

PRELIMINARY PLAN FRAMEWORK

Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan

Draft



YOUR PLAN YOUR PUEBLO

April 2021



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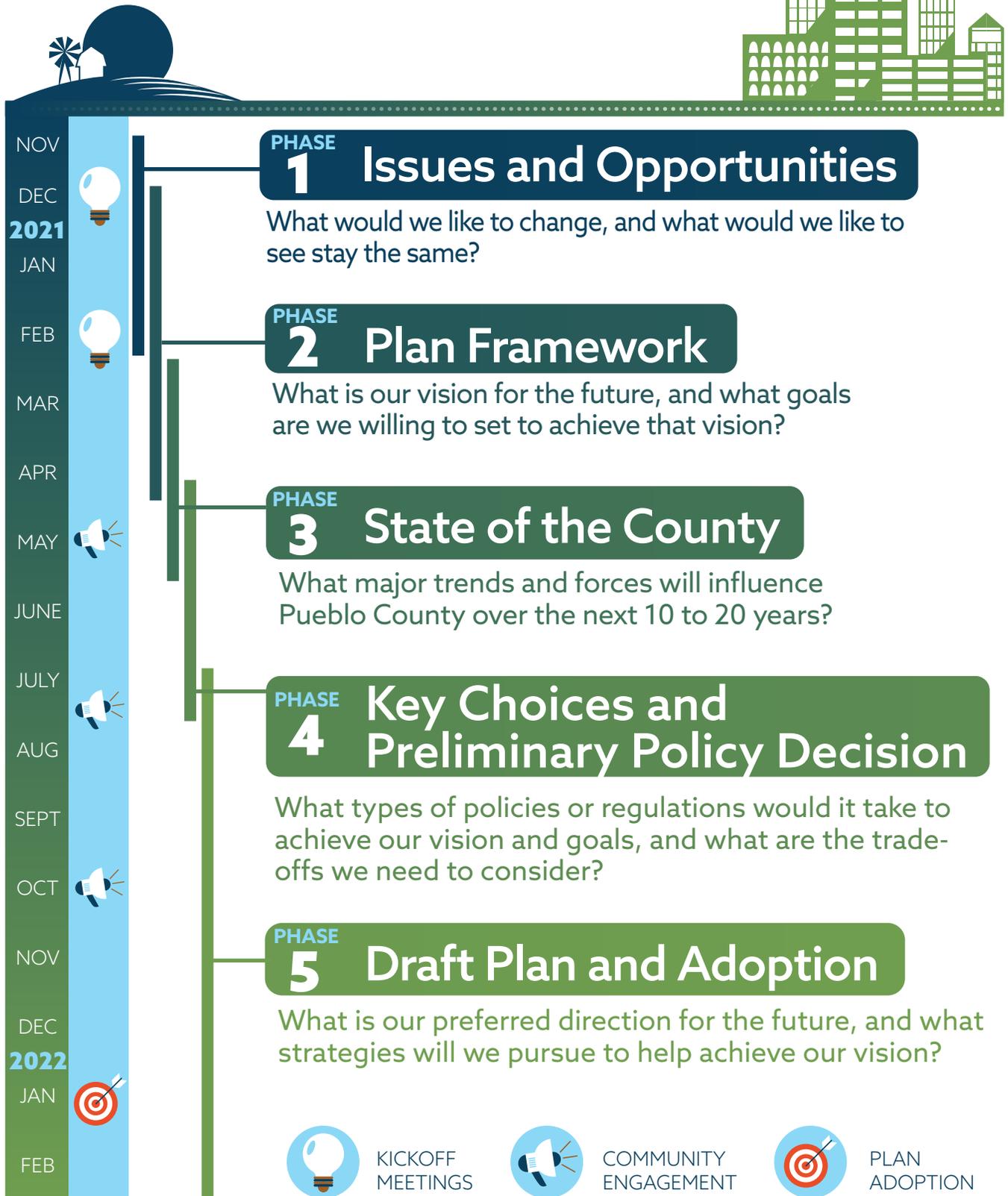
Photo credit:

www.puebloshares.com

www.historicpueblo.org



INTRODUCTION





ABOUT THE PROCESS

Pueblo County—in partnership with the City of Pueblo, Pueblo West, the towns of Boone and Rye, and the unincorporated communities—initiated a major update of the Region’s Comprehensive Plan for the first time since 2002. Key objectives for the process are to:

- Articulate a clear, cohesive vision and goals for the region;
- Define where and how the region wants to grow; and
- Develop a coordinated strategy for implementation.

Stakeholder and community input is critical to the success of the Regional Comprehensive Plan process. Opportunities for engagement are being provided during each phase of the Plan’s development. For more information visit the project website: www.puebloregionalplan.com.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document establishes a preliminary direction and organizing structure for the Regional Comprehensive Plan. The Preliminary Plan Framework was developed

based on input received as part of initial Focus Groups and stakeholder interviews conducted in December 2020, the results of the online Vision and Values Survey that was available on the project website in January and February 2021 (in English and Spanish). Over 900 people participated in this initial round of outreach. This document also draws from research and analysis on the current “State of the County” conducted by the project team in collaboration with the Core Staff Team and the Departmental and Service Provider Working Group.

It is essential that the updated plan reflects the values and priorities of the Pueblo County community. This document provides an opportunity to “check-in” with stakeholders and the community on three key questions: Have we heard you correctly? Are we on the right track? Is there anything that we’ve missed?

NEXT STEPS

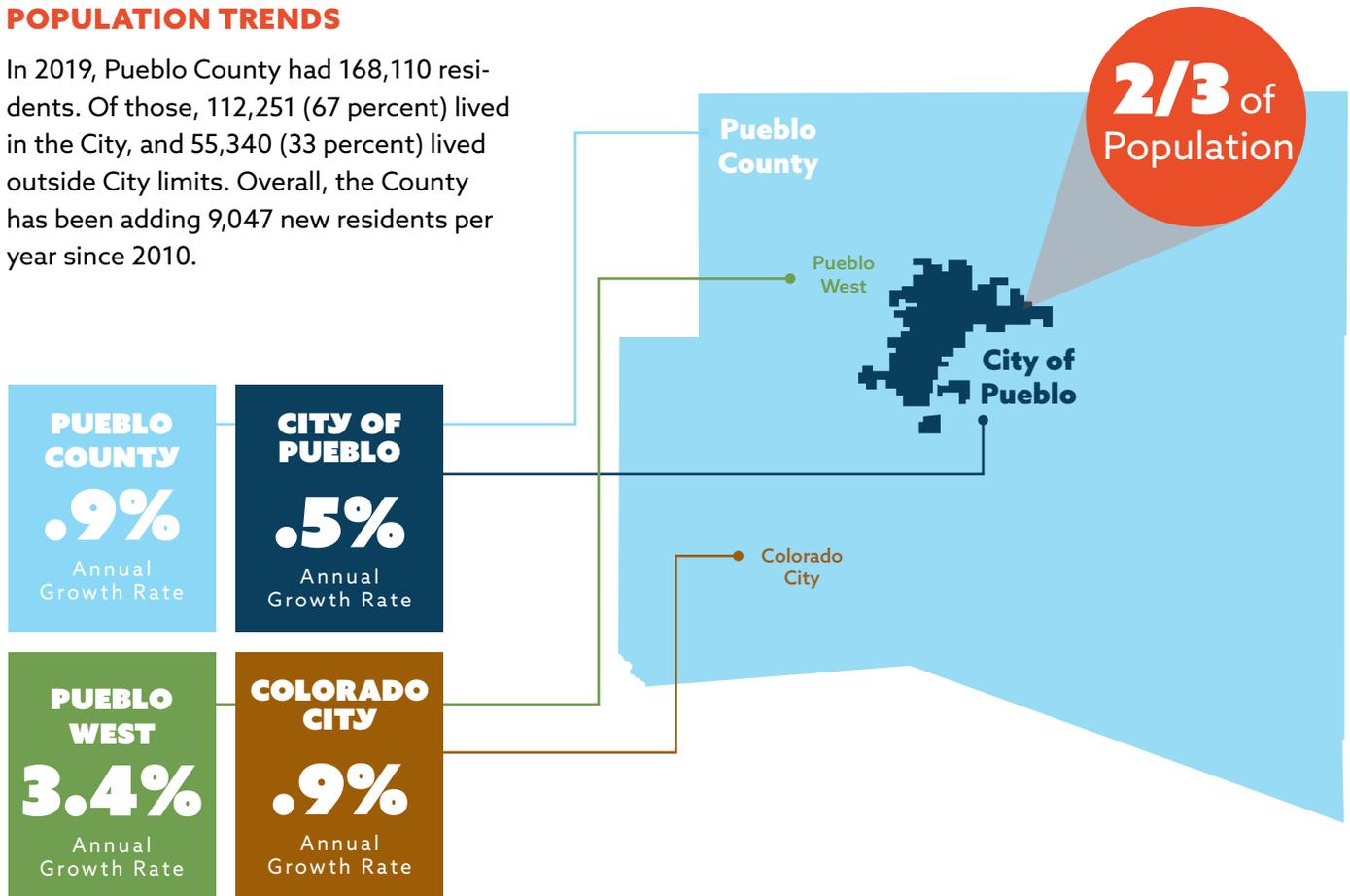
Based on input received as part of stakeholder and community meetings in May 2021, the project team will refine the Plan Framework and begin to frame key policy choices for the Regional Growth Plan discussion later this summer.



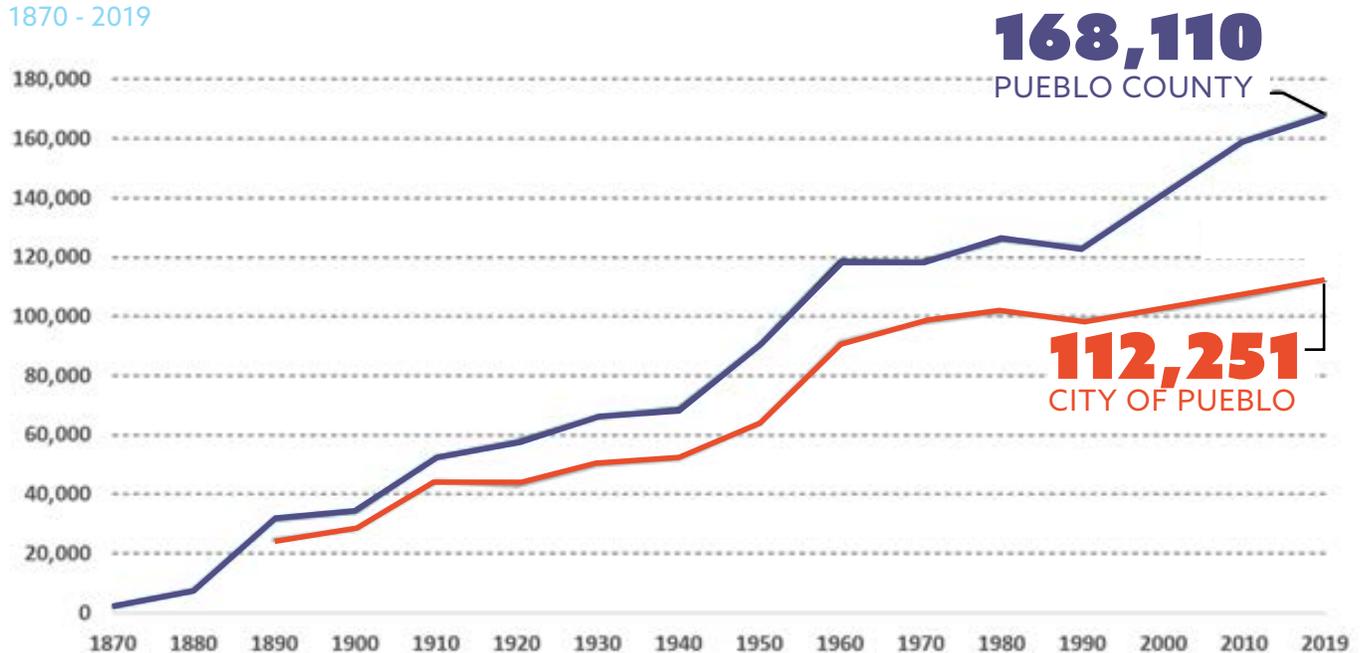
PUEBLO COUNTY SNAPSHOT

POPULATION TRENDS

In 2019, Pueblo County had 168,110 residents. Of those, 112,251 (67 percent) lived in the City, and 55,340 (33 percent) lived outside City limits. Overall, the County has been adding 9,047 new residents per year since 2010.

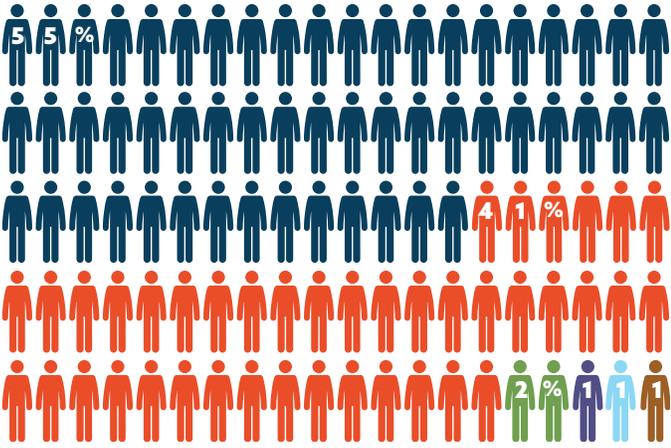


Pueblo City and County Population
1870 - 2019

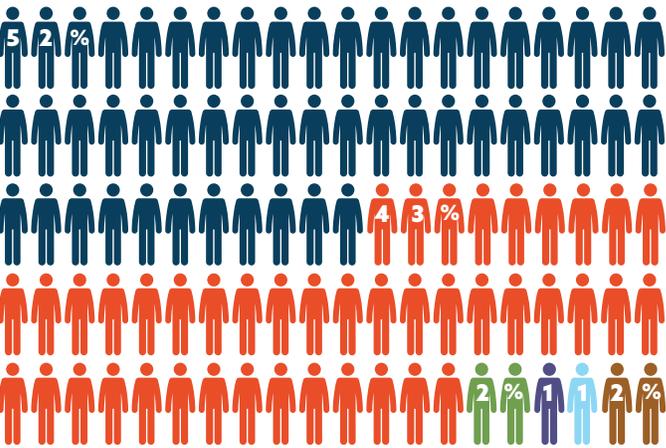


Source: US Census, ACS 5-year, 2010 and 2019; and Economic & Planning Systems for all demographics

Pueblo County, 2010



Pueblo County, 2019



- White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black
- Native American
- Asian
- 2 or more races

DEMOGRAPHICS

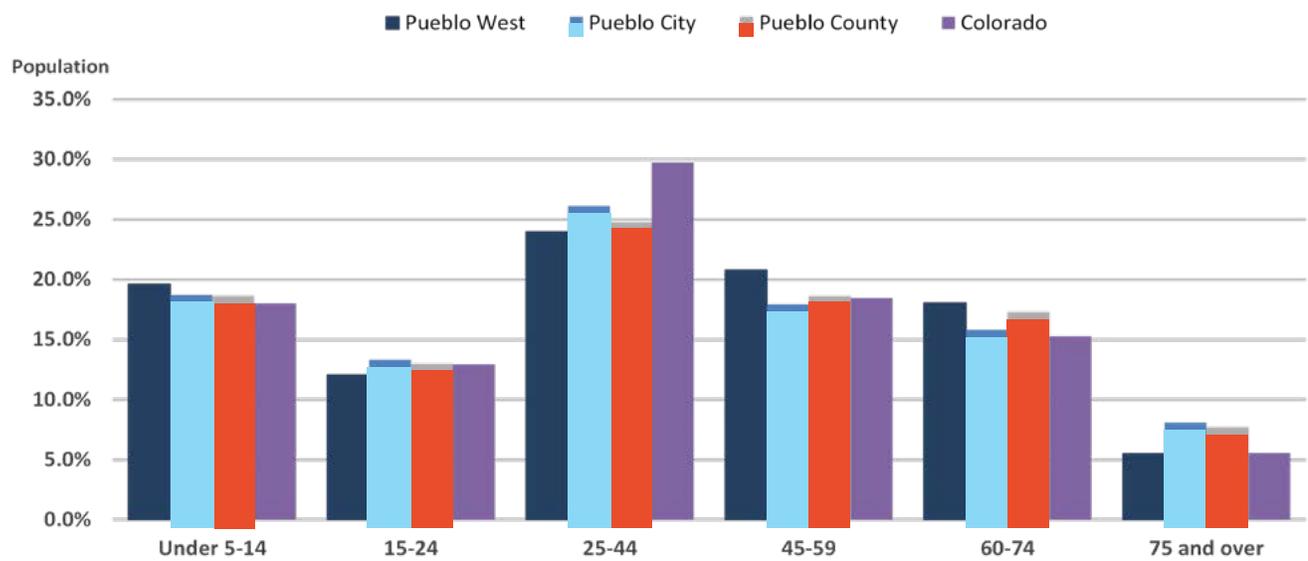
Racial/Ethnic Composition

Between 2010 and 2019, Pueblo County grew more diverse, with an increase of residents in both the City of Pueblo and Pueblo West identifying as Hispanic or Latino.

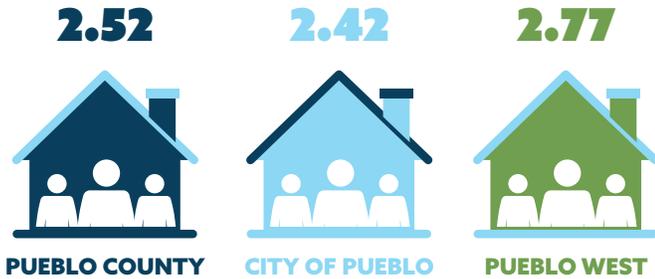
Age Distribution

The County's median age is 39.3 years. The number of residents in the County under the age of 25 has decreased since 2010, and comprises 12-14 percent of the population, while the number of 60-74-year-old is the fastest growing segment of the population, increasing 3.5 percent annually.

Age Distribution by Population, 2019



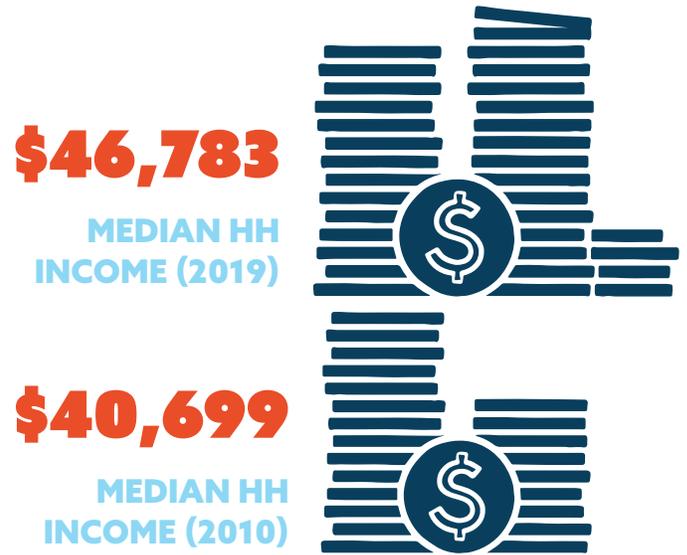
Average Household Size, 2010 and 2019



Household Size

Household size varies by location in Pueblo County, but did not change significantly in any jurisdiction between 2010 and 2019.

Pueblo County Median Income, 2010 and 2019²

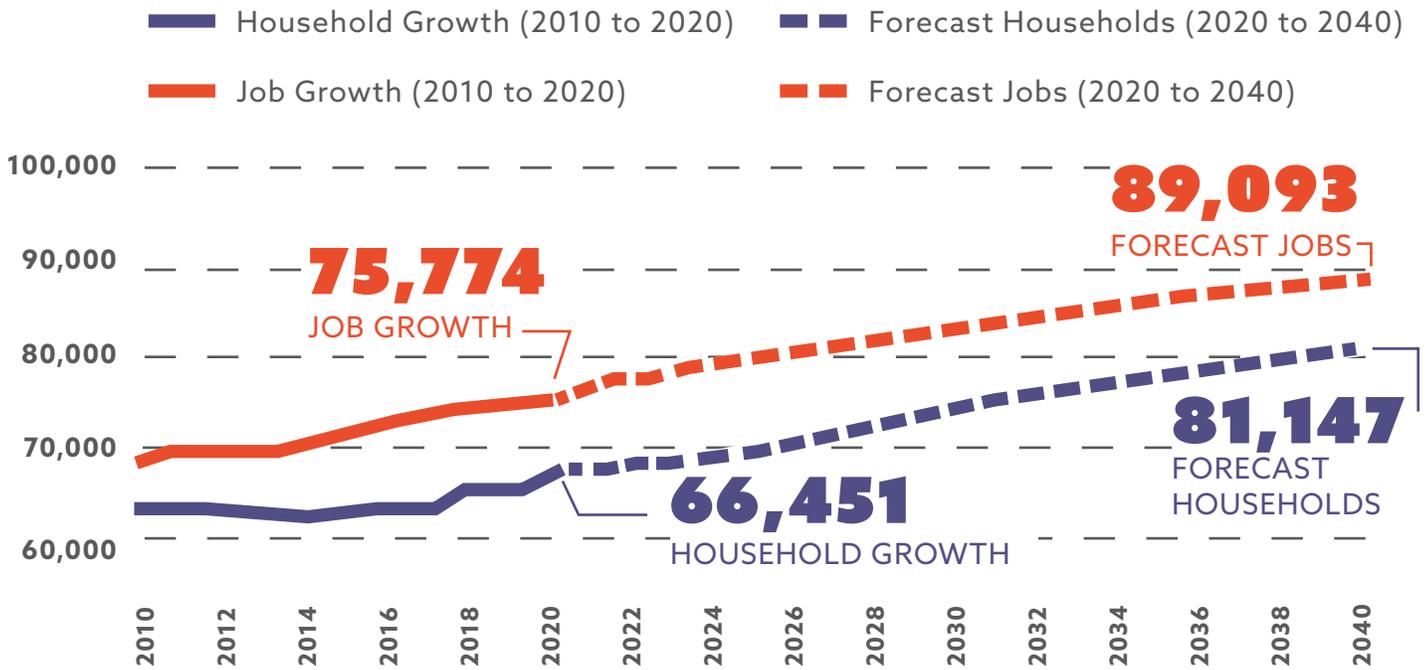


Median Household Income

Median household income increased for the County as a whole between 2000 and 2019. In 2019 median household income in Pueblo West (\$71,553) remained higher than the Countywide median (\$46,783), which in turn remained higher than the City median (\$40,450).

2 U.S. Census, ACS 5-year estimates, 2010 and 2019

Forecast Household and Job Growth²
Pueblo County, 2010-2040



POPULATION FORECAST³

The Pueblo County Regional Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning tool. By the end of the 2040 planning horizon the County’s population is expected to reach nearly 198,000. Births, deaths, and migration all influence growth trends. While the County’s rate of births has held relatively steady since 1990, the rate of deaths began to outpace births in 2016, and is projected to increase between 2020 and 2040. Projected growth in the County is anticipated as a result of new residents moving in.

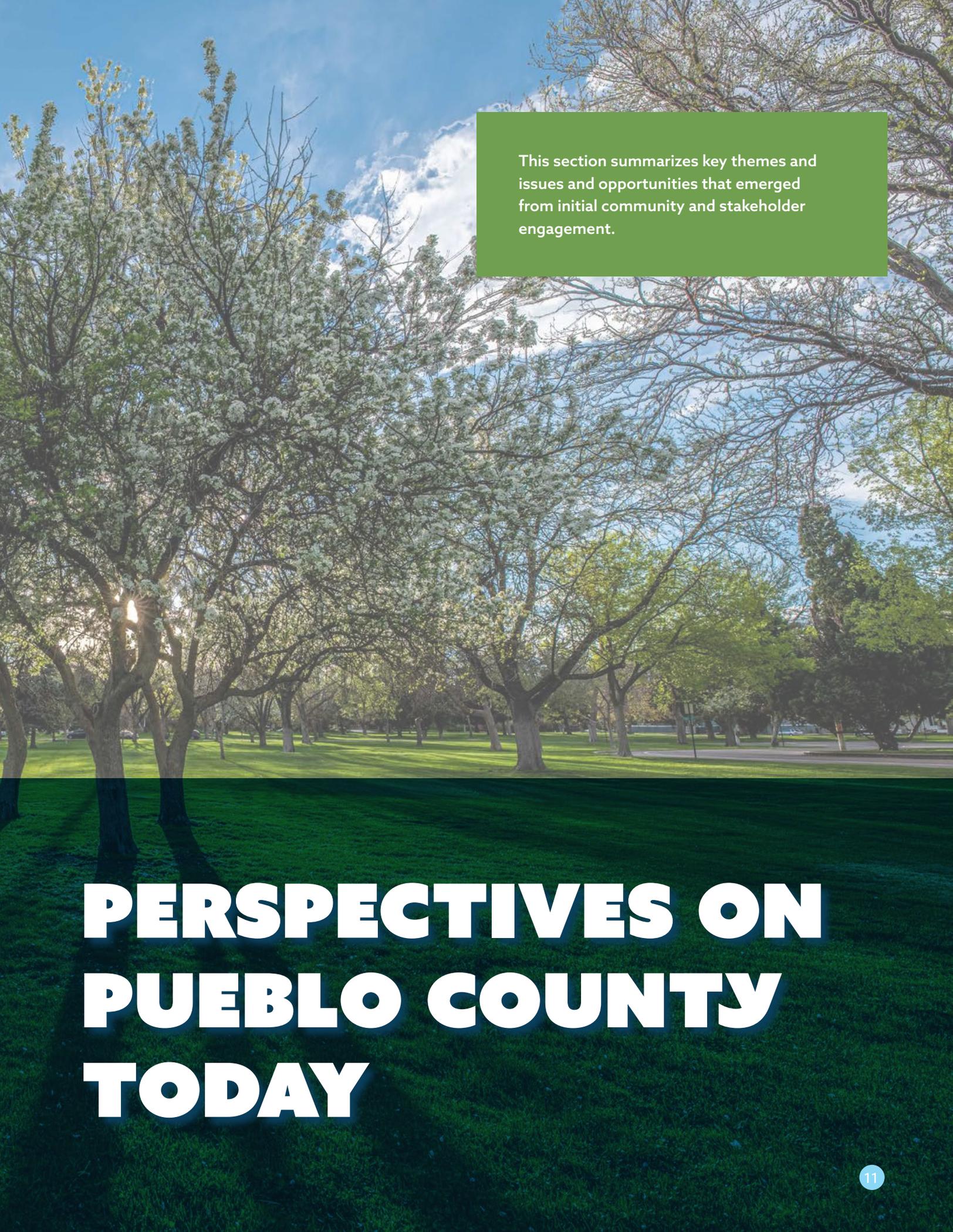
NEW RESIDENTS BY 2040:
29,000

NEW RESIDENTS PER YEAR:
1,462

ANNUAL GROWTH RATE:
.8%

2 Colorado Department of Local Affairs
3 DOLA and Economic & Planning Systems

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This section summarizes key themes and issues and opportunities that emerged from initial community and stakeholder engagement.

PERSPECTIVES ON PUEBLO COUNTY TODAY



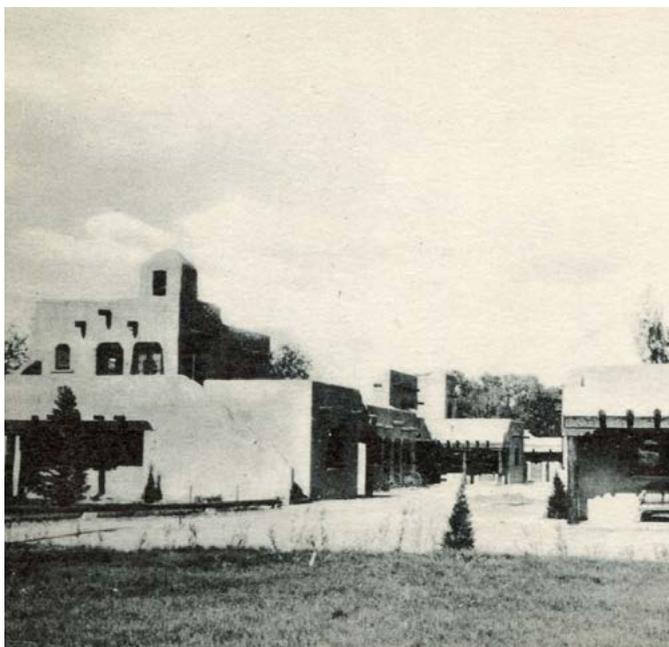
HOUSING

- **Affordability.** The unattainability of for-rent and for-sale homes for many families and issues related to homelessness.
- **Housing diversity.** Lack of housing availability across all categories of housing – especially newer homes, high-end options, housing for people with disabilities, and pet friendly housing.
- **Newer housing options.** Need for new construction and updated housing options, particularly downtown and in walkable areas.
- **Rental units.** Need for affordable rental units, to support low-income families, young professionals, and new residents.



ACCESS TO SERVICES

- **Medical care.** Access to healthcare services and improved quality of care.
- **Education.** Improvements to K-12 education and the need for personal growth opportunities for youth.
- **Public safety.** Concerns about theft, drug use, the number of people experiencing homelessness, and the state of public infrastructure and services.
- **Proximity of commercial services to neighborhoods.** Improved access to local grocery stores, restaurants, and businesses throughout the County.
- **Public infrastructure.** Improved public infrastructure like roadway improvements, public transportation options, high speed internet, and more reliable cellular service.



HISTORY AND CULTURE

- **Cultural/music/art events/activities.** Desire for more entertainment like music venues and family-friendly activities. Recognition of the Sangre de Cristo Arts Center and the area’s many museums as important community assets.
- **Tourism amenities.** Tourism offerings that highlight the many existing assets of the community, including recreation destinations, the Riverwalk area, and seasonal festivals.
- **City or County government participation.** Interest in contributing to local governance, having a greater voice, and sharing ideas.

ECONOMY

- **Good-paying jobs.** More jobs that pay more than minimum wage. Examples cited by participants included tech, construction, renewable energy, and manufacturing.
- **Availability of employment opportunities.** Difficulty of finding employment opportunities and a desire to see companies with a large number of positions come to Pueblo County.
- **Quality of businesses and services.** Interest in seeing more retail and food options (both restaurants and grocery stores) – especially small, locally owned businesses, with sustainable practices, in higher-density areas and near popular recreation destinations.
- **Support for small businesses.** Better promotion and support for small businesses through training and incentives. Desire to develop more robust arts and entertainment offerings.
- **Business-support services.** Need for improving internet reliability and speed, reducing utility costs, and workforce training and retention – including strengthening the local education system.



GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Overall appearance and quality of the built environment.** Concerns about vacant and unkempt properties, and desire to see spaces revitalized and better maintained.
- **Overall quality and condition of existing neighborhoods.** Disparity in quality across neighborhoods and desire to see underdeveloped neighborhoods given an opportunity to flourish.
- **Maintenance and beautification.** Improvements to private and public spaces, including trash management, better lighting, more community art, and landscaping.

AGRICULTURE/RURAL AREAS

- **Rural development.** Balancing preservation of the land, views, and rural atmosphere with development demands and the need for affordable housing.
- **Agriculture.** Concerns about conserving agricultural lands and ensuring farms and ranches have the necessary resources to thrive into the future.



RECREATION

- **Recreational facilities/opportunities.** Improved access and quantity of recreation facilities, in particular pools, athletic centers, and opportunities/activities for youth.
- **Overall quality of recreational amenities.** Satisfaction with the quality of recreational amenities like Arkansas River trail, Riverwalk, parks, and the multitude of outdoor opportunities, but also need for better maintenance and safety in these spaces.
- **Access/proximity to parks, playgrounds, or recreational facilities.** Concerns about the accessibility and inclusiveness of current recreational opportunities.
- **Access/proximity to walking/biking paths and trails.** Recognition of the multitude of trail offerings, and issues with safe accessibility in terms of parking, sidewalk maintenance/availability, and trash/debris.
- **Access to public lands.** Recognition of the barriers created by access fees for lower income households.



ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

- **Air quality.** Concerns about localized air quality and odors from marijuana grow sites.
- **Water quality and conservation.** Management of water systems, drinking water quality, recreational water quality, and interest in xeriscaping techniques.
- **Remediation and reuse of industrial lands.** Concern about the image of the community and desire for industrial remediation is necessary to clean up degraded sites and views from roadways.
- **Resource extraction.** Better regulation of resource extraction in the region and concerns about the location of such activity and health and safety impacts.
- **Sustainable development practices.** Interest in bringing more solar and other renewable energy options to Pueblo County, as well as exploring other sustainable development strategies. Desire for a more robust recycling program.

TRANSPORTATION/CONNECTIVITY

- **Sidewalk connectivity.** Lack of sidewalks in many neighborhoods, with recognition of the impacts for wheelchair users.
- **Ease of travel by biking.** Safety concerns when bicycling and need for more designated bike lanes – especially in the downtown area.
- **Ease of travel by car.** Need for better road maintenance and recognition that the car centric nature of Pueblo County inhibits other forms of transportation.
- **Intra-regional transit.** Improvements to the regional bus transportation system, including the lack of predictability, constrained hours, and minimal routes to different edges of the community. Interest in an option for public transit throughout the Front Range and in particular, to and from Denver International Airport.



OUR VISION FOR PUEBLO COUNTY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our vision for Pueblo County is grounded in seven guiding principles. These principles reflect what residents value about living in Pueblo County today, and what they hope it will be in the future. This Plan Framework recognizes that the success of our region depends not just on how we grow—or the businesses we attract—but also on the prosperity and quality of life of ALL who call Pueblo County home. The guiding principles are intended to be viewed as equal in weight and are not listed in any particular order of importance.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1:



DIVERSE LIFESTYLES, ATTAINABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

Puebloans choose from an array of lifestyle options and have access to housing types that meet the needs of all ages, incomes, and family structures. Both established and new neighborhoods are strong, stable, and safe.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2:



DEEPEN OUR AGRICULTURAL ROOTS

Pueblo County's roots in agriculture go back nearly 160 years. Farming and ranching contribute to the economy, but also to the culture and character of our region through rural landscapes, family businesses, signature crops, and emerging industries.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3:



HELP EVERY COMMUNITY THRIVE

Through investments in our people, neighborhoods, and communities, we will strive to make Pueblo County a place where all residents have a safe place to call home—and access to the basic services, education, and amenities they need to thrive.

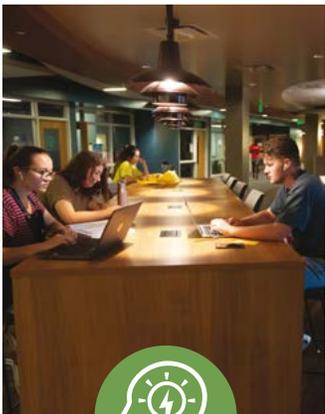
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4:



CELEBRATE PUEBLO

Puebloans value the region's history, culture, landscapes, access to outdoor recreation, and friendly people. We will instill a renewed sense of pride and identity by celebrating our diverse assets and investing in what makes Pueblo uniquely livable.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5:



A FUTURE-READY ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE

A future-ready economy and workforce is nimble in its ability to adapt to industry shifts and economic fluctuations. As a region, we will work together to position Pueblo County as an innovative community, where all residents, business-owners, and members of the workforce have an opportunity to achieve economic prosperity.

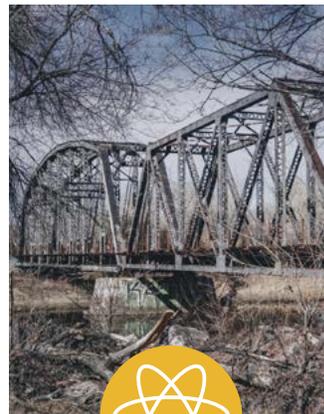
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6:



GROW SMARTER

Smart growth is sustainable and resilient growth. Pueblo County will encourage growth and development that bolsters the economic health and vibrancy of our region, while also conserving our natural resources and adapting our communities to a changing climate.

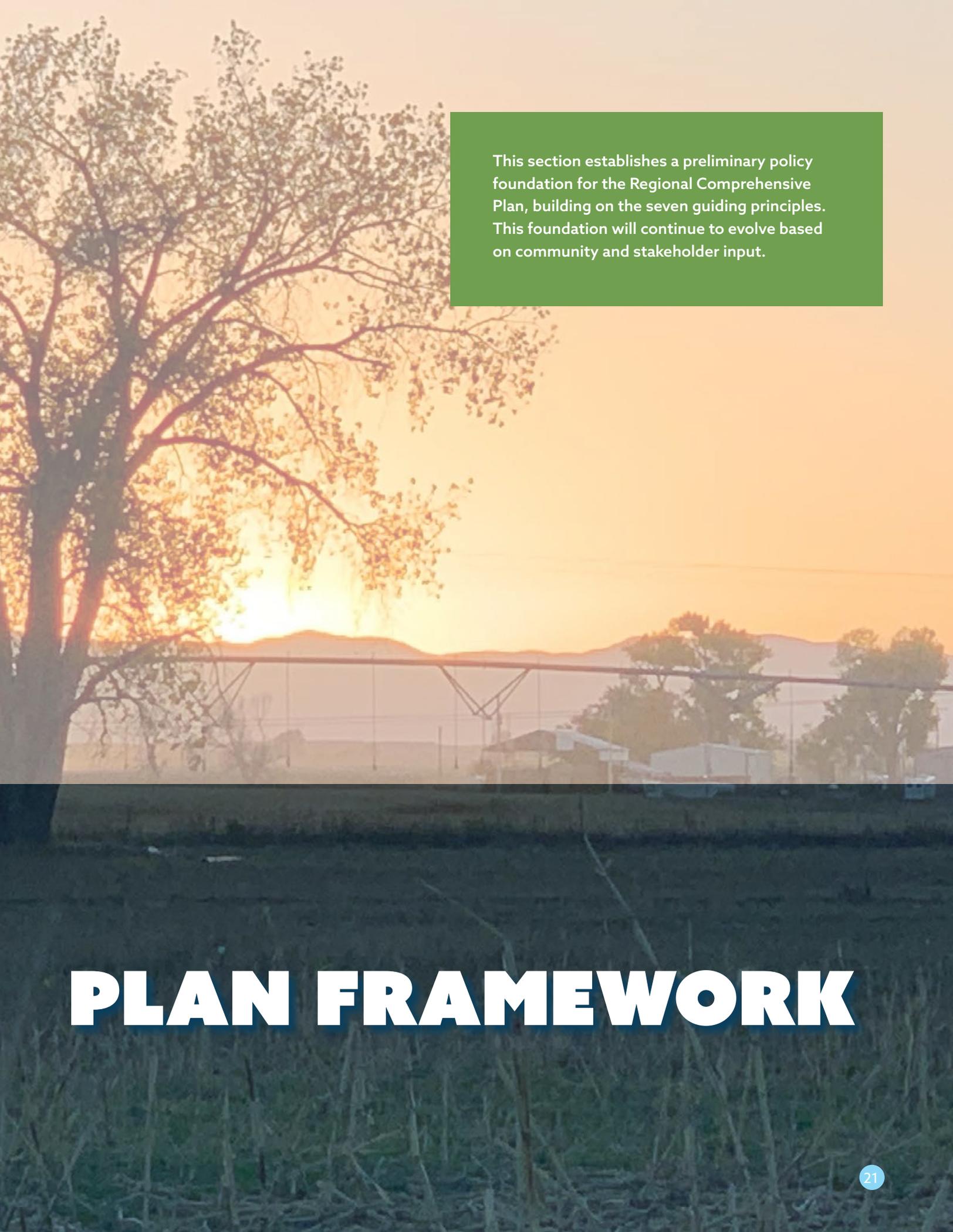
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 7:



STRENGTHEN LOCAL AND REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

Community leaders, businesses, local organizations, and residents recognize that a collaborative and connected region is a more resilient region. Together, we will work to improve our transportation system and infrastructure, provide services and amenities, and enhance local and regional ties.

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This section establishes a preliminary policy foundation for the Regional Comprehensive Plan, building on the seven guiding principles. This foundation will continue to evolve based on community and stakeholder input.

PLAN FRAMEWORK

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: DIVERSE LIFESTYLES, ATTAINABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

Why it is Important

Pueblo County is defined by its diverse lifestyle options—urban and suburban neighborhoods, small agricultural communities, mountain hamlets, and rural areas. Despite this array of options, rising housing costs and a constrained housing supply have made it increasingly difficult for many people to find housing that meets their needs, at a price they can afford. Demand for single-family detached homes remains high—and is expected to continue—but does not necessarily align with the needs of the region’s growing numbers of older adults or of the young professionals we have difficulty attracting and retaining. In addition to diversifying housing types, there is also a need for mixed-use development, where housing is connected to the businesses and services, so a car trip is not necessary for residents to fulfill all of their daily needs.

Decades of economic fluctuations in the region have translated into a housing market focused primarily on speculative construction of single-family homes rather than the construction of larger neighborhoods. Slower growth has led to constraints in supply and a decrease in affordable housing options. Many of Pueblo’s older neighborhoods have seen less reinvestment over time, leading to a deterioration of housing stock and conditions in core area neighborhoods. Residents of Pueblo County place a high value on maintaining the quality of life they enjoy, though there is a recognition that not all community members share equally in the region’s prosperity and amenities. A strong desire exists to minimize existing inequities.



WHAT WE’VE HEARD

“We need more apartments with 3-4 bedrooms for families.”

“The rental market is very competitive and difficult for people to find places to live currently.”

“More opportunities for affordable options would help.”

“...keep looking into ways to help first time buyers and give opportunities to vulnerable populations that need help holding onto their families’ properties.”

“Would like to see more multi-family housing and townhomes that infill in the city’s underinvested areas...and housing that includes amenities like swimming pools, gyms, and rec rooms.”

Puebloans choose from an array of lifestyle options and have access to housing types that meet the needs of all ages, incomes, and family structures. Both established and new neighborhoods are strong, stable, and safe.



Goals

- 1.1: Maintain the ability for Pueblo County residents to choose from an array of housing and lifestyle options, encompassing a spectrum from rural to urban.
- 1.2: Expand housing options to meet the needs of existing and future residents of all ages, abilities, and income levels.
- 1.3: Support reinvestment in existing neighborhoods—housing stock, infrastructure, and amenities.
- 1.4: Preserve and expand the supply of affordable housing within the region.

Measures of Success

- Decrease in single-family homes as a percentage of the overall housing supply
- Increase in number of attached single-family, townhomes, and multifamily units
- Lower number of cost-burdened households (i.e., households spending more than 30% of their income on housing and transportation costs each year)
- Higher number of permits for remodeling or minor improvements



What it Means for Pueblo County

- Ensuring neighborhoods incorporate a mix of single-family, attached, and multifamily housing options.
- Accomodating both for-sale and for-rent housing options.
- Ensuring homes are available for every income level.
- Encouraging mixed-use development in targeted areas.
- Maintaining the diversity and inclusivity of neighborhoods and communities in Pueblo County.
- Stabilizing and strengthening older neighborhoods without displacing existing residents.
- Reinvesting in and preserving existing affordable housing stock.
- Engaging existing residents in the revitalization and stabilization of their own homes and neighborhoods.
- Updating regulations to incentivize underrepresented housing types.

“The “inner city” and “downtown” residential space is so limited and building downtown or renovating space for residential is so challenging that area builders are deeply discouraged. Without residential downtown, the downtown economy cannot thrive.”

“Not enough patio homes or condos for older residents!”

“Opportunity to age in place, assisted facilities and activities for older folks.”

“As a senior citizen I am unable to afford more than a mobile home.

“Houses for sale have risen beyond affordability for single parents.”



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2: DEEPEN OUR AGRICULTURAL ROOTS

Why it is Important

Some farms and ranches in the region have been in existence longer than the County itself. Yet, despite their history and demonstrated resilience, their continued longevity is not assured. While any industry is subject to fluctuations in markets, advances in technology, consumer preferences, and other factors over such an extended period of time, agriculture is particularly vulnerable.

If current trends continue, encroaching development and the gradual loss of prime agricultural land will continue to erode the region's production capabilities. At the same time, competition for agricultural water rights is fierce in Pueblo County and throughout Colorado as cities and urban areas continue to grow and long-time producers seek viable ways to either expand their operations, or retire and transfer accumulated wealth to their heirs. Lastly, the effects of extended periods of drought and other impacts associated with a changing climate on native vegetation and grasslands are plainly visible, and limit the carrying capacity of many rural landscapes for cattle and wildlife.

Despite these vulnerabilities, interest in protecting and preserving the region's agricultural and ranching roots is strong. Interest in the local and regional food system, educational programs, and emerging industries—like urban agriculture, hemp/marijuana, and others is helping cultivate important conversations about the future.



WHAT WE'VE HEARD

"High quality land and water are not being adequately preserved for the continuation of critical local agricultural operations."

"I love the area. Mountains are close, farms are close, big cities are close. Weather is great."

"Keep supporting the farmers and connecting it to tourism for Pueblo and the county."

"Pueblo has a rich history of agriculture that is disappearing because water rights are being sold to developers. Would like to see a plan that preserves water rights for agriculture."

"Give the agricultural community its support while also making way for more renewable energies. This balance can help the economic support in the county which helps the city. Farmer's markets, the Chilefest, and other ways to remind people of what is nearby are excellent ways to do this. "

Pueblo County’s roots in agriculture and ranching go back more than 150 years. The industry contributes to the economy, but also to the culture and character of our region—rural landscapes, signature crops, and emerging industries.

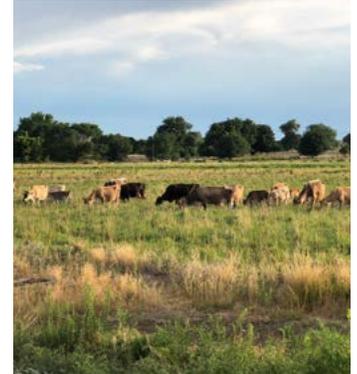


Goals

- 2.1: Protect working lands for ranching and crop production
- 2.2: Nurture the next generation of farmers and ranchers
- 2.3: Promote innovations in agricultural practices to adapt to a changing climate
- 2.4: Create a robust local and regional food system
- 2.5: Conserve and enhance the region’s watersheds and natural resources

Measures of Success

- Acres of prime agricultural land maintained in agricultural use with associated water rights
- Number of year-round jobs in agricultural industries
- Number of first generation or next generation farms and ranches
- Acres of land preserved through conservation easements, agricultural PUDs, or other conservation measures



What it Means for Pueblo County

- Adopting land use policies and regulations to minimize the impacts of development on agricultural and ranching operations.
- Advocating for the adaptation of state water laws in ways that keep water rights with the lands they have historically served.
- Working with interested producers and landowners to successfully transition land, production facilities, and knowledge to a new generation of farmers and ranchers.
- Working with local and regional partners to expand educational opportunities in emerging industries.
- Partnering with land trusts, wildlife organizations, and other land management partners to maintain the contiguity and ecological health of the region’s rural landscapes.

“Look at hemp and similar renewable resources that can help bring jobs and the economy.”

“Be cautious in fragmenting agriculture by permitting rural subdivisions.”

“Very interested in seeing a master plan that incorporates green space and rewards residential infill development.”

“...we NEED a place to encourage new youth to enter these careers, a demonstration farm with some training around agricultural science and business and environmental sustainability issues”

“The City should continue to affordably support farmers on the

mesa and let them use their water rights.

“We need to keep the farmland we have, but it is being sold to make overpriced graded communities. There is plenty of empty land that isn’t used for farming that could be used for that.”

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: HELP EVERY COMMUNITY THRIVE

Why it is Important

Although Pueblo County's varied neighborhoods and communities are all afforded the same ample Colorado sunshine and friendly regional community, not all areas of Pueblo have the same access to high-quality educational opportunities, healthcare, social services, parks and recreation amenities, transportation infrastructure, or even healthy food. Disparities in income levels, housing conditions, and access to services and amenities contribute to deep-seated inequality in our community.

As a region we recognize the challenge of addressing decades of inequality, but also recognize the benefits of a working together to achieve a more equitable and inclusive communities and neighborhoods. Addressing these challenges will require close—and ongoing—collaboration among all of us, but especially among the region's service providers, non-profits, charitable organizations, educational institutions, faith community, and government agencies.



WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“Schools/childcare need improvement.”

“I love the area. Mountains are close, farms are close, big cities are close. Weather is great.”

“Having been involved in recruiting individuals to Pueblo, I feel one of our major drawbacks is K-12 education. Many professionals work here but live in Colorado Springs due to school issues.”

“We are a food desert we lack good quality food. The East side needs a grocery store.”

“Low income neighborhoods do not get enough educational or access to fresh foods!

“Again it is very different for those in poverty, educational opportunities are expensive and are essential to obtain a job that will support a family.”

Through investments in our people, neighborhoods, and communities, we will strive to make Pueblo County a place where all residents have a safe place to call home—and access to the basic services, education, and amenities they need to thrive.



Goals

- 3.1: Advocate for an effective education system and lifelong learning opportunities
- 3.2: Support equitable access to affordable healthcare, services, and amenities
- 3.3: Increase the availability of and access to fresh, healthy, affordable food
- 3.4: Ensure residents are offered equal opportunity for a healthy, active lifestyle
- 3.5: Foster a culture of inclusivity

Measures of Success

- Reduce child poverty rate
- Increase graduation rate
- Obesity rate, percent of woman that receive prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy, life expectancy
- Neighborhood racial/ethnic segregation and racial/ethnic diversity
- Percent of residents within ¼ mile of full-service grocery store
- Percent of residents within ¼ mile of a quality park or open space



What it means for Pueblo County

- Investing in historically underserved areas.
- Expanding access to housing, jobs, support services, and quality of life amenities in historically underserved areas.
- Investing in aging infrastructure in older neighborhoods.
- Expanding multimodal transportation options to allow more residents the ability to walk, bike, or take transit where they need to go.
- Expanding the availability of fresh, health, affordable, locally-grown food in underserved areas.
- Ensuring residents of all ages, genders, races/ethnicities, sexual orientations/identities, and tenures feel welcome and safe.
- Embracing and enhancing partnerships that allow us to leverage limited resources.

“It has the best climate, is easy to get around, friendly people.”

“I’d like to see investment in older neighborhoods to improve living conditions for everyone.”

“I also think enhanced focus on open space and park enhancement would benefit the area.”

“Too many food deserts - need more food access points that are connecting gardens and smaller grocery outlets, not just mega-corp stores and food banks”

“In recent years, the quality of the Pueblo medical care community has declined. MJ, narcotic and alcohol use has increased and is overwhelming treatment resources.”

“A nicer, cleaner entrance to the county and city. Better cleanup of neighborhoods. No trash filled yards and homes. More neighborhood shopping and/or easier access to better public transport.”

“Cyclical poverty needs to be addressed.”

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4: CELEBRATE PUEBLO

Why it is Important

Pueblo County's history is marked by booms and busts. Periods of economic gains contributed to a downtown that is filled with historic structures, vibrant and diverse neighborhoods, and a wealth of cultural amenities, especially for a community of its size. However, subsequent downturns have resulted in the vacancy of those same historic buildings, disinvestment in our neighborhoods, and—in some cases—damaged community pride. Despite these challenges, residents are quick to highlight what they love about living in Pueblo County—its rich history, diversity of cultures, scenic rural landscapes, easy access to outdoor recreation, a vibrant arts scene, and a family-friendly environment.

As we look to the future, we must come together to continue the work of rediscovering and reinvesting in not just what makes Pueblo County unique—but also what makes it a great place to live. A renewed sense of identity and community pride will emerge from our shared commitment to celebrating our past, while actively investing in our children and grandchildren's future through art, education, and cultural awareness.



WHAT WE'VE HEARD

"For locals to stop describing it as crime ridden and terrible, when it's a great place to live. We have image issues and the locals complain in ways that perpetuate them."

"Overall, Pueblo is a wonderful place with a lot of potential."

"Poverty and age of our city can dampen the spirits. We seem old, wrinkled and dirty compared to the roaring growth, newness and sparkle of northern Colorado."

"There has been no progress for inclusivity and cultural diversity. This affects our systems which continue to perpetuate systemic racism."

"I love the community gathering places - like the Arts Center!"

"Pueblo's secret weapon is the friendliness of its citizens, which makes me so proud to call Pueblo my new hometown."

"Engage with the poor and working class more, get their ideas and

Puebloans value the region’s history, culture, landscapes, access to outdoor recreation, and friendly people. We will instill a renewed sense of pride and identity by celebrating our diverse assets and investing in what makes Pueblo uniquely livable.



Goals

- 4.1: Protect and preserve Pueblo County’s historic and cultural resources
- 4.2: Maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation
- 4.3: Celebrate Pueblo’s history and culture through the arts
- 4.4: Establish Pueblo County as a tourist destination
- 4.5: Protect our rural landscapes
- 4.6: Enhance the appearance of public spaces, rights-of-way, and community gateways

Measures of Success

- Adaptive reuse/reinvestment in historic landmarks and districts
- Number of museums and cultural amenities (art, music, theater, science, zoo, etc.)
- Number of cultural events
- Increase in visitors or amount of tourist spending



What it Means for Pueblo County

- Preserving our historic and cultural resources, and sharing the stories that have shaped the region into what it is today.
- Promoting public art and expanded creative outlets for all residents.
- Expanding protections for—and access to—our rivers and other natural amenities.
- Investing in the creativity and entrepreneurship of Puebloans.
- Actively promoting the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of our historic building stock.
- Highlighting the diversity of cultures that have lived – and continue to live – in the region.
- Collaborating with local, regional, and state partners to build our region’s profile as a tourist destination.

then help them launch them. There is so much untapped potential here to make Pueblo as beautiful as its people.”

“Cultural opportunities abound with museums, theater exhibitions and parks and recreation. In particular the myriad of stunning offerings at the Art Center and

educational offerings of university, I-12 and community colleges.”

“Would prefer better recreational opportunities on the river.”

“We need to...build on what makes us unique! I'd like to see more investment in the things that we ALREADY have, including people,

buildings, neighborhoods, and amenities (reservoir, river, history as “makers”). ”

“I like being able to access Lake Pueblo and the San Isabel Nat’l Forest fairly quickly and easily. Pueblo’s public libraries are fantastic.”



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5:

A FUTURE-READY ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE

Why it is Important

Pueblo County possesses a strong economic base, an ample supply of land, and strong regional partnerships to build upon for the future. Existing infrastructure assets—including ready access to the rail network and water and sewer availability—can help support economic growth in the region. However, there are challenges that must be addressed, including the education and skill level of the workforce, electric power costs, and inadequate broadband coverage, among others.

As we look to the future, the economic resilience of the region must be major focus. The region’s traditional economic sectors are being impacted greatly by technology advances and market forces. Increasingly, less skilled jobs in legacy industries are being replaced by investments in automation and new technologies. Ensuring employment opportunities for residents in the future will require the County’s economy, workforce, and community to continue to evolve.



WHAT WE’VE HEARD

“Great place to start a business. Hardest part of small business here or anywhere else is getting quality people to work for you, even if you pay them a livable wage.”

“I would like to see jobs that pay a livable wage.”

“Pueblo is economically depressed. And those in leadership positions respond by raising taxes, raising property values, raising property taxes, and making life even harder than it already is for the citizens.”

“The arts/creative/makers sector could be an economic driver, provide employment and help make Pueblo a destination.”

“I would like to see higher pay for teachers, more renewable energy employment opportunities, and a better arts and music representation in the area.”

“It is difficult to attract and retain young professionals. Once they receive training and experience, they seem to want to either move to or live in other areas, such as Colorado Springs or Denver Metro.”

A future-ready economy and workforce is nimble in its ability to adapt to industry shifts and economic fluctuations. As a region, we will work together to position Pueblo County as an innovative community of choice, where all business-owners, members of the workforce, and residents have an opportunity to achieve economic prosperity.



Goals

- 5.1: Leverage the region’s assets and opportunities
- 5.2: Diversify the region’s economic base
- 5.3: Support the growth, creation, and retention of small businesses and start-ups
- 5.4: Attract and train a regional workforce to meet the needs of the future
- 5.5: Empower residents to achieve economic prosperity and opportunity
- 5.6: Make it easy to do business in Pueblo

Measures of Success

- Increase in job creation/retention
- Increase in number of small businesses
- Higher average wages
- Growth in target industries



What it Means to Pueblo County

- Expanding and innovating our region’s economic base in response to industry and environmental shifts.
- Investing in the educational programs, housing, infrastructure, and quality of life initiatives needed to help us retain and grow our workforce.
- Foster growth in small businesses, innovation, and creative industries.
- Continuing to market the region as a “bundle” of assets and opportunities.
- Aligning regulations and processes within the region.
- Protecting the availability of prime employment land.
- Nurturing our partnerships in the state and region.

“Retaining the brain trust of the community. Our youth, if motivated for Higher Education leave and do not return.”

“The staggeringly high electric rates are a debilitating factor for our community and they disincentivise businesses from relocating here, thereby hindering economic growth.”

“I’d like to see Pueblo County invest in our community rather than try to entice companies with major tax incentives.

“Bring in more jobs, preferably with industry. Prepare for the aftermath of the pandemic. People will be in trouble, financially.”

“Pueblo’s Small Business support systems are archaic and don’t put enough emphasis on partnerships with our local higher ed to get actual Business Development education prior to launching businesses. Which is why we have such a high rate of turnover.”

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6: GROW SMARTER

Why it is Important

For the last 40 years, growth in Pueblo County has occurred much more slowly than it has in other communities along the Front Range. While residents value the slower pace of life and measured growth, it has also presented challenges in terms of disinvestment in established communities, job creation, and a lack of housing diversity. Moving forward, Pueblo County has an opportunity to take a proactive role in determining where and how development will occur, and attracting the types of development will be most beneficial to the region in the future. While greenfield development will continue to occur, a stronger focus on the revitalization of older areas of our communities is needed.

We must also ensure our development and infrastructure is resilient to the impacts of a changing climate. Models predict that the region will be most significantly impacted by the effects of extreme heat events and higher overall temperatures, making us vulnerable to drought, wildfire, and flooding. As we look to the future, it is essential that we adapt our built environment and minimize stress on our natural environment to minimize potential adverse effects on our people, property, and economy.



WHAT WE'VE HEARD

"Any new developments should be xeriscaped."

"Control urban sprawl. Mixed use neighborhoods."

"More businesses in Pueblo West."

"We must begin now to make Pueblo County more sustainable. We need water security and more sustainable new development. We cannot continue to grow at this pace and ignore global warming."

"Need more urban styles of living."

"WE must find a way to require and subsidize wind and solar power in addition to other more earth friendly ways of producing energy."

"WE have so many empty buildings and warehouses, yet we continue to offer permits to new business, which requires more loss of habitat and more parking lots etc."

Smart growth is sustainable and resilient growth. Pueblo County will encourage growth and development that bolsters the economic health and vibrancy of our region, while also conserving our natural resources and adapting our communities to a changing climate.



Goals

- 6.1: Promote a fiscally- and environmentally-responsible pattern of growth
- 6.2: Encourage infill and redevelopment in established communities and neighborhoods
- 6.3: Conserve and protect the region’s water resources
- 6.4: Lead the way in renewable energy
- 6.5: Reduce the region’s risk from climate change and natural hazards
- 6.6: Build sustainable buildings and infrastructure

Measures of Success

- Development permits in priority infill/ redevelopment areas (residential units/ non-residential square feet)
- Water use per capita
- Increase in percentage of energy in City and County that comes from renewable sources
- Lower number of vacant buildings



What it Means for Pueblo County

- Making the most of the land we have already developed through infill and redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and strategic infrastructure investments.
- Prioritizing development in areas where infrastructure and services are planned or already in place.
- Continuing to invest in the revitalization of Downtown Pueblo and core area neighborhoods.
- Expanding our sustainability initiatives—with a focus on water and energy conservation.
- Supporting our rural and mountain communities.
- Reducing the risks and effects of natural hazards on people, property, and infrastructure.

“Shopping centers and stores are tired and worn down. Pueblo has so much potential to be a great place to live but needs to raise itself up and invest in the things that attract people to a community. ”

“Need more urban living styles of living and eating areas.”

“We are a small community and would like limited growth, but we would welcome growth, we just would like to be economical, practical, and well-built growth (and would like to keep our open spaces as well).”

“There are huge local opportunities that have not been maximized.”

“We could lean into creating draws based on neglected areas being revitalized and optimized.”

“There needs to be more careful planning and zoning in our unincorporated areas.”



GUIDING PRINCIPAL 7: STRONG LOCAL AND REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

Why it is Important

Issues of economic development, housing, transportation, environmental sustainability, and providing adequate services to residents rarely follow jurisdictional boundaries. Despite Pueblo County's size and geographic diversity, the challenges facing one community in the region are often shared by others. Similarly, many residents live in one community, but must work, shop, and/or recreate in a different Pueblo County community, with most of these kinds of daily trips currently requiring a car. However, demand for infrastructure that supports alternative modes of travel—such as walking, bicycling, and taking transit—is growing. Mobility will also be an increasing issue for older residents—a growing percentage of the population—who are no longer able to drive cars, but still need to access services and move around their individual communities and the region.

The future of communities both large and small in our region is closely intertwined. Pueblo County communities and stakeholders have a long history of working together on issues and opportunities of regional significance. We are committed to continued collaboration on not just the transportation that connects us, but also on projects and initiatives that will enhance the quality of life of our residents and the collective success of our region—broadband, energy, jobs, tourism, and others.



WHAT WE'VE HEARD

"Bus service seems to be ok - wish more would take advantage of it. Our roads are finally starting to get paved and improved. I know it takes time."

"A second route from downtown area of Pueblo to Pueblo West."

"We lack adequate broadband service in many parts of the County."

"Our regional airport needs more airline service. Rail service into the northern part of the state would be very beneficial."

"Train to Denver!!! Needed. AND - seriously - I've lived in small towns and Pueblo's public transit is abysmal."

"Would LOVE to have train service to Denver's airport"

Community leaders, businesses, local organizations, and residents recognize that a collaborative and connected region is a more resilient region. Together, we will work to improve transportation systems and infrastructure, provide services and amenities, and enhance our local and regional ties.



Goals

- 7.1: Provide a safe, efficient, and reliable regional transportation system for all modes
- 7.2: Expand transportation connections to, from, and within the region
- 7.3: Encourage and prioritize the use of alternative forms of transportation
- 7.4: Collaborate regionally to provide access to quality services and amenities
- 7.5: Maintain and improve regional communication and partnerships

Measures of Success

- Percent of residents living within ¼ mile of transit service
- Miles of multi-purpose trails and bike lanes
- Countywide mode share (how people get around)
- Number of households with high-speed internet access
- Number of residents served by shared programs (i.e., recreational, educational)



What it Means for Pueblo County

- Getting from place to place in Pueblo County is safe, easy, and reliable for all modes of transit.
- Transportation options exist to enable residents without cars to access outlying recreational and outdoor space
- Our region addresses challenges and achieves collective successes by working together – government agencies, service providers, community organizations, businesses, and citizens.
- Seeking opportunities to leverage available resources through shared programs and services.

“Pueblo is designed for cars and cars alone. I often feel unsafe biking or walking because cars allowed to go so fast in the downtown area.”

“The problem with pueblo transit as far as buses is that it ends at 6 or so - however, the bus service is good & appreciated. It also would help to have a line that goes out to the Airport (for both jobs in distribution centers, etc. & use of airport) or some sort of airport shuttle”

“This is the least bike friendly community I’ve lived in. I need to bike many days, as my household only has one car, and it should be easy, but I am so close to being hit by a car every time I bike. It’s terrifying and frustrating to deal with that during my commute.”