

# **CITY OF IDAHO SPRINGS, COLORADO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**



**Adopted July 14, 2008**

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*This Idaho Springs Comprehensive Plan is an update of the plan adopted in 2005. It reflects the changes in the community that have occurred since 2005 and includes updated tables, goals, policies and maps that reflect the vision of the Idaho Springs community. It is intended to state the current conditions the City is facing, present the issues that impact the City, and put forth a vision for the future of the City.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**Approved and adopted by the  
Idaho Springs City Council  
by**

**Resolution No. 12, Series 2008 on July 14, 2008**

### **Planning Commission**

Bill Mehrer, Chair  
Don Reimer  
Cindy Olson  
Justin Gorton  
Kate Collier  
Chuck Howard, Alternate  
Asta Loevlie, Alternate

### **City Council**

Cindy Olson, Mayor  
Rick Adams  
Robert Bowland  
Asta Loevlie  
Dan Abbott, Mayor pro-tem  
John Curtis  
Kate Collier

### **Idaho Springs staff**

Cindy Condon, City Administrator  
Reba Bechtel, City Clerk  
Randy Rasmussen, Public Works Superintendent  
Chris Brownell, Water Superintendent  
David Wohlers, Police Chief  
Tim Katers, Planner

### **Also providing assistance in developing this document:**

JoAnne Sorenson, Clear Creek County  
Mary Jane Loevlie  
Don Allan, Idaho Springs Historic Society  
David Reid  
Tim Tetherow, J.F. Sato  
Peggy Stokestad, Clear Creek County Economic Development  
Clear Creek Courant

### **Photos by:**

Don Allan, Idaho Springs Historic Society (Pages 5, 6, 7, 12, 16, 23, 24, 59)  
Tim Katers, Katers & Associates (All others)  
Cover photo by Don Allan

### **Mapping by:**

Roy Fronczyk, Community Planning Services

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Sources: Colorado Dept. of Local Affairs: Demography Office, Clear Creek County Economic Development, City of Idaho Springs

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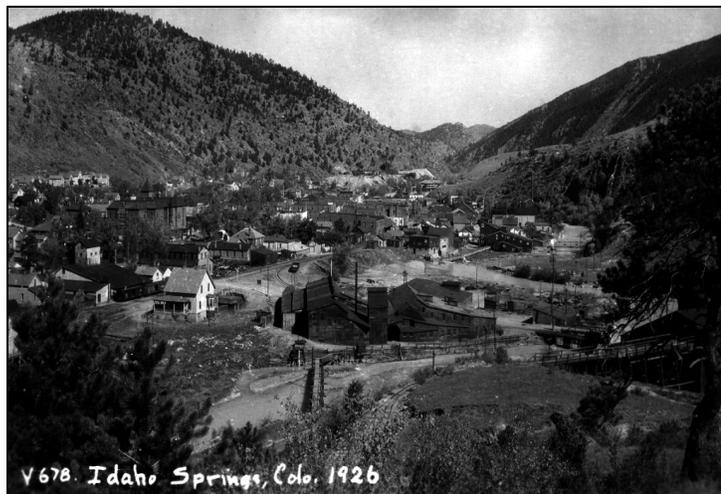
All illustrations developed as part of FHWA and CDOT's I-70 Mountain Corridor Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement - I-70 Reconnaissance Survey for Historic Properties.

## I. BACKGROUND

### HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

During the winter of 1858-59, George Jackson set up camp at the point where Chicago Creek and Clear Creek met. It was here that Mr. Jackson discovered gold on January 7, 1859, and helped spark the Colorado Gold Rush. Within a matter of months following Mr. Jackson's discovery, thousands flocked to the region bringing the first major white populations into the area and settling the cities of Denver, Boulder, Central City and Idaho Springs. By 1861, the region was no longer considered part of the Kansas Territory but the new territory of Colorado. The population of the area now known as Clear Creek County quickly grew to more than 60,000 people. The Gold Rush ended by 1863, but the territory continued to prosper in part because of the railroads built for the transport of gold. Statehood came in 1876; only 15 years after Colorado had become a territory.

The development of Idaho Springs' Miner Street commercial area coincided with the Gold Rush and it still boasts an array of Victorian era homes and commercial buildings. The area has been designated a Historic District and was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. In 1988, the City of Idaho Springs created its own Historical Preservation District to further protect and preserve the City and, most especially, the Miner Street commercial area. The proposed expansion and/or widening of I-70, prompted Colorado Preservation, Inc. to add Idaho Springs and other historic areas along the I-70/Clear Creek Expansion Corridor to its List of Endangered Places in Colorado in 2005.



1926 View from above Mixell Dam

Many of the towns created by the miners of the 1800's have disappeared or become ghost towns. Idaho Springs, widely regarded as the first site of a major Colorado gold strike, is among the handful of western gold rush towns that have survived to the present day. Unlike many of the others, however, Idaho Springs has not just survived but continues as a vibrant community with a thriving downtown, steady population and strong economy.

### COMMUNITY SETTING

Idaho Springs is nestled between the ridges that made many fortunes. It is easy to see how the City grew around the mines and followed the contours of the land. Industry developed along Clear Creek, homes and narrow streets sprang up at the base of the steep inclines and the residents built a host of churches and shops. In the middle of this, the Miner Street commercial district grew into the cornerstone of Idaho Springs' historic landscape.

All of these elements: the topography, the mines, the homes, the shops, the churches and the creek have survived relatively intact and, when viewed as a whole, afford modern day Coloradoans a rare insight into the history not just of Colorado but of development in the western United States.

Idaho Springs grew from the gold nuggets found in Chicago and Clear Creeks. As the settlement grew to become a city, it was cradled by the mountains that still stand silently to the north and south. Those who came to claim the gold concentrated their efforts underground and made a relatively small impact on the landscape. Their true legacy was the City of Idaho Springs; a community built to support the mining industry and the needs of its workforce. The construction of housing, shops, streets and public facilities was carefully scaled to those needs and succeeding generations have maintained this practice. As a result, the appearance of the City of Idaho Springs remains in many ways as it looked in the days of the Gold Rush.



**Looking West**

To the west of the City, winter resort development grew rapidly. As the ski industry developed so did the resort communities. With competition for limited land, costs of housing skyrocketed. Service workers and support services started to locate in less costly communities and workers began commuting to and from the resort areas. With the maturation of the resort industry, attention began to focus on expanding tourism marketing to a year round audience to support the large investments being made in those areas. This shift in focus and metro area growth contributed to large numbers of visitors traveling to and from the Denver area, either from the airport or from their metro area homes to winter and summer recreation sites via Interstate 70.



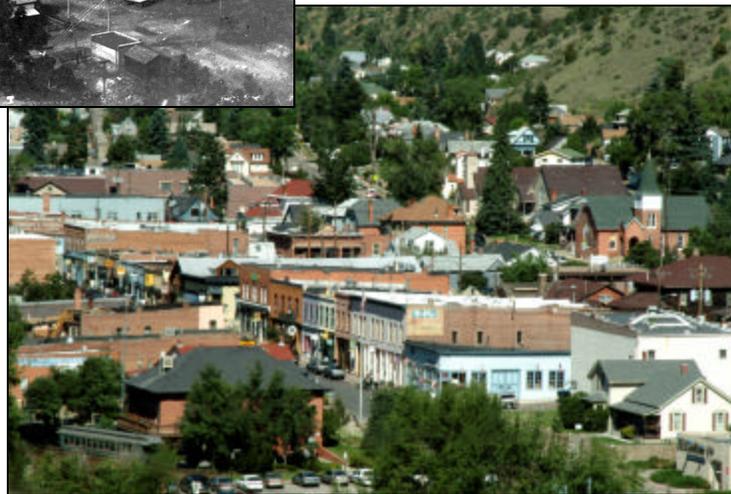
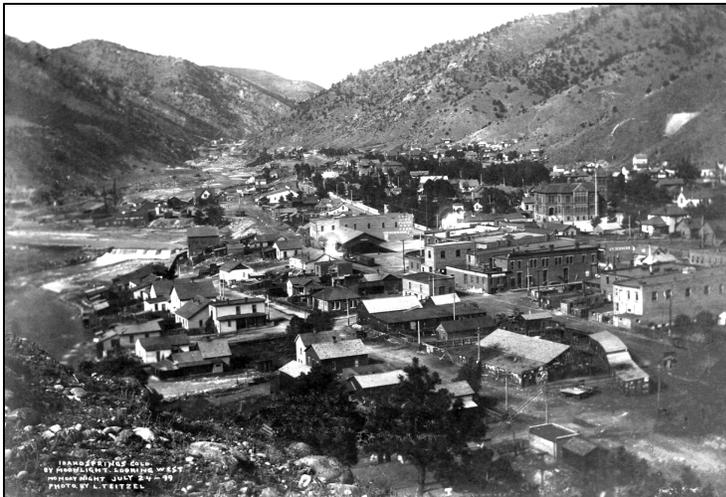
**Gem Electric, circa 1910**

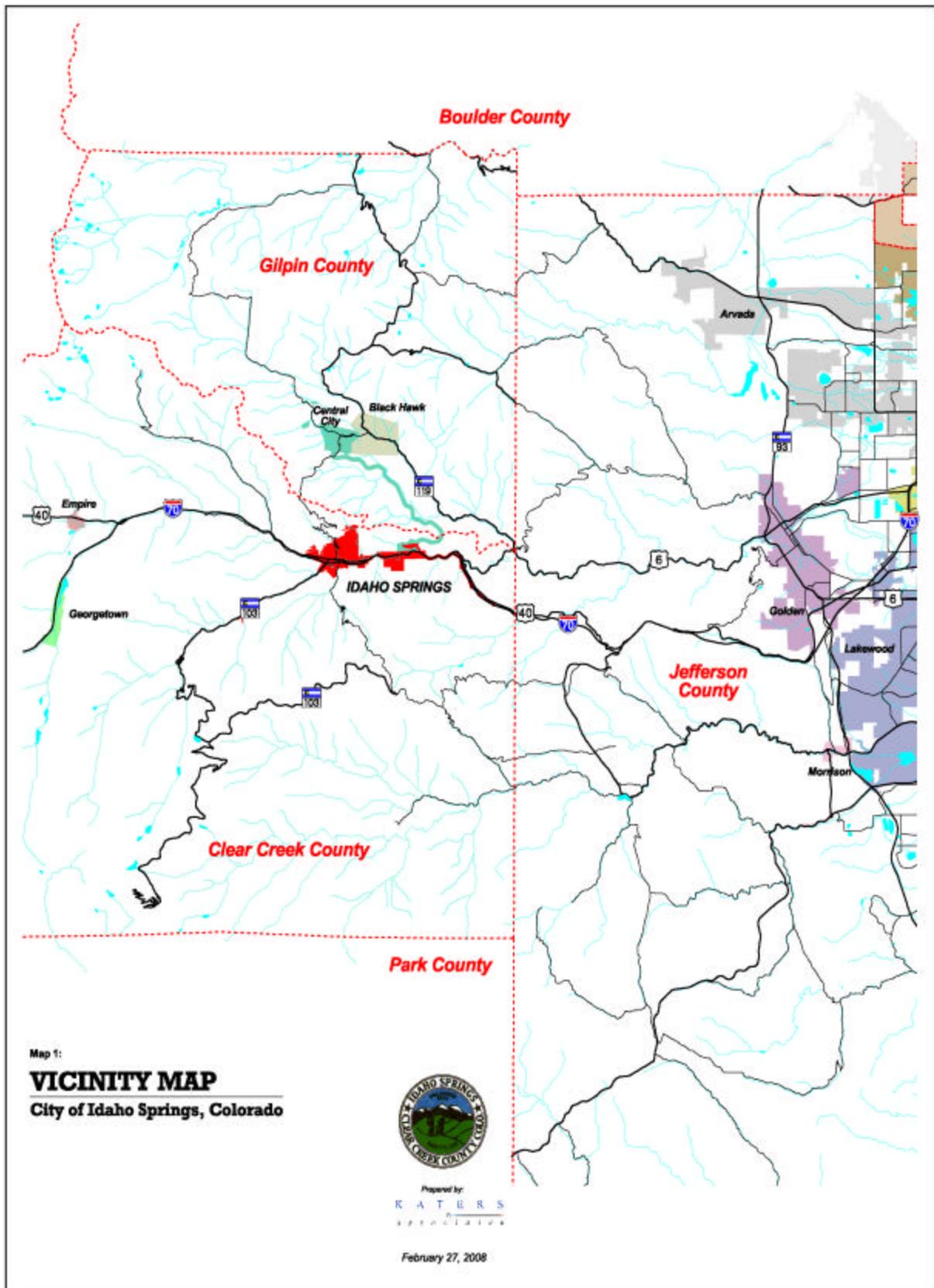
*Idaho Springs Comprehensive Plan*

Today's civic leaders are charged with the responsibility to preserve and protect the unique role of the Idaho Springs in the history of Colorado and of the United States. The discovery of gold in Clear Creek led to the establishment of the Colorado Territory, expansion of America's rail network and to the statehood of Colorado. Propelled by these events, a steady wave of settlers moved through Colorado helping to create a nation that spanned the breadth of North America. In their wake, these settlers left churches, schools and other institutions that were vitally important in creating the diverse and rich cultural heritage of the State of Colorado.

Today, the City of Idaho Springs remains relatively unchanged. Housing patterns mirror those of the Gold Rush and there has been little development on the ridgelines that surround the City. Clear Creek, though heavily impacted by the construction of I-70, continues to be a focal point of the community and the Miner Street historic district remains the commercial center.

Simply put, the historic fiber of the City extends beyond the Historic District. From the layout of the streets, to the homes built on the mountainside, to the Argo Mine building ... all of these elements play a part in the story of Idaho Springs and how Idaho Springs contributed to the growth of Colorado and to the westward expansion of the United States of America.





## **POPULATION**

For many years mining was an important part of the local economy and brought the railroads, wagon roads and commerce to the developing city. With the advent of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of mines and active claims began to shrink as the easily mined ores played out. A few large mining companies started to monopolize mining in the area and a population which had once approached 7,000 began to drop. The decline in precious mineral mining and population continued through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and most of the mines had closed down by the end of World War II.

Since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the City has experienced minor swings in population based upon economic cycles associated with mining and tourism. First, the construction of U.S. Highways 6 and 40 started the expansion of automobile tourism, which has been the mainstay of the local economy for half a century. Later, the construction of I-70 brought both opportunities and challenges. The interstate's location and ability to move people to and from more distant areas quickly enhanced the development of mountain resort communities, first as ski resorts and more recently as year round destinations. It also shortened day travel time from the Denver metro area to mountain communities across western Colorado.

With the substantial population growth in Colorado since World War II, the metropolitan Front Range has grown westward. Early development occurred near Lookout Mountain, Evergreen, Bergen Park, Genesee and El Rancho. It is continuing to move westward into Clear Creek County at Floyd Hill and on land west of Evergreen. Increasingly these areas have attracted relatively affluent families who commute to the metro Denver area while living in the mountains. This same development pattern is occurring in Clear Creek County and is expected to continue.

Since the 1950's the percentage of Clear Creek County's population living in unincorporated areas has substantially increased, while the percentage of the county's population living in Idaho Springs has been reduced from a high of almost 54% to less than 25% in 2005. Such a marked change has resulted in demands for county services which outstrip revenues. During this same period, the population and physical growth of Idaho Springs has been relatively stable. Significant growth has occurred in unincorporated Clear Creek County in areas west of Evergreen, at Floyd Hill and Saddleback and in the Dumont-Lawson-Downieville area.

Growth projections for Idaho Springs vary considerably depending upon the source. Recent estimates project the City's growth capacity at anywhere from 3,000 to a high of 3,800. The City views these estimates to be more realistic due to recent annexations but perhaps overly optimistic in terms of timing. The City has adequate water supply and treatment capacity to meet these projected needs. The City also has adequate wastewater treatment capacity. The City will need to secure appropriate financing for collection and distribution systems. Similarly, the school district has adequate capacity in the local elementary, middle school, and high school to serve any reasonable area growth projection.

**Table 1: Idaho Springs Population and Growth Rate:**

| Year | Population | Annual Growth Rate | Regional Growth Rate | Average Household Size |
|------|------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1980 | 2,077      |                    |                      |                        |
| 1990 | 1,834      | -1.2%              | 1.9%                 | 1.9%                   |
| 2000 | 1,889      | 0.3%               | 2.6%                 | 2.6%                   |
| 2003 | 1,854      | -0.7%              | 2.0%                 | 2.0%                   |
| 2006 | 1,840      | -0.1%              | n/a                  | n/a                    |
| 2007 | 1,755      | -.05%              | n/a                  | n/a                    |

Data suggests population growth has been stagnant, with a reduction in number of families with children living in the City. The assumption is that some second home retiree impacts may be occurring in the area.

**Table 2: Population trends**

| Area                 | 2000  | 2003  | 2006  | 2007  |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Clear Creek County   | 9,367 | 9,654 | 9,747 | 9,848 |
| Idaho Springs        | 1,889 | 1,854 | 1,840 | 1,755 |
| Empire               | 400   | 399   | 354   | 357   |
| Georgetown           | 1,088 | 1,125 | 1,153 | 1,167 |
| Silver Plume         | 202   | 208   | 200   | 221   |
| Unincorporated areas | 5,787 | 6,024 | 6,200 | 6,348 |

During this three year period between 2003 and 2007, most of the 194 person population increase occurred in the unincorporated areas of the county. Presumably, much of this occurred in the increasingly suburban areas in the eastern portion of the county.

**Table 3: Population projections - Clear Creek County**

|                 | 2010   | 2015   | 2020   | 2025   | 2030   |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Population      | 10,242 | 11,380 | 12,536 | 13,617 | 14,642 |
| Annual % Change | 1.5%   | 2.1%   | 2.0%   | 1.7%   | 1.5%   |

Should the projections above hold true, Clear Creek County will see 1,532 new residents in the next 7 years. The median age in Idaho Springs is estimated at 38.7 years; older than both the region and Colorado as a whole. The City also has a larger percentage of its population over 65 years of age than in the region (9.5% vs. 8.8%).

## TRANSPORTATION & HISTORIC SETTING

Beginning with pack mule trails and continuing through the era of wagon roads and railroads; transportation in Idaho Springs has mirrored the development of the State of Colorado. As U.S. Highways 6 and 40 were constructed the ability to easily travel to and through Idaho Springs was established.

The advent of the interstate system again changed how people traveled by automobile. No longer did the highways pass through smaller communities like Idaho Springs but, instead, they pass by those same communities with limited access and egress ramps allowing travelers to stop for food, rest and gas, only to get back on the interstate to continue their trip to their eventual destination.

The routing of I-70 through Idaho Springs took about 1/3 of the easily developable land in the City and reserved it for transportation rather than commercial or residential development. It also displaced many homes, businesses and historic structures in the City and reconfigured the manner in which the traveling public viewed the City. Where earlier routes like U.S. Highways 6 and 40 went through the community, I-70 created a situation where high speed traffic flows by the various districts of the City with a backyard and back door view of both residential and commercial properties. The rapidity with which the interstate system was developed as a strategic defense initiative during the Cold War caused little attention to be paid to visual, noise, air and water quality issues. A large number of travelers on I-70 only know Idaho Springs through this less attractive view of the city.



View to west of I-70 and historic downtown



View to east above Hidden Valley Interchange

### Collaborative Agreement

Efforts by a coalition of communities along the I-70 corridor and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Federal Highway Administration have led to an agreement to allow some roadway congestion improvements along the I-70 corridor. That same agreement, signed by all parties in June of 2008, allows advocates of an elevated rail alternative until the year 2025 to develop a feasible rail option along the corridor.

Key items in the Collaborative Agreement include:

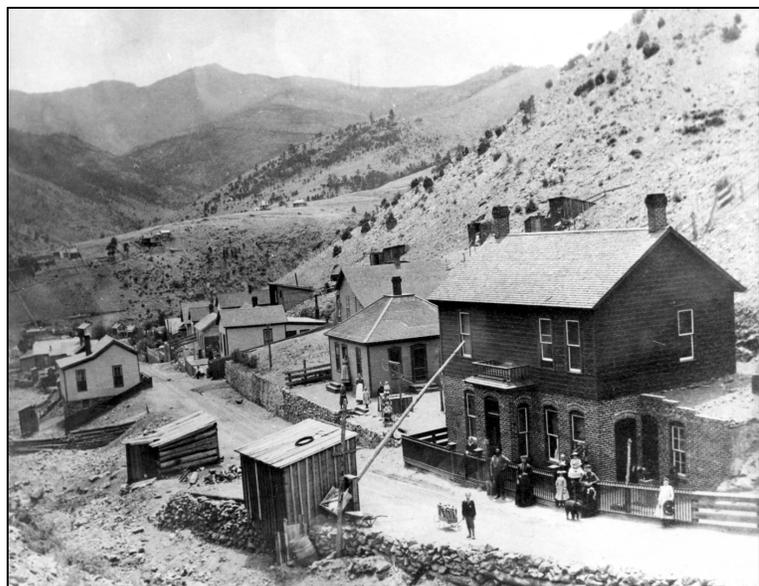
- CDOT and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will work with communities to develop a historic context or contexts for the I-70 corridor,
- identification of historic buildings/engineering features and historic archeology,
- determining the effects on historic properties of transportation facility construction,
- finish construction on a frontage road at Idaho Springs and build bike paths, and
- determination and resolution of the effect of transportation facility construction regarding visual, noise and economic impacts.

The Collaborative Agreement meshes well with the Idaho Springs 1041 Regulations that protect Areas and Activities of State Interest. Both the agreement and the 1041 Regulations recognize the historic importance of the setting of Idaho Springs and seek to preserve the community within its' historic setting.

Idaho Springs is located at the beginning of the Mt. Evans Scenic and Historic Byway and is easily accessible from the metro area. It is one of the closest getaways for the urban populations in Denver and Jefferson counties. As changes occur on I-70 in the future, it will be important to protect these historic and cultural resources and the City's service-based economy.

The following three pages include illustrations from the work that has led up to the Collaborative Agreement. The first two illustrations show the Idaho Springs community in 1957 prior to the construction of I-70. Of particular interest is the width of the I-70 disturbance, loss of historic structures and the shift in the alignment of Clear Creek that occurred due to that construction.

The third illustration is a simulation where the current alignment of I-70 is superimposed over an early 1900's view of Idaho Springs. The impact of I-70 on the historic fabric of the community can be clearly seen.



**Toll Gate on Virginia Canyon (Oh My Gawd) Road**

**Insert Illustration 1: Stream alignment and development Pre-I-70, West Idaho Springs**

**Insert Illustration 2: Stream alignment and development Pre -I-70, East Idaho Springs**

**Insert Illustration 3: Visual Simulation**

## ECONOMY

Idaho Springs' economy is regional in nature and is shaped by the metro area economy and that of the central mountain area. More recently, the advent of the gaming industry in Black Hawk and Central City has impacted Idaho Springs. Service economy employment has created pressures on available affordable housing stock in and near the City. The seven day work week and extended late night hours associated with gaming related recreation has changed the more traditional work force involvement in the community and has affected family life as more parents are away from home during non traditional hours. The maturation of the gaming industry and the competition between the gaming towns, have and will continue to affect Idaho Springs.



Miner Street window

Idaho Springs appears to be developing as a service industry center. Its location, less than thirty miles from the metro area, allows for day travel to and from Denver. The gaming towns are a few minutes away via the Central City Parkway and mountain resort communities are within commuting distance. Thousands of vehicles pass by the City with its four interstate exchanges each day. Tourism and tourism support industries will continue to be the mainstay of the local economy.

Idaho Springs has some unique assets. It maintains a historical character in terms of mining and historic architecture in the central business district and has adopted 1041 regulations to ensure that the historic character of the community is retained. These historic preservation efforts exist in a state with relatively little in the way of historic mining-era assets. The City is located near three other towns which retain heritage assets, Central City, Silver Plume and Georgetown. Heritage tourism is starting to emerge as an increasingly viable segment of the tourism economy.



Rafters on Clear Creek



Group of miners at Stanley Mine

The state demographer's office reports a 28.39% population increase in Clear Creek County over the past 15 years. They project an increase from the current population of just fewer than 10,000 to a population of 17,000 by 2030. Most of this growth, if recent trends continue, will be outside of current municipal boundaries.

In a recent report, the Clear Creek Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) indicated the county's residents have a per capita income level well above the national average. Recent per capita income increases appear to be slightly higher than the state average. Total personal income ranks right in the middle of Colorado's counties.

Sales tax receipts account for an average of 95% of the Idaho Springs annual budget for the years 2000 through 2006. The years 2000– 2003 saw little change in sales tax receipts. Since 2004 the totals have become more volatile with swings of over 11% in 3 of the 4 years.

As might be expected in a service focused economy, the CCEDC reports that, "Retail trade is a major component of the County's employment, income, and sales tax. It is noted, however, that major sales leakage occurs "... from county residents spending their disposable income outside of Clear Creek County. . ." It is also noted that the county's dollar receipts from per capita sales are substantially less than the regional average. It is unlikely that significant change in spending patterns will occur during the planning period and that major purchases by county residents will continue to be made in the metro area.

Retail Trade and Services account for 56% of the employment activity within the City. Government (state, federal and local) accounts for another 21%. Other economic sectors, including mining, real estate, construction, communications, public utilities, manufacturing, finance, insurance and miscellaneous activities account for the remaining 23%. Implications are that three quarters of the existing employment base can be substantially affected by impacts related to government policy and short-term economic condition changes which affect consumer discretionary spending patterns.

CCEDC is concerned about the negative economic consequences which would result from any multi-year construction period related to I-70 capacity expansion. Of particular concern is the impact on commuter traffic involving residents who live in Clear Creek County but work in either the resort towns to the west or the Denver metro area. They estimate that commuting workers account for 30% of the employment and income base for the county. Some sources place the number of commuters from the County to the Denver Metro area at up to 56% of the working population.



**Miner Street view**

By virtue of being a short-term stop location rather than a destination for most visitors, the Idaho Springs tourism economy can be significantly affected by changes in the “convenience” factor for visitors. Unless properly mitigated, any I-70 expansion could result in a dramatic decrease in the City’s tourist-related income. If an I-70 expansion is approved, it will also be important to engage the Colorado Department of Transportation in the development of mitigation measures designed to combat this potential negative economic impact on the City.

Sales tax receipts account for an average of 95% of the Idaho Springs general fund annual budget for the years 2000 through 2006. Between 2000 and 2003 there was little change in the sales tax receipts but since 2004 the totals have become more volatile with swings of over 11% in 3 of the 4 final years shown on the table below.

**Table 4: Idaho Springs sales tax & general fund**

| Year | Sales Tax      | Annual Change | Sales Tax percent of General Fund |
|------|----------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2000 | \$1,035,933.25 | n/a           | 79.35%                            |
| 2001 | \$1,049,646.90 | + 1.3%        | 101.99%                           |
| 2002 | \$1,033,541.32 | - 1.5%        | 95.92%                            |
| 2003 | \$1,022,238.26 | - 1.1%        | 100.55%                           |
| 2004 | \$908,215.01   | - 11.1%       | 101.96%                           |
| 2005 | \$1,022,194.05 | +12.5%        | 84.0%                             |
| 2006 | \$1,037,752.71 | + 1.5%        | 101.34%                           |
| 2007 | \$1,161,116.28 | + 11.8%       | 112.20%                           |

## COMMUNITY PLANNING EFFORTS

This plan is part of a continuing effort by Idaho Springs to guide its future as a community. The first city plan was adopted in 1994 and followed by updates in 2001, 2004 and 2005. The city has developed and adopted 3 Mile Area plans by a series of six resolutions beginning in 1991, through the currently adopted resolution in 2007. A revised 3 Mile Area plan that created a more cohesive document was adopted during this Comprehensive Planning effort on July 14, 2008 by Resolution No. 11, Series 2008.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

This Comprehensive Plan and the associated 3 Mile Area Plan was developed and reviewed in public meetings and workshops at Idaho Springs Planning Commission meetings from January through June of 2008. Informational articles appeared in the Clear Creek Courant describing the plan revision and inviting members of the public to attend the open house event and Commission work sessions. A community open house was held on May 17, 2008 at Courtney-Ryley-Cooper Park in coordination with community clean-up day.

The period to comment on the plan was open for the remainder of the month of June and the full set of comments was presented to the Commission at their meeting on June 25, 2008. The Planning Commission recommended adoption of the May, 2008 draft, including an edit memo, to the City Council at their June 25th meeting.

In their regular meeting on July 14, 2008 the City Council passed Resolution No. 12, Series 2008 adopting the 2008 Idaho Springs Comprehensive Plan.

## II. THE CITY

### FACILITIES & SERVICES

#### General Services

The City of Idaho Springs is responsible for basic public services such as government administration, public works, water and wastewater operations, police protection, municipal court, building inspections, planning and community development. While Idaho Springs owns the building housing the public library, Clear Creek County Library District provides services. The City and the Clear Creek Metropolitan Recreation District share responsibilities for various park and community recreation services. Emergency medical services and fire protection are provided by countywide service districts or authorities. Clear Creek County Social Services has an office in Idaho Springs and the only medical facility in the county is also located in the city. Solid waste collection is performed by private contractors or by individual homeowners.



Clear Creek within Idaho Springs

#### Public utilities

The City controls water supply, storage, treatment, and distribution systems. It also has adequate wastewater collection and treatments systems with excess capacity. Combined, these two systems have sufficient resource availability to shape development patterns in eastern Clear Creek County. Portions of the Idaho Springs planning area may be well suited for renewable energy installations, particularly solar energy facilities.

#### Water system

The City obtains raw water from two tributaries of Clear Creek: Chicago Creek and Soda Creek. Water rights owned by the City include both direct and storage rights sufficient to meet any reasonable growth forecasts. The City has sufficient rights to allow it to consider sales to extraterritorial users either from direct sales to users, wholesale to other providers, or through augmentation agreements.

The water treatment plant is located about 3 miles upstream on Chicago Creek. Plant capacities and capabilities have been upgraded and are adequate to address current needs, with normal operational and maintenance issues to be expected. A state-of-the-art membrane/micro-filtration treatment plant was put on-line in April of 2002 and an upgrade to low-pressure membrane replacements was completed in December, 2007.

Distribution systems within the City will continue to require replacement of aging water mains and service lines, as well as examination and inventory of line capacities and conditions to assure adequate flow for water delivery, both for consumption and fire flow needs.

Any new development at the Twin Tunnels, Hidden Valley, Floyd Hill and other areas will mandate the design and expansion of distribution lines and the construction of pump stations and water storage facilities. Water supply and treatment will not be a constraint to development for the foreseeable future.

**Table 5: Idaho Springs water system**

| Idaho Springs water system |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Water rights               | 572.836 acre feet             |
| Storage capacity (2 tanks) | 1,190,000 gallons             |
| Reservoir storage capacity | 200 acre feet                 |
| Treatment capacity         | 1.814 million gallons per day |
| Average use                | .512 million gallons per day  |
| Excess system capacity     | 1.302 million gallons per day |

**Wastewater System**

The Wastewater Treatment Plant near the Twin Tunnels has seen improved operations in recent years and a program has been created to address ongoing maintenance needs.

**Stormwater & Drainage**

Due to its topography, the City is affected by significant drainage basins. Within the limited landmass of the city, homes, businesses and streets are often affected by storm drainage problems. A number of projects have been undertaken and more are being planned to address drainage issues across the community.

**Parks and Recreation**

The City of Idaho Springs has an adopted Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (1994-1995) that was prepared by the Colorado Center for Community Development. This plan identified a wide range of community needs and proposed a set of recommendations that are incorporated into the vision, goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan as an adjunct document.

As a tourism-oriented community, Idaho Springs has a wide range of recreational venues within a short distance of the city. Skiing, snowboarding, rock climbing, rafting, fishing, bicycling, hiking and hunting activities are readily accessible. Federal lands are a significant portion of the county’s total land area and the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests are near the city limits. Open mountain slopes are the defining feature of the area as over 80% of Clear Creek County are public lands.



**Courtney-Ryley-Cooper Park**

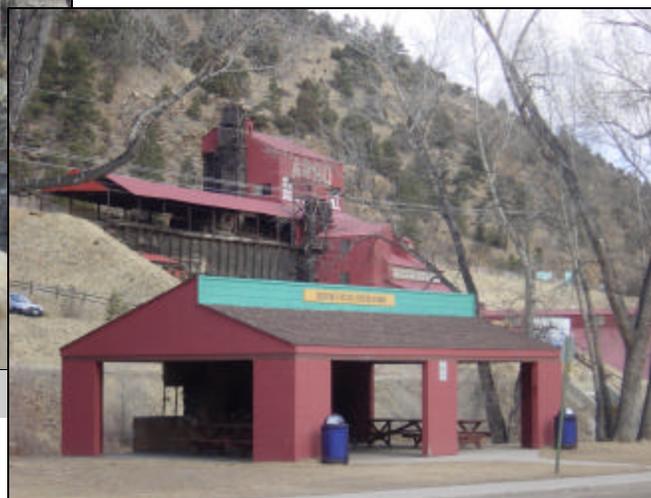
Recreational resources in addition to those mentioned above include:

1. Carlson elementary school & Bob Leathers playground
2. Citizens Park
3. City Hall complex (including locomotive)
4. Clear Creek (fishing, rafting, swimming, etc.)
5. Clear Creek County Greenway
6. Clear Creek Metro District Recreation Center
7. Clear Creek School District fields
8. Courtney-Ryley-Cooper Park
9. East End Ballfields
10. Heritage Museum and Park
11. Hillside Park
12. Idaho Springs Cemetery
13. Idaho Springs Library & memorial
14. Idaho Springs skateboard park, tennis court, multi-purpose court
15. Macy/Mill Park
16. Montgomery Park & fishing access
17. Mt. Evans Scenic and Historic Byway
18. Scott Lancaster Bridge & non-motorized trail corridor
19. Underhill Museum
20. United Center
21. Virginia Canyon/Area 28 open space
22. Waterwheel Park

The responsibility for recreational facilities and programming in Idaho Springs is shared between the City of Idaho Springs and the Clear Creek Metropolitan Recreation District.



**Montgomery Park & fishing access**



**Courtney-Ryley-Cooper Park**

## **Residential**

Idaho Springs features extensive Victorian era housing stock dating from the late 1800's to early 1900's. Approximately 480 housing units in the community were built before 1939. Studies have indicated that the residents are somewhat transient in nature with nearly half the residents changing homes in a 5 year period between 1995 and 2000. The community also includes substantial areas with manufactured homes, some of which show evidence of a need for repair and maintenance.

Little land remains in the main portion of Idaho Springs for residential development unless redevelopment of existing areas of the community or annexation of new lands occurs.

## **Schools**

The City's residents are served by public elementary and middle schools located in Idaho Springs; and by the high school located on Floyd Hill. All 3 schools have substantial capacity to serve increased enrollment. The City supports District effort's to maintain and improve programs at the three schools serving city residents. Substantial population growth and enrollment increases can occur without creating large capital investment needs. More importantly, population and enrollment increases are essential to maintaining the long-term viability of the school district.

## **Historic Properties**

In 2004, the City entered into a partnership agreement with the Historic Society of Idaho Springs wherein the partners established joint ownership of a number of historic properties within the City. The City continues to work with the Historic Society, under the partnership agreement, to operate, maintain, and improve the various properties and to continue welcoming and retention efforts at the Heritage Museum and Visitor Center.

The Historical Society of Idaho Springs a 501-c-3 non profit membership organization that was established in 1964 and has maintained a long mutually beneficial partnership with the City of Idaho Springs. The establishment of the downtown National Historic District was a major goal reached as it was listed on the National Register in 1984. More recently, the adoption of 1041 regulations to help protect the district is now a reality. The ability of the Historical Society to successfully raise significant funds (approximately \$1.4 million) toward common goals with the City has also resulted in numerous accomplishments.



**W.E. Renshaw house, 941 Colorado Blvd.**

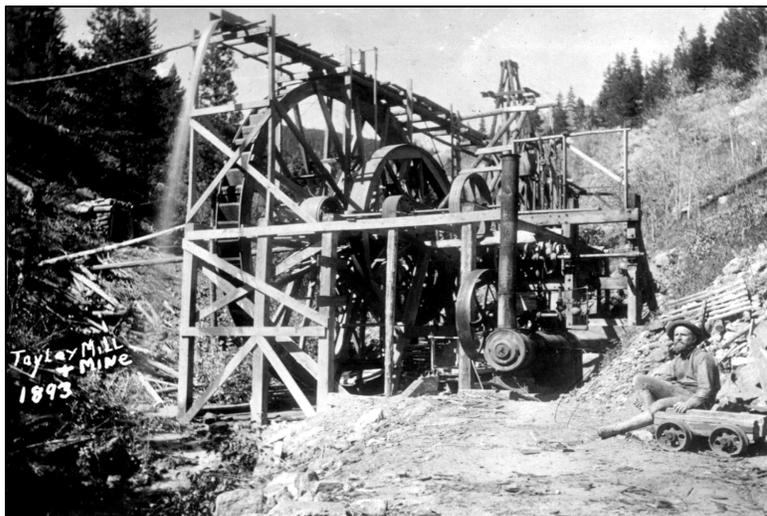
Among those are the restoration and maintenance support of the Charlie Tayler Waterwheel, exterior restoration of the narrow gauge train and the construction and operation of the Idaho Springs Heritage Center that houses the history museum and official Visitor Information Center. Funds from multiple sources have already been secured to restore the Central Hose House and the Jackson Monument. All of the noted properties are City owned. And the preservation of the City's historic assets is an important goal for both entities not only for the intrinsic historic value to the community but as a major catalyst for the very important, lucrative and growing Heritage Tourism industry.

Among the substantial number of historic properties and resources in the Idaho Springs area are:

1. Idaho Springs Downtown Commercial District including:
  - Library
  - Museum
  - Residences
  - Banks
  - Rooming house
  - Numerous retail stores
  - Office buildings
  - Mines Theater (not operating as theater)
2. Argo Mill and Newhouse Tunnel
3. Bryan/Sunnyside Hose House
4. Hose No. 2
5. Central Hose House
6. Jackson Monument
7. United Center
8. Charlie Tayler Waterwheel

In the wider Idaho Springs area, historic attractions include the Evans-Elbert Ranch and Summit Lake Park.

Work conducted as part of the studies related to Interstate 70 included a study of potential historic properties in Idaho Springs. That work was summarized in a map titled "Idaho Springs - Then and Now" which is on the following page. A substantial number of properties in the community are potentially eligible for historic status.



Charlie Tayler and waterwheel - 1893

**Insert Illustration 4: Idaho Springs - Then and Now**

## **IDAHO SPRINGS SUB AREAS - VOTING WARDS**

The City of Idaho Springs includes 3 wards that are the basis for representation on the City Council. The boundaries of each Ward are described below.

### **Ward 1**

All of the land from the west City limits to the center of 13th Avenue.

### **Ward 2**

All of the land from the center of 13th Avenue to the center of 23rd Avenue, including the area west of a line from 23rd Avenue at Colorado Boulevard, to the north side of I-70, then west to Soda Creek Road, then south along the center of Soda Creek Road to the City limits.

### **Ward 3**

All of the land east of the center of 23rd Avenue and the center of Soda Creek Road, including Montane Park and the southeast side of Soda Creek Road.

A map identifying the 3 voting wards in Idaho Springs is on the following page.

**Insert Map of Voting Wards**

## **Idaho Springs Neighborhoods**

While, the division of Idaho Springs into voting wards satisfies the electoral requirements in the community; there are portions of the City that can be better identified as neighborhoods or sub areas. These sub areas are informally identified currently as, for example, most residents have a common knowledge of what and where the “East End” is.

This plan includes a beginning effort to further identify the parts of the community that are now identified only by that “common knowledge”. As no formal “neighborhood” organizations are currently found in Idaho Springs it is hoped that these boundaries will be formalized over time by the residents themselves.

This plan identifies the following six conceptual neighborhoods in Idaho Springs.

### **Hidden Valley & Twin Tunnels**

### **East End**

### **The “Y” and Sunnyside**

### **Historic Commercial District**

### **West End**

### **Chicago/Soda Creeks**

As the preliminary neighborhood boundaries for the areas above change based on discussions among the residents of each area, roles for the organizations might also develop that include:

- neighborhood reports to Council regarding issues, project status
- quarterly meetings with Council or Commission members
- neighborhood events and celebrations
- support from the City, neighborhood plans
- utility and infrastructure issues
- identification & promotion as a unique neighborhood
- other activities as desired

As strong neighborhood organizations develop over time, they will help ensure that effective communication will be maintained between the residents and their elected and appointed officials.

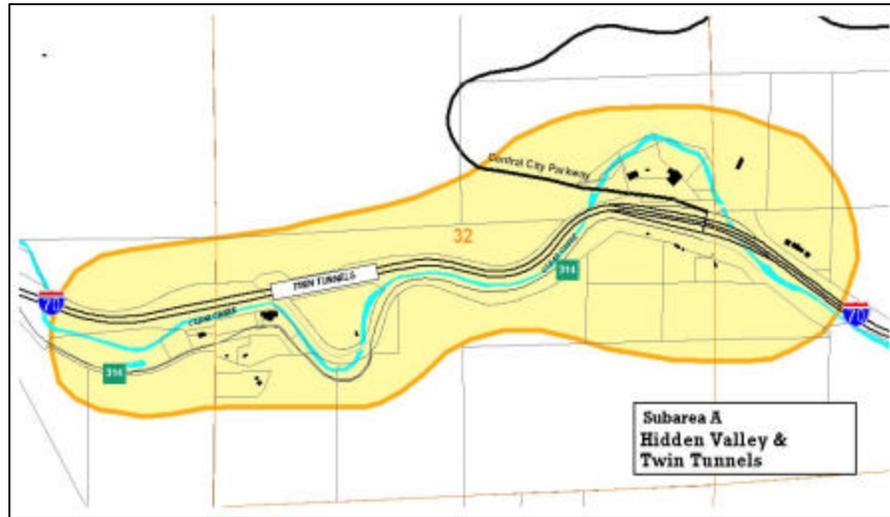
### Hidden Valley & Twin Tunnels

The I-70 interchange at Hidden Valley includes the access for the Central City Parkway and County Road 314. This area was annexed to Idaho Springs, along with adjoining properties in September, 2004. It is anticipated that highway related activities will occur near the interchange at Hidden Valley and rural multiple family residential development will occur south of the interstate and existing commercial and industrial areas nearer to Idaho Springs will maintain their existing uses. The valley is narrow in this area and any development will necessarily be fairly close to the interstate.



View eastward from Central City Parkway

The potential for an alternative route around the Twin Tunnels has been discussed as part of the I-70 Environmental Impact Study. The Tunnels do create a chokepoint for traffic along the corridor and savvy drivers have used County Road 314 as an alternative in an attempt to avoid delays. The City of Idaho Springs has had discussions with Clear Creek County regarding annexation of the Cty. Rd. 314 right-of-way into Idaho Springs after it is reconstructed as a paved roadway.



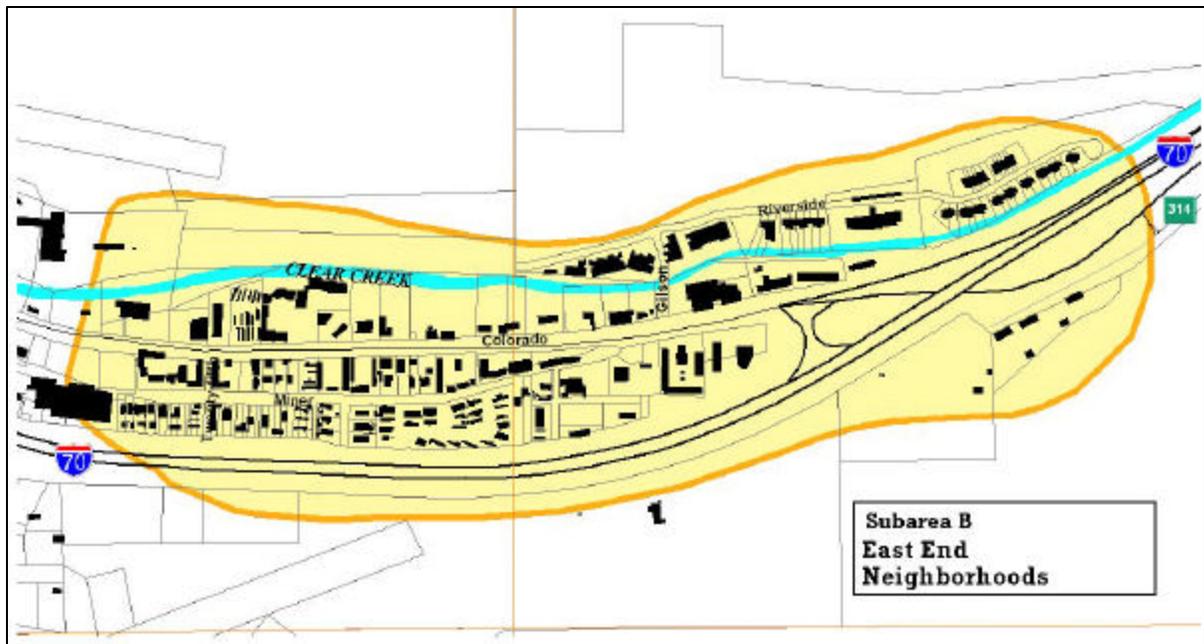
### East End

Between the Exit 241/I-70 interchange and about Twenty-fourth Street lies the area commonly referred to as the “East End”. This area consists largely of highway service commercial developments including food and beverage, retail, service and lodging establishments. This area developed along what had previously been the U.S. 6 & 40 corridor and much of it is a remnant of highway-style development in the 1950’s. The quality of development in the area ranges considerably with recent renovation or development of lodging facilities, retail stores and food service establishments leading reinvestment efforts in the area. The East End also includes manufactured home residential parks and single-family residences.

The East End meets the community’s need for sales tax generation, jobs and general housing. The area includes the City’s principal grocery store, pharmacy, restaurants, service stations and liquor outlets. The East End is primarily oriented toward the automobile while pedestrian paths, sidewalks and walking or bicycling lanes are limited or missing.



East End views



### The “Y” & Sunnyside

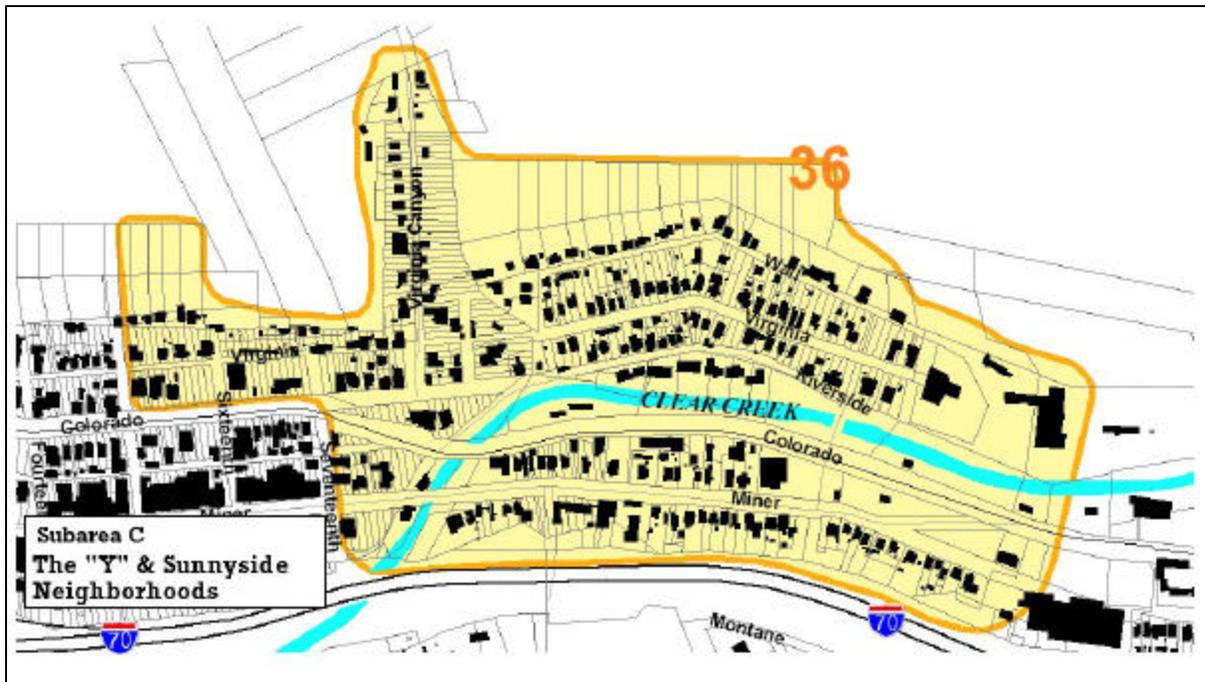
Extending from the Miner Street/Colorado Boulevard “Y” intersection westward towards and north of the historic commercial downtown area, is a mix of residential, commercial and service properties. Features at the east entryway to this area include the Heritage Museum and Visitor Center, Steve Canyon statue and the log structure housing the local radio station. Further west, this area also includes homes, offices, the lumber yard, new senior housing, City Hall, the United Center & the narrow gauge train display adjacent to City Hall and Clear Creek. The Sunnyside portion of this area lies north of Clear Creek and includes a substantial amount of the cities residential properties along Wall & Virginia Streets, and Riverside Drive.



View of Virginia Canyon Rd.



View of Sunnyside from Montane Park



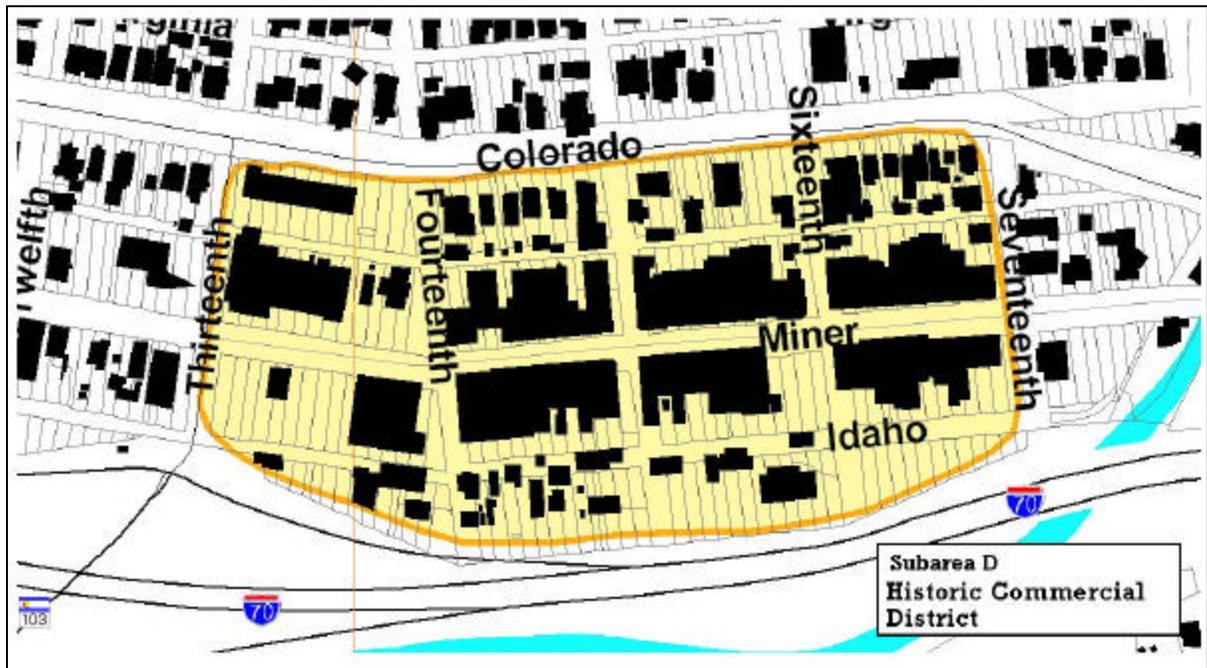
### Historic Commercial District

Beginning at 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue and extending west to 13<sup>th</sup>, the Idaho Springs Historic Commercial District is the centerpiece of the Idaho Springs community. This area is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and features one of the strongest historic commercial districts remaining in Colorado. The district contains a substantial number of visitor and resident oriented service and retail businesses. Substantial investment has gone into street-scape enhancement, off street parking and collaborative efforts in historic development and preservation. The map below identifies the general area considered part of the Historic Commercial District neighborhood; the actual District boundary is smaller than the shaded area on the map.

To the north of the commercial area, much of the residential and commercial building stock has a historic flavor even though they are not located in the historic district itself. On the western end of this area, Exit 240 accesses I-70. Changes in the footprint of I-70 through Idaho Springs have the potential to negatively impact the National Historic District.



View over I-70 towards Historic District

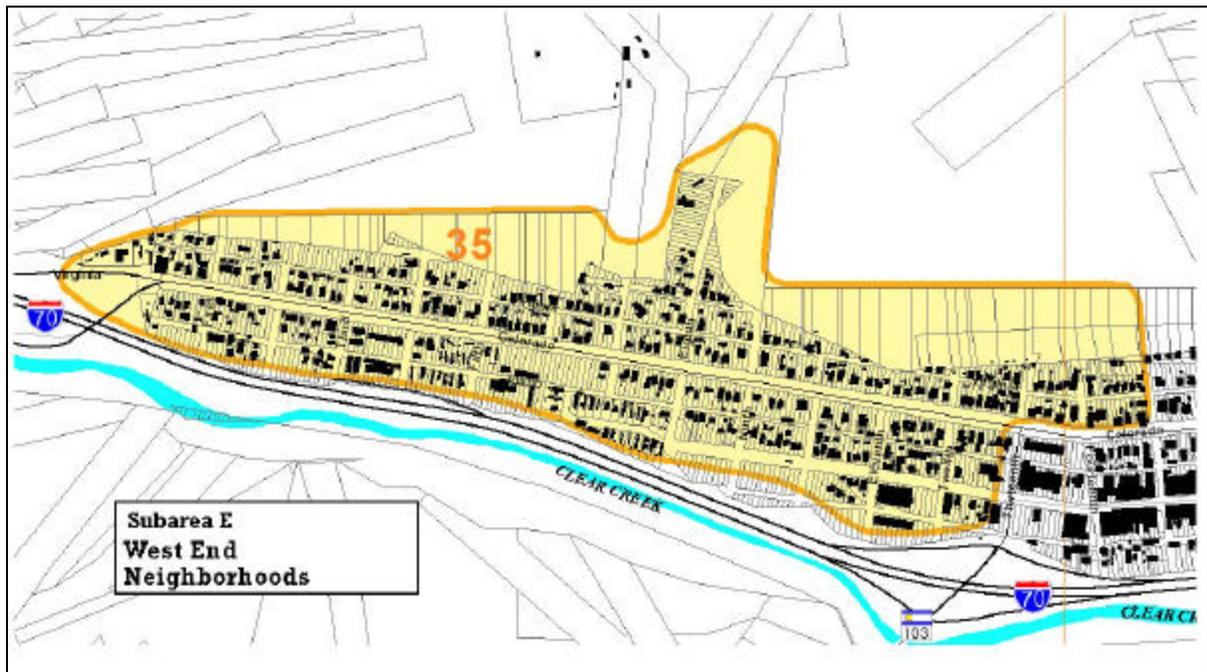


## West End

Beginning at 13<sup>th</sup> Street, the area to the west of the Historic Commercial district to the end of the developed portion of the city is primarily residential. Commercial properties in the form of motels, bed & breakfast operations and some service businesses are found in the area, generally along Miner Street and Colorado Boulevard. A mix of well-preserved Victorian era homes, newly renovated homes and manufactured housing blend to create a strong, eclectic area that serves as the core of the residential portion of the community.



West End views



### Chicago & Soda Creeks

The lands south of Interstate 70 have been combined in this document into two distinct neighborhoods; one centered along Soda Creek and one centered along Chicago Creek. The easternmost portion of this area includes the Montane Park subdivision, the Hot Springs Pool and Lodge, Soda Creek, and access to the Bristlecone Pines Subdivision.

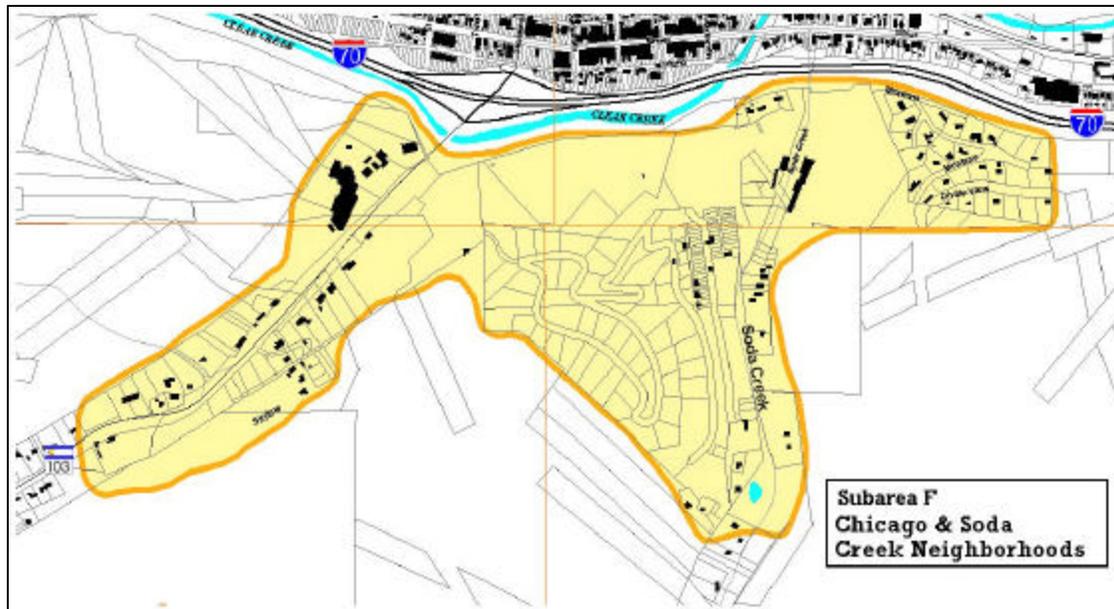
The area along Chicago Creek includes the Middle School, Cemetery, scattered businesses and county residential properties.



Montane Park view



View toward Soda Creek subdivision



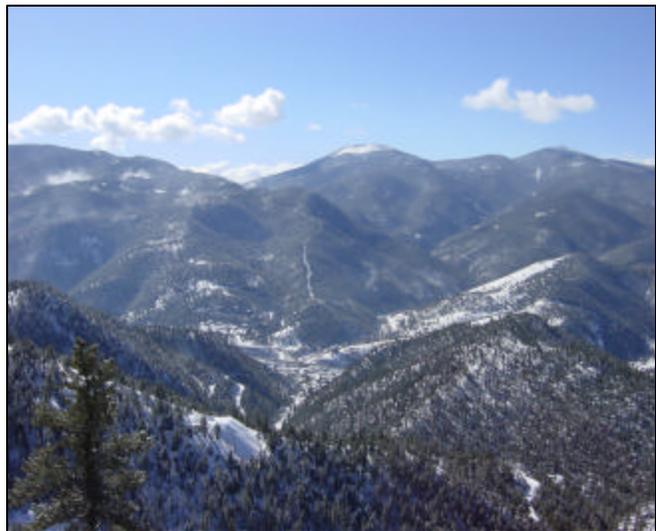
## **COOPERATION**

Implementation of the goals, policies and action steps found in this Comprehensive Plan must take into account how Idaho Springs may affect another jurisdiction or organization with the decisions it makes. Collaboration and cooperation between various governmental entities is very desirable and of mutual benefit to all the affected parties.

Jurisdictions with which Idaho Springs develops, fosters and maintains positive relationships include:

- State of Colorado
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Clear Creek County
- Clear Creek County Emergency Services
- Clear Creek County School District
- Clear Creek County Fire Authority and Evergreen Fire District
- Clear Creek Metropolitan Recreation District
- City of Central City
- City of Black Hawk
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Gilpin County
- Jefferson County
- U.S. Corp of Engineers
- U.S. Forest Service
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Federal Highway Administration

The city also commits to work with recognized homeowner associations early in any annexation or development proposal review and seek to identify issues and develop consensus around a particular proposal. The policies that follow include open public meetings early in any annexation process to determine and address the issues of concern.



**Clear Creek County view**

### **III. VISION STATEMENT**

The City of Idaho Springs has developed the Vision Statement below in order to provide a strong base for the goals and policies of the community.

#### **Idaho Springs Community Vision Statement**

**Idaho Springs is dedicated to  
preserving its culture as a historic mining community,  
ensuring its economic future through both preservation and development,  
fostering open and timely public dialogue on local and regional issues,  
implementing the wise use of community and natural resources, and  
celebrating successful, progressive municipal action.**

## IV. GOALS & POLICIES

Idaho Springs has set specific goals and policies for the overall community, general land use, transportation, parks and recreation, residential land use and economic development. These goals and policies are supported by a series of implementation steps in Section V that are intended to provide residents and staff with the direction and flexibility to address issues that will arise over time.

### Community

#### **Goal C.1: Preserve and protect the environment of the Idaho Springs area**

- Policy C.1.1:** Preserve ridgelines in as natural a state as possible.
- Policy C.1.2:** Encourage the active involvement of state and federal agencies to minimize the adverse effects of mining.
- Policy C.1.3:** Prevent development or intrusion into floodplains and wetlands without adequate mitigation.
- Policy C.1.4:** Encourage the enhancement of creeks, riparian and wetland areas through public and private investment.
- Policy C.1.5:** Protect, maintain and improve the water quality of Clear, Soda, Beaver Brook and Chicago Creek watersheds.
- Policy C.1.6:** Protect and preserve groundwater resources.
- Policy C.1.7:** Preserve established winter grounds for migratory herds.
- Policy C.1.8:** Establish standards for noise abatement in the historic business district and in other areas of the city which can be adversely affected by noise and reverberation.
- Policy C.1.9:** Support the maintenance of high air quality standards.
- Policy C.1.10:** Protect natural drainages and forest lands.

#### **Goal C.2: Provide efficient and cost-effective utility services to the community.**

- Policy C.2.1:** Develop a specific plan for capitalizing upon the city's water assets.

**Policy C.2.2:** Maintain and protect Idaho Springs water rights and resources.

**Policy C.2.3:** Develop, update and implement capital improvement plans for city utilities.

**Policy C.2.4:** Identify and continue to resolve wastewater collection line infiltration problems.

**Policy C.2.5:** Monitor water and wastewater enterprise funds to ensure adequate revenues are generated to address debt service, operational and maintenance expenses.

**Policy C.2.6:** Analyze utility line service extensions in terms of long-term costs including maintenance and operations.

**Policy C.2.7:** Develop and work to implement a program to place all utilities underground.

**Policy C.2.8:** Work to implement efficient utility system improvements using appropriate technology.

**Policy C.2.9:** Develop and work to implement a policy on alternative energy sources.

**Goal C.3: Cooperate with local and regional entities.**

**Policy C.3.1:** Assist in the formation and operation of neighborhood organizations in Idaho Springs as appropriate.

**Policy C.3.2:** Actively participate in Denver Regional Council of Government programs and projects.

**Policy C.3.3:** Maintain positive working relationships with Clear Creek, Gilpin and Jefferson county governments.

**Policy C.3.4:** Foster and maintain positive working relationships with area municipalities.

**Policy C.3.5:** Work with special districts to provide cost-effective services to the residents of the community.

**Policy C.3.6:** Cooperate with the Historical Society of Idaho Springs to preserve, protect and renovate the historic assets of Idaho Springs.

## **General Land Use**

### **Goal GL.1: Review and update City policy documents.**

**Policy GL.1.1** Set an annual program and timeframe for Planning Commission review and Council approval of the 3 Mile Area Plan.

**Policy GL.1.2:** Set an annual timeframe for Planning Commission review of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Policy GL.1.3:** Update the Comprehensive Plan as needed with full review every 4 years.

### **Goal GL.2: Develop and implement an annexation policy.**

**Policy GL.2.1:** Incorporate open, public meetings early in the annexation process to identify and address issues of concern.

**Policy GL.2.1:** Use the Clear Creek Economic Development Corporation to analyze the long-term costs and benefits of any annexation.

**Policy GL.2.2:** Encourage urban density development to occur in/near Idaho Springs service areas.

**Policy GL.2.3:** Support the annexation of developments that provide a net long-term benefit to the community.

**Policy GL.2.4:** Ensure that all agreements and commitments between the City and an annexor clearly identify the responsibilities and roles of each party.

**Policy GL.2.5:** Balance residential and commercial development so that services are maximized and costs to the community are minimized.

### **Goal GL.3: Promote and support redevelopment efforts.**

**Policy GL.3.1:** Support changes in the east end business district through redevelopment of commercial properties and the conversion of residential areas to commercial and mixed use development as appropriate.

**Policy GL.3.2:** Work with the School District and others when the District begins efforts to sell the transportation facility and athletic field.

**Policy GL.3.3:** Establish, refine and monitor business development incentives.

**Goal GL.4: Protect & preserve the historic assets of the Idaho Springs area**

**Policy GL.4.1:** Maintain the integrity of the Idaho Springs 1041 Regulations and the associated 1041 Impact Area.

**Policy GL.4.2:** Support the Historic Commercial District.

**Policy GL.4.3:** Partner with local and national organizations to identify and preserve additional historic resources in the Idaho Springs planning area.

**Policy GL.4.4:** Develop preservation tourism opportunities that help increase the economic viability of the historic resources of the community.

**Policy GL.4.5:** Ensure that any proposal for expansion or reconstruction of Interstate 70 enhances historic assets.

**Policy GL.4.6:** Identify incentives for local property owners to assist with preservation efforts.

**Policy GL.4.7:** Work with the Historic Society of Idaho Springs and its leadership committee to preserve, protect and improve the historic resources of the community.

**Policy GL.4.8:** Work to implement provisions of the Programmatic (106) Agreement signed by the City of Idaho Springs on June 10, 2008.

## **Future Land Use**

The three maps that follow identify the preferred types of land uses for lands in both the current City of Idaho Springs and in adjacent lands. Designation of any land in a future land use map does not zone that property, limit the sale or use of the property, or affect the value land in any way. It only displays a preferred use that would be supported by Idaho Springs should the land be developed as part of Idaho Springs at some point in the future.

The Future Land Use maps feature 10 land use categories. Each of these categories are described below in some detail in order to provide a better indication of the types of land uses that would be preferred. The map used for Future Land Uses in this plan is based upon work completed in 2004 during the creation of the Clear Creek County Master Plan. That plan created 8 sub areas in Clear Creek County that followed logical boundaries (drainages, community influences, topography, etc.) and were reviewed in public meetings. The Idaho Springs maps that follow essentially include the regional community boundary as identified during the process conducted in 2004.

### **Future Land Use Map Categories**

#### **1. County Residential**

This designation reflects lands generally already platted by Clear Creek County into large rural home sites. Idaho Springs would have little rationale to consider the annexation of any of these properties and these properties are anticipated to remain in the County.

#### **2. Mixed Residential Density**

The most extensive land use shown on the maps, Mixed Residential Density includes much of the residential areas within Idaho Springs and portions of the annexed lands at Hidden Valley and the Twin Tunnels.

#### **3. Historic Downtown**

This designation identifies the current Idaho Springs historic commercial district and immediately adjacent properties that closely support the district.

#### **4. Regional Commercial**

Areas more specifically intended to serve the regional or traveling public have been designated Regional Commercial. Hidden Valley, specific tourist attractions (Argo Mine) and small areas on Hwy. 103 and at the West End have this land use designation.

### **5. Mixed Use-Transitional**

This future land use designation includes areas of the East End and Hidden Valley. In the East End, the mix of residential and commercial/business operations are in close proximity. It is assumed that portions of the East End and Hidden Valley will develop or redevelop in the foreseeable future and that work could trend towards either more business development or more residential development. It is unclear which direction any development or redevelopment might take until an open public process begins in those locations.

### **6. Light Industrial**

Service industries including construction companies and gravel or concrete operations are found in the light industrial designation. Public infrastructure in the form of water and wastewater treatment plants are also classified as light industrial land uses.

### **7. Historic Mining**

An extensive area of placer mine claims is located to the north and west of Idaho Springs proper. While not currently feasible to economically mine these claims, they exist and are recognized by this designation.

### **8. Public - Semi Public**

Public facilities including uses as diverse as the CDOT property at Hidden Valley, the Ballfields north of I-70, and the local schools make up the public-semi public land use designation.

### **9. Open Space - Recreation**

A mix of Arapahoe National Forest lands, Area 28, Clear Creek Greenway and parks and other park land are included in this designation.

**Insert Map 3: Land Use Plan - Overall**

**Insert Map 3a: Land Use Plan - Original Townsite**

**Insert Map 3b: Land Use Plan - Twin Tunnels & Hidden Valley**

## Transportation

### **Goal T.1: Continue to participate in developing a long-term solution for Interstate 70.**

- Policy T.1.1:** Work with all partners in developing a preferred alternative for the I-70 corridor as ratified in the Collaborative Agreement.
- Policy T.1.2:** As part of any I-70 construction efforts, require that provisions of the Collaborative Agreement be used to enhance the operation and appearance of interchanges within the City Special Planning Area.
- Policy T.1.3:** Work with regional partners and CDOT to establish effective public transportation alternatives in the I-70 corridor.
- Policy T.1.4:** Work to locate Regional Transit Station(s) within the Idaho Springs original Townsite (i.e.: Argo Mill, south of Historic District, football field).
- Policy T.1.5:** Require mitigation of noise, dust and visual pollution in any planning for I-70.
- Policy T.1.6:** Remain active in the NEPA and I-70 Stakeholder process as it relates to solutions for congestion on Interstate 70.

### **Goal T.2: Participate in long-term improvements on Colorado 314.**

- Policy T.2.1:** Work with the County to annex County Road 314, subject to transitional maintenance support until the road meets City standards.
- Policy T.2.2:** Prepare plans, in consultation with CDOT, for the use of County Road 314 as a bypass route during and I-70 expansion construction.
- Policy T.2.3:** Explore the feasibility of rerouting portions of County Road 314 to allow for the conversion of existing rights of way to commercial use.
- Policy T.2.4:** If I-70 expansion occurs, require CDOT to develop an appropriate mitigation plan to reconfigure and improve County Road 314.
- Policy T.2.5:** Require mitigation of noise, dust and visual pollution in any planning for Colorado 314.

**Goal T.3: Develop and maintain safe, attractive and efficient roadways.**

- Policy T.3.1:** Develop gateway plans with CDOT for all I-70 interchanges.
- Policy T.3.2:** Ensure that all new road right-of-ways respect the historic assets of the community and allow for future roadway expansions.
- Policy T.3.3:** Develop and use traffic calming techniques as appropriate.
- Policy T.3.4:** Develop and implement streetscape improvements including designated crosswalks in commercial and business districts.
- Policy T.3.5:** Ensure that streets effectively accommodate transit, pedestrian, bicycle and other modes of transportation.
- Policy T.3.6:** Develop and implement a street maintenance program.

**Goal T.4: Improve Colorado Blvd. and U.S. Highways 6 & 40.**

- Policy T.4.1:** Partner with CDOT to fund, schedule and implement improvements along Colorado Boulevard.
- Policy T.4.2:** Support pedestrian and bicycle improvements in any new designs.

**Goal T.5: Support the establishment of public transportation alternatives.**

- Policy T.5.1:** Partner with other agencies and governments to develop, operate and maintain public transportation options within Idaho Springs.

**Goal T.6: Create an quality system of trails and pathways.**

- Policy T.6.1:** Partner with Clear Creek County and the National Forest to expand, construct and maintain a continuous off-road pedestrian and bicycle system.
- Policy T.6.2:** Participate in local and regional trails planning and development efforts to promote multi-purpose trails.
- Policy T.6.3:** Develop trail heads which can accommodate user parking.

- Policy T.6.4:** Work with volunteer groups to plan, develop and maintain trail systems.
- Policy T.6.5:** A plan for a phased development of city components of the countywide trail system will be created with regular allocations of funding from the City's Conservation Trust Fund used for trail enhancement purposes
- Policy T.6.6:** Emphasize and establish trails along Clear Creek in the east end.
- Policy T.6.7:** Promote the connection of the county trail & greenway system to Jefferson County.

**Insert Map 4: Transportation**

## **Parks, Recreation & Open Space**

### **Goal PR.1: Expand recreational amenities in the Idaho Springs area**

- Policy PR.1.1:** Develop and promote appropriate recreational development along and on Clear Creek.
- Policy PR.1.2:** Collaborate with the Forest Service to develop appropriate recreational opportunities on the National Forests.
- Policy PR.1.3:** Support continued development and improvement on the Clear Creek Greenway.
- Policy PR.1.4:** Collaborate with local organizations to expand the range of arts events and arts & music programming.
- Policy PR.1.5:** Work with the Recreation District to develop and operate recreational programming for area residents.
- Policy PR.1.6:** Balance resident and visitor recreational needs, facilities and investment.

### **Goal PR.2: Develop Virginia Canyon/Area 28 for recreational uses.**

- Policy PR.2.1:** Develop and implement a Virginia Canyon/Area 28 master plan.
- Policy PR.2.2:** Work to connect new trails with the business and commercial districts of Idaho Springs.

### **Goal PR.3: Market to target audiences.**

- Policy PR.3.1:** Create recreational opportunities as a single-day destination for residents of the Front Range.
- Policy PR.3.2:** Create short-term park and recreation opportunities for travelers on I-70.

**Insert Map 5: Park and Open Space Plan**

## Residential

### **Goal R.1: Maintain a diverse and affordable housing stock.**

- Policy R.1.1:** Promote a wide range of housing alternatives including single-family, multi-family and condominium/townhome development.
- Policy R.1.2:** Support a variety of home ownership options.
- Policy R.1.3:** Support affordable housing opportunities for seniors and families.
- Policy R.1.4:** Support first-time home buyer assistance programs, rental assistance efforts and other specialized housing services.
- Policy R.1.5:** Require that development, annexation, and major redevelopment includes or otherwise provides for workforce housing.
- Policy R.1.6:** Require that workforce housing is integrated with, rather than separated from, the rest of the community.
- Policy R.1.8:** Support the principle of “no net loss” in regard to workforce and affordable housing.

### **Goal R.2: Preservation and renovation of existing housing stock.**

- Policy R.2.1:** Participate in the local designation of Victorian-era homes and in securing financial assistance in maintaining those properties.
- Policy R.2.2:** Collaborate on the replacement of existing manufactured housing as appropriate.

### **Goal R.4: Support excellence in housing and subdivision design.**

- Policy R.4.1:** Encourage defensible space design strategies as part of new development in areas subject to wild fire.
- Policy R.4.2:** Promote and support Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards from the United States Green Building Council for both subdivision development and residential design.

## Economic Development

### **Goal ED.1: Maintain a strong historic business district.**

- Policy ED.1.1:** Promote activities of the Historical Society Idaho Springs and ensure that a coordinated and holistic effort is made to preserve and promote the historic elements of the City.
- Policy ED.1.2:** Assist in the redevelopment of the existing football field as and if it occurs.
- Policy ED.1.3:** Implement the regulations and policies found in the Idaho Springs 1041 Area regulations.
- Policy ED.1.4:** Continue the use of sales tax incentive programs as appropriate.

### **Goal ED.2: Support tourism and special event activities.**

- Policy ED.2.1:** Assist in bringing special events to the community.
- Policy ED.2.2:** Promote the use of Clear Creek for rafting and other recreational purposes.
- Policy ED.2.3:** Develop Heritage Tourism events in cooperation with Georgetown, Central City, Golden and others.
- Policy ED.2.4:** Maintain a presence and support marketing efforts for Clear Creek County and the Idaho Springs area.

### **Goal ED.3: Support development/redevelopment of the East End business district.**

- Policy ED.3.1:** Develop a comprehensive plan for renovation and revitalization of the east end with input from residents, property owners and businesses.
- Policy ED.3.2:** Collaborate to implement a “Main Street” type program if feasible.
- Policy ED.3.3:** Support existing commercial and business enterprises.

**Policy ED.3.4:** Replace aging residential properties with new affordably priced housing stock as redevelopment occurs.

**Policy ED.3.5:** Improve pedestrian opportunities and off street parking including creek front enhancements along Clear Creek.

**Goal ED.4: Support small business and technological improvements.**

**Policy ED.4.1:** Review and modify zoning and subdivision regulations to support home-based and small business development.

**Policy ED.4.2:** Promote expansion of the Enterprise Zone boundary.

**Policy ED.4.3:** Promote LEED designation for both commercial and industrial building design.

**Goal ED.5: Support diversity across all economic sectors.**

**Policy ED.5.1:** Work with CCEDC to attract and retain technological and environmentally friendly businesses.

**Policy ED.5.2:** Support additional commercial, light industrial and retail development in the community.

## V. IMPLEMENTATION

The process of implementing this plan begins with its formal adoption and should continue as decisions are made in Idaho Springs during the life of the Plan. Development proposals should be measured against how they match the vision, goals, and policies found in this document.

This section identifies the tools and techniques that the City may use to guide future land use decisions. Some of the tools and techniques listed in this section are already in place in Idaho Springs while others may not be used for years to come. The tools that follow are an abbreviated list from the wide range of land use and management options available to planners, elected officials, and communities in Colorado. If implemented, these tools would incur different levels of staffing and complexity depending on the tool being used. Each of these tools should be considered thoroughly and carefully before being proposed or adopted.

The City of Idaho Springs already has a number of tools in place including zoning, subdivision regulations, a permit system, and a fee and property tax system. These methods and processes can be modified and used to help define where, when, and how development occurs.

### 1. Development Guidance/Growth Management Tools

#### **Intergovernmental Agreements**

Intergovernmental agreements are voluntarily negotiated, can address a wide variety of issues, and help establish a working relationship that can be used to the advantage of both participating entities and their residents.

#### **Urban Growth Boundaries and Designated Growth Zones**

This tool develops a set of community policies that direct growth to a particular area. Often, service and infrastructure availability (water and sewer) drive the location of an urban growth boundary. A community usually creates a boundary where development within the boundary is encouraged and development outside the boundary is discouraged.

#### **Annexation Policy**

Annexation is a process through which municipalities bring lands outside their jurisdiction into the corporate limits of the community. Developers often seek annexation because they need access to urban services provided like water and sewage treatment, police services, or higher densities than allowed by the respective county. Developing a detailed set of annexation criteria would provide City officials with a set of benchmarks to be used in considering annexation.

### **Adequate Public Facilities and Concurrency Requirements**

Adequate public facility regulations ensure that new development will not result in a decline of service for existing residents. It also ensures that the services needed to support new development are available concurrently with the impacts of such development. This tool requires that certain public facilities, such as utilities, schools, and roads, are in place or planned for as a precondition for development approval. Such requirements can be implemented by the adoption of an “adequate public facilities” ordinance.

Developing an adequate public facilities regulation also requires that standards of acceptable levels of service be defined (e.g. through a fiscal impact analysis) to establish a benchmark for determination of whether facilities or services are adequate.

### **Capital Improvement Program**

A capital improvement plan should systematically outline the timing and funding process to replace, upgrade, develop, and maintain City assets. If developed, and updated every year, to continue to show a 5-year future timeframe, the capital improvement plan will help the public, nearby communities and Special Districts in the Idaho Springs area anticipate where and when public expenditures will occur.

## **2. Quality Development/Open Space Tools**

### **Performance Zoning**

Performance zoning ordinances regulate development by limiting impacts, rather than densities or uses. Commonly targeted impacts include traffic generation, pollution, stormwater runoff, and open space preservation. This tool does not usually specify a particular use for land but grants wide latitude to the developer, and may provide incentives to exceed minimum development standards, as long as the project meets specific performance criteria. This type of zoning focuses on the quality of development, its impact on adjoining properties, and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

### **Clustered or Conservation Subdivision/Zoning**

Cluster development is a design option that locates the same number of houses as permitted under existing zoning, on smaller lots that are grouped closer together. In this way the maximum residential density allowed does not change but the spacing of that development on the property does change. Cluster development allows the remaining portion of the site to be used for agriculture, open space, or natural resource/habitat protection. Cluster subdivisions have been used most successfully to preserve open space or create transitional areas between open lands and residential areas. Generally, a Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning designation will be applied to these lands.

### **Quality Development Standards**

The adoption of comprehensive development/design standards for commercial and industrial development along travel corridors and community gateways can enhance the aesthetic qualities along such roads and highways.

### **3. Issues related to Implementation**

The policies listed in the Comprehensive Plan assume actions and programs that would be implemented by staff, contract consultants or appointed and elected officials. Much of the work involved in implementing a Comprehensive Plan will fall to the Planning Commission as the new goals and policies should be used as a benchmark to review proposals. It is incumbent upon the Planning Commission and City Council to become familiar with the provisions of this plan and to use it as a platform for deliberation, recommendations and action.

Implementation of the policies in this plan will involve more effort by City of Idaho Springs staff since development review will be more detailed, coordination with other jurisdictions and providers will be more extensive, and issues to be addressed with the community during any annexation or development process have been expanded.

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is also the responsibility of both the Planning Commission and the City Council . Wherever policies call for coordinated efforts with cities, towns, and special districts; elected and appointed officials have a definite role in maintaining relations with other entities and working toward solutions that benefit all concerned parties. Active participation in joint planning and policy development meetings is an important task for City of Idaho Springs elected and appointed officials. City officials must dedicate themselves to the principles and policies in this Comprehensive Plan and make decisions based upon what is best for City as a whole.

For this Plan to be effective, the vision, goals, policies and implementation techniques must be reviewed and if necessary, revised on a regular basis. A well-designed monitoring and evaluation program can help the Planning Commission and City Council recognize and understand progress and setbacks in achievement of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. An annual report reviewing the Comprehensive Plan will include opportunities for citizen input, proposed changes to goals and policies, revised implementation strategies, updates to the general data, revisions to maps and tables, and other information.

The following page includes a table identifying proposed implementation actions and time-frame.

| Action Item  | Year           | Lead Entity                |
|--|----------------|----------------------------|
| <b>I-70 PEIS review</b>  | Current        | City Council               |
| <b>Develop Design Standards for commercial - industrial uses</b> | 2008           | Planning Commission        |
| <b>Citizens Park renovations</b>                                 | 2009           | Planning Commission        |
| <b>Monitor and evaluate Comprehensive Plan performance</b>       | 2009, annually | Planning Commission        |
| <b>Update subdivision regulations and zoning as necessary</b>    | 2009, annually | Planning Commission        |
| <b>Develop Capital Improvement Plan</b>                          | 2009, annually | Public Works, City Council |
| <b>CDOT &amp; County - 314 improvements</b>                      | 2010           | City Council               |
| <b>Idahoe Pedestrian Mall improvements</b>                       | 2010           | Planning Commission        |
| <b>Bike path connections</b>                                     | 2010           | Planning Commission        |
| <b>East End redevelopment</b>                                    | 2010 - 2015    | City Council               |
| <b>Area 28 development plan</b>                                  | 2011           | Planning Commission        |
| <b>Colorado Blvd. phases #2 and #3</b>                           | 2012           | City Council               |
| <b>New wastewater plant</b>                                      | 2015           | City Council               |
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## VI. AMENDMENTS

This document is intended to serve the Idaho Springs community for a period of up to 15 years. During that time, there will undoubtedly be new ideas of how to develop, new issues that will impact the City and changes in opinion that may conflict with goals and policies found in this plan. In order to remain an accurate and valid representation of the desires of the citizens of Idaho Springs, a process to revise and amend this document is included here.

### **Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process**

Idaho Springs Planning Commission should review the Comprehensive Plan annually and decide if any amendments or revisions are needed. The Planning Commission may then develop a recommendation for Council consideration. An application can also be made by outside parties to amend the plan where all costs of such amendment would be born by those outside parties.

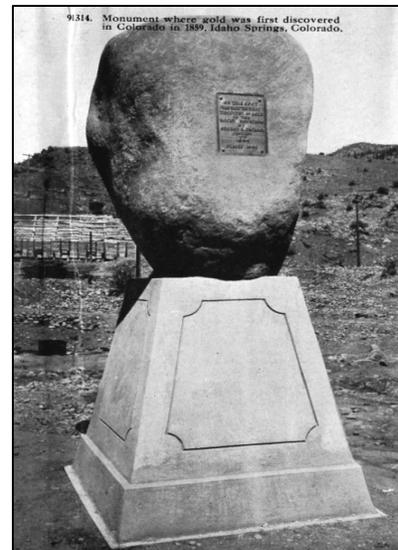
An amendment to the Comprehensive Plan should follow the process below:

- research and study related to the issue that triggered the need to amend the Plan,
- public input on the amendment at a community or Planning Commission meeting,
- referral of proposed amendment to Special Districts, nearby municipalities, Clear Creek, Gilpin and Jefferson Counties,
- Planning Commission Public Hearing and recommendation, and
- City Council Public Hearing and action on the amendment.

The Planning Commission and Council should consider all pertinent information and take testimony during the Public Hearings. Decisions should be based upon the following criteria:

- Amendment is in conformance with the goals and policies of the Plan,
- Amendment is compatible with existing and surrounding land uses,
- The amendment will not result in negative impacts to the existing or planned transportation system, and
- The amendment will not place excessive burdens on existing or planned service capabilities.

If an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan is approved, the amendment, with any map or text changes must be filed with the County Clerk & Recorder.



**Jackson Monument**