

# Clear Creek County 2017 Community Master Plan





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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### **Citizens Advisory Committee Members:**

- John Caldwell
- Dianna Rockwell
- Kim Steele
- Cynthia Neely
- Bob Judge
- Russell Clark
- Jim White
- Jim Epstein
- Stephen Schultz
- Tracy Troia
- Donna Moody

### **Economic Focus Group:**

- Dana Abrahamson
- Kevin Knoll
- Peggy Stokstad
- Scott Yard
- Stephan Andrade

### **Clear Creek County Planning:**

- Fred Rollenhagen
- Brad Boland
- Adam Springer
- Erik Sampson

### **Recreation Working Group:**

- Laurie Beckel
- Randy Wheelock
- Lisa Lieben
- Larry Lancaster
- Randall Navarro
- Dane Matthews
- Cassandra Patton
- Jim Blugerman
- Frank Young
- Sue Lathrop
- Stacy Todd

### **Stakeholder Interviewees:**

- Cindy Dicken
  - Joann Sorensen
  - Lynette Kelsey
  - Deb Kirkham
  - Matt Taylor
  - Lisa Leben
  - Jim White
  - Sally Rush
  - Bert Weaver
  - Charlotte Hampson
  - Kathleen Krebs
  - Martha Tableman
-



Thank you to the following community members who sent in their photos: Beth Luber, Jim Epstein, Linda Berteau, Peter Monson, Kay Axtell, John Bryan, and Danny Tomlinson





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### DEFINING A VISION

Planning for the future is important. Planning helps clarify the community vision and help channel energy and effort towards future change. Planning is particularly important when change is obvious. In developing this updated Master Plan, Clear Creek County acknowledges both the changes it faces and the values it holds important that must be preserved.

Perhaps most importantly in developing this updated Master Plan was the time and effort the community spent in rethinking and re-framing the Vision for Clear Creek County. As the Master Plan describes in detail, it is the Vision that influences the policies and approaches the County will take towards future land use changes. It is the Vision that acknowledges what is important and the measure against which future actions can be evaluated. It is the Vision that speaks to the unity of the County towards meeting the challenges ahead.

### THE VISION

*"Improve upon the existing quality of life in Clear Creek County by supporting the development of a diverse economy, protecting natural and cultural resources, becoming a more resilient community, encouraging recreation, and recognizing the County's distinct areas."*



## SEEKING INPUT

A community Master Plan would be meaningless without substantial community input. During this process, a wide variety of input was received from residents of Clear Creek County. Through a widely distributed and well responded to community survey, interviews with important regional stakeholders and groups, public meetings and open houses, the ongoing involvement and guidance of the Citizen Advisory Committee and ultimately through the thoughtful involvement of the Planning Commission, the issues and opportunities for Clear Creek County were uncovered and used to help inform and guide the development of the Master Plan.

## IMPORTANT ISSUES AND KEY THEMES

What quickly emerged in the process of seeking input was how profound the changes that Clear Creek County faces in 2016. The changing regional economy, highly influenced by the activities of the Henderson Mine, became increasingly a focal point of the community's concern. The very slow rate of growth (in population and economic diversity) in the County was often noted as a continued challenge. The availability of good jobs, affordable housing and access to effective transportation were issues that rose up during the process.

But what also rose up during this process was the strong identity and attitude the residents of Clear Creek County have about this place. The stunning natural beauty, rich history and culture and access to the recreational and environmental resources of Clear Creek County were all elements of the Quality of Life that residents held out as vital. An emphasis on preservation of important lands and acting thoughtfully changes to land use were issues at the forefront of community discussion. Supporting the historic legacy and continued opportunities in mining was also a important issue.

Out of these critical issues many key themes emerged. These are the threads that helped inform the Vision and all of policies within the Master Plan. These themes touch on a wide array of topics, from the continued importance of mining, the value of the traditional settlements within the County, the importance of defining an economic strategy, the preservation and celebration of the County's culture and history and the value of recreation.

## KEY THEMES

 Quality of Life	 Resiliency	 Recreation
 Built Environment and Land Use	 Mining	 Distinct Areas
 Economy	 Natural Environment	 Cultural Resources



## ESTABLISHING POLICIES

The key themes that emerged from the process of updating the Master Plan in turn inform the overall policies of the County. This "Policy Framework" is the structure on which specific goals and strategies for important aspects of future planning decisions can be made. Eleven (11) important policy statements make up this framework. They echo, in many ways, the key themes, but represent the objectives the County will pursue to assure that the Vision can be realized.

### POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. Seek a greater diversity of economic activity within the County.
2. Enable and encourage communities within Clear Creek County to actively participate in planning for their future.
3. Ensure suitability and compatibility with environmental characteristics and community character of Clear Creek County when considering land use change and development.
4. Identify and protect lands of high ecological value, scenic quality, or historic importance.
5. Promote the concentration of residential and commercial development into established municipalities and activity centers in order to preserve rural lands and to efficiently use County resources.
6. Recognize and support endeavors in the arts, culture, recreation and tourism.
7. Consider recreation as an important contributor to residents' quality of life and a part of a balanced regional economy.
8. Continue to preserve and protect mineral resources for the benefit of future generations.
9. Explore how local and regional initiatives within the County can improve access to health care services.
10. Endorse transportation infrastructure that is multi-modal in nature and enhances existing communities as well as their access to the rest of the region.
11. Identify and implement strategies to strengthen and increase resiliency among residents of the County.



## IMPORTANT GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The Master Plan addresses a wide variety of elements that affect the day-to-day lives of the County's residents; land use, housing, transportation, public facilities, recreation, etc. For all of these elements the established Policy Framework shapes specific goals and objectives to advance the Vision.

Out of the many policies included in the Master Plan, several rise up as being highly important and relevant to the issues facing the County today.

- Economic Development – The goals and objectives for economic development strive to expand the diversity of economic activity, unify the actions of various public and private interests and encourage and nurture the opportunity for a more stable regional economy.
- Land Use – The continued importance of open space and preservation is well established in the policies of the County. The Master Plan recognizes the importance of focusing more diverse and intensive land uses into areas well suited to such purposes (by terrain, lack of constraints) and near to existing services and transportation systems. Land use policies also, for the first time, address the influence that mining claim lands have on shaping the land use pattern and provides guidance on what that pattern should be. Understanding the economic impact of new development is also an important policy within the Master Plan. In this plan, we will define “development” as new entitlements or land use outcomes that may result in residential, commercial, or industrial uses, including buildings. The continued involvement of residents within distinct areas of the County is also an important goal and objective for future land use decisions.
- Recreation – The importance of recreation to the residents of Clear Creek County was well established during the update process. The long-term policies for recreation include meeting existing needs and addressing the opportunity for enhancing recreational tourism.
- Open Space and Culture – The continued importance of open space and cultural heritage to the County is affirmed in policies.

## MOVING FORWARD

The Policy Framework and specific goals and objectives described in the Master Plan are meant as a guide towards future decision making. Moving forward to realize the Vision will require continued involvement and engagement with the residents of Clear Creek County. The process of implementation will rely on a continuing process of community input. This process may include changes in land use regulations, clarifying roles and responsibilities within County departments and working in partnership with municipalities, regional partners and state agencies. Tools such as fiscal impact analysis are encouraged and supported in the Master Plan to help the County make good decisions about where future development makes sense.

**This 2016 Master Plan will serve to chart the path forward for the County, enable its residents to undertake thoughtful discussion, keeping the Vision in mind, as the County makes decisions about its future.**



# CHAPTER 1: A VISION FOR CLEAR CREEK COUNTY

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Master Plan for Clear Creek County is one of the primary policy tools at the disposal of the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners that can be used to advise decision making at the county scale. It is a comprehensive document that brings together issues that are often looked at in isolation and finds ways to unite them.

Comprehensive Planning in Colorado is enabled through Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) 30-28-106 (1977). This statute grants the Clear Creek County Planning Commission the authority to adopt such a plan to guide the development of unincorporated lands within the County. This Master Plan is intended to supplant the previously adopted Master Plan (2004). In pursuing this update, the statute directs county planning commissions to undertake studies and surveys, identify growth and demand for county services and recommends content to include recreation and tourism uses.

While the contents and direction the Master Plan takes is at the discretion of the Planning Commission, a truly effective Master Plan can act as a guidebook for complex issues such land use, economic development, transportation, housing, natural resources, and hazard mitigation. As an advisory document, the goals established in a Master Plan are often broad, but can be more clearly articulated through specific strategies and policies that support broader goals.

An essential step in developing a comprehensive master plan is to define the appropriate “planning horizon” or the duration in time outward from the present within which the policies of the Master Plan can



be relevant and used as an effective guide for decisions. For some communities the nature of planning means a long-view is appropriate. For others, changes are so fast that even looking out five years is wrought with challenges.

Based on the feedback from the Citizen Advisory Committee to the Master Plan Update project, consultation with County Planning Staff and public engagement efforts, the approach taken for this Master Plan was two-fold. Firstly, the Master Plan provides some overarching long-range goals that go forward 20 years or so. The Master Plan also identifies a series of short, mid and long-term implementation approaches to help propel this plan forward. This strategy allows the Master Plan to keep a focus on the long-term but act more dynamically in the short to mid-term. Like any planning process it must continually reexamine issues and adapt as needed.

As a guide for the future, this document is meant to be read and used in a variety of ways. First and foremost, it is a tool for decision makers to gauge their choices about future development in Clear Creek County. Changes to County Land Use Code may occur over time to meet the goals, policies and objectives of the Master Plan. Beyond the vision and policies, the Master Plan also includes implementation priorities and actions. These may serve County staff, public officials and others in setting the course of action for the years ahead.

The Master Plan is also meant to be embraced by and accessible to the Clear Creek County community. As discussed below, this public input was vital to this update and the ideas expressed are directly reflected in the language and graphics of the Master Plan. Whether it is private developers seeking to move forward with their projects or communities engaging in local planning efforts, the Master Plan should be their first reference to understand the overall values and outcomes that the County desires.

## WHY UPDATE?

The 2004 Master Plan established a strong foundation for this Update. This new Master Plan brings forward much of the “bones” from the 2004 Master Plan, but has revised, reorganized and repackaged them in support of new or changing issues and with an eye towards making this document more approachable and useable for County residents and staff.

As discovered through the review of baseline conditions (discussed in more detail below) and through the interactions and conversations with residents of Clear Creek County, many things are changing that will have a profound influence on the future. Issues including transportation (the difficulty of being on the I-70 corridor, lack of community mobility), housing (affordability, accessibility and availability), recreation (addressing changing community needs) and the desire to better define where growth is preferred are all front and center in this Update.

But perhaps most notable among these many changes is the evolving future of the Henderson Mine. As the County's biggest private employer and a major contributor to regional tax revenue, the decline in mining activity instigated by international market factors currently does and will continue to have a profound impact on the County. This impact is both fiscal and perhaps more importantly, transformational to the character of the communities within the County. Mining in Clear Creek County has long been an attractor for new residents who have worked hard, raised children and invested both time and money



into making Clear Creek County their home. Mining has been a cornerstone of the regional economy and provided safe harbor when other business sectors have been stressed. Its legacy is wrapped up in both the people and places of Clear Creek County.

While the change in activity at the Henderson Mine is not something the County can directly control, it has helped spur a renewed focus on both long-range economic development planning and a review/assessment of the critical services that the County provides. The County has been active in exploring changes to its economic portfolio and increasing the diversity of the businesses that make up its employment base. The County has been examining all departments and their financial commitments to better understand where revenue is generated and where it is spent. Economic development strategy and fiscal discipline are important themes woven into this Master Plan.

Through this process the community reflected on its approach to economic development and stability. One overarching theme kept emerging: the need to maintain a high quality of life. The concept of quality of life for Clear Creek County residents certainly includes economic opportunity, but it also weaves together aspects of the natural and scenic environment, the County's rich culture and heritage, the prevalence of recreation and the importance of distinct subareas. As the policies of this master plan state, it is of the first and foremost importance that ensuring the qualities that have made Clear Creek County a valued place for so many are embraced and nurtured as the community moves forward.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE MASTER PLAN**

The Master Plan is structured around seven chapters.

Chapter 1 establishes the "Foundation" for the plan: highlights the process to update the Master Plan, important community inputs and key themes affecting long-term planning and culminates in the articulation of the Vision for Clear Creek County.

Chapter 2 goes into more detail on the baseline issues influencing long-term planning in Clear Creek County, including demographic and economic conditions, housing and transportation challenges and the status of key community assets and infrastructure.

Chapter 3 brings together the key themes and Vision and the issues and challenges facing the County into a Policy Framework. This series of statements articulate the objectives the County will pursue in support of the shared community Vision.

Chapter 4 summarizes the key goals and objectives related to economic development. While economic development issues are woven into many elements of the Master Plan, the importance of highlighting economic development goals and strategies was clear given the changes underway in Clear Creek County.

Chapter 5 outlines the goals and objectives for other elements of this plan (transportation, housing, cultural resources, etc.) Again, while many of these elements overlap, the Master Plan articulates key goals for each and supportive strategies to help realize those goals.



Chapter 6 introduces the Future Land Use Plan and associated land use goals and strategies. Land use is, arguably, one of the most important elements of a master plan. It helps affirm the position of the community as it relates to where and what form development should occur. For this Master Plan, a series of “guiding principles” for future land use decisions has been crafted based on public input and roundtable discussions with the Citizen Advisory Committee.

Chapter 7 brings all the elements of the plan together towards implementation. This chapter introduces a series of “implementation toolkit” components; fiscal, operational and regulatory tools that can be further considered as Clear Creek County moves forward in supporting its vision, policies and goals.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Building a Master Plan that has broad community support is essential for its success. The outreach efforts conducted for this update of the Clear Creek County Master Plan often leveraged other recent efforts to explore community needs, understand changing conditions and evaluate the impact of such changes. This included consideration of ongoing economic development efforts within the County, aligning Master Plan goals, objectives and policy with positions taken in the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan and better consideration of community-scale (i.e., sub area) planning objectives. In addition, the Update process included a series of important engagement efforts to hone in on specific concerns and interests.

Highlights of the major elements of this engagement process are provided below. A more detailed summary of the Public Support and Engagement process is provided as Appendix I.

### Stakeholder Interviews

Beginning in September 2015 and extending through January 2016, a series of stakeholder interviews were conducted to help inform the Master Plan. The composition of the stakeholders was diverse, including representatives from important County departments, Housing Authority, SOLVE, etc. Additionally, several Clear Creek County commissioners were also interviewed. The nature of these interviews were generally free-form and open-ended and covered a wide variety of topics. Summaries of these interviews are provided in Appendix I.

### Economic Focus Group Discussion

On December 1, 2015 an economic focus group discussion was held with local stakeholders and business leaders to understand the changes in the Clear Creek County regional economy that have occurred in recent years and to consider strategies and tools for the future economy of the region. To ensure a wide range of viewpoints, participants included representatives from the Clear Creek County Economic Development Corporation and the Henderson Mine, as well as local business owners in real estate, recreation, dining and hospitality, and the professional services industries. Discussion centered on necessary updates to previous economic development plans and policies, findings from the baseline economic and demographic data, and important issues and strategies to address in the Master Plan Update. Primary discussion topics included the phasing out of Henderson Mine, the disconnect between affordability and availability of housing options, the value in the proximity to the Denver Metro, creating employment opportunities for young families, the need for improved communications infrastructure,



and the importance of leveraging the natural resource and recreation assets within the community in economic development strategies. For more detail about the Economic Focus Group session see Appendix I.

## Review of Past Studies, Plans and Documents

Clear Creek County has been very active in the past several years in continuing to plan for its future. Beyond the 2004 Master Plan, the County has been active in exploring issues such as housing, open space, cultural resources, recreation, economic development and transportation. In addition, the County has been (teaming with Gilpin County) been working on a new Hazard Mitigation Plan, the current draft of which has been considered as part of this planning process.

## Citizen Survey

Prior to major public engagement efforts, the Master Plan Update process included the distribution of a Citizen Survey. The survey was distributed to a randomly selected list of 3,000 property owners in the County. Over 631 responses were collected (a very strong 21 percent response rate). An online version of the survey was also made available to the broader public. This data, while considered separately, provided another window into the attitudes and concerns of Clear Creek County residents (and some visitors).

The Citizen Survey was structured to address a wide variety of topics ranging from quality of life, recreation, economic development and housing. Overall the data suggests that the quality of life in Clear Creek County is ranked high; as a place to live, retire or raise a family. The notable exception in these rankings was Clear Creek County as a place to work or start a business. As affirmed by the baseline demographic data, a majority of survey respondents work outside of Clear Creek County.

The key takeaways from the Citizen Survey include the following:

- Supporting infrastructure improvements (roads, broadband), expanding outdoor recreation and tourism-oriented marketing, expanding the diversity of economic activity and increasing the job market were all identified as “best opportunities” for Clear Creek County. All of these, with the exception of expanding recreation and tourism, were also identified as “biggest challenges”.
- Nearly 30 percent of those who work indicated that they own their own business. Perhaps not surprisingly, finding ways to better support local businesses (incentives and improving the business climate) were also identified as potential opportunities.
- A high percentage (about 10 percent) of respondents indicated that they work at home or telecommute to work. The demographic baseline affirms a similar situation. This “work at home” situation is likely highly correlated to local business ownership.
- Recreation was indicated as “very important” by a strong majority of respondents of which the vast majority (87 percent) “personally engage” in recreation in Clear Creek County. Recreational pursuits were diverse including hiking, biking, off-highway vehicles (i.e., snowmobiles and ATV's) and passive recreation like bird/wildlife watching. Getting outdoors is clearly important to the residents of Clear Creek County. When asked about “new” opportunities for recreation, the most commonly identified



improvements related to trails or access to trails. Community parkland and open space was also widely identified as an important new opportunity.

- With so much of Clear Creek County set aside as open space or within National Forest Systems lands, the importance of preserving open space is a well-established value of County residents. When asked in the survey whether “enough” lands have been set aside, the results were essentially split with a plurality of respondents simply indicating “not sure”. This perhaps reflects the importance of communicating the purpose and value of open space in the decision-making process. When asked about the purpose of open space acquisition, the survey results noted environmental resources, recreation and scenery preservation as the top three.
- Echoing the baseline evaluation of housing issues, the results of the Citizen Survey indicated a majority of housing in the County was built prior to 1980. While approximately 70 percent of respondents indicated it was not difficult to find “affordable and/or acceptable,” the remaining 30 percent or so indicated spending more than 30 percent of household income on housing; a threshold indicative of stress in affordability. This situation should also be considered in light of the high percentage of commuting workers in the County which influences the cost of living for County residents.
- From the baseline assessment it became clear that County residents largely commute to/from work and have more limited access to health care services and/or grocery-retail opportunities. Given this, the Citizen Survey asked several questions about access to healthcare and grocery/retail issues.





- For most respondents the transportation issues related to health care access were only moderately important with 27 percent indicating it as “highly important”. What was more commonly identified as important was the range of healthcare services, the quality of those services and the access to specialization. Comments from respondents reflected a diverse range of opinions related to access; many noting the lack of providers in the region.
- Access to grocery/retail establishments was responded to similarly as with healthcare access. The majority of respondents noted the lack of grocery/retail in their area, the lack of variety and the cost of goods sold as important considerations.

A complete summary report on the Citizen Survey is provided in Appendix I. Within this appendix is also the raw collected data and survey comments collected as part of the process.

### **Citizen Advisory Committee**

To help better explore some of the details of the Master Plan Update process, a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) was assembled. This group of 11 individual residents reflected a broad cross-section of the Clear Creek County community; members from established municipalities and more rural areas, younger and older in age, long time and more recent arrivals to the County.

The CAC met five times between January and June during the Master Plan Update process; reviewing information on changes in the County, reflecting on the vision and policy framework for this update and materially helping to shape the future land use plan and associated goals and objectives for critical plan elements. In their final meeting, the CAC met alongside the Planning Commission to review the themes, framework, and policy they had shaped throughout their involvement and discuss the main ideas.

Complete summaries of CAC meetings and materials can be found in Appendix I.

### **Recreation Working Group**

Although technically “outside” of the Master Plan update process, a citizen-led “Recreation Working Group” was formed during this process to help move the discussion on recreation policy forward. The Recreation Working Group also met periodically during the process and presented a set of draft goals and policy considerations to a joint Planning Commission – Citizen’s Advisory Committee meeting in May of 2016. These goals and policies recognized the importance of recreation in the region (as further exemplified in the Citizen Survey results) as well as the importance of continuing to plan for and shape future recreation (and more broadly tourism) outcomes in light of resident needs and as part of an economic development strategy.

### **Public Engagement Meetings**

Public meetings provide another opportunity for the community to listen and participate. One of the key lessons learned from the review of past efforts and the public engagement process was the independent spirit of the people of Clear Creek County. Whether through the challenge of living in a rural and rugged environment or through an inherent desire to shape their own futures, the people of Clear Creek County are uniquely individual. This is not to imply that they don’t recognize the value of community. On the contrary, Clear Creek County is a region dominated by strong communities; whether incorporated



municipalities or less formal population centers within unincorporated lands. People identify with these places AND with Clear Creek County. The importance of understanding this local-regional dynamic is critical to the success of this Master Plan. County-scale policies will find a better path for implementation through a more local scale.

The first public meeting was held on February 16, 2016 at the Clear Creek Metropolitan Recreation Center in Idaho Springs. At this meeting, approximately 45 attendees were introduced to the planning process and the major elements to be included in Clear Creek County's updated Master Plan. The baseline conditions for the different municipalities and sub-areas within the county as well as the county as a whole were then presented to community members. Included in the baseline conditions was data from the American Census Survey, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, and the Clear Creek County Community Survey that was conducted for this project in 2016. While baseline conditions helped to identify current issues within the county, an audience polling exercise was done to elaborate on these conditions. Comments generated during this exercise were compared to previous survey data and helped to identify the highest priority issues.

On March 28, 2016 a second public meeting was held at the Idaho Springs United Center which allowed community members to provide input on actual components of the Master Plan. With the help of the CAC, versions of the vision and policy framework were drafted and shared at this meeting. After a brief presentation that explained the planning process, a series of posters conveying the draft vision and policies were discussed in an open house format that allowed community members (approximately 50) to provide feedback. Additionally, current land use maps were also provided to begin the discussion around future use and areas where use had changed since the last Master Plan update.

A final public meeting was held on June 6, 2016 at the Georgetown Community Center at which approximately 20 citizens attended. This meeting's presentation emphasized the processes used to form the vision statement, policy framework, future land use map, and goals of the master plan. The presentation also highlighted how these various components are intended to work together throughout the master plan document. Following the presentation, the group began the open house portion of the meeting. Citizens engaged in discussion with the consulting team and county staff, clarifying any remaining questions about the plan and planning process. During this time, citizens were asked to submit their feedback on the presentation, which was summarized on boards to facilitate commenting.

Complete summaries of each public engagement meeting and their accompanying materials can be found in Appendix I.

## **Adoption Process**

The plan was initially presented to the Planning Commission on September 21st. Over three working and regular sessions of the planning commission, revisions were made to the Master Plan Document. The Master Plan was brought to a public hearing on December 7th, 2016.



## IMPORTANT THEMES FOR THE MASTER PLAN

Throughout the Update process important “themes” emerged that helped inform the community’s reconsideration of the 2004 vision and the policies that help support it. From the community survey the importance of recreation was evident in the overwhelming importance of recreation to residents of the county. From interactions with the Economic Focus Group and stakeholder interviews the idea for diversity in economic activity was a constant message.

The importance of “quality of life” and being efficient was often mentioned at public meetings, through the work of the Citizen Advisory Committee and in comments from the Citizen Survey. Supporting independent thinking was obvious from the review of the many sub regional (area) plans. Connectivity has been a long-standing element of the County, exemplified by the continued pursuit of the Greenway Plan and the many intergovernmental agreements that exist.

Overall nine (9) important themes emerged that influenced the Vision and the overall policy framework of the plan. The icons below will appear elsewhere in this document to help reinforce how these key themes influenced the Vision, policy framework, goals and strategies that comprise the Master Plan.

### KEY THEMES

 Quality of Life	 Resiliency	 Recreation
 Built Environment and Land Use	 Mining	 Distinct Areas
 Economy	 Natural Environment	 Cultural Resources



## THE VISION FOR CLEAR CREEK COUNTY

A community vision statement is an expression of the aspirations for the future that a community holds close. It helps set the perspective through which the community looks at future changes and provide a touchstone against which those changes can be measured.

The 2004 Vision Statement for Clear Creek County was reflective of its time:

**“Actively pursue economic plans, build on the existing quality of life, and preserve the natural and cultural resources all for the benefit of the County and its citizens.”**

Throughout the Update process the key “themes” that emerged helped inform the community’s reconsideration of the 2004 vision and the policies that help support it. From the community survey the importance of recreation was evident in the overwhelming importance of recreation to residents of the County.

From interactions with the Economic Focus Group and stakeholder interviews the idea for diversity in economic activity was a constant message. The importance of “quality of life” and being efficient was often mentioned at public meetings, through the work of the Citizen Advisory Committee and in comments from the Citizen Survey.

Supporting independent thinking was obvious from the review of the many sub regional (area) plans. Connectivity has been a long-standing element of the County, exemplified by the continued pursuit of the Greenway Plan and the many intergovernmental agreements that exist.

From these inputs an updated Vision Statement emerged:

## A VISION FOR CLEAR CREEK COUNTY

*“Improve upon the existing quality of life in Clear Creek County by supporting the development of a diverse economy, protecting natural and cultural resources, becoming a more resilient community, encouraging recreation, and recognizing the County’s distinct areas.”*



This statement introduces several important things into the Master Plan

1. It asserts that improving the "quality of life" for the residents of Clear Creek County is the foundation of this long-term plan.
2. It connects and balances "development of a diverse economy" with important considerations like the protection of natural and cultural resources, being resilient to changes and assuring recreation is something that is "encouraged".
3. It builds upon the independent attitude of Clear Creek County by emphasizing the recognition of the distinct areas within the County as part of the way that quality of life can be improved.





# CHAPTER 2: BASELINE CONDITIONS

## INTRODUCTION

On the surface, demographic and economic data can appear as little more than sterile numbers and statistics. However, careful consideration of these numbers can illuminate the unique characteristics of a community, uncovering both challenges and potential opportunities. This Chapter summarizes the most pertinent issues which arise from the demographic and economic data.

A more complete and thorough summary of baseline demographic and economic conditions influencing this plan can be found in Appendix II.

### The State of the County

Clear Creek County is located approximately 20 miles west of Denver along the I-70 corridor. See MAP-1. The County was one of the original 17 counties created by the Colorado legislature on November 1, 1861, and is one of only two counties (along with Gilpin) to have maintained its original boundaries. It was named after Clear Creek, which runs down from the continental divide through the County and continues to influence the identity and economy of the community. The County's proximity to Denver and mountain location make it unique within Colorado, offering both a rural mountain lifestyle and a relatively quick commute to everything the Denver Metro has to offer.

I-70 acts as the "spine" of the transportation system in the County and links many of the communities within the county. There are four incorporated municipalities in the County (Georgetown, Silver Plume,



Empire and Idaho Springs) as well as approximately 20 “Sub-Areas.” See MAP-1. In general, population and services are clustered within the municipalities and sub-areas, with the most populace sub-areas being in the eastern portion of the County. Given the topography and limited transportation network connecting the municipalities and sub-areas together, there are geographic, cultural and demographic differences between the eastern portion of the County and the western portion of the County.

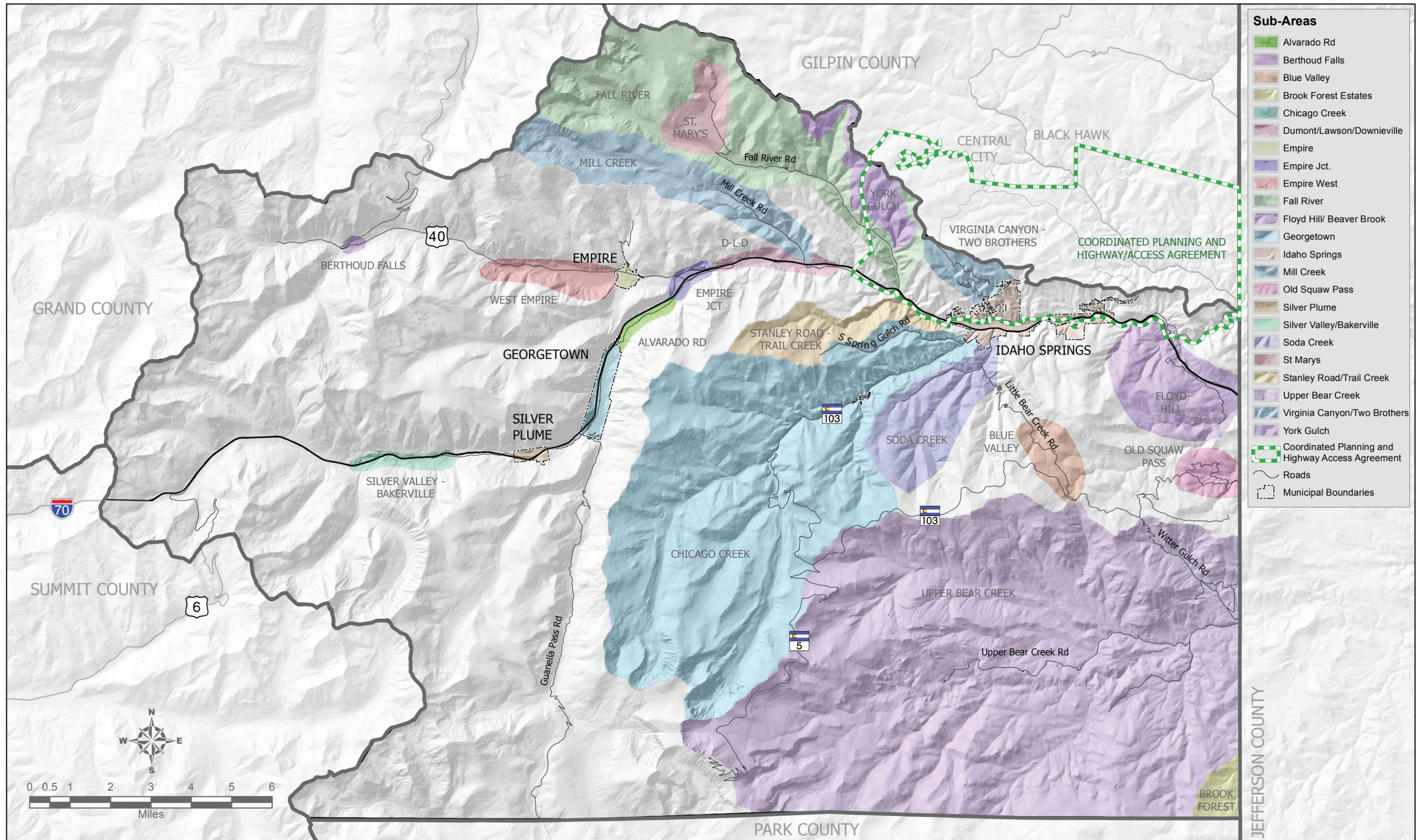
Clear Creek is a diverse county, with over 75 percent of the land being publicly held, primarily as national forest. Mineral resource extraction has and continues to be an important part of the County's land use. The county was created as a direct result of George Andrew Jackson's discovery of gold on January 7, 1859. Although he attempted to keep the discovery a secret, it only lasted until April of 1859, when the current location of Idaho Springs was inundated with its first group of miners. This first settlement was actually two miles above Idaho Springs and was named Spanish Bar, due to the evidence of earlier mining by the Spanish Conquistadors. As more and more miners moved into the county, the prospecting moved west following Clear Creek. Mining districts were founded creating their laws and civil government in order to protect their claims from claim jumpers, thieves, murderers, and all other unlawful acts. Incorporated and unincorporated communities (sub-areas) have grown up around many of the mining districts over the past 150 years hosting most of the commercial and retail activity within the county. See MAP-3. Many mining claims still exist within the county, and a recent trend in the County has been the conversion of mining claims into residential use, consistent with County Land Use Code provisions. Additionally, some mining lands are currently being used, and plan to be used for recreation purposes.

## THE EVOLVING DEMOGRAPHICS

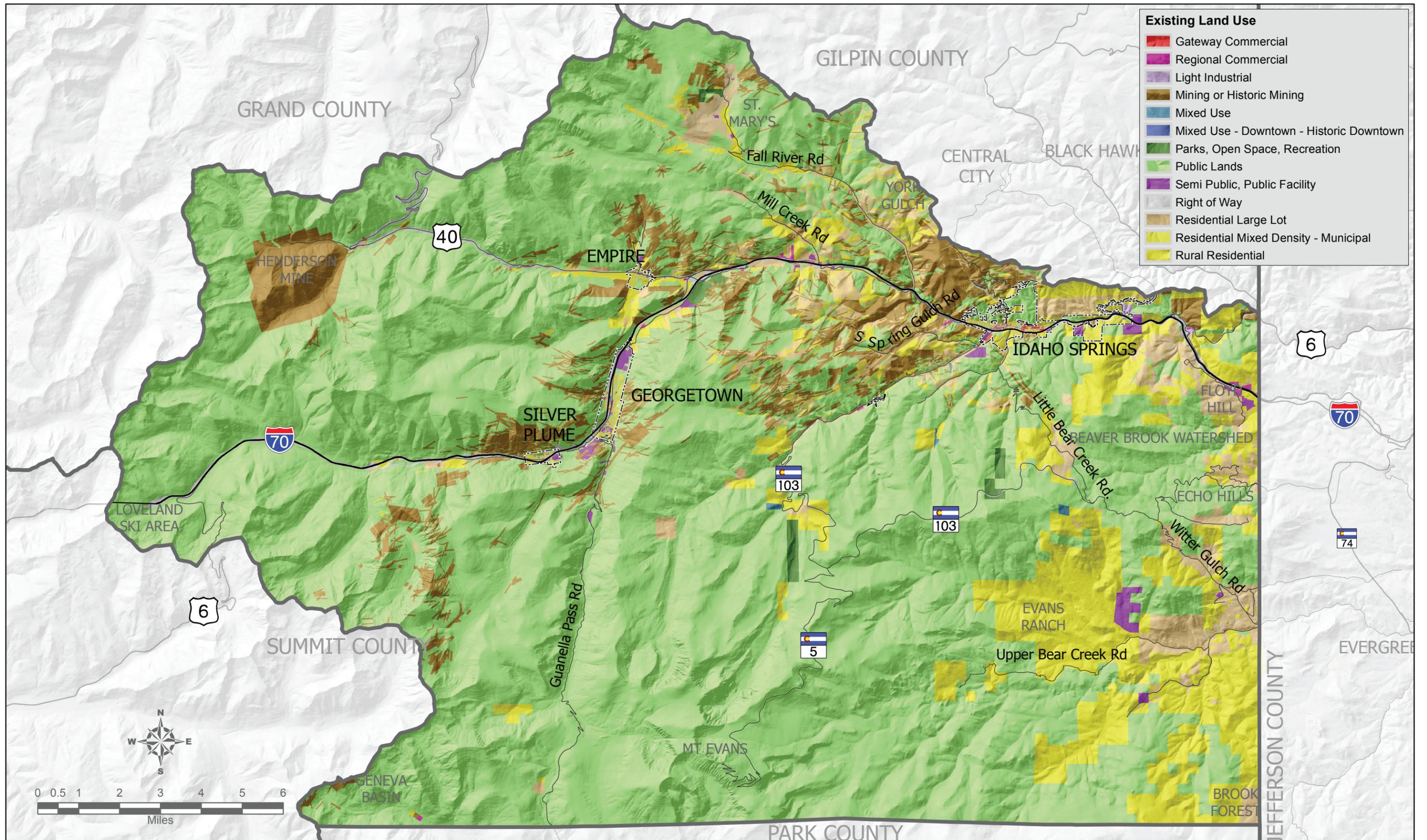
### The Population Picture

Overall the Clear Creek County population has been relatively stagnant in the past 20 years, declining slightly in the last 10 years (2003-2013) and increasing slightly in the previous decade (1993-2003). The Colorado State Demography Office projects this mildly fluctuating trend to continue for at least 10 years, with the County experiencing more dramatic growth in 15, 20, and 25 years. This long-term growth mirrors the growth the State Demography Office anticipates for the Denver Metro, which after comparing historical trends in the two areas does not seem appropriate. This plan considers the potential for some new population growth—and makes recommendations on how to plan for such growth—but does not anticipate any significant population growth for the County, at least in the short- to mid-term.





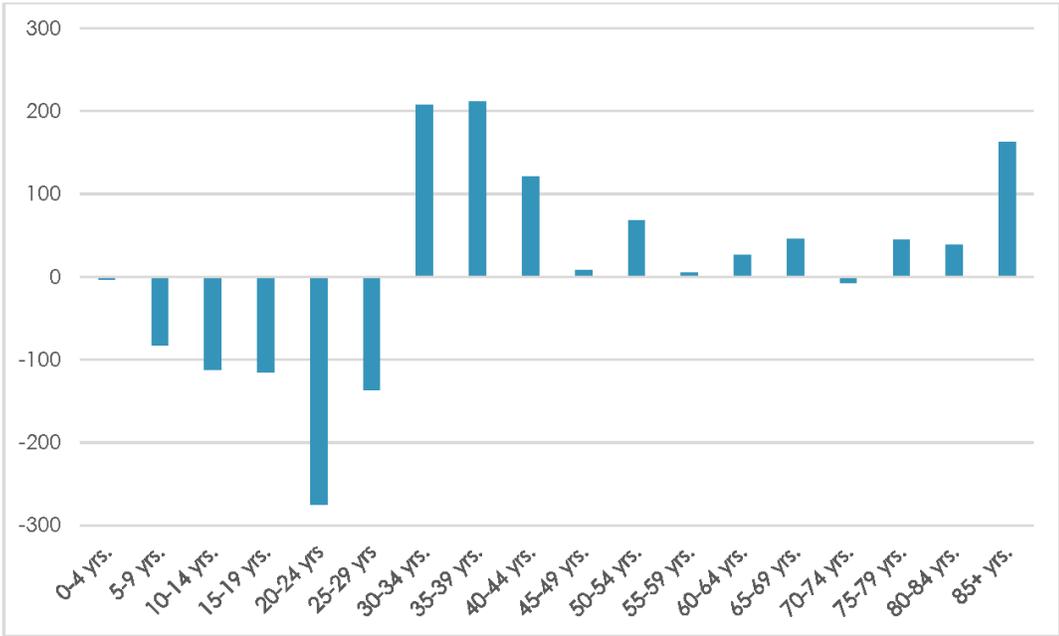
MAP-2 | Distinct Areas



MAP-3 | Existing Land Use



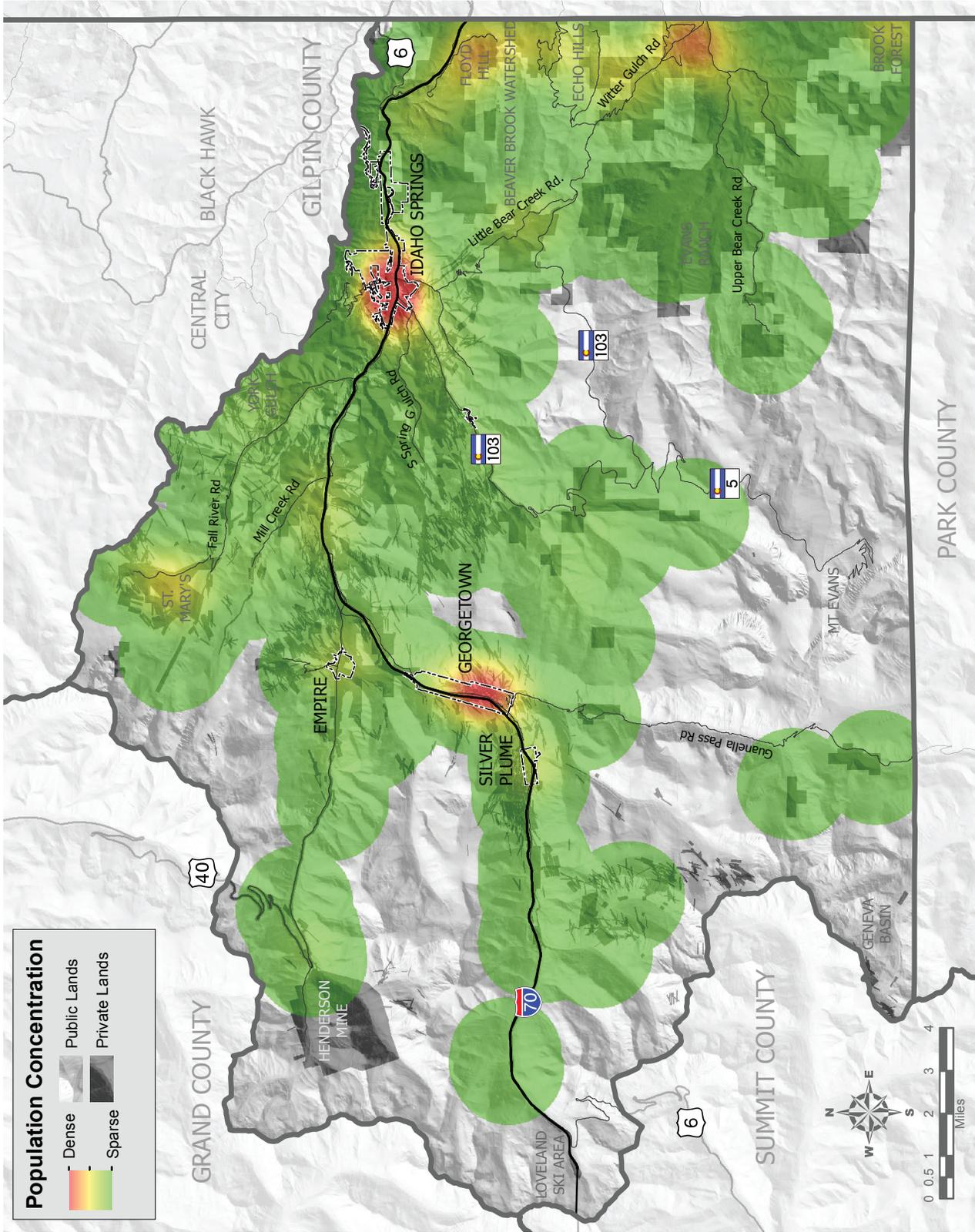
**HISTORIC POPULATION GROWTH 1980-2013**



Source: Colorado Division of Local Government, Demography Section.

As of 2013, approximately 65 percent of the County population resided in unincorporated areas of the county, while the remaining 35 percent of the population resided in municipalities. Idaho Springs is the municipality with the largest share of the County population, with more than half of the municipal population living in Idaho Springs. Georgetown also contains a significant proportion of the County population, with smaller municipalities, unincorporated communities, and rural County land making up the rest. Generally, the eastern portion of Clear Creek County contains larger unincorporated communities such as Floyd Hill or Upper Bear Creek, while the western portion of the county contains smaller unincorporated communities such as Dumont and Downieville. See MAP-4.

While population decline was experienced throughout Clear Creek County between 2003 and 2013, the highest percent of population loss was in municipalities (Empire at 25.13 percent and Silver Plume at 15.08 percent). Unincorporated areas of the county experienced the least amount of loss during this period, with a decline of approximately 1.21 percent. The percent of the population living in unincorporated areas in the county increased from 57 percent in 1993 to 65 percent in 2013. Based on these existing patterns of growth, new growth in the county can be expected to be concentrated in unincorporated areas of the County. As such, new growth in these areas should be focused towards existing population centers and multiple-use areas where county services can be most efficiently provided.



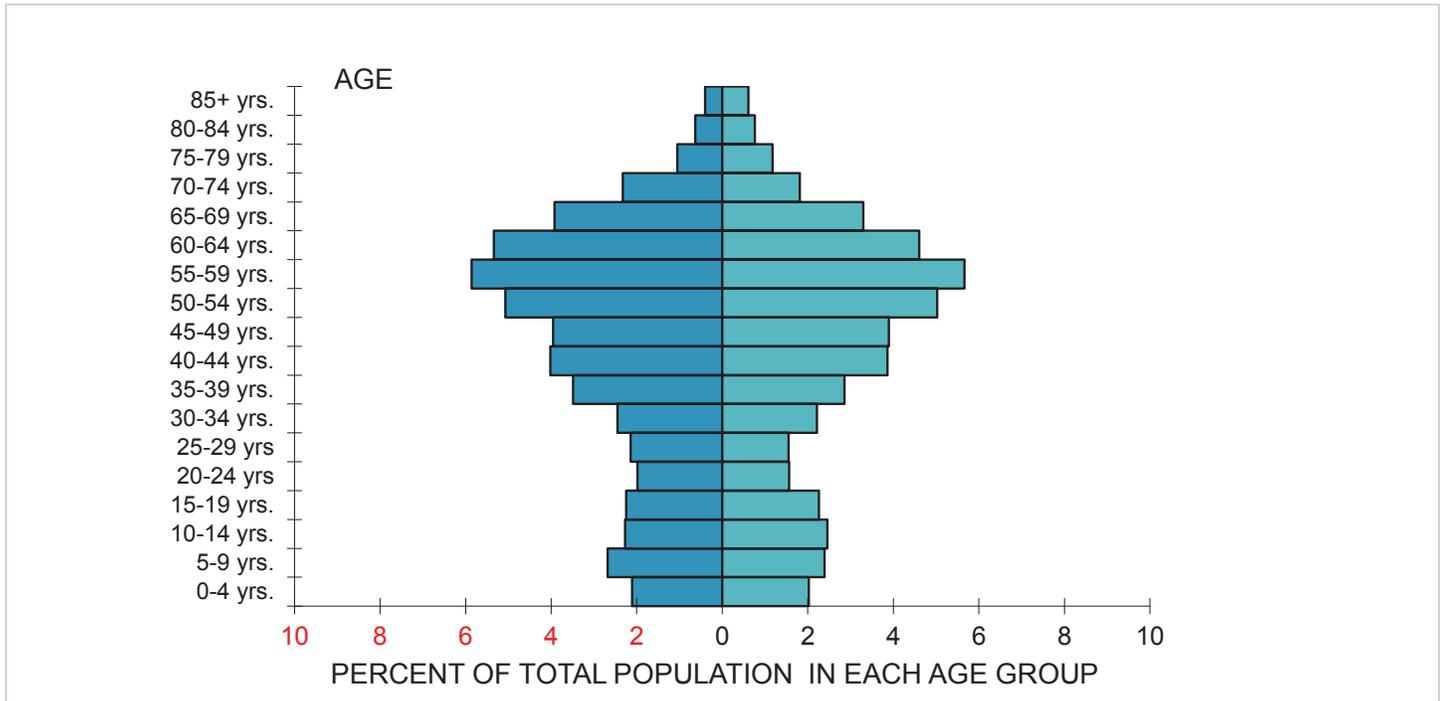
MAP-4 | Population Concentrations



### Age, Households, and Migration

Data regarding age, household structure, and family suggests an aging population within the County and that young families with young children may be either moving away or not migrating into the County. The age distribution of Clear Creek County is depicted in the “population pyramid” figure below. These figures are referred to as pyramids because they generally form the shape of a pyramid when the population is growing (with the largest populations in the youngest age cohorts). The shape of the population pyramid for Clear Creek County, with the largest population cohorts being between 50 and 64 years of age, reflects an aging population within the County with relatively low numbers of young adults and children. The median age of the County is 46.6, compared to a median of 35.7 in the Denver Metro and 37.2 in the U.S. as a whole, which also reinforces this interpretation.

#### CLEAR CREEK COUNTY POPULATION PYRAMID

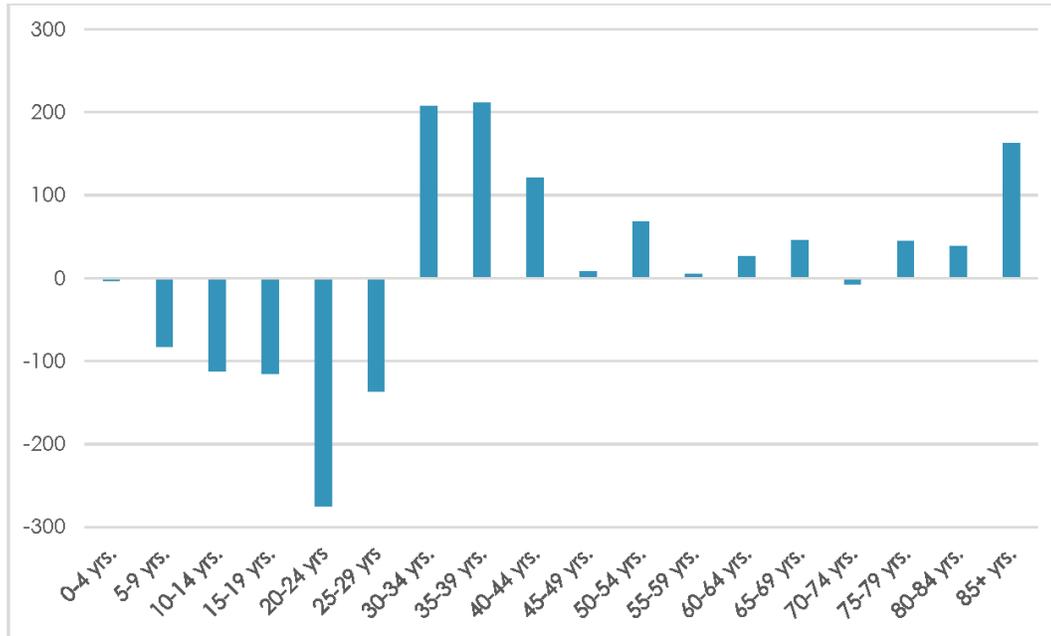


Source: Colorado Division of Local Government, Demography Section

Migration data for Clear Creek County also suggests that young families with young children may be either moving away or not migrating into the County. By analyzing migrations by age, the figure below shows that all age cohorts from 0 to age 30 have negative migration rates, meaning people are leaving the county in these cohorts, and that the largest in-migrations occur within the 30 to 44 age cohorts.



### NET MIGRATION 2000-2010, CLEAR CREEK COUNTY



Source: Colorado Division of Local Government, Demography Section

The average household size in Clear Creek County dropped between 1990 and 2000 and has continued to decline in recent years, decreasing from 2.31 persons per household in 2000 to 2.14 persons per household in 2010. Likewise, the average family size has decreased over this time period, from 2.81 persons per family in 2000 to 2.67 persons per family in 2010. The percent of family households (families with children, husband-wife families, single-parent households) decreased since 2000, dropping from approximately 65 percent in 2000 to approximately 60 percent in 2010.

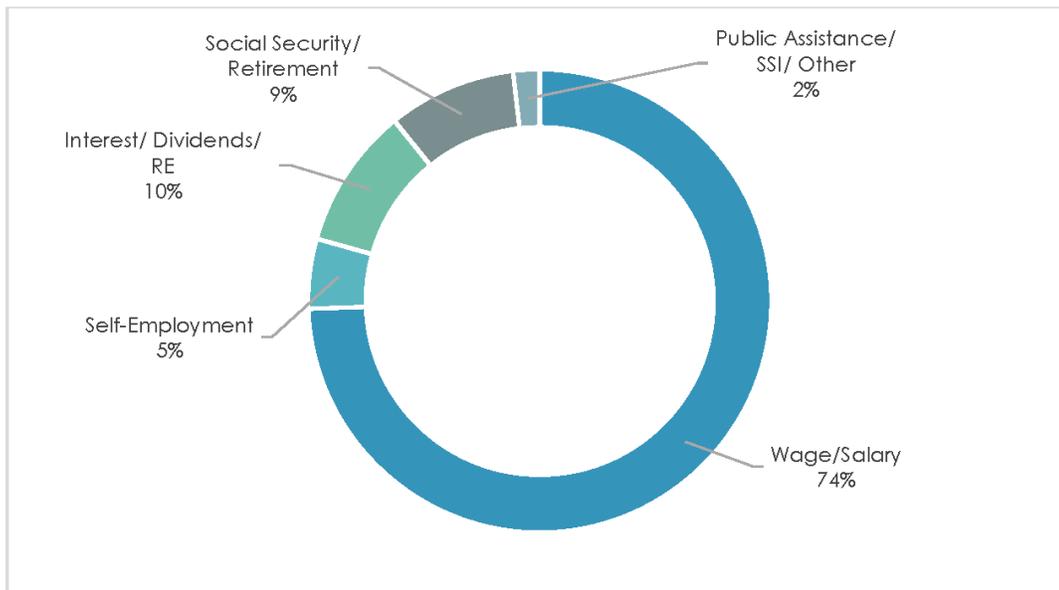
All of these age, migration and household data for Clear Creek County point to an aging population, and a challenge with attracting and retaining young people and young families in the community, which is reflected in the recommended strategies for housing, transportation, economic development and recreation.

## ECONOMIC PROGRESS

### Tracking Income and Workers

The median household income for Clear Creek County was \$67,259 in 2013. While this figure is considerably higher than the national median income (\$51,939), real income (inflation adjusted) has increased only slightly (approximately 1 percent) in Clear Creek County since 2003. Clear Creek County has a relatively high proportion of income derived from interest, dividends and real estate, and slightly lower reliance on income from wages and salaries, highlighting the importance of other income sources and economic opportunities for County residents.

### CLEAR CREEK COUNTY HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY SOURCE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

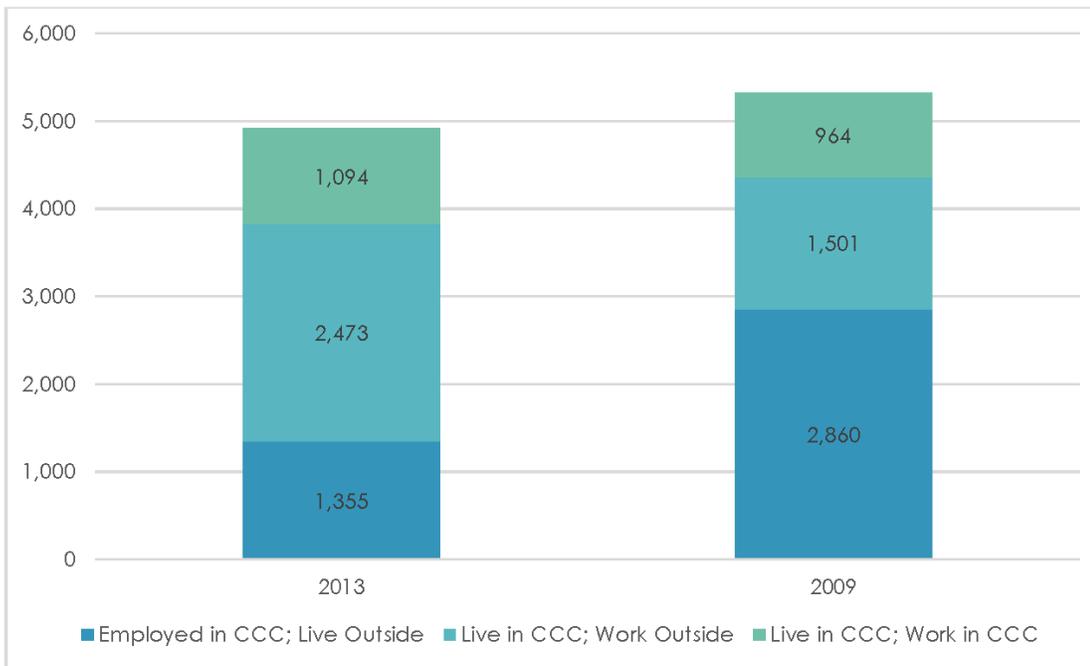
Almost half (49 percent) of Clear Creek County workers are between the ages of 45 and 64, while over a third is between 25 and 44 years of age, again indicating a slightly aging population in the County.

As of 2013, the vast majority (69 percent) of the Clear Creek County workforce was employed outside of the County, with Jefferson, Denver and Arapahoe Counties being the top three commuting destinations for these workers. This massive out-commute from the County demonstrates the importance of inter-county collaboration on transportation solutions, and belies the untapped capacity of the Clear Creek County workforce. While Clear Creek County has a slightly lower percent of worker's in management, business, science, and arts occupations compared to the Denver Metro, it has many more workers in these occupations than there are employment positions in these industries in the County (see Employment and Economic Growth, below). This means that these workers are commuting outside the County for these positions, but also presents an opportunity for economic development in these fields within Clear Creek County because the experience and capacity currently exists in the local workforce.



Between 2009 and 2013, Clear Creek County experienced a large decrease in the number of workers who were employed in Clear Creek County, but live outside the County between—a shift of over 1,500 employment positions. This decrease in employment is likely related to the phasing out of Henderson mine and the reduction of employees from Jefferson and Gilpin traveling to the mine for their work. Figure 15 (See Appendix I) also indicates a large increase in the number of workers who live in Clear Creek County and work outside the County between 2009 and 2013, growing from 1,501 workers in 2009 to 2,473 workers in 2013. This data is likely reflecting a low point of employment during the height of the national economic recession in 2009, and the recovery of many jobs by 2013, albeit at locations outside of Clear Creek County.

### WORKER FLOWS IN CLEAR CREEK COUNTY (2009 & 2013)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Employment and Economic Growth

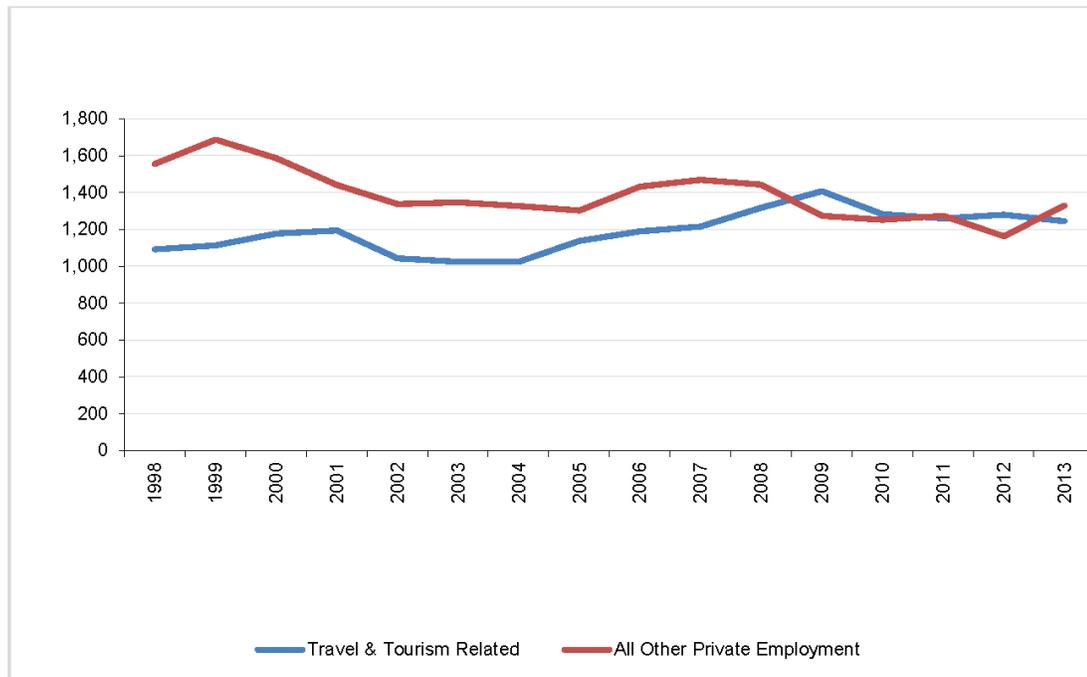
In 2013, the overall unemployment rate in Clear Creek County (7.5 percent) was significantly lower than that of the US (9.7 percent), the State of Colorado (8.5 percent), and the Denver Metro (8.3 percent), suggesting a good outlook for Clear Creek County workers. However, diving deeper into these numbers uncovers a few challenges associated with employment. First, as we saw above, nearly 70 percent of workers who live in Clear Creek County commute outside of the county for work—and this number has been growing—so while they are employed they are traveling farther to find work. Second, when examining the employment rate in Clear Creek County by age, we see that persons 24 to 44 years of age by far have the lowest unemployment rate of any age group at 2.9 percent unemployed. Persons aged 20 to 25 years had a significantly higher unemployment rate at 17.1 percent, suggesting it may be difficult for persons in this age group to find adequate employment, which also tracks with the age and migration



data. Finally, we see that while employment growth has occurred in Clear Creek County, it is slowing down. The average annual change in total employment for the 2002-2015 period was the addition of approximately 15 jobs per year. This figure is substantially lower than that of the 1994-2002 period, which had an average annual change of 56 additional jobs each year. This reduction in job creation is likely at least partially related to the economic recession experienced nationwide during this period.

These changes in employment also track with the economic growth in the County in terms of business composition and activity. Since 2004 total private employment in travel and tourism related industries has grown, while total employment in all other private industries has shrank. During the same period the amount of mining employment in the County has fluctuated considerably, peaking in 2006. Most growth that has happened since 2004, has occurred in either the mining or travel and tourism related industries, with 154 net new jobs in travel and tourism and 64 net new jobs in mining between 1998 and 2013, with net losses of jobs in other industries. These figures are based on the newest available data from the U.S. Census County Business Patterns program, but we know that many more mining jobs have been lost since 2013 with the phasing out of the Henderson Mine and that this trend will likely continue into the future.

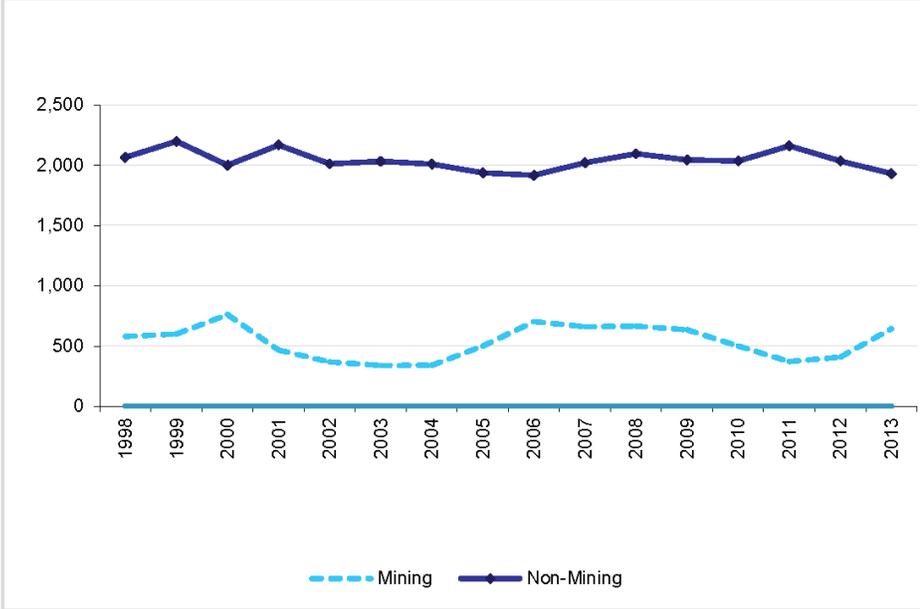
#### TOTAL PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AND TOURISM ECONOMY EMPLOYMENT, 1998-2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 County Business Patterns



**TOTAL MINING AND NON-MINING EMPLOYMENT, 1998-2013**

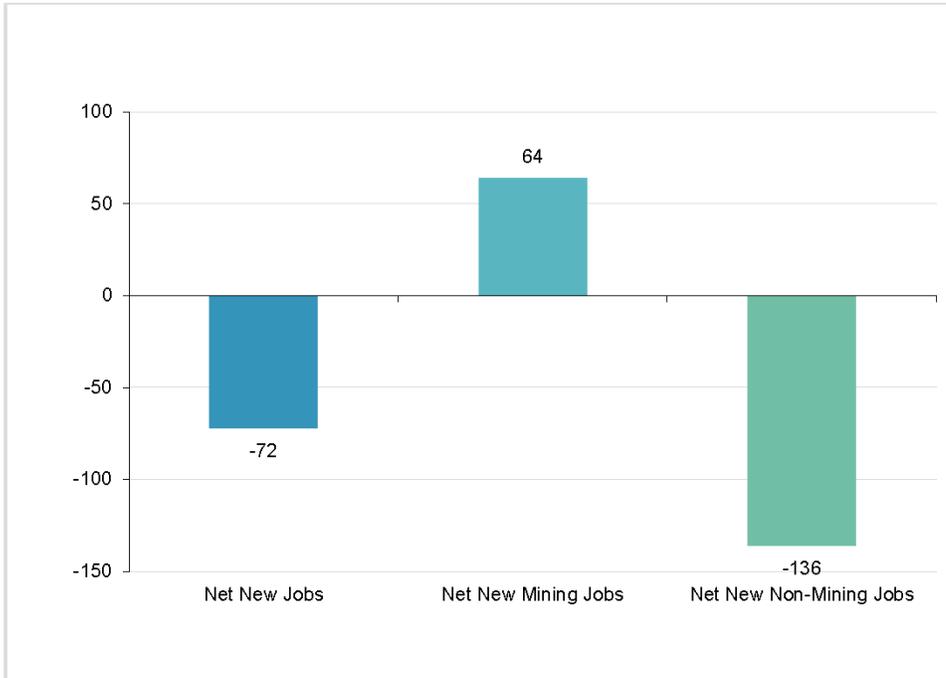


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 County Business Patterns



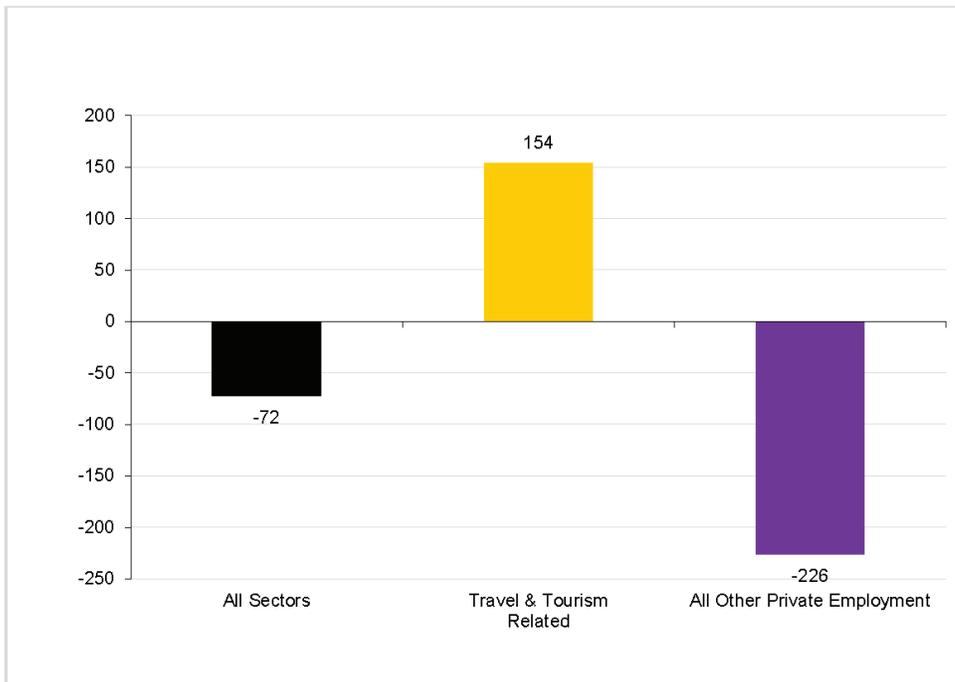


### NEW JOBS IN MINING AND NON-MINING, 1998-2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 County Business Patterns

### NEW JOBS IN THE TOURISM ECONOMY, 1998-2013



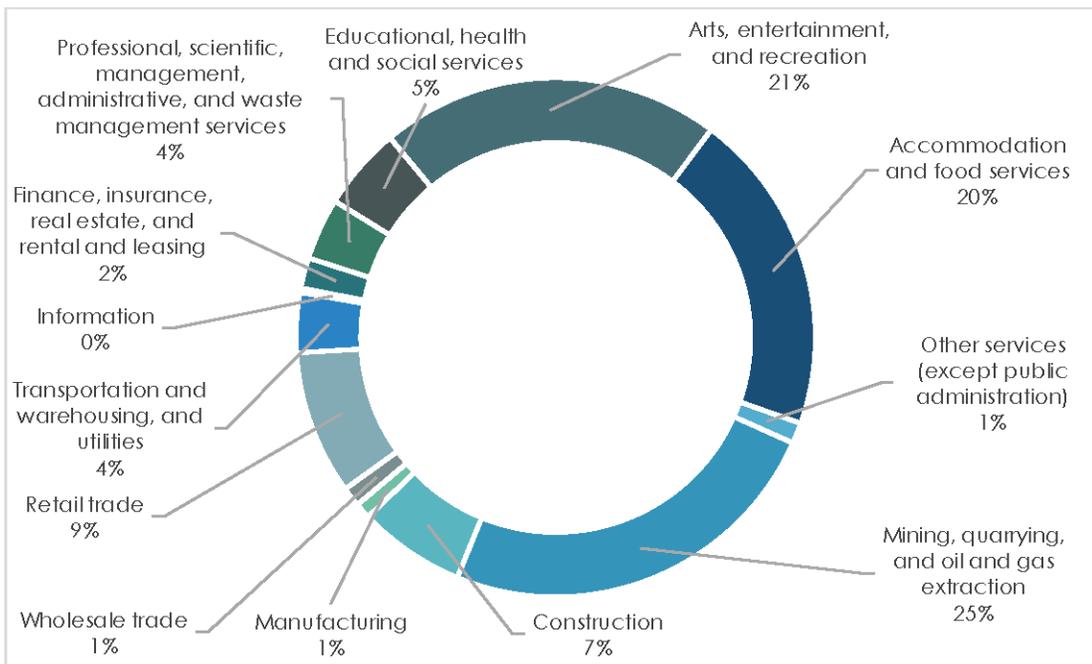
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 County Business Patterns.



The phasing out of the Henderson Mine has highlighted a particular challenge for the Clear Creek County economy that is also evident in the economic data: the problem of economic diversification. There are two primary ways to consider the diversity of industry composition: through the number of businesses by industry and the distribution of employment by industry. By comparing the two, one can get a sense of economic stability and resiliency by analyzing the share of employment attributed to industries with only a few large employers, such as Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction. The first figure below demonstrates the number of Clear Creek County business by industry. The professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services industry has the largest number of businesses in Clear Creek County (58), followed by the construction industry (52), retail trade (51), and accommodations and food services (42). The information industry has the fewest number of businesses in Clear Creek County (3), followed by the mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction industry (4).

When these numbers are referenced with the distribution of employment by industry, we see vastly different results. For example, the professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services industry has the largest number business establishments, but generates only 4 percent of employment in the County. Likewise, The mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction industry only has four business establishments in Clear Creek County (one of which being the Henderson Mine), but accounts for the largest share of employment of any single industry group at 25 percent, although tourism which typically includes both arts, entertainment, and recreation industry and the accommodation and food services industry would be higher at 41 percent of total employment when grouped together as a single unit.

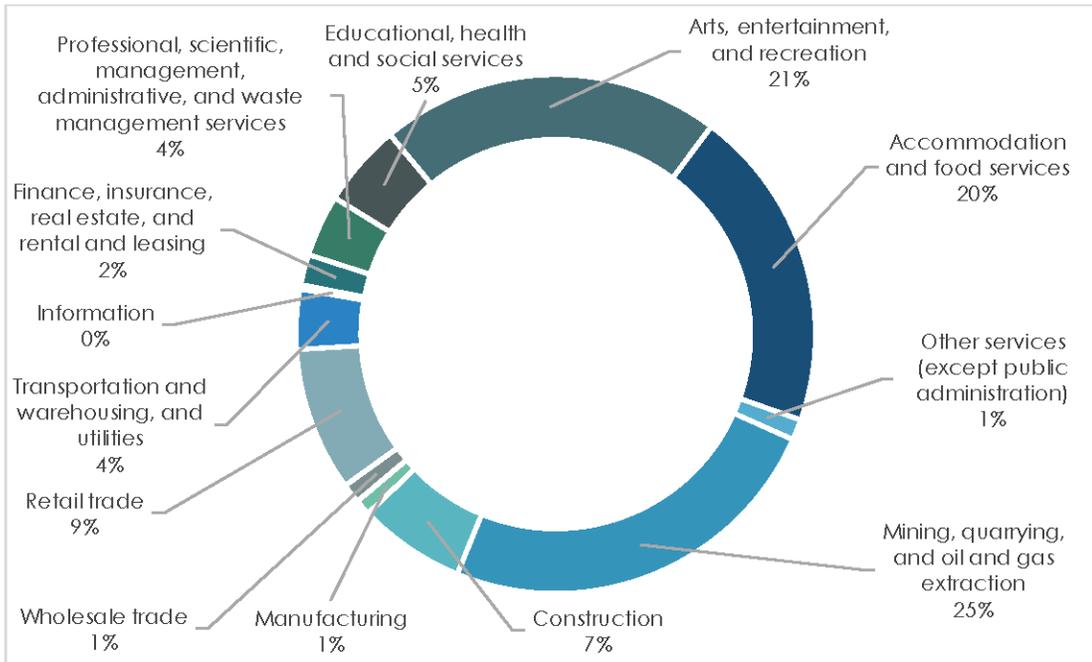
### NUMBER OF CLEAR CREEK COUNTY BUSINESS BY INDUSTRY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 County Business Patterns



### PERCENT OF CLEAR CREEK COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 County Business Patterns





The recent phasing out of the Henderson Mine has created a real challenge for both the residents and the government in Clear Creek County, and highlights the issue with a lack of economic diversity. While many of the employees of the Henderson Mine commute from outside Clear Creek, the loss of the economic activity at the mine has resulted in some job loss for Clear Creek County residents, but has had an even more significant impact on the County's annual revenues, ultimately constraining the County's ability to provide services.

While the growth of the tourism economy in Clear Creek County has provided a real opportunity for economic development that can potentially help offset the loss of the mine, this growth is not without its challenges. Although the tourism economy is spread out over much a larger number of businesses than mining has been, the problem of economic diversification is still present because shifts in travel behaviors could have a significant impact on overall the county economy—much like the closing of Henderson Mine. The average annual wages associated with the tourism economy in Clear Creek County (\$20,451) are also less than half of the typical non-tourism economy wages for the County (\$53,080). While this reflects the nature of many tourism economy jobs—being either part-time, seasonal, or both—this disparity further suggests the need for a “multi-pronged” approach to economic diversification that capitalizes on the tourism economy opportunities available to Clear Creek County, while also pursuing other economic development strategies in other areas.

### CLEAR CREEK COUNTY TOURISM ECONOMY WAGES



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 County Business Patterns



## COUNTY ASSETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Understanding the changing trends that will influence the County's future is an important aspect of a Master Plan. Key issues identified for each element below have been summarized. Appendix III provides more thorough and detailed baseline summaries for many of these elements.

### Transportation and Mobility

Since the 2004 Master Plan, the County's relationship with the Interstate 70 corridor has continued to be a major source of both opportunity and challenge. As described below, recent changes have been undertaken to lessen the impact of peak travel usage of the highway. Also, the ongoing implementation of the non-motorized Greenway Plan has also been connected to the I-70 corridor.

The ongoing maintenance of the County road network has continued to be a challenge given the rural and remote character of much of the network. The current road network, showing both County, US Forest Service, State of Colorado and private roadways can be found on MAP- 5.

While public transit options within the County remain unmet, some regional changes have helped provide additional opportunities for transit mobility.





## Interstate 70

The impact and influence of Interstate 70 on the County is profound. It serves as both the essential access into/out of the County and links many of the distinct areas where the majority of the population is located and where economic activity is highest. It also bisects many of these communities, creates noise, and has a level of congestion that can have staggering effects on the ability of County residents to move about conveniently and efficiently.

While the I-70 corridor has been a part of life in Clear Creek County for decades, a more recent series of short and long term projects led by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), have been undertaken to address peak travel conditions within the corridor associated with the peak summer and winter recreation seasons. As described in more detail in the Transportation Baseline Summary (See Appendix II), some of these improvements included expanding the Veterans Memorial Tunnel from two to three lanes, establishing of a Peak Period Shoulder Lane (PPSL) along a 13 mile eastbound stretch of tolled road from the tunnel to Empire Junction and completing of a feasibility study for a potential high-speed transit system between Golden and Eagle. In addition, new enforcement efforts (chains) and traveler information systems have been started to provide disincentives and/or incentives for peak travel time road highway use.

In addition to the above, CDOT has continued to plan for future changes to the I-70 corridor that certainly will influence outcomes in Clear Creek County. Improvements to interchanges near Empire Junction / US-40 and Floyd Hill, more pullouts and parking for truck operations and a westbound PPSL (Peak Period Shoulder Lane) have all been identified in CDOT's approved Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS).

## The Greenway Plan

The proposed 36 mile long Clear Creek Greenway ([www.ccgreenway.com](http://www.ccgreenway.com)) has been an important County priority since 1990 when it was identified as a non-motorized route in the Clear Creek County Non-Motorized Routes Master Plan. Since then, the County has been investing in planning and construction of various segments of the Greenway. In 2005, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) provided funding for the development of the Clear Creek Greenway Plan that more specifically identifies a proposed alignment and design guidance. At completion, the Greenway will weave together existing segments of multi-use trails with new links and establish a defined recreational trail network connecting the municipalities and distinct area along the I-70 corridor. While CDOT has been an active partner in the establishment of the project thus far, the non-profit Clear Creek County Greenway Authority (CCCGA) was established in 2014 to help facilitate the continued implementation of the project. Since 2005 the Greenway has added to two new segments to the original 9 miles. Additional segments are in the middle of design and permitting processes through 2017.

The development of the Greenway from 2005 to 2015 was done under the auspices of the Clear Creek County Open Space Commission (OSC). They sought grant funding and provided match money for efforts that include the development of two recreational nodes along the Greenway; the Lawson White Water Park, and the Philadelphia Mill Site.

The investment in the Greenway has continued with the CCCGA receiving \$2 million in RAMP (Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance and Partnerships) funding from CDOT in 2014. Combined with a \$500,000 match from Clear Creek County, the monies are being used to complete the design of a 14-mile segment



from Hidden Valley to Empire Junction. The CCCGA continues to pursue grant and investment monies to cover the expected \$4 million in design costs.

Reaching beyond the County's borders, Jefferson County has also been active in development of a trail network that will ultimately intersect with the Greenway Plan. A new 4-mile segment through Clear Creek Canyon (including 1 mile within Clear Creek County) was completed in 2016. The Clear Creek County portion of the trail was overseen by the OSC who sought and received \$2.8 million from GOCO through the River Corridor Initiative and was one of only nine projects awarded funding statewide. The "Peaks to Plains" Trail, which is the larger trail network of which the Clear Creek Greenway is a part of, has been identified by the Governor as one of the State's 16 most important trail gaps.

Other key elements of the Greenway, such as the Bakerville to Loveland Trail, Scott Lancaster Trail, and the Silver Plume to Georgetown segments, as well as some segments through Idaho Springs, were built with CDOT Enhancement Funds and other funding resources over the years.

The planned location of the Greenway is identified on MAP-6.

### County Roads

Clear Creek County maintains about 254 miles of roadway out of about 887 total miles within the County (approximately 29 percent). The vast majority of these roads are dead-ends or provide access to residential properties, businesses or recreational opportunities.

A critical challenge for Clear Creek County has been the ongoing maintenance of this road network. The challenging terrain of the County coupled with the often harsh weather (snow, rain) and remoteness of some road segments makes keeping up with road maintenance particularly daunting. The ongoing maintenance of this network is proscribed by the classification of roads as noted below:

#### Miles of County Maintained Road by Classification

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Primary	69	27%
Secondary #1	24	9%
Secondary #2	64	25%
Secondary #3	11	4%
Secondary #4	86	34%
Total	254	100%

Generally speaking the Primary and Secondary #1 roads are considered critical in that they support (in addition to resident access) school transportation and rural mail delivery. Snow removal on roads classified as either Primary or Secondary #1 is planned to happen on the 1<sup>st</sup> day following the storm.

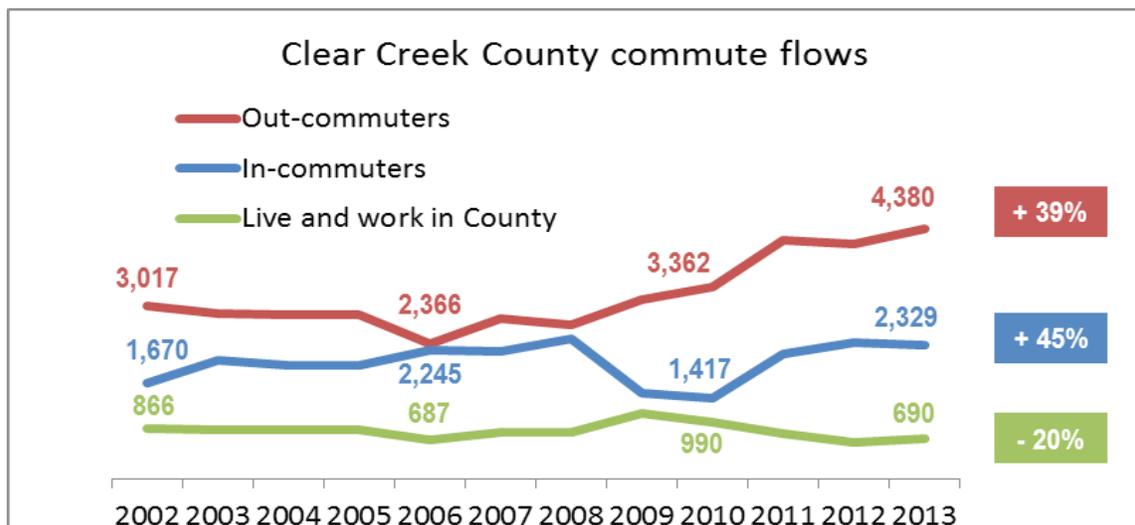
The pattern of County-maintained roadways is also depicted on MAP-5.

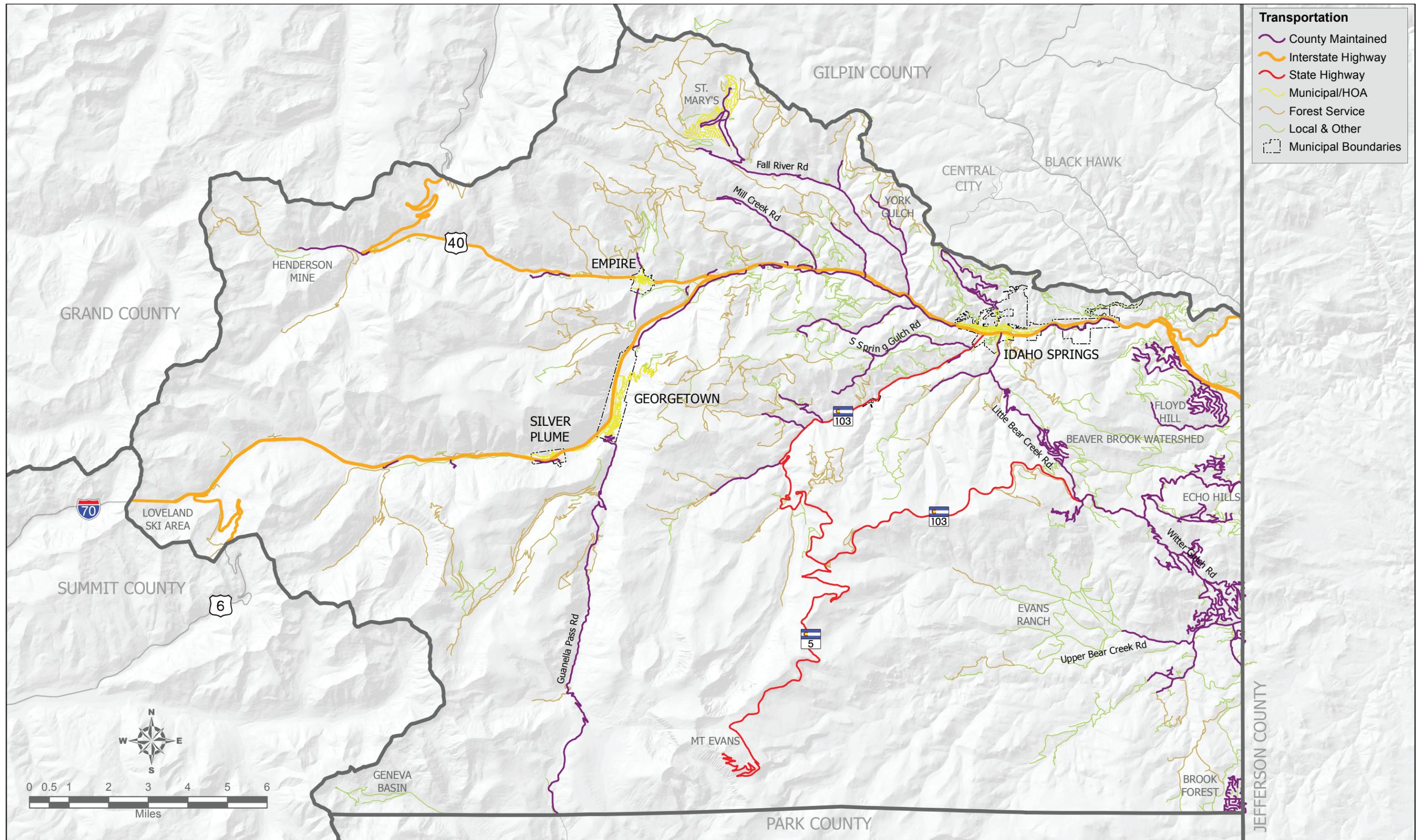
## Transit

The 2004 Master Plan noted the lack of available public transit opportunities for Clear Creek County residents. Currently there is no fixed-route local or regional public transit service within Clear Creek County. Greyhound provides a private, limited, regional intercity bus service and there is limited demand response service. Clear Creek County is not a part of the Regional Transportation District (RTD), which is the Denver Area transit provider. The closest RTD bus service is at the El Rancho Park-n-Ride at I-70 and Evergreen Parkway, which is served by the EV/ES/EX route. This route provides peak hour commuter bus service between Evergreen and Civic Center Station in Denver. Greyhound provides the only regularly scheduled bus service to the County via a bus stop in Idaho Springs.

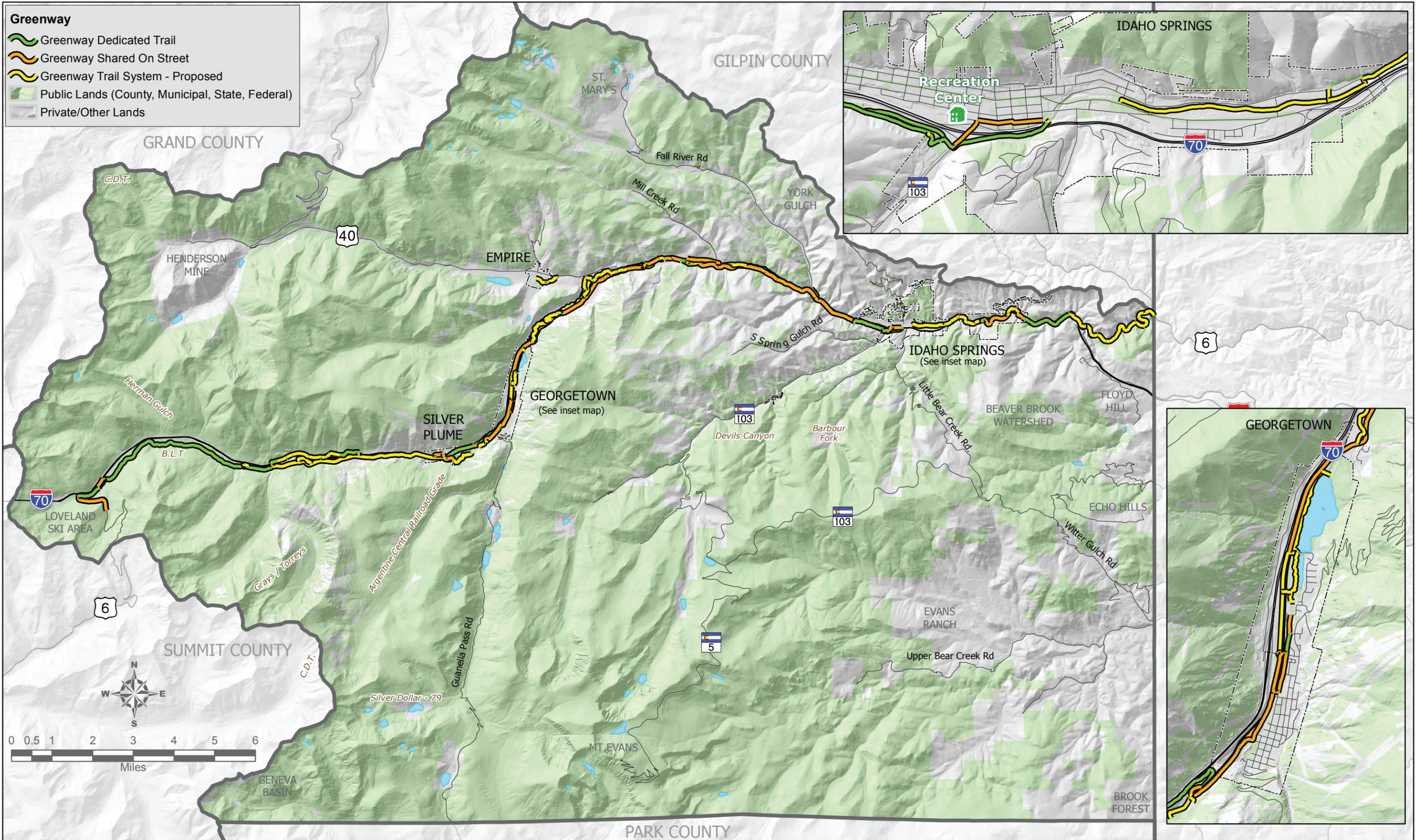
A limited amount of demand response transit service is offered in Clear Creek County including:

- The Loveland Ski Area provides an employee shuttle for employees living in Clear Creek County
- The Senior Resource Center provides on-demand transportation services to people over the age of 60 in Clear Creek County (based out of Evergreen)
- High Country Shuttle provides on-demand service between Clear Creek County and DIA
- Recent travel patterns also suggest there may be a growing need for transit service between Clear Creek County and Denver. Since 2002 the number of residents commuting to work outside the county increased 39 percent (the number of in-commuters commuting into the County for work also increased by 45 percent). As of 2013 about 49 percent of employed residents in Clear Creek County were commuting to the Denver Metro Area, including 18 percent to Jefferson County and 14 percent to Denver. Additionally, the transit commute mode share among County residents increased from 1 to 2 percent from 2009-2014 despite the fact that the County has no regularly scheduled transit service. This suggests there has been an increase in the number of County residents driving to Jefferson County to use RTD to commute into the Denver Metro Area.





MAP-5 | Transportation



MAP-6 | The Greenway



## Housing

The Citizen Survey and a recently completed housing study (the 2012 Clear Creek County Housing Needs Assessment) both indicate that the primary issues with housing are three-fold: availability, affordability and quality.

### Availability

A growing trend in parts of Clear Creek County is the conversion (or use) of unoccupied housing units as seasonal/recreational units. The recent Housing Needs Assessment identified increasing home ownership as an important goal. The increase in seasonal/recreational occupation of housing, at the expense of long-term and stable owner-occupied housing could be indicative of decreased local demand or an “affordability gap.”

### Affordability

While the median price for housing in Clear Creek County is modest when compared to nearby Summit or Jefferson County, affordability remains a challenge. In particular, when combined with the costs for transportation and the lack of diverse and affordable retail/shopping uses in the County, the overall burden of housing and living expenses has been identified as an important concern. The availability of long-term rental units, targeted towards those making 60 percent or less than the Area Median Income (AMI) was indicated as a priority in recent Housing Needs Assessment. Pressure on pricing for seasonal/recreational units only exacerbates affordability.

### Quality

The age and quality (or condition) of many of the homes in Clear Creek County has been identified as a primary concern. About 60 percent of all housing units in Clear Creek County were built prior to 1980. The Housing Needs Assessment identified modernization and energy efficiency measures are important steps to “preserve and improve” the existing housing stock.

A baseline summary of important housing issues is provided in Appendix III.



## Public Facilities and Services

Critical facilities and services within Clear Creek County related to water and wastewater are provided by a consortium of entities including the municipalities and special districts such as the St. Mary's Water and Sanitation District and Central Clear Creek Sanitation. A map illustrating where these service areas and special districts are located is provided as MAP-7.

In addition, Clear Creek County oversees a variety of public services that impact/influence the long-ranging planning for the County.

### Water Resources

Clear Creek County maintains significant water rights and is presently working on a Strategic Water Plan that will describe these rights, their associated infrastructure and operations. The County has recognized that its rights to water resources can play an important role in supporting economic development and the Strategic Water Plan will provide guidance to the BOCC in evaluating whether granting these rights in support of development is a "beneficial use".

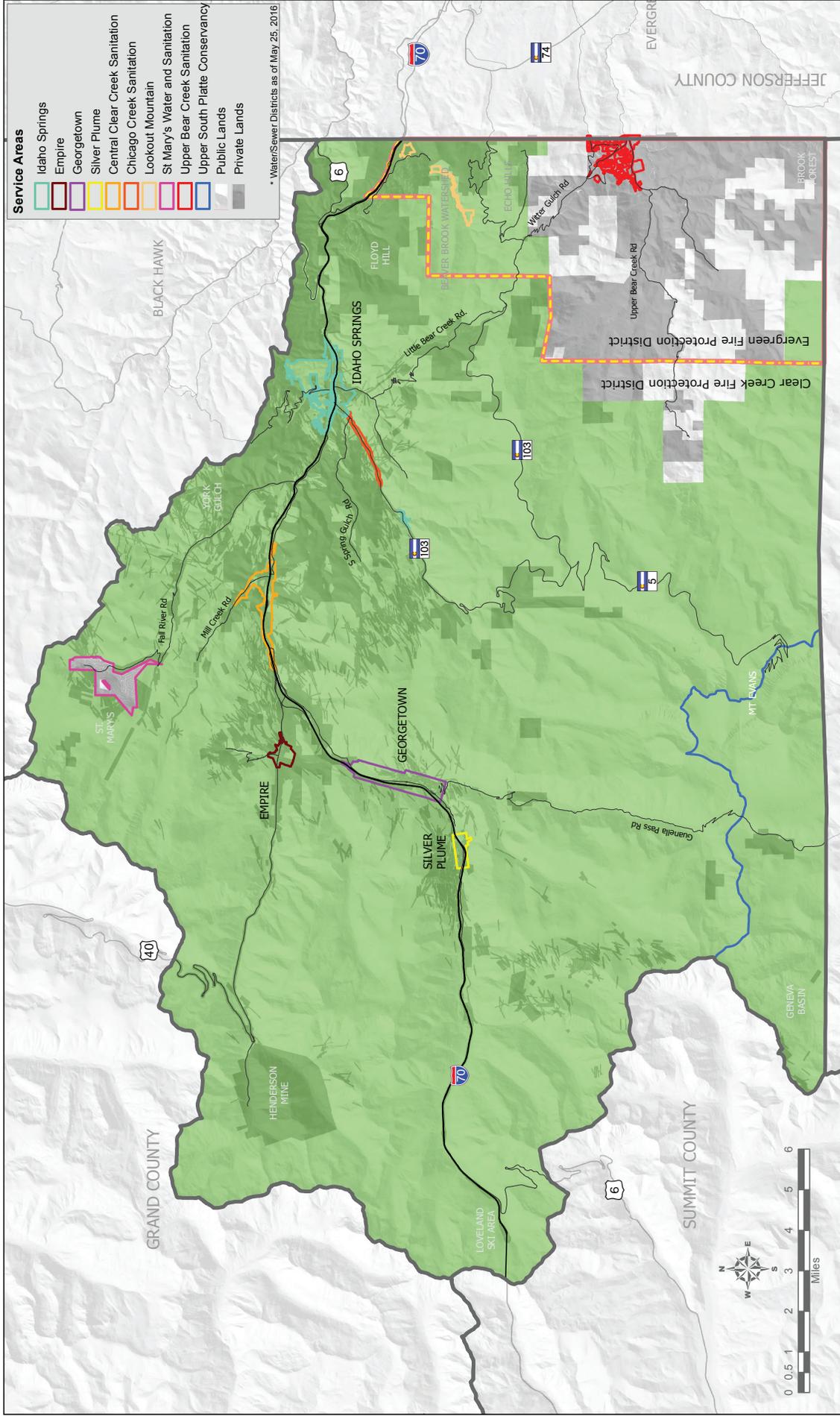
An important element of the water rights portfolio for the County is the headwaters position the County enjoys in relationship to South Platte Basin. This high altitude location enhances the conservation of water resources (i.e., they have less evaporation during winter months) and supports the application of these rights to downstream users. The County has and continues to be active in the South Platte Basin Roundtable to support the development of new infrastructure related to these water resources.

### Broadband Resources

In 2013, Clear Creek County, in collaboration with Gilpin County, retained Frank Ohrtman of Internet3 to complete a broadband assessment study (See <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7521088690>).

This high-level assessment was completed to help establish the service needs for the region as well as provided recommendations to help achieve these needs. As the study noted "actual speed testing, in all communities of Gilpin and Clear Creek are challenged in terms of Internet speeds". A residential survey prepared for the study concluded that outages in Internet access lasting longer than one day were found by more than 40 percent of survey participants. While that survey was not extensive in scope nor statistically valid, community comments during this process emphasized dissatisfaction with broadband connectivity. According to data from the Colorado Office of Information Technology (OIT) the current state of broadband within Clear Creek County for wired service is still limited to areas mostly within the defined municipalities and some subdivisions in the eastern portions of the county adjacent to Jefferson County. Within these wired service areas however, customers have complained of speeds that are less than 3 Mb/sec and sometimes even less than 1 Mb/sec. When adding wireless services to the mix (i.e., line-of-sight) the area of coverage expands considerably westward. Similarly, factoring data services delivered over the cellular network, the coverage area expands further into more remote portions of the County. However, coverage is not consistent and topographic challenges continue to make complete coverage difficult.

The survey data also noted that while the broadband coverage issue may continue to be problematic in more isolated parts of the County, the bigger challenge has been both the poor quality of this service (i.e., reliability) and the limited amount of broadband capacity. Generally both the residential and commercial Internet access speeds available within parts of Clear Creek County are within the 3-10 Mb/sec range. The



MAP-7 | Service Areas



growing number of household and business internet-enabled devices and demand for internet services such as cloud storage, streaming music and video have made even this range less than acceptable. The appropriate standard for consideration is 25 MB/sec download and 5 MB/sec upload.

In April 2016, the Gilpin/Clear Creek Broadband Development Committee (GCCBDC) issued a “Request for Proposals” for a Broadband Expansion Plan Concept to address this connectivity gaps and act as a strategic document through which both private and public investment in infrastructure could be organized. This effort has been managed by the Clear Creek County Information Technology Department.

### Public Health

As outlined in many responses to the Citizen Survey, access to healthcare is challenging in a rural community like Clear Creek County. In 2013 the Clear Creek Public and Environmental Health Department (CCPEH) issued a Community Health Improvement Plan (see [www.ClearCreekHealth.us](http://www.ClearCreekHealth.us)) that, in addition to outlining some of the pressing challenges for healthcare, also provided a set of goals and strategies that this Master Plan considered.

Highlights of this plan include:

- The percentage of the Clear Creek population that is classified as disabled is 26.3 percent versus the statewide mean of 23.7 percent. Mental health and substance abuse issues were also noted as significant challenges in Clear Creek County.
- A 2012-2013 Feasibility Study for the development (or reopening) of a primary care facility in Idaho Springs was completed and its results further emphasized transportation to services as the “most significant barrier” for residents. This study also noted that an important split between the eastern and western portions of the county. Eastern communities have improved access to healthcare in Evergreen and/or metro Denver. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was released in 2014 seeking a qualified primary care provider. No provider has been retained but the County continues to work on this issue.
- The use/support of the Senior Resource Center’s transportation services to help improve access to health care for elders in Clear Creek County
- Efforts to develop/re-open a health clinic have not been completed, but continues to be identified as an important goal.

### Open Space and Natural Resources

Approximately 76 percent of Clear Creek County is either located within the Arapahoe National Forest or public lands owned by other agencies or municipalities. As shown on the Public Lands Map (MAP-8), the pattern of public lands is highly complex and includes lands owned/managed by the United States Forest Service as well as various public entities and local governments. This list of open space owners/managers includes but is not limited to Historic Georgetown, Denver Mountain Parks, the City of Golden, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the Colorado State Land Board. All told, about sixteen entities own/manage open or conserved lands within Clear Creek County.



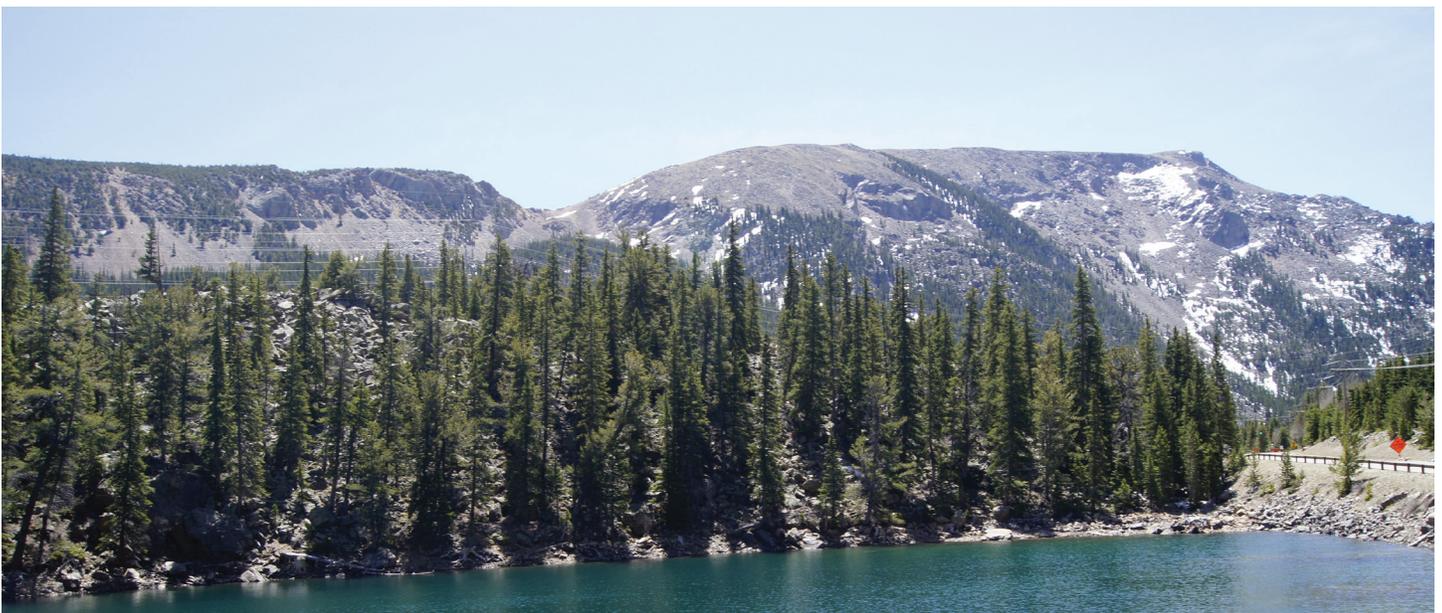
In 2005 the Clear Creek County Open Space Commission (OSC) adopted an Open Space Plan that had been included in the previous Clear Creek County Master Plan. In this plan the OSC identified important resources including:

- *Streams and Wetlands*
- *High Altitude Basins*
- *Critical Habitats and Wildlife Corridors*
- *Identified Conservation Areas*
- *Cultural Resources*
- *Important Features and Views*

In its strategies for acquisition, the Open Space Plan outlines the importance of partnerships with allied organizations, the need to dovetail open space with recreational access, and the ongoing importance of being good environmental stewards for open spaces.

Natural resources are also of critical importance to the people of Clear Creek County. Clear Creek County works closely with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to map and evaluate critical wildlife habitats within the County. Species including bighorn sheep, mountain goat, moose, deer and elk all have established habitats within portions of Clear Creek County.

The Arapahoe National Forest is an important contributor to the natural resource portfolio in Clear Creek County. The Mount Evans Recreation Area offers residents and visitors access to the 14,000 foot peaks on the highest paved road in North America. The associated Mount Evans Wilderness (designated by Congress in 1980) includes nearly 75,000 acres of important wildlife habitat, natural communities, recreational trails and scenic vistas. The Guanella Pass Scenic Byway is also home to diverse wildlife habitats, riparian areas and natural forest communities.





## Recreation, Culture, and Arts

In 2014 the Clear Creek Metropolitan Recreation District (CCMRD) completed a *System Wide Master Plan* (SWMP) which inventoried existing parks and recreation facilities in the County and identified a range of issues surrounding them. The current CCMRD's mission is "Seizing opportunities and developing strategic partnerships to create and sustain the necessary resources for our present and future recreational needs." The SWMP was intended to help align the District with its mission.

In crafting the SWMP the CCMRD recognized that "Parks and recreation facilities and programs contribute to the livability of a community by enhancing its quality of life". They go on to note that most residents within the organized municipalities have access to parks in relatively close proximity to their homes. While the diversity and offerings of the parks vary considerably, the access to organized recreational space is good for those residents. The planning and implementation of parks in Clear Creek County has historically been the responsibility of these municipalities. The SWMP states the possibility of serving underserved neighborhoods in the unincorporated areas of Clear Creek County with park (and recreation) infrastructure as something the District might "consider."

The SWMP outlined a wide variety of goals and objectives, many of which relate to establishing the CCMRD as an important partner in bringing communities together. Among these, the SWMP addressed the need for greater "identity" in recreational infrastructure within the region, including better signage and graphic communication. In part, this need was stated to assure that residents better understand the recreational system, but elsewhere in the SWMP the importance of recreation to economic development initiatives was stressed. The idea of "branding" the District was also discussed in various forms.





The SWMP was developed with significant public outreach, including a survey, which affirmed the importance of recreation as a community amenity. Perhaps the biggest finding in the SWMP was its determination that a County-wide, 5 to 10 year plan for the “delivery of recreational services” is needed. In making that point the SWMP acknowledges that such plan would rely on participation of the District, the municipalities and community organizations. This partnership approach towards long-term planning for recreational infrastructure is consistent with the how recreational services are being delivered presently.

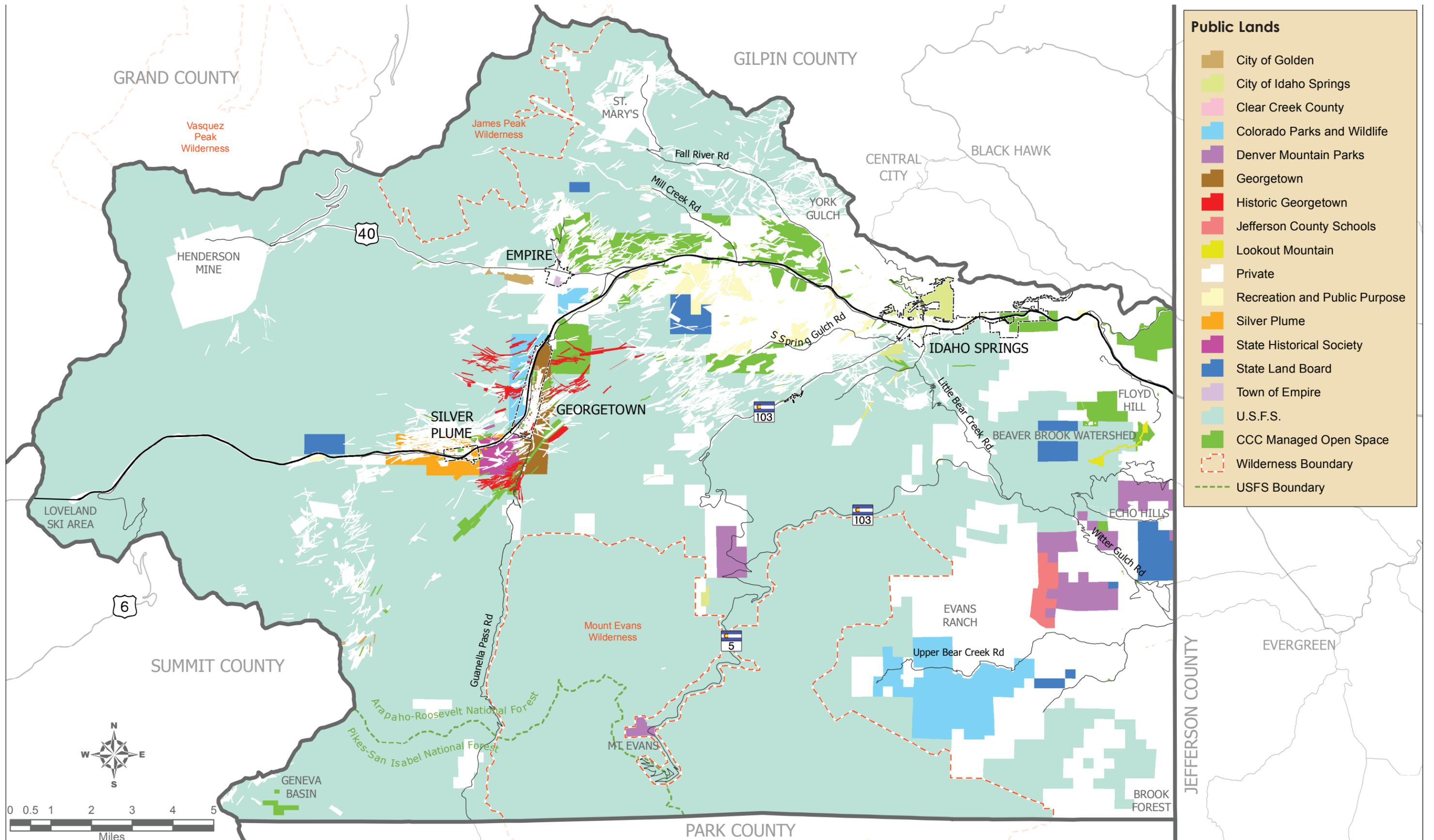
The location of important County recreational assets and trails is depicted on MAP-9. The full SWMP can be found online at: [http://clearcreekrecreation.com/CCMRD\\_SystemWideMasterPlan.pdf](http://clearcreekrecreation.com/CCMRD_SystemWideMasterPlan.pdf)

The mining heritage of Clear Creek County is an important element of the region’s culture and influences its arts. Heritage tourism is a popular attraction for many communities within Clear Creek County. In order to better protect the many cultural resources in the county, a Cultural Resources Management Plan was prepared for the Board of County Commissioners in 2012.

Although this plan was never accepted by the Board of County Commissioners, it provided a detailed baseline and evaluated the many cultural resources in Clear Creek County. In total, the plan identified 890 cultural resources throughout the county, including historic, archaeological, structural, architectural, prehistoric, and others. Of the 890 resources identified, 697 were mining related and archaeological in nature and spanned an era prior to Clear Creek County’s establishment in 1861 to modern day. The evaluation portion of this plan went on to prioritize which of the identified cultural resources and were worthy of planning consideration. The evaluation found that 123 cultural resources (61 of which have potential to be National Register eligible) had significant value to warrant their consideration in future planning.

The recommendations in the Cultural Resources Management Plan inform this plan in by determining the best approach to balancing the protection and enjoyment of the vast cultural resources that Clear Creek County has to offer. See MAP-10 (Cultural Resources).

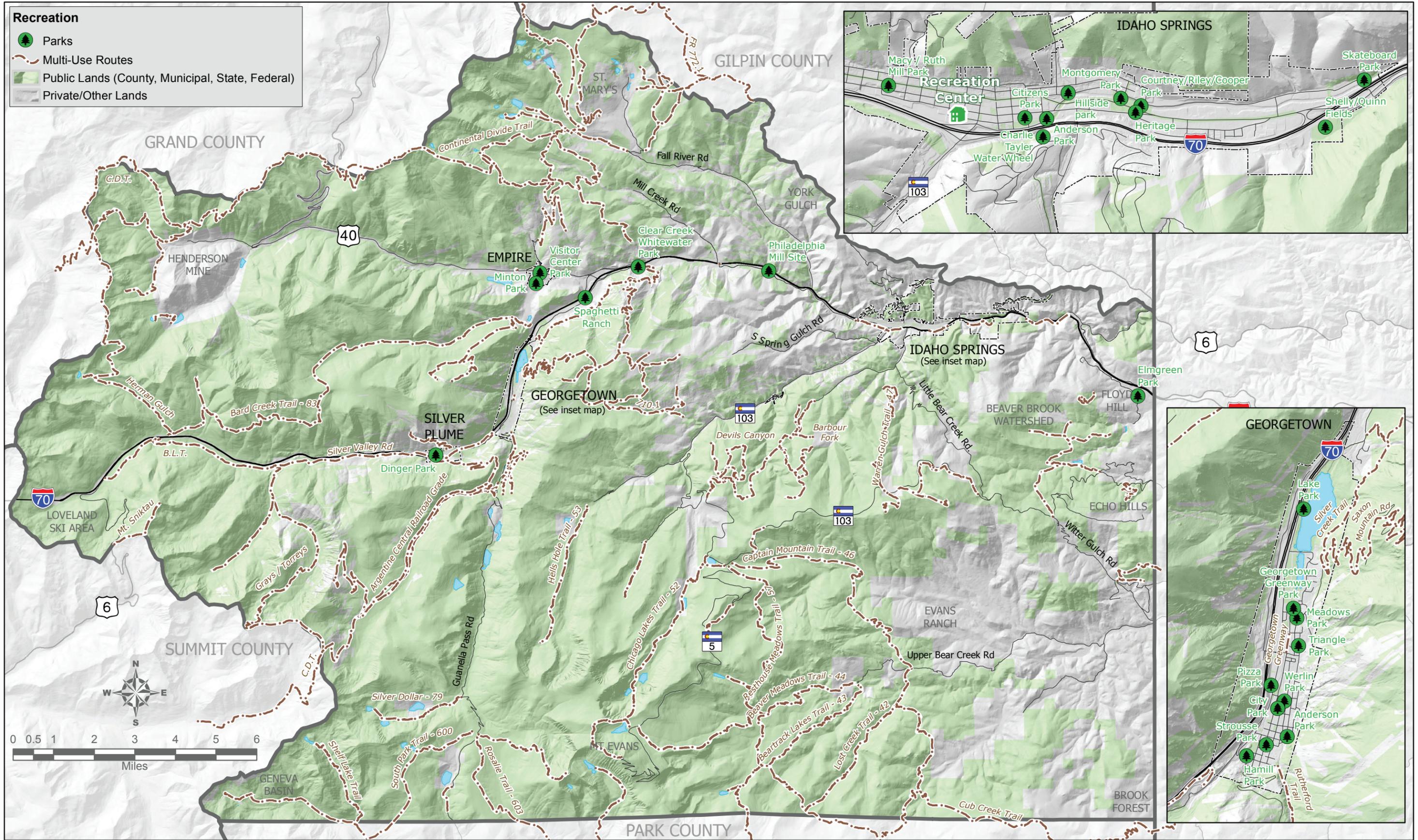


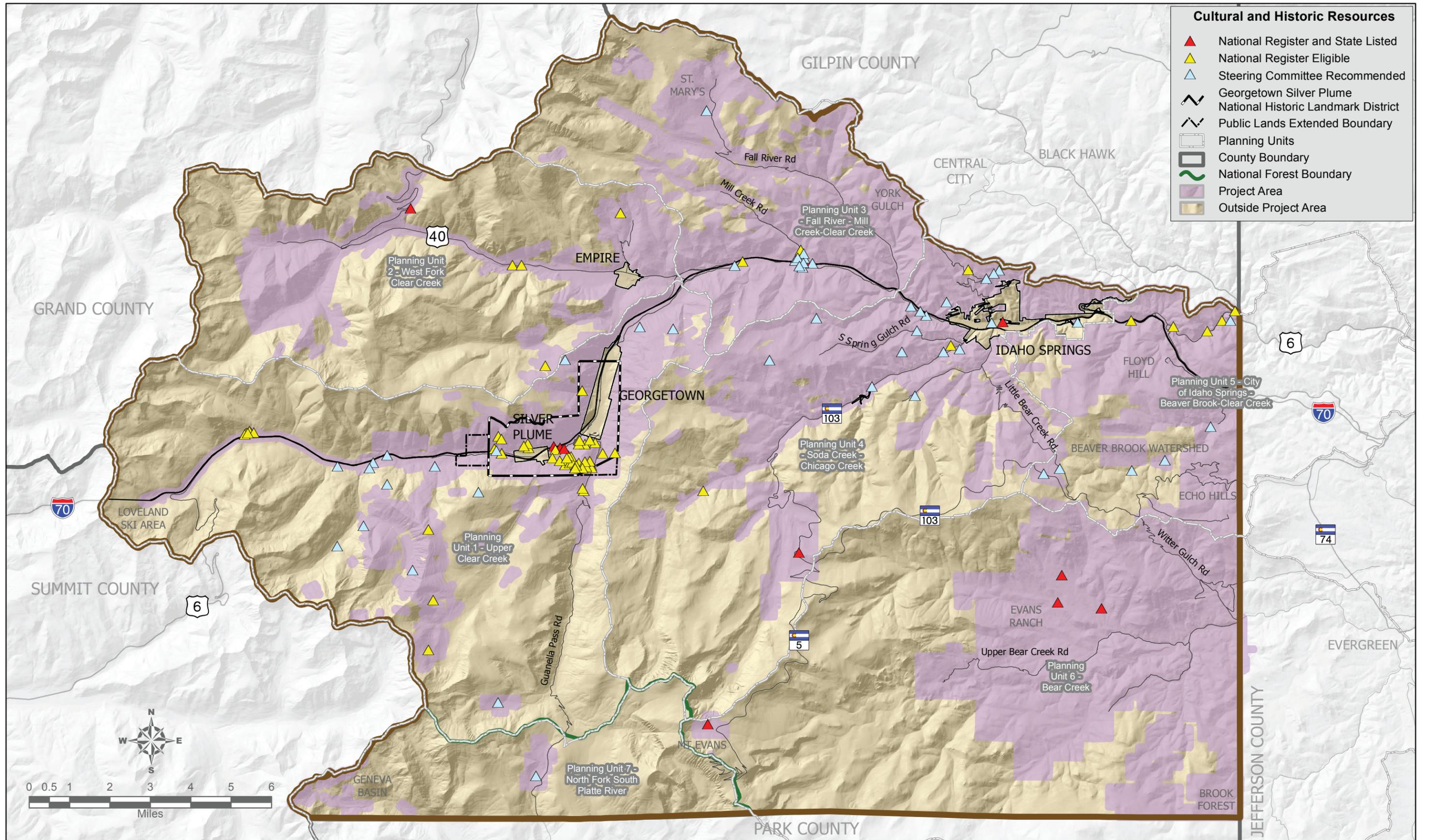


MAP-8 | Public Lands

**Recreation**

- Parks
- Multi-Use Routes
- Public Lands (County, Municipal, State, Federal)
- Private/Other Lands





MAP-10 | Cultural and Historic Resources



## The Importance of Place

In many ways, Clear Creek County is a “place of places”. Whether an organized municipality like Georgetown, an unincorporated and established settlement like Downieville or a slightly more out of way area like Guanella Pass, the residents of Clear Creek County place great value on these distinct areas.

As shown on MAP-2 there are approximately 24 “Sub-Areas” within Clear Creek County, including the four incorporated municipalities; Georgetown, Silver Plume, Empire and Idaho Springs. While the population density in many of these distinctive sub-areas is quite sparse (see MAP-2), nine (9) of these areas have undertaken the process of developing sub-area plans.

- Dumont-Lawson-Downieville
- East Mount Evans
- Fall River Watershed
- Floyd Hill-Saddlebrook-Beaverbrook
- Georgetown Lake/Saxon Mountain Area
- Upper Bear Creek
- York Gulch Area
- Bakerville Neighborhood Land Use Plan
- Coordinated Highway Access Agreement Subarea

Brief summaries of each of these plans are provided in Appendix III.

The Dumont-Lawson-Downieville, East Mount Evans, Fall River Watershed, Upper Bear Creek, York Gulch Area and Bakerville subarea plans have the following common threads:

- *Quality of Life*. Each subarea has a goal to protect the “quality of life” and unique character within each subarea.
- *Open Space*. Each subarea has a goal to protect and preserve open space found on current federal and state lands for a wide variety of passive and active uses.
- *Water Resources*. Each subarea plan has a goal to protect and preserve water resources in both quantity and quality.
- *Infrastructure*. Each subarea plan has a goal to ensure adequate infrastructure to support existing and future development.
- *Wildlife/Ecosystems*. Each plan has a goal to protect and preserve wildlife and the associated ecosystems.
- *Protection of Visual Resources and Natural Setting*. Each subarea has a goal to protect the natural setting and the associated visual resources.
- *Natural Hazards*. Each subarea plan discusses natural hazards.
- *Transportation*. Each subarea has specific goals or policies and actions to ensure an adequate and safe transportation system.



East Mount Evans, Fall River Watershed, Upper Bear Creek, York Gulch Area plans have the following common threads:

- *Low Density Development*. Each subarea has a goal to maintain low density development.
- *Minimized Development*. Each subarea has a goal to minimize development to maintain rural and natural character.

The Dumont-Lawson-Downieville, East Mount Evans have the common thread policies relating to the protection and preservation of cultural/historic resources. The Bakerville Neighborhood Plan and the Coordinated Highway Access Agreement Subarea are the only detailed subarea plan with specific land uses mapped out, with the latter governing zoning and land use. The Georgetown Lake/Saxon Mountain Area is an open space plan.

At a minimum, future community or sub-area plans should address the elements of the Policy Framework expressed in this Master Plan. This will help ensure that the plans move beyond a single focus of consideration (e.g., economic development or open space) and think more broadly about how the specific community might advance the policies of the County with more local context and vision.

## Working with Others - Intergovernmental Agreements

Like most counties, Clear Creek County has a diverse and complex set of agreements (Intergovernmental Agreements or IGAs; Memoranda of Understanding or MOU) with other regions and/or the State of Colorado to help effectuate its policies and objectives. While this Master Plan is not the appropriate place to address all of the elements of these agreements, several of them have relevancy to long-range planning that is important to highlight for this Master Plan Update. Some of the provisions of these IGAs might need to be reconsidered given the changes in condition that have occurred since their original creation and approval.

A matrix of important agreements is provided in Appendix III.

### 1990 MOU between the USFS, BLM CDOW, CCC, Georgetown and Georgetown Society on the Saxon Mountain Study Area

Saxon Mountain Study Area as defined by the 1988 CCC Master Plan. CCC Planning Commission created the Saxon Mountain Committee for reviewing any action proposed to the County within the identified Saxon Mountain Study Area. This MOU was of importance for the creation of the Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District Public Lands Commission (HDPLC) which still exists as a planning forum for the various federal, state, and local land management agencies that hold lands within the historic district, the Saxon Mountain Study Area, and surrounding areas. Authority over the lands remains with the individual agencies.

Highlights of this agreement include: mutual cooperation in plans integration; coordination of land use decision making; the review process of land use proposals affecting the Saxon Mountain area; the identification of appropriate uses and the development of plans for the lake, summit and mountain face sectors of the study area; and the identification of cultural and natural resources within the study area for compilation in established inventories.



### 2005 IGA Directing Development in Coordinated Planning and Highway Access Agreement Subregion

This IGA between Central City, CCC and Idaho Springs has a binding land use plan to the north of Idaho Springs and the Central City Parkway interchange. The Land use policies of the Future Land Use Plan should reflect the presence of this agreement.

### 2009 Agreement for Land Use Planning Coordination with USFS, CSFS and CCC at Reception No. 255167

The parties agree on the need to coordinate efforts in developing policies and in planning for land management and development on forested and related lands in Clear Creek County This agreement requires the USFS to advise the parties on policies and plans for USFS lands in Clear Creek County, to share expertise and cooperate in preparing environmental statements required for projects or activities on USFS lands.

The agreement also requires the County to consult with the USFS prior to any proposed changes in private land zoning or land use plans affecting the National Forest, consider USFS and CSFS comments on land use proposals and to cooperate with the USFS and CSFS in developing land use policies and plans involving forest lands.





# CHAPTER 3: A FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

The Vision for Clear Creek County helps establish the overarching aspirations for the region in the long-term. It states:

*“Improve upon the existing quality of life in Clear Creek County by supporting the development of a diverse economy, protecting natural and cultural resources, becoming a more resilient community, encouraging recreation, and recognizing the County’s distinct areas.”*

A Vision statement can not advance on its own. It needs a structure from which it can guide the policies of the County. This “Policy Framework” is that structure. Building from the key themes discovered during the public engagement process and recognizing the existing baseline conditions described in Chapter 2, the Policy Framework articulates a series of statements that, in combination, express the objectives the County believes are needed to realize its vision. These statements should be read as **“Clear Creek County Shall....”** to emphasize the importance they play in helping move the Vision forward.

A representative icons for each of the key themes described in Chapter 1 is provided adjacent to each statement to reinforce what public inputs most influenced it. Many of the statements address several themes (Quality of Life, Cultural Resources, etc.). Some are more specific to a single key theme. In combination, these statements provide the platform on which more detailed goals and strategies can be created to guide future policy decisions within the County.



“Clear Creek County Shall...”



**STATEMENT 1: Seek a greater diversity of economic activity within the County.**

The County will use a multi-pronged approach to both engage and support local businesses as well as to attract diverse and viable companies and organizations that provide high quality employment. The County will use its key assets in this effort: high quality of life, rural mountain lifestyle, proximity to the Denver metropolitan area, mining legacy and infrastructure, recreation, and tourism.



**STATEMENT 2: Enable and encourage communities within Clear Creek County to actively participate in planning for their future.**

The County will support the development of subarea plans that help refine and reflect County-wide objectives, while retaining the individual character and values of the distinct areas within it. Independent and creative approaches will be encouraged in these pursuits.



**STATEMENT 3: Ensure suitability and compatibility with environmental characteristics and community character of Clear Creek County when considering land use change and development.**

The County will consider resources, including but not limited to, open space, water resources, wildlife, ecosystems, viewsheds, natural hazards, and infrastructure, when assessing the impact of development and land use decisions.



**STATEMENT 4: Identify and protect lands of high ecological value, scenic quality, or historic importance.**

Through both smart land use planning and open space acquisition, the County shall analyze which lands meet these criteria, and align their planning processes accordingly.



**KEY THEMES**



Quality of Life



Resiliency



Recreation



Built Environment and Land Use



Mining



Distinct Areas



Economy



Natural Environment



Cultural Resources

“Clear Creek County Shall...”



**STATEMENT 5: Promote the concentration of residential and commercial development into established municipalities and activity centers in order to preserve rural lands and to efficiently use County resources.**

Through coordinated land use planning, the County will encourage growth in designated areas where services either exist or can be provided with modest effort and cost.



**STATEMENT 6: Recognize and support endeavors in the arts, culture, recreation and tourism.**

The County will use an all-inclusive approach to branding, identification, and communication so that residents identify with and visitors recognize the assets and identity of Clear Creek County.



**STATEMENT 7: Consider recreation as an important contributor to residents’ quality of life and a part of a balanced regional economy.**

The County will acknowledge recreation in economic development efforts, recognizing their tie to each other. The County will understand its unique assets and build recreational opportunities around them. The County will pursue partnerships focusing on recreation with entities such as schools, municipalities, the private sector, state agencies, CCMRD, USFS, and the OSC..



**STATEMENT 8: Continue to preserve and protect mineral resources for the benefit of future generations.**

The County recognizes the short term challenge of the Henderson Mine closure but will continue to think in terms of long-term opportunities and building upon its mining heritage. The County will actively promote reuse options for the Henderson mine that do not preclude future mining efforts.



**“Clear Creek County Shall...”**



**STATEMENT 9: Explore how local and regional initiatives within the County can improve access to health care services.**

The County will work to develop “home-grown” options that support access to health care services while also looking to partner with regional, state, and federal agencies. The County will pursue financially sustainable strategies that will improve health care access in the long-term, not quick fixes that do not hold up over time.



**STATEMENT 10: Endorse transportation infrastructure that is multi-modal in nature and enhances existing communities as well as their access to the rest of the region.**



The County will look for opportunities to integrate pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities where appropriate, enabling residents to access jobs and services without reliance on personal automobiles. The County will address the challenges of the I-70 corridor, while embracing opportunities the highway presents. The County will explore partnerships with neighboring counties as well as local, regional, and state agencies to provide transit service between Clear Creek County and neighboring counties in the pursuit of improving regional access to jobs and services.



**STATEMENT 11: Identify and implement strategies to strengthen and increase resiliency among residents of the County.**

The County will assess its risk and vulnerability to both natural and man-made hazards. It will evaluate its resiliency with respect to the six Colorado Resiliency Framework Sectors: Infrastructure, Watersheds and Natural Resources, Housing, Health and Social Services, Community, and Economy. Through the Hazard and Mitigation Plan, strategies will be developed to address vulnerabilities in these six sectors..



## HOW THE POLICY FRAMEWORK INFORMS GOALS AND STRATEGIES

While the Policy Framework describes the objectives needed to move towards the Vision, this Master Plan must consider a wide variety of elements such as housing, transportation, land use; each of which have specific issues, concerns and challenges that future policy should reflect.

To help make sure that County policies that guide these various plan elements are aligned with the Policy Framework and Vision, the Master Plan provides a series of specific goals and strategies. A goal is best described as the “What is to be accomplished” for any specific plan element. For example, a goal for housing might be to “Provide Affordable Housing within the County”. A strategy provides a set of actions that the County can take to help achieve the goal. For example, a strategy related to providing affordable housing might be to provide access to county lands for affordable housing projects. As the graphic below suggests, the Policy Framework is connected to the goals. The strategies map out important steps that the County can take to support those goals.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 articulate important goals and strategies that relate to critical plan elements such as economic development, transportation, housing, future land use, etc. These goals and strategies are connected back to the Policy Framework to assure that all the plan elements are addressed in ways that support the Vision. In each Chapter is section entitled “Supporting the Vision” that describes how the specific goals and strategies relate back to the Policy Framework and ultimately to the Vision for Clear Creek County.

### Policy Framework

- Critical Planning Objectives





# CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## INTRODUCTION

To remain vital, Clear Creek County will need to provide an environment conducive to businesses, good jobs for workers, and what is necessary to support those business and jobs. This includes good housing, access to services (include high speed internet), a high quality of life, and a healthful environment. Given the current economic and fiscal conditions in the County, investment in economic development in the coming years will be necessary. However these investments must be highly strategic—focusing on those that will work across multiple economic development strategies, capitalize on the existing strengths of the County, and leverage state, federal and private support and partnership opportunities.

The economic development goals and strategies provided herein seek to support the County's existing job base and its mix of industry, government, retail trade, professional services and tourism while encouraging the creation of new jobs and industries that benefit workers and maintain the County's rural mountain character and lifestyle.

This chapter identifies six primary goals, each with a series of individual strategies, aimed at making development of Clear Creek County's economy sustainable over time.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Based on the community input process, meetings with key stakeholders, economic focus group and the efforts of the CAC, several important guiding principles emerged for economic development:

1. Diversification - Support the efforts of the County to have a more diverse economic base.
2. Employment – Support opportunities to expand the County's job base.
3. Supporting Local Governments and Sub-Areas – Support economic activity throughout the County, understanding the important role local governments and sub-areas play as economic centers.
4. Tourism and Recreation – Support the role that tourism and recreation play in the regional economy.
5. Mining and Resource Extraction – Support the continuation of mining and broadening the opportunities for resource extraction
6. Transportation – Support systems that create a “backbone” for regional economic activity.
7. Infrastructure – Support the development of infrastructure tht facilitates economic development, and where it demonstrates a net benefit to the County.
8. Investment – Support investments in economic development only where it demonstrates a net benefit to the County.





## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

**Goal A: Clear Creek County will make a commitment to foster new economic development opportunities that diversify the economy and support the fiscal and economic health of the County.**

### **Strategies**

1. Recognize the Clear Creek Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) as an important source for economic development information, data and services in Clear Creek County. Partner with the CCEDC in the development of economic diversification strategies and leverage statewide resources such as the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OED) and the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) to study and identify those industries best suited to Clear Creek County. Invite those industries that would improve wage levels, increase variety of employment opportunities and utilize the resident labor force.
2. Encourage development proposals that will benefit the County's economic diversification effort. Work to assess the fiscal and economic impact of land use and economic development decisions at the local scale, while allowing for flexibility in development of new infrastructure.
3. Foster a positive entrepreneurial environment for business start-ups and expansion; support retention of existing businesses. Focus on the health of the existing businesses while simultaneously recruiting new business and industry. Support and foster home-base occupations and actively participate in expanding and improving access to broadband internet and cellular communications systems needed for these businesses to flourish.
4. Seek ways to assist clusters of related businesses in manufacturing, technology and service sectors to collaborate more closely with one another and to market themselves as magnets for capital and jobs.
5. Pursue businesses in industries deemed the best fit for the County based on the 2015 Economic Agenda document. These include renewable energy, breweries and distilleries, outdoor recreation retailers and manufacturers, and hospitality related businesses (see sidebar).

### **Challenges for creating economically healthy community**

- Location for certain businesses not close enough to urban metros
- Limited properties (buildings/sites) for expanding or new businesses
- In some cases appropriate zoning not in place for business sites and buildings causing extensive time in processing infrastructure upgrades needed (broadband, water and wastewater)
- Commercial Land Protection not in place
- Workforce Basic Skills
- I-70 Image
- Way Finding Signage needed to promote assets
- High Retail Sales Leakage (est. \$35.0 million)
- Widespread access to broadband internet



6. Promote redevelopment opportunities by targeting underutilized or underdeveloped properties and land banking them and/or making strategic investments in their reuse. Local control is important to get properties ready for investment and to hold for the right economic opportunities. Surplus properties should be banked. An economic development land bank already exists with the Clear Creek Economic Development Corporation.
7. Encourage economic development to occur where resources exist to support the development. For example, retail uses should be encouraged to be clustered in municipalities and multiple use zones, while alternative energy or other industries should be encouraged to locate in areas that contain the necessary resources.
8. Work to create an atmosphere of predictability. Economic development opportunities are enhanced by a positive economic and regulatory environment that offers flexibility, consistency, predictability and clear direction. Coordinate community development, planning and economic development strategies to be consistent with the overall goals of the Master Plan.
9. Support and provide, where appropriate, economic development techniques such as Enterprise Zone tax credits, tax increment financing (TIF), Public Improvement Fee (PIF) funds, use of industrial revenue bonds, business incubator facilities, low interest loans and possible business incentives to provide a business climate conducive to new and start-up businesses.
10. Be proactive in kick-starting economic development with a “Catalyst Project” that creates attention to the commitment and entrepreneurship of the community.
11. Create a niche marketing plan that matches the land, buildings, and catalyst projects to target businesses and creates a value proposition for those businesses to be in the County.

**Goal B: Clear Creek County will make a commitment to increasing its employment base of jobs at all levels, but particularly primary jobs, in such industries as manufacturing, technology, and service.**

**Strategies:**

1. Market the County's unique location, with access to both the Denver Metro and exceptional natural amenities and recreation, in order to stimulate job creation in local businesses and attract new cottage industries, light manufacturing and home-based businesses. Encourage job recruitment efforts towards those sectors that capitalize on these strengths of the region.
2. Provide access to employment and training services that can help develop a trained workforce which can compete for jobs, earn a living wage and meet the needs of business. Work with coalitions and other agencies to participate in the development of competency-based education and training programs. Encourage the development of training programs for people currently employed so they may improve and broaden their skills into new arenas. Work with schools and communities to insure employment opportunities for youth.
3. Explore opportunities to supply a satellite office for firms in Denver that may be a good fit for the County's lifestyle.



4. Encourage both commercial and residential development (multiple uses in close proximity) within appropriate areas which includes a variety of employment options for residents.
5. Improve access to healthcare within the County to maximize business and employee recruitment efforts.
6. Ensure housing availability supports the attraction and retention of the workforce, including provision of rental, family housing and seasonal employment housing.
7. Leverage recreation and quality of life improvements, such as the Clear Creek Greenway, **as** a draw for businesses looking to locate in an area that provides such resources to their employees.

**Goal C: Recognizing the importance of the municipalities and sub-areas as economic centers of the region, the County will make a commitment to promoting intergovernmental cooperation and public-private partnerships that encourage innovation and creativity in the economic expansion of our area.**

**Strategies:**

1. Encourage town councils and boards to retain a unified commitment to expand the communities' joint economy and make it a high priority. Recognize the importance of enhancing the County's tax base, sales tax and other revenue streams to provide funds for County services.
2. Improve coordination of information and services among government offices which affect the viability of business in Clear Creek County.
3. Work with municipalities to identify opportunities for infill and location of new businesses or expansions within them. Encourage greater utilization of the municipalities as a hub of expanded retail, business and cultural activity.
4. Support municipal vitality and vibrancy by supporting and participating in community surveys, studies and projects aimed at increasing the economic viability of Clear Creek County's small municipalities and sub-areas.
5. Encourage logical, contiguous annexations by incorporated municipalities in order to provide for current and future growth patterns. Do this with respect of existing residents of those annexed areas.
6. Explore public and private partnerships to increase access to high-speed internet. Identify and seek to reduce or eliminate regulatory constraints that hinder the expansion of broadband infrastructure.



**Goal D: Recognizing the importance of tourism and recreation to the economy and to the health of the County's retail and service core, Clear Creek County will make a commitment to encourage sustainable cultural and recreation-based tourism development that enables the County to attract year round destination visitors as well as pass-through visitor traffic.**

**Strategies:**

1. Partner with the **Clear Creek Tourism Bureau** in the development of tourism development strategies and leverage statewide resources **for tourism promotion, such as the** Colorado Tourism Office (CTO).
2. Support the Greenway Authority and the development of the Clear Creek Greenway as a significant community amenity and tourist destination to improve economic development opportunities for the county and its municipalities. Ensure the Greenway will link to commercial areas, and encourage visitors to shop, rent bikes, purchase fishing equipment and dine while traveling its length. Seek out joint ventures with commercial recreation providers and encourage related commercial uses to locate near the creek.
3. Leverage Clear Creek (waterway) as an economic engine for the community through the development of additional access points, bus parking for commercial rafting operations, and linking greenway improvements and river access projects. Provide opportunities for recreation industry businesses to develop in multiple use areas along Clear Creek.
4. Recognizing Clear Creek County is rich in heritage that is valuable to preserve, promote businesses that fit into this historic environment and leverage cultural resources, which provide attractions, as a tool for stimulating economic development.
5. Encourage the development of more destination facilities and activities in the County, especially those with family orientation.





6. Increase the County's share of the tourism market through marketing the full breadth of cultural and recreation tourism in Clear Creek County as a cohesive, world-class tourism destination.
7. Build on the County's locational advantages for pass-through visitor services by encouraging lodging, retail and transportation services.
8. Recognize that recreation and quality of life improvements, such as open space preservation or transportation enhancements, have value for both residents and visitors and consider tourism aspects when developing such projects.
9. Work with Loveland Ski Area and USFS for year-round access to the ski area for non-skiing activities such as concerts, mountain biking, etc.
10. Encourage the development of a multi-faceted lodging sector in Clear Creek County that includes a mid to large-sized, mid-price, national brand hotel that is easily recognizable from the highway, numerous local "boutique" options, and a "critical mass" of Bed and Breakfasts (B&Bs).
11. Ensure open communication between recreation, open space, tourism and economic development initiatives to ensure individual strategies can work together to achieve County goals.
12. Consider a sales tax increase to fund transit, recreation management, and marketing of the County.

**Goal E: Recognizing the evolving role of Clear Creek County's natural resources as an income base and revenue source, the County will make a commitment to encourage the on-going development of resource-based industries including but not limited to minerals, water and alternative energy generation, while also embracing the County's mining heritage and exploring opportunities for mine site redevelopment.**

**Strategies:**

1. Develop Clear Creek County's natural resources including water, mining and other alternative sources of power as an economic base and potential for revenue as a community owned asset.
2. Protect long term, commercially significant, natural resource lands from encroachment from conflicting uses.
3. Expand and manage water resources including water rights and storage.
4. Convert the Henderson Mine to long-term multiple underground and above ground potential uses including commercial, industrial (medium to heavy), recreation, open space, office, academic and research & development. Consider other mine site redevelopment opportunities throughout the County.
5. Preserve the County's mining heritage by promoting the continuation of mining activity at various scales while protecting historic mining elements that may have cultural significance.



**Goal F: Recognizing there is a need to coordinate community investments in infrastructure and other public facilities with economic development opportunities and employment centers, Clear Creek County will make a commitment to maximize the value of these assets to achieve economic development objectives.**

**Strategies:**

1. Improve the image (visual and emotional) of the County along the I-70 corridor.
2. Consider economic development in the consideration of solutions for high volume traffic on major highways, good access to activity centers, and connectivity throughout the County.
3. Ensure that preventive maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure are a priority for infrastructure spending. This approach reduces maintenance costs later, supports business and residential investment in areas already served by infrastructure, and creates jobs.
4. Recognizing infrastructure availability is one of the most critical factors to encourage economic development, make strategic infrastructure investments needed to support the expanding economy, where there is a demonstrated net benefit to the County. Expand public water and sanitation systems and other infrastructure to meet the needs of growth outside municipal or special district boundaries only where impact analysis has demonstrated a net benefit to the community.
5. Actively promote high-speed broadband internet and cellular communications connectivity throughout the County. Promote systems based on flexibility, system security, reliability and affordability. Consider using County land resources to support private broadband and/or cellular telecommunications infrastructure. When making investments in communications, take into consideration the ability of technology to enhance the provision of public services to citizens and businesses with deference to scenic and environmental constraints.





## SUPPORTING THE VISION

The following matrix summarizes how each of the Economic Development goals relates and supports the Policy Framework statements identified in Chapter 3.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS	SUPPORTING POLICY FRAMEWORK STATEMENTS (See Chapter 3)										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Goal A: Clear Creek County will make a commitment to foster new economic development opportunities that diversify the economy and support the fiscal and economic health of the County.	X					X					X
Goal B: Clear Creek County will make a commitment to increasing its employment base of jobs at all levels, but particularly primary jobs, in such industries as manufacturing, technology, and service.	X				X			X			X
Goal C: Recognizing the importance of the municipalities and sub-areas as economic centers of the region, the County will make a commitment to promoting intergovernmental cooperation and public-private partnerships that encourage innovation and creativity in the economic expansion of our area.	X	X			X						
Goal D: Recognizing the importance of tourism and recreation to the economy and to the health of the County's retail and service core, Clear Creek County will make a commitment to encourage sustainable cultural and recreation-based tourism development that enables the County to attract year round destination visitors as well as pass-through visitor traffic.	X	X	X			X	X				
Goal E: Recognizing the evolving role of Clear Creek County's natural resources as an income base and revenue source, the County will make a commitment to encourage the on-going development of resource-based industries including but not limited to minerals, water and alternative energy generation, while also embracing the County's mining heritage and exploring opportunities for mine site redevelopment.	X		X					X			
Goal F: Recognizing there is a need to coordinate community investments in infrastructure and other public facilities with economic development opportunities and employment centers, Clear Creek County will make a commitment to maximize the value of these assets to achieve economic development objectives.	X	X			X				X	X	



# CHAPTER 5: COUNTY ASSETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the policies directing the other elements of this Master Plan (transportation, housing) that form the County's assets and infrastructure. For each element the important statements from the Policy Framework are identified. The goals concisely define what the County expects to accomplish over the next 10 to 20 years related to each element. The strategies outlined provide more specific suggestions or actions that help fulfill the defined goals. As articulated in Chapter 7, specific implementation approaches can be pursued in support of these strategies.



## TRANSPORTATION

### Goal A: Reduce County dependence on motor vehicles and create more multimodal options.

#### Strategies

1. Site affordable housing near areas with easy access to major transportation facilities and future transit options. This strategy will create more diverse housing options for those that either live or work in the County which will work towards, reducing in-commuting from neighboring counties and auto-dependency for work trips.
2. Site educational facilities and programs in areas with easy access to major transportation facilities and future transit options. This will give students and their caregiver's transportation options for getting to and from school, events, and activities.
3. Support the Clear Creek Greenway in its role as a local and regional multi-use path connecting communities within the County.
4. Promote economic development efforts that increase the number of jobs in Clear Creek County for local residents, This will reduce the trend in residents commuting to neighboring counties for work.
5. Consider complete streets policies in subarea planning within the County.

### Goal B: Create carpooling and transit options that are accessible to a broad swath of Clear Creek County residents and employees.

#### Strategies

1. Support transit options that interconnect with existing transit systems (RTD, CDOT's Bustang, Summit Stage) and that establish access to major job centers for County residents (Denver, Jefferson Counties).
2. Enhance carpooling efforts for County residents with outreach, marketing, and partnerships (DRCOG, etc.)
3. Continue efforts to explore elder-transit or para-transit for County residents to access healthcare and other services in neighboring counties.
4. Support and advocate for the Clear Creek County recommendations made in the 2015 CDOT Statewide Transit Plan regarding regional bus routes.
5. Explore possibilities for efficiencies and savings through collaboration with other organizations that provide transportation services in Clear Creek County.
6. Support the addition of a CDOT Bustang stop in Clear Creek County
7. Explore joining the RTD to gain access to the Denver metro area for both employment opportunities for residents and also to allow tourist access to the County.



8. Explore the costs and benefits of local transit options such as a commuter route to Jefferson and Denver Counties, a local circulator service, or on-demand service within a reasonable service area.
9. Support and promote the Seniors' Resource Center bus operations starting in 2016. Evaluate options for long-term funding.

**Goal C: Advocate for the County's interests for all future I-70 Corridor projects to ensure they are completed with sensitivity to the communities within the corridor.**

**Strategies**

1. Play an active role on the Collaborative Effort Team identified in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.
2. Negotiate for improvements to Clear Creek County's mobility and economic development opportunities as part of the I-70 Corridor improvement project implementation plans.
3. Identify multimodal county road improvements for streets approaching the I-70 interchanges as well as the frontage road network in order to improve safety, connectivity, and access.
4. Familiarize staff and commissioners with the I-70 ROD and CSS commitment so that Clear Creek County can be vigilant advocates for ongoing work in the I-70 corridor.

**Goal D: Maintain the County road system to ensure adequate and safe circulation and access for both residents and visitors.**

**Strategies**

1. Periodically re-evaluate which roads in the network are Primary, Secondary #1, Secondary #2, Secondary #3, and Secondary #4 to ensure adequate allocation of resources regarding maintenance and snow removal.
2. Identify remote roads that are not high priorities and evaluate a devolution of these roads to private landowners or subdivisions.
3. Explore further development of the frontage road network as a way to separate local and regional trips, provide redundancy in the transportation network, and to reduce reliance on I-70.



The I-70 Mountain Corridor Record of Decision (ROD) for the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) is the culmination of 11 years of study and negotiation between the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Mountain Corridor stakeholders (including Clear Creek County government). Following the 2004 release of the Draft PEIS and a collection of unfavorable comments on the Draft, CDOT convened a Collaborative Effort Team in 2007, charged with coming to consensus about Corridor improvements. The Team, through many months of work, developed a Consensus Recommendation that became the CDOT/FHWA's Preferred Alternative. The solution thoroughly addresses the environmental and community impacts of transportation activities in the Mountain Corridor, taking into consideration impacts to our communities, and our natural and cultural resources.

The Record of Decision does not authorize any construction. It does, however, identify three basic elements: travel mode, capacity and general location. The Preferred Alternative is a multi-modal solution that includes non-infrastructure components, an Advanced Guideway System (AGS) and highway improvements going from a minimum level of improvements to a maximum level – with triggers that are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the improvements. The capacity for the solution was identified as the travel demand for the year 2050. The general location of the improvements follows the existing I-70 mountain corridor alignment, but not necessarily within the existing right-of-way.

The Record of Decision also requires continuing participation from the Collaborative Effort Team to guide transportation improvements into the future. It is vitally important that Clear Creek County remain engaged in this Collaborative Effort process (and all stakeholder processes) as the Preferred Alternative is implemented. We must be ready to advocate for all of the commitments made in the ROD and to fully participate in the 2020 assessment of the overall purpose and need and effectiveness of implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

To date, we have avoided harm to our natural and built environments through diligent participation in CDOT processes. We have also achieved correction of past damage caused by the original construction of I-70, which occurred prior to any guidance from the National Environmental Policy Act. In addition, we have achieved improvements for our communities that enhance our quality of life through the incorporation of water quality improvement techniques, in-stream improvements to the creek that was channelized during the original construction of I-70, wildlife habitat and linkage enhancements, cultural resource inventories and Greenway recreational improvements. Continued local participation is necessary to keep commitments to these issues front and center when transportation projects are developed.

Detailed information on the PEIS and ROD are available at <https://www.codot.gov/projects/i-70mountaincorridor/final-peis>



## HOUSING

There are three main issues with housing in the County as outlined in Appendix II: (1) availability; (2) quality/age; and (3) affordability. The following goals and strategies are intended to address these three issues, the Policy Framework and the Master Plan vision. It is worth noting that the County was in partnership with the Summit Combined Housing authority to develop programs and services for the County. Dissolution of this partnership and creation of a Clear Creek County Housing Authority will continue to maintain the momentum towards more affordable housing goals in the County. This will provide the capacity to organize and implement a multi-faceted approach to addressing housing priorities.

**Goal A: Provide adequate and diverse housing opportunities within the County for all population segments in close proximity to transportation and other required infrastructure; within incorporated areas; Multiple Use areas; and other areas identified by the Master Plan for higher density or mixed-use development.**

### **Strategies**

1. Facilitate the development of long-term rental housing in the County.
2. Provide a variety of tools and incentives to lower development costs and ensure rental rates are affordable to lower income groups, such as tap fee reductions or waivers, density bonuses, PUD variances for housing, Enterprise Zone incentives, land donations, and development fee or tax reductions.
3. Educate existing and potential residents on Division of Housing (DOH) programs for affordable housing such as Housing Choice Vouchers and Down Payment Assistance programs.
4. Provide proactive community support and measures to ensure housing gets developed. Periodically check-in with community partners to understand the specific housing needs of the population regarding price points and building types.
5. In areas identified as appropriate for housing, support the development of adequate water and sewer as an incentive for developers.
6. Recruit and respond to developers that have the capacity to create affordable and workforce housing.
7. Identify feasible housing sites and resources for housing projects.
8. Create incentives and opportunities for the development of senior housing or assisted living so that there are more age-in-place opportunities.
9. Create incentives for the construction of accessory dwelling units in the County, such as the allowance for more than one bedroom, increasing the allowed size on parcels less than two acres, fee waivers, water augmentation for limited wells, or tap waivers.



10. Create incentives to encourage the owners of non-permitted/illegal accessory dwelling units to bring such units into compliance with adopted codes.
11. Consider the potential benefits of local regulations, policies and programs to further the county's affordable housing goals.
12. Encourage preservation and development of housing attractive to current and future households, persons at all stages of life and income levels.

## **Goal B: Preserve and improve the existing housing stock.**

### **Strategies**

1. Develop and implement programs and practices to modernize older homes by upgrading aged components such as roofs, furnaces, electrical, plumbing, windows, and siding. Promote education for homeowners and assist with finding opportunities to DOH and non-profit programs as included in housing opportunities.
2. Encourage, incentivize, and promote energy efficiency when upgrading building components, such as high efficiency appliances, heating equipment and upgrading insulation and windows to meet adopted building codes.
3. Ensure the availability of low interest loans, government and agency programs and grants to upgrade and improve older housing stock.
4. Consider creating incentives or regulatory requirements for landlords to upgrade property.
5. Further explore issues facing mobile home properties and residents to ensure that affordable units are maintained in these areas and for these people.

## **Goal C: Ensure new affordable and workforce housing is targeted towards low to moderate income families.**

### **Strategies**

1. Pursue opportunities to increase sustainable rental housing inventory to provide housing for households making between 30% and 60% or less and households between 60% and 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or some other suitable indicator of local wages and market conditions that the county adopts.
2. Encourage, incentivize and promote housing development that are targeted for households earning 60 percent to 120 percent of the County AMI.
3. Retain a qualified consultant to periodically update and revise the Clear Creek County Housing Needs Assessment to ensure housing goals and targets are being met over time.
4. Ensure new housing projects have a range of housing prices, a diverse mix of building and unit types, and a variety of unit sizes.



5. Support the development of properties subject to resale restrictions to help create and preserve affordable housing stock over the long term. Resale restrictions are a right in perpetuity or for a certain number of years, stated in the form of a restriction, easement, covenant or condition in any deed, mortgage, ground lease, agreement or other instrument executed by or on behalf of the owner of the land. Ownership and loans on resale restricted properties should conform to underwriting guidelines and form of restriction.
6. Allow for unrestricted free-market units in affordable housing projects to help offset development costs.
7. Encourage and develop land trust programs to ensure affordable property inventory over time.

## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

**Goal A: Provide a high quality regional and connected open space, parks, trails, and recreation facilities system that is treasured by residents and attracts additional recreation users from outside of Clear Creek County.**

### ***Strategies***

1. Support the implementation of the Clear Creek Greenway.
2. Effectively manage and maintain recreational facilities and amenities.
3. Apply for GOCO funding to conduct a Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan.
4. Develop, publish, and market Trails, Parks, and Open Space Maps.
5. Support OSC purchases of parcels with high recreational, scenic, or ecological value.
6. Improve access to Clear Creek (trailheads, wayfinding and informational signage) for a variety of recreational uses.
7. Support the management plan for county-owned open space adopted by the OSC in 2012.
8. Design park and recreation facilities in a sustainable manner that minimizes negative impacts to the environment.
9. Promote interconnectivity between County and Forest Service trails as well as trails in adjacent jurisdictions.



In December, 2015 Laurie Beckel addressed the BOCC concerning the formation of an ad-hoc working group focused on recreation and recreation planning in and for Clear Creek County and in collaboration with the County Master Plan revisions currently being discussed and worked on by several interested parties. With the favorable response from the BOCC, Laurie and Fred Rollenhagen developed a list of potential stakeholders and proceeded with organization of the Working Group. The list of participants in the Working Group is included at the end of this paper.

The recreational mission for Clear Creek County that formed the framework of our work is:

**“Provide regional and connected open space, parks, trails and recreation facilities which will provide economic benefits to the county while maintaining, preserving and showcasing the environment and history of the county for its residents and visitors.”**

This goal to be accomplished through the following actions:

- Create an inclusive continuing advisory working group to develop recommendations for recreation and tourism in the county. Including, but not limited to:
  - » Businesses directly involved in recreation;
  - » Food, lodging and other support business and business groups;
  - » County and local promotion and development groups – e.g.,, tourism, economic development, chambers of commerce;
  - » Federal, state and local agencies that manage recreational lands and resources, most especially the United States Forest Service and contiguous counties;
  - » Historical societies;
  - » Private property owners.
- Develop and nurture partnerships to collaborate on potential funding opportunities. Again, including but not limited to:
  - » Governor’s Office of Economic Development & International Trade;
  - » Great Outdoors Colorado;
  - » Gates Family Foundation, El Pomar and other foundations.
- Create a Recreation Resource Management Plan.
  - » The resource plan should analyze projects based on numerous factors, including, but not limited to: initial costs, on-going or maintenance costs, benefits and possible impacts to the community, and potential for economic growth and sustainability through recreation and tourism;
  - » To be used as an information resource for residents, potential donors and visitors to the county about the recreational opportunities within the county.
- Maximize potential economic growth within the county by encouraging and supporting entrepreneurial efforts in recreation and tourism.
  - » Provide assistance with permitting, licensing, financing and other issues facing a small business;
  - » Provide assistance with locating suitable properties and office space.



**Goal B: Create strong partnerships with the municipalities, schools, USFS, CCMRD and other government agencies to leverage existing recreation and open space opportunities and to support a more connected system.**

***Strategies***

1. Seek funding for multi-purpose and multi-jurisdictional regional trail and river access development.
2. Support the partnering goals contained in the CCMRD Master Plan of creating Neighborhood Parks in unincorporated areas, expanding the existing Recreation Center, and developing programming and services to provide a broad range of recreation opportunities for Clear Creek County residents.
3. Improve understanding of access to lands and recreation opportunities on lands owned by different agencies.
4. Explore options and entities for managing recreational resources in a fiscally responsible manner that provides outstanding recreational opportunities for residents, while attracting visitors to the County and creating synergies between parks, open space, trails and economic development.





**Goal C: Enhance and develop recreation opportunities that will have the largest impact to economic development, while managing existing resources effectively.**

**Strategies**

1. Promote cohesive branding and marketing of recreation facilities and attractions through IGAs or private partnerships.
2. Strengthen recreation opportunities that blend heritage tourism with recreation.
3. Encourage centralized, countywide events coordination to provide professionalism, consistency and assistance to recreation-related events that occur in Clear Creek County.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND SENSITIVE RESOURCES**

**Goal A: Preserve the County’s natural resources for future generations.**

**Strategies**

1. Stay current on mapping of natural resources to understand both baseline and changing conditions.
2. Maintain an inventory of important scenic and visual resources in the County and consider these important vistas during the review of development projects. Refer to the maps created for the I-70 CSS process.
3. Coordinate efforts for natural resource preservation with National Forest System land management objectives.
4. Assure that new development satisfies all required state and/or federal permitting as it relates to environmental or natural resources.

**Goal B: Support land use planning and policies that embraces environmental preservation and acknowledges development constraints due to topography and sensitive resources.**

**Strategies (Aligned with those featured in Land Use Chapter)**

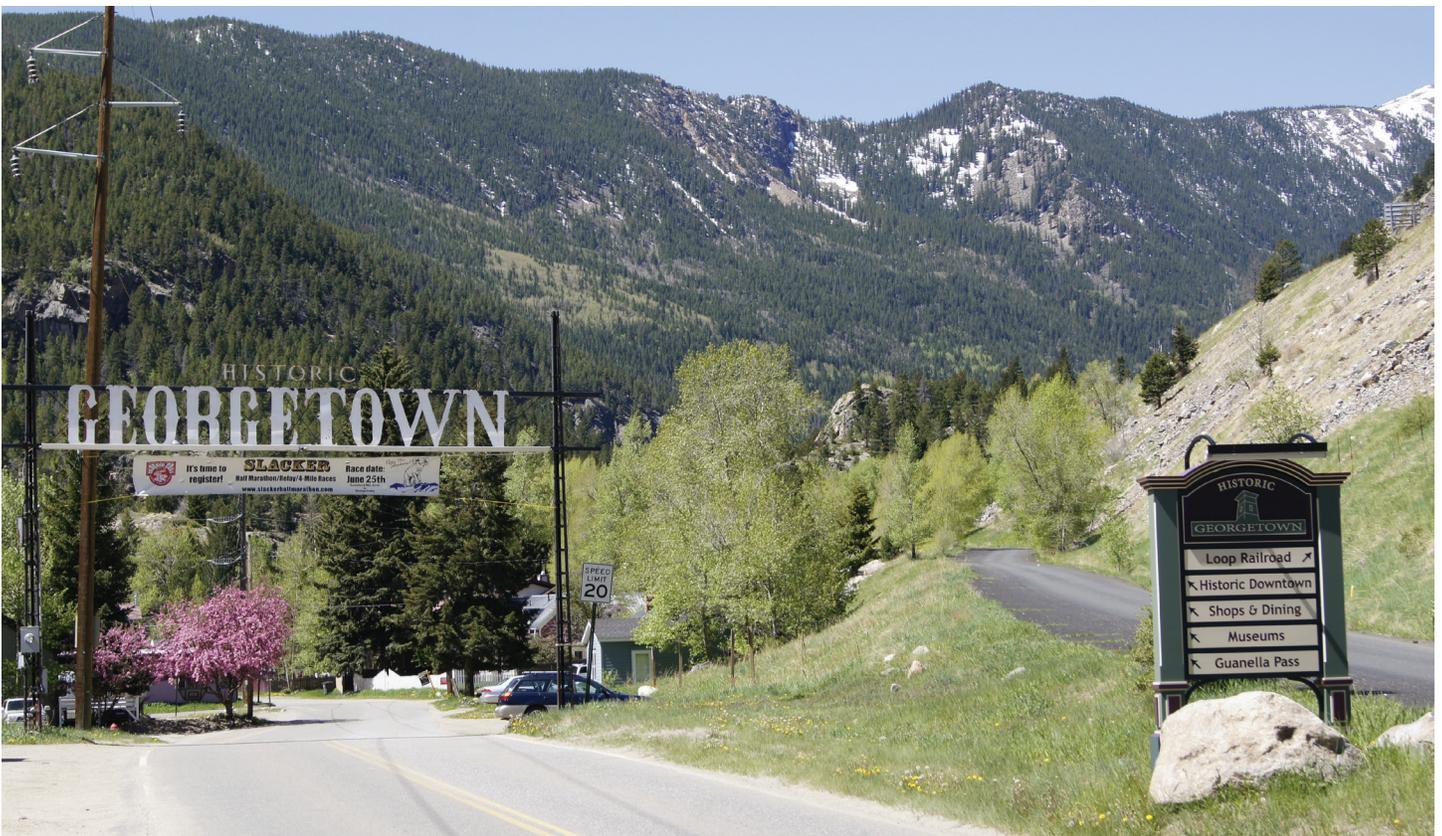
1. Support the Open Space Commission in purchasing and protecting properties with high scenic, ecological, and recreational value.
2. Use Open Space and National Forest System lands to maintain a sense of openness between communities and provide separation of individual communities.
3. Investigate alternatives to development in locations above timberline (10,500 feet), in areas of excessively steep or unstable slopes, or areas of high ecological value.

- 4. Investigate alternatives to development in watershed protection areas.
- 5. Investigate alternatives to residential and commercial development in areas of limited water resource availability or where access to publicly available water is not feasible or desired.

**Goal C: Partner with USFS and other government agencies to preserve natural resources that are on other agencies land but within Clear Creek County.**

**Strategies**

- 1. Identify high priority sites and resources on partnering agencies lands.
- 2. Seek funding to rehabilitate or enhance natural resources on partnering agencies lands.
- 3. Coordinate long-term land use policies with the USFS to assure regional natural resource issues are fully understood and considered.





## CULTURAL RESOURCES

**Goal A: Work to protect important cultural resources in Clear Creek County, particularly through partnerships.**

### **Strategies**

1. Apply to become a certified local government under the NHPA.
2. Preserve historic mining districts and other areas that highlight the unique character of distinct areas within Clear Creek County.
3. Facilitate collaboration between stakeholder groups, agencies, and governmental organizations.
4. Hold periodic meetings and support dialogue with local historic preservation non-profits.
5. Support efforts to educate County Residents, Property Owners, School Children, Organizations, Elected Officials, and County Staff on sites of cultural and historic significance within the county.
6. Support a voluntary program and process to designate locally important historic structures and areas within Clear Creek County.
7. Continue to participate in the Programmatic Agreement regarding implementation of the Interstate 70 Mountain Corridor Project with CDOT

**Goal B: Regularly update a cultural resources inventory that identifies resources of importance throughout Clear Creek County.**

### **Strategies**

1. Organize efforts between the county and interested citizens in terms of roles, responsibilities, and funding.
2. Develop a long-range inventory plan that prioritizes the inventory based on the significance of cultural resources.
3. Establish guidelines and inventory methodology prior to conducting research/analysis on identified cultural resources.
4. Support the distribution of inventory findings to the public and notify property owners when appropriate.



## **Goal C: Recognize that economic development can occur through heritage tourism and support recreation opportunities that can coexist with sites of cultural and historic significance.**

### **Strategies**

1. Encourage further development and interpretation of historical sites, districts and locations within the County and municipalities.
2. Support the establishment of a voluntary cultural resources interpretive signage program
3. Prepare content on cultural resources through multiple media sources (website, podcasts, road markers, etc.).
4. Establish a portal page on the County's website highlighting the County's cultural resources and various recreation opportunities.
5. Where appropriate coordinate with the Open Space Commission to identify and purchase areas that promote both recreation and heritage tourism.
6. Support opportunities for cultural arts experiences and events.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **Goal A: Collaborate with partners to provide low-cost efficient resources to Clear Creek County Residents.**

#### **Strategies**

1. Broaden the inter-relationship between Clear Creek County and other local and regional partners in the delivery of essential services.
2. Work with housing coordinator to best prioritize strategies and resources so that the activities of the Summit Combined Housing Authority are well focused towards the needs of Clear Creek County homeowners/buyers.
3. Evaluate the ongoing relationship with the Seniors' Resource Center for low-cost and effective senior transportation for health care access.
4. Complete the development of the Strategic Water Policy document that will help guide lease decision-making so that water can be used for maximum County benefit.
5. Re-evaluate the 2013 Feasibility Plan for a health care facility within Clear Creek County.
6. Continue to work with the CCMRD and OSC to determine if consolidation/collaboration on trails master planning and development is desired.



## **Goal B: Ensure the provision of adequate community resources in an efficient and cost-effective manner.**

### **Strategies**

1. Encourage extension and development of water, sewer, and other services to areas identified as appropriate for development and discourage services to areas identified as constrained or as a sensitive resource.
2. Develop a development impact questionnaire so that the County can better understand the impacts of proposed developments.
3. Ensure that services are kept up to levels needed for current population and think strategically how to fund increased services and who should bear the burden of the cost of those services by exploring an impact fee program.
4. Thoroughly evaluate the fiscal impact of investment in any new infrastructure.
5. Collaborate with various districts within the County to manage existing infrastructure in the most efficient manner and to coordinate long-term plans with County expectations.

## **Goal C: Provide quality, high speed, and reliable telecommunications infrastructure across the County at a reasonable price for all residents.**

### **Strategies**

1. Promote broadband expansion within all of Clear Creek County.
2. Work with the Colorado Office of Information Technology (OIT) to evaluate options for better “last mile” and/or “mid-mile” services.
3. Consider I-70 corridor and/or Greenway development plans in leveraging access to regional fiber networks.
4. Periodically survey County residents and businesses on current/needed internet accessibility.
5. Align economic development policies in light of broadband accessibility.

## **Goal D: Support local development of renewable energy resources**

### **Strategies**

1. Encourage the development of energy efficient buildings and the use of alternative energy systems in new construction
2. Work with the National Renewable Energy Labs (NREL) to evaluate local potential for wind and solar renewable energy systems.



3. Consider options for larger (commercial-scale) solar and/or wind projects in areas that least impact existing environmental and cultural resources. . Encourage purchase or land swaps to enable these types of projects.
4. Encourage new sub-area plans to evaluate local (i.e., rooftop) solar opportunities as part of the long-term planning process.
5. Review existing County land use policies related to shading for rooftop solar.
6. Encourage new HOA's to adopt local energy standards.

## HAZARDS AND PUBLIC SAFETY

**Goal A: Protect the people, property, and natural, cultural, and environmental resources of Clear Creek County through a variety of policies and management measures.**

### ***Strategies***

1. Develop projects focused on preventing loss of life and injuries from natural hazards.
2. Identify and prioritize actions to protect critical, essential and necessary assets and infrastructure.
3. Protect and enhance natural resources by adopting and implementing sustainable flood-management policies, debris management programs, snow removal, tree trimming and replacement, or energy conservation programs.
4. Identify and expand emergency services protocols for people who are at high risk from hazard events, such as the homeless, elderly, disabled, and oxygen dependent people.
5. Identify and provide for necessary construction, renovation, retrofitting or refurbishment to protect vulnerable structures and cultural resources from the effects of natural hazards.
6. Recognize that development in remote areas of the County will impact response times for emergency services and will dilute emergency response capabilities for existing residences.
7. Seek outside assistance through state and federal grants and partnership to help pay for measures to improve resiliency.
8. Support land use planning, zoning, and building codes that avoids development on unsuitable sites, does not contribute to future hazards, and even mitigates potential hazards on properties.
9. Consider Community Wildfire Preparedness Implementation Plans in evaluating land use changes in area that have such plans.



**Goal B: Increase awareness of natural hazards and their mitigation by continuing to develop informative programs and increasing the accessibility of these programs to the public.**

**Strategies**

1. Continue to develop and expand public awareness and information programs.
2. Expand public awareness of flood and flash flood hazards in general and at specific high-risk locations.
3. Expand public awareness of wildfire hazards and measures by which people can protect themselves, their property and their community.

**Goal C: Coordinate and integrate hazard mitigation activities between communities, emergency response providers, and local governments.**

**Strategies**

1. Strengthen connections between hazard mitigation activities; and preparedness, response and recovery activities.
2. Identify systems, and areas of improvement needed, to implement emergency operations plans and services, including Community Emergency Response Team training.
3. Identify existing local government monitoring and decision-making tools; identify gaps and needed improvements.
4. Reduce services interruptions and revenue losses to the local community and the region from natural hazards, including traffic interruptions.
5. Plan for commercial and emergency air transportation.

**COMMUNITY CHARACTER**

**Goal A: Support and encourage subarea planning so that distinct areas of the County retain unique character and values.**

**Strategies**

1. Encourage land use planning at the sub-area level in order to help inform what local site characteristics are desired and the level of intensity of development.
2. Enhance ties among neighboring towns and communities within the County, while recognizing the need to maintain local and diverse identities.



3. Evaluate current sub-area plans in light of Master Plan policies, goals and strategies.
4. Coordinate long-term planning within each municipality's UGA to align objectives and determine if reservation of land is needed to support expected growth.

**Goal B: Foster a sense of community pride, embodied in the community's overall appearance, friendliness, environment, and historic uniqueness.**

**Strategies**

1. Maintain and enhance the existing rural and historic qualities of the County.
2. Maintain and enhance family-oriented atmosphere that makes the County a great place to raise kids.
3. Create more community-wide events that bring people together that celebrate the cultural heritage and recreation resources that contribute to the high quality of life.
4. Support the coordinated marketing and branding of the County, reflecting the shared objectives of the region.

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**

Governmental entities within the County have the legal ability under Colorado law to enter into Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) to further the goals of the Master Plan, municipal plans and other governmental plans. It is very common in Colorado for IGAs to address land use issues in a specific geographic area because they allow for the creation and implementation of a mutually agreed vision that is shared between governmental entities.

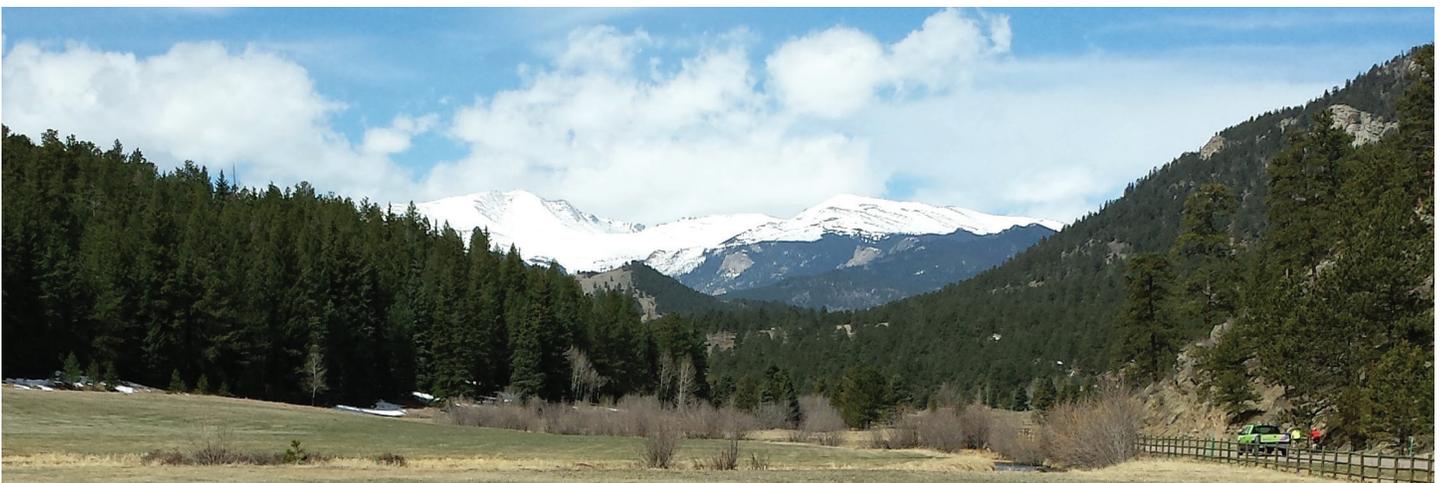
**Goal A: Develop IGAs to further the goals of the Master Plan with municipalities, special districts and federal and state governmental entities.**

**Strategies**

1. Encourage municipalities within the County to update and/or adopt their respective Three Mile Plans based on the Master Plan, their locally adopted plans and other plans that may impact an area. Create IGAs to ensure the areas are developed, preserved and annexed in accordance with the Plan, adopted Three Mile Plans and the effective IGAs.
2. Promote the efficient use of governmental services by consolidating governmental services where possible to free up tax dollars for other needed governmental services. Consolidate special districts where possible.
3. Encourage, promote and incentivize economic development through the adoption of IGAs that lay the foundation to desired future land uses or economic activity.



4. Promote intergovernmental cooperation and public-private partnerships through agreements that encourage innovation and creativity in the economic development of the County.
5. Promote the development of joint use park, recreational facilities and attractions through IGAs and or in collaboration with the CCMRD.
6. Create an IGA that retains the separation of communities along the I-70 Corridor.
7. Explore the creation of IGAs and land use regulations concerning the transfer of development rights from County areas zoned for higher density development or from properties with severe development constraints to municipalities, areas with adequate infrastructure or to Multiple Use areas.
8. Create an IGA with the various metro and sanitation districts for water and sewer expansion in the I-70 corridor.
9. Create an IGA concerning open space preservation and lands suitable for development through land exchanges on lands owned by governmental entities.
10. Create an IGA concerning the cooperation in land use decision-making process on federal, state or other governmentally-owned lands.
11. Create an IGA with CDOT, municipalities and the County for I-70 improvements through the County.
12. Identify specific lands that would serve as gateways into the County and into the individual communities, and develop IGAs to ensure the consistent and desired gateway character and branding.
13. Create IGAs concerning the redevelopment opportunities at the Henderson Mine.
14. Revisit and evaluate the currently effective IGAs concerning land use shown in Appendix II to ensure relevance, general conformance with the Plan, and update, revise and eliminate the IGAs as needed.





## SUPPORTING THE VISION

The following matrices summarizes how each of the goals relates to County Assets and Infrastructure supports the Policy Framework statements identified in Chapter 3.

TRANSPORATION GOALS	SUPPORTING POLICY FRAMEWORK STATEMENTS (See Chapter 3)										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Goal A: Reduce County dependence on motor vehicles and create more multimodal options.										X	
Goal B: Create carpooling and transit options that are accessible to a broad swath of Clear Creek County residents and employees.	X								X	X	
Goal C: Advocate for the County’s interests for all future I-70 Corridor projects to ensure they are completed with sensitivity to the communities within the corridor.		X	X	X						X	
Goal D: Maintain the County road system to ensure adequate and safe circulation and access for both residents and visitors.		X								X	X
<b>HOUSING GOALS</b>											
Goal A: Provide adequate and diverse housing opportunities within the County for all population segments in close proximity to transportation and other required infrastructure; within incorporated areas; Multiple Use areas; and other areas identified by the Master Plan for higher density or mixed-use development.	X	X			X					X	
Goal B: Preserve and improve the existing housing stock.		X			X						
Goal C: Ensure new affordable housing is targeted towards low to moderate income families.	X				X						



RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE GOALS	SUPPORTING POLICY FRAMEWORK STATEMENTS (See Chapter 3)										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Goal A: Provide a high quality regional and connected open space, parks, trails, and recreation facilities system that is treasured by residents and attracts additional recreation users from outside of Clear Creek County.	X	X				X	X			X	
Goal B: Create strong partnerships with the municipalities, schools, USFS, CCMRD and other government agencies to leverage existing recreation and open space opportunities and to support a more connected system.		X		X		X	X				
Goal C: Enhance and develop recreation opportunities that will have the largest impact to economic development, while managing existing resources effectively.	X		X	X		X	X				
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL AND SENSITIVE RESOURCES GOALS</b>											
Goal A: Preserve the County’s natural resources for future generations.				X	X						
Goal B: Support land use planning and policies that embraces environmental preservation and acknowledges development constraints due to topography and sensitive resources.				X	X						
Goal C: Ensure new affordable housing is targeted towards low to moderate income families.	X	X									



PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOALS	SUPPORTING POLICY FRAMEWORK STATEMENTS (See Chapter 3)										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Goal A: Collaborate with partners to provide low-cost efficient resources to Clear Creek County Residents.		X	X		X						
Goal B: Ensure the provision of adequate community resources in an efficient and cost-effective manner.		X			X						
Goal C: Provide quality, high speed, and reliable telecommunications infrastructure across the County at a reasonable price for all residents.	X	X									X
Goal D: Support local development of renewable energy resources	X	X	X	X							X
<b>HAZARDS AND PUBLIC SAFETY GOALS</b>											
Goal A: Protect the people, property, and natural, cultural, and environmental resources of Clear Creek County through a variety of policies and management measures.		X									X
Goal B: Increase awareness of natural hazards and their mitigation by continuing to develop informative programs and increasing the accessibility of these programs to the public.		X									X
Goal C: Coordinate and integrate hazard mitigation activities between communities, emergency response providers, and local governments.		X									X

COMMUNITY CHARACTER GOALS	SUPPORTING POLICY FRAMEWORK STATEMENTS (See Chapter 3)										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Goal A: Support and encourage subarea planning so that distinct areas of the County retain unique character and values.		X	X			X					
Goal B: Foster a sense of community pride, embodied in the community's overall appearance, friendliness, environment, and historic uniqueness.		X	X	X		X					
<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION GOALS</b>											
Goal A: Develop IGAs to further the goals of the Master Plan with municipalities, special districts and federal and state governmental entities.	X	X			X	X			X	X	



# CHAPTER 6: FUTURE LAND USE

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter expresses goals and strategies surrounding land use and the desired pattern of development for Clear Creek County. It focuses on three main ideas: concentrating development into areas that already have developed areas and services, protecting open space and lands with high ecological and scenic value, and recognizing that mining parcels may have other land uses while retaining their legal right to mineral extraction. These goals inform the Generalized Future Land Use Map that will guide decision-making around land use for the years to come.

## THE LEGACY OF MINING

As noted in Chapter 1, mineral resource extraction has and continues to be an important part of the County's land use. As shown on MAP-11, mining activity in Clear Creek County continues to exist. While the diminishment in activity at the Henderson Mine will have a profound impact on mining activity in Clear Creek County, the preservation of mining opportunity for future generations is an important consideration of this plan.

It is also important to recognize that lands with dedicated mining rights are not always mined. The recent trend in the County has been the conversion of mining claims into residential use, consistent with County Land Use Code provisions. Additionally, some mining lands are currently being used, and plan to be used



for recreation purposes. As described below, recognizing that lands with mining rights might have other secondary land use opportunities is an important provision of this Master Plan.

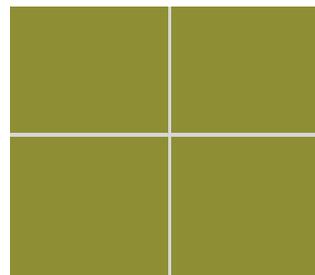
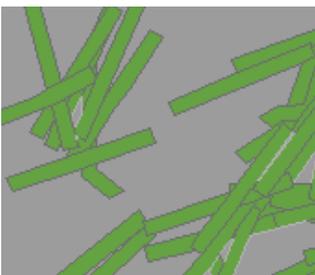
## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR LAND USE POLICY

In establishing this Generalized Future Land Use Map (See MAP-12), an important part of the process was defining key guiding principles that would shape how the map adapts to the Vision and Policy Framework described in Chapter 1. Seven important principles came forward during the process of building this Master Plan that the Map considers:

1. Create a hierarchy of “Multiple Use” areas that considers varying degrees of development and respect land use decision-making by subarea plans.
2. Place Multiple Use areas at key locations along I-70 and SH-40 in order to concentrate development into existing developed areas and to allow for convenient access to transportation infrastructure.
3. Avoid development in areas that are constrained by either steep slopes, high elevations, or lack on transportation access.
4. Opportunities for Open Space and Recreation should fully consider the diversity of owners and use types.
5. Establish residential zones that reflect that character of different areas in the County – rural residential in areas with large parcels, traditional residential in subdivided areas with smaller parcels, and dense residential in particular Multiple Use areas.
6. Although mining claims will always allow mineral resources to be developed there by right, certain mining areas of the County are envisioned for open space, recreation, or residential use. These dually designated land uses are depicted as “shades” of mining.
7. Recognize that most of the land in the County is owned and managed by the United States Forest Service.

### WHAT IS A “CELL”?

The Future Land Use Map (MAP-12, 12A, 12B and 12C) makes use of “cells” of 35 acre is area to help define the pattern for future land use. The graphic below illustrates how a cell is made based on the underlying or planned conditions. Each cell is 35 acres is size.



The green areas on the left are mining claims. When migrated to a cell they become the dominant land use form in the final cell.



## THE GENERALIZED FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Generalized Future Land Use Map is designed to be conceptual in nature. Unlike a zoning map, it does not seek to identify specific land use outcomes for every parcel of land. Rather, it seeks to establish the important land use strategies that eventually can inform rezoning of land. When a zoning amendment is considered, the planning commission shall “consider” the consistency of the proposed zoning with the Master Plan. Therefore, the map is essentially a guide, along with the land use goals and policies, to help promote community conversation, discussion and input on future land use changes.

When one looks for a specific parcel, the following questions should be considered:

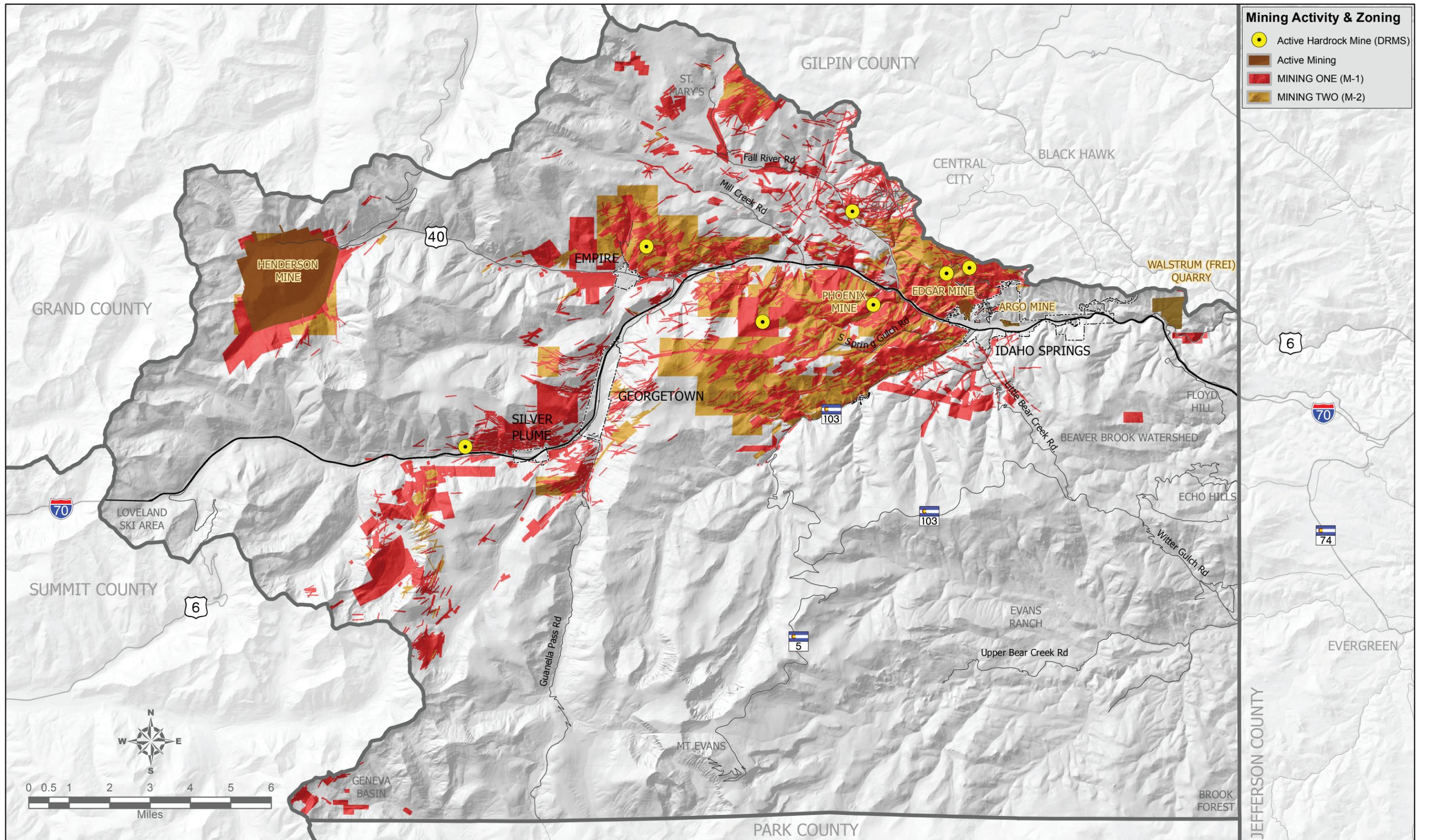
1. Where within the range of future land uses does this parcel sit? Is it generally shown as an area for the preservation of resources or where low/little development is expected? Is it proximal to a land use that may favor some form of more intense development?
2. If it does have some potential for development, then how do the underlying physical properties of the site relate to future uses? Does the parcel have land area suitable for development? Does it have appropriate access?
3. If it is shown mostly as preservation or low-intensity development, then how does the parcel address that expectation? Does it have high open space value?

The extensive number of mining claims parcels within Clear Creek County makes the underlying existing land use pattern very complex. To help reduce this complexity, the Generalized Future Land Use Map (see MAP-12) was constructed using cells approximately 35 acres in size, creating a grid of cells for the entire county. This level of evaluation enables the map to consider both the established and existing pattern of land uses (i.e., where land is developed in one form or another), as well as describe how land might evolve based on its location to roads, existing services, established population centers and the goals, objectives and strategies of the County. To help better communicate this long-range vision, the overall Generalized Land Use Map has been enlarged in three key details (MAP-12A, MAP-12B, and MAP-12C).

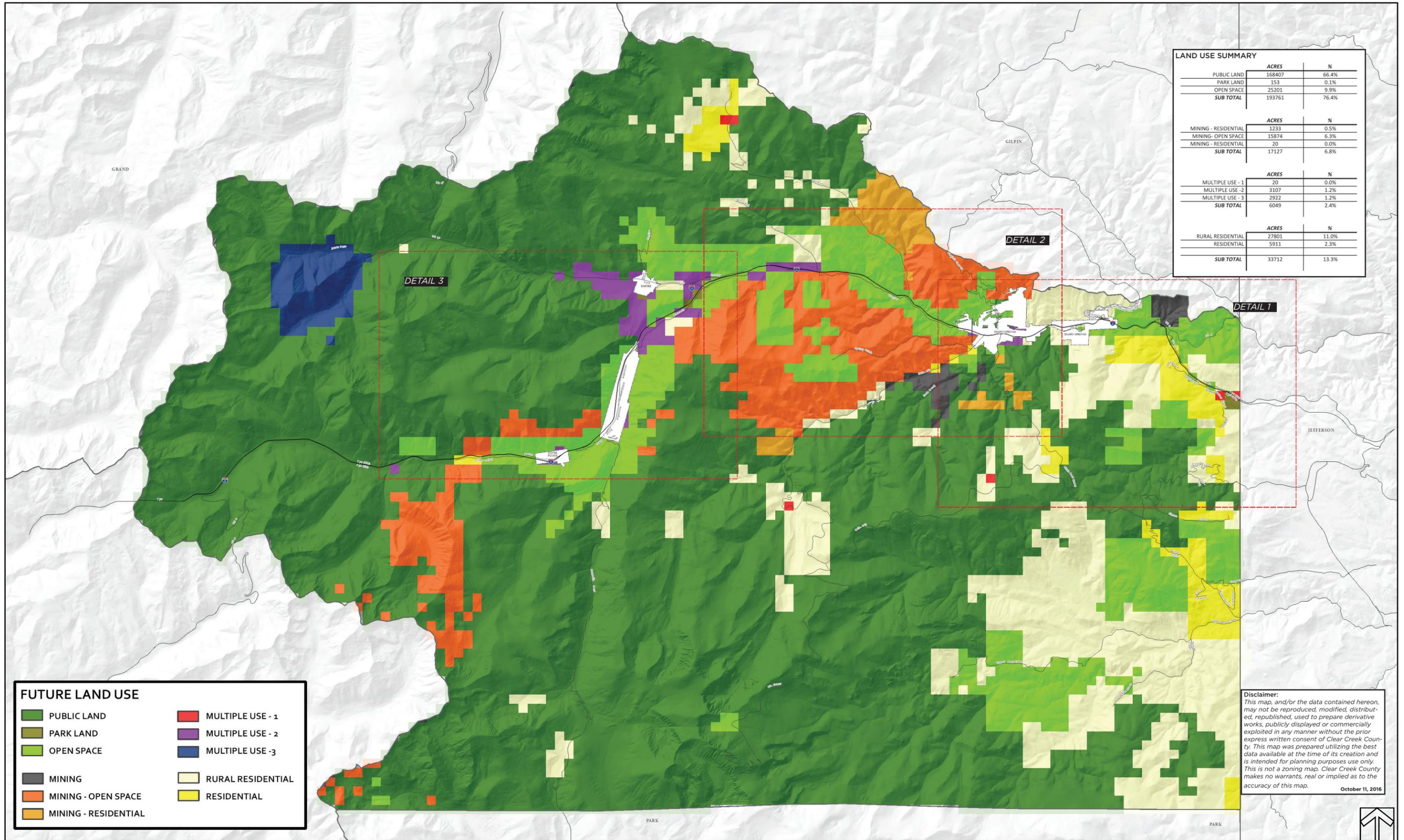
While this “grid” approach is very different from the 2004 Master Plan which expressed future land uses as more bubbles (or areas), it represents a balance between envisioning future land uses in high detail versus losing the big picture pattern it expresses. It is quite easy to get hyper focused on specific parcels, their historical or current use, and their zoning. While those considerations are important, a future land use map is intended to be used as an illustration for how Clear Creek County sees itself: allowing new development in certain areas, protecting others, or maintaining existing development patterns.

The pattern of land use shown on the Map is dominated by public lands, including lands within the National Forest. Elsewhere, it is along the I-70 Corridor, either adjacent to existing municipalities or within distinct areas (i.e. Empire Junction, Downieville, etc.) where land suitability, proximity to existing infrastructure and transportation systems enhances the potential opportunity for a greater diversity of development forms.

Another consideration expressed in the Generalized Future Land Use Map is how existing mining claims might evolve over time. Mining has historically and continues to play an important role in the land use pattern of the community. As shown on the Mining Activity Map (MAP-11), while active mining is dominated by the Henderson Mine, many areas of the County are zoned for mining. While the allowed



MAP-11 | Mining Activities

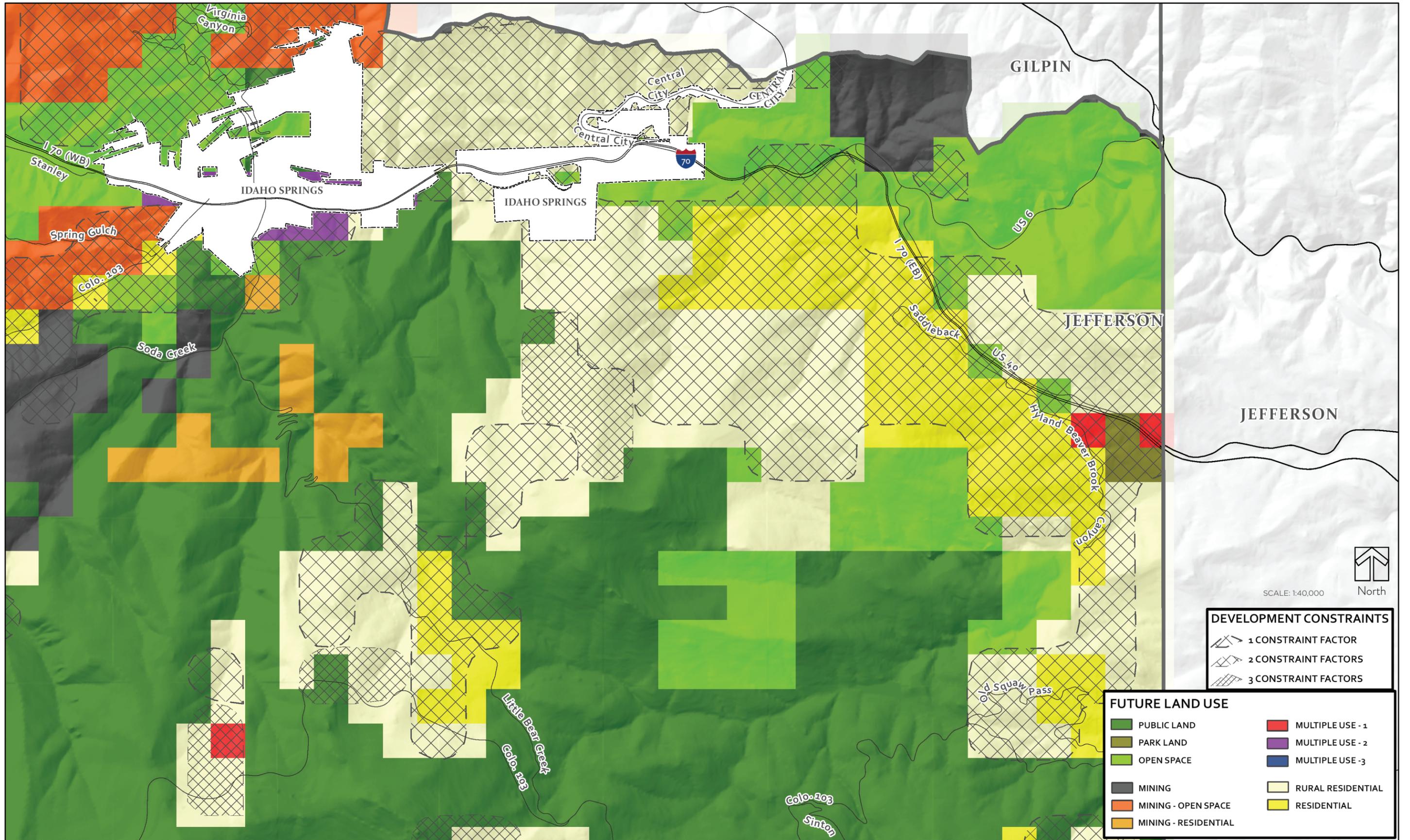


LAND USE SUMMARY		
	ACRES	%
PUBLIC LAND	168407	66.4%
PARK LAND	153	0.1%
OPEN SPACE	25201	9.9%
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>193761</b>	<b>76.4%</b>
	ACRES	%
MINING - RESIDENTIAL	1233	0.5%
MINING - OPEN SPACE	15874	6.3%
MINING - RESIDENTIAL	20	0.0%
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>17127</b>	<b>6.8%</b>
	ACRES	%
MULTIPLE USE - 1	20	0.0%
MULTIPLE USE - 2	3107	1.2%
MULTIPLE USE - 3	2922	1.2%
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>6049</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
	ACRES	%
RURAL RESIDENTIAL	27801	11.0%
RESIDENTIAL	5911	2.3%
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>33712</b>	<b>13.3%</b>

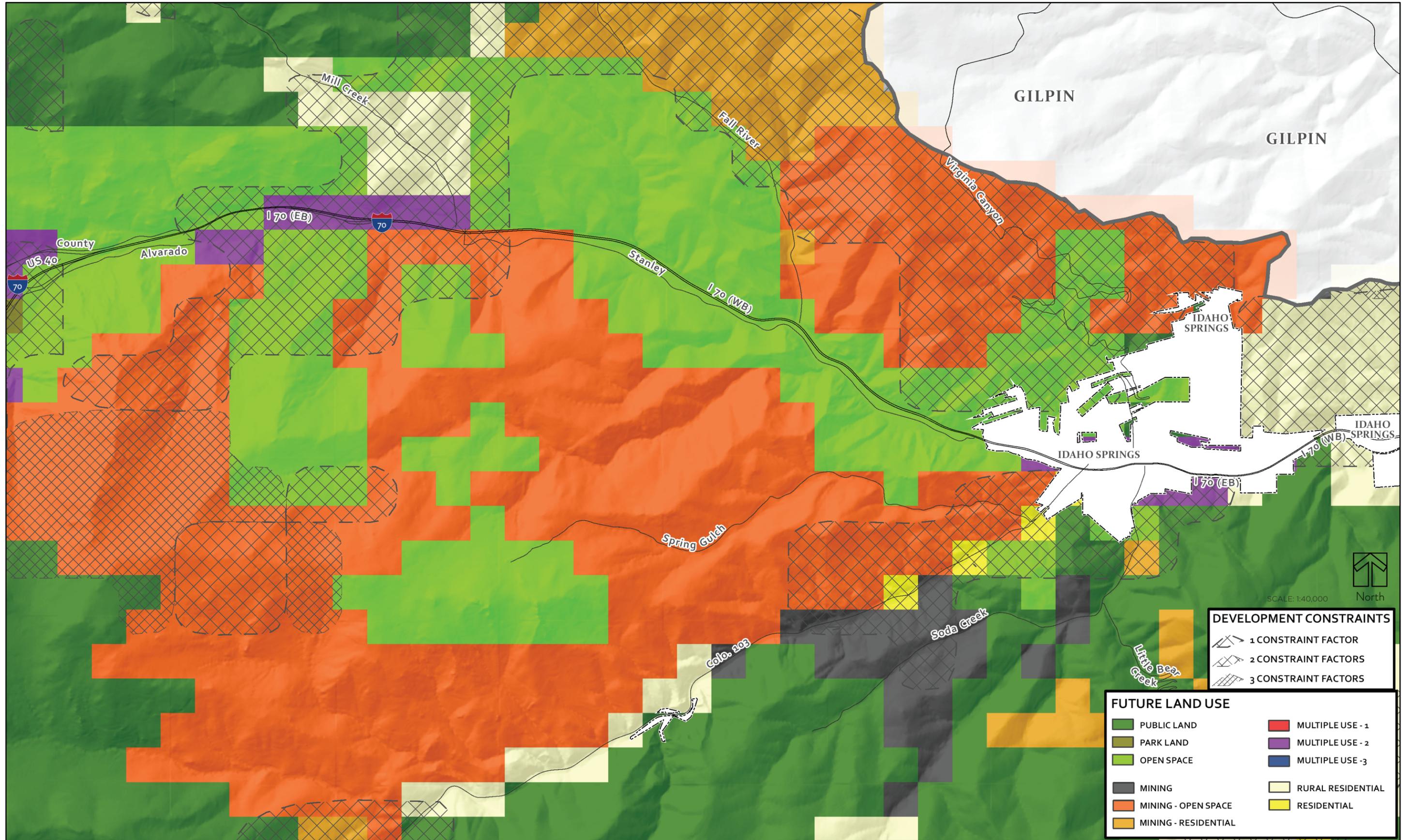
FUTURE LAND USE	
	PUBLIC LAND
	PARK LAND
	OPEN SPACE
	MINING
	MINING - OPEN SPACE
	MINING - RESIDENTIAL
	MULTIPLE USE - 1
	MULTIPLE USE - 2
	MULTIPLE USE - 3
	RURAL RESIDENTIAL
	RESIDENTIAL

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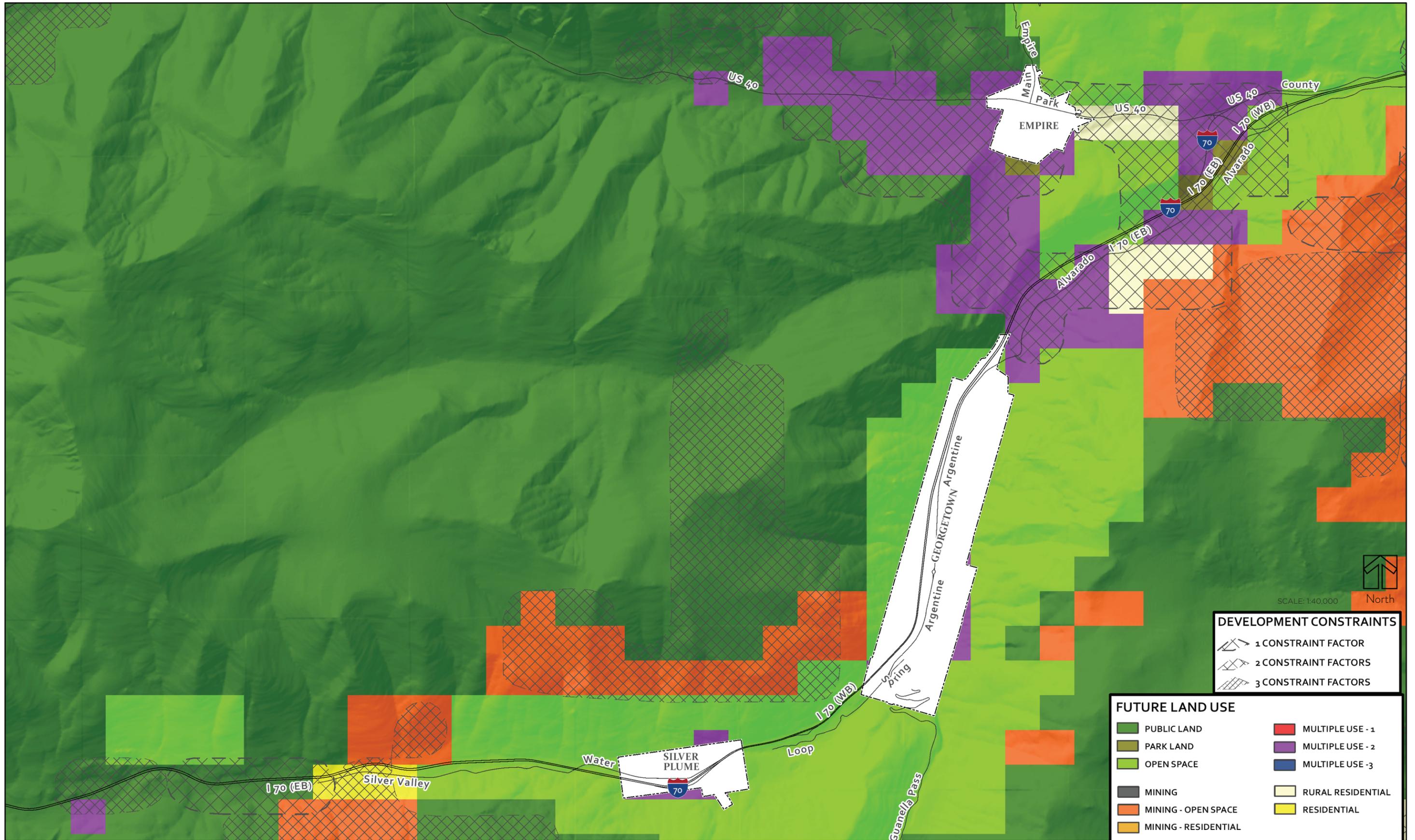
SCALE: 1:150,000 North



MAP-12A | Generalized Future Land Use - Detail Area 1



MAP-12B | Generalized Future Land Use - Detail Area 2



MAP-12C | Generalized Future Land Use - Detail Area 3



purpose is always mining, the experience of the County has been many of these lands have transitioned to secondary uses. The Generalized Future Land Use Map orients some of these mining areas towards new land use outcomes; recreation or open space/recreation or residential use. Some areas of mining are preserved as mining-oriented. Overall these depictions affirm the County Vision and its emphasis on preserving critical open space, providing access to recreation and concentrating development in areas with lowest environmental consequence and greatest proximity to existing and established settlements, while honoring traditional mineral rights.

The Generalized Future Land Use Map also identifies areas with constraints to potential future development. Three factors have been considered; steep slopes, high elevations, and proximity to existing County-maintained roads. There are different markings for areas that meet only one of these criteria and areas that meet two or three of the development constraint criteria. This constraint layer provides additional insight on the remoteness of these areas and what site factors should be considered assessing policy for future development.

## LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The Generalized Future Land Use Map (See MAP-12) identifies nine broad categories for land uses. These run the spectrum from public lands to areas defined for “multiple use”. Each of these designations is summarized below.

### Public Lands

These areas are primarily owned by the Forest Service with some parcels owned by the State Land Board, Colorado Parks and Wildlife. The County has limited jurisdiction over these parcels. The overwhelming percentage (68 percent) of the County is public United States Forest Service Land

### Mining

Land designated as having valid mining claims will always have their mineral rights protected. However, certain mining areas are of interest for secondary purposes such as residential or recreation. Approximately 7 percent of the County is identified as this land use designation.

These areas are depicted on the Generalized Future Land Use Map as the following categories:

#### Mining Areas – Natural Resource Extraction

The long-term use of lands within these areas is likely to involve natural resource extraction in some form or another.

#### Mining Areas – Open Space and Recreation

Areas identified for future open space and/or recreational use were established based on either their proximity to adjacent conserved lands, their potential scenic sensitivity or their potential recreational value. Generally lands within this classification have very limited access potential, are very steep or may be “land locked” by severe terrain.



### Mining Areas – Residential

The continued migration of some lands currently identified as mining towards residential use has been contemplated in this Future Land Use Plan. The scope/scale of these areas is largely limited to areas with already established residential settlement. As the land use policies suggest, the expansion of residential lands within mining claims is not encouraged.

### Rural Residential

Rural Residential refers to residential development on lots larger than 35 acres. The larger lots are intended to preserve the rural character, scenic views, and provide conservation land. These areas are primarily in the eastern portion of the county, adjacent to Jefferson County, and are already largely developed. Additionally, an IGA and subregion development plan from the CPHAA (Coordinated Planning and Highway Access Agreement) for the area directly north of Idaho Springs and adjacent to Gilpin County shows that much of it is to be developed as Rural Residential. It is the intention of this land use map to incorporate the land use plans subareas have for themselves and bring them up to the County level. Approximately 11 percent of the County is identified as this land use designation.

### Residential

Residential areas are those on parcels smaller than 35 acres. Most of this land is in existing subdivisions that are platted and have access to services, and located in the eastern portion of the county, south of Interstate 70. Another location of existing residential land use is north of Downieville, Lawson, and Dumont, and up Fall River Road all the way to St. Mary's. It is envisioned that these areas will continue to be residential, at the density allowed by the current zoning. Approximately 2 percent of the County is identified as this land use designation.

### Open Space

These areas are designated to be undeveloped, with many of the parcels acquired by the Open Space Commission since its inception. Open Space lands are also owned by the Colorado Park and Wildlife Agency, Jefferson County Schools, the State Land Board, and Denver Mountain Parks, among other owners (See Open Space map for specific ownership). Open space lands do have recreation opportunities on them, such as trails, but also contain wildlife areas and watershed areas that are primarily for ecological benefit. Areas platted for residential or commercial development were not included in the Open Space designation, even if they are currently undeveloped. Open space areas are primarily along the Interstate 70 corridor, but exist throughout the county. One reason that Open Space along the highway corridor is so important is so that the communities along the corridor maintain a sense of separation and independence. Approximately 10 percent of the County is identified as this land use designation.

### Park/Recreation

These areas are used for active recreation on either private or County-owned lands. These lands include both commercial areas for recreation-owned businesses as well as recognized public parks and/or school grounds. Uses on these lands include Echo Lake Park as well as rafting and ziplining operations. Parks within the municipalities of Clear Creek County are not represented in this plan. Although not much land



is dedicated to this use due to the desire for open space, clusters of recreation-based businesses in these areas are encouraged as they can contribute greatly to economic development. Less than 1 percent of the County is identified as this land use designation.

### **Multiple Use-1**

These areas allow for multiple uses with the intention of maintaining the level and intensity of current land uses or future uses specified by an approved subarea plan. Site-specific considerations in these areas such as scenic vistas, sensitive natural and cultural resources, natural hazards, availability of services/ infrastructure, and existing and/or future limitations on access, water, or sewer may limit or shape development. Uses may include residential, commercial, parks and open space. This area is limited to an approximately 20 acre area near Floyd Hill, where the appropriate level of development intensity needs to be examined further at the subarea level. Only a very small percentage of the County is indicated as this land use designation.

### **Multiple Use-2**

These areas allow for multiple uses with an emphasis on commercial and residential development. Economic activity and housing for all income levels are encouraged in these areas. The type of mixing and intensity of uses in these areas should be defined in more detail by subarea plans. A small (approximately 1.2 percent) amount of the County is identified as this land use designation.

### **Multiple Use-3**

These areas allow for multiple uses with an emphasis on keeping options open for re-use and redevelopment. Henderson Mine is the primary location of this category. This land use designation covers about 1.2 percent of the County.

### **Development Constraint Overlay**

The Future Land Use Map detail areas identifies cells with the hash marks overlaying the land use category. These hash marks indicate that there are development constraints in these areas. Cells that are indicated with development constraints include one or more of the following criteria: an average elevation above 10,500 feet, located more than 0.5 mile from a County-maintained road, or the having an average slope above 30 percent.

Those that meet two or more of the criteria have a more intense hash mark. Over 43 percent of these area are identified as constrained applying these metrics.



## LAND USE POLICY

**Goal A: Direct the extent of urban development towards existing municipalities and designated multiple use areas.**

### ***Strategies***

1. Use subareas plans to further identify the type, scale, and intensity of development in “Multiple Use” areas.
2. Create a countywide comprehensive housing plan to ensure suitable housing exists for a wide range of incomes and those with jobs in Clear Creek County. Within the plan, identify suitable areas for increased housing density and affordable housing.
3. Explore a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to direct development away from rural or remote areas and into areas where there is existing development and supportive infrastructure.
4. Encourage development that maintains or enhances pedestrian and bicycle mobility and accessibility.
5. Support infill development and adaptive redevelopment that takes advantage of existing infrastructure and services.
6. Explore use of a fiscal impact questionnaire that developers fill out when applying for development so the County can better understand the impact to the County's budget and services.

**Goal B: Ensure land uses are compatible with the natural and rural character of Clear Creek County.**

### ***Strategies***

1. Support the Open Space Commission in purchasing and protecting properties with high scenic, ecological, and recreational value.
2. Use Open Space and National Forest System lands to maintain a sense of openness between communities to provide separation of individual communities.
3. Discourage development in locations above timberline (10,500 feet), that have excessively steep or unstable slopes, or are of high ecological value.



## **Goal C: Plan for interim, transitional, and “second use” utilization for areas identified as having mineral resources and claims.**

### **Strategies**

1. Allow for the potential for or continuation of mineral resource extraction on mining claim parcels.
2. Support purchase of development rights or conservation easements on mining parcels with high ecological, scenic, or recreational value.
3. Support secondary recreation use on mining claims that are adjacent to or contain existing recreation opportunities.
4. While allowing residential development on M-1 parcels, clarify to potential homeowners and builders the access and services constraints they may confront with a residential conversion.

## **Goal D: Support the development of subarea plans that advance the goals and strategies of the County and support the Vision.**

### **Strategies**

1. Review existing subarea plans and encourage local communities to review their existing subarea plans in light of the updated Master Plan, and to evaluate where changes might be beneficial to improve their alignment with County policies and goals.
2. Develop a guidebook for subarea or neighborhood planning that articulates the specific policies and goals that the County believes should be addressed within any proposed new or amended subarea plan.
3. Review the County process for review of subarea plans to assure that the consideration of all plans are done consistently and objectively in relationship to County policies and goals.
4. Build upon existing community planning efforts, including the PEIS I-70 process and Blueprinting 2.0, by aligning policy objectives and leveraging public inputs into any new subarea or neighborhood plans, including the I-70 mountain corridor visioning process.





## SUPPORTING THE VISION

The following matrix summarizes how each of the Land Use goals relates and supports the Policy Framework statements identified in Chapter 3.

LAND USE GOALS	SUPPORTING POLICY FRAMEWORK STATEMENTS (See Chapter 3)											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Goal A: Direct the extent of urban development towards existing municipalities and designated multiple use areas		X	X	X	X							
Goal B: Ensure land uses are compatible with the natural and rural character of Clear Creek County		X	X	X								
Goal C: Plan for interim, transitional, and “second use” utilization for areas identified as having mineral resources and claims.	X		X					X				
Goal D: Support the development of subarea plans that advance the goals and strategies of the County and support the Vision.	X	X	X								X	



# CHAPTER 7: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE AND TOOLKIT

## INTRODUCTION

The Vision statement, policy framework, goals, and strategies set forth in previous elements of the Master Plan together describe the desired future of Clear Creek County during the next 20 years. They do not, however, tell us precisely how to create the kind of community envisioned by the Plan. Yet unless appropriate actions are taken, the plan will remain unrealized. Consequently, a strategy for how to implement the Plan is needed. It is the intent of this implementation guide to translate the Master Plan's vision, policy framework, goals, and strategies into the day-to-day operations of the County government.

This implementation guide considers all elements of the Master Plan, recognizing that they are highly interconnected and must be implemented in a way that treats each element as part of a larger whole. This implementation guide takes great care to make every decision within the context of that basic reality, while providing helpful tools and actions to help achieve the future envisioned by the plan.

## CLEAR CREEK COUNTY ZONING REGULATIONS

The Future Land Use Map (MAP-12) suggests several new land use designations and clarifies where within the county expected land use outcomes are desired. Maintaining consistency between the zoning regulations and the Master Plan is vital. An important short-term implementation strategy for the County



will be to rectify the currently adopted zoning regulations (August 2011) against the suggested future land use designations of the Master Plan. For example, the identified areas for “multiple uses” should be clarified within the zoning regulations to assure the diversity and flexibility of the uses as contemplated in the Master Plan is preserved. Similarly, the consideration of the development constraints overlay within the Future Land Use Map should be connected with current administrative process related to development review.

Three considerations from the in the Master Plan should be addressed in a future review of the Zoning Regulations:

- A. Establishment of a clear definition and spatial extent for Multiple Use areas (by tier).
- B. Review of the Mining Districts (Section 7) within the Zoning Regulations to reflect 1) the potential redevelopment of the Henderson Mine site into “multiple use” and 2) the designation of other current mining lands as “natural resource extraction”, “open space/recreation” or “residential”.
- C. Consider amendment of the Zoning Regulations to address the need for new development proposals to submit a fiscal impact questionnaire and/or complete the “fiscal impact tool” process (described below).

## SUPPORTING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Many of the strategies outlined in the Master Plan rely on cooperation with the municipalities. As each municipality considers its long-range plans, the County should both support and work closely with these local governments to evaluate annexation opportunities and/or intergovernmental agreements to help realize shared objectives.

## LAND USE TOOLS

A hallmark of the Future Land Use Plan is the focusing of development into more define and limited areas subject to significant future community dialogue. Supporting this “focusing” of development can be encouraged through several land use strategies:

### Transfer of Development Rights

The Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a planning tool used by some communities to preserve or protect land areas that are deemed by a community to be important such as open space lands, or preserve lands with severe development constraints such as lands within avalanche paths, tundra, or slopes over 30 percent. TDR programs can also limit growth within a geographic area if so desired by a community while encouraging development in other areas deemed appropriate. TDR programs establish geographic “sending areas” which are the areas to be preserved or protected, and “receiving areas” where rezoning for higher density is encouraged and oftentimes incentivized. The sending area density to be transferred is based on the density permitted in the underlying zone district (e.g., 1 unit per 20 acres) and the density required at the receiving site is based on the current or proposed zoning density (e.g., 1 unit per 6 acres).



TDR programs are created through a code amendment process and typically require or incentivize rezoning to higher density within a receiving area only if the new density is transferred to the site from the sending areas. The sending area site where density is transferred from is either concurrently rezoned to an open space-type zone district and/or protected by an easement held by the local government or a land trust. Receiving areas are typically located within incorporated jurisdictions and other areas with adequate infrastructure and planning to support growth and development.

TDR programs respect property rights and give value to the sending area property owners since developers in receiving areas must purchase or are incentivized to purchase the density. The value of the density is set by either local markets with a willing buyer and a willing seller, or by the local government entity that bases the price on a detailed market study. The outcome of a TDR program that is implemented over time is the protection and preservation of important or constrained areas and maintenance of the desired community character.

## Rural Remote Zoning

Rural and remote zoning is a planning tool used by communities to retain the undeveloped character of rural and remote areas in a county. Rural and remote areas are typically located in mostly undeveloped areas that have substandard roads, limited infrastructure and poor fire and emergency access. Rural and remote zoning regulations often limit development to match historic development patterns in the area to be protected. It is typical to have a maximum home size limit to not exceed historic development patterns. The main goal of this limitation is to prohibit large home sizes that would change the character of an area. There are also floor area, lot area, land use and other standards to match historic development patterns.

Rural and remote zoning may also have standards to protect and mitigate environmentally constrained areas (wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, avalanche paths, etc.); limit the impact of new road construction with a preference for historic access road use; limit winter plowing to preserve character and maintain winter backcountry access; and parcel assemblage standards that relate to the maximum home size.

Rural and remote zoning is implemented through a concurrent or sequential process where a community amends the land use code to create a new "Rural and Remote Zone District" or similar zone district that establishes zoning regulations that are designed to protect the rural character and the natural environment.

The second step is a government initiated rezoning of properties located in the rural and remote geographic area(s) following the adopted rezoning procedures. The outcome of this zoning process is the maintenance of the mostly undeveloped character of rural and remote areas in a county.

## Subarea Plans

Subarea plans are a long-range planning tool used by communities to create a more detailed land use plan for a geographic subarea. Sub-area plans allow a community and a neighborhood to take a more micro view of an area with the goal to create more specific and detailed policies and plans. The sub-area planning process allows for participants to understand the existing context of an area (zoning, land use, constraints, infrastructure, existing development, vacant land, etc.) and imagine the future of the area.



The sub-area plan will include goals, actions, policies, plans and implementation measures to reach the desired future. Subarea plans can have many different levels, ranging from higher level plans to parcel tested plans that utilize architectural or planning firms to show the conceptual layout of buildings, floor areas, massing, streets, open spaces, parks and other land uses.

Economic, transportation and other detailed studies can be conducted concurrently with a subarea plan to ensure the desired future land use plan is likely to achieve the desired results. Specifically, the fiscal impact tool (described below) can be used to evaluate a conceptual “build-out” within a defined sub-area to help clarify the fiscal outcomes. Any new or updated subarea plans should also consider the Master Plan elements and define how it can help achieve county goals and objectives at the local scale.

A subarea plan duly adopted by the Planning Commission can be used as the foundation to encourage and even require general conformance with the subarea plan, with each rezoning measured as to how it will help implement a subarea plan over time. The desired outcome is the development and preservation of an area as envisioned in a subarea plan.





## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Economic development goals and strategies are an important part of this Master Plan. An important step in realizing these goals is connecting economic development policy with other elements of the plan (i.e., Future Land Use, Housing, etc.).

Perhaps the best way to move this process forward is for the County to work in close collaboration with the Clear Creek County Economic Development Corporation and other such agencies in exploring how and where various economic tools can be applied.

### Enterprise Zone tax credits

The Colorado Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program was created by through CRS, Title 39, Article 30) to promote a business friendly environment in economically distressed areas. The program offers state income tax credits to incentivize new or expanded businesses to locate and develop in these areas. The program also includes support to help realize these potentials. At present the entirety of Clear Creek County is within an Enterprise Zone. The County should explore how goals of the Master Plan can be supported and/or support business opportunity through this program.

### Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The use of Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) to support infrastructure improvements as directed through a UR (Urban Renewal) or Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is well established in Colorado. At its essence, TIF works on the premise that upfront expenditures of financial resources to kick-start new development will, over some time, be paid back through the levy of taxes on an increasing tax base. Establishing a TIF can be highly complex, but determining where/if this tool is applicable in the context of supporting the Master Plan should be short-term implementation objective.

### Public Improvement District or Fees (PID/PIF)

A public improvement district (PID) is a taxing entity which can finance, construct and maintain public improvements. A PID may be formed to address any type of public improvement or service. It has authority to issue debt and to impose a mill levy against real and personal property within the district. Again the development of a PID or PIF should be undertaken in light of the goals and strategies of the Master Plan and in support of the Vision.

### Industrial Revenue Bonds

Public bonding in support of critical infrastructure to promote/encourage private-sector development is a common use of IRB's. Again the application of this economic development tool should consider the Master Plan Vision and policy framework; particularly related to the need for greater fiscal impact assessment and the importance of sustainability.



## FISCAL IMPACT TOOLS

### What is a Fiscal Impact Analysis?

A fiscal impact analysis is a tool that compares county government costs against revenues associated with development policies and projects. The analysis helps ensure that county officials understand the short- and long-term fiscal effects of land use policies as well as the impact from new development projects that are approved. County governments are then able to weigh land use policy decisions, acceptable levels of public services provided, plans for capital investments, and long-term borrowing needs, in addition to prompting local officials to evaluate current and future revenue sources.

A typical fiscal impact analysis is a projection of the net cash flow to the public sector resulting from development – residential, non-residential or other. It is similar to the cash flow analysis a developer conducts in order to project costs and revenues likely to result from a proposed development. A well-prepared analysis will reflect revenue, capital costs and associated operating expenses. This is in contrast to an “economic impact analysis,” which evaluates direct and indirect impacts on the overall economy; those impacts are typically new jobs, real disposable income and consumer spending.

### Why Conduct a Fiscal Impact Analysis?

A fiscal impact analysis brings a realistic sense of the costs of new development and redevelopment into the public discussion and provides local governments with the financial information necessary to make balanced land use decisions that are cost-effective and make efficient use of public services and infrastructure. A fiscal impact analysis can lead to a better understanding for both the public and elected officials of the various factors contributing to development proposals and increases their confidence in the fiscal soundness of land use decisions. Using fiscal impact analysis to evaluate land use decisions may also result in more consistent government revenues in the future. A fiscal impact analysis does not provide the all the “answers” to policy and development questions—the environment, housing affordability, jobs/housing balance and quality of life must also be considered—but it can be a very useful tool when evaluating development proposals and land use decisions.

Given the phasing out of the Henderson Mine, Clear Creek County government revenues are rapidly changing. As a result, the need to understand the fiscal impact of new development and to provide services as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible is more important than ever. A fiscal impact tool allow the County to assess the impact of land use decisions at the local scale, while allowing for the project-by-project flexibility necessary to achieve desirable economic development in the County. Along with this analysis comes the notion that simple “growth” is not the objective, but rather growth that supports the fiscal and economic health of the community. Development that achieves this health is desirable, but growth for growth's sake should not be blindly pursued. A fiscal impact analysis tool will allow the County to ensure that new development or redevelopment in the county is “good growth” that will remain viable over the long-term.



## Choosing a Fiscal Impact Analysis Tool

The County has a number of fiscal impact tools and resources available to them, including the SiteStats model used by CCEDC and a tool recently developed by SE Group for use in the County, among many others. The County should undergo a process by which it outlines which fiscal impact tools should be used in which situations, and to possibly further refine available tools to be more appropriate to Clear Creek County, if necessary.

## Points to Remember When Conducting Fiscal Impact Analysis

- **Development results in increased demand for services:** New residents and new workers demand local services and their expectations may be different from those of the existing population and workforce.
- **Fiscal Impacts vary with the type of the development, the location of development, community services, existing service capacity and local policy:** The type of development—commercial, residential, industrial—has different implications for a community's fiscal balance sheet. The nature of the development—compact residential near central facilities versus sprawling rural residential—matters to the fiscal outcome. A community that must extend public services to new developments will incur greater expenditures, but it may pay off in the long-run. That is why fiscal impact analysis is required.
- **Consider ALL services in the process.** While Clear Creek County itself does not necessarily provide all services (i.e., some are provided by sewer or water districts), expanding the analysis to address the widest scope of service costs (and revenues) only services to improve the understanding of the economic cost/benefit.
- **Impacts are Cumulative:** The impact of a single development may be insignificant to a community's fiscal position; however, the impact of development after development may be substantial. Over time, development has broad effects on revenues, expenditures and the tax base.
- **Development affects different groups in different ways:** The distributional impacts are not easily incorporated into standard fiscal impact analysis, but new development may provide greater benefits to some groups. It is important to think about how different groups may be affected and how these impacts may vary over time.



# APPENDIX I: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**STAKEHOLDER MEETING SUMAMRY**

**ECONOMIC FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY**

**CITIZEN SURVEY RESULTS**

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**



## APPENDIX II: BASELINE DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC DATA



APPENDIX III:  
BASELINE ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

**HOUSING ASSESSMENT**

**TRANSPORTATION ASSESSMENT**

**SUB-AREA PLAN SUMMARY**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT SUMMARY**