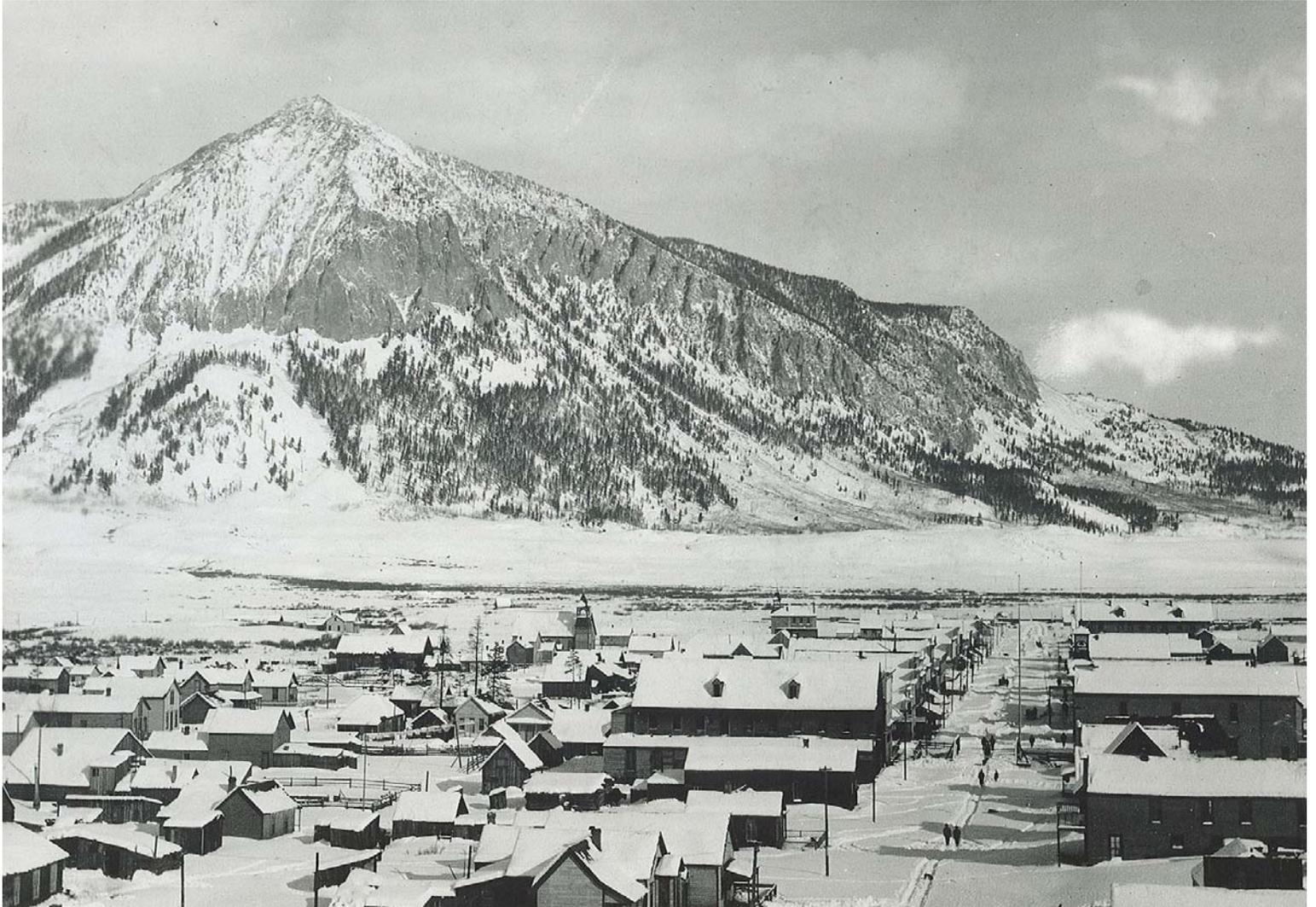


# Crested Butte Land Use Plan



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### **The Crested Butte Planning Commission**

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Cover photo and C.F.&I. employee housing photo courtesy of  
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**Ordinance No. 12 Series 1993**

An Ordinance Identifying the Town Council as the Municipal Planning Commission and Adopting the Crested Butte Three Mile Plan Required by Colorado Revised Statues, Section 31-12-105.

**Resolution 1996-1**

A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the Town of Crested Butte for the Adoption of the 1996 Land Use Plan

**Resolution No. 3 Series 1996**

A Resolution Updating the Town's Three Mile Plan

**Resolution No. 4 Series 1996**

A Resolution Approving the Adoption of the 1996 Land Use Plan

**Resolution 1996-2**

A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the Town of Crested Butte for the Adoption of Article 15-3.

**Resolution 1996-3**

A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the Town of Crested Butte Adopting the First Amendment to the 1996 Land Use Plan to Authorize the Imposition and Collection of Capital Expansion Recovery System Fees for Fire Protection Services.

**Resolution 2003-1**

A Resolution adopting the 2003 Housing Amendment to the 1996 Land Use Plan.

**Resolution No. 5, Series 2003**

A Resolution Ratifying and Approving the Adoption of the 2003 Amendment to the 1996 Town of Crested Butte Land Use Plan.

**Resolution 2004-1**

A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the Town of Crested Butte Adopting the 2004 Park and Recreation Improvements Amendment to the Crested Butte Land Use Plan and Renaming the Plan

**Resolution No. 7, Series 2004**

A Resolution Ratifying and Approving the Adoption of the 2004 Amendments to the Crested Butte Land Use Plan.

**Resolution 2006-1**

A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the Town of Crested Butte Updating the Town's Three Mile Plan by Adopting the Crested Butte Area Plan and Adoption of an Amendment to the 1996 Crested Butte Land Use Plan.

**Resolution No. 7, Series 2006**

A Resolution Amending the Town's Land Use Plan by Replacing the Town's Three Mile Plan with the Crested Butte Area Plan and Approving the Planning Commission's Amendment of the Master Plan.

**Resolution 2007-1**

A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the Town of Crested Butte Adopting the 2007 Park Land and Land For Town Public Facilities Chapters of the Crested Butte Land Use Plan.

**Resolution 2007-2**

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**Resolution No. 9, Series 2007** – A Resolution Ratifying and Approving an Amendment to the Crested Butte Land Use Plan.

**Resolution No. 10, Series 2007** – A Resolution Ratifying and Approving an Amendment to the Crested Butte Area Plan.

**Resolution 2010-1**

A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the Town of Crested Butte adopting the 2010 Amendments to the Housing Chapter of the Crested Butte Land Use Plan.

**Resolution No. 15, Series 2010**

A Resolution Ratifying and Approving an Amendment to the Crested Butte Land Use Plan.

**Resolution 2011-1**

A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the Town of Crested Butte adopting Amendments to the Crested Butte Land Use Plan by Deleting the Trail Chapter, Deleting the Transportation Chapter, Amending the Land for Town Public Facilities Chapter, Amending the Park Land Chapter and Amending the Acknowledgements, and Table of Contents.

**Resolution No. 4, Series 2011**

A Resolution Ratifying and Approving an Amendment to the Crested Butte Land Use Plan.

**Resolution 2011-2**

A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the Town Of Crested Butte Adopting Amendments to the Crested Butte Land Use Plan by Amending the Crested Butte Area Plan by Making Changes to the Title Page, Synopsis, Acknowledgements, Table of Contents, and Preface, and Making Changes to Part 1 Including Changes to: General Policies, Land Use Policies, Natural Hazards to Development Policies, Natural Resources Policies, Transportation Policies and Making Changes to Part 2 Including Changes to: Wetlands, Transportation and Amending the Developed and Undeveloped Land Maps.

**Resolution No. 5, Series 2011**

A Resolution Ratifying and Approving Amendments to the Crested Butte Area Plan, a part of the Crested Butte Land Use Plan.

**Resolution 2013-1**

A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the Town of Crested Butte Adopting the 2013 Amendments to the Transportation, Snow Plowing Equipment Chapter of the Crested Butte Land Use Plan

**Resolution No. 2, Series 2013**

A Resolution of the Town Council of Crested Butte Approving the Planning Commission of Crested Butte's 2013 Amendments to the Transportation, Snow Plowing Equipment Chapter of the Crested Butte Land Use Plan.

## Glossary of Terms

**Affordable Housing** – As a general standard, housing is considered to be affordable when the monthly rent or mortgage payment costs no more than 30% of the household’s income. In Crested Butte, it is also used to refer to housing that is deed restricted or otherwise intended to be affordable for qualifying residents. Terms often used in other communities are community, essential and workforce housing. Crested Butte uses the term “local housing” in the Area Plan and in the Subdivision Regulations. Local Housing is defined as “...*permanently deed restricted housing. The intended beneficiaries for such housing are people who cannot afford unrestricted sale or rental housing prices. At minimum the occupants of affordable housing are a variety of mixed income people who earn at least 80% of their income in Gunnison County. “Earned Income” is defined by the IRS. Other restrictions such as maximum income, maximum assets and/or maximum resale price may also be a part of a deed restriction on local housing.*”

**AMI (Area Median Income)** – Figures published annually for counties by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by household size. When a single figure is referenced, like the median income for Gunnison County, it refers to 100% of the area median for a 4-person family. Housing programs are generally targeted to serve a defined income group. HUD defines income limits for low-income households ( $\leq 80\%$  AMI). Additional categories are usually used in high-cost mountain communities for various programs and policies. Examples of such categories include the following:

1. *Extremely low-income*, which is less than or equal to 30% AMI;
2. *Very low-income*, which is between 30 and 50% AMI;
3. *Low-income*, which is between 50 and 80% AMI;
4. *Moderate/middle income*, which is between 80 and 120%;
5. *Middle Income*, which is 121% to 160% AMI;
6. *Upper/middle income*, which is 161% to 200% AMI; and
7. *Upper income*, which is over 200% AMI.

**Catch-up** - addresses housing deficiencies that exist now.

**Keep-up** - addresses housing needs as growth continues.

**Commercial** – references to commercial development in this document are references to development in the Commercial, Business or Tourist zones or any other development designed to house a business.

**Commercial Linkage** - Developers of new commercial space build or pay for the construction of housing for a percentage of the workforce housing demand generated by the new development. The basic premise of linkage programs is that new commercial development fuels demand for housing through the new on-site jobs that are created. This is a form of impact mitigation. Indirect jobs are not used to document the housing demand generated. When applied to redevelopment, developers are credited for space that already exists.

**Inclusionary Zoning** – A portion of the units in new residential subdivisions and PUD’s are designated as Affordable Housing, typically with deed restrictions that permanently protect their affordability and occupancy.

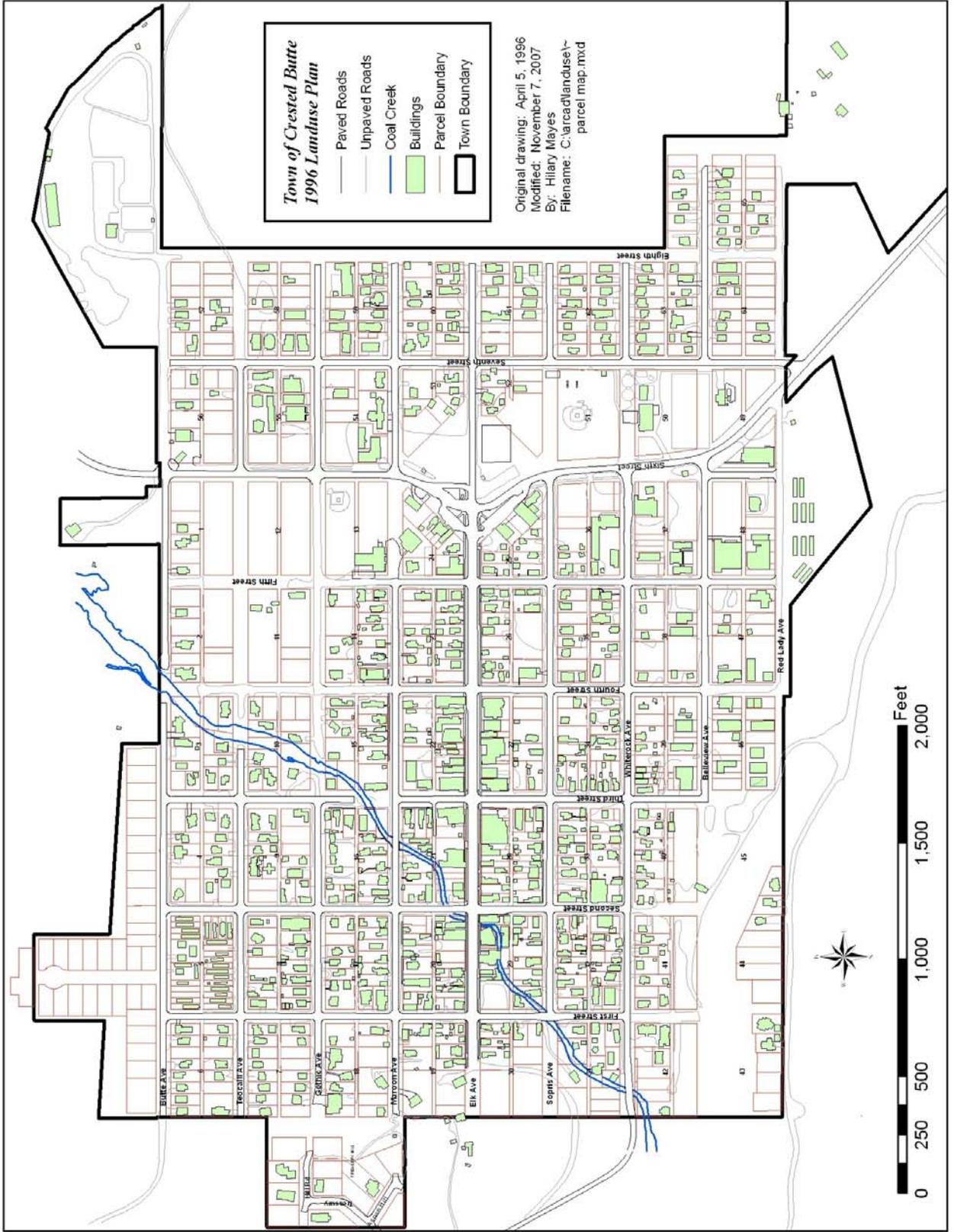
**Lodging Room** – A lodging room is a unit with up to one bedroom or sleeping space. Two bedrooms equals two lodging rooms.

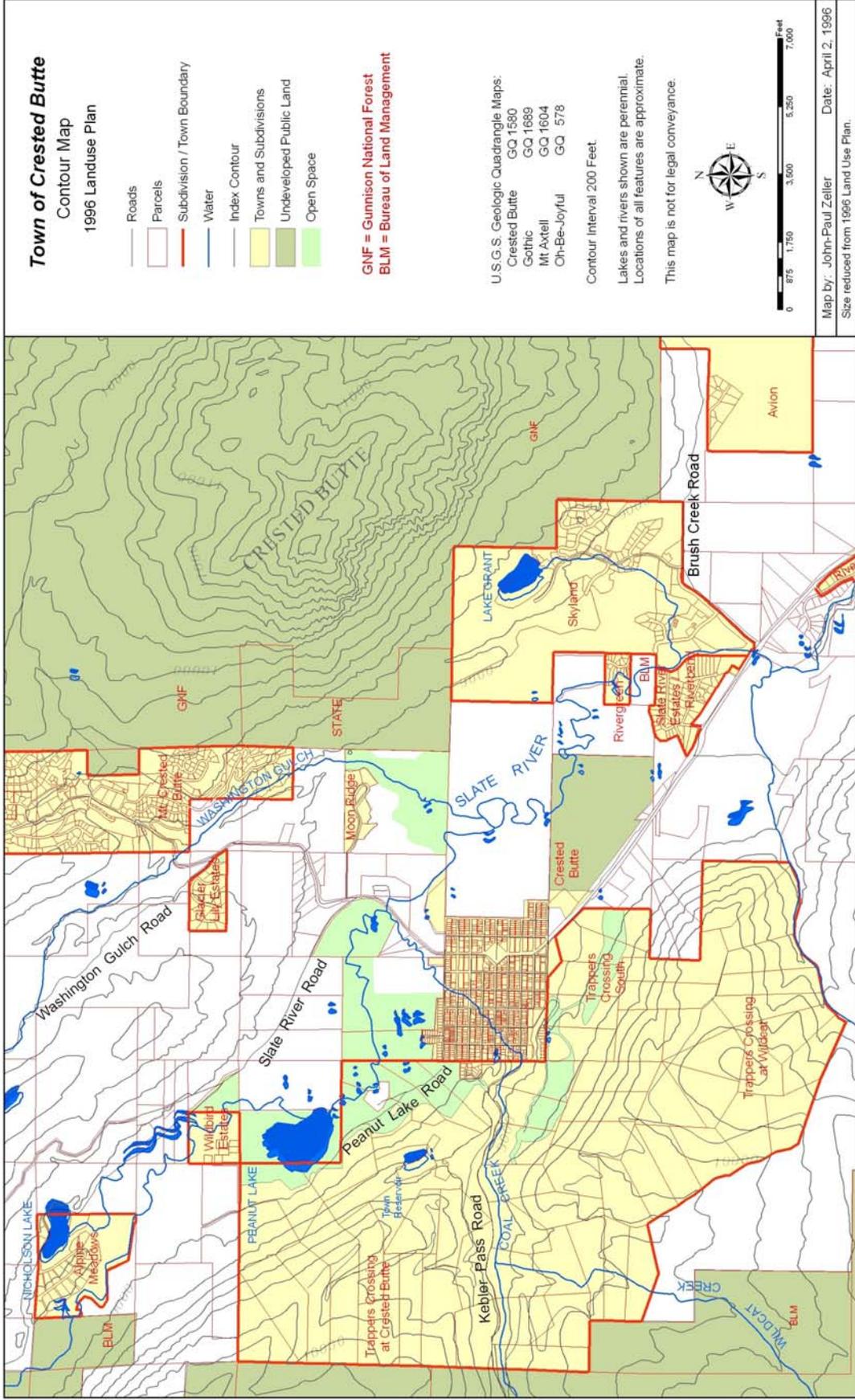
**Mean** – the average of a group of numbers, which is the sum of all the data values divided by the number of items.

**Median** – the middle point in a data set ( $\frac{1}{2}$  of the numbers are above and  $\frac{1}{2}$  are below the median).

**Residential Linkage** – Builders of new residential units are required to address a portion of the housing demand generated by on-site jobs associated with the maintenance and operation of the home, usually by providing a payment in lieu when homes are the size allowed in Crested Butte.

**Resident Occupied (RO) units** – Resident occupied units are units that have fewer restrictions than other deed restricted units. To live in a resident occupied unit, a qualified buyer might need to earn 80% of their income in Gunnison County but not need to be in an income category and there may not be an appreciation cap on the unit.





## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A Very Brief History**

Crested Butte is located on Coal Creek near the confluence of Coal Creek and the Slate River. Both Coal Creek and the Slate River are tributaries of the East River, and the area discussed in this plan is part of the Upper East River Valley. The Upper East River Valley extends from the head waters to an area approximately seven miles south of Crested Butte where Round Mountain and the Crested Butte South subdivision are located. The East River and the nearby Taylor River are the headwaters of the Gunnison River.

Crested Butte is nestled in the Upper East River Valley at the base of the Elk Mountains. Parts of the Upper East River Valley are included in the Raggeds, West Elk, Maroon Bells / Snowmass Wilderness Areas. The Fossil Ridge Wilderness Area is less than 10 miles south of Round Mountain.

The Plat of the 24 western Blocks of Crested Butte was filed and recorded in the County Clerk's Office on May 1, 1880 and the whole Town was recorded in the County Clerk's office on June 6, 1881. Although the Town began as a service area for gold and silver mining in the nearby mountains, coal had become an important mineral at the time of Town Plat recording and the location of the coal mines is identified on the first Map of the Town of Crested Butte. Coal mining was the primary reason for the Town's continued prosperity and existence until 1952 when the last mine, the Big Mine, was closed by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company of Pueblo, Colorado. Although the Town had no single major source of income after the Big Mine closed until the ski area on Crested Butte Mountain opened and became the focus for the Town's economy, the Town did continue to function despite this slow down as it had during previous mining slow downs in its first 100 years.

Beginning in the 1960s and temporarily culminating in the 1970s, the community began to grow again as the ski area and the sport of skiing took hold in the Rocky Mountain West. Lodging, restaurants and retail establishments were established to serve the visitors to the community. In 1974 the historical part of Crested Butte was designated a National Historic District by the U.S. Department of Interior and the community adopted design guidelines to help preserve the character and scale of the historic community.

Throughout the economic downturn of the 1980's the community worked hard to become not only a ski resort area but also a summer visitor area. As a result, one of the few unanimous actions by the State Legislature designated Crested Butte as the Wildflower Capital of the State. The Wildflower Festival

together with the Crested Butte Arts Fair, Aerial Weekend and Fat Tire Bike Week have expanded the traditional Fourth of July activities so there are attractions in the Town throughout the summer. Today, summer visitors and winter visitors are nearly equal partners in the tourist economy that is the primary driver of the Crested Butte economy.

### **Why Plan Now?**

Now that we have reached the middle of the 1990s, Crested Butte Mountain Resort (CBMR), the ski company operating the alpine ski area, is proposing to add 417 acres to the permit area and to increase the maintained ski acreage from 610 to 894 acres of ski terrain which would increase the potential number of skiers per day from an average of 7,516 to 12,470, or nearly doubling the number of skiers in this valley. CBMR is also preparing to build the North Village in Mt. Crested Butte, originally proposed for 1,900 units. Private land developers are already taking advantage of this proposal by proposing additional subdivisions throughout the Valley. Pressure from these and many other sources to place houses on all parcels of land not yet developed is increasing to the point where very few parcels will remain unapproved for development. Prior to 1995 there were roughly 2,300 residential units built in the Upper East River Valley and another 5,000 units approved but not yet built. As 1996 begins, an additional 66 units have been approved and over 800 units are proposed for the Upper East River Valley and most of the units are proposed to be within three miles of Crested Butte. Current subdivision proposals include the following:

**Table 1**  
**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IN THE SLATE RIVER VALLEY**

	<b>Residential Units</b>	<b>Subdivision Acreage</b>
Mountain Highlands	114	150
Buckhorn / Avion Club	338	+ commercial and lodge units. 287
Skyland expansion	242	266
Meridian Lake Filing 3	55	74
Pristine Point	14	62
Saddle Ridge Estates	22	127
Hidden River Ranch	17	280
Silver Sage	23	27
Subtotal	804	1,225

The number of units proposed is nearly identical to the total number units that have been built in Crested Butte. However,

in the case of Crested Butte, it took 115 years to build all of those units.

These development proposals would change the Upper East River Valley and the Slate River Valley forever. While these development proposals raise environmental concerns for the Upper East River Valley, there are other concerns that will directly impact the Town of Crested Butte. These concerns include housing, both to serve employees of the enlarged ski area and to serve the residents of the residential units, maintaining affordable housing in the resort area as more people discover the community and drive prices up, air pollution from automobiles traveling through the Town and other types of pollution including air pollution from fireplaces, light pollution, noise pollution, water pollution, and impacts to social services, fire and police. Most important, these development proposals intend to change the last small ski community in the State to yet another mega-resort with the associated traffic, and crime and the loss of the key quality of life indicator in the Upper East River Valley which is a small community.

With this background information it is clear that it is time for the community to discuss its future and that the results of such discussions should be laid out and explained in a document such as a land use plan which will then be available for guidance as the community evolves and as development proposals are reviewed.

### **Purpose of the Land Use Plan**

The 1996 Crested Butte Land Use Plan is a visionary document that provides guidance for decision making. It should not only anticipate the future directions of development, but also provide a framework which can be used to evaluate options and make consistent decisions on proposals not now anticipated.

The Crested Butte Land Use Plan evaluates several subject areas related to the use of land and presents a series of policy statements about community goals and desires. It is an advisory master plan for guiding future growth and development. As a master plan, it provides an officially adopted guide to the future development of the community for use by the members of the Town Council, the Town Planning Commission, the Board of Zoning and Architectural Review, other concerned governmental entities, residents, property owners, business people and others interested in the future of Crested Butte. The Land Use Plan builds on and ties together a number of plans, planning projects, and studies completed prior to the 1996 Land Use Plan including the following:

- \* Gothic Road Corridor Study, Prepared for Gunnison County, Merrick and Co.;
- \* Joint Policy Statement, Towns of Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte Re: Land Use and Development in the Upper East River Valley, 1984;
- \* Field Performance of Woodburning and Coal Burning Appliances in Crested Butte During the 1989-1990 Heating Season;
- \* The Successful Communities Workshops held in 1991;
- \* The results of the 1990 and 1991 public meetings and surveys about the Gothic Corridor;
- \* Flood Plain Information Report for Coal Creek, Crested Butte, CO, 1992;
- \* Housing Needs Assessment of Crested Butte / Gunnison Area, June 26, 1992;
- \* The Transportation, Alley and Parking Report, July, 1992;
- \* Wetlands of the Crested Butte Region, 1993;
- \* Crested Butte Housing Survey, 1993;
- \* An Analysis of Costs and Revenues Associated with Annexation and Property Development, 1993;
- \* The Crested Butte Three Mile Plan, November, 1993;
- \* The Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte Three Mile Plan work sessions of 1994;
- \* The purchase of the Eccher Ranch, 1994;
- \* Slate River Hydrology Study, January, 1995;
- \* Ecological Evaluation of the Eccher Ranch, Town of Crested Butte, Colorado - 1994;
- \* Design Guidelines for the Town of Crested Butte, 1995;
- \* The annexation of Kapushion Addition, No. 2 and the related 110 acre conservation easement to the Crested Butte Land Trust, 1995;
- \* Crested Butte / Mt. Crested Butte Transportation Development Program, 1995-1999;
- \* Town of Crested Butte, Housing Needs Assessment, Alan Richman Planning Services, February, 1996;
- \* Crested Butte Elementary/Middle and High School Traffic Impact Analysis, Felsburg, Holt and Ullevig, 1996; and
- \* 1995 Land Use Survey.

Although all these studies and projects have focused on specific problems and concerns, they share a common relationship to land use planning and the future of Crested Butte. These studies, projects, and policy statements have contributed to the development of the 1996 Crested Butte Land Use Plan and should be considered as part of this plan. To the extent these studies, project reports and policy

statements conflict with the goals and policies of the 1996 Crested Butte Land Use Plan, this plan should control and supersede the studies, project reports and policy statements.

#### The Relationship Between the Three Mile Plan and the Land Use Plan

Of particular importance in the above list is the Crested Butte Three Mile Plan adopted in November, 1993. This plan was the first land use plan adopted by the Town. Its focus was not the existing town but rather the type of development that should occur if land was to be annexed by the Town. Since its adoption it has been a valuable resource when discussing development in the Valley and it is the only attempt to determine the capacity of the Valley as will be discussed later in the Open Lands chapter.

The Crested Butte Three Mile Plan and all of its amendments are hereby adopted as part of the 1996 Crested Butte Land Use Plan.

#### The Area Encompassed by the Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan should be used to help make decisions about land use within the Town of Crested Butte, before and after annexation, and it addresses land use issues beyond the current Town boundaries to begin the conversation about how the Slate River Valley, in the vicinity of Crested Butte, should develop. The Contour Map in this plan displays the geographic area discussed in this plan and the photograph on this page also roughly displays the geographic area.



**The Relationship Between the Land Use Plan and Regulations**

It is important to understand the relationship of the Land Use Plan to the "Official Zoning District Map." While similar, they are not the same. The Land Use Plan provides a general direction in terms /of land use which the Town hopes to achieve over time. As a master plan, it also identifies various methods to achieve the goals of the plan such as developer provision of amenities, Town direction of resources to provide amenities, and coordination with other levels of government and volunteer organizations to achieve the goals of the plan. It has been developed with an eye to the future rather than for the purpose of current regulation.

On the other hand, the zoning map represents local regulations as they exist today. It is expected that over time, the Crested Butte Zoning and Land Use Ordinance, which includes the Official Zoning District Map, will be amended to help bring about the land use patterns established by the 1996 Crested Butte Land Use Plan.

This plan is organized into seven subject areas including: Population, Land Use, Public Lands, Transportation, Utilities, Open Lands, and Housing. The policies of the plan are found at the end of the evaluation and discussion of each subject area. The maps of the Land Use Plan accompany the text of the plan and illustrate, in map form, the development character that Crested Butte's leaders wish the Town to attain.

**Citizen Participation**

This land use plan incorporates the participation of the citizens of the Town and the Valley. In addition to numerous Town, County, and citizen generated planning workshops and work sessions in recent years, land use plan work sessions of the Town Planning Commission were held in the fall of 1995 and winter of 1996. Of particular importance was a Saturday morning workshop held on the first Saturday of the ski season when 55 people worked to refine the goals of the plan and to draw maps for land use, streets and trails. The work sessions were promoted by the local newspapers and KBUT, the public radio station.

A questionnaire in October, 1995, was answered and returned by 294 residents of Crested Butte and 42 second home owners. The citizen comments received during this process as well as relevant comments from meetings on other planning related subjects are the basis for the policies discussed in this land use plan.

## The Guiding Principles of the 1996 Land Use Plan

"The modern city is a complex organism, it is a great human enterprise that should serve the material and spiritual needs of humanity. It is a segment of the land that people have selected as their place to live and to work, to learn and to trade, to play and to pray. It is a mosaic of homes and shops, factories and offices, schools and libraries, theaters and hospitals, parks and religious institutions, meeting places and governmental centers, fire stations and post offices. These are woven together by a network of streets, and transportation routes, water, sanitation, and communications channels and held together by social bonds and economic conditions."

"To arrange all these facilities properly, as the city develops, is the function of the comprehensive plan (land use plan). The city is a cumbersome affair, at once sensitive to the multitude of small shifts, and yet capable of absorbing great shocks. A change in any part affects other parts of this structure. A new home means more traffic on the streets, ...another customer in the market, more children in the school, more water for the lawn, more picnics in the park. It also means more revenue in taxes. But growth does not always mean strength and prosperity for the community. This rests with the standards a community determines to maintain and the balanced use of its land and resources." (Fn1)

A town, such as Crested Butte, is generally smaller than a city and may not have a hospital or a factory. However, all other basic elements discussed above are also found in a town.

The mountainous terrain, flood plains, wetlands and heavy snowfall which characterize the Crested Butte area impose natural constraints on the location of activities. Development must be undertaken in a careful manner in order not to destroy the natural features which are important to residents and visitors and the wildlife inhabitants of the Valley. As examples, over 80% of the 1995 Land Use Survey resident respondents stated that each of the following natural features should be preserved when land is developed:

- \* air quality,
- \* hillsides seen from the Town of Crested Butte,
- \* natural ponds and lakes,
- \* natural topography,
- \* natural creeks and rivers,
- \* open space,

- \* top of ridgelines,
- \* trees and willow bushes,
- \* unique wildflower stands,
- \* wildlife habitat,
- \* wildlife movement corridors,
- \* wetlands, and
- \* water quality.

The Guiding Principles of the 1996 Land Use Plan were identified during a planning workshop for the Land Use Plan. They are the issues and topics that received the most support when finishing the sentence: "When planning in Crested Butte...." The following are the Guiding Principles of the 1996 Land Use Plan in order of importance:

**1. If there is going to be development, it should occur in a manner compatible with this plan and the regulations created to implement this plan.**

**2. Preserve and protect wildlife habitat and wetlands.**

There are over 1,700 acres of wetlands in the vicinity of Crested Butte which are included in the area discussed in this land use plan. These wetland areas are important to the character of the Town and provide important habitat for wetland creatures such as salamanders, frogs, and beaver and also provide year round habitat for deer, elk, fox, coyotes, Canada Geese, Blue Herons, other water fowl and migratory birds. Other wildlife habitat includes Smith Hill where elk congregate in the fall and an elk migration corridor between Smith Hill and Wildcat Creek. The entire planning area is important wildlife habitat where bear, fox, marmot, ermine, ptarmigan, coyote, and deer congregate seasonally. This issue needs attention to preserve the necessary habitat for the non-human occupants of the Valley.

**3. Provide affordable housing for year round residents.**

Affordable housing for seasonal employees should also be provided but is a lower priority. Affordable housing has been a problem in the Valley for a long time and in recent years affordability has become much more of an issue as the median sales price of a unit increased in just four years from \$88,000 to \$190,000 for all of types of units in Crested Butte.

**4. Preserve unique features such as ridgelines, hillsides, meadows, streams, flood plains and significant vegetation.**

95% of second home owners and 97% of residents

responding to the 1995 Land Use Survey stated that they value the beautiful scenery around Crested Butte. 97% of the responding box holders in 1991 stated that they most valued the beautiful scenery in the East River Valley. Preserving flood plains also minimizes losses due to damage and preserving meadows can contribute to maintaining agriculture and open space.

**5. Locate new development within or adjacent to existing development.**

Crested Butte's appeal to most people is the result of compact development in the Town that occupies a limited area in the Valley surrounded by large areas of open lands. 86% of the responding residents and 76% of the responding second home owners to the 1995 Land Use Survey felt that houses should be clustered on small portions of a parcel leaving most of the parcel undeveloped and preserved. Locating development near development has been the general philosophy of the Valley for years.

This pattern of dense development has occurred in Crested Butte since its early days when shops and homes were tightly clustered and people frequently walked to their destinations. Policy 2-104 (3) of the Gunnison County Land Use Resolution "...encourages residential development in and contiguous to existing municipalities and residential areas." The best way to preserve the scenery and the wildlife habitat is to require that new growth be located adjacent to the existing development.

**6. Coordinate development with Gunnison County and Mt. Crested Butte.**

Crested Butte, Mt. Crested Butte and Gunnison County should communicate regularly with the objective of coordinating development in the Valley.

This land use plan covers an area larger than the Town of Crested Butte because some areas will be annexed into the Town and this plan describes the appropriate uses for those areas. Another reason it extends beyond the Town boundaries is because some issues, by their nature, extend beyond the Town limits such as transportation, wildlife, affordable housing and trails. Ideally, the goals of the Town and the goals of the County and Mt. Crested Butte should be similar for development in the Valley. If this were true, then the resources of each entity could be directed toward accomplishing the goals and development approvals by each entity would result in coordinated development throughout the Valley.

**7. Provide a safe, convenient, integrated transportation system that also encourages pedestrians and less use of automobiles.**

The Mountain Express and Alpine Express transportation systems currently provide important transportation in the Valley. They are organized so that their systems integrate with automobiles and airplanes.

Automobiles, trucks and other motorized vehicles impact air quality. Crested Butte is eight blocks long and eight blocks wide. The size of Crested Butte and the concentration of the business community in the downtown area means that no part of the Town is more than six blocks from the business area and most of the town is three to four blocks from the business area. It is not necessary to conduct most business by auto in Crested Butte. The existing system should be improved and expanded to better service pedestrians and all development in the Valley should receive similar service.

**8. Development should pay its own way.**

The softball fields, soccer fields, ice rink, sewer treatment plant, and water treatment plant are at capacity. The paving of the streets was paid for by residents and lot owners. The Crested Butte School is over capacity. The open spaces around the Town have remained basically unchanged throughout the life of the Town. Current residents should not have to subsidize new residents. New residents should provide new facilities or a means to provide services to mitigate the impacts to public facilities, and the other impacts to the Valley that they will cause.

**9. Preserve open space.**

Over 100 years ago Crested Butte was incorporated as a town and the Valley around Crested Butte was used for agriculture, mining and by wildlife. Today, while some additional subdivisions have been approved and the Town of Mt. Crested Butte was also incorporated, the open spaces of the Valley are generally intact. The loss of these open spaces to development will cause the Valley and the character of the community to change forever. It is the intent of Crested Butte to maintain the character of the community, including open spaces, into the future.

**10. Create an interconnecting trail system.**

The age range of the people of Crested Butte is primarily between 25 and 45, very active ages. More so than in most communities, year round residents are involved in alpine and nordic skiing, mountain biking, hunting, river rafting,

camping, snowshoeing and snowmobiling. An interconnecting trail system will allow the people of Crested Butte to diversify the impact of their trail use and better experience the Valley.

**11. Preserve agriculture for its economic and environmental values.**

Agriculture has been an integral part of the Valley since the late 1800s. Agricultural use of the land has preserved the open spaces that are treasured by the residents of the Valley today and has helped maintain wildlife habitat. Agriculture offers a diversity to the economy that helps maintain the community as other parts of the economy go through their periodic cycles. It is therefore important that as development occurs in the Valley, its impact on agriculture should be minimized.

**12. Preserve the community of Crested Butte.**

The community of Crested Butte includes many parts such as but not limited to the following: old timers, children, volunteers, snow boarders, skiers, environmentally active people, theatre players, softball players, hockey players, construction workers, Elk Avenue businesses, potluck attendees, churches, historic structures, small structures, accessory dwellings and other accessory buildings, wildlife including bears, fox, coyotes, skunks and ermine in the vicinity. As development occurs, these attributes of Crested Butte should be maintained and should not be threatened by development and growth of the community.

**13. Protect air and water quality.**

The water quality of Coal Creek in the upper reaches is excellent. Recent water samples were unable to measure any pollution. Construction of the water treatment facility by Amax has turned the creek from brown to clear and children catch fish in the town limits. The Slate River is also very healthy but not quite as pristine as the upper Coal Creek. The quality of the waters around Crested Butte should be assessed and maintained.

Footnotes

1) Arthur Gallian and Simon Eisner, *The Urban Pattern: City Planning and Design*, New York: Van Nostrand, 1983, 5th edition, 1986, pg. 266.

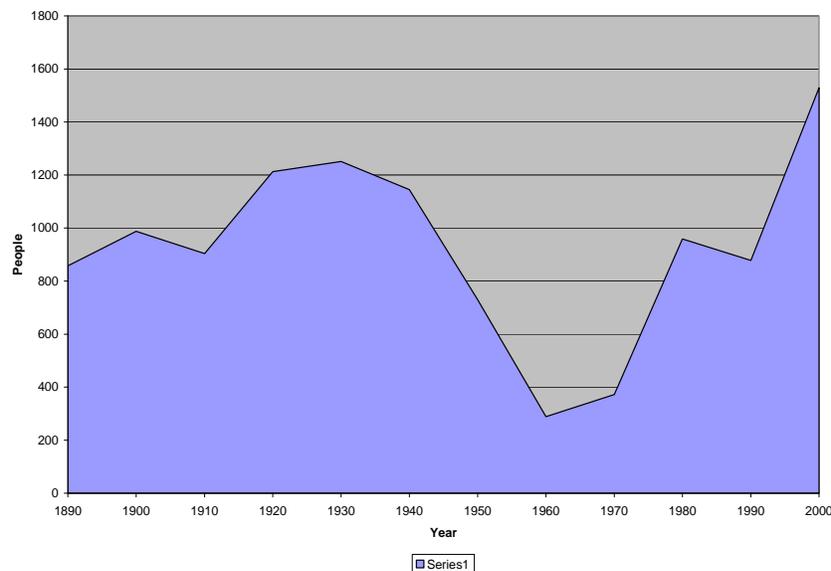
## POPULATION

A community's population change constitutes an important part of a land use plan. Housing, economic growth, public services, and land requirement projections are based on population size and characteristics. Unfortunately, the projection of population changes for any community is difficult. Factors that influence growth or decline, notably migration and the economy, are unpredictable. A reasonably accurate growth range in Crested Butte has been projected, with the understanding that these outside influences may affect the projections. The projections are intended to describe how the community will grow if it continues to grow as it has historically. The policies of this plan may also affect the rate of growth.

### Historic Growth, 1880 to 1960

Crested Butte began in 1880 with the incorporation of the Town in the vicinity of the coal and other mines of the Elk Mountains. As indicated below in Graph 1, Crested Butte has always been a small town. The 1940 Census counted 1,145 people, the largest number counted during the first 100 years of the town. The Town grew at that time because coal was needed for the steel mills in Pueblo for the war effort. The lowest population count was in 1960 after the Big Mine closed in 1952. Despite the opening of the ski area on Crested Butte Mountain in the sixties, even the 1970 Census showed little change from the low point in 1960.

**Crested Butte**  
Population 1890-2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs. Crested Butte Department of Planning and Community Development.

In the graph on the previous page, the flat lines between 1890 and the mid 1970s indicate that the only population number available was the Census number and, for graphing purposes, that figure was extended for ten years to the following Census figure. We assume the population did not remain static during any of those ten year periods as it is graphed.

As demonstrated in the graph, the seventies were a growth period in Crested Butte when the ski area became more of an economic engine in the Valley and as young people found Crested Butte; a real, small town surrounded by magnificent mountains and isolated from the everyday concerns of the rest of the world.

On May 2, 1982, the Exxon Corporation shut down the largest shale oil project in the world near Parachute, Colorado, and although that seems far away from Crested Butte, the economy of the entire western slope of Colorado was affected. Contributing factors at the time were the plummeting prices for all minerals mined on the western slope, including molybdenum. Until 1981, the Amax Corporation was considering opening a mine on Red Lady Mountain but the depressed prices and adamant opposition by the Town contributed to a long delay in that proposal. Not until 1989 did a turn-around in real estate begin in Crested Butte and as a result, the population during the eighties hovered at 875 people. The 1990 Census counted 878 people in April.

Each year since the 1990 Census, the population has increased by at least 5 percent to the present number of 1,457 counted in March / April 1995. It should be noted that the Town had strong disagreements with the Census count in 1990 and felt the correct population was already over 1,000. The 1991 figure was compiled by the State Demographers Office in Denver, based on the 1990 Census count. It should also be noted that the 1992 population figure is an estimate arrived at by merely taking the mid-point between the 1991 estimate and the 1993 count by the Town. Even with these footnotes to the numbers, the growth rate between 1993 to 1994 was over 10 percent and between 1994 and 1995 was over 5 percent. These are some of the numbers that demonstrate that Crested Butte is a fast growing community.

**Table 2**  
**CRESTED BUTTE**  
**POPULATION AND DWELLING UNIT INCREASES IN THE 1990s**

	Population April	Percent Change	Dwelling Units December	Percent Change
1990 Census	878		637(April)	
1990			651	
1991 State est.	903	2.8%	672	3.2%
1992			700	4.5%
1993	1154	27.8%	741	5.9%
1994	1384	19.9%	772	4.2%
1995	1457	5.3%	791	2.5%

**Notes:**

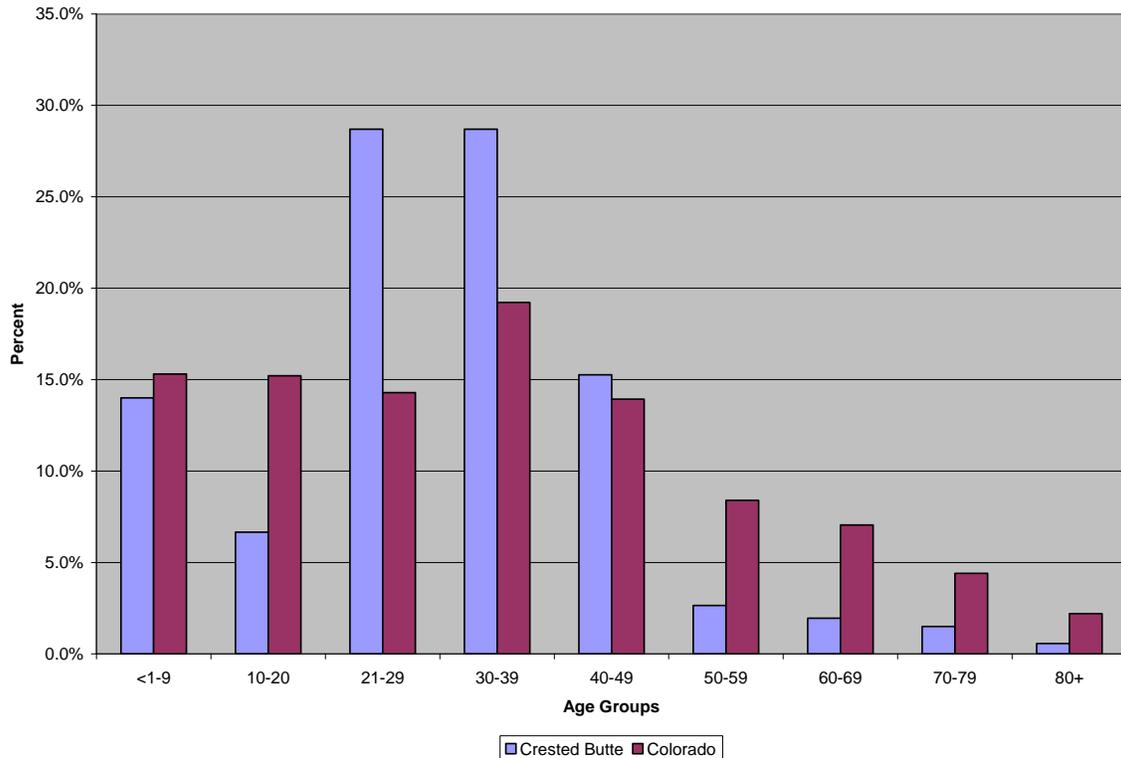
- 1) Source for population in 1990 is the U.S. Census.
- 2) The 1991 population estimate is based on the Census.
- 3) Population has been counted in March or April each year by the Town beginning in 1993.
- 4) Dwelling units in 1990 (April) were counted by the Census.
- 5) All other dwelling units were counted by the Town and establish the number of units as of December each year.

Comparisons to other communities find that the City of Boulder is trying to limit its growth to 1%. The City of Aspen recently reduced its adopted growth rate from 3.4% to 2% in the Aspen/Metro Area which will allow a total of 84 new units per year. By comparison, the average increase in the number of new dwelling units has been approximately 28 per year or 4.1% in the Town of Crested Butte between 1990 and 1995. If the Town grows at a 1% growth rate, it will double in size in approximately 70 years. 2% will double in approximately 36 years, 3% will double in 24 years and 4% will double in approximately 18 years.

**Population Characterized**

The 1990 U. S. Census counted 878 people in Crested Butte. Each year since 1993 the Town Department of Planning and Community Development has estimated the population of the Town by counting the number of people known to live in each dwelling unit as it counts the number and type of dwelling units. In the spring of 1995 there were 1,457 full time residents. The estimated numbers have changed as described in Table 2 above.

### Crested Butte and Colorado Comparison of Age Groups



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990, Colorado Department of Local Affairs.

As demonstrated in the graph above, when compared to the State as a whole, the number of people living in Crested Butte during the time of the 1990 Census was unusually high in the 21 to 29 and 30 to 39 age groups. The number of people in their upper years, over 50, were unusually low when compared to the state-wide results. This supports the commonly held notion that Crested Butte is an unusually athletic community because the number of people in the 20 to 40 year age group is high and that age group is usually more athletic than those who are older. This is the common opinion about most ski area communities in the State.

The number of people in the 10 to 20 age group is low. We assume this is because many families move away from Crested Butte as their children reach high school age because there has been no high school in Crested Butte since 1967.

The median age rose from 28.7 in 1980 to 30.2 in 1990.

Of the 604 people over 25 years old in 1990, the Census found that over half had a college degree. The residents of the Town and the County are highly educated when compared to other communities and counties around the country.

**Table 3**  
**EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT**

<b># of People</b>	
38	had not received a high school diploma.
80	high school graduates,
147	some college,
47	associates degree,
262	bachelor's degree
30	graduate or professional degrees.

In 1990, 232 or 29% of the people lived in the same house as they did five years before while 576 lived in a different house. This demonstrates that the community is strong in Crested Butte since nearly one-third had not moved even to another area of the Town.

Per capita income in Crested Butte in 1989 was higher than in the County and Colorado as demonstrated in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**PER CAPITA INCOME FROM THE 1990 CENSUS**

**1989 Per Capita Income**

Crested Butte	\$18,646
Gunnison County	\$12,349
Colorado	\$17,767

While the per capita income for Crested Butte is high it may have been affected by the timing of the Census. As noted above, the Town felt that the Census under-counted the Town. The Census was taken in April when many people who have been working long hours throughout the winter have left either permanently or for a spring vacation. Whether lower wage earners were more likely to leave at the time of the Census than higher wage earners is unknown. No new estimates of per capita income have been made since the Census.

On the other hand, median household income in 1989 was lower in Crested Butte, \$27,368, than Statewide, \$30,140, but higher than in Gunnison County, \$23,013.

In 1989, 14.6 percent, or 128 people, were below poverty level. The median rent was \$520 and 44% of the renters paid more than 30% of their income toward rent.

Enrollment in the Crested Butte school grew 100% between 1988 and 1995. Part of this growth is due to the reopening of the Crested Butte Middle School in 1992. In 1995, Crested Butte students made up 39% of the enrollment in the Crested Butte schools and the remaining students live in Mt. Crested Butte or the unincorporated subdivisions.

### **Population Projections**

Although there are no officially recognized predictions for population growth for the Slate River Valley, a projection can be derived from available data. Population figures will not be used to project future growth because of the significant difference in counts between the Census and the Town in 1990. The three local population counts since the Census do not provide adequate data to project a trend. Therefore, housing units, a related indicator of growth, will be used to generate projected growth rates.

The 1980 U.S. Census states that there were 516 housing units in Crested Butte. By 1990 the Census counted 637 residential units in Crested Butte. Over the ten year period the rate of growth was 23.4 percent or 2.3 percent per year. This is a modest rate of growth, one that can easily be absorbed by a community, and which will be used as the low scenario.

By the end of 1994 there were 791 units for a total rate of growth of 24.2 percent over the five year period between 1990 and 1995. The growth rate each year was approximately 4.8 percent which can be rounded to 5% per year. This is a high rate of growth and will be used for the high scenario. Actual growth over the next fifteen years will probably lie between these numbers. Using the current number of people per household, 1.89 (which is 1.75 single family and 2.18, multifamily) and the two growth rate scenarios we can expect the population in 2010 to be as follows:

**Table 5**  
**POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR CRESTED BUTTE**

	<b>Population</b>	
	<b>1995</b>	<b>2010</b>
Low growth rate, 2.3% per year	1457	2061
High growth rate, 5 % per year	1457	2828

If we apply the same rates of growth to unincorporated Gunnison County between Round Mountain and Gothic (the Upper East River Valley), we can expect the population of that

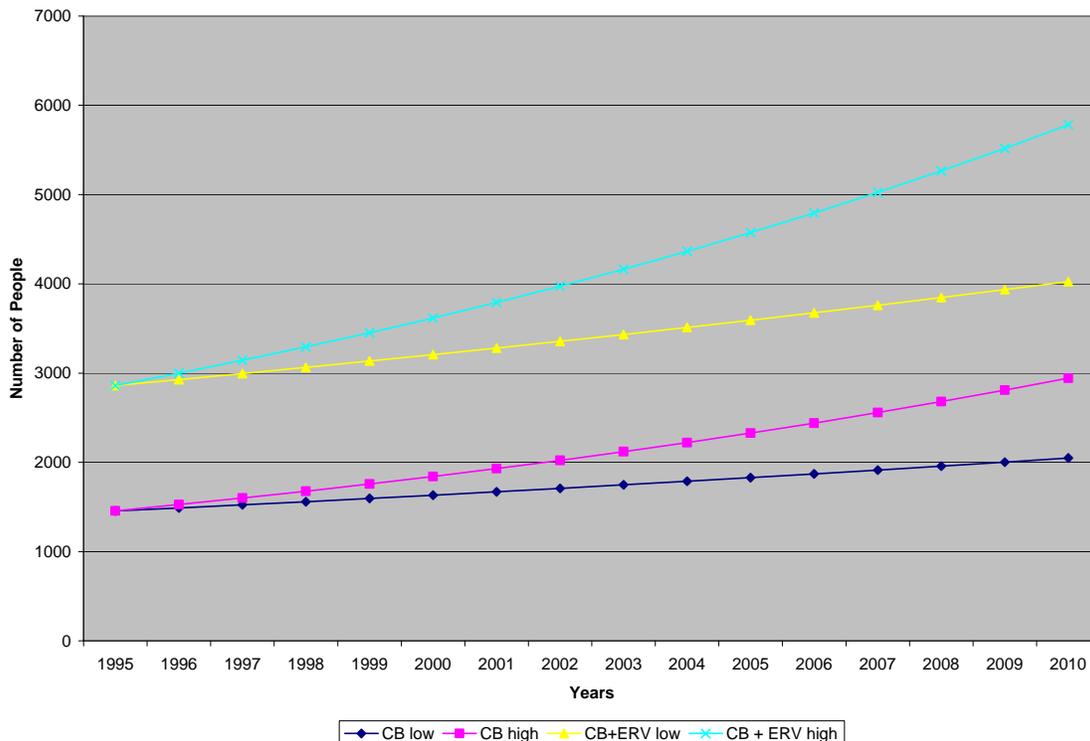
area, excluding Mt. Crested Butte, to increase from 924 to 1307 (low) or 1,793 (high) using the same rates of growth and the same number of people per household (1.89) as discussed for Crested Butte. (1.89 people per household \* 489 housing units = 924 people)

Continuing to use the same rates of growth, Mt. Crested Butte, which has an occupancy rate of about .5 people per household would increase from 481 in 1995 to 680 (low) or 934 (high) in the year 2010. The official growth rate of Mt. Crested Butte would place their projected population at 760 in 2010, but if the North Village is built and the Snodgrass Ski Area is approved, this area may grow more rapidly. The total permanent population of the Upper East Valley could vary between a low of 4,048 people to as high as 5,555 (2061 + 1,307 + 680 = 4,048) (2,828 + 1,793 + 934 = 5,555).

**Table 6**  
**EXISTING POPULATION OF THE EAST RIVER VALLEY**

Crested Butte	1,457
Mt. Crested Butte	481
Unincorporated County (ERV)	924
<u>Total</u>	<u>2,862</u>

**Population Projections**  
**Crested Butte and East River Valley**



### Winter Visitor Projections

The number of people served by commercial and public services will increase when visitors are here. The rate of growth for visitors is based on estimates for skiers per day from CBMR and for actual skiers per day published by Ski Country USA. CBMR estimates that the average number of skiers per day who were visitors in 1995 was 2,387 and projects it will be 4,169 in the year 2010. The projected rate of change, implied by the CBMR numbers, between 1995 and 2010 is a 3.79 percent per year. This CBMR projection is based on the same rate of growth for the next 15 years as was experienced during the past 10 years.

These figures should be adjusted to take into account the actual number of visitors in the Valley. While we have identified the number of skiers per day, we have not recognized that visitors do not ski every day, and that there are visitors who do not downhill ski at all. Data indicates that at the typical ski area resort, about 90% of the visitors are skiers, but that only 70% of those persons are actually skiing on a given day. (Fn2) This means that only about 63% of the tourist population is skiing. For example, if 100 people are visiting the Upper East River Valley, 90 might be skiers. Of the 90, only 63 would be skiing on any given day ( $90 * 70\% = 63$ ). Therefore, if the ski area counts 63 people skiing, another 37 people are visiting but not skiing. ( $100 - 10\% = 90$ .  $90 * 70\% = 63$  skiers.  $100 - 63 = 37$  non-skiing visitors.)

In Crested Butte, 93% of the visitors to the resort are skiers and 82% of the skiers are skiing on any given day. Therefore, 76% of the visitors to Crested Butte are skiers and 24% are non-skiers on any given day. ( $93\% * 82\% = 76\%$ )

Given the above scenario, the average number of skiers on any given day of 2,387 is only 76% of the total visitors, meaning the total visitor population would be 3,140 persons on an average day. ( $2,387 / 76\% = 3,140$ )

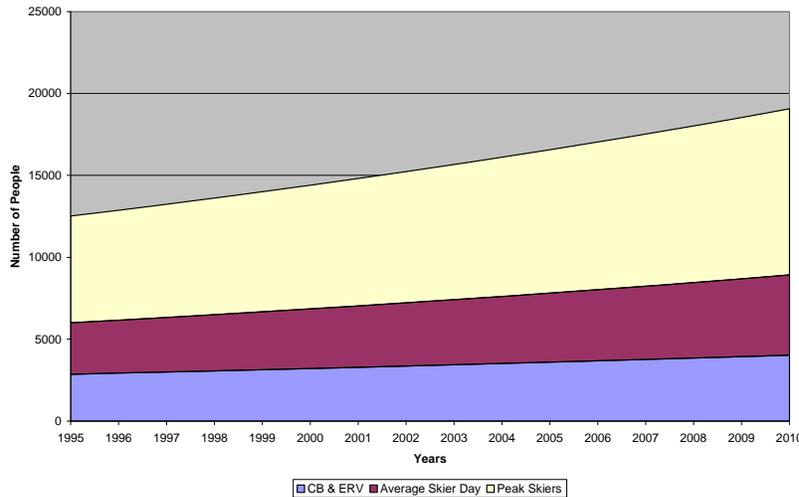
The second and lower growth rate is based on the growth of skiing at CBMR since 1990. This growth rate of 3% includes the Free Ski Program and the years since Ski Free began.

The Town recognizes that ski growth nationwide is slowing. The Town also recognizes that a major reason for the growth rate during the past 10 years was the opening of the expanded airport in Gunnison and the resulting increase in convenience to reach Crested Butte via air service. On the other hand, if approved by the U.S. Forest Service, the Snodgrass Ski Area proposal is projected by CBMR to double the number of skiers or at least increase the amount of intermediate terrain 417 acres when constructed. Therefore, it is fair to say that the average number of visitors could increase from

3,140 to as high as 5,487 during the next 15 years if the Snodgrass Ski Area and the North Village of Mt. Crested Butte are fully built-out by that time.

### Winter Population Projections – Low Crested Butte, East River Valley and Skiers

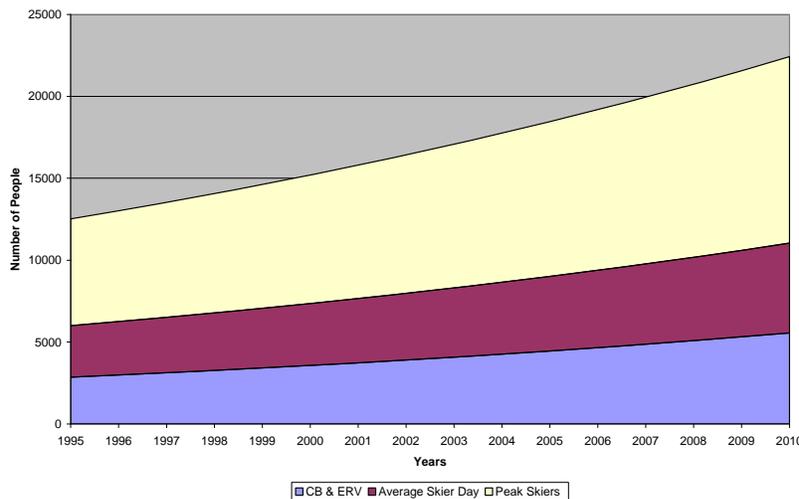
Graph 4



Graph 4 displays the low scenario for the total population of the East River Valley and the total number of skiers who also need to be accommodated on any average day and on any peak day during the next 15 years.

### Winter Population Projections – High Crested Butte, East River Valley and Skiers

Graph 5



Graph 5 displays the high scenario for the total population of the East River Valley and the total number of skiers who

also need to be accommodated on any average day and on any peak day during the next 15 years.

On a peak winter day the total number of visitor skiers at the ski area, was as high as 7,126 during the 1994-95 ski season. Therefore, during the high visitor seasons the Town could be required to provide services for as many as 10,833 people ( $7,126 / 76\% = 9,376$ ) ( $1,457$  full time residents +  $9,376 = 10,833$ ). This is the highest number of people that could be served by Crested Butte on any given day. Because restaurants, shops, lodging and other services in Mt. Crested Butte and in the unincorporated subdivisions also serve visitors, it is unlikely Crested Butte serves that many people on any given day but the Valley will need to serve them and other residents of the Valley on any given peak day.

The low and high rates of growth have been applied to the peak number of skiers per day also and have resulted in a total number of people in the Valley as follows on any given day:

**Table 7**  
**PROJECTED POPULATION**

	<b>1995</b>	<b>2010 Low</b>	<b>2010 High</b>
Crested Butte	1,457	2,061	2,828
Unincorporated Upper East River Valley	924	1,307	1,793
Mt. Crested Butte	481	680	934
Average skier day and other visitors	3,140	4,893	5,487
Peak skier day and other visitors, minus the average skier day	<u>6,236</u>	<u>9,715</u>	<u>10,894</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,238</b>	<b>19,666</b>	<b>23,069</b>

While the projections are based on estimates of skiers, the number of people in the community, based on observations of the Town, are just as high or higher during the summer months. Sales tax is loosely related to the number of people in town and for the past six years, sales tax has been higher in Crested Butte during summer months than during winter months.

**Table 8**  
**SALES TAX IN CRESTED BUTTE, SUMMER AND WINTER**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Summer</b>	<b>Winter</b>	<b>Total</b>
1983	\$158,699	\$163,953	\$ 322,652
1984	199,866	182,055	381,921
1985	214,915	220,802	435,717
1986	246,246	267,888	514,134
1987	252,053	279,987	532,040
1988	291,114	293,214	584,328
1989	342,742	346,803	689,545
1990	402,320	377,607	779,927
1991	454,384	416,842	871,226
1992	525,365	510,806	1,036,171
1993	583,730	533,065	1,116,795
1994	678,104	542,055	1,220,159
1995	675,413	583,919	1,259,332