



BRYAN D. WEIMER, PWLF
Director

Lima Plaza
6924 South Lima Street
Centennial, Colorado 80112-3853
720-874-6500
arapahoegov.com

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission

THRU: Jason Reynolds, Planning Division Manager

FROM: Loretta Daniel, Long Range Planning Program Manager

DATE: September 8, 2025

SUBJECT: Update on the status of the Byers Subarea Plan Update



Purpose

The purpose of this study session is to update the Planning Commission on the progress of revising the current Byers Sub-Area Plan, which was adopted by the Planning Commission in 2003. The staff was approached by community representatives requesting an update to the plan since it was outdated. The staff received approval from the Planning Commission in February 2023 to proceed with the update to the Byers Subarea Plan. The update was to reevaluate land use, transportation, and other topics as part of defining an amended vision for Byers. The scope of work presented to the Planning Commission emphasized public engagement since this was seen as essential in creating a community plan. Key elements of the subarea plan update were to include:

- A community-based vision for Byers for the next 20 years;
- A range of feasible population growth scenarios;
- Goals, policies, and actions that reflect the community's comments and suggestions; and
- A revised document format with identified actions in an implementation matrix.

The updated draft Byers Subarea Plan will provide guidance to staff and County officials on a range of policy topics over the next 20 years. The draft Byers Subarea Plan consists of two documents: the primary Plan document and Appendix A, Byers Historical Information.

Background

The current Byers Sub-Area Plan was approved by the Planning Commission as part of the 2001 Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan on June 24, 2003. The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) reviewed the plan at a study session. The current plan contains a vision statement,

goals, and implementation strategies to guide the future of Byers for a period of 20 years. The plan recognized that more work was required to implement the plan's strategies and recommended that the plan be reviewed and evaluated every three to six years. A community survey was undertaken in 2007 which provided valuable information on the community's thoughts on issues, quality of life, and satisfaction with other indicators at that time. No update to the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan occurred as a result of this survey since it was decided that none was warranted.

The population projection in the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan for 2020 was envisioned to be approximately 5,000. Growth of this magnitude has not occurred, and in fact, the 2020 Census identified the population as 1,322. Byers' population has increased by seven percent since 2000, much less than that of Bennett, Strasburg, and Deer Trail.

The planning process consisted of four phases:

- Phase 1 – Existing Conditions Analysis. In this kick-off phase, an Advisory Committee was convened 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. A project website was established (www.arapahoeco.gov/byersplan) and stakeholder interviews were held. The staff reviewed past plans and prepared potential growth scenarios and demographic information.
- Phase 2 – Ideas and Options. Surveys were conducted for the residents and property owners in September-October 2023, as well as surveys for high school students and Spanish-speaking adults. Additional public input was obtained at a well-attended open house at the Kelter Library, which included results of the survey and demographic and historical information.
- Phase 3 – Draft Plan Development. Meetings were held with the Advisory Committee to distill important themes and update the Future Land Use map. The draft Plan was developed and presented to the Advisory Committee and is to be presented to the Planning Commission and the BOCC at study sessions. An open house is scheduled for October 2, 2025, which will start a public review period.
- Phase 4 – Approval Process. Comments from the public review will be incorporated into the adoption draft of the Plan, and public hearings are scheduled for the Planning Commission and the BOCC.

An overriding theme that emerged from the surveys and open house was that Byers should retain its rural, small-town character. This resulted in the staff focusing on the unique attributes of Byers, including its history which is detailed in Appendix A. While Byers has a limited number of historic buildings, it does have a lengthy history. Byers was established in 1889 when Leonard McDonnell and John Fetzer platted Byers' first townsite. By 1900, the Census reported that 168 people lived in Byers, and although growth has been slow, residents treasure the community's spirit and form.

The draft Byers Subarea Plan consists of 10 chapters, and chapters four through nine are structured with goals, policies, and actions that are derived from public input, summarized as the “Key Takeaways and Findings” section in these chapters. The chapters reference the sections in the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan with some goals and policies carried forward to the draft Plan.

The chapters are:

1. Introduction. This chapter explains the purpose of the Plan, identifies related plans, and explains the community engagement process.
2. Community Context. To better understand the attributes of Byers, the environment, history timeline, and the planning area are described. Important demographic data, primarily from the 2020 Census, compares Byers with the county as a whole. This chapter also presents three population growth scenarios.
3. Vision and Themes. The vision statement and the five guiding themes are based on community input from the public engagement process. The vision and themes form the basis for the goals, policies, and actions in the following chapters.
4. Land Use, Development, and Housing. While Byers has not recently experienced rapid population growth, there may be changes in the future. This chapter identifies physical conditions that can influence development, the 11 land use categories and the Future Land Use Map, and goals, policies, and actions that reflect the vision and themes identified in Chapter 3.
5. Transportation and Mobility. This chapter outlines the community's vision for a safe, well-maintained, and connected transportation network. From community input, policies and actions that recommend pedestrian and bicycle connections are included.
6. Parks, Open Space, and Recreation. Enhancing the quality of life in Byers by improving its parks, trails, and open spaces, and offering more recreational opportunities are community ideas that are included in this chapter's policies and actions.
7. Community Facilities and Infrastructure. Water and sanitation infrastructure and stormwater management are addressed in this chapter.
8. Economic Development and Tourism. Based on public comments, this chapter identifies approaches for improving the business opportunities in Byers through encouraging investment and tourism.
9. Heritage and Community Identity. Recognizing that the history of Byers contributes to its uniqueness, this chapter identifies policies and actions that can increase awareness of Byers' heritage.
10. Implementation. The recommended actions in the Implementation Matrix are consolidated from the previous chapters and include capital projects, policy recommendations, and ongoing programs that implement the Plan. Comparative costs and timelines are also identified.

Definitions. Major terms used in the Plan are identified in this Definitions section.

Next Steps

Following this study session at the Planning Commission, there will be a study session with the BOCC on September 23, 2025. Comments from the Planning Commission and the BOCC will be incorporated into a revised draft Plan. The draft Byers Subarea Plan will be presented at an open house on October 2, 2025, at the Kelter Library in Byers. This will be the start of a four-week public review and referral period. Comments received will be analyzed and incorporated into the adoption draft of the Byers Subarea Plan. The public hearings for approval of the Plan are scheduled for the Planning Commission on November 18, 2025, and for the BOCC on December 9, 2025.

Action Requested

This study session is for information and to provide the draft Byers Subarea Plan for the Planning Commission's review. Comments from the Planning Commission can be provided to the staff at any time before October 31, 2025.

Attachments

1. Discussion Draft Byers Subarea Plan
2. Appendix A: Byers Historical Information
3. Draft Future Land Use Map
4. Byers Subarea Plan PowerPoint Presentation
5. [Byers Subarea Plan Survey Summary Report](#)
6. [Byers Sub-Area Plan \(2003\)](#)



Byers Subarea Plan

Byers, Colorado



ARAPAHOE COUNTY

DRAFT for discussion September 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.

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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 2002) 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.

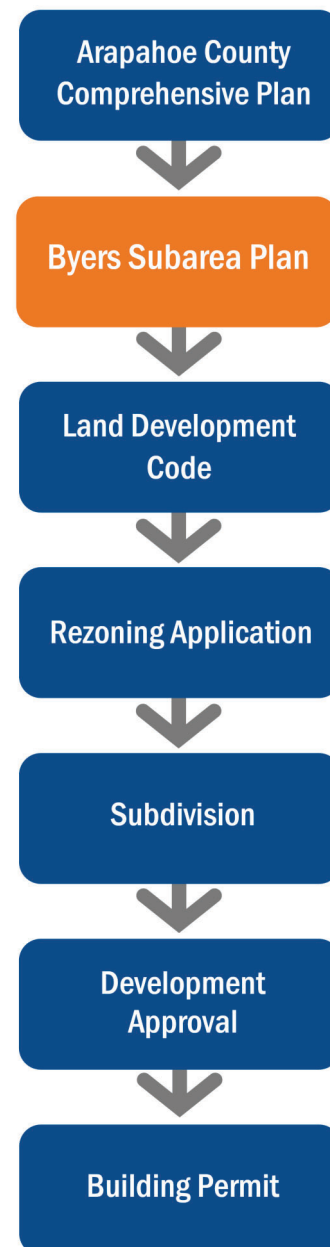
The **Byers Subarea Plan** is part of Arapahoe County's Comprehensive Plan. This update was prepared to revise out-of-date policies and provide an approach to consider development, infrastructure improvements, and other actions that can affect the community for the next 20 years. The 2003 Byers Sub-Area 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:

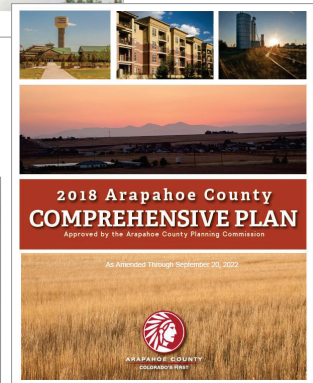
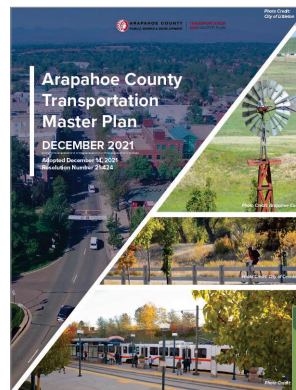
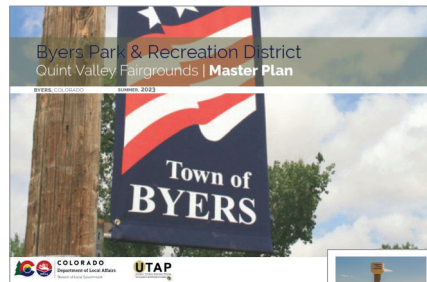
- **Byers Sub-Area Plan (2003).** The purpose of the 2003 Byers Sub-Area Plan was to address anticipated growth pressures. The Plan identified visions, goals, and strategies for community image, housing, transportation, open spaces and parks, education, economic development, tourism, public facilities, 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 Parks and Recreation District with assistance from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. The plan analyzed the site 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 Community, 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, and to gather information, the attendees were asked to place their comments on notes on the boards or write on the maps. This open house was a follow-up to the community survey, to refine specifics from the survey and listen to Byers' residents about their thoughts on a variety of topics.

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 twenty 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.

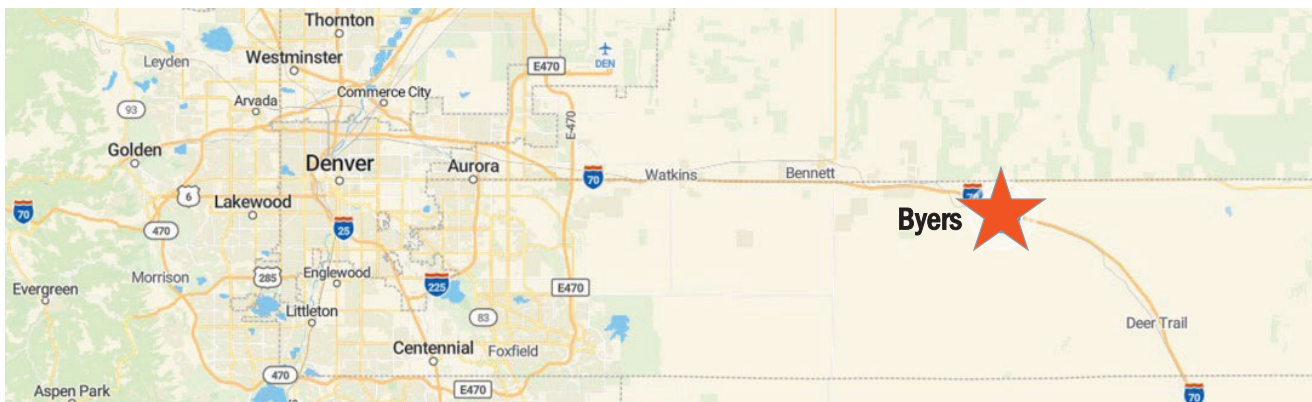
Byers residents have access to natural areas and open countryside, forming a community with a rural character based on its long history, schools and public facilities, and good access to the larger region.

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 farms 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 Fetzer. 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

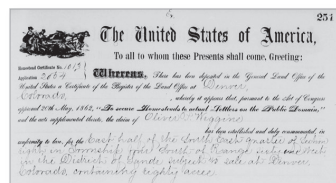
Colorado Territory created.

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

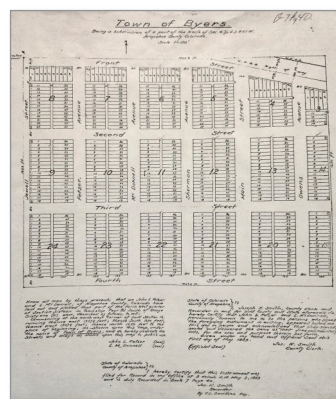
Post office opened in Wiggins' general store; town renamed "Byers".

1876

Colorado becomes 38th state.

1889

Byers established. Leonard McDonnell and John Fetzer 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

W. 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

W. 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 Subarea 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

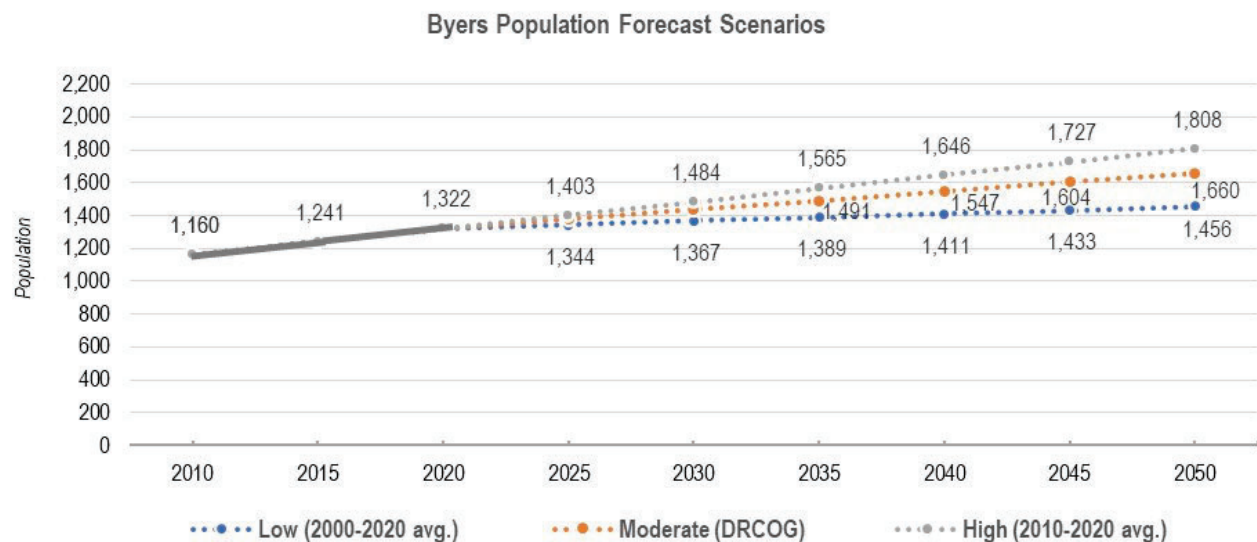
Byers' population has experienced slow growth, much slower than was anticipated in the 2003 Byers Subarea Plan. In the 2020 Census, the population was 1,322. Between the 2000 and 2020 censuses, the number of residents in the study area increased by seven percent. This is a much lower rate than the communities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

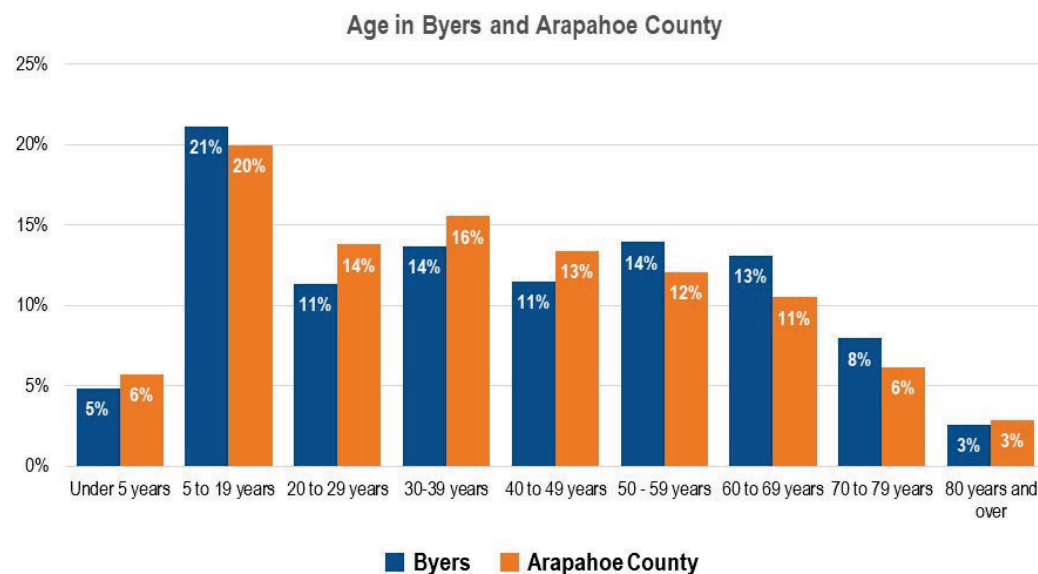


Age

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).

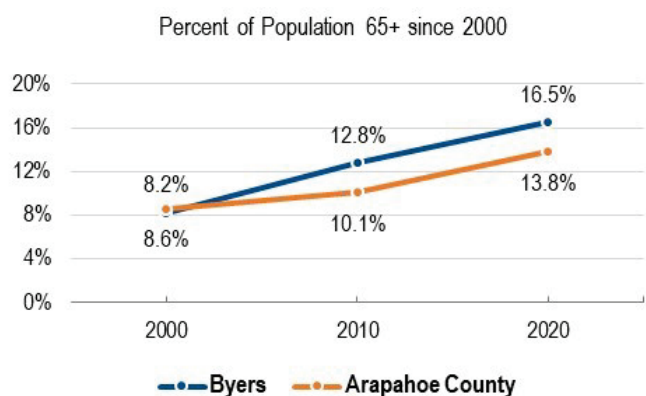
The age distribution in Byers varies slightly compared to Arapahoe County. Byers had slightly more residents who are children between five and nineteen, and fewer residents in the 20 to 49 age groups compared to the county. Byers had a higher proportion of residents in all the age group categories over 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.



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.

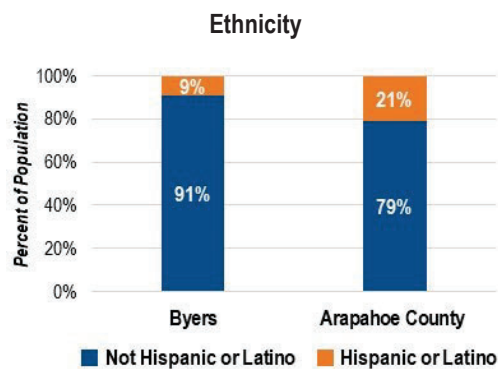
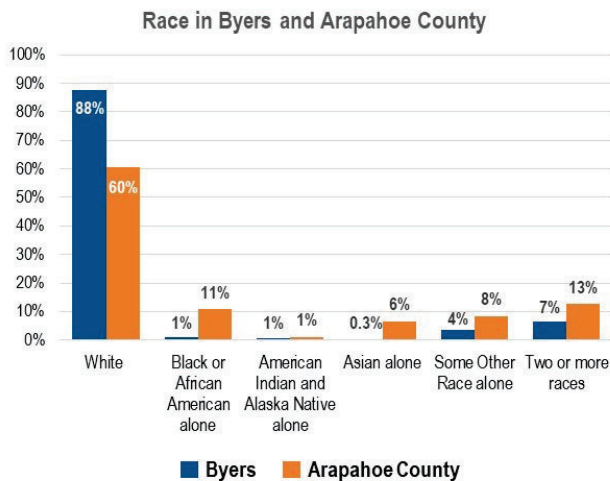
The 65+ population of Byers more than doubled between 2000 and 2020.



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.

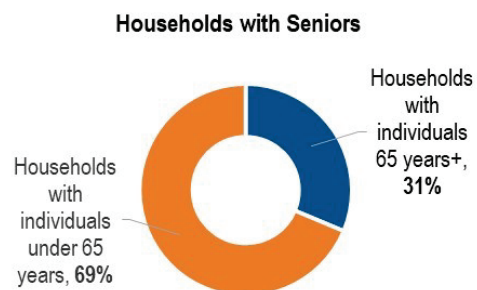
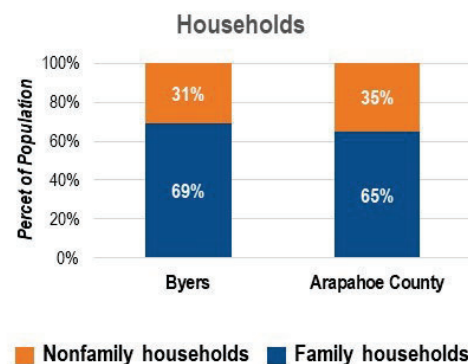


Households

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.

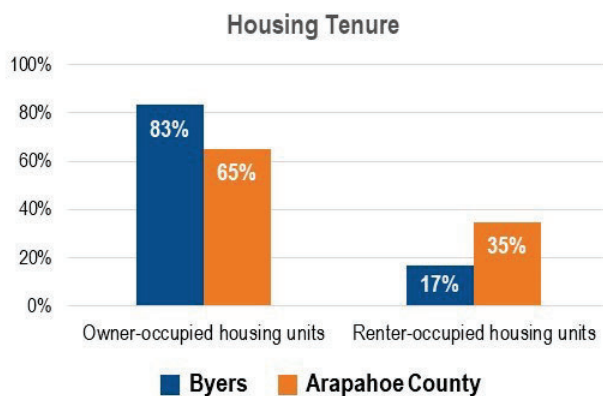
The average size of a household in 2019-2023 was 3.22 people, which was larger than Arapahoe County's average household size of 2.56. The average family size (3.67 people) was also larger than the county's (3.14).



Tenure

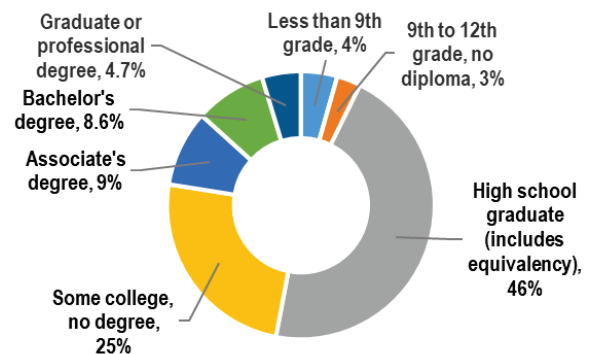
Housing tenure describes whether a household rents or owns the dwelling they live in. According to the 2020 Census, Byers has a housing stock that consists of 83 percent that is owner-occupied and 17 percent that is renter-occupied. The housing ownership in Byers is higher than in Arapahoe County where 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).

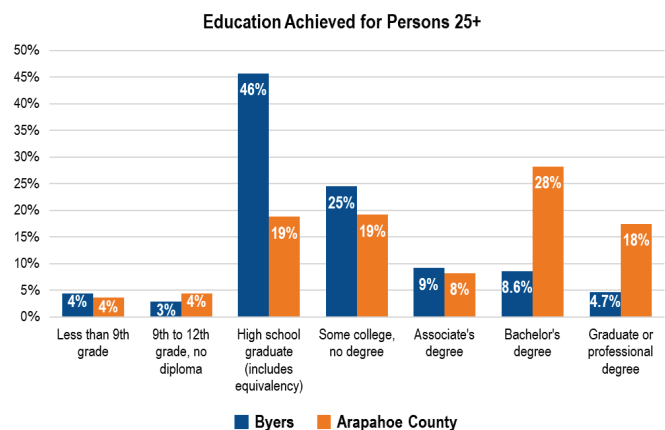


Education

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.



Compared to Arapahoe County, the level of attainment varies by the type of education category, as shown in the comparison chart. 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.

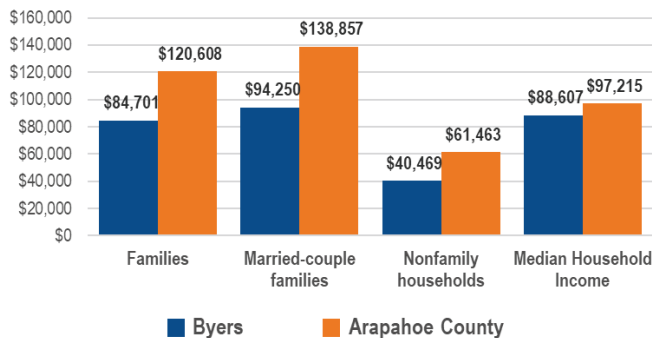


Income

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

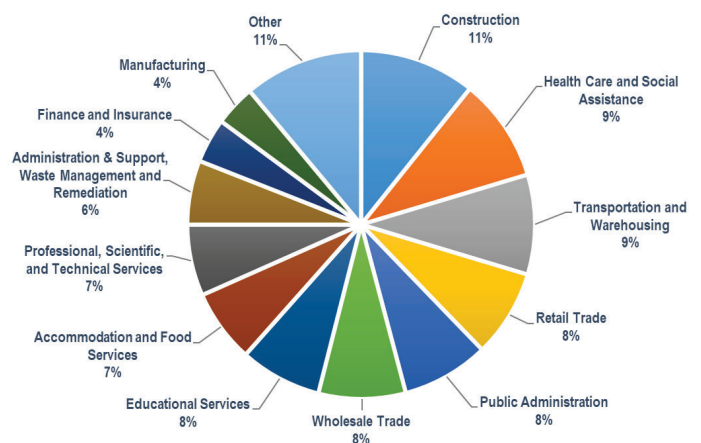


Employment

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 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.



3. Vision and Themes

Vision Statement

The vision statement is an aspiration 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.

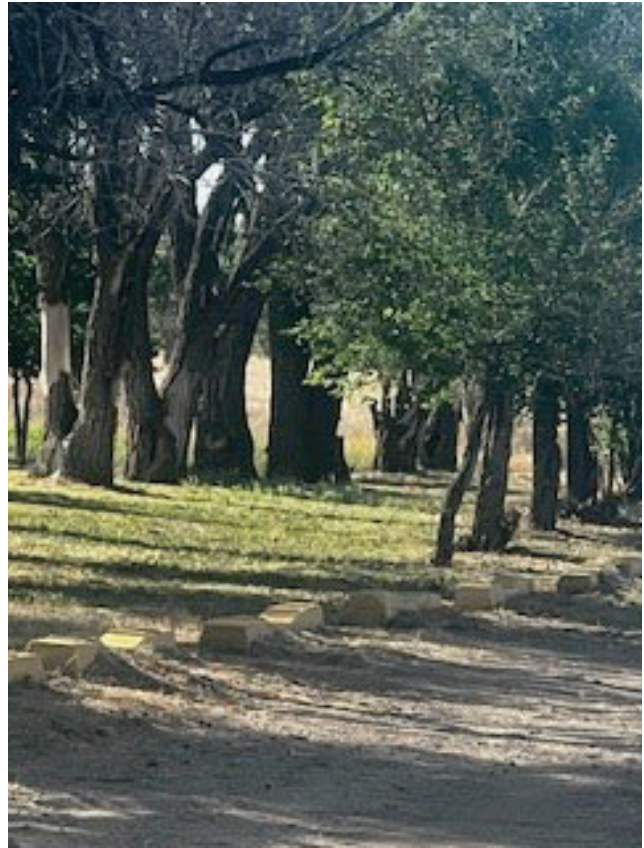
These suggestions highlight the community's desire

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 twenty 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.

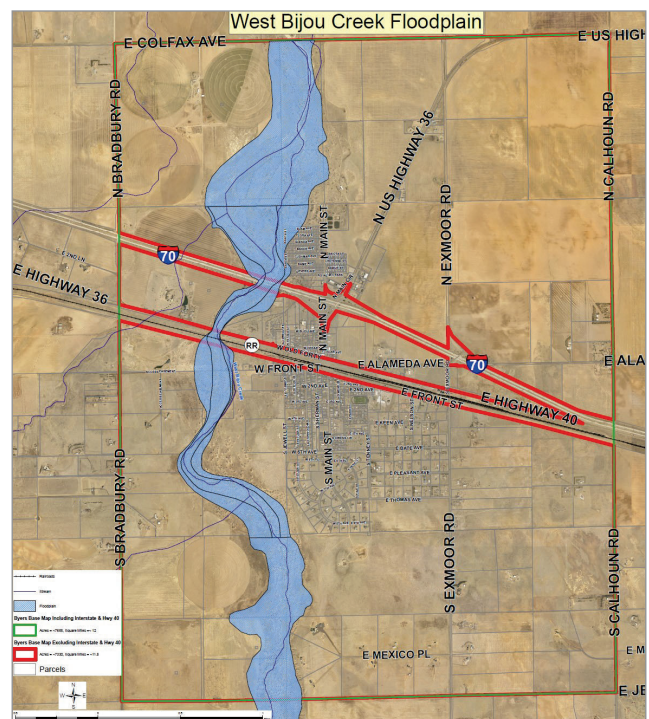
Byers' residents are proud of the community's small-town character. While population growth may occur and bring challenges, it would also provide opportunities for new jobs and a variety of new housing to meet the needs of residents in each stage of life, from newcomers to the community to seniors looking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

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

Factors Influencing Land Use

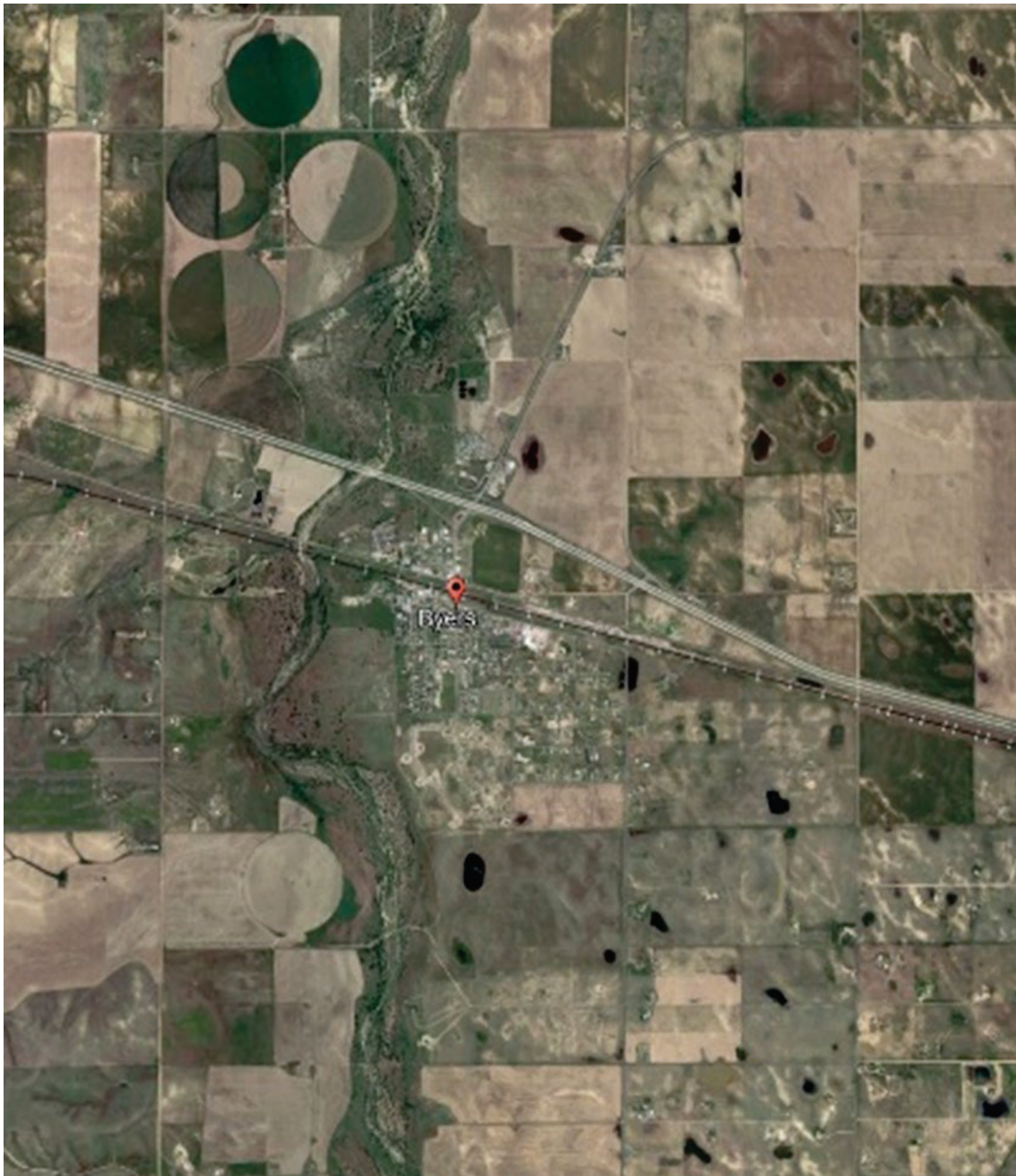
A significant portion of the planning area is within the 100-year floodplain or the floodway of the West Bijou Creek. Property within the floodplain has restrictions on development due to the risk of flooding. Uses with low flood damage potential and that will not affect the creek flow during flood events,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



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 shallow depressions that 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 and 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. This is an interesting feature of this area due to the unusually high concentration of playas. 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.



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.

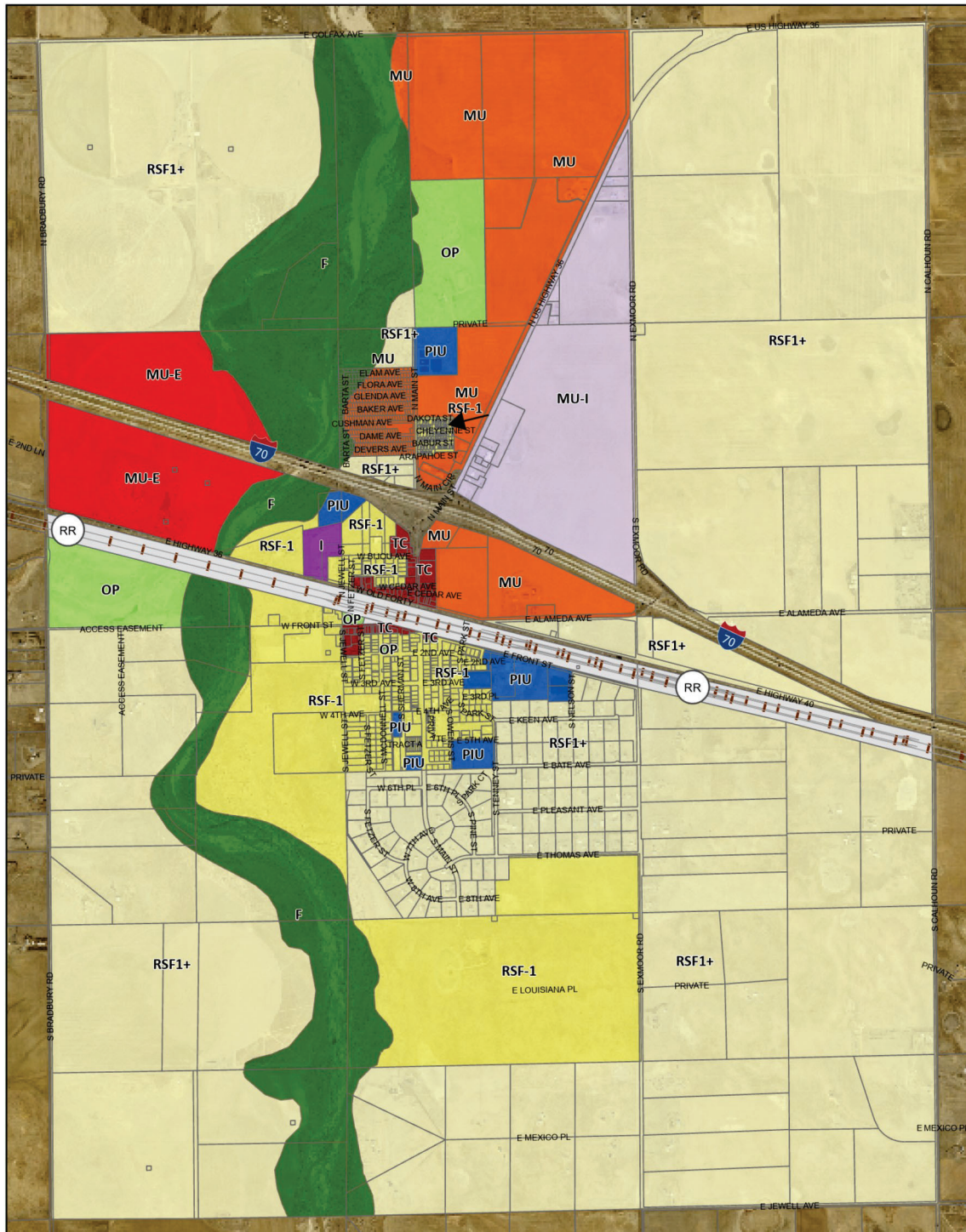
Future Land Use	vs.	Zoning
VISION		REGULATE
Generally presents community-desired land use concepts by development types and actual land usage.	SCOPE	Legal tool that regulates land use and defines specific requirements with zone districts.
CATEGORIZE		SPECIFY
Presents general vision for an area and does 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

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.

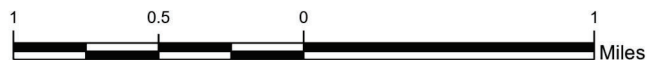
The Map provides the basis for any rezoning or other land use requests. The Map can be considered as flexible to accommodate innovative or desired approaches to development if they are consistent with the overall intent of this Plan. If a rezoning request does not fit within a land use category, there 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.

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.



Byers Sub Area Future Land Use

- RSF-1 Residential Single Family, Attached & Detached
- RSF1+ Residential single family detached
- MU Mixed Use
- MU-E Mixed Use - Entertainment
- MU-I Industrial
- TC Town Center
- I Industrial
- PIU Public, Institutional & Utility
- OP Open Space & Parks
- F Floodplain
- RR Railroad



Land Use Category	Intent	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, townhouse, triplex, and small-scale multiplex. Secondary uses can include places of worship, civic and cultural facilities.	Lots less than 1 acre
Residential Single Family, Detached RSF1+	Primary use is single-family detached dwellings. Secondary uses can include places of worship, civic and cultural facilities.	Lots greater than 1 acre
Town Center TC	Uses include a mix of residential, commercial, 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 and attached and detached, restaurants, retail, office, medical, hospitality, convenience retail, gasoline sales, and EV charging.	Maximum height of 40 ft.
Mixed Use - Entertainment MU-E	Uses include a range of residential and commercial uses including family attached and detached, retail, office, medical, hospitality, and restaurant, as well as meeting halls, concert and entertainment venues..	
Mixed Use – Industrial MU-I	Primary uses include retail, office, light industrial, small-scale manufacturing, indoor storage, warehousing and distribution. Secondary uses can include convenience stores, 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.	

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 new 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. (Highlights incentives as the mechanism)

Policy 4.3.2: Encourage a rural cluster development form to preserve large, contiguous areas of open space and natural habitat. (Provides a specific method, "rural cluster," for achieving the goal)

Actions

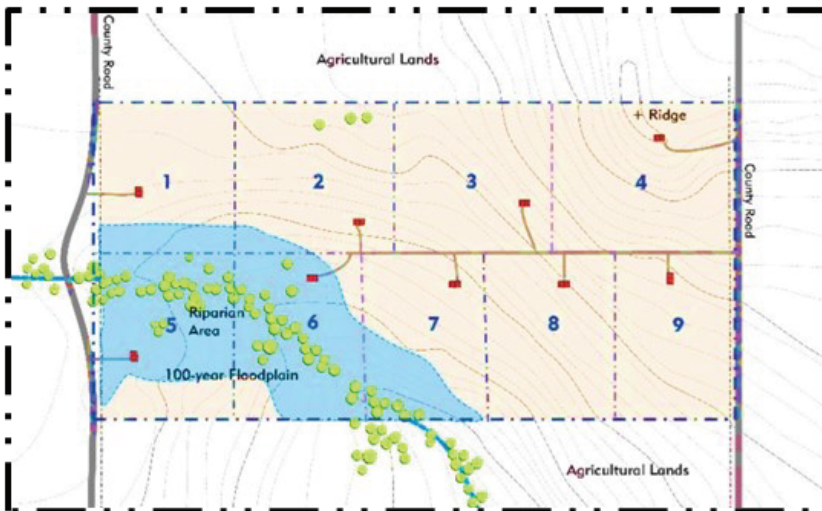
- 4.3.1.** Encourage developers and property owners to consider the benefits of the rural cluster

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.

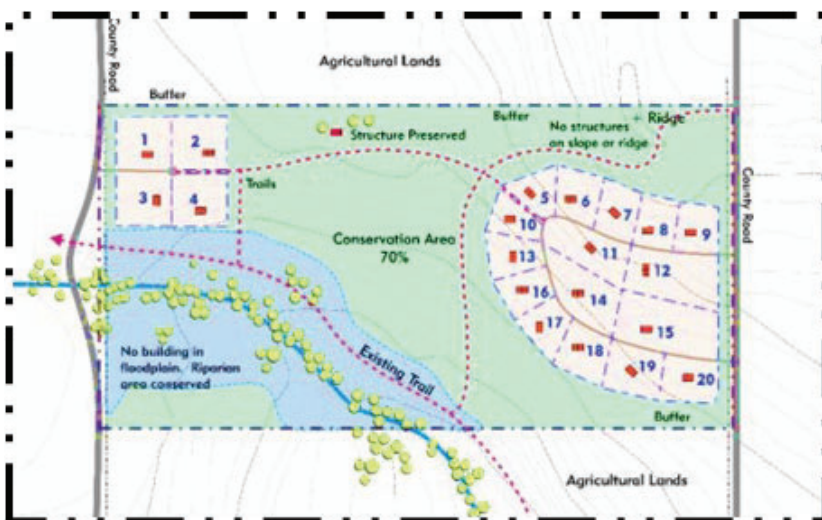
- 4.3.2.** Revise and simplify the Arapahoe County rural cluster zoning option for the A-E and A-1 zone districts. Evaluate the density bonus system to ensure that the rural cluster

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/Pedestrian Master Plan (2017)**.

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

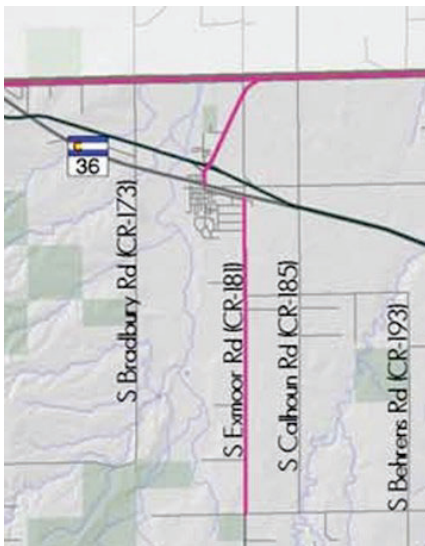
- Feasibility study of a potential general traffic, bicycle/pedestrian, or emergency access underpass or overpass across the railroad tracks east or west of the Byers community.
- Other collector street intersection and bicycle/pedestrian facility improvements throughout Byers in coordination with future 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/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/State Highway 36 from the intersection with State Highway 40 on the south to Colfax Avenue (Highway 2) on the north. The width of the paved shoulder varies. The second segment is on S. Exmoor Road (CR-18) 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."



Except from the Bicycle/ 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 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.

5.2.2. Evaluate the feasibility of a second grade-separated 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 bike 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.

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.
- 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 Subarea 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, 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 Subarea 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.

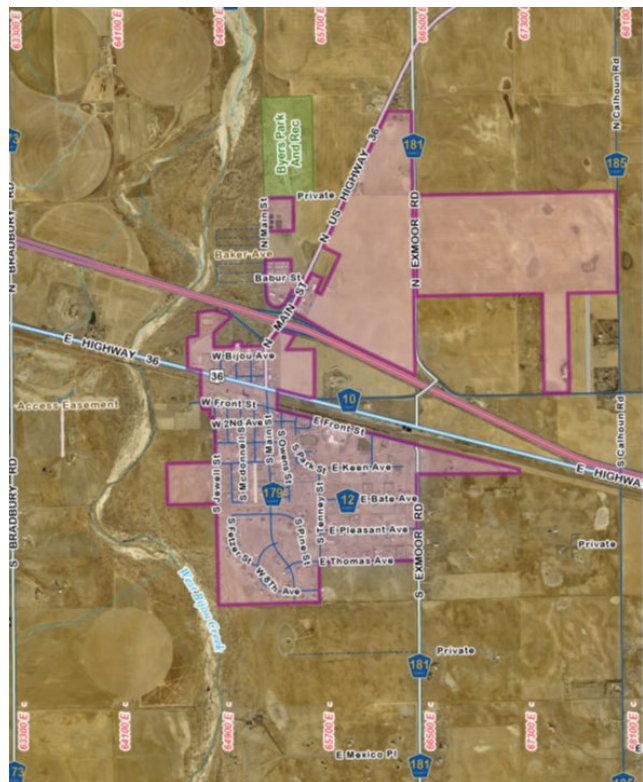
Byers Water and Sanitation District

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, COOT 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 well 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 Management Conditions.

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

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.

Actions

7.2.1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the road swales and culverts in the center of Byers, make recommendations, and



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 Subarea 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.** Much of the employment growth along the I-70 corridor will continue to be to the west and the population growth for Byers is likely to be moderate growth.
- **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.
- **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. The 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.



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.

How the Plan addresses what was heard

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

- 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 a new use that provides 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 for the Lincoln Health Byers Clinic and other medical 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: Encourage 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 profits 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 use of transfer of development rights to preserve agricultural areas and decrease development pressure on agricultural land.



Mural at Byers School District campus.



Credit: Image from smalltownstops.com. Mural by Some girls and a Mural.

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 Subarea 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 local or state 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	\$
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	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
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	\$\$
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	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
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. This can be the implementation action of 5.4.2.	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	\$
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	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
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 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.	2	Short-term	\$
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	\$\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
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	\$
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	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION

PRIORITY

TIMELINE

COST

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	\$
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	1	Ongoing	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
	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.	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 commercial (e.g., retail and office) or light industrial development (e.g., manufacturing and assembling).	1	Ongoing	\$
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	2	Short-term	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
	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 profits 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	\$\$
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	\$\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
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	\$
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	\$

RECOMMENDED ACTION		PRIORITY	TIMELINE	COST
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.

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

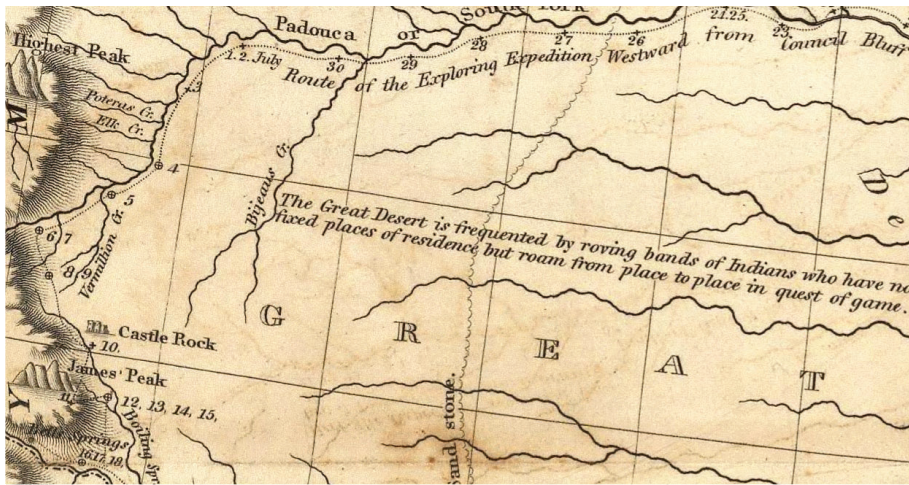
1820 Long Expedition

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

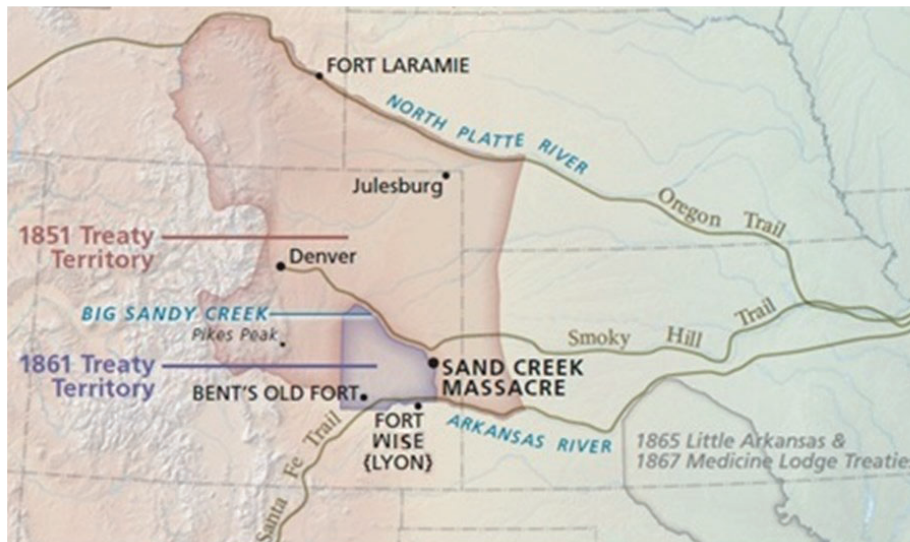
the gold region. Most settlements initially consisted of tents, but soon more permanent structures were built. Regardless of building material used, the settlements were in direct violation of the Fort Laramie Treaty.

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 Bijeau to “Bijou”. The name with this new spelling has remained ever since.⁸

1862. Homestead Act

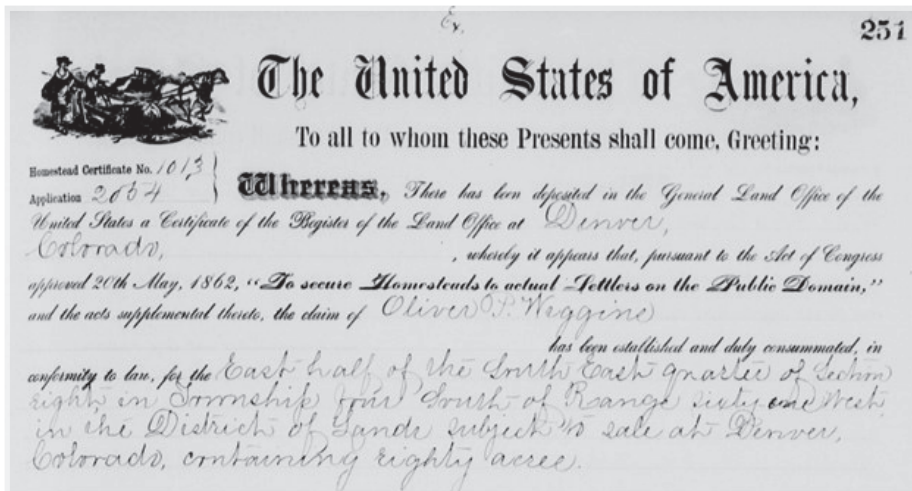
On May 20, 1862, the United States Congress passed the Homestead Act which accelerated settlement of the west. For a small filing fee, adult male or female heads of families, or those 21 years of age, were granted title of up to

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 Stirling, 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

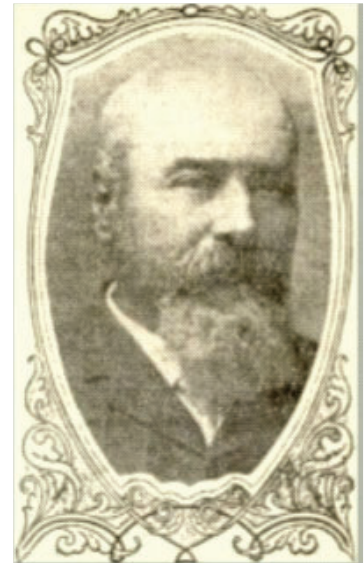
1876. Statehood

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

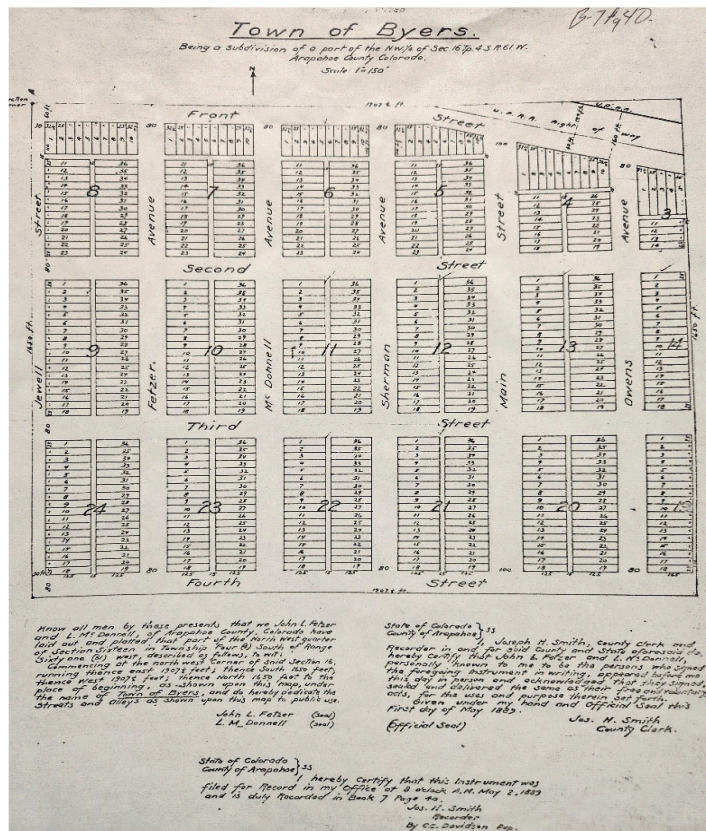


Photograph of Charles Owens' ranch in Byers. *Rocky Mountain News*, April 24, 1904.

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

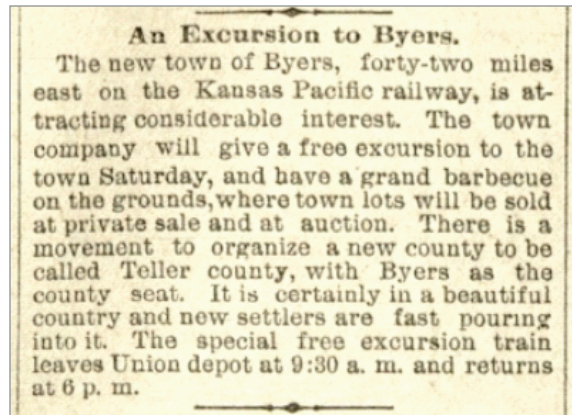
On at least three occasions, the town of Byers was selected to be the county seat of a proposed, newly created county carved from Arapahoe and Adams counties. The first attempt occurred in 1888, when there was a movement to organize the new county of Teller.²² This may have been intended as a promotion 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

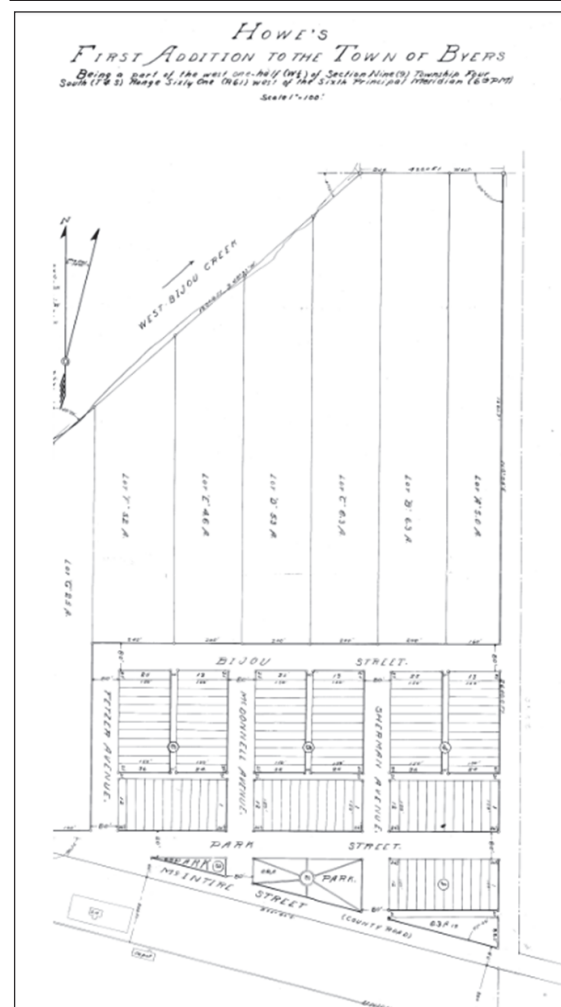
Howe was also actively involved in the promotion and sale of surrounding farmland.

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 Kelleys 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

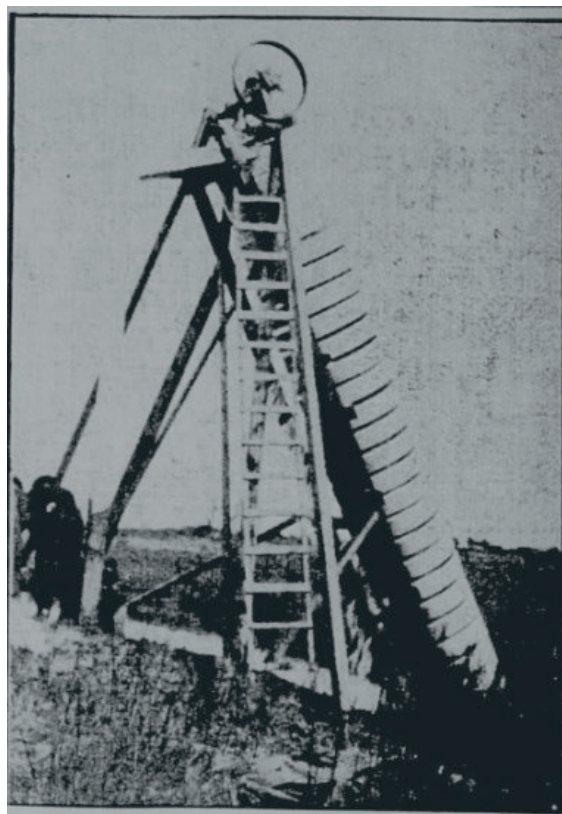
Although many settlers may have followed recommendations from the Colorado Agricultural College and adopted modern dryland farming techniques, an increasing number of farmers found that raising corn, potatoes, alfalfa, cauliflower, and other thirsty crops in an arid climate required irrigation to supplement 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

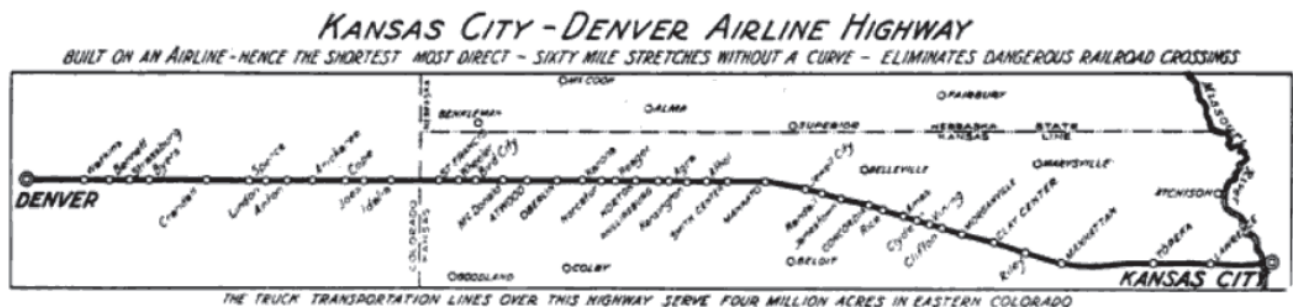
The first automobile, a “steam-powered locomobile”, appeared on Denver streets in 1900. Initially, it was a novelty affordable to only the wealthy. By 1908, Henry Ford introduced the Model T car to the American public for a cost of \$850; windshield, top, and headlamps were extra. The Ford assembly line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

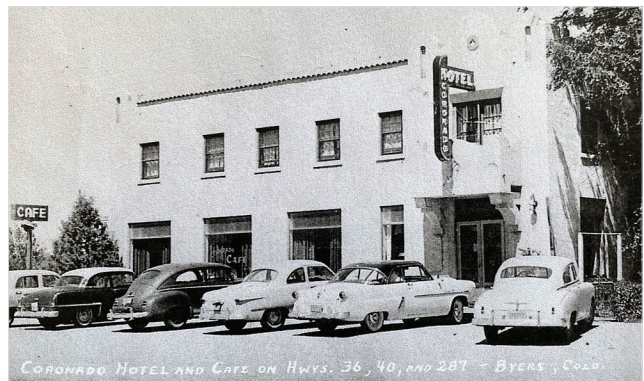


The Airline Highway/U.S. Highway 36, west of Byers in 1930. *Colorado Highways*. June 1930.

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

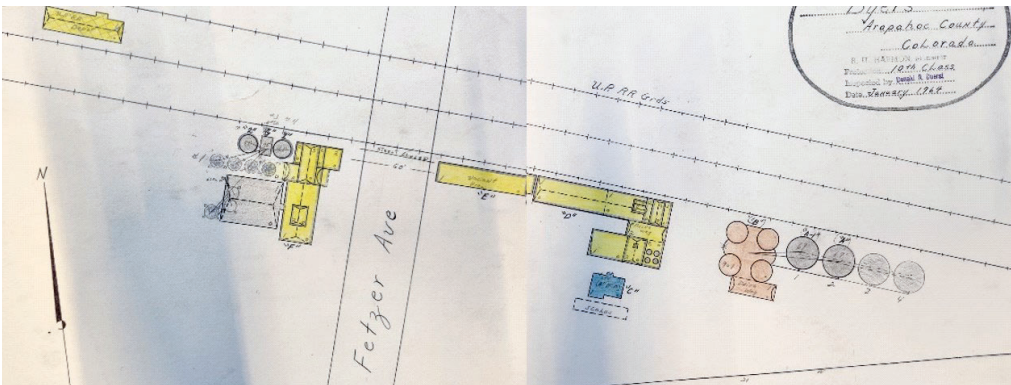
unlike the old Byers elevator, some of the exterior storage tanks, or silos, were constructed in concrete.

Railroad Crossings

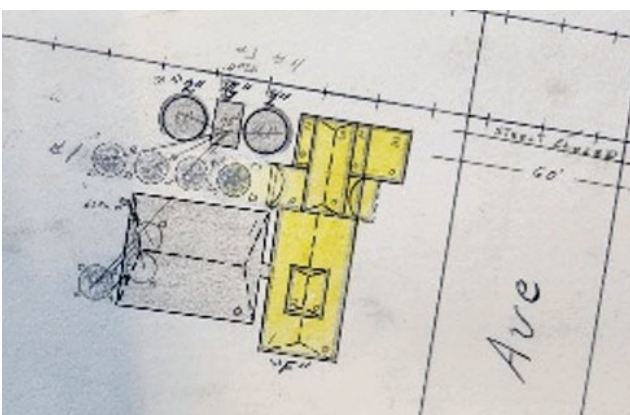
Until the 1970s Byers had two railroad crossings, one at Fetzer Street and the other at Park Street, just west of the school. However, likely in response to several vehicle-train accidents which occurred throughout the Front Range during the 1950s and 1960s including one especially tragic accident in 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

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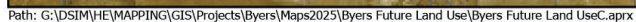
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RSF-1	Residential Single Family, Attached & Detached
RSF1+	Residential single Family detached
MU	Mixed Use
MU-E	Mixed Use - Entertainment
MU-I	Industrial
TC	Town Center
I	Industrial
PIU	Public, Institutional & Utility
OP	Open Space & Parks
F	Floodplain
RR	Railroad





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Byers Subarea Plan Update

Planning Commission

September 16, 2025



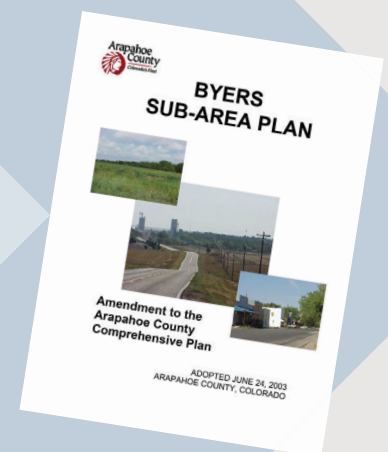
Purpose of the Subarea Plan Update

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)
- 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 important and essential

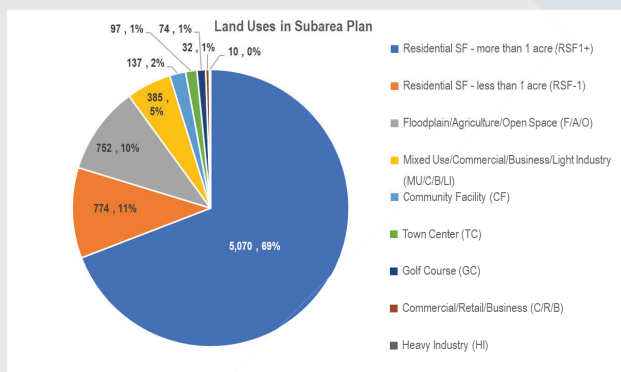


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Planning Area and Horizon

- Byers is a Census Designated Place (CDP), 12 square miles
- Updated Draft Plan has the same CDP area as the 2003 Byers Subarea Plan
- Planning horizon is 2045



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Byers Subarea Plan Update



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Objectives

- Create a **community-based vision** for Byers for the next 20 years
- **Identify opportunities and constraints** for future land uses, economic development, transportation and access, and utilities
- Update the **population projections** based on anticipated growth along the I-70 corridor and the supply of water
- Revise the **Future Land Use Map**
- Update the **goals, policies, and actions**
- Review of the transportation network and **open space and recreation opportunities**
- Identify **implementation actions** and classify them as short-, medium-, or long-term actions



Byers Subarea Plan Update - Process



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Four Phases:

Phase 1 – Existing Conditions Analysis

- Reviewed past plans and studies
- Studied existing conditions, history of Byers, demographics
- Set up the project website
- Established communications/engagement plan
- Established Advisory Committee
- Conducted stakeholder interviews
- Identified potential growth scenarios

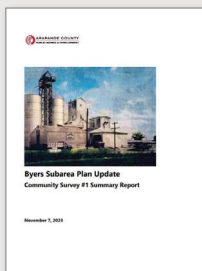


Byers Subarea Plan Update - Process



Phase 2 – Ideas and Options

- Conducted survey in September-October 2023, consolidated findings in survey summary report
 - Surveys for high school students and Spanish-speaking adults
 - Questions on growth and development, quality of life, jobs, and economic development
 - 2007 survey used as a “baseline”
- Advisory Committee meeting to review results of survey, discuss themes/guiding principles for the plan
- Held first open house at Kelter Library on November 13, 2023



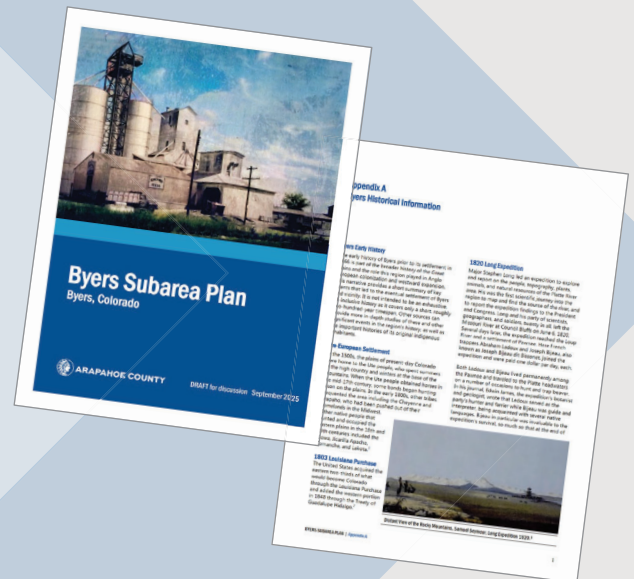
Byers Subarea Plan Update - Process



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Phase 3 – Draft Plan Development

- Advisory Committee meeting to review Future Land Use maps and highlights of the plan. Iterative process.
- Advisory Committee meeting on September 3 to review the draft plan
- Planning Commission study session on September 16 and BOCC study session on September 23
- Second open house will be at the Kelter Library on **Thursday, October 2**
 - Present the draft subarea plan, request comments during the review period
- Four-week public review period for public comment, draft plan to be distributed to referral agencies



Byers Subarea Plan Update - Process

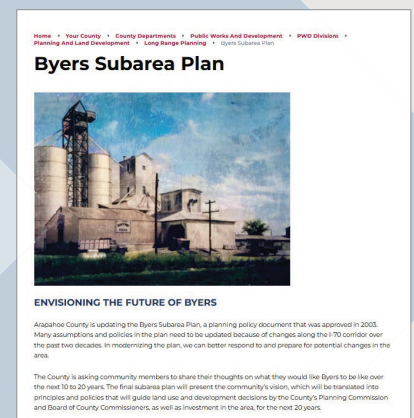


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Phase 4 – Approval Process

- Summarize comments from the review period and incorporate the relevant ones into the Approval Draft Byers Subarea Plan
- **Planning Commission Public Hearing on November 18**
- **BOCC Public Hearing on December 9**
- Final Subarea Plan on project website www.arapahoeco.gov/byersplan

2026 – start of implementation actions, Buyers Own subdivision actions



Challenges in the planning process



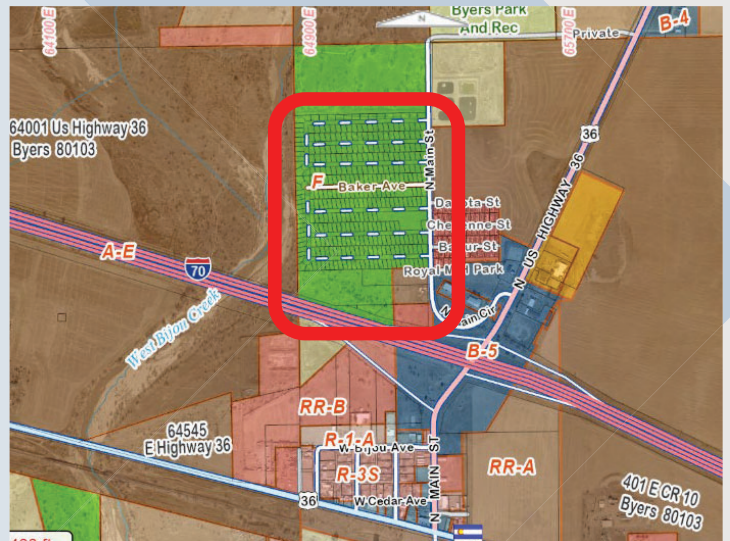
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Buyers Own Subdivision: The objective was to resolve the following:

- Issues about the status of the plat
- Concern that roads/easements were not properly dedicated to the County
- Impact of floodplain on properties (some properties in the 100-year floodplain)
- Current F (Floodplain) zoning – restricts any development

Next steps:

Staff is working with the County Attorney and the Assessor's Office, and would like to meet with the property owners



Obsolete Zoning Districts



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Obsolete districts:

- Not in the LDC, cannot be used for rezoning
- There are limitations with the obsolete zoning districts
- Objective is to rezone these obsolete districts to current zone districts in the LDC (or create new districts, if required)
- Six districts: R-2 Residential, R-3 Residential, R-3S Residential Special, R-4 Residential, R-5 Residential, and R-P Residential – Planned Unit Development
- Subarea plans are an opportunity to introduce, discuss, and provide alternatives
- Rezoning the obsolete zoning districts would be separate from the subarea plan



Plan Organization

Organized into 10 chapters:

1. Introduction
 2. Community Context
 3. Vision and Themes
 4. Land Use, Development, and Housing
 5. Transportation and Mobility
 6. Parks, Open Space, and Recreation
 7. Community Facilities and Infrastructure
 8. Economic Development and Tourism
 9. Heritage and Community Identity
 10. Implementation
- Definitions



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Appendix A

Byers Historical Information

Appendix A Byers Historical Information

Byers Early History

The early history of Byers prior to its settlement in 1886 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 time span. 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, Arapaho, Comanche, and Lakota.

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 1846 through the Treaty of Gadsden-Hidalgo.

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 Lous River and a settlement of Pawnee. Here French trappers Armand Ladoce and Joseph Bijuau, also known as Joseph Bijuau de Bissonet, joined the expedition and were paid one dollar per day, each.

Both Ladoce and Bijuau 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 Jones, the expedition's botanist and geologist, wrote that Ladoce served as the party's hunter and fencer while Bijuau was guide and interpreter, being acquainted with several native languages. Bijuau 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 1820-4

BYERS SUBAREA PLAN | Appendix A

1



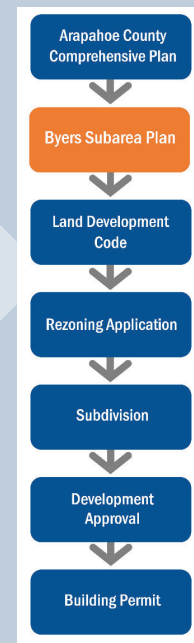
1. Introduction

Introduction includes:

- Purpose
- Related County plans and the Quint Valley Master Plan (2023)
- Community engagement activities
- How to use this plan



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2. Community Context



This chapter includes:

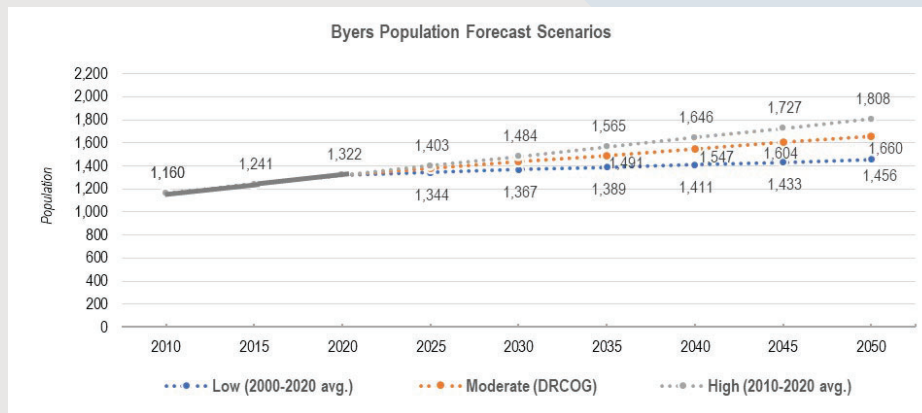
- Regional Context
- Environment
 - Focus on West Bijou Creek and the impacts of the 100-year floodplain, also playa lake feature
- History timeline (introduction to Appendix A)
- Planning Area – location, description of West Bijoy Creek
- Demographics
- Population Growth scenarios



Population Growth Scenarios

Three Scenarios

- **Low Growth** – based on the 7% rate from 2000-2025 (much lower than Bennett (42%), Strasburg (136%), and Deer Trail (79%))
- **Moderate Growth** – based on DRCOG Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs) model
- **High Growth** – based on the 14% rate from 2010-2020



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

2020
Census

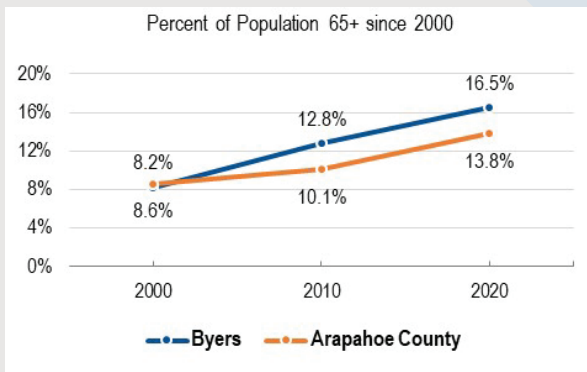
Demographics



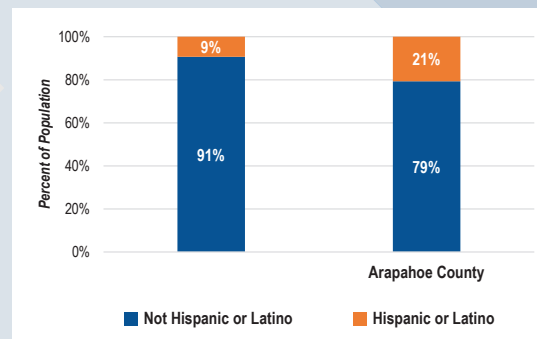
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Age: Median age is 38.9 years, older than the County's median age of 36.6. years

Race and Ethnicity: 88% is White compared to 60% for Arapahoe County. Hispanic population is 9% compared to 21% for the County

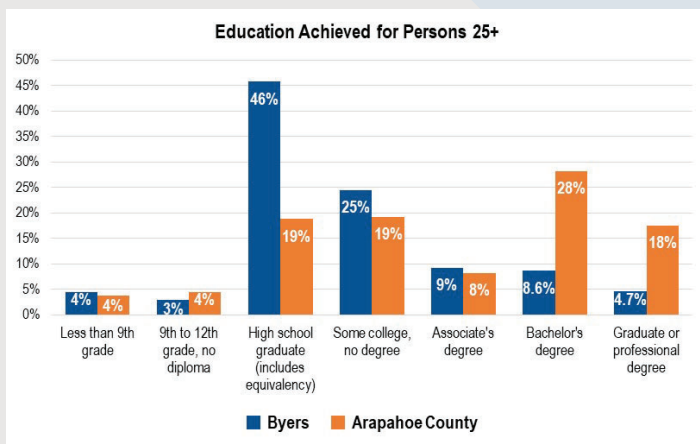


The 65+ population of Byers more than doubled between 2000 and 2020.



Education and Income

Median Household Income: \$88,607 in Byers, which is less than \$97,215 for Arapahoe County
Due to the small population of Byers, there is a wide margin of error, which is shown in the chart below.



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

3. Vision and Themes



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Vision:

- Vision statement and themes were derived from the surveys and the open house comments
- Survey and several open-ended questions – respondents provided thoughtful answers

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.



3. Vision and Themes

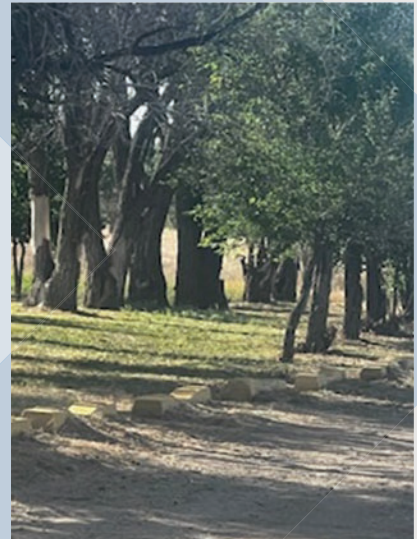


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Themes:

The themes and vision statement formed the basis for the goals, policies and actions:

1. **Preserve Rural and Small-Town Character**
2. **Managed and Controlled Growth**
3. **Attract Small Businesses and Amenities**
4. **Community Beautification and Infrastructure Improvements**
5. **Sense of Community and Quality of Life for Families and Seniors**



4. Land Use, Development, and Housing



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11 Land Use categories:

- Two mixed-use categories were added to identify specific allowable uses (Mixed Use Entertainment (MU-E) and Mixed Use Industrial (MU-I))
- Town Center area was reduced from the previous Plan to apply to the commercial core R
- Residential land use categories are mostly unchanged
- Other categories were refined, names changed

Land Use Category	Intent	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, townhouse, triplex, and small-scale multiplex. Secondary uses can include places of worship, civic and cultural facilities.	Lots less than 1 acre
Residential Single Family, Detached RSF1+	Primary use is single-family detached dwellings. Secondary uses can include places of worship, civic and cultural facilities.	Lots greater than 1 acre
Town Center TC	Uses include a mix of residential, commercial, 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 and attached and detached, restaurants, retail, office, medical, hospitality, convenience retail, gasoline sales, and EV charging.	Maximum height of 40 ft.
Mixed Use - Entertainment MU-E	Uses include a range of residential and commercial uses including family attached and detached, retail, office, medical, hospitality, and restaurant, as well as meeting halls, concert and entertainment venues.	
Mixed Use - Industrial MU-I	Primary uses include retail, office, light industrial, small-scale manufacturing, indoor storage, warehousing and distribution. Secondary uses can include convenience stores, 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.	

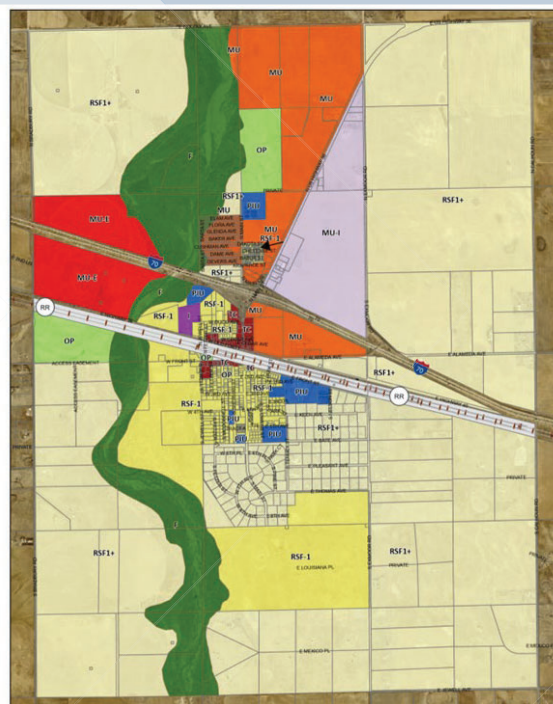


4. Land Use, Development, and Housing

11 Land Use categories:

Byers Sub Area Future Land Use

	RSF-1	Residential Single Family, Attached & Detached
	RSF1+	Residential single Family detached
	MU	Mixed Use
	MU-E	Mixed Use - Entertainment
	MU-I	Industrial
	TC	Town Center
	I	Industrial
	PIU	Public, Institutional & Utility
	OP	Open Space & Parks
	F	Floodplain
	RR	Railroad



4. Land Use, Development, and Housing



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

Key Takeaways and Findings

- **Opposition to growth.** A majority of residents are opposed to large-scale, rapid residential growth. They frequently cite loss of small-town feel, and strained infrastructure.
- **Fear of "urbanization."** Residents value the current quiet, rural atmosphere.
- **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.
- **Concerns about agriculture and infrastructure.** Residents are concerned that new housing will take away from agricultural land.

How the Plan addresses what was heard

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

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



5. Transportation and Mobility



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Key Takeaways and Findings

- **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

Goal 5.1: Improve and Maintain the Local Road Infrastructure.

Goal 5.2: Enhance Safety and Connectivity.

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

Goal 5.4: Improve Pedestrian and Bicyclist Mobility throughout Byers.



6. Parks, Open Space, and Recreation



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Key Takeaways and Findings

- **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
- **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.
- **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.
- **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

Goal 6.1: Establish a Network of Trails and Open Spaces.

Goal 6.2: Improve Existing Parks and Develop New Recreation Facilities.

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



7. Community Facilities and Infrastructure



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PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

Key Takeaways and Findings

- **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.



How the Plan addresses what was heard

Goal 7.1: Enhance Public Safety.

Goal 7.2: Improve the Stormwater Management Conditions.



8. Economic Development and Tourism



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

Key Takeaways and Findings

- **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.** Much of the employment growth along the I-70 corridor will continue to be to the west and the population growth for Byers is likely to be moderate growth.
- **More restaurants and services are needed.** The community voiced a preference for more restaurants and other services, particularly for day-to-day needs.
- **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.
- **Commuting time is long.** Most people commute to jobs outside of Byers.

How the Plan addresses what was heard

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

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



9. Heritage and Community Identity



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
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Key Takeaways and Findings

- **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.

How the Plan addresses what was heard

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

Goal 9.2: Integrate Heritage into Community and Economic Development.

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

Goal 9.4: Inform the Community about Byers' History.



10. Implementation



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Implementation:

- Regular review and updates
- Regular use of the plan
- Identify funding sources for the actions
- Action Matrix
 - Compiles all the actions from the Chapters
 - Identifies priority level, timeline (short-, mid-, long-term, and ongoing)
 - Provides a schematic of cost (\$,\$\$,,\$\$,\$\$)

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 Byers' 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	\$
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	\$



Next Steps



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

This presentation was for information for the Planning Commission. Planning Commission's comments on the Plan are welcome.

Next Steps:

- BOCC study session on September 23
- Open house at the Kelter Library on **October 2**
- Four-week public review period
- **Planning Commission Public Hearing on November 18**
- **BOCC Public Hearing on December 9**





ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS





Byers Subarea Plan Update

Community Survey #1 Summary Report

November 7, 2023

This report is a summary of the first engagement action with residents, property owners, and business owners in the Byers study area. The comments from the survey have helped to identify what the respondents consider important for the future of Byers. The survey findings are one of many inputs County staff will reference when drafting the update to the Byers Subarea Plan.

The survey was posted on the Arapahoe County website and was open from September 8 to October 6, 2023. People in the study area were notified by postcard and also by social media such as NextDoor. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete and consisted of 36 questions (23 closed and 13 open-ended), including two demographic questions.

Who responded?

In total, 115 people completed the survey. The responses were analyzed and the open-ended responses were themed so that they also could be quantified.

The majority of the respondents were Byers' residents and property owners. The age group that provided the most responses (28 percent) was in the 55 to 64-year-old category. The second group that provided the most responses (19.5 percent) was in the 35 to 44-year-old age group.

What we heard

From both the closed and open-ended questions, the respondents strongly felt that the small-town and rural character of Byers is important and should be preserved for the future. There was limited support for growth and an increased population.

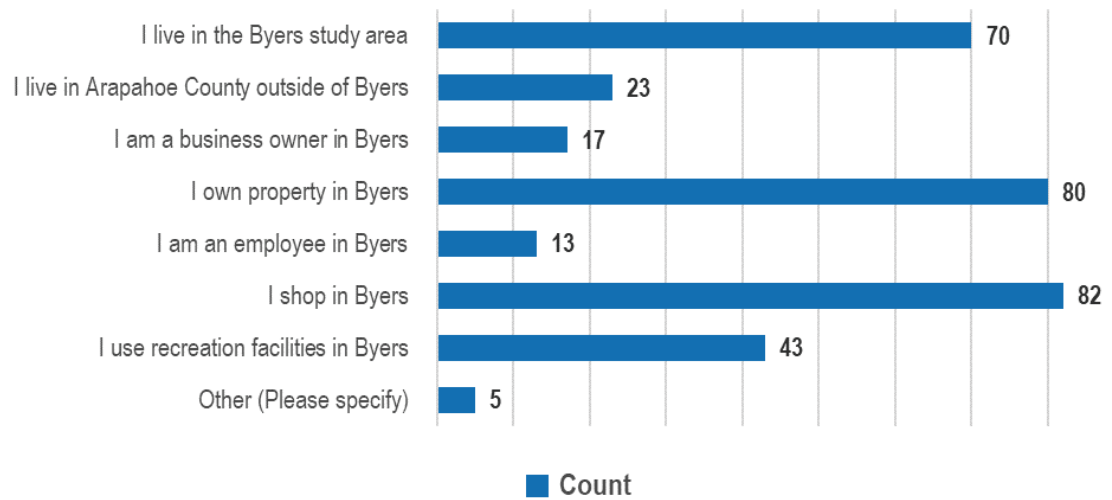


Since there were several open-ended questions with many responses, there is a section after the survey question that summarizes the comments, often with a word cloud. The conversation icon indicates that there is a summary of responses.

How is this survey important?

The results of the survey will be used to identify the guiding principles for the subarea plan which will be used to develop the updated Byers Subarea Plan

1. Do you live, work or shop in Byers? Select as many as apply.



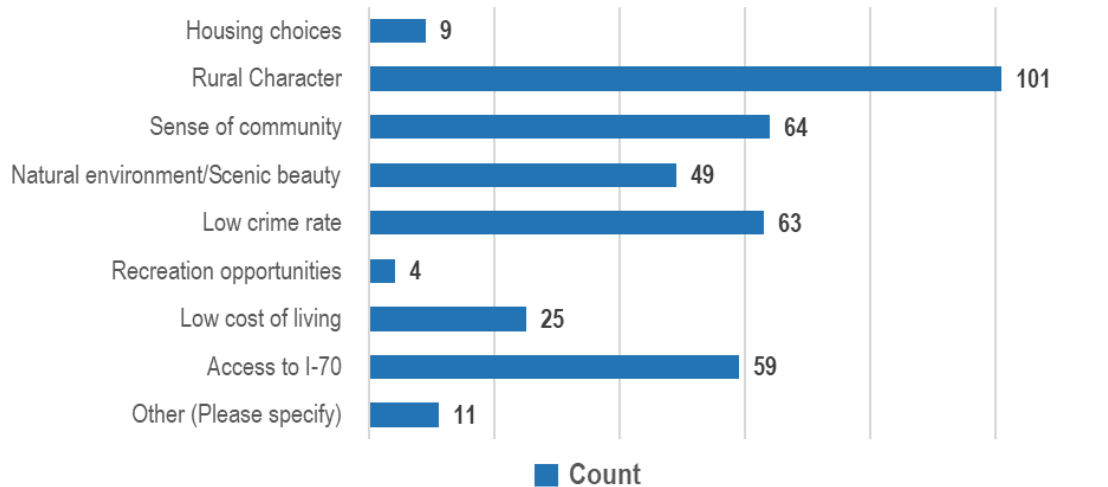
Value	Percent	Count
I live in the Byers study area	21.0%	70
I live in Arapahoe County outside of Byers	6.9%	23
I am a business owner in Byers	5.1%	17
I own property in Byers	24.0%	80
I am an employee in Byers	3.9%	13
I shop in Byers	24.6%	82
I use recreation facilities in Byers	12.9%	43
Other (Please specify)	1.5%	5
Total	100.0%	333

Other (Comments)	Count
Born and raised in Byers all my life.	1
Hunt near byers	1
I use a business in Byers	1
My Kids go to school in Byers	1
The map was not shown but I live in Byers	1
Totals	5



To start the survey, people were asked if they lived in Byers or the surrounding area, and if they used various facilities in Byers. People could provide more than one answer, but the top three responses were shopping in Byers, owning property in Byers, and living in the study area.

2. What are Byers' greatest assets? Please choose up to three.



Value	Percent	Count
Housing choices	2.3%	9
Rural Character	26.2%	101
Sense of community	16.6%	64
Natural environment/Scenic beauty	12.7%	49
Low crime rate	16.4%	63
Recreation opportunities	1.0%	4
Low cost of living	6.5%	25
Access to I-70	15.3%	59
Other (Please specify)	2.9%	11
Totals	100.0%	385

Other (Comments)	Count
A good school	1
Close proximity to Denver	1
It used to be that it was FAR from the city! Best thing about it.	1
Light traffic and quiet	1

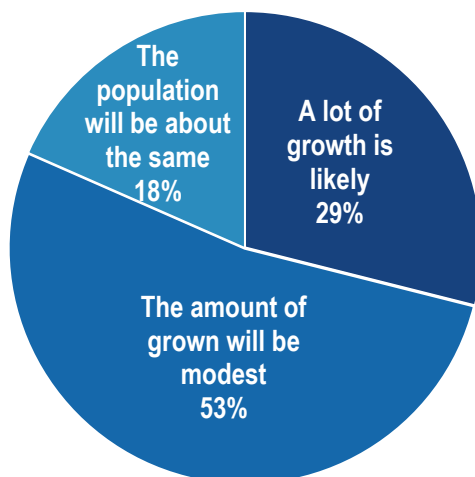
Low population	1
Not expanding as neighboring towns, with high density housing	1
Not many subdivisions or Californians moving here....	1
School	1
Strong ties to Agriculture	1
We have our own grocery store and pharmacy, including gas station.	1
We wanted out of the city, that's why we moved to Byers	1
Totals	11



Rural character was identified by the respondents as the most important asset they value about living or owning property in Byers, and this is followed by the related appreciation of sense of community and a low crime rate. There was a range of responses to the “Other “ category:

- Good school
- Small population, quiet, and with supporting retail (e.g., grocery store)
- Strong ties to agriculture.

3. During the past several years, Byers' population has increased by about seven percent, which is a much more modest growth rate than in Bennett, Strasburg and Deer Trail. How much do you believe Byers is likely to grow during the next 10 to 20 years?



Value	Percent	Count
A lot of growth is likely	28.7%	33
The amount of grown will be modest	53.0%	61
The population will be about the same	18.3%	21
Totals	100.0%	115



Almost 82 percent of the respondents expect Byers' population to grow over the next 20 years, but the majority (53 percent) expect the amount of growth to be modest. Interestingly, 29 percent of the respondents felt that a lot of population growth is likely.

4. What are the most pressing issues for Byers? Please choose up to five.



Value	Percent	Count
Lack of housing options	4.3%	18
Preserving small-town character	22.1%	92
Lack of water	7.9%	33
Lack of local restaurants and businesses	9.8%	41
Protecting the creek corridor and other wildlife habitat	14.4%	60
Lack of community services	7.7%	32
Unmanaged growth	7.4%	31
Cost of living	7.4%	31
Public safety (and crime)	8.2%	34
Lack of employment opportunities	7.7%	32
Other (Please specify)	3.1%	13
Totals	100.0%	417

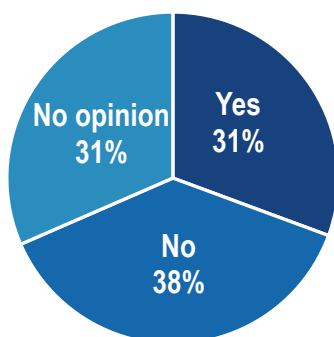
Other (Comments)	Count
Cleaning up the community , at the interstate ramps, at the bank and grocery store. Trash and mowing needs to be consistent	1

Housing for lower income families. Operating agricultural and rural businesses growth governed by metro area of the county who do not understand the lifestyle and local issues governed by pop	1
Keeping population growth to a minimum	1
Lack of Hiring Businesses	1
Lack of adequate medical care.	1
Lack of any sort of recycling; lack of any type of mass transit into the metro area; lack of any sidewalks or areas where one can walk without being beside a road; lack of adult recreation;	1
Lack of public recreation land/facilities.	1
Lack of recreational facilities for youth outside of school	1
Nothing it's great the way it is leave our small town alone	1
Our County can't even take care of mowing! Our town looks awful and what does look good and mowed, is taken care of by elderly residents!	1
The fact that people are trying to make our small town community into something it never should have been	1
lack of town maintenance ie trees, weeds and bushes growing out into streets	1
Totals	12



The top three pressing issues identified by the respondents were preserving the small-town character, protecting the creek corridor and other wildlife habitats, and the lack of local restaurants and businesses. Comments in the “Other” category included mowing of grassed areas, housing for lower-income families, lack of recreation facilities for adults and youth, and lack of adequate medical care.

5. Do you think there should be more employment opportunities in Byers?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	31.3%	35
No	37.5%	42
No opinion	31.3%	35
Totals	100.0%	112



The responses for “Yes”, “No”, and “No opinion” were almost equally divided. If the responses for “No” and “No opinion” are added together, 69 percent of the respondents were not supportive of more or new employment opportunities in the town.

6. If yes, what types of employment would you like to see?

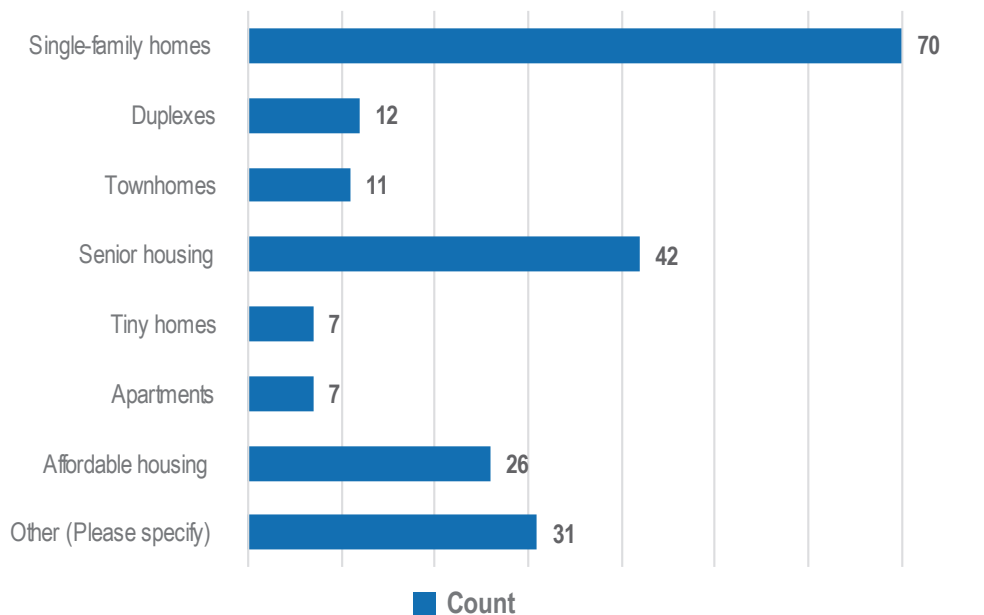
Responses
NONE
1. Rec center... that would be manned and have two divisions; 5th gr age and under...and a different area for older kids. Arcade type things 2. Adjoining a candy or ice cream coffee shop 3. A business that would be a clean to the area, small employment —10-20 employees .
Anything!
Hospitality Entertainment Recreation
Small business
Small business. Hardware, auto, cleaners, small engine repair, ice cream shop.. jobs for youth, assisted living for elderly, lawn and garden store..
Employment for seniors to add to social security income.
walmart restaurants dental office coffee shops
Na
Skilled
Better paying jobs so don't have to commute to Denver
Any would help
Opportunities for teens Jobs that pay well and provide decent reasonable cost benefits
I feel like Byers employs enough residents
More services such as mental health care and wellness services.
I would like to see smaller locally owned businesses succeed and be able to employ local families. I would not like to see large corporations or chain businesses in Byers.
More shops
Anything legal
any
Automotive repair service Restaurants Outdoor recreation Engineering services Firearms dealers Local vendors / craft industries
Businesses Restaurants Gas Stations Hourly workers Large Grocery Store
All auto or diesel repair shop.
Recreation, manufacturing, warehouse, other opportunities that don't require long commutes.
Businesses where teenagers and single moms can work.
Any sort of employment that would keep young people in the area without having to commute.
Professional services Not restaurant.

Value	Percent	Count
Excellent	14.0%	16
Good	37.7%	43
Fair	35.1%	40
Poor	11.4%	13
No opinion	1.8%	2
Totals	100.0%	114



The majority of the respondents (52 percent) felt that the types of existing housing in Byers were either excellent or good. Eleven percent of the respondents felt that the range of existing housing options in Byers was poor.

8. What kind of housing options would you like to see in Byers in the future? (Select all that apply)



Value	Percent	Count
Single-family homes	34.0%	70
Duplexes	5.8%	12
Townhomes	5.3%	11
Senior housing	20.4%	42
Tiny homes	3.4%	7
Apartments	3.4%	7

Affordable housing	12.6%	26
Other (Please specify)	15.0%	31
Totals	100.0%	206

Other (Please specify)	Count
None	7
A house that I can actually afford that's not a trailer house.	1
Acreage homes only, keep it as a small, country town	1
Farms and ranch lands keep all the city growth in Denver	1
Farm acreage	1
Hobby farms	1
Less building	1
NONE!	1
No more	1
No more growth	1
No more housing	1
No new building	1
No new housing unless land is purchased from the owner	1
None I want the town to stay small	1
None keep agricultural farms	1
None leave Byers alone and let us still be a small town. Not everything needs to grow huge. This is the live we wanted so please don't change our town.. we love our small town	1
None of the above	1
None. Leave it the way it is	1
Nothing	1
Really don't need a lot of new housing	1
Single family homes on 40 or more acres	1
no more new homes	1
Totals	28



In order to find out what types of housing may be missing or desirable in Byers, respondents were given the option of selecting more than one desirable housing type. Almost all of the respondents provided two options. The preferred option was single-family housing (34 percent) followed by senior housing (20.4 percent), the “Other” category (15 percent), and affordable housing (12.6 percent).

In the “Other” category, the majority of comments were for no more housing or growth.

9. If you have any additional comments regarding housing and residential uses, please provide them below.

Response
We have a low crime rate and want to keep it that way do not change our town it's small and our town likes it this way!!
I own a house in Byers that we bought for our daughter and grandkids, we live in Strasburg, the amount of growth and issues with the new kids in the school system and the amount of crime came with the growth here in Strasburg, I pray the people of Byers learned from watching Bennett and Strasburgs mistakes and stop the growth, stay a small town and close community
Senior complex, with golf cart access to the store, or post office, or coffee shop. Age 55 and up could live there, with single and couple units.
Would love for the community or someone to take down DEAD unsightly trees and condemn VACANT homes and REMOVE or refurbish.
Current population has zero respect for private property. Trespassing is a constant issue.
Worried about how growth will impact our water supply
No subsidized housing
We do not want large neighborhoods! Bennett put in all these homes and now the crime is through the roof and we have minimal access to groceries
No single family. To keep the small town and safety.. only choice
We would not like to see much growth in housing for Byers, but single family homes would be the only option.
Safety is an issue, the new restaurant at main and hwy36 has created a traffic nightmare that needs a four way or roundabout , parked cars have created low visibility and traffic comes out if the liquor store and restaurant with not stops or warnings
Byers is wonderful just the way it is!
Don't really need a lot of new housing. Where no HOA exists, home occupants need to be allowed chickens, mini cow/goats, and other food opportunities
Byers needs to keep the small town living that it is. No houses should be built, just going to drive up the crime rate and make it unaffordable for us that live here as well as ruin the rural atmosphere we have.
No keep my small town just the way it is we don't want the city out here
We are not an area that needs more housing. By building and allowing more people out the area is being destroyed and character of the people coming out is less then desirable.
I would not like to see more houses being built it will take away from our small town and agriculture
Some housing is needed but not an explosion like what happened in Bennett.
No more growth
Leave the farm land and stop building
Keep Byers small do not turn us into Bennett
Keep multi family housing out of Byers's

I would like to see more affordable single family homes and less luxury single family homes. More smaller 3 bed and 2 bath, less 6 bed and 4 bath.
Can we just get the housing market not to be stupid!?!
Leave it the way it is. Let one small town on the corridor stay small.
No more growth!
Please NO put affordable housing in Byers! It would be nice to have a walking path in scenic areas and/or a designated area for ATVs.
I like Byers the way it is. Open space and quiet!
Especially important would be an apartment complex so young people could access affordable housing.
I believe moderate growth to the housing sector in Byers would be best. I would not like to see a rapid growth in housing such as what has taken place in Bennett and Deertrail.
Please don't let developers build houses so close together. Have at least 20 feet between each home.
A tap on growth to keep the small town feel. Single homes and maybe Senior housing,
Water tap availability
Stop trying to being the city to our wonderful small town. Byers doesn't new or want the growth nor is it sustainable. Stop pushing agriculture out of an agricultural community.
Byers is a wonderful small quiet place to call home. I don't want to see that be lost like it has been in the town of Bennett.
Would not want low income housing - government housing especially not. There are enough of those types of housing closer to Denver
Please do not build huge subdivision like bennett, Strasburg and Deer Trail. We do not need crime rates to go up!
Very little affordable housing options for seniors and low income.
I do NOT want to see massive apartment buildings built here or low income housing projects
Leave the small towns alone! I chose to live in my small town because it is small town living. You don't get that from the places that are going up so cheaply. WE ARE NOT CALIFORNIA STOP TRYING TO MAKE IT THAT WAY. If I wanted to live in a place like Denver I would have moved. There is no good that will come to us small town folks with developments of any sorts.
I would like it to remain the same. If housing had to happen I would prefer single family homes only.
Byers needs to remain primarily rural. We do not need high density housing.



The overarching theme from the comments is no growth, and if there is housing, it should be single-family housing. There were some comments about what could be desirable:

- Trails in scenic areas
- A designated area for ATVs
- Affordable housing for young people
- Some moderate growth in housing could be desirable
- Byers should not turn into Bennett
- No large apartment building or low-income housing

This word cloud below summarizes the most popular responses.

Offices	3.9%	11
Medical facilities	10.7%	30
Industrial	3.9%	11
Other (Please specify)	16.4%	46
Totals	100.0%	280

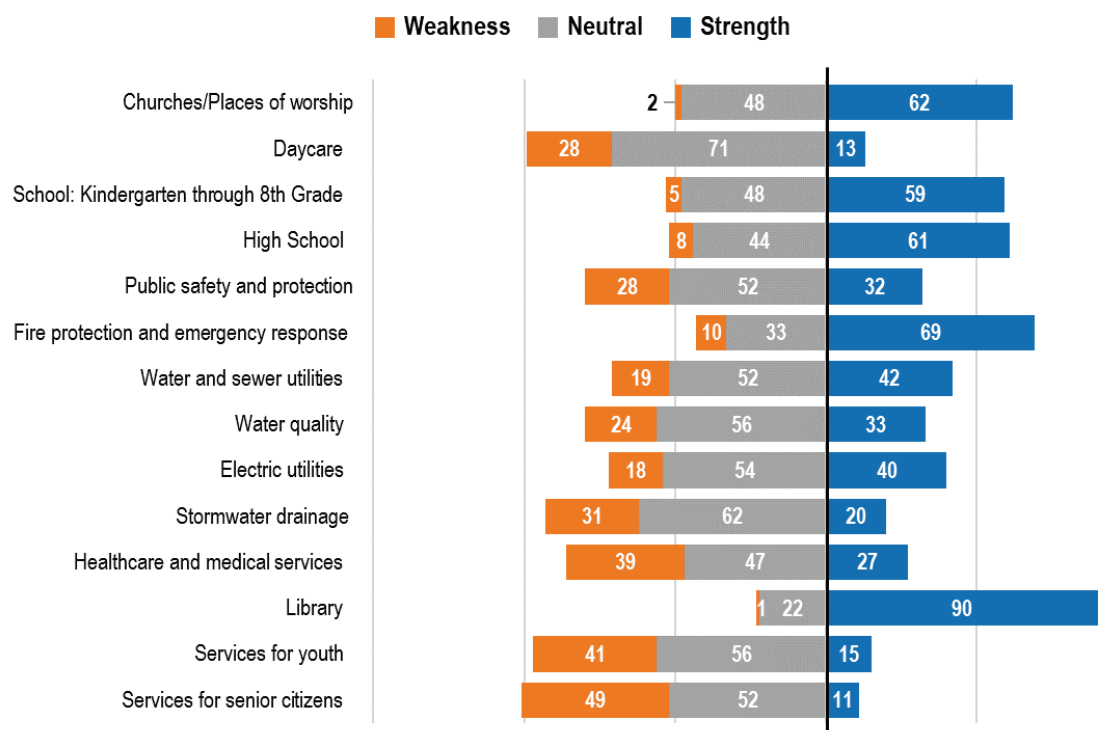
Other (Comments)	Count
None	13
None of the above	2
Childcare	1
Any type that would benefit Byers Community	1
Byers is perfect as is	1
Campground with water park	1
Distribution warehousing	1
Dollar stores	1
Grocery store	1
Grocery store	1
Maybe clean up the areas of Byers that need attention instead of building new stuff	1
Maybe just a couple fast food options	1
NONE	1
NOTHING!	1
None	1
None Bennett has it all	1
None of the above	1
None of the above.	1
None!	1
None! We are rural for a reason and want to stay small! We have enough water for what we have and smaller is better!	1
None really	1
Not a thing my little town is perfect just the way it is !!!	1
Not sure.	1
Nothing	1
Recreation and/ or community center	1
Recreation center for teens	1

Recreational fields, gyms, club	1
We are good the way we are	1
none of choices appeal	1
Total	42



For this question, respondents could provide up to five preferences for development. The desired types, in order of preference, were restaurants, personal services, and residential. In the “other” category, childcare, recreation facilities, campground, and grocery store were identified.

11. When considering existing community facilities and services in Byers, please identify if each of the following is a strength or weakness in Byers today. That is, if you're satisfied with what is provided or if you think there is a need for improvement.



The chart above shows the number of responses for each category. There was a total of 111 to 112 responses, depending on the category. The library, fire protection and emergency response, churches/places of worship, and the high school were ranked as strengths for Byers.

Areas where there is a need for improvement were ranked, in order, as services for senior citizens, services for youth, health care and medical services, and stormwater drainage.

12. If you have any comments regarding community facilities and services, please provide them below.

Response
Recreation Facilities for Families and Seniors should be closer to residential areas.
Byers water STAYS in Byers.
More rec options for the community. Trails, track or fitness center
Byers has nonexistent community recreation.
Yeah, four way stop needed at main amd hiway 36
Byers is wonderful in community services, no improvement is needed.
Rec center, gym
Most of the services available to seniors & community members in need are available through contacts at the library; however,most people don't know that.
there should be a Rec center to keep the community united.
Leave the town alone.
I do not want to see Byers grow like all of the other towns on the corridor. We have what we need and do not need more houses built. Looking at the map it would take a ton of our agricultural needs away by expanding in any direction
No more growth
Byers small town environment is amazing. But the bullying in the schools and community is utterly ridiculous . Even administrators in the school some are bullies
Need a better Catholic church.
Need transportation options, especially for elderly and disabled. Home health care services!
It would be nice to have a recreational center for youth and maybe a community center in the same area for families and retired. Also, we need better health care. Lincoln County opened a facility next to Byers elementary and put my doctor out of business. I don't understand why they don't consolidate with others in this area especially when the doctors in the Byers clinic only gone on certain days and can't administer immunizations.
There are many low income families in Byers that need financial and mental health services. There is also a complete lack of alternative health services such as chiropractic/ massage/ physical therapy. Finally there are no insurance agents realtors etc. some office space would be ideal.
A senior center and/or senior housing facility is needed.
We are great as is. Leave us alone!
A Byers community center would be a good place for everyone to enjoy.
Transportation for the elderly is a need.
It would be great to have a Sr. Center
We lack community facilities and have no services for senior citizens- especially services that would allow seniors to stay in their own homes.
Recreation Centers for children and youth

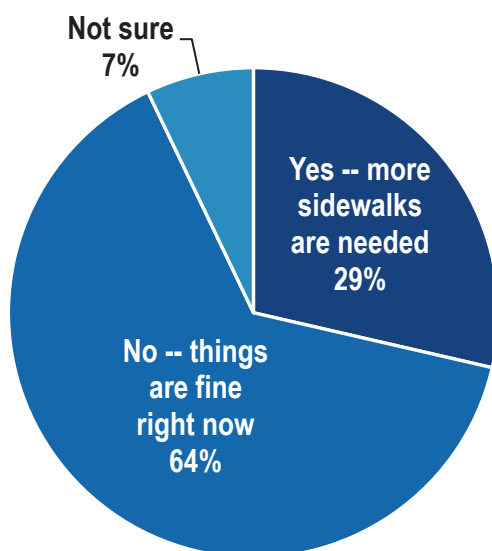
The Library is a great asset and community hub for the town. There are not a lot of options for senior activities or services. Not enough jobs in the area keeps Byers a bedroom town.

[illegible]

Response
Sidewalks
No
I do like that there is a plan for an emergency pathway in the works for getting around train traffic!
Transportation between the towns and into Aurora
Light rail to the airport.
Bustang to Denver area
The van carpool that you see from other towns
The dirt roads are not adequately maintained. The washboard and loose gravel destroy vehicles.
No. Because it just makes higher taxes so no
Roadway repairs in the Ranchwood Subdivision.
Yes, four way stop or roundabout at main and hi way 36 large enough for semi and school busses
Byers roads are fine, no issues.

FILL THE CRACKS on S. Main St. in the Ranchwood development. Many of the cracks are 3-4 wide and at least that deep clear across the street. These same cracks have been there since 2017 at the very least.
carpool lot - use to park at Byers General, new owners say No! More!
Senior transportation
Carpool,
Fixing potholes on the highway
Roadway improvement
No
NO
The on-ramp to i70 westbound needs fixed and the huge bump when exiting i70 eastbound
It would be nice if they actually used our tax money to keep the existing roads nice.
I70 between byers and deer trail is horrific.
No
Cleaning up existing road ways of dead trees and debris
None
Highway 36 amd main st intersection . Since Shooters has been busy (awesome) it has become a dangerous intersection.
Some road improvements
None
Just in general better care for our roads. There are a lot of pot holes.
Maybe more sidewalks?
Roadway improvement, public transportation options and services
The entire state of Colorado needs road improvement.
Street lights out of ally moved to front yard and new led lights don't put out enough light I got one it sucks , there's no sidewalks for people, roads need repair
Additional in town access from north to south. Having to go out of town when there is a train could end badly in an medical or fire emergency. Some type of commuter service to Aurora and DIA
No concerns at this time
No concerns
Many commute to the metro area for work. A carpool or bus option might be helpful
No
No buy a darn car this is how homeless people end up in towns
Over all roads is in need to top priority of things needed.
Roadway

14. As is typical in a rural community, Byers has few sidewalks. Do you think sidewalks are important for pedestrians and should certain streets have new and/or upgraded sidewalks?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes -- more sidewalks are needed	28.3%	32
No -- things are fine right now	64.6%	73
Not sure	7.1%	8
Totals	100.0%	113



This question was asked to gauge the support for more sidewalks, but the response was that the roads are fine (without sidewalks) as they are now.

15. What type of recreational opportunities, including parks, open spaces, trails, or bike routes do you think are needed in Byers?

Response
Give the kids a motorcycle track so they have a place to go have fun and not be driving on the streets
Bike paths..they don't have to be concrete , but wide enough for mower or snow removal
None
Open Space, Trails
Community pool, dog park
Sidewalks on the main streets. Open trails. Rec center for fitness. Running track

Trails along the creek for walking and bike riding
All of the above!
Open spaces and trails.
Swimming pool
Horse trails
We have a park and certainly do NOT need bike routes!!
Gym, pool, open spaces
none. Currently adequate
Dispensary
Swimming pool
Trails
More open spaces and trails
Rec Center large park and trails for walking dogs or going for a run parks for kids to play some basketball courts or fields
Nothing
Off road trails, trails for walking or riding horses.
Open spaces with trails.
It's perfect, just as it is.
None
Tennis and pickle ball courts.
Trails and open space would be great.
None
We are good
Swimming pool.
None we have a beautiful park
Anything for older kids
None
None
Having a few trails would be nice.
More parks. Maybe a trail.
More. Parks are too hot to do anything at, fields are run down outside of school, nothing beside library and schools available to you to hang out.
Open spaces and trails
More open space

None
Open space, trails
All the above people race down street from up by library don't stop for stop signs
Walking trails
Open spaces, trails, bike routes or ATV routes
None right now
Upgrading recreational and or fitness opportunities at Quint Valley would be really great. A bike trail through the creek bottom from the center of town to quint valley area would be a fun and safe option
Dog park!
None
I think Quint Valley facilities are progressing and are meeting the needs of the population right now.
Just make any developer have a park and/or open space within the development
Open spaces
open spaces and trails would be nice but not if they won't be kept up. the park looks awful, and the planning was poor. the street can't even be used for two cars to go down, when cars are parked at the hardware store because it's so narrow now.
Do not know
all that needs to happen is the Byers rec needs to step up and do their jobs
would be nice to have a real rec center
A recreation center would be wonderful. Bike routes connecting Bennett strasburg and byers together would be a welcome addition.
None. Leave the community the way it is.
There is a Park and this is the country - until you have more people living in the community you don't need to spend taxes on open spaces and definitely do not try to use farm land for this purpose. The old Hwy 40 makes for a good bike route - if the speed limit was monitored
I think there should be a track for dirt bikes or atvs or off road activities for the community.
Pickle Ball, mini golf, indoor gym or workout facility
open space
A swimming pool and rec center. There is NOTHING along the corridor except in Bennett and it is outrageously expensive for non residents. This would need to be an Arapahoe county facility like is in Aurora and Centennial.
A park with walking/jogging/biking trails
We have a park but no trails, and no place to walk. There are no bike trails and no shoulders on the roads—which makes riding a bike hazardous for all citizens. There are no fitness programs for adults.
None
Single Family Housing first then trails and bike routes
None.
Parks

Flood zones
No, it is a great community now. Changes will make it worse.
Park and Rec district/quint valley. Park and rec does a horrible job with upkeep and community engagement
no
Property owners cleaning up Businesses being run in residential areas
Police coverage. County land/weed maintenance
None
The sewage ponds for the town stink way too often-near the Royal Mobile Home Park. The streets for the Royal Mobile Home Park need to be county maintained like all the other streets in town-so the residence can get mail delivery instead of being forced to have to pay for a PO Box-the price of which keeps going up.
NO
Na
No.
Yes, the trailer park by Sinclair and the house near the junkyard are horrible
No
The highway 36 and main st. intersection.
Schools. Trailer parks
None
The area next to the public park/playground is a bit run down and could use some attention. Near the school maybe more sidewalks. More parking for the Catholic church (bigger church too) that trailer park north of Byers is super bad... ick
Roadway improvement
No
Park amenities bathroom, basket ball court , parking is wired , and doesn't seem to be any place for dogs to play
Water system, roads
Trailer parks need attention to be brought back to where they were back in the 70's and early 80's.
Just health care
None right now
There seems to be a lot of drug use in the area. Support services and education could be critical for overall health of the community
No the town is good the way it is
There are many areas that could be improved in small ways but no specific area for major improvement.
A bit better clean up of Byers and the surrounding areas.
the intersection of main street and the small highway by Shooters needs a four-way stop sign now that people are parking along the side of the road. it's too hard to see when you are trying to cross.

parks and ballfields
yes no one maintains the roads as far as sight distance. weeds and trees have grown out into the roadways impeding sight distance and this is very dangerous
Down town needs more local retail.
No.
As I said before - needs improvement in allowing additional businesses to start up and grow. Arapahoe County tries to stifle this growth especially through slow processes for changing zoning and permit approvals
I think there needs to be another private trailer park for lower income families.
More businesses for employment
park maintenance
On-ramp to I 70 westbound. There is a yield sign there that very few people pay attention to. Get flashing lights around that sign so people see it. Trim the "trees" and bushes growing around the stop sign at Byers General, take down all the dead and dying trees around town, get that county office building built. I was told by an Arapahoe county rep that the building of that facility was delayed because a new health department was developed. BUT!!! The funds used for that did not seem to come from "in town" sacrifices having to be made, just out here. Open up that DMV facility for walk ins, the appointment only crap needs to end!
All the areas I've commented on already.
Byers is fine just the way it is. Thank you.
Trailer park
Street maintenance
Street maintenance.
Main Street and Hwy36 needs a better traffic turn with the businesses building up and blocking sight lines. Majority of town is serviced by volunteer landscapers. When they stop doing it, we will need regular mowing of our public areas.
like, genuinely anywhere. pick somewhere, and if it isn't the library or shooters it's probably run down and bad
Yes the entire town needs better mowing and vegetation practices!
Things have improved



The most frequently mentioned area in Byers that needs improvement is roadway/street improvements (mentioned nine times), improvements to the trailer park (mentioned seven times), and more businesses such as retail, which could offer more employment opportunities (mentioned four times).

The word cloud below summarizes the most frequent responses.



17. What is your vision for Byers for the next 10 years?

Response
To live in peace and keep our small town lifes
Continue to be a small town with minimal growth
To improve in having a cleaner look, and be inviting for small businesses to come here, and for senior people to have not to travel out of Byers to have their needs met .
Cleaning up the town!
Minimal growth so that our town does not turn into Bennett
Water District deliver Water North of I-70. Development North of I-70. Minimum Traffic across Railroad Tracks.
Moderate sustainable growth
More small town character for business area.
More community interaction. Review the business area near the park
Moderate but well planned growth is my hope, but as we are only a "place" and not a town, I see no hope for controlled or planned growth
I hope it is still a very small town
Improve our roads and recreation opportunities to be at least slightly on par with what is offered in western Arapahoe country.
Maintain a small town with good people... yaknow the opposite of Bennett
To stay rural, single family,safe
To remain a small town and not be overran by real estate investors and commercial home builders.
Keep it small
My vision is that my town of Byers remains a nice, clean and quiet small town community. We have everything we need. I want it to stay as it is!
Community gathering (non-religious) Incentives for healthy living (gym, open spaces) Childcare preschool and early elementary being prioritized

moderate growth
Stay Just As It Is! Unfortunately some business ownership changes (i.e. Byers General & Guarantee Bank ownership changes) have not maintained the community ties those establishments once held - the small town bank & small town store are much more BIG TOWN organizations in a small town setting, detracting from rural community.
To keep it a small community. Too many city folks moving out. Cleaning up properties.
To remain small and private
To remain with small town feel
I moved to Byers 20 years ago for the rural lifestyle. I don't want it to turn into city ghetto
To be like Bennet with a large shopping, local stores, fast food stores, and new homes
Kept the way it is now
To stay just the way it is !!!
Slow growth-keeping the space and country charm. There are enough businesses very close by. Byers does not need to join the throng and over growth.
To stay the way it is. It's a nice place to live.
No growth, no development, keep that in town and leave us alone in the country!
To stay the way it is
For it to stay more of a rural community
To stay much as it is. No stop lights.
I'd like to see a few more businesses to make Byers a little more self sufficient but I don't want to lose my small town. Some growth is great but I would like to see it remain rural and agricultural
Leave it alone
Small business opportunities
Stay a quiet small little farm town
Hoping it stays where it is currently
To be the rural town that it was meant to be. No more subdivisions
To continue to be a rural, small town. I hope the growth that has been happening in Bennett, Strasburg, and Deertrail does not come to Byers. We need to preserve our small town charm.
Keep the small town
Stay small family oriented community
Stays the same
Small amounts of growth, focus on more improvement of what is already here (tidying places, renovations, tear down old unsafe buildings, replacing with better)
Keep small, affordable town. Helpful resources for elderly and disabled residents. Home health care, aging in place supports.
To keep small town America!!
Stay small

No growth
Better fire department, county roads improved city's lights better more resources for seniors, making people more aware of what's happening
No more houses
Managed growth, more options for shopping (food)
A self sufficient community
Leaving it just the same — wild life views. Just new medical facilities so we don't have to drive so far
To remain a small town with open space
To stay small with little growth. We are a close community
Have more business and services available so we do not have to travel to other towns. Provide more affordable housing options. Clean up the drug use
Keep small town feel.
15 to 20 percent growth of population with businesses and services keeping pace.
I see Byers as a great place to live and have your kids go to an excellent school with parents working outside Byers city limits. Byers needs to stay as a nice bedroom community to all the growth west of Byers.
Rural living maintained along with growth for more gas stations, restaurants, motel/hotel, community center for town activities for youth, and seniors.
Keep it as it is!
hopefully stays a small, rural town.
Acreage style homes but with water available
for it to stay exactly as it is now no new buildings, especially no housing developments
A growing place for small town America.
Small community existence without encroachment of suburban and city crime.
Definitely more growth in businesses - that brings taxes and income. Allow land to be rezoned easier to have additional subdivisions and businesses being built. Economy will then grow in a positive manner.
Make improvements, not to grow out of control.
More local business on Main St and Front St to attract more young people and additional housing options that fit within the rural community vibe will come with more employment opportunities.
slow growth
More businesses that are needed, how about a coffee shop, and I don't mean a drive through Starbucks!! No DOLLAR GENERAL!! Or other junk stores. Build a building for businesses, dental practice, urgent care facility, gas station that is not a Sinclair. Ban semi trucks from parking in that empty lot by the eastbound I 70 exit ramp, Build a recreation facility that has a swimming pool and a gym. Build a senior center. Do not build apartment buildings that are low income housing. Help us develop town infrastructure: town hall, chamber of commerce, mayor, town police precinct, etc. But keep in mind people move out here to avoid regulation so probably none of these would be approved of.
Modest growth. Stay unincorporated!
Keep the integrity of small town living in place while keeping the growth slow and steady. Therefore, allowing adequate changes to be made for slow growth with minimal struggles such as water concerns.

I would like to see more community based programs of any type, more recreation for adults, improvements which would allow for a healthier environment, and more help for seniors.
Not remain just a bedroom community.
Hopefully to keep it from turning into a suburbia and to keep our farm land from going extinct like in so much of America today.
No more housing More entertainment, activities, and jobs
Stay a small community
For it to stay a small town but for the community to maintain their properties better.
To continue to grow modestly with the ability to either incorporate, bring retail and more food options to town, better and affordable housing opportunities and more cohesion among corridor communication.
Keep it with the small town feel
it probably stays the exact same, but i would want way more businesses coming in and setting up.
To take care of what we have! Small growth, better vegetation practices! Helping our school not have over growth! Those who r here to take better pride in our community. If anything we need better recourses for our elderly and whip our so called rec board a faculties in shape
Slow growth on reasonable sized lots. No high density housing.
Stay the same for a small town.

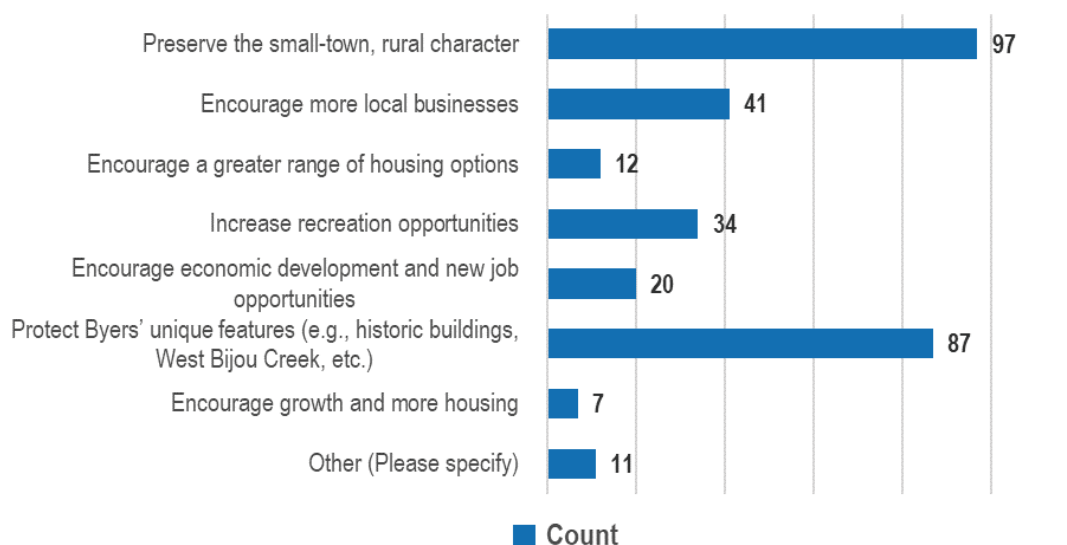


The vast majority of the respondents (52 out of the 86 responses) stated that their vision is for Byers to remain a small, rural town. Concerns were that growth would affect the schools and rural character of the town and impact the surrounding agricultural area. Seven of the respondents stated that some type of moderate or modest growth would be appropriate since more services such as stores and different housing opportunities would occur.

This word cloud below summarizes the most frequent responses.



18. What are your top three priorities for Byers?



Value	Percent	Count
Preserve the small-town, rural character	31.4%	97
Encourage more local businesses	13.3%	41
Encourage a greater range of housing options	3.9%	12
Increase recreation opportunities	11.0%	34
Encourage economic development and new job opportunities	6.5%	20
Protect Byers' unique features (e.g., historic buildings, West Bijou Creek, etc.)	28.2%	87
Encourage growth and more housing	2.3%	7
Other	3.6%	11
Total	100.0%	309

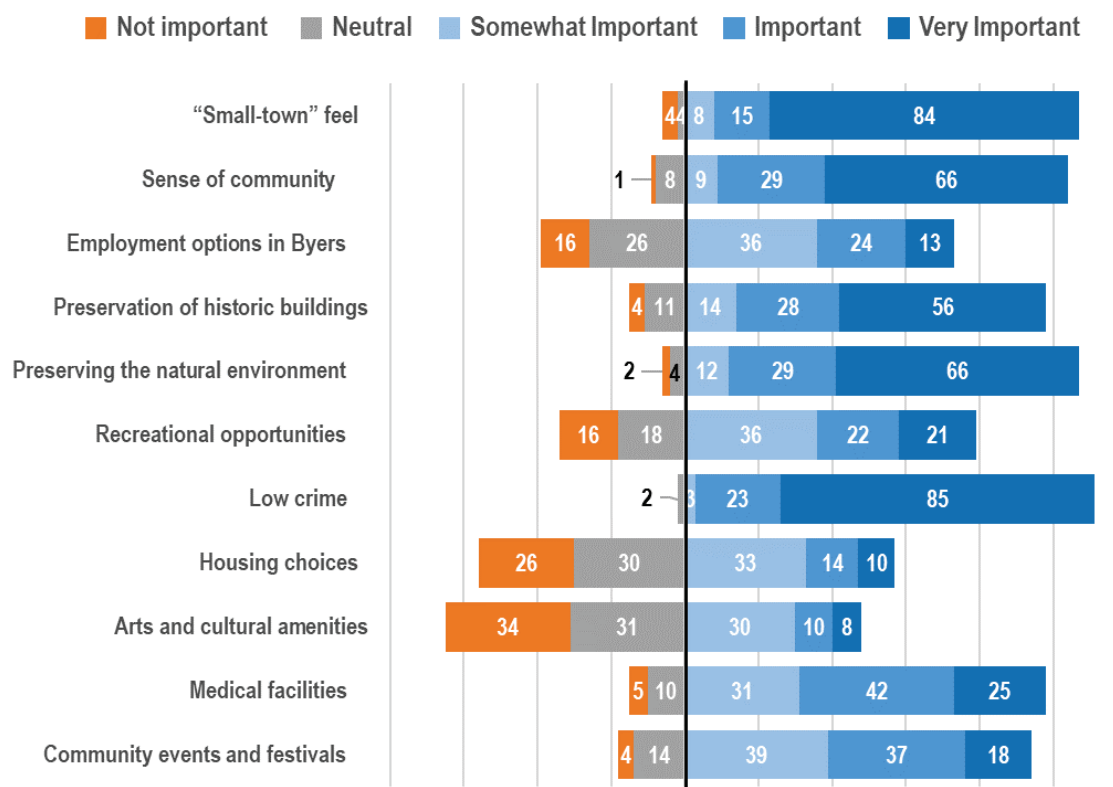


This is an important question to identify what the respondents feel are the most important priorities for the future of Byers. The top three priorities are:

- Preserve the small-town, rural character
- Protect Byers' unique features (e.g., historic buildings, West Bijou Creek, etc.)
- Encourage more local businesses.

In fourth place was "Increase recreation opportunities".

19. How important to you are the following characteristics of Byers?



Through this question, County staff wanted to better understand the relative importance of characteristics in Byers using a five-point scale to prioritize the characteristics. In the chart, characteristics that are somewhat important, important, and very important are right of the black line, and neutral and not important characteristics are to the left of the black line.

Under the "very important" classification, low crime and "small-town" feel were the two most important characteristics, followed closely by preserving the natural environment and sense of community. Also ranking high was the preservation of historic buildings.

The two categories that ranked the highest as "not important" were arts and cultural amenities and housing choices.

20. If you have any additional comments on other characteristics that are important to you, please provide them below.

Response
Byers has everything that is important to me!
We have a medical facility in Byers I feel like it's substantial for our community
Please leave the "city life" and growth out of Byers
Clean up the crap parts of town

Quality education for students, parks and rec events have been good this far
KEEP SMALL TOWN SMALL
No other items
I believe Byers would be well served to incorporate and have a local government to preserve local ideals.
We don't need anything stop being the government and messing our lives up good luck gettin that land tho y'all don't understand the farmers that will be effected by this just let the town grow as people want and need to sell land
Stay away from our perfect as is town!
We as a community look out for each other and with so many other people coming to Byers would take so much away from what we have now.
Better ways to communicate throughout town besides the I-70 scout. More opportunities for community involvement through more meeting spaces.

21.What are your favorite three (3) things about Byers?

Response
Small town Low crime Not a ton of people Everyone helps everyone
No stop lights or constant flow of traffic , quite community, school and activities
My Church is here Small town feel Grocery store is available
Small Town Feel Maverick businesses grocery store/pharmacy
Small town community, small population, an education and sports program that is invested in the community.
Small town feel, Sense of community, Good honest people.
Small town, quiet, fresh air
Small town feel. Historical look. Quiet
Peace and quiet, low crime, less people
Small town Quite Low crime
The school system Proximity to Aurora Limited zoning restrictions
Small town Friendly people It's not ghetto
Small community, single family, tight community safety
Small town feel, low crime and locally owned businesses
*Lack of traffic and other social stresses brought about by overcrowding. *Open space and view of natural environment * friendly small community attitudes and so ial construct.
Small town, everything is need is here and it is unincorporated!!!!
small town feel, community support for schools and other activities, low crime
Small town Creek Open spaces
small town community low crime

small town; quiet; staying close to roots as a rural farm community
Space, privacy, nature
Small town, community feel, friendly
Small town Low crime Friendly neighbors
Small town feel Sense of community Quiet
Small town, most people are friendly
close to highway friendly people beautiful scenery
The small town atmosphere, population is not very high, good school for my daughter to go to.
Small town Rural Quiet
Country charm-not over crowded-not too many businesses
Being rural, quiet and low crime rate.
It's away from Denver, there is NO development, and we take care of each other.
Small town feel, the business we have currently is enough, accessibility for locals is perfect
Small town Not to crowded No stop lights
Small town feel, its not a part of the city, it is surrounded by farm land
Friendly, small town town feel, not crowded.
Small town , supportive community, rural community
That it's not over developed like surrounding towns It's still a small farm town It's perfect the way it is
The community feel, neighbors helping neighbors, size of the community and keeping farming important and celebrated
Small town, community, and open space
It is a small town. Do not have all the stupid city people out here causing problems. Low crime
Small town feel Community The school
Creek Historic building Small town feel
1-Community events 2-Community support for the school/athletics/kids 3-small town feel where people know each other
Small town Neighbors Community
Small town not a lot of people, community support and friendliness, natural landscape with open plains
Small town, quiet, close to i70.
Catholic church. Library. Playground
Byers general store, closeness to I-70, know your neighbors in community
Small town No stop light
SMALL TOWN SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND NO CORPORATE BUSINESS
Small town, community, rural

History, peacefulness, community outreach
Rural character Community Peaceful
Small town Sense of community Not a lot of outsiders
Always been home Quiet Friendly people
Low crime, lots of nature, grocery store and gas station nearby
Community, quiet, open space
Good school, convenience of access to services, the people in the community.
Small town, low crime, community
Small town Good people No crime yet
No fast food restaurants. Small town feel. Good school system.
1. School pride 2. Small town 3. Rural setting
Small town feel, The noon whistle which went away over new people complaining along with the train whistle when approaching.
Small town, sense of community and pride in the town
It is still a small town. There's no new housing developments. It's still a rural agriculture community.
Small town feel, wonderful Neighbors, good location along I-70.
Small town feel, sense of community, escape from crime-ridden metropolitan area.
Convenient to Denver Not right IN Denver area Still has the "West" atmosphere Hopefully will keep Marijuana sales and drugs out
Small town, not a lot of people and low violent crimes.
Small town community low crime Diversity of the residents
good neighbors, grocery store & pharmacy, peaceful
Location from the metroplex Small town feel Unique houses in town and only one subdivision south of town
Low crime. No tiered pricing on electric and water. Quiet. No loud music or gun shots in the night.
Being unincorporated. Small town. Controlled growth
Small town School Local Library
1. The people 2. Distance from Denver 3. The school
Mostly Good Moral People. Low traffic and associated noise. Rural setting
Byers is the place I grew up in, am raising my children in, and plan to be buried in. The Bijou creek. The heart felt connection with people that have known my family way before I was born and the help and uplifting support we are always willing to selflessly give one another.
Small town feel Community Housing doesn't grow
Small community, quite, low crime
Small community Quite Low crime
The Library, the scenery, and the people.

Lack of recreational opportunities Nothing for youth to do that isn't related to school Minimal business opportunities
Crackheads.
Nothing
The roads/cracks in roads need improvement.
* the taste of the water when it is warm. * the taste of the water when it is cold. * the ice cubes taste like byers water.
I have none.
disrespect on the roads (mostly teenagers & new comers); people moving out here & then complaining about the lack of amenities; the lack of information about where to get help or access resources.
Unkempt yards Snow removal
Growth, over crowding
Weeds, lack of maintenance Lack of pride of ownership of property Police availability
Crime Noise Monopoly business owners
Starting to have more crime Lots of drug activity
no retail stores no fast food stores no parks or recreation things to do
Nothing...
Only one natural gas company option-no competition/monopoly leads to higher prices-low quality cell phone reception in some areas-sewage ponds often stink.
People moving out. Wanting to make it more city feeling.
NOTHING! I love this town AS IS!
Na
Getting crowded Track homes (2 acre lots) More crime
It's growing, the crim rise, encroachment from aurora
Too many city people are moving out. They drive crazy, are rude, and want city amenities.
People wanting to develop it "City" encroaching on it Paved roads
Homeless Trailer park by Sinclair not cared for The house next to the junkyards uncleanliness
People moving out here. The country doesn't help the local Fire Department. County wants to build more out here
More building
Bullying Homeless people littering
Not enough recreational activities for older (tween/teen)kids.
It feels like a low income area as in it's run down, lack of businesses/things to do, and the trailer park north of Mavericks is very sketchy.
Trailer park north of the highway behind the gas station. The masons lodge and surrounding buildings are creepy. That one garage.... place.... around Escape the clock gallery is a gross and takes business away from them

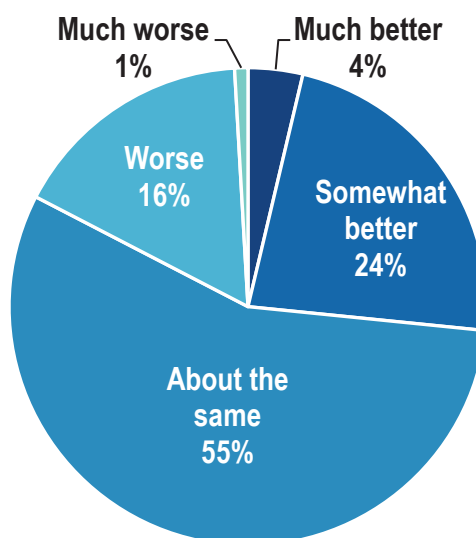
No recreational facilities, no community day for Byers, no fireworks for 4th of July celebrations
Waiting for the train to drive across the road. No place to get coffee. No licensed daycare options outside of school or for infants.
People from the city trying to change the small town!
Growth, growth, growth
Use to be how we all looked out for each other but that doesn't seem to be happening anymore, we once a long time ago town seemed friendly but with all that's happened (almost all can be traced to may)
The growing rate Building more and more houses and townhomes Crime is increasing
Too many clics, too much we don't want to change we like the way it is
Nothing to do Blind intersections Speeding vehicles on Main Street
Don't have any yet
None
Lack of services, drug community, close mindedness toward helping lower class
Expensive, raising property taxes, sense of Denver crime taking over/moving in (Bennett, Strausburg- are we next?)
Everything is great
That we're connected to the metro area through Arapahoe County. Becoming more of a bedroom community. Lack local businesses.
1 not many housing options
Byers Post Office the exterior is not being maintain and looks very shabby, bank need to be updated on the exterior,
The lazy rec department
Lack of restaurants, lack of entertainment, lack of recreation center.
N/A
Lack of: businesses such as grocery stores, gas & ev stations, restaurants, any business that would have a positive affect. And difficult to get Arapahoe County to move quicker to assist in zoning changes for businesses in the town area, and also for approval of permits are very slow or have been. Hopefully this is changing..
The drug problem, maverick buying all the opportunities, and the general store having new management.
Very few businesses Not affordable if you have to commute for work and services
lack of maintenance by county, street alignments, lack of clear property lines that are consistent with town platting
The semi trucks who think they can park anywhere The lack of choices for shopping The lack of an urgent care facility
My neighbors, the water is horrible. No Street lamps on block.
None
1. No sense of community 2. Lack of programs which bring people together in the community 3. No sidewalks or areas to walk or get any sort of exercise
I-70 road noise. Lack of recreational opportunities for children and youth Old and junk vehicles parked on streets.

Value	Percent	Count
Very Satisfied	44.0%	48
Satisfied	33.9%	37
Neutral	18.4%	20
Dissatisfied	3.7%	4
Totals	100.0%	109



Most of the respondents (44 percent) were very satisfied with the quality of life in Byers, and 78 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of life. Only four percent of the respondents with dissatisfied with the quality of life.

24. How does the quality of life in Byers today compare to 10 years ago, or since you moved to the community if less than 10 years?



Value	Percent	Count
Much better	3.6%	4
Somewhat better	23.6%	26
About the same	55.5%	61
Worse	16.4%	18
Much worse	0.9%	1
Totals	100.0%	110



The majority of respondents felt that the quality of life is about the same as it was 10 years ago. Over a quarter of the respondents (28 percent) felt that the quality of life had improved and was either somewhat better or much better. About 17 percent of the respondents felt that the quality of life in Byers had worsened.

25. Please explain why the quality of life is "Better" or Worse".

Response
Nothing is being maintained by the county as we are in an unincorporated part of Arapahoe county, the overall disrespectful culture of the "out of town era" moving in
The addition of Shooters
Population doesn't care about each other, not a community. Just a place where people sleep but they don't live.
For me it's the same.
Only difference is more people, so more noise and more trouble
In the time I have been here it has not changed much and that is good.
Higher taxes
We have a new medical building.. we are not suffering the growing pains we see in Bennet, Strasburg and Deer trail. The nasty tasting water keeps us regular!
crime has increased some
lack of understanding what living in a rural community means... they need to understand this before moving out here, not try to change the community to be more like the city.
Medical facilities are much better
Some residents don't care about keeping property maintained Lack of common courtesy with newer residents
Crime is worse now
Less small town feel and more crime
We have been here 2 years and it hasn't changed much since we have been here
A couple new restaurants in town is nice-a better library and more medical options.
Some of the people moving out have no respect for others.
It is perfect as is!
I like the business growth we have had but we don't need any more growth
We have a few restaurants now
People are moving in that don't like the small town feel that want it to be like a big city
Businesses have made capital investments.
It's losing the small town feel and community that looked out for each other rather than impeded on each other
It's not been overdeveloped yet
The homeless and trash they leave and the drug problem

It is better because Bennett has grown so much they did not plan ahead and they grew to fast for what they can handle. Exp. The school is to small.
We moved from Aurora and love the small town feel, the sense of community of Byers. People wave as you drive down the road. The community comes together for sporting events, concerts, community events, etc. There are no traffic lights, there are open fields and animals instead of houses and traffic everywhere!
Catholic community is stronger
Not much has changed in 5 years, more families living together
It's already grown more than it should have.
Worse cuz people that are moving here don't care about the community they just want to get out of the city. They want the city to come to Byers.
Homes have been let go and much of the town that used to look nice, no longer does. New people moving in have no pride in their homes and dont try to make them look nice. Most yards are overgrown weed patches, the well kept places are getting fewer all the time
Quieter, less traffic, fresh air, simple life
More drugs looks more run down
It has declined some with increase of new homes.
Better I'm away from the metro area . Slower pace. Community
Many young families have moved into the area that come from solid backgrounds and want Byers to remain safe and improve the environment of Byers in general
All the new people make life harder and have to much drama
The upgraded and renewed "Shooter and Automotive area is 100% better. The addition of the "Los 3 Garcia's restaurant was a huge plus!
It's the same it was 10 years ago. It's the same it was 20 years ago and it's amazing.
The new shooters restaurant is a welcome addition to Byers. I have enjoyed the improvements that "Maverick" has made to the community. The auto repair, car wash, and Feed store / gun range.
Close-knit community. People care for one another in this small town. We want to keep it that way.
It's the same to me.
We now have two restaurants and the corner of Main Street and highway 40 has been vastly improved thanks to Maverick Steel revamping it. We also have two lovely senior citizens who mow and trim bushes around town.
It is about the same
I think it's about the same although we are becoming a bit more ethnically diverse which is an improvement.
There appears to be less illegal drug use and trade with a greater sheriff's presence.
The school is improving quite a bit from when I was in school. It's been upgraded well. Activities and community functions have boomed and helped our community come together much more. There are many people and the public library that help tremendously with the homeschool community. When before homeschool was not as supported in almost any way. The faith communities are strong and supportive.
It is better because not a lot of houses are being built

Medical clinic and improvements on the restaurants.

i have lived here for a few months i cant say either way

We have more opportunities with the newer businesses here, options for restaurants to eat at. In the worst way we do not take care of our community mowing and vegetation wise though.

Better. Still somewhat a small town. Town has improved and businesses have improved. School is doing well and has good leadership.

Able to get to the stores easier.



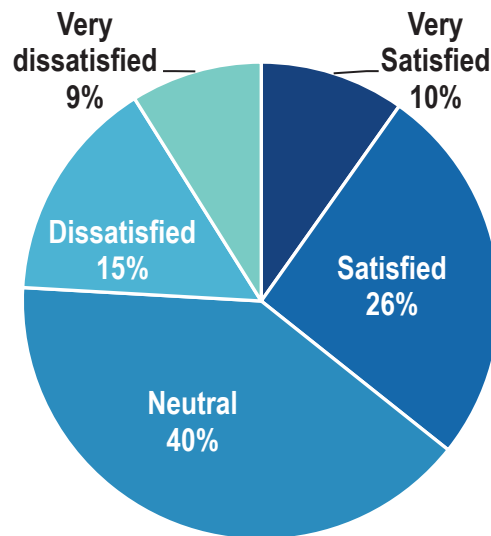
Respondents felt that the quality of life in Byers is better because:

- School quality is good and a medical facility is available
- Businesses have improved with more restaurants
- Less visible drug use.

On the other hand, respondents felt that the quality of life had worsened because of:

- Increased crime
- Lack of sense of community, new residents not understanding the values of a rural community
- Lack of maintenance.

26. Are you satisfied with the level and types of services provided by Arapahoe County?



Value	Percent	Count
Very Satisfied	9.7%	11
Satisfied	26.6%	30
Neutral	39.8%	45
Dissatisfied	15.0%	17

Very dissatisfied	8.9%	10
Totals	100.0%	113



While 40 percent of the respondents were neutral, 36 percent were satisfied with the services provided by the County, and 24 percent with dissatisfied.

27. Are there any additional services that Arapahoe County should provide in Byers? Please list additional services below.

Response
Road maintenance
Mowing at the intersections of Main Street and old Hwy. weeds are so high you can't see cars coming from the East when heading north. Weeds are so high and haven't been mowed north side of the street going past the school. The north side, can't even see the speed limit sign due to tree branches.
They are very difficult to work with, do not understand what we need in a small town. The same regulation apply throughout the county regardless if you are in the middle of the city or in rural area. Doesn't make sense
None
Local planning Office. Fast Track Unincorporated development. benefits of healthy outdoor educational family activities and events
Drivers License renewal dmv,
Recreational fitness options. Trails, fitness center, public track
Van carpool service
Open space would be nice, a sidewalk by the school for the kids to walk home on, and a cross walk or 2 would be beneficial
The service of not telling us what we can and cannot do on our property because not financially benefit them. The service of altering our property values base on their needs.
NONE!!!
Trying to build or expand is very difficult.
Plowing of streets in the winter
Better traffic enforcement. I am tired of people greatly exceeding the speed limit on 181, Main Street by the school, and lots of unsafe passing on 181.
Better response for animal calls. And noise.
No, leave us alone.
Na
Drivers license office for Byers only
No.
Take care of the roads better than they do.
Drivers license at the dmv
Be more cooperative for permits and such. Also we're not Aurora. Stop treating us like Aurora

Snow removal, dirt and recycled asphalt fixing
Road repair/no holes. Incentives for home health care providers to service the area. Daily transportation services, including elderly/disabled. Driver's license services at DMV office/full service.
No
Plow snow off roads in winter
Fast response when it comes to permits on buildings and structures
Additional deputies when available,
None
it is unfortunate that our county commissioners & many county managers are NOT rural county residents and not actively involved in small rural businesses. ALSO UNFORTUNATE that many department public meetings are held in the western area of the county rather than centralized for all.
They should be less involved in "policing" development and more helpful in adopting a mindset that will help business owners and residential development to thrive.
I believe most of the services to be adequate. If anything the building/development offices are over reaching and woefully behind schedule.
More street lights.
stop pretending like we don't exist. plow snow, mow ditches, you tax us then don't do your upkeep.
it's ridiculous that Byers is even in Arapahoe County. Arapahoe county is terrible and does not support the rural communities.
I feel Arapahoe County tends to forget about Byers.
Upkeep road and bridge.
Senior care Daycare County offices so we don't have to drive to Aurora or Littleton
Better internet.
More law enforcement, for quicker response. Snow removal, quicker response.
1. Transportation options 2. Sidewalks and trails 3. Road shoulders or bike paths 4. Senior citizen services of all kinds 5. Recycling of any kind 6. Access to compost materials/ help with xeriscaping 7. Hazardous material disposal
Better road way care Better, law-enforcement
Having a centralized office for citizens to visit to discuss all kinds of support options would be great. Right now it is a hodge podge of multiple departments and people trying to meet people at the few meeting spots in town. Having a county hub would be beneficial for the county and the town.
...anything? i genuinely didn't know they provided any services to us
Mowing!
The Arapahoe County sub office used to be a great service. Not sure who the county clerk is but they have ruined that office. There is no sense of service. Needs to be open to the public and staffed properly.
Lower the taxes.

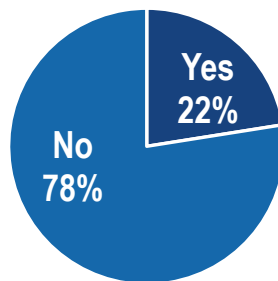


Listed below is a summary of the key services the respondents identified:

- Road maintenance and repair. Plowing of streets in the winter.

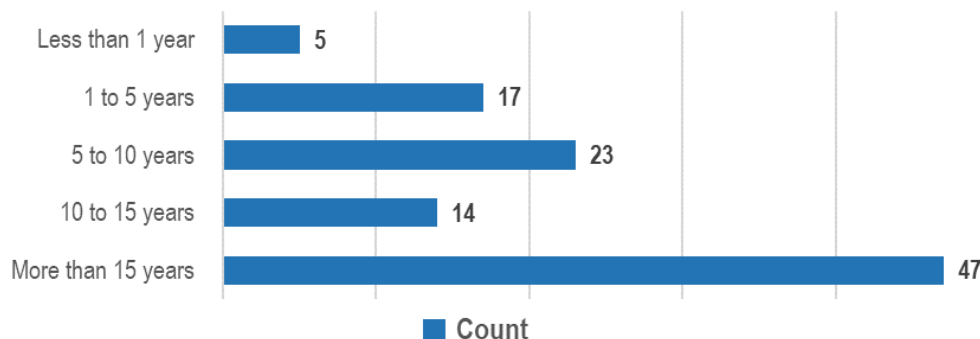
- County regulations are not specific to the rural area, make it easier to build or expand buildings
- County office with driver's license renewal, better response to animal and noise complaints, and other services
- Recreation fitness options such as trails, bike paths, etc.
- Carpool service, daily transportation services (for elderly and disabled)
- A sidewalk by the school for the kids to walk home on, and a crosswalks
- Enforcement of speeding
- Home health care providers to service the area. Daily transportation services, including elderly/disabled. More services for senior citizens.
- Greater recognition of the needs of rural county residents by elected officials and County staff.
- Help business owners and residential development to thrive.
- More law enforcement, for quicker response.

28. Were you aware of the Byers Sub-Area Plan, which was completed in 2003 by Arapahoe County and a citizens group?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	22.3%	25
No	77.7%	87
Totals	100.0%	112

29. How long have you lived in Byers?

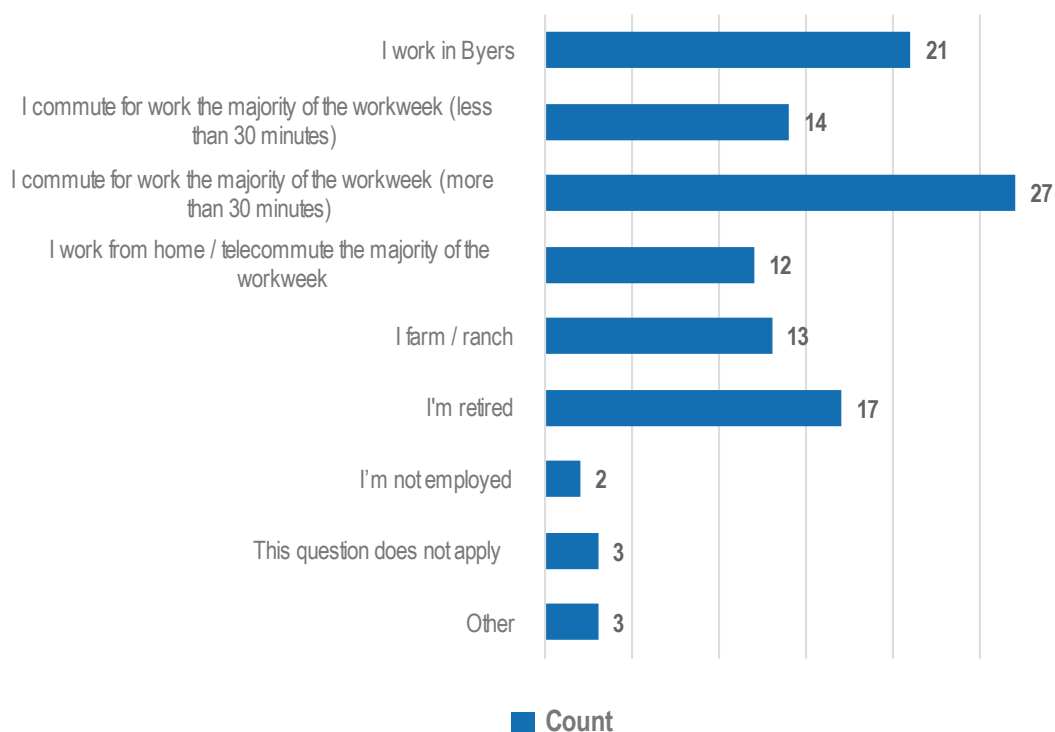


Value	Percent	Count
Less than 1 year	4.7%	5
1 to 5 years	16.0%	17
5 to 10 years	21.7%	23
10 to 15 years	13.2%	14
More than 15 years	44.3%	47
Totals	100.0%	106



The majority of respondents (58 percent) have lived in Byers for over 10 years. It is interesting to note that about 21 percent of the respondents are new residents, living in Byers for five years or less.

30. Where do you work?



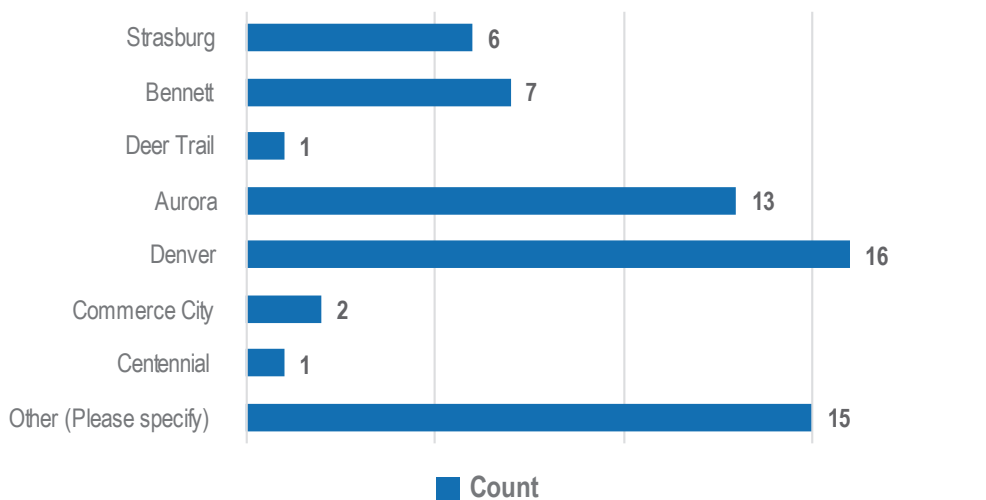
Value	Percent	Count
I work in Byers	18.8%	21
I commute for work the majority of the workweek (less than 30 minutes)	12.5%	14
I commute for work the majority of the workweek (more than 30 minutes)	24.1%	27
I work from home / telecommute the majority of the workweek	10.7%	12

I farm / ranch	11.6%	13
I'm retired	15.2%	17
I'm not employed	1.8%	2
This question does not apply	2.7%	3
Other	2.7%	3
Totals	100.0%	112



Most of the respondents commuted more than 30 minutes for work (24 percent), worked in Byers (almost 19 percent), or were retired (15 percent).

31. If you commute to work, what is your destination for your place of employment?



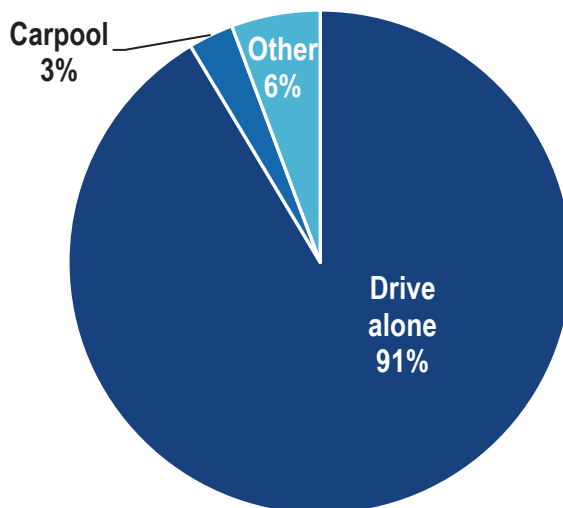
Value	Percent	Count
Strasburg	9.8%	6
Bennett	11.5%	7
Deer Trail	1.6%	1
Aurora	21.3%	13
Denver	26.2%	16
Commerce City	3.3%	2
Centennial	1.6%	1
Other (Please specify)	24.6%	15
Totals	100.0%	61

Other (Comments)	Count
All over	1
All over Colorado	1
DIA	1
Firestone	1
I own a Mobile Repair Business. I travel all over.	1
I stay home and homeschool my children.	1
Keenesburg	1
Occasionally commute	1
Parker	1
The farm and ranch land that you guys are trying to take away	1
commute to Byers from Denver	1
Totals	11



The cities that most of the respondents commuted to were Denver (26 percent) or Aurora (21 percent).

32. If you commute to work, what is your primary method of travel?



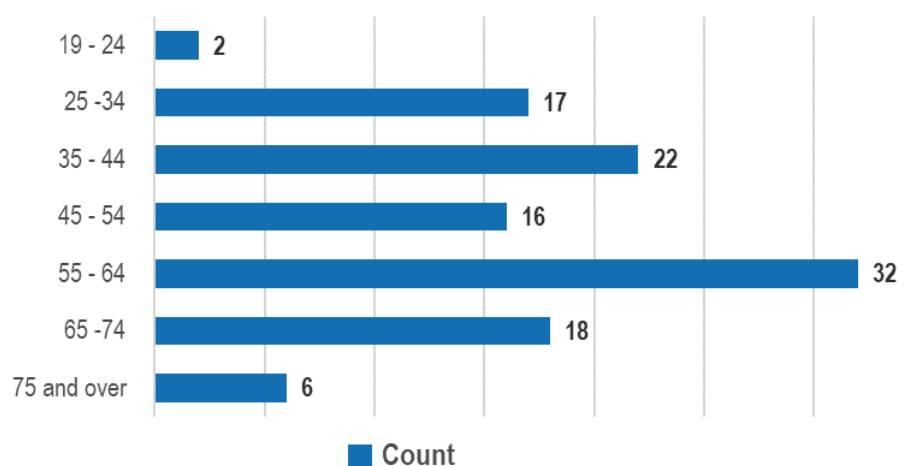
Value	Percent	Count
Drive alone	91.4%	64
Carpool	2.9%	2
Other	5.7%	4
Totals	100.0%	70

Other (specified)	Count
Horse	1
My tractor my truck	1
Totals	2



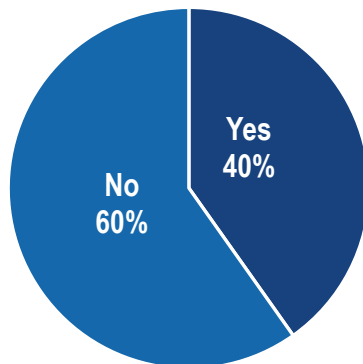
Almost all the respondents drove alone to their place of work (91 percent). About three percent of the respondents carpooled.

33.What is your age group?



Value	Percent	Count
19 - 24	1.8%	2
25 -34	15.0%	17
35 - 44	19.5%	22
45 - 54	14.2%	16
55 - 64	28.3%	32
65 -74	15.9%	18
75 and over	5.3%	6
Totals	100.0%	113

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



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	39.8%	45
No	60.2%	68
Totals	100.0%	113

35. Is there any other feedback you'd like to provide about Byers and this subarea plan update? We appreciate your time and would like to hear your thoughts.

Response
Would love walking trails along the creek
People listen to the residents. I know we don't want much changes
I see arapahoe trying to make us something we don't want to be like accept all the headaches denver has and that is why nobody out here go to denver
Just leave in alone for heaven's sake! It is a wonderful small community, just leave it be! Changes will not improve any of our lives here, it will only make it worse.
please invest in Byers.
Please don't give in and build like the surrounding towns.
I forgot to mention the wonderful recent addition of trees in town. I would love to see more trees planted everywhere possible.
Na
I'd like to keep my dirt road!
Please leave Byers small
Do not let it grown like Bennett
Keep the small town charm
Don't grow Byers

KEEP SMALL TOWN SMALL
NO GROWTH!!!
Can't get map to load and the one that did didn't see anything different
I moved here because of the low crime, lots of nature— it's quiet and peaceful. Please don't drastically change the area to suit yuppies.
I hope the subarea plan keeps Byers a small town with open space as long as possible!
Would just like arapahoe county government to not over step in exercising their power and be more collaborative to help the community to develop. No rich developers here, just small business owners trying to be financially viable.
Please provide better advertisement and let us know what's happening!! I had no idea this survey was happening and honestly do not know who is analyzing it or creating this plan. We don't have a mayor/city counsel- who is making these decisions? Would love a town hall meeting!!
Don't do this please just stop
please leave us alone and do not build here!
Keep Byers a small town community.
Can not open the Byers Plan as your web site has changed and takes us to another web page which still access it.
Please do not build huge unnecessary houses or stores that will have violent people come and disturb our quiet small town and keep out families and children safe.
Limited growth. Fire protection, police and schools are not given enough consideration when development is planned
The maps would not open, so I have no idea what area you are talking about and just assumed it was Byers proper.
I wish this survey was advertised more; I accidentally heard about it.
My feedback is I would really appreciate my small town staying the small town that it is.
Looking forward to moving forward on the Subarera plan Hopeful for the future of Byers
We moved to the area to get out of the city. We would like to see the area stay the way that it is with little to no growth.
We would very much like to keep a small town. This is the whole reason we moved here.
Overall this year I have felt more county reach out with services that were unknown to our community. I also feel this community is ripe with a lot of grassroots/communication/ community groups trying to form.
just add a nice strip mall or something. anything please
Leave Byers growth low! Improve what we have now first!
Please straighten out the sub office in Byers.
Keep the crime rate low

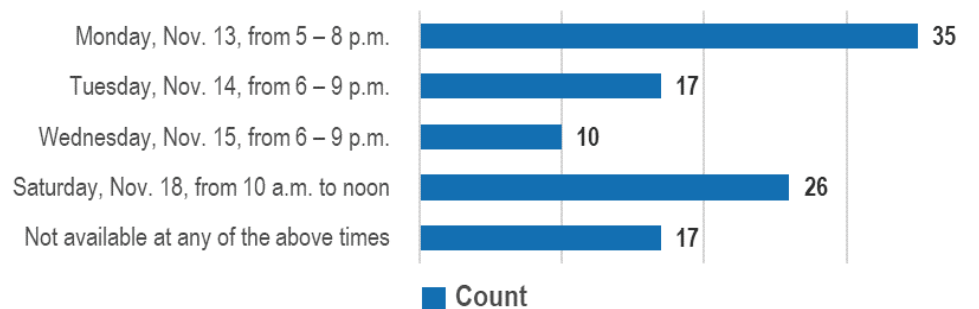


To summarize the comments above, the following are the key comments for the County:

- Would love walking trails along the creek
- Invest in Byers.
- I forgot to mention the wonderful recent addition of trees in town. I would love to see more trees planted everywhere possible.

- Please leave Byers small. Do not let it grow like Bennett. Please don't give in and build like the surrounding towns.
- I hope the subarea plan keeps Byers a small town with open space as long as possible!
- Would just like the Arapahoe County government to not overstep in exercising its power and be more collaborative to help the community to develop. No rich developers here, just small business owners trying to be financially viable.
- Looking forward to moving forward on the Subarea plan. Hopeful for the future of Byers
- We moved to the area to get out of the city. We would like to see the area stay the way that it is with little to no growth.
- Overall this year I have felt more county reach out with services that were unknown to our community. I also feel this community is ripe with a lot of grassroots/communication/ community groups trying to form.
- Leave Byers growth low! Improve what we have now first!
- Please straighten out the sub-office in Byers.
- Keep the crime rate low.

36. We'd like to like to hold an open house to meet you and hear your thoughts about Byers. We are looking to host an open house on one of the dates below at the Kelter Library. For an open house, you can drop in at any time to view the information boards and talk to us. You can choose as many dates as are convenient for you.



Value	Percent	Count
Monday, Nov. 13, from 5 – 8 p.m.	33.3%	35
Tuesday, Nov. 14, from 6 – 9 p.m.	16.2%	17
Wednesday, Nov. 15, from 6 – 9 p.m.	9.5%	10
Saturday, Nov. 18, from 10 a.m. to noon	24.8%	26
Not available at any of the above times	16.2%	17
Totals	100.0%	105



BYERS SUB-AREA PLAN



Amendment to the Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan

ADOPTED JUNE 24, 2003
ARAPAHOE COUNTY, COLORADO

BYERS SUB-AREA PLAN

AMENDMENT TO THE
ARAPAHOE COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

APPROVED BY THE
ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION
JUNE 24, 2003

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Byers Sub-Area Plan Participants

PLANNING COMMISSION

Brenda Gallagher (Chairperson), Arnold Hayutin, Matthew Plitnick, Matthew Reay, Shannon Roth, Frank Doyle, Jack Sampson.

BYERS PLANNING COMMITTEE

Tom Bradbury Jr., Gary May, Wil Chase, Ron Miller, Michelle Miller, Monte Johnson, Sue Johnson, Kasey Miller-Leyda, Enola Dangerfield, Frank Linnebur, Lori Pelton, Jo Bates, Don Casper, Tom Skaggs, Kathy Skipper, Craig Case, Dennis Cuypers, Eddie Roth, Rose Glover, Chuck Adams, Jerry Hankins.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Jim Keller, Fay Chase, Bob Tscheschke, Sharon Woodis, Kent Fleflet, Thomas H. Bradbury, Gene Abram, Dolores Tippet, Herschel Wright, Wanda Owen, Lisa Beauprez, Ross Brazil, L. J. Tippet, Robyn Lydick, Patty Doyle, Mitch Green, Suzanne Green, Mark Brummel, Frances Maestas, Lori Weeth, Troy Palmer, Mick Palmer, Larry Heath, McCoy Miller, Dave Brader, Terry Amundson, Ken Helvie, Donnie Moos, David Moos, Lamar Brown, Craig Sampson, Randy Roth, Lori Summers, Mitch Green, Chris Rino, Karen Scott, Jim Kelly, Jim Bunner, Jeff Swim, Mike LeClair, Nadine Timmons, Kelly Carr, Tammie Scott, plus other people who chose not to sign in at the various meetings.

ARAPAHOE COUNTY PLANNING STAFF

Sue Conaway, Planning Division Manager; Julio Iturreria, Long-Range Planning Manager; Melissa Kendrick, Current Planning Manager; Ron Hovland, Senior Planner; Sherman Feher, Senior Planner and Carol McAllister, Customer Service.

Need for a Plan

A number of different factors came together to encourage the creation of the Byers Sub-Area Plan. The community of Byers and surrounding area has experienced growth pressures, primarily from people who commute to the Denver Metropolitan Area. Many of these people are seeking the ambiance of a small rural community. Another factor was approval of the revised and updated Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan by the Arapahoe County Planning Commission on June 19, 2001. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to guide land use, growth and development decision made by the County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners over the next 20 years. One of the policies of the Comprehensive Plan was to prepare community sub-area plans for the unincorporated eastern communities (Policy CM 5.2). Also, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) as part of implementing Metro Vision 2020 and associated Clean Water Plan and Regional Transportation Plan have designated two square miles of urban growth boundary area for small rural communities, like Byers.

Background

GEOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY OF BYERS

Byers is located approximately 30 miles due east of the Denver Metropolitan Area on the I-70 Highway. The topography of Byers is composed of gently rolling hills and valleys, which in the past were covered with buffalo grass. Near present-day Byers, West Bijou Creek and other nearby creeks flow in a northerly direction into the South Platte River. Most creeks in this area are dry much of the year with floods occasionally destroying crops, livestock and buildings.

During the last 100 years, there has been much wildlife that has come and gone. Some of these animals include Wild Buffalo, Gray Wolf, Prairie Chicken, Curlew, Swift Fox, Prairie Dogs, Antelope, Jack Rabbits, Cotton-tail Rabbits, Coyote, Rattlesnake, Mule Deer, Badgers, and Prairie Owls.

CULTURAL HISTORY OF BYERS

The following history is meant to be an overview. Much of the very early history of Byers is related to the early history of what is now referred to as Eastern Colorado. Predecessors of the American Indian lived in Eastern Colorado some 20,000 years ago. These Paleo-Indians were referred to as stone age hunters of the Pre-Llano and Llano complexes, followed by the Folsom and Plano cultures. These Paleo-Indians killed large animals, many of them that are currently extinct. These cultures were followed by hunter gatherers, generally called Archaic Indians who lived around 8,000 to 2,000 years ago. They used monos and metates for grinding food and they did some basketweaving. They also used the atlatl for hunting. The atlatl is a specially designed stick that is used to provide extra leverage when throwing spears and darts.

The transition from Archaic to Post-Archaic American Indian activity occurred about 2000 years ago. Some of the technological advances during this time period included the bow and arrow and pottery, as well as stone, bone and wood tools. The Post-Archaic culture, represented by the Plains Woodland and Upper Republican cultures in Eastern Colorado, existed until around 1400 when the Spanish explorers arrived. The Upper Republican culture, in Eastern Colorado, utilized smaller villages and campsites and apparently was more prone to hunting than farming.

Spanish explorers encountered historic Indian culture from 1500 to 1700 in Eastern Colorado. The Plains Apache Indians, who had descended from the Athabascans, were the primary Indian culture in this area. The Indians were nomadic buffalo hunters who used dogs with travois to carry belongings and small tipis. As the Plains Indians began to use horses that the Spanish had brought, they could travel faster, hunt buffalo more easily, and live in larger tipis.

In the early 1700s, the Comanches, who had lived in Wyoming moved southward, ultimately driving Plains Apaches further south. The Comanches and the Utes had an alliance until the mid 1700s at which time the Kiowa and Kiowa Apaches, who came from the North, became allies with the Comanches. During the late 1700s the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians (this is apparently the preferred spelling, with the plural spelling is Arapahoes) came to eastern Colorado from the northern Great Plains. These two tribes became the most dominant tribes in the Nineteenth Century.

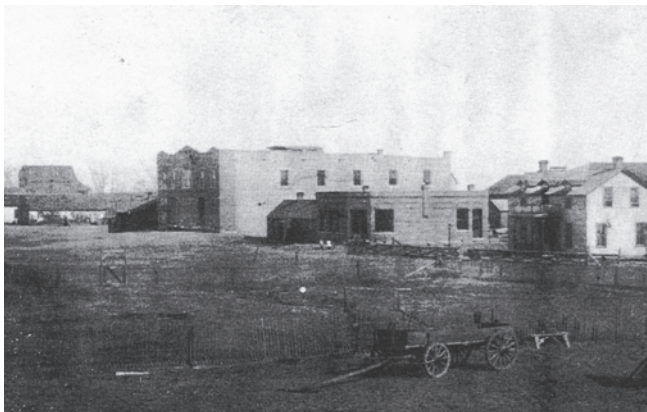
During the early to mid 1800s there were various skirmishes between the various Indian tribes located in and around eastern Colorado. Also during this time hunters, trappers, traders, and explorers traversed eastern Colorado. One French trapper-trader, Joseph Bijou, has left his name in the Byers Area. He was a guide for Stephen Long's expedition in 1820. Long honored Bijou by naming a tributary for him. Most of the trapper-traders were interested in beaver pelts, however, eastern Colorado streams provided only a few beaver. Four

primary trading posts that obtained buffalo hides from the Indians were north of present-day Arapahoe County in northeastern Colorado.

The discovery of gold in 1858 on Cherry Creek brought many migrants into Colorado. One of the routes taken by gold seekers was the Smoky Hill Trail. This trail had three branches; the northernmost branch traversed south of Byers. During this time there was a stagecoach route that roughly follows what is currently I-70. A stage station somewhat south of Byers was part of this route.

During the 1860s, the open range cattle and sheep industry began in eastern Arapahoe County. Joseph Farmer had his cattle operation near Byers. The hunting and decimation of buffalo in the mid 1800s contributed to the demise of the Plains Indian culture in eastern Colorado. Skirmishes between various Indian tribes as well as between the Indians and cavalry occurred during this time in eastern Colorado, but no noteworthy battles occurred around Byers.

The Kansas-Pacific train provided more direct train service from the east, through Byers, to Denver. Construction began September 7, 1863, but was intermittent



until 1867. Tracks from the east reached the eastern Colorado border in January 1870, reaching Byers On August 13, 1870 and ultimately connecting with tracks from the west at Comanche Crossing (now Strasburg) on August 15, 1870. As an incentive

to build the tracks, the Kansas- Pacific received a federal land grant that resulted in the railroad receiving odd-numbered sections for 20 miles on either side of the tracks. For every mile of track, the company earned 20 square miles of land. Thus railroad companies marketed and sold the land. They created townsites such as Deer Trail in 1875 and Byers in 1889. These townsites were already occupied, but the platting created official lots and streets. Most of the railroad

land was sold by 1910, though the railroad company retained the mineral rights because of potential coal resources. In 1898 the Kansas-Pacific became part of the Union Pacific.

Oliver Wiggins founded the town of Bijou, a forerunner to Byers, in 1866. He built a general store that provided various staples to surrounding residents. When the railroad was completed in 1870, Bijou was renamed Byers. Byers was named in honor of William Byers, editor and owner of the *Rocky Mountain News*. In 1873 Oliver Wiggins was appointed the first postmaster. For some time the post office was located in the general store.

In May 1862, the U.S. Congress passed the "Homestead Act" which allowed certain individuals to obtain title to 160 acres (later modified to 320 acres) of land if they lived on and improved the land. The primary influx of homesteaders did not occur in eastern Arapahoe County until the early 1900s, after all the more desirable central plains lands were claimed. While a fair amount of this area was already settled by then, there was still some land left for many newcomers. Many of the homesteaders lived in sod houses or "soddy", which was created from three foot strips of buffalo grass sod. While sod houses moderated temperatures from the extremes in winter and summer, many unwanted animals, such as rats, mice, snakes, insects, and skunks also sought protection in the soddy.

Farming occurred in the late 1800s and early 1900s, with wheat as one of the primary crops. In the early 1900s the "Header" was the most efficient way to harvest small grains. A typical header crew consisted of 10 horses and 6 men to operate the header and wagons. Combines appeared in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Early combines were pulled by tractors, but they were not as widely used as the later self-propelled models. Irrigation resulted in crops of corn and sugar beets. George A. Snow had plans for an extensive irrigation system of reservoirs south of Byers, although only a portion of his plans were used by Snow and Nordloh. South of Byers, another reservoir was owned by Palmer and Owens

which irrigated some acres. This reservoir was also known as a good recreational area for the community. A number of reservoirs were built in eastern Arapahoe County. Irrigation wells were also used for flood irrigation. A significant improvement to agricultural irrigation was the use of a center pivot sprinkler system that was invented by Frank Zyback of Strasburg Colorado and patented on July 22, 1952.

Byers grew slowly during the second half of the 1800s. By 1900, Byers had a one-room schoolhouse, general store/post-office, blacksmith shop, livery barn, depot, meat market, wool-loading dock, saloons, and a hotel. There were approximately a dozen homes in the town. By 1910 a bank, the present-day Presbyterian church, and the two-story Burton Building had been built. The Burton Building had a large hall on the second



floor that was use for various gatherings and dances. Some of the early families or individuals that lived in this area were the Briggs, Mc Connells, Williams, Snows, Parmeters, Burtons, Owens, Parretts, Killens, Andersons, Nordlohs, Mc Donnells, Fetzers, Gerdners, Monroes, Moores, Duncans, Ammons, Mertens, Rotes, Hubbs, Clarks, Pattersons, Terwilligers, Tellers, Marshalls, Seivers, Bertons, Hazels, Berties, and many others.

Byers has experienced many changes since the early 1900s. For more information see [Our Side of the Mountain](#) by Emma Mitchell, [Colorado Plains 1984](#) by Comanche Crossing Historical Society and other history books of Byers.

Census Information

INTRODUCTION

The 2000 Census provides much information regarding the demographics of the Byers Area. Since Byers is not incorporated, the Census Bureau has delineated an area that includes some areas to the north and south of what would currently be called the Town of Byers. The Census Bureau refers to this area as the “Byers Census Designated Place.” All of the following information is derived from this area and will be referred to as Byers in this Plan.

POPULATION

From 1990 to 2000, Byers’ population grew from 1,065 to 1,233. The growth of the male population was slightly greater than the female population during this time. The age groups of “age 5 and under” and “age 65 and older” also decreased somewhat. In 2000, using the population that is greater than the age of 15, 59% were married, and 20.5% were “never married” and “divorced, widowed, or separated” respectively.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2000, 99.6% of Byers’ residents were born in the USA and 57.1% were born in Colorado. English was the primary language spoken at home (97.4%). The following were the primary ancestries of the people of Byers: German (28%), Other European (20%), English (14%), Irish/Celtic (14%), American (7%) and other (17%) in 2000. The residents of Byers that were 25 or older had the following educational attainment: “High school graduate” (45%), “Some college, no degree” (24%), “12th grad or less, no diploma” (16%), and “Some form of college degree” (15%).

EMPLOYMENT

Byers' residents were Employed by the following Major Industries in 2000:

Transportation, warehousing, & utilities	17%
Retail trade	12%
Education, health, & social services	12%
Construction	11%

In 2000, commuting patterns were as follows: "Drove alone" (77%), "Carpooled" (18%), "Other means" (3%), and "Worked at home" (2%). The average travel time to work was 36 minutes.

ECONOMIC INFORMATION

In 1999, the median household income was \$43,750. The following were different categories of people who were below the Poverty Level: "Families" (6%), "Female with no husband" (21%), and "Individuals" (8%). Listed below are the percent of households in various income ranges:

\$25,000 - 34,999	= 14%
\$35,000 - 49,999	= 22%
\$50,000 - 74,999	= 21%
\$75,000 - 99,000	= 11%

HOUSING

Housing units grew from 413 to 460 from 1990 to 2000. In 2000, 67% were single-family detached or attached dwelling units, 27% were mobile homes, and 5% were multi-family dwelling units.

Vision Statements, Goals, & Implementation Strategies/Tools

INTRODUCTION

The following material was put together by the Byers' Planning Committee with review by the residents of Byers. The Arapahoe County Planning Commission approved this sub-area plan as part of the Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan on June 24, 2003. The BOCC has also reviewed this material in a study session.

These vision statements, goals, & implementation strategies/tools are high-level statements regarding the future of Byers for the next 20 years. Much more work is required to implement these concepts and ideas. Many of these statements are interrelated with various topical categories, but for simplicity's sake they are generally only covered in one or two topical categories. Ultimately, the approved Plan should be reviewed and reconsidered at least every three to six years.

OVERALL VISION FOR THE COMMUNITY OF BYERS

Byers will be a well-planned, comfortable, affordable, safe, and economically diverse, small home-town community supported by efficient use of infrastructure. It will be governed by its involved residents. Byers will provide a quality educational experience for its population. Byers will be a transportation hub for I-70, State Highway 36, and the railroad. It is envisioned that the population of the Byers' Area by the year 2020 should be approximately 5,000.

BYERS' TOPICAL PLANNING CATEGORIES

COMMUNITY IMAGE, DESIGN, AND IDENTITY

Vision:

Byers will be a family-oriented community with diverse, complementary styles, reflecting the town's rural character.

Goal:

Use signage or landmarks to promote Byers.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Determine feasibility of signage or landmarks along I-70, etc.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Seek funding for Byers' signs or landmarks.

Goal:

Develop community organization to promote our heritage.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Organize community promotion group.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Create community web site.

Goal:

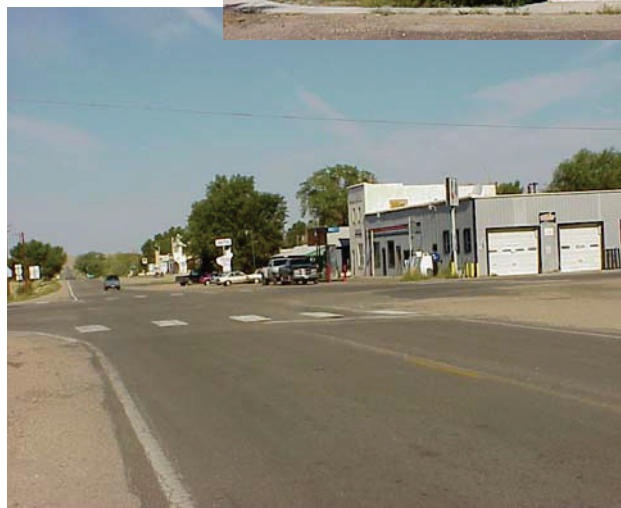
Promote the rural character of the Town.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Develop rural town road standards.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Develop rural town design guidelines.



NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

Vision:

Byers will plan diverse, integrated neighborhoods.

Goal:

Areas of various residential densities will be generally defined by the Land-use Map.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Areas of different single-family residential densities will be generally defined by the Land-use Map.



Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Various other related residential uses will be defined by the Land-use Map and zoning districts.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Senior housing will be considered as a potential housing option.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Housing for teachers will be promoted



TRANSPORTATION

Vision:

Byers will centralize higher traffic business uses around the I-70 and State Highway 36 interchange; establish traffic patterns that minimize impacts to residential areas; and explore opportunities that railroad and possible spurs may provide for industry.

Goal:

Obtain better scheduling of railroad traffic

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Discuss with railroad companies various scheduling options (short-term).

Goal:

Create Park and Ride Facility for car pooling.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Plan and fund park and ride site.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Promote carpools (short-term).

Goal:

Develop an emergency access across/under railroad tracks for emergency vehicles. (short-term).

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Evaluate feasibility of emergency access across/under railroad tracks.

Goal:

Develop overpass/underpass across railroad tracks (long-term).

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Evaluate feasibility to overpass/underpass.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Seek funding copartners for overpass/underpass.

Goal:

Develop second freeway crossover (long-term).

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Work with CDOT to determine feasibility of freeway crossover.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Seek funding copartners and approval for freeway crossover.

OPEN SPACE, PARKS, AND TRAILS

Vision:

Byers will systematically develop open space, parks, and trails using Quint Valley and Bijou Creek.

Goals:

Plan and develop a network of open space and trails.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Have a citizen's committee create a plan for open space and trails.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Have developers contribute open space and trails from new developments.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Seek out governmental and other funds to help obtain open space and trails.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Promote conservation easements as a means to preserve open space

Goals:

Seek contributions of land for open space and trails.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Seek public and private sources to contribute land for open space and trails.

Goals:

Work with the Byers Park and Recreation District to implement their plan with the possible addition of a recreation center and swimming pool.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Conduct a feasibility study of a recreation center/swimming pool and the different ages that they would serve.



EDUCATION

Vision:

Byers will maintain high-quality schools as its highest priority.

Goal:

Byers School District will provide top-ranked schools for its children.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

The population will continue to support bonding and other funding mechanisms to provide high quality school facilities.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

The population will continue to support the hiring of top-notch teachers.

Goal:

Help determine optimum locations for future public school sites.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Work with School District to help locate future school sites.



FISCAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Vision:

Byers will explore opportunities to attract discretionary funds for use by the town and explore the possibility of incorporation as the community grows.

Goal:

Maintain an active and involved citizen's committee that seeks funding opportunities.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Create Citizens Committee to seek funding opportunities.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Meet with various economic development people to explore funding opportunities.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Actively seek funding opportunities.

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Vision:

Byers will develop opportunities created by the transportation corridors that exist in the community; encourage service and manufacturing businesses compatible with the town by providing a diverse economic base and business districts to serve its residents.

Goal:

Create local employment opportunities.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

As a general guideline, Byers would seek to have at least an area of 30% business and 70% residential.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Create Enterprise Zones.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Create a local economic database to help encourage businesses to locate in Byers.

Goal:

Identify, plan, and encourage various business districts (retail/commercial, light industrial/manufacturing).

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Seek support of local landowners to allow development of various business districts.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Locate business districts on Byers' Land-use Map.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Zone or rezone various business districts to coincide with Land-use Map.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Help establish businesses that assist farming & ranching operations



TOURISM

Vision:

Byers shall remember its western heritage and welcome and encourage tourism.

Goal:

Make an effort to preserve physical history.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Tap into historic preservation society's knowledge and funding.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Develop zoning standards/district to allow building and rebuilding with historic building setbacks and design standards.

Goal:

Develop and promote Byers as a tourism information center.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Develop tourism information for Byers.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Develop tourism information booth/kiosk.

Goal:

Promote commercial architecture that reflects rural heritage.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Develop commercial architectural standards that reflect rural heritage.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Provide sufficient quality motels, restaurants, and other facilities for travelers.

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Vision:

Byers will recognize and respect its natural resources and foster cultural activities.

Goal:

Preserve natural resources and the environment.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Preserve and acquire open space.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Preserve Bijou Creek Area.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Promote water conservation.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Promote the use of trees as windbreaks.

Goal:

Develop cultural resources.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Develop and promote local cultural events.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Encourage cooperation with other I-70 Corridor cultural events.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Vision:

Byers will expand to meet the recreational, educational, and social needs of the community.

Goal:

Define and prioritize the needs of the community.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Use community input to help define and prioritize the needs of the community.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Determine financial availability and viability to meet the needs of the community.

Goal:

Determine future public facility sites, such as fire station, library, etc.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Work with Special Districts to help locate future public facility sites, such as for a fire station or a library.



Goal:

Determine feasibility of projects that meet the needs of the community.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Determine community use and support.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Determine public and private funds for respective projects.



CITIZEN INPUT/GOVERNANCE

Vision:

The citizens of Byers and the surrounding area will be actively involved with governing Byers.

Goal:

Various committees will help govern Byers with public input.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

The citizens of Byers will explore and evaluate the possibility of a citizen's committee to provide overall governance of Byers and a liaison to the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners and Planning Commission.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

A citizens committee will be formed [under the General Byers Citizen's Committee] to annually review the Sub-Area Plan and provide oversight and input to the Arapahoe County Planning Commission and Planning Staff.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Other committees will be formed [under the General Byers Citizen Committee] to help implement various aspects of this Plan and address other Byers issues and concerns.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARIES

Vision:

Byers will first manage higher-density growth east of Bijou Creek within the boundaries of the Land-Use Map Planning Area.

Goal:

Growth will be managed in part through (the urban growth boundary and) zoning.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

The Urban Growth Boundary will be used to manage growth per DRCOG requirements.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Zoning and rezoning will be done through community and developer input.

Goal:

Growth will be market driven.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Growth will meet the needs of the community with consideration of private property rights and developer interests.

LAND USE

Vision:

Byers' land-use policy will be based on efficient allocation of land and resources, while recognizing property rights, and the environment in seeking to provide quality living.

Goal:

Have reasonable and cost-effective utilities and infrastructure which supports the Land Use Vision.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Provide quality schools with good teachers and a good transportation system.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Provide adequate natural gas, electric power, water & sanitary services.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Provide improved roads.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Provide recreational facilities.

Goal:

Promote a general balance of various land uses within the Byers' Planning Area to include residential, commercial, industrial, open space, and public uses.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

The Byers' Land Use Planning Map will reflect a general balance of various land uses.

Goal:

Develop a Business District near the intersection of Interstate 70 and State Highway 36.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Provide adequate natural gas, electric power, water & sanitary services.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Provide improved roads.

Goal:

Promote a business and residential historic district south of the railroad, as shown on the land-use map.

Implementation Strategies/Tools:

Create a voluntary designated Historic District with historic district standards for business and residential uses.

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APPENDIX A

	DEFINITIONS	
Land Use Category	Characteristics and Uses	Purpose
Agriculture-35 Acres	Agricultural production and non-urban uses. Minimum lot size is 35 acres.	Preserves rural agricultural areas.
Town Center	Town center includes retail, office public buildings, apartments and townhomes and town square.	Provide higher intensity retail and service business, along with community facilities and higher density residential. Also a place for community activities.
Business/Retail/Commercial	Retail and office uses.	Serve surrounding areas and attract new businesses that will provide services and employment.
Light Industrial	Light manufacturing, warehouses and distribution.	Attract industrial businesses and employment opportunities.
Light Industrial – Transitional	Light manufacturing, warehouses and distribution.	Attract industrial businesses and employment opportunities once the area is included within the Urban Growth Boundary.
Mixed Use	Combinations of various uses which may include light industrial, commercial, and business and other uses in a planned unit development	Encourage a mixture of different types of related land uses.
Open Space and Parks	Public and private open space and parks to be retained in agriculture or active or passive parks and trails.	Retain and shape the small town, rural character. Support agriculture and provide recreation opportunities and wildlife habitat.
Community Facilities	Community buildings and facilities.	Provide adequate space for public and community facilities.
Residential single family Less than one acre lots	Single family dwellings on smaller lots	Provide areas for a variety of housing types and price ranges with high densities.
Residential single family Greater than one acre lots	Single family dwellings on larger lots	Provide areas for a variety of housing types and price ranges with lower densities.
Urban Growth Boundary	Residential development of one or more units per acre and commercial, office and industrial development.	Area with-in which urban use will be allowed and encourage compact development. Ensure that urban development does not occur in rural areas.
Urban	May include industrial, commercial/retail, or residential development of at least one unit per acre	Area with physical characteristics, levels of service, and land uses typically associated with more dense population.
Rural	May include agriculture and residential development less than one unit per acre	Area with physical characteristics, levels of service, and land uses typically associated with less dense population.
Cluster	Residential, agriculture, open space and/or natural resource protection areas	Development design techniques, which concentrates building on a portion of a site to leave the remainder undeveloped.
Planning Area	Area included within the Byers Plan that is approximately 12 square miles.	Byers area of influence and base for analyzing the distribution of land uses.
DRCOG	Denver Regional Council of Governments	A regional planning agency.

BYERS SUB-AREA PLAN

Legend

- Planning Area Boundary
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary
- Historic District Boundary (Voluntary)
- Section Lines
- Railroad
- Floodplain - Outside Planning Area
- Agricultural Area or Rural Cluster or 35 Acre Lot Minimum (A/R/C/35)

Sub-Area Plan

- Commercial/Retail/Business (C/R/B)
- Community Facility (CF)
- Floodplain/Agriculture/Open Space (F/A/O)
- Golf Course (GC)
- Heavy Industry (HI)
- Mixed Use/Commercial/Business/Light Industry (MUC/B/LI)
- Railroad (RR)
- Residential SF - Less Than 1 Acre (RSF-1)
- Residential SF - More Than 1 Acre (RSF1+)
- TOWN CENTER: Mixed Use/Commercial/Business/Community Facility/Residential MF (TC: MUC/B/CF/RMF)

Proposed Urban Growth Boundary Area

ID	Acres
1	337.57
2	323.14
3	198.01
4	122.37
5	274.19
Total	1,255.28

REV. DATE: 12/19/2003

NOTES:

1. PER ARAPAHOE COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, NO BUILDINGS WILL BE ALLOWED WITHIN 100 YEAR FLOODPLAIN.
2. FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PURPOSES, SECTION 1, 1/2 SECTION, 1/4 SECTION LINES MAY BE USED AS "RIGHT-OF-WAY" FOR EXISTING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE PLANNING AREA.
3. CLOMR HAS BEEN APPROVED BY FEMA, WHICH REMOVED MOST OF THE 100 FLOODPLAIN WITHIN THE URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY, SUBJECT TO LOMR.
4. THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN (BYERS' SUB-AREA PLAN) IS TO PROVIDE GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR THE TYPES OF LAND USES THAT WOULD BE ALLOWED IN DIFFERENT AREAS IN THE FUTURE. NO INTENT IS MADE TO TAKE AWAY ANY PROPERTY RIGHTS THAT CURRENTLY EXIST WITH A SPECIFIC LOT OR PIECE OF PROPERTY AND THE CURRENT ASSOCIATED ZONING. CURRENT ALLOWED USES WOULD REMAIN IN EFFECT UNTIL THE PROPERTY OWNER CHOOSES TO CHANGE THEM THROUGH THE REZONING PROCESS. THEN THE REZONING REQUEST WOULD BE EVALUATED FOR COMPATIBILITY WITH THE LAND USE(S) INDICATED ON THE LAND USE PLAN MAP.

