

ARAPAHOE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
NOVEMBER 18, 2025
6:30 P.M.

SUBJECT: CASE NO. LR25-001 – ARAPAHOE COUNTY 2018 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT TO ADOPT, BY REFERENCE, THE 2025 BYERS SUBAREA PLAN

LORETTA DANIEL, LONG RANGE PLANNING PROGRAM MANAGER

PURPOSE AND REQUEST

Arapahoe County proposes to amend the 2018 Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan to adopt, by reference, the updated 2025 version of the Byers Subarea Plan together with Appendix A.

The updated draft Byers Subarea Plan (the Plan) will provide guidance to staff and County officials on a range of goals and policies over the next 20 years. It will also serve as a framework for public and private investment within the Byers area. The Plan provides a list of implementation actions to accomplish the goals outlined in the Plan, intending to make this a “living” document that has practical, actionable steps. The draft Byers Subarea Plan consists of two documents: the primary Plan document and Appendix A, Byers Historical Information.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan was approved by the Planning Commission as part of the 2001 Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan on June 24, 2003. At that time, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) reviewed the plan at a study session. No amendments to the plan have been made in the past 20 years.

Arapahoe County initiated an update to the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan in response to community representatives’ request to modernize the plan since it was outdated. An Advisory Committee was established with representatives from the Byers School District, Byers Water and Sanitation District, Byers Parks and Recreation District, I-70 REAP, residents and business owners, and a developer. The intent was to create a community-based vision for Byers for the next 20 years, with goals, policies, and actions that reflected the community’s desires and suggestions.

The planning process began with an inventory of existing conditions and a community survey, and the information was presented at the first open house. Two supplemental surveys focused on high schoolers and Spanish-speaking adults. In total, there were 135 respondents, and these surveys provided the basis for the vision and the five themes that are carried throughout the Plan. The five themes are:

- Preserve the rural and small-town character of Byers;
- Focus on managed and controlled growth;
- Attract small businesses and community amenities;
- Improve the appearance of the community and implement infrastructure improvements; and
- Maintain a sense of community and quality of life for families and senior residents.

These themes influenced the goals and policies in all the major topic areas in the Plan, such as land use and development, transportation, economic development, and recreation.

This Plan differs from the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan due to the approach taken of collecting comments from the community and using them as the foundation of the 2025 Plan. The action matrix is a new addition that identifies priorities and assigns an implementation timeline. The number of goals, policies, and actions has been expanded to include ideas that reflect the themes and specific comments from the community. The overall organization of the Plan has been updated and structured into 10 topic chapters.

At the Planning Commission meeting of September 16, 2025, staff detailed the four phases of the planning process and presented a draft Plan for the Commission's review. Since then, the draft Plan was presented at a community open house on October 2, 2025, which was followed by a four-week review period for public comments. The adoption draft version of the Plan has incorporated relevant comments from the open house and public review.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

One of the planning processes was centered on working with the Advisory Committee to revise the Future Land Use Map and land use categories. The Future Land Use Map is a policy tool that serves as the visual framework for any desired growth the development. It is a key element of the Plan since it provides the policy basis for rezoning and land use regulations and helps guide decisions for development proposals and new infrastructure investment.

As a starting point, the 2003 Future Land Use Map was analyzed by the Advisory Committee, and discussions focused on potential and/or desirable types of development, available water (i.e., development sites in or outside of the Byers Water and Sanitation District boundaries), the ability of the Byers School District to absorb more students, challenges for infrastructure connections, and impacts on the existing community.

Consequently, there were no substantial changes to the residential areas identified in the 2003 Future Land Use Map, and these areas were carried over to the 2025 Future Land Use Map which is in Chapter 4. There were, however, refinements to the Mixed Use categories by adding two new categories as well as changing some boundaries. The Mixed Use-Entertainment category was developed to reflect existing and potential future entertainment and hospitality venues. The Mixed Use-Industrial category was added to more narrowly define where uses such as manufacturing and warehousing could occur. The Mixed Use areas are generally located north of the established residential area of Byers to limit any negative impacts from new development on the core of the community.

PUBLIC COMMENT & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Public opinion was collected through two surveys as well as two community open houses that were held at the Kelter Library in Byers. The first open house was held on November 13, 2023, to present the results of a community survey and to gather additional comments. The second was on October 2, 2025, where the draft Byers Subarea Plan was presented to the community for comments, and was the beginning of the public review period. Approximately 40 people attended the first open house, and 30 people attended the second. At the second open house, the boards displayed the content of the draft Plan and staff was available to answer questions and explain the rationale for the goals, policies, and actions in each chapter.

The draft Byers Subarea Plan was posted on the County's project website for a public comment period from October 2 to 31, 2025. A survey asked questions about the draft Plan and the level of approval

or disapproval for the goals, policies, and actions in the major chapters. There were fourteen survey responses and the comments received focused on limiting growth and maintaining the rural, small-town character of Byers. There was substantial support for all the main policy chapters, as shown below:

Chapter	Approve	Neutral	Disapprove
Chapter 3, Vision Statement	86%	0%	14%
Chapter 3, Five Key Themes	86%	0%	14%
Chapter 4, Land Use Policies	43%	29%	28%
Chapter 4, Future Land Use Map	46%	38%	15%
Chapter 5, Transportation and Mobility	50%	21%	28%
Chapter 6, Parks, Open Space and Recreation	64%	7%	29%
Chapter 7, Community Facilities and Infrastructure	79%	0%	21%
Chapter 8, Economic Development and Tourism	50%	21%	28%
Chapter 9, Heritage and Community Identify	50%	36%	14%
Average	62%	17%	21%

Only one survey comment resulted in an addition to the draft Plan, which was to add “recreational uses” to the Mixed Use-Entertainment land use category and the Definitions section.

It should be noted that the Future Land Use Map remained substantially the same as in the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan, with the exception of expanding the Mixed Use category for the proposed May Farms development and some other areas, adding the Mixed Use-Industrial and Mixed Use-Entertainment categories, and changing the boundaries of the Town Center category to reflect the commercial areas along Main and Front Streets. In the survey comments, there were some misinterpretations of the Map, such as the 100-year floodplain being reduced, which was not the case, there was also no indication of low-income housing in Chapter 4 or elsewhere in the Plan, and agricultural land uses were not eliminated.

The draft Byers Subarea Plan was sent to 32 referral agencies and entities, and three responses were submitted to staff. For one response, comments were primarily editorial, and the second was from I-70 REAP which expressed support for the Plan and is included in the Attachments. The third response was from CORE to provide information on its upgraded transmission line and new substation.

The public hearing was noticed in newspapers of general circulation within the County, including the I-70 Scout on October 29, 2025, the Littleton Independent, Englewood Herald, and Centennial Citizen on October 30, 2025, and the Eastern Colorado News on October 31, 2025. Staff referred the proposed amendment to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs as required by Colorado Revised Statutes.

STAFF FINDINGS

Staff finds that:

1. The 2025 Byers Subarea Plan is an update of the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan that reflects the aspirations of the community.
2. The 2025 Byers Subarea Plan was prepared with extensive involvement of residents, businesses, property owners, and identified stakeholders in the Byers planning area.

3. The Planning Commission reviewed the draft 2025 Byers Subarea plan at a study session on September 16, 2025.
4. The 2025 Byers Subarea Plan sets forth a vision, goals, policies, and actions that closely align with those in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan and reflect the opinions and comments from the Byers community.
5. The Planning Commission has the authority to amend the Comprehensive Plan to adopt, by reference, the 2025 Byers Subarea Plan and Appendix A, as an element of the Comprehensive Plan, following a public hearing.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of Case No. LR25-001, a Comprehensive Plan amendment to adopt, by reference, the Byers Subarea Plan and Appendix A, as an element of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan based upon the findings and analysis of this staff report.

PLANNING COMMISSION DRAFT MOTIONS

Motion for Approval:

In the case of LR25-001, Arapahoe County 2018 Comprehensive Plan Amendment to adopt, by reference, the Byers Subarea Plan, I have reviewed the staff report including all exhibits and attachments, and have listened to staff's presentation and any public comment as presented at the hearing, and hereby move to adopt this Comprehensive Plan amendment based on the findings in the staff report and submit the Byers Subarea Plan to the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners for approval.

Denial:

In the case of LR25-001, Arapahoe County 2018 Comprehensive Plan Amendment to adopt, by reference, the Byers Subarea Plan, I have reviewed the staff report, including all exhibits and attachments and have listened to staff's presentation and any public comment as presented at the hearing and hereby move to deny this Comprehensive Plan amendment based on the following findings:

1. *State new findings in support of denial as part of the motion.*

Continue to a Date Certain:

In the case of LR25-001, Arapahoe County 2018 Comprehensive Plan Amendment to adopt, by reference the Byers Subarea Plan, I move to continue the hearing to *[date certain]*, 6:30 p.m., at this same location, to obtain additional information and to further consider the information presented.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Planning Commission Resolution – Amendment of the 2018 Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan to Incorporate the Byers Subarea Plan
2. [Adoption Draft 2025 Byers Subarea Plan](#)
3. [Appendix A – Byers Historical Information](#)
4. Referral Comments
5. Report for Byers Subarea Plan – Community Survey #2
6. Presentation

PLANNING COMMISSION OF ARAPAHOE COUNTY, COLORADO
RESOLUTION NUMBER 25-XXX

AMENDMENT OF THE 2018 ARAPAHOE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
TO INCORPORATE THE BYERS SUBAREA PLAN
CASE NO. LR25-001

RESOLUTION NO. 25-XXX It was moved by Planning Commissioner _____
and seconded by Planning Commissioner _____ to adopt the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission is authorized by Colorado Revised Statutes §30-28-108 to adopt a Comprehensive Plan, subject to the approval of the Board of County Commissioners (“Board”), for the unincorporated areas of Arapahoe County by resolution and make amendments thereto over time; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission adopted the Byers Sub-Area Plan as an element of the 2001 Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan on June 24, 2003; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission adopted an updated Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan on January 9, 2018, pursuant to Resolution 18-0001, which adopted by reference, the Byers Sub-Area Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Arapahoe County Public Works and Development Department has developed, through a public planning process that included extensive public outreach and engagement, an updated subarea plan pertaining to the unincorporated community of Byers (“Byers Subarea Plan”) that provides guidance on topics including land use, transportation, and community character; and

WHEREAS, the Byers Subarea Plan is intended to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan as a specific amendment, thereby superseding that previously approved for the Byers area; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was duly noticed by publication in newspapers of general circulation within the County, including the I-70 Scout on October 29, 2025, the Littleton Independent, Englewood Herald, and Centennial Citizen on October 30, 2025, and the Eastern Colorado News on October 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, on November 18, 2025, the Planning Commission reviewed the staff report and the proposed findings contained therein, conducted a public hearing, and considered all testimony and public comment as was presented at the public hearing; all of which are contained in and made part of the Record for the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment, Planning Case No. LR25-001; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission hereby makes the following Findings in support of this Resolution:

1. The Byers Subarea Plan is consistent with the goals and policies of the Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan.
2. The Byers Subarea Plan addresses the unique challenges and opportunities within the Byers community, promotes safety and economic development, and constitutes sound planning practice.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Planning Commission of Arapahoe County, State of Colorado:

1. The Planning Commission hereby adopts the Byers Subarea Plan, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, as an amendment to the Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan.
2. The Planning Commission hereby submits the Byers Subarea Plan to the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners for approval pursuant to C.R.S. §30-28-106(1).
3. This Resolution shall be effective immediately upon its adoption by the Planning Commission.
4. The Secretary to the Planning Commission is hereby directed to maintain this Resolution in the files of the Public Works and Development Department. The Staff Report to the Planning Commission, documenting the amendment to be made, and all attachments and exhibits are a part of this Record.

The vote was:

Commissioner Howe ____; Commissioner Latsis, ____; Commissioner Miller, ____; Commissioner Mohrhaus, ____; Commissioner Sall ____; Commissioner Sauve, ____.

Planning Commission Chair

November 18, 2025

I, Jason Reynolds, **Secretary to the Arapahoe County Planning Commission**, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing Resolution is a true copy of the Resolution of the Planning Commission of Arapahoe County, Colorado, adopted on November 18, 2025.

Jason Reynolds, Secretary

Date



Byers Subarea Plan

Byers, Colorado



ARAPAHOE COUNTY

ADOPTION DRAFT NOVEMBER 18 2025

With thanks

The updated Byers Subarea Plan has been defined by the participation of many residents, businesses and other stakeholders. Arapahoe County appreciates the contributions made by members of the community.

Arapahoe County would like to recognize and thank the Byers **Advisory Committee** for their guidance and support for community engagement throughout the creation of this plan.

Tom Bradbury

Kip Cheroutes

JaLee Kitzman

Gary May

Stacie May

Shannon Roth

Annette Tarantino

Tom Turrell

Publishing Information

Title:	Byers Subarea Plan
Author:	Arapahoe County Public Works and Development Department, Planning Division
Status:	Planning Commission Approval and adoption on xxx, 2025, Resolution No. 25-xxxx Board of County Commissioners Approval on xxx, 2025, xxxxxxxxx
Printing Date:	xxxx, 2025
Updates:	This Plan may be amended or updated periodically. Please contact the Arapahoe County Public Works and Development, Planning Division, for up-to-date information.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Community Context	5
3. Vision and Themes	14
4. Land Use, Development, and Housing	17
5. Transportation and Mobility	25
6. Parks, Open Space, and Recreation	28
7. Community Facilities and Infrastructure	32
8. Economic Development and Tourism	35
9. Heritage and Community Identity	39
10. Implementation	43
Definitions	55

Appendices

Appendix A. Byers Historical Information



Source: Kevin Morgan, Coloradorailfan.com

1. Introduction

The **Byers Subarea Plan** serves as the official guiding document to direct growth, investment, improvements, and development within the community of Byers. This Plan updates the previous Byers Sub-Area Plan (adopted in 2003) and identifies a community vision for the future of Byers. It provides a decision-making framework and establishes an expectation for future investment in the Byers community. The Plan establishes a vision for the future and includes recommendations to make that vision a reality.

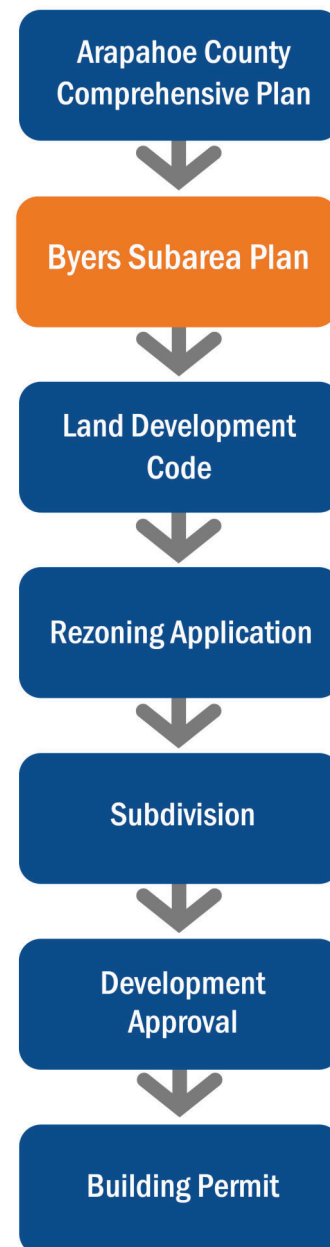
The **Byers Subarea Plan** is part of Arapahoe County's Comprehensive Plan. This update was prepared to revise out-of-date policies and provide an approach to consider development, infrastructure improvements, and other actions that can affect the community for the next 20 years. The 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan was developed reflecting a surge of growth anticipated along the I-70 corridor at that time, and expecting a population of 5,000 in Byers in 2020. That level of growth did not materialize; however, it is expected that population growth and new development will continue to expand eastwards from Aurora.

The planning horizon for this Plan looks 20 years into the future, to 2045. Since situations can change over time, amendments to this Plan can be made periodically to reflect opportunities for new development or other circumstances.

Purpose of a Subarea Plan

The Byers Subarea Plan functions as a detailed framework for managing the evolution of the community. In contrast to a county-wide comprehensive plan, which provides broad guidance across a larger jurisdiction, a subarea plan focuses on the specific needs, characteristics, and aspirations of a defined local area such as Byers. Its foundation is a thorough analysis of existing

How the Byers Subarea Plan fits into the planning and development process.



conditions, understanding what currently defines Byers, and a forward-looking perspective on the community's desired future.

This Plan addresses a range of elements important to daily life and the long-term viability of Byers, including:

- **Land Use:** Delineating appropriate locations and types of development for residential, commercial, and open space uses.
- **Community Character:** Strategies for preserving and enhancing the unique identity and sense of place within Byers.
- **Mobility:** Planning for the efficient movement of people and goods, encompassing vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure.
- **Public Spaces:** Recommendations for improving and expanding parks and other public recreational and gathering areas.
- **Infrastructure:** Ensuring the provision of essential services and facilities necessary to support current and future community needs.

The recommendations presented within this Plan are derived from the public engagement process involving Byers' residents. A horizon year of 2045 was selected and while the horizon year for the plan

is long, the document, especially in the Implementation chapter, should be reviewed regularly since the Plan is adaptable. As Byers continues to evolve, a comprehensive review and potential updates to the plan are anticipated every five years to ensure its ongoing relevance and responsiveness to our community's changing needs.

Related Plans

Plans and studies that affect Byers and which helped form this Plan are:

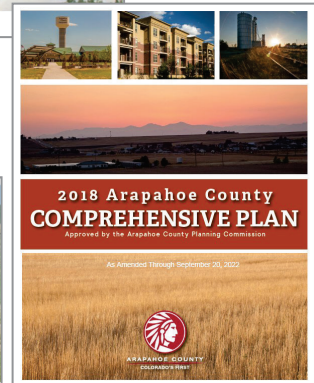
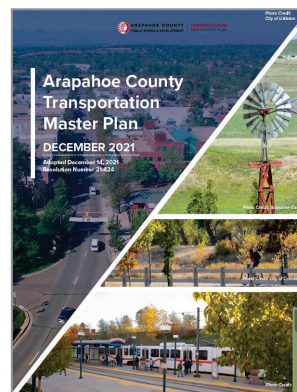
- **Byers Sub-Area Plan (2003).** The purpose of the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan was to address anticipated growth pressures. The Plan identified visions, goals, and strategies for community image, housing, transportation, open spaces and parks, education, economic development, tourism, public facilities, growth management, and land use.
- **Byers Community Survey (2007).** In 2007, Arapahoe County retained RRC Associates to conduct a survey for an update to the Byers Sub-Area Plan. The survey summary document presented findings on quality of life, current services, future priorities, growth and development, economic and commercial development, housing, and communication.



- **Quint Valley Master Plan (2023).** This Master Plan was prepared for the Byers Park and Recreation District with assistance from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. The Master Plan analyzed the conditions of the 80-acre fairgrounds site and presented concepts to include more amenities and attractions, with the goal of improving the recreational and tourism appeal for visitors.
- **Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan (2018).** The Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan provides guidance for land use decisions for the unincorporated areas of the county. Approved in 2018, the plan outlines goals for development and includes various long-range documents, such as transportation and hazard mitigation plans, with a land use plan detailing future development.
- **2040 Transportation Master Plan (2021).** The Transportation Master Plan includes recommended improvements for all modes of transportation to facilitate travel throughout the county to 2040.
- **Open Spaces Master Plan (2021).** The Arapahoe County Open Spaces Master Plan identifies a course for the next 10 years for conserving and enhancing natural lands, water resources, and providing parks and open spaces for county residents.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2017).** The Arapahoe County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan outlines goals, policies, strategies, and performance measures related to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs. It identifies a network of bicycling facilities, along with projects needed to create the network and to complete missing segments.

Community Engagement

The foundation for this revised Byers Subarea Plan is based on input from the Advisory Committee, a survey, and a public open house. Comments received through the engagement process were used to create the vision and guiding themes, and form the basis for each chapter in this Plan. The community's responses were analyzed and distilled in the "Key Takeaways and Findings" section in each chapter.



The survey was posted on the Arapahoe County website and was open for a month in 2023. People in the study area were notified by postcard and also by social media. The survey had a combination of specific and open-ended questions, and the survey summary report is on the project website.

An open house was held on November 13, 2023, to share the results of the survey, present historical and demographic information, and provide an opportunity for residents to talk to staff. Attendees were asked to comment on the materials presented and if they had additional thoughts. This open house was a follow-up to the community survey and comments from the attendees provided more information on their concerns and what they saw as opportunities in Byers.

How to use this Plan

This Plan is to be used by County officials and staff, property owners, developers, residents, and other stakeholders. The Plan:

- Communicates a vision for Byers and how it can evolve over the next 20 years;
- Informs development proposals by guiding the type of development, scale, and intensity that align with the vision for Byers;
- Provides a foundation for the regulatory framework since any rezoning must reflect the Plan; and
- Identifies actions that implement important goals and policies for Byers' residents and property owners.



2. Community Context

Regional Context

The community of Byers is located in eastern Arapahoe County, approximately 40 miles east of downtown Denver and 27 miles east of the intersection of E-470 and I-70. Byers straddles I-70 with the historic center of Byers, established residential areas, community facilities, and commercial uses south of I-70, and some residential and commercial uses on the north side of I-70. Other communities along the I-70 corridor include Strasburg and Bennett to the west and the town of Deer Trail to the east. Byers is well-connected to the region through I-70 and county roadways. In addition, Denver International Airport is approximately 35 miles from Byers, and the Colorado Air and Space Port is 20 miles away. Given its locational advantages and the continued growth of communities in the Denver region, it is expected that there will be an eastward expansion of urban areas along the I-70 corridor.

Established in 1889 as a farming and ranching community along the Kansas Pacific Railway, Byers has grown very slowly from a population of 168 in 1900 to 1,322 in 2020. Byers' rural and agricultural roots remain strong as its small-town character is what makes the community special to its residents.

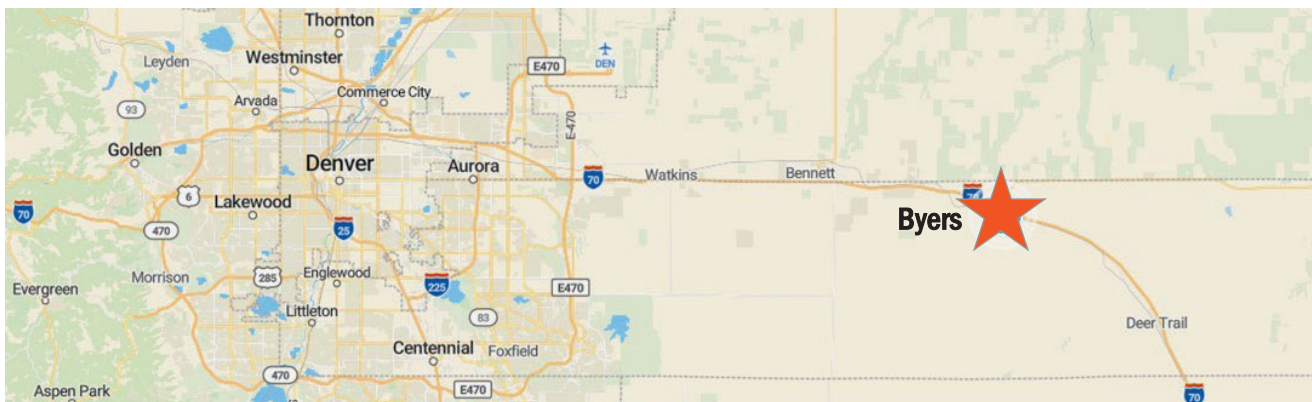
Byers' residents have access to natural areas and open countryside, forming a community with a rural character based on its long history, schools and public facilities, and good access to the larger region.

As a community in unincorporated Arapahoe County, planning, transportation improvements, road maintenance, law enforcement, and other functions are carried out by the County.

Environment

Byers has a semi-arid climate with an average of 16 inches of rain per year. Within the high plains shortgrass prairie ecosystem, the study area has flat to rolling topography with soils that are generally silty with some sand and loam, and grass species that support pronghorn antelope, mule deer, rabbits, and coyotes.

The West Bijou Creek meanders almost four miles through the west side of the study area. The Creek's floodplain is a riparian zone with sandy alluvial soils and cottonwood trees that provide habitat for many bird species and local wildlife. It is an important feature in Byers and provides a recreational opportunity. Most of the study area is rural with irrigated and dryland farming.



History of Byers

In 1866, the first settler in the Byers area was Oliver P. Wiggins, who established a general store to supply area ranches and farms. By 1870, the Kansas Pacific Railway established a station next to the Wiggins' homestead. As more settlers arrived, the area started to grow, and in 1886, the Town of Byers was established with the first town plat recorded by

Leonard McDonnell and John Fetzter. The plat laid out 25-foot-wide lots for the area between Front Street and Fourth Street, and between Jewell Street and Owens Avenue. The timeline below identifies major events in the history of Byers. A detailed history of the community is in Appendix A.

1858

Gold discovered in and along drainages of the S. Platte River near present-day Denver setting off a rush of fortune seekers to the region.

1860

Treaty of Fort Wise extinguished Cheyenne and Arapaho rights to the Rocky Mountain gold regions and central and northeast plains, prompting settlement primarily by Euro-Americans.

1861

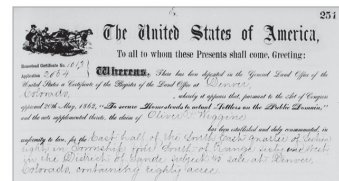
Colorado Territory created.

1862

Homestead Act signed, granting 160 acres to anyone who would settle and cultivate the land.

1866

Oliver Wiggins filed his homestead claim and settled along the east bank of West Bijou Creek, naming it "Bijou".



1870

Kansas Pacific Railway completed connecting Denver to Kansas City and points east.

1873

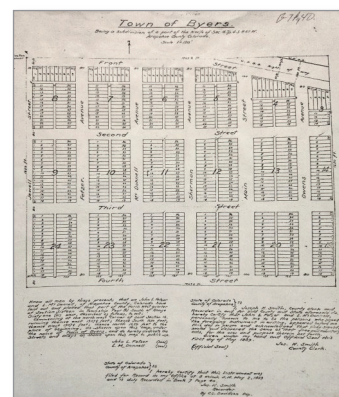
Post office opened in Wiggins' general store; town renamed "Byers".

1876

Colorado becomes 38th state.

1889

Byers established. Leonard McDonnell and John Fetzter platted Byers' first townsite.



1900

Census reports 168 people living in Byers.

1904

George Snow constructed his home, 256 S. McDonnell Avenue.

1908

O.H. Howe plats First Addition to Byers, located on the north side of the railroad tracks.



1916

Victory Highway automobile route established connecting New York to San Francisco through Byers.



1920

Byers population grows to 442 people.

1930

Hotel Coronado constructed.



1935

West Bijou Creek flooded destroying bridges and inundating buildings along Front Street.

1952

Frank Zybach of Strasburg invents the center pivot irrigation system, revolutionizing irrigation worldwide.

1956

Federal-Aid Highway Act funded construction of the interstate highway system. Interstate 70 through Byers was completed in segments beginning in the 1960s.

1965

West Bijou Creek flooded again destroying bridges and inundating buildings along Front Street.



1972

Voters approved a bond for the construction of a new school building for kindergarten through 8th grade students.

1984

Byers Park and Recreation District created.

2020

Landscaping and play structure Improvements completed at the Byers Community Park on Front Street.

2021

Kelver Library building completed and opened to the public.



Planning Area

The Byers planning area encompasses 12 square miles and includes the historic central area with businesses, schools, churches, a central park, the railroad, grain elevators, and a library, surrounding residential neighborhoods, and large parcels of agricultural land. North of I-70 is the Quint Valley Fairgrounds with a rodeo arena, event center, and ball fields. The 80-acre facility is owned and managed by the Byers Park and Recreation District.

The planning area for this Subarea Plan update has not changed since the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan and coincides with the Byers Census Designated Place (CDP) boundaries established by the U.S. Census Bureau. The boundaries of the Byers CDP are US 36 (E. Colfax Avenue) on the north, S. Calhoun Road on the east, E. Jewell Avenue on the south, and S. Bradbury Road on the west.

West Bijou Creek is west of the central area of Byers and is an intermittent stream 84 miles in length that flows north to meet with East Bijou Creek and form Bijou Creek, then to the South Platte River 50 miles north at Fort Morgan. It provides a valuable natural setting, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. Although the creek typically has low and intermittent flows, destructive seasonal flood events have occurred, such as in June 1965 and June 2023. The 1965 flood had a devastating impact on Byers, destroying many buildings in the downtown



area, and due to damage to railway tracks and bridges, disrupting trains on the Union Pacific line for about two months.

The elevations in Byers vary from a high of approximately 5,250 feet on the southeast side of the community to a low of about 5,170 at the northwest.

Demographics

This section summarizes the basic demographic characteristics of the Byers CDP and the local economy. Data in the Plan is from the U.S. Census Bureau, including the decennial census, the American Community Survey (ACS), the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), and other data. The ACS data in this report are from the 2019-2023 5-year ACS estimates. To place the data in perspective, the county's characteristics are compared to Byers where relevant. It should be noted that since Byers has a small population, the ACS estimates have a large margin of error, and where this is significant, it has been noted.

Population

Byers' population has experienced slow growth, much slower than was anticipated in the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan. In the 2020 Census, the population was 1,322. Between the 2000 and 2020 censuses, the number of residents in the study area increased by seven percent. This is a much lower rate than the communities of Bennett, Strasburg, and Deer Trail,

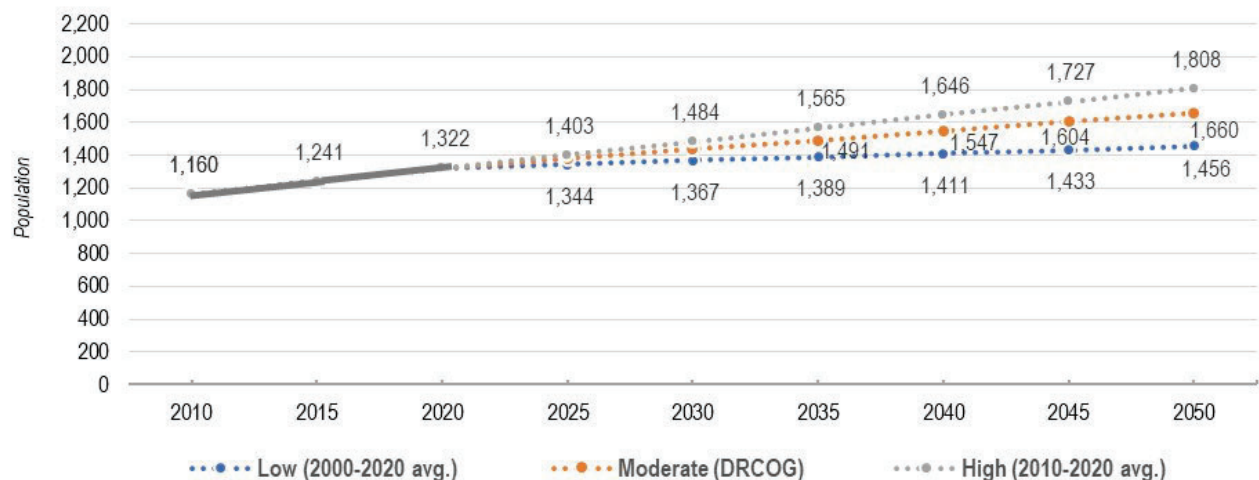
which experienced population increases in the range of 42 to over 130 percent over the past twenty years.

To provide a forecast for growth for a small community like Byers is difficult since a single new subdivision could significantly alter the growth projection. The decennial Census was used as the basis for the forecast since they are based on actual counts and not estimates, as is the case for the ACS.

To provide some guidance for anticipated growth, three growth scenarios were developed. The **Low growth** scenario is based on the growth rate between 2000 and 2020, which was seven percent. The second scenario, or **Moderate growth**, is based on the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) model for traffic zones. The **High growth** scenario uses the growth rate from 2010 to 2020 as the number of people added per decade, since more development occurred in this decade. The High growth scenario results in a 2050 population of 1,808. That would be about 70 new households or about one new subdivision in the planning area. The population forecast for 2045 ranges from 1,433 to 1,727, and for 2050, it ranges from 1,456 to 1,808.

Population					
	1990	2000	2010	2020	Increase 2000 to 2020
Byers	1,065	1,233	1,160	1,322	89 7%

Byers Population Forecast Scenarios



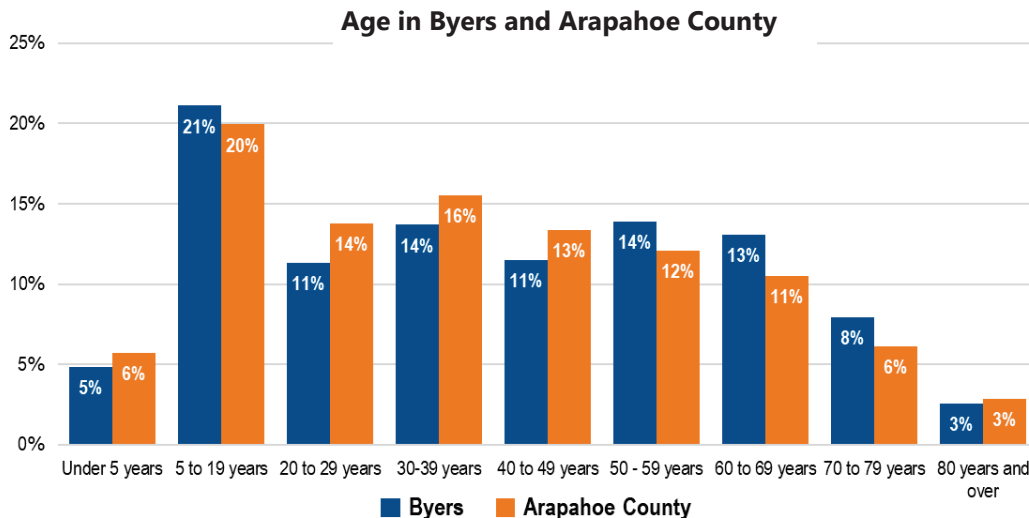
Source: 2010 and 2020 U.S. decennial census, DRCOG, State Demography Office

Age

With regards to median age, Byers is slightly older than Arapahoe County. The 2020 Census data is presented in the charts in the Plan since there was a large margin of error in the ACS data, and this margin of error can skew the interpretation and significance of the data.

The median age in Byers in 2020 was 38.9 years which is older than the County's median age of 36.6. The median age of males at 40.3 was substantially higher than the County's median age of 35.5. The median age of females in Byers (37.7) was the same as the female median age in Arapahoe County (37.8). The age distribution in Byers varies slightly compared

to Arapahoe County. Byers had slightly more residents who are children between five and nineteen, and fewer residents in the 20 to 49 age groups compared to the county. Byers had a higher proportion of residents in all the age group categories over 50 years of age compared to the county. Seniors aged 65 years of age or older made up nearly 17 percent of the Byers population, compared to 14 percent for Arapahoe County. This works out to be about one in six residents being 65 years of age or older.

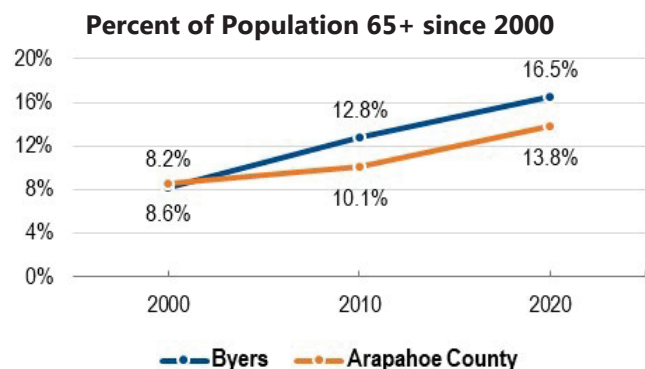


Source: 2020 U.S. Census

Byers and Arapahoe County's population is getting older. The chart shows the increase in the percent-age of the population 65 years of age and older for Byers and Arapahoe County since 2000. In 2000, both areas had around eight percent of the population in this age category. In 2020, that number doubled to 16.5 percent for Byers, higher than the 13.8 percent number for Arapahoe County.

As in most of Colorado and the United States, aging baby boomers will contribute to a larger senior population in the future. The higher proportion of Byers' population in the age groups over 50 suggests that services for the senior population may be needed now and in Byers in the future.

The 65+ population of Byers more than doubled between 2000 and 2020.

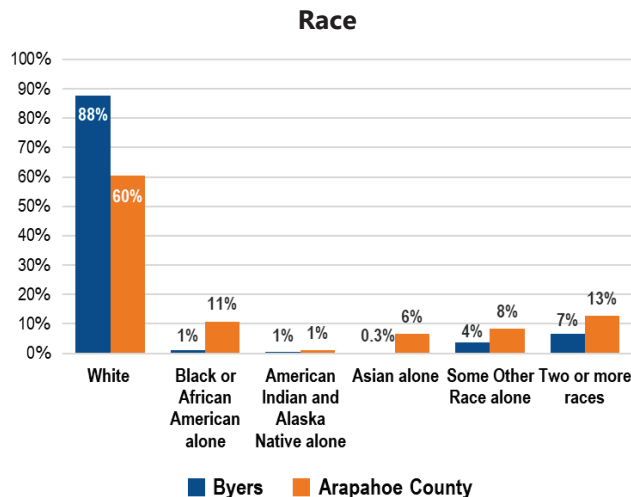


Source: 2020 U.S. Census

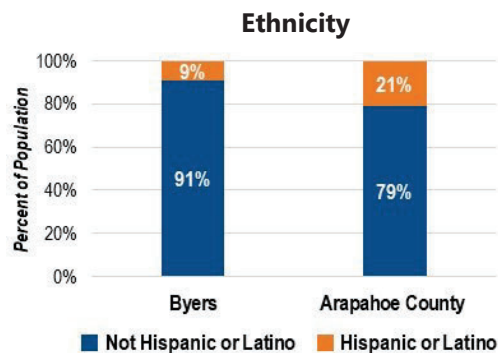
Race and Ethnicity

Byers' population comprises 88 percent of residents who identify as White, followed by seven percent who identify as two or more races, and the remainder are other races, including one percent who identify as Black. Arapahoe County is more diverse with 60 percent of the population identifying as White, 11 percent as Black, and 29 percent formed by other racial groups.

Byers has fewer residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino (nine percent) compared to the County as a whole (21 percent). Spanish is the primary language spoken at home by three percent of the residents.



Source: 2020 U.S. Census



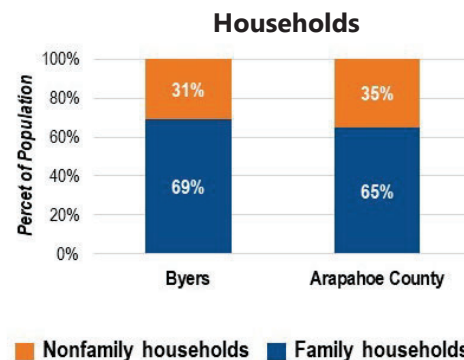
Source: 2020 U.S. Census

Households

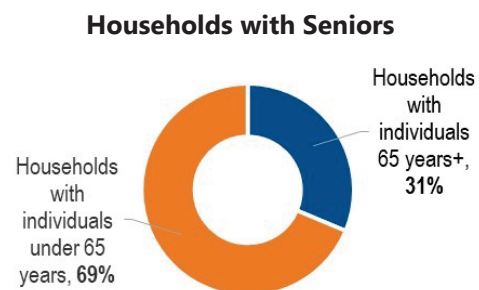
According to the 2020 Census, there were 498 households in Byers. A household contains one or more people, and everyone living in a housing unit makes up a household. Family households comprised 69 percent of the households, and 31 percent were nonfamily households. Family households are defined as at least two members who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption, and nonfamily households are defined as households with one or more persons who are not related.

Twenty-four percent of the households had a householder living alone. It is interesting to note that in 2020, 45 percent of households had one or more people 60 years of age and over, and almost a third of the households had a person 65 years of age or older.

The average size of a household in 2019-2023 was 3.22 people, which was larger than Arapahoe County's average household size of 2.56. The average family size (3.67 people) was also larger than the county's (3.14).



Source: 2020 U.S. Census

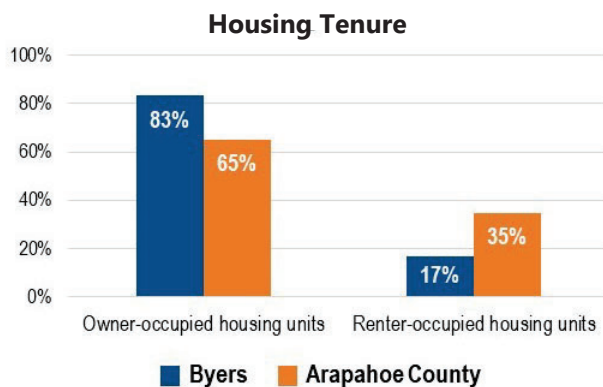


Source: 2020 U.S. Census

Tenure

Housing tenure describes whether a household rents or owns the dwelling they live in. According to the 2020 Census, Byers has a housing stock that consists of 83 percent that is owner-occupied and 17 percent that is renter-occupied. The housing ownership in Byers is higher than in Arapahoe County where cities such as Aurora, Centennial, and Englewood have multifamily housing which is primarily rental. In Arapahoe County, 65 percent of the housing is owner-occupied and 35 percent is renter-occupied.

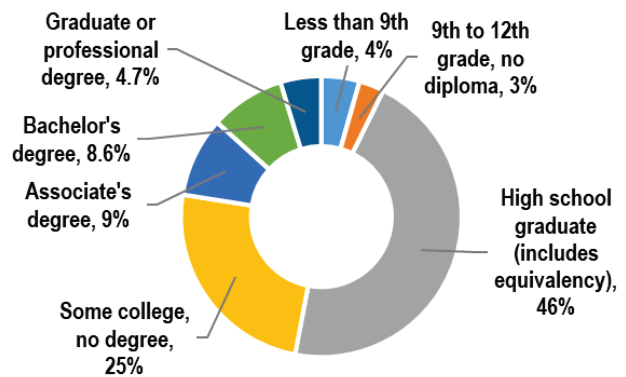
The majority of homes in Byers are single-family units, which include single-family detached and single-family attached units (i.e., duplex).



Source: 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Education

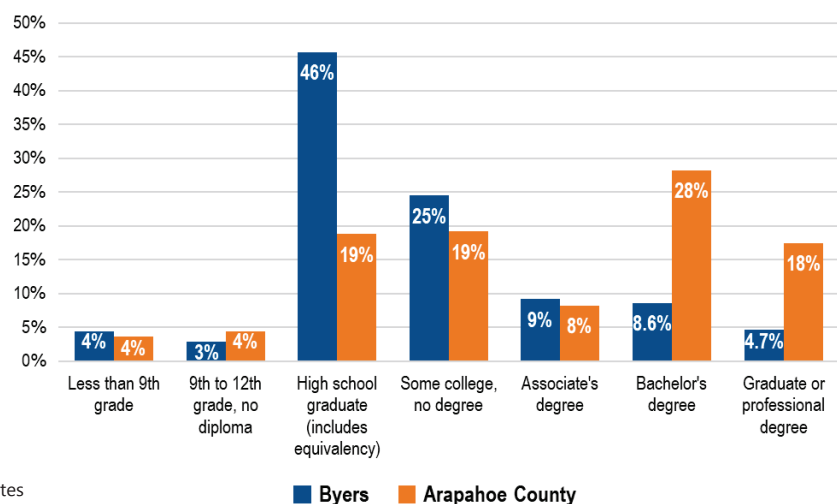
The majority of Byers' residents have a high school diploma or equivalent. At least 46 percent of the population had graduated from high school, and 13 percent held a Bachelor's degree or an advanced degree, such as a master's, professional, or doctoral degree. The educational attainment for people 25 years and older in Byers is shown in the chart below.



Source: 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Compared to Arapahoe County, the level of attainment varies by the type of education category, as shown in the comparison chart below. Byers had a higher proportion of residents who are high school graduates and with some college than the county. Arapahoe County's population had a higher proportion of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher (46 percent), and 54 percent of residents had an associate's degree or higher.

Education Achieved for Persons 25+ in Byers and Arapahoe County



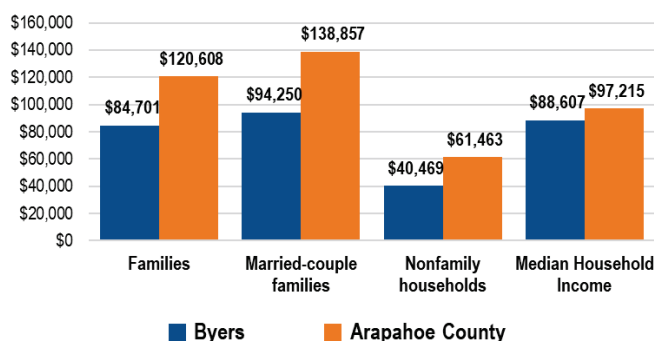
Source: 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Income

Obtaining accurate data on income for Byers is difficult due to the small population of Byers and the income estimates provided by the ACS have a large margin of error. Nevertheless, income is an important indicator for Byers and reflects the employment opportunities available to residents. The chart below shows the income numbers from the ACS and the corresponding low and high range with the margin of error applied. The median household income in Byers was \$88,607 in 2022 which was less than Arapahoe County's median household income of \$97,215. In Byers, married-couple families have the highest household incomes (\$94,250) and nonfamily households have the lowest household income (\$40,469).

Household Types	Byers Income	Byers - low margin of error	Byers - high margin of error
Family Households	\$ 84,701	\$ 76,280	\$ 93,122
Married-couple Family Households	\$ 94,250	\$ 74,603	\$ 113,897
Nonfamily households	\$ 40,469	\$ 13,680	\$ 67,258
Median Household Income	\$ 88,607	\$ 65,282	\$ 111,932

The chart below compares the incomes for the different household types in Byers and Arapahoe County. These income numbers are based on the 2023 5-Year ACS, but the income data are 2022 inflation-adjusted incomes.



Source: 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

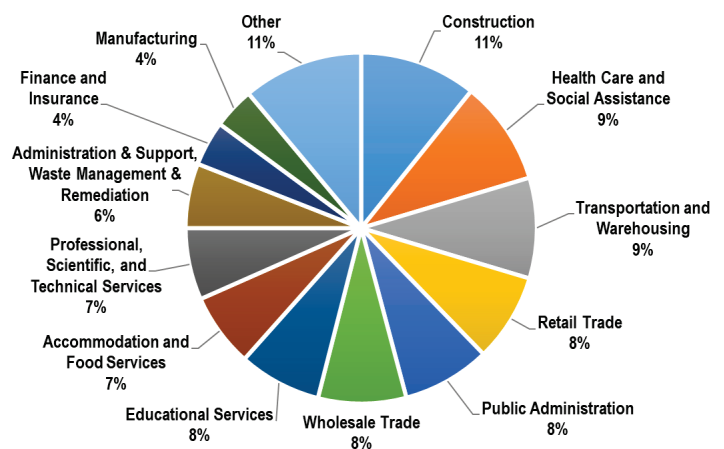
Employment

What do Byers' residents do for a living? An analysis of 2022 employment data and distribution by industry for workers aged 16 and older shows that Byers' residents work in a wide variety of occupations. The distribution of job types is fairly even with 10 of the occupation categories having six to 11 percent of Byers' residents employed in these different industry types.

The chart below shows the occupations as defined by the Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and which are based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The data reflects both full and part-time workers who live in Byers and either work in Byers or travel to their place of work.

The top five industry types employ 46 percent of the Byers workers and are Construction, Health Care and Social Assistance, Transportation and Warehousing, Retail Trade, and Public Administration. Comparing this data with the previous 2020 data, the top industry types have remained consistent. The OnTheMap data also showed that Byers workers commuted to work to destinations throughout the region (e.g., Aurora, Denver, Lakewood, etc.) but no single city was the major work destination. These dispersed commuting patterns together with ACS data show that driving to work is the primary commuting mode.

Types of Jobs Held by People in Byers Who Work



Source: OnTheMap 2022

3. Vision and Themes

Vision Statement

The vision statement is an aspirational description of what Byers' residents would like to see for the long term. Based on public outreach, it is meant to serve as the foundation to guide future decision-making.

A Community Vision for Byers

Over the next 20 years, Byers will thrive as a quintessential rural community with small-town appeal where residents enjoy a strong sense of belonging and contentment. Our vision is to maintain our cherished open spaces, peaceful rhythm of life, and tight-knit community, ensuring these remain the cornerstones of our identity. Byers aims to become more self-sufficient by strategically attracting small businesses and services that meet the needs of all residents, including seniors and families, thereby reducing the need to travel outside the community. Recognizing the value of its close-knit atmosphere, the community will prioritize thoughtful and moderate growth that respects its existing character and open spaces. Changes will be carefully balanced to preserve our rural charm and prevent the rapid growth seen elsewhere, allowing Byers to remain a safe, welcoming, and authentic small town where generations can flourish and feel deeply connected to their community.

Key Themes

From the public engagement activities, five themes emerged from all the comments. These themes helped form the basis for the Goals, Policies, and Actions presented in the following chapters.

1. Preserve Rural and Small-Town Character

A clear and consistent message from the community is the desire to remain a small, quiet, and rural town. There's a strong sentiment against becoming a suburb or a "big town" like neighboring communities. This is the most prevalent theme, with numerous comments emphasizing a wish to "stay small," "stay the same," and "keep the small town

feel." Many residents moved to Byers specifically for the rural lifestyle and want to avoid the issues they associate with larger, more developed towns. Policies and actions will focus on protecting the existing rural character, maintaining low density, and preserving the feel of a close-knit community. This includes resisting large-scale subdivisions and high-density housing developments.

Specific elements that were often cited were to keep the low density and open spaces, maintain the sense of community, limit large-scale commercialization, protect the dark night skies and the natural environment, and recognize and celebrate Byers' agricultural heritage.

2. Managed and Controlled Growth

While most residents want Byers to remain small, some acknowledge the need for or are open to **moderate and well-planned** growth. The key is that this growth must be managed, slow, and sustainable. The goal isn't to prevent all development, but rather to ensure that it is controlled and aligns with the community's values. This theme addresses concerns about infrastructure, water resources, and traffic, particularly near the railroad tracks and north of I-70. This growth is often linked to the desire for more local businesses and services.

Key Aspects of Moderate Growth:

- **Defining "Moderate":** This involves establishing a shared understanding within the community of what constitutes an acceptable pace and scale of growth. This could be expressed in terms of population increases, the rate of new development, or the overall physical footprint of the town over a specific timeframe.
- **Strategic Focus Areas:** Identifying specific types of growth that would be beneficial to the community. This often includes: local businesses and services, diverse housing options, and employment opportunities that allow residents to work in the community.
- **Planning for Infrastructure Capacity:** Ensuring that existing and future infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, etc.) can adequately support any planned growth without straining resources or diminishing the quality of life.
- **Preserving Character During Growth:** Implementing strategies to ensure that new development is sensitive to the existing rural and small-town character through appropriate design guidelines, setbacks, landscaping requirements, and building materials.

The aim of this theme is to find a balance between the desire to remain a small town and the potential benefits of carefully managed growth that can enhance local amenities and the overall well-being of the community, without compromising its cherished rural and small-town identity.

3. Attract Small Businesses and Amenities

Outreach participants identified a need for more local businesses and services to make Byers more self-sufficient, reducing the need to travel elsewhere for necessities. This includes a desire for a coffee shop, local stores, a dental practice, healthcare services, and more dining options. The goal is to focus on supporting and attracting small, community-oriented businesses that enhance, rather than detract from, the town's character.

There was a very strong sentiment expressed for the need for more recreation facilities for all ages, including families, youth, seniors, and the community as a whole. This includes a desire for a recreation center, gym, trails, and a fitness center. More services for the senior residents were identified. This includes a senior center, senior housing, transportation options, and home health care services.



4. Community Beautification and Infrastructure Improvements

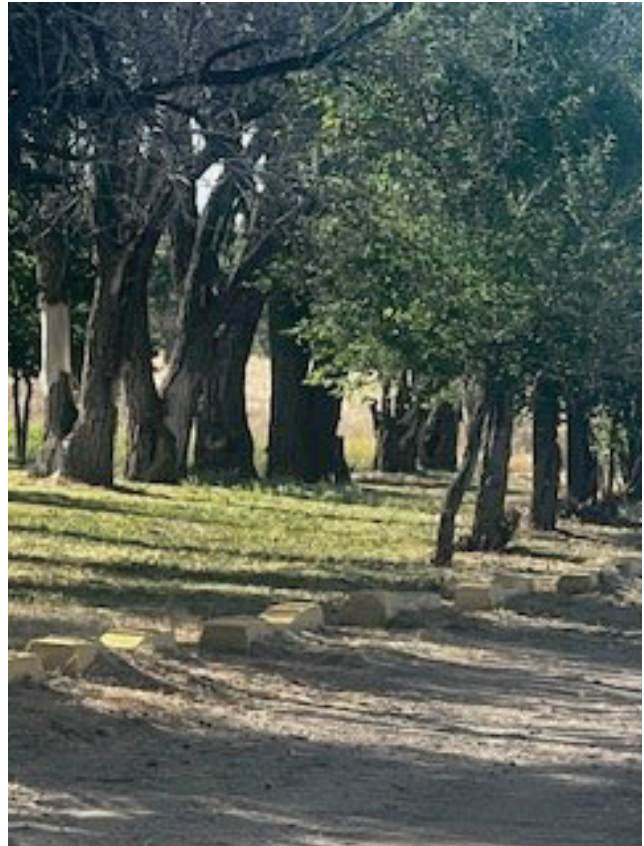
Based on the community responses, there is a need to improve the town's existing infrastructure and overall appearance. This includes improving properties, roads, and overall aesthetics. This theme will guide policies for community beautification efforts and infrastructure projects, such as improving road maintenance and having more parks, trails, and open spaces. It also addresses the desire to take better pride in the community and its appearance.

These suggestions highlight the community's desire for better connectivity, safety, and maintenance across various transportation modes.

5. Sense of Community and Quality of Life for Families and Seniors

This theme encompasses desires for more community interaction, non-religious gathering spaces, support for healthy living, and resources for specific populations like seniors and families with young children. Maintaining a safe and friendly environment is also part of this theme.

Outreach participants noted a need for more community amenities, particularly for youth and seniors. This includes improving recreation opportunities, creating more open spaces, and providing incentives for healthy living, like a gym or swimming pool. There was also a focus on creating more community gathering spaces and activities. A recurring theme is the need for more resources to support the community's populations that need a variety of services, including seniors and families with children. Residents would like better support for seniors, including home health care, aging-in-place options, and local medical facilities. They also indicated a need for improved resources for families, such as childcare, preschool, and a stronger focus on children's and youth recreational opportunities.



4. Land Use, Development, and Housing

Introduction

Providing direction for how land is used and developed in Byers is a primary function of this Plan. The objective is to foster a desirable and compatible mix of uses that will meet the needs of current and future residents and property owners in Byers. This chapter establishes a framework to guide all land use decisions and growth projections for Byers for the next 20 years. The Future Land Use Map and goals were based on the vision and guiding principles established through the public engagement process. Central to this chapter is the Future Land Use Map, which identifies land use categories for areas of land, based on factors such as current zoning and preferred land use recommendations, redevelopment potential, locational advantages, and compatibility with existing land uses. Community input was important to update this map from the previous Subarea Plan.

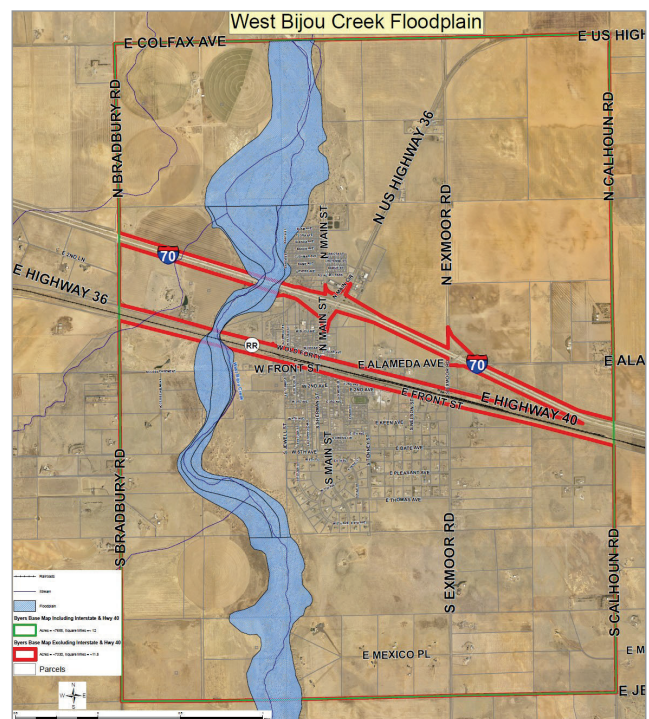
Byers' residents are proud of the community's small-town character. While population growth may occur and bring challenges, it would also provide opportunities for new jobs and a variety of new housing to meet the needs of residents in each stage of life, from newcomers to the community to seniors looking to stay in Byers.

This chapter replaces the Neighborhoods and Housing, Growth Management, and Land Use sections in the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan.

Factors Influencing Land Use

A significant portion of the planning area is within the 100-year floodplain or the floodway of the West Bijou Creek. Property within the floodplain has restrictions on development due to the risk of flooding. Uses with low flood damage potential and that will not affect the creek flow during flood events, such as farming, ranching, trails, parks,

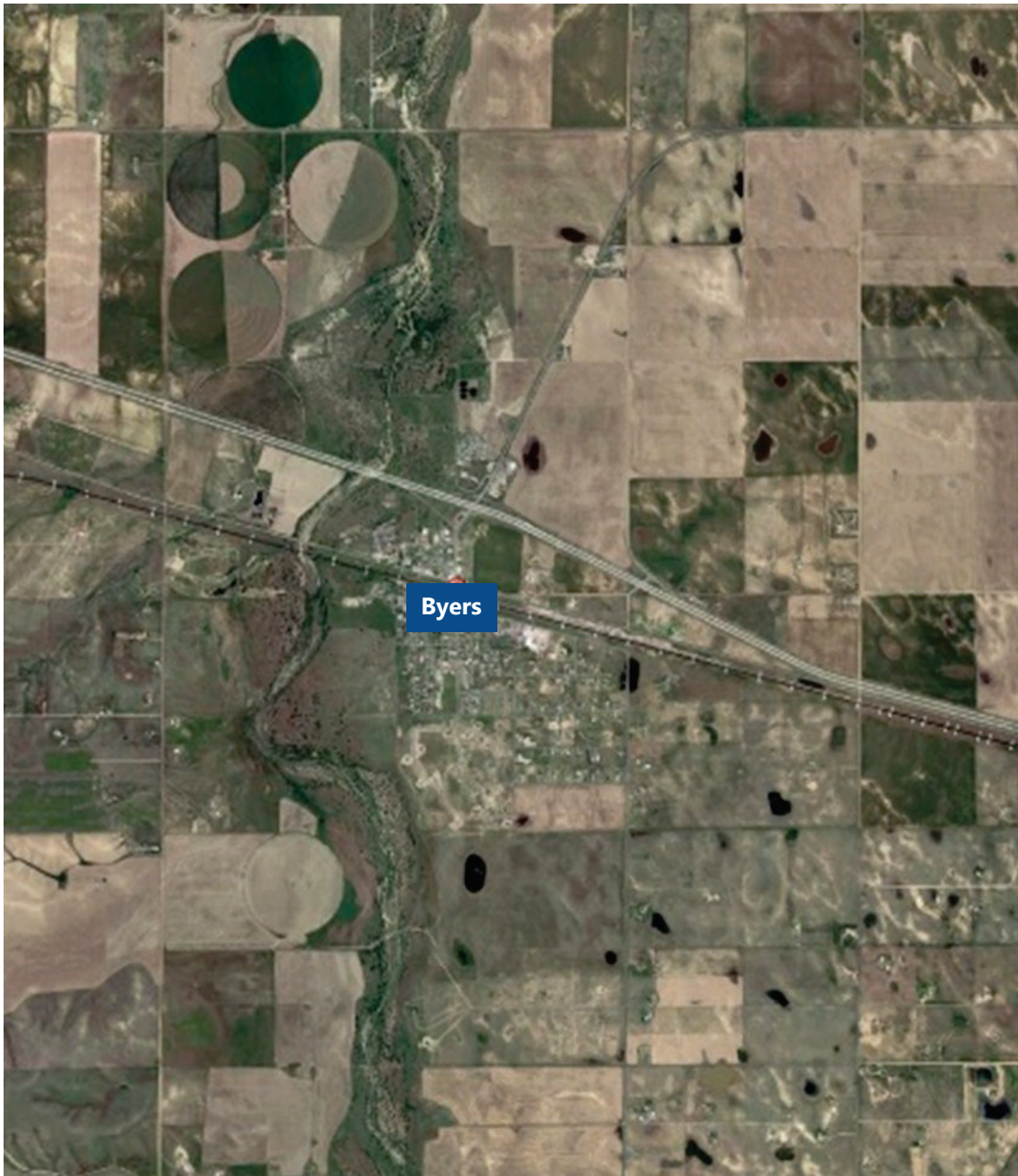
open space, and certain recreational uses, can be in the floodplain or floodway. While building can occur in the floodplain, it is subject to floodplain requirements and an evaluation by the Arapahoe County Floodplain Administrator. Floodplain areas are shown on the Future Land Use Map (page 20).



Another feature that can impact potential land use and development is the intermittent playa lakes. There are some playa lakes in the planning area, which are a unique feature of the eastern plains and occur in widely dispersed clusters. Playas are ephemeral ponds that collect and hold water from rainfall, creating a temporary wetland. They are found on the eastern plains of Colorado and are typically shallow depressions that may have wetland plants or rangeland plant communities, depending on recent rainfalls. There are several playas in the

planning area and the area to the east, as shown on the aerial from 2016, below. This is an interesting feature of this area due to the unusually high concentration of playas. While not regulated like stormwater, if areas with playa lakes are developed

in the future, the benefits of these drainage features should be considered in terms of wildlife habitat and drainage systems.



Source: Map data ©2016 Google

Difference between Future Land Use and Zoning

While land use planning and zoning are approached together to make the best use of the land, there is often confusion about what these two terms mean. Land use planning provides the overall strategic vision for how land will be developed in the future, based on considering factors such as population growth, economic development objectives, and protecting natural features.

Land use determines the opportunities in Byers, both for residential and economic development. The goal of this Plan is to define areas where certain uses and opportunities can occur and enhance the quality of life by guiding growth to specific areas which will help preserve Byers' unique character and important open space.

Zoning implements the land use vision through specific regulations for each zoning district (e.g., residential, commercial) which define the standards for how land is to be developed. Zoning is legally binding and more specific than the land use categories in this Plan. Subdivision regulations also implement the Future Land Use Map. The objective is to have the Zoning Map consistent with the Future Land Use Map, and any rezoning proposal should be consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

Future Land Use Map

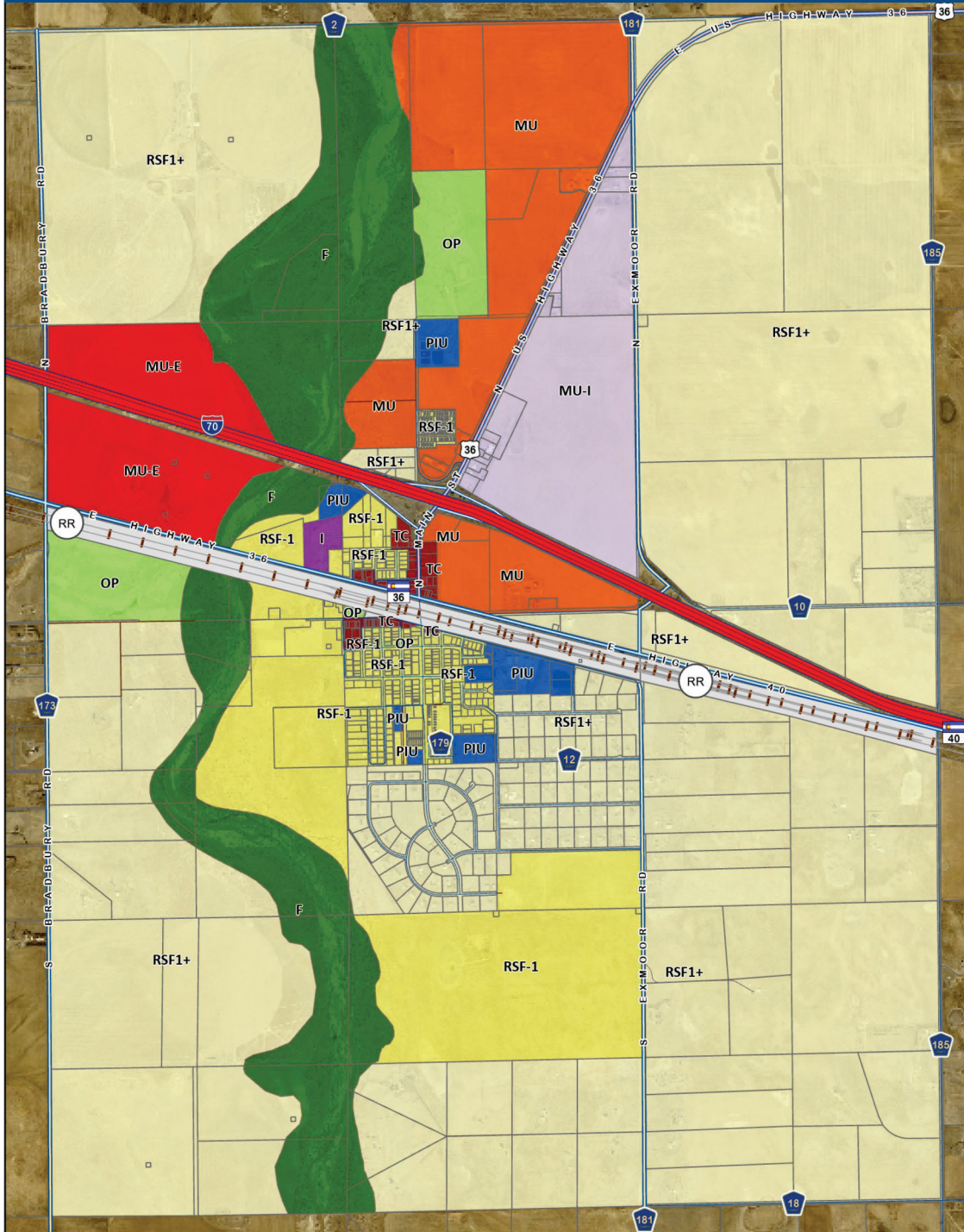
The Future Land Use Map establishes a framework to guide potential growth. The Map categorizes and defines the area of land for various purposes based on factors such as proximity to infrastructure, compatibility with existing and future land uses, current zoning, and community input. The Land Use Map, along with related goals, policies, and actions serves as the Land Use Plan, which is a long-term guide for how development should occur. Within the planning area, there are areas that currently are, or potentially can be, serviced by the Byers Water and Sanitation District with water and wastewater infrastructure. Areas outside of the District can be subdivided for residential lots on wells and septic systems.

The Map provides the basis for any rezoning or other land use requests. The Map can be considered as flexible to accommodate innovative or desired approaches to development if they are consistent with the overall intent of this Plan. If a rezoning request does not fit within a land use category, there can be an amendment to the Map to allow the use. The amendment would be through a process identified in the 2018 Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan and Arapahoe County Land Development Code.

There are 11 Land Use categories identified on the Map and chart. Revisions were made to the categories from the previous Plan to better define appropriate future uses. For example, two mixed-use categories were added to identify specific allowable uses (Mixed Use Entertainment (MU-E) and Mixed Use Industrial (MU-I)), and the Town Center area was reduced from the previous Plan to more narrowly apply to the commercial core of Byers. The residential land use categories, as shown on the Map, are mostly unchanged.

Future Land Use	vs.	Zoning
VISION		REGULATE
Generally presents community-desired land use concepts by development types and actual land usage.	SCOPE	Legal tool that regulates land use and defines specific requirements with zone districts.
CATEGORIZE		SPECIFY
Presents general vision for an area and does not identify exact uses or building form.	LEVEL OF DETAIL	Specific, detailed, regulations for height, setbacks, density, permitted uses, and permitting requirements for each property.
ADVISORY		IMPLEMENT
Identifies future land uses with guidelines and recommendations.	LEGAL STATUS	Legally binding rules and regulations that implements subarea and other land use plans.

Future Land Use Map



- RSF-1 Residential Single Family, Attached & Detached
- RSF1+ Residential Single Family, Detached
- MU Mixed Use
- MU-E Mixed Use - Entertainment
- MU-I Mixed Use - Industrial
- TC Town Center

- I Industrial
- PIU Public, Institutional & Utility
- OP Open Space & Parks
- F Floodplain
- RR Railroad



Land Use Category	Intent and Uses	Density and Form
Residential Single Family, Attached and Detached (RSF-1)	Primary uses are detached and attached single-family dwellings. Examples of attached dwellings include duplex, townhome, triplex, and small-scale multiplex. Secondary uses can include places of worship, civic and cultural facilities, and child daycare centers.	Residential Uses: One dwelling unit on lots less than 1 acre Non-Residential Uses: N/A
Residential Single Family, Detached (RSF1+)	Primary use is single-family detached and attached dwellings. Secondary uses can include agricultural and ranching operations, places of worship, equestrian centers, agritainment, civic and cultural facilities, and child daycare centers.	Residential Uses: one dwelling unit on lots greater than 1 acre Non-Residential Uses: N/A
Town Center (TC)	Uses include a mix of residential, retail, office, medical, hospitality, civic, and cultural uses in a pedestrian-friendly environment with connections to the surrounding neighborhoods.	Maximum height of 35 ft.
Mixed Use (MU)	Uses include a wide range of residential and commercial uses including single-family attached and detached, restaurants, retail, office, medical, hospitality, gasoline sales, and EV charging.	Maximum height of 40 ft.
Mixed Use – Entertainment (MU-E)	Uses include a range of residential, retail, and office uses including single-family attached and detached, medical office, hospitality, and restaurant, as well as meeting halls, concert, and entertainment venues. Secondary uses can include public or private active and passive recreation facilities as specified in the Definitions section.	
Mixed Use – Industrial (MU-I)	Primary uses include retail, office, light industrial, small-scale manufacturing, indoor storage, warehousing, and distribution. Secondary uses can include restaurants and residential.	Businesses should have increased buffering and screening if adjacent to residential areas.
Industrial (I)	Uses include light manufacturing, indoor storage, retail, office, warehousing, and distribution.	
Public, Institutional, and Utility (PIU)	Uses include public, quasi-public, institutional, and utility facilities such as schools, libraries, utility substations, water and wastewater operations, and cemeteries.	
Open Space and Parks (OP)	Uses include active and passive public, quasi-public, and private parks, golf courses, country clubs, rodeo facilities, and ball fields. This use also includes trails, wildlife corridors, conservation areas, and major landscape buffers.	Maximum height of 35 ft.
Floodplain (F)	This category identifies the boundaries of the 100-year floodplain. Properties within this area are subject to compliance with Arapahoe County's Floodplain Management regulations, Chapter 4-3 of the Land Development Code.	
Railroad (RR)	Uses include railroad operations as well as commercial and industrial activities located on railroad-owned property, such as grain elevators and scales.	

Note: The Future Land Use Map can be viewed on Arapahoe County's ArapaMAP application <https://gis.arapahoegov.com/arapamap/>

Key Takeaways and Findings

Comments from public engagement activities reveal a community with a strong and sometimes conflicting set of values regarding land use and growth. Residents express a strong desire to preserve Byers' small-town, rural character while also acknowledging certain benefits of development.

- **Opposition to growth.** A majority of residents are opposed to large-scale, rapid residential growth. They frequently cite the negative impacts observed in neighboring towns, particularly increased crime rates, loss of small-town feel, and strained infrastructure.
- **Fear of "urbanization."** There is a clear fear of Byers becoming "the city" or "California." Residents value the current quiet, rural atmosphere and believe that development will destroy it and negatively change the character of the population.
- **Preference for single-family homes.** When it comes to housing type, a majority of residents who are open to any growth prefer single-family homes. There is opposition to multifamily housing, apartments, and government-subsidized or "low-income" housing.
- **Specific housing needs.** Despite the general opposition to growth, some residents identify specific housing needs within the community. There is interest in affordable single-family homes and specific requests for senior housing or senior complexes.
- **Concerns about agriculture and infrastructure.** Residents are concerned that new housing will take away from agricultural land. They also worry about Byers' ability to sustain growth, specifically raising concerns about the water supply and an increase in traffic.

How the Plan addresses what was heard

This chapter's goals, policies, and actions are intended to manage growth, rather than encourage rapid expansion, and focus on specific needs identified by the community, such as affordable

single-family homes and senior housing. This approach aims to prevent the issues of "urbanization" seen in neighboring towns while allowing for carefully managed changes over time.

Goal 4.1: Preserve the small-town, rural character of Byers while accommodating compatible development.

Preserve Byers' family-oriented character with a balanced mix of land uses that support the small-town, rural character and provide for moderate growth. This involves managing development to ensure it complements the existing community while providing diverse housing, retail, and commercial options.

Policies

Policy 4.1.1: Support the development of different housing types that fit within the Byers small-town character.

Policy 4.1.2: Support new and expanded commercial and retail uses along the major streets and intersections.

Actions

4.1.1. Update the zoning districts and zoning map to remove "obsolete zoning districts" and replace them with appropriate zone districts in the Land Development Code.

4.1.2. Consider adopting a new mixed-use zoning district that applies to the rural scale of Byers to streamline the development review process and add flexibility to land uses.

4.1.3. Promote Arapahoe County's existing home rehabilitation program.

4.1.4. Require any proposed subdivision development to connect to water and sewer or request to be included in the Byers Water and Sanitation District.

4.1.5. Require buffers between incompatible land uses such as commercial or industrial uses and residential development.

Goal 4.2: Provide a variety of housing options that are affordable, meet the needs of residents at all stages of life, and complement the Byers' small-town, rural character.

Promote a diverse mix of housing that is affordable and fits in with the single-family neighborhoods in Byers. This will involve encouraging a variety of housing types and sizes to meet the needs of all residents, from young families to seniors, while maintaining the community's existing character.

Policies

Policy 4.2.1: Encourage housing that is the appropriate form and scale for Byers and complements the existing character of adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Policy 4.2.2: Encourage developers and landowners to provide a variety of housing types to address the needs of Byers' residents at different stages of life, such as renters, first-time homebuyers, families, and senior residents. This can include smaller homes and units that respond to residents looking to downsize.

Actions

- 4.2.1.** Provide opportunities to meet teachers' and other residents' housing needs with affordable housing. This can be achieved by encouraging and supporting partnerships between the Byers School District and affordable housing developers.
- 4.2.2.** Encourage senior housing in areas close to commercial areas where it is convenient to access goods and services.
- 4.2.3.** Identify issues with the Buyer's Own subdivisions and work with stakeholders to resolve the issues.
- 4.2.4.** Design and locate new residential buildings to create sunny, walkable, and attractive public streets.
- 4.2.5.** Integrate support for mobility options including sidewalks for walking and on-street space for cycling.
- 4.2.6.** Promote and support adaptive reuse and renovation of Byers' historic buildings so they can have functional and attractive uses.

- 4.2.7.** Promote housing programs for rental and ownership assistance, home rehabilitation, and other resources provided by Arapahoe County and the State of Colorado.
- 4.2.8.** Promote Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the community's residential zoning districts.
- 4.2.9.** Work with the Arapahoe County Council on Aging to ensure senior residents within Byers have access to the care and services needed.
- 4.2.10.** For new development, encourage the provision of multiple road access points and linkages to ensure the safety of homeowners.
- 4.2.11.** Encourage new development to provide pedestrian and bicycle access to trails, parks, open spaces, and recreational areas.
- 4.2.12.** Encourage the use of fire-retardant materials in new home construction since Byers is in an identified wildland urban interface risk area.

Goal 4.3: Support conservation-based design to preserve the natural environment.

With potential future growth in the Byers planning area, encourage the use of a rural cluster development form in the A-E and A-1 zoned lands to preserve open space and natural features. This development pattern not only conserves open space but also affirms the rural character of Byers.

Policies

Policy 4.3.1: Incentivize development that uses conservation design to protect wildlife habitats and unique land features.

Policy 4.3.2: Encourage a rural cluster development form to preserve large, contiguous areas of open space and natural habitat.

Actions

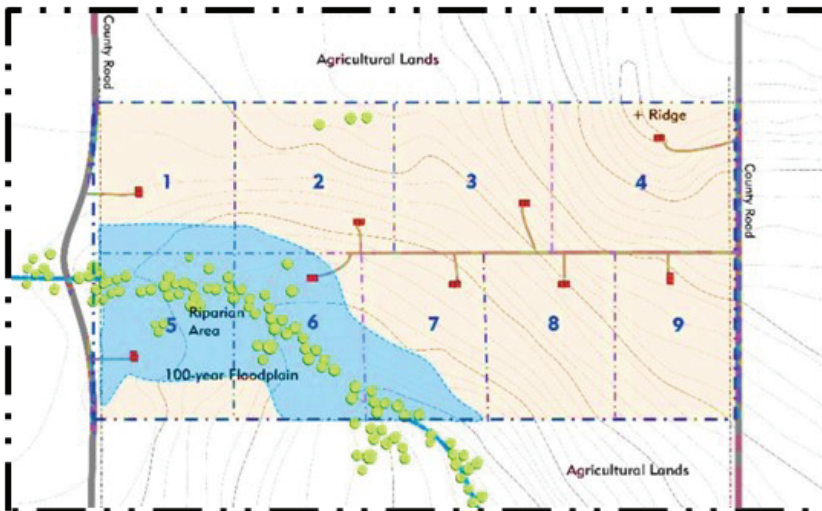
- 4.3.1.** Encourage developers and property owners to consider the benefits of the rural cluster option for residential development on agricultural and ranching lands. This development option maintains the rural open character and agricultural viability of

the planning area by establishing conservation areas adjacent to residential lots.

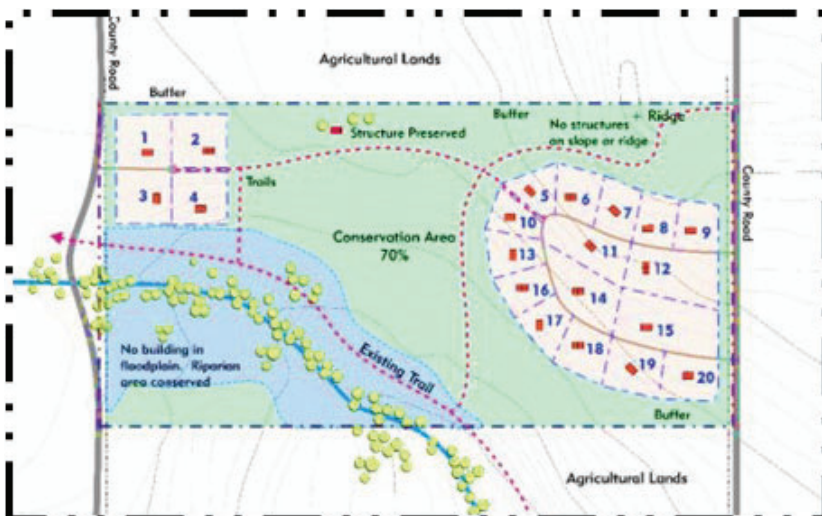
- 4.3.2. Revise and simplify the Arapahoe County rural cluster zoning option for the A-E and A-1 zone districts. Evaluate the density bonus system to ensure that the rural cluster option is optimized and attractive for development.
- 4.3.3. Streamline the development review and approval process for the rural cluster option.

4.3.4. Encourage the continued use of lands in conservation easements for ranching and agricultural activities.

4.3.5. Encourage a range of lot sizes to respond to different residential preferences.



Conventional Subdivision



Conservation Design Subdivision

5. Transportation and Mobility

Introduction

This chapter outlines the community's vision for a safe, well-maintained, and connected transportation network that serves the needs of all Byers' residents, whether they are traveling within Byers or commuting to the Denver metropolitan area or other destinations for employment.

Key Takeaways and Findings

Public engagement results highlighted several areas of concern as well as opportunities for improvements to the transportation network for both pedestrians and cyclists.

- **Roadway infrastructure is a priority.** Residents commented on the condition of both local roads within Byers and the broader I-70 corridor, referencing pavement, road conditions and maintenance.
- **Safety and access are critical.** Concern was expressed about safety at key intersections, particularly the junction of Highway 36 and Main Street. Another major theme from residents was the need for a solution to safely navigate or bypass train traffic, with some residents citing potential emergency risks.
- **Desire for public transportation.** Many residents voiced a desire for new transportation options to connect Byers to regional destinations. The most popular suggestions included commuter buses to the Denver metro area, shuttle or light rail service to Denver International Airport (DIA), and senior-specific transportation. The lack of a formal carpool lot was also noted.
- **Desire for improved walkability.** Several residents requested more sidewalks within the community to enhance walkability and safety for pedestrians.

- **Challenges for bicycle connections.** There are long distances between land uses and the shoulders on rural roads are often narrow.

How the Plan addresses what was heard

The Plan identifies the following Goals, Policies, and Actions that are based not only on comments received through the Plan's planning process but also include recommendations from the Arapahoe County **2040 Transportation Master Plan (2021)** and the **Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2017)**.

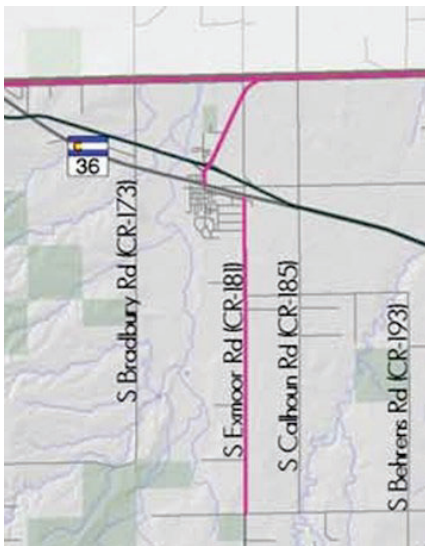
Potential future transportation improvements identified in the 2040 Transportation Master Plan are:

- Feasibility study of a potential general traffic, bicycle/pedestrian, or emergency access underpass or overpass across the railroad tracks east or west of the Byers community.
- Other collector street intersection and bicycle/pedestrian facility improvements throughout Byers in coordination with future development.
- Traffic flow improvements on Front Street and Exmoor Road to relieve Main Street.
- Establishment of a carpool lot near the Byers I-70 interchange.

Specific multimodal improvements for cyclists and pedestrians identified included:

- Shared roadway improvements (e.g., bike lanes or sharrows) on:
 - Main Street from SH 40 to Thomas Avenue;
 - Front Street from Main Street to Exmoor Road;
 - Thomas Avenue from Main Street to Exmoor Road.
- A trailhead connection west of Byers on US 36.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan covers the urban and rural parts of the county and identifies existing and future bicycle and pedestrian connections. Comments from the public helped to identify the network of trails and bike connections and one of the community meetings was held in Byers. The Plan identifies two segments of “shoulder bikeways.” The first is along N. Main Street/US 36 from the intersection with SH 40 on the south to Colfax Avenue (CR 2) on the north. The width of the paved shoulder varies. The second segment is on S. Exmoor Road (CR 181) from Richardson Road on the south to Front Street. Shoulder bikeways are defined in the Plan as “Paved area at the edges of rural roadways. A paved shoulder is suitable for cyclists if it is at least four feet in width.”



Excerpt from the Arapahoe County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Goal 5.1: Improve and Maintain the Local Road Infrastructure

Create a safe, well-maintained, and connected roadway network in Byers.

Policies

Policy 5.1.1: Collaborate with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to secure increased funding and prioritize road maintenance projects in Byers.

Policy 5.1.2: Identify opportunities for improvements to enhance streetscapes, mobility improvements, and transportation connections.

Actions

- 5.1.1.** Identify and implement a long-term road maintenance plan and funding allocation for Byers.
- 5.1.2.** Collaborate with CDOT to review the conditions and fund improvements to the I-70 on-ramps and off-ramps.

Goal 5.2: Enhance Safety and Connectivity

Ensure that all intersections are designed for vehicular and pedestrian safety, and that vehicular speeds are reduced in the central area of Byers.

Policies

Policy 5.2.1: Redesign high-risk intersections and improve signage to ensure safety for drivers and pedestrians.

Policy 5.2.2: Work with Union Pacific Railway and CDOT to identify and implement solutions that improve safety and connectivity around the existing railroad tracks.

Actions

- 5.2.1.** Collaborate with CDOT to improve the safety of the intersection of US 36 and Main Street by reducing speeds and improving visibility since it is a major pedestrian crossing in the community and has a high level of vehicular traffic.
- 5.2.2.** Evaluate the feasibility of a second railroad crossing or an emergency bypass road to mitigate the safety risks posed by train traffic. Given the constraints and the cost for a grade-separated crossing, the feasibility of an at-grade crossing outside of the planning area could be analyzed.

Goal 5.3: Expand Mobility Options to Connect Byers with Regional Destinations

Combine efforts with local, county, and State organizations to provide alternative commuting services for Byers' residents.

Policies

Policy 5.3.1: Pursue partnerships and programs that provide new public transportation and ride-sharing services for commuters, seniors, and other residents.

Actions

- 5.3.1.** Conduct a survey to determine specific demand for commuter service, including preferred destinations (Aurora, DIA, Denver), service frequency (daily, weekly), and willingness to pay.
- 5.3.2.** Identify and secure a location for a new public park-and-ride lot to support bus and carpool services.
- 5.3.3.** Partner with a regional transit provider or a private shuttle service to launch a pilot program for commuter transportation to Aurora and DIA.

Goal 5.4: Improve Pedestrian and Bicyclist Mobility throughout Byers.

Determine ways to implement sidewalk and trail improvements to encourage bicycle usage that is safe and comfortable. Due to existing narrow shoulders on roadways, there are challenges to providing a system of bicycle connections that are safe for the user. However, improvements could be made to connect various destinations and provide a safer bicycling environment.

Policies

Policy 5.4.1: Develop a plan to improve pedestrian infrastructure throughout Byers, prioritizing safe access to key community locations including the school campus and Kelter Library.

Policy 5.4.2: Create and expand a network of shared-use paths to promote safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian travel for both recreation and to destinations, including the school campus and Quint Valley.

Policy 5.4.3: Pursue opportunities to improve connectivity and access to local amenities for all users, including those with mobility challenges.

Policy 5.4.4: Develop a comprehensive bicycle plan for Byers to create a safe and easy-to-navigate bicycle network.

Actions

- 5.4.1.** Develop a Sidewalk Master Plan that identifies the most critical areas for new sidewalks, such as routes to schools, the library, parks, and other community amenities. This could be part of a Safe Routes to School program and a bicycle and pedestrian loop that connects key community destinations, including schools, parks, and the downtown area with the central park.
- 5.4.2.** Identify and map existing and potential bicycle routes within the community and connecting to key destinations. Engage the youth in the community to identify where they'd like to bike to and their preferences. Integrate bicycle-friendly infrastructure, such as bike racks, into spaces where possible.
- 5.4.3.** Identify and design an infrastructure project and apply for the CDOT Revitalizing Main Streets program to fund the improvements. This can be the implementation action of 5.4.2., described above.
- 5.4.4.** Conduct a feasibility study to explore the creation of a multi-use path along the West Bijou Creek corridor, and fund and construct the path.
- 5.4.5.** Install wayfinding signage along designated bike routes to help cyclists navigate the area and notify motorists of the shoulder bikeways.
- 5.4.6.** Conduct a public education campaign on bicycle safety and etiquette for both cyclists and drivers.

6. Parks, Open Space, and Recreation

Introduction

This chapter focuses on enhancing the quality of life in Byers by improving its parks, trails, and open spaces. The goal is to preserve and enhance existing recreational areas, like the community park on Front Street and the Quint Valley Fairgrounds, and to connect them through a cohesive trail system. Byers currently has both active and passive recreational areas, as well as the natural beauty of West Bijou Creek.

Trails are a key component of this vision, offering residents safe options for recreation and mobility. The goal is to create an interconnected system of trails that links key community areas and allows for a variety of uses, including walking, running, and biking. Additionally, this chapter addresses the preservation of Byers' unique natural features, such as West Bijou Creek, and rolling agricultural fields. These areas are not only valued for their rural, aesthetic appeal, but they also serve important environmental functions, such as natural flood control. The overall purpose is to use the community's resources efficiently and sustainably to create a more livable and enjoyable community for everyone.

This chapter replaces the Open Space, Parks, and Trails section of the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan.



Key Takeaways and Findings

The comments from the community engagement activities showed a strong interest in improving and expanding recreational opportunities, especially for the young people in Byers. Frequently mentioned was a need for more diverse options and better maintenance of existing spaces.

- **Trails and open space.** Residents want walking, biking, and multi-use trails, including horse and ATV/dirt bike trails. The idea of trails along West Bijou Creek was very popular. This is the most important improvement that could occur in Byers, and could potentially create a central amenity, much like a park.
- **Recreation center and pool.** A community recreation center and swimming pool were also highly requested, and residents noted the inconvenience of traveling to other towns for these amenities. Also, specific recreational facilities such as a gym, workout facilities, a dog park, tennis and pickleball courts, basketball courts, and fields were identified as needed in Byers. However, a pool is expensive to build and maintain, so other options should be investigated.
- **Park amenities and maintenance.** While the central community park is well used, there are challenges in maintaining it, and there's a lack of amenities (e.g., a basketball court) that could serve young people. Other desirable amenities included a dog park, basketball courts, fields for kids, a running track, tennis and pickleball courts, and fitness opportunities.
- **Youth-focused activities.** There was a specific call for activities for older kids, with a few respondents suggesting a dedicated motorcycle or ATV track to provide a safe place for them to ride. There were requests for activities geared towards children and

teenagers, and general places for youth to "hang out."

- **Connectivity and safety.** Multiple responses highlighted the lack of safe places for walking and biking, mentioning no shoulders on roads and cars speeding. The need for sidewalks on main streets and connecting trails was also noted.

How the Plan addresses what was heard

Based on community input and best practices, the following goals, policies, and actions outline a strategic framework for enhancing Byers' parks, open spaces, and recreational opportunities.

Goal 6.1: Establish a Network of Trails and Open Spaces

Create a system of trails that provides safe, multi-use paths for walking, biking, and running, connecting different parts of the community, and also providing trails for equestrians.

Policies

Policy 6.1.1: Prioritize the development of a multi-use trail system, including walking and biking paths, along the West Bijou Creek corridor and connecting to existing or future parks and public spaces, residential areas, and key destinations such as the Quint Valley Fairgrounds.

Policy 6.1.2: Encourage the development of off-road trails for specific uses, such as ATVs and dirt bikes, in designated areas to prevent trespassing and ensure public safety.

Policy 6.1.3: Encourage the development of equestrian trails, separate from pedestrian and bicycle paths where feasible, to ensure safety for all trail users.

Policy 6.1.4: Require new residential developments to incorporate open space and trail connections into their designs, including provisions for equestrian access where appropriate.

Actions

- 6.1.1.** Establish a citizens' committee to create a

trail and open space master plan, including a multi-use trail along the West Bijou Creek, and incorporating input from young people and local equestrian groups and horse owners. Use the existing natural feature of West Bijou Creek as the basis for a trail system that connects residential areas, the central community parks, and important destinations.

- 6.1.2.** Develop a continuous, "Byers Loop" multi-use trail that encircles the core of the community. This trail wouldn't just be for recreation; it would serve as a safe route for children to bike to school. The trail would have clear signage for navigation.
- 6.1.3.** Establish a safe bike or walking trail to connect the center of Byers to the facilities at Quint Valley Fairgrounds.
- 6.1.4.** Develop a sustainable maintenance plan for all trails and open spaces, ensuring they are consistently kept up for safety and community pride. This may involve establishing a volunteer program to assist with trail and open space maintenance, such as an "Adopt-a-Trail" program where community groups or families take responsibility for the maintenance of a specific section of trail.
- 6.1.5.** Designate and maintain off-road trails for motorcycles and ATVs in an appropriate location away from residential areas. Encourage the development of equestrian trails, separate from pedestrian and bicycle paths where feasible, to ensure safety for all trail users.
- 6.1.6.** Ensure that developers contribute open space and trail connections from new developments.
- 6.1.7.** Apply for grants from Arapahoe County and other entities to fund new open space projects and trail connections.
- 6.1.8.** Encourage private property owners to dedicate land for open space and trail connections.

Goal 6.2: Improve Existing Parks and Develop New Recreation Facilities

Enhance the quality and functionality of existing

parks and explore the feasibility of new recreational facilities, such as a community fitness center.

Policies

Policy 6.2.1: Implement a regular maintenance schedule and funding mechanism to ensure all parks and open spaces are well-kept and safe.

Policy 6.2.2. Review and periodically survey Byers' residents' parks and recreation needs to establish short-term goals. This ensures that plans and actions can respond to the community's evolving needs and concerns.

Policy 6.2.3. Explore public-private partnerships, grant opportunities, and the contribution project program of the South Metro Enterprise Zone to fund the development of a community recreation center or fitness center.

Policy 6.2.4. Identify funding to include amenities in the existing parks and facilities that address identified community needs, such as dog parks, fitness gym, and basketball courts.

Actions

- 6.2.1.** Support the Byers Parks and Recreation District in its goal of implementing the Quint Valley Fairgrounds master plan and identifying ways to fund maintenance of existing facilities.
- 6.2.2.** Form a task force to study the feasibility, costs, and potential locations for a community recreation center, including the expansion/reuse of an existing facility.
- 6.2.3.** Encourage and support community groups to organize activities and classes, such as yoga, pickleball, or youth sports, in existing facilities like the school gym or library.
- 6.2.4.** Identify partnerships with the Town of Bennett and Strasburg to create a shared "Byers Pass" for recreation. Residents would purchase this pass, which gives them discounted access to a reciprocal community's recreation center or pool, similar to a museum membership. Use a portion of the funds from the pass to establish a Byers-specific bus or van service to and from these facilities, providing a

transportation option for families and seniors.

- 6.2.5.** Create a "maker-space" within an existing or new building. This space, a "Byers Barn," would provide shared tools and a place for residents, specifically youth, to work on projects, host workshops (e.g., woodworking, crafting), and teach skills to others.

Goal 6.3: Establish a Comprehensive System for Recreational Walking and Cycling

Policies

Policy 6.3.1: Create a safe and accessible system of walking and cycling paths throughout the community. This system will include sidewalks on main streets for pedestrian safety, and paved, gravel, and natural surface paths to connect neighborhoods, parks, and businesses.

Policy 6.3.2: Integrate bicycle and pedestrian paths into new development projects and major road improvement plans to ensure connectivity and safety.

Policy 6.3.3: Coordinate with Arapahoe County to address road maintenance issues, including sight distance, vegetation management, and speed limit enforcement on key roads.

Actions

- 6.3.1.** Conduct a walkability and bikeability audit of the community to identify key gaps in the current network and prioritize improvements. Develop a plan for sidewalk installation along Front Street, Main Street, and other key corridors.
- 6.3.2.** Work with the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office to increase enforcement of traffic laws, including speeding and stop sign violations.

Goal 6.4: Conserve and Protect Natural Areas and Open Spaces

Preserve and protect significant natural areas, agricultural lands, and undeveloped open spaces

within and around the community to maintain Byers' rural character, provide environmental benefits, and offer passive recreational opportunities.

Policies

6.4.1: Prioritize the use of undeveloped floodplains along West Bijou Creek as open space. This protects property from flood damage while simultaneously providing a natural corridor for trails.

6.4.2: Encourage the use of conservation easements and other land preservation tools to protect prime agricultural lands and significant natural features from development.

6.4.3: Develop and implement sustainable vegetation and weed management practices in all parks and open spaces, using native plants to reduce water consumption and maintenance needs.

6.4.4: Ensure new development is clustered to preserve larger, contiguous areas of open space, rather than scattering small, fragmented parcels.

Actions

6.4.1. Identify and protect key areas that serve as wildlife habitats or movement corridors. These areas can be integrated into the trail system as passive open space, providing a natural buffer from development while offering a unique experience for trail users.

6.4.2. Actively collaborate with landowners to identify and prioritize land for conservation. This could include purchasing land or working with landowners to establish conservation easements, which protect the land from future development.

6.4.3. Encourage rural cluster development to conserve areas for natural habitat protection or open space for the cluster subdivision.

6.4.5. Encourage the use of native and/or drought-tolerant plant species in all new private and public developments or improvements.



7. Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Introduction

Infrastructure impacts many day-to-day activities for all residents in a community. Everything from a heavy rain to doing the laundry is accounted for in these necessary facilities. The primary components for infrastructure include water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater. This chapter examines the infrastructure-specific concerns of the community.

This chapter replaces the Public Facilities and Services section in the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan.

Governance

The unincorporated community of Byers is governed by the Arapahoe Board of County Commissioners which oversees land use planning and development, and administers county services such as transportation improvements, road maintenance, and human services. The five Commissioners are elected by voters to represent the five districts of Arapahoe County. The community of Byers is located in District 3.

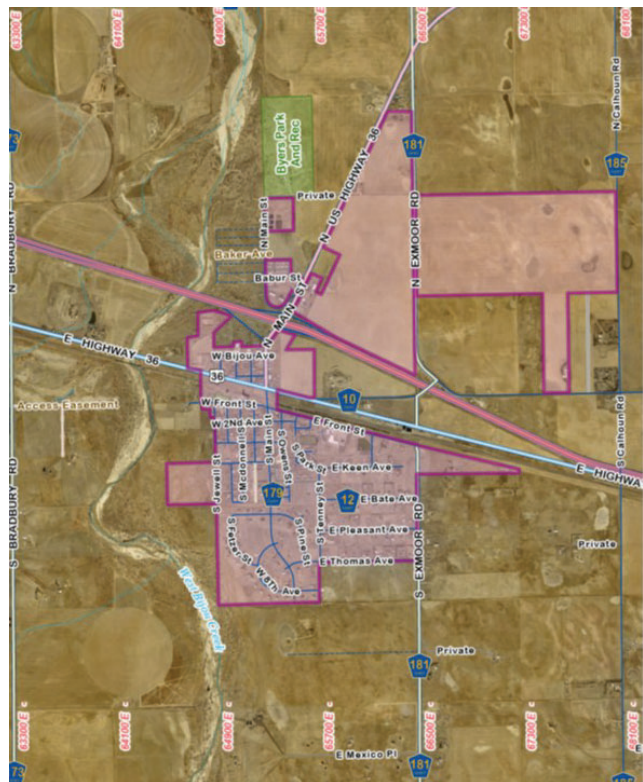
Byers Water and Sanitation District

The Byers Water and Sanitation District has maintained its water system since around 1953. The District's service area consists primarily of residential housing. The exceptions are the school campus, Kelter Library, CDOT and county highways, service stations, and small commercial establishments and offices. Through the District, the residents of Byers have infrastructure that provides potable water and the sanitary sewer system that collects and transports sewage from houses to the treatment facility north of I-70. There are some out-of-district customers and they pay a base water service fee and an additional rate.

The Byers Water and Sanitation District obtains its water from groundwater wells that are not

influenced by West Bijou Creek. The wells draw from the Laramie-Fox Hills groundwater aquifer, which is within the Kiowa-Bijou Designated Groundwater Basin. Groundwater is administered by the North Kiowa-Bijou Groundwater Management District.

The District operates five wells, each approximately 700 feet deep and has a supply over two times the current demand. Water demand is higher in the summer and typically four wells are used in the summer and two wells are used in the winter. The District has five above-ground storage tanks for the treated water. A parcel of land north of I-70 is owned by the District for a potential sixth well. Construction in 2025 made significant



Byers Water and Sanitation District Service Area

improvements to the water infrastructure by upgrading and expanding water lines south and north of I-70.

From the report “Water System Evaluation for the Byers Water and Sanitation District” (2021), based on a 2045 population estimate of 1,424, the projected average water day demand would be approximately 142,000 gallons per day, which is well within the annual pumping capacity of the five wells. The report concludes that with this projected population, there does not appear to be additional water capacity required to meet the projected demand.

West Bijou Creek

Arapahoe County has prepared master drainage plans for several creeks in the eastern plains, including Comanche Creek and Wolf Creek. The purpose of these studies is to evaluate how a stream bed will convey flood waters during a storm event since many eastern rural streams are dry for several months of the year. The studies also identify potential risks for structures like bridges and road crossings that will be impacted by the flow of water. Measures to protect stream banks from erosion and protection for natural environments and wildlife habitats are also recommended. The West Bijou Creek Master Drainage Plan is to be prepared in 2025-2026.

Stormwater

Stormwater infrastructure works to remove any excess flow from the built environment, including the roads. Oftentimes, stormwater detention and retention centers are constructed as both an infrastructure component and a recreational facility/amenity.

An issue in Byers is street flooding in the vicinity of the school campus, resulting in sheet flow over roadways. The County will study the stormwater flow conditions in Byers after the West Bijou Creek Master Drainage Plan is completed.

Other Providers

Colorado Natural Gas provides natural gas to the residents of Byers. Electricity is provided by CORE

Electric. Fire protection services are made available through the Byers Fire Protection District #9.

Key Takeaways and Findings

The following are the key takeaways from the public engagement activities.

- **Water and Wastewater Systems.** Some residents reported dissatisfaction with the quality and taste of the potable water. There were also concerns about the strong odor from the sewage ponds.
- **Essential Community Services.** The survey identified a significant lack of essential community facilities and services. Residents noted a need for better health and dental care, services for low-income families and those needing mental health support, and specific facilities for seniors. The lack of a senior center and other services to help the elderly age in place was a consistent theme.

How the Plan Addresses What Was Heard

This Plan directly responds to the community’s concerns by establishing a framework for strategic, managed growth that prioritizes safety, infrastructure improvements, and the provision of essential services.

Goal 7.1: Enhance Public Safety.

Policy 7.1.1: The Byers’ residents will work in close coordination with the Arapahoe County Sheriff’s Office and the Byers Fire Protection District to proactively identify and address crime, trespassing, and fire hazards.

Actions

- 7.1.1.** Collaborate with the Arapahoe County Sheriff’s Office to conduct a joint analysis of crime data to identify trends and needs, informing a request for additional police patrol resources.
- 7.1.2.** Support the Byers Fire Protection District in its efforts to address fire risks by identifying and targeting areas with

overgrown vegetation and dead trees for removal.

Goal 7.2: Improve the Stormwater and Wastewater Management Conditions.

Policy 7.2.1: The County will investigate and resolve issues related to the blockage of storm drainageways and identify solutions.

Policy 7.2.2: The County will work with the Byers Water and Sanitation District to address wastewater management issues.

Actions

7.2.1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the road swales and culverts in the center of Byers, make recommendations, and implement actions to remediate the sources of street and property flooding from storms.

7.2.2. Evaluate the sewage ponds to identify and implement operational changes or technological solutions to mitigate the offensive odors impacting nearby residential areas.



West Bijou Creek after flood event in July 2023.

8. Economic Development and Tourism

Introduction

This Economic Development and Tourism chapter identifies approaches for improving the business opportunities in Byers through encouraging investment and by providing a large area classified as Mixed Use. The three Mixed Use categories (Mixed Use, Mixed Use—Entertainment, Mixed Use—Industrial) are appropriate for entertainment, recreational, commercial, and light industrial uses. Encouraging economic development contributes to providing more retail, service, and employment opportunities that would enhance the quality of life for Byers' residents.

This chapter replaces the Fiscal and Economic Impacts, Employment and Commercial Development, and Tourism sections that were in the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan.

Key Takeaways and Findings

The following are the key takeaways from the existing conditions analysis and the community engagement activities.

- **Employment opportunities in Byers are limited.** The major employer in Byers is the school district. Other major employers or businesses are May Farms and larger businesses such as the Byers General Store, retail outlets, and restaurants. Employment opportunities for high school students should be expanded.
- **Employment growth is anticipated to be slow.** During the 20-year life span of this Plan, much of the employment growth along the I-70 corridor will continue to be in the communities west of Byers.
- **More restaurants and services are needed.** From the survey, the community voiced a preference for more restaurants and other services, particularly for day-to-day needs.



Quint Valley Fairgrounds.

Survey respondents noted that they need to travel to Bennett or Aurora for shopping or dining experiences. The Lincoln Health Byers Clinic is a valued facility in Byers and residents have expressed a desire for a larger clinic.

- **The rural and agricultural character should be maintained.** Policies should ensure that any economic development avoids large-scale residential subdivisions or industrial development that would consume agricultural land and increase traffic. Preservation of the rural character and open spaces is important and should be balanced with new employment development.
- **Commuting time is long.** Most people commute to jobs outside of Byers. According to Census Bureau data, the average commute time for the majority of Byers' residents to their place of work is over 30 minutes, with over one-third commuting 45 minutes to an hour.

How the Plan addresses what was heard

The Plan identifies the following Goals, Policies, and Actions to enhance and increase the economic development opportunities for Byers.

Goal 8.1: Encourage a diverse range of businesses in Byers to expand the local economy and employment opportunities.

A broad range of recreational, tourism, commercial, and industrial uses is encouraged but adverse impacts on the community should be controlled.

Policies and Actions

Policy 8.1.1: Explore grant funding opportunities and a revitalization authority that would support economic development and the establishment of new businesses.

Actions

- 8.1.1.a.** Research and apply for grants to support businesses, including remote work, entertainment venues, recreational activities for children, teenagers, and adults, and infrastructure improvements (e.g., grants and loans for water and wastewater systems).
- 8.1.1.b.** Consider establishing a County Revitalization Authority (CRA) in partnership with other taxing entities to fund revitalization projects.
- 8.1.1.c.** Develop an economic strategy for Byers with stakeholders to promote business development and expansion.

Policy 8.1.2: Expand economic development partnerships and facilitate workforce development opportunities for Byers' youth.

Actions

- 8.1.2.a.** Collaborate with the I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership (REAP) and the I-70 Chamber of Commerce to support career development opportunities for high

school students, business advocacy, and business-to-business connections.

- 8.1.2.b.** Foster collaborations between Byers High School students and various industries to increase students' skills and create employment opportunities for teenagers and young adults.

- 8.1.2.c.** Continue to implement programs and events by Arapahoe/Douglas Works! to enhance the skills and employability of the local workforce through training, education, and career counseling.

Policy 8.1.3: Encourage new businesses and support the viability and expansion of existing businesses.

Actions

- 8.1.3.a.** Support and facilitate the expansion of existing businesses to encourage more employment opportunities.
- 8.1.3.b.** Partner with the East Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDA) to offer workshops, counseling, and business planning resources for startups and existing businesses.
- 8.1.3.c.** Identify and preserve land in the Mixed Use land use categories with good road and infrastructure access for commercial and light industrial uses so as to attract new businesses.
- 8.1.3.d.** Support outdoor recreation activities, natural product producers, and small town crafts and industries to help broaden the economic base with businesses that reflect Byers' small town character.
- 8.1.3.e.** Support improvements to wireless/cellular facilities to improve digital connectivity, where needed.

Policy 8.1.4: Promote and encourage entrepreneurs and small business development.

Actions

- 8.1.4.a.** Continue promoting the Colorado Enterprise Zone tax credit program to

assist businesses. Explore opportunities to establish South Metro Enterprise Zone contribution projects for non-profits, the Byers Parks and Recreation District, and other eligible entities.

- 8.1.4.b.** Support the establishment of businesses that sustain local farming and ranching operations by allowing complementary retail businesses, such as farm stores and markets.

Policy 8.1.5: Improve the built environment of the commercial core of Byers.

Actions

- 8.1.5.a.** Establish an improved environment and "downtown" character for Front Street and Main Street by providing safe and continuous sidewalks, crosswalks, and attractive streetscapes. Explore the opportunity for grant funding from the CDOT Revitalizing Main Streets grant program which enhances pedestrian safety and funds infrastructure and placemaking projects.
- 8.1.5.b.** Support the adaptive reuse of historic buildings for new uses that provide employment and retail or service needs to the community.
- 8.1.5.c.** Support the creation of a downtown business group to carry out holiday and other special events.

Policy 8.1.6: Support the Lincoln Health Byers Clinic and other medical providers or supportive facilities.

Actions

- 8.1.6.a.** Support the building of medical facilities by reviewing zoning districts to remove any barriers to facilities using existing buildings or building new structures.
- 8.1.6.b.** Explore opportunities to attract small-scale, local healthcare providers for seniors or the general population (e.g., physical therapist, dentist) by highlighting the need for these services.

Policy 8.1.7: Maintain lands for a range of commercial and light industrial uses.

Actions

- 8.1.7.a.** Maintain employment areas in the Mixed Use land use categories that are envisioned to include a range of commercial (e.g., retail and office) or light industrial development (e.g., manufacturing and assembling).
- 8.1.7.b.** Rezoning for light industrial uses that generate significant truck traffic are to be carefully evaluated and located close to highways and I-70. The range of light industrial uses should be limited to those that are compatible with the adjacent residential uses, where applicable, and do not generate significant impacts (e.g., dust, noise, odors, glare, or truck traffic outside of daytime work hours) on these adjacent uses.

Goal 8.2: Promote tourism opportunities in Byers by focusing on the community's history, agriculture, and prairie landscapes.

Policy 8.2.1: Expand tourism by featuring recreational and heritage assets in Byers.

Actions

- 8.2.1.** Encourage the development of tourism that reflects Byers' western heritage by promoting Byers as a day trip destination from Denver.
- 8.2.2.** Support developing tourism to Byers as an industry since it can be a recreation stop or destination, by capitalizing on local attractions such as the rodeo, Quint Valley fairgrounds, and overnight stays at the recreational vehicle park.
- 8.2.3.** Promote opportunities for agritourism and agritainment to allow farm owners to diversify their offerings and generate additional income through farm markets, recreational, farming, and leisure activities, and seasonal events.

- 8.2.4. Explore grants to support tourism, such as the Colorado Tourism Marketing Grant.
- 8.2.5. Explore opportunities to use the abandoned grain elevators for murals. Public art and mural programs have proven to be effective attractions for small towns.
- 8.2.6. Consider the mechanisms such as transfer of development rights or conservation easements to preserve agricultural areas and decrease development pressure on agricultural land.



Source: Image from smalltownstops.com. Mural by Some Girls and a Mural.



Mural at Byers School District campus.

9. Heritage and Community Identity

Introduction

The heart of Byers lies in its history—from the pioneering families who settled the land to the railroad that influenced its growth. Byers' small-town character arises from the original commercial buildings and the homes that have stood for decades. This chapter is a roadmap for celebrating that heritage. The key strategy is to preserve and restore Byers' existing historic buildings, which is both a tribute to the past and a cost-effective alternative to new construction and demolition. By promoting the adaptive reuse of older buildings, such as the Hotel Coronado, these structures can be transformed into vibrant, functional spaces that serve the community while maintaining the community's authentic character. The goals, policies, and actions in this chapter aim to revitalize the historic core of the community and provide approaches to preserving historic buildings, ensuring that they remain a visible part of the community.

This chapter replaces the Community Image, Design, and Identity section of the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan. There is a detailed history of Byers in Appendix A which identifies the families that were instrumental in the founding of Byers as well as important historic buildings and architectural styles.

Key Takeaways and Findings

The following are the key takeaways from the review of Byers' history (see Appendix A) and the community engagement activities.

- **Historic look is a core value.** The community values Byers' "historical look" and "country charm." Residents appreciate the existing historic buildings, such as the Hotel Colorado, buildings on Front Street, and the older churches, and want to maintain the character they provide.



- **Historic identity is tied to small-town feel.** The "small-town feel" that residents appreciate is directly linked to the community's history and historic buildings on Front Street.
- **Historic buildings as economic anchors.** While there's resistance to large-scale growth, there is a desire for a cleaner, more inviting business area with more small, locally-owned businesses.

This suggests that historic buildings can be attractive to these desired local businesses if it's possible to renovate the buildings for new uses.

How the Plan addresses what was heard

The Plan identifies the following Goals, Policies, and Actions to increase opportunities to enhance the heritage of Byers.

Goal 9.1: Promote and Preserve Byers' Historic and Cultural Heritage.

Preserve and promote the unique cultural and historical aspects of Byers to continue the rural, small-town character of the community.

Policies

Policy 9.1.1: Identify and Protect Historic Resources. Actively work to identify buildings and sites of historic or cultural significance and provide support for their preservation. Preserve important buildings in Byers that reflect its western heritage and promote the rural, small-town identity.

Policy 9.1.2: Encourage Official Recognition. Support property owners in seeking state or national historic designations to protect and elevate Byers' heritage.

Actions

- 9.1.1.** Assist in identifying buildings with historic or cultural significance and help property owners seek appropriate historic designations and grants.
- 9.1.2.** Seek funding to conduct surveys that identify, document, and evaluate cultural and historical resources within the community, and to provide for their restoration and preservation.
- 9.1.3.** Encourage and support property owners in nominating significant buildings and places to the State or National Register of Historic Places.
- 9.1.4.** Develop a signage program to identify historically significant buildings, with funding for initial installation and maintenance.

Goal 9.2: Integrate Heritage into Community and Economic Development.

Adapt historic buildings to support community and economic life by bringing back the charm of the past and creating an attractive destination for both residents and visitors.

Policies

Policy 9.2.1: Revitalize Historic Structures.

Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic buildings to support a mix of community-centered and commercial uses.

Policy 9.2.2: Remove Development Barriers.

Evaluate and revise zoning regulations and other codes to facilitate the renovation and preservation of historic buildings.

Policy 9.2.3: Support Property Owner

Initiatives. Create programs and resources to assist property owners in the restoration and improvement of their historic properties.

Actions

- 9.2.1.** Work with property owners to revitalize underutilized commercial spaces in older buildings.
- 9.2.2.** Encourage adaptive reuse that allows for a mix of community-centered uses. A restored building could become a "Main Street Hub" for multiple small businesses.
- 9.2.3.** Evaluate the zoning districts in Byers to identify and revise barriers to the renovation of historic buildings or create an overlay zone with appropriate setbacks and other standards.
- 9.2.4.** Develop a façade improvement program to help building owners restore their building facades to their original appearance.
- 9.2.5.** Investigate opportunities to re-use the abandoned grain elevators.
- 9.2.6.** Encourage developers to preserve significant cultural and historical resources and places by incorporating them into development plans.

Goal 9.3: Develop and Market Byers as a Heritage Tourism Destination.

Strategically promote Byers' history and heritage to attract visitors and create new economic opportunities.

Policies

Policy 9.3.1: Create a Coordinated Marketing Strategy. Develop a strategic marketing campaign to promote the Byers' unique historic assets. This can be combined with recreational, agritainment, and agritourism objectives.

Policy 9.3.2: Support Community-Led Events. Support residents and community groups in creating events and activities that showcase Byers' history and architectural heritage.

Policy 9.3.3: Secure Funding for Heritage Projects. Actively identify and pursue grants and partnerships that support historic preservation and heritage tourism.

Actions

- 9.3.1.** Work with the Byers community to develop a "Historic Byers" campaign that highlights the historic buildings and scenic open spaces.
- 9.3.2.** Assist Byers' residents in establishing a community promotion group that could develop events that showcase Byers' history and heritage buildings.
- 9.3.3.** Support opportunities to create community gathering places, events, and education opportunities that highlight Byers' history.
- 9.3.4.** Support the I-70 Scout in publishing information about Byers' history, historic buildings, and places.
- 9.3.5.** Identify grants and partnerships that focus on historic preservation and small-town revitalization, such as those from the State Historical Fund (SHF), private foundations, and local county-level grants.

Goal 9.4: Inform the Community about Byers' History.

Focus on fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of the Byers heritage among residents and visitors of all ages.

Policies

Policy 9.4.1: Develop and Disseminate Educational Materials. Create accessible resources that share the stories of Byers' past.

Policy 9.4.2: Partner with Local Institutions. Collaborate with schools, libraries, and other community organizations to integrate local history into their programs.

Policy 9.4.3: Create Interactive Experiences. Use modern technology and engaging formats to bring Byers' history to life.

Actions

- 9.4.1.** Archives: Support establishing a central location for Byers' historical information and artifacts that would be attractive to visit for both residents and visitors. Create an online, searchable database of historical photos, documents, and oral histories.
- 9.4.2.** Oral History Program: Establish a program to record and archive oral histories from long-time residents, capturing personal stories and unique perspectives on Byers' development.
- 9.4.3.** Historical Markers: Research and install historical markers or plaques at key locations to explain their significance.
- 9.4.4.** "Byers History Day" Event: Host an annual community event with activities, presentations, and exhibits focused on different aspects of the community's history.

Goal 9.5: Strengthen Partnerships and Community Involvement.

Develop a collaborative network of individuals and organizations dedicated to heritage preservation and community identity for Byers.

Policies

Policy 9.5.1: Create a Dedicated Heritage

Committee. Establish a formal group to guide and oversee preservation efforts.

Policy 9.5.2: Seek Collaborative Opportunities.

Partner with external organizations to leverage resources and expertise.

Actions

- 9.5.1.** Heritage Advisory Committee: Form a committee comprising residents, business owners, and historians to advise on heritage-related decisions.
- 9.5.2.** Volunteer Program: Create a volunteer program for historic preservation projects, such as building restoration, garden maintenance at historic sites, or archiving historical documents.
- 9.5.3.** Partner with County and State Heritage Organizations: Establish formal partnerships with organizations like History Colorado to access their expertise, resources, and grant opportunities.
- 9.5.4.** Community Surveys and Forums: Conduct surveys and host public forums to gather input from residents on which historical aspects they value most and what they would like to see preserved.



Byers Depot constructed circa 1900.

10. Implementation

The implementation chapter outlines specific steps to achieve the vision for Byers as defined by the goals and policies in the preceding chapters. The action matrix details recommendations and assigns a timeline and approximation of funding needed for implementation.

Review and Updates

This subarea plan is not a static document but rather should reflect the continuous change that occurs in Byers over time. The County should review and update the Plan, as needed, to address future shifts in community goals, demographic trends, potential growth, and unexpected issues if they arise. In general, a full review should be undertaken every five to eight years. Establishing a schedule for review of the Plan will ensure the document remains relevant. Any future review would need to include public outreach to identify ideas and feedback from residents, business owners, and other important community stakeholders.

Regular Use of the Plan

This Plan should be considered in the preparation of County budgets and the capital improvement program, and for strategies to apply for grant funding so that projects and programs can be implemented.

As a community-based plan, there should continue to be outreach events, such as the project website, online surveys, interactive mapping, and other tools to help the Byers' residents and businesses stay involved and informed of the Plan's implementation. Continued communication with members of the public should be the goal throughout the implementation of the Plan.

Funding Sources

Many of the strategies in the matrix can be

implemented through County administrative policy decisions or actions. However, other projects may require specialized expertise and/or financial assistance. The County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is directed by the County's Public Works and Development Department and designs and funds projects such as roadway construction and reconfiguration, intersection improvements, sidewalk installation, bridge repair, and traffic signal installation.

The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) and other state agencies provide funding opportunities through various programs. For example, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) provides funding for enhancing transporting and pedestrian safety through the Revitalizing Main Streets grant program. For businesses, Enterprise Zone Tax Credits are available through the state's Enterprise Zone program and offer tax credits that can be earned through job creation, employee training, building rehabilitation, business investment, and other tax credit options. DOLA maintains a list of state and federal funding opportunities.

Arapahoe County Open Spaces has a competitive grant program for communities across the county. These funds can support new park and trail construction, playground and athletic field renovations, park amenities, land acquisition, signage for wayfinding and education, among other projects.

Action Matrix

The action matrix presents a comprehensive list of all the implementation actions and recommendations contained in the Plan. The matrix provides County staff with a tool to prioritize implementation actions and programs, allocate funding, and apply for grant funding. In addition,

the matrix allows the County to gauge the success of implementing the Plan. The action matrix provides a short description of each project and identifies the level of priority, timeline, and cost for completion.

Priority Level

Each action has been given a priority level to assist with prioritizing and implementation. Action item priorities are assigned to one of the following three levels:

- **Priority 1:** Important for the community, can be implemented in the near term, is lower cost and easier to implement. These can include policy updates, strategic partnerships, or may be the first step in a long-term project.
- **Priority 2:** Essential project, but can be implemented in the mid-term. These projects may require consulting assistance or relatively minor investment in infrastructure of project development.
- **Priority 3:** Long-term project or program, is desirable, but needs funding and/or partnerships. Significant amounts of funding must be planned for over time or require several funding sources. These actions require intensive planning, engineering, design, and infrastructure investment.

Timeline

Time estimates indicate, in years, how long it would take to complete an action or strategy.

- **(S) Short-term:** Less than three years.
- **(M) Mid-term:** Three to five years.
- **(L) Long-term:** Greater than five years.
- **(O) Ongoing:** A project currently being implemented and should continue. This also includes programs that may be ongoing.

Cost

Cost estimates are provided on a scale ranging from \$ to \$\$\$\$. The costs only refer to public costs for a project and are defined as follows:

- **\$:** Costs for County staff time, with limited external funding needed.

- **\$\$:** Costs for consultants, materials, or for other project needs.
- **\$\$\$:** Costs for consultants, project design, construction, and ongoing maintenance.

Partner(s)

To implement specific projects, partnerships may be needed with various civic and private organizations. As required, the County should coordinate with I-70 REAP and other potential partners to explore opportunities for collaboration.

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
Chapter 4. Land Use and Development				
4.1.1.	Update the zoning districts and zoning map to remove "obsolete zoning districts" and replace them with appropriate zone districts in the Land Development Code.	1	Short-term	\$
4.1.2.	Consider adopting a new mixed-use zoning district that applies to the rural scale of Byers to streamline the development review process and add flexibility to land uses.	2	Short-term	\$
4.1.3.	Promote Arapahoe County's existing home rehabilitation program.	2	Short-term	\$
4.1.4.	Require any proposed subdivision development to connect to water and sewer or request to be included in the Byers Water and Sanitation District.	1	Ongoing	\$
4.1.5.	Require buffers between incompatible land uses such as commercial or industrial uses and residential development.	1	Ongoing	\$
4.2.1.	Provide opportunities to meet teachers' and other residents' housing needs with affordable housing. This can be achieved by encouraging and supporting partnerships between the Byers School District and affordable housing developers.	1	Ongoing	\$
4.2.2.	Encourage senior housing in areas close to commercial areas where it is convenient to access goods and services.	2	Ongoing	\$
4.2.3.	Identify issues with the Buyer's Own subdivisions and work with stakeholders to resolve the issues.	1	Ongoing	\$\$
4.2.4.	Design and locate new residential buildings to create sunny, walkable, and attractive public streets.	1	Ongoing	\$
4.2.5.	Integrate support for mobility options including sidewalks for walking and on-street space for cycling.	1	Ongoing	\$
4.2.6.	Promote and support adaptive reuse and renovation of Byers' historic buildings so they can have functional and attractive uses.	1	Ongoing	\$
4.2.7.	Promote housing programs for rental and ownership assistance, home rehabilitation, and other resources provided by Arapahoe County and the State of Colorado.	2	Short-term	\$
4.2.8.	Promote Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the community's residential zoning districts.	2	Short-term	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
4.2.9.	Work with the Arapahoe County Council on Aging to ensure senior residents within Byers have access to the care and services needed.	2	Short-term	\$
4.2.10.	For new development, encourage the provision of multiple road access points and linkages to ensure the safety of homeowners.	1	Ongoing	\$
4.2.11.	Encourage new development to provide pedestrian and bicycle access to trails, parks, open spaces, and recreational areas.	2	Short-term	\$
4.2.12.	Encourage the use of fire-retardant materials in new home construction since Byers is in an identified wildland urban interface risk area.	2	Short-term	\$
4.3.1.	Encourage developers and property owners to consider the benefits of the rural cluster option for residential development on agricultural and ranching lands. This development option maintains the rural open character and agricultural viability of the planning area by establishing conservation areas adjacent to residential lots.	2	Short-term	\$
4.3.2.	Revise and simplify the Arapahoe County rural cluster zoning option for the A-E and A-1 zone districts. Evaluate the density bonus system to ensure that the rural cluster option is optimized and attractive for development.	2	Short-term	\$
4.3.3.	Streamline the development review and approval process for the rural cluster option.	2	Short-term	\$
4.3.4.	Encourage the continued use of lands in conservation easements for ranching and agricultural activities.	2	Short-term	\$
4.3.5.	Encourage a range of lot sizes to respond to different residential preferences.	1	Ongoing	\$
Chapter 5. Transportation and Mobility				
5.1.1.	Identify and implement a long-term road maintenance plan and funding allocation for Byers.	2	Mid-term	\$
5.1.2.	Collaborate with CDOT to review the conditions and fund improvements to the I-70 on-ramps and off-ramps.	2	Mid-term	\$
5.2.1.	Collaborate with CDOT to improve the safety of the intersection of Highway 36 and Main Street by reducing speeds and improving visibility since it is a major pedestrian crossing in the community and has a high level of vehicular traffic.	1	Mid-term	\$\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
5.3.1.	Conduct a survey to determine specific demand for commuter service, including preferred destinations (Aurora, DIA, Denver), service frequency (daily, weekly), and willingness to pay.	2	Short-term	\$
5.3.2.	Identify and secure a location for a new public park-and-ride lot to support bus and carpool services.	1	Mid-term	\$\$
5.3.3.	Partner with a regional transit provider or a private shuttle service to launch a pilot program for commuter transportation to Aurora and DIA.	2	Mid-term	\$\$
5.4.1.	Develop a Sidewalk Master Plan that identifies the most critical areas for new sidewalks, such as routes to schools, the library, parks, and other community amenities. This could be part of a Safe Routes to School program and a bicycle and pedestrian loop that connects key community destinations, including schools, parks, and the downtown area with the central park.	2	Mid-term	\$
5.4.2.	Identify and map existing and potential bicycle routes within the community and connecting to key destinations. Engage the youth in the community to identify where they'd like to bike to and their preferences. Integrate bicycle-friendly infrastructure, such as bike racks, into spaces where possible.	2	Mid-term	\$
5.4.3.	Identify and design an infrastructure project and apply for the CDOT Revitalizing Main Streets program to fund the improvements.	1	Mid-term	\$\$\$
5.4.4.	Conduct a feasibility study to explore the creation of a multi-use path along the West Bijou Creek corridor, and fund and construct the path.	1	Mid-term	\$\$
5.4.5.	Install wayfinding signage along designated bike routes to help cyclists navigate the area and notify motorists of the shoulder bikeways.	1	Mid-term	\$\$
5.4.6.	Conduct a public education campaign on bicycle safety and etiquette for both cyclists and drivers.	2	Mid-term	\$

Chapter 6. Parks, Open Space, and Recreation

6.1.1.	Establish a citizens' committee to create a trail and open space master plan, including a multi-use trail along the West Bijou Creek, and incorporating input from young people and local equestrian groups and horse owners. Use the existing natural feature of West Bijou Creek as the basis for a trail system that connects residential areas, the central community parks, and important destinations.	1	Short-term	\$
--------	--	---	------------	----

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
6.1.2.	Develop a continuous, "Byers Loop" multi-use trail that encircles the core of the community. This trail wouldn't just be for recreation; it would serve as a safe route for children to bike to school. The trail would have clear signage for navigation.	2	Short-term	\$
6.1.3.	Establish a safe bike or walking trail to connect the center of Byers to the facilities at Quint Valley Fairgrounds.	2	Long-term	\$\$\$
6.1.4.	Develop a sustainable maintenance plan for all trails and open spaces, ensuring they are consistently kept up for safety and community pride. This may involve establishing a volunteer program to assist with trail and open space maintenance, such as an "Adopt-a-Trail" program where community groups or families take responsibility for the maintenance of a specific section of trail.	1	Short-term	\$
6.1.5.	Designate and maintain off-road trails for motorcycles and ATVs in an appropriate location away from residential areas. Encourage the development of equestrian trails, separate from pedestrian and bicycle paths where feasible, to ensure safety for all trail users.	1	Short-term	\$
6.1.6.	Ensure that developers contribute open space and trail connections from new developments.	1	Ongoing	\$
6.1.7.	Apply for grants from Arapahoe County and other entities to fund new open space projects and trail connections.	1	Ongoing	\$
6.1.8.	Encourage private property owners to dedicate land for open space and trail connections.	2	Short-term	\$
6.2.1.	Support the Byers Parks and Recreation District in its goal of implementing the Quint Valley Fairgrounds master plan and identifying ways to fund maintenance of existing facilities.	2	Short-term	\$
6.2.2.	Form a task force to study the feasibility, costs, and potential locations for a community recreation center, including the expansion/reuse of an existing facility.	2	Short-term	\$\$
6.2.3.	Encourage and support community groups to organize activities and classes, such as yoga, pickleball, or youth sports, in existing facilities like the school gym or library.	2	Short-term	\$
6.2.4.	Identify partnerships with the Town of Bennett and Strasburg to create a shared "Byers Pass" for recreation. Residents would purchase this pass, which gives them discounted access to a reciprocal community's recreation	2	Short-term	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
	center or pool, similar to a museum membership. Use a portion of the funds from the pass to establish a Byers-specific bus or van service to and from these facilities, providing a transportation option for families and seniors.			
6.2.5.	Create a "maker-space" within an existing or new building. This space, a "Byers Barn," would provide shared tools and a place for residents, specifically youth, to work on projects, host workshops (e.g., woodworking, crafting), and teach skills to others.	2	Mid-term	\$
6.3.1.	Conduct a walkability and bikeability audit of the community to identify key gaps in the current network and prioritize improvements. Develop a plan for sidewalk installation along Front Street, Main Street, and other key corridors.	2	Mid-term	\$
6.3.2.	Work with the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office to increase enforcement of traffic laws, including speeding and stop sign violations.	1	Ongoing	\$
6.4.1.	Identify and protect key areas that serve as wildlife habitats or movement corridors. These areas can be integrated into the trail system as passive open space, providing a natural buffer from development while offering a unique experience for trail users.	2	Mid-term	\$
6.4.2.	Actively collaborate with landowners to identify and prioritize land for conservation. This could include purchasing land or working with landowners to establish conservation easements, which protect the land from future development.	2	Mid-term	\$
6.4.3.	Encourage rural cluster development to conserve areas for natural habitat protection or open space for the cluster subdivision.	2	Short-term	\$
6.4.5.	Encourage the use of native and/or drought-tolerant plant species in all new private and public developments or improvements.	1	Ongoing	\$
Chapter 7. Community Facilities and Infrastructure				
7.1.1.	Collaborate with the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office to conduct a joint analysis of crime data to identify trends and needs, informing a request for additional police patrol resources.	2	Short-term	\$
7.1.2.	Support the Byers Fire Protection District in its efforts to address fire risks by identifying and targeting areas with overgrown vegetation and dead trees for removal.	2	Short-term	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
7.2.1.	Conduct a comprehensive review of the road swales and culverts in the center of Byers, make recommendations, and implement actions to remediate the sources of street and property flooding from storms.	2	Short-term	\$
7.2.2.	Evaluate the sewage ponds to identify and implement operational changes or technological solutions to mitigate the offensive odors impacting nearby residential areas.	2	Short-term	\$
Chapter 8. Economic Development and Tourism				
8.1.1.a.	Research and apply for grants to support businesses, including remote work, entertainment venues, recreational activities for children, teenagers, and adults, and infrastructure improvements (e.g., grants and loans for water and wastewater systems).	2	Short-term	\$
8.1.1.b.	Consider establishing a County Revitalization Authority (CRA) in partnership with other taxing entities to fund revitalization projects.	2	Short-term	\$
8.1.1.c.	Develop an economic strategy for Byers with stakeholders to promote business development and expansion.	2	Short-term	\$
8.1.2.a.	Collaborate with the I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership (REAP) and the I-70 Chamber of Commerce to support career development opportunities for high school students, business advocacy, and business-to-business connections.	1	Short-term	\$
8.1.2.b.	Foster collaborations between Byers High School students and various industries to increase students' skills and create employment opportunities for teenagers and young adults.	1	Short-term	\$
8.1.2.c.	Continue to implement programs and events by Arapahoe/Douglas Works! to enhance the skills and employability of the local workforce through training, education, and career counseling.	1	Ongoing	\$
8.1.3.a.	Support and facilitate the expansion of existing businesses to encourage more employment opportunities.	1	Ongoing	\$
8.1.3.b.	Partner with the East Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDA) to offer workshops, counseling, and business planning resources for startups and existing businesses.	2	Short-term	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
8.1.3.c.	Identify and preserve land in the Mixed Use land use categories with good road and infrastructure access for commercial and light industrial uses so as to attract new businesses.	2	Short-term	\$
8.1.3.d.	Support outdoor recreation activities, natural product producers, and small town crafts and industries to help broaden the economic base with businesses that reflect Byers' small town character.	1	Ongoing	\$
8.1.3.e.	Support improvements to wireless/cellular facilities to improve digital connectivity, where needed.	1	Ongoing	\$
8.1.4.a.	Continue the promotion of the Colorado Enterprise Zone tax credit program to assist businesses. Explore opportunities to establish South Metro Enterprise Zone contribution projects for non-profits, the Byers Parks and Recreation District, and other eligible entities.	1	Ongoing	\$
8.1.4.b.	Support the establishment of businesses that sustain local farming and ranching operations by allowing complementary retail businesses, such as farm stores and markets.	1	Ongoing	\$
8.1.5.a.	Establish an improved environment and "downtown" character for Front Street and Main Street by providing safe and continuous sidewalks, crosswalks, and attractive streetscapes. Explore the opportunity for grant funding from the CDOT Revitalizing Main Streets grant program which enhances pedestrian safety and funds infrastructure and placemaking projects.	2	Short-term	\$
8.1.5.b.	Support the adaptive reuse of historic buildings for a new use that provides employment and retail or service needs to the community.	1	Ongoing	\$
8.1.5.c.	Support the creation of a downtown business group to carry out holiday and other special events.	2	Short-term	\$
8.1.6.a.	Support the building of medical facilities by reviewing zoning districts to remove any barriers to facilities using existing buildings or building new structures.	2	Short-term	\$
8.1.6.b.	Explore opportunities to attract small-scale, local healthcare providers for seniors or the general population (e.g., physical therapist, dentist) by highlighting the need for these services.	2	Short-term	\$
8.1.7.a.	Maintain employment areas in the Mixed Use land use categories that are envisioned to include a range of	1	Ongoing	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
	commercial (e.g., retail and office) or light industrial development (e.g., manufacturing and assembling).			
8.1.7.b.	Rezoning for light industrial uses that generate significant truck traffic are to be carefully evaluated and located close to highways and I-70. The range of light industrial uses should be limited to those that are compatible with the adjacent residential uses, where applicable, and do not generate significant impacts (e.g., dust, noise, odors, glare, or truck traffic outside of daytime work hours) on these adjacent uses.	1	Ongoing	\$
8.2.1.	Encourage the development of tourism that reflects Byers' western heritage by promoting Byers as a day trip destination from Denver.	2	Short-term	\$
8.2.2.	Support developing tourism to Byers as an industry since it can be a recreation stop or destination, by capitalizing on local attractions such as the rodeo, Quint Valley fairgrounds, and overnight stays at the recreational vehicle park.	2	Short-term	\$
8.2.3.	Promote opportunities for agritourism and agritainment to allow farm owners to diversify their offerings and generate additional income through farm markets, recreational, farming, and leisure activities, and seasonal events.	2	Short-term	\$
8.2.4.	Explore grants to support tourism, such as the Colorado Tourism Marketing Grant.	1	Short-term	\$
8.2.5.	Explore opportunities to use the abandoned grain elevators for murals. Public art and mural programs have proven to be effective attractions for small towns.	2	Short-term	\$
8.2.6.	Consider the use of transfer of development rights to preserve agricultural areas and decrease development pressure on agricultural land.	3	Long-term	\$
Chapter 9. Heritage and Community Identity				
9.1.1.	Assist in identifying buildings with historic or cultural significance and help property owners seek appropriate historic designations and grants.	1	Short-term	\$
9.1.2.	Seek funding to conduct surveys that identify, document, and evaluate cultural and historical resources within the community, and to provide for their restoration and preservation.	1	Short-term	\$\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
9.1.3.	Encourage and support property owners in nominating significant buildings and places to the State or National Register of Historic Places.	1	Short-term	\$
9.1.4.	Develop a signage program to identify historically significant buildings, with funding for initial installation and maintenance.	2	Mid-term	\$\$
9.2.1.	Work with property owners to revitalize underutilized commercial spaces in older buildings.	1	Mid-term	\$
9.2.2.	Encourage adaptive reuse that allows for a mix of community-centered uses. A restored building could become a "Main Street Hub" for multiple small businesses.	2	Mid-term	\$\$
9.2.3.	Evaluate the zoning districts in Byers to identify and revise barriers to the renovation of historic buildings or create an overlay zone with appropriate setbacks and other standards.	1	Short-term	\$
9.2.4.	Develop a façade improvement program to help building owners restore their building facades to their original appearance.	2	Mid-term	\$\$
9.2.5.	Investigate opportunities to re-use the abandoned grain elevators.	2	Mid-term	\$\$
9.2.6.	Encourage developers to preserve significant cultural and historical resources and places by incorporating them into development plans.	1	Ongoing	\$
9.3.1.	Work with the Byers community to develop a "Historic Byers" campaign that highlights the historic buildings and scenic open spaces.	2	Mid-term	\$\$
9.3.2.	Assist Byers residents in establishing a community promotion group that could develop events that showcase Byers' history and heritage buildings.	1	Short-term	\$\$
9.3.3.	Support opportunities to create community gathering places, events, and education opportunities that highlight Byers' history.	1	Short-term	\$
9.3.4.	Support the I-70 Scout in publishing information about Byers' history, historic buildings, and places.	2	Short-term	\$
9.3.5.	Identify grants and partnerships that focus on historic preservation and small-town revitalization, such as those from the State Historical Fund (SHF), private foundations, and local county-level grants.	1	Short-term	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
9.4.1.	Support establishing a central location for Byers' historical information and artifacts that would be attractive to visit for both residents and visitors. Create an online, searchable database of historical photos, documents, and oral histories.	1	Short-term	\$
9.4.2.	Establish a program to record and archive oral histories from long-time residents, capturing personal stories and unique perspectives on Byers' development.	2	Mid-term	\$\$
9.4.3.	Research and install historical markers or plaques at key locations to explain their significance.	2	Mid-term	\$\$
9.4.4.	"Byers History Day" Event: Host an annual community event with activities, presentations, and exhibits focused on different aspects of the community's history.	2	Mid-term	\$\$
9.5.1.	Form a committee comprising residents, business owners, and historians to advise on heritage-related decisions.	1	Short-term	\$
9.5.2.	Create a volunteer program for historic preservation projects, such as building restoration, garden maintenance at historic sites, or archiving historical documents.	1	Short-term	\$
9.5.3.	Partner with County and State Heritage Organizations: Establish formal partnerships with organizations like History Colorado to access their expertise, resources, and grant opportunities.	1	Short-term	\$
9.5.4.	Conduct surveys and host public forums to gather input from residents on which historical aspects they value most and what they would like to see preserved.	2	Mid-term	\$\$

Definitions

100-Year Flood: The flood having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. Also known as the “one-percent chance flood” or “base flood.” These terms do not imply that the flood will necessarily happen once every 100 years.

Accessory Dwelling Unit: A secondary subordinate dwelling unit that is added to, created within, or adjacent to a detached single-family dwelling unit on a lot or parcel, and that includes a kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping quarters.

Affordable Housing: Housing falls within the financial means of a household living in either market or non-market dwellings. Total costs for rent or mortgage, insurance, and utilities should equal 30 percent or less of a household’s gross annual income.

Agritainment: A for-profit business operation, located and operated on A-E or A-1 zoned agricultural property that is specifically approved as a use-by-special review in that zone to provide educational and/or entertainment opportunities to its patrons in an agriculturally oriented environment by way of activities, events, demonstrations, displays, interactive participation, tours, lectures, and/or the sale of agriculturally related products.

Agritourism: Involves any agriculturally based operation or activity (e.g., farming, processing) that attracts visitors to a farm or ranch. Examples include recreational or educational activities, such as farm tours, hayrides, dude ranches, petting zoos, corn mazes, and u-pick operations.

American Community Survey (ACS): The U.S. Census Bureau provides annual and five-year estimates on population characteristics through the ACS. It is important to note that the ACS is based on a sample of the population and not actual counts, as the decennial census does. The ACS estimates can carry large margins of error, especially for small population areas. To aid users, margins of error are

provided with the ACS estimates to help assess the accuracy of the data.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): A schedule and budget for future capital improvements (building or acquisition projects) for roads, bridges, and other infrastructure, to be carried out over a specific time period.

Conservation Easement: A legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land to maintain it in a natural state and protect its conservation value. The conditions of the land are monitored to ensure adherence to the terms of the conservation easement and to conserve the land in perpetuity.

Density: The number of dwelling units on a site, expressed in dwelling units per acre.

Development Permit: A document that includes approved site and building development plans illustrating land use, landscaping, built form, intensity of use, and appearance of the site and buildings, as well as conditions of development approval.

DRCOG: Denver Regional Council of Governments, the metropolitan planning organization for the Front Range area, and consisting of 59 municipal and county governments.

Duplex: A residential structure that consists of two dwelling units arranged side-by-side or arranged one above the other, each with an entry from the street.

Employment Uses: A mix and range of office, industrial, warehousing, transportation and logistics, construction, communication, technology, commercial and financial services, retail and wholesale, institutional, research, education, public service and similar or related land uses and activities.

Floodplain: The land area that will be inundated or flooded based on the stormwater runoff produced by the 100-year flood as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or Mile High Flood District's flood hazard area delineation study.

Floodway: The channel of a river or other drainageway and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water-surface elevation more than one-half foot.

Heritage Conservation: Includes any activity undertaken to protect, preserve or enhance the heritage value or heritage character (including but not limited to character-defining elements) of heritage property or an area.

Impact Fees: Charges that are assessed on new development to help pay for the capital facilities needed by new development. Impact fees are based upon a standard formula and predetermined fee schedule.

Land Development Code: A regulatory document containing all of Arapahoe County's land use regulations, including zoning district provisions and subdivision requirements.

Multiplex: A residential building with three to six dwelling units arranged side-by-side and/or stacked, typically with a shared entrance from the street. This structure may have the appearance of a medium-to-large single-unit house.

Mixed Use: The development of a tract of land, building, or structure with two or more different uses including, but not limited to, residential, retail and personal services, employment, public facilities, or commercial uses.

Obsolete Zoning District: Arapahoe County has several zoning districts that are considered obsolete, meaning they are not in the current version of the Land Development Code. These districts, including R-2 Residential, R-3 Residential, R-3S Residential-Special, R-4 Residential, R-5 Residential, R-P Residential – Planned Unit Development, are governed by regulations from older versions of the Land Development Code.

Public art: Works of art in any media that have been

planned and executed with the specific intention of being located in or adjacent to public streets, parks, and other areas.

Recreation, Active: Developed facilities used for recreation (e.g., including but not limited to soccer, baseball, softball, running tracks, paved bicycle trails, volleyball and tennis, off-road vehicle parks). Active recreation implies a high level of human use of an open space area or park.

Recreation, Passive: Relatively undeveloped lands used for recreation (e.g., unpaved trails for non-motorized use, picnic tables, and interpretive sites). Passive recreation implies a lower level of human use of an open space area or park.

Riparian Area: The upland area adjacent to a natural drainage way, lake, pond, reservoir, or wetland characterized by a narrow band of lush vegetation within much drier surroundings.

Sharrows: Sharrows, or shared-lane marking, depicted with a pavement marking of a bicycle and an arrow, indicate shared travel lanes for cyclists and motorists on streets typically too narrow for a dedicated bike lane.

Stormwater Management: The management and use of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces, through planning to reduce flooding, direct and store stormwater quantity, manage stormwater quality, and support healthy streams.

Streetscape: All the elements that make up the physical environment of a street and define its character, and can include paving, street trees, lighting, pedestrian amenities, and street furniture.

Townhome: A small-to-medium-sized attached structure that consists of two to 20 one-, two-, or three-story dwelling units placed side-by-side. Entries typically face a street or courtyard.

Triplex: A small- to medium-sized detached structure that consists of three dwelling units placed side-by-side or which may be stacked on top of each other.

Zoning: The dividing of the County into zone districts, and the establishment of regulations governing the use, placement, spacing, and size of land and buildings within those districts.

Appendix A

Byers Historical Information

Byers Early History

The early history of Byers prior to its settlement in 1866 is part of the broader history of the Great Plains and the role this region played in Anglo-European colonization and westward expansion. This narrative provides a short summary of key events that led to the eventual settlement of Byers and vicinity. It is not intended to be an exhaustive, all-inclusive history as it covers only a short, roughly two-hundred-year timespan. Other sources can provide more in-depth studies of these and other significant events in the region's history, as well as the important histories of its original indigenous inhabitants.

Pre-European Settlement

In the 1500s, the plains of present-day Colorado were home to the Ute people, who spent summers in the high country and winters at the base of the mountains. When the Ute people obtained horses in the mid-17th century, some bands began hunting bison on the plains. In the early 1800s, other tribes frequented the area including the Cheyenne and Arapaho, who had been pushed out of their homelands in the Midwest. Other native people that hunted and occupied the eastern plains in the 18th and 19th centuries included the Kiowa, Jicarilla Apache, Comanche, and Lakota.¹

1803 Louisiana Purchase

The United States acquired the eastern two-thirds of what would become Colorado through the Louisiana Purchase and added the western portion in 1848 through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.²

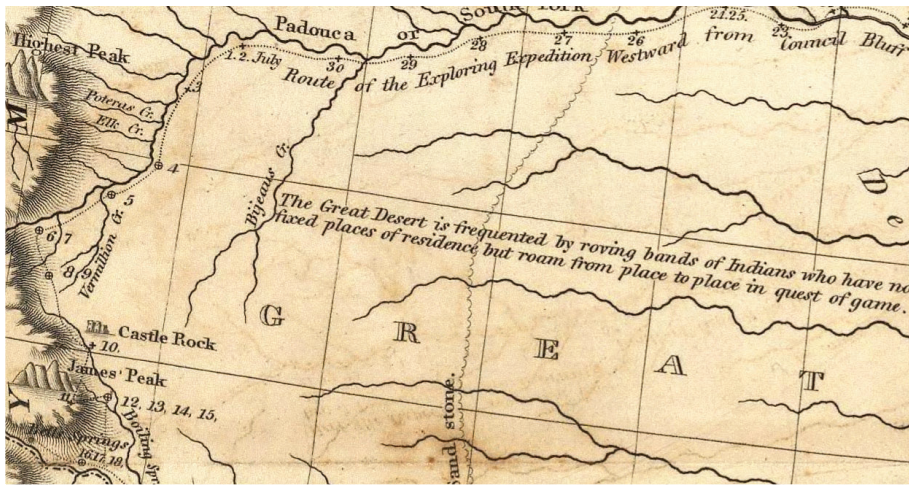
1820 Long Expedition

Major Stephen Long led an expedition to explore and report on the people, topography, plants, animals, and natural resources of the Platte River area. His was the first scientific journey into the region to map and find the source of the river, and to report the expedition findings to the President and Congress. Long and his party of scientists, geographers, and soldiers, twenty in all, left the Missouri River at Council Bluffs on June 6, 1820. Several days later, the expedition reached the Loup River and a settlement of Pawnee. Here French trappers Abraham Ladoux and Joseph Bijeau, also known as Joseph Bijeau dit Bissonet, joined the expedition and were paid one dollar per day, each.

Both Ladoux and Bijeau lived permanently among the Pawnee and traveled to the Platte headwaters on a number of occasions to hunt and trap beaver. In his journal, Edwin James, the expedition's botanist and geologist, wrote that Ledoux served as the party's hunter and farrier while Bijeau was guide and interpreter, being acquainted with several native languages. Bijeau in particular was invaluable to the expedition's survival, so much so that at the end of



Distant View of the Rocky Mountains, Samuel Seymour, Long Expedition 1820.³



A portion of a larger map drawn by Stephen Long for the Expedition to the Rocky Mountains.⁵ The map shows the expedition's route west from Council Bluffs and the month and day of each encampment.

the journey, Long honored Bijeau by naming a tributary of the South Platte River after him. Assigning Bijeau's name to this particular tributary seems significant, for it was here near its confluence with the Platte that on June 30, 1820, the expedition sighted the Rocky Mountains for the first time. Among many results of the Long expedition was the publication of journals detailing encounters with the indigenous people and scientific findings of the area's minerals, plants, animals, and insects. The expedition also produced a map that labeled the plains the "Great American Desert." In his writings of the expedition, Long described the area as "wholly unfit for cultivation, and of course uninhabitable by a people depending on agriculture for their subsistence."⁴

1851. Treaty of Fort Laramie

Signed in 1851 between the United States and plains tribes, including the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Lakota people, the intent of the Treaty of Fort Laramie was to protect white settlers heading west across the Great Plains and to allow the United States to establish military outposts and roads in the area. The treaty gave the Cheyenne and Arapaho sovereignty over the Platte River basin, as far south as the Arkansas River as long as the tribes allowed settlers uninhibited passage over their lands. The treaty did not grant settlers the right to homestead on native lands.

1858. Gold Discovered

In the summer of 1858, prospectors discovered gold in and along drainages of the South Platte River near present-day Denver. Back east, word spread quickly and soon thousands of Americans headed west to the Pike's Peak region to seek their fortunes. They traveled to the area via a number of overland routes including the Smoky Hill, Republican, South Platte, and South Platte Cutoff trails.

By early winter 1858, makeshift towns sprang up throughout

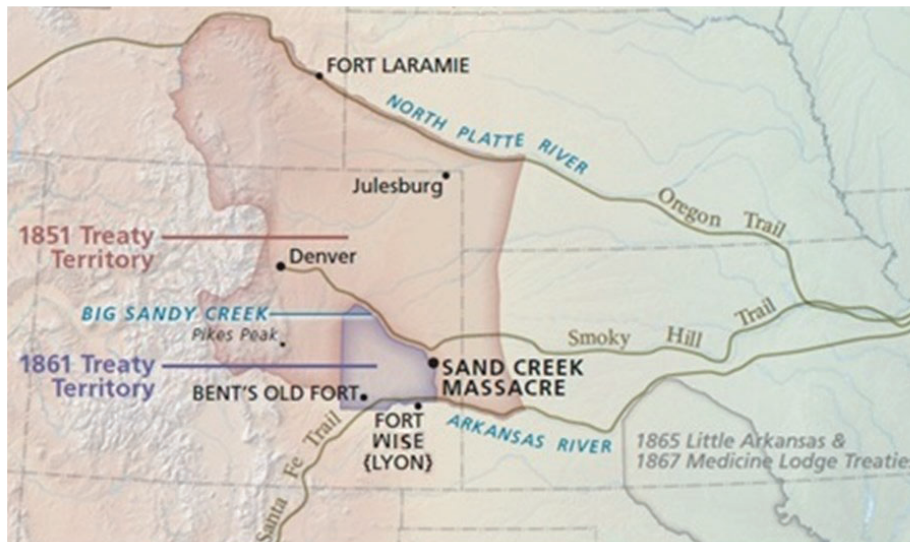
the gold region. Most settlements initially consisted of tents, but soon more permanent structures were built. Regardless of building material used, the settlements were in direct violation of the Fort Laramie Treaty.

Most of the miners, speculators, and fortune hunters, as well as those seeking to profit from the miners rather than from mining itself, headed to either Auraria or Denver City, which were competing towns located on opposite sides of Cherry Creek near its confluence with the South Platte River. Among the early profit-seekers was William Byers, who established the *Rocky Mountain News*, Denver and Auraria's first newspaper published beginning on April 23, 1859.

1860. Treaty of Fort Wise

Under the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, the area between the North Platte and the Arkansas rivers was recognized as Cheyenne and Arapaho land, as long as the tribes allowed free passage to west-bound travelers along the Great Platte River Road. The treaty did not however grant those travelers the right to mine gold or to build towns and settlements.

In 1860, in response to increased conflicts between the indigenous nations of the plains and early gold seekers and settlers, Congress authorized a



Map showing lands granted to the Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples under the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie and the 1861 Treaty of Fort Wise.⁷

"renegotiation" of the Fort Laramie treaty with the goal of extinguishing the Cheyenne and Arapaho rights to the gold regions. The result was the Treaty of Fort Wise, which established the Reservation of the Arapaho and Cheyenne of the Upper Arkansas, a region one-tenth the size of the area granted under the previous treaty. The United States agreed to protect the Cheyenne and Arapaho people and their lands provided that the tribes agreed to abandon their hunting and gathering livelihoods in exchange for adopting an agricultural way of life.

Eleven tribal leaders attended the treaty signing but later said that they did not understand the terms and they never intended to cede their rights to the land. The majority of the Cheyenne and Arapaho did not remain on the reservation, and skirmishes with settlers continued until the situation reached a boiling point on November 29, 1864, when United States troops killed 230 Cheyenne and Arapaho women, children, and tribal elders who were peacefully encamped along the Big Sandy Creek on the Colorado plains southeast of Denver.⁶

1861. Colorado Territory Created

February 28, 1861, President James Buchanan signed into law an act by Congress creating the territory of Colorado, carved from the existing territories of Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, and

Utah.

An 1862 map of the Colorado Territory changed the spelling of the creek that the Long expedition named in honor of Joseph Bijou to "Bijou". The name with this new spelling has remained ever since.⁸

1862. Homestead Act

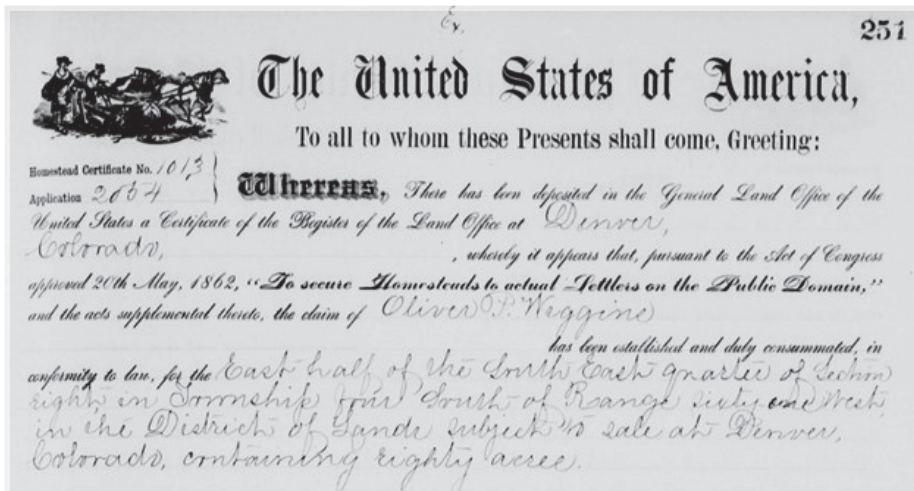
On May 20, 1862, the United States Congress passed the Homestead Act which accelerated settlement of the west. For a small filing fee, adult male or female heads of families, or those 21 years of age, were granted title of up to

160 acres of surveyed public land with the condition that they permanently reside on and cultivate the land for five years. Title could also be granted after six months residency and payment of \$1.25 per acre. Most of the land went to speculators, cattle barons, railroads, miners, and loggers. "Of some 500 million acres dispersed by the General Land Office between 1862 and 1904, only 80 million went to homesteaders."⁹

On Colorado's eastern plains, between 1862 and 1904, 16 people were granted homesteads in township 4, range 61 west, the area that would eventually become Byers. But by far, the largest land holders in this township were the Union Pacific and Kansas Pacific railroads, together owning six of the 36 sections.¹⁰

1862 Pacific Railway Act

July 1, 1862, Congress passed the Pacific Railway Act which authorized the Union Pacific Railroad and the Central Pacific Railroad to construct a transcontinental railroad from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean. For each mile of track, the railroads were granted 20 square miles of land in alternate sections laid out in a checkerboard pattern. The land grants were in exchange for the investment required to build tracks in specific locations across the west. Railroads were free to sell



Oliver P. Wiggins, Homestead grant of 80 acres in the east half of the southeast quarter, Section 9, Township 4 South, Range 61 West.¹⁰

their lands to settlers who would then establish communities.¹¹

1864. Sand Creek Massacre

At sunrise on November 29, 1864, at a bend in the Big Sandy Creek on the Colorado plains, about 140 miles southeast of present-day Byers, the United States Army attacked a peaceful encampment of Cheyenne and Arapaho women, children, and elders, killing 230 people.

For five years following the massacre, there were nearly continuous clashes between immigrants and Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Lakota warriors in northeast Colorado. The clashes culminated in the **Battle of Summit Springs on July 11, 1869**, along the South Platte River near present day Sterling, where United States soldiers defeated the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers.¹² Although a few skirmishes continued into the 1870s, the Battle of Summit Springs generally marked the end of Native resistance to Anglo-European settlement on the Colorado plains.

Byers Settlement

The Early Years

In 1866, Oliver P. Wiggins, a trapper, scout, and veteran of the Civil War, settled along the east bank of West Bijou Creek, where he eventually

constructed a general store to supply area ranchers and farmers.¹ The store also served as the first school and a post office, with Wiggins appointed as the town's first postmaster, a position he held from 1873 until 1884.²

Wiggins is credited with naming his homestead "Bijou" for its location along West Bijou Creek. At that time, there were at least two other places carrying the name Bijou; both waystations for settlers coming into Denver. One was located about 12

miles west of Fort Morgan, presumably at or near the confluence of Bijou Creek and the South Platte River, and the other was located along the Smoky Hill trail, in present-day El Paso County.

On August 15, 1870, the Kansas Pacific Railway was completed giving Denver its first direct connection to Kansas City and points east.³ The railway established a station adjacent to the Wiggins' homestead and continued to use the name "Bijou" until February 1875 when it was formally changed to Byers, in honor of William Byers, editor and owner of the *Rocky Mountain News*, and to coincide with the name of the post office which was known as Byers since spring 1873.⁴ However, frequently and for several years after renaming the railway station, the area continued to be known by both names, written as: "Byers station, on the Kansas Pacific railway"; or, "Bijou creek", "Bijou Crossing", and "Bijou station" to distinguish it from Bijou basin in El Paso County.

The selection of Byers as the new name for the growing community on Bijou creek generated some publicity in the Denver newspapers. For several days in March 1873, William Byers and S.W. Woodbury, one of Byers' staunchest critics and editor of rival *Denver Daily Times*, traded barbs about the new name, beginning with S.W. Woodbury's comment that: "A post office by the name of 'Byers' has been established at the Bijou Crossing of the Kansas Pacific Railway, in Arapahoe county. 'Byers' is the

Italian for 'Bijou' – hence the selection of this name."⁵

William Byers quipped: "The little *Times* has its joke at the name of the new post office out at Bijou creek. Its editor little suspects how near it came to being a serious matter for that thriving village. There was a proposition to name it for another Denver editor, but it was decided that such a title *wood bury* it beyond all hope of resurrection. The Italian editor of the *Times* learned that language of the Italian opera troupe which was here a week or two ago."⁶

The following day appeared this retort in the *Denver Daily Times*: "If, as the *News* declares, the selection of another name for Bijou station *wood bury* it beyond hope of resurrection, *buyers* would be foolish to meddle with it at all, so we cannot see that the matter is improved any."⁷

Byers ended the discussion with: "The *Times* has another joke on the name of the post office at Bijou, but it is so obscure that we find it impossible to see the point..."⁸

The completion of the Kansas Pacific Railway was a significant event for Denver as well as for Colorado's eastern plains. Settlements like Bijou became less isolated. Passengers could depart Bijou station and arrive in Kansas City less than 36 hours later. A little more than a decade earlier, this trip would have taken about one month in a wagon, along bumpy, remote, barren, and sometimes dangerous trails. The growth and expansion of Bijou station as well as other small settlements along the rail line, however, took promotional efforts by current residents and the railroad. The plains still resembled a great desert, inhospitable to farming, perhaps attractive only to stock growers with enough income to amass large acreages.

In 1873, O.P. Wiggins embarked on an experiment to prove that the arid soil could be productive. That spring, he planted a wide variety of trees, fruits, grains, grasses, and vegetables in the dry soil of the eastern plains. In a letter to the Kansas Pacific Railway, he reported that the trees, which were

Advertisement in *A Geographically Correct map of the Kansas Pacific Railway Showing the only Direct Route to Denver and All the Popular Rocky Mountain Resorts*.

cultivated from seed, for the most part survived through the summer. His black locust trees did particularly well without water. The box elder, elm, and silver maple needed some irrigation as did his cherry and crabapple trees. The pear trees however were a disappointment, all having done poorly with the limited amount of water available.

Wiggins raised oats, barley, alfalfa, and Hungarian grass which he reported fared well on the dry prairie. His corn, squash, turnips, tomatoes, beets, cucumbers, lettuce, strawberries, and raspberries, with some water supplement, were all a success. The peas and beans, with no water, were most successful. Only the potatoes, were a failure. Wiggins concluded his letter to the Kansas Pacific by stating: "The land here produces more vegetables than any I ever saw."⁹



Joseph P. Farmer's Ranch, Bijou, Colorado¹²

The railroad also did its part to enthusiastically promote and advertise settlement of the plains. With seven million acres of land for sale, located 20 miles on either side of its track through Kansas and eastern Colorado Territory, the railroad published flyers enticing settlers with hopeful, if not exaggerated, descriptions of the area as having a mild and healthful climate, with no deep snow or floods to wash away crops, and where there were no tree stumps that would be in the way of a plow. Perhaps only the latter would prove true.

Settlers were directed to contact one of the Kansas Pacific land agents in Salina or Kansas City where maps, plats, and free west-bound tickets were available to those interested in viewing the land before purchasing.¹⁰

It is difficult to determine how many settlers came west as a result of this enticement. Settlers on Colorado's eastern plains were not only independent, but they were resilient as well. Although Wiggins reported great success growing fruit trees, grain, vegetables, and berries in 1873, the ensuing years were challenging. The area suffered a severe drought in 1879 that extended into the following spring, followed by an early and prolonged winter. There were also frequent grasshopper infestations throughout the plains that devastated or completely destroyed crops.

Early settlers persevered, however. By 1874, O.P.

Wiggins had been living in Byers for about eight years. On April 16, the *Rocky Mountain News* reported that he was making several improvements on his homestead. He was also in the process of building a general store and enlarging his hotel. Other residents, mostly ranchers, living in the vicinity of Bijou in 1874, included Joseph P. Farmer, E. Russell, H.H. Metcalf, Jerry Coulehan, D. Holden, and A.K. Clark.¹¹

Many settlers found the rolling hills of Colorado's eastern plains ideal for raising livestock. Ranging and grazing freely on native grasses, the cattle and sheep supplied the growing city of Denver, western mountain and mining towns, as well as eastern markets, with beef and wool. Byers, or Bijou station, quickly became an important shipping point for area wool growers.

Keeping track of free-ranging cattle roaming the Colorado plains was an issue. On one occasion, the *Rocky Mountain News* reported that cattle herded to the Denver corrals in the lower part of the city were actually stolen from Byers' rancher J.P. Farmer and other ranches along Bijou and Kiowa creeks.¹³

To help manage their cattle, eastern plains ranchers participated annually in organized spring and fall roundups. The biggest roundup event seemed to occur each spring, where free-ranging cattle were herded to one location, separated, and the yearlings

branded. Because of the area's vastness, the eastern plains were divided into several roundup districts. Beginning in about April of each year, the *Rocky Mountain News* published the route and date for each district roundup. Although the route changed slightly from year to year, generally ranchers in the Byers area were responsible for helping to roundup cattle over a large area from River Bend on Big Sandy Creek to Deer Trail, west to Twenty-mile house, and sometimes as far west as Plum Creek.¹⁴

One year, the annual roundup spectacle became a tourist attraction as Denver residents boarded excursion trains to Brush, the central roundup site. City-dwellers enjoyed a day of watching cowboys in action; roping, wrangling, and branding their cattle.¹⁵

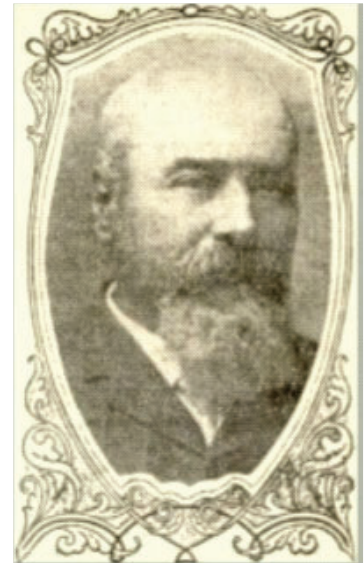
1876. Statehood

Jerome Chaffee, Colorado territorial delegate to the US House of Representatives, convinced his fellow House members that there were more than 150,000 people living in the Territory, thus meeting the threshold to become a state. On August 1, 1876, President Ulysses S. Grant signed into law a bill admitting Colorado to the union as the nation's 38th state.

By **1885** the *Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming and Arizona Gazetteer and Business Directory* reported that Byers had a population of 50 people.¹⁶ The town's businesses now included a hotel managed by H. Miller, a blacksmith shop operated by J. Bruster, and a railroad and express office operated by M.D. Briggs. The directory also noted that O.P. Wiggins, in addition to running his general store and serving as postmaster, was Justice of the Peace, and his son Frank was the area

constable.

The principal activity at the rail station at that time was the shipment of sheep and wool. P.T. Hunt, J.C. Shy, and F.D. West were listed in the directory as the area's primary sheep breeders although there were many others such as George Shy, Charles Owens (pictured right), C.J. Parrett, and Rollin Sherman. Owens in particular was one of the state's



Charles Owens. *Rocky Mountain News*, April 24, 1904.

prominent wool growers and a resident of the Byers area since at least 1878.¹⁷ A *Rocky Mountain News* article published April 24, 1904, featured Owens as "the man of mighty flocks"; raising 3,300 sheep and breeding prized trotting horses on 5,000 acres of land he owned in the Byers area. Owens was also a partner in the Sam Palmer Stock company which grazed 1,800 shorthorn Herefords and 4,000 sheep on 15,000 acres along Kiowa Creek.

The 1885 *Gazetteer and Business Directory* identified other agricultural-related businesses in Byers at that time, including dairy farms operated by John Bains, Michael Schatz, and Henry Schliecker.¹⁸

In **1889**, local rancher, Leonard McDonnell, and Denver realtor and land speculator, John Fetzer purchased 160 acres from the state of Colorado and

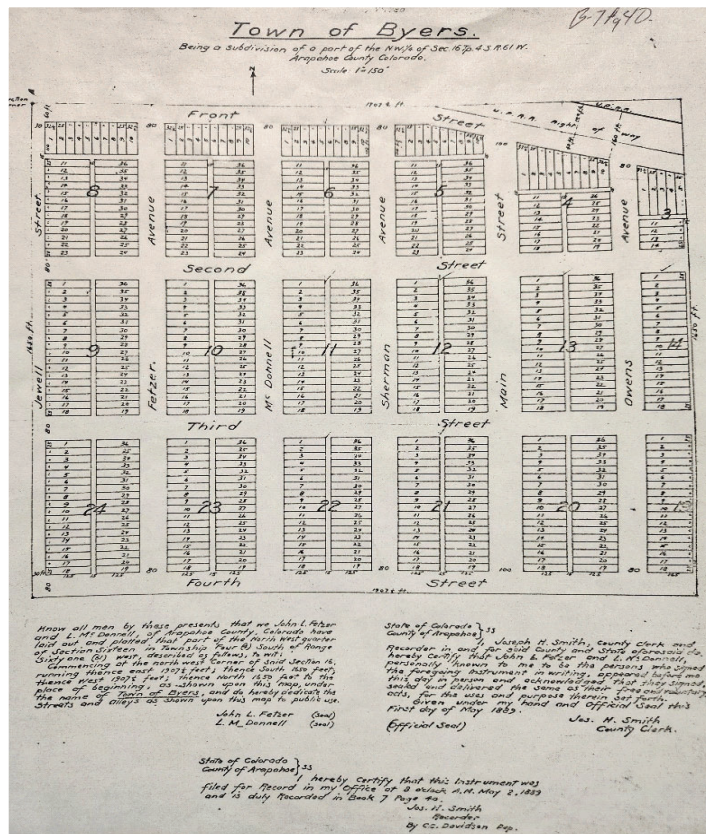


Photograph of Charles Owens' ranch in Byers. *Rocky Mountain News*, April 24, 1904.

platted the Byers town site (shown on right) located on the south side of the Kansas Pacific railway tracks and which consisted of 24 blocks, each with individual lots measuring 25 feet wide by 125 feet deep. A 15-foot wide north-south oriented alley ran down the center of each block. Eighty-foot-wide streets carrying the names of the platters John Fetzer and Leonard McDonnell, and well-known, local sheep growers Charles Owens and Rollin Sherman, ran north and south. The plat also included Jewell Street which was named for Leonard McDonnell's wife Leonora ("Linnie") Jewell. Intersecting east and west oriented streets were numbered Second through Fourth in descending order from the railroad tracks, south. Front Street, located adjacent to and generally paralleling the rail line, was 60 feet wide.

At this time, most of Byers' commercial businesses were located just north of the platted town site, adjacent to the railroad tracks, or in the case of the Wiggins' general store and a few other early businesses, on land claimed by the Kansas Pacific Railroad.

In 1913, the Union Pacific Railroad, owner of the Kansas Pacific, sought to remove the encroaching businesses from its right-of-way. In that year the railroad appealed to the United States Supreme Court an earlier ruling of the Colorado Supreme Court concerning title to a strip of land 400 feet wide, measured 200 feet from the centerline of the railroad track. The Union Pacific brought suit against George A. Snow, Robert W. Burton and others, and against Martin Sides and Walter Sherer, residents of Byers, seeking to remove them from land they occupied, that the railroad claimed it owned. Snow had purchased the general store from O.P. Wiggins in 1890, and later, Burton became his partner in the business. Martin Sides owned the pool hall and Walter Sherer managed the livery stable.¹⁹ The Colorado court found in favor of Snow, Burton, Sides, and Sherer. However, the United States Supreme Court reversed that decision.²⁰ The result was the removal of all buildings within 400 feet of the railroad right-of-way by 1917.²¹



Plat of Town of Byers, 1889.



Byers looking northwest circa 1910 showing the general store, restaurant, saloon, meat market, blacksmith shop and other buildings, some of which were on land claimed by the Kansas Railway. Photograph courtesy of Stacie May, Byers, Colorado

Would be County Seat

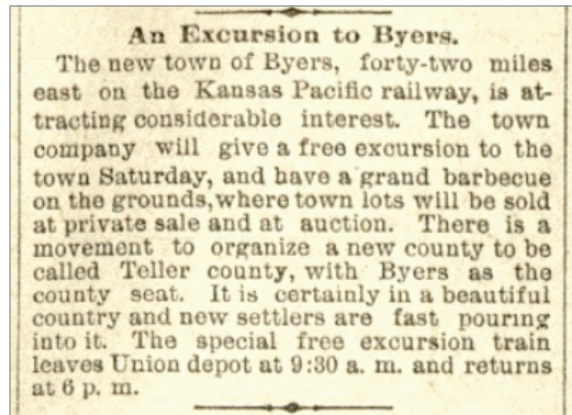
On at least three occasions, the town of Byers was selected to be the county seat of a proposed, newly created county carved from Arapahoe and Adams counties. The first attempt occurred in 1888, when there was a movement to organize the new county of Teller.²² This may have been intended as a promotion by the Byers town company to generate interest in the sale of town lots, which were officially platted the following year.

A second effort occurred in 1913 when State House Representative William D. Wright, Jr., of Denver introduced a bill to create the new county of Steele formed from portions of Arapahoe and Adams counties. The new county was to be named in memory of Justice Steele who died in 1911.²³

The third, and final effort occurred just two years later, in 1915, when Byers was proposed as the county seat of a new Carlson County, named in honor of the then Governor of Colorado, and formed from the eastern half of both Arapahoe and Adams counties.²⁴

Turn of the 20th Century

By 1900 the census reported that there were 168 people living in and around Byers. Most residents owned or worked on area farms, or sheep and cattle ranches, and several reported having immigrated from Canada, Mexico, Europe, Ireland, or Scotland. A few worked for the railroad, and others had what could be considered typical "in-town" jobs such as general merchandise, telegraph operator, teacher, blacksmith, and hotel operator. One individual, Julian Balenza, a 56-year-old widower from New Mexico, indicated his



Rocky Mountain News, May 18, 1888



George A. Snow house circa 1910. Photograph courtesy of Stacie May, Byers, Colorado.



George A Snow house, 254 S. McDonnell Avenue in 2025.

employment was "gambler". The first several years of the new century saw the construction of a few homes and businesses on the Byers townsite lots including the George A. Snow house. Constructed in 1904, this home, barn, and decorative wrought iron

fence appear today much as they did at the turn of the century.

Other prominent buildings constructed at the start of the new century included a new, wood-framed Episcopal church at the corner of 2nd Avenue and McDonnell Street.

Constructed in 1908, this church was the second building constructed by congregants, after the first building, located one block to the west, was destroyed by fire in February 1908, just four months after opening for its first service. The congregation managed to save the pews which were then installed in the new building.²⁵

Although it is no longer a church, the building remains a community gathering place for special events.

Despite the slow pace of home construction in Byers during the first decade of the new century, on September 19, 1908, real estate speculator O.H. Howe, president of the Minneapolis-based Howe-Heide Investment Company, platted a 42-acre section of land on the north side of the railroad tracks. Like the original town site, the lots were long and narrow, just 25 feet wide. His plat also included larger five-acre lots on the north and west sides, and a formal one-acre park fronting the railroad right-of-way.²⁶

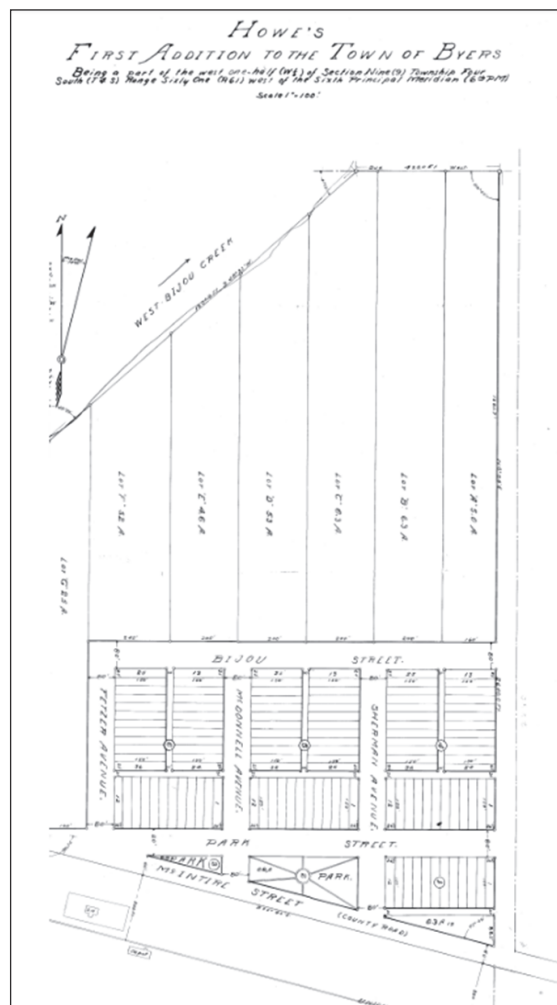
Howe was also actively involved in the promotion and sale of surrounding farmland.

By 1910, the pace of both residential and commercial construction in Byers increased. The census reported a population of 266 people. Like the previous census, most people worked or resided on farms and ranches around Byers. Fifteen residents worked for the railroad, primarily single men who immigrated from Greece. The town had its first physician, Frank McWilliams, a single 35-year-old man from Pennsylvania.²⁷

In 1910, the general store employed six people and was managed by 29-year-old Robert Burton. A local entrepreneur, Burton also owned a brickyard on the south side of town, today roughly in the vicinity of



184 S. McDonnell Street. Formerly Saint Paul's Episcopal church constructed in 1908 (County Assessor).



Howe's First Addition Plat, 1908.

Third Avenue and McDonnell Street. He employed several laborers locally and from Denver to make fired bricks from mud that was sourced on-site. The locally produced bricks were used in a number of Byers' buildings. Burton also owned and operated a lumber yard, an icehouse, and is credited with operating the town's first grain elevator.²⁸

Around 1910, Robert Burton constructed what was, at the time, one of Byers' most prominent buildings. Known as the Burton Block and located on Front Street, this was a two-story building constructed using bricks from Burton's own brickyard. Around this time, pioneer rancher, George Snow began construction on a new bank building at the corner of Front Street and Jewell Avenue (390 W. Front Street). In the construction, Snow also used bricks from Burton's local brickyard.²⁹ Today, this single-story building with its clipped corner front entrance looks much the same as it did over 100 years ago. In about 1912, Snow also began construction on a commercial building, known then as the Snow Building, located immediately east of his bank. This single-story brick building provided commercial space to at least three businesses. Most recently, the building was home to the Lippitt Hardware store (370 W. Front Street).

By 1920, Byers and the surrounding area grew to 442 people, increasing the population by more than 65 percent in just 10 years. Like the previous years, most of Byers' residents owned, or worked on area farms and ranches but the town's commercial enterprises expanded significantly in the decade between 1910 and 1920. New businesses included the town's first newspaper, the *Bijou Valley Granger*; a mechanics garage; a shoe repair store; a barber shop, pool hall, and ice cream parlor, located in the Snow Building (370 W. Front Street); two hotels; and the H & H Mercantile located at the corner of Front Street and S. McDonnell Avenue, and operated by local residents Hal Parmeter and Olin Hutchinson (310 W. Front Street).³⁰

During the 1920s, George Kelley constructed a general merchandise store at 186 W. Front Street. By the 1940s however, George and his wife Carrie converted the building into their private residence. Likely at this time, the Kelley's modified the original false front, removed the tall storefront windows, and enclosed the front door, moving the entrance to face S. McDonnell Street.

Beginning in the nineteen teens through the 1920s Byers also saw an increase in the number of homes



View of Byers circa 1910 showing from left to right, the Burton Block (two story); a single-story building (perhaps a residence); the Byers Bank; the Byers Hotel; and a residence. The George Snow house can be seen in the distant background, upper right. Photograph courtesy of Stacie May, Byers, Colorado



The George Kelley General Merchandise building located at 186 W. Front Street. By the 1940s, the Kelley's converted the store building into their residence. Photograph courtesy of Stacie May, Byers, Colorado

constructed on the platted lots south of Front Street. One of the best, unaltered examples of home construction during this period is the one and one-half story, clapboard sided residence located at 145 S. Sherman Street. This home retains many of its original features including an open front porch which extends across its entire front elevation.

On the north side of Byers, in the Howe's First Addition, very few commercial and residential buildings remain from this early period of Byers history. Notable exceptions include 51 W. Bijou Avenue. Originally constructed as a residence in 1919, this one and one-half story building with lean-to additions on the east and west elevations has been used for several businesses, most recently, a laundromat as well as residences.

Another building of note in the Howe's First Addition is a residence at 117 N. Sherman Street. Although it has been significantly altered, this two-story home was constructed just after the turn of the nineteenth century and was moved to Byers in the 1960s from a location about six miles east of town.³¹



186 W. Front Street pictured today. The building continues to be used as a residence.



145 S. Sherman Street, constructed in 1915. For a time, this residence served as the residence for the pastor of the adjacent Presbyterian Church. Photograph courtesy Arapahoe County Assessor. Image captured April 1, 2010.



51 W. Bijou Avenue.



117 N. Sherman Street. Constructed circa 1905.

End of Big Ranching

During the first decade of the 20th century, land speculators, railroad companies, and community boosters actively promoted settlement of the arid west. Advertisements regularly appeared in flyers, magazines, newspapers, and business journals across the country enticing readers to come to or invest in the west, including Colorado and its abundant farmland. The *Commercial West* was one such publication. A weekly, Minneapolis-based journal, the *Commercial West* represented banking and western interests, and regularly reported on agricultural prospects in eastern Colorado such as crop outlooks, weather, water and irrigation, and the availability and productivity of land.

In addition to articles, the publication contained advertisements from land speculators like that of the Howe-Heide Investment Company. Based in Minneapolis, with offices in Wild Horse, Colorado (a village southeast of Limon), company president O.H. Howe and vice-president P.O. Heide boasted holdings of 70,000 acres of farmland in eastern Colorado, all of which was for sale. The company's advertisement urged: "Now is the time to Buy – Colorado is the Place".¹

George Snow was an early resident of the Byers area, having homesteaded 160 acres along West Bijou Creek in 1894. By the turn of the twentieth century, he had amassed between 18,000 and 25,000 acres of ranchland across the rolling prairie. But by the early 1900s, Snow began selling small

tracts of his land to settlers that were intent on dryland farming. Other pioneer settlers like Charles Owens and Rollin Sherman, sold their ranches intact to land speculators, many from the Midwest, who in turn marketed the land to other investors or to companies interested in settling entire town sites.

The character of the Byers area gradually began to change as vast cattle and sheep ranches gave way to farms on more modestly sized acreages. Still, many settlers, mostly from eastern states or Europe, needed to be convinced that the dry plains were suitable for farming. In November 1907, an organized excursion to Byers showed prospective buyers that dryland farming, using proper, modern techniques, could be quite lucrative. Area farms selected for the tour included long-time residents John O'Connor and John Price, as well as newcomer Addison Teller, who had just settled in the area the year before. Tour parties were shown fields of wheat, oats, millet, alfalfa, and sorghum as well as corn, potatoes, melons, and squashes.

Most impressive was the farm of B.E. Goodale, the "cauliflower king." Originally from Long Island, New York, Goodale settled in the Byers area around 1904. He extolled the virtues of Byers' dry climate as ideal for raising fields of cauliflower which he harvested and sold primarily in Kansas City, clearing a profit of \$500 per acre. Key to his success was the high demand for cauliflower in eastern markets, his proximity to the railroad, and the availability of refrigerated box cars.²

The United States Congress also did its part to encourage farming and settlement on its remaining lands, much of which were located in the dryer regions of the west, away from rivers and streams. In 1909, Congress passed the Enlarged Homestead Act doubling the number of acres a settler could claim in the western states of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, Montana, Washington, and Nevada. Between 1910 and 1920, 43 homesteads were filed in the Byers area, some from long-time settlers seeking to expand their existing holdings.

Just a few months after the Enlarged Homestead Act was passed, the Colorado Agricultural Experiment

Station of the Colorado Agricultural College, later Colorado State University, published a series of bulletins instructing new settlers in the best dryland farming methods. Titles included *Dry Land Farming in Eastern Colorado* (1910), *Windmill Irrigation* (1910), *Notes on a Dry Land Orchard* (1910), and *Suggestions to the Dry-Land Farmer* (1919).

These publications proved instructive. In one publication, agricultural experiment station director L.G. Carpenter warned: "*The best hope of success is to be found in dairying and in poultry growing, with crops as an important adjunct, grown principally for forage... It is well that each intending settler should see the plains, learn the difficulties, satisfy himself whether he is adapted to them. ...those who do not understand the conditions, who are not adapted to them, or who do not have capital enough to tide over one or more unfavorable years are apt to meet with bitter disappointment. ... For those who meet the conditions with patience and intelligence there may be abundant success.*"³

The Need for Irrigation

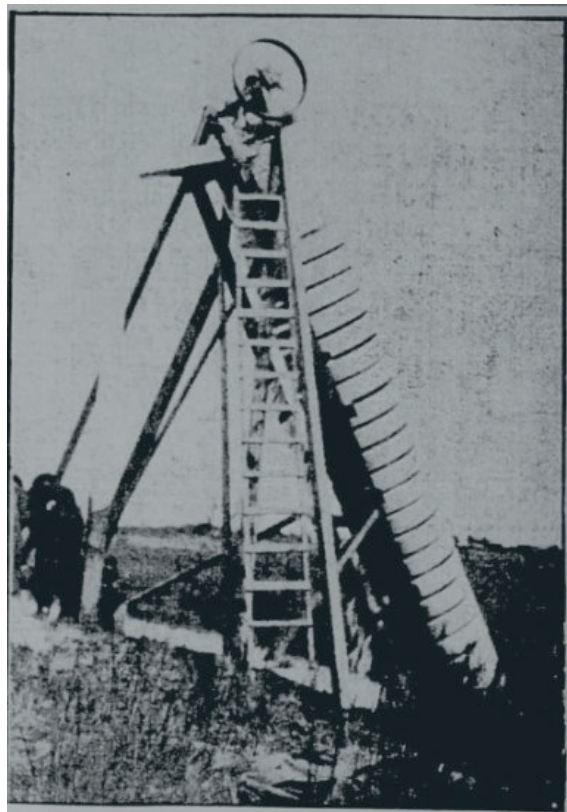
Although many settlers may have followed recommendations from the Colorado Agricultural College and adopted modern dryland farming techniques, an increasing number of farmers found that raising corn, potatoes, alfalfa, cauliflower, and other thirsty crops in an arid climate required irrigation to supplement the unreliable rain and snowfall. In fact, Colorado farmers as far back as the 1860s began diverting river water into ditches and canals to irrigate their crops. As of July 1907, the State Engineer reported that across Colorado 8,500 miles of ditches irrigated nearly 1.9 million acres. In the previous year alone over 3,300 miles of ditches and more than 500,000 acres were brought under irrigation.⁴

1907 also saw the incorporation of a considerable number of irrigation companies statewide, including the Hopewell Irrigation Company whose intent was to secure water from West Bijou Creek to supply Byers' area farms. Less than two years after incorporating, the company began construction of the nearly four-mile-long Hopewell ditch located west of Byers and extending north into Adams

County. Numerous smaller lateral ditches carried water from the Hopewell to individual farms.⁵

In addition to ditches and canals, during the early part of the new century, farmers and engineers began experiments in eastern Colorado to irrigate fields using well water; initially pumped to the surface by hand, and later by windmills and gas-powered motors.

In 1913, J.N. Grimes invented a "spiral lift" and put it into use on a farm west of Byers. Underground water was induced into a rotating spiral tube, which was described as a "spiral elevator". Although the awkward-looking invention managed to deliver an impressive 320 gallons of water per minute, the structure did not catch on.⁶



"The Spiral Lift, A New Invention for Irrigation", *Denver Weekly Post*. November 8, 1913.

Up to the 1950s, getting groundwater into fields required a significant amount of time and labor to

assemble, disassemble, move, and reassemble irrigation pipes by hand and even then, irrigating by this method could only reach a small number of acres. In 1952, Frank Zybach, a tenant farmer from Strasburg, invented a water drive, center-pivot irrigation system. Self-propelled and capable of irrigating 40 acres at a time, this invention was “perhaps the most significant mechanical innovation in agriculture since the replacement of draft animals by the tractor” and revolutionized irrigation worldwide.⁷

Byers and the Transcontinental Highways

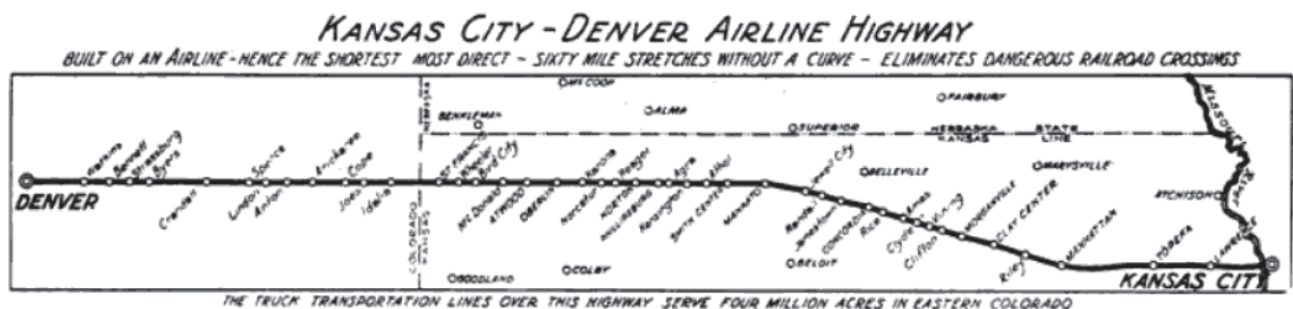
The first automobile, a “steam-powered locomobile”, appeared on Denver streets in 1900. Initially, it was a novelty affordable to only the wealthy. By 1908, Henry Ford introduced the Model T car to the American public for a cost of \$850; windshield, top, and headlamps were extra. The Ford assembly line streamlined manufacturing and by 1924, the Model T sold for just \$290.¹

As early as 1902, automobile enthusiasts began lobbying for the creation of a transcontinental motoring highway. The Lincoln Highway, the first national road, was completed in 1915 connecting New York and San Francisco.² The highway, however, bypassed Colorado entirely, opting for Wyoming’s South Pass route through the mountains just as the Union Pacific railroad had done nearly fifty years earlier. The following year, a number of other named highways entered Colorado from all directions including the Victory Highway, a 3,000-mile-long transcontinental route that connected New York to San Francisco, through Byers.³

Generally, the early motoring routes connected cities and towns along existing, established roads. Because of the confusing array of routes, guidebooks like the *Official Automobile Blue Book*, provided travelers detailed instructions on how to get from point to point, including road conditions, maps, and advertisements from approved establishments. The 1923 *Blue Book* described the 90-mile route between Limon and Denver through Byers as gravel to Deer Trail with the balance mostly dirt, over rolling farm and prairie country, and closely following the railroad. Along this route, the traveler drove sections of the Midland Trail (marked with orange or black and orange markers); the Victory Highway (yellow signs with blue lettering); the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway (red and white markers); the Golden Belt route (yellow marker); and the White Way (black or black and white markers).

To protect motorists along its route from nefarious business practices, the Victory Highway Association designated approved establishments. Hotels, mechanic garages, retail stores, and cafes were identified with yellow and blue steel signs, similar to the road markers. It is currently unknown whether any of Byers’ businesses were officially designated as approved Victory Highway establishments.

Just five years after the Victory Highway crossed Colorado, there was a movement to create a shorter more direct route from Denver to Kansas City. On November 18, 1921, the *Littleton Independent* announced plans to construct an “airline” highway through Arapahoe County. Promoted by the commercial club of St. Francis, Kansas and the



Map of the Airline Highway, Colorado Highways, April 1922.

Kansas City-Denver Airline Association, the new highway followed a nearly direct line east on Colfax Avenue to St. Francis, Kansas, through Byers, which, depending on the source, cut anywhere from 60 to 100 miles from the Victory Highway route. Joseph Young, president of the Kansas City-Denver Airline Highway Association extolled the many benefits of the Airline route. Fifty miles east of Denver, farmers could haul hogs, sheep and other livestock directly to Denver markets without being forced to detour 75 to 80 miles. "It is such highways as this which will assist in developing highway traffic to the benefit of the entire United States."⁴

Both the Adams and Arapahoe County Commissioners adopted resolutions favoring the new highway, vowing to open it at once.

By 1923 the named highways were abandoned in favor of a numbered highway system. The Victory Highway became U.S. Highway 40, and the Airline route became U.S. Highway 36. The colorful signs and markings of the previous named highways were replaced with numerical highway identification signs which, initially were black numbers and letters on an orange background emblazoned on existing telephone poles. In the mid to late 1930s the Colorado highway department also began paving many of the highways with asphalt.⁵

It may be around this time that the official route of U.S. Highway 36 was moved about two miles north of Byers. Following Colfax Avenue straight east from



The Airline Highway/U.S. Highway 36, west of Byers in 1930. *Colorado Highways*. June 1930.

Strasburg, the route shaved less than 2 miles from the highway's overall distance. Being bypassed in this manner must have frustrated Byers' business owners. However, between 1954 and 1955, the alignment was changed again, back to the original route directing traffic through Byers.⁶

With its location at, and near, the crossroad of the Airline and Victory highways, Byers merchants certainly benefited by the increase in travelers through town. By 1930, Gothard Swanson and his wife Lillie built the Coronado Hotel and Café in block 2 of Howes First Addition, which was the block originally platted as a park. Constructed in the Spanish Revival architectural style, the building is one of Byers' most significant commercial structures.

In 1940, the hotel functioned more as an apartment



Coronado Hotel and Café circa 1950. Photograph courtesy of Stacie May, Byers, Colorado.



Coronado Hotel photographed in 2023. 177 West Old Highway 40.

building. Six of the school district's teachers resided at the hotel along with an extension service agent, two filling station employees, and the hotel's employees.⁷

The Swansons operated the hotel until Gothard's death in 1945. By 1948, Lillie was residing on Krameria Street in Denver. In about 1950, a single-story addition was constructed on the north side of the building for a grocery. Over the years, the building also housed a dress shop, ceramics shop, and most recently, a steakhouse restaurant.

In 1944, the United States Congress passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act authorizing the construction of a nationwide system of interstate highways. However, this act did not appropriate any funding for construction. It was not until passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 that funding for the highway system was finally resolved. Interstate 70 from Denver east to the Kansas line was completed in segments, beginning in the early 1960s. Each of the 12-mile segments between Bennett and Byers, and Byers and Deer Trail were completed relatively early; the first in 1964 and the latter in 1967.⁸

Drought, Fire, and Floods

The fifteen-year period following the stock market crash of 1929 was extremely difficult financially for most Americans, but probably the devastating economic impacts were felt most by those farming in the Great Plains. During the 1930s, most of the Great Plains states, eastern Colorado included, suffered from a decade-long drought along with excessive heat and almost continuous high winds, interspersed with grasshopper infestations.¹

By most current accounts, the devastating impacts from the drought were exacerbated by a decade or more of unsustainable farming practices. During the 1920s, more and more of eastern Colorado's grasslands were transformed into cultivated fields of wheat, sugar beets, corn, and other crops as farmers realized increasing profits following World War I. The tilled fields removed the critical structure or anchor that native grass roots provided to the topsoil. With that structure removed, the prolonged

drought during the 1930s dried the topsoil to a fine powdery dust which was then swept away in the wind. It was not uncommon for black clouds of dust to entirely consume farmsteads and towns across the prairie.²

In Colorado, impacts from the prolonged drought were felt most by those farming in Baca, Prowers, and Las Animas counties in the southeast corner of the state. Nevertheless, Arapahoe County farmers suffered as well. Between 1929 and 1935 the amount of acreage in spring and winter wheat dropped by more than 56 and 65 percent, respectively.³

In 1934, the Land Utilization Program, part of the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal programs to provide relief to affected farmers, began purchasing submarginal and eroded lands for the purpose of restoring or converting the acreages to grazing, forestry, wildlife, or recreation areas.⁴ Farmers were also paid to prevent wind erosion on their lands by planting tree windbreaks or reseeding to convert cropland back to pasture. In the Byers district, farmers received 20 cents per acre if they had the necessary equipment, and 40 cents per acre if they had to rent it. R.W. Burton was the program contact.⁵

The decade of the 1930s was also a difficult period for anyone owning or managing businesses in the Byers commercial district. In 1930, Byers had a growing commercial district. Along just three blocks of Front Street, Byers could boast that the town had three retail stores: George Kelley's general merchandise located at Front and McDonnell streets; the H & H Mercantile located on the corner of Front and Fetzer streets; and the Burton Mercantile Company.

By the end of the year however, fire destroyed the largest of the three stores. Located at the west end of Front Street, the Burton Block, a two-story, brick building, was constructed around 1910 by Robert Burton and housed the Burton Mercantile Company, the town's post office, and second story dance hall.

At the time, it was the largest store building

between Denver and Limon and was Byers' largest commercial building. The building's loss was a great blow to Byers as well as the surrounding communities. The fire was discovered at 5 a.m. on December 22, 1930. At that time, Byers did not have a fire department, so a number of residents formed a bucket brigade to carry water from nearby wells, working mostly to save adjacent structures, since it was clear that the Burton Block was a total loss.⁶

Another severe blow to Byers' commercial district came just a few years later, in June 1935. Following the wettest May in the 48-year climatic record in Colorado, floodwaters from West Bijou Creek inundated Byers' Front Street buildings. The White Hotel, located on the north side of Front Street near Jewell Street reported two feet of water on the ground floor. The flood also affected transportation routes like the Union Pacific railroad bridge west of town which was washed away along with hundreds of feet of track.⁷

This was not the last time that Byers would be inundated by floodwaters from the usually dry West Bijou Creek. Nearly thirty years to the day after the devastating 1935 flood, West Bijou Creek flooded again, undermining sandy stream banks and uprooting trees. At one point just north of town, vegetation was found under 12 feet of newly deposited sediment. The cause of the 1965 flood



Front Street prior to 1930, looking east. Buildings pictured from left to right: garage and livery; H & H Mercantile (white building); small commercial building; the Burton Block; the Snow building (occupied by a drug store, ice cream parlor, and barber shop); and the bank. Photograph courtesy of Stacie May, Byers, Colorado.



Railroad and automobile bridge washed out over West Bijou Creek near Byers. June 18, 1965. Photograph by Gary Guisinger. Denver Public Library Special Collections. X7378.

was attributed to several days of rain over a large area. Byers itself received nearly three inches of rainfall on June 15 while some areas of the Bijou

basin recorded up to six inches of rain. The result was not one but two floods. The first occurred on June 15 followed by a more devastating flood on June 17, which washed out or damaged bridges all along the Union Pacific main line, Interstate 70, and U.S. 40.⁸ In Byers, both the Union Pacific and U.S. 40 bridges were destroyed.

Clean up efforts lasted for months. On September 2, 1965, the *Aurora Advocate* reported that between July 2 and August 13, 45 members of the Neighborhood Youth Corps spent eight-hour days assisting in removing debris.



Front Street following the 1965 flood showing the muddy street in front of the Bank (right) and the Byers Hardware in the remodeled Snow Building. Photograph courtesy of Stacie May, Byers, Colorado.



Photograph of the debris and washed-out railroad bridge in Byers following the 1965 flood. Photograph courtesy of Stacy May, Byers, Colorado.

Residential and Commercial Construction: 1930 to 1942

Despite numerous hardships faced by Byers'

residents during the Thirty's, the period leading up to World War II saw the construction of a number of residences and commercial buildings around town.

During this time, Byers also saw the extension of electricity to the community, for the first time. On June 27, 1929, with an initial investment of \$4,000, Gothard Swanson, local entrepreneur and owner of the Coronado Hotel and Café, received approval from the Colorado Public Utility Commission to construct and operate an electric light plant and distribution system, incorporated as the Byers Light and Electric Company.¹ Just five months later, Swanson sold his interest in the company to Matt R. Williams of Deer Trail for \$4,300. Williams converted the system from direct to alternating current, constructed a 13,000 volt, 3-phase transmission line along Highway 40, and connected the town to his generating plant in Deer Trail. The total cost of construction was approximately \$10,000.²

New homes built in the 1930s, like 218 S. Sherman Street and 360 S. Sherman Street pictured right, were mostly modest, single-story residences with gable or hipped roofs, clapboard wood siding, and open front porches. In some cases, decorative fish scale shingles were added exterior embellishments, as shown in the home at 204 S. Fetzer Street, pictured below.

One of the more elaborate homes constructed during this time was 287 S. Sherman Street, a single-story brick home that features many Tudor architectural elements such as an arched front



360 S. Sherman Street, constructed in 1939.



218 S. Sherman Street, constructed in 1931, features a clipped gable roof.



204 S. Fetzer Street, constructed in 1932. This home is a good, in-tact example of the early 20th Century Vernacular architectural style featuring clapboard siding with decorative fish scale shingles in the gable ends.



doorway, paired double hung windows, and a chimney incorporated into the front elevation.



281 S. Sherman Street, constructed in 1931, features many Tudor-style architectural elements.

Post World War II through 1970

In the 25 years following the Second World War, Byers experienced a modest building boom. Between 1945 and 1970, 49 new homes were constructed, most filling in the vacant lots in the Town of Byers and Howes First Addition subdivisions. Several commercial buildings including two motels, a café, drug store, mortuary, restaurant, gas station, and machine shop were also constructed along Front Street, and highways 40 and 36. In 1945, congregants of the Mount Tabor Baptist church financed the construction of a new church building. Located at Third and South Sherman streets, it is reported to be the longest continually operating Southern Baptist church in

Colorado.

In 1953, perhaps realizing the community's potential for growth, Earl and Elise Vansyoc divided their eight-acre parcel on the east side of town into 63 residential lots, each a narrow 25 feet in width. Located east of Owens Avenue along the south side of Front Street, the Vansyoc's Bijou Valley Addition was the first new subdivision filing since O.H. Howe platted his First Addition 45 years earlier. This subdivision was slow to develop, however. Only five homes were built between the 1953 platting and 1970. Like the development pattern in the Town of Byers and Howe's subdivisions, new owners in the Bijou Valley Addition purchased multiple adjacent lots to gain space between themselves and their neighbors: more space than could otherwise be provided on the prescribed 25-foot-wide lots.

During the 25-year period after the war, Byers also



288 S. Sherman Street. In 1931, members of the Missionary Baptist Church formed the Mount Tabor Baptist Church and constructed this building in 1945.



277 S. Sherman Street. Modern brick Ranch styled home constructed in 1961.

experienced a shift in the predominate character of the community. Residential architectural styles gradually transitioned from the classical cottage of earlier generations to a more modern, low-slung, Ranch styled design that featured an open, rectangular floor plan, wide overhanging eaves, a minimal front porch, and an attached one- or two-car garage.¹ Although most of Byers' Ranch styled homes were constructed using wooden clapboard siding, probably the best examples of the modern ranch style in Byers are 277 S. Sherman Street and 70 W. 4th Avenue, both constructed in 1961 featuring brick veneer walls.

The 1970s

In 1970, Colorado was home to 2.2 million people. By the end of the decade, the state added another 800,000 people, a 31 percent increase. Over this decade, Arapahoe County's population increased 81 percent, from 162,000 in 1970 to nearly 294,000 in 1980.²

Unfortunately, it is not possible to infer Byers' share of the County's population as the available census tables only provide population information for incorporated places. Even without the data, it is clear that Byers' population increased in the decade between 1970 and 1980. Four new subdivisions were recorded: Grand View Estates, Keen Subdivision, Shades Addition to Byers, and Bijou Valley Estates.

Although no new commercial buildings were constructed in this decade, in 1972 the Archdiocese of Denver opened a new Catholic Church on West Bijou Avenue, and 76 new homes were built, most located in the Grand View Estates, Keen, and Shades subdivisions, and a small handful in the three previously platted subdivisions.

The predominate residential style in Byers remained the single-story ranch but a few designs added a two-story, mid-floor section. This Split-Level



70 W. 4th Avenue, a classic sprawling brick Ranch styled home constructed on a corner lot in 1961. The home has an attached two-car garage that is accessed from S. Sherman Street (right side of photo).

building form actually originated in the 1930s and gained popularity nationally in the 1950s through the 1970s. The design retains the low-pitched roof, overhanging eaves, and horizontality of the Ranch form but adds a two-story wing to the one-story section at mid-height, resulting in three staggered floor levels.³



222 E. 2nd Avenue, constructed 1973, exemplifies the Split-Level building form in Byers.

Another variation of the Ranch style theme is the Bi-Level building form. Also described as "raised ranch" or "two-level split ranch", this variation experienced its greatest popularity from the 1960s through the 1980s.

It features a raised basement which makes the lower level more livable by allowing larger, above grade lower windows than in the typical Ranch home. The at-grade front entrance leads to an interior landing with a short flight of stairs to the upper and lower living areas.

A good example of the Bi-Level form in Byers is 234 W. Bijou Avenue in the Howe's First Addition subdivision. This home has the added feature of the upper façade projecting over the lower level, giving the front entrance the appearance of being recessed.⁴



234 W. Bijou Avenue, constructed in 1973 representing the Bi-Level form of modern Ranch styled homes.

Notable Buildings

Byers' False Front Commercial Buildings

Byers has several false front buildings that span a nearly 100-year period of commercial construction within the community. The false front design was a common building type in the West between the late nineteenth through the early twentieth century and can be found from mountain mining towns to agricultural communities and railroad towns across the plains. Nearly all false front buildings are rectangular-shaped wood frame structures that are one or two stories in height with a gable roof that is mostly hidden behind a tall, wooden false front.

Particularly in the first few years of a community's development, the false front design was popular among shop keepers, hotel proprietors, and other entrepreneurs who were reluctant to invest in brick-and-mortar construction yet wanted to project an



Photograph circa 1910 showing the livery stable and blacksmith shop in the foreground and the H&H Mercantile (310 Front Street), upper left. Both buildings are examples of the false front design, typical of many early western communities. Also pictured is the Burton Block, upper right, a two-story brick building, constructed circa 1910. The livery was originally located on the north side of Front Street, on property owned by the Union Pacific Railroad. By 1917, it was removed, likely relocated about 150 feet to the south, its current location (330 W. Front Street), making this the oldest known surviving building in town.

image of stability, success, and permanence to customers. Early frontier business owners focused their spending on substantial front facades while relegating the secondary, less-visible sides of the building to cheaper construction materials. As communities grew and prospered, false front buildings were often replaced with more substantial brick construction.¹ In Byers, the false front building design remained popular into the 1960s.



Pictured above left: The H&H Mercantile, 310 W. Front Street, today the Byers Masonic Lodge #152.

Pictured above right: The livery and blacksmith shop, 330 W. Front Street, today a private residence.



186 W. Front Street, constructed circa 1920 by George Kelley for his general merchandise store. By 1940, Kelley converted the building into his residence. Likely at this time, the original false front was shortened and modified to a "stepped" design.



A row of false front buildings in the 200 block of Front Street. Pictured left to right:

268 W. Front Street, constructed in 1925.

278 W. Front Street, constructed in 1960, home to the American Legion Franz Alton Post No. 160.

298 W. Front Street, constructed in 1960 for the Gothard Swanson Chevrolet dealership. Gothard and Lily Swanson came to Byers in 1925 and operated an automobile and implement business. Swanson was very active in improving the Byers community. In 1930 he financed the construction of the Coronado Hotel and Café, 177 Old Highway 40, and began the Byers Light and Electric Company, bringing electricity to the town for the first time.



350 W. Front Street. Constructed in 1960, this false front features a stepped design.



75 W. Old Highway 40. Constructed about 1958/59, this building originally was a 10-unit motel.



Pictured left to right: 41 E. Highway 40, constructed in 1950, formerly a cafe; and 61 E. Highway 40, constructed in 1960, originally Thompson's Mortuary, later a number of businesses including a doctor's office, beauty shop, western shop, and paint store.

Other Notable Buildings



Byers Depot was constructed circa 1900. This building was originally located on the south side of Highway 40, southeast of N. Fetzer Street. Around 1974, the depot was partially demolished, and the surviving section was moved to a lot at 451 W. Front Street.

Photograph courtesy of Stacie May, Byers, Colorado.



451 W. Front Street showing the surviving section of the Byers Depot, currently being used as a private residence.



Pictured left: Carlson's Drug Store located on the northeast corner of Highway 40 and N. Sherman Street. This photograph was included in the 1958 Byers High School Yearbook.

Pictured below: 76 N. Sherman Street. Today Carlson's Drug store is a private residence. At some point horizontal siding was attached to the brick building.



Byers' Grain Elevators



Undated photograph of the Byers Elevator, located at the Fetzer Street railroad crossing. Photograph courtesy of Stacie May, Byers, Colorado.

Viewed from miles in every direction, there are arguably no buildings in Byers more prominent in the landscape than its three grain elevators.

The first and oldest elevator was located on the south side of the railroad tracks at the Fetzer Street crossing. It consisted of a number of wood-frame structures most likely built around 1910 by Byers' entrepreneur and businessman Robert Burton. By the early 1920s, the Byers Elevator was owned by the Denver Elevator Company with Burton acting as the local agent and 47-year-old Charles P. Switzer its daily manager. The elevator supplied wholesale and retail markets with grain, beans, bran, flour, and all other mill products.¹

Also located on the south side of the railroad tracks at the Fetzer Street crossing is the second of Byers' three elevators. Constructed by the Mayer-Osborn Company of Denver³, likely in the 1950s for the Farmers Union Marketing Association, the elevator's principal structures were also wood frame, but

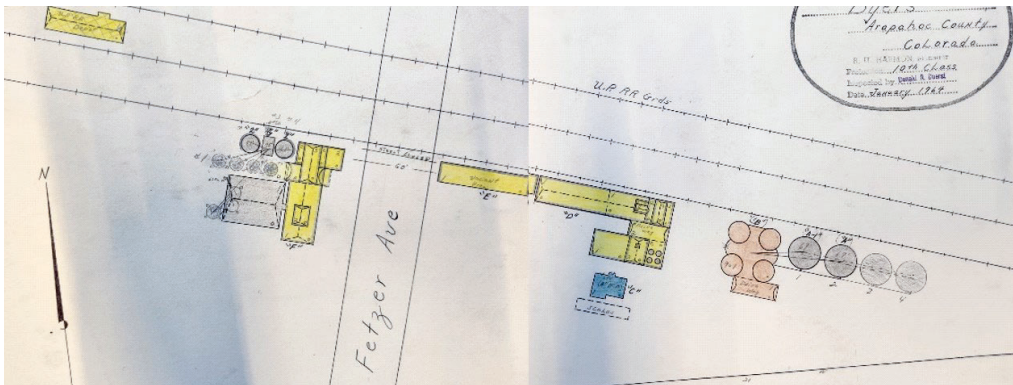
unlike the old Byers elevator, some of the exterior storage tanks, or silos, were constructed in concrete.

Railroad Crossings

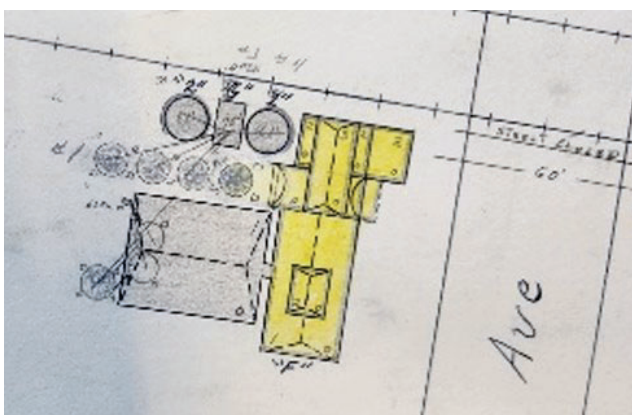
Until the 1970s Byers had two railroad crossings, one at Fetzer Street and the other at Park Street, just west of the school. However, likely in response to several vehicle-train accidents which occurred throughout the Front Range during the 1950s and 1960s including one especially tragic accident in Greeley which took the lives of 20 school children in 1961, the Union Pacific made safety improvements throughout its system in Colorado.⁵ The result was the closure of the Fetzer and Park crossings in the 1970s and consolidation into just one new crossing at Main Street which aligned conveniently with the I -70 interchange. Although severed, remnants of the Fetzer and Park crossings are still visible today along U.S. Highways 36 and 40.



Farmers Union Marketing Association elevator circa 1970s, looking south from U.S. 40. Photograph courtesy of Stacie May, Byers, Colorado.



Clip from the 1964 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Byers* showing the Byers Elevator on the west side of Fetzer Street [labeled avenue], and the larger Farmers Union Marketing Association elevator to the east side. The train depot is pictured in the upper left corner.



Clip from the 1964 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Byers* showing the Byers Elevator.

The color coding shows wood frame (yellow) and metal (gray) construction.²



Byers Elevator, 2023, looking northeast from Front Street. Sometime after 1964, the wood-frame main elevator buildings with their tall cupolas were demolished leaving the storage tanks, or silos, and a metal building.

Byers' third and newest elevator was constructed in the early 1980s⁴ by the Younglove Construction Company of Sioux City, Iowa for the Farmers Marketing Association.

Located at the far eastern edge of town near the intersection of S. Exmoor Road and U.S. 40, this elevator features tall slipform concrete tanks as well as two smaller metal bins with an overall capacity to store 386,000 bushels of wheat. Today, the elevator is owned and operated by Cargill, Inc.

Pictured right: Byers Farmers Union Marketing Association elevator, 2023, looking west from the Main Street crossing. The storage annex and metal frame of the old Byers Elevator is in the distance, behind the white concrete storage tank or silo.



Cargill, Inc., grain elevator, Byers, Colorado, 2023, looking northeast from E. Front Street.



Located at 318 S. McDonnell Street, this uniquely styled barn is associated with a single-family home to the east. Because of its tall center cupola, it is believed that this barn's principal function was for grain storage. The construction date is currently unknown.

End Notes

Byers Early History

1. Tyler, Daniel. "Front Range." *Colorado Encyclopedia*.
2. Troyer, Michael D. "Colorado Territory." *Colorado Encyclopedia*.
3. Clark, J. H. & Seymour, S. (1823) Distant view of the Rocky Mountains / S. Seymour, delt. ; I. Clark, sculpt. United States, 1823. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2007683609/>.
4. Thwaites, Reuben. Editor. *Part 1 of James' Account of S.H. Long's Expedition, 1819-1820 contained in Early Western Travels 1748 – 1846, Volume XIV*, 1905. Library of Congress.
5. Long, Stephen H. Composite: Country drained by the Mississippi. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.
6. Troyer, Michael D. "Treaty of Fort Wise." *Colorado Encyclopedia*.
7. Ibid.
8. Ebert, Frederick J. Map of Colorado Territory Embracing the Central Gold Region, 1862. Denver Public Library Western History Collection.
9. Homestead Act (1862). National Archives.
10. Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records. Homestead Grant to Oliver P. Wiggins. November 5, 1878.
11. *Railroad Land Grants*. Kansas Historical Society.
12. Wilshusen, Richard H. and Neil Lovell. "Battle of Summit Springs". *Colorado Encyclopedia*.

Byers Settlement

1. Michell, Emma. *Our Side of the Mountain*. Eastern Colorado News. 1968.
2. National Archive, Postmaster Appointments for Arapahoe County, Colorado. NAID: 78729679; and Records of the Post Office Department 1773 – 1971, Adams – Bent. NAID 68242283.
3. *Rocky Mountain News*, August 18, 1870.
4. *Rocky Mountain News*, February 17, 1875.
5. *Denver Daily Times*, March 15, 1873.
6. *Rocky Mountain News*, March 16, 1873.
7. *Denver Daily Times*, March 17, 1873.
8. *Rocky Mountain News*, March 19, 1873.
9. *Rocky Mountain News*, November 12, 1873.
10. Advertisement in *A Geographically Correct Map of the Kansas Pacific Railway Showing the only Direct Route to Denver and All the Popular Rocky Mountain Resorts*. Kansas Memory. Kansas Historical Society.
11. *Rocky Mountain News*. Hotel registrations listed in the newspaper throughout 1874.
12. *Joesph P. Farmer's Ranch, Bijou Colorado*. 1880-1900. History Colorado. PH.PROP.1520.
13. *Rocky Mountain News*, February 27, 1874.
14. *Rocky Mountain News*, June 4, 1873, April 17, 1885, September 9, 1887, April 19, 1889, and May 10, 1890. The annual spring round up is also described in *Crofutt's Grip-Sack Guide of Colorado: A complete Encyclopedia of the State, Vol. 2, 1885*. George A. Crofutt. The Overland Publishing Co., Omaha, Nebraska., page 43.
15. *Rocky Mountain News*, June 30, 1884.
16. RL Polk & Co., and A.C. Dancer. *Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming and Arizona*

- Gazetteer and Business Directory*, 1884-5.
17. *Colorado State Business Directory and Annual Register*, 1878.
 18. *Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming and Arizona Gazetteer and Business Directory*, 1884-5.
 19. United States Census, 1910.
 20. United States Supreme Court. 231 US 204. Docket 682. Decided December 1, 1913.
 21. Michell, Emma. *Our Side of the Mountain*.
 22. *Rocky Mountain News*, May 18, 1888.
 23. *Telluride Journal*, Jan 23, 1913.
 24. *Morgan County Republican*, Feb 12, 1915.
 25. Michell, Emma. *Our Side of the Mountain*.
 26. *Howe's First Addition to the Town of Byers*. September 10, 1908. Book 2, Page 3. Arapahoe County Clerk and Recorder.
 27. United States Census, 1910.
 28. Michell, Emma. *Our Side of the Mountain*.
 29. Ibid.
 30. United States Census. 1920.
 31. Stacie May. Personal recollection. August 2023.

End of Big Ranching

1. *The Commercial West*, Vol. 14. April 4, 1908, p. 45.
2. *Rocky Mountain News*, November 3, 1907.
3. *Dry Land Farming in Eastern Colorado*. H.M. Cottrell. The Experiment Station. Fort Collins, Colorado. 1910.
4. "The Irrigation Systems of Colorado. April 25, 1908. *The Commercial West*.
5. "The Hopewell Irrigation System" map. September 1, 1909. Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water Resources.
6. *Denver Weekly Post*. November 8, 1913.
7. Information about Frank Zybach and his invention of the center-pivot irrigation system was provided by the Nebraska Historical Society and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement.

Byers and the Transcontinental Highways

1. *Highways to the Sky: A Context and History of Colorado's Highway System*. Associated Cultural Resource Experts. April 24, 2002.
2. *Back in Time: The Lincoln Highway*. Rickie Longfellow. The Federal Highway Administration.
3. *Highways to the Sky: A Context and History of Colorado's Highway System; and Concrete Highway Magazine*, page 94 volume 8, 1924.
4. *Highway Engineer and Contractor*, August 1922.
5. *Highways to the Sky: A Context and History of Colorado's Highway System; and Interstate 70*, Colorado Encyclopedia.
6. Colorful Colorado State Highway Maps, 1942 - 1955. Colorado State Publications Library.
7. United States Census, 1940.
8. Colorado Department of Transportation. *50th Anniversary of the Interstate System and I-70 Construction Timeline*.

Drought, Fire, and Floods

1. *Areas of Intense Drought Distress 1930-1936*. Francis D. Cronin and Howard W. Beers. Works Progress Administration. 1937.
2. *Colorado Encyclopedia*. The Dust Bowl.
3. United States Census of Agriculture: 1935. *Statistics by Counties with State and U.S. Summaries, Volume I, Part 3. The Western States*. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, page 861. In Arapahoe County, the number of acres in spring wheat production dropped from 11,428 acres in 1929 to 3,963 acres in 1934. The number of acres in winter wheat production dropped from 50,349 acres in 1929 to 21,928 acres in 1934.
4. *Colorado Encyclopedia*. The Dust Bowl.
5. *Aurora Democrat*. March 27, 1936.
6. *Aurora Democrat*. December 26, 1930.
7. Follansbee, Robert and Deon R. Sawyer. *Floods in Colorado*. Geological Survey Water Supply Paper 997. United States Department of the Interior. 1948.
8. Matthai, H. F. *Floods of June 1965 in South Platte River Basin, Colorado*. United States Geological Survey Water-Supply Paper 1850-B. United States Department of the Interior. 1969

Residential and Commercial Construction: 1930 to 1942

1. Colorado Public Utilities Commission. Gothard Swanson. Application 1236, Decision 2342. Volume 13, Part 2. June 27, 1929.
2. Colorado Public Utilities Commission. Matt R. Williams. Application 1485, Decision 2632. Volume 15, Part 1. November 9, 1929.

Post World War II through 1970

History Colorado. Architecture & Engineering Guide. Ranch type.

U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. *1980 Census of Population and Housing: Colorado*. Issued March 1981.

History Colorado. Architecture & Engineering Guide. Split Level type.

History Colorado. Architecture & Engineering Guide. Bi-Level type

False Front Commercial Buildings

1. History Colorado. Architecture & Engineering Guide. False Front Commercial type.

Other Notable Buildings

1. Michell, Emma. *Our Side of the Mountain*; United States Census, 1920; Englewood Herald, August 25, 1922; *Cooperative Manager and Farmer*, November 1917; and *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Byers, Colorado*. January 1964.
2. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Byers, Colorado*. Sanborn Map Company, January 1964. Denver Public Library. Western History Collection.
3. *Rocky Mountain News*. April 3, 1949; *Cervi's Rocky Mountain Journal*. March 28, 1957; and Rich, Gary. *Our Grandfathers' Grain Elevators*. <https://ourgrandfathersgrainelevators.com>.
4. Arapahoe County, Colorado Assessor.
5. *Rocky Mountain News*. December 15, 1961.

**COMMENTS
TO
THE ARAPAHOE COUNTY BYERS SUB-AREA PUBLIC REVIEW PLAN
BY
I-70 REGIONAL ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT PARTNERSHIP
OCTOBER, 2025**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The comments below reflect and reference the public review plan of October 2025

- 1. Economic forces exist to help Byers Colorado thrive per the plan.**
- 2. I-70 geographically strikes a balance between growth and no-growth.**
- 3. REAP is ready to implement the plan.**

Introduction

The I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership (REAP) is a funded agent of Arapahoe County. It stimulates private investment, increase employment opportunities, expand the tax base, broaden the economy and improve the quality of life for citizens along the I-70 corridor. REAP networks, organizes and advocates for balanced growth in water, aerospace, transportation/infrastructure, energy, agriculture, education and health care.

REAP will make Byers a priority in 2026 and beyond. It wants to see this sub-area plan produce real results unlike the 2003 sub-area plan. Except for a new library those visions, goals and strategies amounted to little.

REAP submitted comments in 2024, citing the potential in Byers. In many cases, that potential has become reality, making this update timely.

Economic Forces: Updates and References

1. Lincoln Health is already eyeing Byers for a future facility due to the aging population and the anticipated growth (Chap 8 Policy 8.1.6.).
2. Byers Water/Sanitation District now has a county-funded water pipe to the north for future growth and now needs a water treatment grant (Chap 8 Action 8.1.1.a.).
3. The South Metro Enterprise Zone now includes Byers. This gives businesses the opportunity to benefit from several state business tax credits (Chap 8 Action 8.1.4.a.).
4. CORE Electric Cooperative has issued a “will serve” letter to supply Byers with energy generated by solar and wind energy.
5. A Byers High School bi-lingual student survey revealed a desire for retail, entertainment and recreational destinations in town (Chap 8 Action 8.1.2.b.).
6. Byers Fire District has set its sights on expanded services to the north.
7. Byers Park and Recreation District now has a DOLA-financed master plan to develop and improve open space, trail and rodeo facilities (Chap 8 Action 8.2.2.).
8. The county’s fiber optic study concludes that Byers has connectivity that meets federal

standards for future growth (Chap 8 Action 8.1.3.e.).

9. The rapid growth in Bennett, 12 miles away, is alarming to many in Byers but suggests that Byers can be a recreational, retail and entertainment destination for Bennett.
10. National and responsible investors currently see Byers as an outdoor recreation and tourism opportunity.

Byers Colorado: Growth or No Growth

During the plan's outreach, 400 postcards were mailed to residents and 114 responses were received. Many called for Byers to keep its small-town feel, afraid of the rapid growth in Bennett. Others, like the Byers high school students, cited the need for something to do and some place to go. That suggests a desire for some growth.

A 2021 Abson and Riechers study confirms this split. It identified four attitudes about growth in rural communities: eager for growth, resigned to growth, confident that growth will eventually restrict itself and opposed to growth. All four are found in Byers.

This sub-area plan recognizes this split and seeks balance. It encourages strategies that revitalize the Byers of today with strategies that allow for the Byers of tomorrow.

The inferred solution is to use I-70 as the separation between old and new Byers. Land use north of I-70 is currently zoned agricultural. The county's 2018 Comprehensive Plan allows for agritourism. The proposed rezoning takes the next step. It allows for mixed use, allowing for land use like tourism and outdoor recreation. It will be a use that will not bother residents south of I-70 and will allow for future places to work, play and eat.

Chapter 8: Economic Development and Tourism

Most area plans are drafted then shelved. Not this one. The Byers Sub-Area Plan lays out two goals, eight policies and 26 action items that REAP will use as an implementation guide. It is even mentioned as a collaborative partner. (Chap 8.1.2.a). REAP commits to:

1. Finding relevant funding.
2. Expanding career and technical education for youth and making B2B connections.
3. Encouraging new and supporting existing business.
4. Promoting entrepreneurship.
5. Improving the built environment of Byers' commercial core.
6. Supporting Lincoln Health.
7. Maintaining lands for commercial and light industrial use.
8. Stimulating tourism.

Conclusion

REAP thanks Arapahoe County for its comprehensive work and its excellent historical treatment of Byers. No question, communication, collaboration, creativity and sensitivity will make this sub-area plan a success.

Contact: Louis X. "Kip" Cheroutes, Ex Director lxc.strategies@gmail.com
www.i-70reap.com

Planning Case LR25-001 – Byers Subarea Plan

Received via email November 12, 2025

CORE Electric Cooperative is initiating the planning phase for a project to rebuild an existing transmission line that bisects part of the Byers area. The current line operates at 44 kV and will be upgraded to 115 kV to enhance reliability, increase capacity, and support future growth within the region.

Construction is currently scheduled for 2028. At this time, we are in the routing phase, and the final alignment may change as planning progresses. Additionally, our long-range plan includes a new substation south of Byers to further strengthen the system.

We wanted to keep Arapahoe County informed as this project develops and will provide updates as more details become available. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss coordination efforts.

Thank you for your time and support.

Brooks Kaufman

Lands and Rights of Way Manager

800.332.9540 **MAIN**

720.733.5493 **DIRECT**

303.912.0765 **MOBILE**

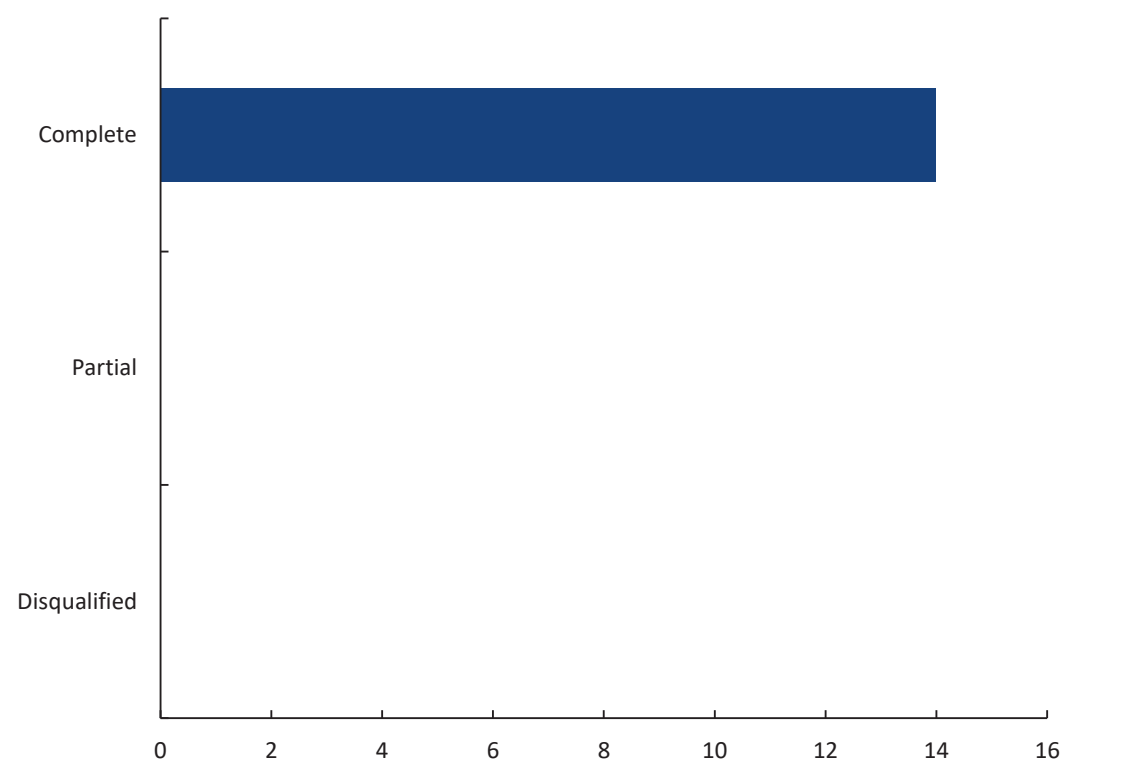
www.core.coop.



Report for Byers Subarea Plan – Community Survey #2

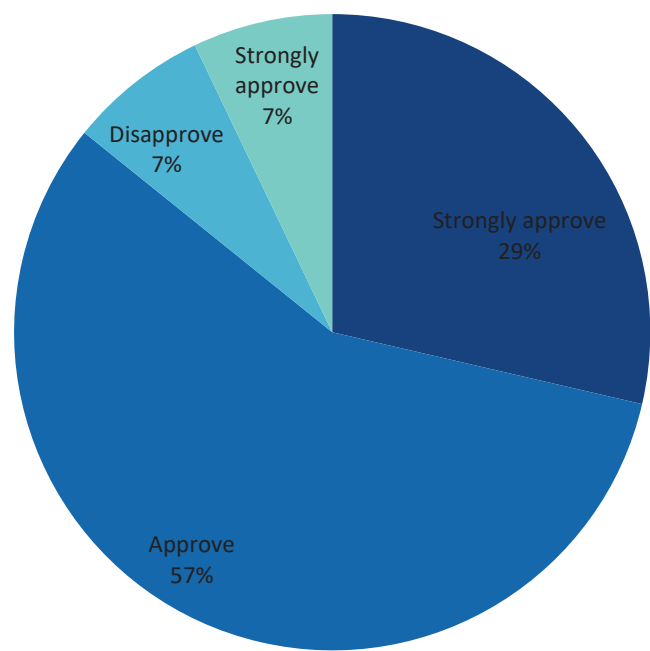
Byers Subarea Plan – Community Survey #2

Response Statistics



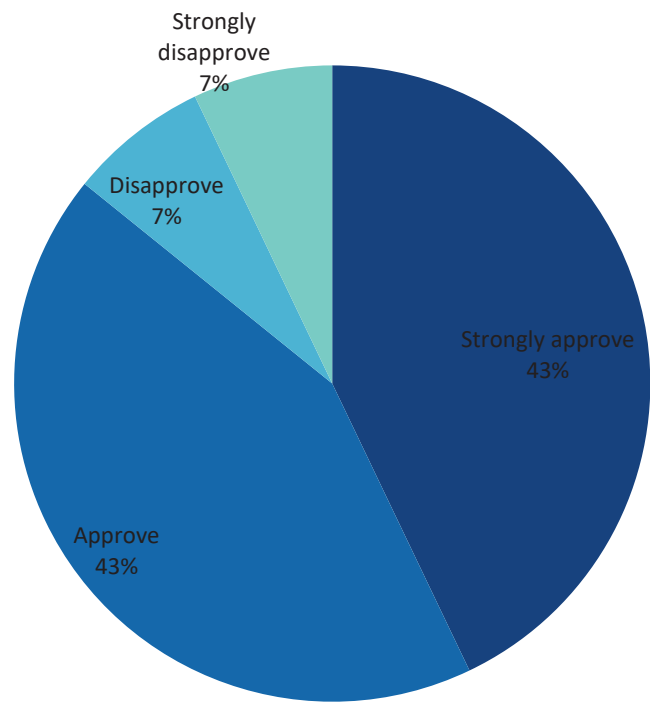
	Count	Percent
Complete	14	100
Partial	0	0
Disqualified	0	0
Totals	14	

1.Chapter 3. Vision and Themes. The Vision Statement presents the long-term vision for Byers as a rural community with small-town appeal. This statement was based on the comments received from the previous surveys and open house participants.What is your level of support for the Vision Statement?



Value	Percent	Count
Strongly approve	28.6%	4
Approve	57.1%	8
Disapprove	7.1%	1
Strongly disapprove	7.1%	1
	Totals	14

2.In Chapter 3, five key themes emerged from the earlier public engagement activities and helped guide the development of the goals, policies, and actions in Chapters 4 through 9. These themes are: Preserve the rural and small-town character of Byers Manage and control growth Attract small businesses and amenities Support community beautification and infrastructure improvements Promote a sense of community and quality of life for families and seniors. What is your level of support for these five key themes?

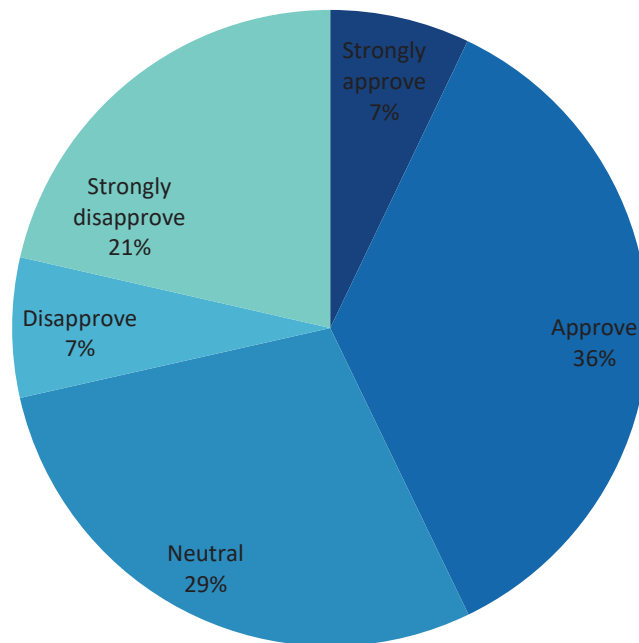


Value	Percent	Count
Strongly approve	42.9%	6
Approve	42.9%	6
Disapprove	7.1%	1
Strongly disapprove	7.1%	1
	Totals	14

3.Do you have any other thoughts about the content in Chapter 3? Is there anything missing? Are there additions needed to improve this topic area? Explain in the box below.

ResponseID	Response
1	Needs to be more specific about amenities and amount of growth
2	Byers is valued for its rural, small-town character, and we should be cautious about development that risks overwhelming that identity. Growth here should be managed and controlled—not rapid or sprawling—so it fits the pace and values of our community. Instead of large developments, we should attract small businesses and amenities that serve local families and seniors, while investing in beautification and infrastructure improvements that strengthen what we already have. Preserving Byers' unique character while making thoughtful enhancements will protect the sense of community and quality of life that makes our town so special. We don't want more development.
3	Always concerned when reading about creating more taxing entities
5	Keep it small town, no more neighborhoods.
6	We need to keep taxes low for property owners.
10	Larger and separate park area in town for older kids. The park we have currently is great for young kids but teenagers might benefit from a skate park. Also maybe a 55 and older community housing area. Dog park would be good too.
13	As long as this town stays the same size and is just cleaned up, is all we need.

4.Chapter 4. Land Use, Development and Housing. This is the primary chapter that will guide growth and land use decisions in Byers. The Future Land Use Map is based on the map in the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan and reflects the goals and policies established from what we heard from the community. The vision for land use, development and housing is reflected in the following Goals: Preserve the small-town, rural character of Byers while accommodating compatible development Provide a variety of housing options that are affordable, meet the needs of residents at all stages of life, and complement the Byers' small-town, rural character. Support conservation-based design to preserve the natural environment. The following Policies support the Goals: Support the development of different housing types that fit within the Byers small-town character. Support new and expanded commercial and retail uses along the major streets and intersections. Encourage housing that is the appropriate form and scale for Byers and complements the existing character of adjacent residential neighborhoods. Encourage developers and landowners to provide a variety of housing types to meet the needs of Byers' residents at different stages of life (e.g., renters, first-time homebuyers, families, and senior residents). Incentivize development that uses conservation design to protect wildlife habitats and unique land features. Encourage a rural cluster development form to preserve large areas of open space and natural habitat. What is your level of support for these Goals and Policies?



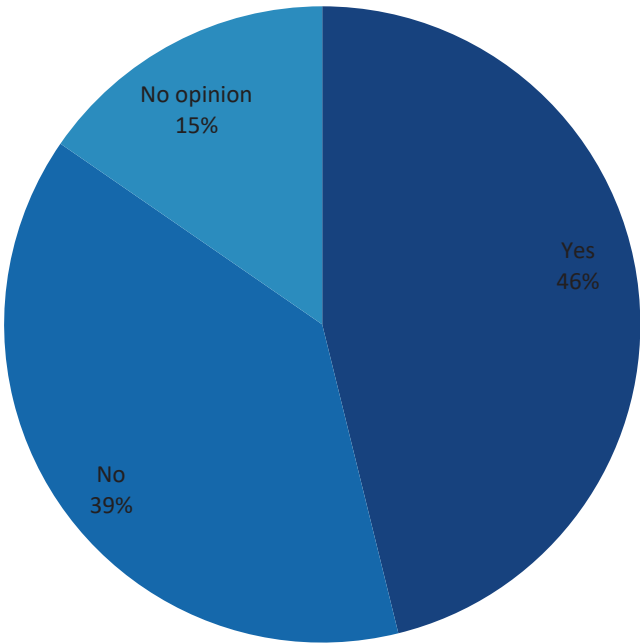
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly approve	7.1%	1
Approve	35.7%	5
Neutral	28.6%	4
Disapprove	7.1%	1
Strongly disapprove	21.4%	3
	Totals	14

5.What is missing from this topic area? Do you have suggestions to improve this topic? Explain in the box below.

ResponseID	Response
1	Absolutely no new housing development. The roads cannot support any more people and there has not been any proposed plans to accommodate more traffic
2	Chapter 4 makes it clear that preserving Byers' small-town, rural character is the top priority. But every time we add new housing or expand commercial areas, we risk eroding the very thing this plan says we want to protect. Growth may be labeled 'compatible,' but even incremental development adds more traffic, more infrastructure strain, and more change than our community needs. The best way to preserve Byers is not to expand it. Instead of pushing for new housing types or expanded retail, we should focus on strengthening and maintaining what we already have—beautifying our town, supporting our current small businesses, and protecting open space and the natural environment. Families and seniors in Byers don't need sprawl; they need peace, safety, and a strong sense of community. If we truly want to honor the goals of this plan, we should draw the line on further development and commit to protecting Byers' unique identity as a small, rural town—not slowly reshaping it into something unrecognizable.
4	Address the issues created by a RURAL community existing in a county that is governed by CITY politicians, building depts, etc, who are thereby following city guidelines in lieu of what works in rural areas.
5	No housing developments, keep our small town...small
6	preserve current housing
9	Please add an incentive to the future use of open land for recreational use, recreational buildings, trails, parks and other recreational activity use, as well.

10	When bringing in large scales of renters and "affordable housing" that generally attributes to crime.
13	I don't want anymore housing of any kind out here.
14	better focus on senior support

6.Chapter 4. Future Land Use Map. A Future Land Use Map is a community's preferred development pattern. It is a visual guide to translate Byers' land use goals onto a map. Eleven land use categories are proposed. The Future Land Use Map and the description of the land use categories are on pages 20 and 21 of the draft Byers Subarea Plan.Do you support the proposed Future Land Use Map and the 11 land use categories?

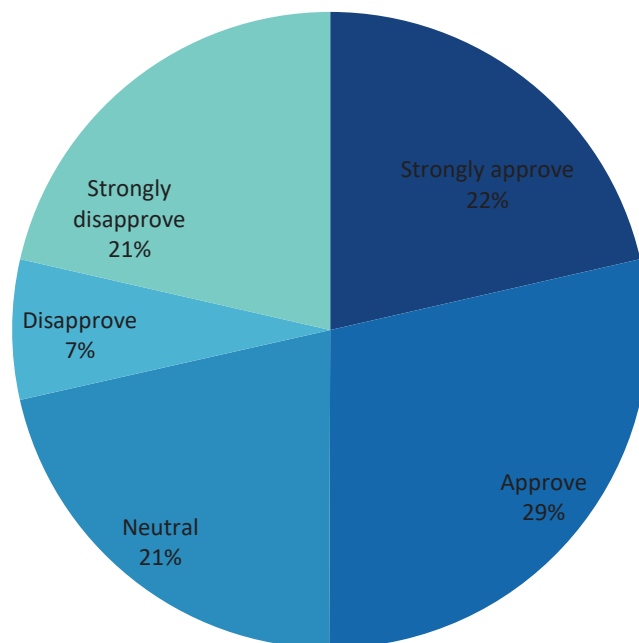


Value	Percent	Count
Yes	46.2%	6
No	38.5%	5
No opinion	15.4%	2
	Totals	13

7.Do you have any other thoughts about the Future Land Use Map? Is there anything missing? Are there additions needed to improve this map? Explain in the box below.

ResponseID	Response
1	In no way should the flood plane be shrunk. It is a dangerous proposal that will endanger lives and property.
5	No low income housing, no more town homes or condos. Keep Byers a rural area. We live out here, because we don't want anything to do with the cities or their crime.
7	The variety of mixed use categories may be limiting to businesses that would be beneficial to Byers by labeling mixed use industrial or entertainment. For example additional entertainment could be beneficial on the other side of Hwy 36 to compliment the other services. one mixed use category would be sufficient to cover all mixed use areas for the next 20 years.
8	Most agricultural uses are being eliminated in this plan
9	Please include a recreational component in the description for MIXED USE in the subarea future development plan. Please include a description that allows for the development of recreational buildings, sports complexes, trails, parks, and other commercial recreational facilities and uses, designed to serve residents and visitors.
13	It seems the only ones getting their way are the big land owners with money. They are deciding for us all what happens out here whether we like it or not.

8.Chapter 5. Transportation and Mobility. This chapter outlines the community's vision for a safe, well-maintained, and connected transportation network that serves the needs of all Byers' residents.The vision for a safe and well-connected transportation and mobility network is reflected in the following Goals: Improve and maintain the local road infrastructure. Enhance safety at intersections and along roadways and improve connectivity. Expand mobility options to connect Byers with regional destinations. Improve pedestrian and bicyclist mobility throughout Byers. The following Policies support the Goals: Collaborate with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) for improved road maintenance. Identify ways to enhance streetscapes, improve local roadways, and make pedestrian and bicycle connections. Redesign high-risk intersections and improve signage. Work with Union Pacific Railway and CDOT to improve safety around the existing railroad tracks. Pursue partnerships and programs that provide new public transportation and ride-sharing services for commuters, seniors, and other residents. Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure throughout Byers, prioritizing safe access to key community locations including the school campus, Kelter Library, and Quint Valley. Pursue opportunities to improve connectivity and access for all users, including those with mobility challenges. Develop a bicycle plan for Byers to create a safe and easy-to-navigate bicycle network. What is your level of support for these Goals and Policies?

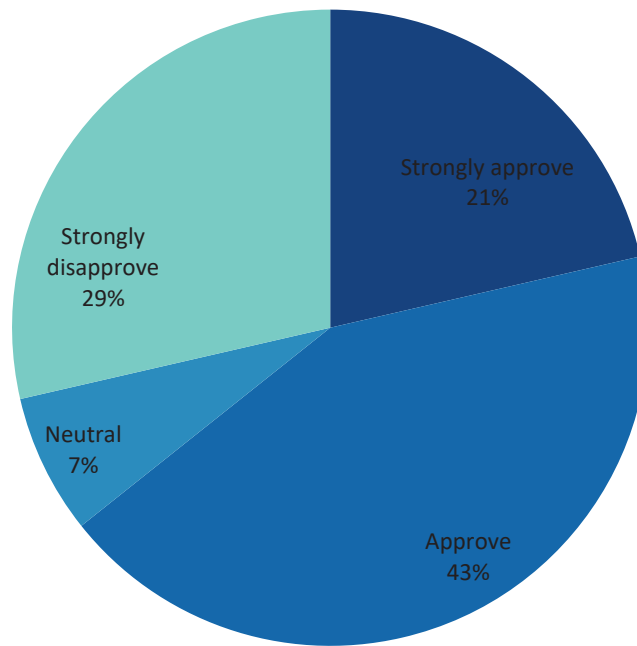


Value	Percent	Count
Strongly approve	21.4%	3
Approve	28.6%	4
Neutral	21.4%	3
Disapprove	7.1%	1
Strongly disapprove	21.4%	3
	Totals	14

9.What is missing from this topic area? Do you have suggestions to improve this topic? Explain in the box below.

ResponseID	Response
1	Public transportation is a waste of time and money out here. It has been tried multiple times. As for bike paths there is no point as bicyclists routinely choose roads over bicycle paths. It would be nice to have a sidewalk from the main neighborhood to the grocery store but that's it
2	Transportation upgrades in Byers should be about safety and maintenance for current residents, not about paving the way for more development. More growth only brings more traffic and danger, which undermines our small-town, rural character. Let's focus on fixing what we have, not expanding to support future sprawl.
3	Concerns about new arterial roads just south of the sub area plan.
5	Byers is not city lifestyles... no bicycles or pedestrians walking our farm roads. They get in the way of us providing a livelihood for our families. If you want to ride a bike or take a walk...then stay in the city.
10	I don't think the bicycle emphasis is pretty strong above considering how few bicycles I see on a daily basis. That could change in the future.
13	This is just another excuse to make this town bigger. This isn't even a issue

10.Chapter 6. Parks, Open Space and Recreation. This chapter focuses on enhancing the quality of life in Byers by improving its parks, trails, and open spaces. The goal is to enhance existing recreational areas, like the community park on Front Street and the Quint Valley Fairgrounds, and to connect them through a cohesive trail system. The vision for active and passive recreational areas and trails is reflected in the following Goals: Establish a network of trails and open spaces. Improve existing parks and develop new recreation facilities. Establish a comprehensive network for recreational walking and cycling. Conserve and protect natural areas and open spaces. The following Policies support the Goals: Prioritize the development of a multi-use trail system, including walking and biking paths, along the West Bijou Creek connecting to existing or future parks and public spaces, residential areas, and key destinations such as the Quint Valley Fairgrounds. Encourage the development of off-road trails for specific uses, such as ATVs, dirt bikes, and equestrian trails. Require new residential developments to incorporate open space and trail connections. Support regular maintenance of all parks and open spaces. Review and periodically survey Byers' residents' parks and recreation needs to establish short-term goals. This ensures that plans and actions can respond to the community's evolving needs and concerns. Explore public-private partnerships and grant opportunities to fund the development of a community recreation or fitness center. Identify funding to include more amenities in the existing parks and facilities. Prioritize the use of undeveloped floodplains along West Bijou Creek as open space. Encourage the use of conservation easements to protect prime agricultural lands and significant natural features from development. Develop and implement sustainable vegetation and weed management practices in all parks and open spaces, using native plants to reduce water consumption and maintenance needs. Ensure new development is clustered to preserve larger, contiguous areas of open space, rather than scattering small, fragmented parcels. What is your level of support for these Goals and Policies?

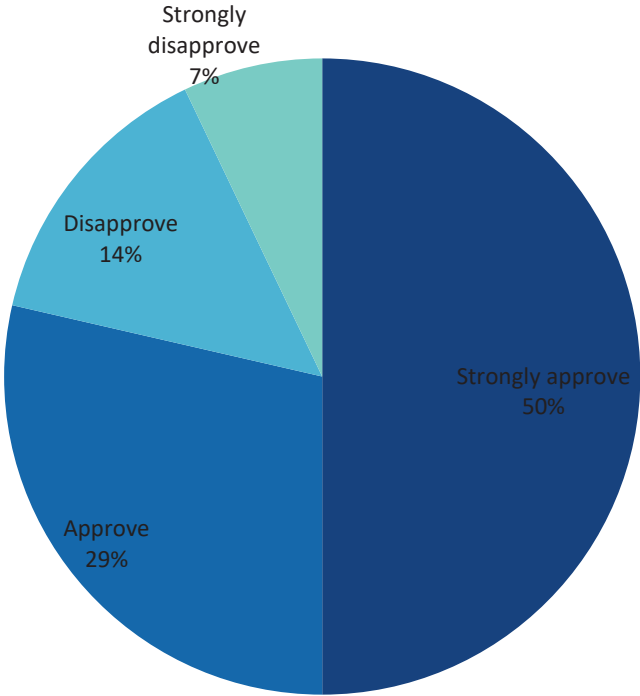


Value	Percent	Count
Strongly approve	21.4%	3
Approve	42.9%	6
Neutral	7.1%	1
Strongly disapprove	28.6%	4
	Totals	14

11.What is missing from this topic area? Do you have suggestions to improve this topic? Explain in the box below.

ResponseID	Response
1	Be honest. You just want to take the bijou Creek basin from private ownership. Trails will not be used, developers will not honor any commitments, and in no way will the county allow any ohv opportunities no matter how much we want them
4	Concern with "requiring" open space and parks be part of residential development as it may cause prohibitive costs associated with projects.
5	Once again we are not a for city lifestyles. Leave our lands alone, we don't need people coming out that have no idea what country life is about. No bike lanes, no pedestrian lanes on our roads.
8	ATV and dirt bike use should not be encouraged. This activity is never well managed and is destructive to the environment
9	Prioritize the development of recreational buildings, sports complexes, trails, parks, and other commercial recreational facilities and uses, that are complimentary to existing bicycle trail and open space use proposals or any other future proposals for recreation. They can be designed to serve residents and visitors. These amenities could be maintained and operated by conservation entities, the town, or private businesses, promoting both use by residents, visitors and promoting private investment in the town.
10	Sidewalks in existing neighborhoods.
13	More taxes for all of us. No

12.Chapter 7. Community Facilities and Infrastructure. This chapter addresses the water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater infrastructure in Byers as well as Arapahoe County’s provision of essential services and public safety. The vision for these essential services is reflected in the following Goals: Enhance public safety. Improve the stormwater and wastewater management conditions. Arapahoe County Sheriff’s Office and the Byers Fire Protection District will proactively identify and address crime, trespassing, and fire hazards. The County will investigate and resolve issues related to the blockage of storm drainageways and street flooding. The County will work with the Byers Water and Sanitation District to address wastewater management issues. The following Policies support the Goals: Arapahoe County Sheriff’s Office and the Byers Fire Protection District will proactively identify and address crime, trespassing, and fire hazards. The County will investigate and resolve issues related to the blockage of storm drainageways and street flooding. The County will work with the Byers Water and Sanitation District to address wastewater management issues. What is your level of support for these Goals and Policies?



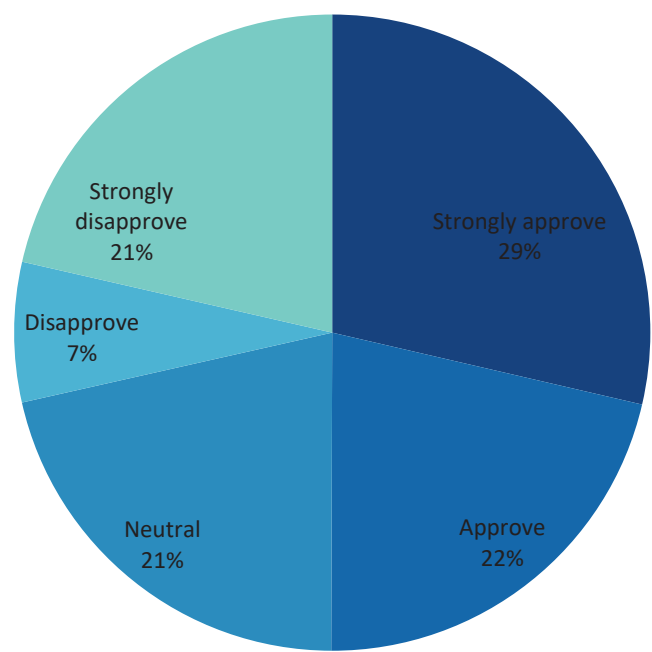
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly approve	50.0%	7

Approve	28.6%	4
Disapprove	14.3%	2
Strongly disapprove	7.1%	1
	Totals	14

13.What is missing from this topic area? Do you have suggestions to improve this topic? Explain in the box below.

ResponseID	Response
1	The only thing missing here is improving the water quality. The current water is horrible
5	For the people not on their own well water, the town of Byers water is awful. There is definitely something wrong with the water in Byers. People that use the towns water say it kills their grass and plants. Any restaurant here has to have a very expensive water filter system. The water is a huge issue.
9	Please address the need for a proactive approach to identify (and possibly prosecute) illegal dumping on open spaces and undeveloped land as it interrupts the wildlife as well as the general beauty and cleanliness of the town
10	County maintaining bridges and infrastructure more consistently. Helping with grants for water dept and maintenance at Quint Valley.

14.Chapter 8. Economic Development and Tourism. This chapter identifies approaches for improving the business opportunities in Byers through encouraging investment and tourism.The vision for economic development is reflected in the following Goals: Encourage a diverse range of businesses in Byers to expand the local economy and employment opportunities. Promote tourism opportunities in Byers by focusing on the community’s history, agriculture, and prairie landscapes. The following Policies support the Goals: Explore grant funding opportunities and a revitalization authority that would support economic development and the establishment of new businesses. Expand economic development partnerships and facilitate workforce development opportunities for Byers’ youth. Encourage new businesses and support the expansion of existing businesses. Promote and encourage entrepreneurs and small business development. Improve the built environment of the commercial core of Byers. Support the Lincoln Health Byers Clinic and other medical providers. Maintain lands for a range of commercial and light industrial uses. Expand tourism by featuring recreational and heritage assets in Byers. What is your level of support for these Goals and Policies?



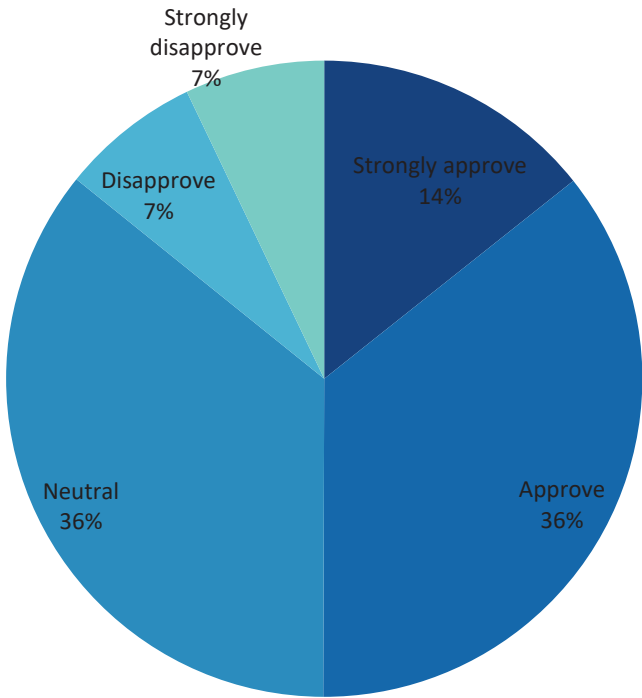
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly approve	28.6%	4

Approve	21.4%	3
Neutral	21.4%	3
Disapprove	7.1%	1
Strongly disapprove	21.4%	3
	Totals	14

15.What is missing from this topic area? Do you have suggestions to improve this topic? Explain in the box below.

ResponseID	Response
1	Idk who you talked to but absolutely no tourism it will fail horribly and waste money
3	I am still concerned about growing too big too fast with some of these goals
5	Don't mind very small businesses, but no thank you to big corporations. Keep Byers a small rural town, that's why we live here. No to tourism, we don't need people getting in the way of providing for our families. The county can start looking into all the illegal cartels buying up land and building big houses on them. They are real easy to find, stop giving them a pass.
7	New business that supports these goals should not be limited by too many mixed use categories.
10	na
13	In order to have more jobs more growth will have to happen. If the town wants to stay small if this is what everyone out here wants then we can't obviously employ that many.

16.Chapter 9. Heritage and Community Identity. The goals, policies, and actions in this chapter aim to revitalize the historic core of the community and provide approaches to preserving historic buildings, ensuring that they remain a visible part of the community.The vision for Byers’ heritage and community identity is reflected in the following Goals: Promote and preserve Byers’ historic and cultural heritage. Integrate heritage into community and economic development. Develop and market Byers as a heritage tourism destination. Strengthen partnerships and community involvement. The following Policies support the Goals: Identify and protect historic resources. Support property owners in seeking state or national historic designations. Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic buildings to new uses. Revise any zoning regulations to facilitate the renovation and preservation of historic buildings. Create programs and resources to help property owners in restoring or improving their historic properties. Develop a marketing approach to promote Byers’ unique history. Support the community’s events and activities that showcase Byers’ history. Pursue grants and partnerships that support historic preservation and tourism. Distribute educational materials on Byers’ history. What is your level of support for these Goals and Policies?



Value	Percent	Count
-------	---------	-------

Strongly approve	14.3%	2
Approve	35.7%	5
Neutral	35.7%	5
Disapprove	7.1%	1
Strongly disapprove	7.1%	1
	Totals	14

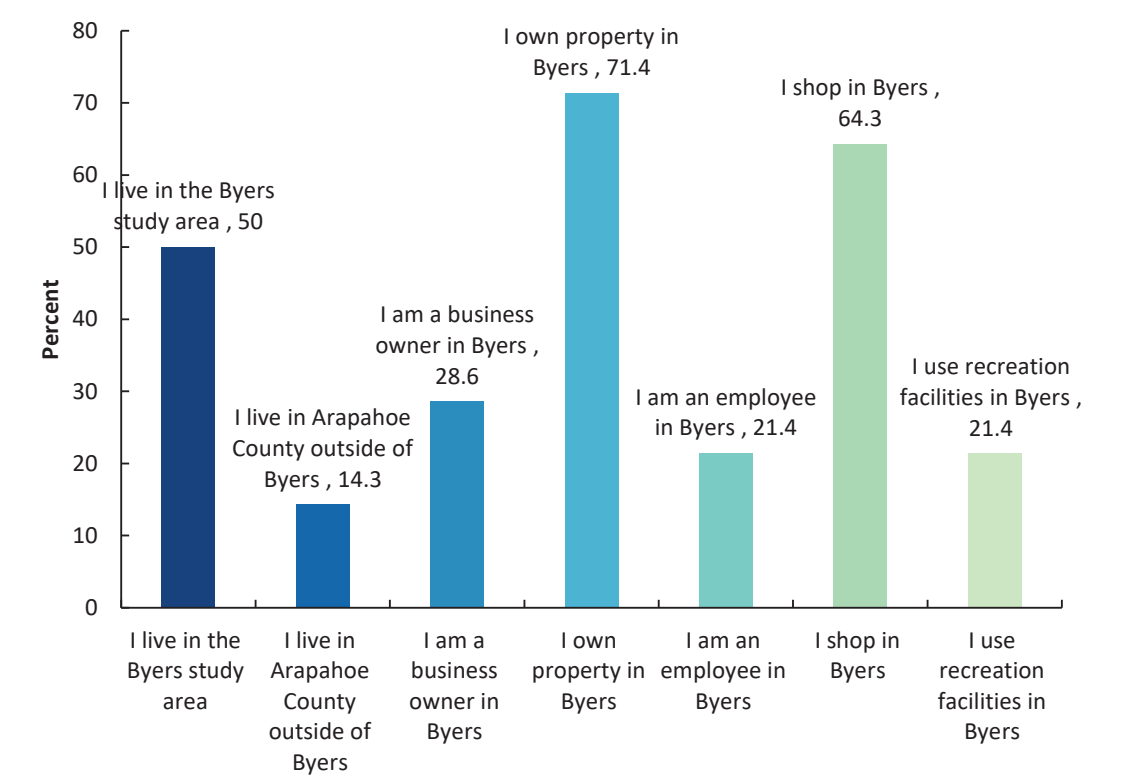
17.What is missing from this topic area? Do you have suggestions to improve this topic? Explain in the box below.

ResponseID	Response
1	No tourism
5	Love to see small towns show their history and preserve their historic buildings. Still no thank you to tourism.
10	WE would like to remain a quiet sleepy town. Why do you want to market and promote it?

**18.What do you hope the updated Byers Subarea Plan helps to achieve?
Explain in the box below.**

ResponseID	Response
1	A realistic plan to improve traffic, fix the roads, improve the water quality and completely drop the open space expansion ideas. We already have Quint valley which is neglected and not maintained and hardly ever used. Until that becomes a useful and maintained area I will not agree with any plans to take land from private owners who actually use and maintain the land to give it to bureaucrats who will do nothing and ask for more money to maintain areas that will be ignored.
3	I hope it preserves the rural nature with small growth of small businesses...no chain stores or super stores
4	Local businesses are able to thrive and residents are able to access needed services while taking pride in their community.
5	Please don't ruin our small town. We all live here for a reason. We love our small country life and the values it contributes to our children (the future). I would like to see the water fixed and our roads taken care of, we do pay for it.
6	safety and sense of community
8	controlled growth while supporting and providing all necessary services
9	To facilitate the responsible development of the town while maintaining the quintinssential charm that already exists
10	Keeping our town quiet and peaceful but also helping maintain it.

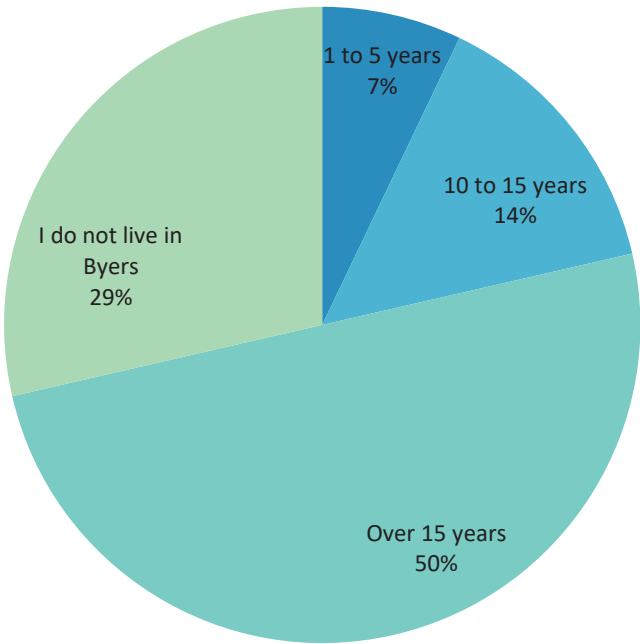
19. Please tell us about yourself. This information is for use only for this subarea plan. Do you live, work or shop in Byers? Check all that apply.



Value	Percent	Count
I live in the Byers study area	50.0%	7
I live in Arapahoe County outside of Byers	14.3%	2
I am a business owner in Byers	28.6%	4
I own property in Byers	71.4%	10
I am an employee in Byers	21.4%	3
I shop in Byers	64.3%	9
I use recreation facilities in Byers	21.4%	3

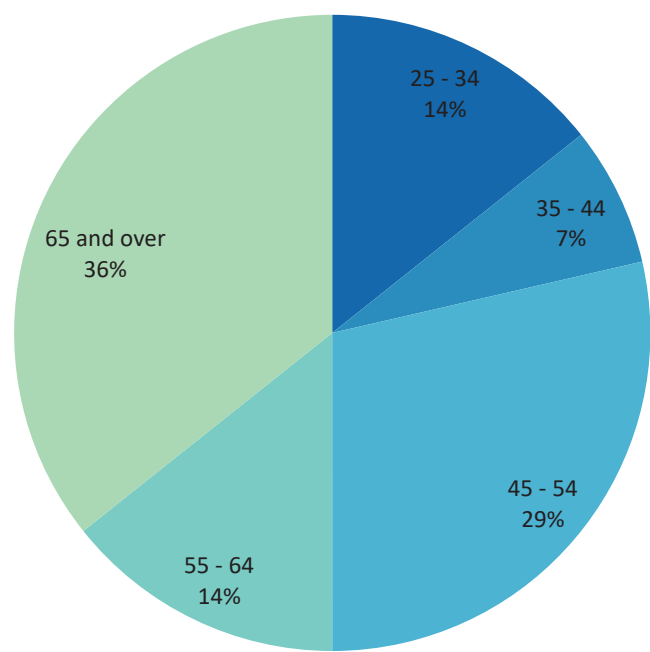
Other	Count
Totals	0

20.How long have you lived in Byers?



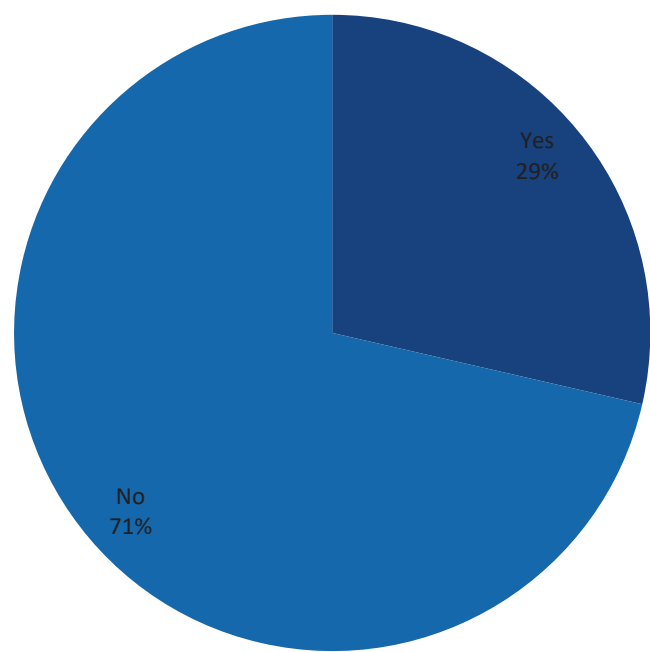
Value	Percent	Count
1 to 5 years	7.1%	1
10 to 15 years	14.3%	2
Over 15 years	50.0%	7
I do not live in Byers	28.6%	4
	Totals	14

21.What is your age group?



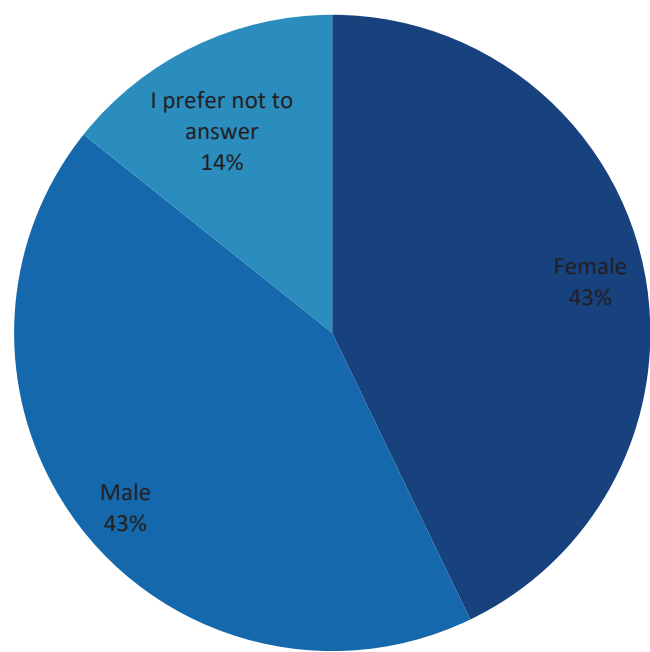
Value	Percent	Count
25 - 34	14.3%	2
35 - 44	7.1%	1
45 - 54	28.6%	4
55 - 64	14.3%	2
65 and over	35.7%	5
	Totals	14

22.Do you have any children under the age of 19 living in your household?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	28.6%	4
No	71.4%	10
	Totals	14

23.What is your gender



Value	Percent	Count
Female	42.9%	6
Male	42.9%	6
I prefer not to answer	14.3%	2
	Totals	14



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

Comprehensive Plan Amendment to adopt the Byers Subarea Plan LR25-001

Planning Commission Public Hearing November 18, 2025



Purpose and Request

Request:

Amend the **2018 Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan** to adopt, by reference, the updated **2025 Byers Subarea Plan**.

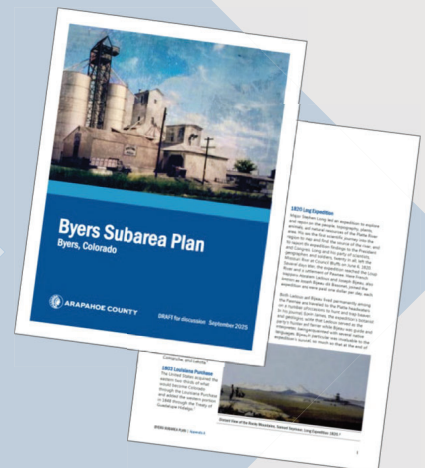
The Plan's Role:

- Provides 20 years of guidance through goals, policies, and actions for staff and County officials.
- Serves as a framework for public and private investment in the Byers area.

Key Feature in the Plan: Includes a list of implementation actions to ensure it is a "living" and actionable document.



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT



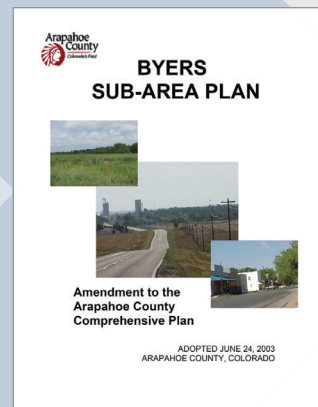
Purpose of the Subarea Plan Update



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

Goal: To update the Byers Subarea Plan so that it is current and relevant

- Byers Sub-Area Plan was approved in 2003, created based on high growth expectations (2020 forecast was for a population of 5,000 in Byers). There were no amendments for past 20 years.
- Byers' property owners and developers approached staff for an update to the subarea plan. Staff presented the scope of work to the group, which was supported.
- Key objective was to update the Future Land Use Map, add new goals, policies, and actions based on community input, and create an implementation framework
- Community involvement was considered essential to create a plan for the next 20 years.



Community Engagement in the Planning Process



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Build a Community-Based Vision

Advisory Committee: Established with representatives from the School District, Water/Sanitation District, Parks/Recreation District, I-70 REAP, residents, business owners, and a developer.

Outreach: Inventory of conditions, first community surveys (135 respondents, including high schoolers and Spanish-speaking adults), and first open house.

Impact: This extensive community input formed the foundation of the 2025 Plan.



Community Engagement in the Planning Process



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

Survey #1 and Open House

November 13, 2023, Kelter Library, in Byers

- Approximately 40 people attended
- Presented background information (demographics), the results of the community survey, and asked for more opinions and suggestions.



Open House and Survey #2

October 2, 2025, Kelter Library in Byers

- Approximately 30 people attended
- Presented the draft Byers Subarea Plan for comments.



Five Guiding Themes

The five key themes from the first community survey and open house influenced the Plan's goals and policies:

- **Preserve the rural and small-town character** of Byers.
- Focus on **managed and controlled growth**.
- **Attract small businesses** and community amenities.
- **Improve the appearance** of the community and implement infrastructure improvements.
- **Maintain a sense of community** and quality of life for families and senior residents.



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT



Byers Subarea Plan Update
Community Survey #1 Summary Report

November 7, 2023

Key Differences from the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

What's new in the 2025 Plan:

- **Foundation:** Built on **extensive community comments** and input.
- **Organization:** Updated and structured into **10 topic chapters** (e.g., land use, transportation and mobility, parks and open space, economic development, heritage and community identity, implementation).
- **Action Matrix:** A new addition that identifies priorities and assigns an implementation timeline.
- **Scope:** Expanded goals, policies, and actions to reflect community themes and specific suggestions.



The Future Land Use Map



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

Key Element: Guidance for future growth, and public and private investments.

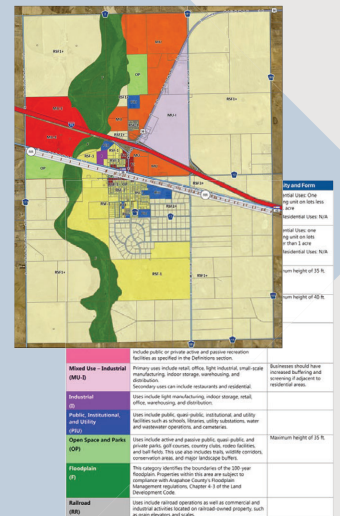
Process: Revised with the Advisory Committee based on discussions about development potential, available water, School District capacity, and existing infrastructure limitations.

Residential Areas: No substantial changes to the identified residential areas from the 2003 Future Land Use Map.

Refinements to Land Use Categories and Areas:

- Added **Mixed Use-Entertainment, MU-E** (for entertainment, recreation)
- Added **Mixed Use-Industrial, MU-I** (to identify specific areas for manufacturing/warehousing).
- Expanded **Mixed Use** areas (include proposed May Farms development)
- **Town Center** boundaries revised to focus on Main and Front Streets.

Location Strategy: Mixed Use areas are generally located north of the established residential core to mitigate potential negative impacts.



Public Review and Comments



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

Public Review Phase:

- **Second Open House:** Was held on October 2, 2025, to present the draft Plan.
- **Public Comment Period and Survey:** The draft Plan and survey were available from October 2 to 31, 2025, on the County's project website.
- **Plan distributed for referral comments:** Sent to 32 agencies; three responses were received, including support from I-70 REAP.

Survey Feedback (14 responses):

- Comments focused on limiting growth and maintaining rural, small-town character.
- Showed **substantial support** for all main policy chapters.

Public notice for Public Hearing: Properly noticed in local newspapers of general circulation.



Public Comment and Formal Review



Survey #2 – Summary of Responses

The survey asked for approval/disapproval levels for the major chapters.

14 survey responses were received, primarily focusing on limiting growth and maintaining the rural, small-town character.

Relevant comments received were incorporated into the final adoption draft of the Plan.

Chapter	Approve	Neutral	Disapprove
Chapter 3, Vision Statement	86%	0%	14%
Chapter 3, Five Key Themes	86%	0%	14%
Chapter 4, Land Use Policies	43%	29%	28%
Chapter 4, Future Land Use Map	46%	38%	15%
Chapter 5, Transportation and Mobility	50%	21%	28%
Chapter 6, Parks, Open Space and Recreation	64%	7%	29%
Chapter 7, Community Facilities and Infrastructure	79%	0%	21%
Chapter 8, Economic Development and Tourism	50%	21%	28%
Chapter 9, Heritage and Community Identify	50%	36%	14%
Average	62%	17%	21%



Staff Findings



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

Staff finds that:

- The 2025 Byers Subarea Plan **reflects the aspirations** of the community and is an update to the 2003 Plan.
- It was prepared with **extensive involvement** of residents, businesses, and stakeholders.
- Planning Commission reviewed the draft Plan at a study session on September 16, 2025.
- The vision, goals, policies, and actions **align with the 2018 Comprehensive Plan**.
- The Planning Commission has the authority to adopt the Plan and submit the Plan to the BOCC for approval.



Recommendation



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

Staff Recommends:

Approval of Case No. LR25-001, a Comprehensive Plan amendment to adopt, by reference, the **Byers Subarea Plan**, and to submit the Byers Subarea Plan to the Board of County Commissioners for approval.

