

CHAPTER VIII

GROWTH AND LAND USE



c.1900 Photo. 70 room hotel opened 1889, burned to the ground 1908.

Denver Public Library



8.1 Existing Land Use

A survey of existing land use in the Town of Green Mountain Falls was conducted in order to better understand the extent and character of development in the community. Map 3- Existing Land Use and the statistical table below illustrate the distribution and types of land use within the community.

Table 8.1				
Existing Land Use in the Town of Green Mountain Falls				
	El Paso*	Teller**	TOTAL	Percent of
Land Use Category	Acres	Acres	Acres	TOTAL
Single Family Detached Homes	166.92	16.18	183.1	25.8%
Multi-family Attached Homes	5.37		5.37	0.8%
Lodging	2.94		2.94	0.4%
Commercial	3.58		3.58	0.5%
Churches	7.18		7.18	1.0%
Public and Semi Public***	4.75		4.75	0.7%
Park and Open Space	56.58	189.76	246.34	34.7%
Vacant	145.17	20.47	165.64	23.3%
Road Right-of-Way	87.51	3.59	91.1	12.8%
Grand Total	480.00	230.00	710.00	
* Portion of Town within El Paso County				
** Portion of Town within Teller County				
*** Includes lands and facilities owned by the Town, Counties, State, Federal Government and Utility Providers.				
Source: Community Matters, Inc. and Town of Green Mountain Falls Planning Committee				
Date of Inventory: August, 2006				



Map 3: Generalized Existing Land Use



8.2 Existing Zoning

The following table provides a breakdown of uses by zoning designation. This table corresponds to Map 4: Official Zoning Map.

Table 8.2			
EXISTING ZONING IN THE TOWN OF GREEN MOUNTAIN FALLS			
Zoning District		Acres	Percent of Total
5A	5 Acre Hillside Residential	134.1	18.9%
R-1	Single Family Residential	293.9	41.4%
R-2	Two-Family Residential	3.6	0.5%
B	Business District	20.7	2.9%
PF	Public Facilities District	2.2	0.3%
PL	Public Lands District	253.2	35.7%
PUD	Planned Unit Development	2.2	0.3%
TOTAL		710.0	
Hillside Overlay District		590.7	

Source: Town of Green Mountain Falls

Green Mountain Fall is unique among small Colorado communities. Over 68 % of the land within Town is zoned for single family or two family residential uses. Approximately 34% of the land within the Town is zoned as ‘public lands’ and is utilized for recreational activities and serves to preserve the pristine mountain backdrops. Unlike most Colorado communities and smaller towns, in general about 3% of the total land area is zoned for commercial uses. This is far different from other El Paso County or Teller County municipalities. By way of example, the Town of Monument is about 50% non-residential and 50% residential with only 46 acres dedicated open space. The City of Woodland Park with a population of 7,600 residents has just over 100 acres dedicated for parks, sport fields and open space, natural areas and greenways. Of the 100 acres, only 38.24 acres are considered open space, natural areas, and greenways.

8.3 Growth Analysis

Green Mountain Falls has very little potential for growth unless additional land is annexed. The Town annexed 150 acres of land since the last Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1996. This land is designated and zoned as parks and open space.

Future growth of the Town is dependent upon three factors:

- Development of lands currently classified as ‘vacant’ based on the Land Use Survey conducted in August, 2006 by CMI and verified by the Town’s Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee
- Annexation of additional land, particularly along the US 24 corridor;
- The Town’s ability to provide services to new development.



Map 4: Official Zoning Map



8.3.1 Vacant Land in Town Build Out Analysis

Vacant Land within the current Town limits accounts for 23.3% of all land within the Town’s boundaries. Vacant land means unoccupied or no visible use. This represents 165.6 acres of land. Of the total vacant land, about 151 acres, or 91.2% of all vacant land is situated on steep areas but not un-buildable according to the Town’s Zoning Ordinance. This steep land is regulated by the Town’s Hillside Overlay District that requires a 5-acre minimum to develop. By analyzing the current ownership of parcels within the Hillside Overlay Zone, as well as potential development of the remaining vacant parcels, we can estimate potential build-out.

Table 8.3			
Vacant Land Build out Analysis			
Characteristics of Vacant Land	Acres	Development Regulation	Possible # of Dwelling Units
Steep Slopes	151	5 acre minimum	33-39 dwelling units
Constrained- less severely sloped or located along Fountain Creek	7.8	Assume 10,000 sq. ft lots w/ ½ or all of land area developable; allow for 20% ROW/utility use	13-26 dwelling units
Total	165.6	Assume 2.53 average household size	46- 65 new units within Existing Town Limits

Source: Community Matters, Inc. and Town of Green Mountain Falls Planning Committee

The number of larger parcels (5 acres or more) within the Hillside Overlay zone yields an estimated 33 homes. There are 3-5 more opportunities for home sites if smaller lots are consolidated. This results in a total of additional 36-39 homes. There are 7.8 acres of vacant land in less severely sloped areas, however, many of the lots are located along Fountain Creek are in the floodplain. To arrive at a potential build-out for these lands, CMI assumed that 20% of the land area would be dedicated to roads or utilities, and then assumed a minimum lot size of 10,000 sq. ft. If only one-half (1/2) of the land could be developed due to land constraints, this would yield an additional 13 dwelling units. Assuming an average household size of 2.53 persons per household, the population of Green Mountain Falls could potentially grow by between 116 residents to 164 persons.

The estimated additional development and corresponding population represents what could occur under zoning that has already been approved in Green Mountain Falls. It should be emphasized that these totals correspond to land that *is vacant*. Not all of this acreage can actually be built upon however. Some will be dedicated to public streets, utility rights-of-way, open space, etc. These acreage numbers are intended as gross estimates meant to indicate the general magnitude of new development that could occur under existing zoning. What actually is built will depend on many factors including: specific site conditions, further Town review of subdivision plats, requirements for public dedication, landowner or developer intent, and market conditions.



8.3.2 Build-out Analysis if Town Decides to Annex Land along US 24

The areas are outside of the current Town limits shown as highway mixed use on Map 6: Concept Plan-Green Mountain Falls/Chipita Park Area. The following build-out analysis provides the Town with a better understanding of the potential magnitude of development that might take place along the US 24 corridor. The benefit to the Town of annexing these areas is a tax revenue benefit. With new development proposed in the Ute Pass area, the area covered by the Concept Plan Map will face increasing development pressure. The Town will need to make a policy determination as to whether they would rather have this area develop within the Town, thereby controlling the siting, density, use, and design, as well as benefiting from the revenue generation, or simply continue to comment on development as it occurs within the County.

		Residential	Commercial Square Footage
Land Use	Acres	Units	(Range)
1. Residential	353.9		
a. Existing Development*	225.2	354	
b. New @ 5.0 acres/unit**	81.2	13	
c. New @ .25 acres/unit**	47.5	152	
2. Commercial	3.7		32,235 - 40,300
3. Highway Mixed Use***	68.6		
a. Commercial Development	34.3		298,000 – 373,500
b. Residential (@ 5.00 s.f.)**	34.3	239	
4. Public and Semi-Public	15.9		
5. School	10.9		
6. Open Space	164.9		
TOTALS	617.9	758	330,235 – 413,800
Notes:* Includes homes in Chipita Park/Ute Pass Road Area			
** Unit estimates incorporate a 20% factor for roads and other land dedications			
*** Highway Mix is 50% Commercial 50% Residential			
Source: Community Matters, Inc. and Town of Green Mountain Falls Planning Committee			

8.3.3 Method by which new development is served

Further development within the existing Town boundaries is hampered by infrastructure, especially the lack of a centralized sanitary sewer system. Individual Septic Disposal Systems have been allowed on smaller in-town lots if properly engineered. Three factors are likely to result in less residential density within the existing Town limits.

- **Factor # 1: Consolidation of Small Lots**

As older cabins are converted to year round residences or new homes are built, the size of the home requires either more land or more expensive and engineered ISDS systems, sometimes both. Certain types of non-residential development are difficult to serve on individual septic systems. For example, restaurants and dry-cleaners place a heavy load on ISDS systems.



New residential development or the conversion of summer cabins to year round use is likely to result in a home being placed on more than 1 lot. Recently, a new home was built on five lots in order to develop the size of home desired and ensure a properly engineered ISDS. As more and more owners decide to increase the parcel size by consolidating adjacent lots, the number of buildable lots within Town will decrease.

- **Factor # 2: Some home owners are buying up adjacent vacant lots to prevent new homes from being built near them.** This reduces the number lots available to build on in the Town.
- **Factor # 3: Competing Residential Development Opportunities along the US 24 Corridor**

Proposed residential development adjacent to US 24 and in close proximity to the Town of Green Mountain Falls will provide those that wish to live in the Ute Pass area with a competing market opportunity. Those wishing to relocate to the Ute Pass area may view the new residential development north of US 24 as an opportunity to buy an enhanced mountain life style with on-site amenities.

8.4 Future Land Use Plan

The intent of the Future Land Use Plan (see Map 5) is to identify the appropriate location for uses as well as the general character of each designated land use. A Future Land Use Map is not a zoning designation. Rather it provides guidance for how lands should be used in the future. Suggested land use designations for areas within the Town simply reinforce the historic character of the Town and for the most part reflect existing land use and zoning.

The following are the descriptions of each land use designation contained on the Future Land Use Plan:

Single/Two-family residential: This land use category encompasses most of the existing residential areas within Green Mountain Falls. Residential use should be the predominant use in this area. Residential uses in this area should continue to be limited to single-family detached homes in order to maintain and enhance the existing character of Green Mountain Falls. Higher density residential uses and non-residential uses are not appropriate.

Multi-family Residential: The areas with this designation are intended to provide a range of housing choices.

Highway Mixed-Use: This land use category is intended to provide for areas that may be annexed along Highway 24 in order to generate sales taxes, such as small auto-oriented uses. The intent of this designation is threefold: to provide a sensible place for businesses that serve the traveling public; to increase sales tax revenues; and, to protect the Town from significant adverse impact commercial development.

Commercial and Office: This category encompasses the Town's "historic downtown area" as well as lands that are currently designated for this type of use. The intent of this designation is



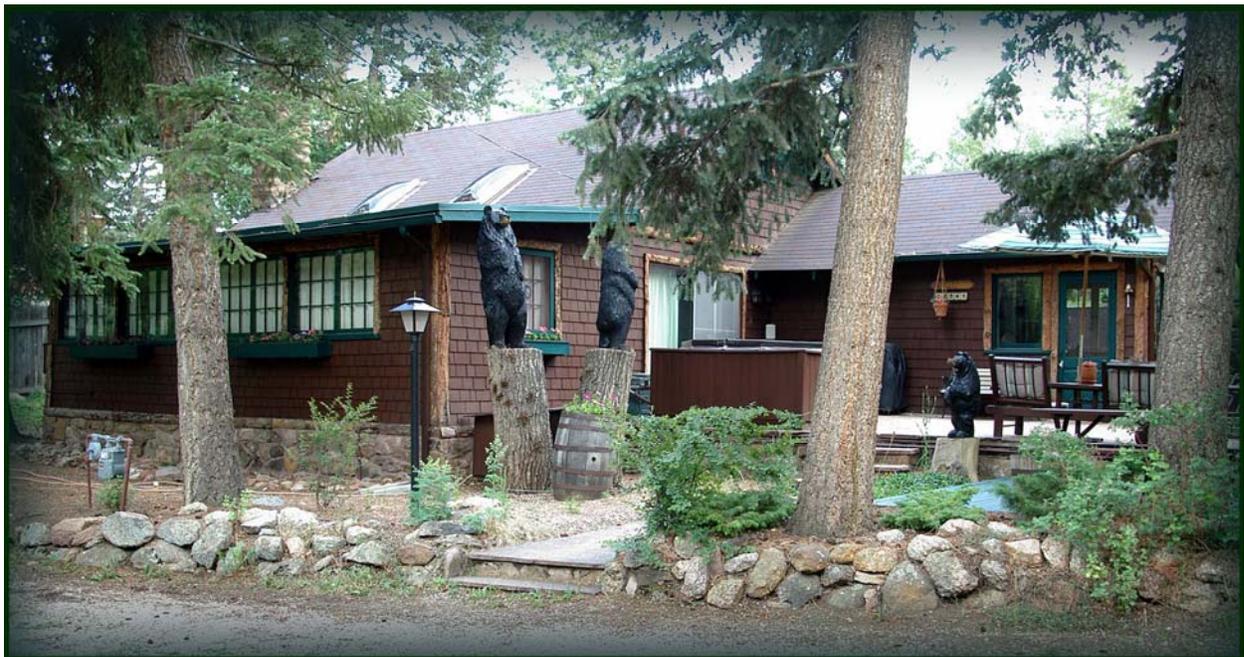
to provide a place for commercial, businesses and offices. Residential uses are allowed in this area; but it should not be the predominant use. Projects that include retail on the first floor and residential or offices uses on the floor(s) above would be ideal in these areas.

Lodging: This land use designation encompasses lands within Town that have historically been used for lodging and reflect the Town's desire to support and promote this use in these areas.

Churches: This land use designation also reflects historic ownership and use for religious facilities.

Public and Semi Public: Public facilities and services that serve the life sustaining and safety needs of the town's residents are located throughout the Town.

Parks and Open Space: The areas designated as either Parks or Open Space is intended to preserve, enhance, and reinforce the quality of life.



2005 Photo. A summer cabin remodeled and converted to year round use. Morgan Photography



Map 5: Future Land Use Map



Map 6: Concept Plan



Map 7: Planning Areas



8.5 Green Mountain Falls Planning Influence Area

The Town prefers growth within the next ten years to occur within Green Mountain Falls designated growth area as shown on Map 7. The Town of Green Mountain Falls has defined a Planning Influence Area to ensure that its citizens have input on what goes on in the area outside of its boundary. In addition, the Town would like to preserve its right to annex land if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the community. Colorado law requires a plan to be in place for all land a municipality seeks to annex. Annexation plans can be drawn up for all areas within three miles of Green Mountain Falls' existing municipal boundaries.

Green Mountain Falls determination of its Planning Influence Area does not indicate its ability to provide services to the areas outside of its municipal boundaries. Green Mountain Falls Planning Influence Area simply allows its citizens to comment on new development on its periphery that might undermine Green Mountain Falls' comprehensive planning principles.

Green Mountain Falls Planning Influence Area is also intended to promote a regional approach to planning particularly with regard to the unincorporated area of El Paso and Teller Counties surrounding Green Mountain Falls town limits.

Map 7 depicts two boundaries: the Growth Area Boundary and the Planning Influence Area Boundary.

8.5.1 Annexation Plan

The Growth Area Boundary shown on Map 7 is the same as the Town of Green Mountain Falls Three Mile Annexation Plan. The area reflects a strong belief by the Green Mountain Falls' citizens, appointed, and elected officials that future development in this designated area has the potential to significantly impact the character and small town quality of Green Mountain Falls. The designation of this growth area boundary allows the Town more influence over the destiny of the area. If land within this area is proposed for development, the Town has the choice to pursue annexations of the property since it is within the three-mile area; or alternatively request that certain site planning or design standards be followed.

POLICY

The Town should study areas that it would potentially be willing to annex and subsequently serve at an urban level of service. This does not mean that the Town must annex these areas, but that it would entertain the possibility if it were in the best interest of the Town.

8.5.2 Planning Influence Area

State Statute requires counties to refer preliminary plats of any subdivision to any municipality within two (2) miles of said subdivision. The Planning Influence Area (Map 7) always includes the Growth Area Boundary



8.6 Land Use / Growth: Principles & Policies

8.6.1 Manage Growth

Principle: Manage how, when, and where growth occurs.

POLICIES

- Encourage that development along US 24 is appropriately scaled and is in keeping with the uses desired by Green Mountain Fall's residents.
- Update the Town's zoning ordinance and the Town's annexation plan to future development does not negatively impact the qualities of place that residents cherish.
- Work with the surrounding counties to ensure the principles and policies contained within this Plan are adhered to.

8.6.2 Residential Quality

PRINCIPLE: Encourage and maintain safe and comfortable residential environments.

POLICIES

- Preserve and maintain areas that have historic significance, environmental sensitivity, natural beauty, and cultural value.
- Enforce and strengthen housing and nuisance codes and ordinances that are intended to protect the quality of residential environments.
- Ensure existing housing is well maintained by establishing reasonable standards for "good repair."
- Ensure that all new housing development and remodeling projects comply with or exceed the adopted building code.

8.6.3 Housing Mix

PRINCIPLE: Provide a mix of housing opportunities.

POLICIES

- Encourage that a variety of housing is available within the Town.
- Allow for higher density housing only in newly annexed areas that can be easily accessed and served.
- Revise the Town's existing zoning ordinance that establishes minimum requirements for residential development including lot size, setbacks, open space requirements, and public land dedication. Revisions to the zoning ordinance will prove critical if the Town decides to annex lands.



- Encourage a mix of densities within areas that may be annexed and encourage buffer zones between different densities and types of housing.

8.6.4 Convenience

PRINCIPLE: Promote the successful development of convenience retail and service establishments that will meet the needs of Green Mountain Falls residents.

POLICIES

- Work with businesses and residents to identify and pursue opportunities to bring new businesses into the community that offer a wider range of basic goods and services.
- Encourage “mixed-use” development (residential and commercial) in commercial districts.

8.6.5 Location of Commercial Development

PRINCIPLE: Encourage desirable commercial development in accordance with the Future Land Use Plan.

POLICIES

- In areas along US 24, promote commercial centers to avoid unattractive strip development.
- Promote innovative and high quality planning and design to minimize visual and traffic impacts.
- In areas that can be developed as highway commercial, develop commercial activity nodes at designated intersections.
- Improve traffic and pedestrian circulation wherever possible.

