

# The Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative (RCI)

## *Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Framework*



# Background

## The Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative (RCI)

The Grand Valley's River Corridor extends from De Beque, Colorado to the Utah state line and encompasses the Gunnison River from Bridgeport to the confluence with the Colorado River. The river corridor is the lifeblood of the community and is a vital economic, cultural, and ecological resource that supports the Grand Valley's well-being and prosperity. Given the diverse values supported by the river, the Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative (RCI) was formed in 2020 to address the acute need for enhanced coordination, planning, and collaboration on river corridor-related activities.

The RCI Vision includes the following:

1. Engage river corridor stakeholder groups to identify common values and challenges.
2. Provide a platform and resource for river corridor stakeholders, fostering coordinated collaboration on future river-centric endeavors, and leading to informed decision-making.
3. Develop strategies to address shared goals, objectives, and challenges.
4. Foster community education and connection with the river.

To address the Vision, the RCI sought funding through the Colorado Water Conversation Board and Colorado River District to support four distinct work efforts extending from 2023-2025.

1. **Facilitation and Outreach:** Create a public-facing presence for RCI and the River Corridor (Contracted with Strategic by Nature, October 2023-2025)
2. **Riparian and Floodplain Health Assessment:** Study the riparian health and floodplain of the river corridor (Contracted April 2024-2025)
3. **Flow Conditions and Preference Analysis:** Understand community values and preferences for river flows (Conducted in Partnership with the River Network, October 2024-2025)
4. **Framework for Planning Coordination:** Develop a framework or agreement among jurisdictions for future river corridor planning (Contracted with OV Consulting, September 2023-May 2024)

These efforts are coordinated through the RCI Advisory Council which meets quarterly and is comprised of a diverse set of 27 stakeholders including local governments and organizations in the Grand Valley.

# Planning Framework

## Purpose

The Planning Framework was conducted over the last eight months by OV Consulting in coordination with the Core Team members Joel Sholtes, Shannon Wadas, and Rusty Lloyd representing RCI, and the Jurisdictions of Mesa County, Fruita, Grand Junction and Palisade. The purpose of the Framework effort was to address the following:

- 1. Develop a coordinated approach to creating a shared Vision for the River Corridor
- 2. Explore planning and management strategies for the corridor that align with the vision
- 3. Inform the engagement process with the community and
- 4. Develop an agreed-upon planning framework and next steps.

Representatives from each jurisdiction have contributed a significant amount of time and associated in-kind match. Since the beginning of 2023, there has been over \$6,000 of in kind support contributed through the various workshops and Advisory Council meetings, this demonstrating a concerted commitment to the process outcome. Jurisdictional participants included:

- |                               |                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Carrie Gudorf, Mesa County | 7. Kimberly Bullen, Fruita          | 13. Tamara Allen, Grand Junction  |
| 2. Faye Hall, Mesa County     | 8. Mark Mancuso, Fruita             | 14. Tim Lehrbach, Grand Junction  |
| 3. Erik Borschel, Mesa County | 9. Sam Atkins, Fruita               | 15. Trenton Prall, Grand Junction |
| 4. Laura Page, Mesa County    | 10. David Thornton, Grand Junction  | 16. David Gray, Town of Palisade  |
| 5. Sean Norris, Mesa County   | 11. Jennifer Nitzky, Grand Junction | 17. Troy Ward, Town of Palisade   |
| 6. Dan Caris, Fruita          | 12. Ken Sherbenou, Grand Junction   |                                   |



Workshop Process

OV Consulting established a coordinated and cohesive jurisdictional Workshop Series for Mesa County, Fruita, Grand Junction, and Palisade focused on river corridor conditions, jurisdictional needs and values associated with the river, a Vision for the Grand Valley River corridor, and identifying the right next steps in securing that Vision. Workshop discussions were supported by local area research, mapping, and river planning best practices that informed the groups’ progress and decision-making around the next steps.



WORKSHOP #1 – REVIEW, REFINE AND SET DIRECTION | NOVEMBER 7, 2023

At this first workshop, jurisdictions identified the challenges that they face along the river, studied the value of recently completed Fluvial Hazard Buffer (FHB) mapping, and uncovered the values and assets of the corridor today. They asked themselves, “Where do we want to be in 20-30 years?” The group discussed the nexus of land use policy, population growth, and river systems and the balance needed to ensure smart growth and a future healthy river in the Grand Valley.

WORKSHOP #2 – SET THE VISION, EXPLORE PEER CITIES & DETERMINE THE TOOLS FOR SUCCESS | FEBRUARY 6, 2024

In the second workshop jurisdictions built upon the values identified in Workshop 1 and drafted a River Corridor Vision to be shared with the RCI Advisory Council. They explored river planning strategies in Peer Cities and built consensus around the right next steps for the Grand Valley River Corridor.

The three main components of Workshop #2 included:

- 1. Draft Grand Valley River Corridor Vision
- 2. Peer City River Corridor Planning and Management Strategies
- 3. Agreement on appropriate planning approach for Grand Valley jurisdictions

It was decided that a Multi-jurisdictional Joint Resolution would provide the agreement needed among the jurisdictions to move forward with a Grand Valley River Corridor Master Plan that would address the newly developed Vision and provide consistent direction to river recreation, river health, mobility, and edge development at a policy level.

WORKSHOP #3 – CONFIRM DIRECTION AND NEXT STEPS | MAY 8, 2024

At the third and final workshop, jurisdictions confirmed the Final Grand Valley River corridor Vision, reviewed supporting documentation, and confirmed the strategy for execution of the Joint Resolution. Jurisdictions also conversed about funding opportunities and the timing of advancing the Master Planning process.

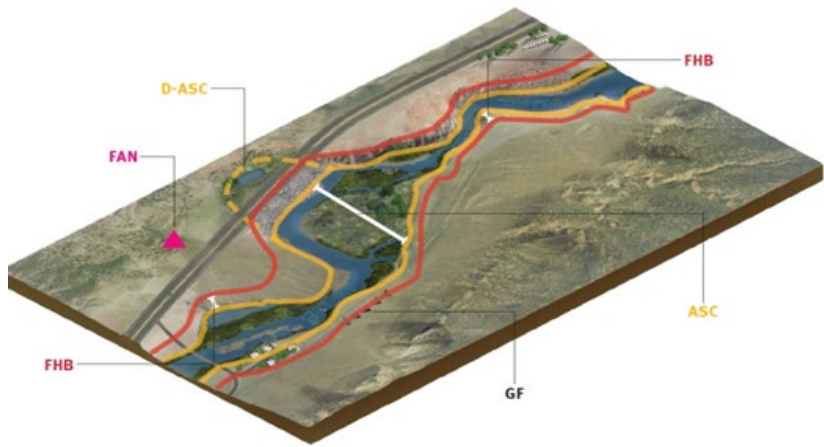
The following pages describe the work that supported the workshop discussions and informed the decision process.

# Conditions Assessment

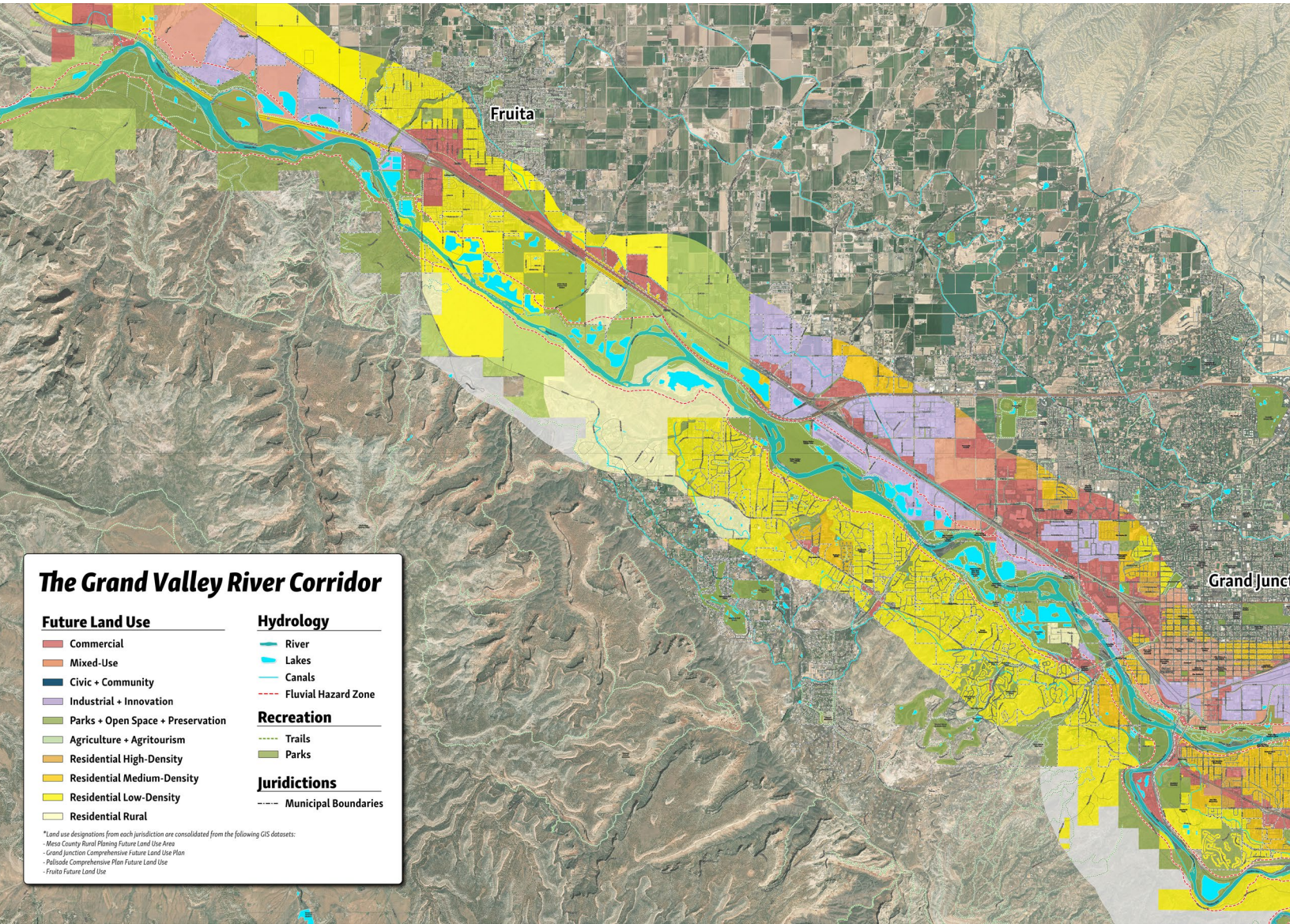
Key challenges identified during the jurisdictional process along the river corridor today include coordination among the three municipalities and one county, siloed decision-making, the number of groups, organizations, and agencies participating in the existing and future use of the river, shrinking summer and fall flows, environmentally threatened species, and growing riverfront development pressure. Jurisdictions shared

current development locations and challenges along the river and expressed interest in the balance between growth and preservation of the natural environment along the river corridor.

The recently completed [Fluvial Hazard Zone](#) delineation of the Grand Valley identifies, among other things, the Active Stream Corridor (ASC) and the Fluvial Hazard Buffer (FHB), also referred to as the Fluvial Hazard Zone (FHZ). Although many rivers in our cities are channelized today, a healthy river corridor typically



- Active Stream Corridor (ASC)
- Fluvial Hazard Buffer (FHB)
- Avulsion Hazard Zone (AHZ)—Not Shown
- Fan (F)
- Geotechnical Flag (GF)



## The Grand Valley River Corridor

### Future Land Use

- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Civic + Community
- Industrial + Innovation
- Parks + Open Space + Preservation
- Agriculture + Agritourism
- Residential High-Density
- Residential Medium-Density
- Residential Low-Density
- Residential Rural

### Hydrology

- River
- Lakes
- Canals
- Fluvial Hazard Zone

### Recreation

- Trails
- Parks

### Jurisdictions

- Municipal Boundaries

\*Land use designations from each jurisdiction are consolidated from the following GIS datasets:  
- Mesa County Rural Planning Future Land Use Area  
- Grand Junction Comprehensive Future Land Use Plan  
- Palisade Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use  
- Fruita Future Land Use

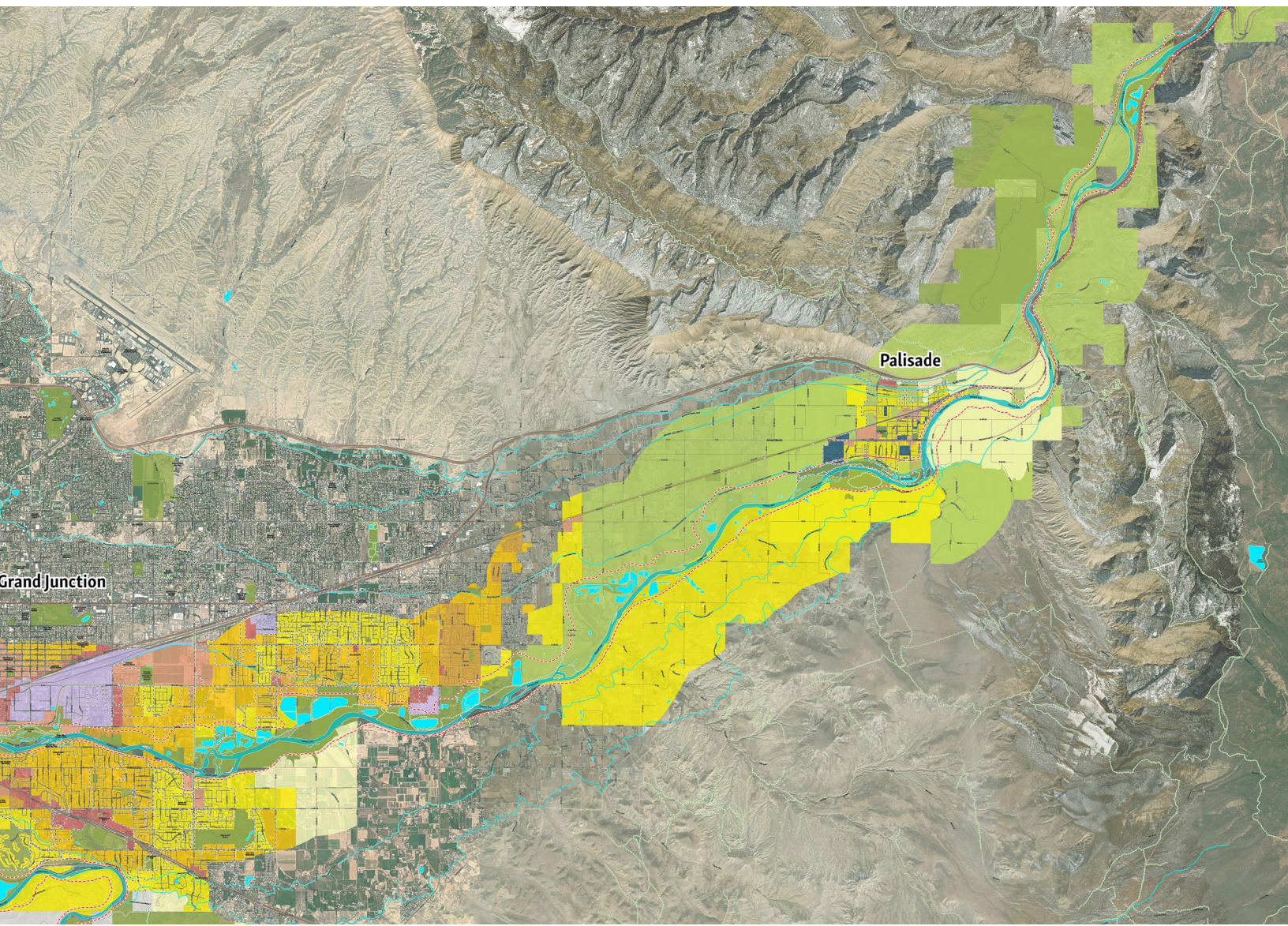
migrates and retains the room in which to migrate through the urbanized area (or within segments therein).

The ASC is the corridor within which the river channel would migrate if left alone and is typically much wider than the visible river footprint. Beyond the ASC lies the margins, often valley slopes, that may not flood but could be influenced by the river channel known as the FHZ.

Since 1937 the river through Grand Valley has migrated significantly and minimizing impact to development while allowing that migration is critical. The mapping of both the ASC and FHZ is an important step in understanding potential risks for existing and future land use and in defining a future pathway for the river. Future channel migration potential and the FHZ should influence infrastructure investment locations, land use patterns, and future development in proximity to the river. Additionally, this information can reveal

opportunities for increased parks or open spaces that support the health of the river, giving it space to migrate.

To visualize this, OV Consulting overlaid the FHZ with planned jurisdictional land use along the river corridor for consideration in evaluating the future of the river corridor. The figure illustrates locations where the FHZ impacts land use development or aligns with open spaces today and reveals the locations where smart, safe and compatible development patterns make sense. This overlay can enable jurisdictions to stay in front of potential river migration, reconnect to the floodplain and restore river health. FHZ mapping should guide jurisdictional decision-making around land use and infrastructure decisions, inform parks and recreational opportunities, and be central to a public education and communication program.



During the workshop series, representatives from each jurisdiction collectively discussed their core values around land use and the river corridor and identified top priorities or considerations for the future health of the river:

- Input from previous river corridor stakeholder workshops from 2020-2022 was also referenced to confirm the jurisdictional values. Important features of the River Corridor and critical threats and challenges were identified:

## IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE RIVER CORRIDOR

Agricultural: **35%**

Education / Awareness: 5%



## Visioning

The key challenges and jurisdictional values identified in Workshop #1 served as the foundation for the Visioning exercise held in Workshop #2. Workshop attendees formed three groups to confirm shared values and craft language in support of a river corridor vision. Input ranged from full vision statements to the identification of supporting vision elements. Draft language and key input on the Vision included the following:

1. Commit to supporting a vibrant and healthy river corridor that benefits a diverse community of stakeholders for future generations.
2. Activate areas with parks, open spaces, and trails.
3. Keep commercial uses out of the flood zone.
4. Cluster land uses and create sub-areas for diverse uses, from urbanized to passive natural areas.
5. Consider buffer zones within the sub-areas and avoid development with the Fluvial Hazard Zone.
6. Plan for “100 Years” or “The Next Century” or “Forever” along our river.



## The Grand Valley River Corridor Vision

*The communities of the Grand Valley are committed to a science-driven approach to steward a resilient, vibrant, and healthy river corridor that supports the values of agriculture, habitat and wildlife, recreation, economic growth, and sustainable development benefiting today's and future generations.*

The Grand Valley River Vision was reviewed and finalized by the RCI Advisory Council.

# Supporting Vision Elements to Guide Future Planning: (DRAFT)

## 1. “Ecology & Wildlife Resilience” / “A Dynamic River”

- Prioritize the restoration and preservation of riparian habitats, aquatic ecosystems, and wildlife corridors.
- Give the river room to move.
- Implement proactive measures to mitigate invasive species, re-mediate landslides, and enhance water quality.
- Build resilience to natural hazards, climate change impacts, and socio-economic challenges through adaptive planning and management strategies.
- Prioritize measures to enhance floodplain management, wildfire resilience, and public safety within the river corridor.

## 2. “A Recreational Asset” / “A Recreational River”

- Celebrate recreational opportunities along the river corridor while safeguarding its natural beauty and ecological integrity.
- Provide inclusive and equitable public access to activities, such as hiking, biking, paddling, and wildlife observation.
- Promotes the corridor as both a community and tourist destination

## 3. “A Connected Corridor”

- Promote seamless connectivity with an extensive network of trails, parks, and green spaces along the river corridor.
- Ensure equitable access to the riverfront for all community members, including measures to address barriers and enhance safety.

## 4. “Grand Valley Vitality”

- Encourage responsible economic development that harmonizes with agricultural needs and environmental systems.
- Support innovative projects that enhance the riverfront's economic vitality, create job opportunities, and attract visitors.

## 5. “Balanced Land Use”

- Integrate land use planning efforts to balance development interests with ecological preservation goals.
- Consider regulations and policies that promote resilient and adaptive development patterns.

## 6. “Corridor Communities” / “Community First”

- Cultivate a sense of stewardship, community ownership, and acknowledgment of the river through robust public engagement and educational outreach programs.
- Empower residents, stakeholders, and future generations to participate in decision-making processes and advocate for the river's well-being.

## 7. “Collaborative Governance” / “A United River Corridor”

- Foster collaborative partnerships among government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private stakeholders to manage the river corridor.
- Establish a coordinated governance framework to facilitate joint planning, resource-sharing, and collective action.

# Planning Tools and Strategies

Cities and Counties across the United States are working to reclaim their rivers and improve the health of often industrialized river corridors. Numerous tools are available and it is the job of each jurisdiction to determine the right path forward for their river corridor. Following the development of the Grand Valley River Vision, jurisdictions explored a range of planning tools and strategies that could be used to achieve the Vision.

The diagram shown below organizes a range of tools into three tiers, ranging in scale and regulatory strength. Tools can be adopted by jurisdictions individually, or tools could be adopted on a multi-jurisdictional level and applied along the entirety of the Grand Valley River Corridor. Often this sort of broader application occurs through the delineation of space along the river referred to as an “influence zone” or “special planning area”, or “river district”.

## Tier 1: Broad Tools

1. Multi-jurisdictional Plans
2. Mapping / Inventory
3. Planning Guidance
4. Resolutions
5. IGAs

## Tier 2: Intermediate Tools

1. Regulations / Ordinances
2. Conservancy / Management Districts
3. Design Guidelines
4. Special Purpose Plans

## Tier 3: Site-Specific Tools

1. Sub-Area Plans
2. Zoning Amendments
3. Site-Specific Improvements

# City Spotlights



## Boise, Idaho

Boise, ID built upon a series of planning efforts to address 10 miles of the Boise River.

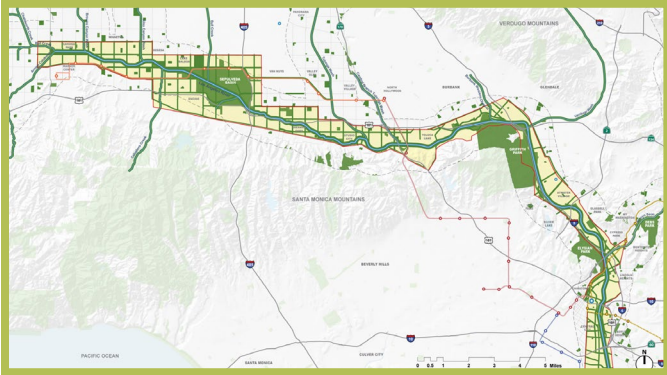
1. Original Boise River Plan (1985)
2. Boise River System Ordinance (1997)
3. Boise River Resource Management and Master Plan (1999)
4. Master Plan Update (2014)

**Key Outcomes:** The Greenbelt Setback – All activities & development within the setback require River System application. River recommendations address safety, lighting, security, recreation, signage and wayfinding, ecology, and riparian habitat.

## Los Angeles River, California

LA River Master Plan is a multi-jurisdictional river corridor plan covering 51 miles of river through multiple jurisdictions. Goals associated with the Master Plan include:

1. Reduce flood risk and improve resiliency.
2. Provide equitable, inclusive, and safe parks, open space, and trails.
3. Support healthy connected ecosystems.
4. Enhance opportunities for equitable access to the river corridor.
5. Embrace and enhance opportunities for arts and culture.
6. Address potential adverse impacts to housing affordability and people experiencing homelessness.
7. Foster opportunities for continued community engagement, development, and education.
8. Improve local water supply reliability.
9. Promote healthy, safe, and clean water.



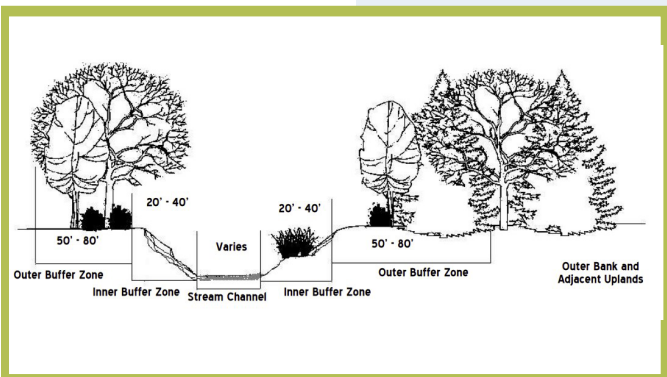
**Key Outcomes:** River Improvement Overlay District (RIO). A Special Use district and implemented ordinance that requires projects within the district to address watershed, urban design and mobility guidelines. Extends ½ mile to either side of the river for 32 miles in length.

## City of Colorado Springs, Colorado

Through a series of regulatory tools and design guidelines, the City of Colorado Springs has planned for the future of their river.

Beginning in 2002, the City adopted the Streamside Ordinance establishing oversight of the area along the river. Subsequently, the Streamside Overlay Zone identified 3 stream types and varying buffer widths for protection of each type. The Streamside Design Guidelines evaluate development within the Streamside Overlay Zone against 11 review criteria including site design, trails and recreation, floodplain, natural features, stream bank stabilization and riparian buffers, among others.

The Ordinance and Overlay Zone were updated in 2007.



*Streamside Overlay Zone*

## Agreement for Future Planning

Following discussion of the range of planning tools and strategies in place in other cities, the jurisdictions debated the appropriate next steps for the Grand Valley. While land use decisions are unique to each jurisdiction, the importance of a consistent approach and overarching guidance to recreation, mobility, land use development and preservation of the river corridor was vital to its future. It was decided that a multi-jurisdictional River Corridor Master Plan would provide the guidance desired and still allow zoning and development decisions at the local level.

A multi-jurisdictional Joint Resolution would serve as the agreement among Palisade, Grand Junction, Fruita, and Mesa County to plan collaboratively along the River Corridor, enter into a Master Planning process, and follow the policy direction provided through that document in the future. Decisions around the delineation of space along the river, and the formation of future river districts, special zones, or governance strategies would be discussed in coordination with the Master Planning process.

This Planning Framework documents the identification of core values, visioning process, and agreement by Grand Valley jurisdictions to consider the future of their river corridor and take the agreed upon planning steps to enhance and preserve that future.

## Acknowledgment

The efforts of the jurisdiction to work through the Visioning process and to identify the future steps to preserve the Grand Valley River Corridor is a critical step. Acknowledgment is credited to the jurisdictions, River's Edge West, and the supporting consultants for a successful process and agreed upon Master Planning outcome.

## Thank You

- Carrie Gudorf, Mesa County
- Faye Hall, Mesa County
- Erik Borschel, Mesa County
- Laura Page, Mesa County
- Sean Norris, Mesa County
- Dan Caris, Fruita
- Kimberly Bullen, Fruita
- Mark Mancuso, Fruita
- Sam Atkins, Fruita
- David Thornton, Grand Junction
- Jennifer Nitzky, Grand Junction
- Ken Sherbenou, Grand Junction
- Tamara Allen, Grand Junction
- Tim Lehrbach, Grand Junction
- Trenton Prall, Grand Junction
- Shannon Wadas, Rivers Edge West
- Rusty Lloyd, Rivers Edge West
- Joel Sholtes, Rivers Edge West & Colorado Mesa University
- Brian Murphy, River Network
- Hannah Holm, American Rivers
- Mary Cornforth, Strategic by Nature
- Stacy Beaugh, Strategic by Nature
- Beth Vogelsang, OV Consulting
- Reese Shaw, OV Consulting
- Mark Johnson, Civitas
- Troy Thompson, ERC

## **Attachments**

Attachment A: Multi-Jurisdictional Joint Resolution DRAFT April 2024

Attachment B: RCI Workshop #1 Summary

Attachment C: RCI Workshop #2 Summary

Attachment D: River Corridor Future Land Use & Hydrology - Full Map

# The Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative

## Multi-Jurisdictional Joint Resolution

<b>Subject:</b> The Grand River Valley Corridor Initiative	
<b>Resolution Number:</b> #XX	<b>Effective Date:</b> MM/DD/2024

### Background

The Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative (RCI) is a community-driven initiative focused on supporting and maintaining a healthy river corridor and the associated needs, uses, and values for generations to come. The RCI was formed in 2020 to address the acute need for enhanced coordination, planning, and collaboration on river corridor-related activities. A Core Team leads it with representatives from RiversEdge West, Colorado Mesa University, and American Rivers. OV Consulting was contracted to provide necessary river system support and move the process forward by coordinating with local municipalities and stakeholders.

The RCI Core Team hosted three multi-jurisdictional planning workshops in Grand Junction on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, to convene planners and professionals from Mesa County, Fruita, Grand Junction, and Palisade to discuss the future of the Grand Valley River Corridor, craft a shared vision for the River Corridor, and discuss planning strategies to support the development of an inter-jurisdictional River Corridor planning framework. Representatives from all four jurisdictions agreed that this joint resolution should serve as an agreement to plan collaboratively along the Grand Valley River Corridor and to move forward with a multi-jurisdictional River Master Plan.

WHEREAS, the Grand River Valley Corridor holds significant ecological, recreational, and economic value for the communities of Mesa County, Grand Junction, Palisade, and Fruita; and

WHEREAS, the state of the river has been changing in recent years with more recreation and development along the river.

WHEREAS, it is recognized that the coordinated planning and management of the Grand River Valley Corridor is essential to preserving its natural beauty, enhancing recreational opportunities, and fostering sustainable development; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by Mesa County, and the municipalities of Grand Junction, Palisade, and Fruita, that:

RESOLVED, Mesa County, Grand Junction, Palisade, and Fruita agree to collaborate in the creation of a comprehensive River Corridor Master Plan.

RESOLVED, That the following vision statement shall be adopted by all parties to reflect the shared values of communities throughout the Grand Valley: *“The communities of the Grand Valley are committed to a science-driven approach to steward a resilient, vibrant, and healthy river corridor that supports the values of agriculture, habitat and wildlife, recreation, economic growth, and sustainable development benefiting today’s and future generations.”*; and

RESOLVED, it is deemed necessary for the RCI to facilitate and identify necessary funding and cost-share models in order to hire a contractor to facilitate the creation of a River Corridor Master Plan;

### **Party Agreement**

We, the undersigned representatives of Mesa County, Grand Junction, Palisade, and Fruita, hereby agree to the terms outlined in this Joint Resolution and pledge our full cooperation and support towards the successful development and implementation of the Grand River Valley Corridor Master Plan.

Signed this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner, Mesa County

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor/Council Representative, Grand Junction

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor/Council Representative, Palisade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor/Council Representative, Fruita



## MEETING NOTES

**MEETING:**     **Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative:  
Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Workshop #1**  
Mesa County Central Library, Grand Junction

**DATE:**        **November 7, 2023**

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### Attendees

**Jurisdictions:**

Mark Mancuso – Fruita Parks & Recreation  
Kimberly Bullen – Fruita Public Works  
Sam Atkins – Fruita Engineering

Dave Gray – Palisade Public Works  
Troy Ward – Palisade Parks & Facilities

Erik Borschel – Mesa County Public Works  
Faye Hall – Mesa County Planning Department  
Sean Norris – Mesa County Planning

Tamra Ailen – Grand Junction Community Development  
Jenny Nitzley– Grand Junction Community Development  
Trent Prall – Grand Junction Public Works  
Dave Thornton - Grand Junction Planning  
Tim Lehrbach – Grand Junction Planning

**Core Team:**

Rusty Lloyd - RCI  
Joel Sholtes – RCI  
Shannon Wadas – RiversEdge West  
Mary Cornforth – Strategic by Nature  
Beth Vogelsang – OV Consulting  
Kat Hill – OV Consulting

### Meeting Purpose and Schedule

This meeting was the first in a series of three jurisdictional workshops to discuss the Grand Valley River Corridor and to achieve the following:

- Develop a coordinated approach to creating a shared vision for the river corridor
- Explore planning and management strategies for the corridor that align with the vision

- Inform the engagement process with the community
- Develop an agreed-upon planning framework and next steps

The agenda included a recap of the River Corridor Initiative, an introduction to the Planning Framework process, an update on recent Fluvial Hazard Mapping and a group exercise to share jurisdictional updates, identify key challenges or concerns and begin to identify core values or goals along the river corridor. (See Workshop #1 pdf for full presentation)

The following process schedule was shared with the group:



## Group Exercise: Jurisdictional Updates, Challenges or Concerns

Each jurisdiction provided an update or identified key concerns they are currently facing along the river corridor. All input was captured through sticky notes and conversation.

### Palisade

#### Updates

- Undergoing riverbank restoration @ Riverbend Park - Tamarisk and Russian Olive invasive species removal.
- Boat Launch improvement @ Harkey's
- Palisade Pipes and Laterals now managed by town (provides non-treated water for irrigation)
- Watershed / Water Quality improvements @ Rapid Creek
- Decommissioning Wastewater Treatment Plant at Sewer Lagoon to use Clifton Sewer - will consider re-development or restoration of the site and riparian habitat

#### Concerns/Challenges

- Palisade owns one square mile – we have a small footprint with limited influence
- Most property along the river is privately owned
- Residents are supportive and understanding about what is happening, after initial shock at sight of chainsaws removing invasive species
- Interested in partnerships to help with projects, particularly Palisade High School

- Current projects have limited crew size - RiversEdge West & Conservation Corp have been critical to getting this work completed.

## Mesa County

### Updates

- [One Riverfront Trail Planning Project](#) alternative analysis working with One Riverfront from Clifton to Palisade
- Hillslope Failure
- Remediation of 29 Road landslide on the south side of the river

### Concerns/Challenges

- High prevalence of gravel quarries that are economic driver for unincorporated area
- Homeless population occupying the river
- Floodplain Management / Wildfire mitigation and emergency services
- Land Use Planning in residential and agricultural areas
- Development applications often trying to be close to the river and running into geologic and floodplain hazards. Several want to run camping or Airbnb businesses in floodplain.
- Interested in being involved / cooperating but depends on specific issue. In some cases elected officials don't need to be involved.
- View RCI as an opportunity to create a working partnership between governments, nonprofits, and private groups that have a vested interest in project. Need to identify who leads, who has resources and support for various projects as well as holistic feel of bigger picture and how the projects feed into that picture.
- How to be sustainable on your own and be supportive of each other?

## Fruita

### Updates

- Reactivate some of the river corridor, especially River Beach Property.
  - Currently site planning with developer for old Fruita Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Water Conservation and Land Use effort through Growing Water Smart Conference

### Concerns/Challenges

- Linking project needs with funding sources
- Corridor connectivity – everything ends in Fruita
- Reservoirs
- Invasive species removal
- Wildfire mitigation
- Preserving city water rights
- Riverfront access currently limited - working to improve access, particularly a boat launch.
- Pedestrian connectivity around and near the river
- TMDLs and Irrigation Water Quality – E Coli (Adobe and Leach), Iron & Selenium (14 Drainages)

- Adobe, + Ridge, Creek, Tributaries, Not Colorado
- Water Conservation/Land Use
- [Mountain Water Properties](#)
- Hadn't yet heard of [Fluvial Hazard Zone Mapping](#)

## Grand Junction

### Updates

- New Development: Las Colonias, Dos Rios, The Eddy (private) demonstrates desire to be near river's edge
- New riverfront trail connections are being developed between Las Colonias and 29 Road.
- Land use plan was updated in 2020. The new plan identifies opportunities for underdeveloped properties and proximity to the river
- Sustainability Adaptation Plan is currently underway, including sections for water, natural resources, tree canopy, and habitat
- River trail upgrades are being completed in coordination with Colorado Parks and Wildlife on C ½ Road as well as other trails
- Study underway of Redlands Parkway from State Highway 340 to Riverside Parkway
- [Desert Rivers Collaborative](#) Memorandum of Understanding currently under consideration for re-signing

### Concerns/Challenges

- Maintenance of Watson Island
- Private land use development and interaction with future planning efforts (Las Colonias, the Eddy, Dos Rios, mineral extraction, campgrounds, Air B&B's, etc. along the river)
  - Interested in densification in the Broadway to Redlands Parkway zone and further west
- Desire for access to the river and better utilization of River Trail Lakes State Park
- Unhoused individuals living along river present challenges to access, flow, development & safety
- Wildfire mitigation, habitat protection and endangered species must be balanced with human needs
- Water Volume and Flows (high and low water)
- Low-lying communities in the floodplain, such as Riverside Neighborhood (low-income)
- Redlands trail race, river (kayak park) and development at Connected Lakes State Park
- Interface with Army Corps & US Fish & Wildlife

## Key Takeaways

The jurisdictions collectively discussed their core values around land use and the river corridor. All input was captured through sticky notes and conversation. The core themes and shared values identified through this conversation included:

- Ecological health, riparian habitat, and aquatic species are the top priority
- The river is a recreational asset and public amenity; recreational use in and along the river corridor, and recreational use “because” of the river
- The river is a spine; trail connectivity along the river and increased access to the river is critical
- Activation, economic development, and housing supply along the river are important aspects of the river’s edge
- Open space, viewsheds, and natural environment along the river should be integrated with river’s edge and influence development decisions (not a commercialized strip)
- Increased education, engagement, and awareness of all aspects of river health and use is important

Additional items for consideration and discussion included:

- Through this process, jurisdictions would like to establish baseline practices and goals for the river corridor that make municipal boundaries along the river nearly indistinguishable
- Public access to the river and land development must be balanced with environmental goals, such as protection of ecological habitat and endangered species
- With population growth, how can the river corridor be protected from the impacts of expansion of necessary public infrastructure and facilities (i.e. wastewater, intakes and treatment plants)?

## Action Items

In an effort to further understand each jurisdiction’s objectives and concerns, the consultant team will meet with staff from each jurisdiction to review and verify the above notes. From there, the consultant team will develop a menu of planning framework tools to explore through the second jurisdictional workshop in January 2024. These tools will be aimed at alleviating concerns and challenges expressed during Workshop #1, while fostering the values expressed by the jurisdictions.



## MEETING NOTES

**MEETING:** Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative:  
Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Workshop #2  
Mesa County Central Library, Grand Junction

**DATE:** February 6, 2024

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### Attendees

**Fruita:**

Kimberly Bullen – Fruita Public Works

Henry Hemphill – Fruita Planning & Development Department

**Palisade:**

Troy Ward – Palisade Parks & Facilities

**Grand Junction**

Dave Thornton - Grand Junction Planning

**Mesa County**

Erik Borschel – Mesa County Public Works

Faye Hall – Mesa County Planning Department

Carrie Gudorf – Mesa County Stormwater Management

**RCI Core Team:**

Rusty Lloyd - RCI

Joel Sholtes – RCI

Shannon Wadas – RiversEdge West

Mary Cornforth – Strategic by Nature

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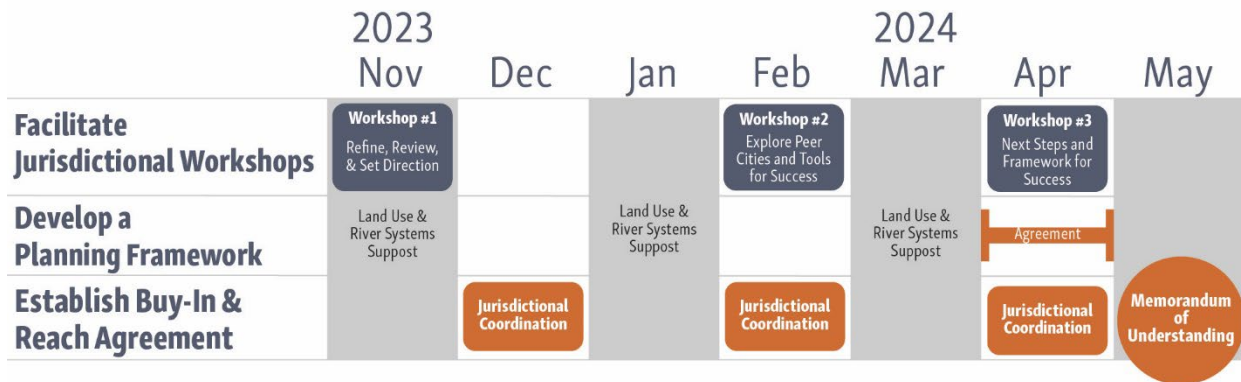
### Meeting Purpose

The agenda for Workshop #2 consisted of:

1. Revising the Draft Vision Statement for the Grand Valley River Corridor
2. Exploring management tools & planning framework examples from peer cities
3. Discussion of a Joint Resolution and next steps

## Project Schedule

The following process schedule was shared with the group:



## Foundation for the Vision: Issues & Values

The project team captured key concerns from each jurisdiction during Workshop #1 and throughout subsequent follow-up meetings with each jurisdiction. The key issues listed below served as guidance for a visioning refinement exercise at the beginning of Workshop #2:

### Key Issues:

- Watershed & Water Quality
- Removal of invasive species
- Restoration of river's edge
- Remediation of landslide, hillslope failure
- Floodplain management and wildfire mitigation concerns
- Water conservation and increasing land use
- Number of gravel ponds
- Changing land use along the river
- Lack of connectivity along river; limited access to riverfront or trails
- Lack of public access to river
- Growing recreational demand and use
- Increase in overnight stays along the river; B&B and camping
- Homeless population living along the river
- Safety
- Need for working partnerships to support projects of all kinds

Using the key issues as a foundation, the project team developed a list of potential values that might align with each jurisdiction's needs and conditions

### **Aligning Values:**

- Ecological health, riparian habitat, and aquatic species are top priority
- The river is a recreational asset and public amenity; recreational use in and along, and recreational use "because" of the river;
- The river is a spine; trail connectivity along the river and increased access to the river is critical
- Activation, economic development, and housing supply along the river are important aspects of the river's edge.
- Open space, viewsheds, and natural environment along the river should be integrated with river's edge and influence development decisions (not a commercialized strip)
- Increased education, engagement, and awareness of all aspects of river health and use is important

## **Vision Statement Exercise**

A visioning exercise was held to further refine the draft Vision Statement for the corridor. Attendees formed three groups to discuss shared values related to the river corridor and the wording for a Vision Statement. Some groups created Vision Statements that were detailed, outlining specific vision elements, while other groups approached the Vision Statement as something that should be broad, high-level, and long-term.

The following draft Vision Statement was provided during the exercise as an example for group discussion

### **Example Vision Statement:**

***"The people of the Grand Valley enjoy and live in harmony with the river, appreciating and stewarding the diverse benefits it brings to our economy, environment, and quality of life and maintaining and enhancing those benefits for future generations through actions that:***

- ***Support the health of the river and its aquatic species;***
- ***Preserve and protect wildlife and riparian habitat;***
- ***Enable accessible active and passive recreation opportunities;***
- ***Ensure public access through connected trails and parks;***
- ***Integrate land use and economic opportunity sustainably and in context to the river."***

Group A developed their own vision statement by revising the example statement, while Groups B and C developed new lists of vision elements. The following are the verbatim revised Vision Statements and Vision Elements resulting from the exercise:

## Group A:

**Revised Vision Statement:** *“The Grand Valley will commit to supporting a vibrant and healthy river corridor that benefits a diverse community of stakeholders for future generations”*

### Vision Elements:

- *Water quality*
- *Floodplain*
- *Recreation*
- *Transportation*
- *Connection & infrastructure*
- *Maintain access*
- *Tourism*
- *Land use & development*
- *Give the river room (to move)*
- *Accessible & benefitting everyone*

## Group B:

### Vision Elements:

- *Activate areas with parks, open space and trails*
  - *Long-term vision*
- *Keep commercial out of the flood zone*
- *Cluster appropriate uses*
- *Initial considerations as projects come up*

## Group C:

### Vision Elements & Comments:

- *Add “terrestrial” to first point or change to “all wildlife systems” [in reference to the provided example vision statement]*
- *Explore creating sub areas for diverse uses, e.g. more urbanized vs passive natural*
  - *Sub areas would have a spectrum of high-intensity → low-intensity uses*
  - *Need for buffer zones, in perpetuity, among areas or sub areas of development*
- *Long-term vision and planning for a River Corridor*
- *Planning for “100 Years” or “The Next Century” or “Forever” along our rivers*
- *Safe (Access, Public Safety, Not Hazardous, Avoiding Development in the Fluvial Hazard Zone)*

## Planning Framework Toolkit

Planning framework tools were presented in tiers, ranging in scale and regulatory strength, but ultimately decisions are up to jurisdictions on an individual level and were discussed with the group through the peer city examples shown below.

### Tier 1: Broad Tools

- Multi-jurisdictional plan
- Mapping & Inventory
- Planning Guidance
- Resolution
- IGA

### Tier 2: Intermediate Tools

- Regulations/Ordinances
- Conservancy/ Management Districts
- Design Guidelines
- Special Purpose Plans

### Tier 3: Site-Specific Tools

- Sub-Area Plans
- Zoning
- Site-Specific Improvement

## Peer City Examples:

- A. **Boise, Idaho Master Plan** - Moderately flexible plan that pairs together an ordinance, master plan, and management district.
- B. **San Diego River Park** - supplement to 14 community plans (multi-jurisdictional)
- C. **LA River Master Plan** - 51 miles through multiple jurisdictions
  - Created RIO - River Improvement Overlay District
  - Land use zoning overlay improved
  - Identified primary goals then broke into sections (guidance coupled with delineation).
  - 3-part governance structure: Foundation to write grants and receive monies, private for-profit development corporation to beneficial projects from land use side for economic benefit, governance authority - coordinated management.
- D. **Chicago River Design Guidelines** - More authority than LA, zone district for entire river corridor. Less discretion.
- E. **Georgia Multi-Jurisdictional Trail Framework** - Flexible, more like guidance, focus on trail recreational framework and economic vitality of tourism .
- F. **CO Springs - Ordinance + Design Guidelines** (single jurisdiction example) - Identifies 3 tiers of stream typologies, each having unique design guidelines.

- G. **Ft, Collins** - Similar framework to CO Springs but greater focus on ecology. Master Plan was not part of their picture
- H. **Denver/South Platte** - No encompassing Master Plan, but The Healthy River Corridor Study created 200 ft. influence zone, adopted through Dept of Transportation and Infrastructure Rules and Regulations
- I. **Miami, Ohio** - Miami Conservancy District used as governing body to increase flood resiliency
- J. **San Antonio Riverwalk Master Plan** – Specific planning area that fits into part of a larger stormwater management system

## Outcomes & Next Steps

Representatives from each jurisdiction discussed their preferences towards next steps in the planning process. All four jurisdictions were receptive towards using a Joint Resolution to serve as an agreement to plan collaboratively along the Grand Valley River Corridor. There was also significant interest in using the Joint Resolution as a foundation for future master planning efforts along the river corridor.

The identification of a Working Group within the Joint Resolution was briefly discussed, although specific details were not elaborated on. It should also be noted that there was an interest in establishing programs to increase awareness and education around the Grand Valley River Corridor through any future efforts.

### Action Items:

1. OV to develop a revised Vision using input from Workshop #2
  - a. Send revised Vision to RCI Core Team for review prior to RCI Advisory Council Meeting (February 29<sup>th</sup>) & add new Vision to RCI website after input from the Advisory Council.
2. OV to draft a memorandum for jurisdictions summarizing RCI's mission, the direction of the planning framework, and the details of a Resolution/MOU to support jurisdictional briefings.
3. Craft draft language for a Joint Resolution, MOU, etc.

### Joint Resolution Discussion Notes:

- Resolution needs to be about cooperative planning and the intention to enter into a cooperative planning agreement.
- This is a starting point to think collectively, to get out ahead and preserve a currently healthy river.
- A joint resolution is possible, have been successful with other efforts - intent to plan collaboratively.
- Identify River Influence Zone - a good community awareness tool, task of Master Plan is to articulate actual zone.

### Master Plan Discussion Notes:

- A master plan would identify goals and categories that impact the river.
- A master plan would supplement or be an amendment to jurisdictional plans.
- Over time, zoning is adjusted to reflect priorities identified in the Master Plan.
- Master Plan distinguishes between the health of the river and the health of the community - they are very different things and stay with each community.



- Process and components can be delineated in the Master Plan. Identify the trigger for concern or actions. Trigger varies by community.
- How do you deal with things already in place in the identified zone?
  - Changes occur over time as opportunity arises

### The Grand Valley River Corridor

#### Future Land Use

- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Civic + Community
- Industrial + Innovation
- Parks + Open Space + Preservation
- Agriculture + Agritourism
- Residential High-Density
- Residential Medium-Density
- Residential Low-Density
- Residential Rural

#### Hydrology

- River
- Lakes
- Canals
- Fluvial Hazard Zone

#### Recreation

- Trails
- Parks

#### Jurisdictions

- Municipal Boundaries

\*Land use designations from each jurisdiction are consolidated from the following GIS datasets:

- Meso County Rural Planning Future Land Use Area
- Grand Junction Comprehensive Future Land Use Plan
- Palisade Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use
- Fruita Future Land Use

