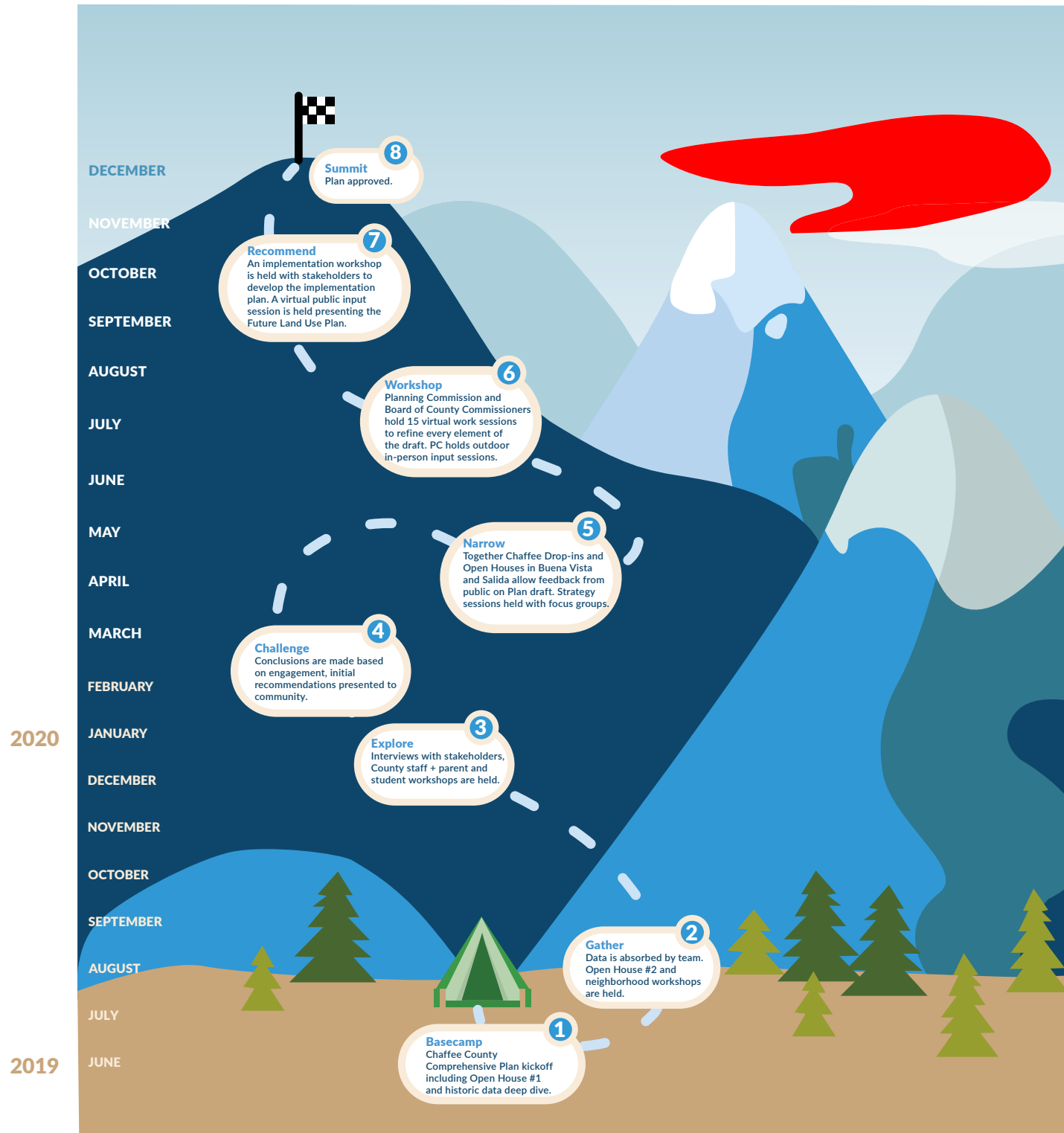


A.1 | Community Engagement Process Summary



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?

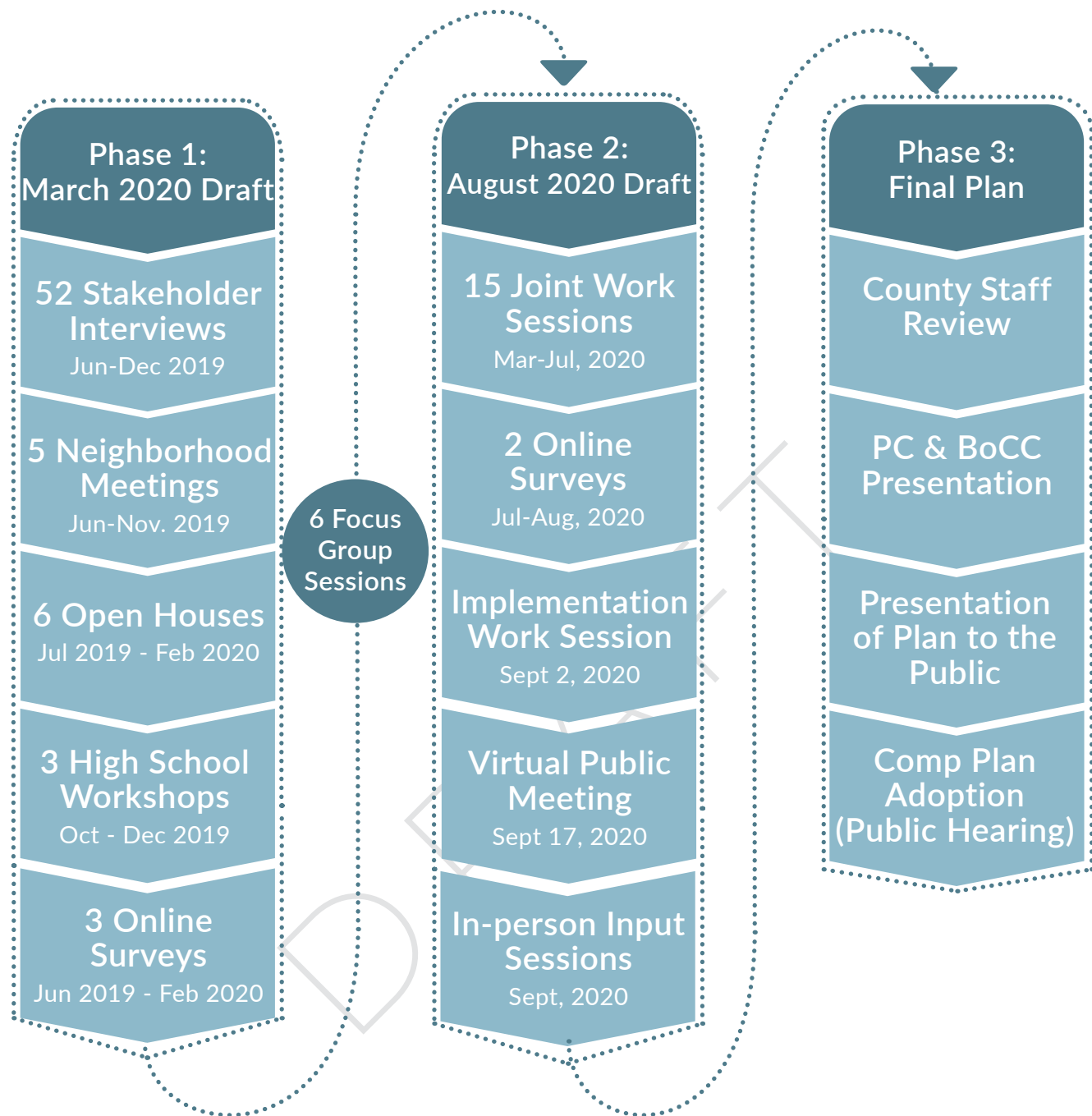
The comprehensive plan update required broad, high-quality input from a variety of sources which meant utilizing a variety of techniques and venues. This is summarized as follows:



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



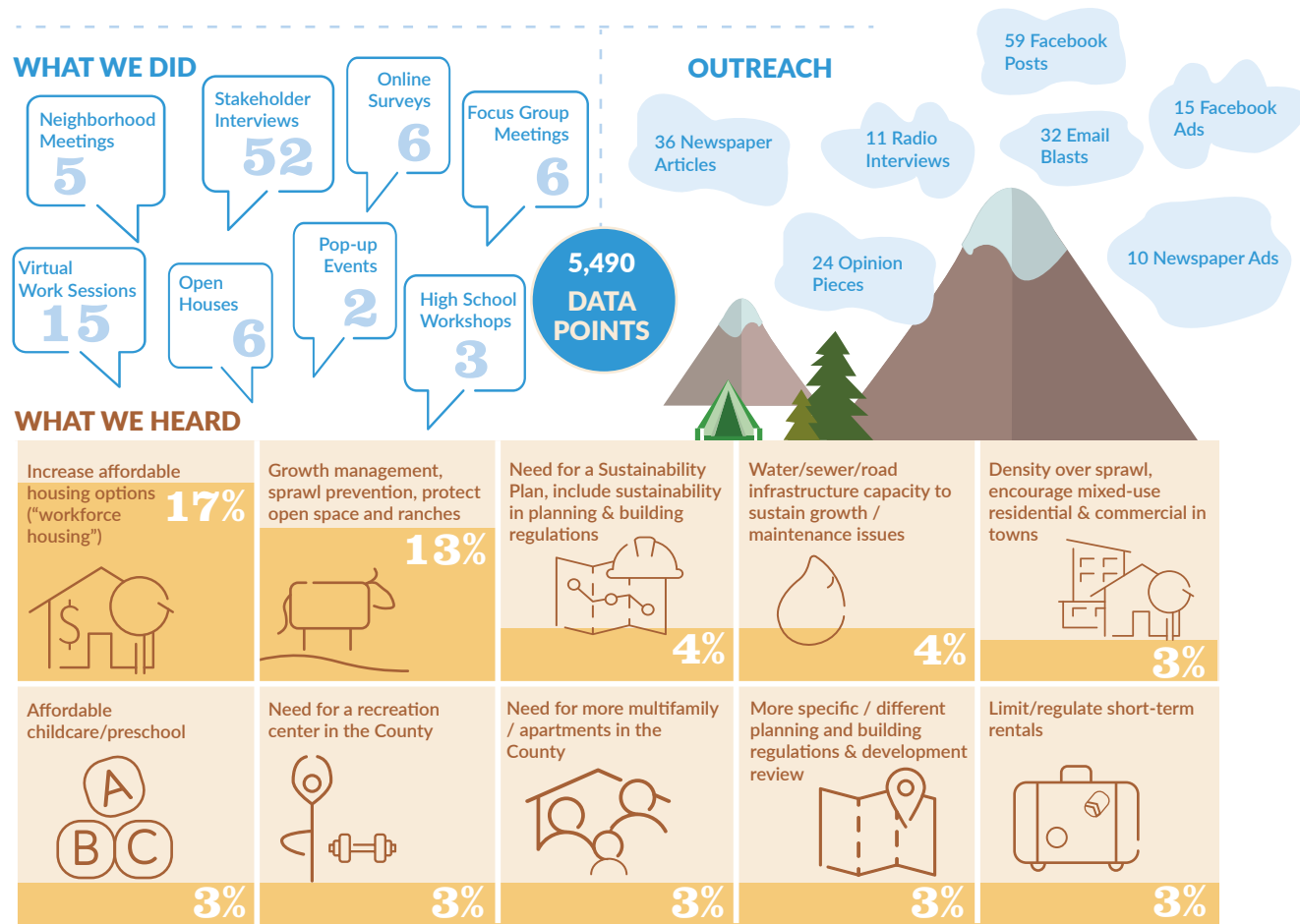
Open House #2 Mapping Activity

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.