

# MESA/POWDERHORN PLAN

## 2012



April 2013



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## VISION STATEMENT



The area's essential rural & pastoral character will be maintained. This character is made up of two small community nodes (Mesa & Powderhorn), a mix of farm and ranch sizes and types, connected by Highway 65 and a rural road network.



Mesa & Powderhorn will grow into two unique communities, while maintaining large blocks of open/agricultural land between them.



The area will keep its strong sense of community and family atmosphere.



Healthy core business areas in the two rural communities will be promoted and supported, providing sustainable jobs, services, businesses, commercial activities & appropriate infrastructure, compatible with the desired community character.



The historic and scenic characteristics of the Grand Mesa Scenic & Historic Byway will be protected and maintained.



The area's watersheds and water resources will be protected and conserved.





## MESA/POWDERHORN PLAN EXISTING CONDITIONS & FINDINGS

### PLAN AREA

The Mesa/Powderhorn planning area (Plan area) is located approximately 25 miles east of Grand Junction. Boundaries of the Plan area extend from Plateau Creek on the north, to the Powderhorn Ski Resort on the south (approximately 12 miles). East and west boundaries extend about two miles either side of Highway 65. The planning area contains 29,096 acres or 45.5 square miles (Figure 1, Table 1). The planning area includes two rural communities – Mesa and Powderhorn – connected by the Highway 65 corridor.

**Table 1 – Plan Area Summary**

	<b>Lots</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>	<b>% Area</b>
Mesa Rural Community	105	257.439	.4	.88%
Powderhorn Rural Community	326	2,559.541	4.0	8.8%
Remaining Plan Area	458	26,279.196	41.1	90.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>29,096.176</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Mesa County Assessor Records and GIS, October 2012

#### Mesa Rural Community

The Mesa Rural Community (Figure 2), as revised in this Plan, covers about 257 acres, or .4 square miles, and contains 105 parcels. It is at an elevation of 5,639 feet above sea level and includes the Mesa core area, with businesses and homes on smaller lots, and encompasses the original Town of Mesa, which was platted October 24, 1900. Extending from Main Street (now Highway 65) west to Bluff Street and from State Street south to Fremont Street (now KE Road), the original townsite had 2 blocks and a total of 92 lots, each measuring 25 feet wide by 125 feet deep. The First Addition to Mesa was platted November 22, 1910. It was located to the northeast of the intersection of what is now Highway 65 and KE Road, and contained 4 blocks. Most lots were 25 feet wide by 135 feet deep. These historic small lots continue to define the Mesa community.

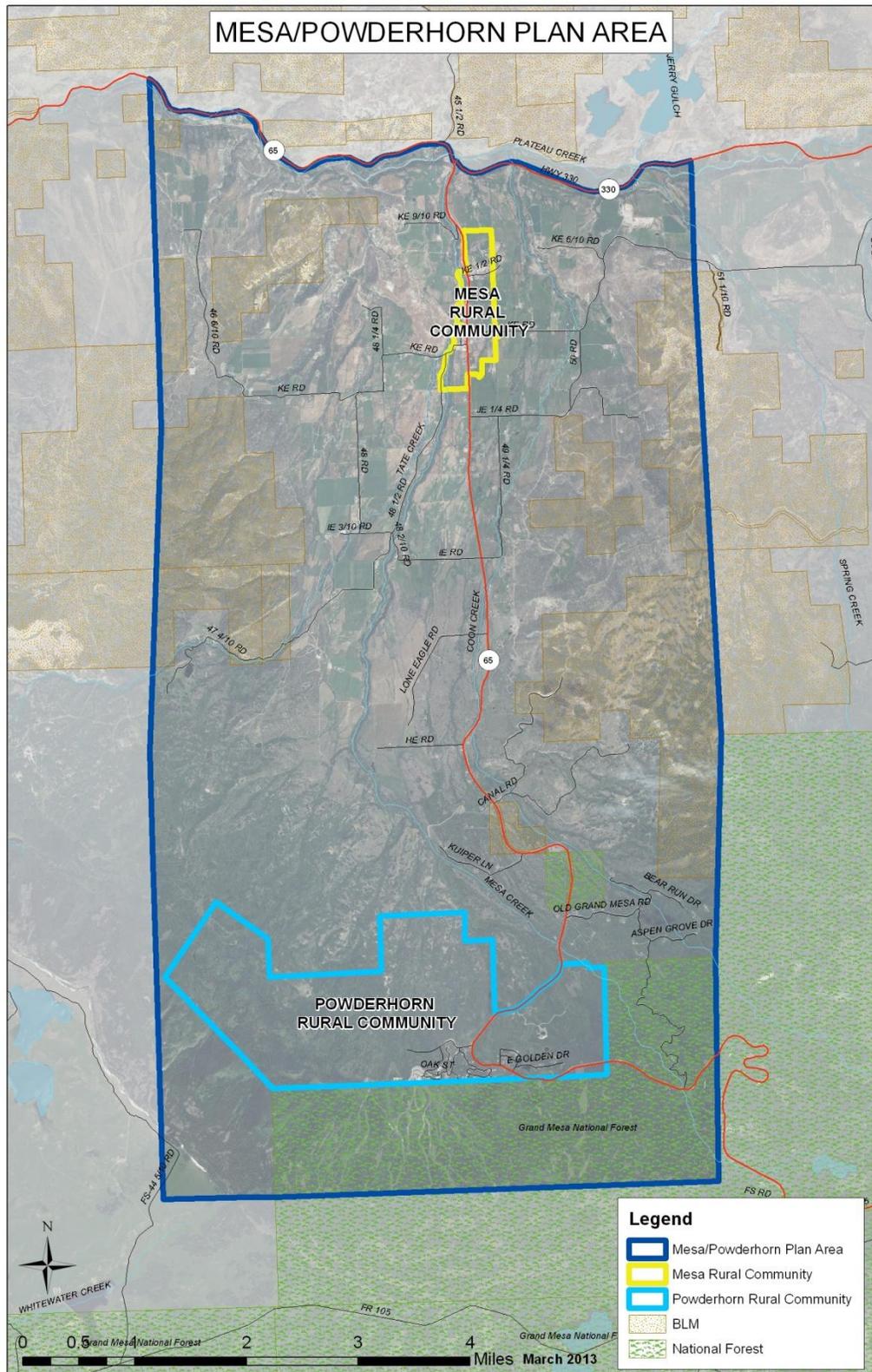


Original plat, Town of Mesa, October 24, 1900

#### Powderhorn Rural Community

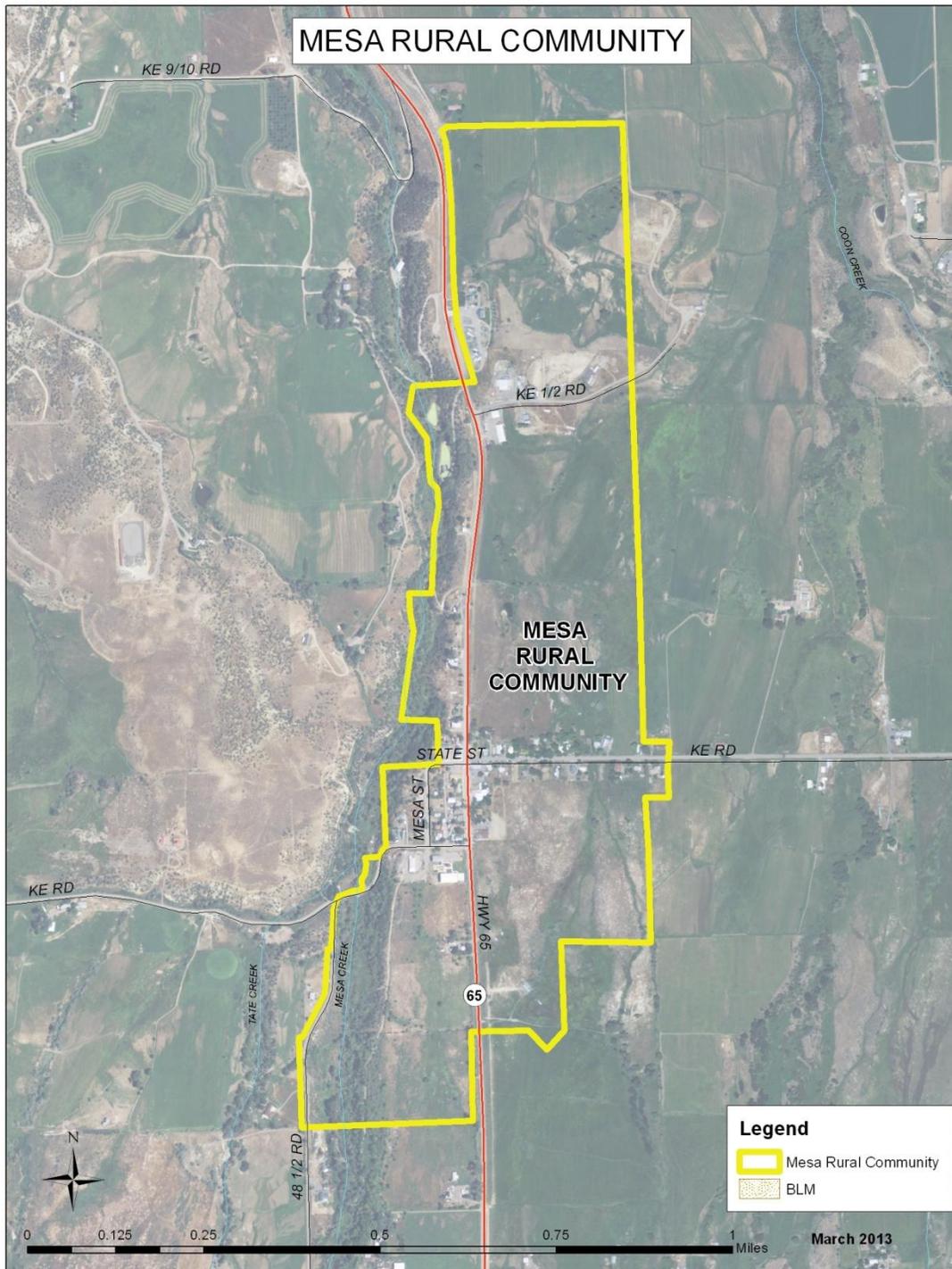
The Powderhorn Rural Community boundaries are the same in this plan as the 2001 Plan (Figure 3). It lies below the rim of Grand Mesa and is about 2,560 acres, or 4 square miles, with 326 lots. It includes the Powderhorn Ski Resort, Horizon Estates and other residential developments. It abuts the Grand Mesa National Forest on the south, and is at an elevation of about 8,000 feet above sea level.

Figure 1 – Mesa/Powderhorn Plan Area



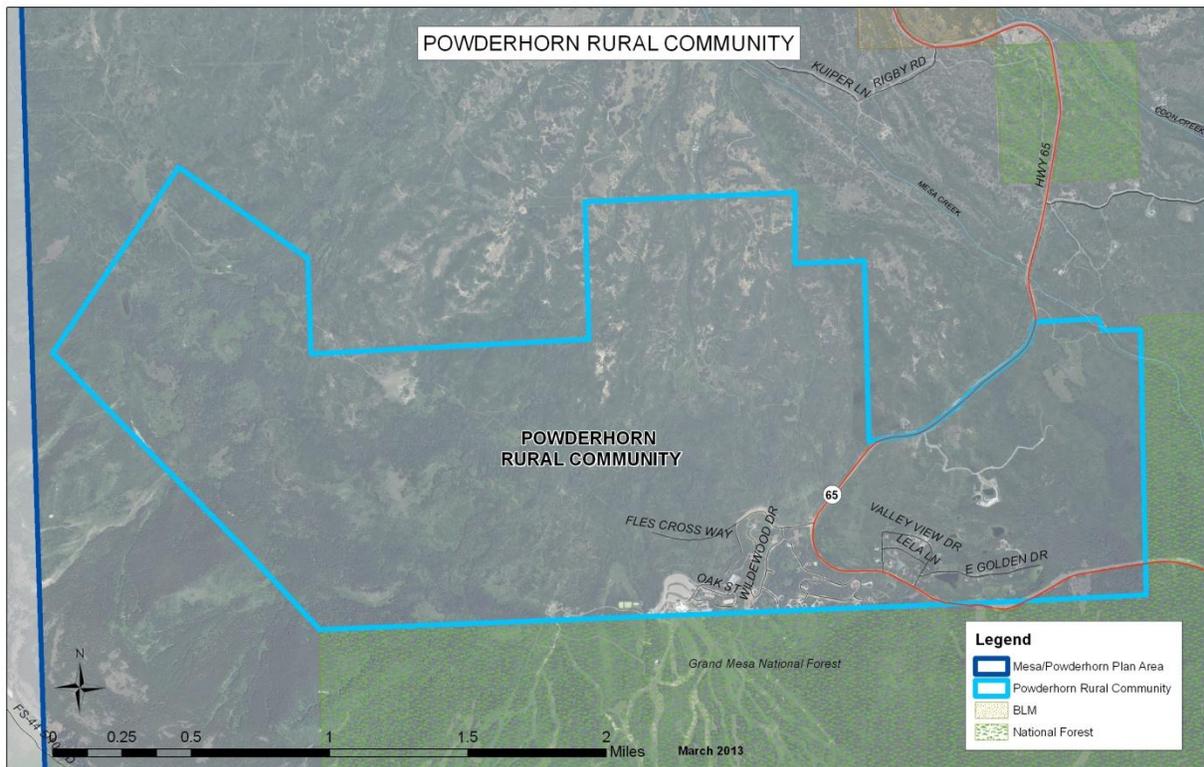
Source: Mesa County GIS

Figure 2 – Mesa Rural Community



Source: Mesa County GIS

**Figure 3 – Powderhorn Rural Community**



Source: Mesa County GIS

**The Mesa/Powderhorn Community Plan addresses seven topic areas, as follows:**

1. Services
2. Transportation
3. Land Use
4. Community Image & Character
5. Environment
6. Parks, Recreation & Open Lands
7. Economic Development



*The Mesa/Powderhorn area is part of the larger Plateau Valley. The first homesteader in the Mesa area was John Brown, who arrived in 1882. The Mesa post office was established in 1887. The Mesa townsite was homesteaded by Dr. Archie R. Craig, the town’s doctor and second supervisor of Battlement Mesa Forest Reserve, which later became the Grand Mesa National Forest. Construction of reservoirs on Grand Mesa began in 1886 to store irrigation water for use in the valley. In its early years, transportation to the Grand Valley was difficult. With the construction, first of the DeBeque Cutoff and later the road along Plateau Creek using convict labor, Plateau Valley became more accessible. The establishment of Battlement Mesa Forest Reserve in 1892 helped to stabilize ranching by creating a grazing permit system. The first American Legion Post in Mesa County was established in Mesa in 1920. The Mesa Gymnasium and Auditorium was built in 1936 by the Works Progress Administration. Its fold-down stage allowed the floor to be cleared for basketball games, and it was known as having one of the best dance floors in the county. The Powderhorn area had been used for winter recreation by residents for years. With the establishment of the ski area in 1966, the modern era of recreation began.*

Source: Mesa County, Colorado – A 100 Year History

## 1. SERVICES

Utility services in the area are provided as follows:

- Domestic Water – Mesa Water & Sanitation District; Grand Mesa Metro District; private wells and cisterns
- Sewage Collection and Treatment – Mesa Water & Sanitation District; Grand Mesa Metro District; Individual Sewage Disposal Systems (ISDS)
- Electricity/Gas – Grand Valley Rural Power provides electricity. There is no natural gas service in the area; propane is provided by private suppliers.
- Telecommunications – CenturyLink provides telephone service. Television is over air and by satellite providers. Internet is also available in the area.
- Solid Waste Collection – Mesa County Solid Waste transfer station; private haulers
- Irrigation Water – Collbran Water Conservancy District

Public Safety:

- Law Enforcement – Mesa County Sheriff, Colorado State Patrol
- Fire Protection/Emergency Medical – Plateau Valley Fire District; Grand Mesa Metro District (contracts with PVFD); Powderhorn Resort Ski Patrol
- Mesa County Animal Control
- Mesa County Emergency Services

Schools:

- Plateau Valley School District #50

Health Care:

- Plateau Valley Hospital District

Community Facilities & Special Districts:

- Mesa Community Center Public Improvement District
- Mesa-Molina Cemetery District

Transportation:

- Mesa County Public Works Department
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Mesa County Regional Transportation Planning Office

### **Domestic Water**

Domestic water is provided to residents by the Mesa Water and Sanitation District and the Grand Mesa Metropolitan Districts within their respective service areas. Properties not served by these two districts get water from wells, springs, and cisterns filled by the individual homeowner.

Mesa Water & Sanitation District

The Mesa Water & Sanitation District currently has a service area covering 442 acres (Figure 4), in the core of Mesa and east of the Mesa Rural Community. The Mesa Rural Community covers 257 acres (see Future Land Use, p. 25). While this Plan recommends that the potential water service area of the Mesa Water & Sanitation District be limited to the Mesa Rural Community, about half of the District lies outside the Rural Community.

The District maintains a water treatment plant on Highway 65 south of Mesa. Since the 2001 Mesa/Powderhorn Plan, the District has installed a new storage tank with a capacity of 160,000 gallons. The plant has a treatment capacity of 115,000 gallons per day and can serve an estimated 130 residential equivalent units. Currently, the system has 72 active taps and is functioning at 60% capacity during peak summer demands. Issues for the system include lack of looping, the condition of older lines and the lack of fire hydrants. Improvements and upgrades are made to the treatment and distribution system as needed to address system deficiencies and aging infrastructure. The District’s near-future plans include improvements to filtration equipment, pending funding.

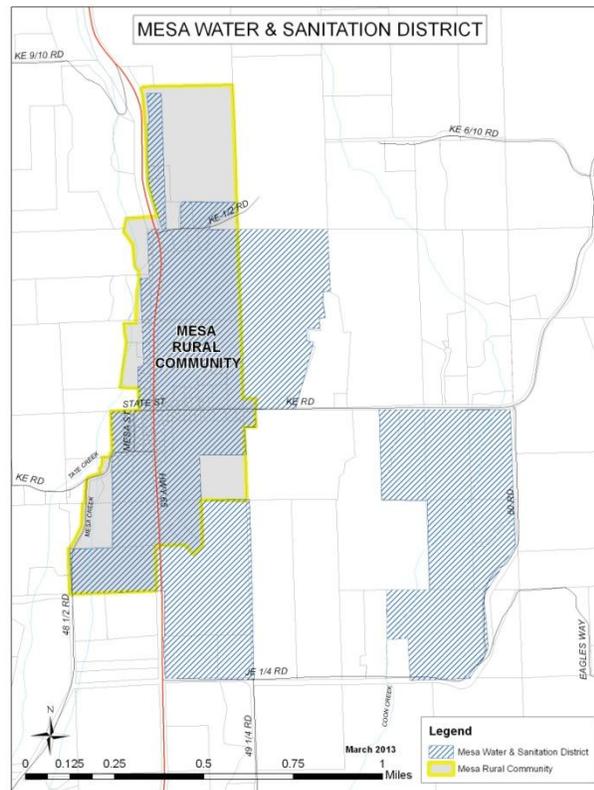
Mesa Water & Sanitation District obtains water through decrees from Ute Spring and two wells. The decrees from the three sources total 1.90 c.f.s., which is equivalent to a supply of 1.2 million gallons per day (MGD). In 1995, water usage in the District was only about 25,000 gallons per day (GPD). Currently, annual average usage is about 40,000 GPD.

Grand Mesa Metro District

The Grand Mesa Metro District (also referred to as the Powderhorn Metro District) provides water service in the resort area of the Powderhorn Rural Community, with a service area covering 857 acres (Figure 5). It does not serve the area east of Highway 65 or to the west of the resort. Powderhorn Resort has an approved official development plan allowing approximately 2,400 units. There are other lands in the District that are zoned for Planned Unit Development but do not yet have an approved development plan.

The District maintains a water treatment plant at Powderhorn. It includes 250,000 gallons of storage. The plant has a treatment capacity of 37,000 gallons per day (GPD), and can serve an

**Figure 4 – Mesa Water & Sanitation District**

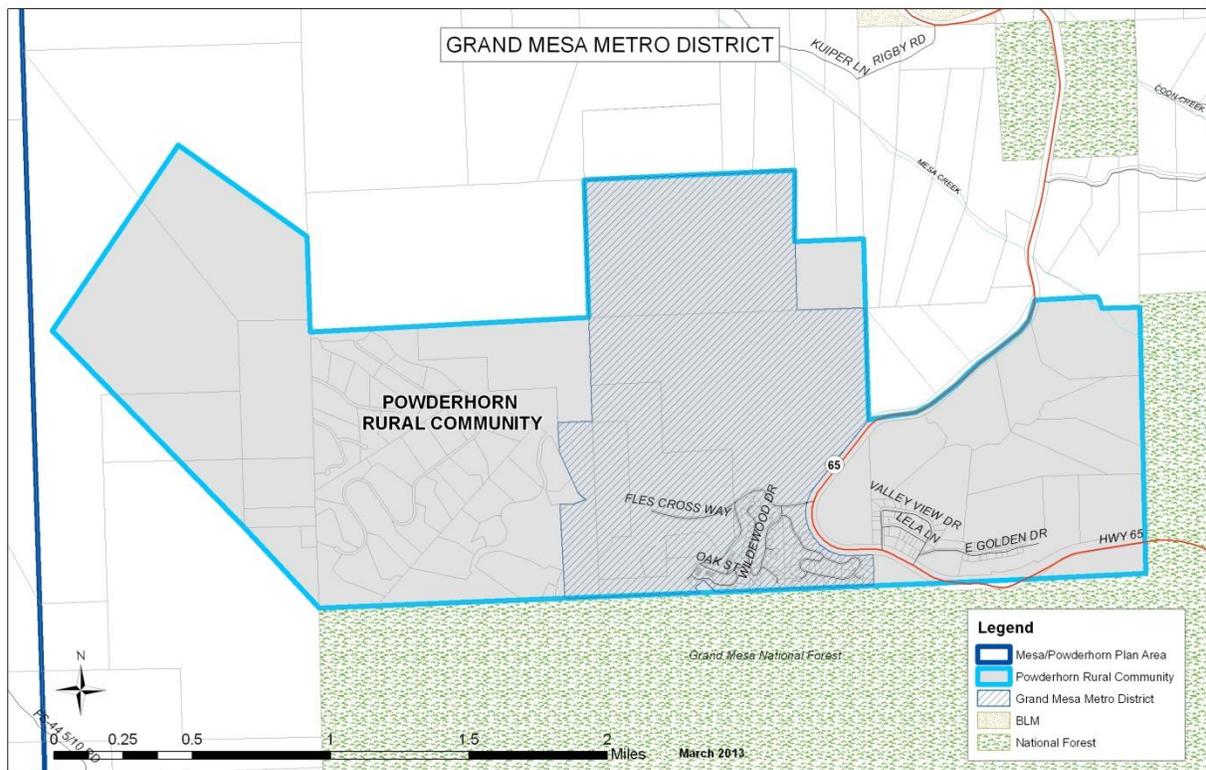


Source: Mesa County GIS

estimated 207 residential equivalent units (EQR), based on an estimated EQR usage of 178 GPD. Currently, the system has 32 taps. A significant portion of the demand is from commercial day use, rather than residential units. Ongoing issues for the system include breaks and leaks in distribution lines and connections due high levels of seasonal ground water movement. There is a need for check valves and looping in order to isolate breaks. A mitigation plan comprised of dewatering wells, drainage and collection trenches, and soil stabilization in the pipe trenches is not expected to be implemented until 2014 or later. Improvements and upgrades are made to the distribution system as needed. Estimated usage at full build-out is 266,300 GPD, which would require a combination of additional storage and treatment. This is not expected to occur until 2032.

The Grand Mesa Metro District’s water supply is from Beaver Creek. The District only has conditional water rights, which come through Powderhorn Resort. The Grand Mesa Metro District is studying the feasibility of securing more permanent water rights, both through the Resort and through the purchase of additional rights to service future demands.

**Figure 5 – Grand Mesa Metro District**



Source: Mesa County GIS

**Other Water**

Properties located outside of the respective service districts rely on wells, springs and cisterns for potable water. Therefore, the availability of water, water quality, water rights and conservation are all very important issues in the Plan area.

According to the Colorado Division of Water Resources, also known as the State Engineer's Office, the area is considered over-appropriated. Therefore, developers seeking well permits must provide augmentation plans, which must be approved by the Water Court. Properties larger than 35 acres are exempt and can obtain permits for domestic and livestock wells. Parcels created prior to June 1, 1972 are also exempt and can obtain well permits for household use only. Well permits are issued by and regulated through the Colorado State Engineer. Per the Mesa County Land Development Code, cisterns are only allowed on unplatted parcels; properties that are platted cannot use cisterns for domestic water. The expansion of the respective water providers' districts could allow public water service to more of the Plan area, primarily in the Mesa Rural Community. There is a water bulk fill station in Collbran. There are not any bulk fill sites in the Plan area.

Ute Water Conservancy is a significant owner of water rights in the Plan area but does not provide any water services. A raw water main passes through the Plan area to the Ute Water treatment plant on Rapid Creek Road near Palisade. Ute Water's land acquisitions are seen by some residents as having an effect on land use, tax revenues, and water rights in the area.

A small portion of land that is part of the City of Grand Junction's water supply system is located at the southwest corner of the Plan area. However, the City's actual watershed is located above the rim of the Grand Mesa and westward and is not within the Plan area.

### **Sewer**

The Mesa Water and Sanitation District provides wastewater treatment services to the Mesa Rural Community. The Grand Mesa Metro District provides wastewater treatment services in the Powderhorn Resort. Residents outside of the two districts use individual sewage disposal systems (ISDS). Some properties use holding tanks that must be pumped, due to inadequate soils or other constraints that prevent the use of ISDS.

#### Mesa Water & Sanitation District

The Mesa system's permit with the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) allows the system to treat 40,000 GPD. There are currently 70 taps, with a flow of approximately 26,000 gallons per day in maximum months. The existing treatment facility north of Mesa along Mesa Creek is functioning at about 65% capacity during peak summer months. The system uses lagoons for treatment. Mesa Water & Sanitation expects to reconstruct the lagoons and increase capacity in the future, if necessary; this most likely would not occur prior to 2015.

The Mesa Sanitation District primarily services the historic Mesa Townsite, although the District's boundaries extend well beyond that core area. Extension of service to other areas may require lift stations. New users are only required to connect to the system if located in the immediate townsite. New development could connect to the system but developers would be responsible for constructing infrastructure to extend service. This Plan recommends that the

sewer service area of the District be limited to the Mesa Rural Community, also referred to as the Village of Mesa and as shown on the Future Land Use map (Figure 11, page 26).

#### Grand Mesa Metro District

Grand Mesa Metro District's system serves 32 taps. The 3-cell lagoon system no longer satisfies State requirements for discharge. The facility must be replaced to meet new treatment standards as well as address future demands and make way for the development of additional ski terrain. The Grand Mesa Metro District, as of the writing of this plan, is working to secure a site for a new facility and expects to construct a new treatment facility in 2014-16, contingent on the availability of funding. The Metro District is planning to construct a plant that can accommodate 400 to 500 EQR and treat 266,300 GPD. The new plant will be a mechanical treatment plant. One of the current challenges of operating the system is the highly variable use. Powderhorn has a high number of second homes as well as lodging that are used seasonally, creating peak times of usage as well as periods where usage of the system is minimal.

#### **Electricity/Gas**

Electricity is provided by Grand Valley Rural Power. Grand Valley Rural Power will continue to serve residences and businesses in the area as it grows and expands.

There are no natural gas providers in the area. To date, no provider has indicated an interest in extending gas service to the Mesa/Powderhorn area, should interest and demand make it feasible. Private suppliers provide propane services to residences and businesses.

#### **Telecommunications**

Telephone service in the area is provided by CenturyLink. Cell phone service is also available, but coverage quality varies by carrier. Internet service is available through CenturyLink and other providers but connection speeds are considered slow and unreliable by some. Many residents in the area work from home and need reliable internet access. There is no cable provider in the area. Television is available over air, with antennas. Satellite television is available in the Plan area, although residences in forested locations may have challenges with dish placement. Some satellite providers are expanding into satellite internet service, which could improve access to the area in the future.

#### **Solid Waste**

Private waste haulers provide services to residences and businesses in the area. Mesa County Solid Waste Division maintains a transfer station at 51254 Highway 330 in Molina. The site accepts residential waste and has recycling collection. Construction and special waste (i.e. soil, sludge) is not accepted. Hours of operation (as of the writing of this Plan) are Tuesday, Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. As the area develops and the need/demand increases, the Mesa County Solid Waste Management Division will continue to evaluate what expanded services can be provided in the area.

### **Irrigation & Water Rights**

The Collbran Conservancy District covers the Plan area. Creeks serve as the main distribution infrastructure. There are several ditch associations in the Plan area. Conflicts regarding water use have been reported, in which residents may use water to which they don't have rights. While creeks and irrigation ditches may flow through an individual's property, they may not own rights to that water. There have been reports of individuals altering creeks to create ponds to retain water, generally without permits. Improper irrigation practices are also an issue. The need to educate new residents about water rights and irrigation practices was identified in the planning process. Mesa County's [Code of the West](#) provides information on these topics.

Powderhorn Resort has a lease agreement with the City of Grand Junction to purchase water from the Somerville Reservoir for snowmaking. The Resort also uses water from Grand Mesa sources, through its US Forest Service permit.

### **Public Safety (Fire, Law Enforcement & Animal Control)**

#### Fire Protection:

Fire protection and emergency medical services are provided by Plateau Valley Fire District (PVFD), headquartered in Mesa with a station in Collbran. The Grand Mesa Metro District contracts with the PVFD for fire and emergency medical services. Powderhorn Resort ski patrol staff provides emergency medical response as part of the resort operations and may provide mutual aid in some situations. A helicopter landing zone is located in the cul de sac at the end of Coyote Run in the Powderhorn Rural Community, for use by medical helicopters. The landing zone most likely would have to be relocated if the surrounding lots were developed. As of the writing of this Plan, PVFD is undertaking a minor expansion of the Mesa station to provide offices, a kitchen and sleeping rooms. This will allow staffing of the station at night.

Fire protection issues in the Plan area include:

- undersized lines, lack of capacity and lack of looping arrangements of the existing water mains;
- areas not served by water;
- seasonal access to hydrants on the Ute Water raw water line;
- dependence on volunteer staff between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m.;
- the need for a Powderhorn station and equipment;
- response times to Powderhorn.

Call volume in the Plan area is approximately 100 calls per year. Response time is generally between 10 and 14 minutes, which is considered good for a frontier-rated area. The public protection classification for the area is ISO 8 to 10. The Mesa station is staffed with paid paramedic /firefighters during the day. The department relies on volunteers during all other times. One of the most pressing issues is a need for commitment from volunteers. Volunteer numbers have declined, due in part to the amount of training and time dedication that is now mandated by the state. It is sometimes necessary to leave the district to obtain necessary

training. The PVFD has an equipment replacement schedule of 5 years for command vehicles, 10 years for ambulances and 15 years for fire and brush trucks.

#### Law Enforcement:

Law enforcement is provided by the Mesa County Sheriff's Office and Colorado State Patrol. The Sheriff's Department monitors activity in the area but does not maintain a substation. Plateau Valley is covered by the Rural Area Deputy Program. Deputies in the program are trained and equipped to handle the unique public safety situations that can occur in rural areas, including search and rescue, water and livestock laws, off-highway vehicle operation and laws, wildlife and Forest Service issues and laws, and gas and oil field issues. Additional law enforcement is provided by the BLM and USFS on public lands. Colorado Parks and Wildlife provides enforcement of wildlife and hunting activities.

#### Animal Control:

Mesa County Animal Control Services protects and manages the animal population by enforcing laws designed to protect county residents and control animals, through licensing animals, educating pet owners, and investigating cruelty to animals.

#### **School**

Students that live in the planning area attend Plateau Valley School (pre-K-12), in Collbran. The school is in District 50. There are about 465 students enrolled in 2012. This includes approximately 140 students at Grand Mesa High School, which is an alternative school located at the Collbran Job Corps. Of the students at Plateau Valley School, a little over half were in pre-kindergarten through Grade 5 in 2012. In the past five years, annual enrollment has seen both increases and declines but has remained fairly constant over the longer period (Table 3). The School District owns property at the north end of Mesa, but there are no plans to build a school at that site for the foreseeable future. In 2012, about 91 students from the Mesa area were on the school bus route list.

**Table 2 – Plateau Valley School District Enrollment, 2009-2012**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>Plateau Valley School</b>	<b>% Change year to year</b>
2008	467	327	
2009	496	356	+ 8.8%
2010	469	329	- 7.5%
2011	450	310	- 5.8%
2012	465	325	+ 4.8%

*Source: Plateau Valley School District #50*

#### **Hospital**

The Plan area is in the Plateau Valley Hospital District. As a special district, it is a taxing authority; the District currently has an 8 mill levy. The primary facility is located in Collbran, with a clinic in Mesa. As of the writing of this plan, three physicians provide coverage. A physician is always available on call after hours for urgent care needs. The clinic in Collbran

recently underwent capital improvements. It is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Mesa clinic was opened in 2009 and is located at 11011 Highway 65, Unit B. At this time, it is open Tuesdays and Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Thursdays from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The Hospital District will evaluate the need for expanded hours as clinic usage increases.

### **Community Facilities & Special Districts**

The Mesa Community Center is owned by Mesa County and operated by the Mesa Community Club (MCC), a non-profit organization. The MCC is supported in part by the Mesa Community Center Public Improvement District (MCCPID). The MCCPID is a legally established taxing authority. The property, located at the southwest corner of Highway 65 and KE Road, includes the community center, which has a large gymnasium, kitchen and small meeting room; the historic Old Mesa Gymnasium and Auditorium; and outdoor facilities that include a playground, gazebo, picnic area, restrooms and outside ball courts. The property is available for rental for events and for use by the community. The property is zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD); updating the development approval could help the Mesa Community Center Board operate the facility more efficiently.

A branch of the Mesa County Library was previously located in the Mesa Community Center. The closest branch is now in Collbran. During the community planning process, some participants expressed an interest in bringing a library back to Mesa.

The Mesa-Molina Cemetery District is responsible for the operations and maintenance of the Mesa-Molina Cemetery, located at 50 Road just north of KE Road. Graves in the cemetery date to the late 1800s. The Cemetery District is an established taxing authority.

## 2. TRANSPORTATION

### Transportation Modes

The area's transportation modes include:

- Air: Grand Junction Regional Airport, 30 miles west with national carrier air passenger and freight service
- Bicycle: no dedicated bike lanes; trails within Powderhorn Resort area and in the Grand Mesa National Forest to the south of the Plan area
- Pedestrian: limited sidewalks/paths in Mesa; hiking/ski trails within Powderhorn Resort vicinity and in the Grand Mesa National Forest to the south of the Plan area.
- Rail: freight and passenger service from Grand Junction
- Motorized Vehicles: Interstate 70, 9 miles to the west; State Highways 65 and 330; Mesa County road network
- Transit Service: no local passenger service; national passenger service from Grand Junction.

### Corridors for Circulation

Highway 65 runs north and south through the planning area. The north boundary of the area is Highway 65 to the west and Highway 330 to the east. Highway 65, designated as the Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway, connects the Plan area to Interstate 70. KE Road provides an east-west connection across the area and to the rest of Plateau Valley. The DeBeque Cutoff, 45.5 Road near the junction of Highways 65 and 330, provides another route to Interstate 70 and northeast Mesa County. There are no other significant routes connecting the Plan area to the remainder of Mesa County.

### Mesa County Road Network and Maintenance

The transportation network in the Mesa/Powderhorn Area is almost entirely vehicular in nature. Roads were built to allow access from farm to market as well as from field to field. Long driveways or lanes are common for many of the older farms and ranches, while newer development is generally closer to county roads. Shared driveways are common.

All County roads in the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area have a functional classification of local road in the County's hierarchical system. Road types and miles are summarized in Table 3. The only higher classification roadways are the State Highways (arterials). There are also roads in the Plan area, mostly in the Powderhorn Rural Community, which may be in County right-of-way but are not county-maintained, as well as private roads serving large lot developments (35 acres plus) that are not mapped in the Mesa County system.

**Table 3 – Road Classifications and Miles**

Road Type	Miles
State Highway	29.32
Local Road	42.94
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72.26</b>

*Source: Mesa County GIS*



Figure 6 shows the transportation system in the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area. There are relatively few County-maintained roads in the Plan area. Including the highways, which account for 40% of the road miles, there is an average of 1.588 road miles per square mile. Highway 65 is vital to circulation, as there are few alternatives to travel without using the highway. Terrain and large areas of relatively undeveloped land affect the road network. South of IE Road, roads extend east and west from Highway 65 and do not interconnect. Old Grand Mesa Road connects to Highway 65 above Horizon Estates and below Powderhorn; it has no winter maintenance. In the Mesa vicinity, loops are formed by KE Road, 48 Road, 48 ½ Road and IE Road on the west. On the east, a loop is formed by KE Road, 50 Road, 49 ¼ Road, IE ¼ Road and IE Road.

As new development occurs, needed right-of-way is acquired. Pre-existing maintained roads are considered public right-of-way by use. To improve safety and bring County roads up to standards, adequate right-of-way is necessary and is required as part of the development approval. However, most of the plan area has a future land use classification of Rural/Agriculture 35+ A. Platting of parcels that are 35 acres or larger is not subject to the Mesa County subdivision review, and therefore right-of-way dedication is not required.

#### Maintenance

The Mesa County Transportation Division maintains approximately 43 miles of county roads in the planning area. Maintenance includes surface treatment (chip seal, asphalt, magnesium chloride, and gravel); grading; drainage (culverts); right-of-way brush/tree removal; weed spraying, mowing; signing; snow plowing; and various other road maintenance/upgrading activities. The district maintenance shop is located at 15620 57 ½ Road in Collbran.

The snow and ice policy of the County is to sand and plow as needed. All school bus and mail routes are cleared as soon as practical. County forces maintain 24-hour coverage during and after storm until near normal driving conditions are restored using all methods available for snow and ice control. Mesa County does not plow or sand private driveways or non-county roads. Through a cooperative agreement with Mesa County, CDOT provides snowplowing on Powderhorn Road from Highway 65 to the parking lots because CDOT crews are able to clear that area sooner than the County. Additionally, there are certain county roads in developments where maintenance would require the removal of vegetation that the residents have stated they do not wish to have removed. Specifically, the County has not been maintaining some County roads in Horizon Estates.

#### Capital Improvements

Mesa County has a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) for transportation projects. The CIP identifies planning and construction projects that will occur in the next 6 years. The current CIP includes widening of Powderhorn Road and improvements to KE Road to realign the intersection with 48.5 Road and replace the Mesa Creek box culvert. Projects could be added to the CIP if determined necessary.

Additionally, Mesa County has worked with CDOT and Powderhorn to prepare plans to construct turn lanes from Highway 65 into Powderhorn. The project is not currently funded in the CIP; construction of turn lanes would be dependent on the project being funded, either through the CIP or other sources.

### **Applied Plans**

Adopted transportation plans for the area include, but are not limited to, the *Mesa County 2035 Regional Transportation Plan*, the *Mesa County Multi-Modal Plan*, and the *Road Access Policy*. The Mesa County Regional Transportation Planning Office (RTPO) provides ongoing traffic analysis using adopted land use plans and community travel data. These analyses help determine the transportation infrastructure necessary for all modes of travel and provide guidance for corridor planning.

In the Mesa and Powderhorn Rural Communities, residential development brings with it bicycle and pedestrian traffic. To safely accommodate increased volumes of residential and commuter traffic as well as bicyclists and pedestrians, upgrades to rural roads and highways would be required. Needed upgrades include construction of pedestrian and bike paths, improved travel lanes and shoulders, cut and fill work on curves to improve sight distance, reconstruction of substandard intersections, and the construction of turn lanes where traffic volumes warrant.

Traffic calming through the Mesa community has been identified as a need by residents. Additional routes that provide an alternative to Highway 65 and KE Road could help alleviate community impacts from energy development-related traffic and also improve emergency response times. Damage to infrastructure such as culverts and buried pipes from heavy truck traffic and overweight vehicles has also been a concern in some areas.

### **Multi-Modal Considerations**

Pedestrian networks are very limited. Sidewalks exist along portions of Highway 65 through Mesa. No scheduled mass transit is provided in the area. Trailheads for bicyclists and hikers are located to the south just outside the Plan area around Mesa Lakes, providing access to the Grand Mesa National Forest. Bicyclists use Highway 65 to travel to and from the Grand Mesa, but there no established bike lanes and limited shoulders in which to ride. Equestrians use the rural roads in the area. As the community grows, roads will need to be modified to safely serve not only motorists but pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians too.

### 3. LAND USE

#### Current Land Use

The Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area encompasses a large and diverse landscape, ranging from the pasture land of the Mesa area to the alpine environment of Powderhorn. The planning area totals approximately 29,096 acres or 45.5 square miles. As of March, 2013, there were 889 tax parcels. The Assessor's records reveal that public/quasi-public, agriculture, residential, business, and commercial land uses occur throughout the planning area (Table 4, Figure 7). The majority of the land use type in the Plan area is agricultural, at almost 58% of the total area. About 46% of the lots have a land use type of residential, covering 11% of the land area.

**Table 4 – Current Land Use by Type: Plan Area**

MESA/POWDERHORN PLAN AREA LAND USE BY TYPE					
Land Use Type	Lots	Acres	% Area	% Lots	Avg. Size
Agricultural	339	16,784.949	57.69%	38.13%	49.513
Residential	411	3,155.819	10.85%	46.23%	7.678
Condominiums	82	1.202	.004%	9.22%	.015
Commercial	15	31.457	.11%	1.69%	2.097
State-Assessed	1	.096	.00%	.11%	.096
Exempt*	41	9,122.653	31.35%	4.61%	222.504
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>29,096.176</b>			<b>32.729</b>

Source: Mesa County Assessor Records and GIS, March 2013

\* Exempt means properties that are exempt from property taxes, according to the Mesa County Assessor's records.

#### Mesa Rural Community

The Mesa Rural Community, as revised in this plan, has an area of 257 acres, or about 0.4 square miles in 105 tax parcels. The Mesa Rural Community represents about 1% of the Plan area. Uses are summarized in Table 5 and shown in Figure 8. The majority of the Plan area's commercial properties are located in Mesa. While 57% of the Rural Community parcels have a land use type of residential, that use accounts for a little less than 14% of the area because of the small lot sizes found in the Mesa core. The average developed lot size is 0.6 acres. Agricultural use accounts for about 58% of the Rural Community, similar to the entire Plan area.

**Table 5 – Current Land Use by Type: Mesa Rural Community**

MESA RURAL COMMUNITY					
Land Use Type	Lots	Acres	% Area	% Lots	Avg. Size
Agricultural	18	150.936	58.63%	17.14%	8.385
Residential	60	35.974	13.97%	57.14%	.600
Commercial	12	7.080	2.75%	11.43%	.590
State-Assessed	1	.096	.04%	0.95%	.096
Exempt	14	63.353	24.61%	13.33%	4.525
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>257.439</b>			<b>2.452</b>

Source: Mesa County Assessor Records and GIS, March 2013

Powderhorn Rural Community

The Powderhorn Rural Community has an area of 2,560 acres, or about 4 square miles in 326 parcels (Table 6 and Figure 9). It covers approximately 9% of the Plan Area. About two-thirds of the lots are residential, with another quarter classified as Condominiums. There are only 3 commercial properties accounting for less than 1% of the area, but they are significant, housing resort facilities. About two-thirds of the land area continues to be classified as agricultural.

**Table 6 – Current Land Use by Type: Powderhorn Rural Community**

<b>POWDERHORN RURAL COMMUNITY</b>					
<b>Land Use Type</b>	<b>Lots</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% Area</b>	<b>% Lots</b>	<b>Avg. Size</b>
Agricultural	22	1,706.331	66.67%	6.75%	76.561
Residential	219	831.001	32.47%	67.18%	3.795
Condominium	82	1.202	.05%	25.15%	.015
Commercial	3	21.007	.82%	.92%	7.002
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>2,559.541</b>			<b>7.851</b>

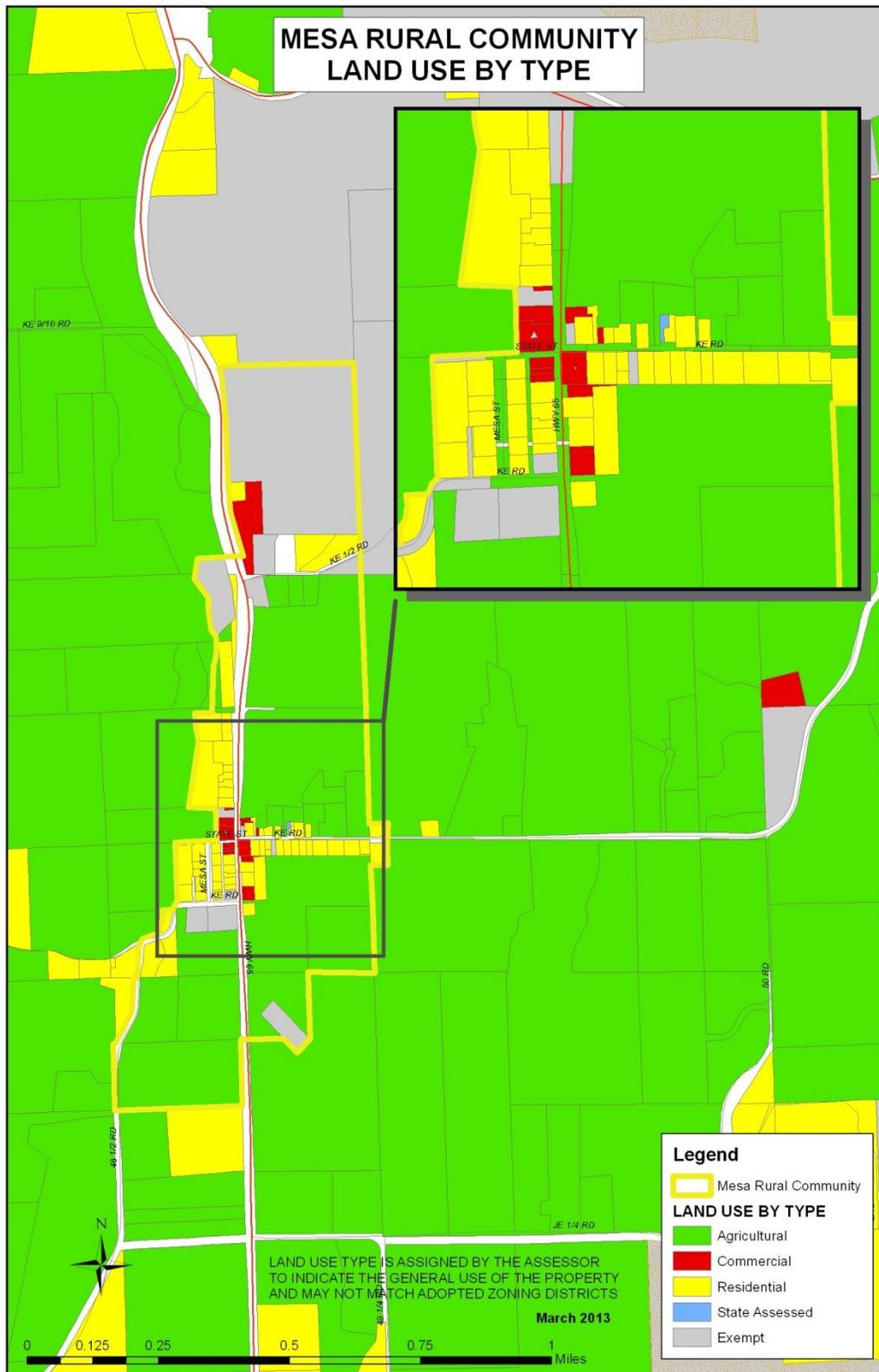
*Source: Mesa County Assessor Records and GIS, March 2013*

Highway 65 Corridor and Rural Areas

About 90% of the Plan area lies outside the two Rural Communities. These areas are not served by central domestic water or sewer, although some areas are in the Mesa Water & Sanitation District. The land use type for most properties in the area is predominantly agricultural (57% of the area) or tax exempt (34% of the area), as classified by the Mesa County Assessor. Properties with a Residential land use type (9% of the area) are mostly clustered along the Highway 65 corridor; the average residential lot is 17.34 acres.

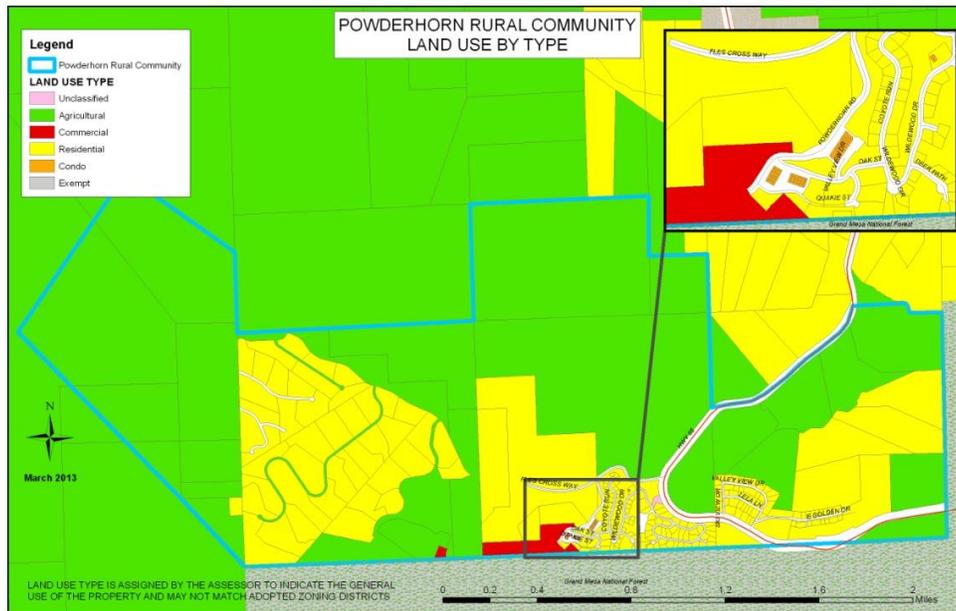


Figure 8 – Mesa Rural Community



Source: Mesa County Assessor Records and GIS

Figure 9 – Powderhorn Rural Community



Source: Mesa County Assessor Records and GIS

**Public Lands**

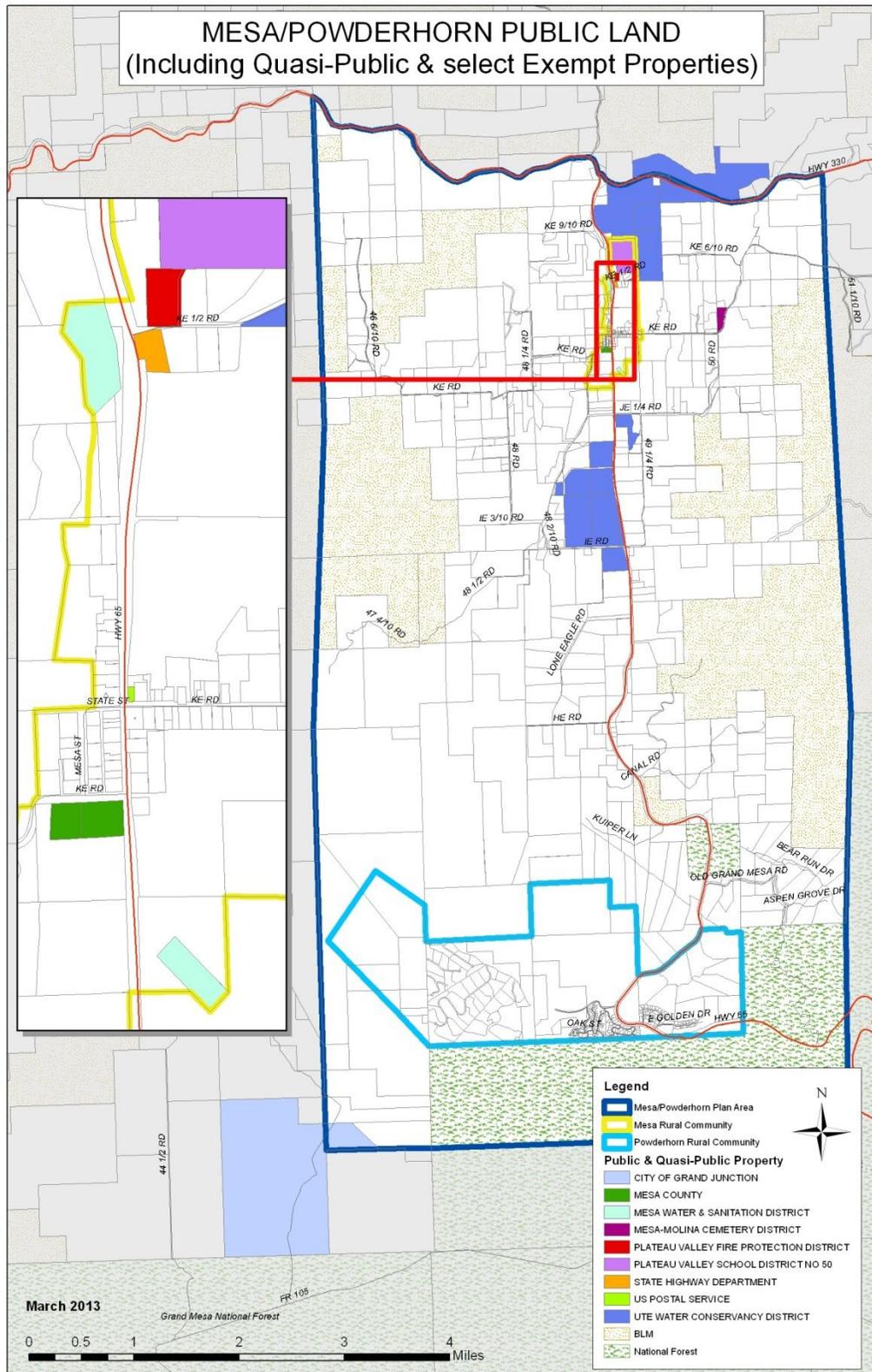
Public and quasi-public uses in the Area (Table 7, Figure 10) include large blocks of open space (Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service lands), the Mesa-Molina Cemetery, land owned by Ute Water, (primarily as a domestic water source), and land owned by public entities such as Mesa County, Plateau Valley Fire District, Colorado Department of Transportation, and Plateau Valley School District #50. Nearly one-third of the Plan area is classified as Exempt from property tax. Additionally, 18 landowners own 160 acres or more in the Plan area, or own a large number of properties; their land tenure accounts for another 31% of the Plan area. (Appendix 2, Map A3)

**Table 7 – Public Land ownership**

Public/Quasi-Public Owner	Parcels	Acres	% Area	% Parcels	Square Miles
BLM	10	5,027.718	17.28%	1.12%	7.856
USFS	2	3,315.154	11.39%	0.23%	5.180
City of Grand Junction	1	63.758	0.22%	0.11%	0.100
Mesa County	2	2.975	0.01%	0.23%	0.005
Mesa Water & Sanitation	2	7.067	0.02%	0.23%	0.011
Mesa-Molina Cemetery Dist.	1	9.523	0.03%	0.11%	0.015
Plateau Valley Fire District	1	2.290	0.01%	0.11%	0.004
Plateau Valley School Dist.	1	47.860	0.16%	0.11%	0.075
CDOT	1	1.260	0.00%	0.11%	0.002
USPS	1	0.108	0.00%	0.11%	0.000
Ute Water Conservancy Dist.	14	645.448	2.22%	1.57%	1.009
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>9,123.161</b>	<b>31.36%</b>	<b>4.05%</b>	<b>14.255</b>

Source: Mesa County Assessor Records and GIS, October 2012

Figure 10 – Public Lands



Source: Mesa County Assessor Records and GIS

### Future Land Use

The *Mesa County Rural Master Plan* (part of the Mesa County Master Plan) directs growth and development to occur in and around Rural Communities, including Mesa and Powderhorn. Land uses in areas outside the Rural Communities are guided by the 2006 Rural Master Plan. The [Mesa County Land Development Code](#) implements the future land use classifications. Zoning districts are used to establish the conditions for the use, density and development of land in each of the future land use categories. Future land uses are shown in Figure 11 and summarized in Table 8.

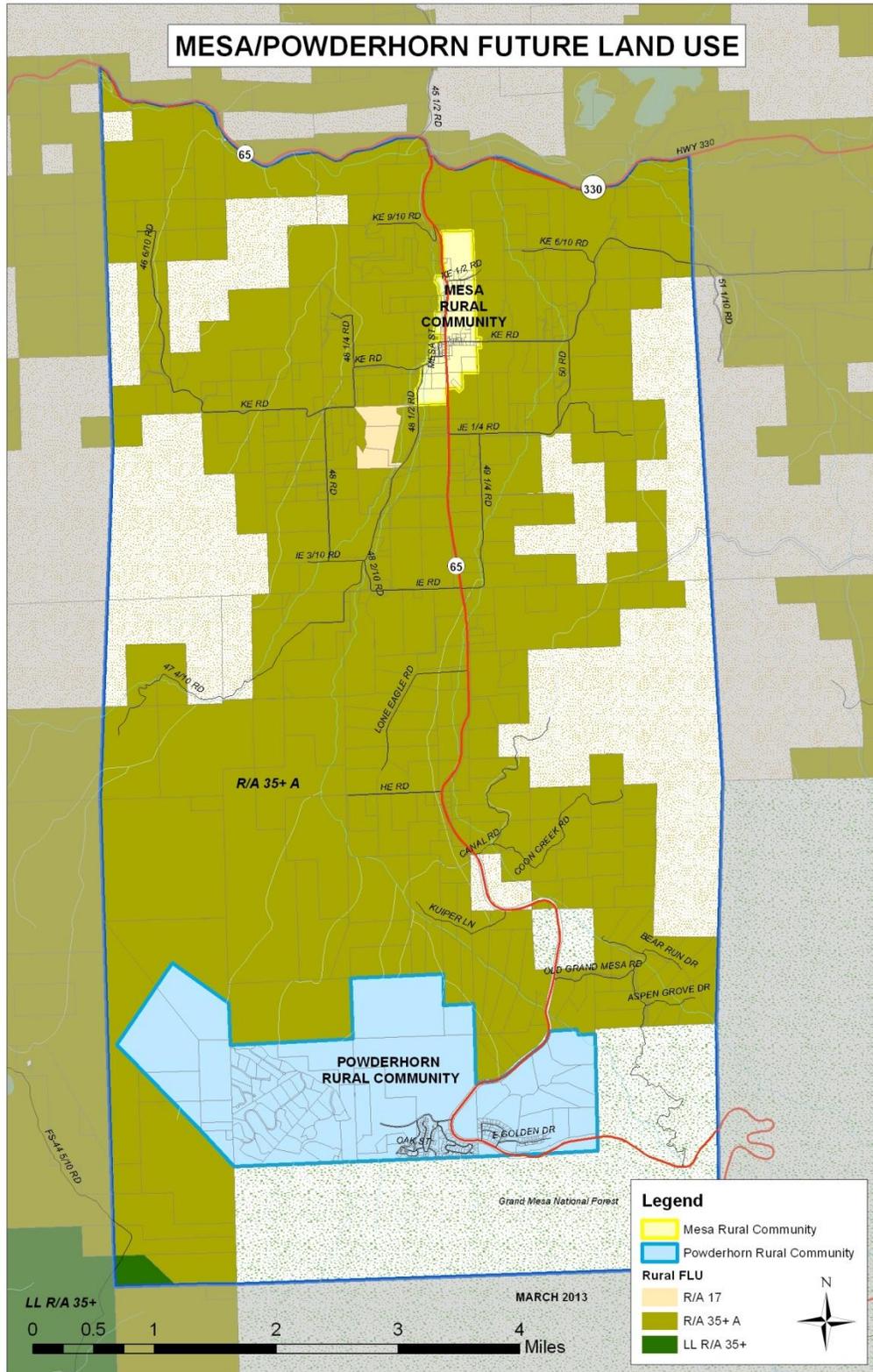
The two Rural Communities account for just under 10% of the Plan area. Higher density residential uses, mixed uses and commercial activities should be limited to the core areas of the rural communities. Properties that are away from the core areas are intended to be developed at rural densities.

**Table 8 – Future Land Use Summary**

Mesa/Powderhorn Plan Area Future Land Use					
	Parcels	Acres	% Area	% Parcels	Square Miles
Mesa Rural Community	105	257.439	.88%	11.81%	0.40
Powderhorn Rural Community	326	2,559.541	8.80%	36.67%	4.0
R/A 17	3	98.321	0.34%	0.34%	0.15
R/A 35+ A	442	17,774.245	61.09%	49.72%	27.77
LL R/A 35+	1	63.758	0.22%	0.11%	0.10
BLM	10	5,027.718	17.28%	1.12%	7.86
USFS	2	3,315.154	11.39%	0.22%	5.18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>29,096.176</b>			<b>45.5</b>

Source: Mesa County GIS, March 2013

Figure 11 – Future Land Use



Source: Mesa County GIS (For the most-current Future Land Use classifications, use the on-line interactive map at <http://gis.mesacounty.us/interactive.aspx>)

### Mesa Rural Community

Rural Communities are early townsites that serve as community and civic centers for an area. The original Mesa townsite was platted October 24, 1900. The Mesa Rural Community has an area of about 257 acres, or 0.4 square miles, in 105 parcels. The Mesa Rural Community is implemented by the Village of Mesa Overlay in the Mesa County Land Development Code. Most of the core area is served by water and sewer from the Mesa Water & Sanitation District. New development in those areas not currently within the District will be required to be included in the district boundaries.

The *2012 Mesa/Powderhorn Plan* substantially reduces the size of the Mesa Rural Community, from 1,438 acres to 257 acres. Specifically, 542 acres south of JE ¼ Road was removed. Most of that area is owned by Ute Water Conservancy and is not expected to develop at densities that would make it practical to extend water or sewer service. Following substantial public input, another 687 acres, mostly lying east of the Mesa core area, was removed from the Rural Community and changed to Rural/Agriculture 35+ A (R/A 35+ A). A 48-acre parcel owned by Plateau Valley School District #50 has been added to the Mesa Rural Community on the north. The School District has not indicated that there is a need for a school in Mesa, but should it become necessary, service from the Mesa Water & Sanitation District would be required for development.

### Powderhorn Rural Community

The Powderhorn Rural Community has an area of 2,560 acres, or about 4 square miles in 326 parcels. It includes the Powderhorn Resort and areas to the east and west. While the first USFS permit for a ski area was issued in 1966, the development approval for the resort was granted in 1978. The area has primarily been developed as Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), wherein the type, location and density of uses are determined through the planning process. Commercial uses and higher density residential development occur in the core of the Powderhorn Resort.

In addition to the Powderhorn PUD, there are also a variety of PUDs in the area with an emphasis on residential developments. The Grand Mesa Metro District serves the Powderhorn Resort and developed areas west of Highway 65. It does not serve the portions of the Rural Community that are east of Highway 65 or west of the resort (see Figure 5 on page 9).

Implementation of the Rural Community would most likely occur through amendments to current PUDs. On the west side, establishment of access and possible inclusion in the Grand Mesa Metro District would be factors in how the Rural Community is implemented.

### Rural Future Land Use

The rural portion outside of the two Rural Communities represents about 90% of the Plan area. The future land use classification is predominantly Rural/Agricultural 35+ A (R/A 35+ A), with a small area of Rural/Agricultural 17 (R/A 17) to the southwest of the Mesa Rural Community. A property owned by the City of Grand Junction is partially located in the Plan area at the far southwest corner and is Large Lot Rural/Agricultural 35+ (LL R/A 35+). These future land use

classifications are described in greater detail in the [Mesa County Rural Master Plan](#). The intent is for the majority of the Plan area to retain its rural character, with large areas of open, agricultural lands. Although the R/A 35+ A and R/A 17 future land uses allow average lot sizes of 35 and 17 acres, respectively, any subdivision of land into parcels smaller than 35 acres is subject to County subdivision standards and will be dependent on obtaining well permits and approval of an augmentation plan pursuant to Colorado State law.

### **Zoning**

The planning area lies entirely within unincorporated Mesa County's jurisdiction, so Mesa County is the regulatory authority for land use zoning. There are 6 zoning districts in the Plan area, as shown in Figure 12 and summarized in Table 9, with Agriculture Forestry Transitional (AFT) being the most extensive district, followed by Planned Unit Development (PUD).

The [Mesa County Land Development Code](#) uses the Master Plan to determine density (average lot size) in the AFT zoning district. For example, a property that has a Future Land Use classification of R/A 35+ A would be allowed to develop with an average of 35 acres per parcel, but lots could be less than 35 acres in size. Properties with a future land use classification of R/A 17 would be allowed to develop at a density of 17 acres but could achieve a density of 9 acres, provided design standards for cluster subdivisions are met. It should be noted that lots may be created as a Simple Land Division, without consideration for the density allowed by the Plan, provided the parcel has not been previously subdivided. As noted above, issuance of well permits for parcels less than 35 acres is dependent on approval of augmentation plans; this would have a significant impact on the ability to create smaller lots.

Within the Mesa Rural Community (Table 10), the B-1 Limited Business district, RMF-8 Residential Multi-Family district, and Village of Mesa Overlay District have also been applied. A bulk rezone to Village of Mesa Overlay District may be appropriate for properties within the Mesa Rural Community, in order to better implement this plan and provide more consistency in land use.

In the Powderhorn Rural Community, the majority of the developed area is zoned PUD and AFT (Table 11). The PUDs comprising the resort properties and adjacent residential properties have been amended numerous times over the past 30 years. The 1980s "Grand Mesa Project" PUD east of Horizon Estates subdivision has never been implemented as planned; instead, the area is now owned as 35-acre-plus individual parcels and the PUD is effectively defunct. The current sewer treatment plant site is zoned C-2 General Commercial.

**Table 9 – Mesa/Powderhorn Plan Area Zoning District Summary**

<b>Mesa/Powderhorn Zoning Districts</b>					
<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Parcels</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% Area</b>	<b>% Parcels</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>
AFT	616	28,143.682	96.73%	69.30%	44.0
B-1	38	29.231	0.10%	4.27%	0.05
C-2	1	1.428	0.005%	0.11%	0.00
PUD	219	843.944	2.90%	24.64%	1.33
RMF-8	1	0.214	0.001%	0.11%	0.00
Village of Mesa Overlay	14	77.677	0.27%	1.57%	0.12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>29,096.176</b>			<b>45.5</b>

Source: Mesa County GIS, March 2013

**Table 10 – Mesa Rural Community Zoning District Summary**

<b>Mesa Rural Community Zoning Districts</b>					
<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Parcels</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% Area</b>	<b>% Parcels</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>
AFT	47	121.312	47.13%	44.77%	0.19
B-1	37	20.444	7.94%	35.24%	0.03
PUD	6	37.793	14.68%	5.71%	0.06
RMF-8	1	0.214	0.08%	0.95%	0.00
Village of Mesa Overlay	14	77.676	30.17%	13.33%	0.12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>257.439</b>			<b>0.40</b>

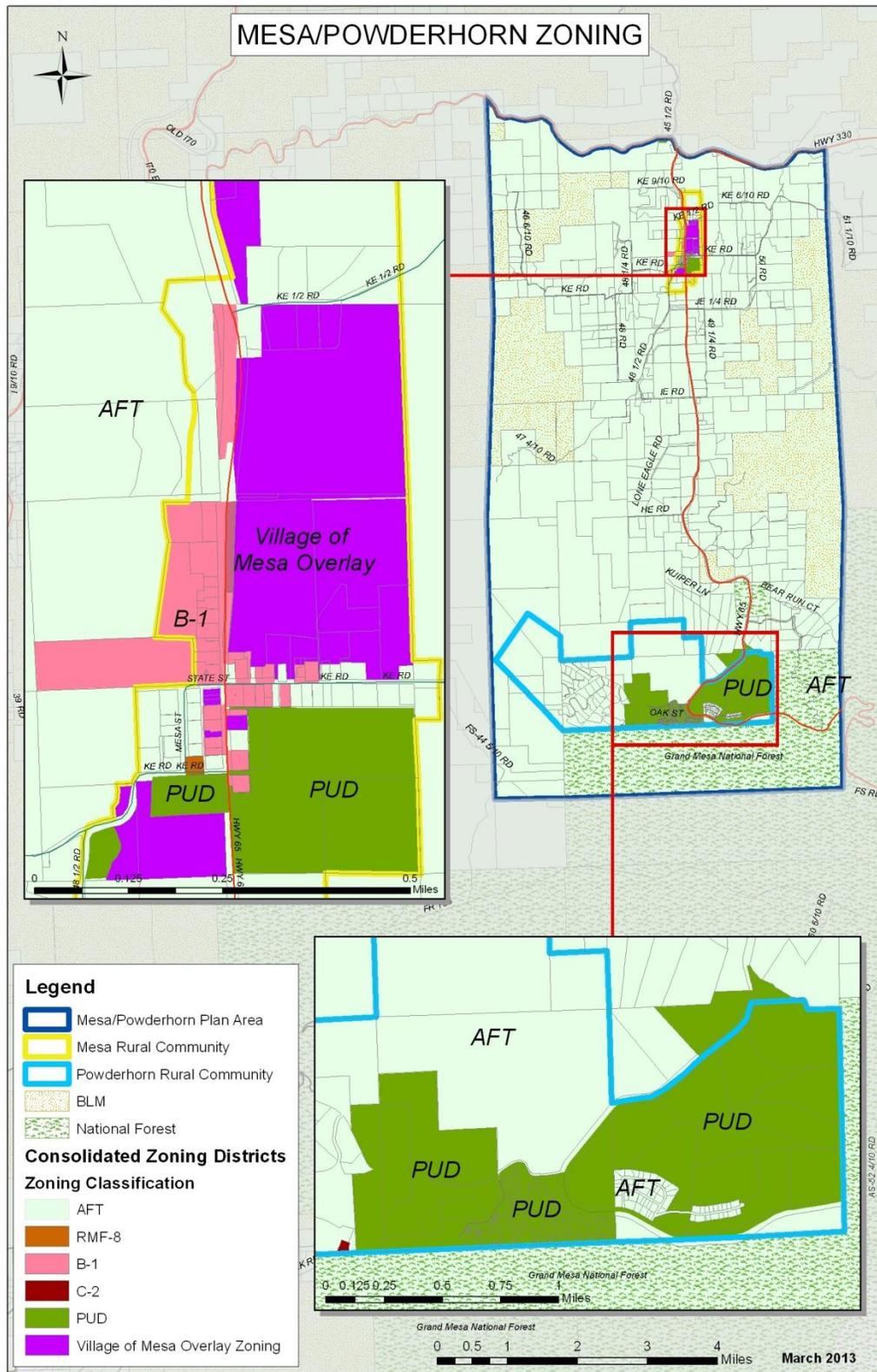
Source: Mesa County GIS, March 2013

**Table 11 – Powderhorn Rural Community Zoning District Summary**

<b>Powderhorn Rural Community Zoning Districts</b>					
<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Parcels</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% Area</b>	<b>% Parcels</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>
AFT	118	1,798.061	70.25%	36.19%	2.809
C-2	1	1.428	0.06%	0.31%	0.002
PUD	207	760.052	29.69%	63.50%	1.189
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>2,559.541</b>			<b>4.0</b>

Source: Mesa County GIS, March 2013

Figure 12 – Zoning



**Development**

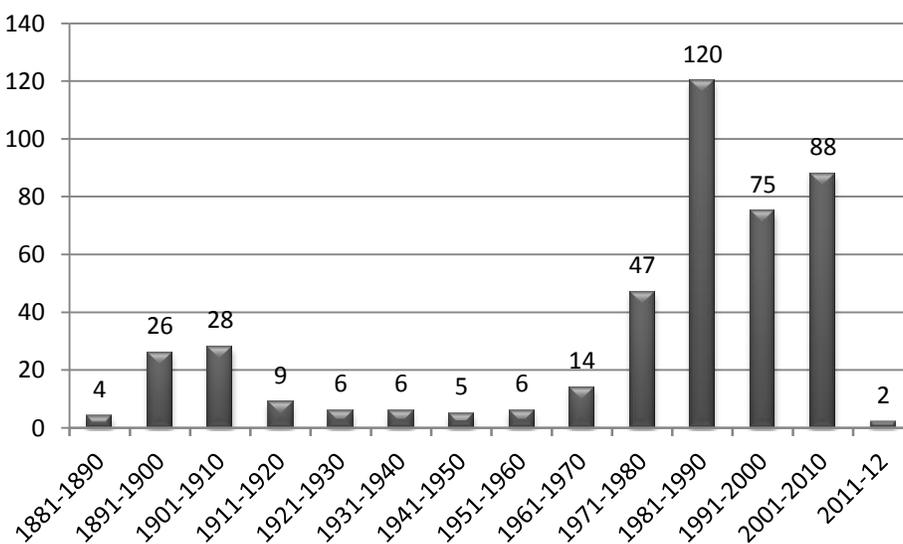
There are approximately 436 developed properties in the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan Area, based on Mesa County Assessor’s records. Of those, 12 are classified as commercial and 10 are tax exempt properties such as government facilities, churches and fraternal organizations. The 2010 US Census estimates there are 440 dwelling units. Based on the US Census, about 60% of the dwellings are in the Mesa area. The Assessor’s records show 82 condominiums, which is about half of the dwellings in the Powderhorn area.

According to the Mesa County Assessor’s records, approximately 47% percent, or 416 of the 889 taxable parcels within the Plan area do not have improvements. The average private parcel size in the Plan area was about 23.56 acres. Unimproved parcels average 31 acres; improved parcels average 16.2 acres. Privately owned parcels range in size from .02 acre to a 629-acre parcel. The largest publicly-owned parcel is 3,168 acres of BLM land.

The oldest buildings in the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area date from the 1880s. About 20% of the buildings in the Plan area are more than 50 years old. Over a quarter of the buildings were built in the 1980s, following the 1978 establishment of Powderhorn Resort, and 65% are less than 30 years old. Between 2000 and 2010, 88 buildings were built, which is 20% of the total building stock. However, since that time, County records show there have only been two new buildings built; this indicates the pace of new construction has slowed dramatically. (Figure 13)

In the Mesa core area, three large, planned developments on over 100 acres are in various stages of development approval. These developments, when complete, would include single-family, two-family, mixed-use and commercial uses with approximately 150 dwelling units and 55,000 square feet of commercial space.

**Figure 13 – Building Year Built, 1890-2012**



Source: Mesa County Assessor’s Records and GIS, October 2012

The average floor area of a dwelling in the Plan area is 2,120 square feet. The two largest homes in the area have floor areas of 18,543 and 7,382 square feet. There are about a dozen homes that exceed 5,000 square feet and about 40 that are less than 1,000 square feet. The largest commercial property is the Powderhorn Resort day lodge, which has an area of 31,398 square feet. The average value of an improved property in the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area is \$218,915 while the median value is \$166,620. Property values range from \$10 to over \$8 million. (Table 12)

**Table 12 – Property Valuation (\$) Summary**

Mesa/Powderhorn Property Valuation Summary			
	Land	Improvements	Total
All (889 lots)	\$34,480,560	\$80,686,380	\$115,166,940
Unimproved (404 lots)	\$12,381,480	0	\$12,381,480
Improved (445 lots)	\$19,156,760	\$78,479,410	\$97,636,170
Tax Exempt (40 lots)	\$2,942,320	\$2,206,970	\$5,149,290
Average (all)	\$38,742	\$90,659	\$129,401
Average (unimproved)	\$30,647	0	\$30,647
Average (improved)	\$42,952	\$175,963	\$218,915
Median (all)	\$15,000	\$6,700	\$52,500
Median (unimproved)	\$10,000	0	\$10,000
Median (improved)	\$30,000	\$123,970	\$166,620
Low Value	\$10	\$920	\$10
High Value	\$359,770	\$8,060,280	\$8,074,850

Source: Mesa County Assessor's Records and GIS, October 2012

### Demographics

The Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area has seen no real change in the estimated permanent population in the past 20 years. The Mesa/Powderhorn Plan, adopted in 2001, stated that the 1990 population was 604 people. In 2000, based on the US Census, the population was estimated to be 575 people. The 2010 Census shows approximately 580 people.<sup>1</sup> By comparison, Mesa County's population grew 57.57% in that same 20-year span, and 26.21% in the past decade. The Mesa area did show slight growth (less than 1% per year), but the Powderhorn area saw a significant decline in population (Table 13).

Growth in the Mesa/Powderhorn area has primarily occurred in the second home and vacation property market. This is evident in the vacancy rate of properties. In the northern part of the Plan area, centered on Mesa, the occupancy rate was 82%, or 18% vacant. In the Powderhorn area, the occupancy rate is the reverse, 18% occupied or 82% vacant, because of the large number of second home and vacation rentals. By contrast, the Mesa County occupancy rate

<sup>1</sup> Exact census data is not available for the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan Area; some census blocks extend beyond the Plan area. For census blocks partially located in the Plan area, population estimates are based on the number of dwellings in the Plan area for each block, according to the Mesa County Assessor records, multiplied by the average household size and the occupied household rate identified in the US Census. For census blocks located entirely in the Plan area, US Census data was used.

was 92.7% in 2010. The occupancy rate in the Plan area declined from 2000 to 2010, as did the household size.

It is expected that the Plan area will not see significant population growth in the next decade. Improvement in the economy may result in more development, but that is just as likely to occur in the second and vacation home market as in the permanent resident population. There is adequate housing stock already existing to meet the needs of future growth. Finally, Mesa County's population is growing older, with the percentage of population over age 65 projected to increase in the coming decade. Decisions about where to live in retirement could have an effect on the Plan area. For example, second home owners could decide to live there year round, and new residents could find the area attractive as a new place to live. This could have an effect on the types of goods, services and housing that will be in demand.

**Table 13 – Population Summary**

<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>MESA</b>	<b>POWDERHORN</b>	<b>PLAN AREA</b>	<b>MESA COUNTY</b>
2000 Population <sup>1</sup>	479	96	575	116,255
2010 Population <sup>1</sup>	515	65	580	146,723
Population Change	36	-31	5	30,468
Percent Change, 10-year	7.52%	-32.29%	.87%	26.21%
Average Annual Growth %	0.73%	-3.82%	0.09%	2.35%
2020 Estimated Population	541	68	609	171,961
Estimated Change	26	3	29	25,238
Estimated Annual Growth % <sup>2</sup>	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	1.60%
2000 Households	217	138	355	48,427
2010 Households	271	169	440	62,644
Percent Change, Households	24.88%	22.46%	23.60%	32.09%
2000 Household Size	2.52	2.53	2.52	2.47 persons/HH
2010 Household Size	2.32	2.10	2.29	2.46 persons/HH
2000 Occupancy Rate	87%	28%	64%	94.6%
2010 Occupancy Rate	82%	18%	57.5%	92.7%

*Source: 2000 and 2010 US Census Data; Colorado State Demographer; Mesa County Assessor Records*

<sup>2</sup> There is insufficient data on which to base estimated growth in the Plan area over the next decade. For illustrative purposes and to allow a comparison to Mesa County's overall projected growth, a hypothetical growth rate of 0.50% has been used for the Plan area. The Mesa County projected growth rate of 1.60% is based on estimates provided by the Colorado State Demographer's Office.

#### 4. COMMUNITY IMAGE & CHARACTER

##### Visual Character

A recurring theme in the planning process, as articulated in the Vision statement for this plan, is the desire to maintain the area's rural character while acknowledging that some growth will occur. Maintaining Mesa and Powderhorn as unique communities is also an important goal for the Plan area.

The Mesa/Powderhorn planning area's character is described by the following attributes:

- large blocks of public and private open land,
- historic and ongoing farming/ranching operations,
- recreation opportunities,
- abundant wildlife and wildlife habitat,
- the presence of the Grand Mesa,
- scenic vistas, bluffs, and ridge lines.

The Highway 65 corridor is the center of the Mesa/Powderhorn planning area and has been designated as the Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway. The transition between the agrarian landscape of the Mesa area and the alpine environment of Powderhorn and Grand Mesa highlights the diversity of the community. Wide-open vistas along the highway allow travelers to see much of the Plan area from a multitude of vantage points. A variety of vegetation communities provide ample opportunity to use creative development techniques to screen development using topography and vegetation, while maintaining the unique sense of place.

Mesa dates back to the 1880s as a community serving the early ranching community. This is evident in its older buildings. Today, Mesa continues to serve the surrounding farms and ranches, but many of the residents are also employed in Grand Junction or are retirees. The number of people who operate businesses from their homes is increasing. The area also serves visitors passing through to Powderhorn and Grand Mesa. Businesses in the community reflect this variety.

The first ski area at Powderhorn was established in 1966 and development of the ski resort began in the late 1970s. This is reflected in its more modern architecture and building types, such as condominiums. Businesses are oriented toward resort visitors, and the majority of residences are vacation or second homes. The area was used for winter recreation prior to the establishment of the resort, and ranchers used the higher-altitude area for grazing as well.

##### Design Guidelines

The 2001 Mesa/Powderhorn Plan included design guidelines for the Mesa and Powderhorn Rural Community and the Highway 65 Corridor. The design guidelines were a result of the residents' desire to protect the character of the area and encourage well-planned development that was sensitive to the landscape and local aesthetics. The 2001 Plan also envisioned the establishment of Architectural Control Committees in certain areas. The [Mesa County Land Development Code](#) includes development standards for the Village of Mesa Overlay District that

generally support the 2001 Plan guidelines. In the Powderhorn Rural Community, Powderhorn resort, including Wildewood Subdivision, and Powder Ridge have design guidelines and Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions, administered by the respective homeowner associations. Appendix 1 to this Plan provides Design Guidelines for the Mesa and Powderhorn Rural Communities and the Highway 65 corridor.

### **Hills, Bluffs and Other Visually Prominent Areas**

The [Mesa County Land Development Code](#) identifies key corridors, including Highways 65 and 330, along which views of new structures on ridgelines must be minimized. However, these restrictions only apply to recently platted lots. Many parcels in the Plan area are unplatted and 35 acres or larger, which are exempt from this requirement.

### **Grand Mesa Scenic & Historic Byway**

The Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway, designated as a National Scenic Byway in 1996 by the Federal Highway Administration, is one of ten byways in Colorado. It was originally recognized by the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway Commission in 1991. The Byway follows Plateau Creek from Interstate 70, through Mesa and over Grand Mesa to Cedaredge in Delta County; it passes through four ecological zones in 6,000 vertical feet. About 15 miles of the 63-mile route travels through the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area. A visitor's center is located on Grand Mesa. Pullouts with interpretive plaques are also located along the route.

The Grand Mesa Byway Association, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is tasked with promotion of the Byway. The mission statement of the Byway is to: "Provide the visitor with a safe and enjoyable experience and promote economic development while enhancing, protecting, and preserving the resources of the Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway." (*Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway Corridor Management Plan*)

### **Outdoor Lighting**

The enjoyment of the night sky is a high priority for residents. Specific standards are set forth in Chapter 7 of the [Mesa County Land Development Code](#) to address light pollution concerns. The varying topography and wide open rural character make it that much more important that the amount of lighting in certain parts of the planning area be kept to a minimum.

### **Code Compliance**

Mesa County Code Compliance Services is responsible for enforcement of the [Mesa County Land Development Code](#). Typical types of Code complaints the staff responds to include: junk and trash, structures and signs constructed without permits, improper storage of vehicles and other household goods, too many animals, and questionable home occupations.

The approach is to provide and explain code information and then partner with individuals, business groups or neighborhood groups to find solutions to problems. As rural communities develop and expand, increasing pressures will occur between existing and new uses. The aim of code compliance is to balance rights of all property owners and tenants and to maintain the quality of life for all residents.

## 5. ENVIRONMENT

### Agriculture

Mesa County Agricultural Policies in the [Mesa County Rural Master Plan](#) and the *Mesa County Land Development Code* encourage the retention of large tracts of prime and unique agricultural lands and recommend clustering of houses to minimize loss of these lands. Historically, the Mesa/Powderhorn Area has had many different types of agricultural production, including cattle grazing, irrigated crops and forage production. Current agricultural practices include cattle grazing and harvesting of irrigated forage crops. Many ranchers have grazing leases on BLM and US Forest Service lands. Only a few ranches have high-elevation year-round range.

The Mesa/Powderhorn area has a good deal of variation in elevation and physiography, which results in an equally varied distribution of soils. The planning area contains deep, well-drained soils found on creek floodplains and valley bottoms as well as shallow, stony undeveloped soils on hill sides and terraces. The *Soil Survey of Mesa County Area, Colorado* by E.W. Knobel et.al. (1955), identifies the most frequent soil series in the area as very poor to fair for grain or seed production while a few soil series are classified fair to good for rangeland. The area receives little rain. Annual precipitation in the area is about nine inches a year (*Soil Survey of Mesa County Area, Colorado*). The planning area includes “Prime” farmland in the Mesa area and extending upstream along the creeks. The higher elevations and lands to the east and west are considered “Not Prime” farmland. (See Appendix 2, Map A5, Soils.)

### Water Resources

The Plan area is in the Big Creek/Plateau Creek Watershed, which drains via Mesa Creek, Coon Creek and Tate Creek to Plateau Creek and then to the Colorado River. There are also numerous unnamed drainages throughout the area. The creeks and drainages play a significant role in the use and development of the Plan area, providing irrigation water to local ranches and farms. The area is considered over-appropriated by the State of Colorado’s Division of Water Resources, and augmentation plans are required in order to obtain non-exempt well permits from the State.

As noted in Services, on page 10, Ute Water Conservancy is a major land owner in the area, having purchased land for its water rights. The City of Grand Junction’s property extends into the Plan area but their watershed is to the southwest.

Other demands on water resources include snowmaking at Powderhorn Resort, which obtains water through its US Forest Service permit and through a lease from the City of Grand Junction’s Somerville Ranch. Oil and gas development in the surrounding area also requires water. The removal of water from the Plan area for outside use is a concern for residents, as the dewatering of previously irrigated lands affects the character and productivity of the area.

## **Natural Hazards**

### Geology

Underlying bedrock geology of the planning area is characterized by thousands of feet of folded, faulted shale, sandstone, and metamorphic rock, while surficial rock consists of a relatively thin veneer of basalt and alluvial deposits. Both bedrock and surficial geology have a general affect on the natural and human built environment, which in turn affects site-specific development patterns and locations.

A review of Stephen Schwochow's Mineral Resources Survey of Mesa County (1978), indicates that there are no geologic faults or mudslide areas in the Mesa/Powderhorn planning area. However, there are numerous small slumps and landslides along the Plateau Creek bluffs and north slopes of the Grand Mesa. The Powderhorn area is within an Alpine and Sub-Alpine Region of moderately high altitude and a very moist climate that exhibits a number of geologic hazards. Slopes range from 10% to 40% in most of the area, with some areas exceeding 60%. The common geologic hazards may include Soil Creep, Small Slope Instability, Large Slope Instability, Very Compressible Soil, Expansive Soil, Snow Sliding and Rock Sliding.

The Powderhorn area contains numerous areas of past and present slope instability. The surface and subsurface drainage is variable. Along natural drainages and wetlands, saturation of soils can lead to erosion or soil instability. These conditions have resulted in ground movement in certain areas, most notably in the Wildewood Subdivision and the Powder Ridge Subdivision, impacting infrastructure, causing water leaks in mains and also affecting some structures. For this reason, the control of surface water as well as soil moisture is necessary. A site-specific geotechnical (soils) report should be completed during the planning stage of new development and/or construction. The [Mesa County Land Development Code](#) requires development applicants to identify all potentially impacting hazard areas and conditions and to avoid, minimize or mitigate such hazards. Chapter 7 of the Code defines hazards and all requirements of development proposals.

### Wildfire

Most of the Plan area has been mapped for wildfire hazard. While much of the area around the Mesa Rural Community is rated as "Low Hazard," a significant portion is rated as "Severe Hazard." (See Appendix 2, Map A6, Wildfire Hazard Mapped Areas.) This includes the oak brushlands extending into the upper elevations and the Powderhorn area and the areas to the east and west that have more pinyon and juniper. Regardless of location, all property owners should be diligent in maintaining appropriate clear zones and in utilizing fire-safe techniques. Fuel reduction management may also be advisable.

### **Stormwater**

The purpose of the 2007 Mesa County Stormwater Management Manual is to provide standards for sound drainage practices to maintain or enhance quality of life of the public, and to protect the public from adverse stormwater effects that could potentially occur due to development. The standards apply to all new development regarding drainage practices. The Mesa County Public Works Department administers the Stormwater Management Manual.

Development on one acre or more requires that construction runoff protection measures be used. Since 2003, a State Stormwater Permit has been required for disturbances of one acre or more. A permit is required from the Water Quality Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) must be used to mitigate erosion on the development site for up to 15 years.

### **Floodplains**

Mesa County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, which allows residents to purchase flood insurance. Mesa County has adopted floodplain regulations consistent with federal regulations.

There is one mapped Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulatory floodplain in the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area. (See Appendix 2, Map A7, Mapped Regulatory Floodplain.) It is located on Mesa Creek, extending upstream from the confluence with Plateau Creek about 2.25 miles, past KE Road and including a one-half-mile segment of Tate Creek. Identified as Flood Zone A, no base flood elevation has been determined. New development is responsible for mapping and providing floodplain data to Mesa County in unmapped areas.

### **Creeks, Drainages, & Wetlands**

Creeks, drainages, and wetlands are important features of the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area. Mesa Creek, Coon Creek and Tate Creek flow through the area to Plateau Creek. The creeks are fed by numerous unnamed drainages that flow from the Grand Mesa and the surrounding areas. These creeks and drainages provide important values and functions to the residents of the area, conveying water for agriculture and providing habitat for fish and wildlife. There are also numerous wetlands and riparian areas throughout the Plan area. These areas require the use of best management practices and protection.

Wetlands provide a variety of important functions and values that are important to the environment and the economic health of the County. Often they are impossible or costly to replace. They also serve as habitat for many species of plants and animals. Wetlands filter runoff and adjacent surface water to protect the quality of reservoirs, creeks, and drinking water. They provide natural flood control, protect shorelines and banks from erosion and retain floodwaters, thereby protecting against the loss of life and property. Wetland plants provide shelter for many animals and are the basis for complete natural food chains. The federal government recognizes the value of wetlands and has established wetland protection programs, primarily administered through the Army Corps of Engineers. The protection takes the form of regulation for certain types of activities and actions. Regulatory programs alone are not sufficient to protect important wetlands. Voluntary efforts by the County and landowners can extend protection to these important areas. Wetlands can be recognized as part of a complex, interrelated, hydrologic system, as well as an integral component of a community's infrastructure, in the same manner as roads, schools, utilities, etc.

Specific functions and values of wetlands are:

- Flood storage/sediment trapping (within basin);
- Shoreline anchoring;
- Aquifer recharge;
- Groundwater discharge;
- Nutrient retention, storage, and removal;
- Wildlife Habitat:
  - Food chain support;
  - Fish habitat;
- Passive recreation, heritage value, public education.

## **Mineral and Energy Resources**

### Mineral Fuels

A substantial portion of the Plan area is identified in the [Mesa County Energy Policy Opportunity Map](#) (EPOM) as being in a Natural Gas Opportunity Area. There are a number of producing gas wells, as well as a handful of shut-in wells. There are no oil wells in the Mesa/Powderhorn Planning Area. There is a gas compressor station owned by Encana immediately north of the Mesa-Molina Cemetery, on 50 Road. As of the writing of this report, there is one active drilling permit, off the west end of KE Road.

The 2011 [Mineral and Energy Resources Master Plan](#) replaces the 1985 Mineral Extraction Policies and encourages balancing the protection of valuable mineral and energy resources with protection of existing communities and development. There are existing and pending natural gas leases on public lands both inside and outside the Plan area. If developed, those leases have the potential to impact the Plan area through increased traffic and demands on water resources. Access is a significant issue, as there are limited rights-of-way across private lands to lease areas. There are numerous constraints in the Plan area that must be considered, including conservation, water resources, natural hazards, land use, visual sensitivity, and the Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway.

The Trans Colorado Pipeline passes through the northwest corner of the Plan area and provides a transmission route for natural gas produced in the area.

### Sand and Gravel

According to the Mineral Resources Survey of Mesa County (1978), gravel resources in the Plan area are limited to alluvial fan gravel deposits, and probable gravel deposits located in alluvial fans. According to the survey, "Gravel deposits along Plateau Creek and its tributaries can be quite thick, 40 to 80 feet and perhaps more. The gravels consist almost entirely of pebbles, cobbles, and boulders of basalt and very little sandstone in a fine-grained calcium-carbonate-impregnated matrix. Abundant oversize material includes boulders up to five feet in diameter."

## **Wildlife**

The Mesa/Powderhorn vicinity contains a unique mix of wildlife species and habitats. This is due to several diverse ecosystems, ranging from the sandstone canyon of Plateau Creek to the alpine environment of Grand Mesa. The elevation in the Plan area ranges from 5,045 feet at the northwest corner along Plateau Creek to 10,000 feet at the rim of Grand Mesa. (See Appendix 2, Map A4, USGS Topographic Map.) The planning area contains important wildlife habitats, from critical winter range for deer and elk to riparian breeding habitat for neotropical birds. Hunting is an important component of area's culture and economy, occurring on both public and private lands. Game species in the area include deer, elk, bear and turkey, as well as waterfowl and most recently, moose. Therefore, quality of wildlife habitat is valued by local residents. The fragmentation of habitat by development can be limited through well-planned and clustered development.

Between 2005 and 2007, 91 moose were reintroduced to the area. In 2012, it was estimated by Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW) that the population had increased to 380 moose, achieving the population size objective. In contrast, there are an estimated 30,000 deer in the area. Moose primarily range between 8,000 and 9,000 feet elevation, with ranges extending to 7,000 and 10,000 feet. They primarily forage in the oak and oak/shrub habitat, followed by aspen habitat. The moose population has dispersed throughout the management area, stretching from Mesa throughout the Plateau Valley and eastward to Divide Creek and onto Grand Mesa. There is a concentration of moose in the Mesa/Powderhorn area that may be seen from the Highway 65 corridor. The first hunting permits were issued in 2009. Hunting permits are considered the primary tool to meet population size objectives.

Coon Creek is home to a genetically pure strain of cutthroat trout. As of the writing of this plan, it is considered a core conservation population; it is managed cooperatively with the State of Colorado and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

CPW staff noted during the Planning process that bear conflicts in populated areas are increasing. Bear-proof dumpsters and other techniques should be utilized throughout the Plan area. Additionally, in some areas, vegetation is becoming thick and old, and could benefit from mechanical treatment to improve habitat.

### Colorado Parks and Wildlife – Wildlife Composite Map

Colorado Parks and Wildlife prepares Wildlife Conflicts maps, which are updated every four years. According to the [Mesa County Land Development Code](#) (MCLDC): "Any project on any parcel that falls within the current Wildlife Composite Map for Mesa County, or on an environmental map adopted as part of a specific Master Plan by the Mesa County Planning Commission, shall require consultation with the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife to substantiate the basis for the potential impact and to address various, specific measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate negative impacts to wildlife and its habitat." Specific criteria are found in Chapter 7 of the MCLDC.

## Vegetation

Native plant communities are, to a great extent, a reflection of the underlying soil structure. Protection of the soil profile from artificial disturbances should be an integral component of a native plant conservation strategy. Vegetation occurring in the planning area reflects the topographic, elevation, geographic, and climatic diversity that is characteristic of the Rocky Mountain ecological provinces. The major native plant associations in the planning area are Pinyon-Juniper woodlands and mixed montane forest. Other vegetation communities of significance include mountain riparian and wetland communities. Uncommon/species of concern are present in the planning area as well as an abundance of non-native desirable and undesirable species.

## Colorado Natural Heritage Program

The [Colorado Natural Heritage Program](#) has identified several plant and animal species of concern in the planning area. They are found along the Plateau Creek riparian area and on the bluffs above the creek. The riparian area is documented habitat for the Corn snake, while the cliffs/bluffs above the creek provide winter roosting for bald eagles. The Uinta Basin hookless cactus is found in the Juniper community on level ground. Colorado Natural Heritage rarity ranks do not imply any legal designation or regulatory actions. However, the hookless cactus is listed as “Threatened” by the federal government.

## Weed Management

The aggressive nature of weeds (nonnative, undesirable plant species) and a lack of their control can present problems in agricultural areas and can have a negative impact on agriculture as well as habitat. Infestations of nonnative plant species of concern threaten native and desirable nonnative plant communities and agricultural operations by displacing desirable species. While weeds are generally considered to be “obnoxious,” or annoying and troublesome, the term “noxious” weed is a legal definition. Noxious weeds are undesirable non-native (exotic) plant species that do not have natural pathogens and predators, or biological controls, to keep their populations in check. Noxious weeds, by law (the Colorado Weed Management Act), require control and are divided by the Colorado Department of Agriculture into 3 categories, or lists: A, B and C.

Weed species on List A must be eradicated wherever detected in order to protect neighboring communities and the state as a whole. List A species that are currently found in the area are uncommon state-wide, and eradication is believed to still be feasible. In the Mesa/Powderhorn area the following noxious weed species are known to be present and must be eradicated by law: Yellow starthistle, Leafy spurge, Spotted knapweed, Diffuse knapweed, Scentless chamomile and Sulfur cinquefoil. Mesa County provides weed management assistance for specific targeted List A noxious weeds. The Mesa County Pest Division also scouts for and maps other noxious weeds in the Mesa/Powderhorn area in the process of eradicating List A species. Some of these noxious weeds that occur in other areas of Mesa County include: Chinese clematis, Dames rocket, Purple loosestrife and Yellow toadflax.

Generally, List B species are more common in Colorado and require control and a management plan to stop their continuing spread. Local governments and citizens are encouraged to manage these weed species. However, where List B species are newly discovered in a county, or are not yet abundant, these List B species are treated as List A species, and are designated for eradication. List B species requiring control in the Mesa/ Powderhorn area include the following: Bull thistle, Canada thistle, Common tansy, Dalmatian toadflax, Hoary cress (Whitetop), Houndstongue, Musk thistle, Oxeye daisy, Russian knapweed, Russian olive, Scotch thistle and Tamarisk.

Finally, List C species are those that are present in abundance in the state. The goal for List C species is not to stop the spread of these weed species, but to provide additional educational, research, and biological control resources to jurisdictions that choose to require management of these species. Some List C noxious weeds found in the Mesa/Powderhorn area include the following: Cheat grass, Chicory, Common mullein, Field bindweed, Perennial sowthistle and Puncturevine.

Mesa County, through a contractor, conducts roadside spraying. Residents can opt out of roadside spraying, but are responsible for notifying the county each year, marking the area and assuming responsibility to control weeds. Mesa County Weed and Pest Control staff works with property owners to educate them on the need for weed control and management techniques. Weed prevention is the most important and most cost-effective step in weed control. New infestations of noxious weeds can be prevented by minimizing disturbance and seed dispersal, eliminating weed seed production and maintaining healthy native communities through the use of certified weed-free hay, crop seed, manure and mulch, and cleaning harvesting and tillage equipment. It is also important to maintain healthy pastures and prevent bare ground areas caused by overgrazing, construction, and other ground disturbances.

### **Historic, Cultural and Paleontological Resources**

Evidence of human occupancy in the planning area has been traced as far back as the prehistoric Fremont People between 700 and 1200. Traces remain of intermittent and seasonal use of the area by the Utes until about the 1880s. Ranchers began settling in Plateau Valley in the 1880s, with the first homestead in the Mesa area filed by John Brown in 1882. Remnants of several original homesteads dot the landscape. Reservoirs constructed on Grand Mesa allowed farmers to irrigate the land. The Mesa post office was established in 1887, and the townsite was platted in 1900.

Today, historic buildings and sites are located throughout the Plan area, including cabins and agricultural structures. The Old Mesa Gymnasium and Auditorium, built around 1936 by the Works Progress Administration, is listed on the [Mesa County Register of Historic Landmarks](#). A snapshot of the area's settlement history can be seen in the Mesa-Molina Cemetery, identifying early settlers and their origins and associations. These historic places in the Mesa/Powderhorn Area are an important component in defining the character of the planning area. Residents have a deep pride and interest in the history and culture of the area.

## 6. PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN LANDS

### Public Lands/Trail Heads

There is an abundance of public lands in and around the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area, with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands on the east and west, and US Forest Service (USFS) lands to the south. The management emphasis for BLM lands is on resource use such as grazing and mineral and energy development rather than recreation. The Grand Mesa National Forest has many trails for recreational use, including hiking, mountain biking, equestrians, off-highway vehicles, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, and snowmobiling. The Mesa Lakes area, just to the southeast of the Plan area, has numerous trailheads, including several routes that connect to the Powderhorn area. The USFS maintains a visitors' center on Grand Mesa. Aside from the Powderhorn Resort area, there are no developed recreational trails in the Plan area. Bicyclists use Highway 65, but there are no bicycle lanes or other facilities along the highway.

### Parks & Recreational Facilities

#### Mesa County Parks Policy

In 2000, Mesa County Planning Commission sunset the 1984 and 1995 Parks Master Plans. In 2001, the Board of County Commissioners passed "A Resolution Establishing a Parks Policy for Mesa County" (MCM 2001-183). In summary, the Parks Policy states:

Development of parks relies on partnerships with local neighborhoods, schools and municipalities. Mesa County may assist, through its lottery program and/or other resources, with planning and construction of parks with a neighborhood special district (see Appendix #4 for district options), school, local unit of government, or a Homeowner's Association maintaining the park. Lottery funds are very competitive and under high demand through existing obligations of the County including development of Long's Park and funding the Community Separator Purchase of Development Rights program.

The Parks Policy also defines a variety of parks and facilities from Regional Parks/Sports Complex to mini-parks, trail connections and recreation centers. The policy suggests the creation of Public Improvement Districts or statutory recreation districts by a vote of the residents to provide park and recreation services.

#### Mesa

The Mesa Community Center has a playground, picnic area and gazebo, and an outside basketball court. The facility also includes a gymnasium, meeting space and the historic Old Mesa Gymnasium and Auditorium. The property is available for community and special events. The Mesa Community Center is owned by Mesa County; it is funded in part by the Mesa Community Center Public Improvement District (MCCPID) and operated by the Mesa Community Club. The MCCPID has a 1 mill property tax.

### Powderhorn

Powderhorn Resort operates the ski area on both private and public land, with a Special Use Permit issued by the USFS. Powderhorn was first permitted in 1966. Powderhorn's current Master Development Plan (MDP) was approved by the USFS in 2000. Powderhorn has begun updating the MDP; as of the writing of the Plan, the estimated completion date is not known. There are 1,600 permitted acres with 63 trails and 4 lifts. The vertical drop is 1,650 feet and there are 600 groomed acres. The longest trail is 1.8 miles. Backcountry access to cross-country and snowshoeing trails on Grand Mesa is located at the summit.

Powderhorn Resort ownership changed in 2011. The new ownership group is working to improve on-mountain facilities and infrastructure. Lodging and other development is now under separate ownership. In the winter of 2011, a tubing hill was opened. In the summer of 2012, a disk golf course was added. Plans are in the works to add facilities for more summer activities, including mountain bike trails and potentially a zip line, as well as more special events. Powderhorn Resort's goal is to become a year-round facility. Powderhorn Resort owns 700 acres in the Plan area where they could expand the resort and add facilities. The original PUD for Powderhorn included a golf course; it is not expected that it will ever be built due to water limitations.

### Other Recreation

Hunting and fishing is a significant activity in the Plan area, occurring on both public and private lands. There are several hunting outfitters in the area. Hunting licenses are issued in the area for deer, elk, bear, turkey and waterfowl. Limited moose permits may be available. Plateau Creek is used seasonally (generally April and May, depending on stream flows) for kayaking, canoeing and rafting.

### **Open Lands & Conservation**

#### Transferable Density Credits

Transfer of development rights is one method that can be used to conserve open and agricultural lands. The Mesa County Transferable Density Credits program is based on the legal premise that the ownership of land is a "bundle of rights" and abilities. Included in this bundle are water rights, mineral rights, and the ability to develop land. The ability to develop land under local zoning and subdivision regulations has a market value, just as water or mineral rights have a market value.

Development rights/credits may be separated from one property and transferred to another, much like a water right may be transferred from agricultural to domestic use. A Transfer of Development Rights/Credits (TDR/C) program establishes a framework to match landowners in sending areas that are eligible to transfer (sell) Development Rights/Credits with land developers within a receiving area that desire to acquire (purchase) Development Rights/Credits. Owners who transfer development rights retain title to the land; TDR/C does not affect continued farming or ranching of the property.

Section 9.8 of the [Mesa County Land Development Code](#) designates the sending and receiving areas for Mesa County's Transferable Density Credits program. At this time, there are no designated sending areas in the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area. The Mesa Rural Community is generally described as a potential receiving area. If area residents indicate an interest in the program, a sending area could be established and the Land Development Code could be amended to provide more specific standards for the receiving area.

#### Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are another tool for the protection of agricultural lands, wildlife habitat and open space. Voluntary and perpetually binding, conservation easements restrict development of a property. The future use of the property, including potential development, is described in the easement. The value of the easement is determined through an appraisal. Easements are usually donated but in some cases may be sold. The land remains under private ownership with the easement held by a qualified land trust or agency. Most easements in Mesa County are held by Mesa Land Trust or Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Colorado provides state income tax credits for donated easements. Property owners may use the tax credit against their own tax liability, or may sell the tax credit at a discount to others.

Conservation easements have been used extensively in Plateau Valley. There are two properties in the Plan area that have established conservation easements.

**7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Throughout the planning process, many residents spoke of issues related to economic development in the area, and the need to expand the local economy. The economy of the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area is divided into three basic categories: agriculture, tourism and recreation. It is part of the greater Plateau Valley economy, which includes the Town of Collbran. Many residents commute to work in the Grand Junction area. Others are able to work from home. Powderhorn Resort is a key economic driver. The Grand Mesa is another tourism and recreation attractor. A large number of people are drawn to the area for hunting each fall. Energy development, to a lesser extent, is also an economic sector. Some workers live in the area, but actual commercial activity related to energy development, i.e. offices and support operations, is generally located outside the Plan area.

Local businesses provide goods and services to both local residents and tourists, yet some basics, such as fuel, are not available. Most residents go to the Grand Junction area for necessary goods and services. According to the Mesa County Assessor’s records, there are 15 commercial properties in the Plan area, with 12 in Mesa and 3 in Powderhorn. There are a total of 34 employers, with 138 employees (Table 14) in the Plan area. In Mesa, businesses along Highway 65 include a recreational vehicle park with store, a general store, liquor store, restaurants, a coffee shop, and offices. In addition to businesses, employers include exempt uses such as the hospital district, fire district, post office and CDOT. Mesa currently has 24,666 square feet of commercial space. At Powderhorn, facilities are open seasonally. There is 43,768 square feet of commercial floor area that includes lodging and the ski resort’s day lodge, with dining, a store, and equipment rental. There are some vacation rentals in the Plan area as well. In the fall, there are several hunting guide services.

**Table 14 – Mesa/Powderhorn Employment**

<b>2010 Employment (non-farm)</b>		
Type	Employers	Employees
Base	4	10
Retail	10	69
Service	20	59
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>138</b>

*Source: ReferenceUSA*

The main agricultural activity is ranching. The primary crop is hay production. There may be limited row crops in the northern portion of the Plan area. Opportunities may exist to establish a farmers’ market to sell local and regional products. Farmers and ranchers in the area may supplement income by leasing land for hunting or providing outfitting services.

Tourism and recreation are complementary economic sectors, with substantial overlap. Visitors may be traveling the Grand Mesa Scenic & Historic Byway. Many more will be participating in recreational activities, coming to the area to camp, hike, bike, hunt or ski. Special events are also a draw. Two notable events are the Grand Mesa Moose Day, held the last Saturday in July

and attracting about 700 people, and Color Sunday, held in late September with events at Powderhorn and on the Grand Mesa.

Commercial activity in the Mesa and Powderhorn area is seasonal. Summer, hunting season and ski season are the peak periods. Hunting seasons for big game run from late August, beginning with bow hunting, and extend into November. Powderhorn Ski Resort is open from mid-December to late March, depending on snow conditions.

Businesses generally cannot survive by only serving local residents and must draw from a larger area or attract tourists in order to have a reliable customer base. The Mesa/Powderhorn area is suited to “lone eagles,” people whose business allows them to locate where they prefer to live. Lone eagles often choose rural areas that have numerous recreational opportunities and amenities. A significant issue for most businesses in the area is the need for reliable telecommunications infrastructure, such as high-speed internet.



## MESA/POWDERHORN PLAN GOALS, POLICIES & ACTIONS

### SERVICES (SVC)

1. Cost-effective services are provided for businesses and residents.

#### POLICIES

- SVC1.1** Development within the Rural Community boundaries will be required to meet appropriate urban development standards (i.e. safe, efficient and maintains community character).
- SVC1.2** Special District service plans should be consistent with this Plan.
- SVC1.3** Continue to submit development proposals to service providers for their review and comment.

#### ACTIONS

- SVC1.A** Mesa County and other service providers will cooperatively establish development standards and respective fee schedules for levels of service necessary as the community develops.
- SVC1.B** Review the service plans of service providers to determine their consistency with this Plan. Request that service providers make revisions to their plans so they are consistent with this Plan.
- SVC1.C** Work with the Grand Mesa Metro District to examine the benefits of expanding the District to serve the entire Powderhorn Rural Community.
- SVC1.D** Consolidation of service districts where there is a fiscal benefit to do so and where service levels can be maintained or enhanced will be encouraged.

2. Adequate public safety services are available to all residents.

#### POLICIES

- SVC2.1** Mesa County, Plateau Valley Fire District and developers will work together to ensure that infrastructure will be designed and installed to provide fire protection to existing and future residents and all commercial development.

**SVC2.2** Address the residents' expressed desires for consistent law enforcement presence and services.

**ACTIONS**

**SVC2.A** Work with the Plateau Valley Fire District and the Grand Mesa Metro District to determine the need for and location of a station in the Powderhorn area.

**SVC2.B** The County shall encourage water providers, in coordination with the Plateau Valley Fire District, to provide adequate fire flow for development planned or anticipated in all areas within their service area.

**SVC2.C** The County shall encourage Ute Water Conservancy to continue working with the Plateau Valley Fire District to provide access to hydrants on raw water lines.

**SVC2.D** The County shall work with Plateau Valley Fire District to determine the feasibility of alternative fire flow mechanisms and standards, e.g., establishing dry hydrants at water sources such as the Horizon Estates ponds.

**SVC2.E** The County shall continue to encourage fire-wise site design and construction to keep homes safer from wildfires by providing informational materials to property owners and developers and through development review, consistent with the requirements of the [Mesa County Land Development Code](#). Coordinate fire-wise planning with the State Forest Service, Mesa County Emergency Management, Mesa County Building Department and Plateau Valley Fire District.

**SVC2.F** The County shall continue to work with land owners and appropriate agencies to identify fuel hazard areas and reduce the threat from wildfire.

**SVC2.G** Provide outreach through the Sheriff's Office to area residents. Assist in the establishment of a Neighborhood Watch program, and work to address community concerns and issues regarding public safety on State and County roads.

3. All services and infrastructure meet the needs of residents and businesses in the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan area.

#### **POLICIES**

- SVC3.1** Infrastructure will be provided to new development and will not diminish existing levels of services.
- SVC3.2** Mesa County will ensure adequate public services are available concurrent with new growth.
- SVC3.3** Any expansion of urban services shall be viable and financially self-sustaining.

#### **ACTIONS**

- SVC3.A** The County shall coordinate with the Mesa Water and Sanitation District and the Grand Mesa Metro District to help ensure that water and sewer systems are designed and constructed with adequate capacity to serve existing and proposed development.
- SVC3.B** A natural gas service provider shall be encouraged to establish service in the Mesa/Powderhorn area as growth is capable of supporting service.
- SVC3.C** Continue to provide a solid waste transfer station in the area, with capacity to serve future residential and commercial development.
- SVC3.D** Telecommunications providers shall be encouraged to expand and upgrade infrastructure in order to improve accessibility to cell phone service and to provide reliable and fast internet.
- SVC3.E** Work with the Mesa Area Planning Association (MAPA) and other interested groups to organize annual or a series of community forums to provide information to residents on matters of interest, including water conservation, irrigation, wildfires, noxious weed control, health, and community safety.
- SVC3.F** Work with the Mesa Community Center Public Improvement District to provide public outreach and education on services available to the community.

- SVC3.G** Explore the creation of an Urban Services Public Improvement District for the Village of Mesa, for the purpose of providing additional urban services as the community grows and is more capable of supporting additional services such as sidewalks, street lighting, stormwater and parks.
  
- SVC 3.H** Work with the Grand Mesa Metro District to establish development standards and to clarify the relationship with county maintenance activities.
  
- SVC3.I** Work with Mesa Water and Sanitation District to coordinate their capital improvements plan with implementation of this Plan.

## TRANSPORTATION (TR)

1. Integrated transportation planning and management – circulation, parking, access and multi-modal elements – is carried out through land use development projects and planning.

### POLICIES

- TR1.1** Continue to coordinate transportation planning with land use planning in the development review process.
- TR1.2** Develop an integrated multi-modal circulation system that accommodates motorized and non-motorized users.
- TR1.3** Until such time as a specific access control plan is developed with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), all access on Highway 65 shall comply with the State Highway Access Code

### ACTIONS

- TR1.A** Prepare a Mesa/Powderhorn Area Circulation Plan that is consistent with this Community Plan.
- TR1.B** Work with the Regional Transportation Planning Office (RTPO) and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to develop an Access Control Plan as soon as practical.
- TR1.C** Include facilities for non-motorized circulation (i.e. trails, paths, sidewalks for pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians) that provide connectivity throughout the communities and to adjacent areas.
- TR1.D** Work with the RTPO and CDOT to plan for a Highway 65 detached bike path between Mesa and Powderhorn.
- TR1.E** Work with CDOT to determine the feasibility of developing a Park and Ride facility.
- TR1.F** Encourage area land owners and the Grand Mesa Metro District to work to establish legal access to properties to the west of Powderhorn. Investigate adding these areas to the Metro District.
- TR1.G** Explore a range of potential transit services for the area and determine the feasibility of sustainable funding.

2. A safe, efficient and functional circulation system lends to the sense of place.

**POLICIES**

- TR2.1** Develop and implement appropriate multi-modal transportation standards and facilities consistent with the needs of the community as it grows while maintaining the character of the area.
- TR2.2** Provide connections from the transportation system to recreation areas.
- TR2.3** Trails should accommodate year-round recreation, serving pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians in the summer and cross-country skiers and snowshoeing in the winter.

**ACTIONS**

- TR2.A** Prepare a trails plan that provides for non-motorized travel throughout the community as well as connections to the Grand Valley and to the Grand Mesa.
- TR2.B** Work with area land owners, RTPO and Mesa County Public Works to plan for and complete an alternate route around the Mesa community such as connecting KE 1/2 Road eastward from Highway 65 to KE 6/10 Road.
- TR2.C** Explore potential traffic calming techniques on KE Road and Highway 65 through Mesa.
- TR2.D** Work with CDOT to establish safe Highway 65 pedestrian crossings in the Mesa area.
- TR2.E** Work with CDOT on Highway 65 safety improvements such as signing turnouts and improving passing zone visibility.
- TR2.F** Establish roadway design standards for the Rural Communities that meet the needs of all users and that reflect the character, setting and design of the individual communities.

## LAND USE (LU)

1. Future development is consistent with this Plan.

### POLICIES

- LU1.1** Require that rezones are allowed only when they are consistent with the Mesa County Master Plan including the Future Land Use Map and Policies in Rural Master Plan and this Community Plan.

### ACTIONS

- LU1.A** Work with area residents to update and implement the Village of Mesa Overlay District and the Design Standards.
- LU1.B** Initiate bulk rezones and assist interested property owners with voluntary rezones to zoning districts consistent with the Plan (e.g., rezone properties in the Mesa Rural Community to Village of Mesa Overlay; AF35 outside of the Rural Communities, etc.).
- LU1.C** Continue to research the accuracy, and amend zoning districts, within the Mesa Rural Community to ensure that the zoning map accurately reflects historical/previous changes.
- LU1.D** Review the status and coordinate appropriate updates to older Planned Unit Developments within the Planning Area consistent with this Plan.

2. Future growth is located in and around the Mesa and Powderhorn rural communities.

### POLICIES

- LU2.1** Urban land uses (as defined in the [Mesa County Land Development Code](#)) will occur in the Rural Community areas only if adequate services are available. Such uses are not allowed outside the Rural Community areas.
- LU2.2** Mixed and concentrated land uses will be encouraged to occur only within the Rural Communities

### ACTIONS

- LU2.A** Explore interest in adding the Mesa and Powderhorn Rural Communities as receiving areas for higher density development to the [Mesa County Transfer of Development Rights/Credits](#)

program, which allows land owners to sell development rights/credits from rural areas for transfer to the Rural Communities.

**LU2.B** Encourage mixed-use development within the Rural Communities of Mesa and Powderhorn in a manner that maintains and/or enhances the character of the respective Rural Community.

**LU2.C** Limit nonresidential development in the planning area to the Mesa Rural Community and the core of the Powderhorn Rural Community.

**LU2.D** Enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Mesa Water and Sanitation District to ensure that the addition of properties to the District and extension of services is coordinated with and consistent with future land use and zoning.

3. A range of housing types, densities and affordability are provided through the implementation of this Plan.

#### **POLICIES**

**LU3.1** Improve the quality of living and economic self-sufficiency for the community through a variety of residential neighborhoods and housing types, including mixed residential and commercial/business uses in the Rural Communities.

#### **ACTIONS**

**LU3.A** Implement the Future Land Use Map and Policies by utilizing the [Village of Mesa Overlay District](#) to provide a variety of housing types and mixed use development.

**LU3.B** Within the Powderhorn Rural Community, encourage a mix of housing types and uses in the core.

## COMMUNITY IMAGE & CHARACTER (CI)

1. The Mesa and Powderhorn Rural Communities are well-defined and distinct, with community features that complement and enhance the unique setting of each area.

### POLICIES

- CI1.1** Establish and maintain well-defined community centers to provide two unique focal points while keeping with the rural appearance and distinctive character of the area.
- CI1.2** Keep the Design Standards current and appropriate for the Mesa and Powderhorn Communities.
- CI1.3** New development will maintain and enhance the area, promoting small community character.

### ACTIONS

- CI1.A** Update the Mesa Rural Community Design Standards and include in the standards in the Mesa County Land Development Code. Work with area residents to periodically review and amend the design standards as necessary to ensure design goals are being met. Continue to apply the Village of Mesa Overlay Standards.
- CI1.B** Improve the awareness of area residents (through education and ongoing outreach efforts) about the issues related to nighttime lighting and light pollution. Continue to apply the lighting standards of the [Mesa County Land Development Code](#).
- CI1.C** Encourage future development that complements or creates appropriate community features such as roads, trails, open space and building patterns, and respects the unique sense of existing community that distinguishes one area from another.
- CI1.D** Recognize the distinction between the rural communities and support design variations that are consistent with the character of individual communities. New development will follow design guidelines called for in each area and will allow for flexibility, creativity, aesthetics, traffic safety, and land use compatibility.
- CI1.E** Work with residents of the developments within the Powderhorn Rural Community to develop and adopt design guidelines that will provide visual continuity, cohesiveness and identity for the entire

Powderhorn Rural Community, based on the Design Guidelines in Appendix 1 of this Plan.

**CI1.F** Work with the area property owners and Homeowner Associations to establish an area-wide Architectural Control Committee (ACC) in the Powderhorn Rural Community, as described in Appendix 1 of this Plan. This ACC will be responsible for ensuring that all development and construction within the Rural Community conforms to Powderhorn design guidelines. This organization should also review and comment on development projects that occur within the Rural Community.

**CI.G** Continue to provide opportunities to the Mesa Area Planning Association (MAPA) to review and comment on development projects that occur within the Mesa Rural Community.

2. The rural and pastoral character of the lands between rural communities is maintained.

#### **POLICIES**

**CI2.1** Encourage the protection and maintenance of the unique rural features and characteristics that are significant links to the past, present, and future.

#### **ACTIONS**

**CI2.A** Assist residents and developers with identifying and using voluntary-based tools and techniques to help maintain or enhance the rural character of the area. These tools may include but are not limited to:

- model subdivision covenants that specifically address agriculture, wildlife, outdoor storage, etc.;
- distribution of copies of the Right-to-Farm and Ranch Policy and the [Mesa County Code of the West](#) to new residents;
- open houses and forums on topics that affect the community.

3. Paleontological, historic, and cultural resources that symbolize the area's identity and uniqueness are retained and preserved.

#### **POLICIES**

**CI3.1** Every effort shall be made to preserve and protect significant historic, cultural and paleontological resources whenever possible and reasonable.

**ACTIONS**

- CI3.A** Conduct a comprehensive inventory of historic, cultural and paleontological resources in the planning area in conjunction with the Museum of Western Colorado and other partners.
- CI3.B** Assist property owners in listing properties on the [County Register of Historic Landmarks](#) and provide guidance and technical assistance to help preserve or rehabilitate historic properties.

4. Development along the Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway enhances the visual character of the Highway 65 corridor and creates a gateway to the Grand Mesa.

**POLICIES**

- CI4.1** Continue to recognize that recreation and tourist activities attributed to the Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway are positive influences on the Village of Mesa and the Powderhorn Rural Community.
- CI4.2** Encourage the Village of Mesa and the Powderhorn Rural Community to remain attractive and vibrant communities that will contribute to the Byway.
- CI4.3** Development of oil and natural gas resources shall be consistent with the [Mesa County Mineral and Energy Resources Master Plan](#) including the mitigation measures of visual impacts along the Highway 65 viewshed identified in the [Energy Policy Opportunity Map](#) (EPOM).

**ACTIONS**

- CI4.A** Explore the preparation and adoption of design guidelines or standards for the Highway 65 corridor, based on the Design Guidelines in Appendix 1 of this Plan.
- CI4.B** Review ridgeline mapping for accuracy and evaluate ridgeline development standards.

## ENVIRONMENT (ENV)

1. Water resources within the Mesa/Powderhorn Plan Area and the surrounding Grand Mesa Slopes Special Management Area are protected and managed wisely.

### POLICIES

**ENV1.1** Ensure historic and traditional irrigation uses are respected and preserved or mitigated by new development.

**ENV1.2** Encourage efforts to protect raw water supplies.

### ACTIONS

**ENV1.A** Enforce historic irrigation easements and safeguard raw water supplies through the development review process.

**ENV1.B** Coordinate water conservation design and standards with the water providers, Drought Response Information Project, and other potentially affected interests.

2. Mineral and energy resource development in the region minimizes impacts while maximizing benefits for the community.

### POLICIES

**ENV2.1** Educate the public on the [Mesa County Mineral and Energy Resources Master Plan](#), including location of resources in the Mesa/Powderhorn vicinity, through informational brochures and outreach.

### ACTIONS

**ENV2.A** Direct energy-related businesses to use the [Mesa County Mineral and Energy Resources Master Plan](#) including the [Energy Policy Opportunity Map](#) (EPOM), consistent with this Plan's policies, to appropriately locate activity in the vicinity.

**ENV2.B** Evaluate road and traffic impacts on infrastructure and coordinate design of road upgrades with the residents, community organizations (e.g., MAPA), federal land managers, energy companies, and other interested parties.

**ENV2.C** Use the [EPOM](#) to evaluate and mitigate visual impacts of oil and natural gas development on the Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway.

3. Agricultural and range lands capable of productive use are conserved.

#### **POLICIES**

**ENV3.1** Encourage the conservation of agricultural operations and infrastructure outside the Rural Communities.

**ENV3.2** New development outside of the Rural Communities is encouraged to locate on land least suitable for productive agricultural use.

**ENV3.3** Support and encourage voluntary techniques to preserve agricultural lands.

**ENV3.4** The use of Highway 65 and Highway 330 as stock driveways will continue.

**ENV3.5** Encourage the maintenance of open lands in continuous tracts to allow the continuation of agricultural operations and to protect the rural character where appropriate.

#### **ACTION**

**ENV3.A** Require new development to use the least productive land (past and present), and identify building envelopes on site plans as part of the agriculture land protection efforts by landowners, developers, and the county.

**ENV3.B** Continue to enforce the [Mesa County Right to Farm and Ranch Policy](#).

**ENV3.C** Continue to promote, make residents aware of, and encourage the use of conservation easements, cluster development, and conservation subdivisions.

**ENV3.D** Explore interest in adding the Mesa and Powderhorn Rural Communities as receiving areas to the [Mesa County Transfer of Development Rights/Credits](#) program, which allows land owners to sell development rights/credits from rural areas and transfer those development rights to the Rural Communities.

**ENV3.E** Continue to distribute the [Mesa County Code of the West](#). Provide information on:

- the facts of living in a rural area with limited services;
- proper irrigation practices and management;
- issues associated with weed spraying; and
- rural road use and maintenance activities.

**ENV3.F** Coordinate with federal land managers on any identified disposal tracts in the area for potential land trades and/or transfer of development credits, and evaluate potential impacts to grazing allotments.

4. The natural heritage of the area, including plants, wildlife and fish, is conserved.

#### **POLICIES**

**ENV4.1** Development in floodplains, drainage areas, washes, steep slope areas, and other areas hazardous to life or property is strongly discouraged or prohibited.

**ENV4.2** Development will avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to wetlands, drainages, washes and floodplains.

**ENV4.3** The Army Corps of Engineers shall be notified of all development requests on property with known or suspected wetlands.

**ENV4.4** Coordinate with Colorado Parks and Wildlife or U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to identify site-specific wildlife/plant habitats in the planning area and avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts from development projects.

**ENV4.5** Protect Mesa County's natural heritage of plants, animals, and biological conservation sites, as identified in the [Natural Heritage Inventory of Mesa County, Colorado](#).

**ENV4.6** Support efforts to protect habitat for cutthroat trout and other important species.

#### **ACTIONS**

**ENV4.A** Require unmapped floodplains to be mapped when proposed developments are in a floodplain area or suspected floodplain.

- ENV4.B** Encourage the preservation of creeks, floodplains, washes, and drainages through incentives provided in the Mesa County Land Development Code.
- ENV4.C** Manage riparian, wash and drainage areas as corridors to allow for wildlife migration. Minimize alteration of streams and obstructions such as fences.
- ENV4.D** Encourage landowners of existing significant wetlands to seek assistance from the Natural Resource Conservation Service or USDA Farmland Protection Program for the purpose of formulating management plans to protect wetlands.
- ENV4.E** Require wetlands to be delineated on final plats and site plans.
- ENV4.F** Develop a list of plant species (native and desirable non-native) appropriate for reclamation/revegetation in the planning area. Require the use of these plant species for reclamation projects.
- ENV4.G** Support public and private efforts to conserve or improve river, creek, and wash riparian areas for multiple benefits (e.g., flood control, water quality, and wildlife habitat). Support efforts to establish buffers along riparian areas to conserve or improve their terraces (soil) and associated vegetation. Particular attention should be given to protecting the native cutthroat trout population in Coon Creek.
- ENV4.H** Continue to use Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the US Fish & Wildlife Service as review agencies for proposed development near potentially impacted streams and riparian habitat.
- ENV4.I** Coordinate with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and Colorado Department of Transportation to minimize wildlife/traffic conflicts and preserve movement corridors for wildlife.
- ENV4.J** Support efforts of the USFS and State Forest Service related to treating sudden aspen decline and aspen blight.
- ENV4.K** Coordinate public outreach on noxious weed control, e.g. public forums with Mesa County Weed and Pest Control staff and the Mesa County Weed Board.

## **PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN LANDS (PR)**

1. Parks, open lands, and trailheads/corridors through the area enhance the community and serve recreational, transportation and environmental purposes.

### **POLICIES**

- PR1.1** Implement adopted parks, recreation, transportation and trails plans.
- PR1.2** Recreational opportunities and activities are encouraged in the area that positively impact and enhance the Mesa/Powderhorn Community where possible.

### **ACTIONS**

- PR1.A** In coordination with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Forest Service (USFS), Powderhorn Resort, Mesa Community Center Public Improvement District (MCCPID), Mesa Area Planning Association (MAPA), Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Association (COPMOBA) and other interested parties, develop a parks/recreation and trails plan for the Mesa/Powderhorn area that includes year-round connections to trails on public lands, between communities and to the Grand Valley and the Grand Mesa, and meets the needs of both residents and visitors.
- PR1.B** Require new development to provide trails/connections as links to existing trails and to the transportation system.
- PR1.C** Work with the RTPO and CDOT to plan for a Highway 65 detached bike path to connect the recreational facilities of Powderhorn and the Grand Mesa to the rest of the Plan area.
- PR1.D** Continue to work with the USFS, BLM and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to promote and encourage safe, effective use of existing recreation facilities and opportunities.
- PR1.E** Work with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, local residents and other interested parties to support and expand opportunities for hunting and fishing in the area.
2. Adequate parks and recreation services and facilities to serve the Mesa and Powderhorn communities are provided through viable entities responsible for ownership, construction and maintenance of facilities and provision of recreational services.

**POLICIES**

- PR2.1** An Urban Services Public Improvement District or an expanded MCCPID should act as the viable entity responsible for construction, maintenance and operations of local parks facilities and programs.
- PR2.2** Encourage partnerships among government agencies, non-profit organizations, private sector businesses and area residents to assist with provision of park and recreational facilities and programs.

**ACTIONS**

- PR2.A** Explore with local landowners and residents the feasibility of creating viable, financially self-sustaining entities responsible for construction and maintenance of local parks facilities such as an Urban Services Public Improvement District or through an expanded MCCPID.
- PR2.B** Support the MCCPID as it works with local residents and partners to maintain the Mesa Community Center as a sustainable entity that is a well-defined focal point for community events and activities.
3. Powderhorn is a regional recreational center, providing year-round facilities and services to the community, Mesa County, visitors and the surrounding area.

**POLICIES**

- PR3.1** Parks and recreation planning efforts should be coordinated with Powderhorn Resort's Master Development Plan.

**ACTIONS**

- PR3.A** Mesa County will participate in the review of Powderhorn's Master Development Plan with the USFS.
- PR3.B** Encourage Powderhorn Resort to develop recreational facilities and activities that will serve residents and visitors year-round.
- PR3.C** Encourage open communication and coordination between the Mesa and Powderhorn communities and districts in planning for and providing parks and recreation facilities and activities.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ED)**

1. Businesses provide goods, services and employment for area residents and visitors.

### **POLICIES**

- ED1.1** Support public/private partnerships to create a commercial base that will serve the local population.
- ED1.2** Support efforts to develop commercial interests that have a broader service area or draw clientele from outside of Mesa and Powderhorn in order to be economically sustainable.
- ED1.3** Support efforts to improve infrastructure that will help local businesses grow.

### **ACTIONS**

- ED1.A** Work with area economic development groups to identify businesses that would be suited to Mesa and Powderhorn and assist with marketing efforts.
- ED1.B** Encourage telecommunications companies to improve infrastructure for wireless and internet, to support business development.
- ED1.C** Investigate the formation of an Urban Services Public Improvement District or expand the services of the Mesa Community Center Public Improvement District to provide infrastructure that will support business development.

2. Powderhorn operates as a year-round resort, providing an economic base for the area.

### **POLICIES**

- ED2.1** Powderhorn Resort and the Grand Mesa are the main economic drivers of area.

### **ACTIONS**

- ED2.A** Coordinate planning efforts with Powderhorn Resort's master plan and Powderhorn Resort's Master Development Plan with the USFS.

3. The rural communities of Mesa and Powderhorn have a symbiotic relationship, providing employees, housing, jobs and services that complement the strengths of each community and the Plan area.

#### **POLICIES**

- ED3.1** Development will include a variety of housing types and mixed uses.
- ED3.2** Development that supports agriculture, tourism and recreation will be encouraged.

#### **ACTIONS**

- ED3.A** Encourage the development of tourism- and recreation-based businesses as year-round economic drivers.
- ED3.B** Recognize the significant seasonal economic impact of hunting activities by supporting habitat improvement on public and private lands and expanding opportunities for landowners and outfitters to provide hunting and fishing services.
- ED3.C** Promote the Village of Mesa as a community focal point from which to exhibit and sell locally produced agricultural products, art, and other commodities (i.e., area farmers' market).
- ED3.D** Encourage the development of housing for seasonal employees.



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## APPENDIX 1. DESIGN GUIDELINES

### A. MESA RURAL COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### APPLICABILITY

These Design Guidelines apply to new development and major redevelopment of commercial, mixed use and multi-family structures in the Mesa Rural Community. Single-family, two-family residential and agricultural uses are not subject to design guidelines. Design guidelines do not apply to existing structures or uses unless the structure or use undergoes major rehabilitation, as defined in [Section 3 of the Mesa County Land Development Code](#).

#### INTENT

The intent of these design guidelines is to help implement the Mesa/Powderhorn Community Plan. It specifically addresses the goal of maintaining Mesa's rural character by providing guidance on architecture and site design. These guidelines are to be used in support of [Mesa County Land Development Code Section 4.4.3, Village of Mesa Overlay District](#).

#### GUIDELINES

##### Architecture

- The desired look for the area is a western style with decks, porches, gable roofs, false fronts and natural colors.
- Structures should be no taller than 2 stories and a maximum of 35 feet in height.

##### Historic, Cultural and Paleontological Resources

- Owners of properties with historic, cultural or paleontological resources are encouraged to protect those resources, which provide an important link to Mesa County's past. Owners should consult the Museum of Western Colorado or the Colorado Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation for guidance on the best means of protection. Owners may also list historic, cultural or paleontological resources on the [Mesa County Register of Historic Landmarks](#).

##### Landscape modifications

- New development should be designed to be harmonious with the topography of the area and in scale and character with the surrounding setting.
- Design should incorporate a variety of irregular, unique lot and building site layouts that are sensitive to the natural features and uses of the land including: topography, ridgelines, viewsheds, riparian areas, wildlife habitat, significant vegetation, and agricultural practices.
- New buildings and improvements should be located where their construction and access require minimal modification of the natural landscape.
- Minimize lot grading.
- Identify and protect major stands of trees.

**Lighting**

- All new light sources shall meet the requirements of [Mesa County Land Development Code Section 7.6.7](#). Lighting on projects that are located inside of the Mesa Rural Community are encouraged to be pedestrian scale and oriented, and to use the following guidelines:
  - path/sidewalk lighting is encouraged for all new subdivision development;
  - lighting poles (excluding street lights) should not exceed 14 feet in height and design should be consistent with the Western style architectural theme (as identified in the Village of Mesa overlay criteria);
  - all new lighting should be directed downward;
  - luminaries/globes should be consistent with the Western style architectural theme;
  - floodlights should not be used to light any portion of any building facade between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.;
  - no outdoor light source should be mounted more than 14 feet above the ground; and
  - existing outdoor light sources are encouraged to follow the design guidelines as opportunities occur to convert them to new fixtures.

**Roads**

- New roads that are located inside of the Mesa Rural Community are encouraged to be pedestrian-oriented.
- The use of shared driveways is encouraged to minimize access points to county roads.

**Signage**

- New signage in the Rural Community should comply with the following guidelines:
  - a Western style architectural theme is encouraged (colors, textures, lighting, text, etc.);
  - monument signs are preferred to pole signs;
  - pole signs should not exceed 12 feet in height;
  - externally lit signs are preferred over internally-illuminated signs; and
  - flush-mounted signs should not extend above the height of the building on which they are mounted.

**Utilities**

- New utilities should be placed underground where practicable.
- Telecommunication equipment should be located within or on existing structures where possible.

**Water**

- Water-conserving practices and devices should be used in all developments.
- Irrigation water should be conserved by limiting the amount of area to be landscaped with non-indigenous plant materials.
- Wet and boggy areas should only be drained if necessary and with appropriate permitting.

## B. HIGHWAY 65 CORRIDOR DESIGN GUIDELINES

### APPLICABILITY

Pursuant to the [Mesa County Land Development Code](#), projects requiring only residential and agricultural site plan review are not subject to design guidelines. However, property owners are encouraged to use these guidelines when planning their projects in order to fit in with the character of the area. These guidelines will be used when reviewing non-residential and non-agricultural projects, as part of determining consistency with the Master Plan.

### INTENT

These guidelines are intended to provide guidance on ways in which development along the Highway 65 corridor can maintain the area's rural and pastoral character, and support efforts to maintain the Grand Mesa Scenic & Historic Byway. It is not the intent of these guidelines to affect traditional agricultural practices and uses.

### GUIDELINES

#### Architecture

- The desired look for the area is a western style with decks, porches, gable roofs and natural colors.
- Structures should be no taller than 2 stories and a maximum of 35 feet in height.

#### Historic, Cultural and Paleontological Resources

- Owners of properties with historic, cultural or paleontological resources are encouraged to protect those resources, which provide an important link to Mesa County's past. Owners should consult the Museum of Western Colorado or the Colorado Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation for guidance on the best means of protection. Owners may also list historic, cultural or paleontological resources on the [Mesa County Register of Historic Landmarks](#).

#### Environmental

- Wet boggy areas, migration routes, wildlife habitat, and public land access should all be maintained and protected.
- Wildfire prevention measures should be identified and reviewed for appropriate approvals in each new development. Ground cover and weed controls as well as defensible space and general area clean-up are to be addressed, consistent with the requirements of the [Mesa County Land Development Code](#).

#### Lighting

- Outdoor lighting must meet the [Mesa County Land Development Code](#) standards for full cut-off fixtures and hours (agricultural uses are exempt) to prevent artificial light disturbance.

**Agriculture**

- Agricultural practices consistent with [Mesa County’s Right to Farm and Ranch Policy](#) shall not be affected by these design guidelines.

**Landscape Modifications**

- Creative design is encouraged. New development should be designed to be harmonious with the topography of the area and in scale and character with the surrounding setting.
- Design should incorporate a variety of irregular, unique lot and building site layouts that are sensitive to the natural features and uses of the land including: topography, riparian areas, wildlife habitat, significant vegetation, and agricultural practices.
- New buildings and improvements should be located where their construction and access require minimal modification of the natural landscape.
- Minimize lot grading.
- Identify and protect major stands of trees.
- Screen storage areas from view of Highway 65.

**Subdivisions**

- Clustering of homes on lots smaller than thirty-five (35) acres may be appropriate if the subdivision design conserves large tracts of open lands for agriculture and wildlife habitat.
- Conservation easements and other voluntary land conservation techniques are encouraged.

**Transportation**

- The use of shared driveways is encouraged to minimize access points to county roads.
- Any walkways and bike paths are encouraged to be separate from the roadways and coordinated with adjoining lands to provide connections and continuity to a network of trails within the Mesa/Powderhorn area.

**Vegetation**

- Vegetation (native and desirable non-native plant species) is an important element of the aesthetic character and economic base (grazing and hunting) of the Highway 65 Corridor.
- Weed control plans should be submitted to the Mesa County Pest and Weed Inspector for any projects causing disturbance in existing or new rights-of-way.
- New development should be reviewed by the County Pest and Weed Inspector to:
  - identify if weed problems exist and work with homeowners’ associations and landowners to develop integrated pest management strategies for common open spaces or open lands; and
  - review revegetation/reclamation projects to assure that best management practices are used to prevent weed infestations and properly revegetate disturbed sites.
- Straw or hay bales used for mulch or erosion control on disturbed areas should be certified “weed free” to help prevent weed infestations.

**Water**

- Conservation of the limited water resources in the area is very important now and in the future.
- Natural landscaping and low consumption water fixtures are encouraged.

## **C. POWDERHORN RURAL COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES**

### **APPLICABILITY**

These Design Guidelines apply to new development and major redevelopment within the Powderhorn Rural Community. However, areas of the Rural Community may continue to use their own adopted design guidelines and Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions. Mesa County will also use these design guidelines when considering whether a proposed development is consistent with the Mesa County Master Plan.

### **DESIGN INTENT**

Specific guidelines should be developed for each development within the Powderhorn Rural Community. Development-specific guidelines should establish standards that will provide a visual continuity, cohesiveness, and identity for all structures within the development. Design guidelines should not limit creative site planning or creative building design. However, construction should be conventional in design and orthodox in appearance, providing a cohesive look among the structures within each specific development. Clustering as a village core is generally encouraged and development should not randomly fill open space throughout the area.

### **ARCHITECTURAL CONTROL COMMITTEE**

An Architectural Control Committee (ACC) for the Powderhorn Rural Community should be formed and should include representatives of all developments/property owners within the Powderhorn Rural Community. This ACC would be responsible for ensuring that all development and construction within the Rural Community conforms to these design guidelines. This organization should be recognized by Mesa County for review and comment on development projects that occur within the Powderhorn Rural Community. This organization should not duplicate review by any ACC or HOA that is in place for a specific development or subdivision.

### **EXISTING DESIGN GUIDELINES AND COVENANTS**

As of the date of this Plan, Powderhorn Resort (including Wildewood Subdivision) has in place design guidelines, Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CCRs), and building restrictions. Powder Ridge also operates under recorded CCRs and design guidelines. Horizon Estates does not have CCRs nor design guidelines. None of the other areas within the Rural Community have recorded guidelines. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a framework for each development to create its own covenants and design guidelines.

Each development included in the Powderhorn Rural Community should establish an “Architectural Control Committee” (ACC) consisting of developers and/or homeowners for the purpose of ensuring visual continuity and cohesiveness of new development in the area and reviewing and approving architectural design within the boundaries of such development. Architectural standards and CCRs for specific developments should address appropriate building types and styles.

The appropriate ACC should review and approve individual building plans and renderings for compliance with adopted architectural standards and CCRs prior to submitting building permit applications to Mesa County for review. In the event that such a committee is not formed, the Architectural Control Committee for the overall Rural Community should act as the development's ACC.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **Architecture**

- Each structure should be designed in such a manner as to be compatible with other units in the area, yet avoid uniformity and lack of variety in designs.
- Mesa County Building Code requirements include mandatory fire-resistant roofing materials within all areas rated as a medium or higher wildfire hazard. All development within the Powderhorn area should meet the same requirements regardless of wildfire hazard rating.
- All new construction should be designed in a manner consistent with the aesthetics and functions of a mountain environment.

### **Historic, Cultural and Paleontological Resources**

- Owners of properties with historic, cultural or paleontological resources are encouraged to protect those resources, which provide an important link to Mesa County's past. Owners should consult the Museum of Western Colorado or the Colorado Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation for guidance on the best means of protection. Owners may also list historic, cultural or paleontological resources on the [Mesa County Register of Historic Landmarks](#).

### **Environmental**

- Existing terrain should be preserved as much as possible.
- There should be no net loss of wetlands as a result of development.
- No disruption of wetlands is allowed without proper oversight and approvals by proper authorities.
- Major stands of trees should be identified and cut only as necessary for approved construction projects (to include building envelopes and roads), safety, or designated forest management plans.
- Wildfire prevention measures should be identified and reviewed for appropriate approvals in each development. Ground cover and weed control as well as "defensible space" and general area cleanup are to be addressed in specific development guidelines.
- Reclamation and landscaping must follow the [Mesa County Land Development Code](#) landscape standards.
- Vegetation (native and desirable non-native plant species) is an important element of the aesthetic character and economic base (grazing and hunting) of the Powderhorn area. Weed control plans should be submitted to the Mesa County Pest and Weed Inspector for any projects causing disturbance in existing or new rights-of-way.

- Straw or hay bales used for mulch or erosion control on disturbed areas should be certified as “weed free” to help prevent weed infestations.
- New development should be reviewed by the County Pest and Weed Inspector to:
  - identify if weed problems exist and work with home owners associations and landowners to develop integrated pest management strategies for common open spaces or open lands; and
  - review revegetation/reclamation projects to assure that best management practices are used to prevent weed infestations and properly revegetate disturbed sites.

### **Lighting**

- Outdoor lighting must meet or exceed the [Mesa County Land Development Code](#) standards for full cut-off fixtures and hours (agricultural uses are exempt) to prevent artificial light disturbance.
- Construction and development plans should include the effects of light pollution within the specific guidelines of each project. Minimum intensity lighting, aimed toward the ground, should be the standard.

### **Signs**

- A unified sign program should be developed that will encompass street, directional, advertising, and identification signs. Each approved development within the Powderhorn Rural Community will designate a unified signage plan that differentiates itself from all other developments but maintains a commonality of design, i.e. signage will be of a “directory” nature at all major intersections and appropriate locations. Signage plans should be approved by the development’s ACC before submittal of individual sign permit applications to Mesa County.

### **Transportation**

- Development-specific guidelines should take into account alternative methods of access to the ski slopes and area trails, such as pedestrian walks, paths, malls, and shuttle buses when appropriate.

### **Water**

- Water conserving practices and devices should be used in all developments.
- Irrigation water should be conserved by limiting the amount of area to be landscaped with non-indigenous plant materials.
- Wet and boggy areas may only be drained if necessary and with appropriate permitting.

## **APPENDIX 2: SUPPLEMENTAL MAPS**

The following maps were used in the preparation of the 2012 Mesa/Powderhorn Plan. All maps in this Plan reflect conditions at that time (generally October 2012), and are subject to change.

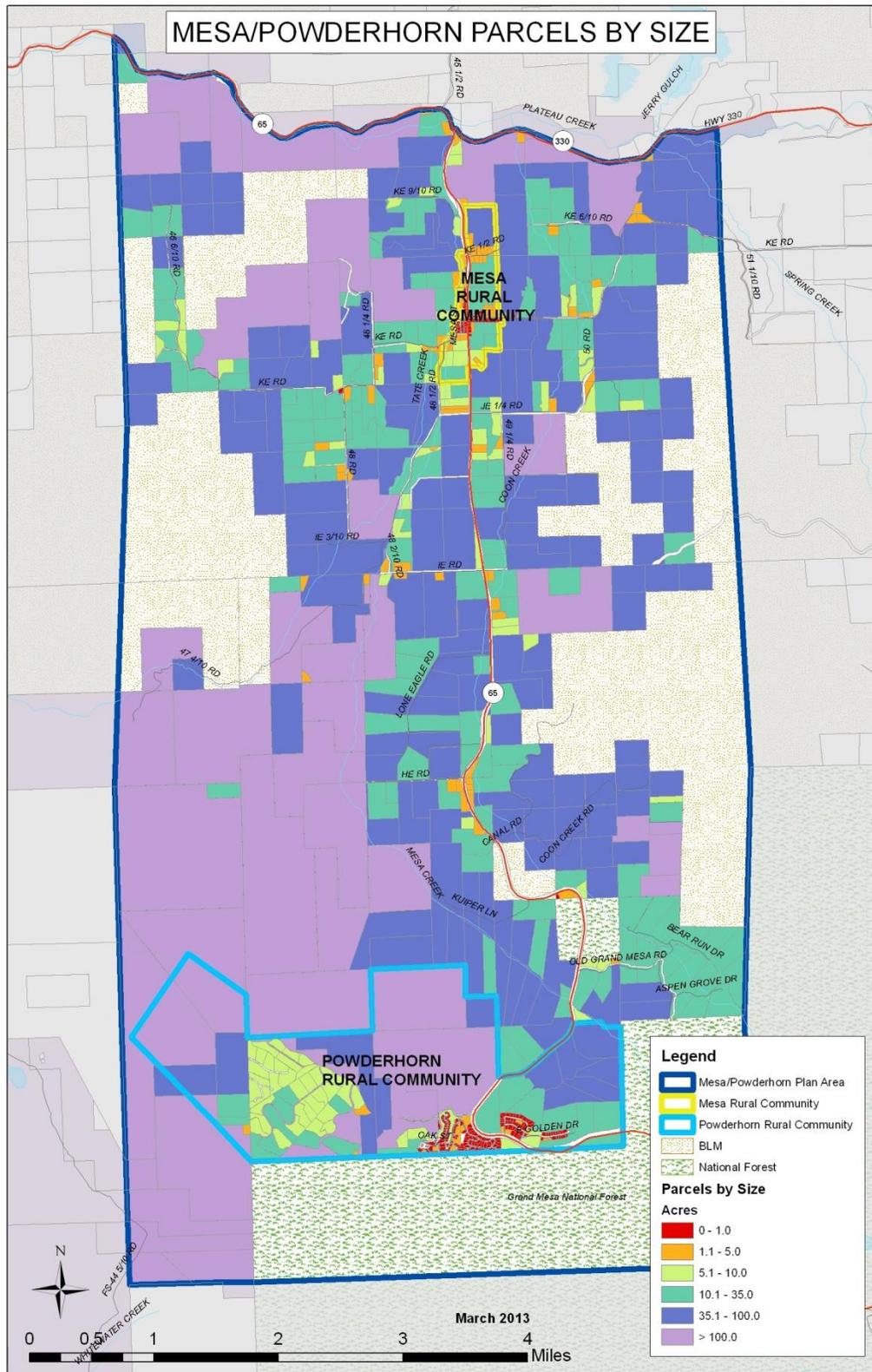
For current maps of the Plan area, use Mesa County’s interactive maps at

<http://gis.mesacounty.us/interactive.aspx>.

### **MAPS:**

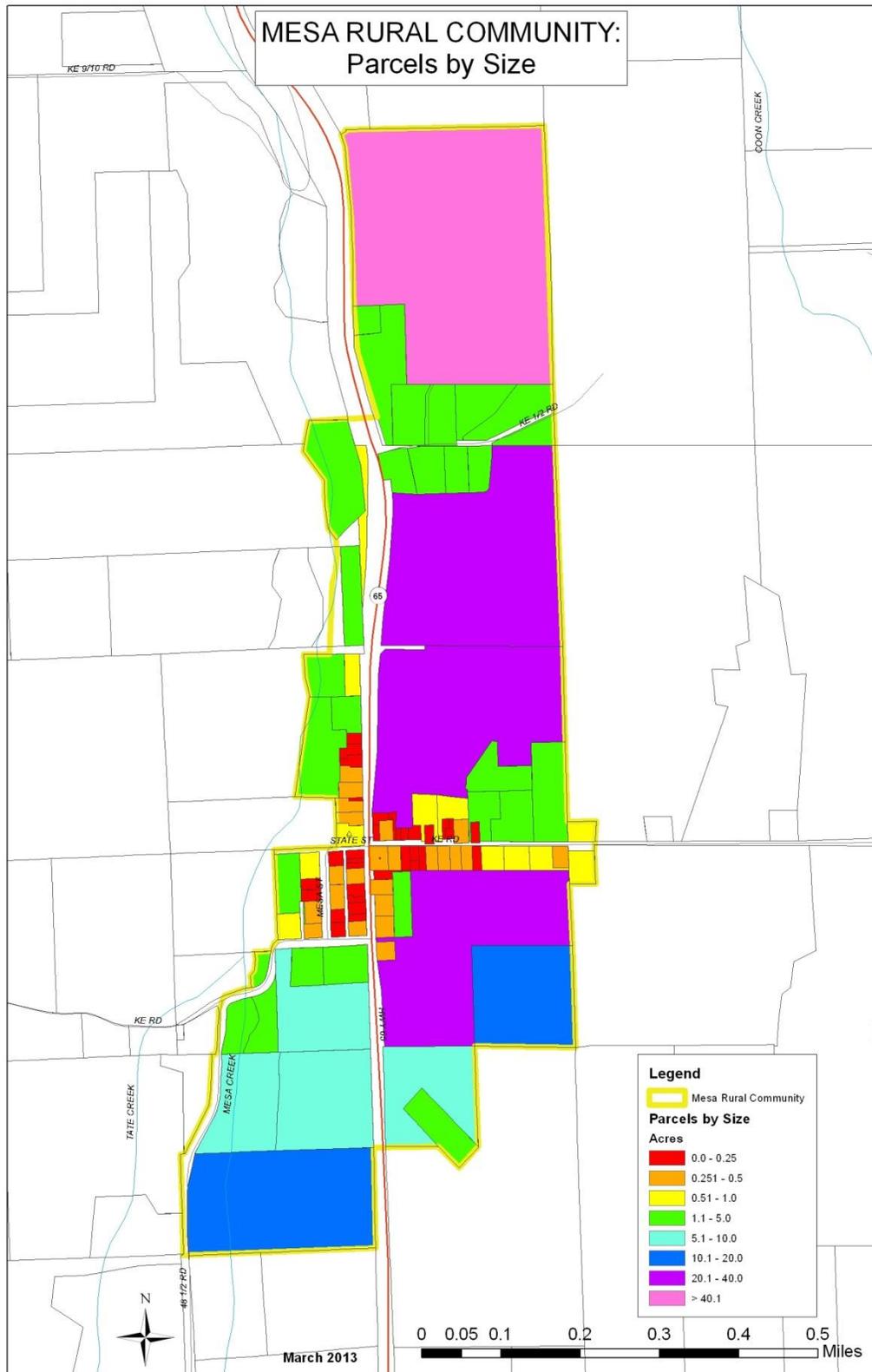
- A1. Parcels by Size
- A2. Parcels by Size – Mesa Rural Community
- A3. Mesa/Powderhorn Land Tenure: Property owners holding 160 acres or more
- A4. USGS Topographic Map
- A5. Soils
- A6. Wildfire Hazard Mapped Areas
- A7. Mapped Regulatory Flood Plain

**A1. Parcels by Size**



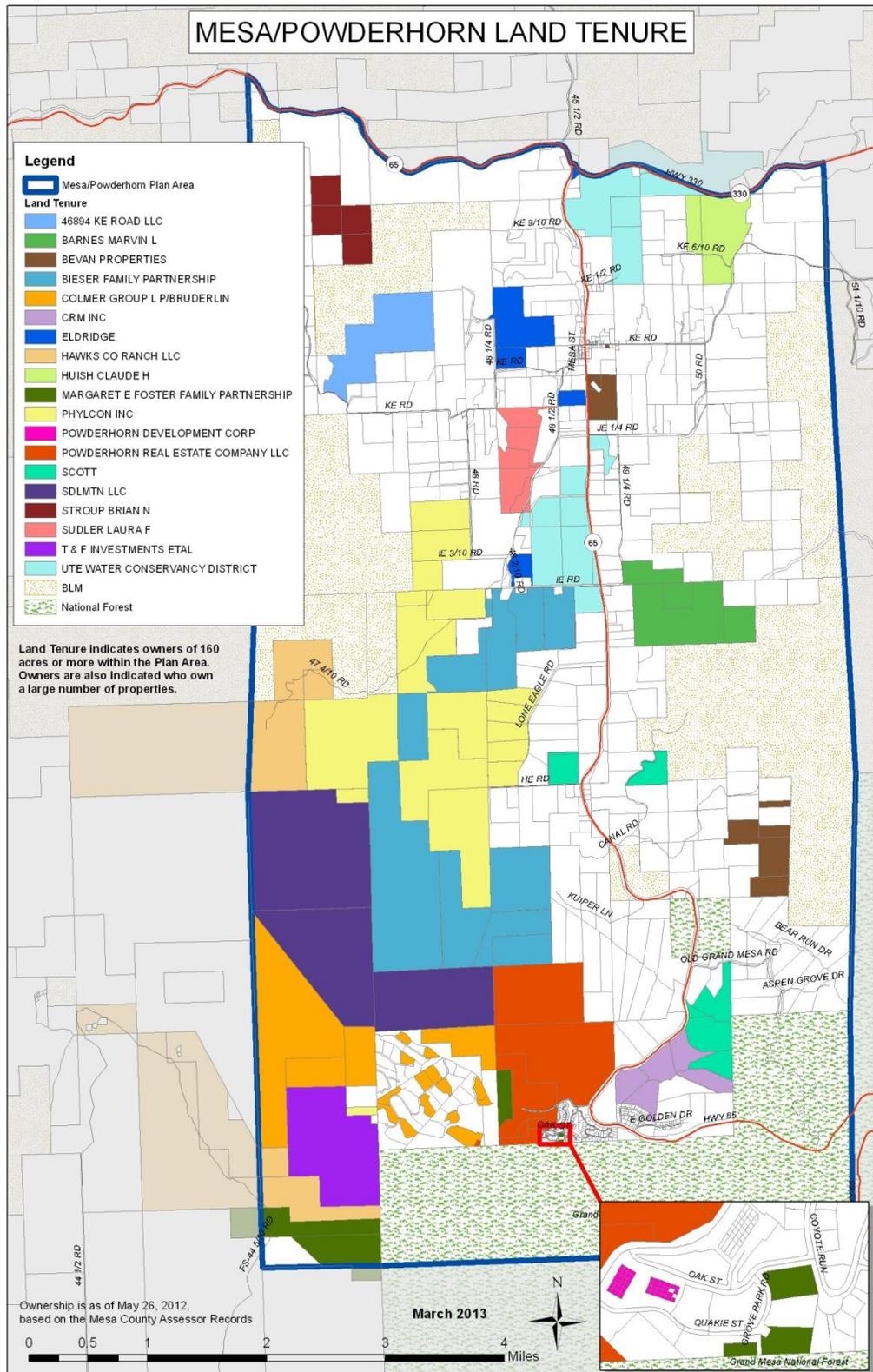
Source: Mesa County Assessor Records and GIS

**A2. Parcels by Size – Mesa Rural Community**



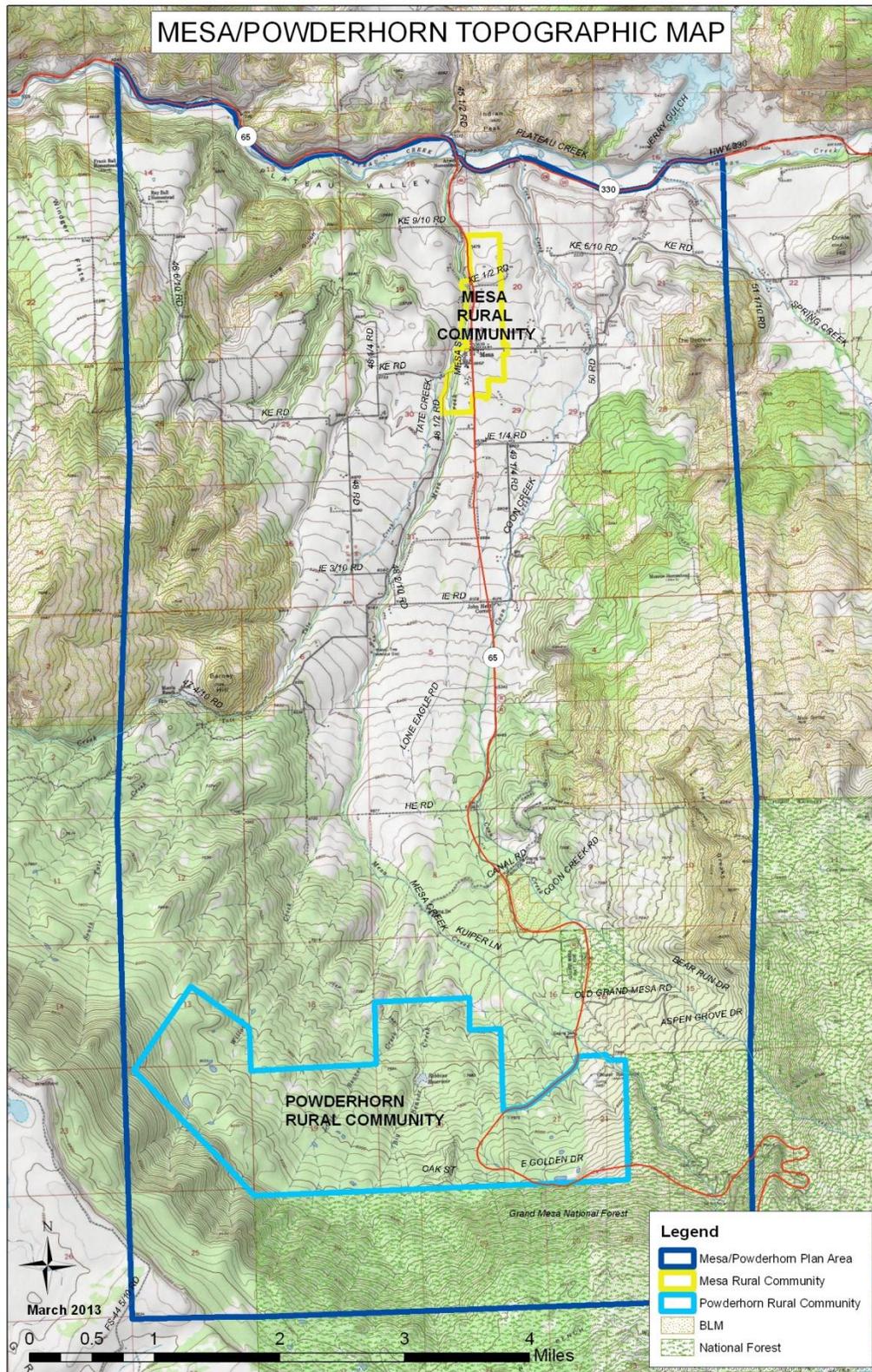
Source: Mesa County Assessor Records and GIS

**A3. Mesa/Powderhorn Land Tenure: Property owners holding 160 acres or more**



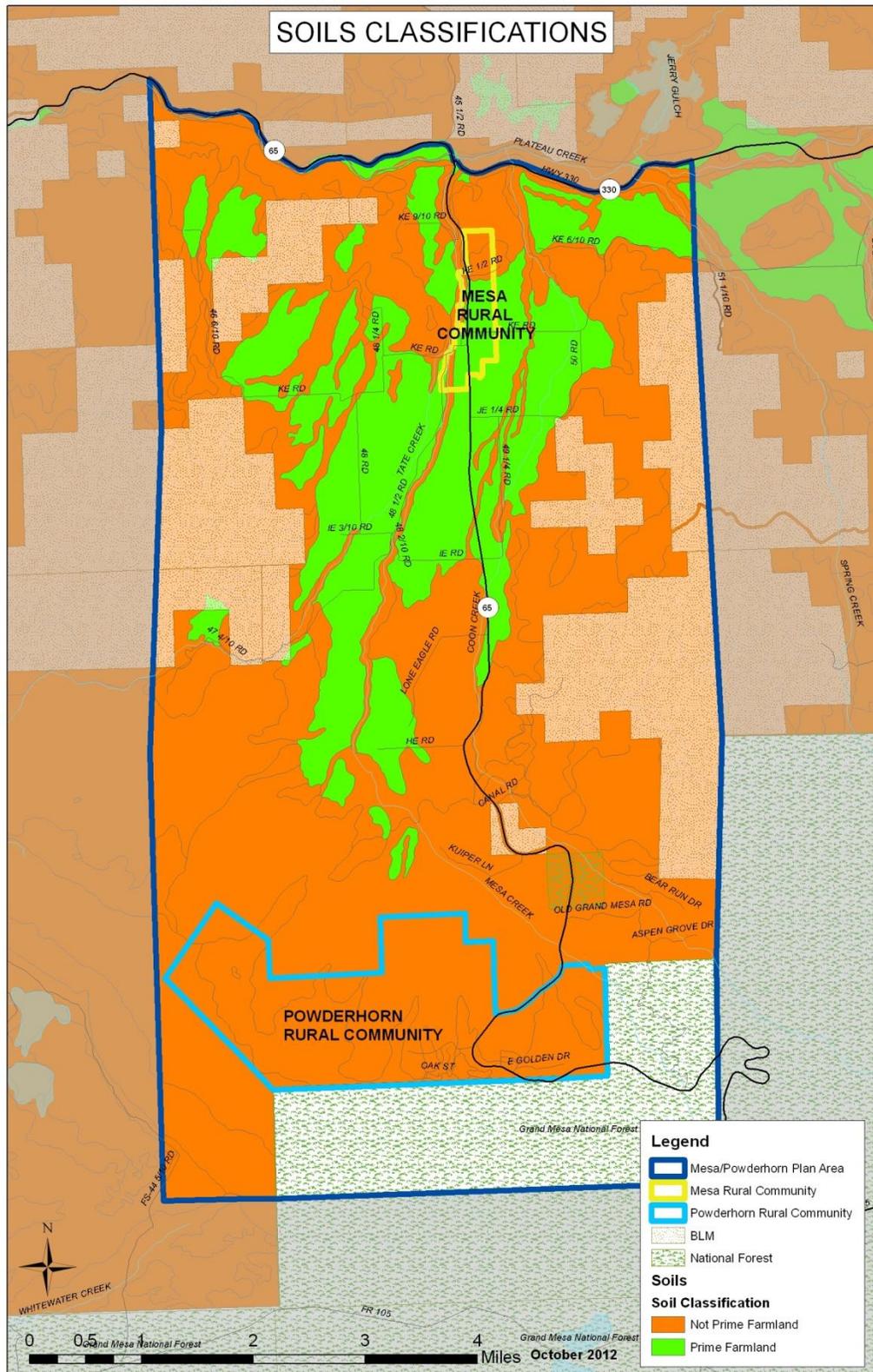
Source: Mesa County Assessor Records and GIS

A4. USGS Topographic Map

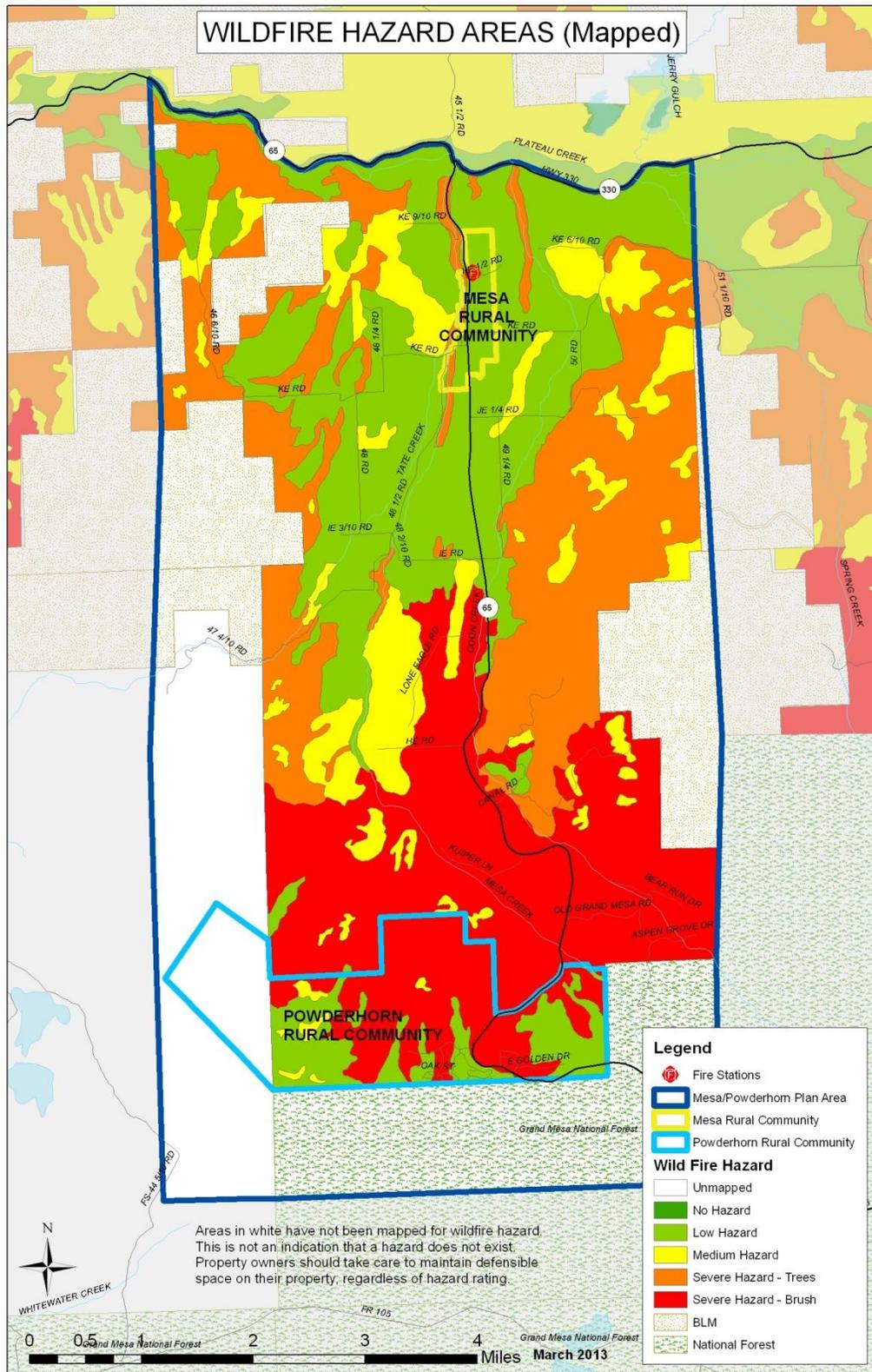


Source: Mesa County GIS

**A5. Soils**

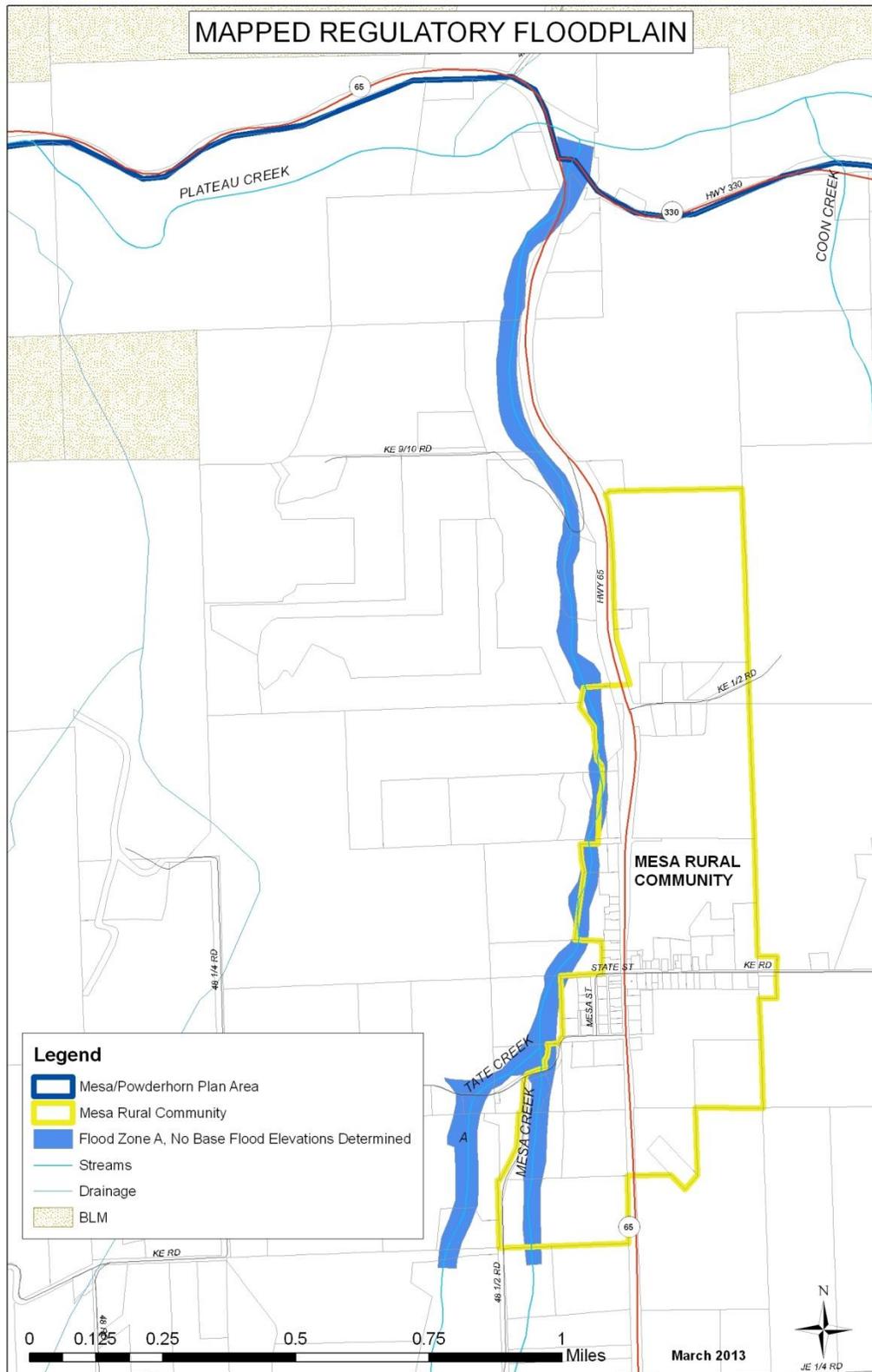


**A6. Wildfire Hazard Mapped Areas**



Source: Mesa County GIS

### A7. Mapped Regulatory Floodplain



Source: Mesa County GIS; FEMA