

## **City of Cortez Core Values**

**Accountability** – We are responsible for the health and safety of employees and community members. We do our best to prevent problems. We are also responsible for our actions and their consequences, dealing with all issues that arise in an effective and efficient manner.

**Communication** – We strive to have open communication with a desire for understanding and consideration. We employ informal conversation, dialogue, news media, telecommunication, and our web page to effectively communicate between departments, with other local governments and agencies, and with the community.

**Innovation** – We encourage creative solutions to complex problems and to the proactive prevention of impending problems. We provide practical education to our employees and citizens to enhance the innovative results that come from an informed community. We are not afraid to try new things.

**Integrity** – We are straightforward and trustworthy, treating employees and citizens with the utmost honesty and equality. We provide reliable information and services, responding to the needs of an evolving community and employing the current best practices whenever possible.

**Leadership** - We take a leadership role in the community. The community recognizes the leadership actions and decisions of the City of Cortez. We practice what we preach and preach what is in the best interest of the community, focusing on fulfilling the most basic needs first. A leader is not merely responsive, but also pro-active in addressing community needs. The City of Cortez leads the way in exhibiting our core values and protecting our shared community values.

**Respect** - City employees and elected officials foster respect and loyalty toward each other and the community. The City of Cortez respects all facets of diversity in meeting the needs and desires of the community. All ideas are given consideration and all concerns are treated seriously.

**Teamwork** – We work together toward a common vision and common goals, leveraging individual strengths to facilitate desirable results.

These Core Values are the guiding principles which City staff and officials operate by. Every task should be performed to the utmost degree of each value. The City of Cortez should have a reputation as being a model representative of these values in the community.

## *Acknowledgements*

*The City of Cortez gratefully acknowledges the participation of the many community members who have contributed to the evolution of this updated Comprehensive Plan. This plan represents the culmination of the community's participation and the devoted efforts of many staff members, a retired City manager, and numerous members of City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission over the eight years leading to the adoption of this plan. This Plan, adopted by Planning and Zoning Commission on August 5, 2008, is intended as a guide toward realization of the 2020 Vision following the City Mission.*

**Countless community members and staff have had roles to play in the creation of this Plan. Those individuals who attended meetings, reviewed chapter content, and edited this document are particularly acknowledged for their efforts and dedication to our community.**

<p><u>Planning and Zoning Commission</u>  Chairman, Arlo Robb  Vice Chair, Janice Benton  Anthony Valdez, Jr.  Bob Diederich  Kimberle Hausser</p> <p><u>Former Commissioners</u>  Allen Klein  Ann Ainsworth  Bob Wilson  Dennis Robson  G.W. McCutcheon  Harriet Durand  Jim McBride  Roger Echols  Sharon King</p>	<p>Jay Harrington, City Manager  Hal Shepherd, Former City Manager  Linda Smith, City Clerk  Jack Nickerson, Public Works Director  Bruce Smart, Former Public Works Director  Kirsten Sackett, Planning and Zoning Administrator</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>If I had to give a dollar to every individual,  every time they helped with this project, I  would have gone broke a long time ago.</i>  --Rebecca Whitehead, Assistant Planner</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>City Council</u>  Mayor, Orly Lucero  Mayor Pro-Tem, Dan Porter  Betty Swank  Donna Foster  John Hager  Matt Keefauver  Robert Rime</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Former Councilors</u>  Bill Rutledge  Cheryl Baker  David Grant Long  Dennis Robson  Fred Torres  Gene Glover  Jeanine Valdez  Jeff Gardner  Jim Herrick  Joe Keck  Karen Garner  Larry Kautz</p>
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## Definitions of General Terms

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**Advisory Boards**– Boards within the City that have powers to make recommendations about matters of the City such as the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Board; Golf Advisory Board; Library Board; Historic Preservation Board; Planning and Zoning Commission; and any other boards appointed by City Council to serve an advisory role.

**Affordable Housing** – Housing in which a household will pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing.

**Ancestral Pueblo People** – Formerly referred to as “Anasazi,” these were inhabitants of many of the Cliff Dwellings and Mesa top archaeological sites in and around Cortez as the ancestors of the modern day Pueblo People.

**Annexation** – The act of incorporating an area into the city limits.

**Base Industry** – Goods or services that derive their income directly from outside of the community to circulate within the local economy, such as manufacturing, tourism, and even residents that earn their income from outside of the community.

**City** - City of Cortez, Colorado

**Community** – The population living in the Cortez area in somewhat close association, sharing resources and participating in common activities and events.

**Community Facilities** – Publicly owned and operated institutions or facilities including but not limited to a library, museum, park, playground, recreational center, jail or correctional facility, police, fire or utility facilities.

**Compatible Land Use** - Consistent with, harmonious with, similar to and/or enhancing the mixture of adjacent land uses.

**County** – County of Montezuma, Colorado

**Critical Lands** - Those lands which have unique or exemplary natural or cultural value. In the natural environment, such critical lands may include, but will not be limited, to natural wetlands, habitat for endangered species, environments unique within this area, pristine natural areas, unique view sheds and ridges, and healthy agricultural fields. Critical cultural lands may include designated historic or archaeological sites, sites with potential for designation, and other cultural sites with importance to the community.

**Culture** - Those learned behaviors and beliefs shared among a particular social, ethnic, or age group that can be passed down from one generation to another.

**Dark Sky** – A set of policies and guidelines intended to maintain a clear nightscape, free of light and other pollution, and to maintain views of the night sky.

**Decision Making Boards** – Boards within the City that have powers to make decisions about matters of the City including City Council and the Board of Adjustments and Appeals.

**Density** - The allowable number of dwelling units or square footage per gross acre of land that is permissible in a zone district

**Developed v. undeveloped park land** – Developed park lands are publicly owned recreational areas that are maintained in a built landscape, including golf courses, playground equipment, baseball fields, lawn grass, and paved trails. Undeveloped park land is also publicly owned, but has not yet been developed for particular recreational activities. This land may be in a natural state and serve as open space with unpaved trails and wildlife, or it may amount to empty lots that have yet to be developed for specific use.

**Developer** - Any public or private person, partnership, association or agency that prepares raw land for the construction of buildings, causes to be built physical building space, or redevelops an existing building.

**Economic Development** - Efforts that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community by creating and/or retaining quality jobs, supporting and growing local business, and sustaining the tax base.

**Ecosystem** - A system formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their physical environment

**Enclave** – A tract of land or a territory enclosed within another territory of which it is independent, such as an area of land within county jurisdiction encompassed entirely by land within the City of Cortez.

**Fixed Base Operator (FBO)** - Service center at an airport that may be a private enterprise or may be a department of the municipality that the airport serves. The FBO at the Cortez Municipal Airport is a full service operator offering aircraft fuel, oil, parking, rental, hangars, and other basic aircraft services.

**Global v. Local Economy** – The Global Economy is the marketing of products and services around the globe while the Local Economy refers to the goods and services directly available within a community.

**Groundwater** - Water located beneath the ground surface held in the soil and in porous rocks.

**Historic** – Of importance or significance locally, regionally, or nationally, usually dating to at least fifty (50) years of age and up to as old as the written record in the region.

**Infill** – Further development of an area that is already partially developed and infrastructure and services are readily available. It may include the redevelopment of underutilized or dilapidated buildings or new construction on empty lots.

**Invasive species** – Non-indigenous species that adversely affect the habitats they invade economically, environmentally or ecologically.

**Inter-governmental Agreement (IGA)** – Any contracted agreement between two or more governmental bodies.

**Living Wage** - the minimum hourly wage necessary for a person working forty hours a week, with no additional income, to afford housing, food, utilities, transportation, health care, recreation, and other basic needs.

**Multimodal Transportation Network** – A system of integrated transportation routes designed to accommodate a variety of modes of transportation including vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and other transportation choices.

**Native** - an organism which is native to a given region or ecosystem.

**Natural Areas** – Publicly or privately owned property that is maintained in its substantially natural ecosystem.

**Natural Environment** - Aggregate of conditions with natural origins that influence the life of an individual or community.

**Natural Resources** - Naturally occurring substances that are considered valuable in their relatively unmodified form that may be renewable (solar, timber, biomass) or non-renewable (oil, natural gas, gravel).

**Neighborhood Business** - Neighborhood commercial uses are retail establishments primarily serving residents within the immediate neighborhood, oriented and designed toward pedestrian traffic such as bakeries, florists, drugstores and stationary stores.

**Non-Native** - An organism that is not indigenous to a given location but instead has been accidentally or deliberately introduced to a new location by human activity or by natural means.

**One-Mile Urban Services Area** - An area identified in the Cortez Thoroughfare Plan surrounding the City that is suitable for the expansion of City infrastructure and services.

**Open Space** - Any unoccupied space on a property that contributes to the openness of the individual property, the neighborhood, or the community.

**Place** – The unique characteristics of an area’s human and natural environment that are substantially shared by the people within that area.

**Potential Sales** – Estimated retail sales based on population, demographics, and income in a given territory.

**Public Land** - Land or interests in land owned by a governmental entity or held in trust for the benefit of the public by a not-for-profit organization.

**Rehabilitation** – The process of recovering an area to its original state such as investment in a blighted area to improve deteriorated building conditions, especially in housing and commercial areas.

**Retail and Service hub** – A location that people frequently visit to obtain their goods and services.

**Rooftop Gardens** – any garden on the roof of a building, from xeriscape to vegetable gardens, intended to provide increased growing area, expand the urban forest, and provide temperature control for the buildings and neighborhoods.

**Safe Routes to Schools** - A network of more than 350 nonprofit organizations, government agencies, schools, and professionals around the U.S. working together to provide a variety of important benefits to children and their communities, including increasing physical activity, reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality, and enhancing neighborhood safety.

**Service Area** – The geographic region in which people frequently utilize a specific Service and Retail hub.

**Sprawl** – Suburban level density development outside of the area in which urban service levels and infrastructure are readily available.

**Streetscape** – The environment including architecture, landscaping, traffic, signs, views, pedestrian movement, etc. on a particular street.

**Three-Mile Potential Growth Area** – An area that extends approximately three miles in all directions from the city limits used for the planning of infrastructure in areas that may require urban infrastructure and service levels in the future.

**Urban Fringe/Periphery** – Property near and adjacent to the city limits that is not within the jurisdiction of the City that is experiencing city level development.

**Utility and Service Providers** – Persons, corporations, or governments supplying gas, electric, transportation, water, sewer, or landline telephone service to the general public.

**View shed** - an area of land, water, and other environmental elements that is visible from a fixed vantage point and is of particular scenic or historic value worthy of preservation.

**Xeriscape** - Landscaping that does not require supplemental irrigation, with a preference for native species.

*“Make not little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.”*

- *Daniel H. Burnham, architect (1846-1912)*

**PURPOSE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

On July 4, 1909, Daniel H. Burnham submitted a 164-page report to the Chicago Commercial Club. This plan became the most influential plan ever drafted and provided for traffic circulation, railway stations, parks, boulevards, public recreation areas, a yacht harbor, and a civic center. Chicago business barons initiated this planning effort in order to foster and promote the “City Beautiful” concept and transform Chicago into the most desirous city in which to dwell.

The recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan are intended to guide the City in its long-range development, providing a “map”, that if followed, hopes to ensure that the Vision for the City of Cortez is reached and that the goods and services necessary for the City to remain strong and viable are provided. This plan is designed as a resource that both establishes directions that our community wishes to go in and provides strategies for implementation that both honor continuity with the past and anticipate the future. The directions for development, restoration and improvement herein are intended to attract new investment that mirrors the values of our community which, in turn, will provide positive contributions to the community’s character and will establish Cortez as “...a desirable place for families to live and work,” (City’s Mission Statement). This Comprehensive Plan is intended to create the strategy for reaching our Vision for the City of Cortez. We go beyond the statutory requirements for a Master Plan to plan to make our City into a thriving community. The success of this vision is not just the responsibility of municipal staff and officials, although they are expected to take a leadership role. This vision generally applies to the activities of all individuals within the community.

***THE 2020 VISION FOR THE CITY OF CORTEZ***

*Centrally located in a rural landscape of agriculture and rich public lands, the City of Cortez provides outstanding and innovative public services while demonstrating the values of our thriving community. Taking pride in our history, diversity, and environment, our friendly community is full of opportunity, making housing, goods, and services universally attainable. The City’s safe, efficient, and effective leadership maintains a small-town atmosphere where diversity and a sense of community coexist in integrated livable neighborhoods and a vivacious downtown.*

In 1993, the City Council adopted a Mission Statement for the City of Cortez. This statement represents the motivation that drives our City government.

***MISSION STATEMENT***

*It is the City’s mission to make Cortez a desirable place for families to live and work,*

The Comprehensive Plan should be a guide that the city government uses in making daily decisions, based on the direction that the community intends to go. This plan promotes health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, general welfare, efficiency, and economy in the process of city wide development. It details the provisions for organized development, growth management, proper and organized transportation routes, promotion of high-quality civic design and arrangement, and adequate public utilities, facilities, and services.

The success of this plan shall not be measured by per capita income or growth in the sales tax base, nor the number of drug convictions, nor the scores on a fourth grade reading level test. The success of this plan should be measured by the sense of the community in our achievement of the City's Vision. Our success will show in the greater freedom that residents enjoy because of the enhanced cultural, economic, and natural environments. As this Plan has been developed through the combined efforts of City Staff members and citizens of the community, it truly is a document of the people, by the people, and for the people.

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### **WHAT A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IS NOT**

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A comprehensive plan does not provide legal means for accomplishing City goals, it only gives recommended directions. As circumstances change, it may not be possible or desirable for decision makers and staff to follow every recommendation of this plan.

That being said, a comprehensive plan is not a stagnant document. As circumstances and community desires change it is important to keep this Plan current in order to guide the City's development.

This document is not a primary source for demographic information, statistics, or legislation. While the City has found the most up to date information available to provide a background for determining directions the City should take, the numbers, statutes, opinions, and other secondary data herein, will change from time to time and it may not always be current within this Plan.

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### **STATUTORY AUTHORITY, RESPONSIBILITY AND OBLIGATIONS**

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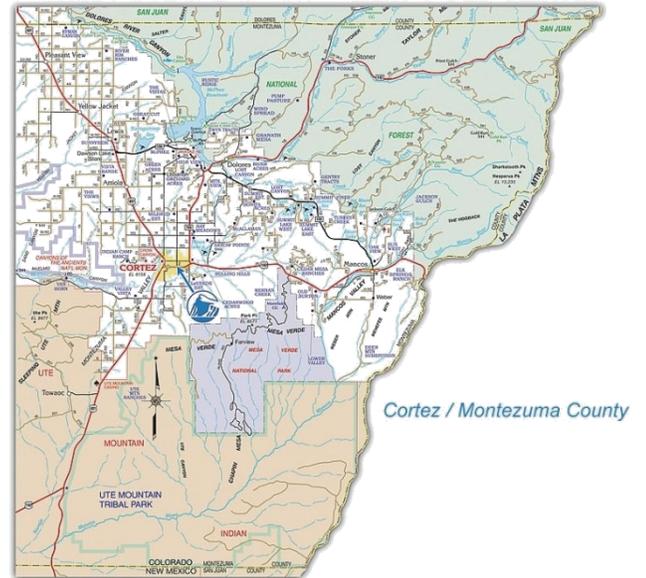
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Under Colorado State Statutes (C.R.S. Sections 30-28-106 and 107), a Comprehensive Plan or "master plan," is made for the general purpose of "guiding and accomplishing a coordinated and harmonious development of the relevant territory, which, in accordance with present and future needs and resources, will best promote the general welfare of the inhabitants." It must address, at a minimum, the following issues:

1. The general location, character, and extent of the current and desired transportation system;
2. The general location and extent of public utilities and terminals to all water, light, power, sanitation, transportation, communication, heat, and other purposes and any anticipated expansion of such utilities;
3. An adequate water supply to serve anticipated demand in terms of both quality and quantity;
4. Use plans for any dedicated public rights of ways;
5. Zoning plans for new development;

6. Inventory of available housing, business, and public space and plans for the projected economic and other needs of the current and anticipated population;
7. A plan for commercial mineral extraction;
8. Demographic projections and associated needs;
9. The general location and extent of delicate and hazardous natural areas.

Furthermore, the City of Cortez may make recommendations for the physical development of any areas outside of its boundaries that have a bearing on the planning for Cortez. In addition to those minimum issues recommended by State Statute, this comprehensive plan will also include a discussion of the local character and culture, and core values and a vision for the city, all of which are intended to guide the actions of the City of Cortez. In creating and implementing this Plan, it is essential to be aware of the widespread implications of the Plan, as many of its elements affect not just contemporary members of the City, but also future residents and residents of the surrounding area which it serves.

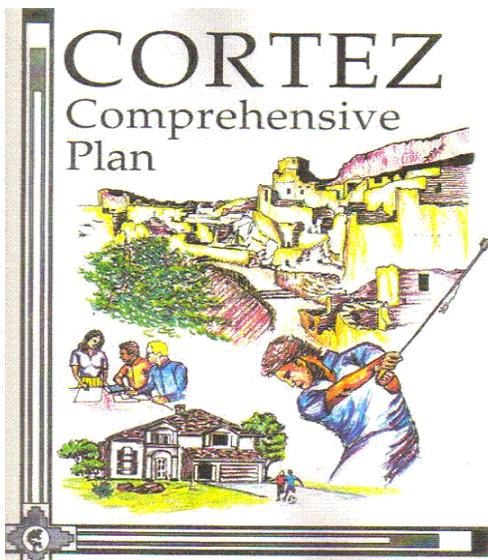


This Comprehensive Plan is NOT law. However, decisions based on adopted comprehensive plans have been upheld in courts of law. The Plan is a tool for future planning and the annual budgeting process. With that said, however, this tool's real value is only attained by the amount of use it receives. To implement the goals and policies set forth in this Plan, the City uses other documents that have been adopted which are specific and detailed pieces of legislation. Some of the legislative documents that the City of Cortez can use to implement the directions of this Comprehensive Plan include, but are not limited to: the Land Use Code, the official Zoning Map, the Historic Preservation Plan, and the Master Streets Plan.

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## THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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### *Previous Plans (a history)*

The first Comprehensive Plan for Cortez was developed in 1959, and it was not until 1969 that the plan was reviewed for necessary updates. With the assistance of Federal funds, a study was conducted over a three-year period, and a new plan was adopted in 1972. The updated plan included 51 pages of text, numerous tables, and two maps of the City. Ten years later, in 1982, the City again reviewed and overhauled the Comprehensive Plan in order to stay current with the changing needs of the City.

In August of 1993, the former Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Cortez City Council. This Plan was developed by an outside consulting agency, with input from

City Staff members and from the members of the community who attended numerous public hearings and voiced their ideas and concerns.

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## IMPETUS FOR A NEW PLAN

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The City's effort to update the Comprehensive Plan began in the year 2000, and once again, many citizens of the community attended public forums to voice their ideas and concerns regarding the future of Cortez. In doing so, they demonstrated their commitment to the City in planning for future needs. Cortez residents and decision makers recognized the importance of creating a new plan rather than conducting an overhaul on the 1993 Comprehensive Plan. The 1993 Comprehensive Plan, while good in intent, was outdated and lacked the long-range insight and detail necessary to guide Cortez's future development. We have seen unprecedented growth in the region, and an update is necessary to improve existing services and provide services to the City's future constituents. The economic and political climates have also changed, with many years of immense prosperity and stability, both regionally and nationally. The 1993 Comprehensive Plan lacked specific direction and action for the various governmental entities to follow into the future, which constricts the proper development for the City and creates opportunities for chaos and confusion. The 1993 Comprehensive Plan has not been discarded in its entirety; rather, it has been used as a guide for updating and developing the current Plan. Great amounts of time and effort were invested into collecting both community and expert input and into forming a realistic and attainable Plan.

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## OBTAINING CITIZEN INPUT

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During the spring and summer of 2000, planning staff divided the city into nine "neighborhoods" and conducted nearly as many individual discussion workshops to obtain public input as to the direction in which the Citizens of Cortez wished the city to grow. Residents in each area were contacted by mail with a letter of invitation sent to each personal residence or place of business. Nearly 3800 letters were mailed to individual property owners.



Public information about The Plan and the neighborhood meetings was provided to all interested parties through the newspaper, informational handouts of previous meeting discussions, and by the mailed individual notices. These meetings gave all residents and property owners of the community an opportunity to express their overall vision based on citizen participation. Citizens were asked four key questions:

- What do we value in our community?*
- What do we see as potential problems in our community?*
- What do we want to see occur in our community?*
- How can we solve the problems we identified?*

Responses encompassed Land Use, Transportation, Downtown, Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, Community Character, and Culture. These broad areas identified by the residents of Cortez have been incorporated as fundamental elements of this Comprehensive Plan. This information

was collected and a new comprehensive plan was started, but none of the work on the plan was completed at that time. The intern who had been working on this plan finished his internship and the Comprehensive Plan fell back to the responsibility of the already overburdened City Planner.

When the City renewed its interest in updating the Comprehensive Plan again in 2006, hiring another intern, it was apparent that there were likely to be new issues and considerations that have arisen for local residents since the neighborhood meetings of 2000. In addition, the community input in 2000 did not take into consideration the concerns of area residents who live in the Cortez area but not within the city limits. The focus of the neighborhood meetings was also largely focused on the values that members of the community share. This instigated another round of community meetings focused around the specific topics that are statutory to the Comprehensive plan or were identified during the neighborhood meetings of 2000. Anyone was welcome to attend these meetings that were advertised on billboards, in the paper, by email, on the City of Cortez webpage, and on flyers displayed throughout the City, but attendance often included City staff and a group of regular citizen participants. Each topic, however, did draw out citizens with specific interest in the topic in addition to some of the usual participants.

The first of these meetings was an introduction to the Comprehensive Plan with discussion on Land Use, Economic Development, and Housing in November of 2006. This was followed by two more meetings at City Hall in January and February of 2007 covering Public Facilities, Police and Healthcare Services, and Education. Five more meetings were held over the summer at the welcome center covering the topics of Community Character and Culture, the Natural Environment, Downtown Development, Parks and Recreation, and Transportation. Presentations were given by experts in each area and then the community members in attendance worked in groups to develop goals for the specific topics. In some cases, the citizens in attendance had recommendations for how to reach these goals and some of the goals were prioritized by the meeting attendants. In addition, citizens provided written comment throughout the process of writing this plan. All input from the public was included, to the extent possible and realistic, in the formation of this plan.

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### **HOW TO USE THIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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The City of Cortez acknowledges a responsibility to adopt and follow a realistic, attainable plan that responds to the community's values. While this plan lays a foundation for decisions in the community, it is also designed as a functional tool for becoming the thriving community that we all envision.

Following this introduction on how to use the plan is a chapter on the culture and the history of Cortez followed by a chapter on population demographics and growth trends. This background provides the framework of who this plan was designed for and how it can be best implemented. This chapter is intended to form the demographic and historical context of the City of Cortez to guide decisions on the rest of the Plan.

Once the context has been shaped, a chapter on Community Character and Culture specifies the desired direction for the culture of the community. While anticipating and planning for the trends, the city would also like to encourage the preservation and development of the remarkable, diverse, cultural attributes of our community. Subsequent chapters on: Land Use; Housing; Transportation; Public Facilities and Services; Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Spaces; Natural Environment; Economic Development; and Downtown Development, follow a similar format as the chapter on Community Character and Culture. These chapters are intended to simultaneously guide the City in making decisions that respond to the citizens desires for the future and fulfill the statutory responsibilities of a Municipal Master Plan.

Each Chapter begins with an **Overview** of the topic which it covers. Overviews will give an introduction to the topic itself in a general framework. It will explore the current situation and trends of the Cortez community with regard to the chapter topic.

An **Action Program** including **Goals, Objectives,** and **Policies,** follows the overview in each Chapter. These give specific, strategic directions for the community to focus its energy. These have been incorporated into the Plan to give a more specific direction to the intentions of the citizens of Cortez and to provide a map for implementation of each chapter. Each Goal is broken down into several objectives with specific policies for reaching each objective.

- **“Goals,”** also referred to as “strategic goals,” are broad, flexible, long-range aims that, through long-term pursuit, achieve the desired results in terms of development, revitalization, or preservation of the City.
- **“Objectives”** are the second step towards achieving the long range vision and goals. They are realistic, affordable, and verifiable ends which, when implemented with other objectives over the next several years, result in the attainment of the desired overall goal for the City. Objectives and their related actions are the guides for the implementation process.

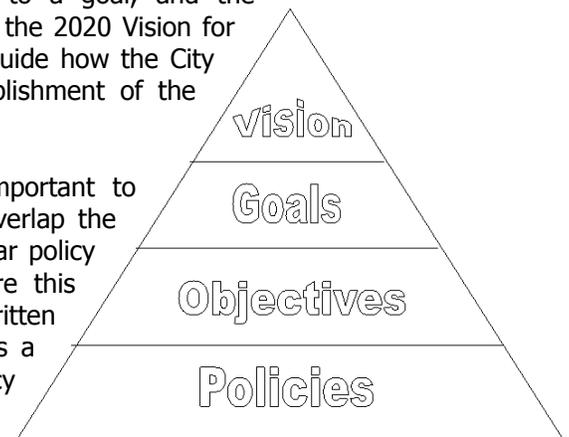
The Objectives have been broken down into short-term, mid-term, long-term, and ongoing objectives. Short-term refers to objectives that should be accomplished within the first three (3) years of this plan. Mid-term objectives are those objectives that should be finished within seven (7) years and Long-term objectives are expected to take eight (8) years or more. Though the mid-term and long-term objectives are expected to take longer to accomplish, there are often actions within these objectives that need to be carried out more immediately in order to accomplish the objective in the recommended timeframe. Ongoing objectives include policies that should be continually implemented and improved upon throughout the course of this Plan.

Following each objective within the Action Program, is a list of Key Participants. These lists are meant to include important participants that will either carry out actions or have the capacity to impede an action and must therefore be included in the planning process of each action.

- **“Policies”** are even more specific methods to achieve the objectives. These are the specific actions that should be taken to accomplish an objective. Policies must reflect budgetary constraints and resources. They must be reviewed frequently and be included in management and work plans.

It may help to think of these format components as a pyramid where the policies help to reach particular objectives. The objectives, when achieved, lead to a goal, and the combination of goals being reached should result in attaining the 2020 Vision for the City of Cortez. The mission and core values of the city guide how the City implements the strategic goals, guiding the general accomplishment of the goals toward the overall vision.

When using this Comprehensive Plan, it is also important to recognize that some of the goals, objectives, and policies overlap the chapters of this Plan so that the implementation of a particular policy may help reach objectives for many different topics. Where this overlap occurs, the goals, objectives, or policies have been written in the two or more chapters that they pertain to or there is a reference to a previous section. This is to aid policy



implementers in achieving the full purpose of each policy rather than focusing on a single intended outcome for that policy. It is the responsibility of the City to decide its direction with this systemic framework in mind.

The final chapter of this plan is dedicated to the implementation of this plan. Though each chapter of this plan includes directions for the implementation of the identified goals, this final chapter provides guidance for how to use the action programs and what the roles and responsibilities are of the advisory and decision making boards of the City, City Staff, residents, businesses, and community organizations. This Plan also includes several appendices that include greater detail on individual topics.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should review and provide recommendations to the City Council for revising any Implementation Program on an annual basis in order to continue to pursue implementation of the City of Cortez Comprehensive Plan on schedule. City staff members responsible for the Comprehensive Plan's implementation should monitor the status of each implementation action throughout the year and provide a general recommended framework to the Planning and Zoning Commission for annually updating the City of Cortez Comprehensive Plan Implementation Program.

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## **ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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This Comprehensive Plan is an official public document developed by the community, staff, city boards and elected officials, reviewed by the citizens at public hearings, and adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission. This plan sets forth the policies and goals concerning the future of the City. It serves as a policy guide for the City to indicate how community development will occur in the next ten to twenty years. The Plan is intended to be reviewed periodically and amended when necessary to accommodate changes in public attitudes, development technologies, economic forces, and legislative policy.

As change occurs, it will be necessary to review and revise this Plan when goals are met or new goals arise in the future. It is the intent of the Cortez City Council to review this Plan every two years, and amend the document as necessary. Citizens, Staff and City Boards may recommend that aspects of the plan be changed or removed, or that a new item be added. Any citizen may bring to the attention of Planning Staff any issue of their concern that may then be taken to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review. These recommendations should be included in a report to the Planning and Zoning Commission at a public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan once every two years. If an item is time sensitive and considered to be an important enough recommended amendment, the Planning and Zoning Commission can move to amend the Plan at any time. A public hearing should be given 10 days of proper notice for any amendments to the textual content of the Comprehensive Plan and any specifically affected interests should be given notice as well.

This Comprehensive Plan is not set in stone; rather, it gives general directions for development within the City. It focuses on general courses of action that can be taken toward creating an improved physical and cultural environment with specific recommended policies which, taken together, should result in the achievement of community goals. However, the future is unknowable, and the City must respond to changes that occur. While this document gives many useful policy directions to guide the City of Cortez, the policies themselves must still be considered before they are individually adopted or carried out by the City and are not automatically adopted by the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan.

*“History is a guide to navigation in perilous times.  
History is who we are and why we are the way we are.”*

*- David McCullough, Historian and Author (born 1933)*

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**OVERVIEW**

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The purpose of this chapter is to provide the context for the rest of the Plan, by describing the forces driving change in Cortez and the values that this community holds. In the effort to anticipate the future needs of the citizens, it is essential to understand the history of the city. In order to create an effective comprehensive plan it is also necessary to be familiar with the current needs of the people. The next step in this process requires an understanding of who “the people” are and how their characteristics affect—and are affected by—various planning functions. Without this information, planners cannot meet the needs of the population. Familiarity with certain concepts, such as demographic trends, land use changes, housing and transportation issues are key to understanding how the City is changing and to providing for planned growth, and to foster community development.

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**HISTORY OF CORTEZ**

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- Contributions from the Cortez Historic Preservation Board

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Cortez is a unique community and has survived despite obvious challenges. It has never been accessed by a railroad, is not located on a major river, and it did not sit on any major travel arteries until the 1930s. In fact, dependable water supplies for the city were not secured until recently.



Cortez is located in a geographic crossroads that has attracted people from prehistoric times to the present. The Ancient Pueblo (Anasazi), Ute, and Navajo history in the area has been well documented. The early Spanish explorations of the area followed by trade with the local tribes are also well known. Increasing hostilities between the Spanish and the tribes ended trade to the area in the

early 1800s. After Mexican independence in 1821, fur traders entered the area, and in 1848, the region became an American territory. The discovery of gold in California brought numerous federal expeditions to the West, which prompted the United States Geological Survey to open the Colorado Plateau to settlement with the Hayden Survey (1873-1876). The Treaty of 1895 set the Ute Reservation boundaries in Colorado and New Mexico.

The first pioneer settlement in the area was Mitchell Springs, located one and one-half miles south of the present location of Cortez. The natural springs on the stage road halfway between Mancos, Colorado and Aneth, Utah were an ideal stop for travelers. The Mitchell Brothers founded the town in 1882 with six adobe buildings, but the town was short-lived. It was poorly located in the flood plain of McElmo Creek, which led to the demise of the town within five years.

In 1885, the Montezuma Valley Water Supply Company developed a plan to cut a canal from the Dolores River to Montezuma Valley. The company sold stock in the plan to eastern investors to finance the project with the promise that bringing water to the fertile valley would create a land rush. By 1887, tunnels, ditches, and laterals were under construction. J.W. Hanna, the company president, and his family patented large tracts of land. In 1888, M.J. Mack, the company engineer, platted the town of Cortez on Hanna's donated land, which was at the time located in La Plata County. In 1887, the citizens of Cortez petitioned the state legislature to form Montezuma County, and name Cortez as the county seat. Although the land rush did not occur, and the Montezuma Valley Water Supply Company failed, Cortez managed to survive.

Ranching was the early agribusiness and primary source to sustain life in the region. With irrigation water, local farmers noted the success of the fruit farmers in Montrose and Delta. They planted apple orchards north of Cortez and peaches to the southwest in McElmo Canyon. The higher altitude made fruit farming risky. Soon, fruit farming was supplemented with hay production, grain and potato farming, and later, dryland pinto bean farming. All farming was limited by high freight costs, making markets mostly local.

The first businesses in Cortez were livery stables, blacksmith shops, and restaurants. The Thompsons built such a restaurant and sold a few retail goods. In 1890, the Guilletts bought the business and turned it into a mercantile. The Lambs opened a drugstore that also contained general merchandise. The first Montezuma County Courthouse was built in 1888, and the Montezuma Journal began to publish newspapers that same year. Local sandstone was quarried for early Cortez buildings, giving the community a permanent appearance.

At the turn of the century, mining and agriculture were in decline, allowing tourism to have increasing significance. In 1906, Mesa Verde National Park was established. The automobile became increasingly available and popular, which led to the establishment of The State Highway Commission in 1910. The federal government passed a "Good Road Bill" in 1916 that provided matching funds for the construction of a national highway system. Cortez benefited from the highway system because it was located on a national road from Kansas to Salt Lake City (U.S. Highway 160). The addition of Hovenweep National Monument in 1923 cemented tourism associated with archaeology as a profitable industry for Cortez, and the community prospered from improved roads and proximity to Mesa Verde and Hovenweep.

The increasing importance of trucking and shipping also contributed to the prosperity of Cortez. The City became a regional hub of automobile-oriented businesses. Cortez grew as a municipality, with new schools, churches, hospitals, and a new county courthouse. The cleaner lines of Art Deco designs replaced Victorian gingerbread, and storefronts were renovated to reflect the changing times.

Oil was discovered northwest and southwest of Cortez in 1909, setting in motion events that would later be duplicated. For instance, in the post-World War II era, Cortez was influenced by the same

boom and bust cycles of energy development that the rest of the Southwest experienced, but tourism-related growth moderated those cycles. Continued growth in the trucking industry brought improved regional highways. Cortez also increased in importance as a regional retail hub, and the community experienced a rapid change of character. Commercial storefronts and signs grew in size to attract drive-by business, and older storefronts were “modernized” with new materials.

Cortez continues to be a supply center for local agriculture and has become a shopping/retail hub for a large area, with market draws such as the Super Wal-Mart store. Tourism continues to be the largest industry for the community, and the addition of new national monuments in the immediate vicinity will add to the tourism base.

The City also experiences many indirect benefits from the services provided through local CO2 tax revenues. The community has also become a bedroom community for oil and gas and construction workers, with over 60 oil and gas employees residing in the City.

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### LOCATION

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Today Cortez is centrally located in the ancient world of the Southwest. Cortez is nestled in the Montezuma Valley surrounded by snow capped mountains, evergreen forests, south sloping upland plateaus, high desert sage fields, dryland farms,



prehistoric and historic cultural sites, and sandstone canyons. The diversity that is within an hour drive of Cortez offers incredible employment and recreation opportunities. Cortez is situated on one of the richest CO2 deposits in the world. We are just over an hour drive from the world class Telluride Ski Resort. The Entrance to Mesa Verde National Park, A World Heritage site, is only 9 miles East of Cortez. Cortez is situated less than an hour from the Four Corners monument, the only place where four states and two American Indian Reservations meet. The Montezuma Valley has been renowned, historically, for its agricultural production. Deer, elk, turkey, bear, grouse, and mountain lion that live in the area create a wilderness lover’s paradise. The second largest body of water in Colorado, McPhee Reservoir, is only a fifteen minute drive from Cortez. The Canyons are prized for nearly every sport imaginable, from climbing and backpacking to rock crawling and mountain biking. In this incredible location, “nature seems to have given to this valley and the surrounding country everything necessary for man’s subsistence, and for his highest prosperity.”<sup>1</sup> Cortez is situated as the county seat in the center of Montezuma County, a county

<sup>1</sup> The Colorado Consolidated Land and Water Company wrote a pamphlet about the natural environment of the Montezuma Valley. This was written to encourage investors for a water project to irrigate the Montezuma Valley. This Pamphlet titled, The Montezuma Valley in Colorado: A description of its location, scenery, climate, antiquities, irrigating works, resources and advantages, is located in the Historic Records at the Cortez Public Library, Cortez,

that is only 28% private land and is nearly 34% Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Land. The remainder of the land is Federal and State public land.



Today, the location of Cortez is where the North/South U.S. Highway 491, U.S. Highway 145 which is the San Juan Scenic Byway, and a major East/West artery, U.S. Highway 160, meet. Cortez has been a pass through point for traffic associated with resources of the four corners for centuries. The City of Cortez, however, has generally not been treated as a destination despite the incredible sites in and around the City. Cortez strives to become a destination.

*Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell.*

- Edward Abbey, writer, essayist, novelist (1927-1989).

**OVERVIEW**

Demographic studies encompass many aspects of everyday life: birth, marriage, living arrangements, education, occupation, income, ethnicity, age, and death. The greater the understanding of these demographics, the more helpful they will be in assisting the community in effectively meeting the future needs of the community.

In Cortez, issues of growth management have been paramount in consideration of recently approved annexations and developments within the City. In public workshops, members of the community have expressed their appreciation for the small-town atmosphere of Cortez, but they are also interested in attracting new businesses and creating a more diverse job market. With new development coming in, and as population continues to increase, the Comprehensive Plan becomes an essential component for managing future growth and channeling it to the appropriate areas of the City so that Cortez maintains the characteristics that attract people to the area.

Throughout this chapter, it is important to recognize that historic patterns cannot predict the future. They only indicate what might come to be if the status quo is maintained. It is important to continually seek updated demographic information and keep this information available to the public in order to better serve the community. When reading demographic information, there are often important considerations that are not necessarily reflected in the raw data. For this reason, it is important to create flexibility in infrastructure and services to react to the changing demographics of a population.

**HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS**

The City has experienced slow, steady growth over the years, averaging 1.5 to 2.7% yearly increases, with the exception of the 1950's decade according to U.S. census data (See **Table 3.1**). As the population has grown, the City has also grown from the core of Main and Market Streets, to extend in all directions and encompass 3,931 acres as of January 1, 2008.

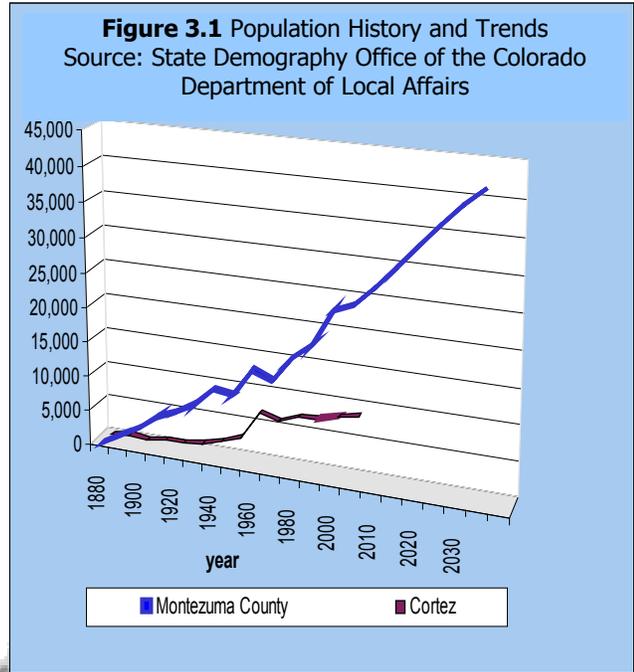
The past ten years have yielded steady growth in both the City of Cortez and Montezuma County, with a **9.5%** increase in the City from the 1990 to the 2000 census, growing from 7,284 to 7,977. Since that time, the population in Cortez has grown to an estimated 8,757 people in 2006. The County population has increased **13.25%**, from 18,672 in 1990 to 23,830 in 2000, with the estimated 2006 countywide population at 25,343. Population totals taken from the U.S. Census Bureau, for both the City and County are listed in **Table 3.1** and charted in **Figure 3.1**.

<b>TABLE 3.1</b>		<b>POPULATION TRENDS</b>											<b>(U.S. Census Data)</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>1890</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>1910</b>	<b>1920</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>1940</b>	<b>1950</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2006</b>	
<b>Cortez</b>	332	125	565	541	921	1,778	2,680	6,764	6,032	7,095	7,284	7,977	8,757	
<b>Montezuma County</b>	1,529	3,058	5,029	6,260	7,798	10,463	9,991	14,024	12,952	16,510	18,672	23,830	25,343	

Population estimates between census years can be somewhat inaccurate, but the average population increase from the 2000 census population of 7,977 to the 2006 estimate of 8,757 in Cortez is

just over a 1.5% annual increase. The steady increase in the City population and an even faster County growth rate are indicators that our community is likely to continue to grow. With this growth will come growing service needs. **Figure 3.1** also shows projected countywide population growth through 2035.

While the City population has been growing at a slower rate than Montezuma County according to estimates with the State Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), the population of both has been steadily increasing; a trend that is expected to continue. However, a variety of factors over which local governments exercise control may have an impact on City population growth relative to County population growth. The trends in growth between the County and City may shift with service needs and availability and with changing land use patterns. The availability of utilities outside of the City service area also have an influence on growth rates between the City and the County and may counteract some of the assumptions that encourage new development within the City.



**POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS**

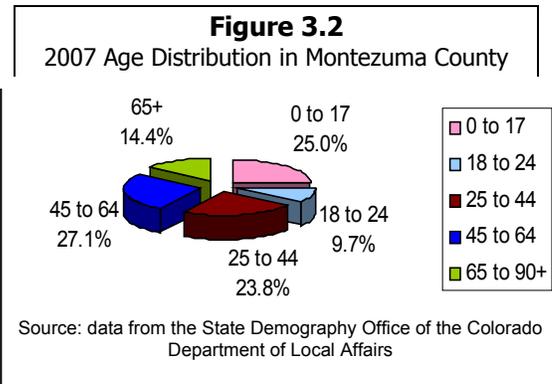
While our community is likely to grow, the dynamics of the growing population are also likely to change. It is necessary to consider the shifting demographic make up to determine what kinds of community needs are likely to grow or change over a long horizon. Age, gender, cultural background, commuter population, educational attainment, household dynamics, income, and employment are all population characteristics that indicate a community's needs for services, goods, employment, housing, recreation, and other resources.

**AGE**

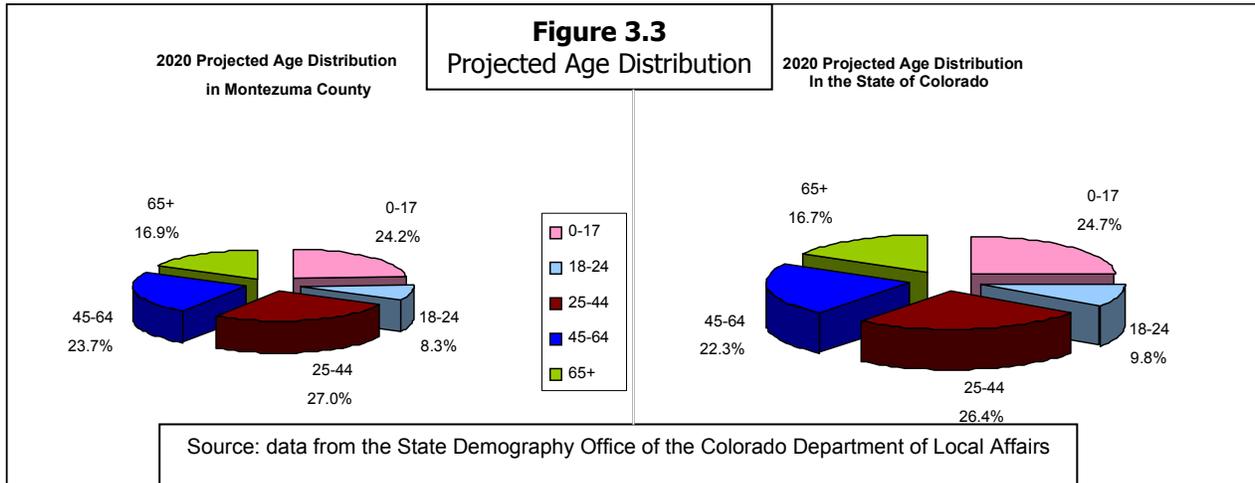
Age is a significant dimension of population for planners because of its close relation to service needs. The differences in the needs of toddlers, children, teenagers, young adults, middle aged, and elderly populations are largely self-evident. Sufficient numbers of quality schools and daycares are needed for the younger population while quality retirement services and facilities are needed for the elderly. Different kinds of jobs are needed for different age groups.

**Figure 2.2** Breakdown of the population of Montezuma County by age. This figure shows that **25.0%** of the population was under the age of 18 years, **9.7%** aged 18 to 24, **23.8%** aged 25 to 44, **27.1%** aged 45 to 64, and **14.4%** aged 65 years of age or older in 2007 State Demography Office projections. **16.4%** of the City of Cortez population was 65+ in the 2000 census, 170% of the statewide percentage of the population in this age group. The current population of Cortez has a higher percentage of retirement age individuals than the State or County. The generally working age population, 18-64, currently makes up over half of the community, but the entire nation is beginning to notice the effects of the retiring "baby boomer" generation. In Montezuma County, the

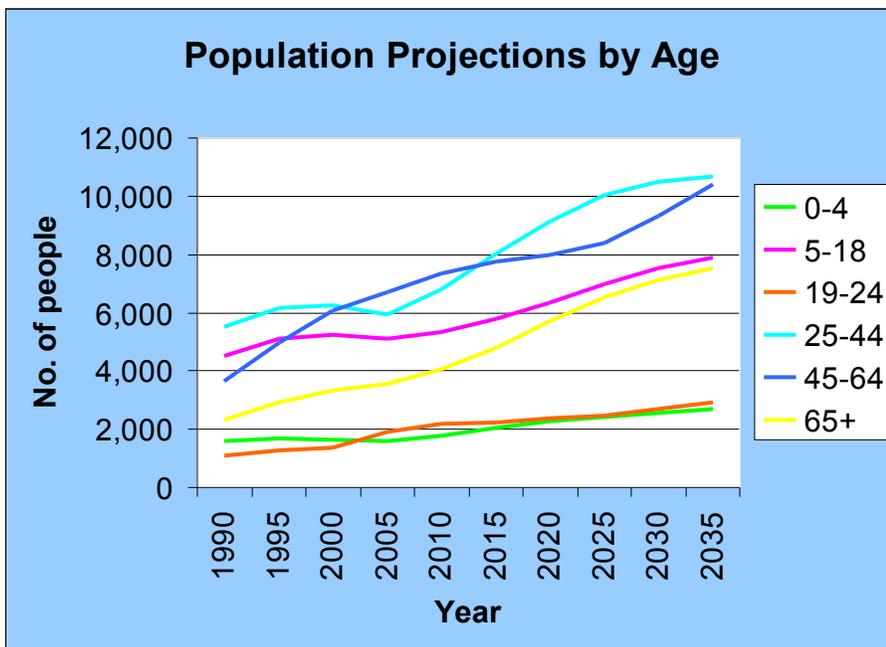
**Figure 2.2**  
 2007 Age Distribution in Montezuma County



population over the age of 65 is projected to represent 2.5% more of the population than it does today, with a slightly higher representation of the over 65 population than statewide projections (See **Figure 3.3**). This increase would result in nearly 2,000 more adults that are 65 or older in the county. While these individuals will not all necessarily live within the City limits of Cortez, most of them are likely to use the services of Cortez. While the “baby boomer” generation is entering retirement, the median age in Montezuma County is actually projected to drop. An estimated median age of 38.8 in 2007 is met with a projected 37.7 median age by 2020. This shift can likely be attributed to the upcoming generations of children and grandchildren of the “baby boomers.”



The projected distribution by age within Montezuma County is very similar to statewide projections (See **Figure 3.3**). However, the 18-24 year old population is 15.4% lower than the projected average for the State. Though this may seem startling, it is likely the result of students leaving the County for post-secondary education. Direction given by the citizens of Cortez, expressing a desire to make Cortez a more desirable place to stay after graduating from high school, including expansion of post-secondary education opportunities, above average employment opportunities, and a downtown night life, could have an impact on the percentage of young adults that stay in Cortez.

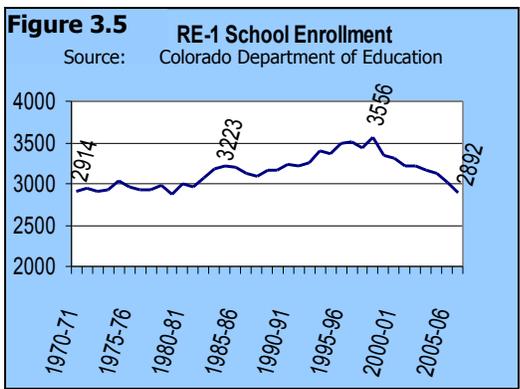


**Figure 3.4**

Source: State Demography Office of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs

To get an idea of the age shifts over time, **Figure 3.4** shows the projected number of individuals of the given age groups within Montezuma County from 1990 to 2035 based on State Demography Office Projections. Notice the blue lines cross each other as the "baby boomers" leave the 45-64 group while their children enter the 25-44 group. Then they cross again as the "baby boomer's" children reach the 45-64 group. Also notice the yellow 65+ age group increase more rapidly from 2011-2030 as the "baby boomers" reach this age group.

The school enrollment numbers for the RE-1 School District show the trend of decreasing school enrollment since the 1998-1999 school year (See **Figure 3.5**). While at first glance this trend indicates a decreasing need for youth activities, updated census information will give a better indication of the numbers of school age children, as decreasing school enrollment does not necessarily indicate a decreasing school age population.



**GENDER**

**Figure 3.6**

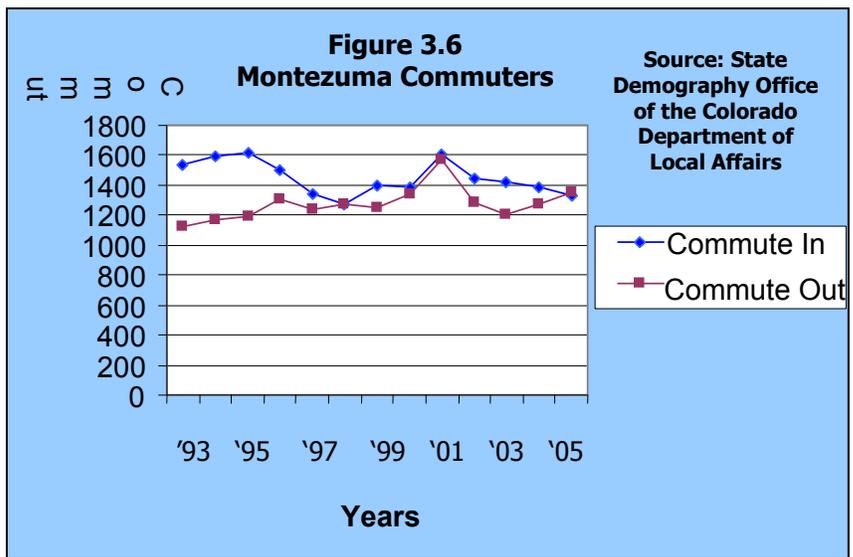
While age is an important determinant of the needs of a community, so is the gender of the members of the community. It is generally expected that there will be a very similar population of men and women in a community unless there is some specific factor that favors one gender over the other, for instance, you might expect that there are more females in a community where there is an all girls university or more males in a community with a military base. While on the face, Cortez would have no reason for a major gender discrepancy, there was a significant difference between the percentage of males and females of different age groups from the 2000 U.S. Census. For every **100** females there were **91.4** males. For every **100** females age 18 and over, there were **84.4** males over age 18.

The population in the state is characterized by a higher percentage of males at birth that shifts to a considerably higher percentage of females by retirement age. Statewide, the population under the age of 16 was 51.25% male according to the 2000 census. The median age of a male in Cortez was 33.6 compared to the state median of 35.4. The median age of females was 38.8 in Cortez compared to the statewide median of 37.5. Factors likely influencing the gender distribution in Cortez include the nature of the labor that has traditionally been available in Cortez, gender roles in the rural west, worker migration, and settlement patterns associated with a service and retail hub. If the gender dynamic is sustained, however, the City should be responsive to providing more opportunities for young men and older women.

There is no data available on the transgender population within the community, but it is important to be cognoscente of the special housing and services that can provide protection for this special population as the City grows and data becomes available.

**IN AND OUT MIGRATION**

For the first time since 1998, more residents reported commuting out of Montezuma County for work than coming into the County for Work in 2005 according to State Demography Office data (See **Figure 3.6**). While this may not be entirely representative of the City of Cortez, it is important to recognize the trend over the last few years of a



declining population of workers coming into the community to work while those who live here and work elsewhere are increasing in population. This trend has important implications for the City's economy.

The number of commuters coming into Montezuma County to work has been decreasing since 2001. While the number of commuters coming in and going out of the County peaked in 2001, commuting out of the County for work is on the rise again so that in 2005 the number of outbound commuters surpassed the number of inbound commuters.

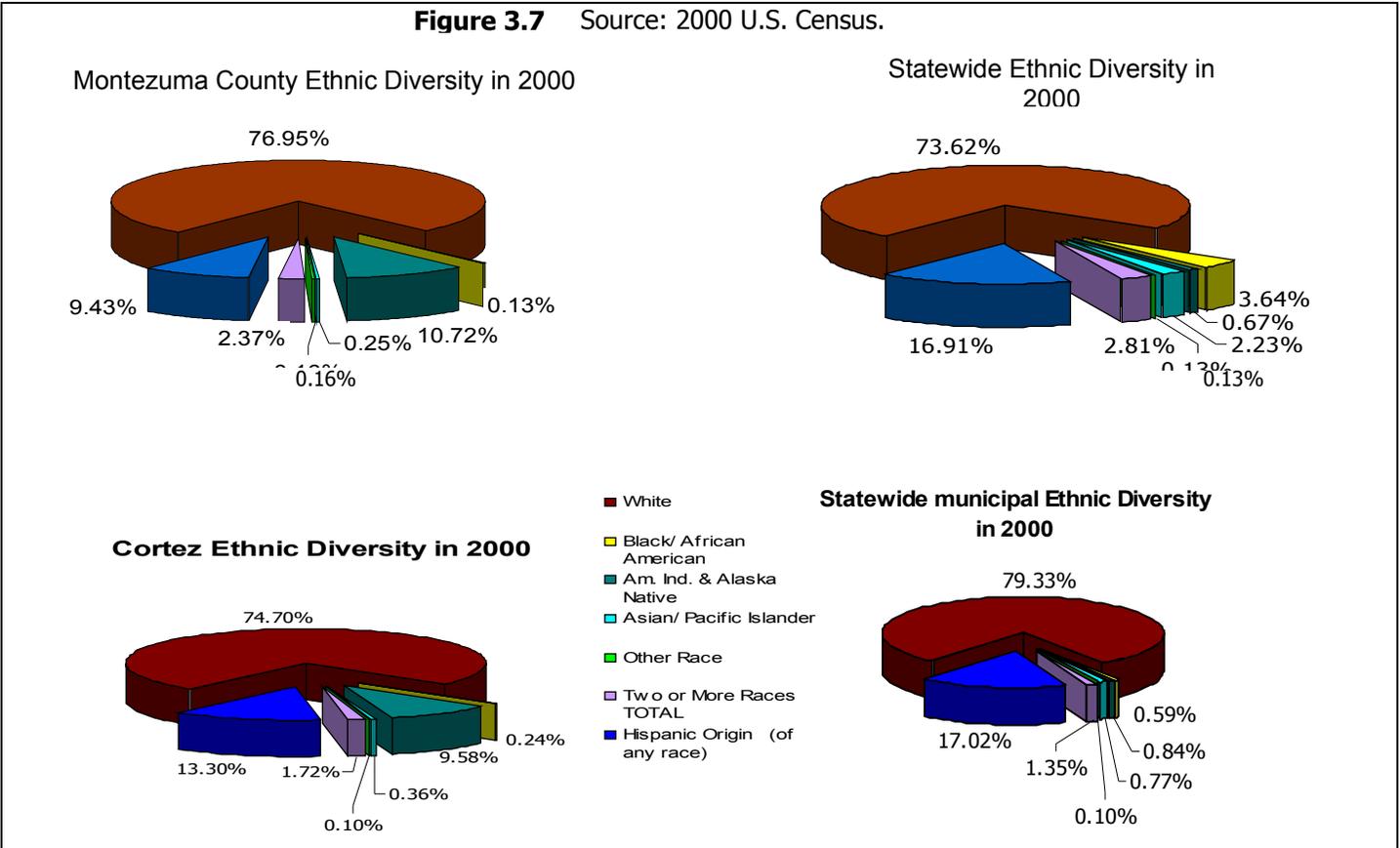
When people work outside of the community, they are more likely to shop and spend money outside of the community, but they also bring money into the community from their outside employment. An increasing outbound commuter population can present challenges to establishing a sense of community, because residents who live in Cortez and work in Durango or at well pads in another four corners state, spend the less active portion of their time in this community and an extra several hours in the car each day. This makes involvement in the community a challenge for commuting residents. It is also important to realize that while there is an increase in the population of workers commuting out of the County for work, not every commuter is a daily commuter and some employees are commuting less frequently and performing their jobs from off-site.

### ***CULTURAL DIVERSITY***

Another very important factor for the community to take into consideration for the offering of services is the cultural diversity of a city. The complex interactions between culture and other demographics, such as age, sex and education are important factors to be familiar with in order to adequately to serve all residents.

The ethnic makeup for the City of Cortez was **74.7%** White, **9.6%** Native American, **13.3%** Hispanic, **0.2 %** African American, **0.4%** Asian, **0.1%** from other races, and **1.7%** from two or more races in the 2000 U.S. Census (See **Figure 3.7**).

**Figure 3.7** Source: 2000 U.S. Census.



In addition to simply showing the ethnic diversity that characterizes Cortez and the surrounding County and State, **Figure 3.7** demonstrates the difference between Cortez and the surrounding community. Cortez has a very high percentage of Native Americans compared to the state averages for counties and municipalities. However, relative to Montezuma County, Cortez has a smaller percentage of Native Americans than the County as a whole. This can be explained mostly by the inclusion of the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation as a part of the geographic area of Montezuma County. Including 3,092 members, the majority of the Ute Mountain Ute tribe lives on the Ute Mountain Ute trust land and the surrounding communities including Cortez. The Navajo Nation shares a border with Montezuma County, and many Navajo tribal members live and/or shop in Cortez as well. These two tribes make up a strong majority of the Native American Population in Cortez and the surrounding County. Also, whereas statewide, there are higher proportions of non-white peoples outside of the city limits, Cortez is blessed with greater ethnic diversity within the City than in the surrounding County.

**Figure 3.7** also demonstrates a very small percentage of African American, Asian, and other ethnic populations, but these populations are present nonetheless. Because of the extremely low percentages of these populations, extra care should be taken to protect these minority groups from discrimination.

The Hispanic population in Cortez is well below the state average, but represents a significant portion of the population. At 13.3% of the population in the 2000, census, individuals of Hispanic origin represented a larger percentage of the population in Cortez than the 9.58% Native American population. It is interesting to note that the percentage of Hispanic individuals is considerably lower for Montezuma County as a whole than within the City of Cortez. The Hispanic/Latino demographic may also be affected by inaccurate representation with the 2000 U.S. Census model and may be considerably higher than reported.

Though nearly 75% of the Cortez population self identified as “white” in the 2000 Census, it is important to recognize a diversity of cultures throughout all of the phenotypical populations. In order to leverage the cultural diversity of the community, it is important to continue to monitor the trends of minority and under-represented populations and outreach to involve these populations in community activities and decisions that protect their rights and values and to embrace the diversity of being a border town.

## **HOUSEHOLDS**

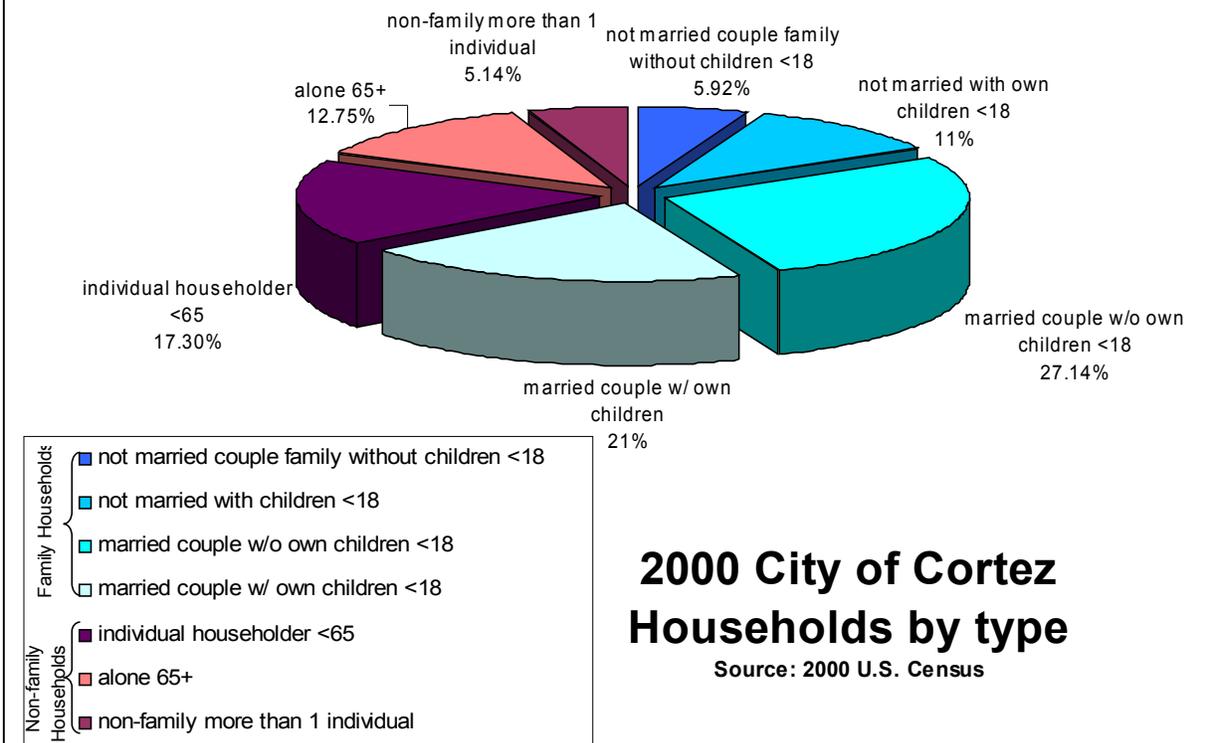
Demographic analysis of household types enables the community to address shifts in demand for housing, schools, and other facilities. For example, the behaviors and needs of households with children are very different from those households without; similarly, people living alone may need different facilities and services than those living with others.

The 2004 estimate from the State Demography Office lists the number of households in Cortez at **3,650**, of which **3,220** were occupied, with **2.41** persons per household. In 2006, 66 new homes including 40 new single family residences and 15 new mobile homes were added to the City, increasing the total number of households by nearly 8.5% over seven years in the City to 3,805 units compared to 3,209 when the 2000 census was done.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, **57.9%** of Cortez households had children under the age of 18 living in them; **48.1%** were married couples living together; **12.2%** had a female householder with no husband present; and **35.2%** were non-family units. **30.0%** of all households were made up of individuals, and **12.7%** had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was **2.41** people and the average family size was **3.00** people. (See **Figure 3.8**)

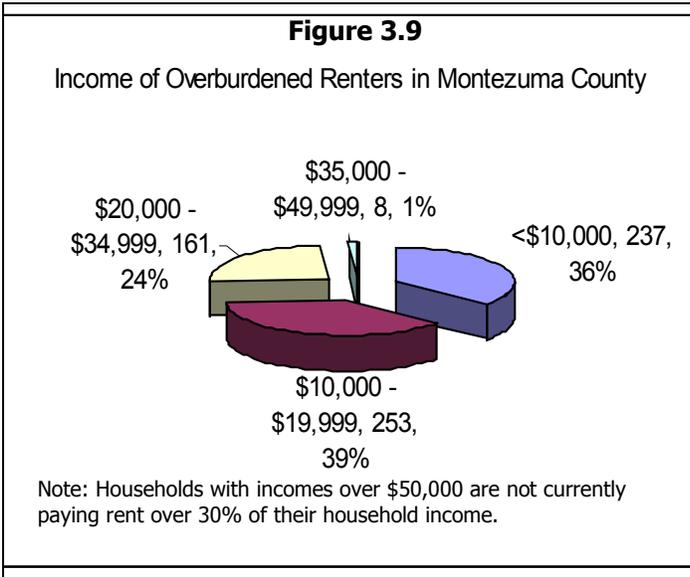


**Figure 3.8**



Though the number of housing units showed an increase in Cortez from 1990 to 2000, the size of a household and a family has decreased since census figures in 1990. There was a 7.1% decrease in household size from the 1990 to the 2000 census dropping from an average household size of 2.6 individuals to only 2.41 individuals. Family size also decreased significantly from 3.19 individuals to 3.0 individuals representing a 6% decrease in family size in Cortez between the 1990 and the 2000 census. This decrease in family and household size represents both the trend of smaller families and the influx of married couples without children.

Based on the median house price in Cortez in 2006, approximately 43% of families do not have a qualifying income for a traditional home loan. Furthermore, some families can qualify for a home loan with payments that exceed 30% of their personal income, making it challenging to fulfill mortgage payment obligations while meeting other basic necessities. Many of the residents in Cortez are renters. The median home price has increased by 82% since 1999. Homeownership has become increasingly expensive, making rental prices rise to meet mortgage payments on more recently purchased rental units. An estimated 31% of all renters in Montezuma County are considered overburdened, paying over 30% of their annual household income on rent. (Source: 2008 Southwest Colorado Index – Data and Trends) **Figure 3.9** shows the income of those families paying over 30% of their income toward rent. 75% of the County renters pay over 30% of less than a \$20,000 income.



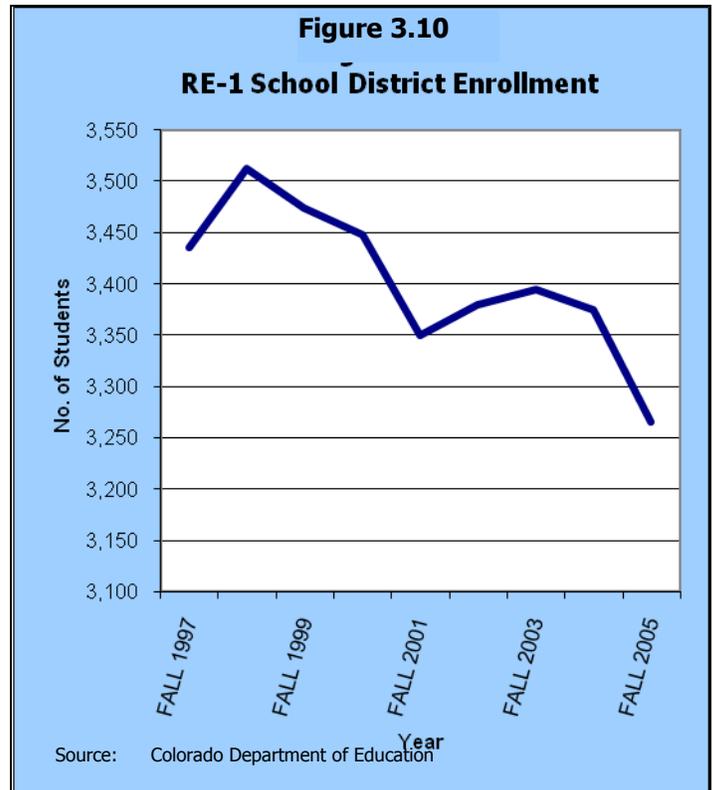
## EDUCATION

The educational attainment of the community members is an important factor in determining the type of employment opportunities needed and available in the area. Level of education largely determines employment, which, in turn, largely determines income. Completion of four years of college paves the way toward a professional or managerial occupation in the information-based economy; completion of high school, but not college, is a minimum-level education needed for many service jobs and the population without a high school level education will have a challenge finding any employment.

Table 3.2		Educational Attainment for the 25 and Over Population							Source: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau
Area	Total Population 25 and Over:	No schooling completed	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college, less than 1 year	Some college, 1 or more years, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	
City of Cortez	5,134 Info for only 4,048	38 0.94%	1,653 40.8%	430 10.6%	782 19.3%	279 6.9%	602 14.9%	264 6.5%	

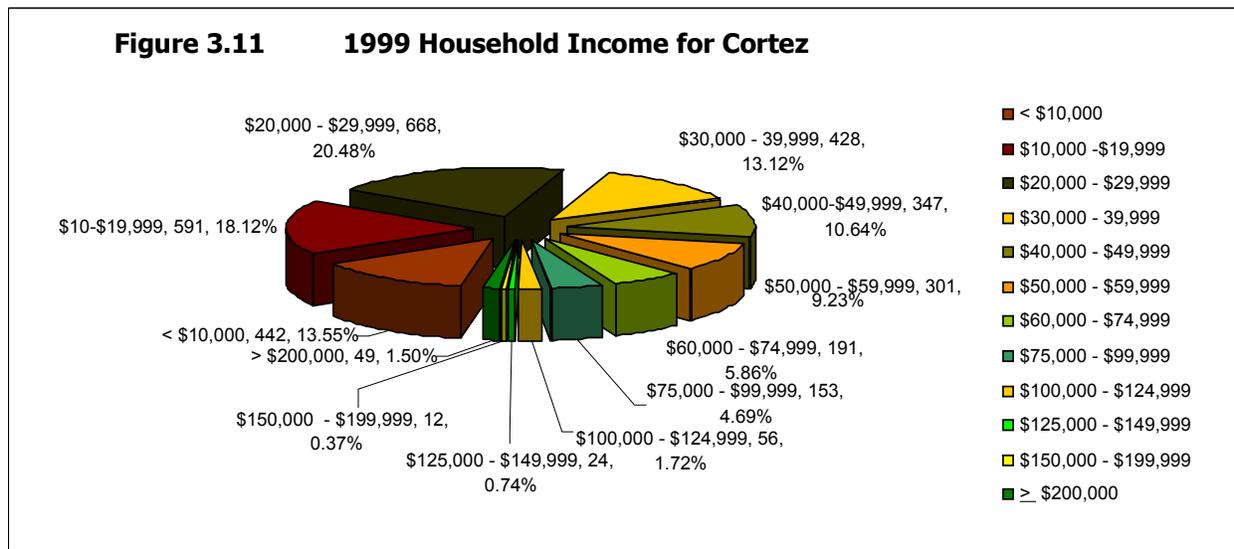
As shown in **Table 3.2**, the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau lists **80.1%** of the population, age 25 and over, as high school graduates or higher. Within that same group only **18.8%** are listed as having a bachelor's degree or higher. Of the 5,134 people over age 25, **376** did not go past the ninth grade, and **647** quit attending between the ninth and twelfth grades according to U.S. Census Bureau data from the 2000 Census. Conversely **1,653** have a high school degree or equivalent, **279** have an associate degree, **602** have a bachelor's degree, and **365** have a graduate or professional degree.

Demographic studies are also important in terms of education planning. Birth rates and migration patterns are essential data for projecting for school enrollment. Typically, in the United States, planning for the programs and facilities of educational institutions is the responsibility of the institutions themselves. However, the proper functioning and the best distribution of education services are more effective when made a part of the larger process of community planning for growth and change. As of fall 2006, school enrollment for the Montezuma-Cortez School District saw a decline in the number of students. However, it is always important to plan ahead for areas of growth that could possibly lead to an increase in the number of students. **Figure 3.10** shows the overall declining trend of school membership over the eight year period from the 1997 to the 2005 school year. Additional challenges in education include State and Federal funding and State and Federal regulations will also have an impact on educational attainment of upcoming generations.



## INCOME

Although overall income distribution is related to education levels, household income also varies with the age, gender, and ethnicity of the various members of the population. For obvious reasons, households of married couples with two earners, especially those with degrees, will earn more than households with less educated members of the family, or households with single parents. These statistics are very important in determining not only the types of housing needs for the population, but also the types of community and social services needed for the community members.



The 2006 countywide average per capita income was **\$28,547**, only **78%** the national median income in a state averaging 108% of the national average. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, the median income in 1999 for a household in the City of Cortez was **\$28,776**, only 50.6% of the National household median income in 1999. The median income for a family was 71% of the national median at **\$35,533**, indicating that families were doing better than individuals compared to the national average. The 2006 figures also indicate improvement since 1999, with an opportunity for still more improvement. Males had a median income of **\$30,755** versus **\$20,280** for females, both between \$6,000 and \$7,000 lower than the national median income in the 2000 census, an accentuation of the national gender gap. The 1999 per capita income for the City was **\$18,040**, **83.6% of the national income per capita**. While the income has increased substantially, the percentage of the national average has actually decreased.

The combination of these statistics illustrate the economically depressed status of Cortez compared to the nation, but the income per capita illustrates that the incomes per household and family are skewed from the national average by the smaller size of a family and a household in Cortez. They may also be reflecting greater stability in the Market in the small community that serves as a retail and service hub. Still, **18.6%** of the population and **14.8%** of families were below the poverty line in 1999. Over a quarter of children, **27.3%** of those under the age of 18, were living in poverty compared to 16.1% nationally. Similarly, **17.3%** of those 65 and older were living below the poverty line. Over **65%** of the households in Cortez had an income below \$40,000 in the 2000 census. (See **Figure 3.11**)

### **EMPLOYMENT**—supplemented by the 2008 Southwest Colorado Index

The current trends in income of City residents indicate the economic deprivation of the City, but they do not reflect the high levels of employment that represent progress in this nation. As shown in

**Table 3.3**, only 4% of the workforce in Montezuma County was unemployed. This was .6% lower than the national unemployment rate, showing an improvement since 2000 when the unemployment rate was higher than the national rate. While this is likely to increase with the national economy going into a downturn, the City will strive to keep its wages livable and employment numbers high within its jurisdiction.

<b>Table 3.3</b>		<b>UNEMPLOYMENT RATES COMPARED 2000-2007</b>						
Area	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Montezuma County	5.4%	4.8%	5.9%	5.5%	5.3%	5.3%	4.5%	4.0%
State of Colorado	2.8%	3.7%	5.7%	5.7%	5.2	5.0%	4.3%	3.8%
Nation	4.0%	5.3%	5.8%	6.0%	5.5%	5.1%	4.6%	4.6%

Many of the largest employers in Montezuma County provide jobs to individuals that reside within the City of Cortez, but only five of the ten largest employers in the County are located within the City of Cortez, three of which are in the government sector and two in the service sector. These two sectors combined account for over 60% of the jobs in Montezuma County today. (See **Table 3.4**) Cortez is the County seat and a service hub, so it has very high numbers of government jobs and service jobs but the Countywide 6% employment in agriculture seen in **Table 3.4** does not apply within the City. While only 2% of the jobs in the County come from mining and utilities, nearly half of County property tax comes from the extraction of CO<sub>2</sub>. Mining and utilities offer nearly double the wages of any of the other sector in the County, including those jobs that require similar skill sets. Finding a way to keep more of the capital from resource extraction in the local economy poses an incredible opportunity that could employ more City residents in the future. Another employment issue tied to the mining industry, that is not apparent on the surface, is the importance of the property taxes to the functioning of the County Government, which employs some City residents and is of vital importance to the local economy. It is important for the City to be an active participant in finding replacement employment and revenue for the decline of Oil and Gas in the County and region.

Maintaining Cortez as a service hub and governmental center and encouraging continued funding of Federal and State employment are vital to the gainful employment of City and area residents, which in turn, keep money circulating in the community. Another opportunity is in growing remote employment opportunities. Cortez has broad band internet services and capacity to increase jobs and job training that can be performed from the home.

<b>Table 3.4</b>					
<b>MONTEZUMA COUNTY TOTAL EMPLOYMENT 2006</b>					
<b>Source: State Demography Office of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs</b>					
	# of jobs	% of jobs	Income (\$000)	% of income	Avg. Annual wage
Agriculture	814	6%	\$ 8,043	2%	\$ 9,881
Mining & Utilities	208	2%	\$ 16,027	4%	\$ 77,053
Construction	1,243	10%	\$ 50,570	13%	\$ 40,684
Manufacturing	519	4%	\$ 15,780	4%	\$ 30,405
Transportation & Warehousing	235	2%	\$ 8,138	2%	\$ 34,630
Wholesale & Retail Trade	1,772	14%	\$ 48,070	12%	\$ 27,128
Information	119	1%	\$ 4,073	1%	\$ 34,227
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	684	5%	\$ 18,731	5%	\$ 27,385
Services	4,061	31%	\$ 94,881	24%	\$ 23,364
Government	3,260	25%	\$ 128,907	33%	\$ 39,542
Total	12,915	100%	\$ 393,220	100%	\$ 34,430

Workforce training, both generally and job specific are very important to the continued high employment numbers of local residents. Developing the workforce, especially for higher paying jobs such as those in the mining and utilities sector, or construction, can help to shift the local workforce into more

skilled labor positions with higher wages that are otherwise going to employees from outside of the community. Providing opportunities for individuals to move into skilled labor and professional positions from minimum wage jobs will open positions for entry level workers such as students while boosting the economy.

Small employers are the most important asset of employment in Montezuma County, because they provide diversity and security in employment opportunities. According to Region 9 Economic Development District's 2008 Southwest Colorado Index, 82% of Montezuma County Employers had 9 employees or less in 2005. 11% had 10-19 employees while 5% had 20-49 employees and only 2% had 50 or more employees. Maintaining high levels of diverse employment is very important to the security of the local economy.

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## CHAPTER 4—COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND CULTURE

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*I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.*

—George Bernard Shaw, Irish Playwright (1856-1950)

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### OVERVIEW

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“Culture” can be defined as those learned behaviors and beliefs shared among a particular social, ethnic, or age group that can be passed down from one generation to another. Most individuals can identify with many different cultures, but there are some characteristics unique to the Cortez community, from the environment and historic and prehistoric cultural traditions which are shared by the residents of the City, to the stores where we shop, restaurants where we eat, and fields where we play. While City and County residents share some of this foundation which shapes the character of the Montezuma County community, there is also a unique character of living in the City that can be built upon to create a strong sense of belonging and enhance the quality of life for all City residents.

The development of the character of individuals and their personal beliefs and values begins in the home and in the schools. Many residents who were raised in Cortez develop an appreciation for the location and rural landscape that generally characterizes the Four Corners area. New residents move here for many of the same characteristics that long time residents appreciate. They value the views, the open space and agricultural land, and the public lands. Residents of Cortez have come to expect stary night skies, deer in the yard, ducks at the duck pond, snow in the winter, lights on the spruce trees at the county courthouse, concerts, shows, and plays in the Montezuma-Cortez High School auditorium, new restaurants each year, wild fires and burning fields in the Spring, pottery sherds on the ground, and sunsets behind the Ute Mountain. While there are so many unique attributes and qualities of Cortez that every member of the community shares, this reality is not always acknowledged or built upon by individuals or by the City. Lyndon B. Johnson gave a great speech to congress in 1965, in which he spoke of what an American City should be.



*“The American City should be a collection of communities where every member has a right to belong. It should be a place where every man feels safe on his streets and in the house of his friends. It should be a place where each individual’s dignity and self-respect is strengthened by the respect and affection of his neighbors. It should be a place where each of us can find the satisfaction and warmth which comes from being a member of the community of man. This is what man sought at the dawn of civilization. It is what we seek today.”*

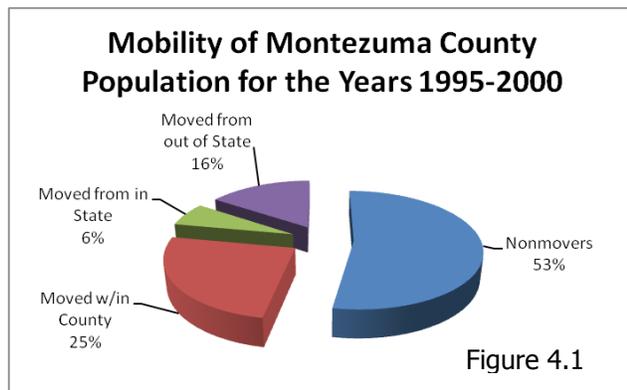
Cortez has been home to a variety of people with diverse cultures throughout the ages. From the areas deepest ancestry as a hunting and gathering landscape for Archaic populations, to the Agricultural character that still dominates the landscape surrounding Cortez today, the tradition of self-reliance and a small town atmosphere is deeply engrained due to our history, location, and geographic isolation. Today, Cortez is located at the crossroads of three state highways and has become a regional service, trade and transportation center for the Four Corners Area. Government is the largest employer in the county today, however the small community atmosphere and culture of independence has been largely maintained over the years. Balancing this sense of individualism with a sense of community and place will continue to be a challenge in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The City will strive to enhance the understanding of the diverse cultural backgrounds of all of the people that have been in the community for generations and those residents that are new to the community, by creating a sense of pride in the community with a connection to this place that is shared by all City residents. Through efforts to strike a balance between the independence of our community’s diverse individuals and the sense of community based upon our shared landscape, the City hopes to preserve the attributes of the community that make it unique.



Government is the largest employer in the county today, however the small community atmosphere and culture of independence has been largely maintained over the years. Balancing this sense of individualism with a sense of community and place will continue to be a challenge in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The City will strive to enhance the understanding of the diverse cultural backgrounds of all of the people that have been in the community for generations and those residents that are new to the community, by creating a sense of pride in the community with a connection to this place that is shared by all City residents. Through efforts to strike a balance between the independence of our community’s diverse individuals and the sense of

community based upon our shared landscape, the City hopes to preserve the attributes of the community that make it unique.

**Figure 4.2** represents that a 78% majority of the residents of Montezuma County had lived in the County for over five years, as of the 2000 census. Furthermore, only 16% of the population had moved to Montezuma County from a state other than Colorado. Census statistics on migration out of the County reflect that a higher number of people left the County than moved into the county between 1995 and 2000. However, the population did show an increase during this time which reflects positive birth rates rather than an influx of people moving in from outside of the community. These migration statistics should be reevaluated following the 2010 census, however, the most recent census data actually shows higher out-migration than migration into the County, begging the question of why people are leaving the community. To reverse this trend of out-migration, whether it has improved slightly since the 2000 census or not, it is important to build a sense of community based on our existing assets in addition to new assets that develop in the community.





**ACTION PROGRAM**

<b>COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND CULTURE GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES</b>	
<b>Goal 4.1:</b>	<b>Invest in diversity through art, education, cultural opportunities, activities, and events.</b>
<b>Mid-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To establish a broad, community-based arts program for citizens of all ages so that our cultures are displayed in art throughout the City.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Local Artists, Downtown Land and Business Owners, Special Events Coordinator, Mesa Verde Country Tourism, Cortez Retail Enhancement, Planning and Zoning Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., Special Events Coordinator, Educational Providers, Local Foundations, Grants Administrator, Cortez Public Library</i>
<i>Policy 4.1.1:</i>	Examine the feasibility of establishing a community program that fosters art in window display areas, especially in vacant downtown buildings, and promote efforts to beautify these vacant buildings.
<i>Policy 4.1.2:</i>	Provide guidelines for community art displays in City parks, trail areas, downtown, and in other public locations.
<i>Policy 4.1.3:</i>	Explore a variety of options for funding of a community arts program, such as utilization of student art programs, a community foundation or other non-profit groups.
<i>Policy 4.1.4:</i>	Utilize City resources to assist with funding for a community arts program.
<i>Policy 4.1.5:</i>	Create displays in areas of attraction for citizens and visitors. Consider having displays that revolve with the seasons and cultures that reflect a special time of the year.
<i>Policy 4.1.6:</i>	Work with the area schools to involve youth in local art displays.
<i>Policy 4.1.7:</i>	Encourage the establishment of an umbrella organization to collaborate the efforts and needs of the various art organizations in the community.
<i>Policy 4.1.8:</i>	Establish a collaborative partnership between the Public Works Department, Special Events Coordinator, Mesa Verde Country Tourism Bureau, and Cortez Retail Enhancement to continually improve the City Banner Program.
<i>Policy 4.1.9:</i>	Promote programming for young artists and validate young forms of art such as the student art shows at the Cultural Center.
<b>Long-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To create a Community Performing Arts Center that promotes diverse activities and meets the community's needs.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>All City Departments, Montezuma Arts Council, Local Artists, Local Non-Profit Clubs and Orgs., Educational Providers, Economic Development groups, Developers</i>
<i>Policy 4.1.10:</i>	Research the feasibility of creating a Performing Arts Center in Cortez and scope the needs that could be met with such a community center. Examine Dolores Community Center project for guidance.
<i>Policy 4.1.11:</i>	Create flexibility in development regulations to facilitate desirable public development in ideal locations that may be inhibited by strict development regulations.
<i>Policy 4.1.12:</i>	Evaluate land in any proposed centrally located developments and existing City property that would be well suited for a Performing Arts Center.

<i>Policy 4.1.13:</i>	Provide technical and professional assistance for the planning and development of a Performing Arts Center.
<i>Policy 4.1.14:</i>	Participate in efforts to create a desired Performing Arts Center.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To increase opportunities for higher education to decrease the percentage of youth that leave the community, starting with today's high school students, to recruit motivated individuals, and to bring diverse interests together through higher education.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>SJBTC, PCC, FLC, Other Educational Providers, General Services Dept., Public Works Dept., Community Leadership Groups and Orgs.</i>
<i>Policy 4.1.15:</i>	Support efforts to expand shuttle services to the San Juan Basin Technical School and to establish a shuttle to Fort Lewis College.
<i>Policy 4.1.16:</i>	Promote programs that prepare students for careers available in Cortez and the surrounding county.
<i>Policy 4.1.17:</i>	Retain Pueblo Community College and the San Juan Basin Technical College through promotion and support whenever necessary.
<i>Policy 4.1.18:</i>	Maintain Cortez Community Fiber optic Network and promote opportunities for remote learning.
<i>Policy 4.1.19:</i>	Promote existing and encourage new mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities that help to bridge the gap between youth and more experienced community members, such as High School Leadership Montezuma and Southwest Open School programs.
<i>Policy 4.1.20:</i>	Utilize City resources and provide technical and professional assistance for efforts to establish a four year college, or satellite degree programs, in or near Cortez, that will promote the strengths of our community.
<i>Policy 4.1.21:</i>	Encourage all post-secondary educational opportunities for the integration of people and ideas including programs in business, SW art, SW cinematography, agriculture, forestry, wildlife management, cultural resource management, and information technologies.
<b>Goal 4.2:</b>	Enhance community understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures, ages, backgrounds, and abilities.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To provide cultural and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages and interests so that any given individual has and knows how to find something meaningful or memorable to do year round.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Parks and Rec. Dept., Youth Groups and Orgs., Educational Providers, Special Events Coordinator, Cortez Public Library, Cortez Cultural Center, Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Other Community Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 4.2.1:	Encourage the development of Youth Activity Centers that include activities and events that cater to youth of all backgrounds and interests and provide diverse, healthy, and affordable cuisine.
Policy 4.2.2:	Support the school district in developing more programming and classroom opportunities for cultural education, and involve youth in cultural events and programs that are held in the City.
Policy 4.2.3:	Coordinate with the Parks, Recreation, and Urban Forestry Advisory Board and the RE-1 School District on needs that could potentially be addressed within the community-wide recreation center programming and other public grounds and facilities.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To diversify involvement in community activities.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Parks and Rec. Dept., General Services Dept., Public Works Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Community Clubs and Orgs., Advocacy Groups</i>

Policy 4.2.4:	Promote co-location of facilities in a campus-like setting for recreational and educational activities for both the youth and the elderly. Provide assistance to local individuals and families who desire to participate in City programs but do not have the means.
Policy 4.2.5:	Promote diverse events and programs held in the City and continue to promote ethnic events in neighboring ethnic communities through consultation and advertisement.
Policy 4.2.6:	Pursue opportunities to develop or promote programming and events that facilitate the involvement of the elderly, small children, physically handicapped individuals, and developmentally disabled individuals.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To increase awareness of community organizations and non-profit groups so that these organizations are more fully utilized.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>City Website Administrator, Special Events Coordinator, Community Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 4.2.7:	Maintain an updated list of activities, events, and organizations in City of Cortez media outlets with current contact information and establish links to other community calendars throughout the Four Corners Region.
Policy 4.2.8:	Encourage efforts to create a non-profit board or center that facilitates the cooperation of local organizations and that assists community volunteers in finding the appropriate organization to donate their time to.
Policy 4.2.9:	Promote the efforts of local civic and non-profit organizations to increase membership for the benefit of the community.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To honor the diversity of area residents and visitors alike.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>City Website Administrator, Special Events Coordinator, Community Clubs and Orgs., Business Owners, Advocacy Groups</i>
Policy 4.2.10:	Encourage art, education, business, recreation, and events that showcase unity in the community.
Policy 4.2.11:	Encourage cross-cultural communication.
Policy 4.2.12:	Provide cultural education materials and opportunities.
Policy 4.2.13:	Encourage businesses to hire minorities and to allow their employees to observe ethnic or religious holidays.
Policy 4.2.14:	Promote education for business owners, managers, and employees on cultural sensitivity.
Policy 4.2.15:	Encourage more opportunities for education and preservation of language, especially Ute, Navajo, and Spanish.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To promote activities and events that feature cultural education and understanding.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Local and Regional Clubs and Orgs., Educational Providers, Special Events Coordinator</i>
Policy 4.2.16:	Maintain collaboration between local and regional organizations to promote the expansion of cultural education, activities, and events.
Policy 4.2.17:	Encourage education providers to measure cross cultural understanding and the impacts of cultural education on social patterns within the schools.
Policy 4.2.18:	Establish cultural events that cater to youth and local audiences including the high school population.
<b>Goal 4.3:</b>	<b><i>Create a genuine feeling of Community Pride.</i></b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To create and enhance a sense of Place and Community so that more residents are familiar with their neighbors and within walking distance from their parks, schools, and shopping centers and Cortez is recognized as a desirable destination.</i></b>

<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>All City Departments, Planning Division, Local Clubs and Organizations, Downtown Land and Business Owners, Local Artists, RE-1 School District, The Lonely Planet, Century 21, Other organizations that portray an image of Cortez outside of the community</i>
Policy 4.3.1:	Actively participate in understanding community and neighborhood dynamics and values.
Policy 4.3.2:	Keep the City vision current and make it readily available to the public.
Policy 4.3.3:	Support organizations that embrace and foster our community values.
Policy 4.3.4:	Continue to promote community values through leadership (business, agriculture, government, etc.)
Policy 4.3.5:	Update zoning and development requirements to promote innovative and progressive building and planning for connectivity.
Policy 4.3.6:	Create public spaces, such as a pedestrian mall, where people can come together on a daily basis.
Policy 4.3.7:	Establish a Year Round, Cooperative Marketplace for local growers, experts, and artisans to sell their goods and services and provide regular interaction among community members while giving visitors a place to find local goods and interact with the community, while minimizing pervasive peddling.
Policy 4.3.8:	Encourage a mixed use of businesses with single and multifamily accessory uses in the downtown business area and accessory businesses in the neighborhood business areas.
Policy 4.3.9:	Follow Smart Growth principles to the extent possible.
Policy 4.3.10:	Establish a Safe Routes to Schools program that creates a greater youth presence in the community by enhancing the safety for pedestrian, bike, and other alternative forms of transportation to and from the schools.
Policy 4.3.11:	Support the RE-1 School District in their efforts to provide education about the diverse cultural, environmental, and economic assets of our community.
Policy 4.3.12:	Contact organizations and individuals that can promote the assets of Cortez. (ex. The Lonely Planet travel guides and Century 21 website)
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To increase opportunities for public participation in the decision-making process of the community.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>City Website Administrator, Cortez Journal, Other Media Outlets, City Clerk, City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Advisory Boards, Community Clubs and Organizations, Other Governmental Agencies, Educational Providers</i>
Policy 4.3.13:	Consistently utilize diverse media, such as cable television, the City web page, and City Clips, as outlets for providing current and accurate information to the public.
Policy 4.3.14:	Encourage citizen participation in future updates of the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Code. Continue to utilize neighborhood meetings, presenting to existing organizations, and other appropriate citizen participation techniques to garner public input.
Policy 4.3.15:	Facilitate accurate publicity of important City activities and decisions by providing written materials for the press and working with various media providers to maintain transparency in government.
Policy 4.3.16:	Consider "roundtable" meetings of all local governmental bodies on a regular basis to address community concerns or to provide information about activities and opportunities.
Policy 4.3.17:	Distribute information that enhances the publics' understanding of political processes and that encourages citizen engagement.
Policy 4.3.18:	Be proactive in making presentations and information available to youth about how and why to become involved in the local political process.
<b>Policy 4.3.19:</b>	Strive to utilize a diverse cross-section of the citizenry in filling positions on appointed boards, committees, and commissions.

<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To have all age groups represented living, working and recreating in the community.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Local Advocacy Groups, Southwest Intertribal Voice, Business Owners, Local Clubs and Organizations, All City Departments, Cortez Cultural Center, Ute Mtn. Ute Tribe</i>
Policy 4.3.20:	Promote efforts to accommodate underrepresented groups in neighborhoods, workplaces, organizations, and recreation.
<b>Policy 4.3.21:</b>	Consider sliding payment scales for City services and activities and events within the City.
Policy 4.3.22:	Encourage and provide opportunities whenever possible for housing, employment, and recreation that empower people of all ages and backgrounds.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To continually enhance the cleanliness and safety of City streets and neighborhoods.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning and Zoning Division, Public Works Dept., Parks and Rec. Dept., Police Dept., Baker Sanitation, Waste Management, County Landfill, Community Clubs and Orgs., Educational Providers, Media Outlets</i>
Policy 4.3.23:	Enhance the community clean up events in ways that involve diverse organizations and bring neighborhoods together.
Policy 4.3.24:	Consider installing and maintaining any additional signage or appropriate lighting that may be necessary to enhance the safety of the community.
Policy 4.3.25:	Evaluate the safety of landscaping and design plans for new development.
Policy 4.3.26:	Identify and phase out dark and blind corners of the physical landscape when appropriate.
Policy 4.3.27:	Enforce regulations that promote community safety and cleanliness.
Policy 4.3.28:	Promote public safety awareness.
Policy 4.3.29:	Support private and public programs and organizations that enhance community safety in Cortez when appropriate.
<b>Goal 4.4:</b>	<b>Maintain The Rural Character Of The Community.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To preserve the rural, small-town atmosphere of Cortez.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Montezuma Arts Council, Cortez Cultural Center, Local Artists, Educational Providers, Montezuma County, Future Farmers of America, Rodeo Associations, Mesa Verde National Park, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Anasazi Heritage Center, Colorado Historical Society, City Advisory Boards, Planning and Zoning Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., Developers, Realtors, Empire Electric Association</i>
<i>Policy 4.4.1:</i>	Provide incentives for increased evening activities during tourist seasons, such as additional community concerts, plays/theatre, and Cultural Center activities.
<i>Policy 4.4.2:</i>	Maintain family "rodeo" and "western" activities in the immediate region to establish continuity between the history of the community and present-day activities.
<i>Policy 4.4.3:</i>	Plan for open space, and conservation of open horizons throughout Cortez.
Policy 4.4.4:	Promote the preservation of community culture through the provision of attainable housing, goods, and services within Cortez.
<i>Policy 4.4.5:</i>	Promote the use of the local workforce, musicians, contractors, vendors, etc. at events and activities held in or by the City.
Policy 4.4.6:	Emphasize base industries in and around Cortez and the role of the community as a goods and services provider for rural residents in the Four Corners area.
<i>Policy 4.4.7:</i>	Adopt dark sky policies that establish guidelines for new outdoor lighting and a plan to retrofit existing lighting. This should especially include street lighting and any appropriate updates to the lighting design requirements of the Land Use Code that would help to phase out misdirected lighting.

<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To maintain an agricultural lifestyle and landscape and have agriculture recognized as an important base industry.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Montezuma Land Conservancy, Agricultural Clubs and Associations, Agricultural Markets, Local Grocers, Special Events Coordinator, Economic Development Organizations, Montezuma County, Educational Providers</i>
Policy 4.4.8:	Support programs that assist rural residents outside of the City with maintaining their agricultural lands and lifestyles when appropriate.
<i>Policy 4.4.9:</i>	Foster local agriculture in the rural areas surrounding Cortez by promoting the consumption of locally grown foods.
Policy 4.4.10:	Encourage the conservation of the rural, agricultural lands surrounding Cortez.
<i>Policy 4.4.11:</i>	Promote opportunities for agricultural curriculum and other agricultural learning opportunities such as a community garden for local residents.
Policy 4.4.12:	Promote agricultural mentorship programs through the dissemination of information, technical assistance, incentives, and education programs and assist organizations that provide such mentorship opportunities.
<i>Policy 4.4.13:</i>	Support the development of an index of food consumed in our City and county that is produced locally to establish accurate representation of agriculture's contributions to the economy.
Policy 4.4.14:	Enhance a buy local program, the farmers market, and other programs, businesses, and organizations that promote the importance of a secure local food.
<i>Policy 4.4.15:</i>	Require local products at events in the City whenever possible.
Policy 4.4.16:	Encourage the education providers to establish a "Farm to School" program that will promote local agriculture.
<i>Policy 4.4.17:</i>	Promote conservation easements in conjunction with organizations, such as the Montezuma Land Conservancy, to maintain agricultural land on prime agricultural properties within the Three-Mile Potential Growth Area.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To avoid regulation for the sake of regulation.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Advisory Boards, City Legal Council, All City Departments</i>
Policy 4.4.18:	Encourage intended outcomes of regulatory changes that are measurable.
Policy 4.4.19:	Measure the impacts of existing and newly created policies and repeal any policies that have negative or no impacts.
Policy 4.4.20:	Fully utilize existing regulations that may make an impact before creating new regulations intended for the same purpose.
<b>Goal 4.5:</b>	<b><i>Promote the historic and prehistoric architectural, artistic, and cultural background of the community.</i></b>
<b>Mid-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To create and maintain an historic and prehistoric preservation plan to identify, rehabilitate, preserve, and promote cultural, historic, and prehistoric sites in and surrounding Cortez.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Historic Preservation Board, Colorado Historical Society, Cortez Cultural Center, State Historic Preservation Office, NPS, BLM, USFS, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Anasazi Heritage Center, Local Experts, Montezuma County</i>
Policy 4.5.1:	Pursue becoming a Certified Local Government by adopting preservation ordinances that meet State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service requirements.
Policy 4.5.2:	Utilize the Historic Preservation Board to develop and maintain a database of all structures, signs, sites, and districts within the City and the Three Mile Potential Growth Area that have historical, cultural, architectural, and archaeological significance.

Policy 4.5.3:	Consider mitigation requirements for public and private development to preserve structures, signs, sites, and districts included in the City database.
Policy 4.5.4:	Encourage rehabilitation and preservation of historic buildings, sites, and districts by private entities through the creation of informative meetings, incentives programs, compatibility criteria, public/private partnerships, and other tools.
Policy 4.5.5:	Identify and secure a location to house City archives, artifacts, and the City database.
Policy 4.5.6:	Draw on the historical aspect of existing structures to create tourism opportunities and utilize the City's extensive and diverse histories as an asset.
Policy 4.5.7:	Preserve private property rights to the maximum extent possible in the designation of any historically or culturally significant area.
Policy 4.5.8:	Adopt an historic and prehistoric preservation plan as an amending chapter to The Comprehensive Plan.
<b>Mid-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To establish policies to promote the preservation of historic and prehistoric sites in Cortez and facilitate compatible land uses adjacent to such sites.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning and Zoning Division, Historic Preservation Board, Montezuma County, Developers, Downtown Land and Business Owners</i>
Policy 4.5.9:	Develop and implement strategies within the Land Use Code to preserve the human scale environment and historical character of older neighborhoods and business neighborhoods.
Policy 4.5.10:	Consider developing design criteria for new development, façade construction or reconstruction, and maintenance of historical buildings where construction is adjacent to historic buildings or the structure itself is historic, utilizing the local, state, and national historic property registers to identify historic structures.
Policy 4.5.11:	Develop and implement standards for downtown development to preserve and enhance the visual assets and community character of the area.
Policy 4.5.12:	In planning rehabilitation projects, incorporate any architectural elements that are common to many historic facades in the Cortez Historic Downtown area.
Policy 4.5.13:	Provide guidance to developers and property owners to create compatible architectural variations among individual buildings to create a visual richness and enhance the essence of Cortez' eclectic architectural heritage.
Policy 4.5.14:	Enhance, through building maintenance and historic preservation, our community's role as a regional center in the past, the present, and the future.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To Establish Local Culture, History, and Prehistory Museum(s) and tourist attractions.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Developers, Local Clubs and Organizations, Historic Preservation Board, Planning and Zoning Division, Cortez Cultural Center, CDOT</i>
Policy 4.5.15:	Promote organizations proposing museums, especially relating to local culture and proposed to be located in or near the historic downtown area, through professional and technical assistance and incentives.
Policy 4.5.16:	Promote any projects to interpret a substantial archaeological site on a piece of property within or adjacent to the City. Consider developing such a site as a City Prehistory Park that would provide: local education about the prehistory of the Montezuma Valley; an additional tourist attraction for visitors who have come to the Archaeological Capital of the United States; and an additional employment opportunity for residents.
Policy 4.5.17:	Promote efforts to preserve the Hawkins archaeological site, which is owned and managed by the Cortez Cultural Center, and to expand visitation of the site by locals and tourists alike.
Policy 4.5.18:	Promote recreational programs and projects to maintain and preserve the natural and cultural environment in the Hawkins Preserve.

Policy 4.5.19:	Promote McElmo Canyon designated as part of the "Trails of the Ancients," as a historic route to the prehistoric destinations of Canyons of the Ancients and Hovenweep National Monuments. This is another cultural asset of the community that the City may leverage.
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*“Change is inevitable. In a progressive country, change is constant.”*

- Benjamin Disraeli, Former Prime Minister of England (1804-1881)

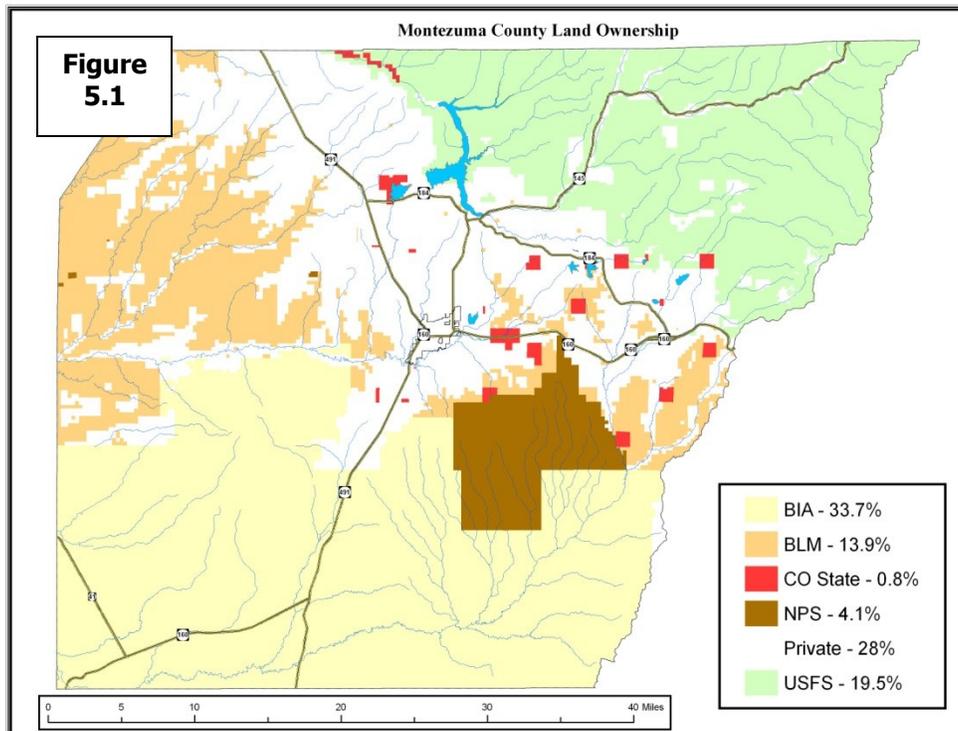
**OVERVIEW**

The Land Use Element establishes the basic policies guiding the physical form of the city, and provides direction on a range of development, conservation and land use compatibility issues. This element describes the balancing of priorities that must take place in order to accommodate a multitude of land uses within the boundaries of the City of Cortez and encourage compatible uses in land immediately adjacent to the City limits. As every other element of the Comprehensive Plan, from community character to economic development, is influenced by the physical landscape of the City, this chapter brings together recommendations for land use management to facilitate the other goals found within this Plan. This Land Use element is intended to offer guidance for the development of properties, transportation, parks and recreation facilities, open space, public facilities, and other land use needs through the year 2020 and beyond.

This chapter embodies directions for policies in the Land Use Code, The One-Mile Urban Services Area Plan, The Three-Mile Potential Growth Area Plan, and other regulatory planning documents. Land Use Planning documents are shaped by many factors including the historic development and heritage of the community, the natural environment, and the location and availability of public infrastructure and other public services. These recommendations shall assist in guiding future land use decisions of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council when reviewing planning document revisions, development proposals, annexations, zoning and rezoning requests, and other land use applications to serve the growing and diversifying population.

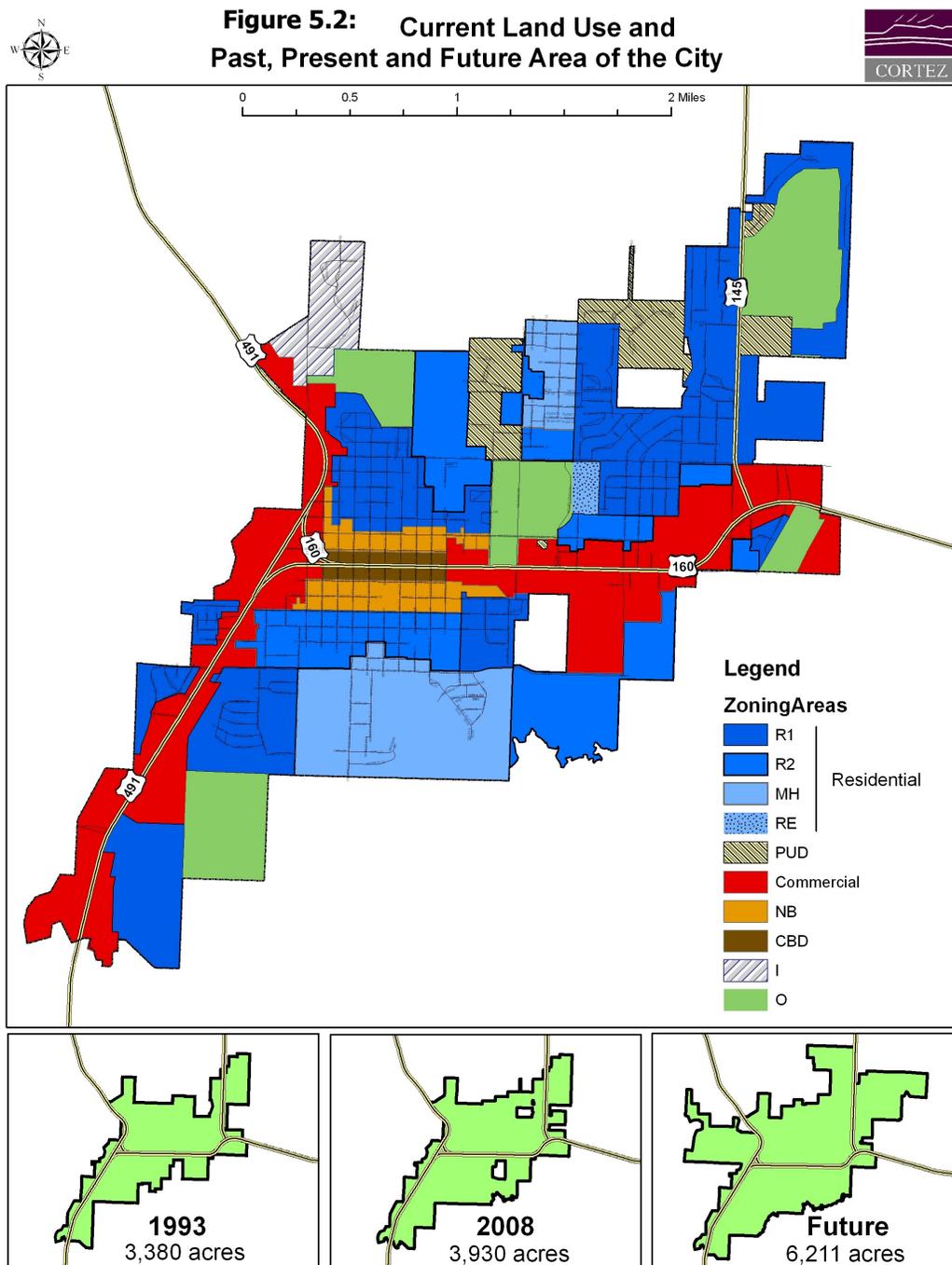
**PAST AND PRESENT LAND USE PATTERNS**

Figure 4.1:

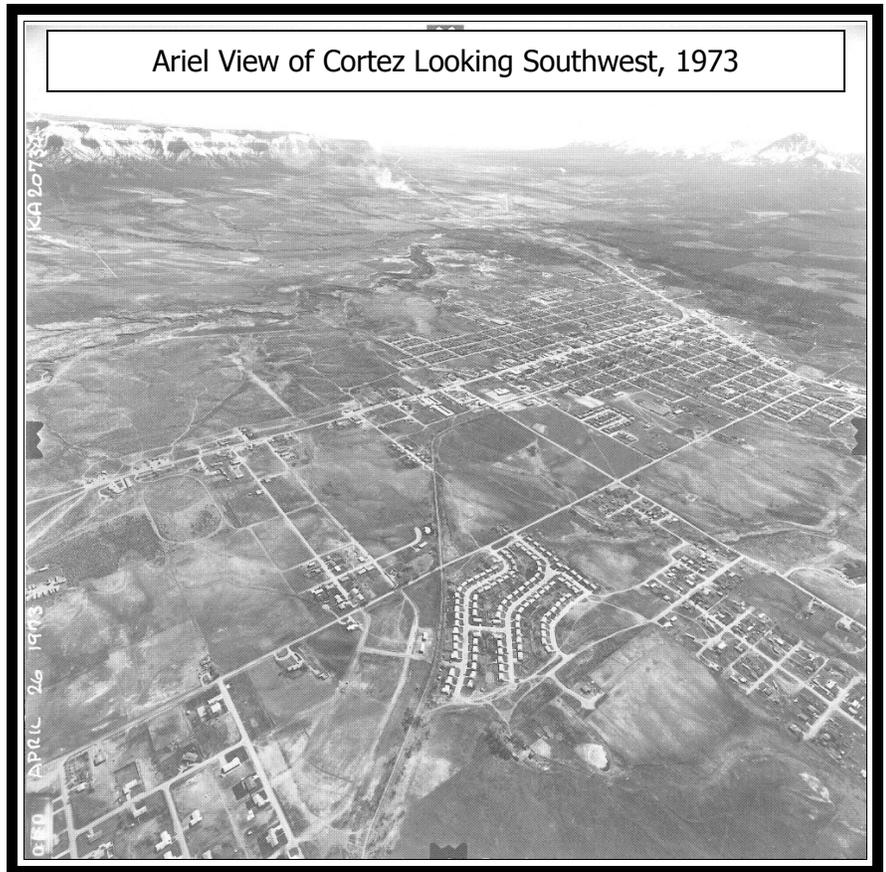


Montezuma County consists of 1,304,895 acres, and within that area, 365,370 acres or 28% of the land is privately held, 489,336 acres or 37.5% is Federal Land managed by the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or the National Park Service, 439,750 acres are Ute Mountain Ute Tribal land managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and 10,439 acres or .8% is held by the State of Colorado. As you can see from **Figure 5.1**, the largest concentration of private land stretches across the City of Cortez. Within three miles of the City limits, 91% of the property is privately owned.

In 1996, a generalized land use pattern based on existing uses was created from field surveys. The information representing the land use pattern at the time was compiled in the "Zoning Map" shown as **Figure 5.2**. The map is updated continuously throughout the year as rezoning occurs, and as new areas are annexed or developed.



From the original Townsite of 160 acres in 1887, the City consisted of 3,344.5 acres by the Fall of 1969 and had grown to 3,931.5 acres by the end of 2007. The maps at the bottom of **Figure 5.2** show the growth of the City since the former Comprehensive Plan and property likely to be annexed in the time horizon of this Comprehensive Plan. The three mile Potential Growth Area is an additional 43,721 acres beyond the 2008 City limits. Within the incorporated limits the predominant land use in 2007 was residential, with 1,776.5 acres utilized for all types of housing, 777.55 acres for commercial, and 80 acres for industrial. There are also 74 acres of mixed residential use and neighborhood businesses. While in 1970 the City's proportion of land devoted to commercial use was higher than most communities of its size, in the last four decades, residential uses have grown at a faster pace than commercial uses and more land has been dedicated for residential use. Even so, in 2008 there are still vacant lands and existing buildings available for commercial endeavors.



Residential growth has been mainly in the northeast region of the City, along State Highway 145 (Dolores Road), and in the southern portion of the City, south of Fifth Street. Urban development to the west is limited by Hartman Draw and to the east by the service area of Montezuma Water Company. The service area of the Montezuma Water Company functions as an informal growth boundary, limiting City expansion in all directions. The ability of the City to expand in land area is becoming limited by physical and practical boundaries, with the most likely areas to be annexed including the north side of the McElmo drainage on the east side of the City, several enclaves, and land south of County Rd. "L" adjacent to the City. Recent annexations include new residential development in both the areas south of County Road "L" (Alamosa Street) and south of 7<sup>th</sup> Street, North of the McElmo drainage. Residential development has varied in these areas, from mobile/manufactured homes to larger stickbuilt homes of 2,000 square feet or more. This diverse housing allows for different demographic groups to reside within the City limits.

Mixed residential and commercial uses within Cortez do exist in and around the downtown area, but there are still ample opportunities for development of more mixed uses in the appropriate areas. Some residences are located in the Central Business District core of downtown, but second story floors of many structures are used for storage, and the upper apartment possibilities are not presently being fully utilized. Within three blocks of the Downtown area is a mixed-use Neighborhood Business area, containing small entrepreneurial businesses mixed with primarily single family residences. Possibilities for multi-family residential development and business opportunities in the Neighborhood business exist.

Commercial growth, on the other hand, has mainly occurred along the highway corridors that pass through town, State Highway 160 (Main Street) and State Highway 491 (Broadway Avenue). Retail stores have become more focused on the outer edges of the City to take advantage of Cortez being a

regional retail center for the Four Corners region. The majority of the most recent commercial development has been to the east on Highway 160 (East Main Street). This has been in the form of big box retail development and strip centers, although some in-fill is beginning to occur along the South Broadway (160-491) corridor. Many of the larger tracts in this area have changed ownership in recent years and new owners are exploring creative ways to deal with the exposed rock layers and with access issues onto the State highway. The predominant commercial use in downtown Cortez is service and banking, with a minority of the properties used for retail businesses.

The Industrial Park is the primary location for industrial use, located to the northwest of the City along County Road "L" just west of Lebanon Road. Industrial growth has been centered in two areas, the Cortez Industrial Park, and the area near the Cortez Airport, to the southwest of the City. The Airport property and the surrounding area are outside of the City limits and fall within County Land Use regulations. Development within the existing areas is growing, with potential for niche manufacturing and room for expansion of existing industrial facilities. However, the available industrial property within the City is limited. Once the Industrial Park has been fully developed, the City will need to evaluate other locations to develop industrial uses. Areas of the Broadway corridor may be well suited for expanded industrial use.



Cortez Industrial Park, Looking North circa 1979

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## FUTURE LAND USE MANAGEMENT

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While the City is growing, there is an increasing desire to keep our small-town atmosphere. The people that live here choose to reside here because of the amenities of the area. The character of Cortez is also important to people looking to relocate in the area. Preserving small-town values is of the highest priority for many Cortez residents, and anything that affects local neighborhoods or Cortez's atmosphere has heightened importance to those who live in the community.

The Land Use Code will continue to be the legal conduit through which land use decisions are made, it is important to continually modify the Land Use Code to reflect the changing needs of the community and promote best land use practices. With growth pressures and sprawling development in the rural areas surrounding the City, infill development of desirable land uses should be promoted with appropriate Land Use Code policies. The policies throughout this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and in other areas of the Comprehensive Plan identify some of the policies that may encourage desirable infill development, use of existing structures, and other land use directions for the Land Use Code. As needs for particular kinds of residential, commercial, or industrial development arise, and particular critical lands for conservation are identified, this Comprehensive Plan should be amended to reflect developing trends and the Land Use Code should be revised accordingly. Ensuring that the Land Use Code continues to be a dynamic, flexible, and current document following the updated trends identified in the Comprehensive Plan, will be an important aspect of guiding the City's development.

Growth trends in communities across the nation are similar to what is occurring in Montezuma County. Distinct urban areas in certain regions are losing residents as they move to lower-density, more rural settings. Likewise, we are seeing increased development on the "urban fringe". The key to quality-of-life issues in the coming decade will be the ability of the City of Cortez and Montezuma County to coordinate planning efforts in order to manage the growth on the urban fringe, and provide an easy transition from high-density, urban settings to the low-density, rural area. Development pressures are such that the unincorporated areas near the City are being developed with near-urban levels. As this growth has occurred, it has become apparent that it would benefit the community to create a plan that ensures appropriate and desirable growth within the City and in the areas around it. Developing the Three-Mile Potential Growth Area Plan to reflect best practices and the future directions desired by both the City and the County is an important aspect of future land use planning.

The City utilizes zoning regulations to help manage land use, compatibility, and density throughout the City. The City provides a menu of zoning options that provide for a variety of residential, commercial, industrial, and open space uses. The current zoning regulations are intended to maintain a healthy, safe, clean, and beautiful community where land is used efficiently, effectively, and which are compatible with neighboring uses. In order to continue to ensure the best use of land within the City to protect the values of the residents, it is important to employ the best planning practices available. Providing flexibility in the Land Use regulations is also an essential component for encouraging projects that are desirable with regards to the assets and opportunities that they bring to the community, though this flexibility contradicts the City's traditional zoning regulations. The Planned Unit Development provides a level of flexibility, but the City should consider more dynamic zoning regulations with regards to density and site development standards in order to accomplish desired community goals.

The City intends to continually adopt specific policies that influence the kind of growth and land use that occurs within the City limits and throughout the Urban Services Area and Potential Growth Area, in an effort to preserve the values of the community. By using a realistic and planned approach to development, flexible practices will help to reduce sub-rural sprawl, facilitate adequate and efficient infrastructure, conserve critical lands and view sheds, provide appropriate residential and mixed use opportunities, appropriately locate commercial and industrial development, encourage pedestrian movement and neighborhood interaction, and make the best uses of existing buildings and land.

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## ANNEXATIONS

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With the substantial growth of both the City of Cortez and in the unincorporated areas of Montezuma County, it is necessary to include provisions for annexation of property into the corporate limits of Cortez. Annexation can be an effective means of accommodating the growth of the City while implementing elements of the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Code.

In 2007, there were just over 90 acres of unincorporated land completely encompassed by the City, also known as county enclaves. These three enclaves are currently subject to county land use provisions and all other regulations including emergency services. To facilitate greater efficiency of infrastructure and services and to encourage desirable infill development, enclaves shall be avoided whenever possible. Existing enclaves and those created by annexation shall be incorporated within a reasonable timeframe.

In addition to efficiency and compatibility obstacles between the unincorporated county and the City of Cortez, water rights and distribution systems pose further obstacles to annexation and corporate limit expansion. It will be imperative in the coming decades to work with Montezuma Water Company in order to make the growth of the City limits more feasible.

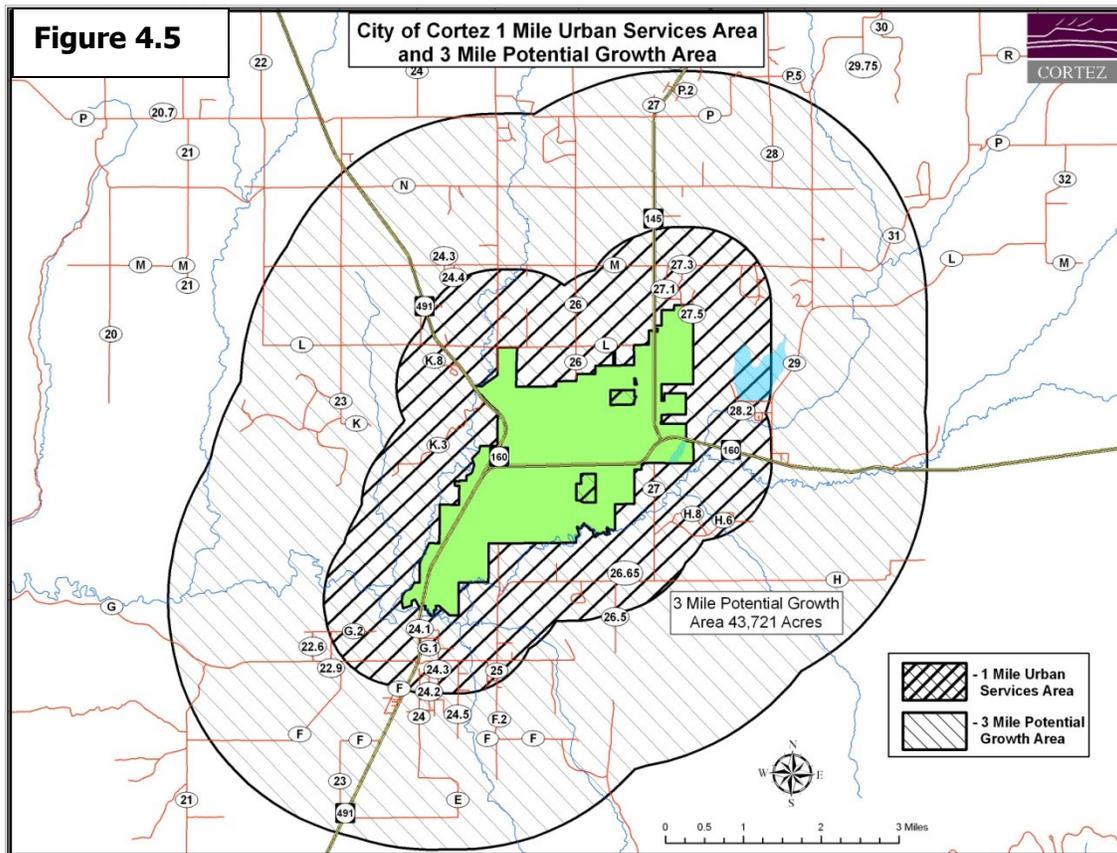
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## ONE-MILE URBAN SERVICES AREA PLAN

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Many efforts have been made for the City of Cortez and Montezuma County to establish an "Urban Services Area" around the City to provide for future planning as the City grows. This Urban

Services Area would include portions of unincorporated Montezuma County up to one mile from the corporate limits of the City. An Urban Service Area could be established through an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the City and the County. The intent of this agreement would be to establish uniform standards for growth around the City, especially in areas that may be annexed in the future. As stated before, the City is seeing increased growth along our urban fringe. It would be beneficial to establish an IGA with Montezuma County to ensure compatible development as our community grows. A gradual transition from urban densities to rural uses is in the best interest of all parties involved, providing for the adequate provision of services, infrastructure, and facilities at a reduced cost to residents of both the City and the County.

In addition to the importance of joint planning on the urban fringe between the City and County, it is also of great importance to establish policies that promote infill development within the corporate limits of the City of Cortez. There are political and jurisdictional constraints to the geographic expansion of the City in many areas, so policies that favor infill will have a direct impact on growth along the periphery of the City.

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**THREE-MILE POTENTIAL GROWTH AREA PLAN**

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The City of Cortez and Montezuma County have established a three-mile area around the corporate limits of the City in order to provide for long-range planning efforts. Specifically, the three-mile plan is intended to be used in conjunction with the Master Streets Plan to ensure that City streets line up with roads in the County. This provides an element of uniformity and continuity between county development and the City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code.

To enhance the Three-Mile Potential Growth Plan as a land use planning tool, the City and County shall continue to work together to explore the best uses of land in the urban fringes. While the One Mile Urban Service Plan can provide for continuous service for areas likely to be annexed into the City of Cortez, the Three Mile Plan can begin to facilitate a desirable land use buffer around the City. Possibilities for joint planning in transition areas can be explored to establish policies and agreements that protect the rights and values of City and County residents alike.

**ACTION PROGRAM**

<b>LAND USE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES</b>	
<b>Goal 5.1:</b>	<b>Establish land use patterns within the City to provide coordinated and responsible growth.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To coordinate timing, location, and intensity of growth with the provision of adequate public facilities.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Land and Business Owners, Education Providers, Developers</i>
Policy 5.1.1:	Utilize appropriate development to protect and enhance the quality of interface areas between residential neighborhoods and business/retail areas.
Policy 5.1.2:	Enhance land use compatibility by requiring adequate buffers to separate incompatible uses and developing appropriate design standards to minimize potential impacts.
Policy 5.1.3:	Encourage development in areas adjacent to adequate public facilities, such as water, sewer, schools, healthcare facilities, and police protection.
Policy 5.1.4:	Consider zoning regulations for the Central Business District that promote retail uses on the ground floor.

Policy 5.1.5:	Evaluate zoning surrounding schools and consider zoning regulations that ensure the compatibility of land uses located adjacent to schools.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To coordinate with all City departments, utility providers, and other agencies to ensure adequate infrastructure in new developments and public improvements projects.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>General Services Dept., Public Works Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Cortez Volunteer Fire Dept., Police Dept., Developers, Empire Electric Association, Cortez Sanitation District, Other Public and Private utility and service providers</i>
Policy 5.1.6:	Continually improve an appropriate review process for land use applications that checks conformance with all contemporaneous city planning documents especially prior to subdivision and annexation approval.
Policy 5.1.7:	Require adequate infrastructure for all new developments.
Policy 5.1.8:	Ensure that infrastructure for all services, including conduit for fiber optics and other developing services, are included at the appropriate stage of capital improvements and development projects.
Policy 5.1.9:	Exchange information about capital improvements projects with other service providers to help coordinate timing and capacity for proposed developments in or adjacent to the corporate limits to aid in meeting the demands of new development.
Policy 5.1.10:	Evaluate development requirements so they are proportional to project impacts.
Policy 5.1.11:	Expand the corporate limits when adequate urban facilities and services can be extended in a cost effective manner if there is not an adequate supply of land within the corporate limits to accommodate a proposed residential, commercial, or industrial development that will benefit the city.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To preserve Cortez's small-town rural character and high quality of life conditions so that rural character and quality of life are maintained as community values.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., Montezuma County, Montezuma Land Conservancy, Land and Resource Experts</i>
Policy 5.1.12:	Utilize land use flexibility, outstanding city services, and other incentive programs to promote infill opportunities within the corporate limits to preserve open space surrounding the City while making the best use of land within the city.
Policy 5.1.13:	Consider "greenbelts" and "greenways" between existing and new areas within the corporate limits as forms of open space for area residents, and determine the responsibility for maintenance of these areas in advance.
Policy 5.1.14:	Identify Critical Lands that shall be conserved within the city limits and the One Mile Urban Services Area and create a Critical Lands Plan that addresses conservation and mitigation requirements.
Policy 5.1.15:	Coordinate with other governmental and non-governmental organizations to facilitate the conservation of critical lands, and consider more dense development of non-critical lands in appropriate locations.
Policy 5.1.16:	Provide incentives and explore mechanisms for protection/enhancement of critical lands within and adjacent to corporate limits.
Policy 5.1.17:	Consider establishing an incentive program to maintain the best agricultural lands around the City in conjunction with the appropriate governmental and non-governmental organizations.
Policy 5.1.18:	Use capital investments and funding strategies to direct growth to areas that can accommodate growth with a minimal impact on natural resources.
Policy 5.1.19:	Preserve and maintain areas that have historical significance, environmental sensitivity, natural beauty, and cultural value by establishing mitigation requirements for property of significant environmental or cultural value.

<b>Goal 5.2:</b>	<b>Continually improve the sustainability and efficiency of new and existing Land Uses.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>Take a position on local, regional, and global environmental issues and shape policies accordingly.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>City Council, General Services Dept., Local Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 5.2.1:	The City of Cortez will take a position on regional environmental issues when appropriate.
Policy 5.2.2:	Exceed minimum design standards for municipal facilities to provide examples of good building and site designs including green building practices.
Policy 5.2.3:	Support programs that assist with the sustainability of structures in Cortez.
Policy 5.2.4:	Evaluate the benefits of green building practices and consider incentives, especially technical and professional assistance, to developers that utilize green-building practices that in the long-term reduce utility costs.
Policy 5.2.5:	Consider adopting sustainable construction standards, beyond International Building Code Energy Efficiency Standards, including use of high-grade construction materials and "green" construction techniques that reduce waste during production and that improve the long term efficiency of the structure.
<b>Goal 5.3:</b>	<b>Protect and enhance the visual aesthetics of the community, including mountain views and visual corridors.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>Preserve visual corridors that are available throughout the city.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Montezuma County, Planning and Zoning Division, GIS Coordinators, Developers, Landowners, Community Clubs and Organizations</i>
Policy 5.3.1:	Identify critical visual corridors throughout the city and along access routes within the Three Mile Potential Growth Area. Work with developers to ensure the preservation or enhancement of these corridors.
Policy 5.3.2:	Use available and appropriate tools to acquire open space that creates or preserves visual corridors.
Policy 5.3.3:	Promote pocket natural areas that preserve visual corridors in new developments when appropriate, and determine the responsibility for maintenance of these areas in advance.
Policy 5.3.4:	Pursue incentive programs that do not create a burden on the city, and Agreements with property owners adjacent to local highways for existing land uses and land uses beyond the city's jurisdiction, to enhance landscaping, visual aesthetics, and preserve mountain views.
Policy 5.3.5:	Work with the appropriate agencies to establish local standards to maintain and enhance views of Mesa Verde, the Ute Mountain, and La Plata mountains. Participate in regional projects that affect these visual assets.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To preserve existing mountain views and promote attractive development/redevelopment along transportation corridors.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Community clubs and orgs., Public Works Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Police Dept., Parks and Rec. Dept., Montezuma County, Developers, Landowners, CDOT,</i>
Policy 5.3.6:	Actively pursue enhanced landscaping and welcome signs at the entryways to the community.
Policy 5.3.7:	Implement appropriate site development standards for development along transportation corridors and establish programs to assist existing businesses in improving site design along transportation corridors.
Policy 5.3.8:	Provide information to landowners along transportation corridors and throughout the community concerning the financial benefits of property enhancement and visual aesthetics.

Policy 5.3.9:	Actively participate in State opportunities for arterial roadway improvement projects, especially supporting landscaping, pedestrian corridors, and other highway improvements efforts.
Policy 5.3.10:	Examine and develop review criteria to enhance the appearance and safety of the city's arterial roadways.
Policy 5.3.11:	Establish appropriate buffer and highway design requirements within the city limits that especially protect mountain views from the highway.
Policy 5.3.12:	Consider increased landscaping for commercial developments along highway corridors.
Policy 5.3.13:	Pursue any opportunities to enhance aesthetics, especially through landscaping, along highway corridors.
Policy 5.3.14:	Establish design standards for innovative site design to reduce the visual impacts of "big-box" retailers and strip developments.
Policy 5.3.15:	Examine sign policies and consider limiting advertising signs (billboards) along the city's transportation corridors to enhance vehicular safety and reduce visual blight.
Policy 5.3.16:	Explore opportunities to develop alternative community informational and advertising displays at entryways and other central locations.
Policy 5.3.17:	Keep current, publicize, and enforce Property Maintenance Standards within the City of Cortez.
<b>Goal 5.4:</b>	<b>Expand infill and rehabilitation opportunities within the city limits.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To facilitate opportunities for infill development within the city.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>General Services Dept., Public Works Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Developers, Landowners, Realtors</i>
Policy 5.4.1:	Encourage infill development on vacant land which will complement the established character of the neighborhood.
Policy 5.4.2:	Strongly encourage new development proposed on surplus, vacant, or underutilized land throughout the city when the development is appropriate for the area and complies with the Land Use Code.
Policy 5.4.3:	Inventory vacant and condemned properties to ensure that the zoning of these premier infill sites is compatible with the prevailing land uses in the area.
Policy 5.4.4:	Consider incentives for appropriate infill projects, such as density standards, technical and professional assistance, and relief from certain financial obligations to the city, when an infill project fits with the city's desired land use directions.
Policy 5.4.5:	Consider techniques and incentives to facilitate development in existing, unoccupied structures while discouraging new construction when a potentially adequate structure is available.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>Facilitate opportunities for rehabilitation of properties within the city.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Building Inspector, GIS Coordinator, Engineer, Developers, Landowners, Realtors</i>
Policy 5.4.6:	Strongly encourage rehabilitation or redevelopment of empty, existing structures that create "gaps" in the urban fabric, and which detract from the character of a commercial or residential street.
Policy 5.4.7:	Survey the city for the age and level of deterioration of existing neighborhoods in order to target areas in the greatest need of rehabilitation.
Policy 5.4.8:	Develop incentives and appropriate zoning regulations and development standards within the Land Use Code to promote rehabilitation of existing structures.
Policy 5.4.9:	Pursue State and Federal funding for rehabilitation projects.
<b>See the Housing Chapter for policies on the development of infill properties and rehabilitation projects for meeting housing goals.</b>	

<b>Goal 5.5:</b>	<i>Provide joint planning opportunities between the City of Cortez and Montezuma County.</i>
<b>Short-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To develop a process for communication between the Cortez Planning and Zoning Commission and the Montezuma County Planning Commission to identify issues that affect both entities and pursue solutions together.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>All City and County Departments</i>
Policy 5.5.1:	Consider regular meetings to discuss issues that affect both governing bodies.
Policy 5.5.2:	Participate in planning activities of the county when possible.
Policy 5.5.3:	Establish a line of communication between city and county planning departments to secure a transfer of ideas.
<b>Mid-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To establish compatible land use patterns in the One-Mile Urban Services Area.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Montezuma County, Public Works Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Landowners Adjacent to City Limits, Montezuma Land Conservancy, Local Land and Resource Experts, Parks and Rec. Dept., Utility Providers</i>
Policy 5.5.4:	Pursue an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) that will provide guidelines for development within one mile of the corporate limits, known as the Urban Services Area.
Policy 5.5.5:	Pursue an Urban Services Area agreement with Montezuma County and other service providers that designates desired land uses within the One-Mile Urban Services Area to establish compatible and efficient land uses and services for all parties.
Policy 5.5.6:	Before development standards are in place for the Future Growth area, determine impacts of county growth and provide incentives for meeting City standards for development of property contiguous with the City.
Policy 5.5.7:	Prioritize areas for annexation adjacent to the corporate limits to ensure compatible growth.
Policy 5.5.8:	Continue pre-annexation agreements with property owners that purchase city water taps, and establish pre-annexation agreements when property owners purchase other city services.
Policy 5.5.9:	Discourage “flagpole” annexations when they would result in increased costs for the City.
<b>Long-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To seek appropriate and responsible growth within the Three-Mile Potential Growth Area.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Montezuma County, Public Works Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Montezuma Land Conservancy, Local Land and Resource Experts</i>
Policy 5.5.10:	Continue to evaluate new development within the Three-Mile Potential Growth Area to evaluate compliance with the Master Thoroughfares Plan.
Policy 5.5.11:	Create and maintain a Potential Growth Area Map in conjunction with Montezuma County to identify desired land uses within the Three-Mile Potential Growth Area. Evaluate development that is inconsistent with desired land uses in terms of available transportation facilities and infrastructure.
Policy 5.5.12:	Continue to evaluate growth within the City and County in terms of urban sprawl, and consider developing a uniform tracking database to identify lands within the Three-Mile Urban Influence Area that will be impacted by development in the future.
Policy 5.5.13:	Work to establish effective land use standards within the City’s Potential Growth Area.

Policy 5.5.14:	Establish collaborative communication and work toward agreements with local service providers to cooperate in areas of possible city expansion. Coordinate with other governmental and non-governmental organizations to identify critical natural, cultural, or agricultural lands within the City and the Potential Future Growth Area that shall be conserved, and encourage relatively dense development of non-critical lands.
Policy 5.5.15:	Provide incentives and explore mechanisms for protection/enhancement of critical lands within and adjacent to corporate limits.
Policy 5.5.16:	Promote conservation easements in conjunction with organizations, such as the Montezuma Land Conservancy, to maintain open space within the Three-Mile Potential Growth Area.
Policy 5.5.17:	Advocate for "right-to-farm" legislation that preserves the local heritage of the community while providing open space in the Three-Mile Potential Growth Area.
Policy 5.5.18:	Support county efforts to promote clustered developments that preserve open space.
Policy 5.5.19:	Adopt regulations that prohibit the provision of City services to proposed annexations not consistent with land use directions established within the One-Mile Urban Services Area or other with other City land use planning documents.
<b>Goal 5.6:</b>	<b>Maximize economic opportunities within Cortez without sacrificing quality of life.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To provide adequate land, facilities, and infrastructure for Commercial and Industrial development.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Economic Development Organizations, Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Developers, Landowners, Realtors</i>
Policy 5.6.1:	Consider developing commercial and industrial design standards that are attractive, practical, and financially feasible.
Policy 5.6.2:	Review the need for additional zones to accommodate new types of development such as light industry and dense residential development.
Policy 5.6.3:	Locate industrial or light industrial enterprises adjacent to each other or in locations that minimize the potential impacts of manufacturing, distributing, or producing goods.
Policy 5.6.4:	Facilitate businesses with minimal impacts to be located in the mixed use neighborhoods south of First Street and between North and Empire Streets to foster economic development.
Policy 5.6.5:	Require ample buffer areas between industrial areas and non-industrial land uses.
Policy 5.6.6:	Develop landscaping or other forms of mitigation standards for compatibility of commercial businesses located in or near areas of residential character.
Policy 5.6.7:	Maintain land use policies so that businesses located adjacent to residential areas are compatible with the neighborhood in which they are located.
Policy 5.6.8:	Support the location and development of additional "business park" land to increase economic development opportunities. Levels of support shall be based on location and perceived benefits of additional developments.
Policy 5.6.9:	Establish standards for "big box" retail centers which minimize visual and traffic impacts through site design review, façade requirements, and signage requirements.
Policy 5.6.10:	Develop land use requirements for full disclosure of products and byproducts at the initial application stage of commercial and industrial developments.
Policy 5.6.11:	Identify if there are desirable locations for commercial and industrial development within the One Mile Urban Services Area.

*“Home is where the house is.”*

*-Anonymous*

**OVERVIEW**

Whether renting or owning, housing provides shelter for members of the community, fulfilling a fundamental need for individuals and families. The housing situation in a community is integrated with every other aspect of this Plan and with a healthy community. Housing issues influence land use and density decisions, shape infrastructure and community service needs, determine transportation demand, and even drive employment strategies for Cortez residents. Housing is also important because it forms the basis of many types of social relations. A housing situation can affect who one's friends are, quality of education, job choice, recreational opportunities, and many other quality of life issues. The types of housing provided and the cost of that housing will influence whether the City can attract families, maintain neighborhood diversity, and provide shelter for all. The availability of housing for people with various housing needs plays a role in diversifying the work force, thereby enhancing local economic development and the character of the community.

Data used for the completion of this assessment included U.S. Census Bureau Statistics of Population, Region 9 Economic Development Council's 2008 Southwest Colorado Index, Data from Montezuma County Housing Authority, and interviews with local realtors and builders regarding the housing market. The ratio of housing costs to household income affects the community, as does the physical condition of the housing stock. Furthermore, the availability of community facilities and services plays a role in the pattern of residential development. Existing housing conditions and trends have been studied in regard to general characteristics, value and cost, market trends, and construction trends. **Table 5.1** shows a breakdown of the 2000 housing stock, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau and the City of Cortez year end reports.

**Housing Units**

As reported by the 2000 U.S. Census, a total of **3,508** housing units were located in the City of Cortez, a seventeen percent (**17%**) increase from 1990. Ninety-one percent (**91%**) of the units were occupied. Sixty-five percent (**65%**) of the occupied units were owner-occupied. Those units characterized as single unit, detached and attached, accounted for sixty-four percent (**64%**) of the housing stock and three percent (**3%**) consisted of 10 or more units (multi-family buildings). Including homes built through 2007, only twenty-two percent (**22%**) of the total housing units were constructed after 1990. Approximately 43% of the housing units in the City of Cortez were built before 1970. The Year End Reports from 2000 through 2007 indicate that there are 297 new housing units since the 2000 census bringing the total number of housing units to 3,805.

**Table 5.1:  
Cortez Housing Stock, 2000 U.S. Census Bureau  
(with some actual figure through 2007 from the  
City of Cortez yearly reports)**

<b>Total Housing Units</b>	3,508	<b>3,805 in 2006</b>
Occupied Housing Units	<b>3,209</b>	
Owner-occupied	<b>64.7%</b>	
Renter-occupied	<b>35.3%</b>	
Vacant Housing Units	299	<b>≈222 in 2006</b>
Homeowner Vacancy	<b>2.4%</b>	
Rental Vacancy	<b>10.5%</b>	
<b>Type</b>		
Single-family, attached and detached	<b>64%</b>	
2-4 units	<b>10%</b>	
5+ units	<b>6.3%</b>	
Mobile Home	<b>19.5%</b>	
<b>Housing Units by Year of Construction</b>		
2000-2007	<b>297/ 7.8%</b>	
1990-1999	<b>536/ 14.1%</b>	
1980-1989	<b>592/ 15.6%</b>	
1970-1979	<b>743/ 19.5%</b>	
1960-1969	<b>333/ 8.7%</b>	
1940-1959	<b>996/ 26.2%</b>	
<b>1939 or earlier</b>	<b>308/ 8.1%</b>	

**Recent Residential Development**

Since the 2000 census, the number of subdivisions has increased both with infill development of larger properties and lots within the City, and with newly annexed properties. Some developers have sought higher density development options, such as multi-family housing, due to increasing costs of land and infrastructure. While innovative housing options have the potential for improving the housing stock in the City, sometimes these site designs encounter obstacles from the land use requirements. The Land Use Code needs to be modified to create flexibility in the redevelopment of infill properties.

Cortez has seen steady residential development in the beginning of the twenty-first century. Some of the larger subdivision developments on the south side of town include Sedona Estates, Southern Bluffs, and the Rogers and Southpointe Subdivisions. The Rodeo Planned Unit Development in the center of town, Fairway View Estates Subdivision, adjacent to the Golf Course, and Brandon’s Gate Subdivision on the north side of town, south of Country Road L, were under construction in 2007, but while 110 new residential lots were created, only 41 new residential units were permitted in 2007. Similarly in 2006, 236 new residential lots were created, and only 66 units were built. This trend of more lots being created than new housing units constructed, that has been ongoing in the first part of the twenty-first century, indicates that there are still a large number of residential lots available for development in the City, without the necessity of annexation or further subdivision for several years. **Table 5.2** shows the number of building permits issued for new housing from 2000 through 2007. While housing construction was high in 2005 and 2006, the number of permits issued for new housing in 2007 was below the previous two years. At the end of 2007, the housing market in Cortez was stable, but an unstable national economy in the beginning of 2008, may have a negative impact on the housing market in Cortez.

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Units</b>
<b>2000 (actual)</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>2001 (actual)</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>2002 (actual)</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>2003 (actual)</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>2004 (actual)</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>2005 (actual)</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>2006 (actual)</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>2007 (actual)</b>	<b>41</b>



The existing housing is an important foundation for determining the future housing needs, but in addition to the types of housing, it is fundamentally important to consider the values and costs of the housing available in the City of Cortez. Housing values in the City increased steadily throughout the twentieth century. Close to 57% of owner-occupied housing units, as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census, were characterized by housing values of less than \$100,000. The remaining percentage of owner-occupied units reported a value of over \$100,000 with only 3% reporting values of \$200,000 or greater. Since the 2000 census, sales prices have increased dramatically within the City, from an average of \$84,000 in 1999 to \$165,000 in 2007, representing a 94% increase in eight years. The increase in housing prices has increased the population of City residents overburdened or unable to buy a place to live from approximately 33% in 1999 to 47% in 2006 according to the Draft Region 9 Economic Development District 2008 Southwest Colorado Index, and observation indicates that this number may be even higher in 2008.

Housing ownership has become increasingly difficult to achieve but vacancy rates have decreased, indicating that the percentage of renters has increased from the 2000 figure of 35%. While the number of renters has increased, so have rental rates. The median gross rent value in 2000 was \$464

per month, and the median monthly mortgage payment was \$743. Estimates from property managers show the rental rates in Cortez as provided by the 2008 Southwest Colorado Index in **Table 5.3**, but anecdotal evidence from rental advertisements suggests that rental rates are often \$100 to \$200 higher in the beginning of 2008 than the 2006 Index figures indicates.

<b>Table 5.3 2006 Cortez Rental Rate Estimates</b> (Source: Draft Region 9 Economic Develop District 2008 Southwest Colorado Index)		
Units	Rent	Minimum Income for Affordability (<30% household income)
1 bedroom	\$450	\$18,000
2 bedroom	\$700	\$28,000
3 bedroom	\$800	\$32,000

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### UNDERSTANDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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The need for affordable housing has become a concern of national proportion, as land and housing prices have increased, while wages have remained relatively stagnant. The need for such housing in Cortez is critical, as many residents are unable to afford housing at current market rates earning the current prevailing wage rates. Unfortunately affordable housing is a term that sometimes carries with it a negative connotation. Community opposition is often based on the perception that affordable housing is aesthetically unappealing, lowers property values, and increases traffic congestion, crime and crowding of public facilities. It has brought out the best of people to public hearings in order to object to new "affordable" housing developments. Unfortunately, many people are just unfamiliar with the term, and are not aware that they themselves might benefit from affordable housing.

To better understand the term affordable housing, the following information has been provided by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development:

*The generally accepted definition of "affordability" is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. An estimated 12 million renter and homeowner households now pay more than 50 percent of their annual incomes for housing, and a family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford the local fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the United States. The lack of affordable housing is a significant hardship for low-income households preventing them from meeting their other basic needs, such as nutrition and healthcare, or saving for their future and that of their families.*

With this information in mind, the reasons for focusing on affordable housing become apparent. People that need affordable housing are not simply the unemployed and disabled, but rather the school teachers, the police officers, and grocery store clerks, those people that could be your next door neighbor. These are people that work hard for an honest wage and deserve to have the same access to housing as those in higher income brackets. And as we look at the demographic information provided in Chapter Three, it is apparent that many Cortez families fall into the bracket of low to moderate income levels. Thus, it becomes essential to analyze the needs of Cortez residents and pursue opportunities to meet the communities housing needs.

Housing owner costs and gross rent (as a percentage of household income) are indicators of housing affordability. Based on the commonly accepted standard of thirty percent (30%) or less of yearly household income, in 1999, seventy-five percent (75%) of owners and fifty-six percent (56%) of renters within Cortez reported housing costs of less than thirty percent of their household income. While prices have risen and wages have stayed fairly steady, in 2008, the percentage of overburdened owners and renters likely exceeds 25% and 44% respectively. Local real estate organizations have noted that demand exists for typical quality starter homes for less than \$150,000. Starter homes in demand should be fairly new and in good condition for accessibility to most loan programs. New homes are rarely available in the City at these starter rates as the cost has increased to typically over \$200,000, unaffordable to many first time homebuyers in Cortez. Those homes that fall within the starter price range are typically aged and require immediate maintenance, but there is a good stock of affordably priced older homes that need some work, creating an amazing opportunity for rehabilitation of housing in the City.




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**COMMUNITY HOUSING IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY**

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With affordability the central focus of housing issues, several key issues should be addressed if the City is to provide for the rental and home ownership needs of all residents. These issues include providing adequate housing for residents with special housing needs, workforce housing, and the need to encourage affordable housing development in suitable, well-served areas.

It would benefit the City of Cortez to conduct a Community Housing Inventory Study. Such a study should address housing needs and market conditions, a strategy for addressing needs and conditions, available resources, and an investment plan with measurable goals. A range of strategies to improve the affordability of housing exist, including rental rehabilitation programs, progressive housing codes, down payment assistance programs, financial assistance to prevent and reduce evictions, supportive housing for populations with special housing needs, transitional housing, and neighborhood revitalization. The plan should also not overlook strategies for increasing wages. An implementation process can be initiated and include a Comprehensive Housing Improvement Plan (CHIP).

**ACTION PROGRAM**

<b>HOUSING DRAFT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES</b>	
<b>Goal 6.1:</b>	<b>Develop and maintain safe, desirable, and quality housing for all current and future residents, with emphasis on affordability/attainability and revitalization of neighborhoods.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>Encourage expansion of the housing supply within the City of Cortez to meet the needs of current and future residents.</b>

<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Developers, State Division of Housing, , State-approved housing consultants, Colorado Housing Inc., Montezuma County Housing Authority, Planning Division, Building Division, City and Other Public Service Providers</i>
Policy 6.1.1:	Pursue a needs assessment to determine the current and projected housing needs of the community and if adequate housing is available for current and future residents.
Policy 6.1.2:	Pursue policies to encourage a sufficient supply of land to be planned and zoned to enable the City to meet its long-term housing needs.
Policy 6.1.3:	Provide suitable regulatory, tax, and financing objectives to meet housing production goals.
Policy 6.1.4:	Strongly encourage the development of new housing on surplus, vacant, and underutilized land throughout the City, with appropriate incentives, zoning regulations, and development standards.
Policy 6.1.5:	Encourage the private sector to provide new housing in locations consistent with Land Use Code and Comprehensive Plan policies and objectives.
Policy 6.1.6:	Keep building codes current, but assess the impacts that a change of building code will have on the affordability of housing prior to adopting new building codes.
<b>Goal 6.2:</b>	<b>Continually improve the quality of existing houses and neighborhoods.</b>
<b>Mid-Term Objective:</b>	<b>To develop Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Programs.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Homeowners, Developers, Landlords, All City Departments, Housing Solutions for the Southwest, Building Division</i>
Policy 6.2.1:	Make the restoration and occupancy of vacant housing units a priority.
Policy 6.2.2:	Utilize State and Federal funding to target neighborhoods in Cortez that are eligible for government programs that provide for infrastructure improvements, parkland and housing rehabilitation.
Policy 6.2.3:	Establish neighborhood revitalization and clean up programs for healthier neighborhoods, utilizing existing organizations and revisit previous revitalization projects whenever possible.
Policy 6.2.4:	Consider supporting programs to rehabilitate existing housing, including upgrading fixtures and appliances, replacing single pane windows with double pane windows, re-insulating, weatherizing, or performing structural upgrades.
Policy 6.2.5:	Consider an incentive program for housing rehabilitation which could include reducing prices for tap or inspection fees.
Policy 6.2.6:	Consider code revisions that will expand housing options for non-conforming lots.
<b>Long –Term Objective:</b>	<b>Develop rental unit guidelines that improve the safety and efficiency of housing units to bring deteriorating and substandard rental housing to some of the same standards as new housing.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning Division, Building Division, Landlords, Renters, Developers, Police Dept., Cross Connection Technician</i>
Policy 6.2.7:	Consider rental guidelines within city limits that ensure rental units are safe, efficient, and affordable.
Policy 6.2.8:	Consider supporting a system that certifies the ability to rent out a housing unit in the City of Cortez.
Policy 6.2.9:	Consider a rental program where each unit must meet standard minimum requirements, and housing that is not condemned but is substandard, should be required to improve the quality of the housing unit by a certain degree each year until the unit meets the minimum standard.
Policy 6.2.10:	Consider establishing penalties for violation of rental standards regulations.
Policy 6.2.11:	Consider cross-connection and other physical inspections to certify rental units.
<b>Goal 6.3:</b>	<b>Ensure that new housing is efficient, safe, compatible, and of sustainable building design.</b>

<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To promote housing that is both safe and compatible with surrounding land uses.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Building Division, Planning Division, Montezuma County, CSU Ag Extension, Educational Providers, Rehabilitation and Renovation Programs, Housing Solutions for the Southwest, Organizations, and Businesses, Cross Connection Technician, Property Owners, Home Owners</i>
<b>Policy 6.3.1:</b>	Continually review construction standards and technologies that may increase affordability without sacrificing safety.
<b>Policy 6.3.2:</b>	Encourage development of schools adjacent to residential areas to ensure safety and reduce costs of infrastructure.
<b>Policy 6.3.3:</b>	Promote programs, education, and testing for indoor air quality and other potential hazards in the home.
<b>Policy 6.3.4:</b>	Consider incentive and certification programs to promote the rehabilitation of aging housing units that may pose unsafe conditions if unattended.
<b>Policy 6.3.5:</b>	Maintain the cross-connection program that provides for the safety of household water.
<b>Policy 6.3.6:</b>	Establish compatibility criteria for contiguous housing sizes, styles, and mixed income levels for new structures in existing and new subdivisions to protect land and home owners in the neighborhood.
<b>Policy 6.3.7:</b>	Protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible land uses through buffering, landscaping, or transition zones.
<b>Policy 6.3.8:</b>	Work with Montezuma County to establish housing standards adjacent to the corporate limits to protect adjacent property and home owners from incompatible development.
<b>Policy 6.3.9:</b>	Continue to identify appropriate locations for manufactured housing developments that will provide a balanced distribution throughout the City without a substantial impact on neighboring property values.
<b>Policy 6.3.10:</b>	Consider regulations that allow for individual manufactured homes to be located in appropriate locations of other residential zones.
<b>Policy 6.3.11:</b>	Discourage high-density manufactured housing developments in areas adjacent to low-density housing.
<b>Policy 6.3.12:</b>	Promote respect for the design integrity of adjacent properties and surrounding neighborhood.
<b>Long-Term Objective:</b>	<b>To reduce the non-renewable energy use of households in Cortez by at least 10% of 2008 levels by 2020.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>EEA, Building Division, Developers, Residents, Property Owners, Business Owners, Community Clubs and Orgs., Building Supply Businesses</i>
<b>Policy 6.3.13:</b>	Work with Empire Electric and other organizations to conduct an energy assessment to determine the current carbon footprint of households in Cortez and to examine the best methods of improving efficiency, reducing energy consumption, and changing energy sources.
<b>Policy 6.3.14:</b>	Consider supporting programs that assist with the sustainability of housing units in Cortez.
<b>Policy 6.3.15:</b>	Evaluate the benefits of green building practices and consider incentives, especially technical and professional assistance, to developers that utilize green-building practices that in the long-term reduce utility costs for homeowners or renters.
<b>Policy 6.3.16:</b>	Consider adopting sustainable construction standards, beyond International Building Code Energy Efficiency Standards, including use of high-grade construction materials and "green" construction techniques that reduce waste during production and that improve the long term efficiency of the structure.
<b>Policy 6.3.17:</b>	Consider developing incentives for new housing that takes advantage of passive solar orientation and design.

<b><i>See the natural environment chapter for additional sustainability policies.</i></b>	
<b><i>Ongoing Objective:</i></b>	<b><i>To promote the development of housing that can be most readily serve by existing public and private infrastructure and services.</i></b>
<b><i>Key Participants:</i></b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Planning Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., Local Service and Utility Providers, Developers, Montezuma County</i>
<b>Policy 6.3.18:</b>	Keep development standards and fees current to ensure that the impacts of new housing developments on neighborhood services, schools, job training, child care, parks, health care facilities, transportation, emergency response capacity, etc., are appropriately mitigated by the developer so that adequate infrastructure and services are maintained for existing and incoming residents alike.
<b>Policy 6.3.19:</b>	Promote new residential areas that are located near schools, neighborhood commercial areas, and public park land.
<b>Policy 6.3.20:</b>	Work with Montezuma County to determine appropriate densities outside of the City's utility service area, and other municipal urban service areas, to decrease the costs of infrastructure.
<b>Policy 6.3.21:</b>	Encourage developers to annex land for proposed housing developments to provide more-affordable utility services when it is financially feasible for the City.
<b>Policy 6.3.22:</b>	Promote the inclusion of open space and recreational amenities within appropriate housing developments and ensure that these amenities are available to residents of all new housing developments.
<b>Goal 6.4:</b>	<b>Expand opportunities for quality housing that is affordable and meets the needs of all residents.</b>
<b><i>Ongoing Objective:</i></b>	<b><i>To improve the housing stock to improve the quality and affordability of home ownership in Cortez.</i></b>
<b><i>Key Participants:</i></b>	<i>Planning Division, Developers, Montezuma County Housing Authority, Housing Solutions for the Southwest, Colorado Housing Inc, La Plata Regional Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, Realtors</i>
<b>Policy 6.4.1:</b>	Evaluate housing needs that are created by new developments and consider an affordable housing inclusion policy for new development with requirements for a percentage of affordable housing or cash in lieu of housing to be invested in affordable housing programs.
<b>Policy 6.4.2:</b>	Evaluate the possibility of a City tax to provide opportunities for affordable infill housing, to bank land for affordable housing projects.
<b>Policy 6.4.3:</b>	Promote the tax incentives available from state and federal programs which can aid in providing affordable housing.
<b>Policy 6.4.4:</b>	Before affordable housing requirements are in place, consider offering technical and professional assistance to developers that provide affordable housing opportunities within new subdivisions.
<b>Policy 6.4.5:</b>	Consider supporting local programs already working to expand affordable housing opportunities.
<b>Policy 6.4.6:</b>	Provide a larger number of housing units for families with children by supporting the Montezuma County Housing Authority and other organizations and individuals who provide new single family homes, duplexes, and multi-family housing opportunities at prices below 30% of the mean household income.
<b>Policy 6.4.7:</b>	In addition to programs targeting persons of the very low and extremely low incomes, promote programs that meet the housing needs of teachers, police officers, nurses, city workers, and others in professions or trades with wages insufficient to afford market-rate rental housing or home ownership in the City.
<b>Policy 6.4.8:</b>	Provide information to residents about down payment assistance programs and promote the Montezuma County Housing Authority's First Time Homebuyer Program.

<b>Policy 6.4.9:</b>	Modify development guidelines to facilitate “new urbanism” techniques, to reduce housing costs and other impacts of development when appropriate.
<b>Policy 6.4.10:</b>	Consider updating construction and maintenance standards for the development of new mobile home parks. These standards should include the age and condition of mobile homes contained in the parks, landscaping, yard maintenance, and storage.
<b>Policy 6.4.11:</b>	Consider maintenance standards specific to existing mobile home parks.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To improve the rental housing stock in Cortez to make quality rental housing affordable to those residents who cannot afford to own a home.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning Division, Building Division, Developers, Montezuma County Housing Authority, La Plata Regional Housing Authority, Housing Solutions for the Southwest</i>
<b>Policy 6.4.12:</b>	Provide support for local housing initiatives that increase the supply of affordable rental housing to low and very-low income families.
<b>Policy 6.4.13:</b>	Consider supporting programs that provide opportunities for low income, and very low income residents to achieve self-sufficiency and upward mobility in housing options.
<b>Policy 6.4.14:</b>	In addition to programs targeting persons of the very low and extremely low incomes, promote programs that meet the housing needs of teachers, police officers, nurses, city workers, and others in professions or trades with wages insufficient to afford market-rate rental housing or home ownership in the City.
<b>Policy 6.4.15:</b>	Promote a mix of housing opportunities that includes boarding house, other cost sharing housing opportunities, and programs such as assistance finding compatible housemates.
<b>Policy 6.4.16:</b>	Consider a program to certify rental units for occupancy that includes requirements such as minimum standards and upgrades to structural stability, design, and efficiency.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To provide appropriate affordable and attainable housing for residents with special needs.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning Division, Police Dept., Developers, Assisted Living Facilities, “The Bridge” Emergency Shelter, Community Connection Inc., Montezuma County Housing Authority, Housing Solutions for the Southwest, Colorado Housing Inc., La Plata Regional Housing Authority</i>
<b>Policy 6.4.17:</b>	Promote the development of assisted living and skilled nursing facilities, especially close to shopping, recreation, and healthcare facilities.
<b>Policy 6.4.18:</b>	Promote an increase in supply, security, and affordability of housing for the elderly.
<b>Policy 6.4.19:</b>	Promote Emergency Shelter Programs for populations that cannot achieve their own housing needs, especially year round housing and programs that address special needs.
<b>Policy 6.4.20:</b>	Promote organizations and programs, such as transitional housing, that assist both individuals and families in reaching self reliance.
<b>Policy 6.4.21:</b>	Promote community programs and organizations that make housing possible for developmentally disabled individuals.
<b>Policy 6.4.22:</b>	Consider requirements for new, large housing developments to provide a percentage of ADA accessible units.
<b>Policy 6.4.23:</b>	Consider supporting programs that provide assistance to retrofit housing for special needs.
<b>Policy 6.4.24:</b>	Consider a program that provides assistance to developers who provide ADA accessible housing and other housing that meets special needs above and beyond requirements.
<b>Policy 6.4.25:</b>	Promote organizations that provide emergency housing assistance, such as subsidizing rent, mortgage, or utility payments, that prevent homelessness and other reductions of living standards.

<b>Policy 6.4.26:</b>	Consider promoting adequate housing opportunities available to reformatory residents to prevent homelessness, facilitate compatible housing locations, and avoid concentration of ex-offenders upon release from the penitentiary system.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To provide a mix of housing opportunities and densities for various lifestyles and incomes.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning Division, Developers, Downtown Land Owners, neighborhood Business District Land Owners, General Services Dept., Montezuma County Housing Authority, Housing Solutions for the Southwest, Colorado Housing Inc., Habitat for Humanity, La Plata Regional Housing Authority</i>
<b>Policy 6.4.27:</b>	Establish development standards that promote a mix of housing types and lot sizes to maintain the diversity of housing options and integrate affordable housing in a decentralized way.
<b>Policy 6.4.28:</b>	Promote mixed-use housing opportunities such as accessory apartments, in commercial areas.
<b>Policy 6.4.29:</b>	Promote high density development within walking distance of Main Street by giving preference to quality, multifamily residential developments and considering opportunities to rezone for higher density development near Main Street.
<b>Policy 6.4.30:</b>	In addition to single family homes, promote the development of new duplexes and multi-family housing opportunities for families.
<b>Policy 6.4.31:</b>	To meet the needs of single residents, allow the development of studio apartments, boarding homes, and other single room occupancy housing opportunities in appropriate zoning districts.
<b>Policy 6.4.32:</b>	Promote the distribution of mixed income housing opportunities throughout the City, as a means to avoid concentrations of low income housing within areas of the City that already have substantial low income housing.
<b>Policy 6.4.33:</b>	Acquire individual properties on scattered sites, when possible, for development of affordable housing in order to disperse low income housing and promote integration with other housing types.

*“New roads; new ruts.”*

-G. K. Chesterton, *English born Gabonese Critic, Essayist, Novelist and Poet (1874-1936)*

OVERVIEW

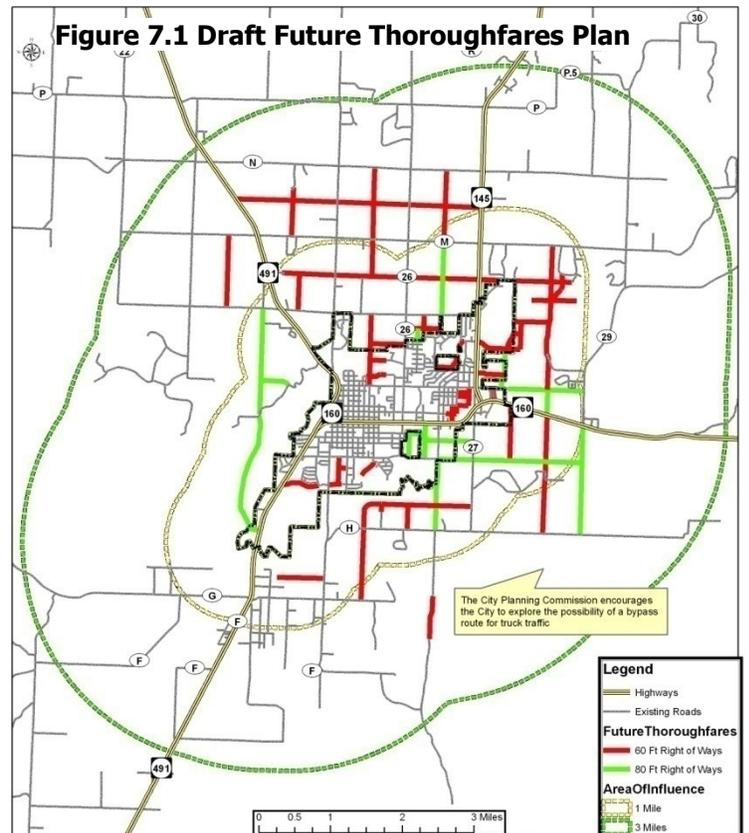
Transportation is a vital service function, as it is the framework upon which the city is built. Pennsylvania Congressman, Robert Brady (1945 – Present), said “There can be no doubt that the transportation sector is the most critical sector of our economy.” A transportation system provides the means by which people can get to work, parks, shops, and home. To support the collective mobility of Cortez residents and visitors, this element suggests directions for traffic engineering, street safety, parking, transportation aesthetics, transit, and other multi-modal transportation options.

STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

The existing street system of Cortez consists of three state highways, a grid network downtown, and suburban residential street networks in newer neighborhoods. Cortez’ largest transportation issue is that Main Street is also U.S. Highway 160. U.S. Highway 491 intersects Highway 160 at the west end of the City (City intersection of Main and Broadway) and the two highways merge and run south from the City together. Highway 160 is a major east/west corridor, extending from Poplar Bluff, Missouri to Tuba City, Arizona. Locally, U.S. 160 connects Cortez to Durango towards the east and the Four Corners to the west. U.S. 491 connects Cortez to Shiprock and Gallup, New Mexico to the south and also leads to Monticello, Utah to the northwest. State Highway 145 begins in Cortez heading north to Dolores, winding through the San Juan Mountains toward Rico and Telluride. With many important highways connecting to Cortez, working and collaborating with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) on issues of joint concern will continue to be an important aspect of maintaining and enhancing Cortez’ transportation system in the coming years.

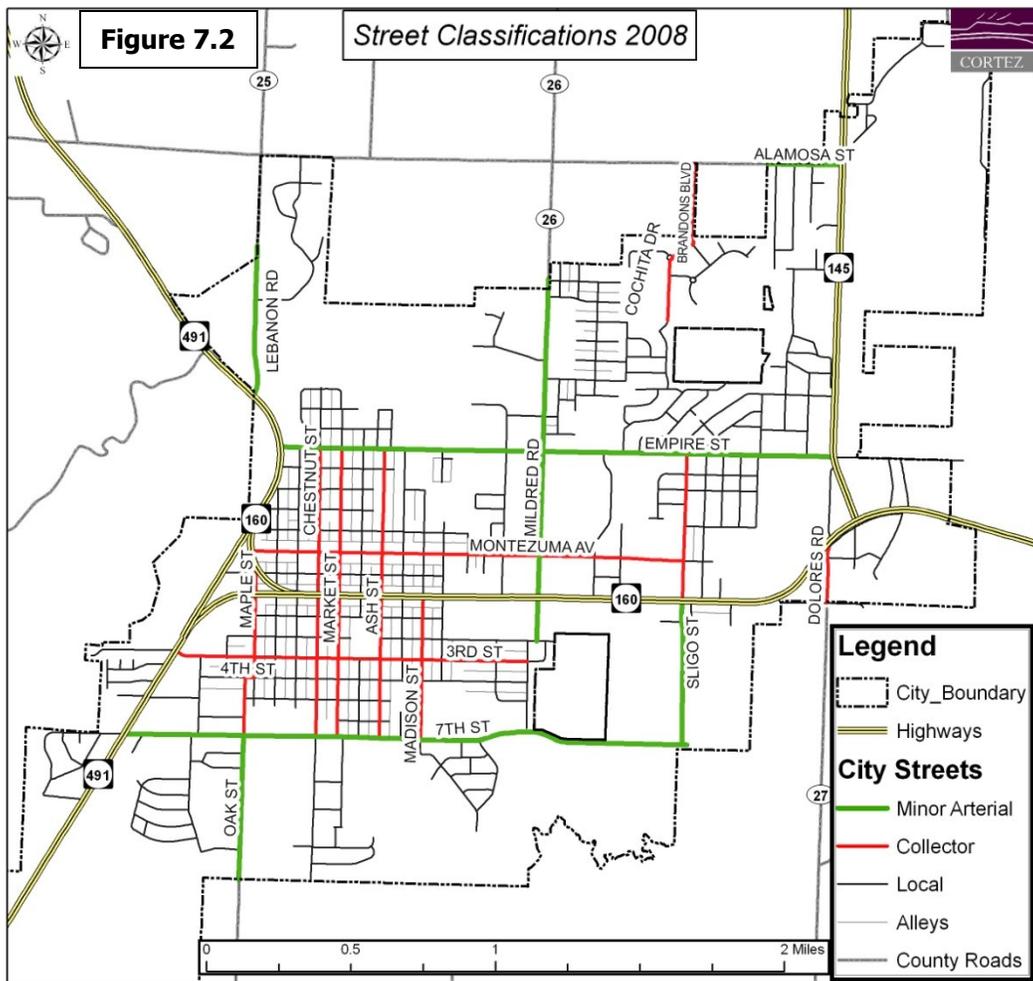
*Future Thoroughfares Plan*

Working with Montezuma County on street improvements and maintenance in areas adjacent to the City will also become increasingly important as the population of the City and unincorporated areas of the County increase. Evaluating the routes that will help facilitate the movement of individuals and vehicles as growth occurs is very important. Creating connections and alternate arterial routes will be a continuing challenge for the City and the County to overcome together. **Figure 7.1** is a draft Future Thoroughfares Map that identifies some potential areas for street development to facilitate traffic movement in and out of the City of Cortez.



**Streets**

In addition to the State Highway system, Cortez has City Streets ranging from alleys to collector streets. The majority of the grid system and other neighborhood streets are paved, but most of the alleys and a few neighborhood streets are gravel. Maintaining both gravel and paved streets will become more challenging as the costs of construction materials rise. Uniform street design does not cater to the varying needs of different neighborhoods and commercial areas. Innovative construction design and traffic calming strategies that match the function of each street with the needs of the area it serves, will be an important aspect of street maintenance in the foreseeable future. Overcoming physical obstacles to street connections may become a concern as both the geographic area of the City and population of the County expand. The City is bound on the south side by McElmo Creek and on the west side by Hartman Draw. There are also drainages on the north and east sides of the City, but they are less imposing to the development of future streets. Irrigation canals may also pose street development challenges as the City limits expand.



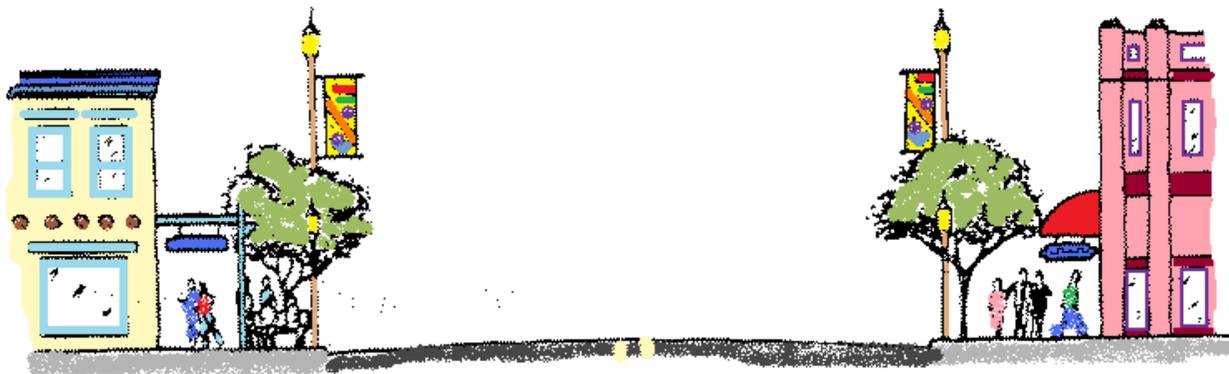
The

development of a Master Streets Plan, including streetscape plans and identifying existing and future development and use of, streets, bike and pedestrian paths, and parking areas, would assist in creating a multi-modal transportation network that safely moves residents and visitors throughout the community. Collaboration between the City and Montezuma County on transportation planning in the City's growth areas will help to maintain a functional transportation network with connectivity and compatibility between City Streets and County Roads.

## *Streetscape Plans*

Streetscape Plans should include a unique plan for the downtown area, and provide a comprehensive and coordinated conceptual design for streetscape improvement that: 1) is supported by the community; 2) enriches the aesthetic appearance of the City; and 3) emphasizes the importance of craftsmanship and creative design in order to generate an excellent pedestrian experience. A major part of the atmosphere of a community is the streetscape—the public spaces among the buildings. The design of streets, medians, plazas, site furnishings, lighting, and landscaping is as important as the design of individual buildings. Empire Street, East of Mildred Street, was identified in the neighborhood meetings as a street that may be well suited for streetscape development that may include pedestrian scale lighting and a buffer between pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The dramatic views and landscapes of Cortez and the surrounding lands are what draw people to the area, and the charm of our community is what invites them to return or to stay permanently.

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## **SAFETY**

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Safety is the number one priority for all transportation improvements. The City should always strive to improve the safety of its transportation system, through adequate signage, public awareness, improved intersections, and additional safety measures. Several intersections have been identified as particularly needing improvement. The priority need is for a stop light at Broadway and Seventh Streets, which has long been warranted by traffic counts. The intersections of Mildred Road at East Montezuma and East Empire have also been identified as potentially problematic four way intersections, and both may be well suited for alternative traffic control, such as roundabouts, that would both improve the safety of these busy four way intersections, and add to the aesthetic appeal of the Parks system. Options to improve the intersection of South Broadway with West Main Street, the intersection of Highways 491 and 160, should be explored.

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## **PARKING**

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The availability of on-street parking near downtown businesses has been an ongoing concern of the Cortez business community. This concern has typically been voiced as a need for more parking spaces, but studies have indicated that there is no immediate shortage of parking in the Downtown area. It is important that the City continue to monitor the parking needs to ensure that adequate parking spaces are available near downtown, but parking management has come to be recognized as the primary parking concern. Recommendations from past studies have included better signage for existing parking, long term parking along streets more than two blocks from Main Street, and restricting Parking on Main Street to a shorter time limit to increase turnover near popular businesses. Parking in other areas of the City has not been a major concern, because off street parking commensurate with a new use is required. Managing existing parking areas to ensure minimal development of new paved parking areas as

necessary may become a challenge with peripheral development, where shared parking for businesses with different hours of operation and transit that allows, large, otherwise unused parking areas to function as a transit depot, should be future parking management considerations.

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## MULTIPLE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

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Developing a safe, appealing multi-modal transportation system to decrease heavy vehicle traffic will also be an important aspect of maintaining the existing roads and adapting to a new age of transportation as fuel costs rise. An emphasis on transit, walking, and bicycling should result in decreased automobile traffic, better use of our land and natural resources, improved air quality, and pedestrian access to public places to build a stronger community. Following the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Trails, Bike Paths, and Bike Routes and evaluating opportunities that arise as development occurs to increase pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections, will be key elements of establishing a functional, multi-modal transportation network.

### *Bicycle Traffic*

"If I can bicycle, I bicycle," wrote British Journalist David Attenborough, though the quote could have come from anyone. Where the opportunity is present, when a safe route exists, a bicycle is available, and there is no hurry or large load to carry, many people would enjoy riding their bicycles. Bicycles offer a unique opportunity for students who can gain independence by riding to school, rather than taking a bus or being dropped off by an adult. Bicycling offers an opportunity for adults to exercise and get out of the house for pleasure or chores without spending a dime on gas. While a few bike lanes and bike paths already exist, the connections throughout the community could use improvement. The largest opportunities for enhancing bicycle routes throughout the community are the striping of bicycle lanes on existing roads. There are also many multi-use and bike specific trails planned and identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Future development of biking trails should not exclude natural, dirt or gravel pathways. The challenge to some cyclists is not to cover miles of ground on concrete or asphalt but is to encounter all types of trail conditions in a natural setting. Beginning with un-improved trails will also help to facilitate cost-effective development of more bicycle connections in the community. Working to establish a "Safe Routes to Schools" program to enable students to walk and ride their bikes to school is also an important element of improving multi-modal transportation in the coming years.



### *Pedestrian Traffic*

Vehicular traffic flow has often been the focal point of new development, and the community is beginning to realize pedestrian concerns that stem from both older neighborhoods with insufficient sidewalks and Main Street's status as a State highway that gives CDOT control over signal timing and pedestrian crossings. Main Street can be an imposing barrier to pedestrian movement downtown, serving as a general pedestrian barrier between the north and south sides of the City. Working with CDOT on signal timing and the development of distinctive pedestrian crosswalks, especially on Main Street, with visual characteristics to make crosswalks more prominent, would greatly improve the pedestrian safety of the City. While these connections are important in downtown, highway crosswalks should also be developed near hotels and other heavy pedestrian traffic areas. Continuance of the sidewalk cost sharing program and following the Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommendation for trails would improve neighborhood pedestrian connections.

### ***Public Transportation***

Public Transit in Cortez currently consists of one bus service that will serve any county resident, but is a 24 hour advance call in service at several dollars a trip. There are no fixed routes and there is no service to larger communities or out-of-county areas that utilize Cortez as a retail and service hub. Because of the amenities of the region, Cortez is becoming a popular destination for retirees. Demographic studies show that the "baby-boomer" generation will be leaving the workforce within the next decade and will be searching for smaller communities that offer a wide variety of options with a lower tax base. Public transit for aging portions of our citizens will become critical in the future. Increased transit options will allow residents of all ages to enjoy the high quality of life that we have come to expect in Cortez.

As the costs of energy and fuel prices at the pump increase, more people will also be looking to public transportation for commutes between Cortez and surrounding communities and for worry free mobility within the City.

Developing a viable, public transit system will be one of the largest transportation challenges in the 2010s. Building ridership, establishing routes and parking areas, and working with many neighboring communities to develop transit not only within the City, but between Cortez and other communities, will take extensive collaboration among the various private and public organizations. This dialogue has been initiated and continuing the dialogue to create a viable plan is the most important step to maintaining a viable transportation system for the City and the entire region.

### ***Aviation***

The Cortez Municipal Airport offers three round trip flights a day to Denver, Colorado through Great Lakes Aviation. The Airport also has Fixed Based Operations with air traffic control during the day, jet fuel, and many private airplane hangars. Airline service is a valuable service for residents who have frequent out-of-town meetings, representing a majority of the traffic flying out of the commercial passengers. But this service is also a noticeable aspect of the community for individuals and families considering relocation to the area. The Airport is an important service for the community and allows for fast and easy transportation in and out of the area. The Airport also serves a necessary function for all of the pilots who live in the community and rent a plane to fly occasionally or have a hangar of their own at the airport. The airport is an integral and necessary part of our community.

Commercial aviation at the Cortez Municipal Airport receives a subsidy from the Colorado Department of Transportation for the provision of essential air service. Without this subsidy, continued commercial operations at the Airport would be a challenge. In 2007, the Airport also surpassed ridership of 10,000 ticket passengers for the year, justifying an increase in funding from the Federal Aviation Administration. Striving to maintain this level of ridership is important, and the continued federal and state support are both crucial to maintaining commercial airline service at the Cortez Municipal Airport.

Development of the Cortez Municipal Airport is generally driven by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), but the sense locally is that the City has greater control over it. It will be important as a City to work with the FAA, and as the Airport Master Plan is developed, to encourage the FAA to approve directions for the airport that will best serve the Cortez Community. The services at the airport have a great amount of potential that can be further exploited for commercial and private flights, especially for the transportation of goods and as a destination for private jets.

**ACTION PROGRAM**

<b>TRANSPORTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES</b>	
<b>Goal 7.1:</b>	<b>Maintain A Transportation System That Safely And Efficiently Meets The Needs of Residents, Businesses, And Visitors.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To develop and maintain a transportation system that safely and efficiently carries motorized vehicles, non-motorized vehicles, and pedestrian traffic throughout the city.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Montezuma County, Other neighboring governments, CDOT, Planning Division, Developers, Transportation Services</i>
Policy 7.1.1:	Create a Master Transportation Plan for the City of Cortez that maintains a gridded street system to minimize loading on single intersections, identifies appropriate street classifications to accompany land uses, and identifies appropriate routes for non-motorized travel.
Policy 7.1.2:	Maintain street design and construction standards throughout the city based on the functional classification and utilization of the street. Allowances should be made to consider safety issues based on the topography and landscape (i.e. hillsides, canyons, trees, etc.).
Policy 7.1.3:	Utilize the most environmentally friendly materials available and recycled construction materials to minimize the use of "virgin construction materials" and lower maintenance and construction costs when more efficient methods can produce equivalent results.
Policy 7.1.4:	Keep construction standards current to provide adequate access for emergency vehicles, transit services, sanitation services, street maintenance, utility maintenance, bicycle lanes, and any other appropriate ancillary needs of each street.
Policy 7.1.5:	Consider extending street tree spacing corner visibility requirements to shrubbery and other visual obstructions to enhance intersection safety.
Policy 7.1.6:	Establish standards intended to discourage through-traffic conflicts in industrial or commercial development areas between automobiles and commercial vehicles.
Policy 7.1.7:	Consider establishing parking regulations that limit oversized vehicle parking within public rights-of-way and in residential areas.
Policy 7.1.8:	Continue city participation in the sidewalk cost-sharing program with property owners to install a cohesive pedestrian system throughout the city.
Policy 7.1.9:	Continue to require new developments to construct sidewalks, and pursue opportunities to build out sidewalks in existing neighborhoods.
Policy 7.1.10:	Aggressively seek State and Federal grant funding for street improvements throughout the city.
Policy 7.1.11:	Establish a Safe Routes to Schools program that provides safe walking surfaces, safe traffic speeds, and walking and biking buses, and parent/police rotating escorts throughout the community to facilitate the pedestrian commute of youth to and from school.
Policy 7.1.12:	Keep the City's Master Streets Plan, the City's Land Use Code, and the City's Construction Standards current to meet the changing transportation needs of the community and to be compatible with the current State of Colorado Highway Access Code.
Policy 7.1.13:	Keep design and constructions standards current and build flexibility into guidelines to accommodate various circumstances while maintaining service levels.
Policy 7.1.14:	Continue to require new subdivisions and developments to have paved streets as the developments are constructed.

Policy 7.1.15:	Work with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and with Montezuma County to identify areas of concern to safely mitigate all problem areas jointly. This includes impacts of land use development, road improvements, transit enhancements, trail linkages, and visual aesthetics throughout the city.
Policy 7.1.16:	Consider unique needs of a neighborhood when pursuing street improvement projects.
Policy 7.1.17:	Work with Montezuma County to establish an agreement for road development and improvement, commercial land use, and arterial street access in the Three-Mile Potential Growth Area to reduce and prevent congestion on city arterial streets and to provide compatibility between the transportation systems.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To provide adequate parking areas throughout the city to facilitate the movement of vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., CDOT, Planning Division, Developers, Downtown Property and Business Owners, Other Public Parking Area Owners</i>
Policy 7.1.18:	Develop a community wide parking plan.
Policy 7.1.19:	Continue to require off-street parking for all new development, redevelopment projects, and changes-in-use that create a higher demand for parking.
Policy 7.1.20:	Review parking ordinances for residential areas and amend when necessary. Enforce existing parking ordinances.
Policy 7.1.21:	Minimize impervious surfaces where possible by allowing or requiring shared parking areas, requiring a percentage of permeable landscaped areas in parking lots, and other appropriate methods of reducing the impacts of the impervious surfaces of the transportation system.
Policy 7.1.22:	Consider landscaping requirements that require a percentage of parking areas to be shaded.
Policy 7.1.23:	Work in conjunction with the school district to provide easier access to schools for busses, vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians through street improvements, sidewalk installation, and the city's trail network.
Policy 7.1.24:	Specify and provide adequate signage for existing public parking areas including specific signage for parking areas accessible to recreational vehicles, campers, and other large vehicles. Designating specific truck parking areas for the truck traffic on which the city depends as needed.
Policy 7.1.25:	Develop signage that identifies the location of public parking areas from Main Street and work to improve the pedestrian corridors from these parking areas to the downtown area.
Policy 7.1.26:	Evaluate developing additional public parking areas when parking concerns arise that cannot be improved by modifications of access or layout of existing public parking areas. Consider possibilities for a small public parking area on Main Street to attract tourists with a convenient parking location near restaurants and restrooms, or improve the corridors from existing public parking areas to these amenities for a similar effect. This may include the temporary rental of vacant lots to be used as city public parking.
<b>Mid-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>Develop a Master Transportation Plan to provide access throughout the community and the region as a whole.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Montezuma County, Other neighboring governments, CDOT, Planning Division, Transportation Services</i>
Policy 7.1.27:	Participate in the development of a regional transportation plan to encompass personal vehicle traffic, evaluation of mass-transit options, and alternative movement of people, especially during the tourist seasons. Pursue any viable public transit options within and between communities.
Policy 7.1.28:	Promote alternate routes and alternative forms of transportation between areas of the city, to maintain traffic flow during peak traffic hours on Main Street and arterial streets through the management of a gridded streets system, access control, and well maintained bicycle and pedestrian routes.

Policy 7.1.29:	Incorporate trail planning and street traffic flows to accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorized vehicle traffic between commercial and retail areas.
Policy 7.1.30:	Explore the potential for a regional transportation service by researching grant opportunities and other funding possibilities.
<b>Mid-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>Provide an aesthetically-pleasing transportation system throughout the community.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Planning Division, Developers, Landowners along major thoroughfares</i>
Policy 7.1.31:	Identify traffic corridors through town that would benefit from enhanced beautification through landscaping, increased land-use protection, or partnerships with owners and the city, and establish an implementation plan.
Policy 7.1.32:	Designate streets in the Future Thoroughfares Plan that could be designed as a boulevard (similar to Montezuma Ave.), utilizing drought tolerant and low maintenance landscaping to minimize maintenance needs when the long term maintenance needs of any new islands can be provided for.
Policy 7.1.33:	Create partnerships between the city and local organizations to assist landowners along major thoroughfares with enhancing the visual appearance of the entryways and thoroughways of the community.
<b>Goal 7.2:</b>	<b><i>Decrease Traffic Impacts on Downtown and Other Areas of the Community.</i></b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To improve traffic movement on the highways and arterial streets to enhance pedestrian access and safety.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., CDOT, Developers, Land and Business Owners Along Highways and Arterial Streets, Montezuma County, County Residents</i>
Policy 7.2.1:	Improve downtown intersections and sidewalks when financially feasible to reflect the needs of the elderly, visually impaired, and other disabled residents. Consider the needs of all residents when commencing street and sidewalk improvements.
Policy 7.2.2:	Work with the Colorado Department of Transportation to establish and enforce safe speed limits and pedestrian crossings through the city on Highways 145, 160, and 491.
Policy 7.2.3:	Evaluate the need for traffic calming devices to be put in place to slow traffic in residential school areas, and in the Downtown area of Main Street.
Policy 7.2.4:	Consider traffic signals that stop traffic for pedestrian crossings at high vehicular and high pedestrian traffic intersections.
Policy 7.2.5:	Establish guidelines and standards for safe highway crossings for the city's trail system.
Policy 7.2.6:	Consider well-lit and appropriately designed underpasses for trails to cross major streets and highways.
Policy 7.2.7:	Work with Montezuma County, the Colorado Department of Transportation, and other affected agencies to designate possible locations and systematically secure Rights of Ways for a highway route to divert truck traffic off of Main Street. This will facilitate development of the bypass in the event that funding becomes available.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To reverse the trend of increased motorized traffic throughout the year by promoting the use of alternative modes of transportation.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Parks and Rec. Dept., Local Bicycle Clubs, RE-1 School District, Other Education Providers, Business Owners, GIS Coordinator, Public Information Outlets</i>
Policy 7.2.8:	Encourage bicycle safety in the city by posting Share the Road signs, identifying areas for secure bicycle parking, and striping bicycle lanes where feasible.
Policy 7.2.9:	Extend pedestrian and bicycle routes into the downtown and other parts of the community.
Policy 7.2.10:	Strive to maintain bike lanes and pedestrian paths to facilitate alternative transportation year round.
Policy 7.2.11:	Establish traffic routes for pedestrians and bicyclers that are consistent with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Policy 7.2.12:	Consider requirements for new development to provide facilities for bicycle and pedestrian users, commensurate with the type and size of development, such as secure bicycle parking and racks, storage, and employee locker facilities.
Policy 7.2.13:	Continue to evaluate the feasibility of public transportation, and look for other transportation alternatives.
Policy 7.2.14:	Promote the sidewalk cost-share program to help increase alternative modes of transportation throughout the community.
Policy 7.2.15:	Identify areas where bicycle lanes are possible and desirable on existing roads, to establish a strategy to provide a safe network of bicycle lanes.
Policy 7.2.16:	Connect activity centers such as schools, parks, and shopping areas with trails, bike lanes, and bike routes where feasible.
Policy 7.2.17:	Ensure that planned rights-of-way are adequate for multiple-use sidewalks and utility installation. The need for utilities on trails in open areas may be reduced by the use of solar powered lighting.
Policy 7.2.18:	Provide equal opportunities for safe multimodal transportation to be provided throughout the city.
Policy 7.2.19:	Promote programs that provide publicity, education, and training on how to safely share the transportation system.
Policy 7.2.20:	Utilize box culverts as trail underpasses where height and width are adequate and safety permits. Adapt these existing culverts or bridges to serve as trail underpasses while maintaining adequate flood flow levels. Install signage where necessary to address issues during high water.
Policy 7.2.21:	Incorporate trails in greenways and conservation easements where appropriate. Where natural and man-made drainages are preserved, enhanced, or restored, consider trail development projects as part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to utilize the recreational qualities as an asset of non-motorized travel.
Policy 7.2.22:	Maintain a current map of all existing trails within the city and make it available to residents and visitors.
<b>Goal 7.3:</b>	<b>Integrate The Cortez Airport Into The Regional Transportation System.</b>
<b>Long-Term Objective:</b>	<b>To increase accessibility in and out of the Four Corners Region via the Cortez Airport.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Federal Aviation Administration, Airport Manager, Great Lakes Aviation, Fixed Base Operators, Commercial Developers, Montezuma County, Mesa Verde Country Tourism Bureau, Cortez Retail Enhancement, the Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Mesa Verde National Park</i>
Policy 7.3.1:	Work with Montezuma County, Mesa Verde Country Tourism Bureau, Cortez Retail Enhancement, the Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Mesa Verde National Park, and all other interested parties in promoting the use of the airport by locals, tourists, industry, and private jet traffic.
Policy 7.3.2:	Encourage the development of appropriate commercial properties adjacent to the airport, especially to the east, by providing economic incentives for location in that area. Capitalize on the airport as a catalyst for new industrial development and promote the commercial expansion of the airport to include increased cargo transport.
Policy 7.3.3:	Continue to aggressively apply to the Federal Aviation Administration for grant funding to upgrade the airport's facilities and services.

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## CHAPTER 8—PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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*To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity.*

*– Douglas Adams, English Author (1952-2001)*

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### OVERVIEW

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The Public Facilities and Services Element of the Cortez Comprehensive Plan has been developed to ensure that the future public facilities development coincides with future population growth within the City. This element outlines the future municipal components necessary within Cortez based on the expected future populations of the City.

The term “community facilities” refers to the physical manifestations of governmental or quasi-governmental services that exist for the benefit of the public. Some community facilities, such as storm water drainage systems, may address immediate consequences of development, while others are necessary for the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens they serve. In addition, planners must understand the physical constraints, economic trade-offs, and significant secondary impacts of extensive infrastructure development in the areas of wastewater management, solid waste management, and provision of a potable water supply.

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### EXISTING CITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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#### *City Building*

The Cortez City Building , commonly referred to as City Hall, located at 210 E. Main Street, currently houses most of the City’s administrative services, including the City Manager, City Clerk, Human Resources, Council Chambers, Finance, and Municipal Court. This building currently consists of 11,950 ft<sup>2</sup>, well above recommended municipal administration space, however only 6,074 ft<sup>2</sup> are actual administrative office space. Storage, Municipal Court, and Council Chambers make up the remainder of

the floor area, primarily on the basement level. There has been a need for more administrative and meeting space at City Hall for over a decade, with an assessment completed in 1998 and recommendations in 1999. There are also potential ADA accessibility needs for the City Hall building. An upgrade to City Hall is desired, possibly including the relocation of the facility or retrofitting the existing facility. Discussion of the future of City Hall is underway, and a new facility or remodel should be completed by 2015.



#### *City Service Center*

The City of Cortez Service Center, located at 110 W. Progress Circle in the Cortez Industrial Park, was completed in 2000. The Service Center consists of 20,000 square feet of office space that contains the Public Works and General Services departments, including Planning and Zoning, Engineering, Building Inspection, General Purchasing, Water Division, Cross Connections, Streets Division, GIS, Refuse, Recycling, Vehicle Maintenance, and Building Maintenance. The Service Center sits on 5.7 acres, which currently serves as



the vehicle yard and storage sheds. Because of the recent expansion, there are no plans to expand or renovate the Service Center in the foreseeable future.

### ***Water Treatment Plant***

The Public Works Department is responsible for delivering high quality water to the citizens of Cortez for household uses, yard irrigation, and business uses. The Cortez Water Treatment Plant, located north of the City, receives high quality raw water from McPhee Reservoir on the Dolores River. The Plant is a conventional six million gallon a day (mgd) multimedia filter plant built in 1960 with a clarifier and chemical feed added in 1993. An additional four mgd membrane filter expansion that can be operated separately or in conjunction with the pre-existing plant was completed in 2007. With the expansion that was completed in 2007, the City Water Treatment Plant has ample storage and treatment capacity to serve the expected needs of the City until 2020 and beyond. Plans for outfitting the Plant with a hydro-electric system are underway in 2008. Though the treatment facility is adequate to meet projected demand, maintaining a high water quality and distribution system, as the needs of the infrastructure ages, will be a challenge in the upcoming decade. Overcoming rising costs of waterline and treatment materials, incompatible service lines in some potential annexation areas, and irrigation canals, canyons, and other physical obstacles will pose additional challenges to the maintenance and expansion of the water distribution system. Expanding land uses appropriate to available service levels, ensuring that development pays its own way, and collaborating with Montezuma Water Company in areas adjacent to the City will all assist in the continued provision of high quality water to all City residents. While the plant is adequate to process the raw water, the City may need to look at investing in water use rights through the Dolores Water Conservancy District to meet future raw water needs.

### ***Solid Waste Disposal***

The Public Works Department currently handles solid waste disposal, collecting residential and commercial refuse within the City limits. Solid waste is deposited in the Montezuma County Landfill, located south of the City. Fees from residents and commercial users pay for the expenses incurred to operate the Refuse Division. As an "enterprise" fund, no extra financial support is needed from the City's general fund. Commercial users in the City of Cortez also have the option to choose between the City service and several private waste collection and disposal companies.

### ***Recycling Program***

The Public Works Department also provides a curb-side recycling program called ECortez that the City initiated in July 1991. The City program collects glass, newspapers, and aluminum beverage cans. Efforts to collect plastics would require regional collaboration, and the City of Cortez does not currently have adequate space for the storage of plastics prior to the transferring of the materials to a processing facility. The ECortez program consists of weekly curbside collection service and a drop-off station, located at the old Justice Building on the corner of Empire and Mildred Streets. While there is some opportunity for increased patronage of the recycling facilities, the storage areas for recycled materials are near capacity. Funding for the recycling program comes from user fees for the refuse program. The largest opportunities for expansion of the recycling program lie with increased local demand for the materials. Hauling cardboard to Snowflake, AZ and glass to Durango is not as advantageous for the environment or economy as the metal processing performed by Belt Salvage which also minimizes the storage capacity needed by the City. The City will evaluate crushing glass on-site in Cortez, and utilizing the crushed glass within the City as one way of recycling the materials locally.

## **Cortez Municipal Airport**

In 1996, the City of Cortez acquired control over the Cortez-Montezuma County Airport located to the southwest of the City near U.S. Highway 160/491, making it the Cortez Municipal Airport. The City



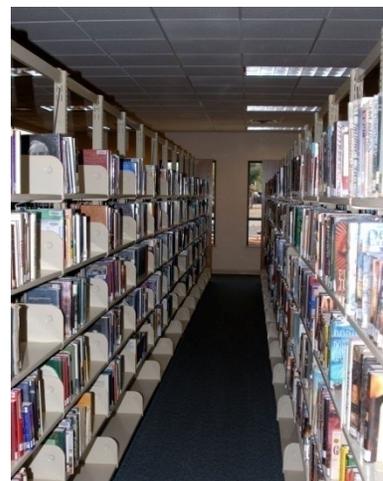
currently holds a lease agreement with Cortez Flying Service to provide Fixed Base Operator (FBO) services at the airport. A new lease was signed in March of 2006 which required enhancements to the current FBO building, with plans to replace the building within the next five years. The Airport Manager is working in conjunction with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on the Airport Layout Plan that is underway in 2008, that will determine the future of the Fixed Base Operations and other airport facilities.

The current airport facility consists of a 3,000 square foot terminal and a 1.36 mile-long runway to service the community. Reconstruction and expansion of the taxiway and a new parking area were completed in 2007. The City has aggressively pursued upgrades and fully utilizes FAA funding to provide the residents with quality services. Future projects include paving of the runway shoulders, scheduled for 2011, and the acquisition of land for a future instrument approach, likely to occur following the FAA timeline, within a decade.

Cortez is currently serviced by Great Lakes Aviation, which has been Cortez’s Essential Air Service provider since 1998. The airline offers three daily commercial flights to and from Denver during the week, as well as two Sunday and one Saturday. The Department of Transportation subsidizes Great Lakes to provide Essential Air Service at Cortez Municipal Airport, as the nearest hub airport is Albuquerque International Sunport, approximately 276 miles from Cortez. In 2007, the Airport exceeded 10,000 paid boardings for the first time, qualifying the airport for additional funding from the FAA. Maintaining the levels of funding and subsidies that provide Cortez with essential commercial airline service will continue to be a challenge for the Cortez Municipal Airport. With increased boardings that justify the essential air service comes the need for a larger terminal building, and eventually more parking and more commercial flights. This expansion is not likely to be needed prior to 2020, but changes in population and transportation choices may necessitate these airport developments at an earlier time. Changes within the essential air service industry and potential upgrades to the planes that are flown to and from the Cortez Municipal Airport, may necessitate other changes to keep the Cortez Municipal Airport viable as well. Maintaining commercial air service is a priority of the City of Cortez.

***Public Library***

The Cortez Public Library is located at 202 N. Park St. in Centennial Park. The facility was remodeled and expanded in 2001 making it 18,500 square feet. In 2005, 143,000 items were checked out of the library for an average of over ten items a year per member. The library itself holds over 70,000 items including books, videos, DVDs, and audio books. The Library also has magazine and newspaper subscriptions, subscriptions to online research databases, Inter-Library Loan, and 20 computers with free public internet access to serve the 14,000 current card holding patrons. The library also has a meeting room for public meetings. In addition to the many materials offered at the Library, the library offers programs for children and adults.



**Cortez Public Library**  
Prideaux RD Photography

***Animal Shelter***



The Cortez Animal Shelter provides area residents with an opportunity to adopt pets that are in need of a home. At any given time, the Cortez Animal Shelter has 15 - 25 cats and 16 - 20 dogs. The shelter also offers lost pet services and impounds animals collected by the Cortez Police Department. In addition to pet adoption and lost pet services, pet licenses can be purchased at the Animal Shelter and are required for all cats and dogs residing within the city limits of Cortez. The City will evaluate the feasibility of extending pet adoption services by providing adequate staff to increase hours of operation. A dog park will be completed in 2008, nestled between the Animal Shelter at 2791 E. Main and Denny Lake Park for the unleashed enjoyment of Cortez' and visiting dogs.

***Recreational Facilities***

The Parks and Recreation Facilities and Services are a separate chapter of this Plan. There is also a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that goes into greater detail on recreational opportunities in the City. The City also has a 145 acre golf course and a Golf Master Plan that provides additional direction for Cortez' golf facilities. Please Refer to Chapter 10 – Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space, for more information on recreational facilities and services, and refer back to Chapter 7 – Transportation for some additional direction for trails and trail connections. See the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Golf Master Plan, at the Cortez Recreation Center, for additional detail.

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**EMERGENCY SERVICES**

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***Police Station and Related Facilities***

The Cortez Police Department offers a full service department including regional dispatch, patrol officers, detectives, shelters, and other specialized response and prevention programs. The ratio of 28 officers to the current Cortez population of 8,750 is well above the standard of 2.1 officers to 1,000 residents. Cortez is a unique community in its safety and protection needs, due to the seasonal influx of tourists and its location as a service and retail hub for the Four Corners area.

The department currently operates out of the Cortez Police Station, an 18,000 ft<sup>2</sup> building located at 608 N. Park Street. The Police Station was built in 1996 and is anticipated to serve police protection needs of the community for the time horizon of this plan.

The Montezuma County Sheriff Department works in conjunction with the Cortez Police Department. The Sheriff's Department oversees the Jail facilities located at 730 E. Driscoll St., across Empire Street from the City Police Station. The jail has 104 regular beds and several cells that are used to hold and monitor high risk and suicidal inmates. The jail is frequently 20% over capacity depending on the day, and though the jail can hold more inmates in the regular housing units, the special holding areas are near full. Expansion of the jail may become necessary for the community before 2020, but there ongoing safety efforts should seek to strike a balance between preventative and rehabilitative Services



and imprisonment. Services and facilities that the City can help develop for the relief of overcrowding at the jail would serve the community by prolonging the need to expand the jail. There are also potential expansion needs of the County justice facilities which may change the justice complex in the coming decade.

### ***Fire Protection***

Since 1882 the Cortez Volunteer Fire Department has been serving the emergency needs of the



City of Cortez and much of the surrounding area. The Fire Department operates as a special district with its own governing board of directors, and it provides emergency services within the City. The City also contracts the Cortez Fire District Fire Inspector to provide fire inspections within the City. The Fire Department is mostly a volunteer force consisting of 36 firefighters. The force hired a new Fire Chief in 2008 and is evaluating paid positions during the work week when volunteers are often unavailable. The fire department has 17 vehicles in its fleet that are housed at three different stations to handle

200-300 Fire and 300-400 Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls each year. The largest station, located north of City Hall at 30 N. Ash St., provides service within the City of Cortez as well as unincorporated areas of Montezuma County and other neighboring jurisdictions when their assistance is requested.

### ***Medical Facilities and Services***

The City of Cortez and the Four Corners area are served by Southwest Memorial Hospital, located at 1311 N. Mildred Road. Ambulatory and EMS services are provided through the hospital, and cover much of the area. Southwest Memorial Hospital (SWMH) offers inpatient services in 55 acute beds including services for Surgery, Orthopedics and Obstetrics. SWMH serves more square miles than almost any facility in the state with services including Ambulance, Home Health, Outpatient Rehab and a full Laboratory, and is pursuing becoming a Critical Access Hospital, but may have to reduce numbers of inpatient beds to do so. SWMH offers a full range of Imaging Services including MRI & CT Scanners, Ultrasound, Mammography and Nuclear. An Infusion Clinic is a recent addition. SWMH is a Level IV Trauma Center. The hospital completed a \$10 million expansion and remodeling project in 2004. The hospital and area medical providers are constantly in the process of recruiting quality physicians to Cortez, and this will be an ongoing challenge for the community. In addition to the western medical opportunities available in Cortez, there is a wide range of private healthcare providers practicing everything from Tai Chi to Chiropractic care.



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## **EDUCATION**

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### ***Education: K-12***

The City of Cortez is currently served by the RE-1 School District, which encompasses Cortez, Towaoc, Lewis, Arriola, Lebanon, Yellow Jacket, and Pleasant View. The District's administration is

temporarily located at Downey Elementary School, 400 N. Elm St., while the Calkins Administrative Building undergoes historic rehabilitation. Space for education is not a short term concern, as recent years have shown declining enrollment and several elementary schools have been closed. With some work, these schools may be able to be re-opened if enrollment increases. The Administrative building should also serve the administrative needs of the school district beyond 2020, once the renovation is completed. In the 2007-2008 School year, the RE-1 School District had 6 open grade schools including one charter school, one middle school, and one high school in the RE-1 School District. The Montezuma-Cortez High School and Cortez Middle School serve students from the entire RE-1 School District. The three school districts that serve Montezuma County have open enrollment that creates some additional fluctuation in enrollment based on each district's unique opportunities. The student-teacher ratio in the RE-1 School District is usually less than 20-1 and often less than 15-1 at the RE-1 K-12 schools. There is also a Head-Start program in place.



Montezuma-Cortez High School had a 6.3% dropout rate between 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades in the 2004-2005 school year. This is compared to a 4.2% statewide average. A high school drop-out rate of 11.6% for Native American students in the RE-1 school district in the 2005-2006 school year (CDE) indicates a need for special attention to help students stay in school. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe does not have its own schools and the Montezuma-Cortez High School and other area schools must continue to strive for appropriate education to meet the needs of all students within the school district.

Private schools are also available for Cortez students, including a Montessori School for pre-school and Kindergarten. The Manaugh Public Elementary School also offers a Montessori program. Southwest Open School (SWOS), a charter high school, offers an alternative education experience for older students and is looking to expand to middle school students by 2015. Currently, the Cortez Middle School, operated by the RE-1 School District serves all residents for grades 6-8 in the RE-1 School District. In addition, there are two parochial schools.

***Education: Post-Secondary***



**Students from San Juan Basin Technical College and their career choices** <https://pueblocc.edu/>

For adults and high school students, San Juan Basin Technical College (SJBTC) and Pueblo Community College (PCC), Southwest Center, provide vocational technical training for students in cooperation with the high schools and on a post-secondary basis. The schools provide special courses on demand as requested by local businesses. SJBTC opened an Industry Training Center in 2008 that is available for training sessions that can be requested by area industries. The two post-secondary education providers are developing a partnership to provide more opportunities to area residents. Fostering this partnership and expanding post-secondary opportunities that require little to no commute will behoove the Cortez Community in the next decade.

Fort Lewis College (FLC), an independent state-funded four year liberal arts college, is located in Durango, forty-five miles east of Cortez. There are also limited opportunities to receive Master’s Degrees through extension centers that hold classes at the Fort Lewis Campus. Currently, the University of Colorado at Denver and the University of Denver have programs in Durango that offer a Master’s Degree in Education, Political Science, Reading, and Psychology. While many Cortez residents take advantage of FLC courses, and many high school students relocate to Durango for college, transportation to Durango, continued state funding for higher education, and the availability of evening and weekend classes for a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree at the FLC campus would be beneficial for Cortez residents seeking higher education opportunities.



**Fort Lewis College**  
<https://www.fortlewis.edu/>

Additional post-secondary education opportunities include the growth and promotion of remote learning in Cortez. Use of the existing fiber-optic system and potential growth of this system will create a plethora of new opportunities in higher education.

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## SOCIAL SERVICES

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### *Montezuma County Social Services*



**Mural in County Courthouse Parking Lot**

Montezuma County administers services designed to help those in need and protect those in harm’s way. The department provides and coordinates services through partnerships that help families and individuals move toward independence, maintain pride and dignity and realize their potential. Many of the programs are mandated by the State while others are voluntary. Some services are funded 100% by the County, while others are funded through combined county, state and federal efforts. While County Social Services fulfill many of the most desperate needs of residents throughout Montezuma County, their services are sometimes the minimum necessary to help an individual or family get by.

Many community organizations supplement the government programs or fulfill a need not met by available County programs, helping those that don’t qualify for the government services or those with special service needs. The commitment of a great number of individuals and organizations to making the community a safer, healthier, more livable place for all individuals and families can be astounding. (Please see **Appendix B** for a list of social service organizations in the community.)

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## OTHER SERVICES

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### *Cortez Sanitation District*

The Cortez Sanitation District currently services the City of Cortez. The Sanitation District is run by an elected board, and is a separate entity from City government. In 2006, a new wastewater treatment plant replaced the three former plants that were operating at capacity. The new facility is a state of the art facility, expected to serve the needs of Cortez for the next decade and any unanticipated growth can be met by an expansion of the plant in its current location. The only areas that may be difficult to serve with the existing treatment plant are those south of McElmo Creek, as they would require pump stations to utilize the existing wastewater treatment facility. While the



Treatment Plant is up to date and poised to serve the future needs of Cortez, as the aged collection system deteriorates, replacing collection lines is becoming a concern requiring immediate attention. Many deteriorating, and undersized lines in some locations, will need to be replaced in the short term. Continuing to work together with the Sanitation District to facilitate line replacement and maintaining appropriate use of the system will assist the Sanitation District in continuing to supply high quality sewage service for City residents.

### ***Stormwater Management***

The stormwater system, administered by the City Public Works Department, is sufficient to meet the existing and future needs of City residents. There are a few areas that have a history of flooding and the replacement and scaling up of some lines and additional inlets will have to be constructed to alleviate some of the stormwater issues. The City is working on a Stormwater Management Plan to address challenging areas. In addition, new State requirements will eventually oblige the City of Cortez to meet new stormwater quality standards. In order to comply with the quality standards mandated by the State of Colorado, a large focus of stormwater management in the coming decade will include education and other measures to prevent stormwater contamination from both direct and indirect sources.

### ***Television***

The City of Cortez currently has a franchise agreement with Baja Broadband to provide cable television access for the community. Baja Broadband is a communications company that provides a full range of advanced broadband services to the home, including cable television, high-speed internet, and telecommunications service. Their infrastructure is capable of transporting large amounts of information to both televisions and personal computers at speeds much faster than conventional copper phone lines because they have upgraded the cable infrastructure to a combination of fiber-optic lines and coaxial cable.

The City has a cable television channel on which it broadcasts live City Council meetings and other City events, and posts schedules, notices, and services. The City will continue to expand the use of this cable television channel to provide transparent information to the community. The City is looking at streaming the City channel on the City website. Partnering with other community organizations to expand viewing on the City channel is another opportunity the City may consider.

### ***Telephone and Internet***

Qwest offers current local telephone service to the Cortez area, along with much of the Rocky Mountain region. Long distance communication in the area is provided by a number of companies, including AT&T, Century Telephone, Farmers Telephone, MCI Telecommunications, Sprint Telecommunications, Telecall Long Distance Inc., and Qwest.

In 2000, the City began the effort to provide high-speed internet capabilities through the creation of a fiber-optic network. In the same year, the City installed 30,000 lineal feet of fiber-optic cable, and in 2005 added another 20,000 lineal feet. Currently the policy of the City is to continue to expand infrastructure for the network in phases and to evaluate improved communications access for all residents of the City through fiber-to-the-home in partnership with private service providers. At present the City provides the connectivity capabilities to the state and public facilities, and leases capacity to providers, which in turn, can offer services to residents. The fiber-optic network is well poised for further business and education opportunities throughout the community, and partnering with other public and private entities may aid in the expansion of the network in the coming decade.

### *Electricity*

Through a negotiated franchise, the City of Cortez receives its electricity through Empire Electric Association, Inc. (EEA) a non-profit, member-owned rural electric cooperative association headquartered in Cortez. EEA provides electricity to residential, commercial and industrial members in southwest Colorado and a small portion of southeast Utah. Empire currently serves more than 15,600 meters over 1,900 miles of energized lines in a 3,300 square mile service territory. With a system that was 99.9% reliable, with the average customer outage rate being less than 38 minutes for the entire 2007 year, the electricity provided to Cortez residents is fairly secure. There are also several power line loops that create redundancy in the system, allowing current to flow through Cortez, even when certain lines are down.



Challenges for the continued provision of affordable electricity largely stem from a changing state and federal regulatory environment especially regarding environmental controls and renewable resource mandates. Empire Electric is part of the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, along with forty-three other rural electric cooperatives. Tri-State transmits power to these electric cooperatives from eleven (11) gas and coal fired generation plants, seven (7) small hydro-electric turbines, two (2) hog methane biomass facilities, and one (1) wind farm in Wyoming. Unfortunately, the electricity produced by the renewable resources does not meet the percentages mandated by Colorado, so credits are purchased by Tri-State G & T to keep up with the changing regulatory environment. This is one aspect of the increasing electricity costs, but high peak demand from Tri-State's Association are also increasing costs by requiring the association to increase production to cover the regular peaks that now exceed production capacity at Tri-State Generation facilities. The expense of purchasing this power from other power suppliers while Tri-State develops more generation capacity is adding to the purchase price of electricity for Cortez residents.



The regulatory environment surrounding renewable energy development is expected to increase, and being prepared for the associated increases in either cost or offsetting costs by limiting use or generating personal or public electricity will soon be necessary. The aforementioned hydroelectric turbine at the water treatment plant is one example of the City adapting to a changing electric age. Pursuing energy saving technology and other generating technologies such as solar, are also ways that the City can set an example for residents, businesses, and other community agencies and organizations in the coming decade.

### *Natural Gas and Propane*

Many homes and businesses within the City of Cortez utilize natural gas for heating and other services. Much of the Western Slope is provided with natural gas service by Atmos Energy. Prior to December of 1993, when they were purchased by Atmos Energy, Greeley Gas Company of Denver, Colorado was the main gas provider to the City of Cortez. Atmos Energy is the largest pure natural gas distributor in the United States and delivers natural gas to 3.2 million residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and public-authority customers. Their regulated utility services are provided to more than 1,500 communities in 12 states.

Because of the rural character of Montezuma County, many citizens of the County rely on propane to heat their homes. There are several companies in the area that provide that service, including Fraley and Company, Country Gas, and Navajo Butane, and some City residents utilize these services as well.

**CORTEZ AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND COLORADO WELCOME CENTER**

The Cortez Chamber of Commerce currently operates out of the Colorado Welcome Center located at 928 E. Main Street. It houses the Mesa Verde Country Tourism Bureau, Retail Enhancement, a Mesa Verde Museum Association Gift Shop, the Chamber of Commerce, and some City offices. The City remodeled and expanded the Colorado Welcome Center facility with the assistance of a \$300,000 grant. The operation of the Welcome Center continues to be partially funded by the State of Colorado and the City currently contracts with the Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce to operate the facility. The Welcome Center is a common visitor stop for travelers arriving in the Four Corners area, and it serves an important purpose for the economic advancement of the community, prospective residents and business owners, and visitors who come to Cortez, by providing "one-stop shopping" for locals and visitors about the opportunities of the area.



**Colorado Welcome Center in Cortez**  
Prideaux RD Photography

**ACTION PROGRAM**

<b>PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES</b>	
<b>Goal 8.1:</b>	<b>Continually Improve Public Educational Facilities And Services.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To promote excellence and diversity in high quality education.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., RE-1 School District, SWOS, Montezuma Arts Commission, Countywide Economic Development Organizations</i>
Policy 8.1.1:	Promote the importance of quality education and educational facilities for all.
Policy 8.1.2:	When population trends and expectations justify the investment, facilitate the appropriate location of new school construction.
Policy 8.1.3:	Promote master school plans and designs that promote multi-use capabilities and year-round opportunities for community-wide activities.
Policy 8.1.4:	Consider working with the Educational Providers to establish a performing arts and conference center to meet the needs of all age groups if the opportunity arises.
See Community Character and Culture policies 3.1.14 through 3.2.2. for further policies related to educational services.	
<b>Mid-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To enhance the safety of school zones and access to schools.</i></b>

<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Educational Providers, CDOT, Planning Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., Police Dept., Public Works Dept.</i>
Policy 8.1.5:	Encourage the location of schools in proximity to the neighborhoods they are expected to serve, in conjunction with siting near parks, recreation facilities, and other services. Avoid hazardous traffic crossings and other environmental hazards when siting new schools or re-opening schools whenever possible.
Policy 8.1.6:	Promote a Safe Routes to Schools Program to encourage walking and biking to schools, and work with program coordinators to enhance corridor safety for school routes including sidewalks, bike lanes, street crossings, and appropriate speed limits.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To enhance opportunities for local residents to pursue post-secondary education.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Educational Providers, General Services Dept., Public Works Dept., CDOT, Montezuma County, Business Owners</i>
Policy 8.1.7:	Support educational partnerships between high schools, higher education, and the local business community.
Policy 8.1.8:	Promote the use of the fiber-optic network to facilitate higher education and continued learning through distance learning programs and ongoing training for adults and students.
Policy 8.1.9:	Promote public transit and a multi-modal transportation network to facilitate transportation to and from higher education facilities.
<b><i>See the Community Character and Culture Chapter for more policies to expand opportunities for higher education.</i></b>	
<b>Goal 8.2:</b>	<b>Maintain the City Library as an asset of the community that provides something for everyone.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To continually enhance library services, expanding programming, maintaining historic materials, and keeping literature and technology current.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Library, Educational Providers, Historic Preservation Board, Community Clubs and Orgs., Other local and Regional Libraries, Colorado State Library, Colorado Library Consortium, Bibliographic Center for Research, Public Library Association, American Library Association</i>
Policy 8.2.1:	Explore regional funding options for the Cortez Public Library to continue to meet the needs of a growing services area while persistently enhancing the services offered.
Policy 8.2.2:	Consider funding one time library investments with a percentage of any surplus revenue, such as investments in new books or library technology.
Policy 8.2.3:	Support consistent investment in the library's book collection and public Internet access, when feasible.
Policy 8.2.4:	Promote programs that improve reading skills and knowledge of classic literature. Make the library available for reading classes, book clubs, and other reading programs whenever possible.
Policy 8.2.5:	Consider establishing and maintaining digitized records of historic documents and have original documents archived at a curatorial facility once digitized. Investigate grant funding opportunities for archival projects.
Policy 8.2.6:	Continue to update the reference section and make efforts to maintain current editions of reference materials as demand for reference materials increases.
Policy 8.2.7:	Promote daytime activities that bring together stay at home parents and their young children.
<b>Goal 8.3:</b>	<b>Facilitate Adequate Emergency Services, Healthcare Access, Day Care, And Assisted Living To Meet The Needs Of All City Residents.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To improve efficient, quality emergency services within the City of Cortez and be proactive in promoting a healthy, safe community.</i></b>

<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Police Dept., Cortez Fire Protection District, Southwest Memorial Hospital, Healthcare providers, Chamber of Commerce, GIS Coordinator, Drug and Alcohol Prevention and Cessation Programs and Orgs., General Services Dept.</i>
Policy 8.3.1:	Promote high-quality emergency services and facilities.
Policy 8.3.2:	Continue to promote the community's recreational assets and high quality of life as recruitment tools for quality emergency service and healthcare providers.
Policy 8.3.3:	Consider developing a wireless network for enhanced emergency services communication and coordination.
Policy 8.3.4:	When necessary, improve street addressing systems to facilitate emergency service response.
Policy 8.3.5:	Work with schools and other organizations to promote classroom education on the effects of drug and alcohol abuse.
Policy 8.3.6:	Promote social services in the community, particularly in regards to mental health and substance abuse.
Policy 8.3.7:	Utilize the community organizations to promote a drug free community.
Policy 8.3.8:	Take a position on projects that will sacrifice the health of area residents.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To facilitate healthcare opportunities in the City of Cortez that meet the needs of residents as the population of the City and surrounding service area grows.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Southwest Mental Health, Southwest Memorial Hospital, Healthcare Providers, Insurance Providers, Chamber of Commerce, "The Bridge" Shelter</i>
Policy 8.3.9:	Explore funding options for expanding mental health facilities in the Cortez area.
Policy 8.3.10:	Assist with any efforts to establish an inpatient mental health clinic and other mental health treatment facilities in or near Cortez.
Policy 8.3.11:	Work with the medical community to encourage increased medical care facilities or services as demand necessitates.
Policy 8.3.12:	Encourage the promotion and recruitment of general practitioners and healthcare practices that meet the broad healthcare needs of the entire community.
Policy 8.3.13:	Continue to support "The Bridge" homeless shelter and alcohol detox center.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To ensure that the level of fire and police service is adequate to meet the needs of a growing population.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Police Dept., Cortez Fire Protection District, Other local fire protection districts, Police Academy, Montezuma County, Building Division, Developers</i>
Policy 8.3.14:	Recruit local officers with a vested interest in the community.
Policy 8.3.15:	Maintain adequate levels of law enforcement and dispatch staffing to meet the community's needs.
Policy 8.3.16:	Continually develop police force with training programs and new services that expand prevention, safety, and efficiency.
Policy 8.3.17:	Support necessary measures for the expansion of the current jail facility and associated penal services to provide for the community's safety and the treatment of inmates.
Policy 8.3.18:	As feasible, continue to improve the community's ISO fire rating.
Policy 8.3.19:	Continue to coordinate with the Cortez Fire Protection District on development proposals to ensure that maintenance standards that provide adequate defensible space in the case of an urban or wildland fire.
Policy 8.3.20:	Pursue standards for water pressure and storage requirements, as well as other utilities, in conjunction with Montezuma County within the One-Mile Urban Services Area.
Policy 8.3.21:	Maintain an adequate level of emergency services for new and existing development by evaluating routes, distances to emergency service hubs, and fire and medical supplies available throughout the community.
Policy 8.3.22:	Strive to increase the numbers of volunteer firefighters.
Policy 8.3.23:	Consider limited paid firefighting positions to cover daytime, weekday hours.

Policy 8.3.24:	Promote the importance and benefits of being a volunteer firefighter in the community.
Policy 8.3.25:	Evaluate benefits of being a volunteer firefighter for the City of Cortez and enhance the benefits when necessary to maintain emergency services.
Policy 8.3.26:	Pursue joint-use facilities and other cooperative service strategies that enhance the community's fire protection services while providing cost-saving facilities for the community at-large.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To provide adequate services for children and families with young children.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Day Care Providers, SJBTC ITC, Healthcare Providers, Special Events Coordinator, Parks and Rec. Dept., Cortez Library, Community Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 8.3.27:	Promote adequate day care and pre-school services to meet the needs of the community.
Policy 8.3.28:	Encourage affordable, quality day care and training for baby sitters.
Policy 8.3.29:	Promote pediatric care and opportunities to expand healthcare coverage to more children in the community.
Policy 8.3.30:	Promote daytime activities that bring together stay at home parents and their young children.
<b>Goal 8.4:</b>	<b><i>Expand And Maintain Utility Systems Logically.</i></b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To collaborate with neighboring state and federal agencies and utility providers.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Utility Providers, Special Districts, Montezuma County, Other Governmental Entities, All City Departments</i>
Policy 8.4.1:	Encourage cooperative planning among all utility providers.
Policy 8.4.2:	Continue to work with other utility and service providers to identify and utilize opportunities to increase service efficiencies through: joint service provision; coordinated construction arrangements; and joint ordering of operating supplies.
Policy 8.4.3:	Explore which utilities are most efficiently and effectively provided as public utilities, by special districts, by public/private partnerships, or by private companies. Pursue the best options for when upgrading, expanding, or providing new utilities.
Policy 8.4.4:	Work with Montezuma Water Company to explore options for providing water service to urbanizing areas on the City's periphery.
Policy 8.4.5:	Consider exchanging land use monitoring, mapping technologies and capital improvement programming with other service providers to foster comprehensive planning between all entities.
Policy 8.4.6:	Work with governmental entities, utility providers, special districts, developers, schools, and others in order to expand the fiber network.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To encourage infill development to reduce infrastructure costs.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Planning Division, Developers, Landowners, Realtors</i>
Policy 8.4.7:	Maintain permit and service costs at a minimum to encourage infill and cluster developments.
Policy 8.4.8:	Promote "smart growth" practices, such as multiple-use opportunities, to reduce infrastructure expansion costs.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To plan for City utility expansion to provide quality, cost-efficient service.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., General Services Dept., City Public Relations, Media Outlets</i>
Policy 8.4.9:	Investigate the future needs of public facilities based on trends and expectations of growth.

Policy 8.4.10:	Promote recycling and re-use programs community-wide to preserve natural resources and conserve landfill space when financially feasible. Encourage local end use of local recycled materials.
Policy 8.4.11:	Consider user fees for utility services that would otherwise be subsidized by non-users.
Policy 8.4.12:	Provide City news on public stations in addition to the cable network and other multimedia outlets.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>Expand opportunities for "High Tech" Or "Clean" Industries through the provision of appropriate utilities and infrastructure.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Countywide Economic Development Organizations, Public Works Dept., General Services Dept., Private and Public Partners, Developers, Community Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 8.4.13:	Work closely with local economic development efforts to identify specific infrastructure needs of various industries.
Policy 8.4.14:	Strive to keep the community's technological services current, in order to create benefits for business relocation.
Policy 8.4.15:	Consider developing the fiber network as a public utility, partnering with private companies or establishing special districts if appropriate.
Policy 8.4.16:	Pursue the expansion of the fiber network including "Fiber to the Home" (FTTH) to help keep Cortez competitive by expanding business and educational opportunities.
Policy 8.4.17:	Promote fiber development of the business park planned-unit development to expand economic development options.
Policy 8.4.18:	Leverage the fiber-optic network to facilitate "High Tech" industries.
<b>Goal 8.5:</b>	<b>Water, wastewater and storm drainage systems are adequate to meet basic and emergency needs of development.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To maintain a City water supply and distribution system that is adequate to meet the needs of a growing population in terms of both quality and quantity.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Water Treatment Plant, Community Clubs and Orgs., Police Dept., Planning Division, Landowners adjacent to City limits, Parks and Rec. Dept., Montezuma County, Montezuma Valley Irrigation</i>
Policy 8.5.1:	Equip the City Water Treatment Plant with a hydro-electric generator if feasible.
Policy 8.5.2:	Reduce per capita water demands and wastewater generation to reasonable flows through on-going conservation efforts addressing education, use practices, fixtures, and system maintenance and enforcement of the existing seasonal daytime watering restrictions.
Policy 8.5.3:	Provide water service utility to all urban development (residential, commercial, or industrial) when commitments for annexation have been secured.
Policy 8.5.4:	Pursue long-term water supply, storage and treatment options which provide the flexibility to accommodate full development within the planning area, as well as the flexibility to adapt to drought situations.
Policy 8.5.5:	Explore all options to secure water supply sources that will meet the needs of the projected population in 2050 and beyond.
Policy 8.5.6:	Continue and expand the use of raw water and/or treated effluent to meet irrigation needs in parks, other large-scale water uses, and potentially residential lawn irrigation systems that do not require potable water, and evaluate further opportunities for replacement of treated water with raw water.
Policy 8.5.7:	Establish requirements to use drought tolerant plants, landscaping materials, and water conserving fixtures as water conservation policies.
Policy 8.5.8:	Keep water tap and service fees and utility rates current, so that new development covers its own infrastructure costs. Per gallon rates should reflect the true costs of infrastructure maintenance and water treatment.
Policy 8.5.9:	Maintain a water supply and distribution system that will meet existing and future domestic and fire protection demands for the urbanizing area.

Policy 8.5.10:	Establish and maintain an automated meter reading system if feasible.
Policy 8.5.11:	Work in conjunction with Montezuma County to develop compatibility for all City utilities and design standards within the One-Mile Urban Services Area.
Policy 8.5.12:	Work with Montezuma Valley Irrigation to enhance the interface of the two systems.
Policy 8.5.13:	Consider annexing or purchasing as a City, land and water rights where properties are in a crucial area for maintaining the adequacy of utility services in the City.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To protect the wastewater system and provide and maintain an adequate stormwater management system that meets the demands of the current and projected population.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Cortez Sanitation District, DOLA, Public Works Dept., Streets Division</i>
Policy 8.5.14:	Assist Cortez Sanitation Districts' efforts to improve the wastewater system.
Policy 8.5.15:	Pursue grant funding to make any necessary repairs or upgrades to the City's utility system that will protect the wastewater services.
Policy 8.5.16:	Continually evaluate and update the Drainage and Maintenance Program to provide adequate drainage throughout the City.
Policy 8.5.17:	Explore possibilities to construct with porous permanent surfaces and minimize area requirements for impermeable surfaces to aid in stormwater management.
<b>Goal 8.6:</b>	<b><i>The viability of the City of Cortez Municipal Airport is maintained as a City priority and that services are expanded to meet growing community needs.</i></b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To maintain property adjacent to the airport in land uses compatible with the development of the airport.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Montezuma County, Cortez Municipal Airport, Developers, Landowners, Realtors</i>
Policy 8.6.1:	Continue purchasing land adjacent to the airport as it becomes available, to facilitate airport expansion, and encourage compatible uses adjacent to the airport, when feasible.
Policy 8.6.2:	Promote the property between the Cortez Municipal Airport and Highway 160/491 as a prime location for industrial and commercial park development, with both highway and airport access.
Policy 8.6.3:	Expand parking services near the airport commensurate with the other facilities and services.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To expand airport services with increasing demand.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Cortez municipal Airport, Chamber of Commerce, Cortez Retail Enhancement, Travel Agents, FAA, Public Works Dept., General Services Dept., Community Clubs and Orgs., Countywide Economic Development Organizations</i>
Policy 8.6.4:	Actively promote the availability of the airport to Montezuma County residents and neighboring communities so that the airport does not have to annually struggle to maintain federal funding levels.
Policy 8.6.5:	Consider constructing a new terminal complex to meet the needs of the growing customer base and regulatory demands for space.
Policy 8.6.6:	Explore opportunities to improve the runway during winter and pursue innovative snow removal and ice melting techniques when feasible.
<b><i>See Airport Master Plan for additional policies. The long range direction of the Cortez Municipal Airport is largely guided by Federal Aviation Administration decisions and economic development that influences fixed base operations at the airport.</i></b>	
<b>Goal 8.7:</b>	<b><i>Maintain Existing City Facilities At Safe, Functional, And Aesthetically Pleasing Levels.</i></b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To maintain facilities at the highest standards possible and eliminate obsolete and dilapidated City facilities.</i></b>

<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>General Services Dept., Building Maintenance Division, Public Works Dept., Parks and Rec. Dept., Funders</i>
Policy 8.7.1:	Evaluate detached public restroom facilities and upgrade or rebuild as appropriate.
Policy 8.7.2:	Regularly evaluate the water facilities for their adequacy and strive to expand these facilities before capacity issues arise.
Policy 8.7.3:	Pursue funding from any available sources to undertake major repairs. Consider both the cost of repair compared the cost of a replacement facility, and evaluate the historic significance of facilities prior to demolition.
Policy 8.7.4:	Remodel or build new City facilities when physically and financially appropriate.
Policy 8.7.5:	Continue to maintain public sidewalks and parking areas to repair cracks, and remove snow, ice, and other obstructions as quickly as possible.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To make constant upgrades to the functionality of City facilities.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>General Services Dept., Building Maintenance Division, Public Works Dept., Parks and Rec. Dept., Funders</i>
Policy 8.7.6:	Regularly evaluate facility upgrades that could improve the City's services and/or enhance the working environment.
Policy 8.7.7:	Evaluate contracting expenses and in house options for maintenance and upgrades to City facilities.
Policy 8.7.8:	Consider alternative construction materials or designs that improve efficiency and appearance.
Policy 8.7.9:	Evaluate meeting spaces, offices, departments, etc. to determine when a function has outgrown its space. Consider reevaluating how particular spaces are used and expanding or building new facilities when necessary.
Policy 8.7.10:	Encourage opportunities for property owners to participate in the City sidewalk cost-sharing program to install a cohesive pedestrian system throughout the City.
Policy 8.7.11:	Maintain appropriate, modern snow removal equipment for streets and sidewalks.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To maintain the physical appearance and cleanliness of City facilities.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>All City Departments</i>
Policy 8.7.12:	Systematically retrofit existing street and park lights with "dark sky" lighting. Consider solar powered and LED options as well as historically sensitive poles.
Policy 8.7.13:	Replace plants with drought tolerant alternatives as appropriate.
Policy 8.7.14:	Promote community pride through programs that discourage littering and encourage community clean up.
Policy 8.7.15:	Display a current vision for the City of Cortez in a prominent public location in all major City facilities.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To continually improve the sustainability and efficiency of existing City facilities.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>All City Departments, Purchasing, Building Maintenance, Performance Contractors, EEA, Local Clubs and Organizations, Public Service Organizations</i>
Policy 8.7.16:	Factor energy efficiency and life cycle costs into decision making for all City purchases, including capital improvements and daily supply purchasing.
Policy 8.7.17:	Ensure that new City appliances and equipment are among the most energy and resource efficient technologies for the intended purpose.
Policy 8.7.18:	Retrofit existing City facilities with efficient lighting and machines to conserve energy and reduce utility costs whenever possible.
Policy 8.7.19:	Consider developing alternative energy sources to offset City energy costs, address regional environmental concerns, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Begin with conservation in all City decisions and planning, evaluating the life cycle costs of building materials and systems early in the planning process.

<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To maintain a functioning Animal Shelter program that minimizes the numbers of stray animals while meeting the needs of a growing community.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Cortez Animal Shelter, Police Dept.</i>
Policy 8.7.20:	Enforce the dog licensing obligations of pet owners.
Policy 8.7.21:	Promote programs for pet adoption and altering cats and dogs in the Cortez area.
Policy 8.7.22:	Consider requiring all cats and licensed dogs and in the City to be altered unless they are papered and used for breeding.
Policy 8.7.23:	Continue to evaluate the needs of the Cortez Animal Shelter. Provide additional veterinarian support, and expand the shelter facility to meet the pet demands of the community, when appropriate.
Policy 8.7.24:	Create and Maintain the Dog Park near Denny Lake and mitigate any abandoned, stray, or threatening animal problems that arise in order to maintain the park as a leash free area for dogs and their owners.
<b>Goal 8.8:</b>	<b><i>Construct New City Facilities To Aid In Service Expansion.</i></b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To ensure accessible and functional facilities for City staff and public gatherings.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>General Services Dept., Police Dept., City Hall Staff, Parks and Rec. Dept., Golf Course Division, Public Works Dept., Community Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 8.8.1:	Determine the feasibility and pursue opportunities to construct a new City Hall with adequate meeting and court space to meet the needs of the growing City per the 1999 study which recommended the removal of City Hall.
Policy 8.8.2:	Expand the dispatch center to meet growth demands of the community.
Policy 8.8.3:	Pursue the construction of a new golf course maintenance building and upgrade the golf pro shop.
Policy 8.8.4:	Expand public restrooms and provide emergency lightning shelters at the City golf course.
Policy 8.8.5:	Install new pedestrian friendly, "dark sky" lighting for park safety along appropriate trails. Utilize efficient lights and individual solar power when possible.
Policy 8.8.6:	Expand and maintain the skate park to meet skating demand and develop or open a system of sidewalks or trails for skaters that access the skate park from all areas of the community when feasible.
Policy 8.8.7:	Provide professional and technical assistance to evaluate the feasibility and pursue an appropriate convention and/or performing arts center where regional events may be held. Consider providing public land for such a project or pursuing these facilities as a City if not privately undertaken.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>Continue to expand recreational amenities that expand the kinds of recreational opportunities available to City residents and visitors.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Parks and Rec. Dept., Community Clubs and Orgs., Developers, Mesa Verde Natl. Park, Montezuma County</i>
Policy 8.8.8:	Work with all appropriate entities and individuals to construct the Mesa Verde Trail from Denny Lake to the entrance of Mesa Verde National Park.
Policy 8.8.9:	Consider developing Denny Lake Park as a more popular park with expanded recreational opportunities such as paddle boats and other shallow water recreations.
Policy 8.8.10:	Encourage innovative pocket parks that minimize City maintenance requirements.
Policy 8.8.11:	Consider constructing an indoor roller rink and/or ice rink if no private facilities come about.
Policy 8.8.12:	Support proposals to expand cultural tourism in the City of Cortez through professional and technical assistance when appropriate.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To continually improve the sustainability and efficiency of the construction, design, and furnishing of new City facilities.</i></b>

<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>All City Departments, Purchasing, Building Maintenance, Performance Contractors, EEA, Local Clubs and Organizations, Public Service Organizations, Building Contractors</i>
Policy 8.8.13:	Exceed minimum design standards for new municipal facilities, setting an example of good building and site designs and pursuing LEED certification when feasible.
Policy 8.8.14:	Evaluate the Solar Project underway in 2008 and pursue opportunities to expand and enhance the solar program when appropriate.
Policy 8.8.15:	Continually evaluate energy use and opportunities for conservation. Utilize efficient fixtures and appliances and minimize the number of high demand items.
Policy 8.8.16:	Ensure that new City equipment is among the most energy and resource efficient technologies for the intended purpose.
Policy 8.8.17:	Take advantage of Passive Solar orientation in new construction and install solar technology whenever possible.

*Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.*

*-Albert Einstein, Physicist (1879-1955)*

**OVERVIEW**

– Contributions from George San Miguel, Ecologist for Mesa Verde Natl. Park

This chapter is founded on the assumptions that there are attributes of the natural environment that the City is striving to maintain and restore. It assumes that natural biodiversity is valuable, that people can have positive impacts on the natural environment, and that development and the natural environment are not in direct conflict with one another. This chapter also makes some assumptions that climate change is a reality and may have some degree of impact on the local natural environment and subsistence resources on which residents depend. For the purposes of this chapter, the “natural environment” can be defined as, “The aggregate of conditions, whose origins are derived from Nature, that influence the life of an individual or community.” The natural environment is capable of providing everything that a person needs in the Montezuma Valley, but there is also an intangible aspect of the natural environment that contributes to the quality of life for Cortez residents. As John Muir put it, “Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.”

**Prehistoric Landscape**

Though the Montezuma Valley only receives 13 inches of precipitation a year, on average, the environment has supported abundant wildlife and a wide range of hunting and gathering cultures for thousands of years. The native ecosystem was very productive for such low precipitation, and many cultures lived on this land throughout history and pre-history. The ancestors of the Pueblo People became sedentary by 600 A.D. in the Montezuma Valley, when they began planting beans, corn, and squash. When this occurred, the intensity of land use increased and the prehistoric population boomed, reaching its peak in the 1100’s A.D. As the population of the Montezuma Valley neared the population that it has today, the soil that had been farmed for years was becoming denuded; there was a lack of precipitation for crops, construction, cooking, and drinking; big game populations were in decline; wood for fires and construction was all but gone; and people had been disposing of their waste in the same locations for generations. It is commonly believed by archaeologists and other scientists in the Four Corners area that the local collapse of the natural environment was partially responsible for the abandonment of the Mesa Verde Region by the Ancestors of the Pueblo People by 1300 A.D.



**Dryland Corn Agriculture**  
[www.crowcanyon.org](http://www.crowcanyon.org)

**Historic Landscape**

When Father Silvestre Velez de Escalante and his superior Francisco Domínguez passed through the region seeking a route to the Pacific Ocean in 1776 and 1777, their field notes recorded the hunting and gathering people and herders who had moved into the Mesa Verde Region following the Ancestral Pueblo abandonment. Several cultures had transitioned into the region following a century of ecosystem recovery. Over the last 700 years,



**Father Silvestre  
Velez de  
Escalante**

some of the woodlands, shrublands, and grasslands have grown back, but historic land use has also had an impact on our natural environment.

Cortez was developed near the transition between the piñon-juniper woodland community on thin, rocky soils and the sagebrush valleys in deep, fine soils. There were also streams with riparian woodlands, wetlands, and springs in the area. To the south and west there was the semi-desert sagebrush shrublands, and where the soil was salty from the Mancos Shale, greasewood dominated the

**Looking south across a sage field at Mesa Verde, from Cortez**  
Rebecca Whitehead



landscape. However, these shrublands were not always so extensive. Prior to Gold Rush and ranching settlement in the Montezuma Valley were common. By the 1880s, livestock grazing had become a mainstay of the Montezuma Valley, and overuse resulted in down cut arroyos, a dryer, less vegetated ecosystem, and the conversion of many grasslands into the extensive sage and greasewood shrublands seen today. The rich, red loess deposits, and alluvium in the drainages, made for great agricultural land, from the beginning of agricultural production, which led to the chaining of the piñon-juniper woodlands to facilitate farming and ranching in the region. The challenges to farming in today's environment include somewhat sporadic and limited moisture, with an average of only 13" of rain in Cortez annually, and a short growing season, and soil deposits of sand and clay.

However, these shrublands were not always so extensive. Prior to Gold Rush and ranching settlement in the Montezuma Valley were common. By the 1880s, livestock grazing had become a mainstay of the Montezuma Valley, and overuse resulted in down cut arroyos, a dryer, less vegetated ecosystem, and the conversion of many grasslands into the extensive sage and greasewood shrublands seen today. The rich, red loess deposits, and alluvium in the drainages, made for great agricultural land, from the beginning of agricultural production, which led to the chaining of the piñon-juniper woodlands to facilitate farming and ranching in the region. The challenges to farming in today's environment include somewhat sporadic and limited moisture, with an average of only 13" of rain in Cortez annually, and a short growing season, and soil deposits of sand and clay.



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## THE LANDSCAPE OF TODAY

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Cortez is an amazing place, partially because of the multitude of public lands including the San Juan National Forest, the San Juan Resource Area of the Bureau of Land Management, Canyon of the Ancients National Monument, Mesa Verde National Park, and the US Bureau of Reclamation Dolores Project, with only 28% of the County in private ownership. The City of Cortez is nestled in the center of this wonderful area and as a result, natural resources are a major focus of the discussion and development of this Comprehensive Plan. One resident commenting on what they like about Cortez said, "Its proximity to all the things people enjoy." The City is within a two hour drive from 14,000 ft. peaks, 2,000 ft. deep canyons, OHV trails, wilderness areas, Whitewater Rivers, world class cliffs, ski areas, the second largest body of water in Colorado, and much more. This Element of the Plan strives to conserve precious natural resources within the City for future generations.

While there is a great deal of public land, open space, and recreational area near Cortez, 91% of the land within the Three-Mile Potential Growth Area, including within the City limits, is privately owned. Residents are accustomed to the rich natural beauty of the area and the City strives to maintain natural areas remaining within and directly adjacent to the City. However there is an important balance between encouraging infill to protect natural areas and open lands that we all enjoy throughout the county and region and maintaining adequate natural areas and critical lands within the City for residents to enjoy on a daily basis. The Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Chapter and Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the Land Use Chapter provide additional detail on balancing recreational space with other land use.

### ***The Floristic Environment***

One way to balance the enjoyment of the natural environment with the built environment is by developing urban landscapes. This can include both high maintenance landscapes such as gardens,

lawns, hedges, shade trees, orchards, vineyards, hayfields, parks, and ball fields, as well as low maintenance built landscapes using locally native or selected "xeriscape" species to beautify public and private areas. Both of these floristic environments are of great value for both aesthetic and oxygen producing qualities as well as for recreational purposes. High maintenance landscapes can be costly in terms of water, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor, but work well in the City, especially for recreational use, and appropriate management practices can minimize the costs associated with these landscapes. Low maintenance, biologically diverse, native and xeriscaped landscapes are not abundant in 2008, but trends in new development and landscaping are seeking this low maintenance landscaping as it requires far less time, water, and other resources and encourages native species of birds and other wildlife. In order to maintain built landscapes, it is important to manage empty lots, road right-of-ways, and other neglected landscapes in the City to discourage non-native pest animals and invasive plants and diseases. The City of Cortez has been experimenting with xeriscaping and various species, including potential alternatives to Kentucky Blue Grass for some park areas.

Cortez also has a fair amount of natural landscapes, in peripheral areas with large estates and in the public natural areas. The native landscapes are important for the education of youth and the quality of life of City residents. These natural areas within the City allow residents and visitors to learn about the native landscape and to enjoy native species of plants and animals. Limiting and mitigating disturbance of natural areas is important to avoid invasion by non-native plants and animals that can be both eyesores and damaging to neighboring landscapes.



### ***The Zoological Environment***

Nature education and familiarity with native wildlife have strong benefits to community well-being. Each of the native species fills a unique niche in the natural ecosystem, which makes it important to manage wildlife in City natural areas, or that have migration corridors through the City. It is important to minimize conflict of domestic animals with native wildlife. Enforcement of leash laws and the careful management of cattle in and near the City, especially on critical wildlife lands, is important to avoid unnecessary stress on delicate wildlife, keep noxious weeds down, and limit competition for resources. While livestock is important to the culture and livelihood of the community, concentrations of non-native animals can be hard on a natural landscape by contributing to overgrazing, soil compaction and erosion, water pollution, spread of invasive weeds, competition with native wildlife, and the fostering of exotic wildlife and pests. Livestock can also lead to nuisances of odor and noise for neighbors. Livestock should be carefully considered on Residential Estates within the City and on the urban periphery.

Artificial landscapes, even those only modestly altered, can harbor wildlife that is not native to southwestern Colorado. Many people do not recognize these animals as being misplaced and enjoy them as much as any other wild animal. Among the common non-native birds are the European starling, English sparrow, Eurasian collared dove, rock pigeon, and brown-headed cowbird. Other non-native species include the house mouse and raccoon. These animals compete with, prey on, and otherwise displace the native wildlife similarly to some domestic species. Minimizing the impacts of growth on delicate ecosystems to discourage non-native wildlife and unnecessary competition for native wildlife will be important as the City expands.

## ***Climate and Weather***

Cortez is situated at 6,153 feet above sea level in the San Juan Basin. There is enough annual moisture to allow the development of small-scale agriculture and extensive dry land farming opportunities. Microclimates allow for the growth of fruits and berries. Most precipitation comes in the form of winter snows and midsummer thunderstorms. Cortez is one of the few communities in Southwest Colorado that was not built on a river. It sits on a rise above the confluence of McElmo Creek and a tributary to Hartman Draw. The original settlement was a watering hole for traders, but the City was established because of the rich soils of the valley with hopes of creating an agricultural heartland by bringing in irrigation water from the Dolores River.



Cortez has four distinct seasons. The summers are generally warm with daytime temperatures reaching into the 80's or 90's and cooling off during the later hours. Fall is typically dry and the mountains change color when the oak brush and aspen trees lose their leaves. Winter temperatures range from single digits at night to between 20 and 60 degrees during the day, and snow storms are common, with approximately 10 of Cortez' 13

inches of annual precipitation falling in the winter. The springtime is very unpredictable, but rivers, creeks, and intermittent streams begin to flow, animals come out of hibernation, and a typical, lush green landscape ensues. Variable weather, hot summers, cold winters, snow, and high winds make Cortez a place that requires attention to construction and available shelter during all seasons. Changing weather patterns may impact the kinds of flora that will grow in and around the City, the scale of drainage infrastructure necessary to serve the City, dust abatement, and much more.

## ***Water***

As stated previously, Cortez sits between McElmo Creek and Hartman Draw, but the City is not located on a river and has low annual precipitation. The drainages around the City have some floodplain areas, but the majority of the City is not impacted by flood zones. Conservation and careful water management should be continued, because of the semi-arid nature of Cortez. While Cortez has a fairly secure and clean source of water from the Dolores River today, with very few up-stream users, changing climatic and political conditions could change the security of Cortez' water situation. Heavier, less frequent downpours observed in recent years, for instance, do not recharge the soil moisture in the same way as regular, gentle rain, and heavy runoff has caused stormwater drainage problems in some areas of the City. With such a variable climate and small cushion of excess water and rainfall, continuing to pay careful attention to climatic conditions and changing water policies is of vital importance to the preservation of Cortez.

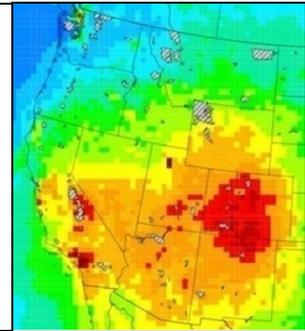
While water quantity is the obvious concern in this seemingly pristine environment, water quality is also threatened by mine tailings, ranching, and other point sources. The area waterways have high levels of Mercury, with several area reservoirs having been designated as having toxic levels. Evaluating the quality of water and the impacts of new and existing land uses on the quality of Cortez' water source is equally important to monitoring the quantity of water available for Cortez residents.

## ***Air***

Cortez is in an economically and politically marginalized rural area, where land uses that create permanent damage have been historically targeted. Resource extraction, weapons testing, and power

production have been considered suitable uses in the region. Cortez is affected by land uses in adjacent areas with impacts that extend beyond borders. Various point sources contribute to ozone, NO<sub>2</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub>, Mercury, and other elements and compounds in that are dangerous in certain quantities. Ozone is expected to exceed the National Air Quality Standard of 75ppb by 2020. See **Figure 9.1**. Evaluating the sources of the air contamination that threaten the amazing views from Cortez and taking appropriate action when possible to mitigate contamination is important to the quality of life for residents and the economic vitality of the area. Montezuma County has installed a 2.5 ppm and ozone monitoring station in Cortez, and data from this air quality monitoring station will help to identify direction for maintaining quality air.

**Figure 9.1:** Western Regional Air Partnership's (WRAP's) projections from computer modeling indicate most of Colorado will be exceeding 90ppb of ozone by 2020. This contrasts with EPA's predictions that California will have the ONLY regions exceeding the 75ppb standard by 2020.



### CRITICAL LANDS

The opportunity to identify and protect critical natural, cultural, or agricultural lands within the City and the Potential Future Growth Area has been discussed earlier in the Plan. The importance of certain landscapes to the economy of Cortez and the quality of life of residents is undeniable. Critical Lands are referenced throughout this plan. An early goal of this plan is to identify and map those lands which have unique or exemplary natural or cultural value. In the natural environment, such critical lands may include, but will not be limited, to natural wetlands, habitat for endangered species, environments unique within this area, pristine natural areas, unique view sheds and ridges, and healthy agricultural fields.

### ACTION PROGRAM

<b>DRAFT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES</b>	
<b>Goal 9.1:</b>	<b>Maintain Natural Biodiversity And Critical Lands, And Preserve And Enhance The Natural Physical Environment Within The City.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To mitigate the impacts of growth on valuable natural resources, including those resources that contribute to the economy and quality of life.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Federal, State, and County public land managers, Montezuma Land Conservancy, Planning Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., GIS, Developers</i>
Policy 9.1.1:	Coordinate with other governmental and non-governmental organizations to facilitate the conservation of critical lands.
Policy 9.1.2:	Explore incentives and other mechanisms for protection/enhancement of identified critical lands within and adjacent to corporate limits.
Policy 9.1.3:	Use capital investments and funding strategies to direct growth to areas that can accommodate development with minimal impacts on natural resources.
Policy 9.1.4:	Promote the protection of identified critical lands through the public lands dedication development requirement of the Land Use Code and other land use tools.
Policy 9.1.5:	Limit, where possible, the development of extractive and impacting industries and land uses to areas where there are minimal impacts on the natural environment and critical lands and adequate reclamation can be ensured.
Policy 9.1.6:	Encourage wide wooded and vegetative buffers along City streams and tributaries following guidelines of the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service or other appropriate guidelines.

<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To maintain a healthy urban landscape throughout the community.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Local Clubs and Orgs., Parks and Rec. Dept., Public Works Dept., Montezuma County, Building and Planning Divisions, CDOT, Landscapers, Developers</i>
Policy 9.1.7:	Consider developing a volunteer program such as an “adopt a tree” program to help finance or physically maintain public landscaping.
Policy 9.1.8:	Work with the Montezuma County Agricultural Extension office to promote urban forestry and gardening and provide professional advice to City residents and business owners about planting, establishing, and maintaining trees, gardens, and native landscaping.
Policy 9.1.9:	Consider developing guidelines for rooftop gardening to facilitate the safe, aesthetically pleasing development of such gardens.
Policy 9.1.10:	Consider supporting efforts to establish community gardens, setting aside public land when appropriate.
Policy 9.1.11:	Continue to work with CDOT and evaluate the feasibility of designing a low maintenance, vegetated median in the historic downtown between Maple and Harrison Streets, and pursue the opportunity if the circumstances permit.
Policy 9.1.12:	Ensure the appropriate scale and design of vegetation in sidewalk and bulb-out planters to and develop bulb out planters in downtown when possible to calm traffic and enhance the urban forest.
Policy 9.1.13:	Maintain and improve wildlife habitats in the City through the encouragement of native landscaping, improved control of pets, preservation of wetlands and provision of water, and the maintenance and provision of breeding habitat.
Policy 9.1.14:	Consider requiring tree canopy shading of a percentage of new parking areas, with maintenance standards for trees, and strive to improve landscaping in City parking lots to allow water infiltration and to increase the tree canopy shading paved surfaces.
Policy 9.1.15:	Consider offering incentives to encourage land owners of existing privately owned parking areas to provide a tree canopy to shade paved surfaces.
<b>See Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Spaces policies 8.1.10 to 8.1.20 for more policies on expanding the urban forest and gardens.</b>	
<b>Long-Term Objective:</b>	<b>To maintain and establish natural areas within the City limits to preserve critical lands, and provide outdoor educational and recreational experiences that meet the needs of City residents and visitors.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning Division, Developers, Property Owners, Cortez Cultural Center Bird Festival Committee, Parks and Rec. Dept., Local Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 9.1.16:	Actively plan for the future preservation of natural areas within the City limits.
Policy 9.1.17:	Follow the Critical Lands Plan and other future land use plans to preserve critical lands as natural areas when appropriate.
Policy 9.1.18:	Strive to increase the percentage of public natural areas in the City and areas pending annexation for residents to enjoy by considering increased density for developments and other incentives for neighborhoods that protect and maintain public natural areas and open space.
Policy 9.1.19:	Explore opportunities for establishing and maintaining natural areas along Hartman Draw and McElmo Creek as the City expands.
Policy 9.1.20:	Maintain the Carpenter Natural Area and expand the area and amenities when appropriate. Promote visitation of the Natural Area.
Policy 9.1.21:	Advocate for continued visitor opportunities and appropriate maintenance of the Hawkins Preserve by the Cortez Cultural Center and promote sensitive and appropriate use of the public natural area and other public natural areas that may be established by the city or other private or public organizations.
<b>See the Parks and Recreation Chapter for more policies on the urban forest and canopy, landscaping, and expanding the parklands and green space.</b>	
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To actively combat invasive species in the City.</b>

<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Police Dept., Pest Control agencies and businesses, Parks and Rec. Dept., Developers, Landscapers, Seasonal and Year-round Nurseries</i>
Policy 9.1.22:	Enforce the regulations to suppress noxious weeds within the City and establish a comprehensive eradication program for invasive species that is well developed and carefully planned, using Integrated Pest Management practices and principals when feasible, so as not to harm the health of the environment or residents.
Policy 9.1.23:	Consider requiring environmentally sensitive Integrated Pest Management practices to combat invasive species and pests in the City.
Policy 9.1.24:	Promote programs that safely assist with the management and eradication of noxious weeds.
Policy 9.1.25:	Consider programs and policies for the maintenance of noxious weeds in empty lots within the City.
Policy 9.1.26:	Continue to carefully assess the landscaping designs of new developments to ensure that weeds and invasive species are not being propagated.
Policy 9.1.27:	Work with the local plant nurseries, including seasonal nurseries, to ensure that potentially invasive species are not intentionally planted or sold in the community.
Policy 9.1.28:	Encourage nurseries, landscapers, and residents to xeriscape and plant native species in the City.
Policy 9.1.29:	Leverage City resources to assist in tamarisk control efforts in drainages within the City.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To keep the urban landscape maintained free of trash, junk, and debris.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Planning Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., Local Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 9.1.30:	Enhance community clean up events in ways that involve diverse organizations and bring neighborhoods together, seeking public/private partnerships and offering minor incentives for participation such as barbeques, recognition, and/or honors credits for students.
Policy 9.1.31:	Continually enforce the City's maintenance and littering ordinances.
Policy 9.1.32:	Promote programs that encourage residents to maintain private property.
Policy 9.1.33:	Continue street sweeping program and regularly scheduled clean-up of parks and trails.
Policy 9.1.34:	Regularly evaluate the placement and pick-up schedules of trash and recycling receptacles, and expand refuse and recycling services as necessary to minimize overflow and littering and maximize use of the recycling program.
<b>Goal 9.2:</b>	<b>Help To Protect Natural Biodiversity And Critical Lands In The Natural Environment Surrounding The City Of Cortez Through Coordinated Management, Education, Legislation, Incentives, And Requirements.</b>
<b>Long-Term Objective</b>	<b><i>To establish a Critical Lands Plan for property within the City or pending annexation.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Federal, State, and County public land managers, Montezuma County, Montezuma Land Conservancy, Planning Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., GIS, Developers</i>
Policy 9.2.1:	Participate in the inventory of critical lands and natural resource values within the City and areas pending annexation in conjunction with Montezuma County, the Montezuma Land Conservancy, local experts, and other state and federal organizations.
Policy 9.2.2:	Consider creating a City Critical Lands Plan that addresses conservation, mitigation, reclamation, and rehabilitation requirements.
Policy 9.2.3:	Preserve and maintain areas that have historical significance, environmental sensitivity, natural beauty, cultural value, and high agricultural potential by establishing mitigation requirements for property of significant environmental or cultural value. Identify these areas in the City Critical Lands Plan and/or other future land use planning documents.

Policy 9.2.4:	Advocate for the construction of a database that identifies the location, type, and quality of critical lands and resource values within the City and areas pending annexation and that identifies critical lands to be conserved through the course of development or annexation.
Policy 9.2.5:	Participate in countywide programs to maintain agricultural use of the best agricultural lands around the City in conjunction with other governmental and non-governmental organizations when appropriate.
Policy 9.2.6:	Consider the use of cluster-development and other higher density development allowances of non-critical land as a balancing policy to preserve open space and minimize impacts on natural and cultural resources, especially those identified in the City Critical Lands Plan.
Policy 9.2.7:	Promote the preservation of outstanding natural and cultural resources and vital resources such as soil, water, air, vegetation, and wildlife on public and private land.
Policy 9.2.8:	Protect important wildlife habitat and corridors within the City and make appropriate comments on projects in the Three-Mile Potential Growth Area that will disturb these critical lands.
Policy 9.2.9:	Promote "Best Management Practices" for land uses in surrounding jurisdictions.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To encourage conservation of stream corridors.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning Division, Developers, Army Corps of Engineers, Montezuma Land Conservancy, Other Governmental and Non-Governmental Orgs.</i>
Policy 9.2.10:	Discourage changing the course of natural streams unless part of a restoration project.
Policy 9.2.11:	Discourage the damming of the natural flow of streams and encourage maintenance of all stream corridors.
Policy 9.2.12:	Promote appropriate governmental and non-governmental organizations in efforts to enhance the protection of streams from the impacts of various public lands uses such as mining, grazing, logging, and recreation that will affect the City water supply.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To mitigate the impacts of growth on valuable natural resources, including those resources that contribute to the economy and quality of life.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning Division, Montezuma Land Conservancy, Other Governmental and Non-Governmental Orgs.</i>
Policy 9.2.13:	Coordinate with other governmental and non-governmental organizations to facilitate the conservation of critical lands.
Policy 9.2.14:	Provide incentives and explore mechanisms for protection/enhancement of identified critical lands within and adjacent to corporate limits.
Policy 9.2.15:	Use capital investments and funding strategies to direct growth to areas that can accommodate development with minimal impacts on natural resources.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To actively combat invasive species around the City.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Montezuma County, Land Owners adjacent to the City, Public Lands Agencies</i>
Policy 9.2.16:	Promote the services of the Montezuma County Agricultural Extension office and other educational organizations or businesses that combat invasive species.
Policy 9.2.17:	Promote continued efforts of Montezuma County to enforce maintenance standards in the One-Mile Urban Services Area for the control of noxious weeds.
Policy 9.2.18:	Promote efforts of public lands agencies and local ranchers to restore native biodiversity to public lands through the enhanced management of noxious weeds.
Policy 9.2.19:	Promote Tamarisk control projects and assist in control efforts in drainages around the City as appropriate.
<b>Goal 9.3:</b>	<b><i>Establish Sustainable Community And Rooftop Gardens And Landscaping That Are Noticeable And Integral Parts Of The Physical Landscape.</i></b>

<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To encourage sustainable community and household gardening practices.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Local Nurseries, Parks and Rec. Dept., Montezuma County, Developers, Landscapers, Arborists, Cortez Garden Club</i>
Policy 9.3.1:	Encourage education about the propagation of native plants and heirloom garden varieties.
Policy 9.3.2:	Include labeled landscaping examples in City landscaping and utilize xeriscaping and native vegetation in the urban landscape as appropriate.
Policy 9.3.3:	Promote the use of biological pest control, plant rotation, and other best management gardening and landscaping practices.
Policy 9.3.4:	Promote the County Agricultural Extension service to guide pruning, planting choice, maintenance practices, and gardening and assess the need for a City service.
Policy 9.3.5:	Carefully design and maintain the floral diversity within the City.
Policy 9.3.6:	Continue to carefully assess the landscaping designs of new developments for suitability of proposed landscaping to site environmental conditions.
<b>Long-Term Objective</b>	<b><i>To encourage the development of community and rooftop gardens.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Building and Planning Divisions, Local Nurseries, Montezuma County, Developers, Landscapers, Arborists, Cortez Garden Club</i>
Policy 9.3.7:	Create a regulatory environment that encourages community and rooftop gardening when safety, land use compatibility, and water supplies can be sufficiently addressed.
Policy 9.3.8:	Consider adopting rooftop gardening and landscaping guidelines to encourage development of such vegetation on buildings that are structurally capable with adequate access. Regularly evaluate any guidelines to ensure that they are current with State water laws.
Policy 9.3.9:	Consider providing incentives for construction that incorporates appropriate rooftop vegetation and includes a maintenance plan for the roof.
Policy 9.3.10:	Including rooftop vegetation for City buildings whenever feasible to set an example.
Policy 9.3.11:	Participate in the development of a community garden, and dedicate a portion of City property for the development community garden if community members or an organization will take responsibility for creating and maintaining the garden.
<b>Goal 9.4:</b>	<b><i>Maintain Healthy Populations Of Native Animals In And Around The City.</i></b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To promote co-existence of people and wildlife species in the City.</i></b>
<b>Key Participant:</b>	<i>Parks and Rec. Dept., Division of Wildlife, Local Clubs and Orgs., Cortez Cultural Center</i>
Policy 9.4.1:	Promote programs and provide education on responsible ways of sharing the urban environment with native plant and animal communities.
Policy 9.4.2:	Consider providing residents with educational materials or programs on sharing the urban environment with native animals when appropriate.
Policy 9.4.3:	Promote the provision of wildlife habitat in residential yards when appropriate.
Policy 9.4.4:	Maintain native plant diversity on public property and in natural areas.
Policy 9.4.5:	Consider installing bird houses in City natural areas.
Policy 9.4.6:	Promote education on the importance of pollinators to minimize any unnecessary destruction of pollinators' homes, and provide educational materials or programs as necessary.
<b>Goal 9.5:</b>	<b><i>Carefully Manage The Air, Water, And Soil On Which City Residents Depend.</i></b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To enhance and maintain high air quality standards.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Planning Division, Montezuma County, League of Women Voters, Farmers and Ranchers, Empire Electric Association</i>

Policy 9.5.1:	Collaborate with the Montezuma County Health Department, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and other community organizations to establish air quality monitoring and particulate matter studies.
Policy 9.5.2:	Regularly evaluate air quality measurements and take appropriate measures to mitigate poor air quality.
Policy 9.5.3:	Support efforts to control slash and burn agriculture in the county.
Policy 9.5.4:	Perform dust abatement on non-paved City streets as needed, and support county efforts to improve dust abatement from roads and other land uses.
Policy 9.5.5:	Promote policies and enforcement actions in the region that protect against environmental contamination.
Policy 9.5.6:	Consider developing a customized Dark Sky Ordinance to minimize nuisance and light pollution, improve energy efficiency, and generally enhance the quality of life for residents at night, beginning with new development.
Policy 9.5.7:	Continue to collaborate with the electric utility provider, to retrofit street lights with appropriate head shields and cut-off shields to redirect light downward.
Policy 9.5.8:	Make appropriate comments on projects that emit hazardous levels of toxic fumes and pollutants that affect the City of Cortez.
Policy 9.5.9:	Develop policies to minimize noxious odors and noises from traffic, households, and industrial uses in the community.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To ensure that an adequate supply of high quality water is available for residents and the environment.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Water Treatment Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., General Services Dept., Cortez Sanitation District, Developers, Community Clubs and Orgs., Public Land Agencies</i>
Policy 9.5.10:	Plan for the availability of appropriate water saving and water cleansing technologies.
Policy 9.5.11:	Consider a commitment to using the most up to date technology, best management practices, and biological and other scientific methods, for reducing water usage, minimizing synthetic pesticide applications, and increasing green space for residents, visitors, and wildlife.
Policy 9.5.12:	Continue to evaluate the water needs of the community and capacity of the water treatment facility. Obtain water rights and upgrade the water treatment plant as appropriate.
Policy 9.5.13:	Support the efforts of the Cortez Sanitation District to maintain the sewers to avoid groundwater and surface water contamination.
Policy 9.5.14:	Any industry proposing liquid contaminants must fully treat all contaminants before any water reaches the public water system.
Policy 9.5.15:	Take steps to eliminate illicit discharges into the storm water drainage system and establish enforcement mechanisms when necessary and promote public education on how to dispose of liquid waste that contaminates the City water supply.
Policy 9.5.16:	Promote efforts of the Cortez Sanitation District to educate the residents on not discharging contaminants into the sewers.
Policy 9.5.17:	Promote the passive on-site treatment and infiltration of storm water to mitigate the impacts of increased impervious surfaces from development on the watershed.
Policy 9.5.18:	Encourage any projects or policies that will improve or protect the water quality in the Dolores and McElmo drainage basins.
Policy 9.5.19:	Discourage inappropriate development over or adjacent to groundwater recharge areas and aquifers and promote preventative measures.
Policy 9.5.20:	Develop groundwater monitoring wells if concerns arise, and promote the county in any efforts to monitor groundwater quality.
<b>Mid-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To establish a community culture of water conservation.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Police Dept., Public Works Dept., Developers, Arborists, Local Nurseries</i>

Policy 9.5.21:	Enforce daytime watering restrictions.
Policy 9.5.22:	Consider establishing a rate structure that encourages water conservation.
Policy 9.5.23:	Establish guidelines for xeriscaping or native landscaping and consider adopting requirements for new developments.
Policy 9.5.24:	Initiate an incentive program for installing water saving appliances in homes and businesses if feasible.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To protect the health and productivity of soil from rapid erosion, salination, mineral and nutrient depletion, and contamination.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning Division, City Engineer, Developers, Public Lands Agencies, Montezuma County, Property Owners Adjacent to the City, Police Dept.</i>
Policy 9.5.25:	Follow development requirements that minimize the impacts of surface water runoff on soil stability when development projects reduce vegetation and ground permeability.
Policy 9.5.26:	Promote efforts of the appropriate governmental and non-governmental organizations to enhance the protection of soils from the impacts of various public and private lands uses such as mining, grazing, logging, recreation, and residential and industrial development, especially in the City and for properties pending annexation.
Policy 9.5.27:	Promote programs, such as the County Agricultural Extension Office, that provide education and assistance with sustainable soil management for agriculture, including biological pest control, crop rotation, fallow soil regeneration time, and water management.
Policy 9.5.28:	Encourage the maintenance of undeveloped and fallow property to prevent excessive chemical weed management to control overgrown weeds after years of neglect.
Policy 9.5.29:	Discourage the excessive use of chemical contaminants of soil from domestic users.
Policy 9.5.30:	Consider establishing development requirements that minimize soil contamination from agricultural, commercial, and industrial land uses.
Policy 9.5.31:	Promote programs that improve drainage and manage irrigation water salinity levels in order to control soil and groundwater salinity.
<b>Goal 9.6:</b>	<b><i>Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions As A City And Plan For Possible Impacts Of Global Climate Change.</i></b>
<b>Long-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To reduce fossil fuel power consumption of existing buildings and their operations by at least 15% by 2020.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>General Services Dept., Building Division, Planning Division, City Engineer, Empire Electric Association, Montezuma Climate Action Network, Other Community Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 9.6.1:	Work with Empire Electric and other organizations to conduct an energy assessment audit to determine the current community wide carbon footprint of Cortez and to examine the best methods of improving efficiency, reducing energy consumption, and changing energy sources.
Policy 9.6.2:	Consider capping Citywide energy use at 2010 per capita levels.
Policy 9.6.3:	Consider supporting programs that assist with minimizing the carbon footprint and reducing energy consumption in buildings, industrial uses, and transportation.
Policy 9.6.4:	Evaluate the benefits of green building practices and consider incentives, especially technical and professional assistance, to developers that utilize green-building practices that contribute to the reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions.
Policy 9.6.5:	Develop a customized Green Building Code for the City of Cortez that may include use of high-grade construction materials, "green" construction techniques that reduce waste during production, and other requirements for the long term efficiency of the structure.
Policy 9.6.6:	Consider establishing incentives to replace inefficient appliances, lighting, wiring, insulation, and other out of date, inefficient designs and materials with Energy Star Materials or LEED appropriate designs.
Policy 9.6.7:	Consider developing incentives for new construction that takes advantage of passive solar orientation and design.

Policy 9.6.8:	Work with the Montezuma Climate Action Network and other community organization to reduce local carbon emissions and increase renewable, clean energy sources as a percentage of our reduced energy demands.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To set an example in community greenhouse gas reductions by continually improving the sustainability and efficiency of the construction, design, and furnishing of City facilities.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>General Services Dept., Building Maintenance, Purchasing, Empire Electric Association</i>
Policy 9.6.9:	Exceed minimum design standards for new municipal facilities, setting an example of good building and site designs and pursuing LEED certification when feasible.
Policy 9.6.10:	Continually evaluate energy use and opportunities for conservation. Utilize efficient fixtures and appliances and minimize the number of high demand items.
Policy 9.6.11:	Ensure that new City equipment is among the most energy and resource efficient technologies for the intended purpose.
Policy 9.6.12:	Incorporate passive solar orientation in new public construction projects and install solar technology whenever financially feasible.
Policy 9.6.13:	Retrofit City facilities for maximum energy efficiency when appropriate.
<b>Long-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To become a solar energy leader in the State of Colorado.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>General Services Dept., Empire Electric Association, Developers, Property Owners, Business Owners, Local Entrepreneurs</i>
Policy 9.6.14:	Evaluate solar projects in the City, and pursue opportunities to expand and enhance solar programs when appropriate.
Policy 9.6.15:	Promote distributor generation and the location of generation scale clean, renewable electricity in and around Cortez.
Policy 9.6.16:	Explore all possible incentive programs for renewable power production to encourage an energy economy for Cortez and the surrounding community.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To leverage vegetation as an important asset for the conversion of carbon dioxide into oxygen.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Parks and Rec. Dept., Planning Division, Montezuma County, Developers, Landscapers, Builders, Realtors</i>
Policy 9.6.17:	Support efforts to improve the capacity of the urban forest to filter City carbon emissions.
Policy 9.6.18:	Encourage the use of environmentally friendly construction materials to minimize local impacts on deforestation, through incentive programs, management of imported goods, and alternative building codes for environmentally friendly construction types.
Policy 9.6.19:	Promote the use of existing structures to minimize new construction when adequate vacant structures are available to meet a particular need.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To prepare for potential local adverse conditions caused by global climate change.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Climate Scientists, Local Clubs and Orgs., All City Departments</i>
Policy 9.6.20:	Evaluate the potential effects of global climate change on local population trends and social, economic, and environmental conditions. Pursue any necessary strategies to deal with foreseeable adverse conditions such as subsistence resource security.

## CHAPTER 10—PARKS, RECREATION, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

*"Open spaces enhance sustainable economic development. They provide crucial places for recreation, education, and aesthetic and spiritual inspiration and enrichment. The preservation of natural spaces is a victory of spiritual values over short-term material greed. Progress entails protecting natural open spaces so they will be available in their natural state for our children and later generations. That's what responsible, forward-looking stewardship is about."*

- *Ross C. "Rocky" Anderson, Former Mayor of Salt Lake City, UT (Born 1951)*

### OVERVIEW



**Cortez Park Lands** -Prideaux RD Photography

Parks and Open Space are the Gems of Cortez. In 2008, the area of the City of Cortez was approximately 4,000 acres containing approximately 519 acres in public green space and open space including 444 in City ownership. That translates to: 12.9% public park, golf, open space, and median lands. Cortez has been designated as a "Tree City USA" by the National Arbor Day Foundation and the Colorado State Forest Service since 1992, having at least one public tree for every 10 residents.



**Parque de Vida Pond** Prideaux RD Photography

The City Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Board set the goal of maintaining at least the 12% open space in the City as the City expands. The land in City ownership is currently distributed fairly evenly between natural areas, developed park land, and the City Golf Course. However, the City has a much larger percentage of natural area in or surrounded by the City outside of City ownership, such as the Hawkins Preserve, owned and managed by the Cortez Cultural Center, and other privately owned areas that have yet to be developed.

This element of the Comprehensive Plan is meant to provide further insight and direction for all City departments and partnering agencies to maintain the public parkland, recreational, and open space needs of City residents and visitors. The Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Board has adopted a separate Master Plan for the Parks and Recreation Department. This Comprehensive Plan chapter reinforces Parks and Recreation Department directions and suggests a few areas of collaboration. Refer to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for details on Parks and Recreation Programming and facilities and refer to the Golf Master Plan for golf program details.

## EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES

The City of Cortez prides itself on the Parks and Recreation system that has developed over time. With nearly 125 acres of developed parks and a 145 acre golf course, the City can boast of its recreation capabilities. The City also owns and manages several natural areas, totaling over 138 acres. Cortez Parks quadruple the nationally recommended standards for public parkland. In addition to what the City owns, there are several developed public and private parks such as those at public schools and at worship centers. These recreation areas are also important to City residents, and the City encourages other entities to develop and maintain such park lands. The extensive undeveloped natural areas, not only publicly or privately owned within the City, but also surrounding the City, contribute to the importance of natural recreation to City residents and visitors. Area residents rely on the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Department of the Interior Public Lands, State of Colorado Land, and Ute Mountain Tribal Land for recreation and aesthetic enjoyment. Within the City of Cortez, many medians, bulb outs, street planters, and other small landscaped areas also contribute to the aesthetic quality of the City.



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Planter  
Prideaux RD Photography

Though the extensive developed parks within the City and the seemingly endless public natural areas near Cortez are integral parts of the community's quality of life, developed recreation facilities also contribute to Cortez resident's quality of life. The Recreation Center was opened in 2004, offering two multi-purpose rooms for classes and meetings, baby sitting, racquetball courts, a gymnasium (for basketball, volleyball and other gym sports), indoor track, indoor swimming pool (with diving board, competition pool, lazy river, 145' water slide, and family pool), fitness area with cardiovascular and weight lifting equipment, and a climbing wall. The City also has numerous fields and courts for a variety of team sports, and strives to continue to develop field and courts as



**Reflection Pond and Recreation Center** - Prideaux RD Photography

particular sports grow. Facilities for individual and family recreation, such as trails for biking, a skate park, a BMX park, pavilions, ponds, and playground equipment, also add to the variety of recreational opportunities available to residents without ever having to leave the City boundaries. **Table 10.1** gives a detailed account of the distribution of City of Cortez Parkland.



Family Pool - Prideaux RD Photography

<b>Table 10.1: Cortez City Park Land 2007</b>					
from Parks and Recreation Master Plan					
<b>Facility</b>	<b>Natural</b>	<b>Lake</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Undeveloped</b>
Cortez City Park				9.00	
Centennial Park				22.00	
Montezuma Park				0.50	
Dolores Road Park				4.00	
Denny Lake Park	11.00	17.00		5.00	
Cortez Softball Complex				9.00	
Cortez Plaza Park				4.00	
Third Street Pocket Park				0.25	
Forth Street Pocket Park				0.25	
Parque de Vida				56.00	
Parque de Vida Rotary Fields				10.00	
Shady Lane Kiwanis Park				1.77	
BMX Track				3.00	
Fairway Estates Park Site					0.50
Speck Park Site					6.00
Downtown Planters			0.25		
Montezuma Ave Medians			2.60		
Market Street Medians			0.50		
Cortez City Hall			0.50		
Fountain Island			0.50		
South Broadway Medians			1.00		
North Broadway Medians			1.00		
Brandon's Gate Medians			0.25		
Rodeo Medians			0.09		
Brandon's Gate Park			4.27		
Southern Bluffs Medians			2.15		
Southern Bluffs Natural Area	33.09				
Carpenter Natural area	76.00				
Chism Natural Area	8.34				
Wallace Natural Area	4.00				
Denny Lake Dog Park	6.00				
<b>Total</b>	<b>138.43</b>	<b>17.00</b>	<b>13.11</b>	<b>124.77</b>	<b>6.50</b>
Total acres all facilities					299.81
Conquistador Golf Course					145
Total Acres					444.81

### FUTURE PARKLAND EXPANSION

While it is unrealistic to expect or plan for the maintenance of all of the undeveloped private natural areas in their current state, planning for the preservation of natural green belts will be important to the preservation of the sense of connection to the natural environment that one can have living in or visiting Cortez. The City should strive to maintain natural open space within the City to preserve view sheds, wildlife corridors, drainages, and low impact outdoor recreation. The City should always evaluate opportunities for the procurement of park/area that can be enjoyed for its undeveloped character or that can be reasonably developed and maintained as park land.

Developed park land also serves many of the community's recreation needs. Maintaining the distribution of developed recreation areas throughout the City and developing recreational opportunities commensurate with neighborhood needs should be the primary focus for new park land development. Multi-use opportunities should also be preserved and expanded whenever possible.

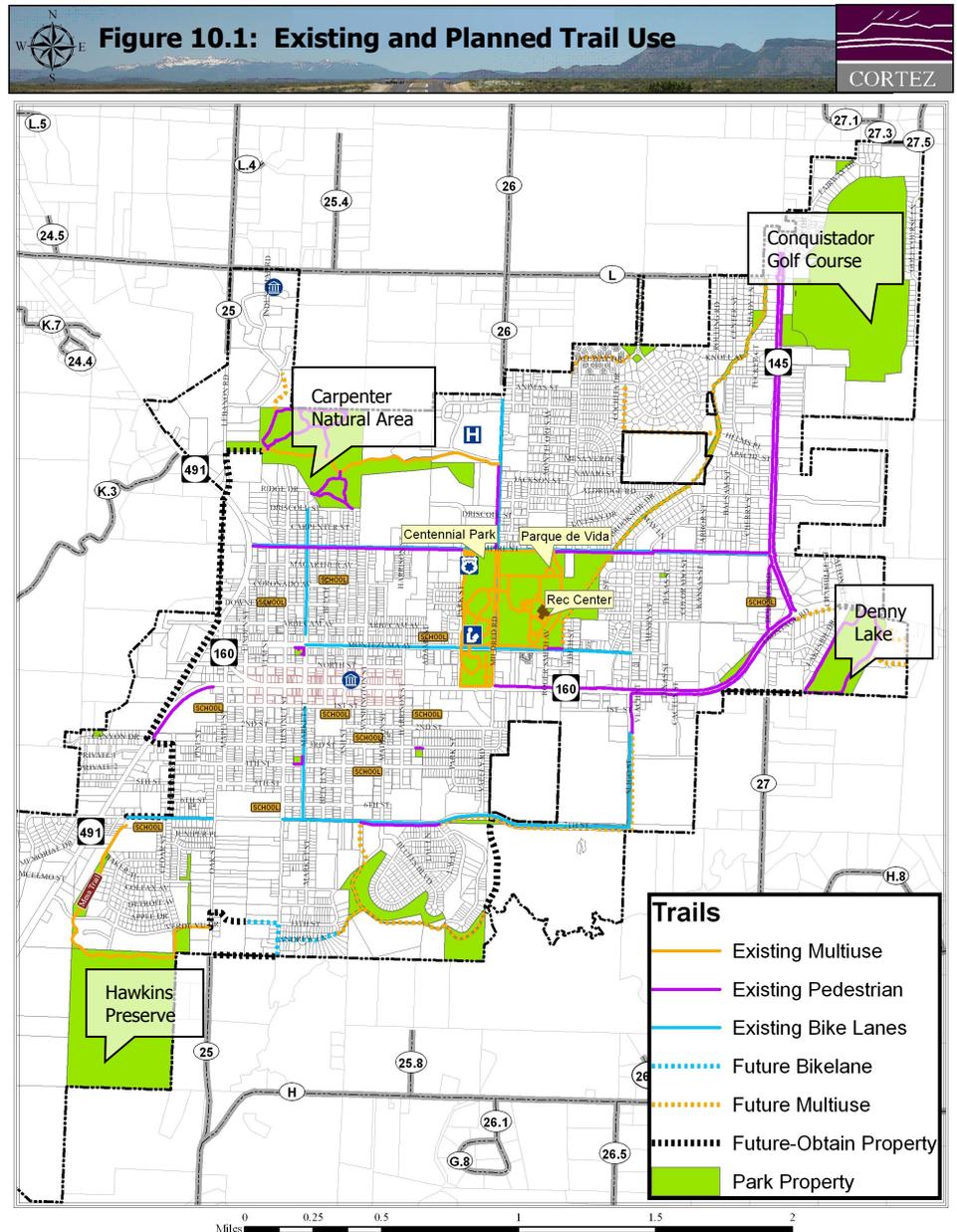
## Trails

A beneficial addition to the Parks and Recreation Department park land and trail system would be a natural trail area at the bottom of McElmo Creek if environmental impacts can be sufficiently minimized. The trailhead could begin at the property of the Cortez Sanitation District adjacent to U.S. Highway 160 (South Broadway) and extend east through the City and eventually beyond the city limits. Other potential trail developments include the Cortez Lateral irrigation ditch easement and future north/south trail connections on the west side of the City, along Hartman Draw. See **Figure 10.1** for a map of the existing trails and their uses, and potential future trails within the City of Cortez.

## Natural Open Space

Dedicated City Open Space includes Denny Lake, Carpenter Natural Area, and Southern Bluffs Natural Area as well as a few small pocket park natural areas. These Natural Areas provide a connection with nature uncommon to urban areas. Maintaining a balance of these undeveloped natural areas with developed park land and urban densities may become a challenge. Some of the private natural areas that City residents enjoy are also likely to be developed, and ensuring that some of the public land dedication is maintained as natural area will be important to the education and environment of residents. The availability of buildable lots throughout the City for infill development and flexibility in density regulations should help to alleviate the inconsistency between the maintenance of open space and growth on the urban periphery for many years to come.

In addition to the Open Spaces owned by the City, the Hawkins Preserve is another natural open space maintained for public use. The Hawkins Preserve is a 122.45-acre parcel of primarily undeveloped land that has been dedicated as a natural and cultural preserve for the purpose of developing an informal classroom for the education of the children and adults of Montezuma County. The land was donated to the City of Cortez by Jack Hawkins, and was annexed into the City in 2005 by approval of the Cortez City



Council. The Preserve is managed by the Cortez Cultural Center. The Preserve has rich natural and cultural resources, educational programming, and easy recreational access on paved and primitive trails.

The City has developed a multi-use trail (non-motorized traffic only) across the northern portion of the Hawkins Preserve, and has developed the Mesa Trail, which provides access from the northwest. Development of access from the northeast is underway, and will continue to be built out as part of the trails system that will circumnavigate the City. Partnerships of this kind should be maintained and opportunities to build, expand, and create new partnerships for the preservation of appropriate open spaces should be developed. Some of these partnerships may include private property owners of critical lands, and owners of existing private open spaces should they choose to develop their land.



**ACTION PROGRAM**

<b>PARKS, RECREATION, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACES GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES</b>	
<b>Goal 10.1:</b>	<b>Make Cortez A Place Where People Come From All Around To Recreate And Enjoy The Environment.</b>
<b>Long-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To make Cortez a community recognized for both the cultural and natural landscapes around it and within it.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Colorado Welcome Center, CDOT, Cortez Cultural Center, Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, Mesa Verde National Park, Public Lands Agencies, Parks and Rec. Dept., clubs and orgs. that promote area tourism and recreation</i>
<b>Policy 10.1.1:</b>	Enhance the City’s image as a multicultural “Oasis Before the Mesa” or some other catch phrase that highlights the cultural significance of Cortez in the Montezuma Valley.
<b>Policy 10.1.2:</b>	Support the Cortez Cultural Center in its efforts to preserve the Hawkins archaeological site and to expand visitation of the site by locals and tourists, when possible.
<b>Policy 10.1.3:</b>	Promote recreational and educational programs and projects to maintain and preserve the natural and cultural environment in the Hawkins Preserve.
<b>Policy 10.1.4:</b>	Develop archaeological and historic sites in the community as recreational sites, when the site can be responsibly leveraged as a tourist attraction and educational tool.
<b>Policy 10.1.5:</b>	Strive to be a mecca for outdoor recreation by leveraging the City as a destination in the center of a natural landscape with a wealth of recreational opportunities, from hiking, biking, climbing, and horseback riding to four wheeling, rock crawling, jet skiing, and motor cycling.
<b>Policy 10.1.6:</b>	Promote the Scenic Byways and “Trail of the Ancients” that come to Cortez.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To keep the Parks and Recreation Master Plan current including its strategies to provide the City with park and open space amenities which will provide aesthetic and recreational opportunities for all, while conserving and preserving the landscape and cultural qualities that make Cortez unique.</i></b>

<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Parks and Rec. Dept., Park, Recreation, and Forestry Board, Golf Advisory Board, Conquistador Golf Course Management, Mesa Verde Country Tourism Bureau, Local Residents</i>
<b>Policy 10.1.7:</b>	Develop and regularly update a parks, recreation, golf course, open space, and trails capital improvements plan that inventories existing facilities, identifies proposed facilities and acquisitions, estimates improvement and acquisition costs, and proposes funding alternatives.
<b>Policy 10.1.8:</b>	Include the Conquistador Golf Course Master Plan as a part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
<b>Mid-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To expand the urban forests and gardens to make the urban environment a more healthy and desirable place to spend time.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning and Zoning Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., Cortez Gardening Club, Local Arborists, CSU Agricultural Extension Office</i>
<b>Policy 10.1.9:</b>	Keep the City's landscaping requirements of the Land Use Code current.
<b>Policy 10.1.10:</b>	Implement policies to expand the public and private landscaping in the City, especially that which shades the neighborhoods and commercial areas.
<b>Policy 10.1.11:</b>	Establish development standards to require a tree canopy to shade parking areas that includes maintenance standards for the trees.
<b>Policy 10.1.12:</b>	Develop and follow a specific street tree planting and maintenance program and consider a cost share program for street tree planting and maintenance.
<b>Policy 10.1.13:</b>	Consider supporting City residents in establishing and maintaining their trees.
<b>Policy 10.1.14:</b>	Develop a program to expand shading and drought tolerant landscaping at existing businesses and homes, including incentives for landscaping beyond requirements.
<b>Policy 10.1.15:</b>	Determine the feasibility of establishing a City Arboretum.
<b>Policy 10.1.16:</b>	Work with the CSU Agricultural Extension office to promote urban forestry and gardening and provide technical assistance to city residents and business owners to create and maintain a protective canopy and yard or rooftop gardens.
<b>Policy 10.1.17:</b>	Consider developing guidelines for rooftop gardening to facilitate the safe, aesthetically pleasing development of such gardens.
<b>Policy 10.1.18:</b>	Support efforts to establish community gardens, setting aside public land when appropriate.
<b>Policy 10.1.19:</b>	Enforce the regulations to suppress noxious weeds within the City and establish a comprehensive eradication program for invasive species that is well developed and carefully planned so as not to harm the health of the environment or residents.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To maintain the Conquistador Golf Course as a recreation destination for locals and visitors.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Golf Advisory Board, Mesa Verde Country Tourism Bureau, Public Works Dept., CDOT, Public Works Dept.</i>
<b>Policy 10.1.20:</b>	Extend and improve the Conquistador Golf Course parking lot as appropriate.
<b>Policy 10.1.21:</b>	Pursue the installation of a new sign for the golf course that is visible to traffic traveling either direction on Hwy 145.
<b>Policy 10.1.22:</b>	Consider extending the Golf Pro Shop to make more space for retail merchandise, a dining room, and a larger kitchen as funding permits.
<b>Policy 10.1.23:</b>	Consider construction of a new maintenance shop with eight to ten bays, an office, and a restroom to appropriately serve the golf course and maintenance staff.
<b>Policy 10.1.24:</b>	Consider developing shelters on the course to protect players from fast approaching thunderstorms.
<b>Policy 10.1.25:</b>	Consider completing construction of golf course cart paths in a short time frame to minimize the escalating cost of construction.
<b>Policy 10.1.26:</b>	Explore funding opportunities for the golf course including grants, capital investments from a percentage of sales tax surpluses, and increased course rates.

<b>Goal 10.2:</b>	<b>Parks And Recreational Opportunities Make Cortez A Great Place To Be, Not Only For Residents, But As Assets That Draw New Residents, Businesses, And Visitors.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To make recreational opportunities available to meet the needs of local residents.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Parks and Rec. Dept., Friends of Recreation, RE-1 School District, Senior Services, Cortez Public Library, Local Clubs and Orgs.</i>
<b>Policy 10.2.1:</b>	Make and maintain provisions throughout the park system that promote accessibility to all residents, including physical access to meet the needs of elderly and handicapped citizens and economical user rates for low-income families and individuals.
<b>Policy 10.2.2:</b>	Evaluate the recreation needs of all youth in the community and make the development of programming and facilities to entertain more local youth year round a priority, as funding permits. Recreational activities suggested by youth include, a guitar/music studio and performance center, an ice/roller skating rink, an arcade, a multiplex theatre, expansion of the skate park and skating routes to the skate park, and a teen hangout/night club.
<b>Policy 10.2.3:</b>	Assess the adequacy of public recreation amenities in neighborhoods and expand amenities in neighborhood park facilities in areas where public playground equipment or game courts are substandard or non-existent, when financially feasible.
<b>Policy 10.2.4:</b>	Consider developing new pocket parks that are low maintenance or will be perpetually privately maintained in areas that are isolated from public parks or where neighborhood demographics demand particular local recreation needs.
<b>Policy 10.2.5:</b>	Promote daytime activities that bring together stay at home parents and their young children.
<b>Policy 10.2.6:</b>	Maintain and expand recreational opportunities for individuals of all ages and interests.
<b>Policy 10.2.7:</b>	Maintain the community recreational center and continually improve and expand programming to meet the needs of the community.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To expand public land and facilities available for recreation as the community grows.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Parks and Rec. Dept., Corps of Engineers, Montezuma Land Conservancy, General Services Dept., Cortez Cultural Center</i>
<b>Policy 10.2.8:</b>	Protect and acquire amenities such as Carpenter Natural Area and Denny Lake for the enjoyment of all residents and visitors, when appropriate.
<b>Policy 10.2.9:</b>	Encourage retention of lands that are not suitable for development (i.e. steep grades, poor soils, wetlands, etc.) as open space areas or as potential recreational areas where appropriate.
<b>Policy 10.2.10:</b>	As resources become available, acquire lands contiguous with City boundaries for future open space and parks facilities in accordance with future land use maps and plans.
<b>Policy 10.2.11:</b>	Pursue private dedications and other land banking opportunities along natural boundaries, such as Hartman Draw and McElmo Canyon, and irrigation ditch banks, to create open space and trail opportunities.
<b>Policy 10.2.12:</b>	Consider limiting construction of more buildings in City Park, Centennial Park, and Parque de Vida to maintain the open park environment and outdoor recreation space.
<b>Policy 10.2.13:</b>	Promote existing performing arts and cultural recreational opportunities and support the expansion of additional artistic and cultural recreational opportunities to meet the community's growing demand for such recreation.
<b>Policy 10.2.14:</b>	Construct an ice skating and/or roller skating rink if feasible.
<i>See Community and Character 3.1 for more ideas on artistic and cultural recreation.</i>	

<b>Long-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To develop and maintain a network of passive and active greenbelts and greenways consisting of park facilities, open space, conservation easements, and trails.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Parks and Rec. Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Developers, Landscapers, Public Works Dept., Colorado Division of Wildlife, Montezuma County, Mesa Verde Natl. Park</i>
<b>Policy 10.2.15:</b>	Consider “greenbelts” and “greenways” between existing and new areas within the corporate limits along appropriate trail linkages and as buffer areas that provide a form of open space for residents and wildlife.
<b>Policy 10.2.16:</b>	Consider establishing appropriate landscaping and development standards to promote visual aesthetics along pathways throughout the community.
<b>Policy 10.2.17:</b>	Pursue a wide variety of trails for all users throughout the community and the region, from various surfaces and sizes to allowing various uses including bike paths, pedestrian-only, horse paths, pet friendly trails, skate boarding paths, etc.
<b>Policy 10.2.18:</b>	Leverage City owned property for the extension of the trail network as appropriate.
<b>Policy 10.2.19:</b>	Investigate potential for trail/sidewalk linkages between central public areas of the community and peripheral recreation amenities such as Hawkins Preserve, Denny Lake, and Mesa Verde entrance center.
<b>Goal 10.3:</b>	<b>Develop And Maintain An Interconnected System Of Parks And Trails.</b>
<b>Mid-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To provide and develop an extensive trail system that is safe for use by all residents and visitors.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Parks and Rec. Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Developers, Public Works Dept., CDOT, Montezuma County, Mesa Verde National Park, Property Owners, Cortez Animal Shelter, RE-1 School District, Cortez Cultural Center</i>
<b>Policy 10.3.1:</b>	Promote education and community events and programs to maintain trails free of trash, obstructions, and debris.
<b>Policy 10.3.2:</b>	Promote trail safety through the establishment of volunteer or city bike and foot patrols.
<b>Policy 10.3.3:</b>	Pursue funding options to complete the Mesa Trail.
<b>Policy 10.3.4:</b>	Work with appropriate governmental and non-governmental organizations and pursue all funding options to construct the Denny Lake to Mesa Verde Trail.
<b>Policy 10.3.5:</b>	Consider establishing a non-motorized loop trail around the City, following the general layout identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
<b>Policy 10.3.6:</b>	Pursue trail opportunities to connect neighborhoods to existing and future park facilities, conservation areas, and retail centers.
<b>Policy 10.3.7:</b>	As trail use increases and the number of conflicts rises, monitor potential problem areas and construct necessary improvements, such as caution or speed limit signs or maintenance, to facilitate the intended uses on the trails.
<b>Policy 10.3.8:</b>	Strive to maintain a pet friendly community that is also pedestrian friendly by enforcing pet regulations along the trail system to provide comfort for all users, especially in high use areas. Complete the Dog Park and consider designating free-roaming pet areas along trails where provisions can be made to provide security for other users and a trail experience that pet owners can share with their pets.
<b>Policy 10.3.9:</b>	Work with property owners and landholders along feasible routes throughout the City and in adjacent areas to the City to incorporate trail easements and dedications.
<b>Policy 10.3.10:</b>	Explore opportunities to develop trails in existing and future Public Easements and Right of Ways. New City easements should allow the development of trails and pedestrian scale amenities and the city should encourage land owners and utility companies to create future easements that allow trail development where appropriate.
<b>Policy 10.3.11:</b>	Acquire property when feasible, along McElmo Creek and irrigation ditch banks, for trail development where safety permits.
<b>Policy 10.3.12:</b>	Strategically incorporate appropriate lighting, landscaping, and art into the trail system to improve the safety and ambiance of the trail system.

<b>Policy 10.3.13:</b>	Require new, major developments to provide trail linkages and easements from neighborhoods to the trail system where appropriate and encourage other new and existing developments to connect to the trail system.
<b>Goal 10.4:</b>	<b>Leverage the City's resources to continually enhance the urban parks, trails, natural areas, urban forests and gardens, and recreational opportunities in the city.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To finance the continued magnificence of Cortez City Parks, Open Spaces, and recreational programs and facilities, and the expansion of the multi-modal trail network and urban forestry and gardening projects.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Montezuma County, Federal and State Grants Administrators, GOCO, CDOT, Parks and Rec. Dept., National Arbor Day Foundation, Bicycle City</i>
<b>Policy 10.4.1:</b>	Utilize community-wide tax revenues to fund development of community parks to serve all sectors of the City.
<b>Policy 10.4.2:</b>	Pursue alternative funding mechanisms for new parks, recreation, and trails projects.
<b>Policy 10.4.3:</b>	Proactively pursue County, GOCO, and other public and private funds for acquisition and development of parks and recreation facilities.
<b>Policy 10.4.4:</b>	Continue public land dedication and/or cash-in-lieu fees in new developments to provide for a fair and equitable distribution of park facilities for the community at large. Development projects should contribute to the acquisition or improvement of parks and recreation facility sites proportionate to the demand created by the new development.
<b>Policy 10.4.5:</b>	Establish multipurpose uses, such as shaded benches near interpretive signs and City art in downtown areas or Callisthenic stations along trails, to assist in winning grants for further development of an integrated network of parks, trails, recreational opportunities, and urban forests and gardens.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>Work cooperatively with private landowners and organizations and public institutions to enhance the urban parks, trails, natural areas, urban forests and gardens, and recreational opportunities in the City.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning and Zoning Division, Developers, Property Owners, Parks and Rec. Dept., Montezuma Land Conservancy, Colorado Forest Service, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Mesa Verde National Park, Mancos-Dolores Ranger District, Other State and Federal Land Managers, Local Clubs and Orgs.</i>
<b>Policy 10.4.6:</b>	Establish standards encouraging the clustering of residences on developing sites to preserve identified critical lands.
<b>Policy 10.4.7:</b>	Create partnerships with CDOT and local landowners along major thoroughfares through the community to establish a landscaping plan for entryways, and main corridors.
<b>Policy 10.4.8:</b>	Help establish a land stewardship education and incentive program for developers with property that could be utilized for open space. This program should be organized in conjunction with organizations such as the Montezuma Land Conservancy, the Colorado Forest Service, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife.
<b>Policy 10.4.9:</b>	Work cooperatively with other public, non-profit, and private groups to help establish an open space system around the city in accordance with future land use plans and maps, including a network of public lands, natural boundaries, and private conservation areas.
<b>Policy 10.4.10:</b>	Encourage private dedications of open space land or conservation easements in areas adjacent to public open space, natural boundaries, or other locations that support the city's conservation objectives and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

<b>Policy 10.4.11:</b>	Work with Montezuma County and other governing bodies whose residents will benefit from proposed city facilities and amenities to coordinate financing, acquisition, and development of park and recreation facilities.
<b>Policy 10.4.12:</b>	Coordinate parks and recreation facility development with other service providers in the area, such as the school district, the County, and the State.
<b>Policy 10.4.13:</b>	Encourage regional events and new facilities to be located in Cortez through state of the art facilities, staff and volunteer investment and organization, and the active recruitment of appropriate proposed regional facilities.
<b>Policy 10.4.14:</b>	Work with other governmental entities to foster parks and recreation opportunities, such as collaboration for trail access to the visitor center at the entrance of Mesa Verde National Park.
<b>Policy 10.4.15:</b>	Cortez should strive to be the long-range planning leader in the county to foster excellence in all planning processes, including planning for our parks and open spaces.

*“Economic independence is the foundation of the only sort of freedom worth a damn”*

- *Henry Louis Mencken, American Journalist and Satirist (1880-1956)*

**OVERVIEW**

The Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses the future of the City of Cortez's economy and the creation of economic opportunities for current and future City residents. This section includes strategies to sustain existing businesses, diversify the economy, accommodate job growth, encourage new businesses, and increase access to employment for City residents. While economic development is generally defined as the creation of jobs and wealth within a community, it is also much more than that -- it is also about improving the quality of life for residents.

Income and labor statistics for the City of Cortez and surrounding Montezuma County are a good indicator of the need to expand economic opportunities in the area. The 2006 countywide average per capita income was \$28,547, only 78% the national median income in a state averaging 85% of the national average. Census data from 1999 also illustrates the gender gap. Males had a median income of \$30,775, versus \$20,280 for females. 18.6% of the population and 14.8% of families were below the poverty line. Over a quarter of children, 23.3% of those under the age of 18, were living in poverty compared to 18.7% nationally. Similarly, 17.3% of those 65 and older were living below the poverty line. Over 35% of the households in Cortez had an income below \$40,000 in the 2000 census. 2010 census data should provide an update on the economic condition in the City and County, but the obvious need to secure and enhance the local economy remains.

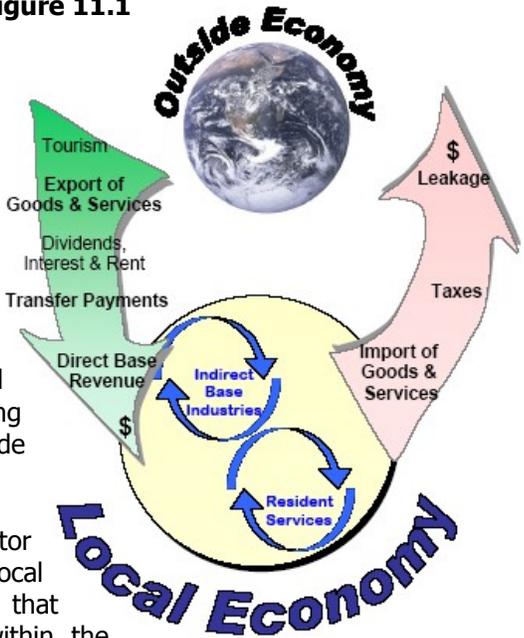
Trends in the global economy are now placing a premium upon community character and quality of life, in a time when many jobs can be performed from remote locations. Companies are realizing the benefit of locating in a community that offers a reasonable commute, a vibrant social life, abundant recreational opportunities, a high natural environment, housing and transportation choices, and quality public services. Leveraging the City's existing resources and ensuring quality essential public services to enhance economic diversity and sustainability will be an important element of economic development in coming years. While the latest technology enables some companies to locate anywhere, the ability to attract suppliers, a strong workforce, and networks have a significant influence on economic vitality. To this end, this chapter will identify existing economic conditions with strengths and weaknesses, goals and objectives for growing the local economy in order to improve the economic condition of Cortez, an emphasis should be placed on encouraging the growth of niche goods and services within the City and surrounding County in order to capture resources from outside of the community.

**SERVICES AND RETAIL**

When retailing in Cortez, retail sales are primarily supplied by the majority (83%) of economic transactions in Montezuma County take place within the City of Cortez. Sales in the County are 1.5 times and a half times the sales in Cortez for the population and income of County residents, because Cortez draws revenue from the entire Four Corners region, creating a surplus above the potential sales estimates. While the County has a fairly robust retail sector, most of the retail sales are from businesses based outside of the community. This can translate to a smaller multiplier effect of these sales in the

**Figure 11.1**

community than if they were locally based with a portion of sales being contributed to the community through taxes and wages while much of the revenue leaks out of the community to the base location. In addition, many local residents are shopping at these businesses, including the large Cortez service area population, meaning that the income that many local residents earn is leaving the community rather than being circulated within the community as shown in **Figure 11.1**. One way to keep dollars in the community is to focus on growing locally based businesses. While it is important for locals to patronize local businesses, it is also important that local businesses are supported by tourist sales and the far reaching distribution of locally produced goods in order to bring outside revenue into the local economy.



The City currently has a fairly self sustaining mix of visitor dependent businesses as well as goods and services for local residents. It is important to maintain this balance to ensure that enough capital is brought in from the outside to circulate within the community. The prospect of locating more Big Box stores and franchise restaurants into Cortez are frequent topics of economic development discussions and the service area population nears the quota demographic desires of many of these businesses. In addition to workforce and shipping challenges, it is difficult to support businesses that offer general goods and services for locals without an adequate amount of capital circulating in the community to begin with. To get money into circulation in the local economy, more capital must be brought in from the outside economy by building our communities niche businesses, further developing tourism, expanding distribution networks, encouraging manufacturing, and consciously developing natural resources.

The City has a beautiful, historic retail area that has the potential to be a vibrant downtown again, but this must be matched by the overall economic development of the community. The following chapter on Downtown Development has more in depth direction for the future of the historic downtown area, but the general economic development directions of this chapter also apply to the development of the downtown area as a part of the overall community vision. A robust retail sector has the potential to



generate significant tax revenue, provide employment and income for residents, enhance the vitality of the City, and improve shopping, dining, and entertainment choices for both City residents and visitors. In general, Cortez has maintained a small-town feel with a variety of retail choices in the downtown sector of Main Street and in a series of strip malls including local businesses and chain stores stretching along Main Street to the East of the historic downtown.

**BASE INDUSTRY**

Retail is an economic driver that can bring dollars into the economy through the tourist trade, but a great deal of money is circulated and even withdrawn from the local economy by much of the retail and service sector. Therefore, it is important that the community maintains a diversity of industries that

export goods out of the community, bringing money into the community. Highlighted in **Table 11.1** are the largest employers in Montezuma County that are based within the City of Cortez. The outward economic picture of a retail and service hub, and tourist community, does not reflect the importance of the government as a major employer in the City and surrounding County.

TABLE 11.1 LARGEST EMPLOYERS IN MONTEZUMA COUNTY		
EMPLOYER	INDUSTRY	EMPLOYEES
Montezuma-Cortez School District	Government	470
Wal-Mart	Service	400
Ute Mountain Ute Casino	Service	400
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe	Government	386
Southwest Memorial Hospital	Service	256
Montezuma County	Government	250
Nielsons Skanska	Service	142
Weeminuche Construction Authority	Government	135
City of Cortez	Government	126
Western Excelsior	Manufacturing	120
Dolores School District	Government	115

Few of the largest employers within the City draw money into the local economy from the outside economy, with the exception of the construction companies based in the unincorporated county. The government sector pays its employees using money that has already been collected from the community through taxes. The larger service sector employees pay wages from the revenues for services provided to both locals and visitors, but more money is extracted from the community to pay the manufacturer, shippers, and owners outside of the community than is provided to the community in the form of goods or jobs. While there are a few manufacturers within the City, such as Osprey Packs with its headquarters and shipping center in Cortez, development of niche goods manufacturing and assembly for widespread distribution is an area that the City can encourage in order to bring money into the local economy. Modest scale manufacturing of goods for local consumption can also decrease local economic leakage, such as locally handcrafted furniture and lumber. One of the largest challenges to the growth of manufacturing industries is the distance of the community from interstates, rail lines, and other transportation networks, making the import of raw goods for manufacture and the distribution of goods costly. Leveraging all of the other amenities of the area in order to encourage manufacturing, in spite of the distribution network, may make manufacturing more practical.

Skilled and reliable employees and good education and healthcare are important factors in growing local businesses and attracting outside businesses and may be more realistic than enhancing the distribution network to and from Cortez. Other economic assets include the beautiful location, rich natural resources, and opportunities for high tech industry and internet businesses that have been important in attracting many businesses that have already chosen to locate in Cortez. By leveraging these resources and improving the workforce and infrastructure, we hope to grow more businesses in Cortez.

**Agriculture**

In considering base industries, those that bring money into the local economy, it is important to also mention agriculture. Though agriculture does not directly contribute a large amount to the local economy, it is a huge part of the lifestyle and identity of the community. Maintaining successful agricultural operations and quality agricultural lands is important for the small addition to the diversity of the base that this industry provides as well as the food that it provides to the community. However, agriculture also contributes an almost



intangible asset that residents and visitors highly value. The open space provided by agricultural lands adds to the quality of life in the area, making it a more desirable place for a business to locate and for tourists to visit.

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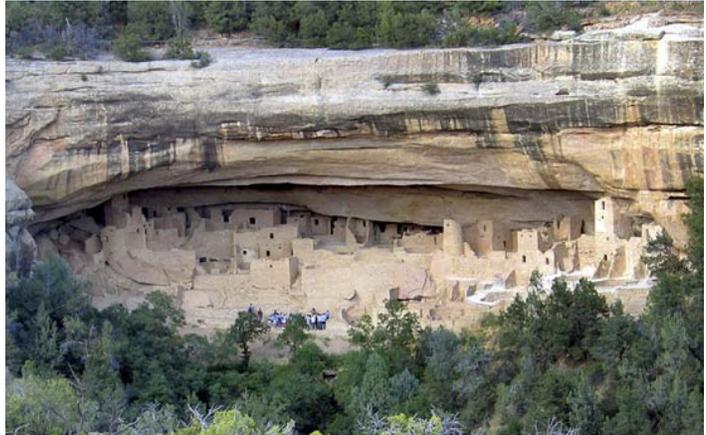
### TOURIST DESTINATION

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In the summer, there is an influx of visitors from around the world that come to see Mesa Verde National Park. People are fascinated by the ancient pueblo homes in the cliffs. Similarly, there is a small boom in the winter during the peak snow season, when the powder on nearby Telluride Ski Resort is world class. While these main destinations and a host of other tourist attractions bring visitors *through* Cortez, there are far fewer visitors who are coming *to* Cortez, though there are hundreds of reasons why Cortez could be a traveler’s destination. There is an opportunity to capture more overnight visitors to Cortez with the significant numbers of visitors coming to area destinations.



Encouraging visitors to come *to* Cortez and visit all of the local attractions is an incredible economic opportunity for the area that fits with the existing community character. If the visitors are coming *through*, we need to give them as many reasons to stop as possible. The City should encourage businesses and attractions within Cortez that provide a unique tourist experience, so that visitors will remember the community and want to return again and again. We have archaeological sites within the City, beautiful natural areas, museums, a historic downtown retail area, and opportunities for much more without even leaving the city limits. But the City is also centrally located for just about anything a visitor would want to do in the Four Corners area.



Promoting the area tourist destinations is important in growing the local economy throughout the region. With Cortez as a service and retail hub, growth in the area economy also stimulates the economy within the City itself and vice versa. For this reason it is important to leverage all of the assets of the entire region to grow the economy throughout Montezuma and the surrounding counties. Continued collaboration among the various governmental and economic development organizations in stimulating the local economy is of the utmost importance to fulfilling the community’s other desires including those found within this plan.

### ACTION PROGRAM

<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES</b>	
<b>Goal 11.1:</b>	<b>Sustain A Well-Balanced And Diverse Local Economy.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To improve Cortez as a regional retail, service, recreation, and convention hub.</b>

<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Cortez Retail Enhancement, Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Mesa Verde Country Tourism Bureau, Countywide Economic Development Groups, Fort Lewis College Small Business Development Center, Region 9 Economic Development District</i>
<i>Policy 11.1.1:</i>	Emphasize the role of Cortez as a goods and services provider for rural residents in the Four Corners area.
<i>Policy 11.1.2:</i>	Proactively promote Cortez as a “regional trade center” and retail “destination” for four corners area residents.
<i>Policy 11.1.3:</i>	Continue to promote activities for all ages to draw City and rural residents from various age groups into the community.
<i>Policy 11.1.4:</i>	Work with the Chamber of Commerce, economic development groups, and other appropriate organizations to encourage retail and service providers to offer weekend and evening hours following the Cortez Market Analysis and future market demands to better serve the rural customer base.
<i>Policy 11.1.5:</i>	Keep the Cortez Market Analysis current.
<i>Policy 11.1.6:</i>	Encourage coordinated evening and weekend business hours, and promote downtown events.
<i>Policy 11.1.7:</i>	Promote opportunities for beautification projects to enhance visual appeal for commercial properties throughout the community.
<i>Policy 11.1.8:</i>	Promote the continuance and expansion of service industries to meet the needs of both City and rural residents. Work with surrounding communities to identify their service needs that could be met within the City of Cortez.
<i>Policy 11.1.9:</i>	Actively recruit appropriate new government offices to Cortez and the relocation of state or federal government offices from outside of the county to Cortez. Work with neighboring communities and Montezuma County to encourage location of appropriate state and federal offices into Montezuma County.
<i>Policy 11.1.10:</i>	Encourage the development of a convention center and other activity centers within the City.
<i>Policy 11.1.11:</i>	Continue to promote community representation in Club 20, the voice of the Western Slope of Colorado, to enhance the community’s economic situation through regional initiatives.
<b>See Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Spaces policies 8.1.1 to 8.1.26 for ideas on how to make Cortez a regional hub for recreation.</b>	
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To incubate the development and expansion of niche goods and services.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Cortez Retail Enhancement, Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Mesa Verde Country Tourism Bureau, Countywide Economic Development Groups, Fort Lewis College Small Business Development Center, Region 9 Economic Development District</i>
<i>Policy 11.1.12:</i>	Assist business owners in finding appropriate locations to expand their operations when requested. Help identify alternative locations that will fit a business’ needs and be compatible with neighboring businesses.
<i>Policy 11.1.13:</i>	Participate in County and region wide economic development organizations, particularly those that foster growth and retention of established businesses and the development of new businesses by local entrepreneurs.
<i>Policy 11.1.14:</i>	Encourage appropriate niche businesses downtown that allow for greater diversification in the downtown area and support the community’s goals as a regional service and retail center. Leverage the Cortez Market Analysis and other similar analyses to identify unmet market demands.
<i>Policy 11.1.15:</i>	Consider establishing an incentive program that promotes the kinds of businesses that have been requested by City residents and other residents within the Cortez trade area through the Cortez Market Analysis and other appropriate tools, as needed.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To improve the image of Cortez as a tourist destination.</i></b>

<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Parks and Rec. Dept., Mesa Verde Museum Association, CDOT, Public Lands Agencies, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Cortez Retail Enhancement, Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Mesa Verde Country Tourism Bureau, Countywide Economic Development Groups, Region 9 Economic Development District, other organizations and individuals that represent Cortez to outsiders</i>
<i>Policy 11.1.16:</i>	Promote year-round recreational activities and events locally to sustain local retail businesses during the winter and shoulder seasons.
<i>Policy 11.1.17:</i>	Encourage efforts to expand winter cultural and natural tourist and recreation opportunities when appropriate.
<i>Policy 11.1.18:</i>	Promote activities that capitalize on the area's unique landscape and cultural background and market the community as a tourist destination for its natural and cultural recreational opportunities.
<i>Policy 11.1.19:</i>	Balance tourist activities and events with more activities and events that meet the needs and desires of local residents.
<i>Policy 11.1.20:</i>	Collaborate with the Trails of the Ancients National Scenic Byway coordinator and other appropriate individuals and organizations to showcase Colorado's only archaeological scenic byway.
<i>Policy 11.1.21:</i>	Promote efforts to designate McElmo Canyon as a part of the "Trails of the Ancients (TOTA)," and as a historic route to the prehistoric destinations of Canyons of the Ancients and Hovenweep National Monuments.
<i>Policy 11.1.22:</i>	Continue to promote tourist activities on the region's public lands, and promote utilization of the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument that will provide positive economic impacts for the region while maintaining the cultural and natural integrity of the monument.
<i>Policy 11.1.23:</i>	Monitor all relevant federal organizations for plans to develop museums, visitor centers, or other tourist attractions, and work with the appropriate government and economic development group on placement and project development that will best suit the area economy.
<i>Policy 11.1.24:</i>	Promote organizations proposing museums, especially relating to local culture and proposed to be located in or near the historic downtown area, through professional and technical assistance and incentives.
<i>Policy 11.1.25:</i>	Promote a positive representation of Cortez through organizations and individuals that represent Cortez to outsiders. (ex. The Lonely Planet travel guides and Century 21 website)
<i>Policy 11.1.26:</i>	Leverage arts as an asset of the community to attract visitors.
<b>See the Community Character and Culture Chapter policies 3.1.1 – 3.1.14 for more policies on encouraging arts and entertainment.</b>	
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To develop Hi-tech industries and leverage infrastructure for e-business.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Countywide Economic Development Groups, Fort Lewis College Small Business Development Center, Region 9 Economic Development District, General Services Dept., Public Works Dept., technology providers, Planning and Zoning Division, San Juan Basin Technical College</i>
<i>Policy 11.1.27:</i>	Evaluate the expansion of the fiber network including "Fiber to the Home" (FTTH) to help keep Cortez competitive by expanding business and educational opportunities and developing the fiber network in business and industrial areas.
<i>Policy 11.1.28:</i>	Continue to pursue and work with economic development organizations to attract businesses that offer high-quality employment opportunities by leveraging the fiber-optic network to facilitate "High Tech" industries.
<i>Policy 11.1.29:</i>	Consider pursuing fiber development of the business park planned-unit development to expand economic development options.

<i>Policy 11.1.30:</i>	Promote the use of the fiber-optic network to facilitate higher education and continued learning through distance learning programs and ongoing training for adults and students to help train the work force.
<i>Policy 11.1.31:</i>	Promote San Juan Basin Technical College, Pueblo Community College, and other appropriate programs and organizations that provide hi-tech training and job opportunities to Cortez residents.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To sustain and enhance local agriculture.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>CSU Agricultural Extension Office, Montezuma County, Cortez Farmers Market, Local Farmers and Ranchers, Montezuma Land Conservancy, San Juan Basin Technical College, Fort Lewis College, Countywide Economic Development Groups, Mesa Verde Country Tourism Bureau, State Legislators, Developers, Local restaurants and grocers</i>
<i>Policy 11.1.32:</i>	Respond to the needs of the agribusiness economy to ensure sustainability of the community's rural character, promoting efforts to establish a year-round marketplace and encouraging the distribution of local products at local stores.
<i>Policy 11.1.33:</i>	Encourage the use of locally produced food at local restaurants.
<i>Policy 11.1.34:</i>	Explore options to provide incentives for the production, distribution, and purchase of local products.
<i>Policy 11.1.35:</i>	Work with Mesa Verde Country Tourism Bureau, countywide economic development groups, and other appropriate organizations to promote and support efforts to develop agri-tourism opportunities and private incentives for agricultural-related businesses.
<i>Policy 11.1.36:</i>	Make appropriate comments on proposed development that will impact farming or ranching operations.
<i>Policy 11.1.37:</i>	Provide information to area residents about current state and federal legislation concerning agricultural (i.e. "right-to-farm" legislation).
<i>Policy 11.1.38:</i>	Promote conservation efforts by local landowners to preserve open space via farming and ranching activities.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To promote healthy, sustainable industries to capitalize on the community's natural resources within and surrounding the City.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants</b>	<i>Montezuma County, Planning and Zoning Division, Countywide Economic Development Groups, Kinder Morgan, other Oil and Gas companies, Public Lands Agencies, Local Entrepreneurs, EEA, Tri-State G&amp;T, Performance Contractors, San Juan Basin Technical College, Pueblo Community College, Governor's Energy Office</i>
<i>Policy 11.1.39:</i>	Work with the oil and gas industry and local economic development groups to forecast the long term industry trends and a time line of resource viability for non-renewable resources, in order to be better prepared for future economic conditions.
<i>Policy 11.1.40:</i>	Work with countywide economic development organizations to pursue "clean" industries
<i>Policy 11.1.41:</i>	Encourage the development of renewable energy generating facilities to develop a clean energy economy.
<i>Policy 11.1.42:</i>	Encourage the development of green building businesses to follow the trends in construction and prepare for changing construction requirements.
<i>Policy 11.1.43:</i>	Encourage the development of local "Performance Contracting" businesses that will be certified by the Governor's Energy Office.
<i>Policy 11.1.44:</i>	Promote "Performance Contracting" to assist business growth.
<i>Policy 11.1.45:</i>	Consider developing requirements to follow best management practices for extractive and impactive industries within the City and encourage efforts and provide comments supporting best management practices for industries in the surrounding community that may impact City residents.
<i>Policy 11.1.46:</i>	Promote and encourage training practices that instruct on Best Management Practices for extractive and impactive industries.

<i>Policy 11.1.47:</i>	Encourage industries that employ City residents for the reclamation of resource extraction.
<b>Goal 11.2:</b>	<b>Serve The Local Economy Through The Provision Of Adequate Infrastructure, Emergency Services, and Land Use Designations.</b>
<b>Mid-Term Objective:</b>	<b>To leverage existing infrastructure to guide business and industry location and expansion.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning and Zoning Division, Developers, Montezuma County, General Services Dept., Utility Providers, Region 9 Economic Development District</i>
<i>Policy 11.2.1:</i>	Leverage the fiber-optic network to promote home occupations where appropriate.
<i>Policy 11.2.2:</i>	Consider utilizing the fiber-optic network to go wireless as a City to encourage distance learning for work force development and encourage appropriate home occupations when other public service demands can be accommodated.
<i>Policy 11.2.3:</i>	Promote Region 9 Economic Development District's Retail Enhancement Program and other local and regional business loan and grant programs, and work with appropriate organizations to grow existing businesses and expand new business opportunities.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To develop City infrastructure to encourage new businesses that will benefit the community.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>General Services Dept., Public Works Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Utility Providers, Police Dept., Cortez Fire District, Southwest Memorial Hospital, Countywide Economic Development Groups, Property and Business Owners, Developers, Realtors</i>
<i>Policy 11.2.4:</i>	Regularly evaluate public services and infrastructure and make improvements and expansions when necessary to accommodate the needs of a wide range of businesses and industries.
<i>Policy 11.2.5:</i>	Continue public investments in the local infrastructure to draw unique businesses to appropriate commercial and industrial areas. Investment in services should be made to entice organizations to relocate to existing areas of commercial and industrial investment to reduce infrastructure costs.
<i>Policy 11.2.6:</i>	Work with local governmental and non-governmental organizations to evaluate the community's needs and custom character of a local business incubator, and, when appropriate, participate in efforts to establish a customized business incubator for local businesses that will assist residents in growing their businesses.
<i>Policy 11.2.7:</i>	Promote new technologies as part of the City's economy and invest in capital improvements where economically feasible to facilitate desirable commercial growth in the appropriate areas of the community.
<i>Policy 11.2.8:</i>	Partner with local land owners, real estate agencies, economic development groups, and other organizations to create and maintain a database of available commercial and industrial sites and facilities to fit entrepreneurs with appropriate business locations.
<i>Policy 11.2.9:</i>	Encourage a mixed use of businesses with single and multifamily accessory uses in the downtown business area and accessory businesses in the neighborhood business areas.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To maintain adequate emergency services to serve commercial and industrial emergency response needs.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Police Dept., Cortez Fire District, Southwest Memorial Hospital, Montezuma County Sheriff, Developers, Private Security Companies</i>
<i>Policy 11.2.10:</i>	Work with emergency service providers to make sure that adequate emergency services are available to serve proposed businesses and continue to require adequate emergency services prior to approval of new commercial and industrial land uses.
<i>Policy 11.2.11:</i>	Maintain adequate patrols and/or security systems to facilitate business development.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To keep zoning designations and district regulations current to meet the changing economic needs of the community.</b>

<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning and Zoning Division, Realtors, Developers, Downtown Property and Business Owners, Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Countywide Economic Development Groups, Montezuma County</i>
<i>Policy 11.2.12:</i>	Keep the design standards and zoning designations of the Land Use Code current to facilitate an attractive business climate.
<i>Policy 11.2.13:</i>	Be proactive in promoting opportunities that will reduce the cost of living for residents.
<i>Policy 11.2.14:</i>	Guide retail and commercial activity to locations consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and other City planning, zoning, and design criteria.
<i>Policy 11.2.15:</i>	Create appropriate public spaces, such as a pedestrian mall, to attract people to retail areas.
<i>Policy 11.2.16:</i>	Consider expanding zoning regulations that promote mixed-use developments in accordance with appropriate Smart Growth principles.
<i>Policy 11.2.17:</i>	Consider zoning designations that promote and encourage small businesses.
<i>Policy 11.2.18:</i>	Work with property owners of vacant commercial and industrial buildings and consider establishing incentives to encourage the redevelopment of vacant buildings when appropriate.
<i>Policy 11.2.19:</i>	Work with economic development groups to provide information on grant funding opportunities to encourage the rehabilitation and/or restoration of existing commercial buildings in the City, and provide technical assistance when appropriate.
<i>Policy 11.2.20:</i>	Promote neighboring jurisdictions in their efforts to enhance predictability and the business climate of their land use regulations.
<b>Goal 11.3:</b>	<b>Maintain High Employment Rates At Living Wages For Families Through The Development Of A Skilled, Community Invested Workforce And Corresponding Job Opportunities.</b>
<b>Long-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To reduce poverty rates to less than 15% of the total City population and 10% of families in the City.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Secretary of State, Business Owners, Region 9 Economic Development District, Montezuma County, Colorado Workforce Center</i>
<i>Policy 11.3.1:</i>	Evaluate the cost of living for a family or individual in Cortez and identify reasonable "living wages."
<i>Policy 11.3.2:</i>	Monitor wages in Cortez and surrounding communities, and evaluate the need for a local "living wage."
<i>Policy 11.3.3:</i>	Take "living wages" into consideration for City promotion, recruitment, and incentives for businesses.
<i>Policy 11.3.4:</i>	Facilitate the expansion of existing businesses and development of new businesses that offer living wages and benefits to City residents when appropriate.
<i>Policy 11.3.5:</i>	Explore incentive options to retain and attract small businesses and start up businesses that offer "living wages."
<i>Policy 11.3.6:</i>	Promote the "Colorado Workforce Center" and other employment assistance programs.
<b>Long-Term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To reduce the percentage of children and elderly living in poverty in the City to the national average.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Business Owners, San Juan Basin Technical College, Pueblo Community College, RE-1 School District, Southwest Open School, State Legislators, Senior Centers, Montezuma County Social Services, Financial Planners, Public Works Department</i>
<i>Policy 11.3.7:</i>	Promote programs and employment opportunities that offer flexibility for parents and childcare opportunities so that more families have the opportunity to make a living.
<i>Policy 11.3.8:</i>	Encourage manufacturing businesses and other skilled labor businesses to enhance employment opportunities at "living wage" income levels.
<i>Policy 11.3.9:</i>	Promote and support appropriate programs that give teenagers and young adults the job skills necessary to enter the workforce when possible.

Policy 11.3.10:	Make appropriate comments on legislation that would lower the quality of life of elderly residents living on pensions and/or Social Security and children on welfare, when appropriate.
<i>Policy 11.3.11:</i>	Promote programs that assist with the collection of child support.
Policy 11.3.12:	Promote appropriate governmental and non-governmental organizations that offer guidance for individuals and families to gain control of their debt or that assist in planning and preparation for retirement.
<i>Policy 11.3.13:</i>	Support transportation opportunities, when feasible, to help residents with limited mobility to get to and from their places of employment and to empower them by improving their access to goods and services.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To improve advanced training and educational opportunities to meet specific industrial training needs and business demands for worker productivity.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Fort Lewis College Small Business Development Center, Region 9 Economic Development District, San Juan Basin Technical College, Pueblo Community College, RE-1 School District, Southwest Open School, Countywide Economic Development Groups, Local Chambers of Commerce, Montezuma County, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe</i>
Policy 11.3.14:	Promote the partnership between San Juan Basin Technical College and Pueblo Community College to enhance job training and lifelong learning opportunities for residents and support efforts to expand partnerships and educational opportunities when feasible.
<i>Policy 11.3.15:</i>	Provide information concerning educational opportunities already in place within the community.
Policy 11.3.16:	Promote new training programs to meet the needs of community residents and employers.
<i>Policy 11.3.17:</i>	Work with secondary education providers, chambers of commerce, economic development groups, and other appropriate individuals or organizations to create new job training programs and local employment opportunities for students.
Policy 11.3.18:	Participate in transportation opportunities that enhance access to regional educational facilities for City residents.

*"We want to avoid becoming a 'punks and drunks' downtown."*

- *Steve Caffee, Placerville, California, Community Development Director (remarks to PCJ Editor Wayne Senville about future of Main Street during tour of Placerville on July 7, 2007)*

OVERVIEW



Downtown Development has been created as a distinct chapter of this plan because of the unique needs and business mix of Cortez' downtown area. The commercial area of the City continues to expand along Broadway and Main Street, and the Central Business District has gone from the primary retail area to a district with many underutilized and occasional vacant commercial buildings. At present, many unique characteristics of downtown are intact and there are ample opportunities to revitalize Downtown Cortez. The primary means of revitalizing downtown in a sustainable way is by creating more pedestrian traffic and getting people to patronize a healthy mix of downtown businesses. This may be accomplished by encouraging appropriate business location and hours of operation, pedestrian safety and access, a diversity of businesses, and downtown events that will bring people onto the sidewalks into the downtown area. The downtown area has incredible potential to attract outside dollars to our local economy as well as to provide specialty goods and services to local residents. Elements of this chapter focus on making downtown more attractive for businesses, residents, and tourists. This is a short chapter as many of the necessary actions for revitalizing downtown include general economic development necessities such as workforce development and retail enhancement. The success of this chapter largely depends on the successful implementation of the action program of the Economic Development chapter. This chapter identifies additional policy ideas specific to creating a vibrant downtown.

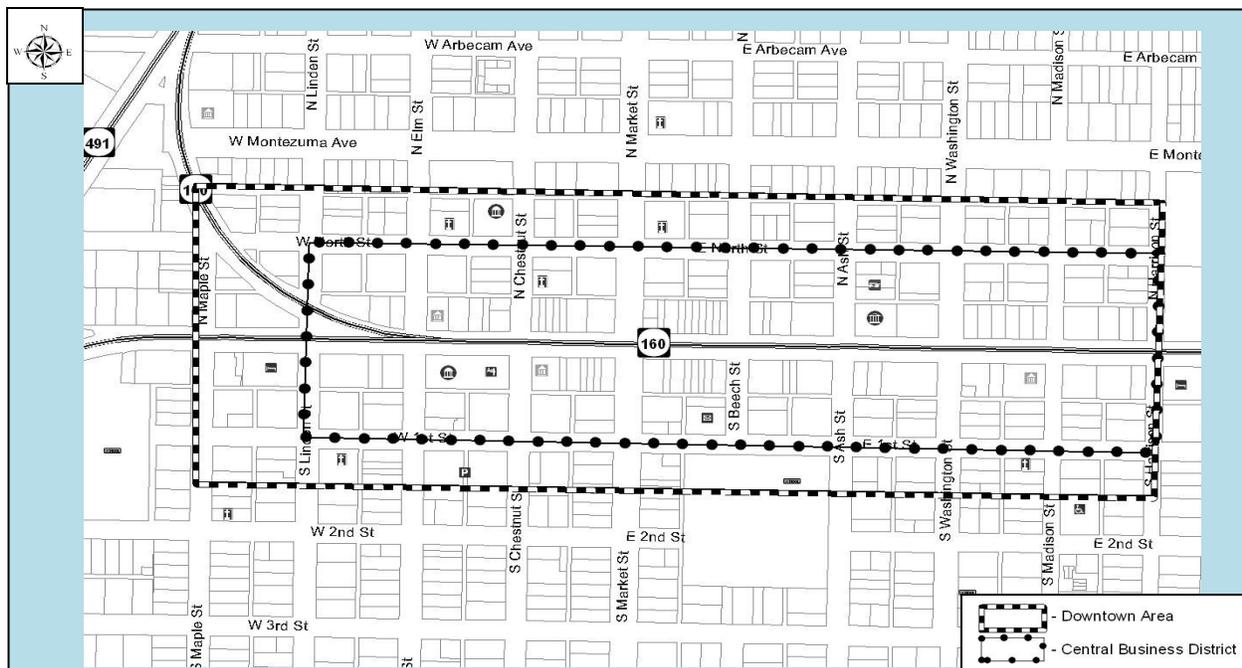


The Central Business district of Cortez is still located in the same place as the livery stables, blacksmith shops, saloons, and dance halls of the original townsite. The downtown shopping area has sprawled along highways US160 and US491 (old US666) extending from the Old Downtown, Central Business District area. Main Street is typical of established rural communities throughout the west. New commercial development outside of the downtown business core is resulting in a transformation of downtown to a service/arts area. While recognizing the importance of the new commercial development along the highways, the residents of Cortez value the character and retail significance of the historic downtown area. Historic downtown Cortez remains the civic center of the community.



Development of the Downtown area follows many of the same principles as economic development of the community in general, including developing an economy that supports the needs of locals and leverages the tourist industry. However, downtown development is about creating and maintaining a particularly healthy and distinctive downtown by revitalizing a retail and service district that enhances the community character and pride in Cortez.

In reviewing this chapter, it is also important to acknowledge the constraints that come with Main Street being a State Highway such as oversight, heavy noise, and a dangerous pedestrian environment. By taking the opportunity to more fully utilize the North-South cross streets for commercial use within a block of Main and expanding the use of First and North Streets as part of the downtown area, Cortez may be able to overcome some of the constraints of having a State Highway for Main Street while taking advantage of the high volume of traffic. Below is the map of what is considered the downtown area for the purpose of the comprehensive plan.



### Historic Character

The Cortez Downtown area still has six (6) original structures built out of locally quarried sandstone blocks as well as six (6) other structures dating to around the turn of the twentieth century. There are an additional seventeen (17) historic structures dating to the auto/City expansion era between 1906 and 1945. These historic structures account for over half of the downtown area, and many of the other structures were designed with architectural features to blend into the eclectic, historic character of downtown Main Street. Only a few buildings contrast with the historic



character. These could likely be integrated with a few simple additions of historic architectural features and the removal of incompatible façades that cover original architecture when the opportunities arise. Leveraging the City Historic Preservation Board and Land Use Code Criteria for Historic Designation, as well as considering design standards for new development and enhancing the streetscape with features that add to the historic, eclectic character of Downtown Cortez will help to revitalize the unique retail and service district that characterizes Cortez.

<b>ACTION PROGRAM</b>
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<b>DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES</b>	
<b>Goal 12.1:</b>	<b>Strengthen Downtown As The Retail, Business, Cultural, And Governmental Center Of Cortez To Help Ensure The Long-Term Viability Of The Downtown Area.</b>
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To increase pedestrian traffic in the Downtown area and promote patronage of downtown businesses to build a vibrant business community.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Cortez Retail Enhancement, Countywide Economic Development Organizations, Region 9 Economic Development District, Fort Lewis College Small Business Development Center, Downtown Property and Business Owners, Planning and Zoning Division, Cortez Cultural Center, Montezuma County, Colorado Mainstreet Revitalization Assoc., RE-1 School District, Local Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 12.1.1:	Promote a mix of retail, restaurant, and office businesses to diversify the selection of goods and services in the downtown area.
Policy 12.1.2:	Promote and expand opportunities for mixed residential and retail uses, such as residential apartments located above businesses, to increase the pedestrian atmosphere of downtown at all hours.
Policy 12.1.3:	Encourage the development of a café culture in Downtown by developing land use regulations to allow above sidewalk patios, functional rooftops, and other open-air opportunities.
Policy 12.1.4:	Research the potential for the north/south expansion of the Central Business District to extend the downtown commercial area onto North and First Streets.
Policy 12.1.5:	Create appropriate public spaces, such as a pedestrian mall, to attract people to Downtown.
Policy 12.1.6:	Promote the Small Business Development Center and other business building organizations to help local businesses develop niche markets.
Policy 12.1.7:	Encourage the use of the Cortez Market Analysis as one tool to assist business owners in the downtown area and continue to participate in activities that assess the Cortez Market and downtown opportunities. Work with appropriate organizations to keep the Cortez Market Analysis or other appropriate tools current.
Policy 12.1.8:	Encourage organizational mechanisms, such as the Colorado Mainstreet Revitalization Association’s Mainstreet program, to enhance the economic and social sustainability of the downtown area.
Policy 12.1.9:	Continue to work in conjunction with local organizations in the sponsorship of downtown events.
Policy 12.1.10:	Work with Cortez Retail Enhancement, the Chamber of Commerce, economic development groups, and other organizations to keep retail enhancement and buy local programs current with the community’s needs and desires.
Policy 12.1.11:	Encourage appropriate business development on cross streets of Main Street from Maple Street to Harrison Street between North and First Streets.
Policy 12.1.12:	Work with the School District to encourage visitation of the historic Caulkins building and appropriate development of the open area west of the Caulkins building to attract pedestrian and automobile traffic to First Street businesses.

<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To support all existing downtown businesses.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Cortez Retail Enhancement, Countywide Economic Development Organizations, Region 9 Economic Development District, FLC Small Business Development Center, Downtown Property and Business Owners, Planning and Zoning Division, Other Governmental and Non-governmental Orgs.</i>
Policy 12.1.13:	Encourage property and business owners to pursue private, state, and federal programs that provide funding or technical assistance for downtown areas.
Policy 12.1.14:	Encourage qualifying business owners to take State and Federal Enterprise Zone tax incentives.
Policy 12.1.15:	Include specific needs of the downtown area in a community parking plan.
Policy 12.1.16:	Consider establishing land banking programs for public purposes to acquire land that can meet growing needs of the community such as public restrooms, parking areas in accordance with a parking plan, or future activity center locations.
Policy 12.1.17:	Consider establishing land banking programs to facilitate desirable private development that may include areas outside of the downtown to help facilitate the relocation of industrial uses and incompatible services to locations outside of the downtown area or the relocation of appropriate businesses into the downtown area.
Policy 12.1.18:	Work with other governmental and non-governmental organization to promote land exchanges to locate desirable uses into downtown and to relocate incompatible downtown uses to more desirable locations when appropriate.
Policy 12.1.19:	Examine the feasibility of improvements agreements with downtown businesses to enhance safety, access, or the aesthetic appeal of downtown.
Policy 12.1.20:	Participate in programs that assist start-up and growth of businesses in downtown when appropriate.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To Maintain and expand downtown Cortez as an area recognized for its cultural opportunities and for its historical and cultural significance to the City.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Colorado Historical Society, Colorado Archaeological Society, State Historic Preservation Office, Historic Preservation Board, Chamber of Commerce, Countywide Economic Development Organizations, FLC Small Business Development Center, Downtown Property and Business Owners, Planning and Zoning Division, Cortez Cultural Center, Colorado Mainstreet Revitalization Assoc., Local Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 12.1.21:	Promote the location of activity centers in the downtown area such as; a performing arts center, public radio stations, a convention center, museums, a marketplace, hotels, restaurants, bars, etc., when an appropriate location can be made available, through professional and technical assistance and incentives when appropriate.
Policy 12.1.22:	Encourage the continued operation of the cultural center and other activity centers in the downtown area and promote cultural center events.
Policy 12.1.23:	Pursue becoming a "Certified Local Government" by adopting preservation ordinances that meet State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service requirements.
Policy 12.1.24:	Promote the preservation of historic structures and assist building owners in obtaining restoration funding and grants when appropriate.
Policy 12.1.25:	Promote historic restoration and renovation of downtown buildings.
Policy 12.1.26:	Provide technical assistance for all interested agencies, such as the Historic Preservation Board, in researching preservation opportunities and acquiring funding.
Policy 12.1.27:	Identify and promote incentives for business and land owners to encourage preservation and renovation of structures downtown.
<b>See Community Character and Culture Chapter Goal 3.5 for more policies on preserving the historic and prehistoric background of the community.</b>	
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To maintain the downtown area as a governmental and professional service hub.</b>

<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Downtown Property and Business Owners, Professional Service Providers, Planning and Zoning Division, Cortez Cultural Center, Montezuma County, Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Countywide Economic Development Organizations</i>
Policy 12.1.28:	Encourage a balance of public offices and services with private businesses in the downtown area.
Policy 12.1.29:	Work with the United States Postal Service to identify an appropriate location for the Post Office when the community's postal needs cannot be met at the existing location.
Policy 12.1.30:	Ensure that a redevelopment plan for 210 East Main is created before any relocation of City Hall is finalized.
Policy 12.1.31:	Partner with local land owners, real estate agencies, and other organizations to create a database of available commercial and industrial sites and facilities, and leverage this knowledge to fit entrepreneurs with appropriate business locations.
Policy 12.1.32:	Use database of available spaces to encourage the location of professional services to the downtown, especially above street level retail businesses on Main Street and along cross streets and First and North Streets in the Downtown area.
<i>Goal 12.2:</i>	<b>Enhance downtown's character by creating an aesthetically-appealing experience for daytime and nighttime functions.</b>
<b>Mid-term Objective:</b>	<b><i>To develop and maintain a downtown master plan.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Planning and Zoning Division, Historic Preservation Board, Downtown Property and Business Owners, Colorado Historical Society</i>
Policy 12.2.1:	Develop and maintain a downtown master plan to address building design, streetscape, landscaping, parking, and other design issues.
Policy 12.2.2:	Consider design standards for new development and renovation in the downtown area to establish contiguity between businesses while respecting diverse building façades and designs.
Policy 12.2.3:	Ensure that building design and façade treatment reflect the historic character of downtown.
Policy 12.2.4:	Consider regulations to require Main Street businesses and potentially all downtown area businesses to develop compatibly with adjacent businesses, regarding building design and façade development.
Policy 12.2.5:	Extend requirements for natural façade appearance and the restriction of metal buildings into the downtown area.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b><i>To continually establish and enhance distinguishing aesthetic qualities of downtown.</i></b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Parks and Rec. Dept., Cortez Gardening Club, Arborists, Public Works Dept., Special Events Coordinator, CDOT, Local Artists and Arts Orgs., Other Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 12.2.6:	Continue landscaping programs for the downtown area to develop visual consistency in the downtown area with a unique landscaping scheme for the Downtown area to distinguish it from other areas of Main Street.
Policy 12.2.7:	Actively pursue pedestrian-scale lighting designs with unique downtown lighting to create a more pleasurable pedestrian experience, taking energy efficient, dark sky, and solar powered fixtures into consideration.
Policy 12.2.8:	Consider developing archways across Main Street or other feasible entryway architecture or landscaping to identify the historic Main Street between Maple and Harrison Streets.
Policy 12.2.9:	Utilize the cultural and historical background of Cortez to develop a public arts program.
Policy 12.2.10:	Continually enhance the City Banner Program.
Policy 12.2.11:	Provide technical and planning assistance for business or land owners in achieving compliance with design standards as buildings are being built or renovated.

Policy 12.2.12:	Continue beautification efforts in conjunction with community organizations, local business, and land owners.
<b>See the chapter on Community Character and Culture policies 3.1.1 -3.1.9 for more ideas on how to enhance the aesthetic qualities of the downtown area.</b>	
<b>Mid-term Objective:</b>	<b>To facilitate the development of a downtown pedestrian oriented mall.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Colorado Mainstreet Association, Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Cortez Retail Enhancement, Economic Development Orgs., General Services Dept., Public Works Dept., Planning and Zoning Division, Downtown Property and Business Owners</i>
Policy 12.2.13:	Evaluate all possibilities for the location of an open-air pedestrian oriented mall and pursue development if feasible.
Policy 12.2.14:	Consider a trial period for any possible location to be developed as a pedestrian oriented mall for events, open air markets, and daily enjoyment, and make the pedestrian mall a permanent downtown fixture if the trial is successful.
Policy 12.2.15:	Work with downtown business and property owners to facilitate the appropriate development of a pedestrian oriented mall that takes specific business needs into consideration.
Policy 12.2.16:	Phase in improvements as necessary to make a pedestrian oriented mall financially feasible.
<b>Goal 12.3:</b>	<b>Provide A Safe, Pedestrian-Friendly Environment For Downtown Visitors And Employees.</b>
<b>Short-Term Objective:</b>	<b>Enhance downtown accessibility for residents and visitors of all ages and types.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., CDOT, Montezuma County, Citizens State Bank, Other large parking area owners, Planning and Zoning Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., RE-1 School District, Southwest Open School, Local Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 12.3.1:	Investigate additional policies and recommendations that enhance pedestrian accessibility to downtown and awareness of pedestrian traffic.
Policy 12.3.2:	Maintain public parking areas located in the Downtown area.
Policy 12.3.3:	Regularly evaluate the need for additional off-street parking areas as office, retail, and restaurant businesses expand or increase in number.
Policy 12.3.4:	Add and improve informational signs for new and existing parking areas that address the needs of personal vehicles, recreational vehicles, and heavy truck traffic.
Policy 12.3.5:	Maintain and improve pedestrian connections to adjacent and outlying residential areas and actively pursue new pedestrian connections where necessary.
Policy 12.3.6:	Increase bicycle racks or storage areas in the downtown area to promote alternative forms of transportation.
<b>Ongoing Objective:</b>	<b>To enhance pedestrian safety on Main Street.</b>
<b>Key Participants:</b>	<i>Public Works Dept., Police Dept., CDOT, Planning and Zoning Division, Parks and Rec. Dept., Local Clubs and Orgs.</i>
Policy 12.3.7:	Continue to address safety, access, and pedestrian issues that hinder downtown development, such as light timing and pedestrian awareness.
Policy 12.3.8:	Continue to cooperate with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to pursue issues of joint concern such as signal timing, speed limits, signage, sidewalk treatments, crosswalk treatments, and any additional improvements along Main Street.
Policy 12.3.9:	Redesign the north side sidewalk on Main Street between Market and Chestnut Streets to facilitate safe pedestrian curbside access when feasible.
Policy 12.3.10:	Continue to take corner visibility into consideration for the review of landscaping and building design.

*“It was character that got us out of bed, commitment that moved us into action, and discipline that enabled us to follow through.”*

*-Hilary Hinton “Zig” Ziglar, American motivational speaker (Born 1926)*

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## OVERVIEW

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Making the vision for the City into a reality is beyond the capabilities of any one individual or organization. It will take the combined efforts of all City staff, policy makers, and residents to move in the direction that is presented in this Plan. The Action Programs throughout this Plan provide specific actions for how to attain City goals. If everyone makes an effort to achieve the specific actions, the pieces should come together to sustain an amazing community with superior City services.

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## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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The task of implementing this plan involves **the City of Cortez, local and regional service providers, and the entire community**. It is important that all department heads and the City Manager provide recommendations to their advisory and decision making boards based upon the direction of this Comprehensive Plan. They should be familiar with policies that apply to their department and direct staff to follow ongoing policies and specific policies when the opportunities arise. Service providers and community members should also consider this comprehensive plan to the extent possible when making decisions that will impact the community.

It is the role of the **advisory boards and decision making boards of the City**, to make sure their recommendations and policies are consistent with the overall direction of the Comprehensive Plan. If there is no comment in a staff report of how an action will relate to the Comprehensive Plan and City Vision, the decision makers of board members should inquire as to whether the action is consistent with this plan and look in their own copies of the Comprehensive Plan to evaluate consistency before making a decision. In addition, these boards are responsible for keeping this Plan current.

**The Planning and Zoning Division, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Manager, and City Council** are responsible for guiding implementation of the Action Programs and tracking progress on short-term, mid-term, long-term, and ongoing objectives in order to ensure that the City is continually working toward its goals. While undertaking tasks to achieve short-term objectives within the first one to three (1-3) years of implementing this plan, it is important to be mindful of all of the objectives and individual policies, even within mid-term, and long term-objectives, that need to be undertaken more immediately in order to achieve the objective in the recommended time frame. Mid-term goals should be achieved within four to seven (4-7) years and Long-Term goals are expected to take eight (8) years or more to accomplish. Ongoing objectives, which are abundant throughout the plan, should become engrained in the thoughts and actions of all Cortez community public servants. Many of the policies can be undertaken immediately and continued indefinitely. It is a task of the Planning and Zoning Division, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Manager, and City Council to encourage the initiation and sustained follow through of these ongoing policies. It is also important that these bodies ensure that this plan continues to reflect the needs and desires of all community members by making amendments to this Plan as needed.

**All residents**, especially those involved in community organizations or businesses, should look for ways that their organization or business can participate in helping to achieve the City Vision and

particular goals, objectives, and policies. City residents should consider how their actions, as City and County residents and voting members of special districts, utility companies, the City, County, State and National governments, will affect both ourselves and our community. The City should set an example for all community residents.

**Residents, Citizens, Property Owners, Business Owners, Business Managers, Service Providers, and Non-profit Community Organizations** can all assist in the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan by taking individual and organizational actions to further the goals of this plan. By looking for an organization or reference to an area or group of individuals of businesses among the key participants for each objective, a community member can find out where he/she may be needed to help achieve the 2020 Vision for the City of Cortez. Even if an individual or organization is not listed among key participants, by looking through this plan, one may find actions that he/she may take to help make the community an even better place.

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### TRACKING PROGRESS

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It is necessary to track progress on the implementation of the Action Programs within this Plan to assist in individual policies coming together to reach broader goals. Following this Plan will help to create a healthy, safe, clean, and beautiful community that residents value.

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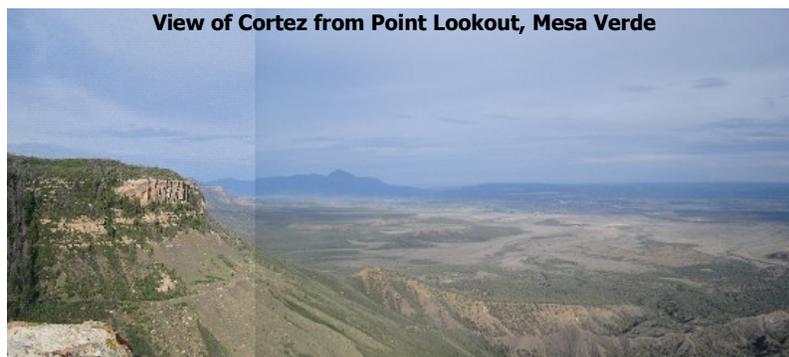
### *THE 2020 VISION FOR THE CITY OF CORTEZ*

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Centrally located in a rural landscape of agriculture and rich public lands, the City of Cortez provides outstanding and innovative public services while demonstrating the values of our thriving community. Taking pride in our history, diversity, and environment, our friendly community is full of opportunity, making housing, goods, and services universally attainable. The City's safe, efficient, and effective leadership maintains a small-town atmosphere where diversity and a sense of community coexist in integrated livable neighborhoods and a vivacious downtown.

In order to track the progress on key objectives within this plan, many of the objectives that are not easily measurable include an initial policy on assessing the existing situation. These are some of the kinds of policies within mid-term and long-term objectives that need to be undertaken in the short-term in order to ultimately achieve measurable progress on the overall objectives. As each individual policy is undertaken, a method of tracking the impact of the policy or action should be included from the outset. Each department undertaking a specific policy action should track its progress and report progress at regular meetings of the department heads, staff, advisory boards, Planning and Zoning Commission, and City Council. This will help to assist the City in determining where to focus its efforts, what is most and least successful, and redirect policy actions that are not quite on target to reach the desired ends.



**"The Mountains are calling and I must go." John Muir**