

## 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.