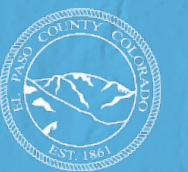


# YOUR EL PASO MASTER PLAN

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ADOPTED May 26, 2021





**EL PASO COUNTY**  
  
**COLORADO**

COMMISSIONERS:  
STAN VANDERWERF (CHAIR)  
CAMI BREMER (VICE-CHAIR)

LONGINOS GONZALEZ, JR.  
HOLLY WILLIAMS  
CARRIE GEITNER

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
CRAIG DOSSEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I hereby certify that the El Paso County Planning Commission, on May 26, 2021, approved and duly adopted the enclosed and referenced version of the Your El Paso Master Plan (MP-21-001), which is a duly adopted as the Master Plan of El Paso County, Colorado. Prior versions of the Policy Plan, Small Area Plans, and Sketch Plans (which amended the Master Plan) have now been replaced with Your El Paso Master Plan. Previously adopted Master Plan Topical Elements and Drainage Basin Plans which were approved as an amendment to the Master Plan remain in effect.



Tracey Garcia, Executive Assistant  
Secretary, El Paso County Planning Commission



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Special Thanks to the El Paso County Community

A special thanks goes to everyone who participated in the planning process for the *Your El Paso Master Plan*. This Plan was made possible by the contributions and insights of the residents, business owners, property owners, and representatives from various group and organizations.



Technical assistance provide by:



# 1

## *Inside this Chapter*

*What is a Master Plan? (page 3)*

*A More Comprehensive and Coordinated Approach to Planning (page 3)*

*Key Planning Considerations (page 4)*

# INTRODUCTION

As one of the most desirable places to live in the United States, El Paso County is experiencing unprecedented growth, and is expected to increase in population by more than 250,000 people in the next 30 years. With such anticipated growth, there is a need to plan to guide that growth. From the mountainous landscapes of Colorado's Front Range and the rolling plains that stretch to the horizon, to the beautiful Black Forest and the Paint Mines Interpretive Park, El Paso County is comprised of some of the most amazing natural landscapes in North America. This Master Plan champions El Paso County as a great place to live and establishes a shared vision for the future.

El Paso County is vast, covering an area greater than 2,100 square miles, roughly the size of Delaware. Within the County, urban neighborhoods, agricultural lands, rural communities, and pristine natural areas create a mosaic that collectively represents the diversity of environments in El Paso County. Together, with areas devoted to commerce, industry, and military installations, El Paso County has the essential elements to build up and help ensure a bright and prosperous future that reflects community values and priorities.

Thousands of residents and stakeholders were engaged in the planning process to ensure the Master Plan reflects the aspirations of the community and to make sure issues and concerns deemed most important were addressed. This Plan reflects the input of County residents and stakeholders, which served as the foundation for plan recommendations and policies.

Finally, the Master Plan seeks to balance conservation with new growth and development and recognizes the absolute importance of being good stewards of the natural environment. This Plan addresses some very important questions: Where will people live? Where will people work? What areas are likely to develop and what areas are likely to stay the same? How will we protect valued habitat and environmental areas? How will people get around? How do we make sure we provide the services and infrastructure people and businesses depend on? How can El Paso County truly grow responsibly?

*Your El Paso Master Plan* is a policy guide needed to answer these questions and serve as a foundation to help lead vision-driven decision-making for the next 20 years. While population projections used throughout the Master Plan are for 30 years, the Plan itself is expected to be updated regularly and replaced after 20 years.



## What is a Master Plan?

In the State of Colorado, counties are provided the opportunity to develop and adopt a master plan per state statute C.R.S. 30-28-106. The Master Plan establishes the vision for the County's future based on the needs of the current population and anticipated growth over the next 20 years.

It also provides the strategies needed to achieve that vision as growth and change occurs. The Plan is comprehensive both in scale and scope, influencing the entire County with recommendations related to a range of topics including land use, housing, infrastructure, transportation, recreation and open space, conservation, tourism, community facilities, and more. The Plan provides the framework for regulatory tools like zoning, subdivision regulations, annexations, 1041 and utility permits, and other County policies. *Your El Paso Master Plan* promotes the community's vision, goals, objectives, and policies; establishes a process for orderly growth and development; addresses both current and long-term needs; and provides for a balance between the natural and built environment.

## Using the New Master Plan

*Your El Paso Master Plan* is general in nature—it cannot tackle every issue in sufficient detail to determine every type of necessary action. The Plan's intent is to identify key areas of focus, define a vision for future growth and development, and provide guidance for County actions and investments over the next 20 years. In areas where more detailed information and recommendations are needed, the plan may identify additional steps or actions to address those needs. The Plan serves to assist with the following key functions:

### ***Telling El Paso County's Story & Sharing Its Vision***

Serves as a powerful statement of the County's vision for how it grows and changes in the coming years. The Plan identifies the County's priorities and charts a path for the County's long-term growth.

### ***Evaluating & Informing Development Proposals***

Guides and assists in the evaluation of public and private development proposals and help ensure that proposed developments support the County's long-term objectives.

### ***Establishing a Regulatory Framework***

Serves as a foundation to assist with zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, the official zoning map, flood hazard regulations, annexation decisions and other decisions guided by these regulations. Amendments to these regulations are made as needed to support the long-term objectives of the Plan.

### ***Coordinating Regional & Local Initiatives***

Coordinates with regional and local planning initiatives as well as aids and informs efforts related to housing, transportation, economic development, trails, water and natural resources, annexation, conservation and more.

### ***Informing CIP & Budgeting***

Informs the development of the County's capital improvement program and budgeting process and helps establish priority expenditures and the sequence of capital improvement programming.

### ***Identifying Future Studies***

Establishes a path forward but cannot address every issue in sufficient detail. It helps identify additional studies and future action steps to address specific needs.

### ***Informing & Educating***

Acts as a valuable source of information for policy makers, local boards and commissions, organizations, developers, businesses, and residents to assist with future initiatives and improve coordination.

## A More Comprehensive and Coordinated Approach to Planning

The comprehensive and coordinated process used to develop *Your El Paso Master Plan* is intended to provide clearer and more coordinated policy, resulting in a document that effectively communicates County goals and identifies specific actions to achieve both County-wide and local area objectives. In the past, rather than incorporating local policies into a broader, unified framework, long-range County-wide planning efforts were viewed as secondary to multiple local area plans. Rather than providing clarity, coordination, and aiding in decision-making, the past approach of multiple standalone plans contributed to unnecessary complexity and planning inconsistency across the County.

As a foundation for enacting plan-based development regulations, such as zoning and land use standards, the County must have an adopted County-wide Master Plan in place. The value of a Master Plan cannot be understated, and the benefit multiplies when the document is used to guide the policies, regulations, and projects that will impact the County, its residents, and the natural environment.

This Master Plan was developed to create one comprehensive strategy for the County moving forward. Therefore, it will be replacing many existing documents including the 1988 El Paso County Policy Plan and the Small Area Plans. *Your El Paso Master Plan* is a broadly-focused document by design and it cannot encapsulate every planning component at every necessary level of detail. The complete list of documents being retained and replaced can be found in Appendix form, which will be available on the County Website. Many recent planning efforts remain relevant and were used to inform development of this Master Plan. While pertinent information is being utilized, not all of these documents are being formally adopted as part of *Your El Paso Master Plan*. Some of these key documents include:

- 2013 El Paso County Parks Master Plan
- 2016 Emergency Operations Plan
- 2016 Major Transportation Corridors Plan
- 2017 Health Indicators Report
- 2018 Community Health Improvement Plan
- 2018 Water Master Plan
- 2019 Broadband Strategic Plan
- 2019 Joint Land Use Study
- 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan

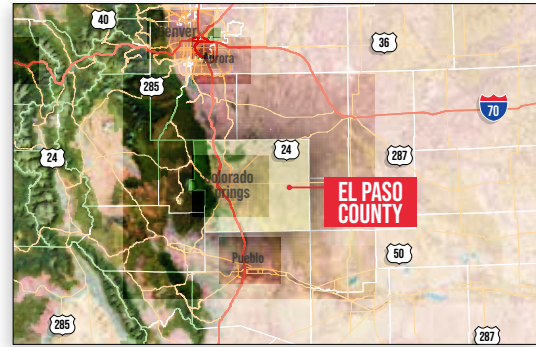
# KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the planning process, several key considerations, factors, and influences were identified that significantly informed the development and content of *Your El Paso Master Plan*. These components reflect the feedback received from thousands of residents and stakeholders, are influences identified through market research and analysis, and are grounded in the existing conditions which provide the context in which the County must plan. Collectively, these considerations informed and influenced the development of the Master Plan. The key planning considerations that provided the context for development of the Master Plan are identified below and presented in greater detail on the following pages:



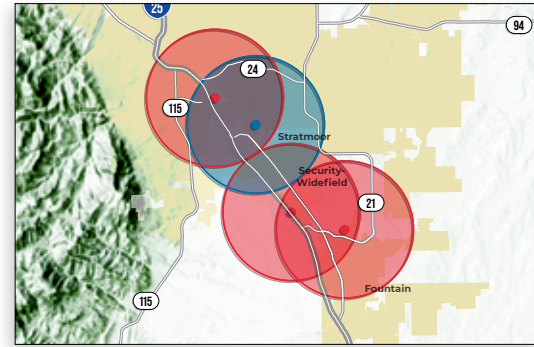
## Community Engagement and Feedback (page 5)

Understanding the concerns and aspirations of County residents and stakeholders is an essential first step and key planning consideration, as is obtaining public feedback when planning concepts and recommendations are being developed.



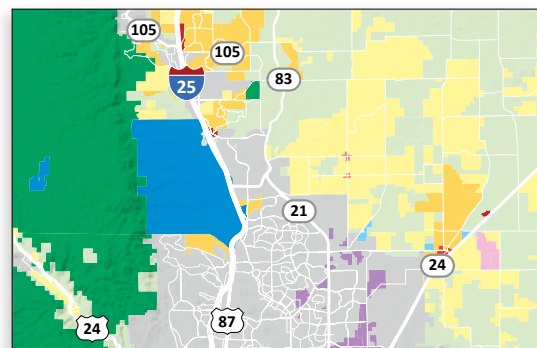
## Regional Context (page 6)

The County's overall location and context is a key planning consideration as it plays an essential role in market and trade areas, natural resources and environmental conditions, transportation facilities and regional network access, jurisdiction and regional partners, and more.



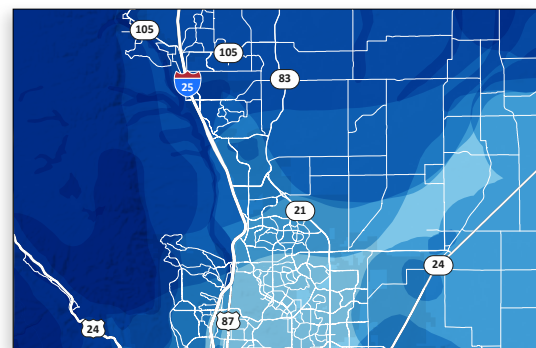
## Multijurisdictional Context (page 7)

County planning must incorporate as a key consideration the multiple jurisdictions that exist within El Paso County, including municipalities and military installations whose land use, development, and activities have the potential to significantly influence surrounding and nearby areas.



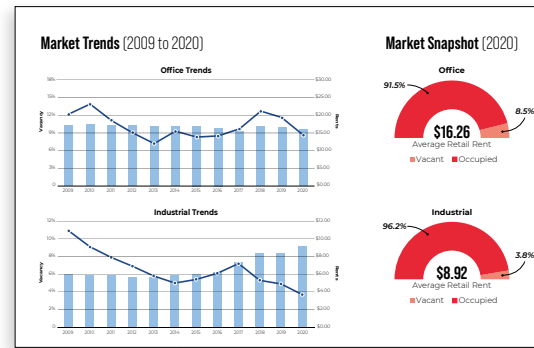
## Existing Land Use (page 8)

Existing land use and development is the primary key planning consideration when undertaking development of a master plan. The existing pattern of development serves as the starting point for the development of future long-range planning recommendations.



## Environmental Conservation (page 9)

Reinforced at every step throughout the process was the notion that the natural environment was the most important consideration when planning for the future of the County. Environmental conservation is a value that is carried throughout the Master Plan.



## Demographic and Market Snapshot (page 10)

A firm and accurate understanding of demographic and market conditions is a key planning consideration and is essential to forming a sound foundation upon which to plan, helping to ensure planning recommendations are grounded in market realities.

## Planning Process

*Your El Paso Master Plan* was created by the following multi-step planning process to both fulfill the Colorado statutory requirements and meet El Paso County's community objectives. The process resulted in the creation of a modern, cohesive, and community-driven plan, which will serve as an advisory document for decision-making for years to come. The planning process included the following steps:

### Step 1: Project Initiation

Initiation meetings were held with County Planning and Community Development Department staff and other County department heads, Board of County Commissioners, Planning Commission, and the specially appointed Master Plan Advisory Committee.

### Step 2: Community Outreach and Engagement

Citizen participation included diverse public engagement opportunities, with events held at various locations around the County, and included in-person and web-based engagement.

### Step 3: Market & Demographic Analysis

A market, demographic, and housing analysis was undertaken, assessing information related to population; housing; and a broad assessment of retail, office, and industrial market conditions.

### Step 4: Existing Conditions Analysis

An analysis was undertaken of the County's past studies, plans, and reports; current zoning and development controls; existing land use and development; public facilities; infrastructure; transportation; recreation options; and other considerations.

### Step 5: Vision & Goals

The vision and goals were created during this step with input and guidance from the Advisory Committee and comments from the public.

### Step 6: Placetypes & Key Plan Components

"Placetypes" identified for specific areas provide the foundation for land use and development character. Key elements of the plan were also initially identified at this step to provide structure for upcoming draft plan chapters.

### Step 7: County-Wide Plans & Policies

The preliminary draft plans were developed for each key plan component that reflected community input and all previous steps and activities in the planning process.

### Step 8: Implementation

Implementation actions required to carry out the new Master Plan were identified, including an action agenda, which identified the key projects and actions to be undertaken, roles and responsibilities, strategic partnerships, funding, timing, and more.

### Step 9: Plan Document & Adoption

Based on the previous steps, the draft and final versions of the Master Plan were prepared for local review, consideration, Board of County Commissioners certification, and Planning Commission adoption.

# KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATION COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK



## Overview

An extensive community outreach process was conducted for *Your El Paso Master Plan* beginning in March 2019 and continuing throughout the plan making process. Engagement was divided into three phases: 1) issues and opportunities identification, 2) visioning, and 3) placetypes. Initial outreach generated input about existing issues and opportunities within the County; the visioning process identified direction for the County's future; and the placetypes engagement allowed community members to provide feedback regarding the location and character of the future placetypes. Additionally, community feedback was obtained as the draft plan was developed and considered. Over 3,800 residents and stakeholders were engaged in the project through a combination of in-person events and online/web-based formats. This outreach generated a wealth of comments and public feedback from residents and stakeholders across the County and identified important issues, concerns, opportunities and actions to be addressed in the Master Plan.

## In-Person Outreach

In-person outreach included three community workshops, three business workshops, nine local area workshops, and a series of visioning workshops held at multiple venues across the County. The County's planning staff also manned a booth at the 2019 El Paso County Fair from July 13th through the 20th to collect youth and adult questionnaires and introduce fair attendees to the Master Plan project. Key person interviews and focus group discussions produced conversations on a variety of topics such as economic development, regional transportation, residential development, military compatibility, utilities, land conservation, natural resources, and emergency services. Additionally, the Existing Conditions Report and Master Plan were presented in various stages to a variety of stakeholder organizations including the Board of County Commissioners, Planning Commission, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations, Housing and Building Association, and more.

## Online Outreach

Online engagement included an interactive project website, online questionnaires for residents and business owners, and map.social—an online community issues mapping tool. El Paso County staff also promoted specific engagement events and online materials to the community through social media, advertisements in digital and hard copy formats, and press releases.

## Key Outreach Themes

Key themes from in-person and online outreach revolved around the following issues, concerns, and projects:

- **Transportation**, congestion, and traffic safety, especially around schools and key intersections
- Preserving open space, parks, trails, **recreation** and natural feature assets
- Maintaining the **established character** of unique areas throughout the County while effectively accommodating and managing growth;
- Increasing workforce development and **employment opportunities**, training the next generation of workforce
- Need to expand and diversify the **employment base**
- Enhancing the **natural beauty** and rural character of the region by protecting clean areas and native wildlife habitats.
- Connecting and expanding the County's **trail system**
- Increasing availability of **commercial** spaces
- Lack of **affordable housing** and a diverse housing stock
- Balancing development with **utilities and services**, especially water access
- Maintaining the existing **infrastructure**
- Sustainable management of **natural resources**

## Engaging the Community

# +3,800

residents and stakeholders were engaged in the project through both in-person and online formats



### 50

Focus Group Participants

### 100

Placetype Engagement Participants

### 25

Business Workshop Participants

### 103

Business Questionnaires Completed

### 49

County Fair Participants

### 59

Community Workshop Participants

### 100

Visioning Workshop Participants

### 176

Local Area Workshop Participants

### 3,134

Resident Questionnaires Completed



## KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATION REGIONAL CONTEXT

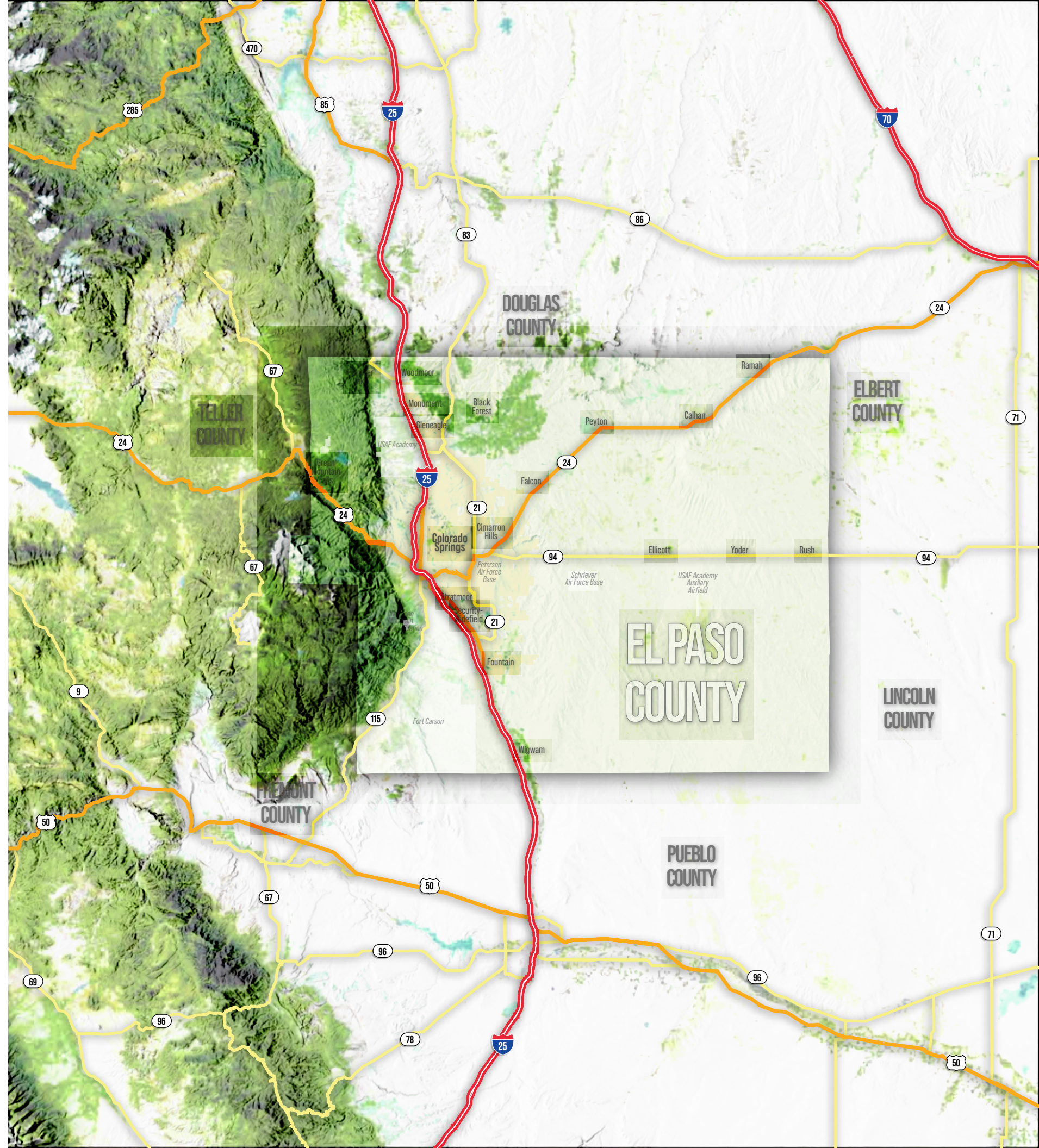
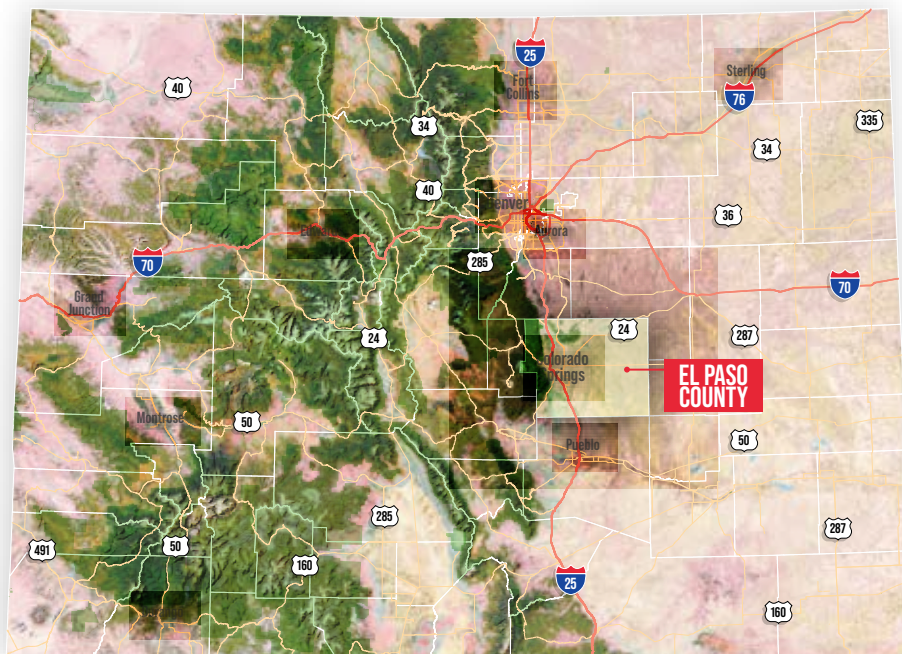
El Paso County is 2,130 square miles in area and is located in central Colorado approximately 50 miles south of Denver. El Paso County is bordered by Douglas County and Elbert County to the north, Lincoln County to the east, Pueblo County to the south, and Teller and Fremont Counties to the west. The Front Range of the Southern Rocky Mountains runs along the western edge of the County and features Pikes Peak, the highest summit of the southern Front Range at 14,115 feet in elevation.

The County is served by the regional transportation network, with Interstate 25 running north and south through the western portion of the County, near the eastern edge of the Front Range. The County is further connected to the region and state via US 24 and State Highways 83, 94, and 115. The Colorado Springs Municipal Airport (COS) is conveniently located in the southeastern part of the City of Colorado Springs and provides daily flights to and from destinations across the country.

Military installations in El Paso County include Fort Carson Army Post, the US Air Force Academy, Peterson and Schriever Air Force Bases, and Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station.

El Paso County has the second highest County population in Colorado, second only to Denver County which has approximately 3,500 more residents (per U.S. Census 2018 population estimates). El Paso County contains eight incorporated communities, which account for approximately 73 percent (524,980 residents) of the County's total population. Unincorporated areas in El Paso County have an estimated population of approximately 195,423 residents.

- Colorado Springs – 478,215
- Fountain – 29,784
- Monument – 7,398
- Manitou Springs – 5,283
- Palmer Lake – 2,887
- Calhan – 704
- Green Mountain Falls – 563
- Ramah – 146



## KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATION

# MULTIJURISDICTIONAL PLANNING

While not under the County's jurisdiction, incorporated areas are critical to its planning efforts. Work done by municipalities affect planning in the County and vice versa. The same is also true for the military installations. Without coordination, a decision by one jurisdiction could positively or negatively impact another adjacent jurisdiction or all of them, depending on the size and scale. It is imperative that the Master Plan not only acknowledge this influence, but also plan for it. Therefore, a key consideration in developing the Master Plan was coordinating and integrating the activities and conditions in other jurisdictions within the County, including those components primarily related to annexation, infrastructure, and land use and development.

## Annexation

Under the 1965 Municipal Annexation Act, annexation can occur in three ways: 1) land-owner petitions, 2) annexation election, and 3) unilateral annexation of an enclave or municipally owned land. The first is most common and requires more than 50 percent of landowners to vote to approve annexation. The second allows registered electors to vote toward incorporation. The third can occur when a specific area is surrounded by or solely owned by the annexing municipality. For any of the options to be eligible, a one-sixth boundary contiguity must exist, meaning at least one-sixth of the annexation area must touch the existing municipal boundary. However, if a property is solely owned by the annexing municipality, the property does not have to touch any part of the existing municipal boundary to be annexed.

Given the impacts municipal development can have on unincorporated areas and the importance of infrastructure in the success of development, annexation is a key factor for growth accommodation in the region. Utilities, infrastructure, and public facilities are easier to manage, maintain, and access in a municipality. While growth in unincorporated areas is necessary, areas with annexation potential should be considered. Future development should plan for annexation wherever appropriate, especially in established enclaves that would benefit from municipal services.

## Use of Infrastructure

Infrastructure is one of the most common delineators between unincorporated and incorporated areas of the County. Because municipal infrastructure is more readily available and typically better funded, urban level development should be focused in existing urbanized areas, such as within incorporated municipalities.

## Roads

The County maintains over 2,326 paved and 2,083 gravel lane miles of roads. Despite the extensive road network paid for by the County, the highest volume of users is not unincorporated area residents. While residents of unincorporated areas also utilize municipal owned/maintained roads, the lack of funding for County roads makes the former a more significant issue. Increased traffic resulting from new development will further strain resources devoted to providing and maintaining County roads. The location and type of new development are crucial to minimizing unnecessary travel and wear and tear on County roads. New development should be located to take advantage of existing roadways and provide options for homes, employment, commerce, and services in relatively close proximity. This results in less travel on County roads, preventing premature road degradation.

## Water

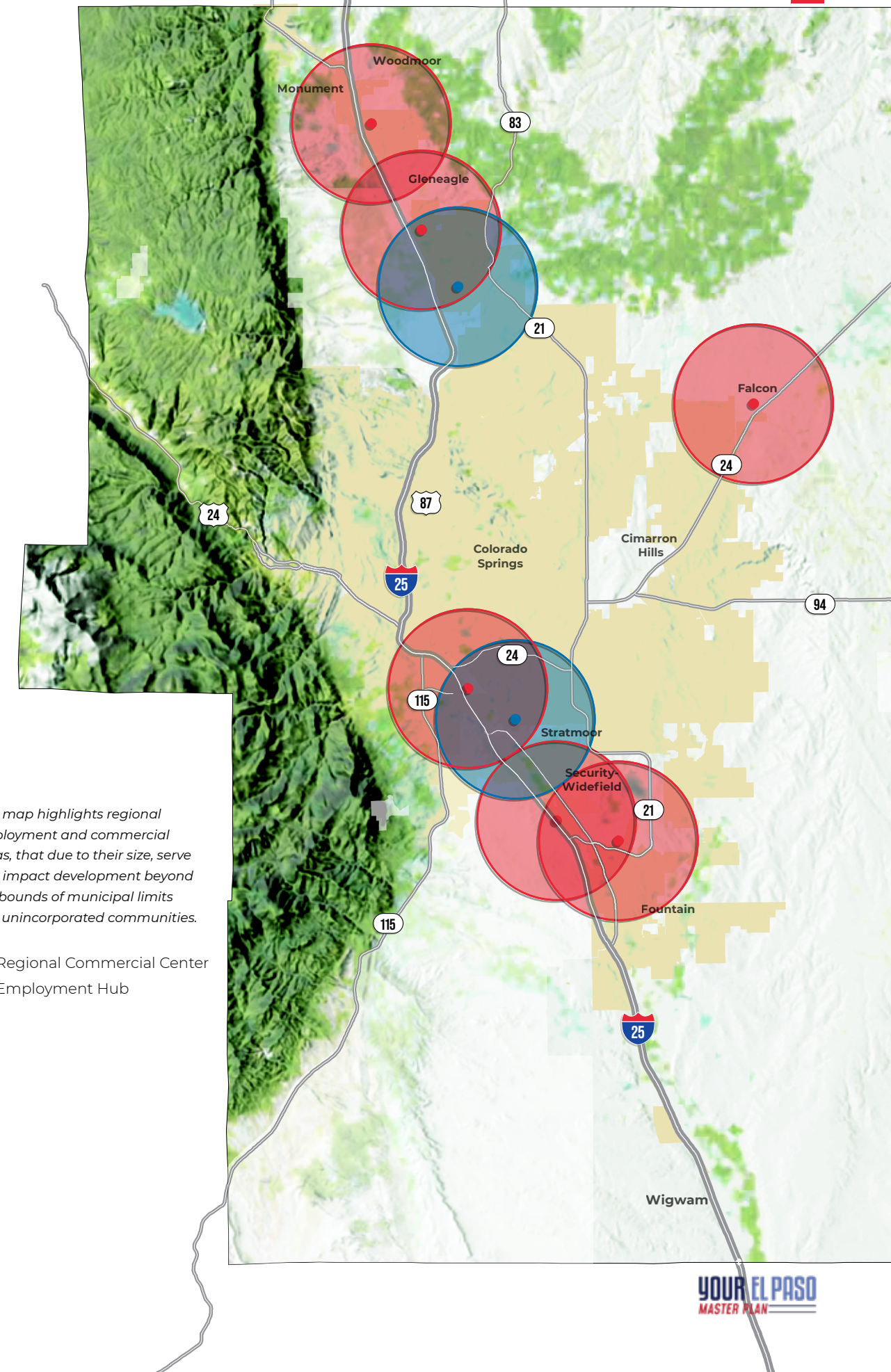
Water availability and quality are among the biggest issues facing the County while planning for additional growth. Ensuring the infrastructure necessary to deliver water resources and maintain water quality is imperative to all future planning efforts. The complexity of this issue is further exacerbated by the number of organizations that provide water services in the County. One of these types of organizations is a Special District, which is a separate, quasi-governmental entity. The number of Special Districts and the ease with which they can be established has made water planning more challenging in parts of the County. Colorado Springs Utilities also provides services to some unincorporated areas that are directly adjacent to City.

## Municipal Land Use & Development Character

City boundaries do not limit development or its impact on surrounding unincorporated areas. The impact of municipal development can significantly impact nearby unincorporated areas in many ways, including traffic patterns, traffic volume, development potential, overall character, strain on resources, and more. For example, a regional commercial center in Colorado Springs can capture a large portion of the potential customers in adjacent unincorporated areas, thus significantly limiting the likelihood of similar commercial development in nearby areas of the County. Proximity to municipal development is a consideration for County planning.

## Access to Regional Commercial Centers & Employment Hubs

Planning efforts within municipalities, particularly on the edges, affects development patterns in the adjacent and nearby unincorporated areas. This requires direct coordination and collaboration between the municipalities and the County to ensure compatibility of adjacent uses and cohesion between the different jurisdictions. **Your El Paso Master Plan** recognizes development can affect areas beyond the boundary of the municipality and beyond the development property. Many of the larger commercial and employment areas within the County are located within municipal limits and require unincorporated residents to travel considerable distances for work, goods and services. For example, residents in the northern part of the County may travel to the Tri-Lakes area to visit the shopping center on Jackson Creek Parkway. Residents from across the county commute to Colorado Springs every day for work. In addition, more dense urban development on the fringe of Colorado Springs spills over into the County and creates areas like Cimarron Hills. Municipal development directly effects development potential and decisions for the unincorporated areas and impacts the daily travel patterns of County residents.



*This map highlights regional employment and commercial areas, that due to their size, serve and impact development beyond the bounds of municipal limits into unincorporated communities.*

- Regional Commercial Center
- Employment Hub

## KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATION

# EXISTING LAND USE

Existing land use and development patterns are one of the most influential and key planning considerations that sets the context in which planning takes place. This section provides an inventory of the existing patterns of development in unincorporated El Paso County. It is difficult to evaluate all the land uses and development that has occurred within such a large study area—El Paso County covers an area almost as large as the State of Delaware. This task of the planning process was simplified by considering both the existing character and geography of all parts of the County and mapping the 10 existing development types that make up various areas, communities, neighborhoods, and places of El Paso County.

## Rural

The Rural landscape covers most of the eastern portion of the County and just over fifty percent of the total County land area. The character of these areas is generally rural, remote, or distant from high activity and higher density areas. Rural El Paso County exists in the mountainous or hilly areas to the west, southwest, and south, surrounded by forested federal land or state-owned parks or preserves, and in the rolling plains to the east, with irrigated crop lands, or grazing lands used for agricultural production. Rural areas also provide farm homesteads and large single-family estates on substantially sized parcels. Residential parcels in Rural areas average approximately 34 acres.

## Rural Center

A Rural Center contains a mix of residential and limited commercial development along main streets and include opportunities for uses such as convenience stores, coffee shops, and restaurants. Rural Centers are surrounded by Rural areas or Large-Lot or Ranchette Development and include places like Black Forest (along Black Forest Road), Peyton, Calhan, Ellicott, Yoder, and Rush.

## Managed Lands & Military

Managed Lands are federal, state, or local government-owned properties that cover large areas. These areas as shown do not represent all government holdings in the County, however they include the most prominent, expansive areas, including military installations, like Fort Carson and the US Air Force Academy, other large rural tracts, park lands, and conservation areas.

## Large Lots or Ranchettes

Large Lot or Ranchette Development, sometimes called Rural Suburban Development, covers almost three times the land area in El Paso County in comparison to the smaller-lot Suburban Development. They are typically located between suburban and rural areas and vary in character based on geography and landscape. These areas have a median lot size of approximately 5 acres. Many large-lot development areas rely on wells and septic systems.

## Suburban Development

Suburban Development covers more than 28,000 acres (45 square miles) of land in El Paso County. These areas are located close to Colorado Springs, Monument, Palmer Lake, or Fountain, and include development in places like Falcon, Gleneagle, Woodmoor, Security-Widefield, and Stratmoor. The character of Suburban Development is predominantly residential in the form of subdivisions with smaller lots and curvilinear streets, with some County areas being difficult to distinguish from suburban development within city limits.

## Employment & Transportation Hub

Employment areas are comprised of land for industrial or other business uses. They are primarily located near I-25 or other highway or arterial road corridors. An example of an Employment Area is Meadow Lake Airport, a private airport located east of Falcon, and other adjacent properties.

## Mixed-Use Center

Mixed-Use Centers are focused along main points of access to I-25 in the northern areas. These include centers at Gleneagle (Exit 156) and Woodmoor (Exit 161). The mix of uses contained in these high-activity areas include commercial services, restaurants, banks, gas stations, park-and-rides, apartments and townhomes, and institutional uses, like high schools and libraries.

## Regional Center

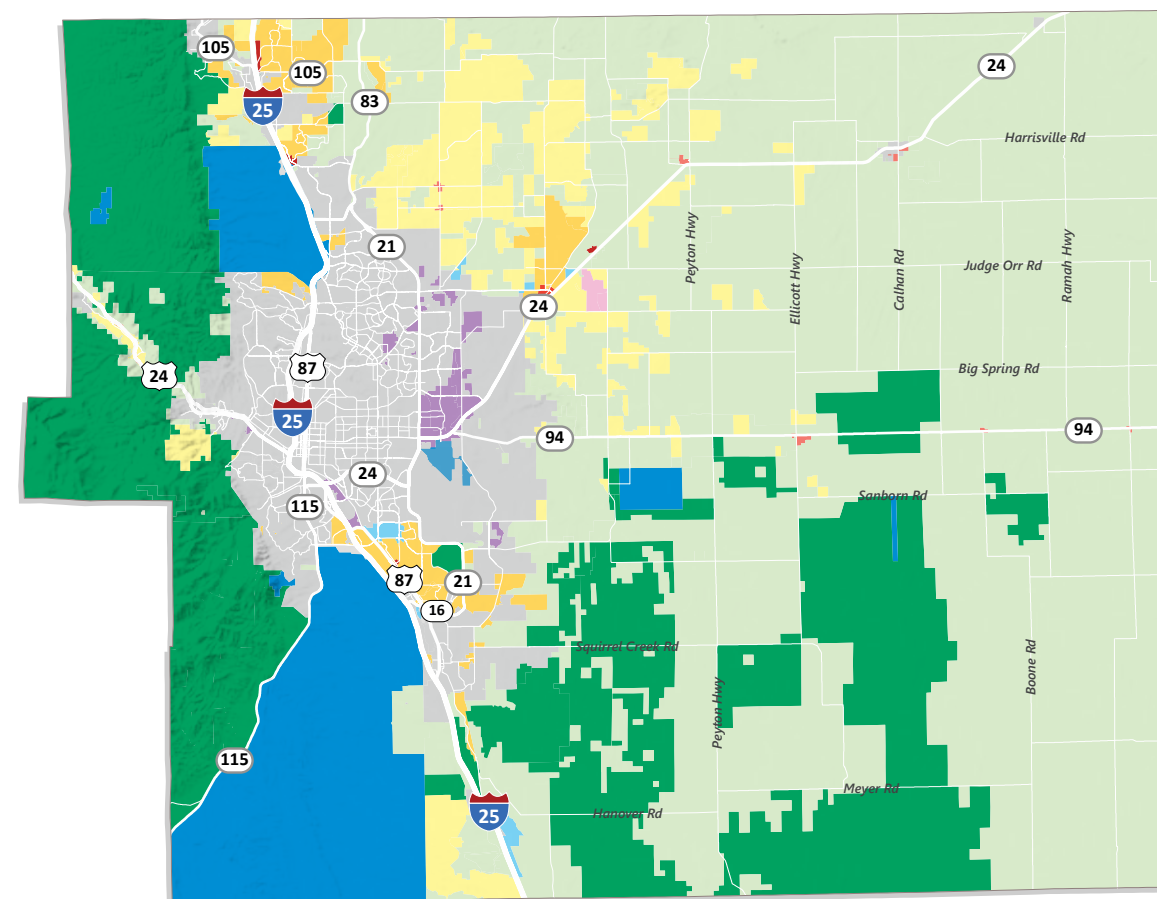
A Regional Center is located in the heart of Falcon and features a unique mix of uses for the County. Falcon's Regional Center is a major commercial destination for residents in the Falcon-Peyton region, and communities farther to the east. The area differs from other communities' Mixed-Use or Rural Centers by providing a level of goods and services that attracts people from across the rural region such as restaurants, entertainment, retail, commercial services, grocery stores, libraries, and post offices.

## Urban Enclave

Within the County's Incorporated Areas, there are enclaves of developed and undeveloped land that remain unincorporated, although they are surrounded on all sides by the City of Colorado Springs and give the sense that it is part of the City. These unincorporated pockets include the area of Cimarron Hills, Northeast Colorado Springs, and Southeast Colorado Springs near Stratmoor. These enclaves are primarily residential but also feature a mix of uses including residential, commercial, institutional, or industrial.

## Incorporated Area

Incorporated Areas are the lands within the boundaries of the eight incorporated cities and towns in El Paso County, the largest of which is the City of Colorado Springs, and the smallest of which is the Town of Ramah in the northeast corner of the County.



### Existing Land Use

<span style="color: #c8e6c9;">■</span> Rural	<span style="color: #e57373;">■</span> Rural Center	<span style="color: #9c27b0;">■</span> Urban Enclave
<span style="color: #43a047;">■</span> Managed Lands	<span style="color: #c0392b;">■</span> Regional Center	<span style="color: #007bff;">■</span> Military
<span style="color: #fff9c4;">■</span> Large Lots or Ranchettes	<span style="color: #8d6e63;">■</span> Mixed-Use Center	<span style="color: #f4cccc;">■</span> Transportation Hub
<span style="color: #ffcc99;">■</span> Suburban Development	<span style="color: #add8e6;">■</span> Employment	<span style="color: #cccccc;">■</span> Incorporated Area

## KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATION

# ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

A key component of El Paso County's character, and arguably the most prominent, is the natural environment. As such, the natural environment should be protected and bolstered wherever possible. If trends continue, El Paso County will surpass one million people by 2050. This population influx is a significant impact to contend with over the next 30 years and requires diligent planning to ensure the maintenance and support of the County's desired character. The natural environment is an essential planning consideration and several approaches to protecting it, enhancing it, and valuing it have been incorporated throughout *Your El Paso Master Plan*. Highlighted below are some of the primary reasons the natural environment is such an important planning consideration.

## Development Influence

The natural environment will help shape development going forward. Accommodating the County's significant growth will not be easy, particularly when paired with the desire to protect open space and undeveloped land. By employing conservation design standards for new development, the County can balance development with environmental stewardship and protect valued areas and habitats. Regardless of the type or location of development, conservation design principles should be used to inform, evaluate, and guide new development to ensure best practices are being utilized on an incremental basis to safeguard the environment and protect open space and environmental features.

## Wildlife Habitat

There are eight threatened species in El Paso County, and together with hundreds of other nonthreatened species, whose valued habitats cover nearly the entire County. While some areas of the County are considered higher value for the habitat they provide and the biodiversity they support, areas of valuable wildlife habitat exist throughout the County. For instance, parts of the northern riparian areas are home to the federally threatened Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse. Two creeks along Pikes Peak are the only remaining waterways for the Greenback Cutthroat Trout, Colorado's state fish. Forests in the southwestern portion of the County are also home to the Mexican Spotted Owl, another federally threatened species. These are just some of the endangered animals that make their home in El Paso County.

## Water Ecosystems & Habitats

Riparian corridors, wetlands, floodways, and aquifer recharge areas all serve a vital role in the County's vital ecosystem and need protecting. Riparian corridors and wetlands support native vegetation growth and replenish groundwater sources. The plants that thrive within these areas can protect groundwater from contaminants and excess nutrients in the soil. Watershed planning and flood control management help protect developed areas from the impacts of natural hazards and prohibiting development in a floodplain reduces the likelihood of flooding events. With water quality and access being a priority throughout the County, prohibiting development in these locations can be critical.

## Environmental Tourism

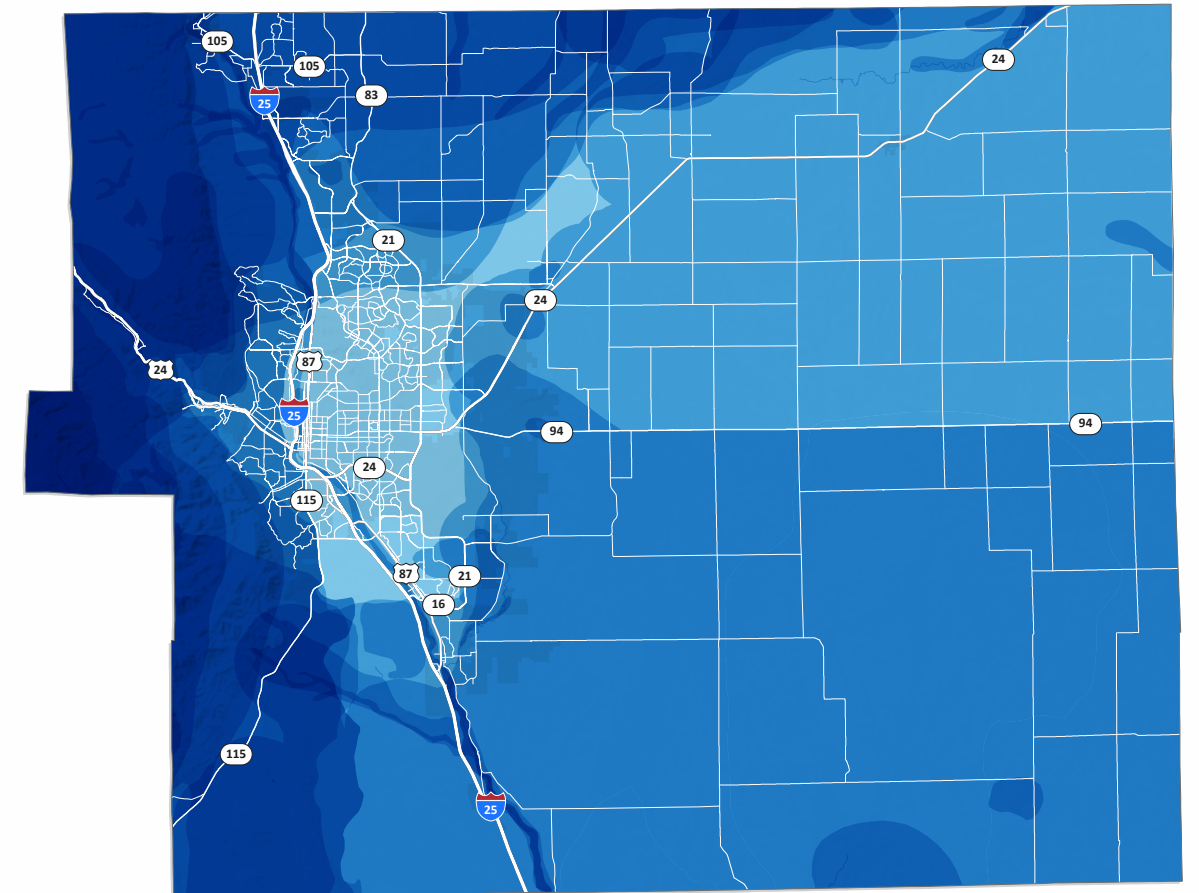
Home to Pikes Peak, Cheyenne Mountain State Park, thousands of miles of trails, and much more, El Paso County is a national destination for outdoor recreation. Each year, hundreds of thousands of people visit the County from all around the world to spend time in its state and regional parks, hike its mountains, and simply enjoy the beauty of its natural, well-protected landscape. These visitors contribute millions of dollars to the local economy through dining, lodging, transportation, retail, and entertainment. As a catalyst for tourism in El Paso County, emphasizing the natural environment is important.

## Sense of Place

The abundance of open space, lush forests, and mountainous topography is interwoven seamlessly with residential development in many areas of the County. This direct connection to the natural environment is one of the greatest attractions for future residents and businesses. However, the prevalence of natural amenities throughout El Paso County does not negate the need to preserve and protect them. In fact, protecting the environment and maintaining its integration as the County grows and develops is essential to keeping El Paso County a beautiful and unique place.

## Recreation

El Paso County's natural environment creates opportunities for year-round active and passive recreation. These amenities provide options for exercise such as hiking the mountains, biking on the trails, or simply by spending time in nature, watching animals in their natural habitat, studying and identifying plants, or just taking a rest. No matter how someone chooses to recreate, in El Paso County the natural environments and the parks, trails, and open spaces are vital to the County's quality and healthy and active lifestyle.



## Wildlife Habitat

The blue color represents overall habitat ranges for animal species in El Paso County. The darker the blue, the more animals consider that area home.

# KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATION DEMOGRAPHIC & MARKET SNAPSHOT

## Demographics

A firm and accurate understanding of demographic trends and conditions is a key planning consideration and is essential to forming a sound foundation upon which to plan. This section provides key takeaways of the basic demographic characteristics of El Paso County, utilizing the most relevant data sources. For detailed analysis and findings please see the Existing Conditions Report on file with the County.

## Population

El Paso County is the second-most populous County in Colorado. The County accounts for 12.5 percent of the State's total population, slightly up from 12 percent in 2000. El Paso County's population has experienced significant growth since 1940, increasing by an average of over 74,200 residents every decade between 1940 and 2010 with an uptick in over 80,000 residents between 2010 and 2017.

El Paso County is projected to reach nearly one million people by 2050, an increase of 256,000 from 2019. While some of the projected growth can be accommodated in Colorado Springs and potentially other annexed areas, many of the new residents will be in unincorporated County areas, which will need to be effectively planned for in order to prevent overburdening the County's services and infrastructure.

## Age Distribution

El Paso County's population has experienced a shift from younger to older overall from 2010-2019, with the under 20 age group declining by eight percent and the 65 and older (senior) group growing by six percent. Since 2010 the 20-34 age group (young professionals) has grown significantly.

Projected through 2050, the senior group is expected to experience the greatest annual growth, which is likely correlated to the continued in-migration of older residents as well as more existing residents aging. Inverse to the last decade, the 20-34 age group in El Paso County is projected to experience the smallest growth, that is less than 0.5 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) through 2050.

## Household Income

El Paso County's median household income (\$62,535) has grown by 11 percent between 2010 and 2017, exceeding the 2017 inflation rate of 2.13 percent. The County's median income is close to the overall median income for the State as well.

Since 2010, El Paso County has experienced its greatest growth in households with annual incomes greater than \$150,000. El Paso County is becoming increasingly more attractive to higher-income households and existing households are experiencing increases in their incomes. Projections through 2050 indicate that these trends will continue in El Paso County with increases expected only in households earning incomes greater than \$74,999.

## Employment

El Paso County maintains a diverse economy with significant employers in a wide range of sectors and no single industry accounting for a majority of the County's employment base. Total employment in El Paso County has steadily increased since 2010 and now significantly exceeds pre-2008 recession levels. The majority of El Paso County's job gains since 2010 were in four sectors: Health Care and Social Assistance (+11,855 jobs), Accommodation and Food Services (+2,040 jobs), Construction (+8,432 jobs), and Retail Trade (+6,543 jobs).

Overall, El Paso County is projected to gain 174,578 jobs from 2019-2050, a growth of 41 percent, indicating the continuing strength of the County's economy. Healthcare and Social Assistance sectors are projected to gain the most jobs through 2050 (50,735) as well as remain the largest employment sector in the County (15 percent).

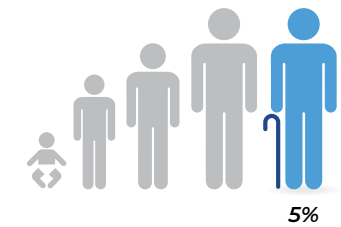
## Unincorporated County

El Paso County current has about 196,000 residents living in its unincorporated area



## An Aging Population

Seniors are projected to see the greatest annual growth through 2050

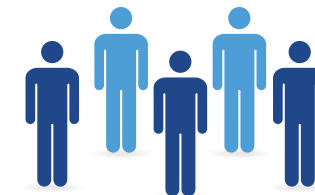


## Steadily Increasing

El Paso County population has increased by an average of

**74,200**

people every decade from 1940 to 2010



## Greater Wealth

Since 2010, El Paso County has experienced its greatest growth in households with annual incomes greater than

**\$150,000**



## A Growing Population

El Paso County is projected to grow by

**256,000**

people by 2050, a 35 percent increase from the current population



## Employment Sectors

In 2010, El Paso County gained jobs in Health and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, Construction, and Retail Trade



**+11,855 jobs**



**+2,040 jobs**



**+8,432 jobs**



**+6,543 jobs**

## Market

The context of a Countywide market assessment is much different than that of a municipality, particularly as it relates to nonresidential uses. Most of the uses and the built environment, as well as a large percentage of demand, are contained within the existing boundaries of cities, towns, and census designated places. The market assessment provides data on El Paso County as a whole, both incorporated and unincorporated areas. Market areas and development potential will be dependent on use and location. Supply and demand within individual market sectors help determine the potential for those markets to emerge or expand in a community. This section presents an analysis of office, industrial, and retail sectors, their existing capacities, and future economic forecasts for each sector. Data for this section is from CoStar, a provider of real estate analytics, for the second quarter (Q2) of 2019 as it was the most recent data available at the time of the analysis. The graphs include data from 2009 to 2020 to acknowledge changes in trends for that year, however this section does not analyze or emphasize data from this year as it is too soon to determine long-term effects. An accurate understanding of market conditions is needed to inform long-range planning recommendations. For detailed analysis and findings please see the Existing Conditions Report on file with the County.

## Office

In the second quarter (Q2) of 2019, El Paso County had an office vacancy rate of 8.8 percent, consistent with the vacancy rate across the entire state. El Paso County's vacancy rate has reached a low not experienced since before the 2008 recession.

This is largely due to greater leasing activity from smaller tenants in existing buildings, particularly in the Black Forest, Gleneagle, Briargate, Falcon, Peyton, and Calhan areas. While rents have fluctuated over the past decade, the County's office market has remained stable. Projected growth in employment in professional services will continue to create demand for quality office space over the next ten to twenty years.

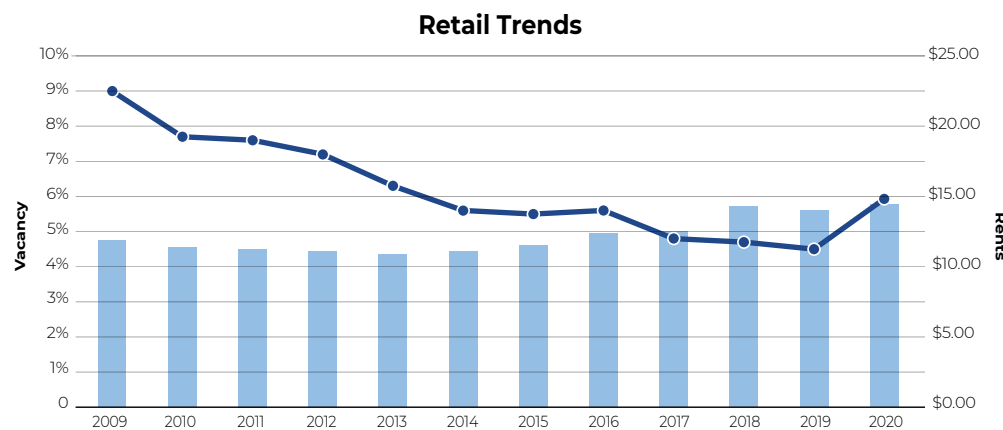
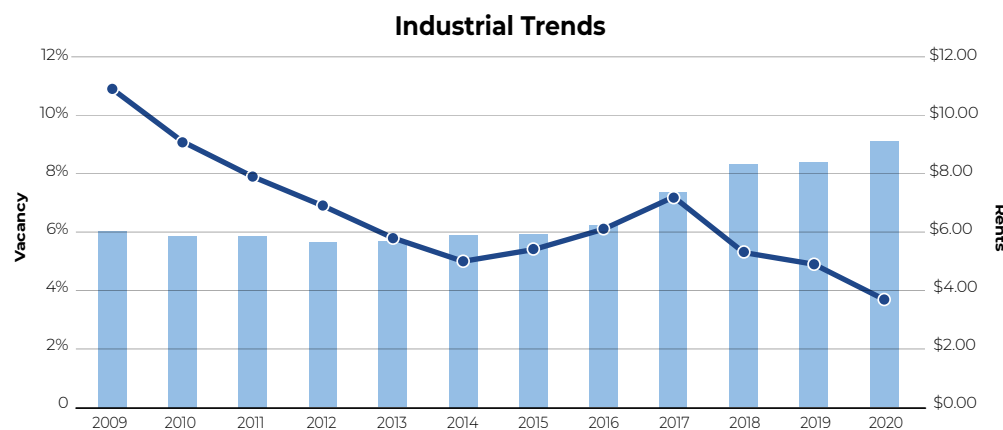
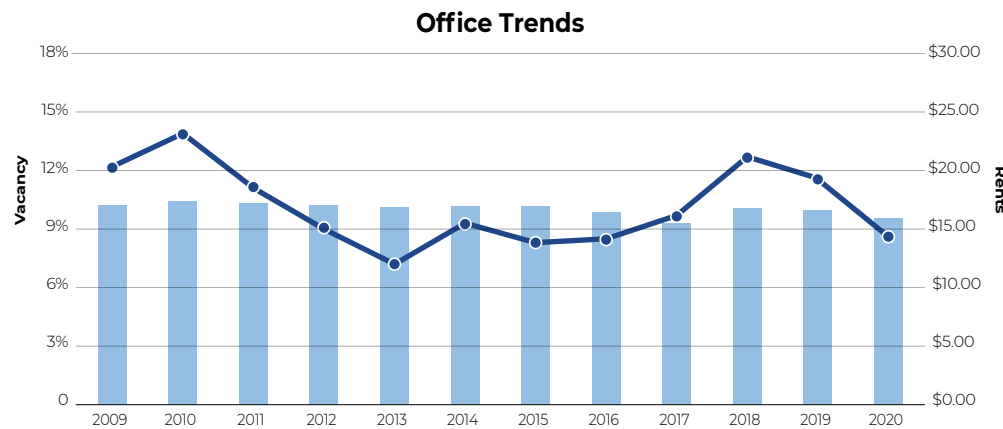
## Industrial

El Paso County has an industrial vacancy rate of 4.9 percent for the second quarter (Q2) of 2019, which is slightly higher than the State's rate (4.5 percent). The County's industrial vacancy rate is at its lowest since before the 2008 recession too. This is due to a number of recent large-scale leases across the County including a 200,000-square-foot building in Fountain Business Park. Steady rent growth in the industrial market combined with sharply declining vacancy rates since 2017 indicate strengthening of the market.

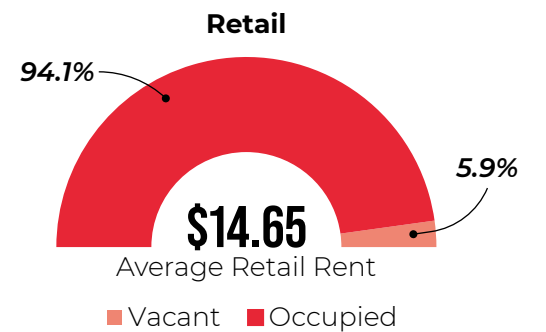
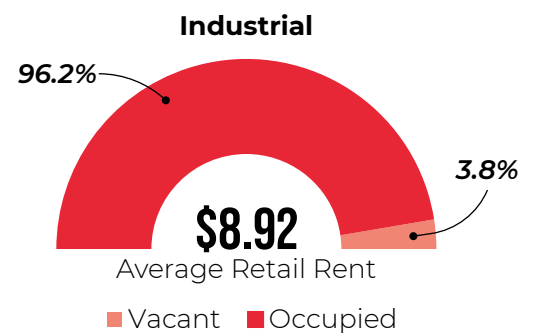
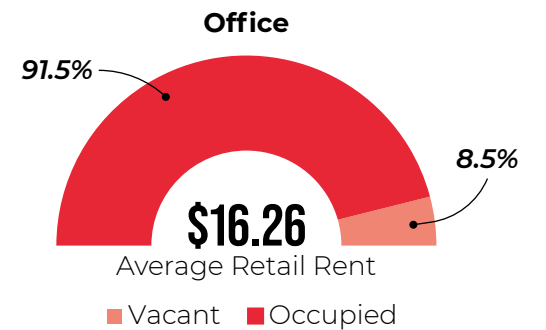
## Retail

El Paso County's retail vacancy rate is 4.5 percent for the second quarter (Q2) of 2019, which is slightly higher than the State's rate (4.4 percent). Even with several significant retailers closing in the County including Whole Foods Market (27,700 square feet) leasing has grown in the County. Average retail rents in El Paso County have increased by 29 percent since 2013. Rent growth and an overall declining vacancy rate since 2009 suggest continual interest in El Paso County's retail market. Recent vacancies of larger properties represent fluctuation in the County which correlate to development changes in the market. However, expansion of existing retail businesses and planned developments still indicate confidence in the overall market.

## Market Trends (2009 to 2020)



## Market Snapshot (2020)



# 2

## Inside this Chapter

Vision (page 13)

Core Principles & Goals (page 14)

# COUNTY VISION

*Your El Paso Master Plan* is an expression of the community's desires for the future of El Paso County. This is outlined by the Plan's vision and further defined through accompanying goals. Together, they provide a flexible guide for decision-making and establish a framework for new projects and policies. For context, it is important to understand the intent of these Plan components and how they work together.

**Vision** - Illustrates what the County can achieve following the adoption of the Master Plan. The narrative is intended to be ambitious and inspirational, depicting the El Paso County community's collective desires, and serving as the foundation for the Plan's goals, policies, and recommendations.

**Core Principles** – Summarize and highlight the importance of high priority planning elements within the Master Plan. These define, at a high level, what recommendations within each chapter ultimately work towards achieving the vision for the County.

**Goals** - Describe desired results toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range and represent an ambition to be sought and require the culmination of many smaller actions in order to be fully achieved. Additional goals from other County plans and studies are referenced in their specific sections throughout this Master Plan.

Together, the vision, core principles, and goals provide specific direction and establish the broad picture of what El Paso County wants to accomplish through this Master Plan. They were developed based upon analysis of existing conditions and public engagement with residents, the business community, military stakeholders, service providers, public officials, and County staff.



## Vision

Projected to grow to nearly one million people by 2050, an increase of nearly 250,000, El Paso County will need to accommodate growth in specific areas of the County while maintaining the special character, unique places, and environmental and natural amenities that have helped define the region. Responsible development is essential and will ensure that key areas grow appropriately and have adequate access to broadband and other services without the unnecessary extension of infrastructure into valued natural areas and parts of the County that cannot support development. This will establish strategic areas of the County as complete communities with the necessary housing, commercial opportunities, and public services to allow current and future residents to experience a high quality of life.

To build off recent regional economic and employment successes, the County will utilize its existing assets to attract new businesses and employees. The continued advancement of established industries like healthcare and the availability of developable land in principal locations will help engage new businesses and capitalize on emerging markets. Regional and national access through the interstate highway system and the Colorado Springs Airport will play a role in anchoring new business development and expansion while El Paso County's regional attractiveness and national prominence as a hub for outdoor recreation will continue to bolster employee recruitment. In addition, coordination with military installations will also be imperative to the County's growth and success as military installations are both major landowners and employers in the community.

Connectivity will be critical to future prosperity in El Paso County. Strengthening east-west connections and creating alternative north-south routes will improve travel within the County. While cars will continue to be the primary mode of transportation throughout El Paso County, greater emphasis should be placed on developing a complete transportation network with well-maintained infrastructure that supports cars as well as transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Expanding additional opportunities for employment, shopping, and procuring services into all communities will also reduce the need to drive across the County.

The County's natural beauty is one of its key assets that will continue to attract new residents and visitors to experience life in El Paso County. It is one of the few places in the country where a person can experience so many different natural environments and biological diversity – from forests and prairieland, to deserts and mountains – in such close proximity. The most important of these natural areas need to be protected and preserved for future generations. Each of these environments provides its own unique opportunities for both passive and active outdoor recreation. The County's diverse environs also provide the backdrop for an excellent network of well-maintained parks, multiuse trails, and open spaces that can be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

Intergovernmental collaboration coupled with partnerships with external agencies will help maintain first-rate community facilities and provide high-quality services to all parts of the County. Coordination and collaboration will be critical to the management of the County's precious natural resources and ensuring their longevity for future populations. A focus for utility services will be on establishing growth areas to prioritize future development to equitably manage water availability.

Through the development and implementation of the Master Plan, El Paso County will continue to grow as one of the most desirable places on the Front Range and in the State. It will be a place where any resident has the opportunity to enjoy the lifestyle they choose, from urban to suburban to rural and everything in between. It will be a healthy and sustainable community whose natural features, recreational amenities, strong employment opportunities, and diverse housing options provide all residents with a high quality of life.





## Core Principles & Goals

### 1. Land Use & Development

**Core Principle:** Manage growth to ensure a variety of compatible land uses that preserve all character areas of the County.

**Goal 1.1** - Ensure compatibility with established character and infrastructure capacity.

**Goal 1.2** - Coordinate context-sensitive annexation and growth strategies with municipalities.

**Goal 1.3** - Encourage a range of development types to support a variety of land uses.

**Goal 1.4** - Continue to encourage policies that ensure “development pays for itself”.

### 2. Housing & Communities

**Core Principle:** Preserve and develop neighborhoods with a mix of housing types.

**Goal 2.1** - Promote development of a mix of housing types in identified areas.

**Goal 2.2** - Preserve the character of rural and environmentally sensitive areas.

**Goal 2.3** - Locate attainable housing that provides convenient access to goods, services, and employment.

**Goal 2.4** - Support aging-in-place housing options to meet residents' needs through all stages of life.

### 3. Economic Development

**Core Principle:** Strengthen the economy with a skilled workforce and targeted investment.

**Goal 3.1** - Recruit new businesses and spur the development of growing sectors.

**Goal 3.2** - Support efforts to recruit, train, and retain a skilled workforce.

**Goal 3.3** - Encourage the development of commercial districts in underserved areas.

**Goal 3.4** - Utilize economic opportunity zones to support new business development.

**Goal 3.5** - Coordinate with military installations to foster new development that is compatible with installations and create new jobs.

### 4. Transportation & Mobility

**Core Principle:** Connect all areas of the County with a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system.

**Goal 4.1** - Establish a transportation network that connects all areas to one another, emphasizing east-west routes, reducing traffic congestion, promoting safe and efficient travel.

**Goal 4.2** - Promote walkability and bikability where multimodal transportation systems are feasible.

**Goal 4.3** - Foster transit-supportive development and coordinate to expand public transportation options.

**Goal 4.4** - Develop a sustainable funding mechanism for transportation infrastructure and maintenance.

### 5. Community Facilities & Infrastructure

**Core Principle:** Continue to coordinate with local and regional agencies to provide well-managed, high-quality community facilities and services.

**Goal 5.1** - Coordinate with agencies to provide high-quality community facilities, services, and infrastructure to enhance quality of life.

**Goal 5.2** - Improve the effectiveness of public safety through coordination, funding, and planning.

**Goal 5.3** - Ensure adequate provision of utilities to manage growth and development.

**Goal 5.4** - Use best management practices to protect water quality, conserve water, minimize impacts of flooding, and beautify El Paso County.



## Core Principles & Goals

### 6. Military Installations

**Core Principle:** Foster effective working relationships with military installations to support planning efforts and mutual success.

**Goal 6.1** - Support compatible land uses within and in close proximity to bases and associated facilities.

**Goal 6.2** - Ensure coordinated planning efforts for transportation impacts and access.

### 7. Recreation & Tourism

**Core Principle:** Maintain and expand the County's recreation and tourism options.

**Goal 7.1** - Support high-quality, sustainable outdoor recreation as a key amenity for residents and visitors.

**Goal 7.2** - Explore projects, programs, and initiatives for enhancing tourism in unincorporated areas.

**Goal 7.3** - Plan for and provide a variety of parks, trails, and open space within the region.

### 8. Community Health

**Core Principle:** Improve public health by focusing on local partnerships, food access, and environmental quality.

**Goal 8.1** - Support community environmental health initiatives through collaborative efforts with other organizations.

**Goal 8.2** - Ensure all residents have reasonable access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food.

### 9. Environment & Natural Resources

**Core Principle:** Prioritize and protect the County's natural environment.

**Goal 9.1** - Consider the environmental impacts related to natural resource conservation, air quality, water quality, wildlife habitat, and waste management during any planning process.

**Goal 9.2** - Promote sustainable best practices with regard to development and infrastructure.

### 10. Resiliency & Hazard Mitigation

**Core Principle:** Support efforts to reduce, respond, and react to natural and manmade hazards across the County.

**Goal 10.1** - Prioritize hazard mitigation as growth and development occurs.

**Goal 10.2** - Continue to support planning efforts and best practices to ensure community resiliency.

**Goal 10.3** - Continue to coordinate communication and activity among Office of Emergency Management (OEM), emergency service providers, and military installations to improve responses and recovery to natural hazards and emergencies.

# 3

**Inside this Chapter**  
*Key Areas (page 17)*  
*Areas of Change (page 20)*  
*Placetypes (page 22)*

## LAND USE

Land use is a fundamental core component of any comprehensive plan and represents the first building block upon which other plan components are structured. And while it may be one of the first things addressed while developing a plan for the future, it is not the first thing people intuitively think of when asked to describe where they want to live. When people think about where they live or where they want to live, they typically don't reflect on land use or parcel size or road width, but rather they tend to think about the place. They think about their home and their neighborhood, about what restaurants and coffee shops are nearby, if they can bike to work or catch a bus to the grocery store, if they can see the night sky or walk through nature on a trail, or live on an open range without any neighbors for several miles. You think about the place.

In response to thinking about where we live more intuitively, *Your El Paso Master Plan* focuses primarily on place rather than land use as an initial building block. The Master Plan defines the various places that exist in the County and how they can be enhanced in the future. The Plan determines what places should remain as they are and be supported moving forward and what new types of places are needed to support the growth of tomorrow. This approach to land use retains established places, identifies opportunities for growth, and provides strategies to mitigate impacts to the natural environment. This chapter is presented in three distinct sections for addressing future land use and development in El Paso County:

**Key Areas** – identifies those areas of the County that are defined by unique localized characteristics having influence on land use and development.

**Areas of Change** – identifies areas of the County that are anticipated to remain the same, undergo minor changes, or develop in a manner different than they exist today.

**Placetypes** – identifies the different development and land use characteristics for areas of the County that make up the various placetypes, which serve as the base for long-range planning.

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**Core Principle 1:** Manage growth to ensure a variety of compatible land uses that preserve all character areas of the County.

*Goal 1.1* - Ensure compatibility with established character and infrastructure capacity.

*Goal 1.2* - Coordinate context-sensitive annexation and growth strategies with municipalities.

*Goal 1.3* - Encourage a range of development types to support a variety of land uses.

*Goal 1.4* - Continue to encourage policies that ensure “development pays for itself”.

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# Key Areas

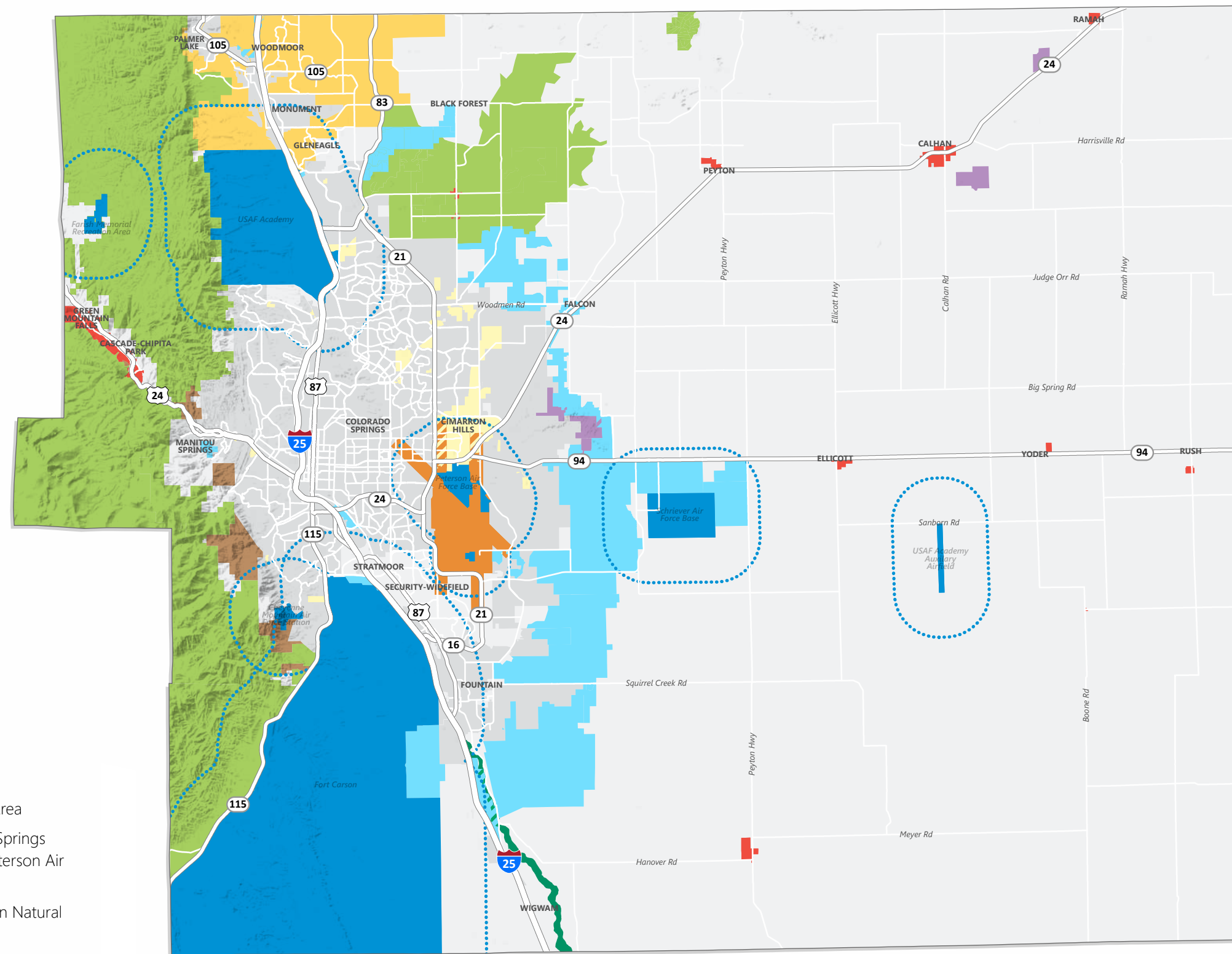
El Paso County represents a vast area composed of many distinct areas. These “Key Areas” have their own unique identities and are generally localized into smaller geographic areas with distinct characteristics that distinguish them from other areas of the County. It is important to note that these Key Areas are not defined by past planning boundaries or arbitrary jurisdictions, but instead are defined geographically by area-specific characteristics.

These Key Areas have influence on planning in the County and in the use and development of adjacent and nearby areas. Key Areas inform land use and development decision-making and are considerations that must be taken into account when planning for the future, regardless of the type of land use or development being considered.

*Your El Paso Master Plan* highlights these Key Areas and prioritizes them for more detailed planning in recognition of their unique and collective contributions to the overall character of El Paso County. Maintaining the unique character of some of these areas is a priority, while for other areas, it means appropriately planning to accommodate location-specific conditions that exist nowhere else in the County. The 10 Key Areas identified in the adjacent map are described on the following pages. Note: the two-mile notification zone is part of the Military Installation Key Area.

## Key Areas

- Military Installations and 2-Mile Notification Zone
- Potential Areas for Annexation
- Enclaves or Near Enclaves
- Small Towns & Rural Communities
- Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control & Greenway District
- Forested Area
- Pikes Peak Influence Area
- Tri-Lakes Area
- Colorado Springs Airport/Peterson Air Force Base
- Uncommon Natural Resources





## Military Installations

Colorado state law requires local governments to notify military installations of development applications taking place nearby, as per Colorado Revised Statute § 29-20-105.6. El Paso County has five military installations: Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, Fort Carson Army Base, Peterson Air Force Base, Schriever Air Force Base, and the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Given the central role the military plays in the region, El Paso County has worked to support its military installations through its land use, transportation, and natural resource planning efforts. Areas directly adjacent to the installations are critical to successfully planning for the County's projected growth, economic viability, and the various operations of the individual bases. Recommendations and policies will be specific and different for each installation, as outlined in **Chapter 9 Military**.

## Potential Areas for Annexation

A significant portion of the County's expected population growth will locate in one of the eight incorporated municipalities. As the largest municipality in El Paso County, Colorado Springs is expected to grow in population over the next several decades. As a result of this growth, Colorado Springs, and other municipalities including Fountain and Monument, will need to annex parts of unincorporated County to plan for and accommodate new development. This will either occur through new development within existing municipal limits or the annexation of subdivisions in unincorporated parts of the County.

This Key Area outlines the portions of the County that are anticipated to be annexed as development occurs. It is imperative that the County continue to coordinate with the individual cities and towns as they plan for growth. Collaboration with the individual communities will prevent the unnecessary duplication of efforts, overextension of resources, and spending of funds. The County should coordinate with each of the municipalities experiencing substantial growth the development of an intergovernmental agreement similar to that developed with Colorado Springs.

## Enclaves or Near Enclaves

Enclaves are areas of unincorporated El Paso County that are surrounded on all sides by an incorporated municipality, primarily the City of Colorado Springs but enclaves or near enclaves exist within or adjacent to other municipalities. The largest enclave is Cimarron Hills, an urbanized community with nearly 18,000 residents, but several smaller enclaves exist around other areas of Colorado Springs as well.

The majority of the enclaves are developed or partially developed in a manner that would require significant improvement for annexation. These include roadway improvements, stormwater improvements and utility infrastructure upgrades. Most enclave areas are accessed by municipal roads, experience the impacts of urban stormwater runoff, or are otherwise served by one or more municipal utilities. The character and intensity of new development or redevelopment in these enclaves should match that of the development in the municipality surrounding it. Discussion with the City of Colorado Springs and other municipalities regarding the possible annexation of these areas should be continued and revisited regularly to explore means to finance improvements and service debt to make annexation a feasible consideration.

## Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control & Greenway District

The Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control & Greenway District was created under SB09-141, established under Title 32 of the CRS. The district is authorized to manage, administer, and fund the capital improvements necessary in the Fountain Creek Watershed to: mitigate flooding, erosion and sedimentation; address water quality issues; improve drainage; protect open space, and; and develop public recreational opportunities including open space. The District has statutory jurisdiction over land use and development within the 100-year floodplain south of the City of Fountain to ensure the watershed is protected and to prevent unnecessary destruction from future development.

Some agricultural uses exist within the floodplain area and are likely to remain. The unique geography of the Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control & Greenway District serves to define a sensitive area for water-quality protection and wetland preservation functions. As such, this area should continue to be protected by limiting development in and near the District boundaries. Any proposed development within the District will need to adhere to the District's land use standards and be reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee and approved by the District's Board of Directors to prevent or otherwise mitigate any negative impacts.

## Small Towns & Rural Communities

This Key Area includes both incorporated and unincorporated communities in El Paso County. Incorporated towns including Calhan, Green Mountain Falls, Palmer Lake, and Ramah have their own established identities that support neighboring rural residents. Similarly, unincorporated rural communities have commercial uses and community facilities that serve surrounding residents and create a sense of community even without a formalized municipal governmental boundary. The unincorporated areas that comprise this Key Area are Black Forest, Ellicott, Hanover, Peyton, Truckton, and Yoder. Regardless of municipal status, all of these places function as a community that supports the needs of a significant portion of the County's rural population. To better serve this population, additional commercial development should be prioritized in the unincorporated places, or where appropriate, additional commercial development should be annexed by the municipalities. Additional commercial uses within these communities improves access to necessary goods and services such as grocery stores and gas stations.



## Forested Areas

This Key Area includes parts of the County where natural forests are the predominant feature such as Black Forest, areas north of Peyton, and areas along Highway 115 as well as lands within Pike National Forest. Pike National Forest is one of the County's largest natural amenities and tourist destinations. Continued coordination with the U.S. Forest Service is critical to ensuring future development in areas adjacent to the Forest do not negatively impact the natural environment. There are also many established communities within Pike National Forest particularly in Ute Pass and along Highway 115. New development and any redevelopment in these locations should be of a lower intensity to mitigate any impacts on the Forest, properly manage stormwater, provide safe access to major roads and state highways for the traveling public and emergency response vehicles and adhere to the strictest building codes to prevent any hazards such as fires and soil erosion related to poor planning, design, and construction.

Managed residential growth, along with supportive commercial uses, have helped the other forested areas preserve their natural amenities while supporting the daily needs of a thriving local community. The seamless connection between the natural environment and small-scale, low intensity development is critical to their identity. All new development and redevelopment in this Key Area should strictly adhere to the transportation and infrastructure, stormwater requirements, built form, and transition guidelines outlined in their appropriate placetypes. Each development proposal should also be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine its specific impact on the forested area and the established character of the individual community.

## Pikes Peak Influence Area

Pikes Peak is the most-defining characteristic of El Paso County for residents and tourists alike, bringing in hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. As the County's most prominent destination, the Peak supports the tourism industry and strengthens the County's overall economy. There are many other amenities and destinations surrounding Pikes Peak that both attract their own visitors as well as benefit from Pikes Peak. These include Cheyenne Mountain State Park, John May Museum, Cave of the Winds, and a host of destinations near Cascade-Chipita Park and the West Colorado Avenue and Highway 24 corridors.

The County is uniquely positioned with access to multiple natural amenities that promote local spending in the economy by both residents and tourists. The County should coordinate with the U.S. Forest Service and the City of Colorado Springs to identify opportunities for the County to help ensure Pikes Peak is preserved and maintained as both a natural amenity and an economic asset. Additionally, the County should foster collaboration among the Forest Service and the other destinations in the Pikes Peak influence area to coordinate events and activities that capitalize on the high volume of visitors to Pikes Peak to further bolster the County's economy.

## Tri-Lakes Area

Tri-Lakes is the northern gateway into the County along Interstate 25 and Highway 83. It is situated between Pike National Forest, the United States Air Force Academy, and Black Forest. With significant suburban development and some mixed-use development, this Key Area supports the commercial needs of many of the residents in northern El Paso County. Tri-Lakes also serves as a place of residence for many who commute to work in the Denver Metropolitan Area. It is also an activity and entertainment center with the three lakes (Monument Lake, Woodmoor Lake, and Palmer Lake) that comprise its namesake and direct access to the national forest. Tri-Lakes is the most well-established community in the northern part of the County with a mixture of housing options, easy access to necessary commercial goods and services, and a variety of entertainment opportunities. Future development in this area should align with the existing character and strengthen the residential, commercial, employment, and entertainment opportunities in the adjacent communities of Monument, Palmer Lake, and Woodmoor.

## Colorado Springs Airport/ Peterson Air Force Base

Colorado Springs Airport is the second largest in the State of Colorado with continually rising passenger totals and activity. Currently, large amounts of land adjacent to the airport are primed for commercial and industrial development, in part due to the establishment of a Commercial Aeronautical Zone (CAZ). The Board of County Commissioners approved the CAZ to attract local businesses and spur development on the available land. The County should continue to prioritize nonresidential growth in this area to help expand the Employment Center in unincorporated El Paso County. Employment Centers not only provide additional job opportunities for County residents but it expands the County's tax base, providing more opportunities to address other County issues such as upgrades to infrastructure, expansion of services and development of new roadways. Peterson Air Force Base also utilizes the Colorado Springs Airport for military flight operations and hosts various military activities critical to national security. The County should also coordinate future development adjacent and within the Colorado Springs Airport Accident Potential Zone (APZ) and within the Peterson Air Force Base buffer area with the Airport and the Base to ensure growth does not negatively impact the primary functions of Peterson Air Force Base or the Airport. Coordination with Colorado Springs Airport should also be considered, as necessary.

## Uncommon Natural Areas

Uncommon Natural Areas include natural amenities within El Paso County that are more unique than a park or open space. The three identified are Corral Bluffs, Paint Mines Interpretive Park, and Ramah State Wildlife Area, all of which are prominent natural areas in El Paso County. Corral Bluffs, located just east of Colorado Springs city limits along Highway 94, was recently discovered as having paleontological significance and Paint Mines Interpretive Park, southeast of Calhan, is a highly visited County Park with unique geologic formations. Ramah State Wildlife Area, southwest of Ramah, is another well-visited natural area in the County.

These three features bring unique opportunities for the County. As future growth and annexation occur in Colorado Springs, Corral Bluffs is situated so as to provide an excellent transition between the urban development of the City and the rural parts of unincorporated County. It should be considered as an open space buffer to preserve the character of the adjacent rural areas. Additionally, there is land around Paint Mines Park that would allow the extension of its boundaries. Extending these boundaries should be considered to help preserve this distinct County amenity and provide more public open space in the future.

# AREAS OF CHANGE

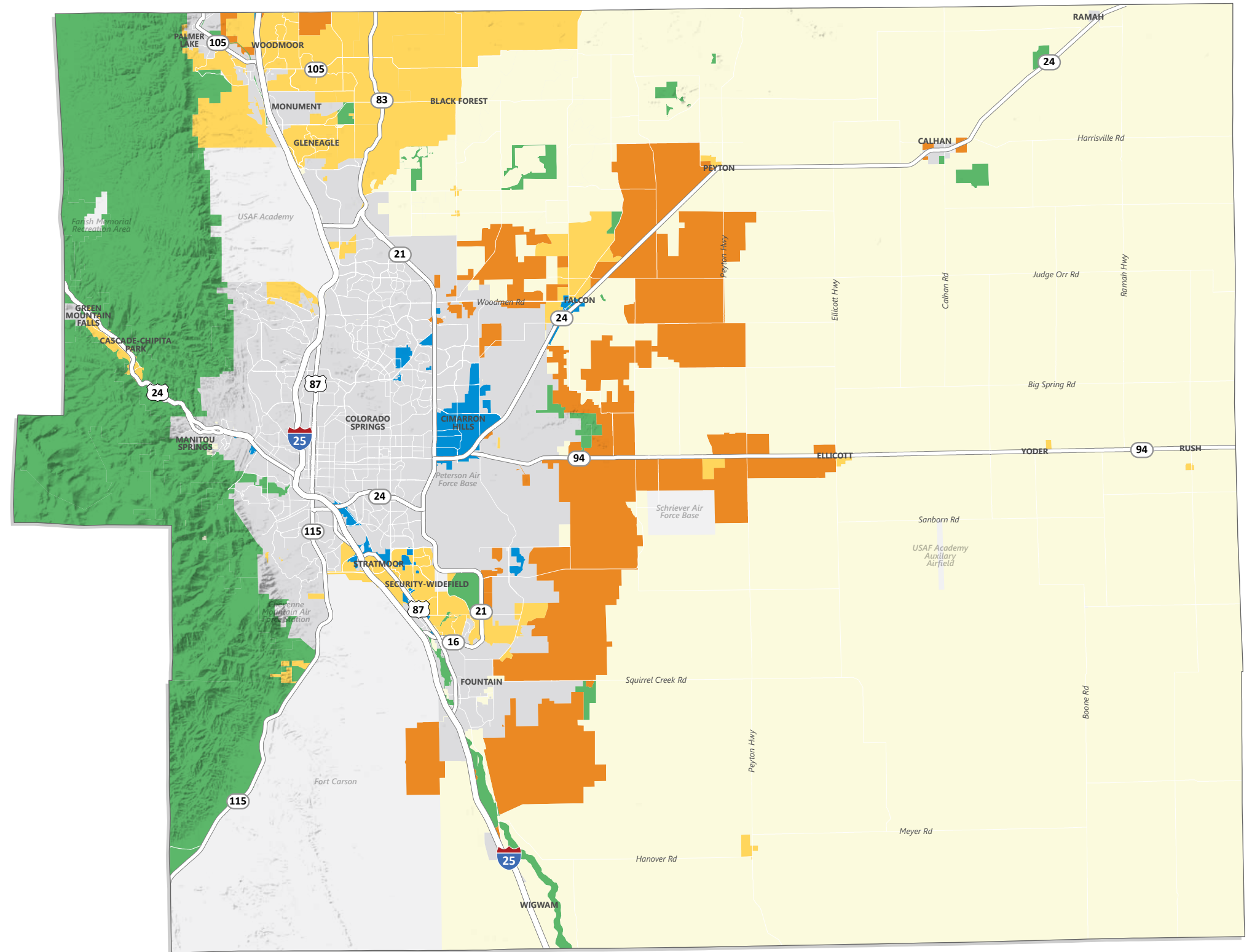
As El Paso County plans for growth and development over the coming decades, it is anticipated that some areas of the County will change more significantly than other areas. Some areas will continue to be designated for conservation and protection, some developed areas may see some infill redevelopment, while others will be completely transformed as new development takes place in currently undeveloped areas.

Identifying areas of change is the second step in developing the future placetypes for El Paso County. Areas of change help set the stage for important development and character changes throughout the County. Areas of change work in conjunction with Key Areas to establish locations of prominence that should be protected for their historical significance or primed for their development potential. A key factor in identifying areas of new development, particularly for residential uses, is affordability. Housing affordability is addressed in **Chapter 4 Housing & Communities** (page 58).

The accompanying map identifies the different areas of change throughout the County, representing the full range of anticipated levels of development. Parts of the County classified as New Development are adjacent to existing developed areas. The Areas of Change categories and map will allow the County to better anticipate, plan for, and manage growth over the next 20 years.

## Areas of Change

- Protected/Conservation Area
- Minimal Change: Undeveloped
- Minimal Change: Developed
- New Development
- Transition

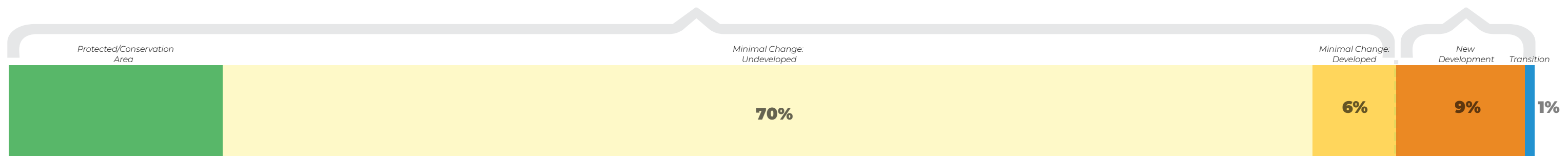


# WHAT WILL CHANGE? WHAT WILL STAY THE SAME?

El Paso County’s population is expected to grow by 256,000 people, or 35 percent, through 2050. To accommodate this growth, significant amounts of new development will need to be considered and approved, although a majority of that is expected to occur in municipalities. However, it is very clear that while some areas of the County should be planned for this new development, other areas should be preserved or protected or see little new development. In fact, just over 90 percent of unincorporated El Paso County is anticipated to remain largely unchanged. This section of the Master Plan, the Areas of Change, strategically identifies specific areas to support new development and overall growth in the County.

**90%**  
Areas Expected to See Minimal Change

**10%**  
Developing Areas



## Protected/Conservation Area

These areas of the County are not likely to change. Due to their local, ecological, or historical influence they should be preserved as they are throughout the life of this Master Plan and beyond. The existing development setting of these places will remain the same in the place-types, outlined in the next section.

## Minimal Change: Undeveloped

The character of these areas is defined by a lack of development and presence of significant natural areas. These areas will experience some redevelopment of select underutilized or vacant sites adjacent to other built-out sites, but such redevelopment will be limited in scale so as to not alter the essential character. New development may also occur in these areas on previously undeveloped land, but overall there will be no change to the prioritized rural and natural environments.

## Minimal Change: Developed

These areas have undergone development and have an established character. Developed areas of minimal change are largely built out but may include isolated pockets of vacant or underutilized land. These key sites are likely to see more intense infill development with a mix of uses and scale of redevelopment that will significantly impact the character of an area. For example, a large amount of vacant land in a suburban division adjacent to a more urban neighborhood may be developed and change to match the urban character and intensity so as to accommodate a greater population. The inverse is also possible where an undeveloped portion of a denser neighborhood could redevelop to a less intense suburban scale. Regardless of the development that may occur, if these areas evolve to a new development pattern of differing intensity, their overall character can be maintained.

## New Development

These areas will be significantly transformed as new development takes place on lands currently largely designated as undeveloped or agricultural areas. Undeveloped portions of the County that are adjacent to a built out area will be developed to match the character of that adjacent development or to a different supporting or otherwise complementary one such as an employment hub or business park adjacent to an urban neighborhood.

## Transition

Transition areas are fully developed parts of the County that may completely or significantly change in character. In these areas, redevelopment is expected to be intense enough to transition the existing development setting to an entirely new type of development. For example, a failing strip of commercial development could be redeveloped with light industrial or office uses that result in a transition to an employment hub or business park. Another example of such a transition would be if a blighted suburban neighborhood were to experience redevelopment with significant amounts of multifamily housing or commercial development of a larger scale in line with a commercial center.



# A PLACE-BASED APPROACH

## What are Placetypes?

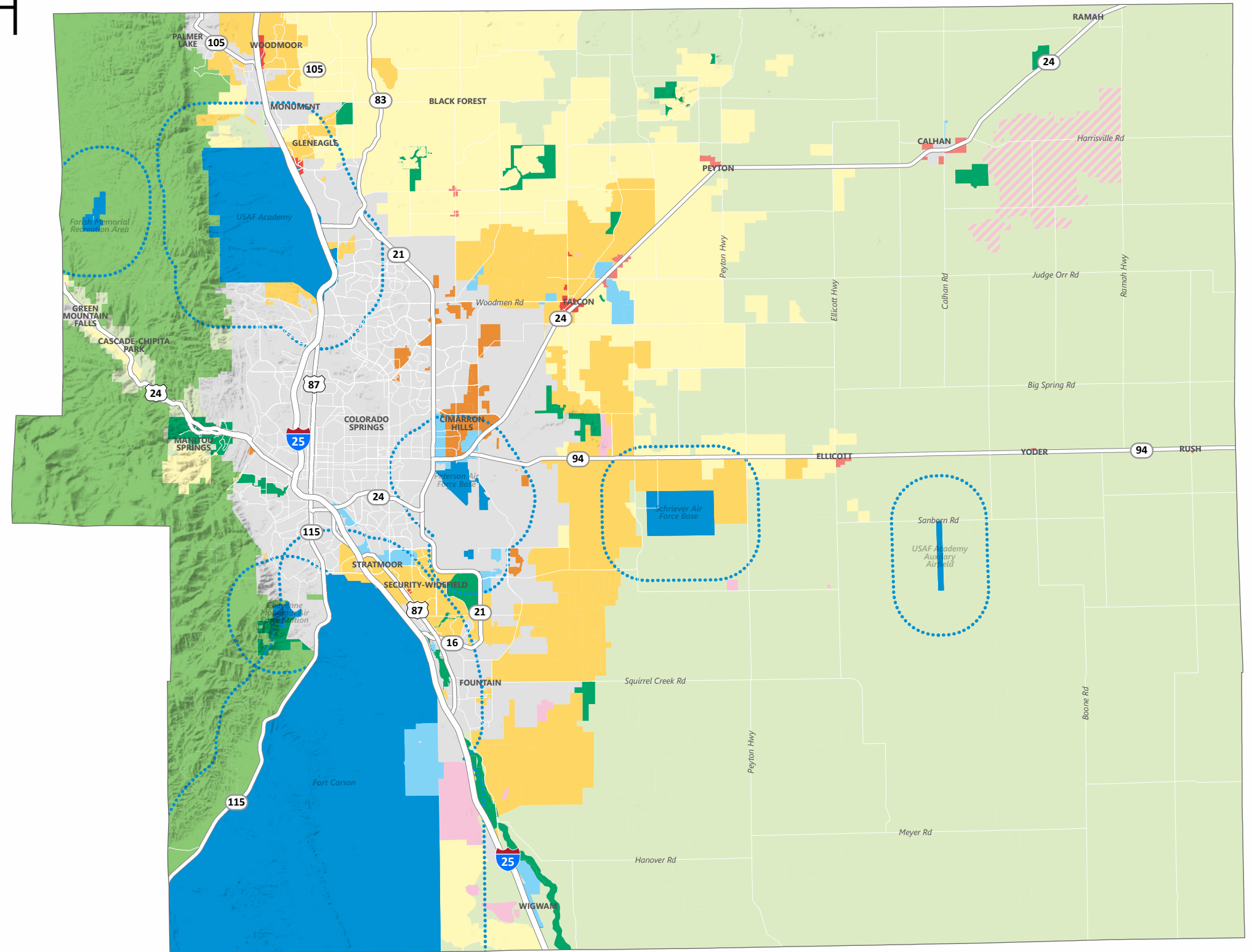
*Your El Paso Master Plan* defines future land use and development using a place-based approach that defines 11 distinct “placetypes.” The placetypes classify specific areas based on defining character, scale, form and function. The place-based approach is not focused on the use of a specific parcel, but rather is concerned with the collective mix of uses that establish a place within the El Paso County community. Together, the placetypes provide a land use and development palette that sorts places by their unique identity and character.

By thinking of El Paso County as a collection of unique places, the Master Plan promotes development of places at a neighborhood scale, creating context-appropriate flexibility and an opportunity for compatible change. The place-based approach promotes the full potential of vacant and undeveloped properties by allowing them to draw on different types of land uses. The creation of places not only depends on the land uses, but also on their specific design, functionality, access to infrastructure and services, and overall character.

Over time, the County will focus on improving and enhancing existing placetypes and creating new placetypes consistent with the Master Plan. Building on the vision and goals of *Your El Paso Master Plan*, the different placetypes will take shape through community involvement, neighborhood planning, land use regulation, public investment, private investment, and public-private partnerships.

### Placetypes

- Rural
- Large-Lot Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Urban Residential
- Rural Center
- Regional Center
- Employment Center
- Regional Open Space
- Mountain Interface
- Military
- Utility
- Incorporated Area



# Placetypes

**Placetype** – is a collection of land uses that work together to establish the character of an area or multiple parcels of land.

From Black Forest to Midway to Rush, El Paso County is a community of unique areas joined to create one distinct County. As is true with many large counties, El Paso County has places with different histories and character, often separated by significant distances. Expected growth in population, employment, and development creates a challenge in maintaining all of the County's one-of-a-kind places. The intent of *Your El Paso Master Plan* is to preserve existing, differing character areas while also accommodating new development, and joining them together to create a connected and cohesive growth strategy for the future.

The place-based approach will allow the County to partner with municipal jurisdictions and service providers to effectively plan and manage existing unique areas and define desired growth and development across the County. El Paso County's 11 placetypes are described in the following pages. Each placetype includes a description of the overall character of a placetype, including typical land use mix, key design features, mobility considerations, and other physical and functional elements that define each type of neighborhood or district. The land use mix is separated into primary and supporting land uses. Primary uses are the more prominent type that helps define the character of a placetype while supporting uses provide auxiliary functions in service to the primary uses.

# Land Uses

**Land Use** – is a singular development type (re: single-family residential, commercial, industrial) that can be built on a specific parcel of land.

The 11 placetypes consist of several land uses arranged in different patterns to provide a range of development intensity. Primary land uses are those that are most prominent and play a pivotal role in characterizing the placetype. Supporting land uses are less prevalent and serve an ancillary function that complements the primary land use. For example, Suburban Residential area primarily consists of single-family homes, but can also contain supporting uses such as multi-family, limited neighborhood commercial, and parks. The adjacent matrix identifies how land use fits into each placetype as a primary or supporting use.

Related to land use, is zoning. Zoning is a regulatory tool used to implement the placetypes. The list of primary and supporting land uses enables placetypes to be related to established zoning districts. Multiple zoning districts can be present in a placetype as long as they complement one another and support the general character of the placetype. The placetypes should serve as an essential tool in identifying needed updates to the County's development regulations.

# Align with Placetypes

Placetypes are the foundation of the Master Plan and the first priority for future growth and development in the County. Development should be consistent with the allowable land uses set forth in the placetypes first and second to their built form guidelines. It is imperative that all development align with the placetypes to ensure the desired character of every part of the County, and provide appropriate density and use transitions to occur between differing placetypes.

PLACETYPES	LAND USES																				
	Agriculture	Farm/Homestead	Estate	Single-Family Detached	Single-Family Attached	Multifamily	Mixed Use	Restaurant	Commercial Retail	Commercial Service	Tourism Commercial	Entertainment and Arts	Office	Light Industrial/Business Park	Heavy Industrial	Military Operation	Parks and Open Space	Natural and Paleontological	Institutional	Utility	
Rural	●	●	○																	●	○
Large-Lot	○			●					○	○										○	
Suburban				●	○	○			○	○										○	○
Urban Residential				●	●	●	○	○	○	○			○							○	○
Rural Center				●	○	○		●	●	●										●	
Regional Center					○	●	○	●	●	●		●	○							○	
Employment Center								○	○	○			●	●	●						
Regional Open Space																				●	●
Mountain Interface				○					○	○	○	○								●	●
Military				○	○	●		○	○	○		○	●	●		●	○			○	
Utility																				○	●

● **Primary Land Use:**  
More prominent and play a pivotal role in characterizing that placetype

○ **Supporting Land Use:**  
Less prevalent and serve to support the primary land use.

# PLACETYPE: RURAL

*The Rural Placetype supports the County's established agricultural and rural identity. This placetype is uniquely sensitive to new development due to limited water access and infrastructure making sustainable growth a priority.*

## Character

The Rural placetype comprises ranchland, farms, and other agricultural uses. The primary land use in this placetype is agriculture however residential uses such as farm homesteads and estate residential are allowed as support uses. Residential lot development within the Rural placetype typically cover 35 acres or more per two units with the minimum lot area consisting of 5-acres per unit. The Rural placetype covers most of the eastern half of the County.

Rural areas typically rely on well and septic and parcels for residential development tend to be substantial in size. Rural areas are remotely located and distant from high activity areas or dense suburban or urban places, making access to regional transportation routes, such as Highway 24 and Highway 94, vital to the quality of life for rural community residents.

The agricultural lands that Rural areas contain represent a valuable economic resource and unique lifestyle that should be preserved. The Rural placetype includes agricultural lands which represent a valuable economic resource and allow for a unique lifestyle that should be preserved. As growth occurs, some Rural areas may develop and transition to another placetype, however leapfrog development should be discouraged, by pro-actively permitting changing areas contiguous to existing development to another placetype.

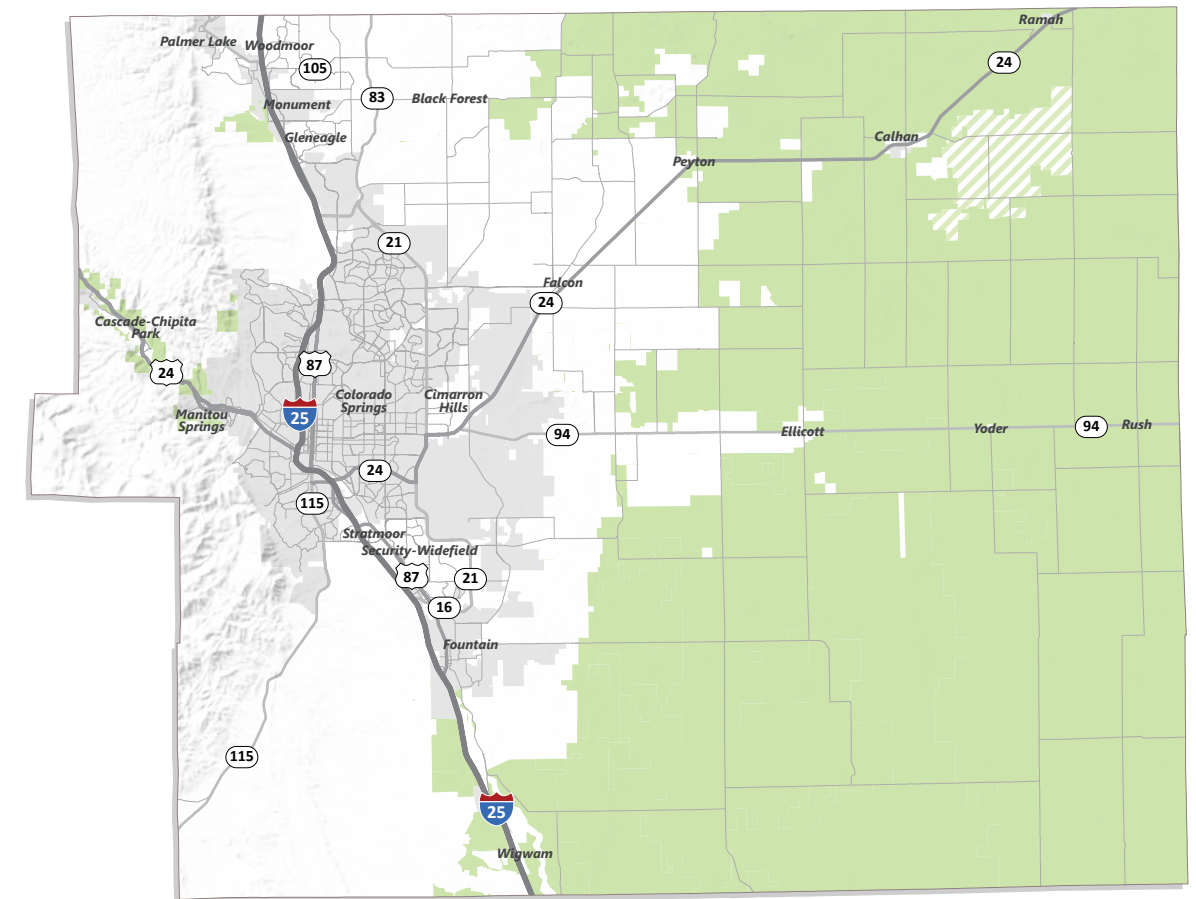
## Land Uses

### Primary

- Agriculture
- Parks/Open Space
- Farm/Homestead Residential

### Supporting

- Estate Residential (Minimum 1 unit/5-acres)
- Institutional





# RURAL

## Placetype Characteristics

- A** Major roadways such as state highways and major County roads are paved. Most local roads are also paved and follow section lines in a grid like pattern. Few local roads are curvilinear following terrain and avoiding hazards. Existing gravel roads that are proposed to serve new development may need to be improved to meet current standards, including paving.
- B** Generally, there are minimal sidewalks. Sidewalks may be required where pedestrian generators exist or are proposed in order to ensure connectivity.
- C** Agricultural buildings and accessory structures surrounded by parks, open space, farmland, or ranchland.
- D** Farmhouses, cabins, homes, and estates with varied orientation, placement, and size.

- E** Multiuse shoulders and sidewalks connect to sidewalks of adjacent large-lot and suburban residential.
- F** Multiuse shoulder or trail connections where applicable.
- G** All right of way is preserved in association with new development. Major roads support longer trips to help connect higher-density and commercial areas, accommodate truck travel, and prioritize access control.

## Additional Design Considerations

- Property fencing is only used to contain livestock and does not create a hard wall between the public way and the property.
- ADA accessibility is required and may be provided within multiuse shoulders along a given roadway, as depicted within the typical design cross section for the function of the road.
- Stormwater infrastructure often includes in natural swales in the placetype.

## Function of Supporting Uses

Agricultural uses often include homesteads as residences for the ranching or farming businesses. In certain cases, agricultural land is subdivided to include estate residential property for family members, housing for employees, or even unrelated individuals. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are compatible in this placetype and should function in the context of the existing area.

# PLACETYPE: LARGE-LOT RESIDENTIAL

*The Large-Lot Residential placetype supports the rural character of the County while providing for unique and desirable neighborhoods.*

## Character

The Large-Lot Residential placetype consists almost entirely of residential development and acts as the transition between placetypes. Development in this placetype typically consists of single-family homes occupying lots of 2.5 acres or more, and are generally large and dispersed throughout the area so as to preserve a rural aesthetic. The Large-Lot Residential placetype generally supports accessory dwelling units as well. Even with the physical separation of homes, this placetype still fosters a sense of community and is more connected and less remote than Rural areas. Large-Lot Residential neighborhoods typically rely on well and septic, but some developments may be served by central water and wastewater utilities. If central water and wastewater can be provided, then lots sized less than 2.5 acres could be allowed if; 1.) the overall density is at least 2.5 acres/lot, 2.) the design for development incorporates conservation of open space, and 3.) it is compatible with the character of existing developed areas.

Conservation design (or clustered development) should routinely be considered for new development within the Large-Lot Residential placetype to provide for a similar level of development density as existing large-lot areas while maximizing the preservation of contiguous areas of open space and the protection of environmental features. While the Large-Lot Residential placetype is defined by a clear set of characteristics, the different large-lot areas that exist throughout the County can exhibit their own unique characters based on geography and landscape.

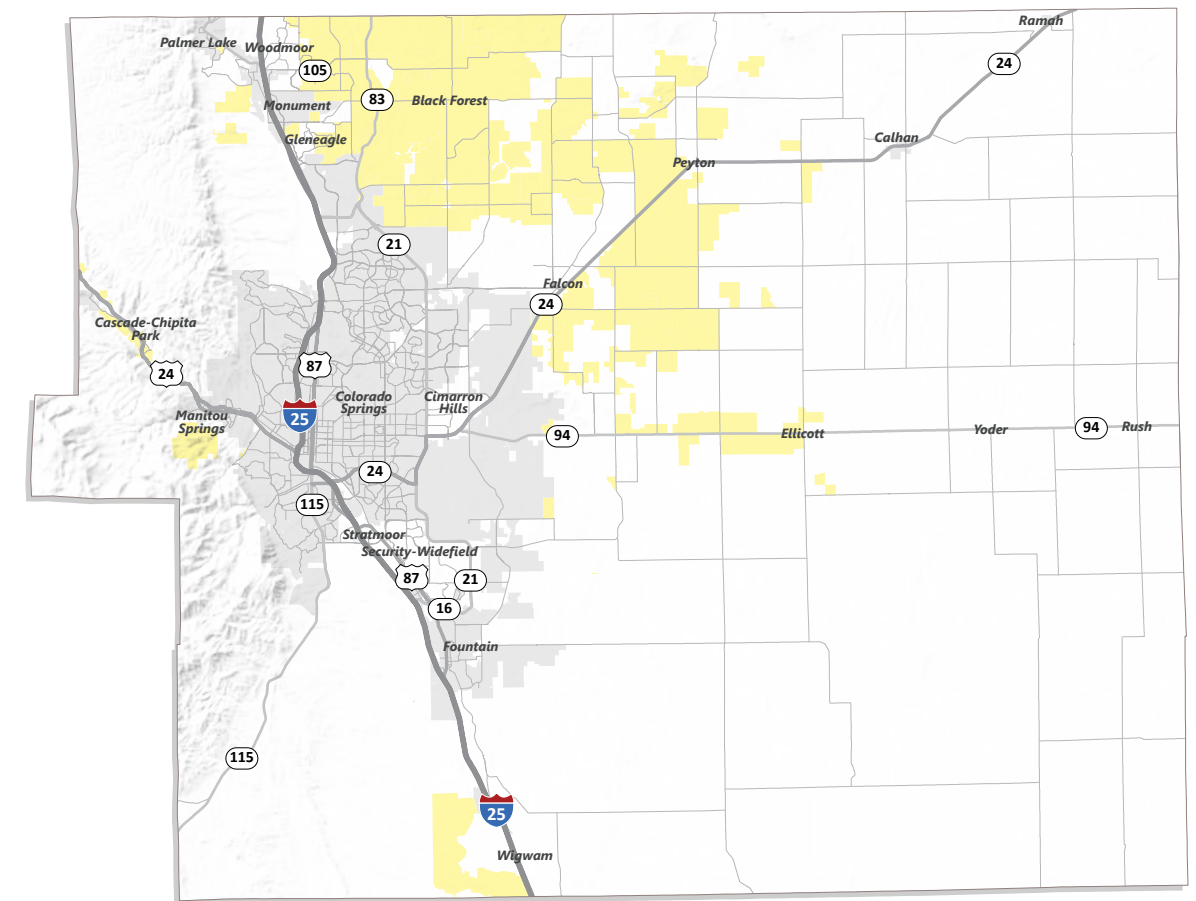
## Land Uses

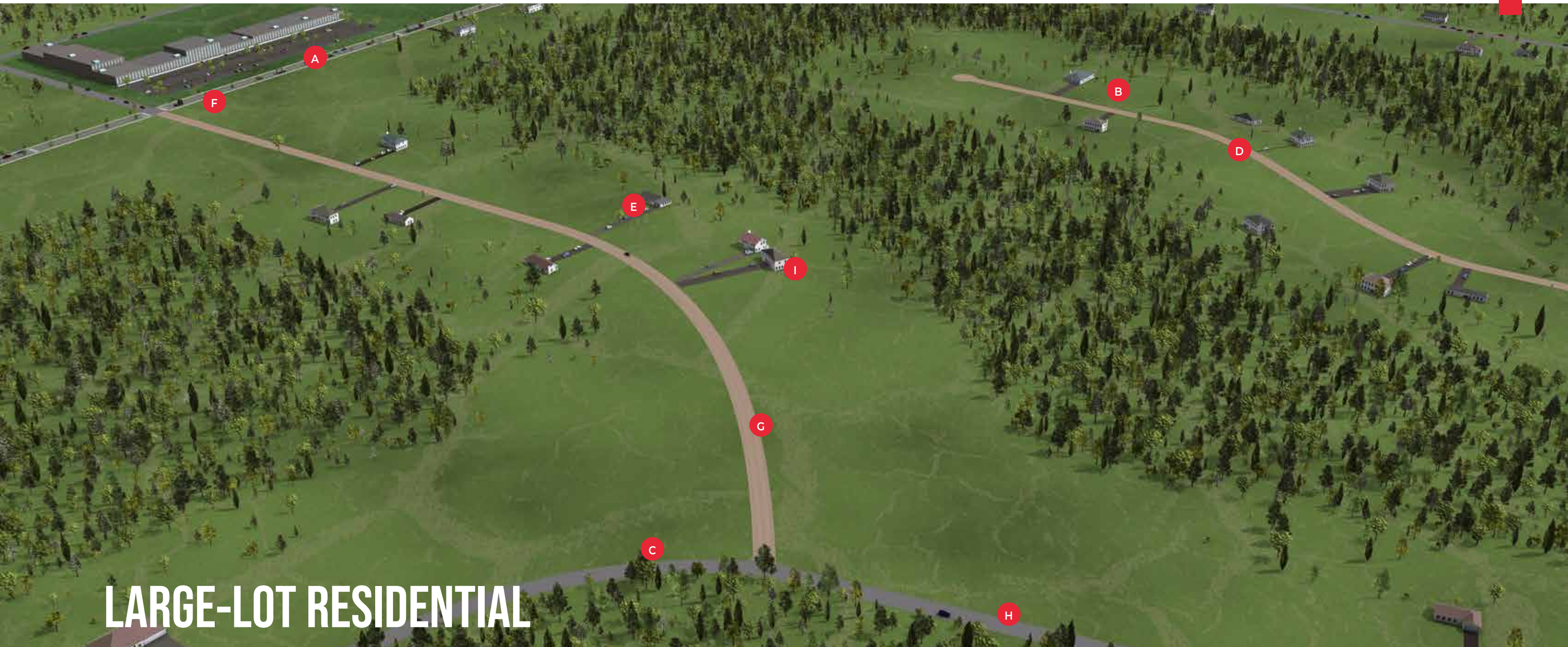
### Primary

- Single-family Detached Residential (typically 2.5-acre lots or larger)

### Supporting

- Parks/Open Space
- Commercial Retail (Limited)
- Commercial Service (Limited)
- Agriculture





# LARGE-LOT RESIDENTIAL

## Placetype Characteristics

- A** Major roadways such as state highways and major County roads are paved. Most local roads are also paved and follow section lines in a grid like pattern. Some local roads are curvilinear following terrain and avoiding hazards. Existing gravel roads that are proposed to serve new development may need to be improved to meet current standards, including paving.
- B** Clustered development has a sidewalk network. Multimodal facilities should be provided in order to ensure connectivity within the clustered development and to adjacent pedestrian paths.
- C** Walking paths, trails, and other designated routes provide additional access and recreation, extensions of or connectivity to these may be required when development occurs.
- D** All right of way is preserved in association with new development. Major roads support longer trips to help connect higher-density and commercial areas, accommodate truck travel, and prioritize access control.
- E** Single-family detached homes oriented to the street.

- F** Sidewalks connect to adjacent suburban and rural sidewalks/pathways and trails.
- G** Institutional uses are appropriate in Large-Lot Residential.
- H** Roads are paved when they connect to existing paved roads, entering suburban and urban placetype areas and may be required to be paved to meet air quality standards.
- I** Attached and detached garages and accessory buildings that reflect the architectural style and scale of the surrounding residential.

## Additional Design Considerations

- ADA accessibility is required and may be provided within multiuse shoulders along a given roadway, as depicted within the typical design cross section for the function of the road.
- Stormwater infrastructure is often provided with swales to adhere to best management practices and is strategically integrated into the design of each neighborhood.
- Large developments incorporate best management practices to mitigate stormwater runoff.
- Street plantings and furniture match the suburban context where transitions occur.

## Function of Supporting Uses

The focus of Large-Lot Residential is intertwining residential uses with the County's treasured natural environment without disruption or degradation. As such, commercial uses are minimal in this placetype with a small-scale standalone business located on a major roadway. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are compatible in this placetype and should function in the context of the existing neighborhood.

# PLACETYPE: SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

*The Suburban Residential placetype comprises the County's traditional residential neighborhoods with supporting commercial uses at key intersections.*

## Character

Suburban Residential is characterized by predominantly residential areas with mostly single-family detached housing. This placetype can also include limited single-family attached and multifamily housing, provided such development is not the dominant development type and is supportive of and compatible with the overall single-family character of the area. The Suburban Residential placetype generally supports accessory dwelling units. This placetype often deviates from the traditional grid pattern of streets and contains a more curvilinear pattern.

Although primarily a residential area, this placetype includes limited retail and service uses, typically located at major intersections or along perimeter streets. Utilities, such as water and wastewater services are consolidated and shared by clusters of developments, dependent on the subdivision or area of the County.

Some County suburban areas may be difficult to distinguish from suburban development within city limits. Examples of the Suburban Residential placetype in El Paso County are Security, Widefield, Woodmen Hills, and similar areas in Falcon.

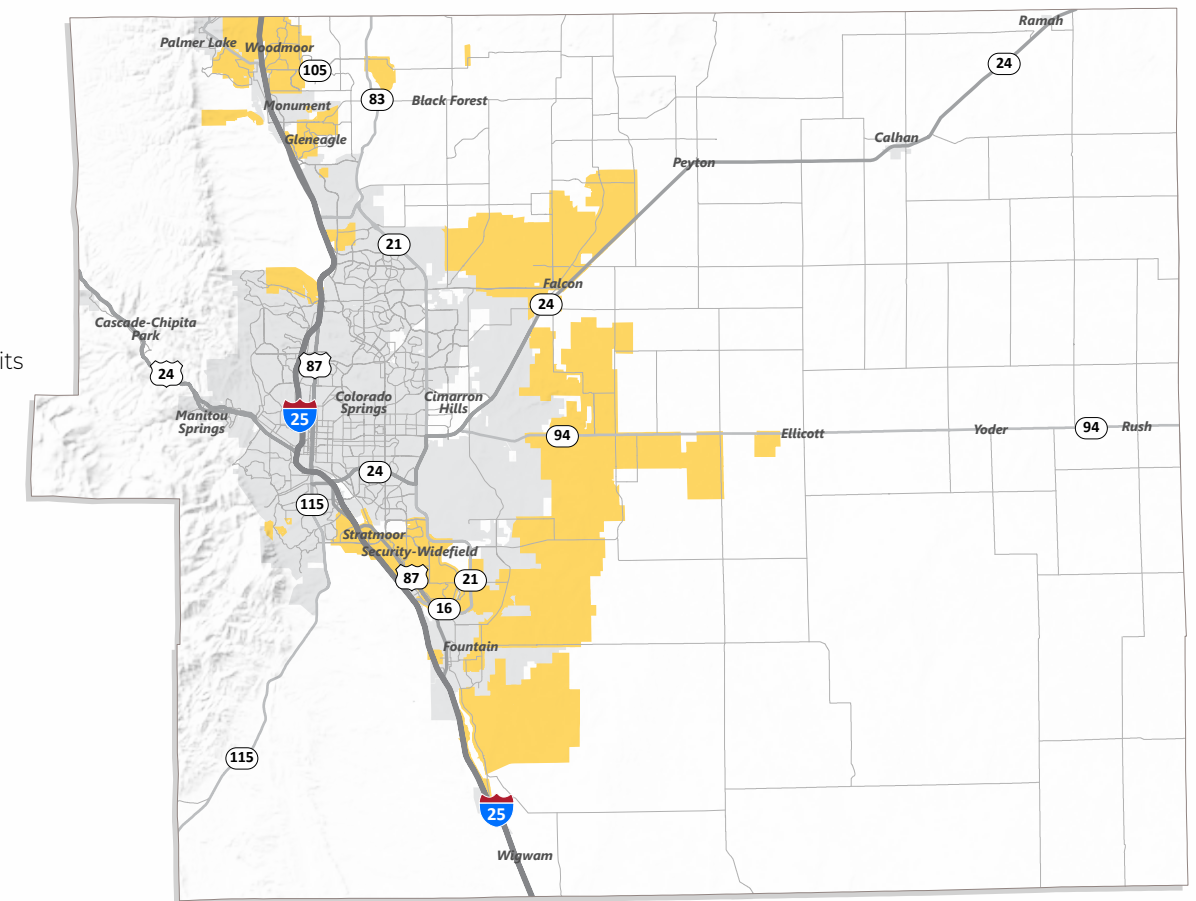
## Land Uses

### Primary

- Single-Family Detached Residential with lots sizes smaller than 2.5 acres per lot, up to 5 units per acre

### Supporting

- Single-family Attached
- Multifamily Residential
- Parks/Open Space
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Institutional





# SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

## Placetype Characteristics

- A** Properties are generally connected through a network of sidewalks often on both sides of the street.
- B** Most roadways support all modes of transportation with sidewalks on both sides of the street. Major highways and County roads may provide multimodal facilities on frontage roads, adjacent trails or sidewalks. Existing gravel roads may need to be paved. County roads will be improved as new development occurs to meet current standards.
- C** Street design standards encourage compatible best management practices adjacent to the street from private development.
- D** Major Roads are paved in a grid-like fashion and local roads may be curvilinear if maintenance, snow plowing, and emergency access can be efficiently and effectively provided while maintaining compact block structure.
- E** Connectivity to trails, hiking paths, and bike lanes provide access to parks, open space, different neighborhoods, jobs, services, and transit if available.
- F** Primarily consists of single-family detached homes, that follow a uniform setback from street. Homes may reflect a variety of architectural design but maintain a similar scale and character to the surrounding homes.

- G** Neighborhood scale parks and open space are distributed throughout the residential development and support community gathering and recreation.
- H** All right of way is preserved in association with new development. Major roads support longer trips to help connect higher-density and commercial areas, accommodate truck travel, and prioritize access control.
- I** Residential blocks are fully developed and well-maintained with higher-density uses adjacent to urban residential placetypes.
- J** Sidewalks or other multimodal facilities on both sides of the street connect to sidewalks of adjacent placetypes.

## Additional Design Considerations

- Stormwater infrastructure adheres to best management practices and is strategically integrated into the design of each neighborhood. Curb and gutter are required.
- ADA accessibility is required and may be provided as depicted within the typical design cross sections for the function of the road.
- Incompatible land uses such as some nonresidential and/or regional commercial are hidden from public view with setbacks, screening, and landscaping buffers from all pedestrian paths and adjacent residences.

## Function of Supporting Uses

Few commercial uses may be appropriate in Suburban Residential. Those allowed must be small-scale standalone businesses that serve a neighborhood population. Additionally, certain unique businesses that mirror the development style of residential development are also allowed. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are compatible in this placetype and should function in the context of the existing neighborhood.



# PLACETYPE: URBAN RESIDENTIAL

*The Urban Residential placetype offers an opportunity for El Paso County to redefine its growth areas through highly desirable, connected, and complete neighborhoods with a mix of housing products and density.*

## Character

The Urban Residential placetype consists of established neighborhoods immediately adjacent to equally dense or more dense urban neighborhoods in incorporated areas, as well as new, largely residential neighborhoods in previously undeveloped areas where centralized utility services are available. The Urban Residential placetype provides for a mix of development densities and housing types within a neighborhood. Urban Residential placetypes generally support accessory dwelling units as well. The dense urban development and high intensity of existing Urban Residential areas make it difficult to distinguish them from adjacent incorporated areas. The development of an Urban Residential placetype will strongly depend upon availability of water and wastewater services.

An interconnected network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure make Urban neighborhoods walkable internally and well-connected to adjacent placetypes. Highly accessible parks and open space are integrated throughout the neighborhood. Neighborhood-serving retail areas in this placetype should be conveniently connected and accessible to residents of the nearby neighborhood. Commercial uses should be located along main or perimeter streets rather than imbedded within primarily residential areas. Cimarron Hills is the most prominent example of this placetype.

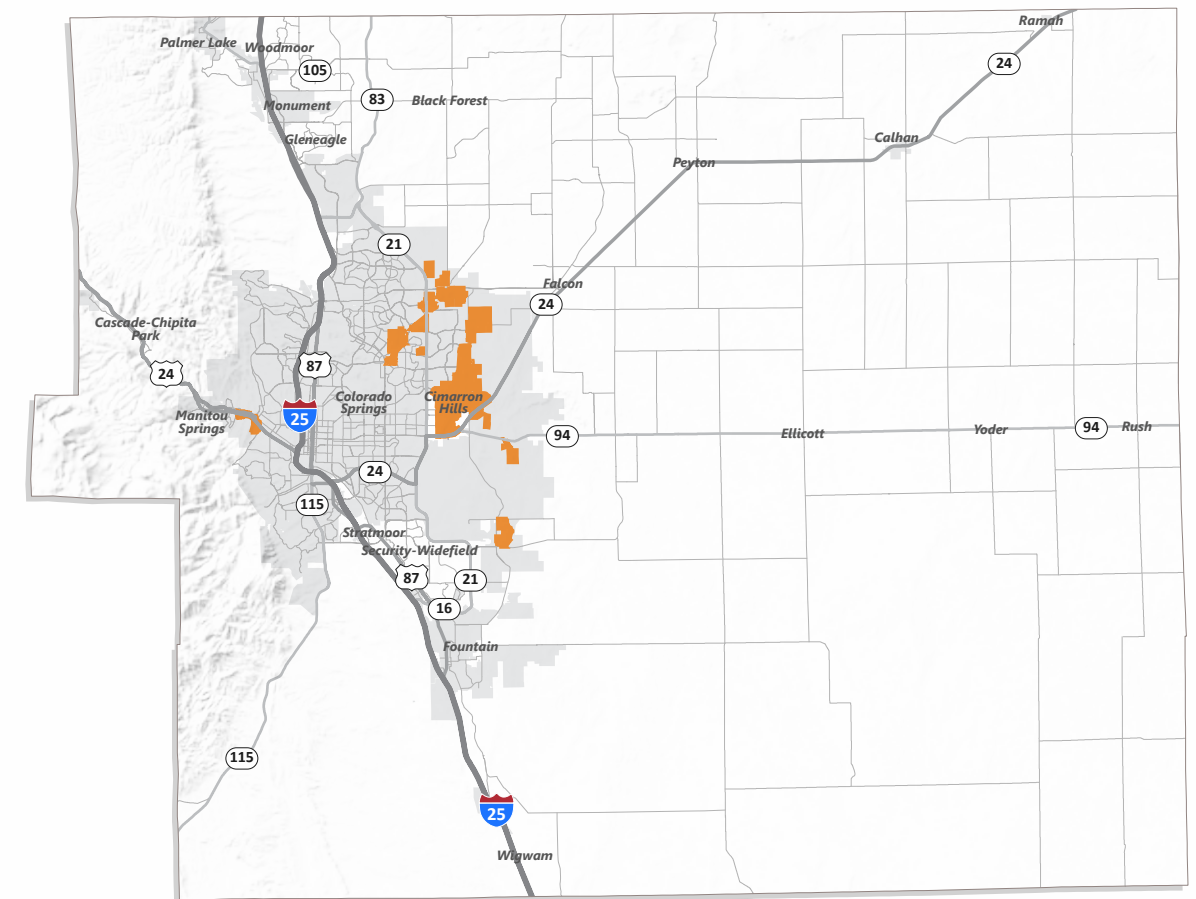
## Land Uses

### Primary

- Single-family Detached Residential (5 units/acre or more)
- Single-family Attached Residential
- Multifamily Residential

### Supporting

- Mixed Use
- Restaurant
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Institutional
- Parks
- Office





# URBAN RESIDENTIAL

## Placetype Characteristics

- A** Most roadways support all modes of transportation with sidewalks on both sides of the street; sidewalks are wider in commercial areas with different streetscaping to promote activity. Major highways and major county roads may provide multimodal facilities on frontage roads, adjacent trails or sidewalks. County roads that do not meet current standards will be improved as new development occurs.
- B** Street design standards encourage compatible best management practices adjacent to the street from private development.
- C** Most roads support bicycle infrastructure and a network of safe pedestrian pathways.
- D** Primarily single-family detached, attached, and multifamily residential homes.
- E** Buildings are oriented towards the street and typically follow a uniform setback.
- F** In mixed-use scenarios, supporting uses are typically located on the ground floor of a building or at roadway intersections.
- G** Architectural style and design of buildings may vary, any supporting land use related to commercial or service provides internal ADA access and at the street.

- H** All right of way is preserved in association with new development. Major roads support longer trips to help connect higher-density and commercial areas, accommodate truck travel, and prioritize access control.
- I** Building setbacks do not dramatically shift when transitioning to adjacent placetypes.
- J** All sidewalks, and other multimodal facilities connect to adjacent placetypes.

## Additional Design Considerations

- ADA accessibility is required and may be provided as depicted within the typical design cross sections for the function of the road.
- Stormwater infrastructure adheres to best management practices and is strategically integrated into the design of each neighborhood. Curb and gutter are required.
- Incompatible land uses such as nonresidential and/or regional commercial are hidden from public view with setbacks, screening, and landscaping buffers from all pedestrian paths and adjacent residences.

## Function of Supporting Uses

The Urban Residential placetype has a greater range of commercial uses including standalone buildings, small neighborhood centers, and mixed-use. These uses cater to the residents as well as any visitors drawn to the area by the uses themselves. They are small in scale to maintain pedestrian focus and accessibility. Institutional uses and parks are appropriate to serve the residents. Offices provide employment opportunities, particularly as a part of mixed-use development. Accessory Dwelling Units are compatible in this placetype and should function in the context of the existing neighborhood.

# PLACETYPE: RURAL CENTER

*The Rural Centers placetype provides rural residents vital access to goods, services, and public facilities and serve as the cultural anchor for the community.*

## Character

Rural Centers often act as the heart of rural areas, providing a mix of uses to support rural residents (including those living in surrounding Rural and Large-Lot Residential placetypes) such as grocery and convenience stores, restaurants, commercial services, schools, places of worship, and post offices. Rural Centers are organized in compact blocks with a mix of residential and nonresidential development that form a recognizable district or destination within the large rural expanses of El Paso County.

As a gathering place and town center for rural areas, development within the Rural Center placetype should be located along a community's main street or near the intersection of an area's most-frequented roadways. The Rural Center placetype is primarily auto-oriented but may include pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to provide for a walkable environment. Examples of existing Rural Centers include Peyton, Calhan, and Ellicott.

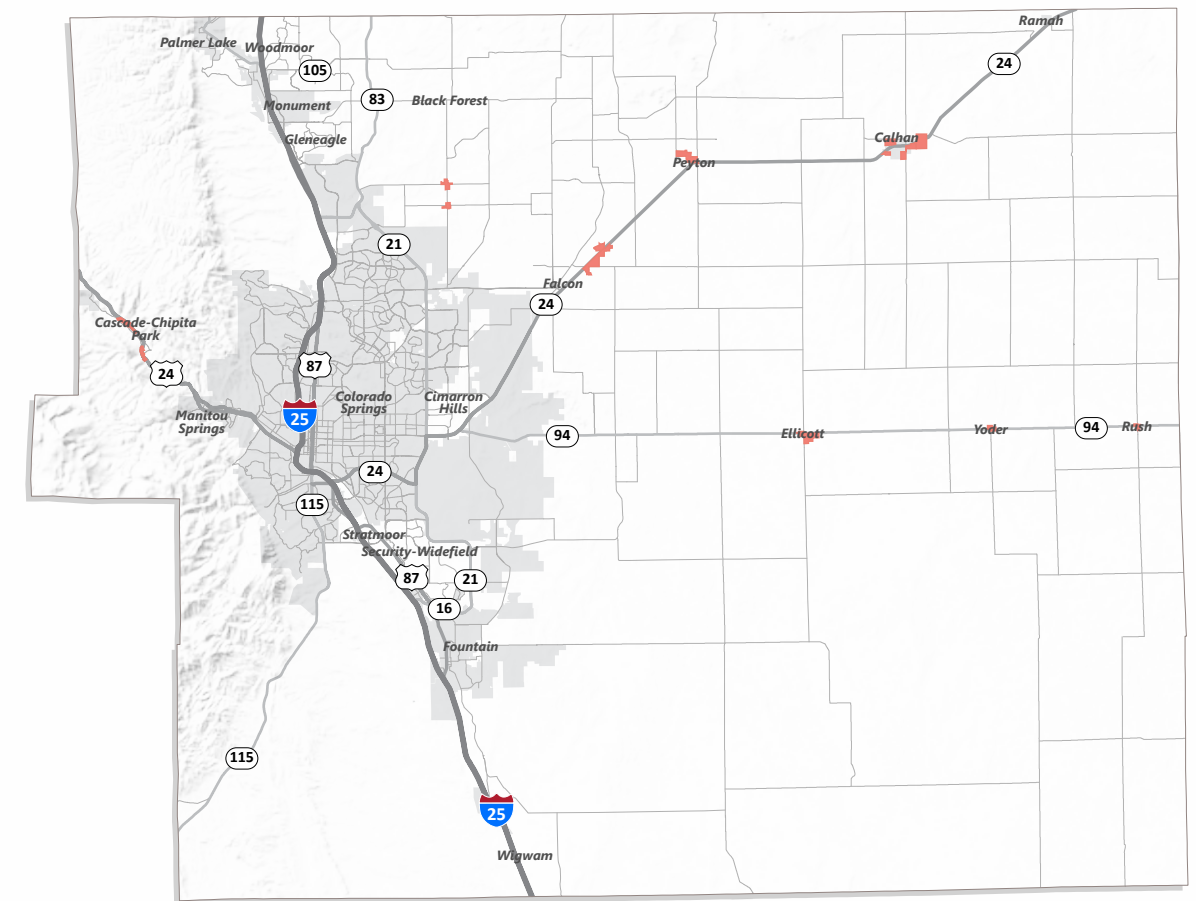
## Land Uses

### Primary

- Restaurant
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Institutional
- Single-family Detached Residential

### Supporting

- Single-family Attached Residential
- Multifamily Residential





# RURAL CENTER

## Placetype Characteristics

- A** Paved major roadways with appropriate intersections controls as warranted.
- B** Most roadways support access via all modes of transportation with sidewalks on both sides of the street. Major highways and major county roads may provide multimodal facilities on frontage roads, adjacent trails or sidewalks. Existing gravel roads that receive increased development may need to be paved. County roads that do not meet current standards will be improved as new development occurs.
- C** Parking is typically located behind nonresidential buildings and accessed via a maximum of 2 points or curb cuts from the major roads.
- D** Primarily low-rise (1 story) developments with destination commercial or retail.
- E** All right of way is preserved in association with new development. Major roads support longer trips to help connect higher-density and commercial areas, accommodate truck travel, and prioritize access control.

- F** Connectivity is provided to trails, hiking paths, and multimodal facilities provide access to parks, open space, neighborhoods, jobs, services and transit if available.
- G** Parking and noncompatible land uses are buffered from pedestrian paths with setbacks and plantings. Transitions to neighboring placetypes are often abrupt and distinct.
- H** Buildings oriented towards the main streets.
- I** Uniform setbacks across an entire block.

## Additional Design Considerations

- ADA accessibility is required and may be provided as depicted within the typical design cross sections for the function of the road.
- Stormwater infrastructure adheres to best management practices and is strategically integrated into the design of each development.
- Outdoor seating where sidewalks and building setbacks allow.

## Function of Supporting Uses

Since the Rural placetype allows for minimal commercial uses, Rural Centers provide commercial options to the residents in these areas. Inversely, residential uses, particularly single-family detached and multifamily support Rural Centers by allowing customers to live in close proximity to the businesses they frequent. These residential uses are small in size and scale (typically 1-2 stories) to match the style of the single-family detached homes that are more prevalent in this placetype.

# PLACETYPE: REGIONAL CENTER

*The Regional Center placetype is a commercial destination for County residents to purchase goods, procure services, and enjoy a variety of entertainment options.*

## Character

The fundamental purpose of a Regional Center is to provide access to necessary and desired commercial goods and services in El Paso County through a unique mix of uses. This placetype differs from Rural Centers by providing a level of goods and services that attract people from across the County, and depending on location, from adjacent counties. Regional Centers often incorporate a lifestyle live-work-play environment and can include multifamily housing elements in their design as standalone apartments or part of mixed-use developments.

This placetype includes large scale shopping centers that house a variety of commercial businesses and support a high activity of users on a regular basis such as grocery stores, pharmacies, clothing stores, automotive centers, restaurants, entertainment opportunities, home improvement stores, and other major retailers. Multifamily apartments provide commercial businesses direct access to potential customers.

Regional Centers are major commercial destinations for residents and are easily accessible from major transportation routes throughout the County. Regional Centers in El Paso County are surrounded by Urban Residential, Suburban Residential, and Employment Center placetypes. In addition, Regional Centers can also be extensions of commercial areas within incorporated municipalities such as the Gleneagle area.

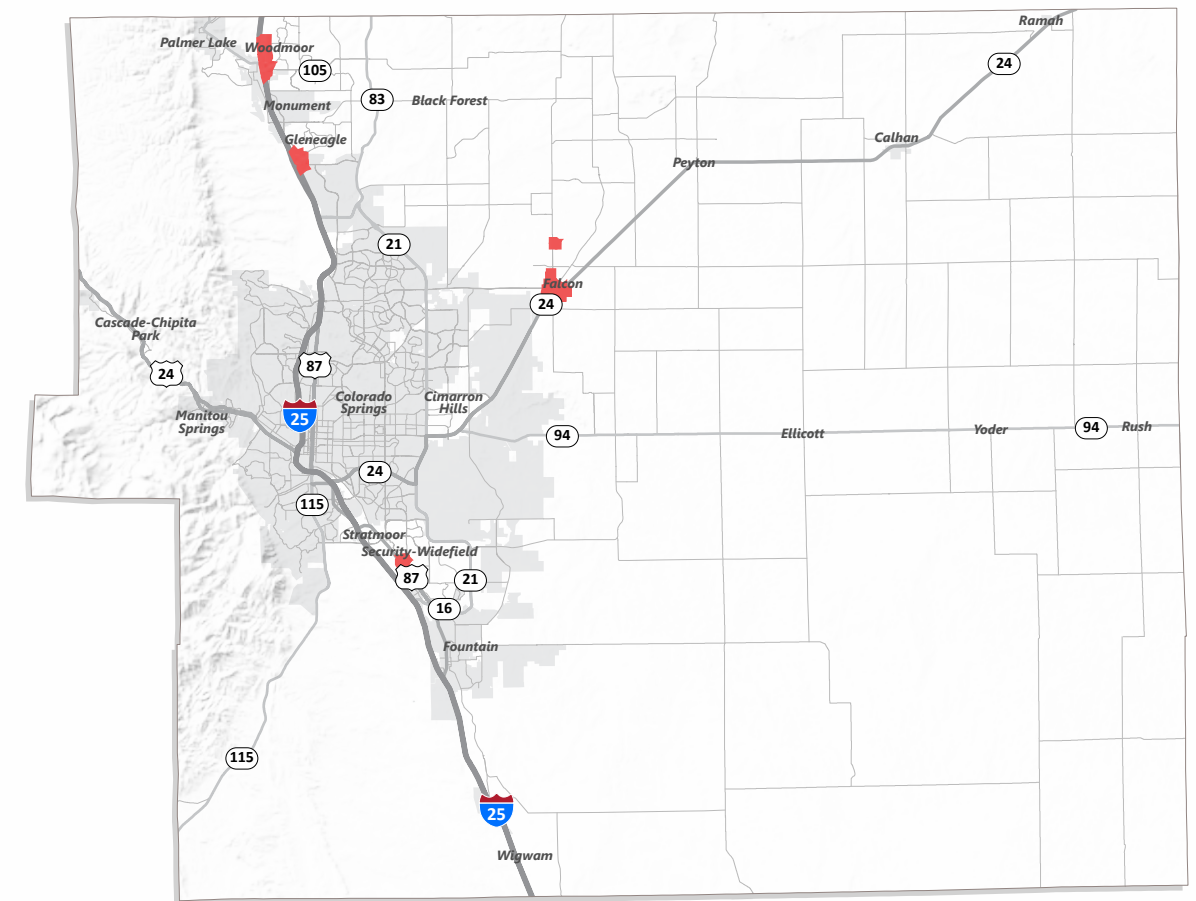
## Land Uses

### Primary

- Restaurant
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Entertainment
- Multifamily Residential

### Supporting

- Office
- Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Single-family Attached Residential





# REGIONAL CENTER

## Placetype Characteristics

- A** Shopping center development provides ADA compliant internal network of pedestrian sidewalk connections and highly visible crosswalks.
- B** Vehicular access points into commercial development ensure major transportation routes and intersections throughout the County are not affected by traffic generated by the Regional Center.
- C** All right of way is preserved in association with new development. Major roads support longer trips to help connect higher-density and commercial areas, accommodate truck travel, and prioritize access control.
- D** Most roadways support access via all modes of transportation with sidewalks on both sides of the street. Major highways and major county roads may provide multimodal facilities on frontage roads, adjacent trails or sidewalks. Existing gravel roads that receive increased development will need to be paved. County roads that do not meet current standards will be improved as new development occurs.
- E** Sidewalks and other multimodal facilities (including greenways) connect and allow access to neighboring placetypes.
- F** Buildings are setback from public roadways and have well defined public entrances.

- G** Architectural style and design of overall place (including signage) is intentional and follows a masterplan or motif creating a sense of place.
- H** Surface parking is landscaped, incorporates best management practices, and is well maintained by the development.
- I** Development is typically 1-3 stories, apart from mixed-use, office, or multifamily structures which may be up to 5 stories in height.
- J** Off-street parking is screened by plantings or other methods of screening from other noncommercial uses.

## Additional Design Considerations

- ADA accessibility is required and may be provided as depicted within the typical design cross sections for the function of the road.
- Stormwater infrastructure adheres to best management practices and is strategically integrated into the design of each development. Curb and gutter are required.
- Highly accessible by public transit with covered bus stops and regular routes.
- Storefronts are inviting and attractive and outside display areas are well integrated and appropriately screened.
- Appropriate intersections controls are provided as warranted.

## Function of Supporting Uses

Similar to multifamily uses, single-family attached provides a larger potential consumer base to which the primary commercial uses can sell their goods and services. This residential use provides a scalable transition between the multifamily uses in this placetype and smaller residential uses in adjacent placetypes. Office uses are appropriate to provide employment opportunities to residents.

# PLACETYPE: EMPLOYMENT CENTER

*The Employment Center Placetype is the County's primary location for large-scale, nonretail businesses that provide significant employment and economic development opportunities.*

## Character

Employment Centers comprise land for industrial, office, business park, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, and other similar business uses. The priority function of this placetype is to provide space for large-scale employers to establish and expand in El Paso County. They are typically located on or directly adjacent to Interstate 25 and/or other regional corridors to ensure business and employee access.

Proximity to other transportation hubs, such as Meadowlake Airport, and rail lines is also appropriate for an Employment Center. Uses in this placetype often require large swaths of land and opportunity to expand and grow to meet future needs and demands. Transitional uses, buffering, and screening should be used to mitigate any potential negative impacts to nearby residential and rural areas. Some Employment Centers are located in Foreign Trade, Commercial Aeronautical, and Opportunity Zones to help incentivize development.

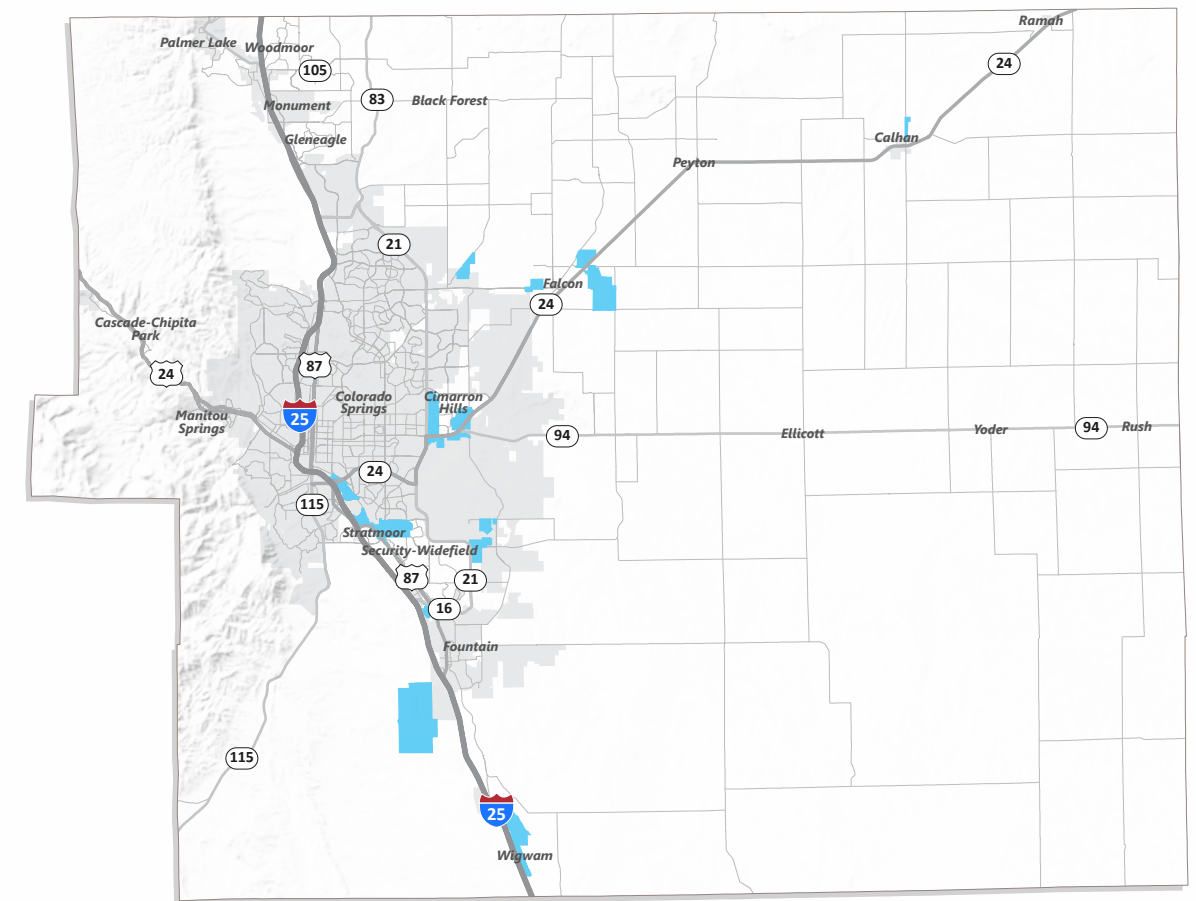
## Land Uses

### Primary

- Light Industrial/Business Park
- Heavy Industrial
- Office

### Supporting

- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Restaurant





# EMPLOYMENT CENTER

## Placetype Characteristics

- A** Primarily low-rise office, manufacturing, and industrial facilities, located along major arterials with access-controlled connections to regional highway, freight, and air transportation systems.
- B** Provide ADA-compliant internal network of sidewalk connections and highly visible crosswalks.
- C** Employee and delivery access is strategic to prevent congestion on major roadways.
- D** All right of way is preserved in new development. Major roads support longer trips to connect higher-density and commercial areas, accommodate truck travel, and prioritize access control.

- E** Most roadways support access via all modes of transportation with sidewalks on both sides of the street. Major highways and major county roads may provide multimodal facilities on frontage roads, adjacent trails, or sidewalks. Existing gravel roads that receive increased development will need to be paved. County roads that do not meet current standards will be improved as new development occurs.
- F** Primary use structures and accessory structures are located within a facility campus.
- G** Surface parking is landscaped, incorporates best management practices, and is well maintained by the development.

- H** Loading, trash service, and other back-of-building functions are not visible from the front of the building to ensure an attractive and inviting face to the development.
- I** Parking, loading, and trash service is buffered with plantings or screening from residential neighborhoods and open spaces.
- J** Sidewalks and other multimodal facilities connect and allow access to neighboring placetypes.
- K** Facilities incorporate noise mitigating landscaping or facility design to minimize negative impacts to neighboring residential.

## Additional Design Considerations

- ADA accessibility is required and may be provided as depicted within the typical design cross sections for the function of the road.
- Stormwater infrastructure adheres to best management practices and is strategically integrated into the design of all development. Curb and gutter are required.
- Parking, loading, and trash service is buffered with plantings or screening from residential neighborhoods and open spaces.

## Function of Supporting Uses

Commercial businesses in Employment Centers support the daily needs of employees with restaurants, convenience stores, groceries, banks, and pharmacies. Buildings can be standalone, clustered together, or in a small strip center.



# PLACETYPE: REGIONAL OPEN SPACE

*The Regional Open Space placetype prioritizes preserving and protecting the abundant natural and open space areas in the County while accommodating developed parks facilities.*

## Character

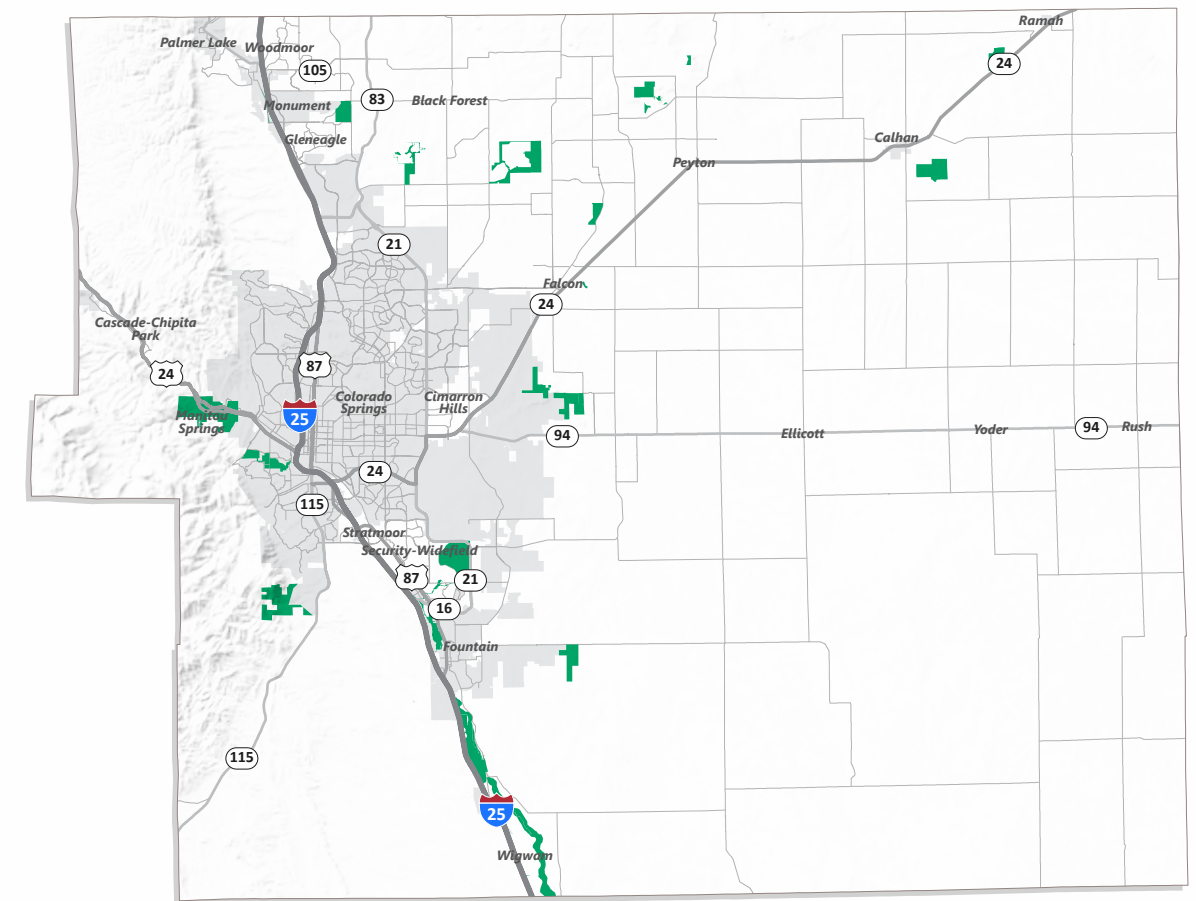
Regional Open Space encompasses large areas of both natural environment and developed parks of varying size and function. Representing more than just County parks, areas designated as Regional Open Space are often significant in size and complement adjacent developed areas. Natural open space in the County includes large areas of land managed by federal, state, County, and city entities that are not otherwise included within the Mountain Interface placetype.

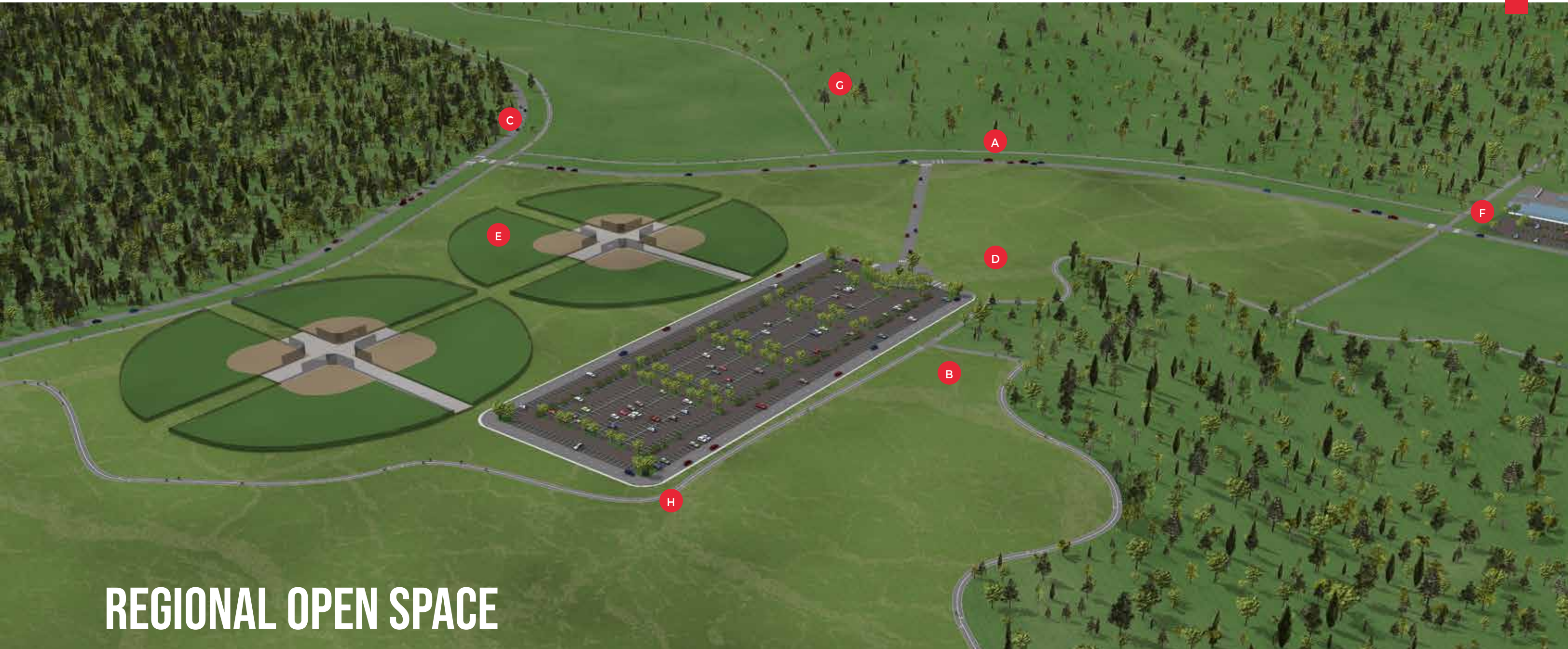
This placetype includes undeveloped areas with significant ecological value as well as programmed parks accommodating passive and active recreation, both of which may function as stormwater-management facilities. The Fountain Creek corridor is a primary example of an area of significant ecological interest.

## Land Uses

### Primary

- Parks
- Open Space
- Natural Areas
- Paleontological Areas





# REGIONAL OPEN SPACE

## Placetype Characteristics

- A** Connect regional parks and open spaces through a network of trails and greenways. Major highways and major county roads may provide multimodal facilities on frontage roads, adjacent trails or sidewalks. Existing gravel roads that receive increased development may need to be paved. County roads that do not meet current standards may be improved.
- B** Connectivity is provided via roads, sidewalks, trails, hiking paths, and other multimodal facilities to access other placetypes.
- C** Locate streets on the edge of green spaces to create public views and access. Internal roads may be needed to access parking lots. All right of way is preserved and access control is prioritized.
- D** Primarily open space and active and passive recreation areas.
- E** Programmed athletic complexes with accessory structures.
- F** Nature centers, visitor centers and other associated structures are appropriate.
- G** Trails, sidewalks or other multimodal facilities connect to all adjacent placetype pathways and allow access across the region.
- H** Open Space uses that create excessive noise, light, or large crowds are buffered from residential neighborhoods with appropriate setbacks, landscaping, and intentional design elements to prevent conflict or nuisance.

## Additional Design Considerations

- ADA accessibility is required and may be provided as depicted within the typical design cross sections for the function of the road.
- Stormwater infrastructure adheres to best management practices and is strategically integrated into the development of parks and the preservation of open spaces.
- Playgrounds, public facilities, and associated parking lots.
- Parking access is designed to mitigate congestion from roadways entering and exiting during programmed events.
- Site access may be limited to preserve historical and paleontological features.

# PLACETYPE: MOUNTAIN INTERFACE

*The Mountain Interface placetype preserves the integrity of the mountainous/eastern foothills area of the Front Range while addressing the needs of existing residents in the area.*

## Character

The Mountain Interface placetype includes all areas in the County on or directly adjacent to the Eastern Slope area of the Front Range. As the largest and most-visited natural feature in El Paso County, the Mountain Interface presents a unique set of challenges to address in implementing the Master Plan. The Mountain Interface placetype recognizes the importance the Front Range plays in the County from both an ecologic and economic perspective

Due to its unique nature and overall importance, the Mountain Interface placetype must be appropriately preserved to help maintain the natural beauty of the County and protect the habitats of its abundant and diverse wildlife. There are several residential developments within the Mountain Interface placetype, particularly within the Ute Pass and Highway 115 corridors. New development within the Mountain Interface placetype must be well managed against the necessity of preservation and protection of this unique environmental area of the County.

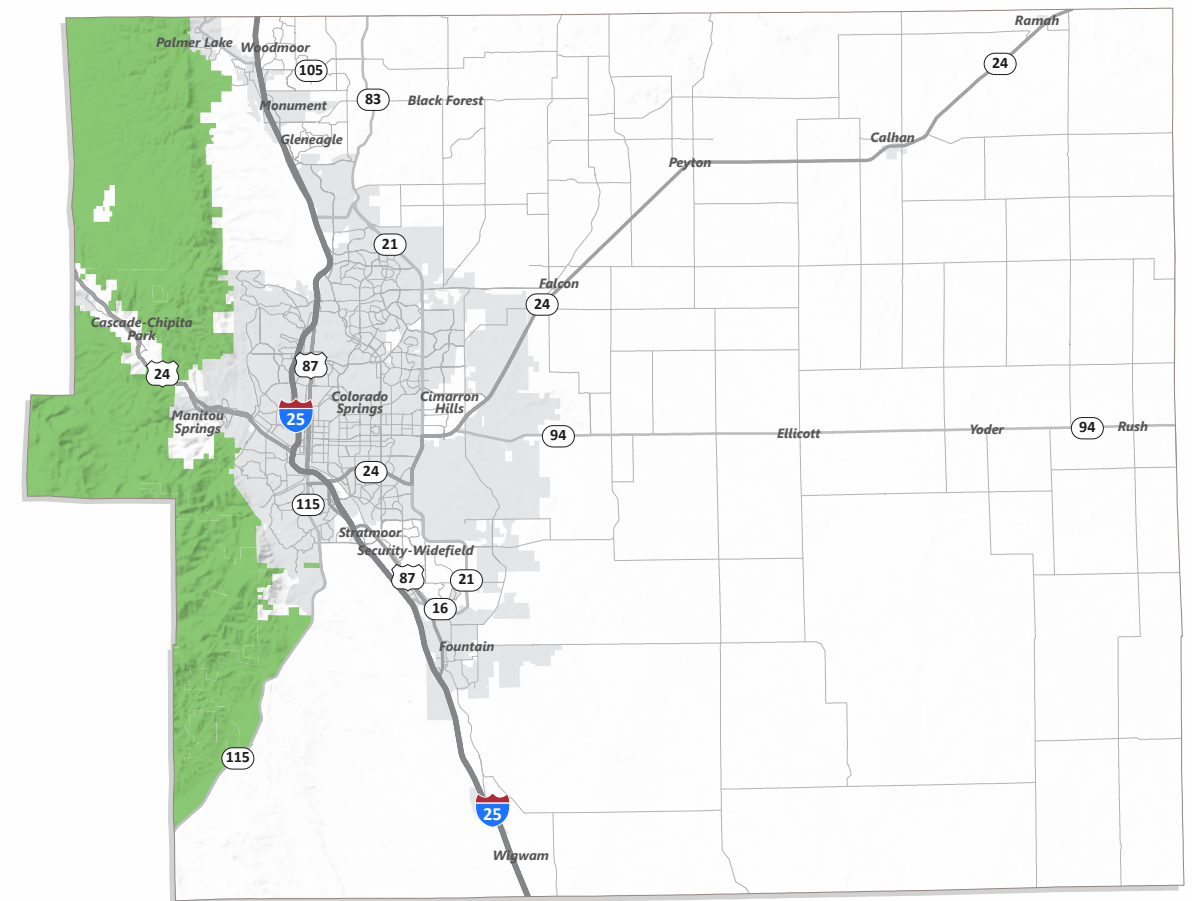
## Land Uses

### Primary

- Parks/Open Space
- Natural Areas

### Supporting

- Single-family Detached Residential
- Commercial Retail (Limited)
- Commercial Service (Limited)
- Tourism Commercial (Arts, Entertainment)
- Institutional (Public Facilities)





# MOUNTAIN INTERFACE

## Placetype Characteristics

- A** Major roadways such as state highways and County roads are paved. Most local roads are also paved, especially if connecting to an existing paved road. Most roads follow terrain and avoid hazards. Existing gravel roads that receive increased development may need to be paved. County roads that do not meet current standards will be improved as new development occurs.
- B** Multiuse pathways or other multimodal facilities allow public access to the Front Range.
- C** Loading, trash service, and other similar areas are located at rear of the building.
- D** Commercial and tourism parking is well landscaped and incorporates best management practices. Access is controlled to major roads.
- E** Small-scale development sensitive to the unique local ecological conditions.
- F** Clustered residential minimizes impacts and preserves and protects the natural environment.
- G** Roads, sidewalks, pathways and other multimodal facilities connect to adjacent placetypes and allow for regional access.

- H** Commercial development is clustered and oriented towards major roadways with access controls to preserve roadway function and enhance safety. Parking facilities provide ADA-compliant internal network of sidewalk connections and highly visible crosswalks.
- I** Commercial uses are buffered with landscaping or screening from lower intensity uses and negative impacts are appropriately mitigated.
- J** All right of way is preserved in association with new development. Major roads support longer trips to help connect higher-density and commercial areas, accommodate truck travel, and prioritize access control.

## Additional Design Considerations

- ADA accessibility is required and may be provided with multiuse shoulders of a given roadway, as depicted within the typical design cross section for the function of the road.
- Stormwater infrastructure adheres to best management practices and is strategically integrated into the design of all development.
- Small scale development sensitive to the unique local ecological conditions.
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are compatible in this placetype and should function in the context of the existing neighborhood.

## Function of Supporting Uses

The priority of Mountain Interface is preserving the natural environment while thoughtfully incorporating residential homes. Commercial uses are minimal in this placetype with small-scale standalone businesses located only on major roadways, specifically Highway 24 and 115, to serve the neighborhood. Tourism commercial includes services associated with the natural features that draw customers from across the County and region. Public facilities are appropriate to serve the residential uses. These include fire and other emergency services.

# PLACETYPE: MILITARY

*The Military placetype consists of the installations and the supporting land uses that surround them. Military installations are major land owners and employers and to help support sustainable growth in the community they must also be adequately supported.*

## Character

Land use and development near and immediately adjacent to existing military installations, as well as their ancillary facilities, require additional consideration with regard to the compatibility of development and the potential for impacts or interference with military lands and potential future military base missions. The five military installations in the County, Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, Fort Carson, Peterson Air Force Base, Schriever Air Force Base, and the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA), each function of their own accord.

Most include a mix of residential and other supporting uses in addition to their core military functions. In total they serve over 151,000 active-duty, National Guard, Reserve, retired military personnel, contractors, and other related tenants throughout Colorado's Front Range. The County continues to partner with all of the installations to maintain compatible use transitions and buffers adjacent to each installation through open space protection and site-specific development restrictions. Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) is a key factor in the Military placetype. This is the only placetype that proposes to describe primary and supporting land uses for areas around and near the placetype, which causes overlap with adjacent placetypes.

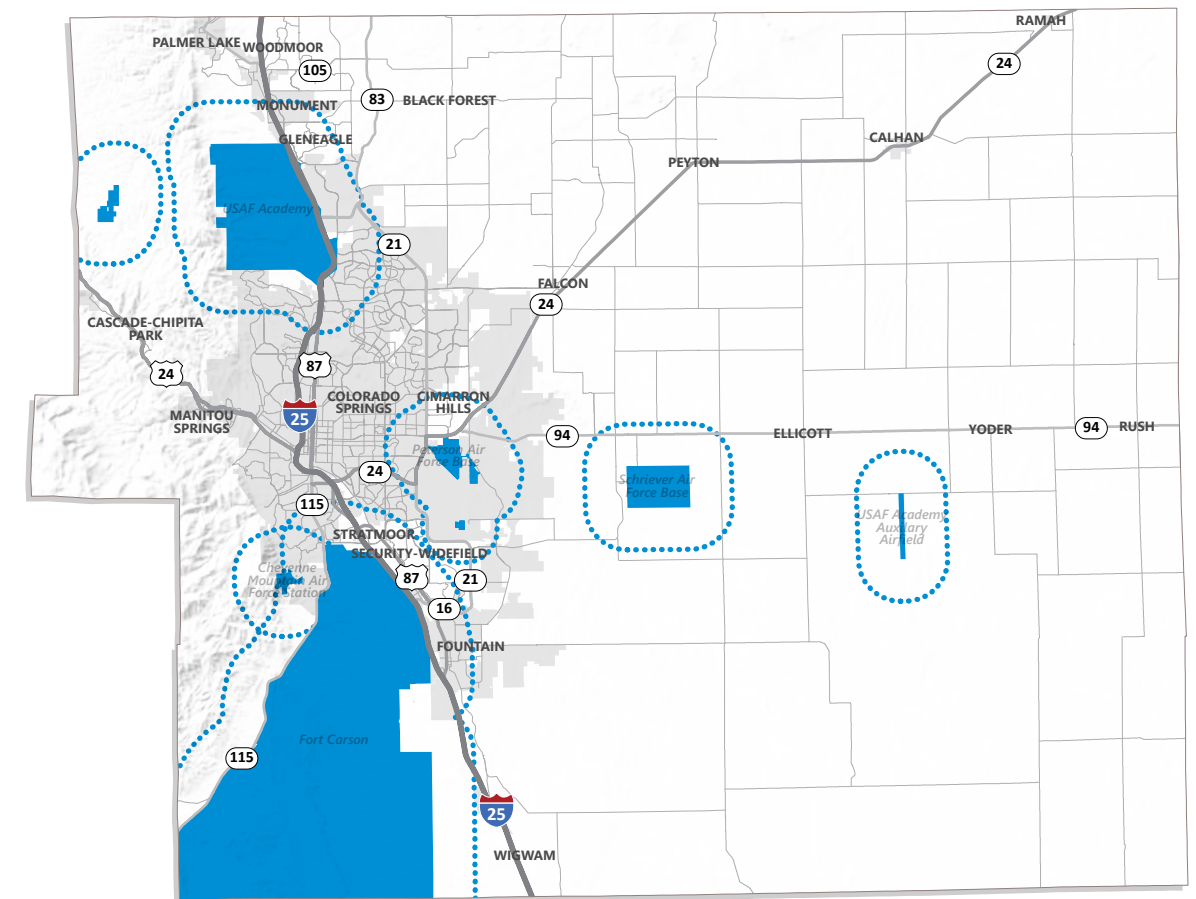
## Land Uses

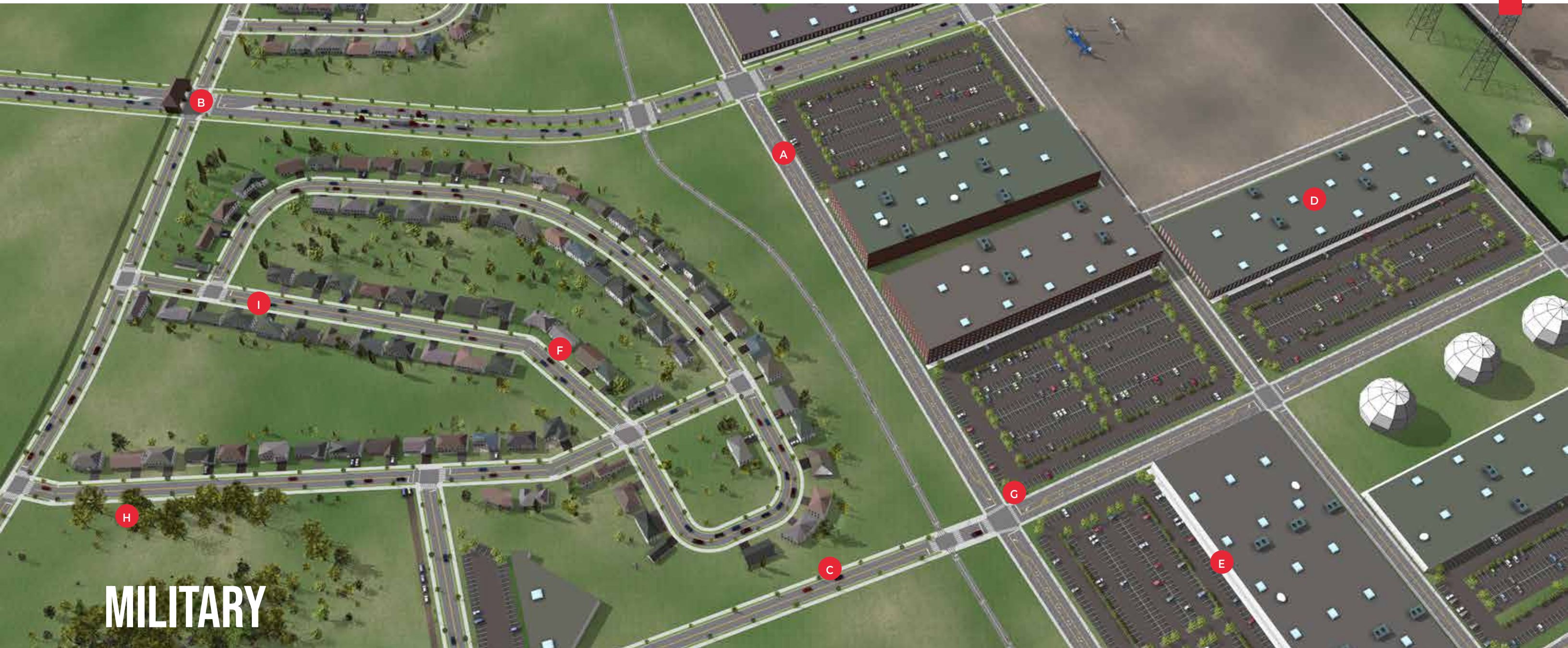
### Primary

- Military Operation
- Office
- Light Industrial
- Multifamily Residential

### Supporting

- Single-family Detached Residential
- Single-family Attached Residential
- Restaurant
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Entertainment
- Institutional
- Parks and Open Space





# MILITARY

## Placetype Characteristics

- A** Major roadways such as state highways, County roads, and City streets are paved. County roads that provide access to military installations that do not meet current standards will be improved.
- B** Each installation within the placetype has strategic access points entering and exiting base areas to ensure mission security and mitigate congestion onto major arterials.
- C** Sidewalks and pathways provide a network to connect facilities.
- D** Primarily low-rise military facilities and multifamily housing with accessory support buildings.
- E** Buildings are oriented towards the street and building entrances are highly visible.
- F** Buildings along an entire block follow uniform setbacks from the street.

- G** Security screening is setback from sidewalks and adjacent residential.
- H** Buffer landscaping is provided in the setback and screening occurs for areas of development.
- I** Areas off-base within the two-mile notification zone follow the built form characteristics of the respective placetypes but may incorporate additional requirements due to proximity to each of the respective installations.

## Additional Design Considerations

- ADA accessibility is required and may be provided as depicted within the typical design cross sections for the function of the road.
- Stormwater infrastructure adheres to best management practices and is strategically integrated into the layout of each installation and into the design of all development within and in close proximity to each installation.
- Site fencing prohibits access from surrounding non-military properties.

## Function of Supporting Uses

The Military placetype is unique and includes some commercial businesses that the individual installations deem appropriate on a case-by-case basis. Commercial uses within each installation serve the residents and employees. For areas off base, commercial businesses provide the same function, however at a smaller scale with grocery stores, restaurants, and a host of local retail and service shops. These are often clustered together instead of standalone.

# PLACETYPE: UTILITY

The Utility placetype outlines the location and unique function of large-scale utility facilities in El Paso County.

## Character

The Utility placetype includes small areas that house major utility facilities that support the daily operations of all County residents and businesses. This placetype, which includes facilities such as landfills, power plants, water treatment facilities, and water reservoirs, is often located adjacent to the Rural or Large-Lot Residential placetypes as these are largely uninhabited areas. As such, the uses within the Utility placetype are comprised of the utility facility and potential storage space surrounded by an expanse of open space serving as a buffer to other placetypes.

This placetype represents existing locations of utility facilities in the County. Planning for future locations is difficult due to the unique set of requirements that must be met for each facility. However, future utility facilities can still align with the Master Plan by maintaining consistency with the adjacent placetypes. Future Utility placetypes require detailed review on a case-by-case basis to ensure compatibility with other existing and planned developments.

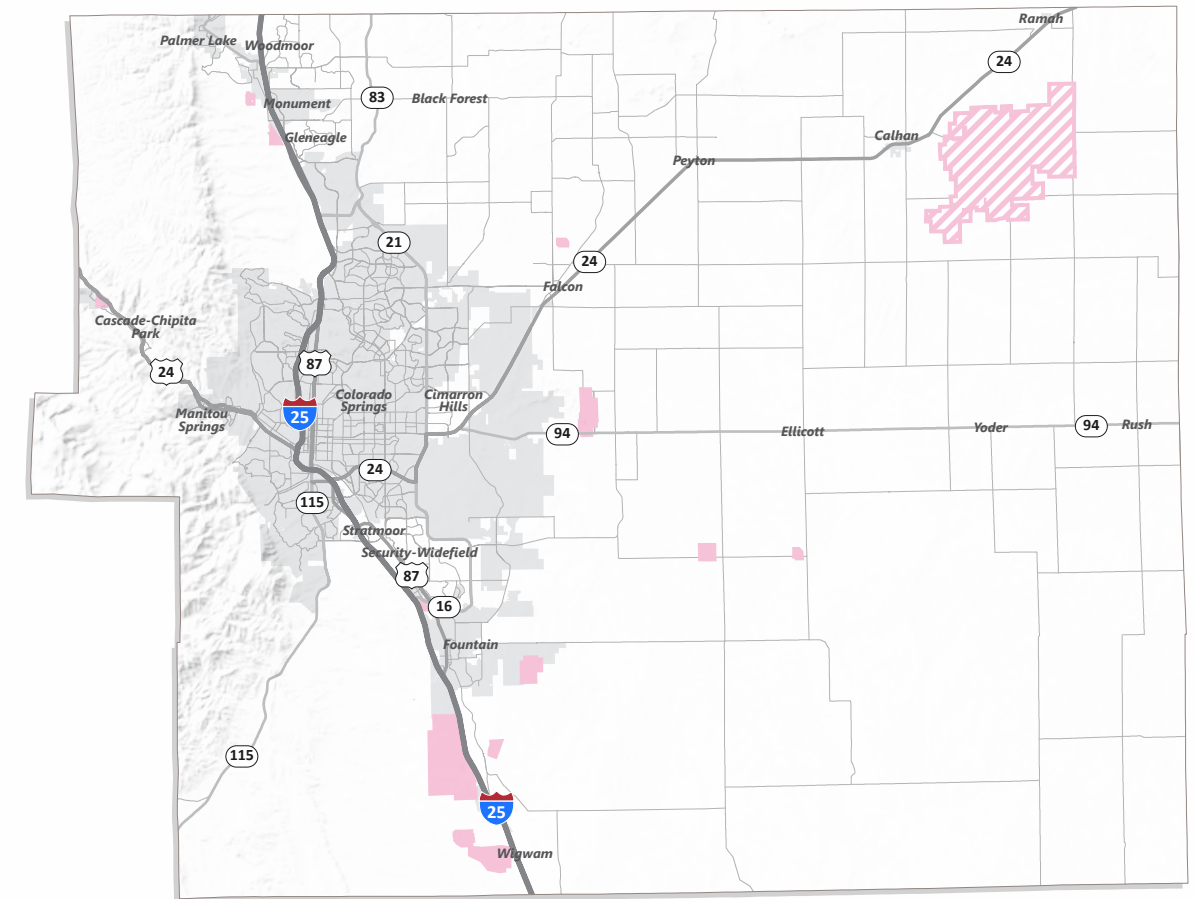
## Land Uses

### Primary

- Landfills
- Power Plants (Any Energy Source)
- Water Reservoirs and Treatment Facilities
- Wastewater Treatment Facilities

### Supporting

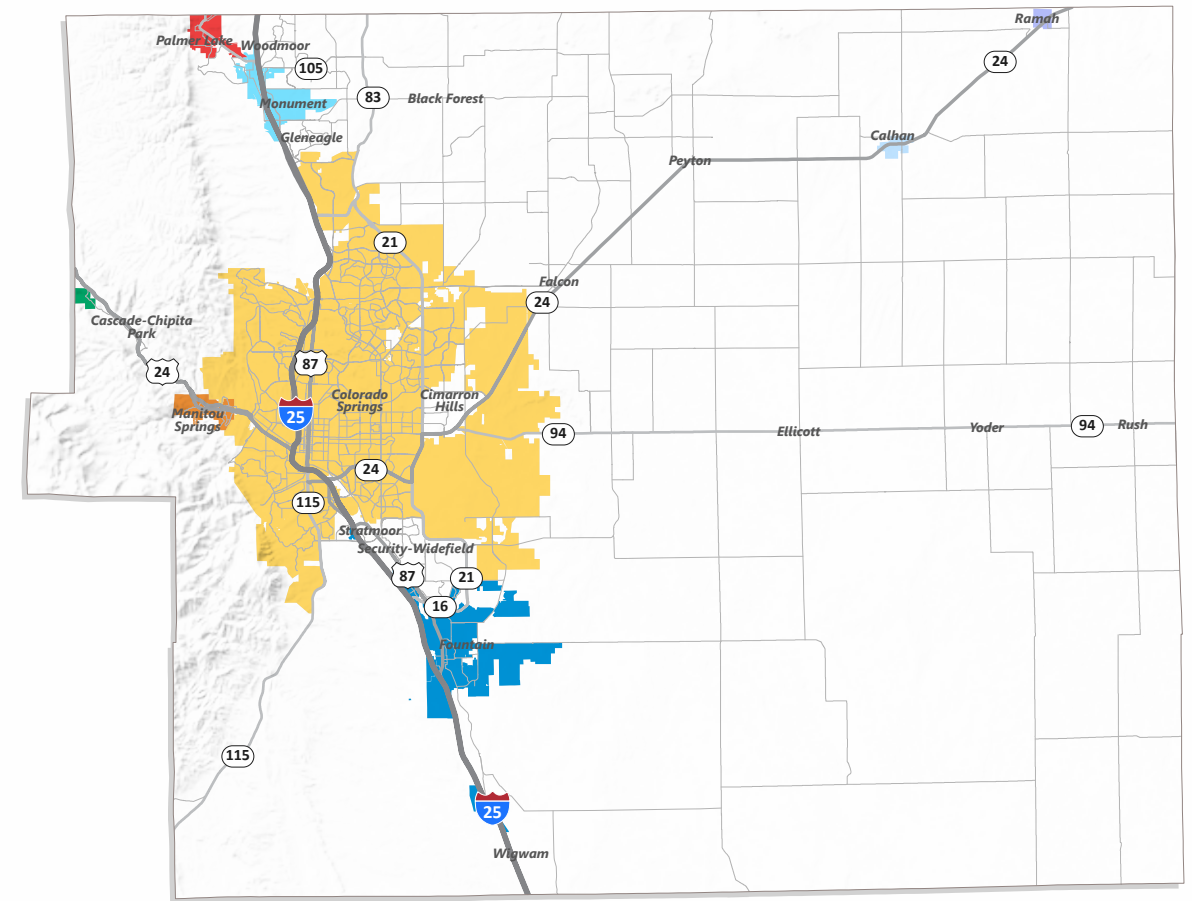
- Storage Facilities
- Open Space



# INCORPORATED AREAS

Incorporated Areas are the lands within the boundaries of the eight incorporated cities and towns in El Paso County, the largest of which is the City of Colorado Springs, and the smallest of which is the Town of Ramah in the northeast corner of the County. While the Master Plan will not address new land use and development in these incorporated municipalities, coordination with them will be critical to establishing the placetypes in the unincorporated areas of El Paso County.

Where municipalities border unincorporated Urban placetypes, land uses and infrastructure may be similar. Typically the unincorporated areas provide housing options for residents who work in the incorporated municipalities. As development occurs in unincorporated areas that are directly adjacent incorporated municipalities annexation should be considered. In certain cases, a municipality may own land outside of its contiguous boundary, which is typically used for parks, open space, or utility services.

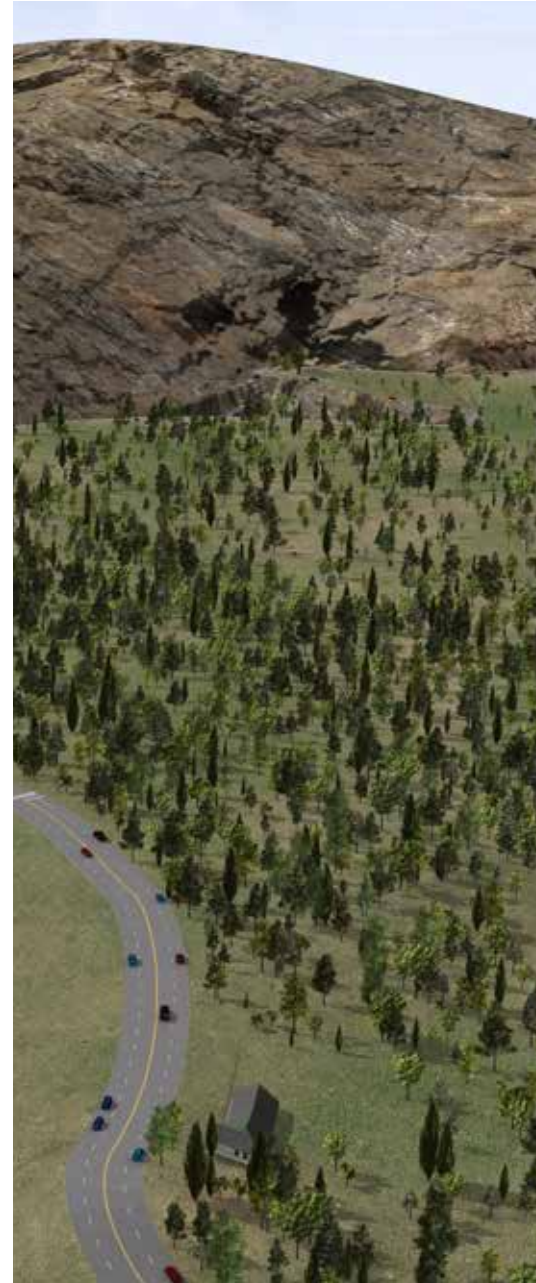




## Placetype Transitions

The placetype approach helps manage growth in the 2,100-square-mile County by breaking down and identifying 11 different and unique character areas. The Placetype Transitions depicts the placetypes' relationship to one another with regard to size, scale, design, intensity, access, and compatibility. Compatible placetypes are shown adjacent to one another, indicating that the type and intensity of development in one would not negatively affect the intended character of the other. The transition area between the two is largely seamless because the scale and type of development, infrastructure, transportation systems, and appropriate design guidelines are close, if not the same in some instances. The placetypes are generally represented as they would be in the County geographically, moving from Mountain Interface on the western edge to Rural in the east. While their representation in the Transitions graphic is generally accurate, some placetypes could be located anywhere in El Paso County and are compatible with many different placetypes.

It is important to reemphasize the intended flexibility of the placetypes approach and their ability to morph over time as desires, needs, and opportunities dictate. Placetypes are not necessarily intended to be a linear transect, always existing from most to least development intensity. Placetypes of varying intensity can appropriately exist next to one another given appropriate design, activity, and distance, even if not in the order depicted in the accompanying transition graphic. Ultimately, the future is not entirely predictable and placetypes are the County's best approach to navigating the uncertainty in a way that can provide and safeguard desired character while addressing the needs of residents, businesses, and stakeholders as market conditions change and opportunities arise over time.



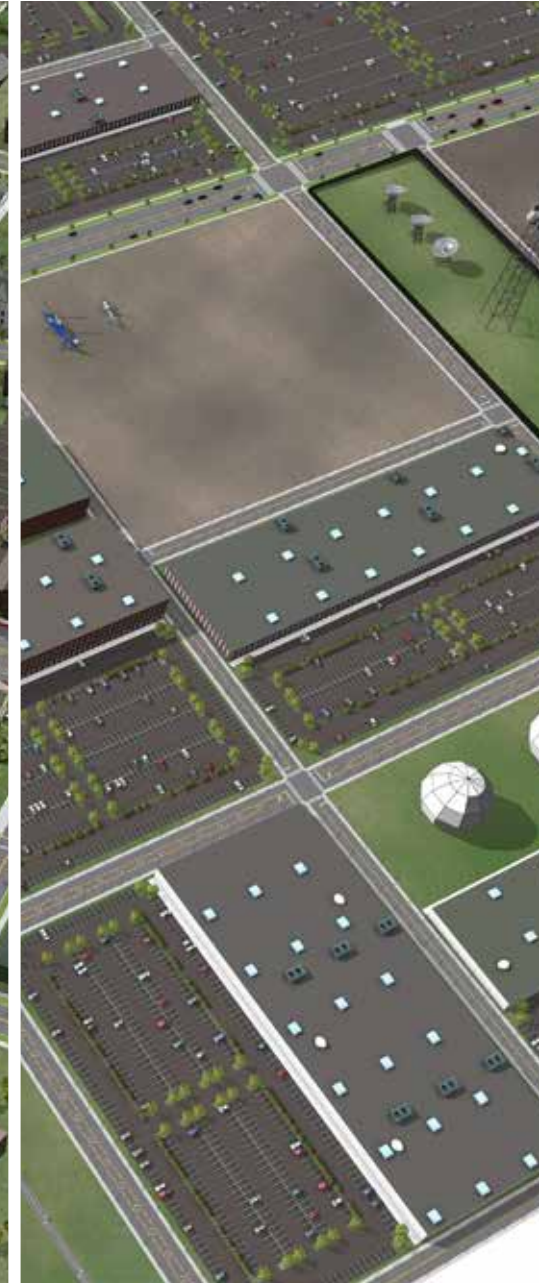
### ***Mountain Interface***

The Mountain Interface placetype preserves the integrity of the Front Range while addressing the needs of existing area residents.



### ***Urban Residential***

The Urban Residential placetype establishes growth areas through connected and complete neighborhoods with a mix of housing products and density.



### ***Military***

The Military placetype consists of the installations and the supporting land uses that surround them.



### ***Employment Center***

The Employment Center Placetype supports large-scale, nonretail businesses that provide significant employment and economic development opportunities.



***Regional Center***

The Regional Center placetype is a commercial destination that provides access to goods, services, and a variety of entertainment options.



***Suburban Residential***

The Suburban Residential placetype comprises the County's traditional residential neighborhoods with supporting commercial uses.



***Regional Open Space***

The Regional Open Space placetype prioritizes preserving and protecting the County's natural areas while accommodating developed parks facilities.



***Large Lot Residential***

The Large-Lot Residential placetype supports the County's rural character while providing for unique and desirable neighborhoods.



***Rural Center***

The Rural Centers placetype provides rural residents vital access to goods, services, and public facilities.



***Rural***

The Rural placetype supports the County's established agricultural and rural identity.

## 4

# HOUSING & COMMUNITIES

With an area of 2,100 square miles, El Paso County has a variety of communities and neighborhoods with a diverse range of housing types, architectural styles, and block configurations. Although they are not located within an incorporated Town or City, El Paso County has several well-known communities with established identities like Black Forest, Falcon, and Cimarron Hills that are recognized destinations by residents and visitors alike. These established neighborhoods define the character of several of the placetypes identified in the Land Use chapter. The *Housing & Communities* chapter provides further guidance as to the desired types and locations of housing within those placetypes.

This chapter provides policies that apply to the El Paso County community as a whole, however, the issues these policies address are not necessarily present in every single one of the County's residential neighborhoods. As such, the application of Countywide policies should be tailored to the needs and conditions of El Paso County's various neighborhoods.

#### Inside this Chapter

*Priority Redevelopment Areas (page 49)*  
*Housing Mix (page 56)*  
*Affordability (page 58)*  
*Environmental Compatibility (page 64)*

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**Core Principle 2:** Preserve and develop neighborhoods with a mix of housing types.

*Goal 2.1* - Promote development of a mix of housing types in identified areas.

*Goal 2.2* - Preserve the character of rural and environmentally sensitive areas.

*Goal 2.3* - Locate attainable housing that provides convenient access to goods, services, and employment.

*Goal 2.4* - Support aging-in-place housing options to meet residents' needs through all stages of life.

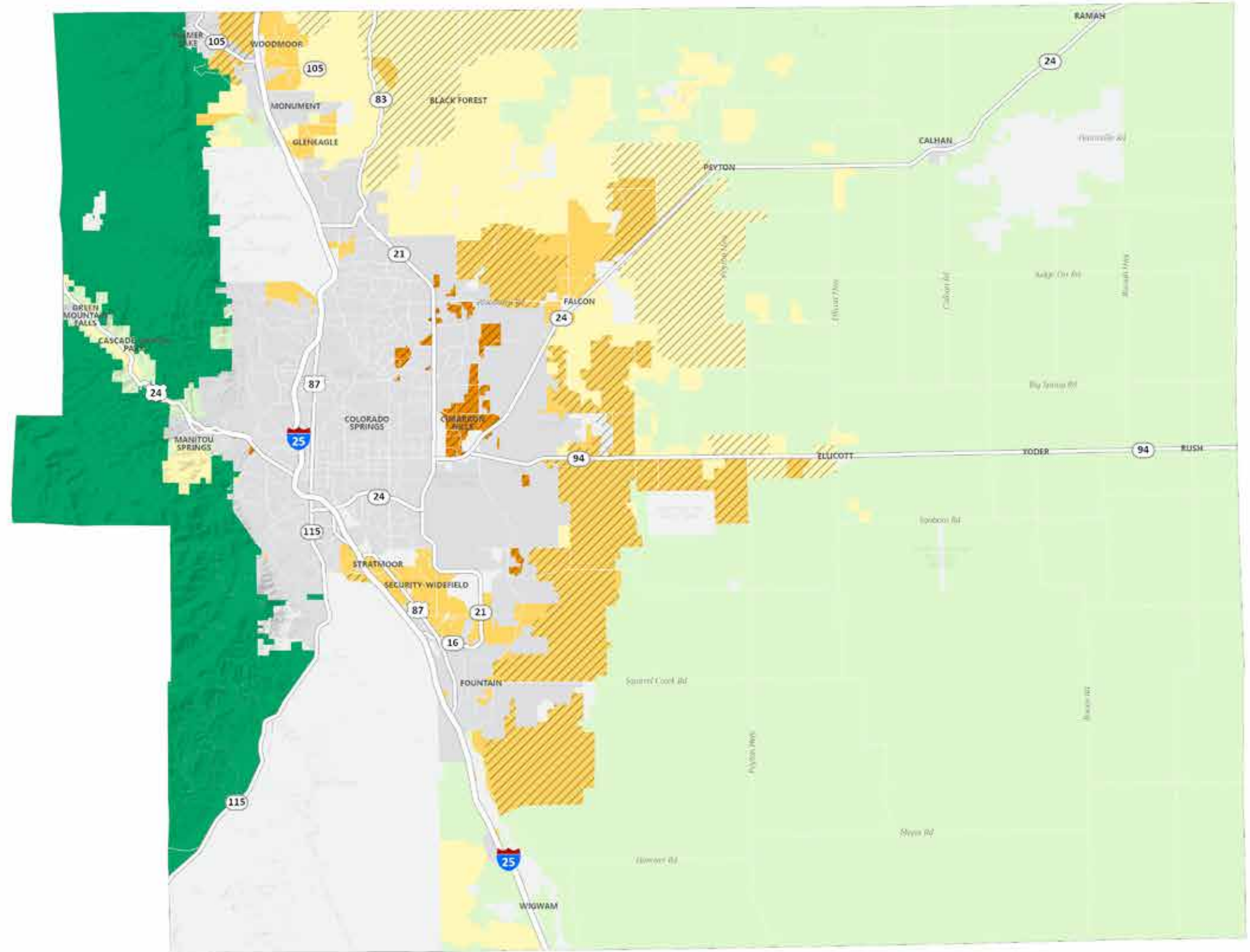
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# Priority Development Areas

El Paso County is expecting significant growth over the next 20 years. While large expanses of undeveloped land exist throughout the County, particularly in the Rural Placetype, development should be prioritized elsewhere to efficiently utilize and extend existing infrastructure, conserve water resources, and strengthen established neighborhoods. This framework identifies specific locations throughout the County that should be prioritized first for new residential development to help accommodate growth. While some priority development areas may be made up of a mix of placetypes, each area is driven by a predominant placetype that defines most of the area. The map shows some gaps between priority development areas and municipal boundaries. These areas are largely developed already and will continue to develop as necessary. In the following section, numbers are only intended to connect recommendations to the corresponding locations in the County. They are not a hierarchy of priority.

## Housing and Communities Framework

- Mountain Interface
- Rural
- Large-Lot Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Urban Residential
- Priority Development Areas



## Potential Annexation Areas

As established in the Key Areas section of this Plan, it is anticipated that several unincorporated parts of El Paso County will be annexed into adjacent municipalities, particularly the City of Colorado Springs. All of the identified areas are located just outside municipal limits, which would make annexation easier for both the County and the associated municipality. This proximity simplifies the ability to extend municipal services into these regions. Access to services, namely water and wastewater, is the most important factor in the County for determining appropriate areas for annexation. The County coordinated with the larger municipalities help identify these areas.

### Costs

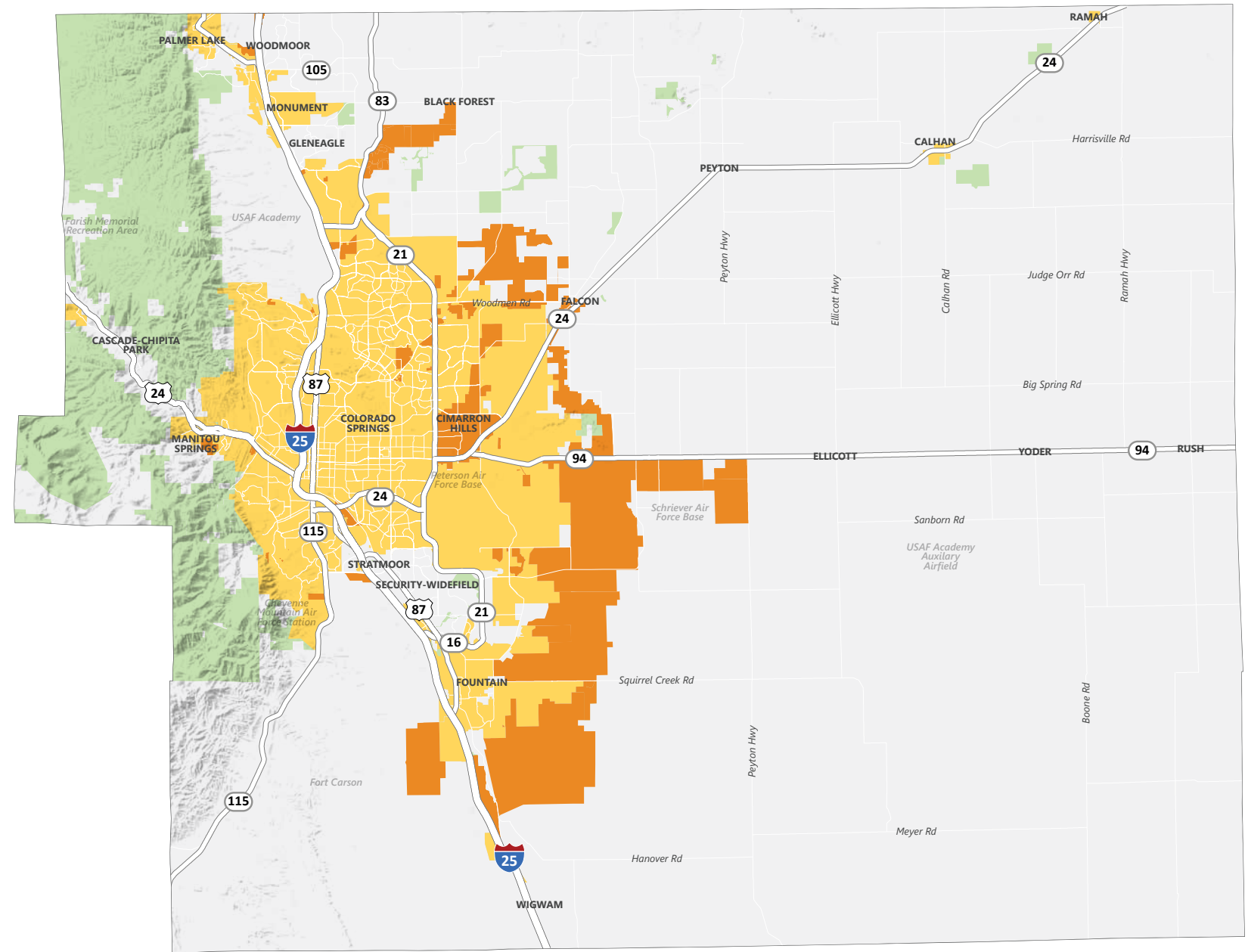
For the County, as a government entity, the cost of maintaining infrastructure and services is an important factor when evaluating locations for future potential annexation. New development will increase the strain on the County's existing infrastructure and will eventually necessitate the construction of new facilities to ensure all parts of the County are appropriately served. For example, El Paso County struggles to adequately maintain its existing roadway network. The development of more neighborhoods in outlying areas will increase use of roadways and related maintenance costs, and further exacerbate gaps in roadway funding.

### Sustainable Growth

The County must determine how and when areas under its jurisdiction should and can be annexed by a municipality in order to establish a growth pattern for the future. A formalized growth pattern will help the County better plan for financial impacts associated with infrastructure management.

The following recommendations are intended to facilitate sustainable growth across El Paso County:

- The County should **provide input and support to municipalities when updating their annexation plans** to help identify areas for incorporation into municipalities based on infrastructure needs, maintenance costs and available funding, municipal interest and capacity, and other factors.
- **Coordinate regularly with municipalities** to maintain knowledge of plans for annexation.
- **Continue to evaluate development impact fees**, requiring adequate private investment to ensure any long-term maintenance of new development will not overburden County resources, and will be served by adequate infrastructure until they can be incorporated if necessary or desired.
- **Ensure all future municipal annexations are contiguous to municipal limits** to prevent the formation of enclaves of unincorporated areas.
- **Prioritize the annexation of existing unincorporated County enclaves** as opportunities arise.
- **Actively participate in the development of any new or updated comprehensive annexation plans** being prepared by the incorporated municipalities, as appropriate.
- **Coordinate with each of the municipalities experiencing substantial growth** to develop an intergovernmental agreement aimed at:
  - Improving the process of transferring publicly owned infrastructure through the annexation process
  - Furthering shared goals and expectations of growth management
  - Establishing reasonable expectations for cross-jurisdictional collaboration and effective channels of communication at all levels of government
  - Developing cooperative planning areas, as appropriate.



### Potential Annexation Areas

- Priority Annexation Areas
- Incorporated Municipalities



## Urban Residential Priority Development Areas

### 1 Colorado Centre

Colorado Springs is already growing in the direction of this enclave. Employment-focused development around the airport is pushing residential development in the surrounding areas. It is partially developed, predominantly with suburban style detached units.

- **Infill development should further support single-family detached units** with some single-family attached, possibly along Horizon View Drive.
- **Multifamily apartments should also be considered on the west side of Horizon View Drive** to help provide affordable options for future residents, many of which could be working at existing or new businesses around Colorado Springs Airport.

### 2 Larger Enclaves

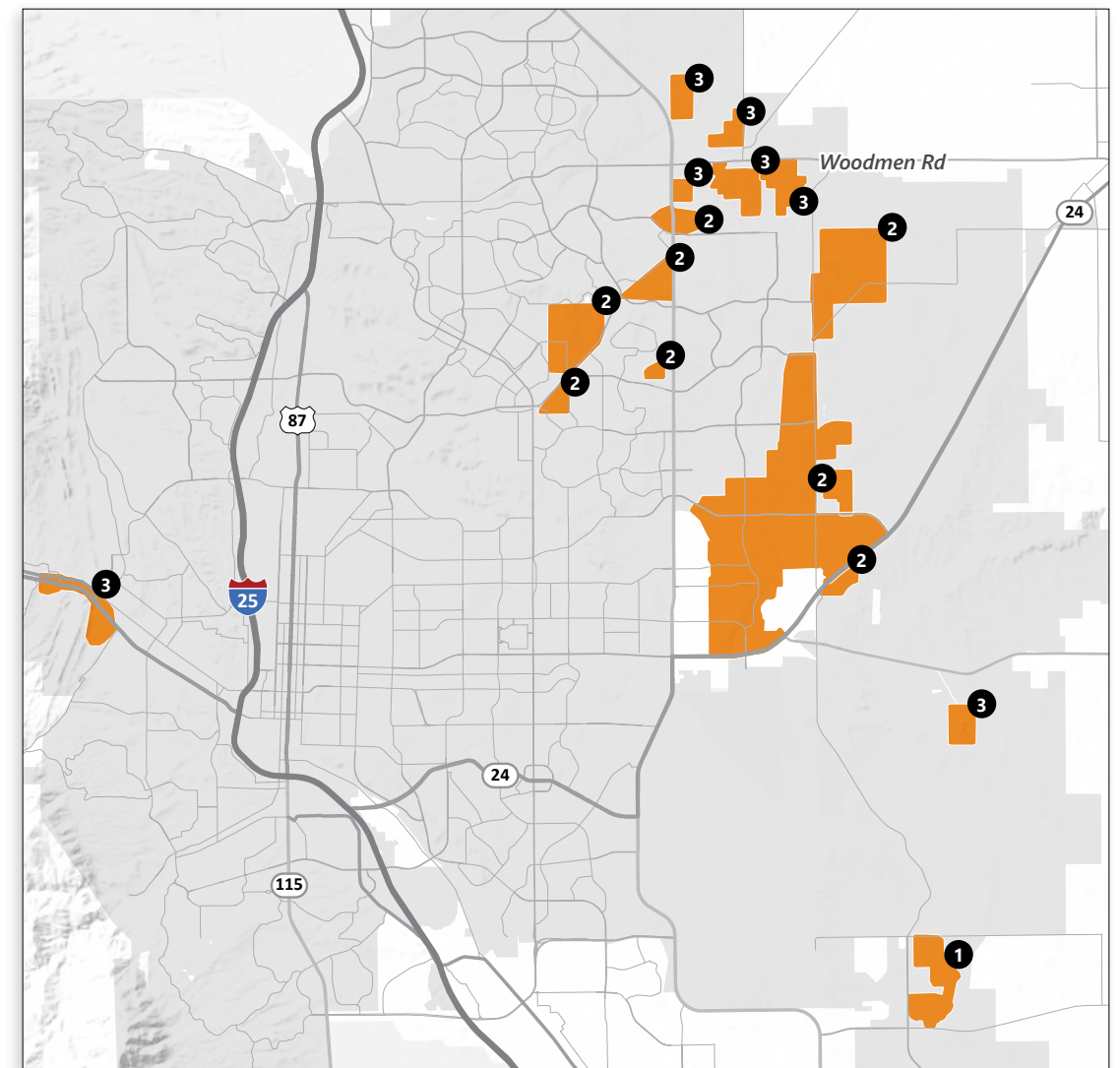
Larger enclaves, including Cimarron Hills, currently exhibit the Urban Residential place-types characteristics. They have denser housing clustered together with a wide variety of commercial and employment businesses to create a complete community. However, some have only one or two uses due to their size. All of them have been designated as transition areas within the Areas of Change because all or part of them could be redeveloped to better support the establishment of complete communities.

- **Redevelop deteriorating single-family homes and sporadic commercial businesses to single-family attached or multifamily units** to increase density where appropriate in the context of the existing neighborhood.
- **Vacant industrial should be redeveloped to an entertainment use or small commercial retail center** to better support residents.
- Overall, the County should **prioritize higher-quality redevelopment of any primary or supporting land use for the Urban Residential placetype** as opportunities arise.

### 3 Smaller Enclaves

These enclaves are set apart from the larger enclaves because they are identified for new development within the Areas of Change instead of transition. They are comprised of a significant amount of undeveloped land and/or large-lot single-family homes that do not fit the character of the surrounding urban neighborhoods. Some also have the potential to transition to denser development should the opportunity arise.

- The County should **emphasize redevelopment of these enclaves, where compatible, to denser urban residential uses** such as multifamily and single-family attached dwelling units where appropriate in the context of the existing neighborhood. Some may require parcel consolidation if existing businesses leave.
- **Mixed-use development is also feasible in some of these areas** with appropriate parcel consolidation, roadway configuration, and design.
- **Any redevelopment should emphasize residential development first** and then accommodate supporting uses.



Urban Residential Priority Development Areas



## Suburban Residential Priority Development Areas

### 1 Highway 105 & Interstate 25

The area is located between Monument, Woodmoor, and Palmer Lake. Due to its proximity to these communities, this area has largely developed to match that community's style of suburban residential and should continue to do so without impediment. It would also be supported by commercial and public services, both of which are important factors when considering denser development. Furthermore, increased density at the northern end of the County would help support residents who commute north for work every day.

- **New and infill development should be encouraged within the significant area of available vacant or underutilized agricultural, land across Interstate 25** to continue the expansion of existing Suburban Residential areas.
- **Single-family attached and detached housing units should be developed in a cohesive manner that establishes a seamless transition between different housing types**, as opposed to large, isolated clusters or blocks of a single type of housing. Maintaining this mixed development pattern should be prioritized by the County to preserve the existing residential character of this area.

### 2 Falcon

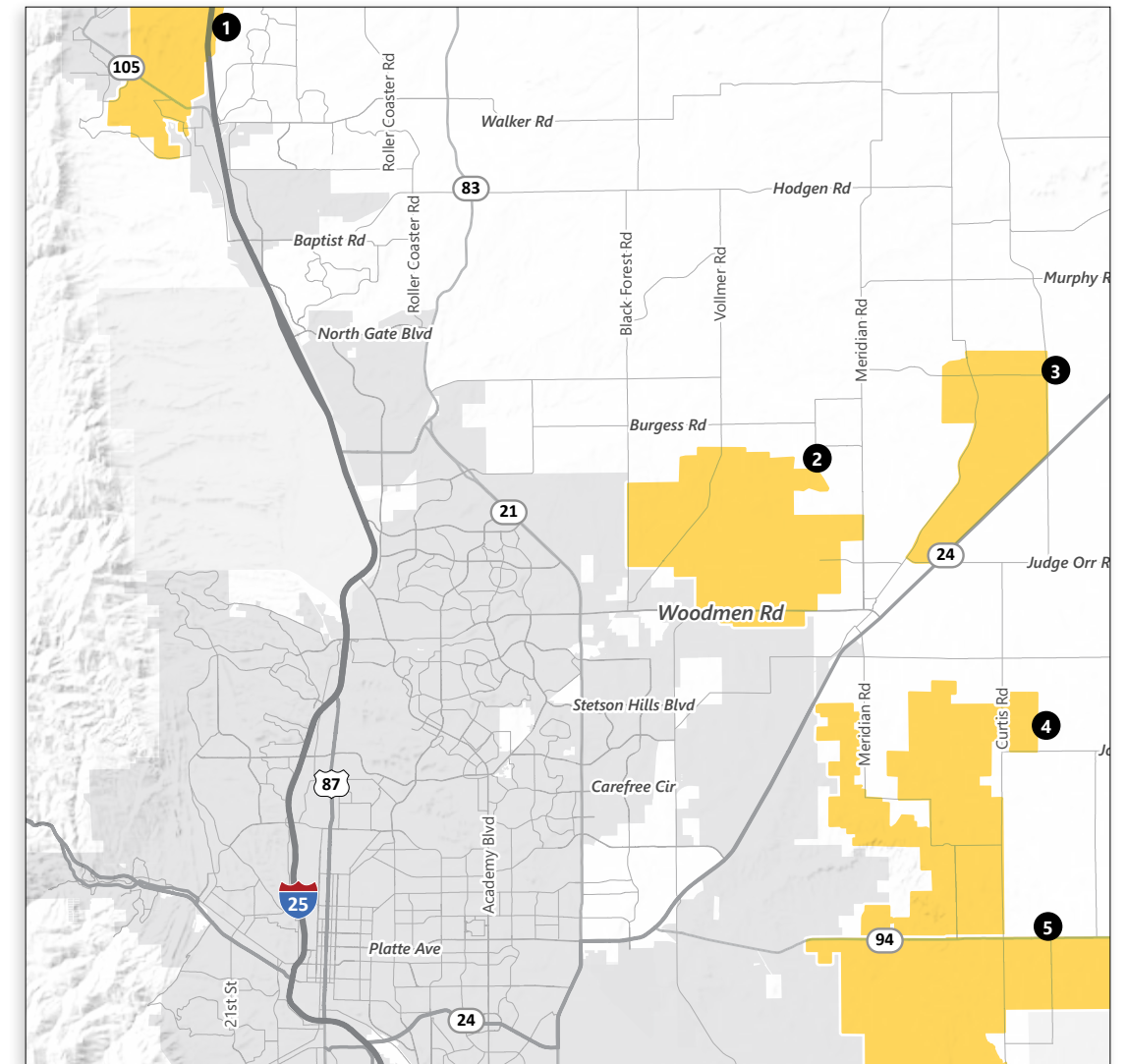
The Falcon community has developed its own unique character and functions like a small municipality. New Suburban Residential development would not only match the existing development pattern in Colorado Springs and Falcon to the east and west but also act as a density buffer between more urban development to the south and large-lot to the north.

- **Residential development near the municipal boundaries adjacent to this area may include single-family attached and multifamily units.**
- The County should **emphasize Stapleton Road, Woodmen Road and Vollmer Road as connectivity corridors** that would provide important access to necessary goods and services in surrounding communities, generally supporting suburban residential development.
- The County should **support the completion of Stapleton Road to improve connectivity between Falcon and Colorado Springs.**
- **Neighborhood-level commercial uses and public services should also be considered** in these areas at key intersections.

### 3 Highway 24

Falcon, and the surrounding area, is already growing, with the majority of homes being developed in the last two decades. The amount of vacant land along Highway 24 should not be set aside for Large-Lot Residential alone. Just as with the proposed Large-Lot Residential in this part of the County, proximity to Highway 24 and availability of central services is another benefit to expanding suburban development. The corridor provides important access south to Colorado Springs. Additionally, Curtis Road provides similar access to Schriever Air Force Base.

- To sustain Falcon's growth momentum, the County should **continue to prioritize Suburban Residential in this area.** Doing so would match the community's existing character and utilize available land to accommodate a sizable portion of the County's expected population growth without negatively impacting adjacent areas.
- The County should **emphasize Stapleton Road as a connectivity corridor** that would provide important access to necessary goods and services in this community, generally supporting suburban residential development.
- **Immediate adjacency to Highway 24 should also be utilized for larger commercial development**, not only to support neighborhoods but also to capture commuters.



Suburban Residential Priority Development Areas



#### 4 Highway 94

Similar to the Suburban Residential area along Woodmen Road, proximity to Colorado Springs also helps designate this section of unincorporated County for the same placetype. Availability of land, need to accommodate a growing population, and general adjacency to compatible uses support the identification of this area for suburban style development. Additionally, a significant portion of land directly west of this area, as well as land within this area, has the potential to be annexed by the City of Colorado Springs.

- **Suburban residential should be prioritized** here to provide a transitional buffer between the City and less-dense unincorporated County to the east, helping to protect its rural character.
- The County should **consider allowing attached housing units throughout this area on a case-by-case basis** depending on the size and scale of each development.
- **Supporting commercial uses should be considered particularly along Highway 94** to serve the community and the works and residents at Schriever Air Force Base.

#### 5 Schriever Air Force Base

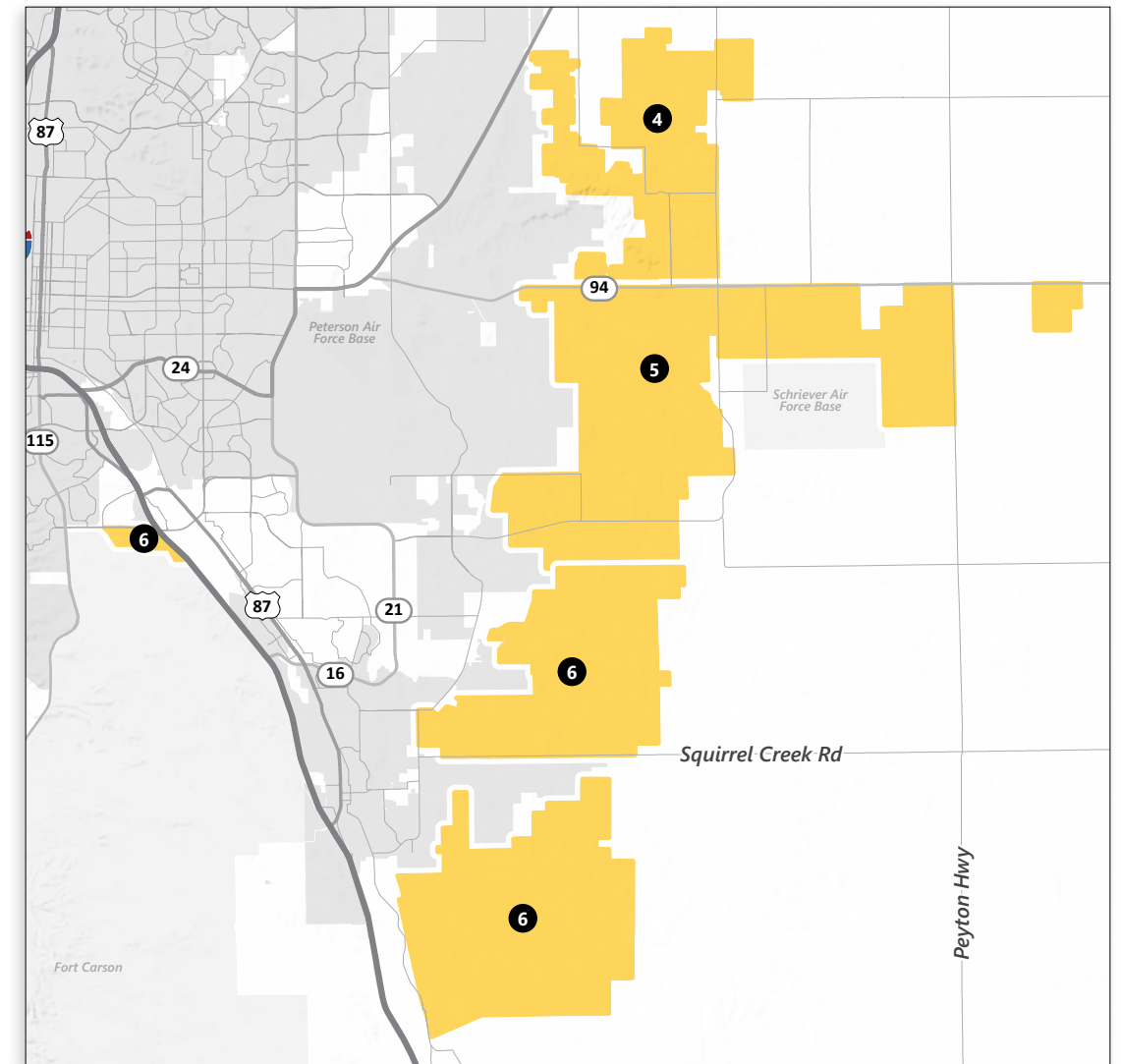
Growth along Highway 94 is expected to continue over the life of this Plan, particularly as operations expand at Schriever Air Force Base. Residential development can support its employees, both military personnel and contractors.

- Suburban development should be **prioritized to help increase density in this area** with smaller-lot sizes, attached housing, and multifamily apartments.
- Efficient use of land helps **preserve open space and reduce impacts on the critical missions** being performed at Schriever Air Force Base and adjacent rural areas.
- The **Rural Center in Ellicott should be expanded** to support the daily commercial needs of residents.
- Additional **commercial uses should be developed at the Highway 94 and Enoch Road** intersection in a manner compatible with and supportive of base operations as well as the anticipated suburban residential development.
- The County should **prioritize the construction of roads as necessary** to improve connectivity to and support the operations of the installation.

#### 6 Fountain Area

The City of Fountain is expected to accommodate a portion of the County's anticipated population growth over the life of this Master Plan. To do so, Fountain has the opportunity to expand south and east along Hanover Road between Squirrel Creek Road and Hanover Road. To match the existing development pattern of the City, this area should be considered for Suburban Residential development. This area includes unincorporated land in the County that is prioritized for future annexation.

- The County should **prioritize Suburban Residential in this area** to support annexation of this area into Fountain.
- **Denser development** should be allowed if compatible with the existing development pattern in Fountain and central water and sewer services are extended.



Suburban Residential Priority Development Areas





## Large-Lot Residential Priority Development Areas

### 1 Black Forest/North Central Area

Black Forest is a community with one of the strongest and most well-established characters in El Paso County. This area is built around protecting the forest and preserving its rural quality. Due to this natural amenity, many new residents seek to live in this area when moving to the County.

- Careful planning is required to **promote health of natural areas, especially the forest**, while accommodating new development for future residents.
- The County should **maintain existing and expand the Large-Lot Residential placetype in this area** in a development pattern that matches the existing character of the developed Black Forest community.
- **Commercial nodes should be considered where appropriately served by the transportation network** in the northern area to provide commercial goods and services within closer proximity to the population in this area. This would reduce unnecessary travel to other parts of the County and establish key commercial areas within the communities that need them.

### 2 Highway 24

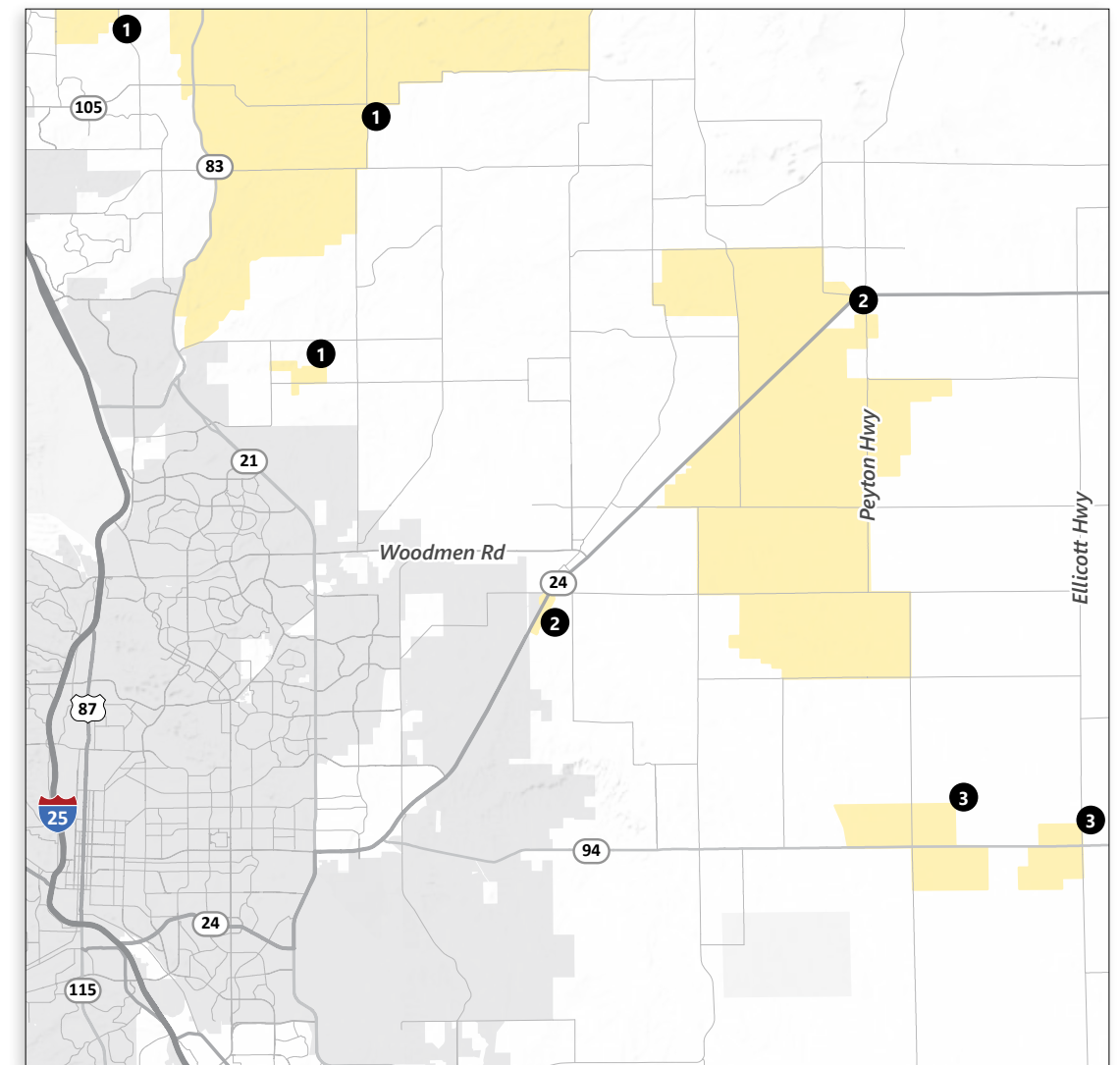
Highway 24 is a major roadway that connects the northeastern part of the County to Colorado Springs. Significant growth is expected along the corridor between Falcon and Peyton not only to connect the existing subdivisions, but also to capitalize on proximity to the Highway and the Falcon Regional Center.

- While an overall density of 2.5 acres per lot should be maintained within this area, consistent with the Large-Lot Residential placetype, **denser development should be allowed if compatible with the existing development pattern and central water and sewer are being extended to provide a transition to expanding Suburban Residential development** in Falcon and areas to the south.

### 3 Highway 94

Highway 94 is another corridor in which the County should support additional Large-Lot Residential development. Potential growth in operations at Schriever Air Force Base could create the need for additional residential development on or near the installation.

- Similar to Highway 24, **denser development is appropriate in areas with access and connectivity to the Highway 94 corridor with compatible development patterns and extension of central water and sewer infrastructure from an existing provider.** This should also occur in the areas surrounding Ellicott .



Large-Lot Residential Priority Development Areas

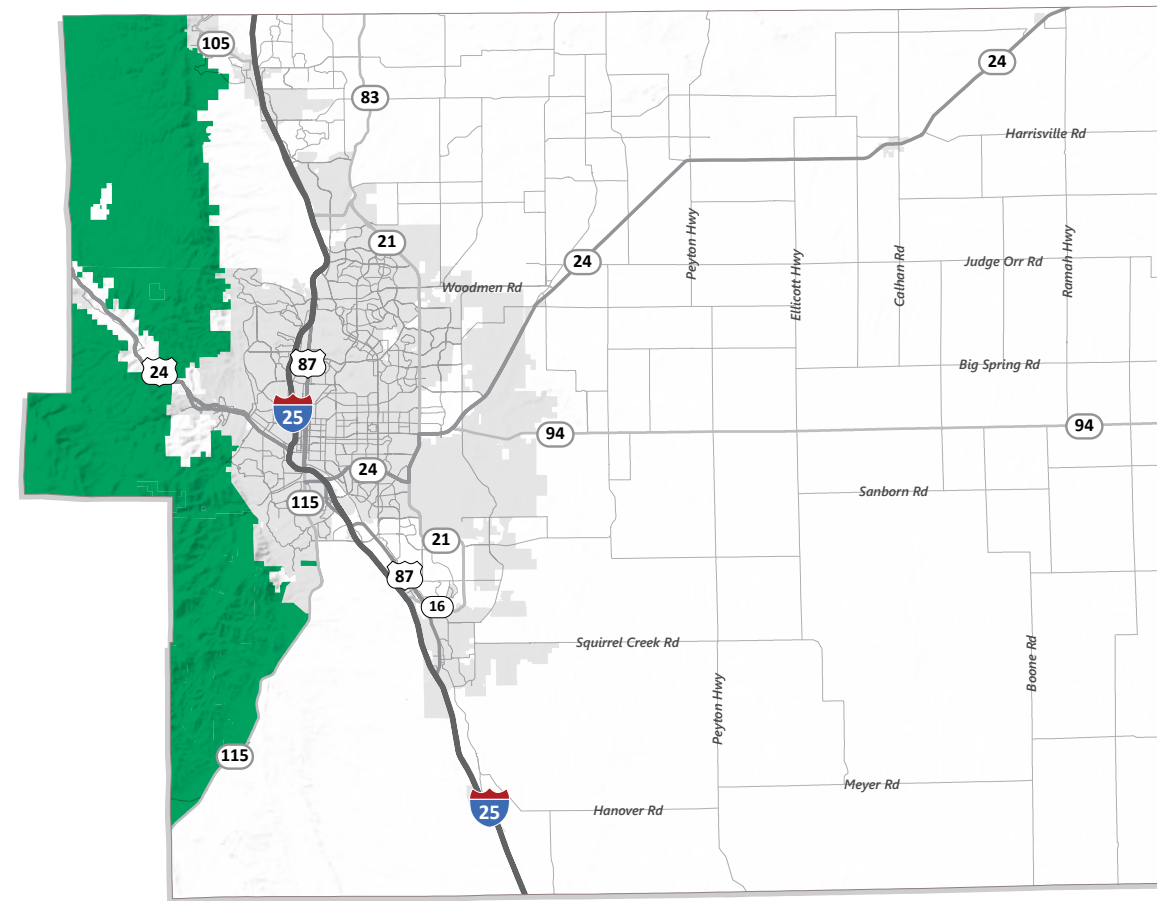


## Mountain Interface

Mountain Interface is not a primary residential placetype nor is it an area prioritized for future residential development. However, the current presence of single-family homes establishes the need for recommendations regarding future housing in this part of the County. This placetype encompasses the entire mountain range and residential development is scattered all along it with some concentrations to the north around Palmer Lake, central along Highway 24 near Crystola and Green Mountain Falls, and south off of Highway 115. Mountain Interface is the most unique placetype in El Paso County.

Its environmental nature and prominence as an economic driver necessitate preservation.

- The County should **prioritize protection and conservation** over new development and redevelopment, where appropriate.
- **All future development proposals should be reviewed** to help ensure they will not negatively impact the natural, environmental, or economic functions of the placetype.
- **Smaller-lot single-family detached homes that are sustainable and compatible where central services are available** should be the only residential use allowed in Mountain Interface. The potential location of a development in Mountain Interface determines potential for construction.
- Residential development on individual well and septic **should be limited.**
- **Adequate emergency services, particularly fire management, and appropriate utility infrastructure** should be present before approval of residential development is considered.



**Mountain Interface Placetype**



## Housing Mix

Housing variety provides multiple options to support residents regardless of income, household size, and age. Providing an equitable mix of housing can ensure the viability of El Paso County as a home for all. This section focuses on how the County can effectively support the development of all housing types to address the needs of all current and future residents.

## Owner & Renter Housing

The County has a healthy balance of housing in terms of tenure, with 63 percent owner-occupied units and 37 percent renter-occupied. However, owner-occupancy is much higher in the suburban and rural communities while rental is primarily concentrated in the municipalities. El Paso County has been experiencing a gradual shift towards renter households over the last two decades with this trend expected to continue throughout the life of this Plan. The current proportion of renter households (37 percent) is expected to increase to 41 percent by 2050, aligning with growing trends since 2000.

## Tenure Projection

Through 2050, El Paso County is expected to gain 93,489 households. Existing vacant units can only accommodate approximately 5,900 of the projected new households, two-thirds of which are rental housing. Based on this assessment, it is projected that 88,000 new housing units will still need to be constructed by 2050. This will require significant development and redevelopment of available land.

## Housing Type

El Paso County's occupied housing stock leans heavily toward single-family detached homes at 71 percent. Multifamily comprises 21 percent and single-family attached rounds out the remaining eight percent. Similar to owner-versus-renter households, urban areas contain a lower percentage of detached housing relative to suburban and rural communities. The closer unincorporated parts of the County are to municipal limits, especially Colorado Springs, the greater the variety in housing type. Proximity to cities and towns supports a better mix of housing options, particularly denser ones, in unincorporated communities because they often have better access to goods and services in the municipalities. Location is important because the quality of, access to, and provision of public services is not consistent across the County.

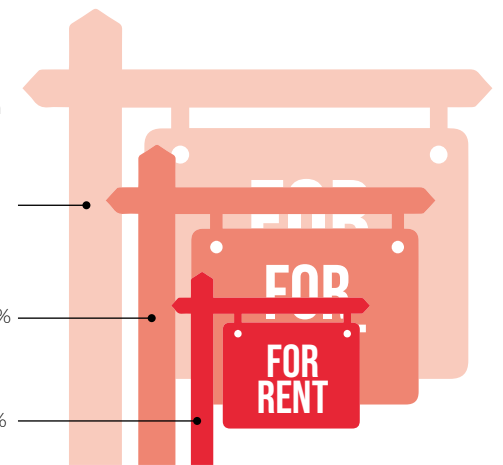
## Type Projection

The majority of existing housing consists of single-family detached homes and this type of development will continue to make up the majority of housing types for the projected new households (approximately 56,000 new units). Single-family homes will continue to be in demand among owner-occupied households, however, it is anticipated that condominiums and townhomes will be in greater demand, especially in more urban areas such as Colorado Springs, Fountain, and unincorporated areas near these cities. Multifamily dwellings will likely constitute a greater percentage of the total housing stock moving forward, with the share of housing units growing by five percent between 2019 and 2050 (approximately 23,000 new units) to 41 percent of all housing units. Single-family housing, both attached and detached, would still be significant options for renters, particularly in rural areas where multifamily dwellings are less viable.

## A Shift Towards Renting

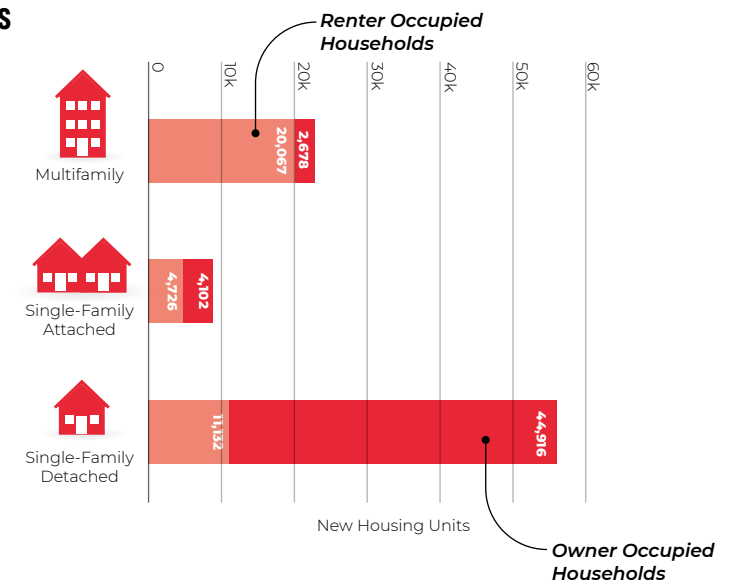
The County has been experiencing a gradual shift towards renter occupied households over the last two decades with this trend expected to continue.

- 2050:** For rent units are projected to make up 41% of the housing units.
- 2020:** For rent units make up 37% of the housing units.
- 2010:** For rent units make up 33% of the housing units.



## Accommodating New Households

A simple housing needs projection was calculated for housing type. This assessment provides a conservative estimate for accommodating the County's projected new households for the next 30 years.





### ***Group Quarters***

With its strong military presence (five installations) as well as several higher-education institutions, a significant number of El Paso County's residents are living in group quarters. Group quarters are nontraditional residences where a group of people reside (permanently or temporarily), and the owner of the property provides housing and/or services for the residents. Group quarters residents are most commonly unrelated and do not require a traditional housing type. They often include college/university residence halls, military barracks, nursing homes, and correctional facilities.

### ***Housing Impact***

In 2000, three percent of El Paso County's population lived in group quarters, but that number has slightly decreased to about 2.5 percent for 2017. This is likely due to the significant population growth in the County over the same time period. While the percentage of the population living in group quarters is declining, the military will remain a strong physical and employment presence. This will necessitate continued coordination with these institutions to ensure they have appropriate space for any growth or changes to their installations that their current available land cannot accommodate.

### ***Need for Housing Variety***

The County's housing stock is largely made up of single-family homes and the majority of planned residential development in unincorporated County is still focused on single-family housing. Existing multifamily units provide rental housing options, but the County will need significantly more throughout the life of this Plan to capture projected growth within the region. While it can be expected that a majority of El Paso County's future households will desire single-family homes, it is important that a mix of housing types be developed to provide options that support market demand and ensure affordability.

### ***Supporting Seniors & Young Professionals***

Changing demographic trends have been and will continue to affect housing demand in El Paso County. Young professionals and seniors (people ages 20-34 and 65 and older) are the fastest growing age groups in the County. As such, they will drive housing need in a more varied way than in years past.

Despite being a generation apart, both groups desire similar types of housing to meet their needs, which is predominantly multifamily apartments. For young professionals this is to provide comfortable, high-quality housing that they can afford and avoid a mortgage. For seniors, apartments help them downsize and reduce or eliminate home maintenance.

More dense housing development should occur in Suburban Residential, Urban Residential, Rural Center, and Regional Center placetypes. This will serve to offset higher land costs in these placetypes while also improving access to goods and services and increasing support for transit. Duplexes, townhomes, multifamily apartments, condominiums, and senior housing should be considered in each of these residential placetypes on a case-by-case basis, assuming they can be integrated into the character of a given neighborhood. The County should also support the development of these types of housing to further support aging in place in El Paso County.

### ***Maintaining County Character***

Single-family detached homes are the predominant housing type in El Paso County. This type also defines the character of the majority of its neighborhoods, regardless of development intensity. In rural areas, single-family homes are the only dwellings as they still largely exist to support the primary agricultural uses. They also define development patterns in suburban areas, ensuring any attached or multifamily dwellings match their design and character. Even in urban areas of the County, detached units are the predominant housing type, further solidifying its importance in the region.

### ***Strategic Approach***

Single-family detached housing will continue to support the lifestyle that the majority of County residents, existing and future, desire. However, continuing to allow detached housing development in all areas of the County will increase the burden on the County's underfunded infrastructure network. Given increasing infrastructure and environmental constraints, the County should focus detached housing development in Large-Lot Residential and Suburban Residential areas.

### ***Transitioning with Attached Housing***

There are two types of housing with increasing demand in the County right now: low-density single-family detached and higher-density multifamily. Both are appropriate and necessary in the right placetypes and locations in the County as defined in the Master Plan, but these two uses should not be located directly adjacent to one another in most contexts. Single-family attached housing such as townhomes, rowhomes, and multi-unit apartment homes should be used to create seamless transitions between low-intensity and high-intensity neighborhoods as well as nonresidential uses.

### ***Design Flexibility, Reduced Costs***

The variety of single-family attached dwelling styles allows for context-sensitive density that matches the scale and intensity of single-family detached neighborhoods. Attached housing can be molded to fit the desired character of adjacent existing neighborhoods while also providing flexibility needed to reduce development costs and related housing costs for buyers and renters compared to traditional single-family development. When a residential developer or property owner begins the application process the County should encourage the inclusion of single-family attached housing. This should occur within the appropriate placetypes: Suburban Residential, Urban Residential, Rural Center, and Regional Center.

## Affordability

Like many growing communities across the United States, housing affordability is an issue in El Paso County. With significant estimated growth over the next three decades, the County will undoubtedly have to continue addressing this issue. Since this Master Plan addresses unincorporated areas, the recommendations regarding affordability do as well.

In addition to housing strategies discussed in this section, more detailed discussion of housing funding mechanisms is provided in **Chapter 14 Implementation**.

## Income Comparison – Attainable Housing

The following analysis compares existing housing values in El Paso County with household incomes. The evaluation is conducted by occupancy tenure, looking at both owner and renter households.

For El Paso County, a total is provided that deducts the households in each income range from the total “attainable housing units” for that income range. Attainable housing units are defined as those costing no more than 30 percent of annual income at the market rate. This is not to be confused with “affordable housing,” which within this Master Plan refers to units that are made affordable through means of various public subsidies.

### Owner

For owner households, the income comparison identifies a shortage of attainable housing units for existing households with annual incomes between \$10K-\$49,999K as well as those earning more than \$100,000 per year. For the highest-income households, lack of housing options is not a significant issue as they can easily afford a lower-value home where a surplus exists. However, a lack of inventory in upper price points of the market places added pressure on the housing supply, increasing competition for housing that would otherwise be available to low- to moderate-income households.

### Renter

For renters, the shortages are most apparent for lower-income households with annual incomes less than \$25,000 a year. Currently, there is a need for an additional 16,360 units to serve households in this income group. This indicates a lack of attainable, market-rate housing units for these households to rent in their price range. Thus, many County residents who rent their home may be experiencing a housing cost burden (spending 30 percent or more of annual income on housing). Both owner- and renter-occupied households are experiencing an affordability disparity to some extent in El Paso County.

## Methodology

The housing affordability analysis compares existing housing values in El Paso County with household incomes. The evaluation is conducted by occupancy tenure, looking at both owner and renter households. The incomes and home values/gross rents are analyzed at the zip code level, meaning the comparison is specific to each individual zip code and not the entire County.

For each zip code, the average household income is compared to the average housing cost, home value for owner-occupied homes and gross rent for renter-occupied homes. The housing cost is compared to the household income to determine attainability at the 30-percent cost burden standard. Attainable housing is defined as costing no more than 30 percent of annual income at the market rate.

For context, “affordable housing” refers to units that are made affordable through means of various public subsidies. The Department of Housing and Urban Development established the 30-percent standard as a means for examining affordable housing need across the country.

On the maps on the following pages, disparity is determined by how close average housing costs are to 30 percent of the average household income. The lower housing costs are compared to 30 percent of household income the more attainable housing is in that zip code. Disparity is represented on the smaller orange maps. Overall attainability is determined by whether the 30-percent household income value is above or below the average housing cost. If this number is more than the housing costs then a zip code is shown as attainable but if it is less than the housing costs it is not considered to be attainable. Overall attainability is shown on the blue maps.

## Attainable vs. Affordable Housing

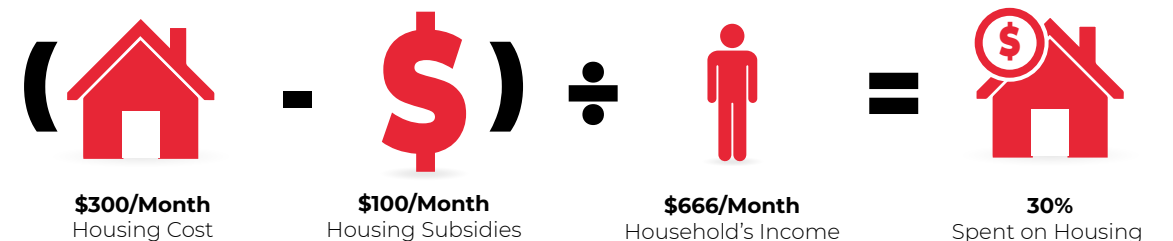
### Attainable Housing

Housing that costs no more than 30 percent of annual income at the market rate.



### Affordable Housing

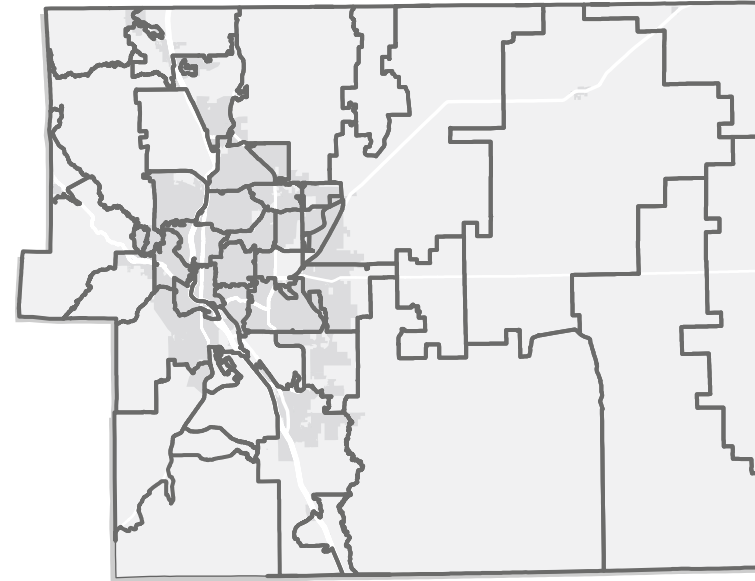
Housing that is made affordable through means of various subsidies.



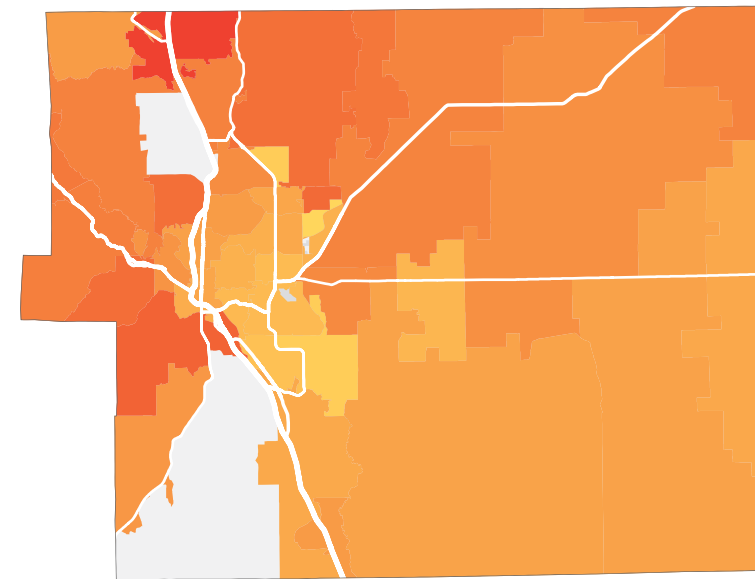
## Owner Disparity

Accounting for the 300 affordable (with some form of subsidy) planned and under-construction units, El Paso will have a potential demand for 20,799 attainable units. Attainability for owner-occupied homes in El Paso County, in both incorporated and unincorporated areas, is complex due to the variety of housing types for-sale in the market. Design, scale, size, and amenities all vary depending on the specific community within the County and location within individual communities. For example, a two-bedroom home in the Woodmoor area could be attainable to the majority of households that live there but the exact same home would be unattainable to someone living near Ellicott.

The attainability analysis shows that most ZIP codes in unincorporated El Paso County are unattainable to some degree for owner-occupied housing, indicating the difficulty of buying a high-quality home at a manageable price for existing and future households. Currently, El Paso County has about 53 properties totaling just over 3,800 affordable housing units (those that utilize some form of subsidy), 97 percent of which are in the City of Colorado Springs. All of these are rental units.

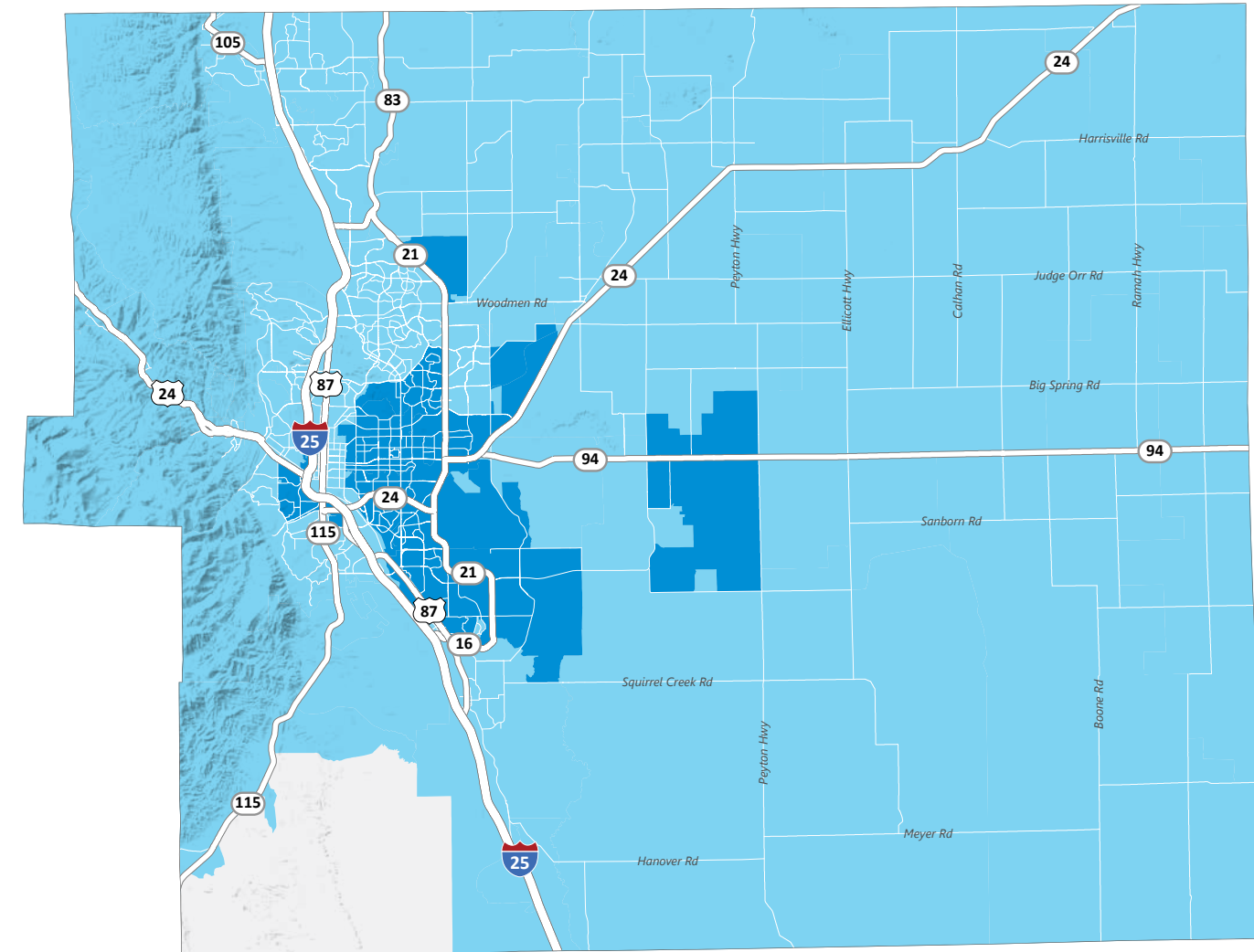


**Zip Codes**



**Disparity by Zip Code**

- Less Attainable
- More Attainable



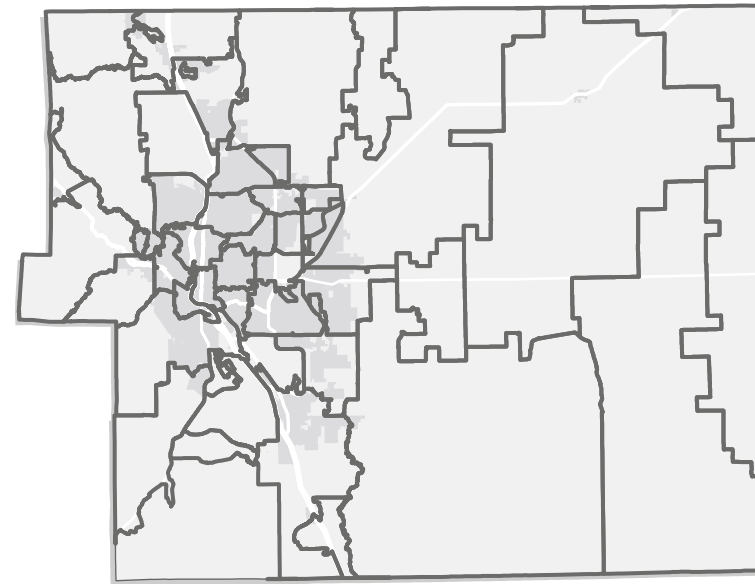
**Owner Attainability**

- Zip codes considered attainable
- Zip codes not considered attainable

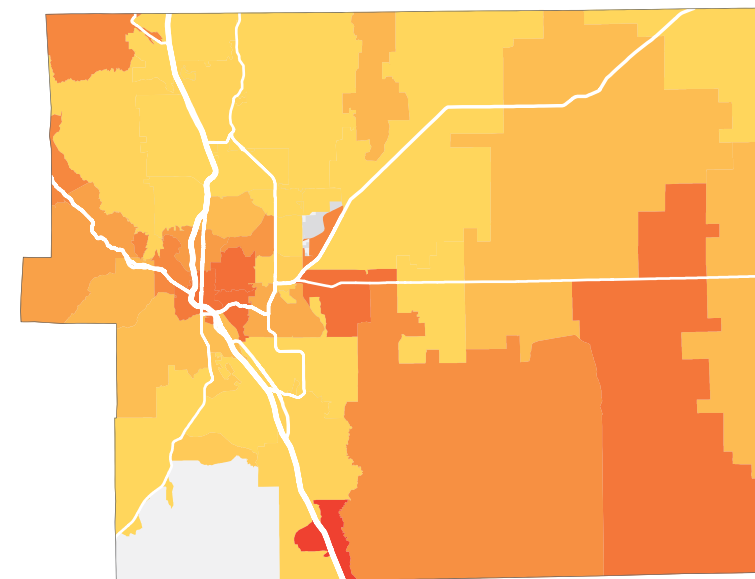
## Renter Disparity

For purposes of the Master Plan, attainable housing for renters is defined as units costing no more than 30 percent of an annual income of approximately \$47,000 per year. This is the annual income needed to afford the average effective monthly rent for a multifamily unit in El Paso County. Attainable housing units are now commonly being referred to as naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH). NOAH is comprised of market-rate housing and operates without subsidy. NOAH properties provide housing at rates attainable to low- and moderate-income households, based on the average household income.

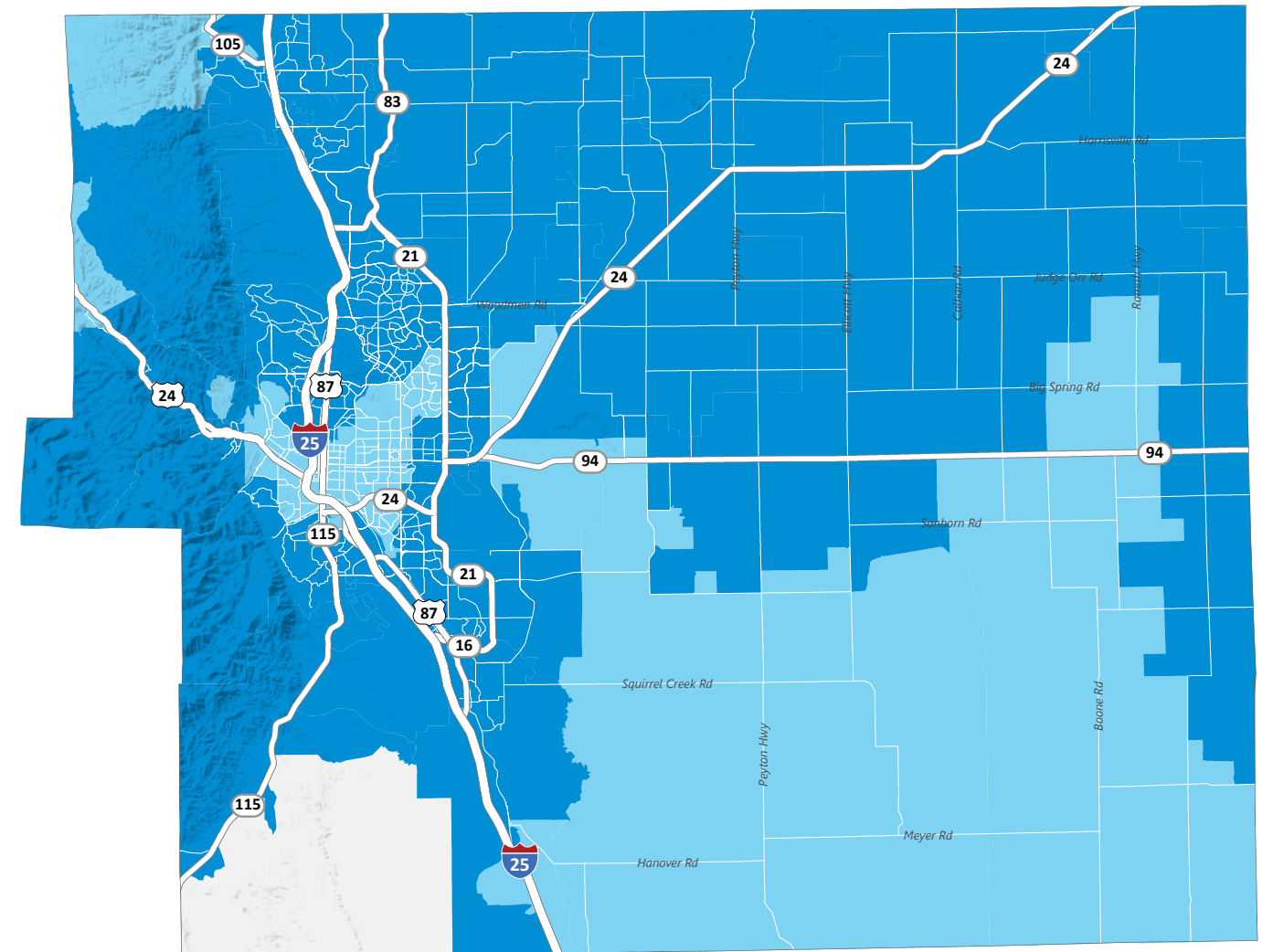
Currently, El Paso County's housing stock favors middle-income households in terms of price point and availability. Likewise, a majority of new units being built are catering to this demographic, which create units at significantly higher rents and values than some residents can attain. In 2018, there was a need for 16,360 renter-occupied homes for households earning less than \$25,000 per year (approximately 30% Area Median Income). Unlike for owner-occupied housing, many of the zip codes in the County that do not have attainable rental housing are located within municipalities.



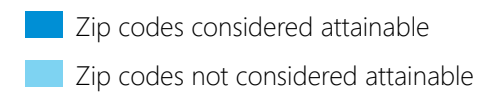
### Zip Codes



### Disparity by Zip Code



### Renter Attainability



## Increase Density in Target Areas

The County should increase density in key areas to reduce the land cost per unit for development. The primary focus should be in Urban Residential and Suburban Residential placetypes, which are appropriate for accommodating significant density that still conforms to the community's desired character. For example, in Cimarron Hills multifamily uses should be prioritized as infill opportunities arise. Additionally, Rural Center and Regional Center placetypes can accommodate more intense residential uses to increase support for businesses. Single-family attached and multifamily units should be located directly adjacent to commercial focal points to accommodate density in the County or incorporated within mixed use developments.

## Accessory Dwelling Units

Allowing alternative forms of density, such as small-lot homes or accessory dwelling units ("granny flats"), would provide more attainable housing units without altering neighborhood character. Allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs), where appropriate, would be another tool to support more affordable rents. Accessory dwelling units can work well for people in various life stages, including students, young professionals, and empty nesters. Proactively promoting the construction of ADUs can take numerous forms including local fee waivers, pre-approved unit plans, assistance navigating the permit process, and working with local lenders to ensure construction and permanent financing is available for homeowners wishing to build ADUs.

## Permit Mixed Housing Type Development

The County should permit projects that include a mix of housing types and increase market-driven affordability. This should include promoting missing middle housing options (duplexes, triplexes, multiplexes, courtyard apartments, and townhouses) on infill parcels within single-family neighborhoods to increase density and maintain neighborhood character. Reducing parking provisions, particularly for multifamily, should also be considered to help reduce the amount (and cost) of land needed per unit.

## Employ Financial Incentives

The El Paso County Economic Development Department and the El Paso County Housing Authority (EPCHA) administer several housing funds to help provide attainable housing options throughout the County. In 2018, they helped open a 180-unit senior housing development using state housing tax credits. The two organizations also helped 227 existing County households procure housing assistance. The County should utilize tax credits and other financial incentives to accommodate affordable housing units to help meet the demand of lower-income households. The Economic Development Department and EPCHA should be key partners in procuring, marketing, and utilizing these incentives. The funding sources section in the **Chapter 14 Implementation** (Page 144) provides greater detail on this partnership and key funding sources.

## Attainable Housing

Attainable housing programs include any policies that require or incentivize the creation of affordable housing when new development occurs, such as impact or linkage fees that generate revenue for affordable housing. Potential opportunities in El Paso County include:

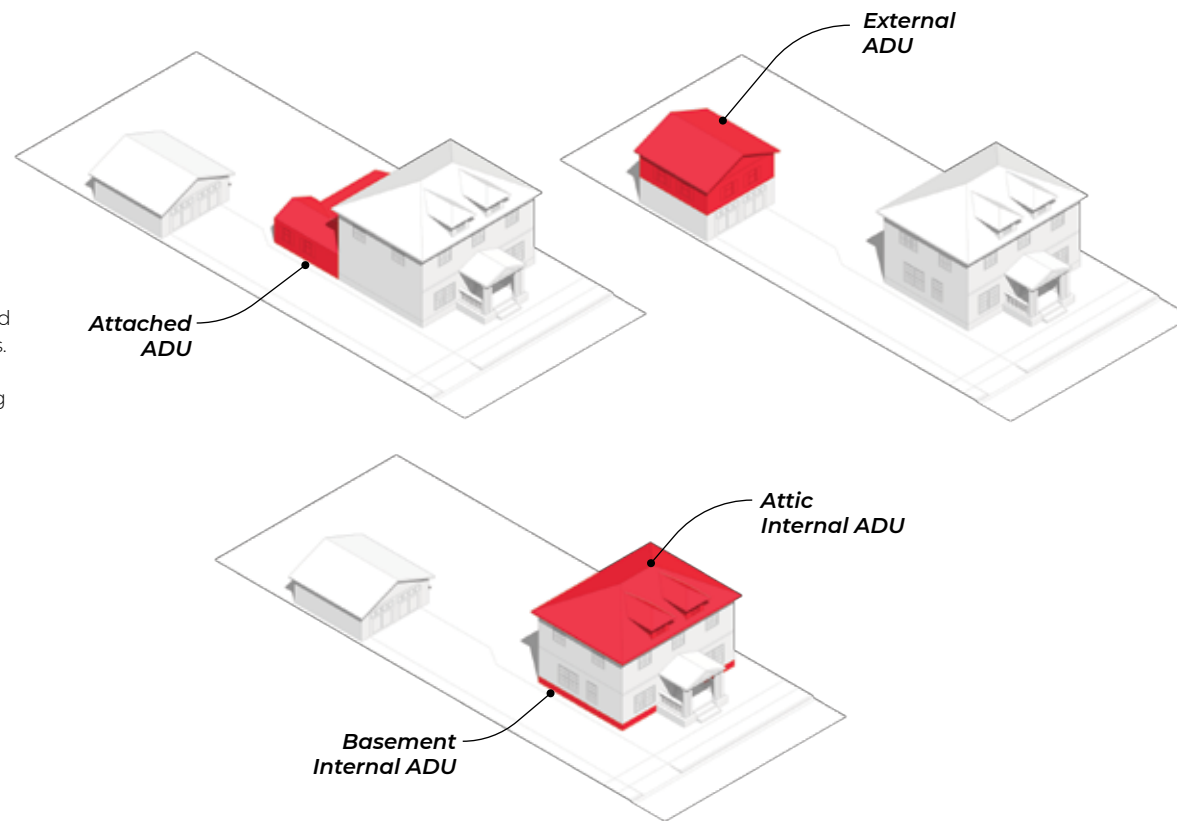
- Expedited review timelines and rapid response review with associated entities.
- Allowances for administrative relief for dimensional requirements, parking, and landscaping.
- Application fee waivers or reductions.

## Homelessness

Homelessness is an important issue in El Paso County. El Paso County works closely with the City of Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Continuum of Care (PPCoC) to address the needs of our homeless population. Several county leaders are members of the governing board for the PPCoC. The PPCoC is the local decision-making group whose purpose and scope are to implement community wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. The PPCoC helps plan for and provide a full range of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing and other services to address the needs of persons experiencing homelessness. The Pikes Peak Continuum of Care PPCoC is made up of local government officials, service providers, advocates, and citizens who work to eliminate homelessness. The Colorado Housing and Finance Authority invests in affordable housing and community development. Other partners include the Colorado Springs Housing Authority, Family Life Services, Greccio Housing, Harbor House, Housing First, Ithaka, Partners in Housing, Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity, Rocky Mountain Community Land Trust, Family Mentor Alliance, Family Promise, Homeward Pike Peak, Springs Rescue Mission, and Partners in Housing.

### Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

Accessory dwelling units can be designed and permitted through a variety of configurations. This diagram represents three of the most common configurations. The County's zoning code determines how and where ADUs are allowed in El Paso County.





## Case Study Land Trust

### Champlain Housing Trust

Based in Vermont, the Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) manages over 2,300 apartments, 620 owner-occupied homes. CHT was formed after two CLTs founded by the City of Burlington, Vermont in 1984 – Burlington CLT and Lake Champlain Housing Development Corporation combined their assets and resources. The CLT offers apartments, single-family housing, cooperative housing and mobile home parks. In addition to educational and support services it provides to its residents and other cooperatives, CHT also offers housing loan funds to help homeowners take care of home repair projects.

### Rocky Mountain Community Land Trust

Rocky Mountain Community Land Trust (RMCLT) preserves long-term affordability for housing in El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs. RMCLT offers programs such as Affordable Homeownership, Foreclosure Prevention, Post Purchase Support, Housing Development and First Time Home Buyers Workshops. RMCLT also collaborates with other nonprofit organizations to address housing needs. It became a HUD-approved Housing Counseling Agency in 2016 and as a Community Housing Development Organization operating in the City of Colorado Springs and El Paso County, RMCLT is also eligible for grants through made available through Colorado Division of Housing (DOH) to run programs that increase the supply of affordable housing in Colorado.

## Community Land Trust

Among the tools available to secure and develop affordable housing, the Community Land Trust (CLT) is a model that helps maintain affordable housing in perpetuity. In growing areas like El Paso County, one of the bigger obstacles to developing and securing affordable housing for lower-income families is the increasing cost of land. According to the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, a nonprofit research foundation based in Cambridge, MA, the community land trust model helps overcome this barrier by allowing a person to purchase a house, without also purchasing the land it occupies. Currently there are 277 CLTs operating in the United States. Community land trusts are nonprofit, community-based organizations that are designed to ensure long-term housing affordability and community stewardship of land. The CLTs can also be used for many types of development including retail and commercial.

### Operation Model

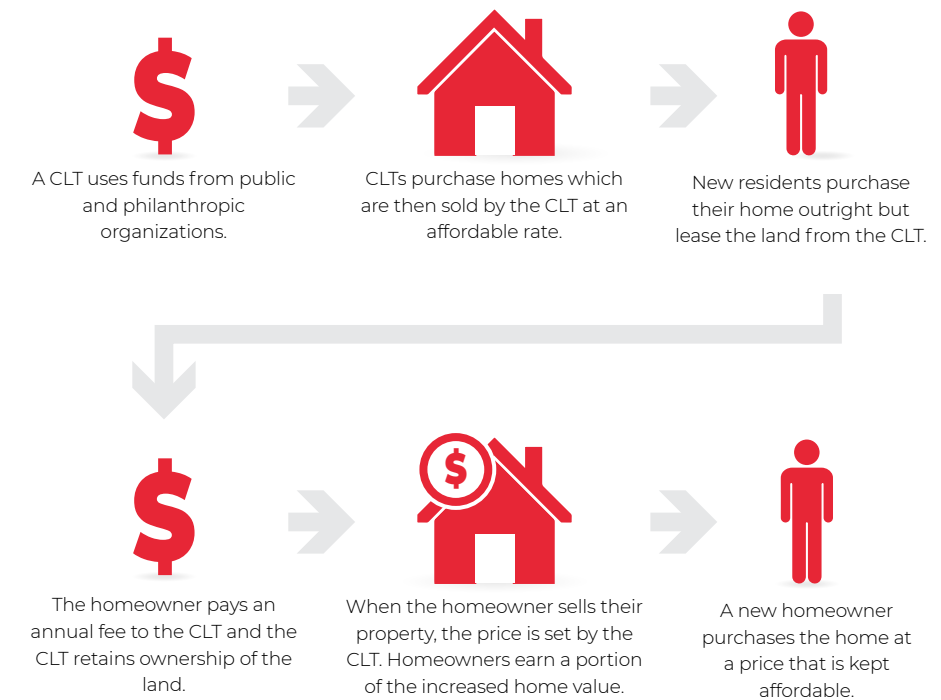
A CLT initially acquires permanent ownership of the land and enters into a long-term, renewable lease contract with a prospective homeowner in lieu of a traditional sale. The CLT retains the right to purchase the property when and if the owner wants to sell. When the homeowner sells, they earn only a pre-determined portion of the increased property value. In addition to capital generated by the sale of properties, funding sources for CLTs include grants, tax credits, and donations. The CLT essentially removes the market value of the land from the cost of the house, making it more affordable. This helps keep the cost of the house lower than market rate and also ensures affordability for prospective homeowners.

### Organizational Structure

CLTs are typically governed by a board of directors that are also members of the community and public representatives. With a majority of the board represented by members of the community, CLTs can be more effective in implementing contextual solutions due to the greater degree of grassroots participation among the community members.

## How do Community Land Trusts Work?

Community land trusts are nonprofit, community-based organizations that are designed to ensure long-term housing affordability and community stewardship of land.



## Service Area

CLTs are place-based organizations whose service area may encompass one or multiple neighborhoods, an entire city or County or even multiCounty regions. The service area can be small or large, urban or rural, which allows the CLT model to be applicable within any community throughout El Paso County.

According to Burlington Associates (BA), a national consulting cooperative that supports CLTs, neighborhood-based CLTs are the most prominent accounting for almost 25 % of all CLTs nation-wide.

- CLTs with a neighborhood-wide service area are more effective for comprehensive revitalization of a neighborhood as the residents exercise long-term control of housing development and community development.
- CLTs with a city-wide service have projects sited throughout the city.
- CLTs with a metropolitan service area champion production of affordable housing on a municipal and regional level. With established organizational structures and funding mechanisms CLTs have enabled low-income households to move upward on the housing tenure ladder as well as choose the place they want to live.

While the maintenance and production of affordable housing is the primary focus of CLTs, they can also develop and acquire agricultural land, parks and open space, mixed-income housing, commercial and retail space, mobile home parks or other forms of businesses that help offset running costs required to operate the organization and take care of the community's resources collectively.

## Key Takeaways

Community Land Trust provide affordable home-ownership opportunities in perpetuity.

- To participate, new owners or members must buy into the organization's rules and regulations.
- Properties and homes are not sold at market rate and the CLT owns the land. They provide low- and moderate- income individuals with the opportunity to build equity and not be displaced due to gentrification and land speculation.
- CLTs help build solidarity among the community members.

The County should consider partnering with existing affordable housing organizations such as El Paso County Housing Authority (EPCHA), Colorado Springs Housing Authority, and Fountain Housing Authority to establish a regional CLT. The County should also continue to work with Rocky Mountain Community Land Trust and Ithaka Land Trust to improve housing affordability in El Paso County.

## Housing Cooperatives

Similar to the CLTs, housing cooperatives are nonprofit cooperative corporations formed by people who plan to own or control the housing and/or related community facilities where they live. Cooperative members own a share or membership in the corporation and are entitled to occupy a dwelling unit in the building/property the corporation owns unlike a condominium where the resident owns a household unit and has shared ownership of the common areas. Operating costs of the housing unit and the corporation are shared by the residents. A housing cooperative can include single-family houses, townhomes, apartment buildings, student housing, senior housing and mobile home parks.

The National Association of Housing Cooperatives outlines three different types of housing co-ops:

- **Market Rate Co-ops:** Members can sell shares at market rates.
- **Limited Equity Co-ops:** Selling rates of shares are predetermined or set using specific formulas.
- **Leasing Co-ops:** The building is leased by the co-op thus the resident does not build equity.

## Operating Model

The governing board of a housing co-op is made of residents or a subset of residents depending on the size of the co-op. Decisions made within a co-op are subject to a vote by its residents thus securing a consensus-building decision-making process. House policies are set by the residents. In smaller cooperatives, residents manage the coop as well as perform maintenance on their own. Larger co-ops can vote to hire professional services.

## Key Takeaways

Housing cooperatives provide another opportunity for residents to own the structure in which they live. As the term implies, co-ops require more cooperation and shared responsibility for ownership and maintenance. While co-ops represent an atypical approach to addressing housing affordability, they provide the opportunity to maintain the single-family residential character of the majority of El Paso County's communities while still promoting home ownership. The County should support and promote housing cooperatives in all residential areas, partnering with related organizations to help establish them when appropriate

## Case Study

# Housing Cooperatives

## Village Cooperative

Village Cooperative, operated by Real Estate Equities Development, LLC since 1972, offers affordable senior rental cooperatives in various Midwest and Western states including Colorado. It currently operates 7 cooperative housing communities in Colorado: Colorado Springs, Centennial, Fort Collins, Greeley, Lakewood, Longmont, and Loveland. Two more are being considered in Littleton and Grand Junction. Members of the cooperative purchase an ownership equity share which entitles the shareholder to occupy a specific unit.

## Boulder Housing Coalition

Boulder Housing Coalition (BHC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community housing development organization that was founded in 1995. Based in Boulder County, the corporation develops permanently affordable rental cooperatives. It currently operates four cooperatives within the City of Boulder. The cooperatives have been developed with grant assistance from the City of Boulder's affordable housing program and requires applicants and residents to qualify as low-income individuals as part of the application process.

## Environmental Compatibility

El Paso County's greatest asset is its abundance of natural resources. While new residential development is necessary to accommodate the County's expected population growth it must not negatively impact the natural environment. Ensuring compatibility between the built and natural environment is a key component of *Your El Paso Master Plan*.

## Rural Character

Natural areas are an important part of the County's rural character, a character that defines El Paso County for residents and visitors alike. It is a critical County asset that residents, particularly in unincorporated areas, wish to see maintained. Preserving this character requires a targeted approach to planning for housing including a diligent review of all future development requests. When a developer begins the planning process, the County must continue to carefully analyze each proposal for compatibility with the natural environment and the rural character.

## Department of Defense REPI Program

Military bases may participate in the Department of Defense (DoD)'s Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program, which is a key tool for combating encroachment that can limit or restrict military training, testing, and operations. The REPI Program preserves and enhances these military missions by helping remove or avoid land-use conflicts near installations, ranges, and their associated facilities, range infrastructure, and airspace, as well as addressing regulatory restrictions that inhibit military activities.

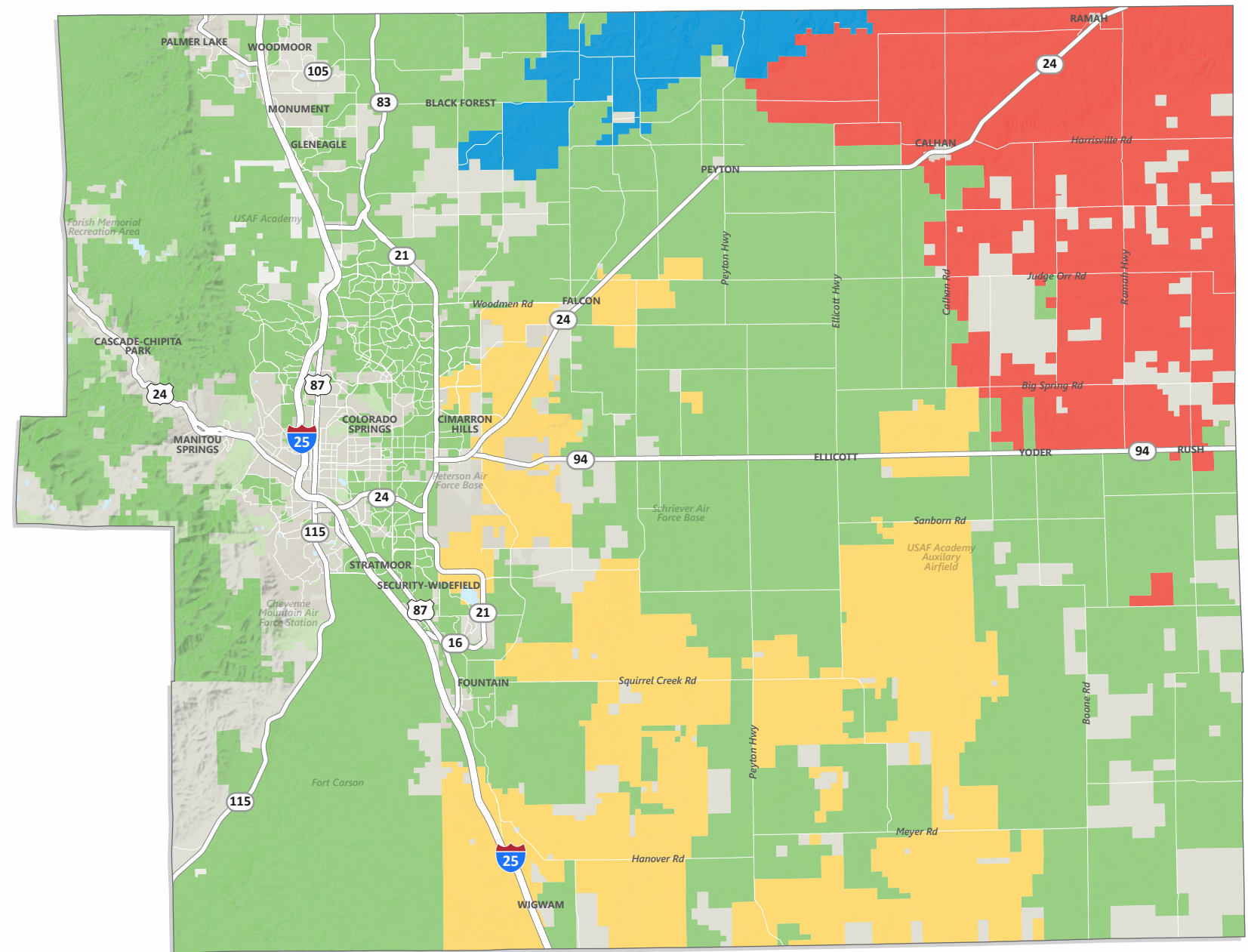
REPI projects contribute to the longevity of working farms, forests, and ranchlands; increase recreational and open space opportunities for nearby residents and military families; and protect against military relocations that would adversely affect the local economy.

## Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement that limits certain types of uses or prevents development from taking place on a piece of property in perpetuity. For example, a rural residential property owner or a farmer could transfer the development rights of their property to a nonprofit organization while still maintaining ownership. This ensures long-term preservation of the property's open space.

Conservation easements protect farmland and sensitive environmental features, preserve open spaces, and reduce sprawl. Some conservation easement properties can also be suitable candidates for regional trails, parks, and open spaces. While easements are most useful in rural areas, select locations within urban and suburban areas could also be appropriate, particularly forested and environmentally sensitive land. Several land trusts or land conservancy organizations operate within El Paso County, including Mountain Area Land Trust, Palmer Land Conservancy, El Paso County Conservation District, and Central Colorado Conservation District.

During appropriate discussion with residents and property owners the County should emphasize the use of conservation easements to protect open space and farmland. When development is proposed within a suburban area or in large lot residential areas adjacent growth areas, density bonuses should also be considered in exchange for allocating areas for conservation. Additionally, a developer or property owner can achieve conservation through PUD zoning with the County. The County should act as a coordinating body between the multiple conservation entities active within the region to streamline policies, identify recreation opportunities, identify land for purchase/transfer, and centralize properties into a singular GIS database.



### Conservation Districts

- Central Colorado Conservation District
- El Paso County Conservation District
- Double El Conservation District
- Kiowa Conservation District

## Conservation Design

A key tenet of *Your El Paso Master Plan* is protecting the natural environment as one of the County's biggest assets. Accommodating the County's significant anticipated growth will not be an easy feat, particularly when paired with the need and desire to protect an abundance of undeveloped land. New construction on untouched land is typically less costly than redevelopment of a vacant site or rehabbing an existing building. This can degrade or altogether remove the County's natural amenities that provide such a high quality of life for its residents. However, there are opportunities for supporting development while protecting environmental areas.

## Environmentally Sensitive Development

Regardless of the placetype within which future development is proposed, new development and redevelopment within El Paso County should be designed to incorporate a conservation design approach where appropriate. Conservation design, also referred to as clustered development, promotes the use of an environmentally sensitive development pattern that aims to preserve contiguous areas of open space and protect environmental features and areas by grouping development together. This approach to development creates the potential for the use of naturalized stormwater management techniques to minimize or eliminate stormwater runoff. It also maintains areas of shared open space that can be preserved as natural areas or used as neighborhood or community parkland. The conservation design approach also minimizes the amount of roadway and utility infrastructure needed to serve a given development.

## Desired Density

Conservation design is a density neutral approach wherein a clustered subdivision achieves the same number of homes per acre as a conventional subdivision. It can even be utilized to increase density as well. As such, the County can encourage open space preservation, while facilitating development that approaches the overall density desired. Conservation development techniques will allow new development to minimize the impact on quality natural areas, preserving them for public enjoyment while maintaining the rural character of the County.

## Stormwater Management

Impervious surfaces, including homes, apartment buildings, driveways, sidewalks, and parking lots, are hard surfaces that cannot absorb rainwater and instead disperse it elsewhere. This can lead to flooding, lower water quality, streamflow disruption, and pollutant runoff. For example, surface water runoff from roofs, pavement, and lawns contains oils, grease, sediment, lawn chemicals, salt, and other pollutants that have a negative impact on water quality. Impervious surfaces can create stormwater management challenges not only at the site level, but for public infrastructure in general, especially during major weather events.

The County should work with property owners (for both existing and future developments) to identify strategies to address stormwater runoff, leveraging stormwater best management practices (BMPs) and low-impact development (LID) techniques whenever possible. BMPs and LIDs can be applied to new and existing development in urban, suburban, and rural situations. An extensive discussion of stormwater management and best practices is included in detail in **Chapter 8 Infrastructure** on pages 103 and 104.

## Conservation Design by Placetype

Conservation design can be used to carry forward the quality of life that has come to be expected by El Paso County residents. Active outdoor recreation and trails, preservation of the natural environment and open space, and access to dependable services and infrastructure must be safeguarded and extended to new areas in the County. Saving room for open space areas, parks, and trails can help minimize the potentially negative impacts of future growth. The following section emphasize the variety of applicability of conservation design within each of the appropriate placetypes. One important strategy across all placetypes is the incorporation of parkland and trails to connect new development to the larger, regional recreation system. It is important to note that conservation design is inherently included the design and development of the Rural and Urban Residential placetypes. Rural placetypes prioritize protecting undeveloped land and significantly limit the ability for development. Urban Residential is about vertical construction to increase density which natural reduces the amount of land required for development.

## Large-Lot Residential

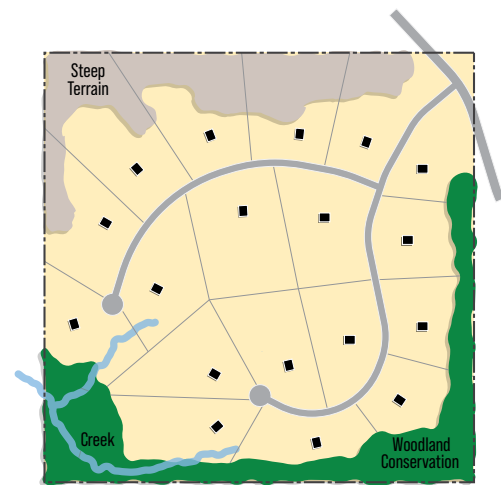
Within the Large-Lot Residential placetype, conservation design should be primarily utilized for preserving El Paso County's rural character, defined by large swaths of open space with minimal development. Additionally, some Large-Lot Residential parts of the County include environmentally sensitive areas that need to be protected. Development should not be allowed within a certain distance of the critical natural assets to ensure they are not negatively impacted by future development. Protecting farmland and scenic views is also an important component of conservation design within Large-Lot Residential areas. The County should evaluate new developments on a case-by-case basis to determine their impact on these natural assets.

## Suburban Residential

In Suburban Residential areas, clustered development should be encouraged to increase density while also preserving open space. In El Paso County, the Suburban Residential placetype provides a transition between urban and rural areas, while also providing a functional connection between urban areas and the County's natural environment. To accomplish these two objectives, development should consist of a mix of single-family detached, single-family attached, and multifamily units. Using conservation design techniques will ensure that a rural character can be maintained in more-populated areas.

## Rural Center

One of the central roles of the Rural Center placetype is to maintain the natural environment while supporting rural families with better access to necessary goods and services. Conservation design can help establish a central commercial area in a rural community without encouraging sprawling land-consumption. The approach focuses on applying techniques to commercial development to create a downtown-like district within an otherwise rural community. Concentrating new uses in one location reduces the impact on the surrounding open space and agricultural land and helps create a more defined sense of place. Residential development within a Rural Center is appropriate to help provide a more direct customer base for the commercial uses to ensure their longevity and viability.



### Conventional Subdivision

- 18 Lots
- Minimum Lot Size: 5 to 35 acres
- No Undivided Open Space



### Conservation Design

- 18 Lots
- Lot Size Range: less than one acre
- 50% Undivided Open Space

# 5

**Inside this Chapter**

*Priority Redevelopment Areas (page 67)*

*Commercial Priority Development Areas (page 68)*

*Employment Priority Development Areas (page 71)*

*Workforce Development (page 76)*

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development chapter identifies opportunities to strengthen El Paso County's overall economy through business collaboration, workforce expansion, and new development. It outlines development strategies to enhance existing commercial and employment areas in the County as well as establish areas for growth.

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**Core Principle 3:** Strengthen the economy with a skilled workforce and targeted investment.

*Goal 3.1* - Recruit new businesses and spur the development of growing sectors.

*Goal 3.2* - Support efforts to recruit, train, and retain a skilled workforce.

*Goal 3.3* - Encourage the development of commercial districts in underserved areas.

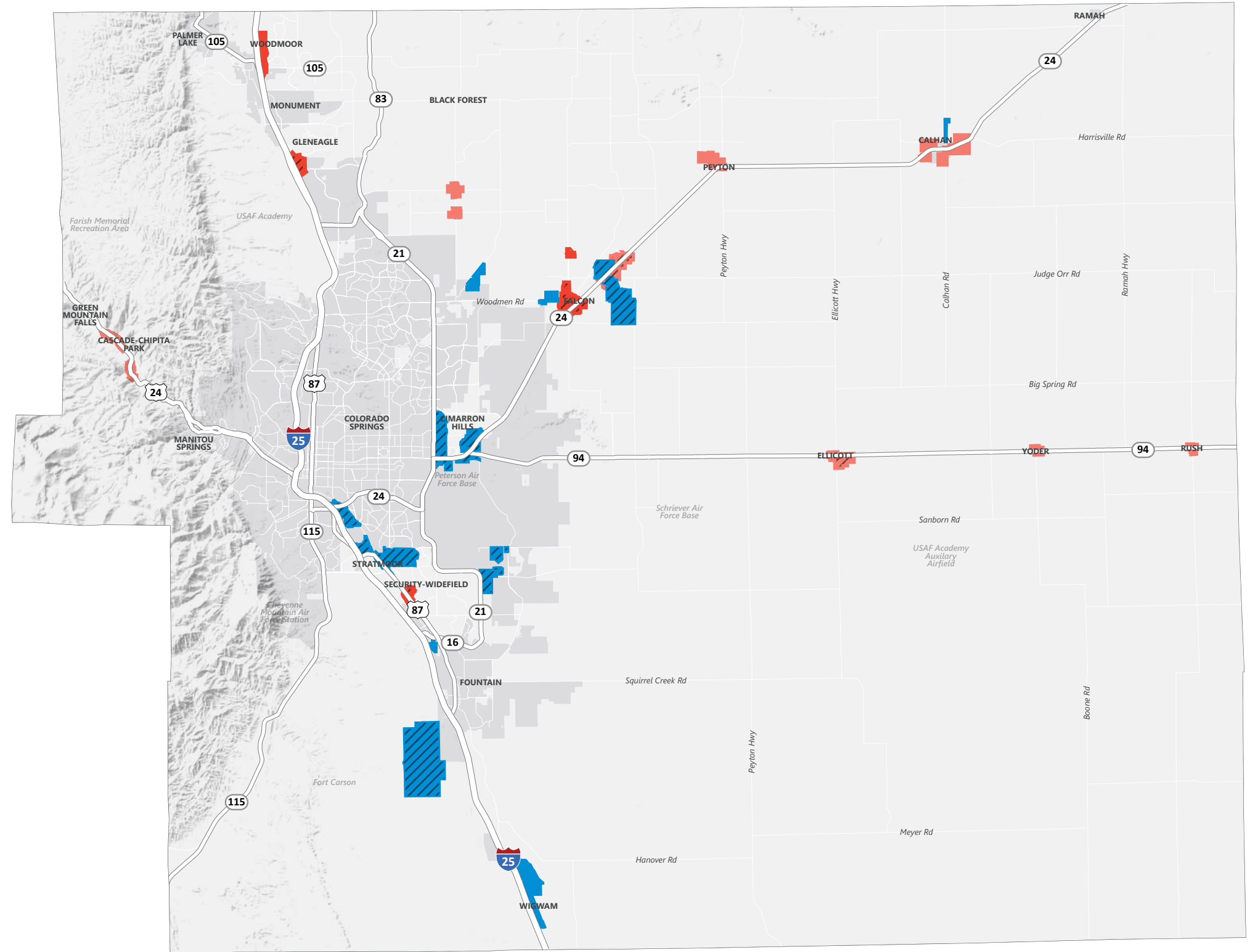
*Goal 3.4* - Utilize economic opportunity zones to support new business development.

*Goal 3.5* - Coordinate with military installations to foster new development that is compatible with installations and create new jobs.

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# Priority Development Areas

Similar to housing and neighborhoods, strategic planning is needed for commercial and employment uses to effectively accommodate growth. This framework identifies specific locations throughout the County that should be prioritized first for new commercial and employment development.



## Economic Development Framework

- Rural Center
- Employment Center
- Regional Center
- Priority Development Areas



## Commercial Priority Development Areas

Most County residents travel to municipalities to purchase goods and services. The Economic Development Framework identifies areas to expand commercial uses in unincorporated communities. This section includes policies and recommendations for increasing commercial development and improving customer access. In the following section, numbers are only intended to connect recommendations to the corresponding locations in the County. They are not a hierarchy of priority.

### 1 Gleneagle

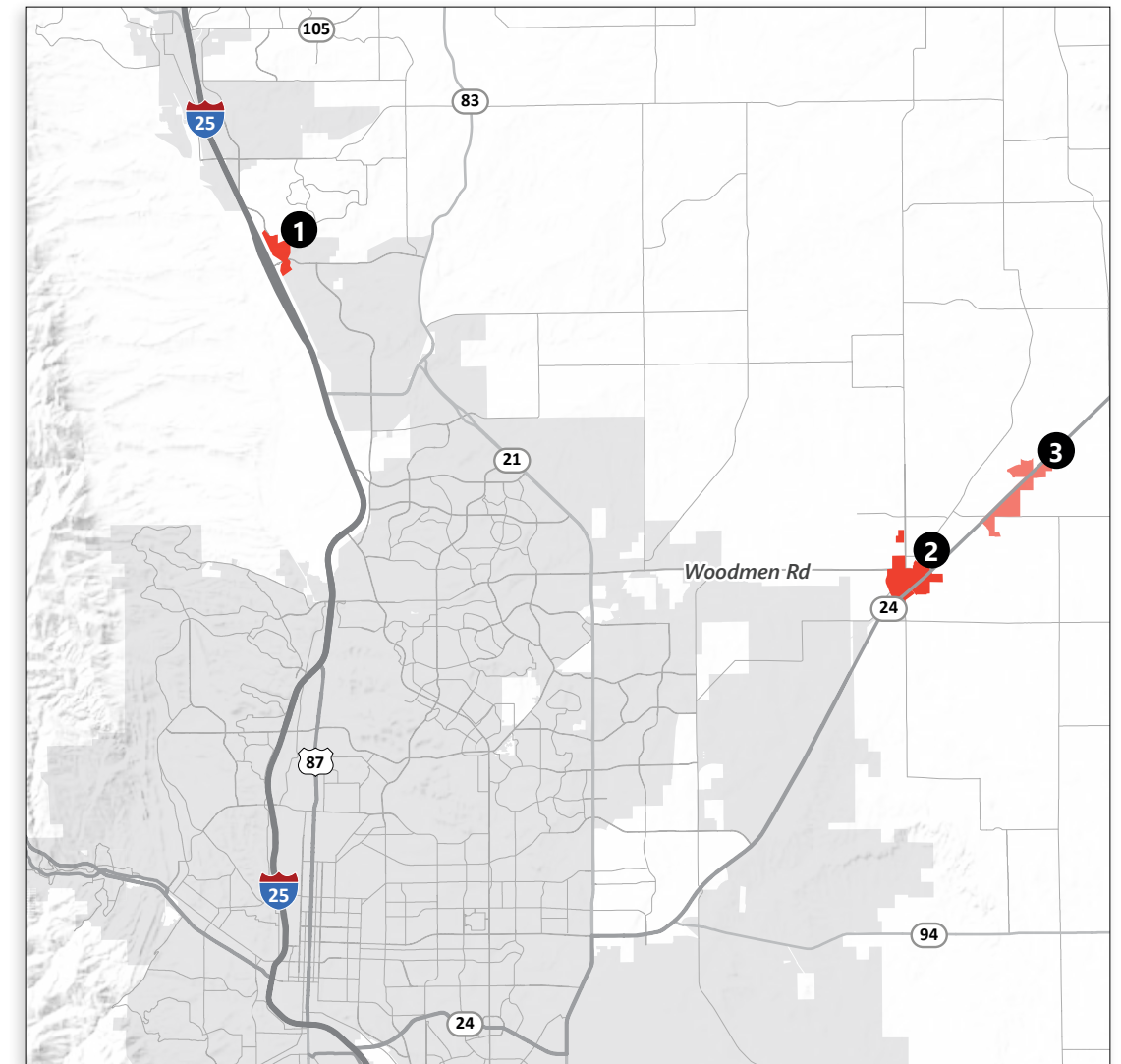
The Regional Center in Gleneagle is an extension of the regional commercial development at the northern edge of Colorado Springs. Some commercial uses already exist in this regional center such as a hotel and coffee shop along Struthers Road. However, there is still a large amount of land available to develop larger commercial uses to support the unincorporated communities of northwest El Paso County, not just Gleneagle.

- Overall, the County should expand this Regional Center to include larger commercial development, including large retail centers to support more residents and travelers along Interstate 25.
- The County should also consider smaller office uses to provide professional services in this community.

### 2 Falcon

Falcon has the most-established Regional Center in unincorporated El Paso County and largely serves all communities in the northeastern part of the region. It includes several substantial commercial retailers including Walmart and Safeway. Additionally, there are a number of strip centers that provide space for smaller commercial businesses include restaurants and professional services. Available land provides the opportunity for existing businesses to grow or new businesses to develop.

- The County should continue to promote commercial development to serve increasing residential neighborhoods.
- Entertainment businesses should be highly considered to foster more-engaging activity in this area as well. Potential businesses could include but are not limited to movie theaters, concert/theater venues, or sports recreation.
- The Regional Center in Falcon and Rural Center in Peyton should be expanded to meet the growing commercial needs of the expanding residential development in this area.



Regional Center and Rural Center Priority Development Areas



### 3 Highway 24

A new Rural Center is identified along Highway 24 north of Falcon. This area is expected to experience significant residential growth over the next 20-30 years. Commercial development in this area is smaller scale to build off and support Falcon's Regional Center to the south.

- **The County should prioritize the development of Rural Center** to serve adjacent Suburban Residential to the north of the Highway and the Large-Lot Residential to the south. It also provides some general commercial directly adjacent to Meadow Lake Airport to support its employee population.
- **The County should emphasize the development of grocery stores**, restaurants (both drive-thru and sit-down), gas stations, pharmacies, and neighborhood-scale services.

### 4 Security-Widefield

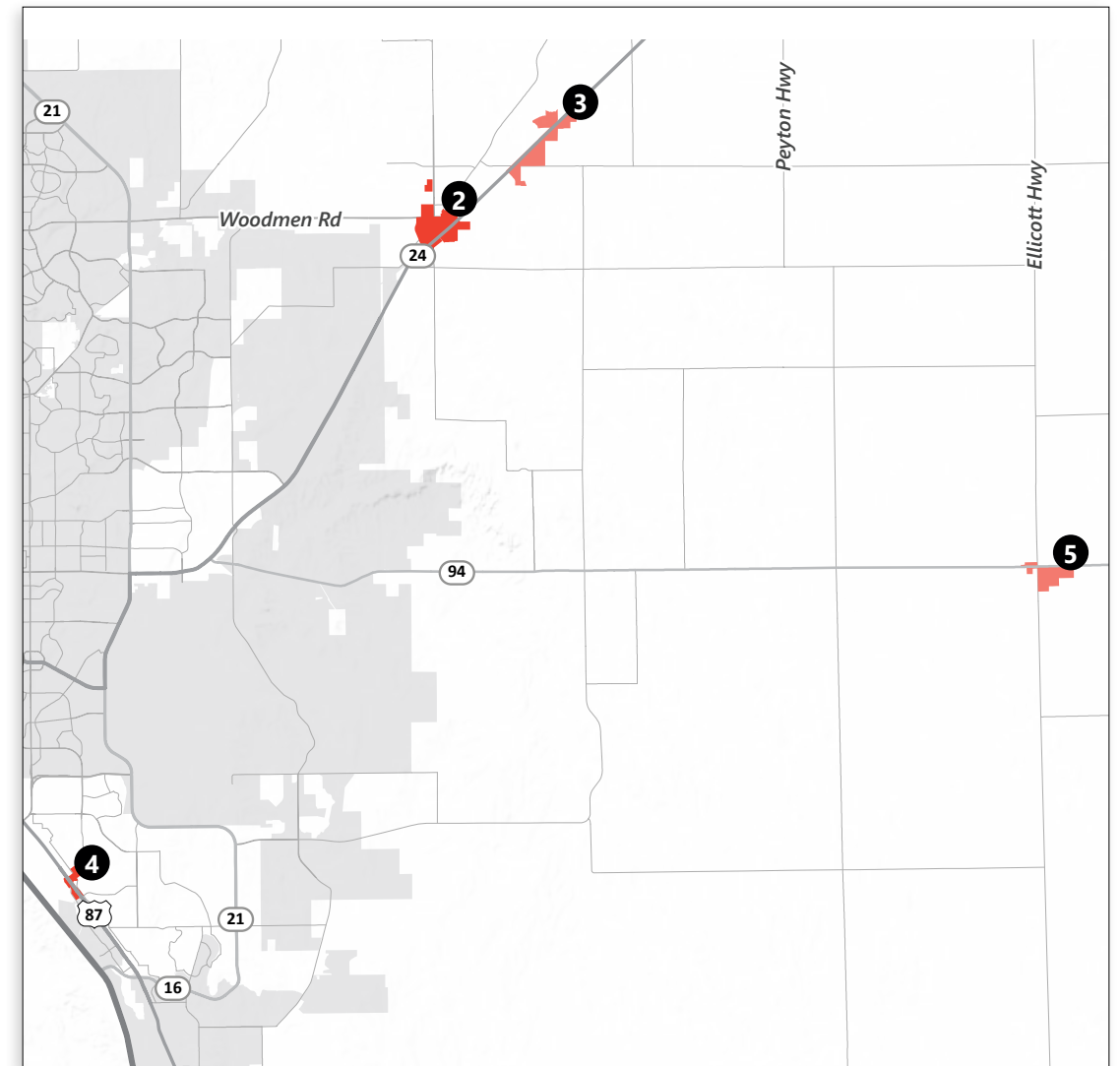
Security-Widefield is its own established community and even though it has access to Colorado Springs to the north and Fountain to the south it could support its own commercial center. Main Street already has several commercial developments clustered on both sides of the street. Similar to the Regional Center in Gleneagle, Security-Widefield could expand on Fountain's commercial corridor along Highway 85 (Can Am Highway). Connecting Main Street to additional development on Can Am Highway could help solidify this Regional Center.

- The County should **promote the development of undeveloped land and redevelopment of existing commercial areas near Can Am Highway for commercial use** to serve Security-Widefield and capture local commuters between Colorado Springs and Falcon.
- **Vacant land along Main Street should be redeveloped** to strengthen the commercial nature of this street.

### 5 Ellicott

The Highway 94 corridor is also planned for significant residential growth, both suburban and large lot. While some commercial uses are appropriate in the residential neighborhoods, Ellicott could help capture most of their commercial needs. The existing Rural Center has a few commercial uses including a small grocery, restaurant, and gas station. While these uses are sufficient enough to support adjacent Ellicott residents, they will not be able to accommodate the expected growth along Highway 94.

- The County should **work to expand this Rural Center with additional commercial uses** to help support the surrounding growing residential. Uses can include a larger grocery store, additional restaurants, coffee shops, and service businesses.
- New residential uses in this community would further support expansion of the Ellicott Rural Center area. This would also provide areas to the east with better access to goods and services.



Regional Center and Rural Center Priority Development Areas



## Mixed-Use Centers

Mixed-use development combines multiple complementary uses (such as retail, office, and residential) within a single building or development. When an appropriate balance of uses occurs, developments within a mixed-use area can support one another. For example, close proximity to amenities such as dining, grocery, and retail can drive demand for residential development which in turn drives demand for restaurants and retailers seeking a strong local customer base. This synergy between uses provides for more robust communities not as easily impacted by blighting factors.

### Support Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-use development offers property owners greater capacity for leasable area and typically higher property values that, in turn, lead to high property tax revenue for the community. Mixed-use development also generates higher non-property tax revenues by providing for a wider range of goods and services within a smaller area and encouraging residents to shop and dine locally more frequently.

To foster mixed-use development the County should assist unincorporated communities in efforts to:

- **Identify barriers to mixed-use**, including zoning, development, and subdivision provisions that prohibit such development.
- Evaluate the use of form-based code or zoning overlays to **increase regulatory flexibility** while maintaining consistent and context-sensitive design.
- **Identify opportunities for infill and redevelopment** such as underutilized properties along major transportation and transit corridors such as vacant commercial center properties or industrial brownfields. This should be coordinated with the County's Economic Development Department to assure El Paso County interests are reflected.
- **Conduct market analyses to identify gaps** in retail, employment, and transit service and promote mixed use development in addressing these gaps.
- **Provide financial and regulatory incentives** such as a height or density bonus or tax abatement to facilitate mixed use development in locations where mixed use is not a proven concept.

Mixed-use development should be strongly encouraged within the Urban Residential plactype. Currently mixed-use is not prevalent in unincorporated areas of the County, but new mixed-use development should be promoted in appropriate areas where it does not yet exist.

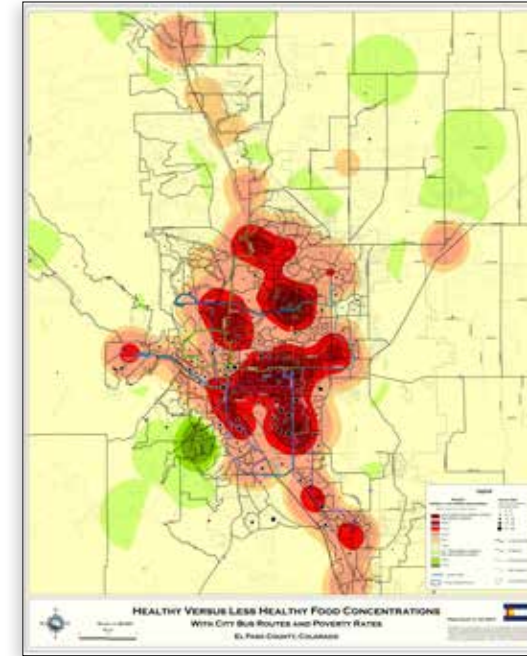
## Serving Rural Communities

Rural areas makeup the majority of unincorporated El Paso County. Most rural communities have little to no commercial services nearby, forcing them to travel significant distances to purchase goods and obtain everyday services. Having to travel farther to access commercial goods and services increases the cost of living and can limit employment opportunities for rural households. The County should prioritize commercial development within or near rural communities to limit barriers to shopping districts and employment centers. This development should be prioritized in the Rural Center plactype.

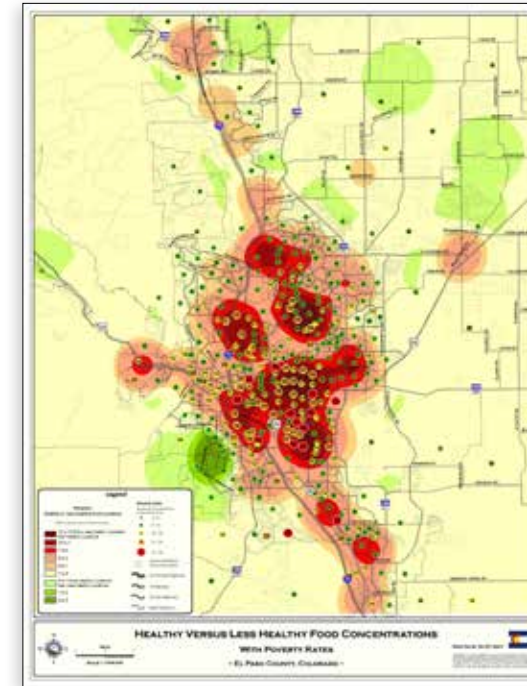
### Food Access

In 2018, El Paso County Public Health developed a Food System Report to assess the food issues prevalent in the County. The report analyzed food security in the context of ease of access to healthy food facilities compared to less healthy food facilities. The study defines a healthy food facility is a full-service grocer with available fresh produce, or a fresh produce market, which includes grocery, club, specialty stores and supercenters, and full-service restaurants. Less healthy facilities are defined as convenience stores (7-Eleven) or small variety stores (Dollar General) that sell limited groceries and stock little to no fresh produce. This also includes food vendors that primarily sell foods with high levels of sugar, fat, and sodium, such as fast-food chains.

The concentration of both healthy and less healthy food facilities is primarily in the City of Colorado Springs. The farther away you move from the Colorado Springs, the more disconnected you become from any type of food facility. Additionally, only people that live in an incorporated municipality have access to a food facility by public transit, further exacerbating the disparity. As development opportunities arise in rural areas, the County should prioritize commercial development to support the growing residential development.



Healthy versus less healthy food concentrations with city bus routes, El Paso County Food System Assessment (2018)



Healthy versus less healthy food concentrations with poverty rates, El Paso County Food System Assessment (2018)

## Regional Centers

Regional Centers serve populations well beyond adjacent neighborhoods. They include large-scale shopping centers with a variety of commercial businesses that provide services and goods that support the short- and long-term needs of customers. They provide a wider variety of businesses that due to size and level of activity cannot be accommodated in Rural Centers. Regional Centers also produce a significant amount of sales tax revenue for the County by capturing the retail activity of local customers as well as out-of-County visitors.

The two main components of regional commercial hubs are retail and entertainment, and the two support and build off one another. Retail uses provide products and services that customers need on a regular or intermittent basis. Entertainment uses give people a reason to leave their homes, visit new places, and try new things. Grouping both uses together can turn a two-hour outing into a day-long event. A significant amount of entertainment draws in El Paso County are located either in the City of Colorado Springs or in facilities near the western edge of the County. The City keeps the benefits earned by the businesses in Colorado Springs and the entertainment options in the mountains are largely maintained by public entities. To help activate spaces, provide more options for fun and recreation to its residents, and attract more visitors the County should emphasize the development of entertainment uses in Regional Centers.



## Employment Priority Development Areas

El Paso County maintains a diverse economy with significant employers in a wide range of sectors and no single industry accounting for a majority of its employment base. Total employment in the County has steadily increased since 2010 and now significantly exceeds prerecession levels. Between 2008 and 2010, El Paso County lost a total of 3,638 jobs representing a decrease of about one percent. El Paso County is expected to add nearly 175,000 new jobs by 2050, which will require strategic planning and economic development to sustain and support. In the following section, numbers are only intended to connect recommendations to the corresponding locations in the County. They are not a hierarchy of priority.

### 1 Meadow Lake Airport

Meadow Lake Airport is the largest airport in unincorporated El Paso County and serves as a reliever to Colorado Springs Airport. Although privately owned, public use allows for commercial flights in and out of the airfield regularly. The facility has expanded significantly since its establishment in 1966 with more than a dozen industrial and manufacturing businesses on the property. As an airport, Meadow Lake has excellent distribution opportunity for its companies but its location on Highway 24 further strengthens access to the rest of the region, state, and country.

The Airport is seeking to further increase the number of businesses on its property and is even implementing a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program to help disadvantaged businesses establish themselves at Meadow Lake.

- The County should **consider prioritizing the Airport for new employment uses** to capitalize on the existing distribution network.
- **Light and heavy industrial should be the primary businesses** in this area.

### 2 Colorado Springs Airport

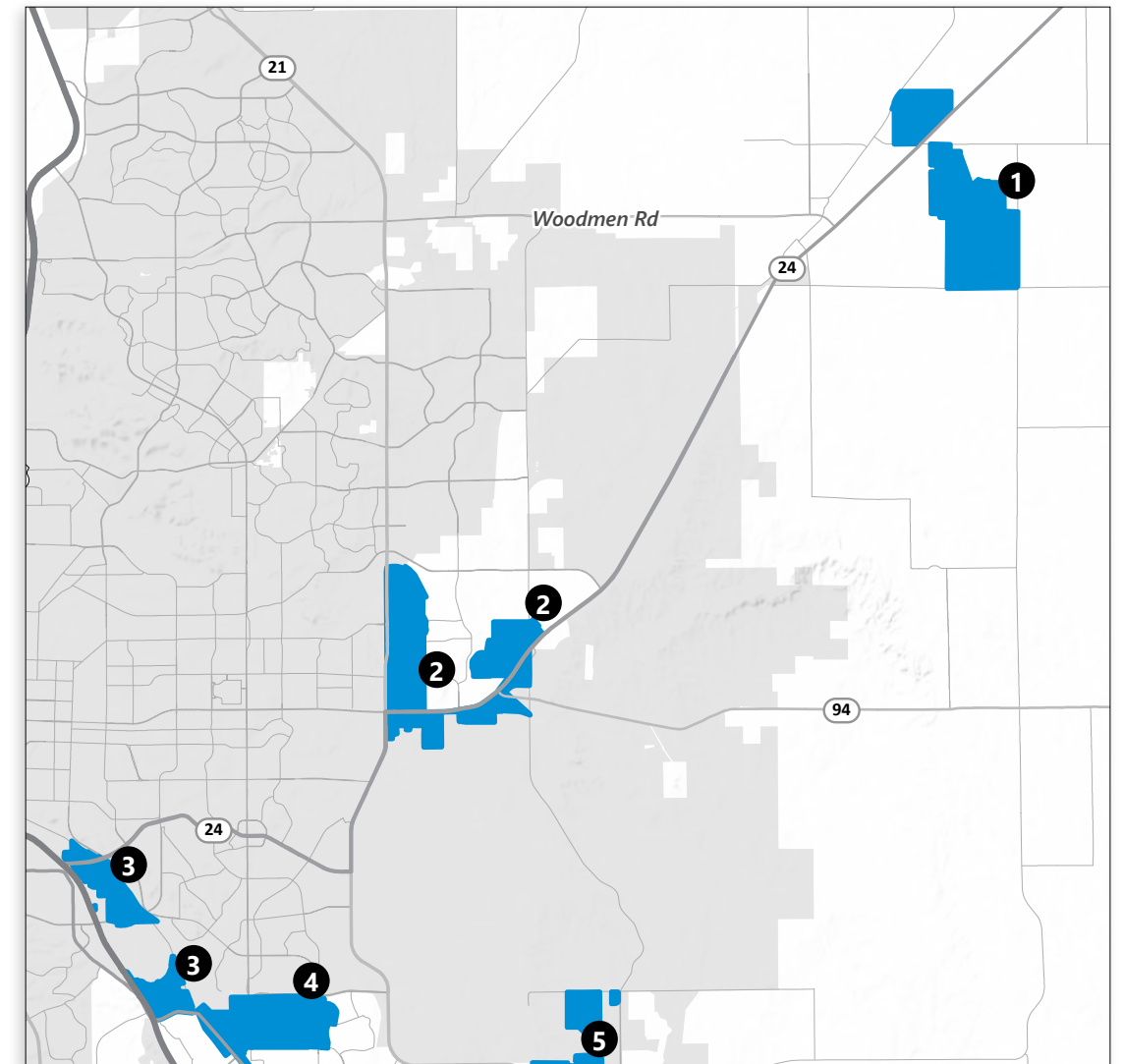
Some parts of Cimarron Hills are located in Accident Potential Zones (APZ) for the Colorado Springs Airport. APZs are areas where an aircraft accident is most likely to occur if it were to occur. As such, residential development is discouraged and in some cases prohibited. Cimarron Hills is an Urban Residential placetype, which includes commercial and employment uses.

- **Limit future development in this area** to align with existing APZs.
- **New or redevelopment should be light or heavy industrial businesses** such as warehousing or distribution.
- Future development should consider potential impacts on the Peterson Air Force Base.

### 3 Security-Widefield Along I-25

Some of the County's larger-scale employment uses are located in enclaves along Interstate 25, south of Colorado Springs. Existing businesses are largely industrial with significant outdoor storage including landscaping supply, automotive mechanic and junkyard, construction, and infrastructure services. A large mobile home park is also located along S Circle Drive. The existing uses require a significant land area for operation and equipment storage. These existing uses are unsightly but serve important service and employment functions for County residents.

- The County should **continue to support the existing businesses** but also help this Employment Center transition to more formal industrial uses as redevelopment allows.
- **Office uses should also be allowed along the edge** to help buffer adjacent residential.
- While internal placement does keep them well-separated from adjacent residential **the County should require improved screening as redevelopment occurs.**



Employment Center Priority Development Areas



#### 4 Bradley Road

Similar to the Security/Widefield along Interstate 25 employment center, this center is primarily heavy, outdoor industrial uses that require a large amount of land for operation. However, unlike the Security/Widefield employment center, this one is less likely to transition to something else. A reservoir, sand company, and solar farm constitute the majority of area within this employment center each of which is a long-term, land-intensive businesses that is unlikely to relocate or fail throughout the life of this Plan.

- The County should **continue to support the existing industrial businesses** in this area.
- The County should encourage the consolidation of smaller commercial business for **redeveloped into a more employment-centric business**.
- The County should **also encourage the develop of the available land along Bradley Road** as a larger-scale employment use.

#### 5 Highway 21

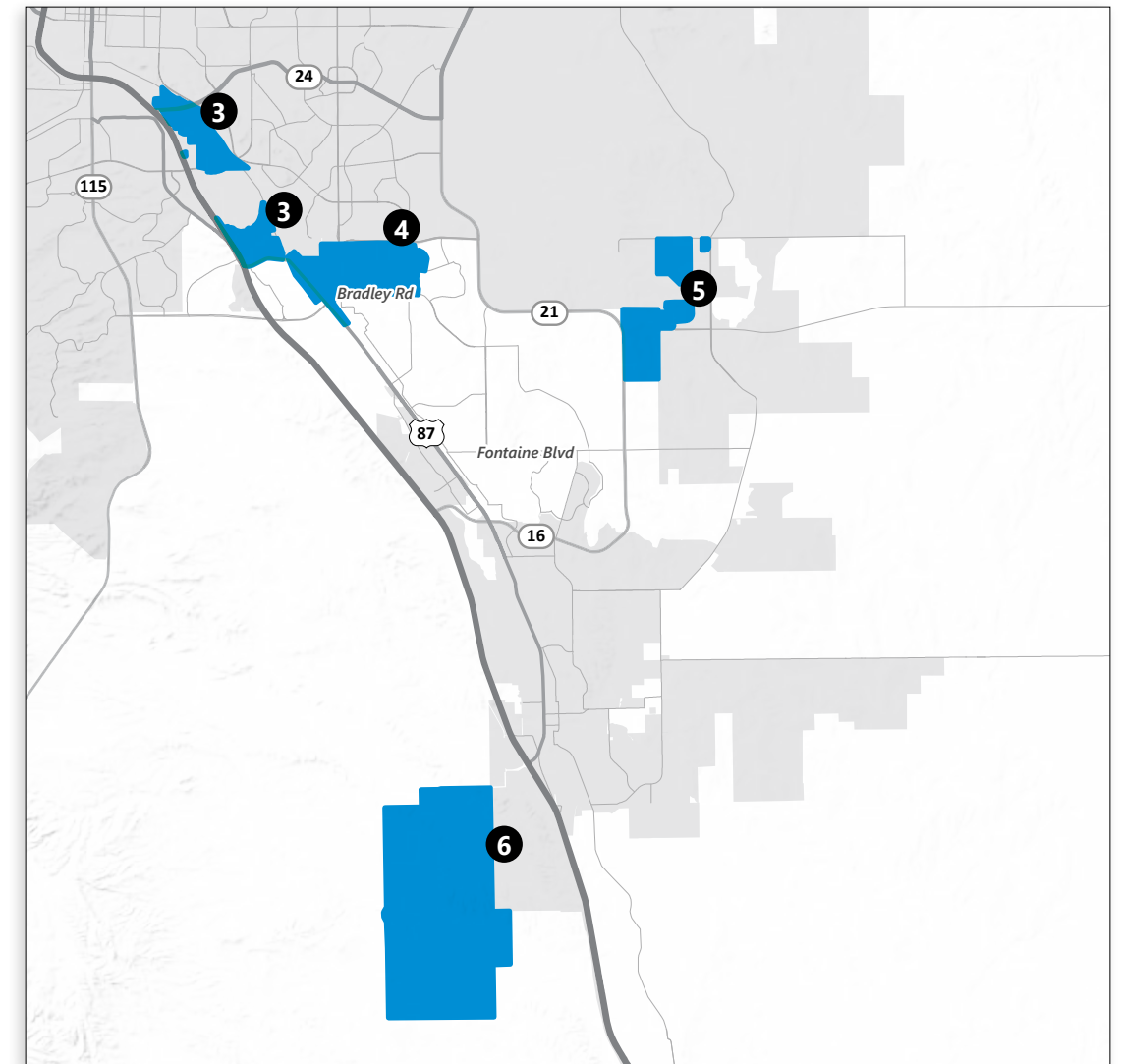
Colorado Springs Airport (COS) has experienced significant growth in passenger totals over the past few years and this trend is expected to increase over life of the Master Plan. The County has already recognized the importance of the Airport to its economy and has created programs and opportunities to capitalize on it. El Paso County established the Commercial Aeronautical Zone (CAZ) to attract local businesses and allow them to succeed at the Airport.

- With businesses expansion already happening around COS, including a 3.6 million square foot Amazon distribution facility, the County should **encourage the develop of unincorporated portions of this area as a formal Employment Center**.
- **Priority businesses should match those that already exist around the airport** such as industrial flex, manufacturing, and distribution.
- The County should also **target the growing sectors of the region** including professional services, healthcare, and technology. The proximity to Peterson Air Force Base could also support companies with a military focus.
- The County should **continue to prioritize non-residential growth in this area** to help establish the first true Employment Center in unincorporated El Paso County.

#### 6 Railyard by Fort Carson

This area is conceptually planned as a new railyard adjacent to Fort Carson and two major power stations owned by Colorado Springs Utilities. The proposed railyard would be the major distribution hub for the southern end of the County. A major railyard could spur vertical integration with the creation of supporting businesses such as manufacturing, warehousing, and roadway distribution due to the proximity to Interstate 25. Depending on scale, these types of businesses could have consequential effects on new employment opportunities for County residents.

- The County should **support the development of the railyard** as a catalyst for the creation of a strong employment hub to serve the entire County.



Employment Center Priority Development Areas

## Business Development

With a desire to increase employment and expand business opportunities, creating a business-supportive community will be a key strategy for the County. El Paso County has strong employers in the U.S. Military and related supporting private contracting businesses as well as a number of healthcare and professional technology companies. However, many of these key businesses are located in incorporated municipalities, namely Colorado Springs. While large employers are desirable, an incremental approach to economic development will help further diversify the employment base. Such an approach should include implementing policies that nurture and cultivate small- and mid-sized firms.

## Small Businesses

Entrepreneurial communities flourish because of a delicate mix of conditions, sometimes called an entrepreneurial ecosystem, that grows and compounds in impact over time. Incremental progress—trial-and-error—is central to the entrepreneurial and start-up segment of the economy, and that dynamic also applies to a local government's role in establishing such a community. Not all initial efforts will produce easily measurable returns, and the ultimate success of entrepreneurial economic planning efforts are measured over the long-term.

Through partnership with local chambers of commerce and other economic development organizations, the County should actively support initial efforts to support entrepreneurs and small, new-business startups. Many of the critical players, such as entrepreneurs, committed government agencies, colleges and universities, potential investors, and experienced business mentors, are present in the region and have successful programs in place within their own agencies. The first challenge is getting these organizations and individuals together to network and strategically plan for a local business climate that encourages and supports new ventures in unincorporated County communities.

## Small Business Development Center

The Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is El Paso County's resource for small business establishment. The center offers a wide range of services including free consulting, workshops, networking events, and long-term programs. The County's Economic Development Department hosts the SBDC as a component unit of the Department. Being under the Economic Development umbrella has created a strong collaborative relationship that has spurred the development of several strategic programs to support small businesses in the County including Bundle Up for Small Businesses and Leading Edge. Coordination between the SBDC and the Economic Development Department ensures that all programs have a financial component and supportive services. As the County continues to grow and begins the process of updating its Five-Year Strategic Plan, it should continue to collaborate internally across departments to create incentives and policies that support the efforts of the SBDC.

## Rural Technical Assistance Program

The State of Colorado's Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) operates a program specifically for rural economic development. The Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) offers a community-centric approach to strengthening economies in the State's rural areas. Communities qualified for the Rural Jumpstart or Enterprise Zone programs are automatically eligible to participate in the RTAP. With the ultimate goal of creating and retaining jobs in rural communities, RTAP includes seven different initiatives for supporting existing businesses, bolstering existing industries, and removing barriers for entrepreneurs.

The initiatives include:

- Certified Small Business Community
- Community Placemaking
- Coworking 101
- Colorado Rural Academy for Tourism (CRAFT) Studio 201
- Creativity Lab of Colorado
- Film Festival
- Grow Your Outdoor Recreation Industry

The Economic Development Department, in collaboration with the SBDC, should promote these initiatives in its unincorporated communities. The SBDC has had recent success in bolstering rural economies in the Falcon and Peyton areas, but these initiatives can help expand that success. The County should also consider working directly with interested communities to apply for these initiatives.

## Minority Business Office

Another program maintained by OEDIT is the Minority Business Office (MBO), which was established to help minority-, woman-, and veteran-owned businesses open or grow in Colorado. The MBO provides mentor programs, business events, and consulting services specifically geared toward these disadvantaged groups. Over 50 percent of businesses in El Paso County self-identify as being owned by someone in at least one of these groups. As such, the County should work to better serve and support these populations in their efforts to start a company and improve the County's overall economy. Through the SBDC, the County has begun to expand its diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, largely with grassroots community engagement. The County should partner with the Minority Business Office to promote and utilize its resources and services in El Paso County.

## Incubators

Funding can be the number one reason a great idea never becomes a business. Incubators and coworking spaces can help mitigate or remove this financial barrier by providing low or no-cost space for an entrepreneur to start their company. There are several incubators in Colorado Springs but none in unincorporated El Paso County. County residents living near the City of Colorado Springs may be able to travel easily to one of the existing spaces, however those that live farther east in more rural areas may not be able to make that commute every day. The County should partner with local educational institutions, property owners, rural chamber of commerce, and developers to evaluate the potential for the construction of coworking spaces in El Paso County, particularly in rural communities far from Colorado Springs. Although this is a long-term strategy, early discussions and relationships can be formed in the near-term.

## Home Businesses

One method for supporting rural economic growth is home-based businesses. A home-based business reduces startup and operational costs by removing the need for separate workspace. By allowing residents to manage compatible, low-intensity personal businesses from their home, the County is creating greater opportunities for new companies to be established. Additionally, these new businesses could be providing a missing good or service directly to their communities.

## Projected Employment Gains

Overall, El Paso County is projected to gain 174,578 jobs from 2019-2050, a growth of 41 percent, indicating the continuing strength of the County's economy. Healthcare and Social Assistance is projected to gain the most through 2050 as well as remain the largest employment sector in the County.



**+50,735 jobs**  
Healthcare and  
Social Assistance



**+21,017 jobs**  
Professional  
and Tech



**+16,157 jobs**  
Accommodation  
and Food Service



**+15,313 jobs**  
State and Local  
Government

### Large Industries

While the County should prioritize an incremental approach for expanding employment opportunities, that does not mean it should neglect large companies. Regional employers have a different set of needs and the County has space and opportunity to support them as well. To support large industries the County should consider the following approaches.

### Access

Large-scale businesses need easy access to customers, employees, and other communities for distribution. Large employers should be located on major roadways to improve connectivity and minimize their impact on daily traffic. Each of the key Employment Centers from the Economic Development Framework is located on or within two miles of a State Highway or Interstate 25 to ensure future businesses can quickly and efficiently deliver their goods and reach their customers.

### Employees

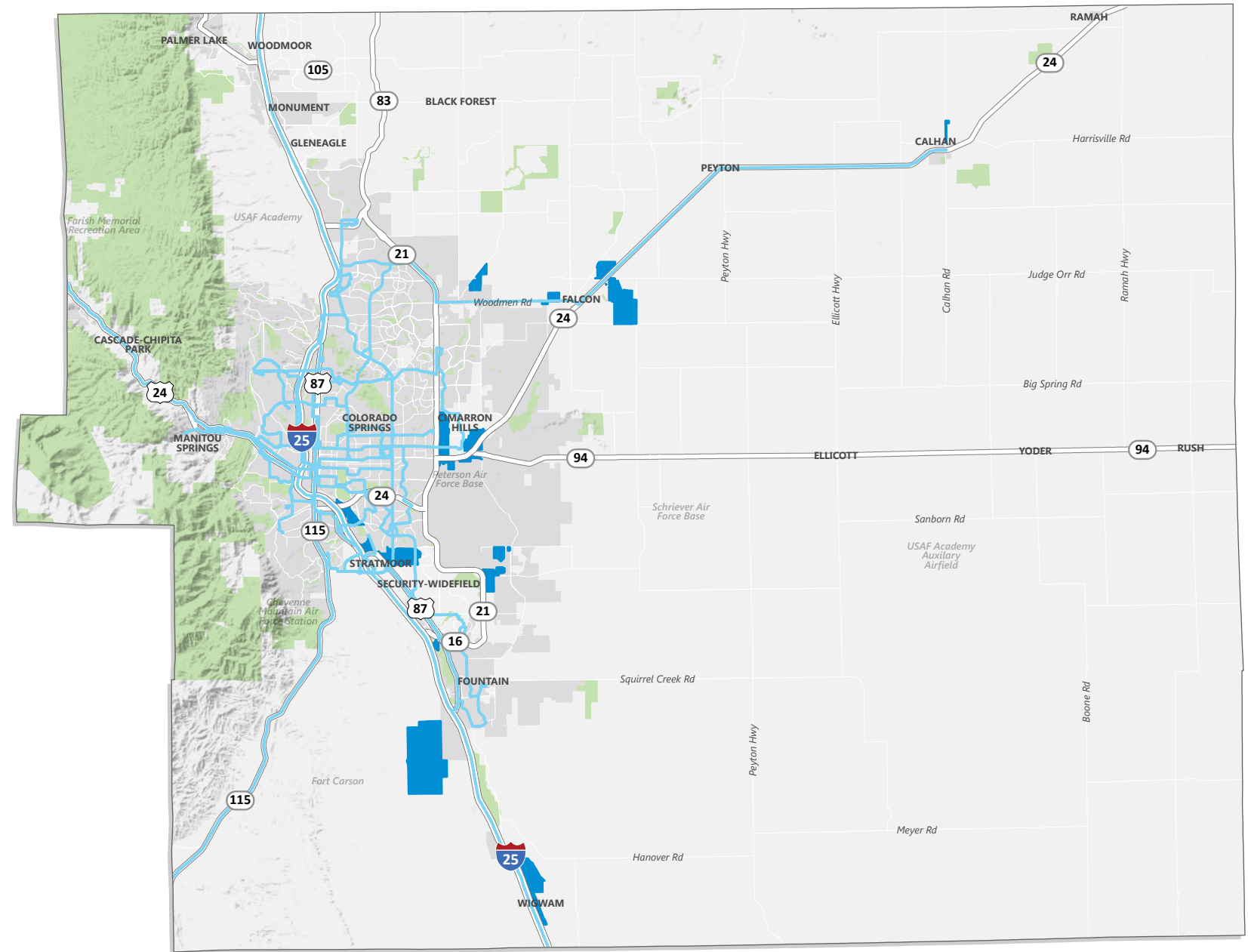
Getting to work can be the most difficult part of securing employment, especially for residents in more rural areas. Locating near primary corridors largely addresses this issue for employees with their own car, which is a significant portion of the County population. Continued population growth will likely increase congestion, particularly near Employment Centers. Public transit can help address this issue. Transit routes and stops at or near all Employment Centers should be strategically located as these areas continue to develop and redevelop.

### Development Footprint

Large employers often require large amounts of space for their workers and the production of their materials. Thus, attracting regional employers will require an appropriate amount of land for them to build on or existing buildings to repurpose. Adequate access to water and other utility services is also critical. As the County continues to develop, it should identify additional areas with enough land to support companies that require a significant development footprint.

### Communication

Several regional employers already have a strong presence in El Paso County. Understanding their short- and long-term needs for success requires regular communication. The County should collaborate with leading businesses in growing regional sectors including healthcare, technology, and logistics to identify and develop strategies to further expand these industries through cooperative arrangements with chambers of commerce, Economic Development, and other organizations.



### Employment Access

- Employment Center
- Transit Route

## Guiding Quality Development

El Paso County has several existing and planned employment centers scattered across the community. Some areas are well-designed and established such as the industrial enclave along Interstate 25. Other employment centers are disconnected or infringe on adjacent residential neighborhoods. In either case, all of these businesses provide important employment opportunities to County residents. To foster business growth and create quality employment areas the County should:

- Ensure that employment centers are appropriately screened and buffered from residential areas and environmental features.
- Enforce regulations that minimize the impacts of business operations, including noise, light pollution, harmful emissions, etc.
- Align future infrastructure investment with the needs of existing and planned employment centers to ensure there is adequate utility services and access for emergency responders.
- Develop design standards to ensure employment centers include well-designed streets, on-site landscaping, cyclist and pedestrian access, wayfinding, and preferred architectural elements.
- Encourage child care services to locate in commercial areas and employment hubs to serve the growing work force and reduce unnecessary transportation burdens to users.

## County Resources

The Economic Development Department currently maintains several resources and programs to spur business development and grow the economy. In addition to those outlined in this section, the Economic Development department currently working on redesigning a business loan fund and a new business incentive policy to help the small business community to access additional capital. The County should continue to navigate our dynamic economic landscape and develop further business incentive policies to assist in creating a robust, diversified, and equitable economic ecosystem.

### Pikes Peak Enterprise Zone Program

The Pikes Peak Enterprise Zone Program (EZ) was established to improve the local business climate and facilitate economic growth in targeted areas of El Paso County. The EZ is a state income tax credit incentive which encourages new and established businesses to locate and expand in economically distressed areas.

### Commercial Aeronautical Zone (CAZ)

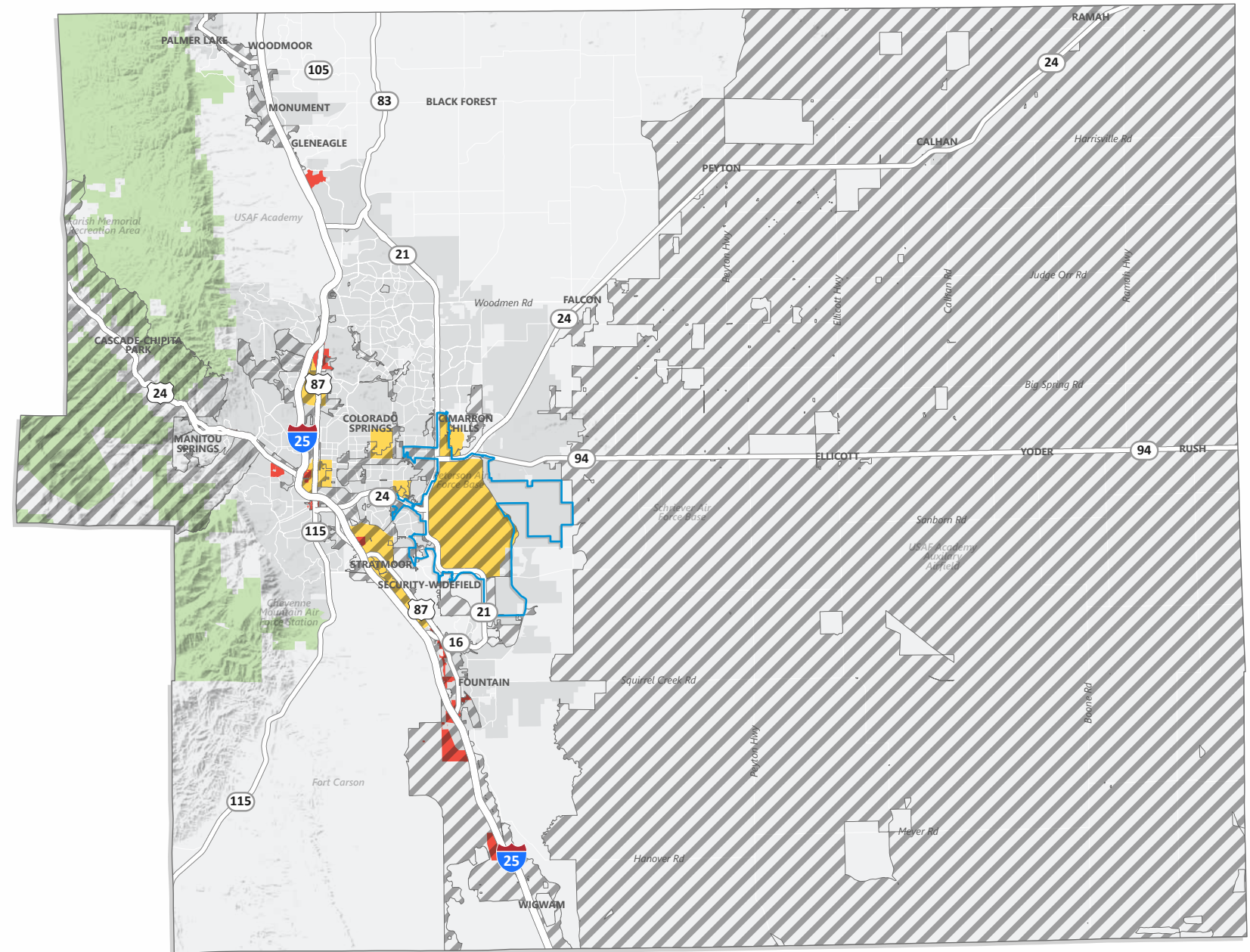
The Commercial Aeronautical Zone (CAZ) was established to attract local businesses and allow them to succeed at the Colorado Springs Airport. Aeronautical businesses can benefit from numerous tax rebates within the CAZ by resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

### Opportunity Zones

Opportunity Zones were enacted as part of the 2017 federal tax reform package and provide a tax incentive for individuals who invest in low-income urban and rural communities through favorable treatment of reinvested capital gains and forgiveness of tax on new capital gains.

### Cimarron Hills Opportunity Zone

Cimarron Hills is an Opportunity Zone located in unincorporated El Paso County with access to major retail, entertainment and hospitality, and industrial development. Retail expansion along the Powers Corridor and rapid residential growth have created significant opportunities for additional commercial development.



### County Resources

- Urban Renewal Areas
- Opportunity Zones
- ▨ Enterprise Zones
- CAZ Zone (2015)



## Workforce Development

El Paso County has an established workforce with 74 percent of its workforce-eligible residents having jobs located in the County. The County should continue emphasizing developing quality, long-term job opportunities to capture local and regional workers. This should include efforts to promote upskilling throughout the County by connecting training and education to existing and future employers in target sectors and their needs.

### Pikes Peak Workforce Center

The Pikes Peak Workforce Center (PPWFC) is the El Paso and Teller County local area branch of Colorado Workforce Centers, which offer free or supplemental support training and educational opportunities for job seekers. Programs at the PPWFC are provided to the community via grants and federal funding at little to no cost. The PPWFC provides a number of resources that help residents start a career, or transition to new careers whether unemployed, employed, or underemployed. In addition, the PPWFC also provides facilities with access to crucial resources such as computers, internet, and resume writing and interviewing assistance. The PPWFC also assists people on how to navigate the health insurance marketplace and connect with financial assistance programs.

The County Economic Development Department should continue to work closely with the PPWFC and promote access to the PPWFC through its website. Further, the County should consider highlighting access to this resource in social media and promote not just the Center, but also the training opportunities it provides underscoring the grant based and free programs it offers.

### Apprenticeships

The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) provides a number of resources for industry-driven career pathways through apprenticeships and maintains the official Colorado Apprenticeship Resource Directory. PPWFC has direct access to CDLE's apprenticeship program and even provides grants that help support some of them. Registered apprenticeships are high-quality work-based learning and post-secondary earn-and-learn programs that meet the U.S. Department of Labor national standards. These apprenticeships ensure that workplace experience and job-related instruction are nationally accredited, guarantee protections under the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, and that apprentices earn wages with at least one guaranteed increase.

### Apprenticeship Directory

The CDLE Apprenticeship Directory includes the following types of programs offered by partner agencies:

- U.S. Department of Labor – Registered Apprenticeship Programs
- Colorado Community College System – Apprenticeship Programs
- Colorado Department of Higher Education – Collegiate Apprenticeship Programs
- CareerWise Colorado – Modern Youth Apprenticeship
- Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) – Licensed Occupations

### Apprenticeships & Higher Education Collaboration

The Apprenticeship Directory can be accessed online through the CDLE website. To further promote the program the Economic Development Department should consider providing direct access to this resource through its website to connect more residents to apprenticeship opportunities. In addition, the County should work with partners like Pikes Peak Community College and other Colorado Community Colleges and public and private universities to circulate this resource among enrolled and prospective students to connect them to careers in in-demand industries.

### Colorado First & Existing Industry Job Training Programs

The Colorado First and Existing Industry programs are designed to strengthen business competitiveness and improve employment opportunities in the State. Funding for these programs is provided by the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) and the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) and grants are administered locally by participating community colleges.

- The Colorado First training program provides funds up to \$1,400 per individual for net new hire training for skills necessary to increase their productivity, increase their wages, and reduce their need for public support. This program is aimed toward businesses relocating to or expanding in Colorado.
- The Existing Industry training program provides funding up to \$1,200 per individual for incumbent worker training and support established Colorado Businesses with adapting to new technology and preventing layoffs.

Grants for the Colorado First and Existing Industry Job Training Programs are made available annually and provide access to training courses ranging from technical skills in machining, welding, and industrial maintenance to leadership and business essentials like group facilitation, project management, and data analytics.



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### ***Job Training & Higher Education Collaboration***

Pikes Peak Community College, in partnership with the Economic Development Department and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), should promote the Existing Industry job training program with established businesses in the El Paso County community. They should make information on the program widely available online through their websites and social media. In addition, the SBDC should consider providing application assistance to businesses in the community interested in utilizing the program for staff training and also utilize the Colorado First grant program to attract new businesses to El Paso County.

### **Pikes Peak Library District's Adult Education**

Pike Peak Library District's Adult Education Program provides free services for educational attainment certificates including Career Online High School (COHS), ESL classes, and ABE and ASE classes to help pass the GED, TASC or HISET exams. These services are designed to help participants obtain or improve employment and or enter college and are offered at various locations throughout Colorado Springs. In addition, the Pikes Peak Library District (PPLD) also offers interactive online learning resources for 21 ESL languages that only require a library card to access.

### ***Program Expansion Potential***

The County should work with the PPLD to expand this program to communities in El Paso County outside Colorado Springs to promote wider access to these services. This may mean a County-wide coordination effort partnering with local municipal libraries in incorporated communities such as Manitou Springs and others to create a wide geographic network of facilities offering Adult Education programs.

### **Colorado Workforce Development Council**

The Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Work-Based Learning Lab is a pilot program designed to support capacity-building efforts for communities to address issues in the local employee talent pipeline. Work-based learning provides students and job seekers relevant industry skills, certifications, and higher education credentials needed to secure employment. Participating communities in the Work-based Learning Lab are eligible to apply for grants between \$10,000 to \$75,000 from the CWDC to help them execute the Action Phase of the program based off of their comprehensive work-based learning plan and landscape analysis completed in the prior Discovery Phase. In March of 2020, the University of Colorado - Colorado Springs, College of Letters, Arts and Sciences (LAS) Apprenticeship Program participated in the Discovery Phase making them a key partner for the County.

### ***Workforce Development Council & Higher Education Collaboration***

The County should collaborate with LAS to learn from their experience during the Discovery Phase and executing the Action Phase of the Work-based Learning Lab program. Utilizing LAS as a partner the County should then connect communities interested in the program to the CWDC and assist them with requirements of the program and ensure their Action Phase is successful.

### **Local Partnerships**

The Economic Development Department of the County partners with the City of Colorado Springs to connect residents to City of Colorado Springs business resources.

- One of the best resources the County has for workforce training and development is the **Pikes Peak Workforce Center** which connects job seekers, employers, young adults, and veterans to training and job placement opportunities in the County.
- The **Small Business Development Center** has also been a major partner for business development for the County, providing essential training resources online that help businesses grow and prosper.
- The **Discover Goodwill's Career Development Center (CDC)** is a long-term partner of El Paso County and the Department of Human Services which has trained and put job seekers to work in the community for over 25 years.
- The **Quad Innovation Alliance** connects County students to local employers to help address an issue or opportunity within their organization. Quad provides students with real-world, hands-on experience that also works toward strengthening local businesses and the County's economy.

All of these partnerships are essential to workforce development in the community and should be fostered and further developed into the future to ensure residents have access to the tools and training they need to live and work in El Paso County.

### ***Local Partners & Higher Education Collaboration***

There are opportunities for the County to expand into new partnerships to promote wider workforce development opportunities in the community. To this end, the County should consider expanded partnerships with the network of Colorado Community Colleges and public and private universities in the County to ensure these institutions have the tools and capacity they need to plug in and utilize the CDLE Apprenticeship Directory and, in the case of LAS, support them in completing the Action Phase of the CWDC Work-based Learning Lab program.

In addition to supporting LAS, the County should consider extending relationships to community groups that would be well suited to conduct the Work-based Learning Lab program such as community development corporations or educational institutions outside of Colorado Springs. Another important workforce development program partner the County should foster a relationship with is the PPLD to work towards County-wide offerings for adult education and similar programs.



# 6

## Inside this Chapter

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*Roadways (page 79)*

*Public Transportation (page 84)*

*Multimodal Transportation (page 86)*

*Airports (page 88)*

*Railroads (page 89)*

# TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

The *Major Transportation Corridors Plan Update* completed in 2016 by El Paso County provides much of the context for the following section. This Plan includes a thorough analysis of existing conditions, projected household and employment growth, as well as future land use changes to forecast major transportation corridor and multimodal projects needed in the County through 2040. Since the MTCP will be reviewed and updated regularly, it should be relied upon over this chapter of the Master Plan if conflicts arise.

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**Core Principle 4:** Connect all areas of the County with a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system.

**Goal 4.1** - Establish a transportation network that connects all areas to one another, emphasizing east-west routes, reducing traffic congestion, promoting safe and efficient travel.

**Goal 4.2** - Promote walkability and bikability where multimodal transportation systems are feasible.

**Goal 4.3** - Foster transit-supportive development and coordinate to expand public transportation options.

**Goal 4.4** - Develop a sustainable funding mechanism for transportation infrastructure and maintenance.

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# Major Transportation Corridors Plan

The Major Transportation Corridors Plan (MTCP) is a long-range plan to keep pace with the dynamic nature of growth and infrastructure within the County. The MTCP looks to create an updated vision for the future transportation in the County as well as a prioritized list of transportation improvements. Funding strategies as well as policies are addressed to ensure the implementation of the completed plan. Improvements outlined in the MTCP are grouped into the following categories:

- Paving/repaving projects
- Rural county road upgrades
- New road connections
- Multimodal connectivity
- County road capacity improvements

The MTCP is the leading document for transportation infrastructure in El Paso County. As such it establishes and defines the recommendations in this chapter and other transportation-related policies and strategies throughout the rest of the Plan. Updates to the MTCP supersede transportation recommendations in *Your El Paso Master Plan*.



El Paso County Major Transportation Corridors Plan (MTCP) Update

## Road Impact Fee

The County has a policy to encourage development to contribute a reasonable and fair share toward necessary off-site transportation improvements. This Road Impact Fee is a method of more fairly and equitably allocating the impact of new development and the traffic it generates and recovering the cost attributable to new development than individually negotiated developer agreements.

Per Resolution 16-454, after January 1, 2020, property in the unincorporated area of the county that receives a Land Use Approval either in a public hearing or administratively, is subject to the payment of Road Impact Fees. Fees are required to be paid for an approval or permit issued for a new use or structure on a parcel of property in unincorporated El Paso County that generates new trips for such parcel; examples include building permits, access permits, site plans, site development plans, special use approvals and variance of use approvals.

The fee pays for the capital costs of building new roads and road improvements that are triggered by the traffic generated by new development. The purposes of the program are to identify transportation improvements needed to accommodate growth, to fairly allocate the costs of transportation improvements among new developments, and to ensure the proper and timely accounting of improvements and funds. The program does not include all roads in the unincorporated County, only higher traffic roads that provide for regional travel.

## Related Plans & Studies

The planning process and implementation of the MTCP is effectively coordinated with State, regional, and municipal transportation planning efforts. The following is a list of the other key recent and ongoing plans and studies that relate to the MTCP:

- Hodgen Road Access Management Plan
- US Highway 24 Access Management Plan
- Marksheffel Road Access Management Plan
- Woodmen Road Access Management Plan
- Woodmen Road Corridor Improvement Project
- Eastonville Road Corridor Study
- Briargate-Stapleton Corridor Study
- Stapleton/Judge Orr Corridor Study
- Highway 105 Corridor Study
- Meridian Road Corridor Plan
- Road Safety Plan
- PPACG Moving Forward 2045 Regional Transportation Plan
- CDOT Central Front Range 2045 Regional Transportation Plan
- CDOT US 83 Access Study
- CDOT US 24 West Environmental Assessment
- CDOT Powers Corridor Environmental Assessment
- CDOT US 24 East Planning and Environmental Linkages Study
- CDOT I-25, Monument to C-470 Planning and Environmental Linkages Study
- City of Colorado Springs Intermodal Transportation Plan
- Las Vegas Street Corridor Improvements

## Roadways

Roadways serve as the primary network of connections between people and places and as these roadways weave through various placetypes they take on different characteristics. For example, in the Rural placetype, Highway 24 is a three-lane road with a unpaved shoulder and no curbs, sidewalks, or barriers. While this same road in the Urban Residential placetype has additional lanes in both directions separated by a median, a separate turn lane at the majority of intersections, and streetlights. These changes in the roadway's configuration reflect differences in the community character and development intensity between the two placetypes. In general, as roads that go from less-intense placetypes like Large-Lot Residential to more-intense placetypes like Regional Center, their various elements such as travel lanes, intersections, shoulders, sidewalks, medians, and lighting are more heavily designed.

## Functional Classification

As proposed roadway improvements are planned and developed, the guidelines and standards associated with their classification and function should be considered to the degree practical and appropriate. The County's roadway design standards are provided in the Engineering Criteria Manual (ECM). Local jurisdictions and CDOT each have roadway design standards applicable to the streets under their jurisdiction.

Classification	Description of Roadway
<b>Freeway</b>	Roadways that serve high-speed and high-volume regional traffic. Access to a Freeway is limited to grade separated interchanges with no mainline traffic signals.
<b>Expressway</b>	Roadways that serve high-speed and high-volume traffic over long distances. Access to an Expressway will be highly controlled and may have both grade-separated interchanges and signalized intersections. Adjacent land uses, both existing and future, shall be served by other network roadways.
<b>Principal Arterial</b>	Roadways that serve high-speed and high-volume traffic over long distances. Access is highly controlled with a limited number of intersections, medians with infrequent openings, and no direct parcel access. Adjacent land uses, both existing and future, shall be served by other network roadways, service roads and inter parcel connections.
<b>Minor Arterial</b>	Roadways that currently serve high-speed and high-volume traffic over medium distances. Access is restricted through prescribed distances between intersections, use of medians, and no or limited direct parcel access.
<b>Collector</b>	Roadways that serve as links between local access facilities and arterial facilities over medium-to-long distances, outside of or adjacent to subdivision developments. Collectors are managed to maximize the safe operation of through-movements and to distribute traffic to local access.
<b>Local</b>	Roadways that provide direct parcel access and deliver parcel generated trips to the collector network.

## Road System Performance

The roadway level of service (LOS) measures the performance of a roadway or intersection. The LOS of a roadway is graded A through F, where “A” represents optimal operation with no congestion while “F” represents poor service with severe congestion. These measurements are taken at peak travel times often during commuting periods before or after work hours. Existing traffic volumes on road segments around the County were compared with lanes, functional classifications, and the planning-level traffic capacity thresholds to assess existing congestion levels.

The MTCP’s Existing Capacity Analysis map identifies road segments that are congested (LOS E or F), near congested (LOS D), congesting (LOS C) or uncongested (LOS A or B). Roads identified as congested should be prioritized for short-range capacity upgrades, these roads include segments of US 24 West, SH 21 (Powers Boulevard), Marksheffel Road, and Meridian Road.

### Roadway Levels of Service

Rating	Description
LOS A	Unrestricted maneuverability and operating speeds
LOS B	Reduced maneuverability and operating speeds
LOS C	Restricted maneuverability and operating speeds closer to the speed limit
LOS D	Severely restricted maneuverability and unstable, low operating speeds
LOS E	Operating conditions at or near the capacity level
LOS F	Breakdown conditions characterized by stop and go travel

## Jurisdiction

It is the County’s responsibility to understand and coordinate transportation projects managed by other agencies within El Paso County to ensure they do not conflict with the desires of the community. This is important because state and federal laws such as Colorado Revised Statutes CRS 43-1-1103 (5) (b.5) require state transportation plans to be developed in coordination with federal military installations, but do not require coordination with the County. Currently, the County collaborates with outside agencies, like the State Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) within the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), military installations, and surrounding municipalities, on various planning and infrastructure projects. This collaboration helps to ensure projects comply with adopted plans, design and construction standards, and allow the County to utilize State and Federal funds.

Ongoing coordination should continue to occur at all levels of government in order to maintain open lines of communication and to ensure transportation projects align with the desires of the community. Dedicating a staff member from the Planning and Community Development department with knowledge in transportation and the responsibilities of these jurisdictions to coordinate with Public Works will help the County stay on top of proposed plans and projects by other agencies. The County should also continue working with PPACG and participating on its various committees to ensure coordination occurs on all transportation plans and projects in the El Paso County.

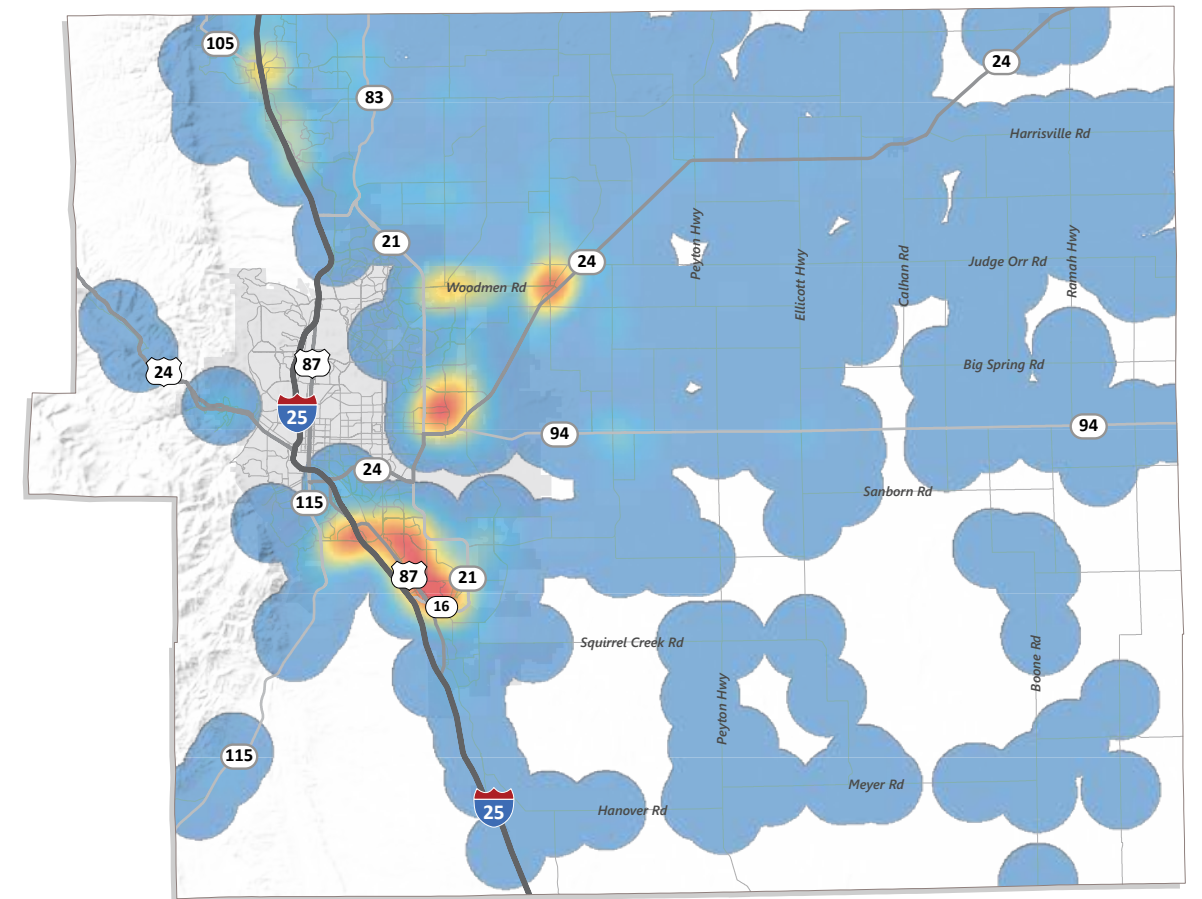
## Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority

The Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA) is a collective of the five regional governments that include the cities of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs, El Paso County, and the towns of Green Mountain Falls and Ramah. The purpose of the PPRTA is to provide funding to improve and maintain roads and support public transit with a regional approach.

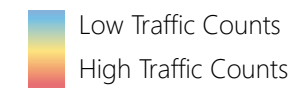
### Project Funding

The PPRTA primarily assists in the facilitation of capital projects and maintenance projects and is funded through a one-percent sales tax in participating jurisdictions. The funds collected through this tax are applied to transportation projects in the region with capital projects receiving 55% of the total funds, maintenance projects 35%, and public transit 10%. In 2012, close to 80 percent of voters reauthorized the continued collection of the tax for an additional 10-year period through 2024.

The PPRTA is a key partner in regional transportation improvements to the County. Currently El Paso County is a member of the PPRTA and should continue to stay involved in the organization. In addition, as 2024 approaches El Paso County should consider promoting the renewal of the PPRTA sales tax into the next 10-year period by advocating to voters the major need to continue regional transportation improvements to keep pace with growth and increasing maintenance obligations. Detailed funding needs, opportunities, and mechanisms are outlined in the MTCP.



### Traffic Counts



## Roadway Improvements

The jurisdictions in El Paso County have identified a number of roadways for improvement and/or new connections. They include state highways, County roads, and even municipal roads. Each is intended to reduce travel times and improve overall accessibility throughout the County. The majority of the planned or proposed roadway upgrades are for east-west routes, where connectivity is significantly lacking. There are several north-south roadway projects as well. Most of these are general upgrades to rural roads and enhancements to accommodate multimodal transportation options. While all road improvements are important, east-west connections are critical to creating fully functional and accessible road network in incorporated and unincorporated El Paso County and these improvements are discussed in greater detail in the next section.

### East-West Connections

The County is relatively well served with north-south roadway connections. However, Highway 94, Highway 24, Bradley Road, and Woodmen Road are the only direct east-west routes into Colorado Springs. Many of the other east-west routes are disjointed, forcing drivers to jog north or south to continue their trip east-west across the County. East-west connections mainly support the residents of eastern rural communities' access to Colorado Springs and other municipalities such as Monument and Fountain. Residents of eastern rural parts of the County often lack commercial goods and services in their own communities and must travel to more urban/denser areas to purchase groceries, find a mechanic, and otherwise meet routine needs. East-west connections are critical to overall quality of life for residents of eastern El Paso County.

The County should work with CDOT to complete its list of east-west priority projects along Highway 94 and Highway 24. These include widening a portion of Highway 94 between Highway 24 and Enoch Road to add passing and turn lanes set to be completed in up to four years and the widening of a section of Highway 24 east through Falcon to four lanes set to be completed in five to 10 years. Additionally, the 2016 Major Transportation Corridors Plan Update identifies roadway paving/repaving improvements to many important east-west roadways. The County should continue to prioritize the improvements listed in this Plan. The County should also conduct a study to identify possible new roadways that create more east-west and north-south connections to ensure the east side of the County has efficient access to Colorado Springs and other County destinations.

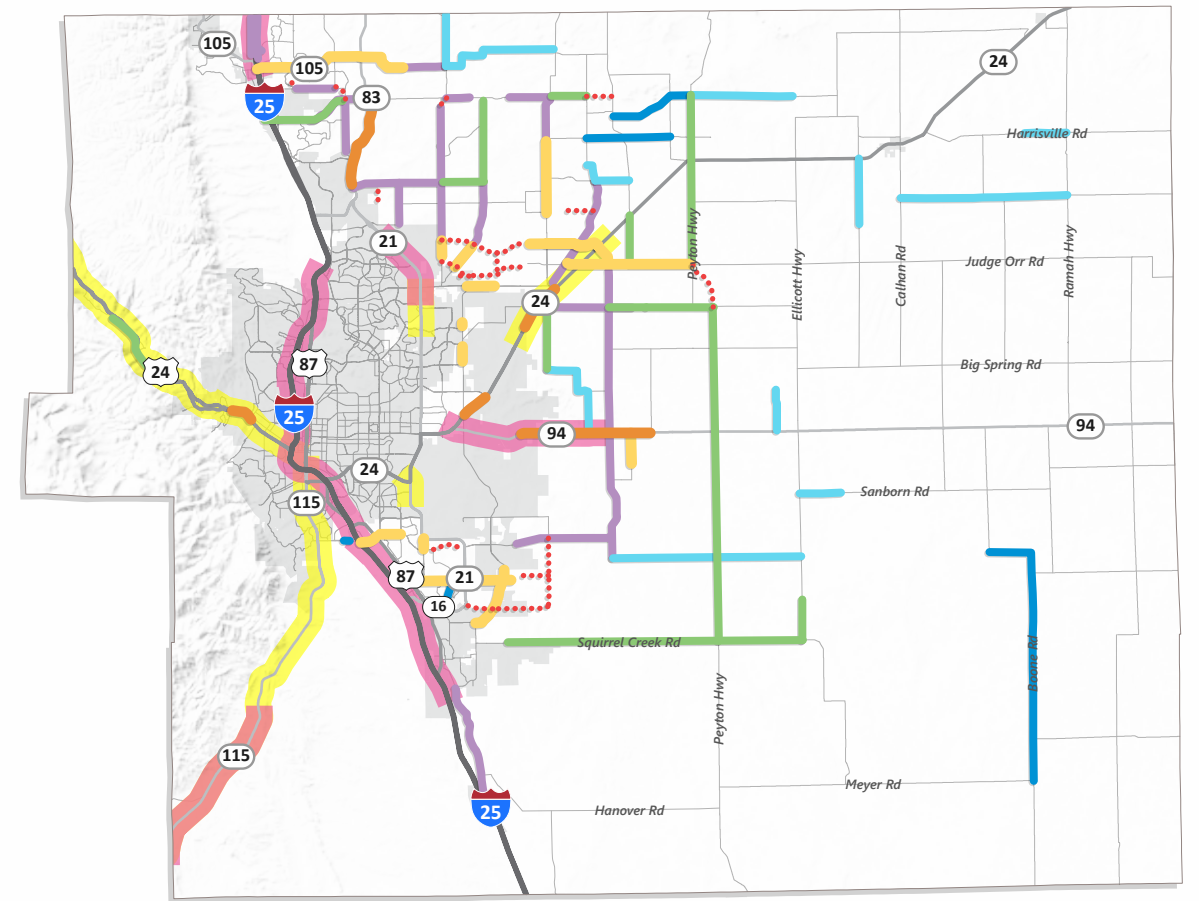
### 2016 Major Transportation Corridors Plan

The 2016 Major Transportation Corridors Plan Update identifies roadway paving/repaving improvements to key east-west roadways such as Funk Road between Calhan Highway and Ramah Highway, Sweet Road between Peyton Highway and Ellicott Highway, and Drennan Road between Curtis Road and Ellicott Highway. The Plan also identifies key road capacity improvements to east-west routes for widening including Judge Orr Road between Eastonville Road and Peyton Highway, Walker Road between State Highway 83 and Stepler Road, and State Highway 94 between the City limits and Slocum Road.

## Colorado Statewide Transit Plan (2045)

The *Colorado Statewide Transit Plan (2045)* is the follow up plan to the Colorado Statewide Transit Plan (2040) which was the first plan to establish a framework for creating an integrated statewide transit system that meets the mobility needs of the residents of Colorado, initiated by the State's Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) within CDOT. The plan compiles recommendations from previous plans conducted by the DTR in order to provide a comprehensive picture of existing and future transit in the state. The main goals of the Plan are to create:

- A modally integrated transit system that provides local, regional, and interregional connectivity and is affordable, efficient, and easy to use.
- A resilient transit network that makes travelers feel safe and secure.
- A high-quality transit system that is financially sustainable and operates in a state of good repair.



### Roadway Improvements

- New Roadway Connection
- State Highway Capacity Improvements
- County Road Capacity Improvements
- Multi-Modal
- Paving Project
- Resurface Project
- Rural County Road Upgrades
- Projects in 1-4 Years
- Projects in 5-10 Years

Improvement from the 2016 Major Transportation Corridors Plan and 2045 Colorado Statewide Transit Plan



## Access Management

Roads generally provide two important functions: mobility and access. The County's roadway system consists of a hierarchy of road types ranging from freeways that solely provide a mobility function to local streets that solely provide an access function. The classification of a roadway reflects its role in the County's street and highway system and forms the basis for street design guidelines and standards. The roadway functional classes in the 2016 MTCP represent a desired function based on the character of service they are intended to provide for the year 2040. The character of service includes attributes such as traffic volumes, trip lengths, speeds, and relationship to adjacent land use. Existing roadways may not meet all of the desired characteristics implied by their function, but strategic improvements can serve to fulfill the vision over time.

## Multimodal Access

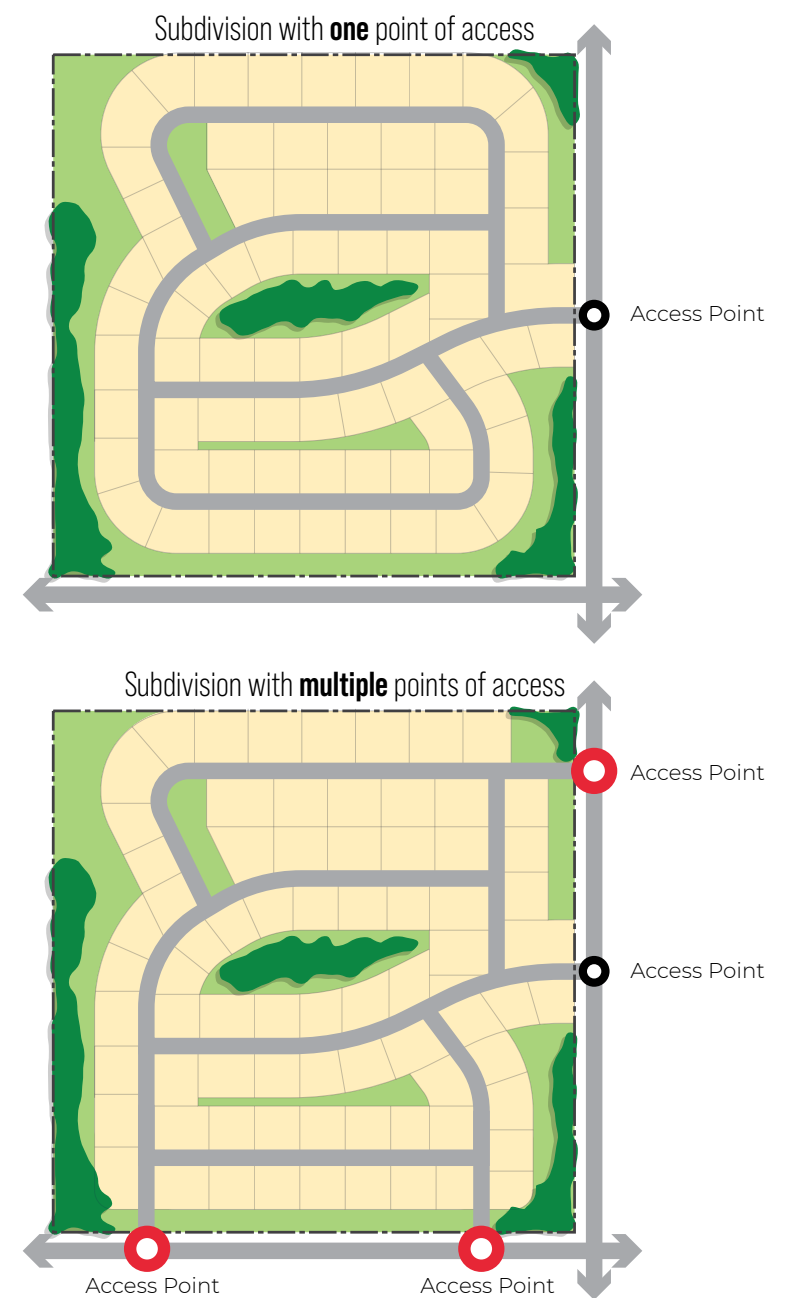
While all placetypes would benefit from a safe, walkable, and connected street network, multimodal access is a defining and critical feature in Urban Residential, Rural Center, and Regional Center placetypes and other areas that promote a mix of uses and mobility options. The County should encourage sidewalks and other multimodal facilities in all new development in placetypes, as appropriate, and upgrade existing infrastructure to these types of facilities when needed.

## Subdivision Access

Local access is key to connecting residents to the region and residents have identified subdivision access as a primary concern. Input received as part of *Your El Paso County* outreach process cited a need for subdivision communities to have two points of access, or two ways in and out. Generally, single access subdivisions create points of high traffic and congestion where they join the primary street network and are disconnected from other neighborhoods by roads that dead end at cul-des-sac. Having two points of access allows for a more contiguous street network and would remove these barriers.

Providing multiple points of access to a subdivision also improves efficiency in emergency response times, and allows for better pedestrian and bicycle access across neighborhoods. Better access can be the difference between a resident or visitor choosing to walk over drive to their destination. Increased access especially with multimodal options for walking and biking has the opportunity to reduce vehicular travel and ultimately congestion and stress on roadway infrastructure.

The County should continue to require that new subdivision developments in the County have multiple points of access to existing roadways to minimize congestion and improve emergency access. They should be sited in a manner that improves connectivity to adjacent areas. Spacing between access points is a key consideration in this process. Roadways that provide these access points should also include sidewalks and bike lanes where appropriate to support multimodal transportation options in the County. Existing subdivisions should also be encouraged to find ways to expand points of access and open up connections to neighboring developments and subdivisions such as through stub roads or easements.





## Responsibilities & Maintaining Roads

Roadways in El Paso County are maintained by a variety of jurisdictions.

- **Major roads that are state or U.S. highways are maintained by CDOT** and include I-25, US 24, State Highway 83 (SH 83), SH 94, SH 105, SH 115, and SH 21 (Powers Boulevard).
- **Connector roads in the incorporated areas of the County are primarily maintained by the municipalities** they are located within.
- Many of the **arterial roads connecting incorporated municipalities are owned and maintained by the El Paso County DPW.**
- County **arterial, collector, local roads in unincorporated parts of the County are maintained by the Department of Public Works.**

There are jurisdictional responsibilities assigned to ensure roads are properly maintained in the County, however, funding has been a consistent challenge for the County to keep up with road maintenance demands. Thus, highlighting a real need to share responsibilities with municipalities to maintain at a minimum County roadways segments that are within their municipal boundary or develop agreements with the municipalities to maintain roadways within and near enclaves. In addition to taking responsibility of existing County roads, as municipalities grow and annex adjacent lands for development it is critical that they also take responsibility to maintain the roadways within, or otherwise primarily serving, these annexed areas rather than leave them to the County or PPRTA.

## Lack of Funding

Roughly 4,335 lane miles of bridges and roads are owned by the County and managed by the Department of Public Works (DPW). This includes 266 bridges, about 109,000 linear feet of drainage ditches, over 382,000 feet of drainage pipe, over 24 miles of guardrail, 29,000 traffic control signs, 92 traffic signals, and over 22,000 acres of right-of-way. To properly maintain this extensive network the DPW needs to conduct pavement overlays on approximately 70 to 100 miles of road per year (about 10 percent of the system). Currently the DPW has funding to conduct payment overlays on about 20 miles of road each year. As the roadway network expands, DPW's capacity to fund maintenance projects will become even more strained.

Currently, roadway needs exceed available funding. Identifying funding sources for County infrastructure projects is an important subject requiring continuous study. Finding State and Federal sources of grant funding is paramount to keeping up with the infrastructure maintenance and expansion needs of the County into the future. Transportation infrastructure improvements also effect cyclist and pedestrian access as well as overall safety. Denser development also encourages multimodal transportation, affects transportation infrastructure needs, and can incentivize annexation.

The County should continue to actively seek out Federal and State funding sources to supplement maintenance and the expansion of the roadway network. Funding sources should not only serve to close the current gap but provide continued dollars to deal with maintenance into the future. Multimodal transportation should also be required with all new projects as there are specific federal funding opportunities for these types of project. The County should also prioritize denser development adjacent to municipal limits to encourage annexation.

## Relationship with CDOT

El Paso County shares responsibility for operation, maintenance, construction, planning for, and funding of roads within its jurisdiction. A strong collaborative relationship is critical to ensure that the complete and multimodal transportation systems work throughout the County. Regional transportation plans, either through PPACG or the Central Front Range, are shared with CDOT for inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Plan. Additionally, the Planning Department invites CDOT to Early Assistance meetings at the beginning of the development process, where traffic can affect state highways, to establish a fair share of costs for signals or improvements that are triggered by development applications. The County should continue its close relationship with CDOT to ensure the maintenance and development of a complete transportation network throughout El Paso County.

## Defense Access Roads

Considering the multitude of military installations in the County, planning for the future of transportation infrastructure in the region must prioritize defense access roads. Major corridors provide important access to military installations that balance access with functionality like Highway 94 and Bradley Road providing key access to Schriever Air Force Base, I-25 providing access to the Air Force Academy, and I-25 and Mesa Ridge Parkway providing access to Fort Carson. Regional transportation decisions related to defense access roads have major implications. In order to maintain safety and support the readiness of military installations and their missions, El Paso County should continue to support transportation projects along Highway 94, South Academy Boulevard, and other major access corridors. This includes supporting current efforts now underway as part of the Military Access, Mobility and Safety Improvement Project.

## Public Transportation

### Existing Infrastructure

Public transportation options in El Paso County are limited and often require preorganized travel arrangements. Public transit travel between communities within the County is primarily completed by bus or shuttle. The County does not operate or maintain any public transit services.

### Mountain Metro Transit

Mountain Metro Transit (MMT) provides 21 routes providing transit service to approximately 188 square miles of Colorado Springs and portions of the broader County. Most routes run at 30 to 60-minute frequencies with limited evening and weekend service. The weekday annual ridership is roughly 1,200,000 while weekends are much lower at below 200,000 riders over the course of the year. During 2013, Route 25 experienced the highest ridership followed by Routes 7, 5, 3, 1, 14, and 9. The MMT bus operations focus primarily on servicing City residents. ADA or paratransit services are also limited to an urban service area.

Schriever AFB personnel have participated in the Mountain Metro Rides Vanpool service which groups commuters who live and work near each other. Passengers share the ride and pay a low monthly fare for a minivan seating up to 6, or a full-size van seating up to 10 people. All fuel, maintenance, and insurance are included.

However, MMT offers limited bus route service outside Colorado Springs city limits into Manitou Springs and a few unincorporated areas, such as bus service to Security-Widefield along Route 32. While service to unincorporated County areas is currently sparse, MMT could see expanded service if funding levels are increased in the future. Future changes to service routes or frequencies could affect both development patterns and reliance on personal vehicles in the County. In addition, most MMT riders utilize this service as a “lifeline” as they do not have access to a car or other means of transportation. The MMT currently cost \$1.75, keeping this transportation option affordable should a top priority.

The County should coordinate with Mountain Metro Transit (MMT) to ensure routes are meeting the needs of the community as it grows and changes in the future. This may mean additional routes need to be added or existing routes redrawn as land use changes and new development occurs. The County should also work with MMT to increase route frequencies and reliability of service through adding buses to the fleet or redrawing routes in smaller loops to create quicker turn around for service. Future studies to find gaps and provide solutions should be considered. Working with MMT to find strategies to keep fare cost down for those that are least able to pay should also be considered. This could be through an income stepped fare card that gives a discount to those that are receiving federal income assistance or other services.

### Calhan Connection

Calhan Connection is a regional bus system owned and operated by Envida that connects Colorado Springs to communities along Highway 24. In Spring 2019, the Connection announced they expanded service to three times a day, Monday through Thursday, from Calhan to Colorado Springs with stops in Peyton and Falcon. Currently, Calhan Connection is building its ridership as a new service and no data is available on frequency of service or volume of riders. Other transportation options such as vanpool are arranged through various social agencies or senior services groups in El Paso County, including through PPACG Agency on Aging and El Paso Fountain Valley Senior Citizens Center.

The County should support Calhan Connection increase ridership by promoting and advertising the service in the County. This advertising should include searchable service information under the transportation section of the County website and social media postings to let residents know where and how to access the service along with other details. The County should use its platform and existing connections with the community to encourage wider public transportation use in the region.

### Bustang

Bustang began interregional express bus service operation in 2015. This service connects urbanized areas of the State in a network of routes and is funded and managed by CDOT. Currently Bustang provides service along four routes: the North Line (Denver to Fort Collins), West Line (Denver to Grand Junction), South Line (Denver to Colorado Springs), and the Colorado Springs to Denver Tech Center Line. The Bustang network is also supplemented by multiple specialty bus services including the Snowstang which provides seasonal service to major ski destinations in the state and the RamsRoute serving Fort Collins to Denver. All routes of the Bustang have seen significant growth in ridership since their inception starting at 43,532 in 2015 and ballooning to over a 300% increase in ridership by July of 2018 serving over 450,000+ passengers.

### Bustang Outrider

Bustang Outrider provides interregional lifeline transit service to rural communities in Colorado. In El Paso County it runs from Colorado Springs south along Interstate 25 to Pueblo. Initiated in 2018, Outrider connects residents to major activity centers for goods and services. Planned expansion to this service will add four new routes by 2021 and additional extensions to priority routes as funding becomes available. Outrider sees the heaviest ridership on its Gunnison-Denver route providing over 15,000 rides in 2019. In total, all routes in 2019 saw a ridership of over 27,400.

Bustang Ridership



Graph does not include Denver Tech Center Line. Source: [www.cpr.org](http://www.cpr.org)

## Park-N-Rides

Park-N-Rides provide residents and visitors to the County free parking in lots designed to provide individuals with a convenient place to leave their vehicles before using local or regional bus systems or joining their carpool. Currently there are six “Park-N-Ride” facilities in the County primarily operated by the Colorado Department of Transportation that are integrated into local and regional bus routes, however, there are a select few Park-N-Ride facilities such as the one in Black Forest that caters to carpooling services such as Mountain Metro Rides. Park-N-Ride services have been shown to reduce vehicle trips and overall carbon monoxide emissions.

As more residents move into emerging communities, such as Banning Lewis Ranch, the pool of potential users for these types of facilities will grow. It is fundamental that any new Park-N-Ride facilities developed in the County be integrated into the public transit network whether they be bus or commuter rail. Balancing this type of infrastructure with growth should be a priority of the County to ensure access throughout the region.

## Colorado Statewide Transit Plan

Presently, there is little public transportation available in unincorporated areas of El Paso County, despite having high travel volumes in and out of the incorporated areas. The County’s population growth is expected to continue over at least the next 30 years. This will add further stress to existing roadways, negatively impacting levels of service, increasing travel times, and degrading infrastructure. In anticipation of this growth, the State of Colorado completed the **Colorado Statewide Transit Plan** to guide future transportation planning efforts.

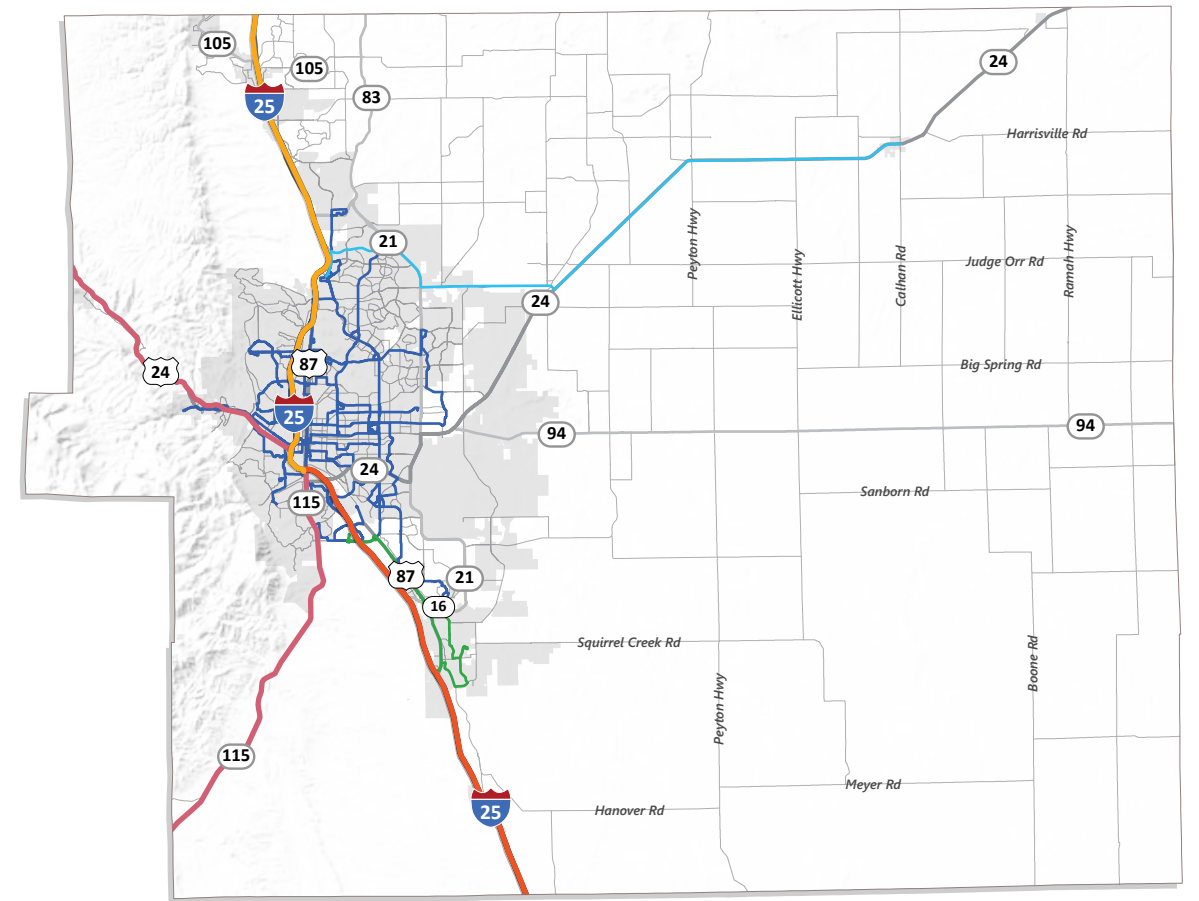
Key recommendations related to the El Paso County region in this Plan include:

- Increase Bustang service frequency on I-25.
- Track outcomes of the Front Range Passenger Rail study, and as funding is available complete additional planning and design and implement service from Pueblo to Fort Collins.
- Define a policy approach to support the appropriate allocation of capital and operating funds to best meet the needs of existing rural transit services and to support service expansion.
- Support transit and human services agencies in rural areas to expand local and regional coordination council activity.
- Work with transit providers to assess opportunities for new park-n-ride locations, particularly to improve connections to rural areas.
- Expand efforts to inform the public about transit opportunities locally, regionally, and statewide.
- Secure and leverage private sector investments.
- Encourage planning coordination with CDOT’s High Performance Transportation Enterprise program to incorporate transit use in managed lanes.
- Implement universal ticketing across multiple public and private providers.
- Partner with local and regional agencies to improve existing and/or build new bus storage and maintenance facilities.
- Support the maintenance of the Bustang and Outrider fleet in a state of good repair.
- Provide support to local and regional agencies in the development/update of their Transit Asset Management Plans.
- Allocate resources toward both maintaining and preserving existing facilities.
- Preserve existing infrastructure and protect future infrastructure and rights-of-way to support future bus and rail transit service.

## Multijurisdictional Coordination

The public transportation network connects key destinations in the County and is a lifeline for many residents getting them to essential services and retail for groceries and healthcare. Improving or adding public transportation in El Paso County is a multijurisdictional issue that requires a coordinated approach. This approach must be inclusive of existing plans and future needs of the region. Close coordination is key to providing the appropriate type and level of service communities need. Establishing partnerships with MMT and Calhan Connection can help ensure that the service routes they provide are in line with the needs of the communities they serve.

The County should support conducting an assessment of the current service provided against future needs across the County. This assessment would provide a foundation for the County to determine how best to support the two public transportation service providers and minimize redundancy in service routes. It would also identify underserved and unserved areas that could lead to expanded service or the need for additional providers. Keeping an open line of communication between providers and County staff will be key to providing appropriate support. In addition, the County should assist these providers in finding a way to utilize a “universal” fare card system that would allow users to transfer between services without having to pay double fares to complete their journey. Financial/revenue modeling and assistance may be necessary to complete this task.



### Public Transportation

- State Bustang Transit Route
- State Bustang Outrider Transit Route
- Proposed State Regional Transit Route
- Calhan Collection Transit Route
- Fountain Transit Route
- Mountain Metro Transit Route



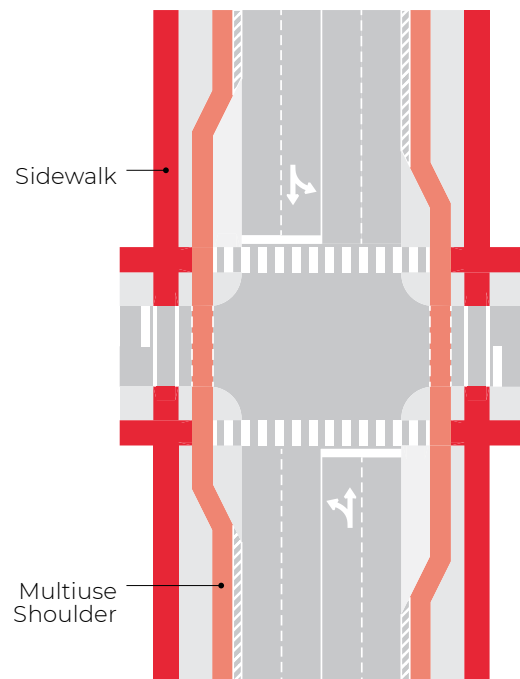


## Multimodal Transportation

El Paso County features a variety of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure options. These options provide residents and visitors alternative routes to move through the community without needing to rely on a car. As of 2016, there are over 700 miles of trails and bicycle routes that traverse the County and further connect it to the region.

### Multimodal Transportation Elements

Multimodal transportation includes modes of transportation such as sidewalks, bike routes, paths, and trails



## Walking

### Sidewalks

Well-designed pedestrian infrastructure is the foundation of healthy communities. Features like continuous sidewalks, crosswalks, human-scale lighting, and shade establish walking the safe, easy, and enjoyable way to make short trips and can increase the number of trips made on foot. Today, El Paso County has pieces of pedestrian infrastructure in place, but major gaps in the network limit its full utility. Detailed sidewalk data regarding locations, repairs, and gaps is not currently available and should be collected as an initial next step.

### Placetype Connections

Currently, the majority of sidewalks in the County primarily exist in denser, urban and suburban locations where subdivision development has occurred.

- **Rural** placetypes generally have minimal sidewalks but are included at activity generating areas. Multiuse shoulder or trails are used to connect to neighboring placetypes.
- **Large-lot Residential** placetypes only feature sidewalks in clustered development and use multiuse shoulders and trails to connect to adjacent placetypes.
- **Suburban Residential** placetypes are generally connected through a network of sidewalks often on both sides of the street.
- **Urban Residential** placetypes generally have sidewalks on both sides of the street, with wider sidewalks in commercial areas with streetscaping to promote activity.
- **Rural Center** placetypes are connected through trails or sidewalks.
- **Regional Center** placetypes often include internal sidewalk network connections and highly visible crosswalks, but typically do not provide extensive connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

### Arterial & Collector Road Facilities

An overview of the system shows many arterial and collector roads generally lack sidewalks, which is dangerous given their travel speeds and volumes. The County is working to gradually build out additional pedestrian infrastructure. Multimodal shoulders also support pedestrian connectivity throughout the County.

Expanding this network to connect more people to places throughout the County is critical. To promote these connections the County should require all new residential development within suburban and urban placetypes and commercial development to build internal sidewalk networks. The County should also require new developments in more dense areas to supply sidewalk connections to adjacent developments (both residential and commercial). In less dense areas, the County should also utilize detached sidewalks and off-road trails to as a way to provide multimodal transportation options.

### Prioritizing Pedestrian Mobility

Transportation improvements to the County should prioritize active modes of transportation and connections to local destinations over vehicular travel and regional trips, whenever practical. Additional network improvements should be pursued to provide alternative routes for commuters currently passing through Urban Residential and Suburban Residential placetypes to reduce unnecessary traffic on major roadways. Prioritizing pedestrian mobility not only takes stress off vehicular routes, but serves a dual purpose of providing access to more active and healthy living opportunities for residents to walk, run, bike, and generally get out and move.



## Biking

### On- & Off-Street Opportunities

There are existing on- and off-street bicycle facilities throughout the County, a majority of which exist within Colorado Springs. Whether located on- and off-street, trails accommodate cyclists and pedestrians in their own delineated space as they navigate roadways. However, on major roads with high traffic volumes and higher vehicular speeds, only confident cyclists will regularly use unprotected on-street options.

The *El Paso County 2016 Major Transportation Corridors Plan Update* classifies off-street routes for bicycle, pedestrian, equestrian, and other multimodal uses into three categories of existing and proposed multiuse trails as follows:

- **Primary Regional Trails** – trails intended to link and provide access to recreation areas of regional significance, local communities, and commuting opportunities.
- **Secondary Regional Trails** – trails intended to link and provide access to Primary Regional Trails, recreation areas of local significance, local communities, and commuting opportunities.
- **Urban Bike Network** – existing or proposed trails located in the incorporated areas of El Paso County.

The *Plan also identifies* on-street routes as “priority multimodal projects” and includes bicycle and other multimodal modes that can be accommodated with two general types of upgrades: widening shoulders and multiuse sidewalks on one or both sides of a road.

### Key Connections

Key projects from the Major Transportation Corridors Plan include:

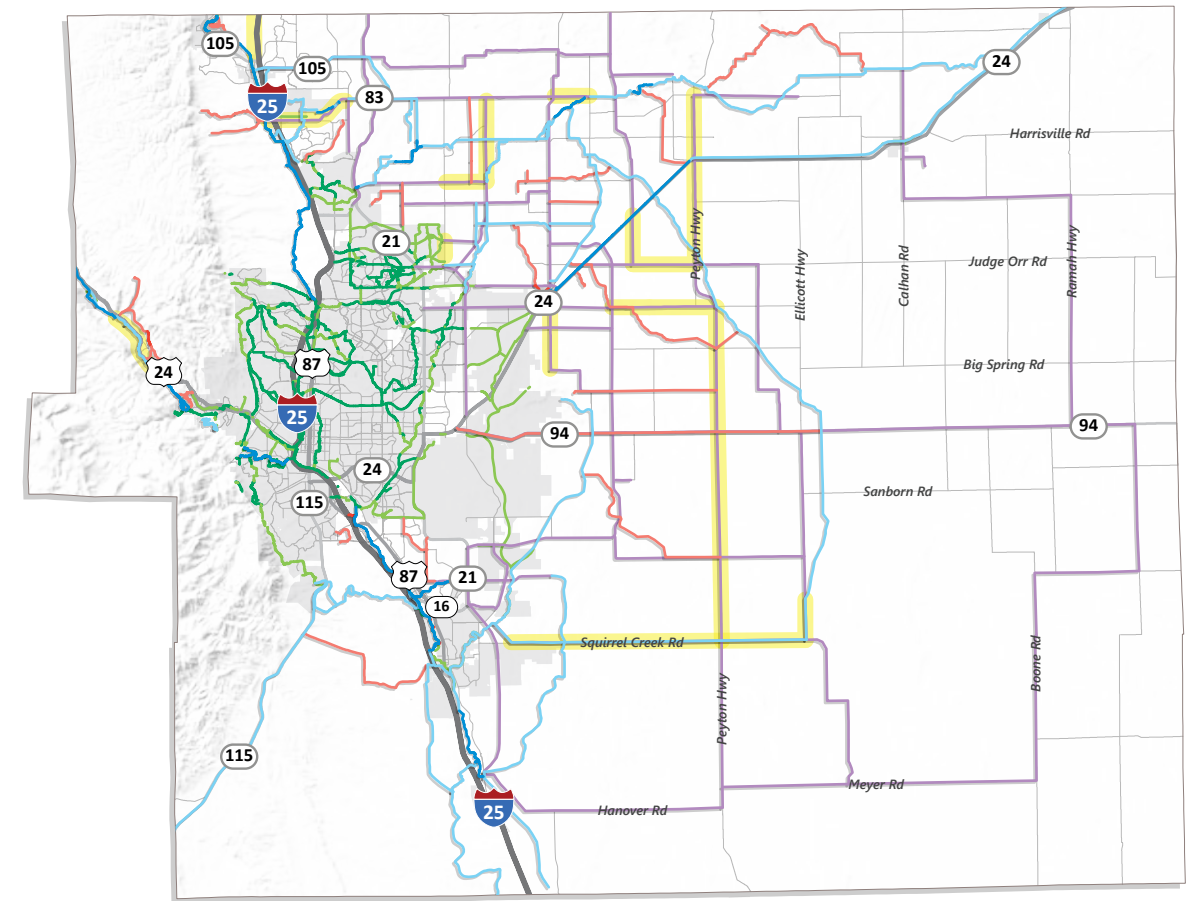
- Proposed **connections to existing Primary Regional Trails** in the east between Ramah, Calhan, and Peyton;
- **A primary regional trail on US 24 between Manitou and Cascade**, connecting where people live with destinations and amenities, broader east-west trail proposed connectivity in central, east, and south east of the County; and
- **Expansive road widening upgrades** outside of Colorado Springs.

The County should continue to prioritize projects as recommended by this Plan as they expand multimodal transportation infrastructure in the County.

### Safety

Safety is a top concern for many bicyclists especially when cars and bikes are forced to share space. Therefore, an important factor in creating safe routes for bikes is establishing physical separation between drivers and cyclists. Both bicyclists and pedestrians prefer to travel along paths separated from vehicular traffic that offer a buffer between themselves and motor vehicles. This type of infrastructure encourages a broader bike culture, which is also a key quality-of-life indicator for places. These buffered paths create lower stress environments which result in increased numbers of people biking and walking. The design of this infrastructure can accommodate everyone with a strategic combination of sidewalks, separated bike lanes, and shared use paths.

Several local and regional plans include proposed projects to improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in El Paso County, including the *COS Bikes! Colorado Springs Bike Master Plan* in 2018 to strategically plan for the future bike network in the City. This project along with the *El Paso County Major Transportation Corridors Plan Update* (MTCP) from 2016 lay the groundwork for planned expansions to the bike, trail, and pedestrian network in the future. Some routes highlighted as “priority multimodal projects” identify general types of upgrades such as widening shoulders to accommodate multiple modes on many rural County roads or the addition of a multiuse path on one or both sides of high traffic rural corridors.



### Multimodal Transportation Improvements

- Existing Urban Trail
- Proposed Urban Trail
- Proposed Bicycle Routes
- Existing Primary Regional Trail
- Proposed Primary Regional Trail
- Existing Secondary Regional Trail
- Proposed Secondary Regional Trail
- Multimodal Roadway Upgrades



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## Airports

There are two main airports in El Paso County: Colorado Springs Airport and Meadow Lake Airport. The former is the largest, most active, and within the City's jurisdiction. However, Meadow Lake Airport is in an unincorporated area near Falcon. Both of these airports, along with several private airstrips, effect air travel to and from El Paso County. The Denver Regional Council of Governments produced an Airport Compatible Land Use Design Handbook, which identified major planning considerations for communities near airports. Many ideas from this Handbook may be applicable to airports within El Paso County and key considerations may include maintaining safe airspace around airports; planning for noise compatibility around airports; safety areas near airports; and planning compatible uses in areas of frequent aircraft overflight.

### Colorado Springs Airport

Colorado Springs Airport (COS) is primarily a commercial service airport with a functioning airfield since 1925. The airport currently operates two parallel runways, one crosswind runway, and an extensive taxiway system. COS is also a joint use civilian and military airport, with Peterson Air Force Base located just north of the airport. The airport is the second busiest commercial service airport in Colorado. Airlines currently operating out of COS include American Airlines, Delta, Frontier, Southwest, United, and FedEx Express, with year-round direct passenger service to Dallas/Fort Worth, Chicago-O'Hare, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Orlando, Phoenix, Houston, Los Angeles, and Denver.

### Colorado Springs Airport Master Plan

In 2013, the City of Colorado Springs completed the Colorado Springs Airport Master Plan providing cost estimates for individual projects associated with the airport's Recommended Development Plan (RDP). Components of the Plan include shifting and reducing the length of multiple runways, removing existing high-speed exit Taxiway C1, C3, and the construction of Taxiway C4 to reduce the risk of wrong runway departures and improve capacity.

Many of these projects are nearing completion as the final phase projects are going through construction planning. COS is currently in the process of updating the Airport master plan to recalibrate maintenance, facility needs, and FAA compliance into the future.

While Colorado Springs Airport is not located within unincorporated El Paso County, there is unincorporated land directly adjacent to the facilities. The County should utilize the most current master plan or compatibility study completed by the Airport (As approved and adopted by the PC/BoCC).

### Meadow Lake Airport

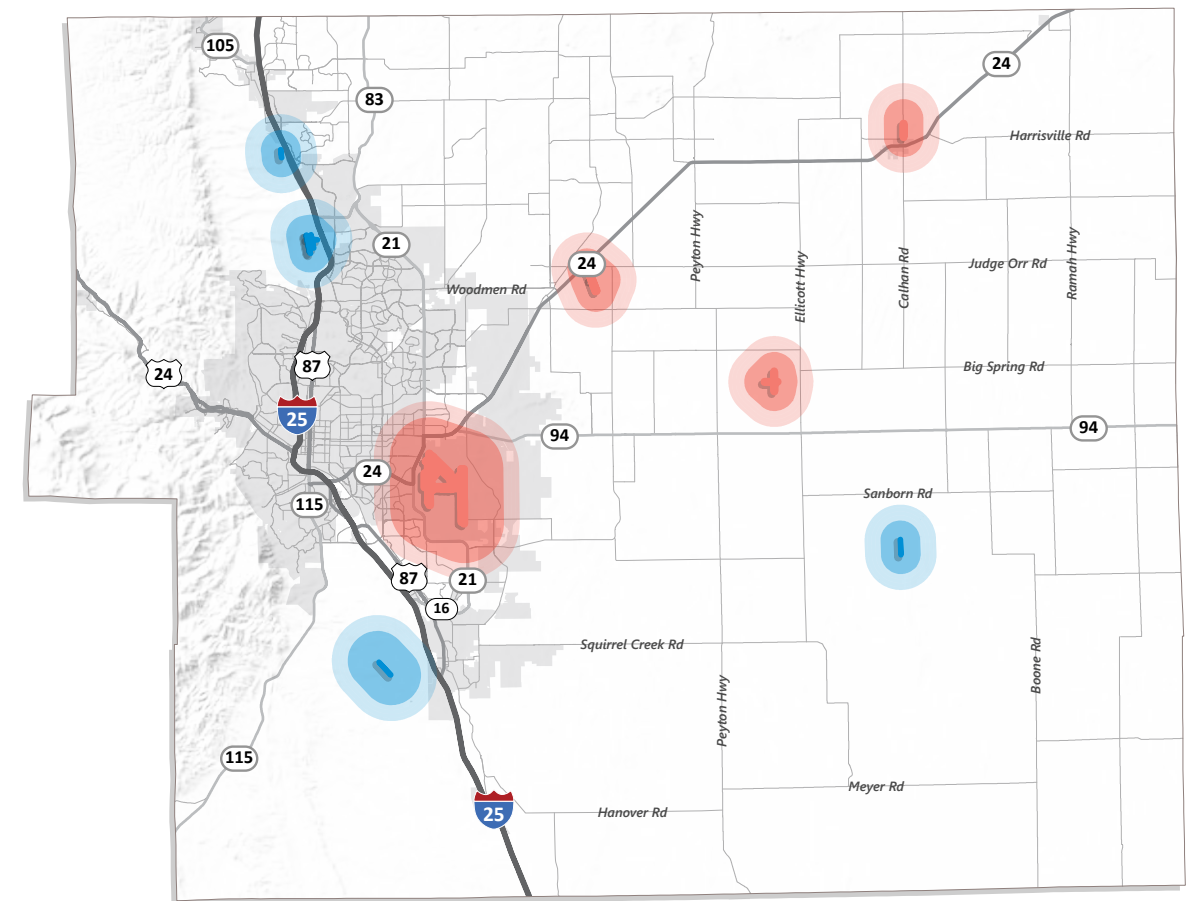
The Meadow Lake Airport Association is a nonprofit corporation that owns and operates the Meadow Lake Airport. Located just to the east of Falcon, off of Highway 24, Meadow Lake is a public use airport and a general aviation reliever airport for COS. It is the largest privately owned airport in Colorado. There are several aviation-related businesses on the airfield including flying schools and aircraft maintenance facilities.

### Meadow Lake Airport Master Plan

The 2015 Meadow Lake Airport Master Plan, adopted by the Meadow Lake Airport Association, provides a comprehensive list of future development projects that include airside development such as reconstruction of existing runways and landside development such as the replacement of the existing terminal building/SRE storage garage. Proposed projects bring the Airport facilities in compliance with ADA requirements and facility modernization to maintain FAA certification. Meadow Lake Airport is an important economic driver for unincorporated El Paso County. A reassessment of facility needs and compliance should be undertaken as projects in the current Meadow Lake Airport Master Plan near completion.

### Other Airports

The only other public airport in the County, in addition to Colorado Springs and Meadow Lake Airports, is Calhan Airport, in the northeast part of the County. A number of small airports presently exist in El Paso County, most of which are privately owned and operated. In addition, military installations such as Fort Carson and the Air Force Academy also operate in the County and share airspace. With the volume of public and private airfields in El Paso County, coordination among all the airports is extremely important. Without coordination, small private airfields can affect air traffic operations for COS, Meadow Lake, and the military installations. The County should help facilitate communication between the airports to prevent conflicts between their operations and those of COS, Meadow Lake, and all military installations.



#### Airports

- Military Airport
- Public and Private Airports



## Rail

Rail is a key element in the overall transportation infrastructure of El Paso County and presents a unique opportunity of opening both Colorado Springs and the wider County to the existing network of rail moving both freight and people across the nation.

In 2018, the Colorado Department of Transportation completed the Colorado Freight and Passenger Rail Plan with the mission to address priority statewide issues and opportunities related to shared use rail interoperability, targeted passenger multimodal connectivity improvements, preserving future capacity, and ensuring quality of life in the state. This Plan provides Colorado's overall vision for the future of rail in the state and directs strategic implementation action to keep Colorado's people and goods moving. As such this Plan provides the foundation for passenger and rail alignment in El Paso County.

## Passenger Rail

Existing rail service within the Denver metro area provides critical links for commuters, visitors, and travelers and serves as an example for future passenger service in the state. Currently, Colorado's passenger rail service is provided by RTD, CDOT, Amtrak, and private railroad operators none of which provide high speed passenger service. Most also do not have routes in El Paso County. For example, the closest Amtrak station is in Denver. Long-range planning efforts by RTD and corridor studies supported by CDOT have identified future services in the state including opportunities for "starter" commuter rail service that could be upgraded in the future.

### *Front Range Passenger Rail*

As identified by the state, Colorado's most immediate opportunity to improve and expand rail mobility is implementing the Front Range passenger rail. Extending from Trinidad to Fort Collins, the Front Range passenger rail could take many forms in terms of service levels, frequency, stops, alignments, and technology deployed.

### *Coordination*

The Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission is currently charged with facilitating passenger rail in Colorado, including advancing Front Range rail service and supporting the Southwest Chief service and potential extensions. The Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission is an important partner for the County to develop alignment with the County's vision for this rail corridor. To this end, the County should apply their 1041 powers as given through the Colorado General Assembly to ensure the local government maintains a seat at the table on this project and that placement of the corridor maximizes economic opportunities for the communities. These 1041 powers allow local governments to identify, designate, and regulate areas and activities of state interest through a local permitting process. The powers allow local governments to maintain their authority over particular development projects even where the development project has statewide impacts.

### *Project Funding*

In 2017, cost estimates and specific improvement projects and investment needs for the entire Front Range passenger rail corridor from Fort Collins to Trinidad had not been fully developed. However, the 2017 ICS Interoperability Report identified initial capital costs for various alignments and service alternatives for a portion of the entire corridor. Capital costs for the alternatives evaluated in this study ranged from \$9.8 billion to \$11.5 billion underscoring again the need for County and local government involvement to ensure funds are utilized to meet the needs of the community.

## Freight Rail

Although rail accounts for a small portion of the overall freight movement in the Pike's Peak region, there are two major rail operators in the County, Burlington-Northern-Santa-Fe (BNSF) and Union Pacific. BNSF shares its rail line located south of Colorado Springs with Union Pacific Railroad which is ranked as a class-one railroad meaning the line operates with a gross annual operating revenue of over \$50 million. This Joint Line hosts several spurs located within the Colorado Springs metropolitan area that include service to Martin Drake and Nixon Power Plants, Fort Carson, and the Garden of the Gods Road industrial area near Chestnut Street.

Currently, a new rail spur adjacent to Fort Carson and two major power stations owned by Colorado Springs Utilities is being conceptually planned. The proposed railyard would be the major distribution hub for the entire County, primarily serving the shipment of materials. A major railyard could spur vertical integration with the creation of supporting businesses such as manufacturing, warehousing, and roadway distribution. Depending on scale, these types of businesses could have a consequential effect on new employment opportunities for County residents. The County should support the development of the rail spur as a catalyst for the creation of a strong employment hub to serve the southern part of the County. The County should help facilitate the development of the railyard located adjacent to the Fort Carson spur of the shared BSNF and UP line.

## 7

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES

El Paso County is supported by a network of community facilities which include public and nonprofit services and facilities, helping to ensure a high quality of life for residents and businesses. Some of these services are provided directly by the County, however, the majority are supplied by partner organizations and other service providers within El Paso County. With the County expected to see continued growth and development for the next 20 years, maintaining these services for residents presents new challenges. This section identifies how El Paso County can guarantee not only the continued level of service to residents but calls out opportunities for broader and better coverage and access in the region.

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**Inside this Chapter**

*County Government (page 91)*

*Public Safety (page 92)*

*Education (page 94)*

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**Core Principle 5:** Continue to coordinate with local and regional agencies to provide well-managed, high-quality community facilities and services.

**Goal 5.1** - Coordinate with agencies to provide high-quality community facilities, services, and infrastructure to enhance quality of life.

**Goal 5.2** - Improve the effectiveness of public safety through coordination, funding, and planning.

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## County Government

The Board of County Commissioners is the main governing body for El Paso County with powers granted by the General Assembly of the Colorado State Legislature. The Board consists of five elected commissioners from five equally populated districts. The County government is not an independent governmental authority but rather a subdivision of the State. El Paso County's government consists of 11 departments, which include:

- Community Services
- County Attorney
- Economic Development
- Facilities and Strategic Infrastructure Management
- Financial Services
- Human Resources and Risk Management
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Public Information Office
- Planning and Community Development
- Public Works.

Some departments have separate divisions within them that support a more detailed aspect of that department. For example, the Parks Division is housed under Community Services. El Paso County has roughly 54 facility locations throughout the County, a majority being maintenance facilities for parks or public works.

County government also includes elected officials. El Paso County derives its elected official structure from the State of Colorado enabling legislation. Elected positions include Board of County Commissioners, Assessor, Clerk and Recorder, Coroner, District Attorney, Sheriff, Surveyor, and Treasurer.

The County departments play an important role in administering services and programs for El Paso County residents. As the County grows, these divisions may see strain on their ability to meet increasing demand. Ensuring the County is appropriately staffed and has adequate facilities to meet the capacity needs into the future is the foundation for related Plan recommendations.

The County should continue to assess department and staff needs to gauge the capacity and level of service the County is currently able to provide and determine where additional staff may be needed. This assessment will help the County determine where staff and funding should be prioritized to meet the changing needs of the community.

## Multijurisdictional Coordination

Many community facilities for emergency response as well as infrastructure providers for water, wastewater, and utilities serving the County, are operated by independent entities that work in concert with one another. The County and partner agencies that operate in El Paso County juggle responsibilities to supply services and programs to residents. To illustrate the complexity of interagency coordination, currently there are over a dozen different agencies operating wastewater treatment facilities. These partners include Cherokee Metropolitan District, Colorado Springs Utilities, Fort Carson, and Monument Sanitation District just to name a few.

Based on feedback from community and partner agencies in the County, many believe that government entities at all levels (local, regional, state, and federal) tend to operate in silos. This perceived network of silos can be a barrier to open communication between partner agencies and the County. The County relies heavily on cooperation from partner agencies to provide crucial services to residents, so a high level of trust, communication, and coordination is essential.

The County should continue to develop and establish strong relationships and coordination with partner agencies to ensure they are not, or even perceived to be, operating in a silo. On-going and regular meetings should be conducted with partnering agencies to discuss plans, projects, needs, and opportunities for collaboration and coordination. This is critical to ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery as the County population grows and new development is planned.

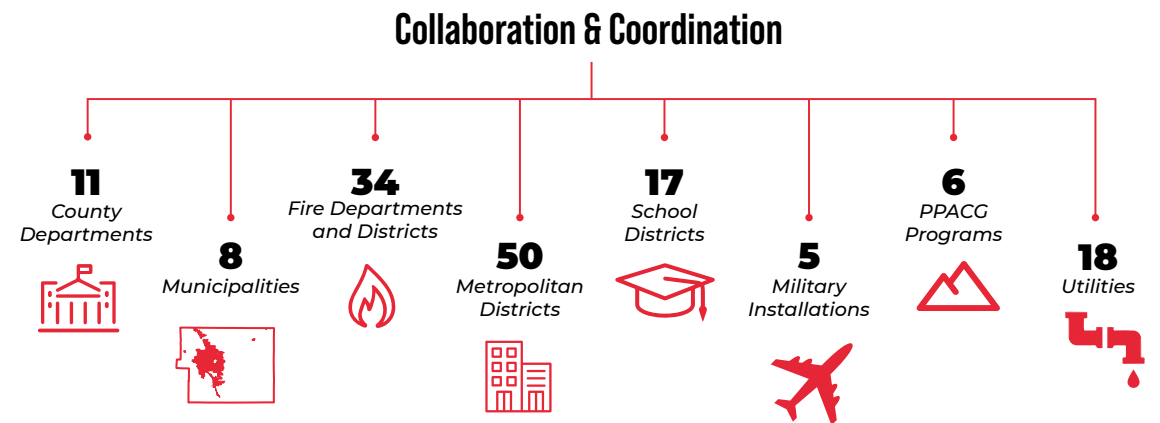
## Public Participation

Not only do partner agencies desire wider coordination and communication from the County, but so do residents. Specifically, residents have expressed interest in greater opportunities for citizen participation and the chance to engage and provide input on County projects and decision-making. Recognizing this, the 2018 Community Services Action Plan completed by the County set goals to continue to enhance understanding of civic services and promote participation, engagement, and confidence in County government. To address residents' concerns the County should offer more opportunity for public participation on County projects.

The County should support more direct and regular communication with elected and appointed officials and staff. This can be in the form of regularly scheduled meetings to inform and discuss with residents County plans and projects and pending development proposals. Consideration should also be given to enhanced virtual forums where participants can post or discuss how the County, residents, and businesses can better communicate and collaborate.

## Taxes

Taxes and funding have been limiting factors in the improvement and expansion of public facilities and services. In line with residents' desires to maintain lower property taxes, state amendments such as the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR), which prohibits state and local governments from raising tax rates or spending surplus revenues without voter approval, impact the ability to regulate certain causes or tax projects based on local needs. TABOR's revenue cap is based on a formula that accounts for population growth and inflation but does not take into consideration the consumer price index or the ups and downs of economic cycles. Further, "TABOR surplus", revenues in excess of the TABOR limit, must be returned to taxpayers. Voters often give state and local governments permission to the surplus in lieu of tax payer refunds and apply them to public projects, however this involves voter approval.





## Public Safety

Public safety is an important variable and contributor to a community's overall quality of life. Public safety is also facing increasing challenges to provide services as populations rise, development increases, and service area expands. Public safety services in El Paso County include fire, law enforcement, and emergency medical services. Each service is an independent entity but operates in coordination with the other two when necessary. As the County's population grows and new development occurs the public safety system needs to be flexible. Continued coordination and a strategic network of nodes between service providers will become even more crucial to maintain adequate levels of service and response times for residents of the County.

## Fire & Emergency Services

There are 68 fire and emergency services facilities, in 34 Fire Departments and Districts, across El Paso County, including those affiliated with municipalities. The Fire District count does not include the City of Colorado Springs, which is protected by its own fire department. Each district has a fire chief who is supported by firefighter staff, or volunteer firefighters who are more frequently relied on in the southeastern districts. More densely populated districts have more staff than other more rural districts in the County. In addition, portions of El Paso County rely exclusively on fire-based medical response, such as Tri Lakes/Monument, Ellicott, and Calhan.

As the County continues to see an increase in population and development, the layout of the fire and emergency medical service (EMS) facilities have become an increasingly important factor in service capacity and response time. New development in previously undeveloped areas means redrawing existing fire and EMS contractual response areas. For some new developments, fire districts have noted the overall challenges for fire services and fire infrastructure requirements. This lack of fire and EMS access is a key concern for the County and those tasked with providing these lifesaving services. The El Paso County Emergency Services Authority (ESA) assesses response time data in contractual response areas in the County. The ESA is an important partner for a County wide approach to coordinating EMS and fire services with existing and future development in El Paso County.

The County, in collaboration with the ESA, should conduct a County-wide assessment of contractual response areas based on current and projected population/development growth in the County. This assessment should consider planned infrastructure projects and work closely with developers during the planning process to design appropriate access roadways suitable to support emergency response times.

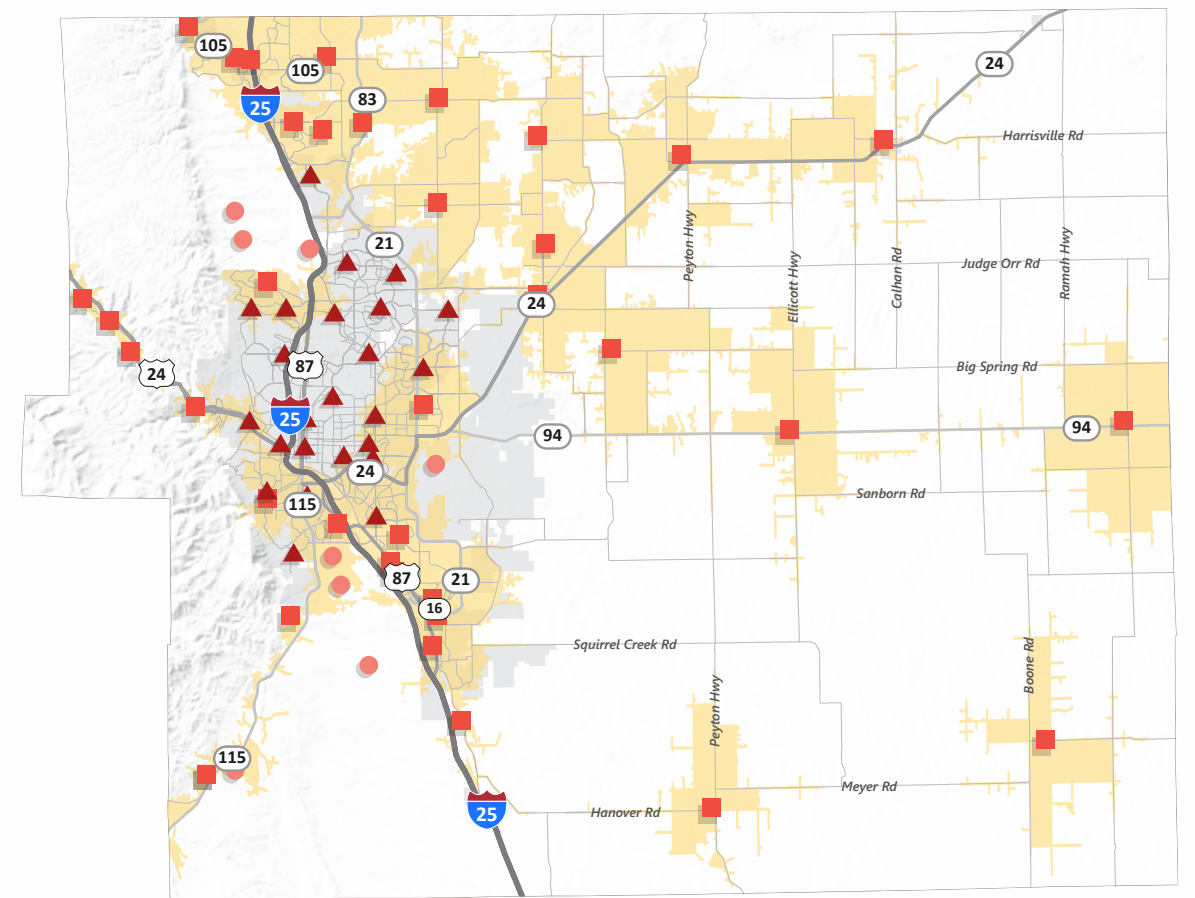
## Disaster Response

The Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is responsible for providing mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and coordination for large-scale emergencies such as wildfires. For more information on the OEM and disaster response, see **Chapter 13 Resiliency & Hazard Mitigation** on page 132.

## Response Times

Fire Districts are concerned about increasing response times due to continued development in far lying regions of the County. New development presents new challenges to existing fire and emergency service capacity. If development continues to occur in far lying areas, new fire and emergency facilities may need to be constructed to provide appropriate levels of service.

Roadway condition, particularly in the rural areas of the County, is another issue affecting access to these outlying development areas. Dealing with response times needs to be a holistic system approach that analyzes the current and projected service areas for the County and the facilities needed to maintain and improve the response time to all areas. An assessment of the existing road network and service nodes was completed in the 2016 Master Transportation Corridors Plan and should be reassessed periodically. This would provide information needed to determine where and how the fire and EMS service nodes and network should shift to meet the anticipated needs of the County in the future. Further, the County should require new developments to participate in and join the closest fire district provide on-site fire/ems service facilities in subdivisions.



## Fire and Emergency Service Facilities

- County Fire Facility
- ▲ Municipal Fire Facility
- State/Federal Fire Facility
- County Fire and Emergency Service Facility 8 Minute Travel Time (Based on NFPA Standard 1710 for fire response)



### Water Access

The continued development of outlying areas stretches the capacity of existing fire facilities to provide adequate service, which is compounded by limited water access in these areas. After serving residences with water for all necessary functions such as drinking and cleaning, the priority for water supply in new development should be for fire suppression capabilities, rather than for ancillary residential uses such as landscaping. Using an inadequate water network for fire suppression can actually cause damage to the network of water lines in a subdivision and still may not supply enough water to suppress or contain a fire. As development is expected to continue in these outlying areas, the County must take steps to ensure that the manner in which these areas develop mitigates fire risk. The County should continue to improve coordination with fire districts, developers, and other groups to ensure that new development provides appropriate fire suppression water supplies and infrastructure.

Wildfires are common occurrences in Colorado and much of east El Paso County, being natural grasslands, is especially vulnerable to fire events. With limited water access in these areas, there is little chance to control wildfires with water. The best way to fight wildfires is to prevent them from occurring in the first place. New development and existing development, especially in the grasslands, should utilize defensive landscaping and building techniques to minimize the potential threat and spread of wildfires. To enforce this the County should adopt a Wildland Interface Code which would require construction permit applicants to supply a fire protection plan, vegetation management plan, and building material classifications in accordance with ULI or other equivalent fire standard ratings.

### Sheriff's Office

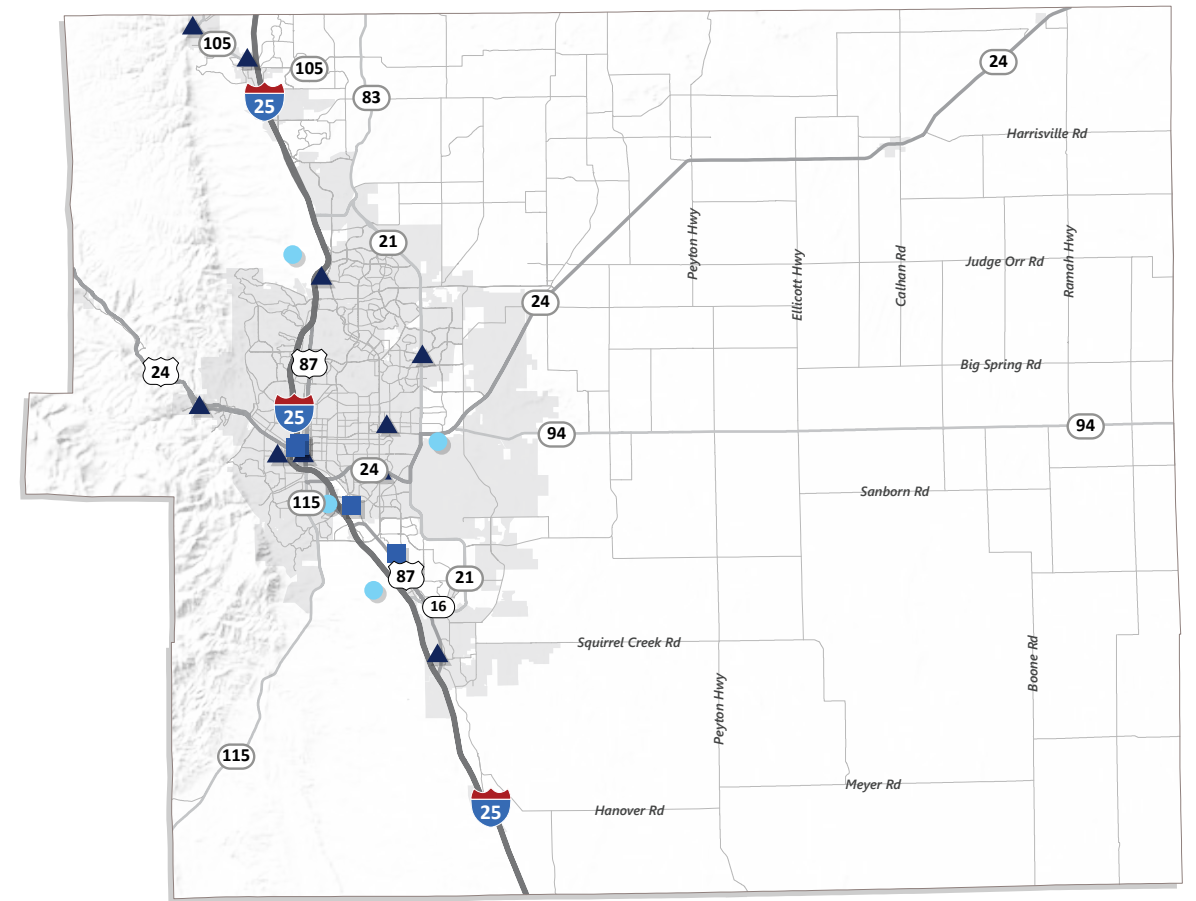
The County Sheriff's Office is tasked with duties set forth in Colorado Revised Statutes that are outlined in its mission to "provide the citizens of El Paso County effective and efficient public safety services." They manage and maintain several services across the County, including general law enforcement in unincorporated areas, jailhouse operation, neighborhood watch, and search and rescue coordination.

In 2015, the Sheriff's Office established the Rural Enforcement and Outreach Unit (REO) to increase patrol services in the eastern part of the County. This unit's main role is to form relationships with rural residents to help address the unique public safety issues they experience in rural areas of the County. Currently 534 sworn deputies serve the Office. Despite the creation of the REO, outreach conducted during the planning process for **Your El Paso Master Plan** found residents perceived a lack of patrol officers in rural areas. To strengthen Sheriff's officer presence in rural communities the County should consider the potential creation of a part time or volunteer unit to act as community liaisons on behalf of the REO and the Sheriff's Office in these rural communities. Employing a network of part time or volunteer support officers would supplement the Sheriff's team and provide wider presence in rural communities and possibly shorten response times depending on the qualifications of part time or volunteer staff.

### Response Times

Even with the REO, the response times for emergency calls to the Sheriff's Office are still seen as a major public safety concern in the vast County territory. The County should explore possible planning solutions to shorten response times across El Paso. Improving response times is key to fixing the perceived lack of patrol officers in these rural areas. Sheriff response times are affected by the lack of roadway connections in the eastern portion of the County just as fire and EMS response times are impacted by a lack of adequate roadway network and infrastructure. Lack of connections is in part, caused by the lack of regular need. Daily traffic counts help determine capacity needs in the County and dictate whether or not a new roadway is necessary.

The County should continue to require new developments provide multiple points of access into subdivisions from major arterial roads to help decrease response times. More access points mean more route options for response teams to better avoid traffic and, therefore, provide shorter response times. These new subdivision developments also present the opportunity for partnerships with the Sheriff's Office to provide satellite Sheriff Offices or support facilities to add strategic nodes to the network of public safety facilities across the County. These nodes can also be utilized to dispatch response units directly within subdivisions.



### Law Enforcement Facilities

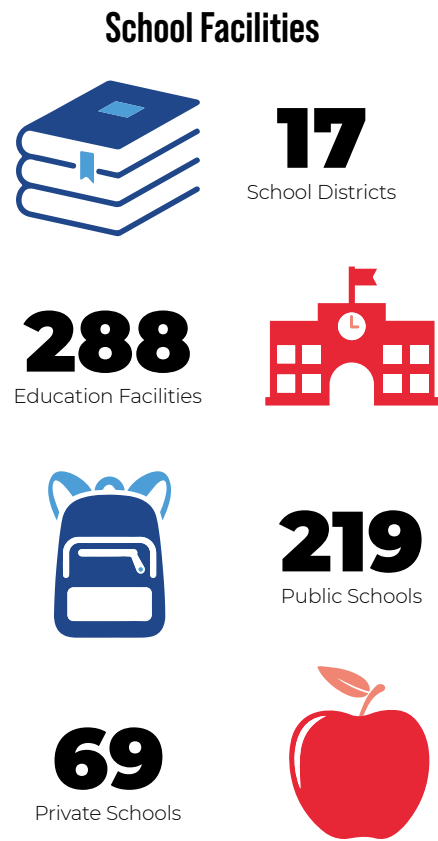
- County Law Enforcement Facility
- ▲ Municipal Law Enforcement Facility
- State/Federal Law Enforcement Facility





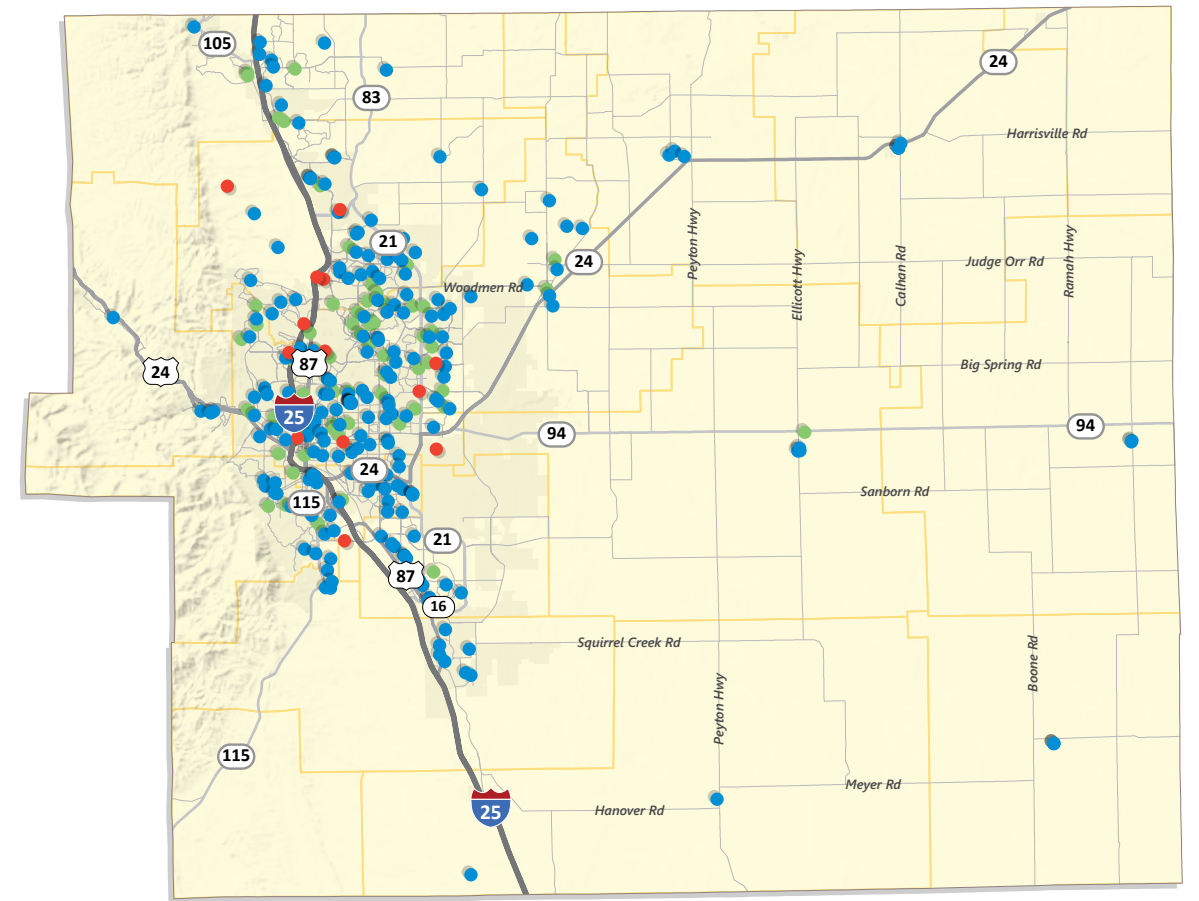
# Education

There are 17 public school districts that provide primary education to students in both incorporated and unincorporated El Paso County. Within this system there are 219 schools for all grade levels, including some for adult education. These are supported by 69 private educational institutions, the majority of which are geared toward early learning and childhood development. Of the 288 total education facilities in the County, 222 are located in incorporated areas. The remaining 66 education facilities are located in unincorporated areas. The County also has numerous choice and charter schools. Most education facilities in the County (outside of Colorado Springs) are located in unincorporated areas adjacent or near to a municipality.



El Paso County is also home to a number of higher education institutions including University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, Colorado College, United States Air Force Academy, and Pikes Peak Community College. These institutions, and others, draw students and researchers from around the world to study and work. They support the County's economy by developing the workforce, providing space for research, and attracting people to visit, shop, dine, lodge, and recreate in the County.

Some school districts are currently at or near capacity for both staff and facilities. This capacity issue ties directly into a general lack of funding across all 17 Districts. Similar to tax funding for infrastructure as addressed in the earlier County Government section, funding for education is also affected by the TABOR amendment. Before TABOR, local property taxes were the primary source of school funding. However, with this amendment, the state contributes roughly 63 percent of education funding to municipalities. Through the subdivision regulations, the County accepts and holds lands for school sites where the school district may subsequently request transfer of the land upon demonstration of a need to develop a school. In the alternative, a school fee could be collected for each residential lot platted, which can be requested by the school district annually.



## Education Facilities

- Public Schools
- Private Schools
- College/University
- School Districts



## Charter Schools

The number of charter schools in the state of Colorado continues to grow, with just over 260 schools serving students in the 2019-2020 school year with over 30 located in El Paso County.

A charter school in Colorado is a public school that is tuition free and open to all students, operated by a group of parents, teachers and/or community members as a semi-autonomous school of choice, operating under a contract or “charter” contract between the members of the charter school community and either the local board of education or the state Charter School Institute (CSI), depending on which entity oversees the charter school. Charter schools receive state funding based on Per Pupil Operating Revenue (PPR), which is a formula for each student enrolled, just like traditional public schools.

Parents must apply to charter schools if they choose to enroll their child(ren) in a charter school. A charter school generally has more flexibility than traditional public schools as regards curriculum, fiscal management, and overall school operations, and may offer an education program that is more innovative than traditional public schools.

## Growth Accommodation

The County population has grown quickly and has caused a significant need for additional schools for all grade levels, particularly in the northern areas of the County. Further, the population is projected to grow in the future, which will continue to put pressure on education facility providers. Coordination is needed to support the educational system as it absorbs this growth today and in the future.

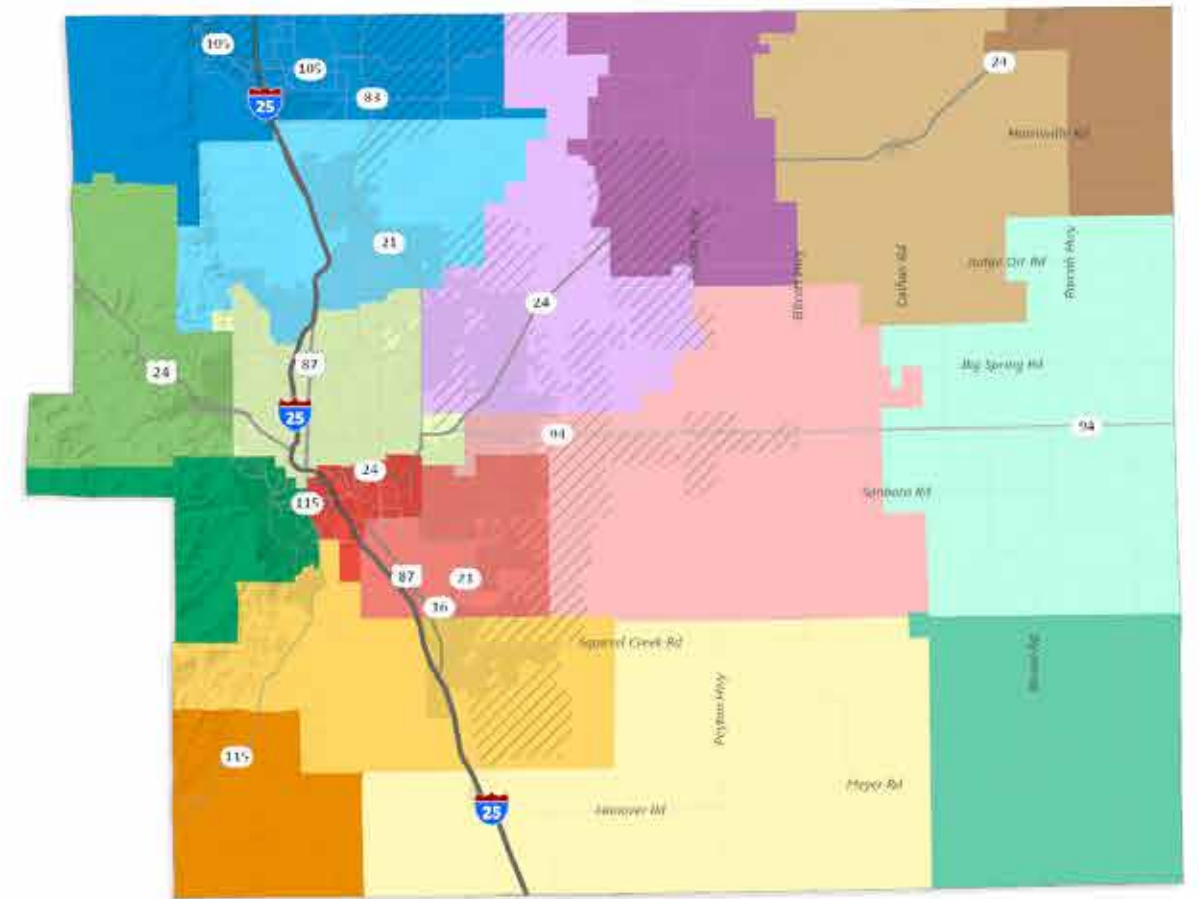
To accommodate this growth the County should support efforts by the school districts to develop individual long-range capacity and facilities plans based on planned growth in El Paso County. These plans should inventory current educational facilities and capacity as well as anticipated needs over the next 10 to 20 years and may include transfer of dedicated school land until a time when it is needed for development.

In addition, they should be considered living documents that needs to be updated at least every few years to measure whether the school districts are on track with meeting the needs of the educational community. These capacity plans should explore the feasibility of new construction and the utilization of joint facilities that can be shared by elementary, middle, and high schools in the same district such as athletic fields or pod/mobile classrooms as supplements to permanent space. In addition, new construction of any educational facility should be strategic and planned out to meet the continued needs of the community, this means utilizing designs that have support structures that allow for expansion out or up in the way of additional stories in the future.

## Safety

Many of the schools in the County are located along major thoroughfares and while these roads are great for access to schools for cars, automobile speeds at major intersections near schools can be a safety concern for students. Many roadways lack adequate bike and pedestrian infrastructure especially in unincorporated areas of the County where typically there are lower volumes of bicycle and pedestrian traffic. To make routes to school safer for students the County should partner with schools to design projects that make crossing these major intersections and navigating to school safer. The County encourages school districts to secure federal funding sources for safe routes to school and related projects around pedestrian and bicycle safety and support schools through the planning and implementation processes.

Due to growing security concerns at schools, school spending on security has increased, however, funding has not increased to cover these additional security costs. If schools do not have the funds there is little they can do to provide building materials, resource officers, social workers, or mental health programming. The County should encourage school districts to conduct a study to assess the current and anticipated needs for security funding for all schools in the County and publish findings with school districts and circulate educational media to residents.



### School Districts

- Lewis-Farmer School District 38
- Poudre Valley-Canyon School District 8
- Elbert School District 22
- Academy School District 20
- NE-2-Fremont/Riverside School District 39
- Falcon School District 49
- Manitou Springs School District 14
- Vanover School District 28
- Miami-Walton School District 65
- Colorado Springs School District 11
- Big Sandy School District 100
- Peyton School District 23
- Harrison School District 2
- Calhan School District 21
- Wadsworth School District 3
- Cheyenne Mountain School District 12
- Canon School District 54
- Priority Development Areas

# 8

## *Inside this Chapter*

*Water (page 97)*

*Gas (page 106)*

*Electric (page 107)*

*Alternative Energy (page 108)*

*Telecommunication (page 109)*

# INFRASTRUCTURE

Providing modern infrastructure, utilities, and services to El Paso County residents helps ensure they have a high quality of life. Strategies for improving and maintaining the existing infrastructure in the County will rely on coordination with local and regional organizations that provide many of these services. Managing growth and expanding best management practices for water and energy resources will help ensure adequate access for those resources in the future. Detailed planning for the extension of broadband and other utilities will provide a road map for implementing plans over time.

Sufficient planning, funding, and education will help to ensure these implementations. El Paso County encompasses 2,130 square miles with expansive rural areas that can be a challenge for providing adequate, modern services. Specific challenges for the County and service providers include stormwater management, continued adequate water supply, and extending services to areas not currently served. Many policies, strategies, and recommendations to address these issues are incorporated from other appropriate plans and studies including the 2018 County Water Master Plan and 2019 Broadband Strategic Plan. Transportation infrastructure is discussed in detail in **Chapter 6 Transportation & Mobility**.

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**Core Principle 5:** Continue to coordinate with local and regional agencies to provide well-managed, high-quality community facilities and services.

*Goal 5.3* - Ensure adequate provision of utilities to manage growth and development.

*Goal 5.4* - Use best management practices to protect water quality, conserve water, minimize impacts of flooding, and beautify El Paso County.

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# Water

Located in a semi-arid part of the State, El Paso County requires planning for and protecting water supplies. The State of Colorado has been proactive in drought and water supply planning since 1937, with the creation of the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB). The most populous cities located along Colorado's Front Range are often most affected by periods of drought. A major drought in the State from 2002 to 2003 revitalized interest in water conservation and Colorado's water future. The statewide movement for water conservation and efficiency led to a 2004 update of the Water Conservation Act of 1991, requiring all sizeable water providers to have a State-approved water efficiency plan before they could be eligible to obtain State grants and financing. El Paso County regulations are more conservative than other counties in Colorado and requires a 300-year water supply for nonrenewable groundwater, instead of the Statewide standard of 100 years. In effect, this stretches the water supply for future residents.

## 2018 County Water Master Plan

El Paso County is in a part of Colorado with relatively high elevations and low to moderate rainfall (15 to 22 inches per year). Residents of the County understand the important role water plays in their daily lives and want to be better stewards of the available supply. Preventing wasteful use of water should be the goal of all residents of El Paso County. Water providers in El Paso County will need to acquire and/or connect additional water supplies of over 55,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) by the year 2060. El Paso County's water goals and objectives align with the 2016 Colorado Water Plan. The Colorado Water Plan and the El Paso County Water Master Plan (WMP) have measurable objectives that are achieved.

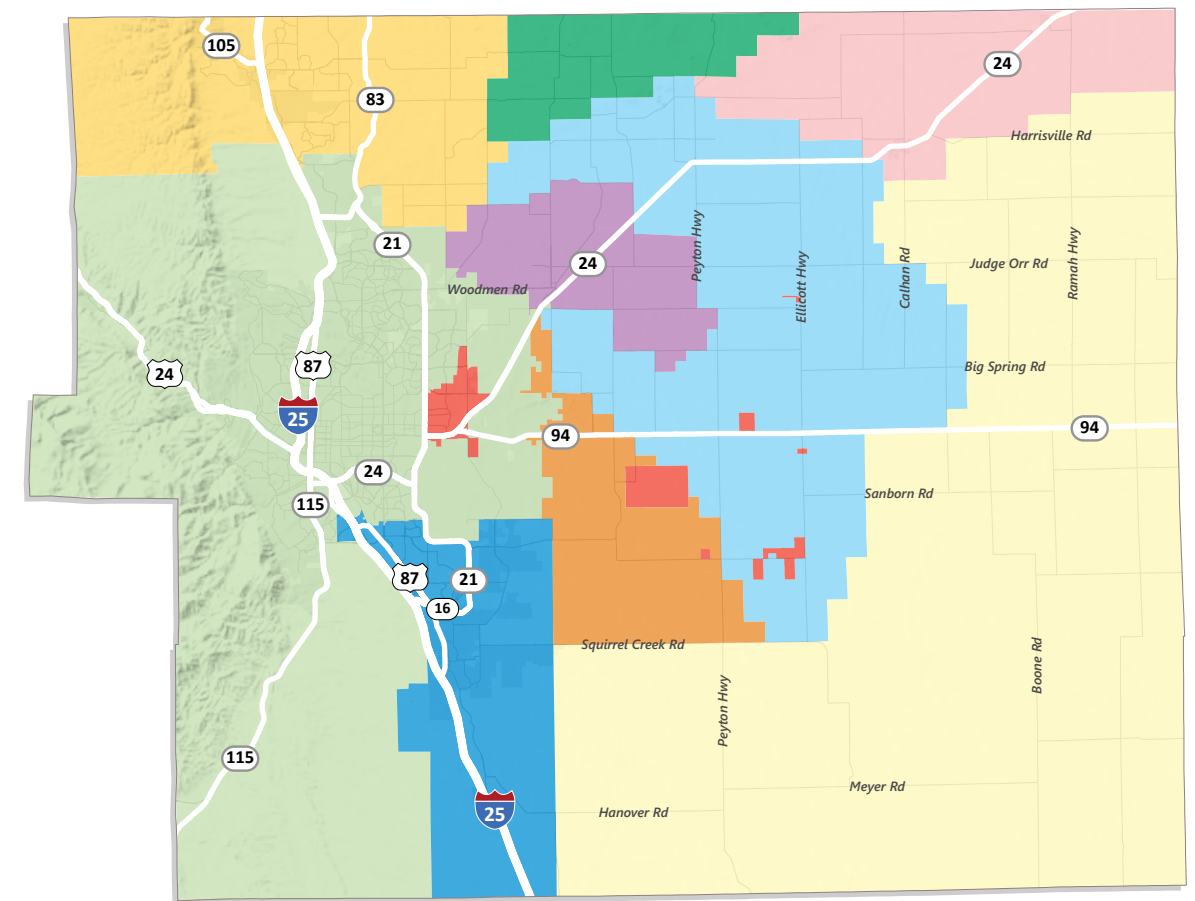
### Supply-Demand Gap

Thoughtful water supply planning is critical to ensuring a secure future for El Paso County. Meeting future water needs must be done in a manner that considers all solutions and addresses the varied water needs of the County and its residents. Gaps reflect the amount by which agricultural or municipal demands could be shorted because of inadequate supplies, largely due to the growing population in Colorado and El Paso County. A goal of the CWCB is to reduce the projected 2050 municipal and industrial gap in Colorado from as much as 560,000 acre-feet down to zero acre-feet by 2030.

### Closing the Gap in El Paso County

- Continue to require documentation of the adequacy or sufficiency of water, as appropriate, for proposed development.
- Encourage water infrastructure projects to be sited and designed in a manner that promotes compatibility with adjoining uses and provides reasonable mitigation of any adverse visibility and other environmental impacts.
- Encourage development that incentivizes and incorporates water-efficient landscaping principles.
- Support the implementation of conservation projects by water providers.

- Support appropriate efforts by water providers to incorporate drought conditions in their supply and demand forecasts in providing future and existing water supplies.
- Encourage the submission of a water supply plan documenting an adequate supply of water to serve a proposed development at the earliest stage of the development process, as allowed under state law. The water supply plan should be prepared by the applicant in collaboration with the respective water provider.
- Incorporate meaningful water conservation measures in those areas with higher-density, mixed-use developments.
- Consider amendments to the Land Development Code to incorporate water efficiency standards, such as:
  - Allowing xeriscaping or native and drought-tolerant landscaping
  - Allowing water efficient irrigation techniques
- Minimizing the percentage of landscaped area covered with non-native turf and increasing the percentage of landscape areas that can be covered with non-living landscape material
- Encourage land use proposals to expressly declare water source(s), quality, quantity, and sustainability in terms of years and number of single-family equivalents.
- Promote urban level development in areas served by centralized utilities.



### 2018 Water Study Planning Regions

- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| Region 1  | Region 4c |
| Region 2  | Region 5  |
| Region 3  | Region 6  |
| Region 4a | Region 7  |
| Region 4b | Region 8  |



## Conservation

Since El Paso County is in a semi-arid climate, adoption of permanent water conservation principles prior to a drought is critical to maintaining long-term water supply. There will always be periodic droughts, so the County needs to plan for water conservation by implementing techniques and technologies that reduce the consumption of water, reduce the loss or waste of water, and improve the efficiency in the use of water. Long-term planning is always less costly and painful than crisis response. The CWCB hopes to achieve 400,000 acre-feet of municipal and industrial water conservation in Colorado by 2050.

### *Water Conservation in El Paso County*

- Increase regional water reuse and conservation to better optimize available water supplies.
  - Support efforts by water providers to effectively and environmentally implement potable and non-potable water reuse including augmentation.
  - Encourage re-use of treated wastewater for irrigation and other acceptable uses when feasible.
  - Consider opportunities to demonstrate the benefits of using non-potable sources of water and to dispel negative perspectives.
  - Encourage land uses that accommodate the reuse of water, including capture of non-consumptively used water within the basin and use of reclaimed water for irrigation, within legal parameters and providing that water quality is maintained.

- Support plans for the siting of additional treatment plants or modification of existing facilities to allow for more effective use of non-potable water and to promote plans for responsible aquifer recharge.
- Consider allowing higher residential densities for new developments, in appropriate locations, where such developments will be served by water providers that are optimizing their supplies through established reuse and conservation measures.
- Explore options for the use of non-potable water and further research into the use of reclaimed and renewable water.
- Fully reuse all water that can be economically reused.
  - The County should work with water providers to advocate for legislation and regulations which allow appropriate water reuse, promoting safe and effective reuse throughout the County, and improve public understanding of water reclamation.

## Land Use

Incorporating water-saving actions in land-use and development planning is usually more cost-effective to implement at the beginning of development as compared to retrofitting at a later date. Coordination is key among planners and developers to ensure that land use planning is in line with water-supply availability. New development should be evaluated based on projected impacts to the overall water supply in the County. The coordination of planning efforts should be reinforced with plan policies aimed at water conservation, expansion of reclaimed water use, and periodic monitoring to ensure the County can continue to support the provision of high-quality water into the future. By 2025, 75 percent of Coloradans are projected to live in communities that have incorporated water-saving actions into land-use planning.

### *Incorporating Water-saving Actions in Land Use & Development Planning in El Paso County*

- Identify any water supply issues early in the land development process.
  - Discourage individual wells for new subdivisions with average lot sizes smaller than 2.5 acres when there is a reasonable opportunity to connect to an existing central system or construct a new central water supply system when the economies of scale to do so can be achieved, especially in the Laramie-Foxhills, Lower Arapahoe, Denver and Lower Dawson aquifers.

- Identify regional opportunities and barriers to satisfying water supply needs at full development build-out (2060).
  - Assist water providers, to the greatest extent practicable, in any future efforts to prepare demand forecasts by sharing information about population growth and new industries or developments in the County that will increase the demand for water.
  - Recognize and plan for the water supply challenges and limitations inherent in each of the regional planning areas. Place emphasis on Regional Planning Area 3 (Falcon) due to its current reliance on nonrenewable Denver Basin wells and the Upper Black Squirrel Creek (UBSC) alluvium, which is renewable but limited and over appropriated.
  - Periodically update the County Master Plan, particularly the placetypes and land use component, to better identify and plan for areas of future growth in a manner that is consistent with the WMP.
  - Locate new development where it can take advantage of existing or proposed water supply projects that would allow shared infrastructure costs.
- Reduce end-user water consumption in the County.
  - Evaluate cluster development alternatives during planning to determine if water savings could occur.
  - Promote water-conscious developments through improved land-use policies.

## Agriculture

Agriculture uses the largest amount of water in Colorado and is the economic foundation for many rural communities, including those in El Paso County. It supports important environmental attributes, strengthens Colorado's food security, and upholds the state's cultural identity. Preserving agriculture is vital to Colorado and El Paso County. The State is expected to work closely with the County and agricultural communities to help achieve these conservation goals. For example, these state-wide collaborative efforts have resulted in agricultural transfer pilot projects sharing at least 50,000 acre-feet of agricultural water using voluntary alternative transfer methods by 2030.



### Storage

Due to the limited local surface water supply in El Paso County and heavy use of nonrenewable groundwater, the entire region is forced to focus on securing additional supplies, and increasing water storage, reuse, and efficiency. Adding reservoir storage and aquifer storage areas would allow better management of renewable water supplies. A storage goal of the CWCB is to attain 400,000 acre-feet of water storage in order to manage and share conserved water and the yield of Identified Projects and Processes (IPPs) by 2050. This objective equates to an 80 percent success rate for these planned projects.

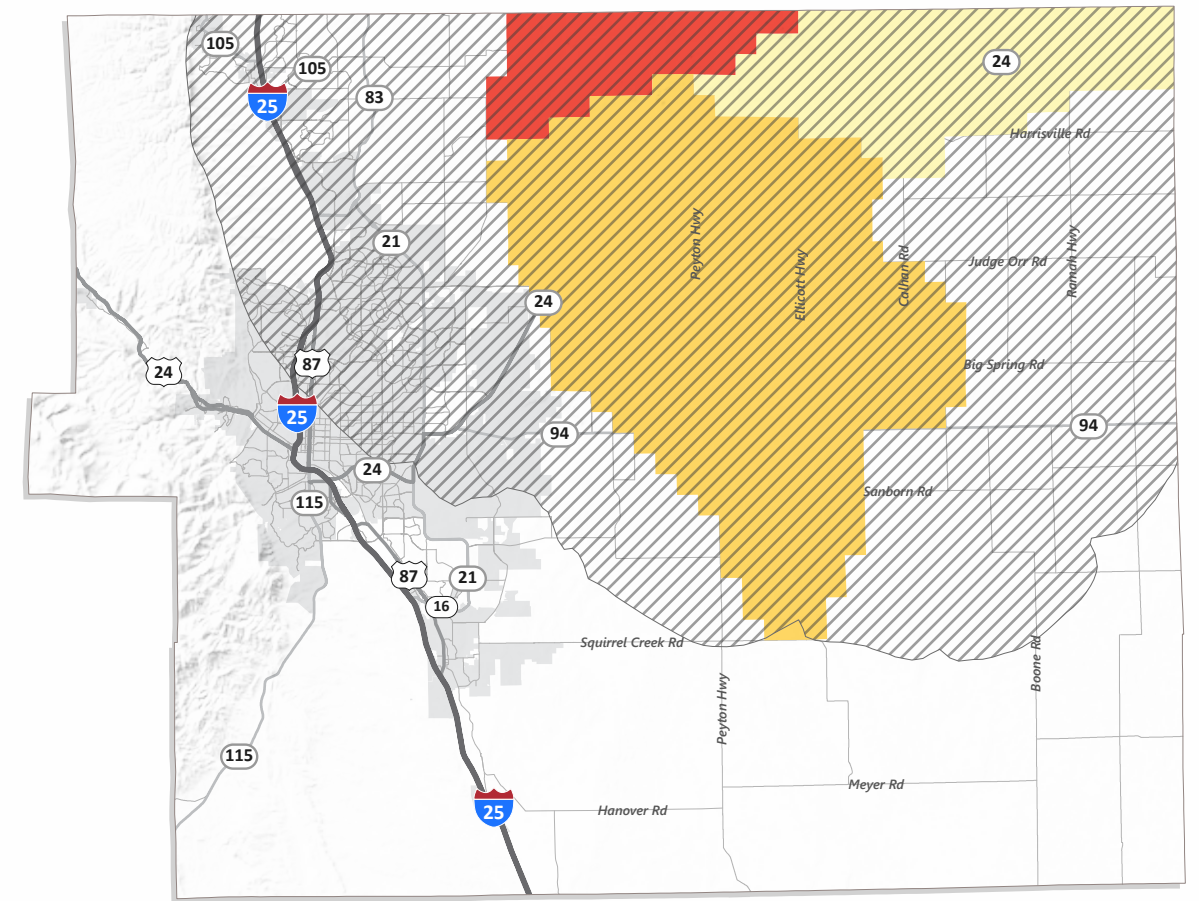
### Storage & Conservation of Water in El Paso County

- Encourage water providers to pursue additional water storage opportunities, including surface storage as well as storage in both bedrock and alluvial aquifers.
- Collaborate with the State and other stakeholders to extend the economic life of the Denver Basin aquifers.
- Denver Basin groundwater should be preserved as much as practical through water conservation and efficiency, extending the economic useful life.
- Incentivize the use of deeper Arapahoe and Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers by central water providers, leaving or deferring the use of the shallower aquifers for the more dispersed domestic well users.

- Encourage plans to recharge the UBSC Aquifer if such plans are based on sound science and can be demonstrated to not adversely impact water quality or water rights, with a preference for those plans which will maintain or enhance the available water supply at a regional scale.
- Encourage the development of water resources surveys through:
  - Well monitoring throughout the County, with an emphasis on the Denver Basin aquifer fringe areas.
  - Monitoring programs and studies that could result in an increased understanding of the quality, quantity, and rate of depletion of available water supplies in the area, including but not limited to private wells.
  - The systematic monitoring and careful administration of the bedrock aquifers to avoid over-allocation of groundwater.

### What is an acre-foot?

The acre-foot is a unit of volume commonly used in the United States in reference to large-scale water resources, such as reservoirs, aqueducts, canals, sewer flow capacity, irrigation water, and river flows.



### Designated Water Basins

- ▨ Denver Basin
- Kiowa Bijou
- Upper Big Sandy
- Upper Black Squirrel Creek

## ***Watershed Health, Environment & Recreation***

Colorado's Water Plan has identified a strategic water quality objective to have fully supported classified uses which may include drinking water, agriculture, recreation, aquatic life, and wetlands to all of Colorado's waters by 2050. These plans will address a variety of concerns, including pre- and post-fire mitigation, forest mortality, water quality impairments, potential impacts of legacy mines, flood mitigation and recovery, aquatic and riparian habitat enhancement, and land use change. A measurable objective has been set to cover 80 percent of the locally prioritized lists of rivers with stream management plans, and 80 percent of critical watersheds with watershed protection plans, all by 2030. The Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District was created in 2009 to manage, administer, and fund improvements in the Fountain Creek Watershed.

## ***Watershed Management in El Paso County***

- Protect and enhance the quality, quantity, and dependability of water supplies by encouraging and supporting legislation that preserves and protects all drinking water sources in the County.
- Plan for water resources in a thoughtful way that recognizes the nonrenewable nature of water resources in the area, accommodates existing and historical uses, and allows for sustainable, planned growth.
- Encourage continued collection and analysis of data for the purpose of better determining the extent and availability of groundwater in areas which do not overlie either the Denver Basin or a studied alluvial aquifer.
- Review the data and analysis of groundwater studies, as appropriate, to determine if regulatory modifications are needed and consider implementation.
- Promote collaboration among the County, municipalities, water service providers and regional and State agencies using Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or similar arrangements. Use MOUs to address shared source water protection and mutual concerns impacting water quality.
- Other areas of focus include:
  - Flood control, drainage, and floodplain management
  - Fountain Creek, Cheyenne Creek, and Monument Creek watershed restoration and water rights protections
  - Post-fire water-quality evaluation downstream of the Waldo Canyon and the Black Forest wildfires

## ***Funding***

Colorado's Water Plan sets an objective to sustainably fund its implementation. In order to support this objective, the State will investigate opportunities to raise additional revenue in the amount of \$100 million annually (\$3 billion by 2050) starting in 2020. Such funds could establish a repayment guarantee fund and green bond program focused on funding environmental and recreational projects. In addition, funds could further support conservation, agricultural viability, alternative transfer methods, education and outreach, and other plan implementation priorities. Funding for projects to develop renewable water supplies and increase water reuse in El Paso County would primarily have to come from municipal and special district financing; however, the CWCB offers funding available through multiple grants and loans specifically for water-related projects. Below is a list of some of the grants offered through the CWCB that would have relevance to the water supply alternatives for El Paso County.

- Supply and Demand Gap Projects
- Water Storage Projects
- Conservation, Land Use Planning
- Engagement and Innovation Activities
- Agricultural Projects
- Environmental and Recreational Projects

## ***Education, Outreach & Innovation***

There needs to be significant improvement to the level of public awareness and engagement regarding water issues statewide, as determined by water awareness surveys. Colorado's Water Plan also sets a measurable objective to engage Coloradans statewide on key water challenges that should be addressed by 2030.

## ***Water Education & Awareness in El Paso County***

- Reach a broad geographic range of community members and stakeholders, and gather feedback on location-specific input, strategy preferences, and open-ended feedback.
- Share educational water management and project-specific materials with property owners and developers.
- Educational campaigns should be pursued to involve the community and provide a broader basis of understanding regarding water supplies and conservation strategies.
- Communicate and gather input from the community on complex, and at times, contentious water and land use considerations.

### Projected Growth Areas

Land development in El Paso County is following several trends. Higher-density residential development is occurring where water is available from a central provider. Where centralized water service is not provided by a municipality, special district, or other entity, the trend is to develop 2.5- to 5-acre lots with individual onsite wells and septic systems. In some cases, developers are creating their own water systems for the purpose of supplying water to higher density developments. It is anticipated that growth in the County will continue to follow historic patterns, with larger-lot subdivisions in the northern and eastern part of the County, and higher-density suburban development occurring in and around Falcon and Fountain.

Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD) lies adjacent to large areas that could potentially develop with higher-density residential along the State Highway 94 corridor. It is anticipated that Schriever Air Force Base (AFB) will continue to grow in the future, which may require increased service. The Banning Lewis Ranch (BLR) area, covering over 24,000 acres from Woodmen Road south, past Highway 94 and constituting the majority of the City of Colorado Springs' eastern boundary, will continue to match the City's suburban development pattern. Future County development could continue to leapfrog BLR, resulting in significant development in and around Falcon and Fountain, along the Highway 94 corridor, and out to Ellicott. The WMP is not intended to address growth within the City of Colorado Springs. The following list outlines where and how growth is expected to occur within the County as it relates to water consumption.

Region	2060 Demand (AF)	Current Supplies (AF)	Average Year Surplus** (AF)	Need (AF)	Need (%)
Region 1	138,453	99,001	0	39,452	28%
Region 2*	13,254	13,607	353	0	0%
Region 3*	8,307	7,164	0	1,143	14%
Region 4a*	1,170	725	0	445	38%
Region 4b*	764	722	0	42	5%
Region 4c*	4,826	2,970	0	1,856	38%
Region 5*	9,608	4,849	0	4,759	50%
Region 6*	2,167	1,360	0	807	37%
Region 7	26,969	15,376	0	11,593	43%
Region 8*	484	299	0	185	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>206,000</b>	<b>146,070</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>59,930</b>	<b>29%</b>

### Projected Water Demand in El Paso County

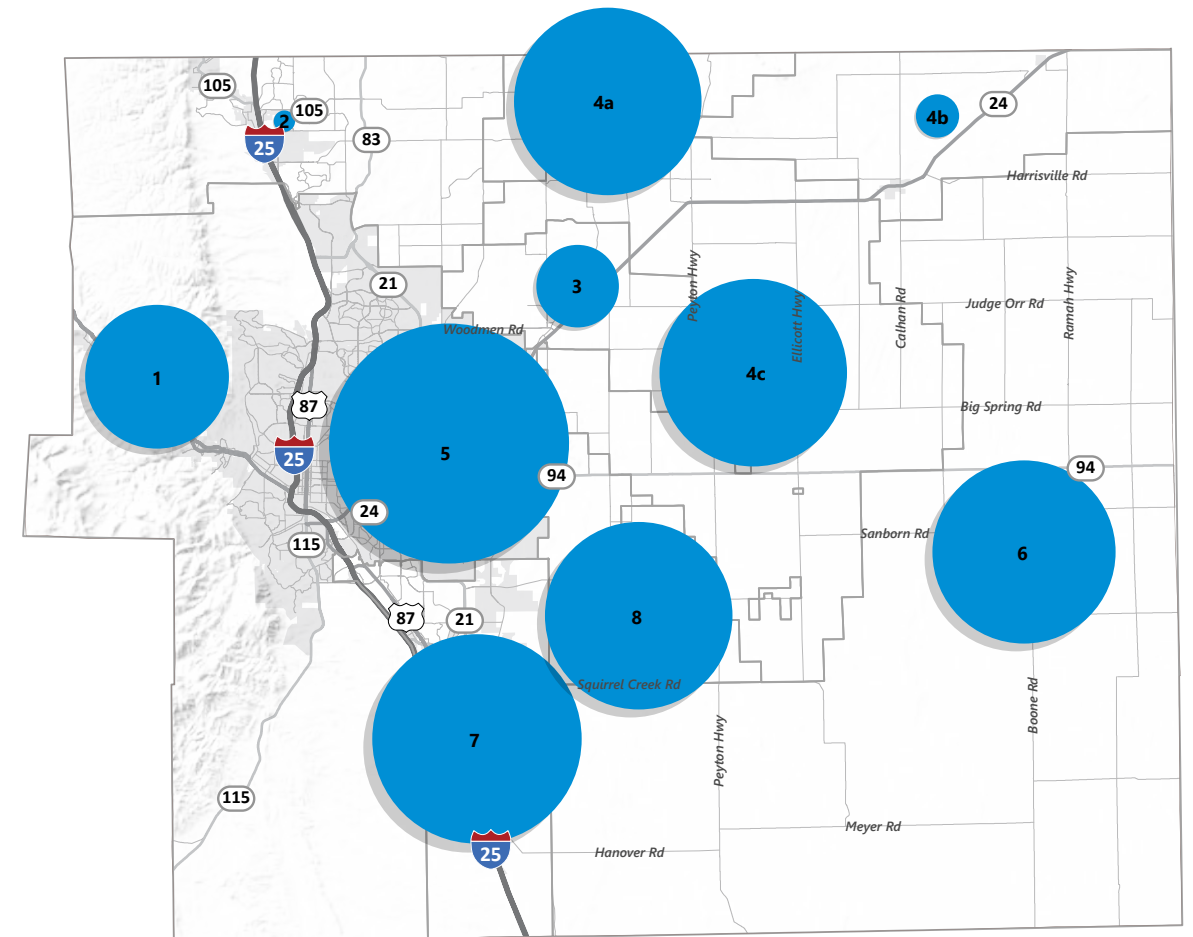
The water demand in El Paso County is projected to grow to 206,000 AF per year at build-out (2060). At the current level of water supply (146,070 AF per year), there is a projected need of 59,930 AF per year by 2060. Based on the reported and estimated future supply of water, there is projected to be enough water supply to reliably serve at least 56% of the projected water demand in 2060. However, the supplies for Regions 2, 3, 4a, 4b, 4c, 5, 6, and 8 make up another 15% of the projected 2060 demand and include a significant share of Denver Basin groundwater. Pumping Denver Basin groundwater may not be economically sustainable over time and by 2060, it would likely be less economical than for 2040 demands, depending on local aquifer conditions. That would serve to increase the water supply needs beyond the 29% that is shown.

An acre-foot (AF) of water is about 326,000 gallons

Source: El Paso County Water Master Plan

\*Water production from Denver Basin wells in this region may not be economically sustainable in the long term, depending on local aquifer conditions.

\*\*In a given year, water rights and hydrology may indicate some water supply surpluses. In other years, however, water providers may need to rely on water stored in prior years to meet demands and may have no surpluses. Note: The Total row represents the total for the County as a whole, and not the sum of all the regions. When looking at the County as a whole, in 2060 the demand is 206,000, but the total supplies are only 146,070. So, while one region shows a surplus, that surplus is more than the total need for the County, so there is no surplus for the County as a whole.



### Projected Water Demand

- Circle size is relative to the gap in current demand and projected 2060 demand per 2018 Water Master Plan
- planning region

Source: 2018 County Water Master Plan



## Quality

### Groundwater

Most water providers in El Paso County provide their customers with Denver Basin groundwater from bedrock aquifers; however, Monument-area water providers have some alluvial wells along Monument Creek, and those in the Fountain area have alluvial wells along Fountain Creek and in the Widefield Aquifer. Also, Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD) obtains most of its supply from alluvial wells in the Upper Black Squirrel Creek (UBSC) Basin. Alluvial groundwater is generally more susceptible to contamination from surface sources than Denver Basin groundwater. Typically, a well is drilled and groundwater is pumped to a well house, where the water can be filtered. The water is then disinfected, usually with chlorine or a variant, before entering the potable water distribution system for consumption.

### Groundwater Quality Issues

Water from Denver Basin aquifers must often be treated for removal of iron, manganese, or both. These constituents are on the EPA's list of secondary drinking water standards, meaning that they are aesthetic water qualities and not health-related standards. Water from the Laramie-Fox Hills aquifer specifically will often have concerns with the aesthetic qualities of taste and odor.

With regard to the EPA's safe drinking water standards, the primary standards related to health concerns, some Denver Basin wells can develop elevated levels of radionuclides such as radium. It occurs due to mild radioactivity in the soils surrounding some wells and is very site-specific. This concern can often be addressed by blending with water from other wells or sources prior to distribution but, in some cases, ion exchange or another form of treatment may be required.

In recent years, water providers pumping alluvial groundwater from the Widefield Aquifer have either had to use alternate sources or provide added treatment. Emerging contaminants known as perfluorinated compounds (PFCs), have been detected in water from the aquifer due to surface contamination. In 2016, the EPA reduced the health advisory level for PFCs from 350 parts per trillion (ppt) to 70 ppt. This raised immediate concerns as PFCs are linked to low birth weight, a number of cancers, and increased risk of heart disease. Water providers that will continue using water from the aquifer are adding ion exchange or carbon contactors to meet the new advisory levels, and the State is evaluating whether to establish a drinking water standard for PFCs.

Nitrate often exceeds the primary drinking water standards in agricultural areas, such as across the designated basins, due to extended use of fertilizers. It may be addressed by blending with other sources but may require additional treatment where blending with lower nitrate sources is not possible.

As part of its indirect potable reuse strategy, CMD recharges reclaimed water at the southern end of the UBSC aquifer. Their UBSC well water is high in total dissolved solids (TDS), listed as a secondary drinking water standard. TDS becomes more concentrated through normal municipal use, so CMD now plans to add reverse osmosis treatment of their reclaimed water before it is used for aquifer recharge.

Alluvial groundwater quality is regularly sampled and tested to determine if it is influenced by surface water. When it is found to have such an influence, the state health department reclassifies the water source and it must then be treated similarly to surface water. El Paso County has been a primary supporter in a multiphase groundwater study of the UBSC aquifer through ongoing water quality studies, to particularly address nutrient concentrations.

Previous results identified nutrients as the primary constituent of concern, and the objective of the Phase 3 study is to assess potential changes in the groundwater quality of the basin since 2013. This project will provide information on changes in groundwater nitrate concentrations over time and identify potential nitrate sources.

### Surface Water

The basic purification of surface water starts by removing larger sediment particles from the water, then filtering the water to remove any additional smaller particles through a screening process, followed by disinfecting—typically adding chlorine to the water to kill any bacteria and microorganisms. The treated water is then introduced into the water distribution system. There can be site-specific variations to this typical treatment scheme to address contaminants in the water.

In general, as surface water supplies must be delivered from longer distances at higher costs, water sources that were previously considered too costly to treat may become more cost-effective. Additionally, more advanced treatments may be needed as a better understanding is obtained of potential health effects of a broad group of trace contaminants that are now measurable (commonly referred to as “contaminants of emerging concern”). More renewable water is needed in El Paso County, and its use must be optimized. Ideally, renewable water would be used in times of wet and average precipitation, reserving nonrenewable groundwater supplies for use during drought conditions when surface water flows are low.

## PPACG Water Quality Management Plan

### Wastewater

El Paso County is projected to grow by approximately one percent per year through 2050. El Paso, Park, and Teller counties, as well as their respective municipalities, are growing more rapidly than most other areas of Colorado and the United States. The current and proposed wastewater treatment facilities for each watershed are expected to be enough to service population projections through the year 2030.

### Septic vs. Shared Sewer

Decisions to locate wastewater treatment systems, interceptors, and lift stations should be made in a manner that protects water quality and recognizes the protection of floodplains, geologic hazard areas, wildlife habitats, wetlands, and agricultural land. The purpose of this is to ensure that public facilities are located and constructed with consideration for minimizing water quality impacts, while recognizing financial limitations. The communities of the region have been supportive of protecting water quality through the funding of well-constructed, -operated, and -maintained water and wastewater treatment facilities. Careful planning of public infrastructure is needed to assure that maximum public benefit is attained with available funds. If it is economically feasible, wastewater service should be provided in regional and sub-regional publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities, and smaller privately owned facilities will be avoided. The potential negative impacts from smaller wastewater treatment facilities are:

- Reliability
- Disposal of industrial wastes and sludge
- Potential cost of technology required to meet stream standards

Federal and state regulatory requirements have strengthened compliance of wastewater discharge facilities. The goal of the 1972 legislation of the Clean Water Act was the “restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Nation's waters.” This act established regulatory requirements for wastewater dischargers that have been amended and updated. Control strategies are required to achieve these standards if they are not being met. Specific numeric standards are established by CDPHE based on the water quality classifications and standards of the creeks to which the facilities discharge. The review of site applications must conform to and be consistent with Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments' (PPACG) 208 Plan and CDPHE Regulation No. 22, Site Location and Design Approval Regulations for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Works. Two documents used in the review of site applications are:

- CDPHE Regulation No. 22, Guidance Document, Site Location and Design Approval Regulations for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Works; and
- CDPHE Policy 96-1, Design Criteria in the Review of Wastewater Treatment Facilities.

The health departments of El Paso, Teller, and Park counties each have Individual Sewage Disposal System (ISDS)/Onsite Wastewater System (OWS) regulations that are applicable for septic systems that are 2000 gallons per day or greater. CDPHE also has ISDS regulations that were updated in 2020.

### Recommendations by PPACG

- All site applications for the region, prior to being submitted to CDPHE, should include a coordinated review by the Water Quality Management Committee, PPACG staff, and appropriate management agencies within the watershed. The site application will be reviewed against the 208 Plan, CDPHE Regulation 22, and other appropriate local and state regulations and policies. It should also be reviewed with El Paso County for potential 1041 applicability.
- PPACG staff should review proposed changes to applicable CDPHE water quality standards, regulations, or policies affecting the review of site applications and discharge permits.
- OWS greater than 2,000 gallons per day should connect to a designated management agency's wastewater system if it is economically and technically feasible. OWS systems of less than 2,000 gallons per day that serve homes or small businesses should be encouraged to connect to a designated agency's system when it becomes accessible and continue to be reviewed by the local County health department where it will be constructed.
- Lift stations must provide enough emergency storage capacity at peak flow for the specific entity to respond to an emergency, and either fix the problem or remove the wastewater through trucks.
- Municipalities, counties, utilities, and other water providers should promote local water conservation and use of non-potable water by supporting appropriate educational efforts and ordinances. Support further research to determine strategies that have been found to be effective in other cities and counties.

- Where site conditions require wastewater collection and central treatment, efforts should be made to consolidate treatment plants. Consideration, however, needs to be given to protection of instream flows, wastewater reuse opportunities, and water rights obligations. Every effort should be made to consolidate management agencies and special district boundaries where possible and financially feasible. At a minimum, proper long-term operation and maintenance should be provided by a responsible operating entity.
- Full compliance with the Colorado Operator Certification Act should be required. The state should emphasize the legal responsibility of the plant owner and should support the plant operator with timely repairs and reimbursement for operations. The state should promptly begin enforcement actions for chronic poor operation of treatment facilities.
- Biosolids generated by municipal and industrial wastewater treatment plants should be managed in accordance with applicable state or federal permits and Certificates of Designation.
- Encourage the reuse of biosolids as a primary application on crop and pastureland, land reclamation sites, nurseries, commercial landscapes, and re-use of treatment plant effluent. Efforts to beneficially use biosolids should be supported by local governments where financially feasible.

### Individual Sewage Disposal Systems

Individual Sewage Disposal Systems (ISDSs) should be located in a manner that protects groundwater and surface water quality and recognizes geological constraints; and should be properly operated and maintained. The CDPHE Water Quality Control Division (WQCD) regulates the discharge of wastewater from all septic systems with design capacities greater than 2,000 gpd. PPACG is also required to review the site applications for these systems and make recommendations to CDPHE prior to their review. The health departments of El Paso, Teller, and Park counties each have ISDS Regulations that are applicable for septic systems of less than 2,000 gpd and are required to be approved by the local health department. These regulations are adopted pursuant to the State of Colorado Board of Health ISDS Guidelines and Sections 25-10-104 of the Community Rating System (CRS). These regulations establish minimum standards for the location, construction, performance, installation, and alteration of ISDS systems Article 10 Title 25 of the ISDS Act is in the process of being updated (July 2010). Working groups have been meeting to discuss changes. Those groups are:

- Training and Certification
- Graywater
- Transfer of Title, Use Permits, and Maintenance
- Funding-Fees
- Septage Management
- Performance Based Design and Regulation.

### Recommendations

- Make certain that all site applications for wastewater systems that are over 2,000 gallons per day have been reviewed and are consistent with applicable County and state ISDS regulations as well as 1041 regulations;
- Require an analysis of costs associated with hookup to a central wastewater treatment facility;
- Ensure that the system will be properly operated and maintained and that it will not exceed the maximum treatment capacity if future growth is planned; Regional Policies PPACG 208 Plan 3 - 20 2010
- Require thorough state, regional, and local reviews of all proposed subsurface disposal systems. These systems are a growing problem in the region, and with reduced federal funding for centralized facilities, these ISDSs are likely to see increased use.
- Make sure location, depth, installation, operation and maintenance of systems and other information is put into a central database tracking system.
- Consider the consolidation of districts so that wastewater services can be regionalized and regulated appropriately to help standardize enforcement between districts.

All Districts are independent in that service agreements are approved one by one, each pays their own legal fees, and entities could all be doing things a little bit differently. Consolidation should be considered so that they could regionalize wastewater services and regulate accordingly. Enforcement varies between entities and is based on discharge. To comply with the TDS order, the CMD is looking to build a total reverse osmosis treatment plant that would be the first of its kind in Colorado and could pump out potable water but may be more expensive to treat as drinking water.

### Stormwater Management

The effective management of stormwater runoff is critical due to its potential to affect stream water quality, riparian zone habitat and wetlands, flood conveyance capacity, and sediment loading and transport. Hydrologic impacts from urbanization can cause water quality problems, aggregation/degradation of stream channels, increased temperature, and sedimentation, which can have a corresponding effect on aquatic habitat, groundwater recharge and streamflow.

Stormwater detention does not have specific federal or state laws or regulations that mandate it. However, state statutes require counties in Colorado to adopt subdivision regulations requiring developers to submit maps and plans (where applicable) for facilities to control stormwater in excess of historic runoff levels. Counties are also required by state statute to include provisions governing standards and technical procedures applicable to storm drainage systems and detention facilities in their subdivision regulations.

All governments require an erosion control plan that outlines methods for reducing soil erosion during construction and grading of land. General requirements include an erosion control plan to be approved prior to the commencement of construction. More specific policies address requirements for temporary and permanent sediment control facilities, protection of land cover for long construction periods, and security required until construction is completed and inspected.

Industrial facilities, including most manufacturers, mining, transportation facilities, power plants, landfills, wastewater treatment plants, and recyclers that discharge water, must be covered by a state stormwater discharge permit. El Paso County and the Pikes Peak Region have developed a stormwater utility or enterprise to meet the needs of improving the quality of streams and creeks and prevent flooding. Most of the stormwater utilities and enterprises require residents to pay a tax or fee based on the amount of impervious surface area. While no state or federal laws or regulations mandate the establishment of stormwater utilities, several state statutes do grant the authority to establish local improvement districts and give direction to local governments seeking to create stormwater utilities.

In some municipalities and counties, the costs are offset for the developer only if regional facilities are constructed as part of the development. Jurisdictional drainage planning for new development is authorized under the Community Rating System (CRS), pertaining to County and municipal planning and zoning. The objectives to the PPACG Stormwater and Urban policy are:

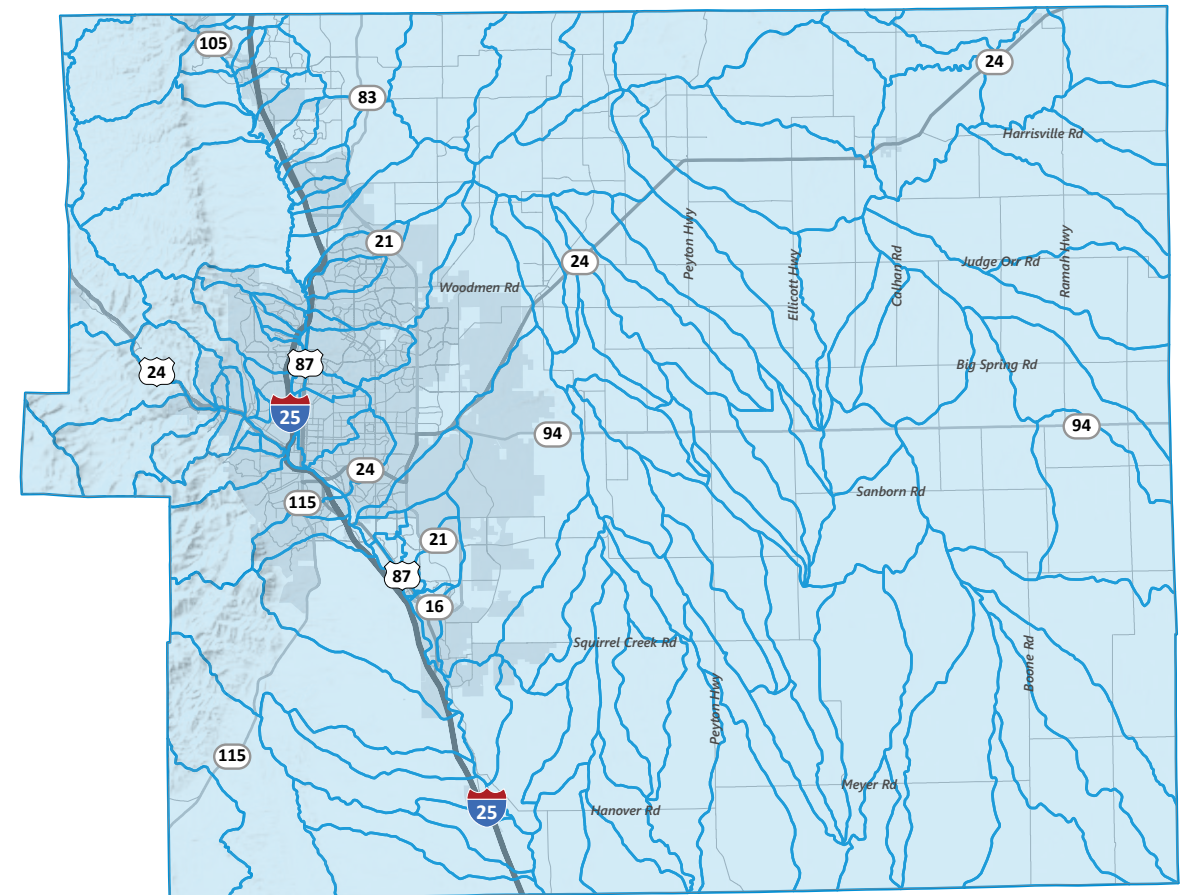
- To promote water quality as an important consideration in making decisions on the location and extent of areas to be served by public and private facilities and services.
- To maintain and improve existing structural controls and encourage the use of nonstructural controls such as stormwater quality control planning, landscaping and vegetative practices, and general education programs in managing stormwater.
- Adoption of stormwater management policies based on benchmark principles developed by the Center for Watershed Protection.
- Use Low Impact Development (LID) techniques to reduce peak flows and runoff volume to stabilize channel forming flows.

### Stormwater Management Plan

El Paso County is required to have a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, which sets limits on point sources that discharge pollutants, monitoring and reporting requirements, and other provisions to ensure that the discharge does not hurt water quality or people's health. Implementation of the following strategies will ensure consistency with the stormwater and urban runoff policy statement:

- Stormwater detention, retention ponds, or other best management practices (BMPs) should be required to minimize flooding, maximize infiltration, and minimize water quality impacts from impervious surface contaminants. Common structural BMPs are stormwater detention and retention ponds, methods to minimize directly connected impervious surface areas, and irrigated grass buffer strips. Nonstructural BMPs include stormwater quality-control planning, adoption of criteria and standards, illicit discharge controls, and general education programs.
- Direct discharge of stormwater to a lake, stream, or drainage way should be minimized.
- Erosion and sedimentation control plans should be required for areas of one acre or larger and should show proper measures for controlling erosion and reducing sedimentation. These plans, when required, should be completed (unless waived by the Water Quality Control Commission) prior to the start of any work and include all proposed excavation, filling, and grade work for improvements.
- Where the potential for water quality impacts exist, the following requirements should be applied to any land use activity.
  - Disturbance management and revegetation plans should be developed when necessary and should include details of vegetation disturbance (schedule, area involved, equipment to be used, etc.) and a description of all measures to be taken during and following disturbance to minimize water quality impacts, including monitoring to determine effectiveness of the measures taken.

- Timing of disturbance: whenever possible, disturbances should be planned to occur at those times of the year when water quality impacts will be minimized. For example, disturbances immediately prior to or during the winter season may require more mitigation before the site can be revegetated.
- Area controls: consideration should be given to limiting the area of disturbance which occurs at any one time, particularly in locations where water quality impacts may be severe, such as on moderate to steep slopes having soils with low permeability.
- Equipment: methods for vegetation disturbance should be selected to minimize water quality impacts.
- Stabilization during disturbance: soil erosion controls and protection of surface waters should occur promptly after vegetation disturbance.
- Monitoring during disturbance: regular inspections should be made of a disturbed site to ensure that the operation is in conformance with grading and erosion control and that water quality impacts are being controlled to the maximum extent practicable.
- Post-disturbance monitoring: inspections of the disturbed site after completion of the operation are necessary to ensure that measures to control water quality impacts are effective and to determine if remedial actions are required.
- Financial assurances should be secured to ensure that erosion control plans, including prompt and successful revegetation of disturbed areas, are implemented.
- Building restrictions on slopes greater than 30 percent should be considered as a means of limiting the water quality impacts of soil disturbance (e.g. Colorado Springs Hillside Area Overlay Zone District 2.504).



### Drainage Basins

■ Drainage Basins (Muller Engineering Company)

## Water Supply Management

### County Regions

The eight regions defined in the growth areas section were delineated by the use of similar types of water sources by the entities located within each region and the presence of, or future potential for, regional opportunities (i.e., shared supplies or infrastructure). While most of the regions are singular areas, Region 4 is subdivided into three subareas. The three parts of Region 4 are distinguished by their separate designated groundwater basins that fall within the boundaries of the County: with Region 4a encompassing a portion of the Kiowa Basin, Region 4b containing the southernmost part of the Upper Big Sandy Basin, and Region 4c including a portion of the UBSC Basin. The use of water within designated groundwater basins, and the replacement of stream depletions resulting from pumping wells in a designated groundwater basin, is administered by the State of Colorado Division of Water Resources. The use of designated groundwater is further managed by groundwater management districts specific to each basin.

Grouping water providers by region helps the public, County staff, developers, Planning Commission members, and the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to better understand communities of water supply and demand and to better evaluate the issues specific to each region. It also identifies those groups of water providers that could potentially work together to better ensure adequate water supplies to meet future demands.

### Municipalities

A municipality is a city, town, village, or government unit formed by a municipal charter from the State of Colorado. Municipalities normally have corporate statutes and the ability to self-govern. Municipalities can tax individuals and corporations through income tax, property tax, and corporate income tax. Many municipalities were created to address public services at a local level, often controlling streets, water supply, sanitation services, waste disposal, stormwater services, police and fire protection, and public transportation. El Paso County has eight municipalities that provide water to their residents: The Cities of Colorado Springs, Fountain, and Manitou Springs, and the Towns of Monument, Palmer Lake, Calhan, Ramah, and Green Mountain Falls.

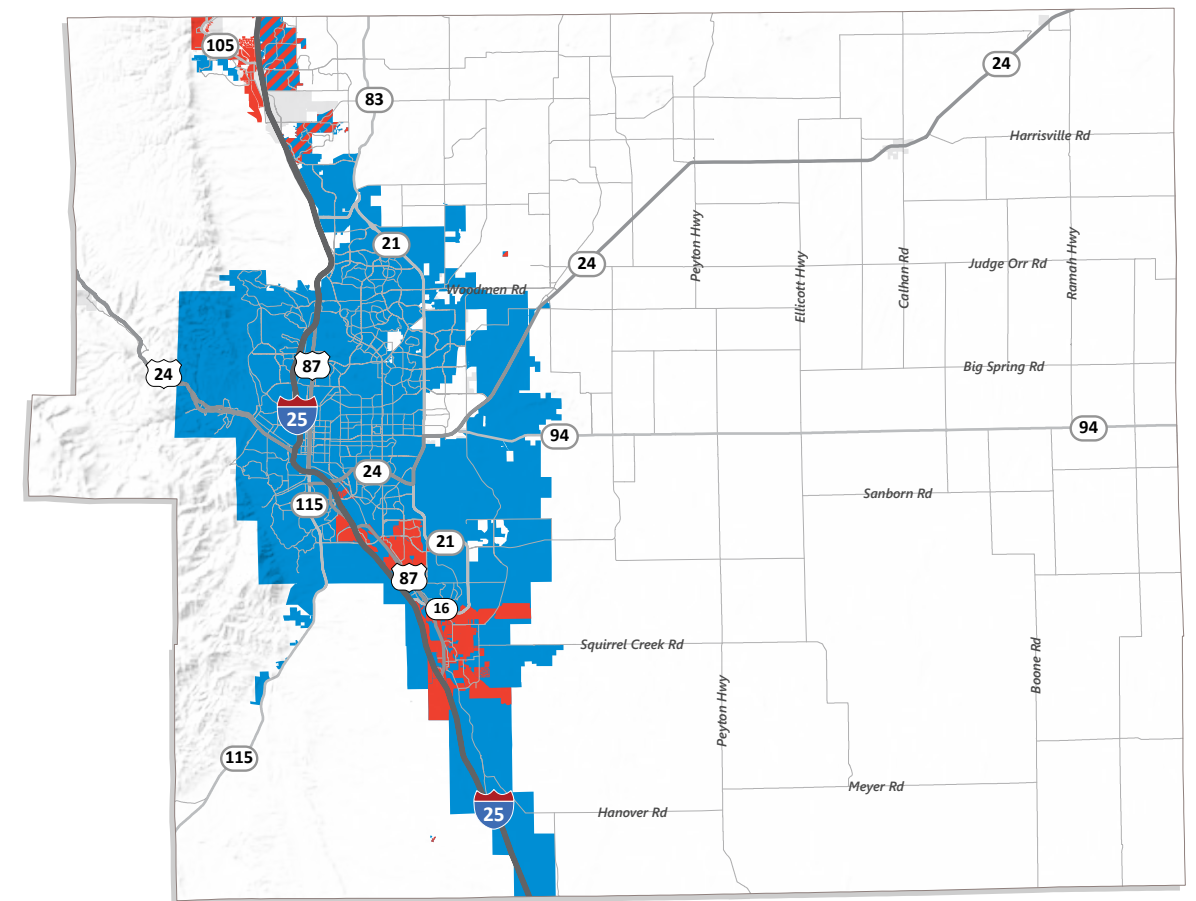
### Special Districts & Private Corporations/Water Providers

Special districts are separate from municipalities and act as self-governing, special-purpose units under Colorado law. Special districts can be formed to provide a number of public services, particularly public water and sewer services. In some instances, a special district will provide only water or only sewer services. In others, special districts are responsible for maintaining and providing various public services like construction and maintenance of parks, roads, water supply, and sewer services.

Special districts providing multiple services are sometimes referred to as “metropolitan districts.” In El Paso County, there are several special districts that are responsible for managing and providing various public services. Most districts are formed and operated pursuant to the Special District Act in Title 32, Article 1 of the Colorado Revised Statutes.

There are several different types of water providers within El Paso County. Although each entity type has governing regulations that are different, all water providers must follow and adhere to state and federal drinking water standards to provide their customers with water free from harmful chemicals and substances. Special districts and all other public water providers must follow all the safe drinking water standards enforced by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

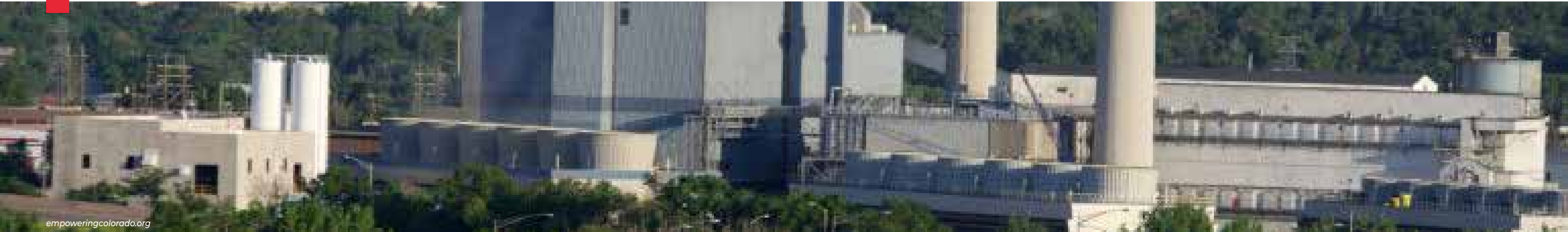
Any water supply element should include conservation policies. These may include goals as a condition of development approvals, including subdivisions, planned unit developments, special use permits, and zoning changes.



### Water and Sanitation Districts

*This map does not include Metropolitan Districts, which may provide water and wastewater services in the County.*

- ▨ Sanitation/Water District
- Sanitation District
- Water District



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## Gas

El Paso County's natural gas utilities are primarily served by Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) and Black Hills Energy. Oil and gas development are regulated on the state level by the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. El Paso County also has regulations specific to oil and gas development within the Land Development Code.

## Black Hills Energy

Black Hills Energy is a company, providing natural gas and electric utilities, which serves a small portion of El Paso County. Black Hills Energy was required in Colorado to generate 30 percent of its energy by 2020 from designated renewable energy sources. This requirement is known as the Renewable Energy Standard or RES. The steps Black Hills Energy is taking to comply with these standards are detailed in reports Black Hills Energy file with the Colorado Public Utilities Commission.

## Colorado Springs Utilities

Colorado Springs Utilities' (CSU) 2015 Gas Integrated Resource Plan (GIRP) process developed three primary types of demand forecasts: annual, peak-day, and peak-hour. Annual demand forecasts are used for preparing revenue budgets and developing long-term natural gas procurement plans. Peak-day and peak-hour demand forecasts are critical for determining the adequacy of existing gas supply resources, or the timing for new resource acquisitions and capital investments required to meet customers' needs during a peak demand.

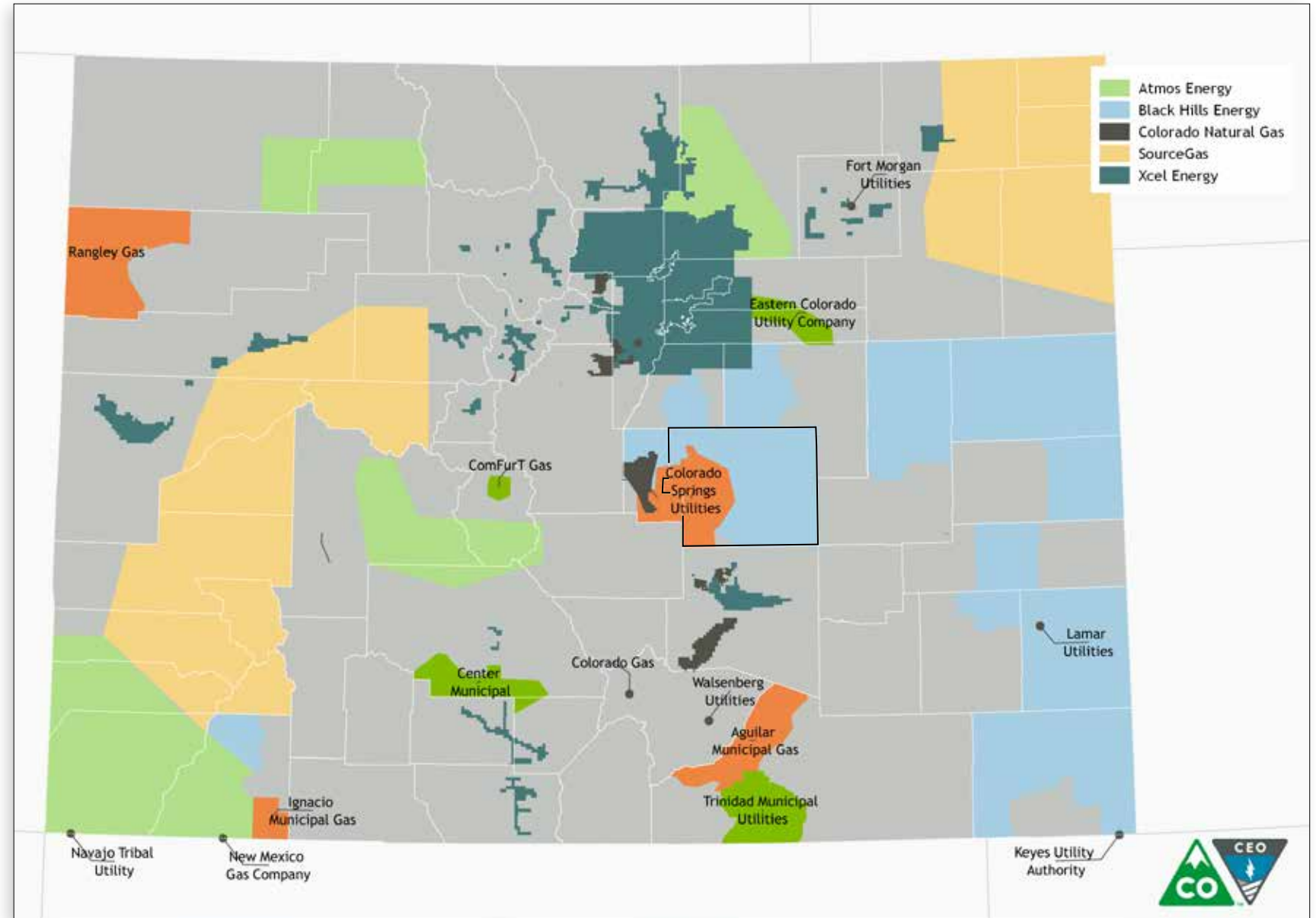
Statistically, these conditions will occur once every 20 to 30 years and typically last no more than 3 consecutive days.

Demand forecasts focus on two primary drivers, residential natural gas usage and nonresidential usage. The nonresidential base in Colorado Springs is relatively small compared to other cities of similar size, therefore CSU's natural gas usage is predominately driven by weather sensitive heating loads. Since there is substantial weather volatility in the CSU service area, forecasting daily and hourly demands is a challenging process. Demand forecasts include wind speed in addition to average temperature as fundamental demand-influencing factors. GIRP analyzed weather data dating back to 1946 and determined a one-in-25-year occurrence to be a -13 °F average daily temperature. In order to meet customer load demands, contracted quantities need to be equal or greater than the forecasted firm peak demand volumes.

The recommended GIRP action plan outlines activities for development and inclusion prior to the next regularly scheduled GIRP review process cycle. The purpose of these actionable items is to position CSU to provide the best cost/risk resource portfolio and to support and improve GIRP planning.

## Colorado Interstate Gas Company

Colorado Interstate Gas Company (AKA Kinder Morgan) owns and operates multiple high pressure gas pipelines, and meter stations throughout El Paso County. It is a major producer of natural gas, connected to major supply basins in the Rocky Mountains. CIG has worked with Colorado Springs Utilities for over 90 years to provide reliable and affordable natural gas to communities and businesses in Colorado.



Colorado Natural Gas Utilities (linked image)



## Electric

The unincorporated population and a number of smaller communities in El Paso County are powered by five independent power providers:

- Mountain View Electric Association (MVEA) – most of the rural eastern part of the County
- Intermountain Rural Electric Association (IREA) – northeast area of the County
- Southeast Colorado Power Association (SECPA) – southeast corner of the County
- Fountain Electric – City of Fountain
- Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) – City of Colorado Springs and southwest area of the County

## Mountain View Electric Association (MVEA)

MVEA serves over 49,000 customers in its 5,000-square-mile territory. This territory expands eight counties: Arapahoe, Crowley, Douglas, Elbert, El Paso, Lincoln, Pueblo, and Washington. Schiever Air Force Base is also served by MVEA.

## Intermountain Rural Electric Association (IREA)

IREA serves more than 160,000 customers its 5,000-square-mile service area. IREA covers communities in 11 counties separated into seven districts. IREA serves a portion of Palmer Lake in the northwest corner of El Paso County. IREA has begun a project in Palmer Lake to upgrade single- and three-phase distribution lines.

## Southeast Colorado Power Association (SECPA)

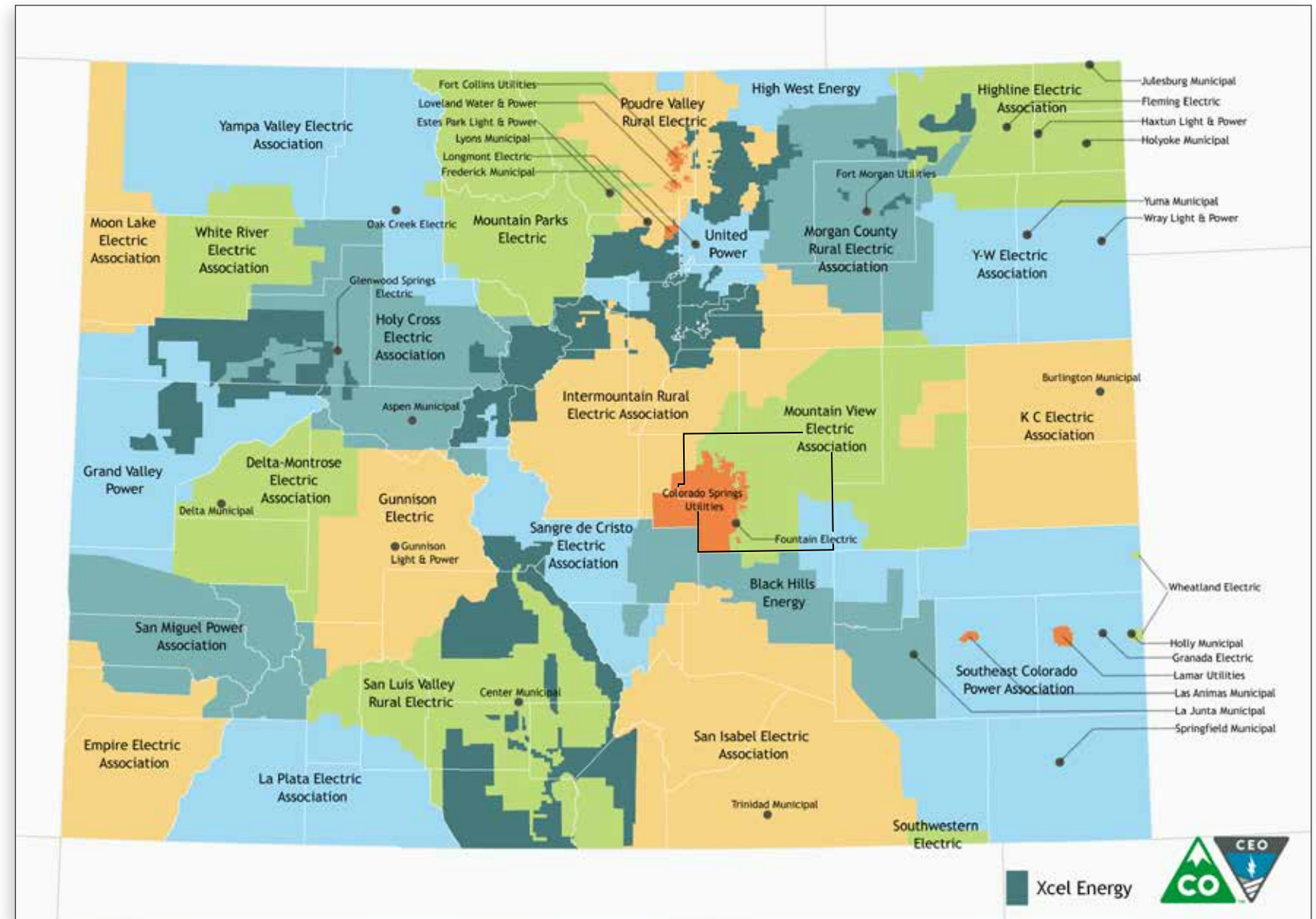
SECPA serves more than 11,000 customers in its 13,000-square-mile service area. Its territory encompasses all or portions of 11 counties in Colorado. A significant portion of southeast El Paso County.

## Fountain Electric

The City of Fountain's Electric Department serves nearly 18,000 customers in a 66-square-mile territory. This includes City residents and some residents of unincorporated areas adjacent to the municipality. The Department currently has two ongoing projects to upgrade its system: the 115 kV Transmission Line and the Jimmy Camp Creek Substation.

## Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU)

Areas within the City of Colorado Springs are powered by Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU). The military installations of Fort Carson, Peterson AFB, and the United States Air Force Academy (USAF) receive electric service from CSU as well. CSU also provides power to the cities of Manitou Springs, Green Mountain Falls, and Chipeta Park. CSU coordinates its transmission planning with other transmission providers and stakeholders in the CCPG subregion and in the Western Interconnection as a whole. The CSU Board has approved a plan for a new energy future that is cost-effective, resilient and environmentally sustainable. Aligned with their energy vision, the approved portfolio 17 option achieves 80 percent carbon reduction and decommissions all coal generation by 2030.



Colorado Electric Utilities Service Territories (linked image)



## Alternative Energy

Due to its location in the United States and climate, El Paso County has a variety of opportunities for alternative energy production and use. In general, all forms of energy generation should be considered and appropriately sited in the County as opportunities arise.

## Wind

NextEra Energy brought a 145-turbine wind farm near Calhan in eastern El Paso County online in 2017. Since then, some health concerns related to the sound and solar flicker produced by the blades have been raised. New technology to reduce noise and flicker may need to be developed in the future to mitigate these impacts and help support wind farm installations as a more acceptable form of sustainable power generation in the County. Area of land with sufficient wind resource capacity is somewhat limited within El Paso County. The County should monitor the development of new technologies as it continues to consider new opportunities for wind energy. The USAFA and its flight training areas should be considered in the development of new wind energy sites to avoid impacts to military missions.

## Solar

Solar energy is sustainable, renewable, and plentiful (especially in El Paso County). As the cost of using solar to produce electricity goes down each year, many Americans are increasingly switching to solar. As of November 2020, the average solar panel cost in El Paso County is \$3.17/W. Given a solar panel system size of 5 kilowatts (kW), an average solar residential installation in the County ranges in cost from \$13,472 to \$18,228, with the average gross price for solar in El Paso County coming in at \$15,850. After accounting for the 26% Federal Investment Tax Credit (ITC) and other state and local solar incentives, the net price a residential customer would pay for solar can fall by thousands of dollars. Solar panels can increase the value of a home and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Since Colorado receives about 300 days of sun per year, it provides an excellent platform for solar power and the focus for future alternative energy sources. Continued support for resources and technology is necessary to ensure clean energy is both reliable and sustainable. To better serve its customers in the future, CSU is becoming more creative and embracing new technologies. By 2024:

- Renewable energy mix will be more than 20 percent;
- More than 100,000 homes annually will be powered by solar energy; and
- CSU will have more than 264 megawatts (MW) of solar power in its generation portfolio.

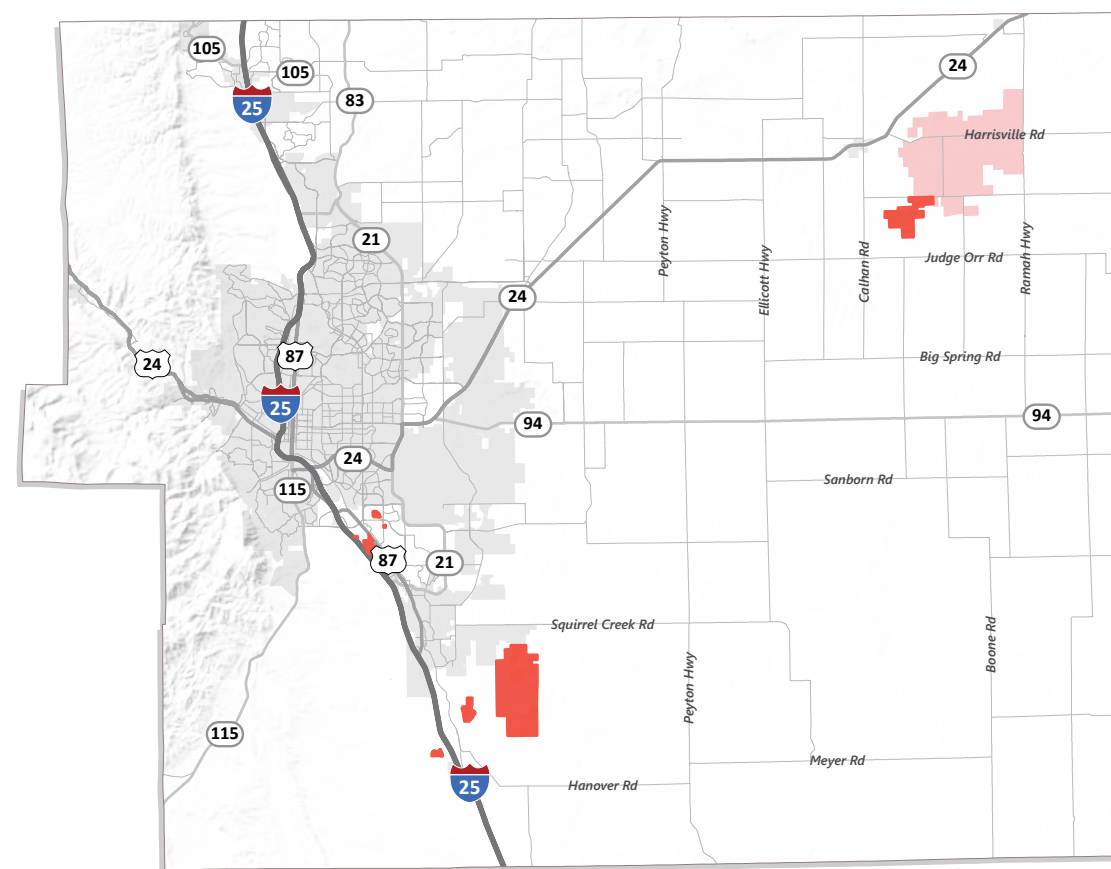
## Ongoing Projects

**Pike Solar + Battery Project:** A project is currently underway for 150 MW of new energy generation facility and a 25-MW battery storage system. This project is expected to come online in 2023. At this time, it is the largest energy storage facility announced in Colorado. The battery associated with this project will be used to store cost-efficient solar energy during the day so that it can be used during expensive peak demand periods and at night. It will also provide CSU with valuable information about improving solar power integration into the system.

**Grazing Yak Solar Project:** In November 2019, the Grazing Yak Solar Project was brought online. Consisting of more than 119,000 panels across 278 acres near Calhan, CO, this project provides 35 MW of electricity to customers. This is enough power for approximately 13,000 homes per year.

**Palmer Solar Project:** In April 2020, the Palmer Solar Project, CSU's largest solar project to date, was brought online. Containing more than 220,000 panels on about 700 acres southeast of Colorado Springs, Palmer Solar provides 60 MW of electricity to customers, enough to power about 22,000 homes annually.

**Clear Spring Ranch Solar Array:** Commissioned in 2016, this array was the first utility-scale solar project that benefits all CSU customers. This 10-MW solar array consists of 42,000 panels and produces enough electricity to power approximately 3,000 homes annually.



## Alternative Energy

- Solar Projects
- Wind Farm

## Telecommunications

Broadband services, including digital subscriber line (DSL), cable, or fiber, generally are widely available in and around Colorado Springs and in Front Range communities along the I-25 corridor. Broadband service is sparser in the eastern part of the County, but is available in some areas, particularly in the more densely developed communities. Terrestrial fixed or terrestrial mobile wireless services are available across most of the County. Cellular service from major carriers is widely available in and around Colorado Springs, including the Cimarron Hills, Fountain, and Manitou Springs areas, and along the I-25 corridor. In the eastern part of the County, cellular service is more limited, with the primary coverage areas along Highway 24. Out of a total of over 235,000 occupied housing units in the County, approximately 97 percent had telephone service, while the remaining three percent (approximately 6,400 housing units) had neither landline nor cellular telephone service.

Residents and businesses in more rural areas and areas with lower population density are generally served by fixed wireless, cellular, or DSL. These technologies underperform the standard of service for broadband. In order to address underserved areas, the County should develop assets that align to a strategic plan and make them available through partnerships with the private sector.

These assets are often referred to as “broadband currency” because they can be brought to the table and used to assist other governmental functions and leverage private sector participation. The County does not have current policies or a formal basis in which to identify, purchase, lease, or share assets like fiber optic cable, conduits, building/tower sites, etc. The 2019 Broadband Strategic Plan for El Paso County recommended the following strategic recommendations to improve broadband access throughout the County.

### Create Public-Private Partnerships to Extend Broadband

The County recognizes the importance of improving broadband access for underserved El Paso County residents. Real broadband service throughout the County will drive social and economic benefits for businesses, residents, and the public sectors. The creation of effective public-private partnerships will enable the County to target the use of scarce resources such as staff time and County budget to the areas in which the highest potential impact can occur.

### Be Proactive in Working with Public and Private Sectors

Because telecommunications services are deployed relatively rapidly, it is important for the County to have existing strategic plans and existing relationships with the private sector. The County should consider creating a working group with these providers that would meet quarterly to discuss issues of interest to both the County and their private partners.

### Align Projects to Mutual Needs

The County should create key Targeted Improvement Zones and additional projects that can improve services for underserved populations. This would serve as a continuation of the 2019 Broadband Strategic Plan to identify paths in which the deployment of fiber and conduit can create a platform for future private-sector service enhancement.

### Identify, Champion & Provide Resources to Implement

One of the most crucial recommendations, is to create a structure of both resources and an internal organization structure to sustainably execute this plan. The implementation champion(s) need not be a technology professional but must be someone who has a strong grasp of the value to the County of implementing this study's recommendations. Importantly, due to the need for cooperation by multiple functions within the County's structure, these champions must not only have a passion for the initiative, but also have the authority and the political capital to influence across County departments in order to drive successful outcomes.

The County may wish to consider hiring a broadband project manager or identifying a key consulting resource to fulfill that role in order to have the right talent to advance the complex relationships and roles required. A budget should be set to cover both the time and the necessary capital and operating expenses that may be incurred in pursuit of goals.

### Develop & Formalize Supportive Public Policy

*Your El Paso Master Plan* creates a unique opportunity to develop and align supportive policies that will enable the creation of broadband coverage throughout the County. The most critical is the creation of a Dig-Once/Joint Build policy, which will help the County to develop assets and extended broadband coverage. In addition, the County's pavement degradation and street cut policies should be updated to ensure full cost-recovery. Additional policies to govern the deployment of 5G/small cell infrastructure should also be considered.

### Identify Targeted Improvement Zones & Develop Project Strategies

Several areas in the County experience a confluence of residential, business, County and anchor institution needs that create opportunities to develop shared solutions. These Targeted Improvement Zones should be studied in further detail to determine the viability and form of solutions that involve the County, other public entities and the private sector.

Areas that have been identified as Targeted Improvement Zones include:

- **Ute Pass:** The County is partnering with the Colorado Department of Transportation and local governments to jointly fund and build fiber infrastructure from Interstate 25 to the western El Paso County boundary near Green Mountain Falls. This fiber is a significant asset and could help to address needs of residents and businesses in Green Mountain Falls, Manitou Springs, and surrounding areas.
- **Black Forest to Calhan:** With a relatively high population to serve, the route through Black Forest to Calhan could create improvements for many residents. The County has significant facility needs in Calhan and desire to improve connectivity at the Fairgrounds.
- **City of Fountain:** The City of Fountain is currently studying its options for community broadband. A potential community-owned broadband service would reach beyond the city limits and could serve in excess of 7,000 unincorporated County residents who reside inside the electric service area of Fountain Municipal Utilities. The County could assist with this effort by increasing access to County residents through grants and policy direction in legislation.
- **Woodmen Valley:** An organized group of residents living south of the USAFA highlighted their concern for improvements to the current DSL service in this enclave. Residents are reporting only a single service provider and download speeds that in some cases deliver less than 5 megabits per second (Mbps).



# 9

## *Inside this Chapter*

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*Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station (page 112)*

*Schriever Air Force Base (page 112)*

*Fort Carson (page 113)*

*Peterson Air Force Base (page 114)*

*U.S. Air Force Academy (page 115)*

# MILITARY

The military installations in El Paso County are a key part of *Your El Paso Master Plan*. Military installations within El Paso County play a defining economic role within the County. Because of this, El Paso County has worked to support its military installations through its land use, transportation, and natural resource planning. As the County continues to grow, ongoing efforts to support effective, coordinated planning efforts with military installations should help to maintain the quality of life of County residents, a robust economic base, and the viability of the key military missions that take place within the region.

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**Core Principle:** Foster effective working relationships with military installations to support planning efforts and mutual success.

**Goal 6.1** - Support compatible land uses within and in close proximity to bases and associated facilities.

**Goal 6.2** - Ensure coordinated planning efforts for transportation impacts and access.

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## Regional Coordination & State Law

The State of Colorado has established several key laws that require coordination as it relates to compatible land use development, transportation, and intergovernmental support pertaining to military installations. Along these lines, El Paso County should continue to proactively engage local military installations formally and informally through its land use planning processes, including at the pre-application stage of development when possible. The County has also established mutual aid agreements with local military installations in a variety of areas, including emergency response and transportation.

The County also recently participated in the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) 2018 Colorado Springs Regional Joint Land Use Study (JLUS), a community-driven, cooperative, strategic plan for its five military installations. The comprehensiveness and relative of the JLUS establish it as a key component of this Master Plan, however the JLUS is a separate PPACG document that is not being formally adopted as a part of this Master Plan. As such, key recommendations have been included in this chapter, where appropriate. In some cases, these items may be pursued by the County independently, while state and local government, the installations, or other stakeholders may be needed for successful implementation on other items.

The JLUS provides four recommendations relevant to regional coordination efforts that are applicable to El Paso County:

- Manage future transportation projects that could affect gate traffic and associated stormwater impacts.
- Ensure transportation projects leave at least one access route unaffected by interference from road construction at any given time.
- Continue to include military installation representatives in regional planning efforts such as transportation plans, master plans, and facilities planning to ensure compatibility among future desired development and military operations.
- Educate local planning staff and elected officials on the effects of incompatible development on military operations.

### Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station

<b>Date Established</b>	1967
<b>Land Area</b>	568 acres
<b>Total Population</b>	150

### Schriev Air Force Base (AFB)

<b>Date Established</b>	1985
<b>Land Area</b>	3,840 acres
<b>Total Population</b>	9,053
<b>Personnel</b>	over 7,255
<b>Economic Impact</b>	\$766,254,782

### Fort Carson

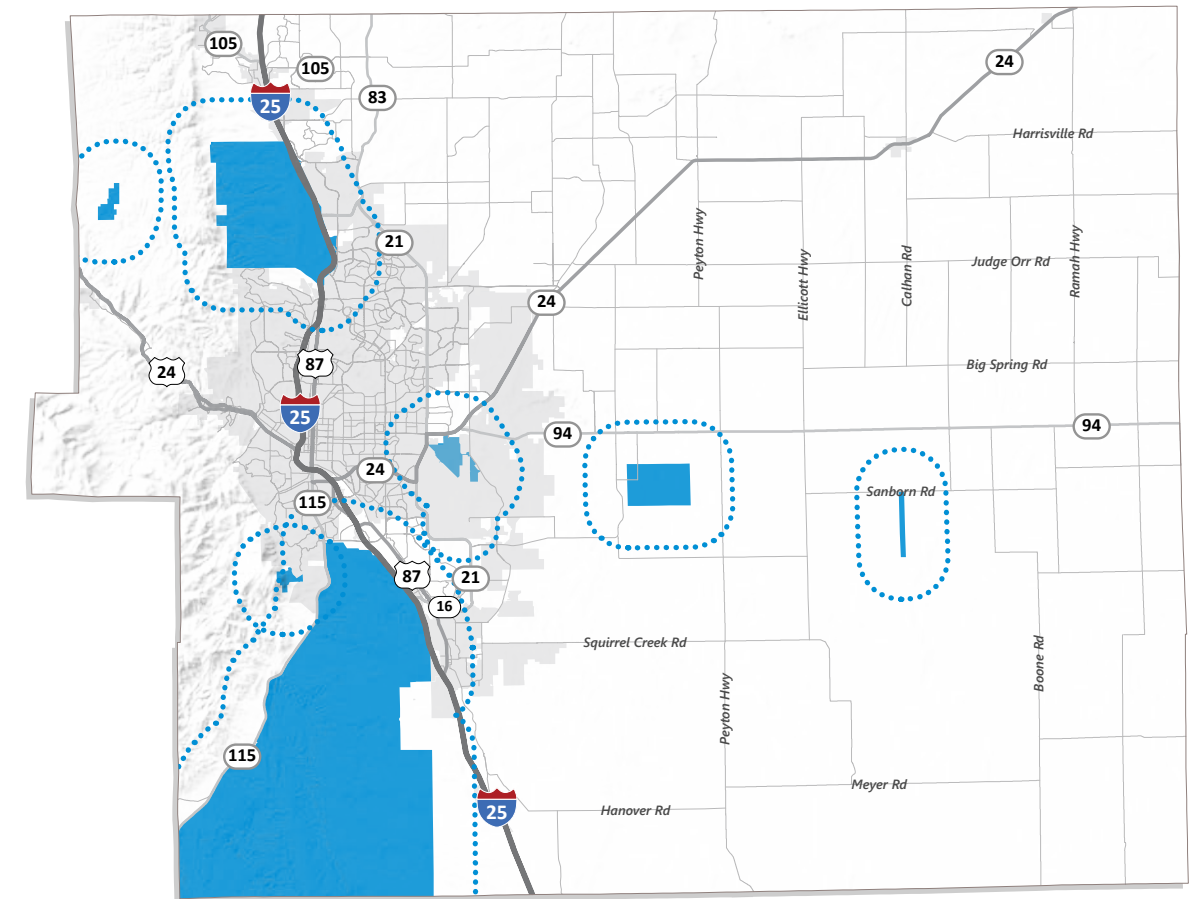
<b>Date Established</b>	1942
<b>Land Area</b>	137,404 acres
<b>Total Population</b>	98,409

### Peterson Air Force Base (AFB)

<b>Date Established</b>	1942
<b>Land Area</b>	1,457 acres
<b>Total Population</b>	18,303

### U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA)

<b>Date Established</b>	1954
<b>Land Area</b>	19,322 acres
<b>Total Population</b>	25,000



### Military Installations

- 2-Mile Notification Zone
- Installation



## Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station

Cheyenne Mountain AFS hosts the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), U.S. Strategic Command, U.S. Air Force Space Command and U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). Cheyenne Mountain AFS is located in southern Colorado Springs and is located adjacent to Cheyenne Mountain State Park. Its core functions are housed underground within the Cheyenne Mountain Complex where it performs global warning functions. Cheyenne Mountain AFS is under the command of the 21st Space Wing located at Peterson Air Force Base.

### Transportation & Access

Highway 115 serves as the major thoroughfare connecting to NORAD Road leading to Cheyenne Mountain AFS. Maintaining a high level of service along Highway 115 is a key priority for the base. El Paso County should continue to participate in discussions with installation representatives and CDOT regarding proposed changes along Highway 115 that could impact the installation.

### Compatible Land Use

105 acres of undeveloped land within the County are located within the two-mile buffer area of Cheyenne Mountain AFS. El Paso County should coordinate with Cheyenne Mountain AFS on development proposals in this area, in particular proposed telecommunications facilities or infrastructure that could impact the installation due to potential radio frequency spectrum interference. In addition, the County should work with Cheyenne Mountain AFS and other partners regionally to address wildfire risks along the mountain range.

### JLUS Recommendations

- Create a fire mitigation plan with residents (potential fire-resistant materials, defensible space, fire suppression systems, etc.) to reduce potential wildfire impacts in neighborhoods adjacent to installations and training areas.
- Craft a wildfire mitigation and watershed preservation plan for higher elevation forest areas west of the installation to include insect infestation management
- Support national defense goals to improve the resilience and sustainability of local installation plans through maintenance and future infrastructure development.

## Schriever Air Force Base (AFB)

Schriever AFB is located in central El Paso County approximately 10 miles east of the City of Colorado Springs, and it is the only military installation entirely surrounded by unincorporated area. U.S. Space Force units stationed at Schriever AFB perform both space and cyberspace warfighting operations in support of the military worldwide in support of programs such as Global Positioning System (GPS) and the worldwide Air Force Satellite Control Network. Schriever AFB employs over 7,255 personnel and has an annual economic impact of approximately \$767 million dollars.

### Utility Development

El Paso County should consult with Schriever AFB to ensure utility and other infrastructure projects promote compatibility with their operations. This includes transportation infrastructure that may induce incompatible urban growth, as well as development (including energy or communications infrastructure) that may generate radio frequency interference or physically block key look angles of ground-based systems located on base. Private utility providers should be included in this coordination when necessary.

### Transportation & Access

In order to maintain safety and support the readiness of Schriever AFB missions, El Paso County should continue to support CDOT transportation improvement projects along Highway 94. This includes current efforts now underway as part of the Military Access, Mobility and Safety Improvement Project. In addition to Highway 94, the County should coordinate with Schriever AFB to address other key corridors including Curtis, Irwin, Bradley, and Enoch Roads.

### Compatible Land Use

El Paso County should coordinate with Schriever AFB on all land use development within the two-mile notification buffer (as required by state law). In addition, as noted in the Peterson AFB section, the County should coordinate with Schriever AFB on land use proposals located between Schriever AFB and Peterson AFB to ensure radio frequency interference does not compromise mission requirements.

### JLUS Recommendations

- Evaluate current methods for addressing road safety issues associated with trash-hauling activities on Highway 94.
- Support national defense goals to improve the resilience and sustainability of local installation plans through maintenance and future infrastructure development.
- Pursue conservation partnering opportunities for compatible land use buffering under flight training areas and other critical areas as needed.
- Identify specific needed improvements to safety and capacity of State Highway 94 pursuant of CDOT studies.



## Fort Carson

Fort Carson extends from Colorado Springs south to the County border and into Pueblo County. It is the largest military installation in the region, covering approximately 137,000 acres with a total population of nearly 100,000. It is home to the 4th Infantry Division, the 10th Special Forces Group, and also hosts the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, and the Colorado Army National Guard, among many others. As of April 2020, Fort Carson employs 33,635 active duty and civilian personnel (including reservists and contractors) with an annual economic impact of \$2.4 billion dollars.

## Stormwater Management

Where possible, El Paso County should coordinate with Fort Carson, the Fountain Creek Watershed District, and Colorado Springs Utilities to reduce stormwater impacts from new development. These groups should also partner together to implement the Monument Creek Watershed Plan (particularly in the upper watershed where possible), develop regional criteria, and improve flood monitoring practices.

## Transportation & Access

Fort Carson maintains numerous gates along major thoroughfares within El Paso County. The County should work with Fort Carson, CDOT, and local municipalities to improve the safety and effectiveness of the transportation network along major Highway 115 and I-25. This includes improvements along I-25, South Academy Boulevard, and the Charter Oak Road/Santa Fe Avenue intersection currently underway as part of the Military Access, Mobility and Safety Improvement Project.

## Compatible Land Use

Fort Carson manages numerous training ranges and maneuver areas to support training for infantry and mechanized units. These activities can produce noise, smoke, dust, and vibrations that can affect neighboring landowners. El Paso County has worked closely and effectively with Fort Carson over time to minimize incompatible development around its perimeter through appropriate land use regulations and land acquisition buffering along Fort Carson's borders. The County should review and update Regional Building Department Guidelines and policies that may impact military air operations during the construction process.

## JLUS Recommendations

- Implement consistent and compatible zoning regulations for land areas within Accident Potential Zones (APZs).
- Continue to pursue conservation and compatible land use buffering efforts with Fort Carson through various programs and initiatives, including the Sentinel Landscape Program and Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB).
- Improve Charter Oak Ranch Road outside Gate 19 at Fort Carson.
- Develop an alternate rail connection to Fort Carson to support redundant and increased rail service.
- Create a fire mitigation plan with residents (potential fire-resistant materials, defensible space, fire suppression systems, etc.) to reduce potential wildfire impacts in neighborhoods adjacent to installations and training areas.
- Craft a wildfire mitigation and watershed preservation plan for higher elevation forest areas west of the installation to include insect infestation management.
- Support national defense goals to improve the resilience and sustainability of local installation plans through maintenance and future infrastructure development.
- Pursue conservation partnering opportunities for compatible land use buffering under flight training areas and other critical areas as needed.





## Peterson Air Force Base (AFB)

Peterson Air Force Base is located within the City of Colorado Springs and to the immediate south of the Cimarron Hills area of El Paso County. It is home to U.S. Space Force, Peterson-Schriever Garrison, North American Aerospace Command (NORAD), U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), the 302d Airlift Wing, and the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command. Peterson AFB is co-located with the Colorado Springs Airport. As of July 2020, Peterson AFB employs 9,597 active duty and civilian personnel with an annual economic impact of \$1.3 billion dollars.

## Transportation & Access

As major transportation corridors, Marksheffel Boulevard, Highway 24, and Highway 94 play a key role in the daily activities of Peterson AFB employees and residents. El Paso County should continue to work with CDOT to prioritize transportation improvements along these routes. El Paso County should also work in cooperation with CDOT and the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) to meet regional military transportation needs.

## Compatible Land Use

The missions at Peterson AFB, which include both airplanes and satellite tracking and control, create some unique factors within El Paso County. Renewable energy development, such as wind turbines and solar farms, has the potential to impact the flying operations of the 302nd Airlift Wing and other aircraft based at Peterson AFB. Because renewable energy development is likely to continue throughout the region, El Paso County should work to notify Peterson AFB when these occur, including in areas beyond the state-required two-mile notification zone.

Similarly, land development between Peterson AFB and Schriever AFB has the potential to cause radio frequency transmission interruptions between the two bases. This could result from specific structures, particularly telecommunications infrastructure or through new development in general. Both can increase the amount of radio frequency "noise" levels and generally degrade communications capabilities between Peterson AFB and Schriever AFB that are core to the missions of both installations. To that end, El Paso County should coordinate land use development applications located between Peterson AFB and Schriever AFB to limit radio frequency spectrum impacts.

## Groundwater & Stormwater

In 2016 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a health advisory limit for perfluorinated compounds (PFC) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) at 70 parts-per-trillion. Water officials in Fountain, Security, and Widefield conducted tests of local groundwater in these areas indicated the supply was at or exceeding the limit. Potential sources of the contamination include the use of firefighting foam at Peterson AFB. Officials from Peterson AFB and regulatory agencies at the federal, state, and local level are continuing to collaborate to address this issue.

## JLUS Recommendations

- Manage encroachment issues from nearby development that could impact utility infrastructure, transportation routes, and that may generate vertical obstructions beneath airspace utilized by flight operations.
- Implement consistent and compatible zoning regulations for land areas within Accident Potential Zones (APZs).
- Facilitate public outreach and communication from Peterson AFB regarding PFOAs and water-quality issues.
- Support national defense goals to improve the resilience and sustainability of local installation plans through maintenance and future infrastructure development.
- Pursue conservation partnering opportunities for compatible land use buffering under flight training areas and other critical areas as needed.
- Identify specific needed improvements to safety and capacity of State Highway 94 pursuant of CDOT studies.





## U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA)

The Air Force Academy is to the northwest of Colorado Springs. Its core mission as an institution of higher learning is to lead cadet military training and Airmanship education for 4,400 cadets each year who should become officers in the U.S. Air Force.

## Stormwater Management

Where possible, El Paso County should coordinate with the Air Force Academy, the Town of Monument, the Fountain Creek Watershed District, and the City of Colorado Springs to reduce stormwater impacts from new development. These groups should also partner together to implement the Monument Creek Watershed Plan (particularly in the upper watershed where possible), develop regional criteria, and improve flood monitoring practices.

## Transportation & Access

El Paso County should continue to support coordination efforts with the Academy, CDOT, and the City of Colorado Springs to ensure that transportation infrastructure and operations can meet the demands of the Academy's workforce and its visitors. This includes key corridors such as I-25, Powers Boulevard, Northgate Boulevard, and Academy Boulevard, as well as shared City/County intersections in the vicinity of the True North Commons, Powers Interchange, and the Struthers Road/Northgate Boulevard intersection.

## Air Operations

El Paso County should coordinate with the Academy to ensure that proposed development within the Academy's formally designated accident potential zones remain compatible with airfield activities. This area is located along the Academy's eastern boundary just north of the Briargate I-25 exit. Potential impacts near the Academy beyond its Clear Zone and Accident Potential zones should be minimized by limiting the intensification of current low-density residential or agricultural land uses. Similar measures should be implemented in the vicinity of the Bullseye Auxiliary Airstrip (south of Sanborn Road approximately 5 miles southeast of Ellicott), which supports practice landings, takeoffs and touch-and-goes of airmanship program participants.

The County should also review and update Regional Building Department Guidelines and policies that may impact military air operations during the construction process. In addition to land in the immediate vicinity of the Academy, El Paso County should coordinate with the Academy to ensure its training areas in eastern El Paso County are preserved. This has the potential to shape not only conventional development, but also the extent and siting of communications and renewable energy infrastructure in the eastern part of El Paso County.

## Ground Operations

El Paso County should coordinate on land use development projects north of the Air Force Academy to ensure compatibility with the activities that regularly occur within Jack's Valley, an outdoor training complex and small arms training range.

## JLUS Recommendations

- Implement consistent and compatible zoning regulations for land areas within APZs.
- Create a fire mitigation plan with residents (potential fire-resistant materials, defensible space, fire suppression systems, etc.) to reduce potential wildfire impacts in neighborhoods adjacent to installations and training areas.
- Craft a wildfire mitigation and watershed preservation plan for higher elevation forest areas west of the installation to include insect infestation management.
- Support national defense goals to improve the resilience and sustainability of local installation plans through maintenance and future infrastructure development.
- Pursue conservation partnering opportunities for compatible land use buffering under flight training areas and other critical areas as needed.



# 10

*Inside this Chapter*  
*Parks and Recreation (page 117)*  
*Tourism (page 120)*

## RECREATION & TOURISM

Access to recreation and open space is a fundamental quality-of-life indicator for a community's residents, providing opportunities for exercise and social interaction. The Master Plan provides strategies to enhance and protect the landscape and recreational assets that make El Paso County a desirable place to live. These natural assets are also major attractions drawing people from beyond the region. Tourism to parks and recreation destinations bolsters patronage at local businesses and serves as an economic driver for the County. Recreation and tourism are tightly interwoven with the expansive parks systems, nationally renowned natural features like Pikes Peak, and large-scale tourist destinations such as the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo.

Following the Colorado Revised Statutes, a master plan in Colorado must contain a recreational and tourism component. As such, this section bears significant weight in the planned future of the region. The legacy of the parks, opens spaces, and trail systems in the County must not only be protected and enhanced to meet the needs of the growing population, but also continue to balance tourism in a sustainable and equitable manner. The following chapter outlines important recommendations to ensure the continued development and maintenance of these systems promotes access and economic growth for the community.

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**Core Principle 7:** Maintain and expand the County's recreation and tourism options.

**Goal 7.1** - Support high-quality, sustainable outdoor recreation as a key amenity for residents and visitors.

**Goal 7.2** - Explore projects, programs, and initiatives for enhancing tourism in unincorporated areas.

**Goal 7.3** - Plan for and provide a variety of parks, trails, and open space within the region.

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# Parks & Recreation

El Paso County offers parks, open space, and recreation amenities which include both passive and active recreational spaces, as well as environmental features. These environmental features showcase a diverse and varied landscape across the County which are the cornerstone of the region's natural beauty and sense of place. The County's parks system, open spaces, and recreational opportunities were inventoried and reviewed to identify key issues and opportunities. The following section outlines these and provides targeted recommendations and strategies to address, enhance, and develop these natural assets.

## El Paso County System

The El Paso County parks system offers a range of natural features covering over 8,000 acres of parkland. The Parks Division of the County's Community Services Department manages 19 parks facilities including County parks, nature centers, and open space, and an additional 130+ miles of regional trails, all of which is managed and operated by the Parks Division of the County's Community Services Department. Two nature centers and a number of open spaces are also included in the County's recreation system. The County is currently finalizing a master plan to determine the location of a third nature center in the northern part of the County.

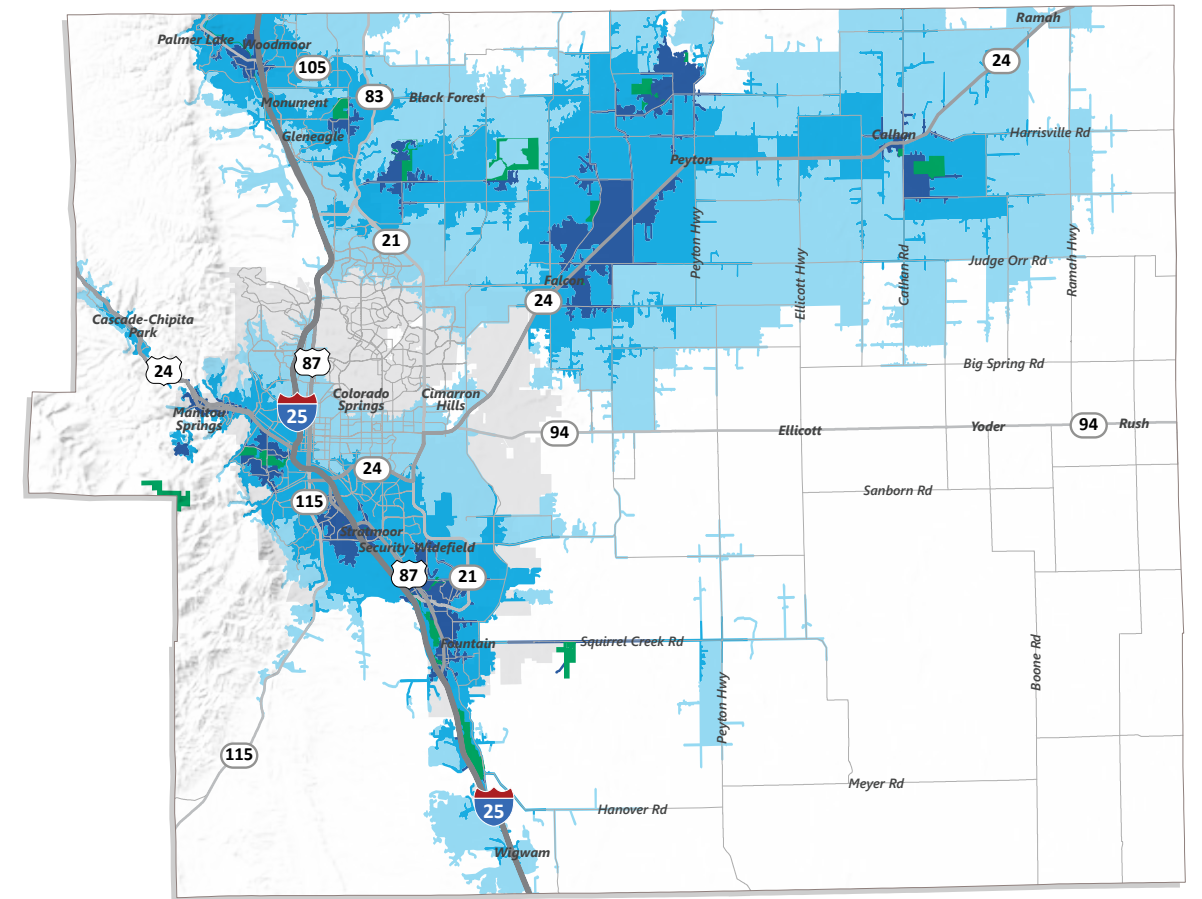
## Service Area Analysis

Utilizing the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) classification and standards system, a 10- and 15-minute drive time is a standard used to define the service area for parks facilities. The same standard has been applied even though some parks are significantly smaller in size than others and travelers within El Paso County may be more willing to go longer distances to get to recreational opportunities than in other parts of the nation. The service area boundaries are analyzed in comparison to the census tract populations for the 129 tracts within El Paso County.

## Service Area Analysis Findings

The service area analysis concludes that 61 percent of the County's population is within a 15-minute drive of a County parks facility. A majority of the remaining 39 percent of the County population is within municipal boundaries, mostly in Colorado Springs, which are served by their own municipal parks systems. When these municipal parks are included in the analysis, 93 percent of the total County population is served by a park facility, natural area, or open space.

A key issue highlighted by this analysis is the lack of facilities in the southeast sides of El Paso County, and along the western edges. However, those on the western edge of the County are served by Pike National Forest, which can be publicly accessible. Similarly, the southeastern portion of the County is rural and has far fewer residents.



### County Park Service Area Analysis

- County Parks
- 0-5 Minute Drive to County Park
- 5-10 Minute Drive to County Park
- 10-15 Minute Drive to County Park





## Additional Land

Wherever possible new park facilities should partner and co-locate with municipal service facilities or public amenities such as schools. Fostering direct connections between parks and public facilities allows for units of shared use that provide multiple levels of service on limited land, this approach is best utilized in densely developed areas of the County where space is limited.

Funding sources should be expanded for sustainable maintenance of parks and trails as well as the acquisition of additional open spaces. The County should also continue to foster timely and reliable communication between the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, USDA Forest Service, and the County Parks Division to ensure programming and planning initiatives across the County are coordinated. Additionally, the construction of neighborhood parks should be undertaken by the developer as they would specifically serve that particular neighborhood or subdivision. Maintenance responsibilities should then be transferred to the Homeowners Association or Special District to ensure they are in safe operating conditions.

## Additional Land Access

Wherever possible new parks facilities should be located along or share connections to County and regional trails to ensure a robust network of connections for residents to these amenities. A large percentage of the County population is aging. To allow them to age in place, age-appropriate recreation options are needed for elderly and less mobile residents. ADA access along trails and access points to facilities and within facilities is needed. The implementation of universal design standards in new construction to ensure all residents can utilize these amenities should be encouraged. As a quality of life factor associated with access to parks, expanded public transportation options should be created to service populations of the County without cars and those that may also need ADA accommodations.

The County should also expand the trail and path network for commuting and destination travel to encourage more residents to walk and/or bike over driving. This should be done by closing gaps in existing infrastructure and bringing all paths and trails up to an acceptable level of repair. Additionally, the County should help complete the iconic Pikes Peak "Ring the Peak Trail".

## Regional Trails

El Paso County Park manages over 130 miles of trails, including major regional trails. The County's newest park and trail facility, Pineries Open Space, opened to the public on June 27, 2020, adding 8.5 miles to the trail system. More than two-thirds of the trails are surfaced with crushed limestone, while the remainder are typically surfaced by native soils. Several distinct trails constitute El Paso County's regional trail system and include:

- New Santa Fe Regional Trail
- Fountain Creek Regional Trail
- Rock Island Regional Trail
- Bear Creek Regional Trail
- Ute Pass Regional Trail
- Crews Gulch Regional Trail
- Palmer Divide Regional Trail

Together, the New Santa Fe Regional Trail, Fountain Creek Regional Trail, and the City of Colorado Springs' Pikes Peak Greenway Trail combine to create the El Paso County portion of the Colorado Front Range Trail, which when complete, will connect Wyoming in the north to New Mexico in the south via an interconnected system of urban and rural trails along the Colorado Front Range.

## Connectivity

While the County offers a wide variety of parks and recreation facilities and sites, many County parks and open spaces lack sufficient public transit access and the connectivity required to provide well-connected non-motorized access. By enhancing both transit and non-motorized access, greater equity can be achieved and will make these amazing amenities more available to a wider population.

### Transit Connections

Lack of transit presents barriers to residents who do not own/have access to a car, not to mention those too young to drive or those with disabilities that prevent them from driving. This challenge presents a key opportunity for the County to improve access and ensure all residents are given the opportunity to enjoy outdoor and indoor recreation amenities. Expanding public transit service should be considered in areas of the County with the highest populations without car access and those most likely to take public transit and connect them to recreation areas that offer multiple amenities. A study of potential routes should be undertaken to map out extensions and new routes that would service these populations. A needs assessment of special service transportation vehicles with ADA access should also be considered in this study.

## Nonmotorized Connections

Local demand for the expansion and increased connection of the County's trail network and bike facilities in general was a recurring topic throughout the community outreach process for the Plan. Residents want a holistic system of trails and paths. A complete network connects people not only to nature but to places. The 2018 COS Bikes! Colorado Springs Bike Master Plan emphasizes the need to change residents and tourist perspectives on bicycle use in Colorado Springs beyond recreation but as an easy way to get around.

Key to this plan was the creation of more bicycle friendly infrastructure in the City. While building bike lanes and paths that connect every development in a 2,100-square-mile County is not likely feasible. There are opportunities for the County to encourage this shift in perspective by promoting a campaign for a walkable/bikeable region to key destinations and ensure trail and pathway infrastructure is well connected and thoughtfully designed. Design and maintenance can be the determining factor between whether people choose to walk/bike over drive and can be as simple as gaps in paving along a planned route and other ADA issues or unprotected bike lanes next to heavy traffic. Making it easy for residents and tourists to choose to walk or bike takes pressure off vehicular infrastructure, reduces pollution, and improves the health of the community. A comprehensive approach to maintaining and closing gaps in the system is necessary to incentivizing walking and biking.



**Safety**

Safety is an important factor in how residents and tourists utilize trail infrastructure. There is a perceived lack of safety and connectivity between County parks and open spaces. Many factors that make a space seem unsafe are simple design elements such as poor lighting, narrow paths, landscaping that obstructs the view corridor, etc. With new trails and parks, it is important to consider environmental design as a means to create defensible space to make places feel safer. The concept of defensible space in environmental design promotes well-lit and well-maintained spaces with strategic landscaping that provides a buffer of visibility along paths and around buildings, among other recommendations. These design elements increase the perceived level of safety in an area by creating highly visible spaces that do not provide opportunity for people to hide adjacent to paths. These design concepts should also be utilized in existing trails and parks when maintenance and updates are appropriate.

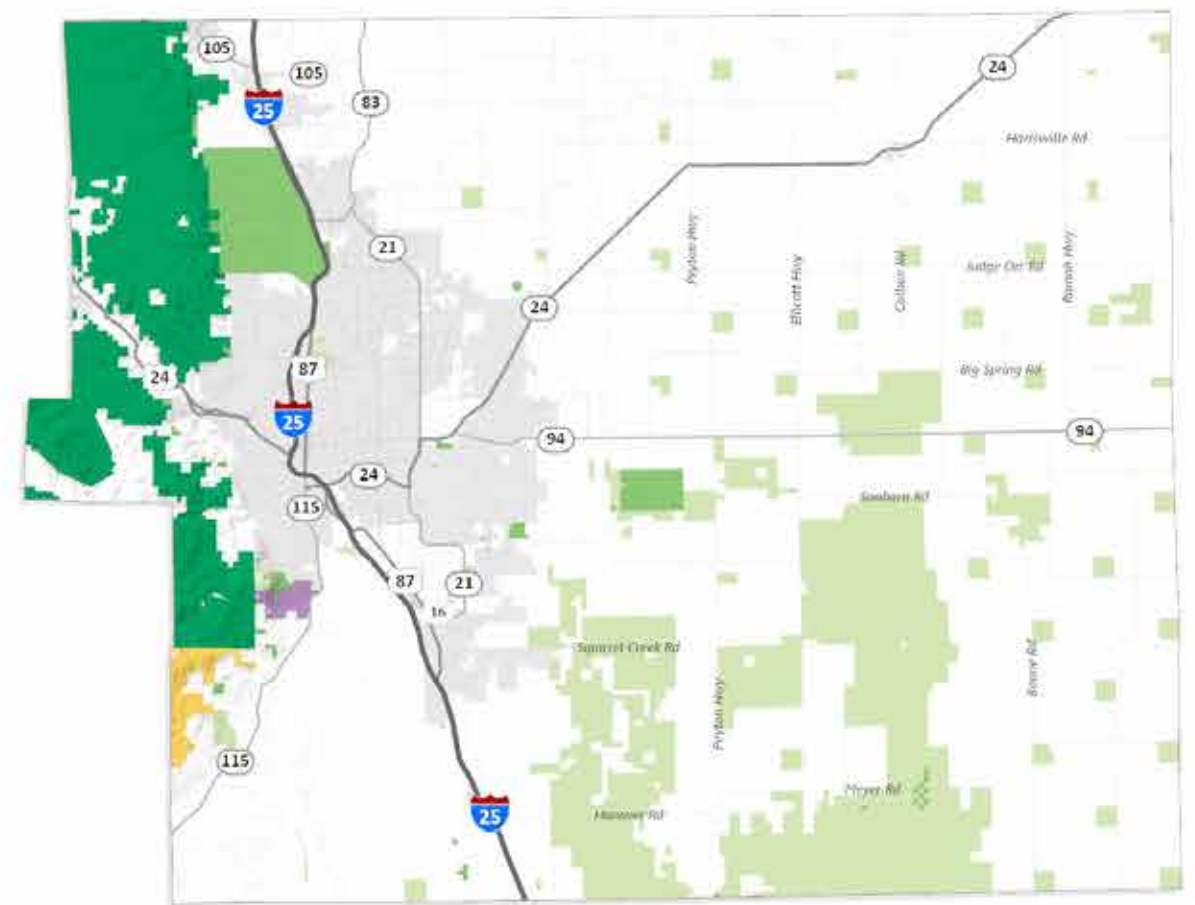
**Safety Design**

The environmental design of spaces can help to improve the perceived safety of the trail network but it is also important to address crime and incident. The integration of a blue light emergency phone and call box system along trails can offer a quick notification and response system directly tied into the El Paso County Sheriff's Office and Rural Enforcement and Outreach Unit (ROE). These blue light systems also give a feeling of safety to an area and have been found to deter crime. To promote safety along trails the County should utilize defensive environmental design standards to create well-lit and visible pathways.

The Parks Division has also begun to add staff to specifically address safety concerns by providing a physical presence in the parks and on the trails. The Division currently has two dedicated staff members and is in the process of adding more, particularly at Paint Mines Interpretive Park and the Rainbow Falls Historic Site. The County should continue to support the addition of staff members to promote safety in the parks system.

**State & Federal Land**

Cheyenne Mountain State Park is the sole park owned and operated by Colorado Parks and Wildlife in El Paso County. The park offers 2,100 acres of camping, hiking, biking, horseback riding, and a myriad of other outdoor recreational options. It also includes several conference, pavilion, and amphitheater facilities for public and private use. The US Forest Service manages the Pikes Peak National Forest on the north-western and western edges of the County. These State and Federal lands serve the entire County and also attract tourist from beyond the region. Continued coordination with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and US Forest Service on planning initiatives, services, and programs is important for the County Parks Division to maintain and grow. Communication between these service providers will ensure programs and services do not compete and detract from each other but rather are coordinated to benefit state, federal, and County agencies. Similarly, communication would also ensure all major parks are not closed for maintenance at the same time to ensure residents always have the opportunity for recreation. Management for all three of these agencies should foster working relationships that allow for the flow of information in a consistent and reliable manner between the organizations in order to provide the highest and best level of service to the community.



**State and Federal Lands**

- Bureau of Land Management Land
- Cheyenne Mountain State Park
- Pike National Forest
- Other State Land
- Other Federal Land



## Tourism

Tourism can account for a large share of a community's economy, and this is true for El Paso County, which is a hub for outdoor recreation not only in the State, but also for the country. Millions of people visit El Paso County each year and according to Visit Colorado Springs, the tourism and promotional nonprofit for the Pikes Peak Region, in 2018 visitors spent about \$2.25 billion dollars in the region. Tourism also supports the local economy through job creation, as the third largest employment industry in the Pikes Peak Region, providing over 20,000 jobs. Under Colorado Revised Statutes (§ 30-28-106 and § 31-23-206), all master plans are required to have a recreation and tourism section, this mandate emphasizes the importance tourism plays in the region's economy. To further this economic sector, the state provides a special financing mechanism to foster growth and development for targeted tourism projects.

## Regional Tourism Act

The Regional Tourism Act (RTA) establishes a program that gives local governments the opportunity to apply with the Economic Development Commission (EDC) for approval of a large scale Regional Tourism Project that is of an extraordinary and unique nature, is anticipated to result in a substantial increase in out-of-state tourism, and that generates a significant portion of the sales tax revenue through tourist transactions.

The RTA promotes diversification of the state's economic base by providing a financing mechanism for these projects, including, but not limited to, museums, stadiums, arenas, major sports facilities, performing arts theaters, theme or amusement parks, conference centers or resort hotels or other similar venues that draw a significant number of regional, national or international patrons.

## City for Champions

In December 2013, the City of Colorado Springs was awarded an estimated \$120.5 million in state sales tax increment by the Colorado State Economic Development Commission. Four of these "City for Champions" projects are currently being developed including:

- Colorado Sports and Events Center;
- United States Olympic Museum;
- Sports Medicine and Performance Center at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs; and
- Gateway Visitor Center for the U.S. United States Air Force Academy.

These projects are expected to bolster the national standing of the City of Colorado Springs and subsequently the County to not only out compete other mid-sized cities in attracting tourists but gain competitive status against major cities such as Denver, Nashville, and Austin when it comes to bids for sports tournaments and conventions. Leveraging these approved projects is important to the future growth of the tourism industry in the County. Partnerships and support for these developments for marketing and programming should be a priority. It is also important to ensure infrastructure and development complements the vision for recreation and tourism for residents and visitors alike.

## Colorado Springs & the Pikes Peak Region Destination Master Plan (2018)

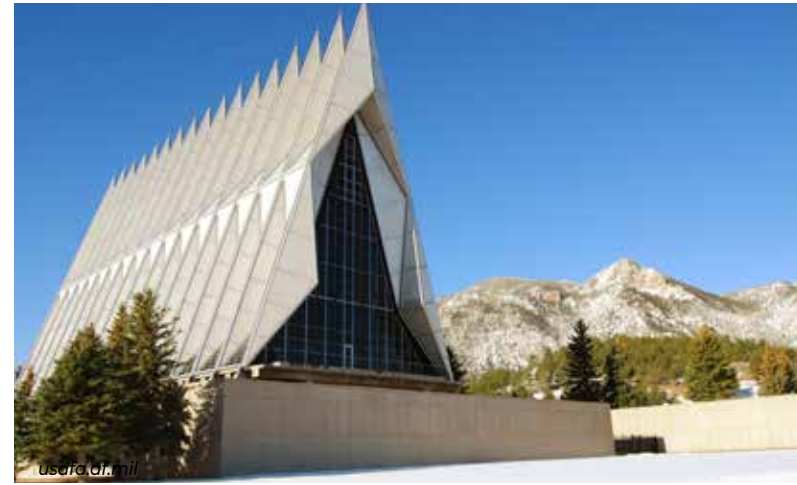
This regional plan aspires to make Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region the leading U.S. destination for experiential travel, with five strategic goals:

- Provide unique experiences that reflect the authentic nature of the region, helping to extend the length of stay.
- Deliver priority infrastructure that serves current needs and anticipates future demand.
- Improve connectivity for trails, roads, transportation systems, and online communication.
- Strengthen the destination brand to ensure the region is top of mind with potential visitors in a positive way.
- Enhance regional collaboration through stronger partnerships and cooperation.

The Plan, partly informed by community outreach conducted by the City of Colorado Springs, builds upon recreational opportunities already offered in the region, including its open spaces and U.S. Olympic facilities.

## Key Trends & Needs

Existing attractions such as the Cog Railway, Pikes Peak Summit Complex and U.S. Air Force Academy are physical assets to the region and need to be properly maintained and managed to ensure the high-quality experiences they provide continues into the future. Appropriate funding for maintenance and improvements should be a high priority for these assets because they drive a significant portion of the tourism economy in the region.



### Arts & Culture

The region relies heavily on outdoor recreation destinations for tourism. In order to make the region a destination for all four seasons the County should consider expanding its arts and culture industry to take a leading role in tourism especially during the off season. The newly constructed Ent Center for the Arts in Colorado Springs is the leading performance and visual arts complex in the region and is home to the Colorado Springs Philharmonic. Promoting events at the Ent Center for the Arts and other venues across the County and the addition of a robust calendar of year-round programming would attract tourism when outdoor recreation options are limited. The County can also promote regional arts and culture tourism by funding public art campaigns and securing partnerships with organizations that draw residents and visitors to new places across the County with mural or sculpture walks, festivals, and other programming.

Existing events and festivals should be expanded upon and new signature events should be developed to provide tourist attractions throughout the year. To help create new events, the County should support improvements to existing, as well as the development of new, arts and culture indoor and outdoor venues. Indoor facilities would also allow organizations to host year-round events. The County should also leverage the Ent Center for the Arts to promote arts and cultural programming and partnerships throughout the community.

### Sporting Events

El Paso County also has a strong athletic legacy that was established by the US Olympic and Paralympic Training Center and continues to grow with the construction of the United States Olympic Museum. The City of Colorado Springs has branded themselves as OLYMPIC CITY USA. However, despite this branding many sporting event organizers see the region as lacking in a sufficient number of indoor athletic venues. This lack of facilities creates hurdles in hosting major tournament events. Improving existing facilities and finding appropriate locations for new development is important to attract athletic tourism and the economic benefit that they encompass with increased spending at local restaurants, hotels, and retail establishments. Other sporting events in El Paso County include NCAA Division I activities at the US Air Force Academy and Colorado College, as well as other NCAA activities at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS), and minor league professional soccer and baseball.

### Shared Economy

Another challenge to regional tourism is the emergence of the sharing economy with Uber, Lyft, and AirBnB. These industries are often seen as disruptors to the tourism industry, causing conflict with existing hotel and taxi service providers. Despite the tension between traditional and emerging services it is important to work with and not against these businesses as they do provide niche services that fill gaps and make the County more accessible for visitors.

### Conventions

Adequate and attractive facilities are extremely important in drawing in major sports events, conferences, and conventions. Currently, Colorado Springs offers 26 venues for meetings across the City, the largest of which is the Broadmoor World Arena with 8,000 theatre seats and is located 11 miles outside of downtown. The City of Colorado Springs is one of the only mid-sized cities in the United States that does not have a downtown convention center. Noted in the Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region Destination Master Plan are pressures to compete nationally and internationally to host conventions. Currently cities around the world are making significant investments in new and existing meeting facilities, lodging, branding, amenities, and infrastructure including regional transit connections that connect residents and visitors to key attractions and the airport.

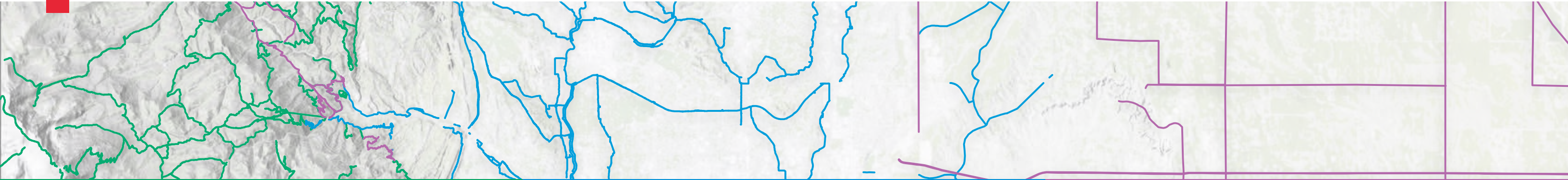
More and more cities are attracting conventions and convincing attendees to extend their business trip stay to experience the city with the unique local experiences and attractions they provide pumping billions of tourism dollars into their local and regional economies annually. For El Paso County to stay competitive and entice organizations to host conventions in the region the feasibility of a convention center should be studied. Quick and easy access to the convention center, including a public transit connection from the Colorado Springs Airport, is also important. Regional partners should consider conducting a feasibility study for a new public or private convention center in El Paso County, possibly in Downtown Colorado Springs. The study should include the potential for direct public transportation access from the Colorado Springs Airport to the convention center.

### Broadband

There is also high demand for a reliable cellular and Wi-Fi network throughout the region by both residents and visitors. Expanding this network enhances safety and GPS navigation in environmental areas that are currently “dead zones” and provides opportunities to market these assets. Peer-to-peer sharing on social media has added a new frontier to marketing tourism to the masses. Art and design in the public realm are becoming branding mechanisms for communities. The landmark LOVE statue in Philadelphia is a great example. El Paso County has many of these opportunities with its natural resources such as Paint Mines Park, Garden of the Gods, and Pikes Peak. Expanding cell and Wi-Fi throughout more natural areas allows for peer-to-peer promotion of the many attractions the region offers in real time. Live streaming and photo sharing act as free advertising and encourage people to get out and explore the region by showcasing its greatest assets. Developing a robust cellular and Wi-Fi network should be a priority. The County should utilize the findings and recommendations from the 2019 Broadband Strategic Plan to help expand cellular service and Wi-Fi coverage throughout the region to eliminate dead spots and enhance safety, GPS navigation, and sharing of experiences on social networks.

### Niche Experiences

Visitors are also looking for local experiences that connect them to a destination’s history, people, and culture. With offers through AirBnB Experiences, people can curate their own bespoke adventures in the places they travel to such “Learn to make croissants with a Parisian” or “Dye your own silk scarf with a working artist.” This rising demand for niche travel and customized experiences is even more crucial to address with reopening businesses to tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic that forced social distancing protocol across the U.S. These small-group tourist experiences provide tourist attractions in a more controlled setting and offer an alternative way to spend your leisure time in the region while avoiding crowds in public spaces and at events. Small group activities can include but are in no means limited to art making, wine tasting, walking tours, or horseback riding sessions. Forming partnerships with small businesses, artists, and indoor and outdoor recreation providers and giving them a platform to offer bespoke travel experiences for tourists directly through the County or Colorado Springs Convention and Visitor Bureau (CSCVB) website would give consumers confidence and encourage them to travel to the region.



Pikes Peak Area:  
approximately **450** miles of trails

Colorado Springs:  
approximately **290** miles of trails

El Paso County:  
approximately **130** miles of trails

## Environmental Tourism

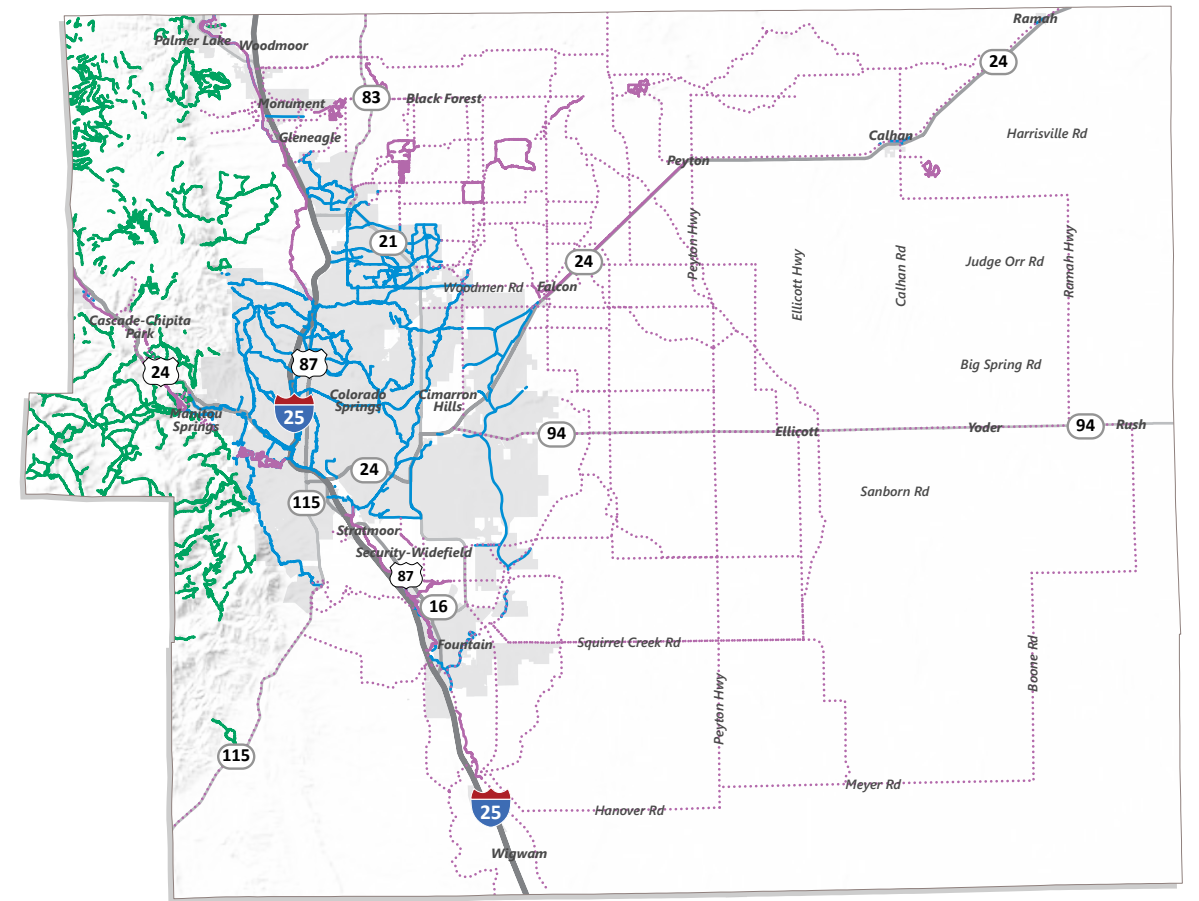
Home to Pikes Peak, Cheyenne Mountain State Park, thousands of miles of trails, and much more, El Paso County is a national destination for outdoor recreation. Each year, hundreds of thousands of people visit the County from all around the world to spend time in its state and regional parks, hike its mountains, and simply enjoy the beauty of its natural, well-protected landscape. These visitors not only pay to utilize some of these amenities but also any other services they use while in the County including food, lodging, transportation, and entertainment. As a catalyst for visiting El Paso County, the natural resources and environmental assets are directly responsible for the additional dollars people spend on many of these items and amenities.

## Relocation

The natural environment is not only a reason people visit El Paso County; it is a reason they move into the community. The abundance of open space, lush forests, and mountainous topography is interwoven seamlessly with residential development in many areas of the County. This direct connection to the natural environment is one of the greatest attractions for future residents and businesses and the availability of land allows nearly anyone who wants to build a home or business to take advantage of the opportunity. However, the prevalence of natural amenities throughout El Paso County does not negate the need to preserve and protect them. With this, targeted conservation efforts by public agencies, nonprofits, and private citizens to protect these highly valued natural amenities are ongoing.

## Recreation

El Paso County's natural environment creates opportunities for year-round active and passive recreation. These amenities provide options for exercise such as hiking the mountains, biking on the trails or even playing a pickup game of any number of sports in the vast amount of open space. Over decades of planning and hard work, the community has established its natural landscape as a place for all levels of recreation and outdoor activity. However, the opposite is also true. The environment is also well-utilized for passive activity and general connection to nature. Residents and visitors alike take advantage of these resources simply by spending time with them, watching animals in their natural habitat, studying and identifying plants, or just taking a rest. No matter how someone chooses to recreate, in El Paso County the parks, trails, and open spaces are the best places to do so.



### Recreation

- Colorado Springs Trails
- Pikes Peak Area Trails
- Completed County Trails
- - - Proposed County Trails



## Economic Impact

Tourism is one of El Paso County's strongest industries with year-round outdoor events and pristinely preserved natural resources drawing thousands of visitors to the region every year. The Colorado Springs Convention and Visitor Bureau (CSCVB) website and Visitor Information Center in Colorado Springs connects visitors to resources such as a visitor's guide, events list, and tour maps to help visitors, new and old, experience everything the County has to offer, no matter the season. The CSCVB boasts over 55 exciting things to do and see in the region. From its rich natural features home to the Garden of the Gods, which has been ranked the second-best U.S. park by TripAdvisor to major destinations such as the U.S. Air Force Academy. El Paso County also hosts many festivals and events that attract people from around the region such as the El Paso County Fair which holds concerts, auto races, bull riding, animal exhibits, theme days and much more bringing roughly 25,000 fair-goers annually. El Paso County is also home to the City of Colorado Springs which holds multiple events and festivals throughout the year in connection to the US Olympic & Paralympic Training Center and the USAFA campus. A popular event is the Rocky Mountain State Games, one of Colorado's largest multisport festivals for athletes of all ages and abilities. This event and others spur regular economic growth for Colorado Springs businesses and subsequently the County.

## Recreation

Natural resources such as the Pikes Peak, Paint Mines Interpretive Park, and Garden of the Gods attract visitors throughout the year to experience and explore the beauty and native character of these natural features. Even if tourists use many parks for free, or spend modestly on recreational activities, they end up spending considerable amounts on food, entertainment, lodging, fuel, gifts, and other items during their time in Colorado Springs and El Paso County. The Colorado Springs & Pikes Peak Region Destination Master Plan predicts that visitors to the region are expected to increase 25 percent by 2028 and that visitor spending will increase to \$3.6 billion annually on overnight and same-day visits for Colorado Springs and an additional \$1.3 billion throughout the region. Visitors to parks and other destinations in the County support local jobs, increase spending at local businesses, and create local tax revenue. Thus, these resources, natural and developed, permanent and temporary, should be protected and strengthened for their crucial importance to El Paso County's tourism industry and overall economy.

The County should explore the feasibility of expanding and developing new indoor sports venues in the region to host regional tournaments. Work with the City of Colorado Springs to leverage the Olympic City USA brand and Olympic partners to promote the County as a destination with an Olympic legacy to attract additional sports tourism opportunities. The County should also continue to maintain and improve existing natural assets and destinations including parks, trails, and open space facilities that support outdoor recreation tourism in the region.

## Access

Easy and equitable access to tourist destinations is just as important as the attractions themselves. Many of the routes and roadways are not under El Paso County's jurisdiction. Therefore, the County should work with CDOT, municipalities, and transit service providers to ensure road improvements and new roads have appropriate wayfinding, sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus access. Pedestrian and cyclist improvements should be in accordance with the El Paso County Major Transportation Corridors Plan Update (2016) and the COS Bikes! Colorado Springs Bike Master Plan (2018) and provide an inviting network of pedestrian and bike paths for residents and tourists. The County should also work with host organizations to ensure programming and events are inclusive of the aging population including holding activities in ADA accessible facilities with access to public transportation.

## Partnerships

The County should continue to maintain and create new partnerships with organizations and sponsors for events, festivals, and conferences to enhance the visitor experience in El Paso County. One such opportunity is to provide a platform and support for unique experiences in the region by partnering with small and local businesses that offer small group and individual programming. The County should also partner with military installations to provide recreational and tourism information and discounts for military families to invite them to explore the region and foster a connection to its landscape. Along these lines, the County should continue to partner with the USAFA to coordinate and enhance the visitor experience as it relates to the renovated planetarium, new visitor center, renovated Cadet Chapel and areas open to the public.

## Marketing

The County should coordinate with the CSCVB and the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) to promote and market El Paso County and its tourist destinations to a broader audience. To help support this effort, the County should support efforts secure additional funding for branding and marketing specifically targeting tourist attractions and activities in the off season to promote year-round tourism. Additionally, the County should encourage hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues to offer packaged deals and discounts including unique regional experiences to help make it easier for business travelers to "make a trip" out of their time in El Paso County.

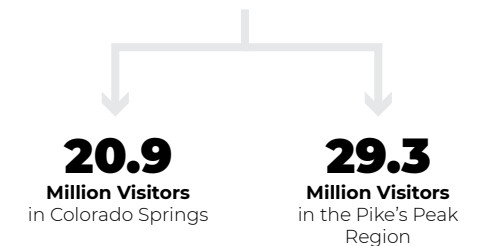
## Visitor Spending Growth

The Colorado Springs & Pikes Peak Region Destination Master Plan predicts that visitors to the region are expected to increase 25 percent by 2028 and that visitor spending will increase to \$4.9 billion annually on overnight and same-day.

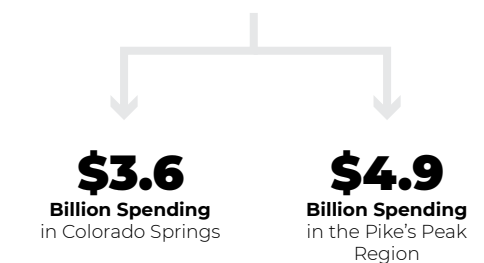
### 2028 Aspirational Targets



**Number of Visitors**  
Targeted increase of 25%  
from 2018 to 2028



**Visitor Spending**  
Targeted increase of 100%  
from 2018 to 2028



# 11

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## COMMUNITY HEALTH

Community health is a key component for having a high quality of life. El Paso County can work on improving the health of its community in a collaborative effort by cooperation between public health workers, municipal governments, volunteers and residents. Having a plan to ensure equity and access to physical and mental health programs, healthy and active living, accessible walking and biking, and healthy food access will benefit the County as a whole.

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**Core Principle 8:** Improve public health by focusing on local partnerships, food access, and environmental quality.

**Goal 8.1** - Support community environmental health initiatives through collaborative efforts with other organizations.

**Goal 8.2** - Ensure all residents have reasonable access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food.

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## Community Health

Community health focuses on environmental, social, and economic resources to sustain the emotional and physical well-being among all people, in ways that advance their aspirations and satisfy their needs in their unique environment. There are many factors that contribute to community health including healthy food access and food security, access to parks and open spaces, neighborhood conditions, family and social support, spiritual well-being, transportation, education, stable employment, access to healthcare, affordable housing, and criminal justice. Communities that are attentive to public health can reduce inequality among their residents and help to reduce those gaps caused by differences in race and ethnicity, location, social status, income and other factors that can affect health. Health equity is providing every individual the opportunity to reach his or her highest health potential by optimizing the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, learn, and age.

## 2017 County Health Indicators Report

El Paso County Public Health issues reports containing information regarding the health of El Paso County resident to identify local health trends and concerns. The goal of the 2017 County Health Indicators Report is to increase healthy life expectancy for all people in El Paso County by offering opportunities and removing barriers that prevent people from achieving optimal health by reversing its upward trend of obesity by addressing its root causes and decreasing the incidence of poor mental health and substance use and misuse.

These two health priorities are representative of the most pressing needs of El Paso County residents based on data presented during the community health assessment (CHA) process. The CHA was conducted as part of the health indicators report.

Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) released a set of “Winnable Battles,” discussed in existing conditions, consisting of key public health and environmental issues where substantial progress can be made to improve population health in the coming decade. For Colorado, CDPHE selected 10 Winnable Battles that impact a high percentage of the population; involve significant health disparities, impose a large economic burden or risk on quality of life or the environment; and are consistent with state and federally mandated programs designed to improve and protect the environment and public health. Colorado’s 10 Winnable Battles were also selected because evidence-based strategies with proven impact exist for these population health areas and in many places, there is community-level readiness and support for change. The 10 Winnable Battles include:

- Clean Air
- Clean Water
- Infectious Disease Prevention
- Injury Prevention
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- Obesity
- Oral Health
- Safe Food
- Tobacco
- Unintended Pregnancy

## Mental Health

Informing policy and system-level change for mental health and substance use consists of identifying the factors that address how individuals are screened and how access to substances is created. Policies could include a tobacco retailer licensing fee, enforcing a fine for selling tobacco products to underage youth, developing standard depression screening protocols for healthcare providers, or requiring service agencies to provide Mental Health First Aid training to all current and new staff. These potential policies provide uniformity across organizations and build local experts across the community.

Through the CHA process, the HCC identified specific strategies to address barriers to behavioral health, including:

- Reducing stigma for behavioral health conditions
- Increasing community-based mental health education and training
- Increasing programming within school-based settings such as Sources of Strength, RULER, Pyramid Plus or parenting classes
- Expanding clinical screenings, community-based screenings, referrals to treatment, and adoption of initiatives such as Zero Suicide
- Developing standardized depression screening protocols for healthcare providers
- Requiring service agencies to provide Mental Health First Aid training to all current and new staff
- Expanding programming for youth, older adults and cross-generational populations
- Increasing social connectedness

## Healthy & Active Living

Addressing efforts to stop the trend of obesity through strategies that promote healthy eating and active living are a key priority for El Paso County. An example of this is demonstrated by a resolution passed in 2014 by the City of Colorado Springs, HEAL. Live Well Colorado, a statewide organization focused on creating opportunities for health and wellness in partnership with communities and individuals who face systemic and institutional barriers to a healthy lifestyle, launched the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Cities & Towns Campaign in 2013. The HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign provides training and technical assistance to help municipal leaders adopt and implement policies to increase access to healthy food, promote active transportation, or support healthy workplaces. There are four status designations in the campaign: Eager, Active, Fit, and Elite.

To qualify for these various status designations, municipalities must have adopted HEAL policies after joining the campaign. Colorado Springs joined the campaign in 2014 and achieved Elite status in 2017. Manitou Springs joined the campaign in 2013 and is designated Active status. HEAL policies, along with other strategies to advance healthy eating and active living efforts include improving the built environment and infrastructure by implementing road diets, approving a cottage food ordinance, supporting small businesses selling locally produced food from their doorstep, and transitioning to healthy food vending machines for municipal workplaces.

While these examples show progress towards policy and systemic changes related to HEAL, efforts to promote HEAL, particularly with an emphasis on health equity, need to continue in order to generate a healthier community overall. El Paso County should consider expanding HEAL policies/programs outside of Colorado Springs to unincorporated parts of the County. Through the CHA process, the HCC recognized evidence-informed strategies and practices to consider, including:

- Increasing access to safe parks, sidewalks and trails
- Reducing household food insecurity
- Increasing access to a variety of healthy food encouraged by the Dietary Guidelines
- Reducing barriers to healthy food options with incentive programs (e.g., Double Up Food Bucks for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants)
- Increasing the number of youths that get 150 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week
- Partnering with school districts to provide out-of-school physical activity programs
- Offering tax incentives for building a healthy grocery store in high-need neighborhoods



## 2018 Community Health Improvement Plan

The Colorado Public Health Reauthorization Act requires identified boards, agencies, and public officials to collaboratively develop state and local public health plans that set priorities for the public health system in Colorado. The Act was signed on June 4, 2008, and its primary purpose is to assure that core public health services are available to every person in Colorado with a consistent standard of quality. An effective public health system reduces healthcare costs by preventing disease and injury, promoting healthy behaviors, and reducing the incidence of chronic diseases and conditions. Each community in Colorado should provide high-quality public health services regardless of its location. Under this law, each County must establish, or be part of, a local public health agency organized under a local board of health with a public health director and other staff necessary to provide public health services with a comprehensive public health plan, outlining how quality public health services will be provided.

In addition to assuring core public health services, local public health agencies are required by the Public Health Reauthorization Act to complete a CHA and a community health improvement plan (CHIP). The CHA and CHIP must be conducted and completed every five years with a multi-agency community group, use current local health indicator data, and align with the statewide public health improvement plan. El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) is also required to complete a local improvement plan to assist in setting public health priorities and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public health system. As the role of the public health system evolves, innovation in partnership with local communities is vital to addressing numerous challenges outside of traditional healthcare. Communities are collaborating intentionally across sectors and with nontraditional partners to tackle the social and environmental determinants of health to achieve health equity.

The Public Health Reauthorization Act includes several key principles of implementation:

- Assuring the provision of basic services
- State and local collaboration
- Financial feasibility
- Functional regionalization

Developing policies focused on incorporating health concepts into decision-making are essential to addressing health outcomes and health inequities. Collaboration across sectors and engagement of key stakeholders is necessary to achieve common health goals and improve the health of all people, while concurrently advancing aligned factors, including economic growth and job development, access to transportation, affordable housing, and higher educational achievement. Influencing policy to address health inequities is critical to decreasing the gap in life expectancy, income, and education among those impacted by inequities. The divide created by structural racism and discriminatory practices for ethnic minority populations can no longer be ignored and must be considered when determining solutions to health inequities. The Community Health Improvement Plan should be updated regularly to ensure the County's key health concerns are continuing to be identified and addressed.

## Built Environment

The built environment refers to all the physical aspects of where we live and work such as housing, office buildings, streets, open spaces, and infrastructure. The built environment can impact a person's health regarding their level of activity and access to food, work, and healthcare.

### Walking & Biking

Certain land use and transportation patterns can be maximized for overall better health. There are feasible measures a community can take to ensure that green space is abundant. Compact, dense communities with a mix of uses also decrease the reliance on automobiles, which increases time spent walking or biking from place to place and decreases pollution and the opportunity for motor-vehicle related injury and death. In El Paso County, where the average commute time to work is 22 minutes and more than three-quarters of the population travels to work via automobile, these implications merit consideration.

Communities everywhere, including those in El Paso County, are successfully demonstrating a better quality of life for their residents by fostering environments that increase safe access to things like play and active recreation, green and natural environments, social support and interaction, and safe routes to walk and bike. Improvements to the built environment offer a promising approach to impacting health on a broad scale by changing the context to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

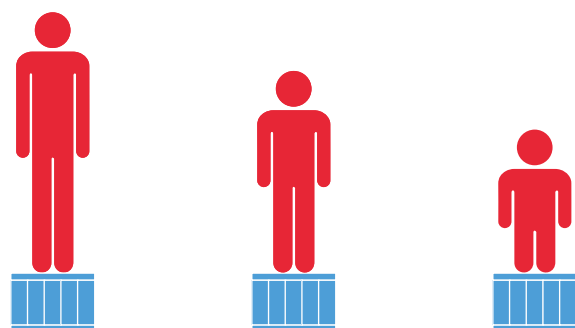
El Paso County's trail system is widely known as an asset throughout the region. The County currently provides and maintains about 130 miles of trails, most of which are six-to-eight-foot-wide gravel-surfaced regional trails that accommodate multiple uses. The El Paso County Parks Master Plan envisions over 700 miles of trails and bike routes in the long term, including off-street regional trails and proposed bike routes. Connectivity with other regional trails is a high priority. Regional trails provide recreational enjoyment, links, and access to recreation areas of regional significance, local communities and commercial areas, and commuting opportunities. Some goals of the Parks Master Plan with specific impacts on public health include:

- Work collaboratively with various transportation organizations to create a continuous, connected system of regional trails. Provide an overall vision for a system of regional trails within the County and connected to adjacent counties and participate in the Regional Nonmotorized Trails and Bike Plan Update to identify standards and address needs as part of a multi-modal transportation network. Ensure that regional trail corridors are secured.
- Prioritize and local trail connections using criteria and proposed action items identified in the Parks Master Plan. Identify potential high priority connections based on identified connection criteria and considering a variety of acquisition strategies and tools including funding and partnership opportunities. Locate trails minimizing conflicts between trail development and wildlife habitat and other sensitive natural and cultural resources.

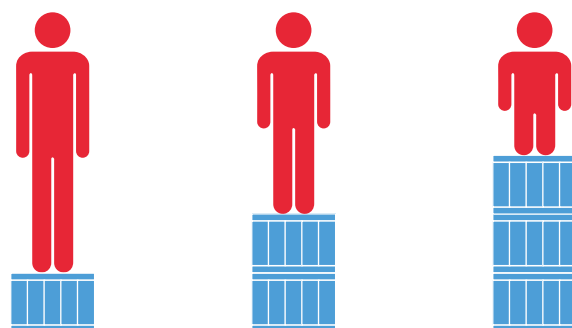
## Equality vs. Equity

Equality is typically defined as treating everyone the same and giving everyone access to the same opportunities. Equity refers to offering varying levels of support depending upon need.

Equality



Equity



## Food Access

There is a need to understand where a person could access food if they are limited by budget constraints or food insecurity. Nearly 15 percent of all El Paso County residents are food insecure. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Proximity plays an important role in circumstances of food insecurity where budget limitations often also impact access to reliable transportation. For many, food pantries, Colorado Springs Food Rescue, and retail sites that accept SNAP and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits are the main sources of food.

Potential interventions at the neighborhood level include small retail markets, farmers' markets, community gardens, community kitchens, backyard farms, farm stands, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) pick-ups at schools, mobile pantries and markets, partnerships between small-scale food producers and corner/convenience stores, expansion of Double Up Food Bucks, and Produce Rx. These hyper-localized practices are sustainable, smaller-scale ways to improve the food system when there may be challenges at the municipal level, especially in those neighborhoods that have more barriers to healthy food access and vacant spaces available for those potential interventions. These practices not only serve to address food access issues but also help foster and strengthen a sense of community in the County.

Several geographic areas of opportunity have emerged that prompt a deeper dive to better understand their specific assets and challenges regarding food access. Characteristics of areas of opportunity include a higher ratio of less healthy to healthy food retail, transit access, and high poverty combined with the potential for neighborhood-based interventions and readiness.

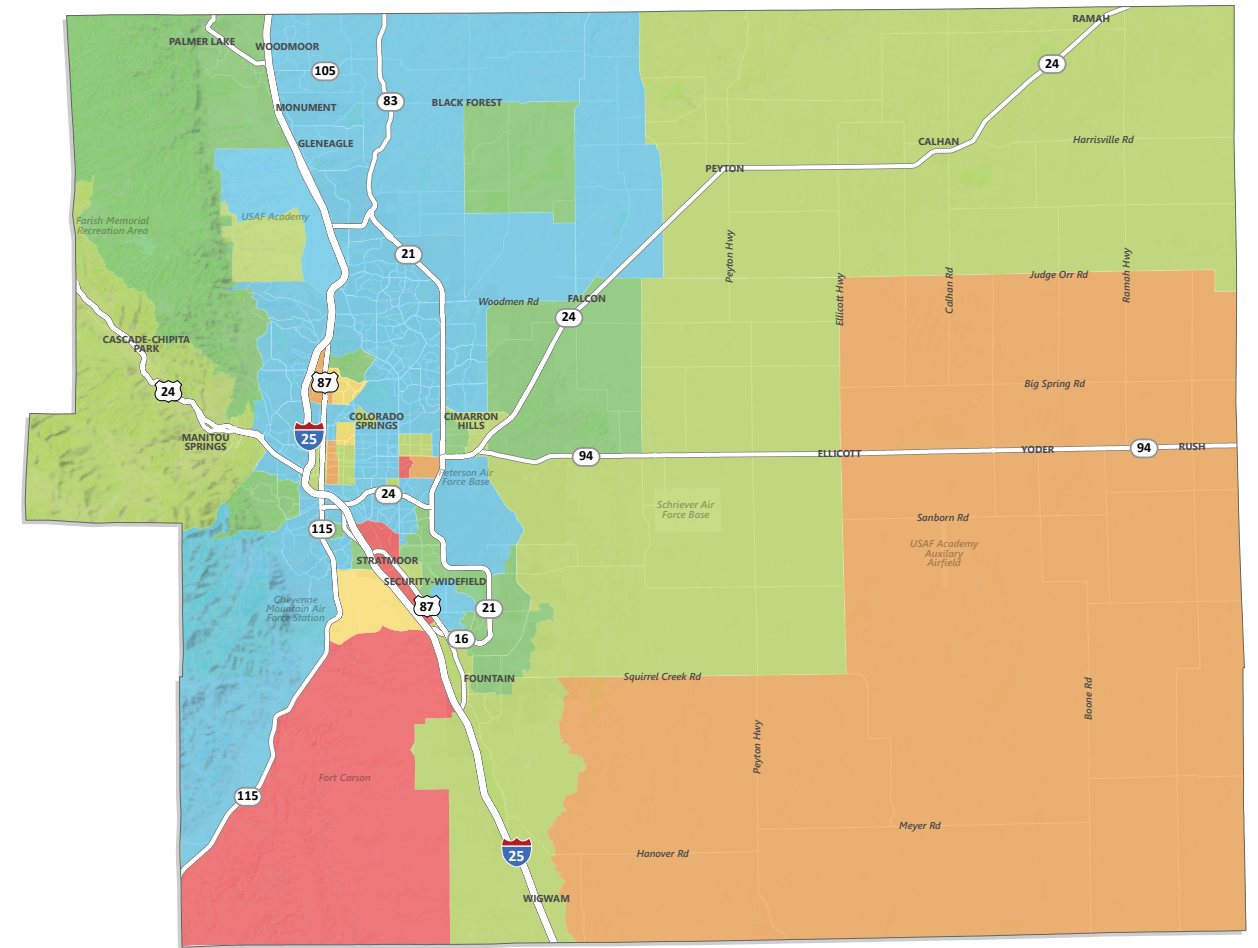
### El Paso County Application

Focusing on these neighborhoods/municipalities and combining all the data sets will tell a more complete story in each. A detailed analysis of this data would show availability of food retail sites by distance, vacant parcels for potential food production, and food pantries and other resources for those experiencing food insecurity. Surveying residents and key informants about their greatest perceived barriers and their behaviors and attitudes related to the food system is critical. Zoning land use and transportation patterns can help improve health. For example, zoning procedures can encourage the development of grocery stores and other retail outlets that sell nutritious food in locations throughout the County. Zoning policies can help improve the food environment through regulating land use of a community by:

- Allowing designation of community food production and farmers' markets
- Limiting commercial food retail, such as fast food businesses, or allowing by-right or incentives to those businesses that increase access to healthy food.

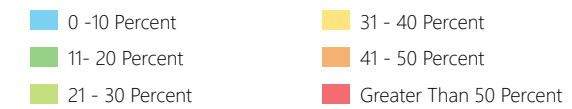
Considering the number of vacant parcels, parks, and open space in El Paso County, there is potential to allocate or incentivize these lands for more local food production. Understanding the County's regional limitations on agriculture—including regulations, a lack of skilled farmers, water, financing, profit potential, or demand—is the first step in addressing them and capitalizing on the economic and productivity potential of the land. Further study into regional agriculture is recommended on both large and small scales and on public and private land. The County should also develop a matrix for identification and prioritization of land with high agricultural potential. These preliminary recommendations are in alignment with the potential policy approaches identified by Colorado Springs City Council and El Paso County Board of Commissioners during the establishment of the Food Policy Advisory Board:

- Strengthen private property rights to encourage urban agricultural activities.
- Work toward reducing barriers for local food producers who wish to sell local food products.
- Build awareness among residents regarding nutrition, food skills, and the sources of their food.
- Seek ways to improve access to safe, affordable, nutritious food for residents, regardless of their income level or geographic location.
- Assess the effects of urban land use policies and regulations on the viability of food production, processing, distribution, and access.



### Food Access

Percent of low-income households that have limited access to healthy food within one mile by census tract



# 12

## ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment is a defining characteristic of El Paso County. It contributes significantly to the County's unique sense of place, healthy and active lifestyle, beautiful landscapes and vistas, flourishing ecosystems and habitats, and the overall quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors of the area. For El Paso County, environmental and natural resource considerations represent both important factors in planning and development and an important set of assets and resources for the County and its communities. These considerations vary widely and include the availability of energy and water resources, the preservation of viewsheds, open space and wildlife habitat, and the management of human interactions with the environment such as with air pollution and waste. Many County agencies, State of Colorado agencies, local communities, and stakeholder groups are involved with all of the areas through environmental and natural resource management. The work of these agencies and groups provides a great deal of understanding and recommendations to consider in *Your El Paso Master Plan*.

### *Inside this Chapter*

*Water Features & Water Quality (page 129)*

*Natural Resources & Land Conservation (page 129)*

*Wildlife Protection (page 130)*

*Conservation Design (page 131)*

*Wastewater Management (page 131)*

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**Core Principle 9:** Prioritize and protect the County's natural environment.

**Goal 9.1** - Consider the environmental impacts related to natural resource conservation, air quality, water quality, wildlife habitat, and waste management during any planning process.

**Goal 9.2** - Promote sustainable best practices with regard to development and infrastructure.

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## Water Features & Water Quality

El Paso County completed a Water Master Plan in 2018 in order to become a statewide leader in the integration of land use and water planning and address the demands and issues about its water supply. Colorado as a whole is facing a substantial water supply gap based on demands projected through 2050 and beyond. As stated in the Water Master Plan, El Paso County is the “epicenter” of the water supply gap in the Arkansas River Basin. County officials understand the need to approach water supply in a thoughtful manner to ensure land use and water are appropriately matched.

### Surface Water

Surface waters are most abundant in the mountainous, western part of El Paso County. The County’s primary watersheds are Fountain Creek, Black Squirrel Creek, Cherry Creek, Monument Creek, Sand Creek, and Kiowa Creek. Most streams in the County eventually empty into the South Platte River, Arkansas River, Horse Creek, and Rush Creek. Standing waterbodies, including Palmer Lake, Monument Lake, and Lake Woodmoor, are human-made and used to retain surface water supplies. Uncertain weather trends, as discussed in more detail in **Chapter 13 Resiliency and Hazard Mitigation**, will continue to be a critical factor in water management. Increases in average temperatures may affect the availability and timing of snowmelt. Overall changes in precipitation and stream flow are difficult to predict, however, and continue to add a layer of uncertainty in projections of water supply.

### Riparian Areas

Riparian areas and open space along the County’s creeks, ponds, and lakes provide flood buffer areas, valuable wildlife habitat, and parks and recreational areas that draw residents and tourists. Portions of Fountain Creek flow through the Fountain Creek Park and Nature Center and Rainbow Falls Recreation Area. The Fountain Creek Regional Trail also follows the riparian corridor for approximately 10 miles, providing access to other County parks and trails. Another string of parks follows the Bear Creek riparian corridor. The Palmer Lake Regional Recreation Area, Ben Lomond Mountain, and New Santa Fe Trail are situated along the shore of Palmer Lake in the northwestern part of the County. High water and increased flow in streams following heavy rains may cause flooding, erode stream banks, damage nearby infrastructure, and increase sedimentation in areas downstream. Alternatively, the County can promote conservation design techniques for any future development near riparian areas to protect them through incorporation into the development.

### Groundwater

Groundwater resources include the four primary aquifers of the Denver Basin (Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, and Fox Hills), which lie beneath the northeastern and north-central parts of the County. Groundwater is sporadic in western El Paso County, in areas where bedrock is granite or exposed at ground surface. In the eastern and southern parts of the County, groundwater resources are generally available along stream channels and in shallow or surficial alluvial deposits, as well as in the Pierre Shale formation.

### Water Master Plan Alignment

The 2018 El Paso County Water Master Plan includes specific goals for ensuring the preservation and improvement of its water features and resources. This includes addressing the water features identified above, including surface water, ground water, and riparian areas. All future water planning efforts should reference the Water Master Plan to ensure alignment with its key policies and recommendations.

- **Goal 4.1** – Develop an understanding of the differences in water supply sources, and any water quality issues within the County.
- **Goal 4.2** – Support the efficient use of water supplies.
- **Goal 4.3** – Collaborate with the State and other stakeholders to extend the economic life of the Denver Basin aquifers.
- **Goal 4.4** – Protect and enhance the quality, quantity, and dependability of water supplies.
- **Goal 4.5** – Plan for water resources in a thoughtful way that recognizes the nonrenewable nature of water resources in the area, accommodates existing and historical uses, and allows for sustainable, planned growth.
- **Goal 4.6** – Promote collaboration among the County, municipalities, water and wastewater service providers and regional and State agencies through the use of Memoranda of Understanding or similar arrangements.

## Natural Resources & Land Conservation

Between forests and land, energy resources, minerals, and fish and wildlife, there is no shortage of natural resources in El Paso County. These resources play a large role in the County’s economy as well as for the quality of life of its residents. Through strategic management, these resources need to be conserved and protected. In 1997, El Paso County initiated a Conservation Easement Program to enhance the County’s ability to protect its abundant natural and scenic features. Currently, the County holds 32 conservation easements, totaling 2,497 acres of land. The mission of the program draws from the goals of the El Paso County Parks Master Plan adopted in 1997 and most recently updated in 2013. It prioritizes preserving scenic viewsheds, wildlife habitat, agricultural lands, and historic and cultural sites, and providing recreational opportunities for the public benefit. This is accomplished through the protection of prairies, forests, existing ranching operations, and undeveloped natural lands, as well as working cooperatively to develop trail connections and view corridors throughout the County.

The policies and procedures utilized in the program ensure that the legal requirements of federal and state law are met, that the program results are real and genuine, and that the responsibilities of the County can be carried out in perpetuity. To fully ensure that all scientific, public, and legal aspects of the conservation easement process are sufficiently addressed for each property, County staff work cohesively on all aspects of the process, including property evaluation, acquisition, stewardship, monitoring, and recordkeeping.

### Federal & State Land

El Paso County also partners with federal and state agencies for the preservation of land in and around federally and state-owned areas. The majority of federally owned land in El Paso County is predominantly administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is located in the mountainous western portion of the County. The County and other stakeholder groups have worked together to support the Friends of the Peak initiative in Pike National Forest.

Land owned by the State of Colorado is mostly in the southcentral portion of El Paso County and is primarily leased for agriculture. The County has worked with the State of Colorado on the following projects:

- The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (a key resource for the newly developed Colorado Springs Park Master Plan that details some of the interconnections between city, county, state and federal parklands.
- The Cheyenne Mountain State Park is an excellent example of parkland operated by the State of Colorado within El Paso County and benefitting the entire County.



Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse



Greenback Cutthroat Trout



Mexican Spotted Owl



Black Bear



Pronghorn

## Wildlife Protection

El Paso County's significant elevational variation supports a wide array of biological diversity. Habitat within the County ranges from the grassy plains in the east to the alpine tundra found on Pikes Peak. Within these habitats, species range from pronghorn and rattlesnakes, to black bears and mountain lions, to marmots and trout. El Paso County's biodiversity provides its citizens unending opportunities to observe and partake in the natural wonders present at every turn. The health of plants and animals provide indicators of the health of the world in which we, too, live. If species are extinguished, no matter how insignificant they may seem, we will never know what opportunities may have been lost. Many goals and objectives have been established by State and regional organizations to protect the natural habitats and species across Colorado, including within El Paso County.

The following strategies are separated into seven key topics, many of which the County will have to partner with other organizations and entities to actualize.

## Protection & Management

- Establish or expand public or private neighborhood parks, reserves, and other protected (e.g., wildlife sanctuaries and private reserves).
- Manage protected areas and other resource lands for conservation (e.g., site design, demarcating borders, putting up fences, and training park staff).
- Control and/or prevent invasive and other problematic plants, animals, and pathogens from establishing and growing in El Paso County.
- Enhance degraded or restore missing habitats and ecosystem functions (e.g., creating forest corridors, riparian tree plantings, breaching levees, and creating/enhancing wetlands).

## Education & Awareness

- Enhance knowledge and skills of students with formal education program about wildlife and habitat protection (e.g., public schools, colleges and universities, and continuing education).
- Expand the opportunity for the exchange of knowledge, skills, and information among practitioners, stakeholders, and other relevant individuals in structured settings outside of degree programs (e.g., monitoring workshops or training courses, learning networks or how-to manuals, and stakeholder education on specific issues).

## Species Management

- Manage specific plant and animal populations of concern.
- Manipulate, enhance, and restore specific plant and animal populations. (e.g., artificial nesting boxes, clutch manipulation, supplementary feeding, disease/parasite management, and vaccination programs).

## Research & Monitoring

- Improve understanding of species/habitat distribution through field inventory, modeling, and ground-truthing.

## External Capacity Building

- Create or provide nonfinancial support & capacity building for nonprofits, government agencies, communities, and businesses (e.g., creating new local land trusts).
- Form and facilitate partnerships, alliances, and networks of organizations (e.g., Conservation Measures Partnership).

## Law & Policy

- Create, implement, change, influence, or provide input on formal government sector legislation or policies (e.g., state ballot initiatives, providing data to policy makers, zoning regulations, and species protection laws).
- Create, implement, change, influence, or provide input on policies and regulations affecting the implementation of laws at all levels: international, national, state/provincial, local/community, tribal (e.g., input into agency plans regulating certain species or resources, working with local governments or communities to implement zoning regulations, and promoting sustainable harvest on state lands)
- Establish, revise, and implement voluntary standards and professional codes that govern private sector practice (e.g., Conservation Measures Partnership Open Standards, corporate adoption of forestry best management practices, and sustainable grazing by a rancher).
- Monitor and enforce compliance with laws, policies and regulations, and standards and codes (e.g., water quality standard monitoring, and initiating criminal and civil litigation).

## Livelihood, Economic & Other Incentives

- Develop enterprises that directly depend on the maintenance of natural resources or provide substitute livelihoods as a means of changing behaviors and attitudes (e.g., ecotourism).
- Promote alternative products and services that substitute for environmentally damaging ones.
- Utilize market mechanisms to change behaviors and attitudes (e.g., certification, financial incentives, grass and forest banking, and valuation of ecosystem services such as flood control).



## Conservation Design

Accommodating growth while protecting the environment is essential to the future of El Paso County. The components that make up the natural environment that have been previously mentioned in this chapter, wildlife habitat, surface water and groundwater, riparian corridors, ecological systems, valued animal and plant species, and more, are all at risk if the County grows and develops in an irresponsible and thoughtless manner. It is a given that new growth will result in the expansion of development into areas previously undeveloped, and that booming growth in County population will result in increasing stress on natural resources and systems. In addition to the other strategies and recommendations identified to protect the natural environment, conservation design is a practice and approach to new development that the County must embrace.

Conservation design promotes the use of an environmentally sensitive development pattern that aims to preserve contiguous areas of open space and protect environmental features. This approach to development creates the potential for the use of naturalized stormwater management techniques to minimize or eliminate stormwater runoff and maintains areas of shared open space and areas of environmental and ecological value. In addition, by clustering development in areas that are more suitable, conservation design can result in the need for less infrastructure and roadway needed than would be required through more traditional development techniques.

While providing equivalent or increased residential densities to traditional development techniques and accommodating the same variety of development types, conservation design ensures that the natural environment is addressed as new development is considered and site plans and infrastructure improvements are designed. As part of any development review and approval process in the County, conservation design should be considered and evaluated alongside development considerations such as land use, zoning, traffic, infrastructure, and utilities. Conservation design is also addressed in **Chapter 4 Housing and Communities**, as it relates to approaching new residential development in an environmentally responsible manner.

## Waste Management

El Paso County falls into the Front Range planning region of the Colorado Integrated Solid Waste and Materials Management Plan (CISWMMP). The purpose of the CISWMMP is to develop a comprehensive evaluation of the current state of Colorado's waste disposal and materials management practices. The results and recommendations within the plan will guide the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and stakeholders to develop short- and long-term goals best suited for developing cost effective and environmentally protective waste management and waste diversion systems. The landfills in the Front Range have been categorized as regional landfills based on the quantities of solid waste generated throughout the County. Moving forward it is expected that the haulers and regional landfills on the Front Range will continue to adapt to changing market conditions and provide services. There may be an opportunity for the Front Range regional landfills to expand their wastesheds beyond the highly populated areas of the Front Range. The location of new, strategically located transfer stations can help extend the service areas of the landfills as well.

There are three active landfills located in unincorporated El Paso County. All three landfills are expected to have capacity to continue accepting waste until at least 2079. The private sector is solely responsible for solid waste collection, transfer, disposal, and recycling services throughout the County. A disposal fee helps to support El Paso County programs for proper disposal of household hazardous waste, yard waste collection and a drop off recyclables program.

## CISWMMP Strategies

All Colorado Integrated Solid Waste and Materials Management Plan strategies for improving the system of collection and management of waste diversion in El Paso County that could be adopted by any or all private haulers may include:

- Recycling depots/drop-offs with regular, convenient hours.
- Curbside recycling offered for single-family homes (at least bi-weekly, with minimum requirements for program elements).
- Pay as You Throw (PAYT) rate structure required for single-family households (with minimum program elements).

- Multifamily recycling of at least four materials in buildings with five or more units, with educational materials provided (minimum program elements).
- Yard waste (or yard and food) collection program for single-family homes on at least weekly intervals, or a drop-off site open weekends and at least one weekday.
- Commercial recycling program available for all businesses with 10 or more employees, 1,000 square feet of space, or 10 cubic yards or greater of outdoor space.
- Collection and composting program for all businesses generating large quantities of food waste or targeted business types designated by CDPHE such as restaurants, hotels, wineries, breweries, assisted living facilities, grocery stores, schools, manufacturers, cafeterias, and coffee shops.
- Commercial recycling required for businesses generating large amounts of recyclables, such as manufacturing companies.
- Construction and Demolition (C&D) recovery program requiring separate bins at generation or post-separation.

# 13

**Inside this Chapter***Resiliency Planning (page 133)**Hazards (page 133)**Disaster Response & Recovery (page 138)**Resiliency (page 138)*

## RESILIENCY & HAZARD MITIGATION

The concept of resiliency can be linked to several topics within a comprehensive plan but is most often associated with hazard mitigation. Resiliency provides a broader lens for understanding not only the natural and human-made hazards, but also the underlying social, environmental, and economic issues in communities that lead to the hazards or affect the impacts of hazards. In other words, a resilient community is both less susceptible to the hazards themselves and more able to lessen the impact of hazards, as well as other daily factors and stresses that communities regularly experience.

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**Core Principle 10:** Support efforts to reduce, respond, and react to natural and man-made hazards across the County.

**Goal 10.1** - Prioritize hazard mitigation as growth and development occurs.

**Goal 10.2** - Continue to support planning efforts and best practices to ensure community resiliency.

**Goal 10.3** - Continue to coordinate communication and activity among Office of Emergency Management (OEM), emergency service providers, and military installations to improve responses and recovery to natural hazards and emergencies.

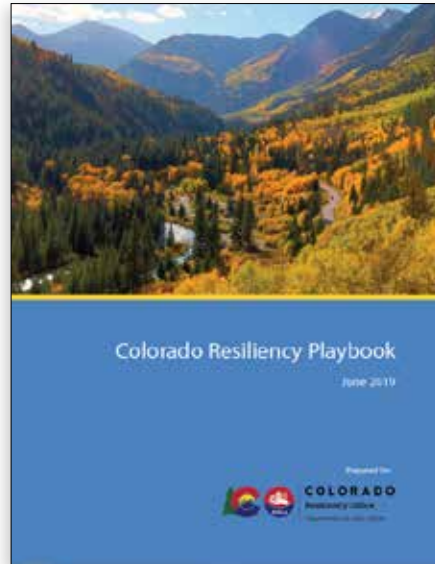
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## Resiliency Planning

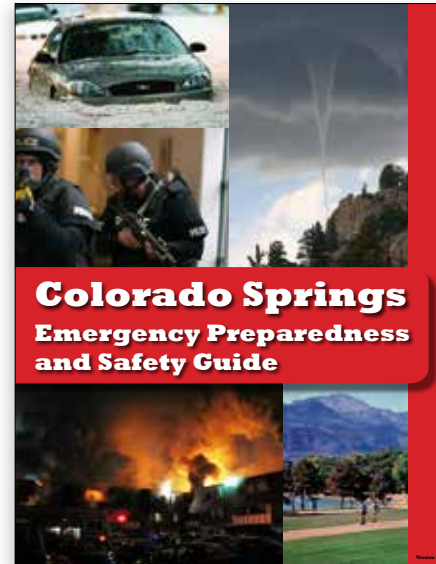
The first step in planning for resiliency and hazards in El Paso County is identifying which issues El Paso County faces based on its location, climate, demographics, and history. The County, many of its stakeholder groups, and the State of Colorado have already completed analyses and plans that identify many of these hazards. These studies, and their findings, are referenced throughout this chapter.

Identifying and planning for these issues and hazards on its own, however, is not enough. Many of these problems have interconnections with each other, as well as with regional development patterns and resource management efforts in the County and beyond. It is therefore important to understand and approach resiliency and hazard mitigation in a way that integrates as many different factors and potential impacts as possible. It requires a holistic systems approach. An example is the relationship among droughts, wildfires, and floods, which are components of a complex system tied to Colorado's continental semi-arid climate. To achieve this type of integrated approach, many different agencies and stakeholders must work together and coordinate their efforts over the long term.

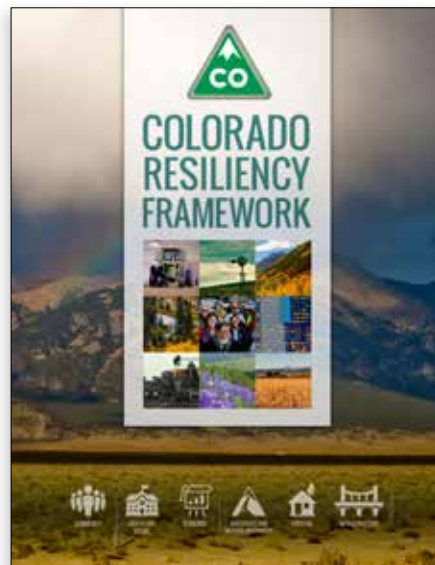
The next step, therefore, is positioning the County's agencies and stakeholders to work together and support each other in managing resiliency issues, hazards, and their impacts. As mentioned already, many stakeholder initiatives and other plans in El Paso County and Colorado include guidance and recommendations for the type of coordination that is needed in different resiliency and hazard mitigation areas.



Colorado Resiliency Playbook (2019)



Colorado Springs Emergency Preparedness and Safety Guide



Colorado Resiliency Framework (2015)



Colorado Hazard and Incident Response and Recovery Plan (2016)

## Hazards

### Blizzards & Winter Storms

All areas of El Paso County are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of Colorado's severe winter weather. Average snowfall is 72 inches or greater in the central (including the Front Range foothills) and western areas of the state. Severe winter storms are a frequent occurrence and a source of major concern throughout Colorado. The combined dangers of snow, ice, freezing temperatures, and high winds pose multiple risks, including those to public safety and the potential to cause major property damage and disruption to commerce. For example, winter storm conditions can threaten transportation safety during the event and result in snow or ice accumulations that can collapse roofs or topple trees.

### Impacts

Severe winter storms may have impacts on vulnerable populations, especially the homeless or those living in households without heat. There is no simple or universal approach to assessing these risks; however, a variety of data sources and tools are available to assist in the process of understanding the likelihood and potential impact of future storm events on the community.

Although El Paso County generally experiences mild winters, typically the area is hit with one or two major snowstorms or extreme cold temperature events each year.

One of the primary concerns is the winter weather's ability to knock out heat, power, and communications services to your residence or office, sometimes for days at a time. Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region.

When winter weather is in the forecast, residents should follow local weather warnings and follow news from local officials online. Residents are also encouraged to take the necessary precautions to prepare their family, home, and vehicles accordingly and ensure they have a plan and adequate supplies to stay at home for at least 72 hours, if necessary.

### County Programs

El Paso County Public Works Department's mission is to provide an effective snow and ice control program, which enables the motoring public to use the County road network during inclement winter weather. This is accomplished by maintaining a reliable road network and provide for the efficient flow of traffic within the County during periods of inclement winter weather.

El Paso County Public Works remains prepared to manage the minor and major snowstorms that periodically occur. In order to monitor weather and road conditions and to accept calls from other agencies and the public, dispatchers are on duty continuously 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The department also coordinates closely with the Weather Bureau, Emergency Services, Sheriff's Office, Pikes Peak Office of Emergency Management, and others to obtain advanced information on impending storms or emergencies.





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## Wildfires

Wildfires are of significant concern throughout Colorado. According to the Colorado State Forest Service, vegetation fires occur on an annual basis, but most are controlled and contained early with limited damage. For those ignitions that are not readily contained and become wildfires, damage can be extensive. According to the State of Colorado Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, a century of aggressive fire suppression combined with cycles of drought and changing land management practices has left many of Colorado's forests, including those in El Paso County, unnaturally dense and ready to burn. Further, the threat of wildfire and potential losses are constantly increasing as human development and population increases and the wildland-urban interface expands. Standing trees killed by pine bark beetles is another contributor to fuel load, which has been an increasing concern since 2002.

Wildfire losses are typically not covered by basic homeowner's insurance. Additional coverage must be purchased in order to insure against such damages. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) and the National Fire Protection Association have developed a methodology for insurance companies to identify wildfire exposure. Property ratings are developed based on the following:

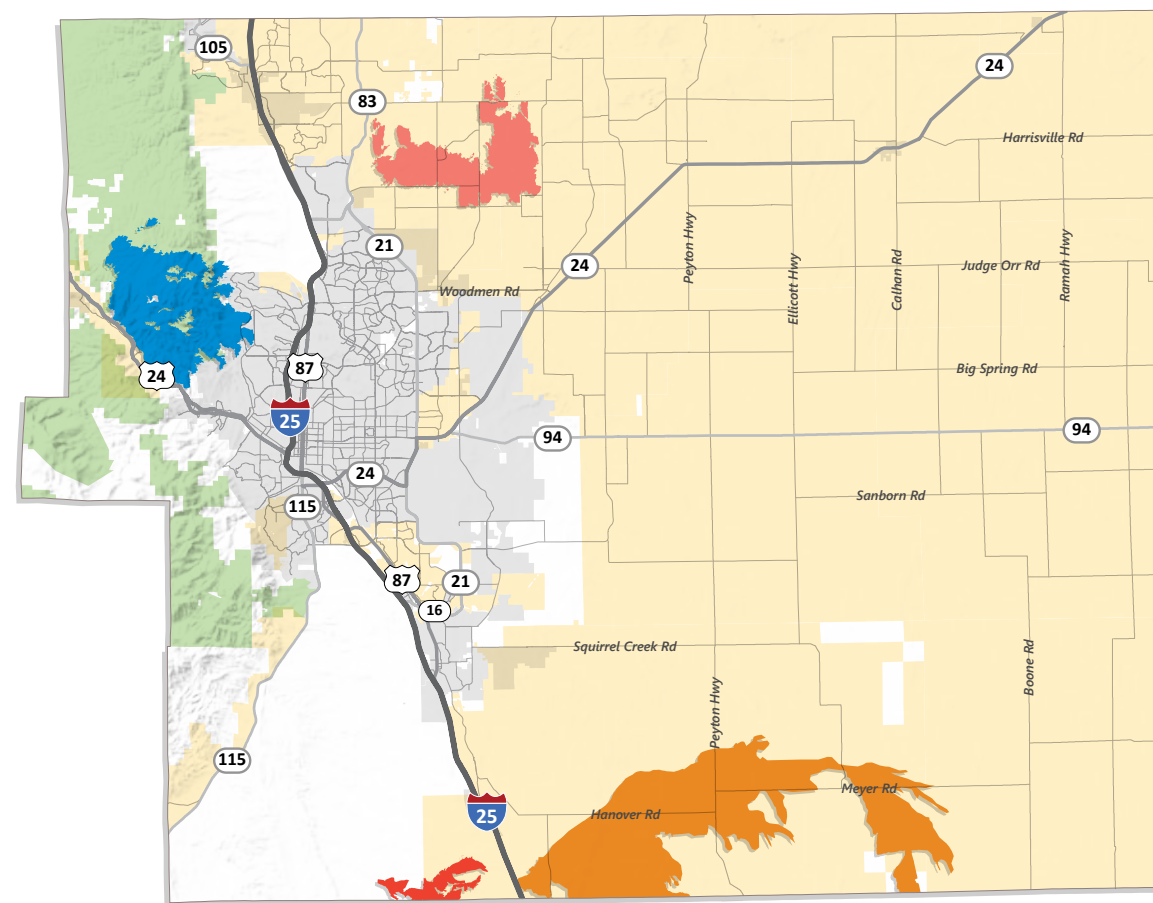
- **Fuel** – Grass, trees, or dense brush can feed a wildfire.
- **Slope** – Steeper slopes can increase the speed and intensity of wildfire and affect reconstruction costs.
- **Access** – Dead-end roads can impede fire-fighting equipment.

Prescribed burns are fires that are set intentionally to clear fuels from an area, so that the area is less likely to burn in the event of a wildfire. These burns are used in forests to prepare sites for forest regeneration, improve wildlife habitat, control insects and disease, and perpetuate fire-dependent ecosystems (Colorado Legislative Council, 2012). In general, prescribed burns are not equated with wildfire hazard as they are intentional and controlled; however, it is possible for a prescribed burn to become uncontrolled and result in a wildfire.

## Community Wildfire Protection Plans

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) are authorized and defined in Title I of the 2003 Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA). The HFRA places renewed emphasis on community planning by extending a variety of benefits to communities with a wildfire protection plan in place. Critical among these benefits are:

- The option of establishing a localized definition and boundary for the wildland-urban interface (WUI).
- The opportunity to help shape fuels treatment priorities for surrounding federal and non-federal land.
- A description of the community's WUI problem areas, preferably with a map and narrative.
- Information on the community's preparedness to respond to a wildland fire.
- A community risk analysis that considers, at a minimum, fuel hazards, risk of wildfire occurrence and community values to be protected both in the immediate vicinity and the surrounding zone where potential fire spread poses a realistic threat.
- Identification of fuels treatment priorities on the ground and methods of treatment.
- Ways to reduce structural ignitability.
- Having an implementation plan.



### Burn Perimeter

- Black Forest Burn Perimeter
- Waldo Canyon Burn Perimeter
- Carson Midway Burn Perimeter
- 117 Burn Perimeter
- County Fire Districts

### County Unincorporated Areas

The CWPP is a broad overview of El Paso County's vulnerability to and preparedness for wildfire and is not appropriate for specific project planning. Even large-scale landscape projects only make sense when viewed at close range, in the context of a fire protection district, or a community. The priorities listed below are, as a result, general recommendations for ways that El Paso County can help its residents to understand and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire.

- Encourage County land managers and planners to take steps to reduce wildfire risk while achieving other land management goals. Consider wildfire risk, mitigation, and response when codes are revised for areas in the WUI.
- Promote cross-boundary mitigation planning and prioritization with public land managers, military installations, municipalities, utilities, fire protection districts, and unincorporated communities.
- Maintain cooperation among wildfire first responders by supporting interagency planning and training.
- Share information about mitigation funding opportunities with local communities, Firewise committees, and fire protection districts.
- Encourage the creation of neighborhood Firewise committees to coordinate education and mitigation in local communities.

- Encourage fire protection districts to support wildfire prevention activities.
- Encourage small communities to create their own CWPPs.
- Coordinate with Colorado Springs and other municipalities on the update of their CWPPs as necessary.
- Advise County managers of opportunities to support the goals of local CWPPs, through normal maintenance of County-owned lands and rights of way.
- Encourage the development of new industrial uses for small woody biomass.
- Promote collaborative discussions about fuel reduction along boundaries of US Forest Service lands, including fire protection districts, municipalities, and public utilities.
- Encourage mitigation projects undertaken by municipalities, military installations, and utilities, especially where adjacent to unincorporated areas.
- Promote mutual aid and sharing of military fire fighters with County fire districts.
- Promote standard zoning and building codes that mitigate fire dangers between communities throughout the County.

### Climate Variability & Effects on Hazard Risk

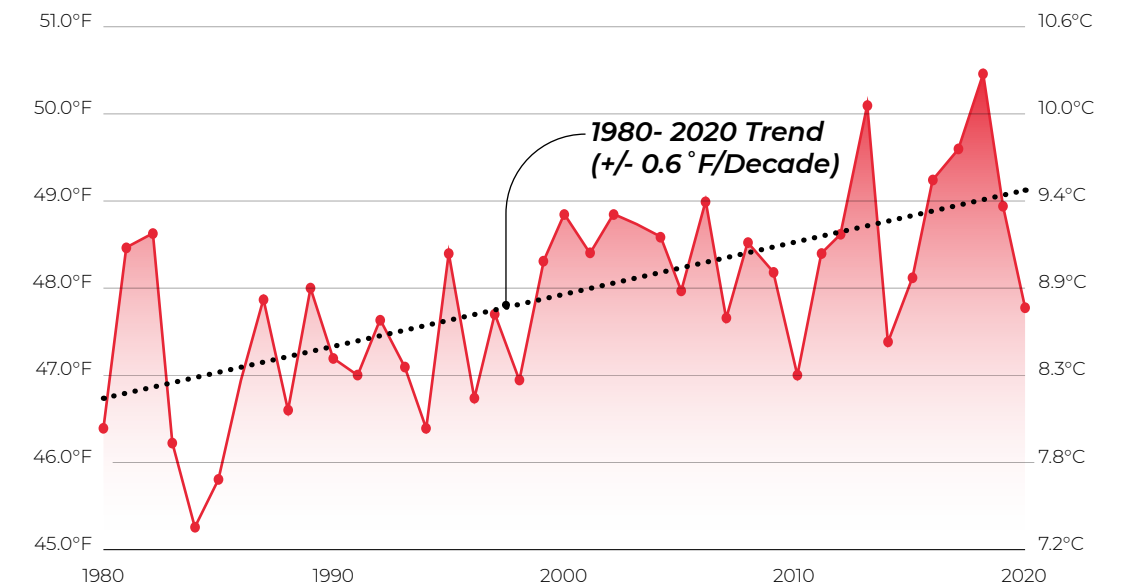
According to the Colorado Resiliency Framework (CRF) published in 2015, Colorado may experience more natural hazards in the future because of changes in the State's climate, such as increased overall temperatures and decreased precipitation. The CRF bases this assessment on analysis of several different climate studies. Moreover, the variability in climate expected in the 21st century may be much greater than what Colorado has experienced in the last century.

With respect to temperature, Colorado is also experiencing a long-term trend of increased temperatures. Annual average temperatures have increased by two degrees Fahrenheit in nearly all parts of the State, including El Paso County. The warmer temperatures, combined with below-average precipitation since 2000, have led to more frequent drought conditions. These trends have therefore also impacted snowpack, which has been mainly below average since 2000. Analysis is ongoing to determine whether a clear long-term trend in snowpack reduction can be established.

### Increasing Temperatures

Annual average temperatures have increased by two degrees Fahrenheit in nearly all parts of the State, including El Paso County.

El Paso County Average Temperature



NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information



westword.com

## Drought

Drought is one of the most serious hazards affecting the State of Colorado. Colorado's water supply comes entirely from precipitation, in the form of rain, snow, and hail, as there are no major rivers that flow into the state. With the semi-arid conditions, drought is a natural part of the climate and can directly or indirectly affect the entire population of the state. Since 2010, every County in the state has experienced drought impacts. Droughts in Colorado can be short- or long-lived, and their impacts come in many forms, particularly in water-intensive sectors such as agriculture, municipal water supply, recreation, tourism, and wildfire protection.

### *Parks & Open Space Implications*

The 2014 Climate Change in Colorado Report finds that warming temperatures in Colorado have worsened some drought indicators over the past 30 years. The report also predicts that droughts and wildfires will increase in frequency and severity by the mid-21st century because of projected warming. Drought can have significant impacts on parks, open space, and recreation sites such as increased wind erosion of soils and poor soil quality; forest and vegetation quality degradation; increased risk of wildfires; loss of wetlands and aquatic habitats or wildlife; loss of water-related recreation activities; and need for increased watering of turf and plant materials to prevent loss

The Colorado Springs Park System Master Plan includes recommendations to address floods, fires, and drought, including:

- Develop fire mitigation partnerships and create natural area management plans with land managers, utility providers, public safety officials, and State Parks representatives.
- Work with natural resource managers of wildlife habitat to balance wildlife needs with management for fire, floods, and drought.
- Refer to the drainage and stream buffer standards or guidelines for recommendations regarding floodplain treatments, vegetation management, stream bank stabilization, and other elements that mitigate flood events.
- Provide education and enforcement to address unintentional forest fire starts and arson.
- Form stormwater, floodplain, and vegetation management partnerships with flood control districts, watershed managers, City and County public works departments, ditch companies, and other land managers.
- Install more drought-tolerant plant materials and reduce park dependency on water resources.
- Identify and re-route trails that are susceptible to frequent damage from flooding.

## *Water Conservation*

Water conservation is an important practice to help maintain supply and reduce negative impacts from droughts. One consideration for limiting environmental impacts is to place limitations on high-water uses (such as golf courses and car washes) during periods of drought. Many communities already have standards in place for these types of uses, so local laws and conditions should be carefully reviewed.

### *Water Efficiency Grant Program & Drought Mitigation Planning Grants*

The Water Efficiency Grant Program & Drought Mitigation Planning Grants provides financial assistance to communities, water providers, and eligible agencies for water conservation-related activities and projects. Eligible entities can receive funding to develop water conservation and drought plans, implement water conservation goals outlined in a water conservation plan, and educate the public about water conservation. Awarded through the program, Drought Mitigation Planning Grants are provided specifically to assist water providers or state and local governmental entities in developing drought mitigation and response plans.

## *Drought Response Program*

The U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation's Drought Response Program supports a proactive approach to drought. It provides assistance to water users for drought contingency planning, including consideration of climate change information and to take actions that will build long-term resiliency to drought. Water users may include individual citizens, businesses, and governments. Program areas include contingency planning, resiliency projects, and emergency response actions. To be eligible, entities must be within a state or tribe that has a current declaration of drought or that has a drought plan on file with Congress.

### *Watershed & Flood Prevention Operations Program*

The Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program provides funds to plan and implement authorized watershed project plans for the purpose of watershed protection, flood mitigation, soil erosion reduction, and sediment control among other activities. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service.

## Flash Floods

El Paso County is at greatest risk from large rain events that produce severe flash flooding. These rain events are most often microbursts, which produce a large amount of rainfall in a short amount of time. Flash floods, by their nature, occur suddenly but usually dissipate within hours. Despite their sudden nature, the National Weather Service (NWS) is usually able to issue advisories, watches, and warnings in advance of a flood. In mountainous, rugged terrain, runoff can damage drainage systems or cause them to fail. The plains and high valleys are generally sheltered from precipitation by the surrounding mountains. Wintertime extratropical systems moving in from the Pacific drop most of their moisture over the mountains with very little making it to the valley floors and plains.

The region in and around the Black Forest and Waldo Canyon burn areas are now more susceptible to flash flooding and will remain prone to flooding until vegetation and topsoil are regenerated through natural and human assisted reforestation efforts. El Paso County and its incorporated communities (except for the Town of Ramah) participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), administered through the Regional Building Department Floodplain Administrator. Structures permitted or built in the County before the program began are called "pre-FIRM" structures, and structures built afterwards are called "post-FIRM." The insurance rate is different for the two types of structures. The effective date for the current countywide FIRM is December 7, 2018. The County and participating communities are currently in good standing with the provisions of the NFIP. Compliance is monitored by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regional staff. Maintaining compliance under the NFIP is an important component of flood risk reduction.



### Community Rating System

The Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary program within the NFIP that encourages floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements. Flood insurance premiums are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from community actions meeting the following three goals of the CRS:

- Reduce flood losses
- Facilitate accurate insurance rating
- Promote awareness of flood insurance

The County and its planning partners are equipped to handle future growth within flood hazard areas. With communities in the County participating in the CRS program, there is incentive to adopt consistent, appropriate, higher regulatory standards in communities with the highest degree of flood risk. Municipal planning partners have committed to maintaining their good standing under the NFIP through initiatives identified in this plan. Communities currently participating in the CRS in the County include Colorado Springs, El Paso County, and Manitou Springs. Those participating in the CRS program will be able to refine this commitment using CRS programs and templates as a guide.

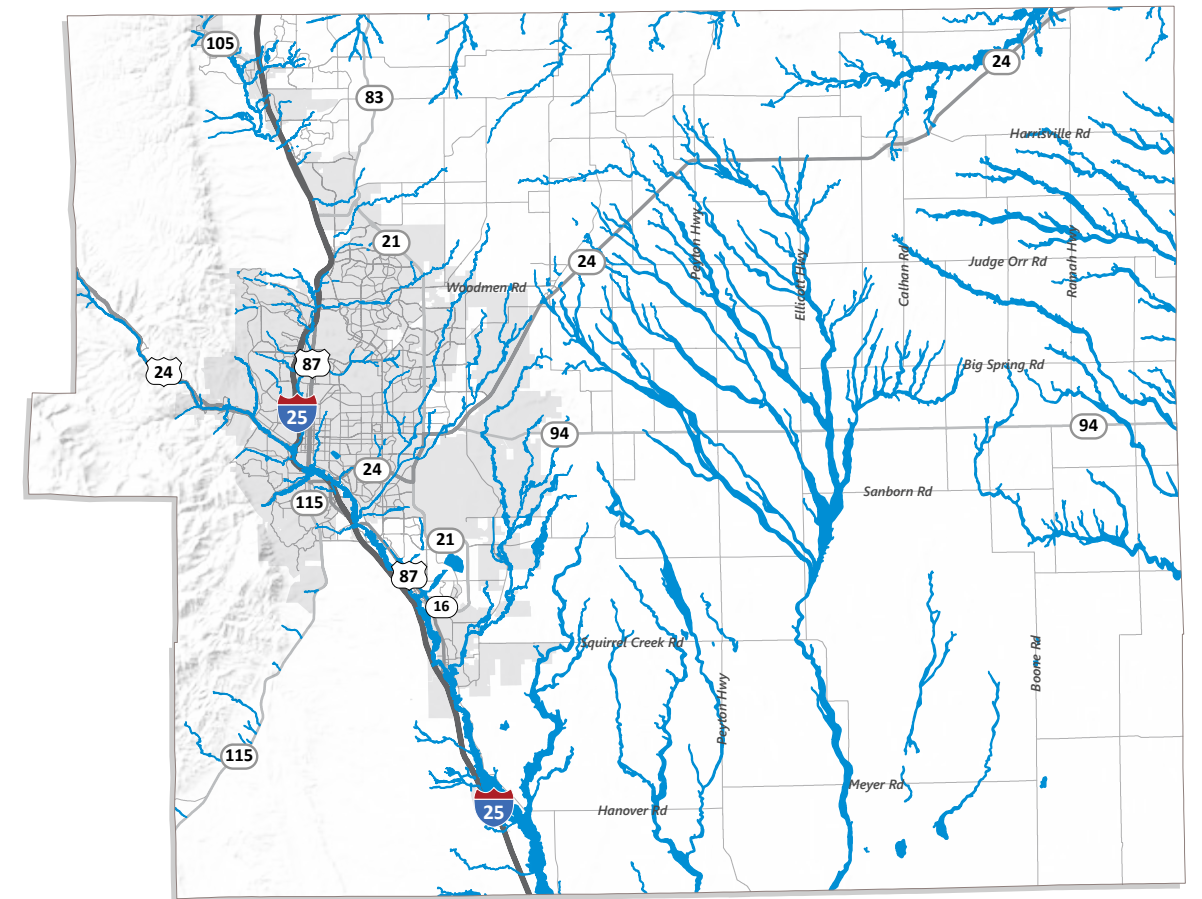
### Flooding Impacts

An intense, short-duration storm could move slowly across the planning area, creating significant flash floods with little or no warning. If intense rain fell on one or more of the recent burn scars in the area, there could be significant mud or debris flows, higher rates of flow, and significant sedimentation. Injuries or fatalities may result if residents are caught off guard by the flood event. Stormwater systems could be overwhelmed, and significant flooding could impact a substantial portion of structures within the planning area. Transportation routes could be cut off due to floodwaters, isolating portions of the planning area. These impacts may last after the floodwater recedes as flash floods in the area have been known to cause extensive damage to roadways and other infrastructure in the County. The major issues for the flood hazard in El Paso County are:

- Flash flooding that occurs with little or no warning will continue to impact the planning area.
- The duration and intensity of storms contributing to flooding issues may increase because of climate change.
- Flooding may be exacerbated by other hazards, such as wildfires, and may cause damages in areas not typically considered special flood hazard areas.
- Damages resulting from floods may impact tourism, which would have significant impacts on the local economy.
- The promotion of flood insurance as a means of protecting private property owners from the economic impacts of frequent flood events should continue.

### Dams

El Paso County and its planning partners have established protocols for flood warning and response to imminent dam failure in the flood warning portion of its adopted emergency operations plan. These protocols are tied to the emergency action plans created by the dam owners. However, there are an uncounted number of non-jurisdictional dams on public and private lands in the County. These are small dams that normally do not store water but may impound water during heavy precipitation events. Because they are not monitored or maintained, there is potential for them to reach capacity or fail and cause flooding and property damage during a significant rainfall event. The extent and risk associated with these dams is not known.



### Flood Zones

- A/AE Flood Zones - Areas subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event

## Disaster Response & Recovery

El Paso County must also plan to meet the needs of its communities when impacts from resiliency issues and hazards have occurred. While the County is not new to disaster response and recovery, its efforts must be adapted as problems evolve with a changing environment and changing community. While the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management plays a central role for disaster response and recovery in El Paso County, other agencies and County residents play important roles as well.

## Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management

The Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is responsible for providing mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and coordination for large-scale emergencies and disasters, both natural and human-caused, to all residents of El Paso County for the purpose of saving lives and preventing property damage. This regional entity is separate from the County and is funded by the participating jurisdictions. The organization manages a variety of services in the region including:

- Mitigating and planning for large-scale all-hazards emergencies and disasters
- Developing and maintaining regional emergency operations plans
- Serving as liaison to local, county, state, military and federal agencies and departments
- Providing preparedness education to citizens and government employees

- Coordinating multijurisdictional exercises
- Responding to multifamily structure emergencies
- Managing resources needed to assist responders and the affected population
- Assisting partner response agencies and the affected population
- Providing assistance and preparedness through the administration of federal and state grant funding

### Mitigation

OEM oversees writing and updating the Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Pikes Peak Region, as well as outlining the functions and responsibilities of all City departments and agencies during emergencies or disasters. OEM maintains close working relationships with all levels of government.

### Preparedness

Because it is impossible to predict when a specific disaster will occur, OEM participates in and helps plan numerous preparedness exercises throughout the year. The exercises are disaster simulations that may involve all levels of government and can range from an organized discussion about a potential threat, to full-scale training that involves actual response units, real-time events and actors who play the role of victims. This training gives management and responders a chance to address and resolve challenges before a real disaster occurs.

### Response

During a large disaster, the OEM provides overall coordination for regional response efforts. This can involve the activation of the Emergency Operations Center, which becomes a single gathering point for representatives from the region's departments and partner agencies. These representatives facilitate resource coordination, mutual aid, and policy decisions.

### Recovery

The OEM assists in the coordination of both short-term and long-term recovery functions. Short-term recovery efforts begin immediately following an emergency or disaster, as the region works to restore basic services and functions to the affected community. Long-term recovery involves restoring economic activity, and rebuilding communities and citizens' quality of life.

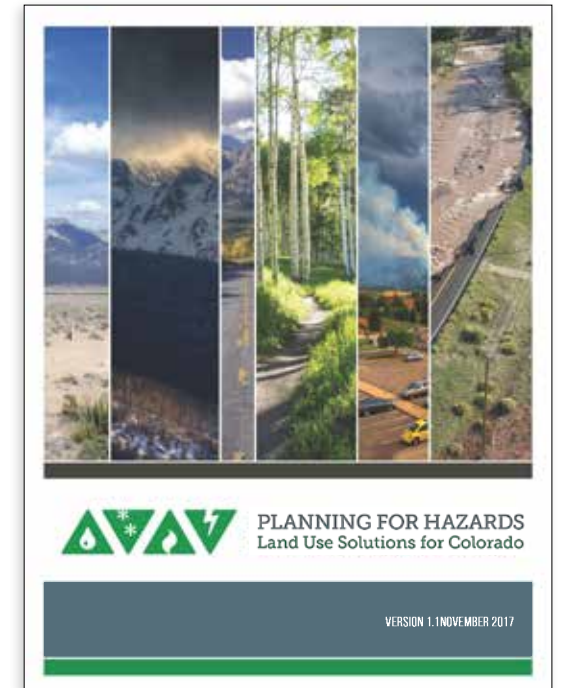
### Make a Plan

Creating plans for family communications, loved ones with special needs, household matters, financial documents, and evacuation are all part of being well prepared. During an emergency, family members may not be together, and a Family Communications Plan will assist people in contacting each other. Household Plans will assist your family in knowing how to prepare ahead of time and what to do during and immediately after an event. Many businesses, schools, and neighborhoods have taken steps to develop plans as well. Neighbors and coworkers often support each other during times of disaster, especially if first responders are unable to get to the area.

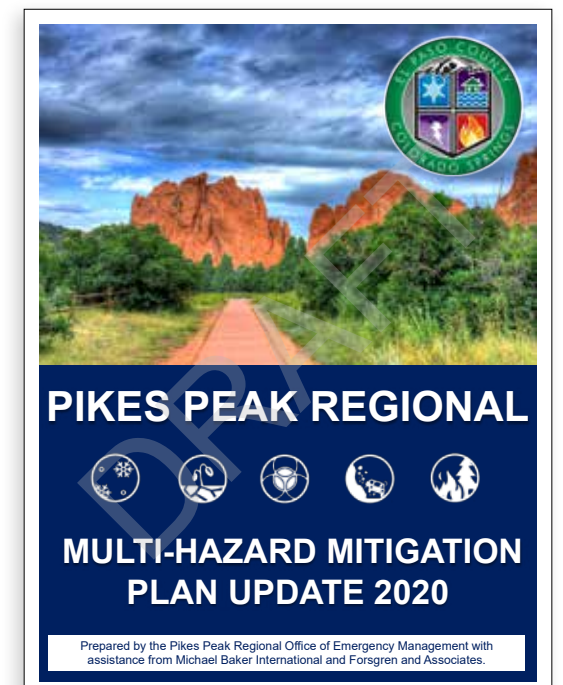
## Resiliency

Resiliency is often incorrectly thought of as being synonymous with hazard mitigation and emergency preparedness. Resiliency is different in that it addresses the underlying causes and vulnerabilities for hazards, emergencies, and other changes in the community that impact its resources, economy, and residents. Resiliency planning looks at the long-term fundamental factors of a hazard that may have put the community at risk, such as deferred maintenance of infrastructure, lack of redundancy in energy and water resources, and high rates of unemployment. The basic framework of resiliency is akin to sustainable development, another holistic approach to development and other human activities that has been in practice for decades. As stated by the Colorado Resiliency Office, resiliency planning "links together the environment, social, and economic sectors to holistically improve communities by being adaptable to changing conditions," including the impacts from hazards and other emergencies, as well as other shocks and stresses, and potentially compounding effects of their interrelationships.

Key existing plans and resources are summarized in this section to provide specific recommendations for resiliency in *Your El Paso Master Plan*.



Planning for Hazards: Land Use Solutions for Colorado (2017)



El Paso County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020)

## 2017 Planning for Hazards Report (Colorado)

Planning for resilience empowers diverse stakeholders to evaluate plans, set strategic policies, and implement projects that will enable communities to adapt and thrive when faced with challenges. Natural and manmade hazards constitute some of the acute “shocks” to which a community can be vulnerable. Other disruptive threats include longer-term societal “stresses,” such as unemployment, poor access or barriers to education, crime, or homelessness. Resiliency planning can include updating land use codes, zoning, development standards, incentive programs, and other plans or policies to better prepare for likely shocks and stresses while also developing measures that allow for action in the face of uncertainty or unexpected events.

- **Shocks:** Mass violence incidents, cyber-attacks, loss of a major tourist attraction, and a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosives event
- **Stresses:** Aging infrastructure, increasing homelessness, and economic downturns

After the Waldo Canyon (2012), The Black Fire (2013) and the MM 117 (2018) wildfires and 2013 floods, many Colorado communities began considering not only how to rebuild damaged homes, businesses, infrastructure, and community assets, but also how to develop long-term strategies for resilience. This catalyst has made Colorado a leader in the development of resiliency planning approaches and tools.

## Colorado Resiliency Framework

The State of Colorado published the Colorado Resiliency Framework in 2015, which defines resilience as “the ability of communities to rebound, positively adapt to, or thrive amidst changing conditions or challenges – including disasters and climate change – and maintain quality of life, healthy growth, durable systems, and conservation of resources for present and future generations.” Other leaders in the field of resilience have similar definitions of resiliency. The Rockefeller Foundation’s 100 Resilient Cities initiative defines urban resilience as “the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.” Resilient communities are often characterized as systems that possess the following seven qualities (100 Resilient Cities):

- **Reflective:** using past experience to inform future decisions
- **Resourceful:** recognizing alternative ways to use resources
- **Inclusive:** prioritize broad consultation to create a sense of shared ownership in decision making
- **Integrated:** bring together a range of distinct systems and institutions
- **Robust:** well-conceived, constructed, and managed systems
- **Flexible:** willingness and ability to adopt alternative strategies in response to changing circumstances

## 2020 Pikes Peak Regional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

El Paso County and six of its municipalities – Calhan, Fountain, Green Mountain Falls, Manitou Springs, Monument, Palmer Lake, and Ramah - prepared the El Paso County Multi-Jurisdictional Mitigation Plan in 2015. The City of Colorado Springs also had an independently prepared plan prior to this update. The 2020 plan merges those efforts and creates a combined plan under the newly formed Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management and consolidates the unincorporated El Paso County and its seven incorporated municipalities, including the City of Colorado Springs, into one plan. This plan does not represent a standard plan update, though it does build off of prior efforts by both El Paso County and Colorado Springs. In order to merge the two entities plans and processes together a new set of hazards, new risk analysis methodology, new priorities, goals and objectives and a new mitigation strategy that best represents the new regional entity was developed.

The goal of the El Paso Hazard Mitigation Plan is to reduce the risks for those who live in, work in, and visit the County. It provides a framework for the foreseeable natural hazards that may impact the County. Participation in development of the plan by key stakeholders in the County helped ensure that outcomes will be mutually beneficial. The plan’s goals and recommendations can lay groundwork for the development and implementation of local mitigation activities and partnerships.

## Plan Goals

- Reduce loss of life and injury.
- Reduce property and economic losses.
- Enhance communication of risks and threats in the Pikes Peak region to empower personal preparedness and responsibility.
- Improve collaboration and cooperation throughout El Paso and partnering jurisdictions.
- Incorporate hazard mitigation into future plans and policies.
- Promote continuity of government services and business operations.

## Plan Policies & Recommendations

The vision of the Hazard Mitigation Plan is “a forward thinking, resilient Pikes Peak region that focuses on common needs and shared responsibilities to foster a healthy, diverse community and economy, balancing the interdependence of human, built, and natural systems.” These policies and recommendations can help ensure greater resiliency throughout El Paso County in support of that vision.

- Increase community capacity to reduce impacts from shocks and stresses. Increasing resiliency is more than disaster mitigation. Acting before disasters to reduce risk can save lives and money; however, when conditions are good, it can be difficult to motivate people to take action. The County strives to move beyond community involvement and “buy-in” to increasing the community capacity as a whole. This requires a shift to a culture of responsibility at the individual level, such as mitigating the danger of wildfire or preparing families for disasters. Local government action is also needed, such as devoting public resources for stormwater management, maintaining and restoring forest health, fostering emergency preparedness, and maintaining infrastructure.

- Foster a paradigm shift toward comprehensive, collaborative planning and implementation with sustainable funding and stakeholder engagement. In order to build resiliency, existing planning and stakeholder engagement processes need to be brought together. Quality of life and emergency preparedness depend on looking to the future to ensure that development does not increase risk or create problems, such as traffic, pollution, and unemployment. In addition, even the best plan cannot be fulfilled without identifying sustainable funding sources and committing to them.
- Create cultural awareness of the need for personal connections in communities and between communities. Resiliency to both shocks and stresses is increased with the connections between people and between communities. Any effort to build and maintain ties, especially across neighborhoods, jurisdictions, and sectors, will increase capacity to handle an uncertain future.
- Brand the region in a way that brings people together and creates “buy-in.” Creating and fostering a Pikes Peak-based identity can increase individuals’ pride in being from and/or residing in El Paso County. It encourages communities to work together, and younger and transient populations to settle in the County and work towards a better future for the region.
- Support coordinated stewardship and management of natural resources. El Paso County’s vision of creating a resilient Pikes Peak region includes creating a balance between the built and natural environments. Therefore, this focus on the natural world speaks to the need for natural resource stewardship. Environmental preservation for aesthetic, recreational, and risk reduction purposes is a key element of building countywide resiliency.

# 14

*Inside this Chapter*  
Next Steps  
Land Development Regulations  
Administration  
Funding Sources  
Action Matrix

## IMPLEMENTATION

*Your El Paso Master Plan* provides direction for growth and development within El Paso County and serves as a guide for County staff, officials, residents, and stakeholders. The Master Plan is the product of a collective effort between County staff and elected and appointed officials, the Master Plan Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission, the Board of County Commissioners, and most importantly, the residents of El Paso County. It represents the end of a 30-month planning process, but also the first step towards guiding change within the community and implementing the recommendations of the Plan.

The Implementation chapter is intended to translate the Master Plan's recommendations into proposed actions. This chapter outlines specific steps to assist the County in achieving *Your El Paso Master Plan's* long-term vision. It includes an action matrix detailing recommendations to realize the Plan's supporting strategies and identifies a variety of potential funding sources to support these efforts.

## Next Steps

This section briefly highlights the next steps that should be undertaken to begin the process of implementation. These include:

- Regular use of the Plan at both the regional and local level, including the review of development applications
- Encouraging the reviewing and updating of zoning and subdivision controls to reflect policies presented in the Plan, where appropriate
- Updating the Plan at regular intervals
- Enhancing public communication regarding long-range planning
- Promoting cooperation with municipalities and key stakeholders
- Exploring possible funding sources and implementation techniques

## Administration

The Master Plan should be used daily, functioning as the official policy guide for land use, development, and community improvement in El Paso County. It should act as the "go-to" document to assist County staff, the Board of County Commissioners, and other commissions by providing guidance for the review and evaluation of future projects, development proposals, and initiatives. In addition, the County should encourage service providers and partner organizations to utilize the Plan when establishing goals and analyzing future development, new facilities, infrastructure extensions, and programming.

### Regularly Use the Plan

To ensure routine usage and further educate the community about *Your El Paso Master Plan*, the County should:

- Make a digital version of the Plan and associated maps available online.
- Aid the public by explaining the Plan and its relationship to public and private development projects and other proposals, as appropriate.
- Meet with department directors and officials to explain the purpose, importance, and intended benefits of the Plan.
- Meet with department directors and officials to explain the purpose, importance, and intended benefits of the Plan.
- Provide a Plan "orientation" for new staff, officials, and board members that highlights key takeaways and major goals of Master Plan that are essential to local policy and initiatives.
- Maintain a list of recommended amendments, issues, or needs that may be the subject of changes, additions, or deletions from the Plan.

## Develop & Maintain Partnerships

El Paso County should be the primary lead for Plan implementation, coordinating administrative actions, reviewing and approving land development applications, and public improvement projects as identified within the Master Plan. The success of implementation will be reliant on developing and maintaining partnerships with the numerous stakeholders throughout the County, including public agencies, community groups, municipalities, the local business community, foundations, and the private sector. Given the breadth and scope of the Plan, these organizations will be essential to assisting the County in reaching the established goals and vision for the future of El Paso County.

Per the recommendations of the Plan, the County should identify specific organizations and agencies to assist with implementation and explore opportunities for potential partnerships and collaborations. Discussions should continue following adoption of the Plan regarding how implementation of the goals and recommendations can be jointly accomplished with partner agencies. Further, the County should ensure that property owners and developers plan for and construct improvements that are consistent with the directives of the Plan.

## Maintain Public Communication

The Master Plan was supported by an outreach process intended to gather public input and foster a sense of stewardship and excitement for the Plan. Through outreach events, public workshops, the project website, online surveys, interactive mapping tools, and other media, residents and stakeholders were able to get involved and stay informed of the Plan's development. This public participation throughout the process helped communicate the importance of long-range planning and provide individuals with a better understanding of ongoing efforts to improve their community and the overall quality-of-life in El Paso County.

The outreach process should serve as a foundation for continued communication with members of the public throughout the implementation process. The County should ensure that major recommendations and the overall vision for El Paso County, as defined within the Plan, are conveyed to the entire community. This should be supported by regular updates, coverage of major milestones, and additional opportunities for residents to voice their opinion. In addition, the County should maintain avenues by which residents and stakeholders can communicate with County staff and receive information about planning and development efforts. This includes methods for residents to voice questions and concerns that are then reviewed and addressed in a timely manner.

## Update Regularly

Noting the County's dedication to thoughtful planning, the Master Plan should not exist as a static document, but rather the center of a continuous planning process. Following adoption of the Plan, the community will continue to move forward, change, and evolve. As such, the Plan should be reviewed and updated as necessary on a regular basis to respond to these changes, addressing shifts in community aspirations, increasing growth pressures, changing market and demographic conditions, as well as new and unexpected issues as they arise. The County should regularly undertake a systematic review and analysis of the Plan.

In general, a review of the Plan should be completed at least every two to three years, or as requested by the Planning Commission or Board of County Commissioners. The review should include preparing a report of findings for discussion by the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. This review should be referred to, as appropriate, when developing the County's forecasted budget, Strategic Plan, and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), enabling recommendations and projects from the Plan to be considered as part of upcoming funding commitments. Establishing a routine for review of the Plan will ensure the document remains relevant to the needs and desires of El Paso County.



## Land Development Regulations

The County's Land Development Code governs the use and development of property and provides a legal framework for implementing the *Master Plan's* recommendations.

The purpose of the County's Land Development Code is to preserve and improve the public health, safety and general welfare of the citizens and businesses of El Paso County, and to:

- Implement the *Master Plan* and related elements.
- Promote predictability, consistency and efficiency in the land development process for residents, neighborhoods, businesses, agricultural and development interests.
- Ensure appropriate opportunities for participation and involvement in the development process by all affected parties.
- Be fair to all by ensuring due consideration is given to protecting private property rights, the rights of individuals and the rights of the community as a whole.
- Guide the future growth and development of the County in accordance with the *Master Plan*.

- Guide public and private policy and action in order to provide adequate and efficient transportation, water, sewage, schools, parks, playgrounds, recreation, and other public requirements and facilities.
- Establish reasonable standards of design and procedures for subdivision and resubdivision in order to further the orderly layout and use of land and to ensure proper legal descriptions and monumenting of subdivided land.
- Ensure that public facilities and services are available concurrent with development and will have a sufficient capacity to serve the proposed subdivision, and, in so doing, ensure that current residents will be required to bear no more than their fair share of the cost of providing the facilities and services by requiring the developer to pay fees, furnish land, or establish mitigation measures to cover the development's fair share of the capital facilities needs generated by the development.
- Prevent the pollution of air, streams, and ponds; assure the adequacy of drainage facilities; and encourage the wise use and management of natural and biological resources throughout the County in order to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the community and the value of the land.

## Code Amendments and Updates

Your *El Paso Master Plan* establishes the overall vision for the character and intensity of land use and development throughout the County, as well as the policies and goals related to infrastructure, transportation, facilities and services, the natural environment, and much more. To ensure the Land Development Code remains an effective tool for *Master Plan* implementation it should be reviewed and amended as necessary, particularly the zoning and development standards, to ensure consistency and alignment with the principles, goals, and recommendations of the *Master Plan*.

## Land Use Applications and Master Plan Consistency

A key value of the *Master Plan* is using it to inform and guide decision-making related to land use applications (zoning and subdivision), including use variances, special uses, planned unit developments, standard district rezonings, sketch plans, subdivision preliminary plans, and subdivision final plats. Depending on the proposal being considered, the applicability of *Master Plan* consistency will vary, sometimes significantly. For example, a standard rezoning request or Planned Unit Development (PUD) would necessitate a thorough consistency review of the proposed application with the *Master Plan*. On the other hand, the uses and densities of a subdivision final plat application will have previously been reviewed for land use, place-type, key area, and areas of change compatibility earlier in the development process as part of the review of a sketch plan or zoning action, and, therefore, will require a much less strenuous consistency review relative to the *Master Plan*. However, while acknowledging the various levels of discretion and review needed, it is important that all land use applications (zoning and subdivision) be evaluated relative to consistency and overall support of the *Master Plan*.

One of the functions of the County's Planning and Community Development (PCD) staff is to perform technical review of all land use applications, including review for consistency with the *Master Plan*. This process includes initial discussions with the applicant at a pre-application meeting to discuss overarching *Master Plan* concepts and general consistency of the land use proposal. Once the formal land use application is submitted for technical review, the PCD staff then engages in detailed discussions with the applicant on the unique aspects of the application in terms of consistency with the *Master Plan*. This step includes highlighting for the applicant any areas of potential consistency and/or inconsistency. The efforts of the PCD staff in evaluating an application's consistency with the *Master Plan* culminates in the preparation of a staff report wherein staff provides the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners a thorough account of staff's technical assessment of the application compared to the various components of the *Master Plan*. The Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners conduct open and public hearings on land use applications and take an action on the application, which will typically include a finding of consistency or inconsistency with the *Master Plan*.

In making this finding, the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners are asked to weigh the merits of each individual land use application against all applicable components of the *Master Plan*. Approval of a land use application does not necessarily require a finding that the application is fully consistent with each and every applicable component of the *Master Plan*, likewise, denial of an application does not necessarily require a finding of inconsistency with all applicable components of the *Master Plan*. Both hearing bodies have the discretion to give greater weight to individual components of the *Master Plan* compared to other components when taking a formal action to either approve, approve with conditions, or deny an application.

## Guidance for Evaluating Land Use Applications

The **Master Plan** should be relied upon for guidance when considering land use applications and determining consistency with the **Plan** should be added to the Land Development Code as one of the criteria for approval when taking formal action to approve or deny a land use application. By using the **Master Plan** as an evaluation tool and decision-making guide, questions like those below can help determine land use compatibility and overall appropriateness and desirability from a planning perspective:

- Is the proposed use located within a Key Area? If so, how will the proposed use affect the unique identity or character of the Key Area?
- Does the proposed use promote the level of change identified in the Areas of Change map?
- Does the use fall within the primary or supporting land uses within the identified Placetype? Is the proposed use consistent with the character and objectives of the Placetype?
- Is the use located within a Priority Annexation Area? If so, how does the nearby municipality plan for or otherwise address the subject property and does the proposed use align with the municipality's plan(s)?

- Is the use located within a Housing Priority Development Area? If so, is the proposed use one of the identified housing types for the area?
- Is the use located within a Commercial Priority Development Area? If so, is the proposed use one of the identified commercial uses for the area?
- Is the use located within an Employment Priority Development Area? If so, is the proposed use one of the identified employment-focused uses for the area?
- Is there existing infrastructure to which the proposed development can connect? If so, is connection proposed and how will it be accomplished? If not, is there a plan for future extension of infrastructure to the property?
- Does the development trigger the need for pedestrian or multimodal connections and are such connections being proposed?
- Does the proposed use/development incorporate appropriate conservation design principles as identified in the **Master Plan**?
- Will the proposed use/development further the County's objective of meeting the Vision, Principles, Goals, and Objectives of the **Master Plan**?
- Does the proposed use/development support the Implementation Objectives and Specific Strategies of the **Master Plan**?

These questions are not intended to be all-inclusive of all of the questions or factors that should be considered when determining consistency with the **Master Plan**. Rather, they are among the many considerations that could help guide the decision-making process associated with evaluating land use proposals.

The County should also continue to perform detailed review of land use related requests by comparing the proposed land use with the regulations outlined in the Land Development Code, including determining whether the proposed use could have significant adverse impacts on nearby properties resulting in negative use-to-use compatibility issues. Some requests may include a proposed use that was not identified or otherwise anticipated within the respective **Master Plan** Placetype. In this instance, the proposal should not be immediately discounted as inconsistent with the **Master Plan**, but instead should be evaluated based upon the merits of the proposal for overall consistency with the **Plan**, compatibility with the surrounding land uses, and whether the use supports the overall character of the area. Considering this, the County should remain open-minded and adaptable to "one-off" uses, which may include necessary but locally questionable uses. It may prove to be vitally important that the County seize opportunities that benefit the economic vitality and development potential of the community, but do so while responsibly managing natural resources and preserving the overall character of each Placetype. Since it is not possible to know or predict all potential future uses or opportunities, the **Master Plan** should serve as a guide to assist the County in evaluating each and every land use proposal.

## Additional Factors to be Considered

The following additional factors should be taken into consideration when reviewing the siting of a proposed use, including determining potential impacts to the surrounding area.

- **Major Roadway Access.** Connectivity and access to major roadways as well as traffic impacts and roadway degradation must be considered. If the proposed use is expected to create a large influx of traffic, existing roadway capacities must be assessed to ensure the use can be sufficiently supported. The County may require upfront and/or phased capacity improvements and safety enhancements in order to ensure public safety and to minimize the impacts to County infrastructure. If the proposed use is anticipated to cause undue degradation to County roadways, then the use should be carefully considered along with all necessary mitigation measures.
- **Larger Land Area.** There are several individual large parcels as well as situations in which multiple smaller adjacent parcels are all owned by a single landowner. These parcel configuration and ownership situations create desirable opportunities for siting larger land uses, some of which may trigger the requirement for approval of a variance of use request. Multiple parcels under the same ownership, for example, could be consolidated to support and mitigate the impacts typically associated with large-scale land uses, such as energy generation facilities, landfills, mineral extraction operations, or concrete batch plants.
- **Environmental Impacts.** El Paso County contains a wide variety of environmentally sensitive areas that are cherished by residents and visitors alike. It is important that land uses, and especially uses allowed via the variance of use process, do not significantly impact these natural areas.
- **Well-Integrated Within Established Placetype.** When land use requests propose a use that is different than what a respective Placetype typically anticipates, the siting, scale, intensity, setbacks, and aesthetic nature should be evaluated to determine if the use can be appropriately integrated into the surrounding area. Where the proposed use is a desired use but exhibits some degree of use-to-use incompatibility, enhanced methods of buffering and screening should be considered and implemented, as appropriate, at a scale that ensures reasonable mitigation of anticipated negative impacts.
- **Connectivity to Adjacent Placetypes.** It is important that all land uses are well connected to adjacent Placetypes. This may mean ensuring new roadways are appropriately paved, well-maintained, and integrated into the surrounding network; preventing dead-end roads; and providing safe, well-connected pedestrian access near residential areas and areas that provide daily goods and services. Environmental connectivity, such as wildlife migration corridors, open space contiguity, and drainageways are also key considerations.

## A Flexible Plan

Recognizing that it is impossible to foresee or forecast all future land use or development requests and given the unpredictable nature of land use requests, this **Plan** was written with the intention of remaining open and flexible. Moving forward, while using the **Master Plan** as a foundational guide for decision-making, it will be the role of County officials to implement the **Plan** by making decisions on land use requests in a manner that best fits the needs and vision of El Paso County.

## Funding Sources

Some policies and strategies recommended in the Master Plan may require special financing or expertise. In these cases, the County should pursue external partnerships and funding sources. A list of potential funding sources and incentives is provided in the following section. County staff should regularly monitor these sources to account for legislative or statutory changes that may influence the applicability or availability of funding, as well as proactively seek new, available funding sources. The following list provides a general overview of potential tools and resources rather than a detailed list of all requirements and applications.

## Housing

### *Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)*

LIHTCs are dollar-for-dollar federal tax credits for the creation of multifamily, affordable housing units. A developer could receive either a four or nine percent credit to cover the costs of redeveloping a multifamily building. This credit helps to increase the housing stock of livable housing units in neighborhoods. In addition, it provides affordable options for low-income families and helps them to access better neighborhoods.

### *Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HTC)*

HTCs are subsidies used for the preservation of historically significant buildings and/or neighborhoods. A developer could receive up to a 45 percent tax credit for the rehabilitation and maintenance of a historic property. The Federal Historic Tax Credit provides a 20 percent federal income-tax credit to renovate income-producing, historic buildings. The State's Historic Preservation Tax Credit allows developers to obtain up to a 25 percent state income-tax credit on the rehabilitation of a historic property. By using HTCs qualifying housing could be saved, and properties of significance preserved.

### *Senior & Active Military Property Tax Deferral Program*

The Colorado Department of Treasury makes payments directly to the County for property taxes of qualifying seniors and active military personnel. This direct payment of property taxes is a lien against the property and does not have to be paid back until the individual is no longer eligible for deferment. Seniors must be at least 65 years old. Military personnel must be actively serving by January 1 of the year they sign up for the program. All previous years' property taxes must be paid and participants must own and occupy the property to participate in the program. As of 2016 El Paso County had 61 participants in the Deferral Program, second-most in the State behind Boulder County with 364.

### *Senior & Veteran Property Tax Abatement Program*

The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) administers this program for seniors, their surviving spouses, and veterans living with disabilities. Through DOLA, the State Treasury distributes funds that cover half of the first \$200,000 in actual value of their property. Seniors must be at least 65 years old and have owned and occupied the property as their primary residence for the past ten years. Veterans must be rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as permanently disabled and owned and occupied the property as their primary residence on January 1 of their application year. In 2019, El Paso County had approximately 27,000 seniors and 2,400 veterans in the program totaling nearly 30,000 applicants. Among all counties in Colorado, Jefferson County had the largest number of applicants with almost 40,000.

### *Local & State Housing Authorities*

Local and state housing authorities are established to help promote affordable housing and community development within their respective geographies. These organizations facilitate the operations of various programs to provide needs such as Section 8 housing, public housing, senior housing, loans and bonds, and tax credit partnerships. The following Housing Authorities are active in the County: El Paso County Housing Authority, Colorado Springs Housing Authority, Fountain Housing Authority, and Colorado Housing Finance Authority.

### *Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)*

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program provides local governments, in conjunction with citizen participation, the opportunity to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The CDBG prioritizes activities benefiting low- and moderate-income residents, aiding in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or meeting an urgent community need. The following reports were conducted by the County to inform CDBG prioritization:

- **2017-2021 Assessment of Fair Housing Report** – Assessed fair housing conditions and identified issues in El Paso County.
- **2017-2021 Community Development Block Grant Consolidated Plan** – Five-year planning document that identifies housing, community, and economic development needs throughout the County and outlines strategies for prioritizing and addressing needs.
- **2018 Community Development Block Grant Annual Action Plan** – Compilation of prioritized objectives and activities to be undertaken in 2018 that was informed by the Consolidated Plan and the Fair Housing Assessment.
- **2017 Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)** – Report outlining the progress the jurisdiction has made in carrying out its strategic and action plans.

### *County Programs*

The Economic Development Department works with El Paso County Housing Authority (EPCHA) to help build affordable housing units in the County. Several housing programs administered by the El Paso County Economic Development Department currently operate within El Paso County to help provide communities with suitable living environments as well as assistance to homeowners for repairs and rehabilitations.

- **Single Family Turnkey Plus Mortgage Program** – Provides a partially forgivable Down Payment Assistance (DPA) Loan to eligible individuals and families who want to purchase a home anywhere in El Paso County.
- **Single Family Housing Rehabilitation Program** – Provides eligible County residents with a grant or loan funding to remove accessibility barriers for person with disabilities as well as health and safety improvements to the home.
- **Multifamily Mortgage Bond Program** – Finances the development of multifamily housing through the issuance of tax-exempt bonds in return for some or all units set aside for County residents of low- to moderate-income.
- **Housing Trust Fund** – An internally self-sustained fund available in the form of loans or the direct purchase of services that prioritizes the development of new, affordable, and accessible housing units.
- **Housing Resource Hotlines** – Phone-based assistance available to County residents in need of housing resources.

## Economic Development

### ***Small Business Development Center***

The Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is El Paso County's resource for small business establishment. The center offers a wide range of services including free consulting, workshops, networking events, and long-term programs. The County's Economic Development Department hosts the SBDC as a component unit of the Department. Being under the Economic Development umbrella has created a strong collaborative relationship that has spurred the development of several strategic programs to support small businesses in the County including Bundle Up for Small Businesses and Leading Edge. Coordination between the SBDC and the Economic Development Department ensures that all programs have a financial component and supportive services. As the County continues to grow and begins the process of updating its Five-Year Strategic Plan, it should continue to collaborate internally across departments to create incentives and policies that support the efforts of the SBDC.

### ***Colorado Main Street Loans***

This loan program offers character-based financing options for small businesses unable to secure a conventional loan or start their business. Loans range between \$5,000 to \$50,000 and are intended to support a variety of business purposes in underserved communities. Funds are available for start-up expenses, working capital, purchasing equipment, leasehold improvements, buying a business or franchise, or business debt refinancing. Funding for this loan program comes from a variety of sources, including banks, foundations, private entities, investors, and government agencies.

### ***Planning Program & Local Technical Assistance Program***

The Local Technical Assistance program strengthens the capacity of local or state organizations, institutions of higher education, and other eligible recipients to create regional economic development plans to improve economic prosperity and resiliency of an area, such as through feasibility studies and impact analyses. The Program is administered by the Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration and offers up to \$300,000 with a cost-share/match requirement.

### ***Existing Industry Customized Training Programs***

Administered by the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade and the Colorado Community College System, the program provides up to \$1,200 per full-time employee. The training program provides funds for net new hire training and focuses on businesses relocating to or expanding in Colorado and are in need of training workers with the skills necessary to improve their productivity, increase wages, and reduce the need for public support. The program focuses on established Colorado companies to assist them in remaining competitive within their industry, adapt to new technology, and prevent layoffs.

### ***Biotechnology Sales & Use Tax Refund***

Qualified taxpayers may seek a refund every year for all Colorado sales and use taxes they paid on purchases of tangible personal property used directly in research and development of biotechnology. This includes properties such as microscopes, chemical reagents, and software.

### ***Colorado Historical Foundation (CHF) Revolving Loan Fund: Preservation Loans***

The Colorado Historical Foundation established the CHF Revolving Loan Fund to provide financing for preservation projects and the acquisition of historically designated properties. CHF Revolving Loan Fund loans are for rehabilitation, restoration, or adaptive reuse. Projects must adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings. The funds can also be applied to the purchase of a national or local historically designated property in Colorado.

### ***Tax Incremental Financing/Urban Renewal Areas***

Urban Renewal Areas (URA) provide the opportunity to fund eligible improvements within a specific geographic area as property tax revenue increases. The increase in tax revenue, or increment, over the base year of establishing tax increment financing (TIF) can be leveraged for infrastructure improvements, property acquisition, improvements to existing development, and related allocations. The duration of the TIF is 25 years with the opportunity to be reset or restarted but not without going to the taxing districts for approval or new pledges. Projects may now request County property and/or sales tax to assistance with the TIF and are reviewed in close coordination with CSURA.

### ***Rural Technical Assistance Program***

The State of Colorado's Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) operates a program specifically for rural economic development. The Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) offers a community-centric approach to strengthening economies in the State's rural areas. Communities qualified for the Rural Jumpstart or Enterprise Zone programs are automatically eligible to participate in the RTAP. With the ultimate goal of creating and retaining jobs in rural communities, RTAP includes seven different initiatives for supporting existing businesses, bolstering existing industries, and removing barriers for entrepreneurs. The initiatives include:

- Certified Small Business Community
- Community Placemaking
- Coworking 101
- Colorado Rural Academy for Tourism (CRAFT) Studio 201
- Creativity Lab of Colorado
- Film Festival
- Grow Your Outdoor Recreation Industry

The Economic Development Department, in collaboration with the SBDC, should promote these initiatives in its unincorporated communities. The SBDC has had recent success in bolstering rural economies in the Falcon and Peyton areas, but these initiatives can help expand that success. The County should also consider working directly with interested communities to apply for these initiatives.

### ***Pikes Peak Enterprise Zone Program***

The Pikes Peak Enterprise Zone Program (EZ) was established to improve the local business climate and facilitate economic growth in targeted areas of El Paso County. The EZ is a state income tax credit incentive which encourages new and established businesses to locate and expand in economically distressed areas.

### ***Commercial Aeronautical Zone (CAZ)***

The Commercial Aeronautical Zone (CAZ) was established to attract local businesses and allow them to succeed at the Colorado Springs Airport. Aeronautical businesses can benefit from numerous tax rebates within the CAZ by resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

### ***Business Personal Property Tax Credit***

Since 2000, El Paso County has provided a credit to businesses for the County's share of business personal property taxes. All businesses receive this credit and it is applied as a Tax Rate Reduction/Credit on Property Tax Statements from the El Paso County Treasurer. All types of businesses, from restaurants to manufacturers, are provided this incentive.

### ***New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC)***

Administered by the Department of the Treasury, the NMTC increases the flow of capital to businesses and low-income areas by providing a modest tax incentive to private investors, businesses, and communities across the country. The Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA), through the Colorado Growth and Revitalization (CGR) fund, administers NMTCs in the State of Colorado.

### **Opportunity Zones (OZ)**

Enacted as part of the 2017 tax reform package (Tax Cuts and Jobs Act), Opportunity Zones are federal tax incentives to increase investment in low-income urban and rural communities. This economic development incentive allows investors to support distressed communities through private equity investments in businesses and real estate projects. The incentive is the deferral, reduction, and potential elimination of specific federal capital gains taxes. Investments are only applicable in a federally designated low-income census tract. Investments must be made into a Qualified Opportunity Fund (QOF). The QOF then must deploy 90 percent of the funds into qualified opportunity zone properties or businesses within six months.

### **Manufacturing Sales & Use Tax Exemption**

This tax exemption is offered through the Colorado Department of Revenue. It provides an exemption from state sales and use tax on purchases of manufacturing machinery, machine tools, and parts. Industrial businesses throughout El Paso County may be eligible for this exemption.

### **Colorado FIRST Grants**

Administered jointly between the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade and the Colorado Community College System, the grants offer up to \$1,400 per full-time employee for companies relocating to or expanding in Colorado to assist with training funds for net new hires.

### **Advanced Industry Investment Tax Credit**

This tax credit administered through the Colorado Office of Economic Development helps Colorado advanced industry companies that are headquartered in Colorado receive more capital from Colorado investors. Colorado's seven advanced industries are Advanced Manufacturing, Aerospace, Bioscience, Electronics, Energy/Natural Resources/Cleantech, Infrastructure Engineering, and Technology and Information. The investor, the investee, and the investment all must meet certain criteria (more detailed information available on the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade website).

### **Renewable Energy Sales & Use Tax Exemption**

Applicable businesses may receive this exemption annually for all Colorado sales and use taxes they paid on purchases of tangible personal property used directly in research and development of biotechnology.

### **Clean Tech and Media Tech Sales & Use Tax Refund**

Through the Colorado Department of Revenue, this refund is available to businesses employing fewer than 36 full-time employees in Colorado with its headquarters or 50 percent of all employees in the State. Covered items and activities include the sale, storage, use, or consumption of property used for research and development of clean or medical technology.

### **Job Growth Incentive Tax Credit**

This state funding source through the Colorado Office of Economic Development is intended to provide a state income tax credit to businesses undertaking job creation projects that would not occur in Colorado without this program. Businesses need to create at least 20 new jobs in Colorado, with an average yearly wage of at least 100 percent of the county average wage rate based on where the business is located. A business located in an Enhanced Rural Enterprise Zone must create at least five new jobs in Colorado, with an average yearly wage of at least 100 percent of the county average wage. All new jobs must be maintained for at least one year after the positions are hired to qualify.

### **Strategic Fund Incentive**

Offered through the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, this incentive supports and encourages new business development, business expansions, and relocations that have generated new jobs throughout the State. Local businesses must create new jobs in Colorado that are maintained for at least one year (see fact sheet on the Strategic Fund Incentive website for full requirements).

### **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)**

This tax credit encourages employers to hire nine targeted groups of job seekers: Welfare/TANF recipients, Veterans receiving Food Stamps, Disabled Veterans, Ex-Offenders, Designated Community Residents, Vocational Rehabilitation, Food Stamp recipients between the ages of 18 and 39, Supplemental Security Income recipients, and Long Term TANF Recipients. The tax credit is administered by the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trades, and eligible employers can receive \$2,400 to \$9,000 per new employee.

## **Transportation**

There are various federal and state-funded programs for which El Paso County may apply. Most of the programs require a local match depending on the type of program. Below are a few of the programs available:

- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Off-System Bridge Program (BRO)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- Highway Users Tax Fund
- Congressional Appropriation Earmarked Federal Funding with Local Match (Demonstration)

The El Paso County Major Transportation Corridors Plan (MTCP) includes greater details on available funding sources for transportation improvements in El Paso County.

### **Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is responsible for carrying out the statewide transportation planning process to receive federal funding for transportation improvement projects. The STIP contains capital and non-capital transportation projects and programs needing funding under Title 23 (Highways) and Title 49 (Transit) of the U.S. Code. The program also contains regionally significant transportation projects requiring action by the federal highway administration (FHWA) or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). A STIP, by law, must be financially constrained. Therefore, all funding sources must be identified for each project.

Under federal rules, CDOT develops a STIP for all areas of the State and provides timely public notice and a reasonable opportunity for comment on the proposed programs. CDOT currently updates its STIP annually, exceeding the required four-year timeframe, keeping up to date with the long-range Statewide Transportation Plan (SWP). The STIP development process includes detailed discussions with local planning partners.

## Parks, Open Space & Trails

### ***Land & Water Conservation Fund***

This fund provides matching grants to states and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities (as well as funding for shared federal land acquisition and conservation strategies). Funds are provided through the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management.

### ***Nonmotorized Trail Grants***

The mission of the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Trails Program is to promote understanding and stewardship of Colorado's outdoors by providing opportunities for the public use and support of Colorado's diverse system of trails. The grant program is a partnership among Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Colorado Lottery, the federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

### ***Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)***

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) prioritizes activities benefiting low- and moderate-income residents, aiding in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or meeting an urgent community need. This can include funding to improve parks, trails, and other recreation opportunities in low and middle income areas of the County.

### ***Colorado Springs Health Foundation Grants (CSHF)***

The mission of the Colorado Spring Health Foundation Grants program is to provide grants that target immediate health care needs and encourage healthy living. One of CSHF funding focuses is to cultivate healthy environments in high-need or under served communities. Healthy environments are those that encourage physical activity or those that increase access to healthy affordable food. CSHF can be utilized to provide parks, trails, and other recreation opportunities in low income areas of the County.

## Environment & Sustainability

### ***Colorado Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (CBRLF)***

This fund is intended to facilitate the reuse and/or redevelopment of contaminated sites by making low-cost funding available for financing environmental cleanups. It is administered by the U.S. EPA and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

### ***Natural Resources Matching Grants Program***

This program provides matching state funds towards the costs of on-the-ground conservation projects and educational conservation activities. Grant funds range between \$1,000 and \$25,000. Administered through the Colorado Department of Agriculture, the matching grant is a competitive program. A committee of government and private conservation experts score the applications based on the following criteria: focused approach with measurable outcomes, conservation impact, feasibility, district involvement, and partner involvement.

### ***Source Water Assessment & Protection Pilot Planning Project***

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment provides funds for source water protection entities that develop exemplary and comprehensive source water protection plans. Funding ranges between \$25,000 and \$50,000.

### ***Protection Plan Development & Implementation Grants***

This grant program provides funds for source water protection entities to develop and implement a protection plan up to \$5,000. It is administered by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

### ***Wildlife Restoration Program***

This program provides grant funds to states and insular areas fish and wildlife agencies for projects to restore, conserve, manage, and enhance wild birds and mammals and their habitats.

### ***Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund Grants***

Administered by the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, this fund provides both project and planning grants. Project grants are intended for projects that promote the improvement and/or protection of the condition of the watershed. Planning grants are for the planning of successful watershed restoration or protection projects. Eligible applicants include locally based watershed protection groups who are committed to a collaborative approach to the restoration and protection of lands and natural resources within Colorado's watersheds.

### ***Colorado Watershed Restoration Grants***

The Colorado Department of Natural Resources provides grants for watershed/stream restoration and flood mitigation projects throughout the State.

## Action Matrix

The Action Matrix offers a comprehensive list of all implementation strategies, policies, and recommendations contained within *Your El Paso Master Plan*. The matrix provides staff with a tool to prioritize implementation activities and projects over the life of the Plan. In addition, the matrix allows the County to approve specific, actionable items on an annual basis and evaluate progress based upon completed implementation strategies. The implementation action matrix offers a brief description of each action or project, priority actions, and time frame.

## Responsible Entity & Partner Organization

In most instances, the entities and/or partner organizations that are responsible for implementation of each recommendation within the matrix have been identified in the appropriate sections of each chapter of this Plan. In other instances, implementation of a recommendation will require efforts by multiple different entities and/or partner organizations. In this instance, no specific entity or organization has been identified. The County should continue to work with the appropriate entities and/or partner organizations to implement the recommendation.

## Time Frame

'S' = Short-Term (1-3 Years)

'M' = Mid-Term (3-5 Years)

'L' = Long-Term (5+ Years)

'O' = Ongoing (Requires immediate action and continued attention throughout the life of the Plan)

# Land Use

**Core Principle: Manage growth to ensure a variety of compatible land uses that preserve all character areas of the County.**

## Goal LU1.

**Ensure compatibility with established character and infrastructure capacity.**

### Objectives

**Objective LU1-1:** Some areas of the County should be planned for new development, while other areas should be preserved, protected, or see little new development.

**Objective LU1-2:** Continue to partner with all of the military installations to maintain compatible use transitions and buffers adjacent to each installation through open space protection and site-specific development restrictions.

**Objective LU1-3:** Protected/Conservation Areas should be preserved due to their local, ecological, or historical influence.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Due to its unique nature and overall importance, the Mountain Interface placetype must be appropriately preserved to help maintain the natural beauty of the County and protect the habitats of its abundant and diverse wildlife. New development within the Mountain Interface placetype must be well managed against the necessity of preservation and protection of this unique environmental area of the County.
- Fountain Creek should continue to be protected by limiting development in and near the Fountain Creek Watershed, Flood Control, and Greenway District boundaries. Any proposed development within the District will need to adhere to the District's land use standards to prevent or otherwise mitigate any negative impacts.
- All new development and redevelopment in the Forested Area should strictly adhere to the transportation and infrastructure, stormwater requirements, built form, and transition guidelines outlined in their appropriate placetypes. Each development proposal should also be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine its specific impact on the Forested Area and the established character of the individual community.
- Corral Bluffs should be considered as an open space buffer to preserve the character of the adjacent rural areas to the east.
- Extending the boundaries of Paint Mines Park should be considered to help preserve this distinct County amenity and provide more public open space in the future.
- New development and any redevelopment in Forested Areas should be of a lower intensity to mitigate any impacts on the Forest, properly manage stormwater, provide safe access to major roads and state highways for the traveling public and emergency response vehicles and adhere to the strictest building codes to prevent any hazards such as fires and soil erosion related to poor planning, design, and construction.
- The Minimal Change: Undeveloped areas should experience some redevelopment of select underutilized or vacant sites adjacent to other built-out sites, but such redevelopment will be limited in scale so as to not alter the essential character.
- Ensure appropriate density and use transitions for new development that occurs between differing placetypes.
- Conservation design (or clustered development) should routinely be considered for new development within the Large-Lot Residential placetype to provide for a similar level of development density as existing large-lot areas while maximizing the preservation of contiguous areas of open space and the protection of environmental features.

### Time Page

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## Goal LU2.

**Coordinate context-sensitive annexation and growth strategies with municipalities.**

### Objectives

**Objective LU2-1:** Continue to coordinate with the individual cities and towns as they plan for growth. Collaboration with the individual communities will prevent the unnecessary duplication of efforts, overextension of resources, and spending of funds.

**Objective LU2-2:** The character and intensity of new development or redevelopment in County enclaves should match that of the development in the municipality surrounding it.

**Objective LU2-3:** Prioritize the annexation of existing unincorporated County enclaves as opportunities arise.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Continue to prioritize nonresidential growth in the Colorado Springs Airport area to help expand the employment center in unincorporated El Paso County.
- **Priority:** Coordinate with the U.S. Forest Service and the City of Colorado Springs to identify opportunities for the County to help ensure Pikes Peak is preserved and maintained as both a natural amenity and an economic asset.
- Coordinate with each of the municipalities experiencing substantial growth the development of an intergovernmental agreement similar to that developed with Colorado Springs.
- Regularly revisit discussions with the City of Colorado Springs and other municipalities regarding possible annexation of enclaves or development of intergovernmental agreements to explore means to finance improvements and service debt to make annexation a feasible consideration.
- Coordinate future development adjacent and within the Peterson Air Force Base flight area buffer with the military installations to ensure growth doesn't negatively impact the primary functions of Peterson Air Force Base.

### Time Page

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'S' = Short-Term (1-3 Years) 'M' = Mid-Term (3-5 Years) 'L' = Long-Term (5+ Years) 'O' = Ongoing

# Land Use Continued

**Core Principle: Manage growth to ensure a variety of compatible land uses that preserve all character areas of the County.**

## Goal LU3.

Encourage a range of development types to support a variety of land uses.

### Objectives

**Objective LU3-1:** Development should be consistent with the allowable land uses set forth in the placetypes first and second to their built form guidelines.

**Objective LU3-2:** The agricultural lands within the Rural placetype represent a valuable economic resource and unique lifestyle that should be preserved.

**Objective LU3-3:** The Suburban Residential placetype should be characterized by predominantly residential areas with mostly single-family detached housing.

**Objective LU3-4:** The Urban Residential placetype should consist of established neighborhoods immediately adjacent to equally dense or more dense urban neighborhoods in incorporated areas, as well as new, largely residential neighborhoods in previously undeveloped areas where centralized utility services are available.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** The New Development areas will be significantly transformed as new development takes place on lands currently largely designated as undeveloped or agricultural areas. Undeveloped portions of the County that are adjacent to a built out area should be developed to match the character of that adjacent development or to a different supporting or otherwise complementary one such as an employment hub or business park adjacent to an urban neighborhood.
- **Priority:** The Transition areas are fully developed parts of the County that may completely or significantly change in character. In these areas, redevelopment will be intense enough to transition the existing development setting to an entirely new type of development.
- Future development in the Tri-Lakes Area should align with the existing character and strengthen the residential, commercial, employment, and entertainment opportunities in the adjacent communities of Monument, Palmer Lake, and Woodmoor.
- The Minimal Change: Developed areas are likely to see more intense infill development with a mix of uses and scale of redevelopment that will significantly impact the character of an area. Regardless of the development that may occur, if these areas evolve to a new development pattern of differing intensity, their overall character should be maintained.
- As a gathering place and town center for rural areas, development within the Rural Center placetype should be located along a community's main street or near the intersection of an area's most-frequented roadways.
- The Regional Open Space placetype includes undeveloped areas with significant ecological value as well as programmed parks accommodating passive and active recreation, both of which may function as stormwater-management facilities.
- The Utility placetype, which includes facilities such as landfills, power plants, water treatment facilities, and water reservoirs, is often located adjacent to the Rural or Large-Lot Residential placetypes as these are largely uninhabited areas.

### Time Page

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## Goal LU4.

Continue to encourage policies that ensure "development pays for itself."

### Objectives

**Objective LU4-1:** Foster collaboration among the Forest Service and the other destinations in the Pikes Peak influence area to coordinate events and activities that capitalize on the high volume of visitors to Pikes Peak to further bolster the County's economy.

**Objective LU4-2:** The Regional Center placetype should include large scale shopping centers that house a variety of commercial businesses and support a high activity of users on a regular basis such as grocery stores, pharmacies, clothing stores, automotive centers, restaurants, entertainment opportunities, home improvement stores, and other major retailers.

**Objective LU4-3:** Employment Centers should comprise land for industrial, office, business park, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, and other similar business uses.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Continue to evaluate development impact fees, requiring adequate private investment to defray the cost of capital improvements needed due to new development so that new development will not overburden County resources, and will be served by adequate infrastructure until they can be incorporated if necessary or desired
- **Priority:** Annexation should be considered as development occurs in unincorporated areas that are adjacent to incorporated municipalities
- The county should revise or update the Special District Policies in conjunction with the involved and affected county departments.

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O	45
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'S' = Short-Term (1-3 Years) 'M' = Mid-Term (3-5 Years) 'L' = Long-Term (5+ Years) 'O' = Ongoing



# Housing and Communities

Core Principle: Preserve and develop neighborhoods with a mix of housing types.

## Goal HC1.

Promote development of a mix of housing types in identified areas.

### Objectives

**Objective HC1-1:** In Larger Enclaves, vacant industrial should be redeveloped to an entertainment use or small commercial retail center to better support residents.

**Objective HC1-2:** In Larger Enclaves, redevelop deteriorating single-family homes and sporadic commercial businesses to single-family attached or multifamily units to increase density where appropriate in the context of the existing neighborhood.

**Objective HC1-3:** Prioritize higher-quality redevelopment of any primary or supporting land use for the Urban Residential placetype as opportunities arise.

**Objective HC1-4:** In Suburban Residential areas, clustered development should be encouraged to increase density while also preserving open space and such development should consist of a mix of single-family detached, single-family attached, and multifamily units.

**Objective HC1-5:** Focus detached housing development in Large-Lot Residential and Suburban Residential areas given the increasing infrastructure and environmental constraints associated with such development to help maintain the established character of rural communities.

**Objective HC1-6:** Single-family attached housing such as townhomes, rowhomes, and multi-unit apartment homes should be used to create seamless transitions between low-intensity and high-intensity neighborhoods as well as nonresidential uses.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Continue to prioritize Suburban Residential in the area along Highway 24 in an effort to sustain Falcon's growth momentum. Suburban Residential would match the community's existing character and utilize available land to accommodate a sizable portion of the County's expected population growth without negatively impacting adjacent areas.
- Infill development in the Colorado Centre area should further support single-family detached units with some single-family attached, possibly along Horizon View Drive.
- Single-family attached and detached housing units should be developed in the Highway 105 & Interstate 25 area in a cohesive manner that establishes a seamless transition between different housing types, as opposed to large, isolated clusters or blocks of a single type of housing. Maintaining a mixed development pattern in this area should be prioritized by the County to preserve the existing residential character.
- Residential development near municipal boundaries adjacent to Falcon may include single-family attached and multifamily units.
- Immediate adjacency to Highway 24 should be utilized for larger commercial development, not only to support neighborhoods but also to capture commuters.

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O	51
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'S' = Short-Term (1-3 Years) 'M' = Mid-Term (3-5 Years) 'L' = Long-Term (5+ Years) 'O' = Ongoing

# Housing & Communities Continued

Core Principle: Preserve and develop neighborhoods with a mix of housing types.

## Goal HC2.

Preserve the character of rural and environmentally sensitive areas.

### Objectives

**Objective HC2-1:** While large expanses of undeveloped land exist throughout the County, particularly in the Rural placetype, development should be prioritized elsewhere to efficiently utilize and extend existing infrastructure, conserve water resources, and strengthen established neighborhoods.

**Objective HC2-2:** Provide input and support to municipalities when updating their annexation plans to help identify areas for incorporation into municipalities based on infrastructure needs, maintenance costs and available funding, municipal interest and capacity, and other factors.

**Objective HC2-3:** Coordinate regularly with municipalities to maintain knowledge of plans for annexation.

**Objective HC2-4:** Ensure all future municipal annexations are contiguous to municipal limits to prevent the formation of enclaves of unincorporated areas.

**Objective HC2-5:** All future development proposals should be review to ensure they will not negatively impact the natural, environmental, or economic functions of the Mountain Interface placetype.

**Objective HC2-6:** Continue to carefully analyze each development proposal for their location, compatibility with the natural environment, and cohesion with the existing character.

**Objective HC2-7:** Regardless of the placetype within which future development is proposed, new development and redevelopment within El Paso County should be designed to incorporate a conservation design approach, where appropriate.

### Specific Strategies:

- Actively participate in the development of any new or updated comprehensive annexation plans being prepared by the incorporated municipalities, as appropriate. O 50
- Develop an intergovernmental agreement to coordinate with each of the municipalities experiencing substantial growth. O 50
- Prioritize suburban residential in the Highway 94 Priority Development Area to provide a transitional buffer between the City and less-dense unincorporated County to the east, helping to protect its rural character. L 53
- Efficiently use land to help preserve open space and reduce impacts on the critical missions being performed at Schriever Air Force Base and adjacent rural areas. O 53
- The County should prioritize Suburban Residential in the Fountain area to support annexation of this area into Fountain. O 53
- Denser development should be allowed in the Fountain Priority Development Area if compatible with the existing development pattern in the City of Fountain and central water and sewer services are extended. O 53
- Carefully plan the Black Forest/North Central Large-Lot Residential Priority Area to ensure preservation of natural areas while still accommodating new development for future residents. O 54
- Maintain existing and expand the Large-Lot Residential placetype in Black Forest/North Central area in a development pattern that matches the existing character of the developed Black Forest community. O 54
- While an overall density of 2.5 acres per lot should be maintained within the Highway 24 Large-Lot Residential Priority Area, consistent with the Large-Lot Residential placetype, denser development should be allowed if compatible with the existing development pattern and central water and sewer are being extended to provide a transition to expanding Suburban Residential development in Falcon and areas to the south. O 54
- Denser development is appropriate in areas with access and connectivity to the Highway 94 corridor with compatible development patterns and extension of central water and sewer infrastructure from an existing provider. This should also occur in the areas surrounding Ellicott. L 54
- Prioritize protection and conservation over new development and redevelopment in the Mountain Interface placetype, where appropriate. O 55
- Smaller-lot single-family detached homes that are sustainable and compatible where central services are available should be the only residential use allowed in the Mountain Interface placetype. O 55
- Residential development on individual well and septic should be limited in the Mountain Interface placetype. O 55
- Adequate emergency services, particularly fire management, and appropriate utility infrastructure should be present before approval of residential development is considered in the Mountain Interface placetype. O 55
- Emphasize the use of conservation easements to protect open space and farmland. O 64
- Density bonuses should also be considered in exchange for allocating areas for conservation when development is proposed within a suburban area or in large lot residential areas adjacent to growth areas. O 64
- The County should function as a coordinating body between the multiple conservation entities active within the region to streamline policies, identify recreation opportunities, identify land for purchase/transfer, and centralize participating properties into a singular GIS database. S 64
- Work with property owners (for both existing and future developments) to identify strategies to address stormwater runoff, leveraging stormwater best management practices (BMPs) and low-impact development (LID) techniques whenever possible. O 65
- Within the Large-Lot Residential placetype, conservation design should be primarily utilized for preserving El Paso County's rural character, defined by large swaths of open space with minimal development. O 65
- Large-Lot Residential development should not be allowed within a certain distance of the critical natural assets to ensure they are not negatively impacted by future development. Evaluate new developments on a case-by-case basis to determine their impact on these natural assets. O 65
- Conservation design should help establish a central commercial area in a Rural Center without encouraging sprawling land-consumption. O 65

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# Housing & Communities Continued

Core Principle: Preserve and develop neighborhoods with a mix of housing types.

## Goal HC3.

Locate attainable housing that provides convenient access to goods, services, and employment.

### Objectives

**Objective HC3-1:** Emphasize redevelopment of smaller enclaves to denser urban residential uses such as multifamily and single-family attached dwelling units where compatible and appropriate in the context of the existing neighborhood, which may also require parcel consolidation if existing businesses leave.

**Objective HC3-2:** Support mixed-use development, where feasible, in some of the smaller enclaves with appropriate parcel consolidation, roadway configuration, and design.

**Objective HC3-3:** Redevelopment in the smaller enclaves should emphasize residential development first and then accommodate supporting uses.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Consider increasing densities in key areas to reduce the land cost per unit for development. The primary focus should be in Urban Residential and Suburban Residential placetypes, which are appropriate for accommodating significant density that still conforms to the community’s desired character. Single-family attached and multifamily units should be located directly adjacent to commercial focal points to accommodate density in the County. O 61
- **Priority:** Permit projects that include a mix of housing types and increase market-driven affordability, including promoting missing middle housing options (duplexes, triplexes, multiplexes, courtyard apartments, and townhouses) on infill parcels within single-family neighborhoods to increase density and maintain neighborhood character. O 61
- Consider multifamily apartments on the west side of Horizon View Drive to help provide affordable options for future residents, many of which could be working at existing or new businesses around the Colorado Springs Airport. L 51
- Emphasize Stapleton Road, Woodmen Road and Vollmer Road as connectivity corridors that provide important access to necessary goods and services in surrounding communities, which also generally supports suburban residential development in the Falcon area. M 52
- Emphasize the Stapleton Road/Curtis Road corridor as a connectivity corridor that provides important access to necessary goods and services in this community, which also generally supports suburban residential development in the Highway 24 area. M 52
- Support the completion of Briargate Parkway/Stapleton Road to improve connectivity between Falcon and Colorado Springs. M 52
- Neighborhood-level commercial uses and public services should also be considered in Falcon at key intersections. L 52
- Consider allowing attached housing units throughout the Highway 94 Suburban Residential Priority Development Area on a case-by-case basis depending on the size and scale of each development. O 53
- Consider supporting commercial uses particularly along Highway 94 to serve the neighborhoods and workers at Schriever Air Force Base. L 53
- Prioritize suburban development to help increase density in the Schriever Air Force Base area with smaller-lot sizes, attached housing, and multifamily apartments. L 53
- Encourage expansion of the Rural Center in Ellicott to support the daily commercial needs of residents near Schriever Air Force Base. L 53
- Additional commercial uses should be developed at the Highway 94 and Enoch Road intersection in a manner compatible with and supportive of base operations as well as the anticipated suburban residential development. M 53
- Commercial nodes should be considered where appropriately served by the transportation network in the northern portion of the Black Forest/North Central Large-Lot Residential Priority Development Area to provide commercial goods and services within closer proximity to the population in this area and to reduce unnecessary travel to other parts of the County and establish key commercial areas within the communities that need them. L 54
- Allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs), where appropriate, as another tool to support more affordable rents and proactively promote the construction of ADUs by considering local fee waivers, pre-approved unit plans, assistance navigating the permit process, and by working with local lenders to ensure construction and permanent financing is available for homeowners wishing to build ADUs. O 61
- Consider reducing parking provisions, particularly for multifamily, to help reduce the amount (and cost) of land needed per unit. M 61
- Coordinate with the Economic Development Department and EPCHA as key partners in procuring, marketing, and utilizing housing incentives. O 61
- Consider partnering with existing affordable housing organizations such as El Paso County Housing Authority (EPCHA), Colorado Springs Housing Authority, and Fountain Housing Authority to establish a regional CLT and continue to work with Rocky Mountain Community Land Trust and Ithaka Land Trust to improve housing affordability in El Paso County. O 63
- Support and promote housing cooperatives in all residential areas, partnering with related organizations to help establish them when appropriate. O 63

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# Housing & Communities Continued

Core Principle: Preserve and develop neighborhoods with a mix of housing types.

## Goal HC4.

Support aging-in-place housing options to meet residents' needs through all stages of life.

### Objectives

**Objective HC4-1:** Denser housing development should occur in Suburban Residential, Urban Residential, Rural Center, and Regional Center placetypes.

**Objective HC4-2:** Duplexes, townhomes, multifamily apartments, condominiums, and senior housing projects should be considered in each of the residential placetypes on a case-by-case basis where they can be integrated into the character of a given neighborhood.

**Objective HC4-3:** Support the development of housing types that further support aging in place.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Encourage inclusion of single-family attached housing when a residential developer or property owner begins the development application process within the Suburban Residential, Urban Residential, Rural Center, and Regional Center placetypes.
- Encourage new and infill development within the significant area of available vacant or underutilized agricultural, land across Interstate 25 in the Highway 105 & Interstate 25 Suburban Residential Priority Development Area to continue the expansion of existing Suburban Residential areas.
- Continue coordinating with institutions that have group quarters to ensure they have appropriate space for any growth or changes to their installations that their current available land cannot accommodate.

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# Economic Development

Core Principle: Strengthen the economy with a skilled workforce and targeted investment.

## Goal ED1.

Recruit new businesses and spur the development of growing sectors.

### Objectives

**Objective ED1-1:** Identify barriers to mixed-use, including zoning, development, and subdivision provisions that prohibit such development.

**Objective ED1-2:** Evaluate the use of form-based code or zoning overlays to increase regulatory flexibility while maintaining consistent and context-sensitive design.

**Objective ED1-3:** To help activate spaces, provide more options for fun and recreation to residents.

**Objective ED1-4:** Attract more visitors to the County by emphasizing development of entertainment uses in Regional Centers.

**Objective ED1-5:** Allow residents to manage compatible, low-intensity personal businesses from their home to create greater opportunities for new companies to be established.

**Objective ED1-6:** Large employers should be located on major roadways to improve connectivity and minimize their impact on daily traffic.

**Objective ED1-7:** Transit routes and stops at or near all Employment Centers should be strategically located as these areas continue to develop and redevelop.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Collaborate with leading businesses in growing regional sectors including healthcare, technology, and logistics to identify and develop strategies to further expand these industries through cooperative arrangements with chambers of commerce, the Economic Development Department, and other organizations.
- Consider supporting smaller office uses to provide professional services in the Gleneagle community.
- Consider prioritizing Meadow Lake Airport for new employment uses to capitalize on the existing distribution network.
- Conduct a market analyses to identify gaps in retail, employment, and transit service and promote mixed use development in addressing these gaps.
- Light and heavy industrial should be the primary businesses in the Meadow Lake Airport area, while supporting uses such as commercial or restaurants should be coordinated with the Meadow Lake Airport Association.
- Continue to support existing businesses but also help the Security-Widefield Employment Center transition to more formal industrial uses as redevelopment allows.
- Allow office uses along the edge of the Security-Widefield Employment Center to help buffer adjacent residential uses.
- Require improved screening as redevelopment occurs in Security-Widefield while emphasizing the importance of internal placement in order to keep new non-residential uses well-separated from existing adjacent residential uses.
- Identify areas with enough land to support companies that require a significant development footprint as development continues to occur.
- Encourage child care services to locate in commercial areas and employment hubs to serve the growing work force and reduce unnecessary transportation burdens to users.
- Continue to navigate our dynamic economic landscape and develop further business incentive policies to assist in creating a robust, diversified, and equitable economic ecosystem.

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## Goal ED2.

Support efforts to recruit, train, and retain a skilled workforce.

### Objectives

**Objective ED2-1:** Transit routes and stops at or near all Employment Centers should be strategically located as these areas continue to develop and redevelop.

**Objective ED2-2:** Foster and further develop all partnerships that are essential to workforce development in the community to ensure residents have access to the tools and training they need to live and work in El Paso County.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Continue to work closely with the PPWFC and promote access to the PPWFC through its website and consider highlighting access to this resource in social media and promote not just the Center, but also the training opportunities it provides underscoring the grant based and free programs it offers.
- Continue to support the existing industrial businesses in the Bradley Road area.
- Consider providing direct access to this PPWFC through the Economic Development Department's website as a way to connect more residents to apprenticeship opportunities.
- Work with partners like Pikes Peak Community College and other Colorado Community Colleges and public and private universities to circulate PPWFC resources among enrolled and prospective students to connect them to careers in in-demand industries.
- Encourage Pikes Peak Community College, in partnership with the Economic Development Department and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), to promote the Existing Industry job training program with established businesses in the community and make information on the program widely available online through their websites and social media.
- Encourage the SBDC to consider providing application assistance to businesses in the community interested in utilizing the program for staff training and also utilize the Colorado First grant program to attract new businesses to El Paso County.
- Work with the Pikes Peak Library District to expand the Adult Education program to communities in El Paso County outside of the City of Colorado Springs to promote wider access to these services.
- Collaborate with the University of Colorado Colorado Springs College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences to learn from their experience during the Discovery Phase and executing the Action Phase of the Work-based Learning Lab program and utilize LAS as a partner to connect communities interested in the program to the CWDC and assist them with requirements of the program and ensure their Action Phase is successful.
- Consider expanded partnerships with the network of Colorado Community Colleges and public and private universities in the County to ensure these institutions have the tools and capacity they need to plug in and utilize the CDLE Apprenticeship Directory and, in the case of LAS, support them in completing the Action Phase of the CWDC Work-based Learning Lab program.
- Consider extending relationships to community groups that would be well suited to conduct the Work-based Learning Lab program such as community development corporations or educational institutions outside of Colorado Springs.
- Foster a relationship with is the Pikes Peak Library District to work towards County-wide offerings for adult education and similar programs.
- Brand the region in a way that brings people together and creates "buy-in." Creating and fostering a Pikes Peak-based identity can increase individuals' pride in being from and/or residing in El Paso County. It encourages communities to work together, and younger and transient populations to settle in the County and work towards a better future for the region.

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# Economic Development Continued

**Core Principle:** Strengthen the economy with a skilled workforce and targeted investment.

## Goal ED3.

Encourage the development of commercial districts in underserved areas.

### Objectives

**Objective ED3-1:** Continue promoting commercial development to serve increasing residential neighborhoods in the Falcon area.

**Objective ED3-2:** Highly consider entertainment businesses in order to foster more-engaging activity in Falcon, including but not limited to movie theaters, concert/theater venues, or sports and recreation facilities.

**Objective ED3-3:** Emphasize the development of grocery stores, restaurants (both drive-thru and sit-down), gas stations, pharmacies, and neighborhood-scale services along Highway 24.

**Objective ED3-4:** Strongly encourage mixed-use development within the Urban Residential placetype.

**Objective ED3-5:** Prioritize commercial development within or near rural communities and within the Rural Center placetype to limit barriers to shopping districts and employment centers.

**Objective ED3-6:** Prioritize commercial use as development opportunities arise in order to support the growing residential base in the rural areas.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Work to expand the Ellicott Rural Center with additional commercial uses to help support the surrounding growing residential including a larger grocery store, additional restaurants, coffee shops, and service businesses.
- Expand the Regional Center in Gleneagle to include larger commercial development, including large retail centers to support more residents and travelers along Interstate 25.
- The Regional Center in Falcon and the Rural Center in Peyton should be expanded to meet the growing commercial needs of the expanding residential development in this area.
- New residential uses in the Ellicott community would further support expansion of the Ellicott Rural Center area, which could help provide areas to the east with better access to goods and services.
- Prioritize the development of Rural Center in the Highway 24 Commercial Priority Development Area to serve adjacent Suburban Residential to the north of Highway 24 and the Large-Lot Residential to the south, which should also provide some general commercial directly adjacent to Meadow Lake Airport to support the employee population.
- Promote the development of undeveloped land and redevelopment of existing commercial areas in the Security-Widefield Commercial Priority Development Area near the Can Am Highway for commercial use to serve Security-Widefield and capture local commuters.
- Vacant land along Main Street in Security-Widefield should be redeveloped to strengthen the commercial nature of this street.
- Assist unincorporated communities in providing financial and regulatory incentives such as a height or density bonus or tax abatement to facilitate mixed use development in locations where mixed use is not a proven concept.
- Encourage the consolidation of smaller commercial businesses for redeveloped into a more employment-centric businesses along Bradley Road.
- Encourage the development of the available land along Bradley Road as a larger-scale employment use.

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## Goal ED4.

Utilize economic opportunity zones to support new business development.

### Objectives

**Objective ED4-1:** Continue to collaborate internally across departments when updating the Five-Year Strategic Plan to create incentives and policies that support the efforts of the SBDC.

**Objective ED4-2:** Target growing sectors of the region including professional services, healthcare, and technology for Highway 21 (Powers Boulevard).

**Objective ED4-3:** Emphasize the proximity to Peterson Air Force Base as an opportunity to support companies with a military focus.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Identify opportunities for infill and redevelopment such as underutilized properties along major transportation and transit corridors such as vacant commercial center properties or industrial brownfields and coordinate these opportunities with the County's Economic Development Department to assure El Paso County interests are reflected.
- Limit future development in the Colorado Springs Airport area to align with existing APZs.
- New or redevelopment around COS Airport should be light or heavy industrial businesses such as warehousing or distribution.
- Encourage the development of unincorporated portions of the Highway 21 (Powers Boulevard) Employment Priority Development Area as a formal Employment Center.
- Priority businesses along Highway 21 (Powers Boulevard) should match those that already exist around the Colorado Springs Airport such as industrial flex, manufacturing, and distribution.
- Continue to prioritize non-residential growth along Highway 21 (Powers Boulevard) to help establish the first true Employment Center in unincorporated El Paso County.
- Support the development of the railyard by Fort Carson as a catalyst for the creation of a strong employment hub to serve the entire County.
- Promote rural business initiatives in unincorporated communities and consider working directly with interested communities to apply for these initiatives.
- Work to better serve and support people from disadvantaged groups in their efforts to start a company and improve the County's overall economy and partner with the Minority Business Office to promote and utilize its resources and services in El Paso County.
- Partner with local educational institutions, property owners, rural chamber of commerce, and developers to evaluate the potential for the construction of coworking spaces, particularly in rural communities far from Colorado Springs.
- Actively support initial efforts to support entrepreneurs and small, new-business startups through partnership with local chambers of commerce and other economic development organizations.

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# Transportation & Mobility

**Core Principle:** Connect all areas of the County with a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system.

## Goal TM1.

Establish a transportation network that connects all areas to one another, emphasizing east-west routes, reducing traffic congestion, promoting safe and efficient travel.

### Objectives

**Objective TM1-1:** Ongoing coordination should continue to occur at all levels of government in order to maintain open lines of communication and to ensure transportation projects align with the desires of the community.

**Objective TM1-2:** Continue to stay involved as a member of the PPRTA.

**Objective TM1-3:** Continue to prioritize the improvements listed in MTCP.

**Objective TM1-4:** Encourage sidewalks and other multimodal facilities in all new development in placetypes, as appropriate, and upgrade existing infrastructure to these types of facilities when needed.

**Objective TM1-5:** Continue the close relationship with CDOT to ensure the maintenance and development of a complete transportation network throughout El Paso County.

**Objective TM1-6:** Continue to support transportation projects along Highway 94, South Academy Boulevard, and other major access corridors in order to maintain safety and support the readiness of military installations and their missions, which includes supporting current efforts underway as part of the Military Access, Mobility and Safety Improvement Project.

**Objective TM1-7:** Help facilitate communication between the other airports to prevent conflicts between their operations and those of Colorado Springs Airport, Meadow Lake Airport, and all military installations.

**Objective TM1-8:** Apply 1041 powers as given through the Colorado General Assembly to ensure that local government maintains a seat at the table on rail projects and that placement of such corridors maximizes economic opportunities for the communities.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Review and update the Master Transportation Corridor Plan (MTCP) regularly to ensure that it can be relied upon over the Master Plan if conflicts arise.
- As proposed roadway improvements are planned and developed, the guidelines and standards associated with their classification and function should be considered to the degree practical and appropriate.
- Continue working with Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) and participating on its various committees to ensure coordination occurs on all transportation plans and projects in the El Paso County.
- Work with Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to complete its list of east-west priority projects along Highway 94 and Highway 24. These include widening a portion of Highway 94 between US 24 and Enoch Road to add passing and turn lanes set to be completed in up to four years and the widening of a section of Highway 24 east through Falcon to four lanes set to be completed in five to ten years.
- Conduct a study to identify possible new roadways that create more east-west and north-south connections to ensure the east side of the County has efficient access to Colorado Springs and other County destinations.
- Continue to require that new subdivision developments in the County have multiple points of access to existing roadways to minimize congestion and improve emergency access. They should be sited in a manner that improves connectivity to adjacent areas.
- Encourage existing subdivisions to find ways to expand points of access and open up connections to neighboring developments and subdivisions such as through stub roads or easements where a burden would not be placed on existing roads.
- Undertake a reassessment of facility needs and compliance as projects in the current Meadow Lake Airport Master Plan near completion to continue strengthening this asset.
- Continue to utilize the 2013 Colorado Springs Airport Master Plan to ensure compatibility between future development and airport operations.
- Help facilitate the development of the railyard located adjacent to the Fort Carson spur of the shared BSNF and UP line.

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# Transportation & Mobility Continued

**Core Principle:** Connect all areas of the County with a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system.

## Goal TM2.

Promote walkability and bikability where multimodal transportation systems are feasible.

### Objectives

**Objective TM2-1:** Transportation improvements should prioritize active modes of transportation and connections to local destinations over vehicular travel and regional trips.

**Objective TM2-2:** Continue to prioritize projects as recommended by the MTCP as they expand multimodal transportation infrastructure in the County.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Require new developments in more dense areas to supply sidewalk connections to adjacent developments (both residential and commercial) and in less dense areas detached sidewalks and trails should be utilized as a way to provide multimodal transportation options.
- Roadways should also include sidewalks and bike lanes where appropriate to support multimodal transportation options in the County.
- Detailed sidewalk data regarding locations, repairs, and gaps is not currently available and should be collected as an initial next step.
- Require all new residential development within suburban and urban placetypes and commercial development to build internal sidewalk networks in order to promote pedestrian connections.
- Additional network improvements should be pursued to provide alternative routes for commuters currently passing through Urban Residential and Suburban Residential placetypes to reduce unnecessary traffic on major roadways.

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## Goal TM3.

Foster transit-supportive development and coordinate to expand public transportation options.

### Objectives

**Objective TM3-1:** Encourage increased public transportation use in the region by using existing and expanded platforms and connections within the community.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Any new Park-N-Ride facilities developed in the County needs to be integrated into the public transit network whether they be bus or commuter rail. Balancing this type of infrastructure with growth should be a priority of the County to ensure access throughout the region.
- **Priority:** Continue to support PPACG in conducting assessments of the current service provided against future needs across the County.
- Coordinate with Mountain Metro Transit (MMT) to ensure routes are meeting the needs of the community as it grows and changes in the future. This may mean additional routes need to be added or existing routes redrawn as land use changes and new development occurs.
- Work with MMT to increase route frequencies and reliability of service through adding buses to the fleet or redrawing routes in smaller loops to create quicker turn around for service.
- Consider conducting studies to find gaps and provide solutions to mass transit issues and consider working with MMT to find strategies to keep fare cost down for those that are least able to pay.
- Support Calhan Connection increased ridership by promoting and advertising the service in the County, which should include searchable service information under the transportation section of the County website and social media postings to let residents know where and how to access the service along with other details.
- Assist transit providers with finding a way to utilize a "universal" fare card system that would allow users to transfer between services without having to pay double fares to complete their journey.

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# Transportation & Mobility Continued

Core Principle: Connect all areas of the County with a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system.

## Goal TM4.

Develop a sustainable funding mechanism for transportation infrastructure and maintenance.

### Objectives

**Objective TM4-1:** Require multimodal transportation with all new projects as there are specific federal funding opportunities for these types of projects.

**Objective TM4-2:** Prioritize denser development adjacent to municipal limits to encourage annexation.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Share responsibilities with municipalities to maintain, at a minimum, County roadways segments that are within their municipal boundary or develop agreements with the municipalities to maintain roadways within and near enclaves.
- **Priority:** Continue to actively seek out Federal and State funding sources to supplement maintenance and the expansion of the roadway network. Funding sources should not only serve to close the current gap but provide continued dollars to deal with maintenance into the future.
- Consider promoting the renewal of the Pikes Peak Regional Transit Authority sales tax into the next 10-year period by advocating to voters the major need to continue regional transportation improvements to keep pace with growth and increasing maintenance obligations.

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'S' = Short-Term (1-3 Years) 'M' = Mid-Term (3-5 Years) 'L' = Long-Term (5+ Years) 'O' = Ongoing

# Community Facilities

**Core Principle:** Continue to coordinate with local and regional agencies to provide well-managed, high-quality community facilities and services.

## Goal CF1.

Coordinate with agencies to provide high-quality community facilities, services, and infrastructure to enhance quality of life.

### Objectives

**Objective CF11-1:** Continue to develop and establish strong relationships and coordination with partner agencies to ensure they are not, or even perceived to be, operating in a silo.

**Objective CF11-2:** Support efforts by the school districts to develop individual long-range capacity and facilities plans based on planned growth in El Paso County in order to accommodate actual growth.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Ongoing and regular meetings should be conducted with partnering agencies to discuss plans, projects, needs, and opportunities for collaboration and coordination.
- Require new developments to participate in and join the closest fire district.
- Explore possible planning solutions to shorten response times for emergency services across El Paso County.
- Collaboration with the Emergency Services Authority (ESA) to conduct a County-wide assessment of contractual response areas based on current and projected population/development growth in the County. This assessment should consider planned infrastructure projects and work closely with developers during the planning process to design appropriate access roadways suitable to support emergency response times.
- Long range capacity plans prepared by school districts should inventory current educational facilities and capacity as well as anticipated needs over the next 10 to 20 years and include transfer of dedicated school land until a time when it is needed for development. In addition, they should be considered living documents that needs to be updated at least every few years to measure whether the school districts are on track with meeting the needs of the educational community. These capacity plans should explore the feasibility of new construction and the utilization of joint facilities that can be shared by elementary, middle, and high schools in the same district such as athletic fields or pod/mobile classrooms as supplements to permanent space.
- In addition, new construction of any educational facility should be strategic and planned out to meet the continued needs of the community, this means utilizing designs that have support structures that allow for expansion out or up in the way of additional stories in the future.
- Support plans for the siting of additional treatment plants or modification of existing facilities to allow for more effective use of non-potable water and to promote plans for responsible aquifer recharge.

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## Goal CF2.

Improve the effectiveness of public safety through coordination, funding, and planning.

### Objectives

**Objective CF12-1:** Support more direct and regular communication with elected and appointed officials and staff, including considering enhanced virtual forums where participants can post or discuss how the County, residents, and businesses can better communicate and collaborate.

**Objective CF12-2:** Continue to periodically reassess the existing road network and service nodes in the 2016 Master Transportation Corridors Plan.

### Specific Strategies:

- Continue to assess department and staff needs to gauge the capacity and level of service the County is currently able to provide and determine where additional staff may be needed.
- Consider adopting a Wildland Interface Code which would require construction permit applicants to supply a fire protection plan, vegetation management plan, and building material classifications in accordance with ULI or other equivalent fire standard ratings.
- Continue to require new developments to provide multiple points of access to subdivisions to help decrease response times, decrease evacuation times, and provide for additional evacuation routes.
- Partner with schools to design projects that make crossing major intersections in order to ensure that routes to school are safer for students.
- Encourage school districts to secure federal funding sources for safe routes to school and related projects around pedestrian and bicycle safety and support schools through the planning and implementation processes.
- Encourage school districts to conduct a study to assess the current and anticipated needs for security funding for all schools in the County and publish findings with school districts and circulate educational media to residents.

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# Community Facilities Continued

**Core Principle: Continue to coordinate with local and regional agencies to provide well-managed, high-quality community facilities and services.**

## Goal CFI3.

**Ensure adequate provision of utilities to manage growth and development.**

### Objectives

**Objective CFI3-1:** After serving residences with water for all necessary functions such as drinking and cleaning, the priority for water supply in new development should be for fire suppression capabilities, rather than for ancillary residential uses such as landscaping.

**Objective CFI3-2:** Promote urban level development in areas served by centralized utilities.

**Objective CFI3-3:** Periodically update the County Master Plan, particularly the placetypes and land use component, to better identify and plan for areas of future growth in a manner that is consistent with the WMP.

**Objective CFI3-4:** Locate new development where it can take advantage of existing or proposed water supply projects that would allow shared infrastructure costs.

**Objective CFI3-5:** Continue to improve coordination with fire districts, developers, and other groups to ensure that new development provides appropriate fire suppression water supplies and infrastructure.

**Objective CFI3-6:** In general, all forms of energy generation should be considered and appropriately sited in the County as opportunities arise.

**Objective CFI3-7:** Create public-private partnerships to extend broadband infrastructure.

**Objective CFI3-8:** If it is economically feasible, wastewater service should be provided in regional and sub-regional publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities, and smaller privately owned facilities will be avoided.

**Objective CFI3-9:** Ensure wastewater treatment systems will be properly operated and maintained and that they will not exceed the maximum treatment capacity if future growth is planned.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Create a structure of both resources and an internal organization structure to sustainably execute the Broadband Strategic Plan.
- All site applications for the region, prior to being submitted to Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE), should include a coordinated review by the Water Quality Management Committee, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) staff, and appropriate management agencies within the watershed. The site application will be reviewed against the 208 Plan, CDPHE Regulation 22, and other appropriate local and state regulations and policies. It should also be reviewed with El Paso County for potential 1041 applicability.
- Coordinate with PPACG staff to review proposed changes to applicable CDPHE water quality standards, regulations, or policies affecting the review of site applications and discharge permits.
- Onsite Wastewater System (OWS) greater than 2,000 gallons per day should connect to a designated management agency's wastewater system if it is economically and technically feasible. OWS systems of less than 2,000 gallons per day that serve homes or small businesses should be encouraged to connect to a designated agency's system when it becomes accessible and continue to be reviewed by the local County health department where it will be constructed.
- Lift stations must provide enough emergency storage capacity at peak flow for the specific entity to respond to an emergency, and either fix the problem or remove the wastewater through trucks.
- Monitor the development of new technologies as it continues to consider new opportunities for wind energy.
- Develop assets that align to a strategic plan and make them available through partnerships with the private sector in order to address underserved broadband areas.
- Create key Targeted Improvement Zones and additional projects that can improve services for underserved populations.
- Consider creating a working group of telecommunication providers that would meet quarterly to discuss issues of interest to both the County and their private partners.
- Create a Dig-Once/Joint Build policy, which will help to develop assets and extended broadband coverage. In addition, the County's pavement degradation and street cut policies should be updated to ensure full cost-recovery.
- Consider adopting additional policies to govern the deployment of 5G/small cell infrastructure.

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'S' = Short-Term (1-3 Years) 'M' = Mid-Term (3-5 Years) 'L' = Long-Term (5+ Years) 'O' = Ongoing

# Community Facilities Continued

**Core Principle: Continue to coordinate with local and regional agencies to provide well-managed, high-quality community facilities and services.**

## Goal CFI4.

Use best management practices to protect water quality, conserve water, minimize impacts of flooding, and beautify El Paso County.

### Objectives

**Objective CFI4-1:** Directly help communities identify the projects they need funded and assist in sourcing funds from state and federal grants as an alternative to paying for projects through local tax funds.

**Objective CFI4-2:** Protect and enhance the quality, quantity, and dependability of water supplies by encouraging and supporting legislation that preserves and protects all drinking water sources in the County.

**Objective CFI4-3:** Plan for water resources in a thoughtful way that recognizes the nonrenewable nature of water resources in the area, accommodates existing and historical uses, and allows for sustainable, planned growth.

**Objective CFI4-4:** Encourage water infrastructure projects to be sited and designed in a manner that promotes compatibility with adjoining uses and provides reasonable mitigation of any adverse visibility and other environmental impacts.

**Objective CFI4-5:** Consider allowing higher residential densities for new developments, in appropriate locations, where such developments will be served by water providers that are optimizing their supplies through established reuse and conservation measures.

**Objective CFI4-6:** Encourage development that incentivizes and incorporates water-efficient landscaping principles.

**Objective CFI4-7:** Recognize and plan for the water supply challenges and limitations inherent in each of the regional planning areas of the Water Master Plan. Place emphasis on Regional Planning Area 3 (Falcon) due to its current reliance on nonrenewable Denver Basin wells and the Upper Black Squirrel Creek (UBSC) alluvium, which is renewable but limited and over appropriated.

**Objective CFI4-8:** Support the implementation of conservation projects by water providers.

**Objective CFI4-9:** Support appropriate efforts by water providers to incorporate drought conditions in their supply and demand forecasts in providing future and existing water supplies.

**Objective CFI4-10:** Support efforts by water providers to effectively and environmentally implement potable and non-potable water re-use including augmentation.

**Objective CFI4-11:** Collaborate with the State and other stakeholders to extend the economic life of the Denver Basin aquifers.

**Objective CFI4-12:** Denver Basin groundwater should be preserved as much as practical through water conservation and efficiency, extending the economic useful life.

**Objective CFI4-13:** Promote collaboration among the County, municipalities, water service providers and regional and State agencies using Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or similar arrangements. Use MOUs to address shared source water protection and mutual concerns impacting water quality.

**Objective CFI4-14:** Reach a broad geographic range of community members and stakeholders, and gather feedback on water issues including location-specific input, strategy preferences, and open-ended feedback.

**Objective CFI4-15:** Municipalities, counties, utilities, and other water providers should promote local water conservation and use of non-potable water by supporting appropriate educational efforts and ordinances.

**Objective CFI4-16:** Stormwater detention, retention ponds, or other best management practices (BMPs) should be required to minimize flooding, maximize infiltration, and minimize water quality impacts from impervious surface contaminants.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Encourage the submission of a water supply plan documenting an adequate supply of water to serve a proposed development at the earliest stage of the development process, as allowed under state law. The water supply plan should be prepared by the applicant in collaboration with the respective water provider. ○ 97
- **Priority:** Encourage the development of water resources surveys through monitoring programs and studies that could result in an increased understanding of the quality, quantity, and rate of depletion of available water supplies in the area, including but not limited to private wells. ○ 99
- **Priority:** Support further research to determine non-potable water use strategies that have been found to be effective in other cities and counties. ( ○ 103
- **Priority:** Where site conditions require wastewater collection and central treatment, efforts should be made to consolidate treatment plants. Consideration, however, needs to be given to protection of instream flows, wastewater reuse opportunities, and water rights obligations. Every effort should be made to consolidate management agencies and special district boundaries where possible and financially feasible. At a minimum, proper long-term operation and maintenance should be provided by a responsible operating entity. ○ 103
- **Priority:** Any water supply element should include conservation policies. These may include goals as a condition of development approvals, including subdivisions, planned unit developments, special use permits, and zoning changes. ○ 105
- To address residents' concerns the County should offer more opportunity for public participation on County projects. ○ 91
- Continue to require documentation of the adequacy or sufficiency of water, as appropriate, for proposed development. ○ 97
- Incorporate meaningful water conservation measures in those areas with higher-density, mixed-use developments. ○ 97
- Consider amendments to the Land Development Code to incorporate water efficiency standards, such as: allowing xeriscaping or native and drought-tolerant landscaping and allowing water efficient irrigation techniques. S 97
- Minimizing the percentage of landscaped area covered with non-native turf and increasing the percentage of landscape areas that can be covered with non-living landscape material. ○ 97
- Encourage land use proposals to expressly declare water source(s), quality, quantity, and sustainability in terms of years and number of single-family equivalents. ○ 97
- Encourage re-use of treated wastewater for irrigation and other acceptable uses when feasible. ○ 97
- Consider opportunities to demonstrate the benefits of using non-potable sources of water and to dispel negative perspectives. ○ 98
- Encourage land uses that accommodate the reuse of water, including capture of non-consumptively used water within the basin and use of reclaimed water for irrigation, within legal parameters and providing that water quality is maintained. ○ 98

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# Community Facilities Continued

**Core Principle: Continue to coordinate with local and regional agencies to provide well-managed, high-quality community facilities and services.**

## Goal CFI4. Continued

Use best management practices to protect water quality, conserve water, minimize impacts of flooding, and beautify El Paso County.

Specific Strategies:	Time	Page	Specific Strategies:	Time	Page
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore options for the use of non-potable water and further research into the use of reclaimed and renewable water.</li> </ul>	O	98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the reuse of biosolids as a primary application on crop and pastureland, land reclamation sites, nurseries, commercial landscapes, and re-use of treatment plant effluent. Efforts to beneficially use biosolids should be supported by local governments where financially feasible.</li> </ul>	O	103
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with water providers to advocate for legislation and regulations which allow appropriate water reuse, promoting safe and effective reuse throughout the County, and improve public understanding of water reclamation.</li> </ul>	O	98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make certain that all site applications for wastewater systems that are over 2,000 gallons per day have been reviewed and are consistent with applicable County and state ISDS regulations as well as 1041 regulations.</li> </ul>	O	103
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist water providers, to the greatest extent practicable, in any future efforts to prepare demand forecasts by sharing information about population growth and new industries or developments in the County that will increase the demand for water.</li> </ul>	O	98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require an analysis of costs associated with hookup to a central wastewater treatment facility.</li> </ul>	O	103
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate cluster development alternatives during planning to determine if water savings could occur.</li> </ul>	O	98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require thorough state, regional, and local reviews of all proposed subsurface disposal systems. These systems are a growing problem in the region, and with reduced federal funding for centralized facilities, these ISDSs are likely to see increased use.</li> </ul>	O	103
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote water-conscious developments through improved land-use policies.</li> </ul>	O	98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure location, depth, installation, operation and maintenance of systems and other information is put into a central database tracking system.</li> </ul>	O	103
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourage individual wells for new subdivisions with average lot sizes smaller than 2.5 acres when there is a reasonable opportunity to connect to an existing central system or construct a new central water supply system when the economies of scale to do so can be achieved, especially in the Laramie-Foxhills, Lower Arapahoe, Denver and Lower Dawson aquifers.</li> </ul>	O	98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the consolidation of districts so that wastewater services can be regionalized and regulated appropriately to help standardize enforcement between districts. Consolidation should be considered so that they could regionalize wastewater services and regulate accordingly.</li> </ul>	O	103
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage water providers to pursue additional water storage opportunities, including surface storage as well as storage in both bedrock and alluvial aquifers.</li> </ul>	O	99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct discharge of stormwater to a lake, stream, or drainage way should be minimized.</li> </ul>	O	104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incentivize the use of deeper Arapahoe and Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers by central water providers, leaving or deferring the use of the shallower aquifers for the more dispersed domestic well users.</li> </ul>	O	99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion and sedimentation control plans should be required for areas of one acre or larger and should show proper measures for controlling erosion and reducing sedimentation. These plans, when required, should be completed (unless waived by the Water Quality Control Commission) prior to the start of any work and include all proposed excavation, filling, and grade work for improvements.</li> </ul>	O	104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage plans to recharge the UBSC Aquifer if such plans are based on sound science and can be demonstrated to not adversely impact water quality or water rights, with a preference for those plans which will maintain or enhance the available water supply at a regional scale.</li> </ul>	O	99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disturbance management and revegetation plans should be developed when necessary and should include details of vegetation disturbance (schedule, area involved, equipment to be used, etc.) and a description of all measures to be taken during and following disturbance to minimize water quality impacts, including monitoring to determine effectiveness of the measures taken.</li> </ul>	O	104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the development of water resources surveys through well monitoring throughout the County, with an emphasis on the Denver Basin aquifer fringe areas.</li> </ul>	O	99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whenever possible, disturbances should be planned to occur at those times of the year when water quality impacts will be minimized. For example, disturbances immediately prior to or during the winter season may require more mitigation before the site can be revegetated.</li> </ul>	O	104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the development of water resources surveys through the systematic monitoring and careful administration of the bedrock aquifers to avoid over-allocation of groundwater.</li> </ul>	O	99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration should be given to limiting the area of disturbance which occurs at any one time, particularly in locations where water quality impacts may be severe, such as on moderate to steep slopes having soils with low permeability.</li> </ul>	O	104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage continued collection and analysis of data for the purpose of better determining the extent and availability of groundwater in areas which do not overlie either the Denver Basin or a studied alluvial aquifer.</li> </ul>	O	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Methods for vegetation disturbance should be selected to minimize water quality impacts.</li> </ul>	O	104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the data and analysis of groundwater studies, as appropriate, to determine if regulatory modifications are needed and consider implementation.</li> </ul>	O	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soil erosion controls and protection of surface waters should occur promptly after vegetation disturbance.</li> </ul>	O	104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share educational water management and project-specific materials with property owners and developers.</li> </ul>	O	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular inspections should be made of a disturbed site to ensure that the operation is in conformance with grading and erosion control and that water quality impacts are being controlled to the maximum extent practicable.</li> </ul>	O	104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational campaigns should be pursued to involve the community and provide a broader basis of understanding regarding water supplies and conservation strategies.</li> </ul>	O	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspections of the disturbed site after completion of the operation are necessary to ensure that measures to control water quality impacts are effective and to determine if remedial actions are required.</li> </ul>	O	104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate and gather input from the community on complex, and at times, contentious water and land use considerations.</li> </ul>	O	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial assurances should be secured to ensure that erosion control plans, including prompt and successful revegetation of disturbed areas, are implemented.</li> </ul>	O	104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full compliance with the Colorado Operator Certification Act should be required. The state should emphasize the legal responsibility of the plant owner and should support the plant operator with timely repairs and reimbursement for operations. The state should promptly begin enforcement actions for chronic poor operation of treatment facilities.</li> </ul>	O	103	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building restrictions on slopes greater than 30 percent should be considered as a means of limiting the water quality impacts of soil disturbance (e.g. Colorado Springs Hillside Area Overlay Zone District 2.504).</li> </ul>	O	104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biosolids generated by municipal and industrial wastewater treatment plants should be managed in accordance with applicable state or federal permits and Certificates of Designation.</li> </ul>	O	103			

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# Military

**Core Principle: Foster effective working relationships with military installations to support planning efforts and mutual success.**

## Goal M1.

**Support compatible land uses within and in close proximity to bases and associated facilities.**

### Objectives

**Objective M1-1:** Continue to include military installation representatives in regional planning efforts such as transportation plans, master plans, and facilities planning to ensure compatibility among future desired development and military operations.

**Objective M1-2:** Educate local planning staff and elected officials on the effects of incompatible development on military operations.

**Objective M1-3:** Prioritize improving and expanding the capacity of existing roads or construct new roads to improve connectivity to and support of Schriever AFB operations.

### Specific Strategies:

- Continue to participate in discussions with installation representatives and CDOT regarding proposed changes along Highway 115 that could impact the installation. O 112
- Coordinate with Schriever AFB on all land use development within the two-mile notification buffer (as required by state law). O 112
- Implement consistent and compatible zoning regulations for land areas within Accident Potential Zones (APZs). S 113
- Continue to pursue conservation and compatible land use buffering efforts with Fort Carson through various programs and initiatives, including the Sentinel Landscape Program and Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB). O 113
- Notify Peterson AFB of renewable energy developments, including in areas beyond the state-required two-mile notification zone. O 114
- Coordinate land use development applications located between Peterson AFB and Schriever AFB to limit radio frequency spectrum impacts. O 114
- Manage encroachment issues from development that can interfere with operations on Runway 13/31 at Peterson AFB and special-use aircraft taking off in hot weather. O 114
- Limit commercial or industrial uses that pose a security threat to Colorado Springs Airport and Peterson AFB operations (storage, shipping, truck trailers, etc.). O 114
- Coordinate with the Air Force Academy to ensure that proposed development within the Academy's formally designated accident potential zones remain compatible with airfield activities. O 115
- Potential impacts near the Academy within and beyond its Clear Zone and Accident Potential zones should be minimized by limiting the intensification of current low-density residential or agricultural land uses. O 115
- Potential impacts near the Bullseye Auxiliary Airstrip (south of Sanborn Road approximately 5 miles southeast of Ellicott), which supports practice landings, take-offs and touch-and-goes of airmanship program participants, should be minimized by limiting the intensification of current low-density residential or agricultural land uses. O 115
- Collaborate with Pikes Peak Regional Building Department to review and update Regional Building Department Guidelines and policies that may impact military air operations during the construction process. O 115
- Coordinate with the Air Force Academy to ensure its training areas in eastern El Paso County are preserved. O 115
- Coordinate on land use development projects north of the Air Force Academy to ensure compatibility with the activities that regularly occur within Jack's Valley, an outdoor training complex and small arms training range. O 115

## Goal M2.

**Ensure coordinated planning efforts for transportation impacts and access.**

### Objectives

**Objective M2-1:** Manage future transportation projects that could affect gate traffic and associated stormwater impacts.

**Objective M2-2:** Continue to work with CDOT to prioritize transportation improvements along the routes that serve military bases.

**Objective M2-3:** Cooperate with CDOT and the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) to meet regional military transportation needs.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Ensure transportation projects leave at least one access route unaffected by interference from road construction at any given time. O 111
- Work with Cheyenne Mountain AFS and other partners regionally to address wild-fire risks along the mountain range. O 112
- Consult with Schriever AFB to ensure utility and other infrastructure projects promote compatibility with their operations. Private utility providers should be included in this coordination when necessary. O 112
- Continue to support CDOT transportation improvement projects along Highway 94 in order to maintain safety and support the readiness of Schriever AFB missions. O 112
- Coordinate with Schriever AFB to address key corridors including Curtis, Irwin, Bradley, and Enoch Roads. O 112
- Coordinate with Fort Carson, the Fountain Creek Watershed District, and Colorado Springs Utilities, where possible, to reduce stormwater impacts from new development. These groups should also partner together to implement the Monument Creek Watershed Restoration Plan (particularly in the upper watershed where possible), develop regional criteria, and improve flood monitoring practices. O 113
- Work with Fort Carson, CDOT, and local municipalities to improve the safety and effectiveness of the transportation network along major Highway 115 and I-25. O 113
- Improve Charter Oak Ranch Road outside Gate 19 at Fort Carson. M 113
- Evaluate current methods for addressing road safety issues associated with trash-hauling activities on Highway 94. S 114
- Develop an alternate rail connection to Fort Carson to support redundant and increased rail service. M 113
- Facilitate public outreach and communication from Peterson AFB regarding PFOAs and water-quality issues. O 114
- Where possible, El Paso County should coordinate with the Air Force Academy, the Town of Monument, the Fountain Creek Watershed District, and Colorado Springs Utilities to reduce stormwater impacts from new development. These groups should also partner together to implement the Monument Creek Watershed Plan (particularly in the upper watershed where possible), develop regional criteria, and improve flood monitoring practices. O 115
- El Paso County should continue to support coordination efforts with the Academy, CDOT, and the City of Colorado Springs to ensure that transportation infrastructure and operations can meet the demands of the Academy's workforce and its visitors. O 115
- Create a fire mitigation plan with residents (potential fire-resistant materials, defensible space, fire suppression systems, etc.) to reduce potential wildfire impacts in neighborhoods adjacent to installations and training areas. M 115
- Craft a wildfire mitigation and watershed preservation plan for higher elevation forest areas surrounding each installation to include insect infestation management. M 115

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# Recreation & Tourism

Core Principle: Maintain and expand the County’s recreation and tourism options.

## Goal RT1.

Support high-quality, sustainable outdoor recreation as a key amenity for residents and visitors.

### Objectives

**Objective RT1-1:** Wherever possible new park facilities should partner and co-locate with municipal service facilities or public amenities such as schools.

**Objective RT1-2:** Wherever possible new parks facilities should be located along or share connections to County and regional trails to ensure a robust network of connections for residents to these amenities.

**Objective RT1-3:** Management for state and federal land agencies should foster working relationships that allow for the flow of information in a consistent and reliable manner between the organizations in order to provide the highest and best level of service to the community.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** The construction of neighborhood parks should be undertaken by the developer as they would specifically serve that particular neighborhood or subdivision. Maintenance responsibilities should then be transferred to the Homeowners Association or Special District to ensure they are in safe operating conditions.
- Encourage implementation of universal design standards in new construction to ensure all residents can utilize recreational amenities.
- Consider performing a needs assessment of special service transportation vehicles with ADA access.
- Utilize defensive environmental design standards to create well-lit and visible pathways in order to promote safety along trails.
- Continue to support the addition of staff members to promote safety in the parks system.

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## Goal RT2.

Plan for and provide a variety of parks, trails, and open space within the region.

### Objectives

**Objective RT2-1:** Expand funding sources for sustainable maintenance of parks and trails as well as the acquisition of additional open spaces.

**Objective RT2-2:** Continue to foster timely and reliable communication between the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, USDA Forest Service, and the County Parks Division to ensure programming and planning initiatives across the County are coordinated.

### Specific Strategies:

- As a quality of life factor associated with access to parks, expanded public transportation options should be created to service populations of the County without cars and those that may also need ADA accommodations.
- Expand the trail and path network for commuting and destination travel to encourage more residents to walk and/or bike over driving. This should be done by closing gaps in existing infrastructure and bringing all paths and trails up to an acceptable level of repair.
- Help complete the iconic Pikes Peak “Ring the Peak Trail”.
- Consider expanding public transit service in areas of the County with the highest populations without car access and those most likely to take public transit and connect them to recreation areas that offer multiple amenities. Perform a study of potential routes in order to map out extensions and new routes that would service these populations.
- Work with CDOT, municipalities, and transit service providers to ensure road improvements and new roads have appropriate wayfinding, sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus access.
- Pedestrian and cyclist improvements should be in accordance with the El Paso County Major Transportation Corridors Plan Update (2016), the El Paso County Parks Master Plan, and the COS Bikes! Colorado Springs Bike Master Plan (2018) and provide an inviting network of pedestrian and bike paths for residents and tourists.

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# Recreation & Tourism Continued

Core Principle: Maintain and expand the County’s recreation and tourism options.

## Goal RT3.

Explore projects, programs, and initiatives for enhancing tourism in unincorporated areas.

### Objectives

**Objective RT3-1:** Prioritize partnerships and support for the marketing and programming of City for Champions projects.

**Objective RT3-2:** Appropriate funding for maintenance and improvements should be a high priority for existing tourism assets.

**Objective RT3-3:** Consider expanding the arts and culture industry to take a leading role in tourism especially during the tourism off season in order to make the region a destination during all four seasons.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Continue to maintain and improve existing natural assets and destinations including parks, trails, and open space facilities that support outdoor recreation tourism in the region. O 123
- Promote regional arts and culture tourism by funding public art campaigns and securing partnerships with organizations that draw residents and visitors to new places across the County with mural or sculpture walks, festivals, and other programming. O 121
- Expanded upon existing events and festivals and develop new signature events to provide tourist attractions throughout the year. Support improvements to existing, as well as development of new, arts and culture indoor and outdoor venues. O 121
- Leverage the Ent Center for the Arts to promote arts and cultural programming and partnerships throughout the community. O 121
- Improve existing facilities and find appropriate locations for new development to attract athletic tourism opportunities and the economic benefit that they encompass with increased spending at local restaurants, hotels, and retail establishments. O 121
- Work with and not against shared-economy businesses as they do provide niche services that fill gaps and make the County more accessible for visitors. O 121
- Regional partners should consider conducting a feasibility study for a new public or private convention center in El Paso County, possibly in Downtown Colorado Springs. The study should include the potential for direct public transportation access from the Colorado Springs Airport to the convention center. O 121
- Utilize the findings and recommendations from the 2019 Broadband Strategic Plan to help expand cellular service and Wi-Fi coverage throughout the region to eliminate dead spots and enhance safety, GPS navigation, and sharing of experiences on social networks. L 121
- Protect and strengthen recreational tourism resources, natural and developed, permanent and temporary, due to their crucial importance to El Paso County's tourism industry and overall economy. O 123
- Explore the feasibility of expanding and developing new indoor sports venues in the region to host regional tournaments. O 123
- Work with the City of Colorado Springs to leverage the Olympic City USA brand and Olympic partners to promote the County as a destination with an Olympic legacy to attract additional sports tourism opportunities. O 123
- Work with host organizations to ensure programming and events are inclusive of the aging population including holding activities in ADA accessible facilities with access to public transportation. O 123
- Continue to maintain and create new partnerships with organizations and sponsors for events, festivals, and conferences to enhance the visitor experience in El Paso County. O 123
- Partner with military installations to provide recreational and tourism information and discounts for military families to invite them to explore the region and foster a connection to its landscape. O 123
- Continue to partner with the USAFA to coordinate and enhance the visitor experience as it relates to the renovated planetarium, new visitor center, renovated Cadet Chapel and areas open to the public. O 123
- Coordinate with the Colorado Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) to promote and market El Paso County and its tourist destinations to a broader audience. To help support this effort, the County should support efforts secure additional funding for branding and marketing specifically targeting tourist attractions and activities in the off season to promote year-round tourism. O 123
- Encourage hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues to offer packaged deals and discounts including unique regional experiences to help make it easier for business travelers to “make a trip” out of their time in El Paso County. O 123

'S' = Short-Term (1-3 Years) 'M' = Mid-Term (3-5 Years) 'L' = Long-Term (5+ Years) 'O' = Ongoing



# Community Health

Core Principle: Improve public health by focusing on local partnerships, food access, and environmental quality.

## Goal CH1.

Support community environmental health initiatives through collaborative efforts with other organizations.

### Objectives

**Objective CH1-1:** Work collaboratively with various transportation organizations to create a continuous, connected system of regional trails.

**Objective CH1-2:** Prioritize and locate trail connections using criteria and proposed action items identified in the Parks Master Plan.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Update the Community Health Improvement Plan regularly to ensure the County's key health concerns are continuing to be identified and addressed.
- **Priority:** Provide an overall vision for a system of regional trails within the County and connected to adjacent counties and participate in the Regional Nonmotorized Trails and Bike Plan Update to identify standards and address needs as part of a multi-modal transportation network. Ensure that regional trail corridors are secured.
- Consider expanding HEAL policies/programs outside of Colorado Springs to unincorporated parts of the County.
- Identify potential high priority connections based on identified connection criteria and considering a variety of acquisition strategies and tools including funding and partnership opportunities. Locate trails minimizing conflicts between trail development and wildlife habitat and other sensitive natural and cultural resources.

### Time Page

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- O 126

## Goal CH2.

Ensure all residents have reasonable access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food.

### Objectives

**Objective CH2-1:** Support food-access practices that not only serve to address food access issues but also help foster and strengthen a sense of community.

**Objective CH2-2:** Strengthen private property rights to encourage urban agricultural activities.

**Objective CH2-3:** Reduce barriers for local food producers who wish to sell local food products.

**Objective CH2-4:** Build awareness among residents regarding nutrition, food skills, and the sources of their food.

**Objective CH2-5:** Seek ways to improve access to safe, affordable, nutritious food for residents, regardless of their income level or geographic location.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** Consider potential interventions at the neighborhood level including small retail markets, farmers' markets, community gardens, community kitchens, backyard farms, farm stands, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) pick-ups at schools, mobile pantries and markets, partnerships between small-scale food producers and corner/convenience stores, expansion of Double Up Food Bucks, and Produce Rx.
- Study regional agriculture on both large and small scales and on public and private land and develop a matrix for identification and prioritization of land with high agricultural potential.
- Assess the effects of urban land use policies and regulations on the viability of food production, processing, distribution, and access.

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# Environment

Core Principle: Prioritize and protect the County’s natural environment.

## Goal E1.

Consider the environmental impacts related to natural resource conservation, air quality, water quality, wildlife habitat, and waste management during all steps of the planning and approval process.

### Objectives

**Objective E1-1:** Establish or expand public or private neighborhood parks, reserves, and other protected areas (e.g., wildlife sanctuaries and private reserves).

**Objective E1-2:** Enhance degraded or restore missing habitats and ecosystem functions (e.g., creating forest corridors, riparian tree plantings, breaching levees, and creating/enhancing wetlands).

Specific Strategies:	Time	Page
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Priority:</b> Enhance knowledge and skills of students with formal education program about wildlife and habitat protection (e.g., public schools, colleges and universities, and continuing education).</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Manage protected areas and other resource lands for conservation (e.g., site design, demarcating borders, putting up fences, and training park staff).</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Control and/or prevent invasive and other problematic plants, animals, and pathogens from establishing and growing in El Paso County.</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expand the opportunity for the exchange of knowledge, skills, and information among practitioners, stakeholders, and other relevant individuals in structured settings outside of degree programs (e.g., monitoring workshops or training courses, learning networks or how-to manuals, and stakeholder education on specific issues).</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Manage specific plant and animal populations of concern.</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Manipulate, enhance, and restore specific plant and animal populations. (e.g., artificial nesting boxes, clutch manipulation, supplementary feeding, disease/parasite management, and vaccination programs).</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improve understanding of species/habitat distribution through field inventory, modeling, and ground-truthing.</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create or provide nonfinancial support &amp; capacity building for nonprofits, government agencies, communities, and businesses (e.g., creating new local land trusts).</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Form and facilitate partnerships, alliances, and networks of organizations (e.g., Conservation Measures Partnership).</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create, implement, change, influence, or provide input on formal government sector legislation or policies (e.g., state ballot initiatives, providing data to policy makers, zoning regulations, and species protection laws).</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create, implement, change, influence, or provide input on policies and regulations affecting the implementation of laws at all levels: international, national, state/provincial, local/community, tribal (e.g., input into agency plans regulating certain species or resources, working with local governments or communities to implement zoning regulations, and promoting sustainable harvest on state lands).</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider industry best practices for improving solid waste management such as collection services for multifamily apartments, recycling programs for commercial businesses, and composting programs.</li> </ul>	O	131

## Goal E2.

Promote sustainable best practices with regard to development and infrastructure.

### Objectives

**Objective E2-1:** Promote conservation design techniques for any future development near riparian areas to protect them through incorporation into the development.

**Objective E2-2:** All future water planning efforts should reference the Water Master Plan to ensure alignment with its key policies and recommendations.

**Objective E2-3:** Promote alternative products and services that substitute for environmentally damaging ones.

Specific Strategies:	Time	Page
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Priority:</b> Establish, revise, and implement voluntary standards and professional codes that govern private sector practice (e.g., Conservation Measures Partnership Open Standards, corporate adoption of forestry best management practices, and sustainable grazing by a rancher).</li> </ul>	S	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Priority:</b> Monitor and enforce compliance with laws, policies and regulations, and standards and codes (e.g., water quality standard monitoring, and initiating criminal and civil litigation).</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop enterprises that directly depend on the maintenance of natural resources or provide substitute livelihoods as a means of changing behaviors and attitudes (e.g., ecotourism).</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Utilize market mechanisms to change behaviors and attitudes (e.g., certification, financial incentives, grass and forest banking, and valuation of ecosystem services such as flood control).</li> </ul>	O	130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conservation design should be considered and evaluated alongside development considerations such as land use, zoning, traffic, infrastructure, and utilities as part of any development review and approval process in the County.</li> </ul>	O	131

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# Resiliency & Hazard Mitigation

Core Principle: Support efforts to reduce, respond, and react to natural and manmade hazards across the County.

## Goal RHM1.

Prioritize hazard mitigation as growth and development occurs.

### Objectives

**Objective RHM1-1:** Promote cross-boundary mitigation planning and prioritization with public land managers, military installations, municipalities, utilities, fire protection districts, and unincorporated communities.

### Specific Strategies:

- Share information about mitigation funding opportunities with local communities, Firewise committees, and fire protection districts.
- Encourage fire protection districts to support wildfire prevention activities.
- Encourage small communities to create their own Community Wildfire Protection Plans.
- Coordinate with Colorado Springs and other municipalities on the update of their CWPPs as necessary.
- Advise county managers of opportunities to support the goals of local CWPPs, through normal maintenance of county-owned lands and rights of way.

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## Goal RHM2.

Continue to support planning efforts and implementation of best practices to ensure community resiliency.

### Objectives

**Objective RHM2-1:** Maintain cooperation among wildfire first responders by supporting inter-agency planning and training.

**Objective RHM2-2:** Promote standard zoning and building codes that mitigate fire dangers between communities throughout the County.

**Objective RHM2-3:** Support coordinated stewardship and management of natural resources.

**Objective RHM2-4:** Support environmental preservation for aesthetic, recreational, and risk reduction purposes is a key element of building countywide resiliency.

### Specific Strategies:

- **Priority:** El Paso County's vision of creating a resilient Pikes Peak region includes creating a balance between the built and natural environments. Therefore, support for this focus on the natural world speaks to the need for natural resource stewardship.
- **Priority:** Increase community capacity to reduce impacts from shocks and stresses. Increasing resiliency is more than disaster mitigation. Acting before disasters to reduce risk can save lives and money; however, when conditions are good, it can be difficult to motivate people to take action. The County strives to move beyond community involvement and "buy-in" to increasing the community capacity as a whole. This requires a shift to a culture of responsibility at the individual level, such as mitigating the danger of wildfire or preparing families for disasters. Local government action is also needed, such as devoting public resources for storm-water management, maintaining and restoring forest health, fostering emergency preparedness, and maintaining infrastructure.
- Encourage County land managers and planners to take steps to reduce wildfire risk while achieving other land management goals. Consider wildfire risk, mitigation, and response when codes are revised for areas in the WUI.
- Encourage the creation of neighborhood Firewise committees to coordinate education and mitigation in local communities.
- Encourage the development of new industrial uses for small woody biomass.
- Encourage mitigation projects undertaken by municipalities, military installations, and utilities, especially where adjacent to unincorporated areas.

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# Resiliency & Hazard Mitigation Continued

**Core Principle:** Support efforts to reduce, respond, and react to natural and manmade hazards across the County.

## *Goal RHM3.*

Continue to coordinate communication and activity among the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), emergency service providers, and military installations to improve responses and recovery to natural hazards and emergencies.

### *Objectives*

**Objective RHM3-1:** Promote collaborative discussions about fuel reduction along boundaries of US Forest Service lands, including fire protection districts, municipalities, and public utilities.

**Objective RHM3-2:** Promote mutual aid and sharing of military fire fighters with County fire districts.

**Objective RHM3-3:** Foster a paradigm shift toward comprehensive, collaborative planning and implementation with sustainable funding and stakeholder engagement.

**Objective RHM3-4:** Create cultural awareness of the need for personal connections in communities and between communities.

### **Specific Strategies:**

- **Priority:** In order to build resiliency, existing planning and stakeholder engagement processes need to be brought together. Quality of life and emergency preparedness depend on looking to the future to ensure that development does not increase risk or create problems, such as traffic, pollution, and unemployment. In addition, even the best plan cannot be fulfilled without identifying sustainable funding sources and committing to them.
- **Priority:** Resiliency to both shocks and stresses is increased with the connections between people and between communities. Any effort to build and maintain ties, especially across neighborhoods, jurisdictions, and sectors, will increase capacity to handle an uncertain future.
- When winter weather is in the forecast, residents should follow local weather warnings and follow news from local officials online. Residents are also encouraged to take the necessary precautions to prepare their family, home, and vehicles accordingly and ensure they have a plan and adequate supplies to stay at home for at least 72 hours, if necessary.

**Time Page**

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# 15

## ADOPTION RESOLUTION

ADOPTION OF YOUR EL PASO MASTER PLAN AS THE MASTER PLAN FOR EL PASO COUNTY, COLORADO

**Commissioner Bailey moved that the following Resolution be adopted:**

**BEFORE THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
OF THE COUNTY OF EL PASO  
STATE OF COLORADO  
RESOLUTION NO. MP-21-001**

**WHEREAS**, the El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department (“PCD”) requests approval of Your El Paso Master Plan by adoption as the Master Plan for El Paso County within the unincorporated area of El Paso County, Colorado; and

**WHEREAS**, § 30-28-108, C.R.S., provides that a county planning commission may adopt, amend, extend, or add to the County Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to § 30-28-106(3)(a), C.R.S., Your El Paso Master Plan includes accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive and explanatory matter, to show the county recommendations for the development of the territory covered by the plan, and includes the necessary elements; and

**WHEREAS**, PCD engaged in a lengthy and extensive process to develop this Master Plan for El Paso County in conjunction with its consultant, Houseal-Lavigne, with input from the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC), appointed Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC), and the public via surveys, comments, announcements, advertisements, public meetings, public comments, work sessions, agency reviews, and report items to the Planning Commission (PC) and BoCC; and

**WHEREAS**, this Master Plan would supersede, replace, and delete the outdated El Paso County Policy Plan (1998), the small areas plans (1977-2008), and the sketch plans which amended the master plan (1982-86); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to § 30-28-106 IV(C), C.R.S., this plan and the Water Master Plan as a Topical Element include goals and policies related to the Colorado Water Plan, specifically those related to water conservation; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to § 29-20-105.6, C.R.S., notification to and review of comments from those military installations identified by statute occurred in compliance with the law; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to § 30-28-106(3)(b), C.R.S., the opportunity to the review the Master Plan was provided to assure that the master plan of a county or region which includes mass transportation shall be coordinated with that of any adjacent county, region, or other political subdivision, as the case may be, to eliminate conflicts or inconsistencies and to assure the compatibility of such plans and their implementation pursuant to this section and sections §30-11-101 , §30-25-202 , and §30-26-301 C.R.S.; and

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**WHEREAS**, pursuant to § 30-28-106(3)(c), C.R.S., this Master Plan includes the previously approved master plan for the extraction of commercial mineral deposits pursuant to section 34-1-304, C.R.S., which remains unchanged as a topical element of the master plan; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to § 30-28-106(3)(d), C.R.S., this Master Plan includes plans for the development of drainage basins in all or portions of the County in support of the subdivision regulations of El Paso County that require the payment of drainage fees, as provided in section 30-28-133(11), which remains unchanged as a topical element of the master plan; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to § 30-28-106(5), C.R.S., this Master Plan contains a recreational and tourism uses element pursuant to which the County indicates how it intends to provide for the recreational and tourism needs of residents of the county and visitors to the county; and

**WHEREAS**, additional local plans and elements were consulted and identified in conjunction with developing this Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the PCD has attempted to coordinate this plan with all municipalities in the County through meetings or review requests, and has specifically coordinated this effort with the City of Colorado Springs and all of the local military installations; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission acknowledges that the proposed Your El Paso Master Plan (PCD File No. MP-21-001) has been thoroughly evaluated and presented; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to § 30-28-106(1), C.R.S., public hearings were held by this Planning Commission on May 5, 2021 and May 26, 2021; and

**WHEREAS**, based on the evidence, testimony, exhibits, study of the master plan for the unincorporated area of the County, comments of members of the El Paso County Planning Commission, comments of the PCD, comments of public officials and agencies, and comments from all interested parties, this Commission finds as follows:

1. That proper posting, publication, and public notice were provided as required by law for the hearings of the Planning Commission; specifically, legal notice for the hearings was published in the El Paso County & Fountain Valley Advertiser & News on April 21, 2021 and on the PCD's website.
2. That the hearings before the Planning Commission were extensive and complete, that all pertinent facts, matters, and issues were submitted and reviewed, and that all interested parties were given an opportunity to be heard at those hearings.
3. That all data, surveys, analyses, studies, plans, designs, maps, and descriptive matter as are required by the State of Colorado and El Paso County have been submitted, reviewed, and found to meet all sound planning requirements of El Paso County.
4. That Your El Paso Master Plan shall be the Master Plan for El Paso County.
5. That for the above-stated and other reasons, the proposal is in the best interests of the health, safety, morals, convenience, order, prosperity, and welfare of the citizens of El Paso County.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the El Paso County Planning Commission hereby approves and adopts Your El Paso Master Plan as the Master Plan for El Paso County, specifically including the maps and descriptive matter that constitute Your El Paso Master Plan contained in PCD File No. MP-21-001, which is incorporated herein by this reference as if fully set forth herein.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that, pursuant to § 30-28-109, C.R.S., the El Paso County Planning Commission hereby certifies to the Board of County Commissioners and to the planning commissions of all municipalities located within El Paso County a copy of Your El Paso Master Plan for El Paso County, specifically including the maps and descriptive matter that constitute the Master Plan as contained in PCD File No. MP-21-001.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the El Paso County Planning Commission hereby directs the Secretary of the Planning Commission to record the action taken by the Planning Commission and affix their signature to said map and descriptive matter pursuant to § 30-28-108, C.R.S.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the intent of the Planning Commission in approving and adopting Your El Paso Master Plan as the Master Plan for El Paso County is that this shall be used as an advisory document. To the extent Your El Paso Master Plan may be subsequently referenced in the County's subdivision and/or zoning regulations, those references shall neither construe nor render Your El Paso Master Plan to be a binding, regulatory document, nor shall such references overcome the intent that Your El Paso Master Plan is advisory and that the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners shall maintain their considerable discretion in deciding how to apply the Master Plan in their land use decisions.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this Master Plan supersedes, replaces, and deletes the previously adopted El Paso County Policy Plan (1998).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this Master Plan supersedes, replaces, and deletes all versions of the previously adopted Small Area Plans: (1) Woodmen Valley Land Use Plan (1977); (2) Ute Pass Comprehensive Plan (1982); (3) Highway 94 Comprehensive Plan (2003); (4) Black Forest Preservation Plan Update (1987); (5) South Central Comprehensive Plan (1988); (6) Ellicott Valley Comprehensive Plan (1989); (7) Southwestern (Highway 115) Comprehensive Plan (1990); (8) Falcon/ Peyton Comprehensive Plan (2008); (9) Midland/Fountain Creek Parkway Corridor Plan (1989); and (10) Tri-Lakes Comprehensive Plan (1999).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this Master Plan supersedes, replaces, and deletes all of the previously adopted sketch plans which amended the master plan because those plans have a zoning or development approval implemented to comply with those plans, including: (1) Arrowwood IV (1982) MP-82-001; (2) Palmer Park Business Center (1982) MP-82-005; (3) Constitution Hills (1983) MP-83-003; (4) Trend Development (Northcrest 2) (1983) MP-83-005; (5) High Meadow Lakes (Forest Lakes) (1984) MP-83-011; (6) Paint Brush Hills (1984) MP-84-003; (7) Loft (Revision) (1984) MP-84-005; (8) Constitution Hills North (Revision) (1984) MP-84-006; (9) Stratton Landing (1984) MP-84-015; (10) Bradley Ranch (Revised) (1984) MP-84-018; (11) The Trails (1984) MP-84-019; (12) Gleneagle (1985) MP-84-020; (13) Marksheffel Centre (1985) MP-84-022; (14) Charter I Center (1985) MP-84-024; (15) Space Age Technological Centre (1985) MP-85-001; (16) Eastside Industrial Park (1985) MP-85-003; (17) Interchange Investment (Revised) (1985) MP-85-008; (18) Constitution Hills (Revised) (1985) MP-85-009;

(19) Colorado Centre (Revised) (1985) MP-85-011; (20) Heather Hills (1986) MP-86-002; and (21) Gleneagle - Shoppes at the Glen (1994) MP-94-001.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that all of the following topical elements of the Master Plan remain in place and are a part of this plan and are not affected by this action: (1) Master Plan for the Extraction of Commercial Mineral Deposits (1996); (2) Major Transportation Corridors Plan (2016); (3) El Paso County Wildlife Habitat Maps and Descriptors (1996); (4) Municipal Airport Part 150 Noise Study (2006); (5) Meadow Lake Airport Part 77 Study (1990); (6) El Paso County Parks Master Plan (2013); and (7) El Paso County Water Master Plan (2018).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that all of the previously adopted drainage basin master plans remain in place and are a part of this plan and are not affected by this action including, but not limited to: (1) Drainage Basin Master Plan (1984); (2) Windmill Gulch Master Drainage Plan (1985); (3) Black Squirrel Creek Drainage Basin Planning Study (1989); (4) Drainage Basin Delineation and Naming Study (1986); (5) Middle Tributary Drainage Basin Planning Study (1987); (6) Monument Branch Drainage Basin Planning Study (1987); (7) Little Johnson/ Security Drainage Basin Planning Study (1988); (8) Pine Creek Drainage Basin Planning Study (1988); (9) Updated Drainage Basin Identification and Fee Estimation (1988); (10) Black Forest Drainage Basin Planning Study (1989); (11) Big Johnson Drainage Basin Planning Study (1991); (12) Windmill Gulch Drainage Basin Planning Study (1991); (13) Fishers Canyon Drainage Basin Planning Study (1991); (14) Big Johnson/ Crews Gulch Drainage Basin Planning Study (1991); (15) Cottonwood Creek Drainage Basin Planning Study (1992); (16) Dirty Woman Creek and Crystal Creek Drainage Basin Planning Study (1993); (17) Sand Creek Drainage Basin Planning Study (1996); Haegler Ranch Drainage Basin Planning Study (2013).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the following conditions and notations shall be placed upon this approval:

#### CONDITIONS

1. Section 30-28-109, C.R.S., requires the Planning Commission to certify a copy of the Master Plan, or any adopted part or amendment thereof or addition thereto, to the Board of County Commissioners and to the Planning Commission of all municipalities in the County. The Planning Commission's action to amend the Master Plan shall not be considered final until such documents are certified by the Chairman of the County Planning Commission and distributed as required by law.

2. Upon adoption by the El Paso County Planning Commission, the effect of this document is adoption of Your El Paso Master Plan as the Master Plan for El Paso County, which replaces the previous Policy Plan, Small Area Plans, and Sketch Plans, while retaining the Topical Elements and the Drainage Basin Plans. If there are any conflicts with this Plan and the Topical Elements, this Plan controls except where the topical element identifies otherwise.

#### NOTATIONS

1. Certification of the documents to the municipalities within the County pursuant to Condition No. 1 above and the Colorado Office of Smart Growth is determined to be satisfied upon transmittal of summary information and maps along with a clear description of the locations where the complete documents are available for inspection, along with an offer to provide a

given municipality a complete copy of the documents if requested. The transmittal may be in the form of a digital copy.

2. By approving Your El Paso Master Plan, the Planning Commission authorizes PCD and the County Attorney's Office to make minor editorial and formatting changes in conjunction with the final approval by the Planning Commission and for the publication process. These modifications may include pagination, correction of typographical errors, form and style edits, clarifications, insertion of photographs, insertion of references and/or corrections to factual information, or inclusion of comments and modifications consistent with and associated with the Planning Commission hearings. In no case will substantive changes be made to the text without reconsideration or amendment by the Planning Commission.

**Commissioner Lucia-Treese** seconded the adoption of the foregoing Resolution. The adoption of this plan shall be by resolution as carried by the affirmative votes of a majority of the entire membership of the commission.

The roll having been called, the vote was as follows:

Commissioner Risley	aye
Commissioner Bailey	aye
Commissioner Trowbridge	aye
Commissioner Lucia-Treese	aye
Commissioner Fuller	aye
Commissioner Brittain Jack	aye
Commissioner Carlson	aye
Commissioner Moraes	aye

The Resolution was adopted by a unanimous vote of 8 to 0 by the Planning Commission of the County of El Paso, State of Colorado.

DONE THIS 26<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2021 at Colorado Springs, Colorado

#### EL PASO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

By: 

Brian Risley, Chair

ATTEST:  
By: 

Tracey Garcia, Secretary













