



**Planning Commission City Hall - 1711 Miner Street, Idaho
Springs, CO 80452 Agenda**

Thursday, February 5, 2026

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Video from Meetings are viewable on the City's Website.

You must join the Zoom Meeting

**(<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82200987574>) passcode 627970 to
participate in a meeting remotely.**

- 1. Call to Order (6:00 PM)**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Agenda Approval**
- 4. Public Comment**
- 5. Conflict of Interest**
- 6. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Motion to approve the minutes of January 8th, 2026.
- 7. General Updates**
- 8. New Business**
 - a. Ordinance No. 3, Series 2026 An Ordinance amending Section 21-131 of the Idaho Springs Municipal Code concerning parking space dimensions
- 9. Old Business**
- 10. Adjourn**
- 11. Work Session Agenda**
 - a. Comprehensive Plan Review: Background/Introduction, Land Use and Community Character, and Strategic Growth Elements

In-person and remote meeting public attendance and participation instructions:

Participation

- To provide scheduled public comment, either in person or remotely, please fill out and return the Public Comment Form on the City's website. All requests must be submitted to the City Clerk (cityclerk@idahospringsco.com) by 6 p.m. (Six) the Wednesday before the scheduled meeting.
- To provide unscheduled public comment, please join the Zoom Meeting, identify yourself with your full first and last name, and use the "Raise Hand" feature to

indicate your desire to speak.

General Guidelines

- Each public comment, whether scheduled or unscheduled, is limited to three (3) minutes.
- The Commission typically does not provide feedback during public comment sessions.
- If you would like to provide materials for the Commission to review along with your Comment, please sign up for Scheduled Public Comment and provide those materials to the City Clerk by the Wednesday Deadline.



**PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES - DRAFT
January 8th, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cindy Olson called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present were Chair Cindy Olson, Alternate Judy Murphy, Caitlin Maxwell, Alternate Jefferson Lich, Kent Slaymaker and Chuck Howard. Vice Chair Ursula Cruzalegui attended via ZOOM. Staff present were Community Development Planner Dylan Graves, Assistant City Attorney Nick Klein, and Deputy City Clerk Wonder Martell.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Maxwell moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Slaymaker seconded. Second was followed by an all in favor voice vote. Motion carries.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There was no conflict.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Slaymaker moved to approve the minutes from October 2nd, 2025. Commissioner Maxwell seconded. Second followed by an all in favor voice vote. Motion carries. After the meeting, Community Development Planner Mr. Graves advised Deputy City Clerk Ms. Martell that a commission member had mentioned to him that on page 4-5 of the minutes from October 2nd stated, "South Rail" and it needs to state, "South Park Rail". Ms. Martell advised that she would make this change in the minutes.

GENERAL UPDATES

Community Development Planner Dylan Graves advised the commission that the City was granted the America 250 – Colorado 150 Grant to help with the digital tour that will be placed on the Visit Idaho Springs website. Mr. Graves stated that he himself and Sadie Shultz applied for this grant and Commissioner Slaymaker helped a lot. Mr. Graves also brought up that Commissioner Slaymaker's term will be up as of February 2026, and if he was interested in being reappointed, to submit a letter of interest to Deputy City Clerk Ms. Martell.

Chair Olson asked Mr. Graves for an update on the 4 points Project (The Fieldhouse). Mr. Graves stated that the anticipated occupancy date is April of this year. The furthest East building is anticipated to be ready in the next 2 months. Mr. Graves advised the commission that they are working on deed restrictions from the division of housing.

NEW BUSINESS

CUP25-001 – 95 East Idaho Springs Road Employee Campground Check. Mr. Graves went over his staff report with the commission. In April 2025, the City of Idaho Springs approved CUP25-001, a Conditional Use Permit for AVA Rafting and Zipline Employee Camping Use at 95 E. Idaho Springs Road. This allowed employees of AVA Rafting and Zipline to camp at 95 E. Idaho Springs Road at their established campground, with certain conditions that would need to be met as part of the use. As of January 5, 2026, condition #15 has not been satisfied. The applicant did receive a building permit to perform the work needed to approve the camping platforms. However, this permit has not yet been closed as there are outstanding inspections. With that in mind, the camping platforms have not been authorized to be used. We did not receive word or see evidence that they were in use, but if the applicant would like to use them in 2026, they will need to close out this permit. Mr. Graves stated that he reached out to the Clear Creek Fire Authority and the Idaho Springs Police Department to see if they had any issues that required attention. No issues were brought up, and they were satisfied with operations in 2025. Staff do not see any reason to revoke the CUP and believe that it would be appropriate to allow the use to continue for the 2026 season, as approved.

REQUEST FOR DIRECTION

Does the Planning Commission have any questions, comments, or concerns that need to be addressed? AVA owner Duke Bradford was in attendance via ZOOM and was available for any questions from the commission. Mr. Graves mentioned that the only item he heard back on was some speeding that may occur around the area. Mr. Graves stated that the city should continue to monitor the shared use area and that things went well and its looking good for 2026.

Chair Olson stated she only had 1 concern, that item 15 on the list of conditions has not been satisfied yet. Mr. Graves stated that the applicant did receive a building permit to perform the work needed to approve the camping platforms. However, this permit has not yet been closed as there are outstanding inspections. With that in mind, the camping platforms have not been authorized to be used. The City did not receive word or see evidence that they were in use, but if the applicant would like to use them in 2026, they will need to close out this permit. Mr. Graves mentioned that is looked like this condition could be satisfied by April of this year. Chair Olson stated that item 15 should be completed prior to the 2026 rafting season.

Mr. Bradford agreed and stated that it was very reasonable, and the goal it to get into compliance with all of the conditions. Mr. Bradford also mentioned that they would be obtaining a slow/children at play sign to help with the speeding that may be occurring around the site. Mr. Graves mentioned that he went on a site visit, and he did not see any speed limit signs, and that the city should work in conjunction with CCMRD to get some speed limit signs placed. Commissioner Maxwell stated that this site will continue to grow and become more and more populated.

2026 Three Mile Plan Review A three-mile plan is required to be updated regularly according to Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) 31-12-105 (1) (e), as amended. Per the CRS, the plan is supposed to be updated annually. The CRS further states, “Prior to completion of any annexation within the three-mile area, the municipality shall have in place a plan for that area that generally describes the proposed location, character, and extent of streets, subways, bridges, waterways, waterfronts, parkways, playgrounds, squares, parks, aviation fields, other public ways, grounds, open spaces, public utilities, and terminals for water, light, sanitation, transportation, and power to be provided by the municipality and the proposed land uses for the area.”

Mr. Graves stated that we are not proposing any changes from the previous Three Mile Area Plan that was adopted in January 2025. One annexation occurred in 2025. This was the 1.99-acre parcel located at 839 CO 103. As it is directly adjacent to existing city lands (Idaho Springs Cemetery), this has had no material impact on the Three Mile Area Plan or Plan map. No infrastructure updates have occurred in 2025 that would impact any of the Plan areas included in the document. Staff propose that the 2026 Three Mile Area Plan be recommended to City Council with no changes.

Commissioner Howard moved to recommend that the Idaho Springs City Council approve Resolution #2, Series 2026, a resolution adopting the Idaho Springs Three Mile Area Plan for 2026. Commissioner Slaymaker seconded, second followed by an all in favor voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business

ADJOURMENT

Chair Olson Adjourned the meeting at 6:15 pm to go into work session.



TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Dylan Graves, Community Development Planner
SUBJECT: Ordinance No. 3, Series 2026 An Ordinance amending Section 21-131 of the Idaho Springs Municipal Code concerning parking space dimensions
MEETING DATE: February 5, 2026 Regular Meeting

SCOPE OF DISCUSSION

The scope of this report is to discuss changes to Section 21-131 of the Idaho Springs Municipal Code (“ISMC”) to consider reducing the required width of parking spaces from 9’ to 8.5’ and define the size of compact, oversized, and parallel parking spaces.

PROPOSAL

Parking Space Widths:

We discussed this at the January Planning Commission meeting, and I discussed this with the City Council on January 26th. To allow more parking to be built in city lots and on private lots, we have drafted an ordinance that would reduce the required parking space width from 9’ to 8.5’. This would allow for narrower parking spaces, which would allow for a few additional parking spaces to be striped around the city and allow private property owners to provide additional off-street parking spaces around the city. The 8.5’ width is common in other jurisdictions around Colorado and elsewhere and is a good way to maximize parking in the city without having to invest in additional parking resources.

In addition to the parking lot widths, the proposed ordinance also seeks to create standards for parallel, oversized, and compact parking spaces to clarify minimum standards for these types of parking spaces.

Compact spaces:

The city does not currently have a standard. We are proposing to define compact spaces as 8’ wide by 16’ long. These dimensions match standards found elsewhere in the state and would be suitable for small vehicles. The city would only stripe compact spaces where a traditional space would not fit. The goal would not be to establish substantial numbers of compact spaces, but to maximize the number of spaces on municipal lots. The city has previously approved 8’ x 16’ compact spaces in conjunction with the Habitat for Humanity homes on Virginia Street, so there is a prior example of where compact spaces were established in the city.

Parallel spaces:

While the city has many parallel parking spaces already, there is no standard in the ISMC. Measuring parallel parking spaces around the city, the average length is 22’. This distance corresponds with standards found elsewhere, which range from 22-25’. The draft ordinance includes a 22’ standard in keeping with the city’s current parallel spaces.

Oversized spaces:

Looking elsewhere in the state, many jurisdictions define oversized spaces and create standards for these spaces. The standards typically require spaces that are approximately double the size of a traditional parallel parking space. For Idaho Springs, this would equate to a 44’ length standard for oversized spaces.

REQUESTION FOR DIRECTION:

Do any commissioners have recommended changes. If so, we can accommodate these as part of a motion and I will make those changes before taking this to the City Council for first reading of the ordinance.

REQUEST FOR A MOTION: Motion to recommend approval of Ordinance No. 3, Series 2026 An Ordinance amending Section 21-131 of the Idaho Springs Municipal Code concerning parking space dimensions

CITY OF IDAHO SPRINGS
Clear Creek County, Colorado

Ordinance No. 3, Series 2026

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 21-131 OF THE IDAHO SPRINGS MUNICIPAL CODE CONCERNING PARKING SPACE DIMENSIONS

WHEREAS, the City of Idaho Springs, Colorado (the “City”), is a Colorado statutory municipality, duly organized and existing under the laws of the state of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article 23 of Title 31, C.R.S., the City, acting through its City Council (the “Council”), is authorized to adopt rules and regulations governing the planning, zoning and use of land within its territory; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to such authority, the Council previously adopted requirements concerning parking space dimensions, codified as Section 21-131 of the Idaho Springs Municipal Code (“Code”); and

WHEREAS, the Council has determined that it is desirable to update said Section 21-131 to reduce the required width of standard parking spaces, to define permissible dimensions of parallel and oversize parking spaces and to introduce compact parking space standards, all in the interest of promoting and facilitating the provision of adequate parking in the City as parking needs in the City are projected to exponentially increase in 2026 and beyond; and

WHEREAS, after reviewing and considering the recommendation of the City Planning Commission, the Council wishes to adopt and amend the parking dimension standards set forth herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF IDAHO SPRINGS, COLORADO, THAT:

Section 1. Section 21-131 of the Idaho Springs Municipal Code, concerning parking space dimensions and layout, is hereby amended as follows:

Sec. 21-131. - Parking dimensions; layout.

(A) The minimum size of a required standard parking space shall be a width of ~~nine (9)~~ eight and one-half (8.5) feet and a length of eighteen (18) feet. Each parking space required by Section 21-127 of this Code shall be a standard parking space unless otherwise expressly approved as a part of a development application pursuant to this Chapter 21.

(B) The size of a loading berth shall be ten (10) feet wide, thirty-five (35) feet long and fourteen (14) feet high.

(C) The minimum size of a compact parking space shall be a width of seven and one-half (7.5) feet and a length of sixteen (16) feet.

(D) The minimum length of parallel parking spaces shall be twenty-two (22) feet for a standard space and forty-four (44) feet for an oversized space.

Angle of parking	Stall depth	Curb length	Driveway width	
			One-way	Two-way
00 degrees	9' 0"	18' 0"	12' 0"	23' 0"
30 degrees	17' 10"	21' 10"	12' 0"	23' 0"
45 degrees	20' 6"	20' 6"	12' 0"	23' 0"
60 degrees	21' 10"	17' 10"	18' 0"	23' 0"
90 degrees	18' 0"	9' 0"	23' 0"	23' 0"

Section 2. Should any one or more sections or provisions of this Ordinance or of any Code provision enacted hereby be judicially determined invalid or unenforceable, such judgment shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remaining provisions of this Ordinance or of such Code provision, the intention being that the various sections and provisions are severable.

Section 3. Any and all Ordinances or Codes or parts thereof in conflict or inconsistent herewith are, to the extent of such conflict or inconsistency, hereby repealed; provided, however, that the repeal of any such Ordinance or Code provision or part thereof shall not revive any other section or part of any Ordinance or Code provision heretofore repealed or superseded.

INTRODUCED, READ AND ORDERED PUBLISHED at a Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Idaho Springs, Colorado, held on the _____ day of _____, 2026.

Chuck Harmon, Mayor

ATTESTED AND CERTIFIED:

Jennie Kim, City Clerk

PASSED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED at a Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Idaho Springs, Colorado, held on the ____ day of _____, 2026.

Chuck Harmon, Mayor

ATTESTED AND CERTIFIED:

Jenni Kim, City Clerk



TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Dylan Graves, Community Development Planner
SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Review – Background, Land Use and Community Character, and Strategic Growth Element
MEETING DATE: February 5, 2026

These sections of the Comprehensive Plan tie together nicely, which is why I brought them to the Commission first. For this month's meeting, we will be reviewing the drafts of the background/introduction section, the Land Use and Community Character section, and the Strategic Growth section. I have not engaged in much formatting and have many more photos to take to add to the plan, so this is a review of the content only.

These sections work well together because they tie together the background and guiding principles that shape the rest of the plan. The Land Use and Community Character and the Strategic Growth sections both focus on analyzing and identifying the best places to accommodate additional growth and development, determining what types of new businesses or uses might be appropriate where, and what types of housing are suitable for different parts of the city.

As we discussed previously, this is not a full re-write of the Plan. Rather, it is mostly an opportunity to focus on new goals and objectives to help guide the city over the next 5-10 years. That said, there have been a lot of necessary changes made over the past 8 months or so to reframe the Plan within the city's current context and to update data and statistics within the Plan. There are a few things to note from each section that we should discuss further, though I have reviewed and updated everything in these sections as relevant.

Background and Introduction:

The key updates to this section are as follows:

1. New section (pg. 2-5): Guiding Principles for the Plan
2. New section (pg. 6): How to Use the Plan
3. New section (pg. 10-14): Achievements Since 2017
4. Chapter 2: Background – Greatly reduced this section. We previously had five pages about the history of Idaho Springs. I reduced it to 1. We have plenty of history in many other plans and documents for those that are interested.
5. Updated all the demographic and economic information.
6. Chapter 3: Updated the vision statements to match what City Council adopted in 2025.

Land Use and Community Character:

The key updates to this section are as follows:

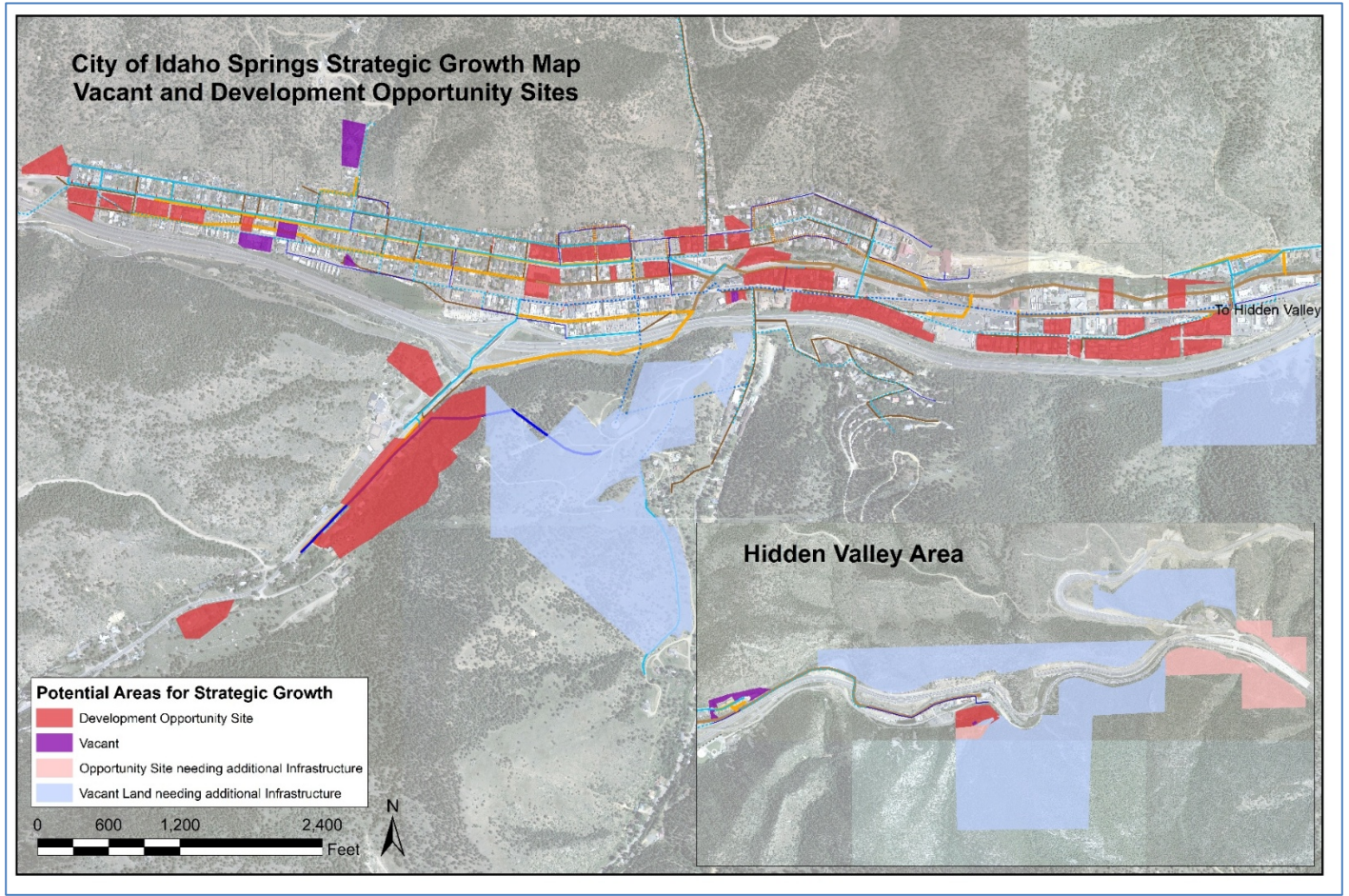
1. Adding a "principles" section that talks about architectural design and preserving community character (pg. 1-3)
2. Updates to land use categories
 - a. Kept all the same categories but creating more flexibility to make it more about mass and scale of development, rather than the use itself.
 - b. Previously certain categories were appropriate for only single-family residential development, but I believe that we should be more flexible to allow other uses if they are compatible with the other uses/structures in the area.
 - c. Under the 2017 plan, we couldn't allow small-scale commercial uses (like a corner shop) in a residential area but there could be a future where we might want more mixed-use type of developments.
 - d. The 2017 plan seemed to largely match the city's land use recommendation map with the existing zoning, whereas now I am trying to be more proactive at allowing more flexibility where it makes sense while protecting areas that are largely residential and have historic characteristics we want to protect.
3. Updates to the objectives for this section.

Strategic Growth Element:

This is a brand-new section that the state is requiring jurisdictions to adopt. The purpose of the section is to force communities to think about where growth and development could and should be promoted. The goal is to get communities to identify areas that are appropriate for development and areas that are not appropriate for development. While the state is broadly pro-housing and wants to encourage as much development as possible, they do not want to promote sprawl developments that use undeveloped lands (open space, forested lands, etc.) when there are redevelopment and infill development opportunities. The goal is to prioritize infill development in the existing city that is close to existing city infrastructure and only push for greenfield development if appropriate.

I analyzed all the lots in the city based on a few different metrics. First, where are the vacant and underutilized “opportunity” sites that could be redeveloped within city limits. These opportunity sites are those that could accept additional density or intensity of uses, e.g. a single-family home on a commercially zoned property.

Second, I looked at how close these lots were to existing infrastructure. If adequate water and sewer facilities and other utilities were available nearby, I identified them as a higher-potential property for redevelopment. Other properties would require infrastructure investment, increasing development costs. Here is the map breaking those sites up into those with infrastructure and those with improvements needed:



This map shows us a few things.

1. Red properties: These are the most common opportunities identified for new development and redevelopment but because they have existing uses on-site, the timeframe for redevelopment on these parcels is probably longer term. If a property owner wanted to redevelop their properties, they certainly could because there is adequate water and sewer infrastructure in the vicinity, but it would require demolition or rehabilitation of existing buildings on-site to accommodate additional density or more intense uses. Over time, these properties may be redeveloped and if they are, they could accommodate more density.
 - a. Note that many of these parcels are small (about 50% are under 5,000 square feet) and would be unlikely to accommodate substantial density increases.
 - b. The east end of town has the largest concentration of larger properties that could be redeveloped and are clearly underutilized. This is a key area identified for infill and redevelopment, as shown with the East End Overlay District.
2. Purple properties: These are vacant sites adjacent to existing infrastructure and utilities. These are the top locations for infill development because they do not have existing uses on-site that would require rehabilitation/redevelopment. Some may be complicated due to slopes or lot size, but if someone wanted to build on these parcels, there would be relatively few hurdles.
 - a. Note that some of these lots are under 5,000 square feet and/or are located on steep slopes. In these cases, redevelopment potential is likely limited.
3. Pink properties: These are opportunity sites like the red properties, but they do not have water or sewer infrastructure nearby or are missing other key infrastructure elements. Some of these sites are likely appropriate for redevelopment because they are near a highway interchange (Exit 243) but would need infrastructure improvements to be feasible for higher intensity uses.
4. Blue properties: These are vacant properties that are missing at least one key infrastructure or utility element that would be needed before they could be developed.

Taken together, this section is meant to lay out areas where we as the city think development would be appropriate without requiring any sort of development. Additionally, other properties may be suitable for development or redevelopment even if not shown on the map. These are simply properties within city limits that could be redeveloped without going through any special processes, like a rezoning.

Strategic Growth Element and the Three Mile Plan:

The Three Mile Plan, adopted annually, assesses the possibility of annexing future lands into the city. This plan identifies the areas near the city that could be annexed and the areas that are infeasible for many different possible reasons. When developing the strategic growth element, I referenced the Three Mile Plan to see where we might be able to grow outwards into undeveloped areas. We want to avoid “sprawl” development, but if there are undeveloped areas that could be developed for housing or other beneficial uses, they could be considered.

REQUEST FOR DIRECTION

These are drafts and I am looking for feedback over the next month or so. Any suggestions, comments, changes, or feedback are appreciated either at the work session or at some other point in February!

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Colorado Revised Statutes give the authority and responsibility to municipalities to “make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality” (C.R.S. 31-23-206). The statute further states: “The Plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the municipality and its environs which will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare.” (C.R.S. 31-23-207).

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range plan that looks into the future. It articulates a vision for the future of the City of Idaho Springs and provides the goals and actions to achieve that vision. It is a policy document that provides guidance to City Council, Planning Commission, City Staff, residents, businesses, and developers to facilitate informed decisions about the current and future needs of the community. It is a valuable tool developed to:

- Promote the community’s vision for the future of Idaho Springs;
- Be a guide for consistent decision making;
- Maintain and improve the physical environment of the City;
- Be used as the basis for more specific rules, regulations, and ordinances that implement the policies expressed through the Comprehensive Plan;
- Identify and set budgeting priorities;
- Provide for a balance between the natural and built environment.
- Be used as the basis for future capital improvements, City projects, and evaluation of annexations and development proposals;
- Plan in a thoughtful, cohesive, and comprehensive manner; and,
- Protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens in the community.
- Address both current and long-term needs.
- Balance competing interests and demands.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principle is people - residents, business owners, visitors. Regardless of what your relationship with the city is, this plan is meant to address your needs and wants for the community. Not everything in this Plan will address everyone's needs but we have done our best to be respectful of disparate needs and wants in a way that leaves no one out. Inevitably at some point someone will feel left out - that this plan does not accommodate their needs. At such a time, contact the city. Staff and elected officials need to hear what's missing so it can be addressed in the future, and a better Idaho Springs can be built.

Ultimately this plan is a visionary document and is made with a positive look to the future. Where existing regulations no longer serve the needs of the community, the plan seeks to change those over time. Where priorities have shifted, this plan is written to shift with them. However, at its core, the goal is to serve people. We intend to serve people by accommodating their transportation needs, by aspiring to build housing that is affordable and attainable to those who live and work here, by providing services that address the community's needs.

The city's vision is tied to four overarching principles that the city's objectives fit within across all elements included in this Plan.

Idaho Springs is:

A historic community.

We are defined by our historic downtown and our quaint residential neighborhoods that have not changed much in 100+ years. This is a key asset for residents, businesses, and visitors who want Idaho Springs to retain the historic feel that makes it so special. Over and over, we heard that historic character and local, small-town charm were key to keeping Idaho Springs a pleasant place to live. Historic preservation keeps the city from changing overnight and preserves small-town feel in important, historical parts of the city. While growth is encouraged where appropriate, the city does not want to sacrifice the things that make us special.

We will look to support history by protecting the historic city center; working to preserve existing neighborhoods; and supporting local residents and property owners in rehabilitating properties. We will also work to preserve the stories of past and current residents to keep their histories alive. We will strive to ensure that new developments support, complement, and build upon the historic foundation that has brought us to the present. By looking at the city's history and what has brought us to this point, we can help establish a future that pays homage to the past while keeping opportunities open for years to come.

A connected community.

The city is defined by connections. As a small, tight-knit community, the connections between neighbors are an important part of Idaho Springs. We are connected in town with a walkable built environment with a transportation network that gets people to necessary services and shops every day. We are also connected to the rest of Colorado via the I-70 corridor. This is a critical link to

social opportunities, employment, shopping, learning, open space, recreation, and other amenities and services. It is also the key connection to Idaho Springs from elsewhere, bringing visitors and their wallets from around the country to our community. Enhancing this connection is key to ensuring that residents and visitors alike can easily come and go to and from the city.

To support this principle, we will focus on maintaining and improving human-scale design to help foster strong physical, social, and cultural connections. Public infrastructure will be designed to prioritize connections, and we will work to improve nearby access to the outdoors, recreation, and essential services. Regionally, we will continue working with CDOT and other regional partners to improve regional transit and access to key hubs, including our Clear Creek and Gilpin County neighbors, the Front Range, and beyond.

A healthy community.

A healthy community is a community with access to recreation, healthcare, safe and secure housing, and community amenities. Idaho Springs is a place with a great diversity of residents and visitors across ages and backgrounds. We will prioritize providing a safe and healthy environment for everyone by providing a safe transportation network; clean water; access to recreation and the outdoors; and access to safe, affordable, and secure housing.

We will focus on maintaining and improving local quality of life so that those who choose to call Idaho Springs home now and in the future can do so happily and healthily. Idaho Springs will look to support families by providing a range of housing options and prices that are friendly to families with children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. New housing will be developed in a manner that reinforces the community's unique character and provides access to schools, parks, and other public facilities. A focus on third spaces and other public improvements is another focus to give young people safe places to socialize and visitors places where they want to linger. Expanding outdoor amenities and recreational opportunities for residents will help people stay healthy and enjoy the area, however they want to recreate.

Protecting environmental resources, including the city's water supply, its air quality, and its open spaces is critical to ensure health and vitality. Working with the Fire Authority and other regional partners to mitigate wildfire risk, with CDOT to mitigate environmental impacts from I-70, and with other regional partners to support environmental protection is key to maintaining a high quality of life.

A welcoming community.

Idaho Springs is a place that should be welcoming to all. We want to create an environment where businesses thrive, visitors come back again and again, and residents can enjoy a high quality of life.

The city intends to continue to support existing businesses to enhance economic growth by addressing parking issues; providing safe streets and sidewalks; and working with the business community to meet the businesses' unique needs in this community. Promoting alternative transportation methods to access town, enhancing visitor experiences, and marketing Idaho Springs as a destination in

and of itself will only help the community thrive. Continued focus on attractive gateways to the city will further enhance the welcome we can offer visitors to the community.

Welcoming new housing developments, and new residents that come with them, is a way to ensure that the schools remain vibrant, the streets filled with laughter, and businesses remain fully staffed. Supporting housing is a key way to drive economic development and keep neighborhoods lively.

Arts and culture are essential to maintaining Idaho Springs' unique and distinctive identity and drive future economic growth while providing opportunities for residents and students to express themselves. Strengthening this industry could make Idaho Springs a premier destination for cultural events, entertainment, and the arts along the I-70 corridor. Opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in and experience the arts and culture scene will continue to be accessible and inclusive.

Accessibility is an important focus for an inclusive community. Idaho Springs streets, sidewalks, and public spaces should be accessible for all to ensure everyone in the city can access essential services, businesses, and public spaces. The city will strive to build inclusivity into projects to prioritize accessible design outcomes.

Finally, public participation and input is critical to ensuring that future development meets the community's needs. To that end, the city welcomes the public to participate in planning efforts and development decisions.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This Plan is a tool for decision-makers and property owners to use in making choices about public investment and land development in the future. The Comprehensive Plan provides a vision for how future development should proceed in and around Idaho Springs. It is NOT intended to provide legal review criteria for specific development proposals. The plan is intended to provide guidance for future rezoning and future updates to the city's land use regulations. The Comprehensive Plan provides a guide for future land use and redevelopment opportunity; however, it does NOT define site specific design. The City has established a vision for Idaho Springs, with goals that are built from this vision. Objectives and strategies specifically articulate how to achieve the community's vision. As it is an advisory policy document, this Plan will influence subsequent revisions to the Municipal Code to ensure consistency between the two. Proposed changes in land use should generally conform to the Plan's goals, objectives and maps.

For City Staff:

Members of the city staff will use the Comprehensive Plan to guide their day-to-day functions, plan for future improvements and initiatives, and provide a framework for future development and regulatory code changes

For City Council and Planning Commission:

These bodies will use the Comprehensive Plan to guide their long-term strategic planning for the city and to consider proposals and ideas that come before them on a regular basis. Both the City Council and Planning Commission will use the vision and various recommendations contained within the Comprehensive Plan to guide all other city plans and programs.

For Developers and Property Owners:

Developers and property owners will use the Comprehensive Plan to understand how future development and redevelopment should proceed. It is meant to provide clarity so that these groups can plan their projects with the city's vision in mind.

For the General Public:

Residents and visitors to Idaho Springs will use the Comprehensive Plan to understand the community's long-term vision and the key policies and recommendations the city is following to achieve these goals. The public will also use the Comprehensive Plan as a reference document to understand the framework behind various city-led programs and initiatives.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

To make a decision about a proposed project, this Plan is intended to be used with and guide the development of updated city regulations. Numerous other plans and studies have been undertaken over the years which have influenced and impacted decisions made within the city of Idaho Springs. Many of these plans have not been implemented fully due to lack of knowledge that they exist, financial implications, the number of these studies or conflicting information and duplicative efforts. This Plan attempts to incorporate, recognize or reference the recommendations of these documents. Some of these documents include:

- Clear Creek County Master Plan 2030 (2017)
- Boomer Bond Summary Report (2017)
- the East End Action Plan (2016)
- City of Idaho Springs Source Water Protection Plan (2016)
- Clear Creek County Mini Blueprint 2.0 (2016)
- Idaho Springs Highest and Best Use Feasibility Study for the Interstate 70 Economic Hub at Exit 240 (2016)
- Clear Creek County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2016)
- Planning for Hazards: Land Use Solutions for Colorado (2016)
- Idaho Springs Community Wildfire Protection Implementation Plan (2014)
- Advanced Guideway System Feasibility Study (2014)
- Clear Creek and Gilpin Counties Broadband Assessment (2013)
- Imagine Clear Creek County Economic Agenda (2012)
- Downtown assessment for the Colorado community of Idaho Springs (2012)
- Clear Creek County Housing Needs Assessment (2012)
- I-70 Mountain Corridor Record of Decision and Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (2011)
- Idaho Springs Area of Special Attention Report (2010)
- Virginia Canyon Open Space Concept (2006)
- Virginia Canyon Mountain Park Master Plan (2019)
- Idaho Springs Downtown Master Plan (2021)
- Historic Resources Survey Plan (2022)
- Clear Creek County Recreation and Outdoor Management Plan (2024)

PLAN AMENDMENTS

An amendment is required when a requested change significantly alters the land use recommendations or other elements of the Comprehensive Plan document. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan will be approved by City Council with a recommendation made by the Planning Commission. An amendment may be submitted concurrently with a rezoning, subdivision, development permit or other land use application. An amendment may be requested by a citizen, property owner, City or County official, or City staff.

Criteria for Plan Amendments:

The city may amend the Comprehensive Plan if the proposed change is consistent with the vision (intent), goals and policies of the Plan and one or more of the following:

- Subsequent events have invalidated the original premise and findings; and/or
- The character and/or condition of the area has changed in that the amendment is consistent with this Plan; and/or
- The community or area will derive benefits from the proposed amendment.

NEED FOR THE UPDATE

This plan is an update of the most recent 2017 Plan update as part of a continued effort to guide the community's future. The first city plan was adopted in 1994 and followed by updates in 2001, 2004, 2005, 2008, and 2017.

Since 2017, several additional long-range planning efforts have been undertaken and completed, building upon the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations, goals, and objectives. These additional plans include:

- 2019: Virginia Canyon Mountain Park Master Plan
 - Amended several times, this master plan focuses on prioritizing environmental, recreational, and economic value of the open space and creates an operations management plan. The park is now operational, with approximately 15 miles of trails as of 2025, which are still growing through work with the city's partners, such as the Colorado Mountain Bike Association (COMBA). Finding funding sources and mechanisms continues to be a clear goal for this park.
- 2022: Idaho Springs Downtown Plan
 - This plan focuses on the area around the Historic District and puts forth a guide for downtown improvements over the next 15-20 years. A focus on parking, mobility improvements, and downtown revitalization is a key component of this plan.
- 2023: Idaho Springs Sports & Events Complex Master Plan: This plan focuses on the redevelopment of the Shelly/Quinn Ball Fields Park property into a sports and events complex, with a skatepark (completed in 2025), tennis and pickleball courts (to be completed in 2026), a playground, recreation fields, the existing performance stage, and a baseball diamond (to remain). The plan incorporates the longtime community desire to offer a wider range of recreational opportunities and serve as an outdoor community hub for the community.
- Three Mile Area Plan: Updated annually, this plan focuses on potential future development opportunities surrounding the city's existing boundaries and considers the feasibility for annexation of adjacent parcels using metrics like water and sewer infrastructure, access, etc.
- 2022 Historic Resources Survey Plan: Adopted in 2022, the plan is a comprehensive document written to assist the community in analyzing the current state of historic surveys and making informed decisions regarding future documentation projects. The plan sets goals about what historical topics to research and places to record and recommend projects to achieve those goals. This plan

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This Plan was developed and reviewed in public meetings and workshops at Planning Commission meetings between April 2025 and XXX, 2026. City staff organized several meetings at City Hall, were out in the community at events, and organized a community-wide survey to gather community ideas, input, and support.

City staff hosted a kickoff meeting on April 30, 2025 at City Hall. Approximately 20 community members attended.

A public survey was distributed throughout the community on a variety of topics relevant to the Plan update. Survey questions and results are included as an appendix to this Plan. The survey garnered over 60 responses, the majority of which were completed by Idaho Springs locals. Survey responses are included as an appendix to this Plan.

City staff hosted weekly “coffee chats” on various Plan topics throughout the spring and early summer of 2025, discussing Plan element topics such as housing, transportation, tourism, and economic development. Approximately 15 community members attended coffee chat events at City Hall.

City staff organized a community meeting on historic preservation, community character, and neighborhood charm on June 25, 2025, with 15 attendees (not including staff). Discussion focused on the need to balance growth and economic development against existing community character to avoid losing the charm and characteristics that make Idaho Springs a nice place for residents.

City staff also organized a meeting about fire mitigation and fire risk that was hosted by the Clear Creek Fire Authority and was attended by over 25 people to discuss how to mitigate against fire risk, engage in structure hardening efforts, and address funding gaps to engage in mitigation efforts. Fire mitigation – and resilience in general – is a key component of this Plan in later sections.

The historic element was discussed at several Historic Preservation Review Commission (HPRC) meetings after the commission had expressed interest in participating in the Plan update. This element – and all others – were then presented at a series of Planning Commission meetings in autumn 2025 into early 2026.

The city’s Business and Community Promotions Board (BCPB) was integral in drafting updated goals and objectives related to economic development and tourism, having provided substantial input and feedback at two BCPB meetings in late 2025.

The final Plan was presented to the Planning Commission on XXX and to the City Council on XXX where a final resolution adopting the Plan was passed.

ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2017

This section provides a retrospective look at the progress made since the adoption of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan. It highlights major accomplishments, completed projects, ongoing initiatives, and areas where challenges persist. This reflection is vital to understanding how the City has implemented its vision, where policy and strategy have proven effective, and where updates or new approaches are necessary moving forward. In addition to new objectives and goals, several maps have been updated to reflect updates to various city plans and new annexations that have occurred since the adoption of the 2017 Plan.

Land Use and Community Character

There have been significant changes in the city since the adoption of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan. One of the most notable changes has been the opening of Virginia Canyon Mountain Park and the impact it has had on East End businesses. This has shifted business from being primarily geared toward the automotive industry to a destination for hikers and mountain bikers alike. In the Exit 240 Gateway Area, the City has annexed critical parcels of land into City Limits. Some of these include the Idaho Springs Cemetery and the site of future affordable senior housing.

One of the objectives of the 2017 Plan was to beautify, preserve, and activate the Historic District. In 2024, City Staff and the Historic Preservation Review Commission (HPRC) updated the Historic District design guidelines, aimed at preserving the Historic District while achieving beautification and activation goals. Additionally, the City has worked diligently to improve signage throughout Idaho Springs, including better wayfinding for key attractions such as the Charlie Taylor Water Wheel and Clear Creek Greenway. Furthermore, through the adoption of the City's Managed Parking Program, we have maximized the amount of paid parking spaces surrounding the Historic District, allowing us to close the Historic District to vehicle traffic during the summer months and activate the Miner Street Marketplace.

Another objective of the 2017 Plan was to upgrade the appearance of Idaho Springs as viewed from I-70. One of the most significant ways this has been accomplished is the commitment that new developments with considerable visibility from I-70 have primarily been designed to face the Interstate rather than back up to it.

Housing

The needs and goals for housing established in the 2017 Plan remain unchanged. Idaho Springs continues to experience unprecedented growth amidst an aging population, and there remains a tremendous need for affordable housing, workforce housing, and senior housing. The most significant achievement since the 2017 Plan was the establishment of the Clear Creek Multijurisdictional Housing Authority. The goal of this housing authority is to support the development of affordable housing that addresses the diverse needs of all residents within Clear Creek County and the local municipalities while strengthening community and providing options to a broad spectrum of the population, including vulnerable groups and seniors. The establishment of the

housing authority has enabled us to achieve goals outlined in the 2017 Plan, including increasing the availability of affordable and senior housing.

The city also imposed regulations for Short Term Rentals (STRs) in 2018. The city allows 15 STR licenses and has a lottery system in place to allocate licenses when they come available. This has ensured that homes within the city remain available to long-term tenants.

The city has continued to invest in projects to support affordable housing, including the purchase of approximately two acres of land for a multi-family senior affordable housing facility on Highway 103. The city received a grant in 2025 to support development of that property, which will fulfill key Plan goals for senior housing projects that allow seniors to “age in place.”

Transportation

The most significant transportation goal that has been met since the 2017 Plan is the creation and implementation of the City’s Managed Parking Program. This created a paid parking structure for visitors in Downtown Idaho Springs, as well as the establishment of residential parking-only zones. Furthermore, City and County residents have been allowed to register for resident permits, which enables them to park in designated areas within the Historic District at no charge, allowing them to enjoy the diverse dining and shopping options in the City of Idaho Springs.

One of the goals in the 2017 Plan was the devolution of Colorado Blvd and general improvements as part of this change. This work has been completed, and the impact continues to be seen in the revitalization of the East End of the city. Along with the East End updates and the establishment of the City’s Managed Parking Program, there is now adequate residential parking along Colorado Blvd, keeping visitors away from critical residential parking areas.

While many of the 2017 Plan’s transportation goals are ongoing, several goals have been achieved in the past 8 years. Long-term improvements to East Idaho Springs Road are continuing, and a productive partnership with CDOT completed the section of East Idaho Springs Road from east of the wastewater treatment plant to the former Game Check station.

While parking requirements have not been eliminated for businesses in the Historic District, the City Council approved the implementation of a fee-in-lieu program for parking requirements that new businesses have utilized in the Historic District.

Parking remains a key issue for residents, businesses, and visitors alike and is an ongoing item for discussion and work in the current, updated Plan.

Economic Development and Tourism

Like many sections of the 2017 Plan, the goals to support and cultivate economic development and tourism are ongoing. The city continues to maintain an active role in economic development through our partnerships with Clear Creek Economic Development

Corporation (CCEDC) and the City's newly formed Business Community Promotions Board, which has greatly increased the city's focus on economic development and tourism. The city has further strengthened its commitment to supporting economic development and tourism through the creation of the Director of Business and Community Promotions position.

In 2021, the city adopted the Idaho Springs Downtown Plan, which focuses on creating a vision for downtown redevelopment and activation. An important part of this plan is parking, with the goal of helping manage visitors and protect parking in residential areas. As of 2025, the city is working on designing a large-scale mobility improvement project to bring in better transit infrastructure, increase downtown parking with a parking structure, improve Miner Street and the Idaho Mall, and improve traffic flow at the Exit 240 interchange. These key goals came out of the 2021 downtown plan.

The focus on developing the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park (VCMP) has been a key priority over the length of the previous Comprehensive Plan. While discussed in more detail in the "Recreation" section below, the success of the park has helped support development and redevelopment of the East End business district.

An ongoing focus of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan was to actively pursue incentivizing economic development and supporting local businesses while protecting the quality of life of Idaho Springs residents. This continues into this updated plan, as this plan is a community-led document focused on community goals first and foremost.

Historic Resources Element

Historic preservation remains a strong priority at the forefront of residents' and visitors' minds, and this has been demonstrated many times since 2017. The two key objectives from the 2017 Plan were to:

- Continue to protect & preserve the historic resources of the Idaho Springs area.
- Promote the benefits of historic preservation.

As a Certified Local Government (CLG), the city acts as a local preservation program to apply for grants of federal money for local projects, exercise greater autonomy in nominating properties to the National Register and participating in countywide historic preservation programs, and review Colorado State Tax Credits for local projects. With this status also comes the responsibility of reviewing and enforcing state and local preservation laws.

The 2017 Plan sought to explore how to increase participation in the Historic Preservation Review Commission (HPRC), which reviews projects that impact the exterior of historic buildings within the city. The HPRC has become a strong group with significant expertise on historic preservation related topics and strengthened the city's Design Guidelines for Historic Structures in 2024 to ensure that property owners appropriately rehabilitate historic structures. The city has focused on ensuring that the HPRC review is the first step in an approval process, rather than the last.

The city published the *Historic Resources Survey Plan, 2022* using funding from a State Historical Fund Grant, which established goals for historical topics in the city and recommends projects that help achieve those goals. This plan builds on previous surveys to establish a set of projects that the city is currently working on and will continue to do so, which you will see as part of this 2025 Comprehensive Plan update. Over 300 properties around the city have been surveyed and analyzed for historical integrity, with a continued priority of expanding this work to have a complete understanding of Idaho Springs historical resources. Work is ongoing for surveying, with a goal of exploring new historic districts around the city to protect additional historical resources while providing financial opportunities for residents and property owners.

Continued work is needed on public engagement and educational programs to help property owners understand the need for historic preservation and the opportunities to receive financial support for renovation, preservation, and upkeep of historic properties. More work on historical tourism is needed, as well. Continued work on designating residential properties as local historic sites is another ongoing goal that will be included in this updated Plan.

Environment Element

The environment remains a key focus for the city and its residents, with progress made towards goals and objectives in many areas but with ongoing needs that will continue to need attention.

The city has worked diligently to protect water quality and water supply for the city. The Idaho Springs reservoir is a critical resource that remains in good condition, providing more than adequate water to the community. The city has won several awards since 2017 related to wastewater treatment, water quality, and water supply, thanks to the efforts of the city's water/wastewater department.

Wildfire prevention and mitigation is an ongoing concern. Beetle kill is a current issue causing problems in the forests surrounding the city. The Idaho Springs City Council has focused on fire mitigation as a key program going forward, with focus on developing programs that can help residents improve wildfire resiliency and expand defensible space.

Working with CDOT, Clear Creek County, and other stakeholders, large infrastructure projects have largely avoided impacts to wildlife and their habitats during development. CDOT has been entrenched in a large-scale I-70 improvement project that is anticipated to continue into 2028, which includes provisions for wildlife friendly fencing, wildlife underpasses/corridors, water quality improvements, and riparian habitat restorations. Within the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park, the city has created several bighorn sheep protection zones that ensure that habitat for this species is protected. The city has also installed bear-resistant containers throughout the city, replacing non-resistant options.

The 2017 Plan discussed considering a Hazard Overlay District to apply additional hazard mitigation/risk reduction regulations to existing zone districts. This has not yet been done but remains a priority in the updated Plan.

Additional noise and light pollution reductions may also be needed, as this was a goal of the 2017 Plan which has not been substantially addressed in the intervening years.

Parks, Open Space, Trails, and Recreation Element

The 2017 Plan focused on building upon and expanding recreational offerings in Idaho Springs. This has been largely successful over the past 8 years.

Courtney Ryley Cooper (CRC) Park expansion was completed, relocating the community garden to the area, building public restroom facilities, and expanding the size of the lawn in the park. A pedestrian bridge connects Riverside Drive to CRC Park today as part of the Clear Creek Trail.

The Clear Creek Trail (formerly known as the Peaks to Plains Trail) has been completed through the city limits and will eventually connect from Denver to Loveland Ski Area through the city. The city has committed to being a part of the Clear Creek Trail Collaborative, a group of all stakeholders along the route committed to helping realize full construction and implementation of the trail corridor.

The Virginia Canyon Mountain Park (VCMP) has been a great success, bringing a new category of visitors to the city to enjoy over 14 miles of mountain bike and hiking trails, with more mileage coming over the next few years. Partnering with the Colorado Mountain Bike Association (COMBA), downhill-focused mountain bike trails have been built through the park that have drawn thousands of riders each month to the city.

More work is needed to continue to enhance recreational opportunities in Clear Creek. The city has a robust rafting industry that brings visitors to the city and continued focus on improving river put ins is a priority of this plan.

Finally, the city has focused on improving the Shelly / Quinn Ball Fields Park. While already well used by youth and adult recreation leagues, and activated for events like Rapid Grass annually, the city has partnered with the Clear Creek Metropolitan Recreation District (CCMRD) to redevelop the park, converting the eastern ballfield into a skate park, tennis/pickleball courts, formal parking spaces, a playground, and green space. A long-term goal is to bring running water to the park for a permanent bathroom at that location.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

During the winter of 1858-59, George Jackson set up camp at the point where Chicago Creek and Clear Creek met. It was here that Mr. Jackson discovered gold on January 7, 1859, and helped spark the Colorado Gold Rush. Within a matter of months following Mr. Jackson's discovery, thousands flocked to the region, bringing the first major white populations into the area and settling into the cities of Denver, Boulder, Central City and Idaho Springs. By 1861, the region was no longer considered part of the Kansas Territory but the new territory of Colorado. The population of the area now known as Clear Creek County quickly grew to more than 60,000 people. When the Gold Rush ended, the territory continued to prosper in part because of the railroads built for the transport of gold. Statehood came in 1876, only 15 years after Colorado had become a territory.

Idaho Springs is located between the ridges that made many fortunes. It is easy to see how the city grew around the mines and followed the contours of the land. Industry developed along Clear Creek, homes and narrow streets sprang up at the base of the steep inclines and the residents built a host of churches and shops. In the middle of this, the Miner Street commercial district grew into the cornerstone of Idaho Springs' historic landscape. All these elements - the topography, the mines, the homes, the shops, the churches and the creek - have survived relatively intact and, when viewed as a whole, afford modern day Coloradoans a rare insight into the history not just of Colorado but of development in the western United States.

For many years mining was an important part of the local economy. Mining brought railroads, wagon roads and commerce to the new city. With the advent of the 20th century, the number of mines and active claims began to shrink as the easily mined ores played out. A few large mining companies started to monopolize mining in the area and a population which had once approached 7,000 began to drop. The decline in precious mineral mining and population continued through the first half of the 20th century, and most of the mines had closed down by the end of World War II. Many of the towns created by the miners of the 1800s have disappeared or become ghost towns. Idaho Springs, widely regarded as one of the first sites of a major Colorado gold strike, is among the handful of western gold rush towns that have survived to the present day. Unlike many of the others, however, Idaho Springs has not just survived but continues to be a vibrant community with a thriving downtown, steady population and a strong economy.

KEY ASSETS IN IDAHO SPRINGS:

- With its location being less than thirty miles from the Denver metro area, Idaho Springs allows for easy day travel to and from Denver. Thousands of vehicles pass by the city with its four I-70 interchanges each day. The city has invested heavily in marketing and advertising to capture tourism dollars and foster economic development in the area.
- Clear Creek, a popular rafting river with 49,356 commercial rafting trips through the city in 2025, directly bisects the city.
- The Virginia Canyon Mountain Park (VCMP) is open to the public after many years of development. The project, which contains public mountain biking and hiking trails, has brought large numbers of recreational users from the Front Range and beyond for in-town recreational opportunities.
- The Indian Hot Springs, discovered by George Jackson several days before his gold strike, now serves as a major tourist destination.
- The Mount Blue Sky Scenic Byway, originating directly from town, is easily accessible from the metro area.
- The City of Idaho Springs maintains a historical character in terms of mining and historic architecture in the central business district, offers tours of structures which are on the National Historic Register such as the Argo Gold Mine and Mill, and has adopted 1041 regulations to ensure that the historic character of the community is retained. The city has fifteen (15) city-owned historic sites and facilities.
- The city is located near several other towns which retain heritage assets, including Central City and Georgetown. Heritage tourism has emerged as an increasingly viable segment of the tourism economy and is an important part of Idaho Springs' tourism-marketing strategy.

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Since the 1950s the percentage of Clear Creek County's population living in unincorporated areas has substantially increased, while the percentage of the county's population living in Idaho Springs has been reduced from a high of almost 54% to less than 20% in 2014. Such a marked change has resulted in increased demand for county services which outstrip revenues.

Since the middle of the 20th century, the City has experienced minor swings in population based upon economic cycles associated with mining and tourism. First, the construction of U.S. Highways 6 and 40 started the expansion of automobile tourism, which has been the mainstay of the local economy for half a century. Later, the construction of I-70 brought both opportunities and challenges. The interstate's location and ability to move people to and from more distant areas quickly enhanced the development of mountain resort communities, first as ski resorts and more recently as year-round destinations. It also shortened day travel time from the Denver metro area to mountain communities across western Colorado.

Growth projections for Idaho Springs vary considerably depending upon the source. The city has an adequate water supply to meet these projected needs although expansion, and recent improvements to the city's wastewater treatment plant ensure that there is adequate capacity to meet the needs associated with future growth. See this Plan's water supply element for more information. The

city has ensured that potential future growth continues to be considered through updates to the Three Mile Area Plan, through audits of the existing city codes to make it easier to develop housing in the city, and through strategic property purchases.

Data suggests a modest population increase is anticipated, though the population has remained relatively steady since the 1980s:

Year	Population	Growth Rate	Average Household Size
1980	2077		2.5
1990	1834	-11.70%	2.41
2000	1889	3.00%	2.25
2010	1717	-9.10%	2.18
2020	1782	3.80%	2.34

Denver and Colorado Growth

Colorado is still experiencing population growth but has slowed since 2017. The 2017 Plan reported Colorado as the second fastest growing state in 2015. As of 2024, Colorado is no longer even one of the top ten fastest growing states, according to US Census Bureau data. Most current population growth continues to occur in the Denver Metropolitan Statistical Area* (MSA), with a population increase of 82,000 between 2020 and 2024 and a 28.81% population increase between 2000 and 2023. Given that the city of Idaho Springs is less than 30 minutes from the Denver Metro, pressures for additional housing as well as transportation improvements continue to be paramount for the foreseeable future.

Idaho Springs Age Demographics

The median age in Idaho Springs is estimated at 39.8 years old, a decrease from 41.7 years old at the time of the 2017 Plan. Although younger than the median age of 49.2 in Clear Creek County, Idaho Springs still has a higher median age as compared to Colorado as a whole, which is listed as 37.9 years old. As can be seen above, 19.3% of the population of Idaho Springs is over 65 years old, as opposed to the 15% it was when this Comprehensive Master Plan was last revised. Data indicates the percentage of Idaho Springs' residents that are high school graduates (92.1%) is slightly less than Clear Creek County as a whole (94.6%) but is similar to the Denver Region as a whole (~92%). However, 50% of Idaho Springs residents have at least a bachelor's degree, which is higher than the approximately 46.4% of the residents in the state but lower than the 56.3% of Clear Creek County residents with a degree.

Idaho Springs Age Breakdown			
Under 5 Years	3.80%	45 to 49 years	5.40%
5.9 years	2.70%	50 to 54 years	10.80%
10 to 14 years	5.20%	55 to 59 years	7.50%
15 to 19 years	9.30%	60 to 64 years	6.90%
20 to 24 years	11.60%	65 to 69 years	5.90%
25 to 29 years	4.50%	70 to 74 years	5.10%
30 to 34 years	12.60%	75 to 79 years	4.70%
35 to 39 years	5.90%	80 to 84 years	1.50%
40 to 44 years	4.90%	85 years and over	2.10%

Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Economy

Economies do not follow jurisdictional boundaries. Idaho Springs’ economy is regional in nature and is shaped by the metro area economy and that of the central mountain area. Idaho Springs’ economy is mostly based upon tourism. The City of Idaho Springs is mostly dependent upon tourism-based sales tax revenue and is expected to continue to perform well since the tourism and recreation industries remain strong in the area. Rafting revenues continue to grow, and the recently opened Virginia Canyon Mountain Park (VCMP) has brought more visitors to the city, along with their dollars. The new cable car project being completed in town is expected to grow the city’s tourism base further.

Sales tax receipts account for an average of 50% of the Idaho Springs General Fund. Since 2010, Idaho Springs has seen a consistent increase in sales tax revenues, with a significant increase in revenue post-2020. Much of the growth in sales tax revenues since 2020 are tied to post-pandemic spending and tourism practices that have brought more people into the Colorado mountains and along the I-70 corridor, which in 2024 saw over 50,000 vehicles daily passing Idaho Springs along the interstate. Capturing more tourism dollars through focused marketing and advertising has been an increasing focus for the city, attracting people to the city’s various opportunities as a destination, rather than a stop along the way to a visitor’s destination.

City of Idaho Springs Sales Tax and Budget Percentage

Year	Sales Tax	Annual Change
2015	\$2,036,865.00	
2016	\$2,332,603.35	11.45%
2017	\$2,483,993.40	6.50%
2018	\$2,710,285.40	9.11%
2019	\$2,996,152.60	10.55%
2020	\$2,952,803.29	-1.45%
2021	3,662,261.52	24.03%
2022	\$3,831,640.78	4.62%
2023	\$4,748,395.34	23.93%
2024	\$4,808,143.64	1.26%

While the city’s sales tax numbers and overall economy are doing well, city residents are still feeling housing affordability and availability pressures. The city has a higher number of housing cost-burdened households than Clear Creek County or the Denver region, with ~40% of local households reported as being cost-burdened (spending 30-49% of household income on housing) and an additional 20% reported as being severely cost-burdened (spending 50% or more of household income on housing), according to Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) data from 2022.

Population	1,798
Households	773
Average Household Size	2.38
Median Age	39.8
Total Population in Labor Force	1,030
Median Household Income	\$72,101
Bachelor's Degree or More	48.20%
High School Diploma or More	97.50%
Single Occupancy Commuters	50.40%

Idaho Springs has a median household income of approximately \$72,101. This is significantly less than the \$87,169 median household income reflected for Clear Creek County or the \$91,681 reported for the Denver region. With the average price of a home in Idaho Springs being approximately \$500,000, a drastic increase from 2017, home ownership continues to be a challenge for many employed in the Idaho Springs service industry.

CHAPTER 3: VISION STATEMENT, MISSION STATEMENT, AND ORGANIZATIONAL VALUE STATEMENTS

Vision Statement

Idaho Springs is dedicated to preserving its culture as a historic mining community, ensuring quality of life and its economic future through both preservation and responsible development, striving for an inclusive community, designing a complete transportation system, promoting recreational opportunities, and implementing the wise use of community and natural resources.

Mission Statement

Through inclusive engagement and proactive stewardship, we strive to enhance the quality of life and ensure the safety of every member of our diverse, historic community, embodying a commitment to sustainable growth and collective well-being.

Organizational Value Statements

Transparency – We value practicing transparent governance by encouraging open-minded communication to build and foster community trust and engagement.

Preservation – We encourage the preservation of our heritage by engaging the community stakeholders to ensure access to Idaho Springs' history for all and encourage lifelong learning.

Teamwork – We believe in building community by working together in the best interest of the residents and visitors.

Accountability – We will be accountable to the community through clear, responsible discussions and actions that promote sustainable policies for managing the community's resources.

Stewardship – We will serve our community responsibly through active listening, engagement and collaboration to preserve our finite resources.

Integrity – We will be honest, respectful and fair in all our actions.

CHAPTER 4: LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Goal: “We will maintain and enhance our community character and quality of life, while lessening the adverse effects of growth and directing new development to appropriate locations that are cost effective to serve.”

The Land Use and Community Character Element encourages appropriate land use patterns, seeks to preserve Idaho Springs’ high quality of life, protects property values, and supports redevelopment that takes advantage of existing infrastructure. The recommendations below do not change the existing zoning of property and are not meant to limit potential development opportunities. However, these recommendations should be consulted for future development proposals, updates to the zoning code, development standards, and other matters relating to the character, future land use or development patterns of the city. The goal is to promote development while also preserving the important characteristics that make Idaho Springs a high quality place to live and visit.

What is the Difference between Future Land Use and Zoning?

Future Land Use: serves as a community’s guide and framework for future planning and development decisions. The Plan illustrates general land use concepts and categories (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial, open space, etc.) but is flexible enough to allow for other land uses to be considered if they meet other community priorities and complement existing land uses in the surrounding area.

Zoning: specific, parcel-based regulations on land uses, density and intensity, types of development and other urban design or architectural regulations. Local regulations establish zone districts which may include multiple uses as identified within the future land use plan. Zoning boundaries are precise and typically follow parcel boundaries. See the table below as an example, though not inclusive of all potential uses.

Community Character and its Role in Development

Community character is a commonly discussed concept in small, historic communities like Idaho Springs. Idaho Springs has a thriving business community and an increasing demand for development. We are seeing an increased interest in construction and development as the city becomes a regional destination for business and economic growth due to its proximity to I-70 and its connections to the Front Range to the east and rural resort communities further west. At the same time, Idaho Springs has established historic neighborhoods that feature walkability, connections to neighbors, and a sense of community that we do not want to lose. There are increasing concerns about traffic congestion, increasing tourism and visitation numbers, and a loss of character

associated with new development that is of a different architectural design, scale, or mass as compared to what exists in the city today. The city hears a growing concern that the Idaho Springs people moved to is no longer the Idaho Springs that they are living in today.

With that in mind, community character is a key focus of any growth or development-related conversation about the city's future. While the city does not want to discourage growth or development, we need to be careful that development complements and builds upon the existing built environment that people know and enjoy. The goal is to protect the city's community character without being anti-growth or anti-development. The preservation of community character can be an effective way to ensure that future developments work with – rather than against – the things that make Idaho Springs special. Future land use decisions and code amendments should consider an analysis of the city's existing makeup to ensure that future development works within the city's core tenets and priorities to build upon the things that are already here. Rather than discouraging growth or development, the city wants to encourage appropriate development that allows the city to remain a quality place to live, work, recreate, and visit for years to come.

In the Introduction and Background section, the four key principles that guide the Plan were introduced. In this section, the Plan will lay out the key land use principles that should guide future development in Idaho Springs that build off those four general principles that guide all sections of the Plan.

Land Use Principles

To ensure that future development decisions consider community character, this Plan establishes the following land use guiding principles:

- Architectural design and building scale and massing that complement the existing historic downtown and neighborhoods are important to ensure Idaho Springs remains a healthy community.
- Sustainability and environmental considerations are key to a healthy community – now and into the future.
- A human-centric scale to development is critical to ensure that the city continues to cater to the people who make up the community.
- The city wants to avoid a strip mall, cookie cutter development style that could be found anywhere in the U.S. We want development that evokes “Idaho Springs”.

Our architecture is our character. The city has several characteristic architectural types for both commercial and residential structures. Most residential structures in Idaho Springs were built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. New developments in

proximity to historic areas of the city should complement existing architectural design and existing neighborhood mass and scale. Compatibility is not about copying historic architecture or ornamentation. Rather, it is about maintaining consistent proportion and massing, focusing on providing similar roof pitches, window proportions, vertical versus horizontal emphasis, and other common architectural forms that allow developers to construct things that are of a modern time while still fitting in with the city's historic neighborhoods.

Historic residential buildings largely fit into a few key architectural styles, including National Folk; Queen Anne; Edwardian; Classic Cottage; Four Square; Late Victorian; etc. These architectural styles feature asymmetrical massing, gabled or hipped roofs with moderate to steep pitches; dormer windows; and other architectural features that create an interesting building façade. Most residential buildings are 1- to 2- stories tall and built to fit in small, often <50' wide lots. Wood, masonry, brick, and clapboard siding is predominant.

Development in and adjacent to residential areas are encouraged to incorporate similar architectural design to fit into existing neighborhoods and maintain existing community character. Commercial and multifamily buildings should be designed to avoid large, unadorned, featureless façades. Design should include a variety of architectural elements and consider the existing architecture of the area and complement features from the relevant architectural types found in the area.

That said, variety is important. The city's historic character includes a variety of materials, colors, and architectural expressions while maintain similar scales, rhythms, and orientations.

The Idaho Springs downtown area and historic neighborhoods were built on a scale that promotes mixed-use, walkable development that allows people to get around the city without a car. Post-war developments in the East End of the city were more car-centric but the core of the city's built environment today was established before cars were readily available to Idaho Springs residents and visitors. Future development should consider this human scale to complement the city's existing built environment. The city's existing streets function as public spaces in many neighborhoods. New development should shape and activate streets to continue developing this attractive public streetscape.

Idaho Springs values development that focuses on sustainability and environmentally friendly designs. Sustainable is not just about "green" development. It is also about high-quality development that stands the test of time. Yes, we need housing, but we need housing that will last for more than 20 years. Flexibility of design is an important consideration – buildings should be able to change uses without needing major reconstruction, so flexible design is something the city values.

Land Use Categories

This element establishes the following use categories within the City of Idaho Springs. These are broad categories meant to guide development towards the community's goals and objectives for the future of the city, and will be considered when making land use decisions on topics such as rezonings, final development plans, and other new development projects:

1. MIXED DENSITY RESIDENTIAL:

These are areas most appropriate for single family residential development and low-density multifamily development. Future development in these areas should be respectful of surrounding housing types, densities, building scale and massing, and predominant architecture. Most of the city's existing single-family residential neighborhoods are designated mixed density residential. These neighborhoods are long-established and are made up of small, single-family lots. Redevelopment potential is relatively low, as lots are too small to accommodate much additional density. These are also areas that do not have adequate infrastructure to support much denser development, characterized by narrow roads, steep slopes, or other physical constraints. A developer looking to add density to this area would likely be required to provide additional infrastructure to accommodate that increase in density.

2. HIGHER DENSITY RESIDENTIAL:

Appropriate for higher density residential use, including multifamily development. These areas are either already higher density than the mixed density residential areas or have the infrastructure necessary to support higher densities. These areas have wider streets, sidewalks, and access to other necessary infrastructure. Some areas designated as higher density residential may only have single-family residences there now but could be redeveloped in the future to include duplexes, townhomes, or higher density multifamily housing. Neighborhood-scale commercial developments or mixed-use developments could be appropriate in this area if they are community-serving.

3. TRANSITIONAL MIXED-USE:

These are areas typically connecting residential areas to commercial areas. Development should maintain or be respectful of residential character. Appropriate uses in these areas include single family residential, attached single family and townhouses, multifamily development that respects the historic scale, massing, and architecture of the surrounding areas, lower intensity

commercial uses, civic uses, daycares, hospitality and tourist services, and other similar uses. Areas designated as transitional mixed use can support a variety of activities and uses but at their core, they still maintain a residential feel. The West end of Idaho Springs is designated as transitional mixed use. Currently, most of this area is single-family residential, though small-scale commercial development and multifamily housing developments do exist today. Redevelopment of these areas designated transitional mixed-use may be appropriate but should pay attention to and respect existing residential neighborhoods and the architectural scale, massing, and design that characterizes these areas.

4. MIXED-USE:

These areas are commercial in nature and allow all the uses in Transitional Mixed-Use areas while also being appropriate for higher intensity multifamily, commercial, or mixed-use development. The top priority for these areas is commercial and mixed-use development that activates the city’s important commercial areas, including the Miner Street downtown area and the East End. However, residential development may also be appropriate – in fact, many lots designated as mixed-use have single-family residences today. Maintaining those homes is appropriate but redevelopment would also be welcomed in these areas. Mixed-Use areas adjacent

5. REGIONAL COMMERCIAL:

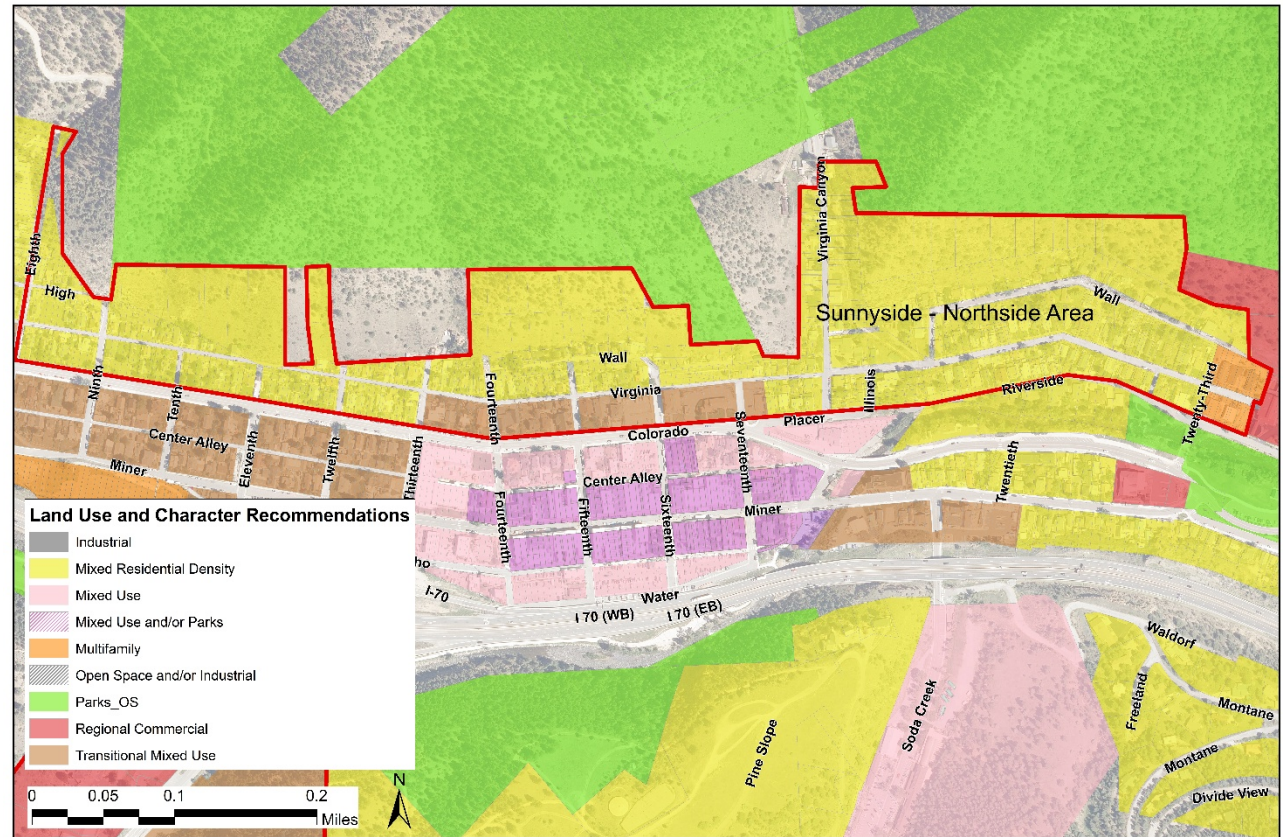
This area is appropriate for many commercial uses, including those that have a regional draw. This includes retail and office uses of any size, hotels, public facilities and schools, tourism services, hospitals and healthcare uses, and other commercial development. Multifamily residential could also be appropriate in this category, though commercial and mixed-use development is the primary vision for these areas. The city’s gateway areas are prime locations for regional commercial development and are areas that are already largely characterized by these types of uses.

6. INDUSTRIAL:

Uses such as heavy equipment storage, LP gas facilities, public works facilities, industrial plants, self-storage, automotive or RV storage, assembling, fabrication, finishing, manufacturing, packaging, or processing of goods, mineral extraction or similar uses. Uses may include working with hazardous materials. These are areas away from residential areas and would be appropriate for the highest intensities of commercial development.

SUNNYSIDE - NORTHSIDE NEIGHBORHOODS

The Sunnyside and Northside Neighborhoods are generally bounded by Wall Street to the north, Colorado Blvd to the south, the apartment complex at 23rd Avenue and the Argo-Riverside Area to the east and 8th Avenue to the west. Most of this area consists of established single-family residences, built in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Preserving and protecting existing structures in the designated residential areas is a priority. If preservation or restoration is not feasible, new residential development should be consistent with the surrounding neighborhood in terms of architecture, size, massing and density. Land use changes are not anticipated, although non-residential uses are appropriate in the transitional mixed-use area.



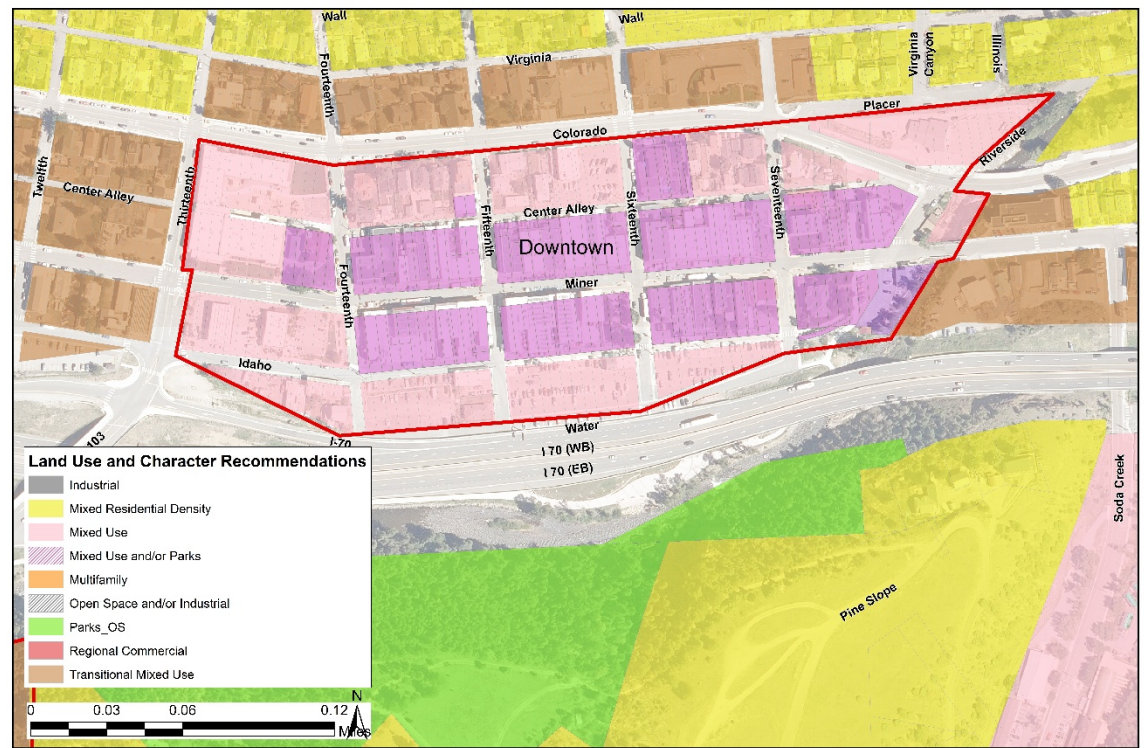
DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

The Idaho Springs Downtown District is generally bounded by Colorado Boulevard to the north, I-70 to the south, Clear Creek to the east and 13th Avenue to the west. This area includes portions of Colorado Boulevard, the Idaho Springs Historic Commercial District, and Charlie Tayer Water Wheel Park. Colorado Boulevard in this area is comprised of a mixture of newer and older single-family homes, public and civic buildings, shops and restaurants.

Idaho Springs Historic Commercial District

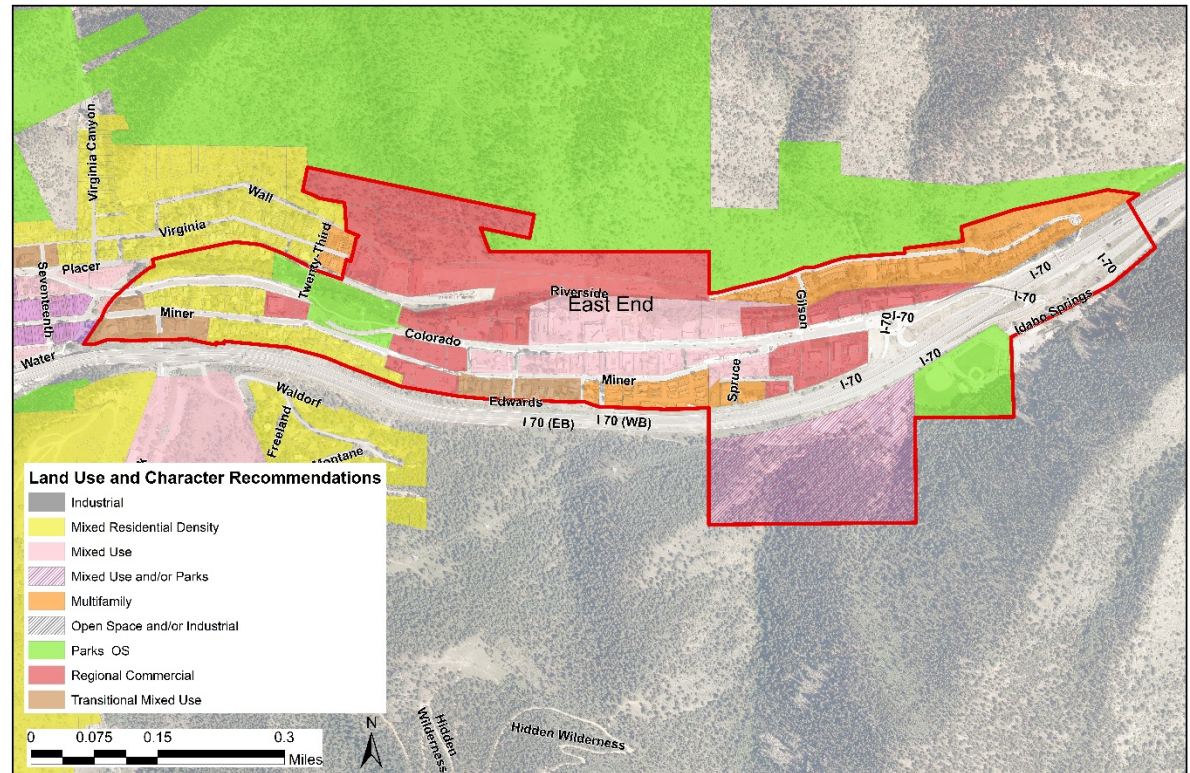
The Idaho Springs Historic Commercial District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and features one of the strongest historic commercial districts remaining in Colorado. The District contains a substantial number of visitor and resident oriented service and retail businesses. Substantial investment has gone into streetscape enhancement, off street parking and collaborative efforts in historic development and preservation. The buildings reflect the later 19th century commercial style characterized by recessed entrances, large display windows, elaborate metal cornices, large display windows, elaborate metal cornices, cast-iron pilasters, and intricate patterns of decorative brickwork. Later modifications, particularly on the first-floor storefronts, include the use of stucco, board and batten, plywood sheathing and composition stone.

As the Idaho Springs Downtown Commercial District is the heart of the City of Idaho Springs, the historical character and uses in the area should be preserved, maintained and celebrated. Future development in this mixed-use area should be pedestrian scaled tourist and local oriented goods and services such as cafes and restaurants with outdoor seating, tourist services, office uses, small retail stores and office buildings. Residential should be encouraged above commercial uses or behind commercial storefronts in this area. Single family residences, duplexes and single-family residences converted to multi-family could also be appropriate directly adjacent to Colorado Boulevard.



THE EAST END

The East End lies east of Clear Creek, west of Hidden Valley / Twin Tunnels, and south of Riverside Drive (but includes the Argo Mine and Mill). This area consists largely of highway service commercial developments including food and beverage, retail, service and lodging establishments. This area developed along what had previously been the U.S. 6 & 40 corridor, and much of it is a remnant of highway-style development of the 1950s. The quality of development in the area ranges considerably with recent renovation or development of lodging facilities, retail stores and food service establishments leading reinvestment efforts in the area. The East End also includes manufactured home residential parks and single-family residences. Idaho Springs' East End provides significant sales tax generation, jobs and general housing.



East End Overlay District

The City of Idaho Springs adopted an East End Action Plan in 2017 to promote redevelopment of the East End of the city. This was incorporated into the Idaho Springs Municipal Code as Chapter 26, creating an Overlay District that is designed to support continued revitalization of and reinvestment in the East End through targeted infill/redevelopment and adaptive reuse; enhance connectivity and promote a pedestrian-oriented environment along Colorado Boulevard and Miner Street, and within the East End generally; support a mix of locally-serving and tourism-related uses; increase the range of housing options available in the East End; and promote innovative, high-quality, sustainable development.

The Overlay District allows for flexible redevelopment with reduced setbacks, allowances for heights exceeding 35', and other design standards that seek to promote a pedestrian-oriented setting that seeks to create a secondary downtown area of the city. A wide variety of uses could be appropriate on the East End, including higher-intensity multifamily and commercial uses, mixed-use developments, lodging, and other similar uses along Colorado Boulevard.

WEST END

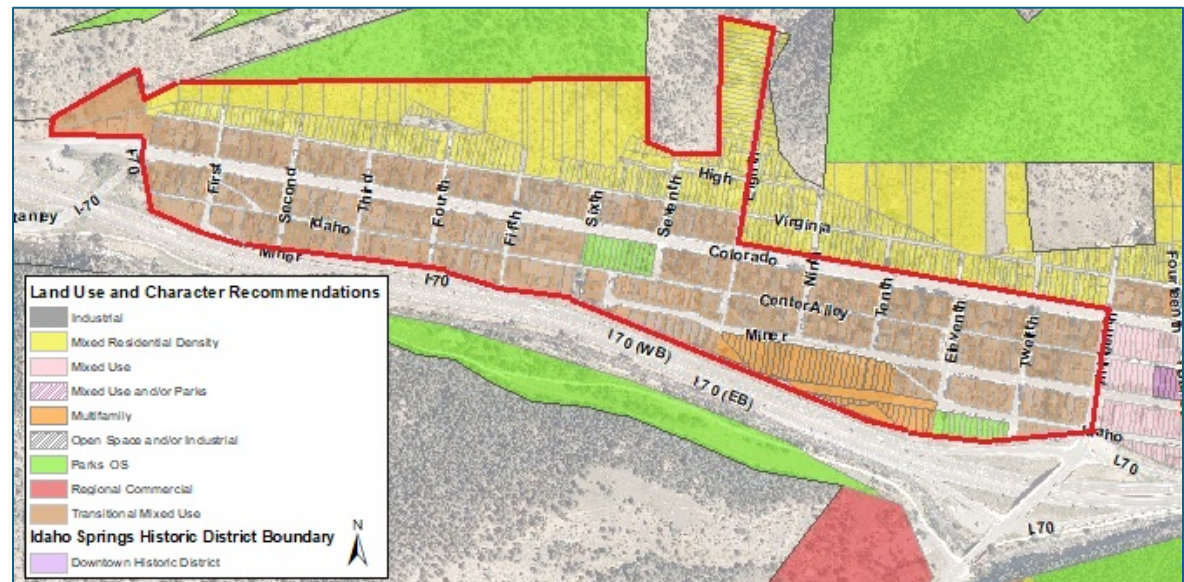
Beginning at 13th Avenue, the area to the west of the Historic District and to the end of the developed portion of the City is primarily residential. Non-residential properties in the form of motels, bed & breakfast operations and some service businesses are found in the area, generally along Miner Street and Colorado Boulevard. A mix of well-preserved Victorian era homes, newly renovated homes and manufactured housing blend to create a strong, eclectic area that serves as the core of the residential portion of the community. There are many manufactured and mobile homes and light industrial uses south of Colorado Blvd, primarily west of 8th Avenue.

West End Transitional Mixed-Use Area

The surrounding character is diverse in this area, including houses built in the early 1900s to manufactured homes over 40 years old, multifamily apartments, duplexes, triplexes, and low-intensity multifamily development. Future development can draw on varied uses, styles and architecture, as long as it remains sensitive to existing residences and addresses Colorado Boulevard. High density multifamily uses could be appropriate if respectful of existing building massing and scale. A range of options to enhance the appearance of this area as viewed from I-70, including replacement of aging housing stock, screening or removal of outdoor storage, additional landscaping, sound-walls, and strategic positioning of buildings should be explored.

Western Gateway

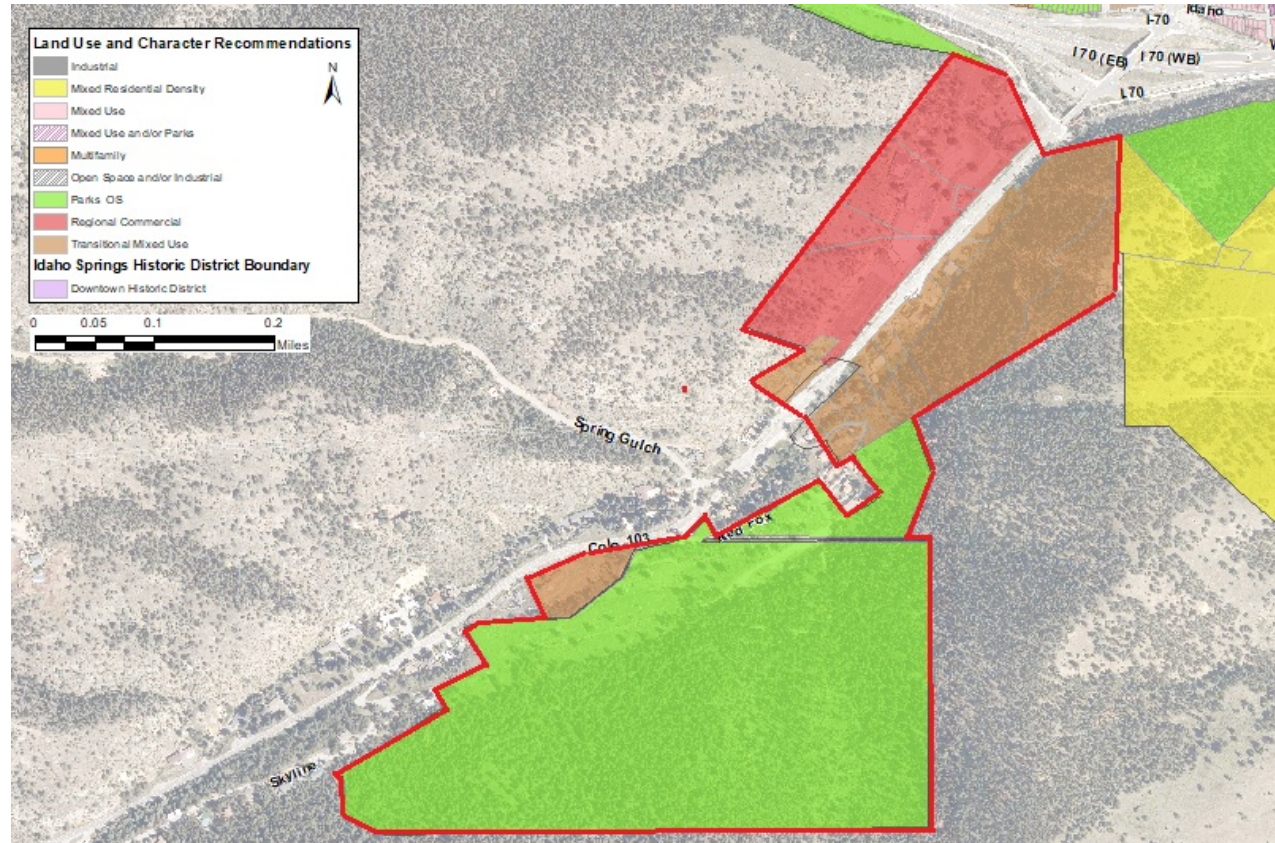
The intersection of Colorado Boulevard and Stanley Road, especially as viewed from Stanley Road traveling northeast, is the western gateway into the city and should provide an announcement of entrance into the city. Upgrades such as decorative features in the Colorado Boulevard / Stanley Road “island,” enhanced signage, and other welcoming infrastructure could improve this area as a “gateway” to the city.



EXIT 240 GATEWAY AREA

The Exit 240 Gateway Area is in the vicinity of Interstate-70 at the Exit 240 interchange. Current uses in the area include Carlson Elementary, a U.S. Forest Service building, rafting headquarters, a Clear Creek County EMS building, and single-family residential development.

There is potential for significant changes in land use and development character. The proximity to Exit 240 and downtown Idaho Springs makes it suitable for many uses, including higher density multifamily and mixed-use development or more intensive commercial development. Development should respect that this is a “gateway” into the City of Idaho Springs and the Mt. Blue Sky Scenic Byway and focus on design and massing that welcomes people into Idaho Springs.



CHICAGO - SODA CREEK AREAS

Soda Creek Area

The Soda Creek Area contains the Hot Springs Pool and Lodge, Soda Creek, Montane Park Subdivision, Pine Slope Subdivision and Montague Placer Subdivisions, and several single-family residences.

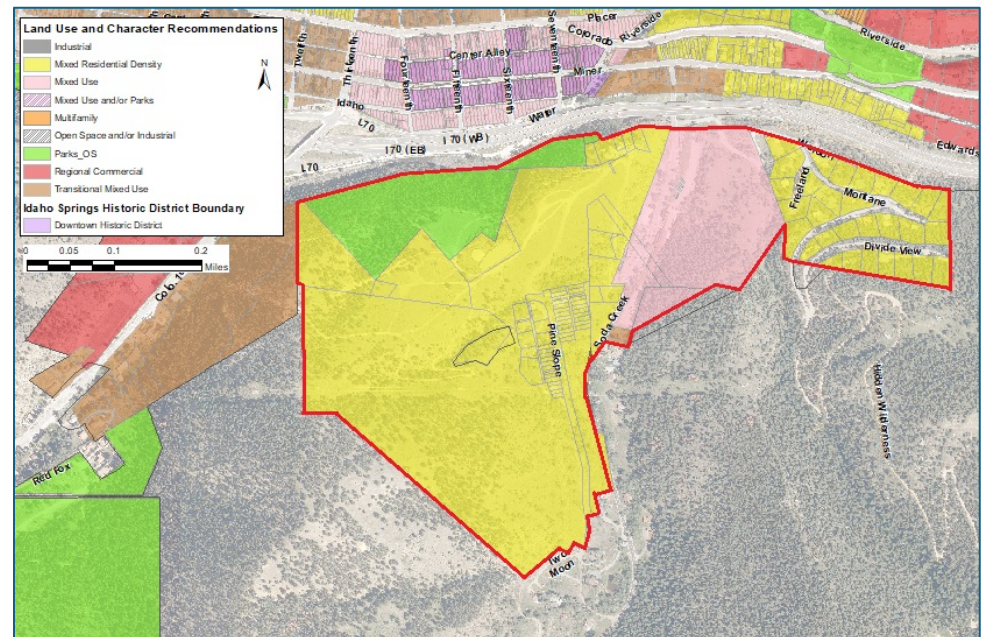
Mixed Use Gateway Area

This is the location of the Indian Hot Springs, a major amenity for the City of Idaho Springs that should be retained and enhanced. Future commercial development should be clustered near the Hot Springs and oriented to the street and Soda Creek. Connectivity from this area under I-70 and to Miner Street could be enhanced.

Park is located southeast of I-70 and Soda Creek Road at elevations ranging between 7,640 and 7,900 feet and was developed in the 1960s. Pine Slope is located southwest of I-70 and Soda Creek Road at elevations ranging between 7,650 and 7,750 feet, and was developed in the early 1900s. New residential development should be consistent with the surrounding neighborhoods in terms of housing stock, architecture, size, massing and density.

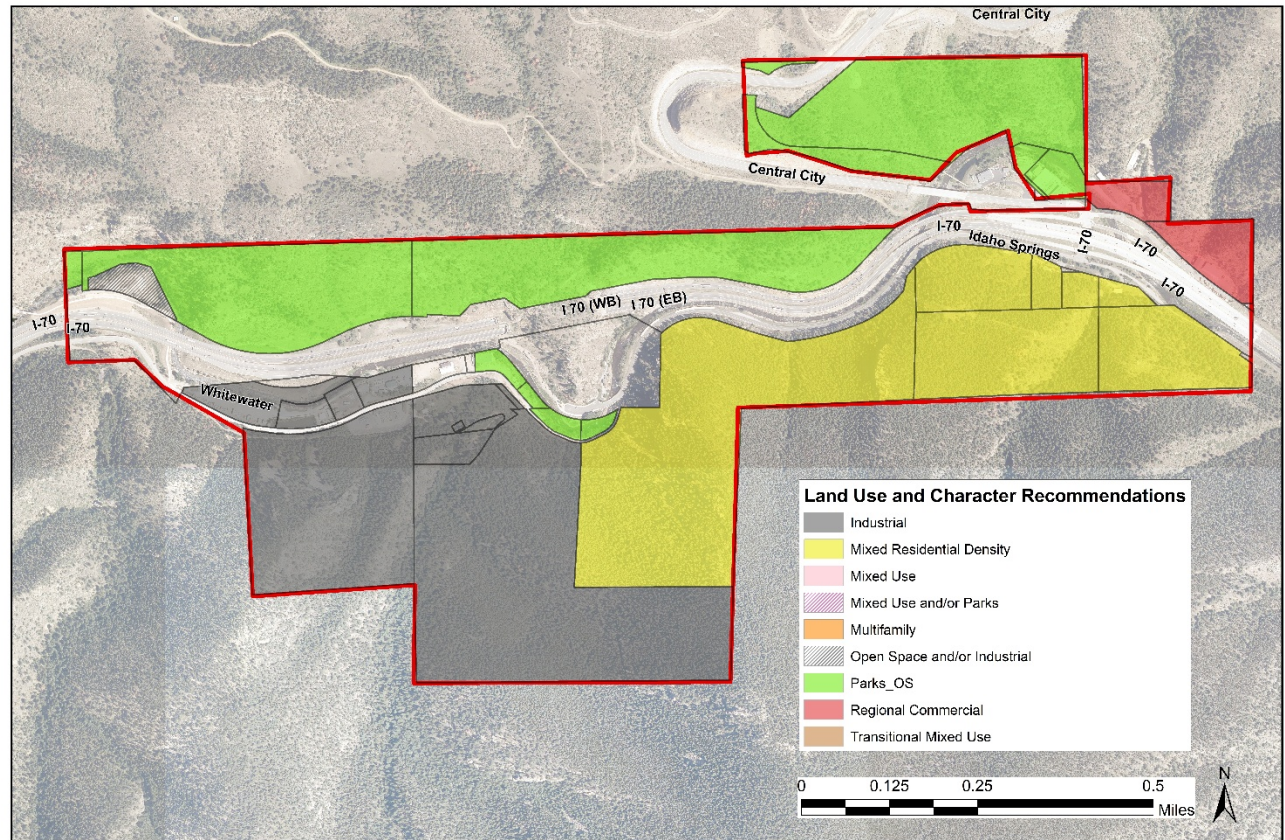
Chicago Creek Area

The Chicago Creek Area is south of the Exit 240 Area. This includes the Cemetery, scattered businesses, and the Highway 103 Annexation Area which consists of the water treatment facility, event center, and several residential properties. Chicago Creek Road (County Road 103) serves as a primary access and scenic byway to Mt. Blue Sky and experiences significant visitor traffic during the summer months. Tourism oriented hospitality uses, including RV parks, motels and campgrounds, are appropriate in this area if they respect and maintain the appearance of the surrounding mountain residential character. Better parking and staging should be pursued for the rafting industry which uses the confluence of Chicago Creek and Clear Creek as a launching area.



HIDDEN VALLEY AND TWIN TUNNELS

The I-70 interchange at Hidden Valley includes access for the Central City Parkway and East Idaho Springs Road (County Road 314.) This area was annexed into Idaho Springs, along with adjoining properties, in September 2004. Regional commercial development has already been built near this interchange. A lack of water and sewer infrastructure will likely be the limiting factor in regard to the type and density of development in this area. This area is suitable for industrial and commercial uses, although residential could also be appropriate. If extension of infrastructure is feasible, higher density uses such as multifamily or RV parks could be appropriate in all areas. The valley is narrow in this area, and any development will necessarily be relatively close to the interstate.



LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

Objective: Ensure that new developments are compatible with surrounding developments, promote the most efficient use of land, and meet the city’s strategic growth and water supply objectives.

- a. New development or redevelopment should follow the land use recommendations in the City of Idaho Springs Land Use and Character Area Map.
- b. In the absence of a specific recommendation for a property, the compatibility of proposed land uses should be evaluated for each specific case.
- c. New development should complement the neighborhood’s mass and scale.
- d. Support infill development and adaptive redevelopment that takes advantage of existing infrastructure and services.
- e. Seek public / private partnerships to foster more efficient use of land and existing structures, such as adaptive reuse of the previous middle and high school building for housing and community uses.

Objective: Explore additional residential neighborhood amenities.

- a. The city will work on regulations that require thoughtful landscaping standards to require new developments to beautify the adjacent public realm and right-of-way areas.
- b. The city will work with local artists, nonprofits, and other community groups to incorporate new public art into the public streetscape in residential areas, the downtown historic district, and elsewhere in the city.
- c. The city will evaluate locations that would benefit from public infrastructure such as trash cans, public benches, and other facilities that promote walkability and opportunities for social interaction, such as along the Clear Creek Trail and other commonly used pedestrian areas.

Objective: Beautify, preserve, and activate the Historic District.

- a. The city will encourage residential units above ground floor commercial uses by reviewing existing regulations and considering potential revisions to stimulate demand, including parking reductions, reduction in tap fees or building permit fees, or other potential incentive programs.
- b. The city will consider regulations that require vacant storefronts to address the public realm.
- c. The city will focus on beautifying the downtown with public art celebrating the City of Idaho Springs’ History.
- d. A redesign of Citizen’s Park to increase functionality will be considered as part of the Downtown Master Plan improvements project.

- e. The city will focus on wayfinding to better identify the location of high-profile areas of the city, including the Charlie Tayler Water Wheel Park and other off-the-beaten path locations around the city.
- f. The city will continue working to implement the adopted Downtown Plan designs into Miner Street to better activate the Miner Street Marketplace to improve the pedestrian experience in the historic downtown.

Objective: Upgrade the appearance of Idaho Springs as viewed from I-70.

- a. New development with significant visibility from I-70 should be designed with the appearance of facing the Interstate rather than backing to it.
- b. The city will work to activate the Idaho Mall as a pedestrian-oriented space fronting I-70 and rear parking lots. Explore using parklets, informational or vendor kiosks, landscaping and public realm space (seating, signage, historical artifacts) to create a barrier and sense of pedestrian enclosure between the paved walkway at the south perimeter of the Historic District between 15th and 17th Avenues and the large parking area adjacent to I-70.
- c. Work to enhance the aesthetics of surface parking lots at the south side of town as viewed from I-70 through landscaping, art installations, and other enhancements will be a priority in the next two years

Objective: Create welcoming, active public spaces through public art installations at city-owned properties.

- a. Work with local artists and art organizations to establish a public art plan for Idaho Springs.
- b. Promote art installations at city-owned historic sites and facilities to further activate these sites and bring additional visitors to these areas.

CHAPTER 12: STRATEGIC GROWTH ELEMENT

Chapter 12 is a new chapter in the Idaho Springs Comprehensive Plan. This element focuses on strategic growth within the community, with a focus on promoting infill development, conserving open space, and supporting efficient infrastructure use. The amount of available land open to development in Idaho Springs is finite and development opportunities are limited. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to encourage development that matches the city's goals, objectives, and vision. This element seeks to lay out how that can be most effectively accomplished.

The strategic growth element is a state mandated section of the Comprehensive Plan, required as part of Senate Bill SB24-174. SB24-174 created a requirement for a strategic growth element to discourage sprawl and promote the development or redevelopment of vacant and underutilized parcels in urban areas to address the demonstrated housing needs of the region and mitigate the need for extension of infrastructure and public services to develop natural and agricultural lands for residential use.

The State of Colorado's Division of Local Affairs (DOLA) defines strategic growth as:

A fiscally and environmentally sustainable approach to land use planning, housing, community well-being, and infrastructure that promotes the development or redevelopment of vacant and underutilized infill parcels, and mitigates the need for extensions of infrastructure and public services into natural and agricultural lands.

This element is required to contain:

- A description of existing and potential policies and tools to promote strategic growth and prevent sprawl;
- An analysis of vacant and underutilized sites that identifies vacant, partially vacant, and underutilized land near existing or planned transit or job centers that could be used for infill development, redevelopment, and new development of housing; assesses the general feasibility of the development or redevelopment of such sites for residential use based on existing and needed infrastructure, transportation capacity, access to public transit, and public facilities and services to serve such sites; describes the public benefits of the development or redevelopment of such sites to the county or region as an alternative to the development of previously undeveloped natural or agricultural land; and in a manner that is consistent with the master plan, designates such sites for which development or redevelopment is deemed to be generally feasible for future uses that include residential uses in a manner that addresses the demonstrated housing needs of the county or region at all income; and,
- An analysis of undeveloped sites that identifies previously undeveloped parcels that are not adjacent to developed land, including existing natural and agricultural land, under consideration for future development, and, for a county or region in a metropolitan planning organization established under the "FEDERAL TRANSIT ACT OF 1998," 49 U. S.C. SEC. 5301 ET

SEQ., as amended, land outside of census urban areas as defined by the United States Bureau of the Census; assesses the general feasibility of the development of such sites for residential use based on existing and needed infrastructure, transportation capacity, access to public transit, and public facilities and services to serve such sites; and describes the long-term fiscal impact to the county or region of the construction, ownership, maintenance, and replacement of infrastructure and public facilities and the provision of public services to serve development of such sites;

In keeping with state requirements, the city commits to updating this regularly as needs, infrastructure, and priorities change. At minimum, the city commits to reviewing and updating this element every five years to align with the statutory update timeline but will address changes more frequently if needed.

Benefits of Strategic Growth

This Strategic Growth Element connects with various other elements of this Plan. This element seeks to identify areas suitable for development to reduce strain on the city's water supply – a goal of the Water Supply Element. The element seeks to minimize the need for additional infrastructure – a goal of the Plan's Public Facilities and Services Element. The Environmental Element is addressed through the promotion of infill development within the city's existing built environment and pushing development away from open space and other undeveloped areas. Working in concert with the other elements of this Plan, a plan that seeks to promote strategic, sustainable growth ensures that other goals and objectives in this Plan are not sacrificed for the sake of new development. Focusing on land that is already within city limits and near existing infrastructure ensures that the financial impacts of development are minimized and mitigated as much as possible.

Strategic Growth and Idaho Springs Guiding Principles

The Strategic Growth Element touches on all four of the city's guiding principles, focusing on building upon Idaho Springs as a historic, connected, healthy, and welcoming community. It strengthens the city's status as a historic community by seeking to situate development in places that are appropriate for new development and considering the need to preserve historic character and balances that against the need for growth. It strengthens the city's status as a connected community by ensuring that new growth needs to connect development to existing infrastructure, and goods and services. It strengthens the city's status as a healthy community by prioritizing developments that allow for healthy lifestyle choices. And it strengthens the city's status as a welcoming community by identifying areas for future growth that will allow new residents and visitors to enjoy the city and become part of the community.

Strategic Growth Report

DOLA published the state's Strategic Growth Report in October 2025. This report details policy recommendations to encourage fiscally and environmentally sustainable growth; an analysis of land use scenarios of future growth; and consideration of different regions and communities and the context in which they are working. The Strategic Growth Report is intended to further a statewide conversation on the intersections between facets of built and natural environments including housing, transportation, infrastructure, water supply, air quality, wildlife risk, parks and open space, resource lands, and critical areas. Strategic growth can be described as a set of integrated policies, initiatives, and principles that typically include:

1. **Smart Land Use & Urban Planning:** Encouraging mixed-use developments, infill, and neighborhood/transit-oriented growth can reduce conversion of agricultural land and natural areas into urban uses.
2. **Infrastructure & Transportation Improvements:** Expanding and improving public transit, road networks, water and wastewater systems, and stormwater management to support population and economic growth in a manner that minimizes service extensions and reduces long-term costs.
3. **Water Resource Management:** Developing strategies that recognize limited water supplies, ensure adequate water supplies are available to support development, and encourage water conservation.
4. **Affordable Housing & Livability:** Promoting housing policies that provide affordable living options, reduce other household costs including transportation and utilities, and support housing production while maintaining Colorado's high quality of life.
5. **Public Services:** Providing adequate and cost-effective fire protection and suppression, law enforcement, public health, education, recreation, environmental protection, stormwater management, wastewater management, public transportation, public infrastructure maintenance, water, social services, and other services traditionally provided by the government.
6. **Mitigating Development in Hazardous Areas:** Adopting strategies that reduce or mitigate wildfire risks, risks from other natural hazards, and promote climate resilience to ensure long-term sustainability.
7. **Preserving Natural Areas:** Protecting natural landscapes both within and outside of urban areas that are critical to biodiversity, climate resilience, and community well-being; recognizing the ecological and social value of open space and natural areas that exist within cities and provide essential ecosystem services such as flood control, water filtration, and higher quality of life.
8. **Economic Vitality:** Recognizing that fiscally and environmentally sustainable growth are important to the long-term economic vitality of Colorado.
9. **Regional Collaboration:** Strategic growth can only succeed through collaboration between state and local governments, private sector investments, and public policy efforts to create a balanced and thriving future for residents.

According to the report, strategic growth can allow for more financially efficient infrastructure investment; protect and connect vital landscapes and resources; improve regional coordination; enhance climate and environmental outcomes; and provide greater predictability for developers and residents. A concern is that poorly designed strategic growth policies could constrain housing supply, create more complex governance, cause capacity challenges for administrations, potentially impact economic development, and result in unequal impacts on certain residents in a community.

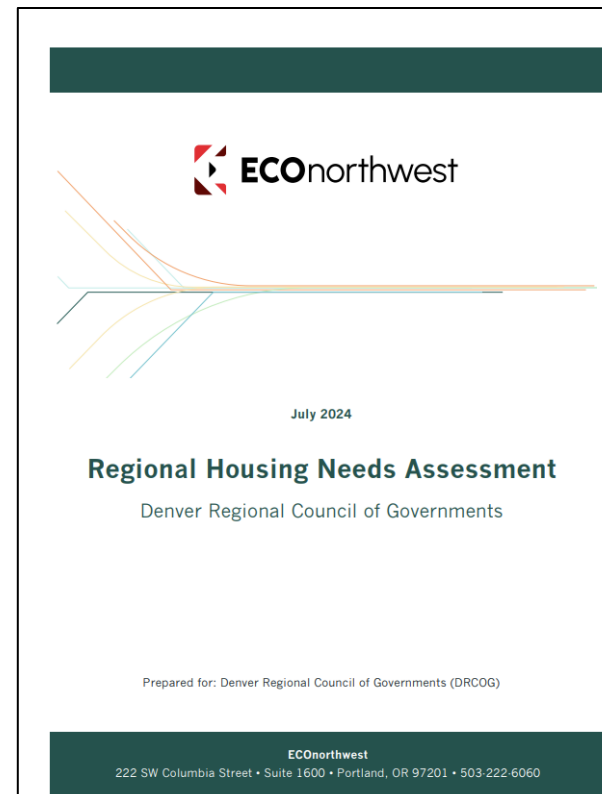
Regional Housing Needs Assessment

The City of Idaho Springs recently was included as part of the Denver Regional Council of Government's (DRCOG's) Regional Housing Needs Assessment for the Denver Region.

The regional assessment analyzed recent trends, current supply and demand for housing; present needs; and future population projections to determine the amount of housing each community in the Denver Region will need by 2032 and 2050. They also determined the overall need across the Denver Region.

The assessment found that **by 2032, Idaho Springs needs an additional 109 housing units, ranging from low-income affordable housing to market-rate housing.** Given this need for housing, consideration of how to strategically grow is paramount to avoid sprawling development and the negative outcomes that can result.

As part of the assessment, DRCOG analyzed the percentage of households that are cost burdened. A household is considered cost burdened if they pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs. 30% of a person's income is seen as the threshold of affordability – anything greater than 30% is considered unaffordable. **The assessment indicated that the number of people in Idaho Springs that are housing burdened has increased from 36.0% in 2000 to 60.2% in 2022.** This shows a growing need for more housing affordability in the city, which can be accomplished in several ways – either by building new, affordable housing units or by preserving existing housing and keeping it in the hands of locals.



Growth Trends in Idaho Springs

Idaho Springs has not experienced substantial population growth, though it has experienced a rise in unaffordability.

The 2020 census put the city's population at 1,782 residents. This represents a slight increase from the previous census (approximately 3.5%), though not one that has had an impact on city infrastructure or service capacity. Notably, the city has maintained this approximate population for over 125 years. The 1900 census showed a high-water mark for the city's population at 2,502 residents. The low point was 20 years later when the population dropped to 1,192 residents in 1920. Since then, the population has fluctuated between approximately 1,500 and 2,000 residents.

While the population has remained relatively constant, economic development, sales tax revenues, and home prices have risen sharply. The fact that over 60% of Idaho Springs residents are considered housing burdened is tied to the fact that **the current average home value has increased substantially, from \$261,453 in 2017 to \$504,531 in 2025** (Zillow Home Values Market Overview). At the same time, growth in housing supply has been incredibly slow. The 119-unit Fieldhouse Apartments is a recent housing success, bringing new rental units dedicated to rental rates at 70-100% of area median income (AMI), but there will remain a need for affordability and more housing diversity for current and future residents.

Along with making it difficult for new residents and employees to move to the area, the lack of new housing supply and increase in housing costs has an impact on existing residents due to rising property taxes and construction and labor costs.

Strategic growth strategies that attempt to solve this problem without taxing existing city infrastructure are critical to ensure that Idaho Springs remains an attractive place to live while allowing and promoting necessary growth in suitable areas.



Strategic Growth in Idaho Springs

Strategic growth in Idaho Springs will consider ways to redevelop existing sites that can accommodate additional density or undeveloped sites in the city, to avoid building housing in wildfire prone areas, in areas that cannot accommodate additional densities, or in areas that are important natural areas near the existing city limits. It also considers quality of life considerations, such as walkability to businesses, transit, and services; access to outdoor and recreational spaces; and other concerns.

As part of this element, the city analyzed a map of vacant and “development opportunity” sites that are underutilized based on the existing zoning designation for the property. These are properties that currently have a single-family home on-site but are zoned for commercial development or multifamily housing. This does not mean that a site is appropriate for higher density – it only means that the site is zoned to allow for more density than what presently exists.

What this analysis showed is that the city does not have a substantial amount of vacant land in the existing city boundaries. Most of the larger vacant sites available for development are in the Hidden Valley area of the city near I-70 Exit 243 and above Pine Slope Road on the previously approved Bristlecone Pines Subdivision (yet to be developed). While there are approximately 40 vacant properties within city limits, only eleven (11) of these vacant sites are half an acre or larger, with most of the remaining vacant parcels being under 3,000 square feet. Of these 11 sites, only two are located within half a mile of the Historic Downtown.

The total area of Idaho Springs, as of 2023, is 2.4 square miles or 1,536 acres. Of this land, approximately 445 acres are zoned for residential development. An additional 175 acres are zoned commercial but would allow multifamily housing as a by-right use. The majority of the remaining land is zoned Park & Recreation.

As of 2025, there are 944 housing units in Idaho Springs. This is increasing with the Fieldhouse Apartments complex at 905 Miner Street just west of Exit 240 which contain 119 units on 3.31 acres – an average density of 35.9 units/acre. This sort of development is a good example of the type of redevelopment project that meets the state’s vision for strategic growth. It is located on a lot that has existing infrastructure nearby – water and sewer, paved roads, and other utilities; is walkable to the downtown core; is near a highway interchange; and is within 0.25 miles of a public transit stop.

The city’s Three Mile Area Plan contemplates development within three miles of the city’s current boundaries. There are some properties within this area that are adjacent to existing city infrastructure and could support additional density. This is largely along Highway 103 and along Stanley Road, though slopes in that area may limit redevelopment. Future annexations in the Floyd Hill area could be possible but would require significant water and sewer upgrades to the area.

Currently, the city has 99 acres of land deemed “opportunity sites” that are development opportunity areas where additional density could be achieved. The main areas of opportunity site land in the city are near the four I-70 exits adjacent to city boundaries (Exits 243 through 239). Smaller pockets of land exist in proximity to the downtown commercial district surrounding Miner Street. This area is largely single-family residential, but there is opportunity for redevelopment over time for small multifamily developments or commercial conversions.

Of the properties that can be considered opportunity sites, context is important. A 5,000 square foot lot would not be able to accommodate a substantial increase in density because of the need for on-site parking, the city’s existing 35’ height limit, and required property line setbacks. This limits the redevelopment potential in areas within existing residential neighborhoods. Small increases in density could be feasible – redeveloping a single-family home as a duplex, for example – but major redevelopment would be difficult on these smaller lots.

Of existing vacant and underutilized lands, many would require additional infrastructure (water and sewer facilities, electrical lines, streets, etc.) to be suitable for development. This is possible but would require significant cost for infrastructure upgrades to those areas (in blue and pink on the map).

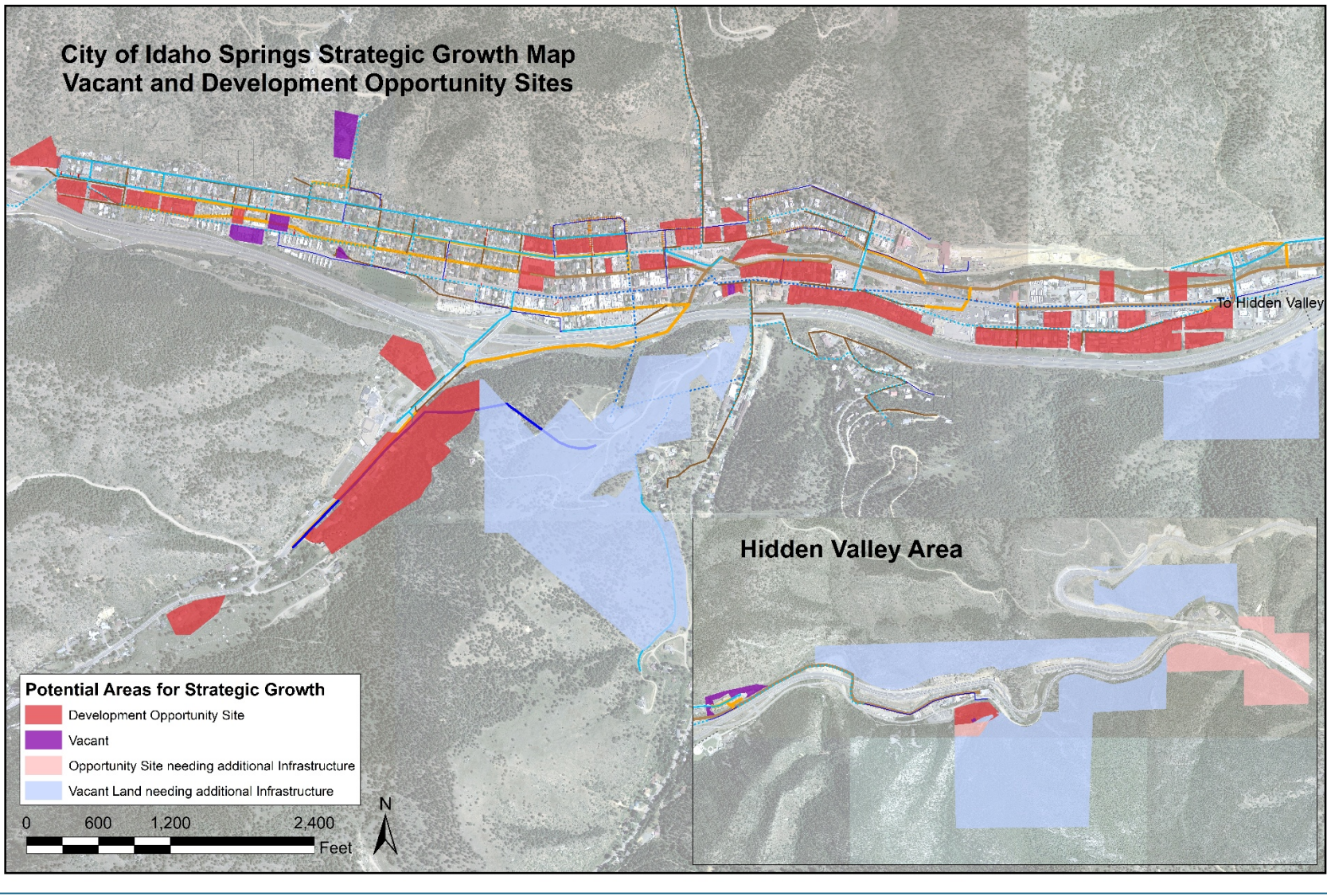
Another important consideration of strategic growth is the clear community desire to maintain character and charm within existing neighborhoods. The community does not want to see single-family homes redeveloped into multifamily housing if it takes away from neighborhood character. It is important that the city considers locations that can accommodate additional development or redevelopment without adversely impacting existing developed properties in proximity to the redevelopment site. Historic preservation becomes an important aspect to help shape growth strategically, since the city has many potentially historic residential homes in existing neighborhoods.

The map on the next page analyzes areas of the city that would be considered vacant or underutilized and could be part of the city’s strategic growth roadmap.

The areas that are purple and red are already adjacent to city infrastructure – paved street, water and wastewater facilities, etc. These are areas that are likely to be able to accommodate growth without taxing existing city facilities or requiring substantial investment from a developer or property owner. As they are largely within the city’s existing “urban” core, they could have impacts on existing residents and neighboring uses, which will need to be a consideration of any redevelopment project.

The areas in blue and pink might be suitable for redevelopment – they are zoned for additional density or are vacant – but do not currently have access to existing city infrastructure. Infrastructure investment would be needed to accommodate additional growth in these areas. These areas contain the largest amount of acreage in the city, so considering how to build that necessary infrastructure may be worthwhile in the long-term.

City of Idaho Springs Strategic Growth Map Vacant and Development Opportunity Sites



- Potential Areas for Strategic Growth**
- Development Opportunity Site
 - Vacant
 - Opportunity Site needing additional Infrastructure
 - Vacant Land needing additional Infrastructure

0 600 1,200 2,400 Feet

Leveraging Existing Infrastructure in Development is a Key for Strategic Growth

The city recognizes that while some developments require infrastructure investment, such investments are expensive. As an example, the city has undertaken several large infrastructure improvement projects in recent years.

In late 2024, City Council approved the first phase of work to replace the Idaho Springs main line along Highway 103. The full bid amount for all phases of reconstruction, totaling approximately three miles, is \$9.9 million. Similarly, a utility and road reconstruction project for Virginia Canyon Road and Virginia Street completed in 2025 had a cost of approximately \$6 million to replace water and sewer infrastructure and repave 1/3-mile of road.

Given the high costs of construction, the city recognizes that development in areas that have adequate infrastructure and can support current and future demands is the priority for redevelopment and new developments within city limits and in the immediately surrounding Clear Creek County area.

The amount of land determined to be vacant or an opportunity site on the previous map is thought to be able to accommodate the 109 units identified in the city's Regional Housing Needs Assessment. All lands identified are already zoned to allow for additional density, whether zoned for multifamily development or zoned for commercial development that allows multifamily construction. Limited density is available in the Sunnyside or West End neighborhoods because lots are small and most are already built out, but there is substantial opportunity for redevelopment on the East End and in pockets of vacant infill development near the city center and in the Sunnyside and West End areas. Even without expanding into undeveloped areas that would require infrastructure expansion and investment, the identified areas within the existing residential core of the city could accommodate additional growth, as discussed on the next pages.

Areas of Focus for Growth and Development

The community believes that there are opportunities for redevelopment and new growth, specifically around the I-70 interchanges in city limits. These include:

West Colorado Boulevard: the western portion of town, which has some redevelopment opportunities due to several blocks of commercial zoning adjacent to Colorado Boulevard. The area from the Exit 239 interchange to Fourth Avenue is zoned commercial, allowing for redevelopment of existing single-family homes into commercial use or multifamily housing. There are several businesses in this area, including an automotive repair shop, a dispensary, and an auto glass shop. Redevelopment in this area should be mindful of existing residential scale and massing, though this area could support redevelopment and has existing infrastructure.

Exit 240 Interchange: This is seen as an area of potential redevelopment near the downtown historic district. There are several lots near the interchange that could be redeveloped with an increase in density, including the United States Forest Service building just south of Exit 240 and other smaller sites currently occupied by local businesses or residences. Studies have shown this to be a potentially viable area for commercial or mixed-use development and water and sewer infrastructure already exists in the area.

Commercial Downtown: This area has small opportunities for redevelopment but most lots in the vicinity of the historic district are smaller than 5,000 square feet in area, making redevelopment at a large scale difficult. These are largely residential structures that could be redeveloped into small-scale commercial or mixed-use developments, though not at high densities. The major redevelopment opportunity in this area is the old Carlson Elementary school building, located at the gateway to the city's downtown commercial district. This redevelopment will have a large impact on the character of this area for years to come. The city is currently working on mobility improvements in this area, as well, including a mobility hub with CDOT and parking improvements.

East End: In 2018, the city created the East End Overlay District (EEOD) that encompasses the Colorado Boulevard and Miner Street corridors from the Miner Street bridge at Miner Street and Riverside Drive to the Exit 241 interchange. The purpose of the EEOD is to support continued revitalization of and reinvestment in the East End through targeted infill/redevelopment and adaptive reuse; enhance connectivity and promote a pedestrian-oriented environment along Colorado Boulevard and Miner Street, and within the East End generally; support a mix of locally-serving and tourism-related uses; increase the range of housing options available in the East End; and promote innovative, high-quality, sustainable development. The EEOD allows for flexible development, including reduced setbacks and taller height limits. This is seen as the primary area to promote strategic growth within existing city limits.

Hidden Valley area (Exit 243 interchange): This is known as the gateway to the Central City Parkway, but it contains several potential development opportunities in Idaho Springs city limits. There are several vacant parcels and others that could be suitable for commercial or residential development. Infrastructure improvements would be necessary to redevelop this area.

Soda Creek Area: The primary opportunity for development in this area is the Upper Pine Slope area west of the existing single-family homes on Pine Slope Road. A single-family subdivision – Bristlecone Pines – was platted in the early 2000s but has not yet been developed. This development would require substantial infrastructure upgrades to bring water and sewer facilities, access roads, and other utilities to the area but has already gone through the subdivision process so may be developed in the future.

Areas to avoid: Community feedback was clear that existing residential neighborhoods should be protected from substantial redevelopment that would change community and neighborhood character. While some redevelopment is anticipated, these areas are areas that the community would like to see maintained so any redevelopment should occur naturally rather than through promotion by the city. There are many homes in these existing neighborhoods that could potentially be designated as local historic sites, which is discussed as an objective in the Historic Resources element section.

Areas outside city limits:

There are areas outside the city's current boundaries that might be appropriate for future development because of their proximity to existing city infrastructure and services. Key areas include:

- Highway 103 between Exit 240 and the Idaho Springs Cemetery
- Stanley Road west of Exit 239
- Floyd Hill (infrastructure investment would be needed)
- Soda Creek Road south of the hot springs

These areas are adjacent to Idaho Springs and have at least reasonable access to city infrastructure. Annexation into Idaho Springs or a rezoning at the County level would likely be necessary for any of these areas to be reasonably considered for increased density. Coordination with Clear Creek County will be necessary to assess feasibility of any areas outside city limits and the city believes that there are opportunities for cooperation and coordination.

Existing Policies to Promote Strategic Growth and Prevent Sprawl

Currently, Idaho Springs has several tools available that are meant to promote strategic growth.

Three Mile Area Plan:

Idaho Springs reviews and, if needed, updates its three-mile area plan annually, in accordance with state requirements. The Three Mile Area Plan provides direction concerning land use issues and infrastructure needs for lands within three miles of the current boundaries of the City. The plan identifies issues that should be addressed prior to any parcel of land being annexed but does not propose the annexation of any lands near the City. Annexation of any land into Idaho Springs remains an individual landowner decision.

This plan was overhauled with a new map in 2025, and analysis shows that much of the lands within three miles of the existing city boundaries are likely infeasible for future redevelopment due to the topography and geography of the region that would make it difficult and expensive to provide necessary infrastructure to the development. It is anticipated that major potential areas for new development are along the Highway 103 corridor, in the vicinity of Exit 243 (Hidden Valley), and west of the city along Stanley Road. There are water and sewer lines running along the Highway 103 corridor to the city's water treatment plan approximately four miles south of downtown Idaho Springs. This would allow for future annexations and development, though capacity could be an issue. The city also has a water line running west of the city along Stanley Road to Stanley Mine, approximately two miles west of Exit 239. The Exit 243 interchange does not currently have water or sewer, which would be a challenge to development in that area.

East End Overlay District:

In 2018, Idaho Springs adopted the East End Overlay District, which applies to areas within the East End Action Plan boundary that are zoned R-2, R-3, C-1, or C-2. Essentially, the East End Overlay District incorporates the entirety of the eastern end of Idaho Springs, from the 17th street bridge and eastward.

The District applies to projects that meet the following criteria:

- A. An infill project proposed for a vacant or substantially vacant lot within the East End Action Plan boundary.
- B. A redevelopment project proposed for a developed lot within the East End Action Plan boundary where more than fifty percent (50%) of the floor area of the existing structure would be demolished and a new structure or structures built.
- C. An addition or renovation project proposed within the East End Action Plan boundary where the total square footage of the proposed addition is greater than twenty percent (20%) of the total square footage of the existing principal structure.
- D. An addition or renovation project proposed within the East End Action Plan boundary where the cost of the improvements is greater than thirty percent (30%) of the assessed value of the existing improvements (as shown in tax records).

- E. The base zone districts within the East End Action Plan boundary shall continue to apply unless modified by the terms of this Chapter.

The purpose is to support continued revitalization of and reinvestment in the East End through targeted infill/redevelopment and adaptive reuse, enhance connectivity and promote a pedestrian-oriented environment along Colorado Boulevard and Miner Street, and within the East End generally, support a mix of locally-serving and tourism-related uses, increase the range of housing options available in the East End; and, promote innovative, high-quality, sustainable development.

The District has the effect of encouraging redevelopment of existing properties on the east end of the city by allowing for taller buildings; smaller minimum lot areas and widths; reduced open space minimums; and reduced property line setbacks.

To date, there has not been much investment in this area in response to the overlay district's creation. It may be wise to consider additional changes to the overlay district to encourage redevelopment through an analysis of existing requirements that may be a barrier to redevelopment. Creating an environment that stimulates the development market should be a goal for this part of the city over the duration of this Plan.

Downtown Master Plan:

The city's downtown master plan considers revitalization and redevelopment of the city's downtown historic district area surrounding Miner Street. The downtown master plan identifies a desire to increase the amount of housing in the downtown area of the city. There are 40-50 potential second-story dwelling units above ground floor commercial spaces that have yet to be fully realized. The downtown master plan also considers the potential for a shuttle service in the city, which would allow for off-site parking away from the downtown core. This could encourage redevelopment at higher densities away from the downtown core and allow parking areas in proximity to the downtown to be redeveloped to higher and better uses.

Water / Sewer and Other Utility Connection Requirements:

The Idaho Springs Municipal Code requires connection to the city's water and sewer system for any lot within the city. Unless exempted by the City Council for good cause and in conformity with applicable statutes and regulations, all improvements generating wastewater and all improvements requiring potable water shall be connected to the appropriate City system if City facilities are within one hundred (100) feet of the boundary of the parcel of property on which such improvements are located. While City Council could exempt a project from the requirement that they connect to the city's water and sewer systems, historically the city has only exempted small-scale developments. The cost of running new water and sewer lines to outlying areas away from the city is likely to reduce the likelihood that large-scale developments occur within city limits, ensuring that sprawling development patterns are mitigated.

STRATEGIC GROWTH ELEMENT OBJECTIVES

Objectives in this element seek to ensure that the city allows considered growth to occur in a manner that avoids dramatic changes to the city's built environment or historic character but allows development that achieves other city goals and objectives.

Objective: Explore ways to increase density within City Limits by redeveloping underutilized and vacant properties that have the infrastructure and size necessary for redevelopment.

- Underutilized or vacant city-owned properties will be prioritized for redevelopment when not needed for a municipal purpose. Affordable workforce housing will be the top priority for these types of properties.
- The city will explore the development of an incentive program that encourages redevelopment of underutilized and vacant properties already in city limits to encourage property owners and developers to consider projects that meet the city's goals for strategic growth.
- The city will continue to promote redevelopment of the East End Overlay District in accordance with Chapter 26 of the Idaho Springs Municipal Code. If redevelopment is slow to progress, the city will further changes to the EEOD to encourage additional investment in this area.

Objective: Consider ways to discourage growth that does not meet the state's definition of strategic.

- Over the next two years, city staff will work to put together regulations and requirements that consider environmental constraints to growth, such as steep slopes, wetland or floodplain areas, or other environmentally sensitive conditions.
- City staff will work with the Planning Commission and City Council to create a framework or guide that identifies appropriate site characteristics that are consistent with strategic growth to bring more clarity to developers and residents about the sorts of projects that meet the city's strategic growth goals.
- The city will promote infill development in areas that have already experienced infrastructure investment (roads, water and sewer infrastructure, etc.) and can handle additional capacity without needing infrastructure upgrades.
- The city will work with Clear Creek County to identify areas outside of existing city limits that could accommodate additional growth while meeting both City and County goals for development.
- The city will only consider development of undeveloped lands outside city limits where existing city infrastructure is already available or could be extended without substantial city costs.

Objective: Support infill development and redevelopment to reduce the need for water and wastewater infrastructure expansion.

- In concert with the water supply element, the city will identify areas with suitable water and wastewater infrastructure and prioritize redevelopment in these areas.
- Future development outside the city's core that requires infrastructure investment will need to be funded by developers to avoid spending city resources on undeveloped or greenfield properties.
- The city will consider incentive programs for infill and redevelopment projects that are in areas that do not require additional infrastructure investment.