

APPENDIX BB

2 Site Description of the Battlement Mesa Community

2.1 The Battlement Mesa Community

The Battlement Mesa Planned Unit Development (PUD) is a 3,200-acre unincorporated jurisdiction divided into several neighborhoods, the names of which are:

- The Reserve
- Battlement Creek Village
- Willow Creek Village
- Willow Ridge Apartments
- Willow Park Apartments
- Eagles Point
- Valley View Village
- Fairway Villas
- Stone Ridge Village
- Monument Creek Village
- Canyon View Village
- Mesa Ridge
- Mesa Vista
- Tamarisk Village
- Tamarisk Meadows
- Saddleback Village

The community sits on a 500 foot mesa approximately to the south of Colorado River and mesas continue to rise above the community for another 500-1000 feet. There has been natural gas development and production going on for the last several years outside the PUD and there are two producing natural gas wells in the PUD.

A 2005 academic study describes Battlement Mesa's transformation from a company town to a retirement community. Depending on the neighborhood, homes range from \$85,000 to \$450,000 in price and from 1,500 square feet to 4,400 square feet in size. While the community is often thought of as a "retirement community" (4), in fact there are also many families with children that live in Battlement Mesa.¹¹²

2.1.1 Parachute

Because the town of Parachute shares a zip code with Battlement Mesa, the HIA includes Parachute in several sections, including the health outcomes baseline analysis. Parachute is a

small town adjacent to Battlement Mesa. Parachute sits at the base of the Parachute Creek valley, between the Battlement Mesa PUD to the south and a large natural gas field to the north, at an elevation of 5,000 feet. Both Interstate-70 and the Colorado River run through the town. Parachute has a population of approximately 1,300 people and there are small family ranches outside the town limits. There is significant industrial activity in Parachute Creek valley and on the surrounding mesas, including natural gas development and production, a gas processing plant and a bicarbonate of soda plant.

2.1.2 Demography¹¹⁶

According to the 2000 United States Census estimates, the total population of the Battlement Mesa/Parachute zip code was 5,041; 49.3 percent of the Battlement Mesa/Parachute population was female and 50.7 percent male. The median age was 37.5 years. 26.0 percent of the population were under 18 years of age, 7.2 percent under five years, and 19.8 percent were 65 years and older. For people reporting race in Battlement Mesa/Parachute, 93.4 percent identified as White, 0.5 percent as Black or African American; 9.7 percent of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino (of any race). In Colorado in 2000, 9.7 percent of the population was 65 years and over compared to 19.8 percent of the population in the Battlement Mesa/Parachute zip code.

Demographics
<p>Population</p> <p>Battlement Mesa/Parachute, 2000</p> <p>Total population: 5, 041</p> <p>Males: 2,487 (49.3)</p> <p>Females: 2,554 (50.70)</p> <p>Mean age 37.5</p> <p>Garfield County</p> <p>2000 Total population: 43,791</p> <p>2009 Total population estimate: 56,298</p> <p>% change 2000-2009: 28.6%</p>
<p>Vulnerable populations</p> <p>Battlement Mesa/Parachute</p> <p>Under 18: 1,311 (26.0)</p> <p>Over 65: 998 (19.8)</p> <p>Total <18, >65: 2309 (45.8)</p>

Although the Battlement Mesa PUD is often described as a “retirement community”, it is difficult to precisely define a “retirement community”. Several objective measures reflect the characteristics of Battlement Mesa’s population. In 2000, the percentage of Battlement Mesa residents, excluding Parachute, aged 65 years and older was approximately twice the national average (24.5 % vs. 12.4%, respectively). Furthermore, whereas 63.9% of the United States population (aged 16 years and older) was participating in the labor force, only 48.9% of Battlement Mesa residents were either working or looking for work in 2000.

While the lower labor force participation rate of Battlement Mesa residents and the higher proportion of people aged 65 years and over are likely indicators of a high retiree population in the PUD, almost half of the PUD residents aged 16 years and over were either working or looking for work. More than a quarter of the family households in Battlement Mesa had children under the age of 18 years (27.2%). So, while the Battlement Mesa PUD is home to higher proportions of people aged 65 years and over than the United States as a whole, the community is not homogeneously “retired.”

2.1.3 Economy

Currently, the Battlement Mesa community is entirely residential. The only businesses in the PUD support the local residents. While several natural gas operators drill extensively the area surrounding the PUD, there are currently only two natural gas wells in the PUD itself. The businesses within the PUD include:

- A grocery store
- Two gas stations
- Several medical facilities
- A public golf course
- Banks
- A café
- A recreation center (paid for by homeowner association dues)
- A local newspaper

In addition to the local businesses, the PUD is home to two churches (with five others in Parachute), a 40-unit assisted living facility in the Battlement Mesa PUD serving seniors of low to moderate income,¹¹² and three schools – Underwood Elementary School (grades 1-3), St. John Elementary School (grades 4-5) and Grand Valley Middle School (grades 6-8). Battlement Mesa students attend the Early Childhood Center for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten and Grand Valley High School in Parachute for grades 9-12. These schools are all in Garfield County District 16.