



WASHINGTON COUNTY, COLORADO
(Washington County Courthouse, Akron, Colorado)

WASHINGTON COUNTY MASTER PLAN

**A land use guide for development in unincorporated Washington County, Colorado
Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 30-28-106**


**Washington County Planning Commission
September 16, 2002**

Fee: \$20.00

INTRODUCTION

This document represents the concerted efforts of the members of the Washington County Planning Commission to develop a Land Use Plan for Unincorporated Washington County. It represents many hours of work undertaken by the following individuals. The Commission would like to thank Richard Parker for his input into the process and the Board of County Commissioners for their patience in the length of time it took to compile some of the information and develop standards that will benefit Washington County. It is our hope that the citizens and residents of the County will profit from our efforts in attempting to make Washington County a desirable place to live. We are proud of our efforts in achieving our goal to create and institute a workable master plan.

Sincerely, on behalf of the Commission



Steve Diamond, Secretary

Washington County Planning Commission Members

Joneal Young, Chairman

John Wright

Steve Diamond

Rick Lewton

Craig Quick

Michael Harty

Board of Washington County Commissioners

Gene Jefferson, Chairman

Quentin Vance

Dennis Everhart

Approved by the Washington County Planning Commission

September 16, 2002

Resolution 2002-01

RESOLUTION 2002-01

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. 30-28-106, it is the duty of a County Planning Commission to make and adopt a Master Plan for the physical development of the unincorporated territory of the County; and

WHEREAS, prior to the adoption of any Master Plan, the Planning Commission is required to conduct public hearings after appropriate notice has been published in a newspaper of general circulation in the County; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission caused a Notice to be published in the Akron News-Reporter on March 7, 2002, stating that a public hearing would be held on March 18, 2002, to discuss the proposed County Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, said public hearing was held at the aforementioned date at which time the Planning Commission reviewed the draft Master Plan and received evidence and testimony from members of the public who appeared at said public hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission continued the public hearing from time to time until September 16, 2002; and

WHEREAS, upon a unanimous vote on this date, the Planning Commission approved the finalized Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. 30-28-109, the Planning Commission is required to certify a copy of the Master Plan as adopted to the Board of County Commissioners and to provide copies of the Master Plan to all towns within the County.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Washington County Planning Commission as follows:

1. The Master Plan as finalized and presented at this meeting shall be and by this action is hereby approved and certified as the official Master Plan for Washington County to be effective as of this date.
2. The Secretary to the Planning Commission is hereby directed to forward this Resolution to the Board of County Commissioners as official notification of the Planning Commission certification.
3. Upon said delivery to the Board of County Commissioners, the secretary is also hereby directed to forward a copy of the Plan to all towns within Washington County.

The foregoing Resolution was presented at a regular meeting of the Washington County Planning Commission held on the 16th day of September, 2002, by Commissioner Rick Lewton who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Craig Quick and on roll call vote, all votes being yes, the Resolution was adopted.

+ John A. Wright
Chairman Pro Tem

Attest: Steve Diamond
Steve Diamond, Secretary

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The Washington County Comprehensive Land Use Plan is comprised of three parts:

- **Introduction/How to Use the Plan** – This section discusses the reasons for developing a comprehensive land use plan as well as how to apply the plan in formulating specific zoning regulations.
- **Land Use Categories** – This section suggests different classes of predominant land usage, the environmental characteristics common to that usage and other social and philosophical considerations relevant to the development and management of that land use. The narrative text describes the subject land use in various degrees of detail. The narrative text includes demographic, geographic and other supporting information that could prove valuable in formulating more specific land use decisions in and around the current land use area.

In many cases, land use or service district maps accompany the narrative text and both of these plan components are designed for use in conjunction with each other.

In addition to the narrative text and maps, each land use category includes one or more long-term objectives as well as general policies in furtherance of the objective(s), which, together, are intended to guide future development of the subject land use.

- **Washington County-at-a-Glance** – This section includes descriptions and maps of various government and educational service districts, utility rights-of-way, transportation arterials and other geographic and demographic information that may be used as a general information resource by developers and the general public.

While the objectives and policies articulated herein are necessarily broad and general in keeping with the expressed purpose of any comprehensive land use plan, they are reflective of the following overall development goals:

- Community-Identity. To establish and reinforce a sense of community identity for all County citizens; to encourage citizen participation; and to protect the lifestyles of existing residents, and provide future residents with an enjoyable area in which to relocate.
- Growth and Development. To provide for the planned, orderly growth of the County, ensuring the highest quality development possible, compatible with surrounding land uses and the natural environment.
- Viability. To foster the development of a County that sustains itself through effective and mutually supportive physical, economic, and social systems; and that rewards its citizens by fulfilling their common aspirations while maximizing individual growth potential and freedom of choice.

- Amenity. To encourage community activities with a desirable, convenient, attractive, comfortable, healthful, and enjoyable environment with recreational opportunities and open space.
- Adaptability. To respond to potentially constructive changes in the physical, economic, and social conditions of the County.
- Diversity. To allow for a variety of community activities and services, and for a range of choice in lifestyles, while preserving the agricultural-based economy of Washington County.

No inference or assumption should be made that any current land use indicated by the Plan will indefinitely retain that use or character or that a specific zoning or re-zoning designation will likely occur in the future. It is expected, however, that any subsequent zoning resolutions, Planning Commission recommendations or Board of County Commissioner administrative proposals having an impact on the goals, policies and objectives identified in the Plan will faithfully embrace their spirit.

Land Use Categories

The plan groups land uses into several general categories. Separately enacted zoning resolutions may further subdivide these categories based on the number of structures within a specified geographic range, population density or other factors.

These categories are:

Agricultural -- Agricultural land uses involve crop and/or livestock production and typically contain farms, ranches, and very low-density residential areas. Undeveloped rangeland also falls into this category.

Residential -- Residential areas generally contain homes sited on individual lots. Building densities are usually greater than residence within agricultural zones.

Retail Commercial -- Uses vary in size and intensity. They contain community businesses, and highway business areas.

Office/Light Industrial -- This use incorporates professional and administrative offices, office/warehouse complexes, and office parks. Projects range in size from a single building to hundreds of acres.

Industrial -- Land uses involve intensive manufacturing and mineral extraction areas. These are exemplified by factory districts, concrete plants, and gravel pits.

Feedlots -- This use is for commercial feedlot operations and is subject to specific state and county rules and regulations.

Open Space/Recreational/Flood Plain -- Land use areas contain both public and private parks, golf courses, reservoirs, floodplains, and hiking trails.

Public Facilities -- Typically these uses include schools, libraries, fire stations, utility substations, governmental offices, and other uses for the public benefit. Dependent upon their compatibility with the surrounding area, public and quasi-public land uses may be allowed in all land use areas.

With the exception of isolated small parcels of land, only the "Agricultural" category is in use in unincorporated Washington County as of July, 2002.

In deciding the ultimate zoning designation for a proposed land use, the County Commissioners may also consider the following criteria as directed by the zoning resolutions:

- Infrastructure — Availability and capability of water, sewer, drainage, and transportation systems;
- Compatibility — Harmony and suitability with surrounding land uses and the natural environment;
- Public Services — Ability to provide police, fire, school, libraries, etc.;
- Convenience — Proximity to employment, leisure-time, and retail activity centers;
- Health and Safety — Protection against natural and man-made hazards, including traffic noise, water pollution, airport hazards, flooding, etc.;
- Physiographic Features — Configuration of the topography, streams and lakes, soil types, etc.;
- Accessibility — Availability of nearby public road connections;
- Amenity — Perception that a site offers comfort and aesthetic enjoyment, including views, landscaped open space, recreational activities, etc.;
- Open Space Requirements — Provision of sufficient open space and recreational area to accommodate a project's residents and employees.

Transportation Categories

Freeways -- Freeways are high-speed, limited access roadways funded by Federal, State or local governments. The primary function of freeways is to move traffic unimpeded within the region and to provide through movement to other cities and states. Traffic control is managed by fully divided lanes, ingress and egress ramps and overpasses to accommodate cross traffic.

Major Arterials – Major arterials within the county are typically Federal and State two-lane highways with more liberal access and integration with the local street grid system. Major arterials, while generally accommodating lower traffic densities at lower speeds than freeways still permit relatively unimpeded movement of through traffic within the county. Traffic control may be managed with a combination of automatic signaling equipment and signage.

Minor Arterials – Minor arterials consist of locally funded paved and unpaved county roadways connecting one or more areas within the county. Traffic volume is usually of the lowest density and is typically managed by signage alone.

Airports and airstrips – Airports and airstrips serve both commercial and private air operations and may range from modern public facilities to graded expanses of private land. Potential adverse impacts to surrounding land uses may range from negligible to severe depending on the volume of air operations, size of aircraft served and neighboring land use.

Rail Lines and terminals – Rail lines and terminals serve the movement of passengers and freight by networks of contiguous surface track. The location and designation of rail rights-of-way typically pre-date county incorporation.

Service Districts

Service districts are geographic areas within which various educational, public utility, health, safety and other governmental services are supplied. While they may have little bearing on zoning and land use decisions, they are included within the plan for general reference purposes.

Similarly, the location of churches, cemeteries, and historical sites may exist in several different zoning districts and their inclusion in the plan is primarily as an informational resource.

INTRODUCTION

The incredibly rapid pace of commercial growth and development over the three decades from 1970 through the year 2000 has brought a host of challenges to many communities throughout the State of Colorado.

Natural resources such as water and soil structures have been severely strained or, in some cases, proven inadequate to sustain specific developmental objectives. Various competing or contraindicated land uses have occasionally expanded beyond their initial locations into close and not altogether harmonious proximity with one another.

While these problems may seem more pronounced in densely populated urban areas, they provide valuable reference data for more sparsely developed rural communities. Among these are the following observable trends:

- Land use density is generally greatest within a centralized commercial core, such as Akron, or along a natural resource (river, stream) or infrastructure arterial (highway).
- Land use density diminishes with distance from the core, but commercial and residential development typically occurs in an outward direction from the core or arterial consuming ever-larger areas of undeveloped land.
- Market forces driving development and land use demands are not always readily predictable and can appear, change and diminish with a speed that taxes the ability of local governments to promptly and appropriately respond.
- Initial land use decisions often leave an enduring impact that can be difficult, expensive or even impossible to alter or mitigate by future generations.
- Communities with comprehensive land use plans and a well-thought out process of designating and amending zoning districts traditionally demonstrate the most consistent success in evolving complementary land uses.

These and other considerations are the primary motivating factors in adopting this comprehensive land use plan for unincorporated Washington County, Colorado.

The plan is intended to be both a factual statement of current general land uses within the County and a broad philosophical statement of intent for future development in light of existing land use.

The plan addresses only those lands and waterways within the county that lie outside of the legal boundaries of incorporated cities or towns. Persons interested in designated land uses within an incorporated city or town should consult the planning and zoning agencies within those municipalities.

The plan is authorized by Sections 30-28-101 to 137, Colorado Revised Statutes, (C.R.S. : 30-28-101-137, as amended) and contains the general requirements outlined in the statutes. In instances of conflicting language or questions of "legislative intent", this Washington County Comprehensive Plan is to be interpreted as advisory in nature and at all times subordinate to and wholly governed by state law and existing county ordinances resolutions as may be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

The plan is intended to be an evolving document that changes as the needs of the county change. The Planning Commission and/or the Board of County Commissioners may amend the plan at any time in accordance with the procedure outlined within state statutes.

The Washington County Comprehensive Land Use Plan is merely the first of many steps to guide orderly commercial and residential growth, preserve natural resources, provide for the health and safety of the general public and, in so doing, enhance the overall quality of life the County's citizens have come to know and treasure.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

Agricultural – The geographical scope of agricultural land use in Washington County is impressive. As of 1997, approximately 86 percent (over 1,394,000 acres) of the total land area in Washington County was devoted to farming or ranching. The actual amount of land use devoted to farming and the average size of individual farms have both increased slightly during the five year period 1992 to 1997.¹

The economic impact of agricultural land use within the county is no less significant. The market value of all agricultural products sold in the county in 1997 was over \$97 million,² and the percentage of persons employed in agricultural jobs within Washington County is the highest in the State. Over one-third of the workforce (34.3%) is employed in agribusiness occupations.³

The objectives and policies that follow are proposed in the belief that the proper management of agricultural land use is clearly of vital importance to the welfare of the County's residents.

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

- A. TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF AGRICULTURAL AREAS.
- B. TO PRESERVE THE LONG-TERM AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION OF THE COUNTY.
- C. TO DELINEATE BETWEEN AND AMONG AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS OF DIFFERENT SIZE AND SCOPE.
- D. TO PROTECT THE VISUAL AND OTHER PERCEPTUAL AMENITIES OF THE COUNTY'S AGRICULTURAL AREAS.

POLICIES

1. HIGH QUALITY SOILS AVAILABLE FOR DRY OR IRRIGATED FARMING SHOULD BE PRESERVED FOR LONG-TERM CROPLAND USES.
If the County is to sustain its agricultural productivity, the soils supporting higher yields should be kept available for farming. Additionally, soil erosion control standards should be created and enforced for those soils identified as having high erosion potential. These areas should be researched and mapped for future reference.
2. THE COUNTY SHOULD SUPPORT FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL POLICIES AND REGULATIONS THAT PRESERVE OR IMPROVE THE

ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF FARMING AND RANCHING.

The economic and social contributions of agriculture to the County are of the utmost significance. The County's agricultural land uses and production are dependent upon national, regional, and local economics and any laws or policies furthering a strong agriculture industry should be promoted.

3. DIFFERENT ZONING DISTRICTS SHOULD BE CREATED BASED ON ACREAGE AND/OR TYPE OF AGRICULTURAL OPERATION CONDUCTED.

Small, family farms are likely to have less adverse impacts on neighboring land uses than large commercial agri-business operations. Sound management of agricultural land use entails proper transitioning between lower and higher impact areas in the same manner as with the transitioning that is common between residential and commercial land uses.

4. USES WHICH MAINTAIN AND SUPPORT THE HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL AND AMENITY VALUE OF ALL AGRICULTURAL AREAS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.

Wide open spaces and unobstructed views, rolling fields of grain and abundant plains wildlife have created an image of Colorado and the American West that should be preserved. Commercial and industrial uses, especially those of potentially high impacts involving wide-area excavations, high-profile structures, and chemical discharges or effluents, should not be located in agricultural areas unless it is demonstrated that such location would present a clear benefit or service to local residents and that adverse impacts could be adequately mitigated.

¹ 1997 Ag Census, Colorado Agriculture Statistical Service, P.O. Box 150969 Lakewood, CO 80215-0969, URL: www.nass.usda.gov

² Ibid.

³ "Colorado Economic Perspective", December 20, 2000. Office of State Planning and Budgeting. URL: http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/govnr_dir/ospb/specialreports/agriculture0012.pdf

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

The Residential Land Use section of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on County land where the major structures serve as dwelling units. Within this broad land use classification, a multitude of housing types, styles, and densities potentially exist.

In addition to a choice of housing types, citizens generally prefer locations, which are quiet, safe, stable, and conveniently served by public facilities. In order to create and preserve these positive qualities, living areas need to be designed to establish a desirable neighborhood character. They should, where possible or practical, be located in convenient proximity to the residents' employment, open space, community service facilities, and leisure-time activity areas. They should be located near thoroughfare routes to ensure easy access. The living area should also be protected from traffic, environmental hazards, and incompatible uses. Open spaces should be used to create an open and green character of development. Finally, residential development should occur on sites that are economic and attractive to develop.

While residential structures are permitted within agricultural land use areas, the concept of specifically designating residential land use areas recognizes the possibility of higher density residential development of a non-agricultural nature within unincorporated sections of the County. Whenever possible, such multiple residential development should occur in accordance with a Planned Unit Development (PUD) document previously filed and approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Planned Unit Developments, by their nature, prescribe the development of permitted land uses within a given zoning district in coordination with the installation of supporting infrastructures (roads, utilities) and other compatible land uses.

The four residential land use categories contemplated within such developments are Single-Family Detached (SFD), Single-Family Attached (SFA), and Multi-Family (MF). The characteristics distinguishing these categories are outlined below.

Single-Family-Detached (SFD – Multiple Home Development)

- Sited on individual lots and may range in lot size from estate lots of at least 2.5 acres;
- Generally located where the terrain offers fairly level, rolling and hillside sites, but avoiding irregular sites and low or poorly drained areas;
- In close proximity to major thoroughfares and roadway systems;
- Bounded but not penetrated by major streets, internally served by a system of collector and local streets fitted to the terrain with consideration to drainage, sunlight, and views;
- Primary open space emphasis is on individual private areas;
- Primarily located on the fringe of existing development and emphasizes a balance between privacy and convenience;

Single-Family Attached (SFA – Multiple Home Development)

- Generally residences that are single-family in character, that are physically connected side-by-side as a single building and separated by an uninterrupted wall extending from the bottom to the top of the structure; usually not more than six in a building;
- Terrain requirements are generally similar to that of SFD units.
- Typical types of SFA units are duplexes, triplexes, quadraplexes, and townhouses or row houses, each having its own private entrance;
- If sold separately from its neighbor(s), the purchase includes the land beneath the unit, or in some cases includes a small front and rear lot;
- SFA districts often function as transitional areas between intensive multi-family uses or non-residential uses and lower density SFD areas;
- Located close to existing towns and emphasizes convenience to goods and services;

Residential Manufactured (RM)

- Generally residences that are single-family in character, and are pre-fabricated and then assembled on site, or mobile homes.
- Terrain requirements are generally similar to that of SFD units, with increasing emphasis on level terrain and excellent drainage characteristics.
- In the case of mobile homes in particular, ownership of the lot on which the home sits may be separate from ownership of the home itself.
- RM districts typically have higher densities in keeping with the necessary economics of the targeted demographics.
- Like SFA districts, RM districts often function as transitional areas between intensive multi-family uses or non-residential uses and lower density SFD areas;
- Located close to existing towns and emphasizes convenience to goods and services;

Multi-Family (MF)

- Include apartments, cooperatives, condominiums, and other multiple family dwelling structures and their related uses;
- Generally located on terrain similar to that used for SFA and SFD sites;
- Primary recreational emphasis is on larger common areas shared with other residents of the same or nearby developments;

- Residences typically share parking, access, and other facilities with residents in the same building or complex;
- If sold separately from its neighbors, the deed describes the purchase of air space rather than land;
- MF areas act as transition areas between non-residential districts and lower density residential uses;
- Generally sited adjacent to and in close proximity of major roadways and public transit facilities, and emphasize convenient connections to work, commercial, and leisure-time areas.

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

- A. TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES, LOCATIONS, AND PRICES TO MEET THE DIVERSE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL NEEDS OF COUNTY RESIDENTS.
- B. TO MINIMIZE CONFLICTS BETWEEN COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND HIGHER DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS.
- C. TO ENCOURAGE THE CONCEPT OF NEIGHBORHOODS, BOTH IN TERMS OF IDENTITY AND AS A SERVICE UNIT.
- D. TO PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY HOUSING IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF HOUSING IN EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

POLICIES FOR MULT-UNIT DEVELOPMENT

1. THE PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) REVIEW PROCESS SHOULD BE UTILIZED WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO PROMOTE QUALITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT COMPATIBLE WITH ADJACENT AREAS.
Careful review of proposed plans should be used to improve general design considerations and increase open space and landscaping on multiple residential projects, and therefore should be applied.
2. LOCATIONAL CRITERIA TO ENCOURAGE HIGHER INTENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD INCLUDE CONSIDERATION OF TRAFFIC IMPACTS ON SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS, INCREASED DEMANDS ON PUBLIC FACILITIES, NEED FOR ADEQUATE OPEN SPACE, PROXIMITY OF ROADWAY FACILITIES, AND AVAILABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.
Single-family attached and multi-family residential development can be a way of creating aesthetically pleasing, innovative, less costly housing. Development of medium to high-intensity housing may have substantial

impacts on surrounding less dense development, however, if the impacts are not carefully assessed and mitigated through the site plan review process.

3. CHANGES IN USES ADJACENT TO RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE REVIEWED FOR POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES TAKEN TO PREVENT NEGATIVE IMPACTS.

Zoning changes should not be made where major negative impacts on agricultural land use are identified. Lesser impacts should be mitigated by buffering with landscaping and other such means identified through public meetings and the site plan review process.

4. THE RESIDENTIAL DENSITY AND CHARACTER OF EXISTING LAND USE SHOULD BE PRESERVED.

Rezoning within established areas should be carefully examined for its compatibility with existing uses.

5. EXISTING PUBLIC FACILITIES SHOULD BE WELL MAINTAINED TO HELP PRESERVE DEVELOPED STABLE NEIGHBORHOODS AS DESIRABLE PLACES TO LIVE. PARTICULAR ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID TO PUBLIC MAINTENANCE AND SERVICE FUNCTIONS. Roads, parks, libraries, and other public facilities and services need to be maintained once they are established, if they are to adequately serve their constituents.

6. POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN ALL REZONING APPLICATIONS WHEN CONSIDERING RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

To insure long-term viability of neighborhoods, housing should not be in areas where residents may be subjected to environmental hazards including floodplains, airport approach zones, hazardous wastes, or high noise impact areas.

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

This section addresses land zoned for future commercial uses as well as existing commercial development. Commercial land use may be generally described as existing for the purpose of providing goods and services to a targeted consumer market. The geographical market area served by a given commercial enterprise may range from the immediate area to a radius of tens of miles. The geographical reach of any business entity depends on a number of marketing factors such as quality of product, pricing and availability of similar products and services from other accessible outlets.

Land uses within this zoning classification generally fall into two broad categories: retail businesses and office/light industrial. Heavy industrial, manufacturing and feedlot uses are excluded from this use classification and require their own distinct zoning regulations.

Commercial uses have a number of characteristics which impact zoning decisions:

Retail Commercial Uses

- On-site visits by customers and vendors are common and the volume of visits may fluctuate greatly as to time-of-day and other factors.
- Access, parking, waste management, noise, lighting, signage and other issues having potential impacts to surrounding areas (including neighboring businesses) vary widely according to the nature of the commercial operation being conducted. The land use challenges defy a "one size fits all" zoning solution.
- Changes in ownership, business failures, or declining economic conditions can result in new and heretofore unanticipated commercial uses of retail sites and structures in regards to their original design which can further result in adverse impacts.

Office/Industrial (Light)

- Sites and areas for administrative, professional, and research-oriented offices and office/warehouse businesses, plus light manufacturing and small product assembly, including single and multi-tenant buildings and developments;
- Typical uses include insurance, real estate, bank and contractors' offices, medical clinics, office parks, etc. Volume of on-site visits by customers and vendors varies but usually less than retail businesses.
- While transient customer traffic is usually reduced, on-site employee populations may be greater and accessibility to the existing employment base is important.
- Minimal dust, fumes, odors, refuse, smoke, vapor, noise, lights, and vibrations extending from the site or area; potential impacts of various land uses tends to vary less dramatically than with retail operations.

In the following interrelated objectives and policies, direction is given on the issues related to commercial and industrial development in the County. These issues include:

- The relationship of retail and office/industrial (light) zoning and uses to current and projected needs of the population;
- The impact of commercial uses on adjacent uses;
- The effect of commercial uses on traffic mobility and access;

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

- A. TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE EXISTING COMMERCIAL USES THAT EFFECTIVELY MEET MARKET DEMAND AND PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.
- B. TO SUPPORT NEW RETAIL AND OFFICE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT MEETS IDENTIFIED MARKET DEMAND.
- C. TO PROMOTE THE CONCEPT OF INTEGRATED, MULTI-USE COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY CENTERS.
- D. TO ENCOURAGE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL SITES TO MAXIMIZE ACCESSIBILITY AND COMPATIBILITY WITH ADJACENT USES
- E. TO INTEGRATE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH THE EXISTING AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY.

POLICIES

1. THE COUNTY SHOULD ENCOURAGE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH SURROUNDING LAND USES AND MEETS MARKET DEMAND BY USING THE PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS WHENEVER POSSIBLE. LAND ALREADY ZONED FOR COMMERCIAL USES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO DEVELOP PRIOR TO REZONING OF ADDITIONAL PROPERTY.
The commercial scale of development should be compatible with nearby land uses and the capacity of existing roadway networks and utility facilities. The Planned Unit Development process should be utilized to most effectively coordinate the diverse public service needs of the proposed enterprise and minimize potentially adverse impacts. The development of land for commercial uses should be encouraged. Before retail or office/light industrial uses are allowed to develop or intensify, a clear need should be demonstrated and protection of adjacent land uses assured.
2. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL CENTERS SHOULD BE LOCATED ADJACENT TO ARTERIAL OR COLLECTOR INTERSECTIONS AND

HAVE ACCESS TO NON-AUTOMOBILE MODES OF TRAVEL WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

Neighborhood commercial centers are single structures whose commercial tenants are separated by common walls and that have a land area of less than 10 acres and a gross leasable area ranging from 30,000 to 100,000 square feet.

3. HIGHWAY-THOROUGHFARE COMMERCIAL LAND USES SHOULD BE LOCATED ADJACENT TO FREEWAY AND ARTERIAL INTERSECTIONS AND AWAY FROM RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS; CONTAIN LAND USES WHICH ARE MUTUALLY COMPATIBLE AND REINFORCING IN USE AND DESIGN; BE GROUPED INTO CLUSTERS WHICH DO NOT EXTEND TO SUCH A LENGTH AS TO CREATE STRIP DEVELOPMENT; AND UTILIZE SERVICE ROADS WITHOUT ACCESS DIRECTLY TO ARTERIAL STREETS.
Highway-thoroughfare commercial uses are freestanding commercial facilities such as gasoline stations, restaurants, fast-food establishments, hotel/motels, automobile dealerships, and lumberyards, which serve passing traffic rather than a residential trade area.
4. RETAIL AND OFFICE/INDUSTRIAL (LIGHT) USES SHOULD BE LOCATED, GROUPED, AND DESIGNED IN PLANNED, INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENTS ACCORDING TO A PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.
Retail and office use design should be located with convenient access to services and to major arterial transportation routes. The Planned Unit Development process should be utilized to most effectively coordinate the diverse public service needs of the proposed enterprise and minimize potentially adverse impacts.
5. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPERS SHOULD BE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO INTERACT DURING THE PLANNING PROCESS WITH EXISTING RESIDENTS IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS.
Interaction prior to and during the development review process provides a forum for addressing neighborhood concerns. This process can improve compatibility of commercial uses with noncommercial uses in the area.

INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

The Industrial land use section of the Comprehensive Plan presents long-range objectives and related policies addressing land zoned for future industrial uses. Industrial land uses include the following general categories: primary manufacturing, secondary manufacturing, wholesaling, warehousing, contracting, feedlots and other miscellaneous categories.

The broad category of industrial land uses development varies in intensity from office/warehouse developments located in park-like settings, to heavy uses, characterized by mining operations and concrete batch plants. All of these uses, however, share the following attributes:

- Primary uses involve manufacturing goods and/or excavating natural resources;
- Typical uses include factories, feedlots, gravel pits, and concrete plants;
- Terrain requirements are for reasonably level land, preferably with a maximum slope of 5%, capable of being graded without undue expense, avoiding irregularly shaped or poorly drained parcels;
- Intensity, scale, and environmental impacts are high. Site should be isolated from population centers or adequately buffered;
- Locational criteria include access to one or more major arterials or freeways capable of handling heavy truck traffic. Rail or airport access may also be used;
- Accessible to employment base;
- Site or area adequately sized to accommodate peak parking, loading, storage, open space, and other service needs;
- Location such that traffic generated does not pass through residential areas;
- Typically has outdoor storage area;
- Average floor area ratio density is variable, dependent upon the number of building stories and upon parking, loading, storage, and open space needs.

Public and quasi-public facilities, such as sewage treatment plants, landfills, and substations, are also considered industrial uses, and should be developed using the objectives and policies stated below.

The following interrelated issues are addressed in the Industrial Land Use Long-Term Objectives and Policies:

- Industrial location factors;

- Compatibility of industrial uses with adjacent land uses;
- Environmental and aesthetic impacts of industrial development;
- Energy conservation concerns; and
- Maximum use of industrial land.

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

- A. TO ENCOURAGE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT WHICH MEETS MARKET DEMAND AND CONTRIBUTES TO THE COUNTY' S EMPLOYMENT AND TAX BASE.
- B. TO SUPPORT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT WEIGH MAXIMIZES ACCESSIBILITY TO REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, COMPATIBILITY WITH ADJACENT LAND USES, AND APPLICABILITY OF ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES.
- C. TO MITIGATE ANY NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS RESULTING FROM THE INTERFACE OF INDUSTRIAL USES, OTHER LAND USES, AND THE NATURAL FEATURES OF AN AREA.
- D. TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF FACILITIES THAT PROVIDE AMENITIES TO INDUSTRIAL AREAS OF THE COUNTY

POLICIES

1. APPROPRIATE INDUSTRY SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO LOCATE IN WASHINGTON COUNTY.
Appropriate industries shall include non-polluting, economically sound industries that provide employment opportunities consistent with skills and wage levels that will sustain adequate standards of living.
2. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPERS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO MAINTAIN AND REDEVELOP EXISTING INDUSTRIAL AREAS IN THE COUNTY.
In addition to attracting new industry, the County recognizes the importance of maintaining, preserving, and upgrading existing industrial uses to current standards whenever possible.
3. INDUSTRIAL LAND USES SHOULD BE LOCATED NEAR MAJOR TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES SUCH AS AIRPORTS , RAILROADS , FREEWAYS , AND MAJOR ARTERIAL STREETS.
Adequate and convenient access is a critical factor in industrial location selection and rezonings.
4. INDUSTRIAL LAND USES SHOULD BE LOCATED AND ADEQUATELY BUFFERED TO MINIMIZE IMPACTS RESULTING FROM THE

INTERFACE OF INDUSTRIAL USES, ADJACENT LAND USES, AND THE NATURAL FEATURES OF AN AREA.

Methods to reduce impacts include both on- and off-site considerations, and are considered as part of the Planned Unit Development review. On the site, buffering shall be utilized, including set— backs, fences, walls, landscaping, drainage details, architectural considerations, paving, limitation of the size of signs, management of traffic patterns, and direction of lighting away from adjacent uses. Off the site, vehicular access through non-industrial areas shall be designed to minimize adverse impacts, and shall be on paved streets that meet County standards.

5. THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIES WITHIN PLANNED, INTEGRATED INDUSTRIAL PARKS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.
Sufficient land should be planned in appropriate locations to cluster and buffer industrial uses. Industrial park owners and tenants should be encouraged to form active associations for purposes of unified regulation and decision making for development design and maintenance of industrial property.
6. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPERS SHOULD BE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO INTERACT DURING THE SITE PLANNING PROCESS WITH EXISTING RESIDENTS OR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS.
Interaction during the site planning process provides a forum for addressing neighborhood concerns. This process can improve compatibility of industrial uses with non—industrial uses in the area.
7. THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL AND SUPPORT SERVICE FACILITIES NEAR OR WITHIN INDUSTRIAL AREAS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.
The provision of convenient services in or near industrial areas can reduce the number of vehicular trips, and is a desirable energy conservation measure.

WASHINGTON COUNTY AT-A-GLANCE

Population – According to the 2000 U. S. Census, the Washington County population stands at 4,926 (a 2.4% increase over 1990) and comprises 1,989 individual households. 96.4% of the population is white Caucasian. Approximately 900 people are age 65 or older (18.2%) and another 305 are children under the age of five. Over 2,700 of the County's residents have at least a high school education. The average population density is 2.0 persons per square mile, with 41% of the total population residing in the cities of Akron and Otis.

Economics – The County's labor force numbers over 2,400 workers whose average earnings per job are \$21,311. Major employers within the county include county and municipal governments, school districts and agricultural storage and processing operations. Retail sales for the year 1997 exceeded \$23 million. Federal funds and grants for the year 2000 were over \$49 million.

Land Area and Topography – Washington County comprises approximately 2,529 square miles located on the northeastern Colorado plains. It is bounded by Logan County on the north, Yuma County on the east, Kit Carson and Lincoln Counties to the south and Arapahoe, Adams and Morgan Counties on the west. Washington County varies in elevation from about 5,400 feet above sea level in the southwest to just under 4,000 feet in the northeast. Soil content ranges from silty clay to sand hills and dunes.

Climate – Washington County is typically mild and dry. The mean annual precipitation is about 16 inches. Periods of drought are common. Approximately 75% of all precipitation comes in the form of rain or snow from March through August. Snowfall totals about 34 inches annually, but contains significantly less moisture than snowfall in the Midwest and Eastern United States.

Flooding, when it occurs, often consists of flash floods. Brief, violent thunderstorms occasionally overflow shallow, narrow creek beds and normally dry gullies. In such instances, sandy, rocky ground in and along the streambeds cannot absorb the volume of water being introduced in a short time span.

Severe winds are among the most extreme weather phenomena experienced in the County and can cause serious soil erosion during hot, dry summers or dangerous ground blizzards during the winter.

The mean annual temperature is 49 degrees, but extremes have ranged from 30 degrees below zero to a summertime high of over 100.

Lifestyle – The Washington County lifestyle is one of quiet, rural routine. Hard work is counterbalanced by family and community-oriented activities. Central to these activities are area churches, service organizations and recreational areas and facilities.

Churches

Assemblies of God, 45415 Adams Ave., Cope
Baptist Country Chapel, Lindon Rd. R,
Bethel Union, 26051 Co. Rd. 17
Church of Christ, 225 E. 6th St., Akron
Cope Community Church, 45466 Main St., Cope
First Assembly of God, 4th St. and Birch, Akron
First Baptist Church, 875 E. 3rd St., Akron
First Presbyterian, 181 Weld, St., Otis
First United Presbyterian, 3rd St. and Ash, Akron
Foursquare Gospel Church, 976 E. 2nd St., Akron
Howard United Methodist, 5915 Hwy 36
Our Saviors Lutheran, Anton
Peace Evangelical Lutheran, 322 Gum St., Akron
St. Joseph Parish, 551 W. 6th St., Akron
St. Paul Lutheran, 6th St. and Lincoln, Otis
Trinity Lutheran, 202 Birch Ave., Akron
Seventh Day Adventist, 675 E. 2nd St., Akron
Sunnydale Evangelical, Rd 4 & LL
United Methodist, 125 W. 3rd St., Akron

Service Organizations

AF & AM Akron Lodge #74, 201 W. 2nd St., Akron
Akron Elks Lodge #2579, 181 Ash St., Akron
Akron Head Start, 902 E. 1st St., Akron
Akron Veteran's Home, Inc., 275 E. 1st St., Akron
Centennial Mental Health, 875 E. 1st St., Akron
Caring People Task Force, 85 Main St., Akron
Cope Recreational Club, 45435 Park Ave., Cope
Otis Development, Inc., 2nd St. and Weld, Otis

Additionally, Lions clubs, home demonstration clubs and sororities are active throughout the county. Young people are also served by numerous 4H, Boy Scout and Girl Scout chapters.

Recreational Areas

City Park, 4th St. and Main, Akron
Cope Park, Hwy 36, Cope
Highway 34 Park, west end of town, Akron
Last Chance Park, Hwy 36 and Hwy 71, Last Chance
Pond and Park, Hwy 63 south of town, Akron
Prairie Golf Course, Rd. MM and Rd. 8
Prewitt Reservoir, northwest corner of County
Summit Springs Battlefield, Rd. 60 and Rd. GG
Swimming Pool Park, 5th St. and Elm, Akron
Washington County Golf Course, Hwy 63 south of town, Akron

Washington County Museum

Airports and Landing Strips – Commercial and general aviation needs are serviced by at least 10 airports and landing strips within the County. Many of these are privately owned and are suitable for daylight VFR operation only. More detailed information regarding refueling capabilities, runway lengths and lighting, and hours of operation is available from Federal Aviation Administration navigational charts and publications. As noted on **Map A-1**, the airports and landing strips are as follows:

1. Akron-Washington County Airport
2. Gebauer Airport
3. Otis Airport
4. Stansfield Airport
5. Ward Landing Strip
6. Chenoweth Landing Strip
7. Unnamed Landing Strip;
8. Roderick Landing Strip
9. Unnamed Landing Strip
10. Frasier Ranch Landing Strip
11. Unnamed Landing Strip

Fire Protection Districts and Stations – Fire protection within the County is provided by seven separate departments within seven separate geographical fire protection districts. In the case of Hillrose, Brush and Yuma Fire Protection Districts, stations actually dispatching firefighting equipment and personnel are located in adjacent counties. Over 97 percent of the land area within Washington County is designated as having fire protection. (See **Map A-2**)

Major Historical Sites – A number of historical sites played a significant role in early frontier life for white settlers and Native Americans alike and have been identified within the County. The most notable of these is the Summit Springs Battlefield in north central Washington County along the border with Logan County.

Other sites indicated on **Map A-3** also have historical importance, but are typically unmarked or are inaccessible due to their location on private land. These are:

1. Summit Springs Battlefield
2. Fremont Buttes
3. Tepee Rings
4. Paint Mines
5. Gold Hill
6. Villasur Trail
7. Flat Top

School Districts – The seven different school districts within the County serve almost 1,000 students from grades K1 through 12. School districts are indicated on **Map A-4**.

Livestock Feedlots—The market distribution needs for cattle and sheep ranchers throughout the County are served by a number of livestock feedlots. As indicated on **Map A-5**, these are:

1. CSU Range Station
2. Holtorf cattle feedlot
3. Rule Sheep feedlot
4. Diamond cattle feedlot
5. Kessinger cattle feedlot
6. Triangle cattle feedlot
7. Hickert cattle feedlot
8. 55 Farms cattle feedlot
9. Mathies hog finish floor
10. Hickert cattle feedlot

Pest Control District – Pest control is currently only administered on an official basis in conjunction with the Colorado Department of Agriculture within a single pest control district covering about 45% of the County. (See **Map A-6**)

Cemeteries and Graves – There are over 35 known cemeteries and/or marked gravesites within the county. Many of these are small family plots and have been abandoned. Others continue to be maintained, but are filled to capacity. The remaining cemeteries are in use and have additional burial capacity. Gravesites and cemeteries are indicated by **Map A-7** as follows:

1. Summit Springs Battlefield & (1A) Mrs. Susanna Alderdice [maintained]
2. Burdett Cemetery [in use]
3. Gray Cemetery [maintained]
4. James Bird (baby) [abandoned]
5. Hoosier Cemetery [abandoned]
6. Daily-Rominger Cemetery [abandoned]
7. Samuel Younger [abandoned]
8. Curtis Cemetery [abandoned]
9. Hope Cemetery [maintained]
10. Rural Cemetery [abandoned]
11. Akron Cemetery [in use]
12. St. Joseph's Cemetery [in use]
13. Platner Cemetery [abandoned]
14. Otis Cemetery [in use]
15. Hyde Cemetery [maintained]
16. Gebauer Cemetery [abandoned]
17. God's Half-Acre [in use]
18. Unknown baby of Alex Ickes or Alex Rupp [abandoned]
19. Elba Cemetery [in use]
20. Swan Cemetery [in use]

21. Jesse Cemetery [maintained]
22. Lee Cemetery [in use]
23. Abbott Cemetery [in use]
24. Hale baby boy [abandoned]
25. Taylor boy grave [abandoned]
26. Lindon Cemetery [abandoned]
27. Mrs. Schmetgen [abandoned]
28. Unknown girl [abandoned]
29. Rural Cemetery [abandoned]
30. Cope Cemetery [in use]
31. Glen Chapel Cemetery
32. Thurman Cemetery [in use]

Water Conservancy Districts – Map A-8

Gas Pipelines and Processing Facilities – Several natural gas pipelines and associated rights of way bisect the County from east to west over many miles. These pipelines are indicated on **Map A-9**.

Major Transmission Lines, Substations and Microwave Towers – Like interstate gas lines, several electrical transmission lines run through the County with power subject to rerouting at several substations. Additionally, a number of microwave communications tower dot the Washington County landscape. Once the source of significant microwave radiation, such emissions are becoming less of a land use planning issue as modern long distance voice and data communications increasingly utilize underground fiber optic cable. (See **Map A-10**)

Potential Reservoir Areas – Future agricultural or commercial development will require the availability of adequate water resources throughout the County. To this end, several potential water storage sites have been identified. While no such projects are currently under construction or proposed, planners and developers should consider that these areas have been identified as suitable for such future use. Moreover, the lack of such identification should not be construed as having excluded any other area within the County from such future use. (See **Map A-11**)

Soil Conservation Districts – Soil Conservation Districts are local jurisdictions that coordinate a variety of activities and services with State and Federal agencies for the purpose of preserving agricultural value and productivity within the district. Washington County has two separate soil conservation districts as indicated by **Map A-12**.

Major Oil and Gas Fields – There are literally hundreds of oil and gas wells in scores of operational fields throughout Washington County. While the plotting of individual wells and even small, wildcat fields is beyond the scope of this document, the major oil and gas fields (eight wells or more) are identified on **Map A-13** and are as follows:



1. Hyde (9 wells)

2. Rago North (10 wells)
3. Bobcat (12 wells)
4. Keno (9 wells)
5. Little Beaver (13 wells)
6. Spear (14 wells)
7. White Eagle (24 wells)
8. De Nova (47 wells)
9. Big Beaver (13 wells)
10. Roderick (8 wells)

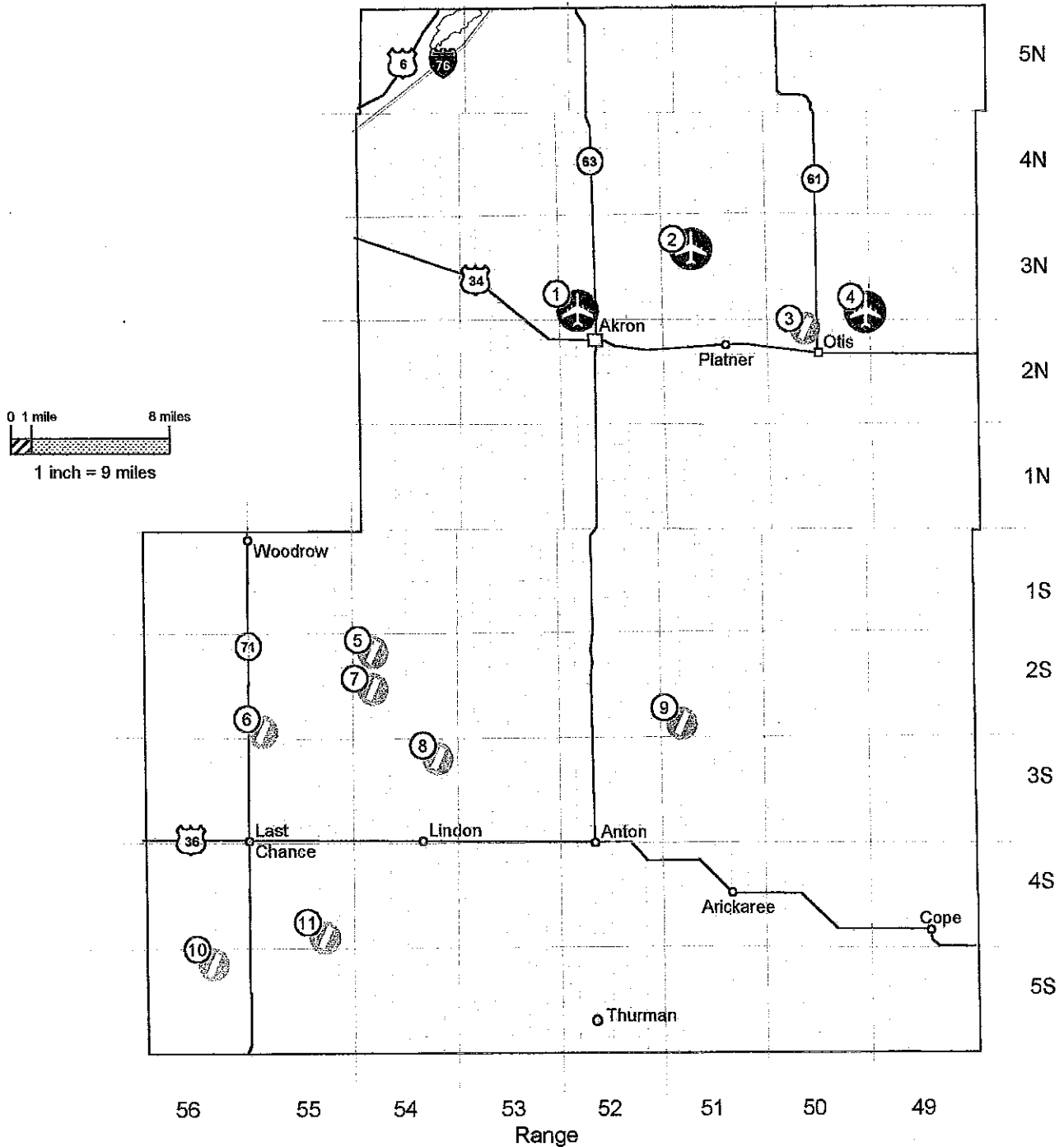
Potential Areas for Future Development – As one might expect, the obvious areas likely for future residential and commercial development lie in and around existing incorporated cities and towns. But other areas have also been identified as having strong development potential as a result of land speculation that has already occurred, or due to their close proximity to various natural resources and/or existing utility and transportation infrastructures. **Map A-14.**

Washington County, Colorado Comprehensive Plan Map

A-1

Airports  and Landing Strips 

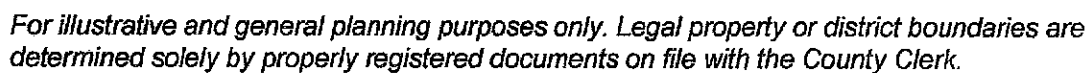
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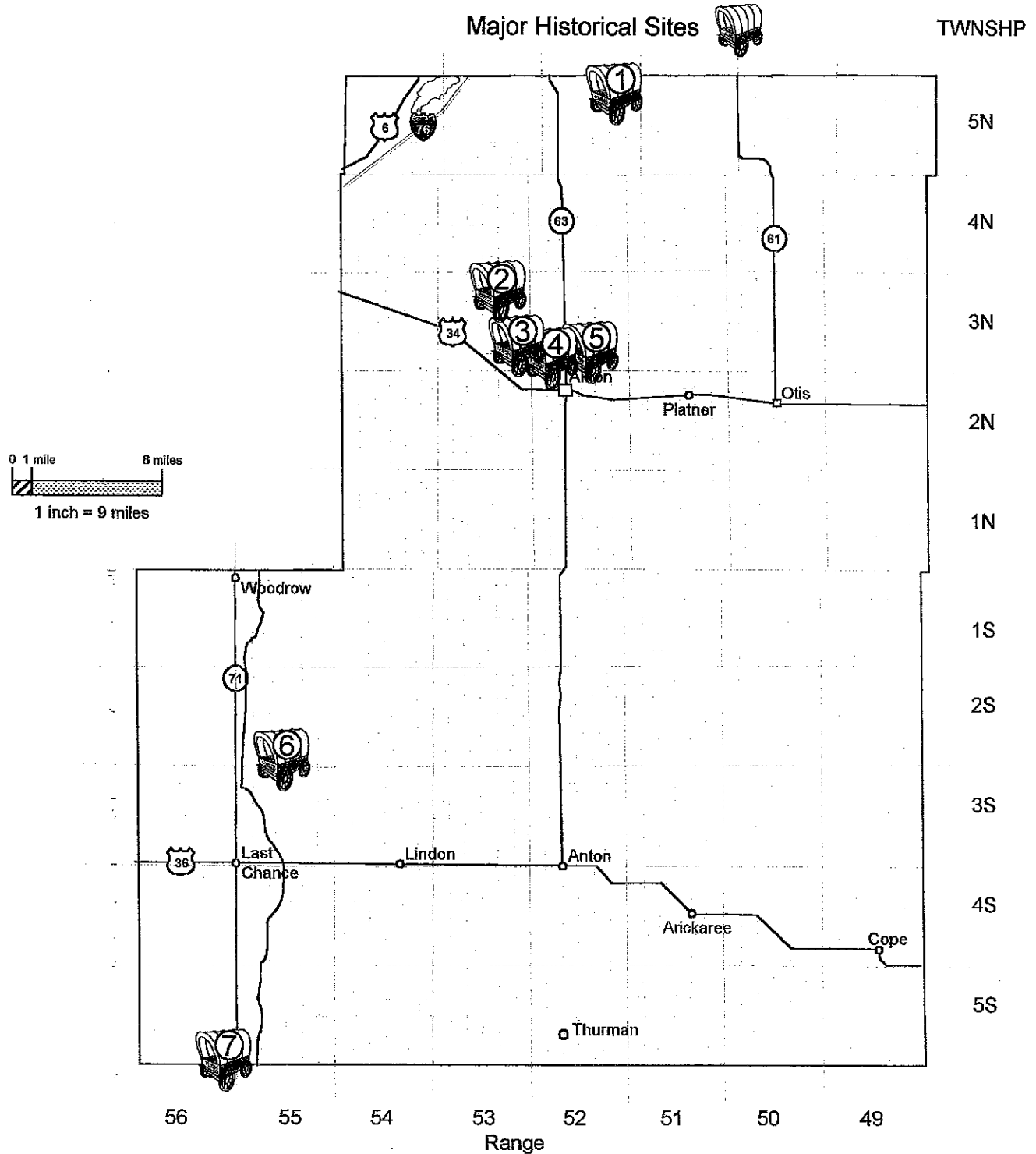
A-2

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Washington County, Colorado Comprehensive Plan Map

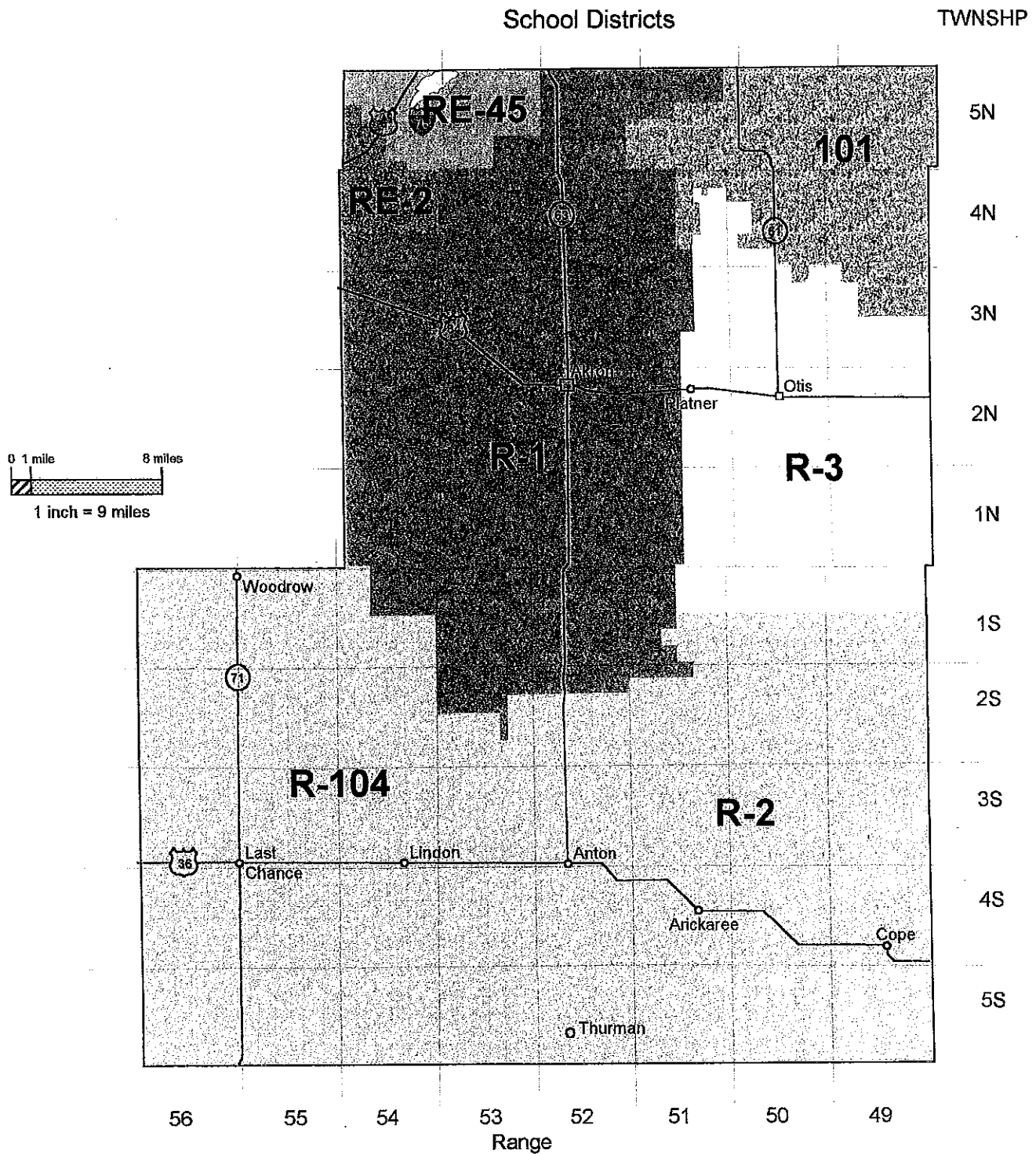
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Washington County, Colorado Comprehensive Plan Map

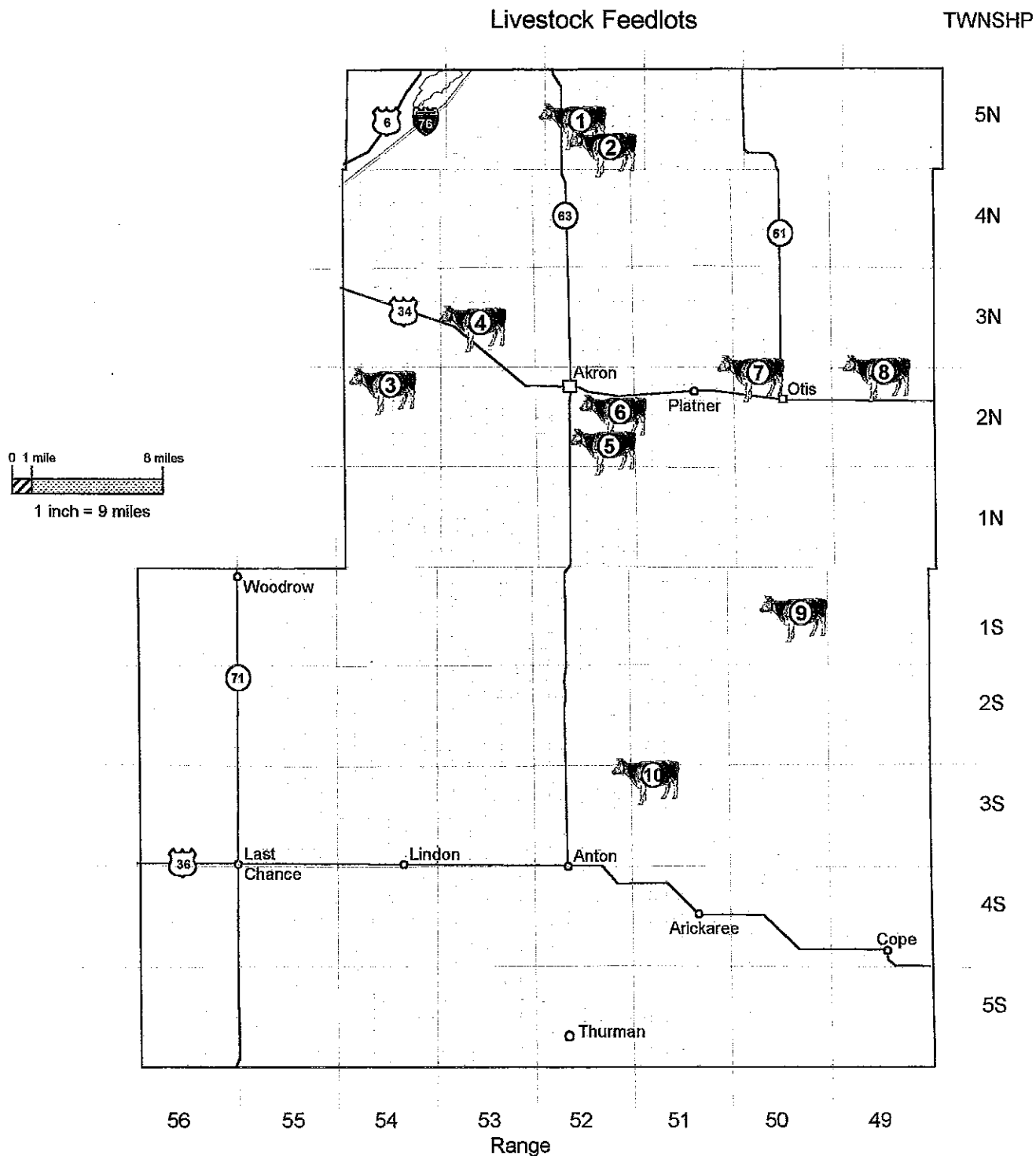
A-4



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Washington County, Colorado Comprehensive Plan Map

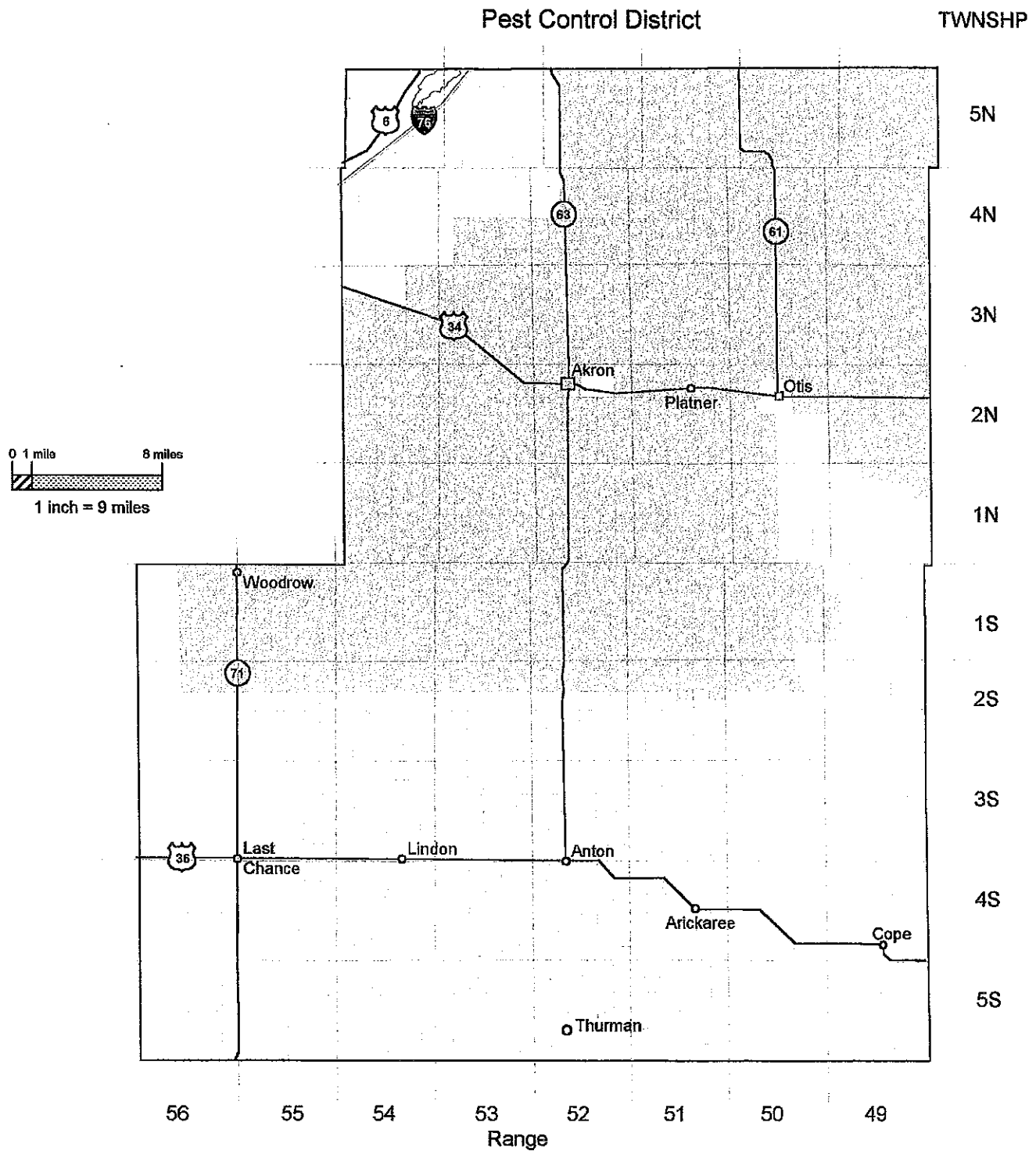
A-5



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Washington County, Colorado Comprehensive Plan Map

A-6



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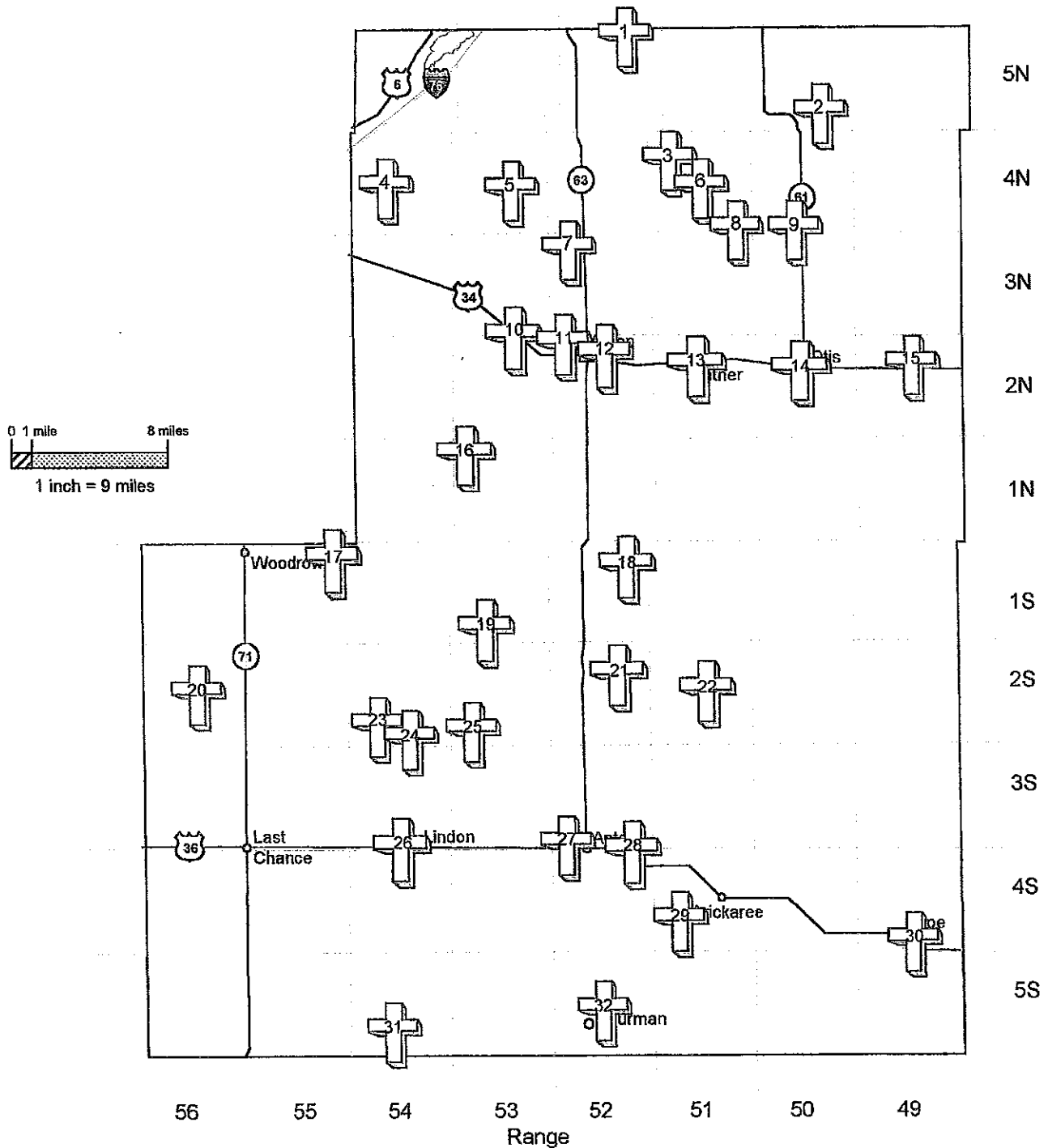
Washington County, Colorado

Comprehensive Plan Map

Cemeteries and Grave Sights

A-7

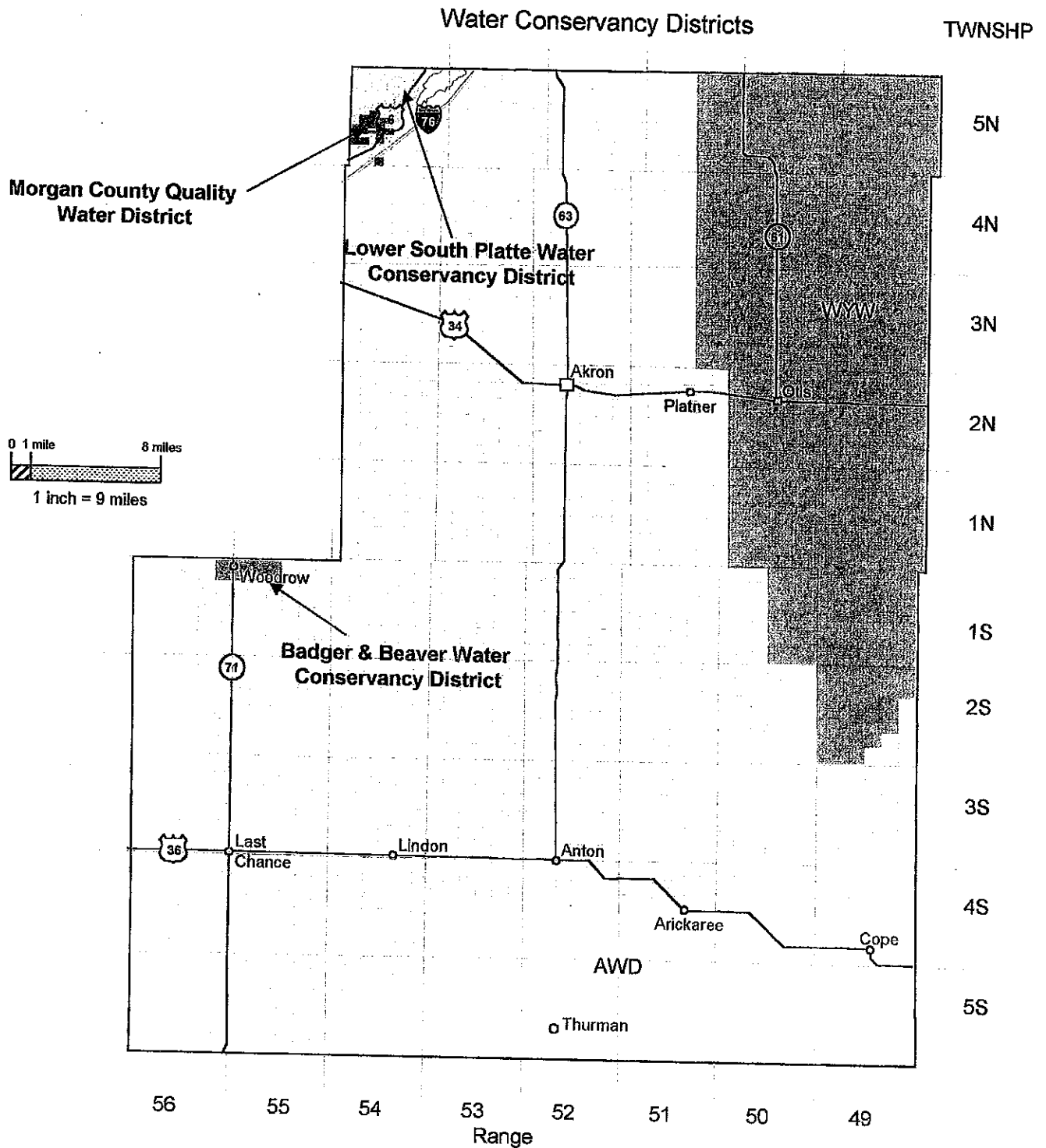
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Washington County, Colorado Comprehensive Plan Map

A-8



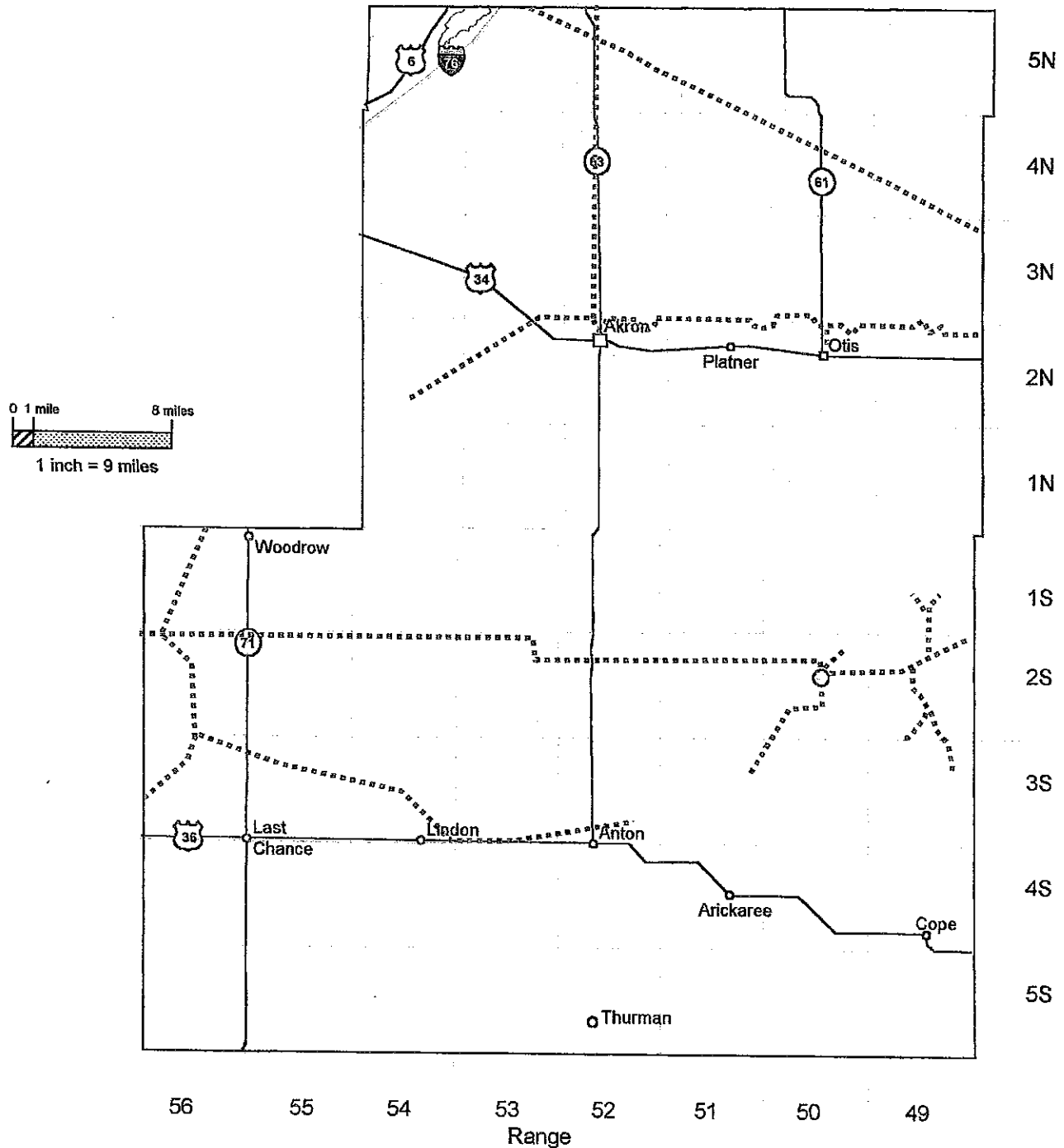
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Washington County, Colorado Comprehensive Plan Map

A-9

Gas Pipelines and processing facilities ○

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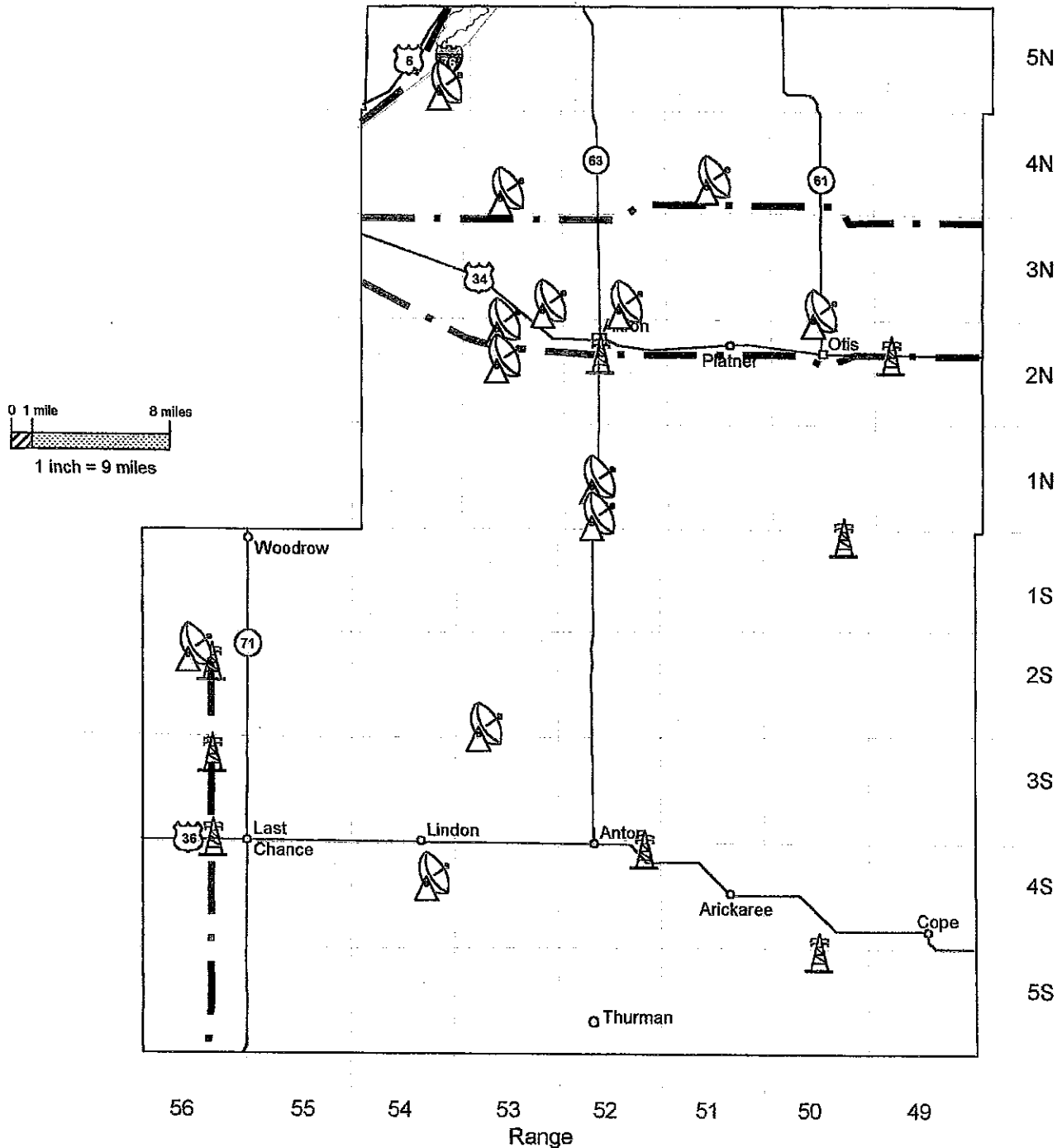
Washington County, Colorado

Comprehensive Plan Map

A-10

Major Transmission Lines — — — — —
Substations and Microwave Towers

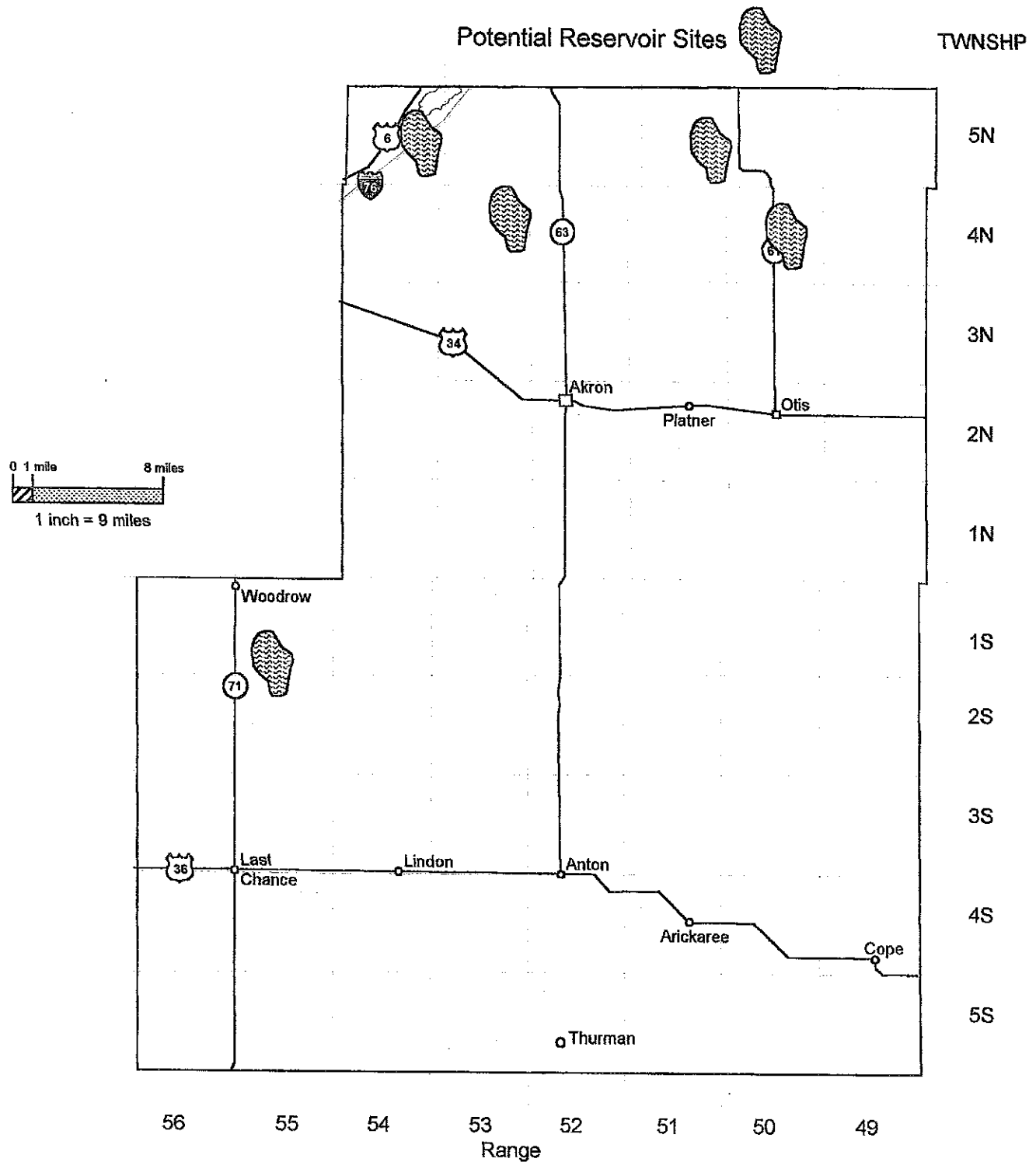
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Washington County, Colorado Comprehensive Plan Map

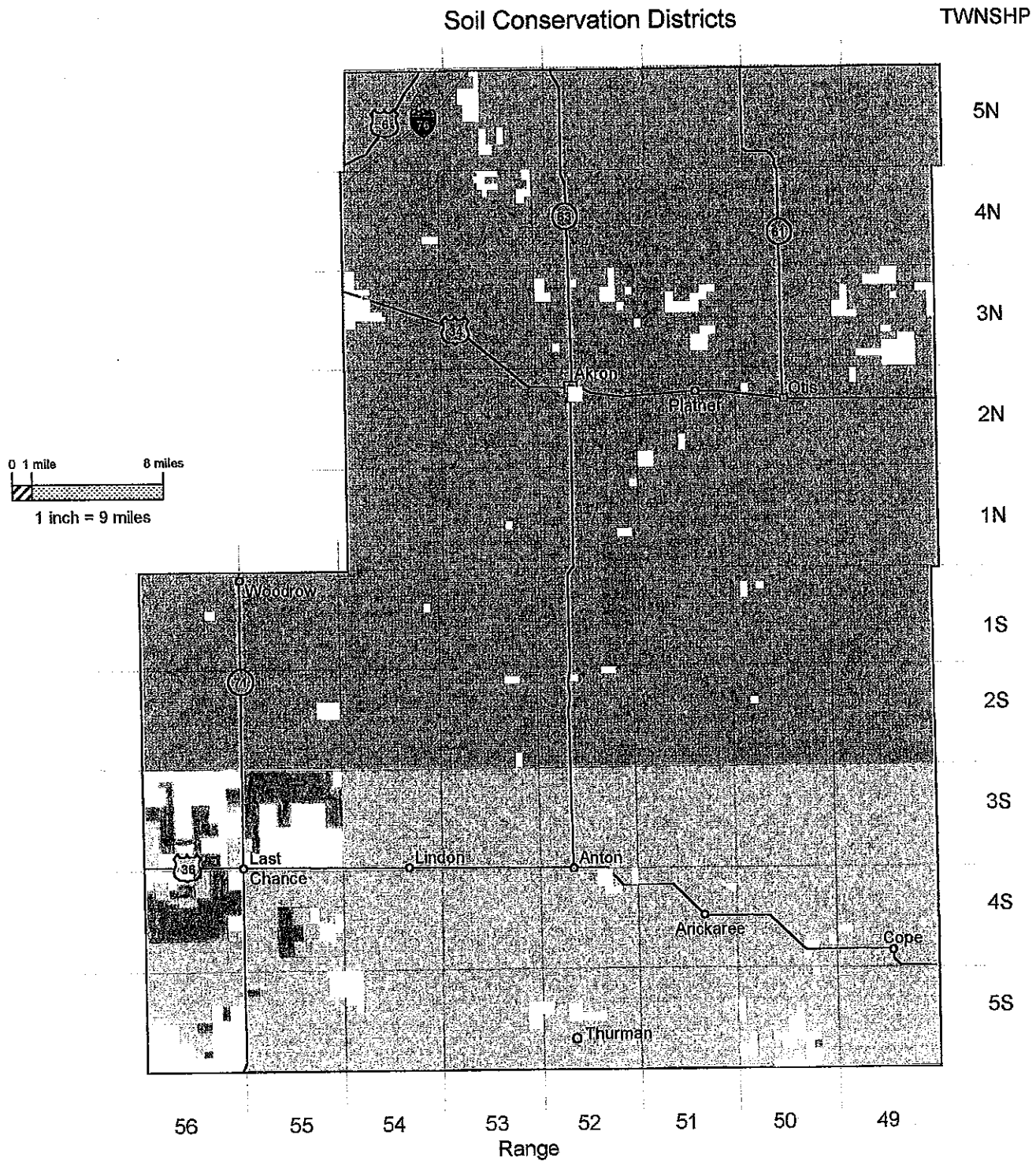
A-11



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Washington County, Colorado Comprehensive Plan Map

A-12



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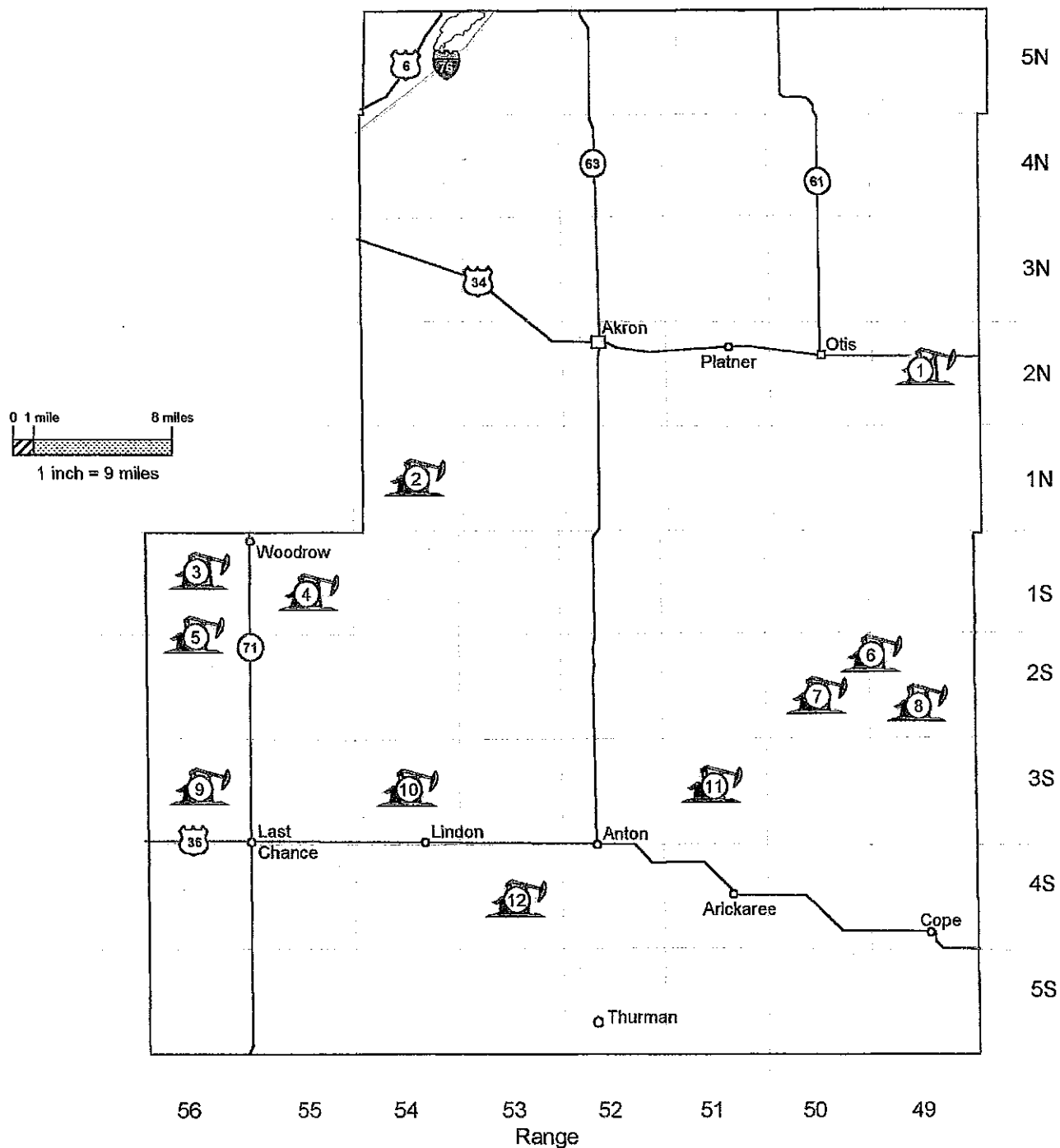
Washington County, Colorado Comprehensive Plan Map

A-13

Major Oil and Gas Fields



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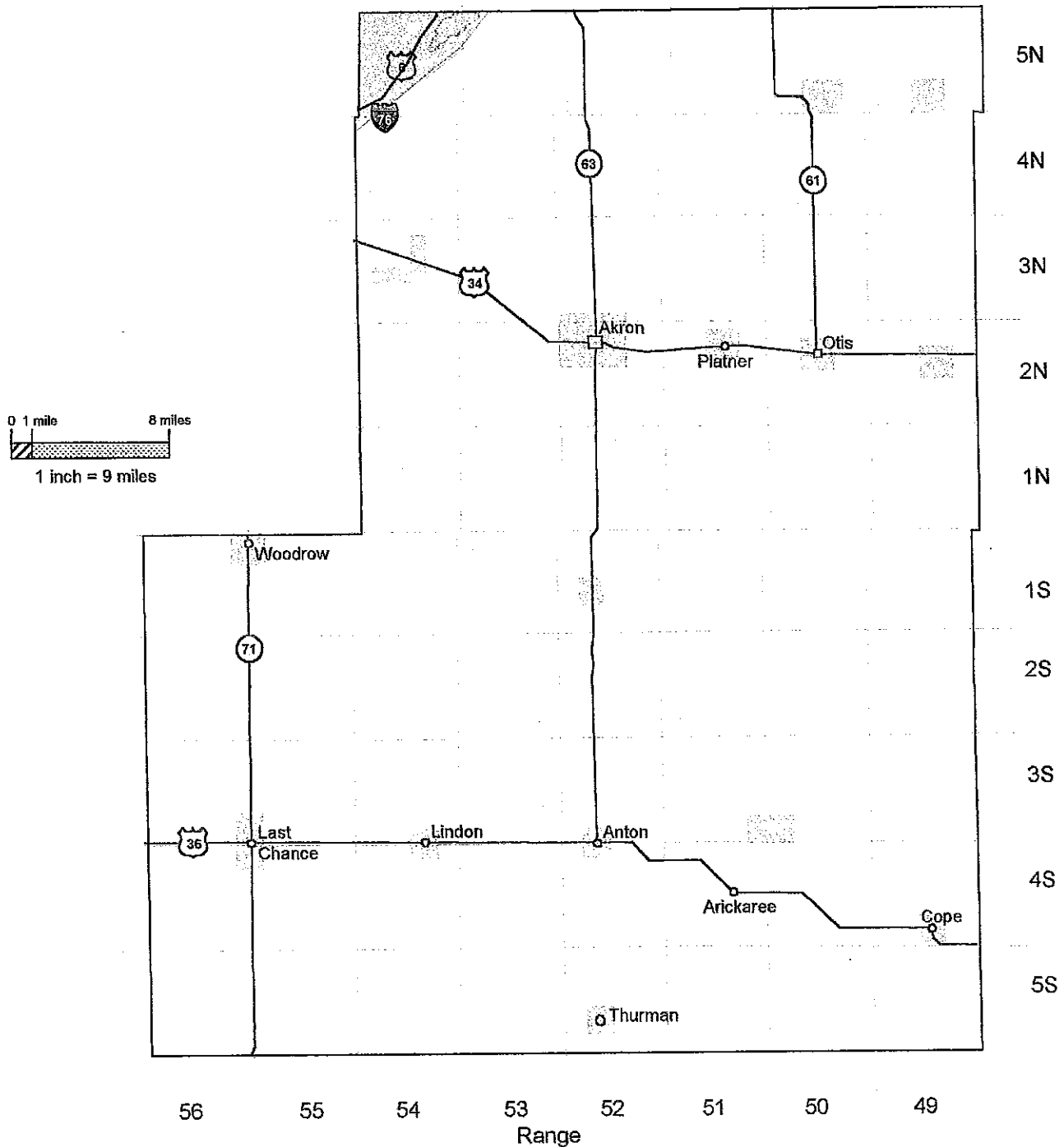
Washington County, Colorado Comprehensive Plan Map

A-14

Potential Areas for Future Development



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