

Together Chaffee County

2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

FINAL DRAFT



Photo: Scott Peterson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2030 Chaffee County Comprehensive Plan update was not possible without the support, input, guidance and consideration from the Chaffee County Board of County Commissioners and Planning Commission.

Board of County Commissioners | March 2020

Keith Baker
Rusty Granzella
Greg Felt

Planning Commission | March 2020

Anderson Horne, Chair
Bruce Cogan
Bill Baker
Marjo Curgus
JoAnne Allen
David Kelly
Hank Held

Chaffee County Planning Staff

Dan Swallow, Director of Development Services
Jon Roorda, Planning Manager
Christie Barton, Planner

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan update was primarily driven by the voices of hundreds of participants representing the people of Chaffee County. Special thanks goes to those who participated in the process by contributing thoughts and ideas online or in-person at any or all of the workshops, open houses, drop-ins or other events.

2030 Chaffee County Comprehensive Plan

Prepared by:

**Cushing
Terrell.**

Cushing Terrell [cushingterrell.com](https://www.cushingterrell.com)
303 E 17th Ave, Suite 105 | Denver, CO 80203

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Citizen Organizations and Community Groups 2019 to 2020

The following citizen-led advisory organizations and community groups dedicated time to ensuring the Comprehensive Plan Vision, Goals, Strategies and Implementation Actions aligned with specific community ideals.

- Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area
- Central Colorado Conservancy
- Chaffee County Community Foundation
- Chaffee County Early Childcare Council
- Chaffee County Equity Coalition
- Chaffee County Visitor's Bureau
- Chaffee Green
- Chaffee Shuttle
- Clean Energy Chaffee
- Economic Development Corporation
- Envision Chaffee
- Full Circle Restorative Justice
- GARNA
- Guidestone
- Heritage Area Advisory Board
- Housing Policy Advisory Committee
- Public Health Department
- Small Business Development Center
- Sustainable Salida
- Transportation Advisory Board
- Upper Arkansas Conservation District
- Watershed Partnership



Contents

1.	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	12
2.	<u>VISION, GOALS & STRATEGIES</u>	20
3.	<u>FUTURE LAND USE PLAN</u>	41
3.1	<u>PURPOSE & OVERVIEW</u>	42
3.2	<u>FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS</u>	46
3.3	<u>LAND USE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	63
3.4	<u>BUENA VISTA SUB AREA PLAN</u>	67
3.5	<u>MID-VALLEY/NATHROP SUB AREA PLAN</u>	74
3.6	<u>SALIDA SUB AREA PLAN</u>	81
3.7	<u>PONCHA SPRINGS/MAYSVILLE SUB AREA PLAN</u>	88
3.8	<u>SCENARIO ALTERNATIVES</u>	95
4.	<u>IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</u>	107
5.	<u>DATA & TRENDS</u>	123
6.	<u>APPENDICES</u>	185
A.1	<u>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY</u>	186
A.2	<u>COMMUNITY PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	200
A.3	<u>MODEL CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION GUIDELINES</u>	204
A.4	<u>DECISION MAKING GUIDANCE</u>	210
A.5	<u>BACKGROUND</u>	213



Maps, Figures & Illustrations

Future Conditions Maps:

County-wide Future Land Use	62
Sub Area Plans	66
Buena Vista Sub Area:	
Existing Land Use	70
Future Land Use	71
Pattern of Development.....	72
Existing & Proposed Infrastructure	73
Mid-Valley Sub Area:	
Existing Land Use	77
Future Land Use	78
Pattern of Development.....	79
Existing & Proposed Infrastructure	80
Salida Sub Area:	
Existing Land Use	84
Future Land Use	85
Pattern of Development.....	86
Existing & Proposed Infrastructure	87
Poncha Springs Sub Area:	
Existing Land Use	91
Future Land Use	92
Pattern of Development.....	93
Existing & Proposed Infrastructure	94
Growth Scenarios	95

Existing Conditions Maps:

Recreation & Trails.....	130
Agriculture	133
Housing Density	136
Traffic.....	141
Wildland Urban Interface.....	148
Sensitive Lands	149
Wetlands & Riparian Areas.....	151
Jobs & Employment	155
Existing Land Use	161
Points of Interest	176
Land Ownership	179
Natural Resources	180
Elevation	182

Figures

Future Land Use Table	60
Population Projections.....	124
Housing Inventory	135
Housing Growth Projections.....	159
Cost of Growth	163

Executive Summary

AN UPDATED APPROACH TO CHAFFEE COUNTY'S LONG RANGE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

“Up until now the past means and methods of planning have served the County fine...but because of changes in the world around us, we can't continue along that path. We need to change the way we do things and chart a new course forward.”

—Public Comment

The Together Chaffee County Comprehensive Plan is the first long range vision and plan for Chaffee County in over 20 years. Despite some similarities in community perspectives towards growth from the late 1990s to today, unprecedented changes in the way people live and work required an updated strategic approach and growth framework. The previous comprehensive plan from the year 2000 could not have addressed 2020's challenges which include a wave of incoming residents, recreation pressures, a changing climate and a growing home-based employment sector. Some of these stem from the 2020 global public health crisis, but all undoubtedly affect the way Chaffee County moves, socializes and communicates. Although the prior plan was substantially outdated, recent efforts including Envision Chaffee County, its Recreation in Balance program, a next-generation wildfire protection plan, and the creation of the Chaffee County Office of Housing create the foundation for this new plan. The aim is to create a healthier, more connected and economically successful county that sustains the lifestyles and landscapes that attract so many people to Chaffee County.

The following summarizes the new tools and ideas in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan that will help plan for a successful future.

DEEP-ROOTED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Together Chaffee County Comprehensive Plan is the culmination of a nearly two-year engagement process anchored by several cycles of community input. Chaffee County has a vigilant and engaged community with local expertise in many topics congruent with comprehensive planning. From neighborhood meetings at the Maysville fire hall, to large open houses at the Steamplant, to drop-ins with local hotel owners, the process included widespread geographic outreach to capture the voice of county residents. At farmers market booths, visitors talked about their first impressions of the County, while large employers were engaged to discuss the challenges they face with changing housing and market conditions. After 13 in-person events, numerous online forums and worksessions, and several surveys, over 3,500 data points were synthesized to develop the plan's foundation.

This plan could not have been created without the attention, effort and time commitment of the Chaffee County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners during joint worksessions, where in the closing six months the plan was vetted, fine-tuned and reorganized to ensure efficacy and simplicity.

A NEW VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Much of the community and stakeholder input gathered in first 10 months was formed into Visions, Goals and Strategies—aspirational statements that emphasize how the County will achieve desired outcomes.

Revised Goals and Strategies: The Vision, Goals and Strategies found in Section 2 were revised to reflect contemporary aspirations of current and future Chaffee County residents and visitors. These are organized into seven planning themes: 1) *People and Community Services* which addresses healthy and equal access to services and fiscal responsibility; 2) *County Character* to protect the County's culture, heritage, recreational activities and lifestyle; 3) *Affordable and Inclusive Housing* to help supply a mix of housing types and affordability; 4) *Resilient and Sustainable Environment* to strive for a sustainable future in the face of hazards and to harbor stewardship of the natural environment; 5) *Connectivity, Mobility and Access* which seeks to make all modes of transport easier and safer across the County; 6) *Jobs and Economy* that focuses on building upon the County's unique qualities to foster economic growth and a diverse workforce; and 7) *Growth and Land Use* to focus directly on changing land use patterns.

Scenario Planning: Scenarios for future growth were illustrated in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan and were updated to harbor community-wide discussion on growth management direction and goals. Future growth scenarios were created using maps, models and illustrative concepts to embody three different outcomes. The community was re-engaged to determine a desired scenario, and advantageous elements of several scenarios were assembled to inform maps and policies.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Providing guidance for the location, design, pattern and character of new development in unincorporated Chaffee County emerged as a key motivation for introducing new growth management policies. Throughout the process, citizens voiced the idea of "keeping the town, town and the country, country" resulting in an outcome where new growth should occur in existing communities where infrastructure and services already exist. Rather than limit or shift development, several new tools are offered to promote smarter growth in places where a vision had previously not been provided. This is accomplished largely through the Future Land Use Plan and Sub Area Plans, and is also implemented with expanded guidance for conservation subdivision usage and design concepts.

Future Land Use Plan and Maps: Found in Section 3 of this plan, the Future Land Use Plan and associated maps provide a vision for growth in the unincorporated county by illustrating the character and intensity of uses and activities that occur on lands outside municipalities. These maps offer guidance for decisions on land use applications and are derived from input from landowners, stakeholders, municipal representatives, the general public and an infrastructure analysis that projected future development patterns based on proximity to amenities and utilities. Future land use planning has not been a significant tool for leaders and decision makers in the past and is intended to be adapted and amended to ensure flexibility and compatibility with future conditions and to form a basis for revisions to the Land Use Code.

Sub Area Planning: Because the geographic range and unique qualities of Chaffee County's rural communities, Sub Area Plans are introduced to

capture locally-specific needs and to continually coordinate land use plans between the County and local jurisdictions. The four subareas include: 1) Buena Vista; 2) Mid-Valley/Nathrop; 3) Salida; and 4) Poncha Springs/Maysville. Sub Area policies and projects focus on lands adjacent to municipal boundaries (with the exception of Mid-Valley/Nathrop where there are no incorporated communities) and were developed with members of town or city administration, planning departments and local elected officials.

Focus Areas for Future Planning: Sub areas consider land use and planning policy at a more granular level, but the Future Land Use Plan goes further to recognize Focus Areas where additional master planning is beneficial to due particular challenges or opportunities on specific sites. Focus Areas generally would benefit from additional study and outreach to overcome infrastructure issues, physical constraints or to gather support for housing or economic development projects that further community goals.

AN APPROACH TO MITIGATE REGIONAL HOUSING CHALLENGES

The Together Chaffee County Comprehensive Plan builds on the energy and momentum brought in when the County's Office of Housing was created and offers land use-oriented strategies to help all Chaffee County residents have access to safe and attainable housing. The Office of Housing is a county-wide department that takes a multi-jurisdictional approach to housing issues and the Comprehensive Plan offers a similarly regional set of goals and strategies to promote the supply of affordable units and to avoid displacement of residents. This plan honors the housing production targets from the Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment and offers a future land use pattern

that acknowledges locations where housing growth may occur as existing communities grow while seeking to promote residential development in rural subdivisions that utilize conservation subdivision design concepts and do not continue to strain the County's ability to provide services.

Conservation Subdivision Design: Designing subdivisions with conservation in mind is an approach to laying out new residential plats so that a significant percentage of buildable area is permanently protected to create interconnected networks of conservation lands or open space. This is seen as a tool to implement a county-wide vision for preserving agricultural and working landscapes in rural areas while allowing for well-designed residential growth. The Future Land Use Plan discusses ideal locations for such designs. While Chaffee County's current Land Use Code allows for and promotes conservation subdivisions, this Comprehensive Plan offers a model for design concepts that is intended to be implemented through a formal ordinance.

A PLAN FOR ACTION

Through several worksessions with local community groups, advisory committees, volunteers and local leaders, the Comprehensive Plan concludes with an ambitious Implementation Plan of actions and steps to enact community goals. The Comprehensive Plan cannot be implemented by one jurisdiction, agency or group, therefore the implementation actions are intended to be fostered by any and all pertinent groups, and not solely by the County itself. Intended as constantly evolving targets, the matrix outlines priority and level of resources needed for each action as a guidepost for future leaders to review, revise and complete over time.

1. Introduction



Anyone who lives in or visits Chaffee County loves the community's exceptional beauty, strong western heritage, quality recreation, and friendly people. But Chaffee County is at an important crossroads where the decisions it makes today will have long lasting implications. Over the past twenty years, tourism has become the County's largest industry bringing an influx people here to visit and to live.

However, the steady increase in population creates both opportunity and new challenges. The County has seen an economic expansion, yet its benefits are not being experienced by everyone. Residential and commercial development is placing significant strain on the region's land availability, housing affordability, and infrastructure capacity. And, finally, the community's social fabric is stressed as long-standing and newer values systems come into conflict.

The County realized the 2000 Comprehensive Plan was woefully inadequate when it came to providing the county guidance on how to address these, and many more, challenges. In 2019, it undertook the comprehensive plan update in order to develop a clear vision and a roadmap that would enable the County to direct and anticipate, rather than simply react, to community change.

The Chaffee County Comprehensive Plan 2030 is the guiding policy document, supported by Colorado law, that the County government can use to inform decision making about land use, development, infrastructure and investments. It works in conjunction with other more detailed subordinate County plans and policies, such as the Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Chaffee County Land Use Code. Over the next few years, the County will work to align and integrate its plans for consistency with the vision articulated in this new comprehensive plan.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan is a guidebook for how Chaffee's citizens, workforce, visitors and developers can help the County grow into a sustainable and connected community. The following maps, charts, descriptions and illustrations that make up this comprehensive plan communicate Chaffee County's 2020 values to policy makers and leaders, to use as future generations make the County their own.

Under Colorado law, the 2030 Comprehensive Plan is an advisory document and is not regulatory in nature. This means that its importance is to provide the priorities needed to guide updates to Chaffee County's policy and development regulations. For the plan to become reality, the County will need to create and adopt a variety of regulatory (e.g. zoning provisions) and non-regulatory tools (e.g. cluster development incentives).

This plan is designed to be used in conjunction with other County and Town planning documents. Subordinate plans more specific in nature like the Community Wildfire Protection Plan should be consulted in conjunction with this plan when making decisions related to wildfire planning.

WHY IS UPDATING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPORTANT?

The Together Chaffee Comprehensive Plan has been updated to communicate an aspirational vision for the future, to build consensus on growth outcomes, and to recommend policies and projects that protect working landscapes while preserving private property rights. As new planning issues emerge, new tools and approaches can be developed and incorporated into this land use plan to build upon recent successes to tackle the County's most sophisticated challenges.

A community is like an ecosystem; to thrive, all of the parts must work together in order to sustain the County's future. This comprehensive plan is meant to help policy makers and implement programs to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our community and preserve our community character for future generations. To do this in a community that is 83% public land, we must have a comprehensive plan organized around stewardship of our ecological resources. This plan extends that ethic to the private lands in Chaffee County, where most of the community lives and works.

To reach its vision, Chaffee County is not starting from scratch, this comprehensive plan instead incorporates how past decisions were made and provides new visionary thoughts and ideas to strive for better outcomes.

To use this plan, decision-making should, in the future, be based on analyzing alternatives and understanding of trade-offs. The public outreach process reached far and wide to understand the public vision from previously unreached or marginalized communities. One outcome of the extensive outreach, for example, was a vision for "keep town town, keep rural, rural", or focusing density in towns to avoid sprawl in the rural parts of the County. The Plan demonstrates these ideas in the Future Land Use Maps. This plan maintains the use of strategies and maps to convey community values on growth, and creates a venue for cross-jurisdictional coordination in the Sub Area Plans.

Photo: Scott Peterson

LAND USE PLANNING PRIORITIES

While there are many prioritized actions in the Implementation Plan spanning across multiple sectors that are all important, the comprehensive plan and in particular, the Future Land Use Plan, establishes a vision for the physical development of Chaffee County that is a priority for and responsibility of the Chaffee County government explicitly. This vision reflects two interrelated and interdependent principles. First, a desire to focus high-quality growth near existing communities, and second, to ensure development in unincorporated areas meets high quality design and use standards. As the current land use code and planning policies do not currently enable this vision, the County needs to prioritize:

1. A land use code update that includes a new zoning code that allows for a mix of development types at different densities.
2. Municipal – County collaboration and the necessary infrastructure analyses to enable more development in and around the municipalities at greater densities.
3. Completion of the resource assessments, maps, and plans to guide the development of appropriate subdivision and zoning standards that will protect priority sensitive areas, open lands and community assets.
4. Completion of a Regional Multimodal Transportation Plan that addresses the need for better multimodal connectivity.
5. Identification of specific sites and zoning districts that prioritize the development of affordable and attainable housing to support the economy and local workforce.

6. Identification of funding sources to support development of multimodal infrastructure (roads, pedestrian and bicycle trails, airport, rail, telecommunication, freight and transit) and affordable housing.

The Implementation Plan includes the specific actions associated with the above priorities. The County Planning Commission will work to steward implementation and communicate progress annually.

TOGETHER CHAFFEE: MOVING FROM PLANNING TO ACTION

Over the past few years, our community has repeatedly demonstrated we can work together to solve big challenges. We have seen the value and benefits of efforts like Envision Chaffee County and the Housing Policy Advisory Committee in creating community-driven solutions. Together Chaffee integrates this collaborative approach into the comprehensive plan. The Together Chaffee planning effort has built bridges across the community's municipalities, organizations, agencies, and community groups to create an integrated vision and action plan that reflects the tremendous work already underway in our community to actualize our shared community values. While the County will take a leadership role in stewarding plan implementation, success will be based on how we continue to work together to get things done. Together Chaffee will continue to engage the community, communicate progress, and celebrate successes as the plan is implemented.



Photo: Scott Peterson

HOW TO USE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This comprehensive plan communicates the community's vision and priorities for the future that can inform community action and development. For the nonprofit sector, this plan demonstrates community support for policy and program development. For the development community and property owners, this plan provides greater clarity about the desired character of neighborhoods and type of future development. For local government, it reflects community desires for resource investments and should inform decision making for consistency with the Plan's Vision and Goals.

The plan includes:

1. **The Vision, Goals, and Strategies:** Establish the aspirational and strategic direction for the County on where it wants to go in the future for seven thematic areas that address issues related to the community, the economy, the natural environment, and the built environment.

2. **The Future Land Use Plan and four Sub Area Plans:** The physical manifestation of the plan, this guides the long-term physical change in the County. This includes the County-wide Future Land Use framework, description of Future Land Uses applied to the unincorporated areas of the County, and Future Land Use Maps.
3. **The Implementation Plan:** A matrix for the specific actions steps necessary to accomplish the Goals and Strategies. It includes the institutional lead and priority level with an emphasis on the next 1-3 years.
4. **Community Trends Summary:** A summary of data reflecting current conditions and drivers of change in the County. This trend data is useful to understand the extent and scope of issues, and it provides supporting data for grant makers and policy decisions.
5. **Appendices:** The public process and input summary and other valuable information can be found here as a reference.

A comprehensive plan should be a living document. Should conditions in the County change significantly, the Comprehensive Plan can be amended to reflect more current realities or be updated completely.

Guiding Principles and Values

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The development of this Comprehensive Plan was grounded in the following principles that should also be used as the County moves into action with implementation.

STRENGTHEN CIVIC CULTURE: Support, improve, and strengthen public and civic processes.

FOSTER REGIONAL COLLABORATION: Foster a climate of intergovernmental and interagency collaboration and achieve continuity and systemic integrity by synchronizing and coordinating plans across intergovernmental, interagency, interdepartmental, and private volunteer organizations and non-governmental organizations to lower costs, increase efficiencies, and maximize results.

RESPECT PROPERTY RIGHTS: Take a balanced approach to regulatory, voluntary, and incentive based approaches to achieve community goals respecting all parties.

SUPPORT INNOVATION & CREATIVITY: Approach community development and decision-making with openness, creativity, and seek win-win solutions.

PROMOTE HEALTH & EQUITY: Include health considerations in policy making across different sectors that influence health (transportation, agriculture, land use, housing, public safety, and education) to address policy and structural factors.

ACT HOLISTICALLY: Given all things are connected, consider decisions across scales from the human, site, and landscape scale and across the comprehensive plan's themes. Consider both the connections among things and the potential for unintended consequences when making decisions.

MANAGE GROWTH: Direct growth to compatible areas where growth makes sense using analysis to consider economic, physical, social, and ecological constraints. Plan and develop sustainably, with the goal of protecting our natural resources, wildlife and viewsheds.

BUILD PROSPERITY: Make future oriented decisions that contribute to the health of our economic, social, and environmental values.

COMMUNITY VALUES

A community's values reflect the culture of a community and reflect who a community is at their best. These values reflect the intangible qualities of Chaffee County that residents love and what makes it a great place to live. While the Comprehensive Plan goals and strategies are intended to support, protect, and enhance these values, community leaders and residents should also use these values to guide future action.

- **We are a caring community.** We value our strong sense of community where we know our neighbors, are welcoming and friendly, and support each other when in need.
- **We are good stewards.** We value the natural beauty in our backyard provided by the Arkansas River, surrounding mountains, and valley. We care for the environment that supports our communities and natural systems.
- **We are civically minded and engaged.** We value the willingness of people to work together and collaborate towards the betterment of our community.
- **We are authentic.** We value our rich heritage, distinctive communities and creative residents that contribute to our unique local character that sets us apart from other places.
- **We are a healthy and active community.** We prioritize the physical and mental wellbeing of all community members.
- **We are a great community for children and families.** We value being an ideal place to raise a family where we support young people and parents by providing services, affordable housing, a strong educational foundation and safe environment.
- **We are a safe community.** We value living in a County with close-knit communities where familiarity fosters trust. We respect our diversity, and we strive to ensure everyone has access to economic opportunities that offer financial security.

2. Vision, Goals & Strategies



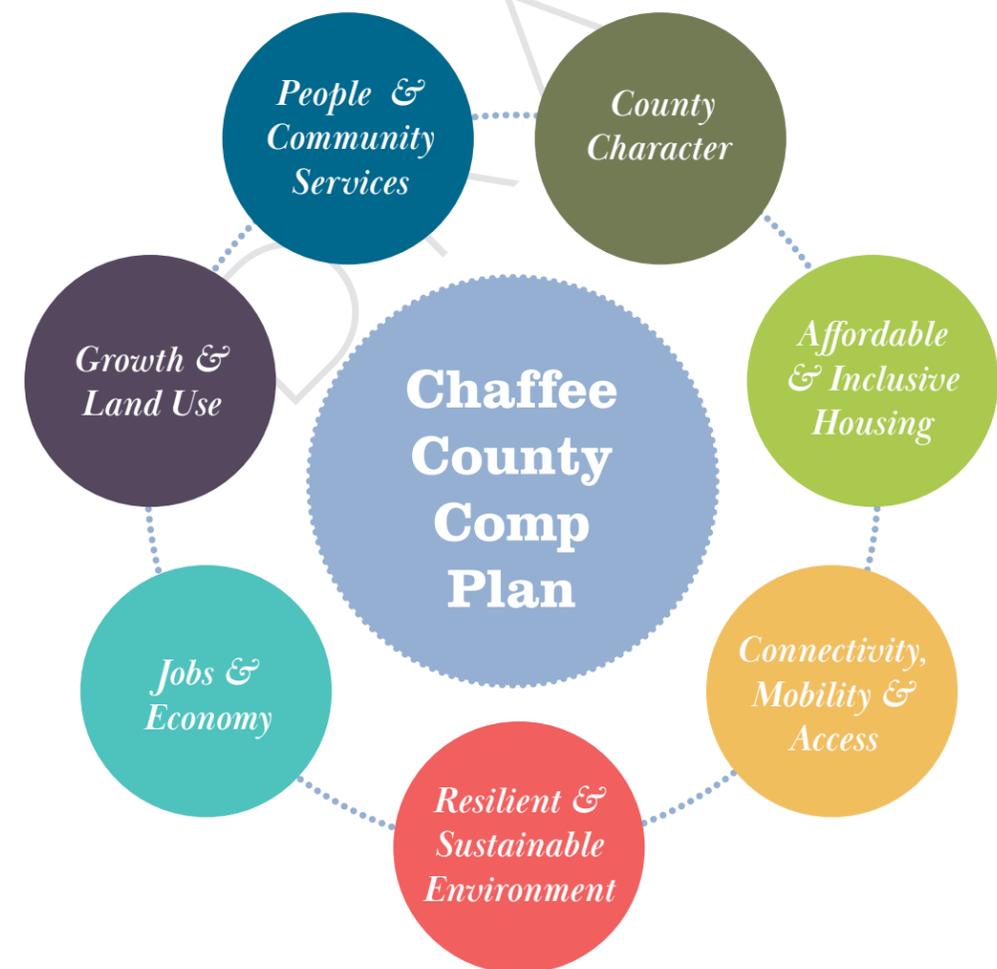
HOW THEY WORK

Goals are broad statements that push forward the aspirational elements of the plan as stated in the public vision. Goals - along with associated strategies - are statements representing recommendations of what needs to be done, how, and by whom.

Action Steps, which are found in the Implementation Plan on [page 106](#), are a translation from strategies to strategic moves that individuals, organizations or agencies can perform to carry out the plan's goals.

SEVEN PLANNING THEMES

The Plan Elements are a way to organize key elements of the Comprehensive Plan using seven value-based themes. Themes were derived from the topics the community stated were highly valuable in the input process. The Plan Elements provide a discussion on how Chaffee's existing community characteristics will guide long term change.





PEOPLE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Chaffee County is a harmonious community where all people are valued, diversity is welcomed, all are respected and have opportunities to achieve their highest potential.

GROWTH & LAND USE

Chaffee County manages growth and land use in a manner consistent with our community values, our recognition of the natural wonder in which we live, and in fairness and equity to the people who live here and respecting the importance of private property rights.

COUNTY CHARACTER

Residents and visitors celebrate Chaffee County's access to the outdoors, unique landscapes and heritage which unites the community around a common connection to place.

Vision

JOBS & ECONOMY

Chaffee County cultivates a vibrant and resilient year-round economy, valuing renewable energy and innovation, offering diverse employment opportunities and an affordable, thriving, healthy mountain community.

AFFORDABLE & INCLUSIVE HOUSING

Chaffee County residents have the opportunity to live in safe, stable, healthy and affordable homes.

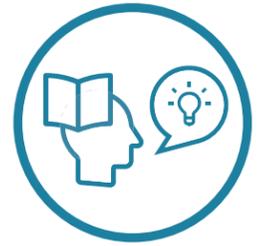
RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Chaffee County stewards its resources in a manner that enhances community resilience and the natural environment for future generations.

CONNECTIVITY, MOBILITY & ACCESS

All Chaffee County businesses, residents and visitors can move around easily and safely with access to a high-quality multi-modal transportation system.

People & Community Services



VISION STATEMENT:

Chaffee County is a harmonious community where all people are valued, diversity is welcomed, all are respected and have opportunities to achieve their highest potential.



Buena Vista Parade
Photo: Scott Peterson

Goals & Strategies:

PEOPLE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

GOAL 1.1: Identify as a generous and inclusive community embodying our community values (see page 19) where all people feel valued and are motivated to be engaged in making Chaffee County a more amazing place to live.

STRATEGIES:

- A. Actively promote a harmonious community (County) through community-building, including events and gathering spaces and places with the support of the Community Foundation and non-governmental groups.
- B. Identify and support diverse communities and activities that support these communities with the support of the Community Foundation and non-governmental organizations.
- C. Create a County-wide kindness awareness project and support existing initiatives that promote community understanding.

GOAL 1.2: Recognize the contribution the creative arts make to our community character and economy and enhance and expand creative arts activities and opportunities.

STRATEGIES:

- D. Support the creative arts organizations through promotion, awareness, branding, events and transportation.

GOAL 1.3: Promote and support physical and mental health for all residents.

STRATEGIES:

- E. Invest in facilities and infrastructure that aid in physical activity and promote wellness.
- F. Support individual and community health behaviors that reduce the disease burden in the community.
- G. Encourage practices and activities to achieve healthy food access for all residents.

GOAL 1.4: Develop an aging-friendly community.

STRATEGIES:

- H. Develop an age in place action plan.
- I. Provide a wide range of housing types accessible to people at all stages of life.
- J. Ensure adequate access to health care for later stages of life.

GOAL 1.5: Develop a child, youth and family-friendly community.

STRATEGIES:

- K. Provide an adequate supply of affordable childcare and after school programs that support working families.

- L. Invest in comprehensive services for the health and wellbeing of children, youth and families that addresses disparities and inequities.

- M. Ensure County leadership offers support to all schools for programs considered in their master plans that seek County-level support.

GOAL 1.6: Create a culture where all residents feel motivated and empowered to be involved in making Chaffee County an amazing place to live.

STRATEGIES:

- N. Recognize and support the wealth of volunteerism present in Chaffee County.
- O. Enhance access to information about County activities that support civic participation.

GOAL 1.7: Ensure emergency services are adequately funded and staffed to maintain high quality service in the County as the populations increases.

STRATEGIES:

- P. Review the impact fees for fire and other services for new development to determine if it is sufficient to meet future level of service needs.
- Q. Strengthen relationships with proven diversion programs that can reduce impacts to the criminal justice system as the population increases.

GOAL 1.8: Support vulnerable residents with appropriate services.

STRATEGIES:

- R. Collaborate with local coalitions and service providers to deliver services for Chaffee County's most vulnerable residents including people who are experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, or food insecurity.

GOAL 1.9: Maintain a fiscally-stable and effective County government.

STRATEGIES:

- S. Ensure growth does not adversely affect fiscal health.
- T. Coordinate with municipal, state and other governments to determine potential for cost savings through servicing agreements.
- U. Communicate routinely with the public through the most convenient and accessible channels during and in anticipation of public health events or human services concerns.
- V. Complete a Chaffee County Strategic Plan.

County Character



VISION STATEMENT:

Residents and visitors celebrate Chaffee County's access to the outdoors, unique landscapes and heritage which unites the community around a shared connection to place.



Photo: Scott Peterson

Goals & Strategies: COUNTY CHARACTER

GOAL 2.1: Responsibly manage the County's recreation opportunities across all jurisdictions to: A) Maintain quality of life and outdoor recreation experiences, B) Sustain recreation-based economic contribution, and C) Maintain healthy forests, waters, wildlife and working lands.

STRATEGIES:

- A.** Adopt the Recreation in Balance (RIB) program and its efforts to maintain healthy forests, waters and wildlife in balance with outdoor recreation.
- B.** Collaborate with municipalities and public agencies on recreation assessments, planning, and project development to meet regional recreational needs. .
- C.** Work with local non-profit organizations and public partner agencies to identify, maintain, and provide equitable recreational access to public lands.

GOAL 2.2: Preserve the County's historic and cultural resources and working landscapes recognizing how heritage contributes to economic development and broadens awareness of local culture and history.

STRATEGIES:

- D.** Support the Chaffee County Heritage Area Advisory Board.
- E.** Identify and preserve historically significant structures and sites and create a database, whether geographic or tabular, that is accessible to all. Reference the Colorado Historic Register and the National register.
- F.** Enhance historic preservation education, outreach, and awareness.
- G.** Protect Chaffee County's iconic viewsheds and Scenic Byways designation.
- H.** Keep working lands working by supporting agricultural economics and helping agricultural operations manage increasing conflicts and costs associated with increasing population and visitation/recreation use.

GOAL 2.3: Update the regulatory framework to support quality of life goals.

Affordable & Inclusive Housing



VISION STATEMENT:

Chaffee County residents have the opportunity to live in safe, stable, healthy and affordable homes.



New housing in Buena Vista

Goals & Strategies: AFFORDABLE & INCLUSIVE HOUSING

GOAL 3.1: Support the development of affordable housing within all jurisdictions in Chaffee County.

STRATEGIES:

- A.** Collaborate regionally to address the affordable housing issues faced by Chaffee County.
- B.** Adopt policies that promote the development and preservation of housing types across the housing spectrum that serve residents across a range of demographics and incomes.
- C.** Develop a dedicated housing fund to be used to support the Chaffee Housing Authority's affordable housing programs, affordable housing development projects and affordable housing preservation.
- D.** Work with the Chaffee Housing Authority to meet the regional affordable housing production goals as established in the Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment.
- E.** Ensure residents have access to safe and livable homes.

Connectivity, Mobility & Access



VISION STATEMENT:

All Chaffee County businesses, residents and visitors can move around easily and safely with access to a high-quality multimodal transportation system.



Photo by Scott Peterson

Goals & Strategies: CONNECTIVITY, MOBILITY & ACCESS

GOAL 4.1: Design and fund a multimodal transportation network that provides options of travel and serves existing population and activity centers as its priority.

STRATEGIES:

- A. Create the Chaffee County Multimodal Transportation Plan (CCMTP) to address elements of Safety, Mobility, Economic Vitality, Maintenance, and Strategic Policies.
- B. Adopt the CCMTP as an addendum to the Chaffee County Comp Plan 2030 and use it to guide consistency in decision making across other plans.
- C. Update the 2007 Chaffee County Trails Master Plan as part of the CCMTP to improve trail connectivity and town trail connections.
- D. Develop a Sustainable Funding Plan to offset County investment needed for the multimodal system.

GOAL 4.2: Enhance safety in Chaffee County by reducing fatalities and serious injuries in all modes.

STRATEGIES:

- E. Work collaboratively to support the Colorado Department of Transportation goal of zero transportation-related deaths.

GOAL 4.3: Improve mobility and access across Chaffee County.

STRATEGIES:

- F. Prioritize multimodal transportation opportunities and choices to all project developments by integrating bicycle, pedestrian, transit and telework connectivity in developments.
- G. Maintain and improve access to public lands and recreational assets.

GOAL 4.4: Improve economic vitality through strategic transportation investments.

STRATEGIES:

- H. Provide appropriate infrastructure to support economic development.

GOAL 4.5: Improve multimodal infrastructure maintenance across Chaffee County.

STRATEGIES:

- I. Maintain the quality and functionality of the existing multimodal system now and in the future.

- J. Provide a safe and efficient County-wide multimodal network that minimizes maintenance costs and supports achieving the community's vision and goals.
- K. Maintain and improve public transportation in the Chaffee County through coordinated planning and investments.

GOAL 4.6: Ensure development regulations support transportation goals for safety, mobility, economic vitality, maintaining the transportation system and strategic policies.

STRATEGIES:

- L. Update the development code to achieve transportation goals.

Resilient & Sustainable Environment



VISION STATEMENT:

Chaffee County stewards its resources in a manner that enhances community resilience and the natural environment for future generations.



Photo: Scott Peterson

Goals & Strategies:

RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

GOAL 5.1: Cut the risk severe wildfire poses to human life, water, critical infrastructure, homes, wildlife habitat and recreation assets/ economy in half by 2030, while also enhancing habitat and forest health.

- A. Implement the Chaffee County Community Wildfire Protection Plan led by the Envision Forest Health Council - an existing collaborative connecting 21 agencies and organizations.

GOAL 5.2: Maintain and improve community preparedness, emergency response and recovery capacity to ensure public health and safety.

STRATEGIES:

- B. Enhance government hazard mitigation and response planning.
- C. Plan and support vulnerable populations to be resilient to hazards, epidemics, extreme weather and climate-related events, including drought and flooding concerns.
- D. Promote disaster-resilient community infrastructure including housing, utilities, transportation systems and healthcare resources.
- E. Build and grow in a manner that is resilient to wildfire and other natural hazards.

GOAL 5.3: Identify, promote, and expand the use of energy efficient practices and renewable energy resources.

STRATEGIES:

- F. The County will collaborate with Federal, State and municipal governments, voluntary organizations, energy experts, businesses and others to establish and commence implementation of energy conservation goals.
- G. Lead by example in County operations to conserve energy, use renewable energy sources in an effective manner, and take steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

GOAL 5.4: Protect public health and the environment through proper waste management.

STRATEGIES:

- H. Minimize land filling through an integrated waste management system in accordance with the state hierarchy of waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, and waste to energy.

GOAL 5.5: Manage water resources to ensure a resilient and sustainable water supply that can support people and ecosystems.

STRATEGIES:

- I. Ensure new development has a sufficient and sustainable water supply.
- J. Promote water conservation and efficiency in new development, redevelopment and County facilities.
- K. Support an integrated water resource management approach and collaborate across sectors, jurisdictions and agencies on implementation.
- L. Support policies and programs that protect agricultural water rights and agriculture's contribution to hydrological functions.

GOAL 5.6: Protect the water quality and quantity in Chaffee County's rivers and streams systems.

STRATEGIES:

- M. Develop a river corridor overlay map to guide and inform development impacting the river corridor.
- N. Mitigate impacts of older, less reliable septic systems.

- O. Protect vegetation that enhances infiltration of precipitation for groundwater recharge and erosion prevention.

- P. Ensure erosion and stormwater standards adequately protect water quality and functions of groundwater recharge.

- Q. Adopt development standards, based on best management practices, that reliably protect the Arkansas River and its tributaries.

- R. Support increased collaboration and alignment of efforts to protect the watershed between different agencies, organizations, and governments.

- S. Support payments for ecosystem services programs for landowners to enhance floodplain function and to protect river corridors.

- T. Increase knowledge and understanding about the health of the Arkansas River and its watershed.

GOAL 5.7: Protect critical wildlife habitat, connectivity and migration corridors cross-jurisdictionally.

STRATEGIES:

- U.** Develop mapping and geospatial modelling of the most impactful wildlife habitat and migration corridors in Chaffee through the Envision Recreation Plan and the Chaffee Recreation Suitability Map.
- V.** Use the wildlife map and model data to develop and then implement wildlife protection standards for all new development.
- W.** For highest priority habitat areas, adopt a conservation subdivision overlay with appropriate development standards.
- X.** Work with private landowners, non-profits, and government agencies to invest in the protection and restoration of priority wildlife habitats.

GOAL 5.8: Become a model County for sustainability.

STRATEGIES:

- Y.** Develop a County-wide Sustainability Plan.
- Z.** Conduct education and outreach to increase understanding and build consensus on the needs of our environment and support citizen's and government's actions in achieving sustainability.
- AA.** Create the capacity in the County to oversee implementation.

Jobs & Economy



VISION STATEMENT:

Chaffee County cultivates a vibrant and resilient year-round economy, valuing renewable energy and innovation, offering diverse employment opportunities and an affordable, thriving, healthy mountain community.



*Downtown Buena Vista
Photo by Scott Peterson*

Goals & Strategies:

JOBS & ECONOMY

GOAL 6.1: Develop, grow, and maintain existing local businesses.

STRATEGIES:

- A. Provide business support for a vibrant agricultural economic sector through a variety of financial incentives and programs.
- B. Provide educational opportunities for entrepreneurs and small business owners.

GOAL 6.2: Attract new and innovative industries that align with community values and provide long-term employment for a diverse workforce.

STRATEGIES:

- C. Recruit and support industry sectors including those focused on: agriculture, food production, recreation, sustainability, and light manufacturing.
- D. Invest in quality of life services in Chaffee County that makes it an attractive location for entrepreneurs and location-neutral employees to relocate.
- E. Leverage the need for Forest Treatment and Community Wildfire Protection Plan to create jobs.

GOAL 6.3: Manage the tourism sector to ensure the values and resources that make Chaffee County a great and desirable destination are protected and economic benefits are year-round.

STRATEGIES:

- F. Work closely with the land management agencies, Recreation in Balance program, the Chaffee County Heritage Board, the Chaffee County Visitor's Bureau, the Chaffee County Community Foundation, the Chaffee County Economic Development Corporation and others to develop strategies for year-round economic resiliency.

GOAL 6.4: Provide appropriate infrastructure to support economic development.

STRATEGIES:

- G. Provide high-quality infrastructure including mobility, telecommunications public utilities and workforce housing. Support improvements to broadband coverage, connectivity and diversity

GOAL 6.5: Support the needs and advance opportunities for the County's workforce.

STRATEGIES:

- H. Support and expand post-secondary educational institutions including community colleges, vocational and trade school programming to promote a locally-grown workforce.

GOAL 6.6: Ensure the land use code supports economic development goals.

STRATEGIES:

- I. Update the code to reduce and/or eliminate unnecessary regulations.

Growth & Land Use



VISION STATEMENT:

Chaffee County will manage growth and land use in a manner consistent with our community values, our recognition of the natural wonder in which we live, and in fairness and equity to the people who live here and respecting the importance of private property rights.



St. Elmo
Photo: Scott Peterson

Goals & Strategies:

GROWTH & LAND USE

GOAL 7.1: Create distinct communities focusing growth around existing towns that enhances community character and maximizes public investments in infrastructure and services.

STRATEGIES:

- A. Strengthen cooperation and intergovernmental agreements to execute annexation, utility connections, and public services.
- B. Use strategies to incentivize and direct growth to existing towns, such as density bonuses.
- C. Encourage flexible and creative development in the unincorporated center of Nathrop and encourage more pedestrian-oriented development in Johnson Village and infill in the municipalities.

GOAL 7.2: Conserve and protect Chaffee County's agricultural and environmentally important lands, and scenic values while balancing private property rights with community objectives.

STRATEGIES:

- D. Apply the Community Conservation Connection criteria to use public funds for the protection of agricultural operations, agricultural land, or environmentally important lands through land acquisitions, conservation easements and conservation leases.

- E. Identify market-based incentives to adopt into the land use code that support planned development and achieve desired resource protection.
- F. Develop an overlay zone and review process to protect environmentally important lands.
- G. Consider land use policies that continue to preserve high value scenic and historic resources in the County and support implementation of the Collegiate Peaks Scenic & Historic Byway's Corridor Management Plan.

GOAL 7.3: Ensure adequate and well-planned infrastructure meets the needs of current and future residents and businesses, including telecommunications, water and wells, wastewater and sustainable energy.

STRATEGIES:

- H. Encourage development in areas that have the ability to provide infrastructure.
- I. Ensure the planning, funding and construction of infrastructure projects are coordinated across government agencies and jurisdictions and allow public input.

GOAL 7.4: Create a regulatory framework that supports the new vision of this plan.

STRATEGIES:

- J. Update the County Land Use Code.

3. Future Land Use Plan 2030



3.1 | Purpose & Overview



How and where our community grows has a major influence on how community members get around, the character of the County and its communities, natural resources, and sense of community. The Future Land Use Plan responds to the need to accommodate a growing population and the subsequent demand for additional housing, services, and employment in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Vision.

The purpose of the Future Land Use Plan is to establish a framework that illustrates the desired locations and patterns for this growth. While development potential is constrained by the fact the county is 83% publicly-owned land, analysis indicates there is approximately 25,908 acres of physically developable land which is currently undeveloped. There is another 12,740 acres with residences, but on lots over 40 acres in size, which could be further subdivided. While only advisory, the Future Land Use Plan is intended to be a roadmap to guide updates to the land use code and to nudge new development in a direction consistent with the community’s vision for orderly, efficient, and sustainable growth

in appropriate locations of the unincorporated county and in or near existing communities.

ACCOMMODATING PROJECTED GROWTH

While projecting increases in population is inexact, it offers an opportunity to consider how the county might grow. The table on the following page uses U.S. Census estimates to quantify how much growth the County needs to allocate in the Future Land Use Plan. These estimates indicate that over the next 10 years, the county’s total population will increase by around 4,000 people.

When considering that a portion of the population will live outside the municipalities, the implications for land use planning are clear. At the base level forecast, about 600 new housing units may be necessary in the unincorporated county. This number increases to over 1,700 with a more rapid population growth estimate. If the county were to continue developing as it is now at 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres, accommodating this growth into

County Growth Projection 2020-2030

	2020 Estimate	2030 Projection (Base)	2030 Projection (Lower Bound)	2030 Projection (Upper Bound)	Net Growth (At Base Projection)	Net Growth (At High Projection)	Est. Land Required
Population*	20,799	24,899	21,210	28,588	4,100	7,789	-
Housing Units**	5,980	6,575	5,456	7,695	596	1,715	1,260 to 3,677 Ac
Employment	8,400	9,463	8,532	10,394	1,063	1,994	70 to 150 Ac

*2020 figures are interpolated from 2000 to 2018 US Census estimates. Includes populations within municipalities

**Only includes units in the unincorporated county (US Census)

new subdivisions would occupy about 1,200 acres. However, illustrating the value of better planned growth, allocating this development into higher density subdivisions around the towns (8 dwelling units per acre), the amount of land needed to accommodate this new growth is reduced to 75 acres. The Future Land Use Plan aims to intensify development potential around existing communities and maximize investments in infrastructure in order to reduce pressure on the County’s rural areas, agricultural lands, and sensitive ecological assets.

Population growth also results in new economic activity. Chaffee County could add about 1,000 jobs in the next decade. While most of the employment is centered in the municipalities, especially in and around Salida, the Future Land Use Plan recommends the land use code allow for more mixed use development and redevelopment of existing commercial areas to support a growing and diversifying economy.

ENHANCING REGIONAL COORDINATION

Keeping “the country, country and the Towns, towns” has been a long articulated ideal in

Chaffee County. However, achieving this desired growth pattern has been challenged by a lack of adequate infrastructure and effective County and Municipality intergovernmental coordination on development. Fortunately, at the time of the development of this plan, intergovernmental agreements, or IGAs, were either adopted or in process between the County, Salida, Buena Vista and Poncha Springs demonstrating a significant shift towards regional planning.

The capacity of infrastructure for roads, water rights availability, and water and sanitation services will be the primary driving factor for how growth occurs in and around the municipalities. The Future Land Use Plan was developed in close coordination with the municipalities and aligned with their more recently developed growth and infrastructure plans. In particular, the Future Land Use Plan reflects the 3 Mile Areas Plans for each of the municipalities. These plans, required by the State, plan for future growth within an area of influence of the town boundaries extending out to 3 miles. These plans include how the municipalities plans to offer utility service extensions, areas targeted for annexation, and areas of desired growth. This Future Land Use Plan reflects an alignment between all the jurisdictions on these preferred areas of growth.

FUTURE LAND USE MAPS

The Future Land Use Plan includes county-wide Future Land Use Maps (FLUMs) and FLUMs for each of the four Sub Areas. The FLUMs represent desired future land use character and are intended to inform the development of future zoning districts and code revisions. The map reflects areas of the County where existing conditions are unlikely to change and areas where infill and expansion of suburban and urban growth will occur based on:

- Proximity to a municipal planned growth area
- Presence and capacity of existing water and sanitation infrastructure
- Location on or near a major road or transportation network
- Character and intensity of surrounding or proposed development
- Location relative to natural resources constraints including natural hazards, high fire risk zones, wildlife habitat and conservation areas, and scenic resources
- Real estate market conditions.

Where transportation plans exist, the Future Land Use Maps include desired or planned road and transportation infrastructure extensions. Roads are indicated by dashed red lines and pedestrian by dashed green lines.

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The Future Land Use Designations articulate the general character of land use areas identified on the maps. These designations are not regulatory, nor do they reflect specific parcel boundaries. Instead they are intended to guide an update to the zoning code and inform development review for consistency in what kind of growth is desired for an area. The Future Land Use Plan contains both descriptions of the future land use and character as well as a two-page future land use table which offers a summary for use in reviewing the maps.

Future Economic Activity Nodes, Focus Areas and Opportunity Sites

The Sub Area Plans also identify areas that would benefit from more detailed site or neighborhood scale master plans. These Nodes, Focus Areas and Opportunity Sites were identified based on their potential for redevelopment and infill areas where change is likely, as a location with unique characteristics or attributes that are underutilized or has development challenges, is an existing small community/neighborhood, and/or may require physical or infrastructure improvements. These areas would benefit from additional planning processes such as a master plan, corridor plan, or neighborhood plan to offer greater guidance for future development. These areas are listed in the table on the following page.

Future Economic Activity Node	Focus Areas	Opportunity Sites (Parcels)
Johnson Village Hwy Corridor	Johnson Village	County Fairgrounds
Nathrop Commercial Area	Nathrop Townsite	Salida South Enclave*
Poncha Springs Mixed Use Corridor	Maysville Townsite	
	Highway 50 Corridor from Salida to Poncha Springs	

*An area of County land wholly surrounded by the City of Salida

The Opportunity Sites differ from the nodes and focus areas in that they are unique parcels in the unincorporated county that offer a high likelihood of development that could further the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. These sites in the unincorporated area were identified based on criteria analyzed using GIS that identified parcels within:

- 400 feet of existing infrastructure including water, sanitation, roads/sidewalks, etc.
- 2,000 feet of existing amenities or activity nodes (schools, parks, grocery stores, healthcare institutions, cultural institutions) and representing a roughly 20-minute walking radius
- 500 feet of a trail network

And also considered:

- Physical site constraints
- Recent nearby development

These sites were then evaluated based on property ownership and included in the infrastructure analysis for feasibility of extending key infrastructure, particularly public water and sanitation lines to service the parcel.

SUB AREA PLANS

Given Chaffee County spans such a large and diverse geography, the Comprehensive Plan includes four Sub Area Plans for the areas of:

1. Buena Vista
2. Mid Arkansas Valley/Nathrop
3. Salida
4. Poncha Springs/Maysville

Each Sub Area Plan was developed based on analysis of the municipalities' long-range plans and Three Mile Area Plans, Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs), existing and platted subdivisions, vacant land, current studies, population and housing projections, and public input. Each Plan includes a Vision, a Future Land Use Map (FLUM), and additional land use planning considerations for development of specific sites and neighborhoods.

These Sub Area Plans are intended as a guide for development that account for the unique qualities of each area and support greater collaboration and coordination between the County and Municipalities to achieve desired growth consistent with the community's vision.

3.2 | Future Land Use Designations



Public Lands

FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



Photo: S. Peterson



Photo: S. Peterson



Photo: S. Peterson



Photo: S. Peterson

Objectives:

- Support multi-jurisdictional interests on the conservation, protection and responsible use of public lands.
- Balance recreational activities with high-value scenic and ecological resources, including sensitive wildlife habitat, riparian areas, scenic byways and/or the wildland urban interface.
- Partner with the multiple jurisdictions involved to continue to provide public access.
- Create a future land use framework for public lands that protects backcountry areas with privately-owned mining claims from hazards.

Location Description: Municipal, County, State or Federally-controlled public lands and open space.

General Character: No major change in land use envisioned. Land uses are generally related to supporting recreation and outdoor tourism-based activities, the administration of public lands and access to outdoor resources. No residential development is permitted on public lands except on mining claims under specific circumstances. Mining claims wholly surrounded by public lands are in private ownership and have challenges with access, sanitation, and natural hazards, particularly wildlife. The Mining Claim designation accompanies this designation, as well as a recommended future Backcountry Overlay to protect landowners under specific circumstances.

Envisioned Density Range: Residential uses are limited in Public Lands but may exist in mining claims under specific circumstances.

Open Space

FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



Photo: S. Peterson



Photo: S. Peterson



Photo: S. Peterson



Photo: S. Peterson

Objectives:

- Provide for additional open space in and around existing or proposed development to provide opportunities for active and passive recreational space.

Location Description: Permanently protected open space held as a land dedication, parkland or conservation easement.

General Character: Intended to preserve open space, particularly in subdivisions, on critical conservation areas or along existing or proposed trail networks to expand County recreation and connectivity goals. Features both passive and active open space uses including trails, parks, open areas, public recreation facilities and conservation areas.

Envisioned Density Range: Not applicable.

Mining Claim

FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



Objectives:

- Provide for recreational opportunities on small privately-owned parcels currently existing in or surrounded by public lands.
- Allow for seasonal limited-access shelters that do not contribute to wildland fire risk.
- Restrict insensitive buildings or uses from proliferating in backcountry environments.

Location Description: Tracts of privately-owned land formally used as mining claims as designated by the County Assessor.

General Character: Limited and seasonal backcountry cabins or structures with approved facilities and constructed to standards for minimal impact or no degradation of natural resources, particularly waterways, and avoidance of natural hazards.

Envisioned Density Range: One shelter per individual parcel.

Rural/Agricultural

FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



Objectives:

- Preserve the character of rural areas in Chaffee County.
- Support the agricultural economy.
- Create opportunities for advancing agricultural and sustainable farming practices.
- Promote the preservation of open land through conservation subdivisions.

Location Description: Areas with large acreages of mostly undeveloped land distant from urban settings.

General Character: Intended for areas with very low-density residential development, farmsteads, and/or agricultural activities. Uses include farming and ranching, value-based agricultural manufacturing,

low impact renewable energy and other ancillary uses that support the agricultural economy, conservation of open lands and habitat and the rural character of the County. Includes areas with natural hazards such as steep slopes and floodplains. Residential uses are generally on large parcels, housing related to agricultural operation and not in platted subdivisions. Large developments in the future should reflect open space design practices such as clustering or conservation subdivisions.

Envisioned Density Range: One Dwelling Unit per 2 Acres, cluster subdivisions or larger lot residential.

Rural Residential

FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



Objectives:

- Provide opportunities for large-lot, low density residential uses in appropriate locations.
- Manage appropriate land uses at the interface between residential and agricultural uses.
- Promote the preservation of open space through conservation subdivisions.

Location Description: Areas of the unincorporated county with single family residential houses in platted subdivisions with lots found farther from municipalities and not intended to receive utility services.

General Character: Generally designated for established residential subdivisions where no change in use is intended. Accommodates low density residential uses with activities that are consistent with

the current Rural Zone District in the Chaffee County land use code including small scale farming and agricultural activities. May support parks, trails, and open space facilities.

Envisioned Density Range: Typical lot sizes are currently upwards of 1 Dwelling Unit per 20 Acres. Promotion of similar densities to adjacent subdivisions to maintain existing character is encouraged, creating a range of development types around the County. Future developments at 1 Dwelling Unit per 2 Acres should reflect open space design practices such as clustering or conservation subdivisions.

Suburban Residential

FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



Objectives:

- Maintain orderly and consistent growth of existing neighborhoods in the County's municipalities or established unincorporated communities.
- Provide a mix of housing to serve a range of people and incomes, including the workforce, the elderly, and families of various income levels.
- Adhere to an orderly and efficient vision that encourages denser growth near existing communities and anticipates municipal annexation through intergovernmental agreements.

Location Description: Areas in or near existing communities of the unincorporated county or municipalities or along major transportation corridors that are included in Intergovernmental Agreements and where municipal services may be extended in the future.

General Character: Generally low density residential uses consistent with the RES Zone District in the current Chaffee County land use code. Intended to support affordable and attainable housing goals with a diversity of housing types to serve a range of income levels. May accommodate locally serving commercial uses that offer amenities to the neighborhood such as small scale retail and home occupied businesses.

Envisioned Density Range: 1 to 4 Dwelling Units per Acre; Higher densities are contingent on incentives for projects that incorporate affordable housing into the development, and projects that are located near amenities or activity centers. Building heights range from 1 to 3 stories depending on location.

Mixed Residential

FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



Objectives:

- Provide a mix of housing to serve a range of people and incomes, including the workforce, the elderly, and families of various income levels.
- Located near major transportation corridors, activities and services such as schools, grocery stores and employment nodes.
- Targets orderly and efficient growth patterns that encourage denser development near existing communities. Development here should not strain the capacity of municipal roads, water, sanitation or other utilities/services.
- Anticipates municipal annexation and servicing through intergovernmental agreements.
- Promotes a jobs/housing land use balance by creating opportunities for housing near places of work.

Location Description: Areas desired for annexation

adjacent to existing incorporated or unincorporated communities or along major transportation corridors where higher densities may be appropriate and near existing water and/or sanitation utilities.

General Character: Envisioned to accommodate a mix of housing types and residential densities, affordable housing, institutional uses such as schools or public facilities, and appropriately scaled commercial uses for walkable amenities. Encourages non-traditional subdivision design with smaller lots and conservation subdivisions to promote more compact development.

Envisioned Density Range: 1 to 4 Dwelling Units/ Acre; Higher densities are contingent on incentives for projects that incorporate affordable housing into the development, and projects that are located near amenities or activity centers. Building heights range from 1 to 3 stories depending on location.

Rural Commercial

FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



Objectives:

- Promote job growth and economic development by expanding opportunities for businesses that generate employment and diversify Chaffee County's economic base.
- Accommodate existing commercial in unincorporated Chaffee County.

Location Description: Existing and future commercial areas

General Character: A diverse mix of locally and regionally serving commercial activities that are integral to the region's economy such as business parks, flex offices, utilities, sand and gravel storage, personal services, etc. Residential uses may be permitted in mixed use developments with density

bonuses to incentivize the inclusion of affordable units. Development standards require buffers between residential and commercial uses.

Envisioned Density Range: 2 to 16 Units per Acre when incorporated into commercial development. Building height between 1 and 3 stories.

Rural Mixed-Use

FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



Objectives:

- Promote a mix of uses best served by transportation corridors and near existing agricultural activities
- Provide opportunities for low-density, low-impact commercial uses that accommodate rural businesses.
- Promote job growth and economic development by preserving sites for highway-oriented manufacturing and freight transportation.

Location Description:

General Character: Similar in types of uses as that of the Mixed Use Corridor, but at lower densities and intensities to reflect the surrounding rural character. Envisioned to promote economic development consistent with the existing recreation, agricultural, and tourism based economy such as recreation companies, campgrounds, and hospitality activities.

Envisioned Density Range: 1 Unit per 2 Acres to 2 Units per Acre with higher densities contingent upon bonuses given to incorporate affordable housing into development. Building heights between 1 and 3 stories.

Mixed-Use Corridor

FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



Objectives:

- Promote a mix of uses best served by major transportation corridors and near existing higher intensity activities
- Adhere to a targeted, orderly and efficient vision for growth that encourages denser buildings near existing communities with existing services and infrastructure.
- Target mixed-use and denser uses to areas near existing communities
- Promote job growth and economic development by locating sites for transportation-dependent offices, services and goods delivery near major highway corridors.

Location Description: Areas located near existing municipalities, along or near major transportation corridors, included in intergovernmental agreements for

the municipalities' three-mile planning areas, and within existing or future utility service areas.

General Character: Targeted growth designation that envisions a mix of uses and higher densities to promote growth near existing communities and around gateways. Includes locally and regionally serving commercial activities that support the local economy such as transportation dependent activities such as retail, personal services, offices and goods delivery. Well connected to schools and other activity nodes with roads, trails, pathways and sidewalks. Development should be consistent with municipal plans and designed to municipal standards to ensure compatibility of development for potential annexation.

Envisioned Density Range: 2 to 16 Dwelling Units per Acre; Higher densities are contingent on bonuses given to projects that incorporate affordable housing. Building heights are between 1 and 3 stories.

Light Industrial

FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



Objectives:

- Support a sustainable economy centered on clean energy, agriculture, and manufacturing using renewable resources.
- Bolster existing businesses and manufacturing uses that provide long-term jobs.
- Support business that may be large in scale and character by locating them next to similar uses and away from residential neighborhoods.
- Harbor opportunities for next-generation industries that align with the economic and environmental goals in this plan.

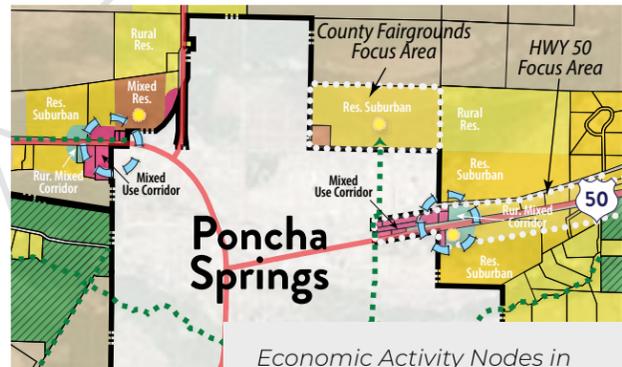
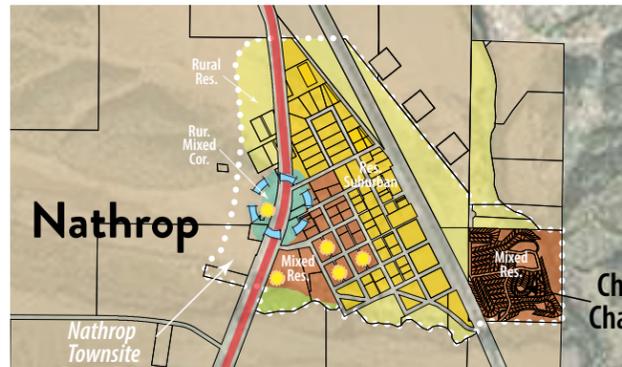
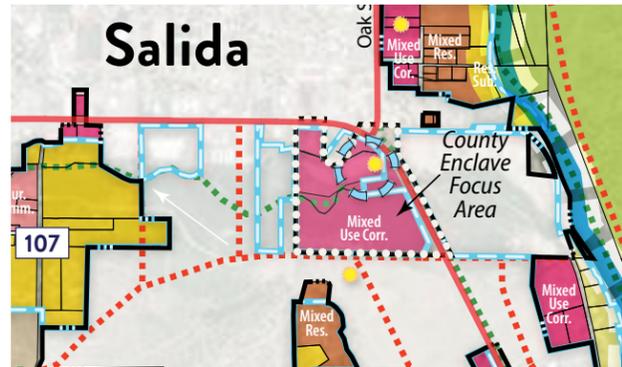
Location Description: Areas located farther away from existing and future residential areas.

General Character: Intended to accommodate existing and future manufacturing areas that support the economic development goals of this plan. Includes singular use and larger buildings with potentially noxious activities. Includes uses such as sand and gravel facilities, large scale energy generation, value added manufacturing with associated offices or limited onsite housing appropriate for operations.

Envisioned Density Range: Not applicable.

Future Economic Activity Node

OTHER LAND USE CHARACTER AREAS



Economic Activity Nodes in the four Sub Areas

Objectives:

- Promote innovation and pursue new industries as well as training or educational facilities (e.g. vocational or college institutions) that support and train the workforce for such businesses.
- Target ideal areas to apply for Colorado Enterprise Zone Tax Credits or other incentives to promote development that satisfies this plan's economic goals and strategies.
- Target areas or sites within the Opportunity Zone (Census Tract 000401) to fast track eligible projects in the northern half of the County.
- Incentivize and recruit businesses that foster opportunities for workers in Chaffee County to further their economic growth.
- Pursue commercial activities that promote the County's identity as a leader in sustainable

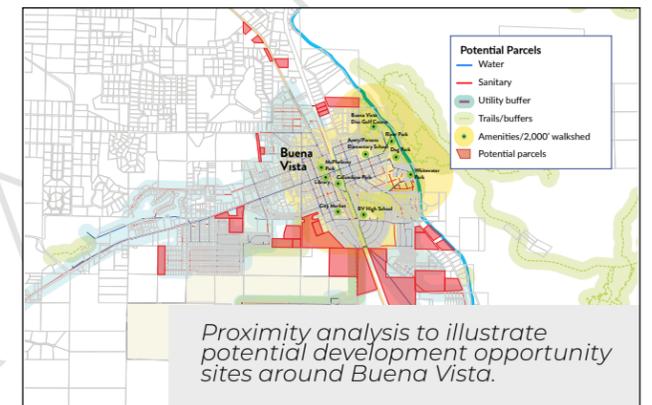
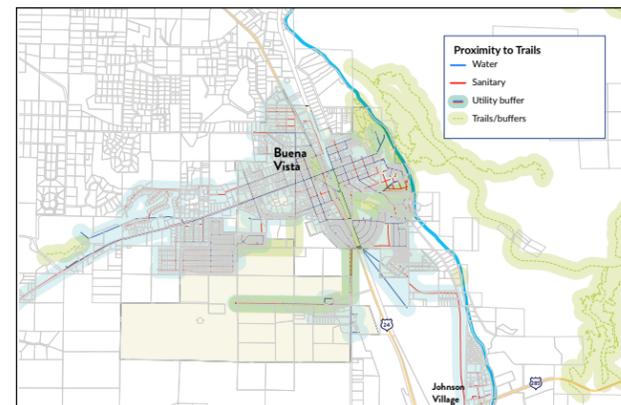
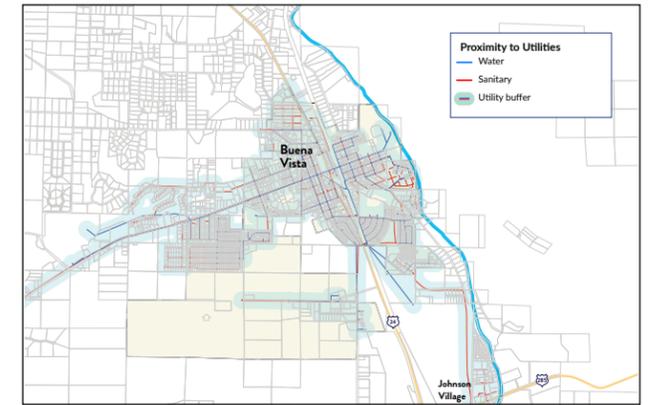
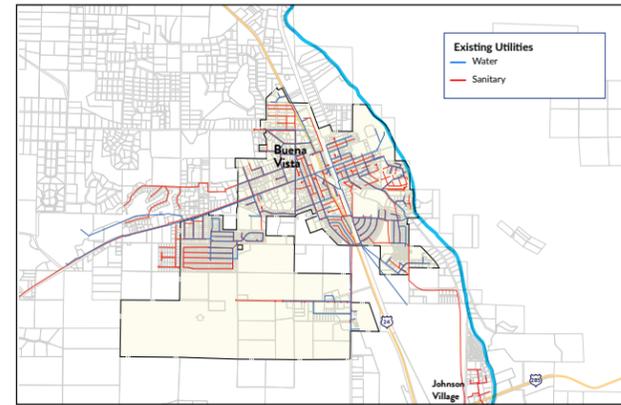
development, environmental stewardship and balanced outdoor recreation.

Location Description: Johnson Village, south of Salida, adjacent to Poncha Springs and in Nathrop.

General Character: Focused area for future economic development implemented through strategic allocation of resources and projects that assist in the creation of new businesses or jobs. May include areas designated for renewable resource infrastructure, community gateways, tourism oriented commerce, new and emerging industries, or new planned mixed use development. Offers potential for annexation into municipalities.

Opportunity Sites

OTHER LAND USE CHARACTER AREAS



Proximity analysis to illustrate potential development opportunity sites around Buena Vista.

Opportunity sites are parcels that—due to certain criteria—offer a high likelihood for development that could further the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. Located in the unincorporated county, these sites illustrate locations where the County may focus resources to catalyze surrounding development or build specific land uses that have otherwise been lacking, particularly affordable housing. Although the County only proposes these as theoretical opportunities in 2020, these sites communicate to the development community and the public locations in Chaffee County where partnerships may be formed to cultivate the kind of buildings the public would like to see. These Opportunity Sites (indicated with the  symbol on the FLUM) are recommended for special design and development standards that would supplement standards identified in Article 2 of the Chaffee

County Land Use Code and would apply to major new development that meets the intent of this plan.

Objectives:

- This designation is given to public or private parcels in the unincorporated county identified through an infrastructure analysis.
- Potential sites for supplying affordable/workforce housing since their locations meet many of the criteria for such projects.
- Determined through community input and GIS infrastructure analysis
- Offer opportunities to meet this comprehensive plan's goals and strategies through their future development.
- Facilitated by public-private partnership particularly in providing infrastructure.

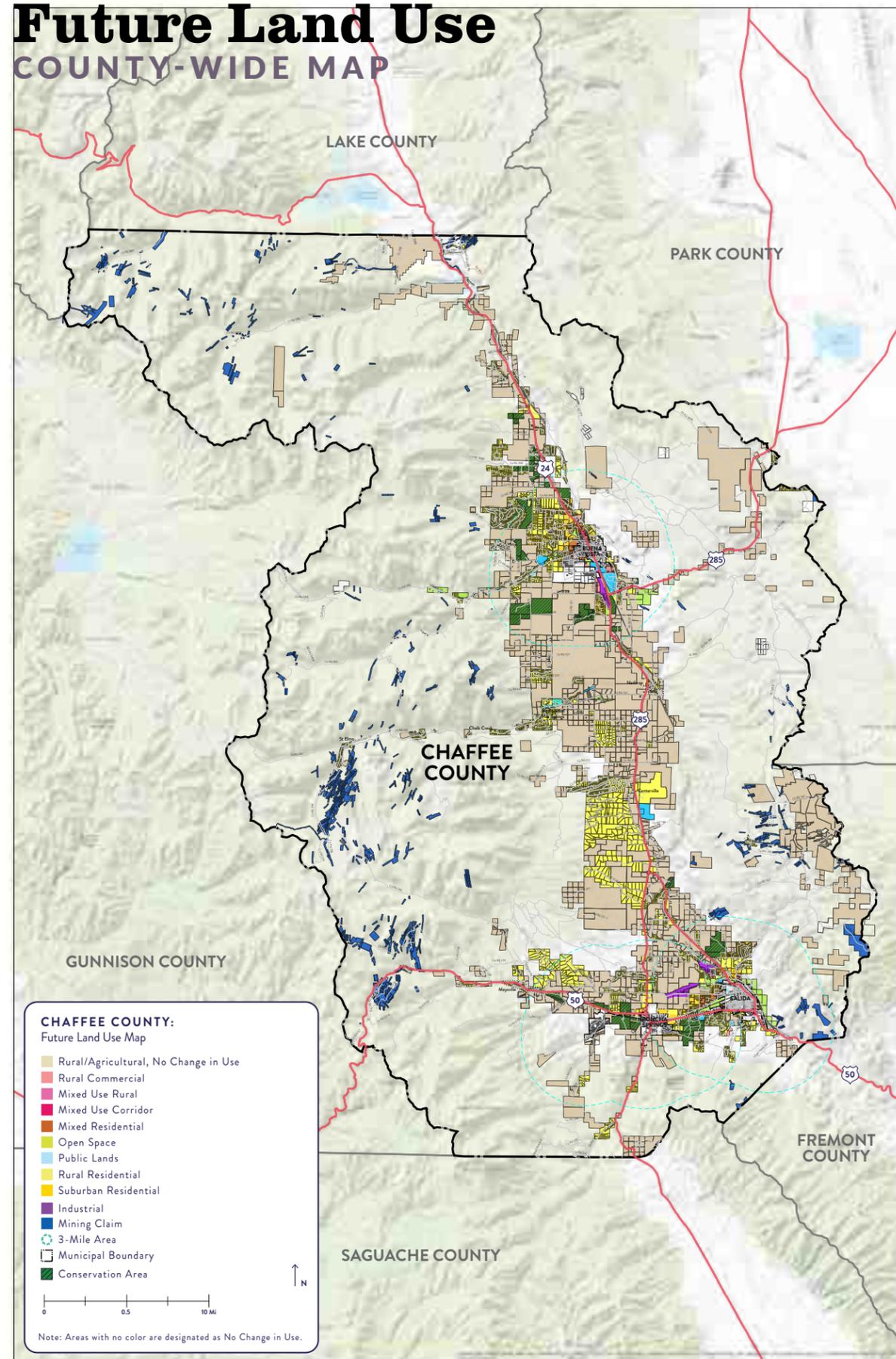
FUTURE LAND USE TABLE

Land Use Designation	Density Range	Description
Public Lands	--	Municipal, county, state, or federally controlled public lands and open space.
Open Space	--	Permanently protected open space held as a land dedication, parkland, or conservation easement.
Mining Claim	--	Mining claims as designated by the County Assessor with small seasonal structures.
Rural/Agriculture	1 DU/2 Acres	Areas with large acreages of mostly undeveloped land distant from urban settings that contribute to agriculture and the rural quality of the County. Intended for very low density residential, farmsteads, agriculture, ancillary uses, and/or conservation subdivisions.
Rural Residential	1 DU/2-20 Acres	Areas of the unincorporated county in existing platted subdivisions on parcels between 2 and 20 acres. Generally designated for established residential subdivisions where no change in use is intended.
Suburban Residential	1-4 DU/Acre	Areas in or near existing communities or along major transportation corridors that are included in Intergovernmental Agreements and where municipal services may be extended in the future. Generally low density residential intended to support affordable and attainable housing goals with a diversity of housing types to serve a range of income levels.
Mixed Residential	4-16 DU/Acre	Areas desired for annexation adjacent to existing incorporated or unincorporated communities or along major transportation corridors where higher densities may be appropriate and near existing water and/or sanitation utilities. Envisioned to accommodate a mix of housing types and residential densities, affordable housing, institutional uses such as schools or public facilities, and appropriately scaled commercial uses appropriate for walkable amenities. Encourages non-traditional subdivision design with smaller lots and conservation subdivisions to promote a more compact development form.
Rural Commercial	2-16 DU/acre	A diverse mix of locally and regionally serving commercial activities that are integral to the region's economy such as business parks, flex offices, utilities, sand and gravel storage, personal services, etc. Residential uses in mixed use development with density bonuses to incentivize the inclusion of affordable units. Development standards with buffers between residential and commercial uses.
Rural Mixed Use	1 DU/2 Acres to 2 DU/Acre	Envisioned to promote economic development consistent with the existing recreation, agricultural, and tourism-based economy such as recreation companies, campgrounds, and hospitality activities.

Land Use Designation	Density Range	Description
Mixed Use Corridor	2-16 DU/Acre	Areas located near existing municipalities, along or near major transportation corridors, included in intergovernmental agreements for the municipalities three-mile planning areas, and within existing or future utility service areas. Areas targeted for a mix of uses and higher densities to promote growth near existing communities and around gateways.
Light Industrial	--	Areas located farther away from existing and future residential areas intended to accommodate existing and future manufacturing areas that support the economic development goals of this plan.

Other Land Use Character Areas	Description
Future Economic Activity Node Opportunity Sites	-- Determined through community input and GIS infrastructure analysis, these are sites that offer opportunities to meet this comprehensive plan's goals and strategies through their future development. Opportunity sites also provide for potential locations for affordable/workforce housing developments since their locations meet many of the criteria for such projects.

Future Land Use COUNTY-WIDE MAP



3.3 | Future Land Use Policies

COUNTY-WIDE FUTURE LAND USE POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve the Comprehensive Plan goals, additional land use tools should be integrated into the County's land use regulations. The policies, described below, complement the goals, strategies and actions already in the plan by providing additional guidance on implementation.

Develop a Natural Resources Overlay

While the community placed high value on the County's natural assets, the County's land use code currently lacks adequate protection of both water bodies and wildlife habitat. The Comprehensive Plan's Resilient & Sustainable Environment section includes specific actions for increasing protection through the adoption of new land use tools. A natural resource overlay is an effective tool for maintaining views, a healthy watershed, and protection of wildlife habitat patches and corridors.

Overlay zones are most effective when they integrate:

- Maps
- Site development standards for vegetation management, setbacks, resource avoidance, etc.
- Resource assessments as part of the development application materials
- Flexible site design
- Density limitations
- Development review procedures and criteria for fair evaluation of proposals.

The County should capitalize on the numerous natural and scenic resource studies being conducted by Envision Chaffee County, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, etc. as a foundation to initiate the development of appropriate natural resource overlays for wildlife habitat and scenic resources.

Adopt an Arkansas River & Tributaries Overlay

The Arkansas River and its tributaries are central to the County's identity, recreation economy, and ecosystem. While the Browns Canyon section of the Arkansas River is protected and managed under the Browns Canyon Management Plan, development pressure along other reaches of the river is increasing at a rapid pace. An overlay would ensure the use, access, and natural features of the river and streams are preserved and protected. An overlay could:

- Create a regional shared vision for land uses along river corridors
- Include clear guidance on how to conduct riparian area and floodplain assessments
- Establish streamside setbacks, buffers, and limits on vegetation disturbance that offer greater protection to riparian habitat, water quality, and the visual quality of the river corridor
- Include design standards, site planning guidelines, and review procedures intended to preserve wetlands, floodplains, open space and river views.

Chaffee County is fortunate to be home to many professionals who are experts in this field and can offer guidance to the County on how to develop an appropriate scope of work to accomplish this task.



Conventional subdivision site plan with 55 home sites, each roughly on two-acre lots.



Conservation subdivision site plan with same number of lots on only 64% of the same site.

(Source: LandChoices, and Randall Arendt, "Conservation Design for Subdivisions", Island Press, 1996)

Adopt a Conservation Subdivision Policy

Chaffee County has both a statutory and cluster subdivision standard that supports more creative site design and promotes open area conservation. However, the Rural Cluster Subdivision Ordinance, Article 5, Sec. 5.3 of the land use code, needs to be revised to strengthen how to use flexible site design to better protect natural, scenic and heritage resources while allowing for economically feasible developments. The adoption of a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance is a central strategy in the Future Land Use Plan for the Agriculture/Rural, Rural Residential, and Suburban Residential designations.

To update the land use code, the County should:

1. Consider revising LUC and application process to mandate a study of the property's ecological attributes during the design process to:
 - Identify and avoid critical habitat of endangered species

- Locate the Wildland Urban Interface
 - Locate flood/fluvial or other hazard areas
 - Locate productive agricultural lands
 - Identify other sensitive or critical areas as defined the Chaffee County Planning Commission, County Commissioners or other recommending bodies.
2. Enhance the pre-application process to ensure subdivision design meets standards earlier in the process.
 3. Illustrate desired design standards in a "Conservation Development Design Guideline" book for distribution.
 4. Increase or make flexible bonus lot allowances.
 5. Incorporate a post-development review process to ensure standards have been met.
 6. Provide accessible asset mapping for property in the County available for the public.

SEE MODEL CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION DESIGN GUIDELINES IN THE APPENDIX (page 204).

Scenic Resource Overlay

The Chaffee County Heritage Area Advisory Board is in the process of updating the management plan for the Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway, a major county asset and economic driver. The County's development standards should be aligned with the results of this updated plan and adopt an overlay zone to provide clear and objective guidance for property owners and developers on how to conduct a site analysis for visual resources, mitigation standards, and flexible site design options.

Conduct Focus Area Master Planning

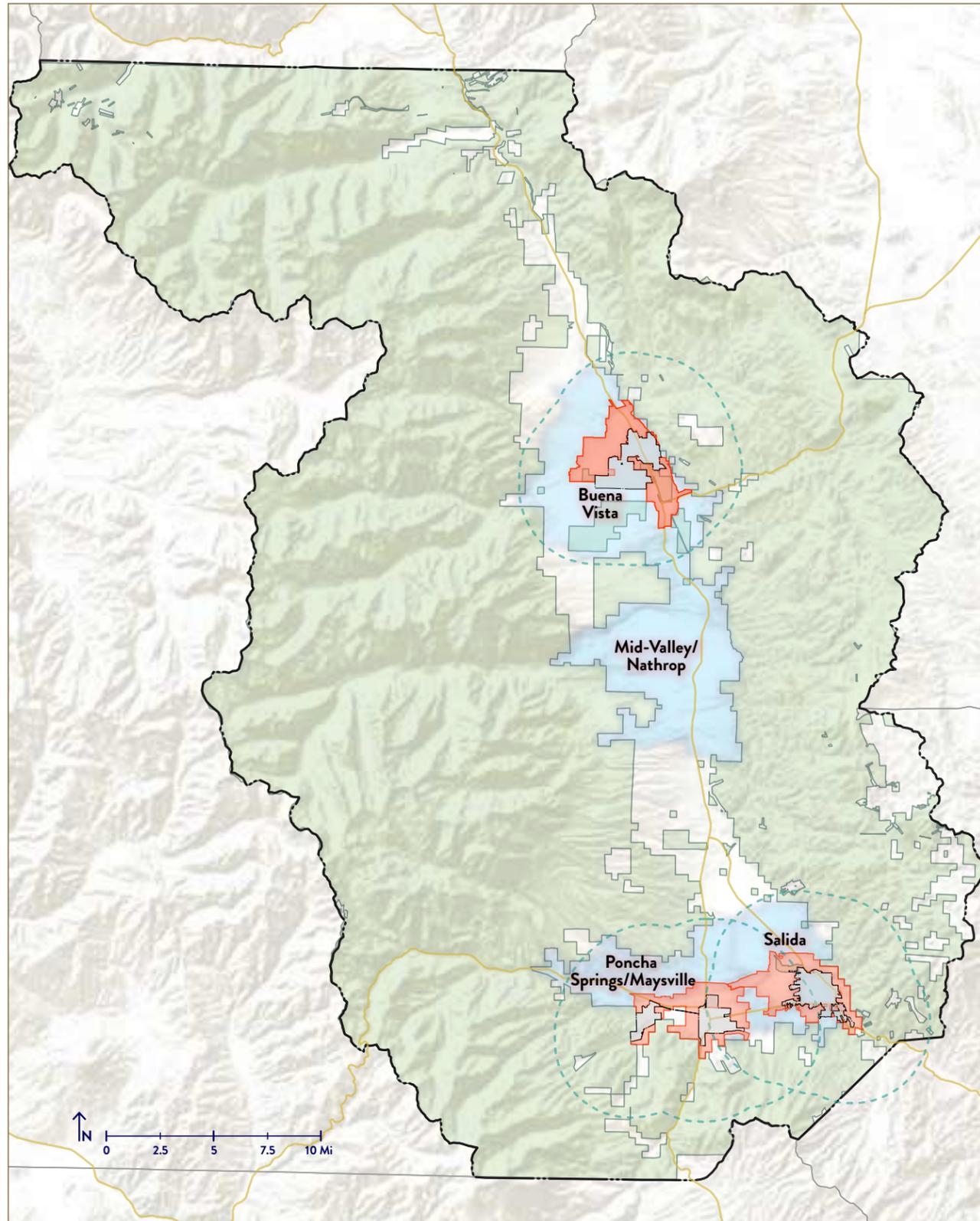
Each of the six focus areas have unique conditions that warrant further study. Developing master plans of each of the areas offers an opportunity to explore the specific opportunities and constraints of each site. The master plans should explore:

- Physical and ecological constraint.
- Need for improved public infrastructure, access, facilities or other physical improvements
- Opportunities for catalytic or visionary projects
- Collaborative partners
- Goals and an action plan for site enhancements.

Develop a Backcountry Overlay

Residential development in the high country, on inholdings surrounded by public lands, and on mining claims pose risks to public safety and environmental sustainability. The County should conduct an assessment of these areas to better understand access, natural hazards, and other resource constraints to inform the development of a Backcountry Overlay with the intent of ensuring uses in these areas do not place a burden on public safety resources, are built to appropriate safety standards, and meet environmental protection standards.

Sub Area Plans



3.4 | Buena Vista Sub Area Plan



VISION & CHARACTER

- The Buena Vista Sub Area has experienced and embraced an **evolving identity**, ranging from mining to music.
- This **historical charm and instant access** to the Arkansas River will continue to attract curious and active travelers coming for a weekend or staying for a lifetime. Continued support of the area’s significant rafting community and culture will pave the way for a vibrant economic future.
- Leveraging the Town’s diverse and growing economy, new businesses reflect the community’s values of **sustainability and healthy lifestyles**, businesspeople are attracted to the Buena Vista area’s recreational economy and ease of access.
- As the **main gateway to Chaffee County** from the Front Range, this Sub Area benefits from steady vehicle traffic that supports highway-oriented businesses, balanced by alternative mobility options including an **extensive trail system** connecting rural areas to the town center.
- The Buena Vista SubArea—through logical growth in places like Johnson Village—can promote community goals of supplying affordable housing by envisioning a mix of unit types at the right size and in the right places.
- The IGA between the Town and County supports coordination on growth management with agreement on allocation of new development and extension of services and infrastructure.

SUB AREA FUTURE LAND USE

Elements of the FLUM include:

- **Mixed Use Corridor:** Along the community gateways and corridors of Highways 24 and 285 to promote economic development. Intended to support existing commercial uses (e.g. rafting companies and auto shops) that are located along the highways as well as provide opportunity for a mix of new commercial businesses that are limited in size and scope. Major commercial activities should be directed to the municipalities.
- **Rural Mixed-Use:** Extends along the Highways 285 and 24 corridors north and south of Town where surrounding land uses are more rural in character.
- **Mixed Residential:** Aligns with lands within the Town of Buena Vista's planning areas where future development is likely.
- No change is proposed for existing residential subdivisions with lots under 20 acres in the **Rural Residential** and **Rural/Agriculture** designations.
- No change is proposed for **Public Lands** except for a parcel identified for a land exchange in the Town's Three Mile Plan.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- The subdivisions around Buena Vista still have some limited capacity for infill with 310 vacant lots.
- The Sub Area's Plan is congruent with the Buena Vista Three Mile Plan which identifies 10 Areas of Desired Growth and Municipal Service Areas.

- The average in-town residential lot is 2,500 square feet.
- Cottonwood Creek, the Town's water supply for portions of the Town, is over appropriated and places limits on development potential within that zone.
- The northern edge of Buena Vista has limitations for water infrastructure due to challenges with elevation.
- The Buena Vista Sanitation District reaches 75% capacity during the summer.
- Highway 285 is seeing increasing traffic issues and congestion.

SUB AREA SPECIFIC POLICIES

While these may also be policies that are relevant throughout the County, these were identified as regional priorities or have greater relevance.

- Use with the Buena Vista Water Resource Master Plan and recent County Infrastructure Study to estimate the feasibility of water service expansion.
- Explore funding models (taxes, in lieu of fees, etc.) for the development and maintenance of regional open space and trails.
- Require new development to include inclusive open space and/or parks.
- Plan for development of public spaces and facilities for youth.
- Promote the production of local food and resources for small scale agriculture.

JOHNSON VILLAGE FOCUS AREA, NODE, AND OPPORTUNITY SITE

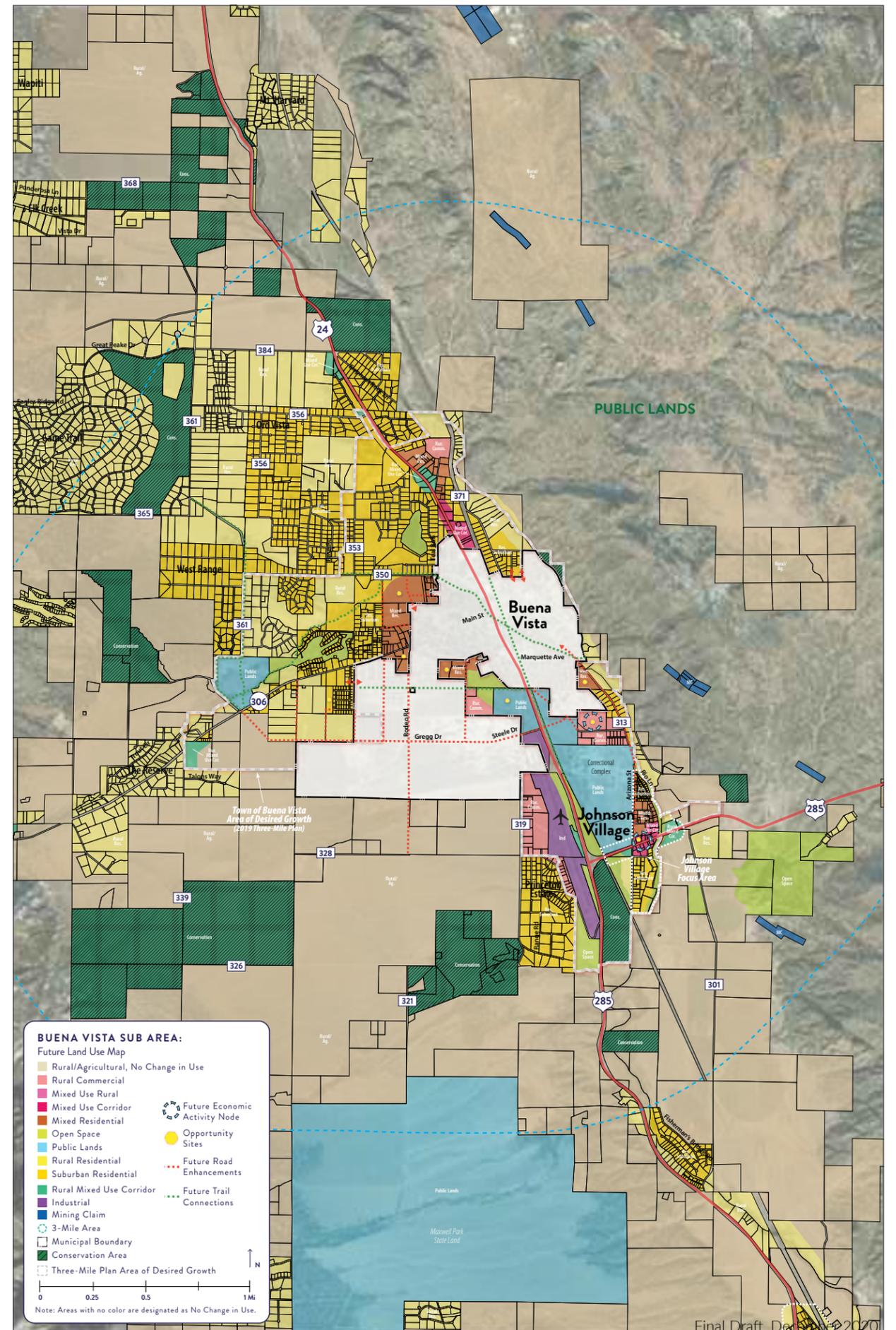
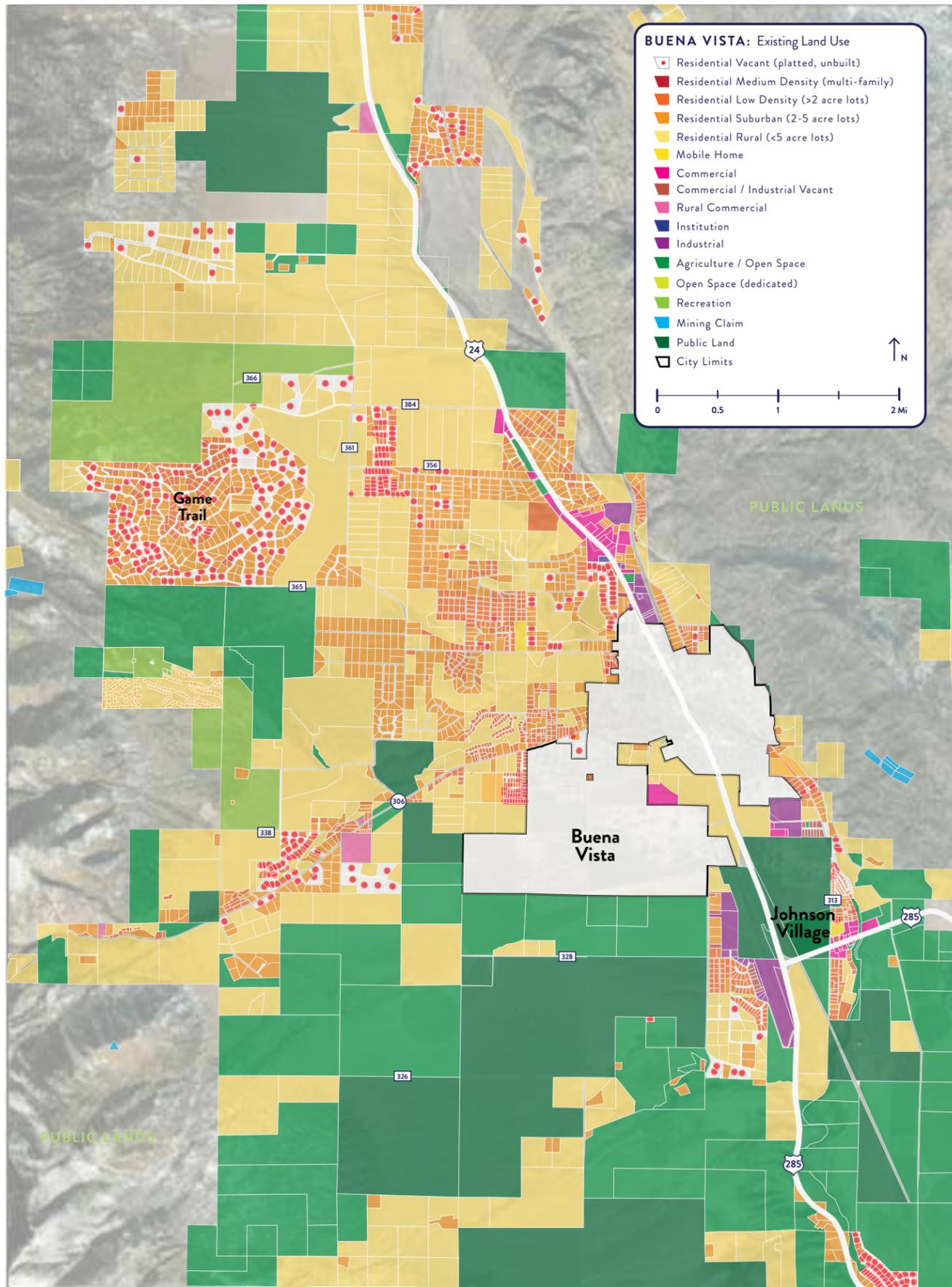
Johnson Village, with high traffic and visibility, offers opportunities for future growth building on existing commercial development catering to the recreation and tourism economy. Highway 285 is envisioned as a future economic activity node intended to promote uses such as:

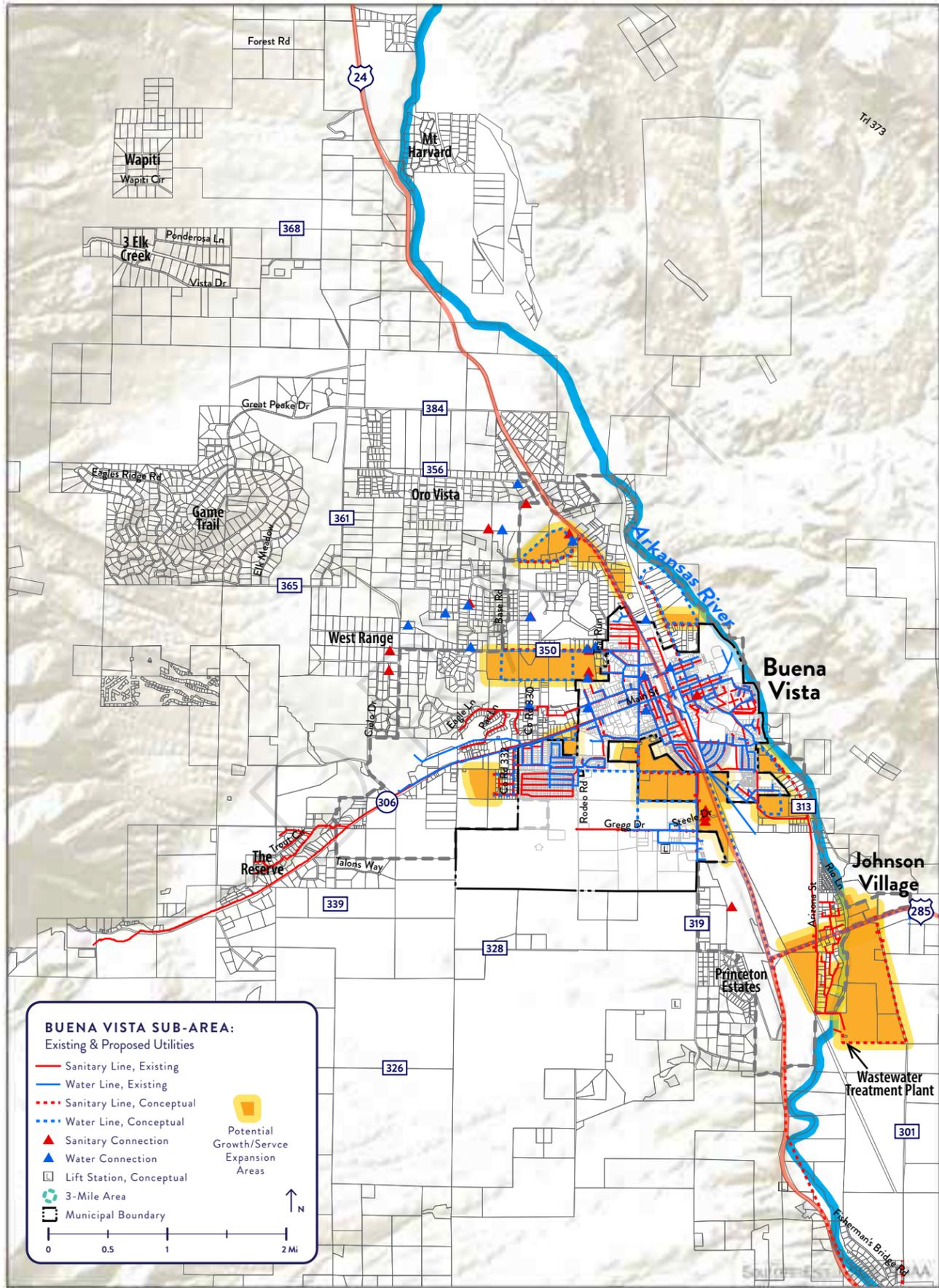
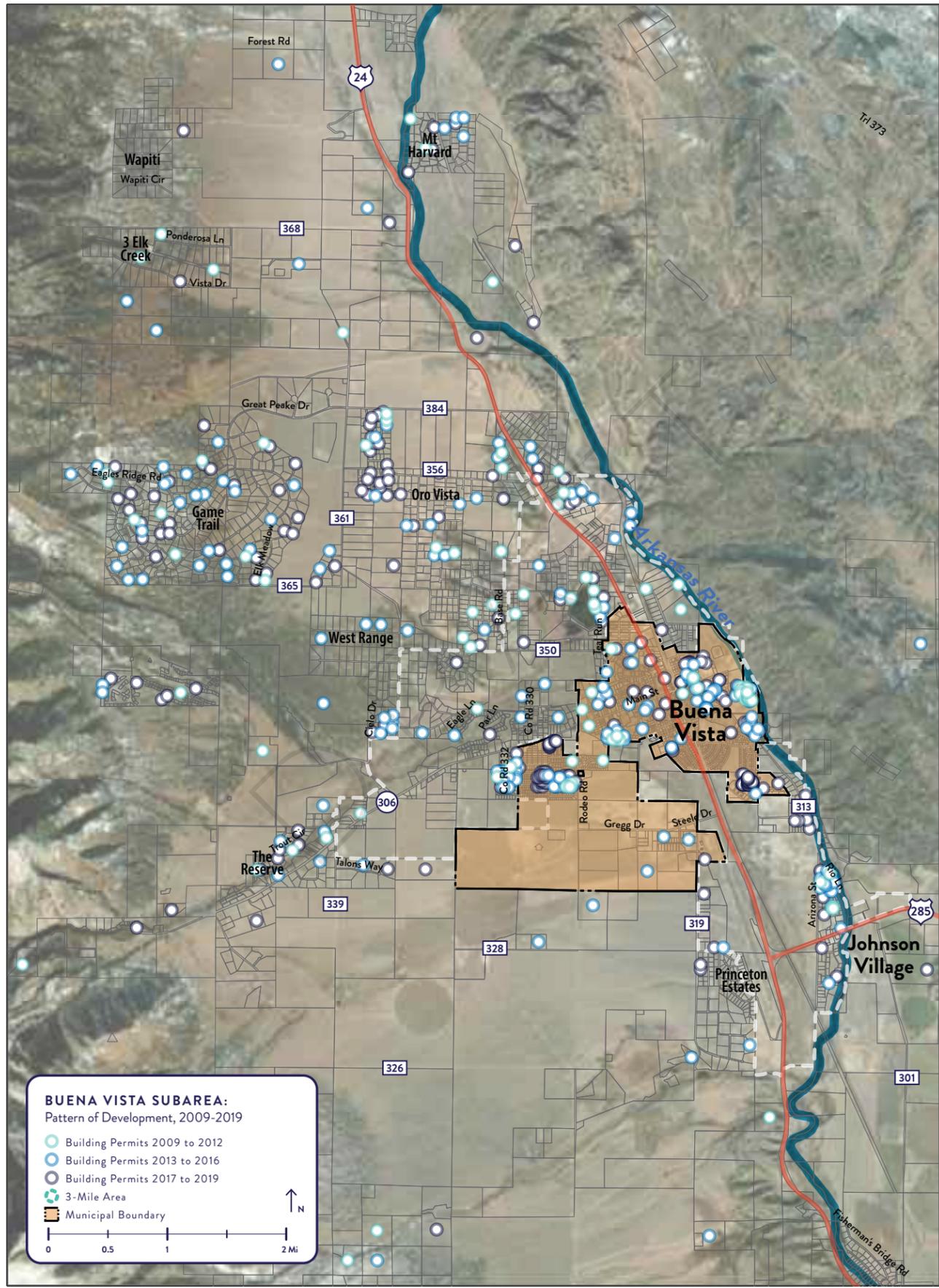
- Food and beverage
- Recreation businesses
- Retail commercial
- Affordable and workforce housing
- Travel centers and convenience stores
- Renewable energy
- Designated campgrounds

However, development in this area is not without challenges. A master plan for Johnson Village should be developed to address the following issues:

- Water and sewer infrastructure capacity will limit future commercial and residential growth. An assessment is needed of the availability of water rights, infrastructure capacity, and costs of service extensions.
- A study should be conducted to assess financial implications of incorporation, annexation, or a special district and how to finance infrastructure system expansion.

- Economic development in Johnson Village should not compete with the Town of Buena Vista. However, this area should be assessed for potential as a State Opportunity Zone.
- The creation of a true "village" that balances highway orientation with the needs of residential quality of life including pedestrian and bike connectivity and infrastructure including sidewalks and safe crossings, signage, commercial design standards, and as a County gateway.





3.5 | Mid-Valley Sub Area Plan



VISION & CHARACTER

- The Mid-Valley and Nathrop areas exhibit the visual characteristics of the County that attract folks to this area: **vast open spaces**, a tight-knit **small town culture**, and neighbors that know each other, whether seasonal visitors or year-round residents.
- Here you'll find **working landscapes** with a long legacy of farming and ranching, clean air and water, and abundant access to the surrounding recreational amenities.
- Old and new developments are designed to “fit” in the landscape rather than overwhelm it, by **preserving view corridors** and clustering houses so as to leave as much of the valley bottom open while still encouraging the right size and type of development.

SUB AREA FUTURE LAND USE

Elements of the Mid-Valley FLUM include:

- **Rural Mixed Use** along the highway 285 Corridor around Nathrop to support limited economic development intended for existing recreation oriented companies.
- **Mixed Residential** and **Suburban Residential** focus on small scale, neighborhood oriented development replacing current commercial and residential zone districts.
- In **Rural Residential** and **Agricultural/Open Space**, generally no change is envisioned for existing development with lots under 20 acres.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- Growth pressures and agricultural conversions are of concern. The Sub Area has been the site of one of the County's largest subdivisions in the past decade.
- Existing subdivisions have approximately 261 vacant lots that could potentially develop.
- Some subdivisions are served by community water and/or sewer systems. The Chateau Chaparral wastewater treatment facility does not meet water quality protection standards.
- Significantly increasing intensity of development in Nathrop would require very expensive infrastructure investments.
- The County landfill needs an updated master plan.

SUB AREA SPECIFIC POLICIES

While these may also be policies that are relevant throughout the County, these were identified as regional priorities or have greater relevance.

- Review and update the County's existing Dark Skies standards to comply with current best practices and increase efficacy.
- Zone the Nathrop Townsite as mixed-use commercial.
- Protect historic properties in Nathrop.
- Place emphasis on conservation subdivisions to retain rural character of Mid-Valley.

NATHROP FOCUS AREA AND NODE

The Nathrop townsite has seen minimal change in the past, despite the Highway 285 corridor being zoned commercial in the existing land use regulations. This planning effort identified a community desire to have economic activities oriented towards the neighborhood and not be oriented towards highway businesses. Given limited infrastructure and the fact that part of the townsite is bisected by the highway limiting pedestrian access, modest future commercial uses along the highway are envisioned. Community serving commercial is desired for areas adjacent to residential development.



Mount Princeton Hot Springs
Photo: Scott Peterson

The node is intended to promote:

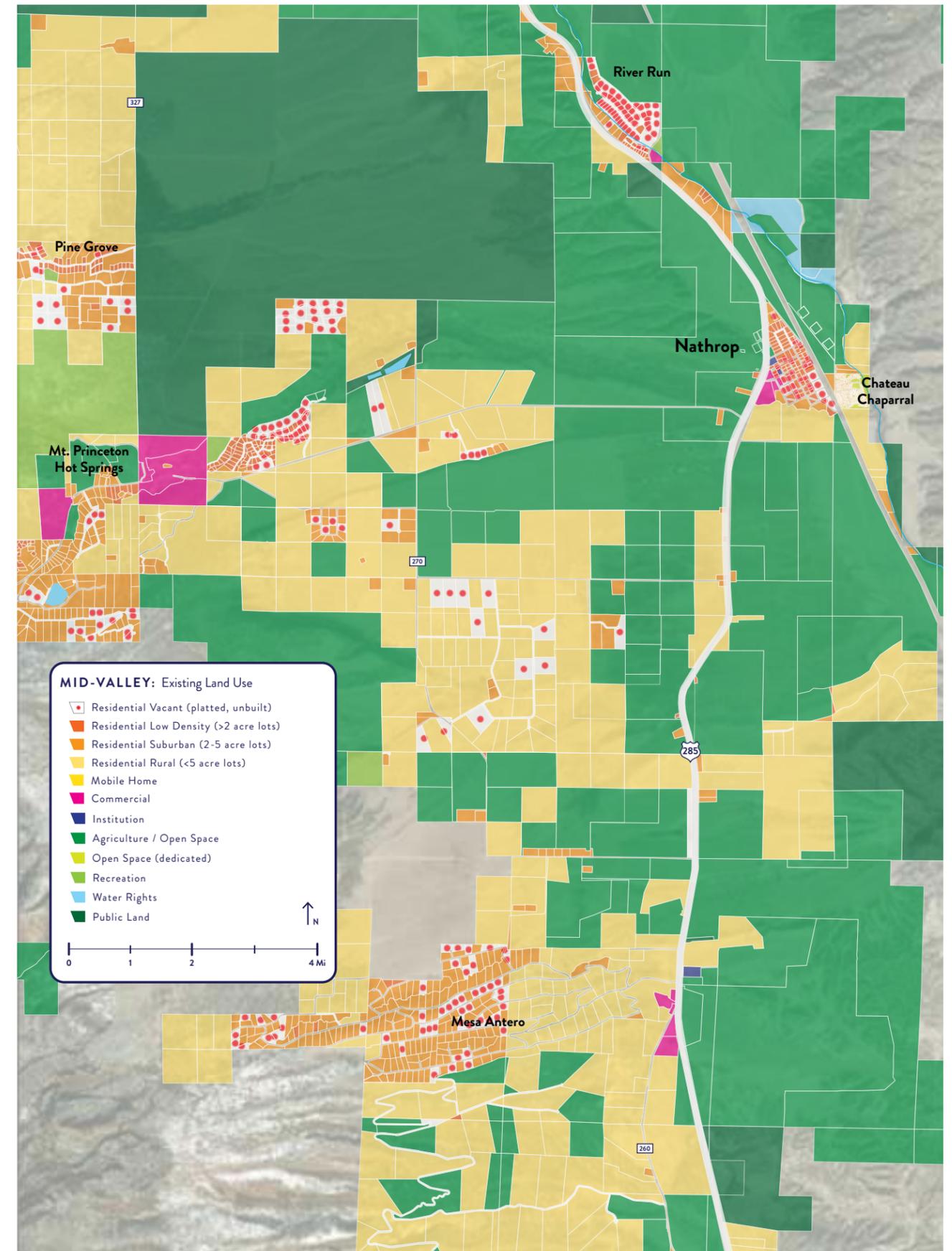
- Neighborhood serving commercial food and beverage
- Existing recreation-oriented businesses
- Workforce housing.

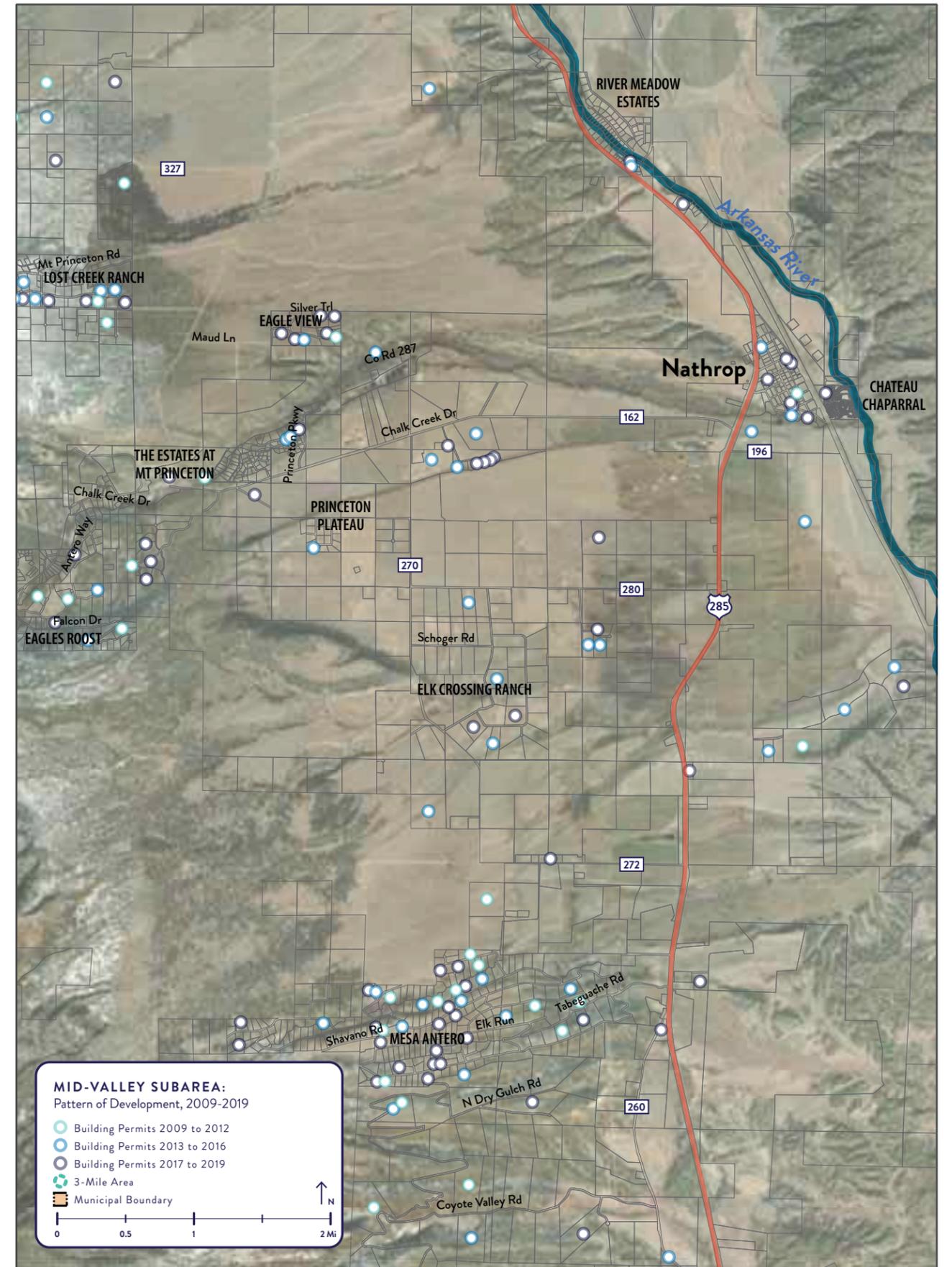
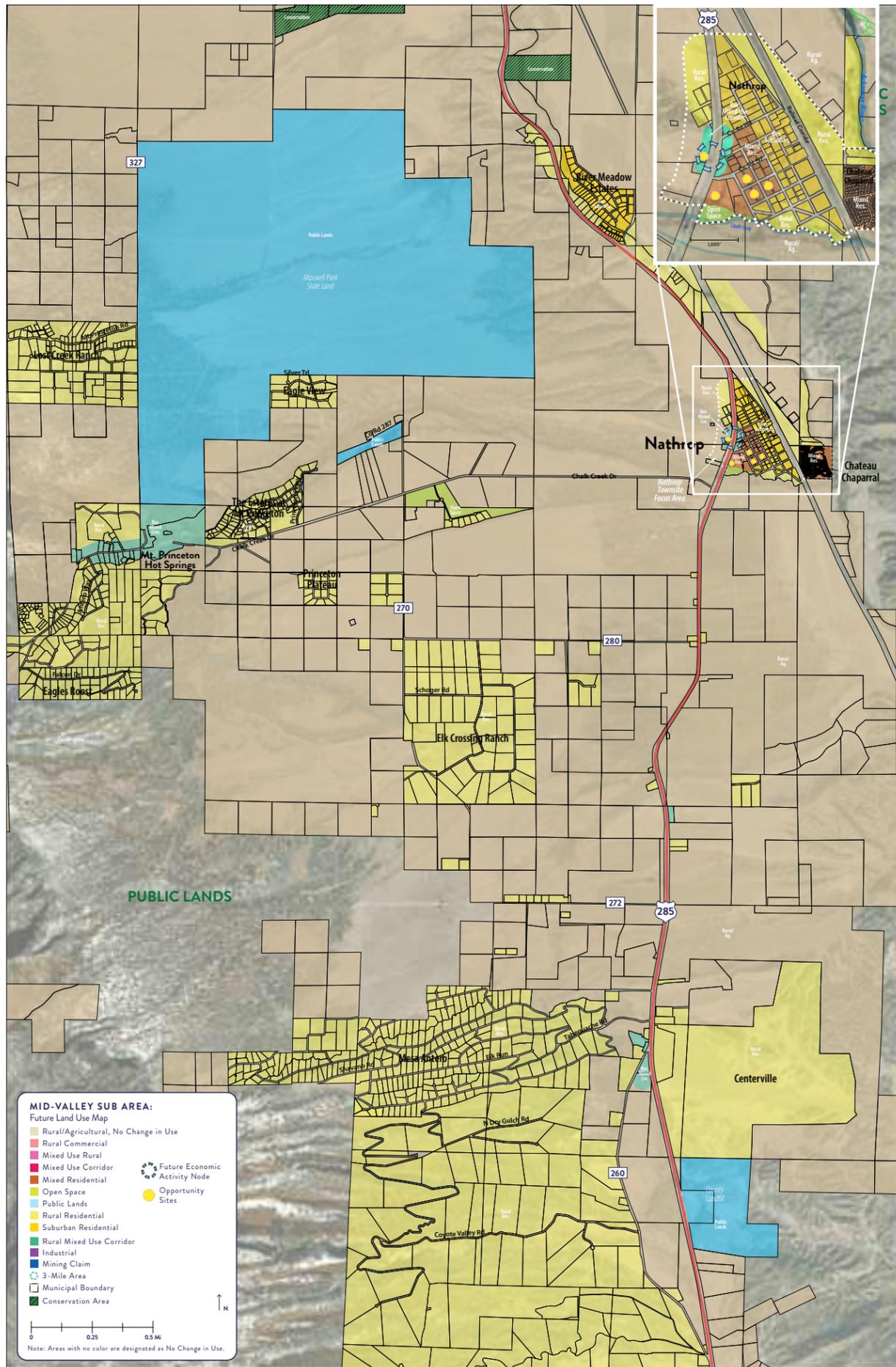
A neighborhood master plan for this area should address:

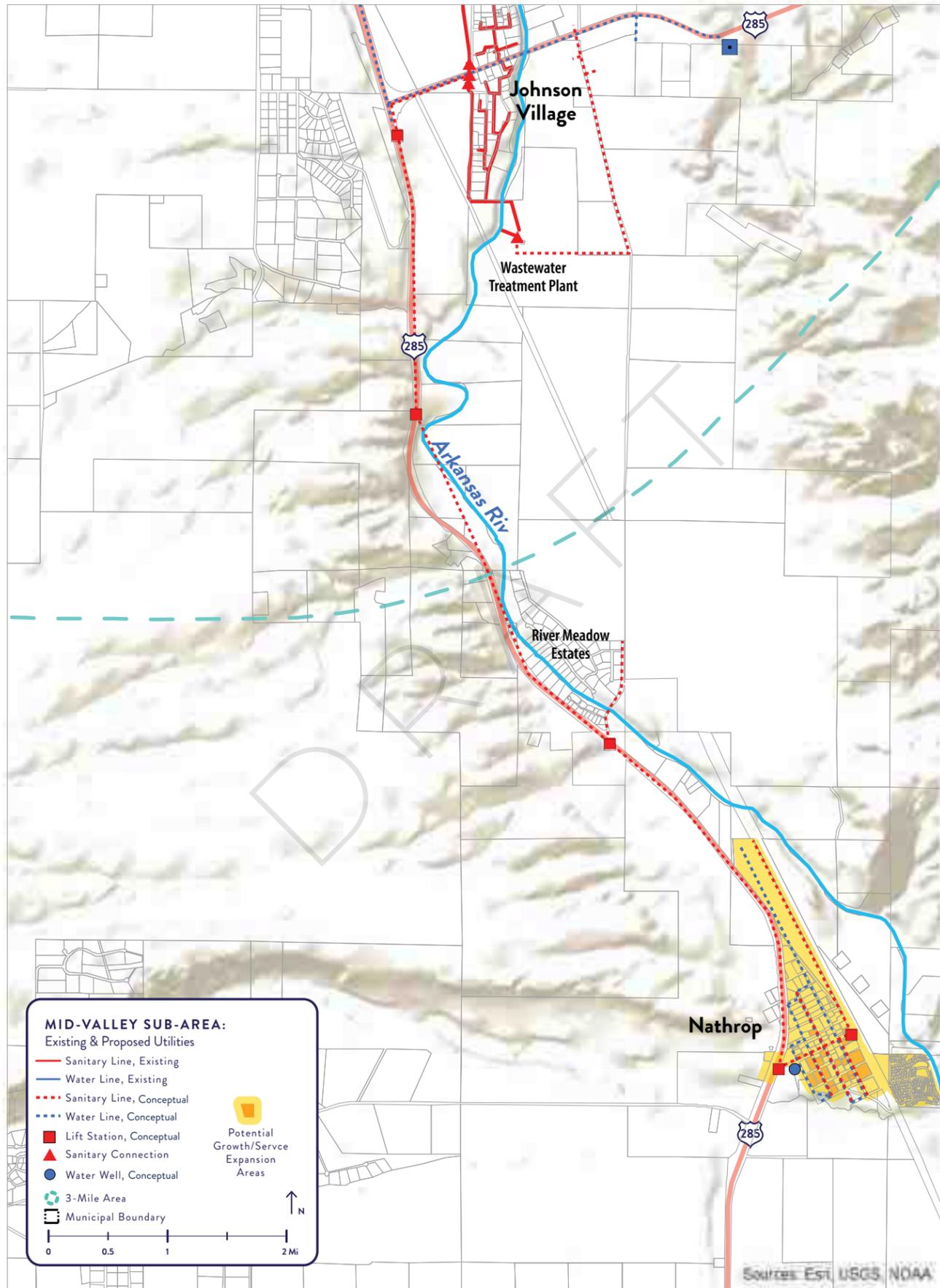
- A fiscal analysis to assess the feasibility of infrastructure improvement and service extension
- The appropriate governance and/or management model to sustain adequate infrastructure
- Adequacy and opportunity for affordable/attainable housing development
- A Townsite Overlay to support desired economic or mixed-use development.

CHALK CREEK/MT. PRINCETON RESORT NODE

This area includes a mix of uses and intensities. The residents of the area value the openness and do not want to see the continued subdivision of lands in the future Rural Residential and Rural/Agriculture into small lot subdivisions. The Mt. Princeton Resort is a keystone of the County's economic health and future development plans are accounted for in the Future Land Use Map. A Scenic Resource Overlay is envisioned for the Highway 285 Scenic Byway and stretches of Chalk Creek Road.







3.6 | Salida Sub Area Plan



VISION & CHARACTER

- The Salida Sub Area, surrounding the **largest municipality** in the County and the County Seat, attracts and balances a higher percentage of growth and development than other areas.
- Its major thoroughfares efficiently and safely bring people to town in all forms of transport, including a **well-connected system of trails** that allow one to ride a bike from the Main Street to the mountaintop.
- A **diverse mix of places to live and work** within and outside of town coupled with a milder climate than found elsewhere, the Salida community thrives year round.
- Cultural identity is strong in this Sub Area, from its **historic ranches and rural art studios** to energetic sporting events and a busy restaurant scene.
- Salida, being the County Seat, is at the center of Chaffee County's administrative and governing activity.

SUB AREA FUTURE LAND USE

- **Mixed Use Corridor** is designated for the community gateways and transportation corridors along Highways 50, 285, and State Highway 291. These areas are intended to support existing commercial uses such as business and industrial parks similar to the County's current COM and IND zones.
- **Industrial** includes the area near and surrounding Harriet Alexander Field Airport to accommodate future aviation business and/or facilities.
- **Rural Commercial** includes the area surrounding the businesses and Smelertown industrial park south of State Highway 291.
- Tiered residential development is accommodated in **Mixed Residential** in areas covered by the County – Salida Intergovernmental Agreement, particularly west of the municipal boundaries, where future development and annexation into the municipality is desired due to existing or future utility services. The next tier includes **Suburban Residential** uses which surround Mixed Residential uses.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

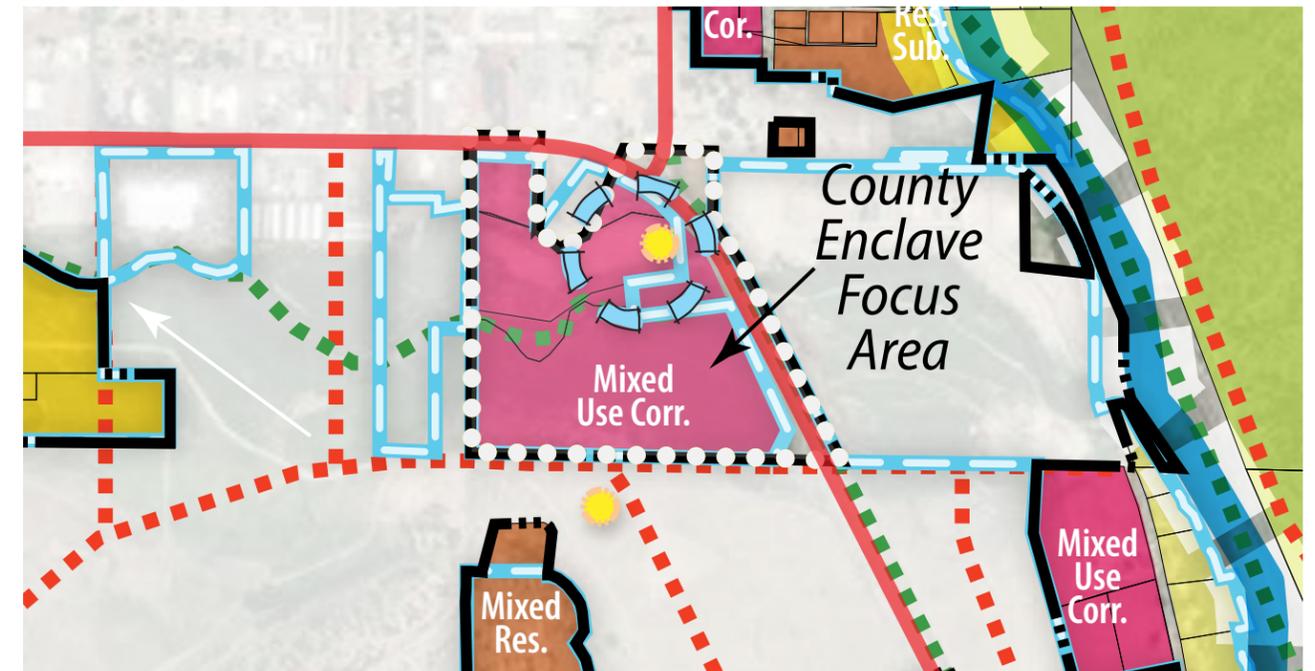
- Development constraints – floodplains, steep slopes, and public land – have resulted in development in the unincorporated county on the Mesa and along Highway 50 along the South Arkansas moving towards Poncha Springs. It is also going out along Highway 291. The land west of Salida along the South Arkansas and between Salida and Poncha Springs along Highway 50 has conservation easements including the Hutchinson Ranch which acts as a community buffer between the two municipalities.

- The average lot size in Salida is .73 acres although parcels are being split to create more development potential in town.
- Water and sanitation capacity in the City of Salida is about 50% of capacity during peak summer months.
- Affordable housing in Salida is the least available throughout the County.

SUB AREA SPECIFIC POLICIES

While these may also be policies that are relevant throughout the County, these were identified as regional priorities or have greater relevance.

- Build on existing policy for stub roads to ensure all new developments include road and trail easements that allow for connection between existing and future subdivisions.
- Coordinate with the City of Salida to assess the need for policy balancing short term rentals and full-time residences in the Sub Area.
- Extend the community buffer concept between Salida and Poncha Springs to include low density development onto the Mesa for the neighborhood between CR 140 and 145 to CR 120 and Airport Road.
- Collaborate with the City of Salida on the Highway 50 Corridor Plan.
- Collaborate with the City of Salida to accommodate new development in desired areas of growth with appropriate infrastructure based on the City's service capacity.
- Develop a plan for managing increased access and traffic along CR 120.

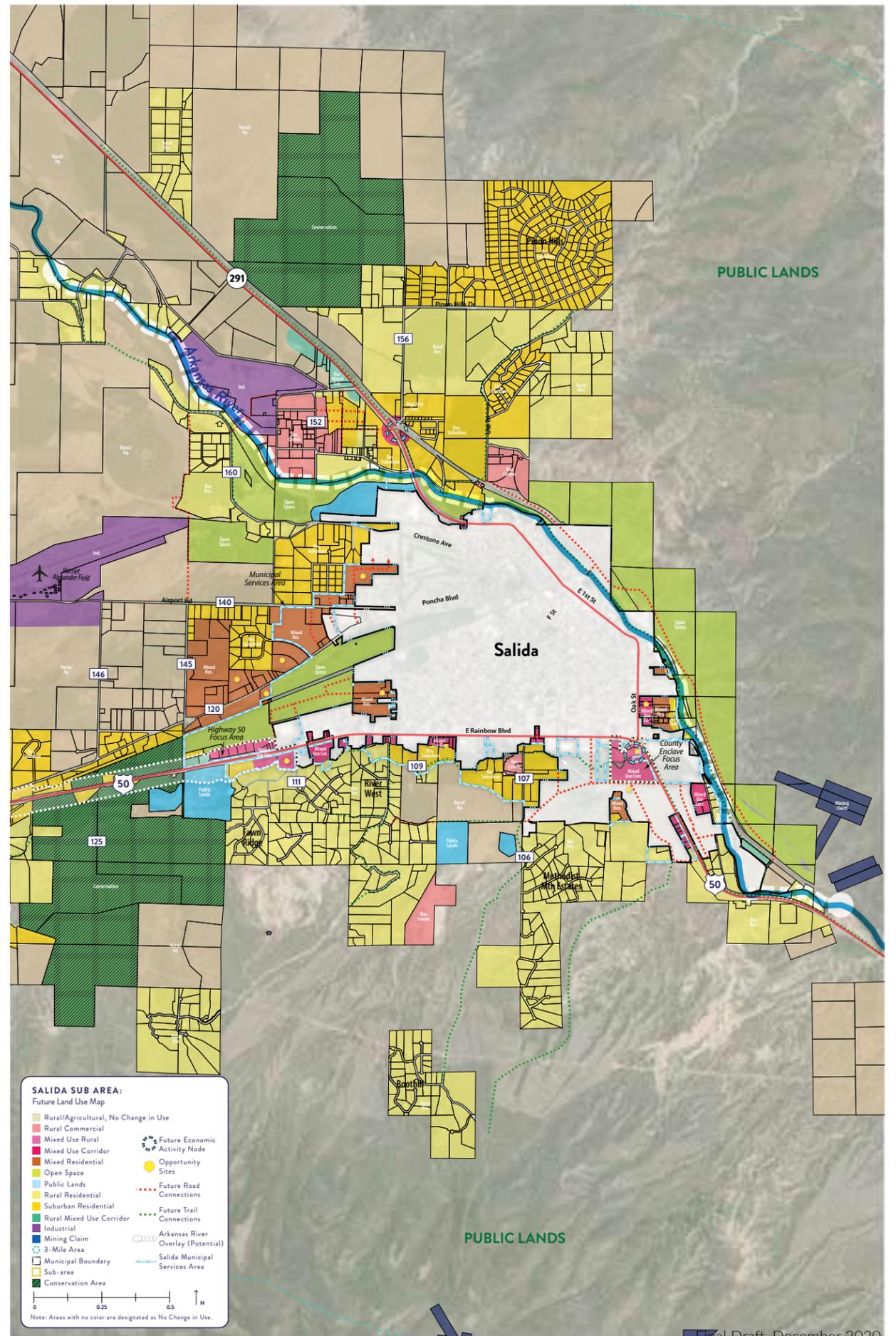
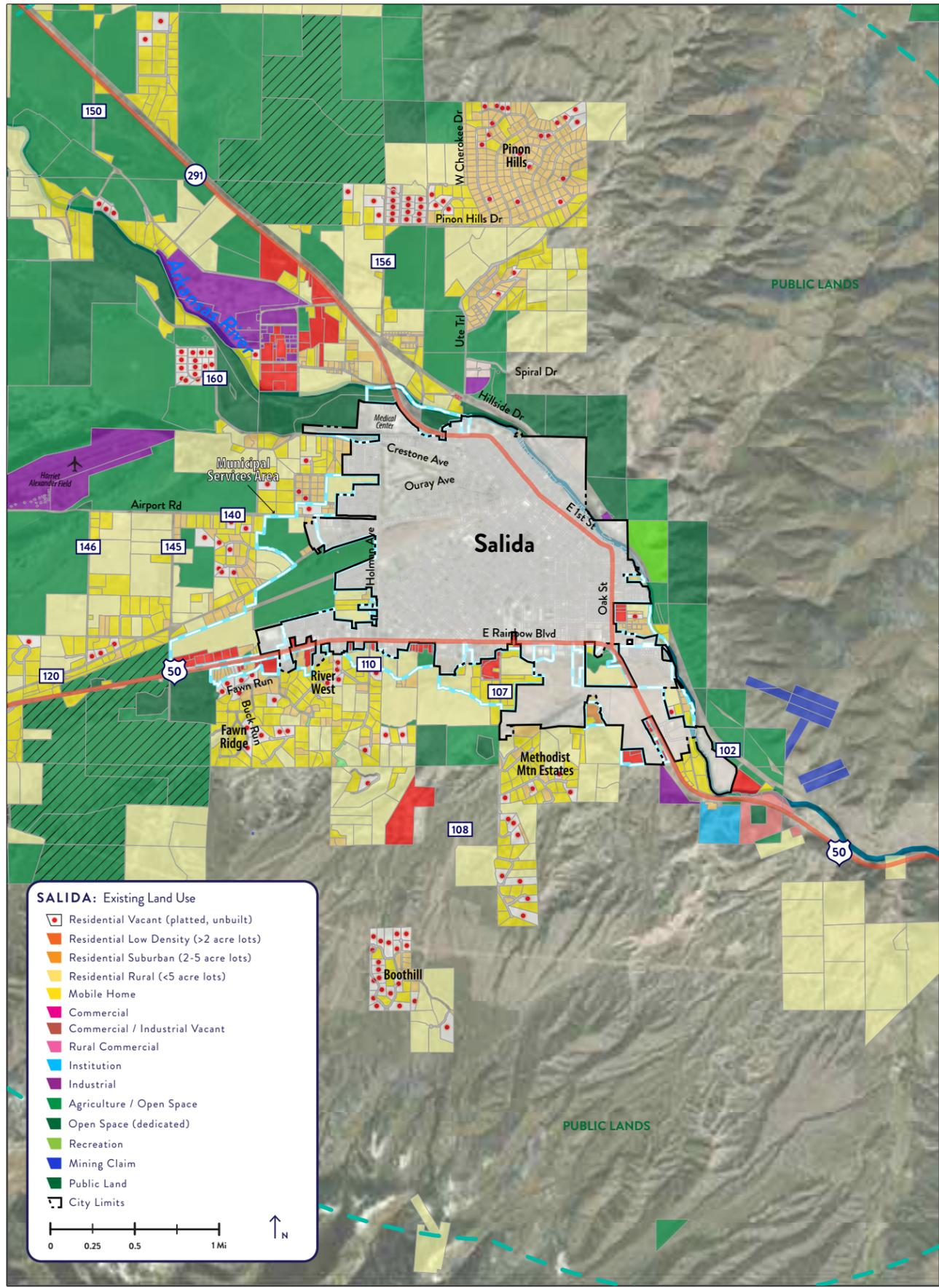


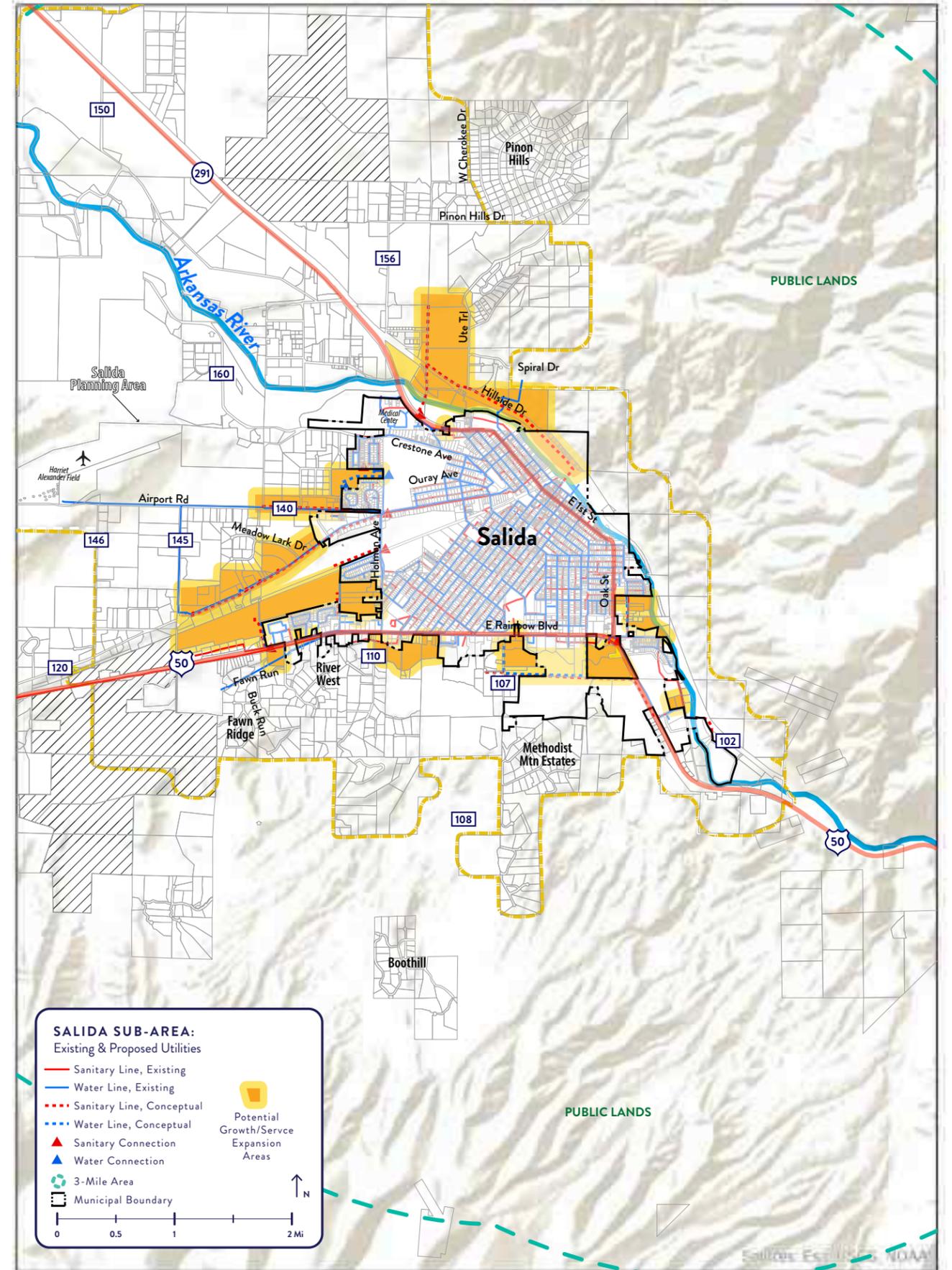
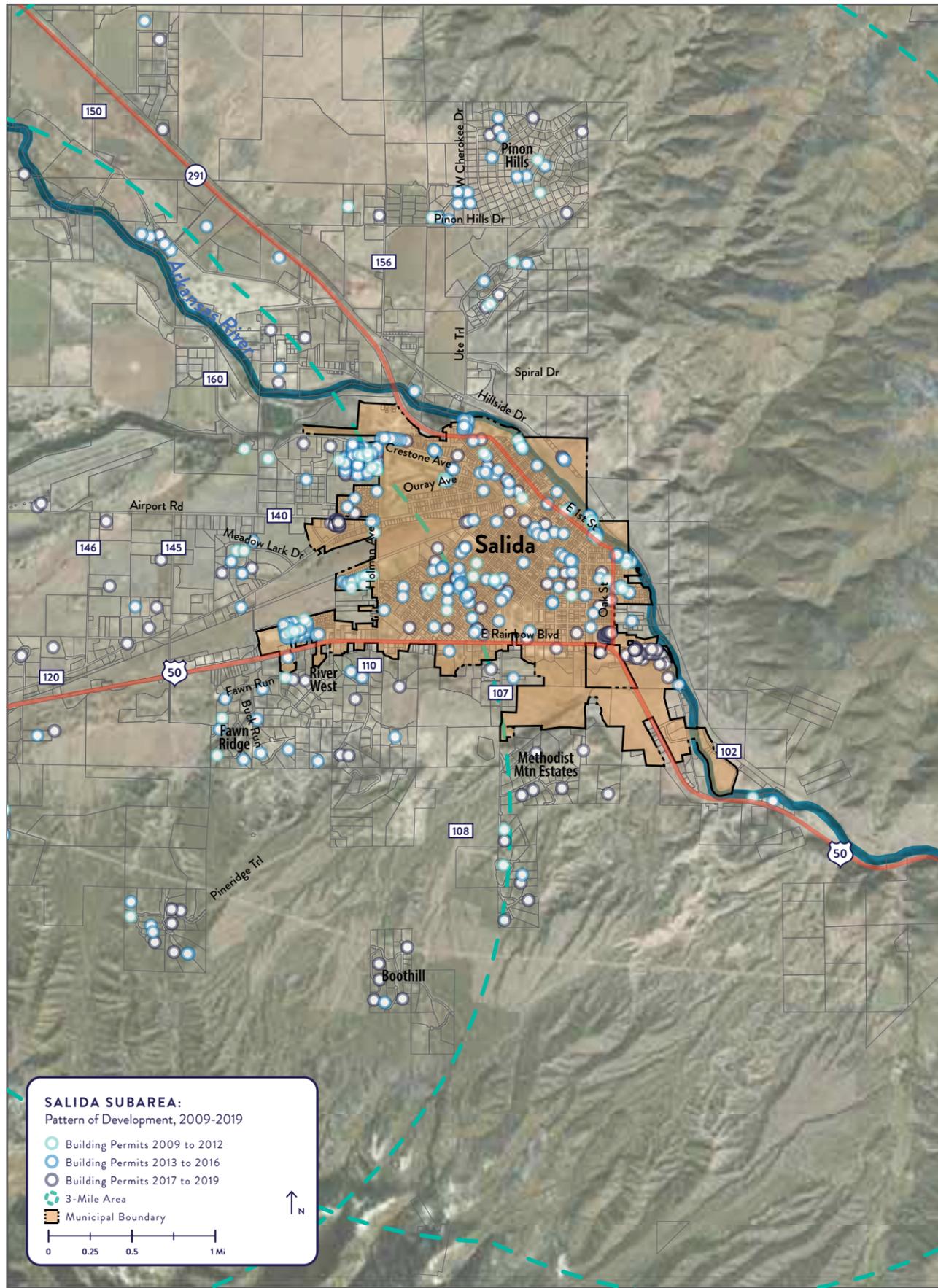
COUNTY ENCLAVE FOCUS AREA

This roughly 30-acre focus area is a wholly-surrounded by the City of Salida and is located at the southern gateway to the City at the junction of US Highway 50 and State Route 291. Further master planning is warranted here due to the strategic location for commercial use and the adjacency to the Vandever Ranch master planned development. A future master plan of this area should anticipate annexation into the municipality.

Considerations for future master planning in this Focus Area should include:

- Ensure future land use consistency with City.
- Evaluate infrastructure provision to potential development in anticipation of annexation.
- Alignment of new rights-of-way including trail and pathway connections as proposed in future transportation plans.
- Feasibility of supplying affordable housing.
- Opportunities for gateway features.
- Floodplain mitigation.





3.7 | Poncha Springs Sub Area Plan



VISION & CHARACTER

- Uniquely nestled at the base of high mountain peaks, Poncha Springs and Maysville celebrate their **small-town character** and offer a variety of landscapes from **open working ranches** to rocky cliff faces.
- Poncha Springs continues to be a welcoming and physically diverse community that is a **safe and affordable** place to live and work as it grows and changes.
- Old and new developments provide a balance of commercial and residential growth to create **walkable neighborhoods** and remain a family and business-friendly community.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Elements of the Poncha Springs/ FLUM include:

- **Mixed Use Corridor** includes the entrances along Highway 50 and is intended to support existing commercial uses located in business and industrial parks. Development in this designation should complement, not detract from the efforts of the Town of Poncha Springs to create commercial centers.
- Tiered residential uses include **Mixed Residential** for land within the Intergovernmental Agreement areas, particularly east of the municipal boundary, where future development and annexation into the municipality is desired and utilities exist or are planned. The next tier includes **Suburban Residential** uses which surround Mixed Residential uses.
- No change in use is envisioned for residential subdivisions with lots under 20 acres in **Rural Residential** or **Rural/Agriculture**.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- The average parcel size in Poncha Springs is 3.2 acres, however they have a form-based development code that enables much smaller lot sizes.
- The South Arkansas River corridor is a long-term target for conservation and many private or municipally owned easements already exist.
- Public land access and recreational trails are underdeveloped around Poncha Springs.
- Expansion of the Town's water supply will likely require a multi-zoned system.

- Intergovernmental coordination between Poncha Springs and the County on land use planning is improving and should continue to develop a shared vision for planned growth.
- County Road 120 traffic is increasing as more people use the road between Poncha and Salida to access businesses located on or near CR 120.
- Maysville wells occasionally run dry.

SUB AREA SPECIFIC POLICIES

While these may also be policies that are relevant throughout the County, these were identified as regional priorities or have greater relevance.

- Work with HOAs on private roadways to balance increasing recreational use with residential traffic, particularly around access to trailheads.
- Conduct a CR 120 Transportation Study.

COUNTY FAIRGROUND FOCUS AREA

This 60-acre, County-owned parcel is adjacent to the Town of Poncha Springs and offers development potential due to its size. A master plan for this site should determine how this parcel could be used in the public's best interest including:

- Affordable housing development
- Rights of way alignments
- Public facilities, such as schools or recreation facilities
- Expansion of uses/facilities that support the County Fair.



County Fairgrounds
Photo: Scott Peterson

HIGHWAY 50 CORRIDOR FOCUS AREA

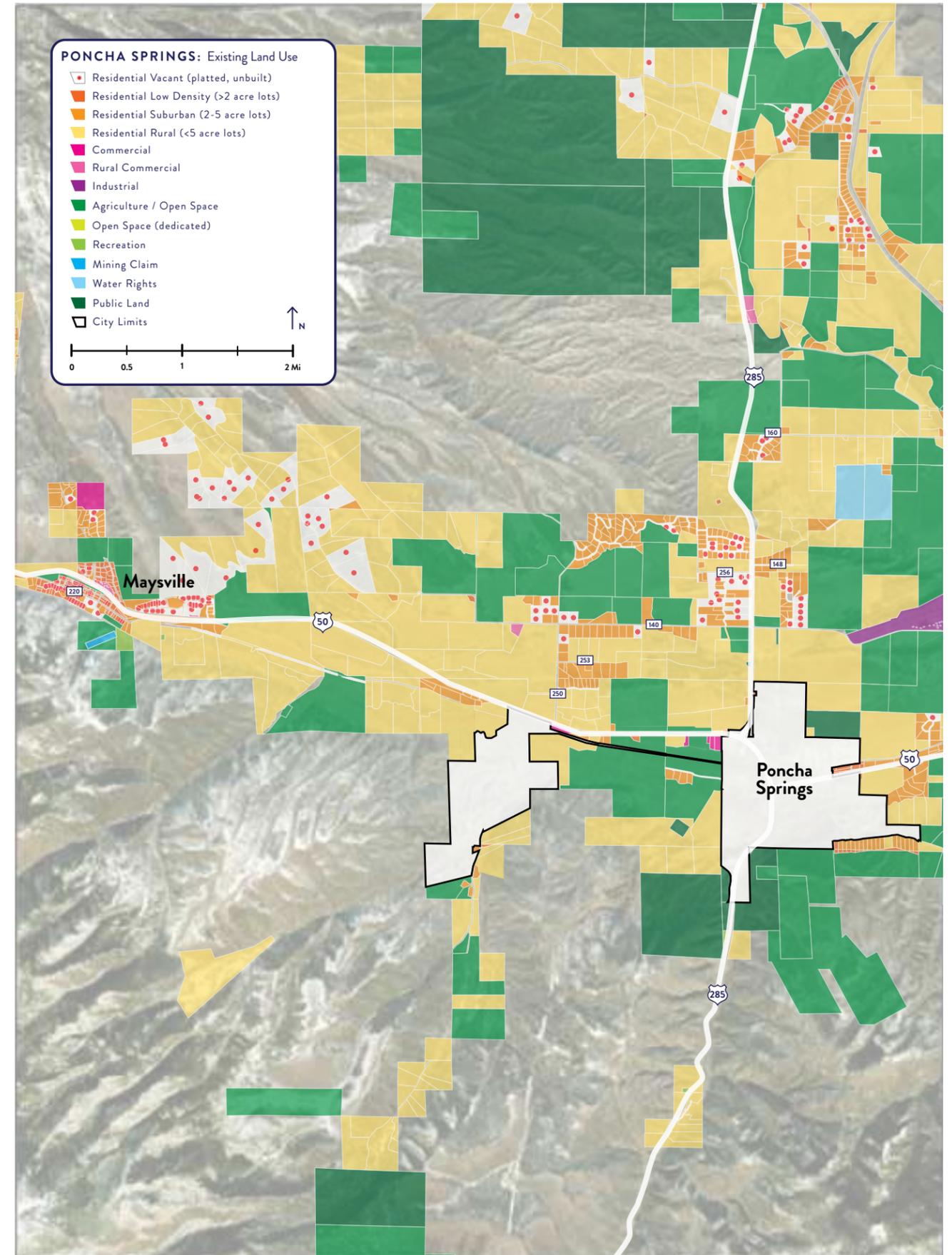
A corridor plan for Highway 50 between Salida and Poncha Springs should address land use and transportation including:

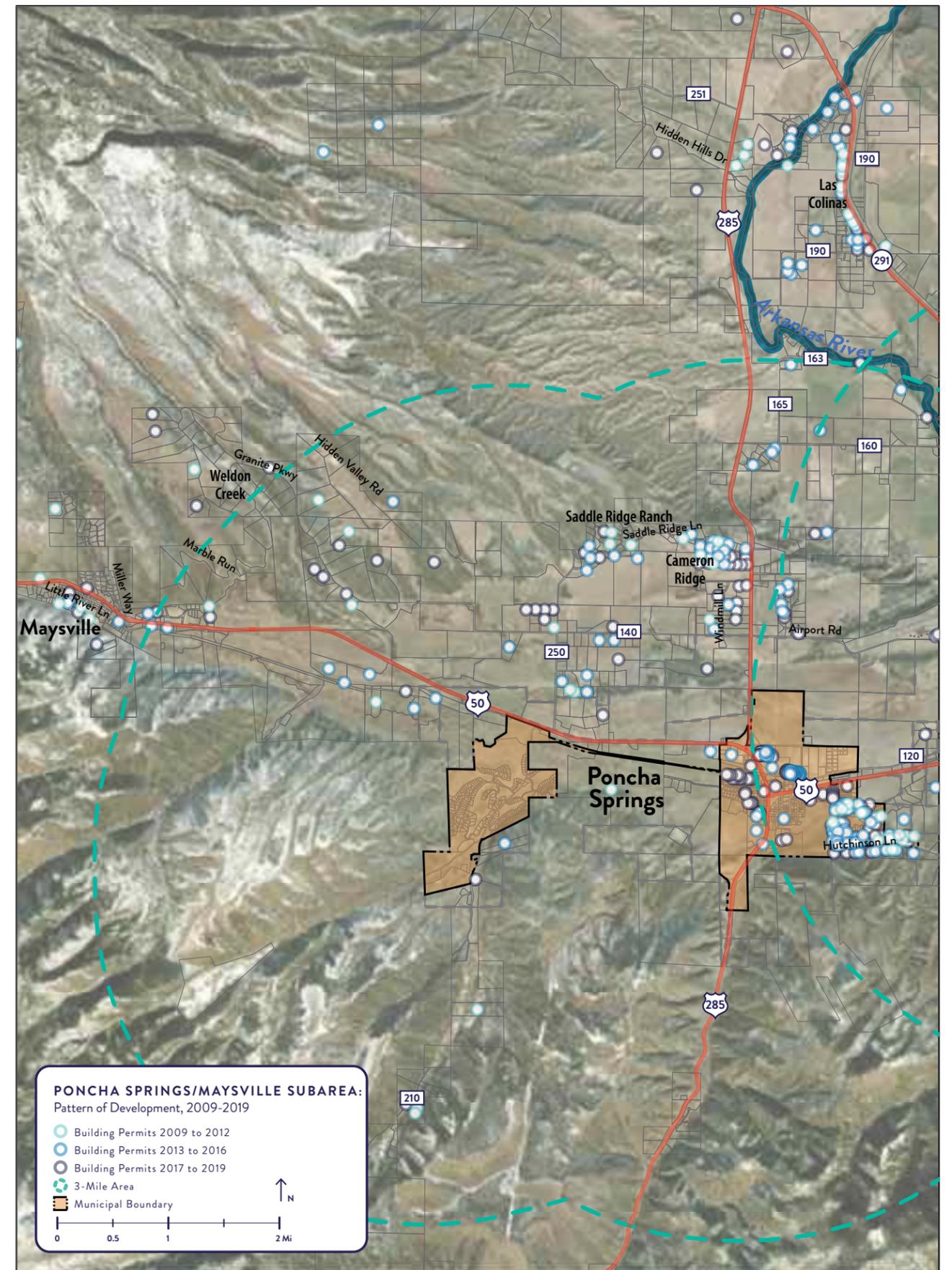
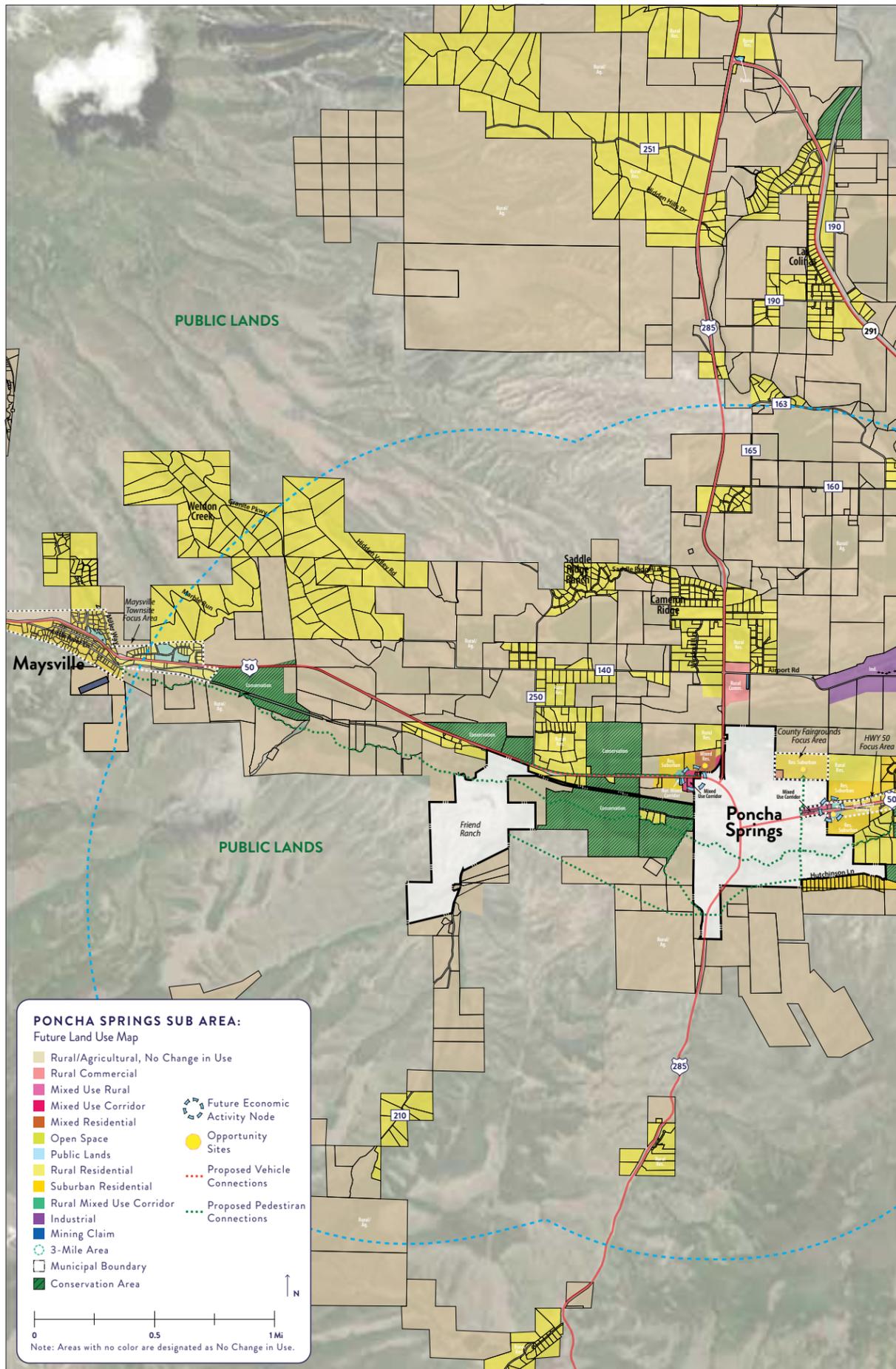
- Directing commercial growth to the highway that does not detract from Salida's or Poncha Springs' desire for town centers.
- Establishes safe pedestrian and vehicle routes, access, and crossings.
- Promotes a distinction between rural and urban uses that emphasizes community gateways for both Salida and Poncha Springs.

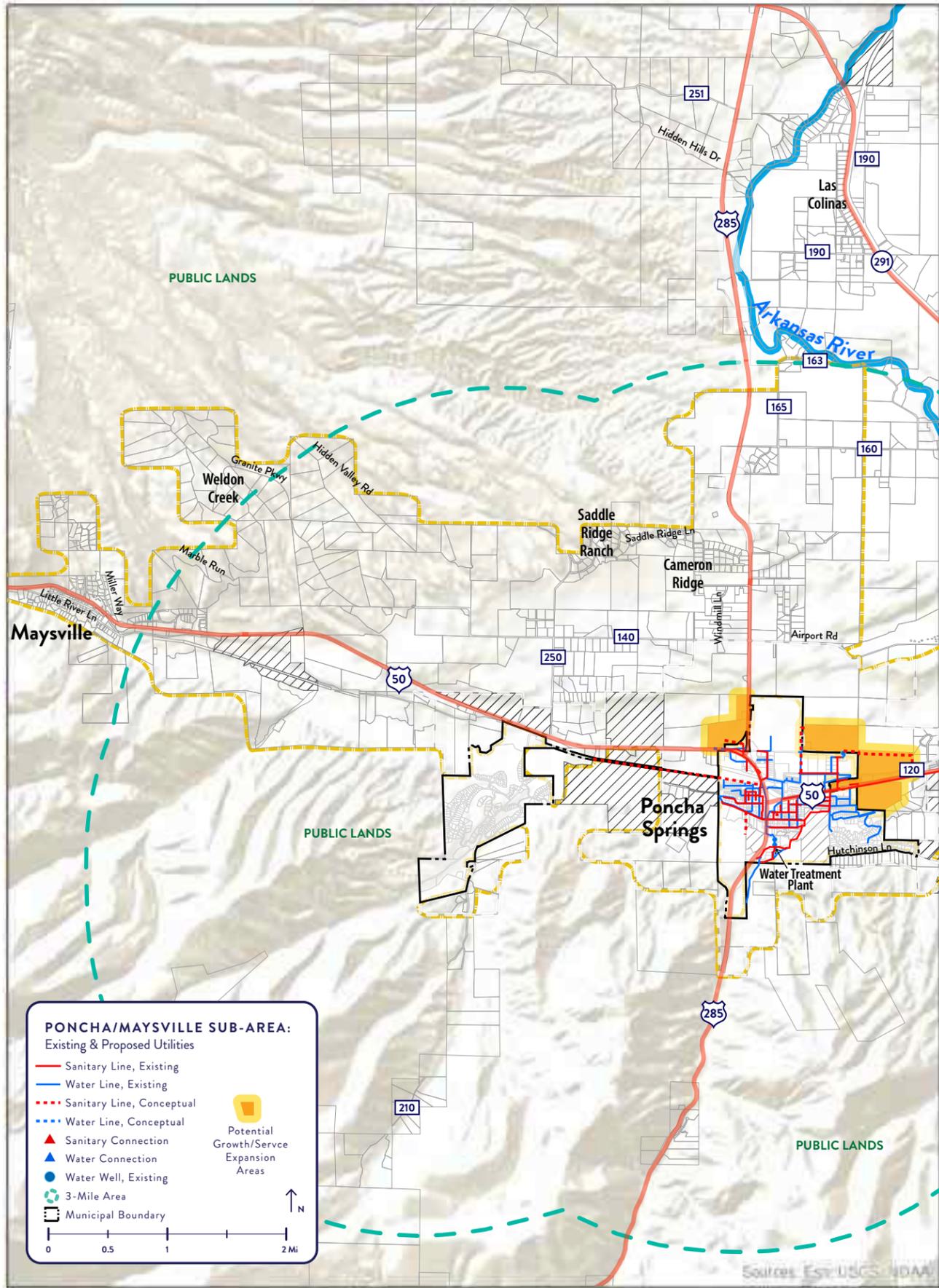
MAYSVILLE TOWNSITE FOCUS AREA

Maysville's townsite residents enjoy the peaceful location and access to the outdoors. Considerations for a neighborhood plan for this area include:

- Assess extent of current infrastructure (roads, water, wastewater, cellular, broadband) to ensure it is adequate and safe for existing residences.
- Understand whether infrastructure improvements would benefit the neighborhood vision for this area and fiscal options for implementation.
- Explore pathway and trail connectivity projects to connect to Poncha Springs and a regional network.







3.8 | Scenario Alternatives



Scenario Planning Process

GROWTH IS GOING TO HAPPEN AND WE HAVE TO HAVE A PLAN AND BE MORE PROGRESSIVE...IF WE DO NOT DO THAT, THE GROWTH WILL STILL HAPPEN, BUT WE WILL NOT HAVE CONTROL OVER IT. GROWTH IS NOT A BAD THING.

— Public Comment

Land use planning scenarios offer a method to assess how different policy decisions can support desired development patterns (Scenario B & C) that are different to the current trend (Scenario A). Both Scenario B and Scenario C shift the balance of development from the current trend to proposed development areas (municipal and/or unincorporated) in order to protect the County's agricultural, ecological, and scenic resources. The discussion of Scenarios resulted in the selection of a Preferred Alternative for Chaffee County that blended Scenario B: Conservation, Corridors, and Connectivity with Scenario C: Growth Focused to Existing Communities.

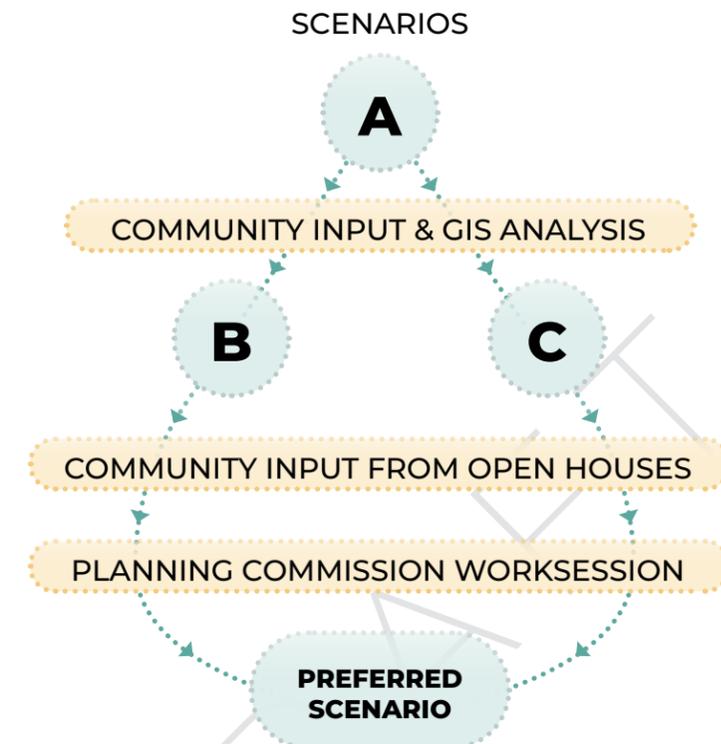
The Preferred Alternative aims to:

- Focus high quality growth near existing communities but acknowledges that until infrastructure capacity and service expansion is possible, there will be limits in the next decade to achieving desired densities and patterns in this alternative.

- Therefore, it allows for well-designed development in unincorporated areas if it meets high quality design and use standards.

The current land use code and planning policies do not support this preferred alternative and therefore a code update is essential. While all the goals, strategies and actions outlined in this comprehensive plan do support achieving this vision, in particular the County needs to prioritize the following:

1. Update the zoning code to ensure a mix of development types at different densities are allowed, as identified in this plan.
2. The regional capacity for implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreements and planning for preferred growth areas is increased.
3. Necessary studies and analyses are done to support infrastructure development that will enable more development in and around the municipalities at greater densities.



4. Resource assessments, maps and plans are completed to inform the development of appropriate subdivision and zoning standards that will protect priority sensitive areas, open lands and community assets.
5. A regional multimodal transportation plan addresses the need for greater road, trail, and pedestrian connectivity.
6. Sites and districts are identified that prioritize and incentivize the development of affordable and attainable housing to support the economy and local workforce.
7. Funding sources are identified that support infrastructure (road, trail, pedestrian, recreation) and affordable housing.

To encourage new development contributing to this vision, the County should include a "Conformance with Preferred Scenario" standard in the land use application review process to make findings on a proposed project's compliance in furthering the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

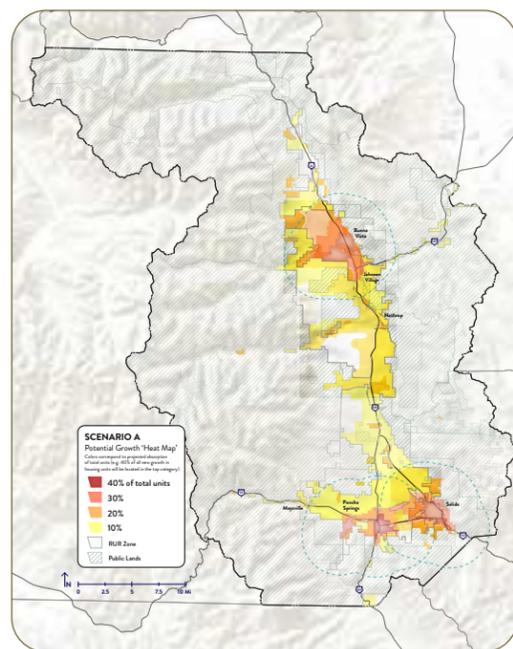
These scenarios were presented for discussion by the public at open houses and results were work shopped at a Planning Commission worksession. No single scenario best captured the County's ideal growth outcome, however key elements from Scenarios B and C were amalgamated into a preferred alternative designed to instill a new framework that resolves key growth management challenges.

Scenario Overviews

Scenario A: Existing Land Use Framework

Description: Scenario A

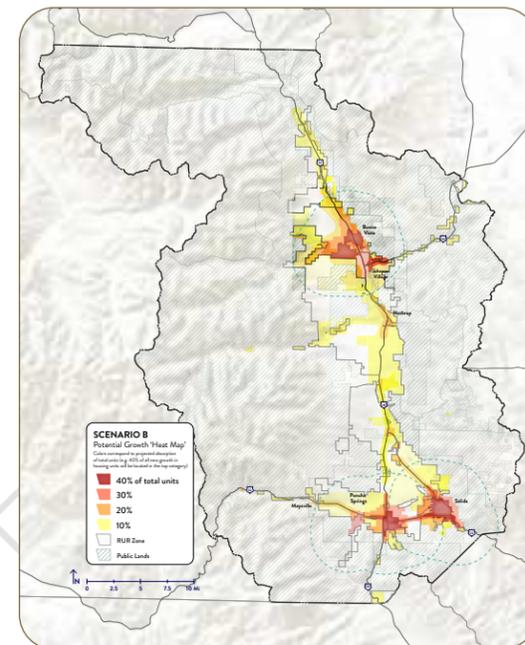
- Continues growth patterns under the existing land use code, zoning map and



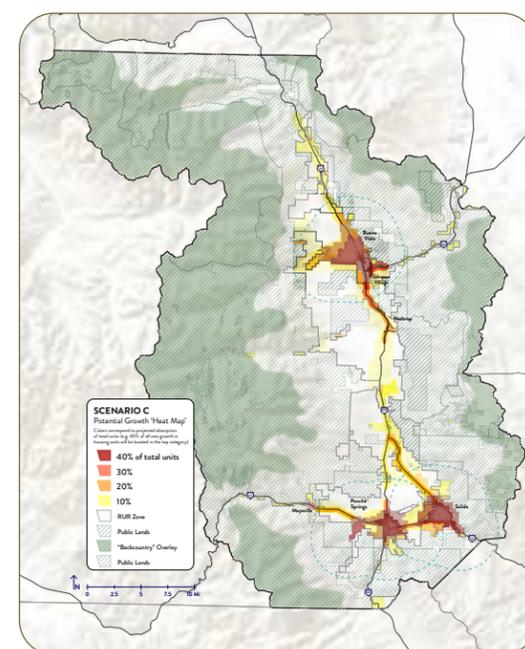
Issues:

- Tools to promote conservation-oriented and well-designed residential development (such as conservation subdivision design standards in unincorporated county) are missing or .
- Land use framework needs additional guidance to allow Staff/Planning Commission/BOCC to make findings that direct growth to existing communities based on community vision.
- Existing zoning allows for range of densities and land use types in unincorporated county.

Scenario B: Conservation, Corridors and Connectivity



Scenario C: Growth Focused to Existing Communities



Scenario B: Aspiration

- Envisions high-quality growth near existing communities and corridors.

Issues Resolved:

- Lack of high-quality and well-located development near existing communities and in proximity to existing infrastructure.

How to Get There:

Strategies/Actions

- 4.2.E:** Reduce highway traffic by promoting active land uses in and near existing communities
- 5.7.W:** Develop "Chaffee County Certified" design guidelines.
- 7.1.B:** Use strategies to incentivize/direct growth to existing communities (density bonuses, cluster developments, conservation development, or other density targeting regulations).
- 7.1.C:** Engage local community members to develop specific area plans.
- 7.3.H:** Create dedicated funding source for aiding municipalities with infrastructure and annexation.

Scenario C: Aspiration

- Envisions improved growth management standards to promote well-designed subdivisions in the unincorporated county through good design and rural county preservation

Issues Resolved:

- Haphazard rural subdivision location
- Lack in quality subdivision design in rural areas
- Provides preservation tools for environmentally sensitive areas and elsewhere in the rural county.

How to Get There:

Strategies/Actions

- 5.1.D:** Collaborate with landowners on preservation strategies.
- 5.6.R:** Develop wildlife conservation map.
- 7.1.B:** Look at what peer communities are doing to incentivize good subdivision design.
- 7.2.E:** Identify incentives to adopt into the land use code that support planned development and resource protection.
- 7.2.G:** Consider integrating visual resource with an environmentally-important lands overlay.

Preferred Scenario

Preferred Scenario: Aspiration

- Focuses high-quality growth near existing communities.
- Allows for development in unincorporated county if it meets advanced design and use standards.

Recommendations for Implementation:

Strategies/Actions

- Implement all Strategies and Actions from Scenarios B and C.
- Establish a Natural Resources Overlay Land Use District through Envision Chaffee and HDGP Grant through revision to the Chaffee County Land Use Code to:
 - Identify lands viable for preservation through an environmental resources study.
 - Map such areas and initiate a public review process.
 - Officially adopt overlay as part of land use code revision.
- Though intergovernmental coordination, designate Opportunity Sites for envisioning future growth, including affordable and workforce housing.
- Explore designating targeted areas near existing municipalities for desired development.
- Incorporate a "Conformance with Preferred Scenario" commentary into the land use application review process to make findings on a project's applicability in furthering the Preferred Scenario's vision.

Scenario A:

EXISTING LAND USE FRAMEWORK

Within the Existing Land Use Framework Scenario, future growth and land development would occur within the density, design and character standards as currently regulated by the zoning and subdivision code.

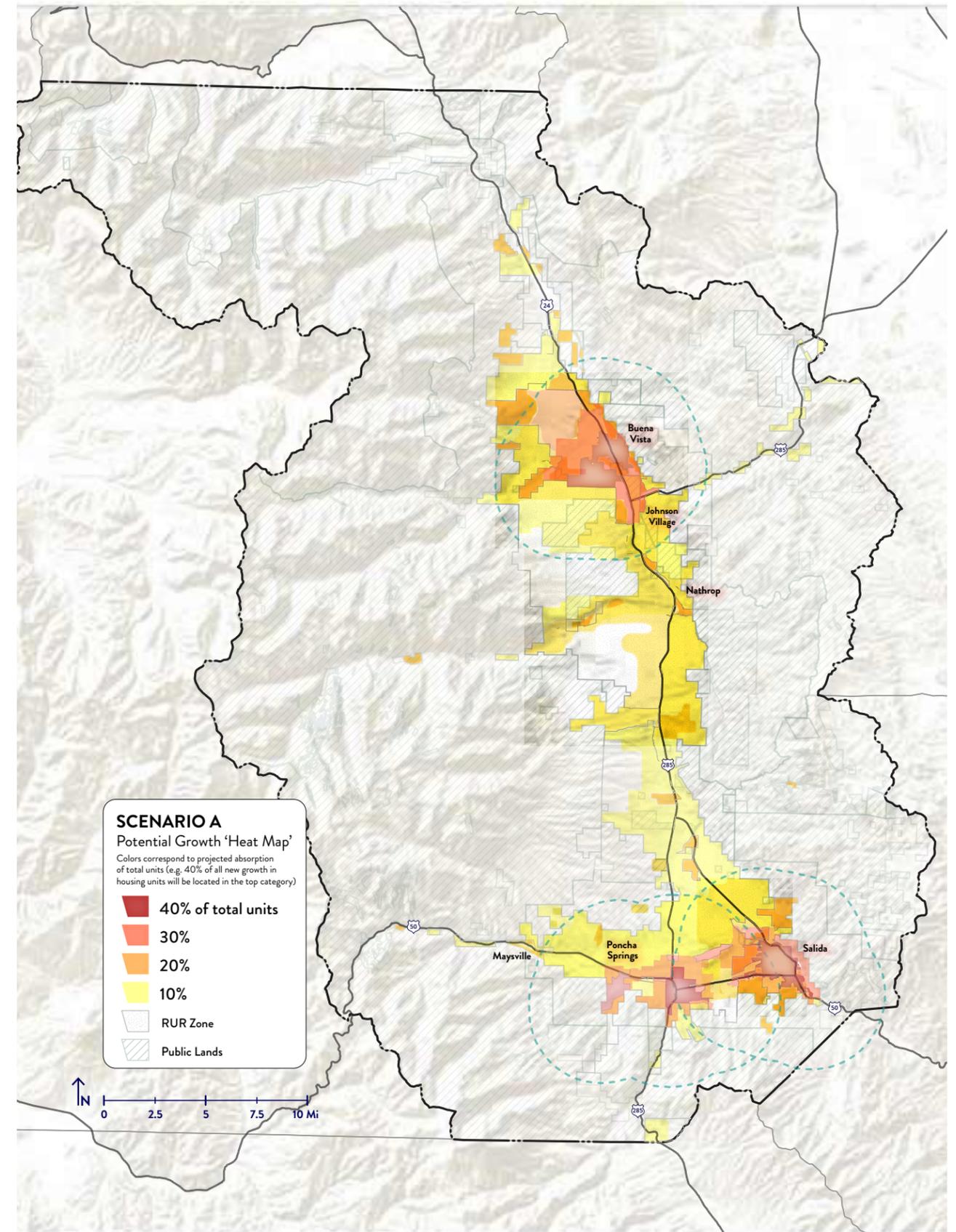
Outcome Objectives:

Based on existing trends, by 2030, 50% of all new and existing households in unincorporated areas will be within a half mile (comparable to a 20 minute walk) of a main street center, corridor, or neighborhood center with access to goods and services to meet some of their daily needs. This is compared to about 40% percent in 2020.

Policy Considerations:

- Maintain existing minimum lot sizes across all zone districts.
- Continue growth management practices that increase density for residential development that includes public water and sanitation (rather than single on-site treatment).
- Assumes continued build-out of platted but unbuilt parcels in existing subdivisions will occur.
- Development within 400 feet of existing infrastructure should make a reasonable attempt to connect to the existing system.
- Continuation of County/Town coordination through intergovernmental agreements.

- Considers infill within municipal boundaries will occur at an equivalent rate to in unincorporated areas.
- Land occupied by new development will spread throughout intergovernmental agreement areas with municipalities and new land formerly in agriculture will be further subdivided.



Scenario B:

CONSERVATION, CORRIDORS & CONNECTIVITY

The Conservation, Corridors and Connectivity Scenario considered a consistent amount of housing units and rate of absorption and growth rate as Scenario A but generally conserves the highest-value landscapes—whether for preservation, recreation or otherwise—according to environmental conditions and community values as expressed in the input process. This includes agricultural and working landscapes, scenic areas, high flood, fire or fluvial hazard areas, or critical wildlife habitat.

The intention of this Scenario was to illustrate a moderate shift in land use patterns from continued subdivision of formerly unplatted land to directed growth toward places where existing transportation, water, sanitation infrastructure and amenities currently exist.

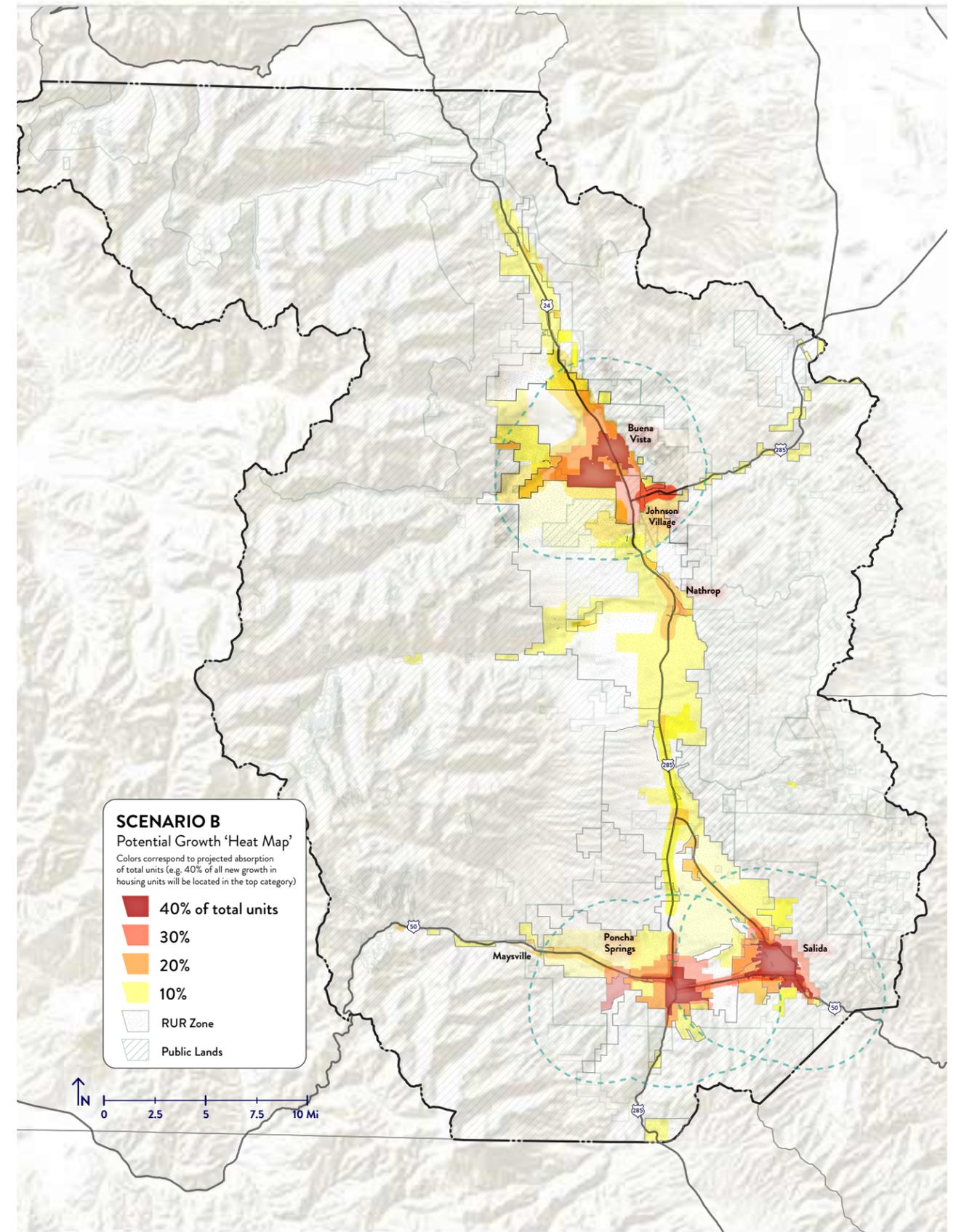
Outcome Objectives:

By 2030, 60% of all new and existing households in unincorporated growth areas will be within a half mile (comparable to a 20 minute walk) of a main street center, corridor, or neighborhood center with access to goods and services to meet some of their daily needs. This is compared to about 40% percent in 2020.

Between 2020 and 2030, 25% of new housing will locate in rural areas. Rural areas are defined as outside of the cities, towns, unincorporated urban growth areas (e.g. more than 10 minutes driving time from an incorporated place).

Policy Considerations:

- Adjust location of RUR zone district.
- Allowable density increase in targeted areas near transportation network, job/activity nodes, adjacent to municipalities and infrastructure.
- Encourage denser housing types like duplex, townhomes, multi-story apartments in these areas.
- Identifies Opportunity Sites for envisioning future growth that meets the public vision, including affordable/workforce housing.
- Includes incentives for density if affordable housing is built over targeted unit counts (e.g. inclusionary land use regulations for affordable housing).
- Introduction of potential locations for affordable/workforce housing on Future Land Use Map as well as strategic actions to supply such housing on the respective properties.



Scenario C:

GROWTH FOCUSED TO MUNICIPAL AREAS AND EXISTING COUNTY VILLAGES

Scenario C is an outcome where the land use regulatory framework only permit low density, large-lot development in outlying unincorporated areas and strongly incentivizes development in and near municipalities that would be annexed, or to existing unincorporated villages such as Nathrop or Johnson Village. In discussion at Open Houses, Scenario C was favored by the public.

Outcome Objectives:

By 2030, 75% of all new and existing households in unincorporated growth areas are envisioned to be within a half mile (comparable to a 20 minute walk) of a main street center, corridor, or neighborhood center with access to goods and services to meet some of their daily needs. This is compared to about 40% percent in 2020.

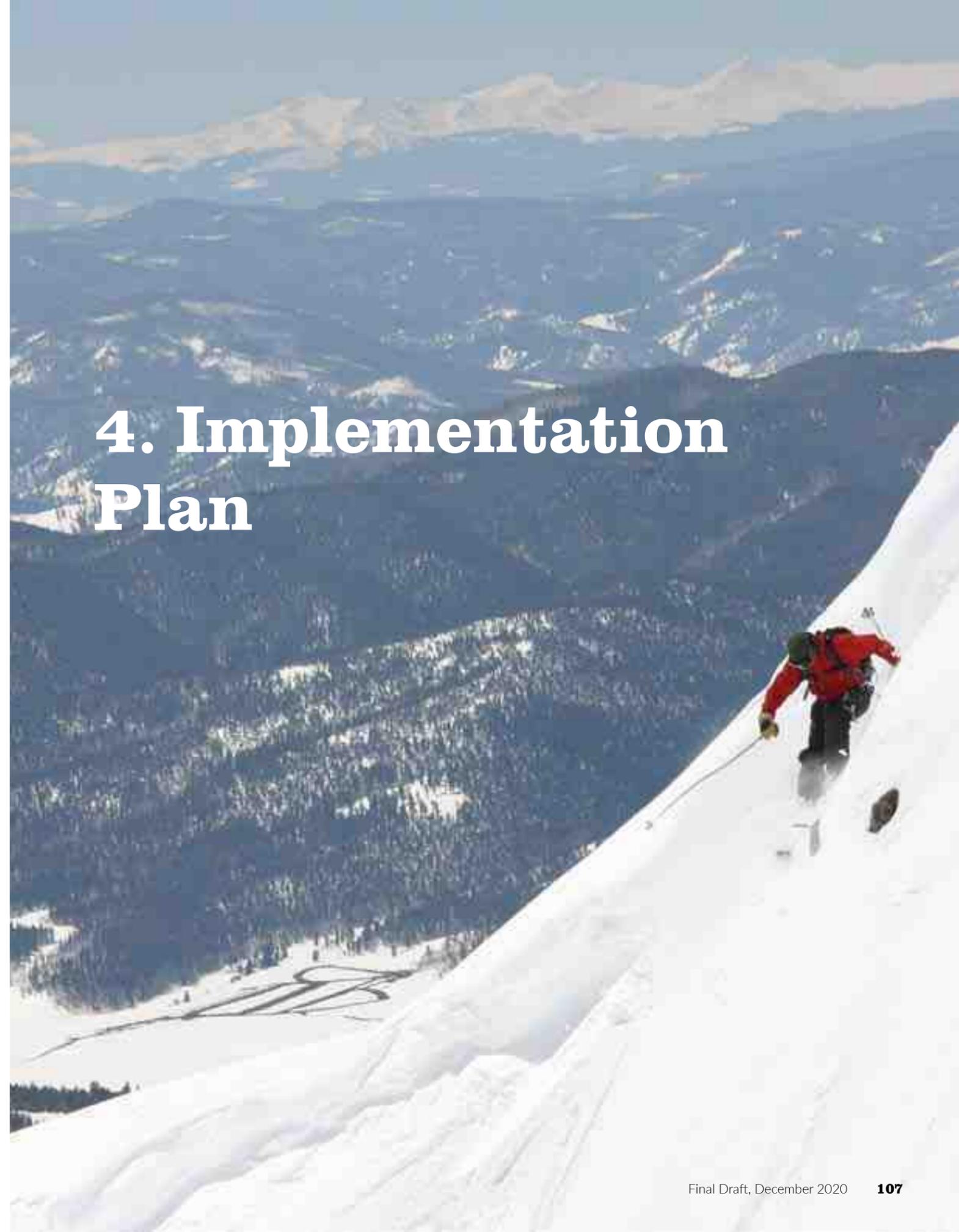
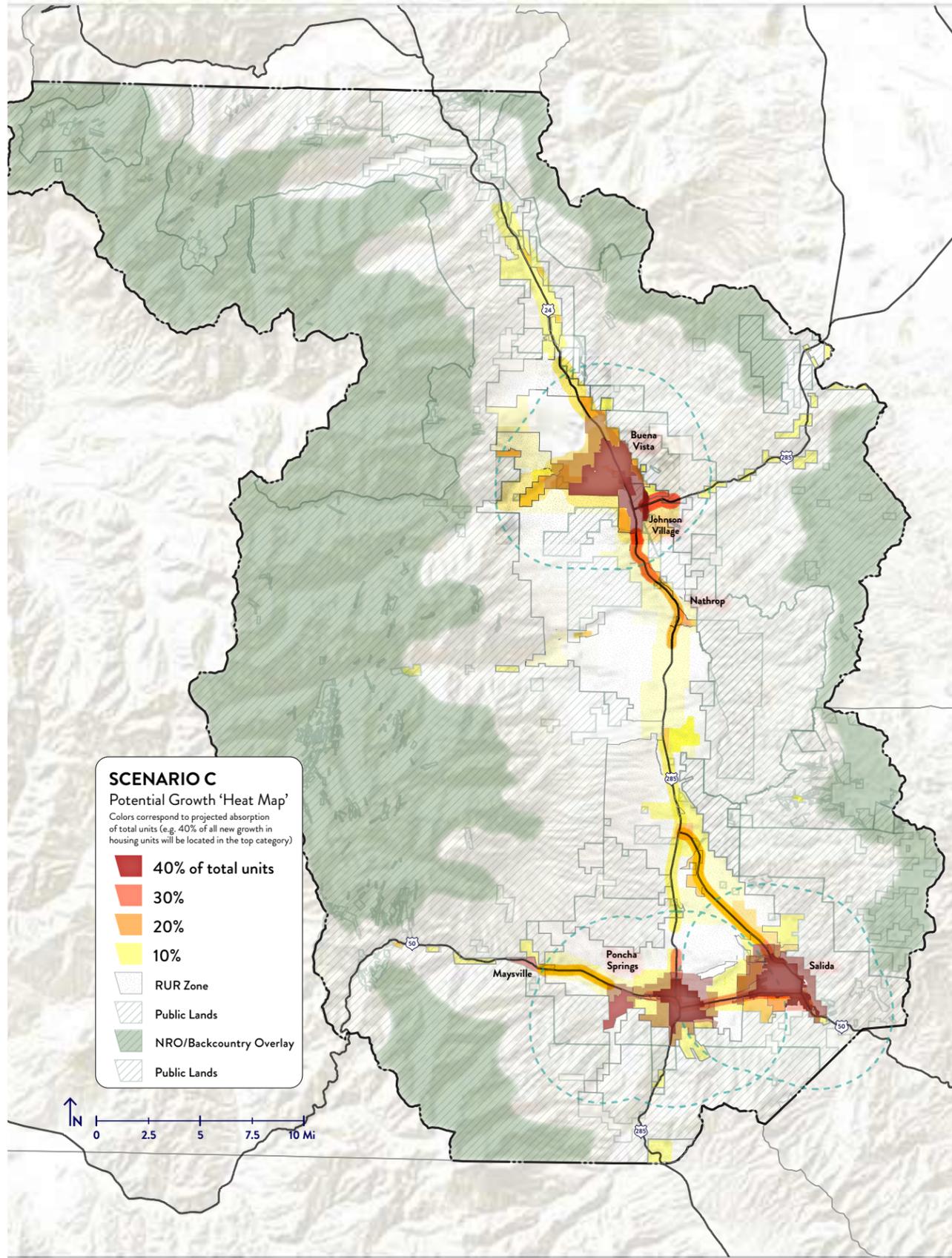
Between 2020 and 2030, 15% of new housing is envisioned to locate in rural areas. Rural areas are defined as outside of the cities, towns, unincorporated urban growth areas (e.g. more than 10 minutes driving time from an incorporated place). Municipalities, through annexation and intergovernmental coordination with the County will absorb the majority of new and existing households through continued annexation into planning areas as defined in

inter-governmental agreements and three-mile plans.

Policy Considerations:

- Consider increase of minimum lot sizes in RUR zone.
- Adjustment of RUR zone district location through map amendment.
- Increase minimum lot sizes in transitional residential/agricultural interface areas where RUR and RES zones are adjacent.
- Incorporation of a Natural Resource Overlay (NRO) areas or “Backcountry” land use overlay on select REC and public lands. Several counties in Colorado have adopted similar land use codes along with a mechanism such as transfer of development rights to ensure equitable transfers.
- Address mining claim land uses: Develop a structure that allows the transfer of development rights from mining claims “sending areas” to receiving areas that the County would not be responsible for/ taxpayers would not be burdened with in the case of a wildfire.
- Establish targeted areas for Affordable/ Workforce Housing based on Opportunity Sites on future land use map. This designation acts as a land use overlay in conjunction with bonuses for number of units supplied.

- Incorporate a development scorecard in the review process to establish criteria for density increases in targeted areas. These criteria may include sites near transportation or trail network, job/activity nodes, adjacent to municipalities, and proximity to existing infrastructure.
- Duplex, townhomes, multi-story apartments encouraged in areas adjacent to municipalities with anticipation of annexation.
- Identifies Opportunity Sites for County partnerships in supplying affordable/ workforce housing as well as actions or incentives to supplying housing in strategic areas.
- Includes incentives for density if affordable housing is built over targeted unit counts particularly robust inclusionary zoning in select zone districts to be determined after community input.
- Specifies density “Target Areas” near municipalities desired for growth where the County supports and directs resources to housing projects that supply affordable/ workforce units. These areas will be annexed into the municipalities.
- Considers revising intergovernmental agreements specific to annexation for consistency with future land use maps.
- Suggests partnering with municipalities to share costs of infrastructure to attract desired development, particularly affordable/ workforce housing on designated Opportunity Sites.
- Adopt Conservation Subdivision Design Standards.



4. Implementation Plan

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The Implementation Matrix below organizes Action Steps that are associated with Strategies that are found in Section 2. Included are project initiation timeframe goals, as well as organizational lead and estimated cost. This is a living document that will be updated on the Together Chaffee website as more time is spent refining implementation.

Each Action Step's corresponding Goal and Strategy is linked in the "Ref" column.

\$ = Under \$100,000

\$\$ = \$100,000 - \$5 Million

\$\$\$ = Over \$5 Million

1. PEOPLE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
1.1, A	Facilitate opportunities for inclusive community-building events, such as a Chaffee Heritage Day Celebration.			
1.1, A	Facilitate communication of community events through a central events calendar /County Visitors Bureau.			
1.1, A	Seek opportunities to introduce diversity and encourage inclusive behaviors in the County conversation.	Full Circle Restorative Justice		
1.1, A	Address harm, crime and conflict in the community in ways that build community, integrate all those impacted, serve victims and increase public safety.	Full Circle Restorative Justice		
1.1, B	Assess the needs of all residents in Chaffee County, particularly vulnerable or underserved groups in our region.	Chaffee County Equity Coalition		
1.1, B	Provide/facilitate access to essential County functions particularly to overcome communication barriers.			
1.1, B	Raise awareness of the cultural contributions to our County by diverse communities.			
1.1, B	Promote inclusivity in all county functions and activities, so as to be welcoming to all faiths and belief systems.	Chaffee County Equity Coalition		
1.1, B	Address issues of isolation and deficient services.			
1.2, D	Support arts education for all ages and arts organizations that promote and offer arts education throughout the County.			
1.2, D	Form a County-wide collaborative to represent the arts and creative communities.	Chaffee County Community Foundation		
1.2, D	Support and promote young creative artists.			
1.2, D	Acknowledge the financial contribution that the creative arts make to the economy of Chaffee County.			

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
1.3, E	Maximize use of existing facilities and coordination with municipalities for health, wellness, and fitness activities.			
1.3, F	Support the Chaffee County Health Coalition with implementation actions to address community health issues.	Chaffee County Public Health	Short & ongoing	\$
1.3, F	Update the Community Health Improvement Plan.	Chaffee County Public Health	Medium & ongoing	\$
1.3, F	In partnership with diverse stakeholders launch an awareness campaign of the effects of behaviors that negatively affect health and the availability of preventive health services.	Chaffee County Public Health	Short & ongoing	\$
1.3, F	Foster a working relationship between Chaffee County Public Health and the Planning Commission to share expertise and resources to achieve shared goals.	Chaffee County Public Health	Short & ongoing	\$
1.3, F	Work with CCPH to develop an orientation for new PC members on the interconnections between land use planning and public health.	Chaffee County Public Health	Short & ongoing	\$
1.3, F	Review and adopt recommendations from the Chaffee County Food Assessment.	Guidestone, CCHED		
1.3, F	Support the Chaffee Local Foods Coalition's work to build a resilient food system and food access.	Guidestone, CCHED		
1.4, H	Evaluate assets and needs of seniors in areas such as parks and public spaces, housing, community participation, respect and social inclusion, communication and information, community and health and in-home services, and grief support services.	Chaffee County Public Health	Short & ongoing	\$
1.4, H	Financially and culturally support community organizations that serve seniors.	Senior Master Plan, CCPH	Short & ongoing	\$
1.4, H	Support the Chaffee County Early Childcare Council recommendations for expanding childcare access in the county by addressing facilities needs.	Chaffee County Early Childhood Council	Short & ongoing	\$\$\$
1.5, K	Support the Chaffee County Early Childcare Council recommendations for expanding childcare access in the county by addressing staffing needs.	Chaffee County Early Childhood Council	Short & ongoing	\$\$
1.5, K	Support the Chaffee County Early Childcare Council recommendations for expanding childcare access in the county by supporting economic viability of childcare providers.	Chaffee County Early Childhood Council	Short & ongoing	\$
1.5, K	Support new centers and childcare homes through the licensing process.	Chaffee County Early Childhood Council	Short & ongoing	
1.5, L	Assess needs for health services in the schools.	BV & Salida School Districts	Short	
1.5, L	Implement services to meet the needs identified in the health services for schools assessment.	BV & Salida School Districts		

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
1.5, L	Support extracurricular youth programming.	BV & Salida School Districts		
1.6, N	Support and encourage local community volunteer organizations.	CCCF		
1.6, N	Encourage and facilitate participation and public engagement in community projects.	CCCF		
1.7, Q	Perform facilities needs assessments and capital improvements planning to ensure serving needs are being accommodated in proportion with the pace of growth.			
1.8, R	Conduct a county wide assessment of vulnerable individuals and their need.	Human Services		
1.8, R	Conduct an inventory of available services for vulnerable populations.	Human Services		
1.8, R	Strengthen outreach systems and a central coordinated access point to information about accessing services.	CCPH	Short & ongoing	
1.8, R	Partner with and financially support entities uniquely positioned to assess community member needs and provide advocacy and support for victims and survivors.	Full Circle Restorative Justice		
1.8, R	Provide funding as necessary to public agencies and resources that provide services to crime victims, the incarcerated, unhoused, etc.			
1.8, R	Prepare for anticipated stresses on all support systems that will occur due to anticipated population increase.	Full Circle Restorative Justice		
1.9, V	Assess which County services are vulnerable to future financial strain.	County Planning Department		
1.9, V	Conduct an impact fee study for services or facilities affected by growth.	County Planning Department		
1.9, V	Perform capital improvement plans and facility assessments to ensure adequate facilities and staffing needs are accounted for.	County Planning Department		
1.9, V	Enhance systems for civic participation in local governance.			

2. COUNTY CHARACTER

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
2.1, A	Support the development and execution of the RIB's Chaffee County Recreation and Resource Protection Plan.	Envision	Short	Funded
2.1, B	Develop appropriate master plans, such as a County-wide Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan, that are amendments to the comprehensive plan and guide land use decision making and investments.	Envision	Short	Funded

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
2.1, B	Envision Chaffee County will facilitate development and implementation of the Chaffee Recreation Plan, with leadership by an in-place Chaffee Recreation Council including top leaders from all land management agencies, municipal governments, county and community. The plan is fully funded and in progress for 2021 completion, followed by implementation.	Envision	Short	Funded
2.1, B	Map all existing recreation and tourism-related lodging and services to identify current areas of focused commercial activity	Envision	Short	Funded
2.1, B	Promote clustering of future tourism-related lodging in the land use code update to minimize impacts on residential or agricultural areas.			
2.1, B	Communicate Chaffee Recreation Plan and the Recreation Suitability Map when complete to the group working on the Trails Master Plan (the Rec Plan should act as a precursor).	Envision	Short	Funded
2.1, B	Ensure all resulting map data and modelling is communicated to PC for use in development planning.	Envision	Short	Funded
2.1, C	Support organizations that provide access opportunities for individuals, youth, and families who are typically unable to enjoy the outdoors.	CCPH	Long	
2.2, E	Update the Chaffee County historic structures and sites inventory.	CCHAAB	Medium	\$\$
2.2, E	Identify and nominate properties for National Historic Register designation.	CCHAAB	Medium	\$
2.2, E	Collaborate with property owners on preservation strategies.	CCHAAB	Medium	
2.2, D	Appoint a Planning Commissioner, County Commissioner, or staff to represent the County on the CCHAAB.	County Planning Department	Short	No cost
2.2, F	Raise awareness of historic structures and sites.	CCHAAB	Long	\$\$
2.2, F	Support CCHAAB with enhancing collaboration and coordination amongst regional organizations working on protection of community assets such as, Buena Vista Heritage, Salida Museum, Salida Historic Preservation Committee, Hutchinson Homestead & Learning, Salida Area Parks, Open Space & Trails.	CCHAAB	Long	\$\$\$
2.2, F	Provide funding for promotion of county heritage historic sites and events.	CCHAAB	Short	\$
2.2, F	Support historical and cultural education in local schools.	CCHAAB	Long	\$\$
2.2, G	Support updates to the Chaffee County Heritage Area & Collegiate Peaks Scenic and Historic Byways Management Plan. (SHBMP)	CCHAAB	Short	\$\$
2.2, G	Integrate the SHBMP into local and regional economic development plans.	County/CCVB/CCEDC	Medium	\$
2.2, G	Align trail and transportation corridor design and development with the SHBMP.	County Planning Department	Long	\$\$
2.2, G	Integrate the updated SHBMP recommendations into the County's land use code update.	County Planning Department	Long	\$

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
2.2, H	Provide education for new residents and visitors on the value of agricultural lands and how to support them.	CCC, Upper Ark Conservation District, Envision	Medium	\$
2.2, H	Support agricultural producers to be sustainable, with consideration of impacts to agriculture in code (tax code, land use code), enforcement of the Chaffee County Right to Ranch policy and support for programs that help brand and promote local agricultural products.	Envision, Chaffee County Right to Ranch, Guidestone, PC	Medium	\$
2.2, H	Involve an agricultural representative in the Chaffee Recreation Plan to ensure it considers impacts of recreation to rancher operations.	Envision	Short	\$
2.3	Review and amend development regulations related to subdivisions to achieve consistency with County plans for public land access, trail easements, open space dedications as well as municipal standards in urban growth areas.	Planning Commission	Short	\$
2.3	Develop a GIS map of potential mining areas by conducting an assessment of geology, mining claims, and mining rights to inform the update to the land use code.			

3. AFFORDABLE & INCLUSIVE HOUSING

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
3.1, A	Support the soon to be created Chaffee Housing Authority by meeting financial commitments and participation by County leadership.	Elected officials, appointed officials, and municipal staff	Short	\$\$\$
3.1, A	Designate the Chaffee Housing Authority as the public entity to represent Chaffee County in affordable housing projects.	Elected officials, appointed officials, and municipal staff	Short initially	\$
3.1, A	Update the Regional Housing Assessment every 5 years.	Housing Authority	Short	\$\$
3.1, A	Use the Chaffee Housing Authority Strategic Plan and Regional Housing Assessment to periodically measure progress in achieving regional goals for affordable housing.	Housing Authority, with input from other housing entities	Medium	\$
3.1, B	Incentivize housing for low- and moderate-income households in designated districts using tools such as: fee reductions, density bonuses, and expedited approval.	Elected officials, appointed officials, and municipal staff	Short	\$
3.1, B	Research applicability of a County-wide inclusionary zoning ordinance for major subdivisions.	Elected officials, appointed officials, and municipal staff	Medium	\$
3.1, B	Refer to the Chaffee Housing Authority's Strategic Plan to align land use policies between the County and municipalities to support the production of affordable housing.	Housing Authority, HPAC to convene parties to draft policies	Medium	\$
3.1, B	Help fund and facilitate a County-wide study on vacation rentals and the feasibility of an impact fee to contribute to affordable housing projects	Housing Authority	Short	\$

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
3.1, B	Fast track approval of plans for continuum of care services facilities and affordable housing for seniors near municipalities	County staff		
3.1, B	Research and adopt zoning and development standards within designated districts that permit different housing types including duplexes, multiplex, tiny homes, ADUs, etc. as use by right.	Planning Collaborative (convened by HA)	Medium	\$
3.1, C	Build support for an affordable housing development and preservation fund.	Housing Authority & HPAC	Short	\$
3.1, C	Create a local impact investment structure to facilitate local investment in affordable housing development.	Housing Authority & CCCF	Short	\$
3.1, D	Identify potential contributions to the acquisition, rehabilitation or development of existing and/or new affordable developments.	Elected officials, appointed officials, & municipal staff		
3.1, D	Acquire and bank land and/or structures for future development, redevelopment, or financial equity.	Housing Authority	Short	\$\$\$
3.1, D	Identify potential contributions to the acquisition, rehabilitation or development of existing and/or new affordable developments	Elected officials, appointed officials, & municipal staff	Short initially	\$\$\$
3.1, D	Identify potential financial contributions to development costs of public private partnerships which result in permanent or long-term affordability	Elected officials, appointed officials, & municipal staff	Short initially	\$\$\$
3.1, D	Promote, facilitate and contribute to public private partnerships for the development of affordable housing	Housing Authority	Short initially	\$\$\$

4. CONNECTIVITY, MOBILITY & ACCESS

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
4.1, A	Task the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) with development of the CCMTF.	TAB, Planning Manager	Short	\$\$
4.1, D	Task the TAB with development of a Five-Year Sustainable Funding Plan with add-a-year/drop-a-year updates annually to the Board of County Commissioners.	TAB, Planning Manager	Medium	
4.2, E	Involve County Sheriff and emergency service agencies in the planning, building and the everyday use of County airports, roads, freight routes, transit routes and bike and pedestrian trails to reduce user conflict and increase public safety.	TAB, BoCC, County Staff, Sheriff's Office	Medium	
4.2, E	Reduce vehicle trips on highways by promoting telecommunication, active land uses in and near existing communities, enhancing access to employment, recreation, public events, services and businesses by use of public transportation and other multimodal options.	TAB, County staff	Medium	
4.2, E	Identify areas with safety hazards and explore ways to improve safety and comfort. Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects to promote safe nonvehicular commuting.	TAB, County staff, local communities	Medium	

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
4.2, E	Improve County highway bicycle and pedestrian crossings. Identify Safe Routes to School and prioritize bicycle/pedestrian improvements to and from schools.	TAB, County staff, local communities	Medium	
4.5, I	Create an ongoing annual Strategic Assessment and Maintenance Plan.	TAB, County Staff	Medium	
4.5, I	Maintain existing County roads, bridges and trails that connect residents, employment and visitors to destinations across the County.	County Staff	Short	Requires increase in budget
4.5, I	Develop County management and operations solutions to create and extend the life-cycle of corridors of all uses.	County Staff, BoCC	Medium	Requires increase in budget
4.5, I	Coordinate with local partners across sectors and jurisdictions on all multimodal projects.	TAB, County Staff, BoCC	Medium	Variable
4.5, I	Coordinate during the planning and design of improvement projects applying the context of "transportation corridors" for all modes to provide for efficiency of construction of multiple projects at once to maximize funding.	TAB, County Staff, CDOT, local communities	Medium	Variable
4.5, J	Align road development standards and road hierarchies across municipalities and the County for consistency with the Chaffee County Multimodal Transportation Master Plan and designated growth areas.	TAB, County Staff, BoCC, CDOT, local communities	Short	Variable
4.5, J	Conduct a fiscal impact study to assess costs of road construction and to address issues such as future maintenance and State Highway access improvements.	TAB, County Staff, BoCC, CDOT	Medium	Variable
4.5, J	Develop a multi-year Capital Improvements Plan for County roads to prioritize road improvements.	BoCC, County Staff, PC	Medium	Variable
4.5, J	Assess strategies for maintaining the ability of agriculturalists to safely move agricultural machinery and move livestock and agricultural products around the county.	BoCC, ranching representatives, CDOT, Sheriff	Medium	Variable
4.1, C	Prioritize trail construction and improvements that connect high concentrations of people to activity centers and connect those with high mobility needs and under-served populations to community services, schools and housing.	TAB, SPOT, local communities	Medium	Variable
4.1, C	Align open space and trail dedication policies, plans, and standards across municipalities and the County.	TAB as part of CCMTP	Short	Variable
4.1, C	Invest in the construction of a multi-use long-distance trail connections throughout the County utilizing designated transportation corridors that connects Salida, Poncha Springs, and Buena Vista to each other.	TAB as part of CCMTP	Short	Variable
4.1, C	Use available rights of way where available for trails to maximize limited funding.	TAB as part of CCMTP, RiB	Short	Variable
4.3, G	Work collaboratively with federal, state, and municipal partner to identify public land access points to prioritize for maintaining access as the region grows.	TAB, local communities, BoCC, PC	Short	Variable

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
4.3, G	Assess existing facilities and access points for capacity and manage to minimize over-use.	County Staff, SPOT, BoCC	Short	Variable
4.5, K	Study the feasibility of a more robust and efficient mass transit system in the County and/or region.	TAB, Chaffee Shuttle, CDOT, RiB	Medium	Variable
4.5, K	Provide support to the transit providers to expand service to have local circulating routes in each community and between communities for recreational activities, service and employment to connect Chaffee County to services and activities outside the county.	Chaffee Shuttle, BoCC, PC	Short	Variable
4.5, K	Implement a one-stop-shop for transit with a call center, website and mobile application to make accessing transit services easier.	Chaffee Shuttle	Short	\$\$
4.4, H	Identify transportation barriers to business employers and employees, including tourism, and assist with their needs.	TAB, Chaffee Shuttle	Medium	Variable
4.4, H	Assure public access to County telecommunication systems.	TAB	Short	Variable
4.4, H	Develop freight movement and accessibility criteria to improve delivery options.	TAB	Short	Variable
4.4, H	Invest in the construction of bicycle lanes, sidewalks or multi-use paths, broadband/fiber optic cable on both sides of the road when County roads undergo significant maintenance projects.	BoCC, PC, TAB	Short	Variable
4.4, H	Evaluate the expansion of airports to support their commercial activities.	Airport Managers in Salida and BV	Short	Variable
4.6, L	Review development regulations for safe and redundant access in natural hazard zones and amend to ensure future County developments are designed to provide for redundancy of ingress/egress.	TAB, BoCC, County Staff, PC	Short	Variable
4.6, L	Review and amend development regulations to require consideration of planned multimodal transportation infrastructure within developments such as safe routes to school, transit stations/shelters, bus bike racks, park-and-rides, transit pull-ins/pullouts, telecommunication links and connections, etc.	TAB, BoCC, County Staff, PC	Short	Variable
4.6, L	Ensure the development review process includes consistency with transportation related plans, such as the Chaffee County Multimodal Transportation Plan, in order to achieve transportation goals between and within developments.	TAB, BoCC, County Staff, PC	Short	Variable
4.6, L	Consider the use of the TAB as a review agency for developments where consistency with state, regional, and county transportation goals are applicable.	BoCC, PC, TAB	Medium	\$

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
4.3, F	Expand transit options in Chaffee County for residents, employees/employers and visitors.	Chaffee Shuttle, TAB, BoCC	Medium	Variable
4.3, F	Coordinate with businesses/employers and Economic Development organizations to eliminate transportation barriers for employees.	TAB, County Staff, EDC	Long	Variable
4.3, F	Complete an inventory of bicycle/pedestrian assets on the County road system to identify needs and gaps between housing, employment and essential goods and services.	TAB, County Staff, local communities	Long	Variable
4.3, F	Prioritize multi-modal access within new development projects	TAB, BoCC, County Staff, PC		

5. RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
5.1, A	Treat 30,000 acres of public and private lands by 2030 to decrease risk wildfire poses to community resources by half, while also enhancing wildlife habitat.	Envision Forest Health Council	Short	\$\$\$
5.1, A	Develop collaborative funding to support above treatment (with estimated cost of \$45 million) with the Forest Health Council and creation of an Upper Arkansas Forest Fund that builds upon/leverages Agency and Common Ground funds.	Envision Forest Health Council, National Forest Foundation	Short	\$\$\$
5.1, A	Implement Chaffee Chips, an inter-agency program enabling private landowners to create defensible space and enhance the health of their local forest.	Envision, Chaffee Fire, CSFS	Short	\$
5.1, A	Implement Collaborative Communications to transparently track and celebrate progress.	Envision	Short	\$
5.1, A	Collaborate with the Planning Commission and the Envision Forest Health Council to implement immediate risk code modifications identified in the CWPP (by 2021) and to update zoning/codes to enhance fire resilience in new development.	County Staff, PC, Envision Forest Health Council	Short	
5.2, B	Complete the Chaffee County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.	County Staff	Medium	
5.2, B	Collaborate with Planning Commission to integrate the recommendations for hazard mitigation into the land use code update.	County Staff	Medium	
5.5, J	Adopt a revised water adequacy supply standard for development	County Staff, PC	Short	\$

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
5.2, E	Invest in and protect wetlands and riparian areas that attenuate floods and capture sediment to build our resilience to fire and flood.		Long	
5.2, E	Execute program for payments for ecosystem services for landowners to enhance floodplains and river corridors	Common Ground, CCC	Medium	Funded
5.2, F	Maintain existing and historic ditches that are essential to agriculture and support groundwater recharge.	UAWCD	Long	\$\$\$
5.2, F	Research and develop market alternatives to buy and dry.	UAWCD	Medium	
5.3, G	Formalize and adopt a Chaffee County Energy Plan; building off the plan created by Clean Energy Chaffee (CEC) in March 2020.	CEC, Chaffee Green, GARNA, Salida Sustainability	Medium	\$
5.3, G	Establish goals and strategies of the Energy Plan based on reducing the identified major sources of carbon emissions in the County, in line with Governor's Roadmap to 100% Renewable Energy by 2040 and Bold Climate Action.	Clean Energy Chaffee, Salida Sustainability	Short	\$
5.3, G	Work with experts in the field of energy conservation and with energy providers to complete a modified energy supply cost/benefit analysis.	Clean Energy Chaffee, Salida Sustainability	Medium	\$
5.3, G	Using the results of the energy supply cost/benefit analysis, identify and plan for implementation of the lowest cost alternatives to reduce carbon emissions.	Clean Energy Chaffee, Salida Sustainability	Medium	\$
5.3, G	Develop and adopt procedures and protocols to improve the energy efficiency of its own operations and facilities.	Clean Energy Chaffee, Salida Sustainability	Long	\$
5.3, G	Make cost-effective bulk purchases of energy efficient supplies and equipment for its own use and those of the municipalities, businesses and homeowners.	Clean Energy Chaffee, Salida Sustainability	Medium	\$
5.3, G	Educate the public on energy, DIY and finance options as needed. Research and encourage involvement of resources to educate the consumer on how to address energy challenges.	Clean Energy Chaffee, Salida Sustainability	Short	\$
5.3, G	To promote job growth and energy efficiency in single family homes, create and host a partnership with Energy Smart Colorado to assist with and subsidize the cost of professional energy audits for homes.	County Staff, CCEDC	Short	\$\$
5.3, G	Support and encourage citizens in their efforts to establish solar gardens within the County.	Clean Energy Chaffee	Medium	\$
5.3, G	Create a map of future energy sites by geothermal and solar potential.	Clean Energy Chaffee		
5.3, G	Promote the 100% free energy audit program from Northwest Colorado Council of Governments to promote energy efficiency and lower utility bills for low income residents.	County DHS, CEC	Short	\$

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
5.3, H	As County-owned vehicles are retired, replace them with electric vehicles, supported by an appropriately extended vehicle charging infrastructure.	CEC, Salida Sustainability	Medium	\$\$\$
5.3, H	Develop an electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout the County.	CEC, Salida Sustainability	Medium	\$\$\$
5.3, H	Coordinate permitting and siting processes across jurisdictions to expedite renewable energy development.	CEC, Salida Sustainability	Medium	\$\$\$
5.3, H	Establish and Audit Retrofit procedure for commercial buildings and low income housing to a high-performance standard to improve their energy efficiency.	CEC, Salida Sustainability	Medium	\$\$
5.3, H	Expand non-vehicle transportation alternatives throughout the County and encourage human-powered transportation and pedestrian-oriented land use patterns to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.		Medium	
5.3, H	Investigate the possibility of reviving the dormant railroad tracks in the Upper Arkansas Valley.		Medium	
5.3, H	To promote job growth and energy efficiency in commercial buildings, expand and promote the “Colorado Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program” or C-Pace to provide affordable, long-term financing for energy and water efficiency and renewable energy projects.	CCEDC, CEC	Short	\$
5.4, I	Evaluate the current waste management systems in the County on their effectiveness and efficiency in diverting waste from the landfill.	Chaffee Green, GARNA	Short	Funded
5.4, I	Develop a waste management plan independent of the Sustainability Plan. Create team to determine details about how to achieve goals	Chaffee Green, GARNA	Medium	
5.4, I	Develop a County-wide integrated waste management system that focuses on next-generation recycling techniques and composting.	Chaffee Green, GARNA	Medium	\$
5.5, L	Work closely with the Upper Arkansas Conservation District to enhance resiliency in water rights management.	County Staff		
5.5, L	Collaborate with Buena Vista to adopt an overlay for Cottonwood Creek that reduces future well density and protects the Town of Buena Vista’s water supply and riparian corridor.	County Staff and PC	Medium	
5.5, L	Collaborate with Salida on protection of the municipal water supply along the South Arkansas.	County Staff	Medium	

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
5.5, K	Assess County facility cost benefits for integration of water efficiency .	County Staff	Medium	
5.5, K	Integrate water efficiency into the land use code update.	County Staff	Medium	
5.6, M	Explore a river corridor overlay as part of the land use code update to identify best use.	County Staff, PC	Short	
5.6, N	Assess the potential of increased nitrate concentrations from septic failure.	CCPHED	Medium	\$\$
5.6, O	Review current streamside setback, wetland, and riparian habitat standards for consistency with best management practices.	County Staff, PC	Short	
5.6, P	Assess land use code for vegetation disturbance limits and revegetation standards, zero net runoff for development and low impact development, and other best practices.	County Staff, PC	Medium	
5.6, R	Support an Arkansas River health study to inform a long-range action plan for the river and watershed.	UAWCD	Medium	\$\$\$
5.6, R	Support the development of a watershed collaborative to develop a Stream Management Plan and/or Integrated Water Resource Management Plan.	UAWCD, GARNA	Medium	\$\$\$
5.7, W	Work with CPW and nonprofit partners to identify habitat priority conservation areas for focal species.	Envision	Short (in progress)	\$
5.7, U	Envision Chaffee County will engage with the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute at CSU, the Chaffee Recreation Council and the community to complete mapping/modelling by summer 2021.	Envision	Short (in progress)	
5.7, V	Ensure all Envision data is housed at the County.	Envision, County Staff	Medium	
5.7, V	Research best practices in land use mitigation standards for focus species (wildlife human conflict, migration corridors, winter habitat, riparian habitat, etc.).	County Staff, PC	Short	
5.7, V	Use research to inform the development of appropriate development standards that mitigate impacts to wildlife.	County Staff, PC	Short	
5.7, U	Work with CPW and nonprofit partners to use the habitat conservation map to inform location and development standards for highest priority habitat.	County Staff, PC	Short	\$\$\$
5.7, X	Leverage funding, grants, and collaborative partnerships to enhance stewardship and protect wildlife habitat on private lands.	Envision Forest Health Council	Medium	
5.7, X	Educate the community regarding wildlife needs and what community members can do to protect wildlife.	Envision Rec Council	Medium	

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
5.8, Y	Assist in developing a citizen advocacy group like Clean Energy Chaffee, to coordinate education and outreach to citizens relating to reduction of carbon footprint individually and in the County.	BoCC	Long	
5.8, Y	Expand on the accomplishments Salida has made in completing a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory by conducting a County-wide GHG Inventory. Data from the inventory can be used as a tool for setting goals and priorities around GHG emission reductions.	BoCC	Medium	
5.8, Z	Develop Chaffee County Certified Design that offers design guidance for voluntary actions based on local knowledge of the County weather including information about solar orientation, insulation, driveway orientation to minimize snow drifts, etc.	Chaffee Green, GARNA, CEC	Short	\$\$
5.8, Z	Chaffee County accepts the Governor's Sustainability Challenge to integrate environmental science with community-based education approaches, resulting in collaboration, participation and innovation.	Chaffee Green, GARNA, CEC	Medium	\$
5.8, Z	Work with local builders and residents to educate them on good building practices and the adoption and application of the latest building methods and codes.	Chaffee Green, GARNA, CEC	Medium	\$\$
5.8, Z	Identify key priority areas for an outreach campaign to educate the general public, and other stakeholders	Chaffee Green, GARNA, CEC	Medium	\$
5.8, AA	Organize County services and staff to provide a focus on ecological health and services by appointing an existing employee or creating a new position called "Sustainability Manager" by 2021	Chaffee Green, GARNA, County Staff	Short	\$
5.8, AA	Support this new position to focus on serving the public needs relative to smart energy transition resulting in employment and lower utility bills.		Medium	\$

6. JOBS & ECONOMY

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
6.1, A	Educate on "Agritourism" and other innovative economic methods to maintain working landscapes and boost the local economy.	Guidestone, Envision	Short	\$
6.1, A	Create a County wide Agricultural Sustainability Advisory committee to develop, promote, and support programs to support local agriculture and ranching encompassing environmental concerns, economic concerns, etc.	Guidestone, CCCF, UAWCD	Medium	\$
6.1, A	Support and education in farming and ranching through local educational institutions (high school, CMC).	UAWCD, Guidestone, CSU Extension	Medium	\$

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
6.1, B	Encourage the formation of a citizen entrepreneur advocacy group that focuses on the specific needs of existing businesses. Educate on economic tools for marketing, cooperative, branding, etc.	Small Business Development Center	Short	\$
6.2, E	Develop an early wins plan.	CCEDC, Envision	Medium	\$
6.2, C	Attract new agriculture, aquiculture, and small-scale farming industries to support local food production.	CCEDC	Medium	
6.3, F	Ensure the Collegiate Peaks Scenic and Historic Byways is integrated into the Chaffee County Visitor's Bureau annual work plan.	CCHAAB, GARNA, County Staff, CCVB	Short	\$\$
6.5, H	Work with CMC and other educational partners to offer programming.	CMC, CCEDC, Salida & BV School Districts	Short	
6.6, I	Host a building and development community charrette to discuss opportunities to streamline and improve the land use regulations to support economic opportunity, creativity, and innovation.			
6.4, G	Maintain and update the broadband plan.	County Staff, CCEDC	Short	

7. GROWTH & LAND USE

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
7.1, B	Research land use incentives used by peer communities to direct growth to inform the land use code update.	PC (in retreat)	Medium	\$
7.1, C	Engage local community members and municipalities to develop and approve of specific area plans and engage in joint planning efforts.	PC (in retreat)	Medium	\$
7.2, E	Research and prioritize strategies to achieve better development including but not limited to density bonuses, cluster developments, conservation development, transfer of development rights and other appropriate strategies.	PC	Short	\$
7.2, E	Update the development regulations to integrate most appropriate strategies.	PC	Short	\$\$
7.2, F	Identify existing gaps and deficits in overlapping agency responsibilities for protecting critical land values.	County Staff	Short	\$
7.2, F	Assess relevant plans and the land use code for existing policies and processes to inform recommendations for development.	County Staff	Short	\$
7.2, F	Update land use regulations as necessary based on assessment.	County Staff	Short	\$

Ref	Implementation Action	Lead	Timeline	Cost
7.2, G	Update the development code to include recommendations in the updated Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway's Corridor Management Plan.	County	Medium	\$\$
7.2, G	Develop a scenic byways visual resource assessment methodology to include in an update to scenic resources development standards.	CCHAAB	Medium	\$\$
7.2, G	Consider integrating visual resource with a scenic value overlay.	County Staff	Medium	\$\$
7.3, H	Create a collaborative environment between municipalities and County to analyze the cost/benefit of providing infrastructure or services.	County Staff	Short	\$\$
7.3, H	Create a dedicated funding source for aiding municipalities with infrastructure service costs when annexations occur.	County Staff	Medium	\$
7.3, H	Hold County-owned parcels near existing municipalities for future schools, housing, water/wastewater treatment plants, landfills, and other future infrastructure needs.	County Staff	Long	\$
7.3, I	Create an accessible geographic database to communicate information on existing conditions such as county infrastructure, facilities, utilities, wildlife habitat and migration corridors.			
7.4, J	Write a proposal to DOLA to fund an update the development code.	County Staff	Short	\$\$\$
7.4, J	Research regulatory policy examples to achieve community goals.	County Staff	Medium	\$
7.4, J	Create overlays showing land use types/zones, viewsheds, open space, existing and proposed multimodal transportation routes, telecommunications, and water supply.	County Staff, Office of Housing	Medium	\$
7.4, H	Develop Focus Area master plans for Johnson Village, Nathrop Townsite, Maysville Townsite, and Highway 50 Corridor.			

5. Data & Trends



PEOPLE & COMMUNITY SERVICES DATA & DISCUSSION

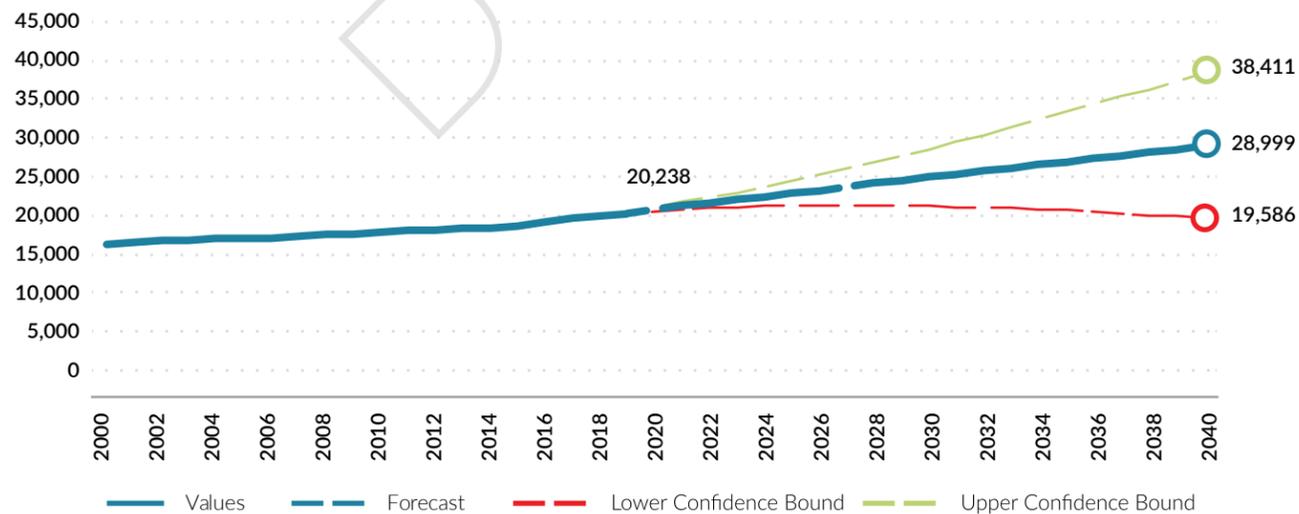
WHY THIS THEME IS IMPORTANT

With changing demographics and an increasing population, Chaffee County is experiencing shifting priorities and growing pains when providing community services to its residents and their changing needs. From education to senior services, the current and future residents of the County rely on these services to meet essential needs.

KEY DATA POINTS

Population & Projections

- Chaffee County has experienced unprecedented growth over the last 20 years, with the fastest growth rates occurring in recent years. According to the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), **from 2015 to 2018 Chaffee County added approximately 1,438 people, an average growth rate of 7.7%**, up 3.3% from that of 2010 to 2015 (4.5%).
- Utilizing U.S. Census data from 2000 through today, an exponential smoothing forecast estimates that **Chaffee County's population will increase by 33% by 2035**, reaching 26,949 people based on historic growth trends.



Population Growth: Population and projection, 2000 to 2040 (Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Cushing Terrell)

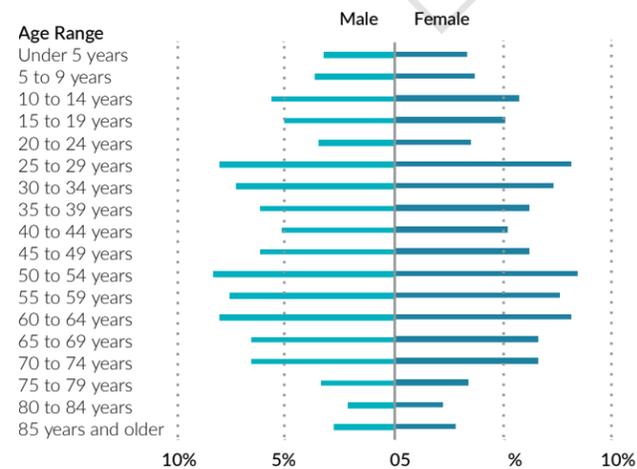
- Pending unforeseen circumstances, Chaffee County will add between 6,000 and 13,000 new residents between 2020 and 2035 who will need adequate housing, services, goods, and recreational activities to maintain the livability that attracts people to this community.

Demographics

- Chaffee County's population is aging**, with a median age of 49.1, which is much older than the state's median age of 36.6.
- An estimated 64% of the population is between the ages of 30 and 75, and half is over the age of 50. The County's population pyramid indicates current and future demand for housing and services for an aging population, such as assisted living facilities and expanded health care.
- Personal incomes in Chaffee County are below average for the state**, but are increasing at a faster rate. According to the

Age and Gender: Population Pyramid

Source: US Census ACS 2017



Median Income Comparison, 2010 - 2018

Area	Median Income 2010	Median Income 2018	% Change
Chaffee	\$42,941	\$54,580	27%
Colorado	\$56,456	\$68,811	22%
United States	\$51,914	\$60,293	16%

Source: US Census ACS 2018

US Census 5-year estimates, the median income of Chaffee County residents increased from \$42,941 in 2010 to \$54,580 in 2018. This 27% rate of increase is higher than the state of Colorado's 22% increase in the median income in that time. According to HUD and CHFA, the Area Median income for 2020 is \$50,000 for a single person.

- An increase in second homes and occasional use homes point to a more seasonal population.** In 2018, the US Census estimated that 19% of housing units in the County were for seasonal or occasional use only, around 2,069 homes. At an average of 2.2 persons per unit in 2018, that represented an estimated seasonal population of around 4,552 persons.

Schools

- The County is serviced by two public school districts, one in Buena Vista and the other in Salida. Each has an elementary, middle/junior, and high school.
- The Montessori School and the Darren Patterson Christian School also operate in the County.

Higher Education

- Residents within the Salida School District voted in 2019 to join the Colorado Mountain College (CMC) Tax District and pay the attendant mill levy on real property. These funds will be used to support much-needed courses and programs through the College.
- CMC is already gearing up its programming in the southern half of the County, with significant emphasis on technical training programs and careers.

Medical Care

- The Heart of the Rockies Medical Center in Salida is the only hospital in the County, and there are many services not available at this facility that require trips to the Front Range.
- Services that were identified as lacking or needed include: urgent care, pediatric dentists, transitional care, substance abuse programs, continuum of care and hospice.

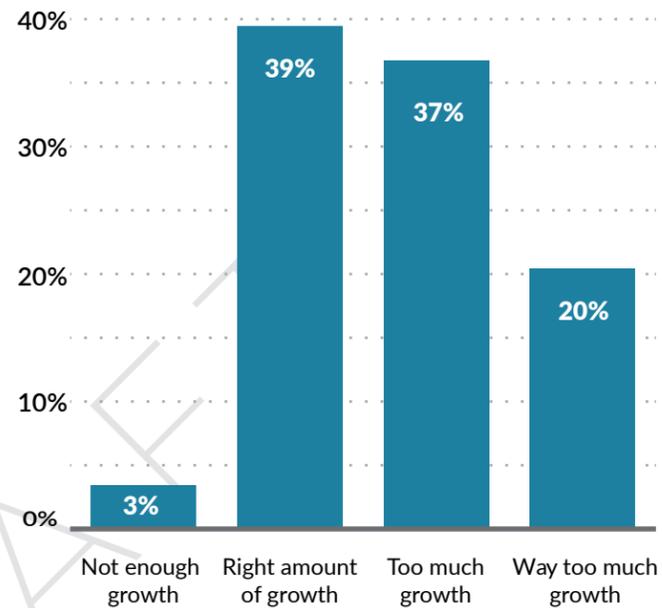
Behavioral Health

- Solvista Health provides mental and behavioral health services for Fremont, Chaffee, Lake and Custer Counties out of Salida. In 2019, they received a grant to build a treatment center adjacent to the Heart of the Rockies Medical Center.

Emergency Response Services

- Capacity for first responders like police, fire and EMS, although potentially adequate for the current population, might be challenged as they serve a growing population. Goal 1.7 “Ensure emergency services are adequately funded and staffed to maintain high quality

What are your feelings on the pace and amount of growth in the County? *Survey #1 Results*



service in the County as the populations increases” is intended to find ways to proportionally increase facilities, personnel, and resources for emergency service branches at the same pace of proposed growth. Additional studies and capital planning should be completed to build an understanding of servicing needs.

COMMUNITY INPUT

- Almost half (45%) of residents who took the first online community survey have lived in Chaffee County for over 10 years, while 38% have lived here for less than 5 years.
- When asked what they valued most about Chaffee County, 25% of all answers mentioned the people and the sense of community. Many mentioned the friendly people of Chaffee, and the tight-knit nature of the Arkansas Valley community.

- About 39% of survey responders thought that Chaffee was experiencing the right amount of growth, 37% thought that there was too much growth, and 20% responded that there was way too much growth. One responder stated “Growth is going to happen and we have to have a plan and be more progressive...if we do not do that, the growth will still happen, but we will not have control over it. Growth is not a bad thing!”

COMP PLAN IMPLICATIONS

With changing demographics comes the need to create the facilities, supply the housing types and construct mobility features for all ages and abilities, including healthy recreation options. This means projects should be oriented to accessibility with gathering spaces that have features and facilities for all ages, such as playgrounds, shady resting areas and safe, visible gathering spaces where the community can interact.

Additional focus is therefore placed in existing town centers, where a critical mass of housing, jobs and job creation opportunities and gathering spaces would encourage the vitality and vibrancy desired by the Chaffee community.

Much study and discussion has been held on the social capital within Chaffee and how it relates to growth and development. The value in tapping into Chaffee’s social networks was communicated in the Envision Chaffee process which stated several grassroots-level ambitions including (paraphrased from “Envision Chaffee County”):

- Chaffee County has a severe shortage of licensed child care locations. Providers decreased from 27 to 12 in recent years, and 65% of 2018 Child Care Availability Survey respondents indicate they may leave due to child care shortages.
- Concern about finding common ground and building community capacity to discuss difficult issues, and develop and achieve solutions.
- Support vulnerable residents: Currently resources are limited for supporting domestic violence programs or resources at the county-level. Goal 1.8 “Support vulnerable residents with appropriate services” is intended to consider expanding those programs to offer support for such services.

Fiscal responsibility is paramount to this comprehensive planning effort, particularly as a global pandemic continues to impact the day-to-day financial well-being of Chaffee County. To the extent that it is feasible, development and growth must only occur if it does not cause undue burden on the County’s finances or its ability to provide a high level of public services. As such the plan has a focus within this theme relating directly to the subject of fiscal responsibility with Goal 1.9: Maintain a Fiscal effective County government, and a list of strategies consistent with the community’s desire to maintain financial health while promoting the right amount and character of growth.

COUNTY CHARACTER DATA & DISCUSSION

WHY THIS THEME IS IMPORTANT

County character is visualized in the historic architecture of the core business districts of town and city centers, the historic ranches lining the Collegiate Peaks Byway, the ruins of old mines, and the many pedestrian and bike trails connecting people to recreation opportunities.

Character comes out in the feeling of being in Chaffee County and walking down the streets of Salida, Buena Vista, and Poncha Springs. It comes out of driving down Collegiate Peaks Byway, or one of the winding mountain passes. It's the sounds of the Arkansas River and the glee of people rafting its rapids.

Character can be measured by the demographic, social, or economic characteristics of the County's people. It can also be measured visually by surveying the natural and built environment. Both means of measurement are important to understand in discussing goals and policies that could bring about or maintain desired character in the future. The following discusses this theme in terms of how character has shifted and the implications of such change.

Maintaining public management of public lands at all levels is a mission of Chaffee County's leadership. This Comp Plan builds upon that legacy.

GROWTH AND ITS EFFECTS ON CHARACTER

Recent growth (residential subdivision, land development or infill redevelopment) has been a catalyst for change in community character. The threats in Chaffee County are found among many other mountain and resort communities, including the loss of agricultural landscapes and open spaces in place of suburban sprawl. This exacerbates a jobs and housing imbalance as residences continue to be built on the easiest-to-develop land further out in the unincorporated county instead of near employment centers.

KEY DATA POINTS

Parks and Public Land

- **Chaffee County is 83% public land** owned by Federal, State and Local organizations.
- Resolution 2017-10 "Recognizing the Value of Federal Public Lands" which was adopted in 2017 to state the County's continuing support for public management, maintenance and control of federal lands. The resolution states the public value inherent in these lands and intends to maintain that public use for future generations. Chaffee County does not maintain a formal park or recreation system or facilities such as campgrounds. **Citizens have access to large tracts of state and federal lands for recreational purposes and hundreds of miles of developed trails and over 900 private and public campsites in the County.**

- The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) manages 70% of the 83% of public land in Chaffee. The Forest Service has **over 300 miles of trails** within the Chaffee County Forests.
- The Bureau of Land Management manages 8% of public trails in Chaffee County.
- The State of Colorado owns over 20,000 acres in Chaffee County, managed by the Colorado State Forest Service, State Land Board, Department of Corrections and the Colorado Division of Wildlife.
- The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA) is managed through a unique partnership of Colorado State Parks, the Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Division of Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service. The AHRA manages recreation along a 152-mile extent of the Arkansas River.

Historic & Cultural Resources

- Chaffee County has a tremendous bank of natural and cultural resources such as abundant wildlife, scenic natural areas like the Chalk Cliffs, historic towns and sites, natural hot springs and pools, and blue-ribbon trout rivers and streams.
- The County has a wealth of sites of historic and archaeological interest. These range from mines to historic cemeteries and ghost towns such as Turret. Of particular note is the **town of St. Elmo, a National Historic District**. Currently, there are no land development or zoning regulations that protect these historic and archaeological resources in the County.
- Salida's Creative District and art scene have offered residents increased opportunities to interact with art after being selected as one of only two inaugural "Certified Creative Districts" in Colorado in 2012.

- Many widely varies cultural and community events have put Chaffee County on the map as a unique destination to enjoy the creative arts, the Arkansas River, music and history.

Agriculture

- In recent years, **farms and ranches in Chaffee County have been increasing in number while decreasing in size**. According to USDA Census of Agriculture estimates, from 2012 to 2017 the number of ranches and farms in the County increased by 30%, while the acreage of farm and ranchland decreased by 15%.
- Most sales from farming and ranching in Chaffee County come from livestock, poultry and products (67%) while 33% come from crop farming."
- **There are approximately 16,464 acres of irrigated land** in Chaffee County, which is 25% of land in farms and ranches.

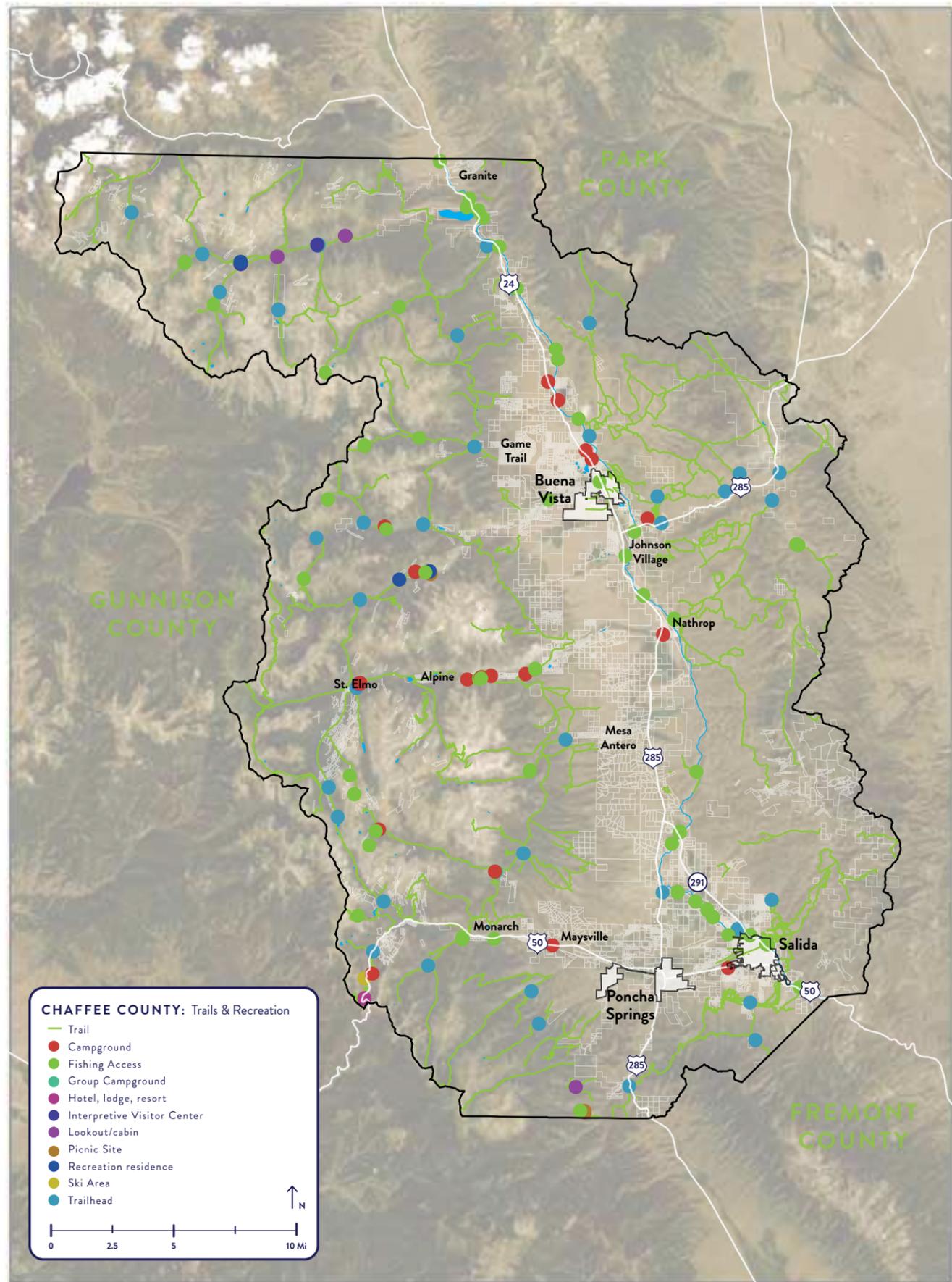
- 90% of farms in Chaffee County are family farms.

Chaffee County Agriculture

County Farms	2017	% Change since 2012
Number of farms	289	+30%
Land in farms (acres)	66,297	-15%
Average farm size (acres)	229	-34%

Land in farms by use	2017
Cropland	26%
Pastureland	62%
Woodland	7%
Other	5%

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 2017



Recreation

- **Recreation use is growing by 15% per year.** We currently have about 4.3 Million visitors per year. At the current growth rate this will double to more than 8 Million in 6-7 years. Impact is increasing in parallel. Of 1,005 dispersed campsites monitored in 2019, 37% have trash and/or human waste and roughly 40% are within 100 feet of water. In the Fourmile area, dispersed campsite numbers are increasing by 23% per year - or doubling every 4-5 years and doubling impacts. This was also identified as a top 5 community concern in the Envision survey and is the second greatest threat to forest health (just after severe wildfire). The challenge is retaining quality experiences and economic benefits while also maintaining health of forests, waters, wildlife and working lands - all of which are currently being impacted by recreation growth.
- There are **over 800 miles of trails** within Chaffee County for hiking, biking and horseback riding. Some trails are open for ATV/OHV and dirt bike recreation, like the 10,000-acre Fourmile Travel Management Recreation Area.
- The **102 miles of whitewater on the Arkansas River** that runs through the County are open to fishing, white water rafting and kayaking. Boaters can find everything from Class IV and Class V rapids, to milder Class II and Class III sections.
- Monarch Mountain offers over 800 skiable acres, 670 of which can be accessed by ski lifts. There are 66 total trails, and the Mountain gets an average annual snowfall of 350 inches.

COMMUNITY INPUT

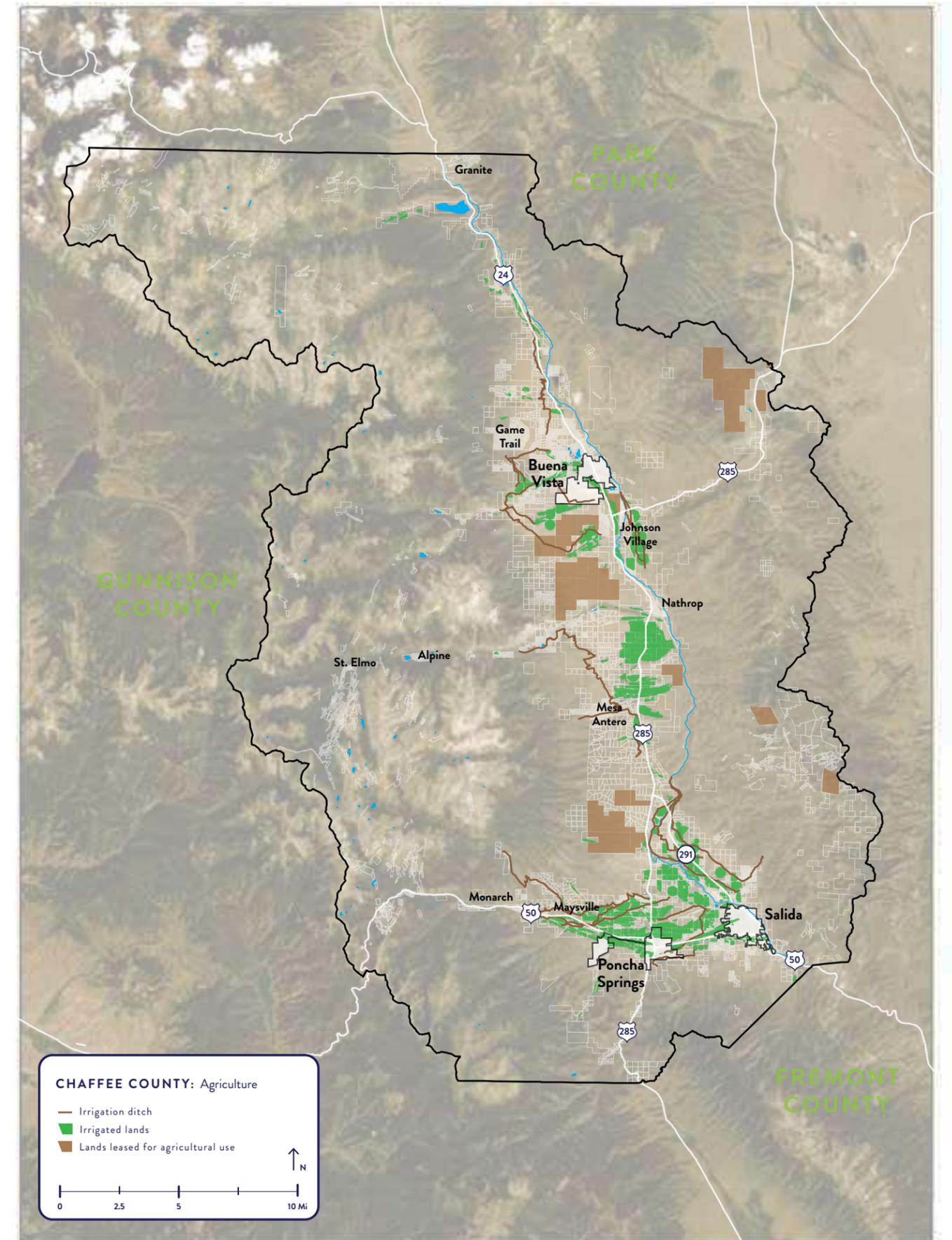
- When asked what the greatest risk to Chaffee County's current quality of life was, 26% survey responders mentioned uncontrolled growth and over-development, and another 26% believed that the lack of affordable workforce housing posed the biggest threat.
- Responders appeared to value the County's open space and were cautious of growth encroaching on natural lands and changing the character of the County.
- Survey responders took pride in the character of the County - when asked what makes Chaffee County a great place to live, 23% answered the rural, small-town feel of their community. Many mentioned the laid-back or "slow" lifestyle as something to be preserved.
- While 97% of the 1,500 citizens who participated in the Envision survey indicated that "working lands are important to my quality of life," there has been a 15% decrease in agricultural lands in the last 5 years or -3% a year. At that rate, agricultural lands will be halved in about 16 years, vastly impacting County character and also the ecosystem (see Theme 5).

COMP PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Agriculture, recreation, western heritage and open space contribute to Chaffee County's character and allow its people their chosen lifestyles. The Comp Plan recognizes this and proclaims the need for flexibility in the face of change. Character is after all defined by the County's people and when the people change, the plan must be adaptable.

The conversion of ranches, farms or other working agricultural landscapes for suburban single family style development has been the impetus for change in land use philosophy across Chaffee County for decades. Similar issues were evident in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan and more recently the issue was discussed in the Citizens' Land Use Roundtable. Demand continues to drive the need to provide housing for newcomers. Ranchers and landowners are able to take advantage of the market by conveying pieces of vacant or agricultural land to developers for residential subdivision. Meanwhile, smaller pieces of farmland have been conveyed through subdivisions exempt from full land use review through exemptions in state law.

This pattern has left unincorporated Chaffee County with little land available for subdivision when public lands and previously platted subdivisions are removed from consideration (See Theme 7: Growth & Land Use for additional discussion on developable land). As that is, future land use policy in Part III of this plan provides guidance to keep agricultural lands in the rural county while respecting the rights of ranchers, farmers and landowners to manage their lands in their best interest for future generations.



AFFORDABLE & INCLUSIVE HOUSING DATA & DISCUSSION

WHY THIS THEME IS IMPORTANT

Understanding the interrelationship between housing costs, jobs, local economics and sustainable growth, Affordable and Inclusive Housing plans for a future where housing is accessible for all segments of the population. This theme centers on the lifestyle that includes all people of all ages, social groups and income levels.

Along with the State of Colorado and the country itself, Chaffee County and the region face challenges to providing sustainable housing for its workforce. A regional housing shortage, lack of diversity of housing, and low-wage jobs have priced certain income levels out of the County, and have continued to push existing residents elsewhere.

Understanding the regional nature of housing, the community partnered in completing the Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment in 2016 which assessed trends, evaluated supply and demand conditions and identified gaps where resources should be focused.

In general the study found that most new jobs added to the County in the past 20 years have been low-wage, tourism-based work, coupled with the rapidly increasing cost of housing and land, resulting in the widening of the gap between wages, incomes and housing. With the

high cost of constructing housing preventing adequate numbers of new homes on the market and non-local ownership and short term rentals constraining the supply of housing to new workers, the gap will continue to widen.

KEY DATA POINTS

Pace of Housing Growth

- **The number of housing units in the County has increased**, with growth of 2,739 units County-wide from 2000 to 2018, according to DOLA. However, the County only grew by 1,975 households over that time. Since one household is equivalent to one occupied housing unit, this faster growth of housing units compared to households indicates an **increase in second home ownership**.
- According to US Census 5-year estimates, 26.8% of housing units in Chaffee County are vacant, which is much higher than the state vacancy rate of 10%. The Census also estimates that in 2018 **2,069 units (19% of total housing units) were used as second homes**, classified as “for seasonal, recreational or occasional use”, compared to Colorado’s 5% second homes.
- **A large portion of the housing stock in Chaffee is in the unincorporated county, according to DOLA.** Of the approximate 11,188 housing units, 29% are in Salida, 14% are in Buena Vista, 4% are in Poncha Springs, and 53% are in the unincorporated area. Development in the unincorporated area is generally low density, dispersed, and without municipal utilities.

- **The Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment concluded that the region’s households in most need of housing are those below 120% AMI.** It identified a 1,262-unit shortfall for households at 60% AMI and below, an 834-unit shortfall for those at 60-120% AMI, and a 330-unit shortfall for the “missing middle” households between 120 and 160% AMI in 2016.

Housing Type

- Based on 2018 US Census estimates, single-family detached housing units made up 81% of the county-wide housing stock, followed by mobile homes at 9.8%.
- Excluding the municipalities, in the unincorporated areas of the County, the **majority (85%) of housing units are single family detached**, up 9% since 2010.
- The number of mobile home units in unincorporated Chaffee decreased from 20% of all units to just 11% from 2010 to 2017.

Housing Inventory by Type

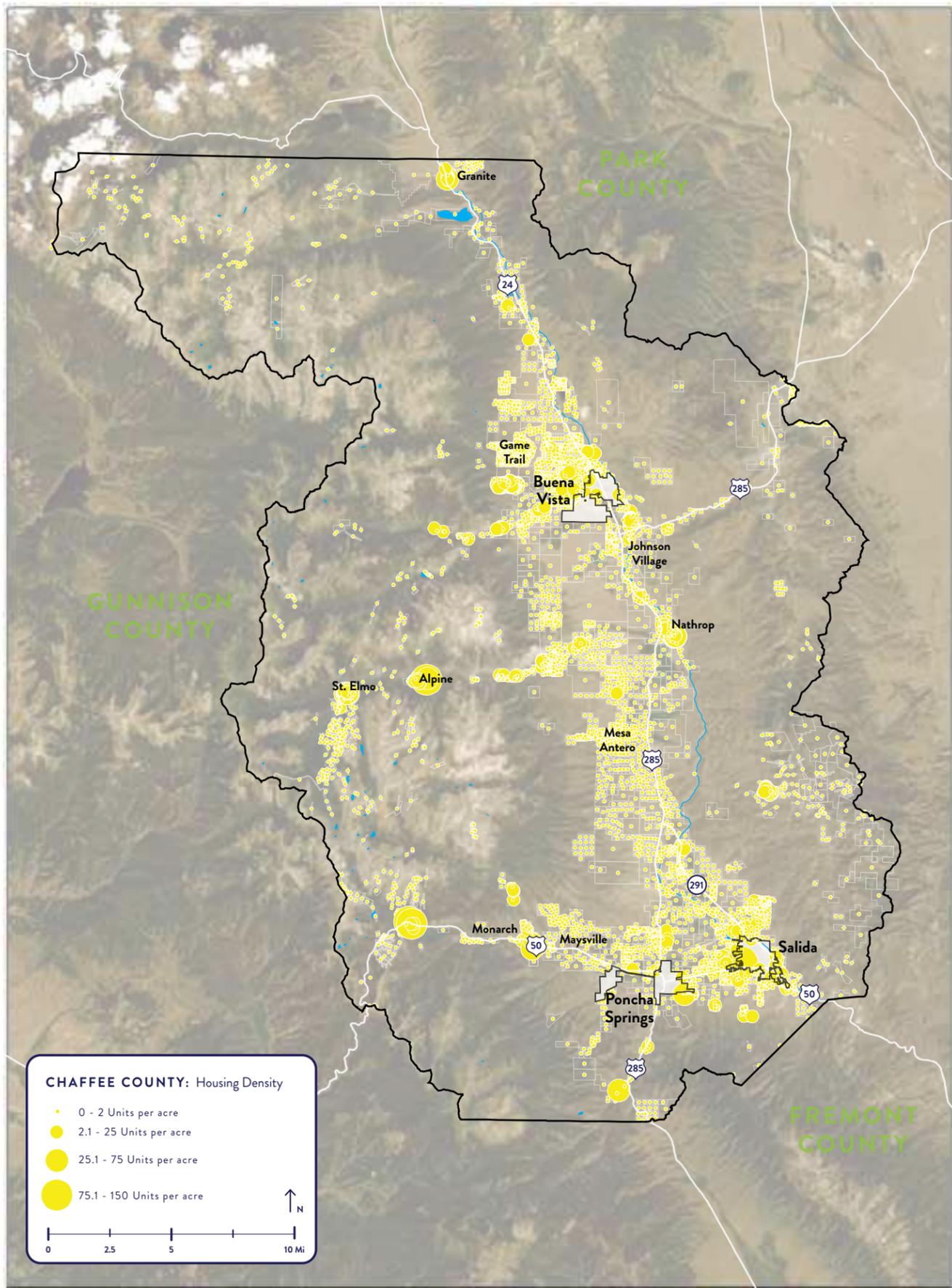
Area	Single Family	Duplex	Multi Family	Mobile Home	Townhome/ ADU	Total
Unincorporated county	4,860	29	58	648	95	5,700
Salida	2,139	232	368	233	94	3,066
Poncha Springs	236	8	53	28	19	344
Buena Vista	1,250	31	113	9	27	1,430
Johnson Village	41	0	0	119	33	193
Maysville	90	0	0	0	0	90
Total	8,575	300	592	918	235	10,630
% of Total	80.7%	2.8%	5.7%	8.6%	2.2%	100%

Source: US Census ACS 2017

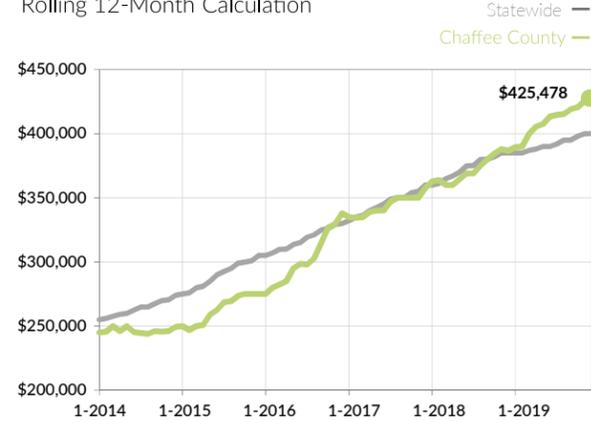
- The housing stock has become less diverse over the last 15 years in the County, with only 5% of units being multifamily. According to the Housing Needs Assessment, there has been very little apartment construction due to a lack of available sites with the right zoning and rents that did not cover the cost of construction.

Housing Cost and Affordability

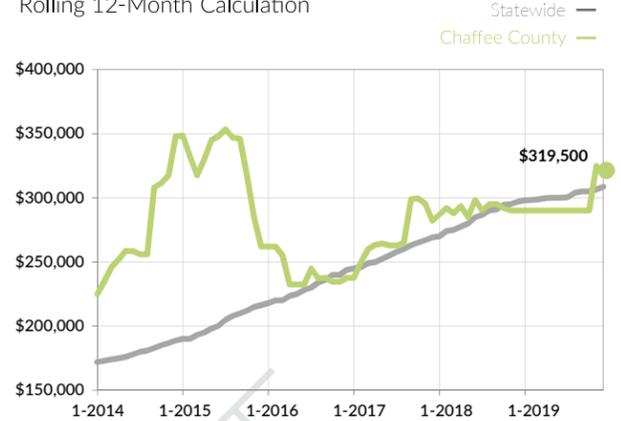
- The dramatic increase in County housing costs largely occurred within the last two to three years. According to the Realtors of Central Colorado, the **median sales price for a single family home in Chaffee County was \$426,978 in December 2019, up 11% from 2018 and up 21% from 2016.**
- Similarly, the median sales price for a townhouse or condo was \$325,200 in December 2019, up 12% from 2018 and up 27% from 2016.
- According to US Census 5-year estimates, 23% of the total housing units in Chaffee County are rentals.



Median Sales Price – Single Family
Rolling 12-Month Calculation



Median Sales Price – Townhouse-Condo
Rolling 12-Month Calculation



Current as of January 6, 2020. All data from the multiple listing services in the state of Colorado. Report © 2019 ShowingTime.

Chaffee Median Home Sales Price	2016	2018	2019
Single-Family	\$338,000	\$386,500	\$425,478
Townhouse or Condo	\$237,650	\$290,000	\$319,500

Source: Colorado Association of Realtors. Reflects prices County-wide, while home prices vary by municipality.

- According to the 2016 Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment, **rents have been rising** and were between \$1,200 and \$1,600 per month. Most rental properties are single family homes, and when properties become available they are usually rented within one month. An average rent of \$1,200 per month is not affordable to a household earning less than 100% AMI. Anecdotally, current local ads show rents between \$1,600 and \$2,000.

Homelessness

- Although accurate numbers of persons experiencing homelessness are difficult to find for Chaffee County, the school officials report an unexpectedly high number of students who claim to not have “housing security”.
- Chaffee has a Homeless Coalition formed in 2019 that focuses on finding solutions and resources for homeless community members. Limited wintertime facilities are available in the south end of the County.

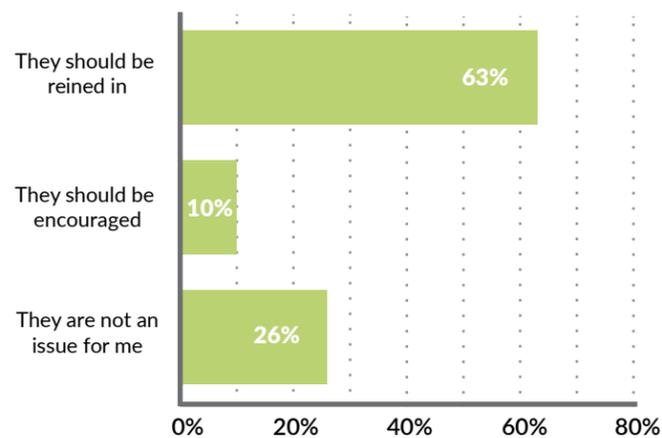
- Homelessness has had significant impacts on the management of public lands, as the rapidly increasing housing prices in the County have forced community members to live in tents and vehicles full-time without proper facilities.

COMMUNITY INPUT

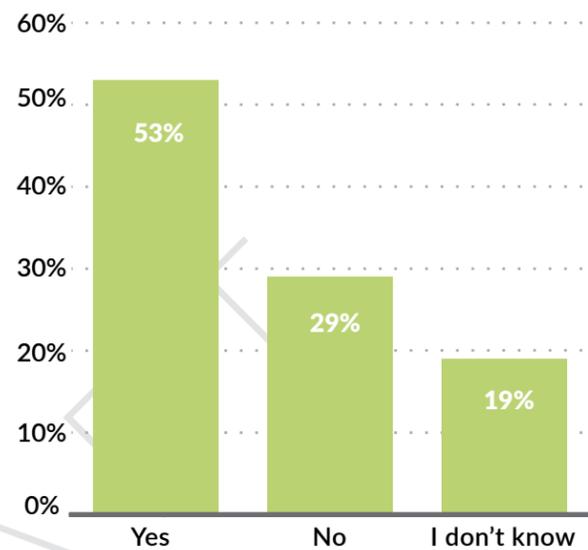
- When asked what the greatest risk to Chaffee’s quality of life was, 26% of responders to the first community survey referred to lack of affordable housing.
- Similarly, 22% of responders mentioned that affordable and/or workforce housing was the number one thing that Chaffee County should focus on in a new comprehensive plan.
- Ninety percent of community survey responders lived in a single-family detached house, while only 3% lived in a townhouse, 2% lived in a duplex or apartment, and 2% lived in a mobile home.

- The majority (89%) owned their home, and of those who rented over half (53%) stated that the greatest barrier to owning was that it was too expensive in their community, while 24% said that there were not enough dwelling types that they needed.
- The majority (63%) of responders thought that short term housing rentals (STRs) should be reined in in Chaffee County, while only 10% thought they should be encouraged, and 26% said that they were not an issue for them personally.
- In Survey #2, 25% of responders said they would support a flat-rate annual licensing fee for STRs that contributes to an affordable housing fund, while 22% said they would support a fee at the percentage of the listing price paid by the vacationer. Only 5% of Survey #2 responders said that they did not support any additional fees for STRs.
- Responders were split on what type of housing they would like to see more of in Chaffee County. Forty percent answered free-standing small homes and small-lot

What do you think about Short Term Rentals (STRs) in the County? *Survey #1 Results*



Would you support a local dedicated tax for affordable housing? *Survey #2 Results*



freestanding houses, while other popular answers included duplex-fourplex (18%) and vertical mixed-use building (12%).

- In response to the open-ended question "What type of affordable community housing should the County produce?", over one quarter of responders described medium to high density apartments in and around existing towns and activity nodes.
- Just over half (53%) of Survey #2 responders were supportive of creating a local dedicated tax for affordable housing, while 29% said they would not support a tax and 19% said they did not know.
- When asked what type of tax they would support, 35% of responders said a hotel/lodging tax, 22% said an excise tax or development impact fee, 15% said a real estate tax or dedicated property tax, and 13% said they did not support a tax for affordable housing.
- When asked if they would support an inclusionary housing ordinance requiring

10-20% affordable housing for every new subdivision developed in the County, 69% responded yes and 31% said that they would not support an ordinance

COMP PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Ultimately the question the community must answer is "How can we continue to supply a strong mix of housing types and prices so that we can alleviate the issues caused by and the economic impacts brought on by losing segments of the population who are unable to participate in the community--either economically or culturally--due to housing costs?" Long commutes, displacement, and empty homes change the community's character and vibrancy.

The dominant housing type is the single family detached unit, and that is unlikely to change. But as people of all types continue to choose Chaffee County as their next home as they depart large cities, the single family home-type will be challenged to absorb the mounting growth pressure. Demand in the rental market is for attached units and apartments, as well as units for seasonal and other workers. Opportunities to increase supply at modest densities will be beneficial in relieving this pressure.

Planning to provide opportunities for a mix of housing--particularly affordable units--for all incomes across the county began with the Housing Needs Assessment and is continued in the Comp Plan by expanding opportunities for housing in the right locations near existing communities and through strategic action steps.

Such locations should be designated in the Sub Area Future Land Use Maps.

From what was heard in the community input, conservation subdivision design appears to be increasingly an alternative to sprawl in applicable locations on transportation corridors or within a municipal planning area where infrastructure may be accommodated. County regulations should incentivize or provide guidance for developers to pursue these designs instead of traditional large-lot rural subdivisions.

As such, the County has made this part of their vision through the goals, strategies, projects and future land use maps. All of the above strive to promote compact, dense housing and mixed use development in the most appropriate areas near or within existing communities.

CONNECTIVITY, MOBILITY & ACCESS DATA & DISCUSSION

WHY THIS THEME IS IMPORTANT

In this document, transportation incorporates Connectivity, Mobility & Access within Chaffee County to create a connected system network for all types of transportation movement through the Arkansas Valley and beyond.

This theme is important as it addresses existing transportation patterns and provides proactive alternatives and practices to accommodate future growth pressures and economic trends. Issues that will affect transportation in the future include population growth, County land development, infrastructure needs and the funding and maintenance of existing and planned transportation networks. This comprehensive plan set the objectives to provide and promote multimodal alternatives to travel, improve connectivity within and between towns, adopt and support safety strategies, support public transportation and telecommunication investments.

Of particular concern is potential growth between the County's employment centers of Buena Vista and Salida. Highways with increasing vehicle traffic and bicycle and pedestrian safety create complicated issues throughout the County.

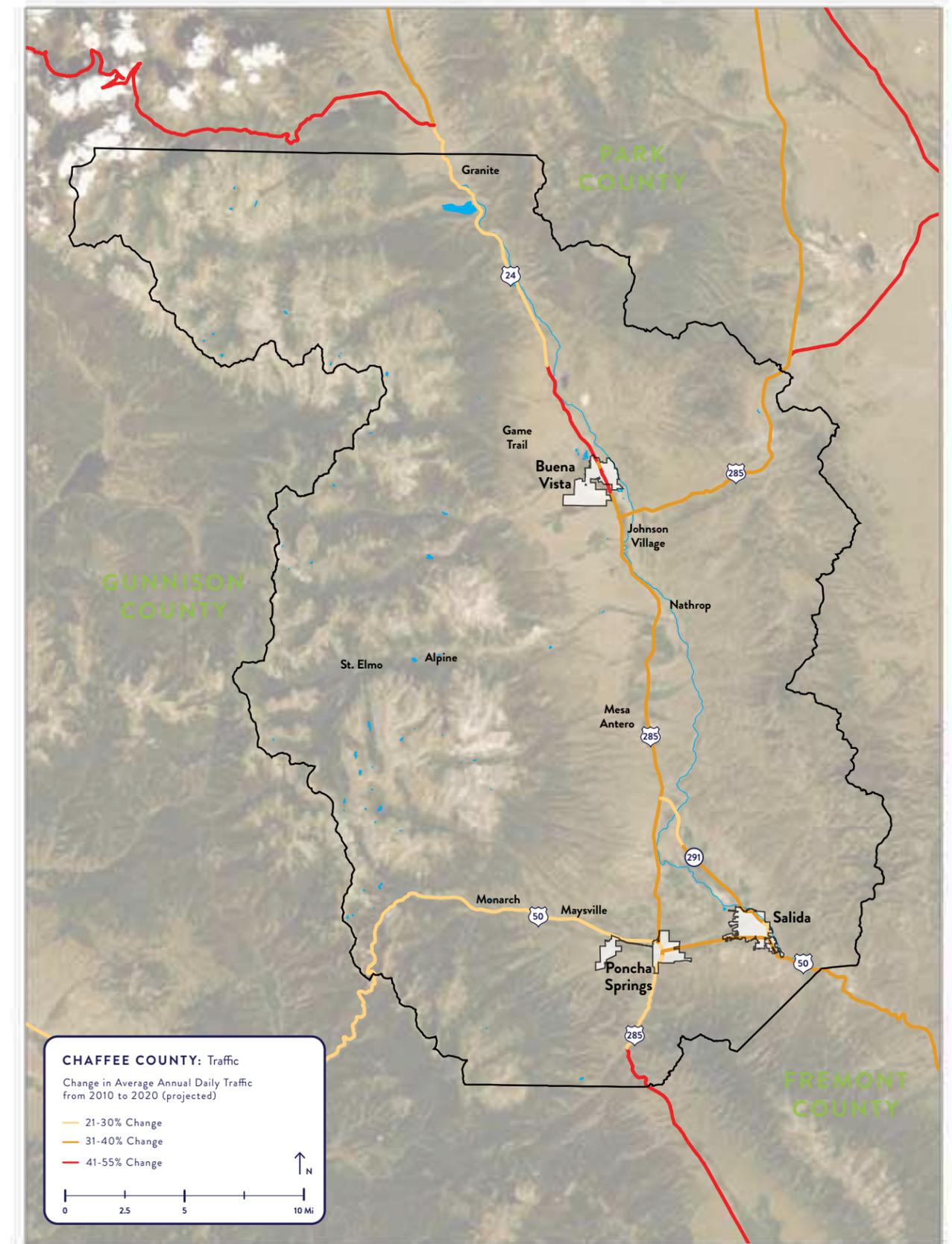
KEY DATA POINTS

County Roads

- The Road & Bridge department has a staff of 18 employees and a budget of \$3 Million per year. The budget is funded by HUTF, PILT and a small portion of property tax.
- The County manages 334 miles of roads. 156 miles are paved, the majority of which are in poor condition. The budget for asphalt will allow for 2 miles of 2 inch overlay and 10 miles of chip and seal per year. There are also 59 bridges managed by the County.
- 178 miles of road are gravel. The challenge with gravel roads is keeping the road users happy with the road condition and dust. Demand is increasing for dust control.
- School bus routes utilize approximately 110 miles of county roads.
- Maintenance of these roads involves geohazards such as landslides, rock falls and flooding, tunnels, pipelines (gas, water, other fuels, etc.), signs, incidents such as roadkill and damage from weather and crashes, and telecommunications infrastructure (phone, internet, cable TV, etc.).

Highway Traffic

- Three major highways serve Chaffee County; U.S. Highway 50 is the primary east/west link and Highways 285 and 24 are the primary north/south links. Traffic backups occur on these highways during the summer months when high concentrations of tourists move throughout the County.



- **Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) has increased significantly on portions of both US 285 and US 24** from 2010 to 2020. The section of US 24 that goes through Buena Vista saw an AADT increase of 46% in ten years.
- Other areas that have seen traffic increases include US 285 at Poncha Pass, US 285 through Johnson Village, and the intersection of Highway 50 and 291.

Commuting Patterns

- **The majority of Chaffee County residents work and live in Buena Vista and Salida.** This indicates that the majority of residents in Chaffee County live where they work.
- According to US Census estimates, almost half (47%) of the workforce in Chaffee both live and work in the County, while 25% work in the County but live outside and 28% live in Chaffee County but commute outside for work.
- An estimated 70% of workers in Chaffee County drove alone to work in 2018, according to US Census estimates. Only 7% carpooled, and 11% walked or biked.

Place of Work vs. Place of Residence

Area	Where talent works	Where talent lives
Salida	58%	57%
Buena Vista	32%	30%
Poncha Springs	3%	3%
Nathrop	4%	10%
Monarch	2%	

Source: Chaffee County Economy Overview, 2018

Telecommunications

- Chaffee County has emergency and commercial telecommunication systems including broadband fiber-optic cable, cell and radio towers, telephone lines and satellites, providing internet/cellular and television access to subscribers.
- **Telecommuting has become more prevalent in recent years (12% of workers worked from home in 2018)**, thus putting higher demands on the systems. Tourism, which is a major sector of the county's economy, also strains the existing telecommunications.
- Broadband access is essential to economic development, purchase and delivery of goods for businesses, and residents.

Chaffee Shuttle Operations

Chaffee Shuttle Riders	Percent of riders
60+ disabled	27%
60+ (non-disabled)	30%
Under 60 disabled	14%
General public	30%

Chaffee Shuttle Trips	Percent of trips
Shopping	27%
Medical appointments	25%
Social/recreational activities	13%
Nutrition, employment or education	11%

Source: Chaffee Shuttle, 2019

Alternative Transportation

- **The Chaffee Shuttle is a transit organization** operated under the non-profit agency of Neighbor to Neighbor Volunteers. It is a shared ride and public transit service, providing transportation to Chaffee County residents for medical appointments, work, shopping, and social activities. The Shuttle has been expanding to provide connecting services for San Luis Valley residents to and from Chaffee County for the same types of trips. Of significance, it is the only public transit agency within CDOT's Transportation Planning Region #5, which includes Chaffee, Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande and Saguache Counties.
- **The Chaffee Shuttle operates with a small office staff and drivers, all of whom are paid through the grants, donations and some fees charged for fixed routes.**
- Bustang, a fee-operating service offered by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), runs a daily bus line from Denver to Gunnison that goes through Buena Vista and Salida. It also runs a bus from Salida to Buena Vista, Salida to Fairplay and Salida to Denver.
- Other transportation options include private taxi and non-profit ride services.

Trails

- Chaffee County has a network of motorized and non-motorized trails used for hiking, walking, mountain biking, and ATV/OHVs. Over the past 30 years, non-motorized systems have developed in each of the three municipalities with connections along county roads leading to the multi-use trails in the public lands surrounding the valley.

- Planning efforts for future trail connections and extensions continue as trail popularity has grown substantially. Continued trail improvements with-in and between communities, counties and the country are encouraged through public support. A Trails Master Plan was completed by the county in 2008 and will be updated as part of the Chaffee County Multimodal Transportation Plan (CCMTP)

Aviation

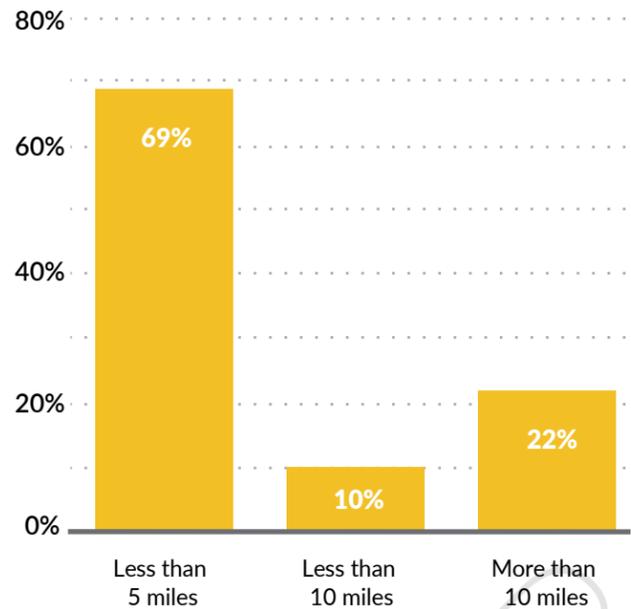
- Chaffee County is served by two general aviation airports. Harriet Alexander Field is located two miles west of Salida and is owned jointly by the City of Salida and Chaffee County and is operated by the County. It serves a variety of private, commercial and government users, including area hospitals.
- Central Colorado Regional Airport is located one mile south of Buena Vista. It is owned by the Town of Buena Vista and is operated by Arkansas Valley Aviation. It serves a mix of private, commercial and government users, including firefighting, search and rescue, and emergency medical operations. (Note: Airport Master Plans for both airports are adopted by this comprehensive plan).

Rail, Trucking and Freight

- The former Denver and Rio Grande Western provides an intact railroad corridor from the southeast corner of the County to the northern border. It has been in Active Reserve status with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) since 1998. Although there have been a number of efforts to utilize the corridor over the years, the STB is holding the corridor for the possible resumption of rail traffic.

How far do you travel to get to work?

Survey #1 Results



- The intact D&RG railroad corridor is a unique and valuable asset that should be kept intact, whatever its final use may be. It is not currently being actively maintained. The corridor could potentially be used for rail and or rail/trail travel.
- Trucks continue to be the main source of freight movement through the County. This not only includes large semi-trucks delivering products to stores, but also includes the “small freight” trucks that are now part of the County’s daily economy. These include parcel delivery by such organizations as UPS and FedEx making direct deliveries to residential and commercial doorsteps from on-line retail establishments.

COMMUNITY INPUT

- Based on the first online survey, Chaffee residents voiced concern over the lack of multimodal options and infrastructure in the County. They were concerned with State Highway congestion, parking issues and that Highway 285 is the only way to get through the County.
- Safety concerns were also often brought up when discussing pedestrian and bicycle interactions on the Highways across the County.
- Although persons who telecommute from home or commute to Chaffee County to work were not surveyed, these are important elements of Chaffee County’s economy.
- Responders took great pride in the existing trail network and its importance for active lifestyles. Thirty-three percent of all responses to the question “What spaces in and around Chaffee County are most important to you?” mentioned trails.
- Due to the Chaffee Shuttle’s limited capacity (and the lack of awareness among citizens that this service is available), the need for a County-wide circulator shuttle was brought up frequently through the engagement process. At the Together Chaffee Drop-in Events in an investment activity, 7% of residents voted to invest in a County-wide circulator shuttle.

COMP PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Community input indicates the existing trail network is critical to the County’s identity, yet progress is needed to ensure recreational and commuter travel is safe and convenient for Chaffee’s residents over the next decade.

Implications for this comprehensive plan include the need for maintaining and improving the County transportation system by analyzing existing conditions and implementing policies, procedures, funding and infrastructure to accommodate the future functionality of the County.

This plan encourages the use of existing studies and promotes intergovernmental, agency and community planning in the decision making process concerning the County transportation corridors; roads, trails, waterways, railroads, easements, rights-of-way, air space and telecommunications. The completion of the Chaffee County Multimodal Transportation Plan is essential to meeting these needs.

Land use and connectivity or mobility intersect particularly when exploring ideas to promote density over sprawl. Transit-oriented development has long been discussed as a strategy, such as building density near Bustang stops or along high-volume non-vehicle transport routes.

RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT DATA & DISCUSSION

WHY THIS THEME IS IMPORTANT

Fostering a Resilient & Sustainable Environment means being a regional and national leader in policy-making and resource allocation that emphasizes sustainable development. It means approaching County planning ecologically, understanding that Chaffee's way of life and some of its highest valued ecological assets require active protection and monitoring.

This comprehensive plan is meant to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our community and preserve our community character for future generations. To do this in a community that is 83% public land, we must have a comprehensive plan organized around stewardship of our ecological resources. This plan extends that ethic to the private lands in Chaffee County, where most of the community lives and works.

KEY DATA POINTS

With continuing efforts from the Greater Arkansas River Nature Association and Chaffee Green, community-based organizations, and the general public, Chaffee County has endeavored to become a leader in the field of sustainable and resilient Western living. There are numerous projects, programs, and efforts driven by grassroots and governmental agencies aimed at pushing the Resilient and Sustainable Environment agenda.

Sustainability-oriented agencies, nonprofits, or other groups have emerged in Chaffee County in the past 20 years. The following organizations had direct input into this comprehensive plan:

- GARNA
- Chaffee Green
- Central Colorado Conservancy

Chaffee Common Ground and Citizen Advisory Committee

- An outcome of the Envision Chaffee County action plan, Common Ground is community-led initiative to **maintain the quality of life and resources** that attract so many people to the region.
- Enabled through a ballot-initiated grant process that leverages a portion of local sales tax, Common Ground makes possible programs and projects that **protect "the county's most spectacular scenic views, the health of forest ecosystems, watersheds and water quality, and wildlife and their habitats.** The Common Ground Fund helps preserve our community's unique character and enhances the assets that support our local economy" (from Common Ground's [website](#)).
- Common Ground is overseen by a Citizen Advisory Committee that provides recommendations to the County Commissioners on efforts or projects.
- Common Ground's guiding principles are congruent with this Comp Plan's motivations (as discussed on page 196) with forest health, sustainable agriculture and mitigating impacts from recreational uses as high priority subjects.

- Along with the Recreation in Balance Program from Envision Chaffee, this Comp Plan supports the efforts put forth in the mission of these efforts, as well as the urgency in competing critical tasks to further their effectiveness. Further information on these tasks can be found in the CCG 2019 Annual Report ([link](#)).

Forest Health

- In the Envision Chaffee effort, forest health was identified as one of the top two concerns of our community.
- Decades of fire suppression has led to a mostly climax forest that lacks diversity and is susceptible to disease. **The spruce beetle is transforming the spruce zone from a forest with 3-4 standing dead trees per acre to 120 standing dead trees per acre.**
- There is also spruce budworm, beetle, and a disease wiping out stands of aspen trees. This has set the stage for catastrophic wildfire.

Wildfire Risk

- According to the Chaffee County Wildfire Protection Plan, wildfires can be classified by how they are managed on a scale of Type 5 (very small fires) to Type 1 (large, complex fires and natural disasters). Ten years ago, the Upper Arkansas River Headwaters Region in Chaffee and Lake Counties had only experienced one Type 3 wildfire ever. In the decade since, **there have been two more Type 3's (Treasure and Lodgepole), the first Type 2 (Hayden Pass), and the first two Type 1's (Weston Pass and Decker).**
- While lightning statistically causes the most forest fires, rapid growth in recreation use exacerbates the threat. Fire management will be a critical concern when dealing with future fires.

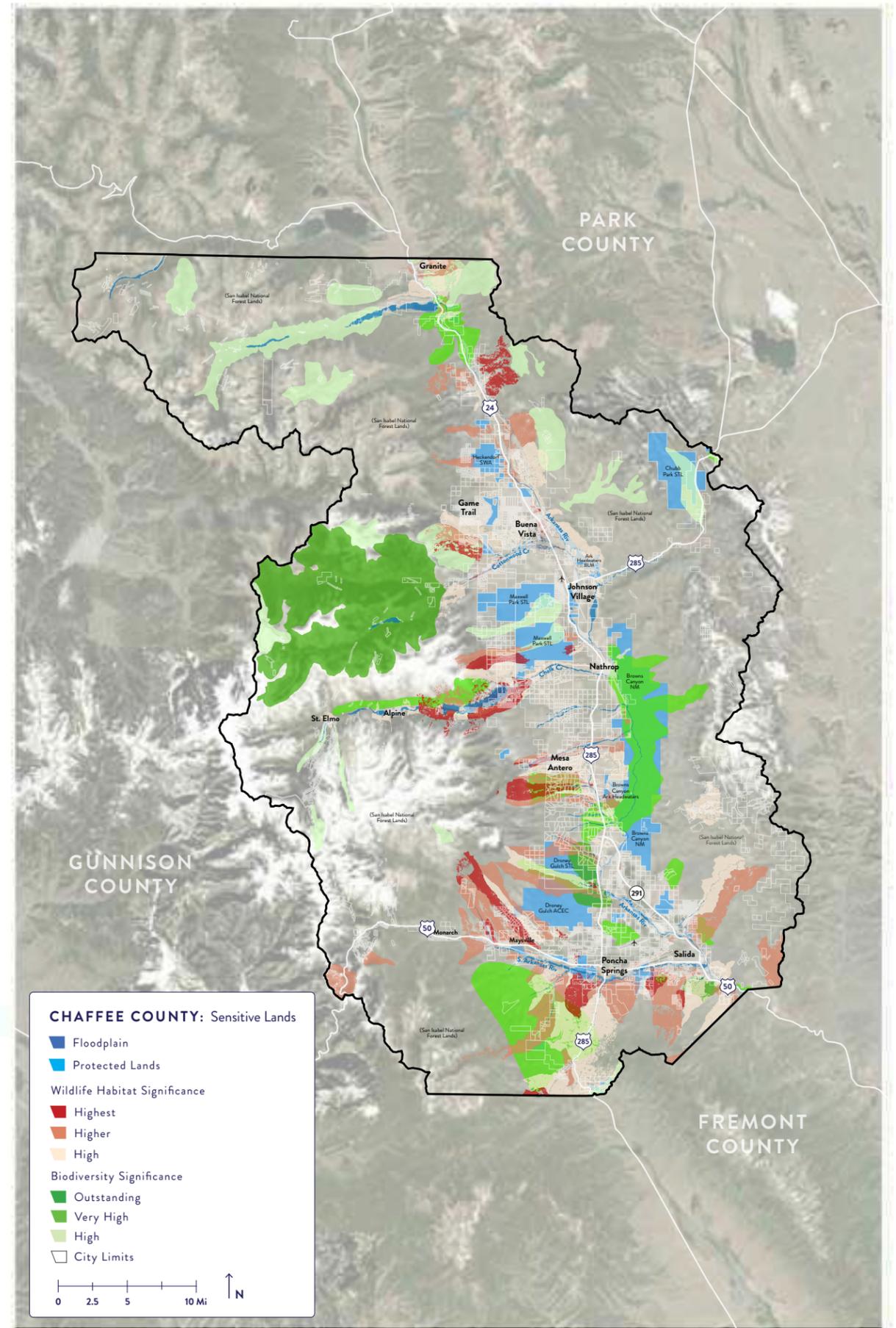
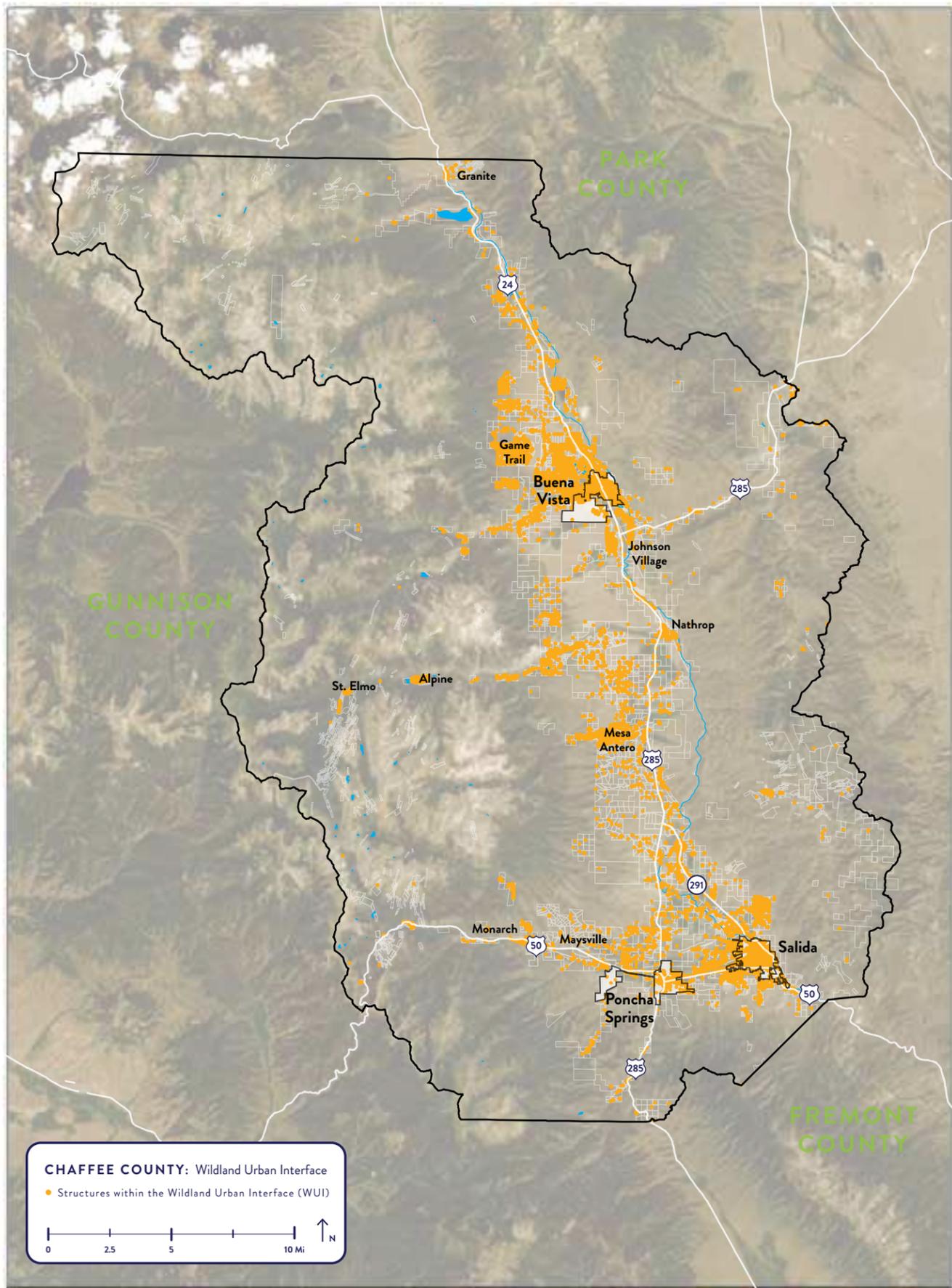
- The Collegiate Peaks Wilderness covers a significant portion of the western side of the County, and much of the municipal water supply derives from that region. The fire management practices, coupled with the difficulty of the terrain make fighting fire in this region extremely difficult and dangerous.
- The CWPP calls for a proactive approach to prioritizing forest treatment, not to eliminate fire, but to try to eliminate *catastrophic* fire.

Preserved/Protected Lands

- With over 502,500 acres of public land, making up 83% of the County, it's undeniable that Chaffee's economic success and future growth is dependent upon preserving its natural assets. The same land that provides spaces for outdoor recreation and drives the tourism industry is also crucial habitat for fish and wildlife, as well as the foliage that sustains the county's grazing agricultural population.
- All of Chaffee's public land is managed by agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, whose responsibilities include managing snowpack repositories, runoff, and surface reservoirs. The proper management of all these elements directly affect the quality and quantity of water supply which the people of Chaffee County rely on.

Water Resources

- Water is a limited resource, and in Chaffee County it is an issue of concern voiced often by the public and County leadership.
- **The Upper Arkansas River Basin has an average of 12 inches of precipitation** or less, and rivers and streams rise with spring runoff from snowmelt and flows reduce significantly during the hot summer months, making it essential to manage water prudently throughout the year.



- The Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District is responsible for managing water resources through storage, augmentation, legal and engineering activities.
- In Colorado, water in every natural river and stream is owned through water rights, and every drop of water in the Arkansas River Basin is appropriated and thereby owned by individual entities, private and public.
- In Chaffee County, water flows through irrigation ditches which are owned and maintained by ranchers across the County.
- Protection of riparian corridors is critical to the survival of wildlife species in the County.



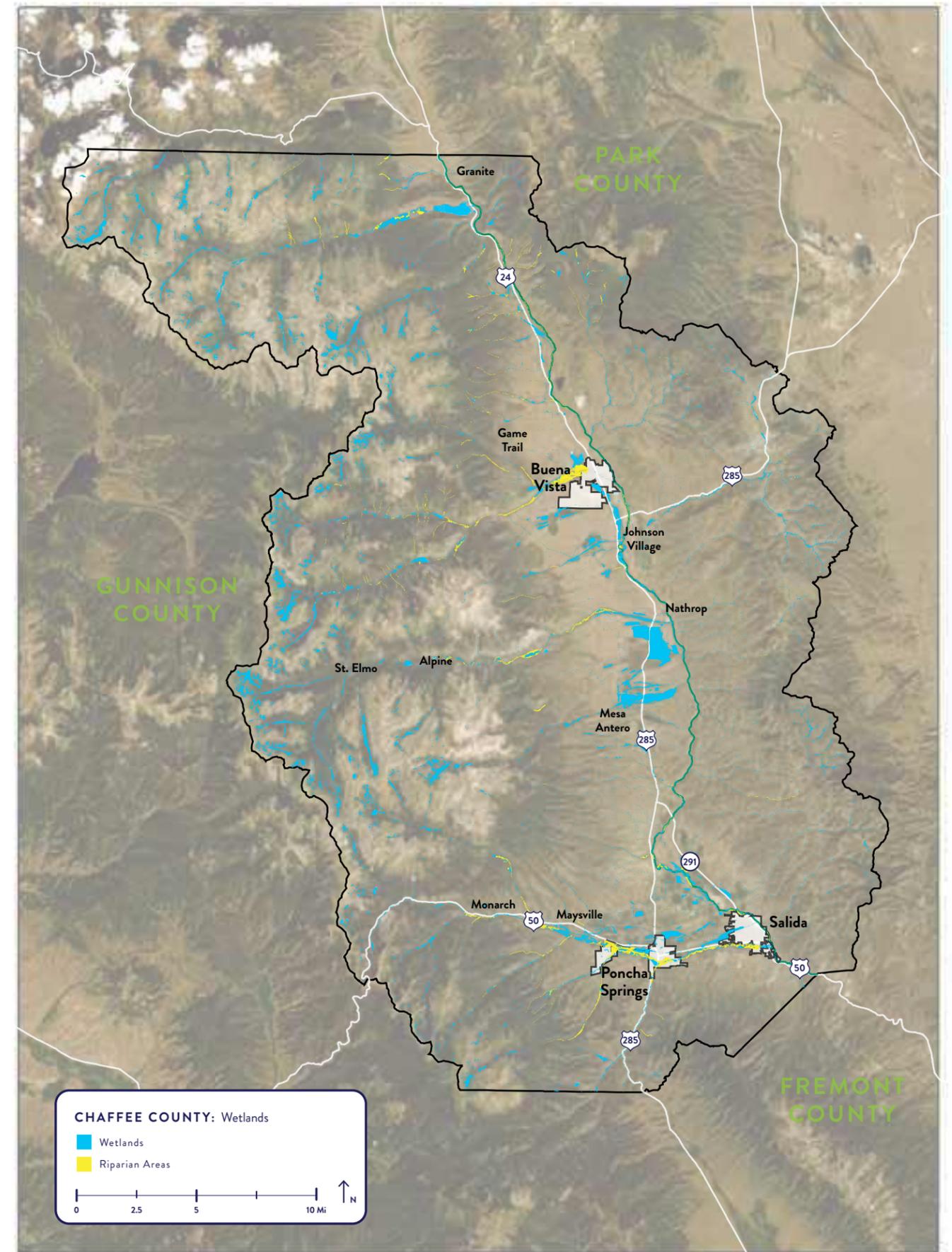
Members of Chaffee Green make reusable bags from recycled feed bags

Watershed Health

- A number of cooperating federal and state agencies have worked to clean the Arkansas River from decades of mining and other contaminants that had negative health impacts to the river and its native trout population.
- One major indicator of the success of these cleanup efforts is the **return of a healthy trout population**. The Arkansas is rated Gold Metal Fishing, which means a body of water must consistently support a minimum trout standing stock of 60 pounds per acre, and the Arkansas has an average of 170 pounds per acre.
- A major concern for the Arkansas River is pollution by sedimentation from erosion. A 2010 watershed assessment determined that historical human uses of the water have put pressure on the river as its flows have been channelized, bends straightened, its bank eroded and its wetland habitat degraded.
- Declining forest health and tree mortality impacts the ability of the watershed to hold snow until summer, and weakens the groundwater recharge function as well.

Wildlife & Habitat Loss

- Elk are currently managed at the low end of target range. Mule deer population declined 33% in the past decade, and deer collar data indicates that deer wintering in Chaffee County populate 8 counties in other months - so our winter habitat impacts regional populations. Chaffee is a center of T&E Boreal Toads which are rapidly declining.
- Studies in other places (Eagle County) have demonstrated up to 50% decline in Elk populations in 10 years directly related to rural lands development and impacts from increasing recreation - exactly what is happening in Chaffee now.
- CPW also indicates that the crossings of major highways with migration corridors are a key threat at traffic increases with increasing population and visitation.



Energy Use

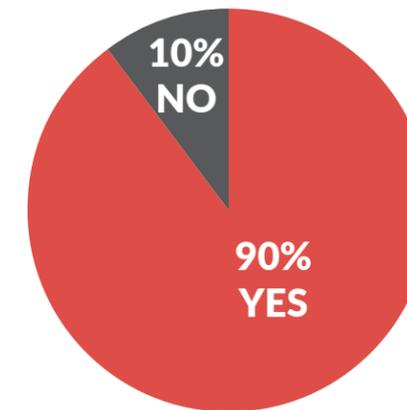
- Clean Energy Chaffee (CEC) is a citizen group dedicated to the advancement of clean energy and energy conservation in the County. The group produced a Clean Energy Plan, in which they recommend strategies for Chaffee County to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This plan should be used as a guiding document regarding energy use in the County.
- Private energy providers and the State of Colorado are making great efforts to expand renewable energy use statewide. The Colorado Energy Plan updated in 2018 aims to achieve 55% renewable energy on the grid by 2026, and reduce carbon emissions by about 60 percent from 2005 levels through a \$2.5 billion investment.
- From geospatial surveys in Chaffee County, the aerial extent of the geothermal reservoir in the Mt. Princeton area has been estimated by the Colorado Division of Water Resources as containing between 3.81 Qs and 68.6 Qs of energy. A “Q” is equal to one quadrillion (10 to the 15th power) British Thermal Units (BTUs). If early estimates prove accurate, this is a major renewable energy source. One Q is equivalent to 160 million barrels of oil.
- Congress has recently established tax incentives for businesses locating in Opportunity Zones, two of which lie south of Buena Vista. This is in addition to State Tax Incentives available throughout most of Chaffee County. In late 2019, Congress re-instituted and increased both the Investment Tax Credit and the Production Tax Credits, which incentivize most types of renewable energy investments.

COMMUNITY INPUT

- Those who provided community input voiced concern that development and growth is encroaching on open space and sensitive environments.
- Of particular concern was wildlife habitat and corridors, watershed health, water quality and quantity, wildfire risk, air quality, waste disposal and landfill capacity, and overall ecosystem health.
- One responder to the first online community survey stated “The current County Land Use Code, with 2-acre minimum lot size for single family residential is the primary driving force in creating sprawl, compromising water quality, wildlife habitat, and impacting the landscape to the maximum degree.”
- Another said “The greatest risk to Chaffee County’s quality of life is the loss of our wilderness areas and wildlife due to growth, wildfire, and not putting an emphasis on sustainability.”
- In Survey #2, when asked if they would support the creation and adoption of a County-wide Sustainability Plan, 90% of responders said yes. Without a sustainability department or manager, many residents expressed their concern that Chaffee County is lagging behind other Colorado communities in planning for sustainability.
- In the effort to update the County’s Wildfire Protection Plan, a survey was conducted to better understand perceptions about forest fire, fire resilience, treatment activities and preparedness for a major wildfire event. The results of the survey indicated that nearly half of citizens were not prepared for wildfire, 40% had no established evacuation plan and 62% had no arrangements related to children at home alone during an emergency.

Would you support the creation and adoption of a County-wide sustainability plan? Survey #2

Results



- Survey responses also indicated that private landowners have little sense of urgency to act to remove vegetation or to change the characteristics of their home to protect their residences from wildfire.
- Regarding new private land development, the survey data appeared to indicate strong support for wildfire-related provisions in building codes.
- Community members recognize that renewable energy competes with other sectors for inputs, particularly land. Poor siting can adversely affect local residents and disrupt tourism, which is a large source of income and employment in Chaffee County.
- Local social acceptance by stating clear benefits to our local community will be critical to introduce renewable energy projects.
- In addition, several key participants in Envision Chaffee and key personnel behind the Recreation in Balance effort were interviewed and provided input to this Comp Plan’s goals, strategies and action steps as found in this theme.

COMP PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The key intersection between sustainable planning, climate change and County growth is fire resiliency planning. The heightened awareness caused by the Decker Fire of 2019 may have had a galvanizing effect regarding community awareness of high fire hazard areas and the real dangers of threats to existing homes in such areas.

This residual consciousness is intended to be used to not only prevent future hazards by eliminating future growth in hazardous areas, but also by putting an eye towards prevention efforts, projects and resources not only for fire, but for combating climate change as a whole by promoting smart and efficient growth through the Comprehensive Plan.

Alternative energy should not be considered as a standalone sector within Chaffee County’s economy. Potential backward and forward linkages with local industries such as forestry or tourism should be developed through an integrated approach to renewable energy deployment. Collective action should be stimulated through intermediate institutions active in our community and policy makers should aim at involving a larger number of stakeholders in policy interventions to stimulate sustainable development and improve local support.

JOBS & ECONOMY DATA & DISCUSSION

WHY THIS THEME IS IMPORTANT

Conventionally known as a recreational mecca and tourist destination, Chaffee County aims to reinvent itself as a more diverse and productive place of business so as to attract workers from elsewhere and balance the inflow and outflow of people commuting throughout the valley in their own vehicles.

Housing and employment characteristics are affected by the land use patterns in a region, and this plan strives to balance opportunities for new jobs with housing to mitigate impacts such as increased traffic.

Attracting new and diverse industries would broaden Chaffee County's economy while providing an opportunity for the County's workers with differing education and backgrounds to obtain employment.

Support for existing businesses across the region is also critical, with the growing trends in remote employees working from home. Supporting the technology and infrastructure required for such businesses is a key component of plan implementation.

KEY DATA POINTS

Jobs & Employment

- According to US Census LEHD estimates, there were 7,350 jobs in Chaffee County in 2018. **Jobs are projected to increase to an estimated 9,500 jobs by 2030.**
- An emerging trend in Chaffee County in recent years is the **expanding population of remote workers - in 2018 11.8% of residents worked from home**, which is higher than Colorado's 7.7% remote workers.
- Envision Chaffee found: "telecommuting represents a rapid change in the fabric of our County, with 37% of people living in Chaffee County now working in other locations, an increase from 3% in 2000. Continued broadband development will enable continued telecommuting economy growth."

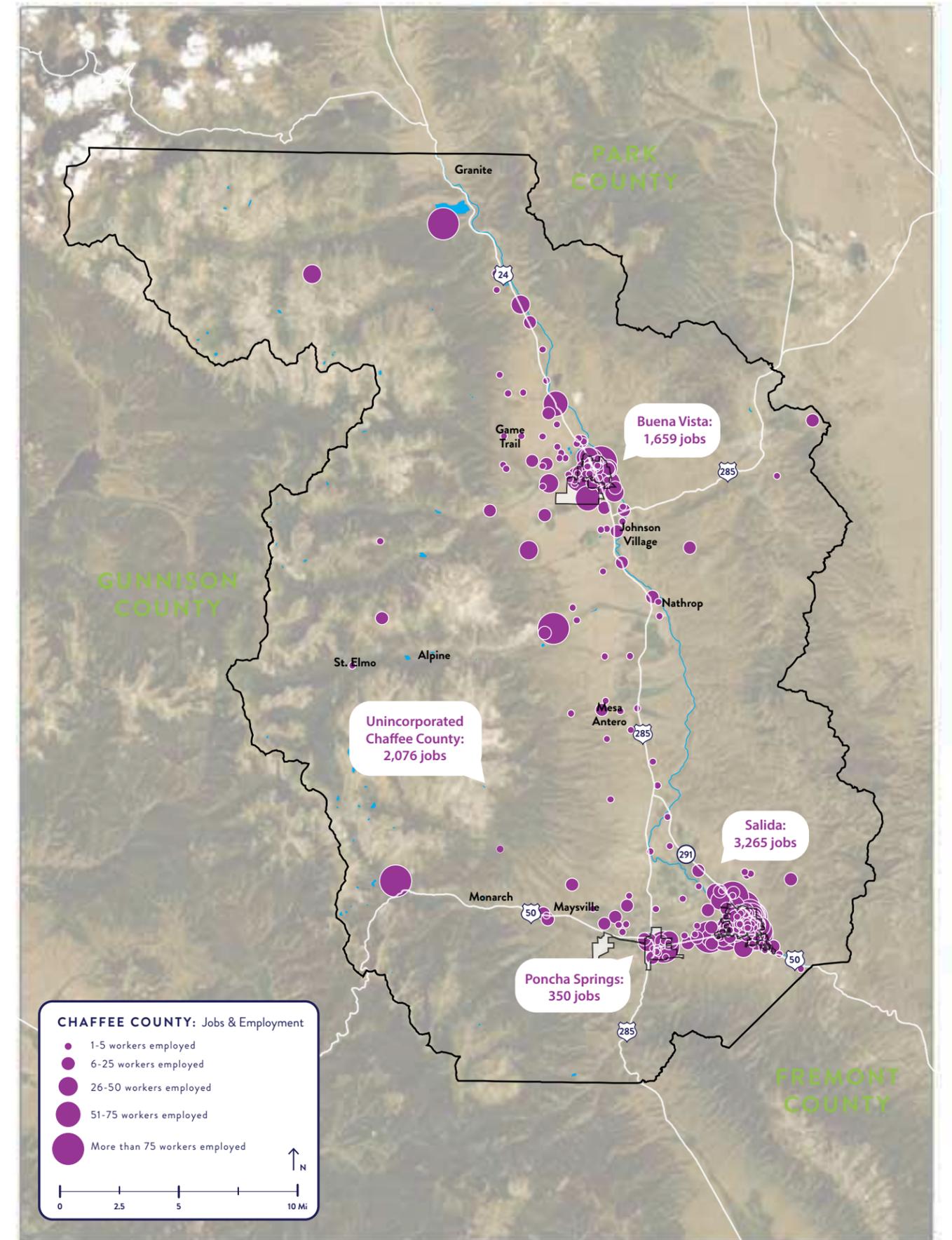
Labor Force

- According to US Census estimates, in 2017 Chaffee County's **labor force participation was 52.9%, which is lower than the state participation of 68.2%.**

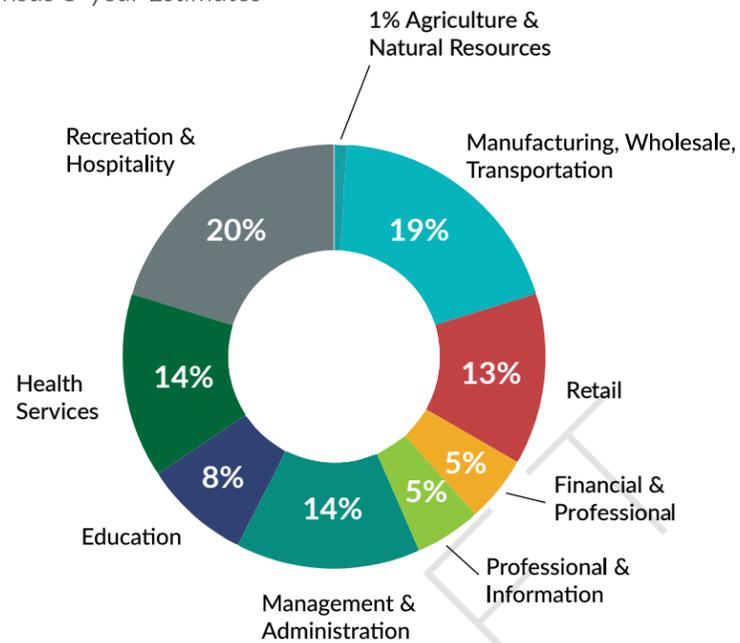
Employment in Chaffee County

Area	% of total jobs
Salida	44%
Buena Vista	21%
Poncha Springs	5%
Unincorporated county	28%

Source: US Census LEHD estimates, 2018



2017 Job Sectors, US Census 5-year Estimates



- In 2018, the ratio of jobs to labor force in Chaffee was 0.86:1, which indicates a **shortage of jobs in the County**. This has increased from 2015, when the jobs to labor force ratio was 0.77:1 and the 2010 ratio was 0.68:1, indicating that jobs have grown faster than the labor force in the past 10 years.

Job Sectors

- Chaffee County’s economy benefits from its world-renowned recreational opportunities and the tourists that they attract, and the County’s labor force and employment picture reflects a tourist economy.
- According to Census estimates from 2017, the top three job sectors in the County were accommodation and food services (16.9%), health care and social assistance (13.5%), and retail trade (12.3%). **That’s 29% of the population that works in the tourism industry**, postulating that almost one third of Chaffee County workers may have to work multiple jobs at relatively low wages. Other prominent job sectors are public administration (9.7%) and construction (9.2%).

- The dominance of food service and retail employers in the County indicates a lack of large-scale employers. According to the 2018 Chaffee County Economy Overview, 42.6% of businesses employ between 1 and 4 workers, 27.9% employ 5-9 workers, 17.5% employ 10-19 workers, and less than 3% employ over 50 workers.

- **Government remains the largest employer with almost 2,000 jobs.** There is some growth in administration and professional jobs, along with wholesale trade that reflects some diversification.
- The growth of craft brewing, wine, and distillery businesses, along with marijuana companies, highlights the diversification and growth of this industry, wholesale trade.
- Health care and construction are the fastest growing and among the highest paying jobs in the County. The Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center is the largest employer followed by the Buena Vista Correctional Facility.

- Monarch Mountain Ski area, which anchors the economy during the winter season, and Mt. Princeton Hot Springs, are among the largest employers.
- Building on an already established music scene, new hotels and music venues have catalyzed the expansion of this industry along with the creation of seasonal jobs. Such visitor-oriented job creating venues and events provide for additional seasonal employment, however impacts to public services or facilities should not place undue strain on the County’s ability to provide a safe and fiscally responsible environment.

- Other common answers included providing high-speed internet to businesses and offering more post-high school educational opportunities like vocational training programs.

COMP PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The public vision for Chaffee’s future economic identity pushes towards innovative and sustainability-oriented businesses, while looking for opportunities to foster the next-generation worker and workspace. A somewhat large amount of presumed remote workers or sole proprietorships as seen in the data provided by Envision Chaffee may indicate latent demand for live/work uses or buildings where entrepreneurs can start up their dream business.

Similarly, promoting new office formats such as shared office concepts offers young or cash-burdened future businesspeople lower overhead costs, flexible leasing, equipment and technology, and a quality environment conducive to creativity and innovation.

COMMUNITY INPUT

- Residents who responded to the first online survey appeared to be concerned with the lack of economic diversity Chaffee County. When asked what the top issues facing Chaffee planning were, lack of job diversity and low wages was the third most common answer.
- Survey responders were split on the types of businesses they thought are most needed in the County. The most common answers were better paying businesses (23%), small/local businesses (19%), high-tech businesses (13%), and more restaurants (10%).
- In response to the open-ended question “What can Chaffee County do to make businesses more successful?”, survey responders offered a variety of ideas. Some thought that small and local businesses should be given financial assistance in the form of tax breaks and incentives, others mentioned workforce housing to support employees.

GROWTH & LAND USE DATA & DISCUSSION

WHY THIS THEME IS IMPORTANT

Growth and Land Use directly addresses the regulatory framework in place which has guided growth across the Upper Arkansas Valley. Growing smart in a community with limited resources and tax base to provide public services creates the potential for challenges if the pace of growth exceeds its ability to provide services and infrastructure. Understanding the capacity of public systems and associated facilities is an important function of the Comprehensive Plan. A growth plan must provide for a pattern of development that has mechanisms to harness growth - or in some cases leverage it - to ensure adequate levels of civic services are maintained.

With three incorporated municipalities with their own Three-Mile Planning Areas housing almost half of the County's homes, and the other half scattered throughout various unincorporated nodes, there is considerable overlap in long range land use strategies. Communicating this intended vision becomes critical to building consensus on what happens on the ground throughout the County.

KEY DATA POINTS

Amount of Developable Land

The comprehensive planning process addresses growth and capacity, and the amount of land physically available for development—in this

case referring generally to land that would be subdivided for single family housing—has helped make determinations on how, where and what kind of growth can be managed in the long-term. A planning-level inventory was used to calculate the amount of land that could potentially be developed. The parameters for an available property were:

- Privately-owned
- Vacant or partially-vacant: residential property occupied by an allowed land use which is large enough to be further subdivided or developed
- Not previously platted in a subdivision
- Not in a environmentally sensitive or unbuildable area (e.g. conservation easement, floodplain/wetlands, habitat, steep slopes).

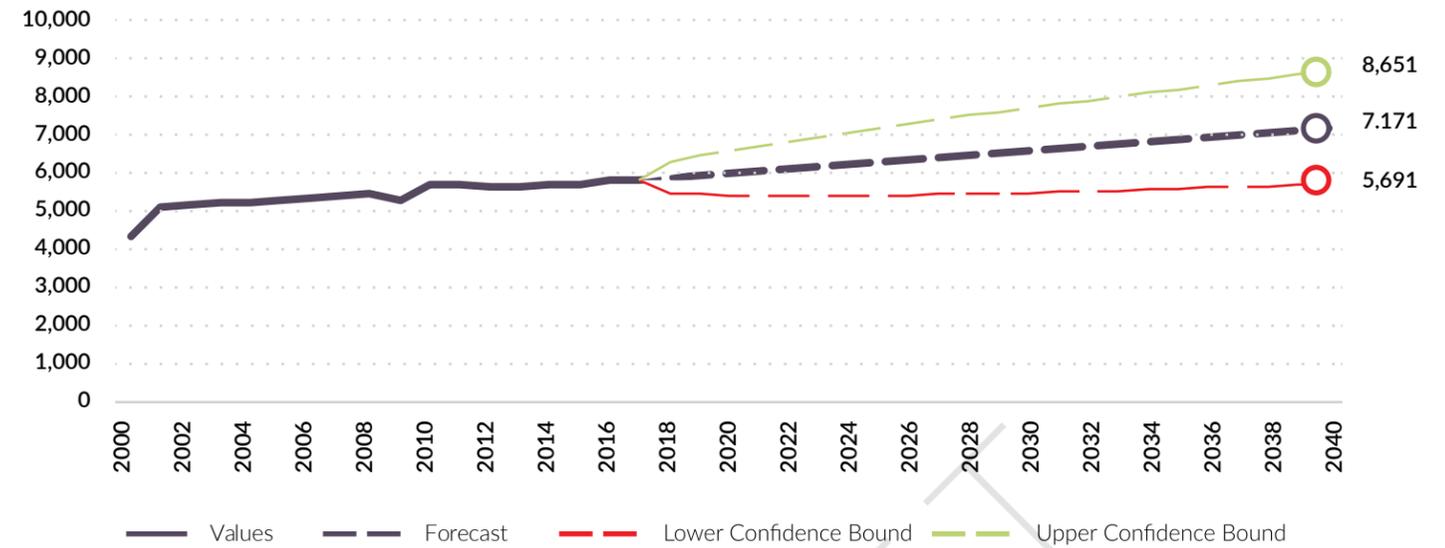
Based on these parameters there are approximately **38,648 acres** that are physically able to be developed. About 12,740 of that total are partially-used residential properties over 40 acres that still that could still be potentially subdivided further.

Housing Distribution in Chaffee County

Area	% of Housing units
Salida	30%
Buena Vista	14%
Poncha Springs	4%
Unincorporated county	over 50%

Source: Chaffee Housing Needs Assessment, 2016

Housing Unit Growth: Pace of housing growth and projection, 2000 to 2040 (US Census, Cushing Terrell)



Pace of Housing Growth

- Utilizing U.S. Census data from 2000 through today, an exponential smoothing forecast estimates that **Chaffee County's housing stock will increase by 19% by 2035, reaching 6,874 housing units** based on historic trends. This forecast also predicts an upper confidence bound of 8,184 units, which indicates that plans for where future growth should occur should accommodate this number of new housing units.
- According to the 2016 Housing Needs Assessment, of the **approximately 10,400 housing units in Chaffee County, 30% are in Salida, 14% in Buena Vista, 4% in Poncha Springs, and over 50% in the unincorporated county.** The Assessment also found that 75% of new housing in Chaffee County was built in the unincorporated area over the past 15 years (2000-2015).

Water

- Water is supplied in the Salida, Buena Vista and Poncha Springs Sub-Areas by municipal water systems. **Outside of the municipalities, a number of community water systems exist within county limits.**

- There are three non-transient, non-community water systems that serve at least 25 of the same people at least six months per year (Mount Princeton Hot Springs, Monarch Mountain Lodge and Salida KOA Campground).
- Additionally, there are 45 transient, non-community water systems are defined as water systems that serve at least 25 people more than 60 days per year.

Sanitation

- Buena Vista, Johnson Village, Salida and Poncha Springs are served by municipal sanitation districts.
- There are 8 minor wastewater dischargers permitted through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) under Regulation 22 - Site Location and Design Approval Regulations for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Works in Chaffee County.
- **Outside of the municipalities of Chaffee County, most homes use on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTSs),** also known as septic systems and leach fields.

- According to CDPHE, Chaffee County has experienced a 15% annual increase in OWTS permits filed.

Electricity

- Chaffee County is served by two electric providers: Sangre de Cristo Electric and Xcel Energy.

Broadband & Cell Phone Coverage

- High-speed, redundant broadband is not available in many areas of Chaffee County. Colorado Central Telecom and Spectrum provide internet service to customers throughout the County, although community members have cited redundancy as a significant issue.
- Cell phone coverage has also been reported as unreliable, as outages and poor coverage are common (particularly in the north end of the County). These weaknesses inhibit diversification of the economy and creation of higher paying jobs.

Fire and Emergency Services

- Chaffee County Fire Protection District's (CCFPD) predominately volunteer force is responsible for the efficient mitigation of emergencies and delivering service to the community within the 1,000 sq mile Fire District.
- CCFPD has 35 pieces of mobile equipment/apparatus allocated between **6 fire stations (located in Buena Vista, Nathrop, Poncha Springs and Maysville)** that are professionally staffed by **40+ volunteer firefighters and 4 paid firefighters.**
- The Salida Fire Department consists of professional fire personnel on duty 24/7 to serve the Salida municipal area with mutual and automatic aid agreements to assist throughout Chaffee County.

Law Enforcement

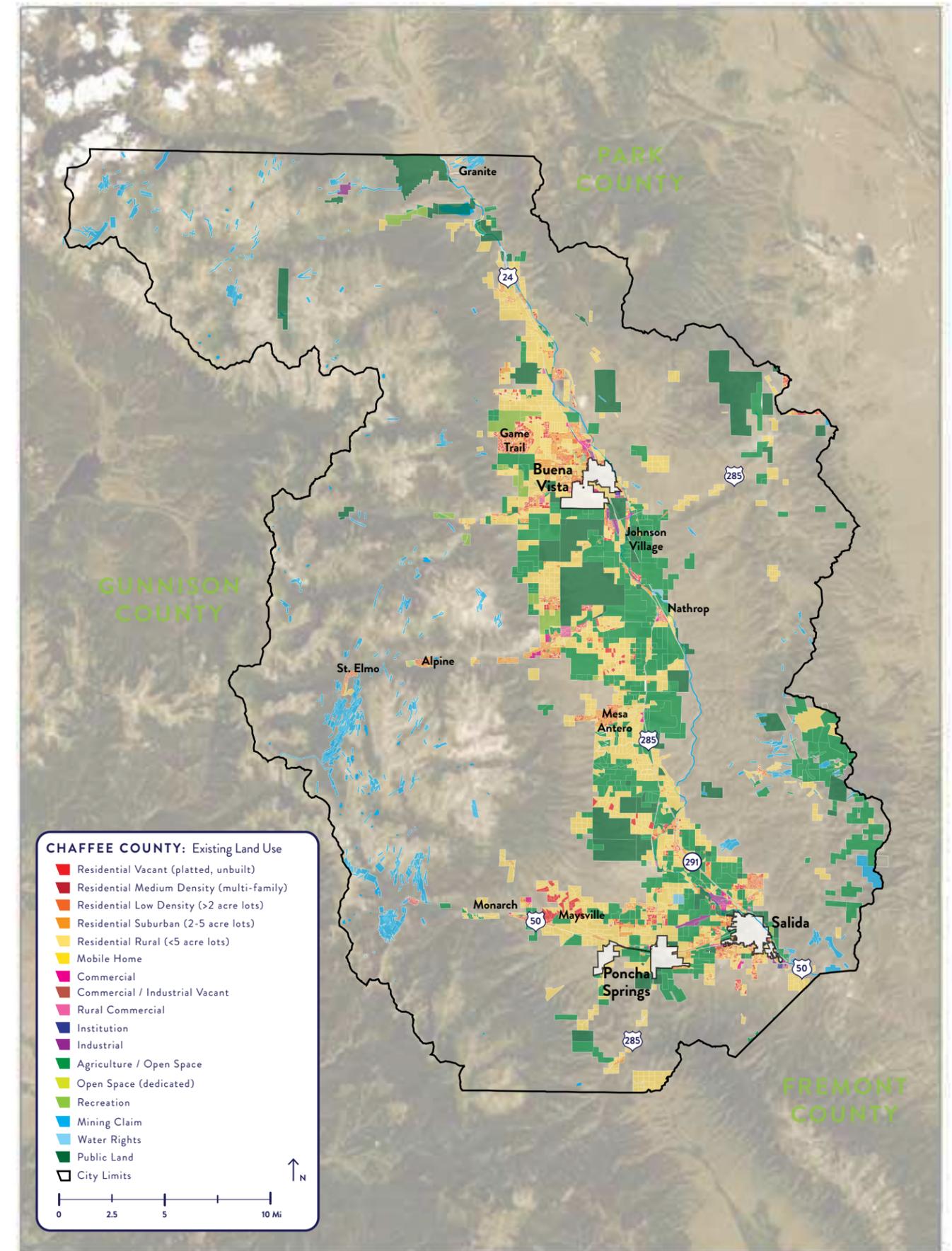
- Law enforcement is provided by the Chaffee County Sheriff Department. The department has 23 sworn officers, and in 2019 they received 6,535 calls. The department **struggles with employee retention due to lack of funding to pay officers competitive salaries.**
- There are two municipal police forces in Salida and Buena Vista, with mutual aid agreements with surrounding agencies.

Road and Bridge

- Chaffee County Road and Bridge is responsible for maintaining approximately 300 miles of roads in Chaffee County. There are 44 bridge structures of various types in Chaffee County.
- The primary responsibility of the Road and Bridge Department is the routine maintenance of county roads. This includes plowing snow, grading dirt roads, maintaining barrow ditches, cattleguards and drainage along county roads, weed and brush control, and patching asphalt.
- **County road maintenance is currently unable to keep up with the impacts of growth,** and public expectations of road conditions continues to rise.

Waste Services

- The Chaffee County Landfill is located off Highway 285, approximately 11 miles from Salida and 14 miles from Buena Vista. Many County residents contract with private haulers to pick up and dispose of household trash.
- The landfill property and landfill enterprise are critical elements of County infrastructure, and while the projected lifespan of the landfill is many decades, replacing it will be a massive challenge. Efforts to best manage this resource should be continued.



Existing Land Use

Land Use	% of total acres
Public land	83%
Agriculture	7%
Residential	9%
Recreation/mining claims	2%

Source: Cushing Terrell, 2019

- Chaffee County's intergovernmental agencies operate four recycling centers in the County, and according to the UAACOG Waste Optimization Regional Study, the **diversion rate for Chaffee County increased from 4.8% in 2005 to 16% in 2016**. However, the amount of waste generated per household was 8.45 pounds per day, compared to the national average of 4.41 pounds per day. Desire for a more robust recycling program was expressed by the community and County leadership.

Existing Land Use

- The majority (83%) of Chaffee County is **public land**, most of which is open space. An estimated 7% of the land is agriculture/open space, over 45,000 acres. The remaining 10% of land is mostly (7%) rural residential (on lots larger than 5 acres). Approximately 3,100 acres in unincorporated Chaffee County are Residential Vacant - which are platted but unbuilt lots.

COMMUNITY INPUT

- Community members that participated in the first online survey expressed concern over the nature of growth and development in Chaffee. When asked what the greatest risk to Chaffee County's quality of life is, 25% of responders mentioned uncontrolled, sprawling growth in rural areas.
- One survey responder answered "The greatest risk to Chaffee County's current quality of life is over-development of rural areas: rural sprawl. Development must be regulated

to accommodate the large and growing population," and another stated "Sprawl development that stretch our infrastructure, place homes in greater fire danger and consume more water."

- Across all engagement channels, the 4th most common comment was concern over the capacity of existing infrastructure (water, sewer, roads) to sustain growth. The 5th most mentioned topic was the idea of density over sprawl - residents would rather see dense growth in existing residential and commercial centers to preserve open space in the rural parts of the County.
- In Survey #2, when asked which tools used to direct growth to municipalities they would support, 38% of responders wanted to use every tool listed (all of the above), 17% wanted a Scenic Resources Overlay, 16% wanted a Tiered Natural Resources Overlay, 15% wanted wildlife/human conflict design requirements and 13% wanted clustering and buffering incentives and requirements.
- Responders to Survey #2 were closely split on their feelings toward the 2-acre minimum lot sizes in the Rural Zone; 34% said they should stay the same, 30% said they should be increased to 5 acre minimums, 28% said they should be increased to 10 acre minimums, and 8% said they should be decreased.

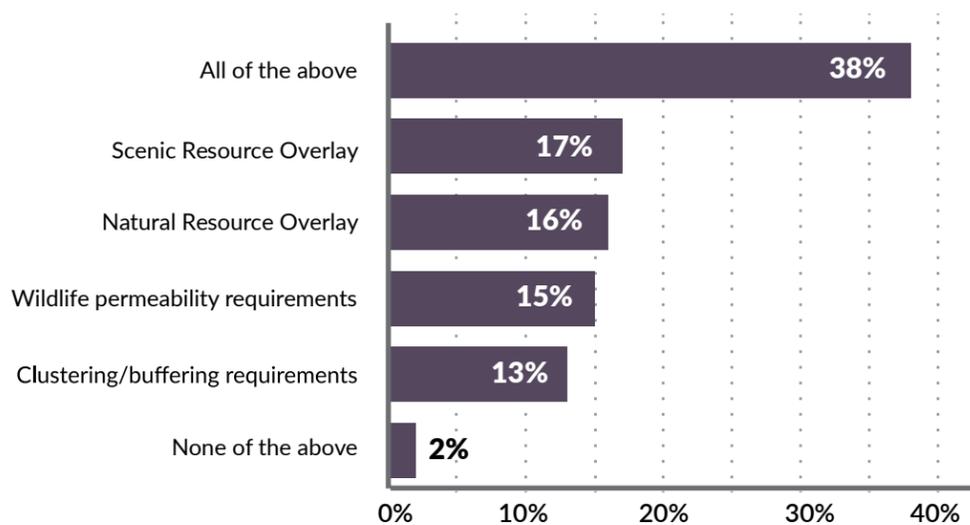
"new sprawling development is higher than to service that same population in a smart growth or infill development" (W. Coyne, The Fiscal Cost of Sprawl, 2003). In Colorado where local government finance is driven by TABOR limits or restrictions established in the 1990s, this issue is even more pressing as Chaffee County's values and revenues are likely to see dramatic variations, as typically consistent revenue streams from seasonal tourism will be affected by variations in visitation in 2020.

Continuation of low-density residential growth has potential to place additional strain on the of these services or activities (for example emergency services, schools, recreational facilities, or capital infrastructure projects) required to maintain Chaffee County's quality of life and additional discussion is warranted to understand the affects of growth on the County's budget and revenues.

Property Tax and Growth

- Chaffee County's taxable value and revenues have increased from 2016 to 2019 across all land categories.

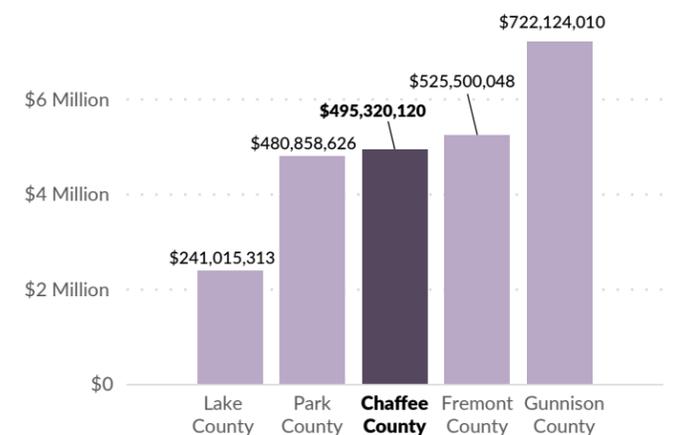
Which of the following natural resource protections would you support in Chaffee County? Survey #2 Results



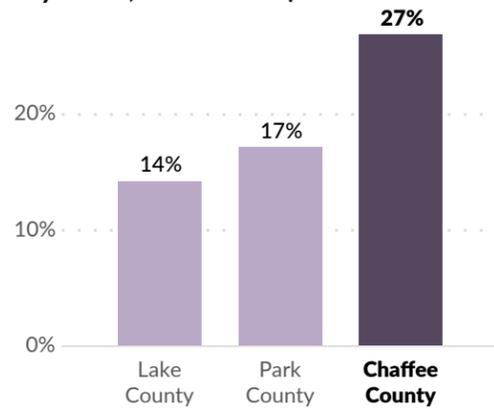
COST OF GROWTH

Authors and researchers have generally posited that sprawling residential development may create a financial burden on local governments as the tax revenue generated from new subdivision rarely covers the cost of its ongoing servicing and maintenance. While it is difficult to know the true cost of providing services to future growth, it is true that the cost of providing public infrastructure and services for

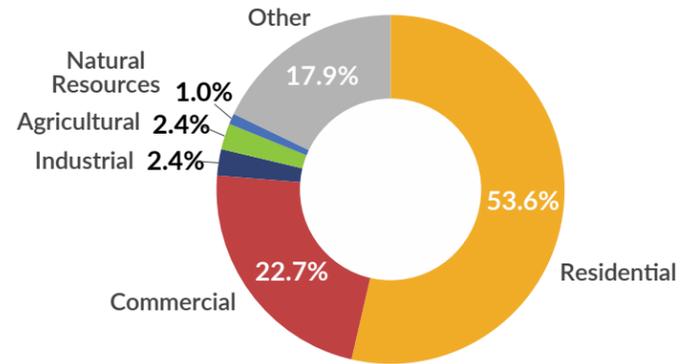
Taxable Value in 2019



**Increase in Taxable Value
(County-wide, 2016-2019)**



Taxable Value Distribution, Chaffee County (County-wide, 2019)



Property Tax Revenue (County-wide, 2016-2019)



- Chaffee County's recent increase in county-wide taxable value (27%) from 2016 to 2019 was much larger than nearby Park County (14%) and Lake County (17%).
- Increases in assessed values of residential property contributed to much of the overall increase, and residential property made up the majority of all taxable value in 2019 (53.6%).

Budget

- Other significant revenue sources include sales taxes and building permit fees. Both have been steadily increasing until 2020 and the outlook is unclear.
- Ballot Issue 1A passed in 2018 increasing sales taxes to support conservation efforts. 1A has allowed for the transfers of some funding to other departments where support is needed such as Road and Bridge. Despite these transfers Road and Bridge is still unable to financially accomplish their major projects.

Sales Tax and Building Permit Revenues (2015-2019)



COMP PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The county budget for the last five years has largely been balanced with the help of increases in property taxes, sales taxes and building permit fees, but any change in these sources would threaten the ability to cover expenses which in 2020 were estimated at \$36,823,855. Even prior to the events of 2020 creating uncertainty in

these sources, the County grappled to provide adequate FTE employment at standard pay levels and was unable to complete essential projects such as chip seal/asphalt services on the county's roads. Anecdotal evidence suggests Chaffee County's real estate market is as busy as it has ever been and it is likely the inflow of people moving into to Chaffee County from coastal areas or large cities to pursue their lifestyle choices will continue.

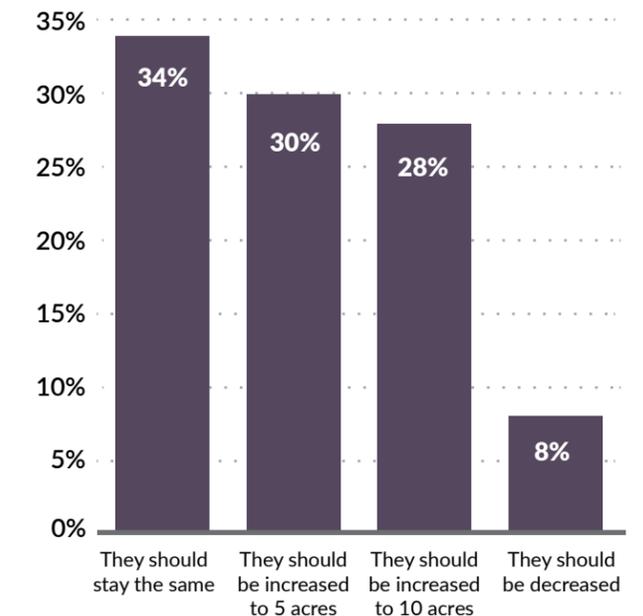
If new residential growth continues at present rates and if property values continue to increase, Chaffee County will struggle to generate revenue to provide adequate levels of service or infrastructure without new and creative sources. TABOR limitations will further challenge the County's service providers. Shifting policy initiatives such as a proposed repeal of the Gallagher Amendment further complicate long-term financial predictions. As such, additional advisory information is needed to ensure fiscal responsibility when approving new development.

To accommodate new growth, the County should continue to establish policies that equip decision makers with the best possible information. This includes relying on smart growth principles in this plan that support infill development and pushing or incentivizing conservation subdivision design. Areas where this Comp Plan proposes recommendations that will affect Growth & Land Use include:

- With TABOR hampering the ability to raise property taxes, the County should explore additional funding sources for providing infrastructure and services.

- Amend or modify Future Land Use Maps regularly to ensure the growth rate of new residential subdivisions will not outpace the County's ability to fund services.
- Look at creative uses of existing revenue sources such as Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT).
- Create Future Land Use Maps that envision infill development near municipalities that will save the County on services/infrastructure.
- Action steps for implementing land use code revisions.
- A plan for additional funding for the Road and Bridge department for maintenance of county roads.
- Evaluate all land use applications in terms of cost/benefit to the County.

How do you feel about the 2-acre minimum lot sizes in the Rural Zone District? Survey #2 Results



Buena Vista Sub Area

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Population

- The Buena Vista Sub Area has an **estimated population of 6,333 - with 3,613 people living in unincorporated Chaffee County and 2,720 in the Town of Buena Vista.**
- According to State Demographer's numbers, the population of the Town of Buena Vista is expected to surpass 3,000 people in 2020.

Jobs

- **The Buena Vista Sub Area had an estimated 1,999 jobs in 2017**, with 1,659 of those being in the Town of Buena Vista, and about 24 of the total in Johnson Village. The unincorporated area around the Town (including Johnson Village) had 316 jobs in 2017.
- According to geographic data from the US Census, many of these jobs in the County are found in rural subdivisions, indicating many people work out of their homes.

Land Use and Development Patterns

- Growth has been affected by public lands and conservation areas established in decades past. As a result, the overall amount of available land for future growth is limited when one considers sensitive areas (e.g. wildlife habitat, fire hazard areas).
- Existing subdivisions already occupy much of the Sub Area's land, and will remain in place as low-density residential land uses. These older subdivisions exhibit a very suburban pattern of development that consumes land less efficiently than what was desired in the public vision, which in 2020 is to promote development near community centers and corridors.

- These subdivisions have many unbuilt parcels, indicating they will continue to add housing units without the approval of any new subdivisions. Among the area's subdivisions, approximately **310 lots are vacant** and available in subdivisions like Game Trail. Although many of these lots are "holding" parcels purchased by an adjoining landowner to maintain as vacant lots, such parcels could potentially supply additional housing without consuming more open land.
- The Buena Vista Three-Mile Plan designates 10 Areas of Desired Growth (ADG) where future growth is desired, but that are outside of the Municipal Services Area (MSA) where the Town can currently provide water.
- The Three-Mile Plan provides future growth policies for new development, annexation and provision of infrastructure in these areas. The Future Land Use Map is congruent with these recommendations in its vision for future growth, and anticipates development in the Residential Mixed future land use district to be annexed into the Town, and developed to the Town of Buena Vista standards for access and infrastructure.
- Based on approved land use and building permit records for the last 10 years, much of the residential development in and around the community has been in existing platted subdivisions, in new subdivisions or within the Town limits. **Approximately 210 permits were issued in the unincorporated county of the Buena Vista Sub Area from 2009 to 2019, of which 94% were residential** (see Buena Vista Sub Area: Patterns of Development map on the following pages). Estimates for permits inside the Town are 169 total residential permits between 2018 and 2019 (source: Town of Buena Vista).

Mid-Valley/Nathrop Sub Area

Physical Character

- In the Buena Vista Sub Area, the average parcel size is just over five acres. **In the Town of Buena Vista, the average parcel size is 1.5 acres, while in the unincorporated area surrounding it, the average parcel size is 9.8 acres.** Excluding some larger commercial parcels, the average in-town residential lot size in downtown Buena Vista is 2,500 square feet (0.057 acres), which is significantly smaller than the County's average lot size (16.8 acres).

Recreation

- The Buena Vista Sub Area has an estimated **7.8 miles of trails managed by the Town of Buena Vista** and four fishing access points. There are four campgrounds located in the Sub Area.

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPACITY FOR GROWTH

Water

- The Buena Vista water system currently contains one source, which provides up to 1.5 million gallons per day (MGD) of potable water. **It is anticipated that a portion of the existing service lines will need to be modified to meet the demands of new, higher-density users.**
- Additionally, watering landscapes and lawns in the summer creates a huge demand on the water supply. Reducing this type of high-maintenance outdoor space through redevelopment and zoning modifications may aid the health of the overall water supply.

- The only area of concern for natural growth is to the north of the existing water district. Due to elevations increasing in this direction, water pressure within the system will fall below operational standards without the addition of a booster pump.

Sanitation

- The Buena Vista Sanitation District (BVSD) provides sanitary sewer services to those properties within the District limits and to the unincorporated community of Johnson Village through the Intergovernmental Agreement with Chaffee County.
- The District limits include all of the properties within the Town of Buena Vista, as well as the Buena Vista Correctional Complex and a number of individual parcels, which were accepted into the BVSD, but did not annex into the Town.
- The BVSD also accepts septage collected from area septic systems, at a rate not to exceed 5,000 gallons per day (gpd). The infrastructure of this system consists of approximately 25 miles of public sewer pipe, ranging from 8 inches to 21 inches in diameter.
- According to 2019 collection data, the plant is currently operating near **35% in the winter and 75% in the summer.** This facility is rated to treat up to 1.5 million gallons per day (MGD). This permit will expire in October 2020, and the renewal may be subject to new terms and conditions, which are expected to be issued before the end of 2024.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Population

- The Mid-Valley Sub Area had an **estimated population of 3,309 in 2017.** Population is geographically centered toward the main County Road corridors and in Nathrop.

Jobs

- **The Mid-Valley Sub Area had an estimated 221 jobs in 2017.** The largest employer in this area is Mount Princeton Hot Springs, with employment fluctuating seasonally.

Land Use and Development Patterns

- The Mid-Valley/Nathrop Sub Area represents the open space and rural character that the public desires to maintain in land use and activity.
- In the past 10 years, growth has occurred around very large ranches, many of which have been owned by families for multiple generations. As a result, the overall amount of available land for future growth is limited considering privately-held ranches and sensitive areas (e.g. wildlife habitat, fire hazard areas). However, this land is not necessarily protected in perpetuity by conservation easements, agricultural covenants, or similar controls.
- Some older rural subdivisions have many unbuilt parcels, indicating they will continue to add housing units without the approval of any new subdivisions. Among the area's subdivisions, approximately **261 lots are vacant** and could potentially have a house built on them in subdivisions like Mesa Antero. Many of these lots may be held by neighboring parcel owners for later in order to maintain adjacent open space.

Physical Character

- **The average parcel size in the Mid-Valley Sub Area is 11.4 acres,** the largest average size among the four Sub Areas.

Recreation

- The Mid-Valley Sub Area has an estimated **3.6 miles of trails** and one campground. There are three fishing access areas on the Arkansas and Chalk Creek.

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPACITY FOR GROWTH

Water

- The Mid-Valley Sub Area is served by community water systems, as **there is no municipal water available.**
- Nathrop has a transient, non-community water system which serves Chateau Chaparral and parts of the Nathrop Townsite. Chateau Chaparral has a minor wastewater treatment facility, which is rated for 12,100 gallons per day (gpd). The Chateau Chaparral WWTF is a small sequencing batch reactor which was upgraded a few years ago and is meeting permit discharge limits. The WWTF was designed to provide service to the Chateau Chaparral development and is operating near the 12,000 gpd capacity.
- Mount Princeton Hot Springs is served by a non-transient, non-community water system. The Mount Princeton Hot Springs minor wastewater treatment facility is rated for 0.0936 MGD, and is currently in compliance.

Sanitation

- The Mid-Valley Sub Area is not part of a sanitation district and is primarily **served by on-site wastewater treatment systems** (OWTSs), also known as septic systems and leach fields.

Future Infrastructure Planning

Specifically in Nathrop, growth is paced by the availability of public utilities. The current pace of development generally meets the community's needs in 2020, as Nathrop is considered rural in character with limited rationale for residential growth due to its distance from amenities and services. However, lower land values and land availability has spurred recent construction of new low-income housing, and infrastructure could be improved to further supply affordable housing in Nathrop. Major infrastructure improvements would be required to build additional housing at a very high cost. Connecting to the BVSD wastewater treatment plant, for example, would require a four-mile sanitary line extension with several lift stations.

Another high-cost option is to establish a special district to eventually provide an internal network of infrastructure and improve existing wastewater treatment systems to move away from on-site septic and individual wells, which may pose public health risks in the future.

Updated long-range planning for the County Landfill site near Centerville is warranted, as the site's current use as a landfill may be evaluated for enhanced facility upgrades or another use entirely.

Salida Sub Area

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Population

- The Salida Sub Area has an **estimated population of 7,284 – with 1,719 people living in unincorporated Chaffee County and 5,565 living in the City of Salida.**

Jobs

- **The Salida Sub Area has an estimated 4,020 jobs.** The City of Salida is home to 3,511 jobs and Smelertown 27 jobs, while the unincorporated area surrounding the City has 482 jobs.

Land Use and Development Patterns

- Development surrounding the City of Salida is affected by the County's two main waterways—the Arkansas and South Arkansas Rivers. Floodplain, wildlife corridors and steep slopes to the south and east of the City have pushed much of the residential subdivision in unincorporated areas to the bench above Salida near the airport and along the Highway 50 and 285 corridors.
- Some subdivisions have unbuilt parcels, indicating they will continue to add housing units without the approval of any new subdivisions. Among the area's unincorporated subdivisions, approximately **102 lots are vacant** and available.
- **Approximately 98 permits were issued in the unincorporated county of the Salida Sub Area from 2009 to 2019** (see Salida Sub Area: Patterns of Development map on the following pages).
- Open space immediately to the west of Salida has remained undeveloped, either through conservation easements or because wetlands or other physical constraints made subdivisions more costly to service than lands with municipal services.

- Community trails traverse this area and public input regarded this as highly valued for preservation of open space.

Physical Character

- **The estimated average parcel size in the Salida Sub Area is 2.5 acres**, while in the City of Salida it's 0.73 acres. In the unincorporated area surrounding the City, the average parcel size is 8.4 acres.

Recreation

- The Salida Sub Area has an estimated **14.3 miles of trails** and two campgrounds. There are two fishing access areas on the Arkansas River.

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPACITY FOR GROWTH

Water

- The City of Salida provides potable water service to all of its residents, as well as several in the surrounding unincorporated areas. In total, there are approximately 2,500 taps in operation.
- There are three sources in the Salida system: two infiltration galleries and a surface intake from the South Arkansas River. The current combined production capacity is 5.3 million gallons per day (MGD).
- **Current usage is at approximately 50% of production capacity in the summer** (highest usage), with an average demand of roughly 1.5 MGD throughout the course of the year.

Poncha Springs Sub Area

Sanitation

- The Salida Sewer System provides service within the City of Salida and the Town of Poncha Springs municipal boundaries. The intergovernmental agreement between the Town and the City states that the transmission line along Highway 50 must be maintained and upgraded so that it does not become a limiting factor to the growth or development of the Town of Poncha Springs.
- The wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) also accepts the waste that is pumped from private septic systems, known as septage, from a number of collection companies that operate in Chaffee and surrounding counties.
- In total, the plant treats an average 0.61 million gallons per day (MGD). Approximately 10% of this is collected from the Town of Poncha Springs, another 30% is from commercial properties in Salida, and the remainder is residential (via public sewer or septage).
- The infrastructure of this system consists of approximately 45 miles of public sewer pipe, ranging from 8 inches to 30 inches in diameter. This facility is rated to treat up to 2.7 million gallons per day (MGD). Given the 2014-2018 collection data, **the plant typically operates around 25% capacity and has reached approximately 50% capacity during the summer**, when outdoor watering and tourist populations are at their highest.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Population

- The Poncha Springs Sub Area has an **estimated population of 2,282 - with 1,487 people living in unincorporated Chaffee and 795 living in the Town of Poncha Springs.**

Jobs

- The Poncha Springs Sub Area has an **estimated 463 jobs**, 364 of those in the Town of Poncha Springs and 99 in the unincorporated county.

Land Use and Development Patterns

- Historically, development patterns in this Sub Area have been affected by conservation areas and public lands. Public lands include the San Isabel National Forest, federal BLM lands, Colorado State Land Board lands, Chaffee County lands (fairgrounds) and Town of Poncha Springs-owned lands, mostly south of the Town.
- The South Arkansas River is a scenic riparian corridor running through the sub area, which is rich in wildlife diversity and provides habitat for native species. As such, the river corridor has several conservation easements that will preserve the land for agricultural uses or open space.
- Other large land holdings such as portions of the Hutchinson Ranch near Poncha Springs have conservation easements which push growth elsewhere. Over all, there are about **984 acres of land under conservation easements in this Sub Area.**

- The Town of Poncha Springs has annexed lands in recent years to accommodate municipal growth and extension of services. As such, much of the recent development activity and building permit activity has occurred within the Town's boundaries.
- About **310 building permits have been issued in the last 10 years** in the sub area for residential or commercial construction. About 61% of those (190 permits) were within or immediately adjacent to the Poncha Springs municipal boundary, many of those within new subdivisions such as Little River Ranch and Quarry Station.
- Rural subdivisions have seen additional development activity, particularly in the last five years in subdivisions such as Cameron Meadows Estates, Eagle Moon Ranch and Weldon Creek Subdivision. Average parcel size for these developments was approximately 6.5 acres.

Physical Character

- **The average parcel size in the Poncha Springs Sub Area is 8.1 acres;** in the Town of Poncha Springs it's 3.2 acres and in the unincorporated area surrounding the Town, the average is 14.3 acres.

Recreation

- The S. Arkansas River corridor is a long-term target for conservation and many easements already exist or are planned by town. Likewise river trails and fishing accesses exist or are planned along the river. The FLUM identifies areas where proposed trails will further connect the town to public lands and National Forest access. A regional trail system that will connect Maysville to Poncha Springs and Salida is in the planning stages and has support from various community organizations. Poncha Pass is a popular hill climb for road cyclists. Additionally, there are two campgrounds in Maysville.

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPACITY FOR GROWTH

Water

- The Town of Poncha Springs provides potable water to its nearly 1,000 customers. Any property interested in connecting to public water must be annexed into the Town if it is not already located within those boundaries.
- The Town currently has 6 wells. The total current production capacity is 0.63 million gallons per day (MGD).
- Once treated, the potable water is stored in one of three tanks across Town. The total storage capacity is 0.66 million gallons (MG), which is adequate to meet required fire flows. The overall distribution system is currently contained within a single pressure zone. It is anticipated that any further expansion to the system would require booster pumps and/or pressure-reducing valves (PRVs), which would create a multi-zoned system.

Sanitation

- The Salida Sewer System serves all properties contained within the City of Salida and the Town of Poncha Springs municipal boundaries. The intergovernmental agreement between the Town and the City states that the transmission line along Highway 50 must be maintained and upgraded so that it does not become a limiting factor to the growth or development of the Town of Poncha Springs.
- The wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) also accepts the waste that is pumped from private septic systems, known as septage, from a number of collection companies that operate in Chaffee and surrounding counties.

- In total, the plant treats an average 0.61 million gallons per day (MGD). Approximately 10% of this is collected from the Town of Poncha Springs, another 30% is from commercial properties in Salida, and the remainder is residential (via public sewer or septage).
- This facility is rated to treat up to 2.7 million gallons per day (MGD). Given the 2014-2018 collection data, the plant **typically operates around 25% capacity and will stretch to 50% capacity during the summer**, when outdoor watering and tourist populations are at their highest.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

GEOGRAPHY

Chaffee County is one of the most strikingly beautiful areas in the United States. Surrounded by high mountain peaks, it is graced with alpine rivers and streams, broad expanses of ranch land and meadows, and landscapes that vary from rolling pinon and juniper forests to rugged wilderness. Located in the Upper Arkansas Valley on the eastern slope of the continental divide, land in Chaffee County ranges from about 6,900 feet to over 14,000 feet in elevation.

There are more 14,000-foot peaks here than in any county in the United States. The Collegiate Peaks are the most striking and prominent physical feature in the County, providing a breathtaking backdrop for the County and some of the most important views from venues such as Trout Creek Pass. Running north to south Oxford, Harvard, Columbia, Yale and Princeton grace the western viewshed of the Collegiate Peaks Byway. These dramatic peaks are the core of the Sawatch, the highest continuous mountain range in North America.

The Arkansas River is the other primary physical feature of the County, running roughly through its midsection from Granite to Salida. US Highways 285, 24 and 50, the three major transportation corridors in the County, parallel the Arkansas River as it runs north to south and then west to east in the County. The views from

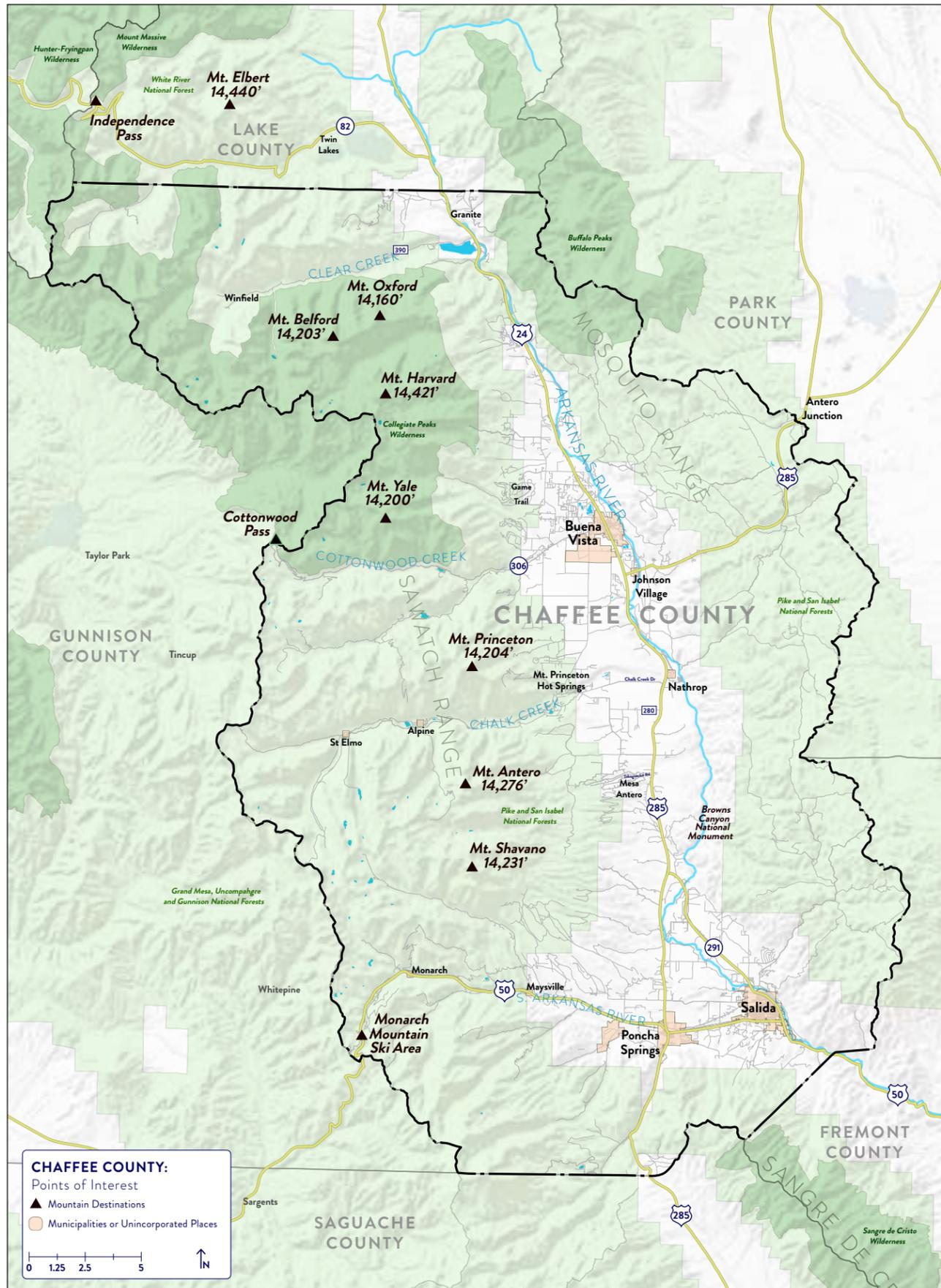
these three highways towards the surrounding mountains and across the Arkansas River do much to establish the rural, scenic character of the County.

Over a billion years ago a long sequence of immense uplifts interspersed by sea sedimentation, volcanic action, and water and wind erosion began in the region. In more recent geologic time, huge glaciers chiseled the Upper Arkansas Valley's monumental Collegiate Peaks. The dramatic white of Mt. Princeton's Chalk Cliffs comes from the kaolinite in granitic material from hot springs leaching up from fault lines.

Most of the County has slopes of over 10% and over one third has slopes in excess of 25%. The Valley soils are typically thin, rocky, and somewhat alkaline. However, soils in a broad band running along the west side of the Arkansas River are generally suitable for development and agricultural uses.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

Ecosystems change with elevation, from prairie grasses and cottonwoods along valley watercourses to alpine tundra. Pinon-juniper hills with yucca and cacti rise up to mountain slopes blanketed successively by ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, aspen, Colorado blue spruce, white fir, lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir, bristlecone pine and limber pine. Wildflowers grace the spring and early summer landscape. In the fall, aspen color blazes from yellow-gold to flame orange.



Highway 285 by Trout Creek Reservoir

WILDLIFE

Many people come to Chaffee County for the alpine scenery, extensive public lands, exceptional whitewater and the Collegiate Peaks. As such the County celebrates prevalent natural and ecological resources found in the Arkansas Valley by promoting their conservation for existing and future generations to enjoy.

Ecological assets of high value include:

- Arkansas River and its riparian area
- Wildlife habitat, including several species of North American megafauna like elk, deer, black bear and moose
- Lakes and reservoirs (Trout Creek)
- Browns Canyon National Monument
- Collegiate Peaks Wilderness Area
- Buffalo Peaks Wilderness Area
- Cottonwood Hot Springs
- Mt. Princeton Hot Springs

The Arkansas River and tributaries harbor prize native wild brown trout. Alpine lakes, streams and reservoirs are stocked with rainbow and cutthroat trout reared in Chalk Creek and Mt. Shavano state fish hatcheries. Elk, moose, mule deer, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, bears and beaver thrive in the area. Large elk herds gather in the fall and winter on the grasslands lining the County roads near Buena Vista, Mt. Antero and Mt. Princeton. Bald eagles, peregrine falcons, wild turkeys, mountain bluebirds and hummingbirds are also found in Chaffee County. Yellow-bellied marmots, pikas and white-tailed ptarmigan live in the alpine tundra.

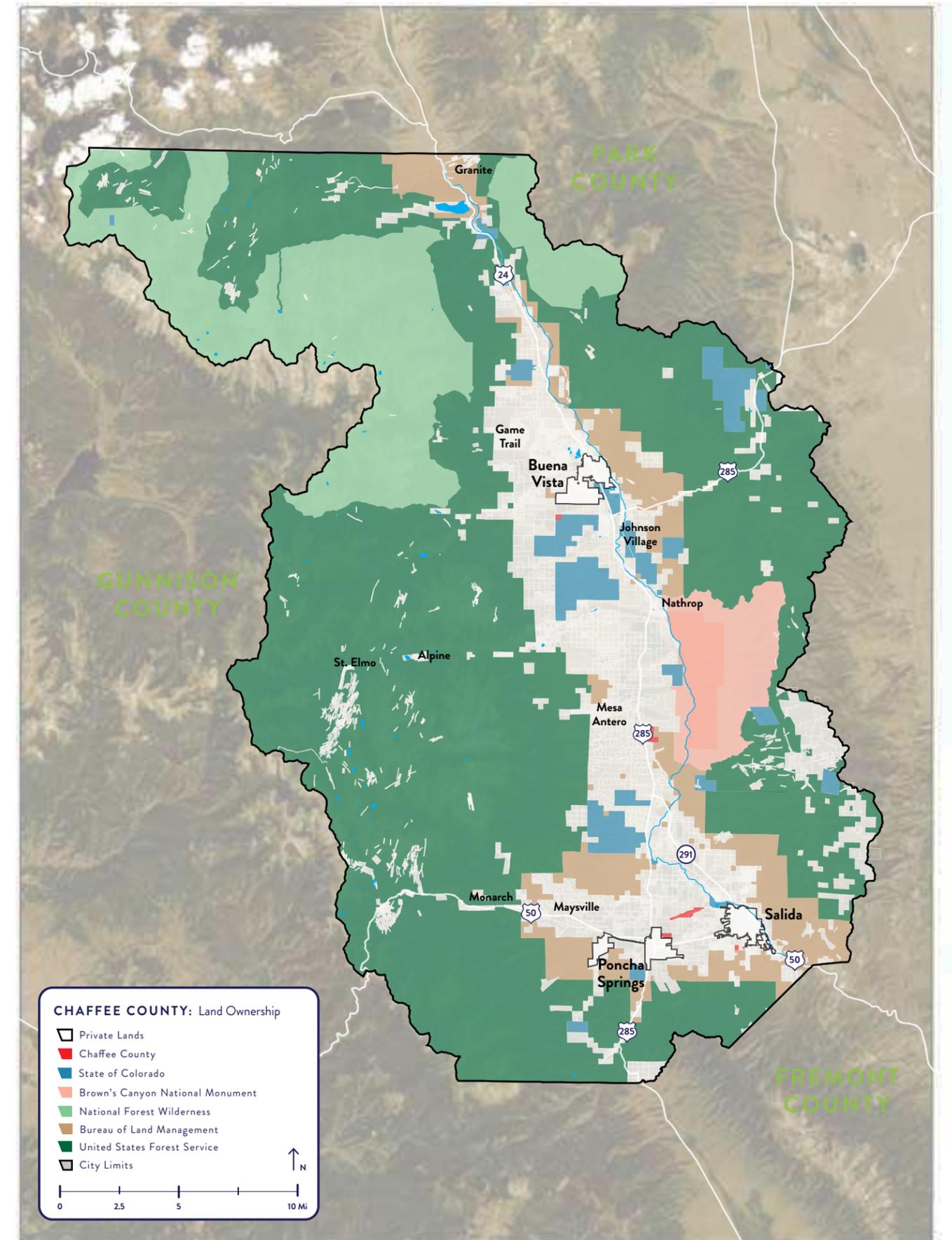
AMENITIES AND ACTIVITY NODES

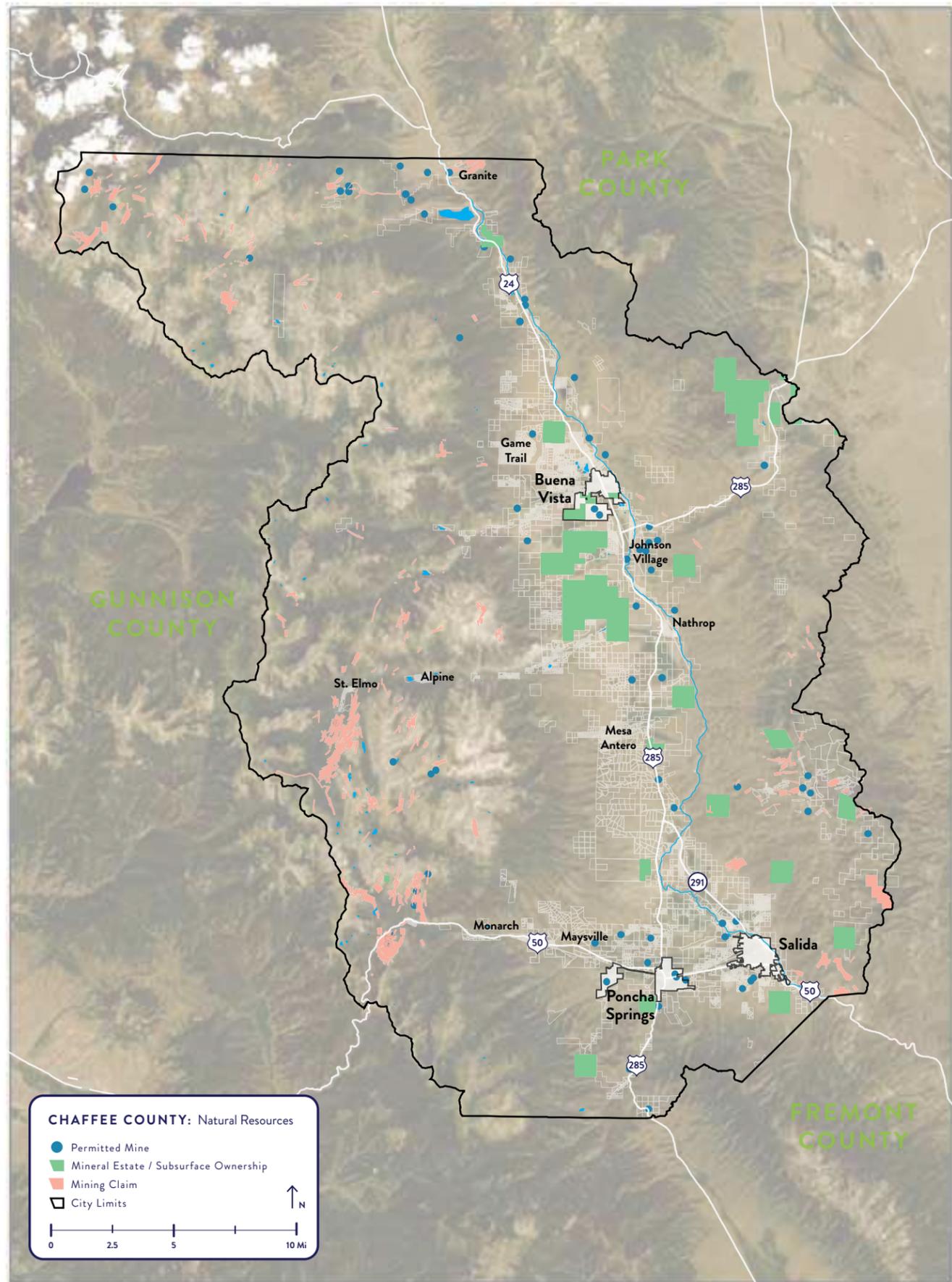
Residents and visitors are drawn to Chaffee because of its wealth of amenities associated with outdoor activities. Hiking one of the fifteen 14,000 peaks, road and mountain cycling on off-street paths and trails, whitewater rafting, fly fishing, rock climbing, and Nordic and alpine skiing are all popular activities located in Chaffee County.

Retail, shopping and entertainment destinations in Salida and Buena Vista also bring people to the County. The two hot springs (Cottonwood and Mt. Princeton) attract people from all over the state. All of these destinations bring in families and individuals from across the nation and beyond who stay at local hotels, shop in local stores and eat at cafes all of which make tourism an important share of Chaffee's current and future economy.



Elk herd
Photo by Scott Peterson





PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Forest Service Research document but was not properly recognized as a major component for federal land use and fire management until the 2000 National Fire Plan.

RIVER AND FLOODPLAIN

The Arkansas River and its tributaries can pose hazards to structures and property in the County when these channels flow at their peak due to warm temperatures and snowmelt. The River has flows that range from 275 cubic feet per second (CFS) in the winter to over 4,000 CFS during spring runoff. Peak flows typically occur in June or early July, presenting challenging conditions not only for those who choose to recreate on the rivers, but also to property adjacent to the rivers in or near the flood hazard areas as provided by flood insurance studies from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

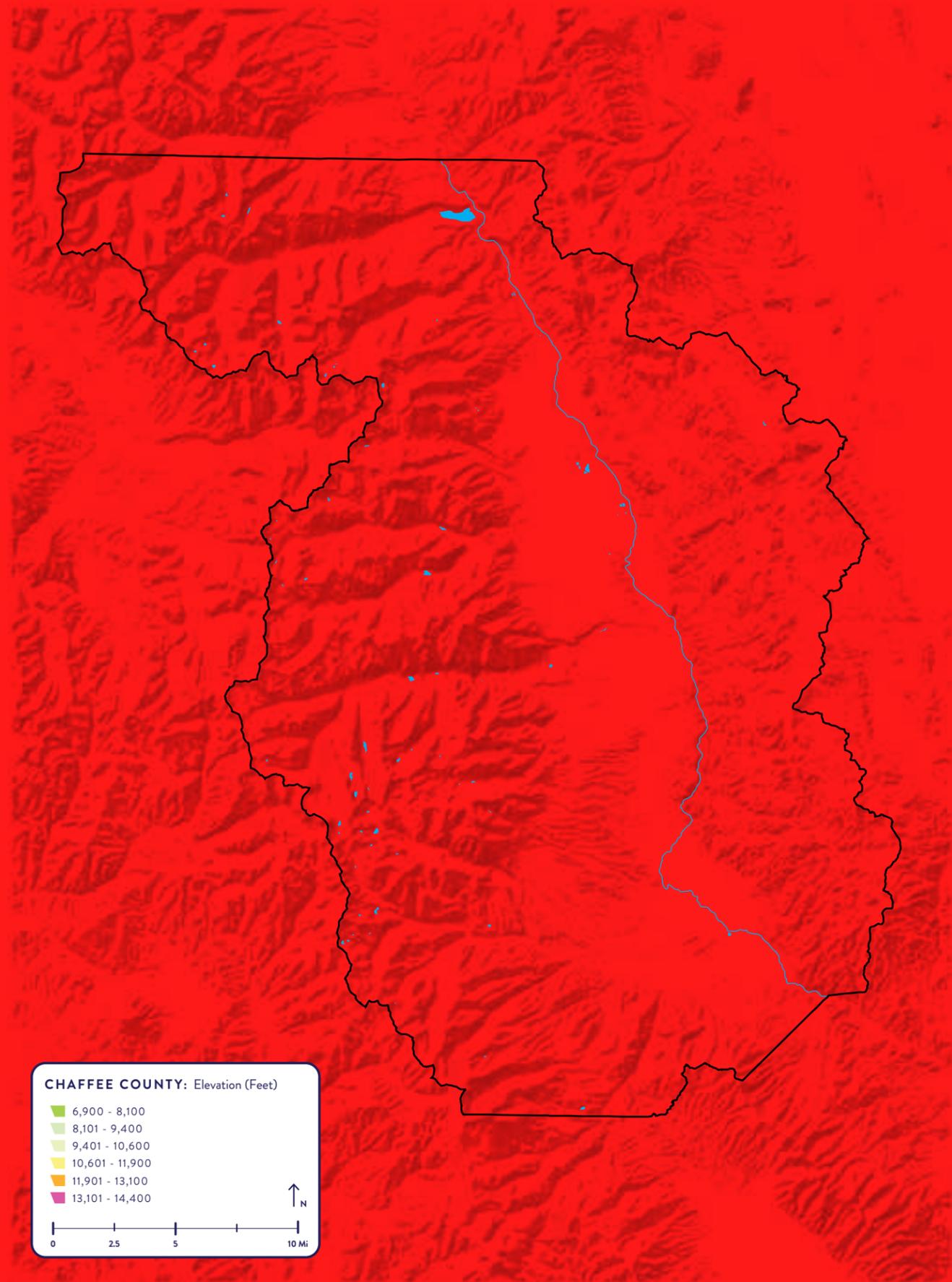
This comprehensive plan intends to continually guide development away from flood hazard areas, or where necessary, to mitigate impacts by following federal, state and local regulations regarding development in flood hazard areas.

FIRE AND WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE (WUI)

The Wildland Urban Interface is defined as the fringe area where urban or residential areas meet with undeveloped land or vegetation. Historically in the Western US, considerable housing development has occurred in the WUI, as it is often the most desirable and valuable land with scenic vistas, dense forests and privacy. The idea of the WUI was formally introduced in a 1987

Over 80% of Chaffee's landscape is federal land, with the vast majority forested, posing high risk of wildfire. Nearly half of the County's population resides outside of municipalities, many in the WUI.

A 2019 survey found that 80% of residents believe that a major wildfire is very or extremely likely within the next five years in Chaffee County, and that 58% of residents are concerned about a fire near their residence. Land management agencies are challenged to keep pace with the need to effectively manage our forests. Recognizing the urgency of the issue, Chaffee County partners with them, as well as local fire districts, homeowners and the community to improve wildfire resilience, water quality, and wildlife habitat. Chaffee Common Ground funds projects through these partnerships to improve forest health and reduce wildfire danger to make the community safer and help protect our forests for future generations.



GROUNDWATER

The majority of the groundwater within Chaffee County is managed by the Colorado Division of Water Resources and the Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District (UAWCD), as it has been deemed tributary to the Upper Arkansas River. The UAWCD was founded in 1979 to protect and secure water in the Upper Arkansas Valley. The UAWCD now spearheads basin-wide projects which secure and augment groundwater and to increase the water supply available to the valley. Part of the District's endeavor is to oversee and augment water rights throughout Chaffee County, as all of the wells within Chaffee County have been deemed tributary to the Arkansas River. The United States Geological Survey completed a study in 2003 to evaluate characteristics of groundwater in Chaffee County including aquifer characteristics, aquifer depletion, aquifer storage, and nitrate/nitrite contamination.

The heatmap at right shows areas with high well density, and based on the hydrogeology, the density may be more than the aquifer can support with groundwater withdrawals.

Figure 20 from the USGS report shows areas of increased nitrate + nitrite contamination. The EPA regulates nitrate and nitrite with

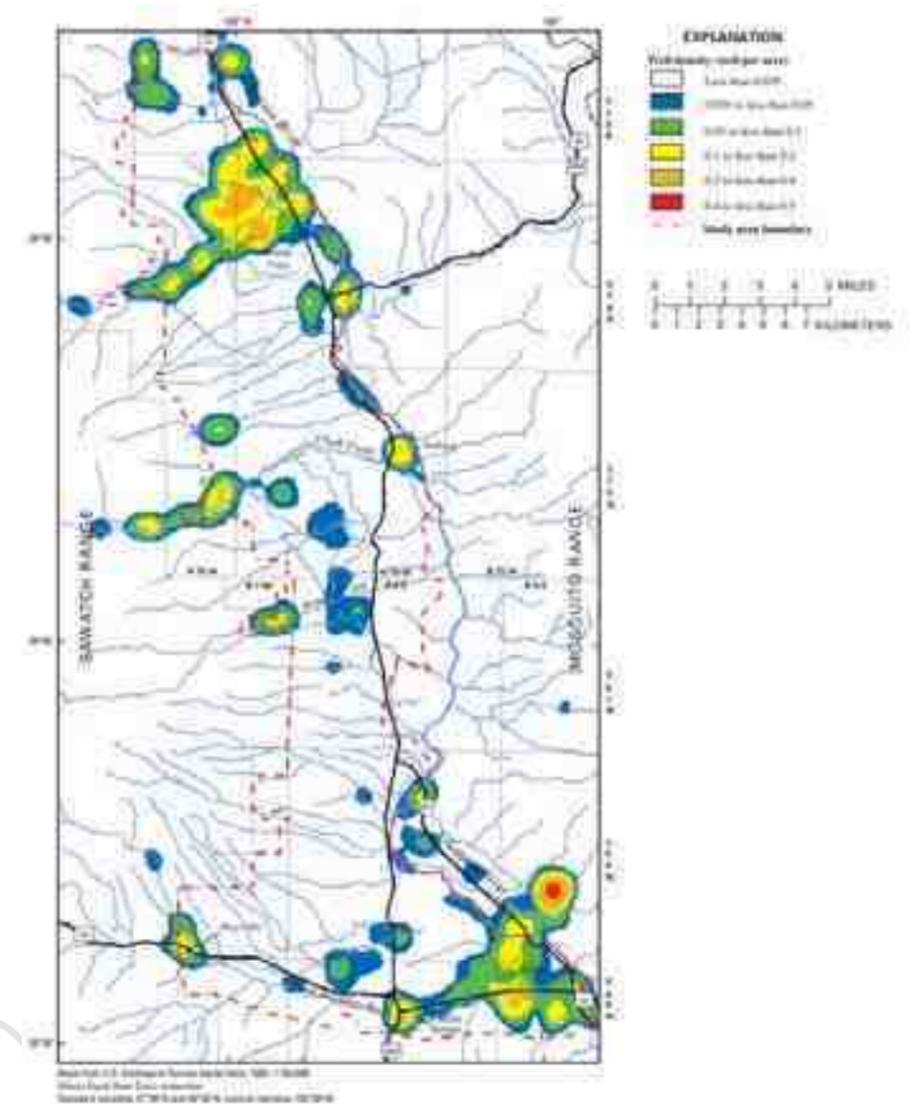


Figure 16. Density of domestic and household wells in and near the study area, 2003

a maximum contaminant level of 10 milligrams per liter (mg/L), as these contaminants are classified as an acute health risk and can cause methoglobinemia ("Blue Baby" syndrome. Areas with higher nitrate + nitrite concentrations may be correlated to areas of high densities of failing septic systems or septic systems installed in unsuitable soils.

Comp Plan Implications

The availability and quality of groundwater are major concerns. The Arkansas River Basin is over-appropriated and we have a compact with Kansas. There is no such thing as a “free” river as there is always a call in place. Many uses of water, such as wells or ponds, result in out-of-priority depletions to the system - water is lost or consumed out of priority and this can cause injury to surface water rights, either here or downstream. The state engineer has determined that there is a nexus between surface and ground water, so well pumping creates an impact to surface water availability. Augmentation replaces the depleted water so that surface water rights are not injured. The availability of an augmentation plan, both the water and the legal/engineering, is a critical component to growth in areas outside of the municipal service areas. Even within the municipalities, municipal wells need augmentation too.

These state reports suggest that the time may have come to consider – at the planning level – incorporating measures to further protect existing and potentially outdated OWTS in the rural county. Implementing Transfer of Title ordinance as per Regulation 43 (See Lake 2018 County On-Site Wastewater Treatment Regulations

Source:

Watts, K. R. (2005). Scientific Investigations Report 2005-5179: Hydrogeology and Quality of Ground Water in the Upper Arkansas River Basin from Buena Vista to Salida, Colorado, 2000-2003. Retrieved January 6, 2020, from <https://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2005/5179/pdf/SIR2005-5179.pdf>.

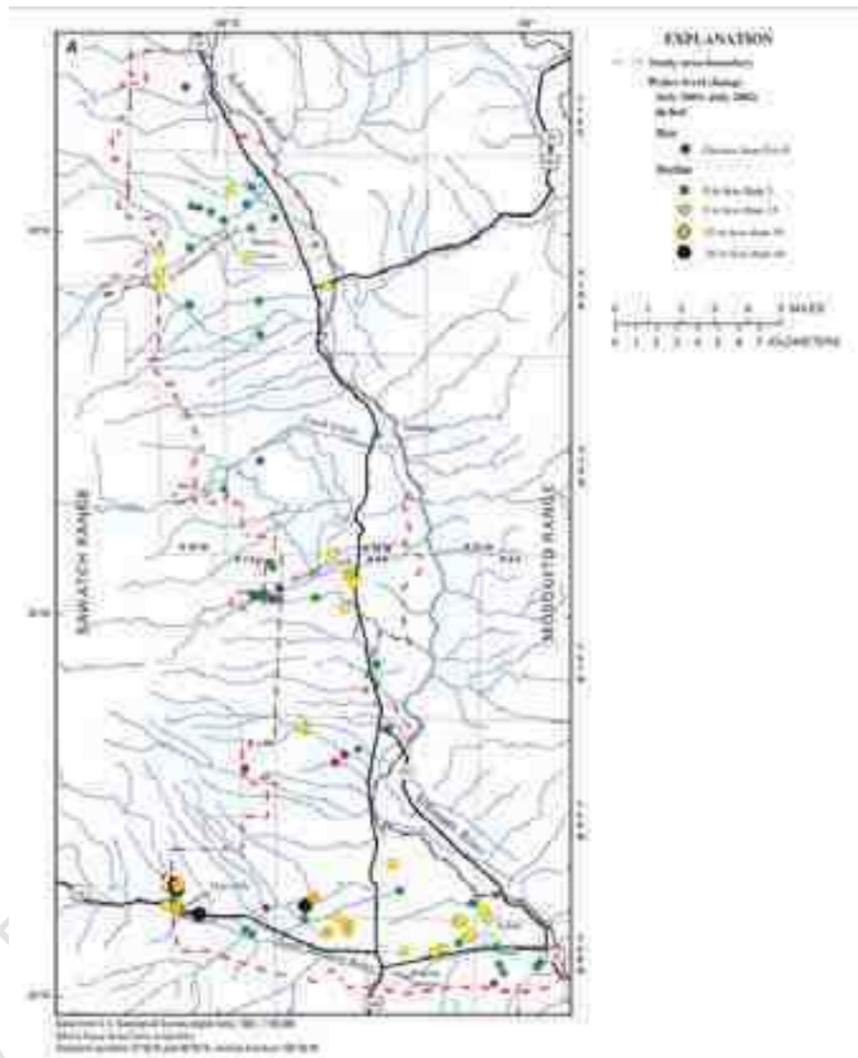


Figure 12 Water level changes in the study area, (A) between July 2001 and July 2002 and (B) between July 2002 and July 2003.

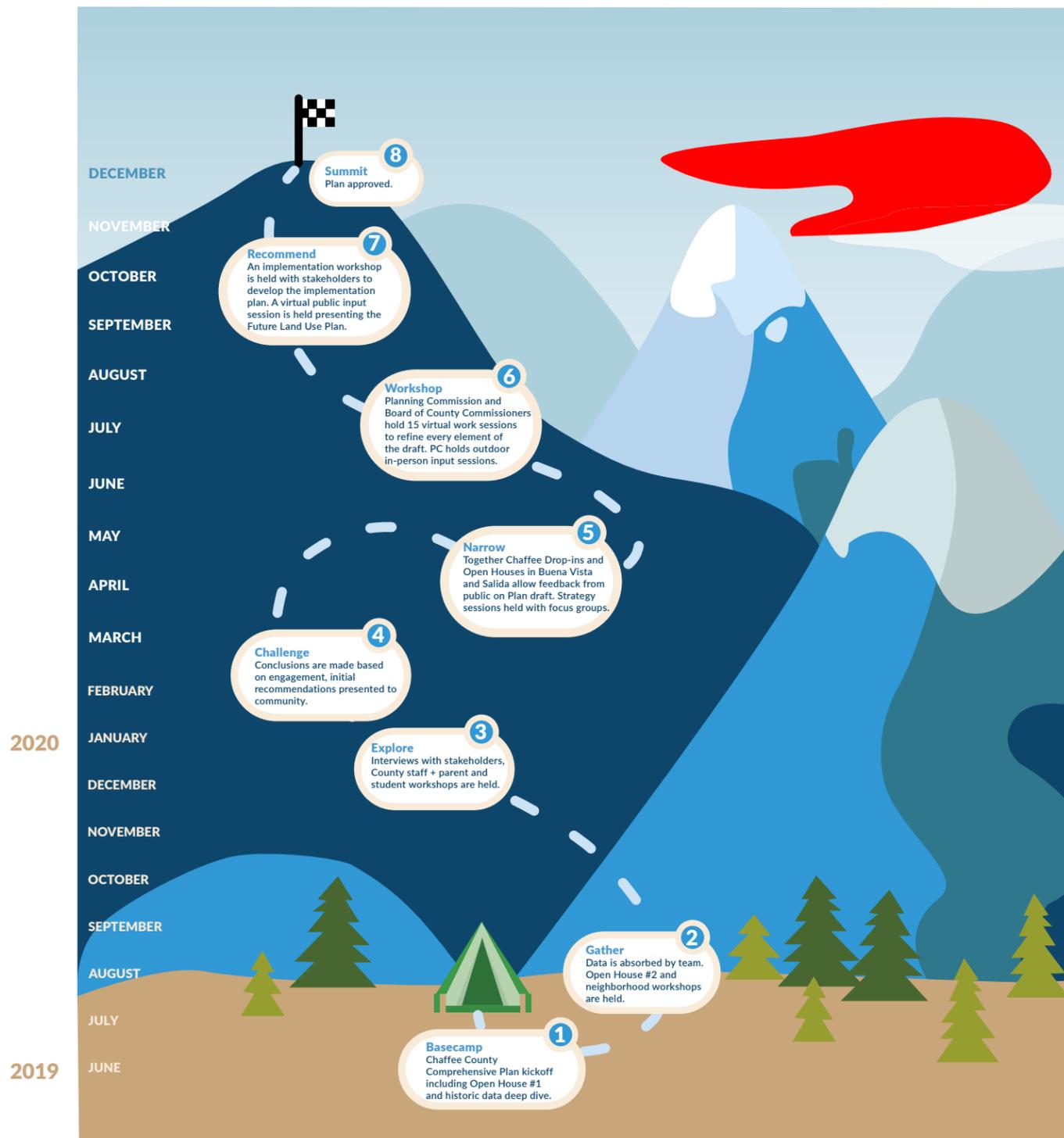
for policy precedent). The early stages of such a policy should be for information-gathering purposes only so as to build a regional database of systems.

At the appropriate time, the County may decide to incorporate remediation measures that would require a landowner to upgrade the system to specifications required of new on-site treatment systems.

6. Appendices

A.1 Community Engagement Process Summary.....	176
A.2 Community Project Recommendations.....	189
A.3 Model Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.....	193
A.4 Decision Making Guidance.....	199
A.5 Background & Regional Context.....	202

A.1 | Community Engagement Process Summary



Input from the people living, working, visiting and leading the community was critical to the validity and success of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, as well as several other inputs acknowledged such as relevant plans or studies. The following summarizes the results of the public input process, as well as other inputs to discuss how this comprehensive plan utilized a breadth of ideas to craft implementation measures.

PUBLIC OUTREACH PROCESS AND SUMMARY

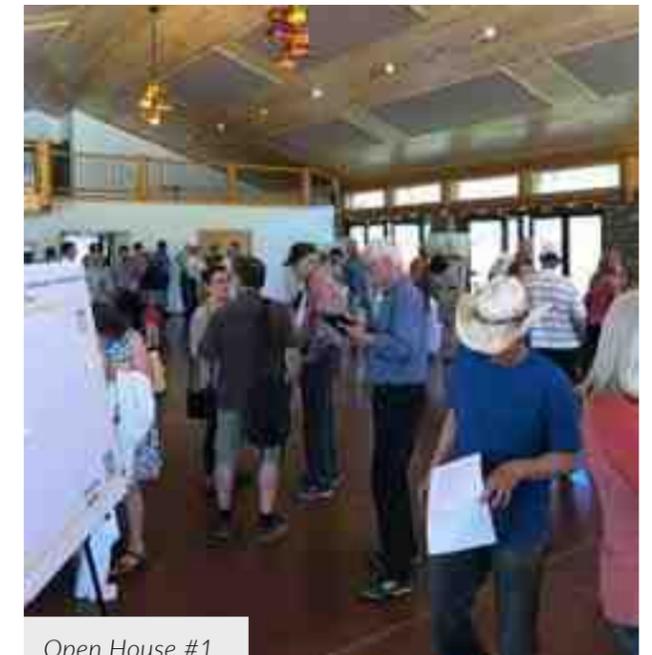
Over the 18-month course of the initial public outreach process, 5,500 data points were recorded and analyzed to determine recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

WHEN did outreach occur?

Shortly after the project kickoff in June 2019, the first open house was held at Mount Princeton Hot Springs on June 26, 2019. The process continued for 18 months, with 16 live, in-person events and a constant presence at the project website: TogetherChaffeeCounty.org where a series of online surveys were available and where news and updates were continually posted. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person public engagement was minimal after March 2020, however virtual events were held and members of the Planning Commission had two outdoor in-person input sessions in October 2020.

WHAT type of outreach were people engaged in?

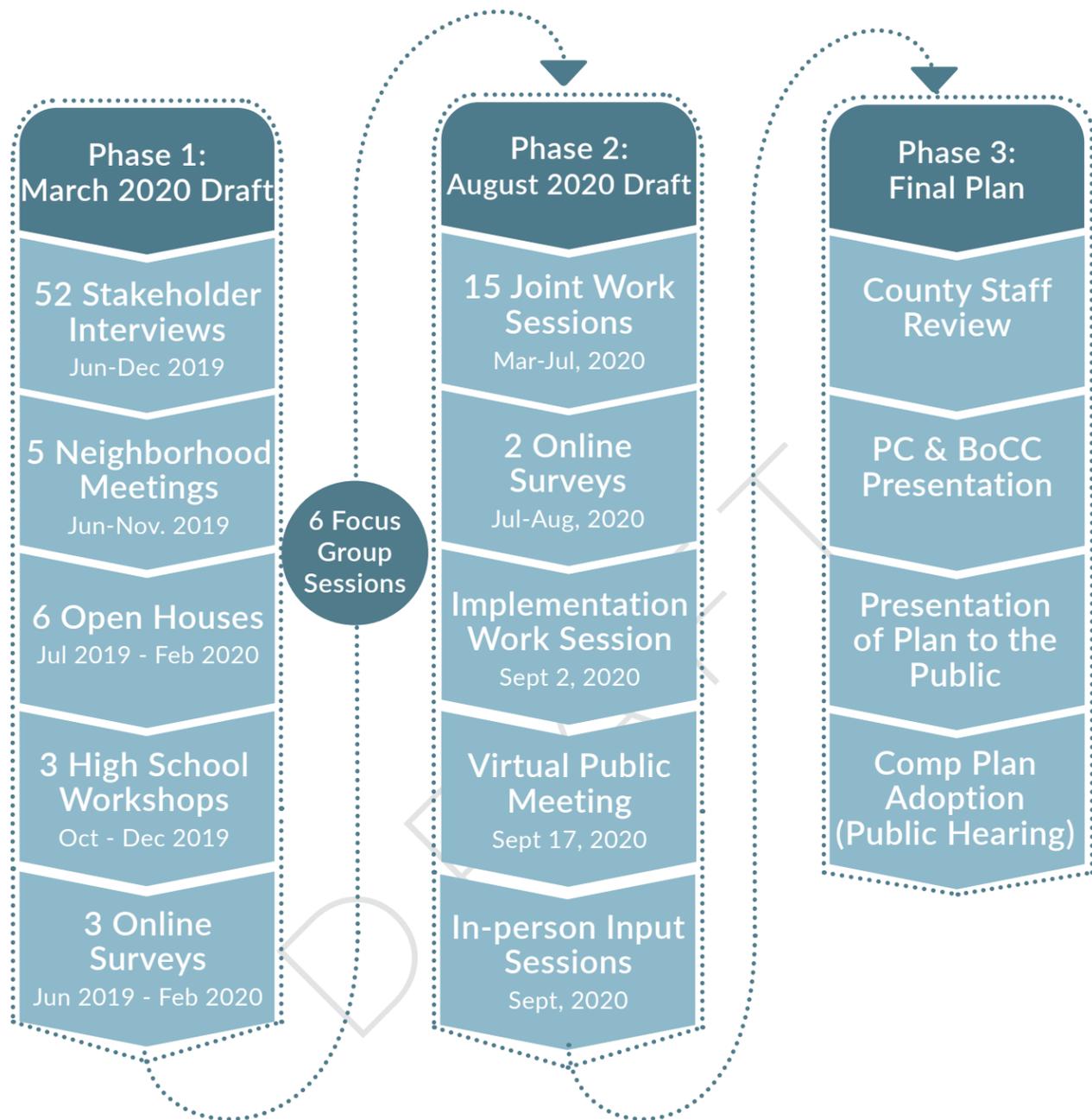
The comprehensive plan update required broad, high-quality input from a variety of sources which meant utilizing a variety of techniques and venues. This is summarized as follows:



Open House #1

4 Public Open Houses were designed to be open to all participants and scheduled for after-work hours in locations across the community (Mount Princeton, Salida, X and X). Each Open House was designed to progress information received from the previous event:

- Open House #1 introduced the comprehensive planning process, received comment on themes established through the Envision Chaffee initiative.
- Open House #2 presented findings and key themes from Open House 1, and engaged participants in a live poll about planning topics.
- Open House #3 & #4 presented draft plan items such as goals and strategies, proposed projects and growth scenarios.



5 Neighborhood Meetings were scheduled in strategic locations to capture information specific to particular neighborhoods living and working across the County. Targeted for intimate discussion among groups of neighbors, these sessions identified very local issues for areas including: Buena Vista, Poncha Springs, Maysville, Johnson Village and Mid-Valley/Nathrop.

2 Together Chaffee Drop-ins were held at the Scout Hut in Salida and a workspace on Main Street in Buena Vista, these events presented draft plan items like Goals & Strategies, and offered a summary of what we had heard so far through engagement for folks to comment on. As well as an opportunity to have one-on-one conversations about the future of Chaffee County with planning staff, the Drop-in events allowed participants to spend half a million dollars in “Chaffee Bucks” on various potential investments.

3 High School Classroom Sessions were held at Buena Vista High School and Salida High School with approximately 45 junior and senior-level students. The students were asked to complete worksheets prior to the sessions about their favorite parts of Chaffee County, their fears for the future, and they felt the County’s greatest needs were. When presented with the summary of the worksheets, the students had open-ended discussion. They also got to participate in the investment exercise conducted at the Drop-in events.

52 One-on-One Stakeholder Interviews were conducted with identified key stakeholders, representing local government heads, cultural institutions or prominent figures in Chaffee County’s local business community, governance or leadership.

6 Focus Group Work Sessions were held to workshop the vision, goals and strategies for each of the Plan’s themes in January 2020. Community groups and subject experts convened to refine the draft.

15 Joint Work Sessions were held with Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners between May and July of 2020 to refine an initial draft released in March. County leadership went through each section of the plan and made changes so that this document could better guide future decision making. The public was welcome to attend these virtual meetings, which had much higher attendance than regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings.

1 Implementation Work Session was held to develop the Implementation Plan. Leaders, representatives from community groups and



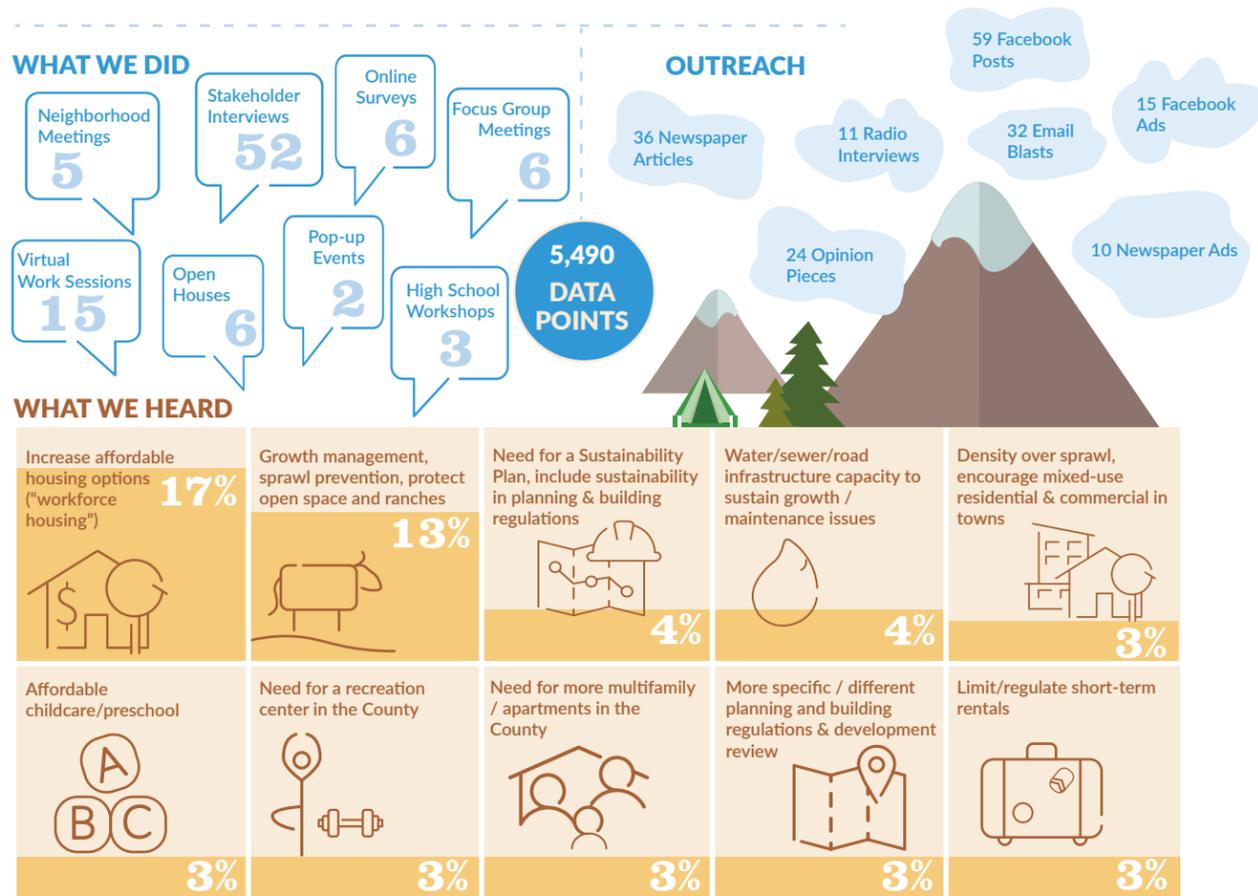
Open House #2 Mapping Activity

County staff convened to assign responsibility for initiating the Action Steps in this plan, as well as a timeline for implementation and estimated cost. This resulted in actionable steps to achieve the Goals and Strategies in this plan, utilizing existing groups with boots on the ground in Chaffee County.

1 Virtual Public Meeting was held in September 2020 to present the draft plan and gather public input. Almost 70 people attended, and a recording of the meeting was posted to the project website with space for the public to leave comments.

2 Comp Plan Pop Ups at the Salida and Buena Vista Farmer’s Market were held to give folks a chance to give in-person input in a safe, outdoor environment. County staff and members of the Planning Commission had large Future Land Use Maps and copies of the Future Land Use Plan for public comment.

TOGETHER CHAFFEE ENGAGEMENT



IF WE HAVE A RIGHT TO LIVE HERE, SO DOES EVERYONE ELSE.

— Local Rancher, Nathrop Neighborhood Meeting

All throughout the public outreach process, the same engagement information was available online, with additional mapping outlets on the Together Chaffee website.

Tools and methods used included visual preference surveys, online surveys, quick comment cards, online mapping applications, live audience mobile device polling, "Chaffee Bucks" investing, Zoom meetings and online forums. Advertising methods included the project website, direct email, flyers, social media platforms, and local print and radio media outlets. A sub-committee called the Outreach Team was formed for the sole purpose of ensuring that underrepresented portions of the

population were aware of and attended public events.

WHY was it important to create such a broad outreach plan?

In the past history of planning efforts, phone or mail-out surveys were predominantly the tool for capturing public input and feedback on planning ideas and land use policy. However on the brink of a new decade, response rates for these traditional methods are dwindling, and with most having an online presence via smart phones, engagement is higher than ever when utilizing digital input collection.

It was important for the team to spread the word as wide as possible, therefore any and all outlets and venues were found useful. When a demographic was found to be less engaged, the outreach plan was adjusted to develop new methods to capture less-vocal cohorts.

HOW much information and input was received?

Of the 5,490 unique data points received through this input, the majority was through direct scoring or voting mechanisms (i.e. dot voting, investment exercises or otherwise directly voting on something in-person or online) allowing the Comprehensive Plan to have solid grounding on tangible elements such as improvement projects or growth scenarios.

WHAT did the Comprehensive Plan do with all this data?

Using the quantitative, qualitative, anecdotal and direct comments, the input team mined the data to find direct commonalities that could be combined with all other inputs and translated into the community Vision, the seven Plan Element themes, Goals, Strategies and Action Steps.

SO WHAT did everyone say?

When all input channels and methods were added up, the results for the top ten most important themes/issues were:

1. Increase affordable housing options ("workforce housing")
2. Growth management, sprawl prevention, protecting open space and ranches
3. Need for a County-wide Sustainability Plan, include sustainability in planning and building regulations
4. Water/sewer/road infrastructure capacity to sustain growth/infrastructure maintenance issues
5. Density over sprawl, encourage mixed-use residential and commercial in towns
6. Affordable childcare/preschool
7. Need for a recreation center in the County
8. More specific/different planning and building regulations and development review
9. Need for more multifamily/apartments in the County
10. Limit/regulate short-term rentals



Open House #3

CONCLUSIONS

The 2030 Chaffee County Comprehensive Plan update received an outpouring of input and support from an active, sophisticated and diverse community. Throughout this plan you will find quotes, themes, comments and stories that complement and prescribe some findings and policy recommendations.

Because of the quality and amount of input received, this plan was able to capture and represent the identity and future vision of the Chaffee community in every goal, strategy, action step or illustration. Special thanks goes out to all who participated.



BV Drop-in Event Investment Activity

SUMMARY OF NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

Buena Vista Neighborhood Meeting

The main topics discussed at the Buena Vista Neighborhood Meeting were the Town's role in the County, mobility, housing and growth.

Many residents believed that Buena Vista hasn't fully shaped into who it wants to be, indicating that there is room to define their identity as a community. Meeting attendees were proud of how open-hearted and open-minded their community is, and how it has a unique historical presence without the look of a "classic town." One resident stated that Buena Vista is the "Gateway to the outdoors - the community is based on people being outside."

The mobility discussion primarily focused on non-vehicle transportation options; many residents voiced concern that the County has not been proactive in pursuing bike lanes, and that they desired more sidewalks in BV.

Cost of housing was the main issue of concern for the residents of Buena Vista, who have seen the negative impacts of housing unaffordability affect them and their neighbors. Many residents at the meeting believed that density is the key to affordable housing and viewed The Farm as an example to be replicated. A few action items that residents referenced were enacting restrictions on short-term vacation rentals, the purchase of County and Town land for deed-restricted housing and creating incentives in the Town to get developers to build affordable housing and annex into Town.

Attendees made the connection between housing and jobs, and spoke of how businesses are unable to retain employees due to the shortage of affordable rental properties. Most meeting attendees agreed that they wanted to continue to be environmental stewards and hoped that pursuing businesses in the green economy will bring attractive, higher-paying jobs to the County.

Johnson Village Neighborhood Meeting

The main topics discussed at the Johnson Village Neighborhood Meeting focused on community identity, water infrastructure capacity, and annexation.

Residents of Johnson Village understand the important role it plays as one of the three main gateways into the County, and acknowledge that historically they have been an overlooked, pass-through community. While some meeting attendees said they would like the convenience of having restaurants and a grocery store in the Village, others were less concerned with the drive to Buena Vista for these amenities. Residents were concerned with the availability and capacity of water infrastructure, and how businesses are leaving the area due to water access issues. When the potential to annex into Buena Vista was brought up, residents were skeptical but saw the potential benefit of having better access to water. Growth in the County has created traffic issues coming through Johnson Village on Highway 285, especially in summer months. With increased traffic, one resident stated "We need visibility - proper signage is key to support commercial growth."



Buena Vista Neighborhood Meeting

Nathrop Neighborhood Meeting

The main topics discussed at the Nathrop Neighborhood Meeting were community identity, protection of rangeland and open space, and commercial development.

The residents of Nathrop and the Mid-Valley area agreed that they love the rural character of their neighborhoods and take pride in the sense that they are a refuge area from more developed areas of the County. One resident stated “I love that you can drive by where my house is, not blink, and still miss it.” Another resident pointed out that the stretch from Nathrop to Centerville is the prime example of what rural character means Arkansas Valley.

Meeting attendees voiced their fear of development pressure in their community, particularly concerning the agricultural lands owned by a few remaining ranchers. The

discussion between the ranchers and their neighbors focused on how to balance community objectives with the private property rights of residents whose families have been a part of Chaffee County for over 100 years. Another community goal discussed was environmental and river protection, particularly the sale and purchase of mining rights.

Some meeting attendees recognized that Nathrop is one of the last areas in the County that is considered by the public to be affordable to buy property or homes for families, but there are very few amenities for families like a place to buy food, a playground, or a gas station. Others were less concerned about the drives to Salida or Buena Vista for those amenities.

Open House #2 (Salida)

The main topics discussed at Open House #2 held in Salida were affordable housing, trail connectivity, open space and ranches, health and childcare, watershed health and sustainability.

The residents of Salida value their walkable downtown with local businesses and a focus on the river. They are a self-proclaimed “lifestyle community,” and are known for their friendly people and recreational assets. They want to continue to be a city with a vibrant local economy and fear the effects that short term rentals and big box stores will have on the community’s character. The severe lack of affordable housing and rapidly increasing home values were a major concern discussed at the meeting, as well as the effect these issues have on retaining a local workforce. Residents expressed a desire to continue the pedestrian-oriented grid network of downtown into the Highway 50 corridor, which is now auto-centric and dangerous to cross as a pedestrian. Trail connectivity within and outside of the City was important to many meeting attendees.

Many residents stated “keep the city areas city, and the rural areas rural”, which appeared to be agreed upon by the greater Salida community. People were interested in ways to preserve ranch lands while protecting the private property rights of ranchers. Meeting attendees were also concerned about the lack of healthcare services in the County like mental and behavioral health, assisted living and childcare. Finally, concern over the impacts of growth on the health of the watershed and the desire to incorporate sustainability in planning were expressed.



Maysville Neighborhood Meeting

Poncha Springs Neighborhood Meeting

The main issues raised at the Poncha Springs Neighborhood Meeting were connectivity, growth, commercial development, town identity and economic vitality.

The connectivity discussion was centered around the intersection of Highways 285 and 50. Poncha Residents recognize that being at a major crossroad in the County has disadvantages, like traffic congestion and the difficulty of non-vehicle highway crossings. However, the Town benefits from the access and visibility from these 2 major highways. Residents stated they

would like a safe way for pedestrians to cross the highways, like a signaled crosswalk. The highways physically divide the neighborhoods of Poncha, which has made it difficult to integrate or create a cohesive identity.

Residents and Town Staff both acknowledged that Poncha has embraced growth, while other communities within the County have less available land and infrastructure to accommodate larger residential developments. The lack of commercial development has prevented Poncha Springs from having a town center, and residents expressed the need for a place to gather with their community members, as Town Hall is currently the only option. Residents stated they would like more small businesses where they can interact with other locals.

Skiing is an important facet of the town's identity, and meeting attendees saw this as a market opportunity to for a hotel to capture skiers who would drive through Poncha to Salida for lodging. This could enhance the Town's economic vitality, which would benefit from an industry that retains long-term jobs. One resident stated "Poncha Springs is an escape from Salida and its congestion – but it comparably lacks tourism appeal and the missing commercial development has created an identity confusion due to the lack of a "downtown" area."

Maysville Neighborhood Meeting

The main topics discussed at the Maysville Neighborhood Meeting were community character, recreational assets, short-term rentals, commercial development and traffic.

An almost exclusively residential area, a meeting attendee described Maysville as "A community hub for surrounding areas." Residents at the Maysville Neighborhood meeting value the small, historic, rural, feel of their community, while also appreciating their proximity to municipalities. One resident stated "we have all of the perks of living in a suburb minus the location." People were concerned that the lakes owned by the local utility provider—historically a recreational amenity for locals—may be sold for water rights. Meeting attendees would like improved regulation and enforcement of short-term rentals as they cause water shortages for residents and they don't provide as much benefit to the community since Maysville does not collect taxes on them. People would like to see cellular phone service and broadband expanded and improved.

Maysville community members are proud of the community-driven effort to preserve the School House, which serves as a landmark. Residents in attendance seemed to share the notion that they did not want commercial activities developed in their residential neighborhoods. Concerns about traffic, highway crossings, dirt road maintenance and signage were also discussed at the meeting.

Motivations and Concerns

As identified through the Envision Chaffee effort, most issues faced by Chaffee County are connected to growth, and the County's capacity to continue to provide safe and reliable public services, housing and economic opportunities to all citizens. But on a deeper level, the fundamental issue is change, and where people have negative feelings or resistance to change, that usually ties back to—real or perceived—changes to quality of life. In 2020, issues include the health of our forests and watershed, the impacts of increasing visitation, the quickly rising cost of living, lack of affordable housing, shifting demographics and changing community values and threats to the future of agriculture. All of these evoke a sense of loss from long-time community members. Newer arrivals bring a different perspective than many of the long-time residents and while they may embody changing set of values, they share many concerns about Chaffee County's future.

ISSUES OF CONCERN

The following issues of concern are based on the pressing challenges the County is dealing with in 2020 and are intended to be broad enough to guide decision-making despite certain changes in conditions, such as shifts in economic markets. The following is a discussion of these issues as they provide motivation for the comprehensive planning elements and land use actions put forth in this plan.

Natural Resources and Healthy Landscapes:

- 1. Forest health** in Chaffee County is a major concern as historic practices of fire suppression and global climate change have set the stage for catastrophic wildfire, pests and disease currently ravage the forests. Real threats include spruce budworm and pine beetles resulting in massive tree mortality. Wildfire in nearly any part of the County threatens human health, life and property, and uncertainty on the forest's future is immense. High priority should be placed on forest treatment as identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
- 2. Water:** The availability and quality of water are major concerns, not just for the County but for the region and nation. Water in the Arkansas River Basin is over-appropriated and surface and groundwater supply is depleting. Surface water rights are delivered based on availability of native water to satisfy such rights in accordance with the Prior Appropriation System. There is a nexus between surface and ground water, so well pumping creates an impact to surface water availability. Augmentation replaces the depleted water so that surface water rights are not injured. The availability of an augmentation plan, both the water and the legal/engineering, is a critical component to growth in areas outside of the places served by municipal water service areas. The Upper Arkansas Water Conservation District and its augmentation plan have been critical to most development in the unincorporated parts of the county. Water quality has increasingly been questioned as it relates to aging septic systems.

3. **Sprawl:** Development pressure threatens to change the working lands and open spaces to sprawling subdivisions and change the character of Chaffee County from rural to suburban. Success in maintaining agricultural lands and functions needs to be as much about making agriculture successful as it is about protecting lands from development.
4. **Working Lands:** Preservation of working lands and appreciation of the ecological function they provide is growing stronger. There are several large conservation easements in the planning stages, and the Office of Housing has model legislation to adopt conservation subdivision planning.
5. **Wildlife Habitat:** As land has developed in Chaffee County, wildlife habitats and corridors are under increasing threat. How does wildlife fit into development patterns and private property rights?
6. **Recreation in Balance:** Increased use of recreational assets has impacted the landscape and watershed health. Continued support for the Recreation in Balance program is critical to preserving our quality of life.

Built Environment & Infrastructure:

7. **Railroad:** The history of Chaffee County has been physically shaped by the railroads and the future use of rail corridors presents interesting potential. The intact corridor is a unique and valuable asset that should be kept intact, whatever its final use may be. It is not currently being actively maintained. The corridor could potentially be used for routing of utilities in addition to use by trains.
8. **Transportation:** Roads and their capacity for vehicle traffic continues to present challenge conditions in the face of growth. County road maintenance is not able to keep up with impacts of increasing inflow or outflow traffic and, at the same time, public expectations of road conditions continues to rise.

Human Environment:

9. **Schools and Institutions:** Growth in population impacts schools and their institutional capacity to deliver a high-quality learning environment to the County's youth. Care must be taken to ensure public institutions have the resources and facilities they need, and this includes K-12 systems as well as post-secondary education and vocational education or supplemental learning environments. School superintendents and representatives from institutions such as Colorado Mountain College and other regional stakeholders must help in the effort to find tools and procedures that ensure growth does not outpace our ability to fulfill those in the County that desire further learning.
10. **Demographic Change:** The County's population is about 12 years older than the State of Colorado on average. The volume of retirees that have worked an entire career to move to Chaffee County has been substantial, while younger people are leaving. High quality continuum of care means there is a smooth transition between different stages of healthcare needs and providing this is a challenge. Many couples are forced to move away upon developing health issues that are not addressed locally. Plans to build facilities to mitigate these issues exist, however none have come to fruition.
11. **Public Health:** Physical, mental and social public health and wellness is of utmost importance at the time of this Comprehensive Plan. Rural areas like Chaffee County struggle in general against lack of resources, however in times of global strife, even more strain is placed on the County's public health officials and stakeholders. Anecdotally, there are two Chaffee Counties: one that is self-sufficient with social care and safety nets, and a significant number of folks who do not have such resources. This disparity is growing as the cost of living increases. The services provided by non-profits and faith-based groups continues to be essential.



12. **Behavioral Health** is a key concern for the future, and ensuring Chaffee County's communities have adequate facilities for the treatment and transport of those in need is a major concern. The County is fortunate to have entities such as Sol Vista who as of this planning effort received a significant grant to start work on a treatment center adjacent to the hospital to serve this critical need. Transporting patients to the Front Range—rather than providing services for them in Chaffee County—is a growing burden.
13. **Culture, Arts and Music:** Cultural activities have come to reshape the region's identity in a short time. Several large music festivals and events drive a portion of the economy and contribute to the County as a cultural destination. Being "on the map" for music and social events continues to bring in ancillary activities like weddings and seasonal visitors like never before. The Salida Creative District contributes to this, as well as community organizations like Chaffee Arts in Buena Vista and further cement the area's position as a place to experience authentic Colorado culture. People will continue to come to the County from across the state and country and many will stay for short time. Some will stay for the rest of their lives.

14. **Recreation** and the identity and culture of Chaffee County is another major motivation for the policies in this plan. With high seasonal traffic on county roads and state highways, crowded waterways, intrusion onto private property near camp sites, and over 100,000 people hiking the County's 14,000-foot peaks every season, impacts from human activity to environmental resources are very visible and strongly felt when considering the recreational economy in Chaffee County.
15. **Affordable Housing:** Along with the State of Colorado and the country itself, Chaffee County and the region face challenges to providing sustainable housing for its workforce. A regional housing shortage, lack of diversity of housing, and low-wage jobs have priced certain income levels out of the County, and have continued to push existing residents elsewhere. Permanently affordable housing is critical to ensuring Chaffee County is an equal-opportunity place to live, work and recreate.

A.2 | Community Project Recommendations

Projects came from stakeholder and community input, and review of existing plans and studies, including:

- Buena Vista Three-Mile Plan
- Salida Comprehensive Plan
- Poncha Springs Comprehensive Plan

The list of projects was then brought to the community in Open Houses 3 and 4 where the public voted on which projects they would like to see prioritized, which is indicated under the “votes” column.



Attendees vote on proposed projects

BUENA VISTA SUB AREA SPECIFIC PROJECTS

Buena Vista Sub Area Projects		Votes
1	Significant affordable housing project in the Sub Area	17
2	Study the execution/prioritization of improving the sanitary system in Johnson Village to comply with Buena Vista Sanitation District standards (refer to the Infrastructure Study)	4
3	Bring people and vitality to Johnson Village by zoning land for commercial and recreational uses, facilitate appropriate growth as it relates to the capacity of infrastructure	2
4	Collaborate with the Town of Buena Vista to identify water resources safety risk for Cottonwood Creek	1
5	Identify and convert one or both of the junk yards in Johnson Village to a project for public benefit	1
6	Install proper signage in Johnson Village and SH 24 North that signifies the gateway into the County and wayfinding to the County’s assets	
7	Create a Johnson Village Master Plan to set long-term neighborhood strategies for infrastructure, connectivity and land use	
8	Engage with the Town on an alluvial water storage study and project for Cottonwood Creek to ensure coordination in the long-term management of water supply in the area	

Buena Vista Sub Area Transportation Projects		Votes
Work with CDOT on the following projects in order of prioritization:		
1	Construct a paved bike path at Crossman Avenue	14
2	Improve the intersection at US 24 and DePaul Avenue	5
3	Construct a bike/ped path from Johnson Village to Browns Canyon Monument with safe highway crossing	4
4	(Current project underway) - Collaborate with all project stakeholders to improve the intersection at US 24 and Steele Drive	1
5	Improve pedestrian crossings along Highway 285	
6	Make US 285 through Johnson Village into more of a main street/entryway with pedestrian amenities like sidewalks and highway crossings	
Work with the Town of Buena Vista on the following projects:		
7	Connect the subdivisions outside Buena Vista’s boundaries with roads (referring to the Buena Vista Transportation & Three Mile Plan and prioritize connectivity)	3
8	Collaborate with project stakeholders (CDOT, RR, etc.) on the improvement of intersection at US 24 and Steele Drive	1
9	Continue the paved bike trail along Gregg Drive (CR 321) through the County past the municipal boundary	1
10	Construct a road connecting Gregg Drive and CR 306 at CR 361	1

MID-VALLEY SUB AREA SPECIFIC PROJECTS

Mid-Valley Sub Area Projects		Votes
1	Work with the residents of Nathrop to develop a Community Master Plan for Nathrop (refer to Infrastructure Study)	4
2	Begin master planning for a comprehensive water/wastewater system to mitigate quality issues and promote community amenities	2
3	Significant affordable housing project in the Sub Area	2
4	Develop something like the old "Nathrop Mall" - a small market (like the general store at St Elmo) in the old townsite to provide easy access to food in the Mid-Valley Sub Area	
5	Construct a park and playground in Nathrop	
6	Construct bike lanes in Nathrop and various subdivisions in the Mid-Valley area	

Mid-Valley Sub Area Transportation Projects

Mid-Valley Sub Area Transportation Projects		Votes
Work with CDOT on the following projects in order of priority:		
1	Ensure that Cogan's Curve is on CDOT's list of prioritized improvement projects	5
2	Construct a public trail and bridge from Nathrop to Browns Canyon National Monument	1

County Road Project Prioritization

3	Improve County Road 162 from US 285 to Mount Princeton	1
4	Construct bike lanes in Nathrop and various subdivisions in the Mid-Valley area	

SALIDA SUB AREA SPECIFIC PROJECTS

Salida Sub Area Projects		Voting
1	Significant affordable housing project in the Sub Area (City of Salida)	6

Salida Sub Area Transportation Projects

Work with CDOT on the following projects in order of prioritization:		
1	Work with both CDOT and the City of Salida to complete projects and plans outlined in the Future 50 Highway Plan	
2	Completion and implementation of Corridor Plan; Intersection control evaluation of US 50/SH 291 intersection	

Work with the City of Salida on the following projects:

3	Monarch Spur Trail Improvements	1
---	---------------------------------	---

PONCHA SPRINGS SUB AREA SPECIFIC PROJECTS

Poncha Springs/Maysville Sub Area Projects		Voting
1	Referencing the future Trails Master Plan, utilize Conservation Subdivision Design standards and other means to preserve areas by the river for potential trail development	1
2	Maintain access to recreational opportunities along the river in Maysville to allow for continued recreational use	
3	Team to perform studies that explore solutions to rural water supply issues around Maysville	
4	Significant affordable housing project in the Sub Area	

Poncha Springs Sub Area Transportation Projects

Work with CDOT on the following projects in order of prioritization:		
1	Ensure that improvements to the intersection of SH 285 and US 50 is on the CDOT priority list	3
2	Improve US HWY 50 pedestrian crossings prioritizing intersections where existing and future housing exist (for example, US 50 & CR 120)	2
3	Enhance the bicycle experience of the Continental Divide Cycling Route - Highway 285 along Poncha Pass	3
4	Explore paths to construction of a multi-use path between Poncha Springs and Maysville	1

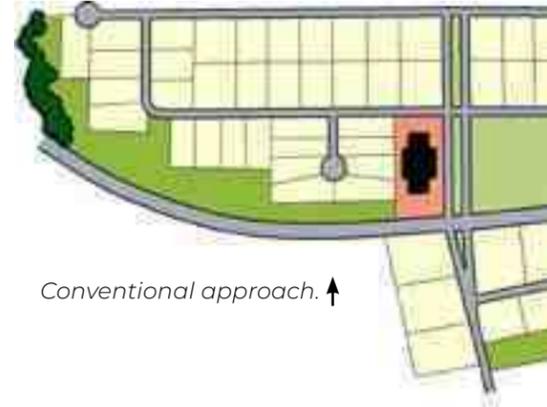
A.3 | Model Conservation Subdivision Guidelines

DESIGN STANDARDS

Purpose: To create a very livable neighborhood, interspersed with functional open space, to improve the quality-of-life of the new residents.

The following is a memorandum provided by Randall Arendt, FRTP, ASLA, for the Chaffee County Office of Housing to serve as a model for a future ordinance. Among the special features of any such new neighborhood are the following sixteen design concepts that are recommended to be incorporated into designs for projects with public, or central, water and sewer infrastructure, where greenway design is desired.

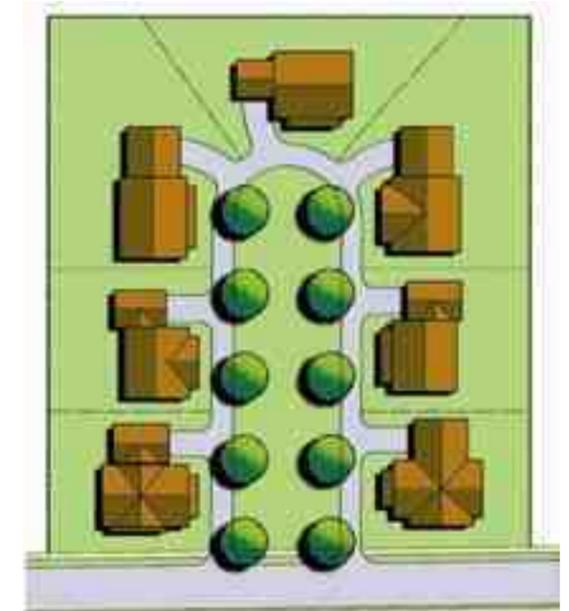
1. **Foreground Meadow:** Many roadside parcels can be developed with an attractive side facing the main public road, but with homes pulled back from it to reduce negative effects of traffic noise, etc. The park-like open space that is thereby created can be planted with a variety of deciduous and coniferous trees. This area buffers homes from the busy road running along the front of the property, and provides greater backyard livability. It also presents the traditional front facades to the public street, instead of lining it with backyards or fences. In the sketch at right, the conventional approach is at the top; the recommended approach is at the bottom.



2. **Numerous Neighborhood Greens:** Many properties lend themselves very well to the concept of creating separate but related “outdoor rooms”, defined by central open space. This special new neighborhood offers a variety of greenspace ranging from a central green to an informal ballfield. In the above example, the author redesigned a conventional extension to a small village by trimming lot sizes and creating both a neighborhood green and an informal playingfield with the acreage that was not needed for houselots.



3. **Terminal Vistas:** Greenspace is deliberately positioned either at the ends of streets, or along the outside edge of curving streets, so that the visibility of these amenities will be maximized.
4. **Closes:** As an alternative to the standard cul-de-sac, a “close” consists of a one-way street looping around a small central green. The turning radius at the far end is designed to meet engineering standards for turning movements required by long vehicles, such as fire trucks and moving vans.



Sometimes the central green area can be used as a rain garden, where stormwater pools for a few days before being absorbed by the soil, cleansing the runoff and replenishing the aquifer.

5. **Green Streets:** When garages are located in the back, accessed by rear laneways, opportunities exist for eliminating the street that traditionally runs in front of houses. In this example, the street area has been landscaped as a green space, with sidewalks for pedestrians. While a sidewalk down the middle might seem obvious, it does not create the same parklike atmosphere as two sidewalks bordering a central green. In a street grid pattern, these streets would be located in lieu of minor cross-streets, and could be repeated in line across a number of blocks to form a greenway spanning an entire neighborhood, perhaps linking homes with a larger part, shops, or a school.



Green streets. ↑↓

This design approach can be used in neighborhoods of single-family detached homes, or in ones involving attached housing, such as condominium units or apartments.

6. **Bungalow Courts:** Bungalow courts, sometimes called “pocket neighborhoods”, can be seen as an extension of the “green street” design concept illustrated at bottom right. However, there are differences, the principal one being they are designed around a central, shared open space that is their basic building block around which homes are arranged. Sometimes homes frame it on all four sides, and often the neighborhood green is broader than that in a “green street” design. The definitive book on this subject is *Pocket Neighborhoods*, by Ross Chapin (2011, Taunton Press).



Bungalow courts.

7. **Rain Gardens:** Provision should be made for the creation of “rain gardens” within parks and the greenspace bounded by the neighborhood greens. These engineering features allow the first flush of runoff from most storms to infiltrate directly into the ground, irrigating the trees and other park vegetation, and also replenishing the aquifer.



These design elements work best when the street pavement is sloped inward toward the central greenspace, with curbing along only the outside edge of the street, not the inside edge, to allow sheet runoff to enter the rain gardens.

8. **Attached Greens:** An “attached green” is one where a row of houselots abuts the greenspace directly, with the street located at the far edge of the green (and garage access provided via rear laneways running along the back lot-lines). It is a useful design approach, particularly along busy streets. This orientation greatly enhances the livability of homes, whose residents step directly from their front porches right onto the greens.



Rain gardens. ↑↓

9. **Mid-Block Connections:** Footpaths and sidewalks should provide ways for pedestrians to cut across long blocks midway between street intersections. In Britain they are known as “twittens”.



10. **Garage Orientation:** When lots are less than 60 feet wide, builders often locate garages as appendages to the housefronts, with the result that protruding garage doors become a central feature of the street facades, dominating the streetscape and defining the neighborhood in a distinctly non-traditional way. A far better alternative is to recess front-loaded garages, or to provide rear laneways. One way that municipalities can easily ensure that front-facing garages do not dominate streetscapes is to require a minimum front setback for garage doors that is 10-15 feet deeper than the front setback for homes.



Attached Greens. ↑

When lots are less than 60 feet across, they really benefit when homes have rear-facing garages (accessed via laneways). Municipalities can require such laneways, and can prohibit front-facing garage doors, when lot widths are less than that.



Mid-Block Connections. ↑

When laneways are provided, they should be planted with shade trees, just the same as the streets in front (see next design concept, below). Rear access can take the form of private common drives or “back lanes”, maintained by condominium corporations.

11. Back Lanes for Rear Garage Access:

Laneways are important design features to avoid front-facing garages that dominate streetscapes on lots less than 60 feet wide, or with some-detached (duplex) homes having two-car garages.

- 12. Semi-Detached Homes:** Front-facing garage doors are possible with duplexes having single-car garages, as illustrated at right. But when these homes have two-car garages, they can be done successfully only with rear access via laneways. (The image at right second from bottom is a two-family home designed to resemble a single-family home. Each front porch has its own front door, and the porch structures help to visually subordinate the two entrances. This effect is enhanced by one porch being set back farther from the street than the other.)

- 13. Shade Trees:** It cannot be emphasized enough how very important shade tree planting is along neighborhood streets, particularly in treeless agrarian landscapes. Shade trees should be planted at 40-foot intervals on both sides of every street, between the curb and the sidewalk, in tree-lawns at least six feet wide. If they are not required at the outset, they are seldom planted afterwards, and almost never in any consistent manner.

The photo at bottom right shows shade trees in Boise, which was originally built in a very open, treeless landscape, demonstrating what can be accomplished in such areas.

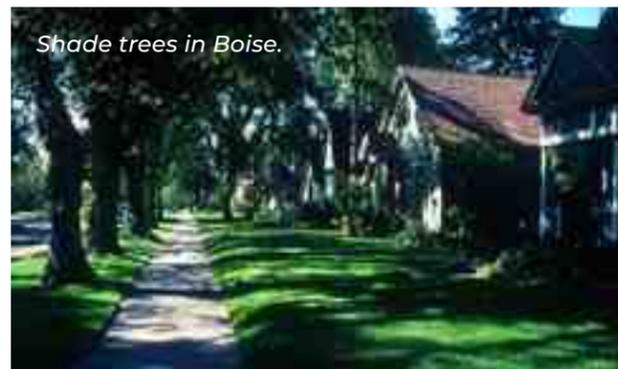
Front-loaded garages.



Semi-detached homes, single car garages.



Two-family home with recessed porch.



Shade trees in Boise.



Street trees in rural areas.



Sidewalks for safety.

If the jurisdiction fails to require such shade tree planting from the developer as a conditional of approval, chances are they will never be planted, and decades later the streetscape will remain barren and unattractive. The upper left photo on this page shows how well shade trees grow in new developments located on former farmland, which is often subdivided in rural areas.

- 14. Sidewalks for Safety:** Separating pedestrians from cars and trucks is always a worthy cause. Older communities routinely required them as a matter of course. However, in recent decades the importance of this basic safety feature has often been overlooked.

- 15. Traffic Calming:** The two one-way streets encircling the first “outdoor room” or neighborhood green (middle right) are designed with T-intersections requiring drivers to come to a full-stop before proceeding through. Other parts of the street networks have been consciously designed to calm traffic, by deliberately introducing tighter curves and three-way intersections where motorists must slow down. Another traffic-calming device is the informal central median. Where fencerow trees exist, they can be incorporated in to the design. Where they do not, such medians should be planted with canopy shade trees capable of filling the “celestial space” overhead, in the fullness of time.



Neighborhood green traffic calming.



Drainageways as boulevard features.

- 16. Drainageways as Boulevard Features:** Retaining a line of existing drainageways can help preserve key features of the rural landscape and add value to any project.

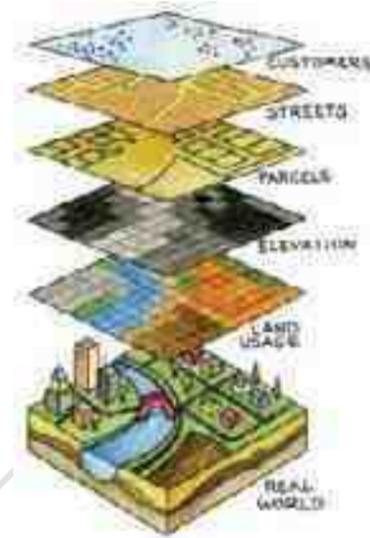
A.4 | Decision Making Guidance

AN ECOLOGICAL APPROACH TO PLANNING

Ecology is sometimes thought of as being synonymous with environmentalism, but it is much more than that. "Ecology" is the interdisciplinary study of relationships of organisms with their physical surroundings – including the built environment – and with each other. Humans as organisms are an important element of this discussion, as is the understanding that ecology examines these relationships on an ecosystem or landscape scale.

There are four laws of ecology that apply at this level of discussion:

1. Everything is connected to everything else (What affects one affects another).
2. Everything must go somewhere (Matter cannot be destroyed). Waste products and byproducts of all processes must go somewhere. The fundamental question we must ask ourselves when making land use and permitting decisions is "Where do the waste and byproducts go? How do we dispose of them? What are the potential impacts to human and ecosystem health and stability?"
3. Nature is the ultimate arbiter (Nature knows best). Natural disasters and unforeseen events – wildfire, flooding, rockslides, disastrous climate and weather events, chemical spills, and more – are likely to overcome our best human designs and engineering. Similarly, the two previous laws illustrate the potential for unintended consequences – how using one pesticide may lead to the rise of another more damaging pest, for example.



4. There is No Such Thing as a Free Lunch (All decisions involve trade-offs). Every gain comes at some cost. There is no such thing as "zero impact." For example, an electric vehicle is charged with electricity produced by some source – either fossil fuel or perhaps solar panels containing rare-earth metals that may have been mined a long ship-ride away. The batteries in the vehicle are similarly manufactured and must ultimately be disposed of properly (see # 2 above). Building large developments of "affordable housing" in rural areas may be an attractive option in terms of land costs, but wells, waste disposal, transportation, and other costs may exceed any savings rendering the housing unaffordable and imposing other costs on the community.

When applied to county-wide land use policy, these tenets guide this plan's philosophy of promoting logical land use patterns in appropriate areas where growth makes sense by its true costs and benefits. An ecological approach finds the best place for something by layering information to optimize suitability. This is particularly applicable to the Growth Scenarios in Part III, which use GIS to take into consideration physical conditions to determine the most optimal criteria for certain human activities.

PRINCIPLES FOR DECISION MAKING

TESTS FOR COURSES OF ACTIONS.

A course of action is a plan or series of plans that will accomplish, or is related to, the accomplishment of an objective that will take us toward achieving our vision. The following tests are considerations when evaluating a possible course of action.

ADEQUACY: Will the course of action (COA) actually accomplish the goal when carried out successfully? Will it solve the problem? Is it aimed at the right objectives?

FEASIBILITY: Do we have the necessary resources – funding, personnel, equipment, facilities - or can they be obtained within reasonable timeframes and costs?

ACCEPTABILITY: Even though the contemplated action will accomplish the objective and we have the resources, is it worth the cost? Is it consistent with community values? Will the public support it?

COMPLETENESS: Does the recommendation adequately answer

- Who will be responsible for executing it?
- What specific tasks and actions are required?
- When is it to begin? When should it be completed?
- Where will it take place?

- How will it be accomplished? There is no inhibition to clearly explaining how, in general terms, the COA will be executed.

CONSISTENCY: Does the recommendation support our vision? Is it consistent with the Chaffee County Comprehensive Plan and regional and intergovernmental agreements?

CONSTRAINTS: Does the COA encompass all the things we are required to do by higher authority, thus limiting our freedom of action? Constraints are things we **MUST** do.

RESTRAINTS: Does the COA comply with all directives by higher authorities that prohibit certain actions? Restraints are things we **MUST NOT** do.

COLLABORATIVE PRINCIPLES

To collaborate as partners with our state, regional, municipal, civic, business, and NGO/ PVO partners, we recognize, value, and utilizes the following decision-making principles.

- During all meetings, discussions, brainstorming sessions, and decision-making processes, we will be respectful, be constructive, and be productive.
- Interagency working groups and committees will endeavor to make decisions based on a gradient of consensus. When possible, decision items will be presented and decided upon in one meeting. Policy level and more complex decisions (i.e., policy recommendations to elected bodies) will be vetted through standing interagency committees (inter alia, Planning Commission, Transportation Advisory Board, Administrators

Committee, Housing Policy Advisory Committee, Heritage Area Advisory Board, et al.) or task-oriented interagency working groups.

- Members of standing committees and interagency working groups must be empowered to speak for the organizations they represent. It is understood for some decisions organizational representatives will need to consult with their boards and leadership before making a decision or before committing their organization to a particular course of action.
- Government members serving in advisory or ex-officio capacities can (and in some cases should) abstain from taking a formal position in a standing committee or interagency working group.
- In making decisions, each member of a standing or ad hoc interagency working group will indicate his or her concurrence on a specific proposal using the five-point gradient below:
 1. Full endorsement: I like it! I fully support it.
 2. Support with reservations: I have some reservations, which I have shared, but I can live with it. I will not withhold support of the group or the decision-making body's ultimate decision and will work for project success.
 3. Abstain: This issue either does not pertain to me or my organization cannot take a position on this.
 4. Cannot support: I register my organization's dissent on this proposal or COA because negative effects will outweigh the benefits. NOTE: in a consensus model, this is tantamount to blocking the proposal, though the ultimate decision may lie with an elected decision-making body. A 4 should be used sparingly and only as a last resort after efforts to resolve concerns have failed.

5. Indecision: If a member cannot make a decision without more information or without consulting with their board or leadership, the member must specify what additional information is needed and what guidance he or she needs from leadership. Ideally, the need for more information and leadership guidance are managed before the meeting.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DECISIONS ON LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

The following are guidelines to staff and decision makers for making determinations on land use approvals under the future land use framework of this Comprehensive Plan:

- Does the project generally meet the intent of the future land use map, its designations, use locations, and any other special elements?
- Can the project's location be reconsidered to better meet the intent of any of this plan's goals, strategies or land use character designations?
- Does the project directly further a goal, strategy, incentive or other project as mentioned in this or any other ancillary plan or study?
- If a residential use is being considered, does the use further Strategy 3.1.B promoting the development and preservation of housing types across the housing spectrum that serve residents across a range of demographics and incomes?
- Does the project generally advance the community vision of the Preferred Scenario?

A.5 | Background

LOCAL HISTORY

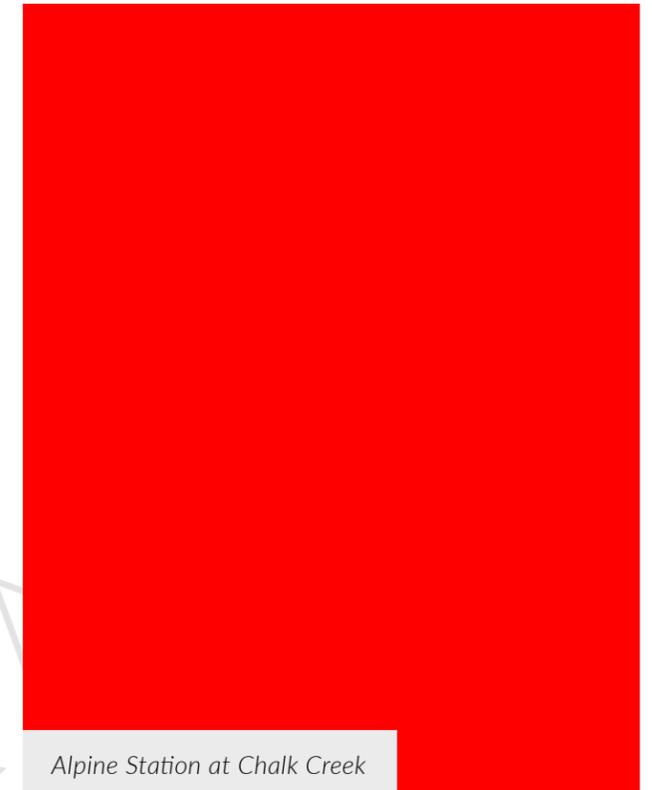
EARLY SETTLEMENT

Chaffee County's history is largely influenced by the geology and geography that make this portion of the Arkansas River Valley such a unique place. The settling of Chaffee County saw a succession of Native Americans, miners, ranchers and railroads. By the 1600s the Ute Indians roamed the valley, valued for its rich hunting grounds and temperate climate. Several of the highest mountains, including Antero, Shavano, Tabeguache, Ouray, Chipeta and Pahlone, are named after the Utes. By the early 19th Century, the Arapaho and Cheyenne occasionally wintered near the Arkansas River.

MINING

Colorado's 1859 gold discoveries brought a mining boom to Chaffee County when thousands of "Pikes Peak or Bust" prospectors moved on from the Front Range to the central mountains. Situated in the center of the Colorado Mineral Belt, the Chaffee mountain ranges yielded a wealth of gold, silver, copper, iron, zinc, lead, limestone, marble, fluorite, travertine, gypsum and feldspar.

Of the many mines located within Chaffee County, the Mary Murphy Mine in the Chalk Creek District, operated by the Mary Murphy Gold and Silver Mining Company of St. Louis,



Alpine Station at Chalk Creek

was the most famous. Another prominent mine operating in Chaffee County was the Calumet Iron Mine run by the Colorado Coal and Iron Company (CC&I). Mining in Chaffee County peaked between 1885 and 1888, when production of gold, silver and lead totaled more than \$1 Million each year. CC&I quarried large quantities of limestone from the Monarch District above Garfield for use in the Pueblo Steel mills into the 1980s. The loading tripple is still visible from US Highway 50.

Smelters located in Buena Vista and Salida processed the raw ore, and provided employment for hundreds of men until the end of WW1. The 300-foot brick chimney in Salida is all that remains of a once prominent industry.

RAILROADS

The three railroad lines contributed immensely to the growth of mining, agriculture and towns in Chaffee County. The Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad crossed South Park from Denver and reached Buena Vista in 1880 on the way to Leadville, the mines near St. Elmo, and across the Continental Divide to Crested Butte.

The Colorado Midland was based in Colorado Springs and traversed Trout Creek Pass on its way to the silver mines in Aspen. The line was abandoned after World War I and is now the backbone of the Buena Vista trail system.

The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG) traveled from Denver to Leadville following the Arkansas River, and founded Salida in 1880 erecting extensive railroad facilities. The D&RG provided Chaffee County with a direct rail connection to the East Coast via Pueblo and St. Louis, and to the Pacific Coast via Salt Lake City and San Francisco. By 1920 the D&RG was still a prominent travel route, but highways began to eclipse the railroads after WWII and the D&RG ended passenger and freight service to the valley in 1964. Union Pacific still owns this rail line connecting Pueblo and Mintern, but it has not been used since 1997.

TOWN SETTLEMENTS

With the establishment of the Colorado Territory in 1861, present-day Chaffee County became part of Lake County.

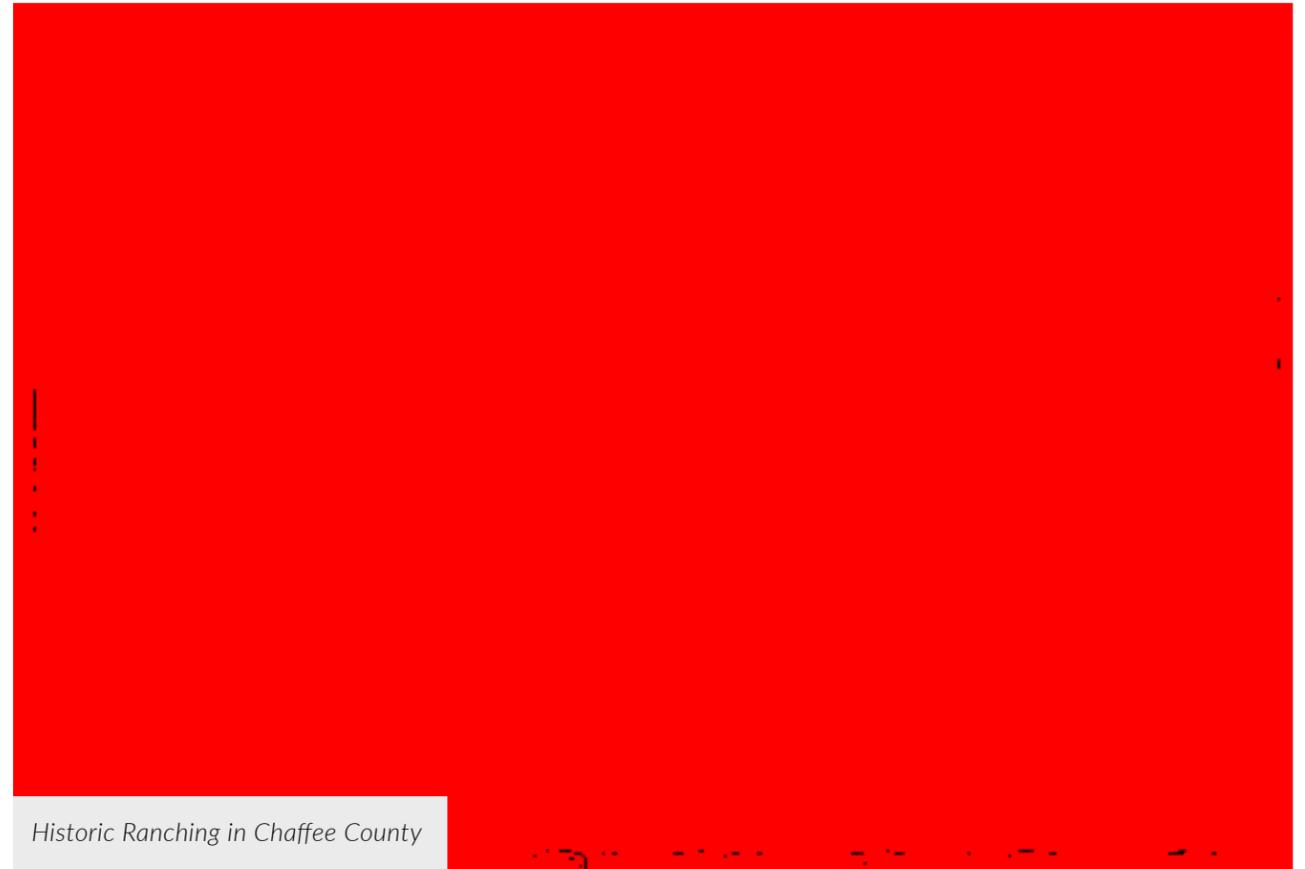
1939, Denver Rio Grande Railroad



Buena Vista was settled in 1864 as people were drawn to its fertile land. Known as BV by the locals, it became an agricultural center eventually serviced by three railroads. To the south, the small township of Nathrop saw its beginnings as the ranch owned by Charles Nachtrieb in 1865.

Colorado became a state in 1876, and in 1879 the state government divided Lake County into northern and southern parts. The southern portion was named Chaffee County after Jerome Chaffee, a businessman and politician who had invested in local mines. The town of Granite, in northern Chaffee County, was designated as the county seat, but later residents voted to move the county seat to Buena Vista, a more centrally located city.

The construction of the highway system through Chaffee County changed the face of the community. Modern conveniences once rare in the valley became the norm. Fires periodically ravaged the early boomtowns which were rebuilt with more sophisticated building materials provided by the new railroads and brick factories. These Victorian business blocks and homes form



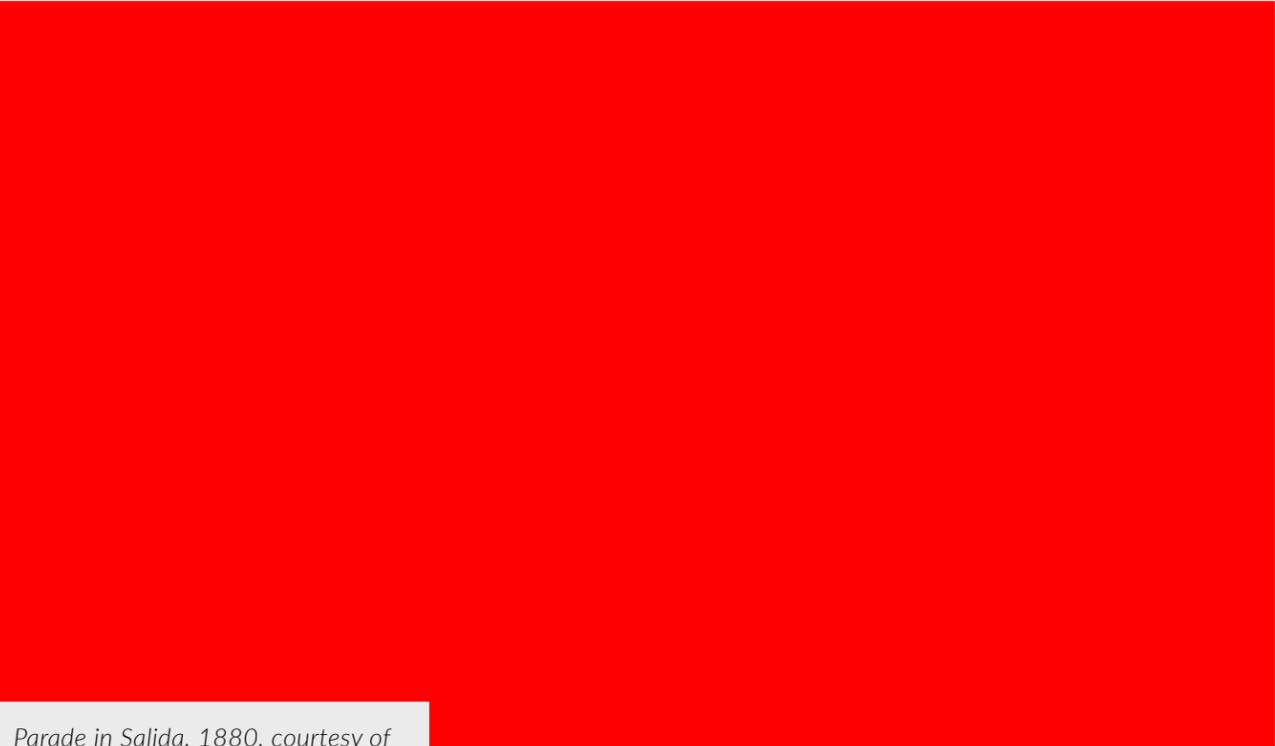
Historic Ranching in Chaffee County

today's historic town centers in Salida and Buena Vista.

Salida was founded in 1880 with the arrival of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. "Salida," *exit* in Spanish, refers to its location where the rail line exited Bighorn Sheep Canyon and entered the Upper Arkansas River Valley. The 1887 Steam Plant provided electricity to the County for 70 years. In 1928 Chaffee County voted to move the County seat for a second time from Buena Vista to Salida. Construction of the new Chaffee County Courthouse in Salida was finished in 1932.

RANCHING HISTORY

A 150-year cattle ranching heritage runs deep in Chaffee County. Following the end of the gold rush in the late 1860s, homesteaders began to establish farms and ranches along the river. Early ranchers found many advantages to settle in Chaffee County: fertile bottomland, public domain grasslands, a temperate climate, water for irrigation and a good market in the mining boomtowns and Front Range cities. Ranchers drove their cattle to the high country for summer grazing while the irrigated pastures produced alfalfa, hay, oats, wheat and barley.



Parade in Salida, 1880, courtesy of Denver Public Library

ECONOMY

In 1939 a federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) project built the Salida Hot Springs complex. Monarch Ski Area was another WPA project, which officially opened in 1939, though skiers had been using the mountain since 1914.

The corrections business has been a consistent employer in Chaffee County since 1891, when the first state reformatory was built near Buena Vista. The facility began as a reformatory for juvenile offenders housing between 94 and 153 juvenile inmates in its first two decades of operation. In 1978 it became an adult, medium-custody facility: the Buena Vista Correctional Facility (later renamed the Buena Vista Correctional Complex). The site now has capacity for up to 1,259 inmates and is one of the largest correctional facilities in the state.

No longer a mining community or transportation hub, Chaffee was missing a strong economic and cultural identity into the early 20th Century. Agriculture and ranching, however, continued to be a mainstay of the area's character. Like many communities in Colorado, Chaffee's economy shifted to tourism, catering to visitors who traveled there to take advantage of the area's abundant natural resources and recreation opportunities.

The Chaffee County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) was formed in 2009 and hired its first director part-time in 2010. Over the past decade the CCEDC has focused their efforts to develop and strengthen the economic development "ecosystem" in Chaffee County.

RELEVANT PLANS & STUDIES

2000 Comprehensive plan

The recent generation of planning began in the late 1990s in response to the County's rapid growth, abundance of available land, and lack of water. This prompted the creation of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan to help guide future development. The Plan placed emphasis on focusing residential and commercial growth around the existing towns of Buena Vista, Salida, and Poncha Springs. It stated that growth in unincorporated county should only occur where infrastructure was available to accommodate it. The preferred development scenario served as an update to the future land use map.

The Plan additionally addressed the County's financial infeasibility to provide infrastructure and services, increasing prices in the housing market, and loss of agricultural land.

Implications for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan was written in a similar moment in Chaffee's growth and development as is seen in 2020. The pace of growth has exceeded that seen in the late 1990s, and the potential for more growth is eminent.

Although the 2000 Plan had aspirations of focused growth, it was not followed by an updated land use code that legally enforced growth in existing towns and connected to available infrastructure. Consequently, 75% of new housing in Chaffee County was built in the unincorporated area from 2000 to 2015. Additionally, although the 2000 Plan offered support for a program to purchase and sell development rights on agricultural lands, it never designated receiving areas for the transfer of these rights, leaving the program obsolete.

Chaffee County Heritage Area & Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway and Historic Byway Management Plan 2008

The Chaffee County Heritage Area & Collegiate Peaks Scenic and Historic Byway Management Plan was created to protect and preserve the distinct natural environment and the cultural, historical and recreational resources unique to Chaffee County. It is both the state-mandated Corridor Management Plan for the Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway and the County-wide Heritage Area Management Plan.

The Plan addresses such issues as growth and development, land use policy, scenic character, recreational conflicts, lack of knowledge of significant resources, economic viability, wayfinding and visitor amenities. It recommends the pursuit of key funding strategies through Federal and State grants for the protection of historic and natural resources. The Plan includes an inventory of natural, cultural, historic, and

archaeological resources and recommends that the County provide education to residents and tourists alike as part of the management plan.

Implications for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan

Resources inventoried in the Heritage Area & Byway Management Plan were considered in the Future Land Use mapping of this Plan.

Chaffee County Citizen’s Land Use Roundtable Recommendations 2008

The Citizen’s Roundtable was formed in an effort to update Chaffee County’s land use code and provided recommendations to improve County land use patterns and procedures. These recommendations were approved by the Board of County Commissioners in 2008. The Roundtable recommendations included the creation of new land use classifications their proposed densities and the implementation of tools to encourage and financially motivate ranchers to seek alternatives to land subdivision.

The Roundtable recommended focused growth by planning appropriate land uses in and around existing towns and focusing commercial and industrial development in or near existing developed commercial areas to preserve the unique community character of Chaffee County. The Roundtable directed the County to promote clustered development and allow higher densities in appropriate areas to leave more land in productive use. Clustering incentives could include a more streamlined approval process, negotiable open space (to promote quality, not quantity), increased density and lower fees.

Land planning staff was directed to develop a voluntary Agricultural Overlay District that allows site-specific higher density, flexibility in land sales as well as some additional commercial land uses.

Implications for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan

The Roundtable continued the ideas brought forth in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, and offered regulatory tools and incentives to promote focused growth. Recommendations from the Roundtable fed directly into the regulatory framework provided in this plan.

Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment 2019

The Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment provides an understanding of the dynamics, interdependencies, and the face of County housing needs. It identified unaffordable housing prices, inventory shortages, and an increase in second home buyers and investors as the issues causing the most strain on the County’s housing market. The analysis found that the greatest need for housing is for households earning less than 60% AMI, as the supply of these units has decreased – partially due to the increase in the cost of new construction and the lack of available sites with higher-density zoning.

Implications for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan

Recommendations in the Housing Needs Assessment were introduced into the comp plan update wherever feasible. The assessment provided a basis of knowledge for exploring specific challenges and opportunities in the

HISTORY OF ZONING SUMMARY (RELATED TO LOT SIZES)

Zoning Resolution	Residential (R-1)	Agricultural Residential (AR)	Agricultural Suburban (AS)	Agricultural (A)	Recreation (RC)	Commercial (C)	Industrial (I)
1974 Zoning Resolution	2 acres*	10 acres	10 acres	35 acres**	10 acres	No minimum	No minimum
1979 Zoning Resolution	2 acres*	10 acres	2 acres	35 acres**	2 acres	No minimum	No minimum
Zoning Resolution	Residential (R-1)	Rural Residential (RR)	Rural Suburban (RS)	Rural (R)	Recreation (RC)	Commercial (C)	Industrial (I)
1984 Zoning Resolution	2 acres*	2 acres*	10 acres*	35 acres**	2 acres	No minimum	No minimum
1990 Zoning Resolution	2 acres***	2 acres***	2 acres***	5 acres for agriculture, 2 acres for rural residential	5 acres for agriculture, 2 acres for rural residential	2 acres	2 acres
*Unless connected to public water/sewer system OR Planned Unit Development (PUD)							
**Unless active mining claim							
***1 acre with connection public water, 1/2 acre with public water AND sewer							

Zoning Resolutions

A series of zoning resolutions in Chaffee County’s planning history had a dramatic impact on patterns of development, particularly in the agricultural (later renamed “rural” zones). The minimum lot sizes in these zone districts gradually decreased with each resolution, resulting in the current 2-acre lot size minimum in all zones. Beginning with the **1979 Zoning Resolution**, which changed the minimum lot size in the Agricultural Suburban and Recreation Zones from 10 acres to 2 acres.

The **1984 Zoning Resolution** renamed the Agricultural Zone Districts to “Rural Residential” at 2-acre minimum lots (unless connected to central water and sewer) and “Rural Suburban”

at 10-acre minimum lots. The Agricultural Zone, renamed “Rural”, remained at 35-acre minimums. The **1990 Zoning Resolution**, which initiated efforts to create the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, decreased the minimum lot sizes in the Rural Suburban Zone from 10 acres to 2 acres (or 1-acre with public water and ISDS, half an acre with public sewer). This Resolution also shrunk the minimum lot sizes in the Rural Residential Zone from 10 acres to 2 acres. The Rural Zone, which had remained at 35-acre minimum lot sizes until 1990, changed to 5 acres for agriculture and 2 acres for rural residential.

In November of 2008, the County adopted **Resolution 2008-69** directing the Planning Commission to revise the land use code to reflect the recommendations of the Citizens’

CURRENT COUNTY ZONING

Zoning Resolution	Residential (Res)	Rural (RUR)	Recreation (REC)	Rural Commercial (RCR)	Commercial (COM)	Industrial (IND)
2014 Zoning Resolution	2 acres*	2 acres*	2 acres*	No minimum**	No minimum**	No minimum**

*1 acre with public water, 1/2 acre with public water AND sewer

**With connection to a central sewer or water system

Roundtable and set the minimum lot size in rural Chaffee at 5 acres. In 2014 the County adopted the revised land use code setting the maximum residential density in the rural areas of the County at 1 unit for each 5 acres being developed. It allowed for a variation in lot sizes in a development down to 1 acre as long as the average for the development was 1 unit for each 5 acres.

Finally, **Resolution 2014-52** included a text amendment to increase density in all zone districts (except Commercial and Industrial which have no minimum lot sizes) to 1 residence for each 2 acres being developed, and retained the allowed variation in lot size. The clustering density incentive became irrelevant with the 2014 increase in rural density. Where they never existed before, an increase in 2-acre subdivisions on historically agricultural land created a more dense residential landscape.

Implications for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan

The decrease in minimum lot sizes in rural zone districts caused a development pattern of scattered small and large lots that impacted the “rural feel” of the County. The public and County leadership look to this plan for a way to preserve open landscapes and agricultural land while protecting private property rights and remaining an open and welcoming community that is attainable for people of all socio-economic backgrounds.

Chaffee County Community Health Assessment and Health Improvement Plan 2017-2021

The Chaffee County Community Health Assessment and Health Improvement Plan provides a summary of the health and wellness landscape of the County and a community-wide action plan to address several top health concerns derived from the assessment. The top five concerns identified through the assessment include: lack of affordable housing, availability of providers, lack of assisted living, substance use and mental health.

The Community Health Improvement Plan recommends pursuing three categories of health as top priorities. First priority is children’s oral health, and action items include public water fluoridation, expanded access to oral health care and education. Second priority is behavioral health, where the assessment recommends advancing policy approaches to improve social and emotional health and preventing prescription drug abuse. Third priority is senior services with action items that include supporting and promoting existing programs that support seniors and identifying and filling gaps in senior services.

Implications for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan

The top five concerns identified in the Health Assessment and Improvement Plan are congruent with issues identified through engagement for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update, and are addressed through the Goals, Strategies and Projects in this plan.

Envision Chaffee County 2019

Envision Chaffee County is a community action plan that charts the course for the future of Chaffee County. It defines four vision statements based on the widely adopted values of Chaffee County residents. Such visions are stated as: our forests, waters, and wildlife are healthy and in balance with outdoor recreation; our community members are able to live locally and benefit from a resilient economy; our community remains friendly, engaged, and culturally connected; and we have sustainable agriculture, beautiful rural landscapes, and development focused in and around towns. Envision Chaffee County identified many strategic initiatives to address challenges, one of which was the update to the Comprehensive Plan.

Implications for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan

Envision Chaffee County formed the basis for developing the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update’s six-theme planning framework, which formed the organizational method for most of the plan. Community values heard in the public process for Envision were congruent with those heard in 2020, particularly in relation to preserving open space and affordable housing.

Chaffee County Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2020

The Chaffee County Community Wildfire Protection Plan was developed in an effort to harness community momentum and deliver solutions that reduce wildfire risk. This forest

health action plan identifies risks posed by severe wildfire and preventative measures to be taken by the County and its residents to decrease risk and improve forest health. Part of the planning effort included a community survey, which identified that Chaffee County residents are not prepared for a major wildfire event. The plan calls for prevention methods like fuel treatment, and found that treating 5 to 10% of the Chaffee County landscape may reduce the risk that severe wildfire poses to community assets by 50 to 70%.

Implications for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan

Fire resiliency planning played a critical role in the development of this plan's Goals, Strategies and Action Steps. The Community Wildfire Protection Plan provided methods to reduce future hazards by eliminating future growth in hazardous areas and pursuing prevention efforts, projects and resources.

Chaffee County Clean Energy Plan

Clean Energy Chaffee (CEC) is a citizen group dedicated to the advancement of clean energy and energy conservation in the County. In March 2020, the group produced a Clean Energy Plan, in which they recommend strategies for Chaffee County to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This plan should be used as a guiding document regarding energy use in the County.

MODAL PLANS, PROGRAMS, SURVEYS, STUDIES AND IGAS

Chaffee County Trails Master Plan (2003) Update 2014

The Chaffee County Trails Master Plan (CCTMP) is a tool for the development of a county-wide trail system. The plan supplements the municipal Comprehensive Plans and assist agencies, groups and individuals with objectives and maps to guide future trail development in the county.

The plan incorporates existing and proposed trail plans and maps from the three municipalities, Buena Vista, Salida and Poncha Springs and identifies trail opportunities within the county that will connect communities and provide public access to the trails on public lands.

The goal of the plan is to create an interconnected trail system in Chaffee County by identifying missing links and connections, identifying opportunities for new trails and interpretation, protecting important access routes, encouraging coordination and cooperation in trail planning efforts and incorporating existing plans into its plan.

Additional Modal Plans, Programs, Surveys, Studies and IGAS

Over the years a variety of modal plans, studies, programs, studies, surveys and IGAs have developed within and among Chaffee County municipalities, agencies and organizations.

Examples of plans include the Salida Regional Transportation Plan (2009), the Buena Vista M3P Trail Plan, Highway and downtown Improvements plans and Parks, Open-space and Trails plans. Community programs have include Share the Road and Safe Routes to School and surveys and studies have been conducted pertaining to wildlife, water, parking and traffic. Intergovernmental Agreements have also helped coordinate land development and growth within and between the three municipalities and other public properties

Implications for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan

Chaffee County Multimodal Transportation Master Plan

The Chaffee County Comp Plan has incorporated the growth trends and strategies of existing plans and recommends to development the Chaffee County Multimodal Transportation Plan (CCMTP). This forthcoming document, to be adopted by referenced in the 2030 Comp Plan, will explore safety, mobility, economic vitality, maintenance and strategic policies which are addressed in the Transportation Theme in the Chaffee County Comp Plan 2030.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following definitions clarify the Comprehensive Plan's descriptions for commonly used terms found in this plan.

Affordable Housing: For sale or for rent housing units are considered affordable if individuals and families spend no more than 30% of their income on housing expenses.

Area Median Income (AMI): The middle point of an area's income distribution for families. Half of families in an area will earn more than the median and half earn less than the median.

Attainable Housing: A descriptive term referring to housing that is supplied in amounts and types that are attainable to all members of the community. It refers to the composition of housing supply rather than a housing type intended for an individual or group. Generally, attainability means housing costs do not exceed 30% of gross household income.

Connectivity: The physical characteristics of the transportation system that promote a complete, efficient network for all modes of transport.

HPAC: The Housing Policy Advisory Committee, an organization of volunteers working to improve the availability of housing in Chaffee County.

Infill Development: Development or redevelopment of vacant or underutilized lands that are generally in previously developed areas, as opposed to agricultural areas.

Market Rate Housing: Housing units that are designed and supplied at fair market rents or sales prices within the real estate market.

Mixed Use Development: A project or development that incorporates more than one unique land use on a parcel or development site.

Mobility: The capability of a person to move across the landscape between destinations and activities on all forms of transportation.

Resiliency: The capability of the County's systems, infrastructure, or its inhabitants to maintain a quality of life through unforeseen shocks and stresses, while positively adapting and transforming towards a more sustainable future.

Smart Growth: A way to develop a community that encourages a mix of building and land uses, diverse living and mobility options, infill development, density where appropriate, and high public interaction.

Sustainable Development: Strategic projects, programs and policies that provide both short and long-term solutions to benefit the people, environment and economy of the Chaffee community.

TAB: The Transportation Advisory Board consists of volunteers who work to provide advice on matters associated with transportation planning and implementation of transportation services.

WUI: Wildland Urban Interface. The fringe area where urban/residential areas meet with undeveloped land and vegetation.

Back Cover

