



GRAND COUNTY GENERAL PLAN 2030

"Adventurous Small Town Spirit"

Exhibit A

**Grand County General Plan 2030, Amended February 20, 2024
to include Chapter 6 Housing, and Appendix 18.3
Moab Area Affordable Housing Plan (2023)**





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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In 2021 Grand County embarked on a top down approach that identifies key long range planning gaps through a stakeholder and decision maker interview regime. The General Plan is then considered for adoption with a robust implementation strategy for all 10 primary elements.

As master plans and studies unfold for adoption (*e.g. Land Use and Levels of Service Analysis, Economic Development Master Plan, and Impact fee analysis*) each segment will be updated. As the Plan is comprehensive in nature, each element must be integrated with the whole to achieve a basket of coordinated and functional strategies.

Special thanks goes to the General Plan and Land Use Steering Committee (2021) for providing leadership, support and input into the Plan. Those members were:

1. County commission – Chair Mary McGann; and Commissioner Kevin Walker;
2. Planning Commission Chair – Emily Campbell;
3. Administration – Mallory Nassau;
4. Economic Development Director – August Granath; previously Elaine Gizler;
5. Trails Director – Madelyn Logowitz;
6. Sheriff – Steve White;
7. Moab Fire Protection Official – Brandon McGuffee
8. Building Official – Bill Hulse
9. Environmental Health Director – Orion Rogers
10. Housing – Jenna Whetzel, Ben Riley, Laura Harris, Kaitlin Myers, Noelle Gignoux
11. Legal – Christina Sloan
12. Canyonlands Regional Airport Director – Andy Solsvig
13. Grand County Roads Director – Bill Jackson
14. Bureau of Land Management Field Manager – Nicholle Gaddis-Wyatt
15. School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) – Elise Erler and Bryan Torgerson;
16. Moab Area Water Partnership – Arne Hultquist;
17. Grand Water and Sewer and Service Agency Manager – Dana Van Horn
18. City of Moab Planning Director – Cory Shurtleff; and previously Nora Shepard.

Two public open houses on November 10, 2021 and March 3, 2022 displayed a series of strategic and work plan formats for comment:

1. Land use and levels of service;
2. Transportation;
3. Housing;
4. Water and Sewer;
5. Building Safety;
6. Roads and Trails;
7. Strategic planning;
8. Spanish Valley survey;
9. Health services and hospital; and
10. Economic Development.



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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

1.1 ROLE OF THE GRAND COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The 2021 Plan is a top-down approach to the strategic development of policies, objectives, implementation and indicators. Crucial to the formation of the Plan is alignment with State Law.

Phase 1 – General Plan and Implementation Plan Update:

In 2021, Administration chose to test the viability of the Plan by updating important implementation objectives through a needs analysis that suggests future annual cycles and renewal of each element (e.g., Land Use) until the General Plan (GP) fully integrates all elements comprehensively.

The 2021 exercise began with interviews of Directors and decision makers within County Departments, agencies, non-government organizations, and other interested parties. The Implementation section identifies their roles, planning linkages with this Plan and the resultant needs and gaps that direct future evolution of the Plan. That next step is a full public engagement outreach with all segments of the community, including jurisdictional and development partners. That step, directed by the Planning and County Commissions encourages community residents and visitors to identify and give their insights, concerns in open forums that eventually form part of a broader and integrated document that can be calibrated against the physical land forms, policies, objectives and strategic implementation attributes of an updated plan.

Phase 2 – Community Outreach and Key Plan Updates:

That process will involve a number of meetings and interactions over the next *year and a half (18 months)*, the Planning and Zoning Department facilitates three phases:

1. Listening – open ended concerns, insights, comments, and critiques that are catalogued, documented and referenced by staff;
2. Clarifying – with references to current and new policies and the received comments reflect on the feedback and ensure it is accurate and confirmed; and
3. Strategies – each department returns with ideas, concepts and programs that attempt to address options, and ways forward for the community.

Further Strategic and Master Planning work initiated by the community and County Commission and, guided by the Steering Committee, will continue to inform this Plan and bring ongoing relevance to its goals, policies, work programs and indicators. Early updates to the following plans will raise this Plan's profile and connectivity with all community enterprise:

1. 2021 – Community Strategic Plan (CSP); Unified Transportation Master Plan (UTMP) and Land Use Levels of Service Analysis and Grand County Public Lands Proposal; Public Engagement Master Plan; Regional Master Plan;
2. 2022 - Parks and Recreation Master Plan; Economic Development Master Plan; Infrastructure Master Plan (water, liquid waste and storm); Social Master Plan; and
3. 2023 - Resource Management Plan (RMP); Capital Improvement Plan; Public Safety Master Plan (Sheriff; Emergency Services; Fire and Emergency Operations).

The Grand County General Plan (GP), known as "The Adventurous Small Town Spirit", is a



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comprehensive policy framework with goals, policies and objectives guiding the growth and development of the County. As THE policy document it needs to reflect the vision of the residents. Although its main purpose guides the physical development of the County, the community-wide initiative supports inclusivity in all elements - social, economic and environmental factors.

Visionary and long-term, the GP links to the County Strategic Plan, and initiates major work programs including indicators, that can migrate into financial and performance plans. From a 20 year or generational plan to an annual plan the County considers the General Plan as the bellwether of measured progress.

Each County Department considers the implementation of this Plan within the context of their long-term objectives. Monitoring and reporting play an important role in the implementation of the Plan (refer to the Implementation section for proposed next steps).

1.2 BASIS AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The General Plan seeks to build a comprehensive interactive family of elements. For example, Land Use and Infrastructure need integration so that long term servicing and development opportunities work together. A list of adopted Plans and Studies are identified in Schedule 17.5. The comprehensive policy framework guides the physical, environmental, economic, social and cultural development of the County.

1.3 POLICY CONTEXT

The General Plan supports the objectives of the County's Strategic Plan and integrates other County plans within each element. The Plan comprehensively addresses land use, community health, economic vitality and community wellbeing including public safety – policing, fire, emergency services and emergency response. The vital health of any community depends on sound fiscal management and data that assigns the value of development to the proper source of the expense. A fiscal impact analysis articulates the equity and imbalances

1.4 PREPARATION OF THE PLAN

The Plan was developed through a strategic planning process that involved the Planning Commission, County Commission, County staff, interested agencies and community partners, and the public as noted above. An intensive planning exercise with the public sets the path toward the major changes to the General Plan and then charted the next steps for updates within the following 18 months as indicated in the implementation section.

An on-line engagement platform on the County Website (<https://grandcountyconnects.com/>) stipulates phases and comment opportunities. The General Plan Steering Committee guides the consideration and adoption process, as defined in the terms of reference:

1. Internal and external policy consistency;
2. Regulatory consistency and pertinence;
3. Engagement strategies;
4. Phasing and timing;
5. Reporting, indicators and outcomes; and
6. Review and adoption schedules.

The Planning and County Commission recognize that early and ongoing public participation grounds the Plan and helps embed neighborhood identity. In 2012 the General Plan update process included the following visioning exercise:



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...draft Vision, Goals and Strategies were presented at two open house meetings with a combined attendance of over 175 people... A total of 173 surveys were collected. Participants indicated whether they liked, were okay/neutral or disliked individual goals and strategies.

The event also included an educational presentation to clarify the meaning/intent of the goals and strategies...The results of these open house meetings were compiled and discussed in WG meetings. Based on direction from the WG, the Vision, Goals and Strategies were revised to incorporate the results.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

In 2010 and 2011, Administration and the Working Group conducted several stakeholder consultation meetings with various groups ranging from developers, housing partners, community clubs, education partners, environment, corrections, business partners, health region, non-profit organizations, and tourism.

...Utilizing the General Plan Citizens Working Group (WG) began developing goals and strategies over the course of eight facilitated meetings in Moab.

The 13 member WG was selected by a sub-committee of planning commissioners and planning staff and represented a broad cross section of the community. There were two representatives from the County Planning Commission on the WG. The WG was responsible for providing general direction for the plan, reviewing draft materials, and providing written revisions to specific plan elements.

The public participation process allowed the County to gain an understanding of how residents feel about their County now, and how they would like to see it evolve in the future, with appropriate opportunities for public education, involvement, input and discussion.

The mechanisms for the process included the Working Group, surveys and public meetings. The 2012 exercise referenced other strategic plans into this Plan, forming implementation strategies to deal with gaps and future updates.

In this phase of the General Plan Update the Planning Commission held two workshops on July 12, 2021 and August 23, 2021 and a public engagement session on November 10, 2021. Key recommendations and policy direction is referenced in the Part 4 – Decision Making.

The County Commission is formulating a **Strategic Plan** which will be vetted through the public and embedded within the decision making of this Plan.

The current board, committee and agency decision making process is mapped with various recommendations and policy directions, in Section 4.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE CONTENT OF THE PLAN

The overall goal of the Plan is to achieve a sustainable community – where development takes place in an orderly, efficient and logical manner and shapes the long term health of the community across all aspects of urban planning.

This Plan, as envisioned, guides and balances finances, the economy, the environment and social needs. The Plan emphasizes the neighborhood and development nodes as building blocks of the



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County. *Development Hubs and Nodes* compliment sector and sub-area plans to create synergies and take advantage of mixed use development options. The Plan policy areas are:

1. Context and Outcomes;
2. Horizons;
3. Decision Making;
4. Sustainability;
5. Land Use;
6. Transportation;
7. Infrastructure;
8. Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas;
9. Environment;
10. Healthy Economy and Social Environment;
11. Public Safety;
12. Culture;
13. Finance; and
14. Implementation Strategies.

1.6.1 DECISION MAKING, SUSTAINABILITY AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Plan maps current Commission decision making through committees, boards, ad hoc groups, community clubs, and Commission meeting formats - executive and formal sessions. The Plan is built around neighborhood engagement and decision making, always searching for effective ways of bringing a broad based and transparent discussion into the public realm.

One value in the Commission's Strategic Plan seeks to:

...welcome diverse perspectives and initiatives by continuously engaging residents, reducing physical and technological barriers and improving access to County resources.

With guidance from the Planning and County Commission, Administration established a staff managed policy group to garner feedback on all policies and procedures.

The current mapping of decision making identifies various gaps. Quality decision making will always arise from sustainable and strategic plan objectives, casting a light that strengthens community dialogue and sense of place.

The implementation matrices catalog the form and shape of interaction for each element, requesting different and more effective ways of achieving a strategy.

The County is known as a national and international destination for visitors and outdoor enthusiasts. It is uniquely situated on the Colorado Plateau with the Colorado and Green Rivers prominent in the landscape. The topography is beautifully demarcated by dynamic vistas, ridgelines and bounteous canyons and rock formations. Diverse economic ventures are seen as important measures to maintain resilience especially in these sectors:

- research and land management;
- agriculture;
- mining;
- manufacturing and processing;
- tourism; and



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- retail/commerce.

These activities bring economic and social benefits to our County, but create challenges - providing adequate infrastructure, housing and transportation. Development and expansion must take place in coordination with plans for growth and development in adjacent municipalities.

Direction from this Plan facilitates the integration with and coordination of the many other plans of different regional stakeholders. This section identifies areas for future residential, commercial/industrial expansion, not only to allow the County to target local efforts, but to work with jurisdictional partners on mutual regional growth management strategies.

Goals and objectives of this section seek to:

1. Foster a relationship of trust and cooperation with regional stakeholders – Counties, City, and State and Federal land including National and State Parks.
2. The County's role as a partner in managing growth through land development;
3. Identify plans for mixed use, and serviced industrial and commercial land;
4. Consider annexation strategies only when supported by financially sound infrastructure plans; and
5. Consider extension of services beyond County boundaries only when accompanied by a growth management plans that consider the cost of services.

1.6.2 LAND USE

The Plan anticipates future housing needs arising from changes in demographic structure and includes goals and objectives that strengthen and support a variety of housing types and styles. A housing forum parallels this Plan formulation and informs these policies. Administration acknowledged the need to update land use and reference zoning transition goals and policies through a land use levels of service analysis. The County recognizes the need to steward quality development and future policy work around land assembly and marketing, and the importance of infrastructure in meeting the demands of development (e.g. water). The Plan will then be updated accordingly.

An updated land use map will articulate the future shape and characteristics of the County by beginning to focus growth and, as needed, constrain the extension of County core services. Interested developers should be able to capture a vision between transportation, parks, land use and zoning to see how development can unfold iteratively and sustainably.

The focus on compact centers or nodes combines with residential infill policies that sustain long-term residential growth. Of particular importance, the residential land use section focuses neighborhoods in existing areas.

The Sustainability section describes key goals that brings all Plan elements together and echoes the following through Smart Growth Principles:

1. Promote a compact and adaptable rural/urban form with variety of housing choices;
2. Encourage innovative housing forms that fit into the neighborhood, and contribute positively to the community;



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3. Develops master plan frameworks for the fringe areas around the County and public lands, waterfront, scenic corridors and neighborhood nodes;
4. Balance planned development with market demands, reducing conflict and integrating livability and community standards that privilege open and gridded streets, and quality building form; and
5. Revitalize and redevelop as necessary the older areas of the County (particularly those areas in need).

1.6.3 TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Diverse mobility including bikes, pedestrian, river ways, equestrian, public transit, or shuttle, gives the community access options to services, work, and recreation without dependence on the single occupant vehicle. Important facets of sustainability, land use and transportation work to build noise and dust buffers, reduce community anxiety, balance density, heighten opportunity for open space, instill natural experiences and preserve environmental values.

Thriving communities depend on transportation equality as residents interact constructively and freely. Neighborhood safety depends on open yards and walkways, and well-lit and monitored spaces. As all politics are local so all good urban environments spring from integrated space. This Plan explores complete streets (bikes, pedestrians, managed lighting, recreation, trees and landscaping, and an open building form), reducing speed, increasing mobility, reducing noise impacts, and demonstrates examples of private and public space working together.

Policies in this section:

1. Continues the hierarchy of streets that are open, non-gated, and gridded but interesting and complete;
2. Promotes alternative street layouts and cross sections to create a pedestrian friendly community;
3. Promotes a pedestrian friendly environment and alternative modes of transportation;
4. Encourages the use of safe trails and connections in new neighborhoods following CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles and seeking cost effective to methodologies; and
5. Establishes a foundation of sound planning for the Canyonlands Airport area.

The Plan emphasizes safe, efficient and effective management of water, wastewater, stormwater and solid waste services. The policies promote timely and cost effective upgrading and construction of infrastructure services. One priority reinforces impact and servicing fees as fundamental to cost effective development. The County's role ensures a steady supply of pre-serviced land to manage growth and land use.

Policies in this section:

1. Invest in and ensure that infrastructure and services are provided in a logical, cost effective and innovative manner;
2. Protects the quality, source, and distribution of water;



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3. Ensures safe and adequate wastewater and stormwater management;
4. Invests in new and existing infrastructure;
5. Fairly distributes the costs incurred for supplying infrastructure through impact fees and servicing fees;
6. Establishes Capital planning initiatives synchronized with service providers;
7. Reference levels of service, urban and rural growth planning structure land use decisions and implicate the value of land, robust land use mapping in concert with infrastructure, references these opportunities and points to future ordinances and policies that support predictable development patterns; and
8. Continue to support the Solid Waste Special Service District's voucher program, allowing each residential property one free truck load of trash disposal per year.

1.6.4 PARKS AND RECREATION

This Plan recognizes the importance of protecting the natural and environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. public lands, steep slopes, watersheds, river valley and wetlands), gauging the cumulative impacts of development (hard surface, air quality, contamination, noise, excessive lighting, and reduced habitats) which will not only maintain the health of the environment but also contribute to quality of life for residents.

Policies in this section promote a healthy environment by:

1. Supporting a network of accessible parks, open spaces and trails to meet the needs of residents;
2. Protecting and enhancing the natural environment;
3. Supplying a balanced system of active (playfields and playgrounds) and passive open spaces (e.g. parks) that contribute to leisure time activities and conserves the natural environment within the County; and
4. Mapping trails and mobility linkages to shopping, parks, schools, and work; beginning to specify park types, site layouts, qualities, and balance.

1.6.5 ENVIRONMENT

Citizen collaboration in processes that encompass the air, land and water builds resiliency within the community and encourages care and stewardship in residents. Goals and policies support reducing cumulative impacts, leveraging land value through brownfield partnerships, recognizing and protecting threatened habitat and migratory routes, improving natural spaces within all settings, encouraging stewardship, and improving partnerships between all aspects of sustainable ventures. Mapping begins to recognize sensitive areas and guide protection methodology.

Policies include:

1. Engage a major university and student partnership evaluating easy wins in all environmental sectors;
2. Establish a land use checklist and educational program around environmental



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stewardship;

3. Manage and mitigate hazardous lands including unstable soils, watersheds, steep slopes and flood plain;
4. Support habitat preservation and reduce fragmentation and impairment; and
5. Support development that does not impact and improves view sheds, scenic corridors, and natural environments.

1.6.6 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE

The strategy for a healthy social environment is to ensure that social aspects of individual and neighborhood health and well-being contribute toward the health and safety of the County. The Plan recognizes that a sound functioning social milieu contributes to independent and interdependent health, behavior and capacity. This Plan champions these values and realizes that the private, professional and volunteer sectors must work together to build the personal and social capital necessary for resident well-being. Moreover, it validates the intimate relationship between the social, cultural, environmental and economic dimensions. Finally, it acknowledges that large differences within the community decrease the health, well-being and competency of all. In other words, the members of the community are interdependent and what happens to one affects all. To facilitate capacity within the community, the concept of hubs or nodes, particularly educational hubs and tourism hubs outlined in the Social section, utilize social, cultural and economic goals.

Policies in this section acknowledge:

1. The potential for schools to contribute to the social, cultural and recreational fabric of the community;
2. The role of education and training in providing access to employment;
3. The role of health services and facilities in promoting a vital community;
4. The need for barrier-free accessibility to facilities and services;
5. The role of the Sheriff, fire and emergency medical services in promoting the health and safety of all residents;
6. The role of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles in planning for a safe, healthy and livable County; and
7. The importance of County government's role in developing and promoting policies that stimulate social cohesion and collective capacity in the community.

1.6.7 PUBLIC SAFETY

Public safety needs to not only recognize the crucial role of first responders in our society, but the integral role played in resident safety. Prevention and proactive engagement always leverage personal responsibility and accentuate hope and achievement. The Sheriff, fire and emergency services work at the street and corporate level to expand citizen capacity and protect the vulnerable.



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Performance objectives such as fire response times and crime reduction targets set benchmarks for safe standards tuned to each neighborhood, and then support sound financial planning for the County. Policies recognize the importance of a safely built environment to reduce the incidence of fire, crime and accidents. As incidences occur, the community builds capacity to respond and then support, nurture and care for its residents.

Policies in this section encourage a collaborative approach between service providers through a master plan that:

1. Consider data, reporting and improvements on a regular basis;
2. Points toward neighborhood level public safety and clean-up;
3. Ensures code enforcement outreach and proactive community engagement; and
4. Provides consistent emergency response for all services including Fire, EMS, emergency response, and the Sheriff.

1.6.8 ECONOMY

A healthy economy not only provides residents with access to employment and income but creates an environment in which business and industry thrive. To achieve a balanced economy, it is important to assume a proactive, multi-dimensional approach. This Plan acknowledges that the physical and social environments within a community are related to its health. The resource industry, tourism, entrepreneurial enterprises, government and the service industry are some traditional economic drivers in the area. However, arts, culture, tourism, information technology and manufacturing can add a degree of diversification to the economic base. Policies in the Plan emphasize one of Grand County's advantages, national and state parks, as an amenity that can enhance and support an overall economic strategy. Urban renewal and redevelopment projects contribute to the employment base as well as help create a more vibrant community. This Plan also addresses the concept of an Airport Industrial Hub and the idea of business/research parks as a way of clustering activity.

A 2022 economic forum or business summit and master plan will further strengthen and edit the policies in this section:

1. Support the development and implementation of a long-term economic strategies such as the *Grand County Strategic Plan, 2022*;
2. Support the existing business community while promoting new businesses;
3. Maintain and promote the County's regional position as a tourism and research mecca by strengthening its role as the regional, commercial, cultural, and educational center; and
4. Promote co-operative relationships and partnerships with surrounding municipalities and public and tribal lands to promote economic development.

1.6.9 IMPLEMENTATION AND INDICATORS

The General Plan guides decision making through an integrated approach articulating work programs and indicators from the goals and policies. The Plan acknowledges that many of the goals can impact the budget. The bridge between a long range plan and annual budgeting comes through the County Commission, community deliberations, project lists, work programs and regular reference to this Plan.



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The implementation strategies will continue to apply the Plan and point toward important updates. Focus groups using indicators with regular reporting can articulate the health of the community and gauge the effectiveness of the Plan. Other planning tools such as the Land Use Code, concept and small area plans, and subdivision plans, capital and operating budgets, taxation, incentives, and committees will always continue to embolden the Plan.

In this section, policies:

1. Address the various planning implementation tools available;
2. Emphasize the importance of sustainable sources that help fund the Plan;
3. Promote public participation and group decision making as fundamental to the planning process; and
4. Acknowledge the importance of gathering community indicators through annual monitoring and reporting.

SECTION TWO: CONTEXT AND OUTCOMES

1. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

¹Moab is the county seat of Grand County and a regional center of southeastern Utah. It is located in the Spanish Valley between the Colorado River to the northeast and the 12,500-foot-high La Sal Mountains to the Southwest. The valley is fifteen miles long and three miles wide within the heart of the Colorado Plateau.

Known variously as Grand Valley, Spanish Valley, and Mormon Fort, the biblical name Moab was adopted in 1880 when a mail route was established between Salina, Utah, and Ouray, Colorado. The first permanent settlers arrived in 1878-79; but before that date Native Americans, including the Sabuagana Utes, have long occupied the valley and used the nearby crossing of the Colorado River.

Even before settlement, the Moab area had a long and colorful history. Late in 1765 Juan Maria Antonio de Rivera reached the Moab area with an expedition sent north from New Mexico to reconnoiter the land on both sides of the Colorado River. Although other New Mexican traders probably used the crossing, their travels have gone unrecorded, and it is not until 1830, when the Spanish Trail was opened between Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Los Angeles, California, that the river crossing became of great significance.

In an unsuccessful attempt to control the crossing of the Colorado River and carry out missionary work among the Indians of southeastern Utah, forty-one men were called by Mormon leaders in April 1855 to establish the Elk Mountain Mission at present-day Moab. Traveling from Sanpete Valley along the Old Spanish Trail, the group crossed the Colorado River in mid-June and commenced construction of a rock fort. They remained until late September of 1855, at which time they returned to Sanpete Valley after Indian attacks destroyed their crops and left three men dead.

¹ Information provided by Margaret S. Bearnson *Utah History Encyclopedia* at [Utah](#)



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More than two decades later, in 1878, permanent settlers returned to Moab to establish farms and ranches. As the community evolved, a Mormon ward and a community school were established in 1881. Construction of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad between Denver and Salt Lake City brought the railroad to within thirty-five miles of Moab at Thompson Springs and provided a much-desired railroad connection.

A ferry across the Colorado River was in operation by 1885. The first bridge across the Colorado, a three-span steel bridge, was completed in 1912. By the first decade of the twentieth century, Moab had developed as one of Utah's finest fruit-growing areas, producing peaches, apples, and some grapes. Moab became the county seat when Grand County was created from portions of Emery and Uintah counties in 1890. Moab was incorporated as a town in January 1903 and became a third-class city in December 1936.

Although some mining was done along the Colorado River and in the La Sal Mountains, Moab's economy was based on farming, ranching, and fruit growing until the uranium boom of the early 1950s brought in scores of prospectors, miners, workers, and speculators, increasing the population of Moab from 1,275 in 1950 to 4,682 in 1960. During the boom, the nation's second largest uranium processing mill was completed just outside

Moab in 1956, employing more than two hundred workers. The uranium boom brought new motels, cafes, stores, schools, and businesses to Moab.

Uranium was extracted from near Moab as early as the first decade of the twentieth century, and in 1911 the first attempt to drill a commercial oil well between Thompson and Moab was undertaken. Oil promised to enrich the Moab economy during the 1920s, but it was not until 1957 when three oil-producing fields were opened near Moab that something of an oil boom hit the area, a boom that lasted into the 1960s.

As the demand for uranium began to decrease in the early 1960s, potash became the most recent boom industry to hit Moab. A modern potash plant was built in 1963 and a railroad spur line completed from the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad at Crescent Junction to the Texas Gulf Sulphur Company mill outside Moab.

Arguably Moab's largest industry, at least for the last quarter century, is the tourist industry. As early as 1906 the Grand Valley Times began promoting the tourism possibilities of the area, and in 1909 the Moab Commercial Club was organized to advertise the scenic attractions and recreational advantages of the Moab region.

A significant boost to tourism came with the designation of Arches National Monument in 1929; however, the Great Depression and World War II brought few visitors to the Moab area. After World War II the river-running craze began slowly in the 1950s, gained momentum in the 1960s, and became a staple of the region's tourist industry by the early 1970s. The establishment in 1964 of Canyonlands National Park, for which Moab serves as the northern gateway, was another milepost along the way to Moab's becoming an important tourist and recreation destination. During the 1980s Moab, with its hundreds of miles of slickrock trails, gained worldwide fame as a mountain-biking center.

Evidence of indigenous occupation up to 10,000BCE has been seen in Grand County. The present city of Moab is the site of pueblo farming communities of the 11th and 12th centuries. These groups were already vanished when the first European explorers entered the country; instead, nomadic Ute tribes were here.



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In 1881 the area was known as Grand Valley, and Moab was a "wild west" town. A 1991 visitor to Moab later said it was known as the toughest town in Utah because the area and surrounding country has many deep canyons, rivers, mountains and wilderness areas, becoming a hideout for outlaws. The local economy was initially based on farming and livestock. Mining came in at the end of the 19th century, and the railroad arrived. The first school in the county was started in 1881. Mormon settlers began planting fruit trees by 1879, and by 1910 Moab was a significant fruit-production center.

Due to the distances involved, the settlers of eastern Emery County found it difficult to conduct county business in that county's seat. By March 13, 1890 their petitions caused the Utah Territory legislature to designate the eastern portion of the county as a separate entity, to be named Grand County, named for the Grand River (whose name was changed to Colorado River in 1921). The county boundaries were adjusted in 1892 and in 2003.

Exploration for deep petroleum deposits began in the 1920s, and this industry has made significant contributions to the economy since that time. Other significant industries include uranium mining, and filmmaking.^[3]



Delicate Arch, one of the most famous arches in Arches National Park

²*Geographically Grand County lies on the east side of Utah. Its east border abuts the west border of the state of Colorado. The Green River flows southward through the eastern part of central Utah, and its meandering course defines the western border of Grand County.*

The Colorado River enters the east side of Grand County from Colorado, flowing southwestward toward its confluence with the Green in San Juan County, south of Grand. The Dolores River enters Grand County from Colorado, flowing westward to its confluence with the Colorado River near Dewey.

Grand County terrain is arid, rough, and spectacularly carved by water and wind erosion, exposing red rock formations that have created a solid tourist industry. The area is little used for agriculture unless irrigation is available. The terrain is filled with hills and protuberances, but generally slopes to the south and to the west.

Its highest point is Mount Waas in the SE part of the county, at 12,336' (3760m) ASL. The county has a total area of 3,684 square miles (9,540 km²), of which 3,672 square miles (9,510 km²) is land and 12 square miles (31 km²) (0.3%) is water. Deserts, cliffs and plateaus make up the scenery, with few settlements apart from the city of Moab, a Colorado River oasis. Arches National Park lies in the southern part of the county, just north of Moab. A northern portion of Canyonlands National Park lies in the southwest corner of the county.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_County,_Utah



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Grand County and the City of Moab combine the benefits of both a small town and urban living. The County is close to mountains, canyons, rivers, surrounded by open public lands and recreational opportunities, contributing to its high quality of life. All these features influence growth and development.

The history of the County shows tourism growth outstripping the necessary range of housing options and support services, especially for the service sector. However, the last several decades have seen many improvements in community and municipal facilities. Such progress serves as a reminder that much still remains to be done.

Prior to the 1980s, the development of the County had been influenced by policies, many of them informal and not formally adopted by the County Commission. The 2022 General Plan (GP) update replaces the 2012 General Plan. To check implementation progress and revisit goals and strategies, administrative staff interviewed a number of stakeholders and decision makers. Those collated results queried current plans, strategies, mapping and reporting. Each of the edited results are embedded within the various sections of this Plan.

2. HISTORICAL PLANS

In 2008, the *Grand County Land Use Code* was redrafted. Major gaps continue to be identified in the key development regulations. An important implementation strategy develops performance based frameworks for both the engineering development standards and the land use code and identifies important alignments with this Plan – e.g. land use and zoning.

This Plan incorporates previous sub-area plans adopted between 1998 and 2003, and then the Small Area Plan (2020) within the North Highway 191 corridor:

1. The North Gateway; and
2. Small Area Plan – North Corridor – 2020.

The plans highlighted future land use patterns with concept maps. Most of the general development standards listed in the sub-area plans were implemented in the 2008 Land Use Code and were generally supported by the public. Flood plain data can be found at this link

<https://grandcountyutah.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=10d6e158878d4530b9ffeb1fa641defb>

Figure 1.1 Plans Adopted by Reference in the General Plan (see Schedule 17.5)

<u>Plan Adopted by Reference</u>	<u>Year Adopted</u>
Grand County Wilderness Plan	1995 (GP 2012)
Grand County Scenic Byways Corridor Management Plan	2008
Grand County and City of Moab Housing Study and Affordable Housing Plan	2009
Grand County Non-motorized Trails Master Plan	2011
Small Area Plan	2020
Resource Management Plan	2017
Spanish Valley Stormwater Master Plan	2011



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Airport Master Plan	2015
County Commission Strategic Plan	2022
Grand County Resource Needs Assessment	2012
Spanish Valley Transportation Master Plan	2008
Grand Water and Sewer Water Conservation and Management Plan	2020
	2001
North Corridor Gateway Plan (https://moabcity.org/DocumentCenter/View/50/MoabGrandNorthGatewayPlanfinal?bidId=)	

3. GROWTH PROJECTIONS AND TRENDS

Population forecasting models were prepared by the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute as part of the University of Utah – David Eccles School of Business. They produce population projections for the state of Utah and all 29 counties and updated every four years.

Figure 2.2. Grand County and Municipality Population Projection through 2060

Grand County Population Projections				
2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
9,669	11,695	12,745	13,736	14,480

Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute

According to the 2019 US Census data, Grand County population was **9,669 as of 2020**. Moab city has a population of 5,268, and the town of Castle Valley has a reported population of 350. *Unincorporated Grand County population is 4,022.*

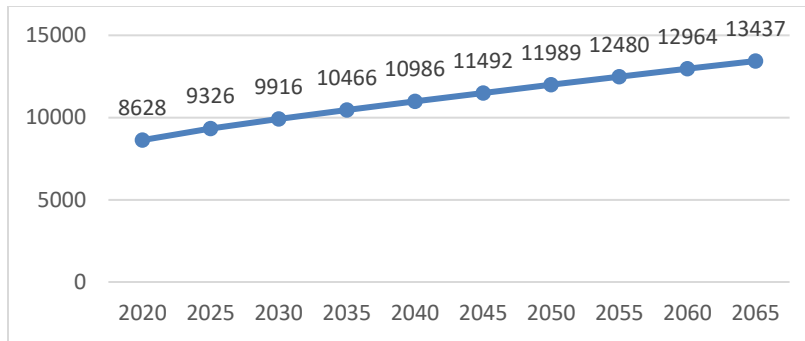
Demographers and state economists are forecasting continued population and employment growth in Grand County. On average the population has experienced a growth rate of 1.07% over the past 10 years; this trend is expected to continue through 2030, but decrease to 0.6% by 2060. Employment in the county has been increasing at an average annual rate of 2.4% with growth in excess of 5% in 2004 and 2005. The DEA is projecting continued employment growth; however, growth is expected to be modest, averaging 0.7% through 2020 (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3. Grand County Total Employment Forecast



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Source: Kem C Gardner Institute Data

Who is in Grand County?

Grand County’s demographics analysis must be broadened beyond estimates of the number of full-time residents because at any given time of year, thousands of people in Grand County are not full-time residents. To keep this characteristic of the county in the forefront, the demographic description breaks the population into segments: 1) full-time residents, 2) tourists and 3) part-time residents, 4) second-home/vacation home owners and 5) seasonal workers.

Full-Time Residents

Approximately 60% of the full-time population in Grand County is part of the labor force. The average household size is 2.28, with 65% of residents owning homes and 35% renting (Figure 2.6). The average 2019 per capita income totals \$27,431 (Figure 2.4). Average monthly wage of 2020 is \$3,154 (Utah Workforce Data). The 2020 Labor Force population was 6,161. Average unemployment rates in 2020 was approximately 9.5%. This percentage is slightly higher than annual averages, which could be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 2.4. Population and Workforce Data

2020 Population	9669	US Census Bureau
2019 Labor Force	5494	US Census Bureau
2019 Per Capita Income	58196	Utah Dept of Workforce Services

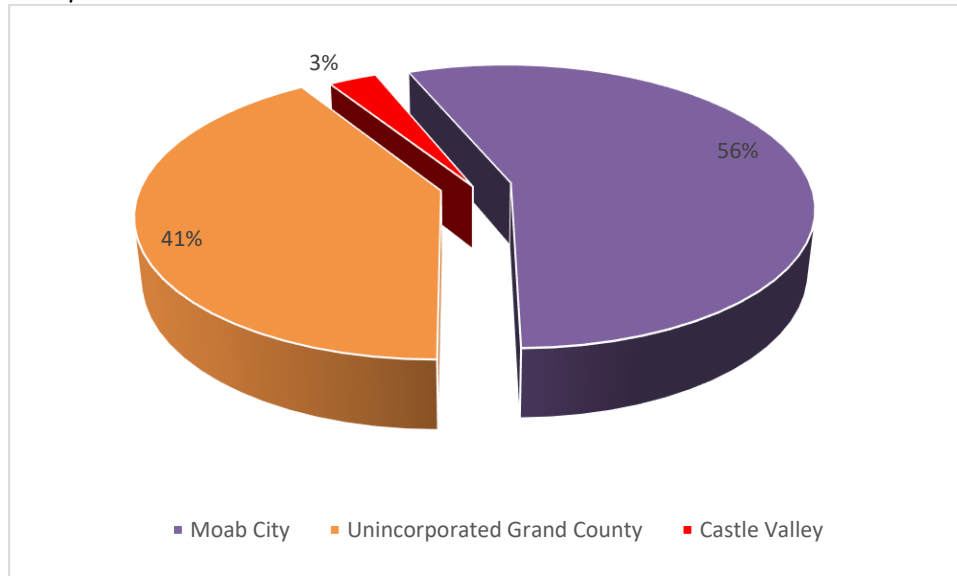
According to the 2012 Census, 56% of the county population resides in Moab, 41% in unincorporated regions of the county and 3% in Castle Valley (Figure 2.5).



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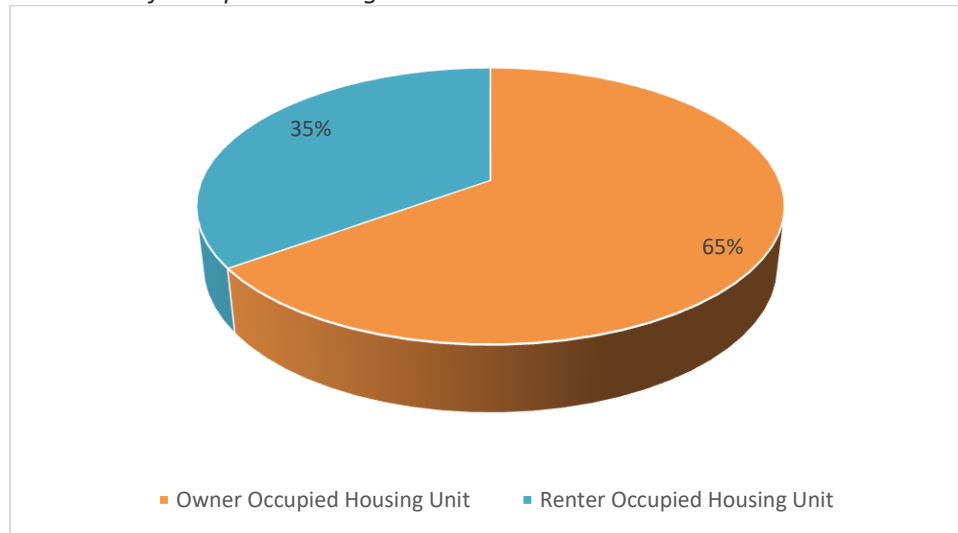
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Figure 2.5. Population Distribution



Source: 2020 Census

Figure 2.6. Tenure of Occupied Housing Units



Source: US Census Bureau

According to the 2019 age-structure estimate from the US Census data, the baby boomer generation, currently ages 57 through 75, accounts for approximately a quarter of residents in Grand County (Figure 2.7).

According to US Census estimates, in the past decade the population of Grand County has increased by approximately 653 individuals, for a total increase of about 7%. Examining the population change by age group shows that two age groups are moving to the area: baby boomers and young adults.

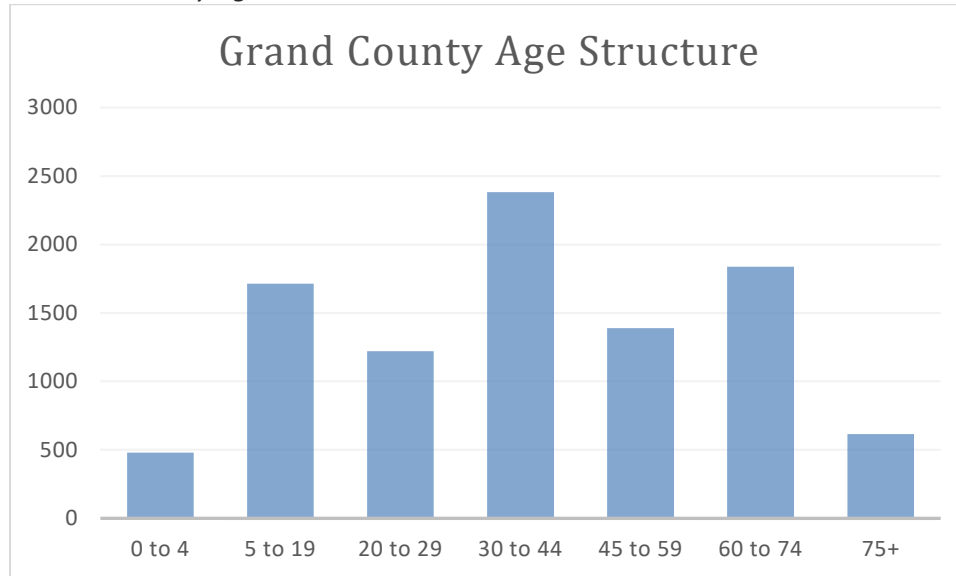
Over half of new residents moving to Grand County are between the ages of 30 and 44 (Figure 2.8). This suggests that many of the new residents are younger individuals attracted by the outdoor lifestyle and recreation in Grand County, and older, financially stable individuals nearing retirement age purchasing retirement and second homes.



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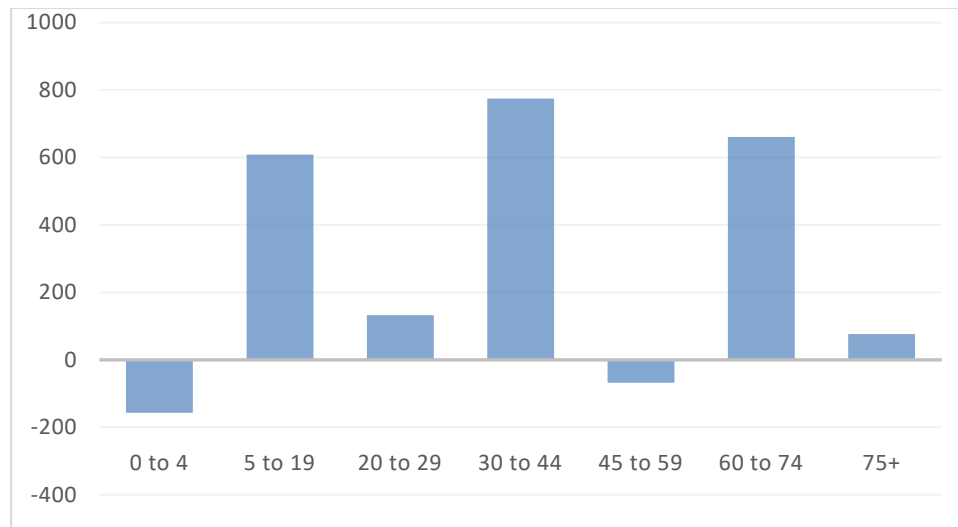
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Figure 2.7. Grand County Age Structure



Source: 2019 US Census Bureau Data

Figure 2.8. Grand County Population Change 2010-2020



Source: 2020 US Census Bureau

The negative growth rates in the bottom age group indicates decreasing enrollment in area schools in the next 10 years, unless a larger number of young adults can establish themselves in Grand County and remain through their 30's and 40's.

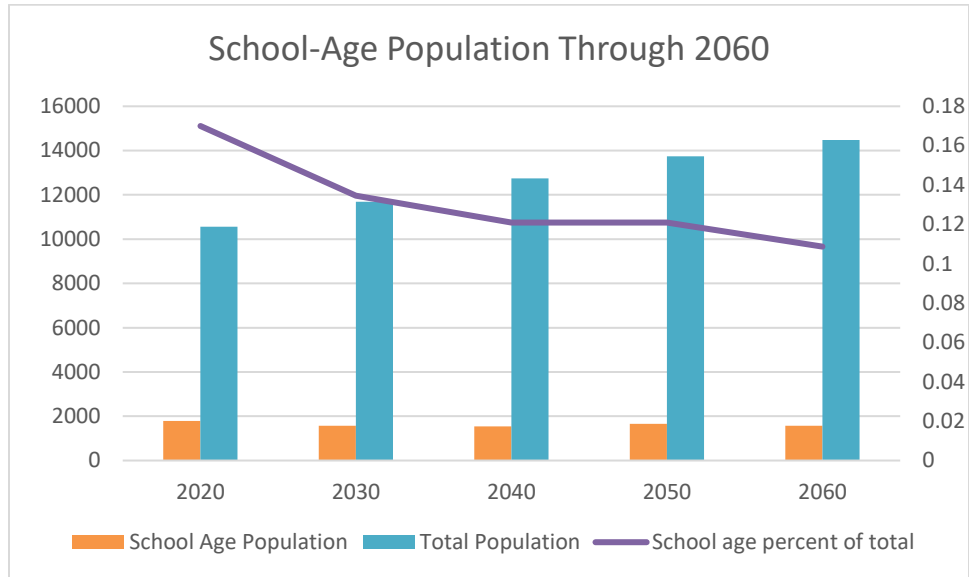
While the total population is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 1% through 2060, the school-age population is projected to increase by less than 0.5% (Figure 2.9). In 2010, individuals between the ages of 5 and 17 composed about 17% of the total population. This ratio is down from the 2000 level of 20% and down from 1990, when the school- age population totaled 24% total population. This ratio is expected to decrease to 11% by 2060.



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Figure 2.9. School-Age Population through 2060



Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute

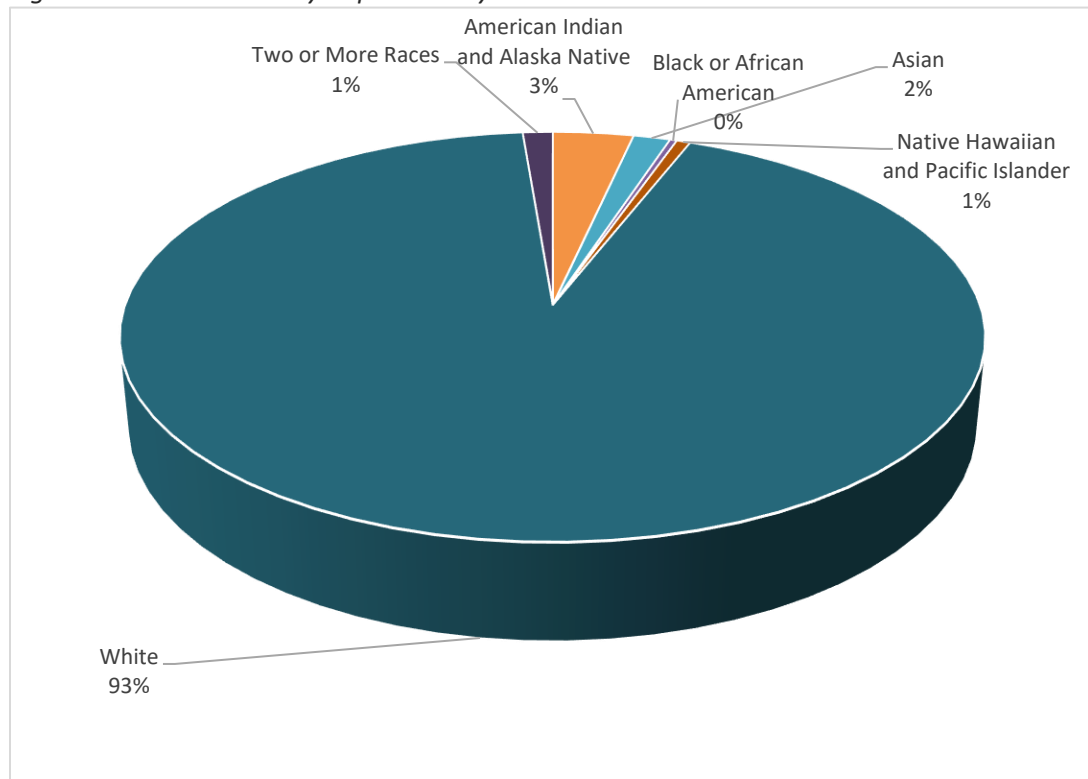
The majority of Grand County’s population is white; only 7% of residents are not white (Figure 2.10). This corresponds with the diversity of the population in 2000, also when only 7% of the population was non-white. Diversity has not grown significantly. Measured separately from race shows that 10.3% of residents are of Hispanic or Latino origin according to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau.



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Figure 2.10. Grand County Population by Race



Source: 2020 Census

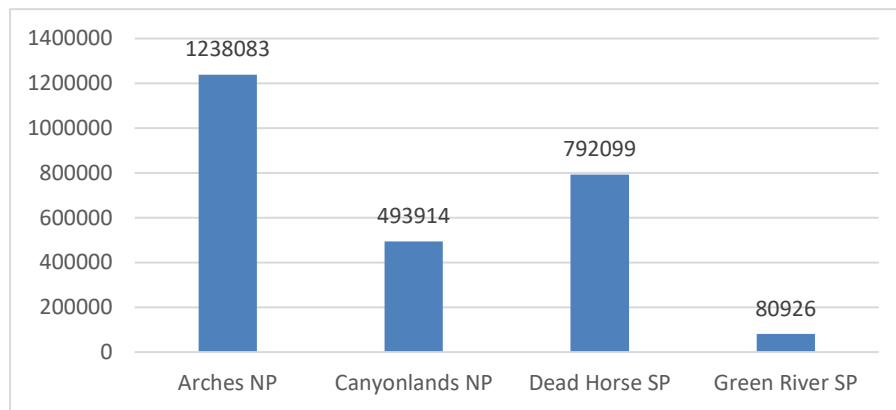


Figure 2.11. 2020 Grand County Tourism Indicators - Source: Grand County Quarterly Economic Reports

Part-time residents

There are two types of part-time residents: second home/vacation home owners and seasonal workers. Second home use parallels the peaks and off-seasons of the tourist seasons. Seasonal workers also reside in the region during the busy times of year when jobs are available.

Tourists

The Utah State Tourism Office collects and maintains data from numerous sources, which can be used as indicators for tourism trends (Figure 2.11). Annually over 3 million vehicles cross the 1-70 Utah/Colorado



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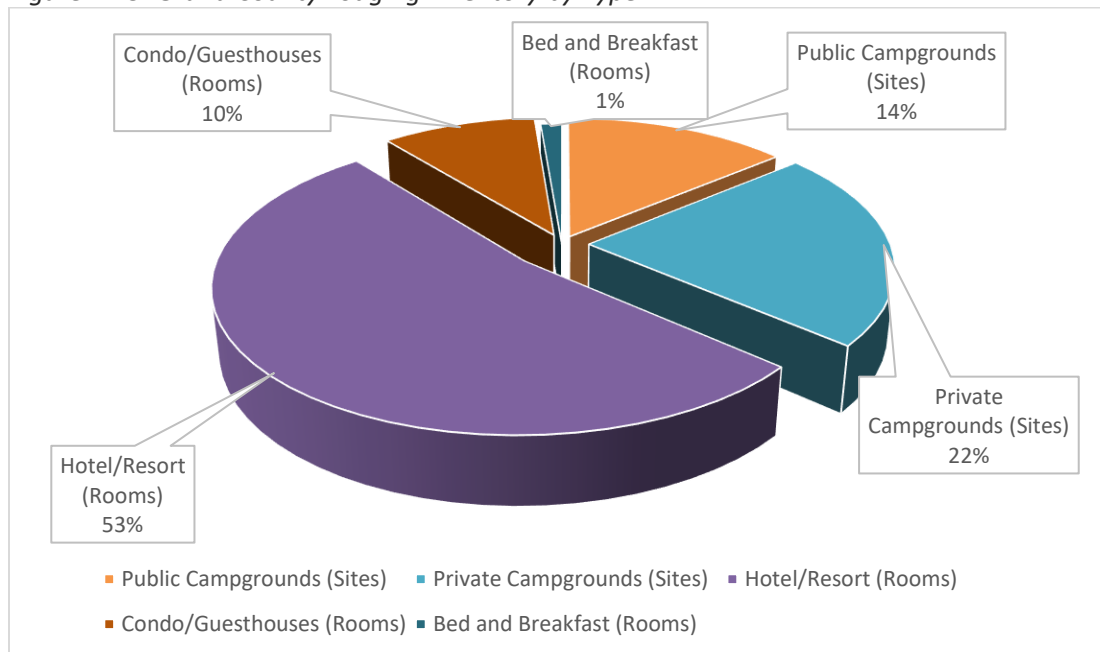
border. However, not all of these trips are tourism-related. In 2020, the two national parks in the area had a combined visitation greater than 1.7 million, state parks had over 850,000 visitors.

Another measure of tourist activity in Grand County is the county’s lodging inventory (Figures 2.12 and 2.13). The county has over 5,000 campground sites and rooms. Fifty-three percent of the lodging stock is rooms in hotels or resorts and 22% is private campgrounds. There are also over 750 established public campsites in the county.

Figure 2.12. Grand County Lodging Inventory

Lodging Type	Inventory – 2015	Inventory – 2020	Percent +/-
Public Campgrounds (Sites)	533	761	42.78%
Private Campgrounds (Sites)	1,260	1,223	-2.94%
Hotel/Resort (Rooms)	2,065	2,888	39.85%
Condo/Guesthouses (Rooms)	442	524	18.55%
Bed and Breakfast (Rooms)	59	71	20.34%
TOTAL	4359	5467	25.42%

Figure 2.13. Grand County Lodging Inventory by Type



Source: Moab Area Travel Council

A rough estimate of total visits can be derived by multiplying the total monthly room capacity, assuming double occupancy, by the monthly county average occupancy rates. This yields a total of nearly 2.5 million room nights (Figure 2.14).

The total room nights are divided by the average stay length to calculate total overnight visitors. According to a Utah Office of Tourism survey of Utah visitors, 40% of leisure visitors are on day trips. Therefore, it is assumed that there are an equal number of day-trip visitors. This is added to the total room nights to achieve the end estimate of 2.75 million visitor days.



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Figure 2.14. Total Estimated Visits

TOTAL ESTIMATED VISITS

Total Room nights	2,478,355	Calculations
Average Stay Length	3.2 days	Utah Office of Tourism
Overnight visitors	688,432	Calculations
Percent day trips	40%	Utah Office of Tourism
Day trips	275,373	Calculations
Total Annual Visitor Days	2,753,728	Calculations

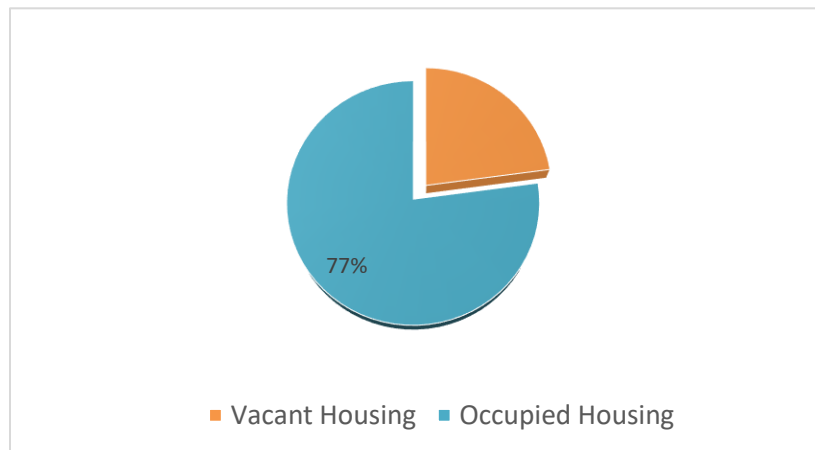
Source: Calculations

Second Home Owners

According to Grand County data from 2021, second home dwellings (for example, retirement and/or vacation homes) made up 25% of the county’s housing stock (Figure 2.16). While this may not seem like a significant portion of the housing stock, even a small external demand for housing units does seriously impact housing prices in a relatively small market. Experience has shown that an accurate measure of second-home ownership requires a customized site-specific study.

Grand County’s landscape and moderate climate make it very appealing to out-of-area investors. Consequently, the local housing market has experienced increased external market demand for second/seasonal homes, retirement homes, and general investment properties. External-market real estate purchasers have the ability to bid higher purchase prices than those supported by prevailing wages in the local market.

Figure 2.15. Housing Unit Stock by Occupancy



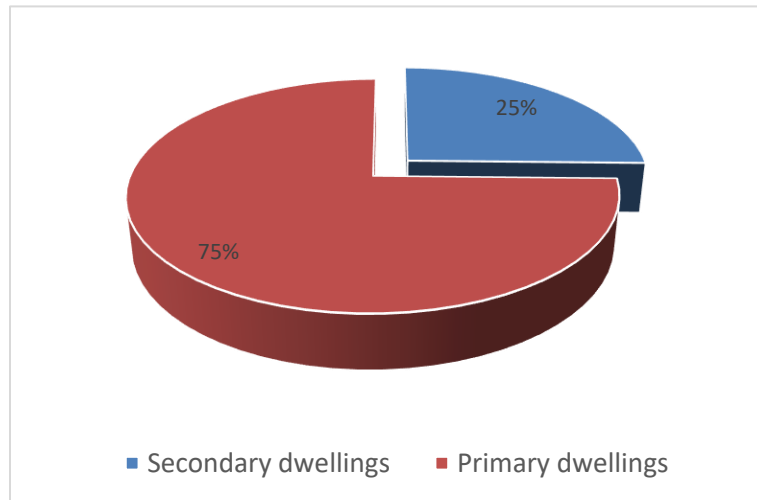
Sources: 2020 US Census data

Figure 2.16. Primary and Secondary Dwelling units



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Source: Grand County Treasurer’s Office data

There are a total of 5192 dwellings in Grand County that are either occupied or unoccupied. Secondary dwellings in Grand County have been increasing at a high rate within the last decade. In the 2012 General Plan, an estimated 12% of homes were secondary dwellings. According to 2021 data, now 25% of homes are secondary dwellings, either used by second homeowners or used as overnight rental properties.

The impact of second homes in Grand County is relatively small when compared to mature resort communities such as Pitkin County and San Miguel County, Colorado. Secondary residences in these counties can impact peak population more than any other land use in the county. However, even the relatively small number of second homes in Moab could impact peak overnight population by about 4%.

Figure 2.17. Grand County Peak Overnight Population

Full Time Residents Population	9669
Tourists (Full Lodging Inventory)	5469
Secondary Dwellings	1144
Total Overnight Population	16282

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Moab Area Travel Council Lodging Information

a. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Several socio-demographic factors and characteristics of the County all point to opportunities. Some of these factors and characteristics include:

- i. Natural resources – solar, helium, forestry and oil/gas;
- ii. Human resources – research and development, re-training, University articulation, service sector career development;
- iii. Built environment – serviced industrial/commercial, mixed use, managed growth referenced in the an adopted land use and infrastructure plan, collaborative master plans with all public lands;

Nevertheless, there still remain challenges. For example, the County should start to diversify its economic base and develop an adopted managed growth plan.



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In meeting opportunities and challenges attributed to growth, the County strives to make the most of development that is already built. As part of its mandate, the County works with citizens, community, public and private stakeholders and business groups to sustain our neighborhoods and businesses. The County supports repair, upgrade and renewal of all building and service infrastructure.

The County makes the most efficient use of infrastructure by promoting infill development in existing neighborhoods and business areas and accommodates intensification of land uses along transportation corridors with existing services. The County promotes investment in commercial and residential development in the Development Nodes that promote hubs for social, economic and cultural activities. The County anticipates regional and national economic, environmental and social shifts that will impact business conditions.

To facilitate long-term planning, the County designates residential, commercial and industrial land to prepare for projected development in each sector for the next 20 years (see Schedules 16.1.1 and 16.1.2). Development will proceed in accordance with our ability to provide municipal services and infrastructure based on the values of residents expressed in the long-term vision for the County.

SECTION THREE: HORIZONS

3.1 OVERVIEW

To be representative of the community, a Plan needs to reflect the broad based values of all stakeholders. A *vision* is an important part of growth management and it should be built upon the diverse values of the community. Growth management concerns the rate, form, location and type of community development. It can also be used in response to or in *anticipation* of growth. The vision for this Plan recognizes that economic development needs to be linked with socio-cultural and environmental development. The challenge of growth management is in mitigating any potential negative impacts of growth.

3.2 VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN

The County adopted a Strategic Plan in 2022 with:

- Core value statements;
- A vision statement; and
- Key Indicators.

The Strategic Plan guides the values in the General Plan in terms of symmetry, pace and priority. The Plan fashions the character of the built, social and economic environment – demonstrating open and integrated development, administrative and elected relationships, County and community engagement and decision making, social structures and support, and preservation and enhancement of the environment. Smart growth policy statements align with the Strategic Plan elements.

3.3 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

Strategic planning with IT is crucial for public information accessibility, online integration between departments, and increased online perspectives. The backbone of any municipal system is Parcel data. Our current system is a state of the art Geographic Information System (GIS). The County has a



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dedicated ARCGIS server with a large database for all employee access and a public interface for the County Land Use Code and parcel, zoning and aerial systems.

The permits and planning system functions with the proprietary IWORQ system using a cloud server. This system is underutilized by many departments. IT chooses systems based on staff resources for configuration and customization, onsite maintenance, the depth and flexibility of the user experience, security, integration, public facing best practices, change management best practices, and financial scalability.

The Emergency software Spillman (Motorola) and Lexipol which have integrated dispatch, emergency operation policies and procedures and integrate with GIS. Civic plus is the County website administration software, and is currently due for a free redesign. The Library is the main user. Currently there are 13 official Grand County Facebook accounts.

Goal

Update the County's IT master plan to address design, development, systems analysis, integration, public access and symmetry between the various systems.

Policies

- i. Develop two IT guidance groups for strategic input – a strategic committee and a user group;
- ii. Within the strategic plan highlight important milestones, systems analysis timetables for short and medium term, security risk analysis, customer service options, and streamlined business practices; and
- iii. Continue to support online engagement platforms that integrate all County communication strategies and practices.

3.4 DEVELOPMENT HUBS OR NODES

A hub or node is a center of activity through which traffic, services and/or communication is routed and focused. It is a central area that connects multiple sectors in a single network. Improvements in one sector will reinforce improvements in others. The overall goal of development hubs is to promote and encourage interaction and specialization of activities within each hub by way of zoning, land uses, and infrastructure policies and objectives.

Different types of development hubs have been identified for the next several decades. The hubs are mainly based on geographic locations and proximity to existing infrastructures and services. They include:

1. Airport Industrial;
2. North Corridor Recreation;
3. Thompson Springs;
4. Cisco;
5. Spanish Trail and Hwy. 191; and
6. Lemon Lane;
7. Scenic corridors – Hwy 191 north and south, Hwy 128, Sand Flat area
8. Land Use study identification (2022)

The *Airport Industrial Hub* has been identified as the area around the Canyonlands Airport. The industrial land base is limited without additional expansion. There are potentially many industrial opportunities for the area surrounding the Airport with successful public lands and infrastructure partnerships. Boundaries for intensification of development must be established in concert with



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private and public lands. Master plans and an updated airport overlay need to mitigate airport impacts.

Highway corridor mixed use nodes are identified in the Rural Hubs at Lemon Lane and Spanish Trail will encourage a range of residential building and land form types including small lot residential, mixed use, neighborhood commercial and light industrial.

The *North Recreation Corridor* references the Special Area Plan that identifies permanent land use types like resort commercial and gateway opportunities. The North Corridor Plan 2001 references development within the City/County area immediately north of the City.

Directing development to managed growth areas will lower overall infrastructure costs and drive social and economic development in the community.

Educational and Research Hubs focus compact development in areas with mixed use resources. A core concept of this Plan is to consider identified hubs as centers of economic, socio-cultural and physical excellence.

Another type of hub is on a neighborhood scale. Residents desire a strong community with strong neighborhoods and support services that enable their families to thrive. These neighborhood hubs are intended to focus on the delivery of social support and some services at a neighborhood scale. The goal is to nurture these hubs to provide a center where recreation, social support and volunteer needs can be met.

3.5 NEIGHBORHOODS

The design of a neighborhood can create a built environment that contributes to sustainable and inclusive communities. To maintain the value of public and private investment already made in existing areas, neighborhoods should be capable of renewal. In a simple definition, a sustainable community affords its residents the opportunity to live, work and play, today and in the future. It provides them with the opportunity to meet their diverse needs both in the present and in the future. A sustainable community is also a safe and inclusive community – one that is well-planned and offers equality of services for all.

For this reason, the built environment will be designed in such a way that communities are active, inclusive and safe, environmentally sensitive, well connected, thriving with services accessible to all. It is hoped that the policies in this Plan will help create and maintain a high quality of life in all neighborhoods. A balance needs to be struck between the needs of neighborhoods and the County as a whole. These policies will be implemented through concept plans, the Land Use Code, and the subdivision and development processes.

While preparing and reviewing concept plans, subdivision plans, and Land Use Code amendments, the following criteria must be considered:

1. Housing options;
2. Sustainability;
3. Efficient and effective use of servicing and infrastructure; and
4. Access to transportation, housing, employment, recreation and amenities.



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The neighborhood concept is based on the residential neighborhood unit - sufficient in size to support an elementary school, small scale commercial space and has a geographical identity defined by topography and streets. In a neighborhood unit, the elementary school, shopping, parkland and recreation facilities focus identity. The interior street system slows down traffic to reduce the traffic risk, provide for multiple unit housing, neighborhood shopping outlets and community facilities within the neighborhood. Decreases in family size drives the need to recalibrate neighborhood size.

3.6 DESIGN STANDARDS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Two basic neighborhood street patterns are evident in the County. Those areas developed prior to 1980 exhibit a rural road arrangement around large lot agricultural lands. Residential developments since 2000 have tended to follow a more curvilinear street pattern, as exemplified by Spanish Valley Drive. The trend today is to design neighborhoods with the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and transit in mind for health, social and environmental reasons. Complete streets and walkable neighborhoods encourage a mix of land uses such as housing, parks, schools and neighborhood shopping.

This Plan will begin to illustrate street layouts, cross sections and visualizations that characterize neighborhood principles, as outlined in the Land Use section (reference Appendix 17.6 and 8).

SECTION FOUR: DECISION MAKING

4.1 OVERVIEW AND STRATEGIES

The County adopted a draft Strategic Plan in October 2021 that references a vision and a value statement. This Plan needs to reinforce the democratic ideal embedded in County decision making and actively search for creative and effective ways that negotiate all the elements in the Plan.

Early and ongoing public engagement breathes relevance into actions. Decision making structure is expressed through (reference decision making chart):

1. Elected officials – Commission; Assessor; Attorney; Clerk/Auditor; Justice Court Judge; Recorder; Sheriff; Surveyor; Treasurer;
2. Committees – Arches hot spot; audit; Local emergency; Homeless coordinating; Moab tailings; Motorized trails committee; Old Spanish trail arena; Sand flats stewardship; Special events; Star hall; and Trail mix Advisory Committee;
3. Boards and Commissions – Planning commission; Airport; Board of adjustment; Budget advisory; Children’s justice center; Council on aging; Economic development advisory board; Economic diversification advisory council; Historical preservation commission; Housing authority of southeastern Utah; Housing task force; Library board; Noxious weed control board; and Travel advisory board;
4. Community groups – neighborhood groups and associations encouraged to participate on the Grand County online engagement platform;
5. Special Service and Local District Boards – Arches special service district; Canyonlands Health care; Grand County cemetery maintenance; Grand County recreation; Grand County transportation; Grand Water & Sewer Service agency; Grand County Special Service Water District board; Grand County water conservancy district board; Spanish Valley Water and Sewer improvement district; Moab mosquito abatement district; Grand County Solid Waste management; Thompson springs



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- special service water district board; and Thompson springs special service fire district; Moab Area Water Partnership (MAWP);
6. Agencies and referral groups – Non-governmental groups, and non-profits; and
 7. Decision making considers the guiding elements of smart growth and uses initiative to find and source out options for constructive engagement including:
 - a. Media – social, print, web, newsletters, reports, on-line access and mailings;
 - b. Face-to-face – open houses with appointed and elected officials, presentations, door-to-door, committees, forums and round tables; and
 - c. Formal – public hearings, County and Planning Commission meetings.

4.2 COUNTY, REGION AND AGENCIES

The quality of decision making depends on adaptively responding to changing circumstances, but, more importantly, consistently and reliably scaffolding ideas from all groups especially the underserved. Administration must “buy-in” to Commission policies and strategies and regularly interact to reinforce consistency. The following goals and policies guide the actions in implementation and help reinforce the political impetus in community planning:

Goal:

Educate and inform employees about County programs, issues and initiatives.

Policies:

- i. Establish a communications committee and orientation program considering regular communication to all staff including those off-site;
- ii. Make information about corporate priorities and initiatives easy to access through online databases and frequently asked questions;
- iii. Promote and leverage existing internal online database of general inquiries/frequently asked questions for employees to find answers;
- iv. Increase employees’ knowledge of departmental functions across the organization;
- v. Provide relevant resources and additional information/links to program information;
- vi. Involve employees in decision making through teams, networks and questionnaires;
- vii. Improve the organization’s ability to anticipate and respond to issues;
- viii. Develop an issues management protocol to effectively identify, monitor and respond to issues; and
- ix. Foster a cultural shift to embody an “oneness” between employees and management.

Goal:

Develop a public engagement strategy to guide the public consultation process and create consistency across the organization.

Policies:

- i. Ensure compliance with *American with Disabilities Act (ADA)*;



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- ii. Consult and engage in diverse locations and ways;
- iii. Create informal opportunities for feedback;
- iv. Explore best practices in public engagement;
- v. Identify new and alternative opportunities for public engagement that are accessible and convenient to the public;
- vi. Leverage website and social media to promote opportunities for input including specific apps;
- vii. Increase the public's trust that the County genuinely wants input and will take various points of view into consideration;
- viii. Create a "How to get involved" section on the website that lists public engagement opportunities;
- ix. Establish communication channels with local organizations to reach a multitude of stakeholders in a targeted and cost-efficient approach (e.g. neighborhood groups, libraries, committees and agencies, and University);
- x. Conduct a pilot project with a local organization (e.g. Chamber of Commerce) to establish and test an approach where the organization provides County information to its members on behalf of the County and solicits feedback; and
- xi. Have stakeholder groups host public events and opportunities for people to talk to County employees to learn more about County initiatives and issues.

Goal:

Improve the quality of the County's key stakeholder relationships and map legislative and reporting gaps across all political and referral agencies.

Policies:

- i. Enhance the County's media relations strategy;
- ii. Provide more information on critical or complex issues through media packages, media briefings, and more face-to-face time with key reporters;
- iii. Consistently identify newsworthy stories and present them in a way that's compelling;
- iv. Ensure inquiries from the media are given a high priority and responded to as quickly and efficiently as possible;
- v. Balance the use of traditional consultation methods (e.g. public meetings, surveys) and emerging methods (e.g. online forums) to best suit the situation;
- vi. Develop a social media strategy;
- vii. Establish stronger ties with neighborhood groups, boards and committees, and coalitions (e.g. community centers, community clubs, libraries, and youth advisory committee);
- viii. Work with stakeholder groups to host public events at which County employees and Commission members can address County issues;
- ix. Explore the possibility of leveraging existing advisory committees (or groups with a similar structure) to help identify key issues;
- x. Continue to implement the County Strategic Plan and ensure that the customer service



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standards are compliant with ADA;

- xi. Provide appropriate customer service training and resources for employees;
- xii. Make the public aware of the County's customer service standards, including timelines for responding to inquiries, mail, and email;
- xiii. Make regular stakeholders research a cornerstone of County activities and regularly endeavor to understand what's important to residents;
- xiv. Conduct community trend surveys every year;
- xv. Increase use of research and public opinion polls in County decision-making;
- xvi. Consider the formation of focus groups to annually report on community indicators; and
- xvii. Increase communication skills and enhance the communications capacity of the organization as a whole.

Goal:

Increase stakeholders' awareness of County programs and initiatives.

Policies:

- i. Enhance the County media relations strategy. Ensure that County news is covered by local media and increase accurate media coverage of County services and initiatives;
- ii. Continue to rely on the County's advertising program to convey important information to residents;
- iii. Review existing advertising policies and update them to reflect changing circumstances;
- iv. Continue to write and produce high impact ads;
- v. Make County information and opportunities for input more accessible;
- vi. Explore the possibility of establishing one-stop information stations throughout the community;
- vii. Create an inventory of languages spoken by employees. Leverage the translation capabilities of County employees to affordably and informally provide information in languages other than English;
- viii. Work with cultural groups to translate and distribute the document to new residents who may not have access to the Internet or speak English;
- ix. Participate in speaking engagements and public outreach;
- x. Build on existing school outreach programs (local government week, engineers in the classroom, water conservation programs, land use transportation, and parks and recreation);
- xi. Continue to host public outreach events and open houses, especially for long range planning projects like the General Plan and leverage social media;
- xii. Revamp the County's website. Focus on presenting information as one voice rather than as information from various departments. Whenever possible, build in opportunities for users to provide feedback on issues and services of the day; considering the user experience; and
- xiii. Develop and roll out sign guidelines so that all County signage is consistently designed and branded.



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4.3 PARTNERS - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Figure 1 explains the current referral relationships with County Commission and recommends that important gaps be evaluated for improved decision making and engagement, as noted above and in the notes section of the figure.

Figure 1 – County Commission Decision Making



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