

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL  
READINESS SESSION

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2013, 5:00 P.M.  
CITY AUDITORIUM  
250 N. 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET

*To become the most livable community west of the Rockies by 2025*

- 1. Orchard Mesa Neighborhood Plan Update:** This is an informal update by Staff to bring to City Council the current planning effort the City has completed with Mesa County for the Orchard Mesa area. The Plan area encompasses Orchard Mesa from the Gunnison River east to 34 ½ Road and from the Colorado River south to Whitewater Hill. Information will be provided about the planning process, major findings identified through public participation, and what next steps are currently proposed in this joint planning effort with the County.  
[Attach R-1](#)
- 2. Community Solar Garden Subscription and Lease Agreement:** Staff will present an overview of the proposed Pear Park Community Solar Garden and request City Council direction on moving forward with an agreement with Ecoplexus, Inc. as a subscriber to the solar garden and a lease agreement for the use of a portion of City-owned property.  
[Attach R-2](#)
- 3. Other Business**



## **CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT READINESS SESSION**

Attach R-1

Date: September 11, 2013  
Author: David Thornton  
Title/ Phone Ext: Planning &  
Development Supervisor / 244-  
1450  
Proposed Meeting Date:  
September 16, 2013

**Topic:** Presentation and Overview of the Orchard Mesa Plan Planning Process, Public Participation, Findings, and Next Steps.

**Staff (Name & Title):** David Thornton, Planning & Development Supervisor

### **Summary:**

This is an informal update by Staff to bring to City Council the current planning effort the City has completed with Mesa County for the Orchard Mesa area. The Plan area encompasses Orchard Mesa from the Gunnison River east to 34 ½ Road and from the Colorado River south to Whitewater Hill. Information will be provided about the planning process, major findings identified through public participation, and what next steps are currently proposed in this joint planning effort with the County.

### **Background, Analysis and Options:**

When the City and County sunset the 2000 Orchard Mesa Plan in 2010, with the adoption of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Staff heard dismay and concern from Orchard Mesa residents that they now would no longer have a specific Plan for their neighborhood. They were told then that City and County staffs would be coming back to them with a planning effort to take a fresh look at Orchard Mesa and develop a new neighborhood plan identifying specific issues that are important to the residents and business owners living and working on Orchard Mesa.

The purpose of doing a neighborhood plan is to create an environment for existing residents and businesses to thrive and see a quality of life that they desire for their community. It defines the vision, identifies specific issues, and establishes goals, policies and action steps that will improve existing conditions and shape future growth.

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan sets the overall vision of Grand Junction and establishes goals and policies that aid in realizing the vision. A new Orchard Mesa Neighborhood Plan can provide greater detail and action on specific concerns for Orchard Mesa. It sets a more detailed vision for the planning area. The new neighborhood plan will address specific issues and topics that provide the road map to addressing existing and long range issues facing Orchard Mesa as the area grows and develops.

Public participation is very important to the planning process in knowing what are the issues and concern on the minds of the citizens, business owners, and service providers. The City and County began the planning process for the Orchard Mesa Plan

in early 2013 as a joint planning effort. Much of the planning area lies outside of the city limits underlying the importance of having Mesa County as a partner.

Public input and participation is at the forefront of the planning process with eleven focus groups/ stakeholder meetings, four open houses and two joint City/County Planning Commissioner workshops held to date. Additional open houses and workshops are planned. There were 322 people participating in the four open houses held with 87 written comments received. In addition Staff received information and issues identified by Orchard Mesa service and utility providers, homeowner associations, and the business community at the eleven focus group meetings held.

The issues and topics that have garnered the most interest and are being considered in the draft Plan include the following twelve topic areas. These 12 topic areas will be drafted into twelve chapters or sections in the Plan document.

**Community Image** – The current condition and look of the US Hwy 50 corridor is a concern for many that have participated in this planning process. Dilapidated buildings, vacant businesses, and junk and weeds are also issues identified.

**Existing and Future Land Use & Zoning** – How Orchard Mesa grows over the next 30+ years will be shaped by the 2010 Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map. Major changes to that map are not anticipated as part of this planning effort. The 2011/12 construction of a major sewer line along Hwy 141 (32 Road) that runs between Clifton and Whitewater is a major concern and issue identified. The majority of people feel strongly that this should remain rural as it is currently zoned and identified on the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map.

**Agricultural / Rural Interests** – In addition to keeping 32 Road rural, the protection of agricultural businesses and interests has been paramount for the majority of those participating.

**Transportation** – Making the Hwy 50 corridor multi-modal with bike, transit, and pedestrian facilities too, providing safe access across Hwy 50 from the neighborhoods located on both sides of the corridor, and providing safe walking routes for school children are important issues to the citizens. Linking neighborhoods to the Colorado Riverfront trail system and the Old Spanish Trail northern branch that enters Orchard Mesa from the south and crosses the Colorado River at 28 ¾ Road has also been identified.

**Economic Development** – Current business vacancy on Orchard Mesa has risen recently to 15% emphasizing the need to help find ways for business to be successful on Orchard Mesa. Residents have stated their desire for more neighborhood services and businesses to be available on Orchard Mesa. The Mesa County Fairgrounds and its anticipated growth and the further development of Whitewater Hill including the Public Safety Training Facility will both be regional attractions that may spur economic development on Orchard Mesa.

**Parks/Recreation/OpenSpace/Trails** – The underserved areas without nearby parks, the future of Confluence Point above the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers, the Old

Spanish Trail (Sisters trail network), private homeowner association parks, and access to public lands and trail systems are all of interest by the citizens of Orchard Mesa.

**Storm Water and Drainage** – With 400 acres and 700 structures inside an identified 100 year floodplain located in the center of the more urban area of Orchard Mesa, performing pre-disaster mitigation and improving and maintaining drainage facilities collectively among drainage partners is important.

**Mesa County Fairgrounds** – The Mesa County Board of Commissioners adopted a master plan for the fairgrounds on December 20, 2012. The master plan includes additional facilities that will attract additional events and people to the facility reinforcing its presence as an economic driver on Orchard Mesa.

**Public Utilities and Services** – Services provided to the citizens including utilities, community facilities like schools, libraries, etc. and public safety including fire and police are all an important part of the quality of life and for Orchard Mesa and what helps it be a great place to live and do business.

**Housing Trends** – The 2010 Comprehensive Plan identified deficiencies in housing choice and the lack of diversity of housing throughout the Grand Junction area. This Orchard Mesa Plan will look at how Orchard Mesa is doing in achieving the Comprehensive Plan's Guiding Principle of providing housing variety on the community.

**Natural Resources** – Orchard Mesa is rich in gravel and mineral deposits and has abundant wildlife in an environment where urban development now interfaces. How the Plan deals with these issues is important.

**Historic Preservation** – Orchard Mesa has a national historic trail that, in addition to locally significant homes and structures, this Plan will recognize and identify.

The Final Orchard Mesa Plan will be divided into the various section topics as discussed above and will include goals, policies and actions in each section that will help the City, Mesa County, and Orchard Mesa residents create great places to live, work, and play on Orchard Mesa. Working towards the City's vision of becoming the most livable place west of the Rockies to live and do business will be the purpose for the Orchard Mesa Plan.

### Next Steps

Preliminary Schedule:

- Early November - Hold 2 Open Houses – Seek input on draft plan, goals, policies, actions
- Late Nov/Early Dec – City Council Workshop update
- December 12<sup>th</sup> - Joint City/County Planning Commission Workshop
- January 2014 - Joint Public Hearing with City/County Planning Commissions
- February 2014 - County Staff brief BoCC
- February 2014 - City Council First Reading
- February/March 2014 - City Council Public Hearing and 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading

Information on the Orchard Mesa Plan and planning process will be presented to Council at the September 16<sup>th</sup> Readiness Meeting using a power point presentation that is attached.

**Board or Committee Recommendation:**

The City Planning Commission will eventually recommend to City Council any final draft of the Orchard Mesa Plan they seek to have adopted by the City.

**Financial Impact/Budget:**

As the area grows and develops there will be needed public improvements constructed and there will also be revenues from new business and new residential developments.

**Legal issues:**

There are no legal issues arising out of or concerning the update; as the Plan proceeds through the public review and approval process any legal issues that arise will be addressed.

**Other issues:**

There are no other issues that have been identified at this point in the planning process.

**Previously presented or discussed:**

No, this is the first update to City Council on the Orchard Mesa Plan and planning process.

**Attachments:**

PowerPoint Presentation

# Orchard Mesa Plan



## City Council Update

16 September 2013



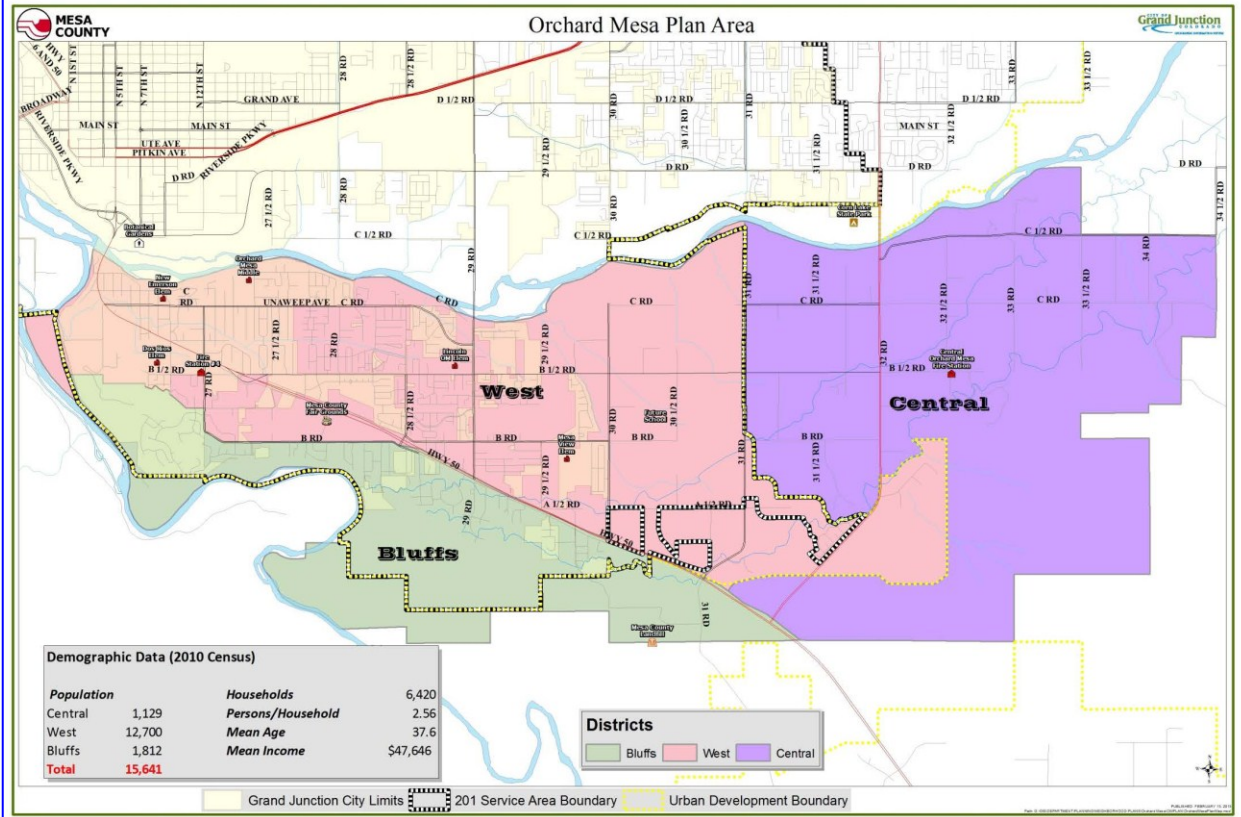
# Orchard Mesa Plan

## Overview

### Planning Process Highlights:

- The planning process started at the beginning of 2013 as a joint planning effort with the city and county planning staffs.
- Since then, 11 focus group/stakeholder meetings have been held.
- The City and County Planning Commissions have met jointly two times to date.
- June 6, 2013 the Board of County Commissioners were briefed on the planning process.
- 3 Open Houses were held June 10, 13 & 18 where 230 people signed in and 73 comment sheets were received. The public helped identify issues on Orchard Mesa.
- Plan goals were drafted from the comments received from the Open House participants.
- An open house was held August 21<sup>st</sup> to obtain input on draft goals of the Plan. 92 people signed in and 14 comments were received from the open house.
- Draft policies and actions will be drafted and presented to the public at 2 open houses in November for their input.

# Orchard Mesa Plan Area



## Community Image

### Background

The vision for Grand Junction established in the Comprehensive Plan is "To become the most livable community west of the Rockies". From the 2010 Comprehensive Plan planning process we learned what type of community we want.

A community that:

- Provides housing, jobs, services, health and safety for all its residents.
- Values our agricultural background; enjoys open spaces and a small-town feel.
- Has services and shopping close to where we live to cut down the amount of cross-town traffic and commute times to our jobs and to reduce air pollution.
- Wants neighborhoods and parks to be connected and close so our children have a safe place to play.
- Is willing to increase density in core areas, if that can prevent sprawl and encourage preservation of agricultural lands.
- Wants a broader mix of housing for all.
- Wants a community with a healthy economy and opportunities to raise families in a supportive, safe environment with good schools.
- Wants a transportation system that balances possibilities for cars, trucks, transit, bicycles and pedestrians.
- Wants opportunities for growth without sacrificing the quality of life that we have come to expect.
- Recognizes tourism and agri-tourism as a significant part of the economy. Without careful planning, agriculture and the lifestyles surrounding it will disappear under the weight of urban sprawl.

### What does this mean for Orchard Mesa?

- How the community is portrayed affects many things including business climate, housing values and general quality of life aspirations.
- The first thing people see when entering Orchard Mesa from the south or from downtown is the US Hwy. 50 corridor that runs through the area. It divides residential neighborhoods, creating a barrier for kids to get to school, and it is a corridor without pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Some properties along the corridor have struggled with vacancy rates running higher than other City areas.
- Another issue is poorly maintained properties, weeds and junk, that affect the image of the community.

# Community Image



## Draft Goals

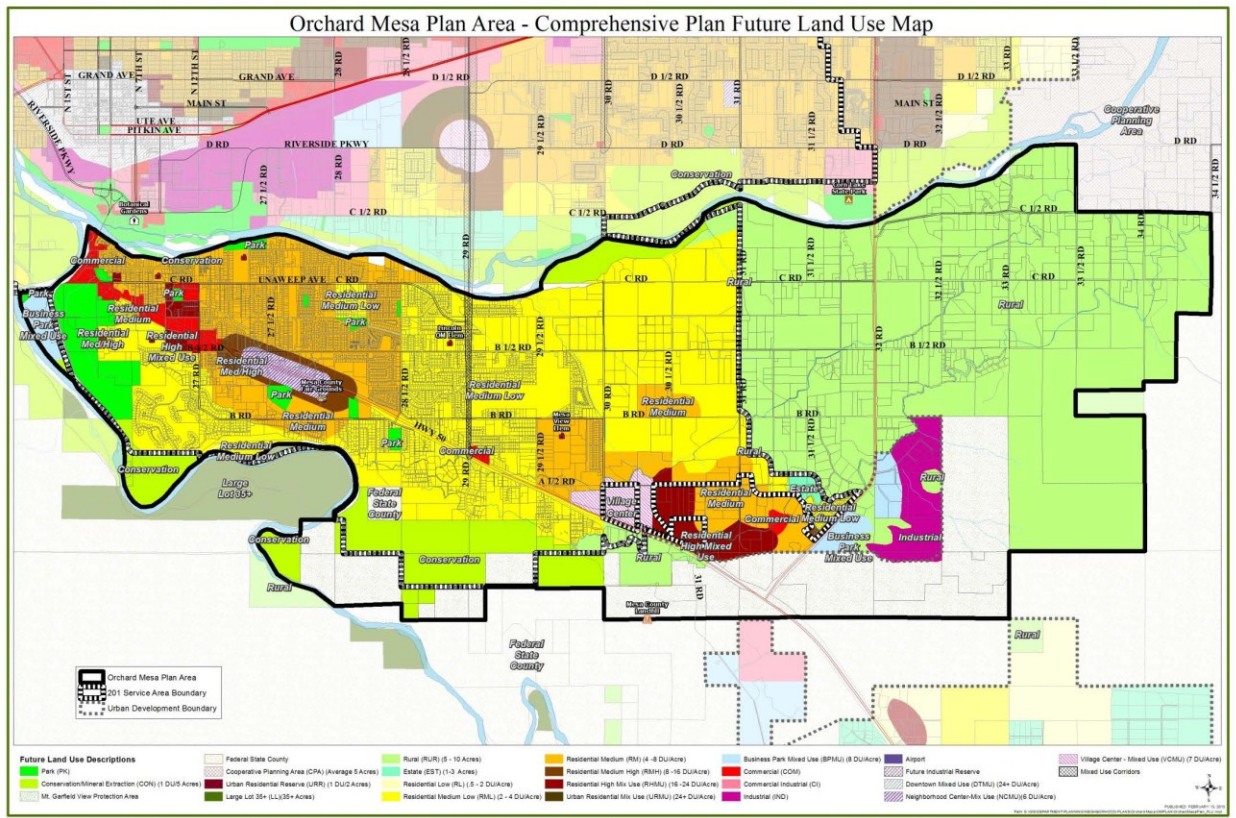
**Goal 1:** Safe and attractive entrances to the community.

**Goal 2:** Preserve and enhance the quality of life on Orchard Mesa.

**Goal 3:** Attractive, well maintained properties and cohesive neighborhoods.

**Goal 4:** A rural life style outside the urbanizing area of Orchard Mesa.

# Future Land Use





# Existing and Future Land Uses

## Urban and Rural Areas

### Background

In 2010 the City of Grand Junction and Mesa County adopted the Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan which identified a range of densities in Orchard Mesa.

In 2012, a major sewer line was constructed along 32 Road from Clifton Sanitation to serve the Whitewater community. The presence of this line on Orchard Mesa is not intended to be used to automatically urbanize the 32 Road area.

A Guiding Principle of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan is to have sustainable growth patterns, in order to expand efficiently and cost-effectively.

The desired development pattern is to develop infill areas first, where it is most economical to extend services, and then outward in a concentric pattern, rather than leapfrogging.

Redevelopment of existing under-developed properties allows property owners to take full advantage of allowed land uses and densities as well as existing infrastructure.

Significant redevelopment opportunities exist along the Highway 50 corridor, which can also further the goals for Economic Development and Community Image.

**What does this mean for Orchard Mesa?**

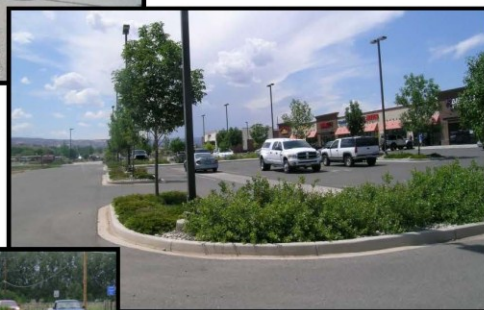
# Existing and Future Land Uses



Neighborhood Center at  
B 1/2 Road and Highway 50



Future Village Center at  
30 Road and Highway 50



### Draft Goals

**Goal 1:** The Highway 50 corridor is invigorated and distinct.

**Goal 2:** Commercial development along the Highway 50 corridor serves the needs of Orchard Mesa residents as well as visitors.

**Goal 3:** Infill areas are developed first and then concentrically out towards rural areas, limiting sprawl.

**Goal 4:** Development is consistent with the land uses identified on the Future Land Use Map.

**Goal 5:** Rural uses surrounding the urban areas continue and are a valued part of the community character.

# Ag/Rural Area

## Area generally east of 31 Road

### Background

In 2008 the Board of County Commissioners and the Grand Junction City Council approved together the expansion of the Persigo 201 sewer service boundary to 31 Road for the area north of A 1/2 Road. The previous boundary was at 30 Road.

Agricultural businesses are an important part of the economy.

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan supports this area for rural densities and agricultural production.

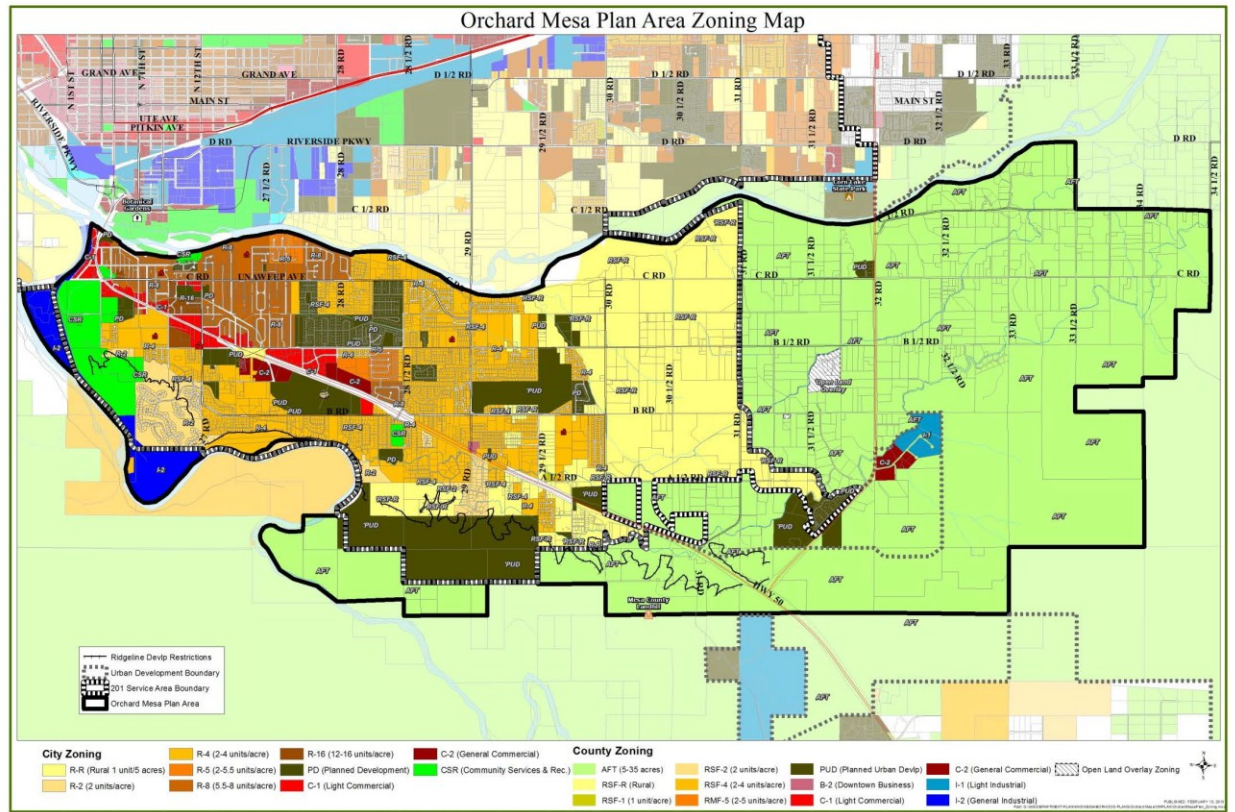
In 2012, a sewer line connecting the rural community of Whitewater to Clifton Sanitation District was installed along 32 Road (Highway 141). Some urban development may occur on this corridor where some existing commercial/industrial development zoning is in place. **However, the presence of the sewer service line is not intended to be used to urbanize the corridor.**

Mesa County's AFT zoning permits agricultural operations, the zoning allows for the averaging of residential densities to one dwelling per 5 acres and permits parcel sizes to be as small as one acre.

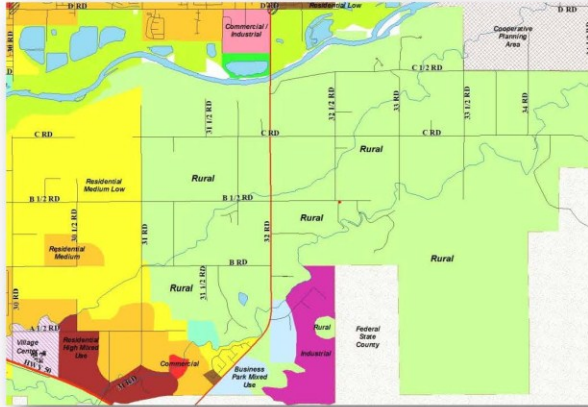
Generally, a minimum of 10 acres is needed for viable agricultural operations on Orchard Mesa.



## Zoning



# Agricultural/Rural Interests



## Draft Goals

**Goal 1:** Rural land uses east of 31 Road are preserved, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map.

**Goal 2:** The 32 Road corridor retains its rural character.

**Goal 3:** Agricultural businesses are viable and an important part of Orchard Mesa's economy.



# Transportation

## Background

Goal 9 of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan is to “develop a well-balanced transportation system that supports automobile, local transit, pedestrian, bicycle, air, and freight movement.”

### What does this mean for Orchard Mesa?

1. A well balanced transportation system supports
  - Street construction with a balance between access, circulation, and the safe movement of all modes , motorized and non-motorized.
  - Multiple travel routes providing greater movement for driving, walking, and biking, helping to reduce congestion.
  - Increasing connectivity which means a street network with multiple travel routes that diffuse traffic.
2. A balanced transportation system is less costly, more cost-efficient, less expensive to maintain and less impactful than widening arterial roadways.
3. In 2009 Mesa County, the City of Grand Junction, and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) entered an agreement to implement an Access Control Plan for US Highway 50. The Plan established future access conditions on a property-by-property basis along the corridor.



# Transportation

## Draft Goals

**Goal 1:** US Hwy 50 through the developed urban areas will serve as a multi-modal facility ("Complete Street") for vehicles, transit, bicycles and pedestrian traffic.

**Goal 2:** Full implementation of the Hwy 50 Access Control Plan.

**Goal 3:** Safe walking routes to all Orchard Mesa schools.

**Goal 4:** Grand Valley Transit service and routes to meet the needs of Orchard Mesa.

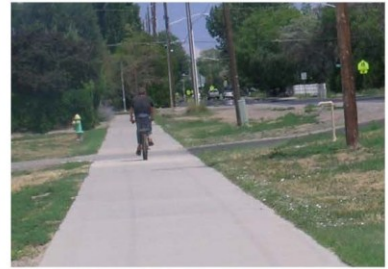
**Goal 5:** A comprehensive system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

**Goal 6:** Trail access to the Old Spanish Trail, the Colorado Riverfront, other trail corridors and other public attractions.

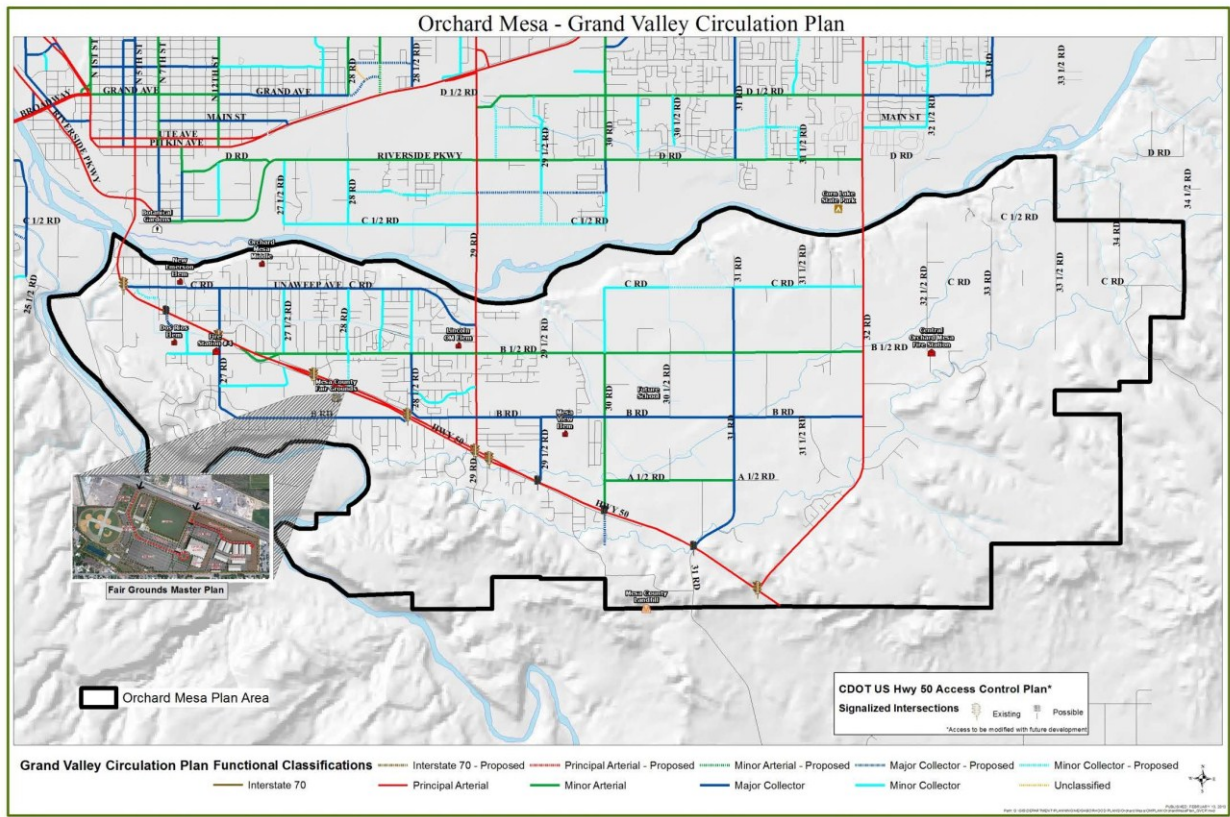
**Goal 7:** Traffic improvements and other measures at key locations.

**Goal 8:** Connectivity between the south side and the north side of US Hwy 50.

**Goal 9:** Trails along drainage ways.



# Transportation - Circulation



# Economic Development

## Background

A guiding principle of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan identifies the Grand Junction area as a “Regional Center... a provider of diverse goods and services and residential neighborhoods...a community that provides strong health, education and other regional services.”

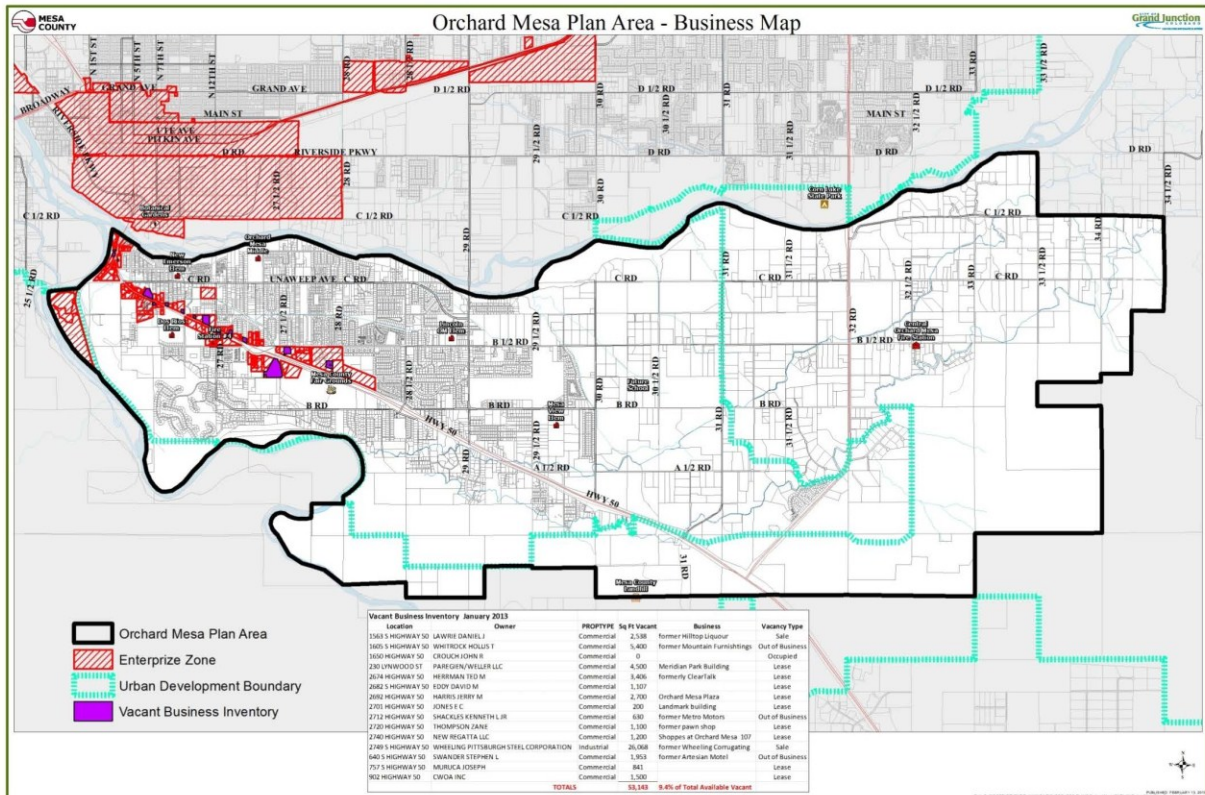
Goal 12 of the Comp Plan - “Being a regional provider of goods and services the City and County will sustain, develop and enhance a healthy, diverse economy.”

A key entryway to the Grand Valley, Orchard Mesa is often considered a drive-through rather than drive-to destination for non-residents.

### What does this mean for Orchard Mesa?

1. The Mesa County Fairgrounds and Whitewater Hill recreation and training facilities have great potential to be catalysts for new and expanded businesses and services. The Public Safety Training facility will be one-of-a-kind on the western slope and drag-way, trap club and airplane modelers club all host regional and even State level events.
2. The Highway 50 corridor’s numerous businesses could serve residents and nonresidents alike.
3. Other potential opportunities for business development on Orchard Mesa include:
  - A. Commercial and business pads and infrastructure in place for new and expanded businesses along Highway 50.
  - B. Enterprise Zone - much of the Highway 50 corridor is eligible for tax credits for business investment/expansion.
  - C. Artesian Hotel site - good water source for bottling company or similar business.
  - D. Confluence Point - proper zoning for variety of commercial development with the best view of the confluence of the rivers.

# Business Map



# Economic Development

## Draft Goals

**Goal 1:** Opportunities to shop, obtain personal and medical services and dining out options are convenient services for Orchard Mesa residents.

**Goal 2:** Orchard Mesa includes businesses and facilities as a destination for area residents and visitors alike.

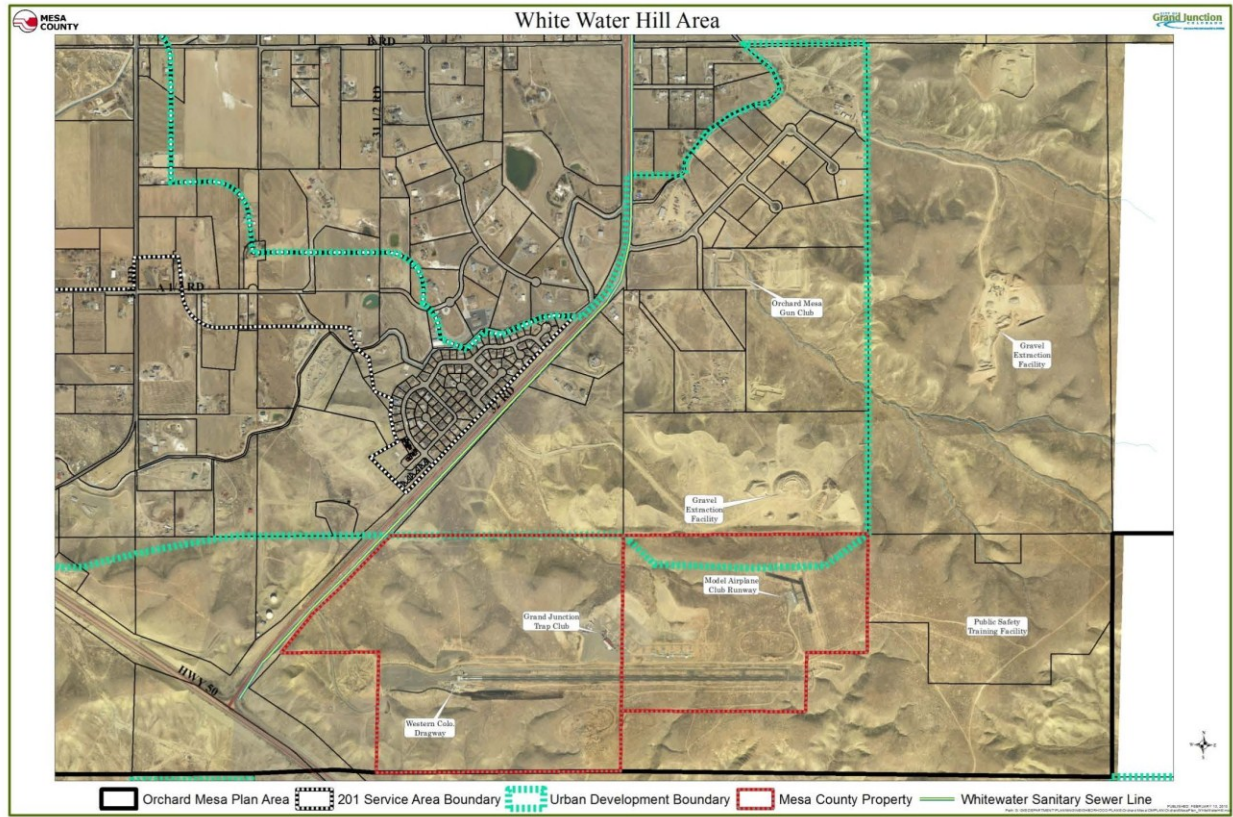
**Goal 3:** Orchard Mesa has an active and effective Orchard Mesa Business Association.

**Goal 4:** Orchard Mesa's agricultural industry thrives as an important part of the local economy and food source.

**Goal 5:** Sustainable businesses support the needs of regional attractions on Orchard Mesa (e.g., Fairgrounds, Whitewater Hill - Public Safety and Recreational Facilities).



# White Water Hill Area



# Parks/Recreation/Open Space/Trails

## Background

One of the guiding principles of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan is a “Grand Green System of Connected Recreational Opportunities.”

Orchard Mesa has about 50 acres of park lands providing a variety of facilities including both City and County park facilities including the Orchard Mesa Community Pool. There is also the Little League fields and BMX track at the Fairgrounds, the privately owned Chipeta Golf Course, and school playgrounds and sports fields. Private parks are located in some subdivisions.

Connections to the Colorado Riverfront Trail are located at 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Eagle Rim Park (28 Road), 29 Road, and 32 1/2 Road.

The Old Spanish Trail North Branch traverses across Orchard Mesa and crosses the Colorado River at 28 ¾ Road. Together with the Gunnison River Bluffs, they are known as the Sisters Trails.

The Palisade Fruit & Wine Byway begins at 32 and C Roads and provides a touring route for bicyclists and motorists through the orchards and wineries of Orchard Mesa to Palisade.

### What does this mean for Orchard Mesa?

1. The Colorado Riverfront trail system runs along the north bank of the Colorado River and can be accessed from Orchard Mesa at four river crossings.
2. Natural drainage ways traverse the planning area running north/northwest and can provide possible future trail connections to the trail facilities already in place.
3. Linking neighborhoods with the Colorado River, Downtown Grand Junction, Village Centers, Neighborhoods Centers and other desired public attractions provides a transportation network for Orchard Mesa residents.

# Parks/Recreation/Open Space/Trails

## Draft Goals

**Goal 1:** Parks and recreational opportunities meet the needs of Orchard Mesa residents.

**Goal 2:** The Old Spanish Trail and Gunnison River Bluffs Trail are a recreation destination.

**Goal 3:** A system of trails provides connections throughout Orchard Mesa for pedestrians and bicyclists, with connections to the Riverfront Trail, the Redlands, and Whitewater.

**Goal 4:** Parks and recreation facilities serving the residents of Orchard Mesa are developed, maintained and operated through effective partnerships between the City of Grand Junction, Mesa County and Mesa County School District 51.

**Goal 5:** Trail access to the Old Spanish Trail, the Colorado Riverfront, along drainage ways and to public attractions.



# Storm Water and Drainage

## Background

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan discusses Natural Hazards which include drainage and storm water management. Drainage for Orchard Mesa is managed by the City of Grand Junction, Mesa County, the Orchard Mesa Irrigation District, and the 5-2-1 Drainage Authority.

Although the average annual precipitation for the Grand Junction vicinity is only about nine inches, flooding can and does occur.

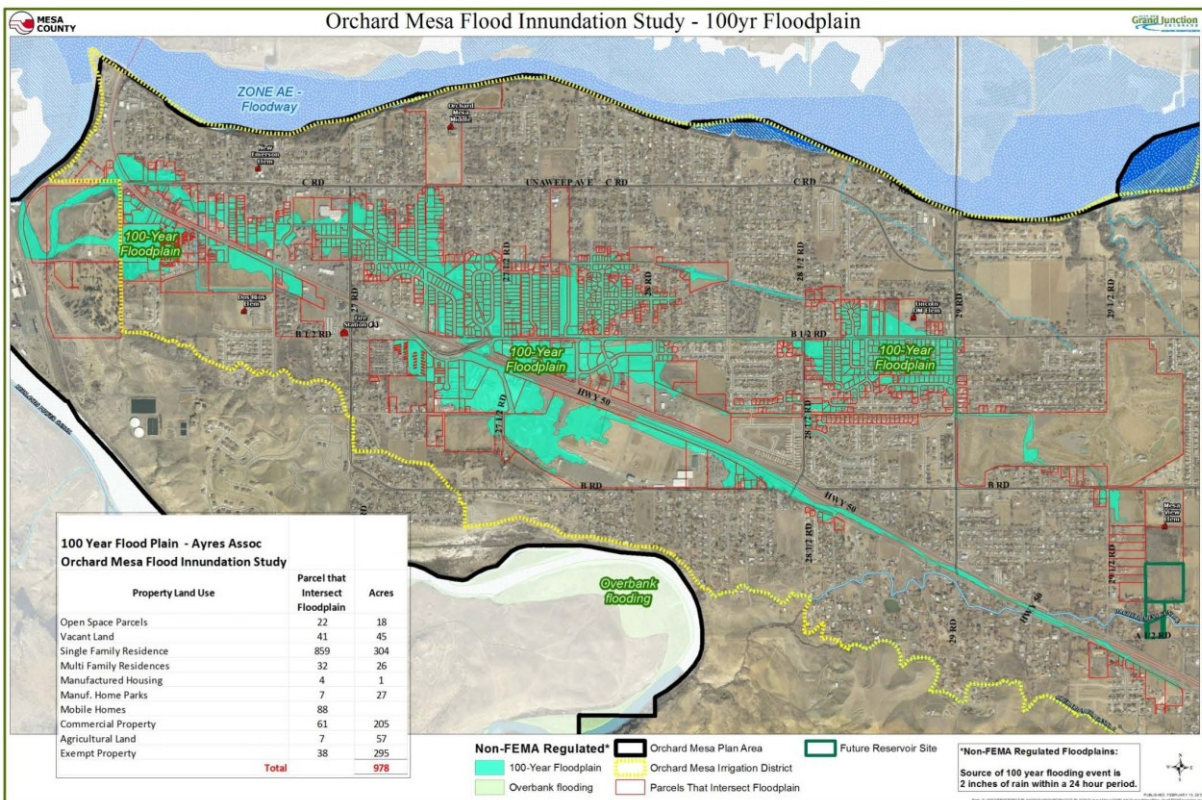
Our native clay soils do not absorb water well. Vegetation is sparse in many areas and this encourages erosion.

Past practices and environmental conditions collectively promote little infiltration, rapid runoff, much debris in the runoff, and flash flooding.

### What does this mean for Orchard Mesa?

1. The 5-2-1 Drainage Authority submitted a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Application to FEMA in 2009 to obtain funding to fix several known problems and remove approximately 100 acres from the newly identified Floodplain.
2. A comprehensive drainage study, from 30 Road to the west, was completed as part of the grant and mapped the affected area.
  - A. It identifies the area inundated by a 1% chance (100-year) event which is 2 inches of rainfall in a 24 hour timeframe.
  - B. There are approximately 400 acres and 700 structures in the floodplain.
  - C. The study found that spending over \$4 Million (2009 dollars) to perform improvements would remove approximately 100 acres from the floodplain.
  - D. Although FEMA has not created a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) from this study, the City is using it as the "best available information" to govern development in the area to ensure all new structures are built high enough they will not flood in the 1% chance event.

## 100 Year Floodplain





# Storm Water and Drainage

## Draft Goals

**Goal 1:** Perform pre-disaster mitigation.

**Goal 2:** Improve and maintain drainage facilities collectively among drainage partners.



# Mesa County Fairgrounds

## Background

On December 20, 2012, the Mesa County Board of County Commissioners adopted the Mesa County Fairgrounds Master Plan. The Plan is a road map for future development of the property. The proposed Master Plan includes:

- A. A new primary circulation road connecting the two Highway 50 Fairgrounds entries.
- B. Improvements at the west end of the site include relocation and expansion of the BMX venue to a professional BMX course, relocated and enlarged Veteran's Park, relocated Veteran's Intermountain Memorial and expanded paved parking.
- C. Improvements to the east end of the site include additional stall barns, a new covered arena, a permanent show office and restroom pavilion, and expanded RV sites.
- D. Improvements to the center of the site include a proposed 5,000 seat indoor event arena with attached 30,000 square foot divisible exhibition hall and expanded paved parking.

## What does this mean for Orchard Mesa?

1. The facility will continue to be an asset to the residents of Mesa County but will also become a regional attraction, providing a venue for a variety of activities and events.
2. As such, it can serve as an anchor for the Orchard Mesa Community and act as a catalyst for future development.
3. By providing neighborhood access, the fairgrounds is an amenity to the surrounding Orchard Mesa neighborhood.
4. Impacts, such as noise, traffic and dust must be considered.

# Mesa County Fairgrounds

## Draft Goals

**Goal 1:** The Mesa County Fairgrounds serves as a regional attraction and is an anchor for Orchard Mesa.

**Goal 2:** Land uses, services and infrastructure support implementation of the Mesa County Fairgrounds Master Plan.

**Goal 3:** Impacts of Fairgrounds activities on surrounding neighborhoods are reduced.

**Goal 4:** The Fairgrounds connects to the surrounding neighborhoods.



# Orchard Mesa Plan

## Next Steps

### Preliminary Schedule:

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| • Early November            | Hold 2 Open Houses – Seek input on draft plan, goals, policies, actions |
| • Late Nov/Early Dec        | City Council Workshop update  |
| • December 12 <sup>th</sup> | Joint City/County Planning Commission Workshop                          |
| • January 2014              | Joint Public Hearing with City/County Planning Commissions              |
| • February 2014             | County Staff brief BoCC   |
| • February 2014             | City Council First Reading  |
| • February/March 2014       | City Council Public Hearing and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading                 |



Date: Sept. 10, 2013  
 Author: Kathy Portner  
 Title/ Phone Ext: Econ Dev & Sustainability/1420  
 Proposed Meeting Date:  
Sept. 16, 2013

**CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT  
 READINESS**

Attach R-2

<b>Topic:</b> Community Solar Garden Subscription and Lease Agreement
<b>Staff:</b> Kathy Portner, Economic Dev. and Sustainability Terry Franklin, Streets and Utilities Manager

**Summary:**

Staff will present an overview of the proposed Pear Park Community Solar Garden and request City Council direction on moving forward with an agreement with Ecoplexus, Inc. as a subscriber to the solar garden and a lease agreement for the use of a portion of City-owned property.

**Background, Analysis and Options:**

In 2012, Xcel Energy released its Solar\* Rewards Community Program to provide incentives to stimulate the development of community solar gardens in its service territory. Ecoplexus, Inc., a solar developer, won a competitive bid for a 2 MW project in Mesa County. A community solar garden operates at a centralized location, generating energy that is sold directly to Xcel via an energy procurement agreement. Each kWh produced generates a “virtual net metering” credit and a renewable energy certificate. Subscribers to the solar garden purchase power from the solar provider and receive a credit from Xcel on their monthly utility statement.

The project is proposed to be located on 14 acres of vacant land, located at 2950 D ¼ Road in Pear Park. The site consists of two parcels, 10 acres owned by School District 51 and 4 acres owned by the City of Grand Junction. The property is bounded by the unimproved D ¼ Road on the south, the unimproved 29 ¼ Road on the west and the Mesa County ditch along the northeast perimeter. The School District property will be fully utilized for the placement of the solar array. Approximately ½ acre of the adjacent City property is proposed to be leased for an access driveway and perimeter landscaping. A Conditional Use Permit for the project was approved by the Planning Commission on June 25, 2013.

The solar array had originally been planned to utilize the entire 14 acres, including the City-owned property, but through the design process it was determined that it could be accommodated on just the ten acres owned by the School District, utilizing a portion of the City property for the access driveway and landscape buffer adjacent to the neighborhood. The improvements on the City property will be confined to the southern and eastern perimeter with landscaping and a driveway, leaving the bulk of the property available for other purposes. Ecoplexus has submitted a bid to Xcel for another solar project, which, if approved, could be located on the remainder of the City property. The

City property would be leased at a rate of \$600 annually for the 1/2 acre for twenty years, with optional renewal provisions and Ecoplexus will be responsible for all improvements and maintenance.

As a subscriber to the Community Solar Garden, the City can maximize savings by selecting the accounts to utilize approximately 23% of the 2 MW project. Other subscribers will include School District 51, Mesa County, Alpine Bank and Grand Junction Housing Authority (5% of the solar garden must be available to income qualified). Based on the City accounts identified for best return, the annual savings projected for 2014 are \$32,943. The City can select and change accounts on an annual basis to maximize their return. The subscription agreement will be for a twenty year period, with an optional extended term for up to five additional one year periods.

**Board or Committee Recommendation:** N/A

**Financial Impact/Budget:**

Savings are conservatively estimated at \$724,838 over the twenty year period.

**Legal issues:**

All documents pertaining to the lease agreement and subscriber's agreement will be reviewed and approved by the City Attorney's office.

**Other issues:** N/A

**Previously presented or discussed:**

This proposed project was discussed at the December 12, 2012 City Council workshop and general direction was given to continue negotiating the terms of the project. A non-binding letter of intent to lease City property and subscribe to the solar garden was executed March 15, 2013.

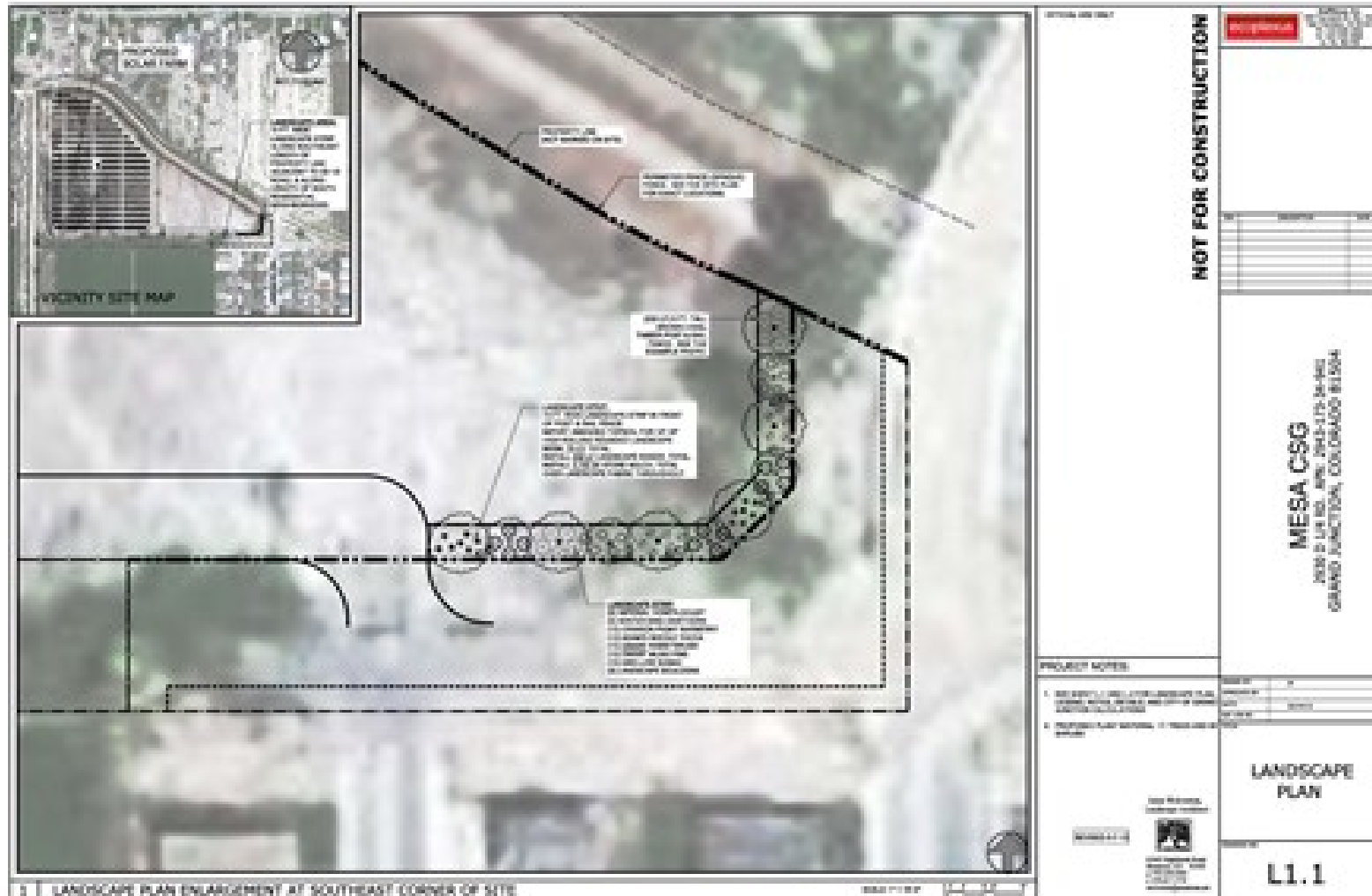
**Attachments:**

Site Plan  
Estimated Savings Analysis

# Site Layout



# Landscaping Plan



NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION

**MESA CSG**  
 2005 UT 80, AVE. JENKINS-8000  
 GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO 81504

- PROJECT NOTES:
1. SEE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS FOR ALL MATERIALS AND FINISHES.
  2. VERIFY ALL MATERIALS WITH ARCHITECT BEFORE CONSTRUCTION.

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 Website: www.ecoplexus.com

DATE	
BY	
CHECKED BY	
SCALE	
<b>LANDSCAPE PLAN</b>	
<b>L1.1</b>	



**City Grand Junction Estimated Savings Analysis - \$0.0675/kWh SA Rate**

Yr	Subscription Value per kWh			Subscription Share (% CSG)			Aggregate Annual and Cumulative Savings					
	Avg Xcel SRC Credit (per kWh) <sup>1</sup>	SA Rate (per kWh) <sup>2</sup>	Savings (per kWh)	Annual CSG Production (kWh) <sup>3</sup>	Subscrip %	Annual kWh's Subscribed <sup>4</sup>	1.5% Utility Escalation		3.0% Utility Escalation		4.5% Utility Escalation	
							Annual Savings	Cumulative Savings	Annual Savings	Cumulative Savings	Annual Savings	Cumulative Savings
1	\$ 0.10746	\$ 0.06750	\$ 0.03996	3,566,642	23.1%	824,395	\$ 32,943	\$ 32,943	\$ 32,943	\$ 32,943	\$ 32,943	\$ 32,943
2	\$ 0.10907	\$ 0.06851	\$ 0.04056	3,548,809	23.1%	820,273	\$ 33,270	\$ 66,213	\$ 34,592	\$ 67,535	\$ 35,914	\$ 68,857
3	\$ 0.11071	\$ 0.06954	\$ 0.04117	3,531,065	23.1%	816,172	\$ 33,600	\$ 99,812	\$ 36,290	\$ 103,825	\$ 39,020	\$ 107,877
4	\$ 0.11237	\$ 0.07058	\$ 0.04179	3,513,409	23.1%	812,091	\$ 33,933	\$ 133,746	\$ 38,039	\$ 141,864	\$ 42,266	\$ 150,143
5	\$ 0.11405	\$ 0.07164	\$ 0.04241	3,495,842	23.1%	808,031	\$ 34,270	\$ 168,016	\$ 39,840	\$ 181,704	\$ 45,659	\$ 195,802
6	\$ 0.11576	\$ 0.07272	\$ 0.04305	3,478,363	23.1%	803,990	\$ 34,610	\$ 202,626	\$ 41,694	\$ 223,398	\$ 49,203	\$ 245,005
7	\$ 0.11750	\$ 0.07381	\$ 0.04369	3,460,971	23.1%	799,970	\$ 34,954	\$ 237,580	\$ 43,603	\$ 267,001	\$ 52,905	\$ 297,909
8	\$ 0.11926	\$ 0.07491	\$ 0.04435	3,443,666	23.1%	795,971	\$ 35,301	\$ 272,881	\$ 45,567	\$ 312,568	\$ 56,771	\$ 354,681
9	\$ 0.12105	\$ 0.07604	\$ 0.04501	3,426,448	23.1%	791,991	\$ 35,651	\$ 308,532	\$ 47,590	\$ 360,158	\$ 60,810	\$ 415,490
10	\$ 0.12287	\$ 0.07718	\$ 0.04569	3,409,316	23.1%	788,031	\$ 36,005	\$ 344,537	\$ 49,671	\$ 409,829	\$ 65,026	\$ 480,516
11	\$ 0.12471	\$ 0.07834	\$ 0.04638	3,392,269	23.1%	784,091	\$ 36,362	\$ 380,899	\$ 51,813	\$ 461,643	\$ 69,428	\$ 549,944
12	\$ 0.12658	\$ 0.07951	\$ 0.04707	3,375,308	23.1%	780,170	\$ 36,723	\$ 417,623	\$ 54,018	\$ 515,660	\$ 74,023	\$ 623,967
13	\$ 0.12848	\$ 0.08070	\$ 0.04778	3,358,431	23.1%	776,269	\$ 37,088	\$ 454,710	\$ 56,286	\$ 571,946	\$ 78,819	\$ 702,785
14	\$ 0.13041	\$ 0.08191	\$ 0.04849	3,341,639	23.1%	772,388	\$ 37,456	\$ 492,166	\$ 58,619	\$ 630,565	\$ 83,824	\$ 786,609
15	\$ 0.13236	\$ 0.08314	\$ 0.04922	3,324,931	23.1%	768,526	\$ 37,828	\$ 529,994	\$ 61,020	\$ 691,586	\$ 89,046	\$ 875,655
16	\$ 0.13435	\$ 0.08439	\$ 0.04996	3,308,306	23.1%	764,683	\$ 38,203	\$ 568,197	\$ 63,490	\$ 755,076	\$ 94,496	\$ 970,151
17	\$ 0.13637	\$ 0.08566	\$ 0.05071	3,291,765	23.1%	760,860	\$ 38,582	\$ 606,779	\$ 66,031	\$ 821,107	\$ 100,180	\$ 1,070,331
18	\$ 0.13841	\$ 0.08694	\$ 0.05147	3,275,306	23.1%	757,056	\$ 38,965	\$ 645,744	\$ 68,645	\$ 889,752	\$ 106,110	\$ 1,176,441
19	\$ 0.14049	\$ 0.08825	\$ 0.05224	3,258,930	23.1%	753,270	\$ 39,352	\$ 685,096	\$ 71,333	\$ 961,086	\$ 112,296	\$ 1,288,737
20	\$ 0.14259	\$ 0.08957	\$ 0.05302	3,242,635	23.1%	749,504	\$ 39,742	\$ 724,838	\$ 74,098	\$ 1,035,183	\$ 118,746	\$ 1,407,483
				<b>68,044,053</b>		<b>15,727,732</b>	<b>\$ 724,838</b>		<b>\$ 1,035,183</b>		<b>\$ 1,407,483</b>	

**Footnotes**

- 1) Weighted average SRC credit for subscribed SG premises; assumes 1.5% annual utility escalation
- 2) 1.5% annual escalation; assumes project is not exempt from taxes
- 3) Based upon preliminary PVSyst performance models with fixed-tilt system; will be fine-tuned during final system engineering; assumes 0.5% annual PV degradation
- 4) Applies the 120% rule to actual annual consumption