

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Doug Dotson
DATE: October 26, 2016
SUBJECT: State of the Plan report for Town Council

At the last Planning Commission meeting, Commissioners suggested that time be given at the meeting Wednesday night to delve into topics related to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. In particular the topics for the meeting were:

1. affordable housing, including possible locations for such housing and changes that might be made to the Town's land use regulations, fees and other similar options to promote affordability, and
2. option for increasing the tax base.

After some thought and discussion with others, I believe that it is important for the Planning Commission to meet with the Town Council before it begins to actively pursue implementation actions. Members of the Town Council have also discussed the Plan. While the Council may not have discussed the Plan to the same depth as the Planning Commission, councilmembers may have similar or other objectives and priorities that should be considered. Meeting with the Council and offering councilmembers your suggestions and listening to theirs will likely improve this process and ensure that everyone is on the same page going forward. By doing this, it improves the changes that the Commission and Town Council will quickly come to consensus on how to move the plan update and implementation actions forward.

If acceptable to the Planning Commission I have updated your report to the Town Council. I have added sections (highlighted in red) for your consideration. If the Commission is in agreement, it might approve this document, authorize that it be forwarded to the Town Council and request a meeting with the Council at its earliest convenience to discuss the Plan and the process for moving forward.

Attachments: State of the Community Plan Report
Talking Points for the Planning Commission's Meeting with Council

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

NEW CASTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

October, 2016

PURPOSE

The purpose of this State of the Community Plan report is to provide an assessment of the 2009 planning document. With this report the Planning Commission intends to:

1. identify those elements of the Plan that continue to provide adequate guidance for the community's future;
2. identify those aspects of the current Plan that should be reassessed now and the reasons for doing so;
3. offer possible strategies and actions steps to the Town Council; and
4. hold a joint discussion with Town Council, to receive input from Council on its priorities and objectives and to reach consensus on actions, priorities and the process for advancing the goals and objectives of the Town of New Castle Comprehensive Plan.

2009 PLAN PROCESS

In 2008 the New Castle Town Council appointed an eleven-member Steering Committee made up of local residents, business interests, and Town Council to guide a new vision for the long-term growth and development of the community. This effort was in response to pending growth pressures, for which the community was not fully prepared. **While several members of the Planning Commission were appointed to the steering committee, the Commission as a whole was not involved in the process of developing the Plan.** After some months and considerable community input, however, the Planning Commission recommended and the Town Council adopted the Town of New Castle Comprehensive Plan on May 27, 2009.

Prior to the adoption of the Plan, the National and local economies were strong. As a result, New Castle had begun to experience significant change. The intent of the Plan was to establish a path for community growth that, while accommodating new housing, businesses, services, jobs, parks/open spaces, non-motorized access systems, transportation, environmental protection and community infrastructure, would ensure that growth and change would not

adversely impact the small-town character and community values that residents wanted to preserve.

As the community planning process neared its conclusion, the National economy began to experience a slow-down, which in time became significant. Growth and development in the Roaring Fork and Colorado River Valleys also were affected. This economic downturn fundamentally stopped new development activity in New Castle. In aggregate, property tax valuation in New Castle declined about 51 percent between 2009 and 2012. More recently, while the upper valley resort economy has experienced improvement in recent years, the effect of the up-turn is only now being felt in New Castle's economy.

The Comprehensive Plan states that “the real measure of success of the New Castle Comprehensive Plan will be regular use and application of the principles, goals and policies that it espouses.” The stage is set for New Castle to grow and prosper as the local economy improves; provided however, the resulting changes will not harm, but seek to maintain and improve the desired small-town community character and values.

The Comprehensive Plan also states that it should be reviewed and updated every five years. More than five years have passed since the Plan was adopted. The Planning Commission finds that the Plan should now undergo an assessment to ensure that it can continue to guide growth and development in the community in a favorable way. The purpose of this document is to provide that general assessment of the Plan and to make recommendations for the next steps to implement the recommendations in the Plan.

COMMUNITY 2050 VISION

The Comprehensive Community Plan provided a vision for the community's future. That Vision is portrayed as follows:

- A. In the year 2050, New Castle is an attractive, thriving Western Slope town that continues to value both its heritage and community. The Town enjoys a sustainable growth rate, a stable economy and a healthy environment. Balanced land uses ensure economic vitality, support local businesses and provide local employment for a majority of residents. An extensive system of connected trails, parks and open space offers non-motorized pathways, access to public land, wildlife corridors, recreational and public health benefits and economic stimulation for the local economy. Developed parks serve a variety of purposes and have grown in acreage with the town. Passive open space protects high-quality wildlife habitat, conserves native vegetation, maintains view corridors, safeguards riparian areas and preserves other environmental resources.

- B. Town residents support environmental protection of high quality air and water. Clean, renewable, locally-produced energy sources are used to meet many energy demands in the community. Homes and businesses use the area’s abundant solar energy, and building designs minimize energy demand. Construction materials reduce environmental impact by minimizing waste and incorporating products that lessen their environmental footprint. Well-designed exterior lighting reduces energy consumption, eliminates lighting trespass, protects views of New Castle's star-filled night sky and at the same time maintains public safety.
- C. In 2050, historic downtown New Castle retains its traditional architectural character and supports a variety of small businesses that employ local residents and attract many visitors to town. Downtown remains the community focal point for events, parades and local government services including Town Hall, the post office, the library and the community center. The historic architectural character of downtown is retained in all new construction and exterior remodels. Wide sidewalks, landscaping, public gathering spaces, period lighting, two-lane traffic and thriving businesses make downtown a pedestrian-friendly attractive site for commerce.
- D. New residential-focused subdivisions incorporate traditional neighborhood design concepts with front porches, openness to the street, alleyways and separated sidewalks. Narrow streets contribute to neighborhood character with slower traffic speeds and high levels of social interaction. The range in size of dwelling units and unit types within all neighborhoods offers a variety of housing styles and prices. This housing diversity, in conjunction with designated affordable housing units, allows New Castle residents to work and live in their community.
- E. Residential neighborhoods include live/work units with low-impact home occupations to allow residents to work where they live. The mix of uses lessens reliance on automobiles, decreases traffic, reduces noise/air pollution and enhances quality of life.
- F. Land-use policies provide for sequential, logical and cost-effective growth within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Consideration of new annexations is based on demonstrated community benefits and needs. "Smart Growth" policies assure a healthy variation in land use types. Residential, commercial, industrial and recreation land uses have a balanced relationship that supports a sustainable economy. Opportunities for local ownership of business and homes ensure that current and future generations can live in the community.
- G. The Town and Garfield County work together on joint land use reviews in the unincorporated areas around New Castle identified by the Joint Planning Area Boundary

under the guidance of the Town's Three-Mile Plan. Their mutual goal is to ensure that future annexations are easily and cost-effectively incorporated into town limits in terms of land use and compatible urban infrastructure.

- H. Development within the Urban Growth Boundary is phased to support an adopted annexation plan. New growth avoids inefficient leapfrog development beyond the range of municipal infrastructure/services. The edge of town is discernible from surrounding rural and agricultural areas. Urban sprawl with the resulting taxpayer burdens is avoided by concentrating development in town with adequate services, infrastructure and parks/open space.

COMMUNITY VISION SUMMARY

- A. All action and growth should value the **heritage** of the community.
- B. There should be a **stable economy** and a healthy environment.
- C. **There should be economic vitality locally**, with support for local businesses and opportunities for **local employment** for a majority of residents.
- D. There should be an extensive system of **connected trails, parks and open space**.
- E. There should be a **high quality environment**, including clean air and water and a star-filled night sky.
- F. The historic downtown New Castle should retain its **traditional architectural character** and support a variety of small businesses that employ local residents and attract many visitors to town. There should be wide sidewalks, landscaping, public gathering spaces, period lighting, two-lane traffic and thriving businesses make downtown a pedestrian-friendly attractive site for commerce.
- G. New residential-focused subdivisions incorporate **traditional neighborhood design** concepts with front porches, openness to the street, alleyways and separated sidewalks
- H. There should be **housing diversity**, in conjunction with designated affordable housing units, allowing New Castle residents to work and live in their community

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES, GOALS AND POLICIES

The guiding principles of the New Castle Comprehensive Community Plan are as follows:

A. COMMUNITY GROWTH

1. Ensure that new development substantially conforms to the New Castle Comprehensive Plan principles, goals and policies.
2. Growth in New Castle shall remain within the established Urban Growth Boundary which is delineated based upon geography, current/future availability of urban services, community input and logical community expansion. This boundary defines the urban edge from surrounding rural/agricultural areas.
3. Annexations and future development outside of the existing New Castle municipal boundary should occur in sequential, cost-effective and logical steps based upon overall benefits to the community.
4. New Castle should strive to achieve a balance of land-use categories (residential, business/commercial, light industrial, open space/parks) to attain a healthy relationship of land use types. A healthy balance of land-use types taken as a whole are considered those that contribute to economic sustainability, job creation, affordable housing, retail and services, recreation, wildlife habitat and overall community enhancement.
5. New Castle embraces the 10 principles of Smart Growth because they provide a framework within which communities can make informed decisions about better ways to grow, create jobs, support economic development, enhance neighborhoods, provide housing, support transit options and achieve a variety of other long-term community benefits. (SMART GROWTH)
 - Mixed land uses.
 - Incorporate compact building design.
 - Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
 - Create walkable communities.
 - Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
 - Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas
 - Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities
 - Provide a variety of transportation options.
 - Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective.
 - Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

6. New Castle shall implement the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan through its Municipal Code land-use regulations and intergovernmental agreements with Garfield County, the RE-2 School District, Colorado River Fire and Rescue, BLM and other governmental or quasi-governmental agencies.
7. New Castle shall require new development to offset all negative development-related impacts as determined through a quantifiable fiscal impact analysis and a traffic and utility study. Development should pay all costs associated with new infrastructure, infrastructure extensions or parks that it may require and for any related financial impacts that it places on existing municipal services. This requirement shall include adequate collateralization of the improvements and provisions to offset the loss of collateralization value due to inflation.

B. INFRASTRUCTURE

1. New Castle will continue to operate its water and wastewater facilities in a manner that provides high-quality service with adequate capacity to meet community needs including fire use, irrigation and wastewater treatment. Fiscally, these systems operate on an enterprise basis and fee structures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that user fees and tap fees (system development fees) are adequate to meet current and long-term financial needs. In addition, the Town will maintain a portfolio of water rights sufficient to serve current and future needs.

C. RECREATION and TOURISM

1. New Castle will work with the BLM and landowners to improve access between the town a public lands and local waterways.
2. New Castle will increase the number and attractiveness of special events in town.
3. Town-owned and managed tourist attractions will be developed and improved.
4. Increase awareness of existing tourist amenities.

D. TRANSPORTATION

1. New Castle will plan for and maintain a high quality interconnected community transportation system that supports all forms of transportation, including public transit, biking and walking, that reduces dependence on the individual automobile and that is designed to meet specific community needs.

E. HOUSING

1. New Castle will investigate, pursue and establish mutually supportive and beneficial partnerships with other agencies to preserve and create affordable/attainable housing.
2. New Castle will create and preserve affordable/attainable housing as an element of all new development.
3. Affordable/attainable housing will be created and preserved in existing neighborhoods.
4. New Castle will create and preserve affordable/attainable housing for renters and essential community service employees.

F. PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

1. New Castle will require dedication of park and trail facilities in conjunction with development and will require that development make appropriate and contributions to that expansion. New development shall dedicate a minimum of 10% of the project gross land area for future parks and open space development purposes.
2. New Castle will acquire, develop and maintain parks in accordance with the standard of the Colorado State Parks and Recreation Planning Guide for Small Towns developed by RPI Consulting under a contract with the Department of Local Affairs.
3. New Castle will acquire, develop and maintain a trail system that provides recreational and public health value and non-motorized access.
4. New Castle will acquire open space in locations and circumstances that protect environmental, scenic and wildlife values and that provide natural buffers between urban uses.

G. ECONOMY

1. New Castle desires to enhance its community retail/service space, thereby increasing needed sales tax revenues to pay for community services. Downtown is an important historic community focal point and should be supported as a key part of the community's economic base. Organizations such as the Main Street

Program education, support and information about enhancing downtowns. Historic Downtown New Castle can be made more pedestrian-friendly and more inviting to residents and visitors alike as a place to go.

2. New Castle will establish a goal of 40% employment of New Castle residents within the Town by the year 2030 by developing a specific plan to achieve this goal.

H. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Identify and maintain wildlife habitat.
2. Preserve or improve water quality.
3. New Castle will preserve or improve air quality.
4. New Castle will preserve a dark night sky.
5. New Castle will preserve riparian corridors.
6. New Castle will protect ridgelines and viewsheds.
7. New Castle will promote renewable energy, resource conservation and environmental sustainability.
8. New development is prohibited in natural hazard areas. Hazards include falling rock, steep slopes, ground subsidence, wildfire risks, unstable soils, etc.

I. Mineral Extraction and Energy Development

1. All areas within the New Castle Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) will be protected from all adverse impacts associated with mineral extraction or energy development.
2. New Castle and Garfield County should establish an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that addresses all aspects of mineral extraction and energy development within the Joint Planning Area to ensure that there are no conflicts with future community expansion.

J. HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

1. New Castle will preserve downtown as well as the character of surrounding older neighborhoods. In addition, the Town will pursue programs and efforts of the business community to celebrate New Castle's history.

K. SCHOOLS

1. New Castle will pursue cooperative planning and development with the RE-2 School District to assure that school facilities are developed and expanded as needed while remaining consistent with other Town goals and objectives.
2. New Castle will take a proactive approach towards planning for new or expanded school facilities.

L. COMMUNITY DESIGN

1. New Castle will preserve its historic building character in the downtown as well as the character of surrounding older neighborhoods by building upon and expanding the existing design standards to apply to annexing properties and new building areas.

M. COMMUNITY GATEWAYS

1. New Castle will create and maintain inviting gateways to the community by making aesthetic and design improvements to both its vehicle and pedestrian entry points.

N INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

New Castle will develop and maintain strong working relationships with surrounding governmental entities that are based upon clear communications and good cooperation to ensure the greatest benefits to the public.

GENERAL EVALUATION

After reviewing the Plan during its work session in July and August, 2016, the Planning Commission has made the following findings about the Comprehensive Plan.

- A. The Commission finds unanimously that the Comprehensive Community Plan, as adopted in 2009 continues to provide a valid direction for the future. The economy did slow after its adoption and growth and development pressures, that were a concern at that time, have diminished. As a result, some of the actions anticipated in the Plan did

not occur. That is not to say that the Plan was ineffective. To the contrary, the Planning Commission does find that it is a matter of time before the level of growth and development previously anticipated will once again come to New Castle.

- B. The Town was not ready for the impending level of growth in 2008-09 and the Plan was prepared in response. The Planning Commission finds that the Plan was a statement of community sentiment about its future. While growth pressures did diminish the Commission finds that the sentiment expressed about the community's future remains valid. The vision of the New Castle community of 2050 that is portrayed in the Plan remains the kind of community for which the citizens and local government should strive.
- C. The Planning Commission finds that clearly some conditions have changed since the Plan was adopted. Growth and development pressures were already at the doorstep at that time. The Plan responded with annexation policies and land use planning that were a "best fit" for the community's needs under those conditions. The economic slow-down all but eliminated those pressures. After evaluating the Plan, the Planning Commission finds that while the Plan continues to provide a sound overall direction for the community's future, some adjustment of certain policies espoused at that time may be appropriate now. By this, the Commission views these as minor, reasonable and strategic. Such adjustments should allow the town to now be more strategic and proactive, rather than coming primarily from a reactionary position that growth and development pressures caused in 2009.
- D. In 2009 the Town was considering many different annexation possibilities in response to pending growth pressures at that time. Those pressures have diminished and some of those annexations are not or may not be possible at this time. The Planning Commission finds that now is the time to refine residential and economic development plans and policies and actively pursue strategic annexations that will best help the community achieve its overall goals.
- E. The Planning Commission finds that New Castle has been for some time and continues to be a bedroom community, with many residents working in Glenwood Springs or elsewhere in the Roaring Fork Valley. This affects the stability of the local tax base as much of the disposable income appears to be spent outside of the New Castle economy. Further, it diminishes the attachment to the community. The lives and work of many of our residents are focused on Glenwood Springs or the resorts in the upper part of the Roaring Fork Valley. The Planning Commission finds that a revival of the growth pressures can move New Castle in a positive direction, one that is more consistent with the 2050 Vision. The economics of the Roaring Fork Valley, including high property values and limits on growth in the upper valley communities, will continue to push growth further down the Valley, adding to the growth pressures on New Castle. The Commission also finds that growth and traffic congestion throughout Glenwood Springs will likely continue to become more problematic over time, further adding the growth pressures

in and around New Castle. Because of these factors, the Planning Commission finds that New Castle will have the opportunity to move beyond its current bedroom community status to one where residents can live and increasingly work and participate. It is likely that the community will continue to have difficulty retaining and seeing expansions in existing local businesses without a critical mass of the population that is connected to the community and works and spends locally.

- F. The Planning Commission now finds that, while such policies are espoused in the Comprehensive Plan, the Town must now focus on strategies and actions aimed at attracting businesses that can provide primary (living wage) jobs for current and future residents. With this in mind, the Planning Commission finds that now is the time to reassess the land use and zoning plans and annexation policies that came out of the 2009 effort to identify the best possible and realistic locations for business development/ job producing uses that are consistent with the desired future. The Commission finds that this should be a high priority.
- G. The Planning Commission now finds that the land use plan developed in 2009 designated significant portions of the community for mixed-use development. The Commission finds that, while mixed land uses continue to be compatible with the 2050 Vision, the Town should gain better understanding about: a) the residential housing needs that will best serve the community going forward while growth pressures remain calm and 2) development patterns that will best reinforce the importance of downtown as a commercial and social center of the community.

In the future, New Castle will likely offer the most affordable supply of housing in the Roaring Fork and nearby Colorado River Valleys. However, the Commission finds that simply providing affordable housing for those that are committed to up valley communities, through schools, work, socially and for other reasons, is not be in the community's best interest. The Commission finds that while there must be a range of affordable housing options, the town should proactively identify and pursue with developers those options that will attract those people (future residents) that will contribute to the community in the future. The Commission also finds that the Town, working with developers, should begin to gain a better understanding of how "affordability" can best be accomplished in the context of mixed-use development, traditional neighborhood development, the standards practices of housing development that occurred in the past in New Castle. This strategy, combined with a proactive economic development strategy described above, should be a priority going forward.

- H. The 2009 Plan states that New Castle should preserve its downtown. The Planning Commission finds this means developing a critical mass of businesses, residents and visitors to downtown. It will require appropriate infill and redevelopment, as well as the preservation of its historical character. All three approaches will be crucial to the success of downtown. Furthermore, the Commission finds that the downtown

improvement strategy should also focus on economic vitality, including strengthening existing businesses and attracting new businesses, design, organization and programming or events and attractions and promotion. To be successful this downtown effort should be closely coordinated with a sound economic development strategy for the community. The Planning Commission similarly finds that the downtown effort should help establish the foundation on which the community branding and marketing strategy is based.

- I. The 2050 Vision statement describes a sustainable and energy efficient community. The Planning Commission finds that there are a number of market, economic and financial forces that will affect the level of sustainability achieved. However, the Commission finds that reasonable and appropriate steps can be taken now to allow this principle to evolve over time. While regulatory requirements may or may not be appropriate now, the Town should consider changes to codes that, within reason, will allow less efficient structures (residential and others) constructed in the past to adapt in the future as a wider range of technologies become available or more affordable.
- J. The Planning Commission find that the community's main intersection, Castle Valley Boulevard and Highway 6, continues to be one of the most significant problems facing the community. It does not present the desired community character and image. Adequate information in a clear and easy to understand format is not offered at or near the intersection to provide direction and information about the community. The Commission finds that this matter should be addressed soon. A detailed plan should be developed to address this concern. The Commission finds that the land use and zoning plan developed in 2009 should be re-evaluated to ensure that it is providing the best possible direction for improving the community character and image, providing appropriate information about the community for both residents and visitors and contributes appropriately to the overall economic development of the community. The Commission finds that this effort may require Interim steps that should commence soon. The overall plan for this area should anticipate past developer commitments for future improvements to the roadways and understanding the triggers for those future improvements.
- K. The Planning Commission find that consideration should be given to taking proactive steps to grow the Town's tax base to support residential and economic growth, while allowing the Town to provide a proper range and amount of services that will maintain/contribute to the quality of life in the community.
 - 1. Without supporting business development New Castle will remain a bedroom community.
 - 2. A considerable amount of potential tax dollars is spent outside of the community now. This will continue unless there is a better means to capture those tax

dollars locally. The Town might consider measures that will it to either capture retail sales locally or gain tax revenues for expenditures made elsewhere.

3. The Town might reconsider current Town policies that may restrict some tax revenue growth that could otherwise be possible immediately.
- L. The Town has begun to build momentum in implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The Town has made significant trail improvements since 2009 and there are plans to continue to build upon this success.
1. The construction/improvement of trails in and near New Castle will have a significant/ positive impact on the community in the future.
 2. The pedestrian bridge across the interstate and the river has been a big success.
 3. The Town Trails Group is working on the Town Loop trail, which will be a significant improvement.
 4. Will need a connection to Glenwood Springs in the future – the LOVA trail with a connection to a river park and tie to the community north of the interstate. This will have a major positive effect.
 5. Continue to work with the BLM to improve access to public lands and for trail improvements on the public lands.
 6. The RFTA park and ride near the intersection of Castle Valley Boulevard and Highway 6 is now under construction.
 7. Downtown streetscape improvements have been completed. The improvements include curbing and drainage, landscape planters and historic lights.
 8. The Town now carries out numerous community events, the objective of which it to bring together community residents to create community cohesiveness.
- M. The Planning Commission finds that as the community pursues a sustainable residential growth and economic development strategy, it should also establish develop a community branding and marketing plan. The brand should be a "promise delivered" about the quality and affordability of our community as a place to live, or why businesses should look to New Castle for the environment in which they can innovate, expand and where there is a suitable labor force that meets its needs, as well as to visitors and tourist and why they should stop and experience this community. Our brand has everything to do with identity; “why” should someone remember New Castle.

Once this story is “clearly articulated” and understood, it must be communicated to the masses or our target market, the role of our marketing plan.

ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Planning Commission finds that, while growth pressures have moderated for the time being, this is the time to take specific steps to implement and proactively pursue those types of development and community improvements that are more generally recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission expects that growth and development pressures will once again return to New Castle. When it does, rather than responding to it, the Town should direct growth in ways that reinforces and add to the desired small-town community character and values that residents desire.

To do this, the Planning Commission recommends that the Town pursue the following action steps at this time. However, as noted at the beginning of this report, the Commission believes that it is important for the Town Council and Commission hold a dialogue where all actions and priorities are discussed and a unified approach for advancing the goals of the Plan is determined. To begin this dialogue, the Commission recommends the following action steps for consideration.

- A. The community should develop an **Economic Development and Business Attraction and Expansion Strategy**.
- B. The Town, working with local businesses and property owners and with citizen input, should develop a special area concept plan for the **redevelopment, infill and historic character preservation of downtown** as well as mixed-use opportunities that will add to the critical mass in and around the downtown.
- C. The Town should work with local developers to develop a **special area concept plan that integrates affordable traditional neighborhoods** into the community fabric of New Castle, as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan, and evaluate current zoning and subdivision regulations of the Town to determine if new techniques are possible to further promote affordable housing in the community.
- D. The Town, working with local businesses and property owners and with citizen input, should develop a special area concept plan for the **community gateway** (Castle Valley Boulevard-Highway 6 intersection)
- E. The Town should develop a special area concept plan for the **improvement of the Colorado River Corridor** through New Castle.
- F. The Town, in support of involved citizens, should continue to actively pursue **construction/improvement of trails** in and near New Castle.

- G. The Town should continue to actively pursue a strategy for creating a **community brand** that connects the community's image, vision and opportunities to current residents and both potential residents and businesses that are attracted to the community because of the shared values and opportunities that New Castles offers them. With a community brand the Town should develop the means to **actively market** New Castle to the intended customer base.
- H. The Town should develop a **community investment strategy**, as part of its traditional municipal budgeting, identifying ways the Town will gather and invest in on-going community improvement beyond it's normal service requirements and capital commitments.
- I. The Town Council should consider potential options for **initiating expansion of the local tax base** in the near future to support this action plan.

PROCESS

The Planning Commission recommends that the Town Council authorize a process for carrying out the work outlined herein. When the 2009 Plan was developed a citizen steering committee was formed. It disbanded upon approval of the Plan. Today, there are currently isolated efforts in the community attempting to advance certain policies of the Plan. However, there is no coordination or clearinghouse of information that is needed to effectively and efficiently advance the Plan. The Commission, recommends that going forward the Planning Commission be designated to fill this coordinating role. Why the Commission? First, it is the role of the Commission to serve as the community's stewards of its comprehensive plan. Second, the Commission is a well-established, standing committee that is available to serve this function. A steering committee is valuable for only as long as it is in existence. The Commission believes that this work will require a sustained effort and that a standing committee is in the best position to effectively coordinate, advance the work and ensure continuity over an extended period. The Commission recognizes that significant public involvement will be necessary to help the Commission carry out the recommendations herein.

In fulfilling this role, the Planning Commission will require appropriate resources. Therefore, the Commission further recommends that, with the assistance of the Town Administrator, the Town Council authorize the Commission to further define refine the specific public process described here and the resources that will be needed at various points and move forward in an expeditious manner.

The Planning Commission looks forward to a constructive dialogue with Town Council. The suggestions and recommendations herein are provided stimulate a discussion with Town Council. The Commission believes that it is important to gain input from Council regarding its goals and priorities and to develop a consensus for going forward. Commissioners believe that

the time is right to advance the implementation of the 2009 Plan and its members look forward to working with Town Council to accomplish this important task.

TALKING POINTS WITH THE TOWN COUNCIL NEW CASTLE PLANNING COMMISION

- A. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND EXPANSION STRATEGY**
1. While Town leadership is appropriate, this should be a broad-based effort.
 2. It will require evaluating the current Land Use Plan to identify the most viable locations for such economic development activity. Consideration should be given to annexation areas, the Castle Valley Boulevard-Highway 6 area, opportunities on Town-owned lands, and the redevelopment on infill of the downtown.
 3. Appoint a committee to work with the Commission (Town Council members, Town staff, and those with financial and real estate expertise).
 4. Identify appropriate annexation areas and work with appropriate property owners to annex and zone those lands for purposes that promote the economic development objectives of the Town.
 5. Consider traditional as well as “out-of-the-box” strategies including, but not limited to, joint ventures, public-private partnerships, engaging local entrepreneurs, and development incentives to foster and promote appropriate economic development within the community.
- B. SPECIAL AREA CONCEPT PLAN FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT, INFILL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER PRESERVATION OF DOWNTOWN**
1. Identify mixed-use opportunities that will add to the critical mass in and around the downtown.
 2. This work should be closely linked to the economic development strategy and it should help establish the foundation on which the community branding and marketing strategy is based.
 3. The strategy should include economic vitality, including strengthening existing businesses and attracting new businesses, design and historical character, organization and programming or events and attractions and promotion.
- C. AFFORDABLE TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**
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1. The Town should proactively identify and pursue with developers and property owners those options that will attract the type and amount of residential growth (future residents) that will contribute to the community's future.
2. The Town, working with developers, should start now to better understand how "affordability" can best be accomplished, whether in the context of mixed-use development, traditional neighborhood development, or within the standard housing development practices that occurred have occurred in the past.
3. The Town should evaluate current zoning and subdivision regulations of the Town to determine if new techniques are possible to further promote affordable housing in the community.

D. SPECIAL AREA CONCEPT PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY GATEWAY (CASTLE VALLEY BOULEVARD-HIGHWAY 6 INTERSECTION)

1. The Town, working with local businesses and property owners and with citizen input, should develop addressing existing and future land use and the configuration of development that will best promote community values and contributes appropriately to the overall economic development of the community.
2. The Plan should address congestion and ways to provide appropriate information about the community for both residents and visitors.
3. The Commission recommends that both interim and long-term actions and financing strategies be developed.

E. SPECIAL AREA CONCEPT PLAN FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE COLORADO RIVER CORRIDOR THROUGH NEW CASTLE

1. The Plan should consider both periphery and in-river improvements (e.g., water park).
2. It should provide a plan of development for a variety of safe uses and attractions for residents and that are easily visible from I-70 to help attract travelers/tourists to the community.

F. TRAILS AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN

1. Continue working with local groups to pursue **construction/improvement of trails** in and near New Castle.
2. The Town should work with the BLM and others to improve access to the public lands and actively pursuing a connection to Glenwood Springs.

G. A COMMUNITY BRANDING AND MARKETING PLAN.

1. The Town should continue to actively pursue a strategy for community branding and marketing that connects the community's image, vision and opportunities to current residents and both potential residents and businesses that are attracted to the community because of the shared values and opportunities that New Castles offers them.
2. This brand, as it develops, should drive the actions for improving the community, from the way we go about meeting the needs of our residents to the ways the Town will entice new residents or businesses to New Castle.
3. With a community brand the Town should develop the means to actively market New Castle to the intended customer base.
4. This work must be well-connected to all of the work in this action plan, in particular the housing, economic development and downtown improvement strategies. Moreover, a branding and marketing budget should be a component of a community investment strategy.

H. COMMUNITY INVESTMENT STRATEGY

1. The Town should develop, as part of its traditional municipal budgeting, identifying ways the Town will gather and invest in on-going community improvement beyond it's normal service requirements and capital commitments.
2. This strategy should also channel appropriate available capital, (e.g., financial, social, intellectual or human), to create partnerships and joint ventures and establish a variety of other actions focused on "the Big Picture."

I. EXPAND THE LOCAL TAX BASE

1. The Town Council should consider potential options for in the near future to support this action plan, from buying local educational campaigns, improving information about what New Castle has to offer its residents and ways to capture tax dollars that are now being spent outside of the community.
2. This should be a priority.
3. Additional financial resources will be required soon and over time to help promote affordable residential development, community improvements and infrastructure development that will be required to advance the goals of the community Plan.