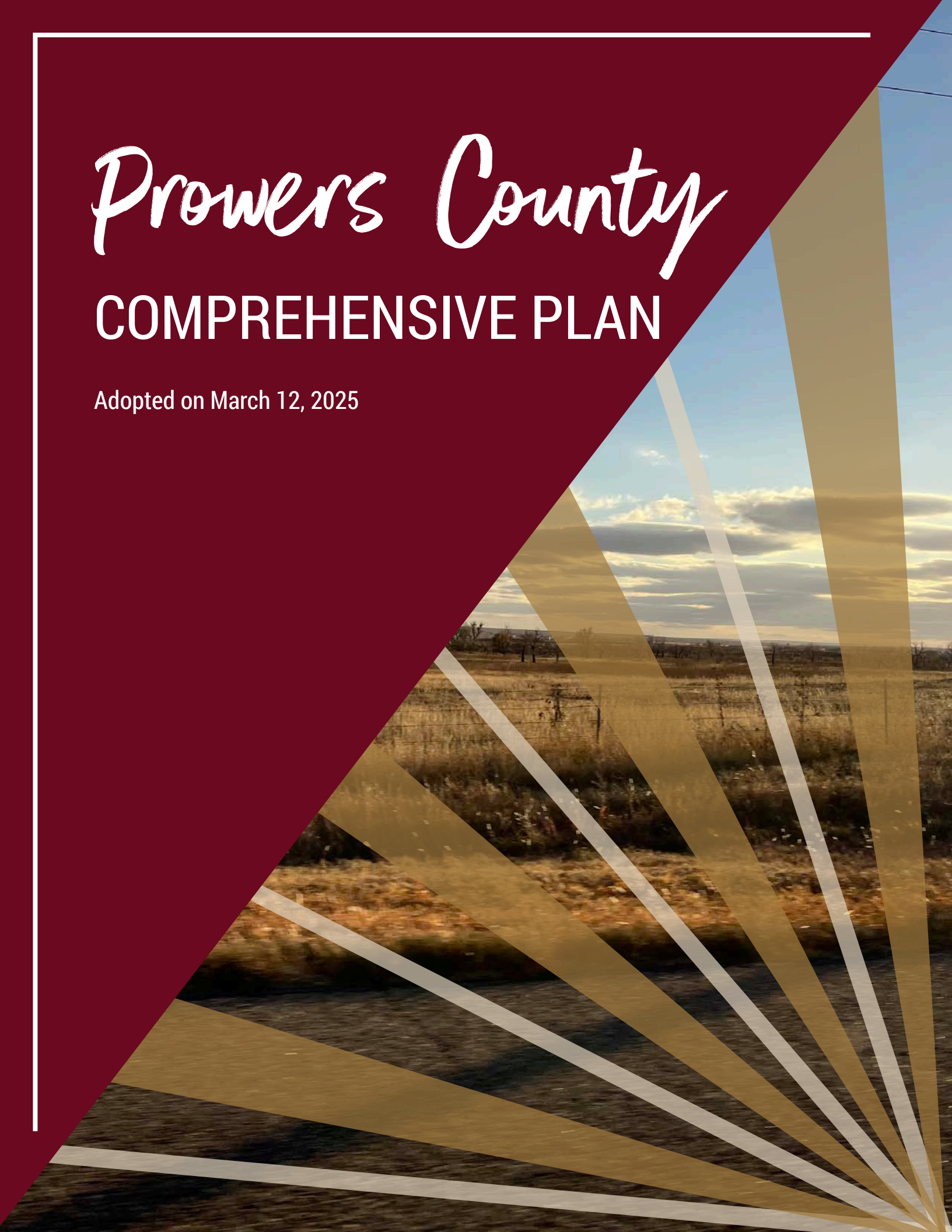


# *Prowers County*

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted on March 12, 2025



BEFORE THE PROWERS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
RESOLUTION NUMBER 25-001  
**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE PROWERS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, Prowers County, Colorado, acting through its Planning Commission is tasked pursuant to Sections 30-28-106 through 30-28-109, C.R.S. to make and adopt a Comprehensive Plan, and

WHEREAS, the Prowers County Comprehensive Plan is a Comprehensive Plan that has been prepared for the County, and

WHEREAS, the Prowers County Comprehensive Plan complies with the requirements of Section 30-28-106 and 30-28-107, C.R.S., and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on the Prowers County Comprehensive Plan on March 12, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission believes it in the best interest of the County that Prowers County Comprehensive Plan be adopted,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF PROWERS COUNTY, COLORADO:

1. That the Prowers County Comprehensive Plan be and hereby is adopted.
2. That the Prowers County Comprehensive Plan as adopted hereby, expressly includes maps and other matter, intended by the Planning Commission to form the whole of Prowers County Comprehensive Plan, all of which materials are contained within the plan document itself, and which plan document is hereby declared to be a part of the Plan.
3. That the action of the Planning Commission adopting the Prowers County Comprehensive Plan shall be recorded on the Prowers County Comprehensive Plan by the identifying signatures of the Chairman and Secretary to the Commission.
4. A copy of this Resolution shall be attached to each copy of Prowers County Comprehensive Plan and shall serve as an attestation that each such copy is a true and correct copy of the Prowers County Comprehensive Plan as adopted.
5. That an attested copy of Prowers County Comprehensive Plan shall be and hereby is certified to the Prowers County Board of County Commissioners and Planning Commission of all municipalities within the county or region pursuant to § 30-28-109, C.R.S.

MOVED, SECONDED AND ADOPTED ON THE 12th DAY OF MARCH, 2025 BY THE AFFIRMATIVE VOTES OF NOT LESS THAN A MAJORITY OF THE ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION.

  
Richard Widener, Chairman

  
Michelle Hiigel, Secretary

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## Powers County Community

**Special thanks to the community members, residents, business owners, and regional partners who helped shape the vision for the future of Powers County.**



# Chapter 1. Introduction and Overview

Photo Credit: Stephen Conn

# IMPORTANCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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The Prowers County Comprehensive Plan (Plan) is the County's leading advisory document that guides the long-term evolution and development of the County. For the first time in over 20 years, the County engaged community members and leaders to rethink their long-term vision and planning policy to update this Plan.

While the 2004 Master Plan accomplished a lot, we now look to the Plan's next generation to establish a clear and visionary approach for the future of our rural county. This Comprehensive

Plan is not just a blueprint for growth, but a collective commitment to fostering our values, innovation, and ensuring sustainable progress for generations to come. By embracing the unique strengths of our community while addressing challenges head-on, this Plan invites all community members to work together in shaping a thriving, prosperous county that honors its past while preparing for the opportunities and demands of tomorrow.

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

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A comprehensive plan is an advisory document that outlines a community's goals for the future and provides direction for elected and appointed officials in making choices regarding the long-range planning needs of the County and its municipalities. Specifically, the Plan, including the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), provides guidance for decisions affecting growth and annexation, land use and development, transportation

systems, and the expansion of public facilities and services. The policy recommendations and maps contained in the Plan are interrelated and, in most cases, should not be used independently from one another.

### Legal Basis for Plan

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The Plan is prepared in accordance with Colorado Revised Statutes that authorize the Prowers County Planning Commission to develop a master plan for the physical development of the unincorporated areas within Prowers County. Per Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) § 30-28-107, the purpose of the Plan is "guiding and accomplishing a coordinated and harmonious development of the relevant territory, which, in accordance with present and future needs and resources, will best promote the general welfare of the inhabitants" of Prowers County. Although advisory in nature, the Plan is the basis for regulatory measures including zoning and subdivision code updates, as well as development project review recommendations. The Plan also serves as the foundation for intergovernmental agreements, capital improvement programming, and detailed studies and programs coordinated by public jurisdictions.

# PLANNING CONTEXT

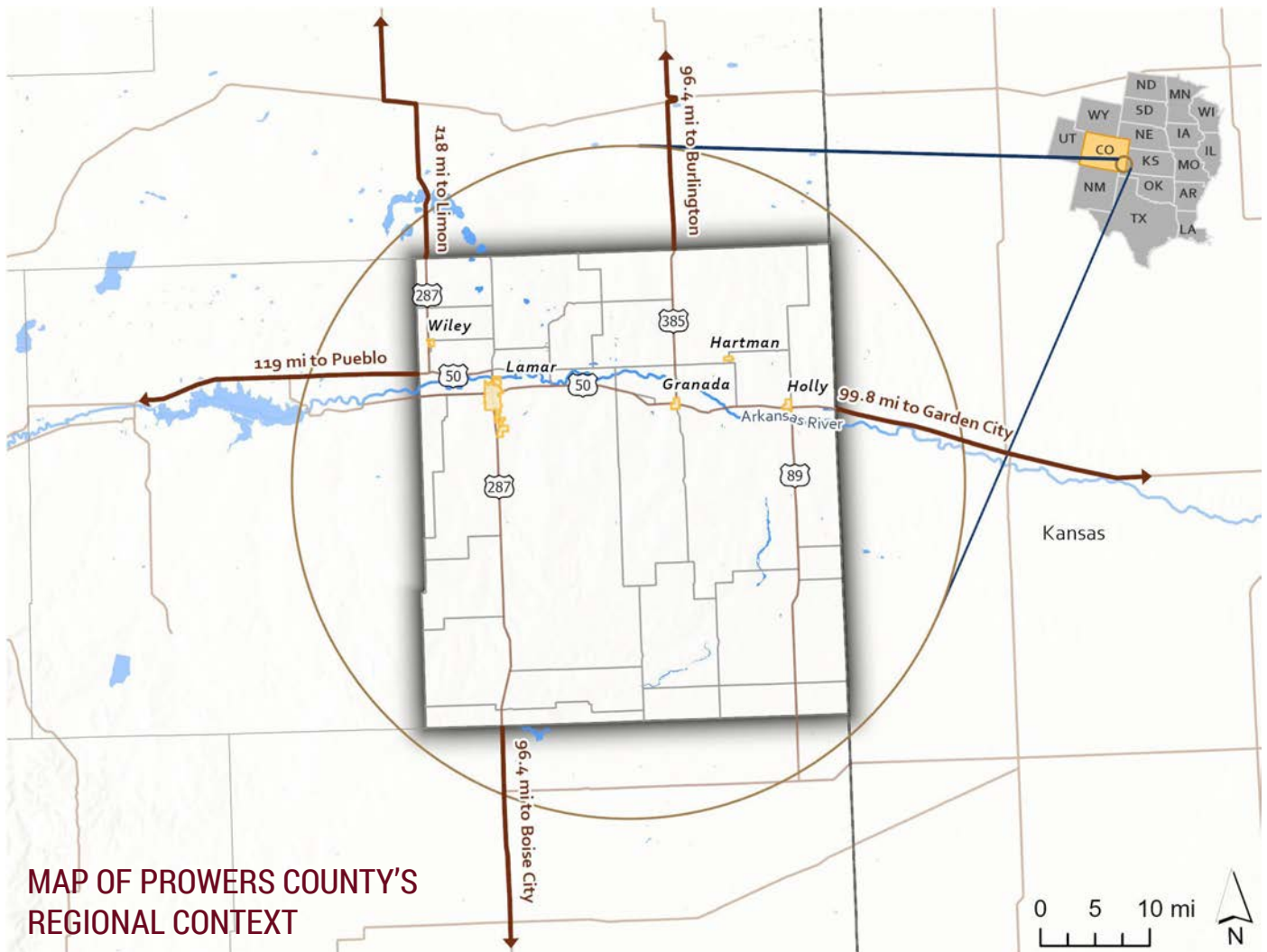
Located on the Arkansas River in southeastern Colorado, Prowers County has a rich heritage rooted in agriculture and has long depended on farming and ranching as the backbone of the economy.

***Generations of families have cultivated the land, contributing to the region's identity and prosperity. However, this traditional landscape is undergoing significant change as water scarcity and competing demands for this vital resource threaten the viability of agriculture.***

As a result, there is pressure to shift toward economic diversification and sustainable practices, including lower water use farming

techniques and the emergence of renewable energy operations, such as wind and solar. These new industries offer promising opportunities, but they also challenge the County to balance its agricultural legacy with evolving environmental and economic realities.

Prowers County also hosts stretches of the Historic Santa Fe Trail and the American Discovery Trail, the Amache-Granada Japanese Relocation Center National Historic Site, Two Buttes Mountain, commercial (BNSF) and passenger (Amtrak) rail, and the crossroads of two great American corridors: US Highway 50 and US Highway 287.



MAP OF PROWERS COUNTY'S REGIONAL CONTEXT

## Planning Boundaries & Jurisdiction

The planning area for this Plan includes all unincorporated areas in Prowers County. The Plan does not address the incorporated communities of Wiley, Lamar, Hartman, Granada, or Holly, as cities and towns are governed by their own local governments. These towns influence the character, resources, economy, and quality of life of the County as a whole, however this Plan does not have jurisdiction in these areas.

The City of Lamar, among the incorporated communities, significantly impacts the unincorporated area—particularly at its boundary. As a result, the 2004 Prowers County Master Plan and the Lamar Comprehensive Plan were originally created through a joint planning process and formalized an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for the Lamar Joint Planning Area (LJPA). While this agreement was dissolved in 2023, the concurrent processes to update both the Lamar and Prowers County Comprehensive Plans endeavored to coordinate the location and type of future development, infrastructure, and potential annexation areas surrounding the City of Lamar.

## Demographic Profile

Similar to many eastern Colorado communities, the population and employment base in Prowers County has largely stayed flat for the past two decades. Without significant change and investment in the County, the State demographer projects an overall decline in population over the next thirty years.

Even with this stagnation, the County's Hispanic population has increased, now making up almost 40% of the total population. The County also has an aging population, represented by an increasing median age. In addition to demographic challenges, Prowers County contends with a high poverty level at close to 18%. This issue disproportionately affects those under 18-years-old and individuals older than 65-years-old, highlighting the vulnerability of these age groups within the community.



**40+% Hispanic/  
Latinx population**

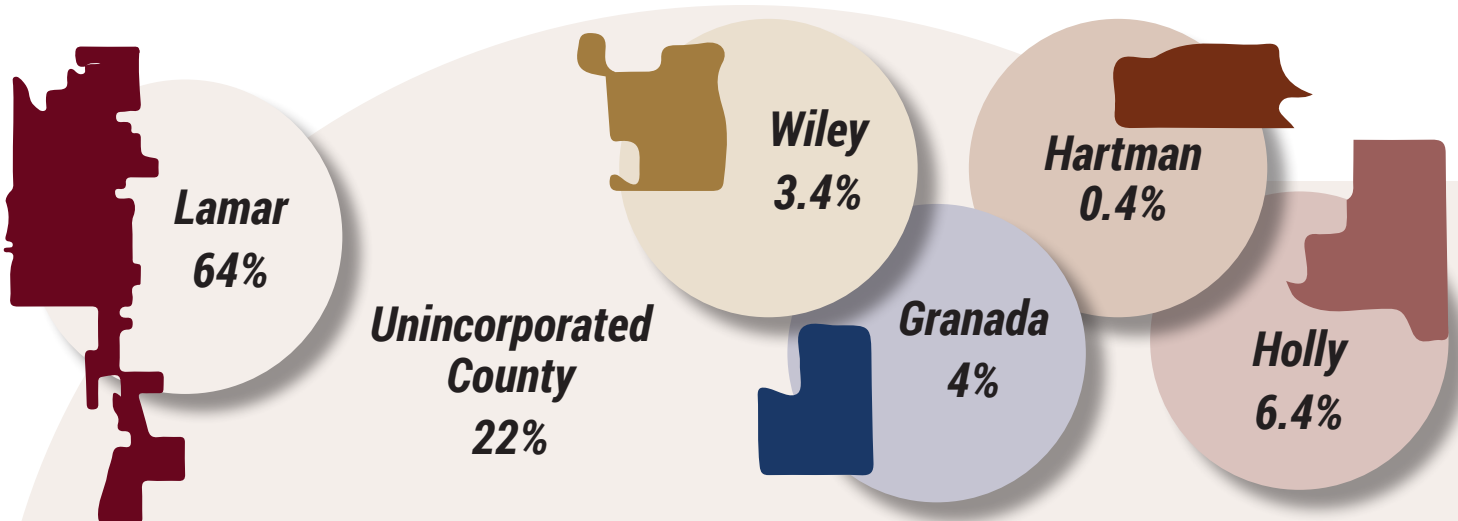


**-17% population  
decline** (2000-2022)



**10% increase in  
55+ age group**  
(2000-2022)

### WHERE DO PEOPLE LIVE IN PROWERS COUNTY?





## Current Land Use & Zoning

Existing land use refers to the current use of a property, which is also the basis for property tax rates (i.e. commercial, residential, agricultural, etc.). The largest private use of property in Prowers County is for agriculture—farming and ranching. Most residential and commercial areas in the County are concentrated within the towns and unincorporated communities. Some exceptions are commercial and industrial uses along US Highway 50 and US Highway 385. Natural features and water availability heavily influence land uses within the County. There are agricultural properties in southern Prowers County that also have large renewable energy operations, namely the Colorado Green Wind Project and Twin Buttes Wind Farm. Renewable energy as a secondary use on ranching properties are usually synergistic because they rarely impede non-irrigated farming operations.

Zoning is a tool used by counties and municipalities to regulate the way a property is used (residential, commercial, agriculture, etc.), minimum lot sizes, and how buildings on those lots should relate to their surroundings including streets, property lines, and other buildings. These regulations are in place to protect community members' quality of life and provide predictability in new development. A large portion of the County is zoned primarily for farming and ranching uses to maintain natural characteristics and agricultural functions.

 **1,644 square miles in size**


 **72.5 square miles of public land**

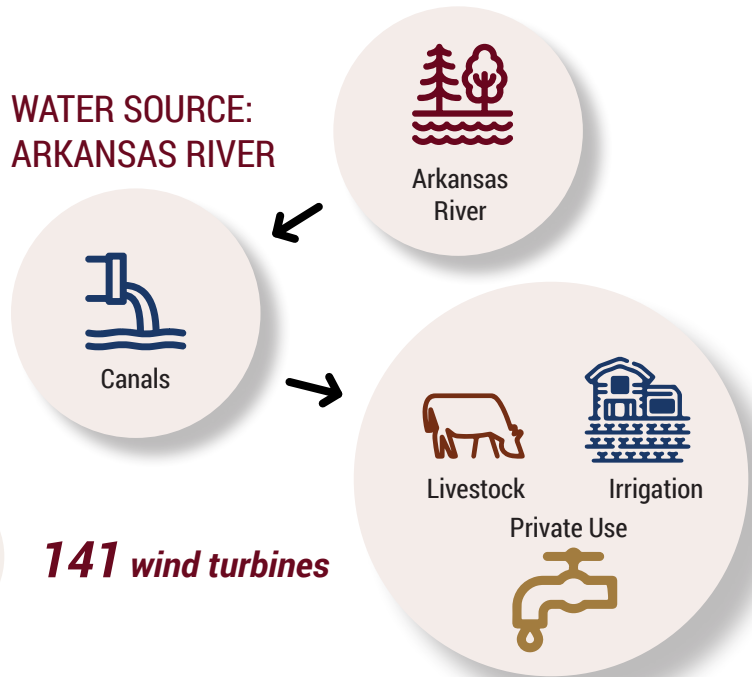
 **800,000+ acres of farmland**

 **19 National & State Registered Historic Properties**


 **141 wind turbines**


 **\$49,422 median household income**


 **43% of homeowners are cost-burdened**



## TOP THREE INDUSTRIES IN PROWERS COUNTY

 **10.5% Retail trade**  
Median earnings \$23,117

 **14% Agriculture**  
Median earnings \$46,390

 **26% Education, social assistance, and healthcare**  
Median earnings \$41,202

# USE OF THE PLAN

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County staff, the Planning Commission, and the County Commissioners should consult the Plan when considering development proposals, updating land use regulations, working on intergovernmental issues, outlining work programs, preparing annual budgets, and reviewing progress toward meeting identified goals. The Plan should be also used to guide residents, landowners, and project applicants concerning land planning and community development objectives.

The Plan is intended to be a living document that County staff, elected officials, and community partners use to drive the County toward its vision. As a living document, the Plan should be flexible to incorporate changes as the community evolves over time and as needed. The Plan should be reviewed at least every five years or when new circumstances or changing conditions warrant reconsideration.

## Who Can Use This Plan?

A wide range of users will find meaning in this Comprehensive Plan. Prowers County residents and property owners, businesses and developers, and County staff, leaders, and partners all use the Comprehensive Plan to guide and realize the future success of our County.

**Residents and Property Owners:** To document values and vision for the future of Prowers in a way that allows them to participate as informed and active citizens in the overall physical development of the County, including decisions about land uses that directly impact them.

**Businesses and Developers:** To provide guidance on how to best achieve the community's vision in ways that allow them to grow, adapt, and implement their development and business plans.

**County Staff:** To work with applicants to review development proposals and provide decision-makers with information about how the proposals align with the intention, vision, and objectives of the Plan. To create and implement county initiatives including code changes and process improvements that advance the goals and recommendations of this Plan.

**County Leaders:** To position Prowers County for the future by establishing annual work plan priorities, developing partnerships, ensuring accountability of County departments, and making thoughtful and informed decisions in harmony with the goals of this Plan.

**County Partners and Towns:** To provide information to governmental, non-profit, and private sector partners on the County's future development and infrastructure, including surrounding communities, transportation providers, regional planning groups, and other key regional players.

# PLANNING PROCESS & ENGAGEMENT

*To be a useful guide for the County, the Plan must authentically reflect public needs and values. Therefore, public participation was essential during the process to update this Plan.*

The Plan's concepts, direction, and final recommendations are all created as a result of an inclusive public participation program. The process included three community engagement phases with nine community events and three online questionnaires. Advertising for the events leveraged existing communication channels that the community was familiar with, including local newspapers, fliers at community events, social media posts, email invitations, and a radio appearance. Each of these events was designed to be fully interactive to maximize public input.

The first phase of the planning process aimed to establish the key issues, opportunities, and values of the community to understand where Prowers County stands today. The second phase defined a set of Vision and Values. The third phase of engagement asked participants to weigh in policy and implementation ideas to work toward the Vision for the Comprehensive Plan.

*A detailed summary of engagement is provided in [Appendix C Engagement Summary](#).*

## Boards, Commissions, and Committees

The planning process engaged the Board of County Commissioners, Planning Commission, and a Steering Committee to provide detailed feedback at every stage of the process. These groups participated in multiple workshops at key milestones.

A new Steering Committee was assembled to help guide the direction of the Plan update and included representatives from organizations, businesses, and residents from across the County. The Steering Committee had two primary functions: to inform the planning team of unique issues, opportunities and values and to serve as liaisons to their communities and social networks to distribute information about the planning process.

The C.R.S. Section 30-28-106 (1) empowers the Planning Commission to be the adopting body of the Plan. However, to cultivate shared understanding, both the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners were regularly engaged and asked to provide guidance and feedback on the plan components.

### Engagement Numbers

**13** Community Events

**114** Event Participants

**175** Online Participants

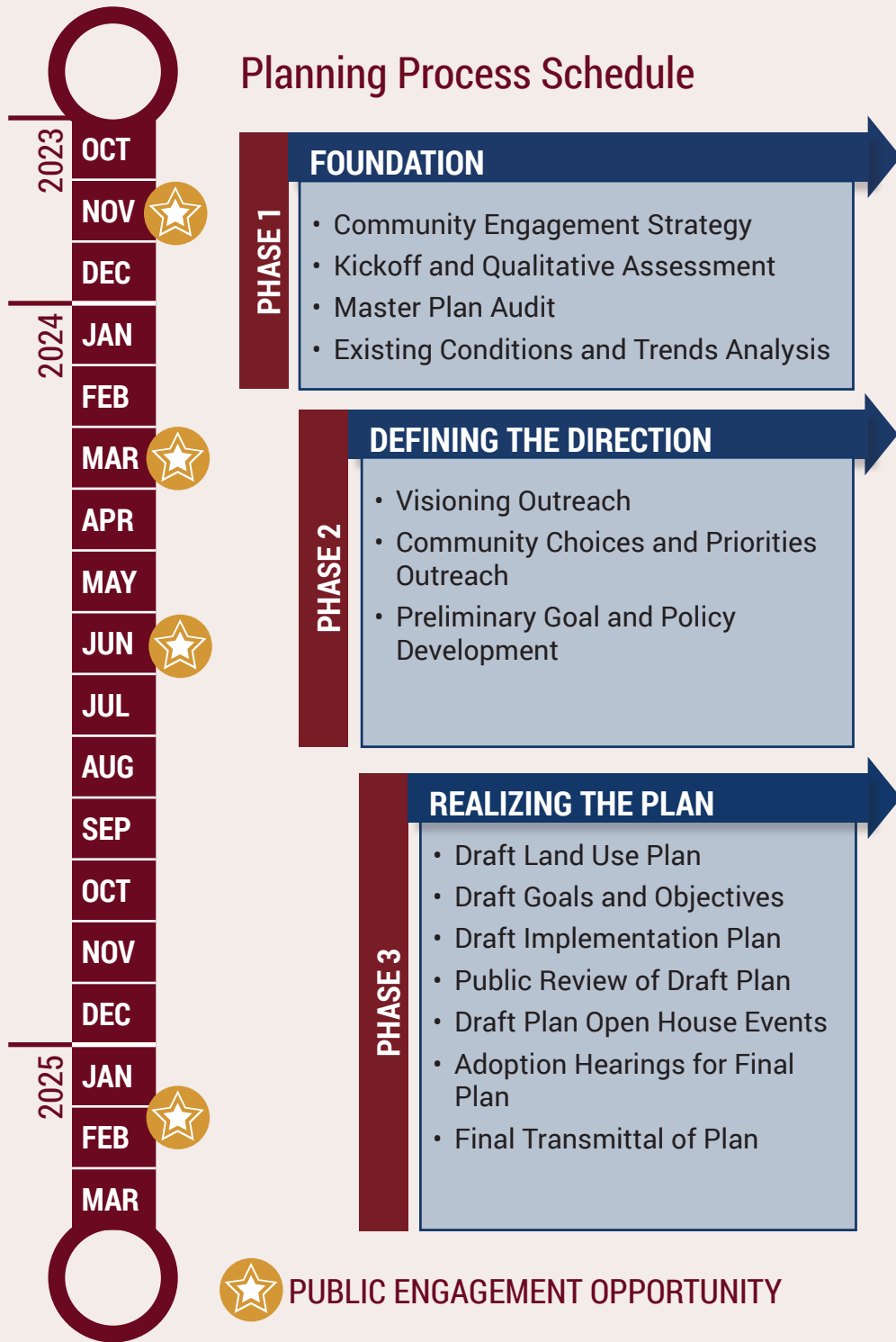
**14,600+** Website Views

**8** County Commissioner and Planning Commission Meetings

**9** Steering Committee Meetings

**3** Town Council Meetings

**43** Project Website Subscribers



### Web-based Public Involvement

The project website [ProwersCompPlan.com](http://ProwersCompPlan.com) provided routine updates, resources, and online activities. This included responding to a call to action, participating in online questionnaires, or reading through project materials and plan documents. Online questionnaires and interactive mapping were active at key engagement milestones.



# *Chapter 2.* *Planning Framework*

Photo Credit: Timothy Vogal

# VISION & VALUES

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*The Vision Themes are shared community values that emerged from the public participation process. They capture the community's priorities for this Comprehensive Plan and provide direction for the goals and objectives. The Vision Themes include:*

- *Water Resource Protection*
- *Healthy Communities*
- *Diversified Housing*
- *Resilient Economy*
- *Celebration of Character*



## **WATER RESOURCE PROTECTION: Ensure the availability and improve the quality of water.**

A key priority of this Plan is to ensure the availability and improve the quality of water and recognize its critical role in sustaining the County's agricultural base and supporting future growth. Safeguarding water quality through sustainable land use policies and proactive conservation measures will ensure long-term environmental health and resilience for both agriculture and the broader community.

## **HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: Facilitate the availability and quality of childcare, senior services, healthcare, and education.**

A vital priority of this Plan is to ensure all residents—from youngest to oldest—have access to the support and essential services they need such as childcare, senior care, healthcare, and education. In a rural county where these services are often limited, we aim to strengthen infrastructure, attract skilled professionals, and foster partnerships to expand access. We will create a healthier, more vibrant community that supports families and empowers future generations by investing in quality education, affordable healthcare, and robust care for children and seniors.

## **DIVERSIFIED HOUSING: Support the creation of quality and affordable housing options for residents of all stages of life.**

A core priority of this Plan is to ensure the development of quality and affordable housing options that meet the diverse needs of residents at all stages of life. Whether it is young families seeking to establish roots, professionals moving to the area, or seniors looking for accessible living arrangements, the Plan focuses on expanding housing choices. Through partnerships with developers, innovative building practices, and thoughtful land use policies, this Plan strives to increase and improve the housing stock to attract new residents and keep the ones we have.

## **RESILIENT ECONOMY: Build a resilient economy with diverse and competitive jobs and a skilled workforce.**

A key priority of this Plan is to build a resilient economy by fostering diverse, competitive job opportunities and cultivating a skilled workforce. We aim to create a more adaptable and prosperous local economy by supporting emerging industry growth, such as renewable energy and advanced agriculture, while strengthening existing sectors like farming and ranching. Workforce development programs, educational partnerships, and job training initiatives will equip residents with the skills needed for the future and ensure that our community thrives in an ever-changing economic landscape.

## **CELEBRATION OF CHARACTER: Maintain agriculture, inclusive of farming and ranching, as a cornerstone of the County's economy and history.**

Maintaining farming and ranching as a cornerstone of the County's economy and history is a central priority of this Plan. These industries have long defined the region's identity and livelihood and we are committed to preserving and strengthening them for future generations. The Plan promotes sustainable farming practices, protects agricultural land, and encourages innovative techniques to address water scarcity and climate challenges. By fostering events and programs related to agriculture, we aim to celebrate and sustain the community's agricultural heritage and support the transfer of knowledge and land to younger generations, ensuring the continuity of these vital traditions.

# GOALS & OBJECTIVES

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The following goals and objectives are designed to help the County enhance the lives of its residents, operate within its resources, guide sound public infrastructure investments, and make informed land use decisions. They are a direct result of issues and concerns community members and County leaders voiced during the planning process and a careful review of existing County conditions.

The goals and objectives are categorized into eight subcategories: Regional Coordination, Housing, Water and Natural Resources, Historic and Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Public Facilities and Services, and Transportation. For the purposes of this document, the goals and objectives are defined as follows:

**Goals:** Broad aspirations and ideals, an end to direct effort.

**Objectives:** Ongoing course of action that guides governmental action and decision making to achieve the related goal.

A list of recommended Implementation Actions is included in Appendix D Implementation Actions are intended to be actionable strategies to achieve the goals and objectives in this chapter. They could include regulatory changes, new studies or plans, programs or services, capital projects, or other partnerships.

## Regional Coordination and Land Use

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Regional coordination and thoughtful land use planning are important components of this Plan, ensuring that growth and development are balanced with the preservation of natural resources, agricultural land, and community character. While the County does not have jurisdiction over incorporated cities and towns, the goals and objectives outlined below can collaboratively assist these communities to achieve their annexation and development goals, strengthen their individual identities, and coordinate regional resources and services.

**GOAL 1.** Foster strong coordination with cities, towns, and unincorporated communities to ensure cohesive planning, shared resources, and collaborative solutions that enhance the region's sustainability and prosperity.

1. Coordinate with the City of Lamar on land use and infrastructure issues within their Cooperative Planning Area.
2. Maintain consistency with municipal land use plans and city/county standards for roads and infrastructure as applicable and appropriate.
3. Collaborate with cities and towns on development opportunities.

**GOAL 2.** Guide the appropriate location, intensity, and development pattern in coordination with the future placement of utilities, roads, and other infrastructure and services.

1. Use the Future Land Use Map and Categories to guide land use patterns in the County and align future property rezoning to the Future Land Use Map.
2. Support the high-speed internet and broadband expansion and accessibility to improve the quality of life and economic opportunities for County residents.
3. Work with local, regional, and state partners to support increasing water availability and water infrastructure in rural communities for agriculture, industrial, and residential uses.
4. Continue to support high-voltage transmission lines, provided that they are responsibly located and buffered from sensitive natural areas and historic townsites and cities.

**GOAL 3.** Balance growth and preservation of community character in unincorporated areas.

1. Encourage clustered residential subdivisions as a preferred alternative to 10 to 35 acre development.
2. Guide commercial or industrial development to concentrated areas along US Highway 50, US Highway 287, and US Highway 385.

**GOAL 4.** Foster collaborative coordination on water management, utilities, infrastructure, housing, economic development, and health and social services at a local, regional, state, and federal level.

1. Align regional plans and actively participate in collaborative initiatives to enhance coordination, resource sharing, and unified responses to regional challenges.
2. Strengthen partnerships with local and regional organizations to expand access to services and leverage resources.
3. Strengthen engagement and trust with the Spanish-speaking community, ensuring all residents have the information and opportunity to participate in government decision-making and access county services.

# Housing

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Quality, affordable housing is essential to build a thriving community and support economic growth in Prowers County. Currently, the County faces significant challenges, including a lack of new housing development, difficulty attracting developers due to high construction costs, and an aging housing stock. These factors limit housing availability and make it difficult to meet the needs of both existing and new residents.

In response to shifting demographics and economic pressures, the County is committed to expanding and improving housing options for residents of all income levels and life stages. This approach will attract new development, support the local workforce, and meet the needs of the aging population, ultimately expanding housing choices across the County.

**GOAL 1.** Increase housing production and promote a diverse mix of housing types to improve housing availability and meet the needs of residents.

1. Support collaboration between developers, community organizations, and local stakeholders to promote a mix of housing types that address different income levels, household sizes, and life stages.
2. Address challenges related to construction costs and infrastructure to support increased housing production, with a focus on ensuring new developments are suitable for the needs of both existing and future residents.

**GOAL 2.** Preserve, revitalize, and maintain the quality and affordability of the existing housing stock.

1. Focus on rehabilitating aging housing stock (pre-1990) to improve safety, energy efficiency, and livability.
2. Ensure long-term livability of existing housing stock by promoting quality standards and addressing housing deterioration.
3. Encourage residents and landlords to take responsibility for regular upkeep, timely repairs, and extending the lifespan of housing units.

**GOAL 3.** Provide housing that meets the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities to ensure accessible, supportive, and inclusive housing options.

1. Support the development of independent living facilities, skilled nursing facilities, and assisted living facilities to meet the needs of the aging population, veterans, and people with disabilities.
2. Promote accessible housing for individuals with disabilities by establishing guidelines and collaborating with developers.
3. Expand housing and services for vulnerable populations, including those experiencing homelessness, through partnerships with local service organizations.
4. Partner with local organizations to facilitate the availability of additional housing and alternative care for the elderly population.

# Water and Natural Resources

---

Future commercial and residential development in Prowers County is dependent on the availability of water resources including fresh drinking water, irrigation water, and water treatment and sewer system capacity. Like much of southeastern Colorado, water availability and quality are top concerns for residents of Prowers County. The County and its residents want to ensure that water rights are retained and keep them in Prowers County whenever possible.

While Prowers County does not hold water rights, the County still plays a vital role in securing future water for the region. The County can influence future water use by spearheading initiatives and development opportunities that attract low-water use businesses and working with regional partners to ensure that the County and its residents are represented at state and regional water discussions.

Historically, Prowers County was situated on the western edge of the region affected by the Dust Bowl, a devastating natural disaster that greatly affected every aspect of life in the County. The County still experiences drought, with varying degrees of severity and soil erosion, and as a result, Prowers County strives for responsible management of limited water resources and soil conservation. In addition to soil erosion, Prowers County has large areas of unstable soils, floodplains, and high wildfire hazard. The County is committed to protecting ecosystem values and minimizing damage to life, property, and fiscal resources.

## **GOAL 1. Improve water quality in Prowers County.**

1. Work with local, regional, state, and federal partners to support increasing water availability and water infrastructure in rural communities.
2. Work with regional, state, and federal partners to establish pipeline infrastructure for drinking water and future connection to the Arkansas Valley Conduit for areas south and east of Lamar.
3. Explore opportunities for localized treatment facilities to help address water quality in existing water districts.
4. Explore small-scale interventions for improving drinking water quality for residents.

## **GOAL 2. Strive for responsible management of limited water resources and soil conservation practices.**

1. Guide residents with water rights-related legal questions to resources to assist with water preservation within Prowers County.
2. Develop regional water quality supply studies of unincorporated areas of Prowers County.
3. Engage regularly in regional water meetings such as the Arkansas River Basin Roundtables and participate in the Colorado Water Congress.

**GOAL 3. Limit development in areas with natural and man-made hazards.**

1. Limit development in floodplains that would constrict or otherwise result in higher floodwater levels or peak flows or impact floodplain functions.
2. Prioritize stabilization measures for development on sandy and unstable soils to ensure long-term structural integrity and environmental protection, such as soil reinforcement, erosion control, and foundation support.
3. Support projects that include riparian habitat and river channel restoration as an important component of overall flood management planning.
4. Develop emergency management and hazard mitigation programs and regulations, standards, and guidelines relevant to individual, household, community, municipal, county, and regional levels.

**GOAL 4. Guide renewable energy development and responsible mineral extraction to reduce land use conflicts, protect environmental quality, and ensure reliable energy sources.**

1. Support responsibly located opportunities for utility-scale wind, solar, battery, and future renewable energy sources with minimal impacts to sensitive natural areas, and residential neighbors.
2. Promote local-scale renewable energy production (i.e., rooftop solar, small-scale wind) to address the risks associated with utility provision, lifeline services, and grid failure in rural areas.
3. In accordance with state law, support the responsible extraction of subsurface resources, including sand and gravel resources, and appropriate reclamation efforts on land disturbed through resource extraction efforts.

## Public Facilities and Services

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Prowers County offers essential public safety services, including sheriff, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS), although response times vary due to the County's rural nature. Prowers Medical Center is a prominent healthcare provider in the County. Education includes four school districts and Lamar Community College, the sole higher education institution. Social services supporting physical health, mental health, and elder and childcare contribute to community well-being, though gaps in access remain. There is a strong need for robust social and health services to support resilience against economic and environmental challenges.

By fostering partnerships and coordinating efforts across agencies, the County seeks to build a foundation of support for all residents, especially vulnerable populations, and promote a safer, healthier, and more resilient community. The following goals and objectives are designed to strengthen public facilities and services in Prowers County.

### **GOAL 1. Expand access to comprehensive healthcare and essential services to improve health outcomes and reduce disparities.**

1. Encourage countywide partnerships between public, not-for-profit, and private sectors for the effective delivery of healthcare and human services.
2. Investigate and pursue innovative solutions to health challenges in rural areas.
3. Enhance community access to medical and behavioral health services by promoting health awareness, reducing stigma, and supporting equitable care.
4. Collaborate with post-secondary institutions, technical training schools, and medical facilities and clinics to attract and retain medical professionals.
5. Embrace new service delivery technologies to increase access to healthcare services in rural and limited transportation areas in an effort to support aging in place, those who have limited transportation options, and those who have limited mobility.
6. Coordinate with municipalities, law enforcement, fire services, and EMS to improve response times across the County.

### **GOAL 2. Support services, programs, and infrastructure for children and youth to learn and thrive in Prowers County.**

1. Work with community partners to grow infant and toddler childcare capacity and improve affordability of childcare assistance.
2. Coordinate with municipalities to increase year-round recreational facilities and activities for youth in the rural areas to support their social, mental, and physical health and well-being.
3. Support and coordinate with the school districts to provide high-quality education and programs for students of all backgrounds.

# Economic Development

---

Over the past two decades, Prowers County has undergone an economic transformation marked by a loss of manufacturing jobs which has contributed to an overall decrease of 1,088 jobs since 2003. Despite this decline, the County has actively pursued alternative avenues for economic growth. Prowers County has strategically pivoted toward the tourism and renewable energy sectors by investing in wind energy, with 141 turbines connecting the County to Colorado’s renewable energy landscape.

Prowers County has also embraced agritourism initiatives to support its tourist economy. Hosting events like the Snow Goose Festival and Two Shot Goose Hunt, the County has diversified its attractions and utilized its location at the crossroads of two major highways. The County’s commitment to these opportunities, along with its focus on attracting businesses and prioritizing tourism-related initiatives, reflects an adaptive approach to sustaining and growing its economy.

## **GOAL 1. Promote economic development and industry diversification throughout the County.**

1. Support the development of wind, solar, and other renewable energy-related projects in appropriate areas.
2. Encourage the development of small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures in non-agricultural sectors.
3. Foster regional collaboration between local businesses, educational institutions, and local and regional jurisdictions to support industries suited to the region’s assets and workforce.
4. Encourage business expansion or relocation that contribute to the diversity of industries active within Prowers County.
5. Cultivate partnerships with educational institutions to retain local talent and workforce and offer job training and certification programs that align with local industry needs.

## **GOAL 2. Strengthen and sustain the agricultural industry.**

1. Support flexibility in agricultural areas with land uses such as produce stands, truck farms, event venues, agritourism, agrivoltaics, seasonal activities, and worker housing.
2. Prioritize local food distribution through farmers markets, farm-to-table, and farm-to-school partnerships.
3. Grow the next generation of agricultural professionals through partnerships and programming such as 4-H, Future Farmers of America (FFA), and succession planning.
4. Encourage sustainable agricultural practices and soil conservation efforts.

**GOAL 3.** Promote tourism by enhancing local attractions, visitor experience, and community events.

1. Enhance and market Prowers County's historical and cultural assets.
2. Support the development and expansion of agritourism, ecotourism, and hunting-related ventures.
3. Support and promote community events that celebrate the County's diverse cultures, natural resources, and agricultural heritage.
4. Improve infrastructure and amenities to attract visitors to the region such as Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations, hotels, and signage.

## Historic and Cultural Resources

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Prowers County is endowed with a wealth of historic and cultural resources that provide a glimpse into its past. The region is home to meticulously preserved historical sites, including landmarks from the pioneer era, agricultural heritage, and architectural gems that tell the tale of its evolution. Camp Amache, which was recognized as a new park in the National Parks System through the Amache National Historic Site Act in 2022, stands as a testament to the historic significance of the County. Similarly, the Santa Fe Trail, that established a historic trade route and later a line of defense, is dotted with National Historic Sites like Bent's Old Fort and includes seven trail markers. Prowers County is also the site for numerous historical Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects.

The County takes pride in its museums that showcase the diverse cultural influences that have shaped Prowers County over the years. Local events also celebrate the area's heritage, offering residents and tourists the opportunity to connect with the past through festivals and educational programs. Prowers County stands as a living testament to the importance of preserving and sharing its unique historical and cultural legacy.

Despite these historic and cultural resources, conservation efforts and programs for tourist activities in Prowers County are limited. The following goals aim to support the conservation of these sites and bolster economic growth through tourism.

**GOAL 1.** Support preservation efforts with national, state, and local preservation agencies, landowners, and the community.

1. Coordinate preservation efforts with local historic preservation boards and organizations to promote a comprehensive historic preservation approach across the County.
2. Work with Colorado State Historic Preservation Office to identify and evaluate resources for National Register of Historic Places and State Register of Historic Properties eligibility and enrollment.
3. Coordinate with the Big Timbers Museum to engage long-time residents and community members in documenting the oral histories of different ethnicities, groups, and communities to ensure an inclusive narrative of the County's history.

**GOAL 2.** Celebrate and honor significant historic and cultural resources and landscapes.

1. Recognize and celebrate historical farms and ranches and Centennial Farms in collaboration with History Colorado and the Colorado Department of Agriculture.
2. Collaborate with property owners, cities and towns, historic societies and organizations, and state agencies to research, map, and mark the historic path of the Santa Fe Trail, ensuring preservation and enhancing public access and education of its historical and cultural significance.
3. Honor the historical significance of Amache National Historic Site and ensure the site remains a place of remembrance and learning.
4. Support and promote community events that celebrate the County's diverse cultures, natural resources, and agricultural heritage to enhance tourism, foster inclusivity, and strengthen community identity.

## Transportation

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Prowers County is exceptionally well-positioned with a robust and diverse transportation infrastructure that facilitates both local and regional connectivity. The County benefits from major highways such as US Highway 50, US Highway 287, and US Highway 385, supported by a network of state and local roads, all of which significantly contribute to the County's economic vitality through efficient freight movement and long-distance travel.

In addition to this extensive roadway network, the County is served by two general aviation airports near Lamar and Holly, enhancing air travel options. The Prowers Area Transit (PAT) system offers reliable intercity fixed-route transit, effectively linking communities across the County. Furthermore, the Veteran Services Office provides transportation by appointment, ensuring accessibility for local veterans. Additionally, Amtrak's Southwest Chief railroad route passes through the County, with a convenient stop in Lamar, further enhancing regional connectivity.

A well-maintained transportation network plays a vital role in Prowers County's economy and quality of life. The transportation network in the County and connections to surrounding regions provide opportunities for future development and support County residents, workers, and visitors. The County is committed to ensuring that residents can access safe and reliable transportation.

**GOAL 1.** Accommodate truck traffic and maintain high-quality infrastructure in support of economic development in the County.

1. Work with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and local municipalities to improve pavement conditions and road grading schedules along key commerce corridors such as US Highway 50, US Highway 287, and US Highway 385.
2. Collaborate with partners like CDOT and private EV charging networks to identify infrastructure to accommodate freight and long-distance travel such as charging stations, rest areas, and services.

(Goal 1 objectives continued)

3. Partner with regional and federal partners to support recommended improvements to the Ports to Plains corridor, including trucker services, intelligent transportation system improvements, and EV charging infrastructure.
4. Work with CDOT to advocate for freight-oriented improvements on the state highway system such as the Lamar Reliever Route.

**GOAL 2.** Improve public transit and rail service within and to Prowers County.

1. Evaluate countywide transit service frequency to align service with riders' schedules and destination needs.
2. Work with regional and state partners to establish passenger rail service from Lamar to Pueblo to connect to future Front Range Rail service.

**GOAL 3.** Leverage the Southeast Colorado Regional Airport (Lamar Municipal Airport) to attract development and commercial opportunities.

1. Improve roadway access to encourage business development on available space surrounding the airport.
2. Partner with the City of Lamar to identify any additional facilities, services, or infrastructure that would strengthen and improve the Southeast Colorado Regional Airport.

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A decorative sunburst graphic on the right side of the page, consisting of multiple rays of varying lengths and shades of tan and beige, radiating from a central point.

# Chapter 3. Future Land Use Plan



Photo Credit: Claire McWilliams

# INTRODUCTION

The Future Land Use Plan embodies the community vision by illustrating the desired mix, character, and location of future land uses within the County. Each Land Use Category includes defining characteristics, primary and supporting uses, and guidelines for residential density. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) establishes the long-term physical growth strategy for the County; however, it does not predetermine exact land uses or densities for given parcels of land. The intent is to generally illustrate land use concepts, interrelationships, and categories with preferred location, density, and design characteristics.




***The Future Land Use Plan creates predictability in future land uses and considers critical factors like housing affordability, economic diversity, and environmental conservation to steer investment, growth, and conservation efforts effectively.***

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAND USE AND ZONING

The FLUM and associated Land Use Category descriptions, along with the goals and objectives of the Plan, provide guidance for future development patterns, infrastructure improvements, and overall character. Although not regulatory, the FLUM informs rezoning, subdivision, and other land use requests. It outlines development goals and objectives in a spatial blueprint without altering existing zoning or permitted uses on property in the County. The Prowers County Zoning and Subdivision Regulations establish actual zoning rules and development standards. Designations on the FLUM typically indicate the intended

primary use and suggested residential density for an area, whereas zoning districts specifically define allowable uses and include the design and development regulations for those uses. Zoning sets the policies and laws governing the use, bulk, height, density, and other physical or operational characteristics on a specific site.

In instances where existing zoning does not align with future land use goals, the FLUM sets expectations for future conditions, encouraging property owners to eventually adjust their zoning accordingly and mitigate negative externalities.

FUTURE LAND USE	VS	ZONING
<p><b>Envision</b></p> <p><i>Development Patterns</i></p> <p>Generally illustrates community desired land use concepts by showing categories of development types and patterns across multiple parcels</p>		<p><b>Designate</b></p> <p>Defines specific requirements for building and uses on individual parcels within defined zone districts</p>
<p><b>Categorize</b></p> <p>Does not predetermine exact land uses or densities for given parcels of land</p>	<p><i>Allowed Uses</i></p> 	<p><b>Define</b></p> <p>Regulates bulk, height, setbacks, density, allowed uses, and permitting requirements</p>
<p><b>Illustrate</b></p> <p>Broadly defines community vision for the future of the area</p>	<p><i>Community Character</i></p> 	<p><b>Implement</b></p> <p>Applies standards and limitations to identify characteristics appropriate for a specific site</p>

# FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

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There are six base land use categories and two overlay categories in this Future Land Use Plan. The base land use categories are described by the following aspects:

**General Character:** describes the overall look, feel, and function of an area.

**Envisioned Density:** refers to the expected intensity of residential development, defined by a number of dwelling units per acre.

**Primary uses:** the predominant types of development encouraged within each category.

**Additional Uses:** complementary or secondary activities that may also be appropriate but should not dominate an area.

**Discouraged Uses:** are activities that do not align with the intended vision for an area and are generally not supported due to potential conflicts with primary and additional uses. Discouraged uses may be allowed or appropriate in certain areas or with special considerations to limit negative impacts on surrounding areas.

The two overlay categories, Floodplain and Unstable/Sandy Soils, are only described by their general character. These overlay categories illustrate areas of the County that may need additional site engineering or considerations to mitigate flood risk or soil destabilization.

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## Farming and Ranching

**General Character:** Agricultural areas are intended for farmsteads and/or agricultural activities. Uses include farming and ranching, value-based agricultural manufacturing, other ancillary uses, and conservation of open lands in the County. These areas include irrigated agricultural land and should be maintained as active agricultural operations, when feasible. (Note: these areas were designated on the FLUM using USDA prime farmland and soils data.)

**Envisioned Density:** 1 dwelling unit per 35 acres.

**Primary Uses:**

- Farming
- Ranching
- Agricultural operations (including CAFOs - Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations)
- Agritourism

**Additional Uses:**

- Large-lot residential uses
- Small industrial and commercial uses
- Outdoor recreation
- Renewable energy-related facilities
- Agriculture-supportive uses such as worker housing or family housing

**Discouraged Uses:**

- Large commercial and retail uses
- Large industrial uses

---

## Rural

**General Character:** Intended for areas with very low-density residential development, farmsteads, and/or agricultural activities. Uses include farming and ranching, value-based agricultural manufacturing, low impact renewable energy generation, and other ancillary uses that support the County's rural character. Residential uses are generally on large parcels, housing related to agricultural operations, and not in platted subdivisions. Large residential developments in the future should reflect open space design practices such as clustering or conservation subdivisions.

**Envisioned Density:** 1 dwelling unit per 10-35 acres, cluster subdivisions, or larger lot residential.

**Primary Uses:**

- Large-lot rural residences of up to 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres
- Farming
- Ranching (including CAFOs)
- Agritourism

**Additional Uses:**

- Small industrial and commercial uses
- Outdoor recreation
- Renewable energy-related facilities

**Discouraged Uses:**

- Large commercial/retail or industrial unless adjacent to a highway

---

## Rural Community

**General Character:** Intended for areas and unincorporated communities with residential character. These may be historic townsites, residential communities, or areas adjacent to municipalities. These areas are generally on individual well and septic systems and may include small-scale commercial and retail uses and community buildings in addition to residences.

**Envisioned Density:** 1 dwelling unit per 1-5 acres

**Primary Uses:**

- Residential uses with a density up to 1 dwelling unit per 1 acres
- Small-scale farming

**Additional Uses:**

- Small-scale convenience commercial, services, and retail

**Discouraged Uses:**

- Large-scale commercial/retail
- Industrial
- Large-scale agricultural uses

---

## Industrial/Airport

**General Character:** Intended for areas with industrial or manufacturing uses not compatible with residential uses. These areas include airport facilities, manufacturing, and processing facilities.

**Envisioned Density Range:** No residential development is envisioned in industrial areas.

**Primary Uses:**

- Manufacturing and processing
- Industrial
- Airport facilities

**Additional Uses:**

- Offices
- Warehousing
- Renewable energy-related facilities
- Residence associated with primary business

**Discouraged Uses:**

- Residential uses

---

## Commercial

**General Character:** Intended for established commercial areas serving the broader County and region. These areas should be commercial hubs along major roadways and may include larger buildings and warehouses.

**Envisioned Density Range:** No primary residential development is envisioned in commercial areas.

**Primary Uses:**

- Commercial, services, and retail
- Light industrial uses
- Warehousing

**Additional Uses:**

- Renewable energy-related facilities
- Residence associated with primary business

**Discouraged Uses:**

- Manufacturing and processing
- Residential uses

---

## Public Land

**General Character:** No major change in land use is envisioned. Land uses are generally related to supporting recreation and outdoor tourism-based activities, the public land administration, and access to outdoor resources. Most of these public lands are not within Prowers County's jurisdiction and therefore specific uses within these areas would be determined with the appropriate land manager.

**Envisioned Density Range:** No residential development is anticipated on public lands.

**Primary Uses:**

- National and State Parks
- Multiple resource uses (i.e. forestry and grazing)
- Outdoor recreation on publicly accessible lands
- Watershed protection
- Hazard mitigation (i.e. floodplain management)

**Additional Uses:**

- Trails and passive recreation facilities
- Research and public institutions

**Discouraged Uses:**

- All residential uses
- Commercial
- Light or heavy industrial

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## Floodplain Overlay

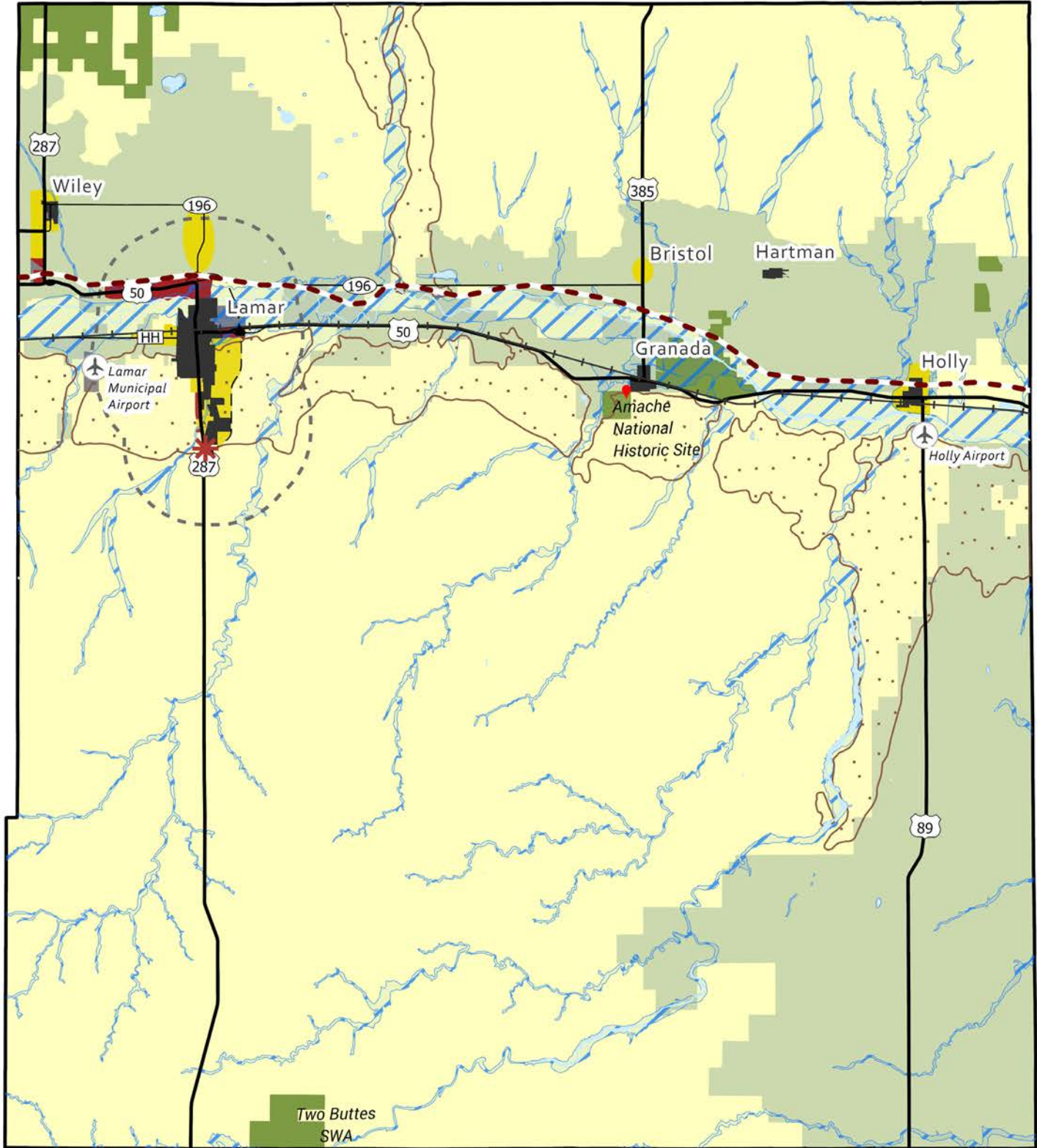
**General Character:** Reflects the 100-year floodplain and the associated areas where development and building restrictions for properties help mitigate environmental and flooding hazards.

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## Unstable/Sandy Soils Overlay

**General Character:** Reflect areas with extremely poor and unstable soils. Sandy soils can easily wash away in the rain or wind and drain water quickly due to their porous nature, which can result in erosion and sink hole issues. Development in these areas requires additional site and building engineering to mitigate these risks. (Note: these areas were designated using USDA soils data.)

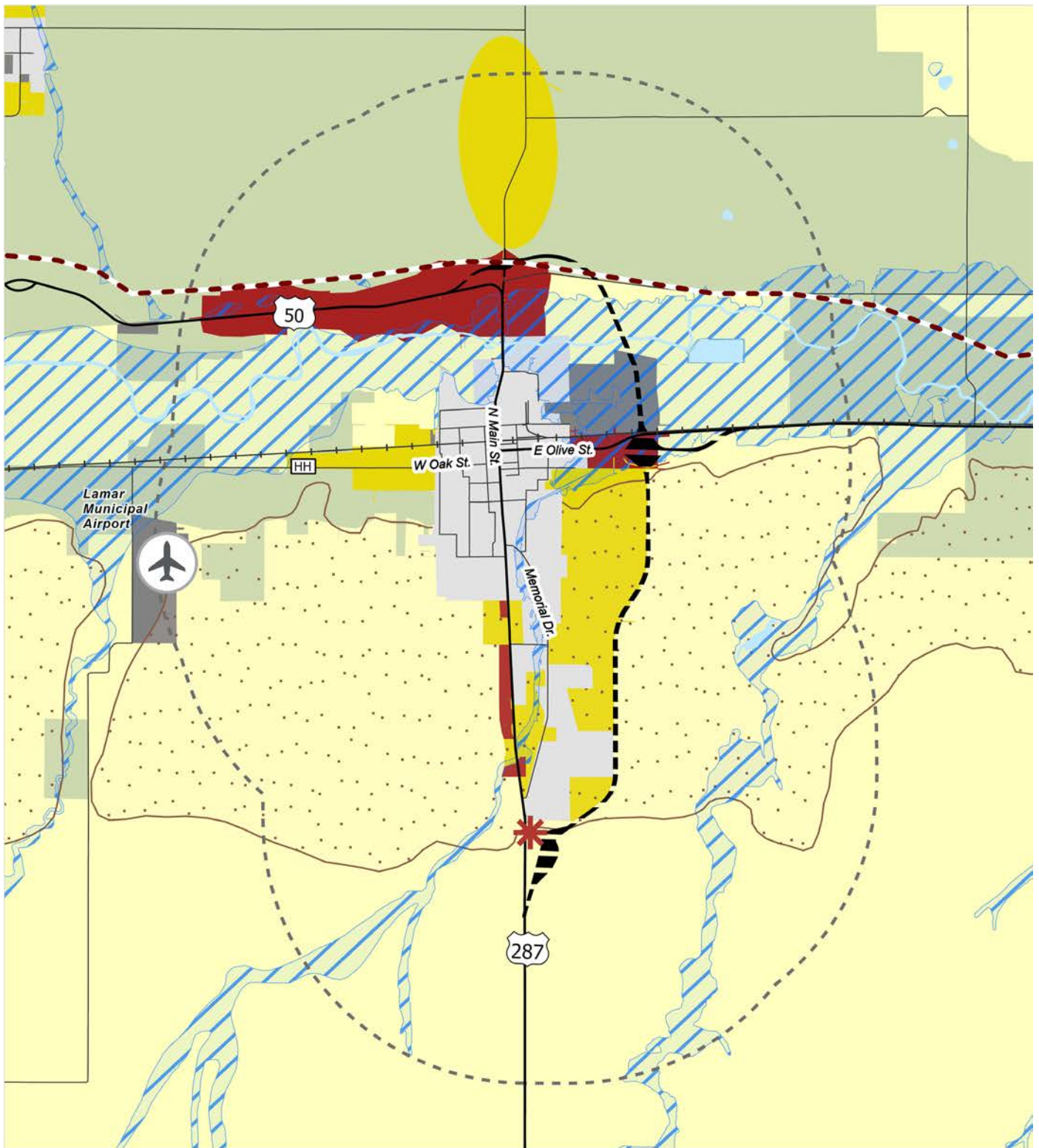
# PROWERS COUNTY FUTURE LAND USE MAP



**Future Land Use Map**  
March 14, 2025

- |                         |  |  |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| County Boundary         | Potential Future Interchange Development | <b>Future Land Use</b><br>Farming and Ranching |
| Municipal Boundaries    | Future Reliever Route                    | Commercial                                     |
| Lamar 3 Mile Buffer     | Floodplain Overlay                       | Industrial/Airport                             |
| Waterbodies             | Unstable/Sandy Soils Overlay             | Public Land                                    |
| Airports                |  | Rural Community                                |
| Highways                |  | Rural  |
| Railroads               |  |  |
| Historic Santa Fe Trail |  |  |

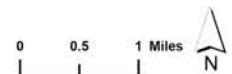


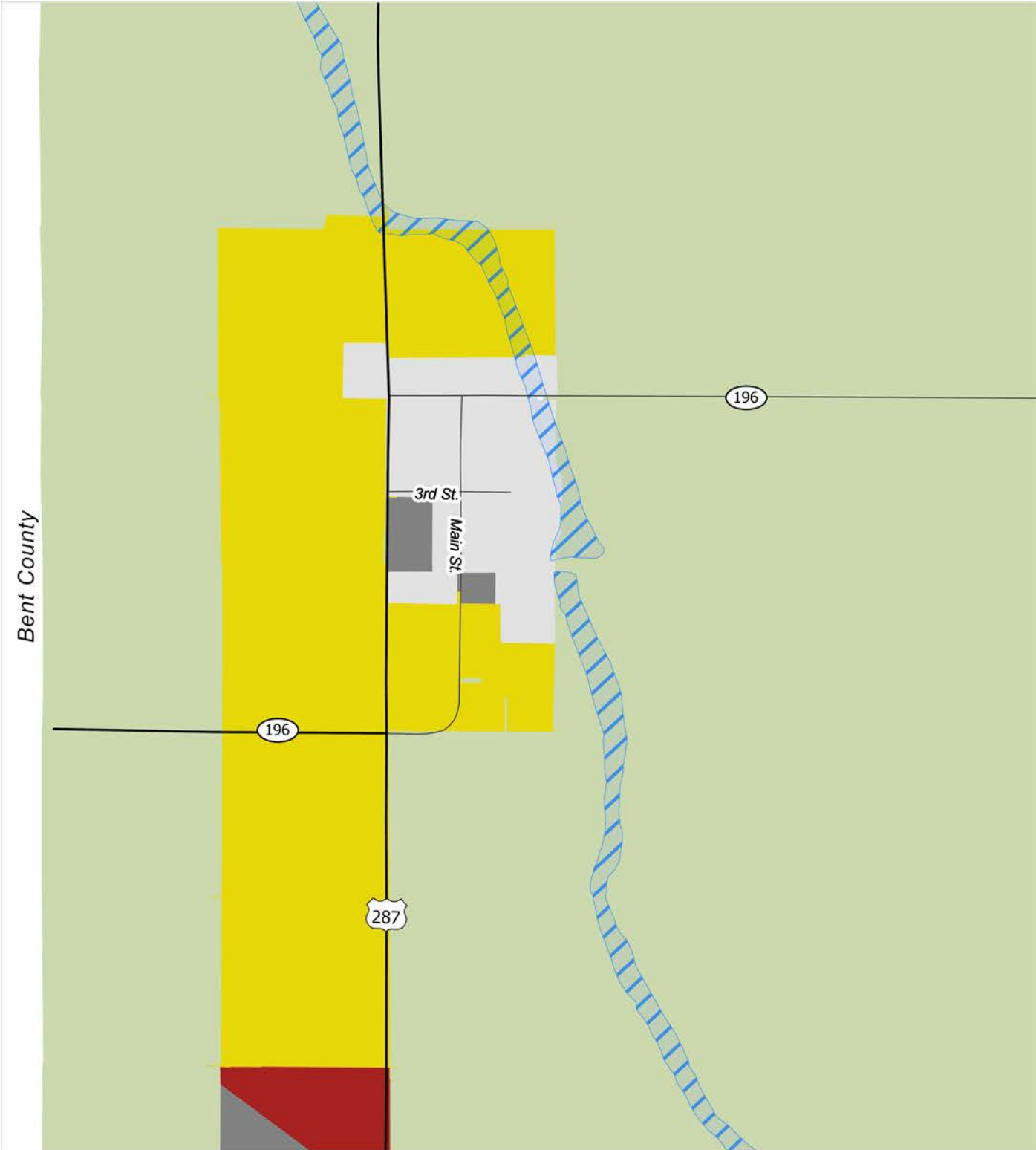


### Future Land Use Map

City of Lamar Area  
March 14, 2025

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Municipal Boundaries</li> <li> Lamar 3 Mile Buffer</li> <li> Waterbodies</li> <li> Airports</li> <li> Highways</li> <li> Railroads</li> <li> Historic Santa Fe Trail</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Floodplain Overlay</li> <li> Unstable/Sandy Soils Overlay</li> <li> Potential Future Interchange Development</li> <li> Future Reliever Route</li> </ul> | <p><b>Future Land Use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Farming and Ranching</li> <li> Commercial</li> <li> Industrial/Airport</li> <li> Public Land</li> <li> Rural</li> <li> Rural Community</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|



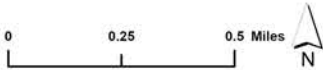


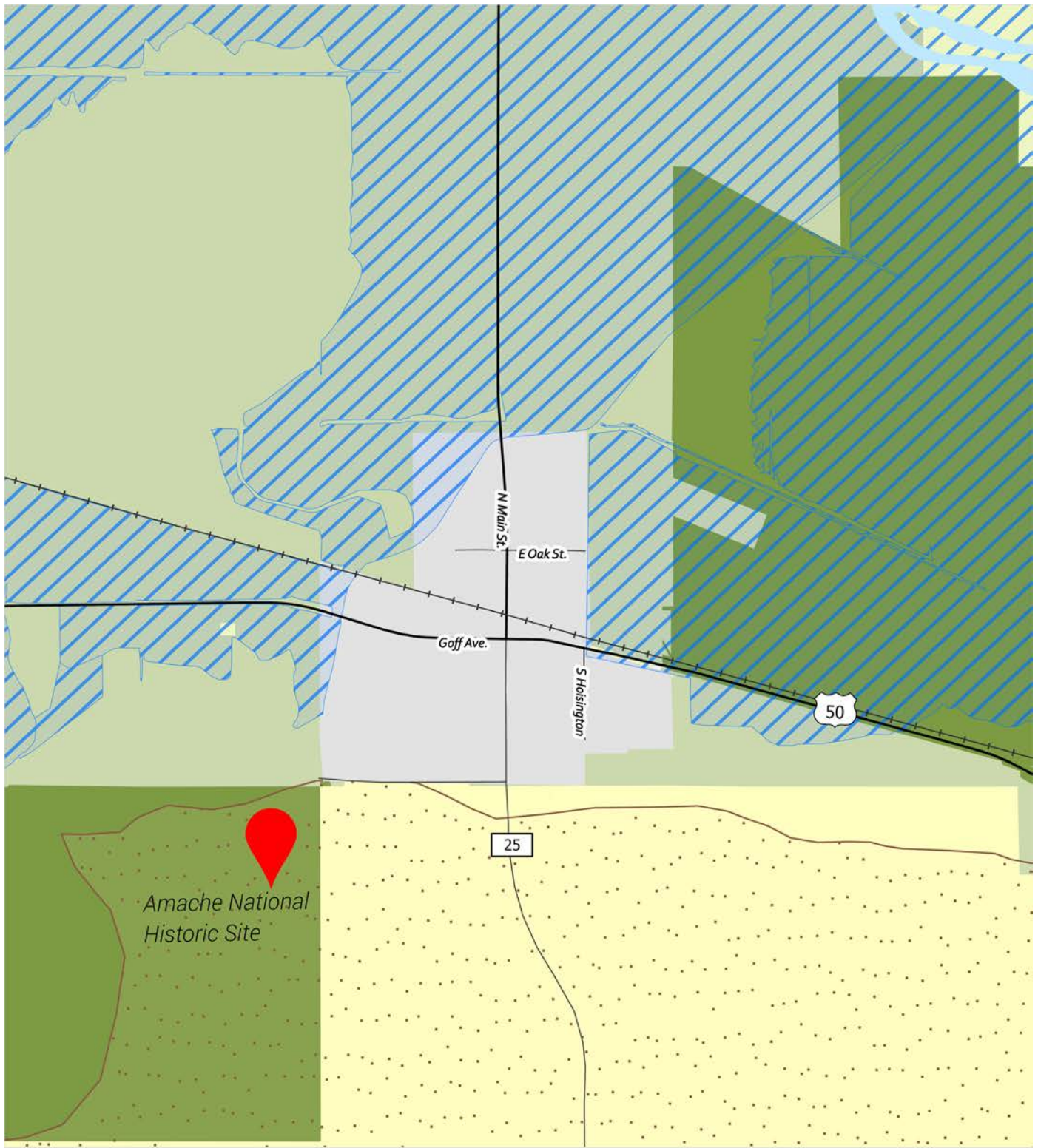
**Future Land Use Map**

Town of Wiley Area  
 March 14, 2025

- Municipal Boundaries
- Highways
- + Railroads
- Waterbodies
- Floodplain Overlay

- Future Land Use**
- Farming and Ranching
  - Commercial
  - Industrial/Airport
  - Public Land
  - Rural
  - Rural Community





**Future Land Use Map**

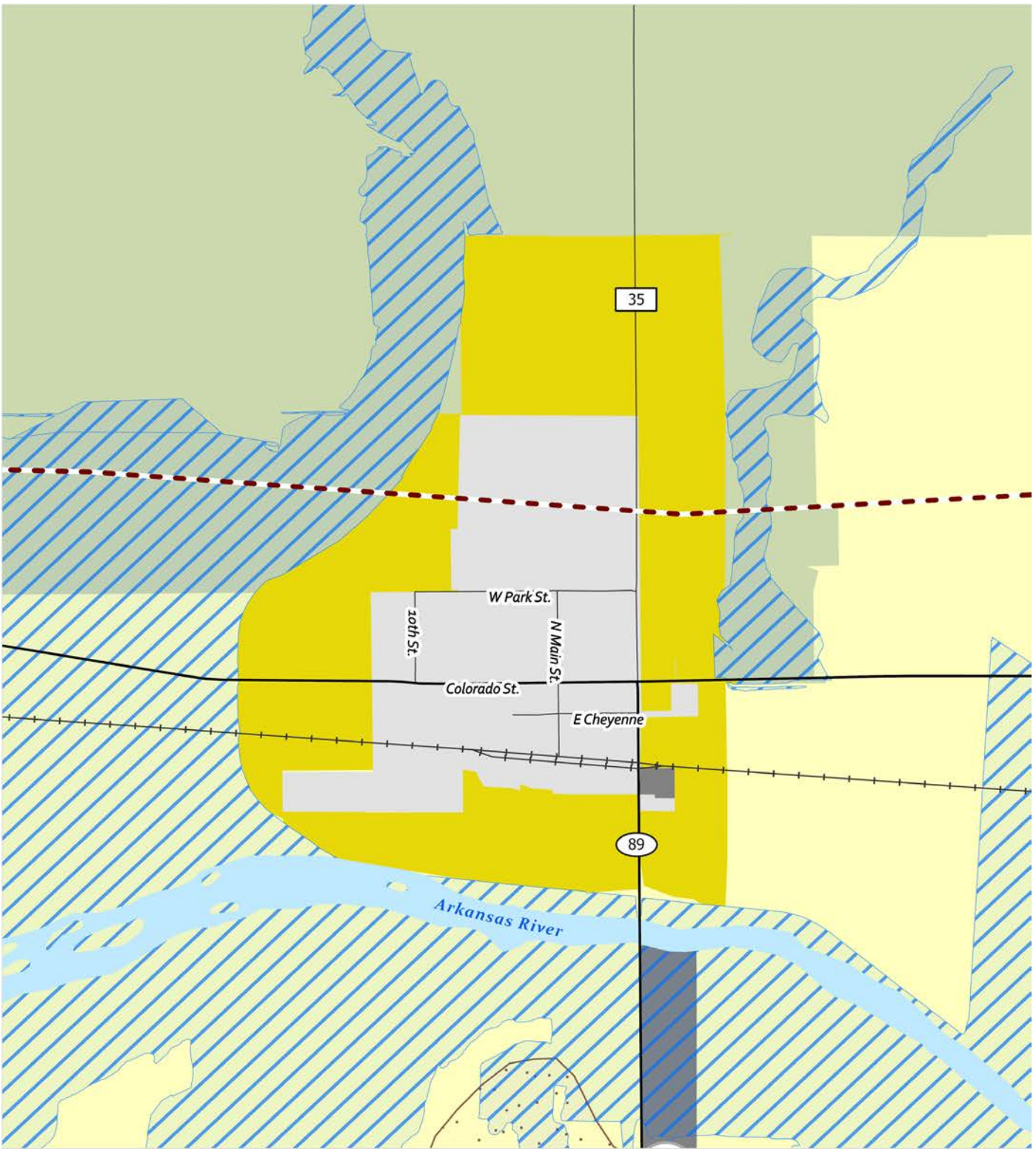
Town of Granada Area  
March 14, 2025

- Municipal Boundaries
- Waterbodies
- Highways
- Railroads
- Floodplain Overlay
- Unstable/Sandy Soils Overlay

**Future Land Use**

- Farming and Ranching
- Commercial
- Industrial/Airport
- Public Land
- Rural
- Rural Community

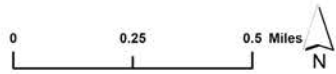


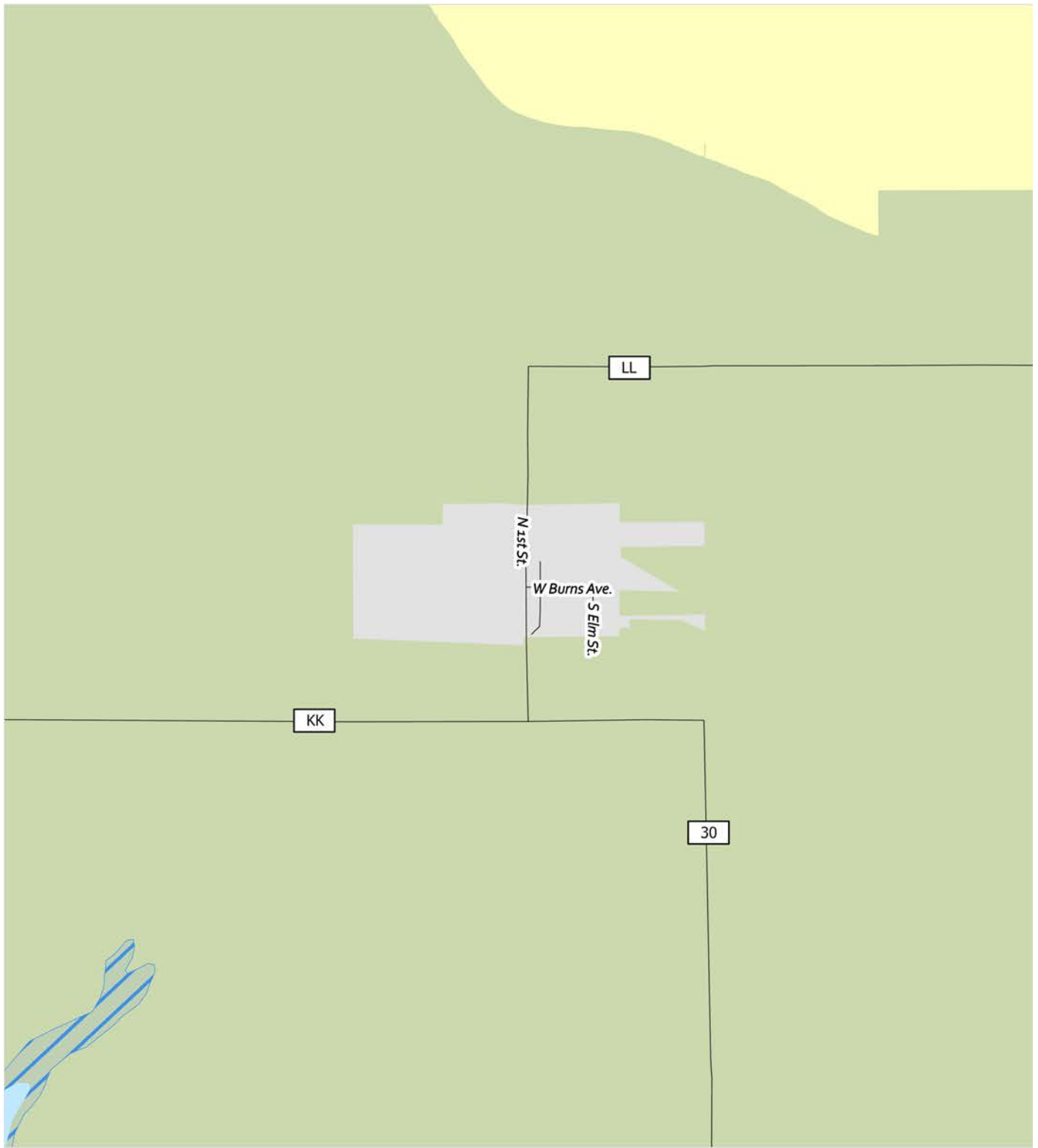


**Future Land Use Map**  
 Town of Holly Area  
 March 14, 2025

- Municipal Boundaries
- Highways
- Railroads
- Historic Santa Fe Trail
- Waterbodies
- Floodplain Overlay
- Unstable/Sandy Soils Overlay

- Future Land Use**
- Farming and Ranching
  - Commercial
  - Industrial/Airport
  - Public Land
  - Rural
  - Rural Community





**Future Land Use Map**

Town of Hartman Area  
March 14, 2025

- Municipal Boundaries
- Highways
- Waterbodies
- Floodplain Overlay

**Future Land Use**

- Farming and Ranching
- Commercial
- Industrial/Airport
- Public Land
- Rural
- Rural Community



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# Chapter 4. Implementation



Photo Credit: Miriam McGilvray

# PLAN MANAGEMENT & AMENDMENTS

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## Periodic Review

The goals, objectives, and land use recommendations contained in this Plan were developed with a 20-year planning horizon, however, the Plan is intended to be flexible and adapt to changing conditions. The Plan should be reviewed at least every five years and updated every 10 years or as needed. Minor modifications may occur in interim years whenever major demographic shifts or policy changes occur that would impact the accuracy and direction of the elements in this Plan. As change occurs, however, the Plan's Vision Themes should continue to provide the foundation.

## Amendments

The Prowers County Planning Commission or the Land Use Department may initiate either major or administrative amendments to the Plan, respectively. The Planning Commission hear and act upon major amendments. Staff process administrative amendments and the Planning Commission does not take formal action.

**Major amendments** have a substantive effect on the goals, objectives, and land uses of the Plan and warrant public involvement as part of the amendment process. Examples of major amendments are:

- A comprehensive update of the Plan as conducted every five or more years.
- The revision of elements as new information becomes available.
- The preparation of additional or more specific elements of the Plan.
- The change of future land use designations or addition/removal of categories.

**Administrative amendments** include changes that do not affect the goals, objectives, or land uses in any substantive way. Examples of administrative amendments are:

- Map updates to show areas newly designated as preserved or conserved.
- Map updates to show newly annexed or incorporated property within municipalities.
- Map updates to show updated information, e.g., roads, hydrology, hazard, wildlife, and other similar data. Future land use designations cannot be changed by these updates.
- Minor clarifying changes to future land use designations.
- Graphic updates.
- Typographical errors and omissions.

# PLAN COMPLIANCE & DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

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While the Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document, the Prowers County Land Use Code (LUC) is the regulatory document that implements the Plan. The LUC establishes procedures and regulations for development including use allowances, site planning, parking, landscaping, and other criteria. Implementation of and alignment with the Plan's vision, goals, and objectives will be key considerations during review of future development proposals.

While there is a desire for flexibility and the ability to respond quickly to high-quality projects and changing market demands, there is also a responsibility to focus on improving water quality; increasing the availability and quality of childcare, senior services, healthcare, and education; creating quality and affordable housing options for residents of all stages of life; building a resilient economy; and maintaining agriculture and ranching as a cornerstone of the County's economy and history. As projects are reviewed and competing issues arise, it will be the responsibility of the approving authority to balance these needs to meet the vision of the Plan.

During the review of an application, the following questions should be considered to determine whether a proposed development is achieving the vision and goals established in this Plan and thus meeting the LUC requirements.

1. Does the proposed development generally advance the vision and goals contained in the Comprehensive Plan?
2. Will the proposed development strengthen the character of the area by:
  - a. Providing appropriate infill development and, if applicable, removing obsolete development that does not contribute to the quality of the surrounding area;
  - b. Minimizing impacts to water quality and availability or have accompanying new water resources so as to not negatively affect existing water supply;
  - c. Supporting the creation of quality community services including childcare, senior services, healthcare, and education;
  - d. Supporting the agriculture and ranching character of the community; and
  - e. Meeting or exceeding the development quality of the surrounding area?

# KEY IMPLEMENTATION NEEDS

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## Compliance with State Legislation

With the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 24-174, many Colorado communities are required to include a strategic growth element and water supply element no later than December 31, 2026, and adopt a Housing Action Plan no later than 2028. Additionally, House Bill (HB) 24-1313 requires communities that meet certain criteria to create a Housing Opportunity Goal and identify where zoning capacity for high density housing adjacent to transit can be provided.

The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) is in the process of developing guidance and background information to guide the preparation of these sections. However, based on preliminary guidance from DOLA, it is anticipated that additional edits specific to SB24-174 and HB24-1313 will not be necessary for Prowers County. DOLA is anticipated to provide more concrete guidance on 2024 legislation in mid-2025.

Other state legislation in upcoming years may necessitate additional updates to this Plan.

## Zoning and Subdivision Updates

This Plan anticipates a number of updates to the County's Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to implement the goals and objectives. While some of the actions listed in Appendix D can be accomplished as individual projects, a larger code assessment of both the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations is suggested to identify where there are gaps in the existing regulations, which standards need to be updated to comply with state and federal regulations, and suggest enhancements to align the zone districts and allowed uses with the Future Land Use Categories.

Updates may include:

- Develop design standards for unpaved public roadways.
- Review and update wildfire mitigation requirements for new development to address vulnerabilities and reduce fire risks.
- Refine floodplain and implement waterbody protection standards to mitigate flood risks.
- Update use allowances and dimensional standards in the Zoning Code to align with Future Land Use Categories and uses.
- Update the Zoning Code to allow for a variety of housing to ensure regulations do not detract from the development of affordable and attainable housing.
- Update the Zoning Code to support flexibility in agricultural areas with land uses such as produce stands, truck farms, event venues, agritourism, agrivoltaics, seasonal activities, and worker housing.
- Revise the County's Zoning Regulations to facilitate redevelopment of historic properties while maintaining historic character.
- Update the Subdivision Resolution to allow clustered residential subdivisions as an alternative to 10 to 35 acre development.

# Appendix A.

## Acronyms and Glossary of Terms



Photo Credit: Ron Knight

# ACRONYMS

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**ADA:** Americans with Disabilities Act  
**AMI:** Area Median Income  
**CAFO:** Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation  
**CDOT:** Colorado Department of Transportation  
**CIP:** Capital Improvement Program  
**CRS:** Colorado Revised Statute  
**DOLA:** Colorado Department of Local Affairs  
**DU/AC:** Dwelling Units per Acre  
**EMS:** Emergency Medical Service  
**FEMA:** Federal Emergency Management Agency  
**FFA:** Future Farmers of America  
**FLUM:** Future Land Use Map  
**HB:** House Bill  
**HUD:** United States Department of Housing and Urban Development  
**IGA:** Intergovernmental Agreement  
**LUC:** Land Use Code  
**PAT:** Powers Area Transit  
**SB:** Senate Bill  
**SECRHA:** Southeast Colorado Regional Housing Authority  
**WPA:** Works Progress Administration

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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*When not defined here, please consult the Prowers County Zoning Regulations for a definition.*

**Additional Uses:** Complementary or secondary activities that may also be appropriate with a Future Land Use but should not dominate an area.

**Affordable Housing:** Generally uses a HUD definition of residential development consisting of any combination of single-family attached, single-family detached, and multifamily dwelling units, regardless of the age of occupants, provided that 50% or more of the units serve households earning from zero to 80% of the regional Area Median Income (AMI).

**Agriculture Land:** The use of land for farming, dairying, pasturage, agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, viticulture, animal and poultry husbandry and the necessary accessory uses for parking, treating, or storing the produce.

**Amendment:** A formal change or revision to the Comprehensive Plan, including either the Plan's text or its maps.

**Annexation:** The incorporation of a land area into an existing city with a resulting change in the boundaries of that city.

**Capital Improvement Programs (CIP):** A mechanism within government for identifying, financing, scheduling, and constructing significant public improvements.

**Commercial:** The distribution, sale, or rental of goods and the provision of other services.

**Community:** Within this document, "community" or "Prowers community" refers to all people, businesses, organizations, etc. within Prowers County or those who are directly affected by the affairs of the County.

**Comprehensive Plan:** A long-range plan intended to guide the growth and development of a community that includes analysis, recommendations, and proposals for topics such as the community's population, economy, land use, housing, transportation, and community facilities.

**Density:** The ratio of residential units on an acre of land. Thus, a permitted density of two (2) dwelling units per acre for a property that has an area of ten (10) acres would allow up to 20 dwelling units.

**Development:** Making a material change in the use or appearance of a structure or land, dividing land into two or more parcels or creating or terminating a right of access.

**Discouraged Uses:** Activities that do not align with the intended vision for an area and are generally not supported due to potential conflicts with primary and additional uses. Discouraged uses may be allowed or appropriate in certain areas or with special considerations to limit negative impacts on surrounding areas.

**Dwelling Unit:** A single residential unit providing complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation.

**Dwelling Units per Acre (DU/AC):** A unit of measurement commonly used to determine the density of a residential development.

**Floodplain:** The land area that has been or may be inundated by water during times of flood. A Regulatory Floodplain is delineated by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the County is a floodplain administrator.

**Future Land Use Plan:** A map and land use descriptions that is used to describe how land should be used in the future.

**General Character:** A description for the future land uses that describes the overall look, feel, and function of an area.

**Goal:** Broad aspirations and ideals, an end to direct effort.

**Infill Development:** Development of vacant, bypassed parcels of land in otherwise built-up areas.

**Infrastructure:** Facilities and services need to sustain any type of development. Infrastructure includes but is not limited to streets, drainage, water, wastewater, transportation, power, telecommunications, and fire and police facilities.

**Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA):** A cooperative agreement between two or more governmental jurisdictions or special districts.

**Land Use:** The manner in which land is used. Land Use may also refer to a future land use designation on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map.

**Objective:** Ongoing course of action that guides governmental action and decision making to achieve the related goal.

**Open Space:** Lands that include agriculture lands, scenic viewsheds, and trails. Open space exists in a natural state and contains few or no structures; it may also contain significant natural, aesthetic, and recreational features that warrant protection.

**Planning Commission:** An advisory board created to conduct public hearings, public meetings, and provide recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on land use applications and related matters. This includes statutory approval of Comprehensive Plan amendments.

**Primary Uses:** The predominant types of development encouraged within each Future Land Use Category.

**Quality of Life:** The personal perception of the physical, economic, and emotional well-being that exists in the community.

**Redevelopment:** To improve and reuse existing buildings; to demolish existing buildings (often in poor condition) and create new ones.

**Riparian:** Refers to living or located on the bank of a natural watercourse such as a river or lake.

**Single-Family:** A development consisting of a lot or lots containing only one primary dwelling unit per lot and which may take the form of detached or attached or manufactured home.

**Sustainability and Sustainable Development:**

Strategic initiatives and policies that provide both short and long-term solutions to benefit the people, environment, and economic welfare of the community.

**Vision:** A shared dream of the future characterized by long-term idealistic thinking that provides the foundation for the development of the goals, objectives, and programs. A vision is non-binding and may not be achievable in the lifetime of this Comprehensive Plan.

**Zoning:** Regulations pertaining to lot sizes and dimensions, building setbacks and height, density, and the way land is used.

**Zoning Map:** Map that depicts the division of the county into districts or “zones” in which different uses are allowed and different building and lot size restrictions apply. The zoning map is regulatory in nature and applies to currently permitted uses; it should not be confused with the Future Land Use Map, which guides formation of future zoning.

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page consisting of a series of radiating lines in shades of tan and white, resembling a sunburst or a stylized sun.

# Appendix B.

## Existing Conditions Snapshots



Photo Credit: Carol M. Highsmith

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# POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

In recent years, Prowers County has faced several demographic shifts, painting a complex picture of its evolving community. One of the most notable trends is the County's stagnating total population, with a projected decline to 2050. Since 2003, the County's Hispanic population has increased, making up almost 40% of the total population. The County also has an aging population, represented by an increasing median age.

In addition to demographic challenges, Prowers County contends with a high poverty level, currently at 17.6%. This issue disproportionately affects those under 18-years-old and individuals older than 65-years-old, highlighting the vulnerability of these age groups within the community. Lastly, just under 22% of the population resides in unincorporated areas. This distribution suggests a significant portion of the community may be more dispersed, potentially impacting access to services and community resources.

## POPULATION GROWTH

Population growth in the County has struggled in recent years, with an overall decrease of 16.6% in population from 2000 to 2022, from 14,483 to 11,968. Although the population decrease has affected the whole County, specific age groups have decreased more than others.

Since 2000, younger age groups (25 to 54 years old) have decreased by 6.7%. Conversely, the 55+ age group has increased by 10.4% over the last 20 years. This change demonstrates that many established residents stayed in Prowers County over the last 20 years and

### By the Numbers



**-17% population decline (2000-2022)**



**40+% Hispanic/Latinx population**



**10% increase in 55+ age group (2000-2022)**

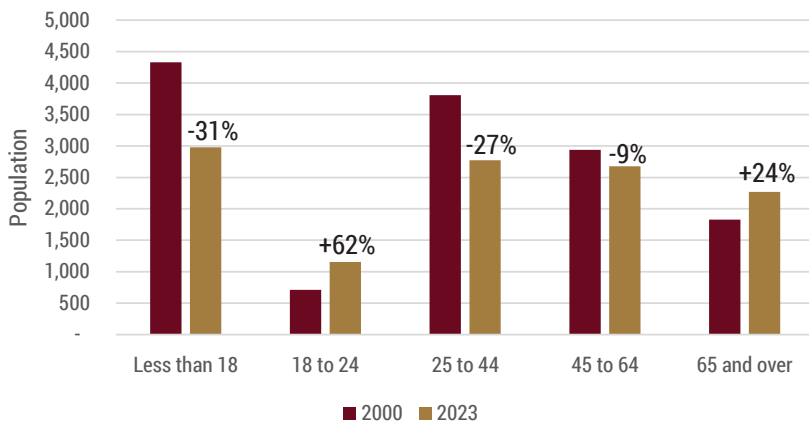


**18% poverty rate**



**22% live in unincorporated county**

Age Distribution (2000-2023)



aged in place. However, the younger age group has not grown in recent years, indicating that younger age groups are leaving the County and not returning at all or for many years when they are older.

The general decline in the County's population has economic impacts due to the loss in labor force. A decline in population also makes it difficult for the County to receive funding for programs or provide services.

## CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

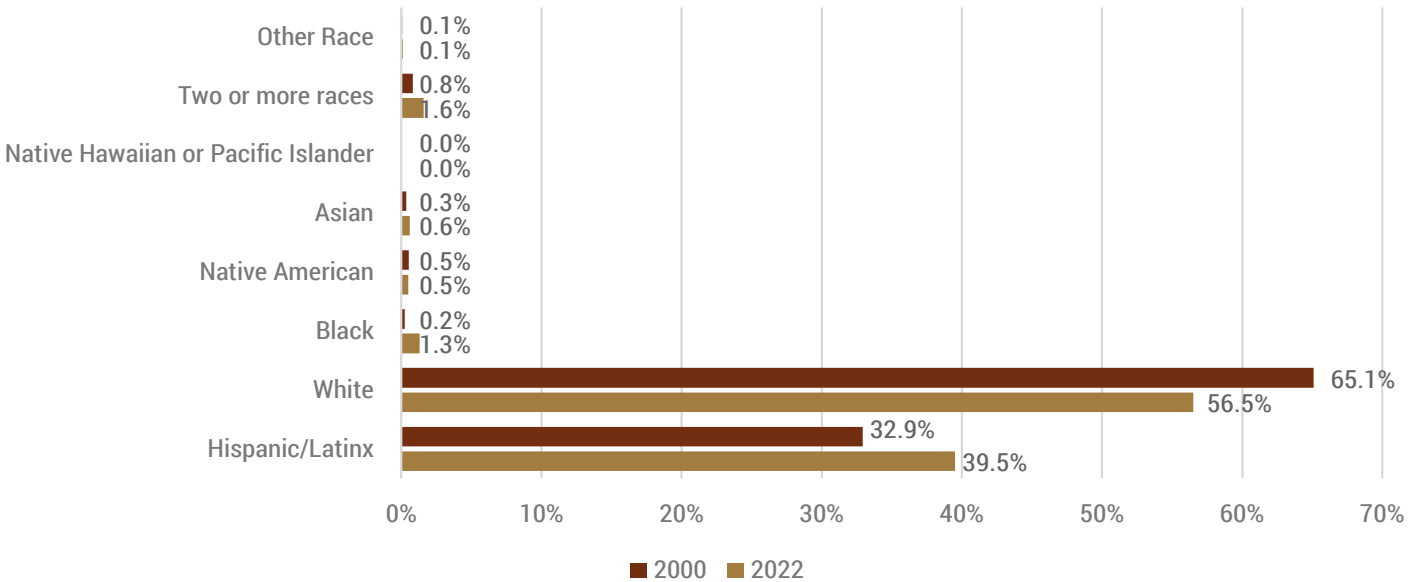
Over the last 20 years, Prowers County has changed and welcomed new communities, lifestyles, and cultures. The most significant demographic change over the past 20 years is an increase of over 6% in the Hispanic/Latinx population. Today, Prowers County is nearly 40% Hispanic/Latinx, which makes it important for the County to provide tailored services and events that support the Latinx/Hispanic community. Organizations like Lamar Unidos currently fill in the gaps, such as assisting people to get their driver's licenses. It should be noted that some estimates put the Hispanic community closer

to 60% of the population, citing significant undercounting in the Census and ACS estimates.

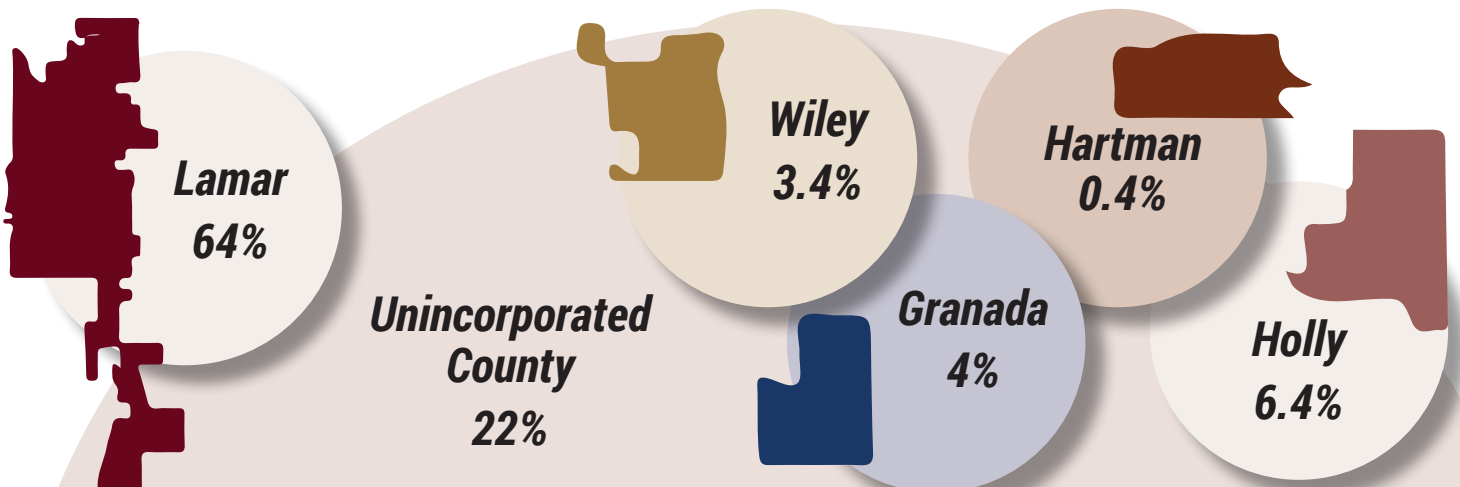
As previously discussed, Prowers County's population is aging, much like the larger state and national trends. Aging populations will require specialized services like senior centers, nursing homes, and healthcare providers that will be able to provide support services.

Currently, senior and elder care within the County is limited, posing challenges for older populations to be able to stay within the County and age in place.

### Race and Ethnicity



## WHERE DO PEOPLE LIVE IN PROWERS COUNTY?





## COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

The County has high amounts of poverty across the population, but larger percentages are concentrated in younger and older age groups. This data indicates that the most vulnerable people could have difficulties getting access to and affording basic needs, such as housing and food. Human services and community organizations that assist these populations are vital to ensuring that the County's populations are taken care of.

The majority of the County's population and growth has occurred in and around the incorporated areas of the County. The County's spatial dispersion of its population is a unique challenge, as those in the rural areas currently don't have the same access to services as those who live near cities and towns. As Prowers County plans for the future, planning for improved access to services for rural residents will be vital to addressing spatial gaps. Coordinating and collaborating with the municipalities will be important throughout this process.

## PUBLIC PERCEPTION

During the first engagement series, many participants expressed concerns over the lack of young people in the County and being able to keep their families together across multiple generations.

One of the biggest challenges heard from the community focused on child and senior care. The quality, affordability, and availability of both types of care leave many parents and family members in difficult positions—socially and economically.

Many families are struggling to break the cycle of poverty, which relies heavily on the County's economic conditions and human services. Access to resources and opportunities is even more limited in unincorporated areas of the County, creating multigenerational struggles.

A significant amount of the County's population is Hispanic, and the sentiment at public events was that the relationship between County officials and other programs should move toward more inclusive practices and proactive engagement of the Hispanic community.

# LAND USE & REGIONAL COORDINATION

Agriculture is the dominate land use in Prowers County, with residential and commercial areas concentrated in towns and unincorporated communities, with exceptions along major highways. While a Lamar Joint Planning Area established in a 2003 Comprehensive Plan dissolved in 2023, ongoing updates to the Lamar and Prowers County Comprehensive Plans may lead to a renewed agreement to coordinate development, infrastructure, and potential annexations. Other incorporated communities in the County, such as Holly, Granada, Hartman, and Wiley, operate independently regarding land use decisions, lacking formal coordination with the County.

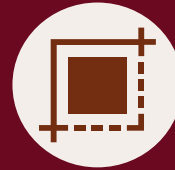
## LAMAR JOINT PLANNING AREA

The City of Lamar, the largest community in Prowers County, has a significant impact upon the unincorporated area. This impact is particularly evident around the city limits. Colorado municipalities are required to adopt a Three-mile Plan prior to annexing property into their territorial boundaries, per C.R.S. 31-12-105. The intent is to establish an understanding of land development patterns, infrastructure, and municipal services and identify land that may be considered for annexation in the future. Additionally, the State of Colorado allows Inter-governmental Agreements (IGAs) between a county and city to address planning issues of mutual interest, which generally encompasses this three-mile radius.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS

The four other incorporated communities—Holly, Granada, Hartman, and Wiley—have their own governance and authority over land use decisions within their town limits. There are no formal agreements between the County and these communities to coordinate land use decisions or annexations.

### By the Numbers



**1,644 square miles  
in size**



**72.5 square miles of  
public land**



**5 incorporated  
communities**



**9 zoning districts**

## EXISTING LAND USE

Land Use is often confused with zoning. Existing land use refers to a property's current use, which is also the basis for property tax rates (i.e. commercial, residential, agricultural, etc.). Zoning is a regulatory designation that looks toward future growth and development potential. As such, zoning should be based on the Future Land Use designations established in the Comprehensive Plan.

Prowers County encompasses roughly 1,644 square miles. At 4% of the County, approximately 72.5 square miles is public land, either owned by the State of Colorado or the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Analysis of existing land use in Prowers County shows that the largest private use of property is for agriculture; farming and ranching. Most residential and commercial areas in the County are concentrated within the towns and unincorporated communities. Some exceptions are commercial and industrial uses along US Highway 50 and US Highway 385. Natural features and water availability heavily influence land uses within the County.

There are agricultural properties in southern Prowers County that also have large renewable energy operations, namely the Colorado Green Wind Project and Twin Buttes Wind Farm. Renewable energy as a secondary use on ranching properties is usually synergistic because it rarely impedes non-irrigated farming operations.

## ZONING

Counties and municipalities use zoning to regulate how a property is used (residential, commercial, agriculture, etc), minimum lot sizes, and how buildings on those lots should relate to their surroundings including streets, property lines, and other buildings. These regulations are in place to protect community members' quality of life and provide predictability in new development. In Prowers County, there are nine different zoning districts.

A large portion of the County is zoned primarily for farming and ranching uses, intended to maintain natural characteristics and agricultural functions. Within the A-1, A-2, and A-3 agricultural designations, property owners are allowed residential uses and uses to support agricultural uses.

## PROGRAMS AND TOOLS

Prowers County is regulated through zoning and subdivision regulations. Zoning permits are required prior to the construction, moving, conversion, extension, enlargement, or structural alteration of buildings or other structures in all Zoning Districts. These zoning permits govern proper uses in each zone district and review setback, density, floodplain, and performance standards.

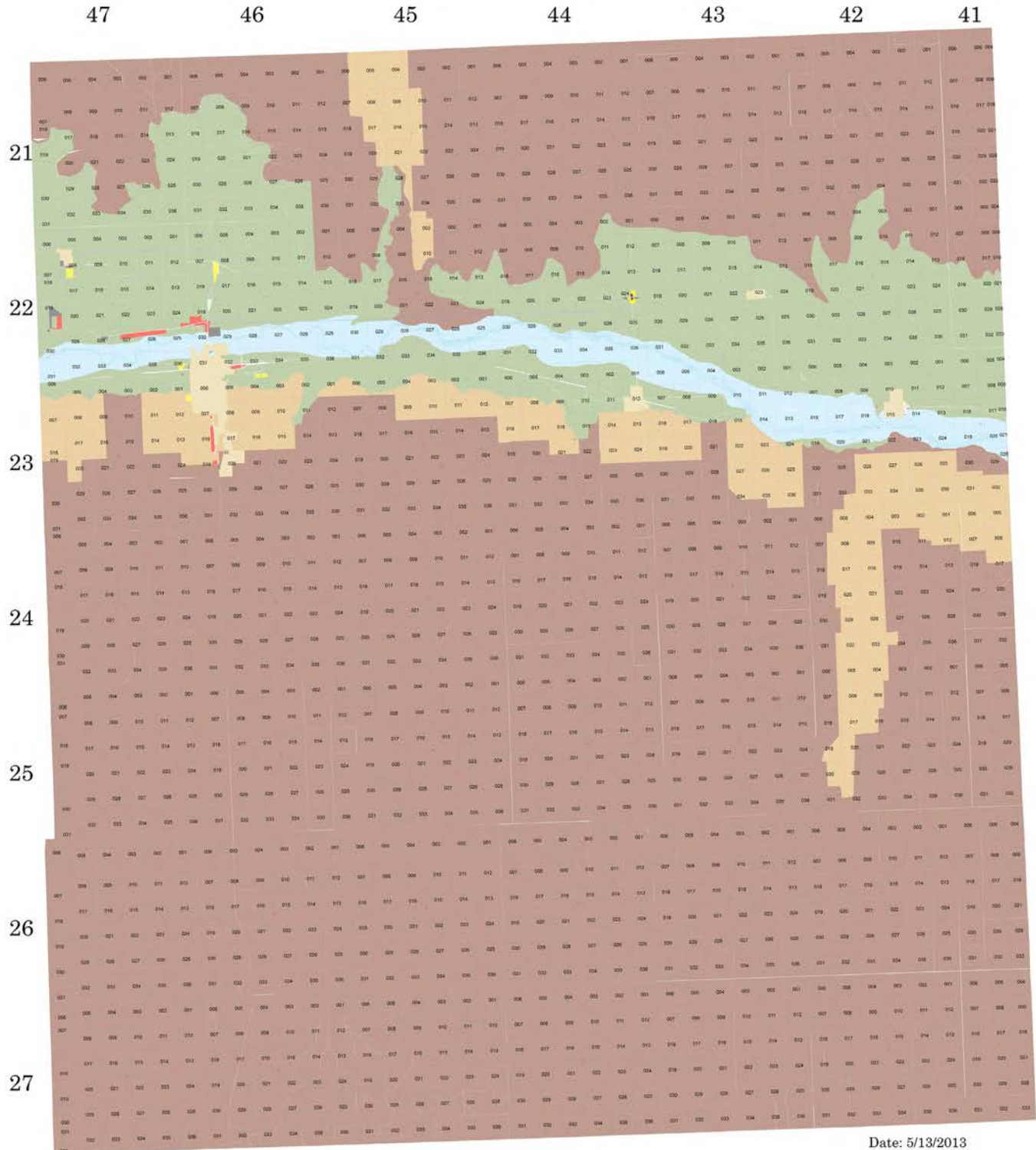
Some areas and activities of state interest are also permitted through Prowers County's 1041 regulations. This includes Municipal and Industrial Water Projects, Major New or Expanded Domestic Water Treatment Systems, Major Facilities of a Public Utility, and Areas with Significant Natural Resources. The County is authorized to permit these uses by the State of Colorado through a 1974 law commonly known as "1041" (for House Bill 1041). All new large scale renewable energy projects, such as wind farms, solar farms, and regional transmission projects are permitted through this process.

## PUBLIC PERCEPTION











In Prowers County, public perception regarding land use and regional coordination often reflects confusion and uncertainty, particularly concerning city boundaries and jurisdictional distinctions between municipalities and the County. Many residents may find it challenging to delineate where city limits end and county jurisdiction begins, leading to misunderstandings about which governing body oversees various aspects of land use planning and development.



# Prowers County Zoning Map



Date: 5/13/2013

Legend			
	CITIES		C-2 HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL
	A-1 IRRIGATED LAND		F-1 FLOODPLAIN
	A-2 NON-IRRIGATED LAND		I-1 INDUSTRIAL
	A-3 FRAGILE LAND		R-1 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
	C-1 LOCAL COMMERCIAL		R-2 MIXED RESIDENTIAL

# HOUSING

Prowers County has experienced a reduction in housing units between 2010 and 2022, notably in single-family detached homes, and some growth in attached homes, large multi-family units, and mobile homes. These patterns imply a trend towards increased urbanization and concentration of housing in municipalities. Household composition changes are also evident, with increased numbers of rental households with children and single-person households. Additionally, much of the available housing is older than 30 years, which reflects aging infrastructure.

While the rental market is becoming more affordable, homeownership is increasingly becoming out-of-reach for many. The notable increase in mobile homes across the County suggests a demand for more affordable and/or flexible housing solutions. The percentage of homeowners experiencing cost burden has increased from 2010 to 2022, which has decreased housing affordability and stability. Overall, rising home values and purchase requirements limit affordability for first time homeownership.

## HOUSING UNITS

The County experienced an overall decrease of 521 units between 2010 and 2022, with the largest decrease occurring in the incorporated towns (-384 units). Rural areas show a more modest decline and diversification of housing types, including more mobile homes. The overall decrease in housing units reflects a combination of demographic changes, economic factors, and policy impacts affecting housing development and retention.

### By the Numbers



**521 unit decrease in housing**



**91% housing built before 1990**



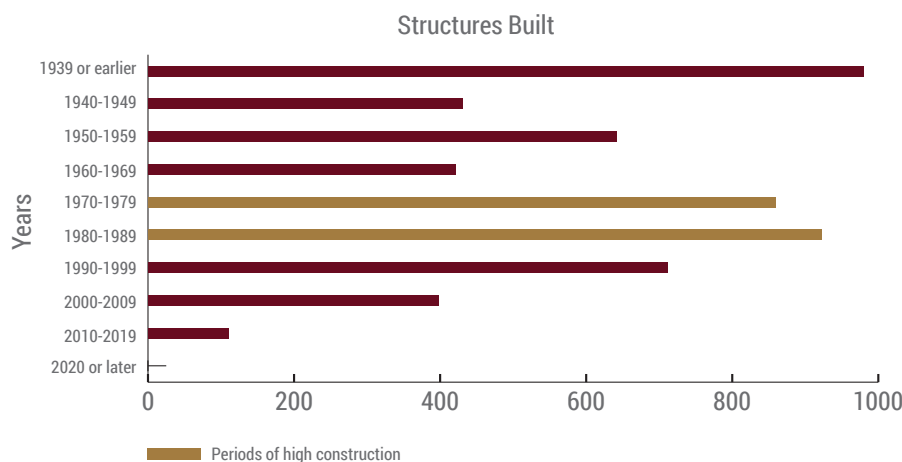
**43% of homeowners are cost-burdened**



**45% increase in home values**



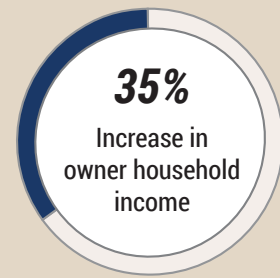
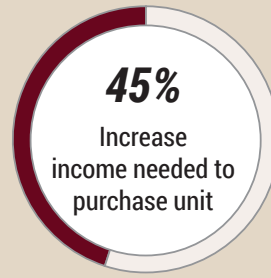
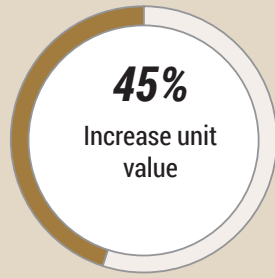
**35% increase in homeowner income**



## AGE OF UNITS

Overall, the housing stock is aging, with 91% built prior to 1990, including 18% constructed prior to 1939. Construction pace started to slow in the 1990s and has continued to slow; there has been no new recorded construction since 2020.

## Data for Housing Ownership from 2020-2022



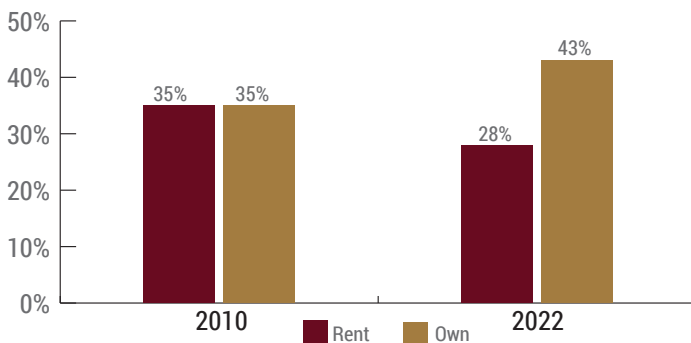
## HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

The County has experienced an increase in rental households with children (from 38% to 43% between 2010 and 2022), a rise in single-person homeowner households (24% to 27%), and a growing share of roommate arrangements in rentals that has led to a decrease in renters living alone (45% to 39%). Median household income within the County, (\$49422), is quite a bit lower than of the State of Colorado overall (\$87598). Looking closer at the communities with the County, Wiley has the highest median income, (\$70208), as well as the largest percent increase since 2010 (89%).

## COST BURDEN

From 2010 to 2022, the percentage of renters who are cost-burdened (spending more than 30% of their income on housing) has decreased from 35% to 28%, while the percentage of cost-burdened homeowners has increased from 35% to 43% during the same period. Generally, cost-burdened households are at increased risk of eviction and homelessness, and have less money to pay for other life necessities, including food, healthcare, and transportation. This also impacts local businesses because there is less money.

Prowers County Cost Burdened Households by Tenure



## OWNER AFFORDABILITY

While ownership currently remains within affordable reach for many, there's a trend toward decreased affordability. Median home values in the County increased 45% between 2010 and 2022, compared to a 35% increase in median income. Ownership units valued between \$100,000 and \$149,999 show a lower percentage of units by value (18%) than households by income (22%). This indicates that the potential demand for housing in this price range exceeds the current supply, which would be the move-up price range that is in demand, known as the missing-middle.

## RENTER AFFORDABILITY

The median rent increased by 46% while renter household median income saw a significantly higher increase of 78%. The substantial increase in median income relative to the increase in median rent cost points to an improved ability to afford housing without becoming cost-burdened. This indicates a lack of opportunities for households with sufficient income to move out of the rental market to become first-time buyers.

## PROGRAMS AND TOOLS

Enhancing first-time home buyer opportunities would not only aid in transitioning renters into homeowners but would also rejuvenate the rental market. Enhancing rental conditions and homeownership should focus on enabling residents to progress from rental to initial home purchases to mid-tier housing, effectively circulating the housing stock. Programs to help with this progression include down payment assistance through the Southeast Colorado Regional Housing Authority (SECRHA), Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Affordable Homeownership Program through Prop. 123 Funding, and the CHFA Home Purchase Loan Program. The Affordable Homeownership Program offers financial support for mobile home preservation, which helps to safeguard affordable housing options for residents. The Mobile Home Park Resident Empowerment Program provides over \$28 million for the acquisition and preservation of mobile home parks.

Because much of the housing stock predates the last three decades, housing rehabilitation services can improve housing affordability and reduce

insecurity by revitalizing existing homes, making them safer and more livable. The DOLA offers the Single Family Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program, which aims to address deficiencies, health and safety hazards, substandard conditions, local housing code violations, and to improve accessibility and energy efficiency in owner-occupied housing.

The pace of construction started slowing in the 1990s and has continued to slow, with no new construction recorded since 2020. Incentivizing new construction for affordable housing will address the critical need for more housing stock, which helps stabilize market prices and directly combats housing insecurity and homelessness. The Innovative Housing Incentive Program supports new construction by aiding innovative housing manufacturing businesses. The Lamar Housing Authority aims to construct 60 new houses for essential workers in six southeastern Colorado communities. The project includes pre-sold homes prioritized for essential employees; any remaining homes will be available on the open market.

## PUBLIC PERCEPTION

The initial phase of public engagement has revealed a community grappling with economic challenges that directly impact housing. Residents perceive a notable mismatch between wages and the cost of living. Rising rent and inadequate housing maintenance exacerbate the situation. There is a clear need for housing that aligns with local wages, pointing to a gap between earnings and living costs. The lack of essential services like food assistance, alongside issues such as aging infrastructure and areas of disinvestment, indicate broader socioeconomic challenges.

Participants also call for rejuvenation to aim for economic growth and make the community more attractive to younger generations, as well as address the senior housing needs and affordable and attainable housing options. Additionally, aging infrastructure, disinvestment, and the need for senior and wage-appropriate housing indicate a need for this planning process and investment in community development, including enforcement of housing codes and potential rehabilitation projects.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Over the past two decades, Prowers County has undergone an economic transformation marked by a substantial loss of manufacturing jobs which has contributed to an overall decrease of 1,088 jobs since 2003. Despite this decline, the County has actively pursued alternative avenues for economic growth. Prowers County has strategically pivoted toward the tourism and renewable energy sectors by investing in wind energy, with 141 turbines connecting the County to Colorado’s renewable energy landscape.

Prowers County has also embraced agritourism initiatives to support its tourist economy. The County has diversified its attractions and utilized its location at the crossroads of two major highways by hosting events like the Snow Goose Festival and Two Shot Goose Hunt. The County’s commitment to these opportunities, along with its focus on attracting businesses and prioritizing tourism-related initiatives, reflects an adaptive approach to sustaining and growing its economy.

## EMPLOYMENT & INDUSTRY GROWTH

Since 2003, Prowers County has experienced a large loss in manufacturing jobs, which had previously been one of its top industries. Overall, the County has lost 1,088 jobs since 2003. Today, Prowers County’s top industries all have annual wages below the median income for the County. The only industry in the County with higher-than-median wages is the finance and insurance industry, which only makes up 2.4% of employment. Despite changes in other areas, agriculture has remained steady over the last 20 years at 14%.

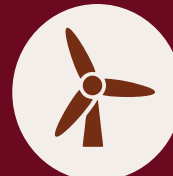
### By the Numbers



**4.4% unemployment rate**



**\$49,422 median household income**



**141 wind turbines**



**\$28.3 million in travel spending**



**26% in education, social assistance, and healthcare**

### Top Three Industries in Prowers County



**10.5% Retail trade**

Median earnings  
\$23,117



**14% Agriculture**

Median earnings  
\$46,390



**26% Education, social assistance, and healthcare**

Median earnings  
\$41,202

Many of the jobs lost from manufacturing have not been replaced. The unemployment rate increased from 2.9% in 2003 to 4.4% in 2022. However, job growth has surged in some areas, such as education, healthcare, and social assistance (7.9%), with moderate increases in administrative services and construction.

## ECONOMIC ADAPTATION

In the past 20 years, the County has proactively tapped into its tourism and, more recently, renewable energy market as future economic growth opportunities. The County currently has 141 wind turbines, with the first project going online in 2004. In 2018, the Plains region comprised 95.5% of the renewable energy capacity in Colorado and represented all the state’s wind energy and 55% of the state’s solar capacity.

Historically, Prowers County has been a nationally acclaimed hunting and birding region hosting multiple events that contribute to the County’s economy, such as the Snow Goose Festival and Two Shot Goose Hunt. The County’s rich cultural history also contributes to its tourist industry, with Camp Amache recently declared as a National Historic Site within the National Park System. Now, the County is expanding to agritourism opportunities based on its existing tourist economy. The County also lies at the crossroads of two major highways in and out of Colorado, where travelers and freight haulers stay on their way to deliver goods. In 2022, \$28.3 million was spent in the County from travel, and the County collected nearly \$1 million in local

taxes from travel. Tourism will continue to be a prominent industry for the County, especially as it prioritizes the expansion of agritourism and attracts tourism-based businesses.

## PROGRAMS AND TOOLS

Currently, the County is part of and has multiple economic programs and groups. The Southeast Colorado Enterprise Development Group (SECED) and Southern Colorado Economic Development District (SCEDD) are regional economic groups focused on opportunities in southern Colorado. Prowers Economic Prosperity (PEP) is an organization aimed at fostering economic growth and development in Prowers County. PEP assists in attracting new businesses and supporting existing businesses. The 2016 Prowers Economic Prosperity Plan revitalized PEP and economic development in the County. The Economic Prosperity Plan outlines an approach to attracting new jobs in manufacturing and services, introducing new opportunities for agricultural land, and bolstering recreation tourism. The DOLA Resilience Roadmap Program outlines economic actions and strategies for the region, and the SECED Enterprise Zone Program incentivizes businesses to locate in enterprise zones, occupy vacant buildings, and provide employee benefits.

The County’s 1041 Regulations also help guide responsible development and protect the County’s water resources by asking developers to demonstrate the effects of their project on water availability and quality in the County. Goal 9 from the 2003 Comprehensive Plan is to promote economic development within the



***Agritourism could be an emerging industry in the County***

***95.5% of Colorado’s renewable energy is sourced from the Plains region***



County by creating reasonable and positive incentives for new development. It also outlines renewable energy and preservation of the County's agricultural economy. Despite the need for these changes, the County does not have policy around agritourism and how it should be supported. Developing direction around the agritourism opportunities within the County will help strengthen this industry and help farmers adapt to changing conditions.

## **PUBLIC PERCEPTION**

The community is worried about being able to train and retain a skilled workforce for industries. Many businesses are struggling to fill higher-level management positions within the County, which limits business expansion. The lack of workforce housing in the County contributes to these issues. Many community members also echoed that wages within the County are not keeping up with the cost of living, leaving many residents at or below the poverty level.

For many farmers, using parts of their agricultural land for renewable energy development can help keep their operations going. Even while Prowers County is at the crossroads of two highways, there has not been a lot of development to make the County a travel hub. Expansion into services and businesses for travelers can support the local economy and create more amenities for tourists during seasonal events.

# AGRICULTURE


Prowers County is rooted in a rich agricultural tradition and has long thrived as an agriculture-based economy. However, recent data reveals a departure from the growth witnessed in previous years. The community faces environmental and economic challenges concerning water availability and profitability, which have become levers for adaptation strategies. In response to these challenges, Prowers County is exploring innovative approaches, such as renewable energy development to diversify its economic base and promote sustainability. Additionally, the County is venturing into agritourism, capitalizing on its agricultural heritage to attract visitors and support the local economy.


***Agriculture is a historical, cultural, and economic cornerstone of Prowers County.***


## AGRICULTURAL GROWTH


Historically, Prowers County has experienced strong positive growth in its agricultural industries. The County's farming landscape has been dominated by operations that primarily produce livestock and wheat or other grains. From 2002-2012, the total sales of agricultural products increased by 74%. Total livestock and crop sales declined briefly around 2017 but have since increased 35% since 2012 sales numbers. Considering about a 27% cumulative inflation rate over the decade, the sales increases still largely show stagnation, indicating significant economic challenges for one of the County's top industries.


### By the Numbers

- 

**21% increase in farm size from 2002-2022**
- 

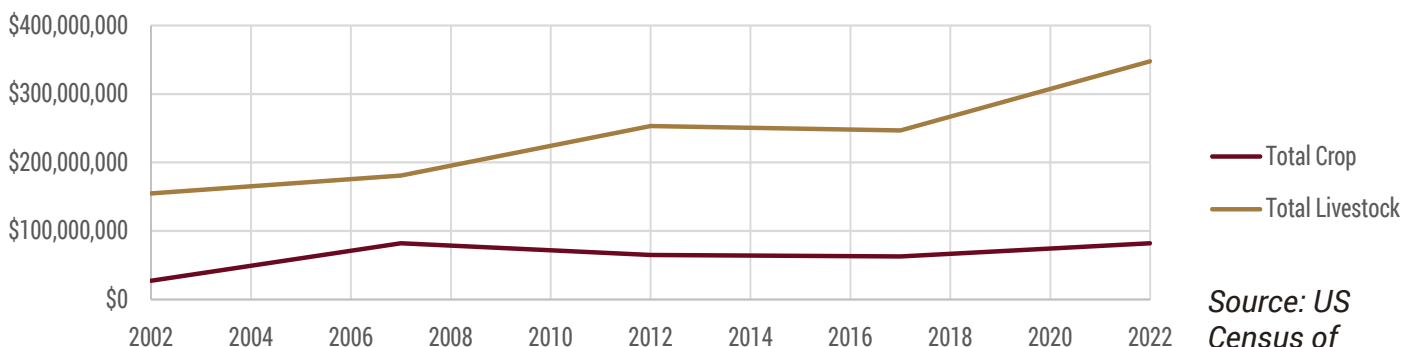
**800,000+ acres of farmland**
- 

**6th highest livestock sales in the state**
- 

**4% of state agriculture sales**
- 

**89,935 acres of irrigated farmland**

Total Crop and Livestock Sales (\$)



Source: US Census of Agriculture

## COST TO FARM

As agricultural sales shift, the cost to farm poses more challenges for farmers and ranchers in Prowers County. Much like sales, the net cash income for farms is not growing as it has in past years and has been impacted by the increasing cost of operating farms. From 2012 to 2022, farm expenses almost doubled and net cash income increased by only 10%. This small increase in net cash income compared to the substantial rise in expenses underscores the challenge facing farmers, where a higher proportion of income is absorbed by operational costs. Consequently, this limits the funds available for reinvestment, posing constraints on the expansion and development of farming operations.

Average farm size has grown slightly from 1,623 acres in 2002 to 1,966 acres in 2022. As farms increase in size, farm expenses also increase. Expenses reduce the total net cash income a farm has from year to year –ideally, expenses and income would grow together. However, the reduced net cash income for Prowers County farmers signifies that this is not happening, and that the cost to farm is rapidly increasing, while the return on investment is diminishing. This reduces the overall economic viability for farmers and ranchers to continue their businesses and farming operations.

## WATER

Water is integral to agriculture. The County was historically affected by the Dust Bowl and today only a portion of the County's farmland is irrigated due to limited water supply from persistent drought conditions. Historical trends in water use throughout the County's agriculture industry indicate an overall decrease in water use because of water limitations and increased water efficiency.

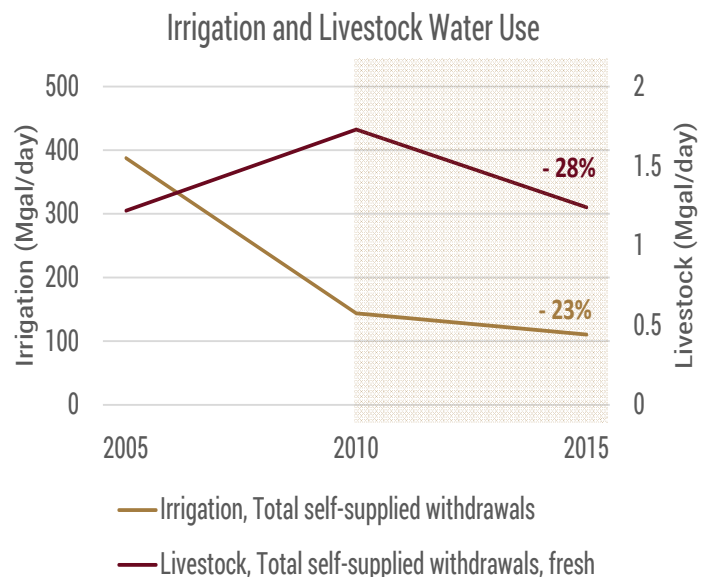
To better compare between use types, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) calculates water use in million gallons per day (Mgal/day). Overall irrigation and livestock water use decreased over 20% each from 2010 to 2015. Additionally, irrigation can be broken

down further, the most important for Prowers County being crop irrigation. From 2010 to 2015, Prowers County saw a range of water use reductions for crop irrigation, with the highest in surface irrigation (-29.9%). Although irrigation efficiencies help mitigate water limitations, the underlying and persistent drought conditions within the County will be a long-term challenge.

## PROGRAMS AND TOOLS

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan outlined goals to encourage agribusiness and increase local farms' roles in the local economy. The Prowers County Comprehensive Plan Update can help prioritize goals and objectives that more concretely support the agricultural community, such as creating more connections between local food and agricultural producers and consumers to help support local, small farms and create a better sense of agricultural identity within the County.

In light of the changing agricultural economy and operation size within Prowers County, future policies and goals can also examine how agriculture in the County can adapt with limited water supply, renewable energy production, and agritourism opportunities.



Source: USGS Waterwatch



Photo Credit: Claire McWilliams

## **PUBLIC PERCEPTION**

Agriculture in Prowers County has experienced many challenges. Still, the foundational spirit of the farming and ranching community is adaptive and resilient. Recent years have brought renewable energy opportunities to ranchers which allow them to maintain their land for livestock grazing while earning extra income from renewable energy leases. Agritourism, an emerging industry in the County, could allow landowners to lease land or charge fees for hunting, birdwatching, and other activities.

Renewable energy opportunities are often met with skepticism from the public. Many community members believe that stricter leases should be created to avoid decommissioned windmills occupying valuable lands past their productive lives.

# NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER

Prowers County obtains potable and irrigation water from the Arkansas River, the associated canal system delivering river water, and an underground aquifer. In southern Prowers County, water availability is constrained because all fresh surface water sources are in the north. Water quality and supply greatly varies depending on the amount of rainfall. Incorporated communities are typically served by municipal water and sewer services, and residents outside of incorporated land are dependent on private wells and septic tanks.

Drinking water quality has been a persistent concern throughout Prowers County for many years. To help improve water quality throughout the Arkansas Valley including portions of Prowers County, the Arkansas Valley Conduit (AVC) has been proposed to bring water from Pueblo County's water system.

## WATER SOURCES AND SUPPLY

The primary water source in the County is the Arkansas River and the associated canal system. County residents and businesses also utilize underground aquifers to obtain additional fresh water. Available fresh water sources are in the northern portion of the County, with the southern area being much more constrained for water. In incorporated areas, potable water is typically sourced from various public and private water providers. Development in the unincorporated County typically obtains water from private wells. Irrigation water is drawn from the Arkansas River, storage reservoirs, and wells. Most water used for irrigation is delivered by the Amity and Fort Lyon canals. The water supply in the canals is dependent upon the flow of the Arkansas River.

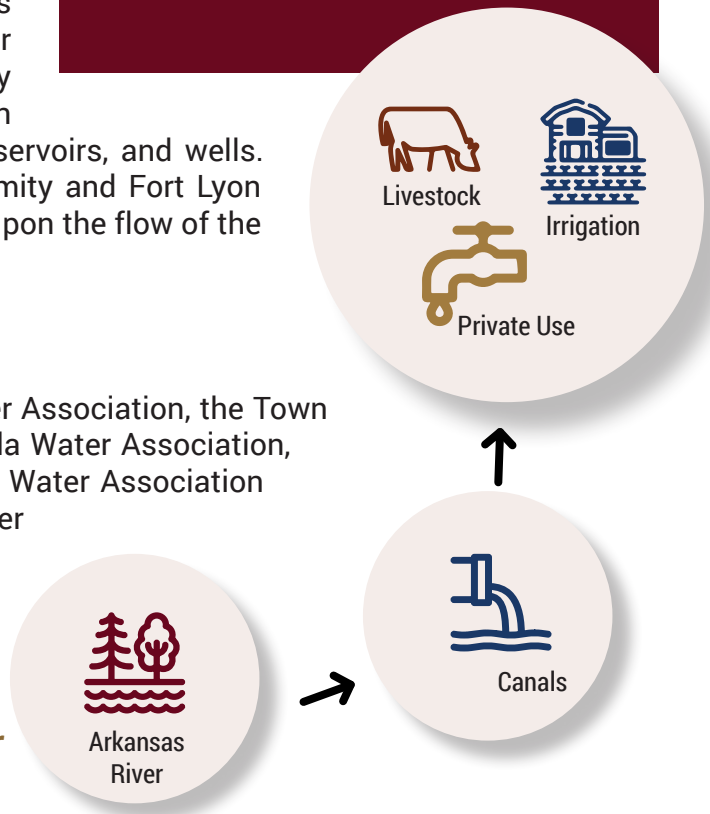
## WATER PROVIDERS

Water providers in Prowers County include A&B Water Association, the Town of Holly, Bristol Water and Sanitation District, Granada Water Association, the City of Lamar, Town of Hartman, and May Valley Water Association (serving Wiley). Development outside of the water service provider boundaries that lack public water or sewer tanks is serviced by ground water wells and septic tanks.

**Water Source:  
Arkansas River**

### By the Numbers

-  **2 freshwater sources**
-  **7 water and sewer providers**
-  **2 water conservancy districts**
-  **1 major river**



## WATER CONSERVANCY

There are two water conservancy districts in Prowers County: the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District and Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District. The Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District is in eastern and southern Prowers County and aims to improve supplemental water supply for irrigation, municipal, and industrial uses; hydroelectric power generation; and recreational opportunities. The Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District is located northwestern Prowers County and aims to conserve, protect, and enhance the water resources to sustain agriculture, uplift the economy, and maintain freshwater and water habitats.

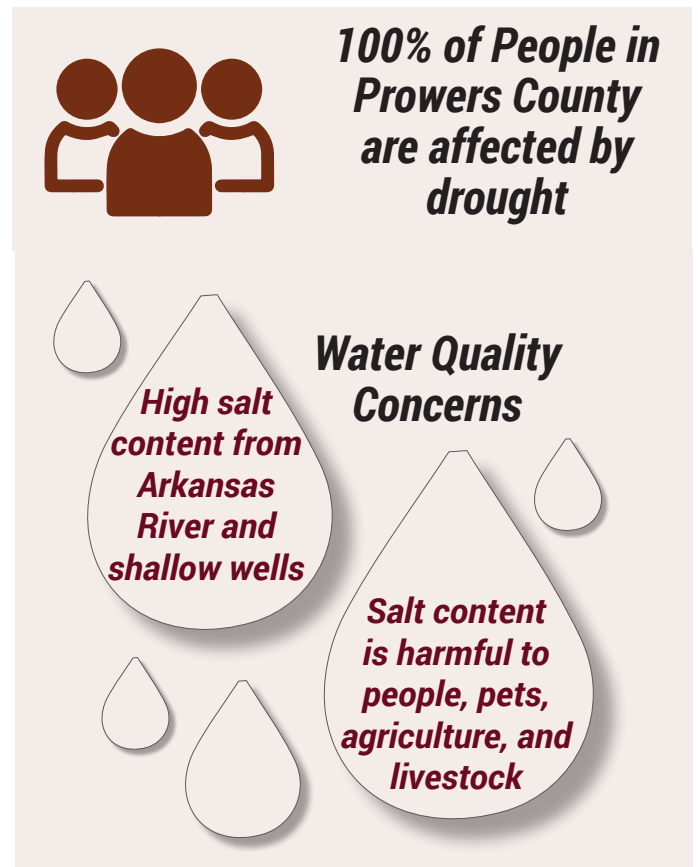
## WATER QUALITY

The quality of irrigated water drawn from the canal system is typically poor. Water from the Arkansas River and from reservoirs contains a large quantity of salt and varies based on the amount of rainfall and source of runoff.

Drinking water sourced from wells varies in quality throughout the County, but is generally poor. Irrigation water sourced from wells is also dependent on the well, as water from deeper wells often contain less salt than from shallow wells in the County. Because of the varying quality of water throughout the County, many people choose to purchase water from other locations instead of sourcing water locally.

## DROUGHT AND OTHER HAZARDS

Historically, Prowers County was the site of the Dust Bowl, a devastating natural disaster that greatly affected every part of life within the County. The County still experiences drought of varying degrees of severity over the years. Since 2003, the County has only experienced one severe drought from mid-2012 to mid-2014, as classified by the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), which spanned from mid-2012 to mid-2014. In 2023 the County experienced some level of drought 100% of the time.



Soil erosion is a symptom of drought conditions and worsens when the County is in more severe levels of drought. Soil erosion has worsened in recent years due to the County's continuous drought conditions. Loose soils combined with high winds across the County can create air quality issues and visibility concerns on County roads.

Wildfires have also been a concern for Prowers County, as much of the area is open grassland and crops. Recently, in April 2022, the Sandy Creek Fire burned north of Lamar and covered 2000 acres of land. Only four homes and other small structures were damaged. Prowers County has also reported 78 tornadoes from 1950-2012, experiencing about one tornado each year. Notably, the F3 Holly Tornado in 2007 resulted in a State Disaster Declaration, two fatalities, nine injuries, and over \$4 million in property damage.

## **RESOURCE MINING**

Sand and gravel are the only commonly mined resources in Prowers County. Gravel pits are located around the County, particularly along the Arkansas River Valley near Lamar. Historically, two limestone deposits and one silica sand deposit have been mined in the County. Prowers County is limited in oil and gas production and the few wells that are operating do not produce many resources.

## **PROGRAMS AND TOOLS**

First authorized in 1962 to bring clean water from the Western Slope to the Arkansas Valley, the Arkansas Valley Conduit (AVC) project has been many years in the making. In 2009, the 130-mile pipeline plan was amended with funding procedures put in place that require a percent of local funding. This local funding will be paid for by the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District.

Construction of the AVC began with the groundbreaking of the trunk line that will run from Pueblo County to the Town of Boone. Once complete, the 130-mile pipeline would serve 50,000 residents including those living in northwestern Prowers County and Lamar.

## **PUBLIC PERCEPTION**

The public has expressed concern about both water quality, the future availability of water for agriculture, and naturally occurring contamination. The public expressed concern about certain areas of the County's water being harmful even for household pets to consume. In addition to the concerns about water quality, anxieties around water scarcity were expressed. Residents had concerns about wells potentially running dry with greater frequency in the future and the aquifer depletion making agriculture no longer viable as a way of life in the County.

# TRANSPORTATION

The transportation network in the County is served by the US highway system, US Highway 287 and US Highway 50, and local roadways. Roadway and freight congestion is most common on US 50 within and surrounding Lamar. The County relies on the US highway network, especially US 50, for regional connectivity. Two general aviation airports serve the County, located near Lamar and Holly. The Prowers Area Transit (PAT) provides intercity fixed-route transit to connect the communities in Prowers County. Amtrak also runs the Southwest Chief route through the County, with a stop in Lamar.

## ROADWAY NETWORK

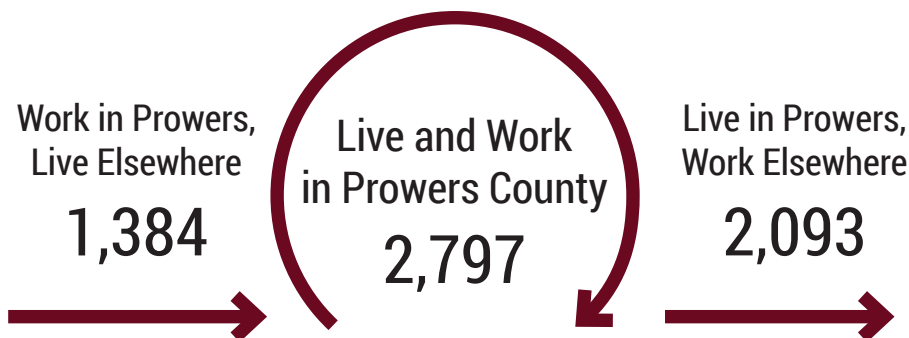
The roadway system in Prowers County is made up of 1,589 miles of classified roadways. The majority are designated as local roads, with the highest functional classifications being principal arterial on US 287 and US 50. The majority of roadways in the County do not exceed 100 vehicles per day. US 50, in and north of Lamar, has the highest daily traffic volume, exceeding 10,000 vehicles per day.

## TRAVEL PATTERNS

All of the communities are located in the northern portion of the County, with Lamar having the biggest concentration of jobs. Most commuters work and live in Prowers County, with 2,224 residents working in the area, 1,365 commuters traveling into the area for work, and 1,814 residents commuting elsewhere for work. Residents of southern Prowers County typically commute north to Lamar, Granada, and Holly. Some residents commute long distance for work, driving to Pueblo, Colorado Springs, and Garden City, Kansas.

### By the Numbers

-  1,589 miles of roadway
-  287 airport trips per day at 2 airports
-  3 US Highways
-  8 fixed transit stops
-  1,027 average truck trips per day



Truck volumes on the highway network are highest along US 287, throughout Lamar and north and south of the City. Truck volumes to the east are typically lower than highways to the west. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) provides freight rail through the County, running east-west, with spurs to freight land uses in Lamar and Granada.

## TRANSIT AND SHUTTLE SERVICE

The Prowers Area Transit (PAT) service provides a variety of transit service options, including fixed-route service, demand-response service, and regional transportation services. The Prairie Dog Express is a fixed-route service, with designated stops in Lamar, Granada, Holly, Hartman, Bristol, and Wiley. The route operates three runs per day, with a morning, mid-day, and afternoon service. PAT runs an additional student/faculty fixed route from Main Street Student Housing to Lamar Community College (LCC), via the LCC route three times per day. Although the LCC route does not connect to the Prairie Dog Express, riders can use demand-response service to connect between the fixed routes.

PAT provides demand-response service to any location in Lamar's city limits, with limited-service availability in Wiley, Granada, Hartman, Bristol, and Holly. Demand-response service requires a 24-hour reservation. Regional transit services are coordinated by Southeast Regional Coordinating Council (SETran). Regional transportation options in Prowers County includes Golden Gate Manor, Lower Arkansas Valley AAA, MedRide, Prowers Veterans Services, and Southeastern Development Services. These regional demand-response services

provide access to medical services within and outside of Prowers County.

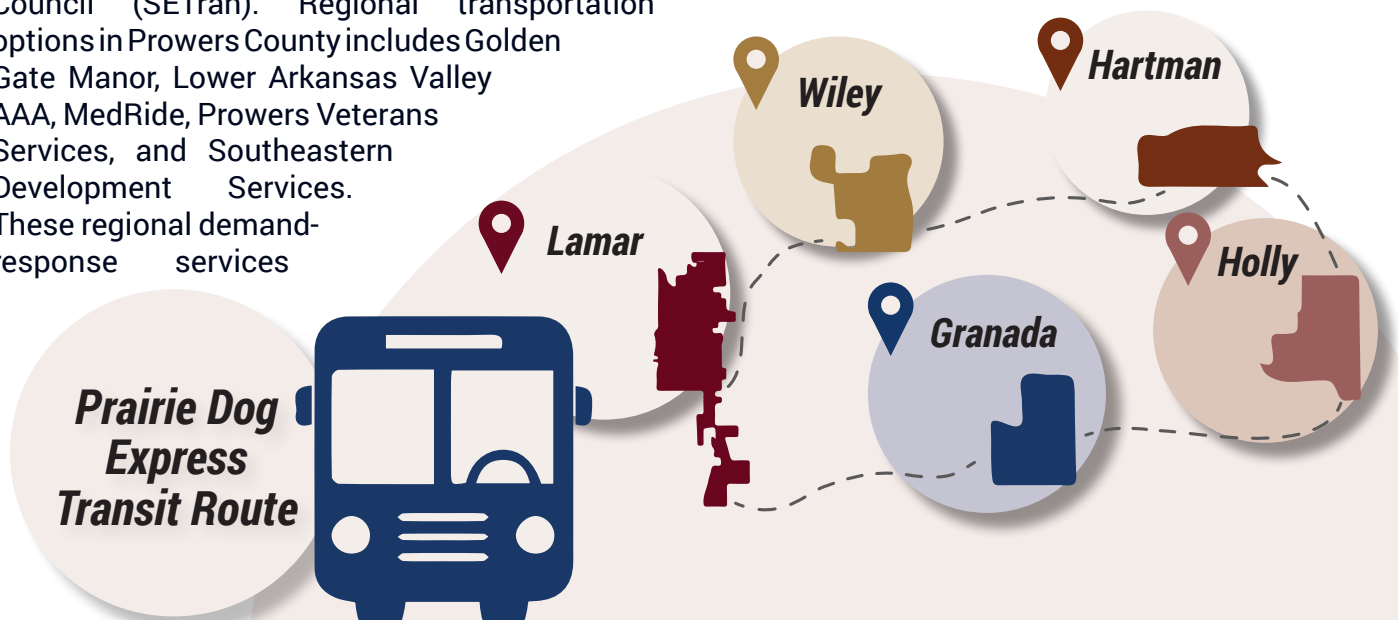
Amtrak provides passenger rail service through Prowers County via the Southwest Chief Train, with a station in Lamar. This route runs daily and connects Lamar, and surrounding communities, to destinations like Illinois, Arizona, California , and the country-wide Amtrak network.

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

There is limited active transportation infrastructure in Prowers County. The Justin Harrington Memorial Walkway Trail in Holly is the only formal trail in the County. Incorporated areas have sidewalks and crosswalks near the town and city main streets, although the sidewalk network has many gaps and is not well-maintained. There are no on-street bike facilities in the County.

## AIRPORTS

There are two airports in Prowers County: Southeast Colorado Regional Airport and Holly Airport. The Southeast Colorado Regional Airport is a major general aviation airport approximately five miles west of the City of Lamar, near US 287. The airport services commercial and private aircraft. Holly Airport is a small general aviation airport suited for small single-engine planes, south of the Town of Holly, near State Highway (SH) 89.



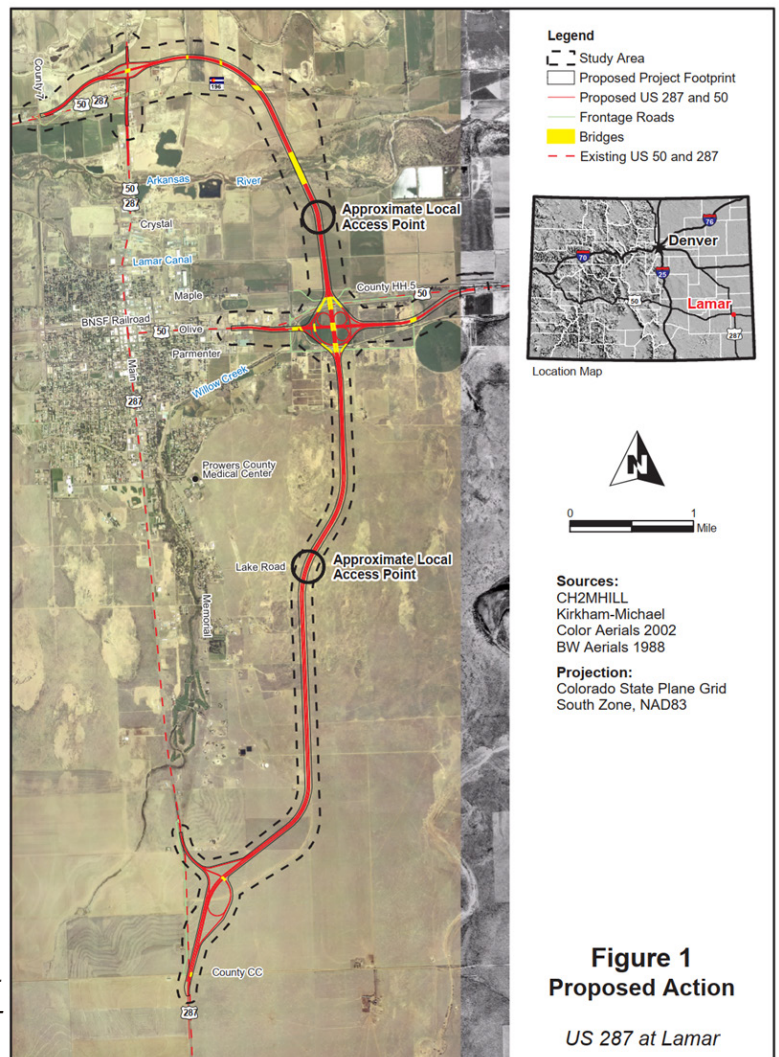
## PROGRAMS AND TOOLS

CDOT is considering a reliever route to serve Prowers County. The Lamar Reliever Route would help facilitate freight movement through Prowers County by constructing a bypass on US 287, US 50, and contiguous segments of US 385 around the City of Lamar. This would mean that truck traffic would no longer need to go through Lamar’s downtown, reducing conflict points and creating free flow of freight movements. The bypass would create a new southern gateway to Lamar, a new south interchange, a new grade-separated crossing over the railroad, and a bridge over the Arkansas River. The reliever route would connect to Highway 50/287 north of Lamar. The reliever route is a priority for CDOT and would enhance freight movement in Prowers County; however, funding has not yet been secured for the project and the final alignment has not been set.

## PUBLIC PERCEPTION

The public’s perception of transportation in Prowers County is favorable with residents feeling safe on the roadways and being able to travel throughout the County without many delays. PAT provides on-call public transit service for the County and is viewed favorably, however residents expressed a need for more public transportation for evenings and weekends. Currently, PAT does not provide service evenings or weekends which can pose a challenge for some workers, especially those on a shift schedule.

*Proposed Lamar Reliever Route alignment*  
Source: CDOT



**Figure 1**  
**Proposed Action**  
US 287 at Lamar

# PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Prowers County provides multiple public safety services, notably the Prowers County Sheriff's Office, the Prowers County Rural Fire Department, and partnerships with surrounding areas for EMS services. Emergency service response times are a concern in the area due to the size and rural character of the county. Additionally, 16% of the County lacks internet access. The remaining 84% that do have access choose to utilize both broadband and cellular data. Waste management and landfills are another concern in the County, as they are managed by local municipalities, but located on County land. Location limits access to these facilities for a lot of people, especially around Lamar. The County contains 4 school districts, with 11 schools across these districts, and LCC is the only higher education institution in the county.

## PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

The Prowers County Sheriff's Office patrol staff is responsible for the law enforcement needs of all the communities of Prowers County. They cover a vast area of over 1,500 square miles and often drive over 30 miles to respond to a call for service. Staff includes the Sheriff, Under sheriff, office staff, patrol deputies, detention officers, and cooks. Patrol deputies handle the majority of calls and are sworn peace officers for the State of Colorado.

Prowers County is made up of four fire protection districts: Wiley Rural, Holly Fire and Ambulance, Two Buttes Fire, and Prowers Rural Fire Department. The Prowers County Rural Fire Department has an ISO rating of 5/5X, indicating an average recognized fire protection.

The County does not have a designated EMS Service and currently provides services through an agreement with the City of Lamar. A one-year contract between Lamar and Prowers County was approved in 2023, detailing the financial details and services to be provided by the city's Ambulance and Emergency Medical Service. The agreement also states that those services will be extended into those areas of Prowers County not served by the Holly Fire and Ambulance District.



## By the Numbers



**84% of residents have access to internet**



**2,907 residents have access to broadband**



**4 school districts**



**18% of population has earned a bachelor's degree**

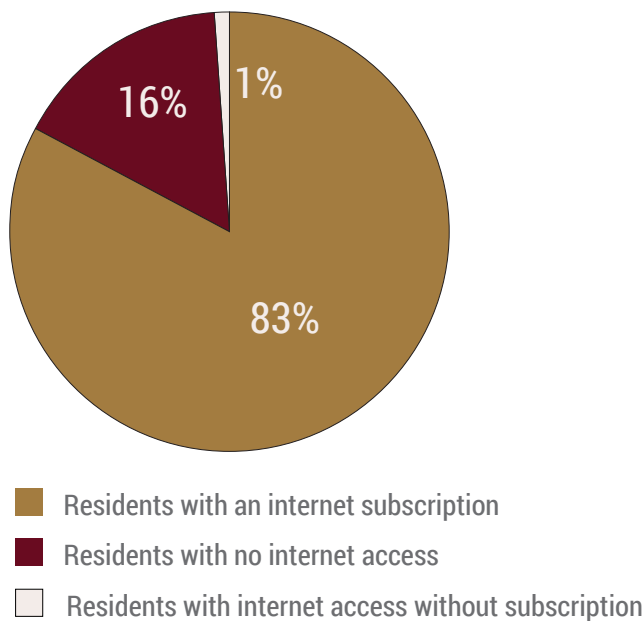


**60% of students qualify for free lunch programs**

***Emergency response times are a concern in rural areas***

## BROADBAND & CELL COVERAGE

16% of residents in the County lack access to internet. Of the remaining 84% of residents with internet, 3,500 residents use cellular data, and 2,900 residents use Broadband, which includes services such as cable, fiber optic, and DSL. Broadband technology is most available in the City of Lamar and least available south of Lamar and in Holly.



## LANDFILLS

Although the County does not own any landfills, municipal landfills are located on County land. Holly, Granada, and Lamar all have landfills located outside of City/Town limits. These all accept non-friable asbestos waste, which can include roofing, siding, and vinyl products. Homes and buildings are more likely to contain asbestos if built before 1980; and 60% of homes in Prowers County were built before 1979. Containing and remediating asbestos in landfills is a priority for the County to reduce health risks and hazards, and to keep the existing landfills within the County operational.

## EDUCATION & SCHOOLS

There are four school districts in Prowers County: Lamar, Granada, Wiley, and Holly, with 11 schools across all 4 districts. According to the 2022 ACS 5-year estimates, the student population is 2,894. County-wide, K-12 enrollment has declined by over 22% since 2010. Combined with the decrease in overall population, enrollment declines can specifically impact funding for schools, which has many effects, including lower teacher salaries and fewer extracurriculars for students. Within the Lamar, Granada, and Holly school districts, over 60% of the student population in each district qualifies for free and reduced lunch programs, indicating that many students in the County come from low-income households and may face other socioeconomic challenges throughout their educational careers.

Within the County, 18% of the population 25 years and older have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 31.2% have a high school diploma. The only higher education institution is LCC, which provides 2 and 4 year degrees, certificates, and dual-credit programs for high schoolers. The college's 2022-2023 enrollment was 668 students across all degree programs, which is a 4% decrease from the previous year. LCC also offers distance-learning programs in nearby Granada, Eads (Kiowa County), and Springfield (Baca County). Prowers County is also home to a Colorado State University (CSU) Extension Office, which provides assistance and programs for the community in five main areas: Agriculture, Horticulture, Family and Consumer Science, Natural Resources, and 4-H Youth Programs. The Extension Office locally offers program including pesticide trainings, cottage food trainings, and working groups for land management. The greater CSU-Extension network provides important resources for farmers regarding water usage, resilience, and innovation for agriculture practices. The office is also involved in the annual County fair.

## COUNTY BUILDINGS

Prowers County has a fairground and County Courthouse. The County Fairgrounds is home to one of the area's biggest events: the annual Sand and Sage Roundup, which includes a rodeo, carnival, and 4-H livestock competitions. The County Courthouse, located in Lamar, is on the National Register of Historic Places. Currently, the lowercase courthouse is used for many purposes and contains the offices for the County Clerk and Recorder, Commissioners, and County Administrator.

## PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Residents expressed a need for satellite internet to help provide consistent coverage across Prowers County. While more populated areas are generally well-served, internet access can be a challenge elsewhere. Many residents also expressed concern for the trash and junkyards located in the County, especially just outside the City of Lamar. Having access to landfills is important to prevent illegal dumping and maintain public and environmental health, which can be affected by toxic waste dumping and poor disposal of batteries or asbestos waste.

Throughout the public engagement process, many residents brought up access to emergency services, especially EMS. Because of the County's large size and rural character, response times can be lengthy. Many households in the area have had to purchase med-flight insurance, as intensive emergency care is not available within the County. There was concern over the County's agreement with the City of Lamar to provide EMS and Ambulance services, as it is not a permanent solution that the County has control over and its termination would be difficult for County residents to manage.

# HUMAN SERVICES & HEALTH

The available community and social services in Prowers County directly contribute to the community's overall health and well-being by addressing issues such as healthcare access, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and child and eldercare. These services play a crucial role in supporting and assisting vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and those facing economic hardships. Prowers County has a robust network of organizations that share information and connect residents with the services, access, and assistance that they need. However, there are still gaps in service that are a challenge for residents, particularly with childcare, eldercare, and specialized healthcare needs. Prowers County has a higher concentration of vulnerable demographics than most of the state, indicating a strong need for social and health services as well as reduced resiliency to economic changes and environmental hazards.

## NON-PROFIT AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

There are a number of non-profit organizations located in Prowers County. These organizations supplement and support the services provided by the County by providing recreational, environmental, cultural, entertainment and community services. Faith-based community organizations also provide services to the community.

The Prowers County Resource Guide is an online resource maintained by the Prowers County Department of Human Services. It lists contact and locational information for social and health services in the region, including emergency numbers, government contacts, court services, local churches, alcohol and substance abuse resources, mental health resources, and more.

The Cornerstone Resource Center is a non-profit organization based in Lamar that serves Baca, Kiowa, and Prowers counties by coordinating local and regional resources and assistance in applying for public benefits, mentoring, support groups, parenting classes and more.

## SENIOR NEEDS AND SERVICES

Similar to communities across Colorado, Prowers County's senior population is growing. Currently, one in five Coloradans is 60 or older. By 2050, more than a quarter of the state's population will be 60 or older. This historic demographic shift will challenge Prowers County to provide appropriate services, healthcare, and housing to the aging community, or otherwise risk older residents moving out

### By the Numbers



**7 licensed preschools**



**1 licensed daycare center**



**3 licensed home childcare providers**



**3 senior care facilities**



**1 hospital**

of the County. Aging adults in rural southeastern Colorado often have unique needs that require specialized services to support their well-being and quality of life.

This can include access to healthcare, transportation, home care and assistance, and socialization and recreation. Most of the services and facilities available to aging adults in the County are located in Lamar, including the Prowers County Medical Center, Lamar Senior Center, and assisted living and nursing care facilities. While there is an additional nursing home and medical clinic in Holly, this still leaves most of the County underserved. Access to these facilities is further challenged with limited transportation options for aging adults.

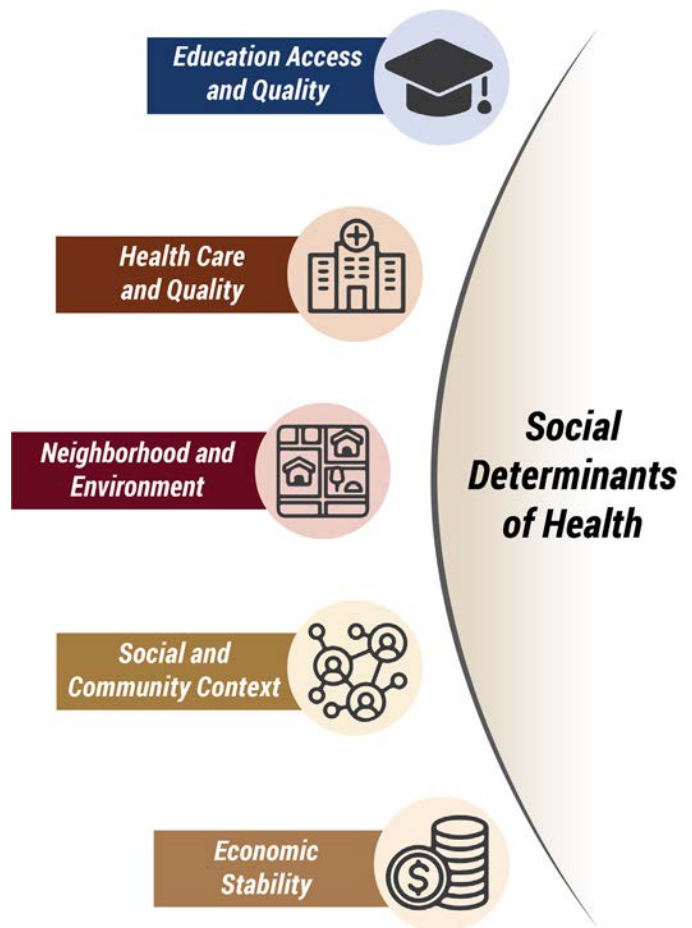
## CHILDCARE NEEDS AND SERVICES

Childcare in Prowers County faces challenges, with limited availability and resources posing significant issues for families. There are seven licensed preschools, a single licensed daycare center, and three licensed home childcare providers. With an estimated 800 children under 5-years-old in the County, the demand for infant and childcare greatly exceeds the capacity of available providers in the County, exacerbating the struggle for working parents to secure reliable and quality care for their children. The County-owned Welcome Home Child and Family Development Center, the only licensed childcare facility in the County, strives to address these concerns but is constrained by its capacity. These challenges highlight the importance of continued efforts to expand and improve childcare services to support the community’s working parents and ensure the well-being of its children.

## HEALTHCARE

Healthcare in Prowers County is a critical component of the community’s well-being, providing essential services to residents. Several medical providers serve the Prowers County community, the biggest of which is Prowers Medical Center. The High Plains Community Health Center’s main clinic is in Lamar, with other

clinic located in Holly. Other private clinics are primarily located in Lamar. According to the 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment, the most significant health needs in Prowers County are Education/Prevention, Drug/Substance Abuse, Social Determinants of Health (i.e., language barriers, poverty, education, high housing cost), Mental Health/Suicide, Accessibility/Affordability of Healthcare, and Cancer. Partnerships between medical providers and local non-profit organizations are critical to addressing these issues.



## VETERAN SERVICES

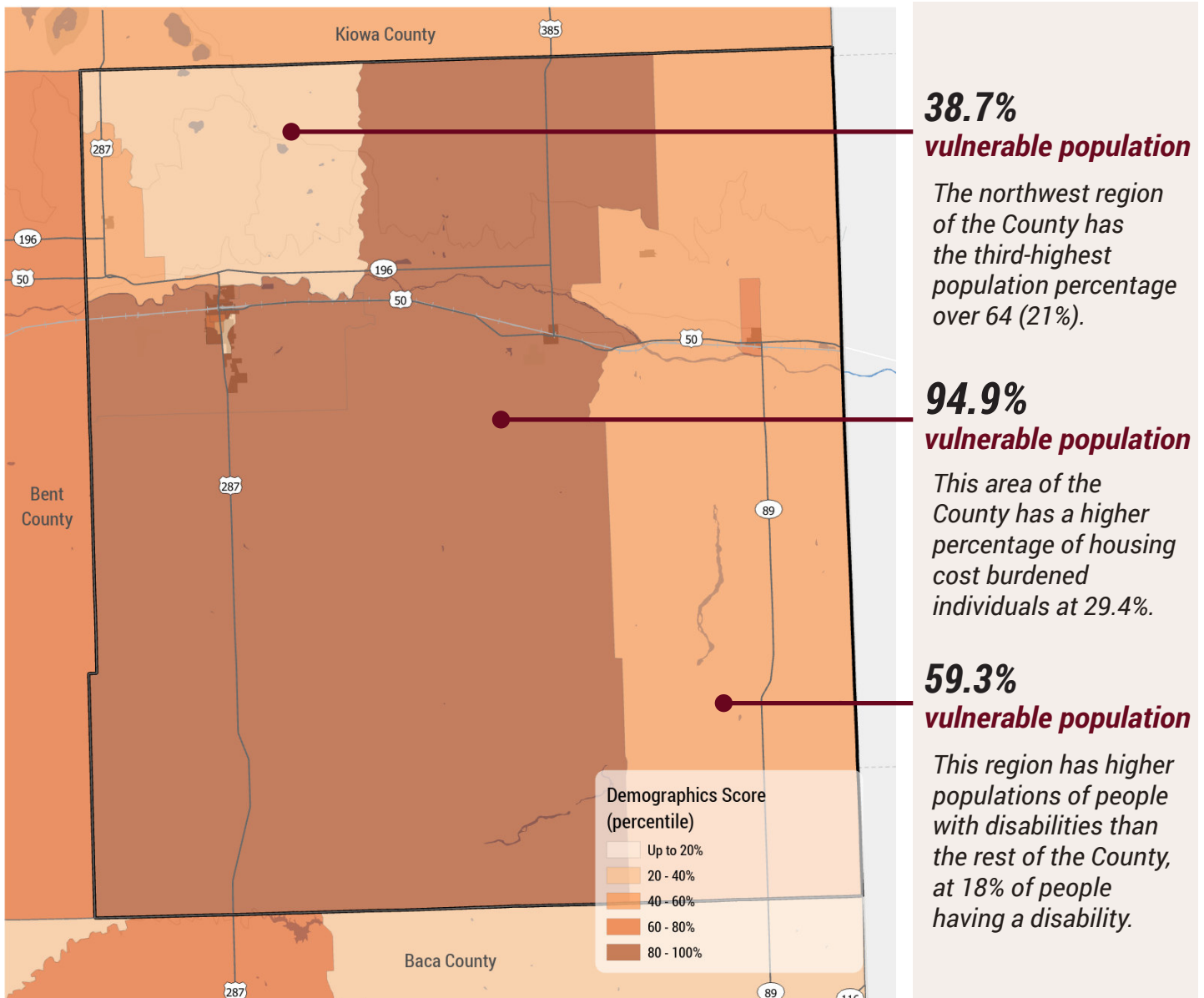
Veteran services are designed to honor and support the over 840 military veterans residing in the area. The County’s Veteran Services Office is dedicated to assisting veterans in accessing the available benefits and resources, including assistance with VA healthcare enrollment, disability claims, education benefits, and pension programs.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

According to Colorado's EnviroScreen tool, Prowers County and much of southern Colorado have higher concentrations of vulnerable demographics than most of the state, indicating higher social and economic vulnerability. This is calculated using data for people living with disabilities, housing cost burden, educational attainment, limited English proficiency, income, and race and ethnicity. Higher numbers of vulnerable demographics indicate a strong need for social and health services as well as reduced resiliency to economic changes and environmental hazards.

Prowers County has lower exposures to air toxic emissions, ozone, and other air pollutants, but has higher contaminants in drinking and ground water. Eastern Colorado counties all have higher lead exposure risk due to the number of older homes and water infrastructure.

Asbestos was once widely used in various industries for its heat-resistant and insulating properties. However, it has been associated with serious health concerns, leading to a decline in its use and the implementation of strict regulations regarding its handling and removal. Many older buildings and structures in Prowers County still contain asbestos and the County is looking into ways to safely remove and dispose of them.



Source: Colorado Department of Health and Environment EnviroScreen Tool

# HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Prowers County is endowed with a wealth of historic and cultural resources that provide a glimpse into its storied past. The region is home to meticulously preserved historical sites, including landmarks from the pioneer era, agricultural heritage, and architectural gems that tell the tale of its evolution. The County takes pride in its museums that showcase the diverse cultural influences that have shaped Prowers County. Local events also celebrate the area's heritage, offering residents and tourists the opportunity to connect with the past through festivals and educational programs. Prowers County stands as a living testament to the importance of preserving and sharing its unique historical and cultural legacy.

## THE STORY OF PROWERS COUNTY

Prowers County is located on Colorado's southeast border with Kansas and encompasses 1,644 square miles. In an otherwise arid High Plains region, the Arkansas River historically attracted seasonal campsites for nomadic Native American tribes and later provided the foundation for farming and ranching settlements of white pioneers and homesteaders. This riparian area was referred to as Big Timbers because of the giant stands of cottonwoods that historically flanked the banks of the river.

In 1821, William Becknell pioneered the Santa Fe Trail along the Arkansas River and established a commercial trade route between Missouri and New Mexico. A regional fur trade prospered along the Santa Fe Trail between white settlers and Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Comanche tribes. Within half a century, cattle ranching became a dominant industry in the area, established by Hiram S. Holly and John Prowers, the County's namesake. Expansion of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF) connected to Prowers County by 1873. The train depots helped establish the Holly, Granada, and Lamar communities by initiating a homestead land rush with the promise of productive farmland. As these collections of homesteads developed into small communities, Prowers County was officially formed in 1889 by subdividing the originally larger Bent County.

Prowers County was hit hard in the mid-20th century, first by a devastating flood in 1921 and then by the Great Depression and Dust Bowl of the 1930s. The County lost almost a fifth of its population between 1930 and 1940, with people moving elsewhere. During World War II, the Granada War Relocation Center (Camp Amache) was built to relocate and incarcerate Japanese Americans from the West Coast. More than ten thousand people passed through the camp, which held over 7,300 internees at its peak. A second devastating flood hit Prowers County in 1965, resulting in efforts to upgrade levees along the Arkansas River.

## By the Numbers



**19 national and state historic properties**



**12 Centennial Farms and Ranches**



**6 annual special events**



**2 public libraries**



**2 museums**



## CULTURAL FACILITIES AND EVENTS

### MUSEUMS

Prowers County has two museums: The Big Timbers Museum located north of Lamar and the Camp Amache Museum located in Granada. The Big Timbers Museum opened in 1966 to showcase the history and artifacts of Southeast Colorado and the High Plains of Eastern Colorado. The museum features exhibits from Native American inhabitants, pioneers and homesteaders, the Dust Bowl, and more. In 2011, the museum welcomed the Big Timbers Transportation Museum which features antique wagons, cars, trucks, and items related to the Santa Fe Trail.

The Camp Amache Museum is a counterpart to the National Historic Site. The museum is filled with stories, personal items, and has a re-creation of a typical room in the barracks. More importantly, the museum serves as a place for pilgrimages, for both previously incarcerated persons and their descendants and families.

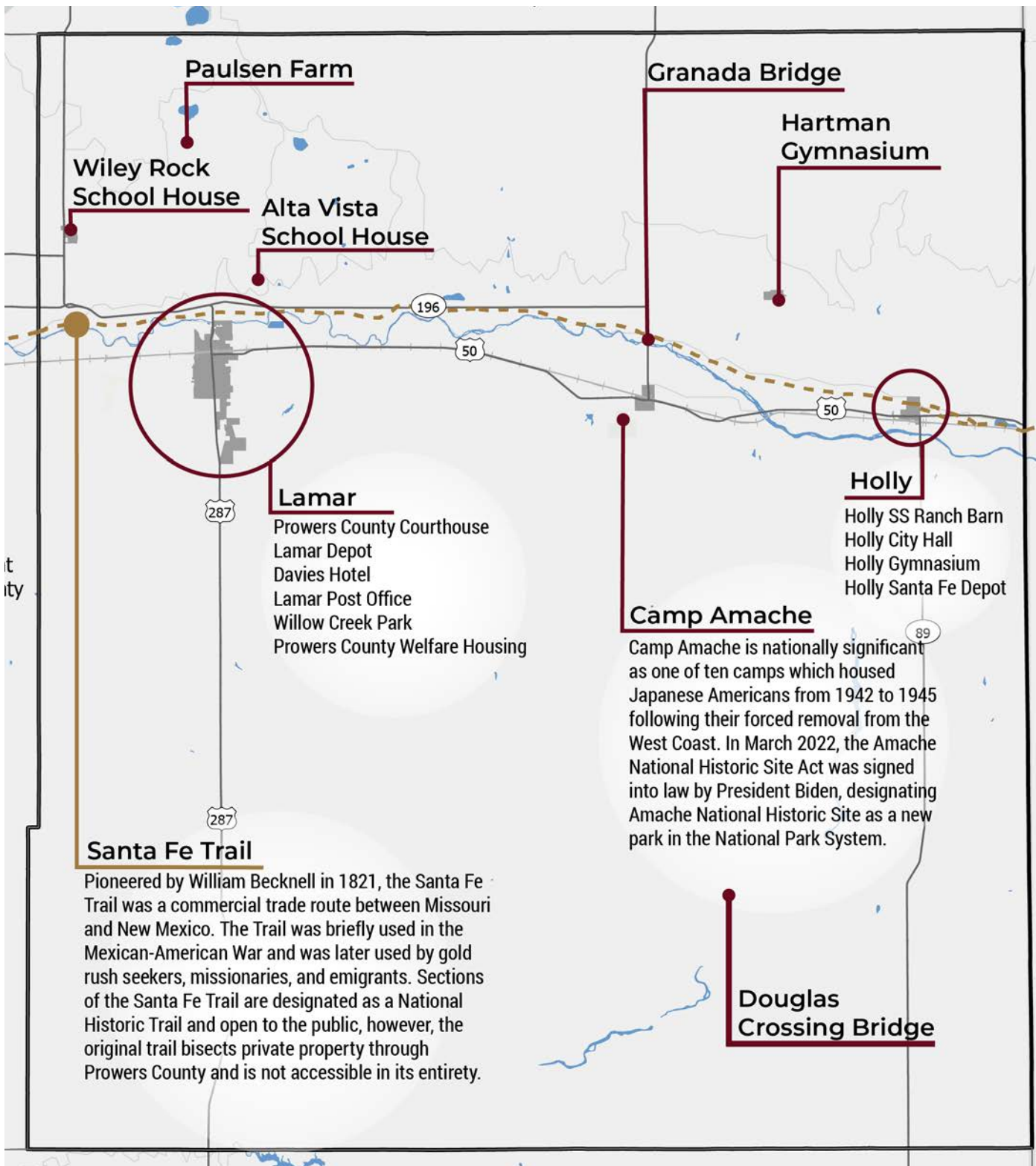
### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

There are two libraries in Prowers County: the Lamar Public Library and Holly Public Library. The Lamar Library has been a local institution since the early 20th century, providing book resources, special events, literacy programs, workforce training, computer access, and meeting space. The Story Hour is a 100-year-old tradition. Holly Public Library has similar services, with Colorado Parks passes available to check out and a variety of seasonal events for families in the area.

With Lamar and Holly being the only libraries in the County, outreach services to other areas of the County are important. In the past, Lamar has used a book bus or a mini-library on wheels that would circulate to other communities in the County. That service has largely been discontinued, but County residents can reserve books and arrange for them to be delivered at scheduled monthly Outreach Service visits.

### CULTURAL EVENTS

Several fairs and celebrations are held annually throughout the County, including the Sand and Sage Roundup (Prowers County Fair), Lamar Days, Wiley Hay Days, Granada/Bristol Days, Holly Days, and Holly Gateway Fair. There is also the Two Shot Goose Hunt and the High Plains Snow Goose Festival.



## HISTORIC PLACES

Community representatives and experts in preservation play a key role in safeguarding a community's heritage through collaboration and policy development. There are numerous historic buildings, structures, sites, and districts in Prowers County. Nineteen buildings have been formally recognized and listed on the National Register of Historic Places or on the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties. Most of these sites are within the cities of Lamar, Holly, and Wiley. The County also has the Prowers County Historic Preservation Advisory Board, which helps facilitate historic preservation within the County. Community representatives and experts in preservation play a key role in safeguarding a community's heritage through collaboration and policy development.

## CENTENNIAL FARMS

Families who have owned and operated their farm or ranch for 100 years or more can apply to receive a Colorado Centennial Farms & Ranches award. Twelve Centennial Farms & Ranches have been

awarded in Prowers County. To qualify, farming or ranching properties must have a minimum of 160 acres, have remained in the same family continuously for at least 100 years, and must still operate as a working farm or ranch. Starting in 1986, the Colorado Centennial Farms & Ranches program was the first program of its kind in the nation to give a Historic Structures Award to families who have successfully preserved historic buildings on their farms and ranches.

## PROGRAMS AND TOOLS

There are several volunteer groups that work toward preserving historic artifacts and sites, including the Prowers County Historical Society associated with the Big Timbers Museum; the Amache Preservation Society, a student volunteer group that has maintained some of the historic Camp Amache grounds; and the formal City of Lamar Historic Preservation Advisory Board. Prowers County, however, does not have strong historic preservation guidelines, regulations, or advisory boards to preserve site or buildings with historical significance.



Photo Credit: Claire McWilliams

## RESOURCES:

### POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS SECTION:

- *Colorado State Demographer's Office*
- *2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*
- *Steven Manson, Jonathan Schroeder, David Van Riper, Katherine Knowles, Tracy Kugler, Finn Roberts, and Steven Ruggles. IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 18.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS. 2023. <http://doi.org/10.18128/D050.V18.0>*

### HOUSING SECTION:

- *2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*
- *2010 US Census*
- *HISTA Ribbon Demographics*
- *Western Spaces Calculations*

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SECTION:

- *2021 SECED CEDS*
- *2022 Economic Impact of Travel in Colorado, Dean Runyan Associates*
- *2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*
- *NHGIS Database*
- *Southwest Colorado Regional Resiliency & Recovery Roadmap, 2023*
- *Colorado State Demographer's Office*
- <https://thegreathighprairie.com/wind-power-projects/>

### LAND USE AND REGIONAL COORDINATION SECTION:

- *Prowers County Zoning Map*
- *Prowers County Assessor Data*

### AGRICULTURE SECTION:

- *2002, 2005, 2012, 2017, 2022 U.S. Department of Agriculture Census of Agriculture*
- *USGS Waterwatch*

### NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER SECTION:

- *Colorado EnviroScreen Environmental Justice Mapping Tool*
- <https://www.townofwiley.us/departments.html>
- <https://www.sdaco.org/lc/sda-transparency/notice/id/3054/feature-name/org.sdaco.transparency.standard>
- <https://townofholly.com/water.shtml>
- <https://www.lowerark.com/>
- <https://www.secwcd.org/content/about-us>
- <https://www.ci.lamar.co.us/water>
- <https://townofholly.com/water.shtml>
- <http://lre-projects.com/ColoradoWaterEntities/>
- <https://spl.cde.state.co.us/artemis/hemonos/he17202p942004internet/>
- <https://www.drought.gov/states/colorado/county/Prowers>
- <https://coloradogeologicalsurvey.org/publications/evaluation-mineral-fuel-potential-prowers-cslb/>

## TRANSPORTATION SECTION:

- *LEHD, Census 2020*
- *CDOT*
- *BNSF*
- *CDOT STIP 2024-2027*
- <https://www.goldengatemanor.com/nemt-transportation>
- [https://www.prowerscounty.net/departments/pats\\_\(prowers\\_area\\_transit\)/brochures/index.p](https://www.prowerscounty.net/departments/pats_(prowers_area_transit)/brochures/index.p)
- <https://www.amtrak.com/southwest-chief-train>
- <https://data.colorado.gov/Recreation/Colorado-Trail-Explorer-COTREX-/tsn8-y22x>
- <https://www.codot.gov/projects/archived-project-sites/us287lamar/documents/Figure1.pdf>

## HUMAN SERVICES AND HEALTH SECTION:

- *Colorado State Demographer's Office*
- *Colorado Shines*
- *2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates*
- *Colorado Department of Health and Environment EnviroScreen Tool*
- *Prowers Medical Center 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment*
- *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCE SECTION:

- <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/prowers-county>
- <https://www.historycolorado.org/national-state-register-listed-properties>
- <https://thegreathighprairie.com/the-historic-santa-fe-trail/>
- <https://www.historycolorado.org/location/atsf-railway-passenger-depot>
- <https://www.historycolorado.org/location/alta-vista-school>

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# Appendix C. Engagement Summary

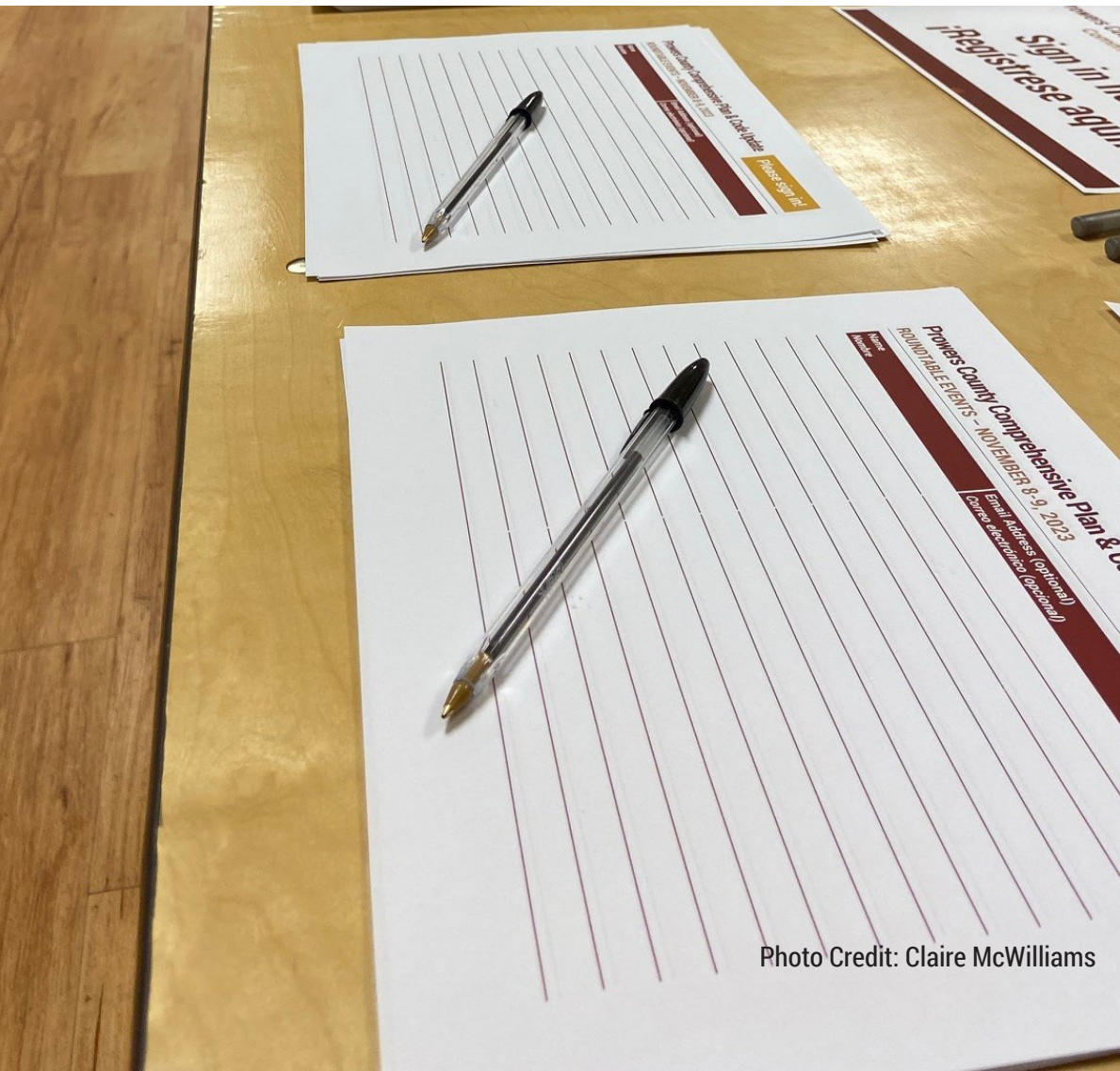


Photo Credit: Claire McWilliams

# INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

The public engagement process for the Prowers County Comprehensive Plan Update was a robust, inclusive, and collaborative effort designed to gather meaningful input from residents across the County. Over the course of 18 months, the process featured 11 community events held in various locations throughout the County, attempting widespread participation and diverse representation.

The Board of County Commissioners and the Planning Commission provided regular updates to maintain transparency and alignment with decision-makers. Coordination meetings with towns and cities further strengthened regional collaboration, particularly aligning with the City of Lamar as it developed their own comprehensive plan concurrently.

Outreach and notification efforts were extensive, utilizing social media platforms, radio announcements, email distributions, newsletters, and newspapers to maximize community awareness and participation. Materials and communications were provided in both English and Spanish and Spanish translation services available at all public events to ensure accessibility for all residents. Refreshments were also offered at each event, fostering a welcoming and comfortable environment for attendees.

This comprehensive approach to public engagement reflects Prowers County’s commitment to an open planning process where all voices are heard and valued.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

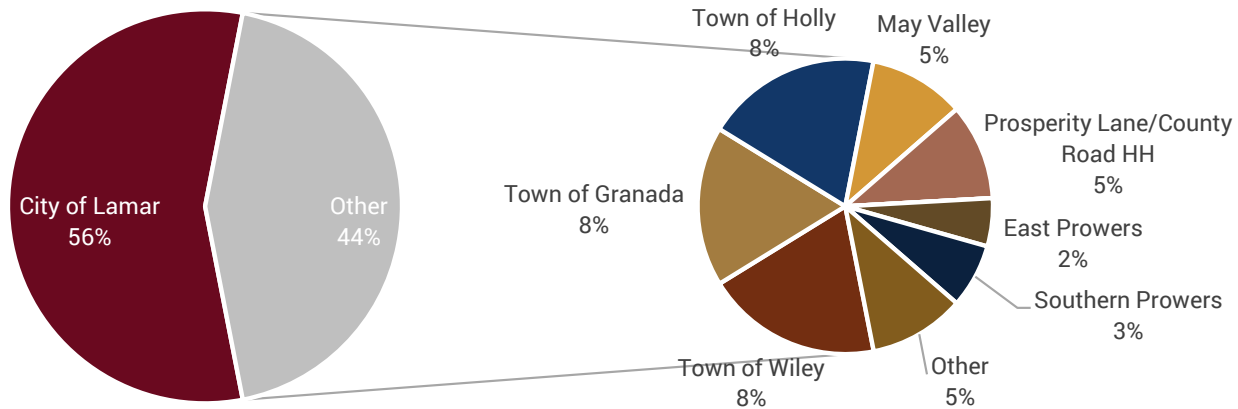
A Steering Committee (SC) was established to provide direction and guidance throughout the planning process by weighing in on big decisions, being a link to the community, and reviewing draft materials. It was made up of community members from various backgrounds who initially applied to be part of the committee.

## TOTAL PARTICIPATION NUMBERS

<b>13</b> <i>Community events</i>	<b>114</b> <i>Event participation</i>
<b>14,600+</b> <i>Website views</i>	<b>8</b> <i>Board and Commission meetings</i>
<b>175</b> <i>Online participation</i>	<b>9</b> <i>Steering Committee meetings</i>
<b>4</b> <i>Online activities</i>	<b>3</b> <i>Presentations to Town Councils</i>

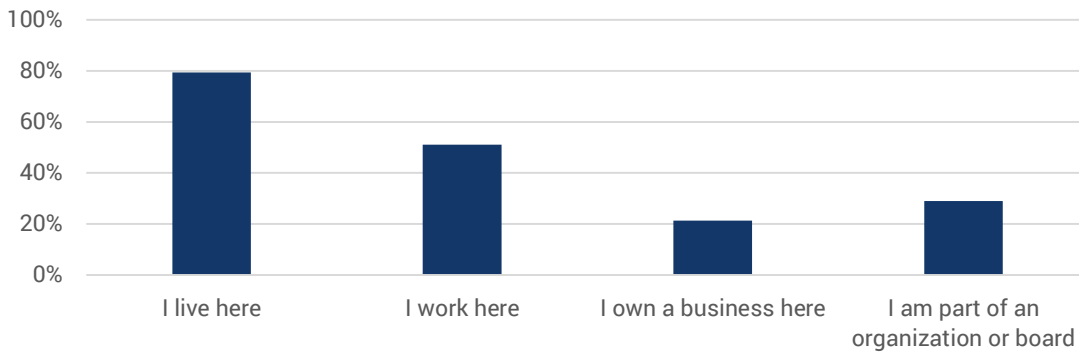
# WHO PARTICIPATED?

## Where is your primary residence?

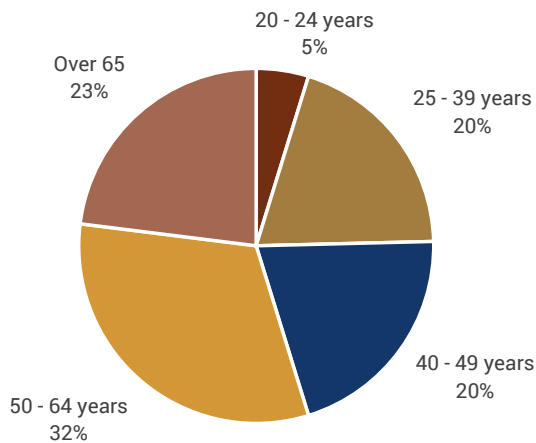


Most project participants indicated that they live in the City of Lamar. This aligns with the population estimates from the Census; 64% of the County population lives in Lamar.

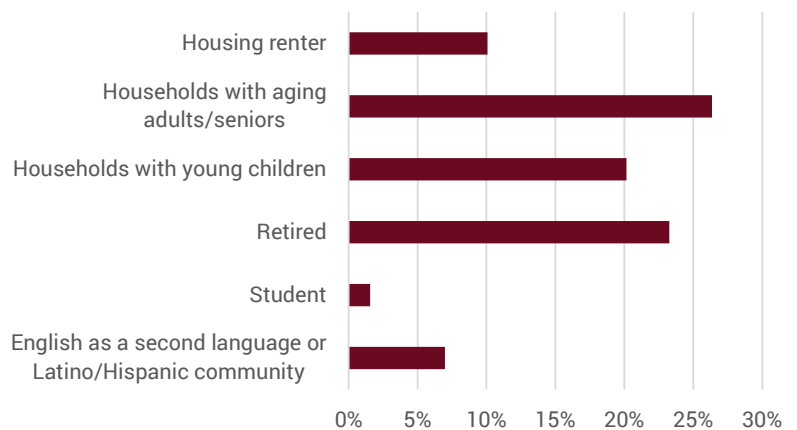
## What is your relationship with Prowers County?



## What is your age?



## Do you represent any of the following?



There were few young adult participants. No youth were involved in this process. Spanish interpretation and translation was available at all events and through online activities, however very few Spanish-speaking and Hispanic community members engaged in the process.

# ENGAGEMENT SERIES #1 - PROJECT KICKOFF

## INTRODUCTION

In September 2023, Prowers County began updating its 2003 Master Plan to guide the County's day-to-day decisions more accurately and holistically into the future. The first phase of the planning process, Foundation, aimed to establish the community's key issues, opportunities, and values to paint an overall picture of where Prowers County stands today. This report intends to summarize the comments heard from the public throughout the first engagement series.

## HIGHLIGHTS

<b>4</b> <i>Community events</i>	<b>2,000+</b> <i>Fliers distributed</i>
<b>39</b> <i>Roundtable attendees</i>	<b>2,000+</b> <i>Website views</i>
<b>88</b> <i>Questionnaire responses</i>	<b>5</b> <i>Engagement methods</i>

## NOTIFICATION

Notification throughout the process utilized existing communication channels that the community was familiar with, including local newspapers, fliers at community events, social media posts, email invitations, and a radio appearance.

**Newspapers:** Two newspaper articles were published about the Comprehensive Plan Update, one in the *Lamar Ledger* and another in the *Prowers Journal*. These articles directed readers to the project website, announced steering committee applications, and shared information about the engagement opportunities available in the first phase of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

**Fliers:** The project team distributed fliers at multiple events and to the SC members throughout the first engagement series. The largest distributions were in a *Prowers Journal* insert and at Midnight Madness and Trunk or Treat, which totaled over 2,000 fliers. The SC was given fliers at the first meeting to share with their



**Prowers County Comprehensive Plan Update**  
**Roundtable Events**

Prowers County is updating its Comprehensive Plan to reflect current community values and desired direction for change in the future! Getting direct input from the community on your vision for the County is essential to this process. Join us at a roundtable event where you can share your thoughts on key issues and big ideas for Prowers County.

**Do you represent one of these groups?**

- Businesses and Economic Development
- Agriculture and Conservation
- Residents and General Public
- Non-profits and Community Organizations
- Community Service or Infrastructure Provider

Attend a roundtable to share your thoughts on the future of Prowers County!  
*Industry professionals and general public welcome.*

**Event Information:**

Dates:  
November 8th @ 6 - 8 p.m.  
November 9th @ 12 - 1:30 p.m.

Location:  
Prowers County Fairgrounds  
Home Ec. Building  
2206 Saddle Club Dr., Lamar CO

[ProwersCompPlan.com](https://ProwersCompPlan.com)

The roundtable events will include a brief presentation followed by guided small group discussions. Refreshments and activities for children will be provided!

Scan the QR code to visit the Comp Plan website!

If you cannot attend, please visit the website for more ways to engage!

community. The majority of these fliers invited the community to the roundtable events, which are described below.

**Social Media:** Social media posts were given to partner agencies and organizations and posted on the County’s website and Facebook page. Social media posts were drafted for different points throughout the engagement series, calling the community to participate through roundtables, one-on-one interviews, and the online questionnaire.

**Email:** Email invitations for the roundtable events were sent to the Steering Committee, Board of County Commissioners, Planning Commission, and community contacts. Invitations for one-on-one interviews were also sent out following the roundtable events to previous groups and participants who provided their emails at the event.

**Radio:** There was one radio appearance on local radio station KWAY by the project team on November 8, 2023. The radio interview described the purpose and process of the County’s Comprehensive Plan Update and invited the community to the roundtable events that happened on November 8 and 9 2023.

## ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The first engagement series used a multifaceted engagement approach, utilizing one-on-one phone interviews, online activities, and in-person and virtual events.

### PLANNING COMMISSION AND BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Prowers County PC and BCC are involved at anticipated milestones in the planning process. Throughout Phase 1, the project team met with the PC twice and BCC once. These meetings were mainly informative and updated the PC and BCC on project progress, public feedback, and key topics that were mentioned in the online questionnaire and at in-person events. The PC and BCC are ultimately responsible for helping adopt the Comprehensive Plan, and their continued participation and collaboration is vital to the update process.

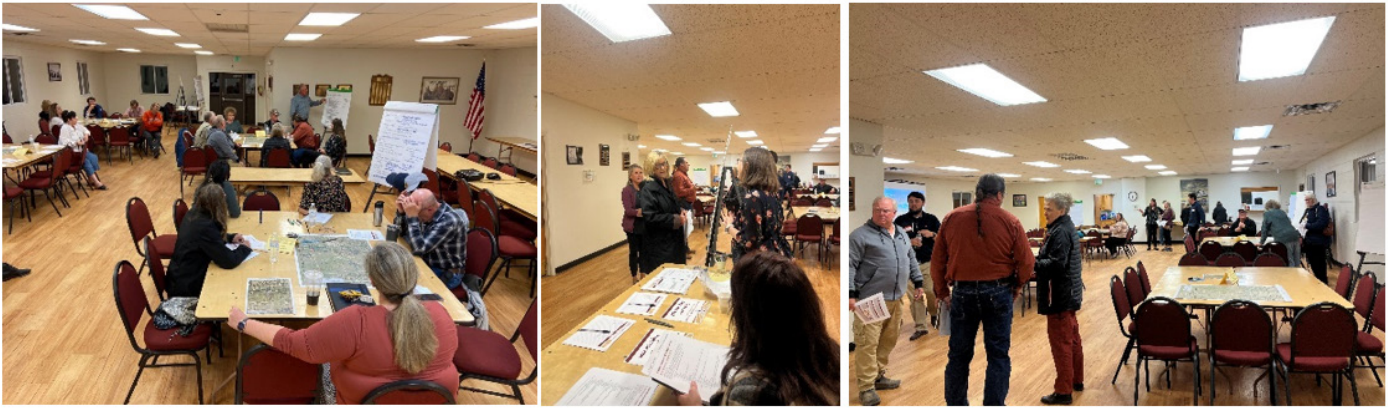
## ROUNDTABLE EVENTS

### PROCESS

The Roundtable Events were held November 8 and 9, 2023, at the Prowers County Fairgrounds. The roundtables were held in the evening and during the lunch hour to encourage as many participants as possible to attend. Each roundtable was around two hours long and began with a short presentation, describing the comprehensive plan update process and purpose, followed by a small group discussion facilitated by one of the project team members.

Groups were separated based on their interests or roles in the community, including business and economic development, non-profits and community organizations, agriculture and conservation, community service and infrastructure provider, and general public. Each table was led through a series of questions that mirrored the online questionnaire:

- What are the top reasons why you choose to live or spend time in Prowers County?
- What are the top issues facing the rural areas of Prowers County?
- What are the top issues facing the area right around the City of Lamar?
- What word(s) describe your vision for Prowers’ future? Another way to think about this is to finish the following sentence: “In 20 years Prowers County will be \_\_\_\_\_.”



- What and where are the County's opportunities and big ideas for the future?

Notetakers recorded the table's comments and thoughts for each of the questions on a flipchart, and participants from each table were asked to share their group's thoughts with everyone else at the end of the event. Spanish interpretation was available at each event and all materials were translated into Spanish.

### ROUNDTABLE EVENT #1

### ROUNDTABLE EVENT #2

<b>Date:</b>	November 8, 2023	November 9, 2023
<b>Event Time:</b>	6:00 PM-8:00 PM	12:00 PM-1:30PM
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	County Fairgrounds	County Fairgrounds
<b>Attendance:</b>	26	13
<b>Event Type:</b>	Presentation Small Group Discussion	Presentation Small Group Discussion

## COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

### PROCESS

Community interviews were offered throughout the first engagement series and created flexibility for those who couldn't attend the roundtables or wanted more time to express their thoughts about the County's future. Interviews were 45 minutes to 1 hour in length and mirrored the questions asked at the roundtables and in the first questionnaire.

### INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

<b>Dates:</b>	October 30 – November 10, 2023
<b>Number of Interviews Conducted</b>	2

# ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

## PROCESS

The online questionnaire, hosted on the project website, consisted of five questions and was active for 8 weeks.

### QUESTIONNAIRE #1

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**Dates:** October 23 – December 31, 2023

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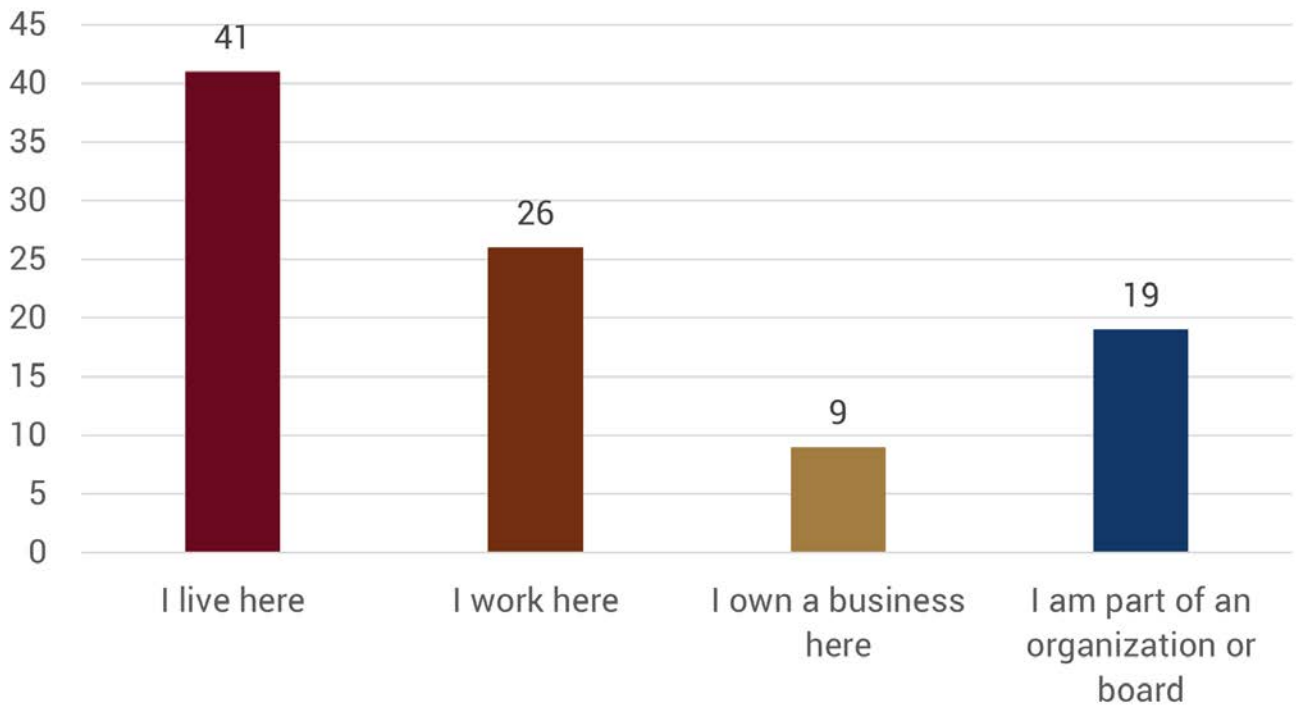
**Number of Participants:** 88 online responses

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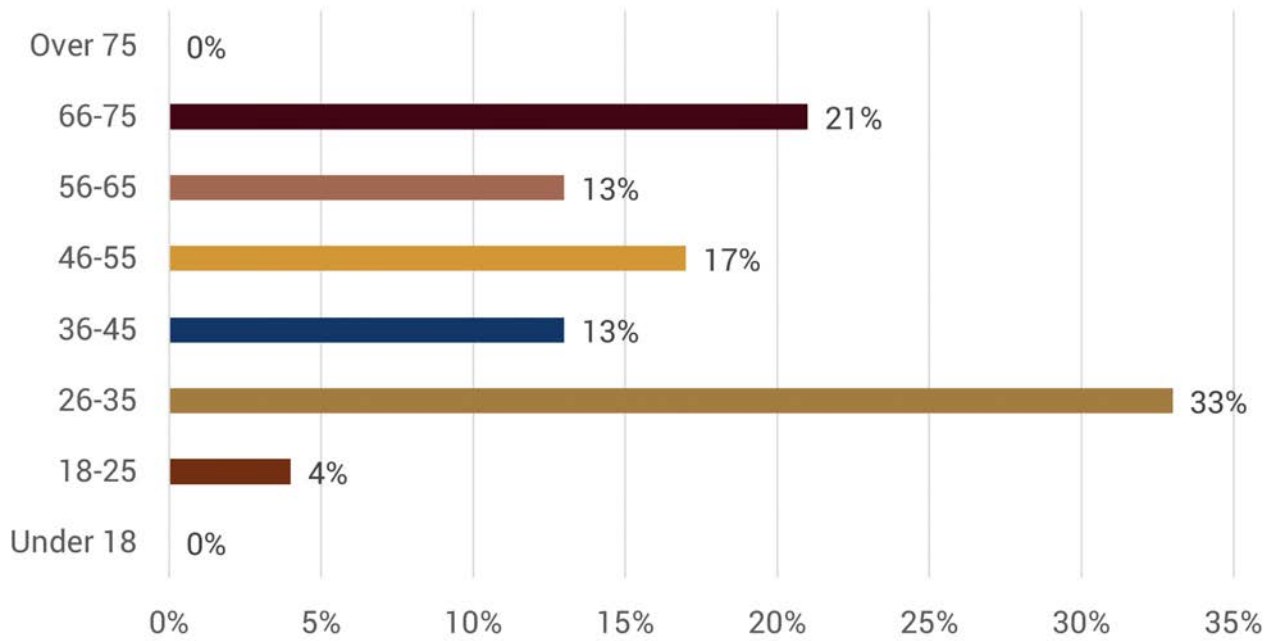
## WHO DID WE HEAR FROM?

There were optional demographic questions at the end of each survey and Roundtable events. These questions helped identify the participating populations and populations to improve outreach efforts for in the future.

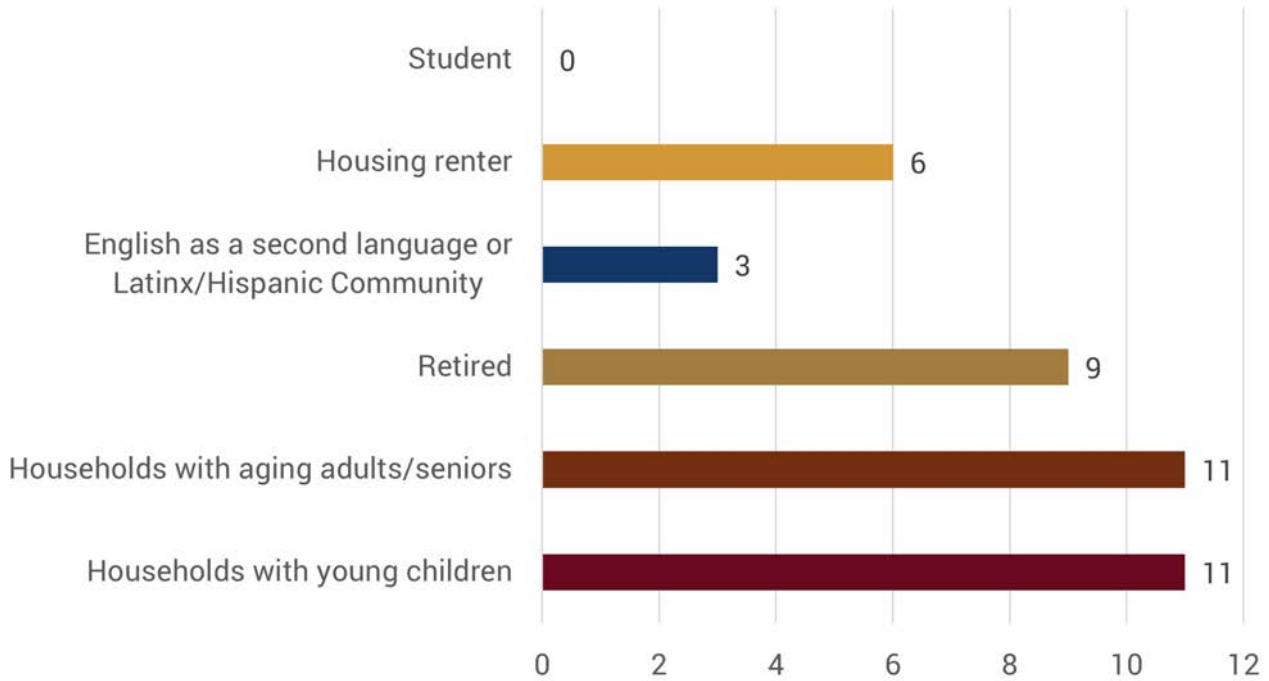
### What is your relationship to Prowers County?



### What is your age?



### Do you represent any of the following?



## WHAT WE HEARD

Questions were kept consistent across all engagement efforts to provide a comprehensive view of present-day Prowers County. The question summaries below reflect responses from all participants throughout Phase 1.

### *What do you love about Prowers County? What are the top reasons why you choose to live or spend time in Prowers County?*

1	<b>Family:</b> The most loved parts about Prowers County were family-related, such as raising a family, maintaining strong multi-generational ties, and having opportunities for students in community organizations like 4-H.
2	<b>Affordability:</b> Many respondents mentioned how affordable Prowers is compared to other places in Colorado and neighboring counties.
3	<b>Small Town:</b> The small-town feel of Prowers County was mentioned as something that the community highly valued. Respondents specifically mentioned liking that everyone knows each other, there are plenty of opportunities to be involved, and the slower pace of life.

## ISSUES

It was important to discern between the rural areas of Prowers County and the area around the City of Lamar to provide more context to the unique issues that each area faces. The top issues that the community brought to each engagement opportunity allowed for a deeper understanding of how the Comprehensive Plan can support the entire community of Prowers County in the ways that matter to them.

### *What are the top issues facing the rural areas of Prowers County?*

The responses for top issues facing the rural areas were centered around access. The most important access issues were medical services and healthcare, jobs, water, and internet and cell service.

1. Access to healthcare and medical services
2. Population decline
3. Water availability and quality for residents and agriculture
4. Internet availability and cell service
5. Economic development and job opportunities

The need for emergency services, the ability to stay connected, and the opportunity to live near employment opportunities were identified as barriers to development and community well-being, which ultimately results in population decline as people move closer to services. The issue that understates all others is water availability in the rural areas of the County. Rural health is economically

and physically dependent on water. Concern about water supplies, water quality, and adaptation to drought were consistently mentioned as top concerns for both the present and future.

***What are the top issues facing the area right around the City of Lamar?***

The top issues for the areas around Lamar focused on intergovernmental coordination. There was overall confusion about service boundaries and regulations between the County and City and a demonstrated need to help define what growth looks like in the County around Lamar.

1. Confusion about service boundaries and regulations
2. Road conditions in and out of the City
3. Trash dumping in areas around Lamar
4. Housing affordability
5. Accessible activities and services for youth

Infrastructure, especially roads around the City of Lamar, are in need of upgrades due to higher traffic volume. The community identified Prosperity Lane/County Road HH as an improvement priority because of the increased traffic from the nearby Southeast Colorado Regional Airport. Trash and dumping in the areas around Lamar were consistently mentioned as a top issue due to the aesthetic impact and environmental and public health concerns.

Socially, the community described the challenges of the lack of nearby activities and services for children and teens. Many respondents live too far to regularly attend or take their children to events and activities in Lamar. Improving access to these in the future will increase the social, mental, and physical health of youth in Prowers County.

Housing affordability was also a challenge for many in the County but mentioned most in the areas around Lamar. Countywide, wages have not kept up with the cost of living, and many younger age groups can't afford to own a home. The community also discussed the lack of quality housing, where many homes in the area either have asbestos or need major repairs. These are financial and physical hindrances to homeownership and limit the number of people who can purchase a home.

***What word(s) describe your aspirational vision for Prowers County's future? Another way to think about this is to finish the following sentence: In 20 years Prowers County will be \_\_\_\_\_.***



## ***What and where are the County's opportunities and big ideas for the future?***

The community was asked to envision its big ideas for Prowers County throughout the engagement process. Generally, the public envisioned a thriving community, both economically and socially, where families could live and work. Feedback heavily supported maintaining the agricultural and historical character of the County while using new ideas and policies to create flexibility for new development.

## ***What are the Community's Ideas for the Future?***

- Affordable housing
- Job training/trade Jobs
- Maintaining agriculture
- Recreation opportunities for youth specifically
- Regional water solutions and infrastructure development
- Leveraging hunting as a tourism attraction
- EV Charging Stations
- Airport development for economic opportunities
- Events and festivals
- Utilizing highway proximity for tourism and economic opportunity
- Ample social resources
- Creating spaces for families to connect (family centers, etc.)
- Youth engagement
- Providing recreational activities
- Passenger rail and high-speed rail for tourism
- Manufacturing jobs
- Opportunities for businesses to move into empty buildings
- Expanding LCC, more programs
- Building a reputation around kids' sports
- Hosting more community events
- Leveraging historical resources (Santa Fe Trail, Amache, etc.)
- Agritourism and agribusiness
- Game bird farms and partnerships for hunting events

## ***Where are the County's big ideas?***

**Prosperity Road Upgrade:** Specifically mentioned as a necessary upgrade as the Southeast Colorado Regional Airport continues to develop.

**Two Buttes:** Recreational opportunities, trail development for biking, walking, horses, etc.

**Granada and Holly:** Mentioned in the context of long-distance employment opportunities, building off what is already working in these areas.

## **EMERGING THEMES**

As the public spoke, issues and opportunities focused on several topics and ideas. These became the emerging themes for the Plan, or the areas that the Plan should prioritize addressing. The following five statements identify the community's preliminary vision for the future of Prowers County.

1. Ensuring the availability and improving the water quality.
2. Building a resilient economy with access to well-paying jobs.
3. Facilitating the availability and quality of childcare, senior services, and healthcare.
4. Maintaining agriculture as a cornerstone of the County's economy and history.
5. Supporting the creation of quality and affordable housing options for residents of all stages of life.

# ENGAGEMENT SERIES #2 - VISIONING

## INTRODUCTION

Prowers County began updating its 2003 Master Plan to guide the County's day-to-day decisions more accurately and holistically into the future. The second phase of the planning process, Defining the Direction, aims to confirm a Vision for the Comprehensive Plan and identify priorities for policy and implementation choices. This report summarizes the Visioning engagement opportunities in this phase of the process.

## HIGHLIGHTS

<b>3</b> <i>Community events</i>	<b>2,000+</b> <i>Fliers distributed</i>
<b>33</b> <i>Event attendees</i>	<b>2,500+</b> <i>Website views</i>
<b>4</b> <i>Questionnaire responses</i>	<b>5</b> <i>Notification methods</i>

## NOTIFICATION

Notification throughout the process utilized existing communication channels that the community was familiar with, including local newspapers, fliers at local stores, social media posts, email invitations, and a radio appearance.

**Newspapers:** News releases were published in the *Lamar Ledger and the Prowers Journal*. These articles directed readers to the project website and shared information about the engagement events and online questionnaire. Additionally, there were two advertisements in the *Holly Shopper*.

**Fliers:** Fliers were distributed throughout the County at local shops, restaurants, supply stores, banks, town halls, libraries, and post offices. Wiley and Granada school districts were also notified.

**Prowers County Comprehensive Plan Update**  
**Visioning Open Houses**

In the first phase of the Prowers County Comprehensive Plan Update, the community identified what makes present-day Prowers County a great place to live and where it can improve. Now, the County wants to know...

**What is your Vision for Prowers County?**

The County is excited to invite the community to take part in its Open House events to envision the future of Prowers. This engagement process will be focused on hearing from communities across the County through in-person Open House events in Wiley, Granada, and Holly. Participants will provide their big ideas for Prowers County to create a unified community vision for the Comprehensive Plan.

**Event Information**

Each Open House will begin with a short presentation followed by Visioning activities. Any and all levels of feedback are welcome!

All events will be catered by local businesses. See each panel below for information on times, locations, and food options!

**RSVP to an Event!**  
 To ensure that everyone gets a plate, please RSVP by Feb. 28th, 2024 at 5 PM.

Granada	Holly	Wiley
<b>Scan the QR code to RSVP!</b>  Date and Time: March 6th, 12-2 PM Location: Granada Community Center, 105 S. Main St., Granada Food Provided by: Santa Fe Trailhouse	<b>Scan the QR code to RSVP!</b>  Date and Time: March 6th, 6-8 PM Location: Holly Pride Center, 201 S. Main St., Holly Food Provided by: Backyard BBQ	<b>Scan the QR code to RSVP!</b>  Date and Time: March 7th, 12-2 PM Location: Wiley Community Center, 209 Pleasant Run, Wiley Food Provided by: Santa Fe Trailhouse

[www.ProwersCompPlan.com](http://www.ProwersCompPlan.com)

**Online and Social Media:** Social media posts were given to partner agencies and organizations and posted on the County’s website and Facebook page.

**Radio:** Mark Westhoff made one radio appearance on local radio station KWAY. The radio interview described the purpose and process of the County’s Comprehensive Plan Update and invited the community to the Visioning Events that were happening in Holly, Wiley, and Granada.

**Other Events:** Project team members attended and provided project information at the Lamar Comprehensive Plan public events. This information was designed to clarify the purview of the County Comprehensive Plan and its relationship with the concurrent Lamar Comprehensive Plan process.

## ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

This engagement series included three events in Holly, Granada and Wiley, as well as an online questionnaire. This project also had a presence at a Lamar Comprehensive Plan event.

### STEERING COMMITTEE

The SC is made up of community members from various backgrounds to provide direction and guidance, be a link to the community, and review draft materials. This committee met twice during this engagement phase and will continue to be heavily involved with reviewing documents and sharing ideas.

### VISIONING EVENTS

The Visioning Events were held at three locations on March 6 and 7, of 2024: Granada Community Center, Holly Pride Building, and Wiley Community Center. The events in Granada and Wiley were held over the lunch hour and the event in Holly was held in the evening.

Each event was designed as a two-hour open house and catered by local businesses. Each event began with a short presentation describing the Plan update purpose and process followed by open house-style. Spanish interpretation was available at each event and all materials were translated into Spanish. Activities focused on gathering support and feedback about preliminary vision themes and statements, which was mirrored on the online questionnaire.

	VISIONING EVENT #1	VISIONING EVENT #2	VISIONING EVENT #3
<b>Date:</b>	March 6	March 6	March 7
<b>Event Time:</b>	12:00 PM - 2:00 PM	6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	Granada Community Center	Holly Pride Building	Wiley Community Center
<b>Attendance:</b>	14	6	14
<b>Event Type:</b>	Open House	Open House	Open House



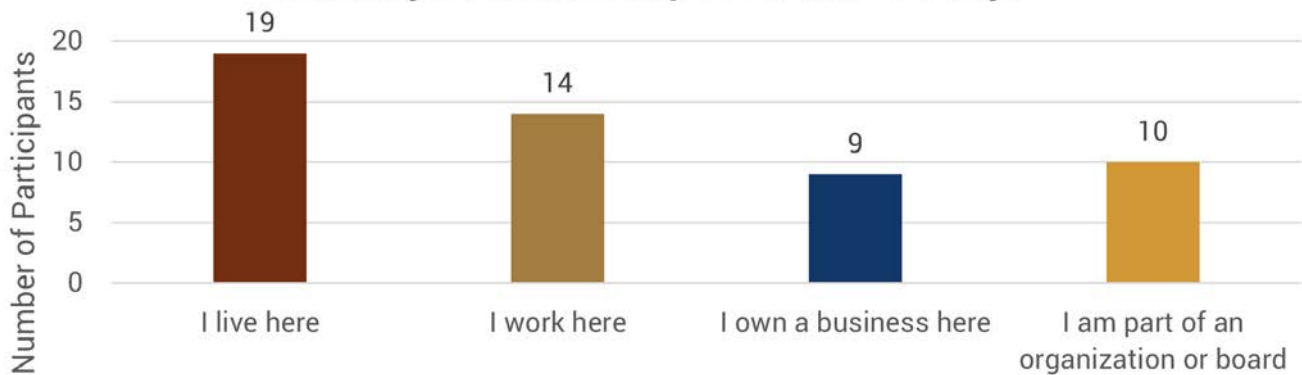
## ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

The online questionnaire was active for eight weeks on the project website: ProwersCompPlan.com. There was very little engagement through this online activity, with only three participants weighing in on the preliminary vision themes.

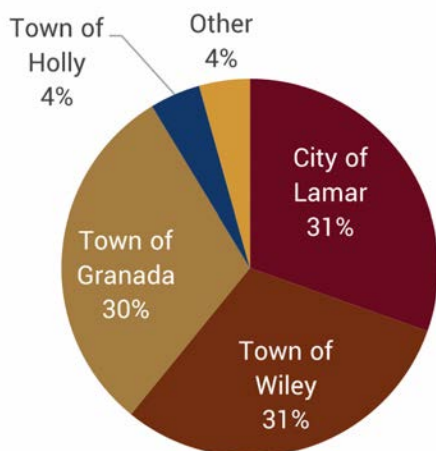
## WHO DID WE HEAR FROM?

There were optional demographic questions at the end of each survey and the Visioning Events. These questions helped identify the participating populations and populations to improve outreach efforts for in the future.

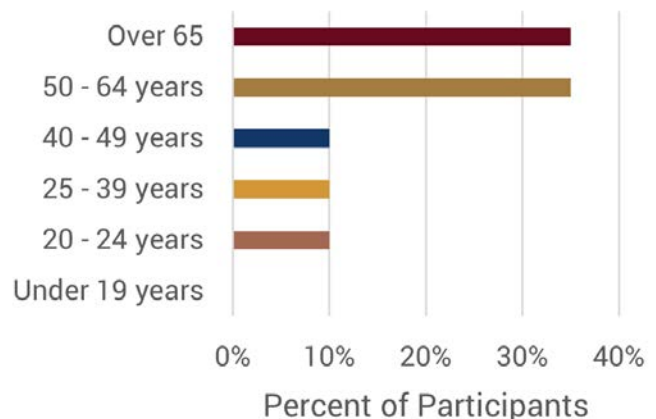
**What is your relationship to Prowers County?**



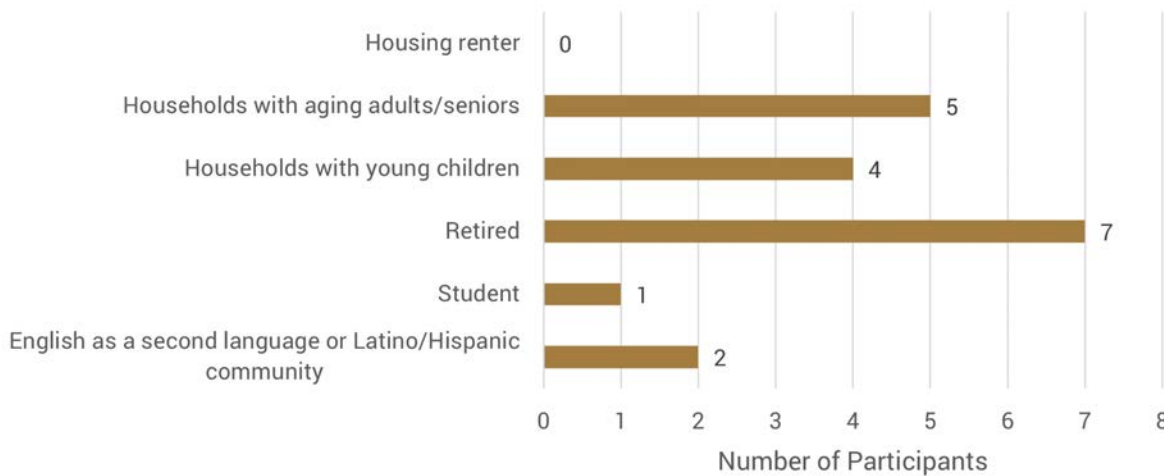
**Where is your primary residence?**



**What is your age?**



## Do you represent any of the following?



## WHAT WE HEARD

Questions were consistent across all engagement efforts to provide a comprehensive view of present-day Prowers County. The question summaries below reflect responses from all events and the online questionnaire.

### 1. *The following themes, developed from public feedback, represent the community's preliminary vision for Prowers County. Is there a theme/topic you feel is missing from the list?*



#### Water Resource Protection

• Ensure the availability and improve the quality of water.



#### Resilient Economy

• Build a resilient economy with access to well-paying jobs.



#### Healthy Communities

• Facilitate the availability and quality of childcare, senior services, and healthcare.



#### Celebration of Character

• Maintain agriculture as a cornerstone of the County's economy and history.



#### Diversified Housing

• Support the creation of quality and affordable housing options for residents of all stages of life.

**Key Takeaway:** There is strong support for these Vision Themes.

#### Comments:

- Add recycling and composting options
- Air quality, soil quality, and conservation practices
- Better internet services
- Human and animal shelters
- Hire strong educators for schools and college

## 2. What is your level of support for the following vision themes and statements?

### Water Resource Protection

Ensure the availability and improve the quality of water.

#### Comments:

- Granada has great water, but supply is low.
- Dairies use a lot of water.
- Have to keep water here.
- If there's no water, there's no way to have more families here.
- Water is critical to building a community (housing, businesses, industries, tourism).
- Water affordability is an issue too.
- Arkansas Water Conduit will help.
- Farm Bill destroyed the Conservation Reserve Program and now there is a lot of dust.

#### Opportunities:

- Offer grants for updated water filters.
- Look for low water uses and industries.
- Consider a County or regional wastewater treatment plan to help smaller communities address their sewer and wastewater needs.
- Educate people on water conservation.
- Look at Colorado Water Plan.

### Resilient Economy

Build a resilient economy with access to well-paying jobs.

#### Comments:

- Add "Diverse economy."
- Hard to find good workers with good work ethic.
- Business owners need to understand the real cost of living.
- Healthy local economy is dependent on good state and national economies.
- Need more business.
- What is a good-paying job compared with the cost of living?
- Support existing businesses.

#### Opportunities:

- Invest in schools and training opportunities.
- Collaborate with LCC for local training and internship opportunities.
- Well-paying jobs in renewable energy industry.
- Tourism industry: agritourism and historic tourism.
- Small business development office and programs.
- Could attract remote workers but needs reliable broadband internet.
- Manufacture here and sell elsewhere.
- Leverage airport and railroad access.
- Travel business ("middle of everywhere")
- Consider casino for tourism.
- Enterprise zone tax credits.

## Healthy Communities

Facilitate the availability and quality of childcare, senior services, and healthcare.

### Comments:

- Childcare is hard to find and not affordable for most households.
- Senior care is important; quality assisted living and nursing care centers.
- Childcare facilities need support from government grants.
- Residents go to Kiowa City for affordable care.
- Availability and quality of healthcare is important for people choosing to live here.
- Childcare will support younger adults working and located here.
- Housing for doctors is an issue.
- State licensing for childcare is a barrier.

### Opportunities:

- Expand PATS bus accessibility
- Provide number to call for non-emergencies for seniors.
- Attract permanent doctors, not traveling doctors.
- Attract retirees with low cost of living and access to health/services.
- Partner with LCC on nursing programs
- Healthcare as an economic driver.

## Celebration of Character

Maintain agriculture as a cornerstone of the County's economy and history.

### Comments:

- Ditch companies can't afford to fight big cities and corporations to keep water for agriculture.
- Farms need to transition and adapt to current times.
- Add ranching.
- Climate and water will affect the future of agriculture.
- How do older farmers pass the torch to a younger generation?

### Opportunities:

- Help young farmers purchase land to start a farm or ranch.
- Collaborate with LCC about agriculture program.
- Agricultural tourism and more agriculture-associated businesses.
- Succession planning/programs.
- Partnerships and internships.
- Capitalize on Fairgrounds for agriculture-related events (Rodeo, horse shows).
- Highlight historical sites and resources.
- Implement sustainable agricultural practices.

## Diversified Housing

Support the creation of quality and affordable housing options for residents of all stages of life.

### Comments:

- Affordability is a huge issue; need affordable homes that can accommodate families.
- Housing for the disabled.
- Need new retirement home; housing for seniors; downsizing.
- Lack of housing stock for rent/buy means we can't attract new families or new jobs.
- Need builders to do small projects.
- Land is affordable but infrastructure costs are high; a barrier to entry.

### Opportunities:

- Assistance for homeowners for home maintenance.
- Clean up or rehabilitate blighted housing.
- Economic development could help attract home builders.
- Short-term rentals are going to grow in the future. Consider lodging tax or incentives.
- Detailed housing plan/study to understand true housing shortage.
- Retirement homes, patio homes.

### ***3. How should the rural areas of Prowers County look and feel in 20 years?***

- Need a countywide landfill/composting/incinerator facility
- More businesses in Wiley, Holly and Granada, instead of concentrated in Lamar.
- Expansion of outdoor recreation and tourism. Consider bike/walking path from old railroad spurs. Wagon trail and campsite for tourists.
- More houses and quality construction in all towns.

### ***4. How should the areas around Lamar look and feel in 20 years?***

- Challenge Lamar to think more about being a hub for surrounding communities.
- Event center for sports, small conventions, and agriculture shows.
- Draw from surrounding towns

# ENGAGEMENT SERIES #3 - COMMUNITY CHOICES

## INTRODUCTION

In September 2023, Prowers County began updating its 2003 Master Plan to guide the County's day-to-day decisions more accurately and holistically into the future. The third phase of engagement, Community Choices, asked participants to weigh in policy and implementation ideas to work toward the Vision for the Comprehensive Plan. This report summarizes the Community Choices engagement opportunities.

## HIGHLIGHTS

<b>2</b> <i>Community events</i>	<b>2,000+</b> <i>Fliers distributed</i>
<b>33</b> <i>Event attendees</i>	<b>660+</b> <i>Website views</i>
<b>56</b> <i>Questionnaire responses</i>	<b>5</b> <i>Notification methods</i>

## NOTIFICATION

Notification throughout the process utilized existing communication channels that the community was familiar with, including local newspapers, fliers at local stores, social media posts, email invitations, and posted on electric business signs in Holly, Granada, and Lamar.

**Newspapers:** News releases were published in the *Lamar Ledger* and the *Prowers Journal*. These articles directed readers to the project website and shared information about the engagement events and online questionnaire.

**Fliers:** Fliers were distributed at Lamar Days and throughout the County at local shops, restaurants, supply stores, banks, town halls, libraries, and post offices.

**Online and Social Media:** Social media posts were given to partner agencies and organizations and posted on the County's website and Facebook page.



## - SAVE THE DATE! -

### COMMUNITY CHOICES & PRIORITIES WORKSHOPS

▶ **HOLLY SENIOR CENTER**  
129 S. MAIN ST  
HOLLY, CO  
June 11 @ 6-8PM

Join us at a public workshop to help identify and prioritize community-driven policy and implementation strategies for the Prowers Comprehensive Plan.

▶ **PROWERS FAIRGROUNDS HOME EC BUILDING**  
2206 SADDLE CLUB DR  
LAMAR, CO  
June 12 @ 6-8PM

If you cannot attend a workshop, check back to the project website to take an online questionnaire, available through June.



[www.ProwersCompPlan.com](http://www.ProwersCompPlan.com)

## ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

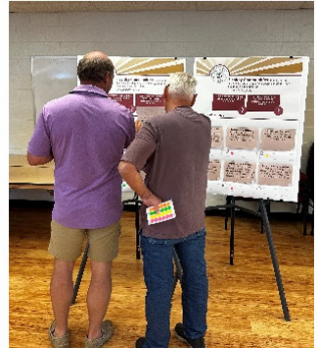
This engagement series included two events: one in Holly and one in Lamar. An online questionnaire mirrored the in-person activities on the project website: ProwersCompPlan.com.

## COMMUNITY CHOICES AND PRIORITIES EVENTS

The Community Choices Events were held at two locations on June 11 and 12, 2024: Holly Senior Center and Prowers County Fairgrounds. Both events were held in the evening.

Each event was designed as a two-hour open house, beginning with a short presentation that described the planning process. Spanish interpretation was available at each event. Activities focused on gathering feedback about potential policy and implementation ideas to achieve the Vision (established in previous engagement).

	COMMUNITY CHOICES EVENT #1	COMMUNITY CHOICES EVENT #2
<b>Date:</b>	June 11, 2024	June 12, 2024
<b>Event Time:</b>	6:00 - 8:00 PM	6:00 - 8:00 PM
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	Holly Senior Center	Prowers County Fairgrounds
<b>Attendance:</b>	2	16
<b>Event Type:</b>	Open House	Open House



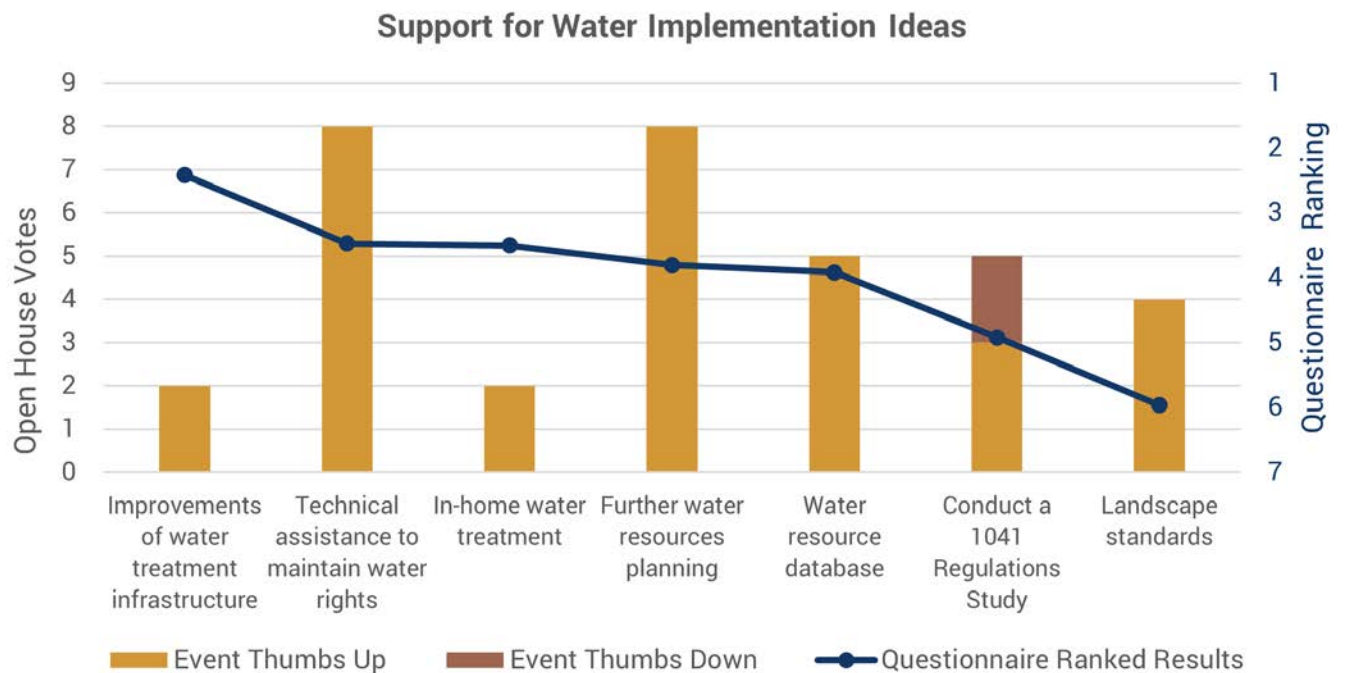
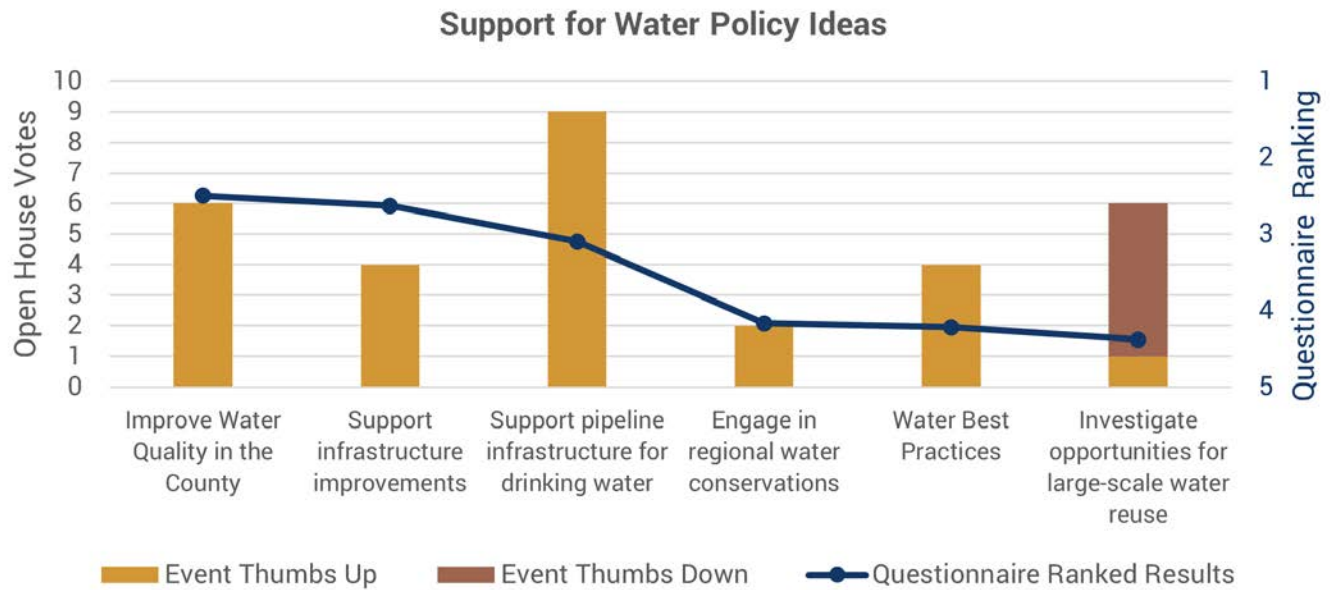
## ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

The online questionnaire was active for five weeks on the project website: [www.ProwersCompPlan.com](http://www.ProwersCompPlan.com). The online activities mirrored the in-person open house activity. A total of 56 residents participated online, however not everyone responded to every question.

## WHAT WE HEARD

The engagement summaries below reflect responses from the in-person Open House events, which also include SC engagement and the online questionnaire results. The Open House results show a “thumbs up” and a “thumbs down” vote while the questionnaire results show an average ranking of the ideas. Interestingly, the results between the Open House and questionnaire often show quite different priorities.

## WATER RESOURCE PROTECTION



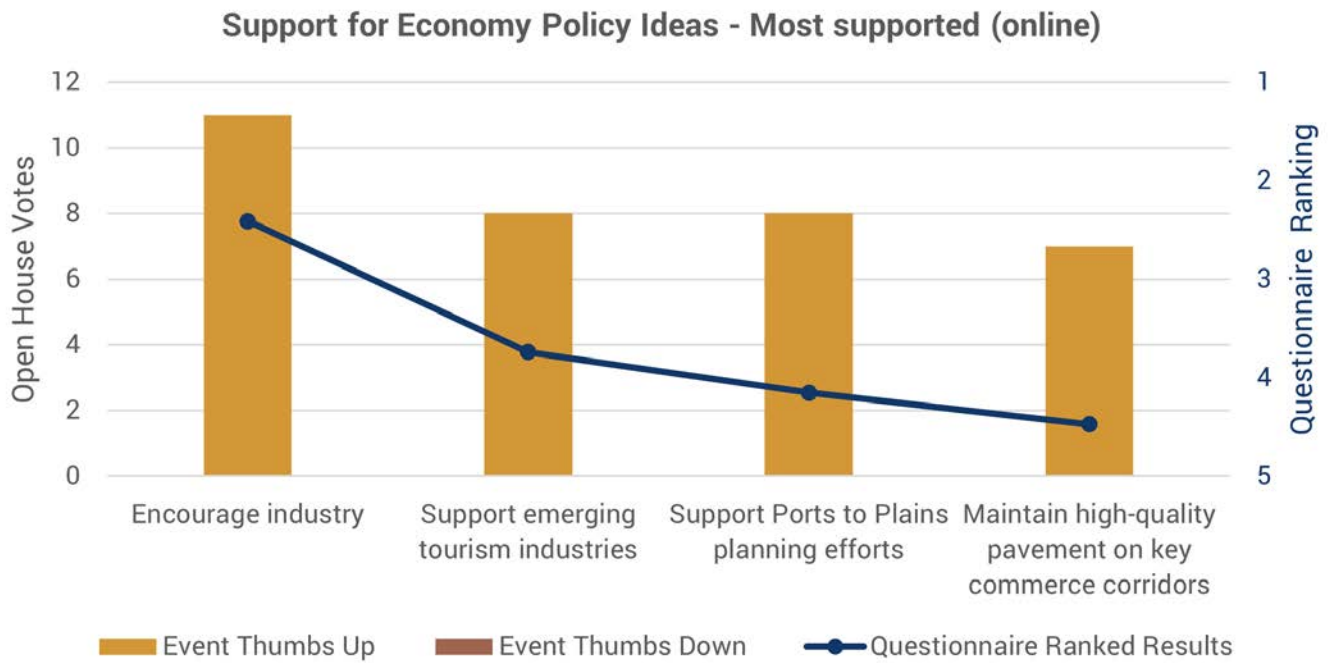
### Comments:

There is an emphasis on keeping agricultural water in Prowers County and using regulations to protect local water resources. Suggestions include countywide ordinances giving local entities priority to purchase water rights and opposing the sale of water shares to outside regions like the Front Range. There are also mixed opinions on participating in the Arkansas Valley Conduit project.

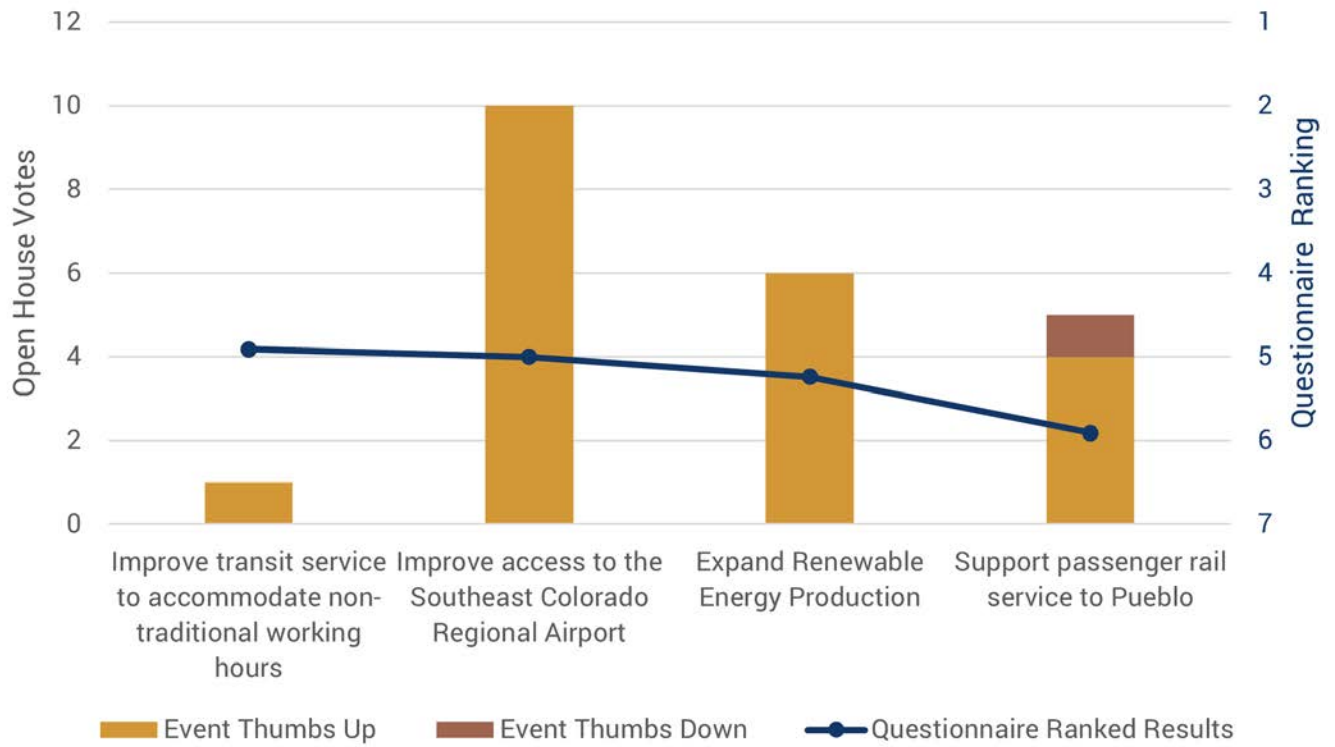
There are calls to update water infrastructure and repair damage from historic floods, such as dredging the Arkansas River. Others are concerned about water quality in the area, with some skeptical about current water importation practices and their effectiveness.

Focus on ensuring water infrastructure can support local businesses and prevent issues related to wastewater. Encouraging investment in water shares to maintain local availability and support for projects that enhance water quality and availability within the County.

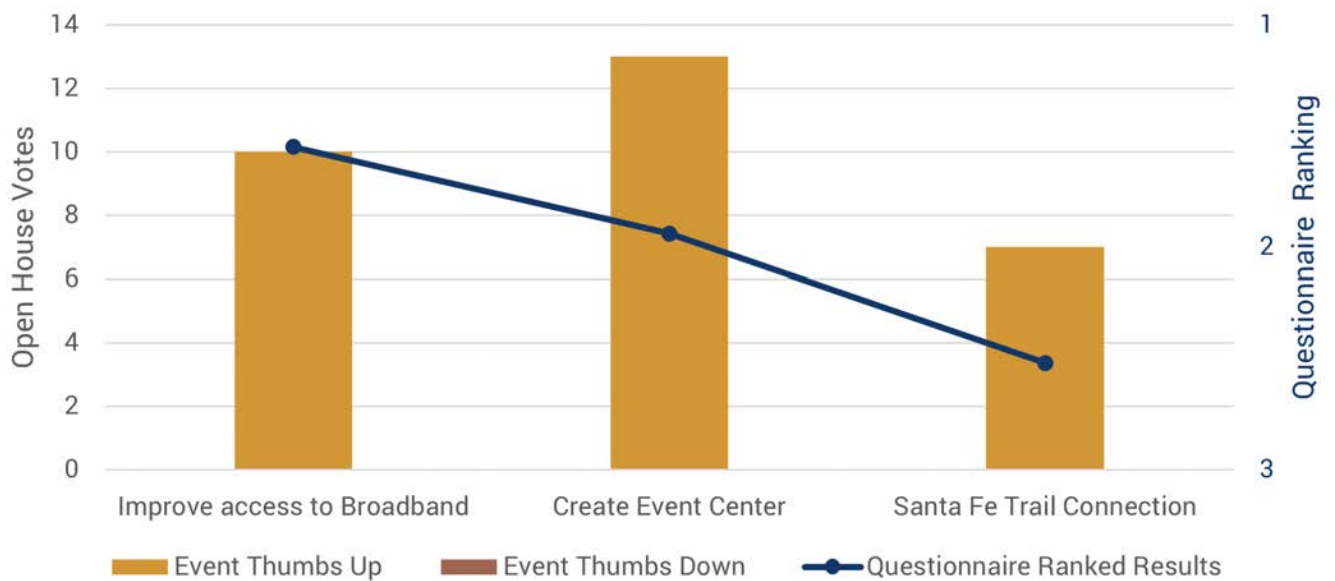
## RESILIENT ECONOMY



### Support for Economy Policy Ideas - Least supported (online)



### Support for Economy Implementation Ideas



#### Comments:

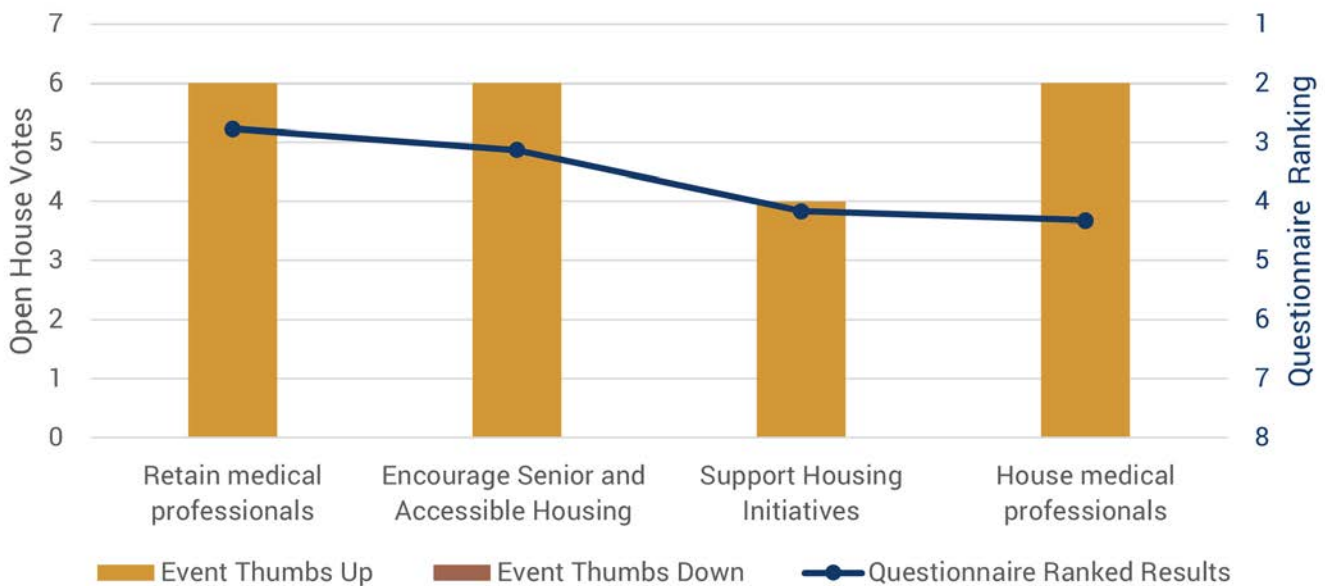
While out of the scope of the County Comprehensive Plan, there is a call to improve Downtown Lamar by cleaning up weeds, bird droppings, and abandoned buildings. Suggestions include adding murals to tell the community’s story and enhancing curb appeal with simple measures to boost pride and make the area more attractive.

Highlighting the importance of educational partnerships, such as those between LCC and local businesses would help to support training and employee retention. There were also comments to attract new housing to support industry growth, constructing a new County fire station, improving walking and biking trails, and enhancing local outdoor activities to attract businesses.

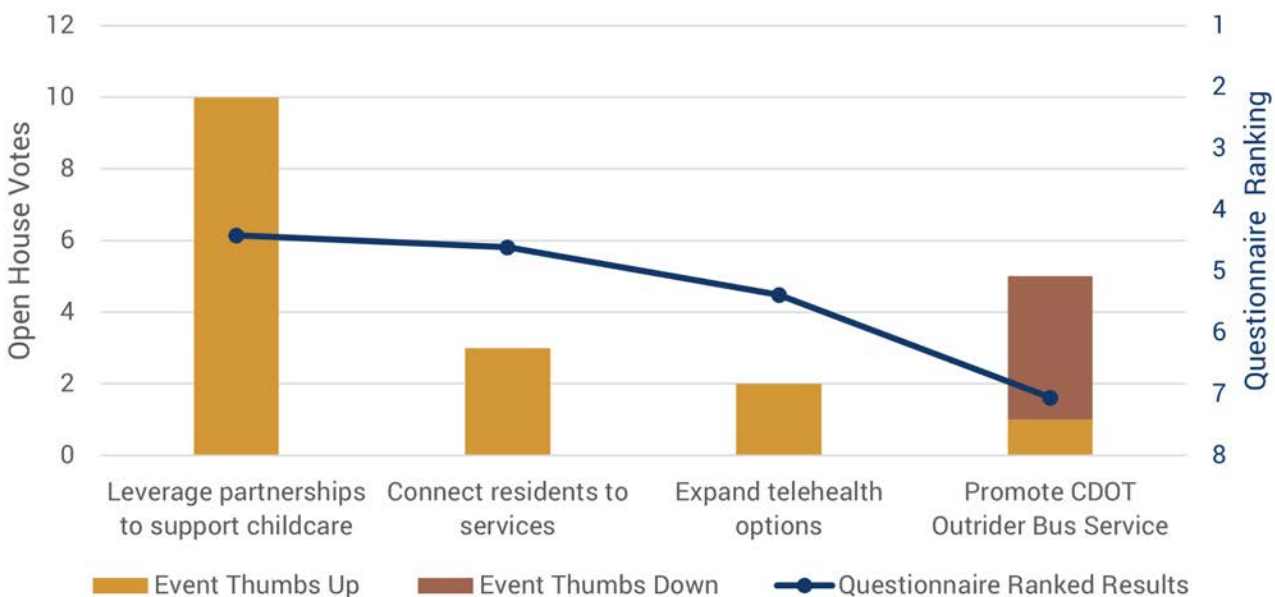
Encouraging home improvement programs, sharing information on financial literacy and first-time homebuyer classes, and providing affordable childcare would foster a resilient economy. There is also a focus on supporting local programs with appropriate funding and collaborating with existing agencies to improve community services.

## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

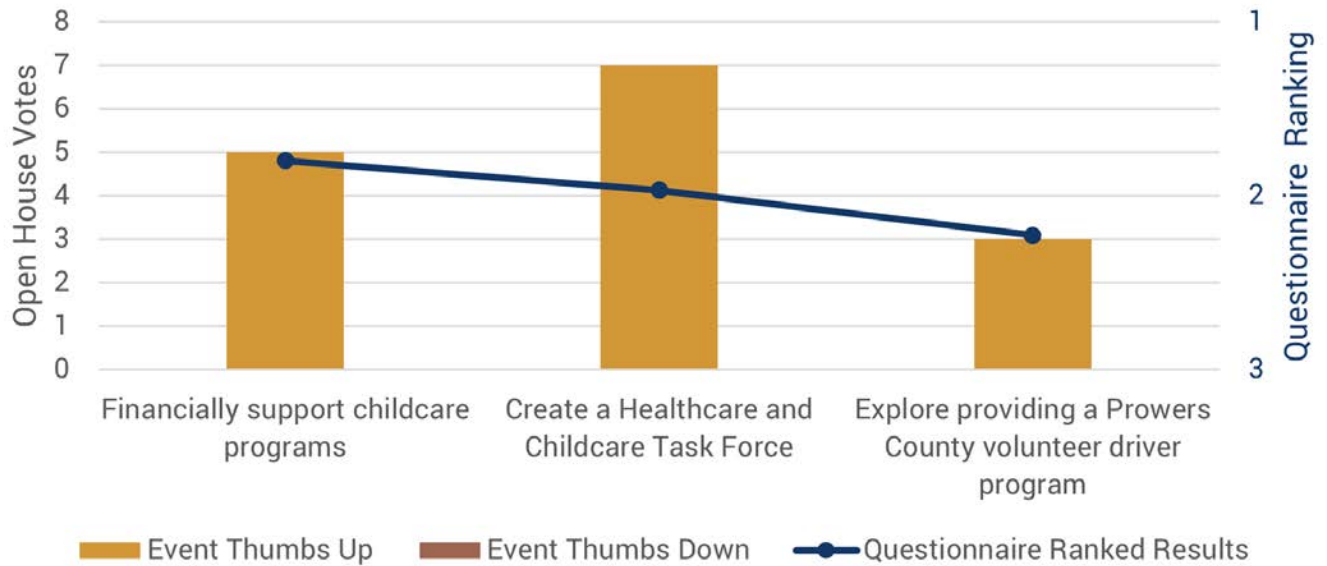
Support for Healthy Community Policy Ideas - Most supported



Support for Healthy Community Policy Ideas - Least supported



## Support for Healthy Community Implementation Ideas

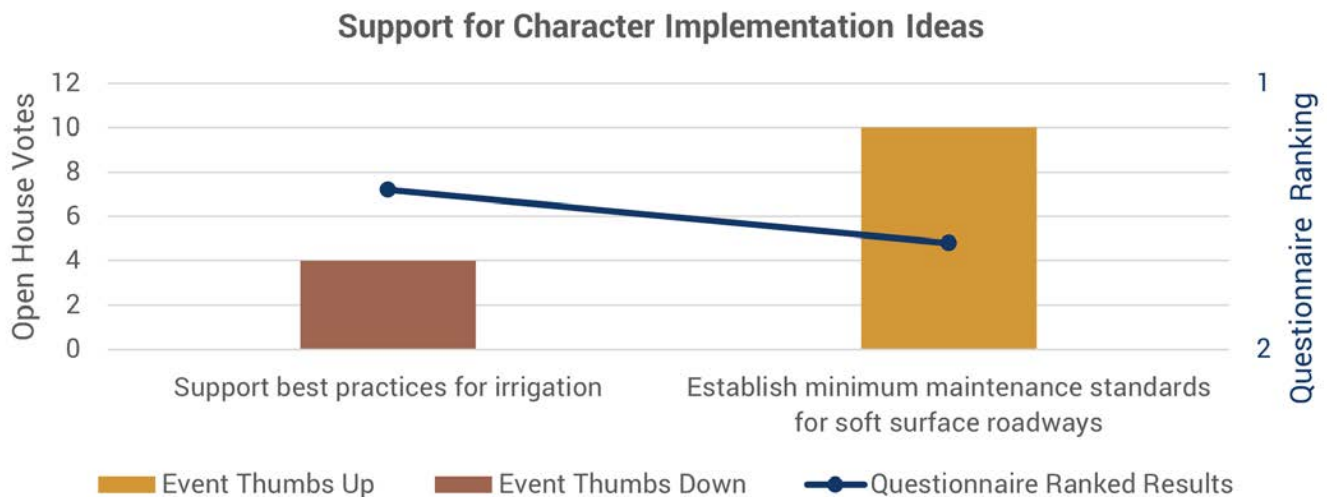
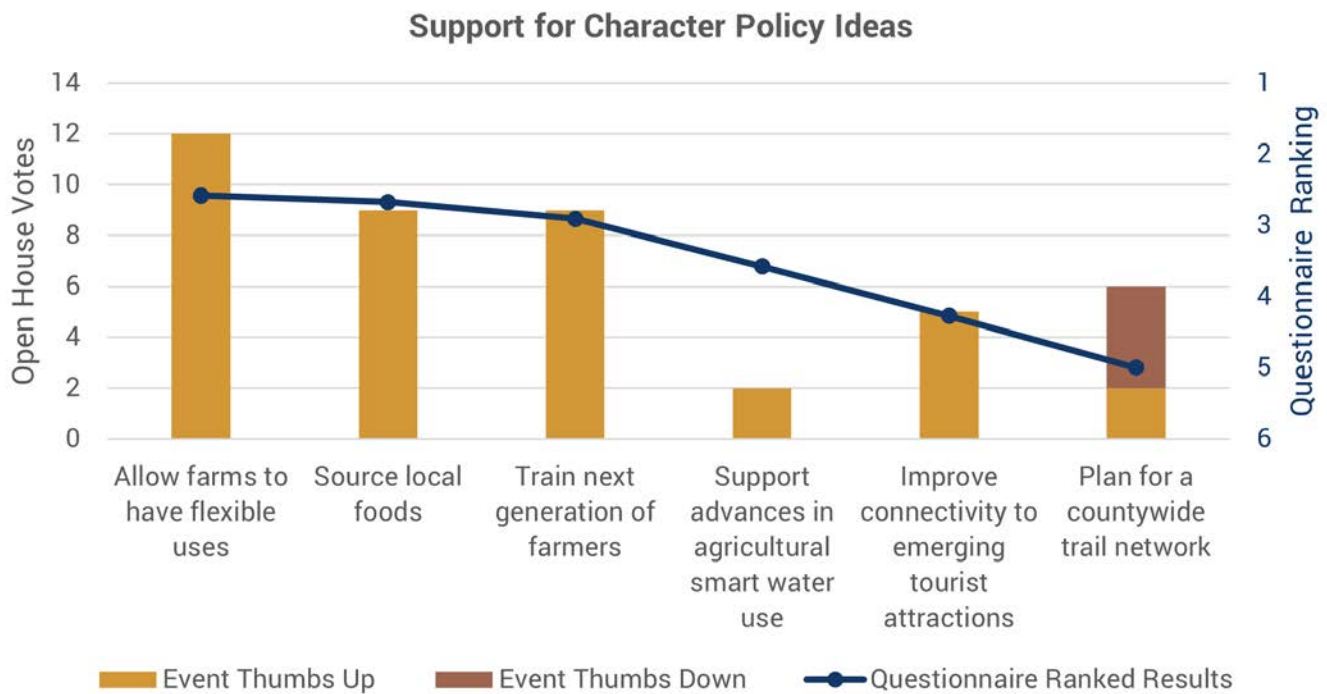


**Comments:**

There are concerns about healthcare and childcare providers feeling overwhelmed and under-appreciated, resulting in high turnover. Suggestions include providing support through coaches or liaisons and encouraging local students to enter these fields through educational programs and internships. There is also a call for a new, modern nursing home to better serve the community.

There were comments about supporting local healthcare services and using existing work groups to address issues like mental health, homelessness, and access to essential services. There are concerns about the lack of effective communication channels to educate the community about local needs.

## CELEBRATION OF AGRICULTURAL CHARACTER

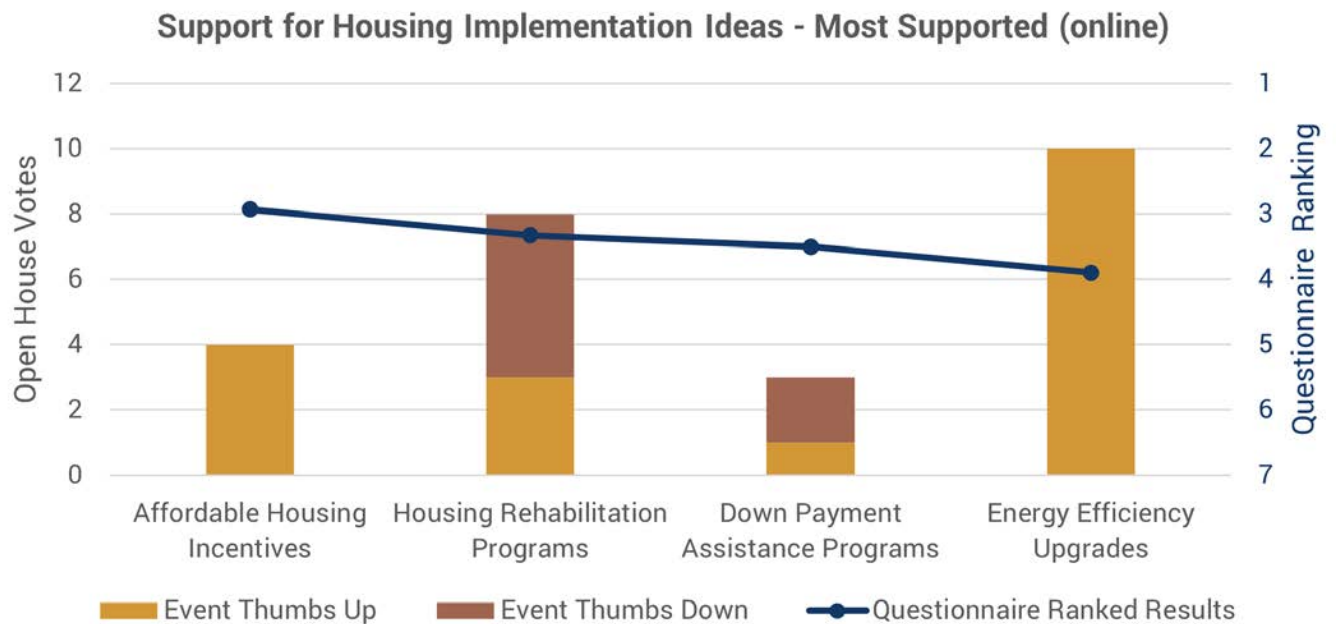
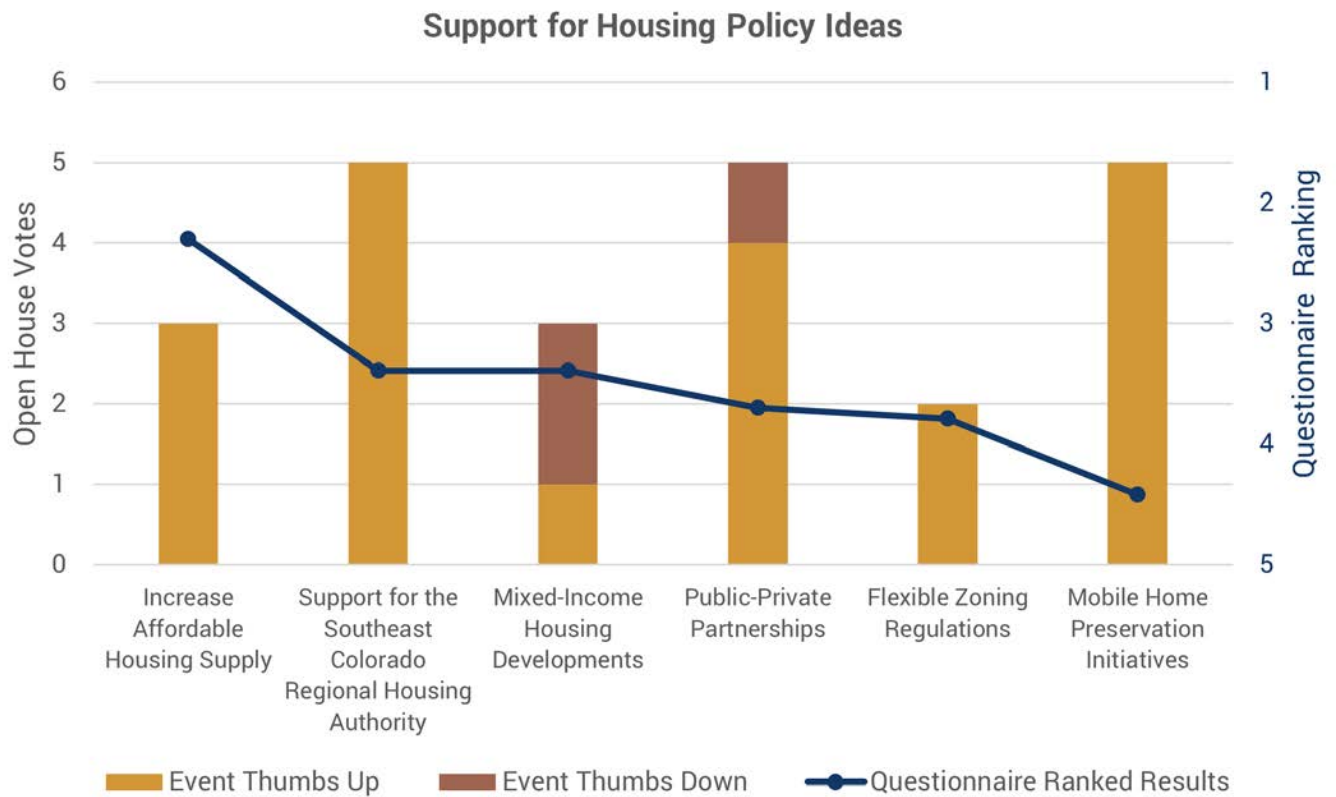


### Comments:

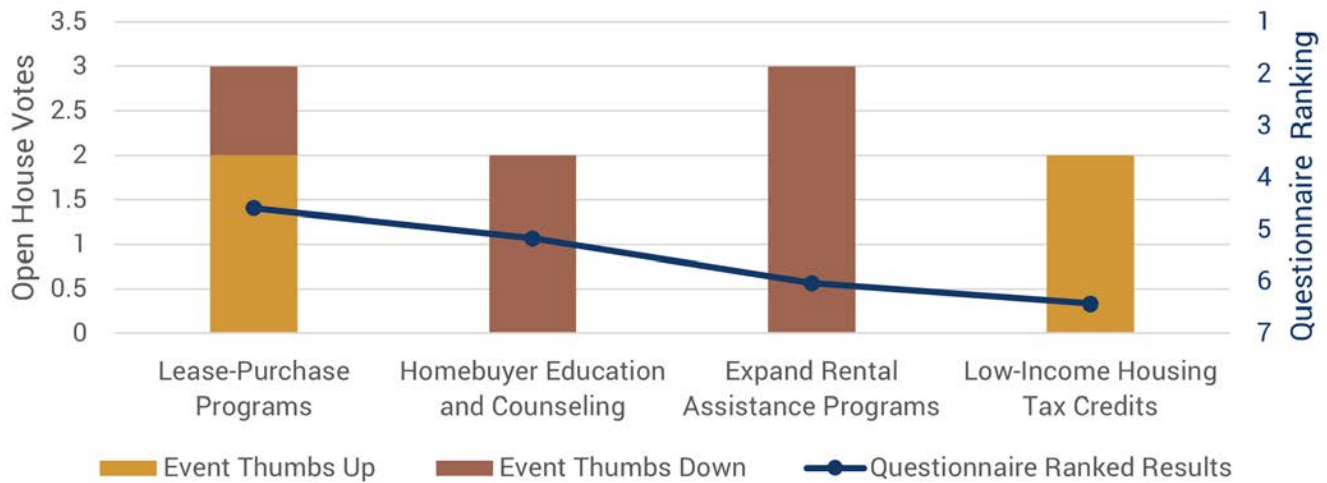
Suggestions include working with educational institutions to count farming activities toward graduation credits and creating a local farmers market to engage the younger generation and support local agriculture.

There is an emphasis on the importance of agriculture and ranching to the community's heritage and economy, advocating for involving young people in these fields to continue the traditions and support local needs.

## DIVERSIFIED HOUSING



### Support for Housing Implementation Ideas - Least Supported (online)



#### Comments:

There is strong resistance to mobile homes and current affordable housing policies, citing issues of abandonment, poor conditions, and potential tax increases.

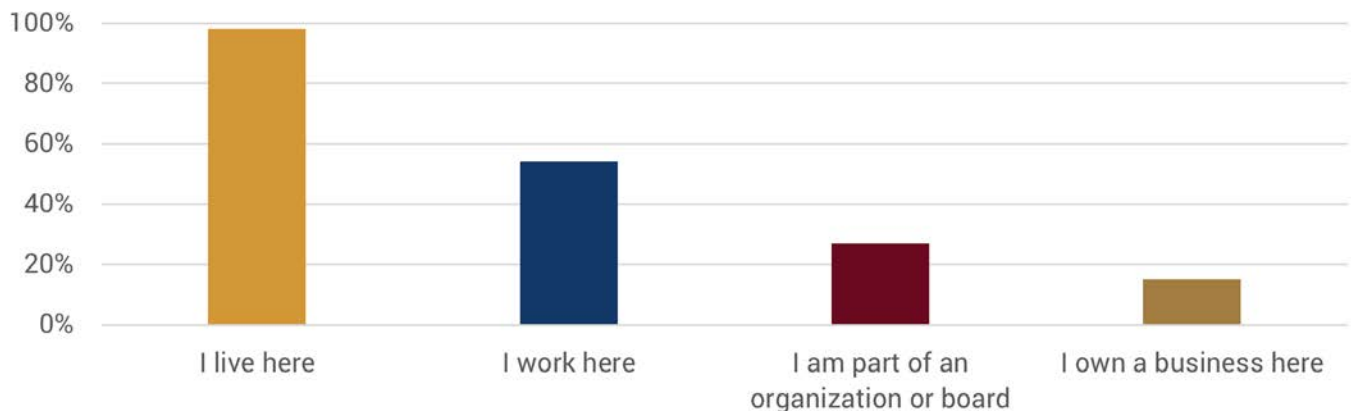
There is emphasis on the importance of financial literacy to help residents become debt-free, save money, and avoid dependency on government aid. Higher wages and improved education are seen as crucial for addressing the underlying issues of housing affordability.

Suggestions include providing incentives for developers to build upscale and affordable senior living communities to attract and retain seniors in the Lamar area.

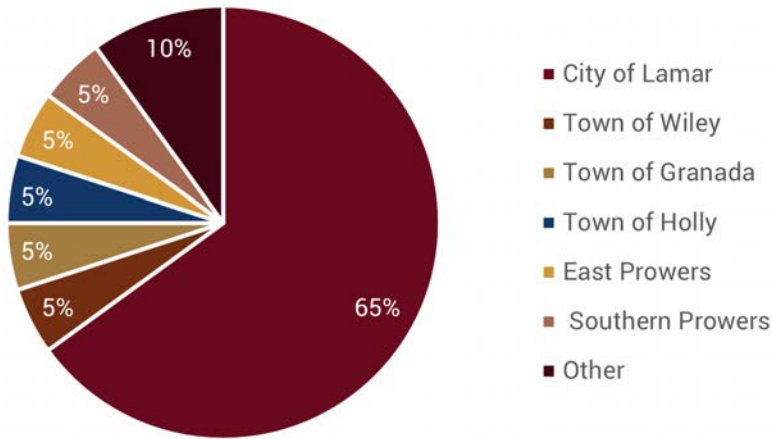
### WHO DID WE HEAR FROM?

There were optional demographic questions at the end of the questionnaire. These questions helped identify the participating populations and populations to improve outreach efforts for in the future..

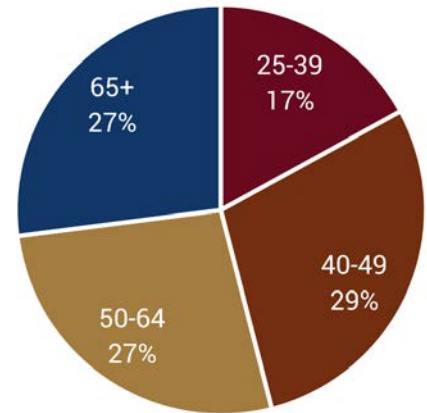
#### What is your relationship with Prowers County?



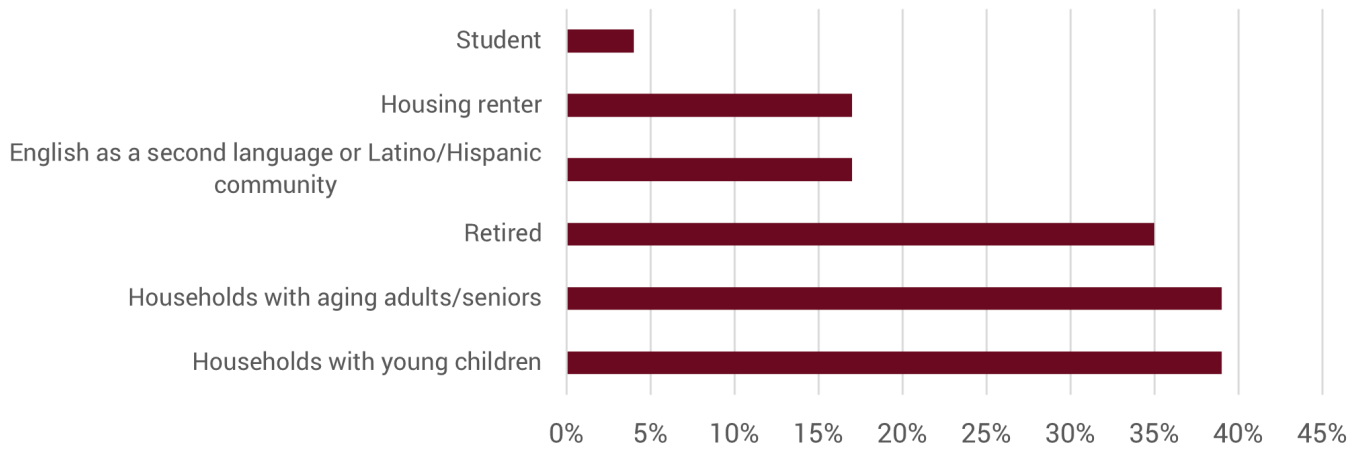
### Where is your primary residence?



### What is your age?



### Do you represent any of the following?



# ENGAGEMENT SERIES #4 - PUBLIC REVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

The public review period for the Prowers County Draft Comprehensive Plan was for the whole month of February 2025 (2/1-2/28). The planning team hosted four events the first week of February across the County to meet and discuss the draft plan with residents. Across these four events, over 40 participants attended. The full draft plan was available online to review, download, and comment on. The online commenting portal received 239 views, and 28 comments from 5 participants.

## HIGHLIGHTS

<b>4</b> <i>Community events</i>	<b>40</b> <i>Event attendees</i>
<b>2</b> <i>Focus Group Meetings (ESL classes)</i>	<b>20</b> <i>Focus Group attendees</i>
<b>42</b> <i>Written Comments</i>	<b>239</b> <i>Views of the Draft Plan online</i>

## NOTIFICATION

The Draft Plan and Public Comment Period was notified through the usual channels of communication: website updates, press release, social media, email newsletters, and newspapers. A double-sided, full page advertisements was included in the Prowers Journal, with one side in English and the other translated to Spanish. Advertisements in English and Spanish were also included in the Holly Shopper. Fliers were posted at businesses and public facilities throughout the County. Emails were sent to the subscribers of the project website, [ProwersCompPlan.com](http://ProwersCompPlan.com).



**- READY FOR REVIEW! -**

### DRAFT PLAN EVENTS AND ONLINE REVIEW

- ▶ **WILEY COMMUNITY CENTER**  
209 PHEASANT RUN  
WILEY, CO 81092  
February 5 @ 5-7pm
- ▶ **GRANADA COMMUNITY CENTER**  
105 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
GRANADA, CO 81041  
February 6 @ 12-2pm
- ▶ **HOLLY SENIOR CENTER**  
128 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
HOLLY, CO 81047  
February 6 @ 5-7pm
- ▶ **PROWERS FAIRGROUNDS HOME EC BUILDING**  
2206 SADDLE CLUB DR.  
LAMAR, CO 81052  
February 7 @ 7-9am

\*Spanish interpretation and translation available at all events.

Join us at an event in your area to celebrate the Prowers County Comprehensive Plan, ask questions, and share feedback on the Draft Plan.



Review the Draft Plan online February 1-28  
[www.ProwersCompPlan.com](http://www.ProwersCompPlan.com)

**PROWERS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
Join us and review the Draft Plan.  
Public comment period February 1-28.

- ▶ WILEY COMMUNITY CENTER  
February 5 @ 5-7pm
- ▶ GRANADA COMMUNITY CENTER  
February 6 @ 12-2pm
- ▶ HOLLY SENIOR CENTER  
February 6 @ 5-7pm
- ▶ PROWERS FAIRGROUNDS HOME EC BUILDING  
February 7 @ 7-9am

Visit [ProwersCompPlan.com](http://ProwersCompPlan.com) to review the Plan!

**PLAN INTEGRAL DEL CONDADO DE PROWERS**  
Únase a nosotros y revise el borrador del plan.  
El periodo de comentarios públicos es del 1 al 28 de febrero.

- ▶ WILEY COMMUNITY CENTER  
5 de febrero @ 5-7pm
- ▶ GRANADA COMMUNITY CENTER  
6 de febrero @ 12-2pm
- ▶ HOLLY SENIOR CENTER  
6 de febrero @ 5-7pm
- ▶ PROWERS FAIRGROUNDS HOME EC BUILDING  
7 de febrero @ 7-9am

¡Visite [ProwersCompPlan.com/ProwersEsp](http://ProwersCompPlan.com/ProwersEsp) para revisar el Plan!

## ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The Draft Plan Events were held at four locations on February 5-7, 2025: Wiley Community Center, Granada Community Center, Holly Senior Center, and the Home Ec Building at the Prowers County Fairgrounds in Lamar. Each event was designed as a two-hour open house. Spanish interpretation was available at each event. Materials included printouts of the full draft plan, large poster-sized Future Land Use Maps, and highlights from each chapter of the plan. Content on the large poster boards were translated to Spanish.

	DRAFT PLAN EVENT #1	DRAFT PLAN EVENT #2	DRAFT PLAN EVENT #3	DRAFT PLAN EVENT #4
<b>Date:</b>	February 5	February 6	February 6	February 7
<b>Event Time:</b>	5-7pm	12-2pm	5-7pm	7-9am
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	<b>Wiley Community Center</b>  (209 Pheasant Run, Wiley, CO)	<b>Granada Community Center</b>  (105 South Main Street, Granada, CO)	<b>Holly Senior Center</b>  (129 South Main Street, Holly, CO)	<b>Home Ec Building (Fairgrounds)</b>  (2206 Saddle Club Dr., Lamar, CO)
<b>Attendance:</b>	12	5	16	7



## WHAT WE HEARD

There were a total of 42 written comments from the Draft Plan Events and online commenting. The public provided a range of feedback on the Draft Comprehensive Plan, including recommendations for formatting, clarity, and content adjustments.

**Formatting & Readability:** Suggestions included rethinking the font, adding hyperlinks, removing extra spaces, and improving photo quality.

**Content Accuracy & Clarity:** Comments highlighted inaccuracies, such as correcting the historical context of Prowers County and ensuring proper naming conventions (e.g., Prowers Medical Center, Town of Holly water service). Clarification was requested for unclear phrases.

**Future Land Use:** Feedback emphasized the need for more flexibility in land use, particularly advocating for mixed-use zoning in commercial areas to attract commercial and industrial investment. Concerns were raised about limited land availability for industrial and manufacturing uses around Lamar. Recommendations included allowing large-scale commercial and industrial uses in agricultural areas and adding farming and ranching as primary uses in rural land designations. There was a suggestion to incorporate short-term stays for education and research on public lands and at airports for personnel.

**Health & Well-Being:** Suggestions called for stronger partnerships with Prowers County Public Health for public health planning, expanding access to medical and behavioral health services, and enhancing substance use prevention and intervention efforts.

**General Feedback:** Some comments expressed overall support for the plan, noting that it provides useful direction for future planning. Additional comments recommended updating the Comprehensive Plan every 10 years.

These public comments reflect a strong interest in refining the plan to ensure it effectively supports economic development, land use flexibility, infrastructure improvements, and community health initiatives.

## FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

The planning team attended two English as Second Language (ESL) classes to specifically engage the local Hispanic community.

A decorative sunburst graphic in the top right corner, consisting of multiple rays of varying lengths and shades of gold and brown radiating from a central point.

# Appendix D. Implementation Action Plan



Photo Credit: Jeffrey Beall

# INTRODUCTION

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The Implementation Action Plan is intended to be a living document that County staff, elected officials, and community partners use to support the intent of the Prowers County Comprehensive Plan. The Implementation Action Plan can be applied by staff to guide work plans, by elected officials to prioritize policy action, and by community partners to identify opportunities to collaborate and contribute. This Implementation Action Plan identifies a broad range of strategies, some with specific actions that can be taken immediately and others that contain broader ideas requiring further exploration. Some strategies can be implemented by staff or elected officials alone, and some require partnerships across local, regional, and state government or between the public and private sector. These strategies are scheduled to be implemented over the next 5 to 10 years; however, as a living plan, strategies should be revisited regularly to address new information, technologies, and resource development.

Action strategies included in the tables on the following pages are intended to influence future zoning and regulation changes, leverage partnerships, prioritize capital investments, and establish new programs and services. The resources and partnerships required for each strategy should be considered in conjunction with annual budgeting and capital planning. Each strategy is outlined by the following elements:

- 1. TOPIC.** This column generally organizes the implementation actions within similar topics, including natural resources, historic preservation, water, transportation, and housing, among others.
- 2. DESCRIPTION.** The description is a short narrative that articulates the overall intent of the implementation action.
- 3. PRIORITY.** The identified level of priority is determined by staff and county leaders and can be updated as needed.
- 4. PARTNERS.** Implementing this Plan and many of these action items will depend on collaboration and coordination with other local and regional entities and organizations.
- 5. RELEVANT GOALS.** This column references back to the list of Goals included in Chapter 2 of this Plan, indicating that the action item will work toward implementing specific goals from Comprehensive Plan.
- 6. TYPE.** The actions are categorized by four types:
  - Regulatory Reform:** Some development regulations and standards will need to be updated to ensure consistency with the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan.
  - Supporting Plans and Studies:** Specific locations or initiatives that may require additional support and direction at a more detailed level than what is established in this Plan. These include site specific development guidelines, feasibility studies, master plans, subarea plans, or additional funding mechanisms.
  - Program/Resource/Partnership:** Many of the Plan objectives may be implemented through continuation, expansion, or addition of programs, services, and partnerships.
  - Capital Projects:** These major infrastructure investments and funding partnerships are specifically relevant to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives, but should be considered in conjunction with other capital improvements to determine priorities, project efficiencies, and timing of capital improvement expenditures.

## Implementation Action Table

Topic	Description	Type	Partners	Relevant Goals
Agriculture	Develop County services or programs that provide support and connect agricultural operators to resources related to farm succession planning, estate management, state and federal incentive programs.	Program	NRCS; FSA	Economic Development Goal 2
Agriculture	Partner with Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4H initiatives, schools, and local organizations to cultivate interest in agriculture among younger generations.	Partnership	School Districts	Economic Development Goal 2
Airport	Conduct a corridor study of County Road HH to determine improvements, such as repaving and roadway widening to incentivize connections to the Lamar Municipal Airport.	Study	County Services	Transportation Goal 3
Airport	Collaborate with the City of Lamar to implement and update the Southeast Colorado Regional Airport Master Plan to identify unmet needs and economic development opportunities.	Study	City of Lamar	Transportation Goal 3
Broadband	Assess existing State broadband resources and prioritize grant opportunities that Prowers County and member jurisdictions can pursue to obtain funding for middle mile fiber to support the Southern Colorado Economic Development District's Broadband Blueprint plan. County-led Final Mile and tower distribution may be needed.	Resource	SECOM	Transportation Goal 4
Childcare	Create a Healthcare and Childcare Task Force to evaluate and recommend strategies to grow childcare and healthcare options in the County.	Process	High Plains Community Health Center	Public Facilities and Services Goal 1 and 2
Childcare	Look into using DOLA's online Childcare Facilities Toolkit, including webinars and technical assistance, to identify additional actions to increase childcare options and availability in the County ( <a href="https://cdola.colorado.gov/child-care-facility-development-toolkit">https://cdola.colorado.gov/child-care-facility-development-toolkit</a> ).	Resource		Public Facilities and Services Goal 2
Childcare	Work with the Cornerstone Resource Center to pursue grants or provide financial support to early-childhood and youth nonprofit agencies, private childcare providers, and/or the school district to support the expansion of existing childcare programs.	Resource	Cornerstone Resource Center; School Districts	Public Facilities and Services Goal 2
Communication	Establish a multilingual outreach or communication plan to ensure Spanish-speaking residents have access to county information, resources, and engagement opportunities. This could include offering all county communications in both Spanish and English, partnering with local organizations that serve Spanish-speaking populations to distribute information effectively, and/or establishing a process for Spanish-speaking residents to ask questions and provide input.	Process	Local organizations that serve Spanish-speaking populations.	Regional Collaboration Goal 4
Event Center	Conduct a feasibility study and location analysis to either expand the County Fairgrounds or develop a new event center to host sporting events, small conventions, community events, and agricultural shows.	Study		Economic Development Goal 3; historic and Cultural Resources Goal 2
Healthy Community	Create online and hard-copy resource guide to educate about local health and human service needs.	Program		Public Facilities and Services Goal 1 and 2
Healthy Community	Strengthen prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts for adult and youth substance use by supporting evidence-based strategies and community-driven solutions. Collaborate with local organizations to promote education, early intervention, and long-term support systems.	Partnership	Local organizations; Prowers County Public Health and Environment	Public Facilities and Services Goal 1
Healthy Community	Partner with Prowers County Public Health and Environment to support the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every five years and actively contribute to the development and implementation of the Public Health Improvement Plan (PHIP). Ensure these efforts are data-driven and aligned with the community's evolving needs.	Study	Prowers County Public Health and Environment	Public Facilities and Services Goal 1

Topic	Description	Type	Partners	Relevant Goals
Historic Preservation	Revise County's Zoning Code to facilitate redevelopment of historic properties while maintaining their historic character.	Code Update		Historic and Cultural Resources Goal 1
Housing	Identify and prioritize potential residential development sites that align with community needs, collaborating with developers to leverage funding opportunities.	Program	Housing developers and contractors; towns and municipalities	Housing Goal 1
Housing	Conduct targeted outreach to attract developers specializing in residential, entry-level rentals, first-time homeownership, senior, and supportive housing projects.	Program	Local contractors	Housing Goal 1
Housing	Facilitate new residential development by exploring group wells to support multiple homes or multifamily units.	Code Update		Housing Goal 1
Housing	Initiate a weatherization campaign for older homes, focusing on energy efficiency improvements like insulation and sealing to support affordability and sustainability.	Program	Local contractors	Housing Goal 2
Housing	Leverage State and Federal funding, such as HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs, to support the rehabilitation of aging housing stock, focusing on sustainability and affordability.	Resource	Property owners	Housing Goal 2
Housing	Partner with Southern Colorado Residential Rental Association (SCRRA) to create an outreach program using workshops, online resources, and community events to connect residents and landlords to available resources, including low-interest loans, grants, and technical assistance for housing maintenance.	Program	SCRRA; home owners	Housing Goal 2
Housing	Work with senior advocacy groups to identify sites for senior housing and ensure accessibility and affordability.	Partnership		Housing Goal 3
Housing	Conduct a feasibility study for a new nursing home or assisted living facility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Assess current/future demand, locations, and funding options, considering public-private partnerships.	Study		Housing Goal 3
Housing	Collaborate with SCRHA and neighboring counties to promote regional housing initiatives and leverage shared resources for the development of supportive and affordable housing.			Housing Goal 3
Natural Resources	Create and distribute educational materials to the public on best practices for wildlife and natural resource protection (i.e. weed and ditch management, minimizing or avoidance of fragmenting habitats)	Resource		Water and Natural Resources Goal 3
Property Maintenance	Develop or update property maintenance ordinances that clearly define standards for property upkeep. Establish a consistent enforcement mechanism with penalties for non-compliance.	Code Update	Towns and municipalities	Regional Coordination and Land Use Goal 3 and 4
Property Maintenance	Review and adjust zoning codes to regulate the location and appearance of junkyards. Establish buffer zones and screening requirements to reduce visual impacts.	Code Update		Regional Coordination and Land Use Goal 3 and 4
Property Maintenance	Organize county-sponsored clean-up days where residents can dispose of unwanted items at no cost. Provide dumpsters and coordinate volunteer groups for assistance, especially for elderly or disabled residents.	Program	Waste management companies	Regional Coordination and Land Use Goal 3 and 4
Regional Coordination	Formalize an agreement with the City of Lamar to align future development, infrastructure, and services within Lamar's Three Mile planning area.	Process		Regional Coordination and Land Use Goal 1

Topic	Description	Type	Partners	Relevant Goals
Santa Fe Trail	Conduct thorough research to accurately map the original route of the Santa Fe Trail within Prowers County.	Study	Big Timbers Museum; Historical Society; Santa Fe Trail Association; property owners	Historic and Cultural Resources Goal 2
Santa Fe Trail	Engage with private landowners along the historic trail route to explore voluntary conservation easements or agreements that allow for trail development while respecting property rights.	Partnership	Property owners	Historic and Cultural Resources Goal 2
Santa Fe Trail	Identify and apply for federal, state, and private grants dedicated to historic preservation and trail development.	Resource		Historic and Cultural Resources Goal 2
Transportation	Develop design standards for unpaved public roadways.	Code Update	Holly, Granada, Hartman, and Wiley	Transportation Goal 1
Transportation	Collect unpaved roadway conditions data prioritize improvements to heavily used soft surface roadways.	Study	Holly, Granada, Hartman, and Wiley	Transportation Goal 1
Transportation	Review land use and infrastructure along the Ports to Plains route to ensure county regulations and code allow for future needs, including electric vehicles and truck services.	Study	City of Lamar	Transportation Goal 1
Transportation	Conduct a short-range transit plan to determine potential improvements to the existing service, including route optimization and expansion, frequency, and alternative transit methods, such as a volunteer driver services.	Study	Prowers Area Transit	Transportation Goal 2
Transportation	Establish and facilitate a volunteer driver program to operate trips outside of public transit hours.	Program	Prowers Area Transit	Transportation Goal 2
Transportation	Conduct a feasibility study with regional partners in Southeast Colorado to determine potential connections the Front Range Rail corridor and other passenger rail services.	Study	City of Lamar and CDOT	Transportation Goal 2
Water	Form a task force that includes Prowers County and neighboring jurisdictions to advocate for water quality improvements for Southeastern Colorado.	Process	Kit Carson, Bent, and Baca counties	Water Goal 1
Water	Conduct a feasibility study to connect additional areas of Prowers County to the Arkansas Valley Conduit.	Study		Water Goal 1
Water	Regularly meet with North Lamar Sanitation District and City of Lamar Sanitation District to discuss opportunities for wastewater lagoon expansion and improvement to increase treatment capacity.	Capital Project	North Lamar Sanitation District and Lamar Sanitation District	Water Goal 1
Water	Identify small-dollar grant funding opportunities for at-home water treatment and filtration and encourage residents to apply.	Program	CSU Extension; water treatment	Water Goal 1
Water	Establish a partnership with a nonprofit or legal counsel to provide technical assistance to residents on water rights-related questions at lower cost.	Program		Water Goal 2
Water	Identify grant funding opportunities for residents involved water-rights related legal cases.	Program		Water Goal 2
Water	Conduct reoccurring water quality studies for the county and maintain up-to-date local water quality data to allow for targeted water quality improvements.	Study		Water Goal 2
Water	Represent Prowers County at regional water conferences and meetings. Implement best practices from these discussions in Prowers County. Provide debriefs from regional discussions to the County Commission.	Process		Water Goal 2

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