

Town of New Castle Comprehensive Plan

2009



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Western Slope Consulting LLC
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Adopted:

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Acknowledgments

The New Castle comprehensive plan project would not have been possible without the countless hours generously donated by the members of the Steering Committee, the public, New Castle town staff and other participants. It is hoped that ownership and understanding of the information contained in this document is retained by the community and passed on to future residents and decision-makers. The real measure of success of the New Castle Comprehensive Plan is regular use and application of these principles, goals and policies to land use and other town decisions. The long-term challenge is to sustain ownership and understanding of the plan in future years as Town Council and Planning Commission members transition. The following participants are individually recognized for their participation in this planning process.

Town Council

Mayor - Frank Breslin
Mayor Pro Tem - Pam Bunn
Councilor - Bob Gordon
Councilor - Bruce Leland
Councilor - Merle Means
Councilor - Art Riddle
Councilor - Greg Russi

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Chair - Kevin O'Brien
Bob Gordon
Bruce Leland
Chuck Apostolik
Gary Broetzman
Greg Russi
LaRue Wentz
Mary Metzger

Molly Kehoe
Ron Skarka
Steve Vandel

Planning & Zoning Commission

Chair - Kevin O'Brien
Vice Chair - Chuck Apostolik
Phil Danielson
Bucky Moser
Roger Poirier
Emily Quinn
Art Riddle

Climate Action Advisory Commission

Chair - David Schroeder
Vice Chair - Creed Clayton
Secretary - Brandon Newton
Frank Breslin
Patrick Stuckey
Eileen Wysocki

Town Staff

Administration

Town Administrator - Andy Barton
Administrative Assistant - Sharon Rather

Clerk's Office

Town Clerk - Lisa Cain
Deputy Town Clerk - Wendy Mead
Administrative Assistant - Mindy Gulliksen

Comprehensive Plan Project Consultants

Western Slope Consulting, LLC
Fuller Consulting Services
RRC Associates
LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.



Structure of the Plan

The New Castle Comprehensive Plan is organized into fourteen sections briefly described below. Section 9 is broken out into sixteen subsections, each addressing guiding principles, goals and policies concerning major parts of the document.

Section 1 - Acknowledgements - Lists the organizations, boards, agencies and individuals who contributed to the writing of this plan.

Section 2 - Structure of the Plan (this Section) - Summarizes the various sections of the document.

Section 3 - New Castle Community Vision - Describes New Castle's community vision for the year 2050. This statement sets the long-term vision of the community that is the underpinning of the planning process and that will guide the community to its future.

Section 4 - Use of the Comprehensive Plan - Explains the source of the information for the document and how the comprehensive plan is to be used.

Section 5 - Overview of Planning Process - Describes the community planning process from start to finish.

Section 6 - Existing Conditions - Documents New Castle as it exists up to 2009 and historic data describing changes over time.

Section 7 - Future Land Use Plan - Contains the descriptions of the future land use categories. This information is to be used with the Future Land Use Map.

Section 8 - Community Design Preferences - Includes descriptions of community preferences for various types of land use design configurations and options. Each category is accompanied by a preferred image and descriptions of the most desired features.

Section 9 - Guiding Principles, Goals and Policies - Reviews the guiding principles with the goals and policies used to guide future growth and decisions on land-use applications.

- Community Growth-
- Infrastructure
- Recreation and Tourism
- Transportation
- Housing
- Parks, Open Space & Trails
- Economy
- Natural Environment
- Mineral Extraction & Energy Development
- Historic Downtown
- Schools
- Community Design
- Community Gateways
- Intergovernmental Coordination & Cooperation
- Recreation and Tourism
- Community

Section 10 - Plan Implementation- Lists the actions that should be taken by New Castle and others to actuate the plan.

Section 11 - Plan Updates and Amendments - Describes how the comprehensive plan is updated or amended to keep it current.



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Section 12 - Community Survey Results – Records community survey information received from area residents. Detailed survey information is in the Separate Plan Appendix.

Section 13 - Stakeholder Input - Reviews stakeholder selection and community input to the planning process.

Section 14 - Appendix - Contains supporting documents and New Castle Comprehensive Plan maps.



New Castle Community Vision

THE VISION STATEMENT DESCRIBES THE NEW CASTLE COMMUNITY **IN 2050**.

In the year 2050, New Castle is an attractive thriving Western Slope town that continues to value both its heritage and community. The Town enjoys a sustainable growth rate, a stable economy and a healthy environment. Balanced land uses ensure economic vitality, support local businesses and provide local employment for a majority of residents. An extensive system of connected trails, parks and open space offers non-motorized pathways, access to public lands, wildlife corridors, and recreational benefits. Developed parks serve a variety of purposes and have grown in acreage with the town. Passive open space protects high-quality wildlife habitat, conserves native vegetation, maintains view corridors, safeguards riparian areas and preserves other environmental resources.

Town residents support environmental protection of high quality air and water. Clean, renewable, locally-produced energy sources are used to meet many energy demands in the community. Homes and businesses use the area's abundant solar energy, and building designs minimize energy demand. Construction materials reduce environmental impact by minimizing waste and incorporating products that lessen their environmental footprint. Well-designed exterior lighting reduces energy consumption, eliminates lighting trespass, protects views of New Castle's star-filled night sky and at the same time maintains public safety.



In 2050, historic downtown New Castle retains its traditional architectural character and supports a variety of small businesses that employ local residents and attract many visitors to town. Downtown remains the community focal point for events, parades and local government services including Town Hall, the post office, the library and the community center. The historic architectural character of downtown is retained in all new construction and exterior remodels. Wide sidewalks, landscaping, public gathering spaces, period lighting, two-lane traffic and thriving businesses make downtown a pedestrian-friendly attractive site for commerce.

New residential-focused subdivisions incorporate traditional neighborhood design concepts with front porches, openness to the street, alleyways and separated sidewalks. Narrow streets contribute to neighborhood character with slower traffic speeds and high levels of social interaction. The range in size of dwelling units and unit types within all neighborhoods offers a variety of housing styles and prices. This housing diversity, in conjunction with designated affordable housing units, allows New Castle residents to work and live in their community.

Residential neighborhoods include live/work units with low-impact home occupations to allow residents to work where they live. The mix of uses lessens reliance on automobiles, decreases traffic, reduces noise/air pollution and enhances quality of life.

Land-use policies provide for sequential, logical and cost-effective growth within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Consideration of new annexations is based on demonstrated community benefits and needs. "Smart Growth" policies assure a healthy variation in land use types. Residential, commercial, industrial and recreation land uses have a balanced relationship that supports a sustainable economy. Opportunities for local ownership of business and homes ensure that current and future generations can live in the community.



New Castle Comprehensive Plan

The Town and Garfield County work together on joint land use reviews in the unincorporated areas around New Castle identified by the Joint Planning Area Boundary. Their mutual goal is to ensure that future annexations are easily and cost-effectively incorporated into town limits in terms of land use and compatible urban infrastructure.

Development within the Urban Growth Boundary is phased to support an adopted annexation plan. New growth avoids inefficient leapfrog development beyond the range of municipal infrastructure/services. The edge of town is discernible from surrounding rural and agricultural areas. Urban sprawl with the resulting taxpayer burdens is avoided by concentrating development in town with adequate services, infrastructure and parks/open space.



Use of the Comprehensive Plan

The New Castle Comprehensive Plan is a compilation of existing New Castle data and community input derived from a variety of sources. This plan embodies the qualities, values, vision and objectives that characterize New Castle's preferred future. The plan in its total sets a path that supports community growth in a planned and positive manner that accommodates new housing, businesses, services, jobs, parks/open spaces, non-motorized access systems, transportation, environmental protection and community infrastructure. At the same time, the plan offers tools to New Castle citizenry, staff and decision makers to support sustainable growth systems to preserve small-town characteristics and community values.

This plan is intended to be flexible to allow creative solutions to the complex and integrated issues of growth, but includes enough specificity to support focused decision making within the overall framework of the document. This is an important point. Comprehensive plans that are too vague and too flexible do not offer enough guidance for decision making, resulting in widely-varying and sometimes conflicting decisions. Conversely, plans that are too rigid do not allow creative solutions to the often complex problems of the real world. This plan strives to strike a balance between these two ends of the spectrum. The document should be used as a whole and in the context within which it was created. It is a mistake to take individual paragraphs, goals or policies out of their context in the document to support a certain end without considering both the plan as a whole and the community vision. The Planning Commission is charged with determining whether a given land use application substantially complies with this plan. A finding of substantial compliance by the Planning Commission is a prerequisite of a subdivision, zoning or other land-use approval. The New Castle Comprehensive Plan is intended as an advisory document except to the extent that the provisions herein are incorporated into the New Castle Municipal Code by ordinance or resolution.

It is anticipated that this plan will be widely used by the town staff and decision makers, but also by area citizens. Regular use of this plan will keep citizens engaged and knowledgeable of guiding principles, goals and policies. Understanding of the Comprehensive Plan will help community residents support their decision makers as they evaluate future growth and strive to make the best choices for New Castle.



Overview of the Planning Process

Public involvement in the comprehensive planning process is vital to achieving a successful plan and long-term implementation. Community input from municipal and surrounding area residents formed the basis for the planning process. The public was invited to attend all comprehensive plan Steering Committee meetings, and there was strong attendance at several community public presentations. Public notice of community meetings included town website postings, town newsletter updates, community posters, newspaper notices/display ads, and word-of-mouth. Community participation involved frequent steering committee meetings, stakeholder interviews, landowner involvement, community visioning, staff interviews, general community meetings and a Planning Commission public hearing and a Town Council public meeting.

The following six major steps summarize the planning process:

- 1. Initial scoping to identify issues and concerns.**
- 2. Quantify existing conditions.**
- 3. Community visioning and preferences.**
- 4. Build maps to depict graphically plan components.**
- 5. Create guiding principles, goals and supporting policies.**
- 6. Establish comprehensive plan recommendations and implementation actions.**
- 7. Inclusion of other plan elements.**

Each step included a variety of tasks. This overview highlights how each step contributed to the comprehensive plan.

1. Initial scoping to identify issues and concerns.

This step involved identifying and investigating the range of issues faced by the Town and the attitudes of town residents towards those issues. This qualitative analysis was vital to understanding the character of New Castle, the ways in which residents related to town government, and the priorities attached to the various issues and concerns affecting the Town. It also offered a chance to enlist local residents in the development of the plan by discussing the project with many people and soliciting input through community outreach.

The first step in the scoping process was a community meeting and barbeque. This event introduced the planning team in an informal setting at which the planning project outline was presented to the community. Over 100 local residents attended the July 2007 event to learn about the Comprehensive Plan and to offer input. More formal scoping was completed through a series of interviews with stakeholders selected by the Town Council and Planning Commission. Stakeholders included Town employees and elected officials, major landowners, business owners/managers, interest groups, area governments, Re-2 School District, Colorado River Water Conservation District, Federal land managers, and the Division of Wildlife. Over 40 interviews with stakeholders yielded a comprehensive list of issues. A spreadsheet summarizing stakeholder input is in the Separate Plan Appendix.

Stakeholder input guided the design of the second step in the scoping process, the Community Survey. The Survey was conducted in 2007 and early 2008 by RRC Associates. The planning team worked with the Steering Committee and RRC to design the survey instrument. RRC collated the results. 288 surveys were returned out of 2,000 surveys mailed to in-town and surrounding area residents. This represented a statistically-valid 14% response rate. The survey



results supplied important information on many topics including attitudes about New Castle's growth and perceptions of important issues facing the community. This survey information also supplied important detail to understanding existing conditions and community preferences. The detailed survey report is in the Separate Plan Appendix.

2. Quantify existing conditions.

It is important to understand existing conditions in New Castle as a baseline before setting future community directions. The existing 1997 Comprehensive Plan was a starting point for understanding current land uses, infrastructure, socio-economic conditions, environmental conditions and town policies. Quantitative research was completed by analyzing existing town plans, audits, budgets, demographics, other documents. Additional qualitative information was obtained by interviewing landowners, interest groups, government employees and public agencies. Field investigation of existing land uses supplied valuable information about on-ground conditions. This research in conjunction with technical expert consultation supported accurate mapping of existing land uses. The existing conditions data served as a baseline for understanding the challenges facing New Castle. Highlights of the existing conditions data include rapid population growth, limited General Fund revenues, insufficient infrastructure and outdated regulatory tools. Existing conditions information also underscored the many qualities that make New Castle a desirable community. These community assets include an extensive park/trails system, a clean environment, fine schools, caring/involved local residents and a hard-working local government.

3. Community Visioning and Preferences

The existing conditions data gave the planning team a comprehensive picture of the issues to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. The next step was to decide how best to address those needs. Information on community preferences came from many sources including stakeholder interviews. The community survey supplemented the data obtained from stakeholders. Survey responses gave input on a variety of topics including land use, economic development and affordable housing. Selected survey responses are included in the body of the Comprehensive Plan and were used to guide development of the document.



Information about the planning process was communicated to the public with website postings, articles in the town newsletter, community meetings and articles in the local media. Several public meetings were held to gather input on particular topics. Two community-visioning sessions were conducted to acquire feedback on design and land use preferences. The first session was a visual preference survey structured to establish most desired urban designs on topics such as residential design configuration, commercial layout/appearance, streetscapes, exterior lighting, parks, open space and signage. This session was followed by a mapping exercise at which the 30+ attendees working in groups developed maps to

illustrate their choices of future land use locations. These maps were collated and became the starting place for the Future Land Use Map.

The Town Council selected an eleven-member Steering Committee made up of local residents, business interests, and members of the Planning Commission/Town Council. The Committee worked directly with the consultants on the details of the Comprehensive Plan and served as a



sounding board on a myriad of planning topics. They met on a regular basis throughout the planning process to review drafts of the plan document, offer comments/guidance and valuable feedback on the plan as they reviewed it section by section. The Steering Committee's meticulous work was important to make certain the plan was comprehensive, clear, consistent and relevant.

4. Build maps to depict graphically plan components.

A series of maps are included to depict visually key aspects of the comprehensive plan. The Existing Land Use Map shows the existing uses throughout the community based upon Garfield County Assessor's land use classifications. This map illustrates existing conditions in the community. Similarly, the Existing Zoning Map portrays the various zone districts in New Castle and their spatial relationships. The Existing Zoning Map will continue to be used by the Town to identify what types of uses are allowed in various locations. The Parks and Open Space Map, Trails Map and Master Street Plan Map graphically represent each of these aspects of the New Castle incorporated area. The Environmental Hazards Map is to be used in and around New Castle as an initial indicator of areas that have development limitations because of steep slopes, floodplains, sensitive environmental areas and other factors that restrict development. This map serves as an initial screen to identify probable limitations. It is assumed that detailed site specific studies will be completed to analyze conditions. Finally, the Wildlife Maps are based upon information obtained from the Colorado Division of Wildlife to show areas of big game concentrations that should be considered and mitigated prior to new development. The wildlife maps represent gross characteristics that require further analysis in association with site-specific development applications.

5. Create guiding Principles, Goals and Supporting Policies.

Information obtained from the community survey, community visioning, public meetings, GIS mapping and discussions with the Steering Committee was used to develop guiding principles, goals and supporting policies. This information constitutes an important segment of the comprehensive plan document. Each of these categories frames a particular issue with a guiding policy, articulates goals and supports the goals with a range of policies. This information is important for land use applicants, town staff, New Castle decision makers and community members as part of the land use process. It is important that land use applications respond to and incorporate these elements. Applicants must develop land-use submittals that comply with these sections of the comprehensive plan. These parts of the plan document are important because they are used collectively to accomplish the long-term community vision articulated in the comprehensive plan.

6. Establish Comprehensive Plan Recommendations and Implementation Actions.

The plan's recommendations are presented in several forms. Perhaps the most important and visible of them is the Future Land Use Map. It shows where and in what form future development should take place. The function of the Future Land Use Map is to guide the Town, developers and citizens about the type and location of future land uses. The map shows land-use types (commercial, residential, open space, etc.), densities, road/trail corridors and connections between existing and future urban areas. The Future Land Use Map is included in the Plan Maps Section at the end of the document. Other important plan provisions are found in the Guiding Principles, Goals and Policies section of the Plan. This section includes detailed information for new development that will guide developers and decision-makers as New Castle grows.



The section on plan implementation includes the methodologies and strategies that New Castle will use to make the comprehensive plan vision a reality. Implementation actions include tasks that must be completed by the town government as well as those best accomplished by citizens' groups or the development community. This section of the plan is where the vision becomes a reality.

7. Inclusion of Other Plan Elements

Transportation Plan

LSC Transportation Consultants completed a general transportation analysis that includes a map showing locations and priorities for upgrades to the Town's transportation infrastructure. The transportation analysis and recommendations are summarized in the Comprehensive Plan narrative. LSC's report is included in the Separate Plan Appendix.

Urban Design Recommendations

The Visual Preference survey was a basis for the Community Design Preferences section and is to be used to guide development including residential/commercial buildings, landscaping, streetscapes, parks/open space, signage, exterior lighting and similar design elements. The Visual Preference Survey report is in the Separate Plan Appendix.

Trails Plan

The Trails Plan Map shows future trail alignments that interface with existing trails. Together, the existing and future trail systems will offer easy non-motorized access throughout New Castle, to adjacent public lands and to multi-use recreational opportunities. The Trails Map is in the Plan Maps Section at the end of the document.



Existing Conditions

Introduction

In order to imagine the future, it is necessary to remember the past and understand the present. This section of the Comprehensive Plan brings together information relevant to the planning process. The categories include population, land use, economics, employment, demographics, infrastructure, parks/open space and other material.

Geography & Climate

The Town of New Castle is located in Garfield County, Colorado along Interstate 70 and the Colorado River on the Western Slope of the Rocky Mountains. New Castle is approximately 76 miles east of Grand Junction and 169 miles west of Denver and lies at an elevation of 5,550 feet above sea level. The town's elevation provides a comfortable climate with a mean January temperature of 25°F and a mean July temperature of 70°F. Average annual precipitation is 17.9 inches. The total land area within the municipal boundaries is 2.53 square miles

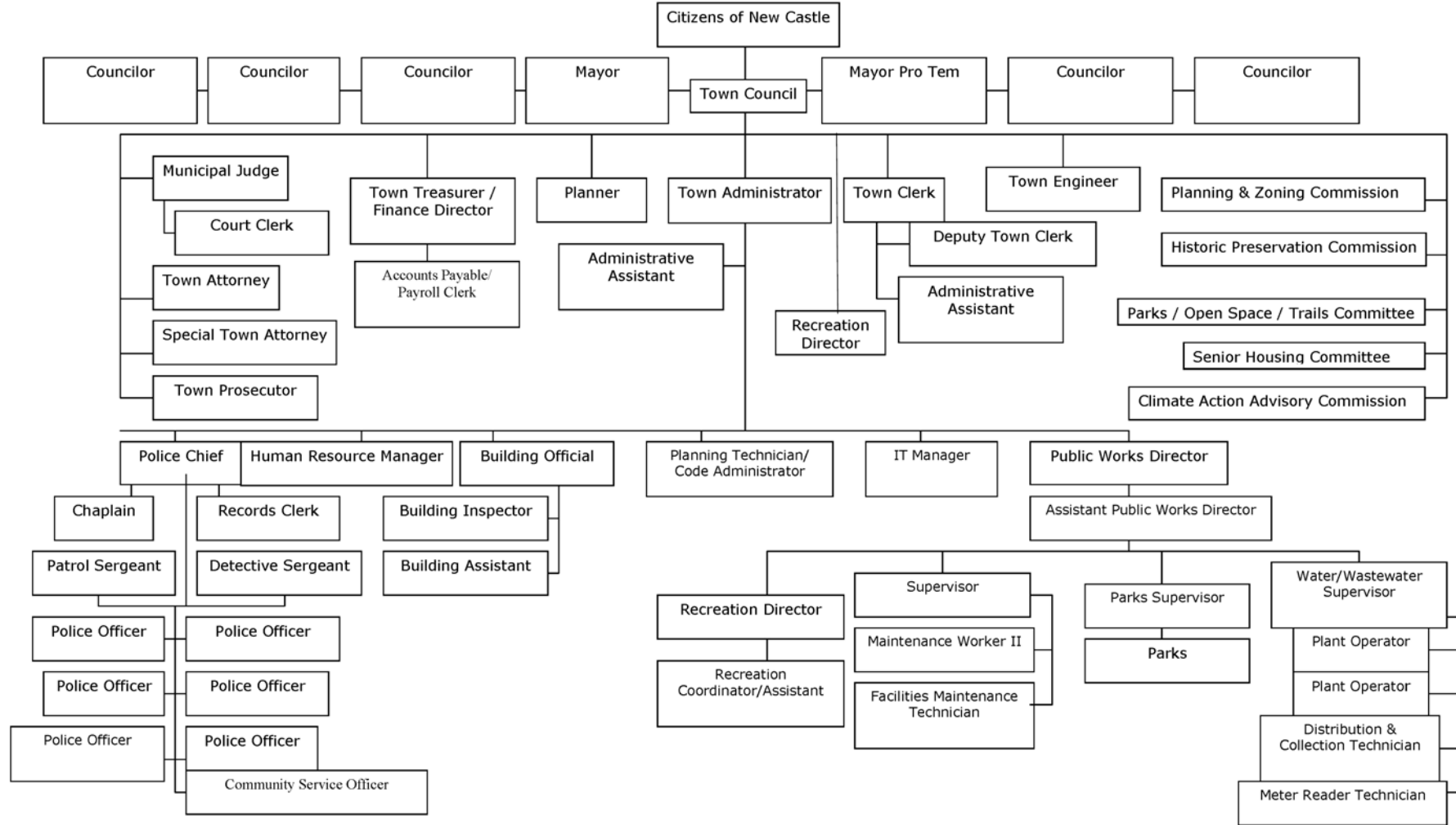


	Average High	Average Low	Mean	Average Precipitation	Record High	Record Low
January	36°F	13°F	25°F	1.60 in.	68°F (1923)	-38°F (1913)
February	44°F	19°F	31°F	1.21 in.	67°F (1981)	-30°F (1905)
March	53°F	26°F	40°F	1.55 in.	79°F (1943)	-14°F (1917)
April	63°F	31°F	47°F	1.66 in.	88°F (1946)	2°F (1966)
May	72°F	39°F	55°F	1.93 in.	92°F (1948)	17°F (1916)
June	84°F	45°F	64°F	1.22 in.	102°F (1954)	27°F (1973)
July	89°F	52°F	70°F	1.27 in.	102°F (1989)	30°F (1903)
August	87°F	51°F	69°F	1.19 in.	100°F (2000)	36°F (1903)
September	79°F	43°F	61°F	1.71 in.	100°F (1924)	20°F (1907)
October	66°F	33°F	50°F	1.86 in.	88°F (1947)	10°F (1970)
November	49°F	23°F	36°F	1.31 in.	80°F (1975)	-9°F (1952)
December	37°F	15°F	26°F	1.42 in.	65°F (1999)	-22°F (1909)



Organizational Chart

New Castle Town Government Organizational Chart





Population & Demographics

At the end of 2008 and continuing into 2009, the US and world economies entered a severe economic recession. This economic downturn has fundamentally stopped new development activity in New Castle. Village Homes, the major developer in Castle Valley Ranch, filed for bankruptcy and halted construction on all of its projects. Very few building permits have been issued in New Castle from the third quarter of 2008 to the middle of 2009. No one really knows when the recession will end, but predictions are that it will continue through 2010. The recession has curtailed growth activity in New Castle and Garfield County. It is probable that in 12 to 24 months growth activity will return to Western Colorado. The reader should understand that the information contained in this document is based upon conditions that were occurring up to the economic downturn. Population projections and other data have been modified to account for a slow growth period. The values, principles, goals and policies contained in this document remain valid because they are basic to the community and transcend economic conditions.

New Castle's population for the period 2000-2007 increased an average of 241 persons per year with an average annual growth rate of 9.24%. This growth rate made New Castle one of the fastest-growing towns in Colorado. In the past 25 years, much of New Castle's population increase has been fueled by a down-valley migration from the communities of Aspen, Snowmass, Basalt and Carbondale where the cost of housing has historically been higher. More recently, natural gas drilling activities and renewed interest in oil shale development have placed a demand on available housing units west of New Castle, thereby driving up the cost of housing in Silt, Rifle and Parachute.

Population growth projections for Garfield County are expected to remain robust through the year 2035 as the energy industry expands in response to demands for natural gas and other fuels. Growth pressures on New Castle are expected to continue in the same timeframe. It is, therefore, important for New Castle to determine how the community desires to grow and plan for staffing, infrastructure, facilities, service delivery, environmental protection and quality of life.

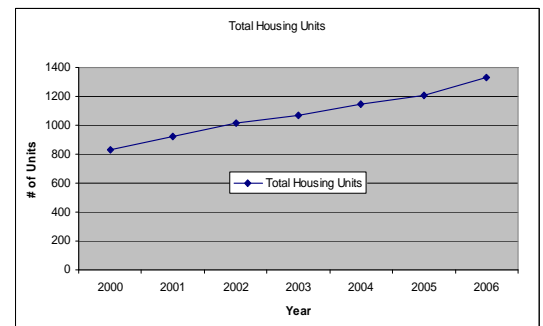


Figure 1

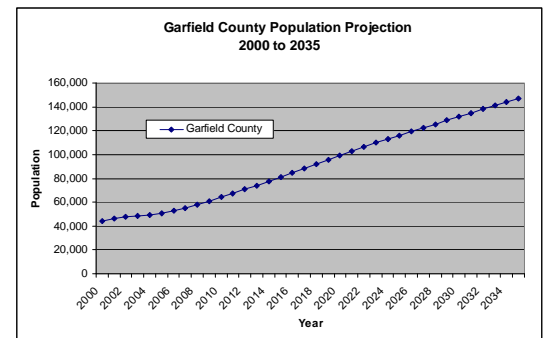


Figure 2

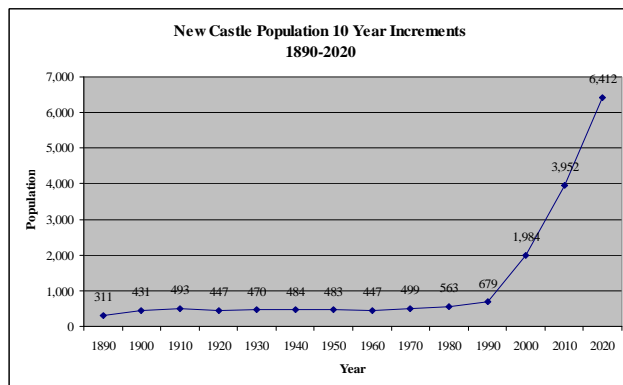


Figure 3

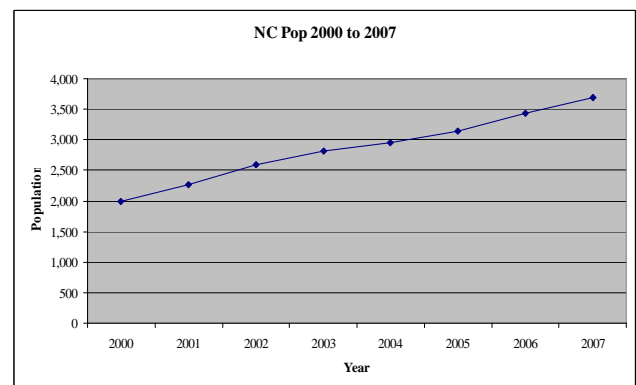


Figure 4



New Castle Comprehensive Plan

2007 New Castle population was estimated at 3,669 with an average household size of 2.66 residents per unit. In 2007, 93% of the population was white with the balance made up largely of Hispanic, African-American and smaller percentages of other races.

New Castle median household income was \$63,966 compared to the Garfield County median household income of \$52,189. The Town and County median household incomes were higher than the \$50,841 statewide average.

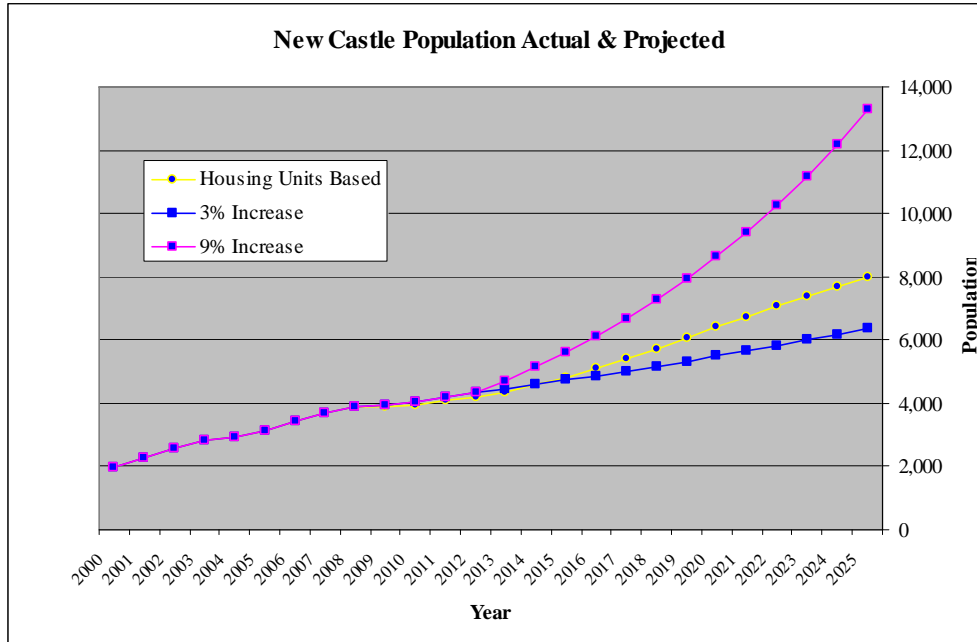


Figure 5

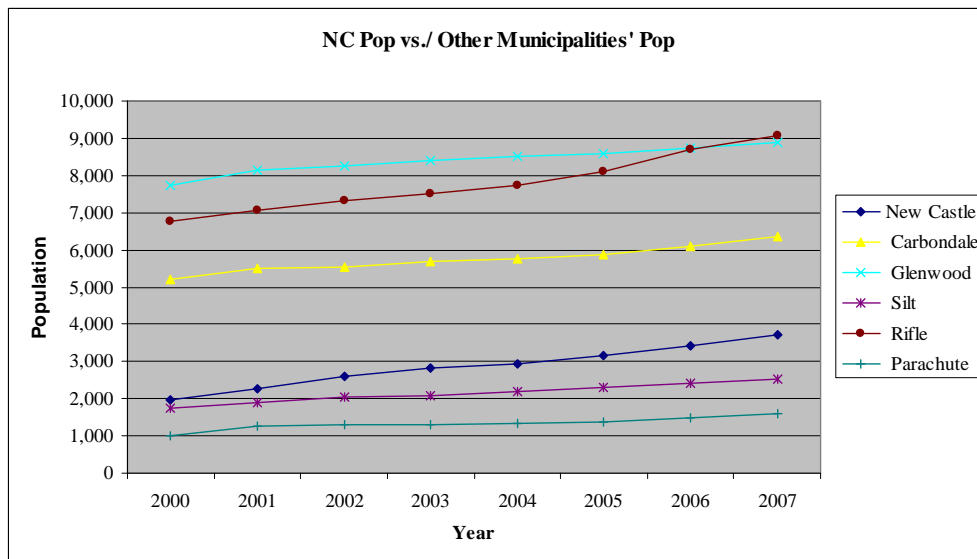


Figure 6



Economy

Historically, Garfield County's economy has been supported by agriculture and mining. Increasing land values driven by resort area development in adjacent Eagle and Pitkin Counties has caused many ranches to be sold for development. The marginal returns from agricultural operations compared to the substantial short-term gains from real estate development have convinced many of the long-term ranching families to sell.

The majority of New Castle residents find employment outside of the community in Glenwood Springs, the Roaring Fork Valley, the Eagle Valley and the Rifle area. Employment outside New Castle causes substantial traffic impacts at the I-70 interchange in the peak morning and evening commuting hours. The three highest categories of New Castle employment are management/professional (28.6%), sales/office occupations (28.4%) and construction/extraction/maintenance (23.2%)¹.

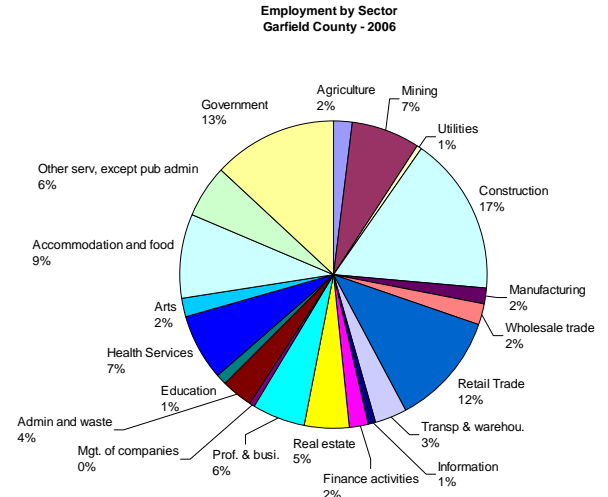


Figure 7

Source: CO State Demographer's Office

Housing

New Castle was estimated to have 1,657 housing units by the end of 2008. The majority of these units are single-family residences. The Town has some multifamily units with duplex, triplex, and larger multifamily structures in River Park PUD, Castle Valley Ranch PA-12, Shibui and Alder Ridge. The majority of residential development activity is occurring in Castle Valley Ranch PUD and Lakota Canyon Ranch PUD. The cost of housing in New Castle continues to increase at a faster rate than median household income. The 2007 average sale price of a single-family home in New Castle was \$355,659.

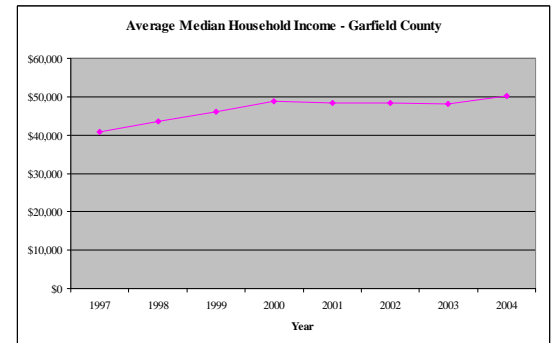


Figure 8

The need for housing units in New Castle will increase as the population grows. Assuming an average growth rate of 4% from 2007 to 2030, population is expected to grow to 9,086, a net increase of 5,417. Housing demand generated by a population increase of 5,417 will require 2,037 new residential units based upon an average household size of 2.66 persons.

¹ 2000 US Bureau of the Census



The 2000 census documented 75.6% of the housing in New Castle as owner-occupied and 24.4% as rental. Single-family detached dwellings represent 82% of the housing stock and 18% are multifamily units. There were 51 mobile homes identified in the 2000 census housing unit count. The number of multifamily units has increased since the 2000 Census with the addition of 153 condominium units in River Park PUD, 67 units in duplex structures in Castle Ridge and an additional 57 units in triplex structures in Castle Valley Ranch (total 277 additional multifamily units).

52% of the respondents to the comprehensive plan community survey acknowledged affordable housing as an essential need. However, there were mixed results about how to address affordable housing. A majority of respondents said that the developers should provide affordable housing in their projects. Alternatives such as increased density, multifamily units, apartments, manufactured housing and mobile homes were not preferred options.

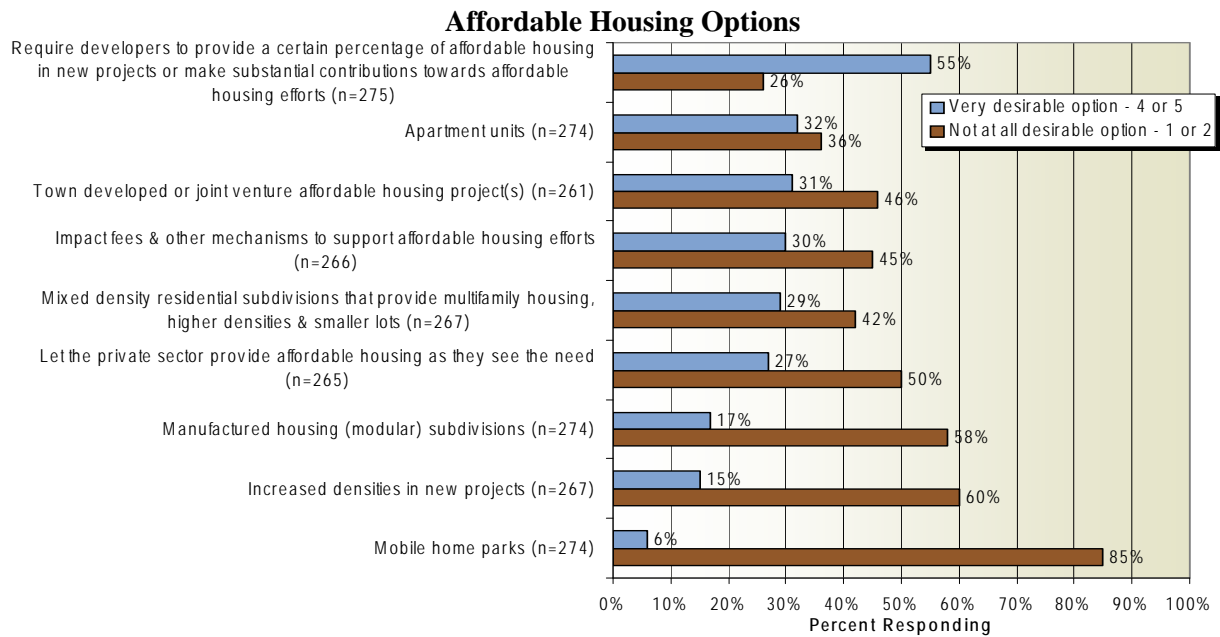


Figure 9

Lack of affordable housing is a persistent and growing problem in and around New Castle. In Garfield County, the median purchase price of new single-family homes in 2005 was \$270,000. If affordable housing were defined as housing that demands 30% or less of household income, an affordable unit in New Castle in 2005 would cost \$190,000 (based on median 2005 household income of \$55,000/year). Between 1999 and 2005, housing prices increased an average of 48% in Garfield County while wages increased an average of 18%. Despite recent fluctuations in the economy and lower housing prices, the gap between income and housing prices is likely to continue in the future.

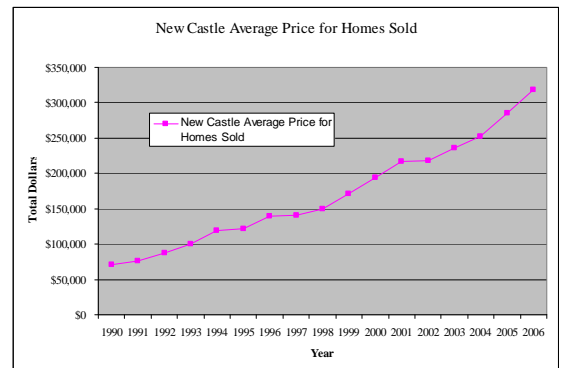


Figure 10



Recreation and Tourism



The Lakota Canyon golf course is the primary commercial recreation business in New Castle. The course hosted over 21,000 rounds of golf in 2008, representing approximately \$1,000,000 in greens fees. It is estimated that non-New Castle golfers played 45-50% of those rounds. Retail sales of golf equipment, clothing and accessories amounted to \$500,000 in income. A restaurant and expanded retail space are still in the planning stages. The Lakota course is considered one of the best-designed and most challenging in western Colorado. The facility is ranked #2 by Golf.com among public golf courses in Colorado. The Lakota Canyon PUD has an 8,000 square foot recreation center that

includes exercise facilities and a swimming pool.

Tourism in New Castle is also bolstered by hunting. The nearby Flat Tops area in the White River National Forest is a major hunting destination, and New Castle has long advertised itself as the “Gateway to the Flat Tops.” County Road 245, the “Buford Road,” leads from the Town into the Flat Tops Wilderness Area and adjacent Forest Service-administered land. The fall hunting seasons generally add to tourist traffic and spending in New Castle. The following table lists the hunter counts for licenses drawn in the Game Management Units near New Castle.

Total Hunters by Species & Year

Game Management Unit	2005		2006		2007	
	Deer	Elk	Deer	Elk	Deer	Elk
GMU 32	259	840	164	1,101	207	1,092
GMU 33	1,294	3,673	1,463	3,287	1,399	3,552
GMU 34	693	1,751	827	1,621	906	1,506
GMU 42	1,163	3,231	1,370	2,770	1,459	2,748

Figure 11

Other recreational activities add to the local economy but are difficult to quantify. Rafting, boating and fishing on the Colorado River are major local tourist attractions, as are hiking and camping in local National Forest areas and skiing in the Roaring Fork and Eagle River valleys. Glenwood Springs is a major market and tourist center and users of the Glenwood Hot Springs Pool, Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park and other attractions probably contribute nominal levels of activity to the New Castle economy.

Parks

New Castle has 12 developed parks:

1. **Burning Mountain Park** - 1/2 acre located in downtown New Castle at the corner of Jasper Ward Avenue and Main Street. It has playground equipment, a gazebo, picnic tables, a public restroom and a monument honoring area miners.



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2. **Town Hall/Library Plaza** - located in between those two public buildings on Main Street, is approximately 4,600 square feet and has several shade trees and benches.
3. **Ritter Plaza** - approximately 4,800 square feet and is located on Main Street between Vanderventer Ave and Jasper Ward Ave. It contains several benches and tables.
4. **Coal Ridge Park** - on the South side of the Colorado River, is approximately 12 acres with 2 developed acres that includes playground equipment, portable toilets, disc golf, and Colorado River boat ramp access.
5. **Hot Shot Park** - located between South Wild Horse Drive and Castle Valley Boulevard, is approximately 3.3 acres with playground equipment, a basketball court, a small picnic shelter and lawn area.
6. **The Hogback Skate Park** - ½ acre and located south of Castle Valley Boulevard near South Wild Horse Drive. The site includes a skateboard park, seating areas and parking.
7. **Alder Park** - located adjacent to Alder Lane in the Castle Valley Ranch area, is 2.9 acres. It contains two “micro” (approximately ¼-regulation size) soccer fields and a pond.
8. **Kay Williams Park** - situated in Castle Valley Ranch is 9,700 square feet adjacent to the Alder Park. It contains a lawn area and a small playground.
9. **Mattivi Plaza** - is 1,404 square feet and located downtown with a flower garden with three planters.
10. **VIX Ranch Park** - is 9 acres, adjacent to North Wild Horse Drive and Riverside Middle School in Castle Valley Ranch. It has a full-size soccer and baseball field. An amphitheatre and restrooms are planned for this park.
11. **Rollie Gordon Park** - is located between Elk Creek and 7th Street. It is 7,100 square feet with a lawn area, planters and a creek-side trail.
12. **River Park** - is 12 acres located on the south side of the Colorado River. A regulation soccer field, a playground and a boat ramp are planned for installation at this location in 2009.



In addition to the previous developed park sites, the Town owns (or has ownership pending on) several open space parcels that have been identified as having potential for park development. These vacant future park sites include:

1. **Sparks Park** - a 1-acre mini park in the Burning Mountain I PUD.
2. **Burning Mountain - II**, Lot 13, a 3-acre park with play equipment, toilets and municipal offices. Plans for this parcel have not been finalized.
3. **Public tennis courts** - are projected to be completed in 2010 at Castle Valley Boulevard and Club House Drive.
4. **A 5-acre site** south of Castle Valley Boulevard near Faas Ranch Road.

The Colorado State Parks and Recreation Planning Guide for Small Towns (2003) recommends public park space dedication at a ratio of 14 acres/1,000 residents. Current existing park acreage, counting only the larger developed parks and not incidental lawn/open areas, is approximately 50 acres. The estimated 2007 New Castle population of 3,669 yields a ratio of 13.6 acres/1,000 residents. These numbers show that New Castle has adequate park space for its population.



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Assuming a 2007 population of 3,669, New Castle is underserved with some park facilities and has ample amenities in other locations. The Town does not have a location for major outdoor events such as festivals, concerts and large groups. Two more soccer and baseball fields, two tennis and basketball courts and a public performance site are needed. Other facilities, like the skateboard park, trails (in terms of total mileage) and the Colorado River put-in are sufficient. Recreation improvements like a BMX track, swimming pool and hockey rink will only be justified with a much larger population.

New Castle has an extensive constructed and proposed trail system. The trail system (Open Space and Trails Master Plan, 2002) shows multiple interconnections between existing trails. New Castle has been diligent about implementing the plan as development has occurred. The exact location and design of future trails will depend on land availability, topography and other site-specific conditions. The Open Space and Trails Master plan includes useful standards for site design and location. The plan emphasizes a need for trails to serve as travel corridors as well as recreational amenities. The Comprehensive Plan and Trails Map further support those principles.

New Castle owns and maintains numerous publicly dedicated open space parcels along rights of way in Castle Valley Ranch. These open space areas range in size from 1-3 acres and require expensive custom maintenance by town crews. The maintenance responsibility for some of the other open space areas remains with homeowners associations. Many of the Castle Valley Ranch open space parcels serve as drainage and trail corridors. These properties (some are included in the 35 acres of undeveloped parkland) total 141 acres. New Castle also owns the 200-acre Mt. Medaris property that separates historic downtown from Castle Valley Ranch and Lakota Canyon PUD. These properties, other undeveloped private land and nearby federal lands include important wildlife habitat, greenspace, viewplanes, biodiversity, natural areas and floodplains. The Town has adopted park and open space dedication requirements, but does not have a separate open space acquisition funding mechanism.



SUMMARY OF MAJOR PARK FACILITIES

Park Name	Soccer	Baseball	Playground	Picnic	Boat Ramp	Other	Restrooms	Size Acres	Neighborhood
Hot Shot		X	X	X			X	3.3	Castle Valley
VIX Ranch	X	X		X		Amphitheatre	X	9.0	Castle Valley
Burning Mtn			X	X		Gazebo	X	0.5	Downtown
Coal Ridge			X	X	X	Disc Golf	X	2.0	S. Side
River	X		X		X			12	S. Side
Alder	X		X	X		Pond	X	2.9	Castle Valley
Rolly Gordon						Lawn/Bridge		0.2	7th St.
Hogback						Skate Park	X	0.5	Castle Valley
Ritter Plaza				X		Benches		0.1	Downtown
Kay Williams			X						
							Total Acreage:	30.50	

Figure 12



Transportation

Transportation Summary and Recommendations

LSC Transportation Consultants was retained to provide a general New Castle traffic/road study and recommendations as part of the comprehensive planning process. The LSC report is in the Separate Plan Appendix. The following narrative is a summary of their findings and recommendations.

1. Exit 105 I - 70 Interchange

The stacking and queuing at the I-70 interchange is a problem during peak morning and evening hours. Evening traffic queues can extend down the length of the off-ramp from the access bridge intersection. This vehicle stacking is likely to become more severe as New Castle population increases without substantial intersection improvements or an additional interstate interchange. The overpass is hazardous to pedestrians crossing over the interstate and Colorado River because there are no sidewalks on the bridge. This is a significant deterrent to non-motorized access to shopping, downtown and other services north of the interstate.

RECOMMENDATION: Investigate potential for a second highway interchange that will relieve pressure on Exit 105. Pursue improvements to the existing interstate bridge that will increase traffic and pedestrian capacity. Investigate additional mass transit opportunities between New Castle and up-valley locations that could reduce reliance on single occupant vehicles for commuting and other purposes.

2. Highway 6 & 24/Castle Valley Boulevard Intersection

This busy intersection is stressed during morning and evening traffic peaks. The four-way stop and short stacking lanes contribute to frequent congestion. Average delays of 40-50 seconds at this intersection indicate a substandard level of service that will continue to degrade as traffic increases. The current level of service (LOS) at the Highway 6 & 24-Castle Valley Boulevard intersection is "C" at non-peak hours and "D" during peak hours. Those ratings will decrease to a LOS "E" or "F" as traffic volume increases unless intersection improvements are completed. Traffic engineers consider a LOS "D" the minimum acceptable LOS and ratings of "E" or "F" are unacceptable because of long intersection wait times.



RECOMMENDATION: Authorize site-specific study of this intersection to plan improvements that will increase capacity and facilitate traffic flow. Consider a roundabout in place of existing intersection. Consider widening Castle Valley Boulevard to facilitate increased traffic. Existing agreements between the Town, Lakota Canyon Ranch and Castle Valley Ranch require the widening of Castle Valley Boulevard to four lanes when average daily traffic reaches predetermined volumes. Determine how future widening traffic thresholds relate to current traffic volumes and circulation needs.

3. 7th Street/West Side Access

North-South access from downtown New Castle to Castle Valley is confined to Castle Valley Boulevard on the east or 7th Street/North Midland Ave on the west. 7th Street is narrow and winding and does not have adequate capacity or easy access for Castle Valley traffic. As a result, Castle Valley Boulevard and



the intersection addressed above are overloaded. Little traffic from Castle Valley uses Main Street because the access to the west end of downtown on 7th Street is difficult.

RECOMMENDATION: An alternate route along the west side of Elk Creek is feasible, but would pose significant engineering and economic challenges. The location, cost, and engineering requirements of this route should be analyzed, so that equitable contributions to its design and construction by future development can be determined.

4. Historic Downtown/Main Street

Main Street gets relatively little traffic because of the factors noted above and is below its design capacity. The width of the street and the lack of pedestrian and aesthetic amenities do not take advantage of the available Main Street opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION: Review and pursue Main Street enhancement improvements. Consider narrowing to two or three lanes, implement angle parking and install amenities.



New Castle Utilities

The Town provides central water and sewer services to residents.

The Town's capacity to provide these services reliably is challenged by continuing growth pressures. The 2009 expansion of the water treatment facility is discussed below in the following section on "Water Supply".

Water Supply

The Town owns water rights that include 2.67 CFS from East Elk Creek. Castle Valley Ranch PUD is obligated to dedicate an additional 2.8 CFS from the Coryell and Red Rock Ditch at development build-out. In addition, the Town holds rights to 4.0 CFS from the Colorado River that are augmented by releases from Ruedi Reservoir. Tables 1 and 2 show the water available from these rights in acre-feet under normal and dry hydrologic conditions.

In 2007, New Castle served 1,593 Equivalent Residential Units (EQRs) with 1,725 additional EQRs approved but not connected. An EQR is a standardized means of measuring demand units. The average water use associated with an EQR averages 350 gallons per day, but that amount varies over the course of the year depending on irrigation demand and other factors. The current plus approved numbers noted above yield a total existing obligation of 3,318 EQRs. Future demand (20 years) is estimated between 3,193 and 3,993 EQRs depending on the rate of buildout of approved units and new units approved. Current average usage ranges from 250 Gallons/EQR/Day during February to a high of 780 Gallons/EQR/Day in July. The difference is attributable to outdoor irrigation. Assuming a growth number of 3,993 EQRs, future demand will range from 71.9-acre-feet in February to 177.4 acre-feet in July. One acre-foot equals approximately 325,850 gallons. One CFS equals 646,272 gallons/day or slightly less than 2 acre-feet.

New Castle can serve 4,350 EQRs with current average use without implementing new conservation measures, curtailing deliveries or expanding supplies. Beyond 4,350 EQRs, deliveries start to fall short in the highest use month of July during dry hydrologic conditions. This projection is based on raw water supply rather than infrastructure that might limit delivery capacity.



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Table 1
Available Water by Right
 Average Hydrologic Conditions
 [acre-feet, except as noted]

Water Right	Coryell Ditch	New Castle Water Works System & Pipeline	New Castle Augmentation Station	Total Available
Rate [cfs]	2.8	2.7	4.0	9.5
Admin. No.	12205.00000	14494.00000	50038.49085	-
Jan	0.0	163.9	245.5	409.4
Feb	0.0	148.0	221.8	369.8
Mar	0.0	163.9	245.5	409.4
Apr	0.0	158.6	237.6	396.2
May	64.8	163.9	245.5	474.2
Jun	67.8	158.6	237.6	464.0
Jul	76.6	163.9	245.5	486.0
Aug	63.5	163.9	245.5	472.9
Sep	56.3	158.6	237.6	452.5
Oct	56.6	163.9	245.5	466.0
Nov	0.0	158.6	237.6	396.2
Dec	0.0	163.9	245.5	409.4

Table 2
Available Water by Right
 Dry-year Hydrologic Conditions
 [acre-feet, except as noted]

Water Right	Coryell Ditch	New Castle Water Works System & Pipeline	New Castle Augmentation Station *	Total Available
Rate [cfs]	2.8	2.7	4.0	9.5
Admin. No.	12205.00000	14494.00000	50038.49085	-
Jan	0.0	163.9	245.5	409.4
Feb	0.0	148.0	221.8	369.8
Mar	0.0	163.9	245.5	409.4
Apr	0.0	158.6	237.6	396.2
May	64.8	163.9	245.5	474.2
Jun	67.8	158.6	237.6	464.0
Jul	76.6	0.0	244.9	321.5
Aug	63.5	0.0	242.4	305.9
Sep	56.3	0.0	214.0	270.3
Oct	56.6	0.0	216.6	273.1
Nov	0.0	158.6	237.6	396.2
Dec	0.0	163.9	245.5	409.4

* Augmented with 400 ac-ft of releases from Ruedi Reservoir to replace depletions to the River including transit losses assessed at 10%. Augmentation release schedule [ac-ft] as follows:

- Jul - 130
- Aug - 120
- Sep - 90
- Oct - 60

Figure 13



A 2002 joint Water Study with the Lakota Canyon Ranch identified a strategy for increasing water supplies with the following points.

- Make provisions to divert water from the Colorado River (project completed).
- Purchase additional rights in Elk Creek.
- Increase the capacity of the water treatment plant (planned for 2010).
- Investigate expansion of a new water treatment plant to accommodate future growth.

Water Delivery

There are three major components in the New Castle water distribution system:

1. **System intake** - Supplies raw water to the treatment facility.
2. **Treatment plant** - Filters and disinfects water for potable use.
3. **Distribution system** - Delivers treated water to the users.

System Intake

The water delivery system starts at the sedimentation pond located near the former KOA campground in the East Elk Creek Drainage. The pond is fed from a diversion structure on East Elk Creek. In the past, the delivery system was limited to 480 GPM by the capacity of the pipeline from this pond. Since 2000, the Town has made improvements to the system that increased delivery capacity to 2,700 GPM. In order to increase deliveries beyond this limit, a pipeline from the sedimentation pond would need to be pressurized and additional or larger pumps would need to be installed. These improvements will allow New Castle to deliver all of the Town's Colorado River rights.

Since 2000, water system revenues have increased 300% to \$777,600/year (2007). Expenditures have increased 400% to \$726,387 (2007). Total annual water production has increased since 2000 by 58% from 150,870,000 gallons to 260,140,000 gallons. Water system tap fees have increased from \$2,250 in 2000 to \$6,000 in 2008. At the same time, annual per capita usage levels have gone down, from a high of 88,254 in 2001 to a low of 70,902 in 2007. This trend towards lower per capita usage reflects the increasing block rate fee structure that imposes increased costs for usage beyond 15,000 gallons. There are higher water use and tap fee rates for out-of-town users.

Raw Water Irrigation

During the warm-weather months, New Castle delivers raw water through the Red Rock Ditch to irrigate portions of Castle Valley Ranch and Lakota Canyon PUD. Untreated water can be delivered to the Red Rock Ditch by gravity flow either from East Elk Creek or by way of a pump from the Colorado River. The ditch delivers up to 185,000 GPD of irrigation water to a pipeline that parallels Castle Valley Boulevard ending at the Faas Ranch property. Lakota Canyon PUD pumps up to 600 GPM from this pipeline as needed. It is anticipated that raw water will be made available through this system to future development in Castle Valley and Lakota. Presently, New Castle is planning for improvements to the water treatment and delivery system. A portion of these improvements will extend raw water irrigation to additional areas in Castle Valley. In addition, the Town is installing a new well in the River Park area on the south side of the Colorado River to provide untreated irrigation water to the new park and to the common areas of the River Park PUD. New Castle is investigating expansion of the raw water irrigation system to serve other parts of Town.



Water Treatment

The water treatment facility includes five 325 gallon per minute (GPM) filter beds (1,625 GPM total capacity). Turbidity during spring runoff limits the plant's capacity below user demand. During May and June, when demand is high and production is limited by turbidity, the plant can have a deficit of 160,000 gallons per day. In November 2008, the voters approved a bond issue to add a single additional filter bed to the water plant. Financing for this capital improvement came from a local mill levy increase. The project will expand the design capacity of the plant to 3.5 million gallons/day from the current capacity of roughly 2.34 million gallons/day. Actual water delivery will vary depending on daily conditions.



Water Delivery

Potable water is delivered through a network of pipes, tanks and pumps. In new development, water system infrastructure is installed by developers before homes or businesses are constructed. New infrastructure is designed and installed according to Town standards and is subject to Town inspection. Areas of town served by older water mains are subject to service interruptions because of breaks and the age of the system. This older infrastructure is a source of water loss and additional expense.

Wastewater Treatment



The existing plant has a design capacity of 200,000 - 230,000 gallons/day (0.2 - 0.23 MGD) but actual capacity is around 183,000 gallons per day (GPD) due to aging equipment. Recently, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) increased the permitted plant capacity to 350,000 GPD because the wastewater plant expansion is under construction. The facility expansion will be completed in 2009 and will similarly raise the engineered capacity of the facility to 350,000 GPD. Average daily flows for 2006 were 201,000 gallons/day, leading to strain on the equipment and frequent "upset" conditions that occur when inflows exceed treatment capacity. Growth over 2007-2008 prompted the Town to

accelerate the timetable for plant expansion. Wastewater plant expansion is in progress with completion expected by the end of 2009. The cost of this expansion is approximately \$8 million. The project is financed by a loan from the State of Colorado Water Resources and Power Authority and a grant from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. The expansion will increase the CDPHE permitted capacity of the wastewater treatment plant from 200,000 gallons/day to 600,000 gallons/day, and the plant design capacity will increase from 350,000 to 600,000 gallons/day. These improvements are expected to extend the plant's useful life by 20 years. The new improvements include new aeration basins, digesters,



clarification tanks and a sludge centrifuge and odor control measures. The expansion currently underway is sized to serve the undeveloped land within the Town's municipal boundary. The 201 Water Quality Study predicts an ultimate capacity of 2.1 MGD at full build-out within the service area. Historic use identified in the Engineering Report for the plant expansion (Schmueser Gordon Meyer, February, 2008) states that a 1.8 MGD capacity (the lower end of the 201 Plan projections) is the anticipated future build-out capacity. Future phases of the plant (tripling the capacity) should not be required until at least 2028. Construction time is estimated to be 18 months from groundbreaking. Presently, the major constraint on wastewater treatment flows to the plant is an undersized (8") wastewater main running parallel to and south of Main Street between the treatment plant and the Burning Mountain PUD. Future development in areas served by this main will require capacity expansion of this pipeline.

Annual wastewater revenues have increased from \$143,354 to \$441,750 (+308%) since 2000. Expenditures increased from \$165,264 to \$441,202 (+267%). During the same period, wastewater influent has gone up from 138,320 gallons per day (GPD) to 243,180 GPD (+175%). Tap fees were raised from \$2,250 to \$6,000. The annual number of purchased taps increased from 51 in 2003 to 225 in 2007. In 2007, River Park PUD oversized and extended potable water and wastewater mains to serve their project and to permit additional taps for development south of the Colorado River.

Schools

There are two elementary and one middle school in New Castle.

1. **Riverside Middle School**, grades 5-7. Riverside is in a new building in Castle Valley at the corner of Alder Ave. and Castle Valley Boulevard adjacent to Kathryn Senor Elementary School
2. **Elk Creek Elementary** pre-kindergarten - 4th grade. Elk Creek Elementary is located west of Elk Creek and north of Highway 6 & 24 at the west end of town. It was converted to an elementary school when Riverside Middle School was moved to a new facility in Castle Valley in 2008.
3. **Kathryn Senor Elementary** pre-kindergarten – 4th grade. Kathryn Senor Elementary is located in Castle Valley at the corner of Alder Avenue and Castle Valley Boulevard.





Coal Ridge High School serves the high school age population. It is located on the north side of Highway 6 & 24 in Peach Valley approximately 2.5 miles west of New Castle.

Registration at local schools has increased steadily over the last several years. Riverside Middle School grew from 473 to 684 students between 2001 and 2009. Kathryn Senior Elementary expanded from 347 students to 548 between 2001 and 2007. That enrollment decreased by approximately 300 students in 2008 with the opening of the new Elk Creek Elementary School. Enrollment at Coal Ridge High School grew from 246 students in its first year (2005) and increased to 498 in 2008.

Annual costs per student are approximately \$29,677/student. No new school facilities are in the planning stages, but the Re-2 School District will be evaluating facilities needs in October 2009. Land acreage standards for new schools are as follows:

Facility Type	Acreage
Elementary schools	10
Middle schools	15+
High schools	40+

Figure 14

Athletic fields, student parking and higher enrollment at larger centralized high schools generate larger acreages for high schools. It is the District's objective to keep elementary and middle schools neighborhood-oriented where they can be readily accessed and served by buses and parents. School siting decisions are often driven by the practical needs of affordable land/land already owned rather than by larger planning concerns.

Recent Garfield County growth projections show a 4.6% annual growth rate through 2010 and 4.5% annual growth between 2010 and 2015. This will result in a district-wide enrollment increase of 4,848 students to 6,319 students (30% increase). The current severe economic recession has reduced short-term growth rates, so the District is reevaluating future enrollment and facility needs.

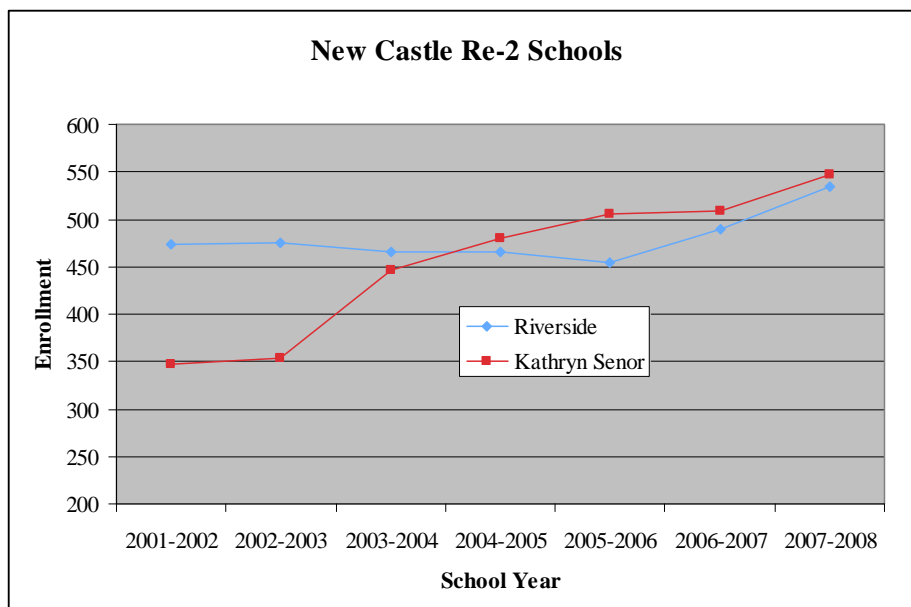


Figure 15



Energy Development

The nature of extractive industries is that they respond to market conditions with cycles of expansion and contraction. This comprehensive planning process started in late 2007 during a period of rapid Garfield County gas well permitting and drilling activity. Now in 2009, the national and worldwide economy is experiencing a severe economic recession. This has slowed local gas industry drilling activity. Research continues on developing commercial-scale oil shale facilities, but future market conditions and national energy policy decisions will likely affect the timing and implementation of these energy options. It is probable that the gas drilling activity and its associated impacts will increase again with favorable market pricing and available pipeline capacity. Awareness of these cycles will help the reader understand the unpredictability and variable nature of this Energy Development section.

Garfield County, Colorado, includes lands with substantial coal, oil shale and natural gas energy reserves. Since the early 1900s, Garfield County has experienced a series of boom/bust cycles associated with oil shale development. The most recent boom/bust occurred in the early 1980s. During the 1980s boom, when Exxon and Union Oil were developing their oil shale operations in Parachute, thousands of workers moved to Garfield and Mesa County in pursuit of jobs. In May 1982, Exxon shut down their project in Parachute and overnight over 4,000 jobs evaporated. Recently, with the increased prices of crude oil there has been renewed interest in oil shale development. The BLM has issued leases to Shell Oil, and EGL Resource as part of an effort to investigate the commercial potential of different shale oil extraction processes.

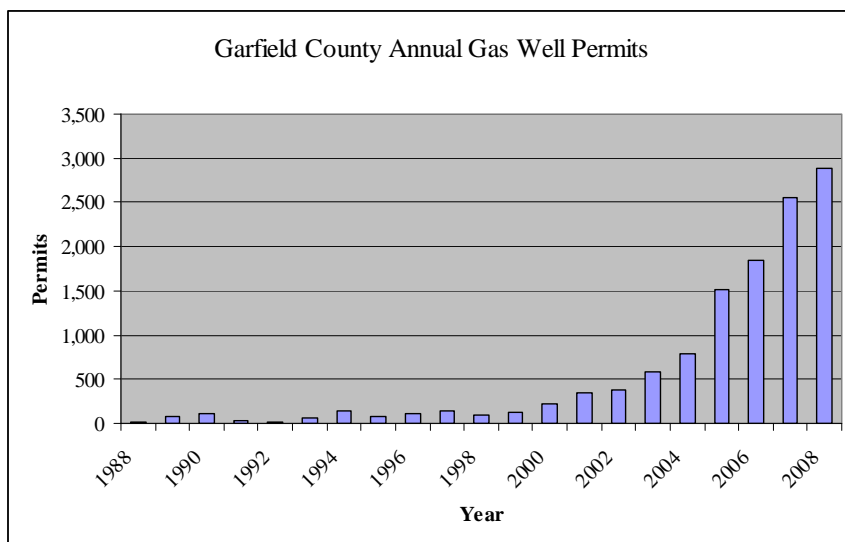


Figure 16

Natural gas exists in Garfield County in tight sands formations deep in the earth. Natural gas drilling activities have occurred for many years in the county, but drilling activity began to accelerate significantly beginning in 2004. Figure 16 shows Garfield County gas well permit activity from 1988 through 2008. Garfield County has led the state of Colorado in drilling permit totals since 2005. Most of the permitting and drilling activity has taken place south of Silt/Rifle Colorado, in the Rulison area and near the Town of Parachute. In late 2008 and continuing into 2009, gas drilling activities have been substantially curtailed due to declining natural gas prices, competition from less expensive gas in the East, oversupply due to substantial drilling activities and pipelines operating at capacity. These factors and



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others caused the energy companies to curtail drilling activities 30% to 40%. The gas industry is relatively mobile and can gear up or down in short time frames. Gas drilling activities are anticipated to resume when prices increase and additional pipelines are completed allowing gas to flow to remote markets.

New Castle lies on the easterly edge of the natural gas drilling areas and is approximately 25 miles east of the rich oil shale deposits between Parachute and Rifle, Colorado.

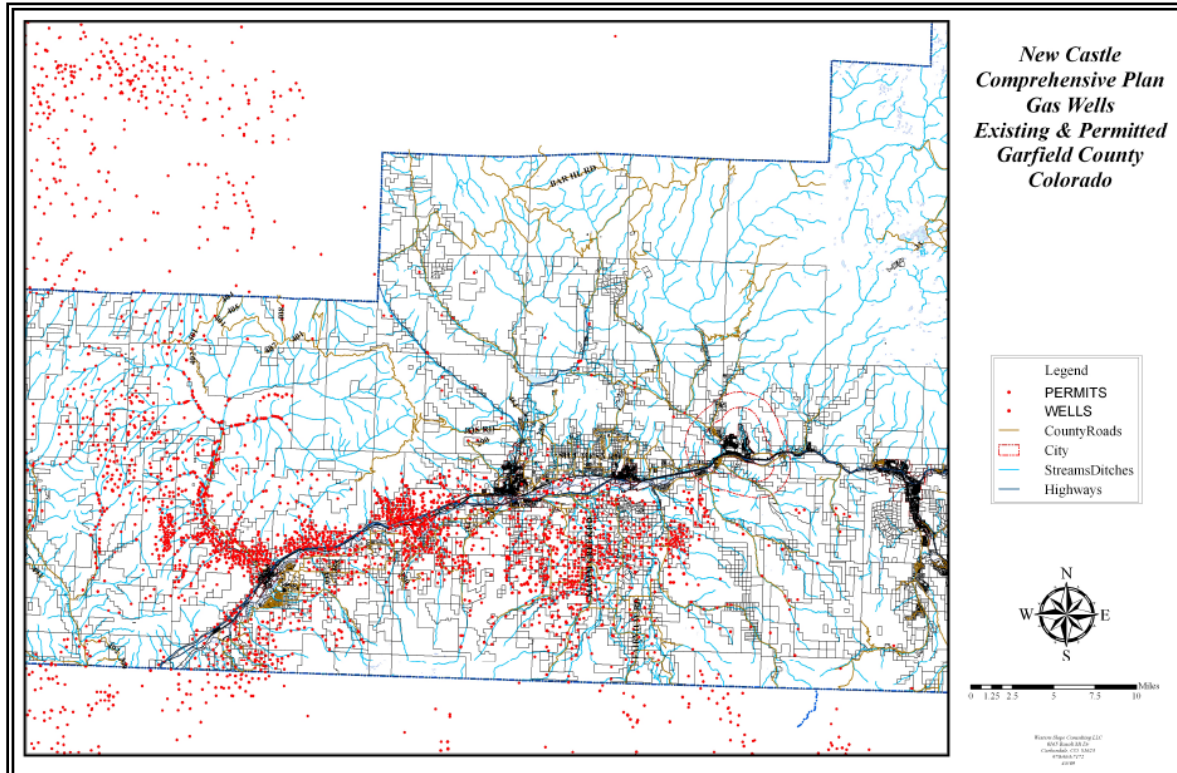


Figure 17

New Castle experiences secondary impacts from oil shale and natural gas development. Energy workers associated with the gas industry occupy most of the hotel rooms between Glenwood Springs and Grand Junction, including New Castle. During the 1980s oil shale boom, the Town experienced increased employment for builders/contractors and then a loss of jobs during the bust. Similarly, the natural gas boom created employment opportunities for County residents. However, the recent decline in drilling activity, coupled with the recent national economic downturn, has substantially reduced local energy industry employment.

New Castle is located adjacent to the 100-mile long Grand Hogback. The Hogback is a sedimentary rock monocline that extends from Redstone, Colorado, northwest into Wyoming. This iconic formation includes large coal deposits mined during the last century. There are currently no active coalmines in New Castle, but during the last 20 years, mining proposals immediately outside New Castle have been considered by Garfield County. Several of the older mines in New Castle are on fire because of historic mine disaster explosions that killed a number of miners. Occasionally smoke and steam can be seen on



the steep sides of the hogback and there are areas that readily melt snow because of the high ground temperatures.

There remains a potential for coal mining or coal-bed methane development activity adjacent to New Castle in the Hogback. These activities would have a direct impact on the community. Development of these coal resources would adversely affect County Road 335 and the I-70 interchange with truck/vehicle traffic. As was noted at the beginning of this section, future development of coal-bed methane or coal resources in New Castle will be largely dependent on national and international markets.

The New Castle community survey and other public input during the planning process demonstrate that New Castle does not view itself as an energy-focused industrial community. Coal mining played an important role in New Castle's history, but it is evident that the community currently has a different view of its future. Continued urbanization in New Castle and community expansion will make it less likely that extractive industries will be compatible land uses in or adjacent to the Town. It is probable that future proposals for coal mining, coal-bed methane or other mining industries will be met with strong opposition from town and area residents.

Future Land Use Plan

The New Castle Comprehensive Plan includes the Future Land Use Map that must be used in conjunction with the following narrative on future uses. Together the information comprises the Future Land Use Plan for New Castle. The plan and map together illustrate and describe land-use patterns, types of uses, densities, location and character of future development. The Future Land Use Plan is not "zoning" per se, but may be used by New Castle to modify existing zoning or to establish new zone districts. In addition, this information is to be used by the public, town staff and decision makers to guide the land use review and decision-making process. The Future Land Use Plan is not intended to predetermine the details of specific applications or the exact boundaries of development areas. These details are left to the creative design work of applicants within the overall context of the New Castle Comprehensive Plan. The Future Land Use Plan establishes a framework within which development plans must be designed, evaluated by New Castle and ultimately completed if approved. It is the goal of the Future Land Use Plan to:

- Ensure a variety and mix of uses that complement the existing New Castle land-use patterns.
- Offer excellent non-motorized access and interconnection between use areas for both motorized and non-motorized traffic.
- Guarantee a balanced mix of housing types that support a broad range of pricing within the market.
- Make certain there are adequate open spaces, trails and connected parks.
- Offer protection of sensitive natural areas, preservation of older trees stands and conservation of resources.
- Support development of activity centers that include a sense of place where the public can interact, find services, and secure employment, and that are sustainable in the long term.
- Allow for a feathered-edge community that transitions to rural areas where open lands and agricultural uses predominate.
- Concentrate development in areas where there is good access, efficiently provided services and cost-effective utility extensions.
- Promote service delivery efficiency and energy conservation in future development areas.



The Future Land Use Plan focuses on areas outside of the existing municipal boundary. The majority of land within New Castle has been master-planned as part of existing large and small PUDs. The balance of developed New Castle includes the historic core, smaller PUDs, and lands that are zoned. A few large landowners control the majority of land outside of the incorporated boundary and within the Urban Growth Boundary. This is an advantage to future development because single-owner control of large parcels allows coordinated master planning. Comprehensive planning for these lands supports integrated design instead of annexation/development of disparate smaller parcels.

Land-Use Classification	Gross Unit/Acre	Acreage	Total Potential Units	Unit Based Projected Population
Rural Low Density	0.1	1,759	176	468
Clustered Residential	4	219	876	2,331
Mixed Use-Residential Focus 4-6/Acre	5	357	1,784	4,745
Mixed Use-Residential Focus 6-10/Acre	7.5	498	3,737	9,940
Mixed Use-Commercial Focus	10	112	1,117	2,970
Business Campus	6	39	234	622
Planned Urban Center	15	522	7,830	20,829
Open Space	0	842	0	
Environmental Protection	0	244	0	
2.66 Persons per Household	2.66			
Future Population				
Current Population (2007)	3,699			
New Population	41,906			
Total Future Population	45,605			

Figure 18

Figure 18 above is an estimate of potential build-out and population in future annexation areas shown on the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. This information is based upon developed acreages and assumptions of densities. This information is not intended to be absolute, but instead, to indicate the possible future growth capacity. Actual build-out population will depend on many variables that will be determined with future annexations and development proposals.

Successful development applications must be substantially compliant with the Comprehensive Plan to move forward in the approval process. The Planning Commission after considering staff recommendations shall determine substantial compliance with the comprehensive plan. Substantial compliance means conformance to 80% or more of the goals and policies contained in this plan. An applicant should have the flexibility to achieve compliance with the provisions of the comprehensive plan through design layout, zoning, application of design standards, landscaping, non-motorized access, and the other provisions in this document. It shall be the applicant's obligation to quantify and clearly demonstrate how their application complies with the plan requirements. Staff's role, among other things, shall be to verify and quantify compliance and forward recommendations to the Planning Commission.



Future Land Use Map includes the following land-use categories.

Planned Urban Center.

Types of Uses

A wide variety and integrated mix of uses is characteristically found in a well-balanced complete urban center. Incorporated in this classification are ground level retail, services, offices, restaurants, hotels, entertainment, civic functions with second-level offices, services, dining, and apartment/condo residential units. Fourth story (and above) uses are predominately residential in character and may include apartments, penthouse space, rooftop gardens and recreation facilities.

Density

This area should support densities (commercial and/or residential) between 15 and 25 units per net acre or more depending on quality of design. Densities should be achieved with multistoried structures with up to four stories. Five-story structures may be considered depending on compatibility with adjacent uses, visual impacts and serviceability by the Fire District. Adjacent building heights should not vary dramatically. For example, a two-story structure should not exist adjacent to a four- or five-story structure. Building height variation on adjacent structures should not differ by more than one story. High-quality design and engineering are critical to achieve these densities. These details will be paramount to the review process and it is the applicant's obligation to demonstrate clearly the details of these designs early in the process before any town entitlements are granted.

Location

This designation is located east of the I-70 interchange and north/south of Highway 6 & 24 as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Design Characteristics

Site layout and architectural design that incorporate elements of smart growth, new urbanist concepts and a street grid system with high levels of connectivity are the hallmarks of a planned urban center. Quality building design and placement should give rise to a sense of "place" to make a quality living environment. People, not automobiles, dominate the landscape. On-street parking is allowed, but primary parking areas should be located behind buildings, in internal courtyards, underground and/or in locations that minimize the visual dominance of vehicles. Site designs will incorporate plazas, natural open spaces with outdoor seating, trees for shade and places for social interaction. Outdoor cafés and use of outdoor spaces by businesses add to the desirability of outdoor spaces and community vitality. Lighting is tastefully executed and well designed to be directed to its particular function, to minimize glare and over-lighting, lighting trespass and night sky pollution. The planned urban center is truly a location where varieties of uses coexist and residents live, work, play and interact in this environment. Engineering designs in the planned urban center incorporate state-of-the-art drainage systems that use natural filtration, trees/landscaping for natural cooling, non-treated irrigation water, xeric plant species and other techniques to minimize demand on utility systems. The density in the Planned Urban Center should support shuttle service to maintain an important linkage between the historic downtown and the newly developed area. New Castle's intent is to complement the downtown and ensure support for the historic core.



Business Campus

Types of Uses

The area includes a mix of compatible employment-generating uses that consists of offices, services, light manufacturing, publishing, research/development, compatible trades, studios for artisans/artists, compatible light industrial activities, compatible wholesale sales (without “big-box” type structures) and similar activities. Restaurants, retail activities and similar functions are of a scale that supports the principal functions in the business campus, but are not a regional draw. Residential uses exist on the upper levels of buildings to make available workforce housing, thereby adding to the dynamic vitality of the business campus.

Density

Net building densities range from 15 to 25 units per acre. Higher multistoried building densities with zero side setbacks are supported in the business campus. Building densities should be great enough to support transit-oriented development.

Location

The area is located with good access to Highway 6 & 24 and I-70 as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Design Characteristics

A wide access bridge over the railroad and the interstate is required to afford vehicle/non-motorized access and circulation to this area.

Building mass is broken up by good architectural design. Large spaces required for business functions are masked by structure design. Large walls are broken up by variations in building materials, vertical and horizontal wall extensions or recesses and other creative methods of masking/breaking up large structures. Adjacent building heights should not vary dramatically. For example, a two-story structure should not exist adjacent to a four- or five-story structure. Building height variation on adjacent structures should not differ by more than one story. Buildings should front on wide sidewalks that are pedestrian/bicycle friendly. On-street parking is allowed, but primary parking areas should be located behind buildings, in internal courtyards, underground and/or in locations that minimize the visual dominance of vehicles. Site designs will incorporate plazas, natural open spaces with outdoor seating, trees for shade and places for social interaction. Outdoor cafés and use of outdoor spaces by businesses add to the desirability of the area and enhance community vitality. Lighting is tastefully executed and well-designed to be directed to its particular function and to minimize glare, over-lighting, lighting trespass and night sky pollution.

Business activities generating excessive noise, odor, glare, smoke, vibration or unsightly outdoor storage should not be located in the business campus or otherwise shall be sufficiently mitigated by strict standards so they are not a problem. Businesses that require deliveries by large semis should be located on the periphery where there is good access to the rear of the buildings without forcing large truck traffic through the center of the business campus.

Mixed Use-Commercial Focus

The area has similar use characteristics to the Planned Urban Center, but in a less intensive setting. It includes a mix of compatible commercial areas including civic functions, restaurants, retail, office, services, entertainment and Transit Oriented Development (TOD). This mixed-use commercial area



builds a sense of "place" in a quality living environment. Public gathering spaces offer important sites for social interaction and community vitality. Good community design standards include quality architectural design with building articulation and produce a human-scale environment that also supports pedestrian accessibility. Quality lighting, tree-lined streets and an abundance of landscaped areas enhance the outdoor realm and make it inviting for residents and visitors. Residential uses exist on the upper levels of buildings and enhance community vitality. An interconnected street grid with safe pedestrian crossings, on-street parking, alleys and narrower street sections offer excellent connectivity and easy access from multiple directions.

Types of Uses

The primary uses in this area are commercial (at least 70%) with other residential or noncommercial uses not exceeding 30% of the square foot occupancy. Uses include small and medium sized retail (not exceeding 20,000 square feet in a single structure), a variety of services, lodging, entertainment, ground level retail, offices, restaurants, entertainment, civic functions, lower and upper level offices, dining, and apartment/condo residential units. Upper-story residential uses include apartments, lofts and live/work units. Compatible light industrial activities are permitted in this district.

Density

Multi-storied mixed-use structures up to 20 units per acre with excellent design.

Location

Mixed Use-Commercial Focus is located where there is good vehicular access near intersections and adjacent to other larger commercial sites. The Future Land Use Map identifies these locations.

Design Characteristics

Mixed Use-Commercial Focus incorporates ample pedestrian/bicycle functions but also accommodates vehicle access to support regional retail sales and services. Non-motorized access between uses, across driveways and to off-site locations is designed to protect the user, offer shade and minimize conflicts with vehicles. These areas are serviced by public transit and incorporate TOD (transit oriented development) designs. On-street parking is allowed, but primary parking areas are located behind buildings, in internal courtyards, underground and/or in locations that minimize the visual dominance of vehicles. Site designs incorporate plazas, natural open spaces with outdoor seating together with trees for shade. Lighting is tastefully executed and well-designed to be directed to its particular function and to minimize glare, over-lighting, lighting trespass and night sky pollution. Light industrial uses and other uses that require storage must enclose items in an architecturally compatible structure. Landscaping/nursery businesses will have outdoor storage areas for plants, shrubs, trees and other live materials. Decorative stone, soil enhancements, brick pavers, fertilizers and similar materials may be stored outdoors in aesthetically pleasing screened areas.

Business activities that generate excessive noise, odor, glare, smoke, vibration or unsightly outdoor storage should not be located in the Mixed Use-Commercial Focus area or otherwise sufficiently mitigated by strict standards so they are not a problem. Businesses that require deliveries by large semis should be located on the periphery where there is good access to the rear of the buildings.



Mixed Use-Residential Focus with a net density of 6-10 Dwelling Units/Acre

Types of Uses

Varieties of residential structures characterize this area. Residential units include multi-family buildings, townhomes, four-plex/tri-plex/duplexes and small/medium-sized single-family. Residential uses comprise 75% of the area and non-residential functions do not exceed 25%. Non-residential functions include neighborhood commercial, small offices, home businesses, day care facilities and other like uses. Live/work units and/or home businesses will be included in the 75% residential standard as long as the occupant of the residential unit is a full-time employee of the business. Live/work units and home businesses may also employ persons that do not reside on the premises.

Density

Net residential densities in this area may be up to 10 dwelling units per acre.

Location

These districts are located on the periphery of the New Castle urban core as shown on the Future Land Use Map. The location of these uses is designed to concentrate densities closer to the urban core where services, utilities, parks, road access and other necessary functions cost-effectively support the density.

Design Characteristics

Varieties of residential structures characterize this area. Residential buildings may stand alone or may contain live/work activities. On-street parking is allowed, but side- and rear-loaded parking is required for building occupants. Parking accommodations must be made for non-resident employees on lot or within close proximity to the place of employment. Parks, open spaces, greenbelts and trail/sidewalk systems are important design components. These neighborhoods attract a variety of residents with a range of incomes. Neighborhood interaction is an important characteristic of these residential areas. Garages should be side- or rear-loaded and do not dominate the front building façade. Street lighting and exterior building lighting is downcast, appropriately directed to the intended purpose and prevents glare, over-lighting and lighting trespass. Tree-lined streets utilize narrower road sections to reduce traffic speeds but still allow on-street parking. Sidewalks are separated from the roadway by a street-lawn that is used for snow storage and as drainage infiltration basins. Buildings include front porches. Site plans have shallow front yard setbacks, rear alley access, utility feeds from the alley and zero rear yard setbacks for alley-accessed garages. Lot sizes range from 3,000 to 5,000 square feet for detached single-family structures. Lot widths of 25 feet per dwelling unit accommodate small-lot single-family and townhome units. Larger lot sizes will be necessary for duplex/tri-plex/four-plex and multi-family structures.

Mixed Use-Residential Focus 4-6 Dwelling Units/Acre

Types of Uses

Varieties of residential structures characterize this area. Residential units include multi-family, townhomes, duplex/tri-plex/four-plexes and small/medium-sized single-family. Residential uses comprise 75% of the area and non-residential functions do not exceed 25%. Non-residential functions include neighborhood commercial, small offices, home businesses, day care facilities and other like uses. Live/work units and/or home businesses will be included in the 75% residential standard as long as the occupant of the residential unit is a full-time employee of the business. Live/work units and home businesses may also employ persons that do not reside on the premises.



Density

Net residential densities in this area may be up to 6 dwelling units per acre.

Location

These areas are located on the periphery of the Mixed Use-Residential Focus with a net density of 6 to 10 dwelling units/acre shown on the Future Land Use Map. The location of these uses is planned to transition lower densities away from the urban core, but still maintain cost-effective services, utilities, parks, road access and other necessary functions.

Design Characteristics

A variety of building designs, sizes and types characterize this area with slightly lower densities. Structures may serve stand-alone residential functions or may include live/work activities. On-street parking is allowed, but side- and rear-loaded parking is required for building occupants. Parking accommodations must be made for non-resident employees on lot or within close proximity to the place of employment. Parks, open spaces, greenbelts and trail/sidewalk systems are important design components. These neighborhoods attract a variety of residents with a range of incomes. Neighborhood interaction is an important characteristic of these residential areas. Garages should be side- or rear-loaded and do not dominate the front building façade. Street lighting and exterior building lighting is downcast, appropriately directed to the intended purpose and prevents glare, over-lighting and lighting trespass. Streets are tree-lined and narrower road sections reduce traffic speeds but accommodate on-street parking. Sidewalks are separated from the roadway by a street-lawn that is used for snow storage and drainage infiltration basins. Buildings incorporate front porches. Site plans have shallow front yard setbacks, rear alley access, utility feeds from the alley and zero rear yard setbacks for alley-accessed garages. Lot sizes range from 4,000 to 7,500 square feet for detached single-family structures. Lot widths of 25 feet per dwelling unit accommodate small-lot single-family and townhome units. Larger lot sizes will be necessary for duplex/tri-plex/four-plex and multi-family structures.

Lower Density with Clustered Residential Option.

Types of Uses

Single-family, patio homes and tri-plex/duplex structures characterize this area. Residential uses comprise 90% of the area and non-residential functions do not exceed 10%. Non-residential functions include neighborhood commercial, home businesses and daycare facilities. Home businesses will be included in the 90% residential standard as long as the occupant of the residential unit is a full-time employee of the business. Home businesses may employ persons that do not reside on the premises.

Density

Net residential densities in this area may be up to 4 dwelling units per acre with flexibility to average densities across the site to cluster units closer to services, access roadways and to keep units off designated open space or away from environmentally sensitive areas.

Location

These areas are sited on the periphery of the Mixed Use-Residential Focus with a net density of 4 to 6 dwelling units/acre shown on the Future Land Use Map. The location of these uses allows a transition to lower densities away from the urban core, but maintains cost-effective services, utilities, parks, road access and other necessary functions. This lower density clustered option is designed to feather



residential density at the urban periphery where it abuts public lands and the Urban Growth Boundary. Lower densities with clustering minimize service demands and long utility extensions.

Design Characteristics

Single-family, patio home, duplex and tri-plex building designs and types characterize this area with lower densities. Building designs and lot sizes facilitate clustering on smaller lots by averaging density across an entire site. Structures may serve standalone residential functions or may include live/work activities. On-street parking is allowed, but side- and rear-loaded parking is required for building occupants. Parking accommodations must be furnished for non-resident employees on-lot or in close proximity to the place of employment. Some parks, large open spaces, greenbelts and trail/sidewalk systems are important design components. Neighborhood interaction remains an important quality of these residential areas. Garages should be side or rear-loaded and do not dominate the front building façade. Minimum street lighting primarily at intersections and exterior building lighting is downcast, appropriately directed to the intended purpose and prevents glare, over-lighting and lighting trespass. Streets are tree-lined and narrower road sections reduce traffic speeds but accommodate on-street parking. Sidewalks are separated from the roadway by a street-lawn that is used for snow storage and drainage infiltration basin. Trail systems are as important as sidewalks in this lower-density area to access open spaces and provide transportation/recreation functions. Buildings include front porches. Roadway lengths in this area are minimized by lot design or clustering the units. The traditional street grid may not be the most appropriate design configuration and curvilinear streets or modified street grids may be most fitting. Lot sizes range from 4,000 to 6,000 square feet for clustered units or range from 5,000 to 11,000 square feet for detached single-family structures. Lot widths may be 25 feet per dwelling unit for clustered single-family, patio home and tri-plex/duplex units.

Rural Low Density

Types of Uses

Large lot single-family, working ranches/farms, ranchettes, open pastures and rural qualities characterize this area.

Density

Net densities are 10 or more acres per dwelling unit.

Location

These lands are situated in unincorporated Garfield County outside the urban growth boundary shown on the Future Land Use Map. Primary land-use jurisdiction lies with Garfield County. These rural areas represent the open lands that extend beyond the feathered urban edge. It is intended that these areas will remain low density and rural to minimize service demands. Higher residential densities are inappropriate in this area and should be directed to urban areas where municipal services and utilities can cost-effectively support density.

Design Characteristics

Large lot single-family and rural agricultural uses characterize these areas. Roads may be gravel or have paved surfaces but typically do not include curb/gutter or sidewalks. Rural trail systems such as the LoVa Trail may support non-motorized access, but lower traffic volumes in most locations allow non-motorized access on roadways. Open space is on private and public lands. Active parks are usually not found in rural areas.



Environmental Protection

Types of Uses

Passive open space, primitive trails and areas where human activity is discouraged or prohibited due to identified wildlife concerns. Residential and non-residential uses are not located in these areas.

Density

Not applicable because residential and non-residential uses are not permitted.

Location

Adjacent to river corridors and other environmentally sensitive locations. This designation includes floodplains, riparian/wetlands, identified sensitive wildlife habitat and may extend beyond those areas to provide buffering from residential and non-residential activities.

Design Characteristics

This area is distinguished by natural undisturbed habitat that may be traversed by primitive trails. Trail routes may offer access to isolated nodes to minimize impact to wildlife and habitat. There may be informational waysides to educate visitors about the natural qualities of the area. Building setbacks of at least 100 feet protect waterways and habitat from human encroachment. Restrictions prevent surface or groundwater contamination from herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers and other human pollutants. Vegetation management techniques are implemented to eradicate invasive species and noxious weeds.

Open Space

Types of Uses

Undeveloped lands, trails and natural passive parks are the primary uses.

Density

Not applicable because residential and non-residential uses are not permitted.

Location

These lands are located in areas that historically have not been used for agricultural purposes and are often covered by mature stands of trees. Open space areas are also located adjacent to highway corridors to provide buffering and to soften the appearance of the urban landscape. Open space areas are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Design Characteristics

This area is distinguished by natural undisturbed habitat that may be traversed by primitive trails. Trail routes may offer access to isolated nodes to minimize impact to wildlife and habitat. There may be informational waysides to educate visitors about the natural qualities of the area. Protections are utilized to prevent surface or groundwater contamination from herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers and other human pollutants. Vegetation management techniques are implemented to eradicate invasive species and noxious weeds.



Community Design Preferences

The New Castle visioning process included a visual preference survey. This procedure offered participants an opportunity to identify their preferred design concepts for incorporation in the Comprehensive Plan. By indicating their preferences, participants help establish a design vision for New Castle that is valuable for developers, decision makers and citizens to evaluate design for new developments and other projects throughout the community. The following section describes the most preferred design options. Each category is accompanied by the preferred image and a description of the most desired features.

Community Layout.



Desired Features:

Pedestrian Friendly.

Good landscaping & street trees.

Excellent connectivity for motorized and non-motorized traffic.

Walking access to everything.

Single-Family Residential.





New Castle Comprehensive Plan

Desired Features:

Separated sidewalks.

Garages on alleys.

Sense of place.

Front porches on homes.

Good landscaping.

Residential Streetscape



Desired Features:

Better street tree planting space.

Lots of trees, mature vegetation for shade.

Safe for pedestrians.

Established neighborhood feel.

Streetscapes





New Castle Comprehensive Plan

Desired Features:

Creative parking.
Drought tolerant plants.
Two lanes with median.
Street section slows traffic and allows parking.

Appears well-planned for traffic and pedestrians.
Separated sidewalks with pleasant landscaping.
Walkable.

Downtown



Desired Features:

Diversity of storefronts.
Benches, attractive streetlights, varied sidewalks.

Landscape planters.
Good blend of landscape and hardscape.
Wide walkways, and separated parking.



Multifamily Residential



Desired Features:

Attractive architecture.

Rear-loaded garages.

Different façades and elevations.

Night Lighting



Desired Features:

Reflective lighting in building.

Minimal lighting trespass.

Can see into buildings for crime prevention.

Good lighting design.

Soft, downcast well-shielded lighting.



Pedestrian Crossings



Desired Features:

Texture defines use of space.
Changes in color and texture.

Use of brick.
Looks safe.

Streetlights



Desired Features:

Attractive, blends with area.
Good architectural style.

Antique style.



Pedestrian Access



Desired Features:

Buffer from street, flows with streets and houses.

Inviting and separated from street.

Unique shape walks and landscaping.

Residential Areas



Desired Features:

Parking offset from street.
Inviting neighborhood with no visible garages.
Street articulation.

Porches, varied elevations, detached sidewalk and fences.
Livable neighborhood.



Commercial



Desired Features:

Large setbacks and good appearance.

Good pedestrian access.

Inviting character and good lighting.

Comfortable separation of pedestrians and vehicles.

Use of brick.

User-friendly and human friendly.

Nice pedestrian mall.

Open Space



Desired Features:

Fits in with area and interesting aesthetics - bridge.

Curves and scenic walk.

Imitates local color pallet.

Good combination of trees, path and open space.



Alleys



Desired Features:

Garage access in back.

Nice architecture and good vehicle access.

Not congested and well maintained.

Good width.

River Corridors



Desired Features:

Pleasant appearance.

A variety of uses.

Access for public & recreation.

Safe uses.

Inviting, good active recreation.



Guiding Principles, Goals and Policies

In the following section, the major elements of the Comprehensive Plan are addressed in terms of a Guiding Principle that will direct town decisions and the Goals and Policies that will provide a context for those actions. The Guiding Principles are based on the core values of the community as expressed through the various public input opportunities that were part of the comprehensive planning process, including the community survey, stakeholder interviews, public meetings and Steering Committee contributions. The following principles, goals and policies are intended to provide direction to both the applicants and the Planning Commission concerning the topics set forth herein. These guidelines do not have the force of regulation unless and until they are incorporated into the New Castle Municipal Code.

1. Community Growth

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

New Castle is the determiner of its own destiny concerning new growth. Expansion of the community through buildout of existing developments, infill or redevelopment and expansion of the Town through annexation is accomplished as a matter of calculated decision-making. New growth and expansion in New Castle will maintain the concept of a compact community with a defined urban edge thereby avoiding sprawl. Ensuring a mix of uses both within the community as a whole and within individual developments will ensure the vitality of New Castle as it grows. This mix will allow housing, employment and services to coexist within walking/biking distance thereby reducing reliance on the automobile for all transportation. The choice to grow is based upon the long-term interests of the municipal residents, the community vision and economic health. New Castle experienced an average annual growth rate of 8.9 percent between 2000 and 2007. When asked for their opinion about growth, most New Castle community survey respondents desired a growth rate between 3 and 5 percent, resulting in a total population range of 4,600 to 5,600 in 10 years.

Goal CG-1: *Ensure that new development substantially conforms to the New Castle Comprehensive Plan principles, goals and policies.*

Policy CG-1A: The Comprehensive Plan will be updated every five years to keep quantitative and qualitative information current for the public, development community and decision makers.

Policy CG-1B: Applicants will be required to clearly demonstrate substantial conformity with the comprehensive plan in all applications.

Policy CG-1C: Town staff will prepare written information to the Planning Commission and Town Council evaluating application compliance with the provisions in the Plan.

Policy CG-1D: Non-compliant land-use applications shall be modified to conform substantially to the comprehensive plan or will be rejected.

Goal CG-2: *Growth in New Castle shall remain within the established Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) which is delineated based upon geography, current/future availability of urban services, community input and logical community expansion. This boundary defines the urban edge from surrounding rural/agricultural areas.*

Policy CG-2A: The outer edge of the UGB defines the long-term limits of municipal growth. The general policy is to concentrate higher densities in and around the geographic center of New Castle and the areas closest to the UGB will decrease to relatively lower densities.



Policy CG-2B: All new annexations shall be located within the UGB and contiguous to the existing municipal limits.

Policy CG-2C: Development outside town limits and within the UGB not eligible for annexation shall be reviewed jointly by the Town and County under the auspices of an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to ensure compliance with the comprehensive plan, adequate provision of municipal infrastructure/services and future urbanization.

Policy CG-2D: Development outside the UGB shall retain a rural residential and agricultural character with the intent that development with residential density greater than 1-unit/10 acres or commercial/light industrial character shall occur within the New Castle UGB.

Goal CG-3: *Annexations and future development outside of the existing New Castle municipal boundary should occur in sequential, cost-effective and logical steps based upon overall benefits to the community.*

Policy CG-3A: New Castle will grow in logical increments out from the existing urban core to provide cost-effective infrastructure extensions, provision of services and sequential growth.

Policy CG-3B: Flagpole annexations resulting in "leap-frog" growth will be discouraged.

Policy CG-3C: Annexation development applications shall pay for a fiscal impact analysis analyzing, at a minimum, municipal revenues, expenditures, service delivery impacts, infrastructure impacts and other development-related impacts to ensure that a development will provide an overall benefit to the community and will not result in diminished levels of service or financial costs to New Castle.

Policy CG-3D: New development shall be responsible for all development studies and costs including, but not limited to, services, water rights, parks/trails and on/off-site infrastructure to ensure that growth pays for itself.

Policy CG-3E: Annexation of new territory will be considered based upon an identified community need. Infill of existing undeveloped areas larger than 1 acre inside the municipal boundary is the highest priority.

Policy CG-3F: New annexations shall not decrease the existing levels of service to New Castle including utilities, emergency services, parks, open space, trails, law enforcement, town administration and schools.

Policy CG-3G: Primary future growth areas shown on the Future Growth Area Map in this plan include:

- A. East and north of the Colorado River, to a point near the intersection of County Road 240/Highway 6 & 24.
- B. Approximately 1 mile west along Highway 6 & 24.
- C. Approximately 1.25 miles northwest along County Rd. 245.

Policy CG-3H: Lands beyond the "Primary Future Growth Areas" should remain outside future municipal boundaries with the exception of properties east of the I-70 interchange and south of the Colorado River along County Road 335. This area has constraints due to single access, poor road condition and distance from municipal utilities/services. Annexation of these lands is a low priority because of these constraints.



Policy CG-3I: Development in future growth areas is dependent upon extension of utilities, adequate utility capacity, acceptable road access, proposed land uses and sequential expansion of the municipal boundary.

Policy CG-3J: New growth shall accommodate extension of all infrastructure to adjacent properties, including but not limited to, adequate infrastructure design/sizing and extensions to parcel boundaries.

Goal CG-4: New Castle should strive to achieve a balance of land-use categories (residential, business/commercial, light industrial, open space/parks) to attain a healthy relationship of land-use types. A healthy balance of land-use types taken as a whole are considered those that contribute to economic sustainability, job creation, housing, affordable housing, retail/services, recreation, wildlife/habitat and overall community enhancement.

Policy CG-4A: Large residential and commercial development (50 lots/units or greater) shall include a mix of land-use types that provide effectively integrated convenience retail, employment, services, parks/open space/trails, public transit and non-motorized access.

Policy CG-4B: Non-residential developments (1-acre or larger) shall include a mix of land-use types compatible with the non-residential uses that successfully incorporate housing, employment, public transit and non-motorized access.

Policy CG-4C: Planned unit developments (PUDs), enhanced zoning techniques, floating zones, density bonuses and other creative techniques shall be considered as mechanisms to support mixed-use development.

Policy CG-4D: New Castle supports location of compatible commercial/business development that creates a mix of uses, contributes to economic sustainability, job creation, retail/services, non-motorized accessibility and is within or adjacent to predominately residential areas.

Policy CG-4E: Review of development proposals will consider how each individual project fits into a fully-balanced community land-use structure.

Policy CG-4F: The Future Land Use Map and the policies in the comprehensive plan are important tools to guide decisions. It is an applicant's responsibility to demonstrate how a proposal works towards achieving a goal of balanced land uses.

Policy CG-4G: The New Castle Future Land Use Map is intended to allow flexibility in the designs of individual land-use proposals, but the map and accompanying policies shall be used to evaluate whether a proposal fits the intended map designation.

Policy CG-4H: Smaller separate applications shall be evaluated to ensure that collectively they support the concepts on the Future Land Use Map and overall principles contained in the comprehensive plan.

Policy CG-4I: The Future Land Use Map provides flexibility for new development considering market conditions, but the integrity of the use classifications on the map shall be maintained to ensure a mix and sustainable balance of use types.



Goal CG-5: New Castle embraces the 10 principles of Smart Growth because they provide a framework within which communities can make informed decisions about better ways to grow, create jobs, support economic development, enhance neighborhoods, provide housing, support transit options and achieve a variety of other long-term community benefits. Smart growth concepts are supported by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, American Planning Association, Environmental Protection Agency, City/County Management Association and a variety of civic organizations.

Policy CG-5A: The following 10 principles of Smart Growth² should be used to guide the public, land use applicants and local decision-makers to evaluate new development with a goal of achieving most or all of the principles in a development proposal.

- A. Mixed land uses.
- B. Incorporate compact building design.
- C. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
- D. Create walkable communities.
- E. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- F. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.
- G. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
- H. Provide a variety of transportation options.
- I. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective.
- J. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

Goal CG-6: New Castle shall implement the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan through its Municipal Code land-use regulations and intergovernmental agreements with Garfield County, the Re-2 School District, Burning Mountains Fire Protection District, BLM and other governmental or quasi-governmental agencies.

Policy CG-6A: New Castle shall review and revise its land-use regulations to ensure compatibility with, and to provide implementation of, the Comprehensive Plan within 18 months of plan adoption.

Policy CG-6B: New Castle shall work cooperatively with other governmental or quasi-governmental agencies through adopted Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) to achieve compliance with the provisions of the comprehensive plan in areas outside of the incorporated area and within a 3-mile radius of the municipal boundary.

Goal CG-7: New Castle shall require all new development to offset all negative development-related impacts based upon quantified fiscal impact analysis, traffic studies and utility studies and to pay all costs related to new infrastructure, infrastructure extensions, parks development and service impacts. This requirement shall include adequate collateralization of the improvements and provisions to offset the loss of collateralization value due to inflation.

² *Getting To Smart Growth II*: ISBN: 0-87326-139-9, International City/County Management Association. (Details about each of these principles can be found at <http://smartgrowth.org> or at the Colorado Department of Local Affairs website at <http://www.dola.state.co.us/dlg/osg/index.htm>, Office of Smart Growth, 1313 Sherman St., Rm. 521, Denver, CO 80203, TEL 303.866.4552.)



Policy CG-7A: New Castle shall quantify applicable unit costs (per capita, cost per gallon, cost per acre etc.) for basic services and update those costs annually to track costs of and levels of service to the community.

Policy CG-7B: New development will quantify impacts on existing community levels of service and complete a fiscal impact analysis to show the economic effects of the development on New Castle's financial condition.

Policy CG-7C: Fiscal impact analysis will be one of several tools the town uses in the land-use decision-making process as the community analyzes new growth.

2. Infrastructure

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

Adequate infrastructure for existing and proposed new growth both on-site and off-site is a prerequisite to approval of new development. New Castle operates central water and wastewater utilities designed to accommodate urban development in a cost-effective manner that avoids reduction of services to existing residents and meets all health department requirements. New Castle also provides a non-treated water system used for non-potable irrigation purposes. Use of raw water irrigation minimizes operating costs and reduces future capital cost needs on the potable water system. New development must plan and design for properly sized wastewater, potable and raw water systems to maintain adequate system capacity and to meet new development demands. Similarly, the municipal street system is designed to handle existing and/or approved unbuilt development in-town. New Castle will use its utility/street master plans, land-use policies and the Comprehensive Plan to evaluate utility and road extensions/expansions to areas not served.

Goal I-1: New Castle will continue to operate its water and wastewater facilities in a manner that provides high-quality service with adequate capacity to meet community needs including fire flow, potable use, irrigation and wastewater treatment. Fiscally, these systems are operated on an enterprise basis and fee structures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that user fees and tap fees (system development fees) are adequate to meet current and long-term financial needs. In addition, the Town will maintain a portfolio of water rights sufficient to serve current and future needs.

Policy I-1A: New development shall pay for on-site and off-site infrastructure improvements commensurate with the anticipated development demands based upon an acceptable engineering analysis.

Policy I-1B: It is the responsibility of new development to demonstrate how additional capacity to serve the project will be provided by the applicant without diminishing existing service levels.

Policy I-1C: New Castle will require town dedication of all or part of water rights associated with land proposed for annexation and/or development at a time and in amounts adequate to serve full build-out of the new development. A fee in lieu of water rights shall be required for proposed annexations and/or proposed developments with inadequate water rights. The amount of payment in lieu shall be sufficient to cover the cost of other water rights adequate in quantity and seniority to serve all development water needs at full build-out.

Policy I-1D: Additional plant or system capacity necessary to accommodate increased demands resulting from new growth shall be paid for by new development.



- Policy I-1E: New Castle will develop a five-year capital improvements plan (CIP) that is coordinated with the comprehensive plan to ensure that there is adequate financing and facility planning to meet projected growth needs.
- Policy I-1F: New Castle will track available water/sewer system EQR availability to ensure adequacy for peak demands by existing land uses and will allow new development demands when new system capacity is available.
- Policy I-1G: Annexed properties shall provide adequate legal water rights and physical water dedications required for raw water irrigation.
- Policy I-1H: New development will design and install raw water irrigation systems to serve all outside irrigation needs.
- Policy I-1I: Water & sewer fees (user and tap) will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and updated regularly based upon the costs of operating the facilities, changing regulations and system depreciation.
- Policy I-1J: Costs of road maintenance and replacement for the existing community will be quantified and monitored regularly to ensure that additional costs of the services caused by new growth will be borne by growth.
- Policy I-1K: Administrative costs necessary to serve new development infrastructure shall be calculated in the total cost of additional service demands and such cost shall be borne by new development.
- Policy I-1L: Other infrastructure costs such as new equipment acquisition, building expansion, vehicle acquisition and similar growth-related needs shall be borne by new growth.
- Policy I-1M: New Castle will evaluate and consider using impact fees on new development for infrastructure impacts/costs that are not otherwise compensated by revenues derived from the new development.
- Policy I-1N: New Castle will not accept ownership or maintenance responsibility for any roads that are not built to town standards, that pose any hazard, or that have not been improved to town standards.

3. Recreation and Tourism

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Recreation and tourism are important aspects of the local economy and lifestyle that the Town will support and enhance through its land use policies. The Town will strive to enhance local recreational opportunities and access to local public lands and recreational sites, and will encourage businesses and services that serve recreational needs. The Town will strive to support and increase tourism, visitation and recreational development.

Goal RT-1: *New Castle will work with the BLM and landowners to improve access between town and public lands and local waterways.*

Policy RT-1A: Development will not be allowed to block access to public lands or recreational sites including National Forest or Bureau of Land Management lands, local waterways or trails.



Policy RT-1B: The Town will work cooperatively with local, regional and national agencies and interest groups to secure rights-of-way, easements and property for access trails, gates, and other access features.

Policy RT-1C: The Town will work closely with public land managers such as the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to provide directional and informational signs directing visitors to public land access points.

Policy RT-1D: The Town will coordinate, develop and provide information in various forms mapping access points and related information (closures, restrictions, etc.).

Policy RT-1E: The Town will work to include boat ramps and fishing access points in plans for parks adjacent to the Colorado River.

Goal RT-2: *New Castle will increase the number and attractiveness of special events in Town.*

Policy RT-2A: Activities and events that may draw tourist traffic such as festivals, fairs and markets will be supported and encouraged.

Policy RT-2B: The Town will encourage businesses, non-profit organizations and government agencies to locate special events in Town.

Policy RT-2C: The Town will seek out opportunities to advertise its attractions and features that might attract more tourist and recreational visitation.

Goal RT-3: *Town-owned and managed tourist attractions will be developed and improved.*

Policy RT-3A: The Town will work actively with other agencies, including the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the state of Colorado to coordinate recreational development and access.

Policy RT-3B: The Town will add to and improve the Town's recreational facilities by developing and improving parks and public recreational sites and facilities in a timely fashion and in convenient locations.

Policy RT-3C: The Town will develop and distribute information in various formats, including the internet, on the tourist amenities and recreational attractions in the Town and surrounding area.

Goal RT-4: *Increase awareness of existing tourist amenities.*

Policy RT-4A: The Town will develop and implement a plan for identifying and promoting local tourist amenities and attractions.



4. Transportation

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

New Castle strives to be an accessible community for all forms of motorized and non-motorized transportation. A high level of connectivity is to be achieved by using traditional grid/alley street designs, looped streets, effective trail systems, sidewalks and other methods to provide easy access to town neighborhoods, commercial areas and employment centers. The transportation systems existing in New Castle consist of interstate, railroad, state highways, county roads, city streets, community trails/sidewalks and Roaring Fork Transit Authority public transit. Not all of these systems integrate with each other. For example, there are approximately 27 daily train trips through New Castle, but there is no rail public transit. I-70 bisects New Castle, but there is a single interchange that provides no non-motorized access north or south of the Colorado River. Main Street through New Castle is a four-lane state highway under the jurisdiction of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) with a focus on unimpeded traffic movement instead of pedestrian-oriented Main Street character. County roads feeding traffic to the I-70 interchange and the municipal street grid result in increasing traffic volumes without commensurate improvements to the municipal street system to accommodate increased traffic.



New Castle must work with CDOT and Garfield County to maintain an integrated roadway network in which creative designs provide for access alternatives, appropriate roadway expansion and multimodal transit systems that will meet both municipal needs as well as the needs of growth areas outside town. An overall transit master plan should be developed with involvement of all parties to ensure that future transportation systems improve mobility, assure safety, serve all forms of transportation, are tied to future growth in and out of town, and minimize congestion or conflicts.

Goal T-1: New Castle will plan for and maintain a high quality interconnected community transportation system that supports all forms of transportation including public transit, biking and walking, that reduces dependence on the individual automobile and that is designed to meet specific community needs.

Policy T-1A: New Castle will work with CDOT to assume ownership of State Highway 6 & 24 through town in order to make Main Street (Highway 6 & 24) a pedestrian-friendly narrower two or three lane roadway with enhancements appropriate to the historic downtown.

Policy T-1B: New Castle will work with CDOT to improve the Exit 105 interchange to meet the current and long-range traffic needs. These improvements may include roundabouts, pedestrian access to County Road 335, appropriate lighting, and other enhancements suitable to the primary community Gateway.

Policy T-1C: New Castle will work with CDOT, Garfield County and future developers to plan, design, finance and construct a second New Castle I-70 interchange near County Road 240 and Highway 6 & 24.

Policy T-1D: New Castle will maintain support for public transit with the Roaring Fork Transit Authority (RFTA) and strive to provide for incremental expansion of public transit commensurate with community growth and that accommodates bicycles.



- Policy T-1E: New development shall plan and provide for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) by consulting with the Town, RFTA and as appropriate, with CDOT and/or Garfield County.
- Policy T-1F: New development will ensure a high level of connectivity in on-street and off-street trail/sidewalk systems throughout the community by designing projects to accommodate both motorized and non-motorized traffic within and connecting to areas outside of the development.
- Policy T-1G: New Castle supports concepts of traditional neighborhood design and smart growth that includes appropriately designed and compatible narrower street sections that incorporate pedestrian-friendly crossings, traffic calming techniques, landscaping and lighting. The Town will consult with emergency service providers, engineers and public works personnel to ensure that road design sections do not diminish public safety or increase maintenance needs.
- Policy T-1H: New Castle will plan for phased development of non-motorized community trails/sidewalk systems to meet the needs of recreation, transportation and access to services.
- Policy T-1I: New Castle will work with Garfield County, developers and property owners to identify, plan, finance and construct a west New Castle limited access transportation corridor to allow for free movement of north/south traffic (motorized & non-motorized) between County Road 245 and Highway 6 & 24.
- Policy T-1J: New Castle will work with developers to secure and protect transportation corridors shown on the Future Land Use Map to ensure safe adequate east/west and north/south motorized and non-motorized traffic flows in east New Castle.
- Policy T-1K: New development shall provide safe and adequate bicycle parking facilities designed to serve employees, customers and other anticipated patrons.

5. Housing

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

The Town of New Castle, through land use policies and building regulations, can affect the numbers, size, type, location and rate of housing development. By influencing the number and variety of available housing stock, local government can ease upward pressure on prices. New Castle will establish standards of affordability based on median household income, will promote the creation of housing priced at or below those standards and will establish guidelines and procedures for maintaining affordable housing stock over time. New Castle needs to explore and adopt a variety of policies and strategies to support the availability of affordable housing to a broad spectrum of the community.

Goal HO-1: New Castle will investigate, pursue and establish mutually supportive and beneficial partnerships with other agencies to preserve and create affordable housing

- Policy HO-1A: New Castle will create partnerships with Healthy Mountain Communities and other government or non-profit agencies, including regional, state and federal housing agencies, to promote the creation of permanent affordable housing stock.
- Policy HO-1B: The Town will develop partnerships with private entities to create affordable housing through a variety of public-private strategies including low-income housing tax credits.



Goal HO – 2: New Castle will create and preserve affordable housing as an element of all new development.

Policy HO-2A: New development will be required to provide a variety of housing densities, types and sizes to ensure a diversity of unit availability and unit pricing that serve a broad spectrum of the community.

Policy HO-2B: The Town will favor developments with higher building densities and smaller home sizes that serve middle and lower-income homebuyers.

Policy HO-2C: The Town will favor developments that support efficient town service delivery, are energy/water/resource efficient, support open space preservation, foster a sense of community and promote owner occupancy.

Policy HO-2D: The Town will favor residential development on smaller lots (i.e. 5,000 sq. ft. and less) to preserve open space, promote efficient transportation and increase affordability.

Policy HO-2E: New Castle will support development that provides housing for those with special needs such as the disabled, seniors and single-parent families.

Policy HO-2F: On-site employee housing may be required in connection with non-residential development.

Goal HO – 3: Affordable housing will be created and preserved in existing neighborhoods

Policy HO-3A: In-home businesses or live/work units will address impacts from traffic, parking, noise, signage, lighting and maintain public safety.

Policy HO-3B: The Town will create zoning for live/work neighborhoods.

Policy HO-3C: The Town will continue to support the creation of accessory dwelling units in new and existing residential areas.

Goal HO-4: New Castle will create & preserve affordable housing for renters and essential community service employees

Policy HO-4A: The Town will pursue affordable housing for workforce in jobs deemed essential to community quality, including, but not limited to, public safety, teaching, public health and government.

Policy HO-4B: The Town will pursue strategies aimed at creating and maintaining an affordable pool of rental housing and require that a component of future development be made available for rental.

6. Parks, Open Space & Trails

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

The Town of New Castle has an extensive and varied park and trail system that will be maintained and improved. Parks will be developed to provide a variety of facilities and features in locations that are convenient to as much of the population as possible and trails will be interconnected to provide ready non-motorized access and recreation opportunities throughout the urban area.





Goal POST-1: *New Castle will require dedication of park and trail facilities in conjunction with development and will require that development make appropriate and timely contributions to that expansion. New development shall dedicate a minimum of 10% of the project gross land area for future parks and open space development purposes.*

Policy POST-1A: All future commercial and residential development will contribute to park and trail development in the form of land, trail easements and/or payments-in-lieu of land. The level of contribution will be determined according to the degree to which development contributes to the need for new park and trail facilities.

Policy POST-1B: The Town may require developer contributions that provide an endowment or other mechanism for funding ongoing maintenance and park improvements.

Policy POST-1C: The Town will ensure that the increased costs of maintenance, park improvements, repair/replacement are calculated as part of a fiscal impact analysis associated with new development.

Policy POST-1D: The Town may require a contribution of open space in addition to park space dedications. Any restrictions on access to or use of open space will be determined at the discretion of New Castle.

Policy POST-1E: The Town may, at its discretion, limit contribution credit for donations of parklands or open space in locations or under circumstances that do not allow for efficient and cost-effective maintenance or where the primary benefit of these lands is to the immediate neighborhood.

Goal POST - 2: *New Castle will acquire, develop and maintain parks in accordance with the standards of the Colorado State Parks and Recreation Planning Guide for Small Towns developed by RPI Consulting under a contract with the Department of Local Affairs.*

Policy POST-2A: The Town will maintain a ratio of roughly 14 acres of usable park land/1,000 population to ensure active recreation parks commensurate with expanding community population.

Policy POST-2B: Parks will be developed in locations and with facilities that will provide access to the maximum number of people and with facilities that are useful, desired by the majority of users, and selected and designed to provide for recreational needs.

Policy POST-2C: Parks will be sited and designed to provide easy (including handicapped) access, appropriate amounts of parking, safe facilities and conservation of resources such as drought-resistant plants and, where appropriate, solar-powered lighting. Parks will be sited to provide most residents with access to park space no more than 1/4 mile away.

Policy POST-2D: Parks will be designed to foster a sense of community, to provide venues for community gatherings and events, to reflect unique community characteristics or natural features and to provide aesthetic and passive-use value as well as recreational amenities.

Policy POST-2E: The system of parks will be connected by greenbelts and trail systems that facilitate easy non-motorized access.



Policy POST-2F: A variety of parks should be developed in the community that range from small neighborhood pocket parks to larger regional facilities. The variety of park types should include those designed for passive recreational use as well as active higher intensity uses.

Goal POST – 3: *New Castle will acquire, develop and maintain a trail system that provides recreational value and non-motorized access.*

Policy POST-3A: Trails will be developed to provide safe and efficient access between residential and commercial areas and to/from parks.

Policy POST-3B: Trails will be designed and built, to the extent feasible, to serve a wide array of users and purposes.

Policy POST-3C: Trails will be located and designed to be sensitive to the privacy and safety of adjacent private properties, but will not be subject to closure except as may be determined by the Town.

Policy POST-3D: Trails will be located, designed and managed to minimize impacts on native ecosystems including plant and animal communities.

Policy POST-3E: Connectivity will be maintained among trail alignments and regional trails systems including the LoVa trail system.

Policy POST-3F: New Castle will recognize and promote trail systems as transportation corridors, recreation amenities and access to areas within the community, neighborhoods, services and connections outside the Town.

Goal POST – 4: *New Castle will acquire open space in locations and circumstances that protect environmental, scenic and wildlife values and that provide natural buffers between urban uses.*

Policy POST-4A: Sensitive environmental areas such as river corridors, defined plant/wildlife habitat, steep slopes, and unique features such as open space will be preserved.

Policy POST-4B: Natural greenways and open space corridors throughout the community will be used to break up continuous areas of development, to provide natural habitat, to provide avenues for human/wildlife movement and drainage ways and to protect tree clusters or forested areas.

Policy POST-4C: The increased costs of maintenance, park improvements, repair/replacement will be calculated as part of a fiscal impact analysis associated with new development.

Policy POST-4D: Whenever possible, New Castle will require landowners and developers to provide access to park or open space for purposes of maintaining infrastructure and protecting public health and safety.



7. Economy

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

The Town of New Castle General Fund is supported principally by sales tax revenues derived from retail sales. Property tax generates only 14 % of General Fund revenues while sales tax income is over half the revenue stream at 56%. Residential housing and predominantly single-family residential housing is the largest category of land-use in town. Residential land uses typically cost more to service than they generate in revenues. This reality combined with the fact that many New Castle residents are employed outside of town increases the potential for sales tax leakage to other communities and further strains the town budget. New Castle is fortunate to have a commercial retail hub at the I-70 interchange and along County Road 335 south of the Colorado River.

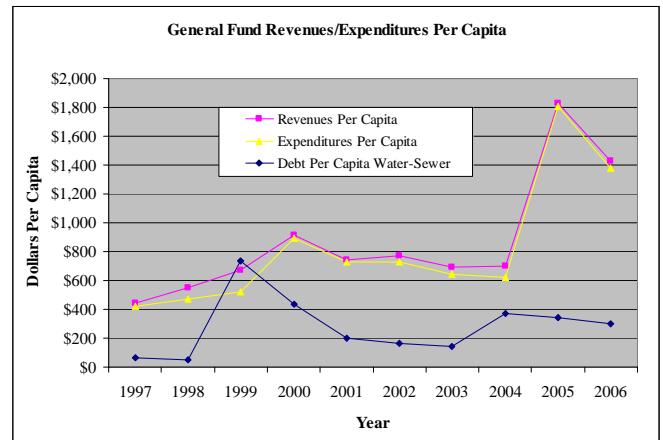


Figure 19

New Castle wants to increase its retail sales tax base, diversify businesses and expand the local employment base to achieve a more sustainable economic condition. The community supports its Historic Downtown as an important business center. Part of New Castle's economic development strategy should be to support existing businesses that have made a commitment to the community. Experts agree that this is the most cost-effective economic enhancement methodology. An important strategy to support community economic vitality is to focus on the downtown as "the place to be" with restaurants and community events and as the "Gateway to the Flat Tops." Community members strongly support additional restaurants as an economic need. Downtown is an ideal venue for dining. Expansion of the New Castle local employment base will support patronage of restaurants and town businesses by keeping employees in town and reducing opportunities for sales tax leakage. Another benefit of increased local employment is a reduction in the morning/evening journey to work outside New Castle.

The community supports midsize retailers, but not "big-box" businesses. New Castle is interested in new smaller scale compatible commerce that complements small-town values and preserves small-town qualities. Another economic strategy is to promote community's natural assets that include the Colorado River and Elk Creek corridors. Enhancement and awareness of these riparian corridors adds to New Castle's quality of life and serves to draw visitors for fishing, boating, hiking/biking trails and other outdoor activities. The concept of a whitewater park on the Colorado River was considered by New Castle several years ago, but was

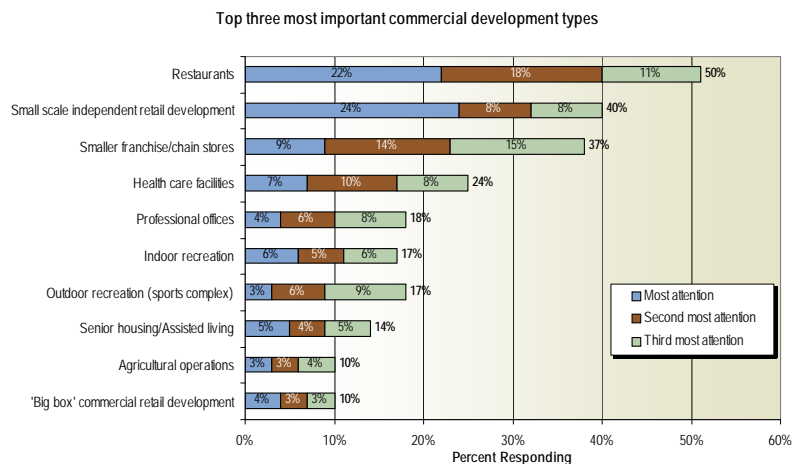


Figure 20



not pursued because of cost. Nearby Glenwood Springs has had immediate success with their Whitewater Park as a national and international draw. This local model is verification of the attainable benefits of a whitewater park and expanded river access in New Castle.

Goal E-1: New Castle desires to enhance its community retail/service space thereby increasing needed sales tax revenues to pay for community services. Downtown New Castle is an important and historic community focal point and should be supported as a key part of the community's economic base. Organizations such as the Main Street Program offer education, support and information about enhancing downtowns. Historic Downtown New Castle can be made more pedestrian-friendly and more inviting to municipal residents and visitors alike as a place to go.

Policy E-1A: New Castle will work with CDOT to acquire ownership and control of Highway 6 & 24 to allow local decision-making on access, streetscape, parking, pedestrian access and other enhancement priorities.

Policy E-1B: If ownership of the Highway 6 & 24 right-of-way transfers to New Castle, the Town will evaluate the benefits of a two or three-lane (center lane boulevard or delivery zone) road section that reduces automobile dominance, offers additional parking and increases pedestrian/non-motorized qualities.

Policy E-1C: The Town will seek to achieve a greater balance of land-use types by acreage and function through the land use process to provide affordable housing, increased employment, increased sales taxes and needed services as the community grows.

Policy E-1D: The land-use process will support development of neighborhood commercial areas with easy access by area neighborhoods without obligatory use of automobiles.

Policy E-1E: The commercial area near the I-70 interchange will be retained and expanded as a primary retail center for the area. Commercial, lodging and mixed-use second floor office/residential functions are the desired use types. Development that is primarily residential in function is not preferred in this location.

Policy E-1F: New Castle will collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce, Envision New Castle and/or an economic development committee to explore various economic development opportunities that can provide long-term sustainable community benefits.

Policy E-1G: The community will work to increase education/information/awareness and visitation to the historic downtown in concert with expanded events, business promotion and related activities.

Policy E-1H: The Town will use way-finding techniques incorporating information, thematic signage, and other techniques to direct residents and visitors to the downtown.

Policy E-1I: Pedestrian/non-motorized connections to downtown will be developed or expanded on C Avenue and along Highway 6 & 24 to provide safe, pleasant and easy access.

Policy E-1J: Improvements such as well-designed lighting, widened sidewalks, trees for shade, textured pedestrian crossings and traffic calming will be incorporated in pedestrian corridor design with a special emphasis in higher traffic areas to improve the quality of the non-motorized experience.



- Policy E-1K: New Castle will work with the Chamber of Commerce and other community development groups to promote New Castle's assets: Gateway to the Flat Tops, high quality golfing, excellent river access, nearby hunting/fishing and other attributes to increase tourist visitation.
- Policy E-1L: The Town will work with the business community to promote activities that draw visitors as well as provide community benefits such as regular farmers markets, outdoor art shows, bicycle rallies and festivals that enhance community quality of life and draw visitors.
- Policy E-1M: New Castle will support options that encourage expanded commercial uses in the C-1 downtown commercial district that is predominately occupied by non-commercial uses. Options that should be considered include allowing cottage businesses that coexist with residential use, allowing businesses to front on improved alleys as primary access, allowing more than one principal use on a lot and other creative options.
- Policy E-1N: The Town will work with the Lower Valley Trails Group (LoVa) to designate a safe alignment for the proposed trail through downtown New Castle as an urban trail section in order to bring visitors through the downtown to highlight the historic core and provide visitors an opportunity to patronize businesses.
- Policy E-1O: The Town will encourage and support the work of an economic development committee.
- Policy E-1P: New Castle will work cooperatively with potential commercial business developers to provide incentives and ease impediments to development. Comparable incentives will be offered to existing New Castle businesses seeking to expand.
- Goal E-2: *New Castle will establish a goal of 40% employment of New Castle residents within the Town by the year 2030 by developing a specific plan with defined actions to achieve this goal.***
- Policy E-2A: Land use policies and regulations will support inclusion of home occupations and home businesses as a permitted use in new residential developments from their inception to minimize conflicts that arise in existing subdivisions when such uses are established later in the development process.
- Policy E-2B: The Town supports mixed-uses in all new development to provide for live/work designs and other traditional neighborhood design concepts that provide local employment, easy non-motorized access to services, retail and other desired amenities.
- Policy E-2C: The Town will work to ensure that high-speed telecommunications, fiber optics and other state-of-the-art communications technologies are part of new development.
- Policy E-2D: New Castle will work with the business community to identify targeted businesses as part of an overall economic development strategy to increase local employment, generate revenues and provide needed services/goods.
- Policy E-2E: New Castle will investigate financing/support mechanisms such as tax increment financing (TIF), business enterprise zones, special districts, grant funding and other techniques for improving the business operating environment for existing and new businesses.
- Policy E-2F: Land use regulations will support inclusion of childcare services in or near businesses/places of employment as a simplified process to meet that important need.



Policy E-2G: New Castle will work with the business community to support tourism-related activities, businesses, events and marketing.

8. Natural Environment

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

New Castle is dedicated to preserving the natural environment while recognizing that the urban development inherent in the growth of the Town will have impacts on that environment. New Castle will strive to identify and preserve critical environmental resources and will work closely with County, State and Federal governments and government agencies to identify those resources and to implement enhancement and preservation strategies. New Castle will support energy conservation and will reduce energy use and environmental impacts associated with Town activities whenever possible. New Castle will support activities and programs aimed at preserving specific environmental values, including wildlife habitat, clean air and water, a dark night sky, low noise levels, healthy native vegetation, access to scenic resources and sunshine and reduction in usage of toxic or harmful chemicals and other materials. In addition to these natural environment protections, development is to be kept out of areas of natural hazards, sensitive habitat, floodplains, critical viewsheds and other inappropriate locations.



Goal EN-1: Identify and maintain wildlife habitat.

Policy EN-1A: The Town will work with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to identify critical wildlife habitat in and around Town boundaries and cooperatively develop strategies for preservation of that habitat

Policy EN-1B: The Town will work with private and non-profit organizations to preserve and improve critical habitat

Policy EN-1C: The Town will identify and address activities that may be detrimental to wildlife and take action to regulate such activities. Examples include domestic animals running at large, removal of native vegetation, inadequate setbacks from waterways, use of toxic materials, fences blocking migration routes.

Policy EN-1D: The Town will seek opportunities to minimize human-wildlife conflicts in the design of new development.

Policy EN-1E: The Town will continue to refer new development applications to the Colorado Division of Wildlife for review and comment.

Policy EN-1F: New development must endeavor to preserve and improve important wildlife habitat as part of the planning and implementation process.

Policy EN-1G: The Town will consider temporary closures of trails and parks/open space areas where the Colorado Division of Wildlife documents significant adverse impacts to wildlife.

Goal EN-2: Preserve or improve water quality.

Policy EN-2A: The Town will identify current water quality parameters in natural waterways and adopt policies and regulations aimed at raising or maintaining those parameters.



- Policy EN-2B: The Town will work closely with the Colorado River Water Conservation District, the Colorado Water Quality Control Division, and other water management agencies to support wise use of water and maintenance and improvement of water quality, the latter through control of urban and construction-related runoff.
- Policy EN-2C: The Town will encourage installation of xeric landscaping through incentives and disincentives, and provide advice and support for water-wise landscaping, use of native plants and low-volume irrigation methods. New Castle will encourage water conservation on private property and apply water conserving irrigation and management practices to parks and properties owned or managed by the Town.
- Policy EN-2D: The Town will establish a water management committee to investigate and recommend appropriate policies and practices associated with the water conservation and water quality.
- Policy EN-2E: New Castle will work with Garfield County and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to prevent proliferation of individual septic systems (ISDS) and small-scale wastewater treatment plants. In support of this policy, new construction within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and/or within 1,000 feet of an existing municipal sewer line shall connect to central sewer. Failed septic systems within the UGB shall not be replaced if they are within 1,000 feet of a central sewer line and shall connect thereto.

Goal EN-3: *New Castle will preserve or improve air quality.*

- Policy EN-3A: The Town will regulate development and development activities to maintain the highest possible air quality.
- Policy EN-3B: New Castle will coordinate with the Colorado Air Quality Control Division, Garfield County, and other agencies to develop monitoring programs for measuring atmospheric pollutants to assure that air quality is maintained.
- Policy EN-3C: The Town will work with the agencies noted in Policy EN-3B, above, and others to develop, publicize and implement air quality control programs and projects.
- Policy EN-3D: New Castle will develop methodologies aimed at reducing air pollution associated with Town resources and actions. Examples of programs to be evaluated for air quality impacts include street cleaning, snow removal, construction and open burning.
- Policy EN-3E: The Town will work with the Colorado Air Quality Control Division and other agencies to evaluate and regulate private activities that may have air quality impacts including, but not limited to, gas drilling, mining activities, fireplace use and open burning.

Goal EN-4: *New Castle will preserve a dark night sky.*

- Policy EN-4A: New Castle will require lighting design that minimizes lighting trespass while meeting appropriate safety standards
- Policy EN-4B: New Castle will establish standards that will minimize after-hours business lighting.
- Policy EN-4C: The Town will adopt lighting ordinances and standards aimed at eliminating light pollution, glare, over-lighting and preserving a dark night sky.



Goal EN-5: *New Castle will preserve riparian corridors.*

Policy EN-5A: The Town will identify riparian corridors associated with local waterways and the Colorado River and adopt regulations aimed at preserving riparian values including wildlife habitat, vegetative diversity, river channel stability, natural pollution treatment and flood control.

Policy EN-5B: The Town will work with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and other government and private agencies to develop and implement strategies designed to protect riparian ecosystems.

Policy EN-5C: New Castle will adopt regulations prohibiting removal or destruction of riparian vegetation.

Goal EN-6: *New Castle will protect ridgelines and viewsheds.*

Policy EN-6A: The Town will identify critical viewplanes and regulate development within those viewplanes to preserve public visual access to the area landscape.

Policy EN-6B: The Town will designate important ridgelines and protect those ridgelines from adverse visual impacts.

Policy EN-6C: The Town will include viewshed impact analysis in the land use code to be part of development reviews.

Goal EN-7: *New Castle will promote renewable energy, resource conservation and environmental sustainability.*

Policy EN-7A: The Town will adopt “green building” guidelines aimed at minimizing resource use and waste and maximizing use of renewable energy sources.

Policy EN-7B: Town operations will be audited to identify potential areas of conservation and to discover opportunities for demonstrating renewable energy technologies.

Policy EN-7C: The Town will investigate opportunities to make building codes support energy conservation and efficiency, including use of sustainable materials.

Policy EN-7D: The Town will work closely with citizen groups, government agencies and private organizations to develop and implement strategies aimed at reducing overall Town energy use and increasing use of sustainable materials, practices and energy sources.

Goal EN-8: *New development is prohibited in natural hazard areas. Hazards include falling rock, steep slopes, ground subsidence, wildfire risks, unstable soils, etc.*

Policy EN-8A: Natural hazard areas will be avoided by new development. These lands should be set aside as open space areas and preserved in a natural condition.

Policy EN-8B: New development shall complete site-specific analyses on hazard areas to determine the extent, type and characteristic of the hazards.

Policy EN-8C: All potential wildfire hazard zones shall be accurately mapped and characterized. Low to moderate rated areas may be considered for development based upon completion of a mitigation plan by qualified personnel and execution of mitigation actions prior to sale of lots. Areas of high wildfire hazard are inappropriate for development.



Policy EN-8D: New Castle's mining history left behind numerous mineshafts that are subject to collapse or subsidence. Some of these areas have been mapped and others have not. New development in areas that may have been subject to mining in the past shall complete a detailed analysis of existing mine portals, shafts or similar features. Areas on or near historic mining facilities that may be subject to collapse or long-term subsidence should not be developed.

9. Mineral Extraction & Energy Development

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

Extraction of natural resources and energy development has a significant role in Garfield County and in areas near New Castle. Mineral resource extraction and energy development is an essential industry, but can have substantial detrimental impacts on quality of life and environmental quality if it is not properly located, managed and regulated. Commercially recoverable minerals and energy resources near New Castle include coal, sand, gravel and natural gas. These mineral deposits are located in the river bottoms, in the Grand Hogback, and in upland mesas in other locations, some of which are in close proximity to New Castle. The Natural Environment section of this plan describes the importance of protecting water and air quality, riparian corridors, wildlife habitat, ridgelines, viewsheds, dark skies and other qualities that are important to New Castle. New Castle acknowledges the need for energy and minerals, but supports quality of life enhancements for its residents, preservation of a clean healthy environment and sustainable resource use. New Castle promotes renewable energy, sustainable construction and "green" activities that minimize environmental degradation. New Castle's long-term vision is to utilize renewable energy and sustainable systems to eliminate non-renewable environmentally destructive practices.

In general, New Castle does not consider mining and resource extraction industries to be compatible with its urban environment. Except for limited and regulated gravel mining activities connected with on-site use of these materials in new development, mineral extraction and energy development within the Urban Growth Boundary are strongly discouraged. These activities may occur in the Joint Planning Area, but careful evaluation regulation and oversight of these industries is paramount. New Castle will work closely with Garfield County to assure that the Town/County concerns are completely addressed before any mineral or energy development is approved. Protection of air and water quality, avoidance of visual impacts, minimization of associated traffic, wildlife/habitat preservation and avoidance of other industrial impacts are major considerations on any mineral extraction or energy development proposal. Projects that cannot eliminate or successfully mitigate these impacts should not be approved. All approved projects must fully reclaim development sites using best practices, including ample financial guarantees to ensure complete and successful reclamation.

Goal MEED-1: *All areas within the New Castle Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) will be protected from all adverse impacts associated with mineral extraction or energy development.*

Policy MEED-1A: Mineral extraction and/or energy development will not occur in areas identified as wetlands, critical wildlife habitat, developed areas (residential, commercial, light industrial, recreational) or parks.

Policy MEED-1B: Except for temporary and regulated extraction of gravel or sand resources to be used on-site in conjunction with new development, mineral extraction and/or energy development shall not occur closer than 2,000 feet from the nearest residential, commercial or light industrial area.



Policy MEED-1C: The quality and quantity of potable water supplies will be protected. Drinking water sources shall be protected to meet the highest achievable quality standards. Any development activity that occurs within the New Castle Watershed shall include a water quality management plan, complete disclosure of all toxic, hazardous or other materials that may degrade water quality. These activities shall not be permitted unless there is an enforceable guarantee of water quality protection that extends throughout the term of the development activity.

Policy MEED-1D: Any mineral extraction or energy development activity proposed within the Joint Planning Area must first be accompanied by a detailed mitigation plan addressing all Town concerns and a reclamation plan that mitigates all impacts after the activity has ended. Such plans shall address, at a minimum, the following.

- Wildlife habitat
- Water Quality and Quantity
- Air Quality
- Vegetation
- Soil and geologic stability
- Visual and scenic quality
- Agricultural impacts
- Noise impacts
- Light and Night Sky
- Traffic, roads, trails and transportation
- Socio-economic impacts including, but not limited to, housing, schools, recreation, police, public safety, infrastructure, termination of the mining/extraction activity and town services.

Goal MEED-2: *New Castle and Garfield County should establish an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that addresses all aspects of mineral extraction and energy development within the Joint Planning Area to ensure that there are no conflicts with future community expansion.*

Policy MEED-2A: An IGA will be consistent with applicable state and federal regulations.

Policy MEED-2B: An IGA will acknowledge Garfield County's mineral extraction policies, plans and regulations and will address avoidance or comprehensive mitigation of any associated (direct or indirect) impacts to New Castle.

Policy MEED-2C: The Town will work with federal and state agencies to resolve regulatory conflicts or address regulatory gaps to ensure the provisions of the New Castle Comprehensive Plan are fully addressed.

Policy MEED-2D: All applications for mineral extraction or energy development within the New Castle Joint Planning Area must comply with the provisions of the New Castle comprehensive plan to ensure compliance with all of the values, guiding principles, goals and policies contained therein.

10. Historic Downtown

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

New Castle has a rich mining and agricultural history dating back to the late 1800s. The buildings and architecture in the downtown reflect this heritage. The Town has recognized the importance of the architectural character and design features of the older buildings and





has established regulations requiring compliance with historic design standards. Some of the downtown buildings have attained state or federal historic register status. The historic downtown gives New Castle a sense of "place" and is recognized by the community as an important asset. As the Town grows and vacant lots in the downtown are developed or as historic buildings are remodeled, the existing architectural character will be replicated or retained. The town's logo "Authentically Colorado" reflects this important community value. Preservation of the historic structures and building architecture is important as New Castle continues to grow. This character will continue to serve as a downtown draw. It contributes to New Castle's quality of life, adds to cultural vitality and will impart long-term economic benefits. The Town will continue to protect and enhance the historic downtown and preserve it as a community focal point. Designs in new development are encouraged to emulate this character with street grids, alleys, building façades and street frontage. In this way, New Castle's heritage will survive and be enhanced in the future.

Goal H-1: New Castle will preserve the historic buildings in the downtown as well as the character of surrounding older neighborhoods. In addition, the Town will pursue programs and efforts of the business community to celebrate New Castle's history.

Policy H-1A: New Castle will continue to enforce existing historic downtown regulations and as needed, develop new standards for both public and private structures to preserve the architectural character of downtown.

Policy H-1B: Demolition of historic buildings is not supported by the Town and in some cases is prohibited.

Policy H-1C: Buildings that qualify for state or federal historic register designation will be identified and to the extent possible, the town will work with property owners to restore these buildings to their original condition.

Policy H-1D: New Castle should pursue development of incentives for recycling existing buildings.

Policy H-1E: As part of promoting the downtown, New Castle will investigate and implement programs aimed at improving the non-motorized experience in the downtown area including expanded use of sidewalks, allowing outdoor café seating areas, enhancement of public spaces, traffic calming and promotion of community activities.

Policy H-1F: New Castle will enhance the resident and visitor experience in the downtown by providing historic and cultural educational materials.

Policy H-1G: The Town will encourage new businesses in historic downtown that will create a destination stop for tourists and visitors.

Policy H-1H: New Castle will encourage retail/restaurant uses for historic downtown buildings.

Policy H-1I: The Town will continue to promote community events in the downtown such as the Burning Mountains Days Festival, parades, street dances, outdoor art shows, and other events that celebrate the town's character.

11. Schools

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

New Castle recognizes that it has a stake in the education of the children in the community. High-quality education, facilities and services are essential to the support of a quality community. Schools offer a vital focal point for community and family life. Quality schools and curriculums are important to existing



residents, people moving to New Castle and businesses investigating new locations. New Castle is committed to supporting the best possible educational curriculums, facilities and the widest possible educational opportunities for its residents.

Goal S-1: New Castle will pursue cooperative planning and development with the RE-2 School District to assure that school facilities are developed and expanded as needed while remaining consistent with other Town goals and objectives.

Policy S-1A: The Town will participate in joint planning activities with school district staff.

Policy S-1B: Effective communication with the school district regarding land use goals, objectives and regulations to facilitate appropriate planning of school facilities will be developed and maintained.

Policy S-1C: New Castle will work with school district staff to assure that school facilities are used in the most efficient and effective way to promote educational excellence, public activities, sporting events and community gatherings.

Goal S-2: New Castle will take a proactive approach towards planning for new or expanded school facilities

Policy S-2A: Developers will be required to quantify and mitigate the impacts of new development on school needs and capabilities.

Policy S-2B: Potential sites for future school facilities will be identified in association with new development or annexation proposals.

Policy S-2C: The Town will consider housing needs for teachers and school staff as part of developing an affordable housing strategy.

Policy S-2D: The Town will consider future school facility needs and growth-related impacts when planning for transportation and other infrastructure improvements.

12. Community Design

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

Design in the urban environment plays an increasingly important role in the planning process. New Castle uses building and historic preservation design standards in the C-1 Commercial District. The intent of these regulations is to protect the historic character, ensure compatibility with surrounding uses and, perhaps most importantly, to enhance the existing small town character and improve the downtown image. There is little undeveloped land in the C-1 Commercial District and infill development is likely to occur sporadically in the future. The intent and guiding principles of New Castle's design standards should be expanded to developing areas of the community and to future annexations. The visual preference survey that was conducted as part of the community visioning process reflected a preference for good design principles for community layout, streetscapes, commercial development, parks and open space areas.

New Castle has already recognized the importance of good design to protect and enhance community character and to build a sense of "place." Design standards should be expanded to promote and actualize important community values as the town grows. Clear communication of design standards with visual imagery and narrative offers a standard and a tool that is valuable to land use applicants and the decision makers. Design standards should not dictate every aspect of the design process but, instead, offer guidelines that professionals can work with to achieve creative excellence. Design standards should



address a broad array of development subject matter that include: building orientation/siting, street sections, pedestrian/non-motorized access, lighting, landscaping, parking, building massing, architectural ornamentation, open spaces and other aspects of site design/development.

Goal CD-1: New Castle will preserve its historic building character in the downtown as well as the character of surrounding older neighborhoods by building upon and expanding the existing design standards to apply to annexing properties and new building areas.

Policy CD-1A: New Castle will develop expanded design standards that will apply to annexing properties and infill areas not restricted by PUD regulations to address building orientation/siting, street sections, pedestrian/non-motorized access, lighting, landscaping, parking, building massing, architectural ornamentation, open spaces and other aspects of site design/development.

Policy CD-1B: New development site design should incorporate high levels of connectivity with streets, non-motorized access and convenient walkable access to services.

Policy CD-1C: Residential development should allow housing units to front on the street with shallow setbacks, narrow frontages, front porches and side/rear-loaded garages that do not dominate the front façade.

Policy CD-1D: Lighting standards should be developed for residential and commercial areas that provide safe and functional lighting without glare, lighting trespass, over-lighting or excessive energy consumption.

Policy CD-1E: Narrower street section standards should be established that encourage slower traffic speeds, separated sidewalks, on-street parking and well-placed street trees/landscaping.

Policy CD-1F: New Castle should establish consistent streetlight and pole standards for new development. An adopted town standard will provide consistency in design (residential, commercial or industrial) and will avoid extra costs due to replacement of customized, unique or hard-to-find streetlights or poles.

Policy CD-1G: Multifamily design standards should be developed to avoid monotonous repetition and unit design and to facilitate creative multifamily layouts that support quality livable indoor and outdoor spaces.

Policy CD-1H: Commercial design standards are needed that address vertical/horizontal monolithic walls, rear and internal parking areas, landscaping designed for shade, division of large parking areas, support of architectural ornamentation and specification of square footage maximums for single structures.

Policy CD-1I: Neighborhood commercial design standards will address architectural compatibility, parking, signage, landscaping and lighting to make small commercial areas desirable in residential development.

Policy CD-1J: Park development design standards should differentiate between neighborhood, area and regional parks. Each facility standard should address parking, non-motorized access, lighting, xeric landscaping, restrooms, trash/recycling and other improvements appropriate to park function and scale.



13. Community Gateways

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

New Castle has identified four primary gateways:

1. I-70 interchange at Highway 6 & 24 (Exit 105).
2. East Highway 6 & 24 at County Road 240.
3. West Highway 6 & 24 at Elk Creek Elementary School.
4. County Road 245 at the northwest New Castle municipal boundary.

Each gateway serves as a town welcome entry and offers visitors a first impression of the community. First impressions are those that remain and shape perceptions. The gateways present an opportunity to give visitors information about the community attractions, services, businesses and the like. Each gateway should include the following attributes: attractive appearance, offer information, appealing natural landscape and reflect community pride. The gateways should include an attractive identifying monument sign, effective well-designed lighting, natural xeric landscaping, and informational signage that guide visitors to key points of interest. The gateways are important to community economic development and well-being and help to provide a sense of place to New Castle. The gateways on Highway 6 & 24 should welcome and direct visitors to New Castle's historic downtown with signage and attractive street lighting. Wide landscaped sidewalks should accommodate pedestrians and bicycles as alternatives to the automobile. Roadways and intersections should be designed to afford a free flow of traffic.

Goal CGW-1: New Castle will create and maintain inviting gateways to the community by making aesthetic and design improvements to both its vehicular and pedestrian entry points.

Policy CGW-1A: The four community gateways will be improved based upon site-specific plans to define the entry portals to add to the sense of "arrival."

Policy CGW-1B: New Castle will work with the Colorado Department of Transportation and Garfield County on the gateways to ensure consistency of signage, landscape design, lighting and other characteristics in these transition areas.

Policy CGW-1C: Pedestrians, bicycles and other non-motorized traffic should be accommodated on wide well laid-out sidewalks and trail systems that connect to the primary locations in the community.

Policy CGW-1D: The LoVa Trail will transition from a rural corridor into the New Castle urban setting through the east, I-70 and west gateways and provide access to the downtown where restaurants, parks and other amenities are available to travelers.

Policy CGW-1E: New Castle will work with community organizations, the business community and development community to support right-of-way cleanup and beautification efforts in each gateway.

Policy CGW-1F: A master signage plan will be developed to limit the total number of signs, height, and square footage. The sign plan will focus on aesthetic character through use of design, materials, and thematic designs.



14. Intergovernmental Coordination & Cooperation

GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

Good intergovernmental communication, coordination and cooperation are critical to effective relationships between agencies. The best services are provided to the taxpayer by governments that understand each other, minimize duplication of services and coordinate infrastructure design requirements. Land-use decisions in the future growth areas outside of municipalities must consider the comprehensive plan goals and policies of the governmental agencies to ensure that land-use types are compatible, road designs are functional, utilities can be extended and future growth can occur in a logical and coordinated manner. Good relationships between local governments start with regular clear communication and well-defined intergovernmental agreements (IGA's) that detail the respective roles and obligations of each agency.

Goal IGC-1: New Castle will develop and maintain strong working relationships with surrounding governmental entities that are based upon clear communications and good cooperation to ensure the greatest benefits to the public.

Policy IGC-1A: New Castle will work with Garfield County to develop an expanded and updated intergovernmental agreement pertaining to new growth, infrastructure and demands placed on each entity by development.

Policy IGC-1B: A New Castle-Garfield County IGA will support coordinated regional planning that is in the best interests of county residents (municipal & unincorporated) to ensure that costs of new development are not borne by existing residents.

Policy IGC-1C: New Castle will develop an intergovernmental agreement with the RE-2 School District to support coordinated planning efforts related to new growth to ensure new school facilities are properly located, expanded facility space is available when the demand exists and that access to school sites minimizes the use of automobiles.

Policy IGC-1D: New Castle and CDOT will develop an intergovernmental agreement that addresses coordinated highway access permitting, maintenance/design/construction on Highway 6 & 24, traffic calming in the historic core and pedestrian access/safety.

Policy IGC-1E: New Castle will work with other agencies including, but not limited to, BLM, Division of Wildlife, Colorado River Conservation District and other local governments to maintain regular and open communications and coordinated planning.

Plan Implementation

The following actions are important in order to implement the provisions of the New Castle Comprehensive Plan.

Community Growth

- Undertake comprehensive review and revision of subdivision standards and criteria, zoning code, annexation criteria and other land use code elements to bring them into conformance with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Publish and post the Future Land Use Map from Comprehensive Plan.
- Convene neighborhood meetings to review the Future Land Use Map in detail with residents and landowners.



New Castle Comprehensive Plan

- Make the Comprehensive Plan widely available through the town's website, links to Garfield County's website, media coverage, brochures and presentations to civic/community groups.

Infrastructure

- Review and revise development and building fees as necessary to cover applicable infrastructure costs.
- Review the Public Works Design Standards and related infrastructure development requirements and consider modifications that are in keeping with goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Revise the New Castle Capital Improvements Plan to include recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan and to ensure timely infrastructure upgrades and capacity increases in keeping with actual and anticipated growth rates.
- Draft appropriate additions or revisions to the land use code, updating requirements for the dedication of water rights from annexed or subdivided properties to include both non-treated water for outside irrigation and potable water.
- Establish schedule for re-evaluation of all fees to assure that they are consistent with costs.
- Analyze cost-effectiveness and, if justified, procedures for imposing impact fees on new development.
- Require developer-financed fiscal impact studies that address all impacts to publicly provided services and infrastructure by new development and particularly annexations.

Recreation and Tourism

- Inventory trails system and public land access points to determine the need for acquisitions of property or easements to provide for long-term trails and access needs.
- Publicize trails system as a recreational amenity and public lands access point. Work with the BLM, US Forest Service, private and non-profit groups to develop recreational trails in connection with development of the Town's trail system.
- Catalog potential local, regional and national partners in acquiring and developing property required for trails and access. Contact appropriate agencies with partnership proposals.
- Contact local and regional groups to assess potential for hosting special events in New Castle. Consider budgeting for adequate staff time to facilitate these events.
- Develop written and internet informational materials advertising New Castle attractions and activity opportunities including parks and trails, fishing and hunting, sports, and river and backcountry access.
- Convene meeting(s) with public agencies (e.g. - USFS, Bureau of Land Management, DOW, Garfield County, State Tourism Office) to pursue specific projects (e.g. - improved signage), brainstorm tourism opportunities and form partnerships.

Transportation

- Continue to explore with CDOT the costs, benefits and timetable for assuming responsibility of Highway 6 & 24 between Canyon Creek and the west end of downtown New Castle.



New Castle Comprehensive Plan

- Join Transportation Planning Region (TPR) efforts to prioritize and support regional transportation improvements.
- Study development of alternate route north from Main St. to Castle Valley Boulevard and beyond on west side of New Castle as traffic and population growth demand.
- Initiate planning for a new east New Castle I-70 interchange.
- Continue developing plans and funding opportunities with CDOT for mitigating traffic congestion at the existing New Castle I-70 interchange.
- Work with the Roaring Fork Transit Authority on transit-oriented development (TOD) in order to establish TOD criteria and standards to be incorporated into the land use code and applied to future residential and commercial development.
- Carry out comprehensive study of bicycle use and facilities and plan to upgrade bike-friendly transportation infrastructure.
- As development occurs east of New Castle, require major development to pay the costs of a regular sustainable shuttle service as needed between areas of density such as the Planned Urban Center and downtown New Castle.

Parks, Open Space, and Trails

- Review and revise 1999 Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan to reflect current and future development, increased population, and Goals/Policies of Comprehensive Plan.
- Continue working with Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers, U.S. Forest Service and BLM on trail connections to public lands around New Castle.
- Work with community volunteers including RFOV to construct connecting single-track hiking/bicycle trails with loops in and outside of New Castle.
- Establish trail design standards/sections for each trail type including, but not limited to, hard surface, soft-surface and primitive trails. These standards should be adopted into the land use code.
- Continue to revise and update detailed portions of the Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan to define specific trail alignments in developing portions of New Castle and in conjunction with proposed annexations.
- Develop C Avenue as a major all-weather non-motorized connection between Castle Valley Ranch and downtown New Castle. Ensure that this connection is safe, lit, and pedestrian/non-motorized friendly.
- Establish a major non-motorized connection between the west end of Castle Valley Boulevard and west downtown New Castle to encourage and facilitate easy non-motorized access to downtown.
- Continue discussions with LoVa Trail Group to determine a trail alignment through New Castle.

Economy

- Analyze and modify zoning as necessary to support Goals and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan.



New Castle Comprehensive Plan

- Establish a town-wide economic development committee to coordinate development activities and recommend development policies to the Town Council
- Convene meetings/discussions with Garfield County, New Castle Chamber of Commerce, the Main Street Committee, an economic development committee, commercial/retail owners/proprietors and others to identify strategies for increasing commercial activity in New Castle.
- Continue to implement the downtown capital improvements plan in coordination with CDOT and create a defined capital improvements project plan that addresses financing, construction schedule and project refinements.
- Develop and enact new zoning and land use regulations aimed at encouraging low-impact cottage and home-based businesses in appropriate locations.
- Plan and carry out beautification projects with the objective of making New Castle more attractive to tourists and travelers on I-70.

Housing

- Work with local affordable housing agencies (e.g. Garfield County Housing Authority, Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Office, Catholic Charities, and others) and with private entities to review existing and future housing programs and to explore partnership opportunities.
- Analyze need for housing for essential personnel (e.g. health and safety, education) and develop plan for providing that housing.
- Consider establishing a New Castle Housing Authority with adequate financial support and funding mechanisms to address affordable housing needs.
- Review land use, zoning and subdivision regulations to assure that affordable sale and rental housing are a part of new development.
- Analyze and establish affordability standards and guidelines.

Natural Environment

- Develop and enact land use and other regulations aimed at preserving wildlife habitat. Such regulations should address pets-at-large restrictions, maintenance of migration and movement patterns, preservation of native vegetation, and trail closures, among other things.
- Continue developing and expanding a comprehensive raw-water irrigation plan and system for New Castle that is adequately supported by legal and physical water rights.
- Develop lighting regulations to preserve the star-filled night sky and restrict over-lighting, lighting glare, and light trespass.
- Meet with Division of Wildlife Staff to identify critical wildlife habitat and to develop preservation strategies.
- Create a water management committee to develop a comprehensive water management plan to guide preservation of water quality and quantity and responsible and sustainable water development. Incorporate its findings and recommendations into land use, zoning and building regulations.



- Develop comprehensive air quality management plan aimed at limiting or reducing air pollution from town activities, private development and commercial sources. Incorporate findings and recommendations as above.
- Research and adopt carbon footprint reduction goals and timetable.

Historic Downtown

- Analyze, revise and implement measures to upgrade Main Street – traffic calming, pedestrian amenities, two-lane traffic, etc.
- Actively support retention and development of existing businesses in downtown and other parts of New Castle.
- Develop support/incentive package for businesses locating on Main St. and enhancing/preserving historic structures.
- Develop publicity/advertising/historic materials for downtown – walking tour, informational signage, brochure, website features.
- Inventory buildings and features of historic town and identify buildings with particular historic, architectural, cultural or public value. Develop regulations/incentives to encourage preservation and enhancement of those structures and features.

Schools

- Convene regular joint planning meeting(s) with Re-2 School District staff to assure effective and frequent coordination and communication.
- Encourage regular school district participation in development review with New Castle staff, Planning Commission, and/or Town Council, to ensure that all school district impacts are adequately addressed in the early stages of project review.
- Participate with the Re-2 School District in ongoing planning for future school capital facilities designed to accommodate future growth and rates of growth to ensure a proactive future-planning environment.
- Collaborate with the Re-2 School District on issues of educational quality and vocational education to ensure that provided services meet the needs of all New Castle students.
- Develop joint use agreement with School District outlining criteria and guidelines for shared community use of publicly-financed school facilities.
- Encourage the establishment of vocational and technical educational facilities where appropriate.

Community Gateways

- Develop and adopt master plan for design and signage of community gateways to the north, east and west in coordination with Garfield County, CDOT and local interest groups.
- Plan for and carry out interim cleanup and beautification projects at gateways.

Intergovernmental Coordination



- Revise the existing New Castle/Garfield County Intergovernmental Agreement to establish and implement a joint staff, agency and Planning Commission review process for locations outside of New Castle within the Joint Planning Area.
- Work with Garfield County and the Town of Silt to ensure effective coordination of their respective comprehensive plans within the Joint Planning Area.
- Establish design standard requirements for new development approved outside the municipal boundary and within the New Castle Urban Growth Boundary and Joint Planning Area, to ensure development there complies with all the municipal design requirements.
- Develop joint planning agreements with Garfield County, CDOT, RE-2 School District, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Union Pacific Railroad and other overlapping or adjacent jurisdictions.
- Provide information packets on Comprehensive Plan to the state of Colorado, City of Glenwood Springs, Division of Wildlife, Colorado River Water Conservation Board, State Historical Society, Colorado Tourism Board, and other agencies and jurisdictions as appropriate.
- Work with Garfield County and other agencies on beautification strategies and projects.

Plan Updates and Amendments

The New Castle Comprehensive Plan is designed to be a dynamic community document that articulates the vision goals and policies of the community for future growth and development. This plan is intended to guide community decision making, as New Castle's future becomes its reality. The comprehensive plan needs to remain fresh and current. The basic community values and vision from which this plan is made are not expected to change significantly. However, as time moves on technical details in the document are likely to need modification and updating. Minor errors may be found in the plan that should be corrected. The comprehensive plan amendment process is not directed at changing the plan to fit the needs of a development proposal that does not comply, but rather, it allows the Town and its residents to ensure that the basic tenets remain consistent with New Castle's future.

The comprehensive plan should be subject to review for updates every five years. The practice of periodic updates gives the community, Planning Commission and Town Council a chance to review, evaluate and consider changes to the policies and strategies defined in the document. This is also an opportunity for appointed and elected boards to renew ownership in the Plan. It is ownership in the plan that is in harmony with the community's vision that ensures long-term sustainability.

In addition to the regular plan update process, two other measures are available for modifying the document. The simplest method is an **Insubstantial Amendment** to the plan. Insubstantial amendments are reserved for small changes and/or corrections of errors found as the document is used. For example, population numbers may need to be updated as current information becomes available. Errors in the text or on the maps may be discovered and should be corrected. Language may be revised to better clarify the intent of a particular section. Insubstantial amendments are those that apply to a few sections of the document and do not change the intent or underlying principles of any given section. Insubstantial amendments are typically initiated by the staff, Planning Commission or Town Council annually or as they are needed.

Substantial Amendments are the second method for modifying the document and are reserved for major changes. Substantial Amendments are only available once a year on or near the anniversary of the plan's



adoption and must be considered carefully. These amendments typically are directed to policy changes, multiple sections of the document or are a magnitude that warrants larger scale review. Substantial plan amendments involve noticed public hearings before the Planning Commission.

Insubstantial and substantial amendments may also be initiated by municipal residents.

Plan amendments (substantial or insubstantial) shall be evaluated against the following criteria. The town planning staff shall submit written recommendations to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is the final decision-making body on these changes and the Commission shall make written findings on each of the following items that shall be presented to the Town Council no later than 45 days after a decision of the Commission.

1. The plan section or sections subject to amendment are erroneous or have been found to be out of date.
2. The proposed amendment will not adversely affect utility planning, transportation, delivery of services, or other major functions of the Town.
3. An amendment does not bestow an individual benefit to a developer, property owner, or requesting party, but confers a benefit to the community as a whole.
4. A proposed change is compatible with existing uses, the plan vision, goals and policies.
5. The amendment is based upon a considerable change in the land use character of an area that warrants modification.
6. The modification does not conflict with or inhibit logical cost-effective annexations.
7. The plan amendment is consistent with logical extension of services, utilities, roadways, parks/open space and other essential municipal functions.
8. The amendment does not adversely affect sensitive environmental areas, air or water quality, or result in increased risks to public health, safety or welfare.
9. Strict compliance with the provisions of the section(s) to be changed conflicts with the intent of the plan or creates conditions that were not intended in the document.
10. The amendment will not result in a reduction and delivery of municipal services, utilities, unmitigated traffic impacts or other conditions that create a financial hardship or other hardship for the town of New Castle.
11. The amendment is in keeping with the overall intent of the New Castle Comprehensive Plan, its vision, its goals and policies and is in the best interest of the community.

Community Survey Results

A December 2007 survey of Town residents was conducted to gather information about Comprehensive Plan topics. The survey was another method of reaching out to citizens to learn about the community. Survey questions solicited input on demographics, household makeup and economics, patterns of shopping, work and travel, and personal values. The survey requested qualitative input on the following:

- Local attitudes towards current **Town issues**. Questions directed towards this goal addressed the direction of Town development and the impacts of growth on Town character.
- Local attitudes and priorities regarding **future development**. Questions in this area addressed future land use alternatives and related issues such as transportation infrastructure, economic development and housing.

The survey firm of RRC Associates distributed 2,076 surveys to residents within the New Castle ZIP code. The 288 survey responses that were returned represent a 14% response rate. The survey had a



margin of error of +/- 5.7%. Beyond the tabulated results, the survey collected a number of open-ended comments that offer useful information about the thoughts of respondents. Those responding to the survey generally shared the following characteristics:

- The average age of respondents was 47.7 years, with 61% of all respondents over the age of 45. Approximately 35 percent of the households have someone under the age of 18 living at home. The average age was somewhat higher than the average age of adults in New Castle, perhaps indicating that older residents had more time to spend on the survey or had a greater sense of civic involvement.
- More than half of respondents (54%) lived or owned property in the Town of New Castle for more than 5 years. This indicates that a large number of respondents were relative newcomers to New Castle, a fact reflected in some of the results noted below.
- The majority of working respondents travel by personal vehicle to work, commuting an average of 39 miles roundtrip. Almost half of these people work in Glenwood Springs (49%) followed by New Castle (22%), Basalt or further up-valley (18%), Rifle (12%), and Carbondale (10%).
- Most respondents (89%) indicated that they get community information through the *Glenwood Post Independent* newspaper. Other important sources of information include talking with friends and neighbors (67%), the town newsletter (51%), radio (27%), and the Town website (17%). These percentages add up to more than 100% because many residents got their information from more than one source.

Sense of Direction

Participants were asked whether they felt things in the Town of New Castle were going in the “right direction” or have they got off on the “wrong track.” While 45% feel the Town is going in the right direction, 29% indicated that it was on the “wrong track”, and 26% “did not know.” Results varied by age, length of time respondents had lived in New Castle, and residence location. Respondents in the newer parts of the Town such as Lakota and Castle Valley and those in the younger age groups were more likely to be satisfied with the Town’s general direction than older residents or those who lived in the older parts of town. This indicates that those who have recently relocated to New Castle are happy with their choice while longer-term residents have a more negative view of recent changes to the community. This same disparity between newcomers and long-term residents extended to perceptions of the Town’s sense of community and small town character. Older respondents and those in older residential areas had a more negative view of trends than did those in newer neighborhoods. The tendency of older and better-

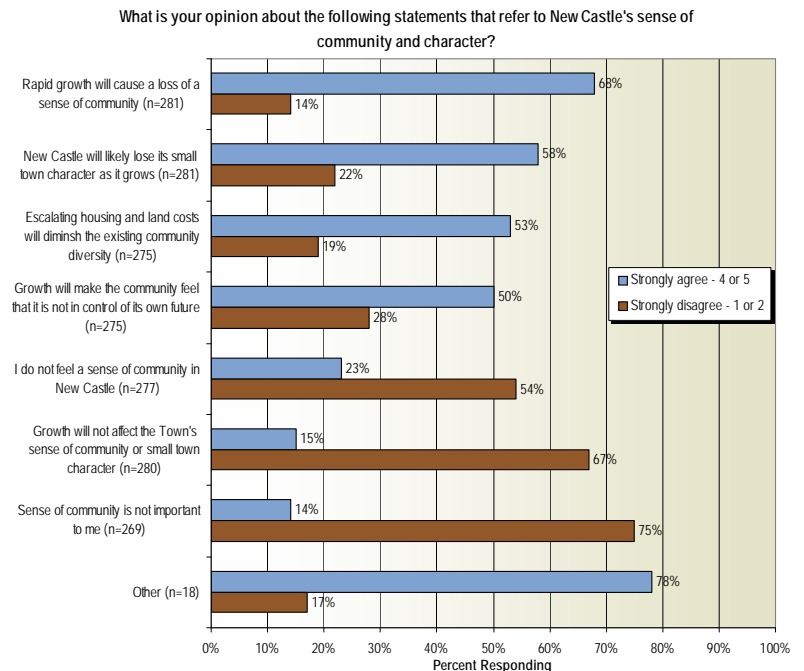


Figure 21



established residents to have a more negative attitude toward change is not unusual, particularly in a small town where change can manifest itself dramatically and quickly.

Further analysis of those that feel the Town is on the “wrong track” suggest that there are varieties of concerns held by this group. A review of open-ended responses shows that attitudes on the rate of growth, residential development, and the inability of infrastructure to keep up with development are frequently at the heart of negative responses.

The open-ended comments reveal that respondents feel New Castle’s sense of community has suffered and will remain a challenge because of the Town’s status as a bedroom community. A large proportion of respondents identified the amount and rate of residential growth as a concern. They also perceived a division between “Old Town” New Castle and the new developments of Lakota and Castle Valley. Suggestions for increasing the sense of community among these separate areas were offered along with support for the community events downtown. The disparity in attitudes and issues between residents of “Old Town” New Castle and the generally newer, younger and more affluent residents of Castle Valley and Lakota runs throughout the survey results. This response indicates a need to do more to rebuild a sense of community adversely impacted by rapid growth and demographic change.

Issue Importance

Several questions asked respondents to rate issues in order of importance to themselves and their households. Of those issues, the most important were the following:

1. Scenic Quality
2. Town Communication with Citizens
3. Water Supply
4. Economic Development Efforts
5. Town Appearance
6. Open Space Preservation

The responses to these questions revealed a strong interest in energy conservation, town services (police, ambulance), sense of community, street/sidewalk maintenance, traffic, local businesses support, and land use.

Future Issues and Growth

Several survey questions asked respondents to prioritize issues that the Town should address in the future. Issues that received the highest proportion of “needs a great amount of attention” (4 or 5) ratings were:

1. Development of the downtown core (73%).
2. Retention of historic downtown as the community and commercial core (69%).
3. Commercial/business development around I-70 interchange (69%).

Topics of growth in general, potential loss of rural setting and changes to New Castle’s small-town character were also deemed important.

Respondents were asked about the rate of future growth they felt was most desirable to achieve over the next 10 years. Most supported a growth rate between 3 and 5% with a 10-year population range of 4,600 to 5,600. The growth rate between 2000 and 2008 was 8.9%. Respondents further said they would most like to see the growth occur east of Town and north of I-70.

The results indicated that the Town should seek to achieve a balance between residents who commute to jobs outside of the community and those who work in New Castle. Currently, most residents commute



out of New Castle to work, with only 22% of the respondents employed in New Castle or the immediate area.

Respondents were asked about their level of agreement with statements regarding management of new growth and development in New Castle. Most respondents felt strongly that “growth can occur in New Castle’s undeveloped areas independent of build out of the core, but this growth should be regulated by the Town” (47%) or that “growth should occur sequentially from the developed core of town outward after existing vacant lots are developed” (38%). Only 15 percent of respondents did not want to limit growth to any specific areas in or around Town.

Survey respondents offered interesting feedback about whether New Castle is “progressing in the right direction” or “has gotten off on the wrong track.” Respondents that stated the Town is going in the right direction were more likely to choose “growth can occur in New Castle’s undeveloped areas,” while “wrong track” respondents were more likely to choose “sequential growth outward from the core.” The implication of these results is that many New Castle residents are uncomfortable with recent growth patterns and perceive that new population centers in Lakota and Castle Valley are cut off, both physically and psychologically, from historic downtown New Castle.

Infrastructure and Town Services

Respondents were asked to allocate a theoretical budget of \$100 among town priorities and services. The following expenditures, in descending order, made up about 80% of that allocation.

1. Water and Sewer Services
2. Fire District & other Emergency Services
3. Law Enforcement
4. Parks
5. Street Maintenance
6. Recreation Center Expansion
7. Building and Planning Services
8. Trail System
9. Traffic Management

The balance of the \$100 budget was divided among 7 additional services and activities. These results are consistent with other input indicating that key infrastructure (water and sewer) are foremost among the Town’s needs. These results demonstrate the respondents’ focus on critical town services.

Economic and Commercial Development

The survey offered a range of economic development options and asked the respondents to rank them in importance. Those listed in the “High Level of Attention” category included the following:

1. Design standards for commercial development on Main St. and Castle Valley Boulevard
2. Retain and expand existing local businesses
3. Improve downtown to draw more visitors and business
4. Improve appearance of town from I-70
5. Expand commercial area around I-70 intersection

Of these, retention of local businesses and downtown improvements were deemed the highest priority in a subsequent question intended to narrow further the choices.



Those activities listed as lower priority included:

1. Provide incentives to draw more business
2. Increase local employment opportunities
3. Solicit major retailers to relocate to New Castle
4. Annex adjacent areas for commercial purposes
5. Promote tourism as a larger element in the economy

With regard to types of commercial development possible in New Castle, there were clear opinions on which types respondents felt would be important to the future of the community. The survey listed 24 various types of development and asked respondents to rate each on a scale of 1 to 5 with "1" as "not at all important" and "5" as "very important". Among the "very important" types of development, restaurants were the top priority, followed by small-scale independent retail development, and smaller franchise/chain stores. Health care facilities, professional offices, recreational facilities and senior housing were also strongly supported as potential commercial opportunities.

It is important to note that manufacturing, storage/warehouse facilities and "big-box" retailers were commercial activities that were not supported. The lack of support for big-box retail is important because it is often the most expedient method of providing sales tax revenues, as has been the case in the nearby communities of Rifle, Gypsum and Glenwood Springs. The strong sentiment against big-box retail shows support for small and medium-size businesses as a source for sales tax revenues.

Housing

More than half of the respondents indicated that affordable housing is needed in New Castle. Respondents were provided with four statements regarding affordable housing in New Castle and were asked to indicate which ones they agreed with.

- 52% said affordable housing is needed in New Castle,
- 28% said New Castle should take aggressive efforts to provide housing that is affordable,
- 27% said New Castle has enough affordable housing, and
- 20% said the Town should not concern itself with affordable housing issues.

These results present a conundrum for New Castle. Other than requiring developers to provide more affordable housing, respondents did not support higher density, multi-family units, apartments or mixed use as a means of achieving housing affordability. Among the options that were disapproved were town-sponsored housing, mobile homes, manufactured/modular homes and increased impact fees to finance additional housing. These results indicate a need for further analysis and possibly community education about acceptable affordable housing solutions and available options.

Environmental Issues

Survey results showed strong support for environmental protection. The environmental impacts of growth are obviously very important to New Castle. Local features respondents identified for protection include Burning Mountain, the Colorado River corridor, Elk Creek, Historic downtown, and Mount Medaris. There was also strong support for preservation of wildlife habitat, riverside habitat, steep slopes and prominent ridges around Town.



Stakeholder Input

THE PROCESS

The New Castle Town Council/Planning and Zoning Commission identified a 44 person/organization stakeholder list at an August 16, 2007 work session. Three more names were added subsequently, increasing the list to 47 contacts. Stakeholders were chosen because of their town affiliation or because they represented a group or interests beyond those of an individual resident. The group included major landowners, community activists, business interests, community organizations, local governments, special districts and overlapping jurisdictions. It was recognized that during the process that the public at large would have a variety of opportunities to provide input into the plan.

Other opportunities for public comprehensive plan input included the community survey, public meetings, and personal contacts with the planning team. This mixture of methodologies for collecting community input broadened the opportunities for reaching out to individuals or parties that chose not to actively participate. Ultimately, 28 of the 47 (60%) stakeholders declined to participate. Those declining to comment had varied reasons, although most simply noted that their connection with the Town was not intensive or consistent enough to allow for meaningful input. Even among these contacts, there was support for the planning process and interest in staying abreast of the process. The stakeholders that chose to participate (40%) offered valuable input.

Stakeholder input was divided into three major categories:

- Individuals representing groups of private citizens with strong interests in New Castle.
- Input from key management/administrative staff.
- Institutional input from persons representing governments, organizations and others with a stake in New Castle's future (Garfield County, US Forest Service, and LoVa Trails).

The stakeholders were organized under broad headings to assure representation across a wide spectrum of interests and to facilitate an orderly process. Stakeholder interviews were conducted over a period of several weeks. Stakeholders were asked the same questions, but responses were not restricted to survey questions. These additional comments are included under the "Future Roles and Miscellaneous" sections of the response spreadsheet included in the Separate Plan Appendix.

Stakeholder contacts were made initially by US mail or e-mail and were followed up by telephone contacts. The stakeholder questions solicited input on town land use policies, public works and similar topics. All stakeholder responses are listed and categorized on the spreadsheet in the Separate Plan Appendix.

THE RESULTS

1. Future and Emerging Issues

There were many and varied responses to this question, with no single issue dominating. Among topics mentioned by multiple respondents were New Castle's changing demographics, changes to small-town character, growth, improvement of staff resources and adequacy of town infrastructure (particularly utilities).

2. Economic Development

A consensus among the public and staff is a need for increased retail sales tax revenue. The input came from a variety of interests including private landowners, environmental groups, and public land



managers. Eight respondents (27%) identified a need to increase the sales tax base. Five respondents (17%) mentioned a need for more and varied commercial/retail development.

3. *Town Staff*

There was consensus on the need to increase and diversify town staff. Eighteen of the respondents (62%) identified a need for additional employees, increased salaries and more workspace. Town staff noted high stress levels and reduced morale because of workload, lack of personnel and limited physical resources. Recent moves made to increase staff (i.e. hiring of a Town Manager and Public Works Director) had strong support. It is important to note that citizen-stakeholders also support expansion of town staff and utility facilities. Conversely, expansion of Town Hall was not supported in the community survey.

4. *Land Use.*

Land use input fell into the following categories:

- Support for growth in retail and commercial sales tax-generating businesses.
- Development of moderate- and low-income housing.
- Support for carefully planned and well-designed developments that pay their own way with infrastructure and public amenities.
- Code enforcement.
- Public works and coordination with town policies/standards.

Numerous comments identified concern about unchecked growth, encroachment on wildlife habitat, environmental impacts, loss of open space and “small town character.”

This input underscored a broad concern that rapid growth in New Castle is changing the community and not necessarily for the better. Responses show support for growth under controlled and managed conditions. Input evidenced a strong emerging environmental interest among both private and public sector respondents that should be incorporated in town land use policies. It is not surprising that land use is the biggest “hot button” issue, garnering comments from 20 of the 29 respondents (69% of the total).

5. *Infrastructure*

The majority of respondents mentioned water and wastewater utilities and roads as important infrastructure. The need for upgrades to the water and/or wastewater systems was mentioned specifically by eight respondents (27%). Roads were mentioned by six respondents (20%). Other comments supported an obligation for developers to pay for infrastructure upgrades and for better Developer/Town coordination on construction standards and inspections.

6. *Environmental Issues*

The concerns noted above were echoed in the input on environmental issues. That input focused on water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, energy conservation and development-generated environmental impacts. Strong interest in environmental, conservation and wildlife issues among the respondents was another theme consistent throughout the stakeholder input. This sentiment could open the way for some important new initiatives aimed at “greening” New Castle.



7. *Community Services*

Comments on Community Services reinforced points made in other categories, including inadequate Town staff, budget and infrastructure. Although only 4 private and 2 staff stakeholders commented in this area, those comments were consistent in pointing out the inadequacy of personnel, budget and physical plant available for critical services such as police and water.

8. *Public Facilities*

Input focused on the need to improve and enlarge schools, both in terms of physical facilities and performance.

9. *Housing*

Housing comments were almost exclusively focused on escalating home prices and the shortage of affordable housing (7 respondents - 24%). Substantial input coupled growth with accompanying adverse impacts. Concern was expressed about the growing disparity between low, middle and upper-income housing and social impacts associated with “ghetto-ization” of housing types. In other words, if there is not a diversity and mix of housing type in new development there will not be a broad range in price and availability of housing. That limitation translates into a less-varied population with the potential of diminishing the Town’s sense of community.

10. *Parks and Recreation*

Eight respondents (27%) support expanded and improved park/recreation facilities.

11. *Future Role and Other/Miscellaneous*

Stakeholders commented on their perception of their future relationship with the Town and other issues that were raised in conversation. The comments in the “Future Role” category focused on the need to maintain good interagency communications and cooperation and the need to keep local citizens involved in government processes. The Miscellaneous category included a wide range of issues, many of which reiterated or reinforced previous comments. Examples of other comments included concern about the difficulty of recruiting volunteers for non-profit/civic functions and the need to maintain active and open lines of communication between local governments as the plan moves forward.

The full matrix of stakeholder responses is provided in the Separate Plan Appendix.



Plan Maps

Existing Land Use.

Existing Zoning.

Parks & Open Space.

Trails Map.

New Castle Master Street Plan Map.

New Castle Environmental Hazards Map.

New Castle Future Land Use Map.

Wildlife Maps.

APPENDIX

Planning Commission Resolution Adopting Comprehensive Plan-

SEPARATE APPENDIX (Available at New Castle Town Hall or Town Web-site)

Community Preference Survey

Community Survey Results & Community Survey Questionnaire-

Stakeholder & Staff Input Results-

LSC Transportation Report-