

Plan Theme: An Authentic Place

Background

Grand Lake is distinguished by its authenticity as a Colorado mountain town. It has retained its rustic character through the efforts of an actively engaged community that strongly values its history and local culture.

Grand Lake’s “Rustic Style” of architecture is reflected in several buildings listed on the Colorado Historic Register, including:

- The Grand Lake Community House built in 1922 in the center of the historic town square. The Community House is used for a variety of public and private events.
- The Grand Lake Lodge, completed in 1920, continues to service visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park and Grand Lake.
- The Kauffman House, built in 1892 as a hotel to accommodate summer tourists. The Kauffman House currently serves as a museum.
- The Smith Eslick Cottage Camp, a motor court built in 1915. The GLAHS is working to preserve the Cottage Camp site dedicated to Grand Lake’s early auto tourism history.

With the exception of the Grand Lake Community House, these properties are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Kauffman House 10



Grand Lake Lodge 11



Grand Lake Community House 9



Smith Eslick Cottage Camp 12

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The Town’s geographic setting – bordered by Rocky Mountain National Park, Grand Lake, Shadow Mountain Reservoir, the Arapaho National Forest, and United States Bureau of Reclamation land – strongly influences its development pattern and compact form. Like many towns originally settled in the late 1800’s, Grand Lake was platted in a grid pattern of wide streets. The original grid pattern is interrupted by a glacial moraine and West Portal Road, most notably in the steep hillside of the Woodpecker Hill residential neighborhood.

Grand Avenue – Grand Lake’s “Main Street” – is the central spine of the original grid with a 100-foot wide right-of-way. Grand Avenue’s major cross streets, from Pitkin Street to Walden Street, are 80 feet wide. Mountain Avenue and Park Avenue also have 100-foot right-of-ways. The wide street rights-of-way contribute to Grand Lake’s unique character, most notably in the form of the boardwalks that line Grand Avenue within the town’s commercial core.



Grand Lake’s Modified Grid Pattern

In 2015, a study to enhance the function and appearance of Grand Avenue was completed. The Grand Avenue Streetscape Master Plan identified four major “interventions” for Grand Avenue, as follows:

1. Define the blocks of the first four blocks of Grand Avenue (Portal Rd. to Vine St.) with a driving lane, bike/snowmobile lane, greenway, and sidewalk.
2. Enhance the corners from Vine St. to Hancock St. with curb extensions to gain pedestrian space and safety.
3. Create seasonal mid-block extensions to bring pedestrian space and activity to the street.
4. Create and clarify greenway regulations, maintenance plan, and development strategies to fully utilize this pedestrian space.

In addition to prioritizing multiple short, mid and long-term action items, the Grand Avenue Streetscape Master

Plan included recommendations from several other plans and studies completed since 2006, including the original 2006 Grand Lake Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the Grand Lake Community Assessment, and the Gateway Community Livability Assessment. As such, the Grand Avenue Streetscape Plan is a valuable community design tool for maintaining and enhancing the heart of Grand Lake, its central business district.

The Town and its residents place a high value on quality, controlled growth for the entire community. The Land Use Plan Map on pages 20 and 21 identifies twelve land use designations that are intended to provide guidance for ensuring a balance of residential, commercial, resort and institutional development.

The Land Use Plan Map also identifies three potential future Town growth areas:

1. A number of residences south of the Wescott / Jericho bridge commonly called “Rainbow” Bridge and east along Jericho road. This “Old Grand Lake” area is largely built-out yet may desire Town services in the future and, if so, would need to petition for an annexation election.
2. Multiple residential lots along and accessed from West Portal Road, between the existing Town boundary and Rocky Mountain National Park. Potential residential estate development is also possible in three locations that have a flat to rolling terrain condition and are outside of sensitive drainages.
3. Numerous residential and commercial parcels along US Highway 34 to the North Fork of the Colorado River. Commercial development in this area should complement, and not directly compete with, businesses in Grand Lake’s central business district.

In addition to these three growth areas, there may be individual parcels contiguous to current Town boundaries that could be incorporated into Grand Lake with minimal impact.

The Town does not currently have an adopted Three Mile Area Plan. A Three Mile Area Plan could provide policy direction and review criteria for considering future annexation petitions. A Three Mile Area Plan should be adopted and annually updated in accordance with state annexation statutes. A draft Three Mile Area Plan is included as an appendix to this comprehensive plan.



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Guiding Principle:
We value the historical character and serenity of our small-town community that supports the quality of life in and around Grand Lake.

ACHIEVABLE GOALS, STRATEGIES AND PRIORITY ACTIONS

| Community Design | |
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| Achievable Goal: To preserve Grand Lake’s unique rustic small-town character. | Priority Action: |
| Key Strategy: Work with national, state and local agencies and organizations to protect Grand Lake’s historic resources. | Update the Design Review Standards in Chapter 12 Article 7 of the Town’s Land Use Regulations to include recommendations from the Design Guidelines for the Central Business District and the Streetscape Master Plan. |
| | Continue to implement the Action Items listed in the Streetscape Master Plan. |
| | Explore opportunities to revitalize existing building frontages in the central business district that are inconsistent with the Town’s rustic western style. |
| | Update and implement Lake Front Park design concepts. |
| Land Use | |
| Achievable Goal: To foster quality development. | Priority Action: |
| Key Strategy: Work with local stakeholders to update the Town’s land development regulations. | Update Chapter 12 Article 2 of the Town’s Land Use Regulations to add purpose and intent statements for each of the eighteen zoning districts, and consolidate permitted uses into a single table for ease of reference. |
| | Update Chapter 12 Article 9 of the Town’s Land Use Regulations to streamline development review procedures and consolidate application types into a single table for ease of reference. |
| | Update Chapter 6 Article 2 of the Town’s Sign Code to be legally compliant with content-neutrality standards. |
| | Integrate all relevant Articles from Chapters 6, 11, 12 and 13 of the Town Municipal Code into a unified land development code and resolve any discrepancies or redundancies. |
| | Update the Town’s Official Zoning Map consistent with the Land Use Plan’s color code and any rezoning or other corrections since 2012. |
| Managing Growth | |
| Achievable Goal: To maintain control of local land use decisions. | Priority Action: |
| Key Strategy: Work with Grand County and others to direct growth into appropriate locations. | Adopt a Three Mile Area Plan in accordance with CRS 31-12-105. |
| | Annually adopt a resolution updating the Town’s Three Mile Area Plan in accordance with CRS 31 -12-105. |
| | Prepare an extraterritorial Major Street Plan in accordance with CRS 31-23 212 and 213. |

