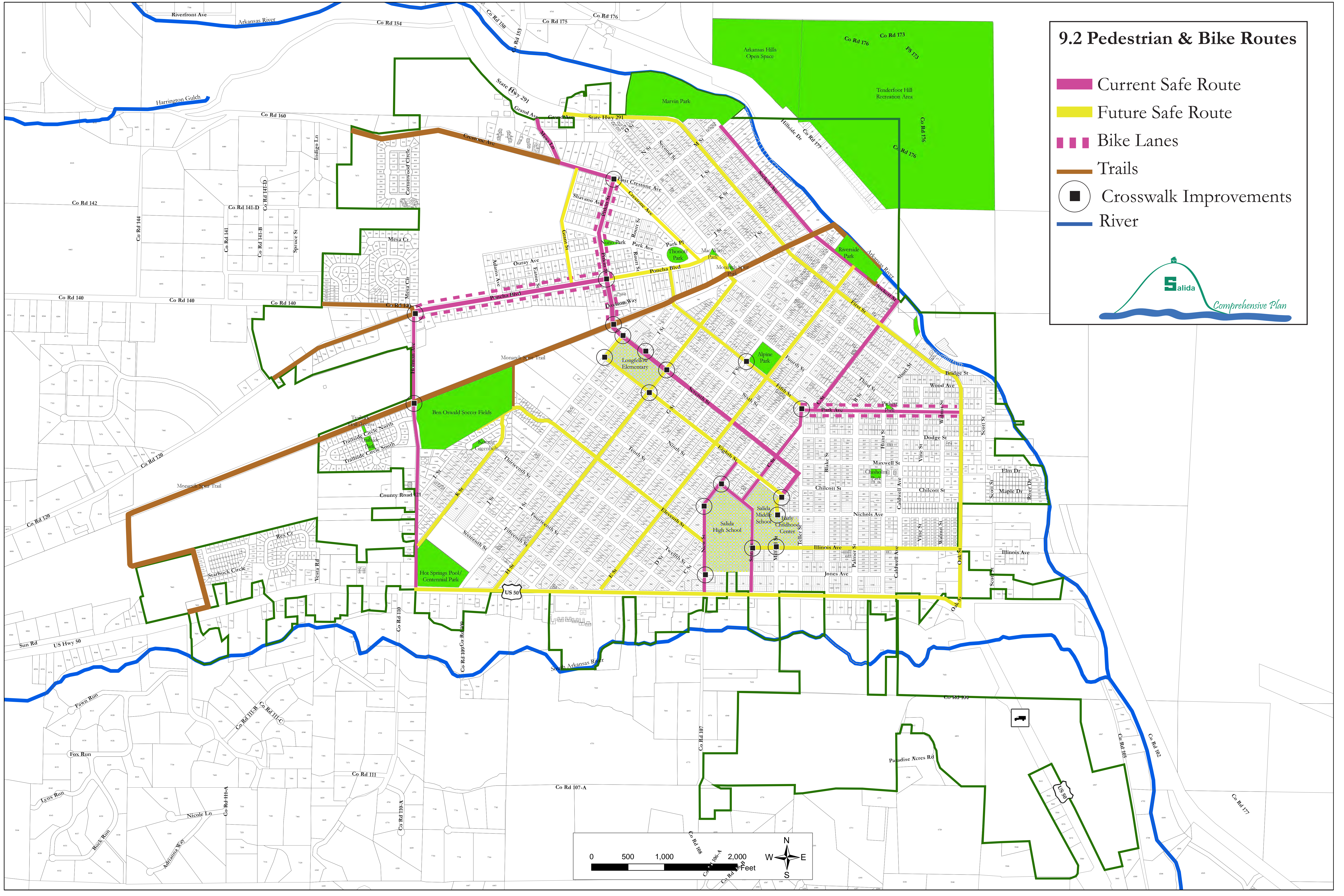
- Arterials
- Collectors
- Heavily Used Local Roads
- Trails
- Problem Intersections
- Truck Route
- River





## 9.2 Pedestrian & Bike Routes

-  Current Safe Route
-  Future Safe Route
-  Bike Lanes
-  Trails
-  Crosswalk Improvements
-  River





# Chapter 10

## Public Safety

A primary responsibility of the city is to ensure public safety to serve and protect the community. The agencies providing these services will continue to respond to changes in demographics, population growth and new technology.

### Core Services

The city departments that are charged with public safety are the police, fire, and building departments. They receive support from and work cooperatively with other departments including public works, water, wastewater, and community development.

#### Police and Municipal Court

The Salida Police Department is responsible for the peace and safety of our residents and businesses. They are accountable for enforcement of the Salida Municipal Code, State and Federal Laws. Police protect the safety and welfare of the citizens of the community with their day to day operations that involve crime prevention patrols, traffic control, investigations, Municipal Court security, and answering calls for service. The police also provide Code Enforcement which includes animals, parking, code violations and enforcement of Property Maintenance violations.

The police work in partnership with many of the community's social organizations to promote open communication, education, problem solving, cooperation, and fair and equal treatment, to improve the quality of life, promote unity, and make Salida a safe community. Officers have a variety of skills, along with the knowledge and ability to prepare for and handle virtually every aspect of public safety. Duties include crime reduction, prevention strategies, and problem solving which requires a proficiency in oral and written communications and specific law enforcement training.

Municipal Court is also administered through this department. Due process, the right to a fair trial and proper representation are core values that the department believes every citizen should have when being

prosecuted for a crime against the laws of the city.

The men and women of the Salida Police Department are committed to and responsible for reflecting these values in their personal and professional lives: Loyalty, Integrity, Fairness, & Excellence. The department strives to be visible, friendly and approachable with the overall objective of "community service above all".

#### Fire

The mission of the Salida Fire Department is to provide the highest level of professional service and protection of life and property to the people who live, work and visit the City of Salida. They also provide the same level of service to other agencies through contract or mutual aid agreements. The department is charged with providing essential public safety services that include fire suppression and response to structural, wildland and urban interface fires, motor vehicle collisions, hazardous materials incidents and mitigation, swift water and ice rescue, and confined space entry and rescue.



Salida Fire Department training burn

The Salida Fire Department works in partnership with the community to provide fire prevention education, commercial and residential fire inspections, smoke alarm checks and installations, and special events inspections. The annual Fourth of July firework display is put on by the department as well as numerous events including hosting an annual Fire Prevention week for residents of the community

including an open house.

The department works cooperatively with the Building and Community Development Departments to review new construction projects for compliance with the International Fire Code.

Salida Fire strives to be a premier fire department that sets an exemplary standard in public safety and community relations through professional leadership and relationships with outside agencies and with the commitment to organizational values and ethics.

The South Arkansas Fire Protection District (“SAFPD”) is a special district surrounding the City of Salida funded through property tax revenue. The City of Salida has a cooperative agreement with the SAFPD to provide fire protection services. The Salida Fire Department responds to all calls within the SAFPD. The fire station is owned in part by the SAFPD and in part by the city. Some equipment is the property of the SAFPD and some belongs to the city, although staff utilizes the appropriate equipment when responding to a call regardless of which entity is the owner.

### **Building**

The City of Salida contracts with the Chaffee County Building Department (“CCBD”) to administer the International Building Codes for all construction in the city. The Community Development Department works directly with the CCBD to ensure zoning and use compliance with all new construction. The CCBD reviews all building permits for compliance with the building code and to eliminate any potential life safety hazards that may be created with new construction. They also conduct building inspections throughout the building process to ensure that new construction meets the building code. On large scale commercial, multi-family or industrial projects they work with the Salida Fire Department to ensure compliance with the International Fire Code.

## **Regional Partnerships/ Mutual Aid**

The various public safety agencies in the Salida region work collaboratively to provide the highest level of service to the citizens in times of major emergency events. The added manpower provided by regional partnerships and mutual aid agreements that help emergency personnel respond to major events is imperative to provide adequate emergency services in small rural communities such as Salida.

The Salida Police Department has several regional partnerships with surrounding agencies including Chaffee County Sheriff’s Department including dispatch, Buena Vista Police Department, Colorado Department of Corrections, and the Canon City Police Department under the Central Mountain Regional Response Team. Included in these partnerships is Salida’s ability to help with other agencies while maintaining a basic level of service in the city and other agencies availability to assist the Salida Police Department.

The Salida Fire Department works collaboratively with Chaffee County Emergency Medical Services to provide advanced and basic life support first response within the city and SAFPD. Partnerships with the Colorado State Forest Service and the United States Forest Service provide additional staffing and equipment as a cooperator for local, state and national wildland fire response. Also the partnership with the Colorado State Patrol Hazardous Materials allows for additional equipment and personnel to assist with hazardous materials incidents in Chaffee and Western Fremont County within the CSP response areas. The partnership with the South Central All Hazards Region allows Salida to provide personnel and equipment to support hazardous materials response through a cooperative agreement with Lake, Park and Chaffee Counties. Lastly, mutual aid agreements with the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department, the Chaffee County Fire Protection District, and the fire agencies of western Fremont County allow Salida to assist with additional manpower and equipment in regional public safety emergencies and to call on their resources if the need arises.



## Emergency Preparedness

Beyond maintaining fulltime Fire and Police Departments to deal with day to day public safety issues, the City of Salida has implemented several programs to help prepare for large scale emergencies.

On June 19, 2006, the City of Salida adopted Resolution 2006-34 authorizing the use of the National Incident Management System (“NIMS”) which provides a systematic, proactive approach to guide city departments to work seamlessly to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents in order to reduce the loss of life and property or harm to the environment. The city maintains 100% compliance with this federal requirement. This ensures the city is meeting national standards in preparation and training in accordance with national standards and remains eligible for federal grants. All full time city personnel are certified to have the basic level of NIMS training. City personnel that are directly involved with public safety in the community continually receive advanced training and annual NIMS certifications.

The city has implemented an Emergency Operations Plan to ensure staff is prepared to provide essential services and recovery during and after a significant emergency or disaster. The city’s emergency management plan is an annex of the Chaffee County Emergency Operations Plans as the county maintains overall responsibility for emergency preparedness in accordance with Colorado Statutes. The Colorado Division of Emergency Management (within DOLA) has statewide emergency preparedness and management responsibilities and provides support to Chaffee County and thus the City of Salida. The city has also opened a “City Emergency Operations Center” at the Touber Building to conduct emergency training and this center will serve as the headquarters for coordinating emergency relief efforts during a natural disaster or large scale emergency.

Yearly large scale emergency response drills are conducted by the city and other regional agencies and governments to help prepare for large scale relief efforts. These drills aim to improve communication lines, help to reduce redundancy in emergency response and raise the level of emergency preparedness.

## Public Outreach/Prevention

Maintaining a positive presence in the community that is approachable and visible is a major goal of the public safety agencies in the city. These agencies engage the public throughout the year by offering a variety of events for the community.

The Police Department is active in prevention education with the youth of the community offering several programs through the school year including bike safety programs, Halloween safety, and High School Alcohol Awareness programs. They also help with the Touch a Truck program and provide a yearly Bike Rodeo to teach bike safety in the community. Police also take an active role in the community by providing “Community Oriented Policing” which allows them to be approachable and proactive in helping citizens solve problems in the community.

The Fire Department offers a variety of programs to help with fire prevention in the community. They host a fire prevention week and visit with local schools to provide fire education to the community. The department is active in providing business fire and life safety inspections and fire extinguisher training for medical facilities and businesses. The department offers residential smoke detector installations and voluntary residential inspections.



Police work with the youth in the community through community policing

## Fiscal Responsibility

Providing adequate levels of public safety services at a reasonable cost to the community is a goal of the city. Every fiscal year each department establishes goals on how to provide the highest level of service and place a minimum tax burden on the citizens. Each department actively seeks grants and assistance from State and Federal agencies to provide support for additional funding for public safety services.

Long range fiscal planning for major capital improvements and expenditures to update facilities and equipment need to be routinely updated. Each request needs to be evaluated to ensure that there is a significant benefit to the community. Long range fiscal planning is an important tool to allow for routine equipment replacement and the necessary upgrades to ensure proper response to future emergencies that may arise.

Large scale emergencies or disasters require plans for how emergency funds will be allocated effectively to allow the chain of command to respond to an event. The lasting effects that these events can have on city infrastructure and budgets can be devastating. Proper planning for a major emergency or disaster can help mitigate the costs these events will have on the citizens and on the city budget.

As the city continues to grow and evolve so must the level of services provided. Demographics in the community will change how the city will need to provide public services. Each fiscal year will allow departments to address these changes and create new goals on how to provide the highest level of service at the best possible price to the community.



# Principles / Policies / Action Items

## Principle PS-I. Core Services

*Public safety services will be readily available to serve and protect the community with a continually adapting understanding of the needs of its changing population.*

**Policy PS-I.1** – Continue prevention and education within the community administered through the public safety agencies to protect residents of the City.

**Action PS-I.1.a** – Pursue the placement of a full-time School Resource Officer (SRO) in the public schools. Current Police staff is certified in the SRO model.

**Action PS-I.1.b** – Continue to work with the community on Community Education Through Environmental Design (“CEPTED”) projects. Partner with the Community Development Department on development of new construction standards for public spaces.

**Action PS-I.1.c** – Provide continuing education to police officers to maintain effective safety programs in the schools and community.

**Action PS-I. 1.d** – Work within the city budget to increase Fire Department staffing to 4 per shift to meet national staffing standards for fire response and hazardous materials response (2 In - 2 Out).

**Policy PS-I.2** – Proper training and continued education of the city’s emergency response personnel allow for the best response for possible emergencies in the community.

**Action PS-I.2.a** – Expand hazardous materials response capabilities through equipment and training.

**Action PS-I.2.b**- Maintain training and equipment to meet an expanding scope of services and utilize new technology through continuing education and capital replacement plans.

**Policy PS-I.3** – Public safety providers should maintain an approachable, visible presence within the community for the prevention of crime, fire, and building safety.

**Action PS-I.3.a** – Continue to use the model of ‘Community Oriented Policing’ in working with the community to help reduce crime and develop safer neighborhoods.

**Action PS-I.3.b** – Partner with community groups who help promote safety and crime prevention.

**Action PS-I.3.c** – Fill the vacant Fire Marshall position to expand business inspection programs to meet national standards.



Police hosting a local community safety event for Middle School students on the dangers of drunk driving

## Principle PS-II. Regional Partnerships/Mutual Aid

*Form public/private partnerships that help provide the highest level of public safety and emergency preparedness for the citizens of Salida and the surrounding communities.*

**Policy PS-II.1** – Continue to pursue regional partnerships and mutual aid with the surrounding communities in the Arkansas Valley.



Multi agency response to crash in the Big Horn Sheep Canyon

**Action PS-II.1.a** – Annually revisit agreements between the City of Salida and other organizations and government agencies to ensure they provide the best public safety coverage for the residents of Salida.

**Action PS-II.1.b** – Continue to work with regional public safety agencies to prepare plans for large scale disasters or emergencies and to have the best possible lines of communication between departments.

**Action PS- II.1.c** – Continue to pursue supplemental funding opportunities through region-wide grant applications.

**Policy PS-II.2** – Promote awareness of available public safety services offered by the city and through its mutual aid agreements with other agencies.

**Action PS-II.2.a** – Work with other agencies to provide education and expand awareness on regional public safety.

## Principle PS-III. Emergency Preparedness

*The city should strive to be prepared for a high level of response to any possible disaster or emergency in the community.*

**Policy PS-III.1** – Maintain training and communication between all the departments responsible for providing public safety to provide the highest level of response and to continue to evolve to be able to respond to any possible disasters or emergency in the community.

**Action PS-III. 1.a-** Require all full-time city personnel to complete the basic level of NIMS training and require administrative and public safety personnel to have advanced certification.

**Action PS-III.1.b** – Create training opportunities and yearly emergency preparedness drills that help staff best utilize the new operation center in the time of a large scale emergency.

**Action PS-III.1.c** – Train for possible school emergencies and continue to provide public outreach, training and awareness to the school district and its employees.

**Policy PS-III.2** – Implement City/County joint Emergency Operations Center at the Touber Building to provide expanded emergency response and management capabilities.



## Principle PS-IV. Public Outreach/Prevention

*The city's public safety departments should strive to provide education and prevention events that maintain a healthy and safe community.*

**Policy PS-IV.1** – Continue to work within the community to provide awareness and education.

**Action PS-IV.1.a** – Maintain our current “Alcohol Awareness” programs in the Salida High School.

**Action PS-IV.1.b** – Seek grants to help offset the expense of current safety programs and to develop new programs.

**Action PS-IV.1.c** – Continue partnerships with local businesses to help provide materials for youth safety programs.

**Action PS-IV.1.d** – Promote fire prevention awareness with fire prevention week activities, community programs and additional education in the classrooms of the school district.

**Action PS-IV.1.e** - Develop and implement special needs identification and response plan.



Salida Police Department and Chaffee County Sheriff Department ‘Shop with a Cop’ with local fourth graders

## Principle PS-V. Fiscal Responsibility

*The city should provide the highest level of public safety service at the best possible price and evaluate the services provided to the community as the demographics and community change over time.*

**Policy PS-V.1** – Continue to provide fiscal responsibility in public safety.

**Action PS-V.1.a**- Utilize aggressive grant research and application, responsible capital replacement plans and interagency cooperation.

**Action PS-V.1.b**- Consider consolidation of some of the regional agencies (SFD, SAFPD, CCEMS, CCFD) to provide more cost effective and cohesive service to the community.

# Chapter 11

## Community Services

The City of Salida is committed to maintaining a sufficient level of quality services, comprising both basic municipal services and certain quality of life amenities. Generally, services are provided due to regulatory requirements set by the state or federal government or because the citizens have identified them as a priority. Some are provided by the city because there is no effective way to provide those services through the private sector. Fiscal constraints are a concrete reality behind all policy decisions regarding community services

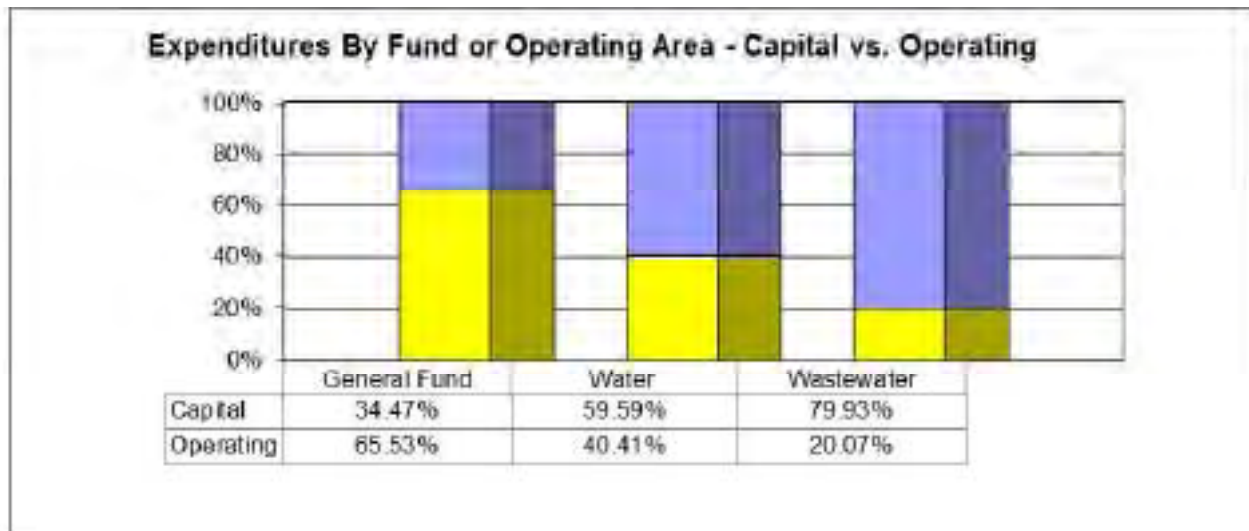
The city practices fiscal responsibility, taking into consideration upfront capital and operating costs as well as long-term maintenance, energy efficiency, and other operational costs associated with the services provided to citizens and visitors. Numerous city-wide and departmental policies articulate goals related to operations efficiencies.

New development in the private sector should not be a burden on the existing citizens either through construction of the initial infrastructure or through ongoing maintenance.

### Budget

In the fall of each year, the City Council reviews a proposed budget that they must approve before the start of the coming year. The finance department prepares the budget based on the priorities identified by the City Council with input from department heads, advisory commissions and any citizens who participate in the budget work sessions and public hearings.

Revenues are derived from a variety of sources with sales tax being the largest single source of general government funds. Separate budgets are prepared for the general fund, water and wastewater enterprise fund, conservation trust fund and the SteamPlant Event Center fund. Within each of the funds are both operating and capital budgets. The following overview of each fund and examples of the allocation of money for expenditures and sources of revenue was drawn largely from the City’s budget. It projects revenue growth along with new and increased costs that are being absorbed across a number of operat-





ing areas. Cost containment efforts and staff’s success in obtaining outside grant funding to supplement ongoing sources of revenue were significant factors in achieving balanced 2013 budget. A need exists for longer term plans for how to continue to provide the essential city services to support the community in light of economic uncertainties and cost inflation.

Overall, Salida’s current financial condition is healthy due to the growth in sales tax revenue combined with rate increases and closely managed operating and capital expenditures. The economic slowdown in 2008 to 2010 caused the City to further “tighten its belt” in many areas of spending across all departments. Rigid discipline over spending is expected to continue in all departments to ensure dollars are spent wisely and with long-term benefits in mind.

The City’s ability to meet future capital and operating needs has benefitted from a significantly reduced level of debt in the general fund starting in 2012. However, the water and wastewater enterprise fund is faced with increasing debt service obligations and uncertain level of development activity to generate revenue for capital needs.

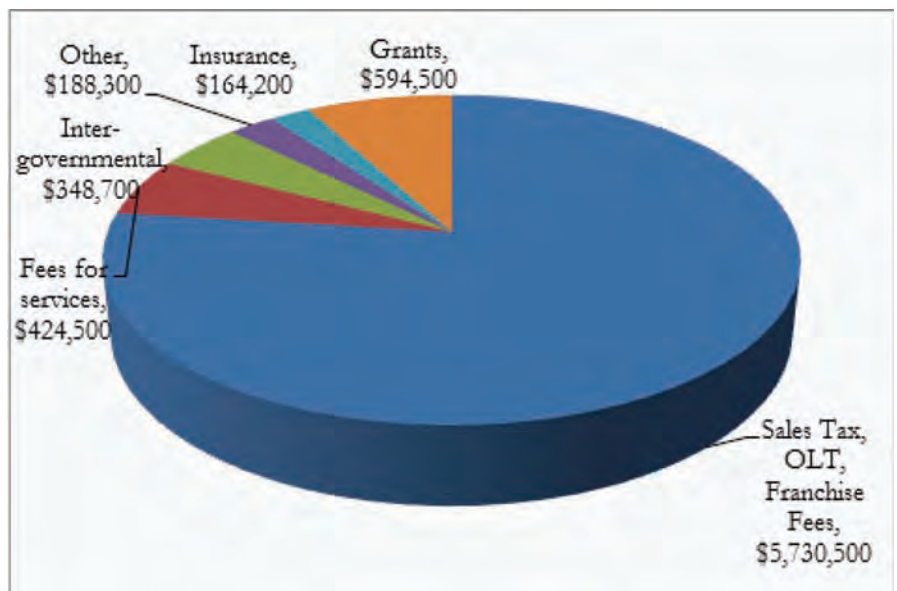
A substantial portion of the budget will be invested in public improvements and capital purchases in 2013 for general government and enterprise activities.

## Operating Expenditures

Funding for operating expenditures is derived primarily from sales tax in the general fund and from fees for services in the enterprise funds. The most significant resource to the City and majority of operating costs are employees. For 2013, personnel expenses comprise 66% of the operating budget and 33% of the total city budget. In addition to daily operational duties, many City employees spend a considerable amount of time planning and managing capital projects. However, the City does not capitalize any staff time associated with work on capital projects. Supplies, purchased services, utilities and insurance costs account for the remainder of the city’s operating costs. The core services the city provides outline the necessary expenditures the city must make to meet numerous federal and state regulatory requirements and to maintain the quality of life residents currently enjoy.

### General Fund

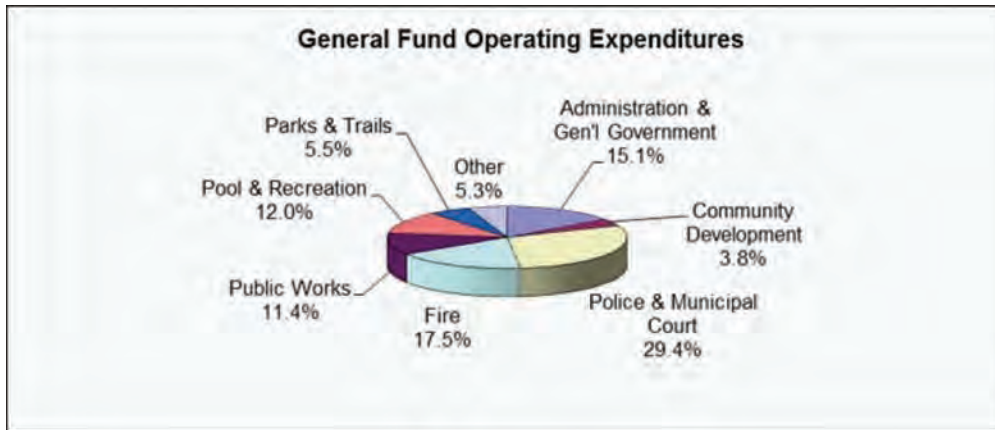
In accordance with voter restrictions, 56% of the city’s 2% sales tax can be used for operating costs. The designation of 2A revenue (an additional 1% sales tax) is for the construction, operation, maintenance and repair of roads and other public infrastructure. A portion of those costs are classified as operating expenditures for accounting purposes. Based on 2013 priorities, 35% was allocated to the operating budget to be used for street repairs, striping, sweeping, plowing, and other public works operating activities.



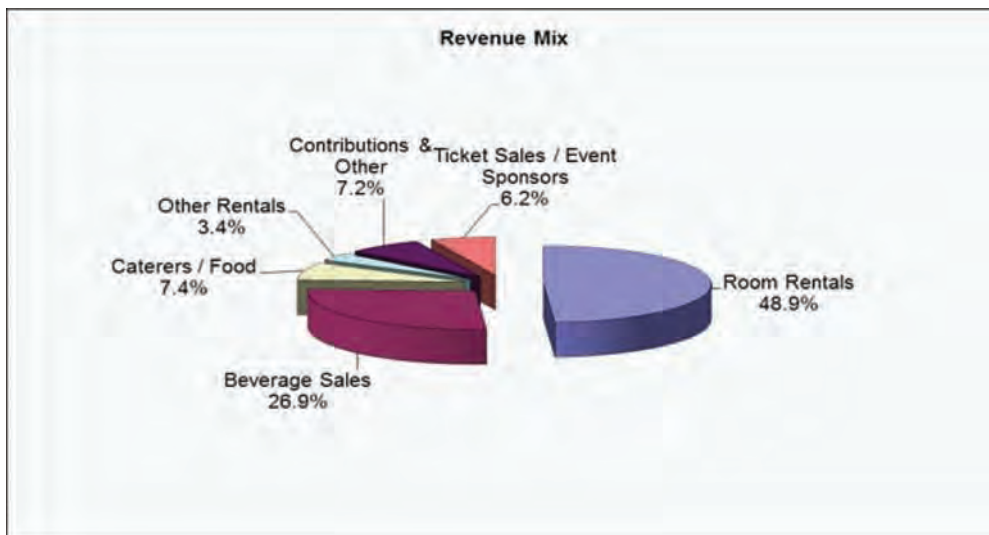
Total 2013 general fund rev-

Revenue is projected at nearly \$7.5 million, consisting of the revenue sources shown on the pie chart.

Charges for municipal services are expected to be over \$400,000 in 2013 and will offset a significant portion of the pool expenditures as well as some of the city's administrative, community development, emergency response and public works costs.



General Fund operating expenditures for 2013 are shown in the pie chart below. Figures are shown as gross amounts. (In other words, any revenues derived from services provided by these departments are not subtracted for presentation of a net expenditure amount.)



### *SteamPlant Fund*

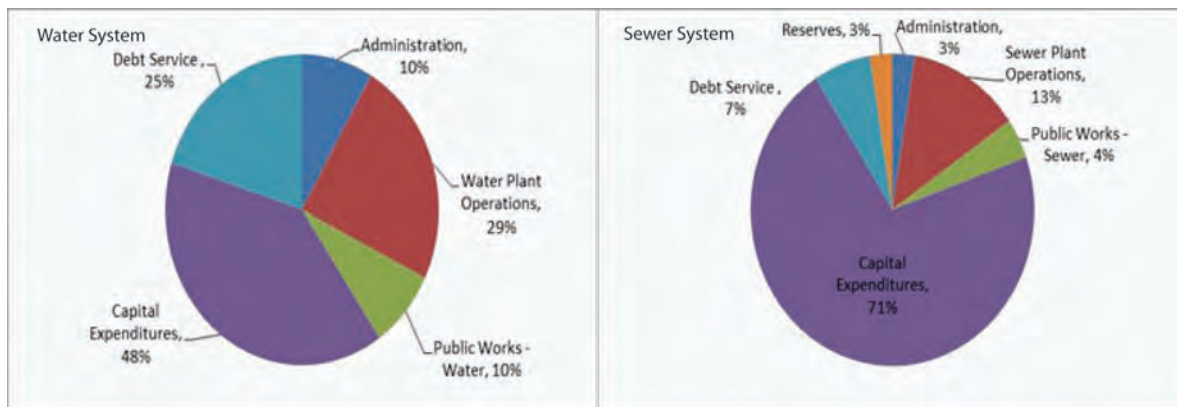
Operations of the SteamPlant Event Center were assumed by the city effective January 1, 2008. Initial business plans projected that the SteamPlant would be financially self-sustaining operation within five years and the city is treating it as an enterprise fund for accounting purposes although it is currently disqualified under TABOR.

In its fifth full year of operations, the SteamPlant is expected to generate \$194,000 in operating revenue. This represents a \$29,000, or 17%, increase over the current expectations for 2012. Operating revenue is supplemented by Friends of the SteamPlant and other direct donations.



Compared to the 2012 projection, personnel costs are expected to increase 3% due to higher wages and benefits. Although inflation will increase the costs of several supplies and services, a very slight overall decrease is expected across other operating costs. The direct costs for events and operating costs are expected to be 10% less compared to the 2012 projection. The net loss to be subsidized by the general fund is expected to be approximately \$75,000. No capital expenditures are planned for 2013.

In 2012 the City Council established a Creative District, which received certification by the State of Colorado, according to the guidelines of House Bill 11-1031. The City was awarded grant funding and technical assistance from the Colorado Office of Economic Development to develop branding, marketing and funding strategies. The state's expectation is that each district will achieve measurable local impacts in terms of the retention and attraction of creative enterprises and jobs, improved retail, dining and gallery sales and continued downtown revitalization. With the Creative District distinction, the City will work toward its vision of a self-sustaining historic downtown core that is supported by and energizes creative entrepreneurs, independent retail and residential development; that promotes adaptive reuse of historic buildings; and provides a focal point for celebrating and strengthening the community's creative identity. The groundwork for this vision will be completed during 2013 using these grant funds. The SteamPlant will serve as a cultural hub for the Creative District.



### Water and Wastewater Enterprise Fund

The Water and Wastewater Enterprise Fund accounts for the provision of basic utility services to Salida residents. The utility fund is financed and operated in a manner similar to a private business enterprise where operating and capital costs are financed or recovered primarily through user charges. Although accounting for the utility fund has been separate from the general fund for some time, in 1996 the city passed an ordinance giving legal status to the Enterprise Fund. Enterprise funds are treated separately under the TABOR Amendment and do not impact general fund revenues and expenditures. The legal status allows the fund to issue bonds without voter approval, while capping the revenues it accepts from monies not generated by the utility at 10%.



New water tank at the airport

As a summary of the combined total budget for the two operating areas within the water and wastewater enterprise fund, the following charts show the use of the total 2013 revenue.

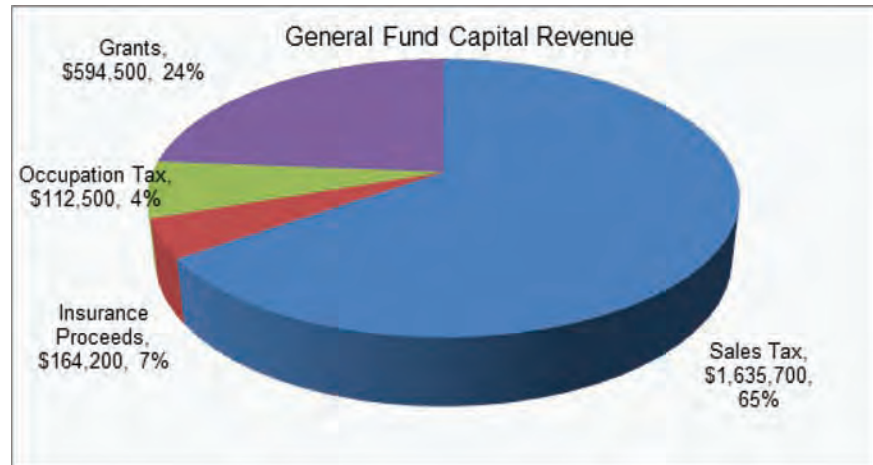
Previously, the utilities code provided for annual increases in rates for water and wastewater services. Since rates have been removed from the code in the re-write completed during 2011-2012, council has approved rates and other fees by resolution as part of the annual budget process. In recent years, the utilities code provided for 3% to 5% annual increases for water and sewer service to cover inflation in the costs associated with providing service. In 2011, the City determined operating revenues must be increased to cover the shortfall in development fees historically used for capital needs and debt service. Costs for the wastewater plant upgrade had already been anticipated in the 2008 sewer rate study and no incremental rate increase was necessary. However, the 2011 water rate study resulted in a significant increase in water service rates effective in July 2011. The 2013 budget includes rate increases of 3% for sewer and 2% for water services.

### *Conservation Trust Fund*

The Conservation Trust Fund is funded from lottery proceeds, based on population. City Council has directed staff to allocate only a portion of the 2013 revenue for recreation areas and to increase reserves with the remainder for future larger projects.

### **Capital Projects**

Funding for capital expenditures is derived primarily from sales tax and grants in the general fund, from system development fees, grants and bonds in the water and sewer enterprise fund, and from lottery proceeds in the Conservation Trust Fund. It is always important for the city to prioritize the funds for necessary capital projects that have the greatest net benefit to the city and its residents. Contributions generally provide capital funding for the SteamPlant Event Center.



Following the passage of ballot issues 2A and 2B at the end of 2008, the city has focused on delivering capital projects utilizing these new funds. The proceeds of an incremental 1.0% sales tax (2A) is used for funding construction, operation, maintenance, and repair of roads and other public infrastructure of the city. The proceeds of the occupational lodging tax (2B) is used for capital improvements and operations expenses for parks and recreation and arts facilities in the city, including, without limitation, the Aquatic Center and the SteamPlant.

The 2013 general fund capital budget revenue totals \$5.6 million and is primarily derived from a portion of sales taxes and grant funds for specific projects, expected to be \$1.6 million and \$3.4 million, respectively. The occupation tax on lodging is expected to generate over \$100,000 for capital projects.

### **General Fund Revenue**



Over one-third of the total general fund revenue is restricted for capital purchases and projects. The \$2.5 million expected for capital revenue is significant for the community and is a larger portion of the total budget than most municipalities.

Of the total capital spending, 94% is for current capital purchases and 6% will be used to pay a financing obligation. In the five years prior to 2012, the percentage of the capital budget used to pay debt averaged 38% and was as high as 50% in 2011. The only financing obligation remaining in the general fund is the lease purchase for the acquisition and renovation of the Touber Building. As a result of the low level of financing obligations, citizens are now seeing a direct and current benefit from the investment of capital dollars.

In March 2012, the City refinanced the two schedules included in the lease purchase obligation for the Touber Building. Interest rates were reduced from 5.51% and 5.35% to 3.4%, and the payment schedule was changed from semi-annual to monthly. The total annual payment obligation remains the same; however, the reduced interest rate and more frequent payments shorten the remaining term by three years. These changes will save the City \$514,000 in interest expense over the remaining term of the obligation.

*SteamPlant Enterprise Fund*

Partner transfers from fundraising efforts are generally intended for capital investments and are reflected as capital revenue; however, these funds may not be specifically restricted for capital. No capital spending was planned for 2013.

*Water & Wastewater Enterprise Fund Revenue*

Capital revenue totaling \$175,000 and \$2.9 million is expected from the water and wastewater operations, respectively.

Revenue generated from water and sewer system development and demand fees of \$277,000 is not sufficient to pay for necessary upgrades or the debt service on past capital projects. Quarterly service fees are currently being used to supplement revenue specifically identified for capital needs. System development fees will increase by 2% as of the first of January. The volume of new taps is predicted to stay approximately level with projections for 2012, which is more than double the number in 2011.



Public Works performing maintenance of city water lines

Capital revenue of \$175,000 and \$102,000 from the water and sewer operations, respectively, assumes the issuance of 12 new taps in Salida plus two additional sewer taps in Poncha Springs in 2013

Debt financing was recently required to complete the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) upgrade and capital projects for water storage and transmission.

For the water system, the majority of 2013 capital revenue plus the reserves accumulated in 2012 is budgeted to rehabilitate the water treatment plant. As identified in the 2011 water system capital improvement plan, new filter media, under drains and troughs are needed at the city's water treatment plant, which at over 50 years old, is one of the oldest such facilities in Western Colorado. Other capital spending includes

new pumps, chlorine equipment, a SCADA system, telemetry, water line and fire hydrant upgrades and a scheduled vehicle replacement.

The \$17.6 million upgrade of the wastewater treatment facility is being financed through a combination of debt, grants and reserves. The 2013 budget includes the use of over \$2.7 million in remaining grant funds to complete the upgrade along with \$225,000 for other capital spending. The first semi-annual debt service payment for the upgrade of \$272,000 is also included in the 2013 budget.

Construction on the upgrade began in September 2011. Financing over a 40-year term is secured through a \$12.1 million loan from the USDA, with interim financing provided by BBVA Compass. The USDA has committed a \$2.6 million grant for the final construction funds. In addition, the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) awarded the City a \$1.3 million grant for the project, 90% of which was spent in 2009 for equipment purchases. The grant agreement requires completion of the project prior to collecting the final 10% of the award, which has deferred the remaining revenue until 2013.



Wastewater Treatment Plant built in 1956 renovated in 1985



*Conservation Trust Fund*

No capital spending is planned for 2013. Less than a quarter of the projected revenue is budgeted for operating expenditures within the City’s recreation areas, increasing reserves with the remainder for larger projects in future years.

*Paying for Growth*

There is a strong sentiment in the community that “growth should pay its own way”. Commercial development is generally more cost effective overall for Colorado municipalities because these types of development can generate sales tax revenue and provide jobs in the community. Residential growth, however, is often seen as a drain on the local economy because it creates additional demand on services without associated revenue.

There are several ways to address concerns about the cost of new growth. In 2008, the City adopted a parks, trails and open space requirement for residential subdivisions and a fee in lieu of school lands which is provided to the R-32-J school district. Some recent annexations have also provided a covenant on transfers of real estate that will provide intermittent revenue for the city. Additional methods of cost recovery include impact fees for specific infrastructure or services impacted by the new development.

The key to being able to address the fiscal impacts of growth is to know what impacts are anticipated. For larger subdivisions, the city should require the applicants to provide adequate analysis of the projected impacts and requirements on the development should be placed accordingly.

*Grants*

The City of Salida has been very successful in obtaining grant funding in recent years. Most major capital improvement projects have been possible through some grant assistance. Some examples of projects receiving grant funding include the Touber Building reuse and rehabilitation, airport water tank, Highway 50 improvements, hot water line remediation, white water



Salida Hot Springs Pool

park improvements, Arkansas Hills open space acquisition, Downtown Creative District, water system plan, Safe Routes to School, new wastewater plant and many others.

Grant funding is an effective way to leverage taxpayer dollars to improve, replace or acquire facilities. However, grant funds are rarely available for ongoing operating expenses. When applying for grant funds the city must clearly understand the obligations they are entering into and ensure that the funds are available to maintain new or improved facilities.

*Application Fees*

Fees are charged by the city for a variety of services, permits and applications. Some of these fees are set by the State of Colorado such as liquor license and VIN inspection fees, while others are based upon the staff time needed to provide the service. Fees are set by resolution of the City Council. In most cases, the Council seeks to minimize the fees charged to citizens while still covering the costs for providing the service. Expenses that are project specific, such as land use applications, should be born solely by the applicant and should not be the burden of the larger community.

## Best Practices and Cost Reduction

### Maintenance

The City of Salida has many ongoing maintenance obligations from street repair to water and wastewater infrastructure, vehicles and equipment, parks and facilities. As the city considers new capital improvements the costs for energy and ongoing maintenance should always be considered as well. The city has fallen behind in maintenance of some items including streets and utilities infrastructure has struggled in recent years to maintain a regular schedule of maintenance and repair. The Council must consider the current maintenance obligations and budget requirements prior to taking on additional maintenance burdens.

### Objective Analysis

When considering new capital improvements staff and the City Council endeavor to create an analysis of what is being requested so that they have a complete picture of both the initial construction costs as well as ongoing operating expenses. There are many beneficial projects that the city could pursue, but it must be done in a way that is fiscally responsible to the taxpayers in the community in an attempt to not increase overall operating expenses.

The city should also consider that they must remain responsive in the services that they are committed to providing and should always provide routine maintenance of vehicles, facilities and infrastructure. In addition, the city should maintain an overall long-term capital plan including plans for street rebuilds, vehicle replacement and equipment replacement. This will assist during budget planning to know if there are major expenditures on the horizon.

### Efficiency

Practices in all activities of municipal government should be evaluated periodically to determine if there are more efficient ways to provide the services to which the city is committed, while not diminishing the level of service. Con-

tinuing education for employees and appropriate training will help to ensure that staff is aware of changes in their field which the city can consider implementing.

Conventional fuels such as gasoline, diesel, coal and wood are being reconsidered in light of worldwide concerns of non-renewable energy consumption, pollution and climate change. Utilizing fuel from clean, sustainable energy sources is becoming a necessity along with reducing dependency on fuels. Recent years have seen a high level of fluctuation in fuel commodity prices as well as emerging sources of energy. The city should continue to monitor options for alternative sources of energy while implementing steps to reduce fuel consumption. Any new facilities should consider implementation of energy cost saving measures and on-site energy generation.

### **Infrastructure & Utilities**

Public infrastructure and utilities are an essential service to the community. The city Public Works Department provides infrastructure for water and wastewater transmission, and maintains streets, parks and public facilities. The Water Department runs the water treatment plant, maintains the ditches in the raw water system and oversees the water from the Galleries and Pasquale Springs. Wastewater treatment is handled by the Wastewater Department at the treatment plant on CR 102.

### Water Treatment

Salida's service area encompasses a total area of approximately 2.2 square miles. In 2013, Salida supplied 422 million gallons ("MG") or 1,315 acre-feet ("AF") of potable water to customers within Residential, Multi-Family, Commercial/Industrial, and Municipal Park categories. In order to supply these customers, the City treated approximately 514.4 MG or 1,579 AF of water to overcome various system losses and leaks. Last year 18 percent of all water produced was lost.



The City delivers water from three different sources in a water delivery system consisting of a water treatment plant (“WTP”), three pump stations and three treated water storage tanks. Water delivery is made to a low zone and high zone. The three water sources are listed below:

- Surface water from the South Arkansas River – 1.3 Million Gallons per Day (“MGD”)
- Groundwater from Galleries – 1.4 MGD
- Pasquale Springs – 1.0 MGD

The WTP, constructed in 1959, treats the surface water while the groundwater from the Galleries and Pasquale Springs is chlorinated and pumped directly into the distribution system.

A one million gallon water storage tank was constructed at the airport in 2008 – 2009 along with associated transmission lines. In 2010-2011 the city installed a new roof and liner for the gallery water tank along with completing some concrete repairs to the existing concrete structure. The pump room and chlorination building also received a new roof in the process. The possible influence of groundwater on the galleries collection system is currently being evaluated and will determine priorities for capital projects in 2013 and beyond.

The city also completed a Raw Water Master Plan in March of 2009. The plan was done for a twenty-five year planning horizon and anticipated a potential population of 10,000 residents by 2033. The plan outlined water needs during the planning horizon and anticipated that the city would treat 888 million gallons a year in 2025. The usage in 2007 was estimated to be 428 million gallons. Additionally, the study looked at the city’s ability to supply the quantity of water needed for the estimated future population. The study found that under extreme drought conditions, the demand could exceed the supply. It was suggested that the city look at storage options so that excess water credits yielded by the city’s water rights portfolio during summer months could be stored in a “bucket” and used when the city needed it at a later date.

## Wastewater Treatment

The total capacity of the existing Salida Wastewater Treatment Plant (“WWTP”) was recently upgraded from 1.2 MGD to 2.7 MGD. Built in 1956 and renovated in 1985, the upgrades to be completed in mid-2013 will have the components necessary to meet modern ammonia standards and to supply sufficient capacities for the communities served - Salida and Poncha Springs.

A Preliminary Engineering Report on the sewer plant was completed at the end of 2008. Construction on this \$17.6 million upgrade project, which began in September 2011, is expected to reach completion in the second quarter of 2013. Components of the existing plant are being re-used; however, a major upgrade in treatment technology was needed. The City was faced with resolving wastewater treatment violations to avoid severe financial penalties and adverse environmental effects. The plant had been operating at a lower capacity than was permitted due to inefficiencies and did not meet ammonia limits imposed by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Built in 1956 and renovated in 1985, the plant did not have the components necessary to meet ammonia standards and to supply sufficient capacities for the communities served, Salida and Poncha Springs. An integrated fixed-film activated sludge (IFAS) process was implemented with the upgrade.

In April 2010, the City of Salida came to a settlement with the Town of Poncha Springs resolving long-standing disputes over wastewater treatment and billing. The city has now assumed responsibility for maintenance of the wastewater delivery systems in Poncha Springs and those users are now direct customers of the city.

## Water / Wastewater Delivery Systems

Salida maintains an extensive network of water and wastewater delivery lines. The system includes pipes, manholes, fire hydrants, valves and meters. These are all maintained by the Salida Public Works Department.

There are a variety of materials and line sizes in both the water and wastewater delivery systems. Efforts are underway to create a digital map of both systems in order to better keep track of infrastructure locations and capacity in various areas of the community. This effort, being undertaken by the city's engineers Schmueser Gordon Meyer, Inc., is an integral component of understanding the current system, maintaining that system and accommodating future growth within the system.

In the past, the city has periodically undertaken street rebuild projects which include replacement of aging or undersized water and wastewater mains. The cost of street rebuild projects is borne in part by the Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund because of the improvements to those infrastructure components. However, reserves in those funds are diminishing and revenue from customers is not replenishing the funds enough to maintain an aggressive schedule of infrastructure replacement. The city is currently reevaluating the need to proactively replace lines as part of complete street rebuild projects.

## Streets

The Public Works Department maintains 36.45 miles of streets in Salida. Curb, gutter and sidewalks are prevalent in the areas closest to the historic downtown and in newer subdivisions.

Aging infrastructure, deferred maintenance and tight budgets have resulted in a situation where the city street system is in need of attention. The last several years have seen 17 miles of street overlays and chip seal applied to the streets. These, along with complete rebuilds and pothole repair are the most common methods of street maintenance used in Salida.

## Municipal Buildings

The City of Salida owns and operates eight facilities including the SteamPlant Event Center, public works shop, Touber Building, Scout Hut, WTP, WWTP, Hot Springs Aquatic Center, and the fire station. For the most part, each department maintains the structure they occupy with supplemental assistance from the Public Works Department. In addition, the city owns, the Salida Community Center, Chamber of Commerce/Salida Museum, golf course clubhouse and facilities at the Harriet Alexander Field. These are occupied by non-profit entities through long-term lease arrangements with the city and maintenance generally falls to the lessee. There is also one structure on East Third Street that formerly housed the police department which is currently in dry storage but a lease to a local non-profit is pending.

A full-time position of Building and Grounds Supervisor will be added in public works and funded through a combi-



Maintenance and repair of a pump at the Wastewater Treatment Plant



nation of changes in 2013. Until the end of 2012, Salida paid one-half of the cost for a county employee dedicated to maintaining the Touber Building. With this new position on staff with the city, some repairs and maintenance work previously outsourced will be brought in house. Also, starting in the second quarter, Salida will provide building maintenance services to the Natural Resource Center for a contracted fee. These items, combined with other expected cost savings derived, are expected to fully offset the costs for the new position.

### **Stormwater**

There is a storm drainage system in a limited area of Salida including along much of US Hwy 50 and north of 7th Street. The storm drains, along with surface drainage from streets generally discharge into the Arkansas River. New subdivisions, commercial and multi-family developments are required to provide onsite detention of stormwater for a 24 hour event of the 25-year storm. State and Federal regulation in this area will only continue to increase with concerns about water quality and pollution. The city should remain aware of current regulation and anticipate additional regulation in the future.

## **Community Support Projects**

The City Council feels it is important to highlight areas where the city supports the community by providing financial or staff resources beyond the basic municipal services expected of residents. Different views exist with respect to the role of government beyond basic necessities. However, as Salida's 2008 Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan states:

*There is a growing trend in the United States for public leaders to recognize that parks, recreation, trails, open space and related "Quality of Life" amenities are not secondary services provided by governmental agencies, but that they are integral to creating communities where people want to live. These services should be seen as investments in the long-term vitality and economic sustainability of any vibrant and attractive community.*

Through taxpayer dollars, municipal governments provide basic services essential to the safety and comfort of citizens. In addition, certain discretionary projects and initiatives are supported by the city. Both staff and Council receive many requests from members of the public and local organizations to fund various projects. Many of these would improve the quality of life for at least some citizens. It is not possible for the city to fund all such requests, and 2013 was no different due to having limited discretionary funds. However, a new process was implemented for the 2010 budget whereby community support requests were submitted in a consistent format and objectively evaluated.

When considering community support requests, it is important to objectively evaluate the requests using the approved "Projects Priority Criteria" document. Staff and Council should ask the right questions to understand the problem / need, whether or not the proposed solution addresses the objective in the most efficient manner and the impact of new ongoing maintenance expenses.

# Principles / Policies / Action Items

## Principle CS-I. Budget

*The City will be fiscally responsible, taking into consideration long-term maintenance costs, operational costs and planning for changing economic trends.*

**Policy CS-I.1** – Growth or new development should pay its own way either directly or through long-term fiscal benefits to the community.

**Action CS-I.1.a** – Review the LUC to ensure that major new development is required to provide sound analysis of the fiscal impacts and benefits to the city.

**Action CS-I.1.b** – Consider anticipated infrastructure upgrades and consider implementation of impact fees as a mechanism to offset costs of upgrades related to new development.

**Policy CS-I.2** – The City should continue to pursue grant funding to leverage taxpayer dollars and create new amenities while being cautious of taking on additional operating expense resulting from the projects.

**Action CS-I.2.a** – Departments should actively identify grant opportunities for anticipated projects well in advance of the need for funding.

**Action CS-I.2.b** – City Council and staff must prioritize projects annually in order to focus efforts to secure funding and proceed with implementation.

**Policy CS-I.3** – Fees for services should reflect the commitment of staff time to perform the service, in addition to external capital and operating costs, while minimizing expense to the citizens.

**Action CS-I.3.a** – Consider creating one fee schedule for City applications and services.

**Action CS-I.3.b** – All departments should analyze fees in their area in connection with proposing their annual budget; the annual review of fees or automatic adjustment of fees should allow the City to avoid sudden large increases in fees or rates.

**Policy CS-I.4** – A consistent source of revenue for the City ensures that services are maintained or improved for residents and businesses.

**Action CS-I.4.a** – Develop plans and strategies to reduce the City's dependence on sales tax revenues by investigating other techniques for revenue development.

**Policy CS-I.5** – In addition to providing basic municipal services, the City will continue to invest in amenities that make Salida a desirable place to live and visit.

**Action CS-I.5.a** – Leveraging 2B funds and working collaboratively with the local hospitality businesses, the city will create new and enhance existing amenities.

**Action CS-I.5.b** – The City will promote use of the SteamPlant as a cultural hub and center for the Creative District, attracting visitors and enriching the lives of members of our community.



## Principle CS-II. Best Practices and Cost Reduction

*The City should continue to maintain and ensure a sufficient level of quality services while seeking innovative techniques and pursuing cost saving measures.*

**Policy CS-II.1** – The City is obliged to maintain existing facilities in good working order.

**Action CS-II.1.a** – Create a facilities maintenance position within the public works department.

**Action CS-II.1.b** – Review lease agreements for tenant spaces to ensure that lessees are responsible for adequate maintenance of facilities they occupy.

**Policy CS-II.2** – Objective analysis should be employed in considering new projects to ensure that operating expenses are not unduly increased in advance of increasing revenues.

**Action CS-II.2.a** – Create a prioritization matrix to be utilized by staff and the Council in evaluating new projects.

**Policy CS-II.3** – Continue to explore ways to improve government efficiency toward saving tax dollars, while providing a sufficient level and quality of city services.

**Action CS-II.3.a** – Explore cooperative opportunities to consolidate or share services and/or equipment with the county and neighboring jurisdictions.

**Action CS-II.3.b** – Each department should periodically review the services they provide to ensure these are provided in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible.

**Action CS-II.3.c** - Study actions that the municipality could take that would encourage changes in behavior and technology that would reduce demands on City infrastructure such as water conservation, grey water diversion and composting toilets.

## Principle CS-III. Infrastructure & Utilities

*Public infrastructure and utilities are an essential service to the community and should be maintained to provide a high level of service and meet all local, state and federal regulatory requirements.*

**Policy CS-III.1** – An adequate supply of clean, safe water should be available to all water utility customers.

**Action CS-III.1.a** – Amend the City’s annexation policy to require future annexations to dedicate water rights to the City in an amount equal to or in excess of the anticipated demand or provide cash in lieu for the purchase of water resources.

**Policy CS- III.2** – Wastewater treatment facilities should be adequate to meet current and anticipated needs of utility customers and comply with all regulatory requirements.

**Action CS-III.2.a** – Complete construction of the new 2.7 MGD WWTP by mid 2013.

**Policy CS-III.3** – Water/Wastewater delivery systems should be maintained and improved for the benefit of utility customers and to reduce the cost of ongoing maintenance.

**Action CS-III.3.a** – Create digital maps of the water/wastewater distribution system including staff training on utilizing the maps.

**Action CS-III.3.b** – Create long-range plans for replacement of aging infrastructure within the system taking into account projections for areas of future development to anticipate the need to increase line sizes where necessary as replacement occurs.

**Action CS-III.3.c** – Evaluate the need for capital improvement dollars to replace existing water/waste water infrastructure and ensure that user fees can accommodate these anticipated expenses.

**Action CS-III.3.d** – Investigate impact fees for infrastructure upgrades related to new development.

**Action CS-III.3.e** – Update the City of Salida Standards and Specifications to address any changes in technology or construction techniques and ensure that infrastructure is installed properly.

**Action CS-III.3.f** – City should actively seek out and repair leaks and infiltration in its water and sewer infrastructure.

**Action CS-III.3.g** - Evaluate rates periodically to ensure that there is adequate funding for ongoing operations and maintenance.

**Policy CS-III.4** – Streets should be constructed and maintained to provide safe and efficient transportation throughout the city.

**Action CS-III.4.a** – Update the City of Salida Standards and Specifications to address any changes in technology or construction techniques and ensure that street infrastructure is installed properly.

**Action CS-III.4.b** – Annually update the street improvement plan to reflect work that has been accomplished and changing conditions of the streets.

**Action CS-III.4.c** – Annually review the street improvement plan to anticipate immediate and future funding needs.

**Action CS-III.4.d** – Create a new full-time position and two seasonal positions in the public works department to assist in street maintenance.

**Policy CS-III.5** – Stormwater drainage is provided to prevent property damage, allow for safety during storm events and not cause undue erosion of land or infrastructure.

## **Principle CS-IV. Community Support Projects**

*The City values the efforts of individuals and organizations that enhance the lives of Salida residents and visitors.*

**Policy CS-IV.1** – Provide support for non-profit organizations that provide services and programs for the Salida community without creating an ongoing expense to the City.



**Action CS-IV.1.a** – Annually, through the Community Support Program, provide discretionary funding to local non-profit organizations that benefit the Salida community.

**Action CS-IV.1.b** – Collaborate with the county, other towns, local non-profits, the school district, and major employers to cooperatively utilize existing facilities for cultural and recreational needs.

## Chapter 12 Implementation

For over three years the City of Salida Community Development Department and Planning Commission have worked to gathering community input on what issues are the most important to citizens. After three years of work by staff, three community surveys, five public workshops, monthly public hearings in front of the Salida Planning Commission and countless hours working with and listening to individuals and community organizations the City of Salida has begun to prioritize what items in the comprehensive plan are the most important to it citizens.

Each chapter in the plan contains principles, policies and action items that have been reviewed and commented on by the community at large. Below are the highest priorities for actions to be taken that have been echoed throughout the public process over the past year for each chapter. This list of actions should be revisited annually to ensure accuracy as conditions change, to update items that have been accomplished, during development of annual budget and department work plans.



March 4th 2010 Public Meeting

### Chapter 2 Community Character

Review and revise the Land Use Code to ensure it is aligned with the principles and policies of the Community Character chapter and maintains Salida's small town character. (Actions CC-I.5.a, CC-II.1.a, CC-II.1.d)

CC-I.3.b – Assess the fee structure for park rentals, street closures and special event liquor permits to balance the demands on staff time with the public benefit provided by public events.

CC-III.1.a – Seek ways to improve or provide additional public access to the Arkansas River.

CC-III.2.a – Work with Chaffee County to encourage agriculture and low density residential development in the open lands within the Municipal Planning Area around the city.



## Chapter 3 Land Use and Growth

LU&G-I.1.a – Amend Salida’s Land Use Code and Zoning Map to advance the objectives of this plan and consider appropriate zoning designations, densities and overlays that utilize setbacks and promote the traditional historic built environment.

LU&G-I.4.a – Changes to the Land Use Code and Zoning Map shall include public process in accordance with local and state laws.

LU&G-II.1.a – Proposals for annexation should demonstrate that the development will not create a fiscal burden on the city.

LU&G-III.1.a – Public spaces should be inventoried and a requirement for providing additional space should be a condition of approval for new development.

LU&G-III.1.b – Encourage the creation of an eclectic range of infill recreation opportunities in existing neighborhoods for all residents of the community to enjoy.

LU&G-III.3.a – Work with the Chaffee County Building Department to ensure updates to the Building Codes allow for sensible adaptive sustainable building practices and use of the abundance of natural resources to heat and power existing structures in Salida.

## Chapter 4 Economic Sustainability

E&S-I.1.a – Partner with the SBA, Chamber and others to create an on-going ‘buy local’ campaign and educate the community on the benefits of buying local.

E&S-I.1.b – Investigate steps the city can take to foster local markets for regionally and locally produced goods.

E&S-I.4.a – The city should maintain memberships with the Heart of the Rockies Chamber of Commerce (HRCC) and Salida Business Alliance (SBA) and should appoint a Council member or staff person to regularly attend meetings of these organizations.

E&S-I.4.b – Participate in supporting community sponsored economic development efforts such as the Chaffee County Economic Development Corporation and the small business development center.

E&S-II.1.a – Review and enhance commercial design standards to ensure that franchises and corporate businesses develop in a manner that fits Salida’s character.

E&S-II.2.a – Adopt land use policies that allow for development of commercial and industrial sites in the City to attract investment in green renewable industries.

E&S-III.1.b – Promote the expansion of information technology infrastructure to the Arkansas Valley.

E&S-IV.2.a – Create a marketing strategy to target Front Range communities to promote Salida as a destination for small conventions.

## Chapter 5 Environmental Sustainability

ES-I. 1.a. – Engage the public to develop a visual resources map.

ES-I. 1.c. – Amend Salida’s Land Use Code to locate construction or development activities to avoid detracting from valued visual corridors and resources as seen from the public right-of-way.

ES-I.2.a – Continue to promote and enforce Dark Sky standards for new construction projects.

ES-III. 1.a. – Require drainage/grading plans for new or expanded development to reduce non point and point source pollution. Also encourage use of natural run-off filtration such as bio-swales, pervious pavement, etc. for on-site retention.

ES-III. 1.c. – Increase drainage design requirement from 25-year to 100-year storm event.

ES-III. 2.a. – Educate the public on water conservation strategies and effects of excessive water consumption in an arid environment.

ES-VIII.1.a. – City will actively seek access rights along river corridors and create trails and habitat.

## Chapter 6 Housing

H-I.3.a – Work with neighborhoods to identify and prioritize infrastructure deficiencies such as sidewalks, curbs, lighting, stormwater drainage and street trees.

H-I.4.a – Review the annexation, subdivision and development standards of the Land Use Code to ensure new neighborhoods contain a mix of housing types, a variety of lot sizes, open space, parks and amenities.

H-II.1.d – Revise development standards, procedures or fee structures that are barriers to the free market development of affordable housing.

H-II.3.a – Maintain and strengthen relationships with affordable housing providers in the community and examine ways the city can provide both monetary and non-monetary support for housing agencies in the community.

## Chapter 7 Recreation and Open Space

R&OS-I.1.a – Yearly prioritization of the implementation goals outlined in the Master Plan should be set in accordance with the yearly fiscal budget cycle.

R&OS-IV.2.b – Continue to provide community support funding for projects brought forward by a local organization with demonstrated community support.

R&OS-IV.3.a – Continue to work to help implement the land management plans of the Bureau of Land Management, State Parks, Forest Service and Division of Wildlife and establish working partnerships to help with their goals of preservation and wilderness awareness.



R&OS-V.1.e – Create an Open Space plan for the management and prioritization of acquisition of parcels in and around Salida.

R&OS-V.1.f – Pursue opportunities to provide localized neighborhood parks in areas of the city that are underserved.

## Chapter 9 Transportation

T-I.1.b. – Maintain the current requirements for new development to provide improvements including sidewalks, trails and open space areas that allow for viable connections to other neighborhoods for pedestrians and bicycles.

T-I.1.e. – Improve ADA access by providing ramps, curb cuts and improving sidewalks throughout the different neighborhoods of the city.

T-I.3.b. – Implement crosswalk improvements throughout town and along the Salida trail system.

T-I.3.c. – Identify and implement bike lanes where needed along well-traveled corridors.

T-I.4.a – Review streetscape standards for parkway widths to allow adequate space for large, long-lived street trees.

T-I.4.b – Investigate grant or partnership opportunities to bring sidewalks to all established neighborhoods that desire sidewalks.

T-II.2.a – Create a comprehensive sign plan for the city for the replacement of old signage and the future placement of new signage.

T-VIII.1.a - Investigate possibilities for use of the railroad corridor for expanding commerce to the valley.

## Chapter 10 Public Safety

PS-I.2.b- Maintain training and equipment to meet an expanding scope of services and utilize new technology through continuing education and capital replacement plans.

PS-I.3.a – Continue to use the model of ‘Community Oriented Policing’ in working with the community to help reduce crime and develop safer neighborhoods.

PS-III.1.a- Require all full-time city personnel to complete the basic level of NIMS training and require administrative and public safety personnel to have advanced certification.

PS-III.1.b – Create training opportunities and yearly emergency preparedness drills that help staff best utilize the new operation center in the time of a large scale emergency.

PS-V.1 – Continue to provide fiscal responsibility in public safety through aggressive grant research and application, responsible capital replacement plans and interagency cooperation.

## Chapter 11 Community Services

CS-I.1.a – Review the LUC to ensure that major new development is required to provide sound analysis of the fiscal impacts and benefits to the city.

CS-II.1.b – Review lease agreements for tenant spaces to ensure that lessees are responsible for adequate maintenance of facilities they occupy.

CS-II.2.a – Create a prioritization matrix to be utilized by staff and the Council in evaluating new projects.

CS-III.1.a – Amend the City’s annexation policy to require future annexations to dedicate water rights to the City in an amount equal to or in excess of the anticipated demand or provide cash in lieu for the purchase of water resources.

CS-III.3.a – Create digital maps of the water/wastewater distribution system including staff training on utilizing the maps.

CS-III.3.b – Create long-range plans for replacement of aging infrastructure within the system taking into account projections for areas of future development to anticipate the need to increase line sizes where necessary as replacement occurs.

CS-III.3.c – Evaluate the need for capital improvement dollars to replace existing water/wastewater infrastructure and ensure that user fees can accommodate these anticipated expenses.

CS-III.3.g – Evaluate rates periodically to ensure that there is adequate funding for ongoing operations and maintenance.

CS-III.4.b – Annually update the street improvement plan to reflect work that has been accomplished and changing conditions of the streets.

CS-III.4.c – Annually review the street improvement plan to anticipate immediate and future funding needs.

### Implementation of the Plan

We have also heard that the priorities of the city are also subject to change during the duration of the Plan. To allow this to be “living” document that can be implemented in an ever changing community the plan should be revisited yearly to evaluate what priorities have been completed, to provide the city’s citizens with an annual progress report, to help guide budgeting and planning for the upcoming year, and to be updated as priorities change.

Each year has the city continues to grow, so should this section of the plan. Tables should be developed annually to provide citizens an update of projects that have been completed, the budget priorities for the upcoming year, and a chance for the citizens of the community to provide input on what they feel are the highest priorities for the community.