

Long Range Planning Issues

Intent

The policies in the Long Range Planning Issues section are not used when reviewing rezoning or site approval cases. These policies are meant to guide staff in updating this plan, developing future work programs, considering regulations changes, or finding and applying for funding opportunities. There are also policies that are good ideas for how the Development and Transportation Department might operate or coordinate and helpful hints for citizens that relate in some way to land use or the planning process.

Future Development



All Development

The location and availability of goods and Services is a major factor that influences where people choose to live. Commercial goods and Services should be within a reasonable distance of supporting residential land use. Likewise, the availability of an educated workforce in addition to other quality of life measures can influence where a business chooses to locate. Ensuring that residential areas are balanced by Commercial, Service and employment centers can contribute to an orderly pattern of development and a sense of place. A balance of land uses may also encourage people to walk or bicycle to nearby Services rather than driving which provides not only a benefit to the environment, but also to their own health.

Goals

- Promote an appropriate mix of land uses that maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting the natural environment.
- Create predictability in development for both developers and citizens.
- Recognize and plan for balanced future growth that complements the existing community character.

Policies

A. General

1. Accommodate a reasonable portion of the growth anticipated in this area of the Denver Metro region.
2. Manage growth and development so as to minimize adverse social, economic, and environmental impacts.
3. Locate compatible Commercial, Light Industrial, high density residential, and Community Uses near each other to promote efficient use of public transportation, Infrastructure, and public Services.
4. Consider local, County, and regional impacts when creating land use recommendations.
5. Ensure that new retail, Office, Industrial, and Community Use recommendations are compatible with existing surrounding uses.
6. Encourage new and existing developments to consider the feasibility of utilizing renewable energy sources to supplement electric, heating, or cooling needs.
7. Encourage development patterns that conserve energy resources.
8. Balance jobs with housing to reduce commute times and distances.

9. When updating Area Plans, changing land use recommendations from Commercial or Industrial to residential should be the exception, not the rule.
10. Evaluate the existing land use pattern to determine the best use of infill properties.
11. Encourage multi-purpose use of public lands, Facilities, or Services.
12. Encourage development to conserve water resources.
13. Support practices and programs to lengthen the life of landfills, such as utilizing waste reduction methods. (See Appendix D II.d.)
14. Support existing recycling and composting facilities and allow properly sited new facilities when needed.
15. When designing refuse facilities, accommodate recycling facilities, as well as trash receptacles.

B. Location

1. Promote economic development and employment opportunities near housing, while protecting residents from adverse impacts, if any, of non-residential development.
2. Accommodate higher Intensity uses in areas with adequate Infrastructure and minimal hazards.
3. Land use recommendations should consider the Jefferson County Self-Certified Urban Growth Boundary/Area (UGB/A).
4. Ensure land uses can be supported by existing or planned Infrastructure and resources.

C. Density Issues

1. Plan for higher Intensity development where public water, sanitation, fire protection, law enforcement, and public transportation exist.
2. Density recommendations should be determined by the type and Intensity of constraints, as well as community character issues.
3. Densities should consider Wildlife Habitat quality.

D. Transportation Issues

1. Consider current and planned road capacity when developing land use recommendations.
2. Locate high traffic generators, i.e. higher density housing, retail, Office, and Industrial land use near Arterial Roads and/or public transportation lines.
3. Encourage alternatives to curb, gutter, and sidewalk, such as trails and ditches, in the rural and semirural areas of the County.

E. Process

1. The Planning and Zoning Division is encouraged to consider the design recommendations and the resources and hazards maps in this Plan to assist in building and site design for Platting, exemption from platting, site development plan, and special use applications.

Economic Development

A community that offers a diversity and adequate number of primary jobs is necessary for long-term resilience. Primary jobs bring new wealth into the community. Commercial property taxes also pay for a large portion of the Services that citizens receive. Since the County does not rely on sales taxes to fund its operations, future economic development opportunities should be focused not on large retail centers, but on creating and maintaining an appropriate balance of uses.

Goals

- Promote a diverse, adaptable, and sustainable economy that supports the needs of the community, provides a high quality of life, and encourages a dynamic mix of business opportunities.
- Attract new businesses and support the preservation and expansion of existing businesses.

Policies

A. General

1. Promote land uses that allow for the Research and Development of new technologies.
2. Recruit and support industries that create primary jobs. (See Appendix B II. a.)
3. Pursue balanced and sustainable economic development.
4. Promote technology transfer opportunities.
5. Encourage public/private cooperation in meeting the County's economic goals.
6. Coordinate economic development planning with the Jefferson County Economic Development Corporation.
7. Support and encourage partnerships between businesses and educational institutions.
8. Explore incentives to attract new and retain existing businesses. (See Appendix B II.c.)

B. Tax Base

1. Increase the County's fiscal capacity to meet the needs of its citizens.
2. Promote an adequate tax base to support quality Services, Facilities, and amenities to attract new businesses.
3. Diversify the County's economic base to increase resilience to changing external conditions.
4. Closely examine land use activities that could lead to a reduction of the County's tax base.

C. Business Retention and Expansion

1. Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses and employers in Jefferson County. (See Appendix B II.c.)
2. Encourage the retention and development of existing federal facilities. (See Appendix B II. b.)
3. If businesses or employers outgrow their existing location, facilitate their ability to remodel or expand their existing site or find another, more suitable, location within the County.
4. Encourage the redevelopment and revitalization of Industrial and Commercial areas that are in economic decline or are under used.

D. Attracting New Businesses

1. Seek grants to help with the costs of installing new Infrastructure.
2. Seek support from local educational institutions in training and other advancements in workforce development.
3. Encourage economic development strategies tailored to the unique conditions of particular subareas of the County.
4. Promote the value of Public and Private Open Spaces when attracting business and industry to the County.

E. Home Enterprise

1. Encourage home enterprise and Home Occupation activities.
2. Support land use Policies that allow individuals to work out of their homes, especially in areas that are not conducive to large scale non-residential development and/or would otherwise require long commuting times.

Activity Centers

Activity Centers are those areas where higher Intensity land uses, such as multifamily residential, retail, Office, and Industrial uses should be located. Many existing Activity Centers were located based on existing land uses, however, new Activity Centers may be created in appropriate areas.

Goal

Ensure that the County has sufficient land designated for higher Intensity land uses.

Policies

A. General

1. When Activity Center boundaries are adjacent to residential neighborhoods, locate lower Intensity uses at the boundary.
2. Encourage retail, Office, and Light Industrial uses in the mountains to be located within designated Activity Centers.
3. Support the planning of concentrated mixed-use, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly Activity Centers.
4. Allow for the creation of new Activity Centers or the rational expansion of existing Activity Centers.
5. Proposed Activity Centers should consider local, County, and regional impacts.
6. The following issues should be considered when creating new activity centers:
 - a) Location
 - b) Uses
 - c) Need
 - d) Transitional uses/buffers
 - e) Services, Facilities & Utilities
 - f) Access
 - g) Traffic impacts
 - h) Hazards

- i) Other adverse impacts
- j) Community input

Housing

A broad spectrum of housing types is essential to create an inclusive community where people can live and work in the same general area. However, new housing needs to take into account man-made and environmental constraints, such as water and septic suitability, Transportation Systems, geologic and Flood hazards, slope, meadows, Wildlife, vegetation and views. Area Plans should guide housing to the appropriate locations.

Goal

Encourage a diversity of housing types throughout the County to meet the housing needs of the people who work and live in our communities.

Policies

A. General

1. Encourage a mix of residential densities to create a diversity of housing types, sizes, and price ranges.
2. In the mountains, multi-family housing should generally be located within Activity Centers.
3. Create neighborhoods that encourage residents to be healthy and promote Active Living.

B. Affordable Housing

1. Reduce local government barriers to the construction of affordable housing units. (See Appendix B I. d.)
2. Coordinate with the Community Development Division to determine the amount and type of Affordable Housing available and needed when updating Area Plans.
3. Encourage non-profit organizations and developers to increase the supply of Affordable Housing units.

Mixed-Use Neighborhoods

A mix of uses, either located in one building or next to each other, in a compact development pattern allows for people of all ages to easily access the things they need on a daily basis without having to drive. Walking or bicycling to the store, a restaurant or work is quick and easy because streets allow the pedestrian to feel safe and invited into the environment. Many mixed-use neighborhoods in Jefferson County are planned near the proposed light rail stations. While these are mostly in the incorporated areas, there may be future opportunities for planning around transit in the unincorporated areas.

Goal

Promote development of mixed-use neighborhoods that would allow residents to live, work and recreate within the neighborhood.

Policies

A. Mixed-Use

1. Where suitable, encourage Mixed-Use Development, with appropriate scale and patterns of uses, which supports a variety of travel options.
2. Encourage vertical Mixed-Use Developments, where housing is located above retail and Office space.
3. Mixed-Use Developments should be served by public transportation.

B. Transit Oriented Developments (TODs)

1. Encourage neighborhood infill that includes a mix of uses, usually including residential, retail and Office, which result in focused, high-quality compact development, and incorporates pedestrian and bicycle oriented design, at high speed rail and transit station locations.
2. TODs should be integrated with surrounding land uses.
3. TOD development should minimize auto-oriented and drive-thru retail.

Agriculture

Over time, many of the existing farms and ranches in the County have been converted to residential subdivisions and Commercial centers. However, there are still areas of the County that strongly identify with their agricultural heritage. There is also a renewed interest in small scale agriculture in more urbanized areas. These agricultural uses should be acknowledged as important resources in our community.

Goal

Support agricultural uses and businesses in the County.

Policies

A. General

1. Support and maintain the agricultural and ranching heritage of the community by allowing these uses to continue through conservation easements, zoning, and other methods.
2. The County should facilitate the coordination of the various agencies with responsibility for livestock protection and related environmental issues, to develop a comprehensive approach to handling livestock-based complaints.
3. Avoid overuse by livestock to reduce water pollution and soil/vegetation degradation.
4. Review the Jefferson County Zoning Resolution for the keeping of livestock in residential areas, for the appropriateness of the number of animals, for the size of the parcel, and type of zoning.
5. Explore the expansion of Urban Agriculture land uses, including food production, processing, distribution, wholesale, retail, and waste management activities.
6. Support a variety of sizes and types of community-based agriculture.

Seniors

The baby boomer generation, i.e. post WWII babies born from 1946 through 1964, currently comprise about 30% of the County's total population. In 2010, the first wave of baby boomers entered into their retirement years. The aging of the baby boomer generation will have a definite impact on County services, Facilities, and housing needs.

Goal

Provide an environment that encourages seniors to live, work, and recreate in Jefferson County.

Policies

A. General

1. Encourage businesses that will benefit the growing senior population.
2. Support the goals of the Aging Well in Jefferson County Strategic Plan. (See Appendix D II.c.)
3. Provide housing options for the projected population growth and income levels of seniors.
4. Determine, based on demographic trends, where additional senior housing may be needed when updating Area Plans.
5. Promote design that meets the needs of residents as they age.

Community Character

The character of a community is what makes a place unique. Many places feel they are losing their community character as New Development brings with it chain stores that could be found anywhere in the US. Other places are trying to figure out what their character is as they grow from a rural area to a more developed community. Both of these situations need consideration when planning for the future to ensure that the County does not become one homogenous area.

Goal

Identify or create a sense of community and encourage new land uses to incorporate that character.

Policies

A. General

1. Identify unique areas that merit special development standards when integrating community plans into the Comprehensive Master Plan or when updating the Area Plans.
2. Encourage neighborhoods, both planned and existing, to create a sense of identity for that neighborhood.

Coordination of Jurisdictions

Jefferson County contains eight cities and hundreds of Special Districts. There are also many state and federal agencies that play various roles in the County. It is beneficial to the County to work with all of these different

interests when determining future land uses.

Goal

Promote intergovernmental cooperation on land use issues.

Policies

A. General

1. Coordinate land use issues between different jurisdictions and agencies, both within and external to the County, to ensure consistency and compatibility.
2. Seek partnerships with local jurisdictions on large-scale land development activities.
3. Support the Denver Regional Council of Government's MetroVision planning efforts and goals.
4. Offer Planning and Zoning expertise and assistance to other Jefferson County Departments and Divisions as needed.
5. Coordinate with community and advocacy groups, e.g. parent and school groups, bike and pedestrian advocacy groups, housing advocacy groups, etc. on land use projects.
6. Coordinate land use planning with surrounding jurisdictions to ensure the future operation of the Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport.
7. Work with other jurisdictions and agencies on the creation and update of Plans that could impact land uses in the County. (See Appendix B, V., a.)

B. Annexations

1. Encourage cities to consider the recommendations in this Plan when property owners apply to the cities to annex and rezone.
2. Inform unincorporated County Homeowners Associations and residents about nearby annexation proposals.

Energy Efficient Design

Energy efficient design is good for the environment and good for the economy. Less money spent on energy costs means that more money can be spent on other things, like business or home improvements. Energy efficiencies can be achieved through both site and building design.

Goal

Encourage energy-efficient design.

Policies

A. General

1. Encourage well designed, energy-efficient buildings that minimize operational energy consumption and maintenance costs over time (e.g., passive heating and cooling).
2. Promote the use of sustainable and local materials.

3. Consider solar orientation when planning developments. Utilize passive solar heating and roof slopes conducive to solar panels, where feasible.
4. Encourage Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified design or similar design techniques.
5. The County should support energy-efficient building design and solar-oriented site planning.
6. Consider County codes that encourage sustainably designed and energy-efficient buildings, landscaping, and Infrastructure.
7. The County should consider energy efficient practices when retrofitting or constructing County buildings.
8. Encourage Green Roofs.



Hazards

Where hazardous conditions exist, hazardous events are more apt to occur. An unstable slope can become a Landslide area when triggered by severe and continuing rains, by earthquakes, or by poorly designed and constructed buildings. It is in the best interest of the County and its residents to avoid or mitigate hazardous conditions, so that each is not subject to future safety or cost implications.

Goal

Protect people and property from hazardous conditions and events.

Policies

A. General

1. Recognizing that hazards cross jurisdictional boundaries, planning efforts should be promoted that foster cooperation and coordination among agencies and organizations involved in the Mitigation of the risks associated with the hazards.
2. Work with Jefferson County Weed and Pest Management and other applicable agencies to address noxious weeds and forest pests.
3. Recognize hazardous conditions and events while evaluating improved technologies and strategies to deal with those conditions and events.

B. Geologic Hazards and Constraints

1. Protect people and property from Geologic Hazards and constraints.
2. Recognize and respect natural geologic conditions.

C. Floodplains

1. Mitigate impacts to life and property in Floodplains and reduce threats to public safety.
2. Promote regional planning and management approaches that protect the integrity of drainage systems and minimize long-term system-wide environmental impacts, costs, and recognized Flood dangers within the County.
3. Cooperate with FEMA and the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, as well as other State and Federal agencies, to prevent Flood damage and incompatible land uses in Flood hazard areas.
4. Support the continued refinement and use of regional Flood warning systems.
5. When existing buildings are located in the Floodplain, encourage either altering the boundary of the Floodplain or moving the building to a location outside of the Floodplain when this can be accomplished in a cost-effective and equitable manner.

D. Wildfire

1. Encourage private and public landowners to manage their forests by developing and maintaining a diversity of species, ages, and stand densities to serve as a natural deterrent to pest and fire outbreaks.
2. Support the Community Wildfire Protection Plans as adopted by the local fire protection districts.

3. Encourage property owners and HOA's to implement the recommendations of their local Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).
4. Explore incentives for voluntary fire Mitigation on existing properties.
5. When updating Area Plans, existing subdivisions should be evaluated for whether evacuation routes exist or if they need to be planned for in the future.
6. Work with Emergency Management when establishing priorities for roadway improvements, particularly in those areas with high Wildfire potential.
7. Support the Front Range Fuels Treatment Roundtable.
8. Encourage slash collection programs throughout the mountainous areas of the County.

E. Hazardous Materials and Waste

1. Identify the known locations of significant amounts of hazardous wastes and materials are used, stored, or manufactured. Use that information when updating land use recommendations in Area Plans.
2. Inform Fire Districts and emergency management teams of chemicals, explosives, Hazardous Materials, products and their wastes stored or manufactured on sites, or transported within their districts.
3. Prior to dedication of any land to the County, an environmental questionnaire should be submitted for the land to be dedicated to alert the County to any liability for future cleanup.

Habitats

The wide variety of Wildlife Habitats and unique vegetation are aesthetic, economic, and environmental assets to Jefferson County. They also contribute to the quality of life of residents of the County. Many people move to Jefferson County to enjoy close proximity to Wildlife, while also being close to needed Services and amenities. Development activities, especially in undisturbed areas, can fragment habitat areas and Wildlife movement corridors. The health of people is connected to the health of the natural environment. While some species can adapt to human encroachment on their habitat, careful planning is needed to ensure that important Wildlife Habitats are not adversely impacted, degraded, or destroyed, and that Wildlife/human conflicts are minimized.

Goal

Support the preservation and/or protection of Wildlife Habitats, natural areas, and movement corridors to maintain a healthy ecosystem and healthy Wildlife populations.

Policies

A. Protection of Wildlife

1. Protect Wildlife's access to forage areas, water, and cover.
2. Protect Maximum/Critical Quality Wildlife Areas through a variety of methods.

B. Vegetation

1. Encourage the protection of public and private properties from noxious weeds and forest pests.
2. Promote the design and construction of ecologically complete artificial Wetlands, where appropriate.

C. Management of Wildlife

1. Support efforts by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to manage Wildlife populations and Wildlife Habitat lands.
2. Maintain areas where big game hunting can continue, to help reduce problems with overpopulation of these species.

D. Development

1. Protect Wildlife Habitats from significant degradation by domestic livestock.
2. Identify important habitat and movement corridors on the Wildlife Resources Map in each community/Area Plan.
3. Offset loss of habitats in developed areas by improving or preserving other habitat areas.
4. Discourage the elimination of all snags, down timber, and shrubs when Wildfire prevention measures are addressed due to the importance of these areas to some Wildlife.

E. Transportation and Wildlife

1. Avoid planting wildlife-friendly seed species along highway rights-of-way to keep Wildlife from grazing along roadways.
2. Consider Wildlife corridors when planning road construction projects and, where practicable, incorporate Wildlife bridges or crossings and signage into design.

Water

Proper planning and maintaining of water quality and quantity is essential. An adequate and safe supply of water protects the health of the community's residents and the environment. Land development affects both the quality and the quantity of Ground Water and surface water. Because of this direct link, the adverse impacts of existing and future development on this necessary resource should be studied and mitigated.

Goals

- Promote a sustainable, adequate, reliable, and safe water supply.
- Protect the quality and quantity of surface and Ground Water resources.
- Protect water resources through stormwater management.
- Promote water conservation practices.

Policies

A. General

1. Endorse efforts to better define and protect Ground Water Recharge areas.
2. Encourage Best Management Practices to limit the spread of vector- and water-borne diseases.
3. Encourage connections to Centralized Water and Sewer Systems, when economically feasible, or necessary to protect human health or the environment.
4. If drainage modifications are necessary, they should be natural in appearance.

B. Ground Water

1. When an area has been identified by the County or Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment as having a Ground Water quality problem, proper Mitigation of the problem should be implemented before zoning, health variances or changes are approved that would aggravate the problem.
2. Encourage collection and analysis of data to evaluate the extent, availability, and quality of Ground Water resources in the Mountain Ground Water Overlay District.

C. Water Quality

1. Identify existing water contamination sources and mitigate or eliminate them.
2. Identify appropriate measures to protect water resources from effects of point and non-point sources of stormwater pollution.
3. Stormwater from New Developments should not discharge into a drinking water supply reservoir unless it can be demonstrated that water quality will not be impaired.
4. Runoff from fertilized landscaped areas and impervious surfaces, including pavement, hard-packed corrals, etc., should be filtered through vegetated buffers and grass swales or other Infiltration structures to reduce pollutants before the runoff leaves the property. (See Appendix C I. d.)
5. Development and other land use activities should avoid water quality impacts from erosion and sedimentation.
6. Utilize Low Impact Development (LID) as a stormwater management approach and set of practices that can be used to reduce runoff and pollutant loadings by managing the runoff as close to its source(s) as possible.
7. Existing development should be encouraged to implement stormwater quality Best Management Practices. (See Appendix C I. a.)

D. Individual Sewage Disposal Systems (ISDS)

1. Protect the quality of surface and Ground Water from pollution caused by ISDS.
2. Encourage advanced treatment system ISDSs when replacing ISDSs.
3. Encourage the State to evaluate separation requirements between wells and leach fields.

E. Conservation

1. Encourage development and implementation of water conservation plans and programs.
2. Promote water conservation techniques which provide large water use reductions and have relatively low cost. (See Appendix C I. e.)
3. Encourage site designs that make efficient use of water.
4. Design landscaping to conserve water.
5. Support gray-water reuse, when not in conflict with local, state and district rules.

F. Coordination

1. The County should protect the region's water resources, in part by supporting the Denver Regional Council of Government's Plans.
2. Coordinate surface water planning on a Watershed level.
3. Coordinate with neighboring communities and with regional planning forums to develop and implement effective Watershed management strategies.
4. The County should work with appropriate parties to develop new, innovative standards for stormwater management.



Historic Resources

Jefferson County has a rich history filled with interesting people and events. Many of the structures and places where notable Jefferson County citizens lived and worked, and where historic events occurred, are still standing as a visual reminder of an earlier time. These resources are important because they help establish the community character. The identification and recognition of these resources are the foundation for their Preservation.

For purposes of this document “Historic Resources” encompasses historic, Cultural, Archaeological, and Paleontological Resources and Historic Districts.

Goal

Preserve, reuse, rehabilitate, or enhance Historic Resources that provide a link to the County’s heritage while recognizing their social and economic significance for the County’s future.

Policies

A. Land Use

1. Encourage land uses that protect the County’s Historic Resources.
2. Promote existing benefits and explore new incentives that would encourage developers to protect and integrate a Historic Resource into the New Development proposal.
3. Encourage acquisition, Preservation, and management of Historic Resources.
4. Develop procedures and standards that will help identify, evaluate, and document, Historic Resources.

B. Documentation

1. Create and maintain an inventory of the County’s Historic Resources.
2. Encourage Historic Resources to be designated with monument-style markers.

C. Historic Districts

1. Support the designation of new Historic Districts.

D. Coordination

1. Coordinate Preservation efforts with national, state, and local Preservation agencies, landowners, developers, and the community.
2. Encourage public-private sector joint projects.
3. Partner with non-profit organizations to acquire funding to protect Historic Resources and provide educational opportunities for the public.
4. Support the Jefferson County Historical Commission in determining priorities for protection and education.
5. When updating Area Plans, work with appropriate agencies to create design guidelines for properties that

are either in close proximity to or contain resources listed or eligible for listing on the national, state, or local registries, where appropriate.

6. Encourage owners of historic properties to apply for national, state, and/or local Preservation status, which may enable them to receive grants and other financial advantages.

Visual Resources

Scenic views and natural features are some of the more perceptible elements of the quality of life in a community. Obscuring valued views or limiting access to viewing sites can reduce the level of satisfaction felt by residents. However, good design practices can enhance the visual quality of an area, particularly in some of the built-up areas of the County.

Goals

- Protect scenic corridors, public views, and prominent features for quality of life and enjoyment of future generations.
- Balance development with preservation of Visual Resources.

Policies

A. General

1. Identify and protect the Visual Resources in the County, to the maximum extent feasible.
2. Develop a systematic approach to conducting a visual resource analysis.
3. Encourage protection of scenic resources using incentives, education, acquisition, and regulation. (See Appendix CV. b.)
4. Promote overlooks and turnouts on Recreational routes and in unique scenic areas.
5. Provide visual open space buffers around communities to maintain separation between communities and to emphasize the uniqueness of each community.

Sensory Aspects

For most sensory impacts, the saying “less is more” is accurate. Less air pollution means increased health of residents. Lighting that provides security without drowning a site in light allows people to continue to appreciate the night sky and protects wildlife. A reduction in odors and noises increase the quality of life and health of residents.

Goals

- Promote the protection of air quality.
- Minimize light, odor, and noise pollution.

Policies

A. Air Quality

1. Mitigate dust on unpaved County roads.
2. Consider the impacts that land use and transportation decisions will have on air quality.
3. Encourage development patterns that reduce dependence on the automobile for work, shopping, and other trips to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).
4. Minimize stop and go traffic, to decrease vehicular emissions.

B. Light

1. Promote lighting color, design, and installation that protect the nighttime environment while providing for public safety.
2. Dark sky practices should be evaluated as regulations are updated or Comprehensive Master Plan design guidelines are created. (See Appendix C III.a.)

C. Noise

1. Encourage noise Mitigation measures to be completed at the same time as transportation projects.

D. Coordination

1. Actively participate in regional decisions concerning air quality, light, odor, and noise impacts.
2. Cooperate with governments and businesses to improve air quality.
3. Coordinate with the Colorado Department of Transportation to provide for effective screening and sound barriers between major highways and adjacent residential areas, using materials and designs that blend with the natural landscape.

Open Space, Open Lands, & Parks

The hundreds of square miles of parks, open space, and Open Land are a valuable amenity to both visitors and residents of the County. Being the "Gateway to the Rockies", it is important to preserve highly visible lands. However, less visible lands also have important values related to Wildlife Habitat protection, water quality, and Recreational uses. Private open space and agricultural uses also play a part in maintaining the community character.

Goals

- Provide open space, Open Land, parks, and trails for County residents and visitors.
- Assist landowners with their efforts to protect private Open Lands.
- Provide parks, trails, or Open Lands within walking distance of neighborhoods.

Policies

A. General

1. Provide Neighborhood Parks, Open Land, trails, and Recreational spaces to meet the needs of the citizens in all areas of the County.
2. Encourage parks, trails, and Open Lands to be integrated into major Infrastructure projects such as roadways, drainage improvements, reservoirs, and utility corridors.
3. Consider the preservation of property with the following attributes:
 - a. Scenic vistas/corridors
 - b. Critical Wildlife Habitat, migration corridors, calving areas, and hogbacks
 - c. Threatened and endangered plant and animal species
 - d. Riparian zones
 - e. Surface waters
 - f. Significant rock outcrops
 - g. Ridges and peaks
 - h. Historic Resources (work with Jefferson County Historical Commission)
 - i. Space to act as a buffer between development
 - j. Opportunities for Recreational uses
 - k. Presence of Geologic Hazards
 - l. Possible trail system connections
 - m. Unique vegetation
 - n. Arable lands, existing agricultural uses, and potentially cultivatable land
 - o. Within the Front Range Mountain Backdrop/Foreground Area
4. In the Plains, and in Mountain Activity Centers, a Neighborhood Park or Greenbelt with trail should be within convenient walking distance of all homes within a neighborhood.
5. Encourage the owners/managers of Open Space and Open Land to create management plans. These plans should address future maintenance costs.

B. Conservation Techniques

1. Encourage a variety of land conservation techniques. (See Appendix B III.e)
2. Support measures that conserve lands in perpetuity.
3. Encourage the private sector to acquire and manage private Open Lands and trails. The County should work with landowners to help them manage and/or control public access.

C. Parks

1. Encourage additional parks in all areas of the County and for all segments of the population, including young children, teenagers, the disabled, and the elderly.
2. Consider developing specific requirements for park(s) within new neighborhoods. Fees for parks may not be adequate in all cases.

3. Provide incentives to Parks and Recreation Districts to accept land dedications. Explore ways to deal with maintenance issues, so that Districts want to accept land and not just fees in-lieu of land.

D. Coordination

1. Encourage and support governments, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals in acquisition, preservation, planning, and management of Open Land and encourage public-private sector joint projects and cooperation.
2. Support the Jefferson County Open Space Master Plan. (See Appendix B III.c.)
3. Encourage the Jefferson County R-1 School District to allow joint use of school facilities for Recreational activities and Community Uses.

Recreational Trails

Recreational trails help people to live an active, healthy lifestyle, create a sense of well being, and help residents and visitors explore the natural beauty of the County. These trails are different from trails that provide pedestrians or bicyclists an alternative way to commute to and from work or shopping. Trails that may be used for transportation are also frequently used for Recreational purposes, such as the trail along C-470. However, many trails, such as most of those within Open Space Parks, are used exclusively for Recreational purposes and do not provide a direct connection from one location to another. Pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians, and other non-motorized vehicles may use these trails, so it is important to plan for a wide variety of users.

Goal

Maintain and expand the network of local and Regional Trails.

Policies

A. General

1. Accommodate a variety of users on the trail network, including hikers, bikers, and equestrians.
2. Connect missing links in the regional, County and local trail systems.
3. Encourage continuity of surface materials along trails.
4. Involve ditch companies in trail planning.
5. Encourage safe routes and street/road crossings for pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists. Work with local equestrian groups to identify needed improvements specific to the unique needs of their users.
6. Ensure that trails are wide enough (minimum of 5-6 feet) to accommodate pedestrians, equestrians, and cyclists.

Recreation and Tourism

Recreation and tourism uses promote economic growth, support existing communities, can encourage health and wellness, and protect historical and natural resources. Future development and continued success of existing venues depends on cooperation between public and private Recreation interests, residents, and businesses.

Most communities have natural resources that provide outdoor Recreational opportunities as well as some history, heritage, or artistic specialty that is of cultural interest. These amenities, both natural and man-made, can be marketed, resulting in an increase in spending in a local area. The resulting increases in spending directly pays for goods, Services and wages that would not exist absent specific Recreation and tourism opportunities. In general, Active Recreation opportunities are provided by local park and recreation districts and cities.

Goal

Encourage and promote Recreation and tourism in Jefferson County.

Policies

A. General

1. Acknowledge and adapt to the growing demands and changing Recreation and tourism preferences of residents and visitors.
2. Consider outdoor Recreation and tourism interests when updating Area Plans.
3. Promote key Recreational opportunities, local Landmarks, scenic byways, and unique areas to benefit the local economy.

B. Recreation

1. Support the provision and maintenance of a diversity of Recreational opportunities.
2. Identify and promote the unique sporting opportunities for hunting, fishing, and Wildlife viewing.

C. Tourism

1. Encourage Heritage Tourism by preserving Cultural, historic, and natural resources and attractions.

D. Coordination

1. Work with Jefferson County Parks, park and recreation districts, and cities to provide for the Recreational needs of residents and visitors.

Services, Utilities & Transportation



Services & Utilities

The provision of consistent, reliable, and adequate Services, and Utilities influence the quality of life in a community. Jefferson County provides Sheriff's and disaster emergency services, as well as a variety of health and social services. Special Districts are overseen by separate boards and provide Services such as fire protection, schools, or Recreation services. Coordination between Jefferson County and the Special Districts is necessary to assure provision of Services.

Goal

Ensure that efficient, cost-effective, and reliable Services, Facilities, and Utilities are available for existing and planned development.

Policies

A. General

1. Anticipate future growth patterns and plan Services and Facilities to respond to these needs.
2. Monitor the changing demographics of citizens and the economy to evaluate their impact on Services and Facilities.
3. Encourage the expansion of Infrastructure, including information infrastructure, to support the economy and stimulate future economic growth.
4. All Centralized Water Systems should be overseen by an Operational Agency, inspected annually and have their water quality checked for Potability, regardless of the number of structures served.

B. Services

1. Encourage the consolidation of Services when appropriate to promote efficiency and to avoid duplication and overlapping of costs and Services.
2. Ensure existing Services have the capacity to serve projected development.
3. Encourage existing development not within a fire protection district to obtain fire protection service.

C. Utilities

1. Encourage utility providers to work with the County and the community in site selection and facility design.
2. Support the expansion of and improvements to the County's communication infrastructure, while considering visual and environmental impacts. (See Appendix B II. d.)
3. Encourage the use of renewable energies at a neighborhood scale to decrease a development's demand on public utilities.

D. Coordination

1. The County should coordinate the development of their Capital Improvement Plans with neighboring jurisdictions and Special Districts.
2. Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions and Special Districts when updating the Comprehensive Master Plan to determine whether they have the future capacity to serve proposed uses.

Transportation

In recent years, funding for transportation improvements has not kept up with the system needs, so the funds should be allocated to projects that will provide the greatest value to the community.

Support of a variety of transportation options, including vehicles, transit, walking, and bicycling, to give people a choice in how they move around the County. A system with a variety of options can lower transportation costs, reduce consumption of fossil fuels, improve air quality, relieve traffic congestion, provide mobility options for people unable to drive, and improve the health of citizens. Multi-Modal Transportation Systems may enhance growth in areas of the County planned for more compact development, such as Activity Centers.

In many suburban and rural communities automobiles will continue to be the preferred mode of transportation for the foreseeable future. Therefore, an emphasis also must be placed on increasing Transportation System efficiency. This can be accomplished through providing carpool opportunities for commuters, coordinating traffic signal timing to optimize traffic flow, and making land use choices that coincide with Transportation Systems.

The Policies in this chapter are meant to ensure that land uses can be supported by the Services and Infrastructure available.

Goals

- Plan, develop, and maintain a safe, integrated, and comprehensive Transportation System to meet the present and future mobility of people, goods, materials, and Services.
- Coordinate transportation planning and design with federal, state, regional, local, and private providers to improve safety and accessibility, reduce congestion, provide alternative modes of transportation, and reduce and/or mitigate environmental impacts.
- Promote an efficient Multi-Modal Transportation System to provide a variety of transportation opportunities.
- Utilize maintenance and improvement techniques which improve safety and reduce environmental impacts.
- Promote connectivity and continuity in the Transportation System.

Policies

A. General

1. Regularly update the Countywide Transportation Plan and the Major Thoroughfare Plan.
2. Encourage Transportation Systems that improve economic vitality.
3. Identify deficiencies in the Transportation System when updating Area Plans.

B. Street Design

1. Design streets to be compatible with the land use and scale of the communities they serve.
2. Support a Complete Streets philosophy in street and road designs in the plains and in mountain Activity Centers. (See Appendix D I.a.)
3. Area Plan updates should create design guidelines to show how neighborhoods could be more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.
4. Ensure that street and road layouts and connections support desired response requirements for emergency

service and efficient school bus service.

5. When developing transportation improvements, consider streetscape improvements, safety, ADA accessibility, Traffic Calming, older adults, bicyclists, historic features, noise reduction, and signs.
6. Promote vegetation along streets and in medians. Native and naturalized grasses and wildflowers which are drought-tolerant should be used. Such vegetation should not attract deer and elk.
7. Develop and maintain a safe and efficient Transportation System with respect for natural features, Wildlife and existing community character.
8. Minimize conflicts between non-motorized and motorized transportation modes.

C. Transit/Multi-Modal

1. Encourage Grade-Separated Crossings for railroad lines, where appropriate.
2. Encourage the completion of the entire Regional Transportation District (RTD) FasTracks project.
3. Encourage public transportation and other viable transportation alternatives to reduce air pollution and congestion.
4. Use a build-out analysis of future land use around transit stops to determine future right-of-way necessary to accommodate vehicle trip growth.
5. Use existing Infrastructures when developing alternative Transportation Systems, where practicable.
6. Encourage RTD to expand service near higher density development, such as Activity Centers.
7. Around heavy rail corridors, plan appropriate uses that will take advantage of the corridor.

D. Improvements

1. Explore methods to evaluate the cumulative impact of small developments and how to proportionally share the cost of improvements, once they are needed.
2. Ensure that new street and road improvements maintain safe and efficient traffic flow and maintain neighborhood character, as appropriate.

E. Maintenance

1. The County should explore alternatives for road treatment in winter, choosing effective options with the least amount of harmful environmental and health impacts.
2. Evaluate current pedestrian and bicycle trail maintenance practices and if deficiencies exist, develop programs to meet maintenance requirements.
3. Determine maintenance and improvement strategies using an asset management system.

F. Connectivity

1. Improve internal east-west and north-south connections within the County to promote economic development and encourage economic vitality.
2. Support the implementation of the County's Major Thoroughfare Plan, including the completion of the Jefferson Parkway.
3. Create a continuous bicycle trail system by building more bike paths or safe on-street routes and by adding bike lanes or shoulders during street and road improvement projects.

G. Transportation System Efficiency

1. Reduce total vehicle miles travelled through Transportation Demand Management strategies.

2. Continue to support timing traffic signals to synchronize lights on major Arterial Streets/Roads so that traffic moves efficiently.

H. Coordination

1. Residents and property owners should be included in the planning and implementation of transportation improvements.
2. Coordinate transportation planning efforts of Jefferson County, its cities and other jurisdictions to maximize influence on the regional transportation planning process.
3. The County should be involved in the Denver Regional Council of Government's (DRCOG's) regional transportation planning efforts.
4. Continue working with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) on the following:
 - a. The development of future transit services that provide local connections to future high speed rail within the County. Work with the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority (RMRA), the I-70 Coalition and other agencies.
 - b. The I-70 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS).
 - c. The completion of the US Highway 285 expansion to the County line and locations of interchanges.
 - d. The enhancement of mass transit along C-470, US Highway 285, I-70, State Highway 121 and other key transportation corridors and major employment centers in the County.
5. Continue to work with the Denver Regional Council of Governments, the Regional Transportation District, and the Colorado Department of Transportation to support alternative modes of transportation.
6. Continue working with the Jefferson Parkway Public Highway Authority.
7. Coordinate standardized road and trail designs between adjoining jurisdictions to provide safe transitions of facilities.
8. Coordinate with Jefferson County R-1 School District and the National Center for Safe Routes to School to identify connections that would provide opportunities for children to walk or bike to school safely.

Outreach



General

Outreach programs are important tools and may be more appropriate than regulations in certain cases. Land planners involve a variety of disciplines and agencies when reviewing development cases and when updating plans or regulations. These connections make planning meetings an excellent forum for distributing information about planning and other subjects to County citizens.

Goal

Inform and educate the public about issues related to land use planning.

Policies

A. General

1. Inform the public about the risks of living and developing in identified hazardous areas.
2. Support measures to educate the public on ways to coexist with Wildlife.
3. Promote the benefit of living and working in close proximity to open space and Recreational resources.
4. Promote the reduction of Vehicle Miles Traveled, such as alternative work schedules, telecommuting, carpooling and the use of alternative transportation.
5. Encourage employers to provide Facilities (such as changing rooms, showers, and lockers) that will promote bicycling and walking.
6. Encourage homeowner associations to register and maintain current records with the County.
7. Encourage referral agencies to maintain current records with the County.
8. Encourage all residents to register their cell phone numbers with the Sheriff's Office to ensure that they receive notification in the event of an emergency.
9. Work with Public Health to educate the public about the many connections between the built environment and health.
10. Work with appropriate agencies when developing public education programs.

Water

The quality and quantity of water is a very important issue in Jefferson County, especially in the Mountain Areas where a large number of properties, both Commercial and residential, are served by Ground Water. Education about water issues should include issues related to wells, Individual Sewage Disposal Systems and water conservation.

Goal

Promote the education of residents, businesses, and appropriate agencies about water issues affecting the County.

Policies

A. General

1. Distribute information, such as the Water Smarts brochure, to inform residents about water quantity, quality and sanitation issues.
2. Inform developers and residents about stormwater Best Management Practices.
3. Educate the citizenry on the importance of maintaining Individual Sewage Disposal Systems.
4. Support educational programs that teach ways to reduce overall water use without adversely affecting quality of life.
5. Encourage homeowners to regularly test their well water for Potability.
6. Encourage well owners to regularly measure the static water level in their well to establish a baseline level.

Historic

Education about the County's Historic Resources is important because these resources provide a linkage to the County's history, chronicle change and mark growth. They are valued by the County's citizens, tourist, historians, and government and contain great social and economic significance. The destruction of Historic Resources is an irreversible loss, especially since Preservation is beneficial in so many ways.

Goal

Promote education about the County's heritage and the benefits of preserving Historic Resources.

Policies

A. General

1. Use education and incentives in lieu of stringent regulatory control to encourage the Preservation, restoration, and interpretation of the County's Historic Resources.
2. Provide educational information to landowners about financial benefits for the Preservation of a historic Landmark. (See Appendix C IV. c.)
3. A listing of agencies, non-profit organizations, historical societies, history museums, libraries with history collections, and other entities and organization involved in archaeology and/or Historic Preservation should be maintained by the County as an educational resource for owners of Cultural Resources and other interested parties.