

ELBERT COUNTY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

PREPARED FOR
ELBERT COUNTY
PLANNING
COMMISSION

PREPARED BY
DESIGN WORKSHOP

APRIL 1, 2018

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I. INTRODUCTION



PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A Comprehensive Plan is an extremely important document for a forward-thinking county such as Elbert County. A county that wants to “move ahead” must know where it is headed and what it wants to become. If private developers, public regulatory agencies and individual citizens are moving in different directions, it is unlikely that the county’s goals will ever be realized. The term Comprehensive Plan is synonymous with Master Plan and may be used interchangeably.

The purpose this Comprehensive Plan is to bring the county together to identify broad-based development goals and devise a coordinated program of public and private actions necessary to achieve those goals. Once adopted, the Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide development by evaluating physical elements such as housing, transportation, open space, recreation, tourism, infrastructure and public facilities, along with socio-economic development, based on input from County residents. For each element, the County should use the Comprehensive Plan to assess its existing conditions and project future needs in order to determine the best strategy for implementation.

The Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document. The purpose of the plan is to establish a vision for the County that describes the ideal future of the County. Regulatory documents - including codes, technical plans, mapping and other legislative tools – should be developed and maintained to support the Comprehensive Plan but are not couched in this Plan.

LEGAL AUTHORITY OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A Comprehensive Plan is an official public document adopted by a County's Planning Commission that outlines how the County should develop. In the State of Colorado, it is the duty of the County Planning Commission to make and adopt a "Master Plan" for the unincorporated territory of the County (Section 30-28-106(1), C.R.S.).

Pursuant to Section 30-28-106(1), C.R.S., a County "Master Plan" shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the County or region in accordance with present and future needs and resources. It will best promote the health, safety, values, order, convenience, prosperity or general welfare of the inhabitants, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development, including distribution of population and uses of land for trade, industry, habitation, recreation, tourism, agriculture, economic development, forestry and other purposes. Also, it will tend to create conditions favorable to health, safety, energy conservation, transportation, prosperity, civic activities, recreation, education and cultural opportunities. It will tend to reduce the wastes of physical, financial or human resources which result from either excessive congestion or excessive scattering of population. This will facilitate efficient economic utilization and conservation of resources, both natural and man-made.

Pursuant to Section 30-28-108, C.R.S., a Planning Commission may amend, extend or add to the plan or carry out any part of it into greater detail from time to time.

Once adopted, the Plan should be used by public and private agencies as the basis for the formulation or amendment of local land use regulation, the coordination of public facility and infrastructure development, and the coordination of private development decisions with community development objectives.

The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan leads to a review of the community's land use regulations, including zoning regulations and maps, subdivision regulations, building codes and other public improvement programs. These regulations should be consistent with the goals and policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan and should be considered as tools of implementation.



THE PLANNING PROCESS

The development of the Comprehensive Plan for Elbert County has been formulated as a result of numerous discussions between the County Commissioners, Planning Commission, County Planning Department, a Citizen Task Force, stakeholder focus groups, consultants and interested citizens to reassess the development policies of the County. The charge to these parties was to examine issues, goals and opportunities, and to develop a living Vision Statement for the County. From the Vision Statement, more detailed Goals, Policies and Implementation Strategies were identified to establish principles, by consensus, to guide future development in the County.

As part of the planning process, two public meetings and one informational open house were held to inform the community of the process, assess the vision of participating residents for the future of the County, and gather feedback on Goals and Policies to achieve that vision.

Over time, Elbert County's needs will change as it develops. As a result, a Comprehensive Plan should be flexible enough to accommodate changes in public attitude, technology, new approaches to land use planning, economics and legislative policy. As these changes occur, updates to the existing Plan are necessary in order to accurately reflect the needs of the County.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following groups and individuals played key roles in outreach, input and leadership in the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

Elbert County Commissioners

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 Danny Willcox – District 2
 Grant Thayer – District 3

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II. EXISTING CONDITIONS



REGIONAL CONTEXT

Elbert County, Colorado possesses a quintessential Western landscape with long-distance views of the Front Range and working agricultural lands. This area marks the end of the Front Range and the beginning of high plains grasslands. The western portion of the County is characterized by rolling hills with large stands of ponderosa pine woodlands and outcropping rock formations. Toward the east, the land flattens and transitions to farmlands and grasslands. The County is located in eastern Colorado, approximately 41 miles southeast of Denver and 91 miles west of the Kansas-Colorado border. However, the County is bordered by the fast-growing Front Range Counties of Arapahoe to the north, Douglas to the west and El Paso to the south. The major towns and community growth in the western portion of the County are roughly a 25-minute drive from nearby Castle Rock and less than an hour commute to the Denver, Aurora, and Colorado Springs areas.

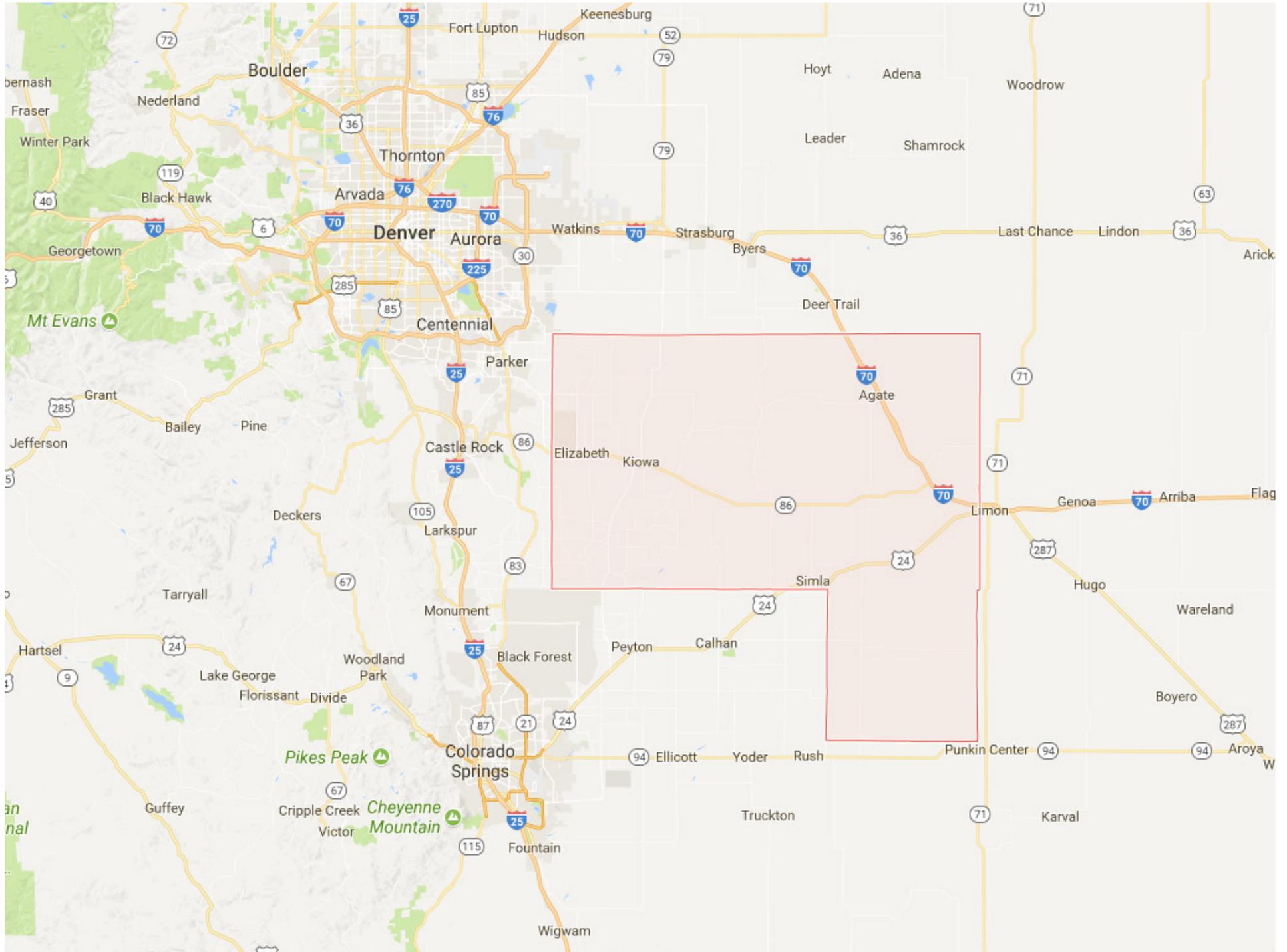


Figure II-1 | Regional Context



A photograph of a brick tower with a silver dome, partially obscured by a black text box. The tower is made of red brick and has a silver, ribbed dome. A fence is visible in the foreground, and there are green trees and a grassy field. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Growth Trends



HISTORY

Elbert County was established in 1874 from eastern portions of Douglas County and the dissolved Greenwood County. Its original extent included land reaching eastward to the Kansas state line. In 1889, Elbert County was reduced to its current size. Within 1,851 square miles resides a county rich in history that signifies the American West. Native Americans have inhabited Elbert County and the surrounding plains going back at least 1,200 years. The Apache entered the area in the beginning of the 1500s and dominated the high plains until the region saw the arrival of the Arapaho and Cheyenne around 1800.

The Pike's Peak Gold Rush brought "Fifty-Niners" west to mine gold in Colorado and with this brought white settlers to the areas historically inhabited by Native Americans. Most settlement in the County began as saw mill camps along the banks of streams. As these prairie camps became more established, economic activity grew to include logging, farming, cattle ranching and dairy farming. To this day, the County remains rooted in its Western heritage evidenced by a primarily agricultural economy, long-distance views, open lands and rural character of the communities.

POPULATION TRENDS

Elbert County's proximity and access to the Denver, Aurora, and Colorado Springs metropolitan areas have brought increasing growth, particularly to the western portions of the County. In 2016 alone, the state of Colorado added 101,000 people to its population and more than 80% of these newcomers settled along the Front Range. The surge of people in this concentrated zone makes areas like Elbert County, with low cost of living and access to economic centers, very attractive. As a result, population growth has manifested in the development of numerous rural subdivisions.

Colorado's population was estimated at 5.456 million as of July 2015, an increase of 1.9% from the previous year. This percentage increase ranked 2nd in the U.S. behind North Dakota, while total population change ranked 7th in the country. While this level of growth was very common for Colorado in the 1990's, 2015 marked the first time since 2001 that the state had grown by over 100,000. This growth didn't take place evenly across the state, however. The Front Range saw 96% of Colorado's population growth between 2010 and 2015, with 68% of the total in the Denver Metro Area. Elsewhere in the state, 23 counties recorded population loss during the same period. Twenty-nine counties experienced net out-migration, and 15 counties had natural decline. Figure II-2 shows which counties saw the largest population changes, both increases and decreases. (Source: State Demographers Office)

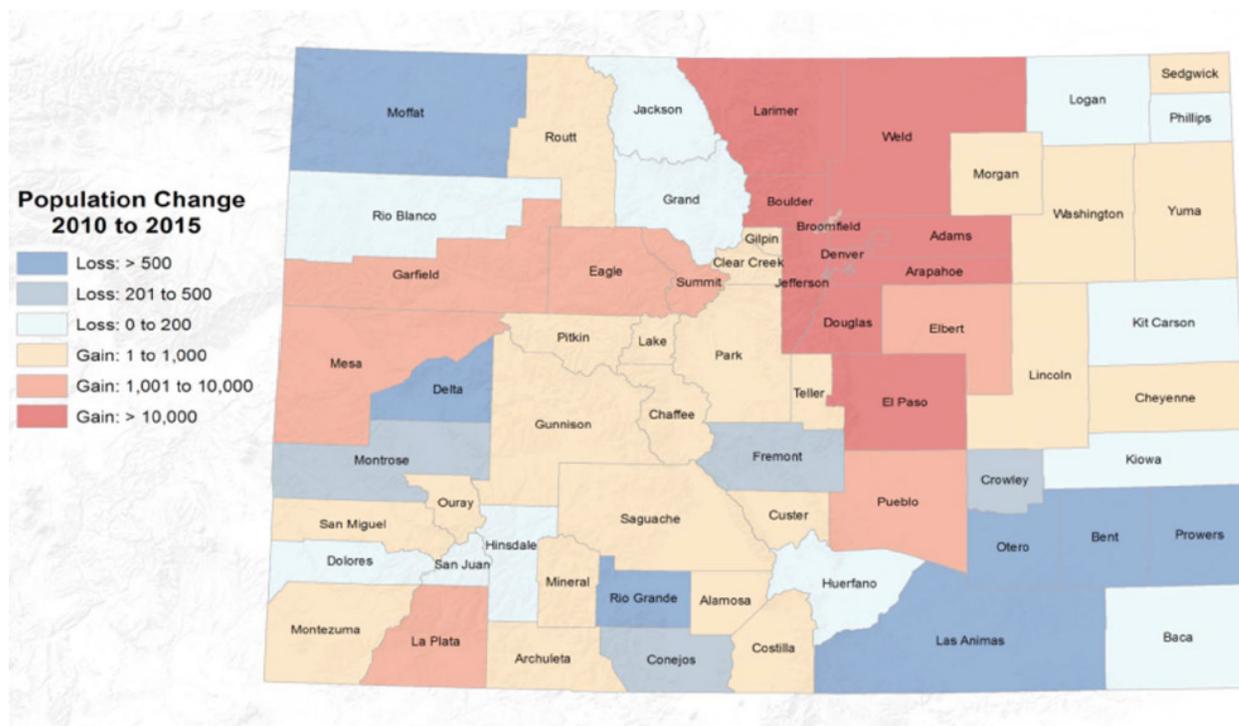


Figure II-2 | Colorado Total Population Change, 2010 - 2015 (Colorado State Demography Office)

Forecast population by the State Demographer indicates that the largest population growth by county will continue to be along the Front Range. Between 2015 and 2050, the state is forecast to increase by nearly 3,200,000 people. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of that growth, or 2,500,000, is forecast for the Front Range and, of that, 1,265,000 is forecast for the Denver Metro Area. Elbert County is forecast to increase by over 40,000 people by 2050.

The 2015 estimated population in the County totaled 24,694, marking a 6.9 percent total increase from 2010. By 2020, the population is projected to increase to 32,968. Annually, Elbert County is experiencing a 1.5% annual rate of population growth, which is greater than the statewide annual rate of population growth of 1.3%. State demographers predict Elbert County will be one of the fastest growing counties over the next five years and experience higher annual rates of population change, growing from a population of 24,694 in 2015 to 48,026 by 2030.

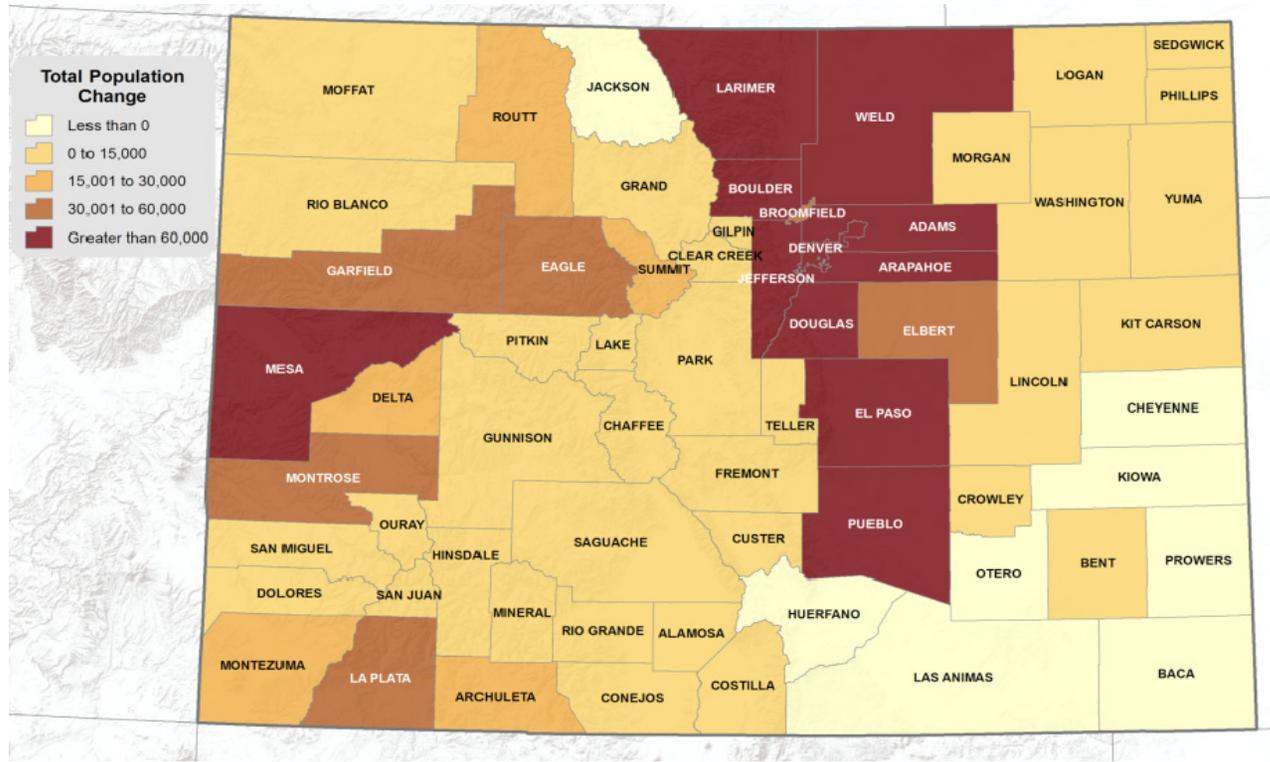


Figure II-3 | Projected Statewide Population Change, 2015 - 2050 (Colorado State Demography Office)

County	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Change in Growth 2015-2040	Annual Avg. Growth 2015-2020	Annual Avg. Growth 2020-2025	Annual Avg. Growth 2025-2030
Arapahoe	630,564	693,797	757,130	820,662	884,964	948,339	317,775	1.9%	1.8%	1.6%
El Paso	677,022	732,993	791,904	851,955	911,290	970,825	293,803	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%
Adams	490,829	548,267	604,088	661,937	720,377	777,948	287,119	2.2%	2.0%	1.8%
Douglas	322,017	353,698	387,352	420,641	449,766	475,185	153,168	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%
Denver	683,096	737,391	762,972	781,470	797,782	812,052	128,956	1.5%	0.7%	0.5%
Jefferson	565,230	596,329	625,899	652,540	674,139	685,641	120,411	1.1%	1.0%	0.8%
Boulder	319,177	339,449	361,029	380,385	399,164	416,553	97,376	1.2%	1.2%	1.0%
Elbert	24,694	32,968	41,349	48,026	53,654	58,856	34,162	5.9%	4.6%	3.0%
Broomfield	64,788	75,250	85,013	94,494	96,577	97,835	33,047	3.0%	2.5%	2.1%

Figure II-4 | Projected Elbert County Population Change, 2015 - 2040 (Colorado State Demography Office)



DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The majority of Elbert County is rural in nature, consisting of large tracts of farming and ranching lands. While agriculture and grazing were historically the backbone of the local landscape and economy, changes in long-standing development patterns began with the first subdivisions appearing in the 1970s. Large land parcels, particularly in the northwest corner of the County, have been converted into smaller acreage subdivisions as growth from the Denver Metro area spreads. Suburban development will likely continue to move south and east of Denver toward the western portions of Elbert County. The subdivision of lands on this side of the County will reduce the number parcels of land under a single ownership. Figure II-6 shows the extent of developed areas within the County in 2015.

The majority of the County's residents live in rural subdivisions in areas surrounding the communities of Elizabeth, Kiowa and Simla. Smaller historic communities include Agate, Elbert, Fondis, Matheson and Ponderosa Park. The town of Kiowa is the County seat. The western portion's proximity to Denver and Colorado Springs, lower cost of living and high quality of life has supported increased population growth, while the eastern portion of the county has retained much of its working agricultural lands and slower population growth rates.

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

The Elbert County Housing Plan, completed in 2009, was developed as a guide to be used by the County to evaluate residential land use proposals. This Plan is intended to balance the demands of growth with citizens' desire to preserve the rural character and environmental quality of the County. The goal of the Housing Plan is "to provide a variety of housing options that are compatible with the rural environment, and that comply with the Elbert County Master Plan (1996) and the Elbert County Site Design Standards for Residential Development."



Figure II-5 | Existing Development Map - 2015

GROWTH TRENDS

Growth trends will undoubtedly affect where priorities for future land use planning should be placed as the County continues to grow and develop. It is expected that the majority of the western portion of the County will continue to experience further subdivision of lands as population growth continues to shift more people from the Denver Metro into outlying areas where more land is available and costs are relatively affordable. While clustered development is encouraged in the County, typical land subdivision results in large-lot subdivisions between 10 and 35 acres in size. Densities of subdivisions are limited by the type of water and sanitary sewer systems allowed by regulation, the amount of open lands and amenities provided, and the type of development proposed. The three towns within the County have the potential to support further development as these areas provide minimum public services and basic supply requirements for residents and business owners and are located along major transportation corridors. Figure II-6 highlights areas of Elbert County projected to experience the greatest degree of population growth and development, energy development or increased interest in recreation opportunities.

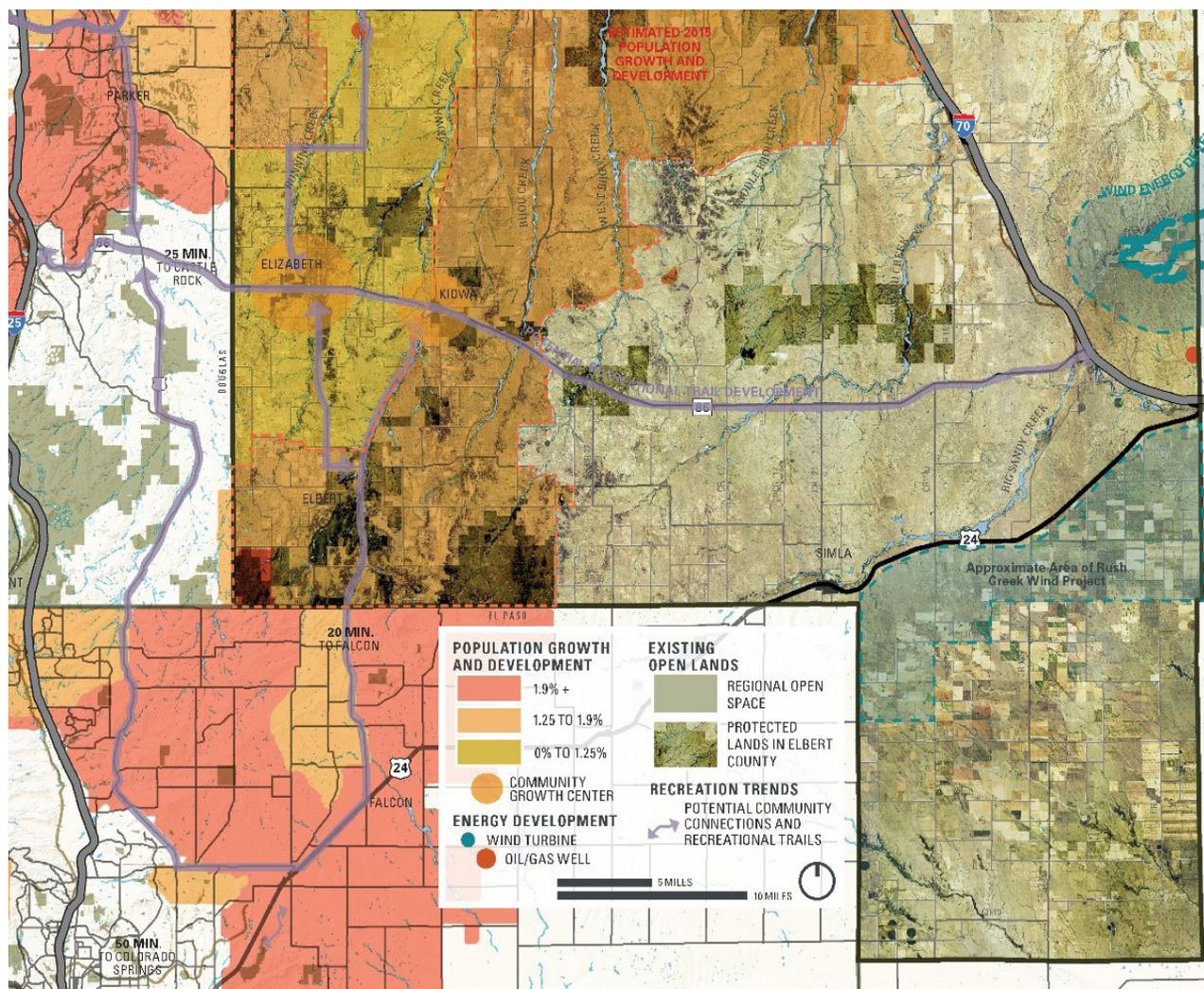


Figure II-6 | Projected Growth Pressures



HAZARD MITIGATION AND FUTURE CONDITIONS

As Elbert County continues to experience growth in the face of potentially uncertain climate conditions, it will become increasingly important to reduce risk through integrated hazard mitigation, land use planning and decision making. Elbert County has presently updated the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2016. The purpose of hazard mitigation planning is to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards. Elbert County and participating jurisdictions developed this Multi- Hazard Mitigation Plan update to prepare strategies to reduce future losses to the County and its communities resulting from natural hazards.

The 2016 Elbert County Multi- Hazard Mitigation Plan update was prepared pursuant to the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 to achieve eligibility for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hazard mitigation grant programs.



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Economic Conditions





HOUSING & HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Households in Elbert County have a higher median household income than most other counties along the Front Range, with the exception being adjacent Douglas County. Statewide median household income ranges between \$43,000 and \$73,000 according to 2015 data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. In Elbert County, the median income increases to \$83,205. Income levels across the County are not evenly distributed, however. The median household income is greatest in the western portion of the County, with income levels ranging between \$76,000 to \$106,000. East of Kiowa, the median household income ranges between \$46,000 to \$71,000.



Housing Profile

ElbertCounty
Area: 1,850.85 square miles

Prepared by Esri

Population		Households	
2010 Total Population	23,086	2016 Median Household Income	\$83,205
2016 Total Population	24,419	2021 Median Household Income	\$94,104
2021 Total Population	26,108	2016-2021 Annual Rate	2.49%
2016-2021 Annual Rate	1.35%		

Housing Units by Occupancy Status and Tenure	Census 2010		2016		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	8,939	100.0%	9,546	100.0%	10,336	100.0%
Occupied	8,380	93.7%	8,911	93.3%	9,555	92.4%
Owner	7,382	82.6%	7,731	81.0%	8,296	80.3%
Renter	998	11.2%	1,180	12.4%	1,259	12.2%
Vacant	559	6.3%	635	6.7%	781	7.6%

Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value	2016		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	7,731	100.0%	8,296	100.0%
<\$50,000	199	2.6%	108	1.3%
\$50,000-\$99,999	93	1.2%	63	0.8%
\$100,000-\$149,999	106	1.4%	64	0.8%
\$150,000-\$199,999	237	3.1%	126	1.5%
\$200,000-\$249,999	368	4.8%	226	2.7%
\$250,000-\$299,999	1,064	13.8%	945	11.4%
\$300,000-\$399,999	1,819	23.5%	1,986	23.9%
\$400,000-\$499,999	1,556	20.1%	1,784	21.5%
\$500,000-\$749,999	1,693	21.9%	2,229	26.9%
\$750,000-\$999,999	296	3.8%	400	4.8%
\$1,000,000+	300	3.9%	365	4.4%
Median Value		\$398,873		\$435,314
Average Value		\$448,978		\$487,642

Census 2010 Housing Units	Number	Percent
Total	8,939	100.0%
In Urbanized Areas	0	0.0%
In Urban Clusters	0	0.0%
Rural Housing Units	8,939	100.0%

Figure II-7 | Housing Profile (ESRI)

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUTING

As population has been increasing employment opportunities have not kept pace. The vast majority of working residents in Elbert County must leave the County for employment opportunities, goods and services. As of 2013, about 89% of the County's resident workforce worked outside of the County.

Illustrated in Figure II-9 are the three major components---Wage and Salary Employment, Nonfarm Proprietors' Employment and Farm Proprietors' Employment as a percent of total employment. The share of Elbert County's employment reported as Nonfarm Proprietors' Employment (39.9%) is 12.8% above the share nationally (21.4%). The share of Elbert County's employment reported as Farm Proprietors' Employment (13.8%) is well above the share nationally (1.0%).

In combination, Nonfarm Proprietors' Employment and Farm Proprietors' Employment amounted to 53.7% (39.9% + 13.8%) of Elbert County's employment in 2015. Wage and Salary Employment made up the balance (46.4%) of employment, which amounted to a substantially smaller share than the corresponding 77.6% for Wage and Salary Employment nationwide. Nationwide in 2015, there were just over one (1.10) Nonfarm self-employed jobs for every four Wage and Salary jobs. For Elbert County, there are just under one (0.86) Nonfarm self-employed jobs for every one Wage and Salary jobs. (Source: Regional Economic Analysis Project)

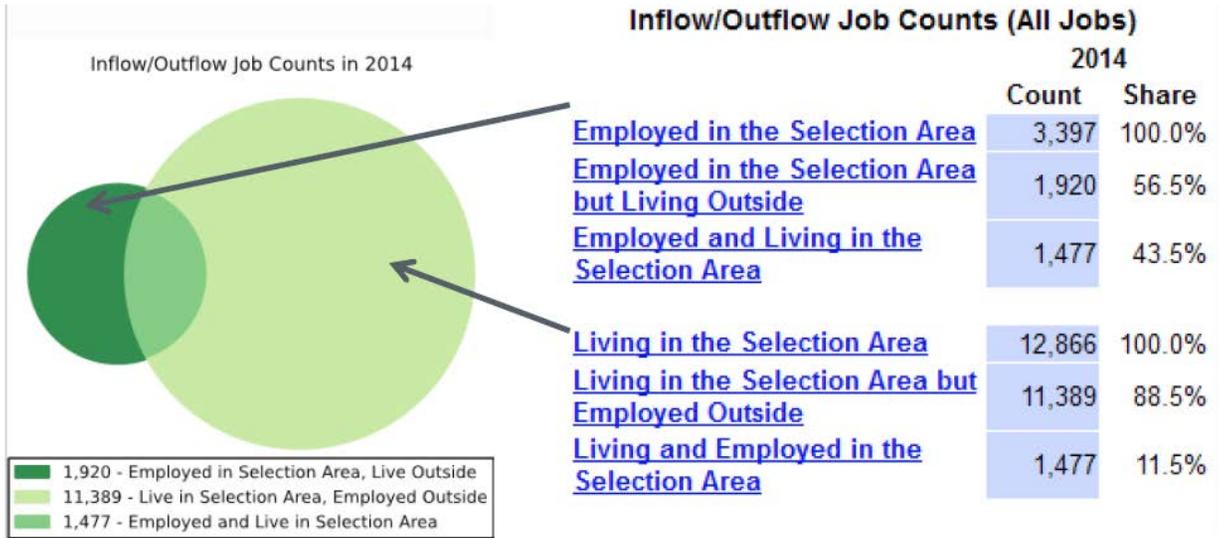


Figure II-8 | Estimated Commuting Patterns (Colorado State Demography Office)

Major Components as a Percent of Total Employment: Elbert County, Colorado, and the U.S., 2015

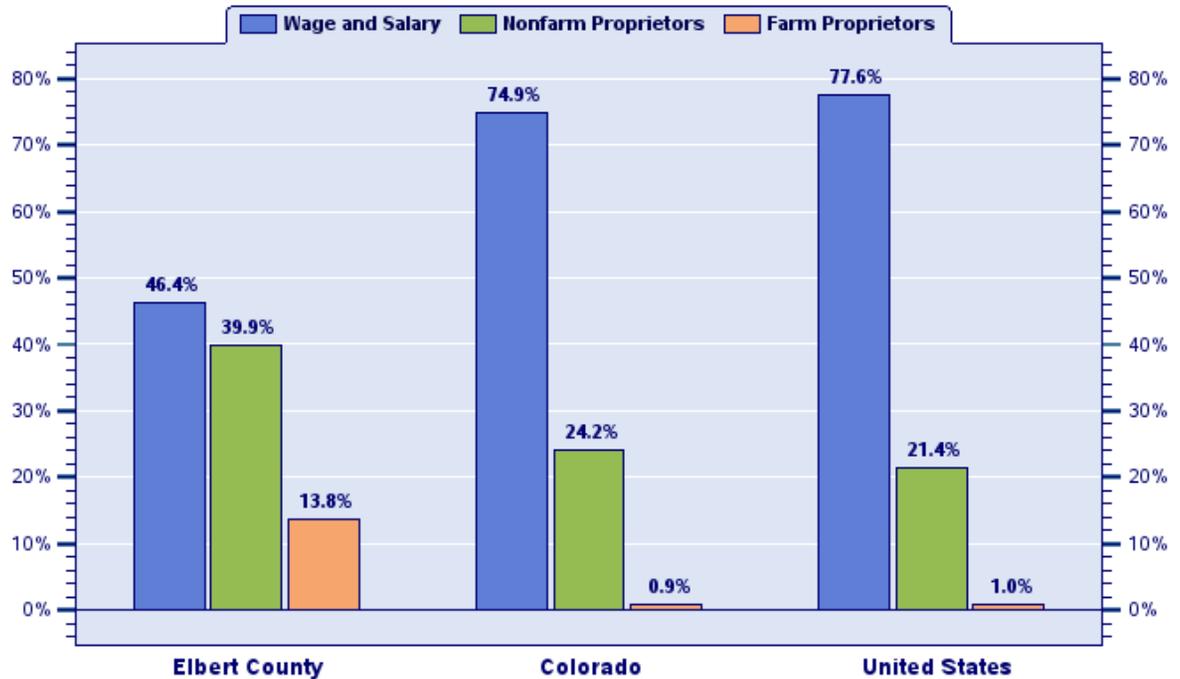


Figure II-9 | Employment Composition (Regional Economic Analysis Project)

ECONOMY	Elbert, Colorado	United States
Unemployment Rate	3.20%	5.20%
Recent Job Growth	2.88%	1.59%
Future Job Growth	42.56%	37.98%
Sales Taxes	3.90%	6.00%
Income Taxes	4.63%	4.60%
Income per Capita	\$36,421	\$28,555
Household Income	\$82,154	\$53,482
Family Median Income	\$91,010	\$65,443
POPULATION BY OCCUPATION		
Management, Business, Finance	16.06%	14.54%
Engineering, Computers, Science	7.97%	5.34%
Community, Social Services	1.97%	1.67%
Legal	0.81%	1.16%
Education, Library	6.37%	6.13%
Arts, Design, Media, Sports, Entertainment	2.08%	1.91%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technology	5.01%	5.67%
Healthcare Support	2.81%	2.51%
Firefighters, Law Enforcement	2.48%	2.23%
Food Preparation, Serving	6.24%	5.76%
Building Maintenance	3.43%	4.01%
Personal Care	3.68%	3.65%
Sales, Office, Administrative Support	24.07%	24.36%
Farming, Fishing, Forestry	0.16%	0.73%
Construction, Extraction, Maintenance/repair	8.31%	8.24%
Production, Transportation, Material Moving	8.58%	12.09%

Sperling's Best Places reports that the unemployment rate in Elbert County is 3.20%, 2% lower than that of the United States as a whole. Job growth in the County is also expected to outpace national averages, 2.88% compared to 1.59% respectively. Future job growth in the County over the next ten years is predicted to be 42.56%, and income per capita (which includes all adults and children) is anticipated to be \$36,421, or almost \$8,000 more than the national average.

Figure II-10 | Source: <http://www.bestplaces.net/economy/county/colorado/elbert>

COMMERCIAL SURPLUS & LEAKAGE

Economic conditions in Elbert County reflect those of many rural Colorado counties. There are few manufacturing or industrial enterprises and the vast majority of businesses that do exist are owned and operated by local residents. The scope of businesses is limited, providing basic needs such as grocery stores, restaurants, banks, limited medical and dental facilities, limited retail clothing stores, convenience stores, and farm and ranching supplies. As a result, Elbert County has an annual potential retail leakage on goods and services of over \$328M to businesses outside of the County.



Retail MarketPlace Profile

ElbertCounty
Area: 1,850.85 square miles

Prepared by Esri

Summary Demographics						
2016 Population						24,419
2016 Households						8,911
2016 Median Disposable Income						\$63,275
2016 Per Capita Income						\$37,964
Industry Summary	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$479,960,624	\$151,868,952	\$328,091,672	51.9	99
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$435,313,137	\$143,042,966	\$292,270,171	50.5	75
Total Food & Drink	722	\$44,647,487	\$8,825,986	\$35,821,501	67.0	24
Industry Group	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	441	\$100,815,414	\$6,394,896	\$94,420,518	88.1	6
Automobile Dealers	4411	\$80,283,783	\$3,791,760	\$76,492,023	91.0	2
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	4412	\$13,671,310	\$0	\$13,671,310	100.0	0
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	4413	\$6,860,321	\$2,603,136	\$4,257,185	45.0	4
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$13,291,765	\$1,540,089	\$11,751,676	79.2	5
Furniture Stores	4421	\$8,230,378	\$843,835	\$7,386,543	81.4	3
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	\$5,061,387	\$696,254	\$4,365,133	75.8	2
Electronics & Appliance Stores	443	\$23,202,703	\$4,252,389	\$18,950,314	69.0	8
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	444	\$28,232,266	\$5,326,057	\$22,906,209	68.3	11
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	\$25,893,649	\$2,769,772	\$23,123,877	80.7	6
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	\$2,338,617	\$2,556,285	-\$217,668	-4.4	5
Food & Beverage Stores	445	\$78,397,898	\$28,888,949	\$49,508,949	46.1	10
Grocery Stores	4451	\$62,274,480	\$22,877,594	\$39,396,886	46.3	3
Specialty Food Stores	4452	\$8,297,391	\$3,896,435	\$4,400,956	36.1	3
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	\$7,826,027	\$2,114,920	\$5,711,107	57.5	4
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$32,798,377	\$1,893,796	\$30,904,581	89.1	3
Gasoline Stations	447,4471	\$25,628,997	\$7,188,231	\$18,440,766	56.2	5
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$16,977,915	\$1,005,007	\$15,972,908	88.8	4
Clothing Stores	4481	\$11,298,788	\$632,544	\$10,666,244	89.4	3
Shoe Stores	4482	\$2,069,928	\$0	\$2,069,928	100.0	0
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	4483	\$3,609,199	\$372,463	\$3,236,736	81.3	1
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$14,993,011	\$1,916,446	\$13,076,565	77.3	8
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	4511	\$13,376,305	\$1,673,588	\$11,702,717	77.8	6
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	4512	\$1,616,706	\$242,858	\$1,373,848	73.9	2
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$73,527,719	\$78,545,980	-\$5,018,261	-3.3	5
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	4521	\$51,001,525	\$77,897,504	-\$26,895,979	-20.9	3
Other General Merchandise Stores	4529	\$22,526,194	\$648,476	\$21,877,718	94.4	2
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$18,204,268	\$1,428,269	\$16,775,999	85.4	7
Florists	4531	\$703,516	\$184,862	\$518,654	58.4	2
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$3,050,232	\$0	\$3,050,232	100.0	0
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$1,560,328	\$341,792	\$1,218,536	64.1	3
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	\$12,890,192	\$901,615	\$11,988,577	86.9	2
Nonstore Retailers	454	\$9,242,804	\$4,662,857	\$4,579,947	32.9	3
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	4541	\$6,045,093	\$0	\$6,045,093	100.0	0
Vending Machine Operators	4542	\$169,336	\$0	\$169,336	100.0	0
Direct Selling Establishments	4543	\$3,028,375	\$4,662,857	-\$1,634,482	-21.3	3
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$44,647,487	\$8,825,986	\$35,821,501	67.0	24
Special Food Services	7223	\$785,568	\$0	\$785,568	100.0	0
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	\$1,757,486	\$0	\$1,757,486	100.0	0
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	7225	\$42,104,433	\$8,825,986	\$33,278,447	65	24

Figure II-11 | Retail Surplus and Leakage Patterns (ESRI)

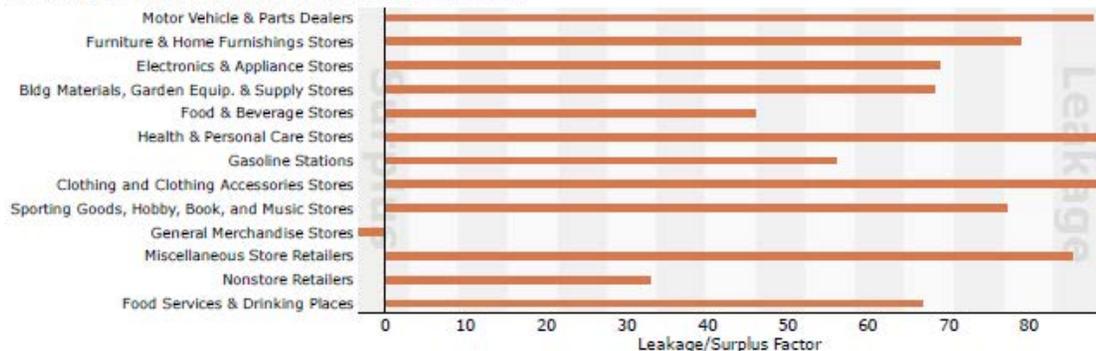


Retail MarketPlace Profile

ElbertCounty
Area: 1,850.85 square miles

Prepared by Esri

Leakage/Surplus Factor by Industry Subsector



Leakage/Surplus Factor by Industry Group



Figure II-12 | Retail Surplus and Leakage Patterns (ESRI)

ELBERT COUNTY FINANCIALS

Elbert County Budget

The following are budget elements that may be impacted by future land use decisions. While assessed valuation increased by \$51,706,130 from 2017 to 2018, nearly 75% of that value increase was from residential land uses, representing an increase of property tax revenue in the amount of \$1,439,389 for all funds.

See the following web link for more information:
<http://www.elbertcounty-co.gov/4%20-%20Budget%20&%20Financial/11-6-17%20-%202018%20Budget%20-%20Version%20III%20-%20Dated%2010-30-17.pdf>

	AUDITED FINANCIALS 2016	ADOPTED BUDGET 2017	BUDGET PROJECTIONS 2017	BUDGET 2018
ASSESSED VALUATION				
Residential	169,079,120	201,659,570	201,659,570	240,049,610
Commercial	22,728,990	25,528,980	25,528,980	27,530,880
Agricultural	19,197,320	19,770,150	19,770,150	21,656,800
Vacant Land	15,349,960	13,739,540	13,739,540	20,764,280
State Assessed	30,326,900	39,364,300	39,364,300	42,347,100
Natural Resources	5,966,580	4,168,350	4,168,350	3,588,380
Certified Assessed Value	262,648,870	304,230,890	304,230,890	355,937,050
MILL LEVY				
General	16.314	16.314	16.314	16.314
Road & Bridge	9.500	9.500	9.500	9.500
Social Services	1.500	1.500	1.500	1.500
Retirement	0.703	0.703	0.703	0.703
Refund and abatements	0.192	0.048	0.048	0.015
Total mill levy	28.209	28.065	28.065	28.032
PROPERTY TAXES				
General	4,284,854	4,963,223	4,963,223	5,806,757
Road & Bridge	2,495,164	2,890,193	2,890,193	3,381,402
Social Services	393,973	456,346	456,346	533,906
Retirement	184,642	213,874	213,874	250,224
Refund and abatements	50,429	14,603	14,603	5,339
Levied property taxes	7,409,062	8,538,239	8,538,239	9,977,628
Budgeted property taxes	\$ 7,409,062	\$ 8,538,239	\$ 8,538,239	\$ 9,977,628

Figure II-13 | 2018 County Budget



**ELBERT COUNTY, COLORADO
ROAD AND BRIDGE FUND SUMMARY
2018 BUDGET
For the Years Ended and Ending December 31**

	AUDITED FINANCIALS 2016	ADOPTED BUDGET 2017	BUDGET PROJECTIONS 2017	BUDGET 2018
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE	\$ 1,657,848	\$ 1,879,092	\$ 2,270,496	\$ 2,606,263
REVENUES				
Taxes	2,980,905	3,030,193	3,035,157	3,539,502
Intergovernmental	2,972,721	3,426,706	3,349,197	2,800,000
Charges for Service	167,527	109,000	194,788	205,000
Net Investment Income	6,711	1,000	2,869	2,500
Miscellaneous	12,571	-	9,661	10,000
Sale of Capital Assets	17,378	-	26,929	30,000
Insurance Recoveries	11,512	-	4,070	-
Total Revenues	<u>6,169,324</u>	<u>6,566,899</u>	<u>6,622,671</u>	<u>6,587,002</u>
REPAYMENT OF ADVANCEMENT				
Chapparral Valley Advance	-	21,167	-	-
Total Repayment of Advancement	<u>-</u>	<u>21,167</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TRANSFERS IN				
Sales and Use Tax Fund	325,000	325,000	-	450,000
Total Transfers In	<u>325,000</u>	<u>325,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>450,000</u>
Total Revenues and Transfers In	<u>6,494,324</u>	<u>6,913,066</u>	<u>6,622,671</u>	<u>7,037,002</u>
Total Funds Available	<u>8,152,173</u>	<u>8,792,158</u>	<u>8,893,167</u>	<u>9,643,265</u>
EXPENDITURES				
General Government	164,688	266,414	263,740	309,153
Public Works	4,863,836	5,518,239	5,120,317	5,725,726
Debt Service - Lease/Rental payments	853,153	1,060,100	902,847	987,497
Total Expenditures	<u>5,881,677</u>	<u>6,844,753</u>	<u>6,286,905</u>	<u>7,022,376</u>
TRANSFERS OUT				
Total Transfers Out	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Expenditures and Transfers Out Requiring Appropriation	<u>5,881,677</u>	<u>6,844,753</u>	<u>6,286,905</u>	<u>7,022,376</u>
ENDING FUND BALANCE BEFORE COMMITTED FUNDS	<u>\$ 2,270,496</u>	<u>\$ 1,947,405</u>	<u>\$ 2,606,263</u>	<u>\$ 2,620,888</u>
*Contingency Funds	-	-	-	1,000,000
ENDING FUND BALANCE WITH COMMITTED FUNDS	<u>\$ 2,270,496</u>	<u>\$ 1,947,405</u>	<u>\$ 2,606,263</u>	<u>\$ 1,620,888</u>

Figure II-14 | Road and Bridge Fund Summary

**2018 BUDGET
For the Years Ended and Ending December 31**

	AUDITED FINANCIALS 2016	ADOPTED BUDGET 2017	BUDGET PROJECTIONS 2017	BUDGET 2018
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE	\$ 2,449,187	\$ 919,486	\$ 1,559,857	\$ 2,031,449
REVENUES				
Sales Tax	1,113,348	1,020,000	1,369,997	1,400,000
Use Tax	1,227,125	1,080,000	1,157,612	1,160,000
Total Revenues	<u>2,340,473</u>	<u>2,100,000</u>	<u>2,527,609</u>	<u>2,560,000</u>
TRANSFERS IN				
Total Transfers In	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Revenues and Transfers In	<u>2,340,473</u>	<u>2,100,000</u>	<u>2,527,609</u>	<u>2,560,000</u>
Total Funds Available	<u>4,789,660</u>	<u>3,019,486</u>	<u>4,087,466</u>	<u>4,591,449</u>
EXPENDITURES				
General Government	70,447	65,000	75,680	76,500
Roads	2,748,356	1,925,000	1,037,134	1,320,000
Equipment	46,000	338,500	943,203	1,457,000
Total Expenditures	<u>2,864,803</u>	<u>2,328,500</u>	<u>2,056,017</u>	<u>2,853,500</u>
TRANSFERS OUT				
Road and Bridge Fund Operating	365,000	325,000	-	450,000
Total Transfers Out	<u>365,000</u>	<u>325,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>450,000</u>
Total Expenditures and Transfers Out Requiring Appropriation	<u>3,229,803</u>	<u>2,653,500</u>	<u>2,056,017</u>	<u>3,303,500</u>
ENDING FUND BALANCES	<u>\$ 1,559,857</u>	<u>\$ 365,986</u>	<u>\$ 2,031,449</u>	<u>\$ 1,287,949</u>

Figure II-15 | Sales and Use Tax Fund Summary

A landscape photograph featuring a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. A dark, semi-transparent horizontal bar is positioned across the middle of the image, containing the text "Environmental Conditions" in white. Below the bar, a hazy mountain range is visible in the background, with a flat, open field in the foreground.

Environmental Conditions

HYDROLOGY & FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

Elbert County receives around 12 to 18 inches of precipitation each year combined in both rain and snowfall. This is average for the State of Colorado, which gets around 16 inches of precipitation a year. Eighty percent of the State’s population lives on the Eastern Slope. It is also noted that 80% of the State’s water is used for agriculture. On average, 10,434,000 acre/feet of water (one acre-foot is equal to 325,851 gallons of water) leaves the State each year.

Streams in Elbert County flow into the South Platte and Arkansas Rivers. The major drainage routes flowing into the South Platte River include the north-oriented streams Running Creek, Kiowa Creek, Bijou Creek, West Bijou Creek, Middle Bijou Creek and East Bijou Creek. Big Sandy Creek and Horse Creek trend more easterly and flow into the Arkansas River. These waterways are prone to flash flooding and have a history of significant flood events, most recently occurring in 1997 and 1999. Waterways in the County contain over 110 flood control dams, although none are categorized as “high-risk.” The 100-year floodplains of these waterways are key areas for open lands since they handle runoff and floodwaters, contain wetland and riparian zones, and provide important corridors for wildlife migration and habitat. The floodplain management programs of Elbert County, the Town of Kiowa, and those recently adopted in the Town of Elizabeth, if properly enforced, should minimize the risk of flooding to future development.

Underground aquifers are the sole water source throughout Elbert County. The designated groundwater basins of the Denver Basin Aquifer System contained within the county include Kiowa Bijou and Upper Big Sandy. The amount of water the County draws from the Denver Basin is about 4% of the annual water that the basin supplies. The surrounding counties in the Metro Area are drawing water from the remaining 96%.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

The natural vegetation occurring within Elbert County consists mainly of high plains drought resistant grasses such as blue grama buffalo grass, wheatgrass and fescue, with large stands of ponderosa pine forest lands in the western portion of the County. Cottonwoods and willows line the riparian corridors, which provide important habitat for wildlife species including black bear, mule deer, pronghorn, white-tailed deer and elk. In the winter, riparian corridors also support the winter range of bald eagles, elk and wild turkey. The diversity of wildlife species found in the County includes Abert’s Squirrel, Preble’s Meadow Jumping Mouse, swift fox, massasauga, mountain lion, burrowing owl and black-tailed prairie dogs.



SCENIC RESOURCES

High elevations and ridgelines in Elbert County offer views to the scenic Front Range and iconic peaks such as Pikes Peak, Rampart Range, Mount Evans and Longs Peak. On a clear day, these mountain views are particularly visible from areas in the western portion of the County and Ridge Road, which runs north-south near the center of the County. The mountain backdrop is enhanced by ponderosa pine forests and the overall rural visual character in the foreground. Areas in the county where scenic resources stand out include Ridge Road, Peaceful Valley, Elbert Road, and the forested areas along State Highway 86.

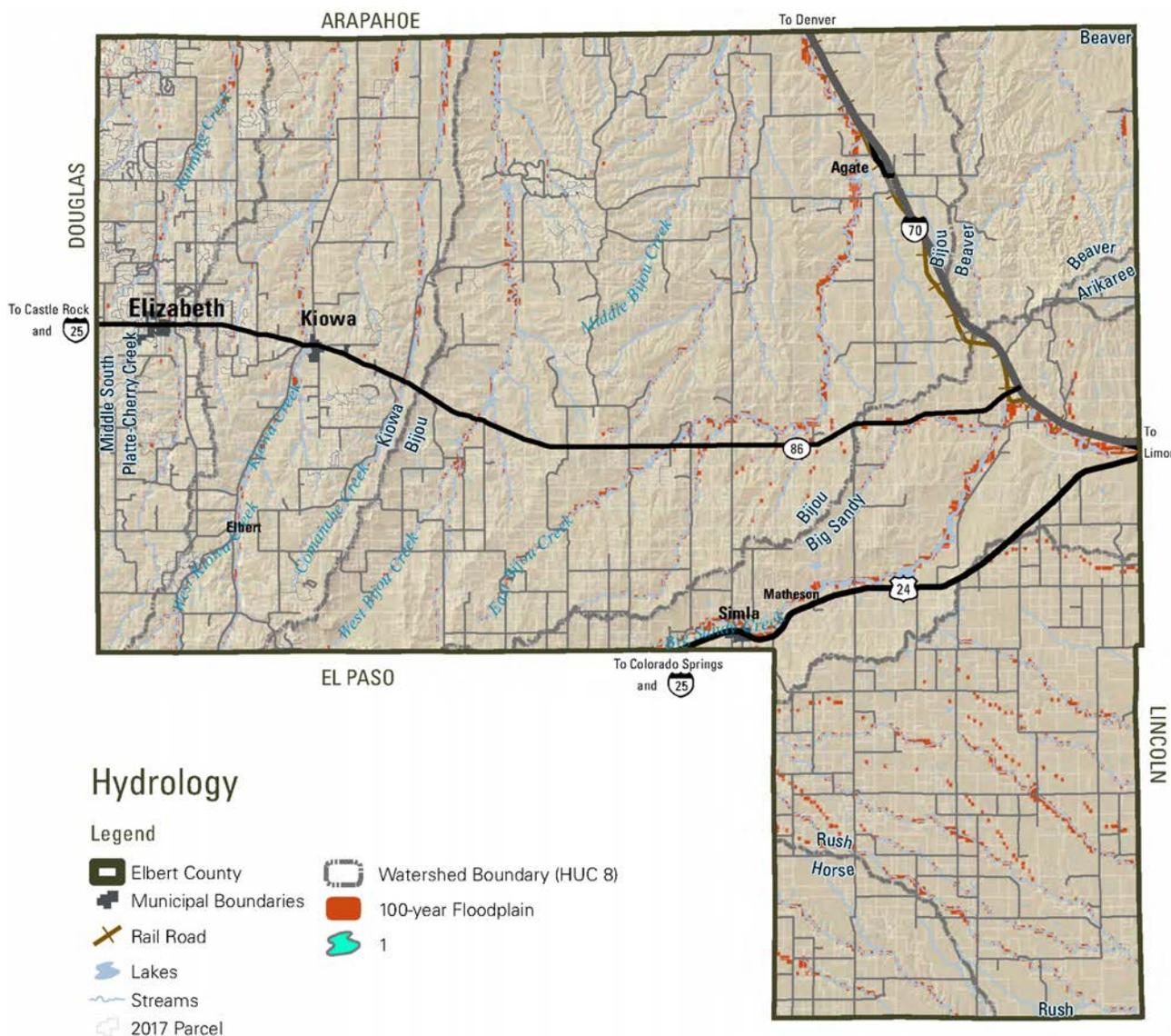


Figure II-16 | Hydrology



A rustic log cabin with a green metal roof and a brick chimney, surrounded by pine trees. The cabin is built with horizontal log walls and has a window with blue trim. The scene is set in a natural, wooded environment with green grass in the foreground.

Community Resources



SCHOOLS

There are ten school districts that serve Elbert County residents and thirteen public schools within the county. With the exception of schools in the Elizabeth School District, which have shown steady if slightly decreasing enrollments over the past 5 years, most schools have seen a 5-year trend of student population loss ranging from 12% to 35%.

FIRE PROTECTION

There are ten fire protection districts that cover portions of Elbert County, including Rattlesnake Fire Protection District, Elizabeth Fire Protection District, Elbert Fire Protection District, Kiowa Fire District, Calhan Fire Protection District, North Central Fire Protection District, Deer Trail Rural Fire Protection District, Agate Fire Protection District, Big Sandy Fire Protection District, and Limon Area Fire Protection District. These fire districts serve the majority of the populated areas of Elbert County.

Given the largely-rural nature of the County, wildfires are an on-going threat to the County's range and crop lands, air quality and economic stability. Strong fire protection and mitigation in the face of these threats may help mitigate the consequences of wildfire.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Elbert County Sheriff's Department serves approximately 1,851 square miles and a 2015 population of 24,694 citizens. The headquarters and detention facilities for the Sheriff's Office are in the Justice Center in Kiowa. Elizabeth, Kiowa and Simla have their own police departments who work closely with the County Sheriff's Department.

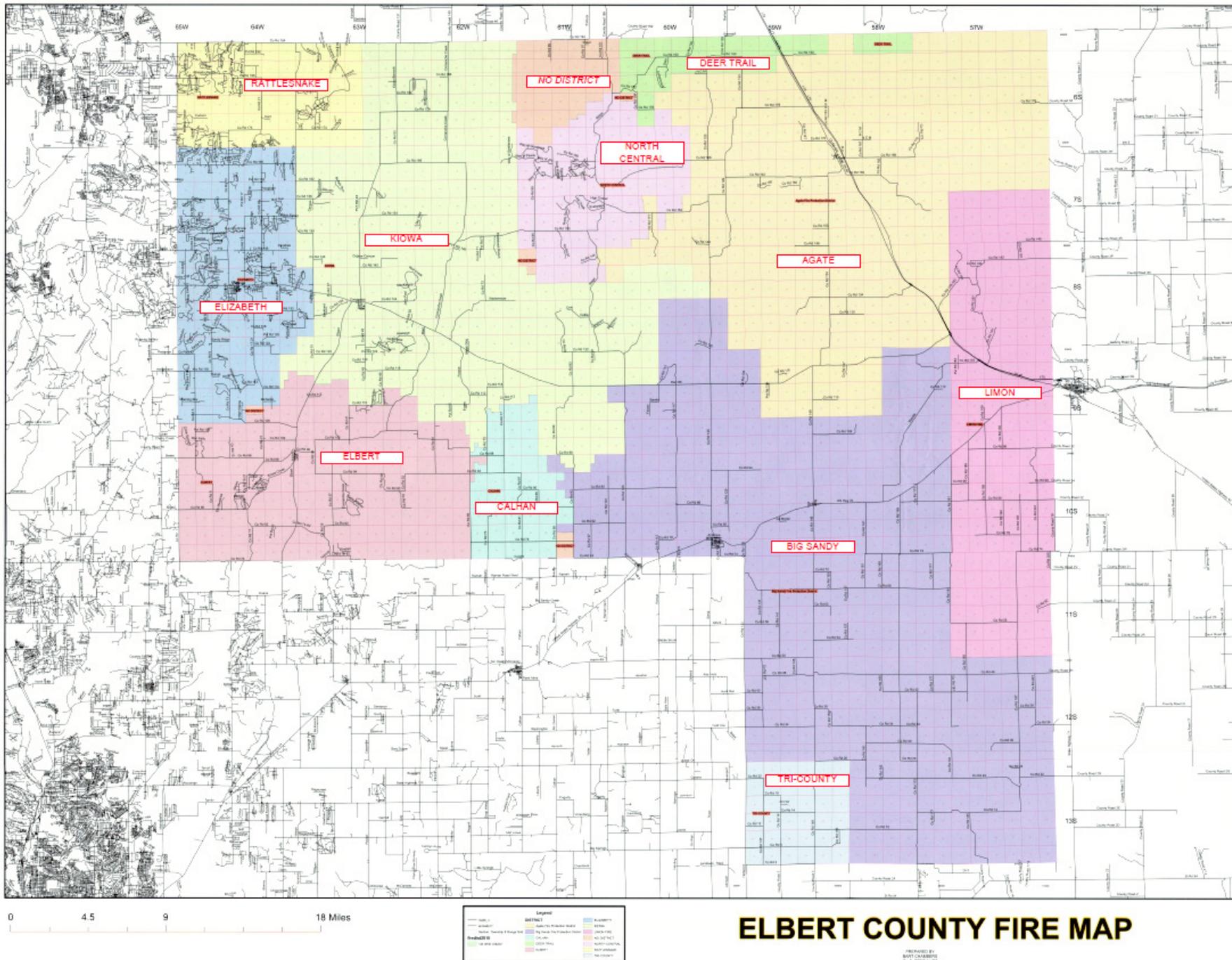


Figure II-17 | Fire District Map

WATER & SEWER

All of the Elbert County water supply comes from wells that are drilled into four of the aquifers that are below the surface. These aquifers are described in the 2018 Elbert County Water Supply Study. Aquifers are areas that can hold water in the different layers of sand and void spaces between the rocks hundreds and thousands of feet below the earth's surface. Large and small wells are drilled into these areas and the water is pumped to the surface for its use. These aquifers, the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe and the Laramie-Fox Hills, are part of the Denver Basin that provides domestic water to most of the Denver Metro area and the surrounding Counties.

Elbert County has 26 special metropolitan districts in addition to the four small towns that provide water and sewer for domestic and irrigation use. Special Districts are responsible for the pumping of raw water from the underground aquifers, treating the water to meet the EPA requirements, and distributing the water to the properties connected to the water mains. The Special Districts are also responsible for the collection of wastewater from properties connected to the sanitary sewer system and its treatment before it is discharged back into the ground. The age of these Districts varies from 10 to 25 years old. There are approximately 2,800 residences on water and sewer from the Special Districts, and 370 residences that have water service while the sanitary sewer is on septic systems. Elizabeth, Kiowa, Simla, and Elbert serve about 1,300 properties with both water and sewer, and have room for future expansion.

The remaining Elbert County properties are on well and septic systems for water and sewer. These systems draw the water directly from the ground, with little to no chlorination or treatment of the water, and then allow the wastewater to seep back into the ground with very limited treatment through residential septic systems. Residential exempt wells are generally for lots that are 10 acres or more and are limited to a 15 gallons-per-minute pumping rate. Most commercial and irrigation exempt wells are larger and can pump up to 108,600 gallons of water per year. Non-exempt wells for large farms and utility systems are regulated by the State Engineer and monitored annually. There are 9,400 active water wells in Elbert County. Seventy-one percent of these wells serve residential properties and the remaining wells are for irrigation and farming. Elbert County has approximately 1,400 farms that average around 780 acres in size and produce Crop Sales (20%), and Livestock Sales (80%).

TRANSPORTATION

The Elbert County transportation system evolved to serve rural and regional roadway needs based on typical low-density rural development and long distances between population centers. Increased growth and development in the County is changing the demands upon the County's aging transportation system.

Elbert County's transportation system endeavors to provide for the safe, efficient, and convenient mobility of the current and growing population. A transportation network functions best when it accommodates a wide range of users with diverse needs: those with agriculture and ranching equipment, and those without access to automobiles such as the aging population.

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

The West Elbert County Transportation Master Plan, completed in 2008, recommends policy, funding, roadway development, and multimodal strategies for West Elbert County through 2030. The 2008 Transportation Master Plan focused only on the western portion of the County because of the rapid development experienced along Elbert County's northwestern border. The issues and limitations facing the western half of the County are much different from those of the eastern half. The Plan identified 138 miles of additional roads to be paved.

EXISTING ROADWAY NETWORK

Elbert County’s roadway network comprises approximately 1,260 miles of road and the following types of roadway facilities: freeways, principal arterials, minor arterials, collectors, and local roads. Figure II-19 shows the County’s roadway network. The transportation system includes approximately 30 miles of freeway (I-70), approximately 75 miles of principal arterials (including US 24 and SH 86), approximately 350 miles of minor arterials and collectors, and more than 800 miles of local roads.

Each roadway type is designed to operate with certain characteristics based on the adjacent land uses and connectivity to other roads. The road’s functional classification (Figure II-18) describes these characteristics, although all roadways and roadway segments may not meet all the characteristics described by their defined functions.

PAVEMENT

There are 276 miles of paved road in the County, 168 miles of which are County maintained and 108 miles of state and federal highway. Figure II-20 shows the paved and unpaved roads in the County.

BRIDGES

Elbert County’s transportation system includes 34 bridges over 20’ in length, a significant number of which are aging and need repair. Many of these bridges are located on the state highway system.

Characteristics	Freeway	Principal Arterials	Minor Arterials	Collectors	Local
Functional Priority	Mobility is primary; limited access	Mobility is primary; access is secondary	Balanced mobility and access	Access is primary; mobility is secondary	Access is primary; limited mobility
Continuity	Continuous regional connections	Interconnected and continuous regional connections	Interconnected and continuous between communities	Interconnected and continuous between communities	Limited continuity and connections
Trip Lengths	Between states and major cities	Between counties and communities	Between and within communities	Between and within neighborhoods	Within neighborhoods

Figure II-18 | Roadway Characteristics

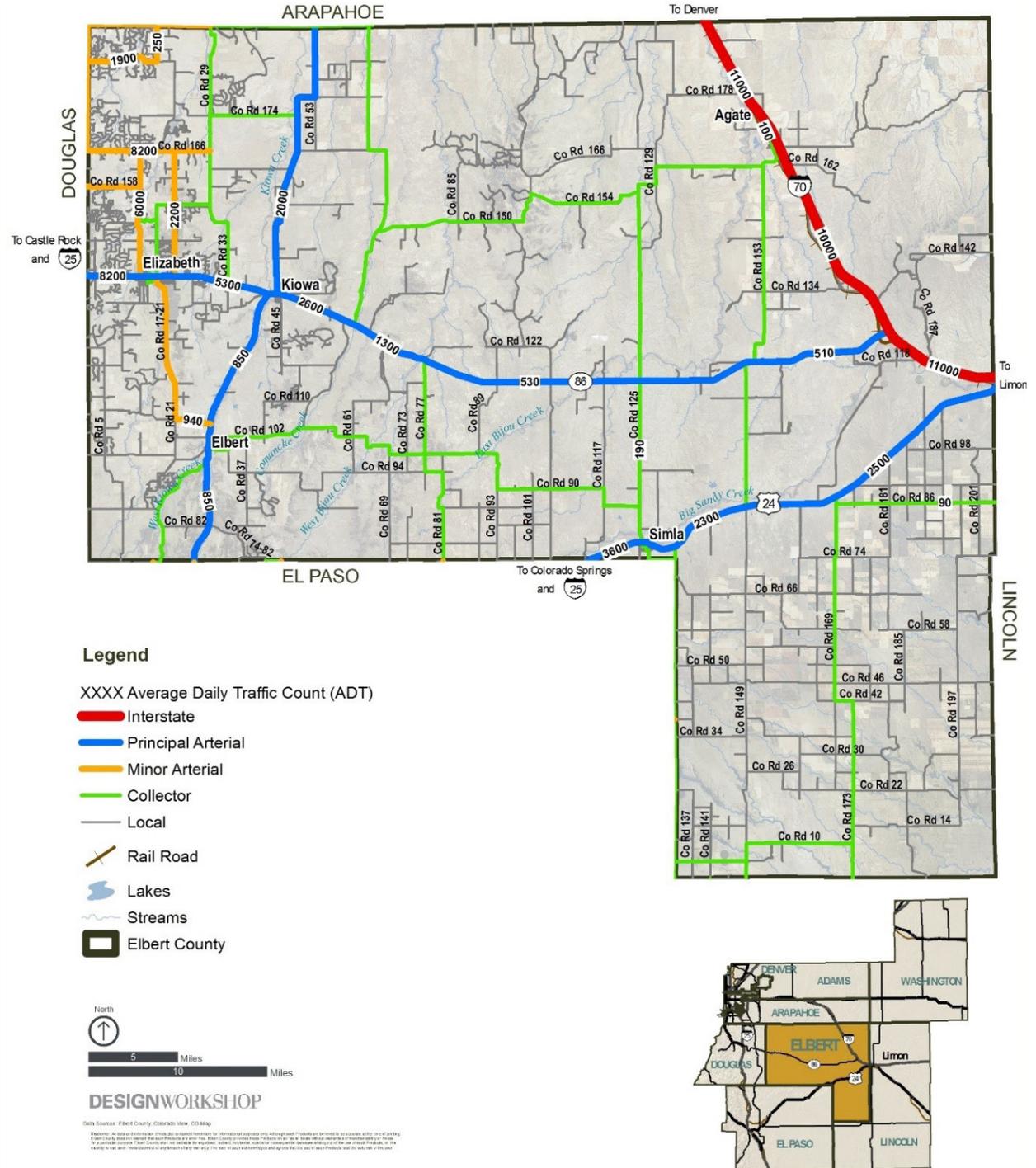
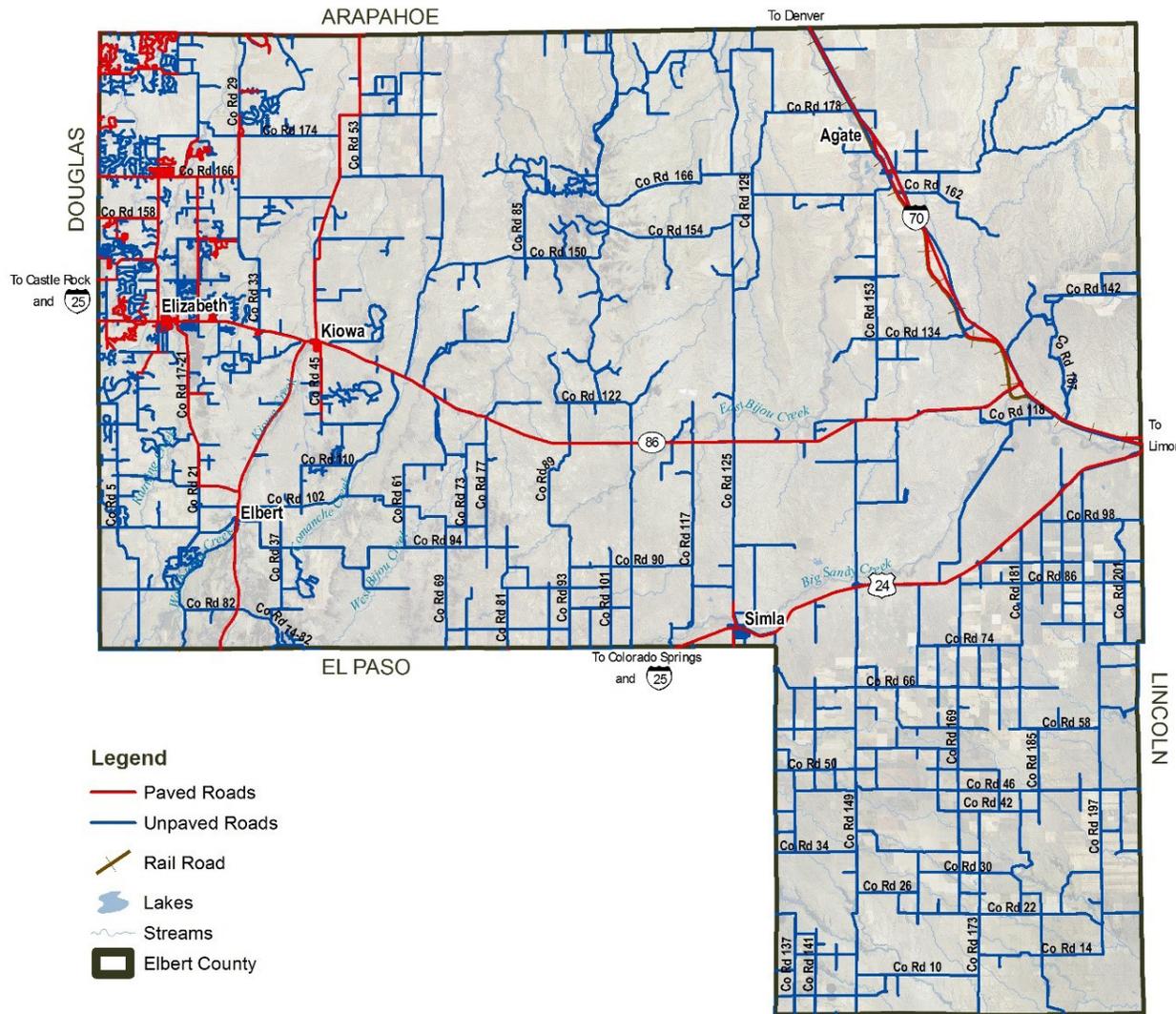


Figure II-19 | Road Network and Average Daily Traffic Counts

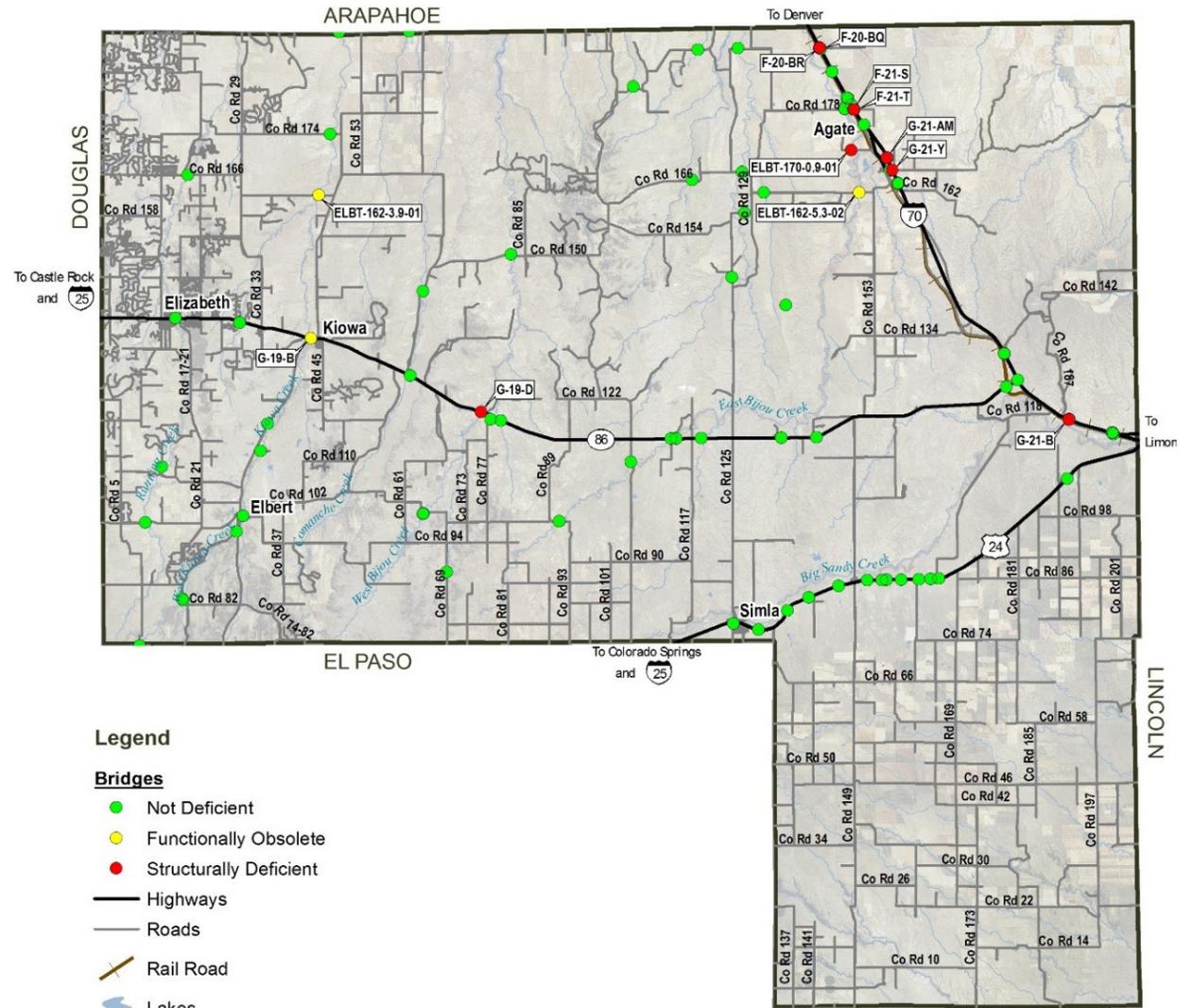


DESIGNWORKSHOP

Data Sources: Elbert County, Colorado View, CO Map

This map was prepared using geospatial data provided by the Elbert County GIS Department. The data was processed and analyzed using ArcGIS software. The map is for informational purposes only and does not constitute a warranty or guarantee of any kind. The user assumes all responsibility for the accuracy and reliability of the information presented on this map. The user acknowledges and agrees that the user shall be responsible for the accuracy of the information presented on this map.

Figure II-20 | Roadway Network Paving Type



Legend

Bridges

- Not Deficient
- Functionally Obsolete
- Structurally Deficient

— Highways

— Roads

— Rail Road

— Lakes

— Streams

▭ Elbert County



DESIGNWORKSHOP

Data Sources: Elbert County, Colorado View, CO Map
 Disclaimer: All data and information presented on this map are for informational purposes only. Although each product can be used for various purposes, the user assumes all responsibility for the use of the information presented on this map. The user assumes all responsibility for the use of the information presented on this map. The user assumes all responsibility for the use of the information presented on this map.



Figure II-21 | Bridges

TRANSIT

The County's sparse population and large geographic area make it challenging and infeasible to support scheduled transit service. However, the Outback Express, a division of the East Central Council of Local Governments (ECCOG), provides a coordinated public transit system serving Elbert County, as well as Cheyenne, Kit Carson, and Lincoln counties, with the mission to assist individuals in maintaining their independence, health, and quality of life in their own homes for as long as possible. While their service primarily supports older individuals and persons with disabilities, anyone who needs transportation is eligible for service.

BUDGET

The West Elbert County Transportation Master Plan (2008) determined that maintenance and infrastructure improvements are not currently keeping pace with the County's increasing traffic demands.







Economic Trends



RURAL COMMUNITIES

Elbert County's economic base was historically rooted in cattle ranching and farming. Soils containing characteristics of prime farmland and farmland of state and local significance are found throughout the County, most notably in proximity to stream corridors and in the County's southeastern corner. The 2015 survey conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture indicates the County contains an inventory of ~37,000 head of cattle, ~41,000 acres of planted winter wheat and ~2,900 acres of planted corn. These numbers indicate Elbert County raises approximately 1.5% of the State of Colorado's cattle and 2% of the State's winter wheat. Working agricultural lands in the County represent a significant source of revenue. The production of winter wheat alone generated \$6,750,650.

Elbert County also has a long equestrian history. The County is ranked seventh statewide in total number of horse farms. A recent study showed the equine industry in Elbert and neighboring Douglas County contributed an estimated \$100-135 million in total economic impact. Linking residents to the diverse outdoor recreation opportunities from the peaks to the plains through trail development has become a priority to continue to support Colorado's outdoor lifestyle and Elbert County's equine activities.

Elbert County is included in the nearly one-third of Colorado counties that are either economically dependent on the cattle industry or have the cattle industry serve an important role in their economies. In comparison to statewide cattle inventories, Elbert County's contribution falls just short of

EXTRACTIVE & RENEWABLE ENERGIES

the top 10 counties in Colorado. Additionally, the equine industry is a significant revenue generator. Components of this industry include equine associations, horse shows and activities, 4-H Clubs and therapeutic riding programs. All these components contribute to a vibrant equine economy in the County through fees and labor. While it is difficult to calculate the direct contribution, a 2007 Census of Agriculture indicates the County had equine sales totaling \$1.31 million, ranking Elbert County seventh overall in Colorado.

Oil and gas development in Elbert County grew in the 1960s and 70s, then idled until about 2010 when drilling activity began to rapidly increase in nearby Weld County. In 2017, 75 producing oil and gas wells were located in the county. Renewable energy investments in wind and solar, among other renewable energy resources, are a growing potential in the County. Wind energy made up 13% of the total electricity generated in Colorado in 2014, accounting for the largest percent of renewable energy generation in Colorado. Innovations in technology and reductions in manufacturing costs have positioned both wind and solar resources to be one of the most prolific and cost competitive renewable resources in the market.

Wind energy potential on the eastern portion of the county ranges from fair to good, and turbines have begun to emerge in the Cedar Point Wind Site, with additional turbines located just over the County line in the Limon Wind Site. The Rush Creek project establishes the largest wind farm within the state. When completed it will include 300-400 turbines with a maximum height of 440 feet to the tip of the blade and 90 miles of transmission lines. Solar energy potential is also high. In most locations across the County, 100,000 square feet of solar panel surface area could generate over 530 watt-hours per square foot, per day - or enough energy to meet the needs of over 1,300 homes. This addition to the statewide electricity portfolio provides substantial benefits for the County, including economic development and job growth. It also brings, however, impacts to wildlife communities and the visual landscape.

Elbert County is located along the oil and gas rich Niobrara shale formation, which runs from southeast Wyoming down the Front Range and into Elbert County and parts of Kansas and Nebraska. Elbert County began exploring oil and gas drilling in their jurisdiction around 2011. According to initial estimates, the Niobrara formation in Colorado could yield as much as \$250 billion in oil and gas. While the County has not experienced the level of oil and gas activity seen in other parts of Colorado, interest in the economic potential of drilling continues.





Figure II-22 | Agricultural Energy Conditions

TOURISM

AGRITOURISM

Agritourism may be defined as activities, events and services related to agriculture that take place on or off the farm or ranch, and connect consumers with the heritage, natural resources or culinary experiences they value. There are three general classifications of agritourism activities: on-farm/ranch, food-based, and heritage activities. Farmers and ranchers provide these recreational and educational activities which evoke our western American heritage. These leisure activities are attractive to consumers and provide extra income to the agricultural community.

In 2006, more than 13 million visitors experienced agritourism in Colorado and the economic impact was \$2.2 billion. This included visits to farms, shopping at farmer's markets, winery tours, etc. The last USDA Agriculture Census (2012) indicated that 864 Colorado farms offered agritourism and recreation services, totaling nearly \$30 million in farm income. (Source: colorado.gov)

ELIZABETH STAMPEDE

With a long history going back to the early 1900's, the Elizabeth Stampede is an award-winning rodeo event for amateurs and professionals. Besides the exciting rodeo competitions, there are concerts, local vendors, and activities for all ages. This annual extravaganza brings thousands of people to Elbert County every year from across the county and around the world to experience the parade, pay tribute to veterans, and enjoy the barrel racing, mutton busting, bull riding and star-studded concerts.



COUNTY FAIR

The County Fair and Rodeo, operated in the fall, allows the county to exhibit the agricultural aspect of Elbert County. The fair has been operating for over 80 years. This event is family oriented and draws people from the entire region.

CURRENT TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

PEACEFUL VALLEY SCOUT RANCH

Located close to unincorporated Elbert, Peaceful Valley Scout Ranch is one of the gems of the Boy Scouts of America Denver Area Council. With over 3,300 acres of land, the ability for adventures at Peaceful Valley Scout Ranch is endless for Scouts of all ages. This regional camp includes a swimming pool, two lakes, Olympic shotgun shooting range (along with world-class rifle and archery ranges), one of Colorado's premier mountain biking courses, natural rock climbing areas, trading post, dining hall, two themed outpost camps and much more.

In addition to the thousands of camping nights logged by youth from across the Denver metro area and states across the country, Peaceful Valley Scout Ranch can also accommodate corporate retreats and weddings.

SHOOTING SPORTS

Elbert County has a wide spectrum of shooting sports available. Shooting ranges are within easy driving distances of the major population centers. These ranges provide the opportunity to shoot sporting clays, pistol targets, and rifle targets. The rifle ranges have multiple distance availability which includes long range targets.







III. VISION, GOALS & POLICIES

VISION STATEMENT

The vision, goals and policies of Elbert County are derived from the concerns of County residents. These vision, goals and policies directly reflect those issues deemed most important by local citizens and officials for this Comprehensive Plan.

The section provides an overall framework from which more detailed goals and policies are derived. This framework is established by the County's Vision Statement, which sets the tone for future development. The Vision Statement describes the ideal future of the County, and includes the values that are important to County residents and statements about quality of life and character. The Elbert County Vision Statement is as follows:

Elbert County, being rich in heritage, has a vision where property rights are respected and agriculture, commerce, industry and residential growth are encouraged, thereby creating a path to economic prosperity.

GOALS & POLICIES

Based on the overall values of Elbert County outlined in the Vision Statement, specific goals and policies were developed. These goals and policies are divided into five topic areas that provide a framework for the Plan, and include the following:

- Land Use
- Community Resources
- Natural Resources
- Economic Development
- Recreation & Tourism

GOALS

The goals are written to describe the ways in which the County strives to achieve the Vision Statement. Goals are not prescriptive; instead, they provide a roadmap for decision making.

POLICIES

Policies are more deliberate statements about what the County should do in order to achieve the stated goals. Policies are meant to encourage desirable development and dissuade actions or activities that may negatively impact public health and safety.

The goals and policies were developed through a series of public meetings, a review of the goals and policies from the 1996 Master Plan, and workshops with the Planning Commission, Planning Department, Citizen Task Force, stakeholder focus groups and concerned citizens of Elbert County.

LAND USE

GOALS

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (RD)

Elbert County supports residential development by: encouraging a range of lot sizes and residential densities associated with available roads and infrastructure; and by encouraging the designation of open space and the preservation of areas of visual, historic and natural consequence.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CD)

Elbert County supports growth of commercial uses to provide residents with goods, services and employment.

AGRICULTURE (AG)

Elbert County strongly supports private property rights that encourage agricultural land uses.

POLICIES

- RD1 New residential development should cover all costs of on- and off-site roads and utilities required to meet the associated demands of that development.
- RD2 To preserve open space and preserve the rural character of Elbert County, clustered residential development patterns are encouraged on lands within one-mile of paved roads and existing utility corridors where they exist and within the three-mile service and/or influence areas of County towns.
- RD3 The County should consider incentives that encourage new residential development to provide a diverse range of housing options.
- RD4 Residential developments may negotiate with referral agencies to mitigate development impacts or strains on public facilities, including land for school sites, parks and open space, and other public uses. Where appropriate the County may allow cash in-lieu of land to meet these requirements.
- RD5 The County should require that public land dedications include adequate access, water and sewer service, and other utilities to serve the intended use.
- CD1 The County should create economic development overlay zoning to identify potential centers of commercial activity and services.
- CD2 Commercial development should be encouraged where arterial road access, water and sewer service, and suitable topography exist or are included as part of an overall development plan.
- CD3 Commercial development should be integrated with the open space from adjacent residential development.
- AG1 The County supports right-to-farm protections for working farms and ranching operations.

LAND USE
(continued)

GOALS	POLICIES
<p>INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (ID) Elbert County supports the growth of industrial enterprises.</p>	<p>ID1 The County should create an economic development overlay to identify potential centers of industrial activity and services.</p> <p>ID2 The County should identify employment centers that utilize existing transportation facilities and infrastructure and are located where traffic, noise, and air pollution conflicts with residential, commercial and agricultural uses can be mitigated.</p> <p>ID3 The County should encourage the development of industrial uses in eastern Elbert County, particularly along the I-70 and railroad corridors.</p> <p>ID4 Elbert County should encourage nodal-type development.</p>
<p>HAZARD MITIGATION (HM) Elbert County supports plans and policies to reduce the impacts of natural hazards to the people, property and environment of the County.</p>	<p>HM1 The County should improve education and awareness of hazards and risk reduction measures.</p> <p>HM2 The County should protect facilities, infrastructure and other community assets from hazards.</p> <p>HM3 The County should incorporate hazard mitigation into future development plans and policies.</p> <p>HM4 The County should enhance local mitigation capabilities, including human, technical, financial and regulatory capabilities.</p> <p>HM5 The County should improve communication and coordination of mitigation activities between federal, state and local governments and with private and non-profit organization.</p> <p>HM6 The County should maintain and update the Elbert County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan as development occurs.</p>

**COMMUNITY
RESOURCES**

GOALS

GENERAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES (CR)
 Elbert County strives to provide public and community resources, services and facilities to all County residents.

PUBLIC SAFETY (PS)
 Elbert County strives to ensure that public safety services are sufficient to serve and protect the County.

HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL SERVICES (HS)
 Elbert County strives to ensure that residents have access to health care and social services within the County.

POLICIES

- CR1 To the extent that new development necessitates capital public improvements as a result of impacts created by that development, the County may require the developer to finance, in a timely fashion, construction of those capital improvements. The County should coordinate with the relevant special districts, authorities and municipalities to determine the need for such facilities.
- CR2 The County, towns, and agencies should work together on reviewing development proposals within designated service and/or influence areas.
- PS1 As development occurs, the County and developers should cooperate to provide funding for additional Sheriff’s Department facilities and resources to cover the service needs associated with new development.
- PS2 As development occurs, the County and developers should cooperate in providing funding to update existing facilities and construct additional fire protection facilities – especially in rural areas where fire equipment and protection may not be readily available.
- HS1 As development occurs, the County should encourage private enterprise to provide adequate medical facilities to meet the needs of the growing population.

**COMMUNITY
RESOURCES**
(continued)

GOALS

TRANSPORTATION (TR)

Elbert County strives to create and maintain a safe and functional transportation system.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS (SD)

Elbert County encourages the formation of economically sustainable special districts to provide services that are not funded through County allocations.

POLICIES

- TR1 New development is encouraged to locate proximate to improved arterial roads or such roads should be provided by the developer.
- TR2 Proposed roadway systems should be planned to minimize negative impacts on the environment and to adjacent land uses.
- TR3 The County should coordinate planning and development review efforts with applicable referral agencies to ensure integration and continuity of the road system.
- TR4 The paving of major collectors in new and existing subdivision roads should be encouraged.
- TR5 The County and developers shall meet all current and applicable federal and state road standards.
- SD1 The County should encourage that a special district has realistic growth phasing in addition to an adequate economic base.
- SD2 The County should encourage cooperation and communication between special service districts.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES
(continued)

GOALS

WATER, SEWER & WASTE DISPOSAL (WS)
Elbert County strives to protect water resources to ensure that plentiful resources are available to current and future residents, businesses and agricultural operations.

PARKS & OPEN SPACE (PO)
Elbert County strives to designate park lands and open space that are accessible to the public and protected from future development.

POLICIES

- WS1 The County should encourage all new developments within an established district to receive services provided by the district.
- WS2 Infrastructure extensions and other necessary facilities should be planned and designed to meet the appropriate municipal and/or district’s standards.
- WS3 In areas where the water and/or sewer system is at capacity, new development should provide appropriate facility improvements to counteract the demand generated by that new development.
- WS4 New development shall conform to State laws covering domestic water supply and septic systems.
- WS5 The County should coordinate planning and development review efforts with towns and applicable referral agencies to ensure integration and continuity.
- PO1 The County should consider establishing standards for parks and open space.

**NATURAL
RESOURCES**

GOALS

GENERAL ENVIRONMENT (EN)

Elbert County strives to safely foster a balance between the natural and developed environment while supporting private property rights.

AIR QUALITY (AQ)

Elbert County strives to protect air quality for the health and safety of the citizens.

WATER QUALITY (WQ)

Elbert County strives to protect water quality for the health and safety of the citizens.

NOISE ABATEMENT (NA)

Elbert County will follow the state of Colorado noise abatement standards.

POLICIES

EN1 All development, including residential, industrial, commercial and public utilities, should be designed and constructed in a manner that is respectful to the environment.

EN2 New developments should minimize negative impacts to adjacent agricultural lands and designated open space.

AQ1 Colorado Department of Health air quality standards applicable to the County shall be considered minimum standards.

WQ1 The County encourages erosion control plans for any new developments in the County.

WQ2 Wastewater systems which recycle or reuse appropriately treated effluent are encouraged for subdivisions.

WQ3 The County should encourage new development to connect to existing potable water and wastewater treatment systems where adequate capacity and infrastructure exists.

NA1 New developments are responsible for mitigating noise from existing land uses.

NA2 New developments or permitted uses are responsible for mitigating noise to neighboring properties.

**NATURAL
RESOURCES**
(continued)

GOALS

FORESTRY & NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT (FW)
Elbert County will strive to protect and enhance native vegetation to conserve water resources, protect soils and preserve natural habitat.

POLICIES

- FW1 The County should encourage the preservation of significant vegetation through weed control, reseeding and other revegetation practices.
- FW2 Land disturbance and erosion should be minimized to help prevent air and water pollution and minimize noxious plant proliferation. The County should encourage stabilization and landscaping of final landforms and control of runoff at historic levels.
- FW3 Significant stands of trees and shrubs identified during the land review process should be preserved and maintained in concert with good forest management practices. Improvements should be located to minimize the removal of vegetation. Special attention should be given to unique or significant forms of vegetation in areas adjacent to bodies of water and in locations where the tree line forms the horizon line on ridges.
- FW4 Off-site disturbance by development is discouraged. When disturbance is unavoidable, stabilization and revegetation with native plants or landscaping should proceed immediately after construction.
- FW5 Existing vegetation should remain undisturbed, except in cases where it is prudent for public improvements, surveying, wildlife protection, agricultural cultivation, forest management or noxious plant control.
- FW6 The County and property owners should work together to reduce the proliferation of noxious plants in an environmentally sound manner in compliance with State laws, County regulations and recognized agricultural priorities.

NATURAL RESOURCES
(continued)

GOALS	POLICIES
<p>WILDLIFE (WL) Elbert County values wildlife and the environments that support them and will strive to minimize disruption of their natural habitats and migratory corridors.</p>	<p>WL1 The County should continue to include Colorado Parks & Wildlife as a referring agency in appropriate land use applications.</p> <p>WL2 Stewardship of critical ecosystem components should be encouraged, including wetlands and other significant wildlife habitats.</p> <p>WL3 The County should evaluate the effect of proposed development upon wildlife, wildlife habitat and migration corridors.</p>
<p>MINERALS (MI) Elbert County supports the safe extraction of mineral resources.</p>	<p>MI1 The County supports mineral resource extraction activities while ensuring they are excavated with environmental sensitivity, minimizing potential hazards to county residents or adjacent lands, and do not interfere with individual property rights.</p> <p>MI2 Any mineral extraction or any accessory activities that may require special use permits should be consistent with State rules and regulations.</p> <p>MI3 The County should ensure new surface development preserves rights of access for owners of mineral rights.</p>
<p>HISTORIC RESOURCES (HR) Elbert County respects its rich history and encourages preservation of the resources that have contributed to the character of the County.</p>	<p>HR1 The County should encourage the preservation of historical sites and buildings as well as important archeological and paleontological sites.</p>

**NATURAL
RESOURCES**
(continued)

GOALS

WATER CONSERVATION (WA)

Elbert County strives to ensure permanent, renewable and reliable water supplies.

ENERGY CONSERVATION (EN)

Elbert County strives to ensure permanent, renewable and reliable energy supplies.

POLICIES

WA1 The County should consider the requirement of development plans to include water conservation measures which prolong water supplies and the economic life of aquifers.

WA2 The County should encourage the extension of centralized water resources to rural subdivisions and other development.

EN1 The County should encourage energy conservation strategies, energy-efficient design and renewable energy resources to be incorporated at all levels of development.

**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

GOALS

ECONOMIC GROWTH (EG)
 Elbert County promotes strong, diverse economic development.

POLICIES

- EG1 Elbert County should consider the creation of an economic development authority to recruit employers to locate within the County.
- EG2 Elbert County should encourage economic development that provides a balance between commercial and residential tax assessments.
- EG3 Elbert County should encourage the recruitment, expansion and diversification of the industrial economic base to achieve a well-balanced economy.
- EG4 Elbert County should support designated locations for economic development districts.
- EG5 The County should encourage economic development that minimizes impacts on surrounding lands.
- EG6 The County should support the development of agriculture, commerce, industry, education, health care, natural resources development, tourism and residential growth.
- EG7 The County should encourage public-private collaboration that provides opportunities for the workforce.

**RECREATION
& TOURISM**

GOALS

RECREATION & TOURISM (RT)

Elbert County strives to create an environment that encourages recreation and tourism opportunities.

POLICIES

- RT1 The County should coordinate with schools, municipalities, and parks and recreation districts, to efficiently meet recreation needs.
- RT2 The County shall encourage the designation of publicly-accessible open space lands in new developments.
- RT3 The County should work with developers and special districts to identify and develop a public trails system.
- RT4 The County should encourage tourism in Elbert County.





IV. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This section outlines the proposed actions needed to implement the Vision, Goals and Policies of this Comprehensive Plan. In order for a Comprehensive Plan to be effective, the County must recognize the ideas and concepts recommended by the Plan. In Elbert County, the process has emphasized the need to formulate creative but realistic planning and design concepts and expectations that are within the capacity of the County to implement.

The Implementation Strategies are intended to be working tools for the county and should be incorporated into the process of carrying out its day-to-day business. It is not intended that all suggestions be accomplished within the immediate future or during a single planning year. Implementation Strategies include the specific policies of this Plan that would be addressed by the strategies. The County should initially channel its resources toward implementing those actions that are considered to have the highest priority, which may be weighted toward those Implementation Strategies that address the most policies. It should be understood that some of the Goals and Policies are already completed or in work.

It will be a staff responsibility to update the Board of County Commissioners and the Planning Commission on the status of the Implementation Strategies on an annual basis, with new strategies added as needed. The County can use this review to assess to what extent the Comprehensive Plan is being implemented as well as use the program to determine what items should be addressed during the next budget year.

Implementation Strategies are recommended regulations, plans and other resources that regulate and/or support specific elements of the Comprehensive Plan in order to reinforce the Vision, Goals and Policies of this Plan. Implementation Strategies may be adopted as addenda to the Comprehensive Plan and should be made available to the public along with the Comprehensive Plan. Implementation Strategies include the following types:

- Regulations
- Technical Plans
- Mapping
- Leadership

REGULATIONS

REGULATIONS	POLICIES ADDRESSED
1. The County should maintain County-wide Zoning and Subdivision Regulations which should include reference to the Hazard Management Plan.	RD3, EN1, EN3, AQ1, WQ1, WQ2, NA1, NA2, FW1, FW2, FW4, FW5, FW6, EG4, HM1, HM2, HM3, HM4
2. The County should maintain a Development Guide for Planned Unit Developments (PUD).	RD3, EN1, EN3, AQ1, WQ1, NA1, NA2, FW1, FW2, FW4, FW5, FW6, EG4
3. The County should maintain Site Design Standards (including hazards mitigation) for Residential Developments.	RD3, HM1, HM2, HM3, HM4, HM5, HM6
4. The County should develop and maintain Site Design Standards (including hazards mitigation) for Commercial and Industrial Developments.	CD3, HM1, HM2, HM3, HM4, HM5, HM6
5. The County should maintain referral agreements with agencies such as, but not limited to: municipalities, school districts, special districts, fire districts and the sheriff's department.	CR1, CR2, CR3, PS1, PS2, PS3, PS4, TR3, SD3, PO1, WL1, HM5
6. The County should develop level-of-service standards with regard to public safety, health care and social services.	PS1, PS2, PS3, PS4, HS2
7. The County should develop level of service standards with regard to transportation networks, potable water, wastewater, utilities, and parks and open space.	RD1, RD5, CR1, SD1, SD2, WS1, WS2, WS3, WS4
8. The County should develop a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) code and standards.	WL2, WL3

TECHNICAL PLANS

POLICIES ADDRESSED

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. The County should maintain a County-wide Housing Master Plan, including required land dedications, water and sewer facilities, and street infrastructure. | RD2, RD3, RD4, RD5 |
| 2. The County may develop subarea plans to respond to specific local conditions. Subarea plans may be desired for economic development centers, lands with unique environmental constraints, etc. | RD2, RD3 |
| 3. The County should develop and maintain a County-wide Transportation Master Plan. | RD5, CD2, ID3, TR1, TR2, TR4, TR5 |
| 4. The County should develop and maintain a County-wide Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan. | RT2, RT3, RT4 |
| 5. The County should maintain and regularly update a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to prioritize funding of community resource needs. | |
| 6. The County should maintain a County-wide Water Plan | RD5, CD2, ID4, AG1, WA1, WA2 |
| 7. The County should develop and maintain an Historic Resources Inventory and Plan. | HR1 |
| 8. The County should maintain a County-wide Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. | HM1, HM2, HM3, HM4, HM5, HM6 |
| 9. The County should develop a County-Wide Wildfire Protection Plan. | HM1, HM2, HM3, HM4, HM5, HM6 |
| 10. The County should develop a county-wide drainage/erosion mitigation plan — coordinating objectives of various agencies to reduce future flood damage. | HM1, HM2, HM3, HM4, HM5, HM6 |

MAPPING

	POLICIES ADDRESSED
1. The County should maintain a County-wide Zoning Map.	AG1
2. The County should maintain and update, as necessary, County-wide mapping that shows existing roads, utilities and infrastructure.	RD2, CS2, ID2, TR1, WQ3
3. The County should develop a future Land Use map, including identification of potential commercial and employment centers.	CD1, ID1, ID4, EG3
4. The County should maintain mapping that indicates significant environmental conditions, including: wetlands, flood plains, significant wildlife habitat, slopes greater than 20%, etc.	TR2, FW3, WL2, WL3
5. The County should maintain mapping of mineral resource areas, including all lands mapped by the County, State and Federal Agencies.	MI2
6. The County should develop and maintain a GIS strategic plan.	RD5, CD2, ID1, ID2

LEADERSHIP

1. The County should create an Economic Development Authority.	ID3, HS1, EG1, EG2, EG4, EG5, EG6, EG7, EG8
2. The County should form and convene the Elbert County Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee.	HM1, HM2, HM3, HM4, HM5, HM6