



## MEMORANDUM

Date: July 28, 2022

To: Routt County Board of County Commission and Planning Commission

From: County Planning Staff and Cushing Terrell

RE: Comments on the Draft Master Plan

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County Planning staff collected comments on the Draft Master Plan from the Board of County Commissioners at a joint work session on June 23, 2022 and via email. The public comment period for the Draft was July 12 - July 22, 2022. The public emailed their comments to County planning staff.

Staff/consultant responses are in [blue](#).

### BCC/PC COMMENTS:

#### Overall/Introduction :

- When discussing the “term” of the plan, rather than a comprehensive update, the plan should be revisited and amended as necessary every 5 years.
  - [Language was added on page 16 to review the Plan every 5 years](#)
- In the previous Master Plan, there was a chapter with acronyms and definitions. Was this considered?
  - [Added Appendix 5.3 Definitions on page 125 that includes acronyms.](#)
- Pg 19 reads “Four open houses” then in listing them only 3 are listed with Steamboat omitted
  - [Page 21 - Steamboat was added](#)
- Page 11: Include average annual wage in addition to median household income - while the AMI is quite high, average annual wage is only about \$40,000 a year. Income inequality is a major driver of issues facing Routt County.
  - [Average Annual Wage was added to page 13](#)
- P. 16: is it accurate that all municipal plans are adopted/ratified by the County?
  - [Updated the language on page 18](#)
- P. 18: I don't think we had “over 922” responses. I think we had either over 900 or exactly 922.
  - [Updated the language on page 20](#)
- Page 12 “Housing Prices” - this section does not seem to fit the rest of the content in this section. It makes sense later and works there but it seems forced here.
  - [Removed this subsection as it is addressed in Background on page 35](#)
- I would like to see more section numbers throughout the document. With updates to the plan page numbers may change and people may reference or look for something from a wrong page number
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## Growth, Land Use & Infrastructure:

- The last paragraph on page 26 describes ridgeline matters; on page 27 the existing skyline map, but nothing ties the comments to the map.
  - [Page 29 - added language to tie the information to the map.](#)
- Page 30, Future Growth Areas map:
  - Does Clark qualify as Tier 3?
    - [Yes, as indicated by the pink circle.](#)
  - Is Glen Eden actually considered a “community”?
    - [No - the label was left over from a previous version and has been removed \(page 28\)](#)
  - Considering SLWSD services and a considerable number of lots in Steamboat Lake Subdivision, wouldn't it be considered Tier 3?
    - [Yes - it was added to the map \(page 28\)](#)
- P. 25: does it make sense to use the word “shall” when talking about municipalities? Our MP can't really dictate what they do.
  - [Removed “shall” on page 27](#)
- P. 28: are the barriers to learning also barriers to economic growth? Should you also use the phrase “equitable access” or similar?
  - [Updated the language on page 31](#)
- Page 66 (referencing Dark Skies policy): This is the first and only mention that I see of this in the plan. I would like to see it in a policy or somewhere else as well.

## Housing & Economy:

- Regarding the discussion on the economy, smaller school districts are very dependent on income from coal extraction and will need new sources of funding in the transition away from coal
  - [Discussion of the school districts' funding was added on page 39, and Action 8.25.A on page 98: Partner with organizations looking to replace coal extraction with businesses that contribute to the economy and local tax base](#)
- Page 38 - Policy 13 - do the words “unless a permit is obtained” imply that a permit process is in place?
  - [This language was removed to avoid confusion \(page 40\). There is no permitting process in place.](#)
- P. 38 seems to indicate that we are prioritizing the protection of natural resources only for economic reasons
  - [This was taken out of subsequent drafts.](#)
- Page 36: Also the amount of land getting subdivided making ranch operations harder to find the proper amount of land to work on. And not getting checker boarded. May be a good area to talk about supportive uses needed for many of these ranches to subsist. Talking about how many ranches need to find alternate incomes to be able to make it.
- Page 37: The policies don't talk much about uses in the county and only talks about housing needs when the chapter talks about the character of the agriculture being needed to be thought of and important
- Page 38: The last section of this area I would think would be where we would mention as policy the need to keep the character of agriculture relevant which was stated previously in the chapter
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## Historic & Cultural Resources:

[cushingterrell.com](http://cushingterrell.com)

- Pg 32 Policy #4 instead of “that attract visitors” use language that includes everyone
  - [This language was updated in subsequent drafts \(page 34\)](#)
- The Master Plan does not appear to address Cultural Resources (for example Historic Building Stocks) and in light of the currently changing environment the mark is missed about Routt County's Existing Infrastructure as a resource. How or the process of our existing building stock, roads, bridges, etc are maintained and upgraded should be addressed.

### Transportation & Mobility:

- Recommendation to add information about County roads
  - [Map was added on page 43, information was added on page 44](#)
- There is a need for passing lanes on US 40 and Hwy 131 - the County needs to do everything in its power to improve the road system. Constructing wider shoulders would improve County road safety.
  - [Action 4.14.B on page 84 of the Implementation Matrix: Advocate with CDOT and identify funding sources to widen shoulders on state and federal highways to improve safety](#)
- The Land Use Story Map should be mentioned as a resource for those wanting more in-depth information
  - [A link to the Story Map was added on page 44.](#)
- Pg 41 Map should include Oak Creek
  - [Map was updated \(page 46\)](#)
- Pg 42 Map would be more useful if communities were identified
  - [Map was updated \(page 47\)](#)
- P. 43: #2 what about ag operators?
  - [Added Action 6.1.C on page 88: Work with the agricultural community to better understand their use of County roads and how to reduce conflicts with other road users.](#)
- P. 43 #6 I'm not sure what this is referencing? Should we add a comment about minimizing conflict between user groups on roads?
  - [This is addressed in other action items under Transportation & Mobility](#)
- P. 47: consider addressing event permitting - especially city events that spill into the county
  - [Added Action 5.3.D \(page 86\): Evaluate the need for permitting for special events and consider off-site impacts.](#)
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### Recreation & Tourism:

- Pg 45 Background paragraph end with “County” instead of “Community”
  - [Language was updated \(page 50\)](#)

### Open Space & Agriculture:

- Recommendation to cite Senate Bill 35 specifically when discussing 35-acre subdivisions
  - [Bill was cited specifically on page 53](#)
- More creative use of 35-acre parcels should be encouraged.
  - [Policy 6.1 on page 88: Support bona-fide and viable agricultural operations](#)
  - [Action 6.1.A: Revise Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to support agricultural operations.](#)
  - [Action 6.1.B: Encourage outreach programs for new residents to educate them regarding activities associated with ranching and their responsibilities to maintain rural lands.](#)

- Agricultural operators say that many large ranches are increasingly being used more as hobby ranches and less for agricultural production.
  - Added Policy 6.1 (page 88) and 6.2: Discourage development that changes the rural character or historic agricultural uses and/or practices. Action 6.2.A: Create a definition of agriculture that helps decision makers decide whether a true agricultural operation is the primary use of a property or not.
- Pg 51 Agricultural lands #9 after “irrigation ditches” add “and scattered developments”
  - Language was updated (page 55)
- Pg 51 Ag land #12 define domestic predators or give a couple examples
  - The way it is written is consistent with the language used in the County’s regulations that also has a definition that’s used by CPW.

### Sustainability & Climate Action

- Pg 53 New technologies paragraph after “larger homes” add “and scattered developments”
  - Updated, page 58
- Page 42: This is a confusing map. What is the percentage in reference to?
  - Clarifying language was added to the map: The labeled %s represent the percentage (on average) of vehicles that are heavy truck traffic (semi trucks).

### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- It seems that the continued rejection of commercial development in the County is missing
  - While the foundation of the plan has not changed, we have moved away from calling it “commercial.” Instead, we state throughout the plan and specifically under 1.4 Guiding Principles; to Direct Growth to municipalities and other targeted areas. One of the goals of the Master Plan update was to address issues that have often caused confusion for the public as well as for decision makers. One of those issues is what is considered “commercial.” There are supplementary uses that are allowed in the A/F zone district, if they meet certain standards, even though they have a commercial component. Examples of these uses are guest ranches and snow mobile tours. Rather than stating that the County rejects all commercial development in rural Routt County while simultaneously allowing certain commercial operations, it was decided that it would be more clear to rely on the Land Use Chart which lists individual uses, where they are allowed, and what type of permitting is required. Standards are then applied to the proposals for such uses to assist decision makers in determining if the uses are appropriate for the proposed location.
  - The next step in this process will be to update our regulations to implement the plan.
- We need to prioritize recreation/public spaces adjacent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 Future Growth Areas so that our residents will have areas to recreate and we can reduce some conflicts in the County
  - Added Action 5.10.B (page 87): Support the creation of public spaces for recreation adjacent to Future Growth Areas
- The PDR program and conservation easements are not mentioned. These easements cover a significant portion of land in Routt and the fact that they cannot be developed should be highlighted.
  - Language was added to page 53 and map Public & Conserved Lands on page 123
- Suggestion to reference the County’s historic diverse communities when explaining the Future Growth Areas
  - Language was added to page 18
- Define the boundaries of the Tier 3 Growth Areas

- Added Action 1.1.C (page 71): Develop standards for any future development in Tier 3 Small Established Communities. We are intentionally not creating boundaries for Tier 3 areas. In the Master Plan, we include criteria that define Tier 3, then the Action is to create standards in the Regulations to help evaluate land use applications in Tier 3 areas. All proposals for these areas will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking the community needs and benefits into account.
- Secondary dwelling units should not be used for short term rentals
  - Language was added to page 32
- Add an action to address the appropriateness of soil berms to protect the natural topography
  - Action 6.15.C (page 90) was added: Protect the natural topography and prevent the spread of noxious weeds by reviewing the appropriateness of allowing soil berms.
- Define criteria for short term rentals
  - Short Term Rentals are defined in the glossary and there is no need to establish criteria for them when they are not allowed in the unincorporated County.
- Add an action item around supporting RRCCR and their destination management efforts
  - Added Action 5.1.H (page 85): Support the efforts of community groups to manage the impacts of recreation.
- Infrastructure needed in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 must include services like adequate grocery stores, gas stations, parks, services businesses as well as open spaces to accommodate projected populations
  - The Future Growth Areas framework allows for uses of this type to be permitted through the land use development process.
- WATER - is critical to our existence and quality of life. This draft Master Plan is comprehensive with an extensive action list, but the issue of the reliability of long-term water supply is not addressed. The Plan mentions water conservation, but not supply.
  - Language was added on page 32
- Section 1.2 does not accurately reflect how white settlers actually obtained the land. A more truthful land acknowledgement of the indigenous people should be considered.
  - Language was added on page 11
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