

INTRODUCTION

Annexation of unincorporated land into an incorporated municipality is an agreement between a willing land owner and a willing local government. Exceptions may include either 1) single parcels that are eligible for annexation as an enclave, or 2) multiple parcels that are subject to an annexation election. In most cases the Town is approached by a land owner interested in annexation to Grand Lake. Motivations typically include access to the Town’s water system, obtaining other municipal services, and the potential for higher density or intensity of property development. An annexation petition is submitted, often with a pre-annexation agreement negotiated in advance, and the technical process of annexation is governed by procedures contained in state statute.

The Town of Grand Lake Three Mile Area Plan is prepared to comply with Section 31-12-105(1)(e)(I) of the Colorado Revised Statutes, as follows:

...Prior to the completion of any annexation within the Three Mile area, the municipality shall have in place a plan for that area, which generally describes the proposed location, character, and extent of streets, subways, bridges, waterways, waterfronts, parkways, playgrounds, squares, parks, aviation fields, other public ways, grounds, open spaces, public utilities, and terminals for water, light, sanitation, transportation, and power to be provided by the municipality and the proposed land uses for the area. Such plan shall be updated at least once annually...”

All annexations shall be in conformance with the provisions of Section 31-12-101 et. seq. of the Colorado Revised Statutes. The Three Mile Area Plan shall be reviewed and updated annually, incorporating any municipal boundary adjustments and related three-mile area boundary adjustments as necessary.

LOCATION, EXTENT AND CHARACTER OF THREE MILE AREA

The proposed location, extent and character of relevant plan components include but are not limited to:

STREETS AND BRIDGES

County and local roads and bridges service primarily residential and tourist accommodation traffic within the Three Mile area. US Highway 34 transects the Three Mile Area and accommodates high traffic flows in the summer and fall months with Rocky Mountain National Park traffic, peaking at 61,299 vehicles in July 2019. Traffic volume is significantly lower in the winter and spring when Trail Ridge Road is closed, with only 1676 vehicles counted at the Grand Lake entrance in February 2020.

WATERWAYS AND WATERFRONTS

The entirety of Grand Lake and Shadow Mountain Reservoir are located within the Three Mile Area and offer year-round recreational opportunities.

OPEN SPACES, PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

The majority of open space in the Three Mile Area is federally-owned and maintained public land: Rocky Mountain National Park, United States Forest Service/Arapahoe National Recreation Area, and the Bureau of Land Management. Open space also includes property managed by the Grand Lake Metropolitan Recreation District, and private land areas that due to environmental constraints (e.g., designated floodplains) are very unlikely to develop. Local playgrounds, squares, parks and other recreational facilities are abundant within the Town of Grand Lake.

PUBLIC AND MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

Three Lakes Water & Sanitation District provides wastewater treatment service to the community of Grand Lake and the surrounding areas. The Town of Grand Lake provides water service within its incorporated area. Other local utility providers within the Three Mile Area include Mountain Park Electric, Xcel Energy (gas), CenturyLink (telephone/internet), and Comcast (cable/internet).

PROPOSED LAND USE

The proposed land use for the Three Mile Area is classified into the following six categories:

FORESTRY OPEN

The purpose of the Forestry and Open land use designation is to protect lands suitable for forestry, mining and recreation after additional permitting. Higher impact uses are allowed when permitted and mitigated properly. Low density single-family residential uses are permitted in the Forestry and Open land use designation. Federal or State land would generally not be considered for annexation by the Town. If annexed, lands designated as Forestry Open would potentially be zoned into the Town’s Open Space (OS) zoning district.

RESIDENTIAL

The purpose of the Residential land use designation is to provide areas for single-family and multi-family residential use; to ensure other community facilities are available to properly serve said residential developments; to leave ample area available for on-site parking, recreational and outdoor activity areas; and to protect the existing character of the designated area. If annexed, lands designated as Residential would potentially be zoned into one of eight Town zoning districts: Residential Estate (RE); Single Family Residential - Low Density (RSL); Single Family Residential - Medium Density (RSM); Single Family Residential - High Density (RSH); Multiple Family Residential - Low Density (RML); Multiple Family Residential District - Medium Density (RMM); or Multiple Family Residential - High Density (RMH).

MOBILE HOME

The purpose of the Mobile Home land use designation is to allow the use and placement of mobile homes and travel trailers on either a permanent or temporary basis. Other residential uses are also permitted in the Mobile Home land use designation. If annexed, lands designated as Mobile Home would potentially be zoned into the Town’s Mobile Home Residential (HM) zoning district.

BUSINESS

The purpose of the Business land use designation is to provide areas designed for retail shopping convenience of residents and visitors. The Business land use designation provides a wide range of commercial uses, including wholesale, business services, and light manufacturing. If annexed, lands designated as Business would potentially be zoned into the Town’s Commercial (C) zoning district.

TOURIST

The purpose of the Tourist land use designation is to provide areas to accommodate related retail businesses to serve the traveling and recreation oriented public, mainly located along US Highway 34. Residential uses are permitted in the Tourist land use designation. If annexed, lands designated as Tourist would potentially be zoned into the Town’s Resort (RT) zoning district.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The purpose of the Accommodations land use designation is to provide lodging facilities with accessory uses to serve the traveling public, mainly to be located along federal and state highways. Residential uses are permitted in the Accommodations land use designation. If annexed, lands designated as Accommodations would potentially be zoned into the Town’s Resort (RT) zoning district.

ANNEXATION POLICIES

The following five annexation policies are intended to ensure the logical extension of the Town boundaries, so that Grand Lake will expand in a directed and fiscally sound manner.

1. All annexations shall be in conformance with the provisions of Section 31-12-101 et. seq. of the Colorado Revised Statutes. The Three Mile Area Plan shall be reviewed and updated annually, incorporating any municipal boundary adjustments and related three-mile area boundary adjustments as necessary.
2. All annexations shall be in conformance with the Town’s adopted Comprehensive Plan. The Land Use Plan Map in the Comprehensive Plan identifies three potential future Town growth areas. Future annexations should be limited to these three areas, along with any individual parcel currently contiguous to Town boundaries that meets the annexation criteria below.
3. Annexation is an agreement between a willing land owner and a willing local government (the Town of Grand Lake). The Town and property owner shall enter into a pre-annexation agreement as a precursor to any annexation. Pre-annexation agreements establish the conditions of annexation and provide the Town and property owner with a set of negotiated obligations upon annexation.
4. Evaluate annexations based upon their impact on the local tax base and value to the residents of the community. Typically, the annexation of property that has potential for commercial development will provide a greater cost benefit to the Town than the annexation of residential properties. In addition, the annexation of County roads would involve costs associated with future road maintenance, whereas annexations of US 34 would still be maintained by CDOT. A fiscal impact analysis is recommended when considering any annexation petition. An increased tax base should not be the sole determinant, yet be a major objective in ensuring services and facilities desired by Grand Lake citizens that are financially supported and achieve stated land use policies.
5. Carefully consider annexation of enclaves and other areas that are largely surrounded by the Town. There may be one or more unincorporated properties that have been surrounded by Town boundaries for at least three years. Three years is the minimum time requirement that a municipality may unilaterally annex an enclave without property owner consent. Municipalities occasionally annex enclaves in order to avoid problems associated with different zoning requirements and/or the provision of multiple local government services. The cost/benefit may be negligible however, and such annexations can be very controversial with property owners. A fiscal impact analysis, along with a robust public outreach/education effort, is strongly recommended prior to initiating an enclave annexation.

ANNEXATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used by Town officials to determine which parcels of land may be desirable for annexation:

- ❑ Consider those parcels that are contiguous to current Town boundaries and can be served by Grand Lake with little or only minimal adverse impacts.
- ❑ Consider those parcels that offer an opportunity to broaden the housing stock of the Town, and help provide housing for all economic segments of the community.
- ❑ Consider those parcels that can broaden the Town’s commercial or tourism base, and help provide employment opportunities and retail services to area residents.
- ❑ Do not consider parcels that would be difficult to access or serve with public facilities and services due to natural constraints, such as floodplains, steep slopes, wetlands or other similar features, unless such annexation will further natural resource, recreation, open space, historic preservation, wildlife protection, scenic protection, and/or educational objectives.
- ❑ Do not consider parcels with existing rural residential uses unless such parcel is in need of water service due to environmental concerns, and/or poor water quality or quantity.