

**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.

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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

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