

# Whetstone Community Housing

*Sketch Plan Submittal Narrative*

*September 2, 2022*



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## Introduction

Located in the north end of the Gunnison Valley, the 13 acre Whetstone parcel presents an opportunity for much needed housing solutions in the community.

The incredible mountains and resort amenities of Crested Butte and Mount Crested Butte attract visitors, second home owners, and high income families with “work from anywhere” jobs. The local workforce is increasingly priced out of the housing market, and many with jobs in the north valley commute from the south valley.

With thoughtful planning, community engagement, and the right development partners, Whetstone will achieve a far reaching array of community goals:

- **Supporting the local economy**, with reliable housing for the workforce;
- **Providing housing security** for essential members of the community who have been facing housing challenges such as overcrowding, low quality/high utility cost, rising rents, or being frequently forced to move (due to home sales and conversions to short term rental);
- **Supporting environmental goals** by reducing commuting and improving energy efficiency through green building and modern construction techniques.



## Purpose

The project vision was developed to determine what the Whetstone Community Housing development should look like and how the team, in collaboration with the community, would get there.

## Vision

Whetstone is envisioned as a significant development of **affordable housing** for a **diverse** mix of local individuals and families to live and work in the Gunnison Valley.

To create a neighborhood at Whetstone, the county imagines **amenities** such as a park, community garden, trail connections, and pleasant streets where neighbors can cultivate a **sense of community**.

## Desired Outcomes



Gunnison County purchased the Whetstone Parcel in response to the growing shortage of housing attainable to local residents in the valley. In bringing the community together to create a plan for the parcel, the following principles emerged.

- **Community vitality** - Make a meaningful and long lasting contribution to community attainable housing by developing new housing for our community members and permanent workforce.
  - Create a great neighborhood, where residents and neighbors make meaningful connections, put down roots, and experience pride of place.
  - Utilize the land to its full potential while providing a significant number of attainable housing units.
  - Support our economic vitality by ensuring that the current workforce is able to remain in the community.
  - Work efficiently to begin site development construction in 2024
- **Affordability** - Alleviate the stress of housing insecurity that many members of our community are experiencing, focusing on homes for rent to households below 120% AMI, and homes for sale for households below 200% AMI.
- **Environmental Sustainability** - Align with the community's **sustainability goals** including reducing energy intensity of buildings and reducing cost to heat homes by increasing the efficiency of homes. Gunnison County plans to develop the Whetstone parcel in alignment with its Climate Action Plan and will apply lessons learned from our own efficiency and carbon reduction journey.
  - Buildings will be all-electric utilizing either a geothermal heat-pump system or air-source heat pumps.
  - We will include infrastructure for charging stations for electric vehicles.
  - The project will be solar ready and we will endeavor to include solar arrays from day one.
  - Building energy performance will meet or exceed 2021 IECC which will result in buildings that use less than half of the energy of our average buildings in the valley.
  - Design will prioritize the use of materials that are low-embodied carbon and those that may contribute to carbon sequestration.
- **Transportation connections** - We are seeking to create a great neighborhood, where people are not dependent on cars. Guiding principles that would make the transit connection successful for Whetstone and broader community:
  - Create opportunities for workers currently forced to commute to live near their jobs.
  - Create strong street, trail, and park connections within the site.
  - Position bus and underpass to work most efficiently for neighborhood design AND transit solutions
  - Create a sense of arrival on/off the bus and through the underpass to make it clear, desirable, inviting, safe, and easy to use, with strong visual and physical connection between green spaces, transit, and underpass
  - Design and build for intuitive desire lines, efficient walking, biking, ADA connections
  - Daylight – through underpass and surrounding features
  - Safety and maintenance – consider snow removal, personal safety, make paths and underpass wide and airy
  - Activate space – tie buildings to transit location, and include community uses

- Opportunities for art/sculpture, unexpected and interesting elements
- Respect/maximize natural site grading – design to natural contours, and site grading to make trails and buildings integrated into cohesive natural and built environment
- Minimizing deep/highly engineered solutions/concrete – using step downs, terraced approach if needed.. more trail than ramp, ideally
- Strong connection within the site to a future CB to CB South Trail.

## What Whetstone Is Not

The Whetstone Parcel has the opportunity to make a significant contribution to alleviate community impacts of rapidly changing demographics in the north valley. The parcel will be planned in the context of regional dynamics. Gunnison County will continue to work on the multitude of challenges faced by the community, and this site cannot solve every community issue in this particular location. Some examples:

Transportation - the site will be planned for future transportation connections to support connections to town for multi-modal transportation including trails and mass transit. The site is not appropriate for intercept parking for Gunnison to Crested Butte commuters and transit service. The County acknowledges that Hwy. 135 and the intersections in the area of the site are busy and dangerous, the development of the site cannot solve pre-existing problems but development will work to inform and influence parallel efforts to improve highway safety, including the potential for a roundabout to address Brush Creek Road safety, the potential for a future underpass, and strong bike, pedestrian, and transit connections from the site to the broader community transportation network.

Schools - the site does not have room to accommodate a school extension, which is an observed community need. The site can provide housing to support the school district in hiring and retaining employees and support currently enrolled families with children who are experiencing housing instability.

Safe Camping - the site is not an appropriate place for hosting campers as temporary living space.

Parks and Ball-Fields - the site should include open space and communal spaces for residents to utilize. The site cannot accommodate ball-fields or large public spaces.

Single Family Detached Affordable Housing - The costs associated with extending infrastructure to the site, combined with the high demand for accessible and affordable housing, do not make this site suitable for low density, suburban style, single family residential development. Market demands show that there is significant demand for the range of housing that is being contemplated for the Whetstone parcel, including single family attached (townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, row homes, etc.), as well as live/work units and multi family apartments, and housing that supports living with disabilities and aging in place.

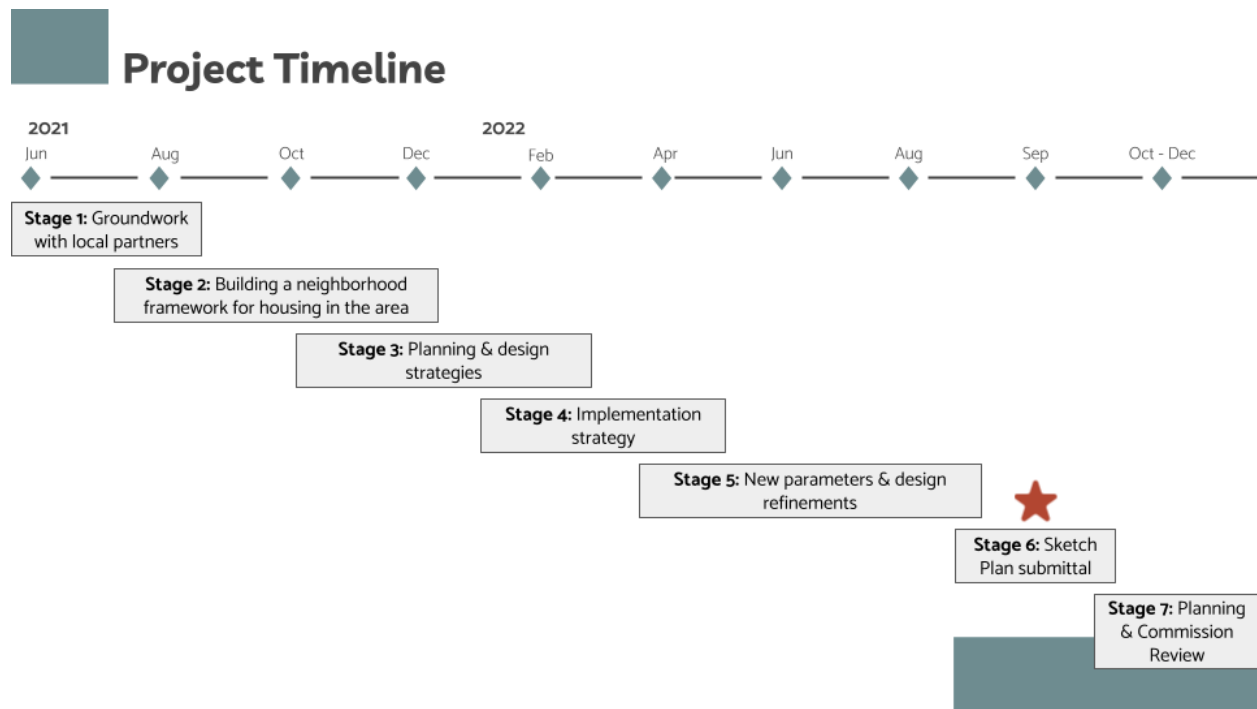
## Process

### Project Timeline

In May 2021, Gunnison County - through their Community and Economic Development and Sustainability and Operations Departments - initiated the Whetstone Community Housing project by hiring a team of consultants - Trestle Strategy Group, Williford, jv DeSousa, and JVA - to co-develop a sketch plan for the Whetstone parcel. In its infancy, the problem statement was simple: **what will the county-owned Whetstone development become, how can it be its best, and how do we make it happen?**

Throughout the project, the project team worked together and with the community to answer those questions and more. The approach has been iterative; project stages have been informing one another as a well-thought implementation strategy was being developed. Through extensive outreach and engagement of the community and stakeholders, the team was able to bring initial observations, assessment, and technical tools together to recommend options and frame tradeoffs for County decision makers and develop a plan that sets realistic and yet ambitious goals for the parcel.

The following graphic summarizes the project timeline and key milestones.



## Process Considerations

At the beginning of the project, the following considerations were prioritized for the process:

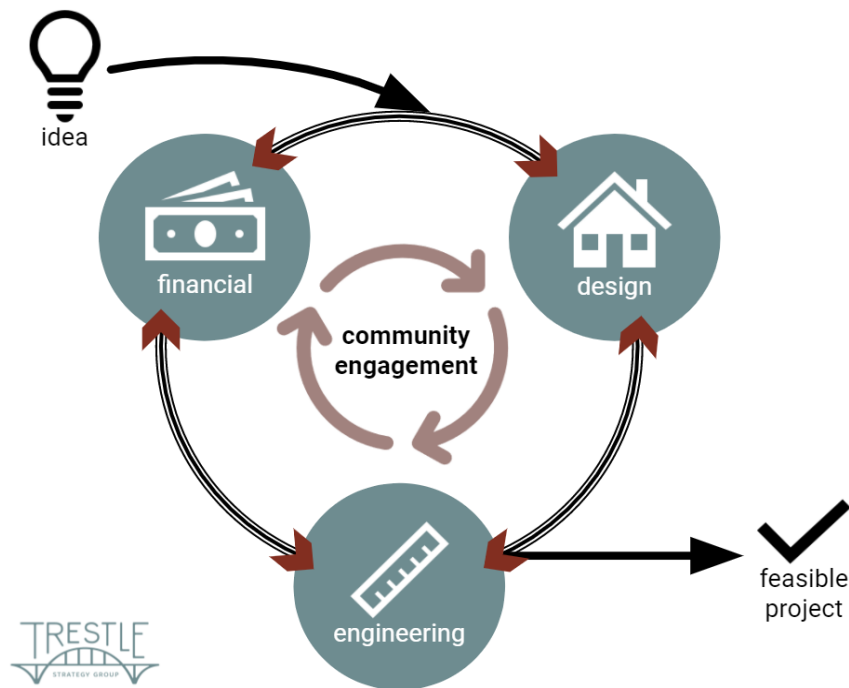
- Create and implement a financially feasible development;
- Engage with a broad spectrum of community members and stakeholders to gather feedback, inform, and collaborate in design solutions;
- Partner with the private sector and coordinate with public sector entities to share risk and benefit from specialized areas of expertise;
- Work with the public sector entities including the Towns of Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte, Gunnison Valley Regional Housing Authority, RTA, CDOT and others to

develop housing solutions that align with community needs expressed in the Gunnison Valley Housing Needs Assessment and Market Update.

## Community & Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the project onboarding phase, the project team created an Engagement Strategy and Community Outreach plan, tailored to the needs of the County, community, and project. Relevant strategies, with various levels of engagement intensity necessary, were selected to engage and address the specific needs of stakeholders. In addition, we created focused opportunities to involve developers as a key stakeholder to provide input that supports the ultimate vision and feasibility of the project.

The project team worked with the community, partners, developers, stakeholders, technical experts, with an iterative approach where technical aspects such as land use, civil, finance and development, are informing and informed by the best ideas, visions and expectations of the area's community and partners, to make the plan for the new Whetstone development the best possible.



To oversee this engagement strategy, the team put together a process committee, made up of County Commissioner Liz Smith and County project managers John Cattle and Cathie Pagano. The process committee's role was to weigh-in on the outreach plan and schedule for the project, which in turn creates transparency in the process.

## Sketch Plan

After multiple iterations informed by community engagement, stakeholder input, and research, the following sketch plan is being submitted in this package.





### Nighborhood Zones

The neighborhood is composed of 8 zones that come together to create a cohesive neighborhood.



**Urban North** - About 85-100 apartments, in a highly transit accessible, vibrant location. Up to three stories. Provides a strong connection to the highway, sheltering the rest of the site, and framing the street and transit connections. Park and pedestrian connections. Excellent views of Mount Crested Butte, Paradise Divide, and Whetstone Mountain. Opportunity for community serving uses such as non-profit office space, childcare, neighborhood serving business, business center or co-work space. Parking for 120-140 vehicles.

**Far Northwest** - 9 townhouse units, 1 and 3 BR with an architectural character that responds to the agrarian history of the Slate river valley and surrounding ranches. Trail connection and residential parking. Anticipated to be for rent - may be employer owned units.

**Gers Parcel** - Separately described and represented in gray. The Gers family intends to rebuild on the site. Land use approvals for this site will occur outside of this process.

**West Side** - 24 units, 1 and 3 BR with pitched roofs, front porches, buildings address garden courts and the street. Parking courts between the buildings include enclosed garages.. Low fences.

**Central** - 66 units, two story flats, alley loaded parking, front porches and second floor balconies buildings address the street and the park. "Alley Flats" above enclosed garages. Anticipated to be for rent.

**Far South** - 8 units, two story flats, front porches and second floor balconies buildings address the street and the park. Anticipated to be for rent.

**East Side** - 12 units - Two story units with living above enclosed garages. Simple industrial contemporary forms, bridging to the Riverland industrial park. Opportunity for live/work, home office, flex space, owner occupancy or employer owned units; likely to go up to 200% AMI. Design could also be modified to have more smaller units.

**Riverland Corner** - 9 units, 2 BR two story townhouses, transitioning to Riverland neighborhood. Likely for rent.

## Housing

**Affordability** - Alleviate the stress of housing insecurity that many members of our community are experiencing, focusing on homes for rent to households below 120% AMI, and homes for sale for households below 200% AMI.

**Yield/Density** - The proposed plan seeks to maximize the housing available on the site through appropriate density within the context of the north valley. Total unit count for the site is projected to be 231 residential units because there is not a developer attached to this project yet that number may shift a bit in the preliminary plan. Higher density is placed in the center of the site and along the edge against HWY 135. Lower density occurs along the east, south and west edges of the site.

**Mix** - Housing types provided include: duplexes, triplexes, townhouses and stacked flats - both walk ups and flats in larger structures with double loaded internal corridors.

Unit sizes include one-, two- and three-bedrooms. Different unit sizes occur in all of the housing types provided.

**Community/Place** - Elements of the design of the neighborhood: buildings addressing streets with entry porches, walkable streets, central greenway, parks, and trails, will encourage interactions between residents and foster a sense of community. The integration of communal, open spaces throughout the neighborhood and their organization to frame views of the surrounding environment will connect the site to the landscape and engender a sense of belonging within the north valley.

The sketch plan anticipates the potential for future community uses without defining what those uses might be or where they might be located. Community outreach conducted as part of developing this plan made clear the desire of potential residents to have a place, or places, to gather - a place for an organization providing supportive services, a coffee shop or something altogether different.

It is hoped that the neighborhood will support residents who want to stay in the valley, put down roots and contribute to the community. The variety of unit sizes and types will allow for a diverse and vibrant neighborhood of individuals, couples and families, children and young adults through seniors. The breadth of unit types and sizes will allow residents to live in the neighborhood as they move through different phases of their lives.

## Transportation Guiding Principles

We are seeking to create a great neighborhood, where people are not dependent on cars. We would like to suggest these guiding principles that we believe would make the transit connection successful for Whetstone and the broader community:

- Explore opportunities for successful vehicle, bike and pedestrian connections between Whetstone and Riverland that do not require use of 135 Highway to travel between the neighborhoods.
- Activate spaces by tying in buildings close to the transit location, and considering inclusion of community uses. Consider opportunities for further space activation and placemaking, such as incorporating art/sculptures and unexpected and interesting elements.
- Explore opportunities for a trail/pedestrian connection along the ROW and Whetstone parcel boundary for better design solutions and transit access.
- Position bus and underpass to work most efficiently for both neighborhood design and transit solutions.
- Create a sense of arrival on and off the bus and through the underpass to make it clear, desirable, inviting, safe, and easy to use, with strong visual and physical connection between green spaces, transit, and underpass. Additional considerations for potential underpass include:
  - Design and build for intuitive desire lines, efficient walking, biking, and ADA connections.
  - Daylight – through underpass and surrounding features
  - Safety and maintenance – consider snow removal and personal safety by making paths and underpass wide and airy

- Maximize natural site grading by designing to natural contours and making trails and buildings integrated into cohesive natural and built environment
- Minimizing solutions that require high engineering and concrete. Consider using step downs, or a terraced approach if needed.. such as focusing on more trails than ramps

### Street and Trail Connections

Streets are located and configured to allow efficient vehicular access into, through and out of the site. The west road is expected to align with a reconfigured Brush Creek Road intersection providing a safe and efficient connection to HWY 135.

Streets are designed to be highly walkable. Detached sidewalks allow a planted parkway space between the walk and the curb. The parkway will provide a space for street trees that shade both the walk and the parallel on-street parking. In places where additional snow storage area is needed the parkway will allow plows to windrow snow along the street edge without blocking the sidewalk. Curb extensions at intersections reduce the street width, slow vehicular traffic and improve pedestrian safety.

A trail/walk runs the length of the site through the greenway and the parks along its length. This is expected to be a primary pedestrian and bike route through the neighborhood.

A boundary trail creates a walkable circumference with views to the surrounding landscape.. The trail is located below the berm on the west side of the site, and on top of the berm between Whetstone and Riverland. At the north end of the site a landscaped "boundary connection" walkway connects the east and west sides.

The project has been designed to accommodate a future multi-modal underpass connection beneath Highway 135 linking bus stops for both north- and southbound travel. The underpass would ultimately connect to the new CB to CB South multimodal trail. The underpass and multimodal trail will be designed and built under a separate County initiative, however, this project has oriented the buildings, parking and open spaces to accommodate and encourage this connection. The continued coordination of this will be required by the future developer.

### Open Spaces/Parks

The site is organized around a central greenway that extends from HWY 135 south to the southern edge of the site overlooking the Slate River. The greenway is a continuous ribbon of landscaped area running through a series of open spaces. It connects to a large central park space in the heart of Whetstone and a large natural open landscape area used for detention at the south end of the site. The greenway contains paths for pedestrians and serves as an alternative to walking on the neighborhood streets.

Buffer space on the east and west sides of the site contain the aforementioned boundary trail.

Duplex, triplex, townhouse and many ground level flats within the central portion of the site have small private outdoor spaces for resident enjoyment and unique landscape expressions.

### Site Grading and Landscaping



An initial grading and drainage plan will be provided at preliminary plan in compliance with the applicable standards. The overarching topography of the site - sloping from northeast to southwest will remain. Berms along the east and west sides will remain. The existing berm along HWY 135 will be modified as required for new points of access and structures.

All landscaping on site will be either native or naturalized and adapted to the site on the valley floor and will expressly avoid all invasive species. The Wildland Urban Interface code helps to inform the types of plantings, which could include native trees, shrubs, perennials and grasses—low water, drought tolerant, fire resistant. Dense evergreens and large non-native trees are not anticipated. Native landscaping along Hwy 135 is proposed.



## Infrastructure

Gunnison County has worked with JVA Consulting Engineering to develop a water supply and wastewater treatment plan. JVA has analyzed three different options for water and sewer service:

- Connection to the Town of Crested Butte water supply and wastewater treatment facilities
- Connection to the East River Sanitation District for wastewater treatment and Skyland Metropolitan District for water supply

- Development of an onsite wastewater treatment system (aka package plant) permitted by the State of Colorado and use of central wells and augmentation water for water supply.

Each option has its own challenges and all are costly. Based on JVA’s analysis and County staff work, the County has identified connection to the Town of Crested Butte services as the preferred option. County staff has met with staff from the Town of Crested Butte and has submitted a request for service to the Town. The Town and the County have entered into a “Memorandum of Understanding for an Assessment of Town Water and Sanitary Sewer Infrastructures Capabilities to serve the Whetstone Workforce Housing Development between the Town of Crested Butte and Gunnison County”. As part of that MOU, the County contracted with Carollo Engineers to analyze the capacity of the Town’s utilities. That assessment identified capacity and some challenges that the Town is currently working to address. The request to the Town by the County will trigger a more extensive analysis and review process to determine if connection will be permitted by the Town.

The proposed water supply and wastewater treatment plan have been prepared by JVA and are attached as Exhibit C.

## Neighborhood Planning Guidelines

These guidelines have been created to guide future development within Whetstone. The guidelines are intended to provide a vision for Whetstone while providing flexibility for future development partners to create unique and distinctive structures and spaces within the framework of a coherent and cohesive neighborhood. Developers may propose something different than what is explicitly shown in this plan but must, through the county review process, show how the proposed development is in keeping with these guidelines and the context and character of the neighborhood.

Key components of the Neighborhood Planning Guidelines include:

- ★ Building scale and form
- ★ Building relationship to the street
- ★ Building relationship to gardens, parks and outdoor spaces
- ★ Building typologies
- ★ Storage
- ★ Architectural character

## Building Scale and Form

- Larger buildings are to be built at the top of the site near HWY 135 in the neighborhood named “Urban North”. Smaller buildings sensitive to the scale of the adjacent properties are to be constructed on the east, south and west sides of the site.
- The neighborhood is to be predominantly two story structures with the exception of two buildings framing the north end of the greenway along HWY 135 and the potential for a third story on the east side units that are built into the berm along this property boundary.
- All structures shall have meaningful changes in plane (creating relief and shadow on the face of the structure) and/or materials to reduce building scale and create visual interest.

- Buildings are to have sloped roofs wherever possible within the allowable 37.5' height limitation (through height modification request as allowed by essential housing standards). Roof orientation shall be such that snow is not shed onto walkways, driveways or unroofed outdoor living spaces. Roofs oriented to maximize the potential for rooftop solar are encouraged but not required.

### **Building Relationship to the Street**

- Buildings should address the street and unit entries should be visible from the street wherever possible.
- Unit entry porches are to be constructed on all structures on the east side, west side, far northwest and central areas of the site.
- Entry porches should be a minimum of five feet in depth and large enough to accommodate resident seating.
- Primary living spaces should face the street and have large windows to enliven the streetscape and provide security to pedestrians and neighbors.

### **Building Relationship to Gardens, Parks and Outdoor Spaces**

- Outdoor spaces around structures should be planned as shared or private landscaped gardens and yards.. Spaces within these structures, and particularly primary living spaces, should be located alongside these garden areas and oriented to take advantage of views of and across them.
- Building design at Whetstone is to encourage the connection of residents to the landscape through proximity of indoor and outdoor living spaces and gardens and fenestration patterns to strong visual connection between interior and exterior spaces.

### **Building Typologies**

- A wide variety of building types is encouraged.
- Building types anticipated are shown on the Development Plan.
- Building types should seek to generate the desired density while maintaining a scale appropriate to the context.
- Single family detached structures will not be allowed except in the Far Northwest neighborhood.

### **Storage**

- All housing units constructed within Whetstone shall have secure bulk storage spaces for outdoor equipment and gear.
- Bulk storage spaces shall be a minimum of 35 sf with a minimum dimension of 5 feet and minimum height of 8 feet.
- Bulk storage space may be remote from a unit or within the unit but shall not otherwise be used as a bedroom or utility closet.

### **Architectural Character**

Architectural character at Whetstone is represented by the following images:



## Architecture Idea Board Goals

- Variety of architecture and materials
- Tie into Gunnison Valley style
- Some relationship to Riverland's industrial characteristics
- Break down larger masses
- Smart snow management
- Orientation for solar access
- Decks and small private outdoor spaces
- Transition from more traditional architecture to the west to more modern industrial to the east



Pitchfork Mount CB: small buildings, traditional mountain architecture, decks, wood, rusty metal



### Lower density: duplexes, triplexes



Duplexes: single pitch, great opportunity for solar & snow management, carports



Deck, single pitched roof, large windows with a view (especially for east side)



Traditional Gunnison Valley



**Diversity in Materials**



**Higher density & commercial**



Buried architecture for bigger buildings

Traditional mountain feel architecture on west side (less density), increase density towards Riverland and move towards more industrial/modern style.

Community center



**Live-work units**



**ADUs**



**Phasing**

It is anticipated that infrastructure will be the first phase and may be concurrent with the first phase of development. Phasing of the residential development will be determined by the developer and coordinated through future phases of the land use permitting process.

**Sketch Plan Submittal Requirements**

**H.5 STATUS OF PARCEL AS A LEGAL LOT.**

The parcel is a legally created lot as evidenced by the partition suit creating the subject parcel recorded in the office of the Gunnison County Clerk and Recorder at Reception No. 313072 or Book 496, Page 395.

**H.6. LIST OF ADJACENT LANDOWNERS.**

The list of adjacent landowners is attached as Exhibit A.

**H.7 IDENTIFICATION OF PRESENT LAND USE AND PREVIOUSLY-APPROVED USES.**

The parcel is currently vacant. In 2004 an application was made to develop an industrial park on this site, the preliminary plan application was approved but the application was later withdrawn by the applicant.

**H.8. MINERAL RESOURCES.**

There are no known mineral resources on the parcel.

**H.9. PROJECT DESCRIPTION.**

A description of what the applicant wants to do on or to the property, including the following:



**a. USES AND ACTIVITIES, NUMBERS OF UNITS, OR SIZES OF USES.**

Gunnison County proposes the development of an essential workforce housing residential development on the site. Approximately 231 units are proposed at the site of which the majority (more than 40% per Essential Housing standards) shall be deed restricted based on AMI limitations which will vary based on a range of community needs and the ability of the County and developer to secure supplemental funding and control costs. The units will vary and may include: apartments, townhomes, and live/work units. This plan is conceptual in nature, as required by Gunnison County standards. Gunnison County has not yet partnered with a developer for the site. At the time of preliminary plan application it is expected that the County will have partnered with a developer and significantly more detail is required and expected at that time. Gunnison County proposes a mixed use building to be included in the development which may include various commercial type facilities that would serve the neighborhood. Those commercial uses could include childcare, mental health offices, a cafe, community meeting space, or co-work space. No commercial uses have been specifically identified at this time. The total parcel is 15.1 acres, the proposed area of open space is 6.6 acres or 43% (30% is required).

**b. DESCRIPTION OF OFF-SITE RESOURCES.**

No offsite resources are expected to be required for this project other than typical construction operations.

**c. SEASONS AND HOURS OF OPERATION.**

Not applicable.

**d. PHASES.**

The County anticipates that the project will be developed in phases and will provide more detail at the time of Preliminary Plan application. At this time a developer has not been selected for the project so the phasing has yet to be determined. It is expected that all infrastructure and utilities will be installed initially and phases of housing will be installed following infrastructure.

**I. MAPS AND SITE PLAN SHEETS.**

**1. VICINITY MAP**

See Exhibit B.

**2. NATURAL FEATURES.** Attached.

**a. MAPS AND TABLES OF SOILS TYPES.**

**3. SITE PLAN.** Attached.

**J. ROADS AND TRAILS SYSTEM PLAN.**

The general locations of the roads and trails are shown on the site plan attached as map #1. The design team has consulted with Gunnison County Public Works on the design of the internal development roads and is aware of Gunnison County standards. The roads are proposed to meet County and Crested Butte Fire Protection District standards and include on and off street parking, landscaping, and sidewalks. Gunnison County is currently working with

Mead & Hunt to develop a revised Brush Creek intersection plan that is expected to include a roundabout and relocation of Brush Creek Road. The intersection is expected to also include an underpass that would connect Whetstone essential housing to the northwest side of Highway 135.

A perimeter gravel trail is proposed on the parcel that will be accessible to the public. Gunnison County is also working with CDOT and other consultant teams to develop a plan for a multimodal access trail from Crested Butte to Crested Butte South, the design of the trail is expected to include access to the Whetstone essential housing project.

**K. ACCESS AND OTHER EASEMENTS.**

All known easements are shown on the survey map titled, "Gunnison County Commissioners Parcel" dated May 24, 2022.

**L. FLOOD HAZARD AREAS.**

The parcel is not in a floodplain according to FEMA Floodplain maps.

**M. GEOLOGIC HAZARD AREAS.**

The parcel is not in an area of geologic hazards according to Gunnison County mapping.

**N. LOCATION OF SITE WITHIN WILDFIRE HAZARD AREA AND FIRE PROTECTION.**

According to Gunnison County's current mapping the parcel is in an area of low wildfire hazard, however the County did work with Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire in 2019 and that updated mapping (not yet adopted) shows the parcel in an area of high hazard. The design team recognizes that the parcel is in a wildfire hazard area and will implement FireWise design standards, defensible space, and fireflow requirements for fire fighting purposes into the design. It is anticipated that future structures may need to comply with the International Wildland Urban Interface Code.

**O. WILDLIFE HABITAT.**

The parcel is not in an area of defined sensitive wildlife habitat according to CPW mapping.

**P. LOCATION OF SITE WITHIN AREA POTENTIALLY AFFECTED BY WETLANDS AND WETLANDS PERMITTING.**

A small portion of the southwest corner of the parcel is within 125 feet of a water body. The proposed development will comply with all inner restrictive buffer requirements and outer variable buffer requirements as necessary. No development will occur within 25 feet of the water body and a water quality protection plan will be included as part of the Preliminary Plan application.

**Q. DEVELOPMENT ON RIDGELINES.**

There are no ridgelines on the parcel.

**R. DEVELOPMENTS IMPACTING AGRICULTURAL LANDS.**

There are no agricultural operations on or adjacent to this parcel. There are no ditches, easements, or historic livestock drives on this parcel.

**S. LANDS BEYOND SNOWPLOWED ACCESS.**

Not applicable.

**T. DEVELOPMENT ON INHOLDINGS IN NATIONAL WILDERNESS.**

Not applicable.

**U. DEVELOPMENT ON PROPERTY ABOVE TIMBERLINE.**

Not applicable.

**V. WATER SUPPLY PLAN.**

Gunnison County proposes connection to the Town of Crested Butte water supply system. The Town's water system is proposed to provide domestic, irrigation, and fireflow needs. An MOU between the Town and the County describing the process of investigating extension of water and wastewater utilities from the Town of Crested Butte is attached as Exhibit D. The water supply plan is attached as Exhibit C.

The applicant has worked with JVA Engineering to develop several options for water supply to the development. The options include:

- A. Connection to the Town of Crested Butte central system
- B. Connection to the Skyland Metro District water supply system
- C. Development of onsite central wells to serve the development

Connection to the Town of Crested Butte is the preferred option. The County and the Town signed a Memorandum of Understanding (see attached Exhibit D) that identifies that the parties selected Carollo Engineers to perform a water and sewer capacity study to confirm the capacity of the Town's water and sewer infrastructure to serve the Whetstone essential housing development. Carollo Engineers report is attached as Exhibit E. The MOU states: "The MOU parties agree that should the efforts...demonstrate, to the reasonable satisfaction of the MOU parties, adequate water and sanitary sewer capacity in the Town of Crested Butte's water and sanitary sewer systems for the Whetstone project, the parties will present the findings of the study to the Town Council for the purpose of the Town's consideration of water and sanitary sewer infrastructure extension to the Whetstone parcel."

**W. SEWAGE DISPOSAL.**

The County and the Town signed a Memorandum of Understanding (see attached Exhibit D) that identifies that the parties selected Carollo Engineers to perform a water and sewer capacity study to confirm the capacity of the Town's water and sewer infrastructure to serve the Whetstone essential housing development. The MOU states: "The MOU parties agree that should the efforts...demonstrate, to the reasonable satisfaction of the MOU parties, adequate water and sanitary sewer capacity in the Town of Crested Butte's water and sanitary sewer systems for the Whetstone project, the parties will present the findings of the study to the Town Council for the purpose of the Town's consideration of water and sanitary sewer infrastructure extension to the Whetstone parcel."

Carollo Engineers report is attached as Exhibit E and found that there is capacity opportunity within the Town's systems but there are also additional improvements and policies that may need to be addressed to ensure that capacity. Carollo noted: "additional recommendations for a subsequent phase of the capacity assessment have been developed to confirm the viability and further detail the impacts of connecting the Development to the Town's water and wastewater systems. The recommendations include additional assessments to understand the impacts of



connecting the proposed system, responsibility for operation and maintenance of system components, capital costs associated with the proposed connections and possible facility expansion or storage needs, and long-term operations and maintenance costs (e.g., additional staff requirements to support the near-term additional demands on the existing system, power and chemical costs, etc.). These recommendations are summarized in Table 4 (of the report).

County and Town staff are discussing the report prepared by Carollo Engineers to determine how issues such as treatment of sump pump water and disposal of waste solids may be addressed to allow for adequate capacity to treat wastewater from the Whetstone essential housing development. The County has also prepared and submitted a request to the Town for service of water and wastewater to the subject parcel which will trigger additional analysis and review process to determine if the Town will allow connection.

**a. COMPLIANCE WITH CDPHE REQUIREMENTS.**

The Town of Crested Butte water systems comply with CDPHE requirements.

**b. CONFIRMATION OF WILLINGNESS TO SERVE.**

The attached MOU serves as the Town’s initial documentation of willingness to serve. Additional analysis will need to be completed by the County prior to the Town being able to approve connection.

**x. GENERAL SITE PLAN STANDARDS AND LOT MEASUREMENTS.**

The narrative, map and design layout shall address and comply with the requirements of Section 13-103: General Site Plan Standards and Lot Measurements.

**Y. SETBACKS FROM PROPERTY LINES AND ROAD RIGHTS-OF-WAY.**

The narrative, map and design layout shall address and comply with the setback requirements of Section 13-104: Setbacks from Property Lines and Road Rights-of-Way.

**Z. LANDSCAPING PLAN.**

A landscaping plan titled “Landscape Plan” is attached as Maps #4 and 5.

Snow storage areas are shown on Map #3 (attached). The proposed snow removal plan by area and road is:

- East Road: Winrow to the NW side of road
- North Road: Push toward Central Greenway and stack in storage area. Also push toward West Road and stack at corner of Greenway at road intersection.
- West Road: Push South from 135 and stack at corner of Greenway. Continue pushing South to snow storage at the South end.

Additional snow storage areas are distributed along each road with the understanding that pushing long distances is infeasible. These distributed storage areas will have a roll curb so snow may be pushed up into the off-street storage area. It may later be trucked with a loader to the larger storage areas identified at the Greenway and South end open space.

Parking areas each have snow storage at the end where snow can be pushed. Some areas like the Central Stacked Flats will require snow to be pushed from the central lane to the adjacent lanes to be stacked.

**AA. RECLAMATION AND NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL.**

Gunnison County acknowledges that an Earthmoving Site Revegetation and Noxious Weed Control Plan, as designed and/or approved by the Gunnison Basin Weed Specialist pursuant to Section 13-115: Reclamation and Noxious Weed Control will be required to be prepared for the Preliminary Plan submittal, if the Sketch Plan is approved.

**BB. GRADING AND DRAINAGE PLANS.**

The Sketch Plan design has been guided by the standards of this Section.

**CC. WATER IMPOUNDMENTS.**

No water impoundments are proposed as part of this project.

**DD. SCHOOLS, PARKS, AND COMMON AREAS. The Sketch Plan application shall identify those areas that are proposed to be set aside for schools, parks, or common areas, as applicable.**

No schools are proposed at this site, although space for a small child care facility has been contemplated as part of the “community use” building. The open space is proposed to be set aside for common area and park space to serve the neighborhood as shown on the site plan.

**EE. SOLID AND HAZARDOUS WASTES.**

No solid or hazardous wastes are expected to be generated as part of this project.

**FF. PROTECTIVE COVENANTS OR RESTRICTIONS.**

The Whetstone essential housing development is expected to be developed in phases by one or more developers. It is not anticipated that individual vacant lots will be sold, thus some protective covenants are not necessary. The following covenants or restrictions will be included:

- Responsibilities of an HOA, developer, or metro district to maintain common areas, improve infrastructure. This will be further defined at Preliminary Plan when additional detail from a developer is known.
- The County will be party to amendment/enforcement of any covenants.
- Building scale and location will be described in detail in the Preliminary Plan.
- Architectural style and appearance shall reflect a varied look including more modern architecture, some industrial elements that will complement Riverland Industrial Park. Please refer to the above narrative and photos for more information on design guidelines.
- No solid fuel burning devices shall be allowed in the development.
- Exterior lighting shall comply with the standards of the LUR.
- Use and maintenance of open space and common areas shall be described and include access for the general public.
- Parking rules within the development shall be included.
- Landscaping maintenance and installation shall be included.
- Snow removal and snow storage responsibilities shall be included.
- Domestic animal controls shall be included .
- Fencing standards shall be included.

**Additional Submittal Requirements**

**Section 7-102: B. Compatibility with community character; no adverse impact to future development of the development area.**

Gunnison County proposes an essential workforce housing project on the subject parcel. The 2021 [Gunnison Valley Market Update](#) shows a current shortage of 460 housing units (300 own, 190 rent) and an additional need for 470 units (290 own, 180 rent) to keep up with demand by 2026. The impacts of housing shortage have been detailed at public meetings and in the media. Businesses do not have enough employees, essential services cannot hire essential staff from teachers to physicians because of the lack of affordable housing at all price points. The development of essential workforce housing is essential to maintaining community character—without year-round residents that live and work in the community the very core and essence of the community is gone. As stated in Section 9-601:

*“The wellbeing of the residents and visitors in Gunnison County is dependent upon a supply of affordable workforce housing being available for emergency services personnel, medical practitioners, teachers and other employees crucial to our economy and community so they can live within reasonable proximity to their worksites and provide necessary public- and private-sector services. The documented trend of increasing housing and land prices in Gunnison County has resulted in an inadequate supply of Essential Housing for county residents. This jeopardizes the ability of local employers to hire and retain employees, thus negatively impacting business operations.”*

That section was written in 2006 and the lack of essential housing has only grown in scale and challenge.

The proposed neighborhood has been designed to be compatible and complementary to the natural systems and existing land uses in the area. The consultant team has worked extensively with community members and adjacent landowners in the design of the development plan. The neighborhood has been designed with connectivity to neighboring parcels, multi-modal access, and appropriate buffering in mind. Additionally, the design team is working with the Town of Crested Butte to determine if connection to the Town’s water and wastewater treatment systems is feasible. The development will likely be developed in phases. At this time a developer has not been selected for the project so the phasing has yet to be determined. It is expected that all infrastructure and utilities will be installed initially and phases of housing will be installed following infrastructure.

**Section 9-600: Essential Housing**

Gunnison County proposes an essential housing development on the subject parcel in compliance with the standards of this Section. At least 40% of the units will be deed-restricted essential housing. Gunnison County expects that the majority, if not all, units will be deed restricted for essential housing, however because a developer has not yet been selected the exact percent is not yet determined. It is possible that there may be a small number of units that are either not deed restricted or have lighter deed restrictions (residency requirements only) to cover the costs of the deed restricted units. During the design charrette, stakeholders expressed a strong desire that this be a lights-on community and that no short term rental units be permitted. The applicant supports those desires.

Compliance with standards of Section 9-604: Incentives to Provide Essential Housing

A.1. The application is eligible for this incentive.

A.2. Not applicable, the applicant is not seeking an increase in size for a primary residence.

A.3. Applicable, an increase in height of 25% is requested for buildings 10 and 12. These buildings are designed to work with the site topography and to minimize visibility and mass from Highway 135. The public benefit of the taller buildings will allow more units in the development for essential housing. No solar access will be obstructed for other units nor will solar access be obstructed for adjacent property owners.

A.4. Not applicable, it is expected that the proposed development can meet setbacks from the perimeter of the site.

A.5. Applicable, the payment of fees and possible deferral may be requested at Preliminary/Final Plan. At this time, because a developer has not been selected, it is unknown if fee deferral will be requested.

A.6. Modified Development Standards

The conceptual development identifies the following conceptual sizes for the proposed buildings (the number corresponds with number label on the conceptual development plan):

1. Single-family residence, 1,200 sq. ft.
2. Duplex buildings, 3,000 sq. ft.
3. Triplex buildings, 4,600 sq. ft.
4. Apartment building, 9,200 sq. ft.
5. Apartment building, 17,000 sq. ft.
6. Alley flats, 1,000 sq. ft.
7. Live/work townhomes, 6,500 sq. ft.
8. Triplex buildings, 3,800 sq. ft.
9. Apartment building, 19,500 sq. ft.
10. Apartment building, 34,500 sq. ft.
11. Apartment building, 17,000 sq. ft.
12. Apartment building, 42,000 sq. ft.

We request a modification to the design standards of Section 13-105: D.2. *Maximum Building Size and Maximum Aggregate of All Structures* which states the maximum building size for multi-family residences is 10,000 square feet and the aggregate maximum is 12,500 square feet, as allowed by Section 9-604: A.6. The proposed buildings have been designed in a manner to increase efficiencies—both energy and cost efficiencies and do not jeopardize public health, safety, or welfare. The buildings, especially 9-12 have been designed in a manner to utilize the topography and grade at the site to reduce the appearance and massing of the structures from Highway 135. Locating larger structures closer to the highway creates a sense of arrival to the community with this site which will help to slow traffic on Highway 135. It is important to consider the tradeoffs that are necessary for developing essential housing—larger buildings are more cost effective and energy efficient and can house more people, while smaller buildings may be more culturally acceptable and align with past development patterns. However, if the highest priority is housing our community members and workforce in energy efficient units that are connected to our communities and part of great neighborhoods—larger buildings are a critical tool. We cannot house everyone in single family or even duplex and triplex units while still maintaining open space, ensuring multi-modal connection, and aligning with our climate and energy efficiency goals.



B.1. 422 parking spaces are proposed at this time for 231 units which is 1.8 spaces/unit. The LUR requires two parking spaces for up to a 3-bedroom unit. As allowed by Section 9-604: B.1. We are requesting a reduction in required parking for the proposed development. The County and the design team have worked very hard to balance the number of units with needed parking at the site. 1.8 space/unit is significant and that parking, along with the County's separate project to develop an underpass from the site connecting it to transit and a multi-modal path justify the reduction in parking. The reduction in parking will not jeopardize public health, safety, or welfare and because of the proposed underpass connection to transit it will likely improve public health and safety by reducing vehicle trips and emissions. Additionally, the reduction in parking allows for the development of improved park and open space that is an amenity for residents.

B.2. Of the 15.1 acres, 6.6 acres of (44%) open space is proposed.

### **Section 10-103: Residential Density**

The essential workforce housing development is within the Town of Crested Butte's [three-mile area plan](#) (Area Plan) which was last updated in 2011. Gunnison County has not adopted the three-mile plan. The Town has also recently developed the Crested Butte Compass Plan which is in the final stages of adoption. County staff engaged with Town staff on Town's plans, infrastructure, site design, and long term community housing goals of both jurisdictions.

The Area Plan stated goals include: a healthy environment; a high quality of life; housing for people who live and work in the community. The subject parcel is located in the "Middle Slate River Valley" as defined in the Area Plan. The Area Plan identifies incentives such as increased density for the development of local housing (essential housing). The Area Plan does identify the subject parcel, along with the adjacent Colvin parcels (but not the recently acquired Gers parcel) as "priority preservation areas." The prioritization of these parcels as preservation areas would leave them as islands that are adjacent to industrial, residential developments and the highway.

The Area Plan identifies the following goals for residential design:

- Preservation of the natural character of the land and habitat
- Clustered buildings
- Provision of substantial open space
- Solar access and alternative energy
- Preservation of agricultural uses whenever possible

The Whetstone essential housing development has clustered buildings on the parcel, created open space that is meaningful for the neighborhood and accessible for the residents, prioritized solar access and alternative energy for the development. No agricultural lands are impacted by the proposed development.

The Area Plan also recommends that development should provide trails as identified on the Crested Butte Trail Plan. A perimeter trail around the development is proposed that is also expected to connect to a future Crested Butte to Crested Butte South multimodal access that the County is currently working on.

Road design standards are described in the Area Plan and the Whetstone development is expected to comply with those standards. The development has been designed with two access points which improves safety and traffic flow. All exterior lighting shall be required to comply with the County’s exterior lighting standards which requires fully-shielded and full cutoff fixtures. The development also proposes connection to the Town’s water and sewer service which is an identified goal in the Area Plan. The Area Plan recommends that development include land available for public transit systems; the development includes internal bus stops and the County has included a possible underpass on Highway 135 as part of the Brush Creek intersection redesign. The underpass is not included as an element of this project that requires Planning Commission approval—it is separately reviewed and approved by CDOT as part of the Brush Creek intersection redesign. The applicant finds that the development of an underpass would be a significant benefit to this project and the greater community.

The Area Plan includes a section on housing with a specific goal: “The housing policies of the Crested Butte Area Plan are designed to develop a socially, culturally and economically balanced community with an appropriate mix of residential dwelling unit types for permanent residents, part time residents, and tourists.” The Whetstone development meets this goal by providing deed-restricted essential housing for the local workforce.

The Town’s [Compass Plan](#) identifies key themes heard from the community and defines community values. The Compass Plan describes a desire to implement policies that “make driving less convenient while simultaneously improving and expanding transit opportunities as an attractive alternative.” Additionally, the Compass Plan describes concerns about housing insecurity:

“A tension that was an undercurrent to many of the conversations was a deeply held fear of housing insecurity and lack of economic mobility. For example, residents of the Town feel threatened by the changes they are witnessing, including losing their quality of life, a growing divide between the haves and have nots, an inability to maintain the existing culture and community, the inability to afford a home, and the lack of opportunity to build and sustain a life here that future generations can experience.”

The proposed Whetstone workforce housing development addresses a challenge described in the Compass Plan:

“Affordable Housing: Increasingly throughout each jurisdiction, individuals are unable to afford housing near where they work. There are many compounding issues, including the diversity of the housing stock, strategic density, the need to incentivize deed-restricted units, and a lack of options that are walkable, bikeable, and served by transit.”

**Section 10-104: Locational standards for commercial, industrial, and other non-residential uses.**

The building identified on the site plan as mixed use may include several different neighborhood serving uses such as a co-work space, childcare, mental health center offices, shared/rentable community space, or a cafe. These proposed uses comply with Section 10-104: B.2. as is contemplated in the Crested Butte Area Plan. The Area Plan identifies that neighborhood serving commercial uses are appropriate. Additionally, Section 10-104: C.1.e. identifies that a commercial use that is designed to serve a specific residential area is appropriate and compatible.

**Section 13-119: Standards to Ensure Compatible Uses.**

The proposed essential housing neighborhood has been designed to ensure that it is compatible with and complementary to the nearby residential or public use areas. The County has worked with adjacent landowners and community stakeholders to design a neighborhood that will be an asset to the community and a great place for our community members to live. The development of accessible open space, trails, and connection to transit create a neighborhood that is compatible with and enhancement of the community.