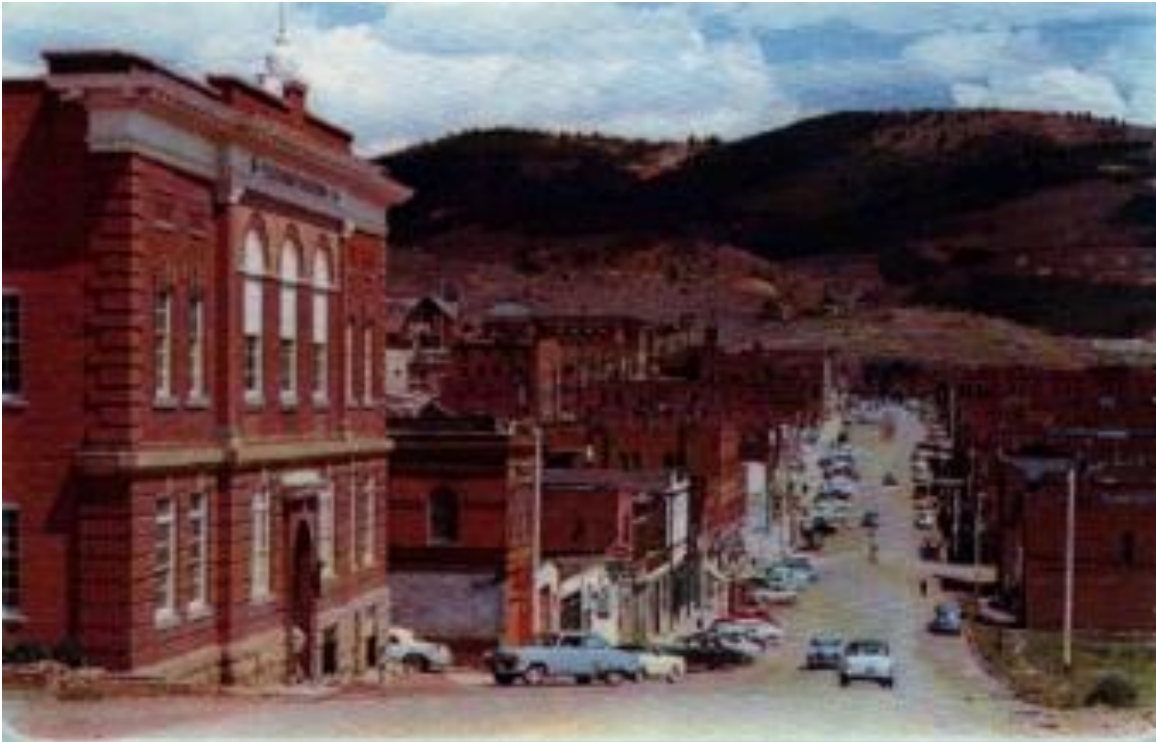


## **2019 Growth Management Plan Teller County, Colorado**



**Protect the Past.... Embrace the Future**

# **THE 2019 TELLER COUNTY GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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### Definition

Together with the Regional Action Plans which constitute geographical parts of Teller County, the Teller County Growth Management Plan is the Master Plan for unincorporated Teller County. Pursuant to Chapter 12: General Definitions of the Teller County Land Use Regulations (LUR), Adopted 12-06-07 – Effective) 1-01-08, the Teller County Growth Management Plan, less any advisory Regional Action Plan or other advisory Plan, is a regulatory document.

### **Background**

The intent of the Teller County Master Plan is to provide for planned and orderly development within the unincorporated portions of Teller County and referral cities, towns and areas, while simultaneously preserving a high quality of life for its residents and our unique mountain rural lifestyle. This plan aims to strike a balance between providing for the basic human needs of today, including deliberate development in our growth areas, and conservation and preservation of rural lands, rural lifestyle and the natural environment for future generations. Protect the Past...Embrace the Future.

Teller County's Growth Management Plan, the Regional Action Plans and the Teller County Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan comprise Teller County's 'Master Plan'. The Master Plan is an overall plan that establishes a framework for the future, a collective vision, and should provide guiding principles and goals for what our County will look like over the next 30 years [2050].

The Local Government Land Use Control Enabling Act (29-20-101, HB 74-1034) grants counties and municipalities broad authority to plan for and regulate the use of land, with no restrictions, conditions, or procedures prescribed for local Governments.

In 2001, legislation was enacted requiring jurisdictions intending to adopt or amend a master plan to give notice of the proposed plan or amendments to all neighboring jurisdictions for review. (Our Growth Management Plan will be sent to El Paso, Fremont, Douglas, and Park County as well as our referral cities for comment)

In 2007, the Colorado General Assembly adopted the Predictability in Planning Act, which revised C.R.S. §§ 30-28-106 and 31-23-206 to specifically state that the master plan of a local government constitutes an advisory document to guide land development decisions, but that the plan (or any part of it) may be made binding by including it in the local government's adopted subdivision, zoning, platting, planned unit development (PUD), or other similar land development regulations after satisfying notice, due process, and hearing requirements for legislative or quasi-judicial processes as appropriate.

It has been nearly 30 years since the Master Plan was developed [April 3, 1990] and much has changed in Teller County and in Colorado. The current Master Plan has proven its worth in

achieving a proper conservative balance between growth and preservation. The intent of this document is to review and update a highly effective Master Plan through current legislation, societal trends, resource availability, updated demographics and current population growth, western migration, and technological advances have all impacted Teller County. Government estimates now show an annual growth rate of 1.85% for Colorado, making it the second fastest-growing state in the US with a current population of 5,557,560 (2017). Without deliberate planning for growth in Teller County, the rural lifestyle that characterizes our county, reflects the values of our residents and attracts tourists from around the country, could be gone in a generation.

Teller County is located in east central Colorado, 20 miles west of Colorado Springs. Its mountainous terrain ranges in elevation from 6,700 feet to 12,800 feet, which includes the western slope of Pikes Peak. Teller County is at the intersection of four watersheds: Upper South Platte River, South Platte River Headwaters, Fountain Creek and the Upper Arkansas River. These watersheds are crucial to all of Colorado and are the primary water supply to the Front Range and eastern plains. Preservation and critical analysis of any development in close proximity to wetlands, streams, creeks, rivers and water sources must occur in Teller County in the coming years in order to prevent damage to this vital resource.

Agricultural lands have been encouraged to remain so in previous Teller County documents. “Ranch open space is an important part of the scenic beauty of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado...many residents and tourists place a high value on the protection of ranching in the West.” *Teller County Right to Farm and Ranch Policy, 08/12/1999*. With over half of Teller County being BLM, USFS, and State Land, coupled with existing subdivisions, the Cripple Creek Mining District, and our towns and cities, any remaining opportunities for further development in unincorporated agriculturally zoned Teller County, must be carefully examined and weighed so that the proper balance between the rural and developed portions of the county is maintained. Additionally, public services in rural agricultural areas are not provided at the same level as in urban or suburban areas. Law enforcement, fire protection, and ambulance services have longer response times in rural environments. Additional population or development in the coming years may further stress these vital services without corresponding increases in county expenditures to increase them.

On May 12, 2011, the Teller County Board of Commissioners was presented the final results of the Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Teller County by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Colorado State University. In 2010, Teller County with Colorado State University and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) to survey for critical biological resources in Teller County. A wetland and riparian survey was conducted concurrently with funding provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. *“The purpose of the survey was to provide a scientific data resource for managers, planners, and the citizens of Teller County for conducting proactive landscape planning. This document should be considered a tool for managing lands that support rare, imperiled and/or sensitive plants, animals and significant plant habitats.”* This CNHP study and resultant survey identified 49 potential conservation

areas (PCAs) in Teller County. This updated Master Plan, and the subsequent updated Regional Plans, should take note of these critical areas in all future land use or development decisions.

“Conversely, modernization and technological advances such as broadband and telecommunications, improved health care, and other private sector services will present opportunities for improvement in the quality of life for our residents and infrastructure. Proper planning for these opportunities will insure Teller County truly can ‘embrace the future’.

In the next thirty years as opportunities for growth in Teller County are presented, we must continue to maintain our position on the proper role of government and that of private industry in any development proposal. It is our intent that the use and development of land within unincorporated areas of Teller County be orderly, appropriate and effective. The development of land should respect personal freedom and rights, while balancing the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens of Teller County. It is the role of industry and not county government to finance commercial development. The public process must remain in the forefront of all future development so that Teller County residents, through their elected officials and this Growth Management Plan, are represented.

This Growth Management Plan will provide guidelines for proper planning, measured and responsible growth, provide direction for Teller County decision makers, enable and empower current residents and inform future residents. This plan will measure and meter the impacts of proposed development on our quality of life. These impacts include our sense of rural community and rural lifestyle protection, new development and the opportunities presented by new technologies and services, and impacts to our natural resources such as water availability and quality along with ever increasing pressure on our recreational areas and opportunities. In summation, the 2019 Growth Management Plan will chart a course for what Teller County will look like mid-way through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century [2050].

Currently, Teller County is ranked 55 of 64 counties geographically and 22 of 64 counties in population with a large percentage of the County owned by the State or Federal government [approximately 55%]. The County contains a portion of the Pike National Forest, the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, the Dome Rock State Wildlife Area, Mueller State Park, the Department of the Interior BLM lands, the Manitou Experimental Forest, the State of Colorado State Lands Board Lands, the Department of Transportation, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the Department of Conservation.

The Federal and State land portions of Teller County may not be developed and it is this aspect of our County that often attracts our long term residents, tourists and the businesses and services that support them. This large percentage of publically owned land, however, significantly reduces the amount of available private land for development and the corresponding impacts of new development may appear to be magnified in its impact to adjacent and adjoining property owners. In addition to the 55% of the County that may not be developed, when added to the land mass of the combined long-established subdivisions along the US Highway 24 corridor and its major County road arteries and the Cripple Creek Mining District, the majority of past development has occurred in and around the incorporated towns of Woodland Park, Cripple

Creek, and Victor and the unincorporated towns of Divide and Florissant. Both Divide and Florissant are designated growth areas where responsible future development may occur.

While the large percentage of Federal and State land in Teller County will continue to buffer growth and add to our rural lifestyle, there are two components of this reality that Teller County must continue to monitor in the coming years – increased population and a dynamic and diverse tax base. Additionally, an increased use of State and Federal lands inside of Teller County may impact adjoining properties and Teller County infrastructure.

As the population of Colorado increases, the pressure to develop more of Teller County will increase. Teller County has a finite amount of land. It lies directly adjacent to rapidly expanding Front Range growth areas such as Colorado Springs and we can expect pressure from population expansion on the Front Range to increase in the coming decades. This could set a conflict in motion between agricultural rural lifestyle and residential development.

The tax base from which to draw on for essential services and infrastructure in Teller County is finite. Particular attention should be paid to the number of non-taxpaying or reduced taxpaying large land owner new development proposals in the coming years so that the tax burden does not fall disproportionately on residential homeowners or commercial businesses. Additionally, small parcel A-1 properties, less than 35 acres, that are currently taxed as agricultural parcels should be verified and/or grandfathered until re-sale. Conversely, the Right to Farm and Ranch in Teller County should be carefully protected for those with a bonafide operation.

In terms of the use of public lands by nonresidents that lie in Teller County, we can expect exponential growth and corresponding impact to Teller County roads, associated infrastructure adjoining land owners. The large number of inholdings and residential development lying in close proximity to these public lands may lead to further conflict and challenges that will need to be carefully monitored for safety, quality of life and wildlife impacts.

Another geographical aspect that impacts Teller County is our close proximity to the large Front Range population center of Colorado Springs and by extension Denver. We are the first mountain County encountered by travelers from the front range using US 24. While we are a pass through County for many travelling to Park County and beyond, there is an ever increasing number of those who seek to develop property in Teller County, ranging from outdoor enthusiasts and educational camps, to non-profit organizations and business minded entrepreneurs. Many non-residents are surprised to learn that over half of the land they see in Teller County is protected public land and is not available for development. This places even more demand on privately held property and this pressure will increase in the next 30 years.

Woodland Park, Teller County's largest city and the first town encountered by Front Range travelers, has nearly one-third of the County's population at the eastern edge of the County and hosts the majority of the County's service and limited small-scale manufacturing industries. As one of several growth areas in Teller County, a balance must be struck between commercial growth of the town and the residential interface surrounding the town. In recent years, US 24 traffic has greatly increased with direct impact to the City and the deliberate effort to revitalize the downtown area. These traffic impacts will also continue to affect State and County roads and

unincorporated Teller County. New development proposed in growth areas, for example, in unincorporated Teller County along US 24, often requires additional expense for special traffic lanes, and access modifications which can have the unintended consequence of preventing development due to costs.

The unincorporated towns of Divide and Florissant are designated growth areas and are located along the U.S. Highway 24 corridor west of Woodland Park. The town of Divide is located at the intersection of U.S. Highway 24 and State Highway 67 and is host to public service establishments and limited heavy services or industrial uses. Florissant lies at the west end of the County and neighbors Park County and has seen some limited growth and revitalization in the past 30 years and is also a designated growth area with potential for additional growth.

In the 1990s, due in large part to a changing economy and the introduction of gaming to Cripple Creek, Teller County was one of the fastest growing counties in the State of Colorado with a predicted growth rate of 3% annually. This led to increased demand for both convenience services, new homes and subdivisions. This rapid growth led to conflict over competing land uses and several improved and enhanced versions of the Teller County Land Use Regulations over 29 years, the development of the April 3, 1990 Growth Management Plan and the advent of planning regions for unincorporated Teller County.

Zone changes from A-1 zones occurred in and around the town of Cripple Creek in anticipation of rapid growth due to gaming. For the most part this growth did not occur and much of the zoning is now obsolete or being returned to the A-1 agricultural zone. These zones were never developed or fully developed and are subject to pre-existing 1990's regulations [no growth or change in use] or must now be re-zoned back to A-1 and apply for a Special Use Permit, meeting all of the current standards.

There are currently 16 zones in Teller County for land use with four being obsolete where development is permitted either in its pre-existing form or only to levels authorized in regulations that existed at the time the obsolete zone was enacted. Land Use Boundaries in Teller County generally follow the historic and rural nature of the county. The vast majority of the land in Teller County that is available for development is zoned for residential or agricultural uses. Smaller parcel residential development generally conforms to the platted subdivisions scattered throughout the County. The agricultural zones generally lie outside of these subdivisions, the incorporated cities and the growth areas of Divide and Florissant. Additionally, commercial overlay zones may be applied for non-retail commercial use inside the growth areas and town centers of Divide and Florissant. These zones were developed for and tied to deliberate growth in the original 1990 Growth Management Plan. Finally, a Cripple Creek Mining Overlay District surrounds the mining activities in close proximity to the incorporated cities of Cripple Creek and Victor. The publically stated life of the mine under its current ownership is 2025.

Currently, the amount of land in Teller County, as it is presently zoned, available for industrial, commercial or mining use beyond the Cripple Creek Mining Overlay District (CCMOD) is extremely limited. Any future development in these areas over the next 20 to 30 years would

require a request for re-zoning and the concurrence of the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners with input from adjacent and adjoining property owners in a public process. Such requests would need to strike a careful balance between maintaining Teller County's rural lifestyle [to include farming and ranching], recreation and tourism and new development. When considering future land use development, care should be taken to not fundamentally alter or negatively impact the reason our citizens chose to live in Teller County.

Additionally, for any proposed new development, Teller County has Regional Action Plans and sitting committees of board member citizens who will review development proposals from a regional perspective and provide comments to the Teller County Community Development and Services Division [planning and building] who will then consider their citizen input in their recommendations.

Twenty years ago, in 1997, Teller County's Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan stated, "Teller County is now in the throes of growing pains as large, at least in human impact, as the physical forces that shaped the country and as dramatic as the gold rush." In 2019 we are beginning to see challenges to our rural lifestyle and impacts to our water supply, groundwater contamination by septic systems and sewage disposal, traffic impacts, and increasing competing uses and pressure on our public lands. As Colorado's population increases, along with the impacts of this increase to services infrastructure, coupled with our proximity to Colorado Springs we will need to focus and prioritize our efforts towards growth management. This growth management should enable responsible, deliberate growth in designated areas while discouraging or prohibiting new commercial growth in residential or agricultural areas. Rural lifestyle protection areas, sensitive fringe protection areas, environmentally sensitive areas and scenic and wildlife viewing roadways are all examples of methods that have effectively preserved our County for our residents of today.

Further challenging all of this, and a factor that is often overlooked, are the challenges presented by our topography. Teller County is located in a mountainous part of the State. Rocky outcroppings, steep terrain, primitive roads, creeks, wetlands and FEMA flood plain areas further limit the development of sites that would otherwise be available. This further focus's any future growth into a relatively small area of the County and has given rise to the encouragement of growth around Divide and Florissant and in the incorporated cities of Woodland Park, Cripple Creek, and Victor. In the latter two, historical preservation is a major consideration in any type of development and location.

As we approach the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, due to our proximity to large Front Range cities which are themselves experiencing exponential population growth at a very high level, Teller County will come under increasing pressure in a variety of areas, land use being a primary focus of this pressure. Local Government working with the Teller County citizens they represent, should consider what legacy will be passed to future generations, what will be preserved and developed and to what extent, while embracing necessary change and innovation. We must carefully review every potential development for both positive and negative aspects, and often unintended consequences. A balance must be struck between individual property



rights and the rights of adjoining and adjacent property owners and our responsibility to future generations.

The Teller County Growth Management Plan [Master Plan] is a living document under the stewardship of the Teller County Board of County Commissioners on behalf of the residents and constituents of Teller County. It may from time to time be amended to reflect the collective vision of the Teller County constituency and those elected to represent them or as function of State government decisions or as a result of technology enhancements and opportunities. As a strategic document, amendments should not be undertaken lightly or frequently but only after careful study, considering the long- term impacts, unintended consequences, and the input of Teller County residents. A guiding principal should always be the question, “what do I want Teller County to look like in 30 years ?” Each of Colorado’s 64 counties has a unique Growth Management Plan and this one is ours.

**Protect the Past.... Embrace the Future**

## **Administration**

### **INTENT/INTRODUCTION**

The intent of the Administration section of the Teller County Growth Management Plan is to provide a section which explains the essential administrative process and elements of the plan. The section is necessary to provide the County and user of the plan with an understanding of the legal framework and an overview of the planning process. The section describes how the plan is to be administered. The previous Master Plan dated April 3, 1990 has proven to be an extremely effective document, lasting nearly 30 years. The intent of this current Growth Management Plan is not to discount the effectiveness or chart a major course correction from the 1990 document as it is a good plan with conservative principles that have guided both deliberate development and prudent conservation for nearly 30 years in Teller County, to include the introduction of additional Teller County residents, gaming, mine expansion and mine life extension.

The growth that has occurred since 1990 and any future growth will place additional demands on Teller County rural lands, public lands inside of Teller County, and government services. Therefore, our task is to examine any updates or changes required in order to address future development over the next thirty years. This examination will insure that the new document reflects any legislation or legislative requirements passed since 1990, population demographics, changing economic realities, studies presented to Teller County leadership, and emerging technology.

The section was developed preliminarily approved early in the planning process to provide the commissions and citizens with an overview of the entire process and to identify the purpose and objectives of the plan.

The section includes the following important elements: Authority, Jurisdiction, Purpose and Objectives, Planning Process, the Citizen Involvement Program, and Strategy,

### **AUTHORITY**

The State of Colorado has specifically authorized and encouraged the intergovernmental cooperation required to develop the Teller County Growth Management Plan under the provisions of Colorado Revised Statute Chapter 29-20-101, et. seq., Local Government Land Use Control Enabling Act.

The State of Colorado has specifically authorized and stated it is the duty of the Teller County Planning Commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of Teller County, in which the Teller County Growth Management Plan, is a part, under the provisions of Colorado Revised Statute Chapter 30-28-101, et. seq., county planning and building codes.

In 2001, legislation was enacted requiring jurisdictions intending to adopt or Amend a master plan to give notice of the proposed plan or amendments to all neighboring jurisdictions for review. This will be accomplished as part of this review. Neighboring jurisdictions will include adjacent counties and Teller County's incorporated towns.

In 2007, the Colorado General Assembly adopted the Predictability in Planning Act, which revised C.R.S. §§ 30-28-106 and 31-23-206 to specifically state that the master plan of a local government constitutes an advisory document to guide land development decisions, but that the plan (or any part of it) may be made binding by including it in the local government's adopted subdivision, zoning, platting, planned unit development (PUD), or other similar land development regulations after satisfying notice, due process, and hearing requirements for legislative or quasi-judicial processes as appropriate

Together with the Regional Action Plans which constitute geographical parts of Teller County, the Teller County Growth Management Plan is the Master Plan for unincorporated Teller County. Pursuant to Chapter 12: General Definitions of the Teller County Land Use Regulations (LUR), Adopted 12-06-07 – Effective) 1-01-08, the Teller County Growth Management Plan, less any advisory Regional Action Plan or other advisory Plan, is a regulatory document.

## **JURISDICTION**

The jurisdiction of the Teller County Growth Management Plan shall include all of the unincorporated territory within Teller County, Colorado, including the unincorporated places of Divide, Four Mile, and Florissant. The incorporated territory of the referral cities of Woodland Park, Cripple Creek and Victor are included upon approval of the respective municipal planning commission, in accordance with Colorado Revised Statute 30-28-109, *et. seq.*, Certification of the Plan. Specific unincorporated areas participating actively are the Four Mile Area, Florissant, Teller County South East Region and Divide.

## **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The intent of the Teller County Growth Management Plan is to provide for planned and orderly development within the County and cooperating Communities and areas, while balancing basic human needs of a changing population, and maintaining a healthy environment for future generations.

This plan is designed to be utilized as a land use development and conservation decision-making guide; to reinforce our goals and values; and to support County and Community decisions regarding coordinated, sequenced, and timely growth.

Upon completion of this plan, additional studies, and the drafting of implementation methods, the plan and subsequent planning efforts shall endeavor to meet the following objectives:

- 1A.) To identify regulatory and other techniques for the use of land so as to provide for the orderly use of land and the protection of the environment in a manner consistent with constitutional rights.
- 1B.) To provide adequate and appropriate zoning for residential, commercial, mineral extraction, agricultural, recreational, industrial and other uses.
- 1C.) To identify present and future needs and resources for food, water, sanitation, transportation systems, energy and telecommunications.
- 2A.) To protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public and adjacent and adjoining property owners by preventing inappropriate land use, requiring developers to mitigate identifiable impacts prior to development, and by implementing methods which eliminate the cost of growth from the taxpayer. Any new development in Teller County may place additional unintended costs on its limited services and facilities..
- 2B.) To identify methods for the minimization of pollution of land, air, soil, and water through proper location of industries, disposal sites, other activities, compliance with Colorado State agency requirements, and planning to encourage conservation.
- 3A.) To develop a land utilization and classification system based upon the availability of appropriate services and facilities, community values, rural lifestyle considerations, and physical opportunities and constraints.
- 3B.) To provide for processes that regulate and support facilities for Community services, including roads; parks; schools; public safety; drainage; and utilities for water, sanitation, electricity, gas and telecommunications.
- 4A.) To evaluate potential activities and developments which may result in significant changes in population density on the basis of the overall impact upon the Community, surrounding area, and County services.
- 4B.) Apply conservative principals to land use and new development by maximizing finite county financial resources and human capital for the greatest benefit to all residents.
- 5.) To identify environmentally sensitive land and hazardous areas including: flood plains, water shed sources, steep slopes, wildfire lands and geologic hazards, and restrict incompatible development and activities in their vicinity. Particular attention must be paid to the urban-rural

interface areas in Teller County and those areas abutting or traversing through Federal or State controlled lands inside of Teller County.

6.) To identify and protect environmentally significant land, including wildlife habitats and scenic and highly valued landscapes and roadways, and restrict incompatible development and activities in their vicinity. Insure the 2011 Survey of Critical Biological Resources data is integrated into this plan and the regional plans and considered as part of future development plans.

7.) To identify and preserve land, area, and activities of historical and archeological significance, and restrict incompatible development and activities in their vicinity.

8A.) To promote cooperation in the development of the Growth Management Plan between Teller County and other local, regional, state, and federal governments. Providing neighboring jurisdictions notice of any intention to amend or adopt a new growth management plan for review and requesting the same from them.

8B.) To coordinate the phased, logical extension of cities', town's and area's boundaries and growth areas.

9A.) To enhance and maintain a sense of community for the county, unincorporated communities, and areas.

9B.) To promote appropriate design and arrangement of development which is compatible to the Community, area and neighborhood.

9C.) To promote through clear standards, processes and communications, a path for the development of quality housing and residential opportunities for all citizens of Teller County in appropriate growth areas.

10.) To remove obstacles to sound development proposals that meet the intent of the GMP leading to a well-balanced diversified economy to promote local employment opportunities, to capture local and tourist expenditures, and to encourage commercial opportunities in growth areas.

## **THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS**

The following information is intended to acquaint Teller County residents with the growth management planning process used to develop this plan. This section includes discussion of 1.) the process, 2.) the documents, and 3.) the implementation of the plan.

### **What is the Process of Growth Management Planning?**

The growth management planning process encompasses much more than developing a written report. It is part of a larger continuing process in which the unincorporated area of the County and incorporated areas of cooperating Communities are continually examined, taking into consideration different aspects of the utilization of the areas. Planning serves as the objective basis from which to evaluate alternatives and make decisions for the future. These decisions are made not only by the County or Community officials or planners, but by private citizens as well. Our constituents have made considerable investment in Teller County through their ownership of private property, including both businesses and private residences. The importance of this plan cannot be overstated, it is our constituents who will be directly impacted by future decisions made by county officials using this plan as a guide.

Planning is the process by which the County, and its Communities, ~~decide~~ deliberately plan what kind of future they want, and then establishes the policies and possible management techniques, such as zoning regulations and capital improvement programming, to help reach that desired future. Using background research, the County, and its Communities, apply informed forethought to guide private and public decision making. This should include demographics, population and technology trends, legislation changes, including building code and land use changes, and Teller County Regional analysis and input.

The County needs to develop plans and goals. Numerous social, economic and physical factors will impact the County whether there is a plan in place or not. Unplanned impacts will result in unplanned consequences which will prove difficult to apply resources to with Teller County's limited tax base. Unplanned impacts have the potential to impact both private residents and local businesses. Private investment decisions; the local, national, and international economy; federal and state policies and investments; and certainly, the public and private decisions made by the local governments and individuals all benefit from sound planning.

Planning for growth management is needed simply because there is limited land to accommodate all growth. The rancher, developer, businessman, and even government, all compete for the land -- the rancher to raise livestock, the developer to build more homes, the businessman looking for a better opportunity, and government to build roads, schools, parks and other facilities. The problem they ~~must~~ face is that the land is a finite resource. Additionally, new development often brings with it and expectation and potential requirement for more services supported by local government. Increases in services are generally paid for through increased taxes by a finite tax base. This should not be an unintended consequence of improper

or uncoordinated land development or planning. Conversely, not addressing the potential need for increased services as part of proposed development in Teller County may increase the risk of reduced services for all citizens of Teller County. Land is the basic resource on which all human activities depend. So, it makes sense to plan for its wise use by guiding growth and change to achieve economic benefits while protecting environmental quality.

The growth management planning process includes several steps, each step logically builds from the previous step. The process does not stop with the completion of a Plan document. It continues to review, monitor and enhance the objectives of the County, and its Communities, and the effectiveness of the planning effort. Growth Management planning has the ultimate objective of creating a general guideline to be used in making decisions about the physical development of the County, and its Communities.

The impact of good planning may take years to become apparent while bad planning or failure to plan is often evident much earlier, and is most often seen in unintended or unforecast consequences. Sound planning is an investment in Teller County's future and in the lives of those who will eventually live and work here. An orderly growth pattern takes time to develop but the results can be felt sooner. Managed growth is a useful to outside entities as well because the business and industry sectors seek out Counties and Communities which can provide adequate services and facilities, and are attractive places to live and work with a predictable lifestyle. Our regulations, guidelines and plans are often read on-line by prospective residents and entrepreneurs trying to decide if Teller County is a good fit for their goals.

Growth Management planning also enables predictive governmental budgeting, allowing Teller County to forecast and appropriately allocate funding for projects. Good planning allows, for example, public construction projects to be relocated, delayed, or eliminated because of changing conditions, wants or needs. Ultimately, decisions will be based on sound planning recommendations made by capable and informed leaders in Teller County Government. The use of this Growth Management Plan should be a ready reference that will help guide these future decisions. Finally, use of the GMP should enable the most efficient and predictable use of Teller County's limited financial resources.

### **What is a Growth Management Plan?**

The Teller County Growth Management Plan is the official statement of Teller County and its unincorporated Communities, which sets forth major policies concerning desirable future development, deliberate growth and appropriate conservation and preservation of our rural lands.

In order to serve its purpose as a frame of reference for both decision-makers and residents, the Plan must be based on a series of well-defined goals and standards which establish a positive plan of action for future development and deliberate growth. Thus, the Plan establishes a perspective which relates today's decisions to their possible future implications. The Plan should also set forth a vision for a pattern of development which reflects the desired goals of the County, and its Communities. The GMP should serve as a tool to assist in current decisions, and as a strategic tool for long term planning. Finally, the GMP serves as a

framework and guide for the various County and Community boards, councils, commissions, departments, private organizations, and citizens involved with the potential physical development of an area.

The Plan must be "comprehensive" and consider all of the geographic areas within the County, and cooperating Communities, and all factors which affect physical developments. While the incorporated cities and unincorporated regions in Teller County will undoubtedly face unique challenges, there must be an overarching plan which provides a framework for decision makers presented with development plans or requests for conservation. Future population growth, traffic and enhanced technology are all impacts which will impact all parts of the County in the next thirty years. The Plan must be coordinated to balance potential unintended impacts from development decisions in one part of the county on other parts. Factors include, but are not limited to: provisions for adequate public facilities such as transportation, drinking water, sewers and sewage treatment, schools, parks, and other public services; the encouragement of growth in our growth areas and the protection of our conservation and rural areas; equitable protection of residents from fire and flood dangers; promotion of the health and general welfare, and identification of the most appropriate uses of land throughout the jurisdictions.

To address all of these areas, the County referral Communities have prepared a document setting forth the policies for the future of use land in the County. It is the result of the considerable study and analysis of existing physical, economic, and social conditions, assessment of citizen's opinions, and a projection of future needs. When adopted, the Plan serves as a guide for many public decisions, especially proposed requests for land use changes and the preparation of capital improvements programs.

The GMP if properly constructed, should be a policy level regulatory document which provides intent and guidance to the six Regional Action Plans, Teller County Government and to our citizen boards. That is, it summarizes policies and proposals upon which future studies, projects and development will be based and evaluated, but does not spell out detailed regulation provisions or specific locations. The Plan is enabled and supported by Land Use Regulations, Building Codes, and any number of Resolutions and Regulations designed to impact specific areas of development.

The Plan should be "long range" and deal with issues and possibilities over a thirty (30) year period, rather than only current or past issues. While it may certainly be amended in the future, doing so should be a deliberate process.

### **How is the Growth Management Plan implemented?**

The timely implementation of this Plan is an important concept which will ensure that the goals and objectives will be realized. It must be seamless, showing continuity with the previous 1990 Plan. The 1990 Plan has served Teller County residents and elected officials well for nearly 30 years and should be amended with great care and deliberation. The nature and lifestyle of Teller County could be irrevocably changed negatively by short sighted change. The next 30 years will most certainly present challenges to leaders and Teller County citizens alike. The



GMP provides a long term, well thought out strategy that will enable Teller County to protect the past and embrace the future – a careful balance of deliberate growth and conservation.

It is the responsibility of the members of the Planning Commission, local government and elected officials to implement the Plan by incorporating the Plan's goals, objectives, and policy statements into all land use reviews and capital improvement programming decision-making processes. Teller County citizens also play a vital role by participating in our public processes.

Examples of this include requests for rezoning, Special Review Use Permits [SUP, CUP, AUP], , annexations, capital improvements, facilities and other similar issues or requests should be reviewed for compliance with the provisions of this Plan. The Plan will be used as a guide to making decisions and is already included as the first standard required to be met in current Teller County Land Use Regulations involving Plats, Special Use Permits, and other development proposals.

The planning process will include initial and continual use of the Master Plan in all development proposals and in final standards evaluation. It is critical that future staff recommendations to decision makers be standards based and not premised on conjecture or opinion.

The interrelated nature of planning activities is integral to the implementation of the growth management strategy. In the next thirty years, subsequent studies, population growth, changing demographics and new legislation will all impact Teller County.

The Planning Commission is directed to consult with the appropriate elected officials prior to beginning the process of amending this document in the future. The Commission will then develop, assess, analyze, solicit public comment, and recommend appropriate action to the Board of County Commissioners for the implementation of the amendment or change.

Properly developed and used, the Plan can be categorized under seven general areas: regulatory, coordination and cooperation, administration, use and impact fees, land acquisition, service and facility programming, and additional plan elements and studies.

Regulatory techniques include the continued use ,development, or the revision of regulations, standards and codes.

The overall purpose of these regulations is to assure the reasonable appropriateness of location, type, density, quality, and quantity of any proposed development. Examples would be zoning and subdivision regulations; annexation procedures and policy; energy conservation regulations and Codes; Uniform Building, Electrical, Mechanical, and Fire Codes; and Environmental and Health regulations.

Coordination and cooperation techniques include efforts such as this plan. The County and its Communities will be encouraged to respect the planning efforts of each jurisdiction while seeking an equitable outcome for the overall county. Consistency between plans, regulations, and land use decisions of the various entities will be sought. Cooperation is required between the

Communities and the County to review proposed annexation and major development, for example, to assure the availability of services and facilities to those specific areas, and for the protection of adjacent and adjoining property owners directly impacted by the proposal. The impacts of State and Federal agency actions and evolving legislation affecting land use and growth inside of Teller County must be constantly monitored. Specific regional plans have been developed to address growth impacts in defined geographic locations and must also be updated and monitored for impact to adjacent regions and communities.

Administrative techniques will continue to stress the development of checklists, guidelines, and procedures to provide the public and the land use decision makers with simple, concise, and understandable information, direction, and methods.

Acquisition techniques include compensatory methods in which landowners are satisfactorily reimbursed for using or not using their land in a specific manner. The reimbursement may be in a variety of different forms and, certainly, not necessarily a direct monetary payment. Examples of this technique include: Land donations, public land purchase, voluntary land trusts, protective covenants, mutually beneficial condemnation, easement acquisition or application, land banking, and the transfer of development/density rights.

Service and facility programming and the existence of actual infrastructure will continue to be a major component of any proposed development evaluated under this Plan. This technique will directly relate the staging, timing, and location of services and facilities to the approval of growth in Teller County, and its Communities, for the period of this plan. The plan will identify those services which are required prior to any development and growth can occur and the required level of service for any specific location. This is critical as economic factors outside of Teller County's control could negatively impact development that is allowed to occur without necessary infrastructure based solely or mainly on conjecture and hope. If allowed to occur, population increase and unsupported development in Teller County will result in degraded services and infrastructure for its citizens.

The level of services will vary from location to location, depending upon its urban or rural setting, distance from existing infrastructure and the objectives of the County, and its Communities. The plan will indicate those areas where adequate levels of service exist, areas where services are scheduled, and areas where services are not scheduled. Through this staging plan, all developments are coordinated with regard to timing and the functional relationships of the various service and facility projects. Methods commonly used to implement this technique are short and long range facility plans and capital improvement programs. It is recommended that Planning Commissions annually review their jurisdiction's capital improvement program to ensure it is compatible with the Teller County Growth Management Plan and its respective Regional Growth Management Plan.

## **CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM**

In Teller County's initial 1990 GMP, the Planning Commission agreed, from the conception of this planning activity, that citizen involvement in the growth management planning effort and plan development process is essential to ensure its success. Therefore, the Planning Commissions, as a preliminary task, approved The Citizen Involvement Program of the plan in order to demonstrate its importance. The Commissions offered their approval of this program on March 1, 1988. This program is intended to establish the primary objective of offering the opportunity for the citizens of Teller County, and its Communities, to be involved in all phases of the planning process. Public process, debate and discourse, and private citizens as well as local citizen owned business owners should all be encouraged and invited to participate in all development decisions.

It was the stated policy of the Citizen Involvement Program to provide methods to enhance the participation of all citizens to be informed of, to be involved with, and to influence all phases of this planning process and plan document development. In 2019 internet based web sites, community bulletins, the posting of staff products, reports, and agendas all continue to enable Teller County residents to stay involved and informed on proposed development. Additionally, adjacent Counties have posted their Growth Management Plans online and legislation mandates that adjacent counties review and comment on proposed plans. All of this allows full participation by willing Teller County residents in this process.

The following elements were included within this program to implement the above policy and objective. The elements were selected by the Planning Commission after discussion and mutual consensus; the elements include:

1. All meetings will be posted, publicized, and open to the public.
2. Press releases will be prepared for all meetings.
3. Information will be developed in an understandable form.
4. Public hearings will be required prior to plan approvals, adoption, and revisions.
5. Special interest groups will be invited and encouraged to review and comment.
6. Plan advisory groups may be established for specific elements and/or areas.
7. Community surveys may be used to solicit opinions and to promote interest.
8. Town hall, neighborhood, and area wide work sessions ~~will~~ may be conducted.
9. Newspaper supplements will be developed at various stages of the planning process.

10. In addition to mailings to inform interested persons of the process and upcoming meetings, all products will be made public on line on the Teller County website.

11. Upon completion of the plan document periodic review of the plan, plan implementation technique development, and achievement of goals and objectives will be conducted.

## **GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Teller County Growth Management Plan will encourage the adoption of a "Growth Management Strategy" as the planned course of action. The planned course of action, goals and objectives, and implementation methods, when viewed collectively, represent the growth management plan of the County, and its Communities.

The term growth, or development, management encompasses the conscious decision to accommodate or restrain development in any geographic setting, whether it is downtown Woodland Park, Ute Pass, Divide, the Cripple Creek-Victor mining/historical areas, or the Four Mile Area.

The reasons the County and its Communities desire to manage growth include but are not limited to: preserving a sense of Community and preserving a rural lifestyle ; to preserve and protect the sensitive and significant environment; to avoid higher taxes; to insure the provision of essential services to residents with the financial resources available and to enhance the fiscal solvency of local governments. Growth will managed to occur in growth areas and nodes.

The County, and its Communities, will make an open effort to enable private development in growth areas by providing clear processes, regulations, standards and transparency in process and consistency in infrastructure requirements

The use of a development management system is a recognition that planning and implementation must both be holistic if critical problems facing the County, and its Communities, are to be solved. Both the problems and their solutions must be viewed as a whole; thus, systems must be regional in scope, and must include cooperation between the County, and its Communities, and perhaps adjacent counties, examples being common connecting roads, natural resources, and infrastructure. Although individual geography in Teller County may need to be uniquely examined for impact, they must still be viewed in terms of their interrelationships with the other areas and the County as a whole.

The 2019 GMP will require the refinement and periodic update of our existing Regional Action Plans. These regional plans both localize and comprise the Master Plan for the Teller County. Development of specific policy statements, implementation strategies and the delineation of Urban Service Areas and Functional Planning Areas can be tailored to a specific

Community and Region, based upon their specific opportunities and constraints, desires and problems.

The growth management strategy system must be viewed as regional in scope; the county cooperating with other jurisdictions can provide its fair share of development, which may be viewed as little, or none at all. Once provisions are made, using growth management strategies for such cooperation and coordination, decisions, that might otherwise be challenged, become acceptable. This system allows the County, and its Communities, to accommodate their fair share of the regional growth in the most efficient and sensible way. Each jurisdiction shares regional growth without destroying its individual ability to achieve Community goals - primarily the prevention of sprawl of development in accordance with the ability to provide adequate public facilities and services, preservation of the environment, and sense of Community.

The growth management strategy is designed to ensure appropriate timeliness, quality, quantity, type, location, sequence, cost effectiveness and efficiency of transition and development of land and resources. This system will allow County problems and issues to be addressed comprehensively, thus significantly aiding the County and Communities in planning for future growth, and understanding the interrelationships between and implications of varying policies, goals and implementation methods. The strategy will influence development in the direction of the goals and objectives of the Plan. The plan, therefore, will encourage a method of review and evaluation to guide development toward the most suitable locations and away from other less suitable areas.

This legal and planning policy framework for growth management is primarily based upon the delineation of functional and geographically identifiable "tiers" or "functional planning areas." This delineation is integral to a rational planning process and is fundamental to the identification of appropriate implementation methods or tools.

All land in Teller County has been placed into functional planning areas and regions. This land classification and "utilization area" system is provided for under Colorado Revised Statute Chapter 30.28.106 et. seq.

The Growth Management section of this Plan describes how these regional areas have been identified and determined.

The recognition of the functional planning areas allows the County to describe goals and objectives for each area, to selectively evaluate growth trends for each area, and to select implementation techniques that are specific for each area. Therefore, the goals and implementation methods that would be competing or conflicting when applied consistently can be harmonized when viewed selectively by area and/or region.

The County was initially divided into specific planning regions for purposes of developing planning and implementation strategy. The regions are Cripple Creek, Divide, the Four Mile Area, Florissant, Victor, and Woodland Park.

Within each Planning Region, Urban Service Areas will be identified, if applicable. Urban Service Areas are areas in which Communities or other entities can and/or are willing to extend serviced and facilities for streets, water and sewer. The extensions may be made by Communities of their own accord, or by developers, or by the residents of a specific area or district.

In conclusion, this system, using functional planning areas and regions, assumes that the County, and its Communities, will accept their fair share of growth. It will allow the County to achieve its goals within a rational planning framework and with due respect for legal and constitutional principles. Potential exclusionary effects can be minimized since the County can meet its regional responsibilities. Challenges would be discouraged since courts would have difficulty invalidating a system that accommodates each jurisdiction's fair share of growth, despite the fact that prohibited, limited, or exclusive uses would be prohibited in some areas.

The system allows for a high degree of sensitivity to comprehensive planning by distinguishing between functional planning regions and areas, and the various governments involved in (or influencing) development of the Plan and implementation of the system. Each of these "linkages" is of critical importance to the design of the County's system since each one improves the consistency of all actions affecting the growth and development of Teller County.

## **ADOPTION**

The existing GMP plan was developed through cooperation between Teller County, and its Communities, and our incorporated cities and the adoption process was in compliance with both County and City Colorado Revised Statute provisions.

The current GMP is a good plan that has worked, but after 30 years was in need of update and careful review. Teller County's regional action plans, for example, were all created after the 1990 GMP and our incorporated cities have all developed their own master plans and strategic plans since then. The 2019 GMP strives to be a policy level document.

The Growth Management Plan shall be considered an element of the County and individual City or Community Master Plans. The approval of the new GMP encouraging a joint planning effort shall serve as the approval of Teller County for a specific Community's planning commission to assist in the planning of areas outside of the Community's boundaries having a direct impact on the Community.

Adoption of subsequent revised or updated Regional Action Plans shall be in accordance with this section, and Colorado Revised Statutes 30-28-109 *et. seq.*

Colorado Statue authority states, in part, that the Commissions may adopt the plan as a whole, or parts thereof, as the work of developing the plan progresses. Further, the Commissions may amend, extend, or add to the plan or carry any part of it into greater detail from time to time. The adoption of this plan or any part shall be by resolution, carried by the affirmative vote of not less than majority of the entire membership of the County Planning Commission and carried by the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of the entire membership of the Planning

Commission. The resolution shall refer expressly to the maps and descriptive and other matter intended by the Planning Commission to form the whole or part of the plan. The action then shall be recorded in the plan, part, or amendment by the identifying signature and certification of the secretaries of the commissions.

The Planning Commission shall attest and certify a copy of the plan or part thereto to the Board of County Commissioners and to the Planning Commissions of the Communities of the County.

The Board of County Commissioners approval and adoption of this plan will be required. The plan or amendment thereto shall be filed with the County Clerk and Recorder and with the City Clerk of Teller County incorporated cities.

## **MONITORING**

Throughout the development of this Plan, the need for accountability has been a recurring theme. Consequently, this Plan provides for the careful and stringent assessment of the progress made toward its implementation. This section describes a system of appraisal of implementation progress and the impact of the growth management system upon the County, and its Communities.

Monitoring and evaluation processes may be hampered by insufficient data due to the subjective nature of certain goals and objectives, and/or to the intangible quality of certain features that might indicate progress. In other cases, the collection and organization of indicative information may be prohibitively expensive or difficult to obtain. This section seeks to provide the means by which to measure the effects of the Plan on the character of the County, and its Communities, and its effects on the provision of public services.

## **REVISION:**

The Growth Management Plan be carefully reviewed every five years by staff and presented to the Board of County Commissioners. This will ensure that the strategy to manage growth is current and reflects the County's, and its Communities, values. A major review using referral agencies and regional action plan stakeholders will occur every 12 years, unless accelerated by major changes or as directed by the BoCC. This 12 year review will be a comprehensive review of the entire Growth Management Plan. The review may be fairly simple if the County and Communities have not changed much over that period or it might be quite elaborate if the County has witnessed rapid growth or change.

The following questions should be asked during the review and revision process:

- Can goals, objectives and policies be improved?
- Have population characteristics changed in the last three to six years? How will those changes affect the jurisdiction in the years to come?
- Have alternative land uses been examined and considered?
- Has the economy changed in the County for the better or worse? What long-term effect will these changes have on this jurisdiction?
- Has the natural environment been degraded or improved? Were the controls useful or should they be changed to meet present needs?
- Where and what kind of development has been occurring? Is this the kind of development wanted or do changes in this trend need to be made?
- How successful has the County been in meeting the capital improvement program? What changes could be made to better meet the needs?
- How successful has the County been in obtaining citizen participation? How can the Planning Commissions better communicate with fellow citizens?
- What impact have federal and state regulations and funding had on the Community? How can the working relationship with other levels of government be improved to the Community's benefit?
- Is the Community meeting the needs of the residents for transportation, recreation and other public services and facilities?

The results of the review and revision may very well mean changes in the implementation methods including the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulation or other development controls. The Planning Commission can make that determination and recommendations can be formulated.

## **AMENDMENTS**

Provisions are made in this plan for changing it, but this authority should be used with discretion since much of the value of a plan can easily be lost through frequent or capricious changes. Amendment applications can be proposed by the Planning Staff, the Planning Commissions, Elected Officials, citizen groups or individual citizens, but any proposal must always be referred to the Planning Commissions for their consideration.

The Commission shall discuss any proposed changes, and hold a public hearing to solicit reactions and input from Teller County citizens. In addition, they may refer the proposal to a study committee for recommendations. While evaluating the proposed change, the Commission



should insure that the change fits the overall goals and policies of the plan, that alternative land uses are examined, that special interest groups are not given preferential treatment, and that secondary impacts of the change are adequately considered.

The Adoption and Amendment Procedure shall be in accordance with Colorado State Statutes, using the Planning Commission and public input.

## **Survey of Existing Conditions Intent/Elements**

### **INTENT/INTRODUCTION**

The future is built upon the past and the present. An understanding of the physical, social, economic, cultural, and political environment in Teller County is necessary to develop a realistic and achievable growth management plan. Recognition of our constraints, challenges and opportunities for growth in Teller County must occur well in advance of their occurrence if growth is truly to be managed and not just be allowed to occur.

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS ELEMENTS**

The existing conditions portion of the Growth Management Plan include that fact that over half of our county is under Federal jurisdiction (BLM and USFS), with the remaining portion of the county being divided into six planning regions. Additionally, there are 3 incorporated cities in Teller County.

In the 2019 GMP five areas were reviewed in terms of existing conditions:

- (1) Historical/Cultural Profile
- (2) Natural Resource Inventory
- (3) Services and Facilities Evaluation
- (4) Socioeconomic Characteristics
- (5) Existing Land Use Inventory

### **CURRENT REGIONAL PLANS AND INCORPORATED CITY PLANS**

It is expected that the current Regional Action Plans and the Master plans existing for our incorporated cities will also be reviewed as a result of the revised 2019 GMP

The current Regional Action Plans and any appropriate reference to the Master Plans of our referral (incorporated) cities were all considered in the review of the 2019 Teller County GMP and are incorporated into this plan by reference.

## **HISTORICAL/CULTURAL PROFILE**

As stated the future is built upon the past and present, therefore, an understanding of the past helps to explain why things are the way they are and offers an insight to what the future may be.

Knowing the history of a place, County or Community allows the County or Community to understand its current spatial arrangement -why a road follows a specific route or why a town is located where it is today, for example.

History provides important lessons regarding how and why previous residents used the land; it allows today's residents not to repeat mistakes and enhances a sense of tradition.

It is therefore important, that in any Growth Management Plan carefully consider the impacts of future growth on the historical and cultural nature of the area designated for development and the values of the citizens of that region or area.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY**

The 2019 Growth Management Plan analyzed environmental characteristics throughout the county to determine which may be impacted the greatest by future development. These characteristics included: geology and topography, hydrology and water supply/quality, vegetation, climate, soils, and wildlife. These features and their interactions with development play different roles in maintaining the desired quality of life and unique identity of Teller County and its Communities. It is important that any proposed future development consider the natural resources during the planning process.

Historically, the County and its Communities have made land use and development decisions based, in part, upon an understanding of the land, its natural resources, and their physical functions. Recognition of the land's functions offers special opportunities to develop methods for the protection of the land and its functions. This information can be used to minimize potential environmental problems and consequences.

Planning that is motivated by the desire to conserve and protect valuable natural features, and by a belief that development can be located with less social and economic expense, must be based upon a knowledge of environmental characteristics and an understanding of environmental opportunities and constraints. Once the natural characteristics of the land are identified and understood, a clear planning technique/tool can be implemented to limit or permit future development based on what the land is capable of sustaining.

## **SERVICES AND FACILITIES EVALUATION**

Essential to the Growth Management Plan is an inventory and analysis of the level of services and facilities needed to serve both the rural and urban areas of the County. The demand for services and facilities is directly related to the existing and projected population to be served. In many cases, proposed private sector development must be accompanied with a commitment to develop the required infrastructure and services prior to the development occurring or being approved.

## **SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Analysis of socioeconomic, or economic and demographic characteristics, of an area are essential to serve as indicators for future land use demands. This analysis will provide an understanding of the character of the County, and its Communities, the recognition of the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy and the subsequent development of realistic projections and growth management.

## **EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY**

Land use is defined as the nature and distribution of human activity over the earth's surface, in this case, Teller County. During the summer of 1988 a comprehensive Land Use Inventory was conducted, as part of the Growth Management Plan development process. The purpose of the inventory was to assess and describe the spatial distribution of present land use activities. In 2019, we have experienced some growth in our intended growth centers, Woodland Park, Divide, Cripple Creek, and to some extent, Florissant. We have also seen an increase in Special Use Permits for activities on agricultural lands involving camps, retreats, lodges and other activities. In terms of Heavy Services or industrial activity in Teller County, very little has occurred other than that related to the CC&V Newmont Mine near Cripple Creek. In terms of our existing subdivisions, in the past thirty years many easily buildable lots have been developed and adjacent or adjoining lots purchased by residents to preserve open space. The few remaining large parcels of land in Teller County, [500- 2500 acres] are in use for agricultural purposes such as grazing or are as of this writing on the market.

Knowledge of existing land use and potential trends is essential in planning for future uses and evaluating their impact and appropriateness. An existing land use inventory is necessary for estimating needs for location and the amount of future development and public facility and service demands.

An inventory is important because future land use is greatly influenced by existing human needs and past actions. Individual land uses are interdependent. The consequences of the use of a particular parcel of land are not limited to that parcel; adjacent and even distant land may be affected as well.

## **INVENTORY INFORMATION SUMMARY**

The 2019 GMP along with the Regional Action Plans should routinely assess available land in their regions and insure the tenants of the GMP are being adhered to and an accurate assessment of the land inventory maintained. The Teller County Assessor maintains the land and parcel inventory data base and Teller County GIS products provided a graphic pictorial for our public and our local governments. It is vital that this inventory, by region, is updated during the periodic 5-year staff updates and the 12 year GMP major review to the GMP.

### **Forecasts and Projections**

#### **INTENT/INTRODUCTION**

It is important to note that population and development projections carry risks. There is a significant amount of uncertainty associated with any prediction of the future; since projections are based on past trends, which may or may not continue, the degree of uncertainty increases with the length of time into the future for which the projections are made.

Any prediction (in this case, regarding population and development) made for any county or community is based upon existing and past trends as perceived by the authors. It is subject to judgement, interpretation, and personal observation.

That said, the 1990 GMP used 1980 - 1987 data from the State of Colorado Demographic Office, and presented analysis and predictions for the future. Today, in 2019, we are able to use historical data from that same office, and review the nearly 30 years of actual data to see what actually occurred and whether that analysis and subsequent predictions were accurate. In the vast majority of cases, the predictions were extremely accurate and this data should be useful for our projections in the 2019 GMP.

The 2019 Growth Management Plan and this section used the State of Colorado Demography Office and Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) data bases which are current through 2017. The 2020 census will continue to inform this document for future updates and may or may not validate assumptions made since the previous 1990 Growth Management Plan.

## **POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR TELLER COUNTY**

### **Previous and Existing Population Trends.**

Since the 1970 Census, Teller County's population has increased substantially, growing from 3,316 in 1970 to 8,128 in 1980, to an estimated 11,479 in 1987 (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1970 and 1980; Colorado Division of Local Government, 1989). In 2017 the Colorado Division of Local Government listed Teller County as having a population of 24,625. Current estimates show 25,300 in 2019. Stated another way, in just under 50 years the population of

Teller County has grown seven times larger than it was in 1970. This kind of growth serves to underscore the necessity of sound growth management planning.

The 1960 Census indicated a County population at its historical lowest total, only 2,495 persons. The County's population peaked at around 30,000 persons during the major mining era at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, although there are reports of up to 160,000 transient people living in the County during the Gold Rush. It then continually decreased until after 1960. In 2017 there were 181 births in Teller County and 144 deaths, with a net migration into the county of 576 people that year. In the previous year, 2016, there were 191 births and 174 deaths with a net migration of 644 people. This trend has remained relatively constant in the past few years and is indicative of steady and deliberate growth *inside* of Teller County. That said, there are external influences and pressures on Teller County with regards to potential future growth that should also be considered.

It was assumed, for example, in the previous 1990 GMP that past erratic fluctuations of population, such as that caused by mining operations as part of the Gold Rush would not happen in the future in Teller County. In 2019 however, we must not only look internally to consider where growth may occur, but we must look externally for other factors that could influence growth in our County, in particular from the Front Range.

When we look at the Front Range we are presented with net migration in 2017 alone of 40,405 people, which includes 30,250 deaths and 55,914 births for a population of 4,694,304 million people. Clearly, the collective pressure, both from potential residents to possible commercial expansion, from the Front Range in the coming years will continue to impact Teller County, despite the seemingly controlled conditions inside of Teller County.

The previous 1990 GMP assumed that no dramatic deviation from our existing economy would occur to change the growth rate either in a positive or negative manner. An example of a dramatic deviation would be a major economic shift from a residential tax base to one supported by the manufacturing sector.

This assumption was further based upon the existing economy of Teller County continuing as primarily retail/service, tourist supported, and the mine staying open. The population of Teller County would steadily increase at a stable rate over the period of the plan. There would only be periodic, yearly, and seasonal fluctuations.

Recent growth was fastest from the seventies into the early eighties and then slowed until the introduction of gaming in the mid-1990s. Data from 1980 to 1985, which balanced the extremely rapid growth of the seventies and the reduced growth rates of the mid to late eighties, and, with the exception of the spike in population related to the introduction of gaming, Teller County data from the 2017 data base may be considered representative of reasonably expected future trends.

There are a number of growth areas that are noteworthy and may experience growth in the next 5-10 years.

The City of Woodland Park will continue to grow to a level supportable by its water augmentation plan and its ability to process waste produced as part of any future growth. Possible future expansion of the city limits is somewhat limited by geography, with the most probable expansion being to the west and to some extent to the north.

Cripple Creek and the immediate surrounding area may also experience some growth due to planned and proposed major casino expansion projects and the need for more service industry employees to support any expansion and the resultant expansion of residential development.

Divide, another growth area, may experience an increase in already planned residential development, the major limiting factor being the capacity of the Teller County Waste Water Treatment Facility and their current water augmentation plan.

Florissant upgraded its Water and Sanitation capability in the past 4 years and is currently only operating at 30% capacity, indicating that expansion, if desired, could be supported.

Finally, Victor has no major current plans for expansion, either commercial development or residential development, and is expected to grow at its historical rate.

In terms of commercial or residential growth in the rest of unincorporated Teller County, many of the easily buildable lots in our subdivisions have already been developed since the 1990 GMP, with some residents in those subdivisions purchasing adjacent and adjoining lots in order to vacate the lot lines and increase the open space around their homes. Vacant lots that do remain are either small, less than ½ acre, making the placement of a home, septic, leach field, and well challenging, or they consist of steep or rocky terrain that presents challenges to access and development without extreme cost. In terms of agricultural lands remaining, zoned A-1, there are a number of large A-1 tracts that have recently been placed on the market. In the southern 1/3 of the county, predominately consisting of mining claims, many of those have been purchased and are in use as residential parcels. Mining claims have presented numerous challenges in the past 30 years since the 1990 GMP in that their individual sale, has revealed problems with access, including trespass through Federal land and adjacent property. Teller County Land Use Regulations were updated to in part address the challenges of access in November 2018 and it is having a positive impact as of this writing.

### **Projecting Population Trends Methodology**

Analyzing and projecting population change over time includes understanding the two basic components: natural increase (births minus deaths), and migration.

Natural Population Increase:

Actual numbers of annual Teller County births and deaths are recorded by the Colorado Health Department and are furnished to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Birth and death rates were calculated through year 2017 for the entire population of Teller County. These rates, nationwide, tend to remain fairly constant, and do so in Teller County as well. Subtracting the annual birth rate from the annual death rate gives the annual rate of "natural increase."

#### In-Migration Population Increase:

Forecasts of migration are more problematic because migration does not necessarily vary strictly as a function of existing County population, as do birth and death rates. Additionally, a significant majority of those migrating to Teller County are from the Front Range population and many new residents are over the age of 50 upon arrival. In addition to a steady increase in our population, Teller County's population is also aging and may require more county or private sector services in the future. In the past decade we have seen this manifested in Teller County by an expansion of our major hospital, the development of two assisted living facilities, and additional funding for ambulance service in Teller County.

Migration slowed in the mid to late eighties and again in 2008/2009 during the economic downturn experienced in Colorado. Three recent economic forecasts — Leeds School of Business, Legislative Council Staff (LCS), and Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) — project Colorado's economy will continue to grow in 2019, but at a slower pace. They indicated that the risk of a recession is low, but if the forecasts are wrong, they're likely to be too optimistic. There are currently five Colorado economic trends that will drive our state's economy in 2019, and in turn may impact Teller County and its growth that should be monitored.

**Global Economy** - Colorado has had a very strong economy in recent years but we depend on other markets to buy our goods and services. Nationally, the current economic expansion is nearly a few months' shy of the longest in U.S. history. This expansion has been weaker than the one in the 1990s — the longest on record — and is showing the normal signs of a maturing expansion.

**US Economy** – The US economy is slowing. Rising interest rates and the potential of a recession in the not so distant future may also impact growth in Teller County

**Colorado's Labor Market** – Colorado, and by extension, Teller County, has had a historically tight labor market. Colorado's unemployment rate is among the lowest in the Nation. Elsewhere in Colorado, employers in search of people for construction, agriculture, leisure and hospitality, health care, and professional and business services industries report having a hard time finding enough skilled workers to grow their businesses. In Teller County, the problem may be magnified due to a shortage of housing that is attainable to this work force. This factor may also constrain future growth in Teller County.

**Population Growth in the Front Range** - Colorado's population grew by 1.4 percent in 2016 and 2017 but this growth has not been equally distributed throughout the state. Between 2010 and 2017, 95 percent of the population growth occurred along the Front Range with 64 percent being concentrated in the Denver Metro area. Over the same period, 21 counties, many of them

in the southeastern corner of Colorado, actually lost population. According to a recent report prepared by U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 10 of Colorado's 64 counties, all located along the Front Range, accounted for 85 percent of the state's economic activity.

**Colorado's Aging Population -** Although Colorado remains one of the youngest states in the nation with the sixth lowest percentage of people over 65 years old, rural counties ideal for retirement are aging faster as many of the baby boomers who moved here in the 1970s and 1980s are turning 65. This is what we are experiencing in Teller County with the average age of a new resident being 50. This will continue to place a demand on health care and other services in the years ahead that should be planned for. As an example in 1990 there were 902 people in Teller County over the age of 65. In 2019 there are 5,510 people in Teller County age 65 or older. It is projected that thirty years from now in 2050, there will be 7,260 people in Teller County over the age of 65.

### Teller County Population Projections

In the 1990 GMP two alternate projections were presented to illustrate a reasonable range of possibilities in terms of population growth. Changes in any of a variety of factors, however, could result in significant variations from the forecasts.

The projections from both sources (Pikes Peak Council of Governments and State Demographic Office) were relatively close to one another. Note in each of the projections as it compares to the mid-migration rate of an estimated 250 additional persons per year, there was generally less than 1/2 of one percent deviation between the two.

It was projected that by the year 2010, the expected duration of the previous GMP, a total population of 21,527 persons would reside in Teller County. That is a projected increase of 10,046 persons from the 1987 estimated population, or an 87.5 percent increase. The actual population of Teller County in 2010 was 23,309. This represents a projected average growth rate of 3.9 percent from 1987 to 2010.

### **POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR WOODLAND PARK AND PLANNING REGION**

Since the development of the initial 1990 Teller County GMP, the City of Woodland Park has developed its own Growth Management/Master Plan. It is planned for a revision in the near future [2020]. As the city's plan did not exist in 1990, a great deal of city and municipal detail was included in the Teller County Growth Management Plan. Much of that detail is now contained in the Woodland Park document and was deliberately not duplicated here.

The 2019 Teller County GMP has included some relevant portions of the 1990 document with regards to Woodland Park, however, which serve to show the level of growth experienced by the City as a predictive measure of what we can potentially expect in the next 30 years and any corresponding impact to the rest of the County.



### Previous and Existing Population Trends

Woodland Park experienced a tremendous amount of growth between 1970 and 1990. Based on the following data, it was determined that the city would continue to grow at a steady, but slower pace.

Prior to 1970 the population of Woodland Park had never exceeded 1,000 persons. The Census of 1900 indicated a population of only 269 persons. The City's population continued to decline until the 1930's and increased only slightly until the boom of the 1970's.

Since the 1970 Census, Woodland Park's population increased substantially, growing from 1,022 in 1970, to 2,634 in 1980, to an estimated 4,095 [the actual number reached being 4506] in 1987 (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1970 and 1980; Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 1989). This was an increase of approximately 301 percent.

In 2000 the population grew to 6,853 and in 2010 its population grew again to 7,229. In 2019, using the latest data from the State Demographic Office [2017] the population exceeds 8,228. Clearly, Woodland Park is a growth area and barring any other unforeseen change, this growth will continue. The past few years have seen increases in multi-family housing and upgrades to the city's water treatment plant as part of this trend. The potential for additional annexation around the city exists if this growth continues to accommodate housing and those services and industries that support an increased population.

Based on this data, it is anticipated that the previous erratic fluctuations of population will not happen in the near future. Unless a dramatic deviation of our existing economy would occur, the population will steadily increase at a stable and manageable rate. If this holds to be true, any corresponding impact to unincorporated Teller County as a result of growth in the city of Woodland Park should be predictable and manageable and would support deliberate, planned growth. The Planning Departments of both the City and the County are referral agencies to proposed development in both jurisdictions which adds a level of predictability and assists with deliberate growth.

The 1990 GMP compared 1980 census data and the population estimates and projections for 1988 and 1993, respectively, which showed and predicted that the age group 15 years and younger would decrease from 27.3 percent in 1980 to 20.4 percent in 1988 and in 1993 to 19.3 percent. Aggregating the elder age group 65+ and 75+ for Woodland Park showed an increase from 6.6 percent in 1980 to 13.5 percent in 1993. In 2019 there are 5,510 people in Teller County age 65 or older. It is projected that thirty years from now in 2050, there will be 7,260 people in Teller County over the age of 65. Woodland Park provides services and conveniences not currently available in unincorporated Teller County which makes it attractive to an older demographic. It is expected that the trends predicted in the previous GMP and shown in current statistics for Teller County as a whole will continue with an increase of 65+ residents.

## **DEVELOPMENT PROJECTIONS FOR TELLER COUNTY HOUSING.**

### Teller County.

In 1990 projections for future housing needs were based on analyzing the projected population increase and the number of residential units needed to accommodate that increase. In the intervening years a number of multi-family housing projects have been constructed, predominately in the City of Woodland Park. This trend may continue but is predominately constrained to our growth areas in that they are the only places that have central water supply and wastewater treatment facilities. To an extent, any additional growth in our growth areas (Woodland Park, Divide, Florissant and Cripple Creek) are dependent on an adequate water supply and wastewater treatment facilities that can accommodate growth. This method of projection remains valid in that it still provides some measure of predictability in terms of growth.

## **RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.**

### Teller County.

In the 1990 GMP projections for future residential development needs were made based on analyzing the projected number of residential units needed to accommodate the projected population increase and the number of existing subdivided lots available for possible residential development.

In 2017 the State of Colorado Demographic Office listed Unincorporated Teller County as having a total of 8,741 housing units with 2,290 vacant housing units or a 26.2% vacancy. Interestingly, in 1990 at the time of the original GMP there were 2,845 vacant housing units. This is an indicator that in 30 years since the 1990 GMP, Teller County has maintained between a 20 and 27 percent housing vacancy. Therefore, it may be surmised that there is not a housing shortage in Teller County, but rather, depending on the demographic seeking to purchase a home, there may be a shortage of affordable housing in Teller County. This is not unique to Teller County and the same can be said for our adjacent counties. The ability of county governments to affect the affordability of housing is extremely limited and pricing is more a function of the market place and economic conditions.

In terms of undeveloped lots, parcels, tracts, and mining claims in Teller County that could be used for residential purposes, if existing rates of *internal* population growth and development continue, the number of subdivided lots now available will be sufficient to meet the demand for the foreseeable future.

This forecast does not, however, consider the many desirable characteristics a future home owner may want such as large lot size, certain views, orientation, open space, and privacy. It can be assumed that approximately 10 percent of all the remaining lots may not fall into the "desirable" category and may never be developed.

It can also be assumed that approximately an additional 10 percent of all the remaining lots may be held by adjacent lot owners who may never desire to develop them but instead, to preserve them. [Teller County has experienced a surge in lot line vacations in our subdivisions in the past 5 years]

Approximately an additional 5 percent may be deducted due to characteristics such as: flood plains, steep slopes, wildfire hazards, lack of suitable water, and/or other factors that may make the lot "unbuildable". In some cases, an unbuildable lot can be developed but at great cost making in economically unfeasible to develop the lot when alternatives exist.

Therefore, by subtracting the potentially "unbuildable" lots (25% of the total) from the estimated total number of unbuilt residential subdivision lots, it is estimated that 7,714 lots may be available to meet the expected future demand. Approximately 2,100 to 3,200 more lots in existing subdivisions are available than what is expected to be needed. This number does not take into account any current large, undeveloped tracts that may in the future be purchased and intended for subdivision and development. If, the percentage of unbuildable lots is estimated to be 50% percent of the estimated total number of residential subdivision lots, then 5,145 lots still may be available, again meeting the projected demand.

This analysis does not include the incorporated cities of Cripple Creek, Victor, and Woodland Park. The total number of available lots would certainly increase if the total number of unbuilt developable city lots could be factored into the projection. Cripple Creek and Woodland Park have developed their own Master Plans and data pertaining to the development of property within their jurisdictions is available in those plans.

### **INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, GOVERNMENTAL, TRANSPORTATION, RECREATIONAL, MINERAL EXTRACTION AND UTILITIES DEVELOPMENT.**

Projections to determine the amount of land needed to adequately provide for industrial, commercial, governmental, transportation, recreational, mineral extraction and utility development, can be formulated by preparing a detailed study. Teller County conducted this study which resulted in the June 2002 Teller County Heavy Services Action Plan. This Heavy Services Action Plan was a systematic study of issues associated with the potential development of industrial land in Teller County for 'heavy services' uses such as waste transfer facilities, recycling centers, bulk fuel sales, and utility service centers etc. The study was commissioned to help the county identify and evaluate potential sites that may be suitable for light industrial development. The study noted that, "*historically, there has not been significant demand for industrial land in Teller County and, therefore, not much land zoned for this purpose.*"

The challenge with regards to industrial development in Teller County is to find suitable sites that do not detract from the areas quality of life. The study indicated that, "*heavy service uses are perceived as objectionable – as they tend to produce a certain level of noise, odor, dust and traffic.*" That said, the study did develop a Heavy Services Action Plan (HSAP) that in the main, depicted potential sites in and around our identified growth areas (cities and towns in

Teller County). In all, 46 potential sites, totaling 11, 412 acres were evaluated for suitability in the HSAP Plan.

In 2002 when this plan was developed it was noted that Teller County was *“in transition from a mostly rural region to its probable future as a developed region combining both rural and suburban development”* It was projected to continue to grow at a rate of 3% per year for the foreseeable future [the current data indicates that in general it has]. It was also postulated that this development would increase the demand for heavy services. In 2019 however, nearly all of the potential sites indicated as suitable for the possible development of heavy services remain vacant or as they were in 2002. There is, for example, a solitary parcel south of the city of Victor that is zoned M-1 for heavy manufacturing. It remains vacant.

It is surmised that in addition to the detractors that accompany heavy services industry mentioned in the study and above, that the lack of infrastructure including commercial solid waste management, waste water management, and the availability of water in general, have impacted unincorporated Teller County in this area.

The HSAP study and plan provided Teller County a conceptual framework and knowledge base which was designed as a *“first step in a lengthy process to reach a working consensus on the heavy services question... to assist the County and other participants to resolve the often emotional issues that accompany growth and potentially objectionable land uses...”*

In the nearly 18 years since this study was commissioned and the plan presented, very little growth in terms of industrial development in unincorporated Teller County has occurred. As more and more previously undeveloped land has been developed for residential use in that time, the prediction of Teller County’s residential development has come to fruition. The development with regards to heavy industry in Teller County has not been realized. Waste and recycling, for example, are simply transferred to the Front Range where an industrial base already exists.

It may be reasonable to assume that sometime in the next 30 years, it may be more economically feasible for some heavy industry to relocate to Teller County and the HSAP may be of use at that time, or provide a base to update prior to development decisions being made. For the foreseeable future, there are no indicators that heavy industry other than the industrial mine near Cripple Creek, will be developed in Teller County.

### **Recreational Opportunities**

Teller County is unique in that over 50% of the land inside of Teller County is public land belonging to a host of entities ranging from the USFS (Pike National Forest), the BLM, Colorado Parks and Wildlife Division, National Monument and State Lands among others. While some Teller County owned land exists (fair grounds and Catamount area open space), Teller County Government is not currently actively pursuing additional land.

There have been some recent examples of privately held land in Teller County being given to other entities, most recently 40 acres inside of the Dome Rock Wildlife Refuge and the addition of 180 acres to the Florissant National Fossil Beds monument. In 1997 Teller County developed its Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan as part of the Teller County Master Plan, of which this Growth Management Plan is a part. In 1997 Teller County developed a “*Long Range Trails Concept Plan*” which sought to use the long range population expansion numbers in order to connect population centers in Teller County with a system of foot trails to include the Ute Pass Corridor Trails System and the American Discovery Trails System.

Within this framework, capital improvement projects were identified and prioritized into three general groups, the hope being that eventually a system of trails within Teller County would connect with the Ute Pass Corridor and American Discovery Trail systems. As of 2019 very little has been accomplished as envisioned in the plan, due in large part to constrained budgets and the abundant availability of hiking trails and outdoor experiences in the Pike National Forest and BLM lands inside of Teller County. Recently, the Ring the Peak Trails initiative has been presented and is in discussion with key stake holders.

In 2019 Teller County government continues to endorse the relevant policies of the 1997 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan. The plan clearly indicates the importance that our citizens place upon open space, agricultural land preservation and the preservation of recreation in Teller County. In future development proposals that may come to Teller County decision makers, careful consideration must be taken to any resultant reduction of, or impact to our rural lands. The 1997 Plan reminds us in 2019 that:

*“The opportunity to protect open areas within Teller County remains high, which in turn will uphold the value of real estate, preserve wildlife habitat, protect critical watersheds, and safeguard a rich ranching culture. Local governments have a fundamental interest in protecting these highly valued resources, for to do otherwise would put both the economy and the quality of life at risk”*

## **Transportation**

The 1990 GMP envisioned greater development of public transportation in Teller County than has been realized in 2019. For example, airports and the resurgence of a railway system connecting our outlying cities, towns and communities. Teller County remains for the most part a rural county with the majority of its residents living in subdivisions in unincorporated Teller County or in our communities and cities. This dispersion makes the use of a rail system impractical and there are no plans to develop one in the near future. The major communities and cities do have a limited taxi service and our communities have some limited internal transportation, to include those provided by volunteer organizations. Cripple Creek has a system of buses that travels to and from Colorado Springs to support its gaming operations.

In terms of an Airport, there are no current plans for one for the immediate future, nor is there any land currently zoned for an airport in Teller County. The close proximity of the Colorado Springs Airport makes its use convenient to Teller County residents.

As our population ages and our numbers increase, non-profit organizations such as the Senior Coalition in Woodland Park and others that provide transportation services to this demographic, may be expanded but there are currently no Teller County plans to provide these services.

### **Mineral Extraction**

With the 2012 Mine Life Extension request, the Newmont Corporation's CC&V Gold Mine near Cripple Creek will continue to extract Gold until 2025. Gold price and the economy will drive any decision beyond that date which, if requested, will be a public process involving State and local Teller County Government.

In the past 10 years Teller County has seen a resurgence of private party mineral extraction primarily on unpatented mining claims in the Pike National Forest for precious gems. These requests are considered by local government in a public process, along with approvals being required from State and Federal agencies.

### **Utilities Development**

There have been a number of improvements in this area in Teller County since the 1990 GMP. Only rudimentary and limited Cell phones and broad band capability existed in 1990.

In the area of telecommunications, including cell phone service and broad band, there have been technological changes since 1990 and as a resultant, communications improvements in Teller County. With regards to cell phones and broadband, Teller County has a number of existing towers on high prominent terrain throughout the county. The towers are located on private land and on Federal land and were approved using variance, conditional use permit, or location and extent public hearings. In the past 5 years the vast majority of the antenna equipment on these existing towers has been upgraded multiple times in order to improve cell phone or broad band service. Teller County has developed an expedient administrative review process for these upgrades which expedites the approval process while still protecting property owners. Additionally, as our population increases and the demand for telecommunications increases, we have maintained a stringent co-location policy in order to minimize the number of towers in Teller County while still providing these industries with viable options and our residents with high quality service.

Additionally, there are a number of telecommunications companies operating in Teller County that have provided fiber optic underground capability using public Rights of Way routes.

In terms of water, Teller County is a critical watershed for the Front Range. Teller County's larger cities and communities have municipal water supply and waste water treatment facilities while much of unincorporated Teller County uses Onsite Waste Water Treatment Systems (Septic tanks), and State permitted wells. There are a number of water districts in unincorporated Teller County that support a limited number of subdivision residential development as well. In recent years, there has been an increase in nitrate and nitrite levels in

some of our subdivisions which resulted in private sector upgrades of water facilities in those neighborhoods. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) routinely informs both local county government and property owners when any water standard has been exceeded. As the population of Teller County increases special attention should be paid on current community water challenges and well as any proposed future development which will consume water.

### **Gas and Electricity**

Teller County's cities and communities are supplied by natural gas and there are multiple electricity carriers available. In rural unincorporated Teller County, propane gas is used and electricity is still not available to remote areas. This is due in large part to the large percentage of public land in Teller County and the cost of above or underground facilities. Generally, electricity is not developed to some parcels until a residence desired.

## **ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**

The economic prediction of any community is based upon existing and past trends. It is impacted by, and subject to judgement, interpretation, and personal observation.

In the next thirty years as opportunities for growth in Teller County are presented, we will continue to maintain our position on the proper role of government and that of private industry in any development proposal. The development of land should respect personal freedom and rights, while balancing the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens of Teller County. *It is the role of industry and not county government to finance commercial development.*

This plan supports appropriate economic development activities which will improve and enhance the local economy while seeking to preserve Teller County's unique rural lifestyle, western heritage, culture, and natural environment.

#### Primary Assumption:

That the existing economic trends of Teller County will continue into the perceivable future.

#### Observations:

The economy of the County can be characterized as primarily "service-retail based". Retail and service establishments provide necessary goods and services to the resident and the tourist. However, many of these retail and service businesses rely substantially on seasonal tourism demand. Tourism is subject to and strongly influenced by the overall trends of the national economy.

The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) base industry analysis for Teller County in 2017 indicated the following with regards to Teller County's economy:

28.63 % tourism income (includes gaming)  
 14.3 % retiree income  
 10.51 % National Services or Regional Center income  
 7.01 % Households with public assistance income (excluding retirees.)  
 6.56 % Education and Health Services  
 6.28 % Mining  
 2.2 % Government  
 1.66 % Agricultural Business income

These percentages have remained relatively constant and are predicted to do so in the foreseeable future. This clearly indicates that tourism remains our number #1 economic resource by a factor of two. It can therefore be surmised that the retention of those qualities in Teller County that attract tourists should be maintained. [open space, recreational opportunities, gaming etc.]. Secondly, while our population is aging which may require additional services for this demographic in the future, the majority of that population will have retirement income which will continue to contribute to our economy. Future development proposals should also be viewed through the economic benefit to Teller County by decision makers.

The previous 1990 GMP recognized that a substantial amount of resident dollars for retail goods and services continue to "leak" down Ute Pass to El Paso County establishments. County businesses must take it upon themselves, working with their business oriented organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, to arrest this trend and stop the flow. In 2019, Teller County has considerable more retail and service establishments than it did in 1990 and an increased population. Many of our residents no longer need to travel to the Front Range for goods and services that are now readily available here at equitable cost, especially when the costs of fuel and time are factored in.

Mining has continued to provide a role in the County's economy. It is anticipated that mining will continue to be a factor in the Teller County economy. Mining has had a significant role in the economy and social perception of the County in the past.

It is assumed that the majority of employment opportunities for Teller County residents will continue to be provided in El Paso County. Teller County and its Communities have recognized this important aspect of our economy. An unfortunate downside of this has been a dramatic increase in traffic on US HWY 24. This problem will get worse in the future as our population increases and serious consideration should be examined in the future for alternatives.

Colorado, and specifically Teller County, will continue to be a place where people will want to live. Teller County and its Communities can continue to provide either a mountain/western small town atmosphere or mountain/country living opportunities in a naturally beautiful Rocky Mountain setting that is in proximity to the metropolitan area of Colorado Springs and Colorado's Front Range urbanized area.



## **GROWTH ALTERNATIVES INTENT**

### **INTENT/INTRODUCTION**

The evaluation of alternative Growth Management scenarios provides a conceptual framework for visualizing the future use of land and resources. Strategies for planning become apparent in terms of possible development patterns, conservation efforts, corresponding land consumption requirements, anticipation of the services and facilities needed to accommodate development, identification of other social, environmental, economic, political, and governmental impacts.

Three possible general Growth Management alternatives were reviewed by Teller County, and its Communities, in regard to future development. Each alternative has identifiable costs, benefits, advantages, and disadvantages associated with it:

- 1.) Unlimited Growth
- 2.) No Growth
- 3.) Managed Growth.

The comparison provides an opportunity to discover what advantages and disadvantages one strategy may have over another.

A primary focus of this evaluation and comparison is an examination of the interrelationship of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, agricultural, and mineral extraction land uses.

The alternatives should also be examined to determine how effectively each could achieve the County's and Communities' goals, and the purposes and objectives of this plan.

A majority of the evaluations are, by their very nature and the level of research, subjective and intuitive, such as, the value of aesthetics or view, the "quality of life".

Effectively evaluating these growth management alternatives should involve a basic assumption: The population of Teller County and its Communities will increase over time as the population of the front range does. Land in Teller County is a finite resources and Teller County's ability to provide services is also limited.

### **DESCRIPTION OF GROWTH MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES**

The selection of a specific County wide growth alternative policy will not preempt or prevent an individual planning region from adopting its own Growth Management Alternative. [Woodland Park, Divide, Cripple Creek, Florissant, Victor, or the Four Mile Area].

## **Unlimited Growth**

The unlimited growth alternative represents a model of growth and development management that would offer no restraints upon land use. It provides for the greatest exercise of personal individual property rights and calls for the complete removal of all local governmental regulations regarding the use of land. It allows the individual landowner to determine the use and disposition of his property. This type of development is normally driven by market conditions.

It provides for the least compact arrangement of developed land use and could lead to development to spread over a wide area of the County (sprawl). It also provides the lowest level of predictability for adjacent and adjoining property owners as well as Teller County Government charged with providing an appropriate level of service to our communities and residents. Unlimited growth could also potentially greatly impact adjacent property values and virtually eliminate commercial agricultural use of Teller County's remaining available agricultural land.

The developer would have a land development market unaffected by local government regulation (or ability to adjust, affect, or manage) - this may present both positive and negative consequences. The amount of time and funds saved by not following required review processes may be a benefit and the housing market could offer a wider selection of homes. There may be a downside to "letting market forces work" unmanaged by local authorities. However, in the future state and federal mandates may require corrective action at the taxpayer's expense. The cost of some types of land owner's insurance may be increased and/or become unavailable (flood, fire, other disasters). No county oversight or regulation in terms of managing growth in this model could lead to unintended consequences such as the destruction of our watershed, our rural environment, and the loss of both tourism and agricultural socio-economic financial and lifestyle impacts to Teller County.

The unlimited growth model has the potential to radically alter the character of the County. This model could potentially create widely disbursed development throughout the currently undeveloped areas of unincorporated Teller County. The County could become saturated with rural subdivisions, each at different levels of occupation, and all demanding services and facilities from Teller County Government. Teller County would become more municipal in nature, doubling or tripling its population and essentially become a 'bedroom county' for the Front Range. Unresolved traffic challenges today would only get worse, and without the corresponding development of central water and sewer facilities, water quality in Teller County will degrade.

The hidden cost of the unlimited growth model is that while it will benefit the developers and will result in an increase in housing in the short term, its corresponding immediate impact will be a sharp increase in county taxes. Increases in services, infrastructure and road maintenance will be necessary and funding will come from the residents of the county in the form of taxes. The unlimited growth alternative is also the least protective of personal community property rights, not only allowing extensive sprawl, but possibly establishment of

incompatible land uses and thus, an increase in complaints and nuisances. Additionally, after this dispersed development is realized, the citizens in those communities will begin to call for commercial goods and services closer to home. This could lead to extensive "strip" and "spot" development, or 'Spot Zoning' to meet the needs of these residents. [ Spot Zoning is illegal in Colorado]

Without review and approvals of proposed development, to include input from the USFS and BLM who currently have oversight of Federal lands inside of Teller County, areas not suited for growth may not be identified and environmental degradation could occur. This degradation could include the loss of wildlife, wildlife habitat, water impacts, open space loss, impacts to sensitive fringe protection areas and environmentally sensitive areas. Lack of oversight could also lead to development at or near flood plain areas, steep and unstable slopes, and property with unsuitable soil characteristics.

A major impact of unlimited and privatized growth with no county oversight would be the loss of deliberate planning in terms of Teller County Government's ability to plan and budget for necessary and required governmental services and facilities from limited funds with no predictably for funding streams and budgets. The County and its Communities would continue to "react" to growth problems and would not be a position to be "pro-active."

Increases in traffic on the County's and Communities' road and street systems (without controls placed upon proximity to already developed areas) or road adequacy studies would have negative consequences such as a sharp increase in road maintenance costs which could lead to a lower level of service to other established communities.

While the tax base would most likely be broadened, the exponential corresponding expectation of a level of services provided by Teller County would also place additional demands on the County. Centralized sewage treatment and the water infrastructure, road maintenance and other essential county services would need to be increased. Police, fire protection and ambulance services would all be strained, requiring a corresponding increase in their budgets to meet the increased demand. This in turn would potentially lead to increases in the mill levy rate and in taxes.

### **No Growth**

The no growth alternative represents a model of growth and development management that would offer maximum restraints upon land use with an emphasis on conservation and preserving Teller County's agricultural lands. It provides for the greatest restriction upon personal individual property rights and calls for the development of restrictive local governmental regulations regarding the use of land. It does not allow the individual landowner complete determination over the use and disposition of his property. This alternative may be considered unlawful by some residents who might consider it to be a "taking" of persons' private property rights.

The no growth alternative provides for the most compact arrangement of developed land use and would restrict growth to areas of the County already developed or to an "in-fill" strategy, thus precluding options for expansion.

The developer's market would be impacted by local government's previous approvals; this may present negative consequences. The housing market could only offer a limited selection of residential opportunities due to higher land or building costs or caps on development, even in growth areas, due to limitations caused by water or sanitation disposal.

This alternative could also alter the character of the County. The no growth model could stifle innovation and hinder modernization efforts as well. Technological advances such as broadband and other services designed to improve quality of life would have little ability to expand or impact a wider number of Teller County residents under this scenario.

The potential would exist for concentrated development only in existing areas using existing or proposed services and facilities and not allowing extensive sprawl.

While the no growth model may provide for the protection of personal property rights in some cases, in particular agricultural land and commercial agricultural activity, overtime as new technologies become standard throughout other counties, the lack of these amenities in Teller County could also have a corresponding negative impact.

Under this model, undeveloped areas in unincorporated Teller County suitable for growth and potential development could not be used. Already developed areas may see increased use and development, such as lesser desirable undeveloped lots inside of existing subdivisions. An example would be where antiquated subdivisions, those using septic tanks and wells to serve very small lots (1/4 acre or less), could see an increase in density to an unhealthy, or even dangerous level.

One of the major impacts of the no growth alternative would be continued provision of required governmental services and facilities from limited funds. The County and its Communities would continue to "react" to growth problems and would not be in a position to be "pro-active." Requests for variances and exceptions would increase, thus placing the regulatory burden on the land owner.

Over time, a no growth model would probably result in a tax base that would be insufficient to cover the ever rising costs of providing the appropriate level of County Government services. As current unincorporated Teller County infrastructure ages, the costs of replacing or repairing those systems would have to be considered as well in a no growth model. Even in a no growth model, front range traffic increases and the corresponding impact to our roads and communities would need to be considered. So even in the no growth model, the County would be forced to investigate methods of increasing individual taxes to provide for maintaining existing service levels.

## **Managed Growth**

The managed growth alternative represents a model of growth and development that attempts to strike a balance between unlimited growth and no growth. It provides for and recognizes individual property rights as well as providing for community good by providing a more stable and predictable budgetary model for Teller County Government. Predictable and managed growth will allow Teller County Government to provide essential services to its residents. It maintains reasonable county land use and building, insuring minimum standards are met and in compliance with any and all state and federal regulations. Managed growth allows property owners, the communities or regions they live in and Teller County to collaboratively work together, to determine the best use and disposition of property.

The underlying assumption of the managed growth alternative is the recognition that land in Teller County is a finite resource. As the population of the front range continues to grow, the available land in Teller County will come under more pressure for development. Managed growth at the county level and direct involvement from our planning regions will insure that development is deliberate and not haphazard. Development, as well as protection and preservation of land in unincorporated Teller County are both part of managed growth.

Managed Growth in Teller County is currently focused on our cities and communities, many of whom have a central water and sewage disposal system. Current subdivision development continues to occur inside of existing subdivisions.

Current developers must comply with county government regulations and procedures as they do elsewhere, insuring that additional burdens are not placed on the taxpayer as the result of their development. Reasonable regulations will offer predictable outcomes for many diverse projects which can be assessed using standards based evaluation criteria.

Under the managed growth alternative, Teller County government will be able to assess growth and capture that growth in its strategic plan so that budgeting can occur in a logical and sequenced manner.

This model maintains the character of the County while at the same time allows for new and innovative development while allowing county government to insure adequate funding for essential services is available. Managed Growth, using our established growth areas, is also evident in in-fill development using existing or proposed services and facilities, providing for new development in appropriate areas, and not allowing extensive sprawl.

The managed growth alternative balances the protection of personal property rights with the greater community good. It decreases the possibility of the creation of incompatible land uses as development is only targeted to occur in appropriate area. Managed growth will reduce conflict.

Areas suitable for growth and development would be used appropriately. The chances of environmental degradation would decrease due to thoughtful and conscientious planning and review processes. Circumstances of location and characteristics of the site would be brought to

bear upon all development. This includes input from planning regions, adjacent and adjoining property owners, and members of the public through a public process.

One of the major benefits of the managed growth alternative would be the provision of required governmental services and facilities in a timed, staged, and efficient manner. The County and its Communities would be in a position to be "pro-active" based upon an approved and adopted standards based plan for development.

The tax base would most likely continue to increase at predictable levels, hence the standard level of service would be maintained or improved for existing facilities and services and traffic on the County's and Communities' existing road and street systems would not strain maintenance costs. The costs of new sewer and water extensions, and other services would be provided for by the developer as orderly development occurs. This model provides a higher level of predictability in the levels of county provided services.

**SELECTION OF THE BEST GROWTH MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE FOR UNINCORPORATED TELLER COUNTY AND ITS COMMUNITIES – MANAGED GROWTH**

The selected Growth Management Alternative for unincorporated Teller County and its Communities is the **Managed Growth Strategy**.

The Managed Growth Strategy provides Teller County government and its leadership the ability to budget and be predictable in its provision of providing essential services to the residents of Teller County. Additionally, it provides a high level of standardization in terms of process expectation to developers and expectation management for our residents.

The positive benefits of the Managed Growth Strategy as opposed to unlimited growth or no growth include:

- That individual property rights will be maintained
- That community property rights will be greatly improved.
- That the quality of life may be enhanced.
- That reasonable land use and other regulations have been created and implemented. When necessary, those regulations can be amended [such as with camping and access regulations]
- That land use patterns and locations will be predicable and planned, leading to a more efficient use of resources and budgets
- That housing availability and types would exist under market conditions.
- That land speculation would be moderated due to predicable growth patterns.
- That the character of the County would be maintained
- That services and facilities demands will be timed, phased and budgeted for in an efficient manner.
- That land development would occur in a deliberate manner.
- That funding for new services and facilities are the responsibility of the developer. Existing services and facilities will be maintained based upon a predicable funding sources.
- That pro-active methods will be used in addressing growth issues.
- That the tax base will be improved and grow at predicable levels.

- That in-fill will be encouraged inside of growth areas.
- That stability, predictability, and defined expectations for our residents may be achieved with long term plans.
- That long term stability will enhance property values.
- That appropriate development quality standards will be determined by development type.
- That continued citizen involvement in various public processes will continue to be critical to assure the success of managed growth
- That the County continues to attract economic development opportunities due to its predicable growth patterns.
- That the accountability of elected and appointed officials is built into this process.
- That environmental quality will be maintained or improved based upon sound protection policies and required mitigation measures.

### **IDENTIFICATION OF PLANNING REGIONS**

Teller County does not have a single city or community that clearly represents the central focus of the County. Cripple Creek is the seat County government, Woodland Park has the largest population, and Divide is the most centrally located community. Cripple Creek, Victor, and Woodland Park are the only incorporated cities, while Divide, Four Mile, and Florissant are unincorporated places, recognized by the citizens of the County and this planning effort as significant "Communities."

No community or city is identified as the social, political, or economic "hub" of the County. The population of Woodland Park was estimated to be near 8000 in 2019 by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. This is far short of the Bureau of Census' definition of an urbanized area (50,000 persons or more).

Therefore, Teller County's Growth Management Strategy does not encourage the centralization of a major "urban" core, but the identification of six planning regions which reflect the values and the sense of community for each recognized city, town, Community, place or area. The Planning Regions are:

- 1.) Cripple Creek \*
- 2.) Divide
- 3.) Four Mile Area
- 4.) Florissant
- 5.) Victor \*
- 6.) Woodland Park.

\* Note that Cripple Creek and Victor comprise the current SE Teller Regional Plan



## **GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PLANNING REGIONS WITHIN TELLER COUNTY**

Unincorporated Teller County government believes that Managed Growth is the most appropriate path for the overall county at this time. It allows for the greatest amount of flexibility to the planning regions and our communities.

As such, we are providing a policy level framework for growth in Teller County as a foundation or cornerstone.

This section is included within the plan to afford Teller County, and its Communities, the opportunity to address specific growth management related issues not addressed by any other section of the plan which will provide the greatest amount of flexibility to the geographic planning regions, urban service areas, and functional planning areas. It is the intent of the Board of County Commissioners that the growth management for these regions remains nested in the overall managed growth model while allowing for a degree of flexibility for the regions

The reader and user of this plan is encouraged to reference the Introduction and Administrative sections of this plan in order to acquaint oneself with the foundations and primary assumptions of the selected strategy.

The term "Growth Management" includes any conscious decision to accommodate or restrain development in any geographic area and the use of the terms 'growth area' and conservation area.

The County, and its Communities, will make an open effort to influence private development decisions by incorporating and adhering to a Growth Management Strategy.

The use of the strategy is the recognition that planning and implementation must be coordinated if critical challenges facing the County are to be solved. Both the challenges and their solutions must be viewed as a whole, bearing in mind those unique to each region. Although the needs of each geographic region will be considered, caution must be used in that many growth decisions in one area will have a corresponding impact in another region, traffic being a prime example.

The 2019 Growth Management Plan (GMP) continues to incorporate the Regional Action Plans which developed specific policy statements and implementation strategies.

The 2019 GMP continues to ensure timeliness, quality, quantity, type, location, sequence, cost effectiveness and efficiency of land use and resources. This system allows County opportunities and challenges to be addressed comprehensively in planning for future growth and conservation, and understanding the interrelationships between, and implications of, varying policies, goals and implementation methods.

This legal and planning policy framework for growth management is primarily based upon the delineation of functional and geographically identifiable "functional planning areas." This delineation is integral to a rational planning process and is fundamental to the identification of appropriate implementation methods or tools for any geographic location.

The recognition of the functional planning areas allows the County to describe goals and objectives for each unique area and to selectively evaluate growth trends for each area. Therefore, the goals and implementation methods that would be competing or conflicting when applied uniformly, can be harmonized when viewed selectively by area and/or region. Importantly, residents of these planning regions will have a continuing opportunity to participate in planned or potential growth in their regions as early as possible in the process.

The use of functional planning areas allows the County, and its Communities, to accommodate their fair share of county growth in an efficient and equitable way. Each planning region will potentially be presented its share of growth without altering its individual character and ability to achieve and maintain its community goals - primarily the prevention of the sprawl of development without first having the ability to provide adequate public facilities and services. Secondly, it will help insure that each regions unique sense of community is preserved.

The 2019 GMP retains each region and the six (6) functional planning areas, three remain classified as growth areas and three remain limited growth areas:

#### Growth Areas:

- 1.) Community centers and surrounding mixed land use activity areas.
- 2.) Older established neighborhoods, existing, and/or approved activity areas
- 3.) Potential development activity areas

#### Limited Growth Areas:

- 4.) Fringe protection areas
- 5.) Resource, environmentally sensitive / significant protection areas
- 6.) Rural life-style protection areas.

For 2019, within each Planning Region, Urban Service Areas have been identified, many by unique existing and developed city master plans. Urban Service Areas are areas in which

Communities or other entities can and/or are willing to extend serviced and facilities for streets, water and sewer. The extensions may be made by Communities of their own accord, or by developers, or by the residents of a specific area or district.

In conclusion, the 2019 GMP continues to use functional planning areas and regions, which is based on an assumption and Board of County Commissioner policy intent that each of these areas will have a degree of autonomy while also accepting a fair share of growth in the coming years. It continues to assist the County to achieve its goals within a rational planning framework.

The 2019 GMP will continue to allow for a high degree of sensitivity to comprehensive planning by distinguishing between functional planning regions and areas, and the various governments involved in the development of the Plan and implementation of the strategy. Each of these "linkages" is of critical importance to the design of the County's GMP since each one improves the consistency of all actions affecting the growth and development of Teller County.

### **INTENT ON THE USE OF THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Upon adoption of the 2019 Growth Management Plan (GMP), it shall be the intent of the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) that Teller County government staff, elected officials and all decision making boards, to include the BOCC, incorporate and consider the Plan's goals, objectives, and policy statements into all land use and development reviews and decision-making processes. Including but not limited to, requests for rezoning, conditional and special use permits, annexations, capital improvements, facilities and other similar issues or requests shall be reviewed for compliance with the provisions of the 2019 GMP.

The continued inclusion of planning regions, urban service areas, and functional planning areas in the 2019 GMP, and the input from residents who live in them, remains a critical component of our decision making process in unincorporated Teller County.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The intent of goals and objectives for this chapter is to assist Teller County decision making bodies, Teller County communities and residents potentially impacted by proposed growth or change, to use goals and objective in order to review potential growth objectively.

Goals and Objectives will assist decision making bodies and the BOCC as a land use development and conservation decision-making guide. Additionally, if properly developed, they will support and assist with both County level as well as Regional and Community decisions regarding coordinated, sequenced, and timely growth.

## **GOALS**

As specifically authorized in Colorado Revised Statute Chapter 29.20.101 *et. seq.*, the County, and Communities, may continue to use the authority granted to local governments to plan and regulate the use of land as outlined in the 2019 GMP. Teller County and its Communities shall use these statutory authorities to meet the following specific goals:

- 1.) Provide for planned and orderly use of the land and the environment in a manner consistent with constitutional rights, respecting the rights of individual property owners;
- 2.) Regulate the use of land on the basis of the impacts on the County, its Communities, and adjacent and adjoining property owners.
- 3.) Insure that development is phased, only moving forward when adequate services and facilities exist;
- 4.) Carefully consider any activity or proposed development which may result in significant changes in population density and its corresponding potential impact to the provision of essential county government provided services;
- 5.) Regulate and monitor development and activities in hazardous areas;
- 6.) Protect lands from activities which would cause immediate or foreseeable material danger to significant wildlife habitat and would endanger wildlife species;
- 7.) Preserve areas of historical and archaeological significance;
- 8.) Continue the necessary intergovernmental cooperation required for planning and regulating the use of land [BLM, USFS and other landowners];

## **OBJECTIVES**

In order to continue to achieve the County's and Communities' goals for the 2019 Growth Management Plan (GMP), this plan shall prescribe reasonable and achievable objectives.

The objectives of the Growth Management Strategy are designed to influence one or more of these characteristics or aspects of land use including: the quantity of development, the type of development, the economic and environmental costs of growth, the location of development, the timing or rate of growth, the quality of development, and the density of development.

These objectives are:

1A.) To identify regulatory and other techniques for the use of land so as to provide for the orderly use of land, the protection of the environment and adjacent and adjoining property owners, in a manner consistent with individual property rights.

1B.) To consider the use of land for residential, commercial, recreational, agricultural, mineral extraction, industrial and other uses.

1C.) To consider short and long term impacts in any development or growth proposal in order to identify present and future needs including essential services, resources and infrastructure.

2A.) To protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public by preventing inappropriate land use, requiring developers to mitigate identifiable impacts in advance of development, and by implementing methods which eliminate or reduce the cost of any growth to the taxpayer.

2B.) To insure any proposed growth or development identifies and demonstrates the appropriate mitigation measures for any potential pollution of land, air, soil, and water.

3A.) To maintain land utilization and classification system [zoning] based upon the availability of appropriate services and facilities, existing residents and communities, community values, and physical opportunities and constraints.

3B.) To insure adequate land exists for facilities for community services, including roads; parks; schools; public safety; drainage; and utilities for water, sanitation, electricity, gas and communication.

4.) To evaluate activities and potential development proposals which could result in significant changes in population density in any area of the county and its potential impact on essential services provided by the county, to include budget impacts.

5.) To identify environmentally sensitive land and hazardous areas including: flood plains, steep slopes, wildfire lands and geologic hazards, and restrict incompatible development and activities in their vicinity.

6.) To identify and protect environmentally significant land, including wildlife habitats and scenic and highly valued landscapes and roadways, and restrict incompatible development and activities in their vicinity.

7.) To identify and preserve land, area, and activities of historical and archeological significance, and restrict incompatible development and activities in their vicinity.

8A.) To promote the cooperation in the development of the Growth Management Plan between Teller county and other local, regional, state, and federal governments.

8B.) To continue to coordinate with our communities and incorporated cities in any proposal for expansion of the growth area.

9A.) To enhance and maintain a sense of community for the County, cities, towns and areas.

9B.) To promote appropriate design and arrangement of development which is compatible to the community, area and neighborhood.

10.) To encourage the redevelopment of existing downtown areas and older residential areas.

## **GROWTH NODES**

Within each Planning Region Growth Nodes may be identified if applicable. Growth Nodes are areas in which Communities or other entities can and/or are willing to extend services and facilities for roadways, water and sewer services. The extensions may be made by Communities of their own accord, or by developers, or by the residents of a specific area or district.

The determination of the Growth Nodes, in subsequently updated Regional Action Plans that will follow the 2019 GMP, will assist in identifying the specific functional planning areas for identifying Growth and Limited Growth Areas.

The boundaries of Growth Nodes should be formulated and included in Regional Action Plans only after discussing various aspects of existing and future service and facility demands with County Staff, Public Works Directors, and appropriate community, city and county leadership.

These areas have, or could have available, the needed facilities, infrastructure and services to support development in an efficient and economical manner. Potential developers should be apprised of any impacts to existing conditions and develop mitigation strategies or improvements prior to the approval of any proposal.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF FUNCTIONAL PLANNING AREAS**

The intent of this subsection is to identify, describe, and recognize the significance of the Functional Planning Areas to Teller County, and its Communities.

The Teller County land area utilization system is a legal planning policy strategy for growth management that is primarily based upon the delineation of functional and geographically identifiable "tiers" or "functional planning areas." This delineation is integral to a rational planning process and is fundamental to the identification of appropriate growth management implementation methods or tools for any geographic location.

The recognition of the functional planning areas allows the County, and its Communities to describe goals and objectives for each area, to selectively evaluate growth trends for each area, and to select growth management implementation techniques that are specific for each area.

The functional planning area strategy allows the County, and its Communities, to accommodate their fair share of the County growth in the most efficient and sensible way. Each region can share County growth without preventing it from achieving its own community goals.

All land in Teller County remains categorized under functional planning areas in the 2019 GMP. This land classification and "utilization area" strategy is authorized under Colorado Revised Statute Chapters 30.28.106 et. seq. and 29.20.104 et. seq. This section of the Plan will describe how these areas have been identified and determined.

This strategy, using regions and functional planning areas, assumes the acceptance of the County's and Communities' fair share of growth. The system allows for a high degree of sensitivity to comprehensive planning and decentralized input from local residents and communities.

## **CRITERIA AND OBJECTIVES FOR FUNCTIONAL PLANNING AREAS**

### **Growth Areas and Nodes**

The County, and its Communities, will encourage growth to occur in the three growth areas of the County including:

- Community centers and surrounding mixed land use activity areas;
- Older established communities and neighborhoods
- Approved activity areas; and
- Potential development activity areas.

### **Community centers and surrounding mixed land use activity areas**

Land within these activity areas must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be located within an area known historically as the "Downtown" and within its general vicinity;
- Be located within the Growth Area;

- Be served by a municipal or community street, sewer and water systems; and
- Be characterized by a mixed land use pattern of existing and usually older commercial uses, varying residential uses, public uses, and on occasion may have some light or pre-existing manufacturing and warehousing uses.

These areas are relatively small and well defined with few unoccupied parcels. Establishment of new uses in vacant buildings and lots should be encouraged.

In some Communities there exists a mixed-use area surrounding the downtown which is less intensively utilized, less specialized in purpose, and is less well-defined. This area has potentially greater opportunities for redevelopment and reuse. Potentially conflicting land uses that cannot locate in other areas of the County or Communities may be served in this area. Development in these areas may also involve the extension of central water and sewer systems.

This area is expected to accommodate only a small portion of the projected new residential development and a major portion of the projected commercial development.

### **Older established neighborhoods, existing newer development and approved soon-to-be developed activity areas**

The primary objective of this area is to sustain growth while preserving the community character and quality of life. This can be accomplished through in-fill, redevelopment, and new fringe development that augments residential, commercial, and employment choices while preserving the sense of community and protecting natural character.

Development, which would otherwise spread into unplanned, unincorporated and environmentally sensitive and significant areas, should be concentrated here. In-fill development and redevelopment needs to be prudently balanced with infrastructure and public service requirements. It is not the responsibility of Teller County government to pay for any expansion of required or centralized infrastructure for private development proposals. Land within this activity area must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be located within an area of older established neighborhoods, existing newly developing areas, approved soon-to-be developed activity areas, or within the general vicinity of these areas;
- Be located within the Growth Node;
- Be served by a municipal or central sewer and water system; and
- Be characterized by a land use pattern of primarily single-family homes, parks, neighborhood- scale commercial uses, and designated areas for light industrial uses.



These areas are less defined with both unoccupied and occupied parcels. The areas are generally located away from community centers but in the vicinity of major roads, streets, and highways. The areas are predominately residential, but not exclusively.

Older established neighborhoods are primarily single-family residential with the majority of homes built prior to 1960. These areas are projected to accommodate only a minimal share of the new development projected for the County. Development that does occur should be encouraged to be compatible with the character of the existing neighborhoods.

Existing, newly developing areas are primarily single-family residential but some two family and multiple family dwellings are present. The majority of these units were built after 1960. The area also includes neighborhood commercial establishments. These areas are projected to accommodate a major portion of the new residential development expected for the County. Development that does occur should be compatible with the planned character of the area, as described in protective covenants and the general characteristics of the surrounding uses.

Approved, soon-to-be developed areas are primarily undeveloped lands that are currently vacant and still in a somewhat natural state. The areas may or may not include existing street, sewer, and water systems. These areas have already received approval from the County or a Community for a Master plan, Site plan, PUD Final Development plan, Preliminary Subdivision Plan, or Final Subdivision Plat.

### **Potential Development Activity Areas**

The primary objective of these areas will be to absorb development in a timed and sequenced manner based upon optimal use of the existing or planned municipal or community street, sewer, water systems, thereby preserving the sense of community and protecting the recognized natural character of the area.

Development will be predominately low density residential with designated areas for planned commercial, light industrial, and other appropriate uses. Development, which would otherwise spread into unplanned or unincorporated and environmentally sensitive and significant areas, should be encouraged to locate here.

Development in these areas should be prudently balanced with infrastructure and public service requirements.

Land within this activity area must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be located within the Growth Node;
- Be served or be able to be served by central or community street, sewer, and water systems; and

- Be characterized by a land use pattern primarily of undeveloped land that is currently vacant and still in a natural state, and be void of County or Community approvals for specific development.

These areas are well defined as unoccupied parcels or scarcely occupied parcels in proximity to older established neighborhoods, existing new developments or a soon-to-be developed activity region.

The areas are projected to accommodate a major portion of the new development expected in the County. Development that does occur should be compatible with the planned character of the area, as described in protective covenants and the general characteristics of the surrounding uses.

### **Limited Growth Areas**

The County, and its Communities, will discourage development in the three limited growth areas of the County, including: Fringe protection areas; Resource and environmentally sensitive/significant protection areas; and "Rural life-style" protection areas.

These areas lack the needed facilities and services to support development in an efficient and economic manner; contain valuable natural resources; environmentally sensitive/significant lands deserving preservation or protection [or may already be in conservation easement]; and/or may be deemed important for protection to maintain the rural life-style of a specific region. The rural life-style areas are characterized by small rural residential (RR) parcels, often less than 35 acres or A-1 zoned parcels with hobby farms or small ranches that may or may not be greater than 35 acres (mining claims being the major difference). In nearly all cases, property in the limited growth areas are served by unimproved roads [gravel], and are served by private wells and onsite waste water treatment systems (OWTS).

### **Fringe Protection Areas**

The primary objective of this area is the protection of areas identified as not suitable for new development within the six planning regions because existing or planned municipal or community street, sewer, and water systems are not, or will not, be available during the time frame of this plan.

It is likely that some areas within these regions may be reclassified as Potential Development Activity Areas when facilities become available. However, at this time only limited or no development can be accepted in these areas based upon the lack of street, sewer, water systems. This serves to preserve the sense of community and protects the recognized natural character of the planning region.

Land within this protection area must meet all of the following criteria:

- Not be located within the Growth Node;
- Not be served or not be able to be served by municipal or community street, sewer, and water systems;
- Be characterized by a land use pattern of primarily undeveloped land that is currently vacant and still in a natural state, and
- Be void of County or Community approvals for specific development.

These areas are well defined as unoccupied parcels or parcels of limited occupation. The areas are projected to accommodate only a very minor portion of the new development expected in the County. Development is not encouraged until these areas can be reclassified into functional planning areas capable of accommodating growth.

### **Resource and Environmentally Sensitive/ Significant Protection Areas**

The primary objective of this area is the protection of areas within the County, and its Communities, identified as unsuitable for new development because of identified or identifiable valuable natural resources, and/or lands deemed environmentally sensitive or significant.

Development will be discouraged in these areas based upon recognition of the importance of maintaining and managing the natural resources in a prudent and efficient manner for generations to come. Further, it is understood that uncontrolled or incompatible development on or near environmentally sensitive lands will result in damage to life, property, and the environment. And finally, it is understood that uncontrolled or incompatible development on or near environmentally significant lands may result in irreversible damage to important historic, cultural, or scientific lands, aesthetic views, areas of unique natural beauty, and natural lands or systems deemed locally significant.

Lands within this protection area must meet all of the following criteria:

- May or may not be located within a Growth Node;
- May or may not be served by central or community street, sewer, and water systems;
- Be characterized by a land use pattern of primarily undeveloped land that is currently vacant and still in a natural state;
- Be void of County or Community approvals for specific development; and
- Be identified as containing valuable natural resources and/or be deemed environmentally sensitive or significant.

These areas are not projected to accommodate any of the new development expected in the County. Development will be discouraged in these areas.

This plan will endeavor to identify and locate the valuable natural resources deemed important for protection. These resources may include the following: Significant mineral deposits, fuel deposits, forests, soils, and water.

Environmentally sensitive lands may include the following: Flood plains, steep slopes, aquifer recharge areas, surface waters, wildfire hazard areas, snow avalanche areas, geological hazard areas, and man-made hazards.

Further, the 2019 GMP continues to identify and locate environmentally significant lands deemed important for preservation. Environmentally significant lands may include the following: Forests, wetlands, meadows, wilderness and open space, geologic formations, scenic vistas, surface waters, wildlife habitats, areas of historical, cultural and archaeological significance and viable range lands in agricultural use.

### **"Rural Life-Style" Protection Areas**

The primary objective of this area is to protect areas within the County identified as not suitable for new development because existing or planned central or community street, sewer, and water systems are not or will not be available during the time frame of this plan. Further, the residents of the area, region, and/or the County have deemed the protection of the "rural life-style" of these areas an important value and objective.

Development will be discouraged in these areas based upon limited or non-availability of adequate street, sewer, water systems, as well as the desire to preserve the sense of community and protect the recognized natural character of the planning region or area.

Land within this protection area must meet all of the following criteria:

- Not be located within the Growth Area;
- Not be served, or not be able to be served, or be served only on a limited basis by municipal or community street, sewer, and water systems;
- Be characterized by a land use pattern of both undeveloped land that is still in a natural state, and a minimal amount of developed land of primarily low density single family residential character; and
- Be recognized as an area where the residents and/or the County have deemed the protection of its specific "rural life-style" an important value and objective.

These areas are well defined as unoccupied parcels, parcels of limited occupation, or platted, under-occupied subdivisions.

The areas are projected to accommodate a minor portion of the new development expected for the County; in-fill should be encouraged in appropriate areas and developments.

### **FUNCTIONAL PLANNING AREAS OBJECTIVES**

Functional planning areas divide the County, and its Communities, functionally and geographically for both planning and implementation purposes.

The use of functional planning areas is a significant element of and is important to, the development of the 2019 GMP. It allows the use of different implementation techniques, or tools, in each area in order to achieve different, but mutually compatible, growth management objectives.

The coordination of each area in relation to other areas allows the County, and its Communities, to achieve the plan's primary goal – that of managing growth in an efficient, economical, and environmentally sound manner.

**Community centers and surrounding mixed land use activity areas and older established neighborhoods, and existing and/or approved activity areas share common objectives, which are:**

- a. To encourage reinvestment and redevelopment where possible or as appropriate inside of these areas
- b. To encourage infill of unoccupied parcels, and
- c. To encourage the development of new, previously approved residential and other land use opportunities.

If a larger percentage of new growth occurs in these areas, where public facilities and services are adequate and available, fiscal pressure on the County, and its Communities, will be reduced and the preservation of areas fringe protection areas), resource, environmentally sensitive/significant protection areas, and rural life-style" protection areas will be more easily achieved.

**Potential development activity areas (PDA)** - will absorb development in a timed and sequenced manner based upon optimal use of existing or planned central or community street, sewer, water systems; the development will be predominately low density residential with designated areas for higher density residential, commercial, light industrial, and other appropriate uses, thereby preserving the sense of community and protecting the recognized natural character of the area.

Potential development activity areas have prevented the process of sprawl and leapfrog development by making future development responsive to timed and sequential provision of public utilities and services. This concept is continued in the 2019 GMP.

The delineation of these areas will specify where development will be allowed to occur and under what circumstances. The implementation tools for this area will include an adequate public facilities provision tied to the capital improvements program and long range plans for streets, sewer, and water systems.

**Potential development activity areas are land areas where growth should occur and where the County, and its Communities, must:**

- Consider making commitments to support growth and investment;
- Consider land for development in a staged contiguous manner;
- To develop efficiencies for facilities extensions; and
- To provide for balanced housing needs and land use.

Since PDA areas are the location in which major future growth will occur, it is the prime area of emphasis in the growth management plan, but, this emphasis should be the result of a realization that development policies applied to these areas will have a significant impact on land development in the other areas as well.

The 2019 GMP retains as one of its tenants the basic objective of managing growth to occur in growth areas, thereby reversing or preventing the trend of growth in the rural areas where public facilities and services are inadequate. Therefore, although the County, and its Communities, may be limiting growth in some areas, it is correspondingly encouraging growth in other areas.

**Fringe Protective Area**

The purpose of the Fringe protection areas (FPA) is to denote those parts of the County located within a regional planning area that are primarily undeveloped and/or vacant, and which lie beyond the limits of the urban service area where growth may logically and feasibly occur in the future, but not at this time. Because of the undeveloped state of this area, its distance from community centers, and the lack of the appropriate level of facilities and services, these areas should remain in an undeveloped state until the appropriate time.

**The objectives for the FPA are:**

To prevent their premature development and therefore, strain on essential county services and budgets

To limit sprawl and leapfrog development which would fiscally strain the County and its Communities to provide adequate facilities and services

To protect the recognized natural character of the area.

**Resource and environmentally sensitive/ significant protection areas)**

**Objectives:**

- To identify land, for which the cost of correctly developing may be excessive or prohibitive {exceedingly steep terrain, flood zones etc.]
- To protect the public health, safety, and welfare
- To encourage parks, recreational, and other appropriate uses
- To protect natural resources and environmentally sensitive and significant lands
- To help direct the location and timing of growth and development in such areas.

In order to accomplish these ends, all protection areas must be identified and mapped with consideration for their distinctive characteristics and land use capabilities.

This area would overlay all other areas in the locations of the identified characteristics and capabilities. Then a combination of acquisition, regulatory, and incentive techniques can be utilized to protect and preserve these lands.

**Rural life-style protection areas**

**Objectives:**

Any area generally comprised of small farms and ranches, and residences built on small building envelopes so as to encourage the appearance of the land as being in its natural state.

- These areas are generally not suitable for new development because existing or planned central or community street, sewer, and water systems are not or will not be available during the time frame of this plan;
- To limit sprawl and leapfrog development which would prove to be a fiscal strain on the County and its Communities in providing adequate facilities and services;
- To prevent additional premature development; and
- To protect the recognized natural character of the area.

- Further, the residents of the area and/or the County have deemed the protection of the "rural life-style" of these areas an important value and objective.

In order to accomplish these ends, all of these areas must be identified and mapped with consideration for their distinctive characteristics, the availability of facilities and services, and resident values. Potential property owners and current owners alike should be aware of the areas that contains their property or potential areas.

## **Conclusion**

The 2019 GMP continues to use and further refine the regional planning concept. It also fully recognizes that Teller County's incorporated cities have developed their own city Master Plans. Every effort has been made to develop the 2019 GMP into a Policy level growth management plan for Teller County. The GMP takes a holistic and integrated approach to growth management that considers each area as a separate functional and spatial component of the entire County, and its Communities. Critical linkages between our cities and Teller County and impacts to our regions in the coming years must be closely monitored. Growth management and the impacts of growth must be managed across Teller County with information sharing, referral processes and meetings for all stakeholders prior to any development occurring.

The 6 (six) planning regions will retain a degree of autonomy and should consider the intent of the residents who live there, while still remaining under the control and within policy guidance for managed growth at the county level. Impacts to other adjacent regions are balanced and assessed, in particular, any fiscal costs, as they may have impact on the tax base of the entire county and its residents not living in a particular region.