



C O N N E C T
F O R T
M O R G A N
C O M P R E H E N S I V E
P L A N U P D A T E

FINAL

ADOPTED AUGUST 8, 2016



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CONNECTFORTMORGAN

*Welcome
to
Fort
Morgan*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *CONNECT FORT MORGAN* plan is the culmination of a strategic planning process undertaken by the City of Fort Morgan (the City) to develop and adopt an updated Comprehensive Plan. Since 1958, Fort Morgan's Comprehensive Plan has helped the City prioritize public investment and position itself to take advantage of new opportunities. Fort Morgan's Comprehensive Plan contains a vision for the future growth and development of the City and will continue to serve as the basis for all land development regulations, capital improvement programming, and detailed planning studies. The City's last Comprehensive Plan was developed in 2003, with a minor update completed in 2010.

The 2016 City of Fort Morgan Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) articulates the City's shared values and seeks to move beyond the current challenges facing the City to identify opportunities and action strategies that will ensure a thriving and resilient future for Fort Morgan's residents, visitors, and businesses in the years to come. This Plan does more than simply update the outdated 2010 Comprehensive Plan. It is designed to accelerate the community forward and sustain a meaningful dialogue as Fort Morgan experiences dynamic change and growth over the coming decades.

CONNECT FORT MORGAN reorganizes the structure of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan around seven plan themes:

- Housing and Demographics;
- Economic Development;
- Land Use and Growth Management;
- Community Services and Facilities;
- Transportation;
- Utilities; and
- Environmental Quality and Potential Hazards

Based on these themes, the Plan contains foundational goals, policy statements, maps and user-friendly graphics that outline how the vision can be realized, providing the City with strategies for economic development, infrastructure upgrades and expansions, and improvements for community services and character.



CHAPTER

1



OUR STORY





INTRODUCTION

The City of Fort Morgan is an award-winning, friendly, and self-sufficient community of diverse citizens, known for its recent downtown renovation; abundance of parks and amenities; nationally-recognized sports facilities; and municipally-owned sanitation, gas, electric, sewer, and water utility systems. Its deep roots lie in its strong agricultural heritage, with a rich history highlighted by music and lights – unforgettable imagery and moments range from Glenn Miller playing from the rooftop of his high school to local kids dancing and music trumpeting from the City’s acclaimed band shell. Fort Morgan has many unique qualities, from an in-depth arts and music culture. This is showcased by the music played along Main Street, “Live @ the Park” summer concert series, a world-renowned disc golf course, and the yearly transformation into the Christmas Capital of the Plains.

To protect and capitalize on these assets, the City of Fort Morgan will provide a solid foundation for expressing an intentional future through the development and adoption of this Plan. The project is funded through the Department of Local Affairs Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Fund (DOLA EIAF 7665) and City of Fort Morgan Capital Improvement Funds.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

As the Denver metropolitan region continues to expand and Fort Morgan continues to mature and flourish, the City is likely to witness a significant amount of growth over the coming decade. New residents, services, and businesses will be attracted to the area, which in turn will require additional and immediate demand for land, housing, economic development, and infrastructure to support a growing population. Recognizing the need to reflect today’s trends and prepare for future opportunities, City leadership called for an evolution of the 2010 Plan with the inclusion of forward-thinking policies and targeted actions to help implement the vision. *CONNECT FORT MORGAN* envisions a future poised to bring new life and vibrancy to the Fort Morgan community.

CONNECT FORT MORGAN is a community-driven plan designed to be a living and evolving document that is flexible, adaptable, forward-thinking, user-friendly, and capable of leveraging new opportunities in the best way possible. Specific goals and policies to realize the overall vision are presented in Chapter 2 of this Plan, followed by detailed strategies that bridge the gap between vision and implementation in Chapter 3. Additionally, the general goals of the Comprehensive Plan are as follows:

- The Plan will be used for review of all public and private proposed developments that may potentially affect the City’s physical, social and/ or economic settings.
- The Plan will serve as an advisory document to guide both short- and long-term policy and land use development decisions within City limits, including those concerning zoning actions, subdivision regulations, land use, and annexation.
- The Plan will serve as the basis for community programs and decision-making for capital budget recommendations, community development, school siting, recreation or open space land acquisition, and housing.
- The Plan should be consulted by city staff, Planning Commission and City Council when addressing land planning issues, outlining work programs, and preparing annual budgets. It can also be used as supporting documentation when pursuing grants and other funding opportunities associated with accomplishing various community development objectives.
- The Plan will protect and enhance the overall public health, safety, and welfare of the Fort Morgan community and its residents.
- The Plan provides direction on future growth and development for all lands within the City limits and the Urban Growth Boundary.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT + ENGAGEMENT

CONNECT FORT MORGAN offered an extraordinary platform for city staff, Planning Commission, City Council, stakeholders, and residents to join in a planning dialogue focused on enhancing the long-term vitality of the City of Fort Morgan. The City began the update process in October 2015 and aims to have the new Plan considered for adoption in July 2016. The update has materialized over the course of four phases. A complete summary of public involvement, including notification, participation, and meeting summaries, are included in Appendix B.

PLANNING PROCESS

PHASE I: FOUNDATION

October – December 2015

This initial phase introduced the comprehensive plan; generated public awareness and interest surrounding the project efforts; laid the framework for meaningful community engagement throughout the process; established the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to help guide the process; identified values and big ideas for the community; and developed the Fort Morgan Snapshots, or baseline conditions, that were used to inform the plan themes.

Plan Branding: A promotional kickoff campaign was an integral part of Phase I. It included the development and launch of the *CONNECT FORT MORGAN* Comprehensive Plan “brand” and project website, www.connectfortmorgan.org. The plan branding process established messaging materials that have been mirrored consistently throughout the project.

Stakeholder Interviews: In November, the team conducted both in-person and over-the-phone interview sessions that included a cross section of local business owners and employers, local developers, members of various City Boards and Commissions, County Commissioners, city staff, and representatives from the School District and Morgan Community College. The purpose of these sessions was to gather feedback on issues and opportunities, generate initial visioning ideas, and excite interest in the Plan Update.

Kickoff Event: A celebratory kickoff event to introduce the Plan Update and gather initial feedback on values and opportunities was executed in tandem with Fort Morgan’s tremendously popular Christmas Capital of the Plains Festival to capture the attention of hundreds of local residents and visitors.

CONNECT FORT MORGAN Technical Advisory

Committee (TAC): A 14-member committee of city staff and key partners was established in Phase I to provide technical guidance and expertise, and assist with the development of the Plan Update.

Snapshots: During Phase I, the team was equipped with the best available data that was then used to create an inventory and analysis of baseline conditions. The provocative snapshots not only provided an overview of baseline conditions, but also defined how those conditions and projections influence the development of policies, actions, and focus areas for the Comprehensive Plan. Please refer to Appendix C to read the full documents.

Plan Audit: With the assistance and technical expertise of city staff, the existing comprehensive plan was assessed for relevance and content through an interactive online tool. The purpose of the plan audit is to gather systematic and defensible feedback from experts in each of the subject areas about how the 2010 Plan goals, strategies, and actions operate today and identify any conflicts and needs present under current regulatory guidance in relation to predicted future demands.



PROCESS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

PHASE I: FOUNDATION (October - December 2015)

- Stakeholder Interviews
- City Tour
- Formation of the Technical Advisory Committee
- Christmas Capital of the Plains Kickoff Event
- Online Questionnaire #1
- Development of Existing Conditions Snapshots and Plan Themes
- Completion of Plan Audit

PHASE II: VISION AND OPPORTUNITIES (December 2015 - February 2016)

- Community Visioning Meeting
- Online Questionnaire #2
- Development of Vision Statements
- Review and Refinement of Goals and Policies

PHASE III: CHOICES AND IMPLEMENTATION (March - April 2016)

- County Coordination
- Focus Groups
- Community Choices Public Open House
- Online Questionnaire #3
- Development of Future Land Use Map

PHASE IV: PLAN DEVELOPMENT (May - July 2016)

- Development of Public Draft Plan
- Public Draft Open House
- Online Questionnaire #4
- Adoption of the Plan by City Council and Planning Commission and approval by City Council

PHASE II: VISION AND OPPORTUNITIES

December 2015 – February 2016

Phase II harnessed the public feedback articulated in Phase I to establish shared community values, pinpoint future priorities and opportunities, and articulate key community choices and big ideas to develop an overall vision for the City of Fort Morgan.

Visioning: Vision statements provide an overall direction for the entire Plan - the goals and policies are designed to support the overarching vision. The team worked with city staff and members of the community in order to identify the elements of an updated vision that will revitalize, redevelop, and reinvent the Plan. Workshops and study sessions with City Council and Planning Commission were held to determine initial vision statements for each theme followed by a Community Visioning Event at the library to provide the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the preliminary vision statements. In efforts to involve as many residents and stakeholders as possible in the visioning process, the public event was paired with a virtual workshop with the same content to collect input from people unable to attend the Community Visioning Event.

Community Values: What do we love about Fort Morgan? The visioning process began by soliciting broad input from the community about what they love most about Fort Morgan, from which a set of shared community values emerged. The statements shown in the word cloud to the right depict the public responses to this question and speak to the emotional truth about what Fort Morgan means to its community members (the bigger the word, the more often it was listed as a response). *CONNECT FORT MORGAN* preserves and enhances these qualities and assets.





Opportunities: What would we like to improve about the Fort Morgan community in the future? A vision is forward-thinking and intentional and thus it cannot be founded on existing values alone. Essential to a successful vision and Comprehensive Plan is the ability to adapt to ever-changing dynamics. The vision and Plan must account for needs of not only today’s stakeholders, but also those of future residents, visitors, and businesses yet to come to Fort Morgan. As such, community members were asked to identify needs and improvements for the future of Fort Morgan. Their responses are depicted in the word cloud on the left and were used to inform the Plan’s goals, policies, and priorities.

PHASE III: CHOICES AND IMPLEMENTATION

March – April 2016

Phase III focused on strategic community choices and pivotal questions related to growth management, development, and amenities which helped shape the policies and strategies defined in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. To further increase awareness and solicit additional feedback, outreach included a public open house event at the Armory; focus group meetings conducted at the senior center, Rotary Club, and high school; and a presence at the International Music Festival. The same questions presented at the in-person events were included in an online questionnaire. Strategic choices determined by input received from City Council, Planning Commission, stakeholders, and the public were refined in order to recommend adjustments to key policies and strategies in the Plan.

The product of Phase III is an updated Future Land Use Plan (FLUP) and categories, coupled with refined goals and policies, which are used collectively to help direct development patterns and infrastructure improvements citywide to achieve the overall vision. The general recommendations of the FLUP will form the basis for zoning and municipal code regulations.

PHASE IV: PLAN DEVELOPMENT

May – July 2016

Phase IV is the culmination of the entire process, where the draft and final plans were written, reviewed, revised, and published. The public had the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Plan during a month-long review period before adoption. After the public comment period, final revisions were made to the Plan to account for comments.



EXISTING CONDITIONS OVERVIEW

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The City of Fort Morgan is a home-rule municipality located 80 miles northeast of Denver off Interstate 76, a major east-west corridor. Its location offers convenient access to Denver and Denver International Airport (DIA) that is actually more efficient than that of other areas of the Denver metropolitan area.

With a population of over 11,000 and a geographic area of 4.46 square miles, the City claims the county seat. As the most populous municipality in Morgan County, Fort Morgan is a commercial, industrial, and recreational hub for northeast Colorado.

2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN THEMES

The 2016 City of Fort Morgan Comprehensive Plan is divided into seven key themes that emerged from pertinent information discovered during the existing conditions analysis in Phase I. The plan themes and associated vision statements are outlined below, supported with key points and trends from the existing conditions snapshots and an overview of the citizens' perspectives based on what we've heard throughout the process.



VICINITY MAP

HOUSING AND DEMOGRAPHICS

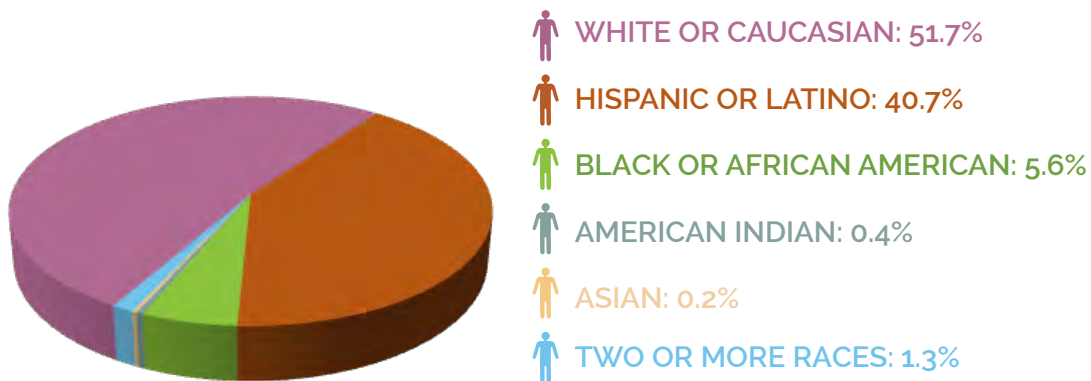
SNAPSHOT HIGHLIGHTS:

- 80% of housing units in Fort Morgan were built before 1980.
- 60% of housing units are owner-occupied, which is slightly lower than the statewide average.
- Approximately two-thirds of the housing units in Fort Morgan are single-family homes.
- Median home values within the city limits average \$118,000, which makes the City relatively affordable.
- 12% of residents have a bachelor's degree or a graduate/professional degree.
- Morgan Community College provides low cost education through associates degrees, adult education classes, and technical training and certifications.
- 40% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, double the average population in Colorado.
- Millennials and Baby Boomers each account for about 20% of the resident base.
- There are at least 26 different languages and dialects spoken in Morgan County, providing Fort Morgan with a uniquely rich and diverse cultural background.

DID YOU KNOW?

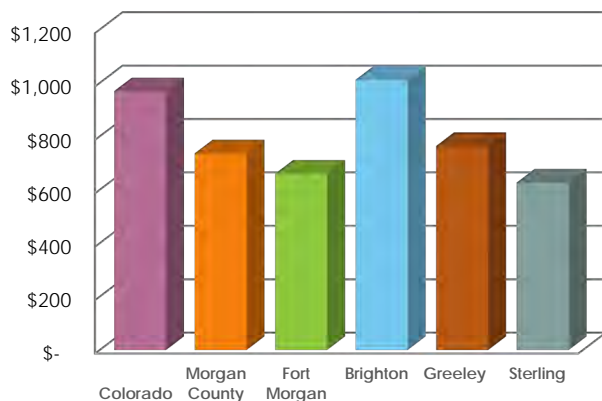
The City of Fort Morgan was recently named one of "Colorado's 10 Most Affordable Cities" by the *Denver Business Journal*.

FORT MORGAN'S RACE + ETHNIC COMPOSITION, 2014



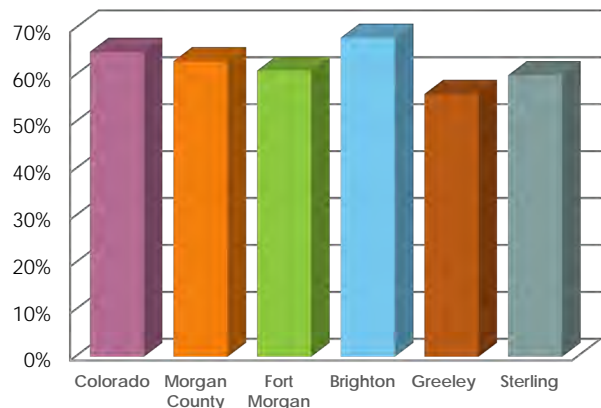
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

MEDIAN GROSS RENT, 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS, 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE:







Fort Morgan must continue to adapt by offering a mix of housing options in proximity to unique retail areas, cultural attractions, and other amenities that support healthy lifestyles at all ages. Stakeholders expressed concern that the housing stock and lack of housing diversity limits the options of newcomers to the City, forcing them to move elsewhere. They agreed that Fort Morgan needs more housing within the city limits, especially low-income housing, rentals and apartments, high-end homes, and workforce housing to attract new employees. The City should identify areas for additional multi-family housing including assisted living/retirement options.

Stakeholders said that in order to boost the local economy and diversify the employment base, Fort Morgan needs to invest specifically in housing for young professionals with community living spaces. Stakeholders would also like to see increased density and renovated apartments located above businesses Downtown. They felt that the City should focus new housing development to the west and southwest, while preserving the character of stable neighborhoods. Addressing and eliminating vacant residential properties is a must, as some feel that the negative activities (e.g., crime, drug use, and homelessness) associated with vacant and blighted buildings are detracting from the quality of neighborhoods.

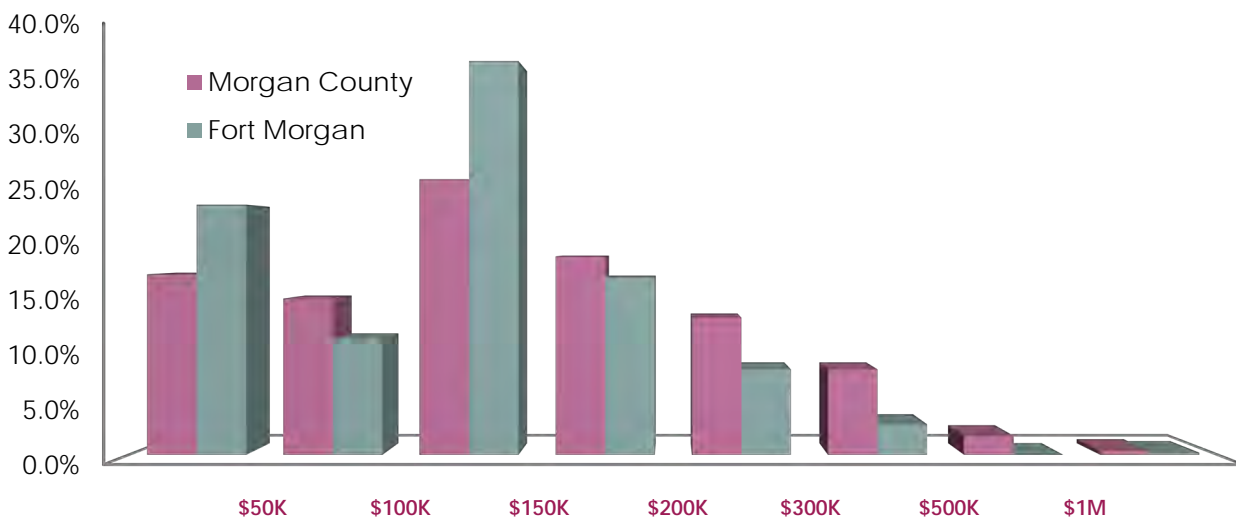
Efforts to integrate cultural groups should be strengthened, as opposed to enabling encapsulated communities. The number of refugees coming to Fort Morgan is expected to increase in the next few years, and stakeholders agree that it is highly important to be progressive in addressing these demographic shifts and celebrate Fort Morgan's diversity.

THE SIX GENERATIONS LIVING IN FORT MORGAN



-  GENERATION Z (0-17): 30.9%
-  MILLENNIALS (18-35): 20.0%
-  GENERATION X (36-50): 18.6%
-  BABY BOOMERS (51-69): 19.8%
-  SILENT GENERATION (70-79): 5.9%
-  GREATEST GENERATION (80+): 4.7%

HOME VALUE DISTRIBUTION, 2014

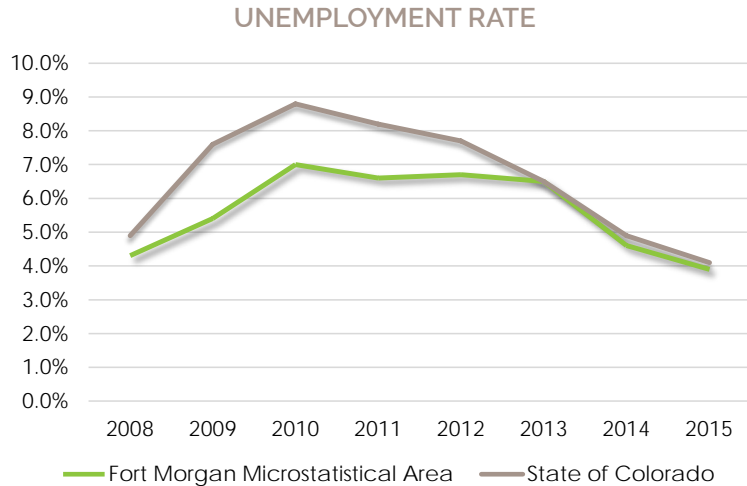


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year Estimates 2014

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SNAPSHOT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Fort Morgan’s job base has experienced minimal growth between 2009 and 2013.
- Unemployment has decreased significantly since its height in 2010 (7%); currently at 3.2%.
- Employment is stable but concentrated in a few sectors.
- Median household income has remained relatively unchanged between 2010 and 2014.
- Fort Morgan has high retail sales per household, which suggests that the City captures local resident expenditure and attracts shoppers from outside the City.
- Sales tax revenue has grown by a significant 35% since 2009, but is leveling out or lower in 2016.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

CITIZENS’ PERSPECTIVE:

Community members would like to see Fort Morgan position itself to become competitive with its neighboring regional communities, such as Greeley, Brighton, and Sterling in the near future through a concentrated effort to raise education rates. By concentrating efforts to increase the value the community places on education and offering new opportunities for adult education, they believe that the City will be able to attract more people and increase its overall economic and employment base.

Many employees currently live in the City of Fort Morgan or Morgan County, but stakeholders are witnessing more and more employees commuting either to or from nearby cities. Stakeholders feel that Fort Morgan should focus on promoting its industries, and should work together with its valued corporate partners to recruit new employees that will reside in Fort Morgan. It is vital that the City focuses on housing and commercial development to attract and retain a more diverse workforce that includes young professionals. Community members agree that the City is in need of higher-paying, more professional jobs. The City must find ways to diversify the economic and employment base moving forward, and concentrate on bringing in businesses that encourage growth and relocation.

There is strong feeling among stakeholders that Fort Morgan needs to develop commercial centers with new and unique opportunities for shopping, dining and entertainment. They would like to see Fort Morgan become more of a destination hub, taking advantage of its accessible location off the interstate to attract tourism money.

FORT MORGAN SALES TAX REVENUE, 2009 - 2015



Source: City of Fort Morgan

DID YOU KNOW?

Fort Morgan is a net importer of jobs with over 5,000 workers traveling into the City and only 2,600 workers leaving the City each day for work.

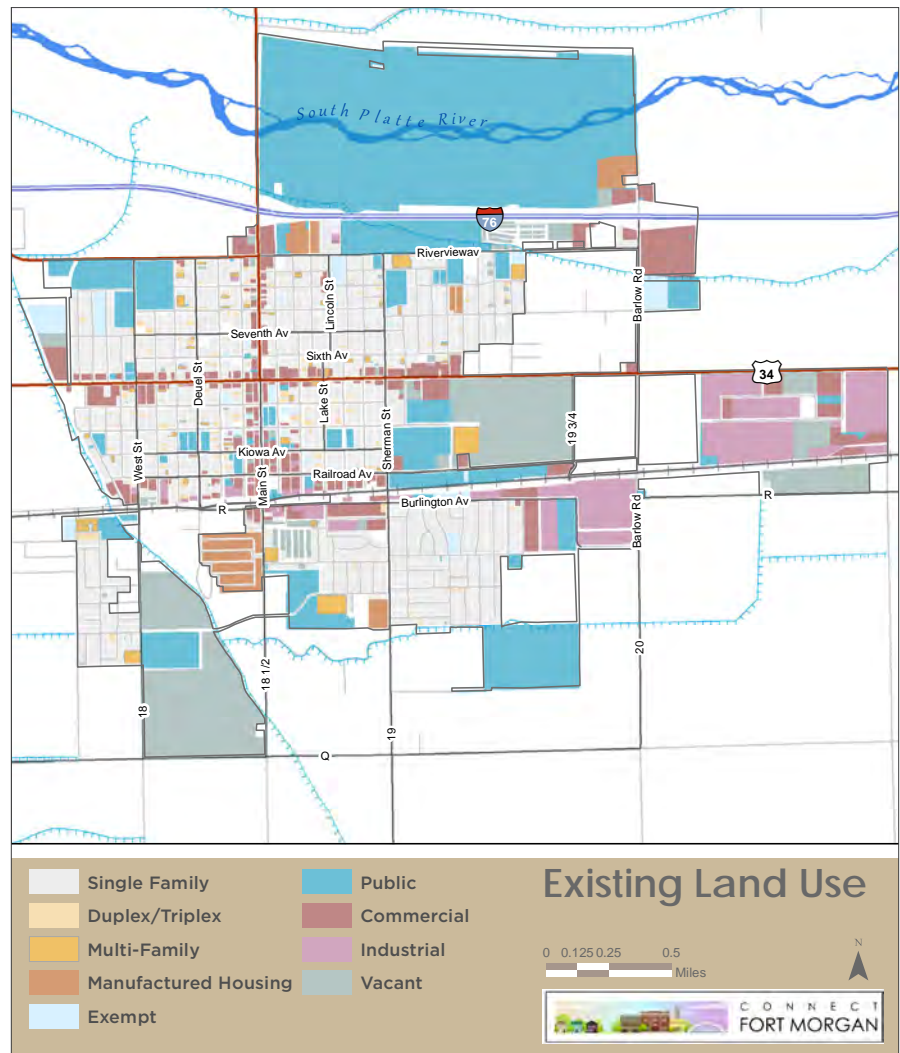
LAND USE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

SNAPSHOT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Fort Morgan is uniquely positioned in a rural setting along major transportation connectors.
- The City boasts easy access to Downtown Denver and Denver International Airport.
- 42% of the land within the City is Public and Charitable land mainly due to Riverside Park and its associated open space.
- Approximately 25% of the land use in the City is single-family residential.
- Almost 15% of land within the city limits is vacant.

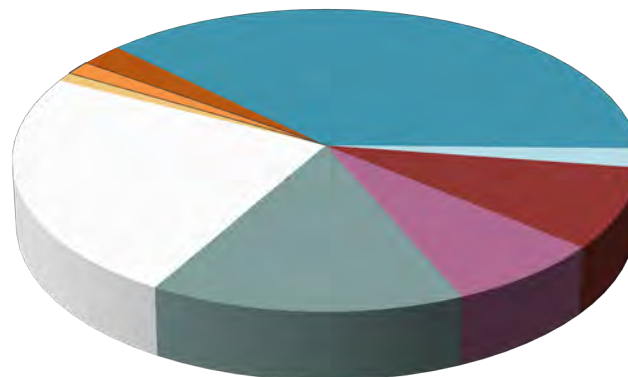
CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE:

Stakeholders expressed that future development should encourage infill in town, with densities and patterns reminiscent of historic Downtown neighborhoods. They agree almost unanimously that future development should avoid the floodplain as much as possible and take into consideration the availability and capacity of utilities and services. The public would like the City to plan and annex new land in a contiguous way. According to the stakeholders, the City should retain the rights-of-way and street grid for future roads and connectivity in new developments and define ditch easement widths for consistency and to avoid coordination issues. They also expressed the importance of facilitating intergovernmental coordination between the City and County when planning for growth. In the future, stakeholders would like to see improved city gateways and an expansion of the industrial park.



Existing Land Use

EXISTING LAND USE ACREAGE



SINGLE FAMILY: 23.6%
 DUPLEX/TRIPLEX: 0.9%
 MULTI-FAMILY: 1.4%
 MANUFACTURED HOUSING: 2.3%
 PUBLIC: 39.5%
 EXEMPT: 2.0%
 COMMERCIAL: 8.5%
 INDUSTRIAL: 7.3%
 VACANT LAND: 14.4%

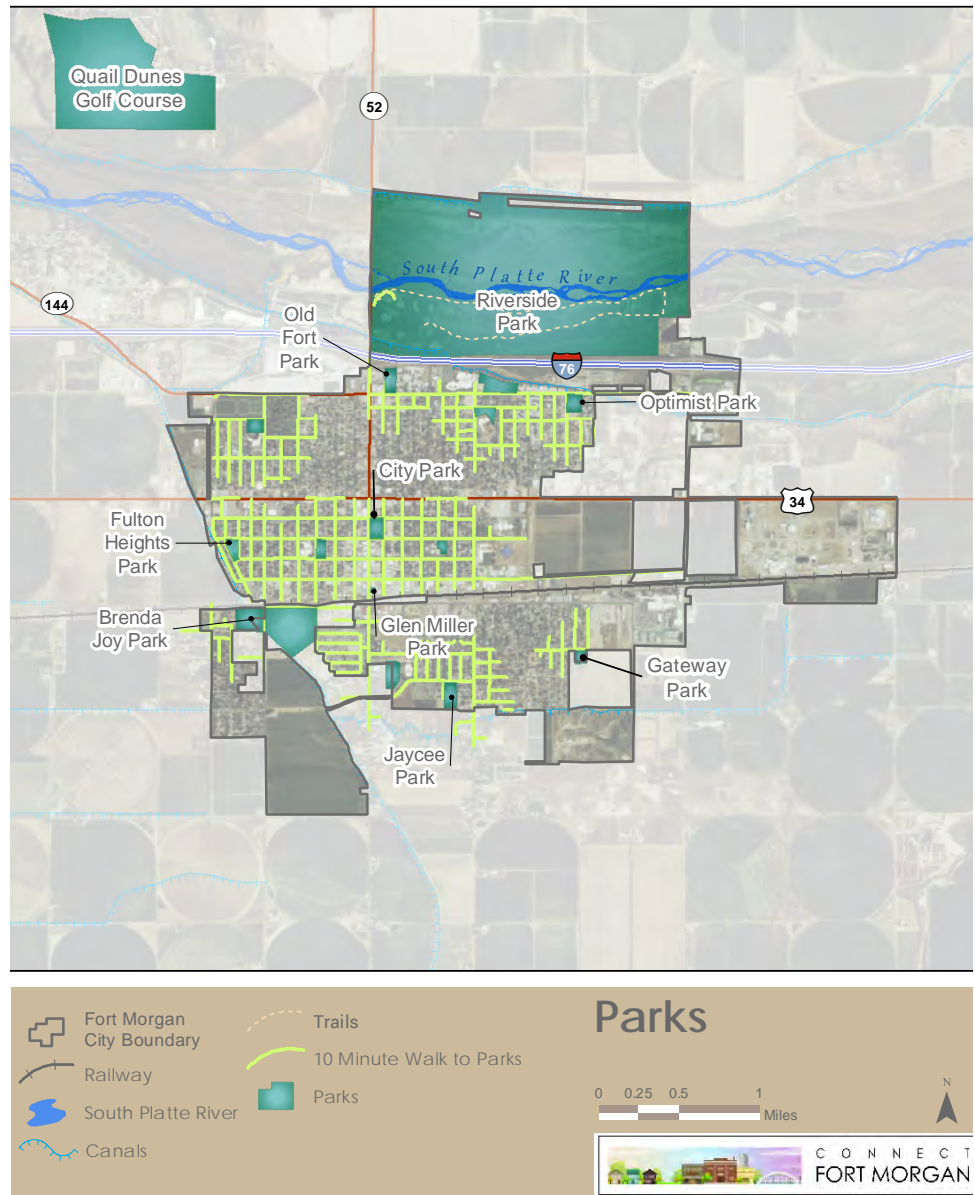
DID YOU KNOW?

Fort Morgan has more parks and open space per capita than the national average and higher than most Colorado municipalities, with 77 acres of developed parkland plus over 300 acres of undeveloped open space.

COMMUNITY SERVICES + FACILITIES

SNAPSHOT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Fort Morgan has 77 acres of developed parkland - nine public parks including one dogs only area, a premier disc golf course, and over three miles of scenic nature trails.
- 80% of Fort Morgan residential parcels are within .25 miles of a park.
- The City's six largest General Fund programs are: police, streets, parks, library, fire, and recreation.



CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE:

The public desires more cultural facilities in Fort Morgan, including more public art placed throughout the City and in parks, more youth-oriented activities, and additional library services. According to the stakeholders, the existing parks, recreation and open space network is an important asset in Fort Morgan and one that should be supported and expanded. However, they also feel that the recreation system and facilities in Fort Morgan are outdated and too localized. They have expressed a strong desire for the City to build a modern recreation/community center that integrates new types of programming for multiple generations and affordable recreation programs. Stakeholders are supportive of the collaboration with the County and neighboring communities to create a recreation district. Additional recommendations include connecting and expanding the existing trail system with additional parking provided north of Rainbow Bridge, pedestrian bridges to connect additional trails north of the river, maintaining emphasis on tourism and events. Stakeholders agree that the City should continue to preserve the land within the floodplain as parks and open space.

77 of developed parkland
ACRES within the City

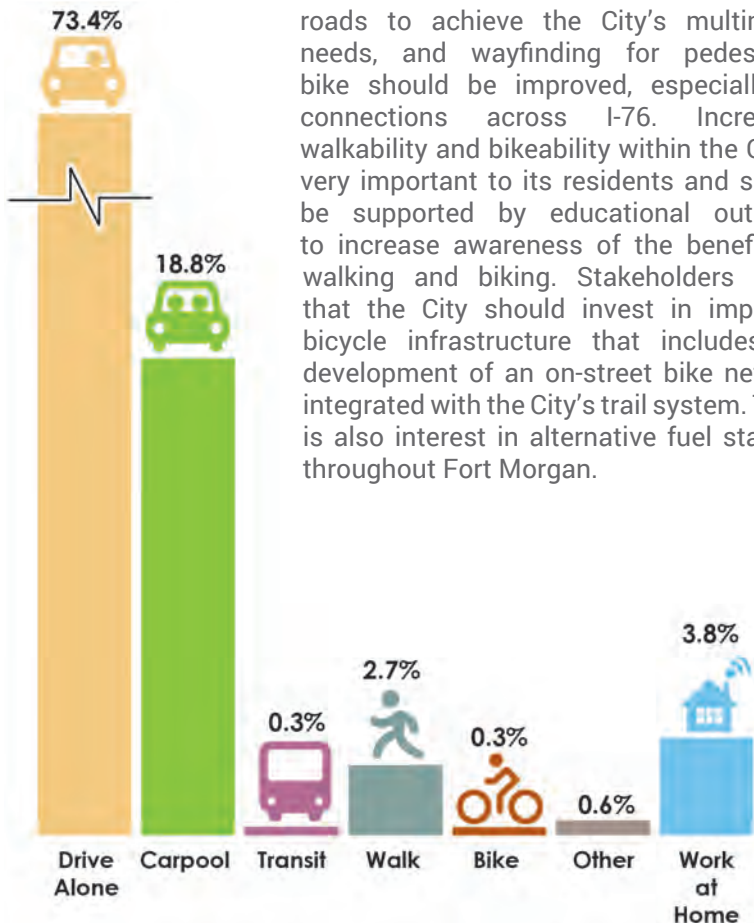
TRANSPORTATION

SNAPSHOT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The automobile is the predominant means of transportation in Fort Morgan.
- With a strong, gridded street network, the City is well positioned for increased biking and walking as means of transportation.
- County Express provides demand-responsive transit service and Amtrak provides passenger rail service.
- Statewide Freight Corridors include the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway, I-76, SH 52, Hwy 144, and US 34, creating significant daily freight movement through the City.
- The percentage of households without a vehicle is comparatively high at 9.8%.

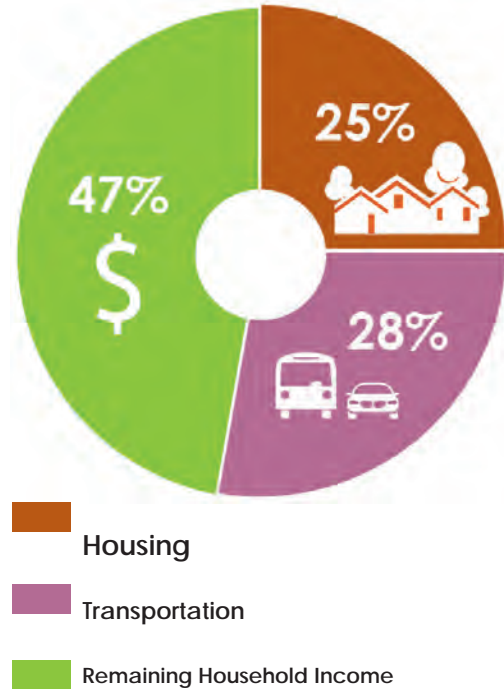
CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE:

Stakeholders desire more options for public transportation from reliable sources. They have expressed that many of Fort Morgan's impoverished families do not have transportation and the currently available options do not consistently meet their needs. Street cross-sections should be defined for future roads to achieve the City's multimodal needs, and wayfinding for pedestrian/bike should be improved, especially for connections across I-76. Increasing walkability and bikeability within the City is very important to its residents and should be supported by educational outreach to increase awareness of the benefits of walking and biking. Stakeholders agree that the City should invest in improved bicycle infrastructure that includes the development of an on-street bike network integrated with the City's trail system. There is also interest in alternative fuel stations throughout Fort Morgan.



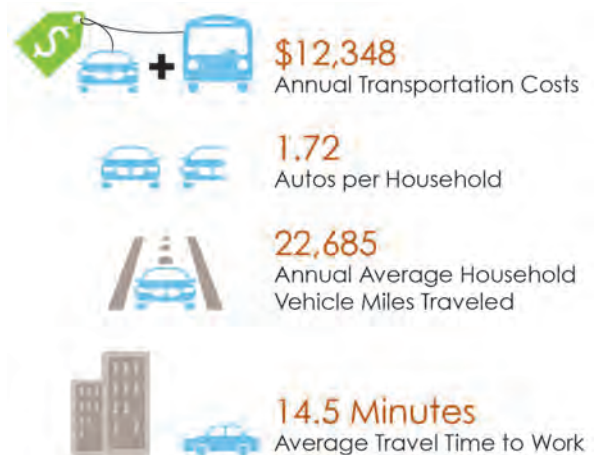
Source: US Census Bureau - American Communities Survey (5-year estimate for 2010-2014)

SHARE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME



9.8%
Households that do not own a car

TRANSPORTATION QUICK FACTS



Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology

UTILITIES

SNAPSHOT HIGHLIGHTS:

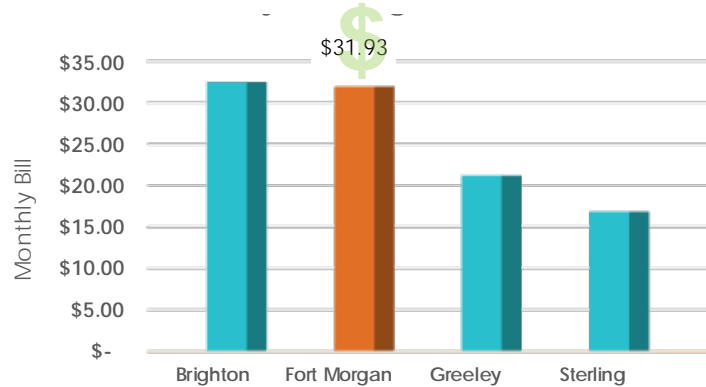
- The City of Fort Morgan has secured a reliable source of water to supply its citizens and surrounding communities.
- Both the water and wastewater treatment plants have additional capacity to support future growth.
- The City builds, owns, and maintains the water and wastewater treatment facilities, as well as the water distribution and wastewater collection systems.
- Stormwater infrastructure in Fort Morgan has been improved over the past few years, decreasing the amount of localized flooding.
- The City owns and maintains electric, gas, sanitation, water, and sanitary sewer utilities.
- The City has a strong history of collaborating with adjacent utility providers to receive and provide treatment and emergency supply.

CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE:

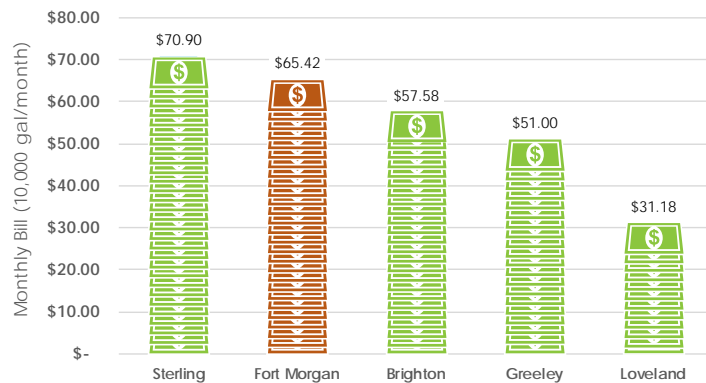
The fact that Fort Morgan is a “one-stop shop” for utilities makes it attractive to businesses and residents alike. Stakeholders would like to see Fort Morgan continue to invest in the Northern Integrated Supply Project to expand its water supply, fiber-optics to improve citywide telecommunications, and more sustainable options for utilities.

Water and sanitary sewer capacity are not currently major concerns for residents, and based on input received thus far, they are happy with the service provided. Storm drainage is a major concern for residents who have experienced localized street and regional (South Platte River) flooding over the past few years.

COMPARATIVE RESIDENTIAL MONTHLY AVERAGE SEWER BILL



COMPARATIVE RESIDENTIAL MONTHLY AVERAGE WATER BILL



DID YOU KNOW?

The City of Fort Morgan is a “one-stop shop” for utilities, providing municipally-owned and operated water, sewer, sanitation, electric, and gas services to city residents and surrounding neighborhoods. As a full-service City, Fort Morgan has a unique competitive advantage over other communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY + POTENTIAL HAZARDS

SNAPSHOT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The City of Fort Morgan owns and operates a lot of physical infrastructure and social facilities that are key assets to the community.
- Continued growth is anticipated to the southwest.
- Recent capital improvements are part of an on-going program to minimize flooding impacts on residents, businesses, and infrastructure.
- Although the South Platte River is a prominent feature of the City, only one community building, the Parks Storage Facility, is located in the regulated floodplain boundary.
- Large industrial producers are located in the northwest and southeast areas of the City.

CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE:

Stakeholders expressed mutual concern about the City's need to intervene in the regulation of large industrial operators. Citizen complaints concerning the traffic, dust, odor, and perceived lack of water treatment are taking place as a result of these industrial operations. As some of these operators are located just outside of the City limits, additional intergovernmental coordination between the City and County is needed in order to resolve these challenges.

Stakeholders also mentioned the importance of avoiding future development within the floodplain and would like the City to implement stormwater system improvements to minimize flooding during storm events.

DID YOU KNOW?

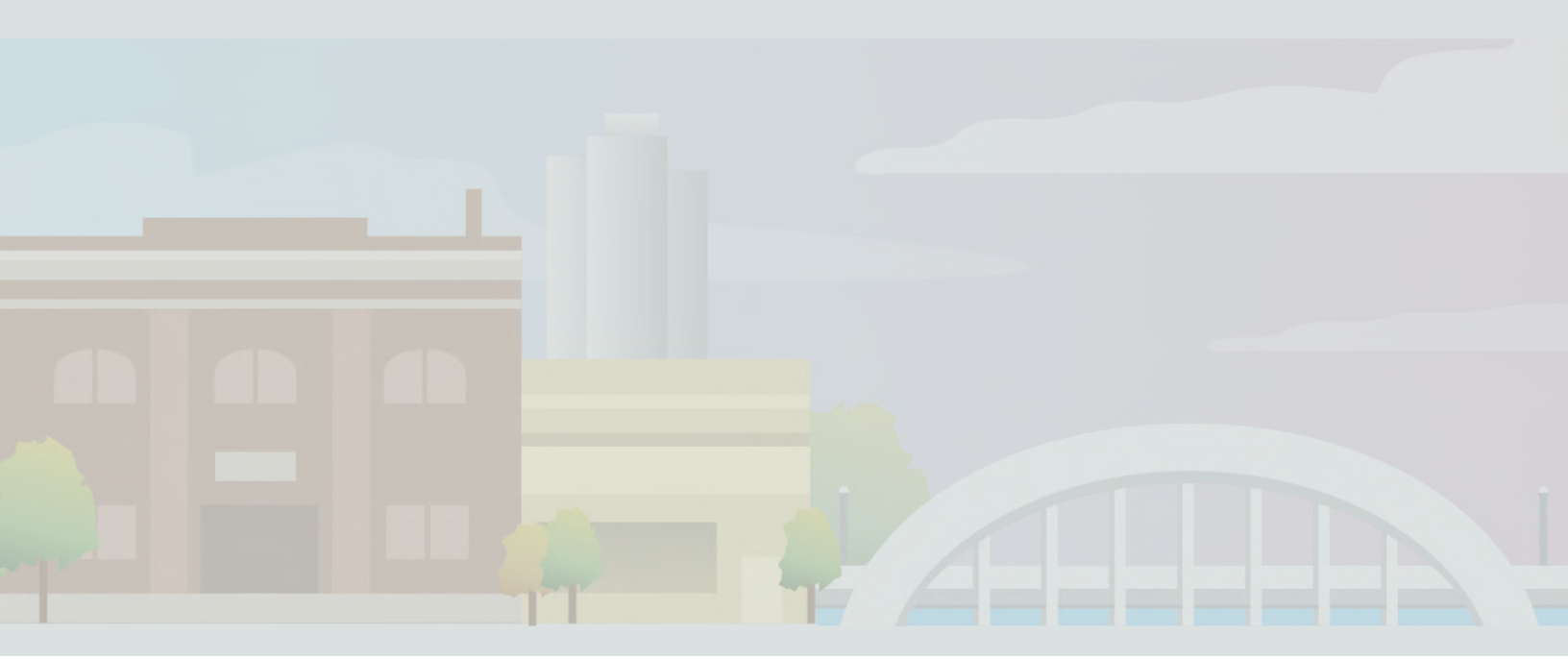
Fort Morgan ranks as one of the "Top 10 Safest Communities in Colorado" according to a study completed by Movoto Real Estate. With one of the lowest crime rates in the state and the best fire protection insurance rating in the County, Fort Morgan's superb public safety system is the finest in northeast Colorado.





CHAPTER

2



OUR VISION

CONNECTFORTMORGAN



FORT MORGAN
&
MUNICIPAL

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the Plan Update process, input was gathered from residents, business owners, city staff, school teachers, and many more individuals on what the community loves about Fort Morgan, what could be improved and key opportunities. This feedback, analyzed through the key trends summarized in Chapter 1, formulates the vision for the community. This chapter identifies the goals and policies related to each of the seven plan elements, and the land use framework that will assist the community in achieving the vision over the next 10 to 20 years and identify locations for appropriate development of future housing, businesses, and services.

GOALS & POLICIES

The goals and policies reflect the community's aspirations and provide guidance for future planning and decision-making within Fort Morgan. Future capital improvement plans, targeted economic development efforts, general improvements for community services and character, and new development proposals will all be reviewed in relation to these goals and policies.

Many of the goals and policies from the previous 2010 Comprehensive Plan, which was an update to the 2003 plan, were brought forward intact, or refined to reflect new realities and to achieve the revised community vision. This chapter will also be used as a starting point for changes to the City's zoning code and other regulations.

HOUSING + DEMOGRAPHICS

Vision: Promote a wide range of housing choices for current and future residents of all socioeconomic levels.

Fort Morgan’s neighborhoods will encompass a mix of housing types for current and future generations. While it is not the City’s responsibility to provide and build housing, these goals outline the infrastructure and land use requirements necessary to guide future developers.

The evolving rural Colorado economy and changing demographics are altering the dynamics of the local housing market. Establishing partnerships with agencies that can provide or assist in providing a wide range of housing choices will be key. Fort Morgan will be a series of complete neighborhoods that consist of parks, neighborhood services, and connected streets.

Regulations will need to be streamlined and reflect current practices, especially in regard to allowing larger parcel sizes within city limits, identifying locations for additional multi-family units, and identifying locations and possible partnerships for affordable workforce housing. The City will need to continually survey housing needs and review trends to address potential changes.

Goal HD 1. Achieve a sufficient mix of housing types and densities that meets the needs of all current and future Fort Morgan residents.

Policy HD 1.1 Address limitations to zoning and building codes to provide a mix of housing.

Policy HD 1.2 Coordinate with other entities to look for opportunities to provide additional low-income and/or subsidized housing.

Policy HD 1.3 Encourage zoning and codes that support minimizing costs to developers and homeowners.

Goal HD 2. Support a high quality of life and economic vitality through complete neighborhoods.

Policy HD 2.1 Encourage redevelopment and infill housing through mixed use and higher density.

Policy HD 2.2 Understand and analyze the housing needs within the region.

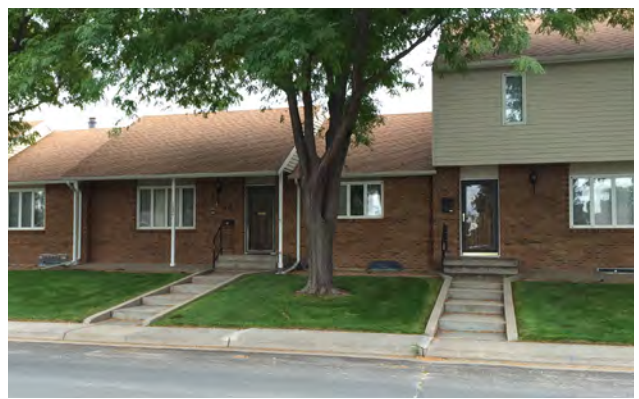
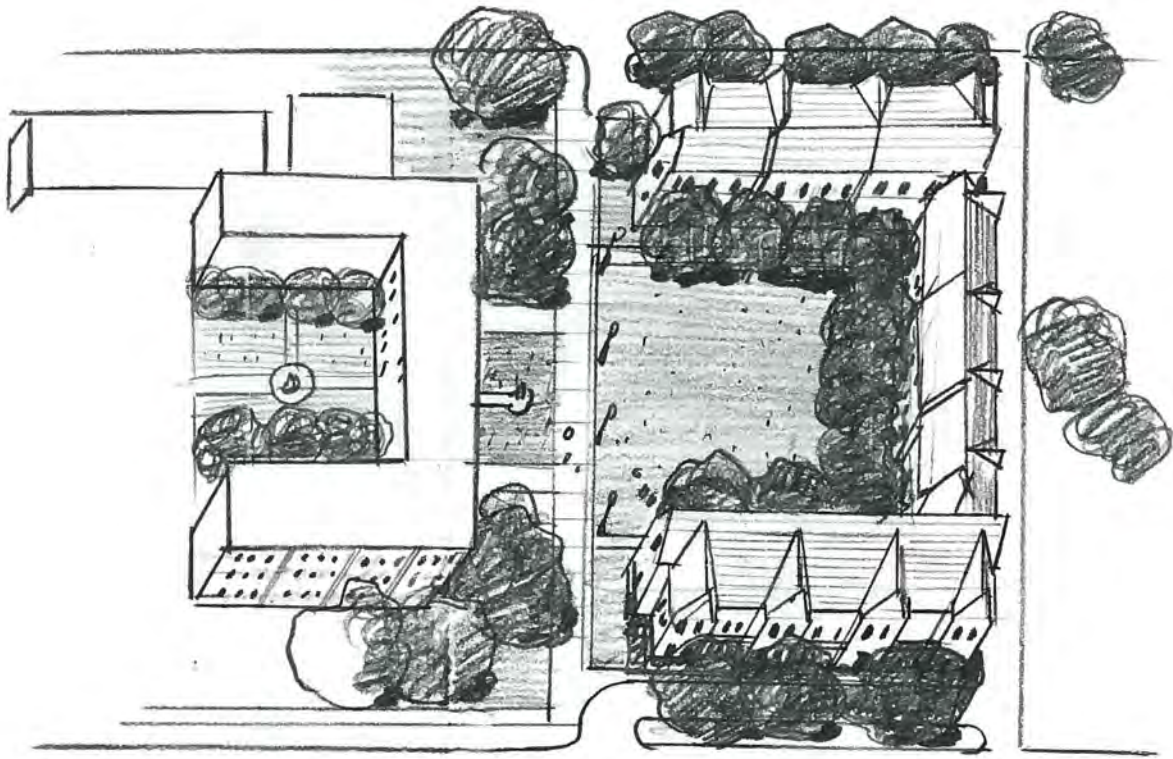
Policy HD 2.3 Encourage mixed use development by providing incentives such as density bonuses, height waivers for step back development downtown, or allowances for accessory dwelling units for neighborhoods

Policy HD 2.4 Identify areas for additional multi-family housing including assisted living/retirement options.

Goal HD 3. Protect and enhance the stability of Fort Morgan’s existing neighborhoods.

Policy HD 3.1 Support and expand on area agencies’ efforts to make the transition and integration into the existing community easier for newcomers.

Policy HD 3.2 Be proactive in addressing demographic shifts and cultural issues by working with other agencies on population trends.





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vision: Support and expand the economic portfolio and employment base through diversification.

Fort Morgan’s economic future will continue to strengthen the City’s role as a regional provider of goods, services, and employment. Fort Morgan’s recreational amenities should be promoted regionally and state-wide as attractions. The City will capitalize on its location along I-76, as a key stopover for long-haul travelers and a relatively easy commute for Denver employees.

The City manages its own Economic Development office to further promote the City. Best practices for economic development should be encouraged such as parking regulation revisions and code updates that promote the community as business- and development-friendly. As new development, including the new middle school, continues to grow to the south and west there will be a need for commercial neighborhood services south of the railroad.

A viable workforce is needed to support local retail and commercial enterprises. Employment lands, those available for primary jobs, should be expanded and efforts should be made to attract and diversify employment opportunities, while preserving land for existing and future industrial and manufacturing uses.

Goal ED 1. Support best practices for economic development in the downtown core and key corridors.

Policy ED 1.1 Evaluate parking supply/demand and circulation within the downtown area to catalyze revitalization.

Policy ED 1.2 Work with local business owners and partners to enhance the business community and ensure compliance with standards.

Policy ED 1.3 Investigate design standards for key corridors that meet the intent of the neighborhood character with possible signage code and façade improvements.

Policy ED 1.4 Extend Downtown improvements with cross street and alley improvements.

Policy ED 1.5 Increase and diversify retail, dining, and entertainment options.



Goal ED 2. Sustain Fort Morgan’s heritage as the regional agricultural and economic center of northeastern Colorado.

Policy ED 2.1 Actively engage in attracting new businesses to the City that provide quality jobs across a range of skill levels.

Policy ED 2.2 Identify locations for the expansion of industrial and business park land to expand employment opportunities.

Policy ED 2.3 Leverage partnerships with community organizations to develop a viable local workforce.

Policy ED 2.4 Increase awareness and education on historic preservation efforts.

Goal ED 3. Maintain a focus on tourism and events as a strategic economic driver.

Policy ED 3.1 Coordinate with County Tourism on marketing of events and amenities.

Policy ED 3.2 Enhance the viability of Downtown as the cultural/event hub of the community.

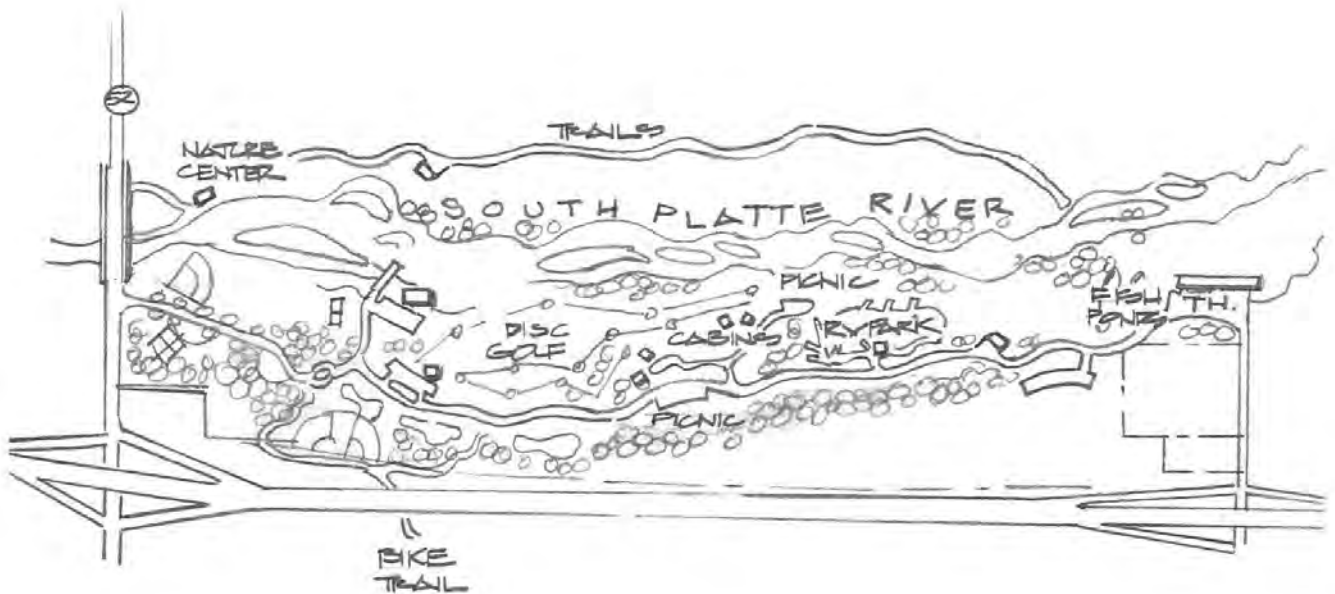
Policy ED 3.3 Explore options for redeveloping the historic Power Station.

Goal ED 4. Continue and enhance collaboration with local partners to enrich the business community.

Policy ED 4.1 Improve gateway signage and wayfinding, especially off the highway toward Downtown.

Policy ED 4.2 Align strategic goals among the City, County, Morgan County Economic Development Corporation and the Chamber of Commerce.

Policy ED 4.3 Continue coordination with Morgan Community College and other community education providers to provide continuing education for the community.



COMMUNITY SERVICES + FACILITIES

Vision: Maintain and expand opportunities to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Recreational opportunities contribute to a community's quality of life and have become an increasingly important factor in determining where to live or locate a business. Cities are responding by looking at land use choices that support healthy lifestyles – including parks, trails, and recreation facilities.

The City's Community Services Department is a key player in providing the City with desired services and facilities; however, partnerships and coordination with other entities and agencies is vital to the success of the community. The Morgan County Re-3 School District, Morgan Community College, OneMorgan County, and other nonprofit agencies throughout the community are vital to ensure a high quality of life.

Park and recreation agencies are as diverse as the communities they serve. Even though there is no defined national standard, Fort Morgan exceeds the typical national and Front Range benchmarks for the number of acres per resident. Future enhancements should focus on the maintenance of existing amenities, equality of distribution, and improved access to parks through reduction of barriers. As new developments are built, particularly south of the railroad tracks, additional parks should be developed to serve these new neighborhoods. Moving forward the City should focus on maintaining and enhancing its current assets while providing highly desired amenities. The City will continue to maintain and operate both the Airport and golf course, located outside city limits, within Morgan County.

Goal CSF 1. Increase educational and learning opportunities for all Fort Morgan residents to proactively address demographic shifts and cultural issues.

Policy CSF 1.1 Coordinate with the school district, MCC, OneMorgan County, and other agencies/organizations to increase a focus on education through city functions, governmental processes, and offering internships.

Policy CSF 1.2 Support alternative programs and services to support differing demographics and cultures.

Policy CSF 1.3 Encourage community partnerships with Morgan Community College to provide education classes for the community.



Goal CSF 2. Maintain a park, trail, and recreation system that serves the diverse recreation needs of Fort Morgan's residents and visitors.

Policy CSF 2.1 Integrate new types of programming for various generations and affordable recreation programs.

Policy CSF 2.2 Expand existing trail systems through possible coordination with ditch/canal companies and continue to increase user accessibility.

Policy CSF 2.3 Work with the County and neighboring communities to create a recreation district with the goal of approving a funding option to build a community/recreation center.

Policy CSF 2.4 Coordinate and partner with the school district to allow park access.

Policy CSF 2.5 Develop additional neighborhood parks as the city expands.

Goal CSF 3. Protect and enhance the South Platte River corridor as an environmental and recreational resource.

Policy CSF 3.1 Connect and expand the existing trail network in Riverside Park, including additional parking and trailhead north of the Rainbow Bridge.

Policy CSF 3.2 Link the passive recreational use of the South Platte River corridor with leveraging economic development.

Policy CSF 3.3 Create a pedestrian connection over the South Platte River to connect additional trails north of the river to the fishing ponds and south side trails.

Policy CSF 3.4 Ensure access points for emergency vehicles, police services, etc.



Goal CSF 4. Increase ease of communication within the community to disseminate information.

Policy CSF 4.1 Continually expand the City website and invest in new technology to provide accessibility of city services (permitting, bill paying, etc.), make information more easily available, and increase promotion of community resources to residents and visitors via City website.

Policy CSF 4.2 Increase universal access of City information and services to meet the needs of all demographics and physical abilities, including coordinating with community resources to interpret key City information.

Policy CSF 4.3 Create dedicated social media accounts for various community facilities.

Policy CSF 4.4 Consolidate public services into a centralized location to efficiently and effectively provide services.

Policy CSF 4.5 Coordinate with community agencies to have interpreters at key community events.



TRANSPORTATION

Vision: Enhance the various modes of transportation to balance the community and regional travel needs.

Fort Morgan will preserve and enhance a well-connected and balanced transportation network that provides facilities for both local and regional travel needs. Fort Morgan’s historic transportation network consists of wide, gridded streets, ideal for a walkable, bikable community. Future development should respect this grid system, and extend the right-of-way with new development for arterials, collectors and local streets. The City should place additional emphasis on identifying and mapping a bike network, and focus on enhanced pedestrian connectivity and safety within key areas of the City, such as Downtown and near schools. Fort Morgan will coordinate with local transit providers to increase the availability of public transportation, especially those that rely on this form of transportation.

Goal T 1. Provide an efficient, safe, and connected roadway network which meets the access and circulation needs of all Fort Morgan residents.

Policy T 1.1 Maintain and improve the current city grid system for the arterial and major collector network.

Policy T 1.2 Continue to address and improve traffic flow issues along primary roads through traffic control and signal timing and/or physical improvements.

Policy T 1.3 Consider design standards, land use patterns, and improvements that create a full accessibility for all residents of varying levels of physical ability.

Goal T 2. Provide an efficient, safe, and connected pedestrian and bike network.

Policy T 2.1 Identify preferred routes for on-street bike routes that integrate with the City’s trails.

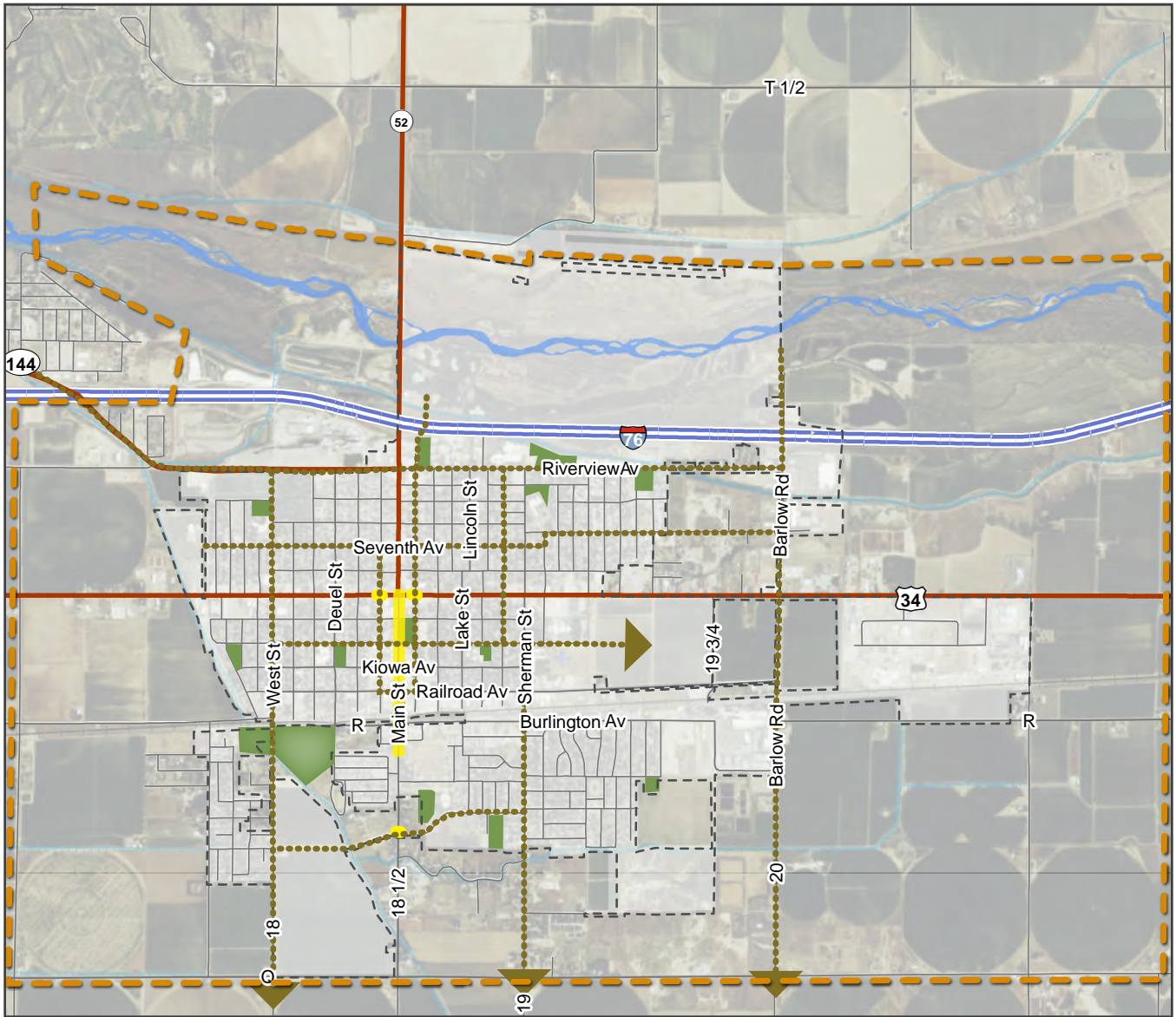
Policy T 2.2 Encourage and coordinate with property owners to improve/complete gaps in the sidewalk system, especially in activity centers, residential areas and all annexed land.

Policy T 2.3 Improve pedestrian crossings and wayfinding, particularly in high pedestrian activity areas, and connections across I-76.




Goal T 3. Improve awareness and identify partnerships to serve the transportation needs of the community.

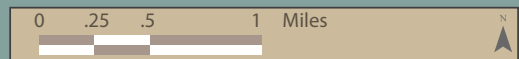
Policy T 3.1 Work community-wide to increase awareness of the access and benefits of walking and biking (health, monetary, social, environmental, etc.) through educational outreach to the community.

CONNECT FORT MORGAN



TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK MAP

-  Preferred Bike Routes
-  Key Pedestrian Corridors/Crossing
-  City Limits





Policy T 3.2 Coordinate with the school district to identify safe walking and biking routes to school and to ensure that all students have access to viable and safe transportation to and from school.

Policy T 3.3 Explore options to reinstate public transportation and human services transportation through partnerships with local transit organizations.

Policy T 3.4 Encourage the use of alternatively fueled vehicles by providing charging stations.

Goal T 4. Encourage high-quality and well-maintained transportation systems.

Policy T 4.1 Identify design guidelines and criteria for specific designations for key corridors such as Commercial Corridors; Downtown Main Street; and Historic Corridors.

Policy T 4.2 Continue to evaluate the functional classification system of City streets as growth occurs to ensure compatibility with truck routes and snow removal routes.

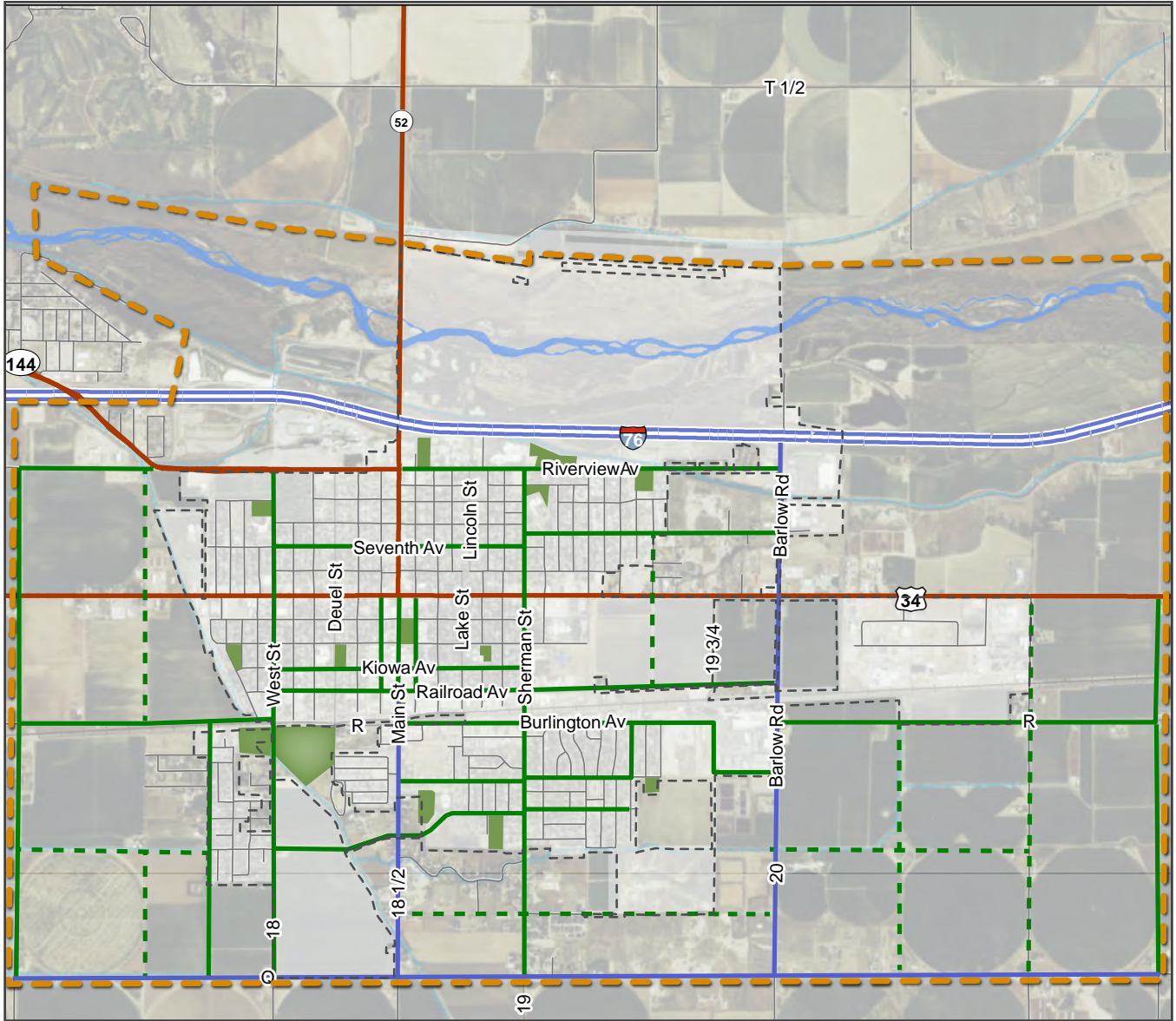
Policy T 4.3 Investigate over-sized load permitting to assist in maintenance of the transportation system.

Policy T 4.4 Update and define street cross-sections for future roads to achieve the City's multimodal needs for 60-foot, 80-foot and 100-foot ROWs.

Goal T 5. Improve coordination with freight companies to ensure land use compatibility and an efficient freight network.

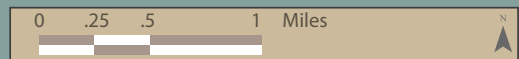
Policy T 5.1 Work with Federal Railroad Administration to expand the railroad quiet zone, as residential areas expand; but prioritize area east of the Barlow Road crossing to CR 21.

Policy T 5.2 Evaluate and expand on existing and potential future railroad spurs to continue to support and expand industrial uses.



TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK MAP

-  Freeway
-  State/US Highway
-  Arterial
-  Collector Street
-  Future Collector Street
-  Local Street
-  City Limits



FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Streets generally provide two important functions: mobility and land access. These functions conflict with each other—more land access generally leads to reduced traffic carrying capacity and mobility, and vice versa. Each roadway type is specifically designed to operate with certain characteristics based on the adjoining land uses, level of continuity, and proximity and connections to other facilities. A street's functional classification reflects its role in the road network and forms the basis for access management, corridor preservation, and street design guidelines and standards. Existing streets may not meet all of the desired characteristics described by their defined functional classification but can be upgraded as improvements to the street are made, and as development occurs. The functional classification should be viewed as the desired condition and should not change over time. While the level of traffic is typically highest on higher level functional classifications like freeways and arterials, traffic volumes are a result of the street's function rather than a delineator between functional classifications. Fort Morgan's Transportation Framework includes the functional classifications described below.

Freeways have the highest level of mobility, providing unimpeded, high-speed regional and interstate connections. Freeways are limited access, divided highways that link major urban areas. I-76 is the freeway that serves east-west interstate travel through eastern Colorado, providing a connection between Fort Morgan and the Denver Metropolitan Area. I-76 is under the jurisdiction of FHWA and CDOT.

State and US Highways provide for longer distance travel between communities. The State and US Highways in the Fort Morgan area (US 34, SH 52, and SH 144) are categorized separately because they are under the jurisdiction of CDOT; Fort Morgan design and access standards do not apply to these facilities.

Arterials provide for trips of moderate length and offer connectivity to streets of higher functional classification (e.g., interchange access to I-76). Arterials provide intra-community continuity typically without penetrating neighborhoods. Fort Morgan's arterials include Barlow Road and the section of Main Street south of Railroad Avenue. Q Street is envisioned to function as an arterial in the future. A right of way of 100 feet is desired for arterial roads.

Collectors serve to gather traffic from local streets and funnel them to the arterial network and State Highway. Collectors provide a balance between access and mobility and retain continuity through neighborhoods. Travel speeds are moderate, and travel distances are short to medium. Fort Morgan's desired right of way for collector streets is 80 feet.

The City should work with developers to identify **Future Collector** street alignments and to encourage a system of collectors that enhance the grid network, minimizing discontinuous, curvilinear alignments. Collectors should be located opposite each other at arterial intersections to avoid offset T-intersections.

Local Streets serve the highest level of access, providing direct driveway access to adjacent properties and carrying traffic to the collectors. Local streets can be of limited continuity and may be designed to discourage through traffic. Local streets are typically identified through development plans. A right of way of 60 feet is desired for Fort Morgan's local streets.



UTILITIES

Vision: Increase focus on fiscal and environmental sustainability, technological advancements, and resource preservation.

The City builds, owns, and maintains its own water and wastewater treatment facilities, water distribution and collection systems, and stormwater infrastructure, as well as electric, gas utilities, and provides sanitation collection. Some utilities are provided well beyond the existing city limits; however, the ability and desire to grow the corporate City limits to that extent (See Utilities Boundary Map) is not within the immediate vision. The City also owns limited fiber-optics infrastructure. This telecommunication infrastructure will be vital to attracting and retaining businesses and residents. The City should focus on continuing to provide these essential services and work to improve these services as technologies advance.

Goal U 1. Improve infrastructure quality and conservation through the effectiveness and efficiency of utility system programs.

Policy U 1.1 Plan for water, wastewater, stormwater, electric, and gas system capacity increases based on growth projections.

Policy U 1.2 Maintain existing infrastructure and investigate new technologies as they become available.

Policy U 1.3 Maintain high water quality with new source water additions, technology changes in water treatment, and system redundancy with neighboring water providers.

Policy U 1.4 Expand the existing fiber-optic network to enable affordable broadband connectivity.

Policy U 1.5 Continue active participation and coordination in utility agreements with applicable providers.

Goal U 2. Increase awareness of the community's environmental needs and issues in all facets of community life.

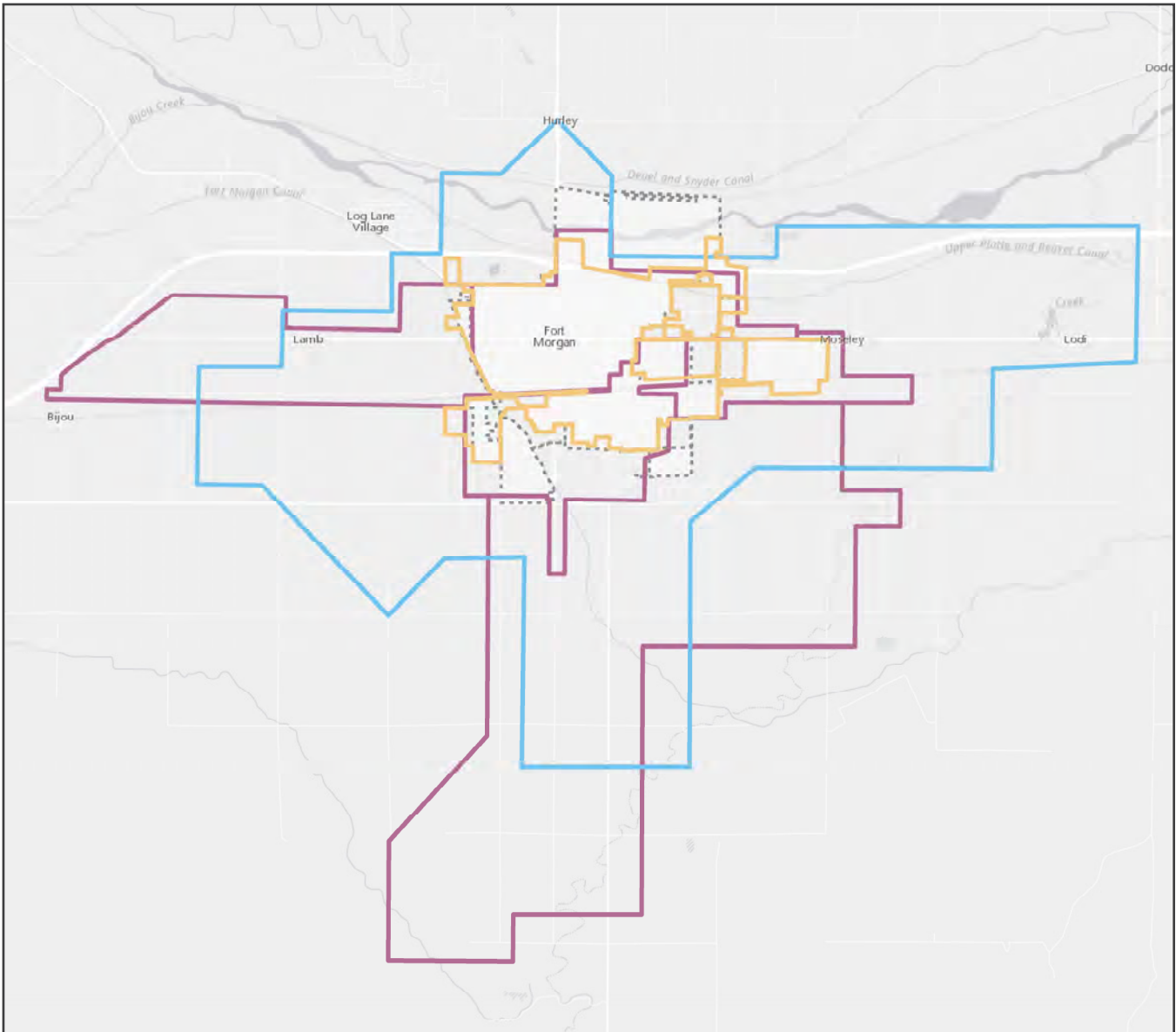
Policy U 2.1 Explore a recycling program and newer recycling technology.

Policy U 2.2 Increase focus on sustainable practices and technology.

Policy U 2.3 Investigate ways to incorporate renewable energy sources through City functions and operations.

Policy U 2.4 Obtain sufficient source water to meet growth projections.

Policy U 2.5 Continue to coordinate with ditch/canal companies on utility ROW preservation and identifying future road and utility crossings.



UTILITIES SERVICE AREAS

- Sanitary Service Limits*
- Electric Service Boundary*
- Gas Pressure Zone*
- Fort Morgan City Boundary*

**Water/sewer services are generally provided within City limits.*



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY + POTENTIAL HAZARDS

Vision: Mitigate risks, hazards, and environmental concerns through public policy intergovernmental coordination with surrounding entities.

Fort Morgan will be a safe, clean, and visually appealing community. Working with industrial and freight companies to manage environmental impacts and nuisances is vital, as is mitigating natural and man-made hazards through strategic land use decisions.

Goal EQ/PH 1. Promote a safe, clean, and visually appealing community.

Policy EQ/PH 1.1 Continually review and update the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), especially with the development of new businesses.

Policy EQ/PH 1.2 Minimize negative industrial and commercial development/construction impacts on the surrounding community through intergovernmental and interagency coordination.

Policy EQ/PH 1.3 Increase awareness of impacts to the community by industrial providers.

Policy EQ/PH 1.4 Encourage compliance with applicable sustainability programs, energy standards and/or best practices.

Policy EQ/PH 1.5 Coordinate with railroad users to increase safety and awareness related to train derailments.

Goal EQ/PH 2. Improve stormwater and water management/safety through improved site development.

Policy EQ/PH 2.1 Construct stormwater system improvements, as recommended in Master Plans, from downstream to upstream to minimize flooding during storm events.

Policy EQ/PH 2.2 Encourage water quality features (Low Impact Development) in new development design to not only treat and improve water quality, but also to minimize flood risks by improving storage flooding risks, and treat and improve water quality.

Policy EQ/PH 2.3 Continue to preserve the land within the floodplain as parks and open space.

Policy EQ/PH 2.4 Provide a quality stormwater system that meets current and future capacities.

Goal EQ/PH 3. Proactively plan to mitigate potential hazards through land use decisions.

Policy EQ/PH 3.1 Retain adequate ROW and setbacks within and along primary freight/haul corridors.

Policy EQ/PH 3.2 Encourage transitional/buffer zones along the railroad corridors.





LAND USE + GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Vision: Preserve and strengthen Fort Morgan's local identity of being safe, friendly, and family-oriented with a small-town feel when planning for residential and commercial growth.

Fort Morgan will guide new development to sites with available infrastructure, and support redevelopment opportunities within city boundaries. While the City has seen minimal growth (1-2% annually), recent development has primarily occurred outside city limits. Working with Morgan County to focus development, especially along the municipal boundaries, is important to meeting the vision.

The City will work to encourage infill with densities and patterns reminiscent of historic development patterns. Capital improvement programming, land use regulations and economic incentives may be used to encourage infill development and redevelopment activity. Land with economic and employment opportunities should be focused within the City to provide the necessary fiscal resources.

Goal LU 1. Guide new development with available infrastructure and support redevelopment opportunities within existing City boundaries.

Policy LU 1.1 Encourage mixed use development, and rezone specific areas to coincide with land use changes.

Policy LU 1.2 Encourage the preservation of the character of the city's residential neighborhoods.

Policy LU 1.3 Encourage the preservation and restoration of older neighborhoods and buildings.

Policy LU 1.4 Encourage infill within the City with densities and patterns reminiscent of the existing neighborhoods.

Goal LU 2. Accommodate population and economic growth through logical extension of municipal boundaries and where the City has capacity to provide services.

Policy LU 2.1 Encourage new development in locations east, west, and south of existing boundaries.

Policy LU 2.2 Promote the contiguous expansion of industrial areas.

Policy LU 2.3 Preserve right-of-way for major corridors to ensure street connectivity in future growth areas.



Goal LU 3. Use capital improvement programming, land use regulations and economic incentives to encourage infill development and redevelopment activity.

Policy LU 3.1 Investigate opportunities for underutilized sites.

Policy LU 3.2 Promote and incentivize annexation in a cohesive, contiguous manner.

Policy LU 3.3 Work with willing landowners on annexation of all infill areas.

Policy LU 3.4 Initiate more in-depth or feasibility studies regarding utility and transportation improvements for potential redevelopment sites such as between 8th Avenue and Riverview and Brush subdivisions.

Policy LU 3.5 Investigate preservation of land area for future water storage.

Goal LU 4. Coordinate with the County, special districts, and other public agencies on future growth areas.

Policy LU 4.1 Utilize coordinated technology, file systems, GIS, etc. to increase efficiency between City and County.

Policy LU 4.2 Maintain a zoning map that is easily accessible to staff and the public.

Policy LU 4.3 Maintain ongoing, regular communication among public agencies.

Policy LU 4.4 Maintain and improve procedures to review County land development proposals and develop consistent development regulations within the Fort Morgan Growth Area.

FUTURE LAND USE FRAMEWORK

The Future Land Use (FLU) framework, including the Future Land Use Map and categories, should be used in conjunction with the City's Land Use Code and Official Zoning Map to guide the appropriate location, character, type, and intensity of new development. The map is considered an advisory document only and is not binding on the zoning discretion of Fort Morgan. Although advisory, the Plan should function as the basis for project review recommendations.

The Future Land Use framework embodies the community vision, illustrating the desired mix and location of future land uses. Specific land use categories, which have been refined since the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, are identified. The framework classifies a range of land use patterns that assist the community in visualizing how to implement the community's vision but provides flexibility in achieving that vision. The FLU categories have been consolidated to provide both flexibility and usability for future developments.

The FLU framework categories and the associated map, coupled with the goals and policies within, are used to help direct development patterns and infrastructure improvements citywide to achieve the overall community vision. Zoning refers to land use entitlements and requirements that regulate appropriate use, bulk, height, density, and other characteristics appropriate for a specific site. The general recommendations of the future land uses form the basis for zoning and municipal code regulations.

URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY



Effective growth management is essential to protecting the surrounding rural character of Morgan County, providing efficient services, and promoting quality development. Managing growth means proactively planning for what we want. The Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is land that is likely to be subject to increased development pressure and is deemed appropriate for development and urban level of services. This UGB discourages leapfrog development, preserves outlying areas for agricultural and other less intensive uses, and provides greater market predictability for new development initiatives. Additional details related to growth management are described in Chapter 3.

The UGB has shifted throughout the years, growing and shrinking as times change. The defined UGB, which includes the entire existing city limits and city-owned property, encompasses just over 8,000 acres. The current municipal boundary contains 5,200 acres of land. The 2016 UGB was adjusted slightly along the northern border to mitigate concerns and logistics associated with providing utilities (water and sewer) and public safety services (fire and police) north of the river.


FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

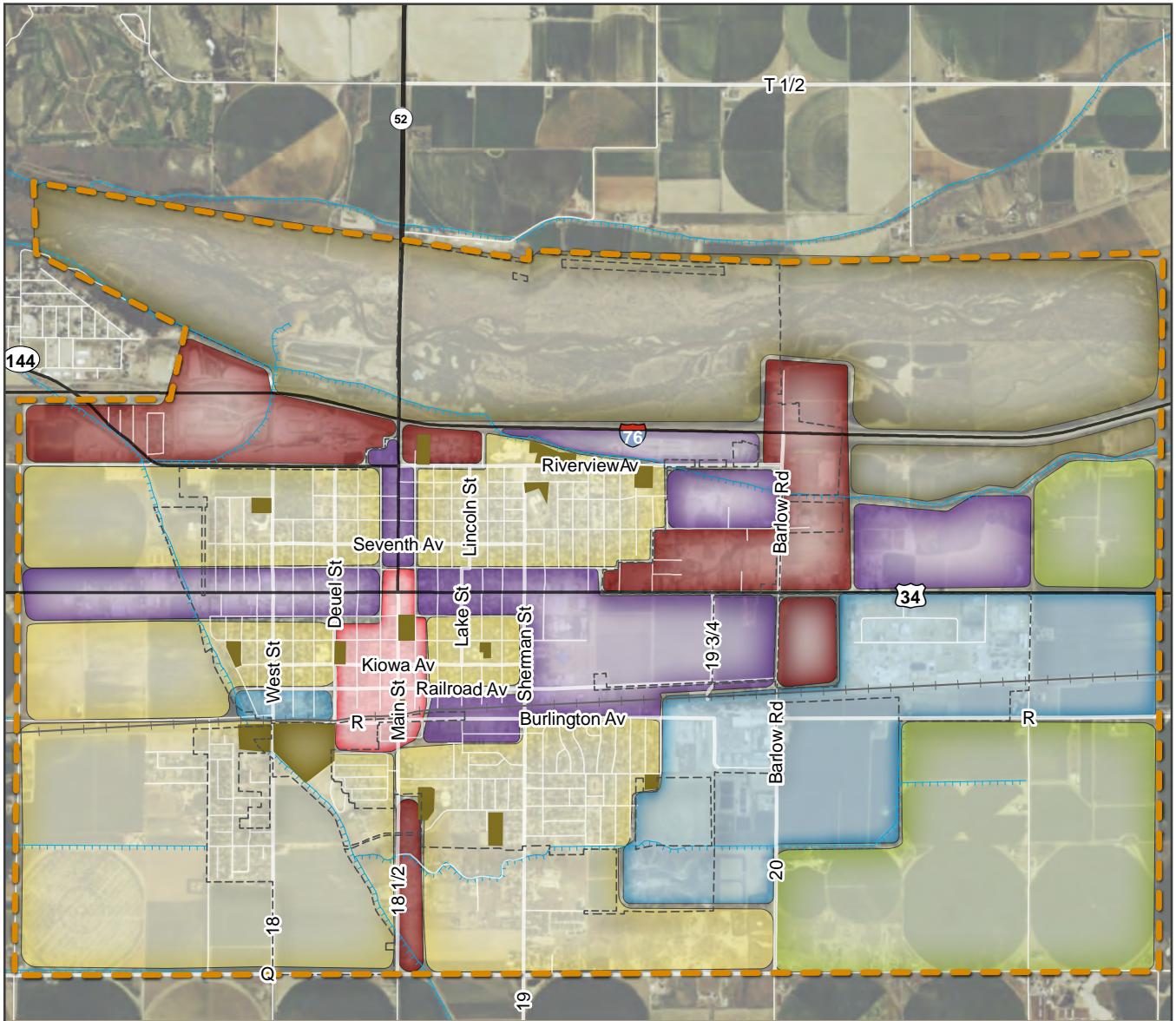
The seven future land use categories are defined below, and their location, use, and desired characteristics should honor the general intent and the FLU Plan.

LAND USE CATEGORY	ZONING DISTRICTS	USES & LOCATION	DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS
 <i>Rural/ Urban Agriculture</i>	UA Urban Agricultural; ER-1 Estate Residential	<p>Very Low density - (1 unit per 1 - 5 acres):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family detached residences. • Non-intensive agricultural land uses, where appropriate, within the Urban Growth Boundary. • The following types of agricultural uses within the Urban Growth Boundary would be considered compatible with neighboring urban development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crop agriculture, nurseries, orchards, and gardens. - Domesticated farm or ranch animals raised. - Equestrian facilities and boarding. 	<p>The Rural/Urban Agriculture category is designed to provide a transition from urban development into the rural regions of Morgan County. These areas provide the benefits of being in close proximity to urban services with the flexibility of a rural lifestyle. These areas are located at the perimeter of the City, which provide a transition from urban levels of service to non-urban levels of service.</p> <p>Screening and buffering through the use of trees, berms, or fencing should be utilized in areas where domesticated farm or ranch animals adjoin higher density areas.</p>
 <i>Residential</i>	R-1 Low Density Residential; R-2 Medium Density Residential; R-3 High Density Residential; R-4 Mobile Home Residential	<p>Low-density residential (1 to 4 units per acre):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family detached residences. • Areas generally suitable for quiet residential neighborhoods are located off a community collector street and in close proximity to parks, open space and trail networks. <p>Medium-density residential (5 to 10 units per acre):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family detached homes, single-family attached homes, townhomes, condominiums, patio homes and apartments. • Areas that may serve as transitional land use between low- and high-density residential uses. • Areas generally located within ½-mile range of shopping, educational and recreational facilities. • Areas adjacent or directly accessible to arterial or collector streets that do not require residents to pass through less intensive residential development. <p>High density residential (11 to 20 units per acre):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster Housing, duplexes, townhouses, condominiums, apartments, and other multi-family residences. • Areas located within walking distance of schools, public or private parks or open space, and neighborhood and community commercial facilities such as the Downtown area. • Areas adjacent or directly accessible to arterial or collector streets that do not require residents to pass through less intensive residential development. • Higher-density residential development that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood through the provision of lot line buffers and useable open space to provide a needed transition between other less intensive residential uses or as required if adjacent to nonresidential development. • Allowed in areas where the density of the development will not overload existing and planned facilities and utilities or create traffic impacts that cannot be mitigated by the development. 	<p>Residential neighborhoods in Fort Morgan include single-family dwellings, multi-family developments, and manufactured homes. This variety of housing types gives the City a sense of visual and residential diversity and avoids the cookie-cutter housing developments that are characteristic of fast-growing suburban communities.</p> <p>These areas have no significant physiographic or environmental constraints. As much as possible, residential developments should be developed with gridded arterials kept in place with sufficient usable open space within each neighborhood.</p> <p>Well-maintained dwellings and well-landscaped lots are desired. Scale and siting of the residential units shall be appropriate to lot size and configuration. Off-street parking shall be primarily provided via private driveways. Accessory uses must be related to the primary residential use of the property, and shall be smaller than the primary structure.</p>

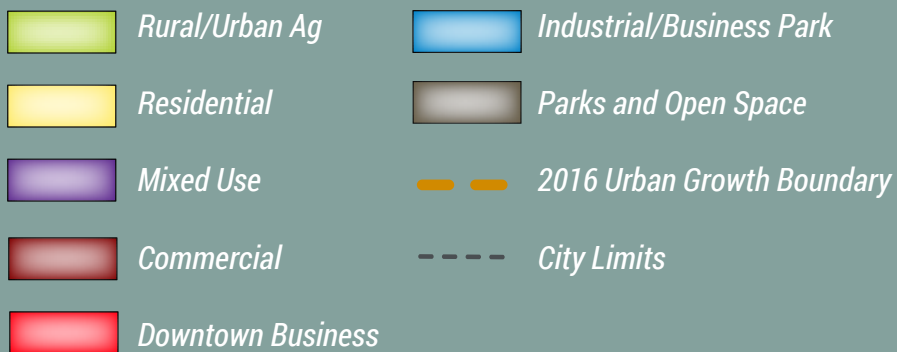
LAND USE CATEGORY	ZONING DISTRICTS	USES & LOCATION	DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS
 <i>Mixed Use</i>	B-1 Mixed Use Business; B-2 General Business; BP Business Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail and services. • Uses that provide services for the traveling public, including lodging and destination retail. • Offices. • Medical services and facilities. • Entertainment, culture, and arts. • Plazas and parks. • Multi-family housing (including apartments and condominiums, and excluding single-family housing). • Vertical mixed-use. • Senior housing. • Recreational amenities and community services. • Public/quasi-public and institutional uses. • Areas suitable for a mix of commercial services and associated residential uses include, but are not limited to lands adjacent to one of the following streets or major transportation corridors: north Main Street, SH 34 / Platte Avenue, Railroad Avenue, and sections of Barlow Road. 	<p>The Mixed Use category is designed to promote cohesive urban design with consistent development standards. Buildings and facilities shall be accessible to all, be compatible with adjacent uses, and provide a range of goods, services, and housing. These areas are intended to be developed as a concentrated and dense mix of uses and be scaled to create a functional, walkable, pedestrian-friendly urban environment with public gathering spaces.</p> <p>Vertical or horizontal mix of uses that integrates high-density residential with retail, commercial, office, and restaurant uses is desired.</p>
 <i>Commercial</i>	B-2 General Business; BP Business Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail and services. • Uses that provide services for the traveling public, including lodging and destination retail. • Offices. • Medical services and facilities. • Entertainment, culture, and arts. • Small-scale convenience retail establishments. • Recreational amenities and community services. • Areas suitable for a primary commercial and retail development include, but are not limited to lands adjacent to one of the following streets or major transportation corridors: I-76, SH 144, Barlow Road, and South Main Street. 	<p>Commercial lands are designed to serve the citizens of Fort Morgan, Morgan County and the established trade area. This mixture of nonresidential development is intended to provide goods, services, and employment opportunities for the citizens of Fort Morgan and Morgan County.</p> <p>The Commercial category shall be located at major intersections of highways and/or arterial streets.</p>

LAND USE CATEGORY	ZONING DISTRICTS	USES & LOCATION	DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS
 <i>Downtown Business</i>	B-1 Mixed Use Business (with specific requirements for building height/density, parking, signage, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialty retail. • Small businesses and restaurants that provide services to the Downtown area and nearby commercial and office establishments. • Offices. • Entertainment, culture, and arts. • Plazas, event spaces, and parks. • Hotels. • Residential lofts and apartments that utilize vacant second- and third-story space above businesses. • Public/quasi-public and institutional uses. • The Historic Downtown District is the existing area delineated from just south of Railroad Avenue to just north of Platte Avenue, and centered on Main Street. 	<p>The Downtown Business category is an area of regional attraction for visitors as well as the heart of Fort Morgan's business community providing a mixture of retail and commercial uses and services that complement adjacent residential and commercial areas and exemplify Fort Morgan's small town character.</p> <p>Many of the uses within the Historic Downtown District may also be Public / Quasi-Public/ Institutional in nature but uses that provide key neighborhood services and promote pedestrian traffic, especially in evening hours, should be encouraged.</p> <p>Development shall respect the historic parcel size and integrate with the scale of existing development, working to preserve and make use of existing historic buildings. Minimum building heights and densities and design and signage guidelines should be encouraged to promote the historic look and feel.</p> <p>Pedestrian-oriented development that includes transparent first-floor street facades, small blocks, and wide sidewalks is desired. Pathways and pedestrian access between commercial areas and residential neighborhoods shall be integrated. Reduced parking requirements will encourage pedestrian connectivity.</p> <p>Redevelopment and infill that combines small business and specialty and destination retail uses and fully utilizes the upper floors for office or residential uses is encouraged.</p>
 <i>Industrial/ Business Park</i>	I Industrial; BP Business Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural and food product processing. • Manufacturing that minimizes negative impacts such as noise, odor, and views from nearby residential areas through screening and buffering. • Production of goods/ services. • Outdoor storage that is screened from street view. • Research and development facilities. • Workshops. • Repair and equipment shops. • Warehouse facilities. • Auto service and repair. • Offices and supporting uses in a park-like setting. • Located on sites where existing or planned utility service is available with no extraordinary constraints to development. • Located in the designated industrial areas in close proximity to other industries, primarily to the east of the City. 	<p>The Industrial/Business Park category is meant to be in less-invasive areas of the City, typically where regulations are less restrictive to allow typical industrial uses to take place. Surrounding residential shall be limited and appropriately buffered from the effects of the industrial use.</p> <p>Activities proposed for this category are intended to provide both employment opportunities and increased tax revenues. Locations were selected because they offer regional highway and railway access and because opportunities exist to buffer existing residential development from this type of development.</p> <p>Development shall be designed to minimize negative impacts to adjacent neighborhoods and land uses.</p>

LAND USE CATEGORY	ZONING DISTRICTS	USES & LOCATION	DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS
 <i>Parks & Open Space</i>	All, as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pocket parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, and regional open space. • Active playing fields. • Recreational facilities. • Areas within the 100-year floodplain of the Platte River. • Areas of flood control. • Reclaimed lands for parks, open space, and recreational trails. • Close to existing or planned residential areas. • Designated parks and open space lands are equitably distributed throughout the Urban Growth Boundary. 	<p>The Parks and Open Space category includes publicly-owned and -managed developed parkland, recreation facilities, and undeveloped land utilized for recreational purposes. Park and recreation facilities are defined as areas used for indoor and outdoor recreational activities and should provide multi-purpose areas for all age groups. Open space is either land owned or leased by the City or land dedicated as open space through the development review process. Open space lands shall be stabilized with vegetative cover, shall be free from any structure, and shall not be used for drives, parking, or storage. Public open space can be utilized for hiking, picnicking, and other non-intensive outdoor recreation.</p> <p>These lands may be public or private lands designated within the 100-year floodplain of the Platte River.</p>



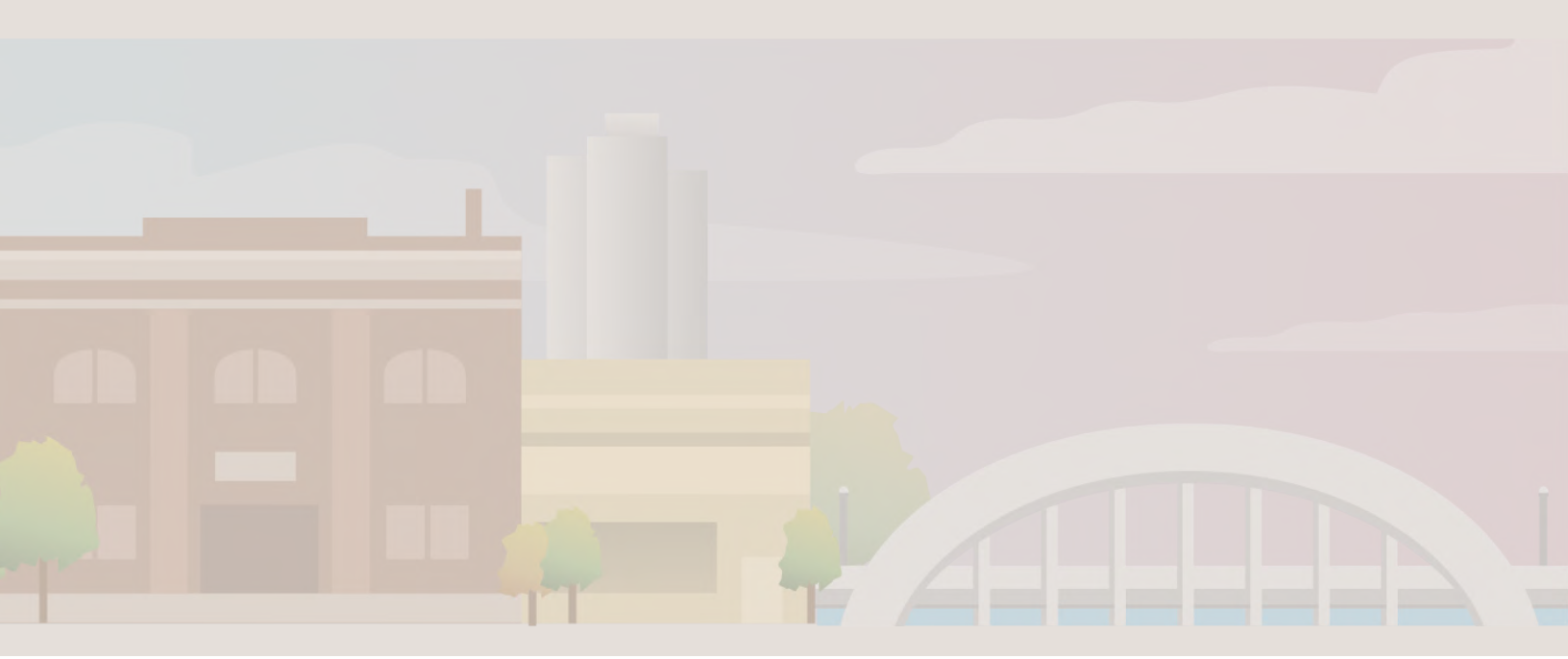
FUTURE LAND USE MAP





CHAPTER

3



OUR ACTIONS

CONNECTFORTMORGAN



G R O W T H M A N A G E M E N T P R O G R A M

The Growth Management Program is a process for decision makers and the community to evaluate where and how growth is occurring and adjust policies and strategies as necessary to ensure future growth better achieves the community Vision. The growth management program is being implemented through an intergovernmental agreement (Appendix D). The IGA is intended to allow Morgan County and the City of Fort Morgan to accommodate further development in a manner that preserves and adds to the desirable characteristics of the community and is fiscally sound. Reasons for the agreement include:

- Meeting the requirements of the DOLA grant;
- Increasing efficiency in emergency response;
- Creating consistency in development standards;
- Preserving appropriate land for agricultural purposes;
- Meeting the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan; and
- Identifying a tiered approach to growth management and coordination with the County.



DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

The first tier involves coordination of development applications. Morgan County shall refer all proposals for development within a three-mile area of the City for review and recommendation. The opinion of the City and resulting recommendations will be advisory.

URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY & ANNEXATION

Annexation is a legislative act and City Council exercises its sole discretion in the annexation of lands to the City. Land to be annexed and the uses proposed for the land shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. However, it has been a policy of City Council to not force annexation. The IGA proposes incentives to encourage annexation where appropriate. The City will encourage annexation of any land within the defined Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), particularly County enclaves, and property owned or purchased by the City.

Where appropriate, the City and County may jointly provide incentives, which may include the waiver of annexation fees and/or provision of services, if development standards are met. An additional incentive that could be utilized in the near future includes the availability of high speed internet, as the City is legally allowed to provide this service only to those located within its municipality.

It is the City of Fort Morgan's policy to encourage growth within those areas that can currently be served by an extension of utilities utility services and infrastructure. Considerations for the future annexation of land shall include:

- Contribution to the City's property and sales tax base,
- Diversification of the employment base,
- Provision of a wider range of goods and services, and
- Provision of a wider range of housing opportunities for all economic groups.

The City of Fort Morgan is requesting that development proposals within the UGB conform to a set of development requirements. These requirements include, but are not limited to: conformance with the Master Streets Plan; development of pedestrian facilities; conformance with City Utility Master Plans, etc. Public facilities and amenities must be constructed as part of annexation and development agreements for any land annexed to the City to ensure that public needs are met. Industrial and business uses should be encouraged within the UGB to provide adequate services to the development and provide local jobs and sales tax revenue.



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The strategic plan section is the bridge between vision and implementation. The following strategies are meant to be adaptive and flexible, but decisive. Staff and city leaders should draw on these strategies to guide economic development and growth. The strategies are organized into three categories:

Plan or Study: A more in-depth analysis or master plan is needed to identify preliminary costs, opportunities, and constraints, and impacts to the community.

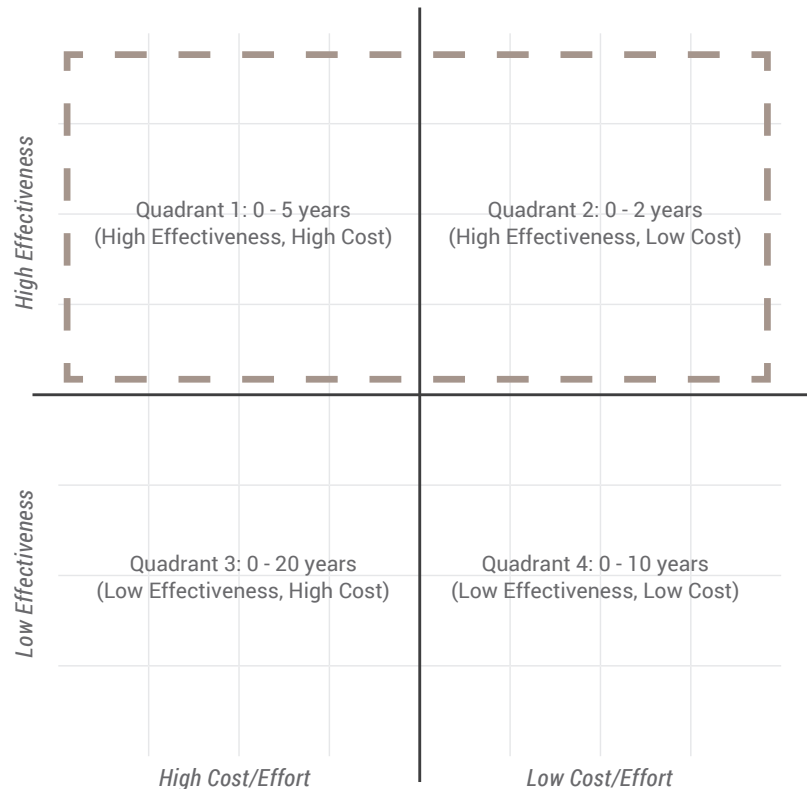
Project: A work plan, which may include a schedule, resources, and funding needs, is needed to implement a capital improvement project or other special project.

Regulatory: An action to establish or amend zoning regulations, guidelines, or ordinances.

A three-year work plan for implementing Fort Morgan’s Vision should be established and reviewed each year as part of the City Council goals, budget, and capital improvement plan (CIP). The annual review of the key indicators will assess the progress toward the vision and goals of the community and help to identify potential strategies for the upcoming year. The annual review will track the desired trend of each indicator identified in the plan and a recommended course of action. Staff should evaluate the work completed over the past year and prioritize strategies for implementation based on how well the City is achieving its vision and which implementation measures are most needed.

The work plan may also include the implementation of preemptive corrective actions. The resources required to implement the work plan will be considered, along with the parties responsible for implementing the strategy. As strategies are completed and/or new best practices, technology, and information become available, the work plan may include strategies that are not currently listed.

The initial work plan should focus on what is most vital to the community and support the vision and goals of the comprehensive plan. Each strategy will be assessed on cost/effort and effectiveness. The figure below illustrates the methodology to assess each strategy. Quadrant 1 includes projects that are transformative in nature with a higher cost; while Quadrant 2 includes projects that are a less costly and will have incremental positive change over time. Quadrant 3 and 4 projects should be pursued as part of a longer work program and evaluated annually by City Council. Many of these projects would also require additional funding sources, including special assessments or state or federal agencies.

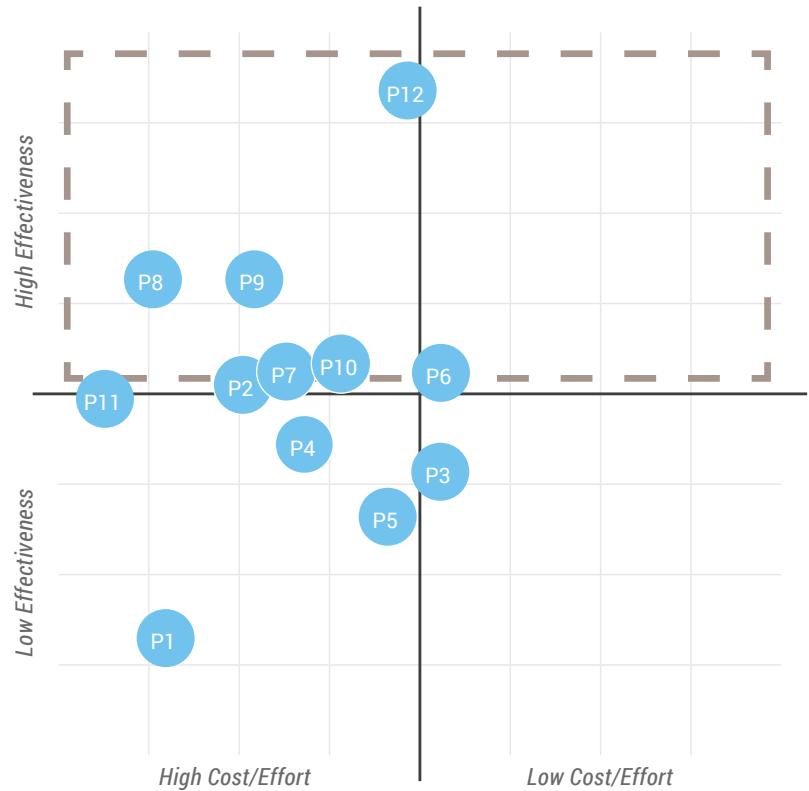


PLAN OR STUDY (S)	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	ANTICIPATED COST
1. Conduct study on existing use of ADUs and regulations and determine potential code changes.	Planning and Zoning	Long	Mid
2. Conduct a community center feasibility and programming study to determine desired needs, programming, and financing options.	Community Services	Short	Mid
3. Conduct a housing market study to determine needed housing development based on income, size, and location.	Planning and Zoning/Fort Morgan Housing Authority	Short	Mid
4. Update the 2003 Parks and Recreation Master Plan to include recommendations from this Comprehensive Plan Update.	Parks	Mid	Mid
5. Complete a targeted industry study to identify appropriate future employers and businesses.	Planning and Zoning/Fort Morgan Chamber	Short	Mid
6. Update the City's Master Streets Plan to prioritize the design and construction of east-west connections within Fort Morgan.	Public Works/ Streets	Long	Mid
7. Investigate and implement a recycling program and collection throughout the City.	Sanitation	Short	Mid
8. Complete joint surveys with Morgan County on enclave properties to determine barriers to annexation and level of improvements needed to bring properties up to city standards.	Morgan County/ Planning and Zoning	Short	Mid
9. Update the previous utilities-related master plans to prioritize immediate needs, and plan for the new vision of land use built-out	Gas/Electric	Short	Low
10. Update the stormwater master plan to evaluate water quality needs.	Water/Wastewater	Long	Mid

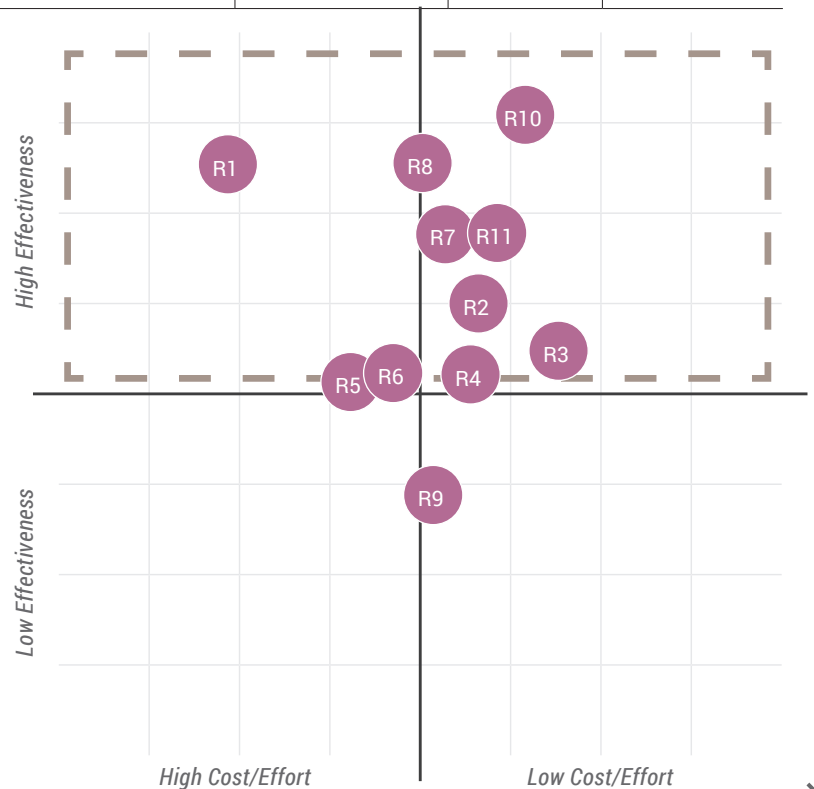


CONNECTFORTMORGAN

PROJECT (P)	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	ANTICIPATED COST
1. Redevelop the historic Power Station into a visitor center with retail opportunities.	Planning and Zoning	Long	High
2. Expand the existing industrial park south of the rail lines and east of Barlow Road.	Planning and Zoning	Short	High
3. Capitalize on the acclaim and recognition of the disc golf course as a regional destination through marketing and signage.	Golf Course/Parks	Mid	Low
4. Initiate a Capital Improvement Plan for improvements consistent with the Master Streets Plan.	Streets	Long	Mid
5. Integrate bicycle improvements as part of Capital Improvement Plan priorities.	Streets	Long	Mid
6. Create and implement a wayfinding and entry signage strategy and guidelines.	Planning and Zoning/Streets	Short	Low
7. Coordinate with Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) on interchange updates to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities, underpass improvements from State Street to Riverside Park, and wayfinding enhancements.	CDOT/Planning and Zoning/Streets	Short	Mid
8. Upsize existing downstream stormwater lines to increase system carrying capacity.	Wastewater	Short	High
9. As development occurs and the existing stormwater system needs expanded, evaluate the existing system to determine where upsizing may need to occur to meet development build-out.	Wastewater	Short	High
10. As development occurs, evaluate storage to manage peak flows and reduce downstream capacity constraints.	Wastewater	Short	Mid
11. Initiate or update Capital Improvement Plans for utilities based on updated master plans.	Gas/Electric	Long	High
12. Expand the existing fiber-optics system.	Gas/Electric	Short	Mid



REGULATORY (R)	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	ANTICIPATED COST
1. Establish a Recreation District with partner communities and investigate option for implementing a mill levy to finance the District.	Parks/Planning and Zoning/Partner Communities	Short	High
2. Rezone the old middle school property to B-1 zoning.	Planning and Zoning	Short	Low
3. Create a mixed use district (B-1 Zoning) between US34 and Railroad Avenue, and Sherman Street and Barlow Road.	Planning and Zoning	Short	Low
4. Update code regulations to allow for larger parcel sizes within city limits.	Planning and Zoning	Short	Low
5. Investigate fee waivers, or infrastructure or tax credits to encourage mixed use development.	Planning and Zoning	Short	Mid
6. Revise sign regulations in the Municipal Code to comply with recent Supreme Court rulings and streamline both requirements and review process.	Planning and Zoning	Short	Mid
7. Develop an Intergovernmental Agreement with the County on growth management boundaries, development standards, annexation and development review process.	Planning and Zoning/Morgan County	Short	Low
8. Develop incentives and outline a comprehensive process to annex primarily enclaves, and secondarily, contiguous properties into the City.	Planning and Zoning	Short	Mid
9. Develop requirements for new developments through city policy that encourages Low Impact Development (LID).	Planning and Zoning	Mid	Mid
10. Develop and implement design guidelines for downtown commercial and mixed use areas that encourage aesthetic transitions to Main Street, visual breaks on facades, and landscaping recommendations.	Planning and Zoning	Short	Low
11. Revise developer fees to direct money toward a recreation center or community spaces instead of dedication of parks if neighborhood park requirements are met.	Planning and Zoning	Short	Low



MONITORING PROGRAM

An adaptive management program provides a structure to continuously verify that Fort Morgan is on the correct course to ensure the vision and goals are met. The indicators are a quantitative review that provides measurability and accountability. This will enable the analysis needed to adapt implementation strategies, ensuring that development occurs in the desired amount, location and type.

INDICATORS

The review of indicators will serve as a check-in on the progress toward achieving the vision. The following indicators have been developed to meet five basic criteria: relevant, reliable, clear, usable, and affordable. The metrics also encapsulate most of the themes. Additional information on each indicator, including community comparisons, can be found in Appendix C, Snapshots.

CRITERIA	EXPLANATION
<i>Relevant</i>	Is the indicator relevant and related to the Connect Fort Morgan vision?
<i>Reliable</i>	Is there a reliable source of data so that the indicator can be consistently and accurately tracked over time?
<i>Clear</i>	Is the indicator simple and easy to understand, not relying on overly complex definitions or calculations that will be difficult for stakeholders and decision makers to understand?
<i>Usable</i>	Will the indicator be useful in evaluating city-wide objectives, neighborhood area character, and/or opportunities, and guiding timely decision making? Can the comprehensive plan and its implementation lead to changes in this indicator over time?
<i>Affordable</i>	Can the indicator be easily replicated over time without excessive costs or staff time?

INDICATOR	CURRENT	DESIRED TREND
<i>Miles of Identified/Preferred Bike Routes/Lanes</i>	Minimal	Increase
<i>Parks Access (% of Residential Units Within .25 And .5 Miles of a Park)</i>	80% (2015)	Maintain and increase through new development
<i>Home Value Distribution</i>	72% > \$150,000	Decrease
<i>Median Home Value</i>	\$118,400 (2014)	Increase
<i>Jobs/Housing Balance (Ratio of Total Jobs to Total Households)</i>	1.65 Jobs/Households (2013)	Maintain
<i>Housing Affordability (Residential Price Per Square Foot)</i>	Tbd	Decrease

INDICATOR	CURRENT	DESIRED TREND
<i>Sales Tax Revenue</i>	\$7.1 Million (2015)	Increase
<i>Fiber-Optic Network</i>	15 Miles (2016)	Increase
<i>Intersections Per Square Mile (Residential)</i> <i>*A Higher Number of Intersections Per Square Mile Reflects a Strong Grid Network with Travel Route Options For All Modes.</i>	TBD	Maintain In New Residential Areas
<i>Average Residential and Commercial Block Size</i>	TBD	Maintain In New Residential, Commercial, And Downtown Commercial Areas
<i>Amount of Community Facilities (Square Feet)</i>	TBD	Increase

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

This Plan is intended to be a dynamic document and may need to be amended if metrics are triggered or as Fort Morgan’s conditions change. Regardless of when the amendments are proposed, they will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council at the same annual meetings where the annual metric report is reviewed and the implementation work plan for the following year is set. This promotes a simultaneous and comprehensive review of proposed amendments, metrics, and the work plan to meet the Plan’s vision. To approve an application to amend the Plan, the action should:

- Better implement the Fort Morgan Vision;
- Be consistent with the other policies and strategies of this Plan; and
- Respond to indications that at least one of the following situations exists:
 - The principles of this Plan are not being implemented;
 - Fort Morgan’s characteristics have substantially changed, warranting a revision to the Plan’s key components that directly relate to the change in characteristics; or
 - The values and priorities of Fort Morgan have changed.







GLOSSARY



ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

A structured, iterative process of robust decision making in the face of uncertainty, with an aim to reducing uncertainty over time via system monitoring.

AFFORDABLE OR ATTAINABLE HOUSING

Housing that can be rented or purchased by a household with very low-, low-, or moderate-income for less than 30 percent of that household's gross monthly income. Often refers to housing either managed by a non-profit for the purpose of providing affordable housing, or whose resale price or rent is somehow restricted.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

A method of commuting other than driving alone in a car.

ANNEXATION

The process by which land is added to the city in accordance with the provisions of the Colorado Revised Statutes and code.

BABY BOOMERS

The group of people born between 1946-1964. Being the relatively largest cohort, their spending and activities habits often drive the market.

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS/ IMPROVEMENTS/ PROJECTS (CIP)

A short range plan for the development, purchase, or improvement of tangible items such as roads.

DENSITY

For residential uses, the number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. For nonresidential uses, density is often referred to as development intensity and is expressed through a ratio of floor area to lot size.

DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS DOLA

A branch of the Colorado State government that provides technical assistance, funding, and information to local governments.

FRONT RANGE

The urban corridor east of the Rocky Mountains extending from Cheyenne, Wyoming to Pueblo, Colorado.

INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Development of vacant, skipped-over parcels of land in otherwise built-up areas. Local governments are showing increasing interest in infill development as a way of containing energy costs and limiting costs of extending infrastructure into newly developing areas. Infill development also provides an attractive alternative to new development by reducing loss of critical and resource lands to new development and by focusing on strengthening older neighborhoods.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT (IGA)

A contractual agreement between the City and another governmental entity.

MILLENNIALS

The group of people born between the early 1980s and the 2000 aka Echo Boomers. They are highly connected, ethnically diverse and global generation.

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

A development type in which various uses, such as office, retail, and residential, are combined in the same building or within separate buildings on the same site or on nearby sites.



MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

A form of residential development where multiple housing units are contained within one building.

MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

A transportation system that includes several types (modes) of conveyances such as automobile, bicycle, bus, pedestrian, and rail; and appropriate connections between these modes.

MUNICIPAL LAND USE CODE

Compendium of municipal ordinances and codes, including zoning regulations.

PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED

Form of development that makes the street environment inviting for pedestrians; for commercial areas may be characterized by special sidewalk pavement, zero front and side yard setbacks, buildings of varied architectural styles, street-facing window displays, an absence of front yard parking, benches and other amenities; for residential areas may be characterized by sidewalks, parkways, front porches, low fences, lighting and other amenities.

POLICY

A specific statement of principle or of guiding actions that implies clear commitment but is not mandatory. A general direction that a governmental agency sets to follow, in order to meet its goals and objectives before undertaking an action program.

QUALITY OF LIFE

The personal perception of the physical, economic, and emotional well-being that exists in the community.

SNAPSHOTS

An overview of baseline conditions that also defines how those conditions and projections influence the development of policies, actions, and focus areas for the Comprehensive Plan.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

A 14-member committee of city staff and key partners established to provide technical guidance and expertise, and assist with the development of the Plan Update.

VISION

A shared dream of the future characterized by long-term idealistic thinking. Provides the foundation for the development of the goals, policies, and programs. A vision is not a binding goal and may not be achievable in the lifetime of those participating in the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan.

ZONING ORDINANCE

A set of land use regulations enacted by the City to create districts that permit certain land uses and prohibit others. Land uses in each district are regulated according to type, density, height, and the coverage of buildings.



APPENDIX

BB



P U B L I C
O U T R E A C H
S U M M A R Y



A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Development of Connect Fort Morgan relied heavily on broad public input, aspiring to be a plan that is both by and for the local Fort Morgan community and thus truly representative of public needs and desires. As such, inclusive and transparent public participation played a pivotal role in every phase of the process. The public engagement process utilized a multi-faceted strategy that combined face-to-face engagement with other indirect methods like web-based and remote engagement.

Through active public outreach efforts designed to engage as many stakeholders as possible, the Fort Morgan community helped to focus the Plan on key issues and topics that are most important to them. The ideas gathered as a result of the targeted public engagement efforts described below were instrumental in determining community values, vision statements, opportunities, and key choices that ultimately helped shape the goals, policies, and strategies recommended by the new Plan.

PROJECT NOTIFICATION

Fort Morgan community members were notified of project information, events, and the release of Plan document through the following channels:

- E-mail updates sent to the City's contact list
- Utility bill inserts mailed to every residence
- E-Newsletters
- Press releases in the Fort Morgan Times
- Broadcasts on the local radio station
- Social media updates posted on the City's Facebook and Twitter pages
- Notifications on the City of Fort Morgan website and Connect Fort Morgan project website: www.connectfortmorgan.org
- Translations provided for Spanish speakers
- Posters, banners, and other displays at local events and popular public locations

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The purpose of conducting stakeholder interviews, or face-to-face discussions with individuals or small groups who have an interest in the Comprehensive Plan, is to gather initial feedback on issues and opportunities in Fort Morgan, generate preliminary visioning ideas, and stimulate interest in the Plan Update. Connect Fort Morgan stakeholder interviews were conducted by the consultant team from November 10th through November 19th, 2015. During this time, 19 stakeholders and five city staff members were interviewed. Stakeholders were asked what they love about the City of Fort Morgan and would like to see preserved into the future, as well as what they felt needed to be improved as the community looks toward the future. The stakeholder interviews were conducted either over the phone or in person, and additional city staff interviews were obtained through an online survey platform with the same questions. Their responses were exported and summarized on November 25, 2015. All interview responses from both the stakeholders and staff have been compiled and summarized by plan theme and are described below.

WHAT WE HEARD:

HOUSING + DEMOGRAPHICS

Fort Morgan must continue to adapt by offering a mix of housing options in proximity to unique retail, cultural attractions, and other amenities that support healthy lifestyles at all ages. Stakeholders expressed concern that the housing stock and lack of housing diversity limits the options of newcomers to the City, forcing them to move elsewhere. They agreed that Fort Morgan needs more housing within the city limits, including low-income housing, rentals and apartments, high-end homes, and workforce housing to attract new employees. Stakeholders said that in order to boost the local economy and diversify the employment base, Fort Morgan needs to invest in housing for young professionals with community living spaces. Stakeholders would also like to see increased density and renovated apartments located above businesses Downtown. They felt that the City should focus new housing development to the west and southwest, while preserving the character of stable neighborhoods. Addressing and eliminating vacant residential properties is a must, as some feel that the crime, drug use, and homelessness associated with vacant buildings are detracting from the quality of neighborhoods.

Stakeholders expressed that a number of religious, language, and cultural barriers among different cultural groups currently exist within Fort Morgan. There is tension between groups as a result of different value sets. There should be an effort to integrate cultural groups as opposed to enabling encapsulated communities. The number of refugees coming to Fort Morgan is expected to increase in the next few years, and stakeholders agree that it is highly important to be progressive in addressing these demographic shifts and celebrate Fort Morgan’s cultural diversity.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Stakeholders expressed concern about Fort Morgan’s low education rates, especially in comparison to its neighboring cities. They would like to see Fort Morgan position itself to become competitive with these cities in the near future. By concentrating efforts to increase the value the community places on education and offering new opportunities for adult education, they believe that the City will be able to attract more people to Fort Morgan and increase its overall economic and employment base.

COMMUNITY SERVICES + FACILITIES

The public desires more cultural facilities in Fort Morgan, including more public art placed throughout the City and in parks, more youth-oriented activities, and additional library services. According to the stakeholders, the existing parks, recreation and open space network is an important asset in Fort Morgan and one that should be supported and expanded. However, they also feel that the recreation system and facilities in Fort Morgan are outdated and too localized. They have expressed the importance of building a community center, with opportunities for cultural engagement, additional options for recreation and leisure, an indoor swimming pool, venue spaces, and activities for children and seniors. Stakeholders felt that investigating the creation of a recreation district would be highly beneficial moving forward. Stakeholders recommended investigating citywide recreation programs that are affordable for all income levels.

TRANSPORTATION

Stakeholders agree that Fort Morgan needs to provide more options for public transportation from reliable sources. They expressed that many of Fort Morgan’s impoverished families do not have transportation and the options that are currently available in Fort Morgan are not always meeting their needs. Increasing walkability

and bikeability within the City is very important to its residents. Stakeholders agree that the City needs to invest in improved bicycle infrastructure and facilitate a walkable, connected street and trail system. There is also interest in investigating alternative fuel stations throughout Fort Morgan.

UTILITIES

Fort Morgan is a “one-stop shop” for utilities which makes it attractive to businesses and residents alike. Stakeholders would like to see Fort Morgan invest in NISP water, fiber optics to improve citywide telecommunications, and more sustainable options for utilities. Additionally, they feel that Fort Morgan Schools do not have the proper access to resources needed to improve and expand.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY + POTENTIAL

HAZARDS

Stakeholders expressed mutual concern about the City’s need to intervene in the regulation of large industrial operators. There is an overwhelming amount of citizen complaints about the traffic, dust, odor, and lack of water treatment taking place as a result of these operations. Additional intergovernmental coordination between the City and County is needed in order to resolve these problems. Stakeholders also noted the importance of avoiding future development within the floodplain and concerns with stormwater management.

LAND USE + GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Future development should avoid the floodplain as much as possible. Stakeholders also expressed the importance and need for better coordination between the City and County when planning for growth.

It is important to look at each demographic within Fort Morgan and understand how to relate to each sector and emphasize their value during the planning process, so that Fort Morgan will provide each resident with a genuine sense of community and inclusion.

Stakeholders feel that Fort Morgan should focus on promoting its industries, and should work together with its valued corporate partners like Cargill and Lepirino to recruit new employees that will reside in Fort Morgan. Many employees currently live in the City of Fort Morgan or Morgan County, but stakeholders are witnessing more and more employees commuting either to or from nearby cities, and feel there is a threat of Fort Morgan becoming a bedroom community. It is vital that the City focuses on housing and commercial development to

attract and retain a more diverse workforce that includes young professionals. Stakeholders agree that the City is in need of higher-paying, more professional jobs. Many expressed that a number of people with families who are employed in Fort Morgan are choosing to live elsewhere because the City doesn't offer enough opportunities for their spouses and/or children. The City must find ways to diversify the economic and employment base moving forward, and concentrate on bringing in businesses that encourage growth and relocation.

Stakeholders agree that Fort Morgan needs to develop commercial centers with new and unique opportunities for shopping, dining and entertainment. They would like to see Fort Morgan become more of a destination hub, taking advantage of its accessible location off the interstate to attract tourism money. Stakeholders expressed concern about the level of monetary leakage that's presently occurring, as people are regularly leaving the city and travelling to Denver, Fort Collins or Greeley to shop, dine and spend their expendable dollars. They believe that by offering more social opportunities, options for dining and entertainment, and a nightlife, Fort Morgan can attract and retain the young professional population that it is currently missing. Stakeholders also agree on the importance of offering more grocery stores and healthy food options within the City.

STAKEHOLDER COMMENT SUMMARY TABLE

WHAT STAKEHOLDERS LOVE ABOUT FORT MORGAN: VALUES	
<i>Summarized Comment</i>	<i>Comment Count</i>
Open Space, Parks, Recreation + Trails	9
Small-Town Feeling	9
Riverside Park	7
Location + Accessibility	6
Municipally-Owned Utilities	6
Feeling of Safety	5
Band Shell + Music in the Park	4
Entertainment + Leisure Opportunities	4
Friendly Residents	4
Potential for Quality Development + Investments	4
Stability + Conservative Atmosphere	4
City Staff	3
Community Events	3
Good Schools	3
It's a Great Place to Raise Kids	3
Public Involvement	3
Affordability	2
Benefits of a Small Town but With Access to Big City Amenities	2
Blend of City + Rural County	2
Community Leaders	2
Community Resources	2
Cultural Diversity	2
Family-Friendly Environment	2
Industries	2

WHAT STAKEHOLDERS LOVE ABOUT FORT MORGAN: VALUES

<i>Summarized Comment</i>	<i>Comment Count</i>
Multiple Family Generations + Local Family Businesses	2
Cross Collaboration	1
Great Quality of Life	1
High School Sports Rivalry	1
Historic Preservation	1
Unique Houses	1
Industrial Park	1
Privacy	1
Rainbow Bridge	1
Wide Avenues	1

WHAT STAKEHOLDERS WOULD IMPROVE ABOUT FORT MORGAN: OPPORTUNITIES

<i>Summarized Comment</i>	<i>Comment Count</i>
Increase Housing Diversity	13
Diversify Economic + Employment Opportunities	12
Improve Critical Infrastructures	11
Increase Entertainment Options	10
Increase Intergovernmental Coordination	9
Increase Dining Options	8
Increase Retail Options	8
Build More Housing within Fort Morgan City Limits	8
Be Proactive in Addressing Demographic Shifts + Cultural Issues	7
Create a Unique Vision for Fort Morgan	7
Improve Schools	6
Build a New Recreation Center	6
Prevent Monetary Leakage	6
Add More Recreation Opportunities	5
Expand Community + Cultural Events	5
Increase Population	5
Address Affordable Housing Options	5
Take Advantage of Interstate Location to Attract Tourists	5
Celebrate Cultural Diversity	4
Enhance City Gateways	4
Improve Local Convenience + Accessibility	4
Improve Education Rates	4
Improve Public Outreach and Information Accessibility	4

WHAT STAKEHOLDERS LOVE ABOUT FORT MORGAN: VALUES

<i>Summarized Comment</i>	<i>Comment Count</i>
Improve Social Services	4
Improve Telecommunications	4
Incentivize Annexation	4
Increase Bikeability	4
Increase Value of Education	4
Mitigate Odor from Western Sugar	4
Streamline Policies + Codes	4
Attract Highly Qualified Teachers to Live and Work in Fort Morgan	3
Build a Community Center	3
Build a New Public Pool	3
Eliminate Cultural Barriers	3
Embrace Change + Be Progressive	3
Improve Aesthetics + Redevelop Blighted Areas	3
Improve Citywide Databases	3
Improve Customer Service in the City Government	3
Improve Signage + Wayfinding	3
Increase Access to Public Transportation	3
Increase Public Arts Presence	3
Increase Sustainability	3
Need More Venue Spaces	3
Need Tax Reform	3
Offer Adult Education Classes	3
Plan for Growth	3
Re-Evaluate Water Purchasing	3
Build a Recreation District Beyond the City	2
Build a Restaurant at Riverside Park	2
Celebrate Every Generation	2
Create Affordable, City Sponsored Recreation Programs	2
Create a Social Infrastructure that Supports Intellectual + Cultural Growth	2
Develop the Power Station as an Asset	2
Expand the Community's Existing Historic Preservation Effort	2
Expand Trails + Open Space	2
Improve Promotional Content on the City's Website	2
Increase Building Ownership + Fill Vacant Buildings	2
Increase Density + Redevelopment	2

WHAT STAKEHOLDERS LOVE ABOUT FORT MORGAN: VALUES

<i>Summarized Comment</i>	<i>Comment Count</i>
Increase Local Amenities But Maintain the Small Town Feeling	2
Increase Median Income + Employment Rate	2
Need More Opportunities for Children	2
Create Partnerships with Local Schools	2
Promote Local Industries	2
Recruit+ Retain Local Employees	2
Utilize the South Platte River for Recreational Activities	2
Allow Liquor Licenses on City Properties	1
Build a Bridge Across the South Platte River	1
Build a Senior Center	1
Develop Commercial Centers	1
Help Reduce the Homeless Population	1
Hire an Economic Development Director	1
Increase Coordination of Recreation + Library Programs	1
Provide Drop-Off Locations for Recyclables	1
Protect the Land in the Floodplain	1
Support a Collaborative Downtown Business Association	1
Add Healthy + Organic Food + Grocery Options	1

CHRISTMAS CAPITAL OF THE PLAINS KICKOFF EVENT

The City of Fort Morgan kicked off Connect Fort Morgan on December 19, 2015 as part of the City's Christmas Capital of the Plains event at City Park. Throughout the development process, large comprehensive plan events were strategically aligned with key annually-occurring events such as this one to capture feedback from a wider audience than traditional public meetings or events typically do. Invitations were sent to community members with the goal of getting them engaged, thinking, and ready to participate. By celebrating the launch of the website, outreach campaign, and release of branding materials at the Christmas Capital of the Plains, the team was successful in generating interest and buy-in from local leaders and community members.

With complementary hot cider, an array of giveaways and chap sticks and stickers branded with the Connect Fort Morgan logo to choose from, the visitors were asked what it is that they love about the City of Fort Morgan and would like to preserve in the future, as well as what they would like to see improved moving forward. The overall conversation was thoughtful and lively, with over 150 people stopping by the event and hundreds of others passing by the Connect Fort Morgan display. The top three responses for what participants love about their City were the community events, small-town feeling, and the friendly residents. The top three recommendations to moving forward were to improve critical infrastructure, increase recreation opportunities, and provide additional opportunities for children.

The celebratory kickoff was advertised as part of the annual Christmas Capital of the Plains event via a press release from the City, website posts on both the City's website and the project website, broadcasts on the local radio station, and email notifications sent to the City's contact list.

VISIONING + OPPORTUNITIES OUTREACH

A Community Visioning and Opportunities Workshop was held in the Community Room of the Fort Morgan Public Library on February 23, 2016, where members of the public were invited to review and comment on preliminary vision statements for each of the updated plan themes. The event included an educational presentation, hands-on activities, and interactive discussions with participants. As the first opportunity for public participation in the plan development process, the goals of the open house event were to explain the planning process and project goals and encourage participants to sign up for future notification; gather additional thoughts, ideas, and desires from the community about opportunities; identify issues and priorities for further examination; articulate elements of an updated community vision to revitalize, redevelop, and reinvent the plan; and establish a foundation for ongoing public dialogue. In efforts to solicit input from as many residents and stakeholders as possible to help inform the visioning process, the public event was paired with a virtual workshop and online questionnaire with the same content on the Connect Fort Morgan project website to gather feedback from people unable to attend the Community Visioning and Opportunities Workshop.

Below is the summary of the initial opportunities and vision statements that were identified in the visioning process through stakeholder interviews and public input, and subsequently refined through work sessions with technical staff.

INITIAL OPPORTUNITIES: WHAT WE HEARD

HOUSING + DEMOGRAPHICS

Vision: Offer a wide range of housing choices for current and future residents of all socioeconomic levels.

- Increase the amount of affordable housing options
- Be proactive in addressing demographic shifts and cultural issues
- Encourage urban redevelopment and infill housing developments
- Create a mixed use district (B-2 Zoning) between US34 and Railroad and Sherman and Barlow.
- Identify area for additional multi-family housing including assisted living/retirement options
- Integrate new forms of housing above existing businesses downtown to create additional options for affordable units
- Support and expand on OneMorgan County's efforts to make the transition and integration into the existing community easier for refugees coming into Fort Morgan

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vision: Diversify and maintain the economic portfolio and employment base through diversification of retail, dining, and entertainment options.

- Diversify our economic portfolio and employment base
- Design standards for downtown
- Increase and diversify retail, dining, and entertainment options
- Attract higher paying primary employer
- Coordinate with County Tourism on marketing of events and amenities
- Maintain focus on tourism and events
- Build off of Downtown Improvements with side street and alley improvements.
- Redevelop Historic Power Station into a visitor center with shops.
- Improve wayfinding signage, especially off the highway towards Downtown
- Reinstitute the Downtown Business Association and collaborate with Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation
- Evaluate parking limitations and circulation downtown

COMMUNITY SERVICES + FACILITIES

Vision: Maintain and expand amenities through proactively addressing demographic shifts and cultural issues.

- Increase focus on education and improving public school performance
- Support after school programs
- Build a modern recreation/community center, integrating new types of programming for multi-generations and affordable recreation programs
- Connect and expand the existing trails in Riverside Park with additional parking north of Rainbow Bridge
- Build pedestrian bridges to connect additional trails north of river to fishing ponds and south side trail
- Multi-use South Platte Greenway trail
- Work with County and neighboring community to create a recreation district
- Revamp City website to make information more easily available
- Create dedicated website for various community facilities
- Address connectivity between parking and detached sidewalks
- Develop additional neighborhood parks in underserved areas
- Partner with schools to allow park access

TRANSPORTATION

Vision: Enhance the various modes of transportation to balance the community and regional travel needs.

- Increase access to public transportation and human services transportation through partnerships with local transit organizations
- Create an on-street bike network that integrates with the City's trails
- Complete gaps in the sidewalk system
- Improve wayfinding for pedestrian/bike, particularly for connections across I-76 like the underpass from State Street to Riverside Park
- Improve pedestrian crossings, particularly in high pedestrian activity areas and around schools
- Increase awareness of the benefits of walking and biking (health, monetary, social, environmental, etc.) through educational outreach to the community
- Coordinate with the school district to identify safe walking and biking routes to school and to ensure that all students have access to viable and safe transportation to and from school

- Resolve traffic flow issues along primary roads through traffic control and signal timing improvements
- Encourage the use of alternatively fueled vehicles by providing fueling stations
- Address specific safety problems at key intersections
- Revisit the functional classification system of City streets to better align with truck routes and snow removal routes
- Define street cross-sections for future roads to achieve the City's multimodal needs
- Expand the railroad quiet zone to the CR 21 railroad crossing
- Create programs that get kids to school should be investigated to increase attendance rates
- Identify defunct railroad lines for potential rails to trails
- Evaluate and expand on existing and potential future railroad spurs to support industrial uses
- Maintain and improve the current grid system for the arterial and major collector network

UTILITIES

Vision: Increase focus on fiscal and environmental sustainability, technological advancements, and resource preservation.

- Implement a recycling program and newer recycling technology
- Increase focus on sustainability
- Obtain sufficient source water(s) to meet growth and storage projections.
- Plan for water, wastewater, electric and gas capacity increases based on growth projections.
- Plan for water, wastewater, electric and gas transmissions and distribution system capacity increases based on growth projections
- Maintain existing infrastructure and implementation of new technologies as they become available
- Maintain high water quality with new source water additions, technology changes in water treatment, and system redundancy with neighboring water providers
- Implement a widely-available and affordable fiber-optic network to enable broadband connectivity
- Coordinate with ditch companies on utility and road crossings
- Continue active participation and coordination in utility agreements with applicable providers
- Investigate renewable energy sources

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY + HAZARDS

Vision: Mitigate hazards and environmental concerns through intergovernmental coordination with surrounding entities.

- Implement stormwater system improvements, as recommended in Master Plans, from downstream to upstream to prevent minimize flooding during storm events
- Implement a stormwater management plan
- Continue to preserve the land within the floodplain as parks and open space
- Increase intergovernmental coordination with surrounding bodies to regulate industries
- Develop a train derailment plan

LAND USE + GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Vision: Preserve and strengthen Fort Morgan’s local identity of being safe, friendly, and family-oriented with a small-town feel when planning for residential and commercial growth.

- Preserve and restore older neighborhoods and buildings
- Encourage infill in town, with densities and patterns reminiscent of historic Downtown neighborhoods
- Improve the City’s gateways with signage
- Focus development east, west, and south of existing boundaries
- Expand industrial park south of railroad tracks, East of Barlow Road
- Retain ROW and street grid for future roads and connectivity in new developments
- Define ditch easement widths for consistency and avoid coordination issues
- Plan and annex in a contiguous way
- Complete existing housing projects

COMMUNITY CHOICES OUTREACH

On April 20, 2016, staff and consultants held a public meeting at the Armory on “Big Choices and Ideas.” About 25 members of the community attended. The purpose of the meeting was to gather feedback on key questions related to growth, development, and amenities. The open house included the previously presented the process, vision statements and existing conditions as background on the plan for those that may be unfamiliar.

Outreach also included focus group meetings conducted at the senior center, Rotary Club, and high school; and a presence at the International Dance Festival. The same questions presented at the in-person events were included in an online questionnaire and asked of the Technical Advisory Committee. Strategic choices determined by input received from City Council, Planning Commission, stakeholders, and the public were refined in order to recommend adjustments to key policies and strategies in the Plan. A summary of the questions and results are shown below.

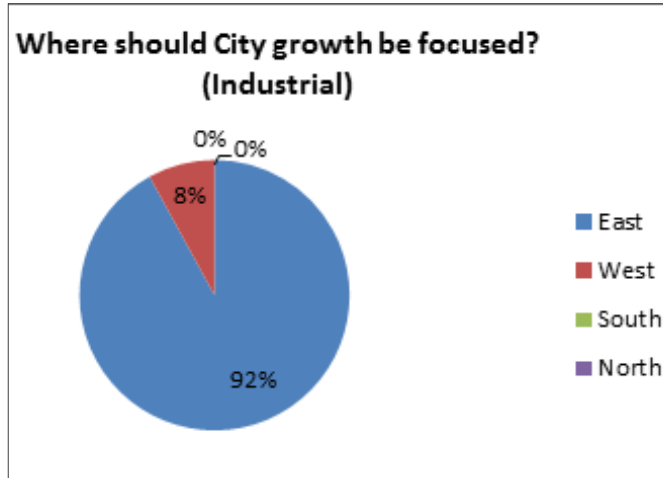
BIG CHOICES SUMMARY

CITY GROWTH + DEVELOPMENT

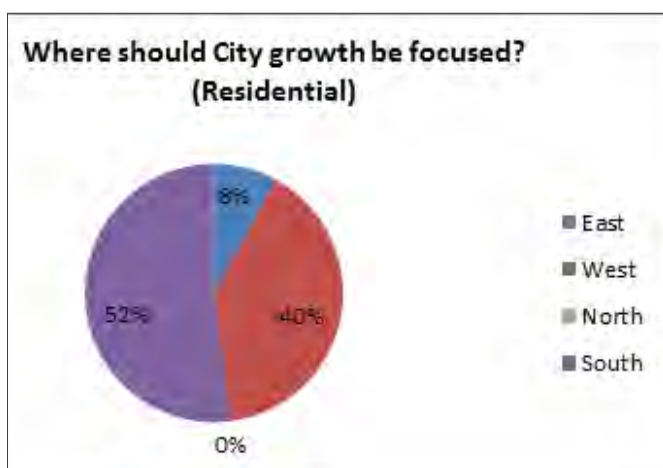
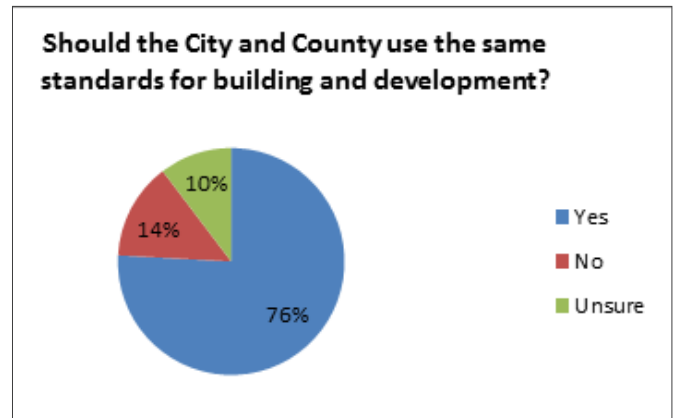
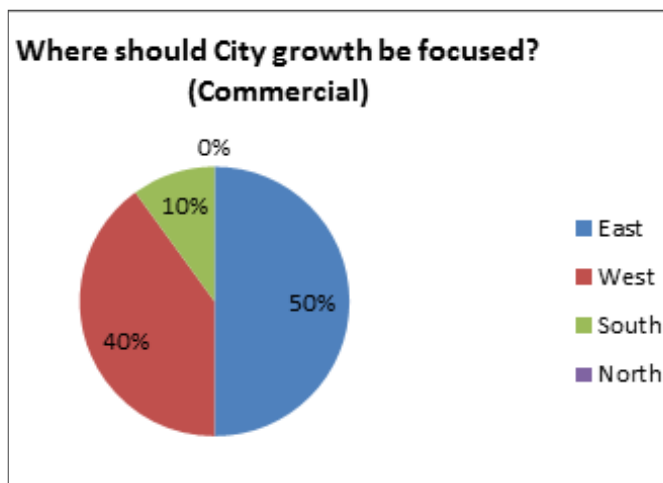
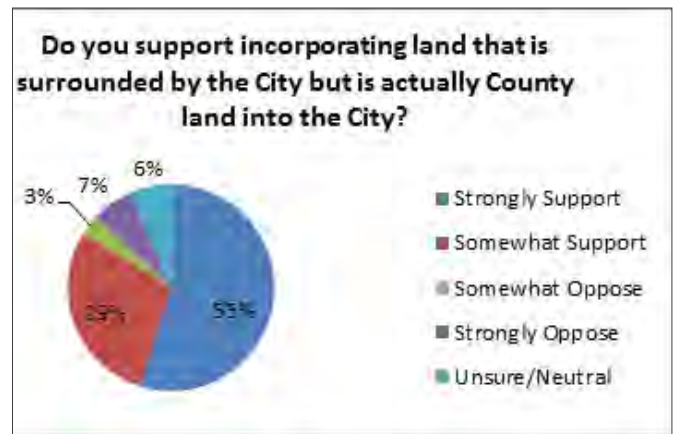
What We Heard:

- Encourage infill in town, with densities and patterns reminiscent of historic Downtown neighborhoods
- Improve the City’s gateways
- Expand industrial park
- Retain Rights of Way and street grid for future roads and connectivity in new developments
- Define ditch easement widths for consistency and avoid coordination issues
- Plan and annex new land in a contiguous way
- Future development should avoid the floodplain
- Take into consideration the availability and capacity of utilities and services

Big Question: "Where should future City growth be focused?"



Big Question: "How should growth management be coordinated with the County?"



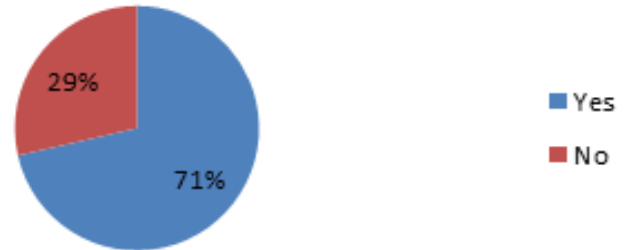
DIVERSE HOUSING

What We Heard:

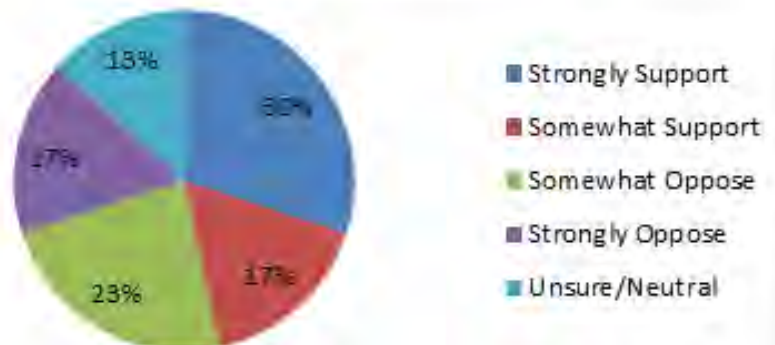
- Increase the amount of affordable housing options
- Encourage urban redevelopment and infill housing developments
- Identify areas for additional multi-family housing including assisted living/retirement options

Big Question: "How can the City promote housing diversity?"

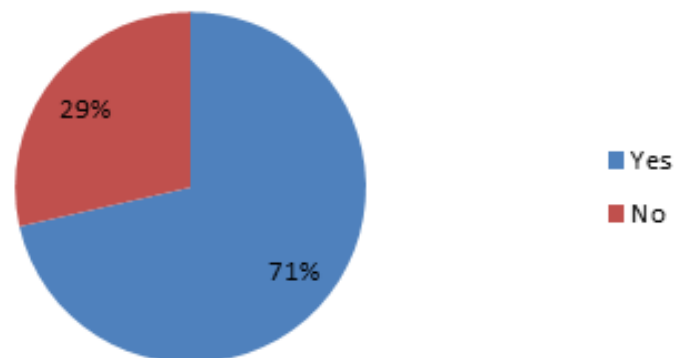
Should certain areas be rezoned to allow higher density housing (3+ stories)?



Do you support decreasing parking requirements for higher density housing/development?



Should the City continue to allow accessory dwelling units (i.e. carriage houses, granny flats) to increase housing density and diversity in appropriate locations?



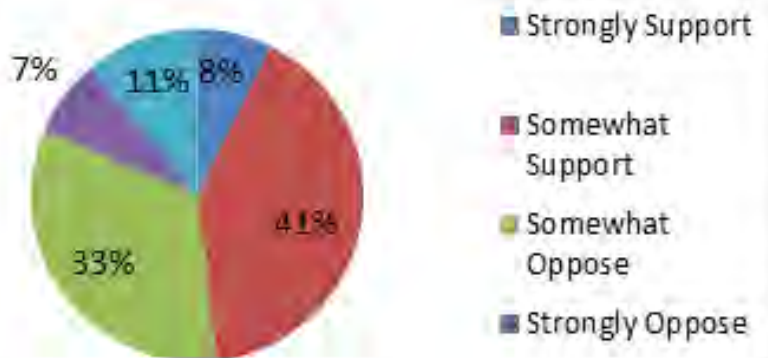
BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS

What We Heard:

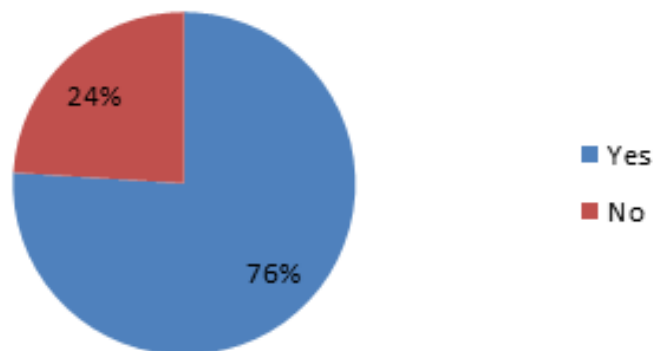
- Create an on-street bike network that integrates with the City's trails
- Improve wayfinding for pedestrian/bike, particularly for connections across I-76 like the underpass from State Street to Riverside Park
- Increase awareness of the benefits of walking and biking (health, monetary, social, environmental, etc.) through educational outreach to the community
- Define street cross-sections for future roads to achieve the City's multimodal needs
- Implement stormwater system improvements, as recommended in Master Plans, from downstream to upstream to minimize flooding during storm events

Big Question: "How could our streets be enhanced to promote walking and biking?"

Do you support building bike parkways on key corridors with medians down the center of residential streets to capture stormwater?



Are there sufficient sidewalks throughout town?



Where, if at all, should bike lanes be built?

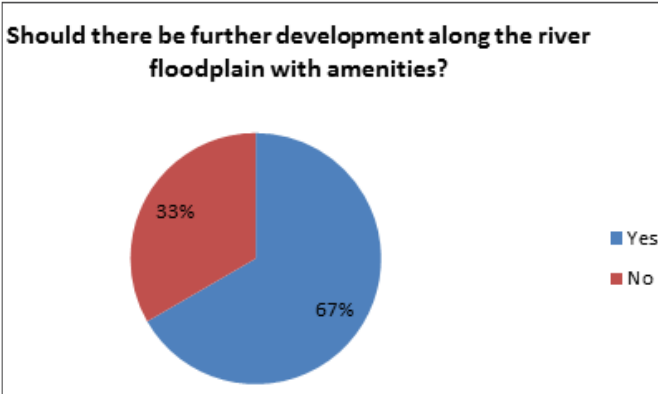
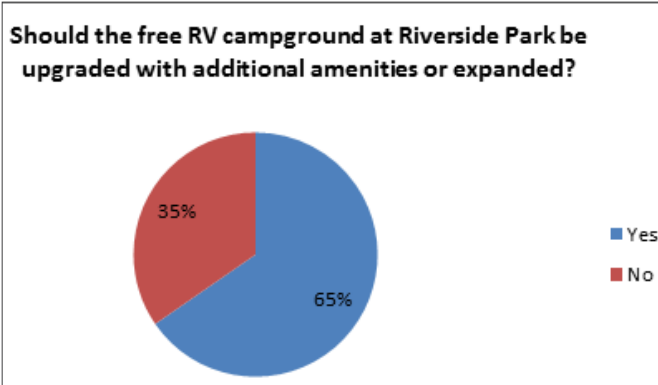
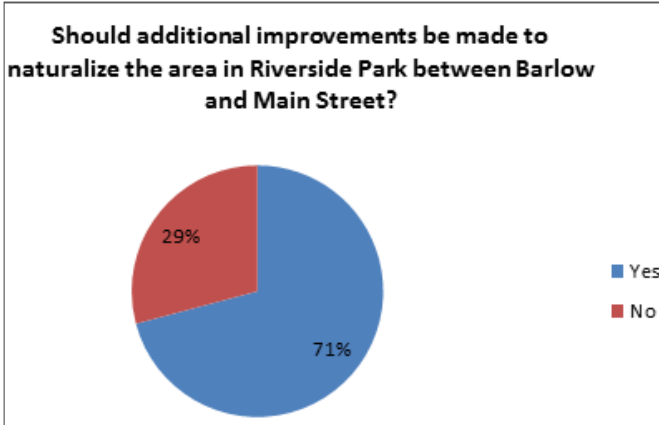


RECREATION TOURISM DISTRICT

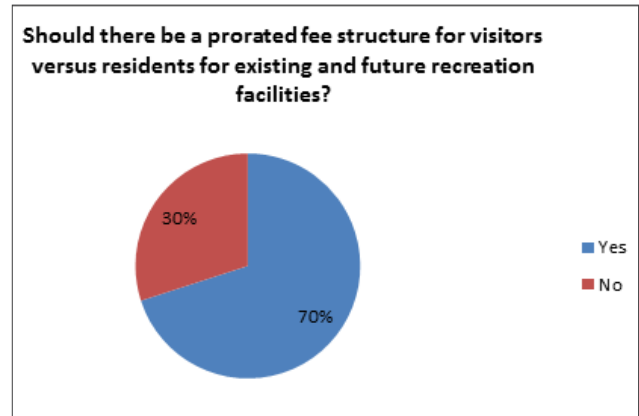
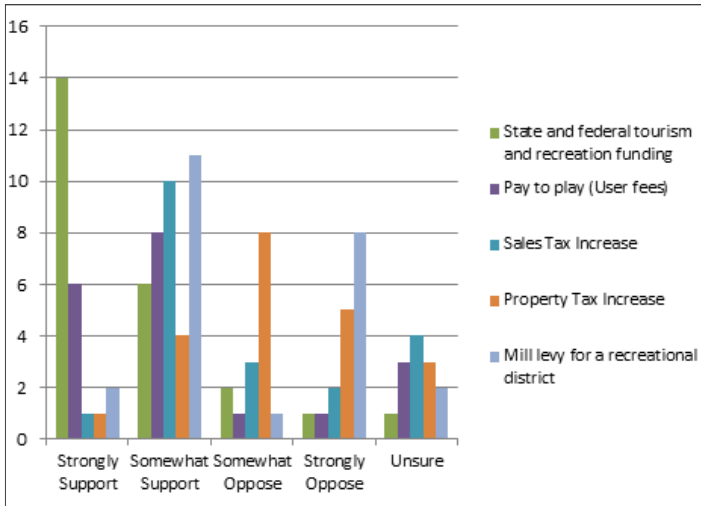
What We Heard:

- Build a modern recreation/community center, integrating new types of programming for multiple generations and affordable recreation programs
- Connect and expand the existing trails in Riverside Park with additional parking north of Rainbow Bridge
- Build pedestrian bridges to connect additional trails north of river to fishing ponds and south side
- Multi-use South Platte Greenway trail
- Work with County and neighboring community to create a recreation district
- Maintain focus on tourism and events
- Continue to preserve the land within the floodplain as parks and open space

Big Question: "How can the City encourage tourism through increased recreational amenities?"



Big Question: "Please rate if/how you would support the following ways to fund additional amenities."



PUBLIC DRAFT PLAN REVIEW

The Connect Fort Morgan Public Draft was released on June 7th for public review. The public was given an opportunity to provide comments online and via a public meeting held on June 16th at the Live at the Park Concert. 23 people participated in the online survey and 12 comments were collected at the Draft Plan Public Event.

Commenters noted that the policies, in some instances, were too specific. Comments supported the need for additional housing opportunities, recreational improvements, and economic development in support of small businesses. There was only one comment on the Future Land Use map, which questioned the transition of residential to commercial use in the northwest corner.

Additional comments included a few technical edits and requests for additional information/clarification regarding public involvement, city functions and a few maps and graphics.



APPENDIX



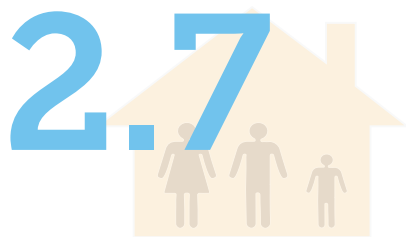


SNAPSHOTS

HOUSING + DEMOGRAPHICS

Key Points

- 80% of housing units were built before 1980; Brighton, Evans, Greeley, and Sterling have newer housing.
- 60% of housing units are owner-occupied, which is slightly lower than the statewide average.
- About 2/3 of the housing units are single-family homes.
- Median home values in within city limits average \$118,000, which makes the city relatively affordable.
- 40% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino.
- Millennials and Baby Boomers each account for about 20% of the resident base.
- 12% of residents have a bachelor's degree or a graduate/professional degree.



Average Household Size in Fort Morgan

Why it Matters

Maintaining an attractive and diverse housing stock is vital to ensuring that the City of Fort Morgan remains an appealing community for all types of people as well as attaining its economic development goals. Available homes must be suitable for all life stages and lifestyles in order to attract and keep young adults as they progress through marriage, raising kids, downsizing, and transitioning to assisted living facilities. The evolving rural Colorado economy and changing demographics are altering the dynamics of the local housing market, requiring an updated understanding of local housing needs.

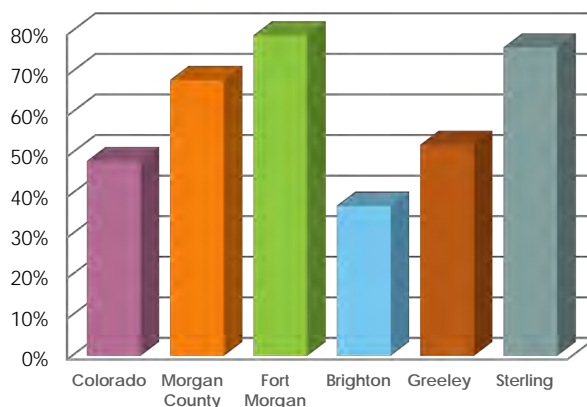
As such, the housing element includes a current depiction of the demographic and economic characteristics that impact housing affordability and preferences, as well as an understanding of how the market, public policy, and public incentives can be used to meet housing needs now and in the future. This snapshot examines the current state of the Fort Morgan housing market including housing age, ownership, type, value, and availability. Also included is a demographic snapshot, looking at age distribution, race and ethnic composition, and educational attainment.

Housing

Housing age is the best proxy for housing condition available from federal data sources. The figure below shows the percentage of Fort Morgan housing stock built prior to 1980, as well as comparison communities, Morgan County and the State.

Approximately 79% of housing in Fort Morgan was built before 1980. Sterling's housing stock is similarly aged with 76% built prior to 1980. Evans, Brighton and Greeley have relatively newer housing stock with 29%, 37%, and 54% of housing built before 1980, respectively. Statewide, 48% of housing was built prior to 1980.

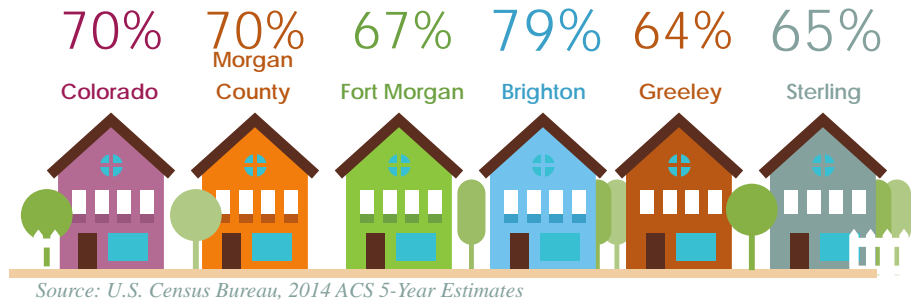
% OF HOUSING STOCK BUILT BEFORE 1980



Recent local home construction has primarily occurred in the County adjacent to City limits. However, these locations are provided City amenities, including utilities and other services.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

PERCENT OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES, 2014



HOUSING TYPE

Homeownership is often correlated with housing structure as the majority of owner-occupied units are single-family houses rather than multifamily buildings.

The majority of homes in Fort Morgan are single-family homes (67%), just over half of which are owned rather than rented. This is slightly less than the statewide rate and Morgan County rate (both of which are 70%). Brighton, with 79% single-family homes, is the only comparison community that is noticeably different.

HOMEOWNERSHIP

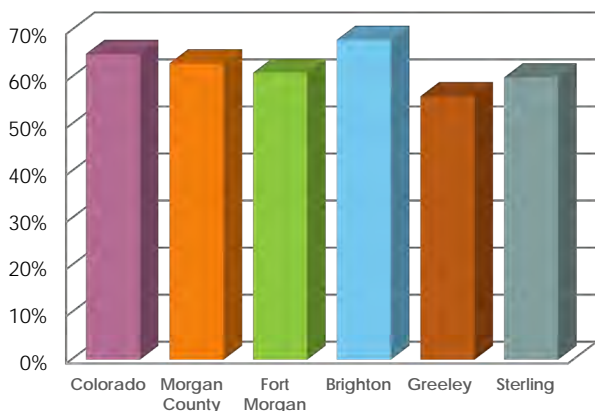
Homeownership is also an important characteristic that can reveal certain demographic and resident characteristics such as life stage, income level, and duration of residence. The figure below shows comparative homeownership rates of other communities and the State.

Currently 61% of Fort Morgan housing is owned rather than rented, which is higher than in Greeley (56%), Evans (59%), and Sterling (60%). Both Brighton (68%) and the State (65%) have a higher rate.

HOUSING VALUE

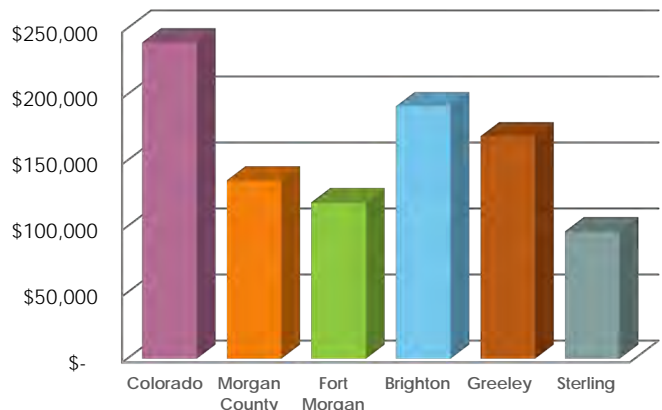
Another useful metric for evaluating housing conditions is the Median home value. While a range of values exists within any city, the median value is useful when comparing between locations. It is important to note that the median home values presented represent all homes within the community/geography, just not those recently constructed, sold, or listed. The figure below shows the median home value for Fort Morgan and comparison communities, as well as Morgan County and the State. As of 2014, the median home value in Fort Morgan was \$118,400, which is lower than Brighton (\$191,100), Evans (\$142,900), Greeley (\$168,400), countywide (\$135,000), and statewide (\$239,400). Only Sterling (\$96,400) has a lower median home value.

OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS, 2014



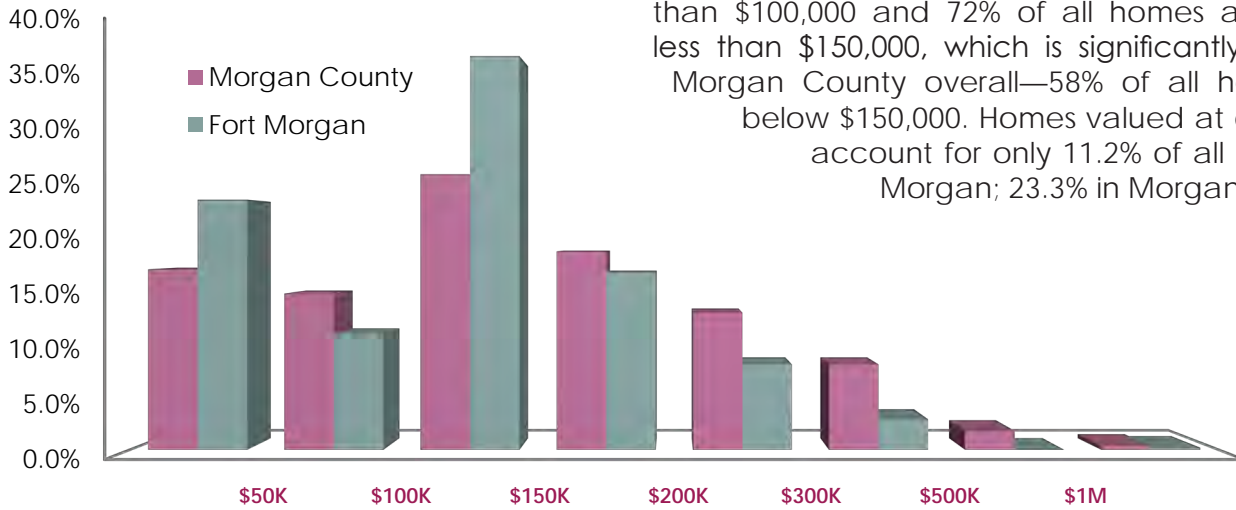
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

MEDIAN HOME VALUE, 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

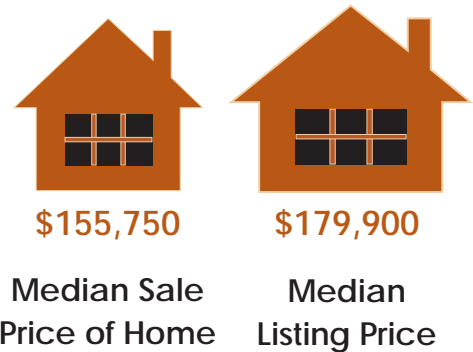
HOME VALUE DISTRIBUTION, 2014



The home value distribution within Fort Morgan shows that over a third of homes are valued at less than \$100,000 and 72% of all homes are valued at less than \$150,000, which is significantly higher than Morgan County overall—58% of all homes valued below \$150,000. Homes valued at over \$200,000 account for only 11.2% of all homes in Fort Morgan; 23.3% in Morgan County.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year Estimates 2014

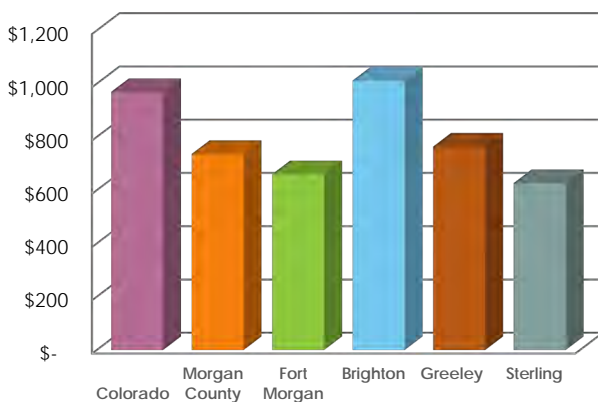
Recent local real estate data provides additional insight into home values in Fort Morgan and the immediately surrounding area (data include records outside of city limits but still considered part of the local real estate market). The median residential home sale price in 2015 was about \$156,000, while the current median residential home listing price is about \$180,000.



RENTAL HOUSING

While the majority of the housing stock is owner-occupied, 39% consists of rental units. Rental housing vacancy rates can reveal housing needs, affordability, and development potential. Low vacancy rates put upward pressure on rents, making housing less affordable. At the same time, low vacancy rates also indicate stronger future development potential.

MEDIAN GROSS RENT, 2014



Over the past five years, rental housing vacancy rates have significantly fluctuated within each community. Excluding Fort Morgan, Sterling, and Morgan County, the general trend is a reduction in rental housing vacancy rates. Fort Morgan's rental housing vacancy rate in 2014, 6.6%, is the highest observed since 2010. Comparatively, rental vacancy rates Statewide were 5.5% and 4.6% in the County.

Rental rates can also indicate housing affordability and development potential. The figure to the left shows median gross rents in Fort Morgan, The median monthly rent in Fort Morgan is \$660.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Population

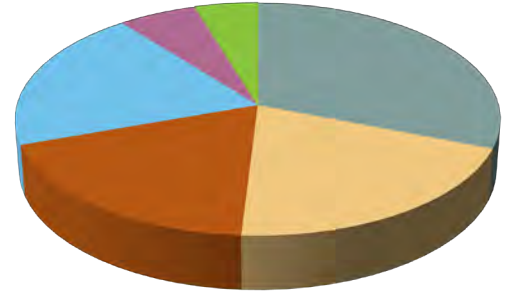
Morgan County's total population is approximately 28,000, of those about 11,400 live in the City of Fort Morgan's and 5,500 live in Brush. Fort Morgan has had a steady annual population growth of about 1-2% since 2000.







AGE DISTRIBUTION

Understanding the age distribution of residents within a community is an important consideration for housing and economic development policy, as the needs and desired community amenities differ. Additionally, businesses considering a Fort Morgan location are likely to consider the age of the local labor force and if it aligns with their business needs. The figure below presents Fort Morgan's current age distribution.

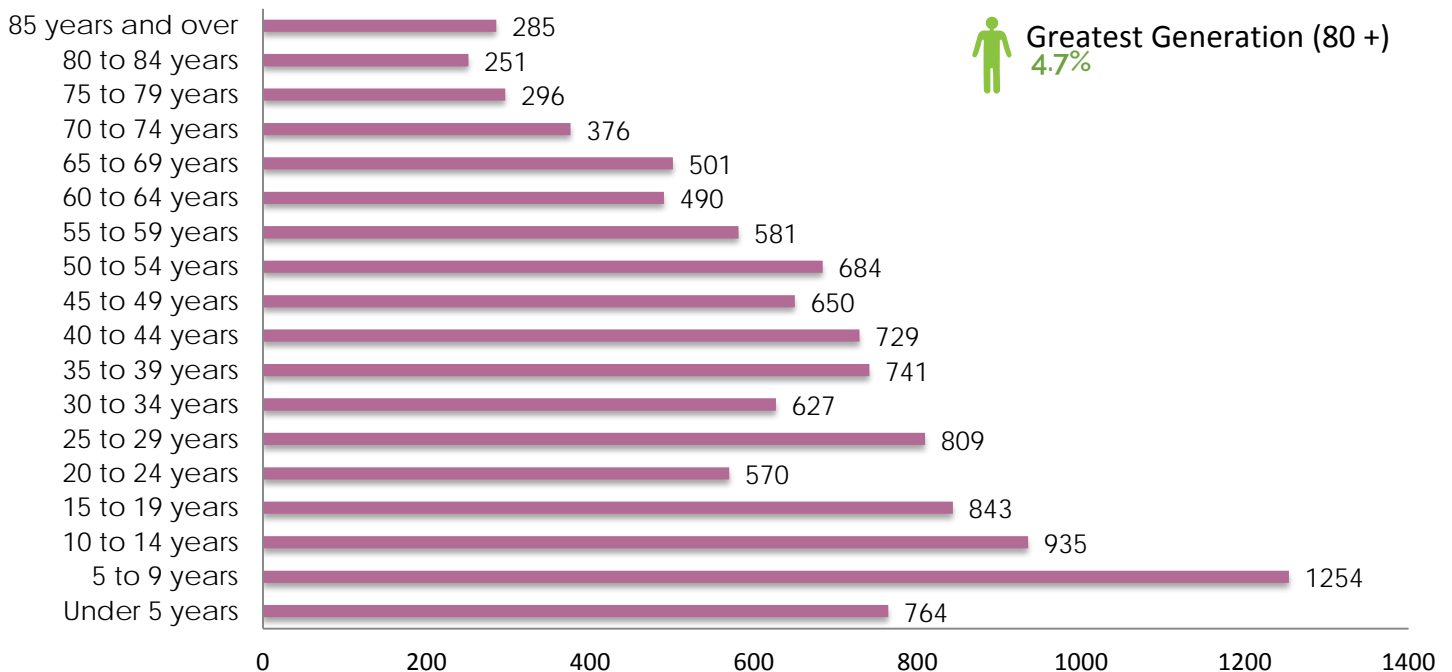
About 20% of Fort Morgan's population is between the ages of 18 to 35, the Millennial generation. The Baby Boomer generation (ages 51 to 69) account for about the same percentage at 19.8%. There are a disproportionately large number of children between the ages of five to nine in Fort Morgan, suggestive of young families in the City.

THE SIX GENERATIONS LIVING IN FORT MORGAN



-  **Generation Z (0-17)**
30.9%
-  **Millennials (18-35)**
20.0%
-  **Generation X (36-50)**
18.6%
-  **Baby Boomers (51-69)**
19.8%
-  **Silent Generation (70-79)**
5.9%
-  **Greatest Generation (80 +)**
4.7%

FORT MORGAN AGE DISTRIBUTION, 2014



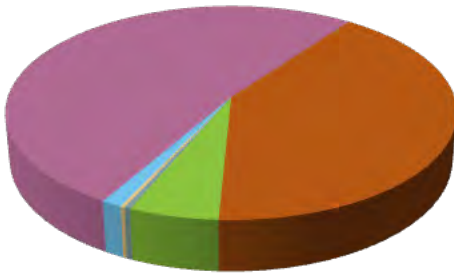
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

RACE + ETHNIC COMPOSITION

Being aware of a city's racial and ethnic makeup is important to creating a welcoming and vibrant community, which form the basis to a robust and strong economy. Recently, Fort Morgan was used as a case study for demographic influx. The figure below shows Fort Morgan's current race and ethnic composition.


Fort Morgan has a substantial Hispanic and Latino population, comprising about 40% of the total population, which is significantly higher than the State's (21%).


FORT MORGAN'S RACE + ETHNIC COMPOSITION, 2014





 White or Caucasian
51.7%

 Hispanic or Latino
40.7%

 Black or African American
5.6%

 American Indian
0.4%

 Asian
0.2%

 Two or more races
1.3%

A total of 14% of Fort Morgan's population is foreign-born; of those, 36% speak languages other than English at home. There are currently 26 different languages spoken in Fort Morgan. The current educational condition shows that 66% of students are considered minority, and 25-26% of school children are English as a Second Language (ESL) students.

Since 2005, Fort Morgan has experienced a significant increase of East Africans, primarily Somali refugees. The East African refugee population has continued to grow over the last decade, and the city will likely see additional refugee population growth as the benchmark for the number of refugees permitted in the United States has increased from 72,000 to 85,000. Refugee status is determined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; fleeing due to disease, disaster, and/ or war. As such, the city should be aware of possible changing demographics and plan accordingly.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment within a community is a key component for prospective businesses considering Fort Morgan as a location. Higher educational attainment tends to be highly correlated with higher household incomes, which in turn creates more business and sales activity.

Many industries in the area do not require post secondary degrees. A third of residents hold a high school diploma and 12% of residents have a Bachelor's, graduate or professional degree. Many high school graduates leave the community for higher education and additional job opportunities. The community is proactive in assisting in furthering the various educational opportunities of residents. For example, Morgan Community College provides low cost education through associates degrees, adult education classes, and technical training and certifications.

Citizen's Perspective

Fort Morgan must continue to adapt by offering a mix of housing options in proximity to unique retail, cultural attractions, and other amenities that support healthy lifestyles at all ages. Stakeholders expressed concern that the housing stock and lack of housing diversity limits the options of newcomers to the city, forcing them to move elsewhere. They agreed that Fort Morgan needs more housing within the city limits, including low-income housing, rentals and apartments, high-end homes, and workforce housing to attract new employees.

Stakeholders said that in order to boost the local economy and diversify the employment base, Fort Morgan needs to invest specifically in housing for young professionals with community living spaces. Stakeholders would also like to see increased density and renovated apartments located above businesses downtown. They felt that the City should focus new housing development to the west and southwest, while preserving the character of stable neighborhoods. Addressing and eliminating vacant residential properties is a must, as some feel that the negative activities (e.g., crime, drug use, and homelessness) associated with vacant and blighted buildings are detracting from the quality of neighborhoods.

Stakeholders expressed that a number of religious, language and cultural barriers among different cultural groups currently exist within Fort Morgan creating a tension between groups with different value sets. Efforts to integrate cultural groups should be strengthened, as opposed to enabling encapsulated communities. The number of refugees coming to Fort Morgan is expected to increase in the next few years, and stakeholders agree that it is highly important to be progressive in addressing these demographic shifts and celebrate Fort Morgan's diversity.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Key Points

- Fort Morgan's job base has experienced minimal growth between 2009 and 2013.
- Unemployment has **decreased significantly** since its height in 2010 (7%); currently at 3.2%.
- Employment is stable but concentrated in a few sectors.
- Median household income has remained relatively unchanged between 2010 and 2014.
- Fort Morgan has high retail sales per household, which suggests that the City captures local resident expenditure and attracts shoppers from outside the City.
- Sales tax revenue has **grown by a significant 35%** since 2009.

Why it Matters

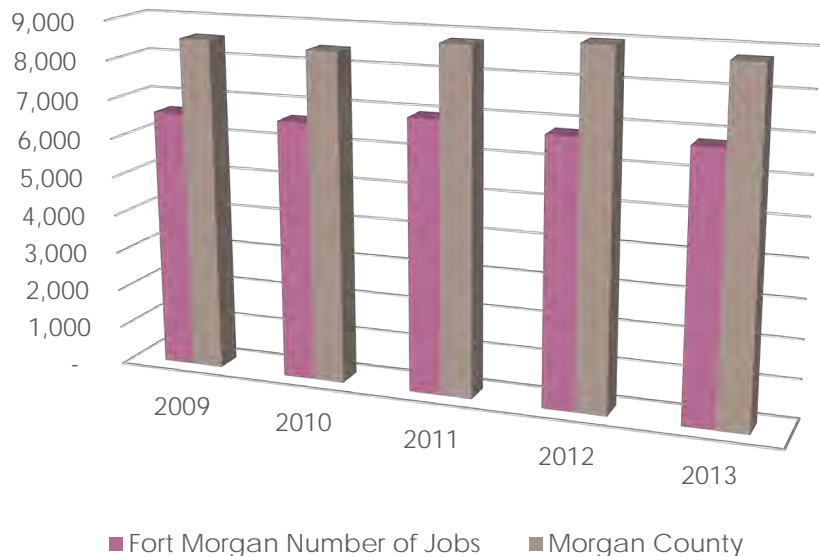
Recruiting a highly educated workforce is now crucial to business attraction and the economic health of cities. As Baby Boomers continue to retire, there will be opportunities for younger talent to seek good mid-to-high wage jobs. With educated Millennials choosing to live in more urban areas, Fort Morgan has the opportunity to position itself to attract young talent, as well as retain high school and community college graduates already in the community. Lower than average incomes and education levels are observed in Fort Morgan, however, and could be a deterrent to maintaining mid-life residents seeking higher-paying job opportunities.

The following presents an economic data snapshot of the City of Fort Morgan. The analysis includes time trend and community comparisons for employment, income, and retail sales. The data throughout the economic development snapshot is reflective of the 2009 national economic recession, as well as trends associated with a recovering economy.

Jobs

Employment conditions and opportunities are indicative of the strength of the local economy and future growth potential. The figure below shows the total number of wage and salary jobs within Fort Morgan and Morgan County between 2009 and 2013.

FORT MORGAN WAGE + SALARY JOBS, 2009 - 2013

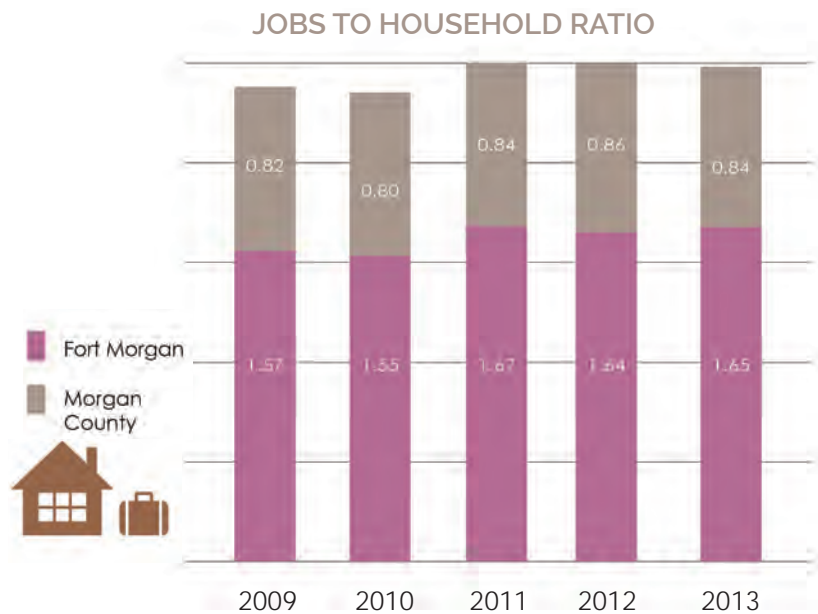


*Note: The data does not include the self-employed population.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 - 2013 ZIP Code Business Patterns*

In 2013, Fort Morgan had approximately 6,800 jobs. However, this figure understates the total job numbers because self-employed individuals are not reported by the U.S. Census. The job base has remained relatively consistent since 2009. However, the number of jobs noticeably increased (4.9% growth) before decreasing in 2012. The number of jobs in Morgan County also remained relatively unchanged between 2009 and 2013. Given the economic realities associated with a national recession, Fort Morgan and Morgan County fared better than many communities across the country that experienced significant job loss.

Jobs—Housing Balance

Comparing employment numbers with household data indicates whether a community is a net importer or exporter of employment. A ratio above 1.0 suggests that a community is a net employment importer while a ratio below 1.0 indicates residents tend to work outside the city. In 2009, Fort Morgan had approximately 6,600 jobs and 4,200 households, or 1.57 jobs for every household. Over the next five years, the number of jobs and households remained relatively stable. As of 2013, there were approximately 1.65 jobs per household (6,800 jobs and 4,100 households).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau County and ZIP Code Business Patterns, and ACS 5-Year Estimates

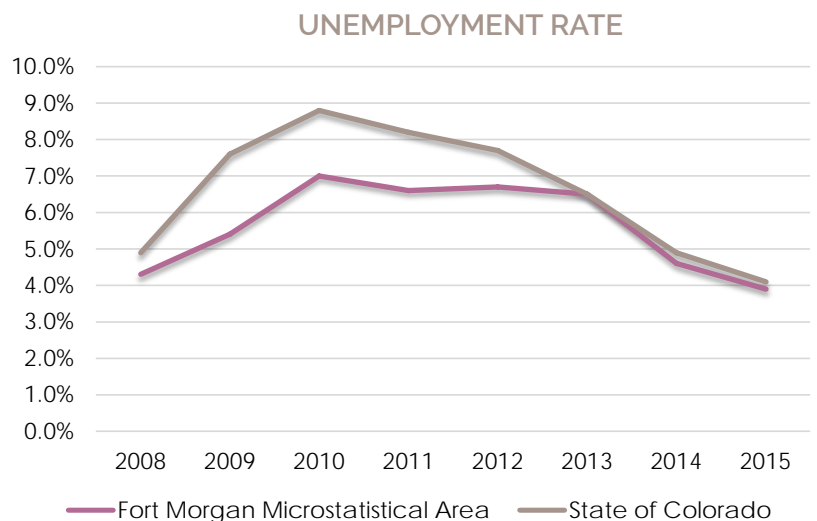
Since 2009, the number of jobs per household has remained stable in both the City of Fort Morgan and Morgan County. In general, Fort Morgan is a net employment importer while Morgan County workers tend to commute outside of the County for work.

employment importer while Morgan County workers tend to commute outside of the County for work.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate for the Fort Morgan Micropolitan Statistical Area (Fort Morgan Area) peaked at about 7.0% in 2010, and has since seen a continual decrease. The reduction is a key indicator of a recovering and strengthening economy. The figure to the right shows the unemployment rate in the Fort Morgan Area and the State of Colorado between 2008 and 2015.

The Fort Morgan Area has historically had a structurally lower unemployment rate than the State of Colorado overall. At the height of unemployment in 2010, the State of Colorado's unemployment



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

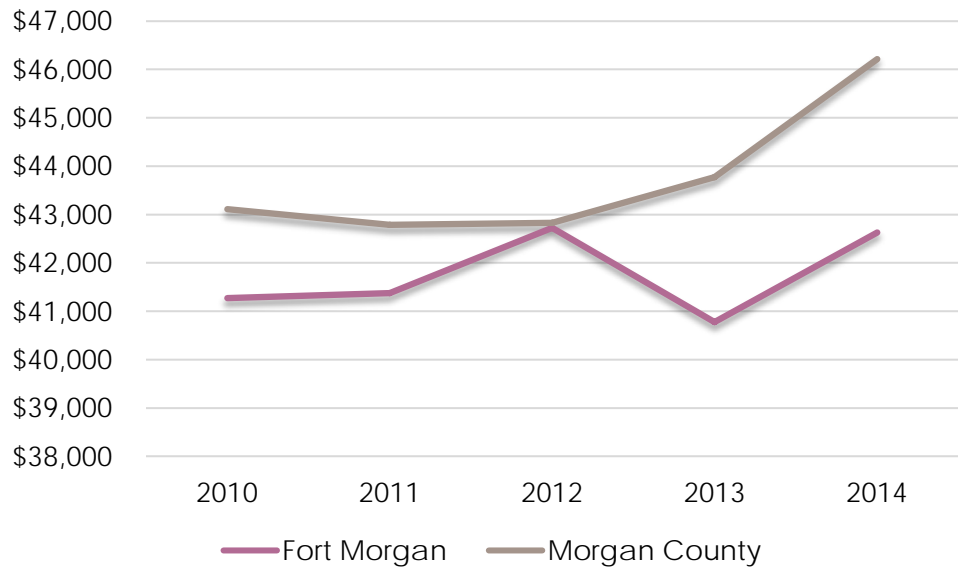
rate was about two percentage points higher than that of the Fort Morgan Area. Since 2013, the unemployment rates of the Fort Morgan Area and the State of Colorado have remained close and trended similarly. The Fort Morgan Area unemployment rate is currently estimated at 3.2% (November, 2015).

Household Income

Related to employment, household incomes contribute to economic and commercial development within a community. Incomes directly impact consumer spending, municipal tax revenues, and private capital investment within the City; higher incomes have a positive impact on tax revenue and public and private investments.

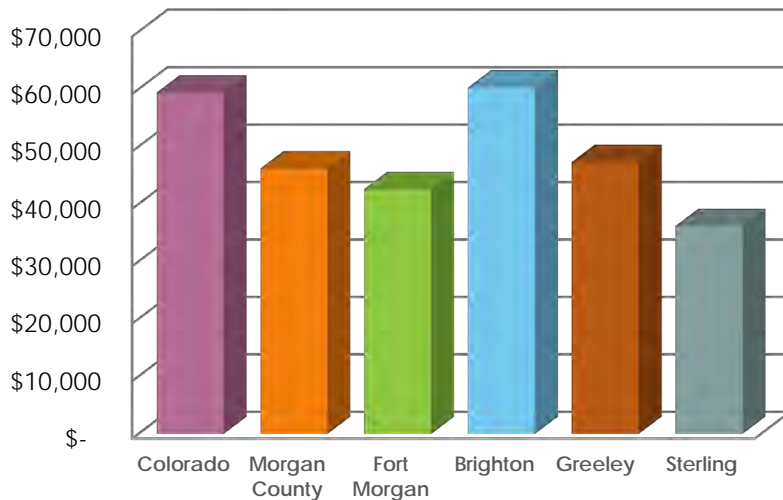
The figure on the above right shows Fort Morgan median household incomes compared to Morgan County. Fort Morgan household income tends to be less than incomes throughout the County, with the difference becoming more pronounced in recent years. As of 2014, the median household income in Fort Morgan (\$42,600) was less than the median income in the County, \$46,200. Brighton (\$60,300), Evans (\$47,800), and Greeley (\$47,300), but higher than Sterling (\$36,200). However, Fort Morgan's median household income has grown by about 3% between 2010 and 2014, a rate suggestive of a recovering local economy.

FORT MORGAN MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2010 - 2014



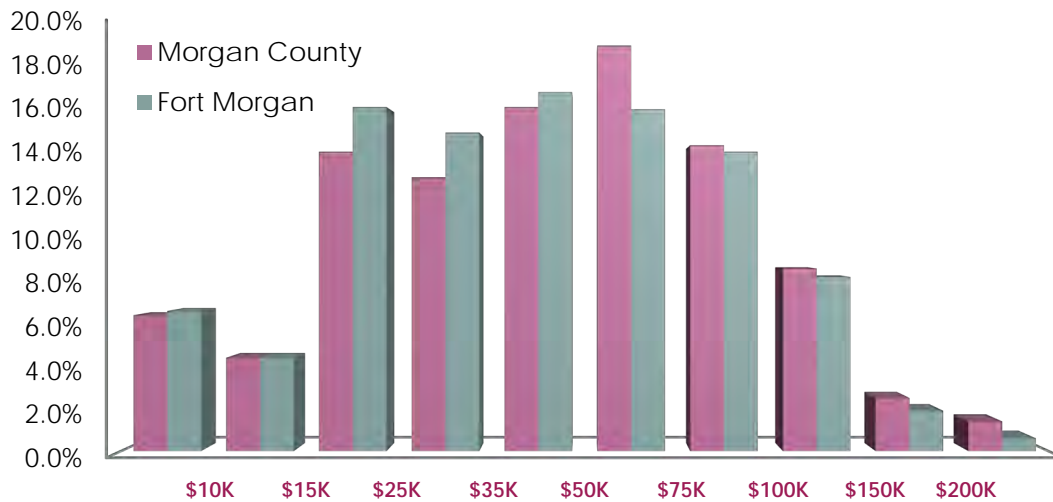
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY MUNICIPALITY, 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014

HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION, 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year Estimates 2014

The household income distribution within Fort Morgan indicates that about 27% of households earn less than \$25,000 per year, which is similar to the county overall (25%). Roughly a third of households in both Fort Morgan and Morgan County earn between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per year.

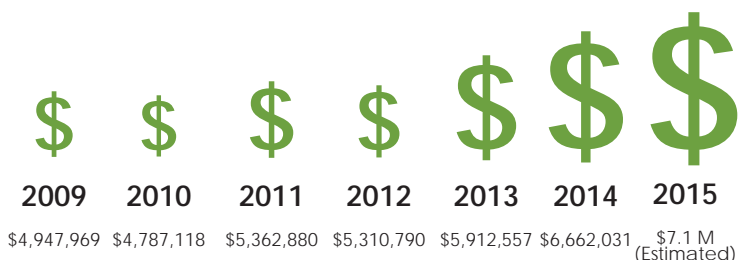
Retail Sales + Sales Tax Revenue

Retail sales are another indicator of economic growth and commercial development in a community. Areas with high retail sales and growth potential are attractive to new businesses, which can create additional tax revenue and jobs within the City. Morgan County has a 1.9% lodging tax, all of which goes into an appointed Morgan County Lodging Tax Tourism Fund for advertising and marketing Morgan County tourism—the City of Fort Morgan does not directly receive any revenues from the lodging tax, but likely indirectly benefits through increased visitation. Most Colorado municipalities are dependent on sales tax revenues and Fort Morgan is no exception with sales tax contributing the largest source of general fund revenue for the City budget..

Evaluating retail sales per household can help determine retail revenue potential within a community. High retail sales per household indicate that the local economy captures a large portion of residents' retail spending as well as attracts spending from non-residents. Low values reveal a leakage of retail sales outside of the local economy. Fort Morgan benefits from a relatively strong retail economy. When compared to selected comparison communities, Fort Morgan captures more retail spending per household (\$105,100) than all other comparison communities except Greeley (\$112,200), which is a significantly larger community and is an established regional economic center for eastern Colorado.

Since retail sales tax revenue is an essential source of municipal revenue, annual tax revenues are another important metric used to evaluate economic strength within a community.

FORT MORGAN SALES TAX REVENUE, 2009 - 2015



Source: City of Fort Morgan

Retail spending and corresponding sales tax revenues remained relatively constant between 2009 and 2012, ranging from \$4.8 million to \$5.3 million; however they significantly increased in both 2013 (\$5.9 million) and 2014 (\$6.7 million). In 2015 sales tax revenues are estimated to be around \$7.1 million.

Citizen's Perspective

Community members expressed concern about Fort Morgan's low education rates, especially in comparison to its neighboring cities. They would like to see Fort Morgan position itself to become competitive with these cities in the near future. By concentrating efforts to increase the value the community places on education and offering new opportunities for adult education, they believe that the City will be able to attract more people and increase its overall economic and employment base.

Many employees currently live in the City of Fort Morgan or Morgan County, but stakeholders are witnessing more and more employees commuting either to or from nearby cities. Stakeholders feel that Fort Morgan should focus on promoting its industries, and should work together with its valued corporate partners to recruit new employees that will reside in Fort Morgan. It is vital that the City focuses on housing and commercial development to attract and retain a more diverse workforce that includes young professionals. Community members agree that the City is in need of higher-paying, more professional jobs. Many expressed that a number of people with families who are employed in Fort Morgan are choosing to live elsewhere because the City doesn't offer enough opportunities for their spouses and/or children. The City must find ways to diversify the economic and employment base moving forward, and concentrate on bringing in businesses that encourage growth and relocation.

There is strong feeling among stakeholders that Fort Morgan needs to develop commercial centers with new and unique opportunities for shopping, dining and entertainment. They would like to see Fort Morgan become more of a destination hub,

taking advantage of its accessible location off the interstate to attract tourism money. There is concern about the level of monetary leakage that's presently occurring, as people are regularly leaving the City and traveling to Denver, Fort Collins, or Greeley to shop, dine, and spend their disposable income. Stakeholders believe that by offering more social opportunities, dining and entertainment options, and a nightlife, Fort Morgan can attract and retain the young professional population that it is currently missing. They also agree on the importance of offering more grocery stores and healthy food options within the City.

COMMUNITY SERVICES + FACILITIES

Key Points

- 77 acres of developed parkland; 9 public parks and one dog park.
- Parkland per capita exceeds the national average, and is greater than many Colorado municipalities.
- The City operates under Council-Manager form of government, providing a variety of services and amenities.
- The City's six largest General Fund programs are: police, streets, parks, library, fire and recreation.

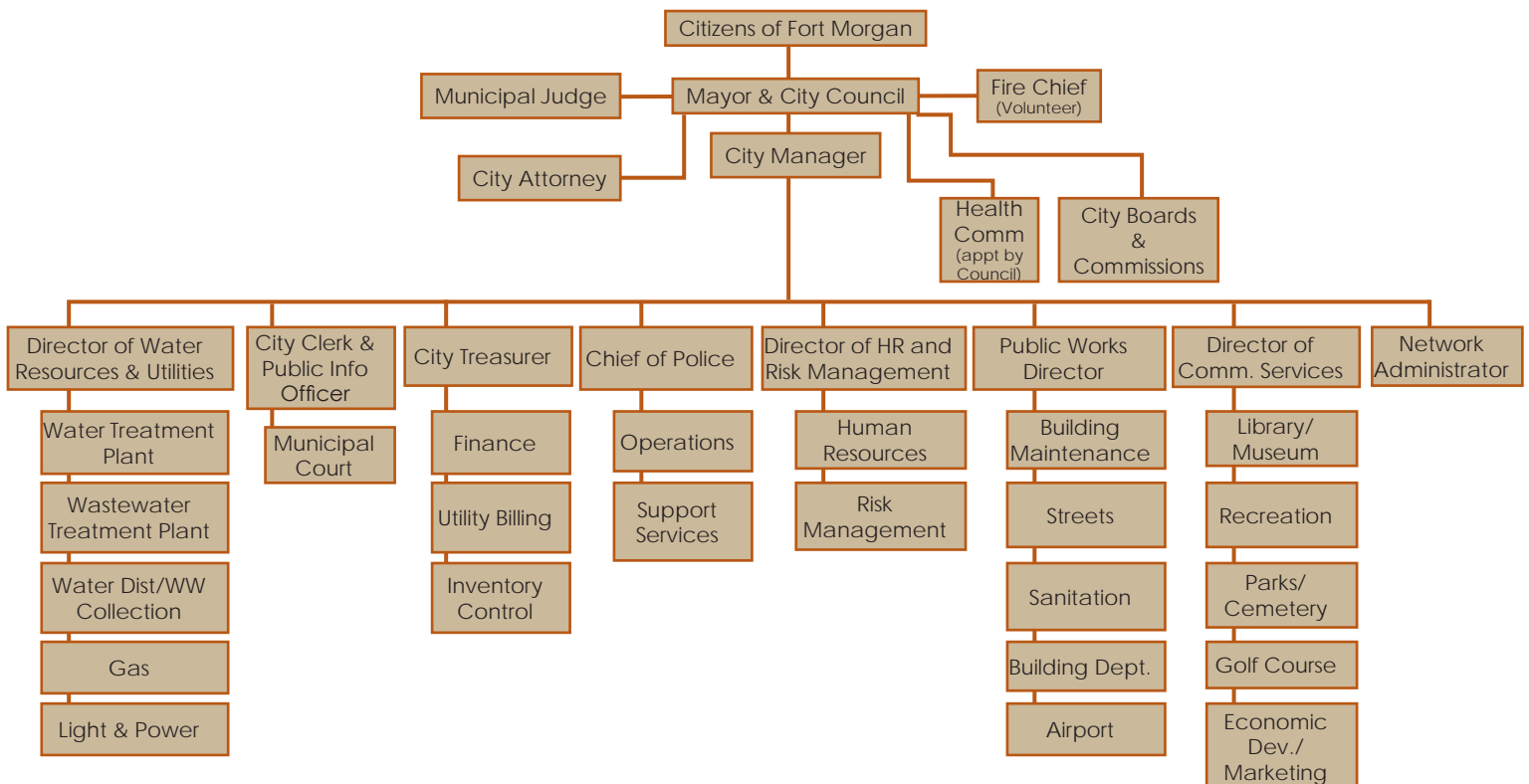
Why it Matters

Parks, recreation, and cultural amenities along with good schools, are desirable as both a service and resource to enhance quality of life for all residents. Fort Morgan has made significant capital and time investments in developing these offerings. However, underperforming schools are a problem, which the community must address in order to attract more families and remains an important factor for businesses considering locating in the area.

Recreational opportunities contribute to a community's quality of life and can help counteract the obesity epidemic and associated rising health care costs. As such, they have become an increasingly important factor in determining where to live or locate a business. Cities are responding by looking at land use choices that support healthy lifestyles – including parks, trails, and recreation facilities.

In Fort Morgan, the 'Community Services' Department umbrella includes the recreation/senior center, parks, the golf course, and the Fort Morgan Public Library and Museum. The Morgan County School District is a separate entity but critical to land use and growth discussions.

CITY ORGANIZATION CHART



47%

of Fort Morgan residential parcels are within a .25 mile of a school

Schools

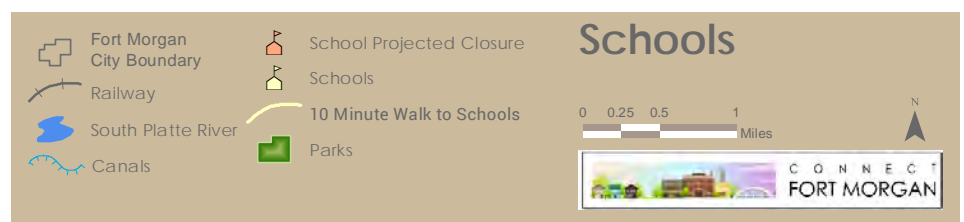
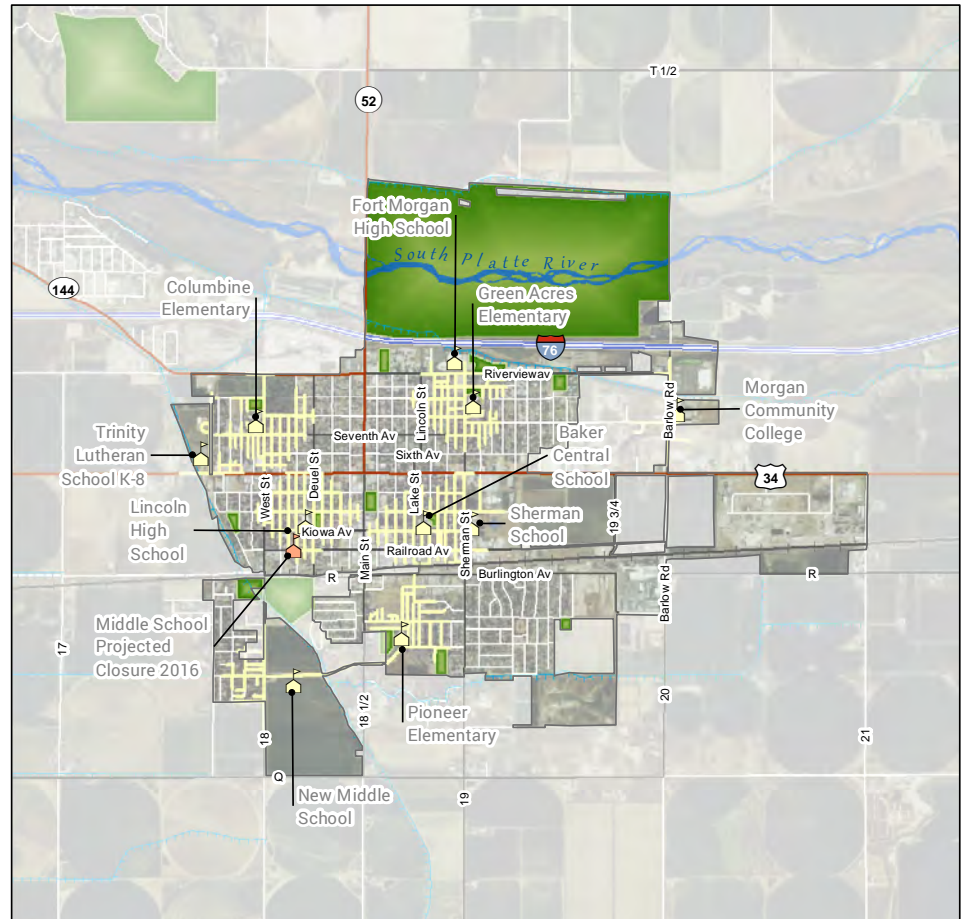
The Fort Morgan RE-3 School District teaches 3,200 students in:

- One early childhood center (PreK and kindergarten)
- Three elementary schools (grades 1-4)
- One intermediate school (grades 5-6)
- One middle school (grades 7-8)
- One high school (grades 9-12)
- One alternative high school

Within the school district, elementary school students comprise 56% of the Fort Morgan RE-3 district enrollment followed by high school students at 30%, and lastly middle school students at 14%.

In the last three years, Fort Morgan's public school student populations have not experienced significant increases or decreases. The 2014-2015 average teacher salary in Fort Morgan was \$38,234 with a 15% turnover rate. Average salary for teachers in Sterling was \$39,368 with a 24% turnover rate. Greeley had the same 24% turnover rate; however, teachers earned an average salary of \$46,759.

The Fort Morgan RE-3 School District is generally under-performing according to the Colorado Department of Education Performance Framework rating. It is classified



RENDERED PERSPECTIVE OF VIEW TOWARD MAIN ENTRY AT THE NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

as an “Improvement” district along with Brush and Greeley, while Wiggins and Sterling are classified as “Accredited” districts.

Fort Morgan's ethnic diversity creates both an opportunity and a significant challenge to education as a quarter of students do not speak English as their first language. This diversity creates an opportunity for other students to learn and expand their knowledge of other cultures.

Less than half of the residential units are within a quarter mile walk to a school. In addition to safety concerns of crossing major arterial roads; districting (students may not attend the school that is the closest) and the lack of busing within City limits creates constraints to the access of schools. Therefore, many students are driven to school. The school district is building a new middle school in the southwest corner of the City, scheduled to open in 2016. With the addition, the school district will restructure to a more traditional format to include: one early childhood center (PreK and kindergarten), four elementary schools (grades 1-5), one middle school (grades 6-8), one high school (grades 9-12), and one alternative high school.

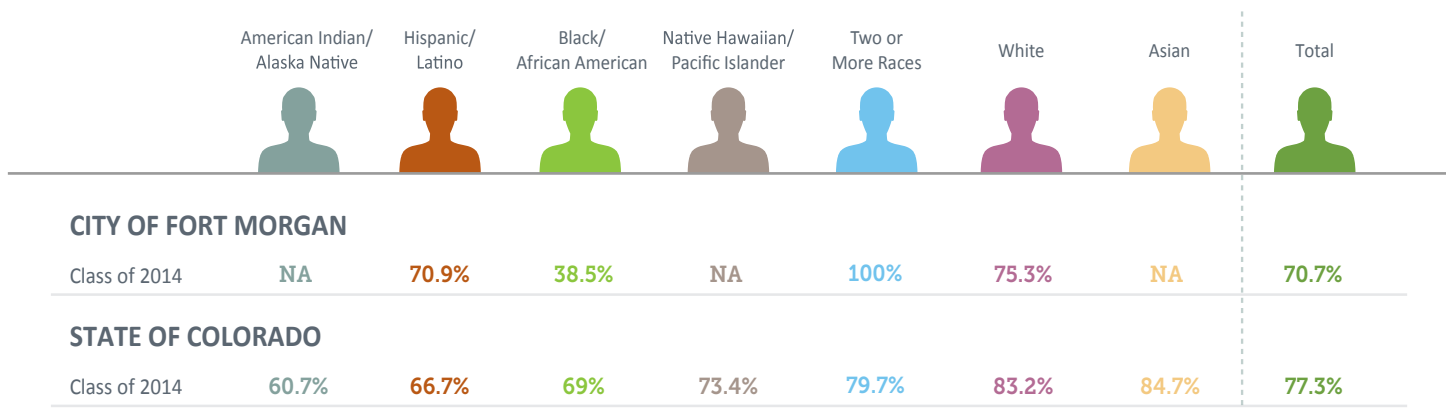
Morgan Community College (MCC), a Higher Learning Accredited, two-year public community college is also located within Fort Morgan. MCC offers 50 academic as well as Career & Technical Education programs through in-class instruction, distance, and online learning. About 3,000 students attend annually and MCC is ranked as one of the best two-year colleges to work for across the country by The Chronicle of High Education. MCC also offers customized training for local business and industry, such as Cargill’s Workplace Education Program.

MCC is a great asset to the entire community. For example, the college helps high school students get a head start on college credits by offering summer courses. In addition, the college aids in increasing the educational attainment of local residents, thereby, making the region more attractive to employers.

Culture

The City of Fort Morgan was originally established as a military outpost in 1864. In 1908, the Historic City Hall was constructed, and residents are proud of its design and construction. The need and desire for strong character exemplified by Fort Morgan’s original residents has transcended generations and more than a century later is still expressed by its current residents. Moving forward, it is important to capitalize on the City’s historic roots and cultural resources while simultaneously positioning itself to remain economically competitive in the future.

WHO IS GRADUATING IN 4 YEARS (BY RACE/ETHNICITY)



Source: Colorado Department of Education

In order to ensure an economically sustainable future, the City must be proactive in addressing demographic shifts and conquering cultural barriers. Fort Morgan is currently home to a rapidly growing number of immigrants, which is further described in the Housing & Demographic Snapshot. Over the past several years, Morgan County's increasingly diverse population led to a corresponding need for community cohesion initiatives among the receiving, Latino and East African populations which OneMorgan County (OMC), a local nonprofit, provides through its programs. OMC works to decrease barriers to productive intercultural interaction, including opportunities for positive dialogue, relationship-building, intercultural communication skills training, and access to accurate information and services for all sectors of the community. OMC's efforts have been made possible through state and local partnerships with other influential organizations and the involvement of the residents of Morgan County.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Fort Morgan Museum voices the stories of Fort Morgan and Morgan County through temporary and permanent exhibits; educational programs take place at the museum, at schools, or for groups and exhibit photos, documents, and artifacts from today and yesterday. The Fort Morgan Public Library is a valued cultural resource for local community members. It provides materials that satisfy its patrons need for both recreational reading and educational information. The library offers a creative atmosphere in which children and adults can foster their love of reading, and has become a recognized source of information, intellectual creativity, and entertainment for the community.

The Bloedorn Research Center in Fort Morgan is the primary genealogical research center in the area. It houses over 150 school yearbooks and annuals, and over 100 community directories and phone books. It is also home to 125 years of local newspapers on microfilm.

In addition to its nationally recognized historic buildings, Fort Morgan is also home to local historic designations along Main Street such as the former Grace Opera House, now Carpets Plus; the former Hill Building, now the Club Tap; and the former bank, now the Goetz building.



FORT MORGAN MUSEUM AND LIBRARY



FORT MORGAN CITY HALL,
BUILT 1908

FORT MORGAN'S HISTORIC BUILDINGS LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER:

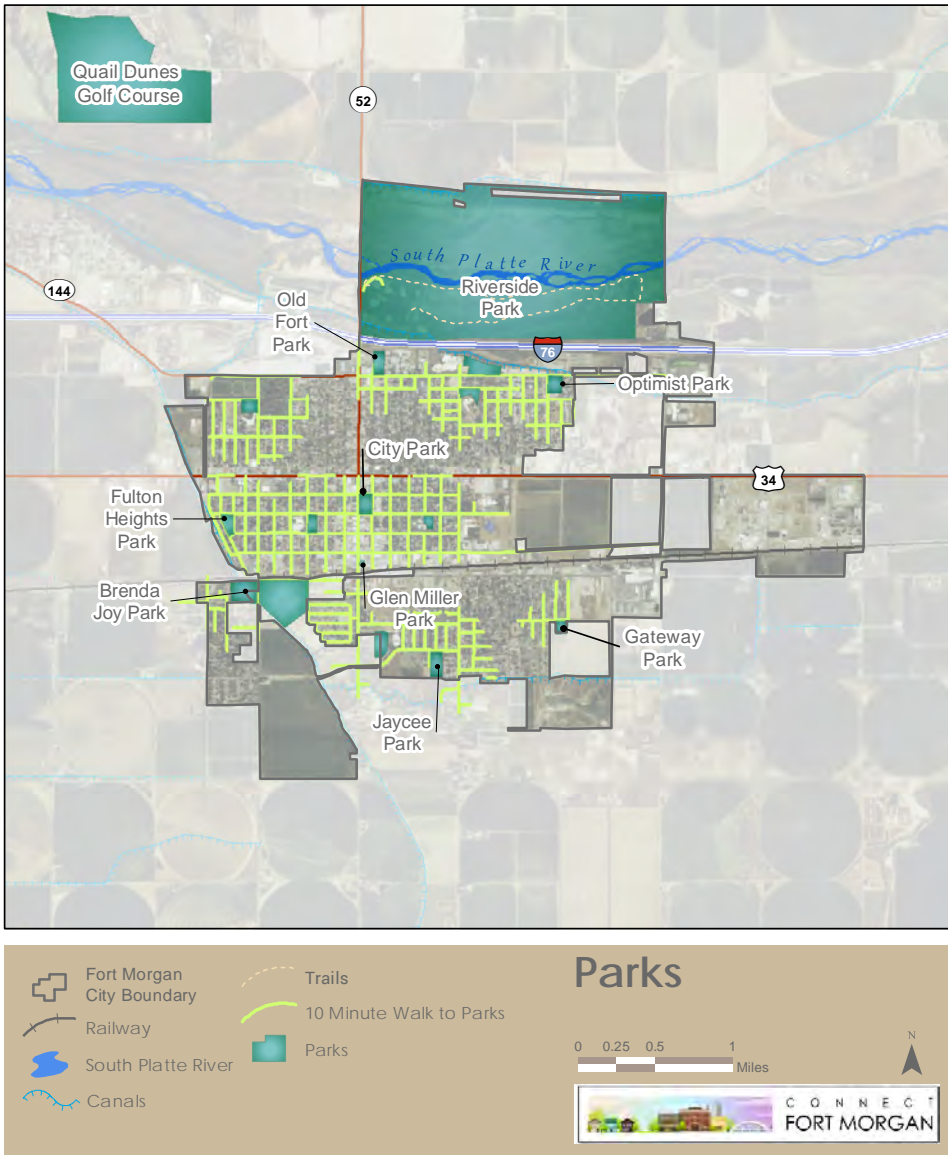
- Farmers State Bank Building
- Fort Morgan Armory
- Fort Morgan City Hall
- Fort Morgan Power Plant Building
- Fort Morgan Main Post Office
- Lincoln School of Performing Arts
- Morgan County Courthouse & Jail
- Rainbow Arch Bridge
- Sherman Street Historic Residential District

77 of developed parkland within the City of Fort Morgan acres

Parks + Recreation System

Fort Morgan has a total of nine public parks and one dog park within its City limits for a combined total of 77 acres of developed parkland, plus over 300 acres of undeveloped open space. All City parks are available to reserve for private events. The amount of parks per 1,000 residents, 33 acres, exceeds the national average, and many Colorado municipalities, including Brighton with 28 acres and Greeley with 8 acres per capita.

Fort Morgan also offers a municipally owned and operated golf course. The Quail Dunes Course is a beautiful 18-hole, par 72 course, with yardage ranging from 5,300 to 6,600 yards and four different tee boxes to accommodate all levels of golfers. Built on 165 acres of land, there are 57 acres of native area throughout the course. Wildlife habitat in this area is home to eagles, hawks, deer, quail, pheasant and coyotes, as well as many others. The Quail Dunes Golf Course was designated as an Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary in 1994.



80%

of residential parcels are within .25 miles of a park

“Quality of life” projects in Fort Morgan have included the reclaiming of a 180-acre wilderness park between Interstate 76 and the South Platte River. Riverside Park, Fort Morgan’s largest and most popular park, borders the South Platte River with popular amenities including:

- **Nationally recognized disc golf courses**
- **Basketball, tennis, & volleyball courts**
- **Baseball and softball fields**
- **Swimming pools**
- **Playgrounds**
- **Park shelters**
- **Fishing ponds**
- **5.5 miles of nature trails**
- **An RV campground**
- **In-line skating rink**

The City’s recreation center, the Armory, is open to the public and includes a weight room, aerobics room, basketball court, and an elevated walking track. The Armory’s dual purpose of serving as a community center fostered the growth of entertainment and recreational opportunities in the City. Fort Morgan offers citywide recreation programs and activities including Tae Kwon Do, Romp-N-Stomp preschool class, co-ed basketball, soccer, volleyball, youth basketball, men’s and women’s basketball, Parent’s Night Out, U.S. Air Force Band, swimming lessons, flag football, and senior activities, which include a senior stretch class, senior Tai Chi, a Blackhawk Casino trip and line dancing. More information about citywide recreation programs, activities, and facilities can be found in the Fort Morgan Community Services Department’s yearly Information Programs Guide.

In 2014, the City spent \$3,263,147 on community services (including all parks and recreation, the golf course, and library/museum), which comprised 20% of the City’s total governmental funds expenditures. Funding for Fort Morgan’s citywide parks and recreation services, facilities, and projects is a combination of contributions from both the City’s general and non-major governmental funds (Conservation Trust Fund and Golf Fund), plus additional revenues from charges for services (cemetery fees, recreation fees, etc.). Fort Morgan residents and stakeholders have outwardly expressed their readiness for new and improved recreation facilities and affordable, citywide recreation programs. Similarly, greater demand for senior-oriented culture and learning opportunities is likely in the coming years as the Baby Boomer population continues to grow.

PARKLAND ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS



Trails

The City of Fort Morgan has one major looped trail system, called the Nature Trail, and located in Riverside Park. There is an opportunity to create a unique recreational destination by improving trail connections and links between Riverside Park and more distant amenities such as Jackson Lake and the scenic byway. The 300+ acres of undeveloped open space near Riverside Park also pose unique opportunities for new trails and trail connections to increase outdoor recreation within Fort Morgan.

Citizen's Perspective

The public desires more cultural facilities in Fort Morgan, including more public art placed throughout the City and in parks, more youth-oriented activities, and additional library services. According to the stakeholders, the existing parks, recreation and open space network is an important asset in Fort Morgan and one that should be supported and expanded. However, they also feel that the recreation system and facilities in Fort Morgan are outdated and too localized. They have expressed the importance of building a community center, with opportunities for cultural engagement, additional options for recreation and leisure, an indoor swimming pool, venue spaces, and activities for children and seniors. Stakeholders felt that investigating the creation of a recreation district would be highly beneficial moving forward. Stakeholders recommended investigating citywide recreation programs that are affordable for all income levels.



Key Points

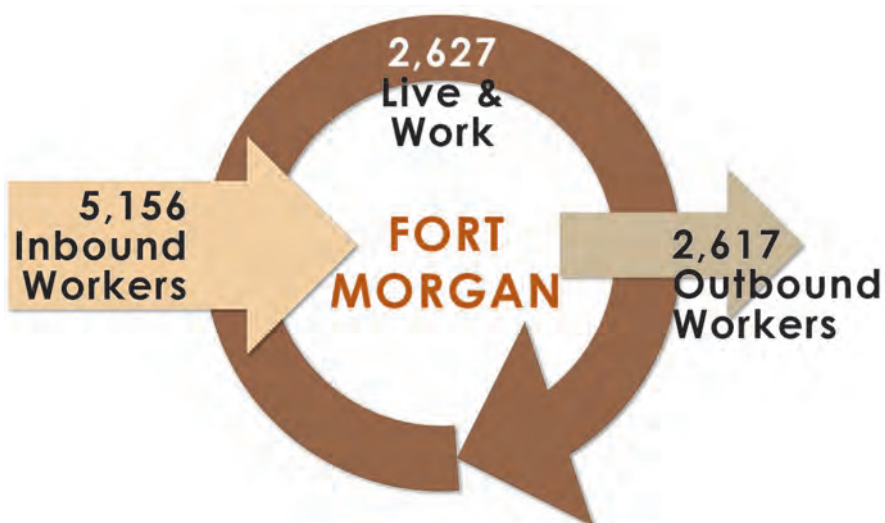
- The automobile is the predominant means of transportation.
- The City is well positioned for increased biking and walking as transportation means with its strong gridded street network.
- County Express provides demand-responsive transit service and Amtrak provides passenger rail service.
- Statewide Freight Corridors include: the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway, I-76, SH 52, and US 34 **creating significant** daily freight movement through the City.
- Stakeholders express a desire for more alternative travel options (e.g. transit, biking, walking) and alternative fueling stations.

Why it Matters

Transportation affects quality of life every day with residents requiring transportation to get to work, school, medical facilities, recreational amenities, shopping, and other community and social activities. A well connected and efficient transportation network allows for access to higher paying and varying job types, a wider selection of housing options, and more convenient health and human services. An integrated multimodal transportation system allows residents, employees and visitors of Fort Morgan the freedom of personal mobility and choice of how to travel. Increasingly, communities that thrive economically have an extensive and expanding transportation network that includes integrated transit, biking, and walking facilities in addition to efficiently operated and maintained roads.

Travel Patterns

Each day, over 5,000 people travel to Fort Morgan for work, while approximately 2,600 Fort Morgan residents leave the City to work elsewhere. Another 2,600 Fort Morgan residents work within the City. That is, there is a net inflow of workers in the community, with roughly half of employed residents working in the City. The average travel time to work for Fort Morgan residents is 14.5 minutes.



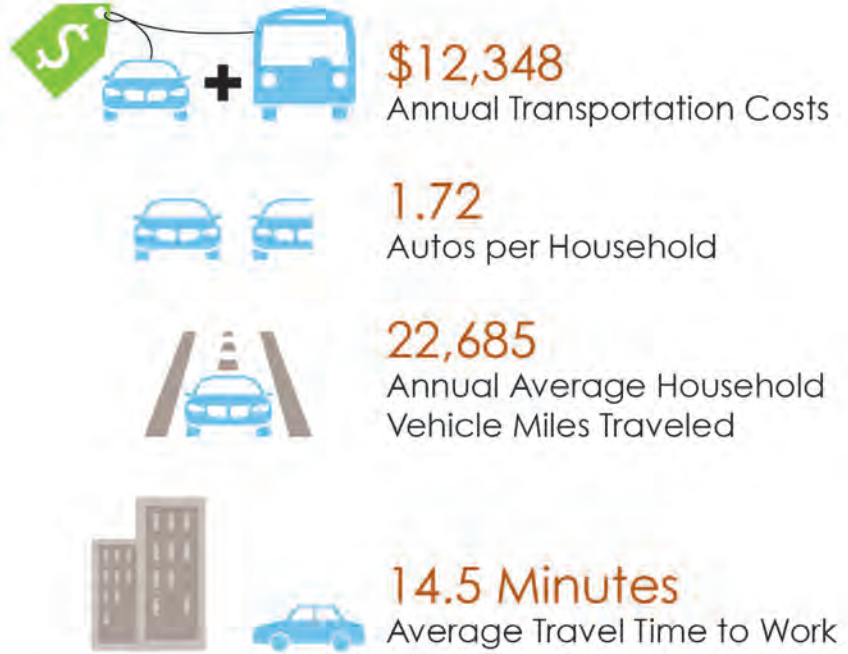
TOP THREE CITIES FOR FORT MORGAN RESIDENTS TO WORK:

1. Fort Morgan (50.4%)
2. Denver (5.4%)
3. Greeley (4.5%)

Fort Morgan residents pay approximately 53% of their household income to cover the cost of their housing and transportation. The Center for Neighborhood Technology's (CNT) research indicates that these costs should remain below 45% to be affordable. The Housing + Transportation affordability index takes into account the cost of housing and the cost of transportation, the two largest expenses in most households.

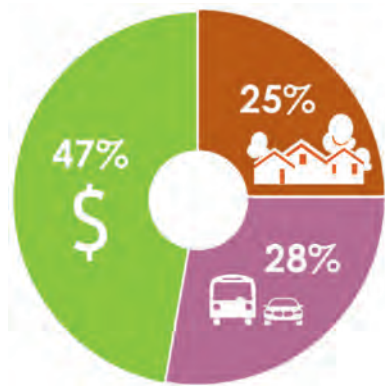
The automobile remains the predominate means of travel to work for Fort Morgan residents – over 73% drive alone to work, and 18.8% carpool. Alternative travel modes (public transportation, walking, biking), account for 3.9% of work trips, and 3.8% of residents work from home.

TRANSPORTATION QUICK FACTS



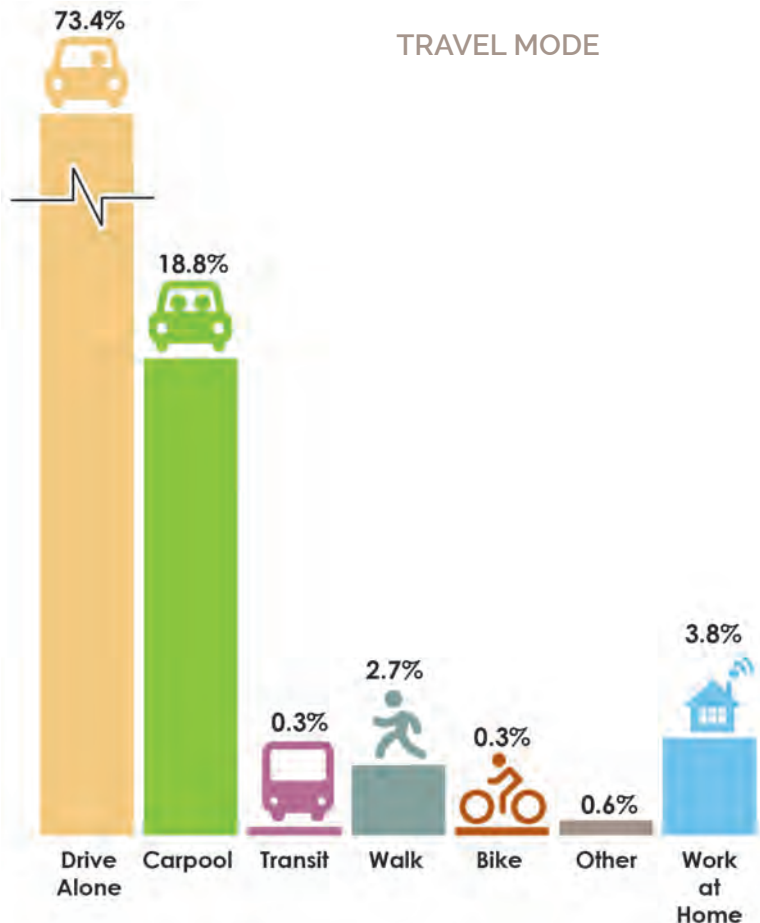
Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology

SHARE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME



- Housing
- Transportation
- Remaining Household Income

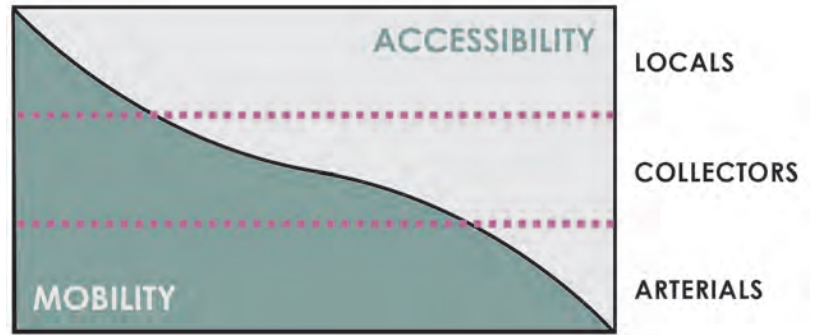
TRAVEL MODE



Source: US Census Bureau - American Communities Survey (5-year estimate for 2010-2014)

Streets

The street network in Fort Morgan includes approximately 58 miles of local streets that provide direct access to residences, businesses, and I-76, an interstate facility. Streets generally provide two important functions: mobility and land access. These functions conflict with each other—more land access generally leads to reduced traffic carrying capacity and mobility, and vice versa. Each roadway type is specifically designed to operate with certain characteristics based on the adjoining land uses, level of continuity, and proximity/connections to other facilities.

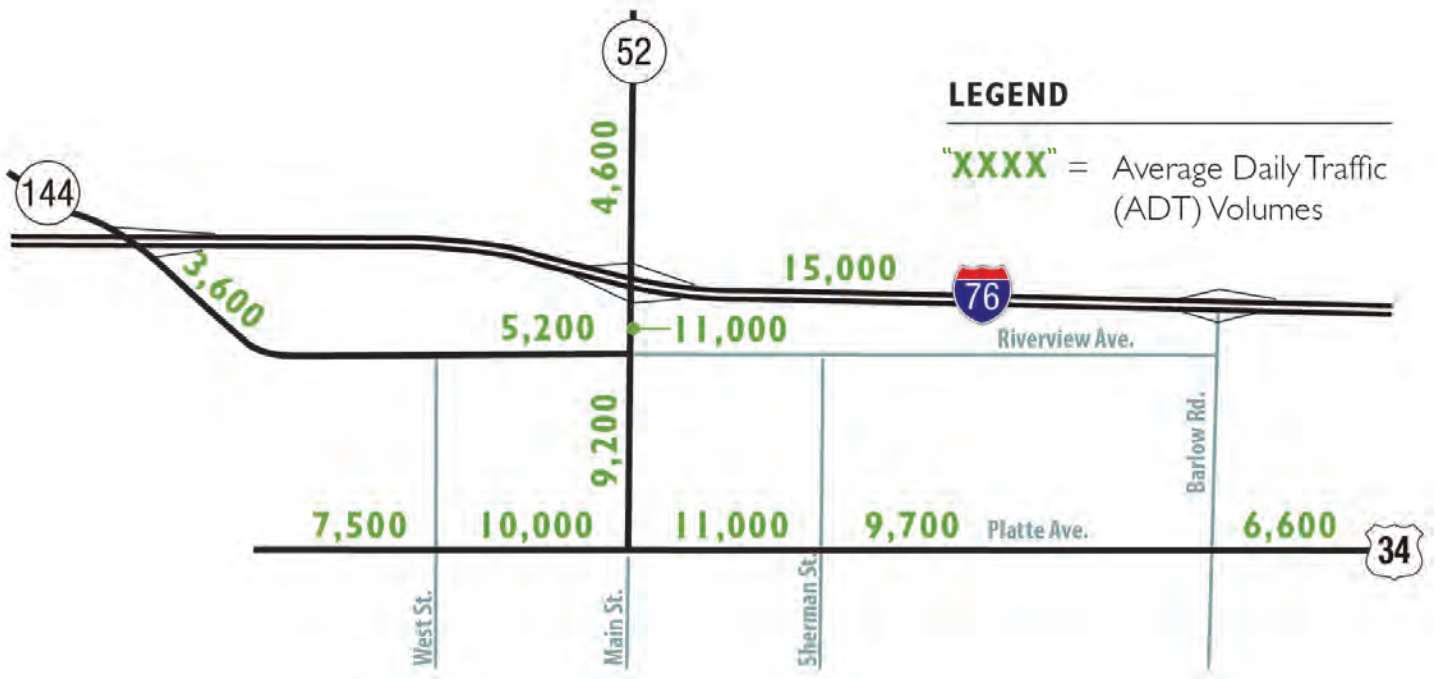


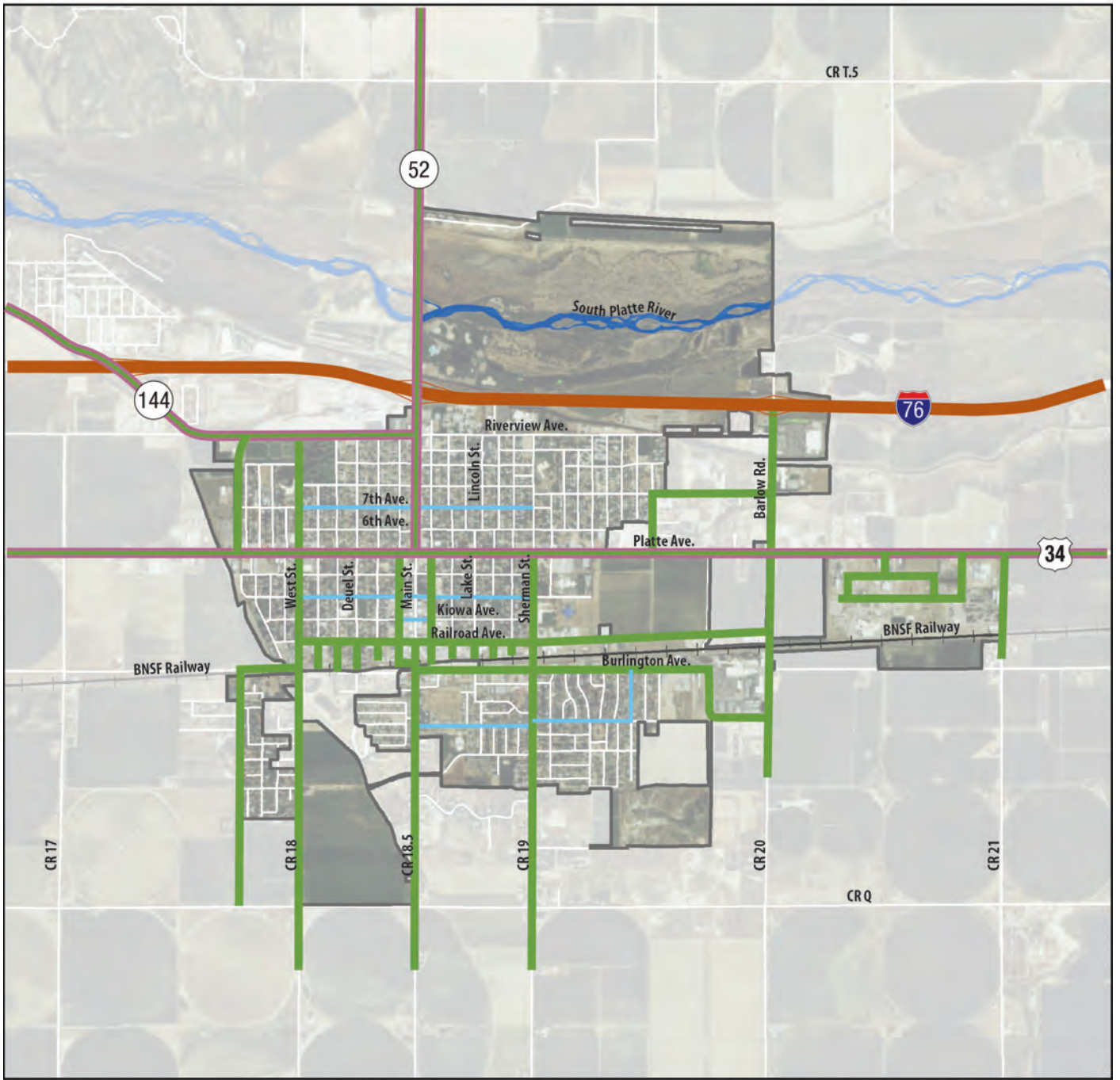
A street's functional classification describes these characteristics. Several streets in Fort Morgan are owned by the Colorado Department (CDOT) of Transportation – including I-76, Platte Avenue (US 34), a portion of Main Street (SH 52), and a portion of Riverview Avenue (SH 144). However, the City is required to maintain them to a limited capacity (e.g. snow removal, street cleaning, minor repairs, etc).

The Upper Front Range 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (March 2015) shows that all state highways in Fort Morgan currently operate at level of service (LOS) C or better, indicating good traffic flow with minimal congestion. Based on the forecasted growth in the region, the state highways in Fort Morgan are expected to remain uncongested over the next 10 years.

Even though the congestion is not expected to increase in the immediate future, CDOT has recently undergone several large highway and bridge upgrades east and west of Fort Morgan. The Fort Morgan area is currently in the design stages for upgrades to three intersections and highway between Exits 78 and Exit 82.

AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC VOLUMES





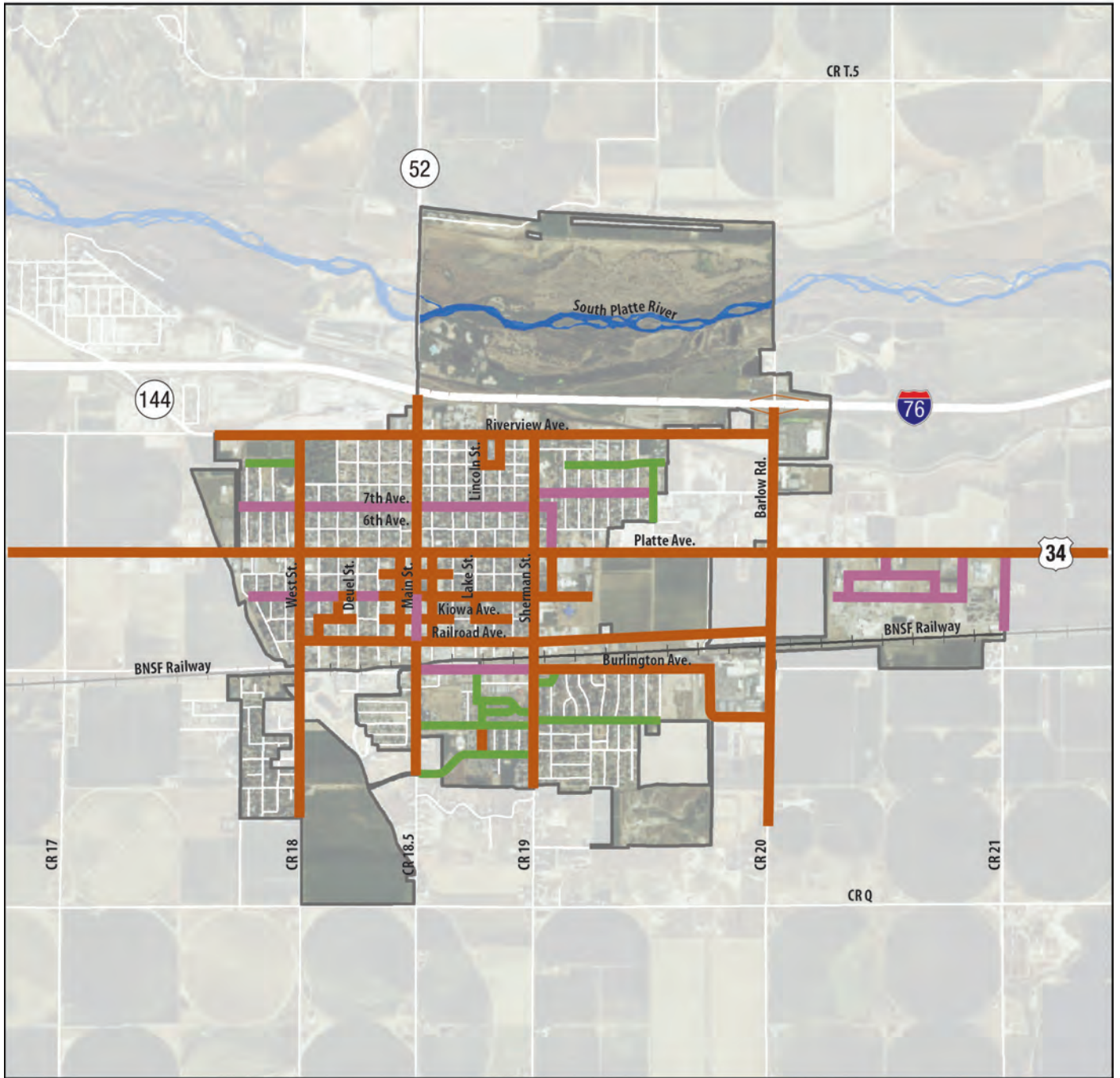
STREET SYSTEM

- Interstate
- State/US Highway
- Truck Routes
- Collector
- Local

0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles

N

**CONNECT
FORT MORGAN**



SNOW REMOVAL ROUTES

- First Priority
- Second Priority
- Third Priority

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

N

CONNECT FORT MORGAN

Rail and Freight

The Brush to 20th Street Branch of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway traverses Fort Morgan, carrying an average of 16 trains per day and 16 trains per night including the Amtrak trains. The BNSF mainline includes a double track through the City Limits, and a single track east and west of the City. There are a number of spur lines that serve local industries, the most notable of which serves the Western Sugar Cooperative. There are seven mainline railroad crossings within the City Limits and three crossings of the sugar plant spur. All ten crossings are at-grade, with various crossing controls. Over the past 20 years, there have been three accidents at railroad crossings – (at the West Street, CR 21 (injury), and Nelson Road crossings).

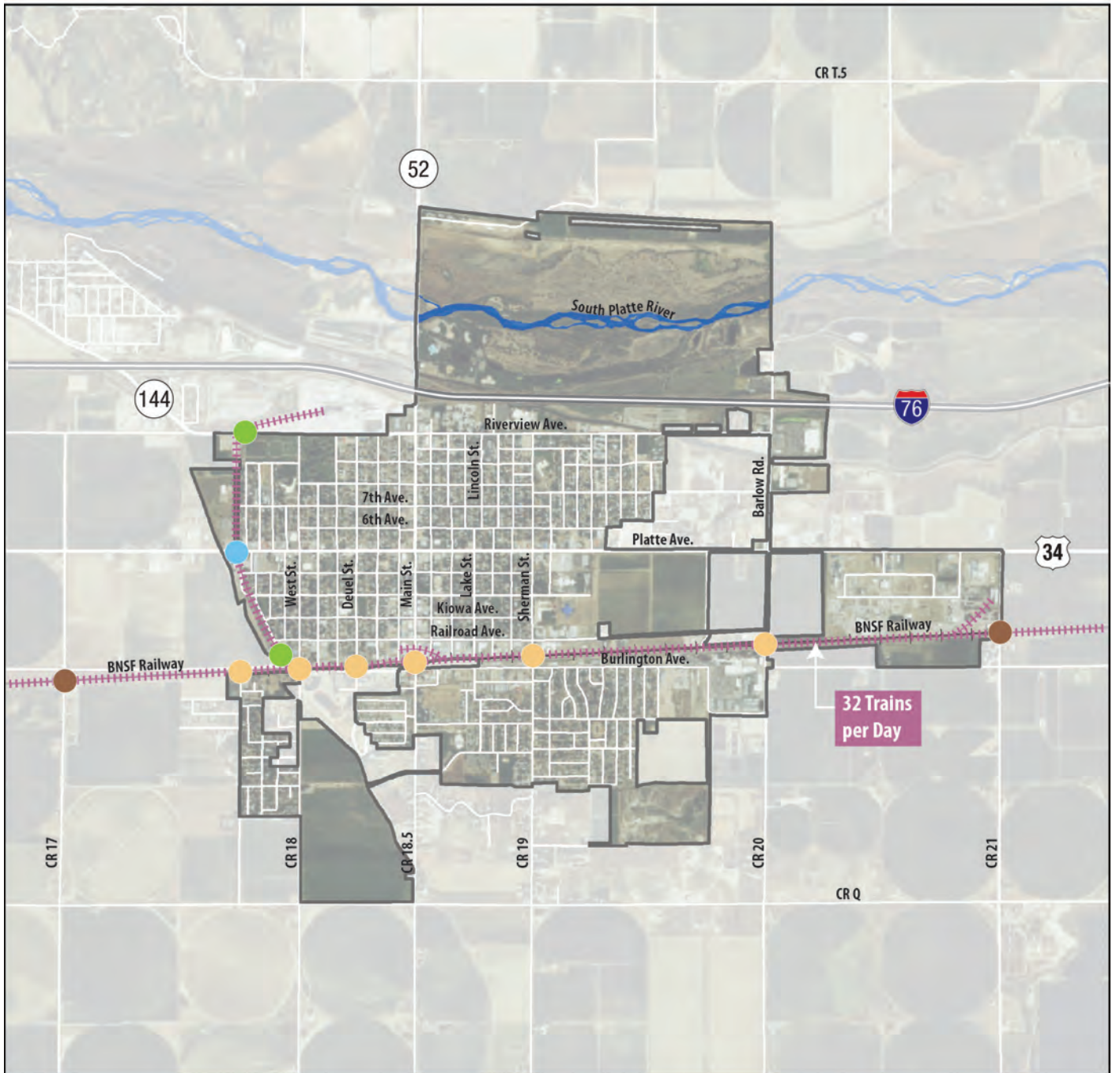
Six primary crossings in Fort Morgan are a part of a quiet zone. Trains are generally prohibited to blow their horns as they pass through the quiet zone unless there is an immediate safety concern per Federal Regulations. Crossing improvements to allow the quiet zone were completed in 2013 and the reduction of train horns has considerably improved the quality of life for Fort Morgan residents.

32 trains per day on BNSF railroad through Fort Morgan

10 at-grade railroad crossings within City Limits

Two of Colorado's Freight Corridors (as identified in the Statewide Freight Plan) travel through Fort Morgan – I-76 and US 34. Additionally, I-76 carries approximately 2,500 trucks per day (16.5% of the total daily traffic), and US 34 carries over 420 trucks per day (4.2% of the total daily traffic).

Roads such as West Street, Platte Avenue (US 34), and Main Street (SH 52) are heavily impacted by overweight industrial trucks, resulting in considerable damage, deterioration, and shortened life expectancy for the pavement. The City currently does not have any permitting or fees associated with overweight trucks.



RAILROAD INVENTORY

- Crossbucks
- Crossbucks, Stop Signs
- Crossbucks, Flashing Lights
- Quiet Zone Crossings (Crossbucks, Gates, Flashing Lights)
- Railway

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

N

**CONNECT
FORT MORGAN**

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Today, Fort Morgan’s bicycle infrastructure is limited to a few sections of dedicated paved trails. However, many of Fort Morgan’s local and collector streets are well suited for bicycle travel, as they carry low vehicular traffic volumes at relatively low travel speeds. Many of the streets are also wide and could accommodate bike traffic.

Fort Morgan’s street network also exhibits a strong grid pattern, making it ideal for walkability. Sidewalks exist on both sides of most City streets. Although, the sidewalks are typically narrow (four feet), the connectivity of the network is good. Since bus service to schools is not provided within City limits and sometimes causes a barrier to attendance, a well-marked and safe bike and pedestrian network is key to accessing schools.

Transit

The County Express, a service operated by the Northeast Colorado Association of Local Governments (NECALG), provides regional demand-response service in six counties across a 9,300 square mile area, including Morgan County. The service is open to the general public and trips are provided to and from locations within the

service area, as well as to major cities along the front Range. NECALG piloted the Platte Express in 2008, to provide deviated fixed-route service in Fort Morgan, and between Fort Morgan and Brush. While the service had ridership, due to the expiration of grant funds, local funds and a sustainable structure to fund the service, it was eliminated.

The California Zephyr, the Amtrak route that serves Fort Morgan, originates in Chicago, stops in Fort Morgan, connects through Denver, and terminates in California. The Amtrak train departs Fort Morgan daily at 5:05 AM, arriving in Denver at 7:15 AM. The eastbound train departs Denver at 7:10 PM arriving in Fort Morgan at 8:25 PM. These train times allow for Fort Morgan residents to use Amtrak service for day trips to Denver; however, freight trains have priority, and Amtrak trains are frequently behind schedule.

There are also two private long-distance bus routes that travel through Fort Morgan – a Black Hills Stage Lines route (between Denver and Omaha), and a Burlington Trailways route (between Denver and Chicago).



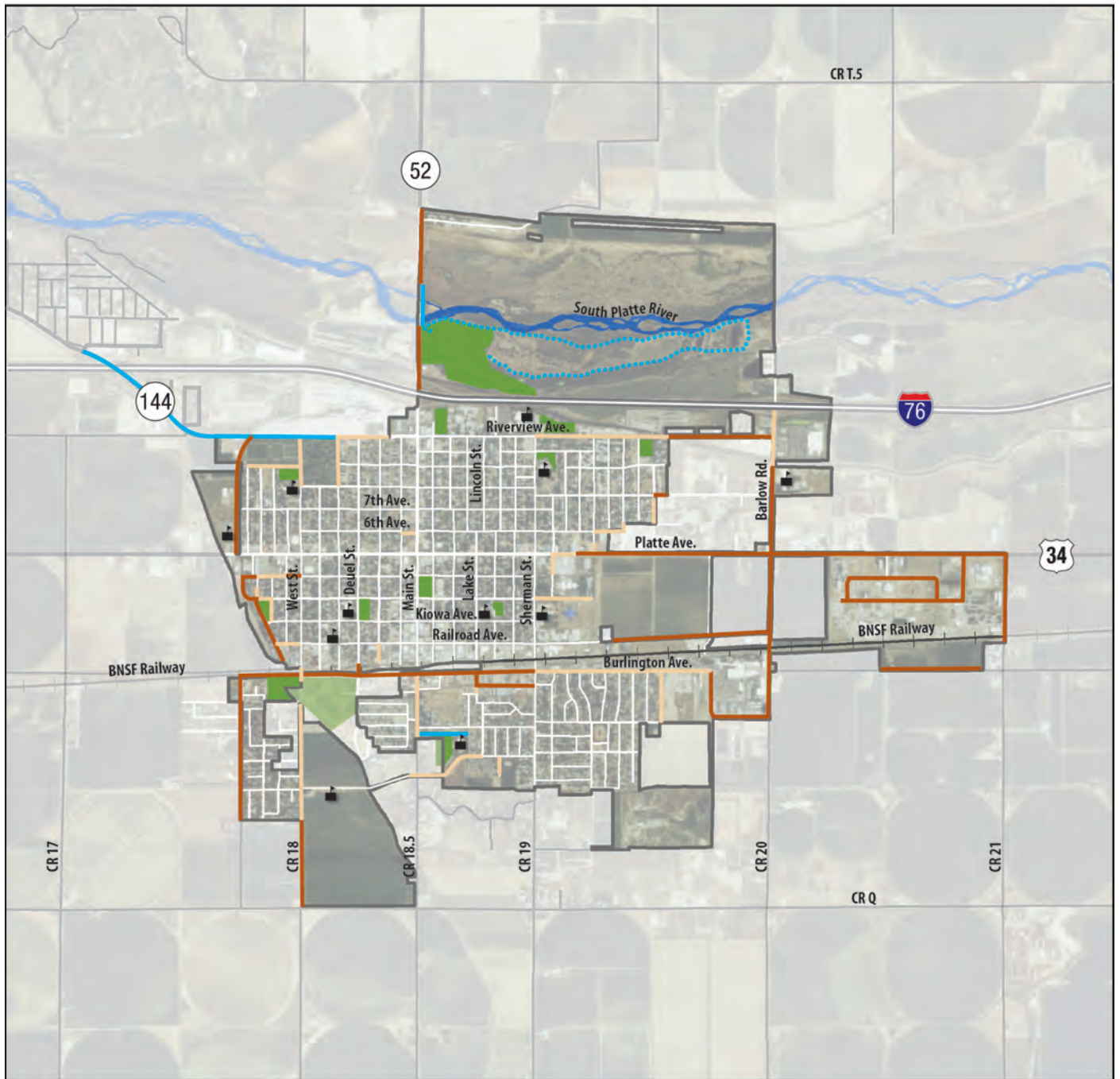
9.8%

Households that do not own a car



2

Transit providers



Existing Sidewalk (Both Sides)	Parks
No Sidewalk	Schools
Missing Sidewalk on One Side	
Paved Trail	
Unpaved Trail	

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

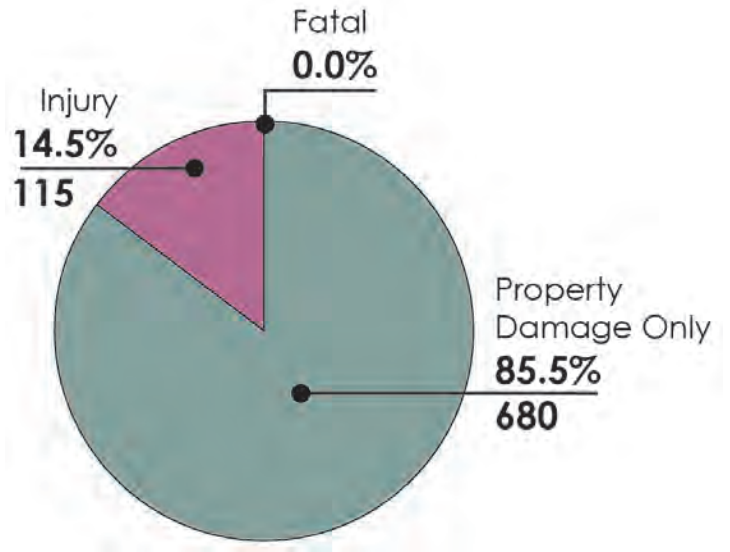
Safety

In the past three years (2012 – 2014), there have been nearly 800 crashes in Fort Morgan. While the majority of these crashes (over 85%) resulted in property damage only, 115 of the crashes resulted in injury. There were no fatal crashes in Fort Morgan during this time period.

Citizen's Perspective

Stakeholders desire more options for public transportation from reliable sources. They've expressed that many of Fort Morgan's impoverished families do not have transportation and the options that are currently available do not consistently meet their needs. Increasing walkability and bike-ability within the City is very important to its residents. Stakeholders agree that the City should invest in improved bicycle infrastructure and expand the walkable, connected street and trail system. There is also interest in alternative fuel stations throughout Fort Morgan.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENT RESULTS



CRASHES INVOLVING BICYCLIST OR PEDESTRIAN (2012 - 2014)

8 crashes involved a pedestrian

7 crashes involved a bicyclist

9% of injury crashes involved a bicyclist or pedestrian

Key Points

- Reliable source of water to its citizens and surrounding communities.
- Both the water and wastewater treatment plants have additional capacity to support future growth.
- The City builds, owns, and maintains the water and wastewater treatment facilities, as well as the water distribution and wastewater collection systems.
- Stormwater infrastructure has been improved over the past few years, decreasing the amount of **localized flooding**.
- The City also owns and maintains the electric and gas utilities and sanitation.
- The City has a strong history of collaborating with adjacent utility providers to receive and provide treatment and emergency supply.

Why it Matters

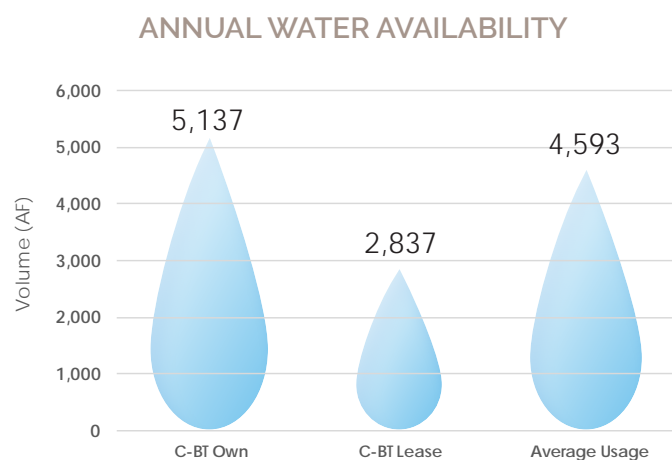
One of Fort Morgan’s key values is to provide safety and security to its citizens. The City has fostered that value in its infrastructure planning by proactively engaging in collaboration with and supporting surrounding communities, especially through many of the provided utilities. The City builds, owns, and maintains its own water and wastewater treatment facilities, water distribution and collection systems, and stormwater infrastructure, as well as electric, gas utilities, and provides sanitation collection. The City also owns limited fiber-optics infrastructure. This telecommunication infrastructure will be vital to attracting and retaining businesses and residents.

Utility capacities are not currently major concerns for residents and businesses of the City. In general, growth can often only occur to the extent that utility infrastructure can support growth without negatively impacting current residents and businesses. However, stormwater drainage is a concern for those who have experienced localized flooding over the past few years.

Water Supply

Fort Morgan has been proactive in securing a reliable water supply for the community. While the City has historically received water from wells, in order to provide a more stable and quality source, the City’s existing water supply is now entirely surface water supplied from the Colorado Big Thompson (C-BT) Project. The City’s annual supply capacity of C-BT is 5,582 acre-feet (AF) based on a 70% quota. Raw C-BT water, derived primarily from mountain snowmelt runoff, is piped from 110 miles to Carter Lake to the City via the Southern Water Supply Pipeline. The City owns 5,137 shares (one share is equal to one AF) of C-BT and leases an additional 2,837 shares of C-BT from the Riverside Irrigation District and Morgan County Quality Water District

(Quality Water) as of 2007. Based on the daily average water usage, which will be described in more detail later in this Snapshot, the City treats 4,593 AF of water annually.



Source: City of Fort Morgan Water Conservation Plan (2008); City of Fort Morgan Staff

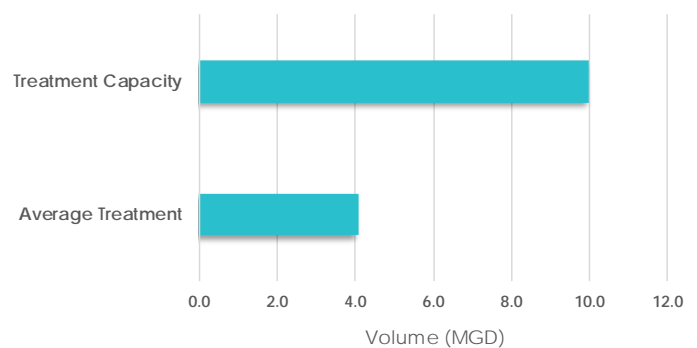
Fort Morgan has a strong history of collaboration with other communities and agencies through Inter-Governmental Agreements (IGA) in its planning for water. This is an increasingly important endeavor for Colorado municipalities with the limited water supply and increasing water costs. Providing reliable, high quality water, at reasonable cost, is vital to the success of the City, especially during times of water shortage which are not uncommon to many communities in Eastern Colorado. Although the water supply is sufficient for current demand, the City has taken proactive steps to plan of the community's future. For example, the City is a 9% stakeholder in the Northern Water Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP). NISP could supply the City with an additional 3,600 AF of water per year, providing greater reliability and enabling future growth. If approved, the NISP is expected to begin construction in 2019 with water will becoming available in 2024.

Water supply and demand allocation can also be impacted by the addition of one or two new major industrial users. For example, Cargill Meat Solutions currently consumes more than 30% of the City's water. Seasonal demands can also stress the supply. In the case of water supply shortage, the City has three (3) interconnections with Quality Water that can be used as well as during times of emergency or temporary maintenance and repairs to its system. As a last case scenario the City may be able to obtain additional "boil-order" water through local wells currently used for irrigation.

Water Storage, Treatment, and Distribution

Fort Morgan works with surrounding communities to provide them with high quality drinking water and takes pride in producing the best tasting water in rural Colorado. The current water treatment plant has a 10 million gallons per day (MGD) capacity and a peak pipeline capacity of 6.7 MGD. The plant treats an average of approximately 4.1 MGD for both the City and Quality Water, serving approximately 4,000 customers, both inside and outside of the City, with drinking water.

WATER TREATMENT CAPACITY



Source: City of Fort Morgan Treated Water System Master Plan (2006); City of Fort Morgan Staff

The current water treatment plant has capacity to accommodate additional growth and is located near Wiggins, several miles west of Fort Morgan. The City has two 3.5 million gallon (MG) tanks for water storage available near the water treatment plant. This available water storage provides system demand balancing and fire storage. A 30-inch transmission line conveys water through a pressure reducing station on the transmission line to the City's distribution system. City residents and the Fort Morgan Fire Department have not reported problems with water pressures during emergency fire flow situations.

Since the water treatment and storage facilities are connected to the City via a single transmission line, potential challenges include maintaining water supply and storage when doing maintenance on this line. Balancing water availability via the

Colorado Big Thompson agreement and long term growth demands through this single supply line could also pose a potential challenge.

The current water rate structure, adopted in 2004, splits rates into three customer classes: in-city, industrial, and outside city limits. Monthly fees include a NISP fee, a consumer charge, and a commodity charge (\$/1000 gallons). Water rates increased 5% in 2014 and the average residential monthly water bill (based on 10,000 gallons/month) is \$65.42. Compared to other communities, Fort Morgan has some of the highest rates; however, investment in securing reliable, high quality supply sources is a contributing factor in those rates. It is anticipated that rates will need to increase with inflation while NISP payments continue through 2018. Other communities are gradually catching up with rate increases of their own; communities involved with NISP will likely face rate increases as well.

COMPARATIVE RESIDENTIAL MONTHLY AVERAGE WATER BILL



Source: City of Fort Morgan Report on Water Rates and Related Charges (2014)

Current plant investment fees (PIFs) for Fort Morgan are low compared to similar communities. This low cost is a marketable benefit for developers building new homes, and industries looking to build operations in Fort Morgan. In addition to the PIF, a one-time fee is also required for C-BT Water Transfers. For residential, this price has varied between \$7,500 and \$18,000 due to market value and water demand.

COMPARATIVE WATER PLANT INVESTMENT FEES

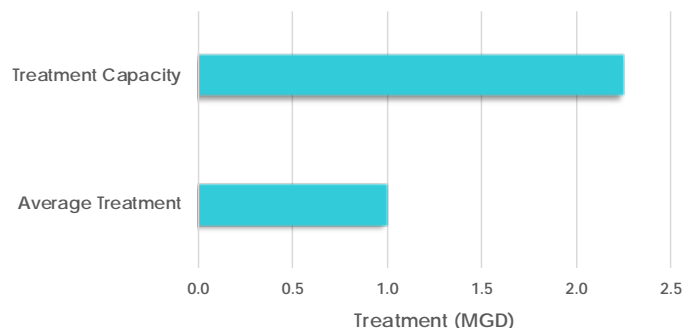


Source: City of Fort Morgan Report on Water Rates and Related Charges (2014)

Wastewater Treatment and Collection

Wastewater collection and conveyance capacity is impacted by the geographical growth of Fort Morgan and whether lift stations, or increases in existing trunk and collection pipe sizes, are required to meet anticipated growth. The existing wastewater treatment plant, east of Fort Morgan, has a capacity of 2.25 MGD and is currently running at approximately half capacity. According to the City, during a large flood event of the South Platte River, the treatment plant received 5 to 7 MGD of wastewater into their system, all conveyed by their existing trunk interceptor line. Fortunately, this flooding resulted in no damage to the treatment plant or collection system. Results from this event give the City confidence the existing system is able to accommodate future growth.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT CAPACITY



Source: City of Fort Morgan Wastewater Collection System Master Plan (2006)

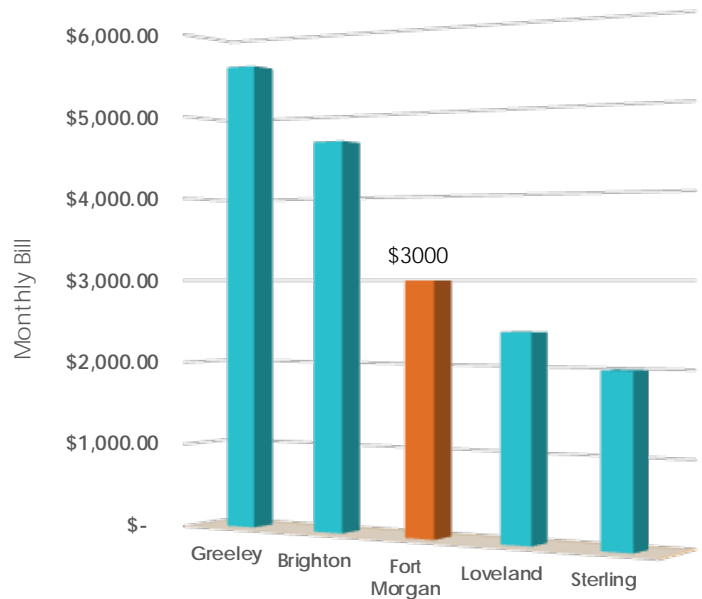
Wastewater collection is provided primarily through gravity conveyance to the treatment plant. Only one lift station is utilized to pump flows from low areas. After treatment, the effluent is discharged into the South Platte River. As of December 22, 2015, the plant's compliance status is "No Violation," according to U.S. Environmental Agency's Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO).

Commitment to jurisdictional collaboration can also be seen with wastewater treatment as the City also receives and treats wastewater from Log Lane Village, the Spanish Colony, and other surrounding subdivision developments in Morgan County. Large industries in the City, including Cargill Meat Solutions and Leprino Foods, collect and treat their own wastewater.

The current rate schedule is based on four customer classes: in-city base, industrial, outside city limits, and Log Lane Village. Monthly charges are based on fixed charges, volume rates, and waste strength rates. The current monthly sewer utility service fee has been in effect since August of 2012 and the average monthly bill, as of 2014, is \$31.93. The rate structure is set so that residents living outside of the City have double the rates as those living inside the City. Compared to similar communities, Fort Morgan's rates fall in the high-middle range.

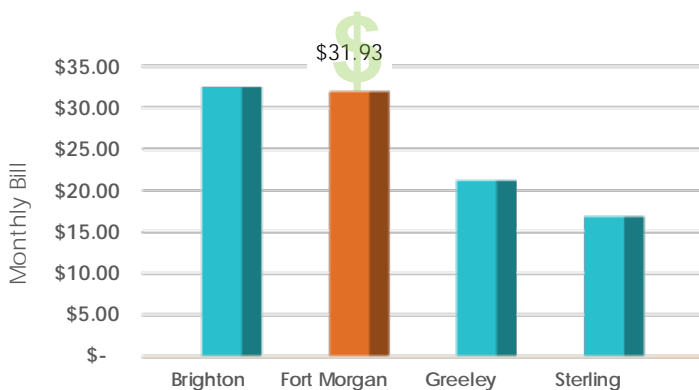
Current plant investment fees for Fort Morgan are low compared to similar communities. This low cost is again beneficial for economic development operations in Fort Morgan

COMPARATIVE SEWER PLANT INVESTMENT FEES



Source: City of Fort Morgan Report on Water Rates and Related Charges (2014)

COMPARATIVE RESIDENTIAL MONTHLY AVERAGE SEWER BILL



Source: City of Fort Morgan Report on Sewer Rates (2014)

Stormwater Drainage System

The City has a long history of flooding events, even during frequent and lower intensity storm events, due to an undersized and non-integrated stormwater drainage system. Much of the stormwater infrastructure was developed pre-1980, when regulations for stormwater management were not as stringent as they are today. Historically, build-out was approached on an as-needed basis with limited planning for future growth. The City's terrain is fairly flat, with large drainage areas bisected by irrigation ditches and railroad tracks, making conveyance to the South Platte River a challenge. Drainage improvements have been made over the past several years, decreasing the amount of flooding seen within roadways. Improvements include increasing stormwater pipes and additions of

various detention ponds throughout the City. Although these improvements have reduced flooding, localized flooding still occurs in the City, and additional improvements could be made.

Gas

The City provides natural gas to its residents, businesses, as well as customers outside of the City (approximately 4,500 customers total). The City purchases gas from the Nebraska Public Gas Agency and distributes it through 99 miles of mains from five points of delivery.

Fort Morgan's municipal gas utility is funded entirely by monthly charges to customers and other revenues. The annual budget for the gas utility is approximately \$6 million. The last rate increase was in 2013; however, customers receive the benefit of low gas rates.

System expansions related to new growth areas would possibly result in initial costs to expand the Fort Morgan system, depending on existing infrastructure in those areas. The Fort Morgan fee structure does not include a new development fee for gas infrastructure.

Electric

Fort Morgan Light and Power utility provides electric service to about 6,000 customers in the City and 150 outside of the City boundaries. Power is purchased from the Western Area Power Association and the Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska. The system includes five substations, 7.5 miles of 115 KV transmission lines, and 90 miles of 12.5 KV distribution systems, both above and below ground.

Fort Morgan Light and Power is funded entirely by monthly charges to customers and other revenues, with an annual budget of approximately \$25 million. Due to supply cost decreases, there was a 10 % rate decrease implemented in 2016.

Per the latest Master Plan, updated in 2012, the distribution system has the capacity to serve existing Fort Morgan loads while maintaining acceptable electric reliability levels. Annual kWh

sales were approximately 240,000. Only about 24% of these sales were residential, the remaining were commercial, industrial, and irrigation.

Sanitation

The Sanitation Department provides trash pick-up and disposal to approximately 3,570 customers within the City. During the course of a year, the department picks up and hauls approximately 12,000 tons of solid waste to the County operated landfill located north of the City.

Solid waste is collected from residential customers twice per week and from commercial customers on an as-needed basis. During periods when the landfill is closed, for such reasons as high winds, personnel from the Sanitation Department assist the Street Department with various projects.

Broadband and Fiber-Optic Network

Many Fort Morgan businesses use cable and DSL services due to lack of available and affordable fiber-optic broadband. These services are typically adequate, but speed and reliability have been an issue of concern. The City currently has fiber-optic infrastructure serving the municipally owned anchor institutions; however, it is looking to upgrade its system to a network which could provide services to: residential, small business, large business, and community anchors.

The current fiber-optic network consists of approximately 15 miles of fiber infrastructure, both underground and aerial, throughout the City. The buried lines are primarily in the downtown areas while the overhead lines are found primarily in the outer regions of the network. The underground component includes 5.2 and 2.9 miles of lines owned by the City and Morgan County, respectively. The network's underground infrastructure is shared in most cases. The aerial component consists of 6.9 miles of lines owned by the City.

Currently, the City has only used the network for internal communications. The Morgan County RE-3 School District does not own any fiber, but utilizes 4 strands of fiber cable that serve as a

lateral into the Baker School. Internet services are provided to these strands through the City/County infrastructure.

Citizen's Perspective

Fort Morgan is a "one-stop shop" for utilities which makes it attractive to businesses and residents alike. Stakeholders would like to see Fort Morgan continue to invest in NISP water, fiber-optics to improve citywide telecommunications, and more sustainable options for utilities.

Water and sanitary sewer capacity are not currently major concerns for residents, and based on input received thus far, they are happy with the service provided. Storm drainage is a major concern for residents who have experienced localized street and regional (South Platte River) flooding over the past few years.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY + HAZARDS

Key Points

- The City owns and operates a lot of physical infrastructure and social facilities that are key assets to the community.
- Continued growth is anticipated to the southwest.
- Recent improvements are part of an on-going program to minimize **flooding impacts on residents, businesses, and infrastructure.**
- Although the South Platte River is a prominent feature of the City, only one community building is located in **the regulated floodplain boundary.**

Why it Matters

While the concept of resiliency is not new to engineering principles, infrastructure improvement and pre-disaster planning are emerging fields. Nationally, the rising costs of natural disasters has put a focus these areas. As evidenced by the 2013 flood and other historical floods, it is increasingly important to anticipate these events and reduce the costs and time invested for redevelopment. Fort Morgan owns and operates a significant amount of infrastructure assets, so it is essential to identify and take them into account when planning for the City's overall future safety and sustainability. Examining environmental quality and hazards will also help inform land use decisions, policies to help reduce costs, protect critical infrastructure, reduce liability, and minimize impacts and length of recovery. In addition to natural disasters, man-made hazards and safety can also be addressed by land use decisions and are briefly highlighted in this section.

Approximately every five years, Morgan County conducts a vulnerability assessment and presents the findings in a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan. The following information reflects current City conditions as of the 2013 Plan, however, additional and updated information about hazards and risk assessments can be found in the County's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan available on the County website.

Assets

According the 2013 Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan, Fort Morgan's building count is 4,376 comprising approximately \$463 million of building exposure and \$324 million in building content; totaling \$787 million in total exposure. Estimated potential economic losses from flooding total \$8,353,000 for the City. Morgan County planning officials identified the following natural and historic public assets specific to the City of Fort Morgan:

- Rainbow Bridge
- Historic Power Plant
- Main Street District
- Historic City Hall
- Armory
- Morgan Community College
- Bloedorn Center for Community Economic Development
- Houses on 400-500 block of Sherman

Threats

In 2013, Morgan County's planning team identified the hazards that affect the County and summarized their frequency of occurrence, spatial extent, potential magnitude, and significance specific to Morgan County. They conducted a vulnerability assessment, which analyzed the population, property, and other assets at risk to hazards ranked "medium" or "high" significance. This information is presented in the Mitigation Plan. It also includes a listing of events that have occurred in the past. Primary threats imposed on the City of Fort Morgan include natural hazards such as high winds, tornadoes, fires, floods, dam failures, blizzards, droughts, and hail.

Additionally, man-made hazards that are concerns include crime, transportation and freight train related incidents, air quality, and noise pollution. Although catastrophic impacts of most natural and man-made disasters are relatively low, it is important to consider their impacts when making land use decisions.

Air quality and odor pollution in Fort Morgan are factors of transportation and larger agricultural, industrial, and manufacturing uses within (and adjacent) to the City. Poor air quality can cause impacts to physical health and an annoyance that may lead to avoidance of the region. However, Morgan County is currently not under Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) regulations like the majority of the rest of the state.

Fort Morgan crime is relatively low and ranks as one of the Top 10 Safest Communities in Colorado according to a study which looked at data on murders, violent crimes, and property crimes.

Flooding

The City of Fort Morgan has a history of flooding problems. Flooding occurs during frequent storm events due to an undersized and non-integrated stormwater collection system. Flooding from the South Platte River also occurs, but does not pose a large threat to the City as past large flood events have mainly affected areas north of the City limits.

The City is primarily out of the regulated floodplain boundary. Only one building exists in the floodplain, the Parks storage facility. Land that is within the floodplain is mostly open space; as such, when the South Platte River floods, City property remains pretty much untouched with the exception of its parks. However, the City has experienced significant flooding events in the past. It is important to work towards eliminating localized flooding through the necessary infrastructure improvements moving forward.

FLOODPLAIN CONSIDERATIONS



STORMWATER FLOODING
EVENT

The City is affected by a Zone A floodplain. Zone A is the regulatory floodplain, meaning there is a 1% chance flooding will occur during a rainfall event. Although development within the floodplain is possible, proper documentation to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is required to ensure development does not negatively impact upstream and downstream stakeholders. The regulatory floodplain is associated with the South Platte River and is located primarily north of I-76. Currently, land use in this area is primarily open space and agriculture. Additionally, a small Zone A area impacts urban development directly south of I-76 at Sherman Street.



RIVER FLOODING EVENT

Unincorporated areas of Morgan County near the City are also impacted by a Zone A floodplain. The east side of the City has Zone A occurring along the South Platte River both north and south of I-76. Zone A flooding also occurs south of I-76 at Barlow Road. Currently, this area is primarily open space north of I-76 and manufacturing and commercial south of I-76. Zone A, towards the west side of the City, remains north of I-76 which is primarily open space, light industrial, and manufacturing.

Based on review of FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps and discussions with the City, flooding of the South Platte River does not create a large negative impact on existing development. Flooding typically occurs north of the City, except at the CDOT I-76 and Barlow Road interchange. Therefore, localized flooding is the largest flood-related hazard for the City.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD CONSIDERATIONS

There is a City of Fort Morgan Parks storage facility within the floodplain. Facilities in or near Fort Morgan with hazardous exposure to the floodplain include the Cargill, Leprino Foods Company and the City of Fort Morgan wastewater facilities. The Bijou #2 Dam (Dams 1-4) upstream of the City is classified as a significant hazard dam.

DRAINAGE CONSIDERATIONS

Review of City drainage studies for flooding effects focus on localized flooding (flooding due to stormwater infrastructure including pipe sizing, inlet sizing, and street capacity) rather than flooding of the South Platte River.

The City has a long history of flooding events, even during frequent and lower intensity storm events. Typically, modern municipal stormwater drainage systems are designed to capture and convey storms with a 20 or 50% chance of occurring and are checked against storms with a 1% chance of occurring. However, the City's infrastructure is typically undersized and experiences flooding primarily due to the local stormwater system not able to handle low probability storms.

Historically, flooding events such as flash floods, street flooding, and residential and business flooding have occurred. The City has replaced portions of the stormwater system with larger pipes to reduce the flooding. One example is the downtown infrastructure improvement in 2008, which helped to relieve existing flooding of downtown businesses. Other infrastructure improvements and additions of regional detention have also helped to relieve flooding. Although flooding has been reduced since these improvements were constructed, flooding has continued in other portions of the City and additional improvements are still needed. Localized flooding, or identified floodplains, does not appear to currently impact areas west and east of the current City boundaries; however, proactive planning with regional detention and adequate stormwater infrastructure should be included in any future developments.

Citizen's Perspective

Stakeholders expressed mutual concern about the City's need to intervene in the regulation of large industrial operators. There is an overwhelming amount of citizen complaints about the traffic, dust, odor, and perceived lack of water treatment taking place as a result of these industrial operations. As some of these operators are located just outside of the City limits, additional intergovernmental coordination between the City and County is needed in order to resolve these challenges.

Stakeholders also mentioned the importance of avoiding future development within the floodplain and concerns with stormwater management.

LAND USE + GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Key Points

- Uniquely positioned in a rural setting on the edge of the Front Range.
- Easy access to Downtown Denver and Denver International Airport.
- 42% of the land within the City is Public & Charitable land mainly due to Riverside Park and its associated open space.
- 25% is single family.
- Primary commercial corridors include US 34 and Main Street/CO 52, which intersect just north of downtown.

Why it Matters

A community land use plan that is programmed in a deliberate manner, with an understanding of market, financial, and physical realities, can help foster a healthy balance of land uses and minimize uncertainty for its officials, staff, residents, and other interests. Leveraging and preserving the natural features, recreational resources, and neighborhood character that contribute to the high quality of life in Fort Morgan is important in attracting and retaining the residents, businesses, and visitors that sustain the community's economy.

In general, land uses should be efficient and sustainable; support a multimodal transportation network; provide housing choices conveniently located near jobs, schools, shops, and parks; minimize conflicts between incompatible uses; and plan development in areas of existing and planned infrastructure. The Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map are the primary tools that Fort Morgan uses to influence the mix of land uses, so it is important to continually evaluate what changes need to be made to ensure that the community grows the way it desires.

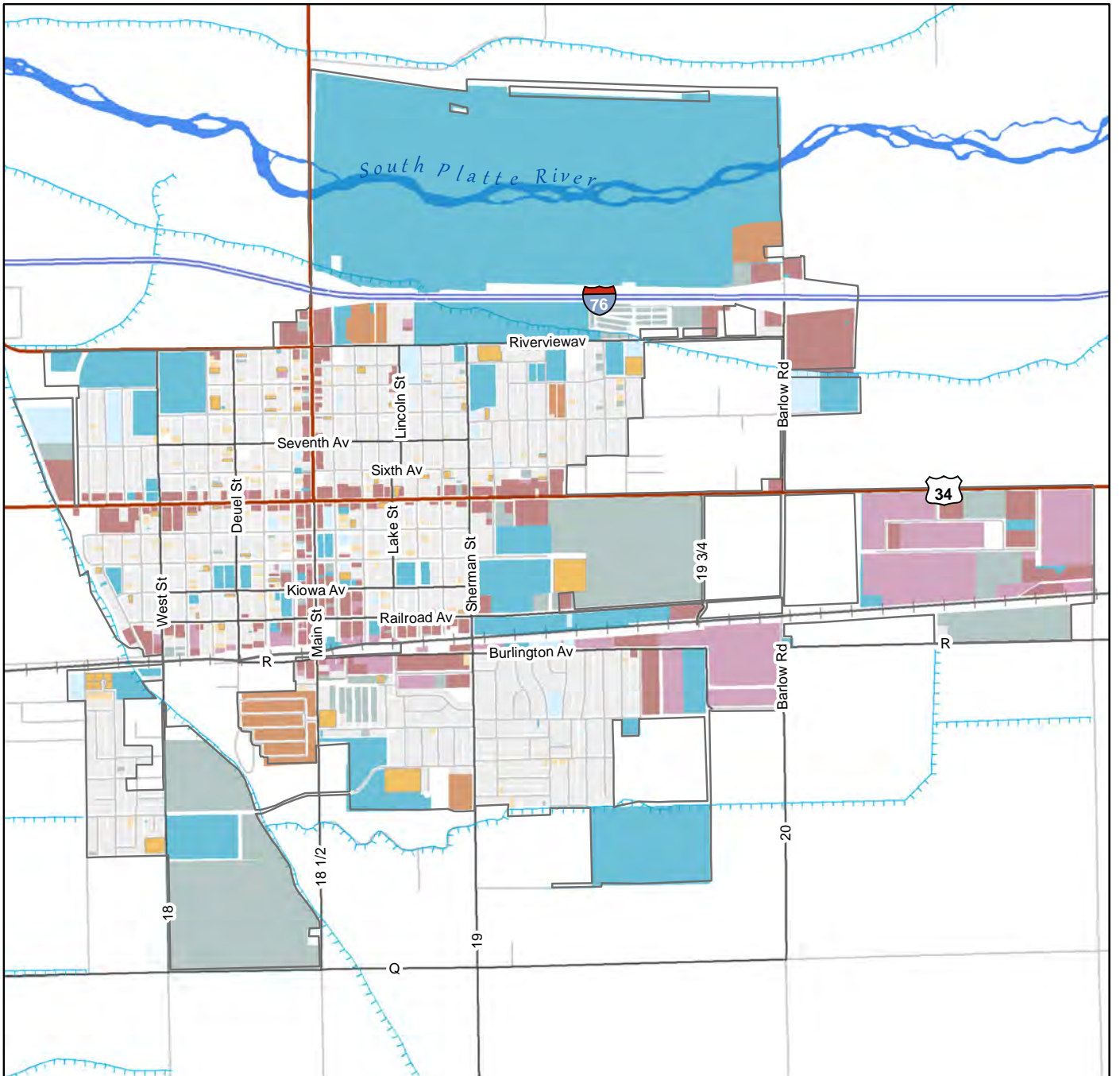
The services and amenities of Fort Morgan serve more than just the city limits. Residential development north of the city, Log Lane Village, and new housing to the west and southwest of Fort Morgan access the City's schools, retail opportunities, and recreational facilities.

Development Pattern

Fort Morgan is a free-standing, rural, Eastern Front Range community. The City covers approximately 6 square miles, but has an expanded service area that includes the surrounding areas, including north of I-76 where the municipal golf course and airport are located.

I-76 runs east-west along the northern edge of the City with two interchanges within the City. US 34 runs directly through the community and connects to I-76 3 miles west of the City. Directly north of I-76 lies the South Platte River and its floodplain. A large open space area and Riverside Park are located along the River. Developed parks, as well as schools, are scattered throughout the community.





	Single Family		Public
	Duplex/Triplex		Commercial
	Multi-Family		Industrial
	Manufactured Housing		Vacant
	Exempt		

Existing Land Use

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles






The majority of land within the City is built out, but expansion opportunities exist into the surrounding agricultural land and undeveloped, under-utilized County parcels. Historically, annexations have occurred in a reactive manner creating a somewhat haphazard pattern. However, in recent years annexations have been completed in larger blocks to streamline and promote future development. Refining the City boundary and minimizing the differences within the municipality will help resolve issues of compatible land uses, enforcement, and maintenance of infrastructure (e.g. roads).

Historic Downtown along Main Street is the focus of events and public services, including the Library, Museum and City Hall, and recently received major streetscape improvements.

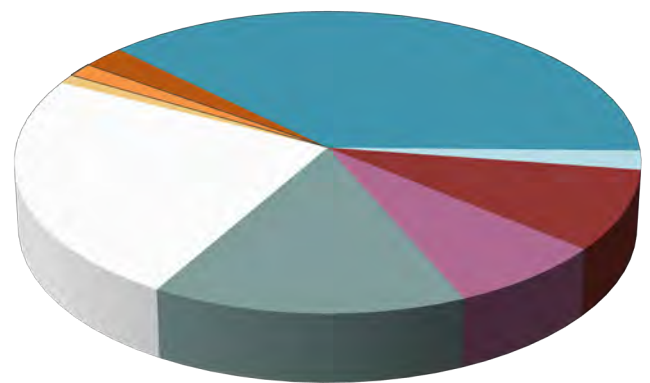
Land Use Mix

The majority of land within the City, 39.5%, is categorized as a public (municipal, governmental, public school, recreation, etc.) land use. Another 2% is tax exempt land uses such as religious, medical, and private school facilities. This includes all school and public facilities, and the 300 plus acres of parks and open space. Not included in this acreage are the municipally run Quail Dunes Golf Course and the Municipal Airport as they are outside the City limits.

The second most predominate land use is single-family residential, which makes up 23.6% of the City. Existing commercial land uses (retail, services, lodging, etc.), which comprise 8.5% of the land, are mainly located along US 34, Main Street, and along E. Railroad Ave. Industrial and manufacturing uses, 7.3%, are primarily located in the eastern sections of the City along the railroad and within the industrial park. Industrial uses consist of the dairy, beef, and oil and gas support services, which have long supported the community.

Almost 15% of land within City Limits is vacant. The majority of this land was recently annexed into the city.

CURRENT LAND USE ACREAGE



- Single Family
23.6%
- Duplex/Triplex
0.9%
- Multi-Family
1.4%
- Manufactured Housing
2.3%
- Public
39.5%
- Exempt
2.0%
- Commercial
8.5%
- Industrial
7.3%
- Vacant
14.4%

Growth Management

The majority of recent development has occurred in close proximity to, but, outside of the City limits. Currently, utility services are provided outside of City limits at no extra cost. This places limitations on the tax base to the City, which in turn is unable to recover costs.

The ability to continue to absorb potential future growth will be dependent on the ability to provide utility services. Prioritizing development that minimizes conflicts with existing and future uses in Fort Morgan and the County will be imperative in the future.



Planning Authority

The City Engineering & Public Works Director oversees the Planning and Zoning Department responsible for these duties in the City of Fort Morgan. The department also provides land use and development-related services to the general public, landowners, developers, builders, and their consultants. The City also has a Planning Commission that consists of at least seven members appointed by City Council. Their purpose is to provide citizen input into the planning and growth of the City and guide orderly development using current ordinances and regulations.

Citizen's Perspective

Future development should avoid the floodplain as much as possible as well as take into consideration the availability of utilities. Stakeholders also expressed the importance and need for better coordination between the City and County when planning for growth.

It is important to look at each demographic within Fort Morgan and understand how to relate to each sector and emphasize their value during the planning process, so that Fort Morgan will provide each resident with a genuine sense of community and inclusion.



APPENDIX

D



INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT

TO BE PROVIDED AT LATER DATE.