

Florence Master Plan

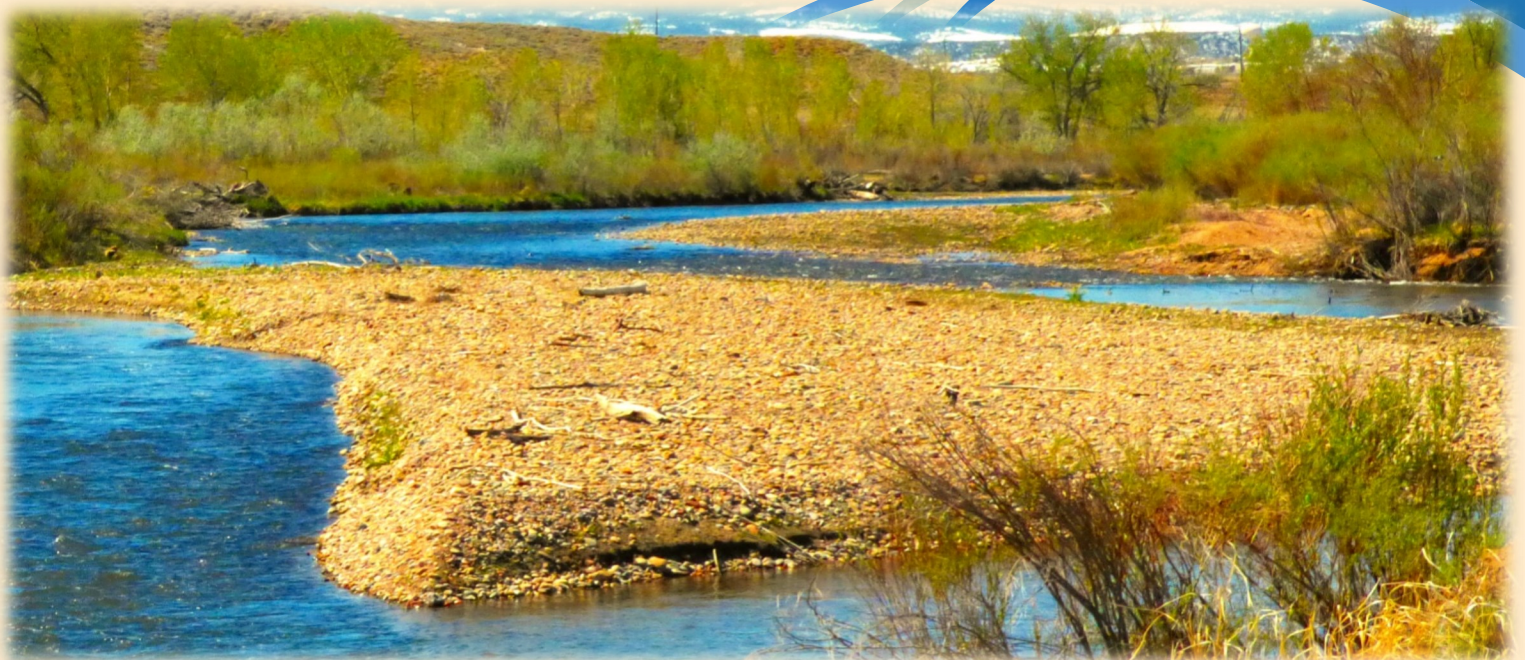


“To promote and improve our quality of living, enhance our sense of community, create economic prosperity and preserve the integrity of our small-town agricultural & mountain heritage and maintain our thriving historic downtown . We are committed to providing an excellence in services for all citizens, businesses, and visitors through constant improvement and determination. We strive to sustain the public trust through open and responsive government, and we encourage public participation from our citizens and businesses.”



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Florence Master Plan

A VISION FOR FLORENCE

To promote and improve our quality of living, enhance our sense of community, create economic prosperity and preserve the integrity of our small-town agricultural and mountain heritage and maintain our thriving historic downtown. We are committed to providing an excellence in services for all citizens, businesses, and visitors through constant improvement and determination. We strive to sustain the public trust through open and responsive government, and we encourage public participation from our citizens and businesses.

The Remarkable Recent Past and the ‘Florennaissance’

Florence is widely known in Colorado and beyond as the Antique Capital of Colorado. In 1999, the Fox Family began a slow revolution downtown whereby vacant and underutilized buildings were restored and turned into antique and retail stores, as well as supporting restaurants. The energy attracted additional merchants & outside residents who moved downtown, restored buildings and created numerous upstairs apartments. Main Street of Florence then became a premiere location for affordable antiques. These efforts came after a massive community drive to become the location for the new “Supermax” prison located just outside the city’s boundary in the mid-1990s. The federal government chose to locate the facility near Florence and created a multiyear building boom. The resulting influx of people meant that new subdivisions were warranted and Sumo/Bear Paw, High Meadows, and Last Mile Estates were developed. New commercial development was seen for the first time in many years, mostly locating on the Highway 115 corridor on the east side of town, most notably a locally owned grocery store. Since the early 2000s Florence has continued to attract more residents and business, while additional properties are being restored creating one of Colorado’s best small towns where you can experience history then take some home with you.

Previous Master Planning Efforts in Florence

The City of Florence has been conducting Master Plans since at least the 1980s and probably long before that, although few records remain from those initiatives. In 1984, the Florence Master Plan focused on downtown redevelopment and historic preservation and revitalization of downtown buildings. In 2006, a large effort was conducted by City Staff and the Planning Commission to create the newest Florence Master Plan.

Master Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Master Plan is to articulate the vision for the Florence community. This plan will help decision makers evaluate proposals and form the comprehensive strategy for guiding future development and managing the growth of the Town in a manner that is consistent with their vision. It is intended to serve as a guide for City staff, Boards and Commissions, developers and citizens to achieve the goals set forth in this Plan while providing direction to other municipalities and governmental entities within a three-mile area of Florence.

Florence Master Plan

What is this Document?

This document is the City of Florence Master Plan and community profile. The official Master Plan was adopted by City Council June 5, 2017 and is a green two sided document. This product is a closer examination of the City of Florence and our goals and accomplishments, for both newcomers and longtime residents. This document welcomes people to our great small town and helps them understand our goals, aspirations, and challenges for the next 5 to 10 years in context of current conditions. This document will help the reader understand not only the goals of the City of Florence but it celebrates the recent accomplishments of City Staff and citizens as this is one of the hardest working small towns in Colorado. This City believes in accountability to its citizens and creative problem solving as a community and this document demonstrates those examples. It is the type of place you can address city council and sometimes get a sidewalk fixed or a tree trimmed in the same week. We also highlight the general condition of the content area in a one page overview that exposes the reader to what is occurring within that area, these pages give context to the goals and welcome you into what is occurring which we feel is quite a bit for such a small town.

What's With the Antiques?

Florence is widely known as the Antique Capitol of Colorado and is home to at least 15 antique and second hand stores. There is a strong Merchant's Association of Downtown business owners that meets monthly and sponsors events such as the Florence Car Show and Halloween Strick of Treat. Antique Row runs mainly down Main Street and it is a great place to experience the history of the architecture and then take some history home.

What's With the Oil Logos?

Yes, Florence is home to one of the earliest Oil strikes west of The Mississippi. The earliest strike was near Canon City but the Florence Oil field that heavily developed in the 1890s is one of the longest producing oil fields in the US. Though no longer visually noticeable oil wells are still producing in town as well as south of the City limits. Oil, as well as a long history with coal development in the surrounding Coal Towns (3 incorporated towns of Coal Creek, Rockvale, Williamsburg), demonstrates Florence has a long working-class history of energy extraction that new businesses are highlighting in their marketing.

What's With the Supermax/Prisons?

The United States Federal Prison ADX, generally called Supermax is located just OUTSIDE the City limits of Florence and it employs 1100 workers who come from as far as Pueblo and Colorado Springs. Finished in 1994 ADX now houses some of the nation's top criminals. The prison is one of 13 in Fremont County. And while the region is known for this, I think most believe the feel of Florence is not that of a 'prison town' but more a welcoming small town. The high-security nature means the facility is very low key and there have been no escapes.

Florence Master Plan

Acknowledgements

City Staff: Mike Patterson (City Manager), Wade Broadhead (Planning Director), Sasha Dierdorff (Administrative Assistant), Samantha Bauby (Youth Advisor)

City Council: Keith Ore (Mayor), Richard Upton, Pat Smith, Larry Baker, Paul Villagrana, Charlette Henager, Mike Vendetti

Planning Commission: Daniel Peterson, Matt Bowles, John Miller, Jackie Chester, Gail Nelson

Photos: Carol Gebhart, where noted.

Amending the Plan

This Master Plan is a citizen-driven document for the Planning Commission and City Council to use to direct decision making for the City. As the community grows, the Plan must be able to adapt accordingly. The Planning Commission, City Council, and City staff should re-evaluate and update the Plan in response to major changes in the community every three to five years. Citizens may also request amendments to the Plan. Both the written and graphic components of the Master Plan may be amended. The Planning Commission must review all requests to amend the Plan. If an amendment is suggested, the City Council and Planning Commission must determine if the suggested change is in the best interest of the City and hold a public hearing regarding the amendment. An amendment to the Master Plan must be done by an adopted resolution of the City Council. The Master Plan may be amended provided the following criteria are met:

1. The amendment improves the implementation of one or more of the goals, and strategies of the Master Plan.
2. The amendment will not pose a detrimental impact on existing or planned City facilities, services, or transportation facilities.
3. Significant community concerns regarding the proposed change have been adequately addressed.

3-Mile Plan

Colorado State Law (CRS §31-23-206) provides the framework for “master plans” or comprehensive plans and outlines the authority and duties of the City’s Planning Commission to make, amend and carry out a master plan for the physical development of Florence. This document complies with the State statute by providing for planned and orderly development and balancing basic human needs for a changing population with legitimate environmental concerns. The Plan is designed to work with other agencies by encouraging Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) and other area plans that address all the concerns of nearby municipalities and government organizations. This Master Plan is intended to serve as the Three Mile Plan required by CRS 31-12-105.

Florence Master Plan

Community Engagement

Imagine Florence Master Plan Efforts-

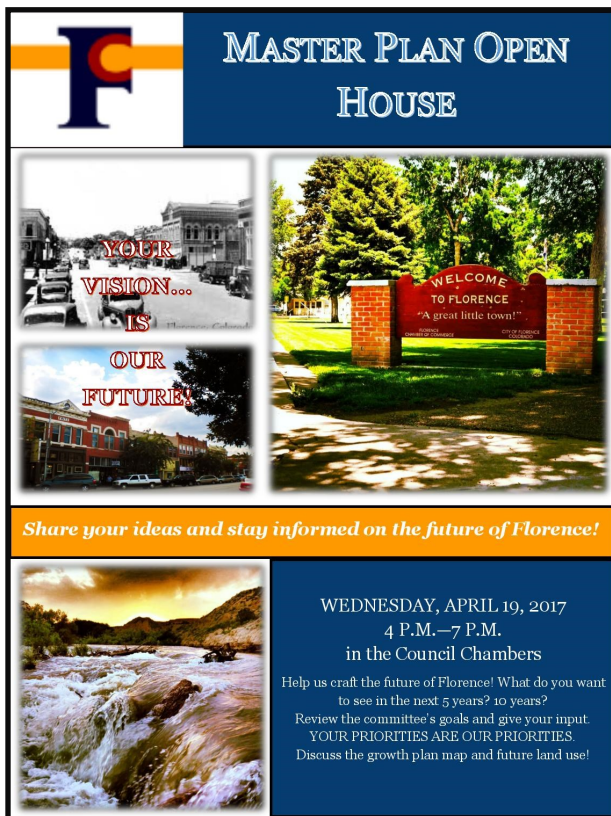
The Imagine Florence current planning process began in the fall of 2014 with a ‘soft opening’ speaker’s series designed to get people thinking about bigger picture concepts and issues in Colorado and the United States. Matt Goebel of Clarion associates Denver spoke on “Imagine Change” as well as meeting with high school students interested in planning. Further talks were held in early 2015:

Imagine Preservation, Michelle Pearson and Patrick Eidman, History Colorado

Imagine Transportation, Colorado Department of Transportation

Imagine Community, Juan Morales, Poet Professor at Colorado State University-Pueblo

In June of 2016, the City of Florence contracted with the Department of Local Affairs on a planning grant to hire a consultant to assist staff in writing the plan. Community Matters of Littleton was contracted to conduct the work and after two days of intensive outreach in March 2016. The City then transitioned to McCool Development a Planning firm out of Denver to assist in completing the plan. The result was two intensive days of outreach at the Florence Rotary Club, and various stakeholder groups and City staff. The feedback from the March outreach efforts was combined with a Mobile Planning Tour on August 11, 2016, where staff from McCool and the Planning Director visited the Farmers Market, Coffee Shop, Rotary Club, Public Library, Planning Commission meeting, trivia at the local brewery, and the Sr. Center. The second planning effort had a heart of Florence map and a priority dot planning board to indicate citizen’s preferences for areas of focus in the next 5 years. The final Master Plan Open House was held April 19th, 2017; about 30 people attended and it was advertised in the paper, and via radio and social media. Updates were discussed at numerous City Council workshops and meetings from mid-2016 to 2017. The plan was adopted by the Planning Commission June 1, 2017m and ratified by City Council on June 5, 2017. Prior to the ratification, the plan was noticed and posted to the City’s website for 3 weeks.



The poster features a large blue 'F' logo with a yellow bar at the top left. The main title 'MASTER PLAN OPEN HOUSE' is in white on a blue background. Below the title are two images: one showing a street scene with the text 'YOUR VISION... IS OUR FUTURE!' and another showing a 'WELCOME TO FLORENCE' sign. At the bottom, there is a call to action: 'Share your ideas and stay informed on the future of Florence!' and event details: 'WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2017 4 P.M.—7 P.M. in the Council Chambers'. A small image of a river is in the bottom left corner.



Florence, Colorado Community Profile

(2014 Data)

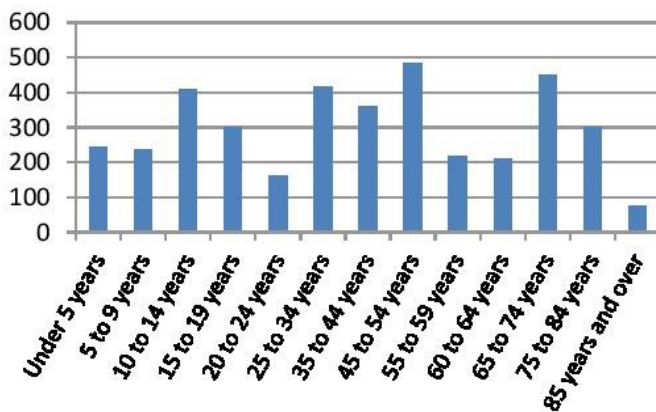
Population

	Florence	Fremont County
Total	3,875	46,879
Male	1,916	27,405
Female	1,959	19,474

Age of Population

Median Age	39.4 years	43.3 years
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Florence Population by Age Group



Projected Population

Population is expected to grow at 1.3% per year.

Year	Fremont County
2020	50,190
2025	53,876
2030	57,348

Income

	Florence	Fremont County
Median Household Income	\$34,119	\$40,569
Mean Household Income	\$46,135	\$52,361
Median Family Income	\$50,536	\$50,433
Mean Family Income	\$57,772	\$62,389
Per capita income	\$18,445	\$19,161

Education

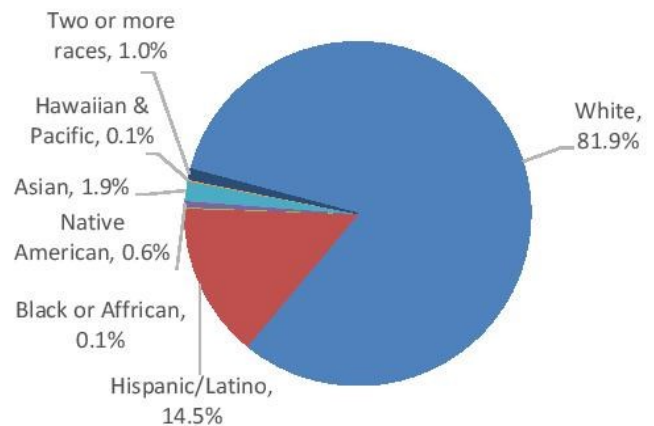
	Florence	Fremont County
School Enrollment¹		
Nursery school	37	576
Kindergarten	30	539
Elementary School	547	3,546
High School (9-12)	238	2,116
College or grad school	186	1,882

Educational Attainment¹

(Population 25 years or older)

High school graduate	752	13,025
Some college	868	9,071
Associate degree	207	2,373
Bachelor degree	310	3,549
Graduate/professional	106	2,124

Race and Ethnicity (Florence)



Stable Community

87.2% of Florence's residents have lived within Florence, or Fremont County, for at least 1 Year.

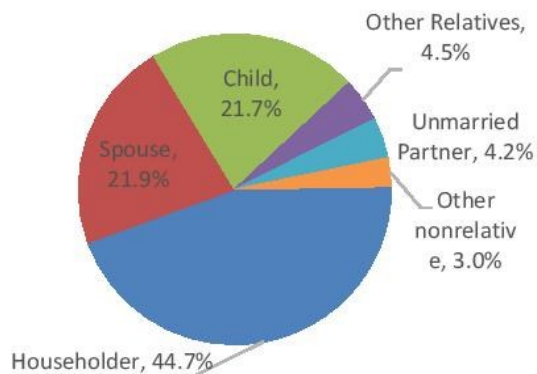
Florence, Colorado Community Profile

(2014 Data)

Households

	Florence	Fremont County
Population	3,875	46,879
In households	3,790	35,885
In group quarters	115	10,994
Total households	1,551	16,600
Family households	985	10,670
Living alone	398	4,975
65 years and older	234	2,642
Average household size	2.44	2.16
Average family size	2.98	2.89

Household Composition (Florence)



Housing Supply

Sales Tax

Ti
Colorado: 2.9%
Fremont County: 2.5%
City of Florence: 2.5%

Total: 7.9%

Labor Force

	Florence	Fremont County
Civilian labor force	1,577	15,437
Employed	1,348	14,114
Unemployed	229	1,433
Unemployment rate	14.6%	9.3%
Unemployment rate		3.5%

Employment

	Florence	Fremont County
Employed Labor force	1,348	14,114
Agriculture, Mining	1.0%	3.8%
Construction	12.0%	7.1%
Manufacturing	4.1%	4.1%
Wholesale	1.6%	1.1%
Retail	12.4%	13.5%
Transport, Utilities	2.4%	4.4%
Information	1.8%	1.0%
Finance, real estate	2.7%	4.7%
Professional	7.7%	7.2%
Education, health	22.6%	23.8%
Tourism (food service, accommodations, recreation, and entertainment)	7.7%	9.1%
Other services	7.1%	5.1%
Public administration	16.9%	15.1%

Occupation

	Florence	Fremont County
Management, business	27.1%	28.3%
Service	38.9%	30.0%
Sales and Office	20.2%	22.2%
Natural Resources, Const., Maintenance	11.3%	12.0%
Production and Transportation	2.5%	7.5%

Data Disclaimer: The data in this profile are compiled from multiple sources and are intended for informational purposes only. Community Matters Inc. (CMI) assumes no responsibility or legal liability for the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of any information in this profile.

Data Sources: Data are 2014 data from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5 year estimate (2010-2014) except projected population which is by Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) in 2015.



Community Matters Inc.



FLORENCE, A GREAT LITTLE TOWN COLORADO

719-784-4848 | florencecolorado.org

WHY YOU WILL WANT TO...

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY

Florence has all the charm and close-knit feelings of a small town, without losing out on amenities. From outdoor activities to arts and antiques, Florence has a little something for everyone. Be prepared to be greeted by name and with a smile- we are all neighbors here!

INVEST IN FLORENCE

The Florence downtown district is known for high quality antiques, a growing draw for foodies, and opportunities for service, retail, and restaurant. If you are looking for somewhere you will get to know your customers and really feel like a part of the community, Florence is just the place for you.

Whether it's a new home or business, Florence welcomes you. The city has an Urban Renewal Authority, Historic Tax Credits, low water tap fees and building fees as well as a professional courteous staff willing to help you build your dream here.

COMMUNITY ASSETS

- THREE GREAT PARKS IN TOWN
- ANTIQUE CAPITOL OF COLORADO!
- BOUTIQUES AND SPECIALTY SHOPS
- CONCERTS IN THE PARK
- EXCITING PARADES: 4TH OF JULY FESTIVAL AND PIONEER PARADE.
- SAFE COMMUNITY
- WEEKLY FARMERS MARKET (SEASONAL)
- COMMUNITY POOL

BUSINESS ASSETS

- DOZENS OF NEW BUSINESSES
- SHOP LOCAL!
- FLORENCE ROTARY CLUB
- CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

RECREATION

- HIKING AND BIKING TRAILS
- RIVER PARK
- MOUNTAIN PARK
- WHITE WATER RAFTING
- ZIP-LINING
- JEEP TOURS
- HOT SPRINGS
- HUNTING
- CAMPING
- FISHING



EXPERIENCE

OUR STABLE COMMUNITY

With the cost of living at 10% below the national average and the affordability of homes in town, it's no wonder 87% of Florence residents have lived here for at least one year. The elementary, middle and (very new) high school for the city are all here in town, making Florence a great place for families.

TOURISM AND ACTIVITIES

Just minutes from the breathtaking Royal Gorge, a short trek to the beautiful Sangre De Mountains, and surrounded by bucket-list worthy experiences... there's plenty to do around town!

Stop by any of our great restaurants in town and do some shopping while you're here.

COME SEE FOR YOURSELF!

If you are looking for a sense of community, an exciting new adventure, or just a beautiful place to call home; Florence is just waiting to be discovered by you!

LIVING IN FLORENCE

AVERAGE HOME COST: \$123,700

POPULATION: 3,865

MEDIAN AGE: 39.4

TASTE OF FLORENCE

CULINARY CAPITOL OF FREMONT COUNTY!

SUSHI • STEAKHOUSES • BBQ • PIZZA • HOMESTYLE DINING • CHINESE • BAKERIES • COFFEE SHOPS • TAVERNS, BARS, AND PUBS.

NEARBY

CANON CITY- 10 MINUTES

PUEBLO-40 MINUTES

COLORADO SPRINGS- 45 MINUTES

DENVER- 90 MINUTES

MONARCH MTN- 1 HR 45 MIN



CONTACT INFORMATION

FLORENCE CITY HALL

719-784-4848

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

719-784-3544

SENIOR COMMUNITY CENTER

719-784-6493



Florence Master Plan

Vision

“To promote and improve our quality of living, enhance our sense of community, create economic prosperity and preserve the integrity of our small-town agricultural & mountain heritage and maintain our thriving historic downtown . We are committed to providing an excellence in services for all citizens, businesses, and visitors through constant improvement and determination. We strive to sustain the public trust through open and responsive government, and we encourage public participation from our citizens and businesses.”

Goals

Our goals are broken down into seven categories, listed below, aimed at improving the community for years to come. These are the “big picture” issues that City Staff, City Council, and community members would like to see addressed.

Strategy

These are the actions that need to be taken to address each goal area. These strategies will help us track our progress at accomplishing our goals.

“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning”

- Benjamin Franklin



Historic photograph of Downtown Florence.

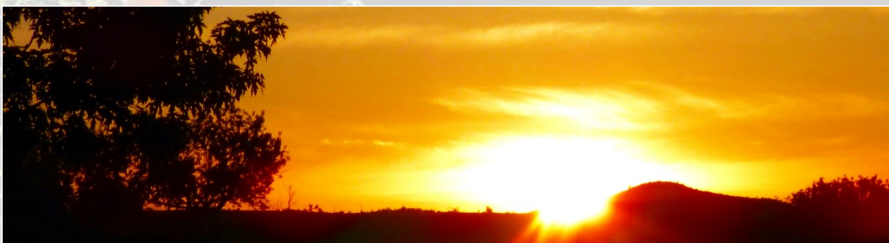
Goal Sections

- Parks & Recreation
- Youth & Education
- Economic Development
- Arts, Culture & Tourism
- Health and Safety
- Infrastructure & Transportation
- Growth and Land Use

Parks and Recreation

The City of Florence owns seven parks/recreation facilities, six inside the City boundaries and one outside for a total of 38.19 acres in the City and 252.19 total acres. The parks system is maintained by the Public Works department. Pioneer Park is the showcase park, and contains a public swimming pool and acts as the site for numerous annual festivals and the summer farmers market. The park system offers a wide range of amenities and special purpose venues across the City from horseshoes and sand volleyball at Pioneer Park to softball fields at Wilcox Park. The City has utilized limited funds and grants for improvements at Pioneer and Lions Park over the years and a special tax for parks and recreation to keep the pool operational was passed in 2005 and reallocated for streets and public improvements in 2015. The City has two unique recreation opportunities not common to many other small municipalities in the Florence River and Mountain Park. Florence River Park was annexed into the City in 2016 and contains 20 acres along the Arkansas River and is in planning to be the terminus of the Arkansas Riverwalk Extension Trail. This natural habitat along the River is great for picnics hiking or fishing or slow, calm, family-style rafting. Florence Mountain Park located just south of Florence on highway 67 is 214 acres and on par with Pueblo Mountain Park, with great access to, mountain environments and adjacent trails on BLM and Forest Service lands.

As for recreation, there is no formal Parks Department or comprehensive recreation program in the City of Florence, although the City does maintain a public swimming pool at Pioneer Park for the Summer season and lessons are generally offered there. Residents may utilize Canon City Area Parks and Recreation Programs in Canon City at out-of-City rates. This has prompted citizens to form recreational clubs and groups including soccer, community bike rides, and softball. The City understands this is one of the priorities for citizens and it has been discussed for decades. Merging with Canon City would mean giving up management or ownership of Florence facilities and this is something the City has not wanted to do. Recently, the City has been working with the School District on agreements to share facilities for clubs and activities. As for trails, the City has a limited trail network and no on-street bike lanes, though older historic streets are very wide. In 2015, the City adopted the Eastern Fremont County Open Space and Trails Master Plan that calls for an extension to the existing Arkansas Riverwalk trail from western Canon City to Florence River Park.



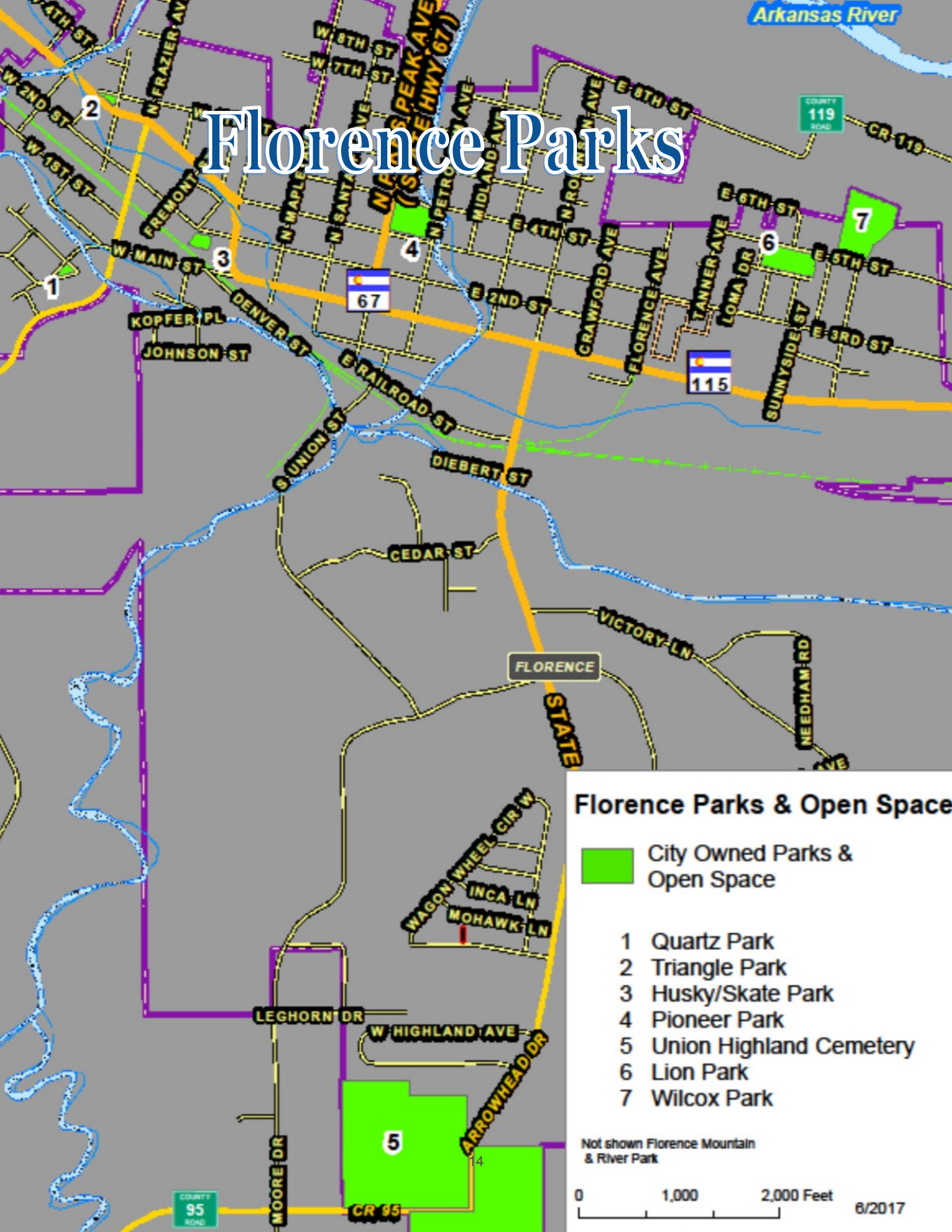
Background: Florence Mountain Park. Sunset above by Carol Gebhart.

Goal: Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities.

Strategies:

1. Complete the non-motorized trail from Canon City to Florence.
2. Develop an interconnected system of parks and trails that links Florence with regional systems, enhances local trail systems and offers bike and pedestrian opportunities.
3. Evaluate existing park amenities and seek development of additional park resources to offer recreational opportunities for all residents and visitors of Florence.
4. Explore enhanced recreational opportunities and programs or a district for citizens.
5. Seek grant funding from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) to assist with trail enhancements, recreational facility improvements and programming.
6. Continue and expand Tree City USA Efforts.
7. Identify and remove dying trees and make serious efforts to replace the aging tree canopy across the City.
8. Work with Fremont County and landowners to implement the Arkansas River Opportunity Area as designated on the Future Land Use Plan.

Florence Parks

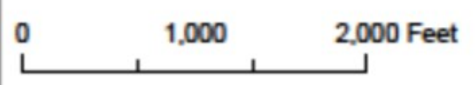


Florence Parks & Open Space

City Owned Parks & Open Space

- 1 Quartz Park
- 2 Triangle Park
- 3 Husky/Skate Park
- 4 Pioneer Park
- 5 Union Highland Cemetery
- 6 Lion Park
- 7 Wilcox Park

Not shown Florence Mountain & River Park





Two Florence Police Officers with the Girl's Huskies Soccer Team they coached, 2017.

Education & Youth

One of the top three responses from public outreach was that citizens care very deeply about engaging the communities' youth and believe in strong education. Community members understand without a well-prepared youth there is limited long-term community resiliency. From City officials, to retiree empty-nesters, all understand a strong local education system is part of a well-rounded economic development strategy- as well as an opportunity for leadership and advancement for local students. Despite having a slightly older average age and the presence of an increasing number of retirees, Florence seeks to support their youth and foster leaders. One of the primary goals of the outreach was the creation of a recreation center for youth to spend their time. Florence does have a downtown library and a Boys and Girls Club, but both youth respondents and citizens suggested a more comprehensive recreation center was needed near downtown. Respondents also suggested strengthening ties between the City, service organizations, and the school for community service projects. Since 2016, the City has had a youth member on both the preservation and planning commission. Prior to this, community members working with the ACE program & grassroots organization and high school completed numerous community service projects such as food drives, clean-ups, and landscaping. The Florence Rotary hosts a Fun Fest for graduating seniors to alleviate the dangers that come on graduation night and the Florence Police Department has an Explorers program open to local teens.

Recent Accomplishments

- Rotary Fun Fest night for graduation of high school students
- Land-Marking Project with the Elementary School Student Council
- Hosting 2017 Colorado Preserve Youth Summit
- City Planner is chair of the Colorado American Planning Association Youth Engagement Committee
- Mock Interviews with 8th Grade students
- School Resource Officers work closely with local schools and students well beyond public safety functions.

Goal:

Create tomorrow's leaders and successful citizens and plan for community resiliency by engaging youth in community issues and projects.

Strategies:

- Focus recreational activities for youth; indoor and outdoor.
- Create and maintain partnerships between schools, city, and citizens for shared projects and mentoring.
- Continue to engage youth on real and advisory committees for the city
- Continue to employ youth for summer jobs and look at additional employment or internship programs.

Economic Development

The primary goal encountered during two years of feedback during the Master Plan process was for the City to facilitate the growth and expansion of jobs. Florence is now well known as the Antique Capital of Colorado with over 15 different antique stores, and while this industry brings many outsiders to the town but people wanted a wider array of employment opportunities. Beyond Downtown: the grocery store, hardware store, and motorsports retailers are primary retail sales generators. Government jobs: the City, County and surrounding state and federal prisons employ many residents as well as the extractive & construction industries. While Florence is becoming home to numerous retirees, many families and citizens struggle to find meaningful work or are underemployed. Since the Great Recession of 2008, the unemployment rate in Fremont County has bounced back to about 5.5%. In Florence, there was a month-to-month sales tax increased for 16 straight months, indicating conditions in the City have been improving for at least the last two years. Small-scale entrepreneurship- especially in the field of restaurant and entertainment- has blossomed in Florence. New eateries appear to be thriving, making Florence the new Culinary Capitol of Fremont County. Despite the growth in the downtown core and steady numbers, many citizens want better jobs. Furthermore, with a regional water system, additional commercial users help ease the debt retirement service on all citizens in the Regional Water system. Economic growth is then a priority for multiple reasons. Florence is in a unique position to grow “all things big and small”, that supports smaller, locally-owned business in downtown and maintain a unique historic core while looking at larger users for bigger plots south of downtown or along the highways that run in and around Florence City limits. Florence has the possibility of growing economically without losing the charm that makes the City a tourist/antique destination. Whether it’s new greenfield development or historic rehabilitation of a downtown building, Florence has development areas for multiple commercial sectors. The City’s #1 goal is to create a welcoming atmosphere to do business and reduce the barriers to starting or expanding commercial and industrial endeavors.

Florence has been ambitious on economic development on a number of fronts. First off, a knowledgeable and friendly staff works with business leads and ensures reliable processes for applicants and business prospects. We like to think a small town atmosphere pervades economic development efforts where City officials will meet prospects almost any time to work through new business ideas and plans. Second, the City aggressively contacts business leads and touts its cheaper land costs, good weather, and plentiful water supply for development. Third, through this Master Plan effort, the City is working on modernizing their zoning codes and general development rules to encourage uses that citizens want, and make development straight-forward and predictable. The future land use map and the growth map will signal to existing business (as well as outsiders) the areas the City wants to see grow with commercial and industrial development.

Recent Accomplishments

- 16 out of the last 18 months of record sales tax revenue collection
- Creation of an Urban Renewal Authority
- USDA Study of Industrial Feasibility
- Business Friendly pragmatic approach from staff
- National Register District Downtown for tax credits
- Intensive study of the floodplain to reduce floodplain and positively impact property values.



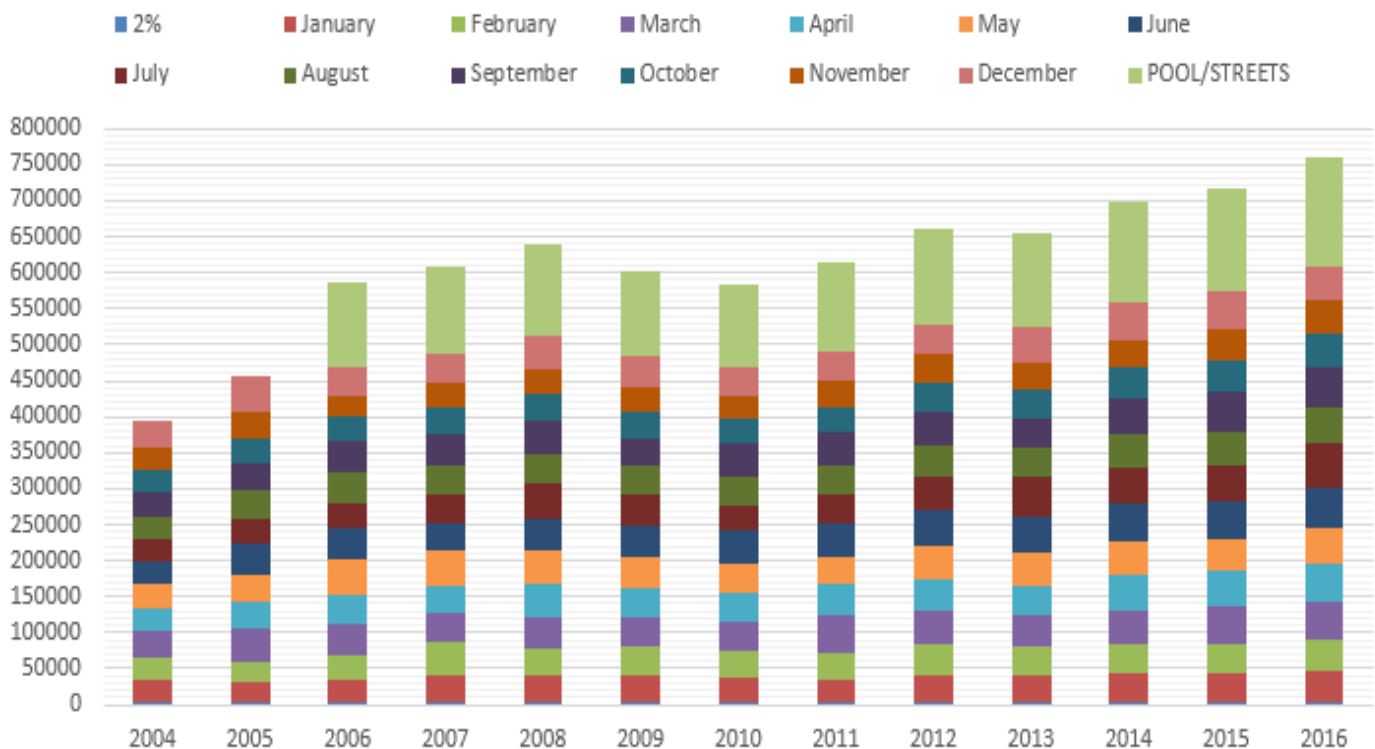
Economic Development, Continued

Goal: Expand economic opportunities for citizens by attracting and growing new jobs for various economic levels while focusing on, stable, long term primary employment.

Strategies:

- Closely examine the creation of an economic benefit package for new or expanding businesses.
- Increased marketing for business owners.
- Target businesses that require water and create good paying jobs.
- Maintain and strengthen “Antique Capital of Colorado” brand
- Develop ancillary complementary businesses downtown to expand the range of services and goods available in Florence.
- Develop and expand entertainment & culinary opportunities in Florence to extend functional hours of operation and utility for visitors and citizens alike.
- Examine a pedestrian plaza or more active space for festivals someplace along Front Street and Pike’s Peak Ave.
- Examine new parking regulations and plans for additional parking as well as ways to activate other downtown spaces such as alleyways.
- Find ways to fund the installation of pedestrian streetlights and other amenities recommended by the Downtown Colorado Inc. 2015 plan.
- Create and utilize urban renewal districts to facilitate redevelopment of downtown and East Florence.

City of Florence Retail Sales Tax Collections



Arts, Culture & Tourism

The City of Florence has experienced an “arts and cultural revival” since the late 1990s, if not earlier. While it’s difficult to define the scope of Arts and Culture, Florence has a wide range of offerings for a city of its size. Artistic venues as well as festivals provide a wide range of quality of life enhancements for citizens and become an economic driver from sales and a draw from surrounding areas. Theatre was active in town previously but has diminished. Art galleries have recently moved into downtown and a community arts and cultural center, The Belltower, has expanded to provide not only a venue but also education classes for Florence. In addition to the galleries on Main Street, entertainment venues are evolving in Florence. The Rialto Theatre revival is now in full-swing and plans will provide a multi-functional venue for different shows upon completion in 2018 or 19, having earned their permanent certificate of occupancy for the first floor in 2017. In 2016, Florence hosted Robert Redford and Jane Fonda for the filming of a Netflix Movie “Our Souls at Night” in Florence and Colorado Springs. The City hopes to work with additional studios who are looking for a friendly small town. Events such as Paint the Town have been going on since 2005 and have attracted artists from around the state and region. Visual signs of an increasing arts presence are now visible in downtown via art installations and an impressive array of carved trees across the residential neighborhoods of Florence converting a dying stock of trees into community amenities.

Finally, Florence has become a hotbed of festival activity. Florence hosts annual events, like the Pioneer Days Celebration, Fourth of July Festival and Wet and Dry Parade, annual Car Show and the Steampunk Festival, providing numerous activities for families and new markets for local artists. The arrival of the Florence Brewery has also added new festivals to the rotation and a desire for more indoor-outdoor public plaza space to host events located near Pikes Peak and Front Street. As for tourism, the City continues to participate in the Fremont County Tourism Council and we work closely with that group to share lodging tax for promotion of the City. The City also understands there is a severe lack of lodging in Florence and is working with developers, investors, and owners to try and rehabilitate existing historic buildings or add new units or buildings so visitors can enjoy overnight stays in Florence.



Jane Fonda and Robert Redford in front of the Two Sisters Restaurant during the filming of “Our Souls At Night,” summer of 2016.(LEFT) Bell Tower Cultural Center, now offering classes, performances, and events in various art forms. (RIGHT)

Arts, Culture & Tourism, continued.

Goal 1: Create a vibrant art scene and infuse art into numerous aspects of ways of life in Florence.

Strategies:

1. Increase participation in art events, both by consumers and by artists (increase attendance at every concert, art show, art walk, drama performance, etc.).
2. Increase and coordinate marketing efforts (cohesive plans, consistent marketing, professional approach, further reach).
3. Encourage opportunities for developing artists - artist in residence programs, studio space, increased exhibition possibilities, tutoring.
4. Improve economic incentives for artists - greater sales, jobs available in the arts, recognition of arts in other career areas such as graphic arts, teaching, performance, etc.
5. Increase marketing to key segments outside Florence for continued tourism.
6. Support enhanced festival schedules and expand existing mainstays such as 4th of July, Pioneer Day, and the Florence Car Show.
7. Work to develop additional lodging units and overnight options close to downtown Florence.

Goal 2: Preserve and celebrate the unique historic character of Florence.

Strategies:

1. Complete or adopt a preservation plan.
2. Complete a City wide historic context and neighborhood study.
3. Work toward user-friendly apps, brochures, and other ways to make the history and architecture of the town easy to access by residents and visitors.
4. Assist owners of key redevelopment projects downtown such as the Elks Building, Rialto, and McCandless.



Painting by local artist, Svetlana Piltingsrud

Historic Preservation

The City of Florence contains an incredibly intact 1890's Progressive Era Historic Downtown Commercial District and is surrounded by a stable residential historic housing spanning over 100 years of development. Fiercely proud of the unique history as the earliest Oil field west of the Mississippi, Florence is fond of its industrial and commercial history which is still well represented in its existing architectural gems. The City has been relatively late to the process of historic preservation but has undertaken various efforts of indirect preservation since the 1970s including rehabbing the D and R G RR Depot and operating the Old Carnegie Library. Starting in the 1970's and picking up in the 1990's and 2000's, residents and business owners have restored buildings across town and created a pleasant downtown core for shopping and architectural appreciation. Despite a groundswell of individuals restoring buildings, 'formal' recognition has been slow with only two buildings listed on the NR of historic places. Downtown Florence is zoned as "Commercial Historic Business" which regulates uses, but there are no restrictive local historic districts in the City.

The slow start has picked up considerably in the past few years since the Antique Revolution in 1999. The City has created a Historic Preservation Commission and landmarked its first buildings. The City became a Certified Local Government and has assisted nonprofits with State Historical Fund grants. Other non-profits have obtained SHF grants and are rehabilitating building across town. Two archives are located in Florence and the town is particularly well documents and preserved via records. The Florence Archive is located in City Hall and the Pioneer Museum archive is located in the Pioneer Museum downtown. Private and nonprofit efforts have also been very successful. The Bell Tower has restored an old church for an arts center and a beautiful Presbyterian Church has been restored as a residence. The Rialto Theatre restoration efforts have strengthened and significant work and fundraising have occurred, leading to the first show in a decade performed there in 2016. Several other people have restored the second story of downtown buildings and have made them into large apartments, restoring the live/work balance that existed historically. Still, there are a number of underutilized buildings in the historic core such as the Carnegie Library, McCandless Building, and Elks Lodge that are examining redevelopment strategies and opportunities. Finally, the City and Merchants have completed a Downtown Florence National Register Historic District encompassing dozens of properties. This was long overdue and offers new economic benefits to building owners.

Goals

1. Finish a preservation plan
2. Finish the Downtown Florence National Register District Nomination
3. Work toward user friendly apps, brochures, and other ways to make the history and architecture of the town easy to access by residents and visitors.
4. Assist owners of key redevelopment projects downtown such as the Elks Building, Rialto, and McCandless.

Recent Progress

1. Formed a Florence Historic Preservation Commission (2015)
2. Became a Certified Local Government (2016)
3. First Two local landmarks designated (2015-16)
4. SHF grants for the Bell Tower, St. Josephs Manor and Denver and Rio Grande Depot (2012-2017)



A beautifully maintained and restored residence in Florence.



An example of restored buildings in the Downtown Florence Historic District.

Florence Listed Properties

Property	Address	Highest Level of Designation
Denver Rio Grande Depot	120 Railroad St	Local
BPOE Elks Lodge #611	120 Front St	Local
Hotel Florence	201. W. Main St.	State
Braden & Griffith Block	102. E. Front St.	State
Rialto Theatre	207-209 E. Main St.	State
Main Street Bridge	Co. Hwy 115 & Main St.	National
Florence Post Office	121 N. Pike's Peak	National
McCandless Building	109-111 E. Main St.	National
Downtown Florence Historic District	Various	National



Community Health

It is becoming increasingly difficult for small, rural places to provide access to affordable health care. Florence has only one doctor's office and one dental office but is served by St. Thomas Moore in Canon City, and many residents go to Pueblo or Colorado Springs for specialists and surgeries. As a small city, there is little health data at the Florence level but there is a significantly more when looking at slightly larger areas. In 2016-17, a Community Health Implementation Plan was completed that identified the top three priorities, to include lung disease, heart disease, and obesity/overweight citizens. According to the study, residents of Fremont County smoke at double the rate of Colorado and have higher rates of lung cancer, heart disease, and obesity when compared to the state. Mental health resources are also limited to Sol Vista in Canon City and allied mental health professional out of town. The health indicators pose a challenge for Florence but the School District, RE-2, has been working closely with health specialists and on grants to the Colorado Health Foundation to change these outcomes. Florence also recognizes the need for additional recreational programs and amenities & bike infrastructure to help combat obesity and those goals are outlined in the Parks and Recreation section.

Recent Accomplishments:

- School Health initiatives at RE-2
- Fremont Communities That Care Initiative

Goal: Work toward a healthier city with more access to affordable care

STRATEGIES:

- Examine possibility of providing Health Screenings to the public for common conditions
- Attract Primary care physicians and dentists to the area
- Find and implement strategies to reduce obesity in the community
- Develop and manage an information center with healthcare contacts and community outreach programs.



Florence first responders in the 4th of July Parade



2017 Photo of the Florence Police Department staff

Public Safety

Few people have what it takes to put their life on the line every time they show up for work and to put an entire City ahead of themselves, but the officers in Florence do just that. Florence Police Department currently consists of a total of 16 officers and supervisors, including detectives and reserve officers. They work closely alongside Canon City Police Department and Fremont County Sheriff's Office for many cases, as well as sharing a 9-1-1 and dispatch center (located in Canon City), a Drug Task Force and SWAT team consisting of officers from each agency, and coordinating efforts for joint investigations. There is currently no crisis negotiation capability or mobile command center for public safety use, but this is a goal for the near future. FPD handles all the calls in Florence city limits and assists on many located in the county. While safety is their main priority, they also handle code enforcement issues like the accumulation of refuse, abandoned vehicles, and unsafe homes. Much of the equipment the PD utilizes is obtained through the DRMO surplus program or the funds generated from equipment that is no longer needed. Most of the fleet was replaced within the last year to include 2012 Dodge Chargers for patrol vehicles and a generous donation of a 2010 Dodge Ram used for investigations.

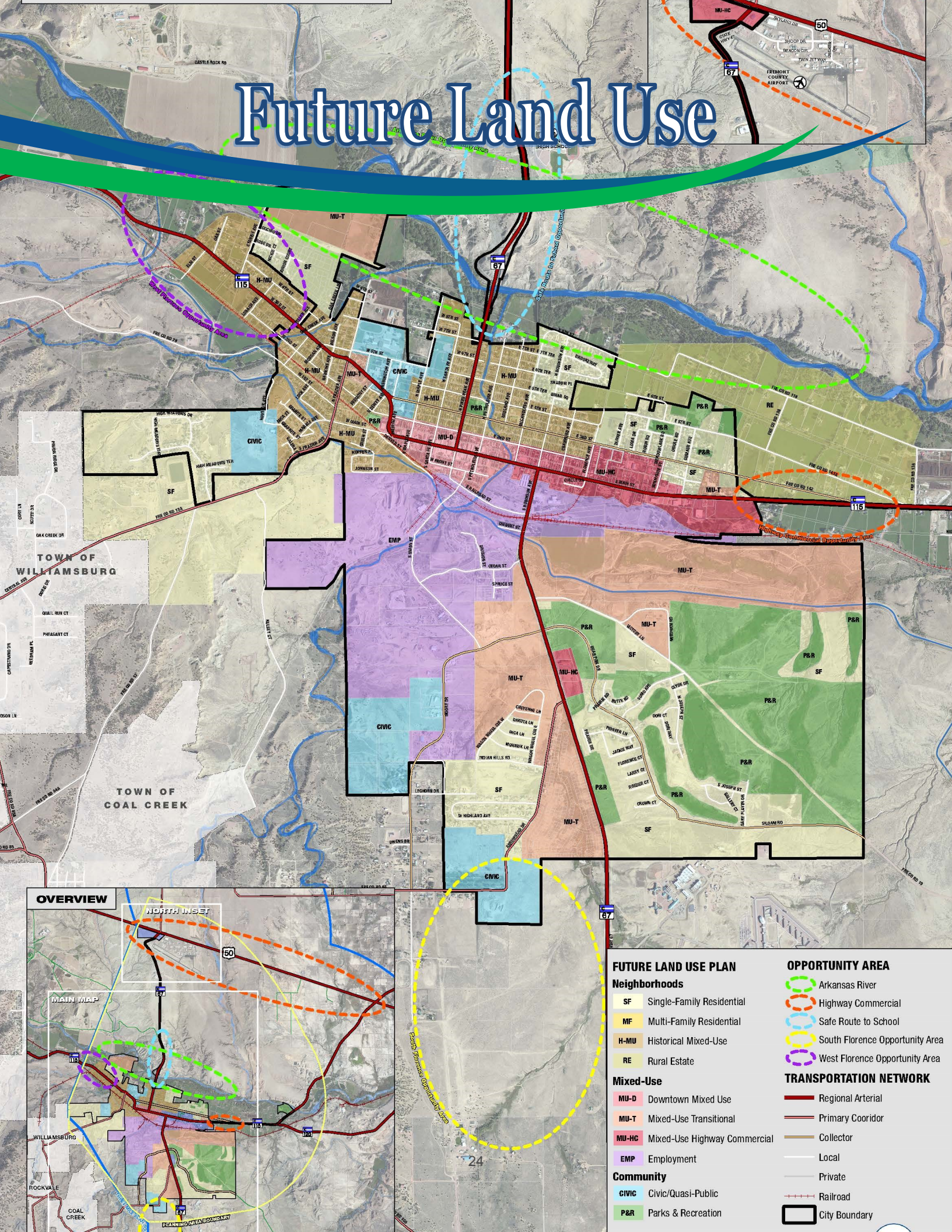
The Chief of Police has reported four public safety goals that are believed to best address the current issues in Florence, including strengthening interdepartmental relations and increasing the department size to better patrol Florence and handle the call volume. It is also vital to continually update and replace equipment to assure the highest quality of service can be achieved. Florence is a generally safe community, and the FPD works tirelessly to keep it that way. While each officer makes a great contribution to the department, they are able to just make ends meet with the volume of calls that come in. The 2017 projection will have FPD managing well over 10,000 calls, as opposed to 8816 in 2015 and 9371 in 2016. For January of 2017, they were already at a shocking 181% increase in the month-to-date ticket count compared to 2016, and a 50% increase in reports. With the exponential rise in calls-to-service added on to the current heroin and methamphetamine epidemic and lack of available funding to such a small department, Florence Officers face challenges not known to many departments. Adversity aside, "protect and serve" is more than a motto to these officers; it is a way of life. They are constantly going above and beyond the call of duty to assist the community in any way they can.

Goals

1. Increase department to put more patrol officers on the street
2. Continue to fight on the epidemic of heroin and methamphetamine use and sales in our area
3. Repair and bridge the frayed working conditions between CCPD and FPD
4. Replace outdated equipment with new equipment which will allow the PD to protect and serve at a higher level



Future Land Use



OVERVIEW

NORTH INSET

MAIN MAP

WILLIAMSBURG

ROCKVALE

COAL CREEK

PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Neighborhoods

- SF Single-Family Residential
- MF Multi-Family Residential
- H-MU Historical Mixed-Use
- RE Rural Estate

Mixed-Use

- MU-D Downtown Mixed Use
- MU-T Mixed-Use Transitional
- MU-HC Mixed-Use Highway Commercial
- EMP Employment

Community

- CIVIC Civic/Quasi-Public
- P&R Parks & Recreation

OPPORTUNITY AREA

- Arkansas River
- Highway Commercial
- Safe Route to School
- South Florence Opportunity Area
- West Florence Opportunity Area

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

- Regional Arterial
- Primary Corridor
- Collector
- Local
- Private
- Railroad
- City Boundary

Land Use Designations

(H-MU) Historic Mixed Use

These are established generally constructed before World War two for a non-motorized way of life. These mature neighborhoods have a wide range of historic housing with some new infill and scattered example of duplexes and four-plexes and even historic mixed-use along collector streets and highways. This designation allows for case-by-case examples of neighborhood commercial and office as well as live/work units on busier streets and main intersections. Future use of this historic core area of Florence should focus on residential development with a degree more flexibility for case-by-case infusions of other uses with properly mitigated impacts.

(SF) Single Family Residential

These are generally single-use automotive age development with single-family housing developments. The intent of this district is to provide stable locations for single family living as well as case-by-case examples of low level multifamily housing or special uses such as churches where appropriate.

(MF) Multi-Family Residential

These areas are intended for larger multifamily developments that can provide relief to the current housing crisis in Florence. These areas are generally in transitional sections of town and developments should be sited to buffer other uses and contain a quality of product that will be an asset to Florence for years to come.

(RE) Rural Estate

These areas are characterized by larger lot developments with low level agricultural activities or horse properties. These are the predominate type of land outside City Boundaries and there are limited areas within the City. These areas will mainly be single-family residential in use.

(E) Employment Centers

These are areas designated for low to mid-range industrial and commercial uses that have low to moderate external impact on the surrounding community. These areas tend to have larger lot sizes and be located some distance from residential uses. A variety of buffer uses may be allowed to screen these uses from residential such as mini storage and other uses.

(MU-D) Downtown Mixed Use

This area is designated for the retention of the existing, established historical commercial downtown of Florence that was developed from the 1890s to the 1930s. These areas

are primarily pedestrian-orientated and support a number of retail, office, food services, community organizations, and limited hospitality uses as well as entertainment venues. The designation seeks to preserve the wide range of uses that support the city and the unique historic character of downtown Florence. Residential is encouraged in second story and rear of buildings as long as storefronts are maintained for commercial purposes. Although the designated areas mainly support the established historic building stock, new compatible buildings and uses are encouraged adjacent to downtown and as infill on non-contributing buildings and vacant lots through some level of municipal design review. Unlike many downtown districts, some limited low level industrial and employment uses are encouraged that are compatible with the existing downtown.

(MU-T) Mixed Use Transitional

This is a broad category for areas that are in transition over the next 5 to 10 years and located in areas that could develop in a couple of different ways depending on the market in Florence. This designation is intended to allow the greatest flexibility for change and may accommodate some multifamily development or commercial development or well-designed mixture of uses.

(MU-HC) Mixed Use Highway Commercial

The designation is intended to allow flexibility of commercial development along main highways as market forces change land uses. Existing residential single family homes are located in these areas and may remain however; the City is open to redevelopment plans for commercial uses along busy corridors and especially of blighted and underutilized properties is encouraged.

(Civic) Civic Quasi-Public

This designation is for schools, governmental facilities, and other quasi-public organizations as well as land adjacent that could transition to expansions of these uses in the future.

(P & R) Parks and Recreation

This category is designed for land utilized as City parks or recreation facilities.

Opportunity Areas

These areas represent opportunities to welcome visitors to Florence, provide strong connections to downtown, catalyst opportunities for recreation, education, tourism and represent growth opportunities through annexation. All areas offer joint planning opportunities to collaborate with the County and other agencies to coordinate matters of mutual, regional interest.



Downtown Florence

Land Use & Growth

The Future Land Use & Transportation Map reflects preferred land use patterns and transportation networks by designating land use categories and roadway classifications for specific geographical areas. The land use designations are illustrative and are not intended to depict either parcel specific locations or exact acreage for specific uses.

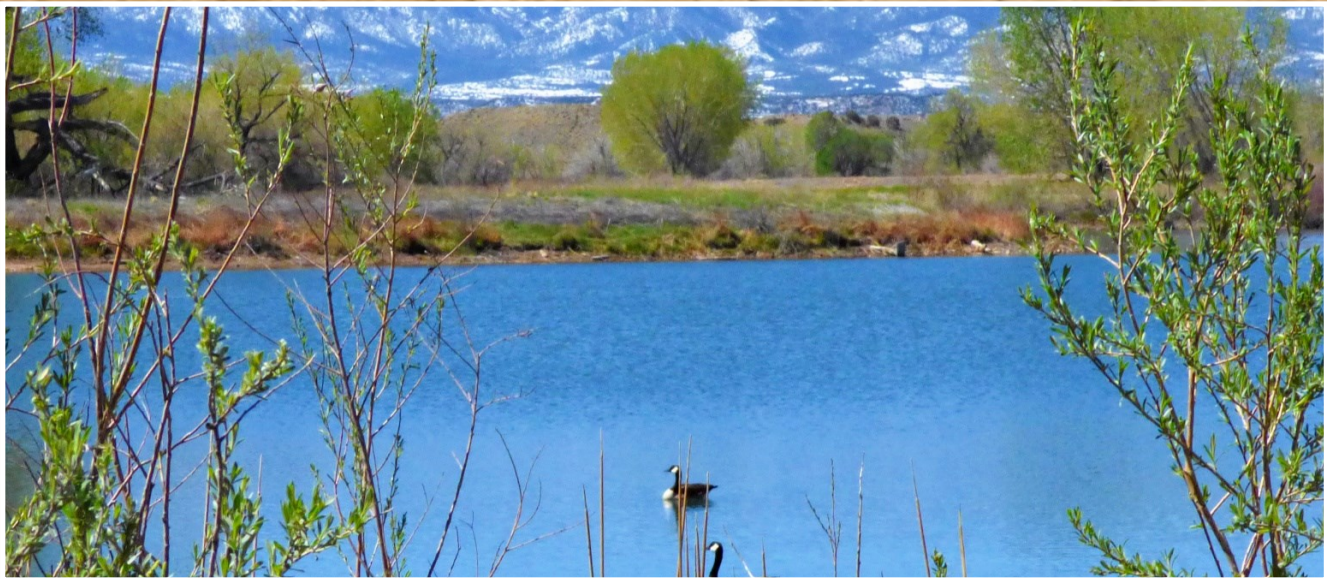
Goal: Continually reassess strategic opportunities for growth in and around Florence.

Strategies:

1. Aggressively incorporate the Beaver Property along the River and seek development partners to utilize the location.
2. Closely assess adjacent lands for new job creation opportunities or for new retail or restaurant space as downtown fills up.
3. Facilitate rezoning of 2nd street and Pike's Peak to allow limited mixed use/home work office type uses.
4. Use the Future Land Use Plan as a general guide to land use decision-making. Ensure that new development proposals provide a balance of land uses and adhere to the land use designations as depicted on the Future Land Use Plan.
5. Encourage redevelopment and reinvestment within Growth Tier 1. Discourage development that is not within Tier 1 unless there is a significant public benefit from the development or the appropriate land is unavailable in city limits.
6. Revisit the tiered growth program and map during the next Plan update and adjust as necessary.
7. Require development outside of Tier 1 to pay all costs associated with the extension of infrastructure as well as operation and maintenance of utilities.



Historic building on 2nd, now used as a B&B



Hérons on the pond, by Carol Gebhart

Growth Priority Tiers

To help the City focus on compact growth, ensure that any future development does not place an undue burden on current residents, and preserve the City's small-town character. The City has established the following growth priority tiers as illustrated on the Growth Priority Tiers Map.

Tier I is the Priority Growth Area that is within one-quarter of a mile of existing services which enables the City to plan for and provide new services efficiently. Extending urban services beyond this area is something the City could consider; however, development must pay the full costs of doing so. As the downtown core grows, the Master Plan should be amended to extend Tier I around the new development and to extend Tier II one-half (1/2) mile from existing infrastructure.

Tier II is the Secondary Growth Area. It has sufficient land to serve approximately 25 years of growth and existing infrastructure is within one (1) mile. There are limitations to growth in this tier as a gradual progression of growth from Tier I and II are recommended to integrate new development and extend necessary infrastructure. Properties in Tier II would become eligible for annexation upon approval of an overall concept plan that addresses all issues associated with annexation.



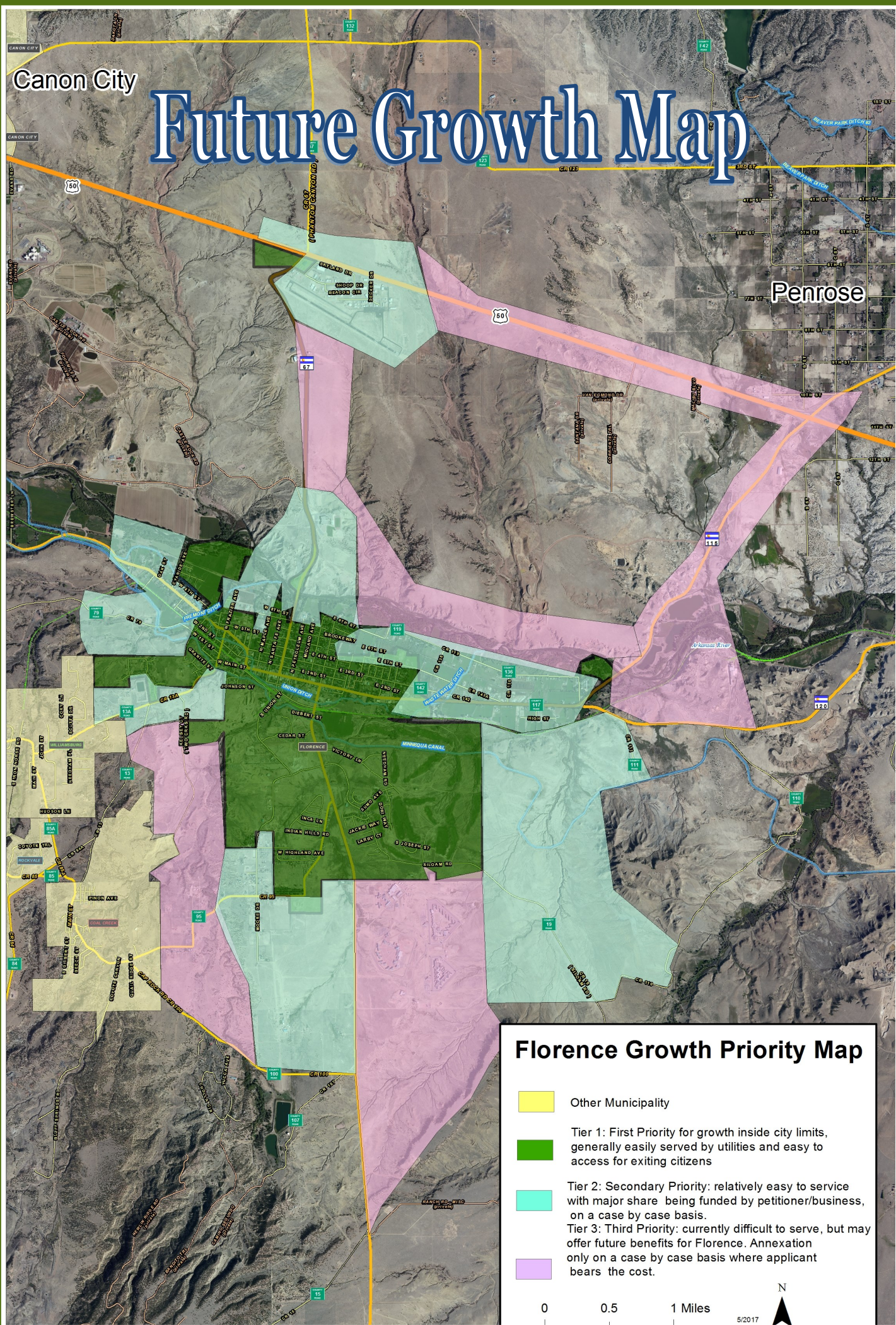
Sunrise captured by Carol Gebhart

Tier III contains all remaining lands within the Planning Area that would require significant capital investments to provide public services. This tier offers opportunities for additional IGAs with the surrounding municipalities and Fremont County to help ensure the City has input regarding any potential development applications in this tier.

Canon City

Future Growth Map

Penrose



Florence Growth Priority Map

- Other Municipality
- Tier 1: First Priority for growth inside city limits, generally easily served by utilities and easy to access for exiting citizens
- Tier 2: Secondary Priority: relatively easy to service with major share being funded by petitioner/business, on a case by case basis.
- Tier 3: Third Priority: currently difficult to serve, but may offer future benefits for Florence. Annexation only on a case by case basis where applicant bears the cost.



Beautiful historic house in Florence.

Housing

One of the primary goal encountered during two years of feedback during the Master Plan process was the need for an increased supply of housing and as the planning process continued, the need for affordable housing. Due to affordable prices and high quality of life, Florence has been attracting active senior retirees as well as working families in Fremont County. A number of factors have recently converged to make the housing situation difficult in Florence. First, the recession on 2008 halted development in at least 4 subdivisions, growth that was later in coming to Florence than surrounding communities. Second, the slow rebound of Northern Colorado is very late to arrive in Florence. New building starts have averaged 1-2 houses since 2008. This also means no multifamily or affordable housing projects have been constructed since San Juan Apartments the 1990s Finally builders have been looking at Florence but banks are slow to lend and infrastructure costs have climbed making an extension of roads and utilities the sticking point for new development. During the planning process, we heard Fremont County citizens love Florence and want to live here but cannot find homes or apartments. A second issue is deteriorating housing. While improving values have spurred rehabilitations, there are still some deteriorating public health risks around town the City is working on through code enforcement and engaging owners to restore these risks. A new crop of 'flippers' has come to town and the City seeks to solve these deteriorated housing issues through the private sector.

Despite these challenges, City Staff has worked with community banks, builders, real estate agents and other to stimulate housing growth in existing platted subdivisions such as High Meadows, Last Mile, and Willow Creek. The City has even looked at breaking subdivision improvements into manageable phases so builders can test the waters of recovery.

Recent Achievements

- Bringing builders and landowners together to restart Willow Creek Subdivision and High Meadows
- Engaging other out-of-town builders to start a project in Florence
- 1/2 Cent sales tax for roads that might be used to supplement new infrastructure

Goal: Increase the housing supply.

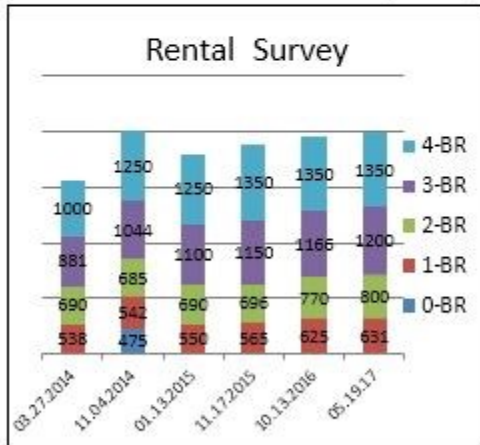
Strategies:

1. Examine Public/Private Partnerships to fund infrastructure to spur private sector housing development of existing platted subdivisions.
2. Work closely with developers to facilitate new housing for all economic levels.
3. Work with contractors and citizens to facilitate rehabilitation of deteriorating properties.
4. Examine possibilities of allowing tiny houses, accessory dwelling units, and other non-conventional housing types to increase affordable housing supply.

Fremont County Housing Data

County	
•	Population 2016 – 47,446
•	Prison Population – 6,312±
•	Median Income 2017 - \$52,000
–	Florence \$38,179 (2015)
•	Unemployment Rate – 4.0%
–	Colorado 2.5% (3/17)

Housing	
•	Vacancy rate – 3.0% (3 rd quarter 2016)
•	Foreclosures – 125– 2016; 15 Florence - 2016
•	56 residential building permits in 2016
•	No affordable housing units have been built since 2012



Average Home Sales Price	
2010	\$136,056
2014	\$146,930
2015	\$157,576
2016	\$180,923



Housing Affordability Wage

	0-BR	1-BR	2-BR	3-BR	4-BR
03.27.14		\$10.35	\$13.25	\$17.00	\$19.25
11.04.14	\$9.13	\$10.42	\$13.17	\$20.08	\$24.04
01.13.15		\$10.58	\$13.25	\$21.15	\$24.04
11.17.15		\$10.87	\$13.40	\$22.12	\$25.96
10.13.16		\$12.02	\$14.80	\$22.40	\$25.96
05.19.17		\$12.14	\$15.39	\$23.10	\$25.96

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts, 2016 Kids Count in Colorado, DOLA - Colorado Division of Housing, UAACOG – Central Colorado Housing

The historic Fremont Hotel and Elks lodge is an active community space with potential space for residential upstairs.

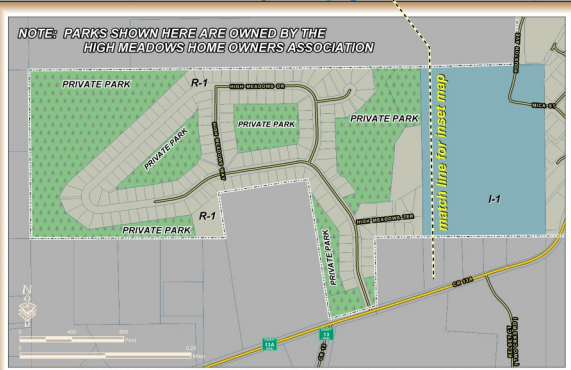
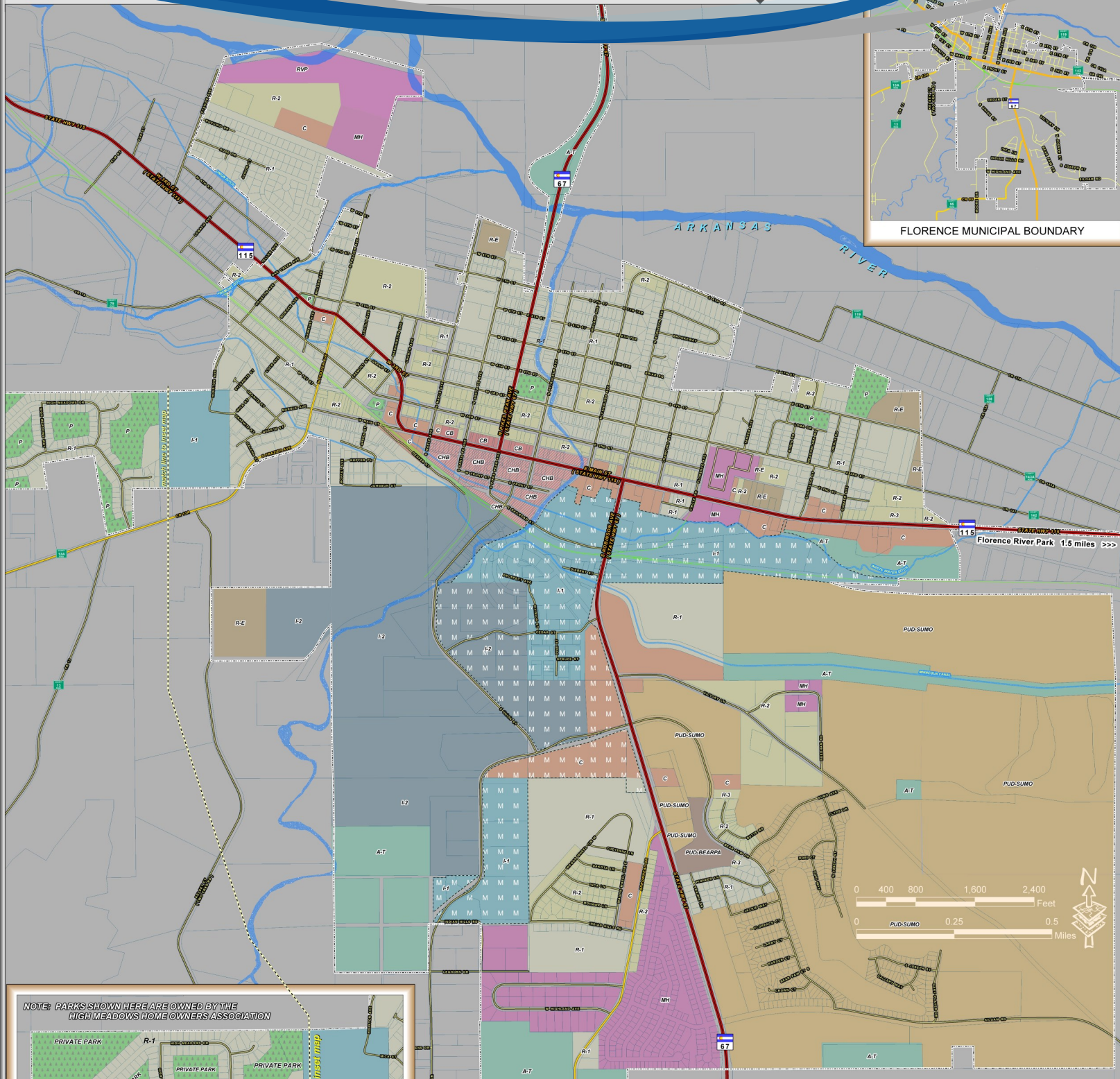
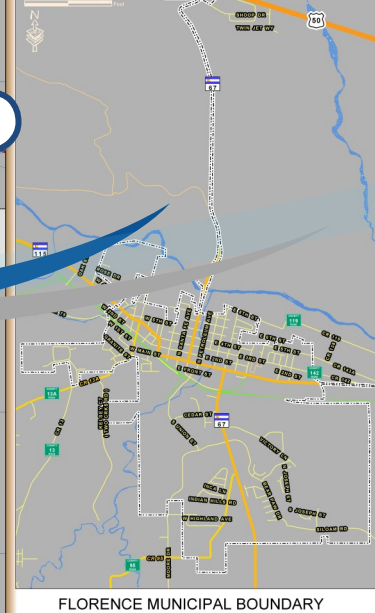


City of Florence, Colorado Existing Zone Districts

Map Date: August 2, 2017
 Aerial Imagery: April, 2016
 Source Data: City of Florence, Latitudes, & Fremont County Regional GIS Authority
 Original Map Design: Don Palumbo, Latitudes of Pueblo

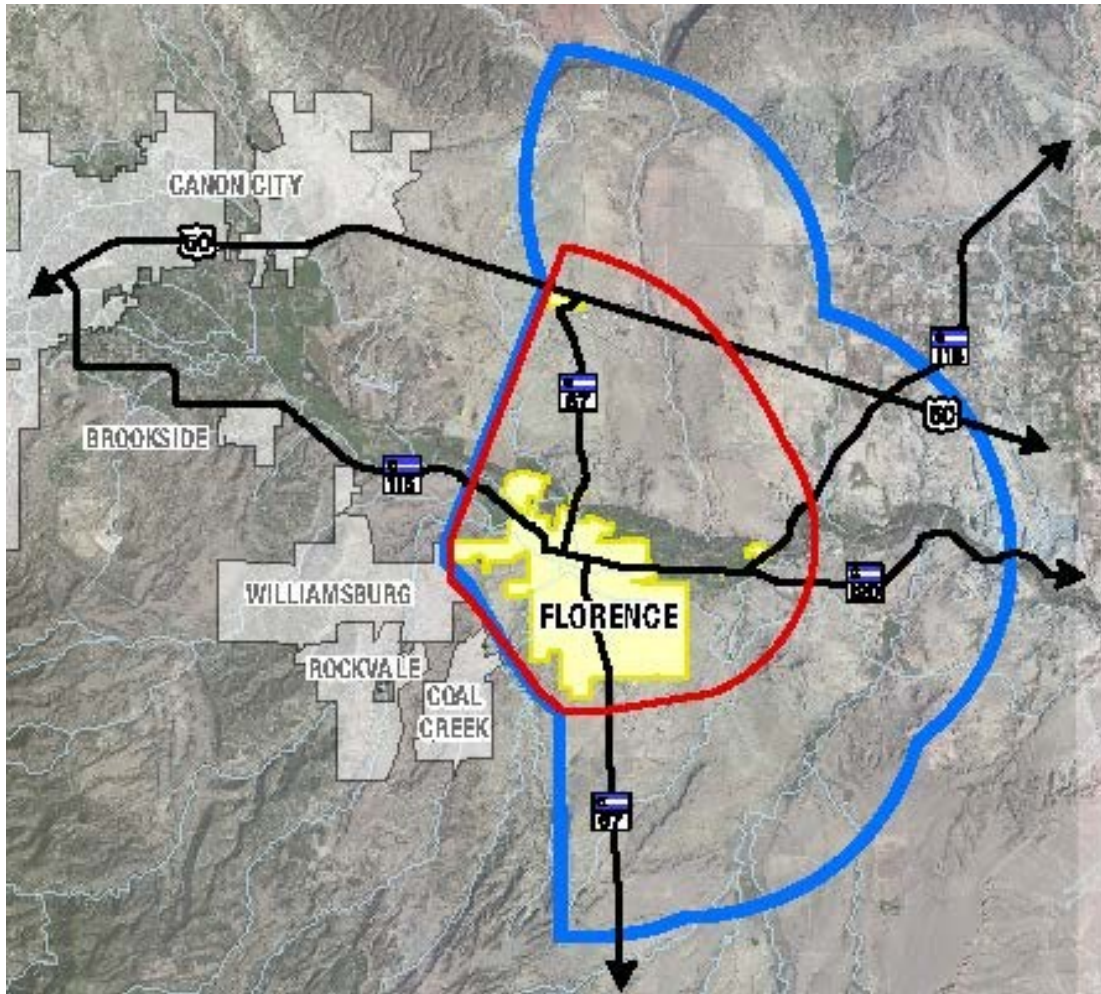
Zoning Map

1.80 Miles



EXISTING ZONE DISTRICTS					
A-7	AGRICULTURAL TRANSITIONAL	MH	MANUFACTURED HOME DIST	R-2	MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
C	GENERAL COMMERCIAL DIST	PP	PARKS - OPEN SPACE	R-3	HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
CHB	CENTRAL HISTORIC BUSINESS DIST	PUD-BEARPAW	BEAR PAW PLANNED UNIT DEV	RVP	RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARK
CB	CENTRAL BUSINESS DIST	R-E	RESIDENTIAL ESTATES	PUD-SUMO	SUMO PLANNED UNIT DEV
I-1	LIGHT INDUSTRIAL	R-1	LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	M M M	MULTIPLE USE OVERLAY
I-2	HEAVY INDUSTRIAL				

Three Mile Plan



THREE MILE PLAN

Legend

-  Planning Area
-  Three Mile Boundary
-  City of Florence
-  Adjacent Municipalities/Town Boundaries



0 1.5 3 Miles

Source: Fremont County GIS Authority
Cornerstone Geospatial Consulting

Recent Progress

- Road Repair Prioritization meeting with Council (2016)
- Repaved #1 priority-Front Street (2016)
- Finished plans for a redesign of Pikes Peak Avenue (2017)
- Paved Frazier Avenue with DOLA grant partnership with Fremont County (2015)
- Purchased Street Patch Repair Equipment (2017)



Florence Public Works department installing an ADA ramp in a busy intersection. New sidewalks (bottom left) and curb cuts installed by the PWD.

Transportation & Infrastructure

The City of Florence of approximately 26 miles of streets and maintaining this road network on a limited budget presents a number of challenges. Despite annexation in the last part of the 20th century, Florence has a very compact and walkable Downtown. The core of Florence has commercial, civic, educational, and residential uses all located within a 2-6 block walk of one another. Even new development on the eastern edge of town is not more than a short walk or bike ride away. Florence has two highways that bisect the City; State Highway 115 which runs from east to west and connects Florence with Canon City and State Highway 67 runs north and South connection Florence to Westcliffe and Highway 50. Florence is a member of the Central Front Range Transportation Planning unit coordinated by Colorado Department of Transportation. This TPR meets quarterly and helps guide funding decisions for regional priorities in adjacent counties. Road maintenance is performed by the Public Works departments and various transportation planning functions are handled by the Planning Director. Until 2016 the City had no special fund allocated for road improvements until a special ½ cent sales tax was reallocated for road & sidewalks work. The City also receives approximately \$100,000 from the Highways User Fund Tax that is allocated to activities to maintain city streets. Florence does not have a public transportation system, though there is limited access to transportation for seniors through the Golden Shuttle program. The road system is a mainly paved system with some gravel roads. The principal problem remains on how to patch and repair a road system on a limited budget with decades of differed maintenance.



As for non-motorized travel, Florence has a limited trails network and no designated bike lanes yet, though some are designed to be installed. Sidewalks conditions vary widely, from historic red stone walks to concrete to a complete lack of walks. In 2012, the City embarked on a vast program of implementing ADA ramps, starting with access to civic locations and this project is still active. Florence has a range of sidewalks conditions but has greatly improved access, especially around City Hall, schools, and the commercial downtown. The City is even working with Bicycle Colorado on a Safe Routes to School grant to improve access to the elementary school.

Transportation & Infrastructure

Goal 1: Develop a functional and efficient transportation network.

Strategies:

1. Promote shared parking and conduct a parking study to determine appropriate locations for shared parking lots.
2. Maintain, enhance and improve local and regional roadways to strengthen networks, increase accessibility and incorporate alternative modes of transportation.
3. Apply for Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) grants to implement safe routes to school and transportation alternatives within the safe routes to school Opportunity Area as designated on the Future Land Use Map.
4. Prioritize reconstruction and enhancement of Pike's Peak Avenue/ST HWY 67 from Main to High School with bike lanes.
5. Add the curve on ST HWY 115 at Church Street to regional funding TIP and look for immediate safety enhancements to the rear of Fremont Middle School.
6. Implement the West and South Florence and Highway Commercial Opportunity Area as designated on the Future Land Use Map.

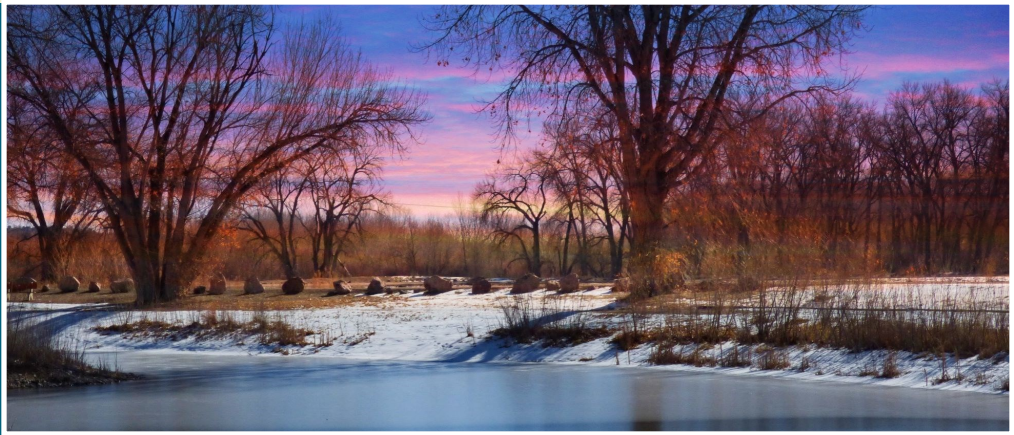
Goal 2: Build community resilience by ensuring Florence is prepared for and can adequately respond to natural or man-made disasters.

Strategies:

1. Promote development while preserving environmentally sensitive, constrained or hazardous areas, unless appropriate mitigation has occurred.
2. Protect surface and groundwater resources to maintain the integrity of the municipal water supply.
3. Determine appropriate mitigation of flooding and support disaster relief.
4. Target infrastructure and grant funding from the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) to assist with storm water management and infrastructure improvements.

Goals

1. Conduct a Study of Coal Creek and examine methods to reduce vast floodplain issues.
2. Examine the Community Rating System and implement methods to increase our score and reduce insurance rates.
3. Examine conducting a flood or disaster resiliency plan and implementation strategy.

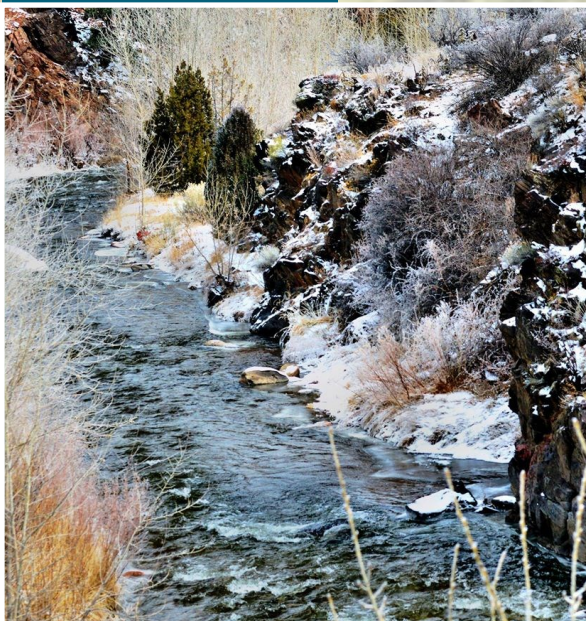


Foreground Photos by Carol Gebhart

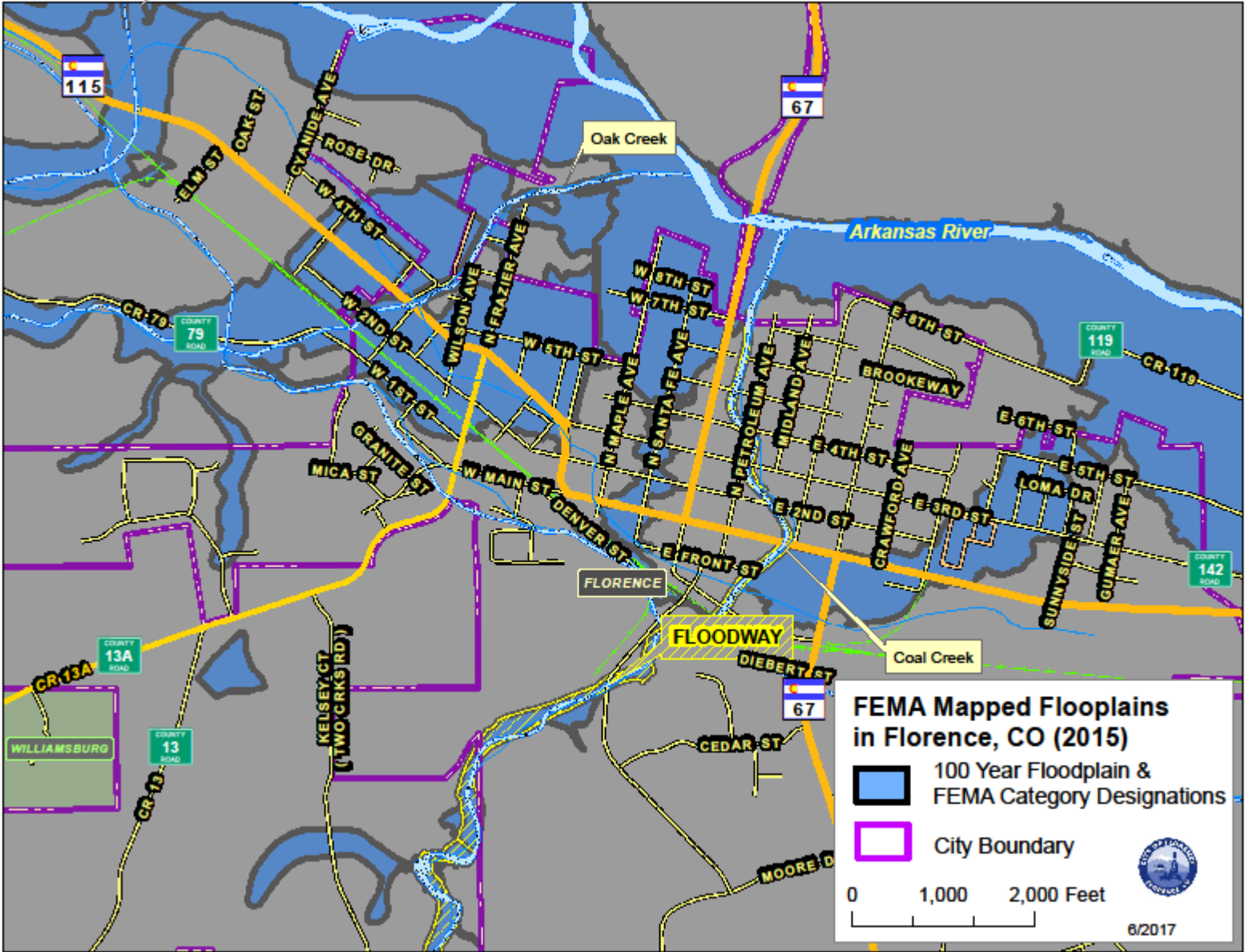
Flood Resiliency

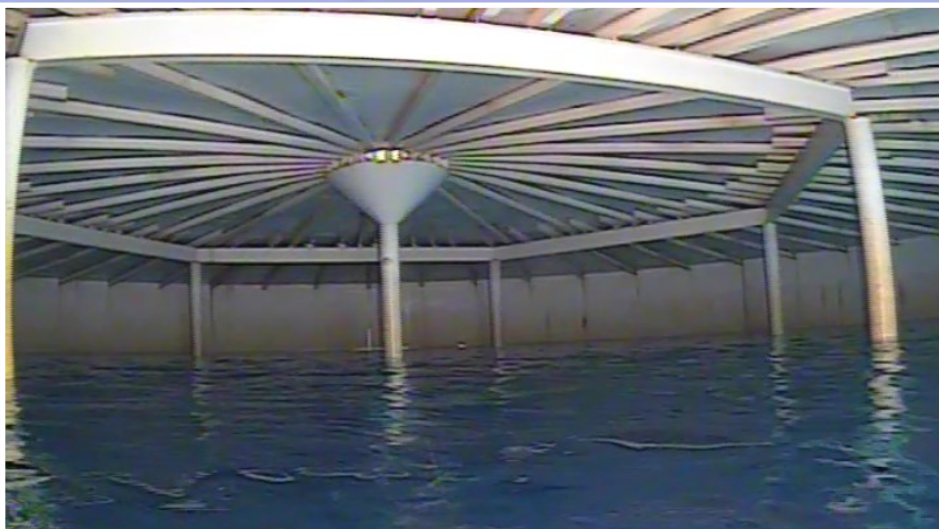
The City of Florence is located along the Arkansas River and two major tributary Creeks: Oak and Coal. Due to this location, a large percentage of Florence is located in the 100-year floodplain which presents numerous challenges for development. The primary goal of the City is to main the floodplain management program for flood insurance and examine and implement projects which may increase protection or reduce the floodplain for citizens. The City passed a floodplain protection ordinance and permits are issued for all developments in the floodplain. The City participates in the National Flood Insurance program and the last inspection was in November of 2016 by the State and FEMA. As of 2016, there were 57 insurance policies in Florence. The relatively low number may be the result of numerous owner-occupied homes and an older population, where homes are paid for and do not need insurance.

Two prominent floodplain tongues affect both downtown Florence and the Eastern highway commercial corridor; both of these areas stem from Coal Creek where a railroad and highway bridge restrict flow and would cause flooding. A preliminary study was conducted on Coal Creek and the City is using that information to pursue a study and or project to identify and remove the overflow obstruction and reduce the floodplain.



Current Floodplain





Two views inside the 2 million gallon tank (above and background)

Florence Water Department

Mission Statement

Our goal at the Florence Water Department is to protect the public health and environment by providing dependable, safe and high-quality drinking water to our customers 24 hours a day, every day. We diligently work to meet and exceed all federal and state health and safety standards. We endeavor to maintain a reliable water production facility at an affordable cost to all of our customers.

The Florence water treatment facility is run by a 5 person staff that promotes on-going training and career development in an effort to maintain the best-qualified personnel. We investigate customer concerns regarding water quality and service and respond with a quick analysis and explanation of our findings. The Florence Water Treatment Department strives to be a recognized industry leader in quality and service, always providing “better than expected” service to our customers.

Overview

The City of Florence has water rights for 4 raw water sources; the Arkansas River (via the Minnequa Canal), Adobe Creek, Mineral Creek, and Newlin Creek. Our source water is collected and stored in our 4 raw water reservoirs that are estimated to contain between 50 and 60 million gallons. Construction of Florence’s new Surface Water Treatment Facility was started in 2005 and was brought online in 2006 with the capacity to treat 6.0 MGD (million gallons per day). Florence provides potable drinking water to its own customers as well as Rockvale, Williamsburg, Coal Creek, East Florence and the Federal Prisons. The city’s distribution system consists of 6 drinking water storage tanks totalling over 6 million gallons, 4 finished water pump stations and 3 raw water pump stations.

Recent Achievements

- Florence completed the 2016 Colorado State Sanitary Survey with 0 Significant Deficiencies, 0 Violations, and 4 Observational Recommendations.
- Since January 2006 Florence has submitted 1092 Bacteriological analysis samples with no positive detection of coliforms or pathogenic organisms.
- Continued water system improvements including; East and West Tank rehabilitation, construction of the West booster pump station, North and South Tank comprehensive inspection cleaning and repair.
- Installation of pumps, motors, VFD’s, and HVAC unit at the new North Pump Station.
- SCADA System upgrade at the South Water Treatment Plant.

Goals

- South Raw Reservoir Phase 2: Repair of SRR #2
- South Raw Reservoir Phase 3: Repair of SRR #1
- 100% Completion of New North Raw water pump station
- Water main replacement on Main Street from McCandless to Florence Ave.
- Intake improvements of Adobe and Mineral Creeks
- Trunk Main #1- County road 100 to West Tank and abandonment of Coal Creek Tank
- Water Treatment Plant PLC improvements/upgrades
- Water main loop from Pathfinder Park along Hwy 115 to Cyanide

Florence: Past and Present

Pre 1860s: Utes, Arapahoe, and other Native American tribes utilize the lands around Florence.

1860: Florence began with the arrival of the farmer Jesse Frazier, who settled on the Southside of the Arkansas River at the site of the present city about 1860s.

1866: Florence obtains first water rights

1869: The apple industry began

1870: The railroad arrives at the town of Labran (East of Coal Creek) and soon expands into Florence.



1912-1915: Gold production slows down, smelters close

1923: The Rialto Theater was constructed to serve as an opera house. Massive explosion at oil refinery, 6 left dead.

1917-19: Oil & automobile boom, buildings constructed downtown, new high school, Carnegie library, and RR Depot finished.



1930s: Great Depression shuttered many storefronts, Pioneer Day festival begins.

1940-50: Farming, ranching, and coal mining.

1960s: People commuted to work at Steel mill, NORAD, and Ft. Carson. Estes Rockets employs 500 people in Penrose. New modern Safeway store constructed on Church St.

1963: Elementary school constructed, 8 rural schools closed in consolidation.

1967: Local hospital finished new large building.





1874: Florence consists of a railroad station, two stores, and an orchard.

1881: Oil was discovered in Florence.

1887: Florence incorporates a town of 450 residents. The first brick building is erected.

1888: 50 oil wells are producing.

1889: 60 new buildings are erected.



1890s: Oil and Gold boom, downtown building boom.

1892: Florence helps constructed shelf road to bring gold ore to processing in Florence.

1894: Gold Belt RR finished to Cripple Creek & Victor.

1897: Town tops 5000 residents.

1900: Portland (Later Ideal) Cement is operation employing hundreds just east of Florence.



1984: Michael Jackson plays surprise “Thriller” Concert in Florence

1999: Fox Den of Antiquity started full-fledged antique renaissance

Mid 2000s: People renovated buildings for retail, restaurant, and apartments downtown.

2005: City Hall moved in to St. Joseph’s manor—the closed hospital. The new Florence High School was constructed.

1992: Town worked to bring “Supermax” to the area with new jobs and investment.

2016: “Our Souls At Night”- A Netflix original movie was filmed in Florence. Extreme renovations also began on the Rialto Theater to restore it to it’s former glory.

Florence Today

Florence is now a town of roughly 4,000 people and 4 square miles. It has the accessibility of a big city with the comfort and familiarity of a small town. There is now a booming culinary industry, a brewery, dozens of antique stores, thriving local businesses, and even festivals and events throughout the year. Houses fly off the market, local schools are improving, and it is a great place to live! Despite the constant changes and improvements, Florence has a colorful history that will not soon be forgotten as it is apparent in nearly every aspect of our town; from the historic buildings to the Pioneer Day Festival that has been happening since the 1930s.