

CRESTED BUTTE



AREA PLAN

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July 5, 2011

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CRESTED BUTTE AREA PLAN - SYNOPSIS

The Crested Butte Area Plan (this Plan) is created to:

- comply with C.R.S. Sections 31-12-101 et. seq., which require that there be a plan for a three mile area from any point of the municipal boundary prior to annexation, and to
- provide the basis for addressing and evaluating proposed development in unincorporated Gunnison County in the vicinity of Crested Butte.

More than 50 sources of information were used to help create this Plan including plans from other communities, books about rural design and designing with nature, the 513 responses from the 2004 Land Use Survey, and public comments made during the most recent annexation process.

The three mile area surrounding Crested Butte is referred to in this Plan as the Middle Slate River Valley (MSRV) and it is approximately 39 square miles, excluding Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte. 49% of the land is federal, 21% is developed, 15% is preserved open space, 1% is local government land, and 14% (3,500+- acres) has not been developed or preserved as open space.

This Plan is capacity based. The underlying question is: what is the capacity of the MSRV to absorb more development? Capacity is determined by examining the constraints for development and the resources our community would like to preserve. Constraints include: avalanche zones, flood plains, geologically unstable lands, steep slopes and wildfire areas. Resources include: wetlands, important wildlife habitat, and views that should be preserved.

This Plan allows development anywhere on private land in the 39 square mile focus area, unless there are constraints to development or resources we would like to preserve on a site. The constraints and resources are mapped to identify lands that may need additional investigation.

Mitigation is the key to developing most parcels of land. The first recommendation about each constraint or resource is to avoid sensitive areas. If avoidance is impossible, then mitigation of impacts to sensitive areas should occur. Examples of mitigation include:

1. Preserving off-site wetlands when wetlands are proposed to be filled or dredged
2. Building back from the edge of a steep cliff so wildfires will not sweep up a cliff wall and consume a house at the edge
3. Clustering development so most of a site is open for resident, wildlife, or livestock use
4. Maintaining corridors for wildlife movement such as river corridors for bird migration or patterns of development that allow wildlife to move between developments

After appropriate lands for development were identified, the Town then asked: which developable lands are most appropriate for development and how should they be developed? The most important considerations were that if additional development is to occur, it should be clustered near existing higher density development, it should be served by central water and sewer, significant amounts of open space should be preserved and local housing should be a major component of the project. Development that meets these tests will have the support of Crested Butte when the other policies of this Plan are met. The type of development that is discouraged is dispersed, large lot development with no open space, no public access, and no local housing.

As a result, residential development is recommended to be near Crested Butte, Skyland and Buckhorn Ranch. Light industrial development is recommended to be adjacent to Riverland Industrial Park.

The underlying density of the MSRV is one unit per 35 acres as a matter of right. Incentives to accomplish the goals of this Plan include higher densities to direct growth and to create local housing and preserving less open space if the preserved land is a “Priority Preservation Area”

Higher density is directed to areas near existing development. Densities in these areas are based on existing density in the vicinity and may be as high as listed below:

1. Crested Butte to the Slate River (east of Gothic Road) 5.00 units per acre (including streets and alleys but not parks and open space
2. The Slate River to south side of cemetery 3.50 units per acre
3. State Highway 135 to Buckhorn Ranch Subdivision .50 units per acre
4. North side of the cemetery to Moon Ridge Lane .25-.3 units per acre

Open space incentives encourage important open space to be preserved. This Plan recommends preserving five acres open space for each new residential unit. If Priority Preservation Areas are preserved, rather than preserving the recommended five acres per residential unit, only three acres of priority open space need to be preserved per unit. Priority Preservation Areas include:

1. hillsides seen from Crested Butte
2. wetlands
3. important wildlife habitat
4. a one-quarter (1/4) mile view corridor buffer along State Highway 135
5. all private land in the Crested Butte watershed
6. all irrigated agricultural land

Open space may be on site or off site. If it is offsite, the potential density offsite is “transferred” from the “Sending Area” to the site to be developed, which is the “Receiving Area.” It is anticipated that conservation easements, or similar instruments, will be used to restrict future development of Sending Areas and that the free market will determine the value of the development rights being transferred from the Sending Areas.

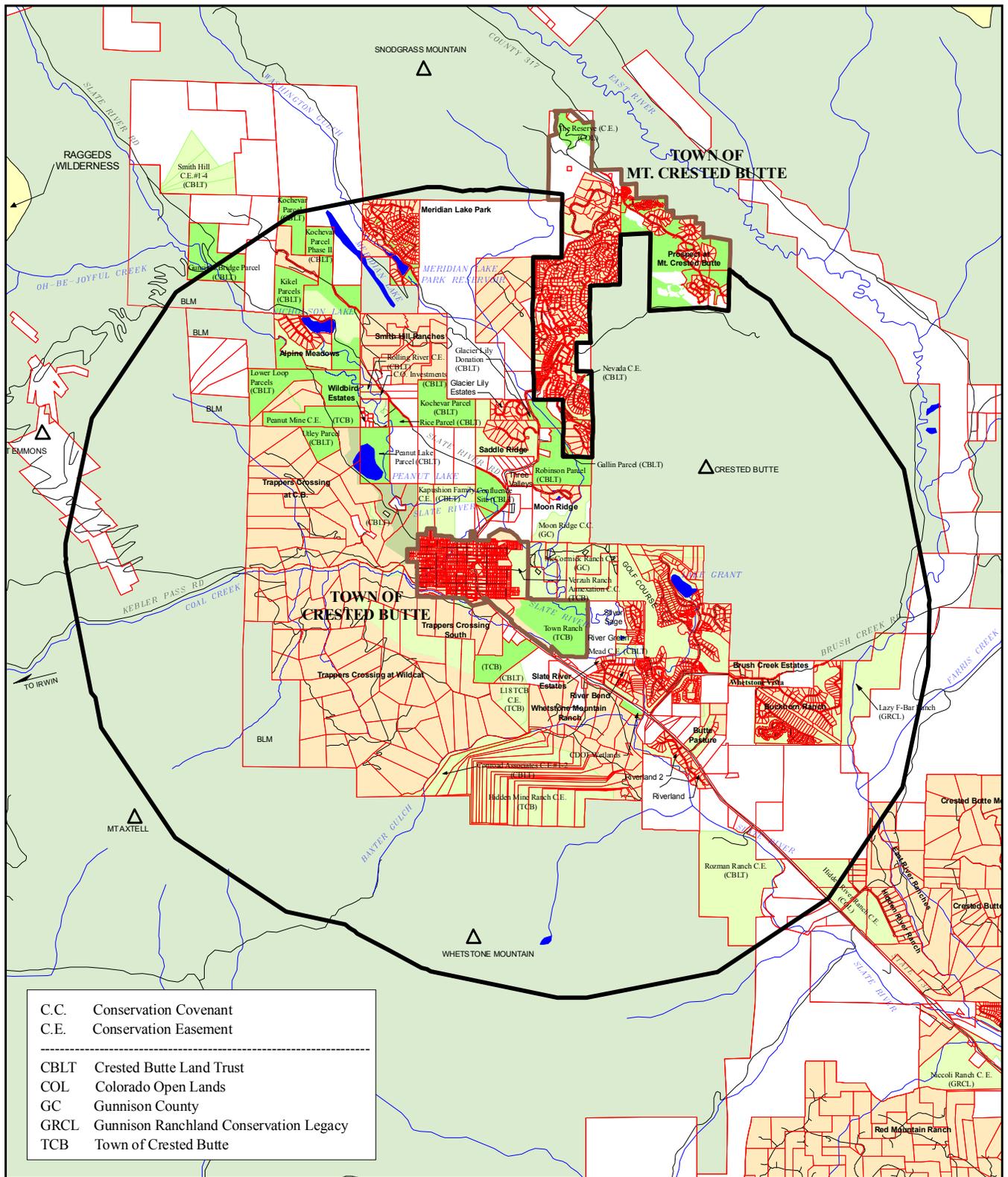
Local housing incentives allow for maximum density and the least open space. Density may be as high as 10 units per acre and 1 acre of open space is recommended for each local housing unit.

The transportation policies recommend creation of transit centers in Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte, the creation of park-N-ride facilities, the development of mass transit, trails and trailheads and having a cohesive intermodal transportation system in new development.

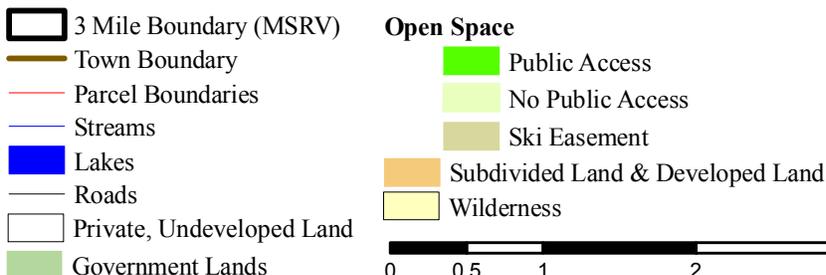
Currently, 69% of all occupied residential units are owner occupied or long-term rentals. The Housing Policies recommend that developers provide land and/or units so that at least sixty percent (60%) of all new residential units annexed to Crested Butte are permanently deed-restricted to a variety of mixed income people.

This Plan is transferable to other areas and/or expandable. Constraints and resources can be mapped for any area. However, if this Plan is expanded, decisions about higher density should be made by the people who live near potentially higher density areas.

What are the implications of this Plan? Currently existing approvals and zoning allow for 10,320 units from Round Mountain to Gothic, including both towns, but not including the Larkspur and Three Valleys subdivisions. If all the units are occupied, for example on the Fourth of July, as many as 24,549 people could be in the valley. If the policies of this Plan are followed, the total number of units could be 10,507 if all new units are free market, and 10,893 if all new units in Receiving Areas are affordable housing.



Open Space and Development



Drawn by: Hilary Mayes
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- Gunnison County Current, and Long Range, Planning Offices
- Gunnison County Geographic Information Systems Office
- Colorado Geological Survey
- U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- Town of Mt. Crested Butte

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Part 1, PREFACE

Authorization

The Crested Butte Area Plan is a guide for the physical development of the municipality as well as a limited area outside its boundaries in unincorporated Gunnison County. The Plan is created in part to comply with the Colorado Municipal Annexation Act of 1965, (C.R.S. Sections 31-12-101 et seq. as it may be amended. It is also created pursuant to the authority set forth in the following Colorado Statutes:

C.R.S. Sections 31-23-201 et seq.	Planning Commission and Master Plans
C.R.S. Sections 24-65-101 et seq.	The Colorado Land Use Act
C.R.S. Sections 24-65.1-101 et seq.	The Areas and Activities of State Interest
C.R.S. Sections 24-67-101 et seq.	The Planned Unit Development Act of 1972
C.R.S. Sections 29-20-101 et seq.	The Local Government Land Use Control and Enabling Act of 1974

Evolution of the Crested Butte Area Plan

Work began on the Crested Butte Area Plan in 1990 when the Towns of Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte surveyed the public about their values and land use issues in the upper East River valley. Active work on this Plan began in February, 1993. Background information and the maps were prepared to describe the existence and the extent of land issues important to land use planning. That information was integral to the development of policies to address the issues. The Crested Butte Three Mile Plan was adopted by the Town Council, as the Municipal Planning Commission, on November 1, 1993.

The 1993 Three Mile Plan was included in the Crested Butte Land Use Plan in 1996. Later in 1996, the wetland chapter was updated to incorporate information from Howard H. Whiteman, Ph.D. In 2003 the Three Mile Plan was updated by revision of the Three Mile Plan boundary map to reflect changes in the Town boundaries since 1993.

In 2004 the Town Council asked the Town staff to update the 1993 Three Mile Plan. Statistics and other dated information in that plan were 10 years old and the Town Council wanted their Three Mile Plan to be more current. In addition to updating the data, the maps were updated and new relevant maps were added. The name of the Three Mile Plan was changed to Area Plan to reflect the fact that a three mile boundary is arbitrary and may cut through a topographic area in a way that is not logical.

In 2010 and 2011, after considering an annexation for about two years, many issues were raised by the public and the annexors that needed clarification in the Area Plan and in the Subdivision Regulations. The purpose of the 2011 update was to make those clarifications and to begin addressing the carbon footprint of the Town, which has become an issue since the last update.

How the Crested Butte Area Plan is Organized

This Plan is divided into three broad parts. **Part 1, Policies**, contains the Preface and other introductory information and the policies of this Plan. These policies recommend how and where development should occur and how to address issues discussed in Part 2. **Part 2, Description of**

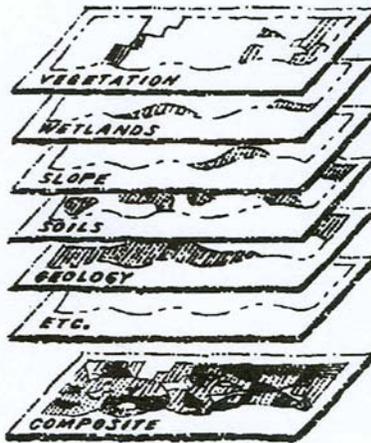
the Issues, includes information and maps describing issues related to development in the vicinity of Crested Butte. Topics include: public participation, natural hazards, natural resources, transportation, and socioeconomic trends. **Part 3, Appendices**, contains a list of the primary resources used during development of the Crested Butte Area Plan, responses to the 2004 Land Use Survey, and other summary and detailed information.

Goal of the Crested Butte Area Plan

The goal of the Crested Butte Area Plan is to manage growth to:

1. avoid hazards that may threaten life or property when developing structures or infrastructure
2. preserve what the citizens and the Town Planning Commission appreciate about Crested Butte and the Middle Slate River Valley including:
 - a. a healthy environment
 - b. a high quality of life
 - c. housing for people who live and work in the community
 - d. open space
 - e. recreation facilities adequate to serve the recreation-oriented people of the Middle Slate River Valley
 - f. access to public lands
 - g. the natural character of the valley and surrounding mountains

Therefore, the Crested Butte Area Plan is based on the carrying capacity of the land which is identified on a series of overlaid maps and in the discussions of the topics in Part 2, Description of the Issues. This overlay mapping approach was described by Ian McHarg, an ecological planner, in his 1969 book, Design With Nature. If some parcels of land have characteristics making it difficult for construction, they have less carrying capacity. If other parcels of land have resources the community values and wishes to preserve, those parcels also have less carrying capacity. Land that has neither resource nor hazard limitations is targeted for future development.



Reprinted from *Ecology of Greenways*

Why Amend the Three Mile Plan Now?

Ideally, the Town would like to work with Gunnison County to adopt a Plan for a land use for the area around Crested Butte. In the absence of such a plan, the policies set forth herein are the Town's opinions about how development should occur in the vicinity of Crested Butte.

There are a number of reasons to amend our plan including the following:

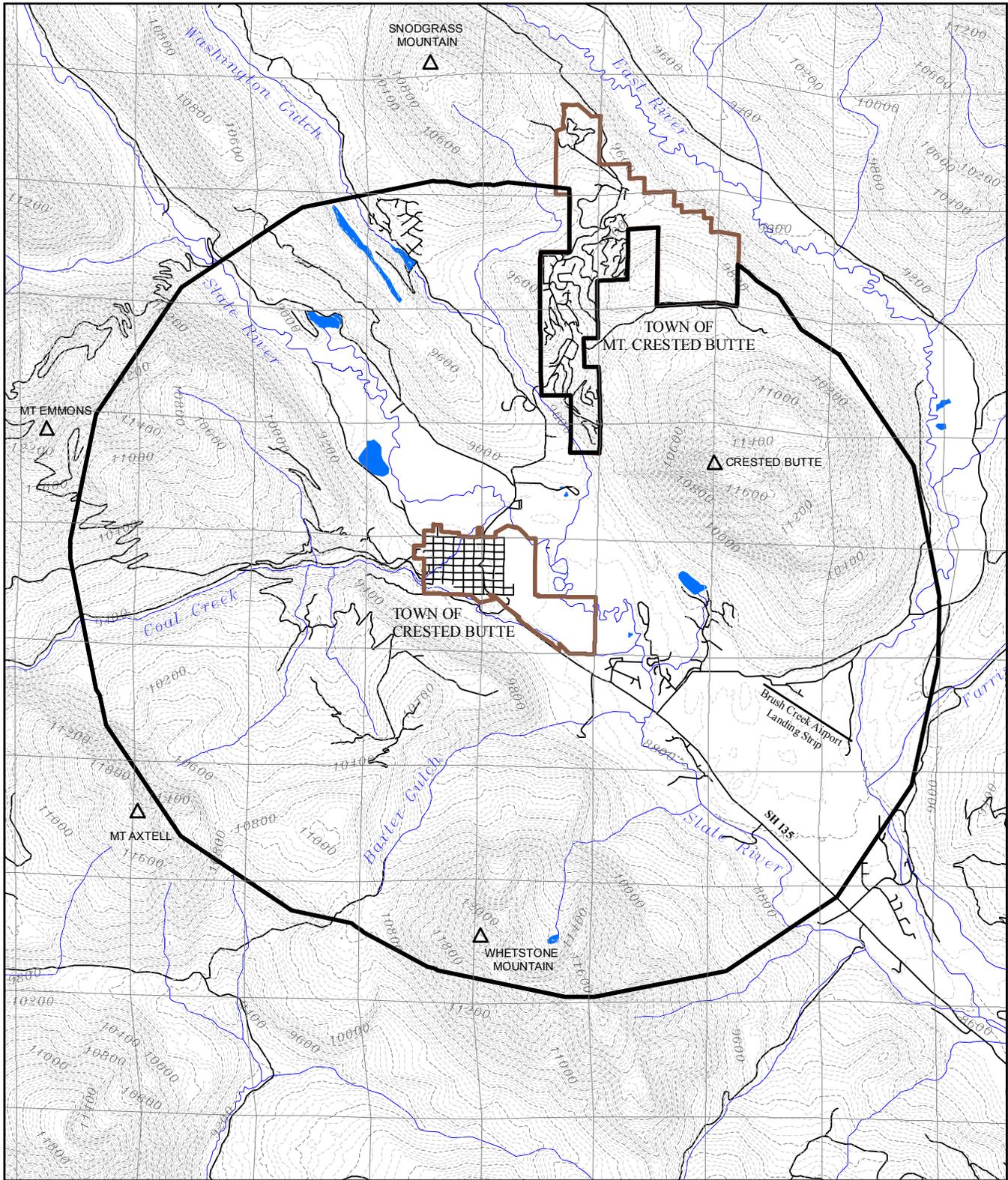
- a. The Town wants to give guidance to landowners and developers, before they begin making plans. This should allow developers to move through the review process in a timely manner, rather than learn about Town concerns after they have submitted plans and then need to make changes.
- b. This Plan will help the Town be consistent when providing comments to the County during development reviews.
- c. This Plan will help the Town decide upon its comments when providing comments to the Federal and State governments about their initiatives, or proposals on their land.
- d. It helps with grant applications when we can say the project complies with local policies.
- e. It updates mathematical justifications for particular policies in this Plan.

The Town feels that now is the time to adopt this plan because:

- a. The Town thinks it is prudent to update our plan for annexations so:
 - i. Landowners and developers know what will be expected of them if they want to annex to Crested Butte,
 - ii. Circumstances have changed since 2006, so this Plan and our expectations should reflect those changes.
- b. The Town solicited public input about development in the vicinity of Crested Butte and that information should be incorporated in the Town's policies. Major opportunities for public input included the following:
 - i. A series of public meetings regarding the proposed Foothills Annexation,
 - ii. The public hearing held on July 5, 2011 prior to adoption of this 2011 plan amendment.
- d. A subcommittee of the Planning Commission has been working on the plan update for nearly a year, and Town staff members have been working on it for over a year. It is time to finish it before circumstances change so much that the plan needs to be updated again.

The Town would like to work with Gunnison County on reviewing our Area Plan or working together to create a plan for development in the vicinity of Crested Butte.

(1) Colorado Revised Statute 31-12-105(e)



Area Map

-  3 Mile Boundary - Middle Slate River Valley (MSRV)
-  Town Boundary
-  Streams
-  Lakes
-  Roads
-  Section Lines

40' Topographic Contours

-  index
-  interval



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