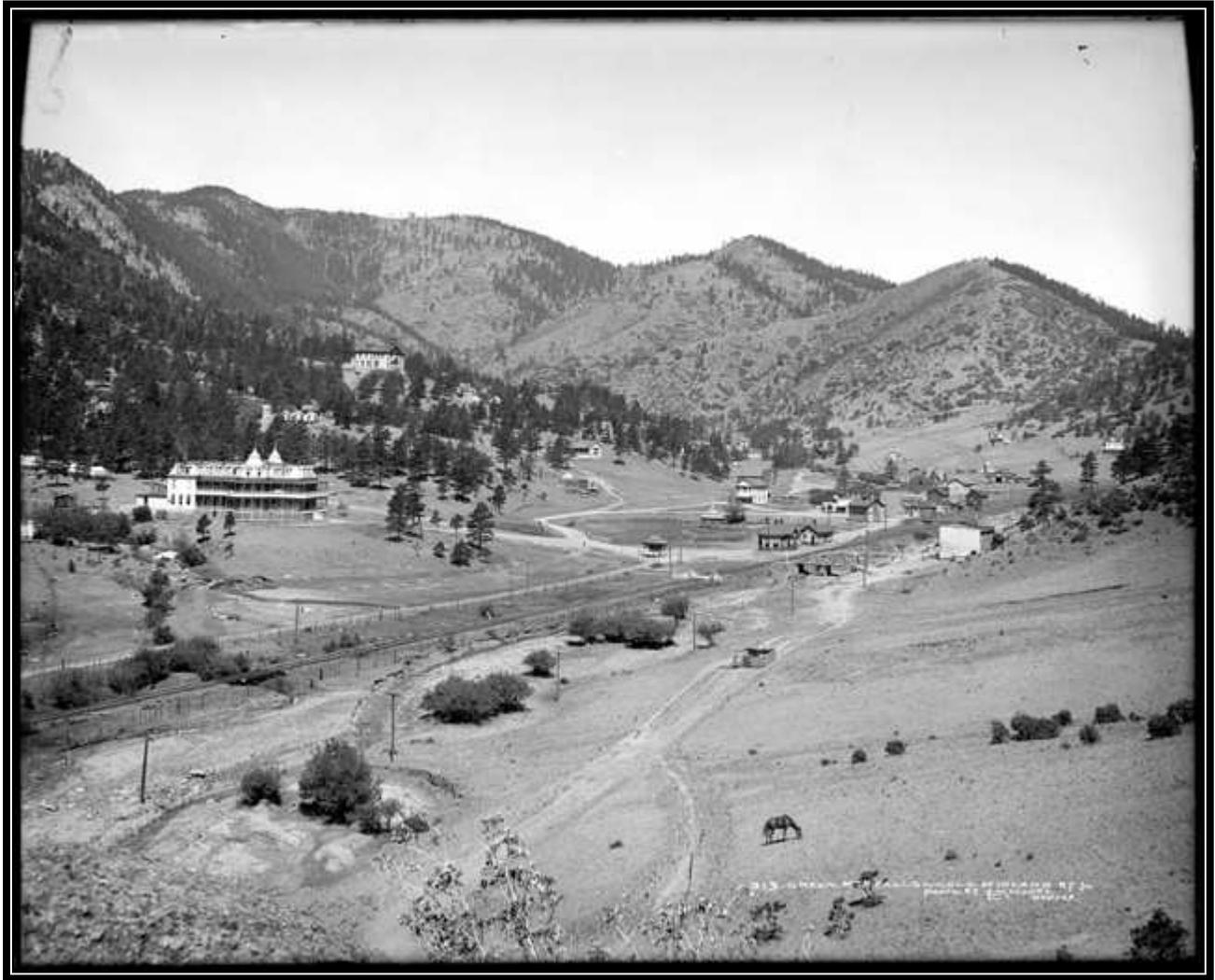


CHAPTER I.

PLAN OVERVIEW



1900 PHOTO of Green Mountain Falls with hotel, RR depot, ice house.
UPHS-Wellington Collection



1.1 Development of the Plan

Early in 2006, Green Mountain Falls' Board of Trustees determined that the 1996 Comprehensive Plan should be updated to ensure that Green Mountain Falls is adequately prepared to handle potential growth and economic sustainability. The Town recognized that citizen involvement was critical to the success of the Plan. On July 20, 2006, a well-advertised town-wide kick-off meeting was held in order to get a sense of which issues were most important to the citizens of Green Mountain Falls. Approximately 100 members of the community attended the meeting. In addition, 76 people responded to a written citizen survey. Results of that survey are appended to this plan. Subsequently, a citizen's advisory group was formed to oversee the development of the plan.

1.2 How to Use This Comprehensive Plan

The idea behind planning is a simple one. It is the idea that people in a community can guide decisions, development, and growth in the place where they live. A comprehensive plan is only one tool to be used by a community to guide decision-making.

1.2.1 Plan Distribution and Use

The Plan should be used by the Green Mountain Falls Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, and Town Staff to determine annual work programs and budgets. The Plan should be used to guide decision-making with regard to community character, infrastructure improvements, land use, and environmental quality.

The Plan should be reviewed on an annual basis by the Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, and Town Staff. The intent of the review is to check if the action items identified have been met, completed on schedule, are no longer valid or if new ones need to be added. Amendments can be added to the Plan, as a supplemental section in the beginning of the document. The Town should notify community service groups and local agencies or businesses that the Plan is available to aid in their short and long-term principle setting and investment decisions. The Plan should prove useful to Green Mountain Falls' residents, the real estate community, private property owners, or developers' representatives. The Plan provides information, policies, and guidance on several community topics, including land use, community character, public services and facilities, and environmental quality. The Plan should be made available to all prospective businesses, employers, and residents. It will help them understand community desires.

1.2.2 Using the Plan to Review New Development

Any land use application should be reviewed for compliance with the Future Land Use Plan [Map 5] and all other respective principles and policies outlined in the Plan.

If the development proposal or request does not conform to the Comprehensive Plan, the request should be denied or modified to be generally consistent with the plan. Changing conditions or unique circumstances, where approving the request will definitely benefit the community, may require an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. This should occur only if



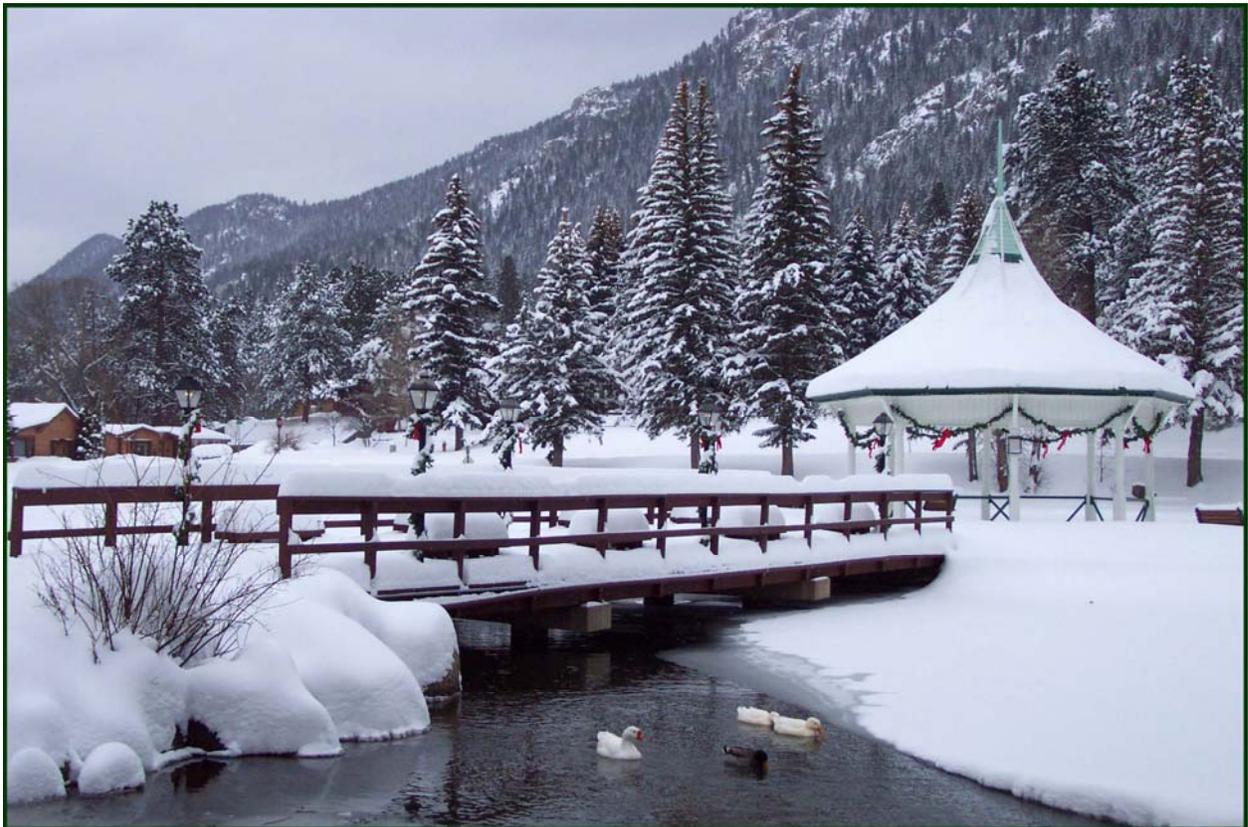
community benefits are clearly identified and do not compromise other community principles and policies.

1.2.3 Legal Status of the Comprehensive Plan

This Comprehensive Plan is for use by the Green Mountain Falls Planning Commission and Board of Trustees as a guide to determine if land use changes are in keeping with the overall pattern of development desired by the Town and its citizens. As specified by Colorado law, the comprehensive plan sets forth the Planning Commissions' recommendation as to the most desirable use of land from the community's perspective.

Colorado case law further provides that adopted land use plans are advisory only. Zoning provides the detailed means for giving legal effect to the plan's principles and policies. C.R.S. § 31-23-303 provides that, in statutory municipalities, zoning regulations "shall be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan."

Those submitting a development application to the Town of Green Mountain Falls shall be advised that the entire plan is referred to in assessing the merits of an application.



2006 Photo. Gazebo, built in 1888 , decorated for Christmas. Morgan Photography



1.2.4 What Do the Citizens of Green Mountain Falls Want for the Town?

Overall Community Goals

Green Mountain Falls is in many ways the definition of a perfect small Colorado mountain town. It is a safe, involved community; there are no big box stores, no strip malls, and no stoplights. It is a town where people can stop in the middle of the street and visit with a friend and is within walking distance to unique recreational and natural amenities. There are no ‘cookie cutter’ subdivision developments. The Town has respected and embraced the historic past. Businesses are locally owned and operated and many homeowners walk to the downtown area. The overall goals that the Town has adopted are as follows:

- **Retain the peaceful, small town atmosphere of Green Mountain Falls.**
- **Preserve and protect the natural environment.**
- **Celebrate and preserve Green Mountain Falls heritage.**
- **Continue to improve the appearance and function of Green Mountain Falls public facilities and amenities (e.g. trails, pool, parks, Gazebo and Lake.)**
- **Attract businesses that meet the everyday convenience needs of Green Mountain Falls residents and visitors.**
- **Improve and upgrade the Town’s infrastructure (e.g.drainage, and roads).**
- **Enhance communication between the Town and its citizens, and continue to promote community involvement.**
- **Encourage better property maintenance to enhance the overall appearance of the community.**

1.3 How does the Comprehensive Plan Address the Stated Overall goals?

1.3.1 Community Services and Facilities

The Community Services and Facilities component deals with strategies to develop a collaborative approach to providing desired community services and a facility, ensuring that infrastructure is upgraded in a fiscally responsible and logical manner. This component also addresses the community’s desire to continue to improve safety and security. The following themes will be addressed by this Plan:

- **Logical and fiscally responsible extension and maintenance of infrastructure (including the potential of centralized sanitary sewer for specific areas of town).**
- **Street maintenance**



- **Drainage**
- **Public safety**
- **Improved communication between the Board of Trustees and Citizens.**

1.3.2 Community Character

The Community Character component deals with strategies to maintain and enhance the qualities of place cherished by citizens and visitors to Green Mountain Falls.

- **Overall Community Image and Identity**
- **Creation of a strong “downtown” core**
- **Beautification of common areas**
- **Property maintenance**

1.3.3 Environmental Quality

This component provides strategies to protect and enhance Green Mountain Falls environment, to preserve resources, and to ensure that the health and safety of Green Mountain Falls residents are protected

- **Upgrade and replace if necessary Individual Septic Disposal Systems**

1.3.4 Economic Sustainability

The economic sustainability of small Colorado towns is dependent in large part to the continued expansion of sales tax revenue producing businesses and non-residential land uses that are assessed at 29% rather than the current residential assessment rate which is under 8%. These tax revenues are vital to smaller towns as it allows the municipality to continue to invest in public services and facilities. This component outlines measures that the Town can undertake to strengthen the local economic sustainability.

1.3.5 Land Use / Growth

This component provides strategies to manage growth to ensure that development occurs in accordance with community desires and needs and provides the general framework for all future development in the community. The key elements to the Growth Management & Land Use component are:

- **Type and Location of Growth and Use**
- **Compatibility**
- **Appropriate Mix of Future Land Uses within the Town**



1.4 Making this Vision a Reality in Green Mountain Falls

GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

Comprehensive Plans, under Colorado statute, provide guidance on what is placed on the land, how land is used and served. To assist the communities to achieve their preferred future as described in the overall goals, principles, and policies were developed. For ease of reference, the goals and principles correspond to the each of the following Chapters:

- **Chapter 3- Community Services and Facilities**
- **Chapter 6- Environmental Quality**
- **Chapter 7-Economic Sustainability**
- **Chapter 8- Land Use**

The Principles outlined in these chapters are the essential concepts that shall guide decision-making. They address and summarize the concerns and desires of Green Mountain Falls residents, businesses, and property owners.

Policies provide general direction for the Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, and Town Staff regarding public investments, issues regarding community form and function and land use matters. Policies should guide both Board of Trustees and Planning Commission actions. The policies should be reviewed annually by both the Board of Trustees and Planning Commission to ensure these policies adequately and clearly articulate the desires of the citizens of Green Mountain Falls.

1.5 Critical Actions to Implement the Plan

Three critical areas have been identified that require immediate action in order to implement this Plan.

1.5.1 Update Land Use and Nuisance Regulations

In order to implement the goals and principles contained within this Comprehensive Plan the Town's land use regulations should be revised. Critical to the success of this plan is revising the current zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. Nuisance related regulations also need to be updated and enforced to deal with noise, dogs, property upkeep, junk, RV's and boats in the public right-of way.

As Comprehensive Plans are advisory only, the Town's zoning ordinance ensures the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan. Colorado State law suggests that zoning regulations should conform to the Comprehensive Plan.

"Code Enforcement is lacking" according to results from the Citizen Survey and Town-wide Community meeting. The Town should improve enforcement of the existing code.

Subdivision regulations will become an increasingly important tool if new lands are annexed into town. Update the Town's subdivision regulations found in the Land Use Code. Subdivision regulations establish the process and requirements for creating building lots and



the construction of public improvements. Similar to zoning, the subdivision regulations implement the Comprehensive Plan by establishing the requirements for improvements, land dedications, and engineering. Proper street alignment and grades, proper drainage, and land dedications are some of the items addressed by subdivision regulations.

1.5.2 Update the Town’s Capital Improvements Program

Continue to revise and adopt a Capital Improvements Program annually to ensure that major public capital improvements are adequately planned and funded. Adjust priorities to reflect citizen desires. Further refinement and annual adoption of the Town’s existing Capital Improvements Program will aid in the procurement of grants as well as the development of sound financing mechanisms to pay for needed infrastructure improvements.

1.5.3 Enter into Intergovernmental Agreements

The Town of Green Mountain Falls should begin to work more closely with El Paso, Teller Counties, Woodland Park and Manitou Springs to ensure that the interests of its citizens are taken into consideration when these two counties and nearby municipalities make policy decisions that affect Green Mountain Falls. Specifically, develop an Intergovernmental Agreement with both counties stating that all development applications within the identified Planning Influence Area Boundary shall be forwarded to the Town of Green Mountain Falls for review and comment.



2006 Photo. Residents honor Postmaster Simon Garcia on his retirement. Morgan Photography

