



Arapahoe County

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Board Summary Report

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Bryan Weimer, Director, Public Works and Development

Prepared By:

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Subject:

Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Approve the 2025 Byers Subarea Plan

Purpose and Request:

Arapahoe County proposes to amend the 2018 Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan to approve and include the updated 2025 version of the Byers Subarea Plan together with Appendix A.

The updated draft Byers Subarea Plan (the Plan) will serve as the strategic guide for staff and County officials for the next 20 years, establishing goals, policies, and actions that frame public and private investment in the Byers area. It is intended as a "living" document with practical, actionable steps, detailing implementation actions to accomplish its outlined goals. The draft Byers Subarea Plan includes the primary Plan document and Appendix A, Byers Historical Information.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: Sustainable Growth and Infrastructure - Implement smart growth policies to align housing, transportation, open spaces and economic development.

Background and Discussion: The 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan was approved by the Planning Commission on June 24, 2003, as part of the 2001 Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan, and subsequently reviewed by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) at a study session. The Plan has not been amended in the past 20 years.

Arapahoe County initiated this update to the 2003 Plan in response to community requests to modernize the outdated document. To guide this effort, an Advisory Committee was established, drawing 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 of this collaborative process was to develop a community-based vision for Byers for the next 20 years, ensuring the resulting goals, policies, and actions reflect 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, policies, and actions in all the major topic areas in the Plan, such as land use and development, transportation, economic development, and recreation.

The 2025 Byers Subarea Plan differs the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan due to its foundation in extensive community input. The goals, policies, and actions have been substantially expanded to reflect the themes and specific suggestions received from the community. A key new addition is the Action Matrix, which identifies all the actions in the Plan and assigns priorities and an implementation timeline. The overall organization of the Plan has also been modernized and organized into 10 topic chapters.

The draft Plan has undergone several review stages leading up to the adoption process. The Planning Commission first reviewed the Plan at a study session on September 16, 2025. Staff then detailed the four phases of the planning process and presented a draft Plan for the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) review at a study session on September 23, 2025.

Following the internal reviews, the draft Plan was presented to the public at a community open house in Byers on October 2, 2025. This event initiated a four-week public comment review period. The adoption draft version of the Plan incorporates relevant comments and suggestions received during the open house and subsequent public review period.

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 and Community Outreach

Public input for the updated Plan was gathered through two main avenues: two community surveys and two community open houses, both held at the Kelter Library in Byers. The first open house, held on November 13, 2023, focused on presenting the results of the initial community survey, presenting demographic and other background information, and collecting comments and suggestions.

Approximately 40 people attended this session.

The second open house took place on October 2, 2025. This event marked the beginning of the formal public review period, during which the draft Byers Subarea Plan was presented to the community for comments. Around 30 people attended the second open house. Boards displayed the content of the draft Plan's chapters, and staff were on hand to answer questions and explain the rationale behind the proposed goals, policies, and actions.

The draft Byers Subarea Plan was made available on the County's project website, initiating a public comment period from October 2 to October 31, 2025. During this period, a survey was conducted to gather feedback on the draft Plan, specifically querying the level of approval or disapproval for the proposed goals, policies, and actions within the major chapters. A total of fourteen survey responses were received. The comments predominantly focused on the desire to limit growth and maintain the rural, small-town character of Byers. Overall, there was substantial support for all the main policy chapters, as detailed 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 Identity	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 five responses were submitted to staff. For one response, comments were primarily editorial, and comments from I-70 REAP expressed support for the Plan. Other responses were from CORE and the County's Public Health and Open Spaces Departments.

Planning Commission held a public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan amendment on November 18, 2025, and moved to adopt the Plan as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and submit the Plan to the BOCC for approval. The vote was 6 to 0.

The public hearing of December 9, 2025, was noticed in newspapers of general circulation within the County, including the I-70 Scout on November 19, 2025, the Littleton Independent, Englewood Herald, and Centennial Citizen on November 20, 2025, and the Eastern Colorado News on November 21, 2025. Staff referred the proposed amendment to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs as required by Colorado Revised Statutes.

Approval Process

The approval process for a Comprehensive Plan has been updated due to Senate Bill 24-174 (SB24-174). SB24-174 amended C.R.S. §30-28-106 to require that a master plan is "subject to the approval of the county commission having jurisdiction thereof." Previously, comprehensive plans and related subarea plans were solely adopted or amended by the Planning Commission. With the new law, comprehensive plans and all amendments are subject to review and approval by the BOCC. This revised process entails public hearings before both the Planning Commission and the BOCC when adopting or amending the Comprehensive Plan and its related master and subarea plans. This new requirement was presented to the BOCC at a study session on May 5, 2025, and the proposed process for two public hearings was approved for implementation.

Alternatives: The Board of County Commissioners has alternatives that include the following:

1. Approve the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment as recommended by staff or with changes.
2. Continue to a date certain for more information.
3. Deny the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact at this time. Projects identified in the action matrix of the subarea plan may require future funding for implementation.

Alignment with Strategic Implementation Strategies: The attached framework helps Arapahoe County institutionalize values-based, transparent decision-making, documenting how we make decisions and carry out actions to achieve the county's strategic plan.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendment to the Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan to include the Byers Subarea Plan and Appendix A.

Concurrence: The Public Works and Development Department developed the Byers Subarea Plan with the assistance of an Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from Byers School District 32-J, Byers Water and Sanitation District, Byers Parks and Recreation District, the I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership (REAP), property owners, and developers. Planning Commission voted 6-0 to adopt the Byers Subarea Plan as an amendment to the Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan.