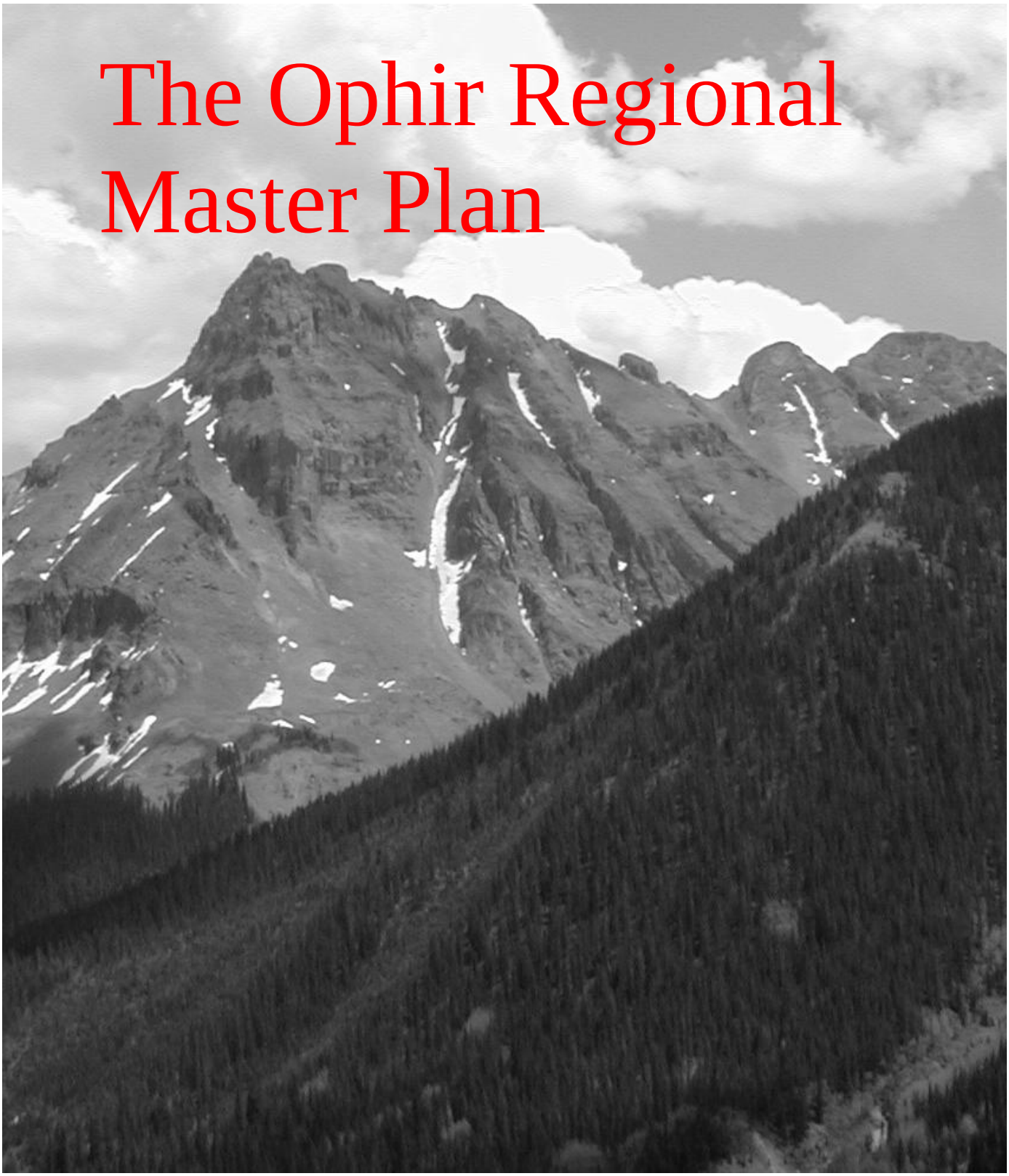
The Ophir Regional Master Plan



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I. INTRODUCTION

The Ophir Regional Master Plan ("Plan") is a policy document that establishes a community vision for future development and growth management in the Ophir region. The Plan is comprised of this text and graphics in this text, Future Land Use maps and the Major Streets Plan map. Numerous public meetings, opinion surveys, and studies were conducted as part of creating this Plan. The Plan is intended to promote better decision making by providing a comprehensive view of planning issues related to future development and growth management.

The Plan should evolve with the community as the community grows and changes. A complete review and update of the Plan should occur at least every ten years or more often if necessary. A Master Plan document was adopted in 1994. This updated Ophir Regional Master Plan replaces the 1994 master plan document in its entirety.

Authorization

The Town of Ophir's Home Rule authority provides broad powers for matters of local concern, including the adoption of this Plan document. Colorado Revised Statutes authorize municipalities to plan their communities as provided by the following statutes:

§31-23-202	Grant of power to municipality
§31-23-206	Regional Master Plan
§31-23-207	Purposes in view
§31-23-212	Jurisdiction
§31-23-213	Scope of control

The Major Streets Plan element is designed to comply with 1987 amendments to the Colorado Municipal Annexation Act of 1965, and specifically with Colorado Revised Statute (C.R.S.) §31-12-105 that requires the annual update of each municipality's Regional Master Plan as a prerequisite to annexation.

Applicability

The Plan applies to the Ophir 3-Mile Planning Area, which includes all lands within 3 miles of the Ophir town site boundary. The Plan also is intended to be used a basis for public comments, positions and decisions regarding land uses beyond the three mile planning area but within the region that affects the Ophir community, especially with regard to federal decisions on the surrounding United States Forest Service lands, and state and local government decisions that affect the Ophir community.

Overview of the Ophir Regional Master Plan

The Ophir Regional Master Plan categorizes various planning issues in the succeeding articles, including: Community Design; Public Facilities and Services; Environmental Protection; Parks, Open Space and Trails; and, Future Land Use. Each section includes a general description of the planning issue; "Goals" provide general statements of desired community visions; "Objectives" provide general statements of achieving Goals; and, "Policies" describe specific actions intended to achieve or implement Goals and Objectives.

Preferred Scenario -- Vision Statement

The Ophir community will preserve its rustic character and the wild natural setting of Ophir Valley as the community grows and new development occurs. Ophir will remain a residential community that offers a unique mountain life style.

Ophir will limit the mass, size and scale of development in Ophir to a level that is appropriate for Ophir. Management of population growth, new development, and overall rate of growth are essential to preserving the unique character of the Ophir community. The total population of the Ophir, including part-time residents and visitors, will be less than 287 at full build-out.

While meeting the growing needs of a growing population, the Ophir community of tomorrow will retain the best qualities of Ophir today, such as our quiet, intimate, crime-free atmosphere, our connection to the incredible natural mountain environment, and our cherished affinity for individual freedom and alternative mountain lifestyle.

II. HISTORY AND SETTING

Ophir began as a winter camp in 1875. A Lieutenant Howard and a group of prospectors from Silverton followed a creek (later named the Howard Fork of the San Miguel) up to a high valley where vivid orange sediments in the creek bed prompted them to think "GOLD!" In 1878-79, seventeen of these men returned and burrowed into the 35 - foot snowdrifts for the winter, surviving on dreams of endless wealth. They built one room miner's cabins and named their little settlement "Ophir" after the biblical mining villages of King Solomon (I Kings 9:28 10:11; 22:48)

By 1885, Ophir had a population around 200 people which is quite close to that of today. However, it fluctuated a lot over the next ten years with the boom and bust of the mining trade. The period of 1896-1910 was Ophir's most prosperous time. There were about 40 houses interspersed among two hotels, several saloons (of course), a livery stable, a town hall, a meat market, two blacksmiths, a barbershop, a volunteer fire department, a restaurant, and the Suffolk Mill. The mines, Crown Point, Nettie, Santé Cruz, Nevada, and Summit yielded gold bearing quartz. The Cariboo Mine opened in Ophir sending its silver over Ophir Pass to Silverton.

When the Rio Grand Southern Railroad (RGSR) built the Ophir Loop in 1891, Ophir joined the rest of the world. A connection with Telluride was established where goods and supplies could be bought. The Cariboo Mine was the main employer. Electricity and telephone service were available by 1908. Unfortunately the boom did not last for little old "Ophir", but a new Ophir was arising down valley. The Rio Grand Southern built a station/depot at the Ophir Loop. It served old Ophir and the settlement of Ames in the valley below. This depot was two stories and housed the Station Master's family.

Frequent avalanches in the gullies west of the town made travel difficult and power to go out for days at a time. The Spring Gulch slide path took out many buildings in town in and major fires were frequent. Many of old Ophir's residents moved down valley to the "new Ophir" at the Loop where the nearby Butterfly Mine provided employment and the railroad provided transportation.

In the 1950's many RGSR tourists and jeepers began to discover this beautiful valley. San Miguel County which had taken control of Ophir Pass in 1942, made the road four-wheel drive by 1953. As back-country activities and sports evolved in the early 70s, new people arrived to rebuild the old mining shacks and construct new homes in what is now called "West Ophir".

Ophir presently has had a healthy revival. The town's current demographics are 70 houses and around 190 people mainly between the ages of 20 to 45. In 2009 it boasts of 68 babies, 36 dogs, a newly renovated "green" town hall with a community garden, two parks, one with a playground, and - most of all - it's spectacularly beautiful outdoors.

***Post Script:** For those of you who are mining buffs we recommend that you read the RGS Railway Book-wonderful mining site photos and much more detail.

The town of Ophir is situated in the San Juan Mountains, approximately 12 miles south of Telluride. It is nestled in the Ophir Valley, with Waterfall Canyon on the South side and Spring Gulch to the North. At an elevation of 9,600 ft., Ophir is home to 190 people residing in 73 houses. As you enter the town on dirt roads there is a public Maintenance facility that houses the Garbage bins and Recycling center. There is also a garage that houses all of the maintenance vehicles. A park with basketball court and play structures are situated just East of these buildings.

The town of Ophir is divided by a historic avalanche path, thereby setting Ophir Proper (aka Old, or West, Ophir) from East Ophir. In East Ophir there is another park that has a restored cabin and serves as a gathering place for neighborhood functions. The road that runs through East Ophir continues past the town up to Ophir pass where Silverton can be accessed in the summer months.

During the winter months the Town of Ophir enjoys abundant snow falls that create a winter wonderland. Many popular back country ski runs start or end from the town. The children in the town enjoy excellent sledding on streets and fields. In the summer months there are wonderful hiking trails that mostly follow old mining roads and traverse the mountainsides and extend into the high country. The Ophir valley is surrounded by mixed forests of Aspen and Evergreens. Native grasses sweep over the valley floor and the Howard Fork of the San Miguel runs through from East to West.

III. COMMUNITY DESIGN

Community Design sets forth specific planning goals, objectives, and policies that reflect community values and attempt to promote the incorporation of, and appreciation for, these values as new development occurs and the community changes. The 2006 Ophir Community Survey by Deb Barr Business Services will be updated every 5 years. Population growth and new community needs also justify updating as demands on services increase.

Goal A: Maintain and enhance community values that are unique to Ophir

Community values unique to Ophir provide a strong sense of place and promoting these values is intended to preserve Ophir's uniqueness as it changes in the future.

Objectives:

1. Preserve Ophir as a traditional historic Colorado mountain town, especially our individual freedom, alternative lifestyle and connection to the surrounding natural alpine environment.
2. Preserve the historic "mountain hamlet" scale and appearance of town. Scale is an issue because of size of recent (2010) building on larger lots.
3. Discourage commercial tourism in Ophir Valley to retain the predominant residential character of the community and prevent damage and overuse of natural resources.
4. Manage growth so that new development and population increases occur at rates that can be absorbed by the community without negative impacts.
5. Create policies and standards for Green Building.

Policies:

1. Strive to inform, involve, and empower the Ophir community of all issues that affect and influence change of the community.
2. Strive to conduct opinion surveys of residents and property owners every five years.
3. Strongly support personal freedoms and strive to enact regulations in a manner that minimizes infringement on personal freedoms while accomplishing community goals.
4. Monitor the rate of population growth and increased demands on Town services.
5. Promote the viability of public community spaces, including but not limited to: the Town Hall and town parks.
6. Maintain the traditional and historic scale and character of Ophir throughout the Town.
7. Protect the surrounding mountainsides as open space and discourage visible road cuts across such slopes.
8. Promote sustainable growth and encourage state of the art Green building and sustainable energy use.

Goal B: Promote Mountain Compatible Design

Ophir's southwest mountain setting presents many unique challenges and opportunities for design of new development. Many communities throughout the country have suffered from homogenization caused by generic tract housing, bland architecture, and inappropriate architecture that is indifferent and/or disrespectful to its setting and location.

Objectives:

1. Promote design in new development that is compatible with the existing rustic and appropriate historic architecture in Town.
2. Encourage design that functions in Ophir's high altitude mountain setting.

Policies:

1. Establish regulations that require or promote the use of visible exterior materials deemed to be compatible with Ophir's unique mountain setting, and mining history
2. Encourage building designs and architecture that reflect and promotes Green Building and sustainable energy use.
3. Establish regulations or design guidelines for structures, infrastructure, roads, trails and pedestrian walks that respect the occurrence of significant snowfall, melting periods, and rain events.
4. Restrict building heights and excessive mass and scale of new structures to preserve the view corridors of the mountains for existing and future residents and property owners.

New homes in East Ophir are compatible with Ophir's mountain setting. They use natural wood siding, incorporate steep pitch roofs, and are similar in mass, size and scale.

Goal C: Preserve the Historic Character of Ophir

The historic mining character of Ophir is strongly valued by residents, property owners, and visitors and is an integral part of Ophir's unique character. The numerous historic structures speak not only of Ophir's history, but the history and culture of the American west.

Objectives:

1. Maintain and enhance opportunities for residents and visitors to appreciate Ophir's history.
2. Discourage the destruction of remaining unoccupied historic buildings and structures in Ophir.
3. Encourage the restoration of existing historic buildings and structures in Ophir.

Policies:

1. Develop and maintain an accurate survey of historic structures and sites in the Ophir region.
2. Develop and maintain an accurate survey of gravesites in the Ophir Cemetery.
3. Develop and maintain a repository of historical information regarding Ophir and its citizens.
4. Restore town-owned historic structures, including the Ophir Jailhouse.

IV. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

This Article IV., Public Facilities and Services, establishes goals, objectives and policies concerning public facilities and services. General goals regarding public facilities and services are stated below, followed by specific public facilities and services with separately identified objectives and policies.

Goal A: ***Develop, maintain, and enhance public facilities and services that are directly related to the health and safety of the community as the first priority.***

Goal B: ***Develop and maintain public facilities and services to meet the demands of the residents and property owners of Ophir on a timely, predictable, and economical basis.***

Goal C: ***Insure that the rate of growth and subsequent increased demands on public facilities and services do not exceed the capacity of public facilities and services or reduce the level of service provided to existing residents.***

Goal D: ***Require new growth and development to pay for public facilities and services desired, required, or necessitated by the new development, and minimize the potential for existing residents and property owners to be financially burdened by direct or indirect impacts of new growth and development.***

Goal E: ***Maintain reasonable affordability for residents and property owners of the overall cumulative cost of public facilities and services.***

Town Owned Land: The Town of Ophir owns 511 lots. Of these, approximately 30 potential building sites are not located in known hazard areas. The Ophir community desires to use these lots for future community needs through sale or use. However, the Ophir community is also concerned about over development and congestion that may be caused by over development.

Objective:

1. Identify Town owned properties that are suitable for sale or trade for community purposes such as public facilities, parks, or in-town open space.

Policies:

1. Seek to consolidate town owned land around the existing Old Ophir Town Park.
2. Rezone lots identified for sale or trade for public purposes to Open Space designation.
3. Create a Park Zone for town owned lots that are intended for long term in-town park use.

Town Hall: Town Hall is located at 36 Porphyry. Town Hall provides administrative office space, a public meeting space and greenhouse space.

Objectives:

1. Employ adequate staff to meet the administrative demands of the Ophir community, including: managing records, responding to the public, implementing public projects and administering regulations.
2. Provide and maintain adequate office equipment and furniture to meet the administrative demands of the town.
3. Update the existing greenhouse so that it is in working order.

Policies:

1. Evaluate the growing administrative demands and potential need for additional office space with available and potentially available space in the Ophir Town Hall.
2. Continue to make improvements with county and private moneys on the greenhouse in order to maintain its functioning capabilities as a sustainable source of food for Ophir residents.

Water System: The Town's water system treats spring water from the Warner Springs on the north side of Ophir. The Town's water system can currently store 50,000 gallons of municipal drinking water. The current system uses bag filters and a miox chlorination system to treat raw water. The

Town is in the process of constructing a new drinking water treatment facility in town limits using water from Waterfall canyon to the south of Town in the summer of 2010. This will be the Ophir's primary system and Warner Springs will be utilized as a back-up.

Objectives:

1. Maintain the plan and timetable to construct a new drinking water system using the Waterfall Canyon water source.
2. Maintain compliance with the Safe Water Drinking Act and enhance the drinking quality of the Town's municipal water.
3. Reduce the distribution system's rate of water loss due to leakage.
4. Maintain and enhance the water system for fire protection.

Policies:

1. Continue to reduce the rate of leakage with leak detection programs, replacement of old distribution lines, and repair of failed distribution lines.
2. Insure that distribution pipes are bedded properly with non-corrosive fill material that protects such pipes from damage and undue wear that causes leaks.
3. Meter all water users and establish water rates based on usage to promote conservation as a second phase of the water treatment plan.
4. Establish water tap rates and user fees to reduce debt and build an appropriate replacement fund, so that the water fund can operate debt-free in the future.

[Insert pictures, graphics and cost estimates]

Water Rights: Colorado is an arid state that manages the limited supply of water under the "doctrine of prior appropriation." The Town currently has a water right for a surface diversion in Waterfall Canyon and water rights for Warner Spring.

***Objectives*:**

1. Maintain a permanent, legal source of water for municipal purposes that is sufficient to serve the current and future needs of the Town of Ophir

Policies:

1. Maintain and protect the Town's water rights.
2. Research and pursue the development of Waterfall Canyon water while securing the right to use Warner Springs water to supplement a Waterfall Canyon system.
3. Establish an adequate legal water supply before approving annexation development or up-zonings that create significant increases to the demand for municipal water service.
4. Establish a rate structure or payment policy that recovers the cost of securing adequate water rights to serve new development, subdivisions and annexations from such new development.

***Waste Water Treatment**:* Currently, no centralized waste water treatment is available in Ophir and individual disposal systems (septic/leach field) are used to treat waste water. The County Health Inspector currently reviews plans for septic systems in accordance with the State Individual Sewage Disposal Act. The State guidelines require a minimum of one house per 1/2 acre. Ophir requires one house per 2 lots (one lot is 25 ft x 100 ft therefore two lots would be 5,000 sq.ft.). The area of the town is 150.5 acres including placers and Rights of Way. Ophir's build out potential is 115 built homes, 70 existing and 45 privately owned residential building sites not in a hazard zone and approx 20 Town of Ophir buildable sites (or a population build-out of 287). Ophir has alluvial sand and gravel soil conditions.

***Objectives*:**

1. Continue to use individual sewage disposal systems to treat waste water.
2. Discontinue all individual sewage disposal systems that do not comply with the State Individual Sewage Disposal Act.
3. Avoid contamination of the Howard's Fork or the human environment by inadequately treated waste water.
4. Prohibit additional subdivisions, up-zonings, development, or commercial uses that could result in contamination of the Howard's Fork and force Ophir to install centralized waste water treatment.

***Policies*:**

1. Require all households to install and maintain an individual sewage disposal system that meets all state guidelines and regulations as well as local LUC guidelines.
2. Prohibit buildings, households, and waste water generators from generating additional waste water that could exceed the lands capacity to treat with absorption systems.
3. Identify and plan for future maximum development potential by coordinating zoning, land use regulations, intergovernmental agreements with the County, and other public facilities and services, with the total land capacity of the Ophir town site.

***Streets and Alleys**:* The street system in Ophir is based upon the historic town site plat. The street system follows a grid system, except where variation is necessary as a response to the natural features of the land. The street and alley pattern in the historic town site area provides

multiple beneficial functions, including: good delivery/service/emergency vehicle access, on-street parking, snow storage, and pedestrian opportunities. Alleys are not used for year round vehicle access but are used for utility access and site access for construction.

Objectives:

1. Maintain a high service level of town streets so that overall traffic congestion is minimal and town roads and alleys can provide multiple beneficial functions.
2. Manage the Street Fund finances, new road approvals, and new development approvals so the Street Fund can afford to provide adequate maintenance services that meet the demands of the Ophir community.

Policies:

1. Encroachments into public rights-of-ways should be eliminated.
2. Dead-end streets shall be avoided in favor of loop roads where practical.
3. Some flexibility in street design standards may be permitted where necessary to minimize site disruptions and cut and fill, provided exceptions to the standards do not compromise public safety.
4. Streets should not be approved with grades in excess of eight percent (8%), ten percent (10%) for isolated areas where delivery/emergency vehicle access is not hampered, and twelve percent (12%) for private driveways.
5. Roads and utilities shall not be extended into areas deemed premature for development.
6. Monitor street maintenance staffing and costs.
7. Establish and maintain a capital improvements plan to upgrade street maintenance equipment on a continuous systematic basis.
8. Prioritize street improvements, surface repairs, and dust control where traffic is the heaviest.
9. Systematically improve street drainage to reduce deterioration of street surfaces and avoid run-off damage to private properties.
10. Consider creating street signs that fit the historic feel of Ophir.

<u>Street Classification, Capacity and Deficiencies</u>: The Major Streets Plan map illustrates the existing streets and future planned streets. New streets and road extensions should comply with the Major Streets Plan with regard to the point of connection to the Town's street system, including the quantity and character of development connecting to the Town's street system. Streets and road rights-of-way are usually used for utility installation as well as vehicle access.

Objectives:

1. Maintain an updated Major Streets Plan that establishes a comprehensive plan for future road connections, extensions, traffic capacity limits, current deficiencies, and identified improvements.
2. Coordinate the Major Streets Plan with utility and infrastructure planning.

Policies:

1. All street extensions and upgrades shall be improved to Town standards at the developer's expense.
2. All collector extensions, and any existing deficiencies in those collector sections needed to provide access from a proposed subdivision or development to the State Highway, shall be completed by the developer.
3. Furnish all local authorities with current street maps and house numbers so emergency vehicles can locate all residences in the town site.
4. Maintain the local administration of local highway access permits and establish standards and procedures for highway access permits.

5. Only streets designated as "Collectors by Review" may be used as access for new subdivisions and developments outside of current Town boundaries.
6. Limit Collectors by Review to the designated traffic thresholds established in this Plan and the Major Streets Plan map.
7. Future collectors are designated and shall be limited as follows**:**

Fire Protection: Fire Protection is provided by the Telluride Fire District at the Mountain Village Station 2, in Mountain Village as well as the new Station at San Bernardo. Station 2 houses; Engine #2 with a 500 gallon water tank and a 2,000 gal/min pump; Truck #2, with a 50 foot tele-squirt, a 500 gallon tank and a 1,250 gal/min pump; Tender #2 with a 1,800 gallon tank and a 500 gal/min pump which is able to fill the attached 2,500 gallon fold-a-tank and ALS equipped Ambulance #2. The new San Bernardo Station house: Engine #15 with a 500 gallon water tank and a 1,250 gal/min pump; ambulance # 5 and Brush #2, a Ford flat bed type 6 wild land engine that carries a 300 gallon tank and pump.

Objectives:

1. Identify town residents who want to be part of the Ophir Fire Brigade.
2. Utilize the new Fire station that will service our town from San Bernardo.
3. Maintain up-to-date equipment to fight a fire on our own and maintain the current garage that can hold a fire truck.
4. Establish a local Emergency Operations Plan for the Town to follow.

Policies:

1. Educate residents periodically with fire training and safety procedures.
2. Create a fire brigade incase there is ever a fire during an avalanche that closes us off from the Telluride Fire District.
3. Allocate funds to make sure equipment is in working order and can reach all houses.
4. Add a 35,000-gallon storage tank to our fire fighting capacity.
5. Update Emergency Operations Plan every two years
6. Routinely clear fire hydrants from snow

Education/Day Care: Telluride School R-1 District is known for exemplary K-12 programs and high school student achievement. The Test scores on the CSAP are among the highest in the state, which demonstrates the outstanding success rate of its programs, instructors and facilities.

Objectives:

1. Maintain involvement in the Telluride Public Schools.
2. Acquire transportation for the large population of children to and from school to reduce the carbon footprint of the Town.

3. Support grass roots preschool/daycare programs that can contribute to the growing need for child care in the county.

Policies:

1. Coordinate with the Telluride School District to help fund/manage an Ophir bus plan so that it comes into the town to pick up children thereby alleviating excessive driving time of the bus.
2. Encourage community members to establish co-ops with child care to better serve the working community for convenience.

Telecommunication/Media: Quest provides telephone services to Ophir. No high speed internet access is currently available in Ophir. No cable television services are offered in the Ophir region; however, most areas receive satellite reception.

Objectives:

1. Maintain up to date providers that will continue to serve the community for Internet and/or mobile service.
2. Coordinate services to provide state of the art communication with high speed Internet, mobile and/or cable options.

Policies:

1. Identify and plan for modern communication standards.
2. Continue to show, per household, interest in Internet service.

Utilities : The Ophir Region is served by Tri-State Generation and Transmission main transmission line that crosses Ophir Pass to the east.

Objectives:

1. Maintain adequate electrical service for the Ophir Region.
2. Eventually place all electrical lines underground in the Town of Ophir and Ophir Valley.

Policies:

1. Require all new development and new extensions of electrical lines to install electrical line extensions underground.

2. Consider cooperative projects to install electrical lines underground.
3. Support projects to install electrical lines underground that are financed by special assessment districts.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

This Article V of the Ophir Regional Master Plan addresses community issues related to environmental considerations. Environmental considerations include the quality of the human environment, natural resource protection, natural hazard damage prevention, and environmental remediation. Ophir will follow the precautionary principle which states that if an action or policy has a suspected risk of causing harm to the public or to the environment, in the absence of scientific consensus that the action or policy is harmful, the burden of proof that it is not harmful falls on those who advocate taking the action.

Quality of the Human Environment

Goal A: ***Protect and enhance the natural environment to ensure the health and safety of the present population and future generations.***

Objectives:

1. Prevent any degradation to the environment that presents a measurable human health risk.
2. Abate any existing or natural environmental conditions that present any measurable human health threat.

Policies:

1. Ensure that the water supplies and sanitation comply with State, Federal and local health standards.
2. Protect the Town's drinking water source from contamination or degradation.
3. Ensure that all ground and surface water in the Ophir Region meets water quality standards capable of supporting aquatic life at a level comparable to other natural mountain streams; and, that these waters do not pose any human or other environmental health threat in the valley.
4. Ensure that soils throughout the Ophir region do not exceed maximum standards for contaminates as set by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
5. Ensure that air quality in the Ophir region exceeds state and federal air quality standards and otherwise meets a pristine level of natural mountain air quality commensurate with the surrounding natural environment.
6. Encourage the use of solar, and other clean energy production technologies.
7. Develop reasonable noise standards to control nuisance noise.

8. Seek environmentally green alternatives for the magnesium-chloride used on the roads to mitigate dust problems.

<u>Protection of Natural Resources</u>

Goal B: Protect and enhance natural environmental resources.

Objectives:

1. Minimize degradation to, or loss of, natural environmental resources.
2. Restore degraded natural environmental resources and enhance existing natural environmental resources.
3. Reduce or eliminate non-sustainable consumption of natural resources.

Policies:

1. Identify and protect wetland areas.
2. Protect and enhance wildlife and aquatic habitats.
3. Preserve and restore the quality of the Howard's Fork stream.
4. Support and encourage programs to eliminate noxious invasive weeds.
5. Control exterior lighting levels and the exterior light sources to protect views of the natural night sky.
6. Work cooperatively with County, State and Federal agencies to prevent environmental degradation from activities such as mining, timber harvests and road development.
7. Adopt policies that support energy conservation, increased energy efficiency and conversion to renewable resources.
8. Promote energy efficiency in all Town operations and strive to develop facilities for renewable energy sources.
9. Encourage the conservation of energy in new construction through land use policies which affect placement, orientation, and density of housing.
10. Conserve energy by promoting more intense land use patterns and by the provision of recreation and essential services in proximity to housing.
11. Encourage the reduction, reuse, and recycling of all recyclable materials.
12. Prohibit residents/landscapers from planting noxious weeds and require property owners to keep their empty lots weed free.
13. Support appropriate measures to limit emissions of substances that contribute to the global atmospheric warming and thinning of the ozone layer.

<u>Natural Hazard Damage Prevention</u>

Goal C: Prevent damage caused by natural hazards.

Objectives:

1. Eliminate or minimize the potential for personal injury and property damage presented by natural hazards.

Policies:

1. Maintain maps and studies of potential natural hazards, including but not limited to: avalanche, debris flows, flood plains, geologic hazards, rock fall, unstable slopes, and wildfire hazard areas.
2. Establish regulations for proposed development activities in natural hazard areas.
3. Promote land use patterns that eliminate or reduce potential development in natural hazard areas.
4. Preserve natural hazard areas as open space.

<u>Environmental Remediation</u>

Goal D: Remediate the environmental impacts of past human activity.

Objectives:

1. Abate discharges and releases into the environment that cause measurable degradation to natural resources or pose any measurable human health risks.
2. Prevent activities that are likely to result in discharges and releases into the environment that cause measurable degradation to natural resources or pose any measurable human health risks.

Policies:

1. Support enforcement of federal and state water quality laws.
2. Identify and map areas that release measurable degrading pollution into the environment.
3. Promote cooperative plans to abate and remediate environmental impacts caused by past mining activity.
4. Establish local land use regulations and permitting procedures for reclaimed and polluting areas that are coordinated with state and federal approved reclamation plans.
5. Establish a comprehensive watershed plan for protection, remediation, and enhancement of the water quality in the Ophir watershed area.
6. Utilize current local studies to postpone the uranium mill slated for development that effects our surface water by wind deposition

VI. PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

Parks, Open Space and Trails sets forth community planning issues related to recreation and undeveloped natural landscapes.

Recreation Overview Within the Town of Ophir there is a central park area in Old Ophir (or West Ophir) and a new pocket park in East Ophir. The Old Ophir Park, located adjacent to the Town Hall and Maintenance Facility, contains a playground, basket ball court, and picnic tables. The East Ophir Park contains a historic mining cabin with a community gathering area.

Objectives:

1. Maintain and enhance the Old Ophir Park as the primary Town Park for the benefit of all residents of Ophir.
2. Maintain and enhance the East Ophir Park as a secondary pocket park for the Ophir community.
3. Add a facility for public use, such as a bathroom, at the Old Ophir Park to be used by residents and guests.
4. Continue to improve and expand community parks while maintaining a balance with the need for land priorities within the valley.

Policies:

1. Conduct community outreach through informal meetings, public hearings, community opinion surveys, and other techniques to determine community demands and priorities for park maintenance and improvements.
2. Consider ongoing maintenance costs and replacement costs for any proposed park improvements.
3. Consider the acquisition of lands adjacent to the existing Old Ophir Park to expand the park area and protect the park area from encroachment by surrounding development.

Open Space Overview Preservation of the natural mountain landscape and non-development of land surrounding the Town of Ophir is the top priority. The Town of Ophir initiated an active Open Space Program in 1992 and has since acquired many mining claims to preserve as Open Space. The Town of Ophir has successfully partnered with the San Miguel Conservation Foundation, the Trust for Public Land, the Trust for Land Restoration, San Miguel County, and private property owners to pursue open space preservation.

Objectives:

1. Protect wildlife corridors.
2. Protect view corridors.
3. Maintain recreational opportunities.
4. Require non-motorized use of land.

Policies:

1. Write policies to acquire properties and mining claims in the Ophir Valley.
2. Confine development in the Ophir Valley to within the Town limits.
3. Continue to seek financial support from Federal, State, County and non-profits to acquire more open space.
4. Preserve as much open space as possible.

Trails Overview

The Town of Ophir currently has no maintained trails within the town limits. It is the hope of the community to change this so there are opportunities to enjoy the valley and Town by getting off of the roads for safety and dust reasons.

Objectives:

1. Create a River trail to connect West Ophir to East Ophir.
2. Create a trail from the Town of Ophir to the Post Office.

Policies:

1. Acquire money, through grants, to build a river trail along the North Fork of the Howards River from West Ophir to East Ophir.
2. Receive easements that would allow the Town of Ophir, to establish a bike trail from the Town to the Post Office that is off of the dusty and busy county road.

VII. ENERGY PLANNING

Energy planning identifies renewable energy projects that would meet the energy needs and uses of the community.

Goal A: Promote and develop sustainable energy supplies and use.

Objectives:

1. Promote the reduction of energy consumption in Ophir.
2. Promote the use of sustainable energy sources to serve the Ophir Community.
3. Incorporate sustainable energy practices into the Town's operations and energy use.

Policies:

1. Promote the availability of energy audits for households and other buildings in the Town of Ophir.
2. Explore the potential for community sponsored renewable energy generation projects including, but not limited to: solar, wind, geo-thermal, bio-mass and/or hydro, in the Ophir Valley.
3. Encourage and Promote households to utilize alternative renewable energy sources.
4. Adopt an Energy Conservation Code for new construction in the Town of Ophir.

VIII. FUTURE LAND USES

Future Land Uses identifies various development land uses which would meet the needs of a balanced community and sets forth community planning issues related to the mixture of land uses and location.

Residential Land Use:

Communities across the inter-mountain west are discovering the importance of an adequate supply of affordable housing to the long term health of a community. A balanced small town community must provide diverse housing opportunities that reflect diverse economic levels and the varying and evolving housing preferences of different life stages. Within the context of Eastern San Miguel County Ophir, because of it's unique characteristics, provides an adequate supply of affordable housing contributing to the long term health of San Miguel County.

Goal A: ***Develop and maintain single family housing opportunities and residential neighborhoods which meet the needs of the Ophir community.***

Objectives:

1. Achieve a developed stock of rental and ownership housing opportunities that meets a broad, balanced range of housing demands.
2. Maintain, protect and enhance the residential character of residential neighborhoods.

Policies:

1. Update the comprehensive zoning plan to achieve a broad range of housing types and sizes.
2. Allow home-based businesses.

Regional Land Use

Regional land uses are depicted on the Ophir Regional Master Plan map. Four general categories of uses are planned for areas within the Ophir 3-Mile Planning area and outside the Ophir town site, which are listed and described as follows:

1. **U.S. Forest Service Lands**. U.S. Forest Service lands comprise the overwhelming majority of the land ownership outside the Ophir town site and within the Ophir 3-Mile planning area. Planned and desired uses of U.S. Forest Service lands within the 3-Mile planning area include passive recreation, limited motorized recreation to Ophir Pass Road, firewood extraction, and removal of fuel woods to reduce forest fire risks. The Ophir community is directly connected to the surrounding natural forests which provide a unique setting. The U.S. Forest Service has a strong goal to eliminate private land in-holdings (patented lode mining claims) to consolidate land ownership and clearly determine forest service boundaries to improve the efficiency of forest service management.
2. **High Alpine Zone**. All undeveloped private properties that lie above the Town of Ophir in elevation in the 3-mile planning area are best suited for open space preservation and public ownership. Undeveloped private properties that lie above the Town of Ophir in elevation in the 3-mile planning area should be included in the San Miguel County High Alpine Zone.
3. **Ag/Forestry Zone**. All private properties along the Ophir access corridor (between the Town of Ophir and the Ophir loop/Highway 145 entrance) that lie below the Town of Ophir should remain in the Ag/Forestry Zone District and should be limited to one single family residence per 35 acres.
4. **Ophir Loop**. The Ophir Loop is a distinct piece of our local history the falls within our 3-mile plan. The town of Ophir would like to make this stay within our land use codes. If possible we would like to see that space for warehouse for storage for overflow parking, or a park-and-ride lot for a future Galloping Goose bus route, or possibly a General Store/Tavern.

IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1992 Ophir Community Survey [on file at the Ophir Town Hall]
- 2003 Ophir Valley Community Questionnaire [on file at the Ophir Town Hall]
- 2005 Ophir Community Survey [on file at the Ophir Town Hall]
- 2010 Vikis Water Consultants Water Rights Report [on file at the Ophir Town Hall]
- 1974 Art Mears Report on Hazard Studies [on file at the Ophir Town Hall]
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- Class I Areas at Risk: Event-Based Nitrogen Deposition to a High-Elevation, Western Site by Mark W. Williams and Dave Manthorne
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Ophir Historical Books:

1) The R.G.S. Story, Vol. III, Over the Bridges, Vance Junction to Ophir; Collman, McCoy, Graves
2) Guide to Colorado Historic Places; Thomas J. Noel
3) Living (and Dying) in Avalanche Country; John Marshall & Jerry Robert