


KIT CARSON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2000

KIT CARSON COUNTY,
COLORADO



KIT CARSON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2000

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Plan is the result of many hours of review and discussion with community representatives from throughout the County. In addition to those listed below, we would like to thank the many citizens of Kit Carson County who participated in the planning process. Without their guidance, assistance and valuable input, this Plan would not have been possible, and most likely not practical.

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Life in Kit Carson County

- Kit Carson County is one of the most productive agricultural counties in Colorado.
- The rural areas of the County may be open and spacious, but they are intensively used for agriculture.
- Persons moving into a rural area must recognize there are drawbacks, including conflicts with longstanding agricultural practices and a lower level of services than in towns.
- Agricultural users of the land should not be expected to change their long-established agricultural practices to accommodate the intrusions of urban users into a rural area.
- Well run agricultural activities will generate off-site impacts, including noise from tractors and equipment; dust from animal pens, field work, harvest, and gravel roads; odor from animal confinement, silage, and manure; smoke from ditch burning; flies and mosquitoes; the use of pesticides and fertilizers in the fields, including the use of aerial spraying.
- The County covers a land area of over 2,168 square miles in size with hundreds of miles of state and county roads outside of municipalities.
- The sheer magnitude of the area to be served stretches available resources.

- Law enforcement is based on responses to complaints more than on patrols of the county and the distances which must be traveled may delay all emergency responses, including law enforcement, ambulance and fire protection.
- Fire protection is usually provide by volunteers who must leave their jobs and families to respond to emergencies.
- County gravel roads, no matter how often they are bladed, will not provide the same kind of surface expected from a paved road.
- Snow removal priorities mean that roads from residences to major roads may not be cleared for several days after a major snowstorm.
- Service in rural areas, in many cases, will not be equivalent to municipal services.
- Children are exposed to different hazards in the county than in an urban or suburban setting.
- Farm equipment and oil field equipment, ponds, ditches, electrical power for pumps and center pivot irrigation operations, high speed traffic, sand burs, puncture vines, territorial farm dogs, and livestock present real threats to children.
- Controlling children's activities is important, not only for their safety, but also for the protection of the farmer's and rancher's livelihood.

(Adapted from Weld County's Right to Farm Covenant)

Underlying Principles and Goals

The following statements were adopted as part of the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. These principles and goals still serve as the underlying foundation of the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Protect the health, safety and general welfare of the residents.



2. Maintain and protect agriculture as the primary endeavor molding economic activity and lifestyle in Kit Carson County.



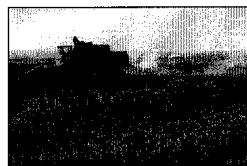
3. Protect and enhance soil, air, and water quality.



4. Encourage location and development of nonagricultural growth in a manner that does not interfere with the agricultural base in the County.



5. Encourage economic, industrial, and commercial growth compatible with maintaining or expanding the County's existing agricultural base.



6. Encourage a strong public educational system within the County.



1. Introduction

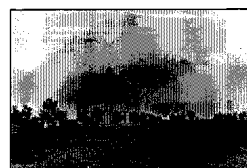
A. Legislative Authorization

The Planning Commission, according to the mandate set by the Board of Commissioners and Colorado Statute 30-28-106, 1973, as amended, has prepared a Comprehensive Plan for the County of Kit Carson County, State of Colorado.

This plan, with any accompanying maps, plats, charts, or descriptive and explanatory matter, sets forth the County policies for the development and land use covering the unincorporated areas of Kit Carson.

This plan, as allowed by statute, may refer to any of the following items:

1. General location, character, and extent of streets, roads, viaducts, bridges, parkways, playgrounds, forests, reservations, parks, airports, and other public ways, grounds, places and spaces;
2. The general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, for water, light, power, sanitation, transportation, communication, heat, and other purposes;
3. The acceptance, widening, removal, extension, relocation, narrowing, vacation, abandonment, or change of use of any of the foregoing public ways, grounds, places, spaces, buildings, properties, utilities, or terminals;
4. The general character, location, and extent of community centers, townsites, housing developments, whether public or private, and urban conservation or redevelopment areas;
5. The general character, location, and extent of forests, agricultural areas, flood control areas, and open development areas for purposes of conservation, food and water supply, sanitary and drainage facilities, flood control, or the protection of urban development; and
6. A land classification and utilization program.



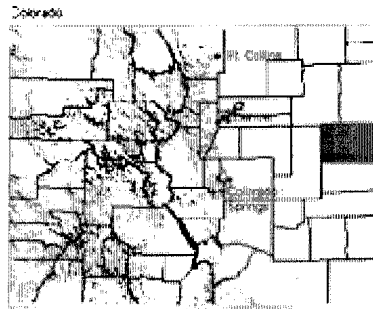
B. It's Place in the Region



Kit Carson County is a rural county located on the eastern plains of Colorado. Geographically, the county lies on the western edge of America's Great Plains. In what has become known as Colorado's Outback, the

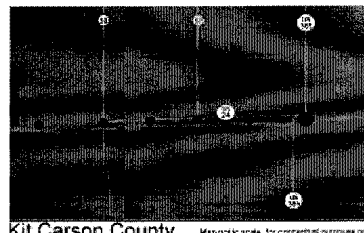
County abuts Yuma County to the north, Cheyenne County to the south, Lincoln County on its western border and Sherman County, Kansas on its eastern boundary. Colorado's two largest metropolitan areas, Denver and Colorado Springs, are approximately 150 highway miles to the west.

Kit Carson County is mostly level to low rolling prairie with an average elevation of 4,100 feet above sea level. Some valley lands are present, principally along the South Fork of the Republican River and its tributaries. The average annual temperature is 51.8 degrees Fahrenheit and the area receives an annual average of sixteen inches precipitation. The majority of land within the County is agricultural, either irrigated cropland and dry-land farming, or it is rangeland.



There are six incorporated communities in Kit Carson County, each located along Interstate 70. They include, from west to east, Flagler, Seibert, Vona, Stratton, Bethune, and the County Seat of Burlington. Each of these communities serves as a focal point for surrounding farm and ranch lands.

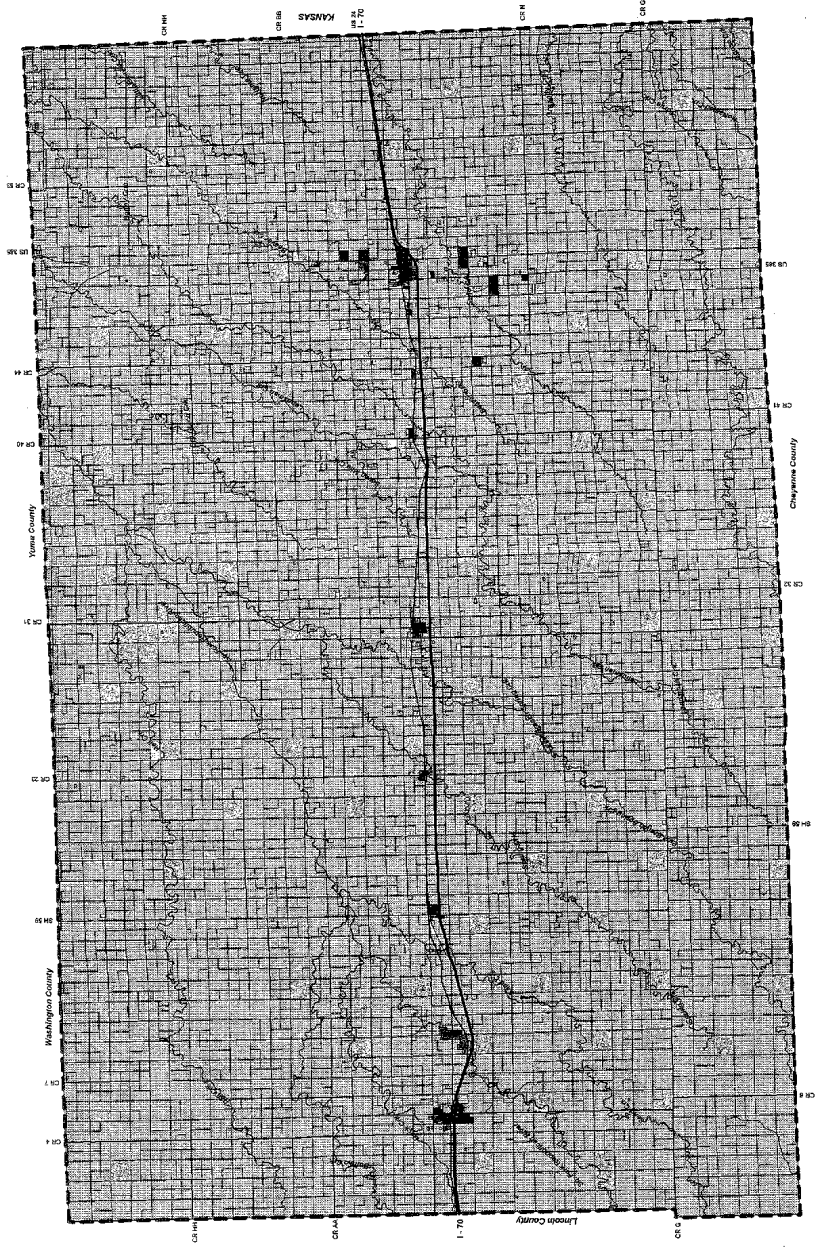
Kit Carson County's history, its people and its economy are anchored in the spirit of the Plains.



Kit Carson County Map not to scale, for conceptual purposes only

Map 1:
Generalized Existing
Land Use Map

- Residential
- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Forest
- Public
- Vacant
- Water



**Comprehensive Plan
Kit Carson County**



Prepared by:
Carter & Associates, Inc.
February, 2000

This map is for planning use and
does not constitute a warranty.
Land use patterns are not guaranteed
and are subject to future land use changes.

C. Kit Carson County History

Kit Carson County was designated a Colorado County in 1889. Before this time, the area was included as a part of Elbert County until demands for more local representation and more convenient access to county seats across the wide eastern expanse led to its division and the manifestation of Kit Carson and other smaller county subdivisions. Kit Carson County is a 2,168 square mile area and was named after Christopher Carson, a nineteenth century figure who played a significant role as both frontiersman and military leader in the Colorado and New Mexico regions.



The settlement of Kit Carson County parallels the settlement patterns found in most of eastern Colorado, which in turn mimics the older established patterns developed in the American Midwest. In fact, many of the region's first Anglo settlers originated in the Midwest, carrying with them both their values and geographical organization of space.

Two main forces catalyzed this settlement: "a frontier era in which forts, trails, and ranching controlled placement of settlements and a subsequent era of increased commercial farming in which railroads, town companies, and large-scale demands for farm products influenced the formation of towns." These patterns carved the flat prairie topography with widely dispersed rural farmsteads, county boundaries, town sites, and transportation infrastructures.

Kit Carson County follows this general settlement pattern closely. In the 1870's and 1880's, the region began being utilized by Anglo settlers but only almost exclusively for open range cattle grazing. At this time farming efforts were minimal and limited to only small strips of land along the river basins. Prior to the 1870s, primarily the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Native American tribes occupied the region.

The late 1880s brought the biggest population boom in which thousands of settlers migrated to the area and attempted farming and ranching across the entire region including in the more remote areas. However, farming efforts in the semi-arid environment were initially unsuccessful overall and many settlements failed. This accounts for a great amount of claim abandonment and significant decrease in county population during the 1890s. It was not until dry-

Christopher Carson lived from 1809 to 1868 influencing America from Kentucky to California but making his biggest mark on the Colorado and New Mexico regions. "Kit" Carson was a trapper in the Green and Snake River Basins, gamesman for Bent's Fort, Fremont on three expeditions, served in the Mexican war, headed a company of Rangers in the regions, appointed Indian agent for the Utes, served as an intermediary for Indian affairs, commanded the New Mexico Battalion during the Civil War, and held a command post at Fort Garland.

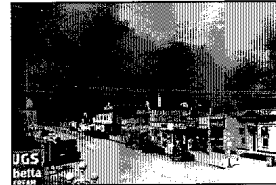
land farming and irrigation systems were better understood and applied that agricultural efforts in the region became lucrative.

Although non-sustaining, it was this first initial boom of the late 1880s that created most of the towns in Eastern Colorado. Many dwindled out and died but the towns that did survive became the center of early twentieth century agriculture in the region. Dry-land farming not only revitalized agriculture in the area but also transformed the landscape from the "Great American Desert" to a horizon strewn with "tree groves for fuel and wind blocks, artesian wells to tap ground water, windmill pumps, grain-fields and pasture lands for dairy cows."

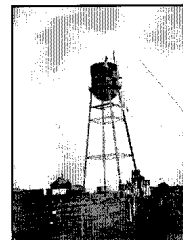
Vertically, the water towers, railroad grain elevators, "rag-tag wood buildings," groups of trees and especially and towns stood visible for miles around on the flat horizon. Also characterizing Kit Carson's geography is its geometry. Primarily unvaried topography lent to linear and right angle boundaries throughout the area. Allotments and roads followed these paths reinforcing the squared character of the plains landscape.

Undoubtedly, the settlement of Kit Carson County can primarily be understood through the influence of railways; "decisions of the late nineteenth-century railroad companies were the key organizing components of the region's transportation geography." Railroad towns provided the critical transport corridors, capital and markets needed for agricultural systems to function and thrive. Originally, Colorado was only transected by the early Union Pacific and Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe lines and portions of the in-progress transcontinental line. These major thoroughfares defined town placement in the area but obviously left large gaps in between them. It was not until smaller lines, like the Rock Island and Missouri Pacific Railroads, carved the region in between the gaps that the area between the Platte and Arkansas Valleys, which includes Kit Carson County, emerged with townships.

Railroad towns, including those in Kit Carson County were frequently laid out the same: the outer edge was a formed by the railroad tracks with the main street branching off perpendicular to it. This lends the title "T-town" to railroad towns. This pattern "permitted easy access to the depot and grain storage operations [located near the tracks] but prevented the railroad from disrupting town traffic and the



1934 Dust Storm in Burlington, Kit Carson County



1915 Tower, Kit Carson County

* Parsons, Eugene. *A Guidebook to Colorado*. Little, Brown, and Company: Boston, 1911. Wyckoff, William. *Creating Colorado*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

coherence of Main Street activities.” Other principle streets were also oriented around the railroad lines. The streets were compiled of rectangle lots with their narrow edges backing the street, square buildings and squared street blocks. Buildings were often a reflection of the economic viability of the towns, especially banks and schools.

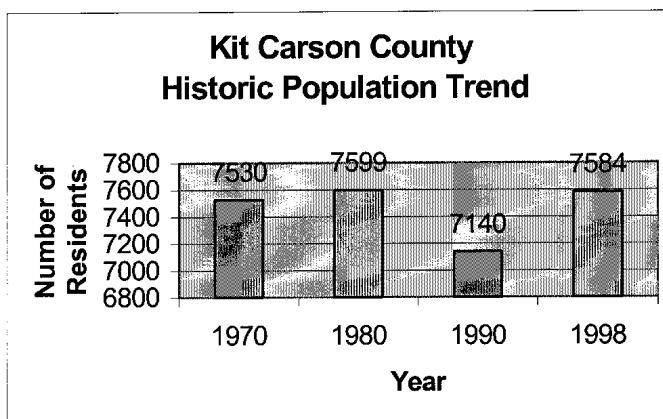
While most buildings were one or two story wooden structures, a multistory stone or brick bank or commercial building demonstrated economic success in the towns. Multistory schools were also frequently constructed to emphasize a cultural pride and investment in the community. Churches, schools and other less formalized meeting places also held significant importance so they too had prominent locations in the town layouts. Activities centered in these places brought coherence in the towns and community spirit.

Burlington, the county seat, and all other Kit Carson County towns were established along the Rock Island Railroad, which transects the county from east to west. This railway still carries the county's grain to production but is now owned by the Kyle Railroad, as the Rock Island Railroad no longer exists. Because railhead towns were strategically placed to accommodate the most efficient transport of the agricultural goods to markets, the regular spacing of towns, such as the linear path formed by Flagler, Siebert, Vona, Stratton, Bethune and Burlington, was intentional. Also forming the county infrastructure was the “system of unimproved, unmaintained roads and ruts that connected the far-flung ranches and farms to these key rail corridors and graphed out the area.

D. The People and Where They Live

In 1998, Kit Carson County had an estimated population of 7,584 residents. The county's population has returned to the levels of 1970 (7,530 residents) and 1980 (7,599 residents) and is a marked increase from earlier in the decade. In 1990 the population had dipped to 7,140 people.

Statistics for the County indicate that the majority of the population growth in the 1990's can be attributed to a net increase of residents moving into the area from locations outside of Kit Carson County rather than a net increase in births over deaths within the county. Therefore, attracting new residents will continue to be essential important if the County's population is to remain stable or increase.



E. The Economy



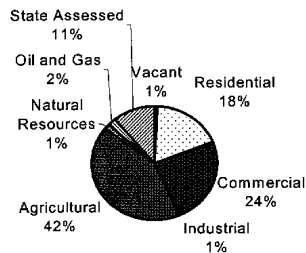
Historically, agriculture has driven the County's economy as the most vital component of the economic health of the region. In 1998, Kit Carson County was the top winter wheat producing county in Colorado. That same year, the County also led the

state in sunflower production and ranked second in the production of corn.

In recent years, commercial, industrial, institutional and tourism activities have begun to make more important contributions to the economy, especially along the I-70 corridor in the cities and towns. Retail sales and such services as hotels and restaurants continued to increase through the 1990's. Two new major employers opened facilities in 1998. The Kit Carson Correctional Facility opened in Burlington and in the fall of 1999 employed approximately 125 people and housed approximately 800 prisoners. Midwest Farms, a confined animal feeding operation, opened its facilities south and west of Burlington and employed nearly 60 workers in the Spring of 2000.

Statistics released by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and the Center for Business and Economic Forecasting further describe the economy in numbers. In 1996, agriculture accounted for 35 percent of the county's work force. Government accounted for 29 percent with retail trade accounting for 23 percent and the wholesale/manufacturing sector accounting for the remaining 13 percent.

**Kit Carson County
Assessed Valuation by Land Use
1999**



Another indicator of how the economy is constructed, is the breakdown of taxable assessed valuation. In 1999, the County had a total of \$88,189,670 of total taxable assessed valuation. Of that amount, agricultural properties accounted for 42 percent, residential 18 percent, commercial 24 percent, industrial 1 percent, oil and gas 2 percent, natural resources

just over 1 percent, and state assessed and vacant properties accounting for the remainder.

Critical to the continued health of the County economy is the Interstate 70 corridor that traverses the County east and west. I-70 carried an average daily traffic volume of nearly 8,600 vehicles at Burlington. I-70 has interchanges at each of the incorporated municipalities. U.S. Highway 385 is another important link to the eastern Colorado region, traversing the County north and south through Burlington.

F. Projections for the Future

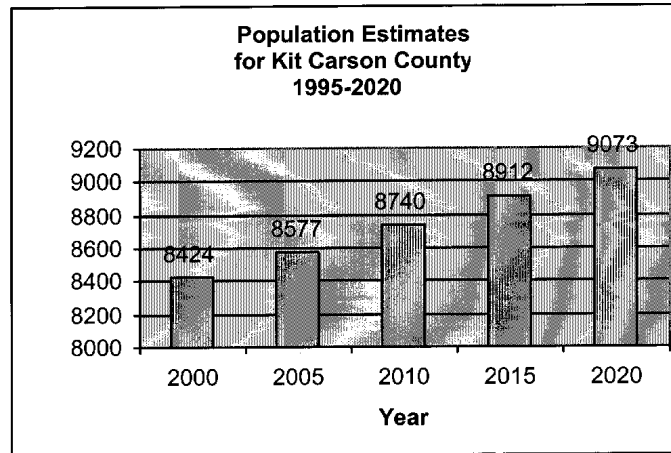


A population and its community change over time. These changes will affect how the County and other local governments provide facilities and services.

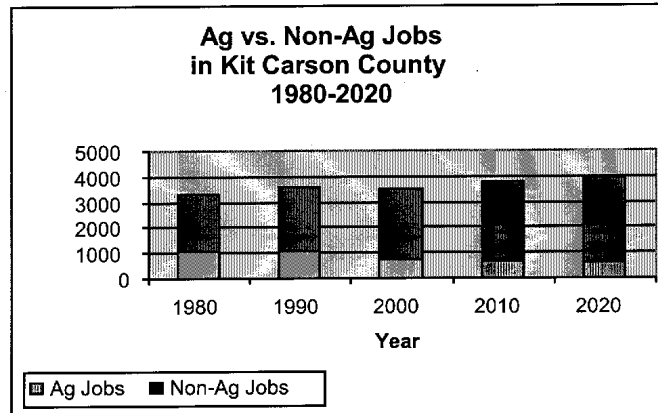
How the population is distributed geographically across the County is important when considering the provision of services and accommodating new development. Historically, most of the population growth has occurred within existing towns, particularly in Burlington. The farm and ranch population is actually decreasing countywide.

In areas where the population increases, there may be a shortage of adequate housing and therefore a need for new housing development. New housing development, in turn, will likely result in a demand for new businesses to meet its needs. On the other hand, in areas that experience a decrease in population, housing will be abandoned and the related retail services that depend on those residents will suffer and perhaps disappear.

Planning, as an endeavor, will require the County to always look forward. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs and the Center for Business and Economic Forecasting periodically make population and economic projections. The projections, reported in 1999, indicated a slow but steady increase in the population of Kit Carson County, from approximately 7,300 in 1995, to just over 8,400 in 2000, 8,740 in 2010 and 9,073 in 2020.



Likewise, projections have been calculated indicating how the economy might change. One good indicator of economic change is the growth and makeup of the employment opportunities. The number of jobs in Kit Carson County is expected to increase from approximately 3480 in 1995, to 3536 in 2000, 3764 in 2010 and almost 4,000 in 2020. One of the more revealing indicators of a continuing change in the County economy is the number of agricultural jobs relative to non-agricultural jobs. In 1980, 33 percent of all jobs were related to agriculture. As the number of farms decreases and the need for farm labor decreases as well, by 2000 agricultural jobs are expected to have decreased to only 20 percent of all jobs. This trend is expected to continue to where agricultural jobs will decrease to 18 percent in 2010 and to 16 percent of all jobs in 2020.



Projections, such as those above, are not predictions of the future. Rather they reflect expected trends and are based on certain assumptions about the global, national, state, regional and local economies and societies. What happens in Kit Carson County in the future will depend on a number of different forces both, internal and external.

How much and where land is developed will be affected by how the County grows in some areas and perhaps declines in others. The types of public services, as well as how, where and to whom they are provided will also be affected by the composition of the future population and economy.

G. Local Government



Incorporated in 1899, Kit Carson County, in accordance with the Colorado Constitution and the Colorado Revised Statutes, provides a variety of services to its citizens.

Included in these, are law enforcement and jail facilities, clerk and recorder, assessor, social services, health services, road and bridge construction and maintenance, solid waste disposal (landfill), and a coroner. The *Kit Carson County Government Structure* section of this Plan describes the structure of county government as well as the roles and responsibilities of various county officials.

The incorporated cities and towns include Flagler, Seibert, Vona, Stratton, Bethune and the county seat of Burlington. Each of these jurisdictions provides water and sewer services and local street maintenance. In addition, most of these provide police protection and parks and recreation services.

Fire protection and ambulance services are provided by volunteer departments. Fire stations are located in Flagler, Seibert, Stratton, Vona and Burlington. Ambulance facilities are based in Flagler, Seibert, Stratton and Burlington.

Outside of incorporated areas, individual wells and sewage disposal systems (septic) provide water and sanitary sewer.

The County's main office is located at 251 16th Street in Burlington. Kit Carson County is located in Planning & Management Region 5, which is coordinated by the East Central Council of Governments located in Stratton.



2. The Plan

A. How the Plan Was Prepared



In 1995, the Kit Carson County Commissioners directed the Planning Commission to consider how best to plan for and manage growth and land use. In April of that year, the Commission conducted a survey of Kit Carson residents, asking about the quality of life in the County and how they felt about growth and change. Questionnaires were mailed to over four thousand residents and over fifty (50) percent of the forms were completed and returned. Residents overwhelmingly supported the concept of preserving and protecting the County's natural resources, including groundwater, soil and air. Although the majority of respondents favored new growth in the technological, industrial and agricultural areas in general, there was somewhat less agreement on how to respond to these issues. Finally, regarding the question of whether the County should regulate growth or not, sixty (60) percent favored regulation, twenty-three (23) percent opposed, and seventeen (17) percent were undecided.

With this citizen input in hand, the Commission met and drafted a Land Use Resolution and Comprehensive Plan. The County Planning Commission approved the Land Use Resolution and Comprehensive Plan in April 1998. The Kit Carson Board of County Commissioners approved the Resolution and Plan in June of 1998. The Board resolution which adopted the new land use regulations, and the 1998 Plan, stated that *"a new land use resolution is necessary to protect the quality of life of the residents and citizens of Kit Carson County, to provide for the orderly development of the County, to preserve the property values within the County and to protect and enhance agricultural interests and development within the County."*

In December 1998, the Commissioners retained Community Matters, Inc., a professional planning consulting firm, to help prepare an expanded version of the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. Community Matters was asked to look more specifically at several issues including, but not limited to, growth management, capital and public improvements, community character, recreation, landfill issues and transportation.

The update process consisted of three phases. The first phase was the creation of a planning database, including information about the County's physical resources, its social, economic and governmental structure and its assets. This effort culminated in the drafting of the Kit Carson County Community Profile.

The second phase of the planning process focused on community input. Community Matters conducted a series of individual interviews with a cross-section of residents throughout the County. In addition, a countywide public workshop was held in Stratton in February where several county residents were able to discuss the issues they felt were critical. In March 1999, the County Commissioners appointed a group of citizen advisors to guide the planning process. This Citizen Advisory Committee met periodically to determine specific concerns to be addressed, discuss important issues and develop a framework of policies and strategies for the Comprehensive Plan update. In addition, Community Matters met with County Department Heads, staff members and various local experts in the fields of agriculture, water resources, social services, solid waste management, transportation, communications and other technical fields to gather more specific information. A Technical Advisory Committee was also appointed by the Board to advise Community Matters on all aspects of the draft policies and strategies.

The final phase consisted of drafting, amending and redrafting policies and strategies. The Citizen and Technical Advisory Committees met again with the consultants to review revised drafts. A county-wide public meeting was held in March. On March 27, 2000, the Planning Commission approved the Plan. The Board of County Commissioners held a public hearing on May 3, 2000 to review the plan and adopted the Plan on June 28, 2000.

B. How the Plan Can Be Used



The general purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to guide and accomplish a coordinated and harmonious development of the County in a manner that will best promote the health, safety and general welfare of all residents.

The Plan is intended to serve as a guide, not just for the Board of County Commissioners and the Planning

Commission, but for other county elected officials; appointed boards and commissions; and, department heads and staff, as well.

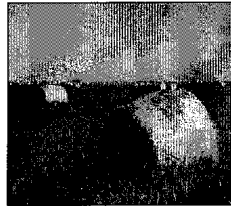
The Plan should be used whenever the County considers applications for development permits, proposed subdivisions, and variances. In addition, the Plan can provide guidance to the County Commissioners and others when considering matters of public investment, capital improvements, and annual budgets.

Just as important, the Comprehensive Plan can serve as a tool to help all County residents in identifying, monitoring and managing programs and activities that influence the quality of life in Kit Carson County

3. Policies and Strategies

A. Land Development Policies – Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Uses

1. Unincorporated areas should be retained primarily for agricultural uses. Non-agricultural related uses are encouraged to locate within existing municipalities. Outside of these cities and towns, non-agricultural uses may be permitted if compatible with adjacent land use.



Strategies

- a) The Kit Carson County Future Land Use Map, Map 2 depicts the major future land use categories: (1) the **General Agriculture Area**, (2) **Municipal Planning Influence Areas**, (3) **Low Intensity Agricultural Areas**; and, (4) **Future Town or City Growth Areas**.

The **General Agricultural Area** is the predominant land use area in the County. This area includes all agriculture uses including crop and livestock production, processing and storage. Some uses, such as concentrated animal feeding operations may be subject to further review and permitting by the County or State of Colorado. Intensive non-agricultural uses are discouraged in this area. Low-density residential development may occur in this area subject to the County Land Use Resolution.

The **Municipal Planning Influence Area** is an area that generally extends three miles around each incorporated municipality in the County. Land uses and related activities that occur within this area are likely to have an impact, positive or negative, on the adjacent town or city. Therefore, the County shall refer all land use changes in the area to the affected municipality for its review and comment. The County should give consideration to land use changes in the area in order to limit undesirable impacts on the municipalities and the County.

The **Low Intensity Agricultural Area** is the unincorporated area within the Municipal Influence Area boundaries. This area is intended to serve as a buffer area between agricultural activities and more intense residential uses. Lower intensity agricultural uses such as general crop production and open grazing are encouraged in this area. More intensive agricultural activities, such as Confined Animal Feeding Operations are discouraged. (See Kit Carson Land Use Resolution for definition) Low-density residential development may occur in this area subject to the County Land Use Resolution.

The **Future Town or City Growth Area**, if established by a town or city, identifies those areas around a community that may be suitable for annexation and development in the future. (These growth areas also include existing incorporated areas of each municipality.) Most non-agricultural uses are encouraged to locate within the Town or City Growth Areas. If non-agricultural development does occur in these Growth Areas, it should be served by municipal services, such as water, sewer, streets, etc.

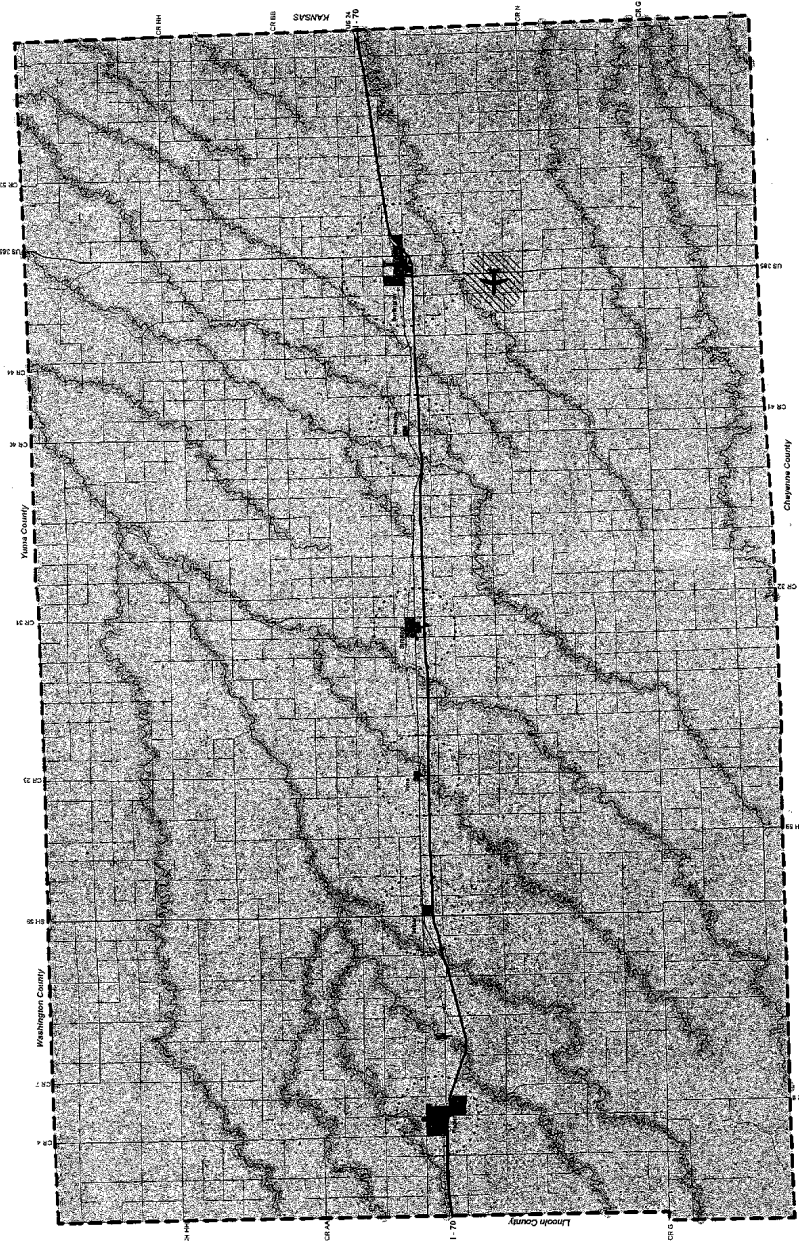
- b) Each municipality within the County is encouraged to establish a Future Land Use Plan for all lands within its incorporated boundaries, as well as unincorporated lands adjacent to the existing City or Town. The Plans should identify Municipal Development Areas appropriate for non-agricultural development.
- c) The municipal Land Use Plans should be established based on a municipality's ability to provide adequate water, sewer, local street access and other municipal services for new development.
- d) If a municipality chooses to establish a Future Land Use Plan, the City or Town should give adequate notice to all residents, affected landowners and the County as well as hold public meetings, workshops and hearings.
- e) Future land use designations should be a result of negotiations between the City or Town, residents, landowners and County representatives.
- f) Once a municipality has adopted a Land Use Plan, it should also adopt a Town or City Growth Area which would identify those areas most likely to be developed within ten to fifteen years from the time of Plan adoption.

Map 2:
Future Land Use Plan
 Planning Influence Area
 Town Boundaries
 Drainage Area
 Non-intensive Agriculture
 General Agriculture
 Airport Influence Area
 Airport

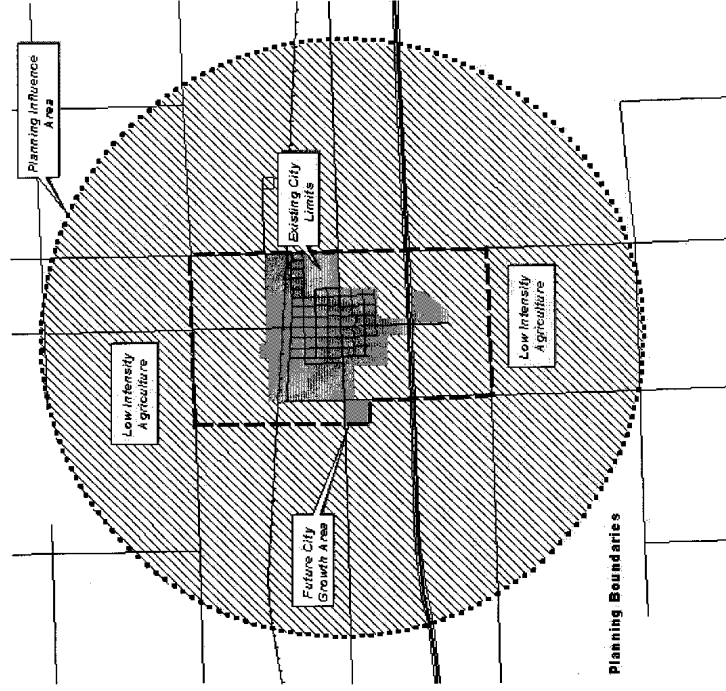
**Comprehensive Plan
 Kit Carson County**



Prepared by
 Community Matters, LLC
 February 2009
 This map is for planning and informational purposes only. It is not intended to be used for legal or financial purposes. Land ownership patterns are generalized and not intended to provide specific boundary information.



Kit Carson County General Land Use Areas



This Town Growth Area may then be the subject of future agreements between the County and the municipalities regarding land use control.

Map 3 illustrates the various concepts described above.

2. Any use of agricultural land for uses other than agriculture will be critically reviewed.



Strategies

- a) In order to minimize conflicts between incompatible uses, the conversion of agricultural land into residential, commercial or industrial development outside of existing municipalities, or their respective Town Growth Areas, is discouraged.
- b) Agricultural businesses and industries related to ranching, livestock production and farming may be allowed outside municipalities, or their Town Growth Areas, if the removal of agricultural land from production is limited and impacts on existing agricultural activities is minimized.
- c) Kit Carson County recognizes the "right to farm." The County encourages each municipality and all residential subdivisions to adopt a "right to farm" covenant which serves as notification to residents that the area is agriculturally based and that conflicts between agricultural activities and municipal uses may occur.
- d) The County acknowledges and supports the continuation of historic livestock feeding operations.

3. The County encourages the promotion of methods that increase crop and livestock production without adversely affecting groundwater, surface water and/or air.

Strategy

The County should work with the various existing organizations which promote improvements to agricultural production including, but not limited to, the Colorado State University Extension Service, Natural Resource Conservation

Service, Colorado Farm Bureau, Colorado Wheat Growers and the Colorado Cattleman's Association.

4. The County encourages the promotion of efforts to improve marketing of agricultural products.

Strategy

The County should cooperate and work closely with existing agencies and organizations which promote the marketing of agricultural products, including the State of Colorado Department of Agriculture, the State Economic Development Commission, and others.

B. Residential Development Policies

1. During the residential development process, the separation of residential areas from inharmonious land uses is encouraged.



Strategies

- a) The County and each municipality should encourage new residential development be located in areas where conflicts with existing or planned commercial, industrial or agricultural uses can be minimized.
- b) New development shall be encouraged to use a variety of buffering techniques – such as setbacks, fencing, landscaping and other forms of screening – to increase privacy and minimize impacts of noise, dust, unsightly views and traffic.

2. Most new residential development is encouraged to locate near an existing municipality in order to maximize the utilization of existing public facilities and service investments such as schools, parks, streets, and community sewer and water.



Strategy

Whenever feasible, new residential development should locate within established municipal growth boundaries and their related Town Growth Areas.

- 3. In order to promote contiguous agricultural lands, protect the county's rural character, and encourage the efficient use of land and public services, it is desirable to have development in rural areas clustered, rather than scattered across the landscape.**

Strategies

- a) The County should adopt a Land Use Resolution with policies, standards and procedures that promote the clustering of residential development when proposed lots are less than eighty acres.
- b) The Land Use Resolution shall include development review standards for rural cluster development. The standards should address open space, setbacks, height, parking and site planning criteria for rural cluster developments.

- 4. The County encourages housing for the elderly and disabled be located within existing municipalities.**

Strategies

- a) Housing for senior citizens, the disabled and those individuals with special health care needs should be located within municipal boundaries.
- b) Housing for these special needs groups should either be located within a reasonable distance of community centers, health care facilities, parks and shopping areas, or, where transportation services can be provided to enable easy access to these facilities.

- 5. Encourage the development of a variety of housing, available for the full spectrum of income levels within the County.**

Strategies

- a) Each municipality is encouraged to accommodate higher density housing and manufactured housing, in appropriate areas, in order to encourage lower cost rental and owner occupied units.

- b) The County supports private efforts to provide affordable housing throughout the County. The Colorado Housing and Finance Authority, Prairie Developments Rehabilitation Program, and development incentives can serve to promote additional housing.

C. Commercial Development Policies

- 1. Encourage commercial development that will broaden the economic base of the County and still safeguard the County's existing environment.**



Strategies

- a) The County supports public and private-sector efforts that are aimed at supporting the expansion of existing businesses and encouraging the formation of new businesses in the County.
 - b) The County encourages commercial development if it finds that the economic benefit of a new business would outweigh the loss of productive agricultural land.
 - c) The County should work with landowners, local chambers of commerce and various public and private organizations to plan and market commercial and industrial development in Kit Carson County.
- 2. Only those commercial developments that cannot reasonably be located in the existing municipalities will be reviewed to determine feasibility of locating in unincorporated areas.**

Strategies

- a) Agricultural businesses and industries related to ranching, livestock production and farming may be allowed outside municipalities or their Town Growth Areas if the removal of agricultural land from production is limited.
- b) The County shall adopt a Land Use Resolution with specific review criteria for commercial facilities in residential or agricultural areas outside the municipalities and their Town Growth Areas.

Commercial development should be encouraged to locate within or contiguous to the existing towns or communities.

Strategies

- a) New commercial development should locate within existing towns or their respective Town Growth Areas, if established.
- b) New commercial development should be located in areas that are easily accessible, have good available (e.g., water, sewer, fire protection) and where negative impacts on existing development can be minimized.



D. Industrial Development Policies

- 1. Encourage industrial development that will not have a negative effect on the County's existing environment.**

Strategies

- a) New industrial development should locate within existing towns or their respective Town Growth Areas, if established.
- b) Require sufficient buffering of new industrial development adjacent to agricultural lands.

- 2. Local officials, public and private, shall promote the development of an expanded and diversified industrial base compatible with existing agriculture.**

Strategies

- a) The County will work with landowners, local chambers of commerce and various public and private organizations to plan and market commercial and industrial development in Kit Carson County.
- b) The County shall support public and private-sector efforts which are aimed at promoting the expansion of existing and formation of new agriculturally oriented businesses.

- 3. Work to ensure the logical placement of industrial development.**

Strategies

- a) New industrial development should be located in areas that are easily accessible by auto, truck and rail, if necessary. In addition, new industrial development should be located where services are or will be available (e.g. water, sewer, fire protection) and where negative impacts on existing development can be minimized.

E. Transportation Policies

- 1. U.S. Highway 385 should be promoted as a major north-south transportation corridor through the nation's "High Plains".**



Strategies

- a) Kit Carson County actively supports public and private efforts to promote U.S. Highway 385 as the "Highplains Highway."
 - b) The County supports efforts to obtain federal designation of the corridor as an integral part of the Ports-to-Plains and Heartland Express system connecting Mexico and Canada through Colorado and neighboring states.
 - c) As part of the Highplains Highway effort, the County and the City of Burlington should explore appropriate improvements, and realignments if necessary, to assure the most efficient, effective and safe north-south connection through or around the City of Burlington.
- 2. The County should designate certain roads within the County as collector roads. These roads should be widened and highly maintained.**

Strategies

- a) The Kit Carson Transportation Network, depicted on Map 4 shall serve as the future transportation plan map.

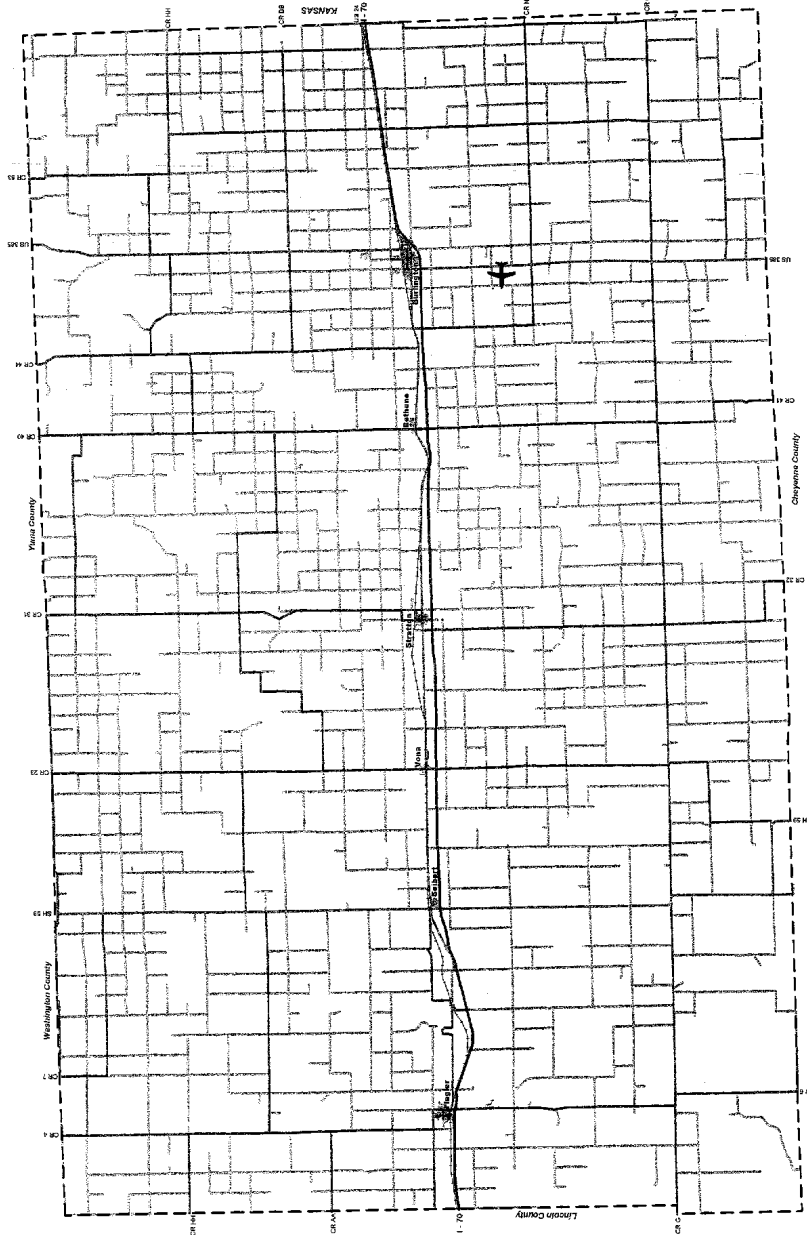


Map 4:
Transportation Plan
 Freeway
 Regional Arterial Highway
 County Collector Roads
 Local Roads
 Airport

**Comprehensive Plan
 Kit Carson County**



Prepared by:
 Planning Solutions, Inc.
 January, 2008
 This map is for planning use and
 is not intended to be used for
 legal purposes.
 Use of this map for legal purposes
 will not be held for plan specific accuracy.

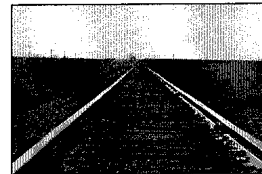


- b) All mail carrier routes and bus routes are designated as County Collector roads and should receive priority snow removal and maintenance.
- c) Efficient east-west connections on County roads should be provided. The alignments of County Roads G, N, BB and HH should be maintained, and improved if necessary, to provide efficient vehicular connections from the east end of the County to the west.
- d) The County should continue its road maintenance program that puts snowplows on call during a storm to assure quick reaction and plowing of major County roads at the earliest possible time.

3. The County supports appropriate safety measures at each of the railroad crossings in Kit Carson County.

Strategy

The County should work with the Kyle Railroad, or any other operator of railroad facilities, to assure appropriate crossings are installed and maintained.



4. Airports and traffic pattern airspace should be maintained and upgraded as a vital part of The County transportation system.

Strategy

The Future Land Use Plan establishes a 3-mile radius Airport Influence Area around the Burlington/Kit Carson County Airport. Applications for any land use changes within this influence area should only be approved if it can be established that such changes will not negatively affect flight patterns or other operations at the airport.



5. Any rezoning, subdivision, rural development adjacent to major highways or the County's collector roads shall not be approved unless adequate right-of-way is dedicated.

Strategy

Prior to approval of any subdivision or land use permit on a property that abuts a County road, the County should

determine if it has sufficient right-of-way for the existing or proposed road. If not, the applicant shall dedicate to the County additional rights-of-way, pursuant to County standards.

6. The County supports responsible measures for handling and transporting hazardous waste and/or hazardous materials over County roads as governed by federal and state statutes.

7. The County shall protect residential, commercial, industrial and public areas from undesirable and unnecessary traffic while still providing good access to these areas.

Strategy

Prior to approval of any new land use development application, the County shall determine if the new development will have unacceptable impacts on existing residential, commercial, industrial or public areas. If necessary, the County, at its discretion, may require of the application a traffic study completed by a certified professional engineer. If unacceptable impacts are projected, the applicant shall amend the application to reduce traffic, re-route traffic or provide adequate buffering techniques such as fencing, landscaping or other barriers.

8. The County encourages a well-balanced transportation system that supports the use of a variety of modes of transportation, including automobile, bus, railroad, air, pedestrian and bicycle.

Strategies

- a) The County will develop a road plan to classify existing and future roads. This will be used to help prioritize capital improvement programming during the development review process.
- b) The County should continue to support public transportation services such as the Outback Express.



F. Water Quality and Quantity Policies

- 1. Transfer of ground water and/or surface water from Kit Carson County to be used in other areas shall be restricted.**

Strategies

- a) Kit Carson County officials shall establish appropriate communications with the State of Colorado Division of Water Resources and the Water Conservation Board to assure the County is made aware of any applications to transfer water from Kit Carson County.
- b) The County shall object to any such transfers, unless it can be shown that there will be no negative impact on Kit Carson County residents, businesses or agricultural operations.
- c) The above strategies are not intended to discourage or prohibit a farmer from pumping irrigation water from wells located in Kit Carson County for the irrigation of contiguous land in an adjacent County.



- 2. Water is the one resource that will determine whether growth in the County's agricultural industry is to continue. The County's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations consider conservation of this resource to be a primary objective.**

Strategies

- a) Promote the wise use of Kit Carson County's water resources by encouraging the use of drought resistant plant materials and native species in non-agricultural landscaping. (See plant list in Appendix)
- b) Promote the wise and conservative use of Kit Carson County's water resources through educational programs and outreach from the local water authority.
- c) Identify possible future water resources in the County and take steps to purchase and reserve appropriate water rights.



3. An adequate water supply shall be a primary prerequisite for any new land development.

Strategies

- a) Require that new development submit a statement and plan of projected water use for all domestic (residential), commercial and industrial activities, as well as for landscaping. The County may require amendments to development applications depending on its review of such information.
- b) Discourage land uses that result in overly consumptive water use.

4. The County should take all necessary measures that will prevent the contamination of groundwater.

Strategies

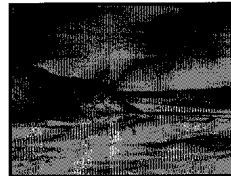
- a) Require storm drainage plans and waste disposal plans that minimize the contamination of groundwater as required by Colorado statutes.
- b) The County shall, in conjunction with local extension agencies, continue to educate the agricultural industry, business and industrial owners and residents regarding proper water usage techniques and proper storage techniques for hazardous or polluting materials.

G. Mineral Resources Policies

1. Gravel is a limited resource in the County that should be developed.

Strategies

- a) The County shall allow the orderly and reasonable extraction of aggregate resource deposits in the County.
- b) All aggregate mining activities shall conform to the rules and regulations of the State of Colorado.
- c) Mining activities should minimize the impacts of surface mining on surrounding land-uses, roads and highways.



- d) All mining sites shall be reclaimed in a timely manner pursuant to the guidelines of the State Mined Land Reclamation Board.

2. Further development of the natural gas and oil industry within the County should be encouraged.

Strategies

- a) The County's land use policies should accommodate further development of oil and gas resources in the County if oil and gas exploration and production occurs in a manner that minimizes the impact on existing agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial uses.
- b) Exploration and production should be conducted pursuant to state and federal rules and regulations to assure minimal impact on the environment.

3. The County promotes the efficient recovery of any other minerals in the County.

Strategies

- a) The County shall allow the orderly and reasonable extraction of commercial mineral deposits in the County.
- b) All aggregate mining activities shall conform to the rules and regulations of the State of Colorado.
- c) Mining activities shall minimize the impacts of surface mining on surrounding land-uses, roads and highways.
- d) All mining sites shall be reclaimed in a timely manner pursuant to the guidelines of the State Mined Land Reclamation Board.

H. Communications Policies

1. Maintain a technologically up-to-date communications system throughout the County.

Strategies

- a) The County supports efforts to upgrade communication systems throughout the County.
- b) The County will work with municipalities, private organizations and public agencies to promote the extension of "state of the art" communication systems, including high speed Internet access, to all users in the County.
- c) The County will continually assess the existing telephone services to all residents of Kit Carson County and urge phone companies to continue to maintain a high level of service.
- d) The County will promote the expansion of wireless communication.
- e) The County supports the implementation of the goals and strategies outlined in "A Strategic Telecommunication Plan for Eastern Colorado," March 2000.
- f) The County should monitor the effectiveness of the National Weather Service storm warning system and promote improvements, as necessary. The County should assist in notifying and educating all County residents about the availability of this warning system.



I. Environmental Protection Policies

1. All land development proposals that possess the potential to pollute any stream, body of water, subsurface aquifer, aquifer recharge, the air, or the surrounding surface shall comply with all local, state and federal water quality standards.



Strategies

- a) Review all development proposals to ensure that the development conforms to appropriate water quality control standards.
- b) Discourage intensive development (such as residential, commercial, industrial or livestock confinement uses)

within drainage corridors. Low impact agricultural uses, such as crop production or grazing, is encouraged.

2. New development shall acknowledge, respect and incorporate existing environmental constraints and opportunities to ensure that Kit Carson County's natural and man-made environment is preserved and enhanced.

Strategy

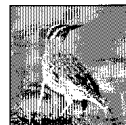
The County should adopt a Land Use Resolution that includes standards for new development. These standards should address:

- Natural hazards, toxic hazards and hazardous substances
- Water quality
- Floodplains
- Air quality
- Vegetation
- Animals and animal habitat
- Visual quality, noise, vibration and odor
- Soils and geology
- Geologic, paleontologic, ecological, historic and archaeological resources

3. Floodplains and other unsafe or unsuitable areas for building shall be kept open and free.

Strategies

- a) Prohibit development of any permanent structures within any identified 100-year floodplain. In those drainage-ways for which a floodplain has not been mapped, great care should be taken to avoid potential flooding areas.
- b) The County shall discourage re-grading and channelization of any 100-year floodplain. If development or re-grading within any floodplain does occur, the County shall assure it is completed in conformance with Federal Emergency Management Agency requirements.



4. Sewage disposal will be subject to the rules promulgated by the State and Local Health Departments.

Strategies

- a) Intensive land uses, such as multiple unit residential subdivisions, commercial and industrial, should be located in areas where central sewage disposal service is available.
- b) For less intensive land uses, the County shall adopt a sewage disposal standard, in its Land Use Resolution and other resolutions that will guide the use and installation of Individual Sewage Disposal Systems.

5. Coordinate and oversee the placement of any landfills of other proposed disposal sites. Any sites that are not environmentally sound shall be avoided.

Strategies

- a) Discourage the placement of landfill and disposal sites in environmentally sensitive areas.
- b) All efforts should be made to place new landfill facilities in areas where adjoining land uses will not be negatively impacted.
- c) All new landfill applications shall conform to all applicable statutes, rules and regulations of the State of Colorado.

6. Encourage all measures to reduce wind or water erosion in the County.

Strategy

The County shall work closely with the Burlington and Flagler Soil Conservation Districts and promote practical and effective erosion control programs.

J. Parks and Recreation Policies

- 1. The County shall encourage the development of bodies of water in the County where County residents can fish, picnic or, in general, have a recreational area.**



Strategies

- a) The County supports the continued maintenance and improvements to the Flagler Reservoir and State Wildlife Area.
- b) The County supports the designation of park, recreation and open space areas around existing bodies of water, floodplains and stands of trees and shrubs.

- 2. The County should encourage a balanced and readily accessible program of recreation and facilities for all ages, income levels and cultural backgrounds with special emphasis on programs and facilities for youth.**

- 3. The County shall encourage a viable habitat for wildlife.**

Strategies

- a) The County should cooperate with local, state and federal agencies to identify, conserve and protect fish and wildlife habitat.
- b) The County supports sound agricultural activities that provide and manage natural wildlife habitat.



K. Public Facilities and Services Policies

- 1. Encourage adequate and responsive law enforcement and fire protection for the entire County.**
- 2. Reduce crime and the fear of crime and preserve the rights and freedoms of the citizens of the County.**

Strategies

Support the County Sheriff's Department in the fulfillment of its vision that includes:

- Protect life and property
- Preserve the peace of the community
- Apprehend offenders and assist in their prosecution
- Assist the general public in non-criminal matters
- Treat everyone with due respect
- Avoid using unnecessary force
- Be a visible deterrent to crime in the community
- Make the Sheriff's office available to all citizens
- Support the community's youth and their activities
- Maintain good communication with the citizens

3. All new developments shall have complete and adequate utilities and public service. Tap fees, service charges and tax revenues from all new developments shall be sufficiently high to properly protect the existing users from increased cost due to the new developments.

Strategies

- a) The County should assure that new development pay its fair share of the cost of development, including, but not limited to, water, sewer, roads, parks and schools.
- b) The County may consider incentives and subsidies if it deems the new development will offset the costs of such subsidies.

4. Proliferation of service districts shall be opposed.

Strategy

The County encourages new development which would require public services, such as water and sewer to locate within existing municipalities where the ability to provide such services already exists.

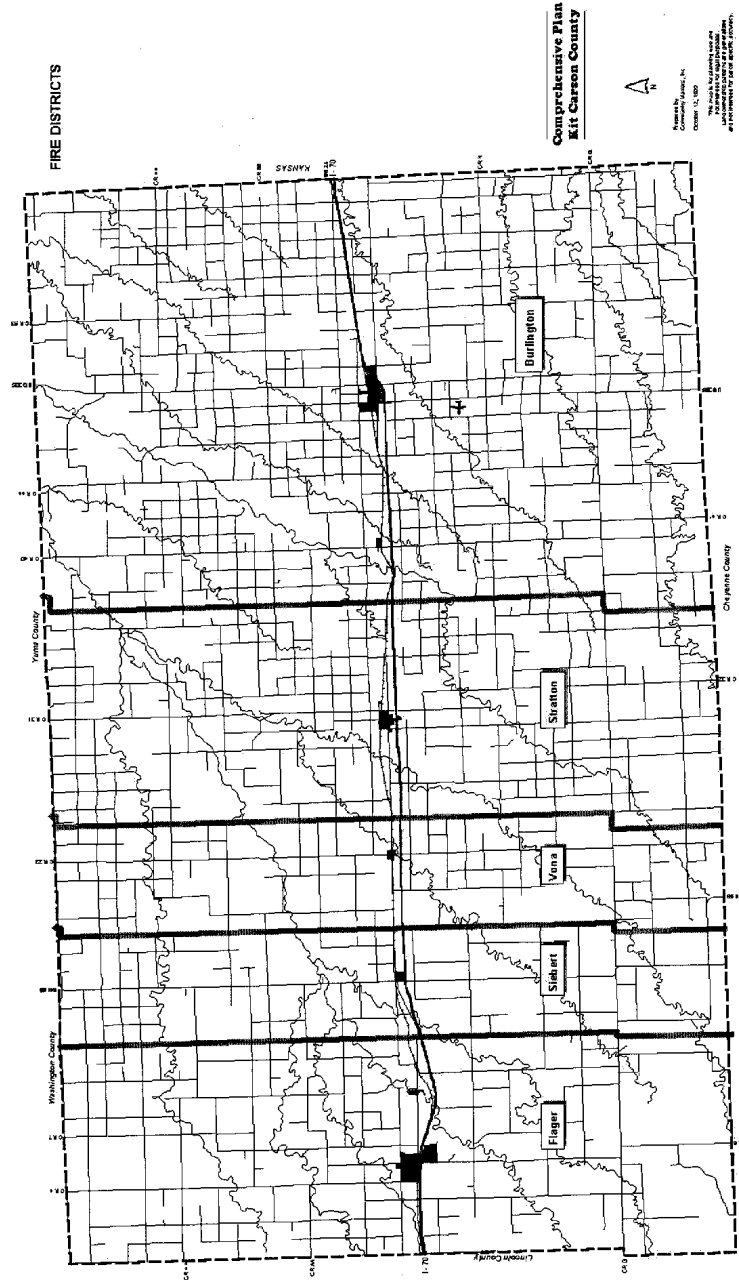


5. The County will encourage the promotion of adequate health care for all County residents.

Strategies

- a) The County encourages the improvement of community clinics and emergency centers in centralized locations in order to meet the health needs of all citizens.

Kit Carson County Comprehensive Plan



- b) Encourage the provision of a broad range of health care services as determined by the continuously redefined needs of the medical service area.
- c) Strive to promote improved health awareness and lifestyles through education and wellness programs.
- d) The County encourages the promotion and continuation of the County's emergency medical services.

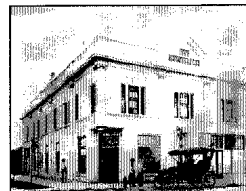
6. The County will promote educational opportunities within the County communities.

- a) The County supports public and private efforts to maintain high quality educational programs and facilities throughout the County.
- b) Any new development that will have a significant negative impact on a local school system should not be approved unless it can be shown such impacts can be resolved.
- c) The County encourages cooperation between school districts and municipalities to consider joint use of facilities.

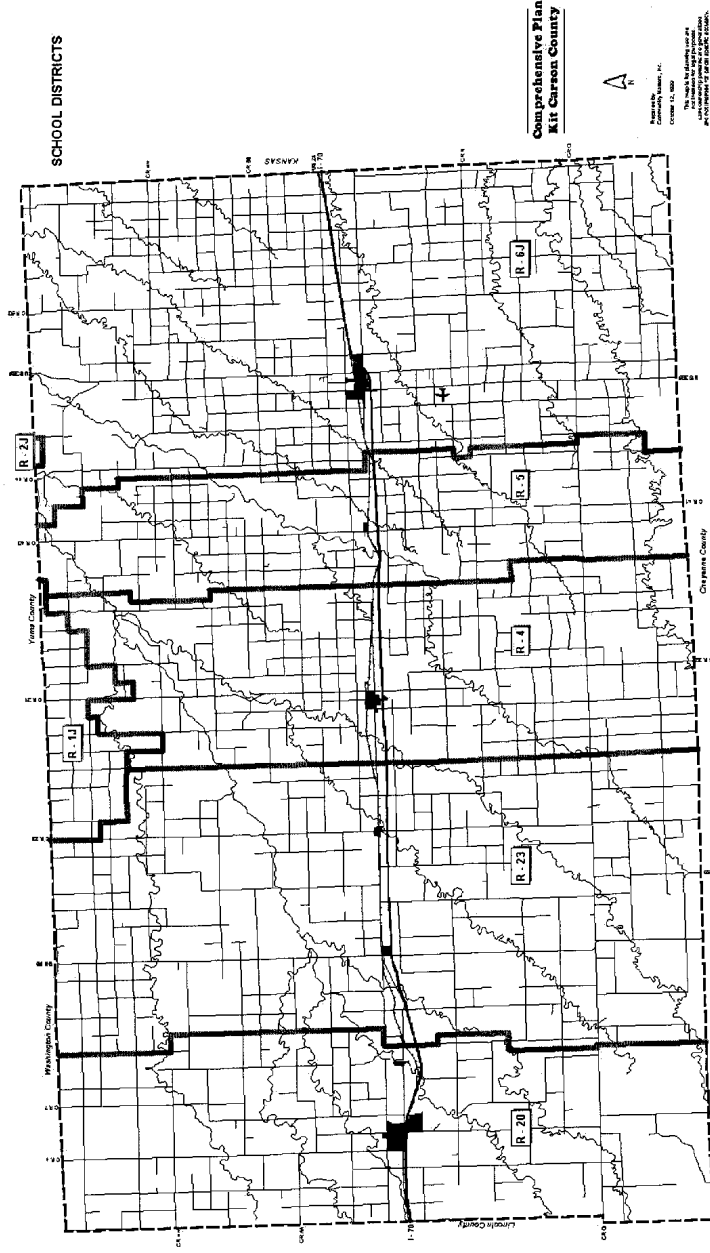
7. The County will pursue provisions for needed public facilities and services in an efficient and economic manner to promote, protect and enhance the County's existing population.

Strategies

- a) The County should develop a capital improvements program that identifies necessary improvements or new construction of capital facilities.
- b) A five or ten year capital improvements budget should be prepared and adopted by the County Commissioners that estimates the cost of facilities and identifies a specific schedule for the improvements. The principles of responsible and effective capital improvement programming are set forth later in the following chapter.



Kit Carson County Comprehensive Plan



4. Service Provision, Needs Assessment, and Capital Improvements

For many local governments, how and where growth occurs within the jurisdiction has profound effects on the provision of services. Most municipalities (cities and towns) within Kit Carson County provide services that would require significant capital improvements if growth occurs. The elements of the **physical infrastructure** provided by municipalities include water and sewer services, streets, sidewalks, street lighting, parks and recreation facilities. In addition, the municipalities provide police protection and several other administrative services. If growth occurs in any of the municipalities, each jurisdiction will have to respond to the demand for new services. Depending on the location and amount of new growth, meeting that demand may require significant extension of the service networks.

Kit Carson County does provide some traditional services that can be considered part of the physical infrastructure, the primary one being Road and Bridge. (In 1998, the County Road and Bridge Fund accounted for twenty-six percent [10 mills] of the total property tax mill levy [37.9 mills] assessed for County services.) In addition, the County provides, either outright or jointly with other entities, several major capital facility elements of the physical infrastructure. These include the Kit Carson County Hospital, County Jail, County Landfill and the Burlington/Kit Carson County Airport. For these and other capital improvements, the County annually assesses a 1.75 mill property tax.

As described in the chapter entitled *County Government Structure*, counties are responsible for providing several administrative functions including but not limited to property tax assessment and collection, social services, health services, agricultural extension services and sheriff services. These services might be called the **administrative infrastructure** that the County provides to its citizens. The administrative infrastructure does not always have the same *cause and effect* or *supply and demand* relationship to growth as does the physical infrastructure. Whereas a new residential subdivision would require a specific number of new water or sewer taps and a certain amount of new street frontage, the level of additional social or health services that same

subdivision might require is not as evident. For many of the County services, an increase or decrease in the demand for service is not in the number of units, but in more subjective qualitative measures.

Many of the services the County will provide to its ever-changing population are best administered with the direction and funding of short-term operating plans and budgets. However, even the **administrative infrastructure** services should be guided by overall County goals and objectives. Each department should determine the "business they are in", create indicators of quality service and stick to a plan and a budget. The County's elected officials should draft and periodically adjust a mission statement regarding the provision of all services.

A. Capital Improvement Planning and Programming

Some County services will be dependent on long-term capital investments. The **capital improvement plan (or program)** (CIP) is the method the County can use to determine its infrastructure requirements and to plan the financing of needed services and facilities. The CIP represents a framework for decision making. It provides a forum to discuss and resolve the political choices that the County must make about what to build or buy, where and when to build or buy it, how much to spend for it, and how to pay for it.¹

Capital improvements are those improvements, including new construction, expansion repair, and replacement of facilities and equipment that are relatively high cost and have a useful life of several years. Capital improvements that Kit Carson County has provided in the past, and may provide in the future, include, but are not limited to:

¹ Building Together: Investing in Community Infrastructure, pp. II-2,3

- Courthouse
- Administrative Buildings
- Storage Buildings
- Building Additions and Remodeling
- Roads and Bridges
- Road Maintenance Equipment
- Parking Lots
- Jail Facilities
- Airport
- Landfill
- Hospital
- Hospital Equipment
- Automobile Fleet
- Computer Systems
- Specialized Operating Equipment, e.g., communications systems, geo-graphical information systems, etc.

The CIP should be a multiyear plan (five or six years) that projects spending for all anticipated capital projects. The plan should address both the repair and replacement of existing infrastructure as well as the development of new facilities to accommodate future growth. It will enable the County to identify needed capital projects and to coordinate facility financing and timing. An effective CIP consists of both an administrative process to identify needed capital projects and a fiscal plan to provide for the funding of those projects.²

The CIP should link the County's planning and budgeting functions. The CIP should describe each capital project proposed for development over a five-or six-year period by listing the year it is to be started, the cost by year, and the proposed method of financing. Based on these details about each project, the county can develop annual cost resources (i.e., current revenues, general obligation bonds, and intergovernmental assistance). Thus, a capital planning program should present both the cost and funding sides for all the capital facilities required by the county. Once the CIP is approved, a annual **capital budget** should be prepared that represents the first year of the capital improvement plan.³

B. Advantages of Preparing a Capital Improvement Program

Using taxpayers dollars wisely – Advance planning and scheduling of community facilities may avoid costly mistakes. Careful evaluation of the need and the timing of new facilities can provide savings. Over-building or under-building usually can be avoided and necessary land can be purchased at lower cost in advance of construction.

² Building Together: Investing in Community Infrastructure, pp. II-2,3

³ Building Together: Investing in Community Infrastructure, pp. II-2,3

Focusing on community needs and capabilities -

The capital improvement planning process should reflect the County's needs, objectives, expected growth and financial capability. Planning ahead will help assure that high priority projects will be built first.

Obtaining community support -

Citizens of the County are likely to be more receptive to spending on capital improvements if they are the result of a community-wide rational analysis. Citizens must be allowed to participate in the capital planning process. Citizen support of bond issues, rate increases or other funding mechanisms is more likely if the capital improvement program reflects community needs and priorities.

Encouraging economic development -

Businesses looking to expand or relocate in Kit Carson County are more likely to be attracted to the area if public facilities are either in place or well thought out and planned for the future.

More efficient administration -

Well planned projects can reduce scheduling problems, conflicts and overlapping of projects. Work can be scheduled more effectively when it is known in advance what, where, and when projects are to be undertaken. The CIP can also allow the County to anticipate lead times necessary to identify and tap in to additional funding sources if necessary.

Maintaining a stable financial program -

Abrupt changes in the tax structure and bonded indebtedness may be avoided when construction projects are spaced over a number of years. Major expenditures can be anticipated, resulting in the maintenance of a sound financial standing.

Coordinating with other governmental units -

A capital improvement program gives the County the opportunity to coordinate the location, timing and financing of related or joint-use facilities.

Federal and state grant and loan programs -

A capital improvement program can place Kit Carson County in a better position to take advantage of federal and state grant programs, because plans can be made far enough in advance to anticipate grant applications and the earmarking of matching funds, if necessary.

C. Key Steps in Preparing the Capital Improvement Program

- 1. Reaffirm the capital improvement policies in the Comprehensive Plan** - The County Comprehensive Plan sets forth several policies intended to guide the planning, financing and construction of capital improvements. These should be reviewed and reaffirmed, and amended if necessary, prior to developing the CIP.
- 2. Conduct an Inventory** - The County should perform and periodically update an inventory of its current facilities as well as the need for new facilities and equipment. The inventory should include an assessment of the condition of existing facilities and their adequacy to provide the continued service.
- 3. Identify Projects** - Each department should compile a list of potential projects based on best estimates of future needs and past experience. At this point, it is important to involve the public by encouraging citizens to submit project requests and articulate needs otherwise unknown to staff. This process should include the participation of the various appointed citizens boards and commissions that are responsible for guiding County policy. At this step, the County should coordinate with each municipality within the County. The objective is to identify projects that the County and a municipality might jointly benefit from. Joint-use agreements might be established which can eliminate a duplication of service. In addition, two or more local governments may be able to combine financial resources to make funding of a particular project more realistic and economical.
- 4. Set Priorities** - The project list that results from the previous step will probably not be fully fundable with resources available. The "wish list" will need to be evaluated and each project will need to be ranked. The criteria for ranking projects should include one or more of the following:
 - Legal obligations and mandates
 - Fiscal and budgetary impacts on the County
 - Health and safety effects
 - Effects on economic development efforts
 - How often the facility is used
 - Environmental, aesthetic and social effects
 - Ability to coordinate and share resources with other projects
 - Degree of community support
 - Prior commitments and feasibility
 - Implications of deferring the projects
 - Amount of uncertainty and risk
 - Effects on other jurisdictions, e.g. city or towns
 - Disruption and inconvenience

- 5. Public Review and Comment** - Citizen involvement throughout the capital improvement planning process assures the plan reflects the needs and desires of the community. In addition, an active outreach program can serve to keep the citizens informed and help minimize complaints and after-the-fact objections to major county projects.
- 6. Perform a Financial Analysis** - The County should prepare an assessment of its financial capability. Revenue trends, expenditure trends and projections for both should be analyzed. Two key questions should be asked:

 - ✓ How will capital projects affect the county's operating budget?
 - ✓ Can the county fund the current year's capital budget?
- 7. Assess Funding Sources** - The County has only a limited pool of resources to fund capital improvements. The challenge will be to identify those funding mechanisms that are adequate to raise the required capital and at the same time be the most politically acceptable. Some examples include current County revenues, existing fund balances and working capital, funds raised from borrowing in the capital market (bonds), increases in taxes, impact fees, development fees, user fees and charges, grants and low-interest loan programs. Consideration of the appropriate mix of borrowing and pay-as-you-go financing of capital improvements must recognize the practical (as well as legal) limits to each approach.
- 8. Develop and Adopt the Capital Improvement Plan and Budget** - After projects have been evaluated, rated and tied to potential funding sources, the County should prepare a program showing each project, its priority, timing and method of funding. The first year capital budget should also be prepared at this time. The County Commissioners should then adopt the Plan after adequate public review and comment. At the time the CIP is adopted, the County should also adopt the first year capital budget.
- 9. Monitoring and Annual Review** - The County staff and elected officials should monitor the progress of the

Kit Carson County Comprehensive Plan

CIP, ensure that projects remain on schedule, make adjustments as necessary, perform an annual review and adopt the subsequent year's capital budget.

5. Implementation

A. How the Different Planning Documents Relate

The Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan identifies specific principles, policies and strategies that are intended to provide guidance and direction for existing and future land use. In addition, the Plan sets forth the general mission of the County and its various departments. The basic documents used by Kit Carson County to carry out the policies and strategies of this Plan are the Land Use Resolution, the Land Subdivision Regulations and the County Budget.

The Land Use Resolution

The Land Use Resolution is a regulatory document. It defines land use permit application procedures, identifies responsibilities, and defines standards and regulations pertaining to various land uses as well as non-conformance and enforcement procedures.

Land Subdivision Regulations

The Subdivision Regulations establish rules, regulations and standards governing the subdivision of land within the County. The regulations, required by the Colorado Revised Statutes, provide the Board of County Commissioners authority to review and approve the plans for creating building lots or parcels and related streets and other public rights-of-way. The Regulations include design standards for streets, sidewalks, lot sizes, easements, driveways, sanitary sewer, water supply and storm drainage.

The County Budget

The County Budget sets forth the County's annual commitment to programs and policies. Much of the business that the County conducts is done pursuant to state or federal mandates, such as welfare or health programs. However, there are many items in each budget for which the Commissioners and other elected officials have discretion. The Comprehensive Plan can serve as a guide to the

Commissioners and those elected officials when deciding whether or not to fund particular programs.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

It is important to emphasize that although the Comprehensive Plan is an important planning tool, the Planning Commission or County Commissioners are not bound to make decisions in conformance to it. The Plan is an advisory document, which, by its nature, does not impose zoning or land use permit restrictions. The Colorado Supreme Court has, on several occasions, recognized and emphasized the distinction between the advisory nature of comprehensive planning on the one hand, and the regulatory, binding nature of zoning on the other.

In one of the Court's leading decisions, *Theobald v. Board of County Commissioners of Summit County*, 644 P.2d 992 (Colo. 1982), the Court found that "*conceptually, a master plan is a guide to development rather than an instrument to control land use...on the other hand, it is the task of the legislative body charged with zoning to individually apply the broad planning policies to specific property, consistent with the public interest, and with notions of due process and equal protection.*"

In other words, decisions made by the County Commissioners and others, regarding specific permit applications, do not necessarily have to be in conformance with the Plan. Because conditions and circumstances change over time, the Kit Carson Board of Commissioners reserves the right to maintain flexibility, as long as the intent of the Plan is adhered to. The citizens of the County, and those doing business in the County, should expect and deserve predictability. Therefore, it is the intent of the Board of Commissioners to respect the spirit of the plan.

6. Kit Carson County Government Structure

A. Colorado County Structure

Traditionally counties have been considered to be a subdivision of state government existing to administer state programs at a local level. As an administrative branch of government, counties do not have a court system of their own. They possess no inherent legislative powers and may exercise only those delegated to them by the General Assembly. Article XIV of the Colorado Constitution also establishes the organization and structure of non-home rule counties.

B. County Government Positions

Board of County Commissioners

The Boards of County Commissioners serves as both the administrative and the policy-making bodies for the county. While, generally, boards have only those powers specifically conferred by the state General Assembly, courts have held that they have such implied powers as may be necessary to carry out their specified powers. Constitutionally, the board also sits as the County Board of Equalization. The Board also fills all vacancies in County offices other than those for County Commissioner and for Public Trustee. All powers of the County, as a legal entity, are exercised by the Board of County Commissioners and not by its individual members.

County Clerk and Recorder

By state constitution, the Clerk and Recorder is required to be the Recorder of Deeds and the Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners. By law, the Clerk and Recorder is responsible for carrying out certain state functions. The Clerk is the agent of the state Department of Revenue and, among other duties, is charged with the responsibility of administering state laws relating to motor vehicles, certification of automobile titles, and motor vehicle registration. The Clerk is

also responsible for administering all primary, general, and special elections held in the county, and for registration of voters, publication of notice of elections, appointment of election judges, and printing and distribution of ballots. The Clerk and Recorder also issues marriage licenses, maintains records and books for the Board of Commissioners, collects a multitude of license fees and charges required by the state, maintains property records, and furnishes deed abstracts upon request.

County Assessor

The County Assessor values real and certain types of personal property for "ad valorem" taxation purposes. The County Assessor maintains property ownership records, produces a yearly tax roll and a yearly abstract of assessments and certification of valuation to taxing entities.

County Treasurer

The Treasurer of each county is responsible for the receipt, custody and disbursement of county funds. The Treasurer is the public trustee, except in first and second class counties. The Treasurer collects some state taxes and all property taxes - including those for other units of local government. The Treasurer collects and disburses school funds belonging to school districts located within the county. The Treasurer sends notices of and collects all property taxes for all local governments and disburses receipts for each after charging a statutory collection fee. The Treasurer conducts sales of property for delinquent taxes.

County Sheriff

The County Sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer of the county, responsible for maintaining the peace and enforcing state criminal laws. The Sheriff must attend court and is required to serve and execute processes, subpoenas, writs and orders as directed by the court. The Sheriff operates the county jail, and must maintain and feed prisoners. The Sheriff is also fire warden for prairie or forest fires in the county. Finally, the Sheriff performs certain functions in connection with sales of real and personal property to satisfy debt or tax liens.

County Coroner

A Coroner is elected for the term of four years. Candidates for the position are encouraged by the General Assembly to possess knowledge and experience in the medical-legal investigation of death. It is also the intent of the General Assembly that those individuals holding this office participate in programs designed to develop and enhance their qualifications in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities associated with the office. The Coroner may declare an individual dead if he finds the individual has sustained irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory function.

County Attorney

The Colorado Constitution states that the County Attorney may be elected or appointed. Statutes state that the county attorney shall be appointed. The county attorney advises other county officers on all legal matters and is required to represent the state in certain types of juvenile and mental health proceedings.



Appendix A

Survey for Kit Carson County Zoning 1995

4008 Survey Questionnaires were mailed to County residents.
2102 (52%) completed surveys were returned

Summary Results:

1. How important is quality of life to residents of Kit Carson County?

Important	1969	97%
Undecided	37	2%
Not important	16	1%

2. How important is the preservation and protection of natural resources, i.e. groundwater, soil and air?

Important	1996	97%
Undecided	48	2%
Not important	20	1%

3. Would you favor technological growth?

Favor	1329	65%
Undecided	527	26%
Opposed	185	9%

4. Would you favor industrial growth?

Favor	1278	63%
Undecided	459	23%
Opposed	295	14%

5. Would you favor agricultural growth?

Yes	1489	73%
Undecided	325	16%
Not Important	222	11%

6. Generally speaking, should new commercial or industrial development in Kit Carson County be regulated to protect existing property owners?

Yes	1580	77%
Undecided	176	9%
No	294	14%

7. Should County growth be regulated through zoning?

Yes	1186	60%
Undecided	335	17%
No	465	23%

8. Do you own 35 acres or more in Kit Carson County?

Yes	915	44%
No	1144	56%

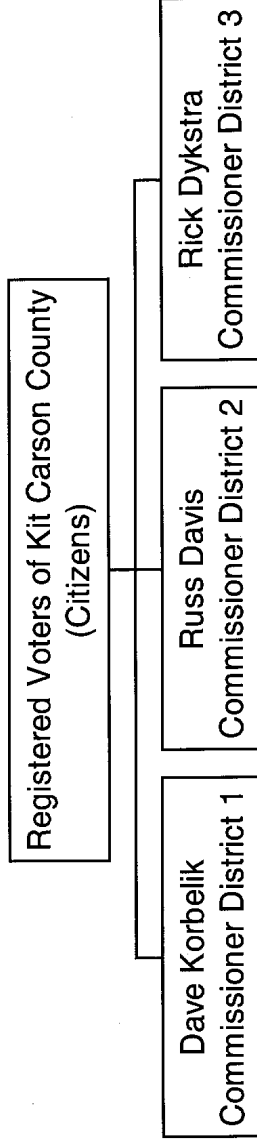


Appendix B



Kit Carson County

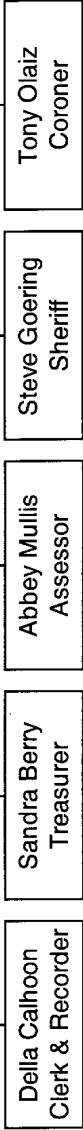
Board of County Commissioners





Kit Carson County

Registered Voters of Kit Carson County
(Citizens)





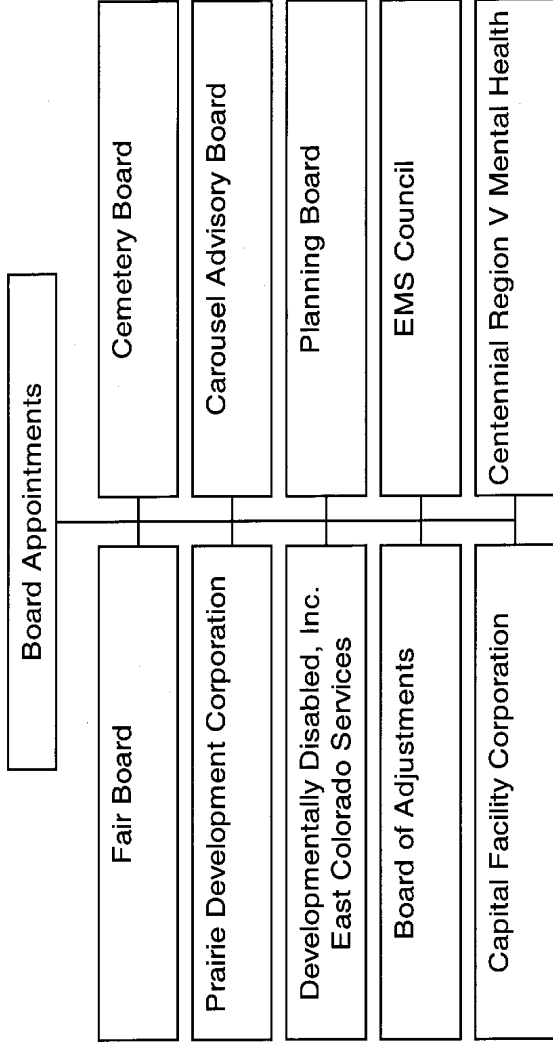
DEPARTMENTS

Board of County Commissioners

Attorney Wade Gateley 346-5427	Administrator Lynda Brownfield 346-8139	Ambulance Director Ted Foth 346-7878	Communications Supervisor Shannon Reeder 346-9325
Road & Bridge Supervisor Walt Isenbart 349-1985	Landfill Supervisor Randy Gorton 346-8139	Grounds & Buildings Dave Weber 346-5927	Payroll/Expense Clerk Skipper Walters 346-8133
Weed District Ray Flock 348-5875	Emergency Management Darcy Janssen 346-8538	Veteran Officer Hubert Tyrell 346-8845	Public Health Director Kindra Mulch 346-7158
Public Health Specialist Kelly Alvarez 346-7158	Social Services Director Norma Pankratz 346-8732		



County Boards





Appendix C

Building Permits in Kit Carson County

(Incorporated and Unincorporated)

The following are the most commonly asked questions when building or remodeling a home.

- Do I need a building permit?
- What do I need in order to obtain a building permit?
- Where do I obtain a building permit?
- How much does a building permit cost?
- How long after obtaining a building permit do I have to build?

The answers to these questions may vary depending on the jurisdiction in which you wish to build.

Please contact the town or city hall in the community you wish to build. The contact phone numbers are listed by community below:

Bethune

Bethune Town Hall, Town Clerk
719-346-7593

Burlington

Burlington City Hall, City Clerk
719-346-8652

Flagler

Flagler Town Hall, Town Clerk
719-765-4571

Kit Carson County (Not in City or Town limits)

Kit Carson County Clerk
Administration Office
719-346-8139

Siebert

Siebert Town Hall, Town Clerk
970-664-2323

Stratton

Stratton Town Hall, Town Clerk
719-348-5612

Vona

Vona Town Hall, Town Clerk
970-664-2435

Appendix D

Utility Services in Kit Carson County

(Incorporated and Unincorporated)

If you are building a home or purchasing a manufactured home, you will need to have utilities extended to your property. The local utility services are listed below for your reference. You may wish to consult the latest edition of your local telephone directory to confirm numbers.

Electricity

Within City of Burlington City Limits:

Burlington City Hall
415 15th Street
Burlington, CO 80807
719-346-8652

Remainder of Kit Carson County including other towns:

KC Electric
Main Office
422 3rd Avenue
Hugo, CO 80821
719-743-2431

Natural Gas

Peoples Natural Gas
304 14th St.
Burlington, CO 80807
719-346-5365
1-800-303-0752

Telephone

Flagler:

Eastern Slope Rural Telephone Association
403 3rd Avenue, PO Box 397
Hugo, CO 80821
719-743-2441

Siebert and Vona:

Plains Telephone
6488 Hwy 36, PO Box 123
Joes, CO 80822
970-358-4211

Bethune, Burlington, Stratton:

CenturyTel
27850 Harris Road
La Junta, CO 81050
800-261-7649

Cable TV

Burlington:

CableComm(Burlington)
800-480-7020

Flagler, Stratton:

Galaxy Cable Company
800-365-6988

Seibert:

B&C Cable
970-483-7820

Water, Sewer and Trash

Contact local town or city halls in Kit Carson County