



TOWN OF BLUE RIVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



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CHAPTER 1 - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUMMARY



The Town of Blue River Comprehensive Plan is an officially adopted policy document that establishes the Town's goals for the future and provides direction for decisions affecting the use and development of land, preservation of open space, transportation systems, partnerships with other organizations, economic growth, the expansion and maintenance of public facilities and services, and the relationship between land use patterns and fiscal policies.

The citizens of Blue River provided the policy direction articulated in the Comprehensive Plan through an extensive and broad-based public process. This is their document and it can be used to protect the unique qualities that brought them to Blue River; small town character, economic opportunity, recreational assets and natural amenities. The Comprehensive Plan will also serve as a guide to property owners and developers to help them understand the community's vision and to predict the uses that could occur both on and near their properties. The plan articulates the expectations about the physical form of development and helps developers make informed land-use decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan is not the same as the land use code. It does not change existing regulation, nor does it create new regulations. It is an advisory document that recommends and provides guidance for changes to the land use code. The Comprehensive Plan is written to provide general policy direction while also providing enough detail to set priorities and guide decision-making.

BLUE RIVER'S CHALLENGES

Blue River is a unique municipality in that it encompasses only residential subdivisions and has no commercial uses that typically define downtowns or commercial corridors in other communities. Adding to its uniqueness is the fact that approximately 44% of the homes in the town are utilized as part-time residences or vacation homes (Census Bureau).

For the most part, the full-time residents in Blue River are employed and commute to work in other communities, as evidenced by the 89% workforce participation rate and median household income of \$78,000 per year, both of which are higher than other comparable small towns in the area including Frisco, Dillon and Fraser (Census Bureau). So, Blue River provides an important role in the larger region by providing free market housing that has proved to be affordable for working residents.

The legal framework surrounding property tax rates and other taxes in Colorado have created a fiscal environment for municipalities and counties alike that have resulted in a strong dependence on sales taxes to meet the financial requirements of providing basic services. However, because the Town of Blue River has no retail or commercial in town, it is in the unique position of being almost entirely dependent on property tax revenues, which accounts for 64 % of the town's average annual revenues, compared to 2% of revenues in Frisco, 5% of revenues in Dillon and 34% for Summit County (Colorado Department of Local Affairs).

This dependence on steadily declining property taxes creates a constrained fiscal situation for the town, and for decades it has provided streets, law enforcement and general government services with volunteers, part-time employees and contractors. Needless to say, working with limited resources and staff, the level of service provided by the town often falls short of the expectation of its residents.



A SOLUTION-BASED STRATEGIC PLAN

This comprehensive plan lays out a strategic path for improving the town's level of service and for improving and expanding on its physical assets: streets, recreation, trails, parks, open space and community facilities. This includes fiscal strategies for expanding the revenue streams that will be necessary to make these changes. The Future Land Use Plan articulates a desired future for land uses in the town that is integrated with the overall strategy to improve assets and the level of service offered by the town and that also builds on and preserves the mountain valley and small town character that makes Blue River so appealing.

MISSION STATEMENT

Chapter 2 Strategic Plan articulates goals and strategies for improving assets and the level of service offered by the town. The Strategic plan begins with the town's mission statement that articulates the intent to make improvements that will benefit the entire community. The mission statement touches on all of the critical elements of the strategic plan: improved levels of service, enhancement of physical assets, improved communications and citizen involvement, fiscal responsibility, and maintaining Blue River's physical character.

CORE SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Core Services and Infrastructure component of the Strategic plan provides direction for maintaining and improving the Town's core infrastructure: streets, drainage and utilities. This section of the plan also includes strategies for core services such as administration, communications, and law enforcement.

The Town expends more resources and effort on maintaining and improving streets than on any other service or capital asset. Waste water collection and treatment is provided by the Upper Blue River Sanitation District and private septic systems. Water is provided to most properties via groundwater wells. There is no central water supply in Blue River except for the Timber Creek Water District. The town streets system consists of subdivision streets and the intersections with Highway 9. The majority of town streets are gravel, but some are paved.

A planning level analysis of the estimated peak traffic generated by residences in the Town's major transportation sheds shows that the lower segments of Blue River Road and Spruce Creek Road are in need of paving and associated drainage and improvements to meet basic Federal Highway Administration standards. Spruce Creek Road is also the access to the USFS trailhead serving Burro Creek Trail and Crystal Lakes Road, resulting in additional traffic loads during certain times of the year.

Most of the utility lines are overhead in Blue River except for in the newer developments, but it would be preferable to bury utility lines in the long term. Ideally, utility line burial would occur concurrently with Town streets and/or Town drainage improvements along the streets.

RECREATION ASSETS

The Recreation Assets component of Chapter 2 Strategic Plan contains goals and conceptual planning to guide physical improvements to the Town's recreational assets including open space, trails, parks and public lands access. The recreation component focuses on physical improvements and ways to improve the functionality of the recreation assets in and connected to town.



Goose Pasture Tarn - With some relatively minor improvements such as signage, trails, a dock, and improved parking, Goose Pasture Tarn could become an even more valuable centerpiece of the town's recreational amenities. The Recreation Assets component of the Strategic Plan provides conceptual level planning and strategies for next steps in design and funding to help make these improvements.

Upper Blue River Sanitation District Land - The land owned by the Upper Blue River Sanitation District has long been considered an opportunity for developing a recreation amenity close to the Town Center, where the Town Hall and Fire Station are located. The land is sloped toward the highway and its configuration lends it for use as a green field park with a site for a developed feature at the highpoint. In the winter, the slope would make an excellent informal sledding hill for Town residents. The Recreation Assets component of the plan sets the stage for a coordinated effort with the sanitation district to develop and utilize this great asset and further enhance recreational opportunities in Blue River.

In-Town Trails Network - The Town of Blue River has an extensive system of neighborhood roads and pedestrian easements platted in its subdivisions that connect subdivisions to open space areas. Many informal trails throughout town are in dedicated public easements, while others are informal trails that were created by local residents. There are a number of opportunities for improving existing trails and trailheads, as well as establishing new trail connections within the Town. While many of the existing dedicated access easements are not fully inter-connected, the easements do provide a framework and linkages from existing neighborhood roads to watersheds and river access, as well as direct access to adjacent National Forest areas. The Recreation Assets component of the plan provides mapping of the easements and social trails and strategies for formalizing the ability of Blue River residents to utilize this potential community asset.

USFS Trailheads and Access - Several popular multi-use recreational trails are located adjacent to the Town limits and as part of the adjacent White River National Forest management area. The existing trails and trail access points provide tremendous opportunities for local residents and lend to the attractiveness of the community for prospective residents. However, the formal and informal access points and parking areas serving these trailheads need improvement so that local residents are not inconvenienced by disorganized parking and access. The Recreation Assets component of the plan articulates strategies for working with county and federal partners to better manage these access points and to mitigate impacts on town roads and its residents.

Hoosier Pass Recreational Pathway - The conceptually planned Hoosier Pass Recreational Pathway could be a great asset for the community, but several technical considerations will need to be addressed by the Town of Blue River in conjunction with the Summit County Open Space Department and the CDOT prior to advancing the Hoosier Pass Recreational Pathway project through the town. The ultimate success of the proposed pathway through Blue River would require an extensive and thorough property owner outreach process and the direct involvement of the Town.

FISCAL SOLUTIONS

This Fiscal Solutions component of the strategic plan outlines budgetary strategies and revenue projections for implementing the strategic plan. The Core Infrastructure and Services component of the plan were classified as near-term and long-term solutions.



- Near Term - Provide core services funded with existing revenues to include law enforcement, accident response and traffic patrol through partnerships with Summit County and the Town of Breckenridge and the ongoing staffing of a town administrator and a community services officer.
- Long Term - Create a Town of Blue River law enforcement department funded with existing revenues and a mill levy increase and/or additional retail sales tax and use tax revenues. This also includes continued funding for a Town administrator and a community services officer.
- Long Term - Increase capital investment funded with existing revenues and a mill levy increase and/or additional retail sales tax revenues. Once the core services and reserve savings are covered, the remaining revenue may be made available for capital improvements.

The Fiscal Solutions component of the Strategic Plan articulates strategies for diversifying the town's revenue structure both by going to voters with tax proposals and by utilizing the town's financing tools to help neighborhoods achieve their own capital investments. This section of the plan also provides policy guidance for the future land use plan by signaling the need to explore future development opportunities that would diversify and expand revenues. While federal and state grant funding is not a long term solution, it can help make specific improvements and help the town fill gaps during the transition that is already underway.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Natural Environment component of the strategic plan sets out goals and strategies for protecting and enhancing the habitat and scenery that make Blue River so appealing. The high alpine setting and riparian environment helps to define the character for the Town of Blue River so it is critical to maintain and protect it, especially the riparian and wetland areas in the valley floor and creek bottoms. While living at high elevation brings the advantage of wildlife habitat, it also brings hazards. The most serious natural hazard in Blue River is wildfire hazard associated with the conifer forests and complex terrain in which most of the Town's neighborhoods are located. Several neighborhoods are accessed by one main road and homes are situated among the conifers. Methodical thinning and establishing fire breaks and maintaining vegetation along roads can help reduce wildfire risk.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Chapter 3 - Future Land Use Plan is a geographic and thematic representation of the future direction for physical planning called for in the Strategic Plan section of this document. This critical component of the Comprehensive Plan is a physical planning tool to help the community arrive at a future of its own making. It is advisory in nature, laying the foundation for making changes to zoning in the future, but it is neither zoning nor a zoning map. The future land use plan does not restrict existing or vested uses.

Chapter 3 - Future Land Use Plan places the goals and strategies articulated in the Chapter 2 Strategic Plan on the map, by identifying future development opportunities and showing their relationship to physical assets. Most of the town consists of platted subdivisions and there is little land that is not already part of a platted subdivision. The platted areas that make up the majority of the town are designated as Developed Neighborhoods, and it is acknowledged that these areas will continue to build out and structures may be replaced, but they are unlikely to change fundamentally for the foreseeable future.



The Future Land Use plan begins by articulating future development opportunities for three areas that have potential for additional development/redevelopment. The plan articulates the opportunities and the desired future for each of these areas as well as the physical parameters that will ensure that future development is in keeping with Blue River's character and that the fundamental requirements of development such as access and parking are provided.

Town Center Development Area - This future development area encompasses the area in the proximity of Town Hall and is easily accessible from Highway 9. The desired future for this area is that it serves as the civic center for municipal and other public facilities, including open space, park land and small-scale commercial that complements the civic purpose. Future development would be in keeping with Blue River's character and, with buildings and site design oriented around a center to create a sense of place.

Spruce Creek Development Area - This area is located across Highway 9 from its intersection with Spruce Creek Road and adjacent to the northern edge of the Blue Rock Springs Subdivision. This is one of the only undeveloped parcels with developable land remaining in the Town Limits. This site is best suited to provide a diversity of housing unit types ranging from smaller residential units and attached units to single family units on larger lots and has the potential to accommodate a live-work component where residential units are directly connected to workspace for home occupations. The layout would emphasize native landscape screening and the preservation of the viewshed as seen from Highway 9.

Skiers Edge Redevelopment/Renovation Annexation Area - This is a potential annexation into the town, but only as part of a redevelopment/renovation plan to make it an attractive and successful development. Future uses would include lodging, short-term rentals and attached residential.

Highway 9 Corridor and Gateways - State Highway 9 bisects town and provides auto access to town streets and driveway access to private residences. One goal for the highway corridor is to reduce speed through Town to improve safety and driving conditions. To help define the town geographically and alert motorists, gateways are also proposed for the highway corridor using entry monumentation to create a sense of arrival and wayfinding for visitors.

Open Space and Recreation - Open space and recreation opportunities are central to quality of life in Blue River. The strategies for recreation development articulated in the Strategic Plan are also included in the Future Land Use plan and it provides strategies for connecting these assets to existing and future development.



CHAPTER 2 - STRATEGIC PLAN



2.1 Introduction

The strategic plan charts the direction for accomplishing the community goals. The strategic plan spans all of the functions and capital assets provided by the Town. The strategic plan also provides linkages between the Town's strategic direction and the future land use plan. Each section contains goals, strategies and background information. Goals express what a community wants to achieve and strategies say how they wish to achieve it. The background information is included to inform the goals and strategies.

There are several sections of the strategic plan:

Mission Statement - A statement of intent articulated by the Town Board of Trustees

Core Services and Infrastructure - Direction for maintaining and improving the Town's core infrastructure: streets, drainage and utilities. Also includes strategies for core services such as administration, communications, and law enforcement.

Recreation Assets - Goals and conceptual planning for physical improvements to the Town's recreational assets including open space, trails, parks and public lands access.

Fiscal Solutions - This section of the strategic plan outlines budgetary strategies and revenue projections for implementing the strategic plan.

Natural Environment - Goals and strategies to protect and enhance the natural resources in Blue River.



2.2 Town of Blue River Mission Statement

The purpose and mission of the Town of Blue River as articulated in the Town of Blue River Comprehensive Plan is:

- To maintain and enhance Town infrastructure.
- To provide personal and timely service and communications to Town residents
- To reflect and protect the uniqueness of the community.
- To serve as a conduit for local advocacy with neighboring communities, Summit County and the state.
- To provide criminal law enforcement, traffic patrol and Town municipal code enforcement.
- To provide protection of homeowners' rights.
- To enhance recreational opportunities while mitigating impacts of recreational use on Town residents and roads.
- To be fiscally responsible.
- To plan for and implement a land use plan and land use regulations that integrate consideration of environmental, infrastructure, Town service capacity and fiscal capacity.



2.3 Core Service and Infrastructure

Town of Blue River provides core services including streets maintenance and improvements, code enforcement, building permit and zoning ordinance review, and basic Town governance including elections and budgeting. The Town also provides parks and open space, but this is covered in Section 2.4 - Recreation Assets. To date, the Town has supplied these services with a combination of volunteer leadership, part-time, modestly paid staff, and by contracting with Summit County, the Town of Breckenridge and with private contractors. This element of the comprehensive plan provides information and a strategic path for improving the core services and infrastructure.

Goal 1 - Maintain and enhance the quality of core Town infrastructure: Town roads, Town drainage, Town hall and private utilities.

Background - The Town expends more resources and effort on maintaining and improving streets than on any other service or capital asset. Waste water collection and treatment is provided by the Upper Blue River Sanitation District and private septic systems. Water is provided via groundwater wells. There is no central water supply in Blue River except for the Timber Creek Water District. The Town streets system consists of subdivision streets and the intersections with Highway 9. The majority of Town streets are gravel, but some are paved.

A planning level analysis of the estimated peak traffic generated by residences in the Town's major transportation sheds (see Figure 1) shows that the lower segments of Blue River Road and Spruce Creek Road are in need of paving and associated drainage and improvements to meet basic Federal Highway Administration standards. Spruce Creek Road is also the access to the USFS trailhead serving Burro Creek Trail and Crystal Lakes Road, resulting in additional traffic loads during certain times of the year.

Most of the utility lines are overhead in Blue River except for in the newer developments, but it would be preferable to bury utility lines in the long term. Ideally, utility line burial would occur concurrently with Town streets and/or Town drainage improvements along the streets.

Strategies

Strategy A - Provide reliable and consistent snow removal and regular road maintenance.

Strategy B - Pave the Town's major collector roads that are not already paved and have reached engineering thresholds for needing a paved surface and improved drainage necessary to protect a paved surface from water and ice damage.

- ▶ Blue River Road
- ▶ Spruce Creek Road

Strategy C - Continue to make systematic improvements to drainage along Town streets; priority will be given to areas of greatest need, afterward improvements will begin from the end furthest downstream and work upward.

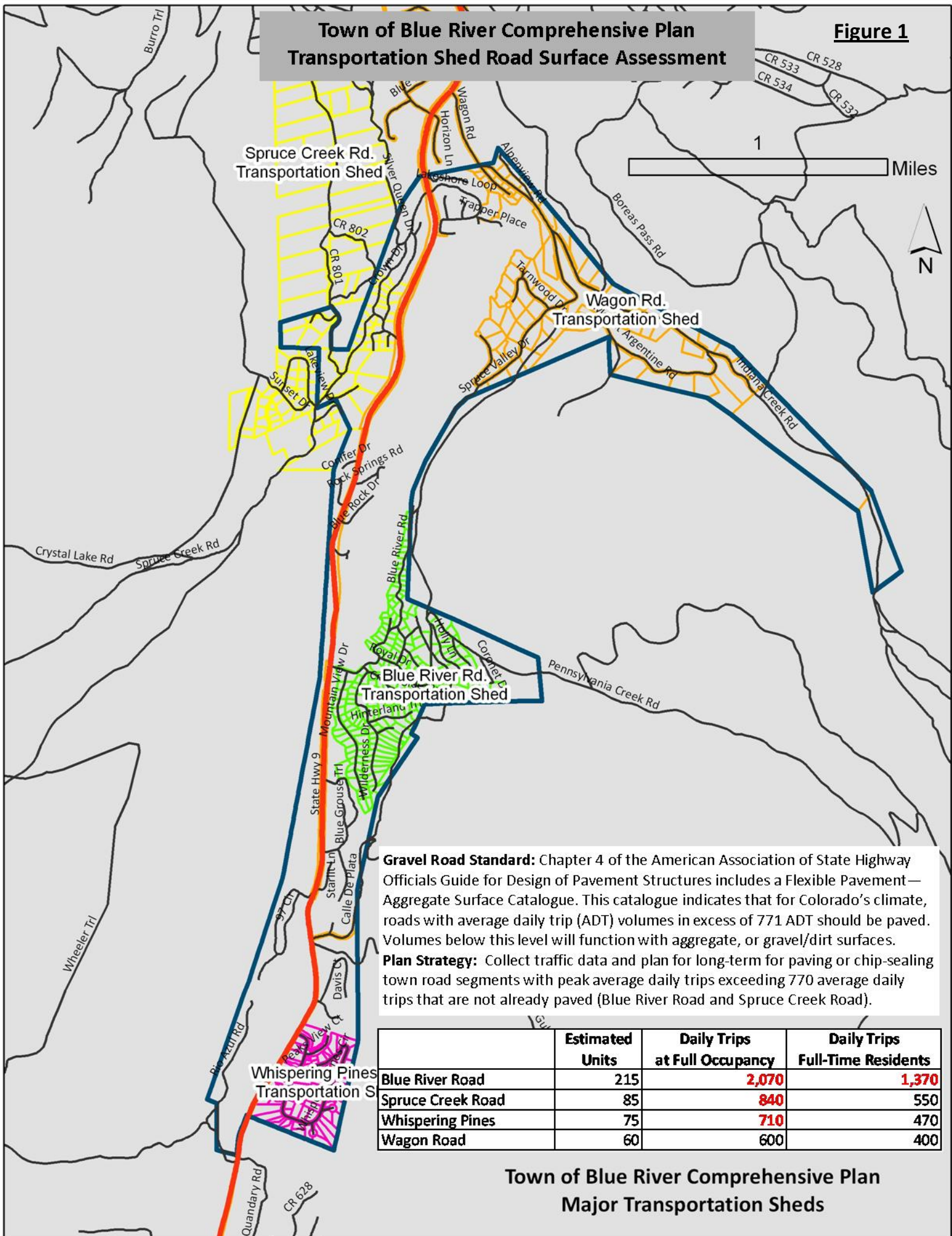
Strategy D - Work with utility companies and neighborhoods to bury overhead utility lines.

Strategy E - Establish a strategy for clarifying the legal status of the right-of-way/public access on Town streets and evaluate the need to formalize the Town's authority over the streets rights of way.



Town of Blue River Comprehensive Plan Transportation Shed Road Surface Assessment

Figure 1



Gravel Road Standard: Chapter 4 of the American Association of State Highway Officials Guide for Design of Pavement Structures includes a Flexible Pavement—Aggregate Surface Catalogue. This catalogue indicates that for Colorado’s climate, roads with average daily trip (ADT) volumes in excess of 771 ADT should be paved. Volumes below this level will function with aggregate, or gravel/dirt surfaces.

Plan Strategy: Collect traffic data and plan for long-term for paving or chip-sealing town road segments with peak average daily trips exceeding 770 average daily trips that are not already paved (Blue River Road and Spruce Creek Road).

	Estimated Units	Daily Trips at Full Occupancy	Daily Trips Full-Time Residents
Blue River Road	215	2,070	1,370
Spruce Creek Road	85	840	550
Whispering Pines	75	710	470
Wagon Road	60	600	400

Goal 2 -Continue to develop the capacity of the Town staff to manage the Town's finances, operations, maintenance, and capital projects and to provide regular communication with residents.

Background - Professional management is an essential service for a Town Blue River's size and the Town has hired a professional Town administrator. There are several strategies that can guide the Town administrator's work program at the outset.

Strategy A - Dedicate sufficient time in the Town Administrator's work program dedicated to community communications and outreach.

Strategy B - Establish a comprehensive email and mailing list of residents and homeowners groups.

Strategy C - Update the Town of Blue River newsletter electronic development and distribution and expand information and updates on Town operations, meetings/events, issues, goals and progress.

Strategy D - Maintain, expand, and improve the Town website as a portal for Town documents, applications, contact information and announcements and news updates.

Strategy E - Continue to host community events such as the Town Yard Sale and Barbeque.

Strategy F - Engage the Summit Daily News and other press to cover Blue River news and help with resident communications.

Goal 3 - Provide for public safety/code enforcement.

Background - Public safety and code enforcement are of key importance for Town residents. Currently, the Town staffs a code enforcement officer who addresses non-criminal code violations and patrols the community, but criminal law enforcement and accident response are covered via an agreement with Summit County. From a long-term sustainability standpoint, it is important for the Town to eventually budget for and manage its own full service public safety department and to achieve law enforcement and public safety self-sufficiency.

Staffing a law enforcement department costs about \$230,000 per year, on average for similar sized Towns (see Figure 2). If the Town was to staff and operate its own full service law enforcement department without establishing new revenue sources, a budgetary deficit would occur and the Town's reserve funds would be depleted within 7 years. Section 2.5 - Fiscal Solutions discusses strategies for increasing the Town's Financial capacity so that it can provide this core service.

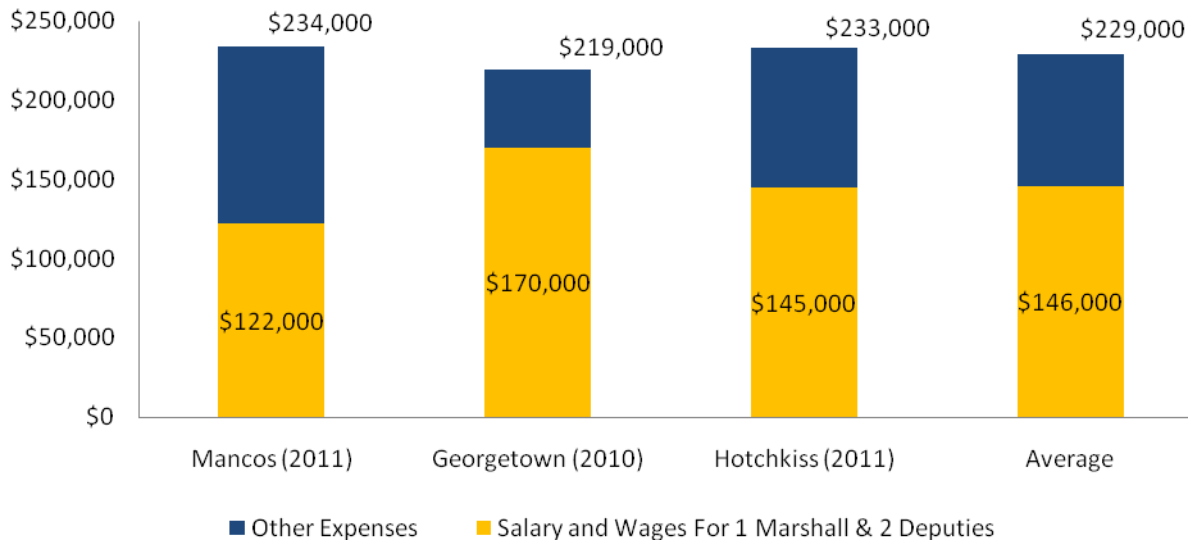
Strategies

Strategy A - Near term: Sustain partnerships with local law enforcement agencies for criminal law enforcement, vehicle accident response, and traffic enforcement and sustain the Community Service Officer position and funding to enforce the Town's Municipal Code.

Strategy B - Long term: Establish and sustain a Town of Blue River law and code enforcement department.



Figure 2- Law Enforcement Cost Survey



2.4 Recreational Assets

Parks, recreational trails, and open space are important community assets for the residents of the Town of Blue River. These land uses provide both passive and active recreation opportunities for residents and reinforce the outdoor lifestyle and connection to the mountain environment valued so much by residents.

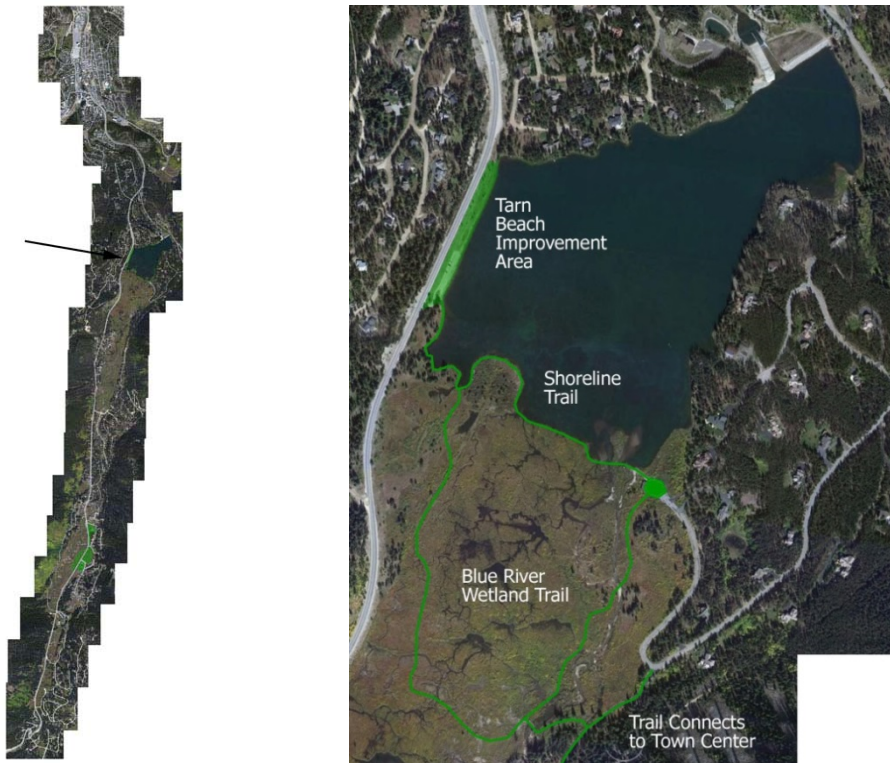
Organized along the Highway 9 corridor and the Blue River, Spruce Creek and Pennsylvania Creek watersheds, the Town of Blue River is surrounded by outstanding recreational areas co-managed by the White River National Forest, and Open Space agencies for both Summit County and the Town of Breckenridge.

See Figures 6 and 7 - Recreation Assets for north and south overview maps of the recreation assets in Blue River.

Goal 4 - Enhance the recreational access and support facilities for Goose Pasture Tarn.

The Goose Pasture Tarn and the area around it are the main open space resource in Blue River. The Tarn is a 771 acre-foot controlled reservoir that is the principal domestic storage facility for the Town of Breckenridge and collects runoff from approximately 42 square miles of the Upper Blue River watershed. Residential property occupies much of the shoreline. The Town owns a small portion of the shore as well as a large area of wetlands in the Blue River delta area.

Figure 3 – Context Map and Aerial Map of Goose Pasture Tarn Improvements



This Town owned land at Goose Pasture Tarn is restricted to private use by the residents of Blue River. The area has signage and is patrolled by the Town Community Services Officer. Small boats including canoes, kayaks, standup paddleboards, and rowboats are allowed and boats may use electric trolling motors, but gasoline motors are not allowed. All boats require registration with the Town Clerk and must display a boat

sticker. There is currently not boat storage allowed at the Tarn. Swimming and fishing are allowed from shore or from a flotation device. A fishing license is required, catch and release is encouraged and catch limits apply. All winter use is restricted to the shore.

There are a variety of opportunities for recreation enhancement at the Goose Pasture Tarn. These include a pavilion and picnic facilities, a natural themed playground, long term boat storage, a dock for swimming and fishing and improved trails along the shore and into the wetlands of the Blue River Delta. The Tarn trail system could allow for exploring and bird watching and could connect with the overall network of trails for the Town.

Strategies

Strategy A - Develop a concept plan for improving Goose Pasture Tarn that includes conceptual design, preliminary costs, public outreach and funding sources.

Strategy B - Utilize the concept plan to submit grant applications with state, federal and non-profit recreation funding agencies.

Figure 4 –Recreation enhancements that could be constructed at the Goose Pasture Tarn





Figure 5 – *Concept Illustration for a Formalized Trail near the Parking/Access Area on Highway 9*

Goal 5 - Utilize the Upper Blue River Sanitation District land near Town Hall as an active open space amenity and connect it to Town Hall with a pathway along Highway 9.

An area that is available for development as an active open space amenity for the Town of Blue River is the sewer plant leech field currently operated by the Upper Blue River Sanitation District . The property is located just to the north of Town Hall and the proposed Town Center development area. The land is sloped toward the highway and its configuration lends it for use as a general green field park with a site for a developed feature at the highpoint. In the winter, the slope would make an excellent informal sledding hill for Town residents. This open space can be connected to the Town Center area and other areas of Town with a pathway along the highway. There other areas available for open space development within the proposed development areas and the proposed annexation area at the south Town boundary. By clustering the residential development, the maximum open space can be preserved to buffer and screen adjacent uses, provide connections with trails and trailheads and provide additional passive and active parks and open spaces for the Town's long term future.

Strategies

Strategy A - Work with the Upper Blue River Sanitation District to establish a preliminary agreement regarding the recreational use of the district land and the commitment of the Town to build and maintain recreational facilities.

Strategy B - Develop a concept plan for developing recreational amenities on the district land, including conceptual design and a funding strategy.

Strategy C - Formalize the construction and maintenance details contained in the concept plan into a service agreement between the Town of Blue River and the Upper Blue River Sanitation District.

Goal 6 - Identify key river and trail easements in current subdivision plats and establish a network of footpaths allowing for shorter in-Town routes and connecting key destinations within the Town limits.

As a residential community, the Town of Blue River is comprised of thirty-four separate residential subdivisions, as well as a series of Town owned land parcels and other public lands owned by Summit County and the Town of Breckenridge.

The Town of Blue River has an extensive system of neighborhood roads and pedestrian easements platted in its subdivisions that connect subdivisions to open space areas (reference Figures 6 and 7). The various pedestrian easements connect neighborhoods to individual watersheds, providing access to wildlife habitat areas in the area. The residential nature of the Town provides numerous neighborhood roads that are generally characterized by low traffic volume and low travel speeds. The neighborhood road system offers a relatively safe environment for recreational walking and bicycling within the Town limits and allows for routes that utilize Town streets to make connections between trail segments. The surrounding White River National Forest provides dedicated public lands and recreation opportunities within close proximity to the Town limits, with existing and potential trail routes that integrate with the in-Town system.

There are also several improved foot trails and informal social trails throughout the community. Many of the informal trails are part of dedicated public easements, while others are informal and understood trails created by local residents over time. There are a number of opportunities for improving existing trails and trailheads, as well as establishing new trail connections within the Town.

While many of the existing dedicated access easements are not fully inter-connected, the easements do provide a framework and linkages from existing neighborhood roads to watersheds and river access, as well as direct access to adjacent National Forest management areas. In some cases, specific subdivisions have dedicated continuous access easements as a part of a subdivision for local residents to legally access the Blue River and other watersheds.

Strategies

Strategy A - Conduct research on the subdivision plats and approval documents to identify the trail easements that are open to Blue River residents.

Strategy B - Conduct outreach with homeowners associations and property owners to determine the willingness of subdivision residents to open up private trail easements to broader use by Blue River residents and work to formalize access agreements or easements in writing.

Strategy C - Establish a network of local volunteers and secure funding for improving the trails, posting signage, producing maps and making trail connections.

Goal 7 - Work with the Forest Service, Summit County, Town of Breckenridge and homeowners to create better access and trailhead parking at popular trailheads in Blue River and to mitigate regional recreational impacts on Town roads.

Several popular multi-use recreational trails are located adjacent to the Town limits and as part of the adjacent White River National Forest management area. The existing trails and trail access points provide tremendous opportunities for local residents and lend to the attractiveness of the community for prospective



residents. However, the formal and informal access points and parking areas serving these trailheads need improvement so that local residents are not inconvenienced by disorganized parking and access. Winter access can be particularly problematic because the already limited parking is further constrained by snow.

Strategies

Strategy A - Identify key access points at adjacent National Forest management areas and improve vehicular and pedestrian access at key parking and trailhead locations with adequate parking.

Strategy B - Identify revenue sharing agreements among various agencies responsible for maintenance and operations of trailheads.

Goal 8 - Should the Hoosier Pass Recreational Pathway enter the implementation phase, work carefully with Summit County, CDOT and other partners to define an alignment and design standards that are safe and acceptable to the Town property owners and benefit the community.

The recently completed Hoosier Pass Recreation Pathway Feasibility Study (2011) provides an analysis of existing conditions along Highway 9 to connect the Town of Breckenridge, Town of Blue River and points south along Highway 9 to the Town of Alma. The pathway could be a great asset for the community, but several technical considerations will need to be addressed by the Town of Blue River in conjunction with the Summit County Open Space Department and the CDOT prior to advancing the Hoosier Pass Recreational Pathway project through the Town. The ultimate success of the proposed pathway through Blue River would require an extensive and thorough property owner outreach process and the direct involvement of the Town for approvals.

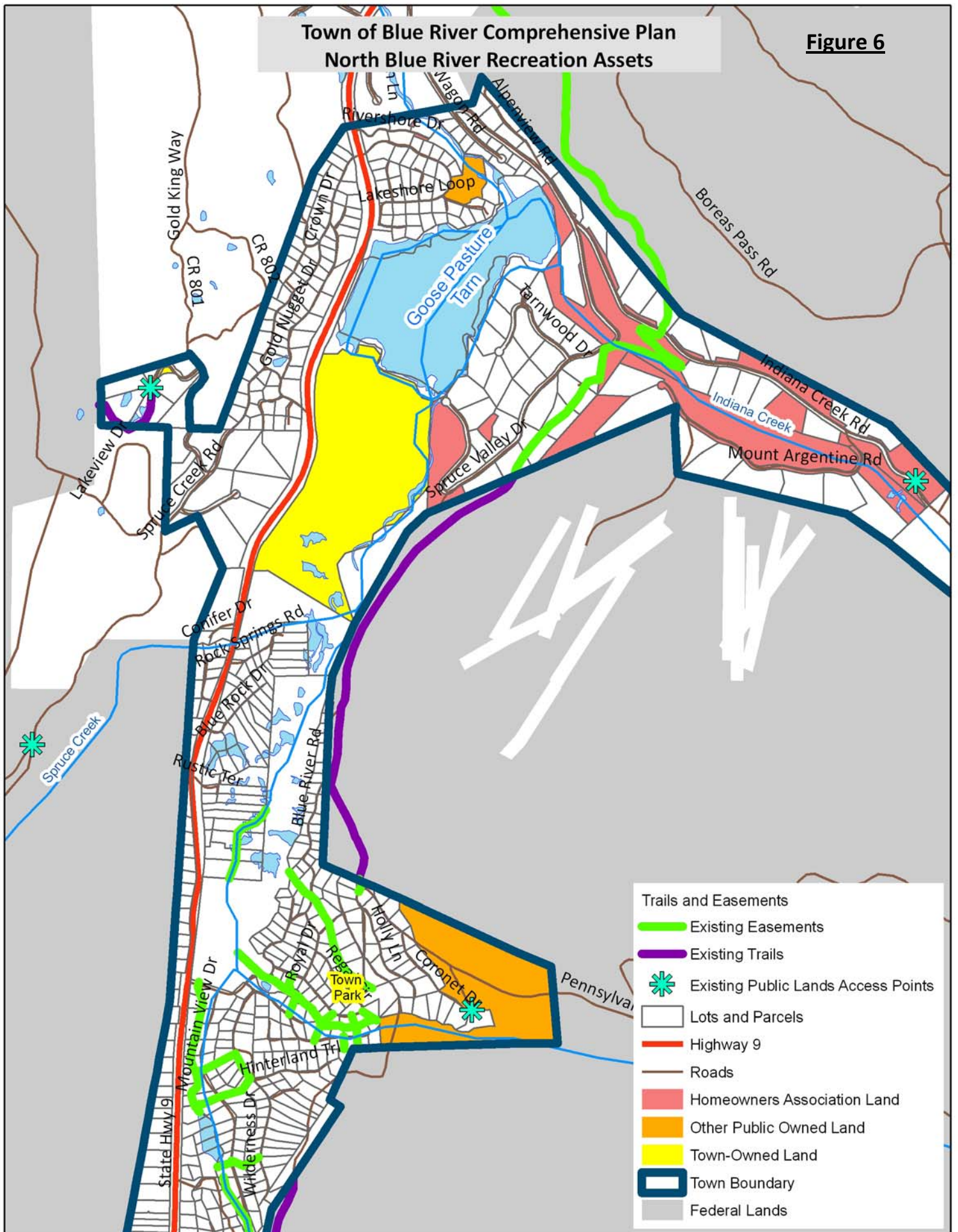
Strategies

Strategy A - Continue to have town representation and active involvement in future phases of planning and design of the Hoosier Pass Recreational Pathway to advance the community's preferences and mitigate adverse impacts.



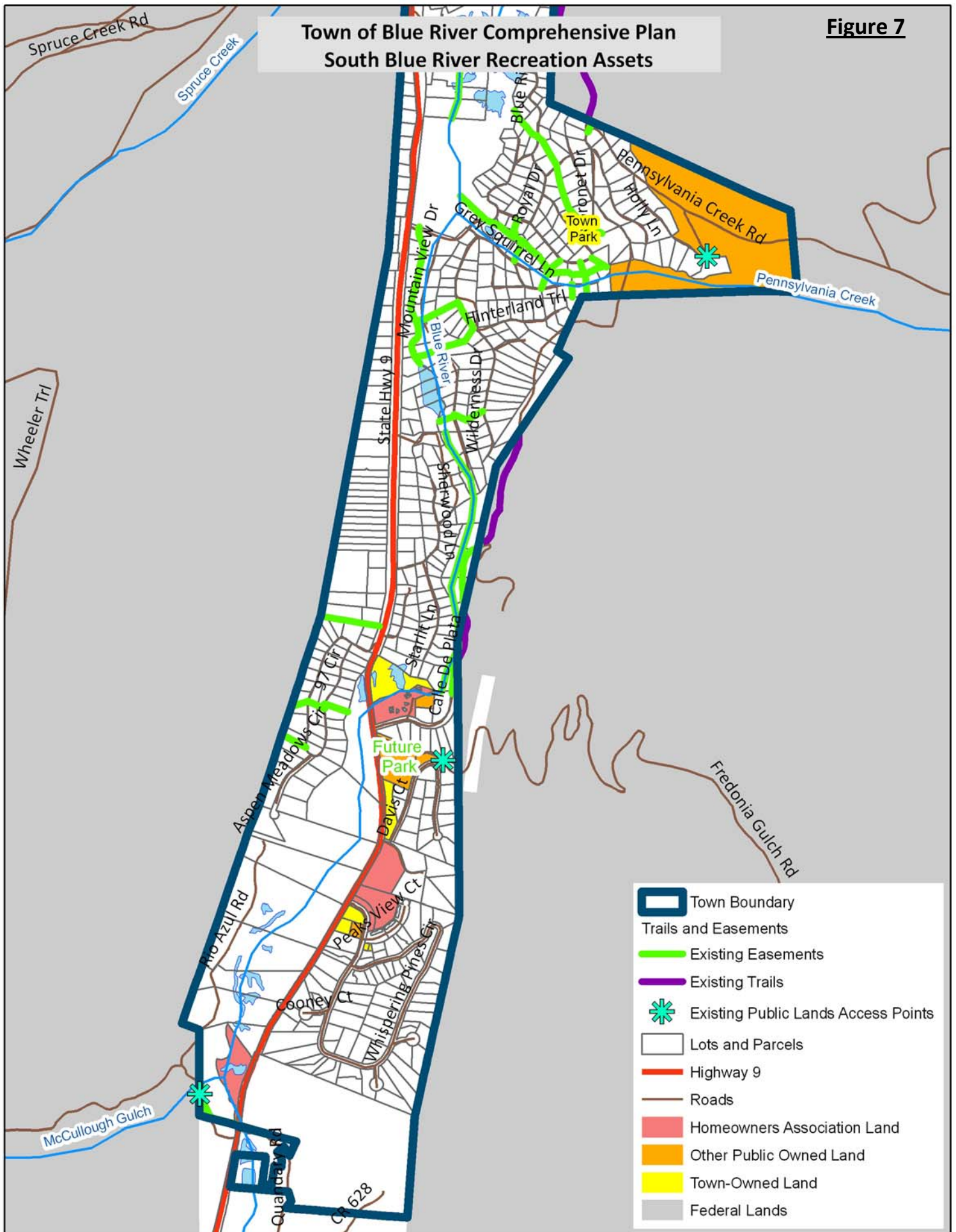
Town of Blue River Comprehensive Plan North Blue River Recreation Assets

Figure 6



Town of Blue River Comprehensive Plan South Blue River Recreation Assets

Figure 7



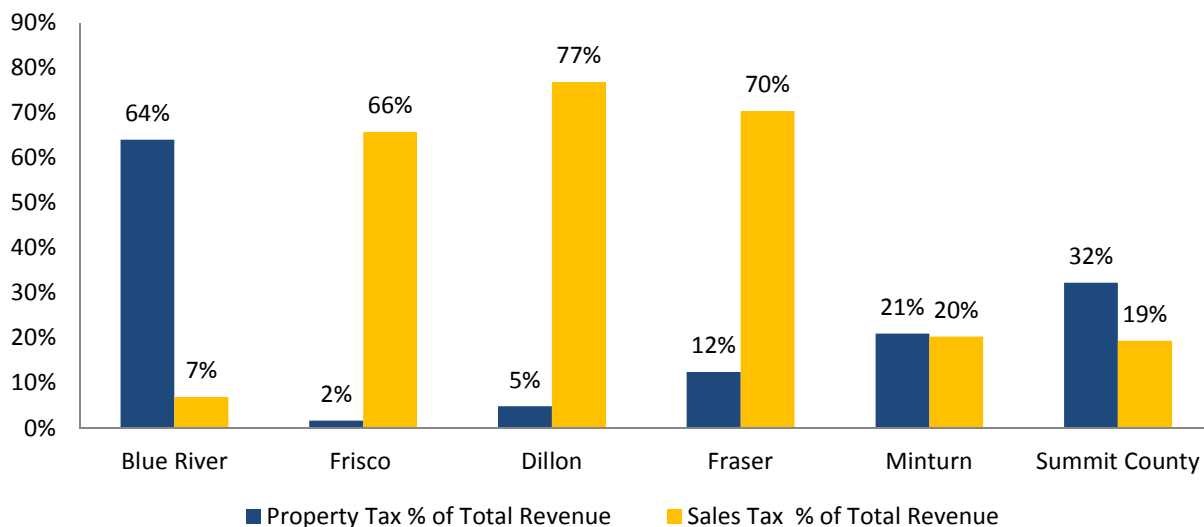
2.5 Fiscal Solutions

Accomplishing the goals and strategies articulated in this plan will require deliberate fiscal planning. This component of the strategic plan lists fiscal strategies for maintaining fiscal sustainability, achieving self-sufficiency and implementing the goals of the strategic plan.

Goal 9 -Develop a sustainable fiscal strategy and budgetary structure for accomplishing Town goals and completing capital improvement projects.

Background - The most important fiscal characteristic of Blue River is that it is almost entirely dependent on property tax. Also, Blue River registers lower per capita expenditures compared to other communities, reflecting that fewer services and facilities are offered in Blue River compared to other neighboring small Towns.

Figure 8 - Property Tax as Percent of Total Revenues



Revenue Outlook - Because the Town is reliant on property taxes, and these revenues are projected to decline for the next few years only to flatten out until 2018, the revenue outlook for the Town indicates that more fiscal challenges are coming.

Note - For more details on fiscal conditions and solutions, see Appendix 2 - Fiscal Solutions Background Information.



Figure 9- Per Capita Operations and Capital Expenditures

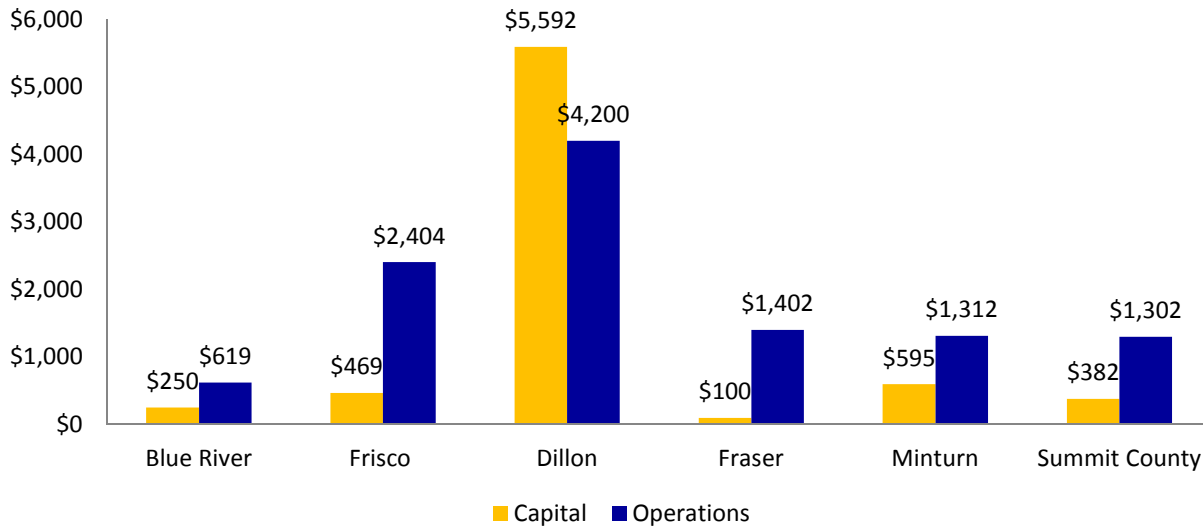
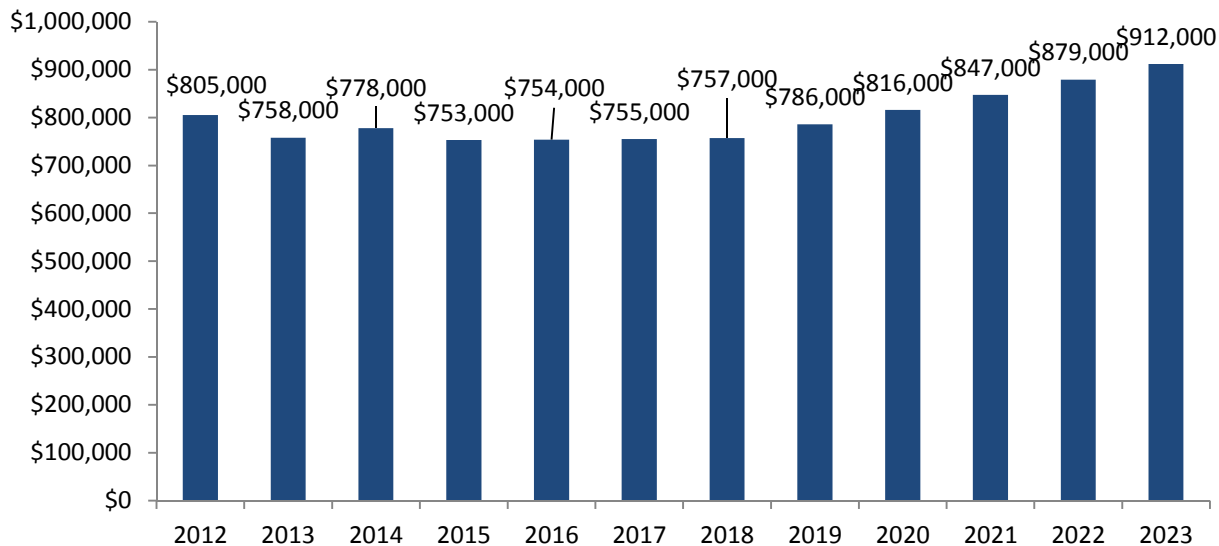


Figure 10 – Total Projected Revenues Through 2023



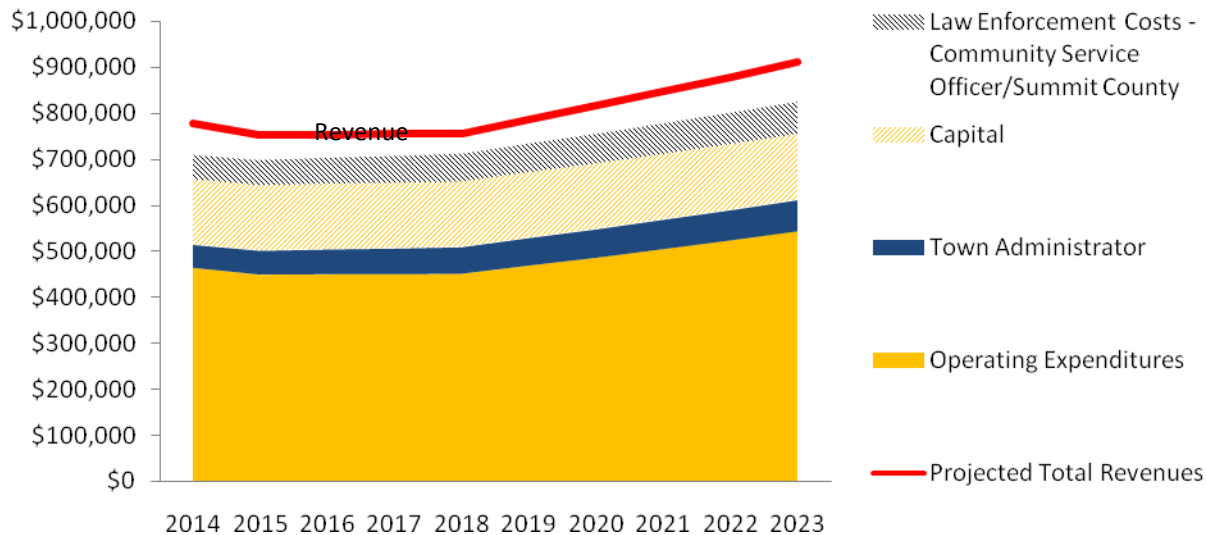
Fiscal Strategy Summary

- Near Term - Provide core services funded with existing revenues to include law enforcement, accident response and traffic patrol through partnerships with Summit County and the Town of Breckenridge and ongoing staffing a Town administrator and a community services officer.
- Long Term - Provide Blue River law enforcement department funded with existing revenues and a mill levy Increase and/or additional retail sales tax revenues. This also includes continued funding for a Town administrator and a community services officer.



- Long Term - Increase capital investment funded with existing revenues and a mill levy increase and/or additional retail sales tax revenues. Once the core services and reserve savings are covered, the remaining revenue may be made available for capital improvements.

Figure 11 - Near Term Funding Analysis



Overall Strategies:

Strategy A - Diversify the Town's revenue structure:

- Structure a use tax proposal on building materials, vehicles and other such items as allowed under Colorado Revised Statutes 29-2-105 to help pay for development-related capital improvements and submit to registered voters for approval as directed by statute.
- Structure a Town-wide property tax proposal to voters that includes long-term funding for capital improvements, capital replacement, and a Town public safety department.

Strategy B - Use the Town's financing tools to help neighborhoods achieve their own capital improvement goals:

- Facilitate the development of special improvement districts to collect property tax revenues in order to accomplish capital improvements or increase maintenance.
- Work with neighborhoods to create special assessments for localized infrastructure improvements.

Strategy C - Diversify the in-Town economy by exploring future development opportunities.

- Explore opportunities for small-scale commercial uses in Blue River that are in keeping with the character of the Town and the Upper Blue River.
- Identify possible annexation areas and articulate a desired future for these areas.



Strategy D - Utilize state and federal grant funding to implement capital improvements and improve Town services while striving for self-sufficiency in the long term.

- Utilize the Colorado Department of Local Affairs Town manager funding assistance program to phase-in a permanent Town administrator, but ensure that revenues are sufficient the Town can fund the position self-sufficiently at the end of the 3 year program.
- Evaluate grant opportunities for infrastructure improvements:
 - Parks, Recreation and Trails.
 - i. Great Outdoors Colorado
<http://www.goco.org/grant-programs/local-government/applications-forms>
 - ii. DOLA Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance program
<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251594715231>
 - iii. Colorado State Parks Land and Water Conservation Fund
<http://parks.state.co.us/Trails/LWCF/Pages/LWCFHome.aspx>
 - iv. KaBoom (for playgrounds)
http://kaboom.org/about_kaboom/programs/grants
 - v. Colorado State Trails Program
<http://parks.state.co.us/Trails/Grants/>
- Roads
 - i. Federal Highway Administration's Western Federal Lands Highway program-
<http://www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/>
 - ii. Federal Highway Trust Fund
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/>
- Town community facilities
 - i. USDA Rural Development Community Facility Grant
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/had-cf_grants.html
 - ii. HUD Community Development Block Grants (administered by DOLA)
<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251592177272>
 - iii. Great Outdoors Colorado
<http://www.goco.org/grant-programs/local-government/applications-forms>
 - iv. DOLA Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance program
<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251594715231>



2.6 - Natural Environment

Goal 10 - Preserve the natural assets and wildlife habitat.

The high alpine setting and riparian environment helps to define the character for the Town of Blue River, so it is critical to maintain and protect it. The Blue River, the Goose Pasture Tarn, and several creeks provide the Town a rich with wildlife habitat with a variety of mountain species that utilize and move through the area. From a wildlife perspective, the riparian areas and wetlands are the most valuable habitat, and in most cases, the wetlands and riparian areas are preserved either because they are owned by the Town or because they are set aside as homeowners association open space. See Figures 12 and 13 - Opportunities and Constraints for north and south maps showing these key habitat types as they relate to the development pattern in Blue River and the build out potential.

Strategies

Strategy A - Continue to enforce, evolve and refine development regulations that preserve and enhance key habitat and natural features.

Strategy B - Preserve and protect wetlands and riparian areas for wildlife and water quality.

Goal 11 - Reduce the risk of wildfire hazards.

While living at high elevation brings the advantage of wildlife habitat, it also brings hazards. The most serious natural hazard in Blue River is wildfire hazard associated with the conifer forests on complex terrain in which most of the Town's neighborhoods are located. Several neighborhoods are accessed by one main road and homes are situated among the conifers. Vegetation thinning around and near structures, establishing/maintaining fire breaks and thinning vegetation along roads can help reduce wildfire risk.

Strategies:

Strategy A - Work with the Red White and Blue Fire Protection District to attain "Fire Wise" status for Blue River.

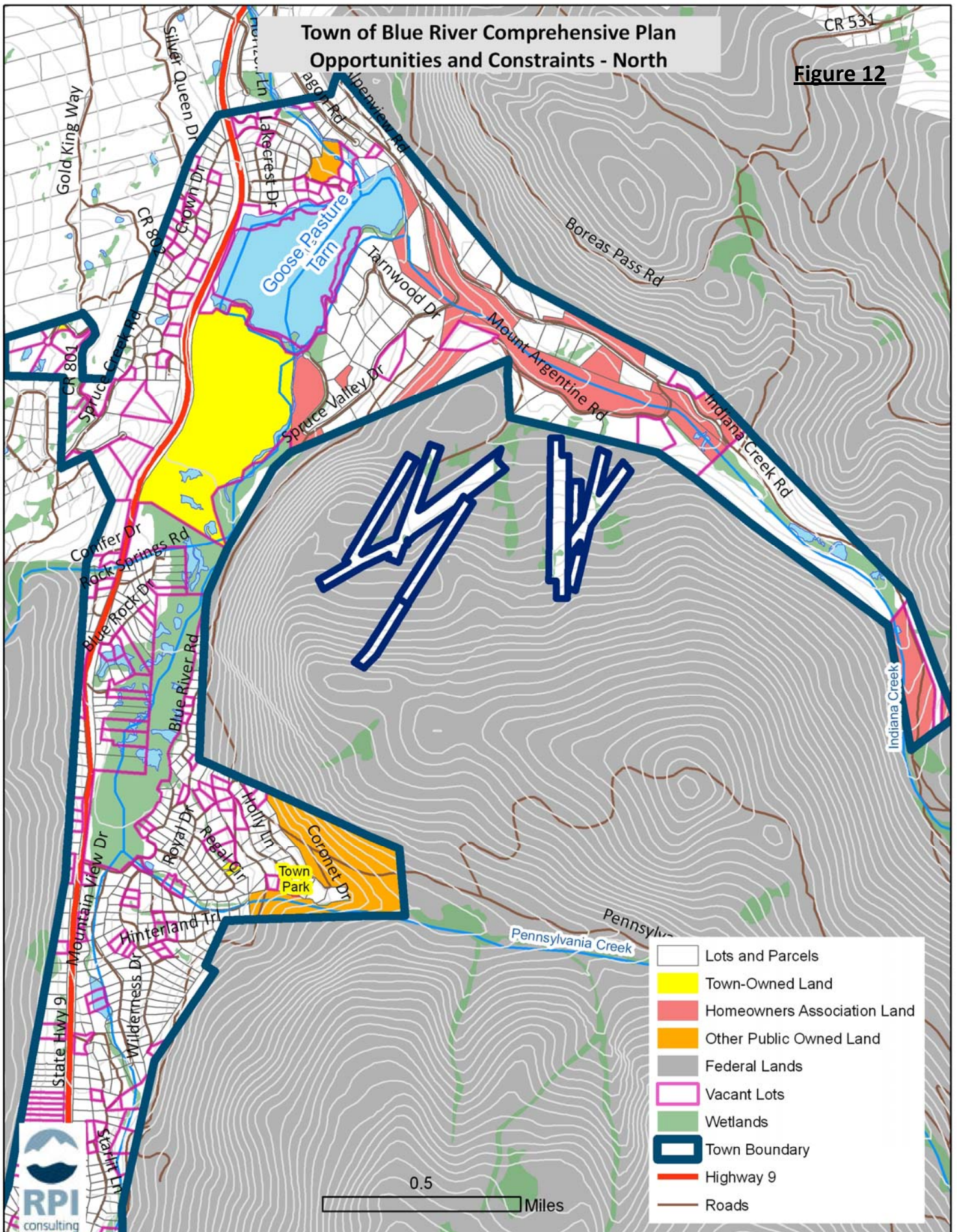
Strategy B - Improve the Town addressing system and address signage standards for faster and more efficient EMS response.

Strategy C - Develop a program and funding for water cisterns for fire protection.



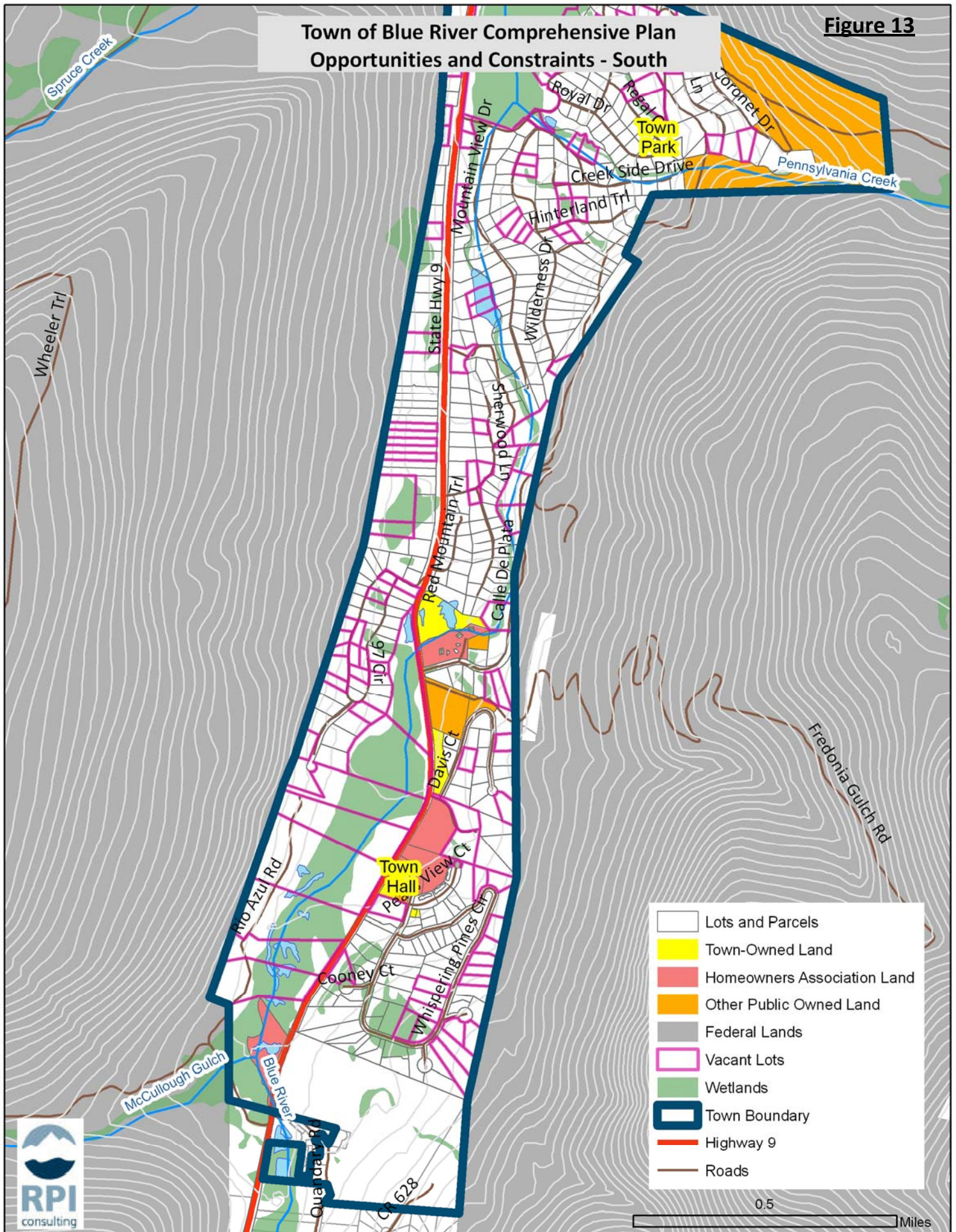
Town of Blue River Comprehensive Plan Opportunities and Constraints - North

Figure 12



Town of Blue River Comprehensive Plan Opportunities and Constraints - South

Figure 13



CHAPTER 4 - FUTURE LAND USE PLAN



4.1 Future Land Use Plan Designations Summary Table and Map

The future land use plan is a geographic and thematic representation of the direction for physical planning called for in the Strategic Plan section of this document. This critical component of the Comprehensive Plan is a physical planning tool to help the community arrive at a future of its own making. It is advisory in nature, laying the foundation for making changes to zoning in the future, but it is neither zoning nor a zoning map. The future land use plan does not restrict existing or vested uses.

The Town of Blue River is a special place. Clean air and water, spectacular mountain vistas, abundant open spaces, diverse wildlife and vegetation, easy access to outdoor recreation and a small town atmosphere are some of the attributes which define this community. It is the value of these intangibles that defines the physical character of the community. The Town's high alpine setting and pristine natural environment are the mainstay which attracts residents and visitors to this area and defines the community for what it is today. And the Future Land Use Plan will help to preserve that special character into future.

The Town of Blue River is situated in the Upper Blue River Basin and Summit County's Upper Blue Master Plan calls for a transition from urban land use patterns in Breckenridge to a rural and mountain setting. Blue River is part of this transition from urban core to the rural and mountain setting along Highway 9 towards the summit of Hoosier Pass. Densities in Blue River are mixed, with some attached residential development, but most of the development is situated into landscape in such a way that the visual impacts are reduced and the vistas that are so important to the county are maintained. Future development in the Town of Blue river should reflect this broader context and continue to be sensitive to visual impacts and should be sited designed to minimize impacts valuable wildlife habitat.

Future Land Use Plan Designations



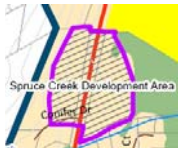
Blue River is partially built-out, with 160 vacant lots remaining, and there are very few areas that are not already platted. The future land use designations describe the desired future for the remaining undeveloped areas in town that have development potential. Designations also represent open space ownership and show the relationship of future development areas to open lands. See Figure 14 for a summary matrix of the designations.



Future Land Use Plan Map



The Future Land Use map places the designations for the full extent of the Town of Blue River and adjacent properties that have annexation potential. Each designation is depicted on the map. See Figure 15 and Figure 16 for north and south Blue River future land use maps.



Figure 14- Future Land Use Designation Summary Table

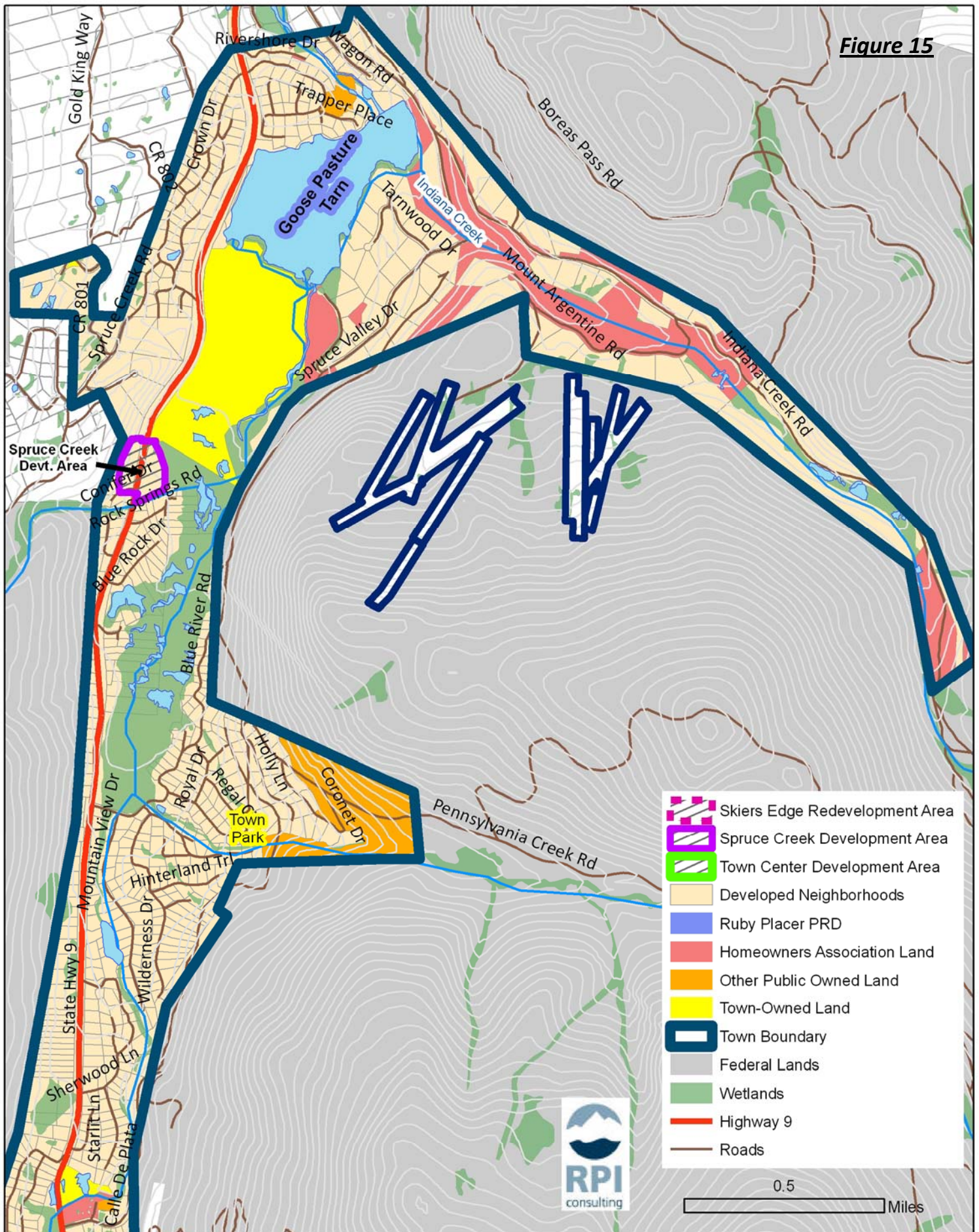
Designation	Character Element	Description
Town Center Development Area  	Location/context	Encompasses the area in the proximity of Town Hall. The current zoning is Planned Residential Development.
	Relationship of development to highway and adjacent area.	Easily accessible from Highway 9, the buildings to be oriented toward the civic center of Town
	Uses	Civic center for municipal and other public facilities, park and open space and small-scale commercial that complements the civic purpose.
	Building mass and scale and architecture	Mass, scale and architecture to be consistent with existing Town Hall, height limited to two stories, style should clearly indicate the civic purpose of the Town center.
	Parking	On-site/adjacent surface parking lots with landscaped islands.
	Landscaping	Use landscaping to screen parking areas, planting style to be cultured and complementary of the Valley's natural landscape
	Connectivity	Trail network to provide connections to area neighborhoods, recreation areas and the potential Summit County Recreation Trail
Spruce Creek Development Area 	Location/context	This area is located across Highway 9 from the intersection of Spruce Creek Road and adjacent to the northern edge of the Blue Rock Springs Subdivision. The current zoning is Transitional.
	Relationship of development to highway and the adjacent area.	Residential uses on the east side of highway will be screened to minimize visibility. Uses on the west side will be more visible.
	Uses	Diversity of housing unit types, live-work
	Building mass and scale and architecture	Height limited to three stories. Avoid monotonous, box-like structures.
	Parking	Combination of surface lots, parking shelters, and tuck-under parking garages sited on the sides and behind buildings in smaller scale lots broken up by shade trees/landscape islands.
	Landscaping	Use landscaping to screen residential areas, include landscaping islands in parking areas.
	Connectivity	Connect to Town trail network and the Summit County Recreation Trail.

Designation	Character Element	Description
Developed Neighborhoods 	Location/context	Mostly built-out subdivisions or condos, unlikely to change significantly for decades. The intent is to protect existing zoning/approvals and quality of life. Some potential for additional development under current zoning.
	Uses and intensities	Continuation of the approved/existing uses.
	Landscaping	Encourage and invest in trees and other landscaping, planting style to be complementary of the Valley's natural landscape
	Connectivity	Trail network to provide connections to area neighborhoods, recreation areas and trails.
Skiers Edge Redevelopment and Annexation Area 	Location/context	Future redevelopment/renovation of Skier's Edge Facility would be an opportunity for annexation.
	Relationship of development to streets	Visible entrance from Highway 9, but development would be screened as seen from the highway with native vegetation. .
	Uses	Lodging, short-term rentals, attached residential
	Building mass and scale and architecture	Avoid monotonous, box-like structures.
	Parking	Located behind native landscape screening or behind buildings as seen from the highway.
	Connectivity	Trail network to provide connections to area neighborhoods, recreation areas and the potential Summit County Recreation Trail.

Designation	Location	Description
<p>Highway 9 Corridor</p> 	<p>Travels north to south through Town</p>	<p>State highway, bisects Town and provides only auto access to adjacent areas. Buffer traffic noise to adjacent uses with berms and landscaping. Reduce speed through Town to improve safety and driving conditions.</p>
<p>Gateways</p> 	<p>North and south Town limits on Highway 9</p>	<p>Use entry monumentation to create a sense of arrival and wayfinding for visitors. Landscape the gateways generously. Reflect the small mountain-Town character.</p>
<p>Open Space and Recreation</p> 	<p>Throughout Town and along the periphery.</p>	<p>Town owned open space Land owned by other public agencies Open space owned by homeowners associations</p>

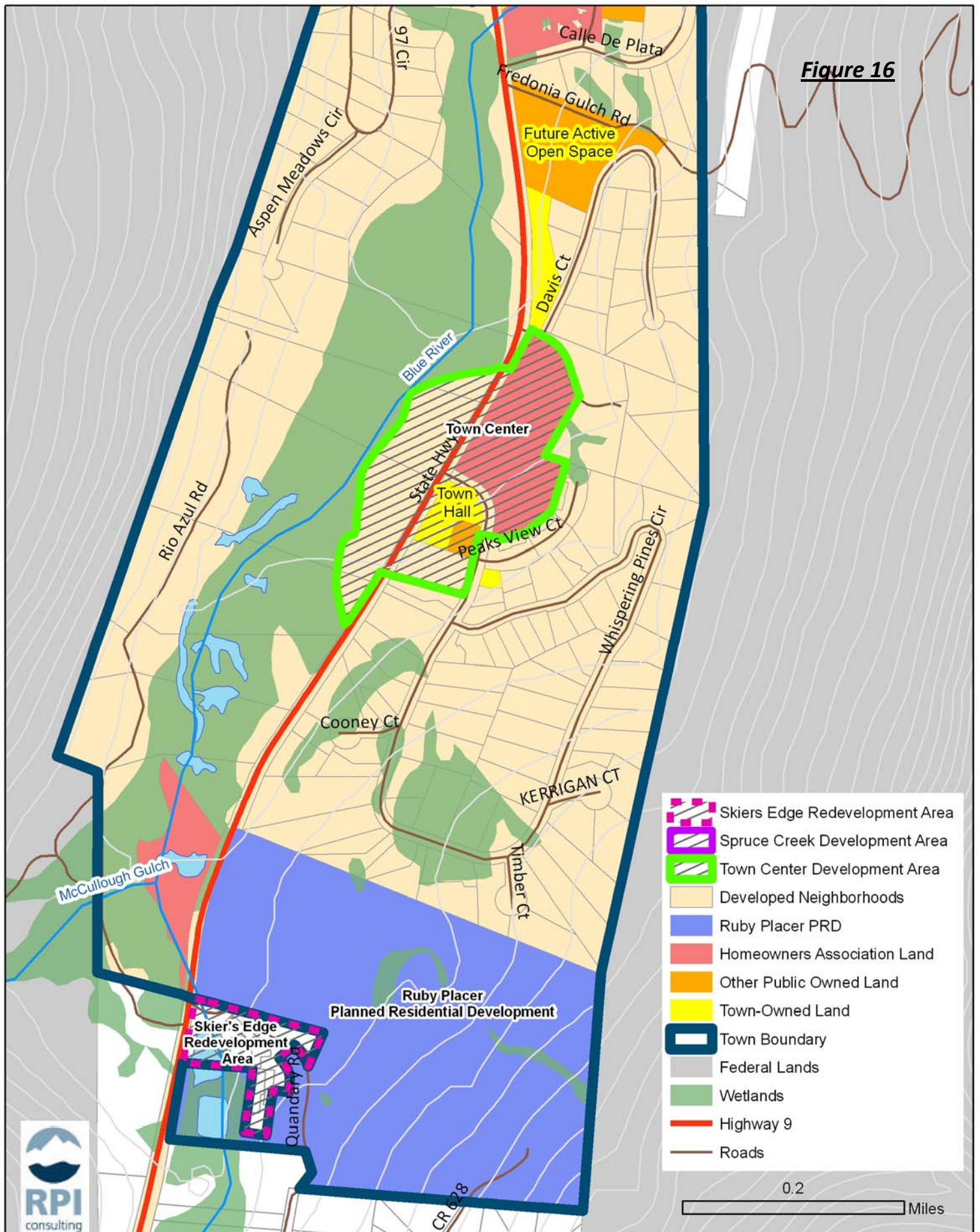
Town of Blue River Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Plan - North

Figure 15



Town of Blue River Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Plan - South

Figure 16



4.2 Town Center Development Area

This designation encompasses the area around Town Hall, including the Red White and Blue Fire District Station, and the developable land to the north currently owned by the DOT Condominium Homeowners Association and Silverheels Homeowners Association. Development of this area could allow the Town to create a civic center for Blue River. The Town Center should be easily accessible by both autos and pedestrians from all areas of the community by way of Highway 9 and the planned community trail network. The large, flat open area has limiting vegetation that allows for flexible layout and lower cost implementation with minimum disturbance. Town Center has excellent visibility with easy access from Highway 9 and has the capacity to integrate a variety of uses, including civic, open space and small scale commercial/services that are ancillary and complementary to the civic focus of the Town Center. The area would require screening to buffer the visual impact to adjacent residential area. The design of the area would need to be sensitive to the nearby Blue River riparian corridor.

Figure 17 – Context Map and Aerial Map of Potential Town Center Development Area



Relationship of Development to Streets: Town Center would be oriented along Highway 9 to provide easy access for visitors passing through Blue River. However, buildings should be set back with adequate visual screening and to provide a buffer from highway noise. The setback could also be used to accommodate parking and landscape in keeping with important civic areas as well as pathways to provide pedestrian access throughout Town. Town streets would provide additional internal access.

Uses: Town Center will include civic and recreation uses and commercial uses/concessions that are complementary to the function of the Town center. Currently the civic functions in the Town Center include Town Hall and the Red White and Blue Fire District station. Potential future uses could include an expanded Town hall, police station, small convenience store, post office boxes, small community center, or public open space.

Building Mass, Scale, and Architecture: All should be complementary to existing Town building styles. Civic buildings may be more formal in style than other buildings in Town, but should not exceed two stories in height. Break up massing and limit height of vertical sidewalls. Step buildings down in scale as they approach adjacent residential uses and streets to reduce visual impacts.

Roads and Parking: The Town Center site design should emphasize convenient automobile access. Parking lots should be designed in smaller scale format and divided by landscaped islands with appropriate landscaping. Consolidated drives should be encouraged to maintain the continuity of pathways along the street. On street parking should only be used when required for overflow.

Landscaping: All landscaping should be appropriate to a civic / commercial area but complementary of the natural landscape throughout Blue River. Parking areas should be appropriately landscaped to breakup large parking areas and provide shade. Planting to buffer from the area from highway noise and provide screening to adjacent residential uses should be integrated into the overall planting design for the site. Naturalized site drainage should be incorporated into the landscape plan to minimize runoff into the Blue River and adjacent wetlands.

Connectivity: Auto access would be primarily from Highway 9 and would likely require highway improvements to provide acceleration/deceleration lanes and other intersection improvements. Access could be provided by area, but this should be limited to minimize impacts to residential traffic. Pedestrian access would be from the Town pathway network including the Summit County Recreation Path extension. Site specific conditions such as street right-of-way width and traffic volumes need to be considered when designing pathways to ensure user safety.



4.3 Spruce Creek Development Area

The Spruce Creek development area is one of the last developable areas in the Town of Blue River. Spruce Creek on the east side of the highway is relatively flat and open with views overlooking the wetlands of the Blue River Delta. This east side provides an opportunity for single family residential development with a mix of lots and home sizes. Small scale multi-family units could also be integrated into the use mixture. Screening from the highway would be important to buffer this area from noise. The land on the west side of the highway is wooded and is sloped so it would need to be carefully developed to take advantage of its potential while minimizing impacts. Uses on the west side could include multi-family housing, or a live-work component that could be benched into the slope on the west side of the highway and oriented toward the highway. Careful configuration of the site would be required to provide safe access and parking along the busy highway.

Figure 19 – Context Map and Aerial Map of Spruce Creek Development Area



Relationship of Development to Streets: Development on the east side of the Spruce Creek area could be oriented toward the Blue River Delta and would be screened from the highway. There would be an internal network of streets for circulation, but relationship to the street would be secondary to the views toward the Goose Pasture Tarn and mountains. On the west side of the highway, the space for building is limited due to the steep slope on much of the land. As a result, the uses would be oriented toward the highway. There should be screening to buffer highway noise and either a frontage road or distributed parking to limit access points and ensure safe auto circulation.

Uses: Spruce Creek would be a mix of uses depending on location. The east side of Spruce Creek is relatively flat and has views over the Blue River Delta and mountains beyond. This area should be developed primarily with single family residential on variable sized lots. Small multi-family units, such as Townhomes are also allowed. The west side of Spruce Creek has steep slopes near the highway and thus more limited building

potential. Proposed uses on this side include small scale affordable housing and/or live-work units that can be built to accommodate the steep slopes.

Building Mass, Scale, and Architecture: All should be complementary to existing Town building styles. Buildings on the east side are primarily single family, but may also be multi-family. Multi-family buildings should be divided into a series of smaller masses to avoid large box-like structures and should appear similar in scale to other structures in the surrounding neighborhood. The bulk of detached additional buildings need to be scaled to be visually secondary to the main dwelling. Buildings on the east side could be up to 3 stories tall. On the west side where development would be closer to the highway, the highway should be faced with three-dimensional architectural elements such as windows, doors, and dormers, contributing to an interesting highway view.

Roads and Parking: Parking requirements should be linked to the size and/or likely occupancy of the units. Parking lots for multi-family or live work units should be sited in smaller scale lots divided by landscaped islands with appropriate landscaping.

Landscaping: All landscaping should be complementary of the natural landscape throughout Blue River. Spruce Creek –The west side of the highway should have landscaping that is integrated along the front of the buildings as viewed from the highway to contribute to the visual interest of the community and exterior parking areas should be adequately screened. The east side of the highway should have adequate landscaping in the front of buildings to provide pleasing highway view. Parking areas should be appropriately landscaped to breakup large parking areas and provide shade. Planting should buffer the area from highway noise and provide screening from adjacent residential uses should be integrated into the overall planting design for the site. Naturalized site drainage should be incorporated into the landscape plan to minimize runoff into the Blue River wetlands.

Connectivity: Auto access would be primarily from Highway 9 and would likely require highway improvements to provide acceleration/deceleration lanes. Site specific conditions such as street right-of-way width and traffic volumes need to be considered when designing pathways to ensure user safety.

4.4 Developed Neighborhoods

The developed neighborhoods designation is intended to provide for neighborhood stability while allowing remodeling, replacement and new construction in established residential neighborhoods. Developed neighborhoods consist of residential subdivisions, condominium developments, multi-family developments, and planned unit developments that are unlikely to change significantly over the twenty-year planning horizon of this Comprehensive Plan. Developed neighborhoods are almost entirely built-out, with few vacant lots.

Use and Intensity: This designation calls for a continuation of the uses allowed under the applicable zoning districts, subdivision approvals, or planned unit development approvals in place today. Private covenants, although not enforced by the Town, are also a factor in how future development may occur in stable neighborhoods where they are in place. There is one area on the eastern most end of the Spruce Valley Ranch subdivision that contains large parcels that are not fully developed to the extent allowed under current zoning. This could be a potential area for future residential development, but it would require an approved subdivision agreement.

Landscaping: All landscaping should be appropriate to integrate the infill property into the existing developed neighborhood and complementary of the natural landscape throughout Blue River.

Connectivity: Town pathway network and connection to the potential extension of the Summit County Recreation Path would provide improved connections to area neighborhoods, Town Center, and parks and other recreation areas.

4.5 Skiers Edge Redevelopment and Annexation Area

The Skier Edge is a condominium development with many owners. It was not included in the Ruby Placer Planned Residential Development and annexation and remains in the unincorporated county. This is a potential annexation area for the Town of Blue River, but only as part of a redevelopment renovation plan to make it an attractive and successful development. It would likely require consolidation of ownership. Future uses could include lodging/short-term rentals, dining, attached residential and support buildings. Redevelopment should include native landscape screening from the highway.

Figure 20 – Context Map and Aerial Map of Skiers Edge Redevelopment and Annexation Area



Relationship of Development to the Highway: Skiers Edge loads from Highway 9 and would have a visible entrance with signage that is appropriate to the small town mountain character, but upon redevelopment, the buildings would be screened with native landscaping as seen from the highway.

Uses: Uses would include lodging, short term rentals, and attached residential units.

Building Mass, Scale, and Architecture: Future structures should be complementary to existing Town building styles. Buildings should be divided into a series of smaller masses to avoid large box-like structures and should appear similar in scale to other structures in the adjacent neighborhoods.

Roads and Parking: This is a small parcel, so parking is limited. In future redevelopment designs, parking should be located behind native landscape screening as seen from the highway or behind the buildings themselves.

Connectivity: Pedestrian access would be from the planned Town pathway network, possibly including the Summit County Recreation Path extension.

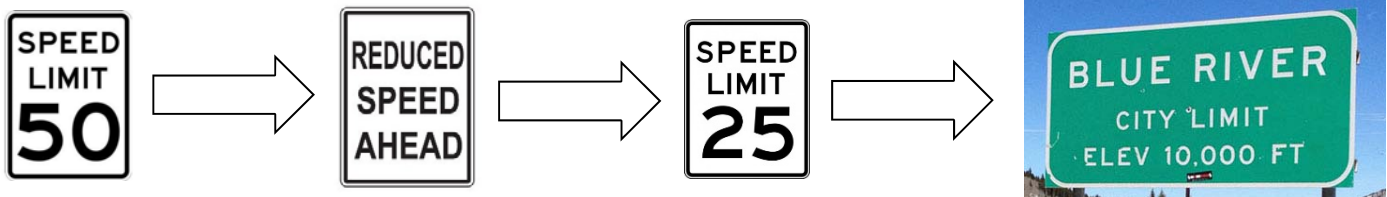
4.6 Highway 9 Corridor

Colorado State Highway 9 travels north to south for the length of Blue River and in many areas bisects the Town. It is the main point of connection for the majority of areas for the Town. The speed limit on highway through Town is 50 mph so entering and exiting the highway can be challenging. Those traveling through Blue River are often driving so fast they do not realize that they have driven through a Town, often assuming that this is residential area is the outskirts of Breckenridge. There are several approaches to address Highway 9 and make it more of an asset for Blue River.

Figure 21 – Highway 9 Usage Examples



Speed: The posted speed on Highway 9 through Blue River is 50mph. However a recent study by CDOT discovered that half of all drivers exceed the speed limit on rural roads. As a result, many of the drivers travel through Blue River at speeds greater than 50 mph. The easiest way to deal with this is to reduce the speed through Town to a speed more in keeping with a residential, municipal road. This would require coordination with CDOT and would likely include regular speed measurements and trial speed reductions that may take some time, but the result will not only be a safer passage through Town and will also help to identify Blue River.



Highway Access Challenges: As Highway 9 travels through Blue River, numerous roads and driveways load directly onto the highway without acceleration/deceleration lanes or caution signage. The road has numerous curves that limit sight distances and in the winter, icy roads and snow piled high on the side of the road make conditions even more difficult. This results in regular unsafe driving conditions on Highway 9 through Blue River as autos enter and leave the road on which drivers are routinely traveling in excess of 50mph. The most effective method for making the road more safe is to reduce the speed limit and clearly mark all access points with reflective signage and caution signage. At busier access points, it may be necessary to provide acceleration/deceleration lanes or other intersection improvements to insure driver safety. And with the potential routing of the Summit County Recreation Path along Highway 9 through Blue River, additional controls may be necessary to insure pathway user safety.

4.7 Gateways

There are only two gateways in Blue River, at the north and south Town boundary on Highway 9. The Town limits are currently marked with green highway signs. An easy method to improve Town identity is to mark the highway access points with more significant monuments that are generously landscaped and lit at night. The design of the entry monument should be complementary to the Town's civic architecture and the mass and style should be appropriate to a small Town. The gateway monuments would also work in conjunction with the Highway 9 speed reductions to notify drivers that they are entering the Town of Blue River and that they should be alert and drive safely.

Figure 22 – Town Gateway Examples



APPENDIX 1 - USING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



WHAT A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a policy document that charts strategies for achieving community goals. The plan serves as the foundation for decisions about land use, economic development, infrastructure and services. The comprehensive plan does not change or create any regulations or requirements, but it may recommend advisory changes to regulations as implementation strategies.

FIVE FACTORS MAKE A PLAN COMPREHENSIVE

1. The plan covers the entire geography of the Town.
2. The plan represents authentic and diverse community participation.
3. The time horizon considered in the plan is long-range, extending 10-20 years into the future and well beyond the concerns of today.
4. The plan provides comprehensive guidance on where and how growth and various land uses could take place.
5. The plan clarifies relationships between physical development goals, such as land use and infrastructure or land conservation, with social and economic goals, such as economic development.

WHAT IS IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The comprehensive plan is divided into several "elements" that are organized by chapter.

Chapter 2 Strategic Plan - The strategic plan charts a direction for accomplishing the community goals. It incorporates all the Town supplied functions and capital assets and serves as a connection between the Town's strategic direction and the future land use plan. The strategic plan also provides guidance for core services and infrastructure, recreation assets, and fiscal solutions for achieving goals.

Chapter 3 - Future Land Use Plan This chapter presents a geographic and thematic representation of the direction for physical planning called for in the Strategic Plan. The future land use plan is advisory in intent, laying the foundation for making changes to zoning in the future, but is not zoning or a zoning map. It does not restrict existing or vested uses, but instead is a reference for future consideration.

The future land use plan includes designations that use distinct but interrelated elements of Blue River's physical character to describe the desired future conditions for the limited potential growth areas in and adjacent to Town.

Appendix 1 - Demographic Profile charts the core demographic and economic indicators of Blue River Residents and compares Blue River to other communities in the region.

Appendix 2 - Fiscal Solutions presents a detailed analysis of the budgetary strategies and alternatives for implementing Chapter 2 Strategic Plan.

HOW TO USE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Each chapter of the Comprehensive Plan contains a distinct type of planning guidance so the intended decision making varies between chapters. The following provides the Town a brief use description specific for the intended user for each chapter of the plan.

Chapter 2 - Strategic Plan

By Town Officials



The strategic plan helps Town officials to support the Town's mission statement. Many of the goals and strategies are intended to be accomplished by the Town alone, such as updating the zoning code or expanding pathways. However many of the goals and strategies will require partnerships with the other entities such as Summit County, Colorado Department of Transportation, local organizations and non-profits, businesses, and landowners. The strategic plan lays out the purpose and projects for these partnerships.

By Developers

The strategic plan alerts developers to the outcomes toward which the community strives. These statements of strategic intent provide guidance to help developers understand the Town's strategic direction. This results in development proposals that are in line with the community's strategic plan and thus will be more likely to generate public support.

By Citizens

Citizens can use the strategic plan to protect the qualities that attracted them to Blue River, such as the small Town format, mountain landscape, privacy, recreational assets and natural amenities.

Chapter 4 Future Land Use Plan

By Town Officials

The primary function of the future land use plan is to provide physical planning guidance for future zoning code updates. It can also be used as advisory guidance in reviewing specific development projects as directed by the Town ordinances.

By Developers

The future land use plan can be used by developers to design projects that align with the community's values, which it then helps to maintain and enhance the characteristics that make Blue River a great place.

By Citizens

The future land use plan graphically represents the community's vision for the future as a map. It depicts the areas of Blue River so that the residents may consider the desired future conditions for each part, the relationships between them, and the Town as a whole.

The **Appendix** contains reports released early in the planning process and provides a record of background information about demographic, economic, land use, and fiscal/budgetary trends and conditions.



APPENDIX 2 ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC TREND SUMMARY



Introduction

Appendix 2 Economic and Demographic Trend Summary is a description of the existing demographic and economic indicators and trends in town. It contains baseline data used to inform the dialogue throughout the planning process and for future discussions. This summary includes demographic characteristics of the town population, housing growth projections, economic indicators and other information that is useful for planning for future growth. In order to provide a frame of reference, this analysis compares Blue River's demographic and economic characteristics with four nearby municipalities:

- Frisco
- Fraser
- Dillon
- Minturn

All of these towns function in part as “bedroom” communities to larger, more developed resort towns, have relatively small populations, and are located in the region.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The economic and demographic data confirm that Blue River contains a significant portion of second homes with a 42% seasonal occupancy in 2010 according to the Census. But it increasingly serves as year-round home to local and regional working households and retirees. The seasonal occupancy rate dropped 5% from 47% in 2000 to 42% in 2010, reflecting a trend towards a more full-time resident community. The labor force participation rate for Blue River is the higher than all four comparison communities at 89% of working age people employed. Blue River also has the highest rates of home ownership and has the highest percentage of 'Family' households of all of the comparison communities.

The predominance of working families and households is reflected by the fact that Blue River also has the highest household income of all four comparison communities, with a median household income of \$78k while 39% of households earn over \$100k annually. All of this information together describes Blue River as a place where people live, raise families and are relatively prosperous.

Given the general prosperity of the place and the obvious work ethic of its residents, there is not much of an economy in Blue River itself, because it is a residential community with no commercial properties. Economic models estimate that there are 14 businesses located in Blue River, all of which are home occupations such as professional home offices, small scale construction companies, property management, and cottage manufacturing. Blue River functions as a place where prosperous people live, but it is not a place where very much commerce occurs.

DATA SOURCES

Baseline demographic, housing and social data comes from the 2000 and 2010 Census. The economic data in summarized in Figure 12 is from ESRI's Business Analyst Online (BAO). BAO is an online tool that provides custom demographic and economic data based on industry standard data sets including public data from the



Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis, and Bureau of Labor Statistics and proprietary data from private sector data management firms.

HOUSING AND POPULATION GROWTH 2000-2010

Between 2000 and 2010, the Blue River population grew by 24% adding 164 new residents. This translates to an average annual growth rate of 2.4% the second strongest growth rate behind Fraser in the comparison towns, which grew at an average annual rate of 3.5%.

Figure A1 – Total Population 2000-2010 (Full-Time Residents)

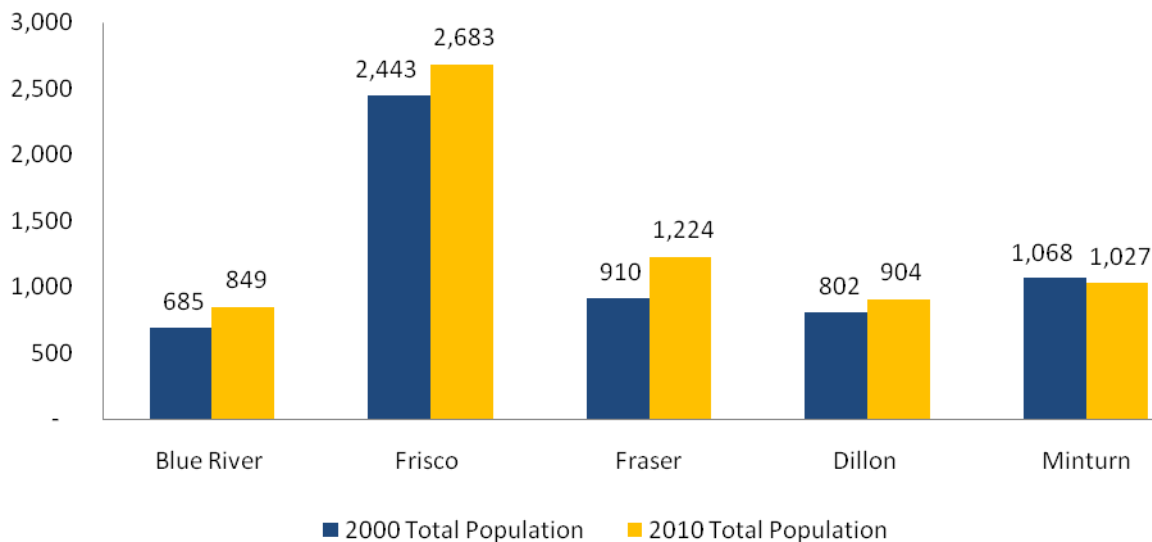
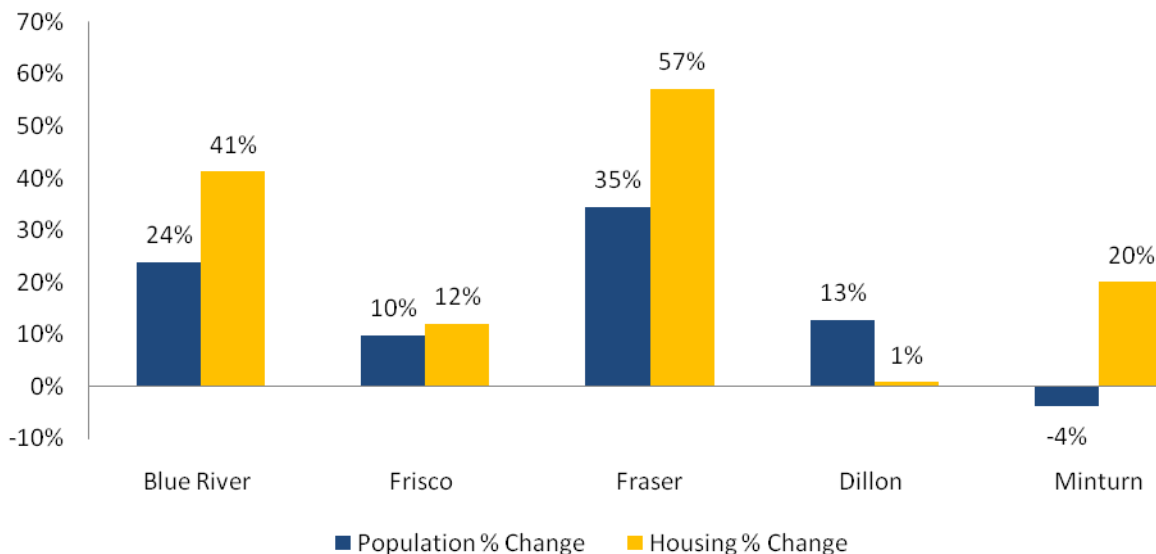
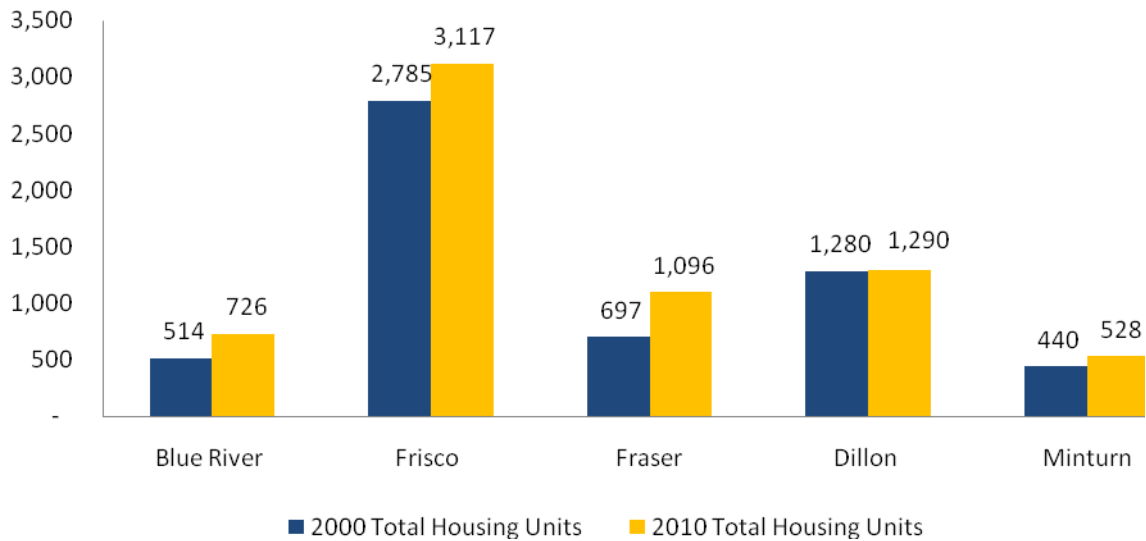


Figure A2 – 2000-2010 Percent Change Population and Housing



Between 2000 and 2010, 212 new housing units were built in Blue River, a 41% increase, the second highest growth rate behind Fraser of the comparison communities. The total growth in housing units exceeds the population growth, which indicates that a significant portion of the homes built through the 2000s are second homes.

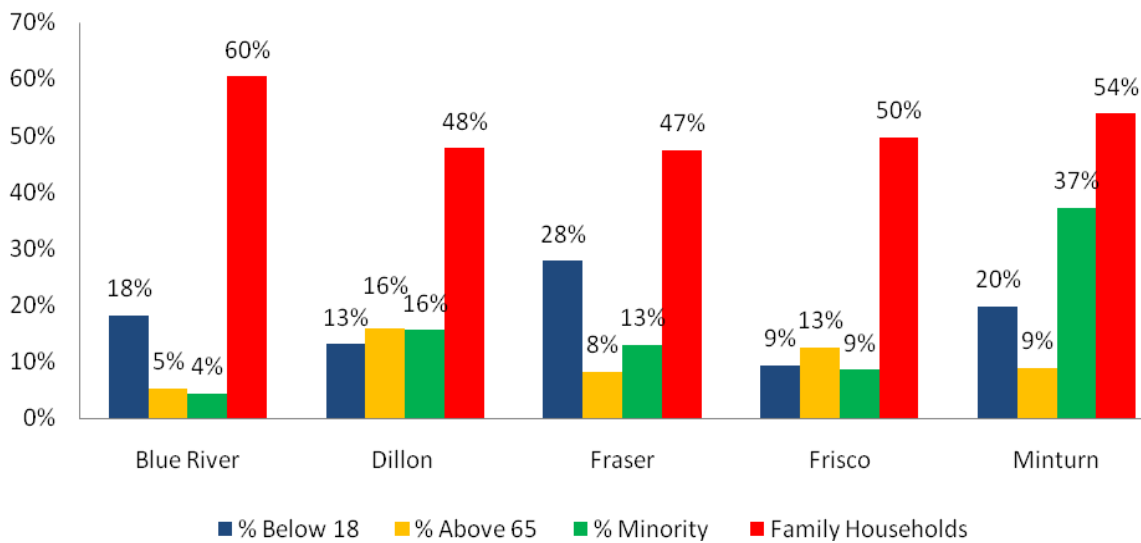
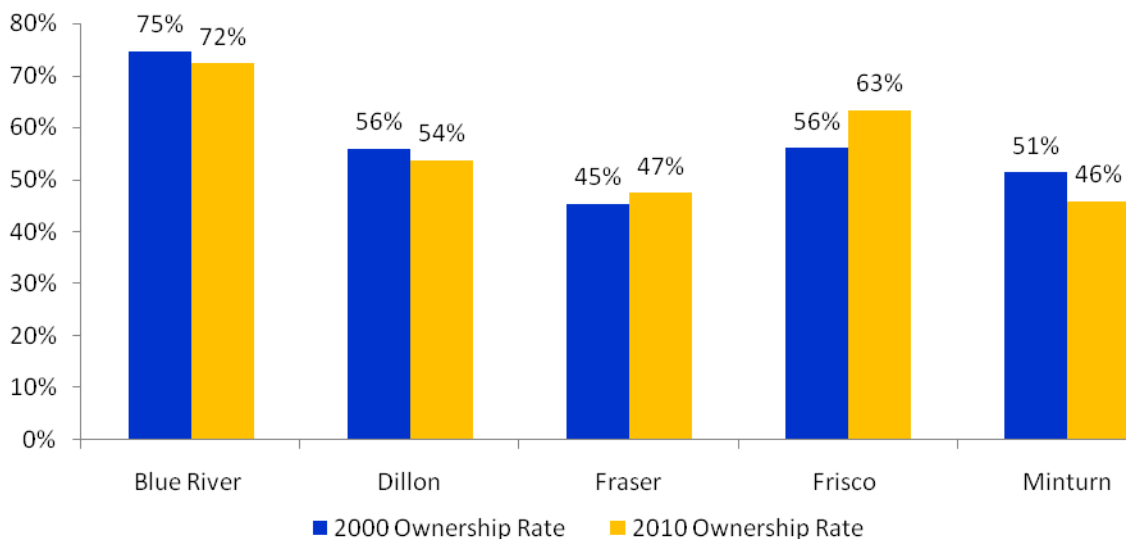
Figure A3 – Total Housing Units 2000-2010**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FULL TIME RESIDENTS**

Blue River is a relatively young town, with a median age of 35, median age is between 1 and 7 years younger than similar towns.

Figure A4 - 2010 Median Age (Full-Time Residents)

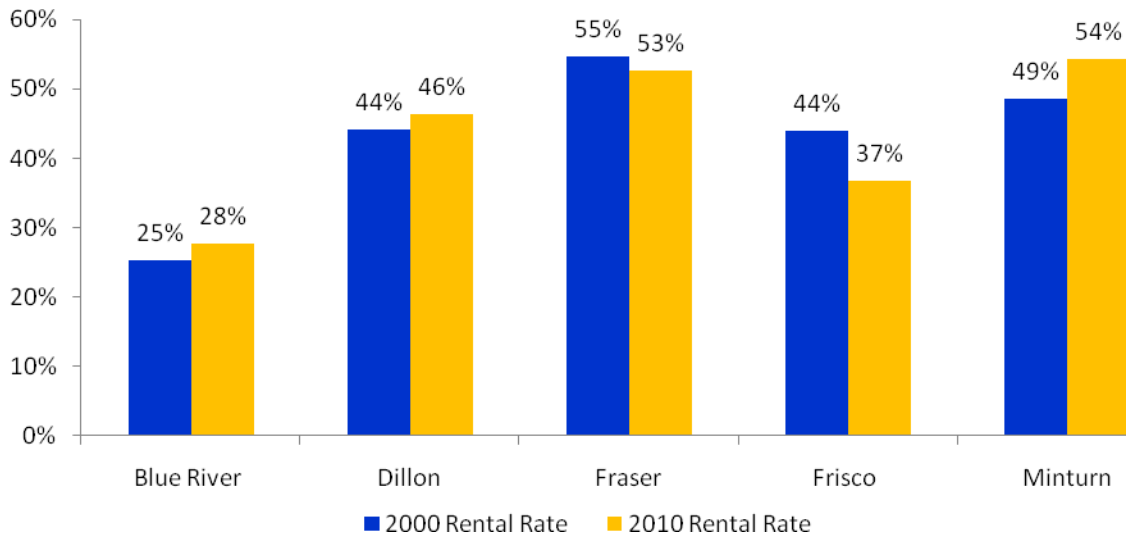
Blue River	35
Dillon	42
Fraser	36
Frisco	41
Minturn	37

Blue River has the second highest rate of residents under 18, and the lowest rate of residents over 65. Only 5% of Blue River's population is over 65, the next lowest rate is 8% in Fraser. Blue River is the least diverse town, with only 4% of the population being a minority race. This is less than half the rate of second lowest rate of 9%, in Frisco. Blue River has the highest rate of family households; the 60% rate is between 6% and 13% higher than the similar towns.

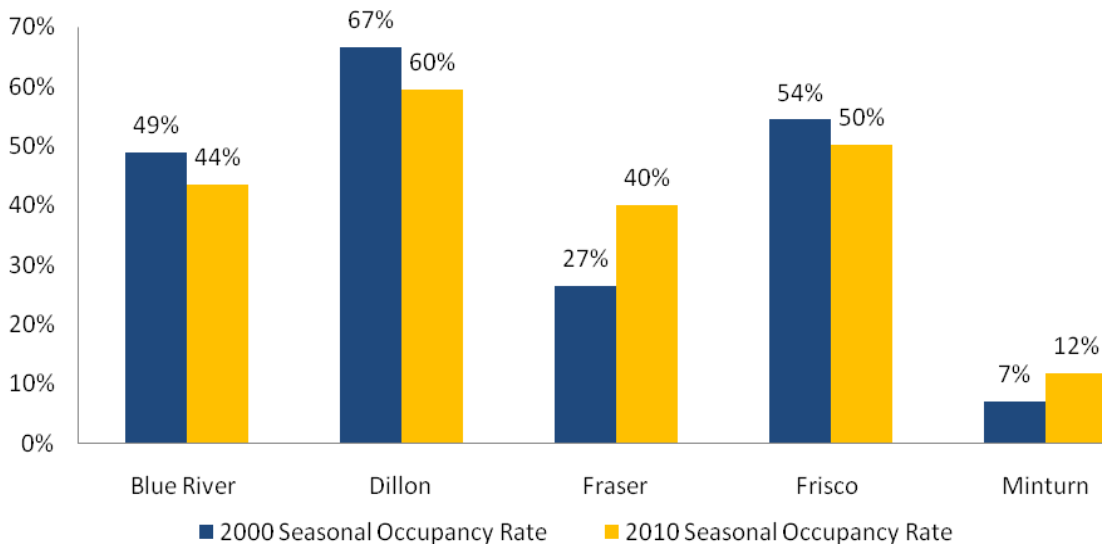
Figure A5 – Demographic Characteristics Comparison (Full-Time Residents)**Figure A6 - Home Ownership Vs Rental Rates (Full Time Residents)**

Blue River has the highest rate of home ownership with 72% of residents owning their own homes. Between 2000 and 2010, the ownership rate decreased in Dillon and Minturn, and increased in Fraser and Frisco and decrease just slightly Blue River by 3%. The relatively higher rates of family households and homeownership indicate the predominance of stable working households.

28% of residents in Blue River rent their homes, a rate significantly lower than similar towns. However, the rental rate is moving to align with regional trends, in 2000, the rate was 19% - 30% lower than comparable towns and in 2010, the rate was 9% -26% lower than comparable towns. The observed increase in rental homes and the fact that Blue River is trending upwards in rental units compared with the other communities signals the town's increasing role as a residential community.

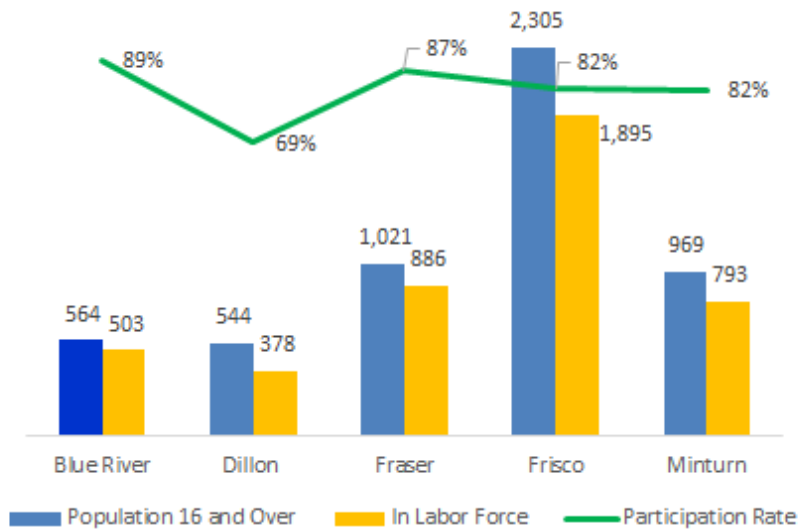
Figure A7 – Rental Rate 2000-2010 (Full-Time Residents)

Between 2000 and 2010, seasonal occupancy declined from 49% to 44% in Blue River. Seasonal occupancy rates also declined in Dillon and Frisco but increased in Fraser and Minturn.

Figure A8 – Seasonal Occupancy Rate 2000-2010

Economic Characteristics

The labor force participation rate for Blue River (the % of the population over 16 that works) is the higher than all four comparison communities at 89%.

Figure A9 - Labor Force Participation Rates (Full-Time Residents)

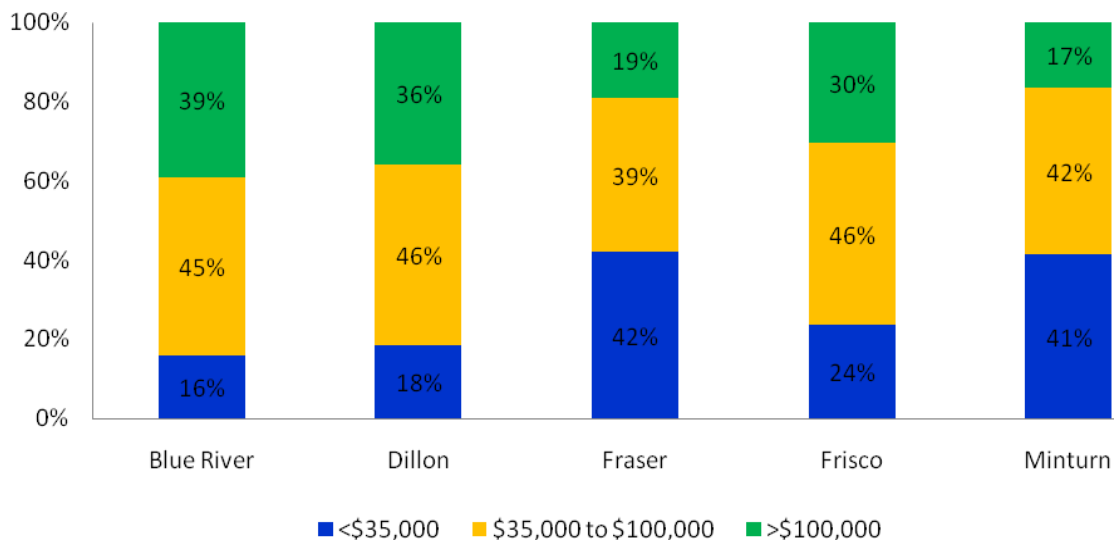
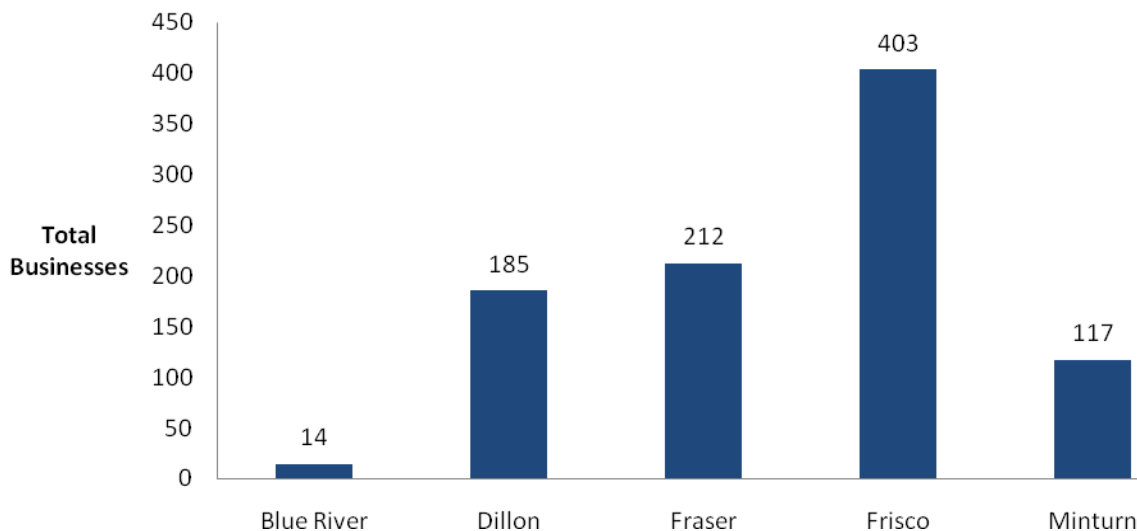
The higher rates of labor force participation, families and working households is reflected by the fact that Blue River has higher household incomes when compared with similar towns, median income is \$77,887, the highest of all the communities and almost two times higher than the median income in Fraser and Minturn.

Figure A10 – Median Household Income (Full-Time Residents)

Blue River	\$77,887
Dillon	\$70,877
Fraser	\$40,428
Frisco	\$75,450
Minturn	\$43,694

Blue River has the highest proportion of households earning more than \$100,000 per year and the lowest proportion of households making less than \$35,000 per year. Only 16% of residents make less than \$35,000 while 39% earn over \$100,000 annually.

Despite having relatively higher incomes Blue River has the smallest economy, further reflecting its role as a residential community. Economic data from ESRI's Business Analyst Online (BAO) provides custom demographic and economic data based on industry standard data sets including public data from the Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Bureau of Labor Statistics and proprietary data from private sector data management firms.

Figure A11- Household Income by Income Bracket (Full-Time Residents)**Figure A12- Total Number of Businesses in Municipal Boundaries**

According to custom reports from ESRI, there are 14 businesses with addresses within the municipal boundaries. There are no commercial storefronts in Blue River, these businesses are mobile businesses that base from home such as professionals with home offices, construction/design, property management and cottage manufacturing. While the lack of commercial real estate options in Blue River are a clear limit on the degree of economic activity occurring in town, there is still a core of economic activity occurring as home occupation.

APPENDIX 3 FISCAL OUTLOOK AND FUNDING STRATEGIES



This appendix to the Blue River Comprehensive Plan provides an information basis for implementing planning goals, strategies and future land use planning with an eye towards maintaining fiscal sustainability. This appendix does not contain policy direction like that contained in the main body of the plan. It is intended as a background information component and was developed early during the community involvement process to inform the discussions leading up to the development of the main body of the plan. It is organized into three sections:

Fiscal Background - The most important fiscal characteristic of Blue River is that it is almost entirely dependent on property tax. Also, Blue River registers lower per capita expenditures compared to other communities, reflecting that fewer services and facilities are offered in Blue River compared to regional towns.

Revenue Outlook - Because the Town is reliant on property taxes, and these revenues are projected to decline for the next few years only to flatten out until 2018, the revenue outlook for the town indicates that more fiscal challenges are coming.

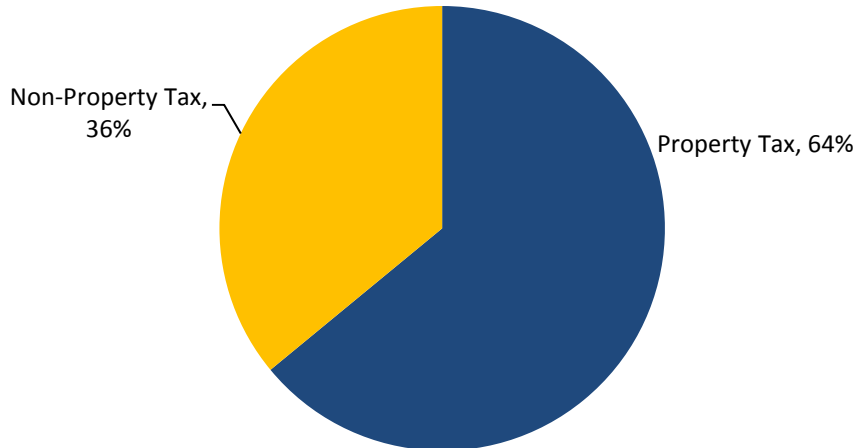
Near and Long Term Strategies and Funding Solutions - This includes a costs and revenue analysis of short term and long term strategies and funding solutions for accomplishing the goals and strategies.

- Near Term Strategy - Provide core services funded with existing revenues to include law enforcement, accident response and traffic patrol through partnerships with local governments. The near term strategy also includes a town administrator and a community services officer.
- Long Term Strategy -- The long term strategy adds an in-house law enforcement department funded with existing revenues and a mill levy Increase and/or additional retail sales tax revenues. This also includes continued funding for a town administrator and a community services officer.
- Long Term Strategy - An additional long-term strategy includes increased capital investment funded with existing revenues and a mill levy increase and/or additional retail sales tax revenues. Once the core services are covered make revenue available for capital improvements.

Fiscal Background

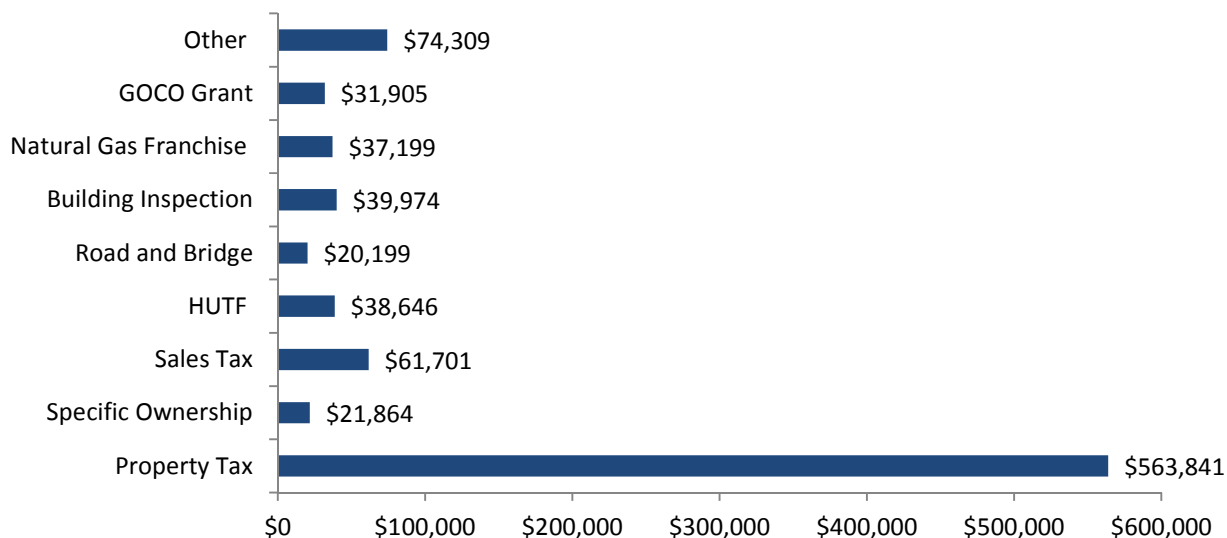
Blue River has no retail commercial uses and is heavily reliant on property tax. On average between 2009 and 2011, 64% of total revenues originated from the Town's general operating mill levy.

Figure A13- 2009-2011 Average Property Tax and Non-Property Tax Revenues by Percentage

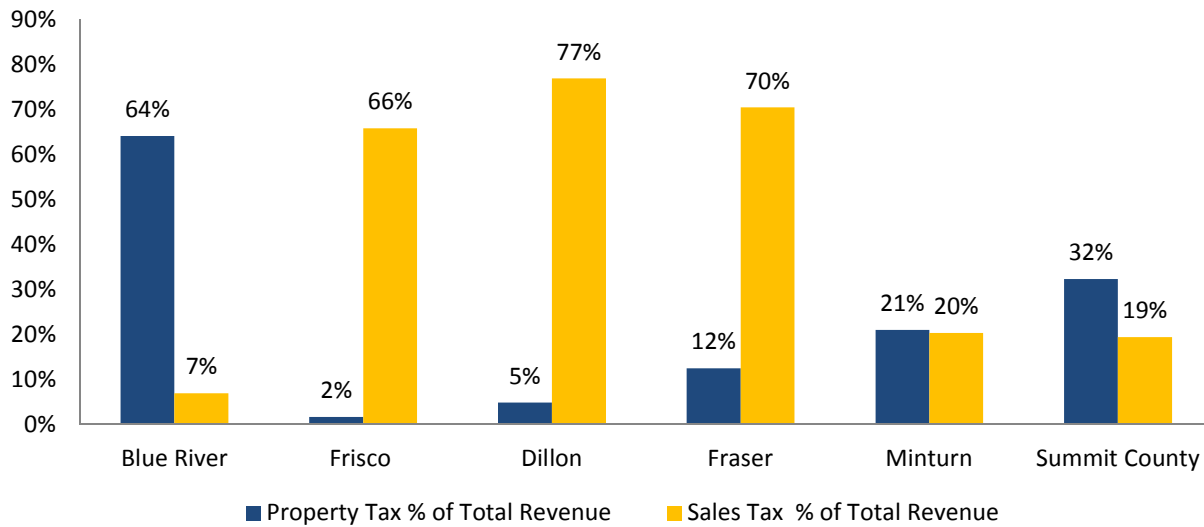


The Town's remaining revenues originate from a mix of taxes, fees and intergovernmental revenues such as specific ownership taxes, lodging tax, vehicle fuel tax, natural gas franchise fees, building department inspection fees, and fees for service. Between 2009 and 2011, Blue River collected just under a million in non-property tax revenues.

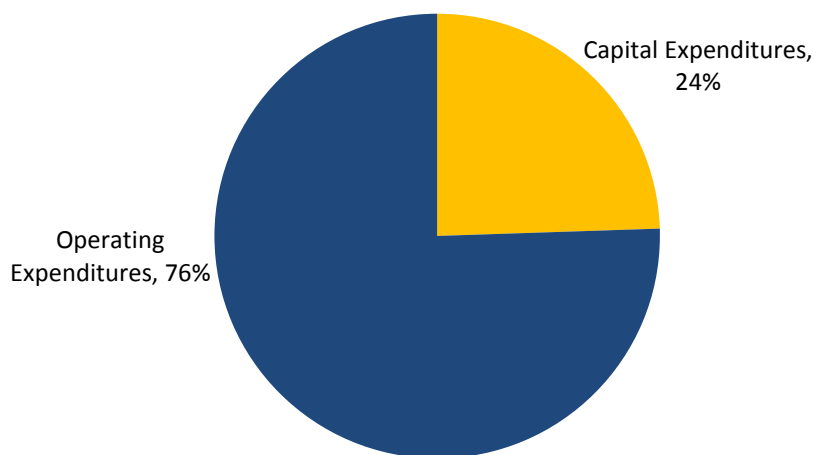
Figure A14-2009 -2011 Aggregate Revenues by Type



In regional communities, such as Frisco, Dillon, and Fraser, 66%-77% of revenues originate from sales taxes and only 2%-12% originate from property taxes. 19% of total revenues come from sales tax for Summit County government.

Figure A15 - Property Tax as Percent of Total Revenues

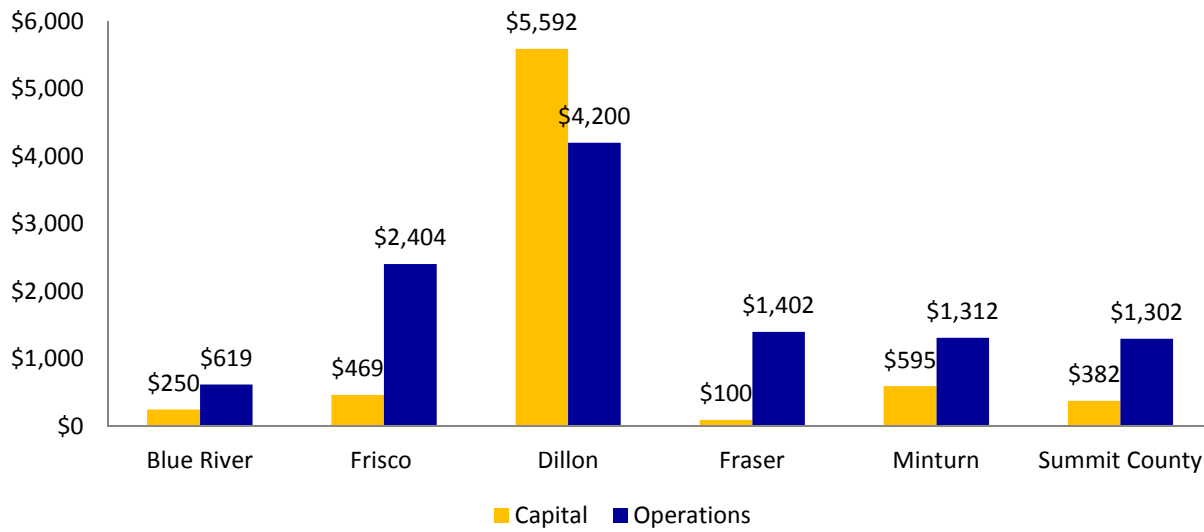
Between 2009 and 2011, 24% of Blue River's total expenditures were related to capital purchases and 76% were related to operations. Blue River's capital expenditures included improvements to Goose Pasture Tarn, development of a Town Park and the construction of a bridge. It should be noted that a \$468,000 bridge project accounted for 47% of total expenditures in 2010. The town had \$97,000 in capital expenditures in 2009 and \$42,000 in 2011.

Figure A16- Average Operations and Capital Expenditures Ratio

On average the town spends \$619 per resident on operations and \$250 per resident on capital per year. This is much lower than comparable municipalities, which have average per capita operations expenditures of \$2,300 and average per capita expenditures of \$1,700. The additional spending in other communities is related to the amount of services provided by them. The comparison towns have police departments, provide

services to commercial development, water and sewer infrastructure, and have more established and parks systems.

Figure A17- Per Capita Operations and Capital Expenditures



Revenue Outlook

Because property taxes make up the majority of the Town's revenue (2001-2011 average is 62%), the budget projection in this analysis is tied to the assessed valuation projection through 2023. The following conclusions were drawn from Summit County Finance and Assessor data:

- It is unlikely that the Town will continue to have annual budget surpluses similar to the \$600,000 surplus enjoyed in 2011 in the near future.
- The 2013 valuation for all property in Blue River from the county assessor is \$38,347,150, 6% down from 2012.
- The assessor's office is projecting a countywide decreases in valuation for 2014 & 2015, and flat valuation through 2018.
- Between 2001 and 2011, the Town non-property tax revenues accounted for 38% of the Town's revenues. Were this pattern to continue through 2023, annual town revenues are projected to reach \$912,000.



Figure A18- Projected Assessed Valuation in Blue River

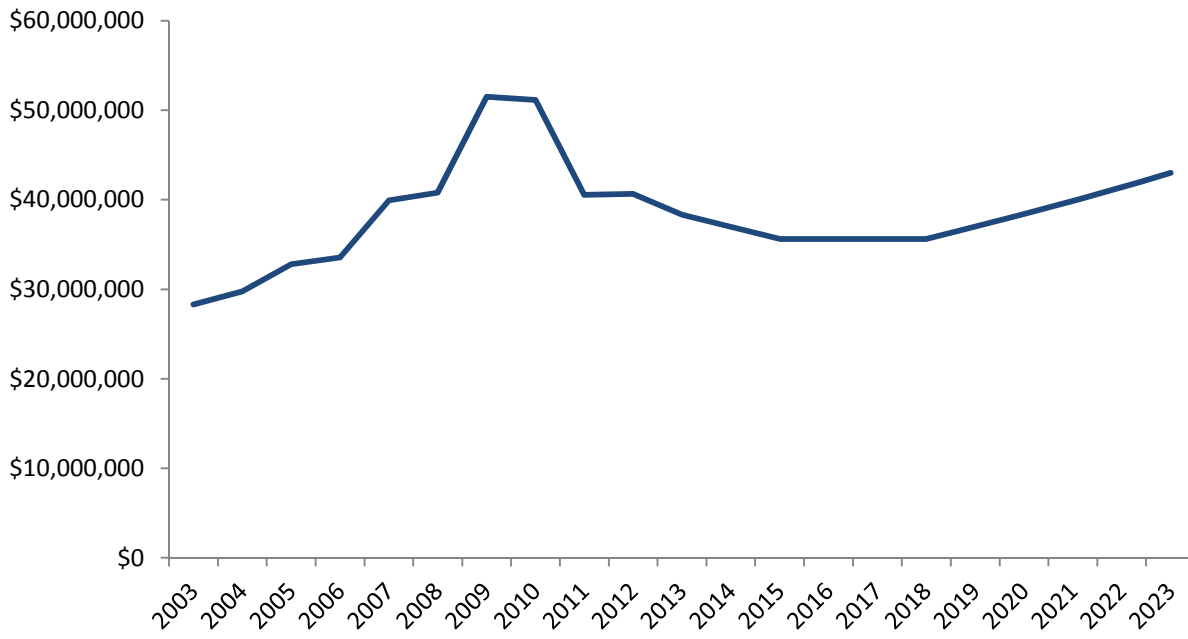
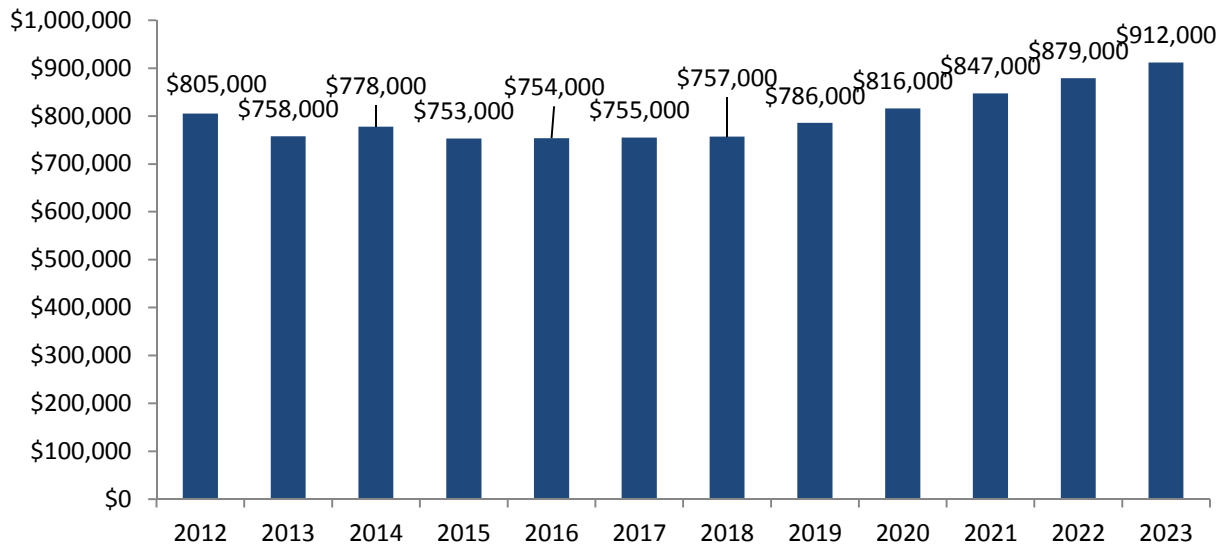


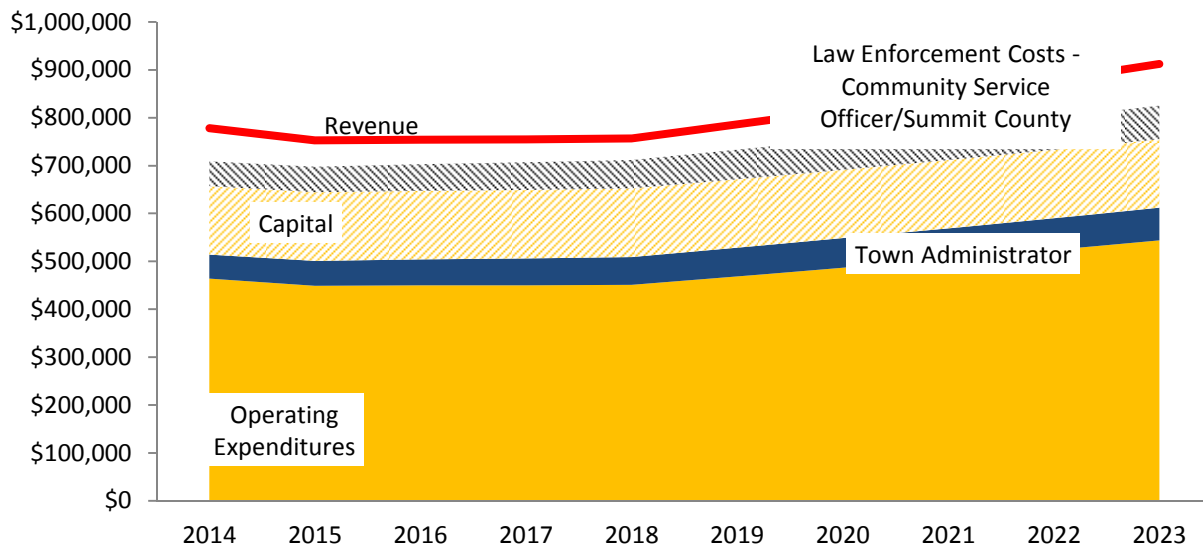
Figure A19 –Projected Town Revenues Through 2023



Near Term Strategy - Provide Core Services

The near term strategy is to maintain all of the services offered by the town at this time, historic capital investment levels, and to continue to maintain staff capacity with a town administrator, community services officer, building official and streets supervisor. Combining the projected revenues with anticipated costs for implementing this strategy shows that the town will operate with moderate surpluses through 2023. Implementing this strategy would mean that the town would will have an annual surplus of around \$61,000 per year. Unforeseen expenses, increasing costs for services and other cost factors could quickly eat away this buffer, so accomplishing the near term strategy will likely require additional revenues.

Figure A20- Budget Capacity Analysis - Core Service Scenario

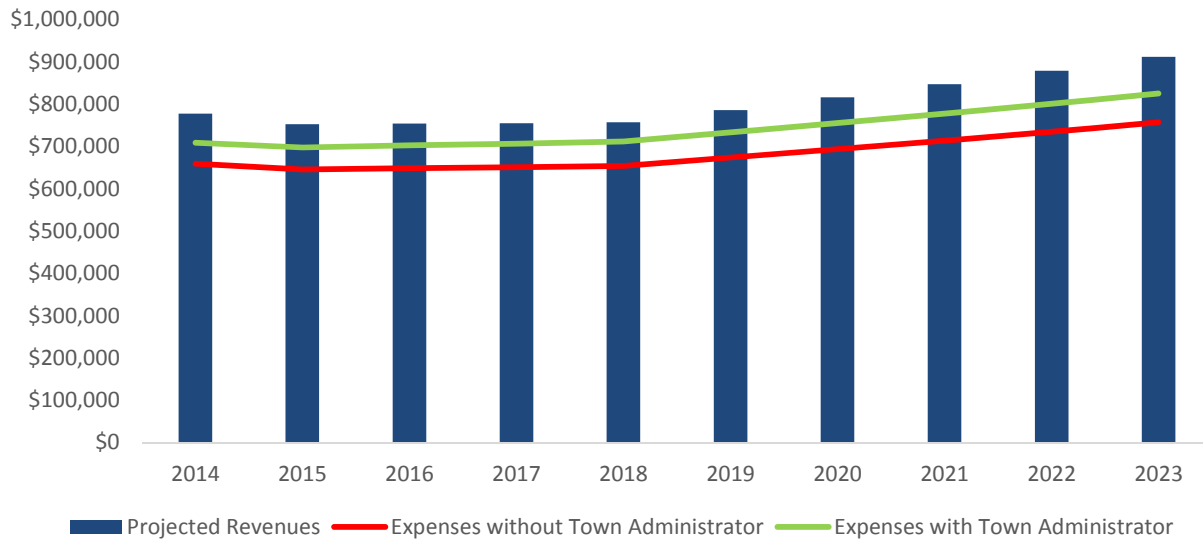


According to the blue book for Ballot Issue 2D, the recently voter approved 2.5% sales tax in Blue River will result in \$47,000 in additional revenues originating from taxes on existing utility bills, short term lodging, and sales tax on goods sold from cottage businesses. It should be noted that this is an estimate, prepared by the town treasurer. The estimated sales tax revenue would enable the town to hire a town administrator and still maintain adequate surpluses to maintain a healthy reserve fund.

While this is not enough to pay for expanded law enforcement services, or increased levels of capital spending, the sales tax helps augment the revenues needed maintain reserve funds for the core services strategy.

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Figure A21 – Revenues Budget Gaps

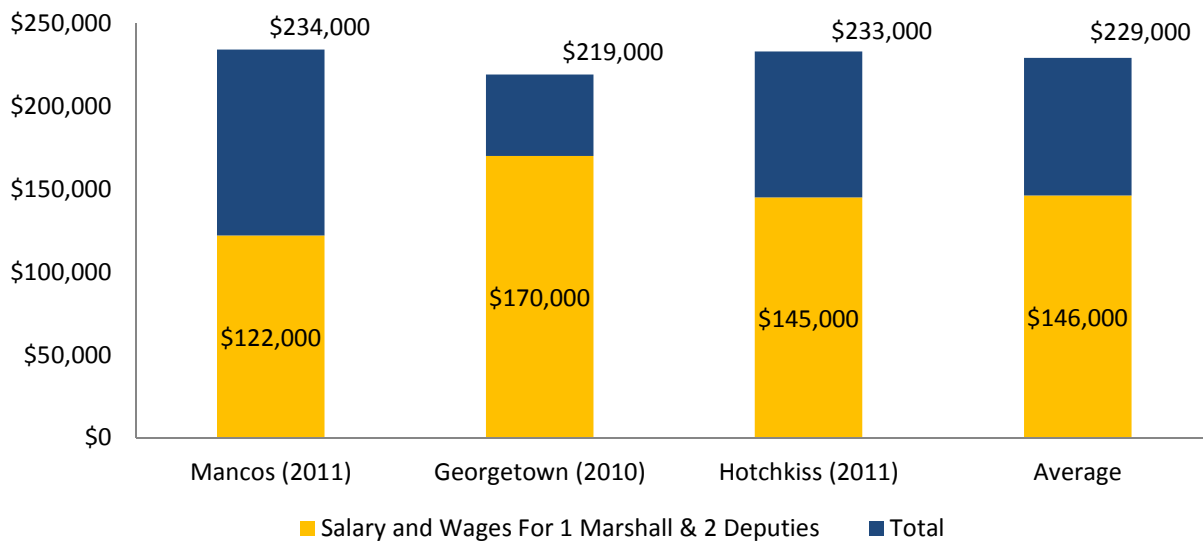


Long Term Strategies and Funding Solutions

LONG TERM STRATEGY - IN-HOUSE LAW ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

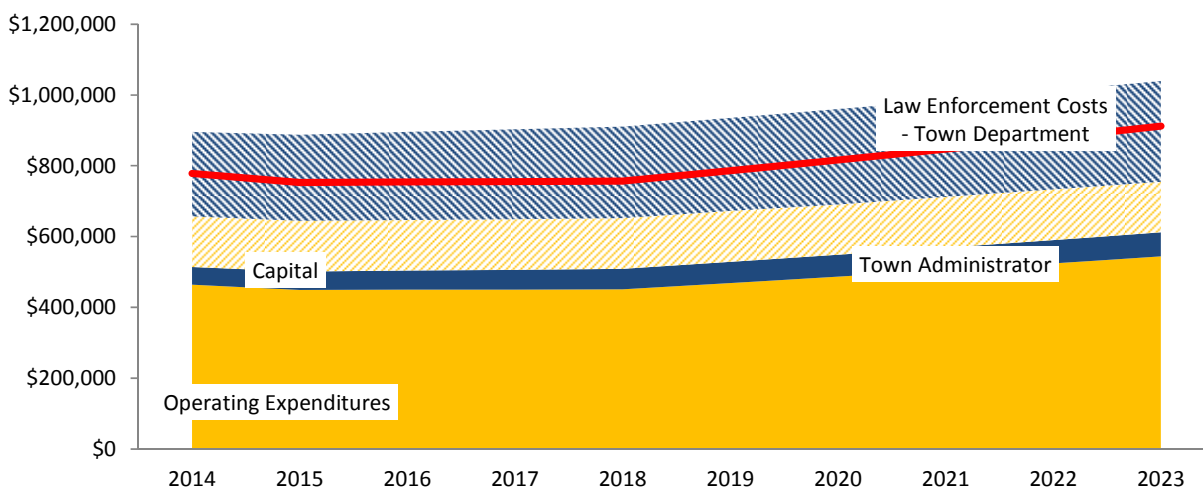
Costs for staffing and operating a law enforcement department vary depending on a municipality's needs, location and fiscal environment. This analysis uses an average of budget expenditures from three small Colorado towns, each with a population similar to Blue River, and each with a department consisting of a Marshall and two deputies. It assumes that the Community Service Officer's code enforcement duties would be absorbed by the law enforcement department.

Figure A22- Law Enforcement Cost Estimate



Were the town to attempt to staff and operate its own full service law enforcement department, an immediate budget deficit of \$139,000 annually would occur, increasing over time.

Figure A23- Budget Gap Analysis – Expanded Law Enforcement Scenario

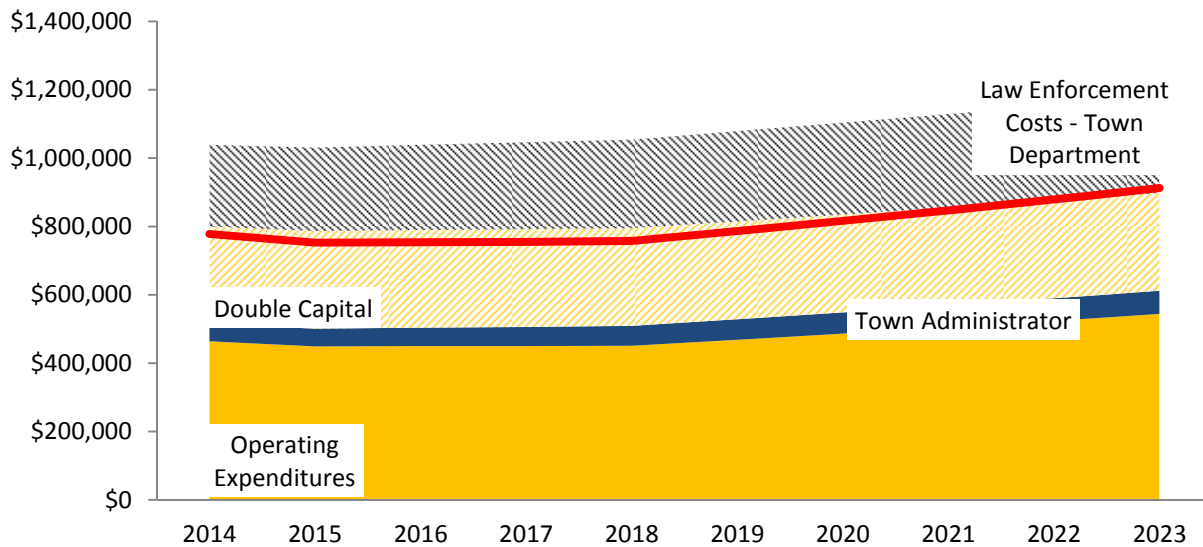


On average, the shortfall of sustainably funding a law enforcement department would be \$282,000 annually over the next 20 years. Existing reserves would only cover one third of the combined deficit and would be depleted within under 4 years. It is clear that implementing the long term strategy will require additional revenues.

LONG-TERM FUNDING SOLUTION - INCREASED CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Adding additional capital expenditures would not be possible without additional revenues.

Figure A24- Budget Gap Analysis –Increased Capital Investment Scenario

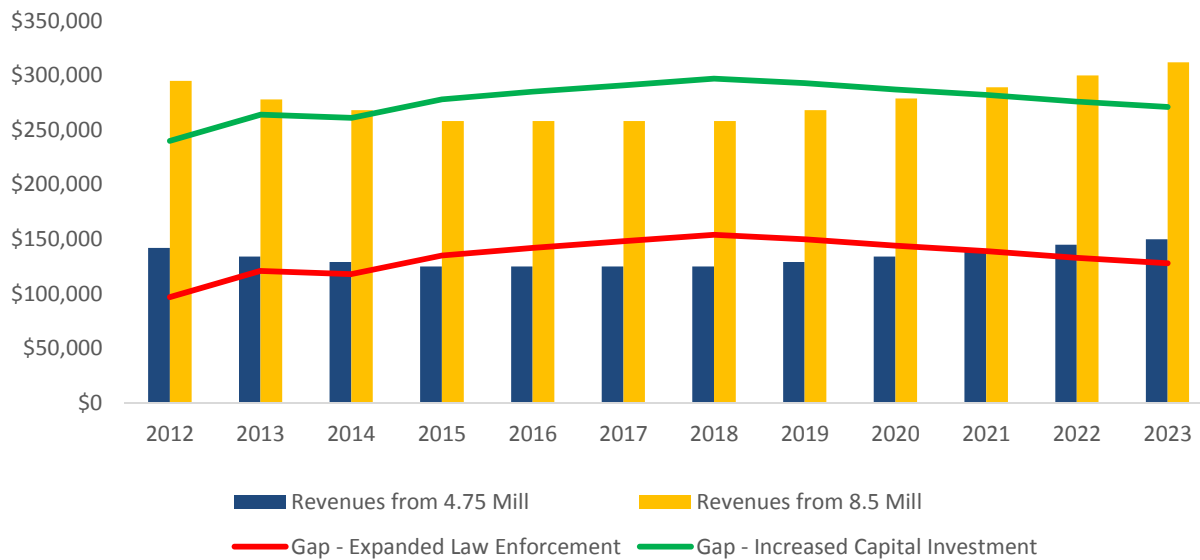


LONG-TERM FUNDING STRATEGY - PROPERTY TAXES

Both long term strategies will require future revenue sources to implement. Currently the town cannot raise the general fund mill levy above 12.29, however if approved by voters, the town could increase the mill levy in order to pay for capital investment and increased law enforcement services.

Based on the projected assessed valuation presented in the revenue outlook section the town would need to increase the mill levy 3.5 mills to adequately pay for increased costs under the expanded law enforcement scenario. This increase would not eliminate budget gaps for every year, the total combined deficit would total \$6,000. Which could be absorbed by existing reserve funds or other small revenue source. The town would need to increase the mill levy by 7.24 mills to pay for cost increases to implement the increased capital investment strategy. This increase would not totally eliminate all deficits, but the combined deficit through 2023 would total \$4,000.

Figure A25 – Property Taxes Resulting from Increased Mill and Budget Gaps



LONG TERM FUNDING SOLUTION - CONTINUE TO COLLECT LODGING TAXES

Increasing the number of short term rentals produces a relatively small additional revenue stream. In 2011 the 54 short term rentals in Blue River brought in \$35,000 in lodging tax revenues, an average of \$600 per unit. If the town adds two short term rentals per year, by 2023 the town would earn an additional \$14,400 per year.

Figure A26 – Revenues from Increased Short Term Rentals

