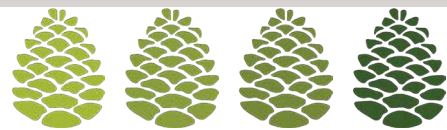




# TOWN OF GRAND LAKE Comprehensive Plan



November 2020



# Plan Theme: A Healthy Economy

## Background

Since the turn of the twentieth century, Grand Lake’s economy has been strongly linked to tourism and outdoor recreation. Grand Lake’s location as the western gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park is a significant economic asset for the community. Over 4.5 million tourists visited Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) in 2018, although the majority of park visitors travel through RMNP’s eastern gateway, Estes Park, and do not make the journey to Grand Lake. In addition, the vast majority of trips to RMNP are between June and September.



Western RMNP Entrance 13

Likewise, Grand Lake’s economy is largely seasonal, yet includes many other unique attractions besides RMNP: hiking, ATV and mountain biking trails on US Forest Service land; a historic, walkable downtown on the shore of Grand Lake; rowing, paddling, boating and fishing on Grand Lake and Shadow Mountain Reservoir; an annual Regatta Week hosted by the Grand Lake Yacht Club; the long-standing Buffalo Days Weekend festival and other local cultural events, notably performances by the Rocky Mountain Repertory Theatre.



Grand Lake Festival 14

Mid-October through Memorial Day is Grand Lake’s “secondary season.” Those visitors that make the journey and access RMNP trails from the edge of town are treated to a winter wonderland. The Grand Lake Golf Course becomes the Grand Lake Nordic Center, available for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Two downhill ski resorts (Winter Park/Mary Jane and Granby Ranch) are within one hour drive of Grand Lake. And with access to hundreds of miles of snowmobile trails, Grand Lake is known as the “Snowmobile Capital of Colorado.”



Snowmobiling in Grand Lake area 15

The sustainability of year-round tourism and outdoor recreation opportunities is vitally important to Grand Lake’s local economy. Grand Lake is committed to outdoor recreation in all seasons. Monthly and annual sales tax revenue from retail, restaurant, and lodging has been steadily increasing for the last several years.

One recent challenge is the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in a dramatic reduction in tourism-related visits during the spring of 2020. Seasonal workers from foreign countries were also not able to travel to Grand Lake during the pandemic. High school students also typically leave the summer workforce in mid-August to return to school. Communities such as Grand Lake that are gateways to national parks can anticipate short-term fluctuations in business stability and revenue. Long-term economic resiliency may become dependent on retaining a year-round workforce that will create additional demand for local goods and services. An expanding workforce will also need to be supported with myriad social and human services in order to live year round in Grand Lake.

# Plan Theme: A Healthy Economy

The image shows the cover of a 'PRELIMINARY FEASIBILITY REPORT' for Grand Lake, CO, dated April 2019. It features a collage of photos: a snowy street scene, a colorful art display, a wooden structure, and a ping pong table. Logos for 'ARTSPACE CONSULTING' and 'GRAND LAKE COLORADO' are at the bottom, along with the text 'Prepared by Artspace Consulting for the Town of Grand Lake'.

Attracting more workforce housing is therefore vital to sustaining a healthy economy. The 2018 Housing Plan for the Study Areas of Granby, Grand Lake, Kremmling, and Hot Sulphur Springs identified the following potential housing unit goal by 2023: 20 homes and apartments deed restricted at or below 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for owners and 100% AMI for renters. The plan noted that accomplishing this goal would address 67% of the gap, in the Grand Lake area.

In 2018, Colorado Creative Industries (CCI) certified Grand Lake as a creative district, with access to the resources of “Space to Create”, a workforce housing program. A preliminary feasibility report completed in 2019 identified multiple sites in Grand Lake for a potential Artspace workforce housing project. A market study is underway and funding opportunities are currently being explored for this exceptional public private partnership opportunity.

Grand Lake has several other tools available for promoting affordable housing development, including an inclusionary housing ordinance, a housing fund, and residential and commercial linkage (impact) fees. Additional funding sources include tax credits, state and federal grant programs, debt financing with favorable terms, and local philanthropy such as the Grand Foundation.

Short-term rentals by owners (STR’s) offer a more frequent use of otherwise unoccupied single-family homes and condominium units within the Town. In 2019, nightly short-term rentals added approximately 860 pillows (assuming 6 to a unit) to the nightly rental inventory. While adding to the nightly rental lodging base and bringing in additional tax revenue, careful consideration should be taken with how the Town moves forward with regard to the short-term rental policy.

Providing an array of community services for workers is also key. Such services should include day care and medical and mental health services for younger populations.

Note: Colorado Statutes require inclusion of a Recreation and Tourism element within a comprehensive plan. The above information is intended to serve as the Recreation and Tourism plan element pursuant to C.R.S. 31-23-207 (5).

The image shows the cover of the '2018 Housing Plan for the Study Areas of Granby, Grand Lake, Kremmling, and Hot Sulphur Springs', dated September 2018. It features a collage of photos: a landscape with a winding river, a house, and a street scene. Logos for 'WILLIFORD, LLC', 'Melanie Rice, Rice Consulting, Inc.', 'Wendy Sullivan, WSW Consulting, Inc.', and 'URBANrural' are at the bottom.





# Plan Theme: A Healthy Economy

**Guiding Principle:**  
*We value the businesses providing quality services, employment opportunities and an economic base for our community. Grand Lake is noted for the casual, historical, western character of its shops, restaurants and lodgings, even more convenient as our year-round economy is strengthening. We welcome current and future business opportunities.*

## ACHIEVABLE GOALS, STRATEGIES AND PRIORITY ACTIONS

<b>Economic Recovery &amp; Development</b>	
Achievable Goal: To recover from the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.	Priority Action:
Key Strategy: Work with state agencies, community development organizations and local business owners and tenants to stabilize the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.	Encourage the marketing and animation of any vacant storefronts using pop-ups and other shared retail concepts.
	Create temporary parklets on Grand Avenue between Hancock Street and Vine Street to add usable outdoor space and expand business capacity working within specified design guidelines.
	Update Chapter 12 Article 2 of the Town's Land Use Regulations to create an administrative temporary use permit with specified temporary use provisions for commercial zoning districts.
	Update Chapter 12 Article 2 of the Town's Land Use Regulations to expand vehicle stacking space design requirements for commercial drive-through and pickup services.
	Update Chapter 6 Article 2 of the Town's Sign Regulations to provide greater flexibility for the commercial use of temporary signage, including addressing of the seven consecutive day limitation.
Achievable Goal: To foster a sustainable year-round local economy.	Priority Action:
Key Strategy: Work with local businesses to target market needs along with associated improvements to the Town's land development regulations.	Create a strategic plan for diversifying the local employment base, increasing the retail mix and making other long-term adjustments to improve economic resiliency.
	Update Chapter 12 Article 2 of the Town's Land Use Regulations to reduce obstacles associated with attracting new businesses by streamlining development review and permitting procedures.
	Update Chapter 12 Article 2 of the Town's Land Use Regulations to create a Historic District zoning overlay along Grand Avenue between Hancock Street and Vine Street.
	Update Chapter 12 Article 2 of the Town's Land Use Regulations to combine the Commercial Transition and Commercial Zoning districts into a new Commercial Mixed-Use Zoning District that provides for developing a full range of retail, office, artisan industry, high density residential, institutional and civic uses.
	Update the Town's Zoning Map to reflect the new Historic District and Mixed-Use Commercial zoning categories.
<b>Attainable Housing</b>	
Achievable Goal: To increase the number of housing units available for Grand Lake's workforce.	Priority Action:
Key Strategy: Work with federal, state and local agencies and the private sector to develop new workforce housing in Grand Lake.	Update Chapter 12 Article 10 of the Town's Land Use Regulations to clarify and enhance the affordable housing requirements.
	Update Chapter 12 Article 2 of the Town's Land Use Regulations to lessen restrictions that create a disincentive for the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) and tiny homes.
	Update Chapter 12 Article 2 of the Town's Land Use Regulations to provide density bonuses for deed-restricted multi-family housing development.
	Adopt criteria and funding priorities for use of the Town's Housing Fund.
	Develop and purchase land as needed for workforce housing.
	Explore public/private partnerships to develop rent-restricted multifamily housing.





# Acknowledgements

## Grand Lake Town Board

Steve Kudron, *Mayor*  
Jonah Landy, *Mayor Pro-Tem*  
Michael Arntson  
Ernie Bjorkman  
Tom Bruton  
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