

**WATER PLAN GRANT FINAL REPORT**

**Project Information**

Grantee:	Alamosa County
Grant Agreement Number:	POGGI, PDAA, 202400003030
Project Title:	WPG-Alamosa County Comprehensive Plan Update
Date:	12/26/2025

**Budget Information**

Total CWCB Grant Amount:	\$99,600
CWCB Grant Funds Spent:	\$99,600
Total Actual Project Cost:	\$420,530
Match Spent:	Cash Match: \$286,291
	In-Kind: \$34,729
	Total Match: \$321,020

**Please provide a general project summary.**

Task 1 – Project Initiation and Community Engagement Plan – 100% complete previously  
 Task 2 – Kickoff & Qualitative Assessment – 100% complete previously  
 Task 3 – Plan Audit & Review – 100% complete previously  
 Task 4 – Existing Conditions Analysis & GWS Self Assessment – 100% complete previously  
 Task 5 – Defining the Direction: Values & Vision – 100% complete previously  
 Task 6 – Defining the Direction: Community Choices & Priorities – 100% complete previously  
 Task 7 – Policy Framework and Land Use Development – 100% complete previously  
 Task 8 – Management and Implementation Plan – 100% complete now

- CAC review & Draft Management & Implementation Plan completed in June 2025

Task 9 – Draft Plan and Public Review

- Public review events & Online review completed in June 2025

Task 10 – Adoption Hearings & Final Plan

- PC & BOCC joint sessions in June and July
- Plan Adopted by PC 7/16 and Approved by BOCC 7/23/25

Task 11 – Project Management

- Project completed, grant oversight and contracts completed. Final deliverables received 12/23/25

**Please describe any major issues that have occurred relating to the project’s tasks, including any information on cost overruns.**

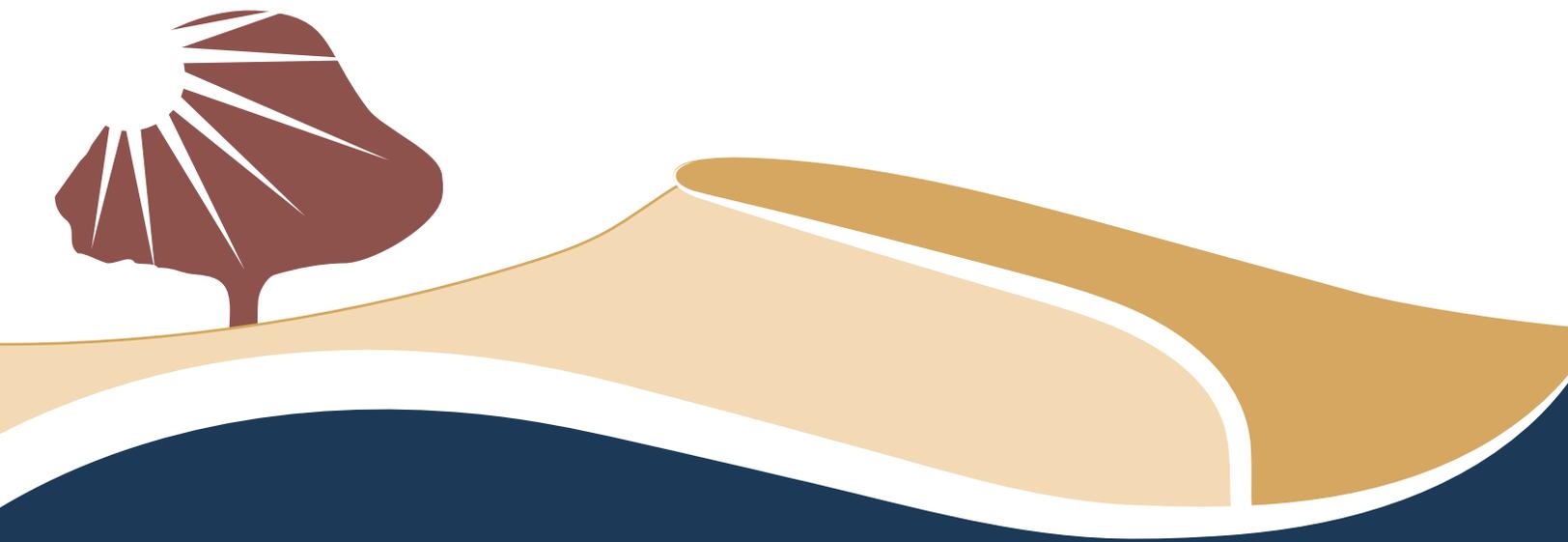
The final project wrap up was more complicated than expected, especially in getting printed copies correctly formatted for the printer, and in making the document and especially the appendices into digital format compliance with CO state accessibility requirements for posting on our website.

**Please describe corrective actions taken to address the issues described above.**

Worked with the consultant to get appropriate deliverables, contracted out print publication directly.

**Please provide any additional comments or reflections on the project. Did this project achieve the desired outcomes? Would you have done anything differently?**

While lengthy, this process was invaluable and CWCB support was greatly appreciated. We are very pleased with the end result as a long-term strategic vision for future development and decision making. In particular, the water availability overlay, building on conversations with the city and local water agencies, will guide appropriate development through effective use of our most limited resource.



# *Imagine* ALAMOSA COUNTY

Comprehensive Plan • July 2025

# Acknowledgments

## Board of County Commissioners

Lori Laske, *District 1*  
Arlan Van Ry, *District 2*  
Vern Heersink, *District 3*

## County Planning Commission

Joe Martinez, *former Chair*  
Leroy Teem, *Vice- Chair*  
Les Petersen, *Chair*  
Pat McDermott  
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Erin Minks  
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LRE Water

Special thanks to Alamosa County residents, business owners, and other community members that contributed to this Comprehensive Plan, helping shape the future of Alamosa County.

Extra special thanks to Alamosa High School 11th and 12th grade government students, and their teachers Mrs. Ramirez and Mr. Dorsey.

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# *Chapter One*

**Introduction**



Alamosa County is the most populated county in the San Luis Valley and has been the economic and transportation hub of the region since the arrival of the railroad. In June 1878, rail crews brought the first buildings to the City of Alamosa from Garland City on flatbed rail cars. This turned the town from a tent city into a railroad town in a single day. When the County of Alamosa was incorporated in 1913 from portions of Conejos and Costilla County, it was an agricultural community at the heart of a railroad network that served south central Colorado and northern New Mexico. While the railroad network has gotten much smaller in the intervening century, Alamosa County still remains an agricultural community and the regional center for banking, retail, healthcare, and other services.

Federally managed public lands have always been part of our history as a county and remain important to our future. The Great Sand Dunes National Monument was established in 1932, at which time the Rio Grande National Forest was already in existence. The establishment of the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge and Blanca Wildlife Habitat Area in the 1960s furthered conservation efforts focused on preserving the unique natural environment of our community. These and other natural areas in the region provide numerous outdoor recreation opportunities, and since the designation in 2000 of the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, increasing tourism visitation to the region has been reshaping the local economy.

As Alamosa County looks to the future and works to plan for the next several decades of change, we also recognize and honor our heritage and community values. Agriculture continues to be an important economic driver, and agricultural activities exert positive influences on the economy and culture of the county. The water and water rights that support our agriculture remain our most valuable asset. Alamosa County is committed to maximizing the beneficial use of this asset and restricting it from export beyond the San Luis Valley. We recognize and appreciate our world-class views and open spaces. We embrace our solar resources and recognize that our position as state leaders in renewable energy production must be balanced by increasing the public benefit to our local communities.

## Purpose of the Plan

The Alamosa County Comprehensive Plan is a shared vision for the future of Alamosa County—a roadmap to guide thoughtful growth, protect our natural landscapes, and strengthen our communities. It serves as an advisory document, helping elected and appointed officials make informed decisions about land use, transportation, open space, public facilities, and more. Together with the Future Land Use Map, the plan’s goals and strategies lay out a path for managing growth, preserving what makes Alamosa County unique, and investing wisely in the services and infrastructure that support our way of life.

Rather than prescribing rigid policies, the Comprehensive Plan strikes a careful balance between providing clear guidance and allowing the flexibility needed for changing times. Leadership, priorities, and opportunities may shift over the next 10 to 20 years, but this plan is designed to remain relevant, offering a strong foundation that future decision-makers can build upon.

This plan also serves as a framework for other important County tools, such as the existing Land Use and Development Code and 1041 Regulations. It helps guide decisions on zoning changes, new developments, public investments, environmental protections, and partnerships with other agencies.

## Intent of Plan

- Address current trends and issues within Alamosa County.
- Identify strategies to help create a more desirable and sustainable future.
- Direct future change through a vision of community potential.
- Establish the framework for consistency between future land use goals and regulatory measures.
- Assist County officials in their decision-making process.

It also gives residents, businesses, and partners a clear sense of Alamosa County’s vision and priorities.

This plan, called Imagine Alamosa County, is an update to Alamosa County’s master plan that was adopted in 2008. Much has changed over the past 17 years, bringing both new challenges and exciting opportunities. Exceptionally dry years have led to new regulations, policies, and organizations that dramatically impact water use by agricultural producers. The San Luis Valley Habitat Conservation Plan brings the San Luis Valley together to protect avian habitat along riparian corridors. The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage area promotes our diverse and distinct cultural heritage. Federal agencies have formalized engagement with Tribal Nations that have ancestral ties to the San Luis Valley. Visitation to the Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve has exceeded half a million visitors.

This updated plan embraces those changes and focuses on key areas such as water, housing, economic development, land use, infrastructure, and resiliency. It aims to honor our agricultural roots, build a strong and diverse economy, protect our natural beauty and resources, and promote a healthy environment for all.

This plan will be a living guide—empowering residents to shape Alamosa County’s future, adapt to new possibilities, and ensure that Alamosa County remains a place people are proud to call home.

# How to Use the Plan

Imagine Alamosa County establishes a long-term vision for balanced growth and replaces the 2008 Master Plan as Alamosa County’s primary guiding document for land use. Built around four interconnected themes—Agricultural Identity, Diverse Economy, Healthy Environments, and Natural Landscapes—this plan reflects the ideas, priorities, and evolving conditions that have shaped Alamosa County over the past two decades and expresses the themes for future development that matter most to the community. Each theme is explored individually in Chapters 3 through 6 with detailed goals and strategies that work together to support a thriving and resilient future.

This plan applies specifically to the unincorporated areas of Alamosa County, where Alamosa County maintains land use authority. It serves as a key resource for County Commissioners and Planning Commission members when reviewing development proposals, updating the Alamosa County Land Use and Development Code, or setting strategic priorities. The incorporated City of Alamosa and Town of Hooper manage land use decisions within their boundaries, and this plan identifies areas adjacent to those city and town limits where cooperation across jurisdictions can help achieve shared goals.

## Plan Elements

The plan elements are organized by the four themes of the community vision with water as a cross-cutting theme. Framed with an overview of existing conditions, exploring key considerations and emphasizing water considerations, each plan element includes specific goals and strategies, and a recommendation of supporting land uses. The plan elements, although divided into their own sections, are interconnected and one element’s success may influence the other’s success. The following page describes the components of each theme chapter in more detail.



**Agricultural Identity (Chapter 3)**



**Diverse Economy (Chapter 4)**



**Healthy Environments (Chapter 5)**



**Natural Landscapes (Chapter 6)**

## Overview

The overview of each plan element provides a description of how each theme exists in Alamosa County in 2025 paired with community value statements. Understanding the current condition and what the community desires to preserve is important in helping determine patterns and a starting point for enhancements or improvements.

## Key Considerations

The key considerations include acknowledgments of the great strengths that Alamosa County has worked toward, both directly and indirectly. They provide a further framework that helps inform the goals and strategies tying the plan elements together.

## Water Considerations

Water management and conservation are key principals of the Comprehensive Plan and directly relate to each plan element. Within each section, water considerations are emphasized with supporting strategies that will keep Alamosa County moving forward, while responding to water availability in the area.

## Goals

The goals are long-term desired outcomes that guide decision-making and set the direction for future actions as they relate to each element. They reflect the vision and provide further clarity on subtopics within each element.

## Strategies

The strategies provide examples of actions, policies, or partnerships that work towards meeting the goals. Some are more explicit while others are intentionally more subjective and allow refinement over time.

## Supporting Land Uses

These land uses provide examples of the specific development types that move Alamosa County forward in accomplishing the strategies and broader goals of each element.

## Future Land Use Framework Chapter

The Future Land Use Map in Chapter 7, a core part of this plan, provides guidance on the type and intensity of development best suited to different areas of Alamosa County. The Future Land Use Plan and Map provide a place-based metric for evaluating the applicability of specific projects. When new development proposals are considered, they will be evaluated based on how well they align with the land use categories as well as the goals, strategies, and vision outlined in this plan.

## Implementation Chapter

In addition to setting goals and land use direction, Imagine Alamosa County includes an Implementation Plan in Chapter 8 that outlines recommendations for applying the guidance in this document. These tools will assist County staff, elected officials, and other partners in updating regulations, shaping policies, and pursuing funding opportunities. Community members are also encouraged to use the plan as a guide for aligning local projects and programs with Alamosa County's collective community vision for a vibrant and sustainable future.

## Statutory Requirements

The development and adoption of a comprehensive plan is mandated through Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S. 30-28-106) to be used as a long-range guiding document for the physical development of Alamosa County. Although advisory in nature, the plan provides the framework for implementing regulatory tools like zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, and updates to other relevant County codes and standards.

The Plan also serves as the foundation for potential intergovernmental agreements, memorandums of understanding, capital improvement programming, and detailed studies and programs coordinated by public jurisdictions.

Although Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S. 30-28-106) stipulates that Comprehensive Plans must remain relevant, this document is not regulatory and shall not be interpreted as to obligate Alamosa County to take any specific action.

While the Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan reflects collaboration with the City of Alamosa, the draft plan was also shared with all neighboring jurisdictions, including the East Alamosa Water & Sanitation District. There were no objections to this plan from any neighboring jurisdictions per C.R.S. 30-28-106 (3)(a.5)(i).

Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan is prepared in accordance with the State of Colorado's Revised State Statutes Section C.R.S. 30-28-106, as referenced herein, and recent State Senate Bill, SB24-174. The following requirements are met within this plan:

- Description of the procedure used for development and adoption of the comprehensive Plan - **Chapter 2 Plan Foundation, and Chapter 8 Implementation**
- Recreation and Tourism - **Chapter 3 Agricultural Identity, Chapter 4 Diverse Economy, Chapter 6 Natural Landscapes** Strategic Growth - **Chapter 7 Future Land Use Framework**
- Water Supply - **Chapters 3 - 7**

## Relevant Plans

This Comprehensive Plan builds on several existing local and regional plans. Although these related plans will still shape individual projects and initiatives, the

Comprehensive Plan integrates their overarching guidance as long as it aligns with the community's vision.

- Hooper/Mosca Housing Action Plan
- San Luis Valley Transit Plan
- San Luis Valley Regional Airport Master Plan
- Alamosa Code of the West
- Alamosa County Emergency Operation Plan
- Alamosa County Hazard Mitigation Plan
- San Luis Valley Housing Needs Assessment
- San Luis Valley Public Health Improvement Plan
- San Luis Valley Health Assessment





# *Chapter Two*

## **Plan Foundation**



## **Imagine Alamosa County's Vision**

**“Alamosa County envisions a flourishing community by balancing its agricultural identity with a diverse economy, healthy environments, and natural landscapes.”**



*Kick Off Week Activity*



*Spanish Outreach Event*



*Alamosa High School Map Drafting Activity*

# Community Engagement

Imagine Alamosa is a community-driven update to 2008 Alamosa County’s Master Plan. It embraces the community’s values, voices, and identity while envisioning its future.

Imagine Alamosa has been shaped at every stage through continuous input from those who live, work, and play here, ensuring the plan reflects local priorities and needs. Public engagement has been at the forefront of this process – from broad, intentional outreach to focused, targeted engagement – utilizing a diverse set of tools. The goal throughout was to meet the community where they were and to actively listen to their challenges and aspirations. These insights were transformed into the plan’s themes, goals, strategies, and future land use plan, with opportunities for refinement built into each step.

To align with the community’s needs, demographic data was collected to understand who was participating and who had yet to participate. This data enabled the project team to target outreach efforts, especially towards underrepresented groups. The result is an inclusive and diverse vision that community members both support and can effectively implement.

A detailed summary of community engagement is provided in Appendix F Engagement Summaries.

- 3,000+** touchpoints with the community
- 40 community events/meetings
  - 3 questionnaires
  - 4,000 postcard mailers
  - Utility bill notifications (2x)
  - 6 CAC Meetings
  - 8 PC and BOCC meetings

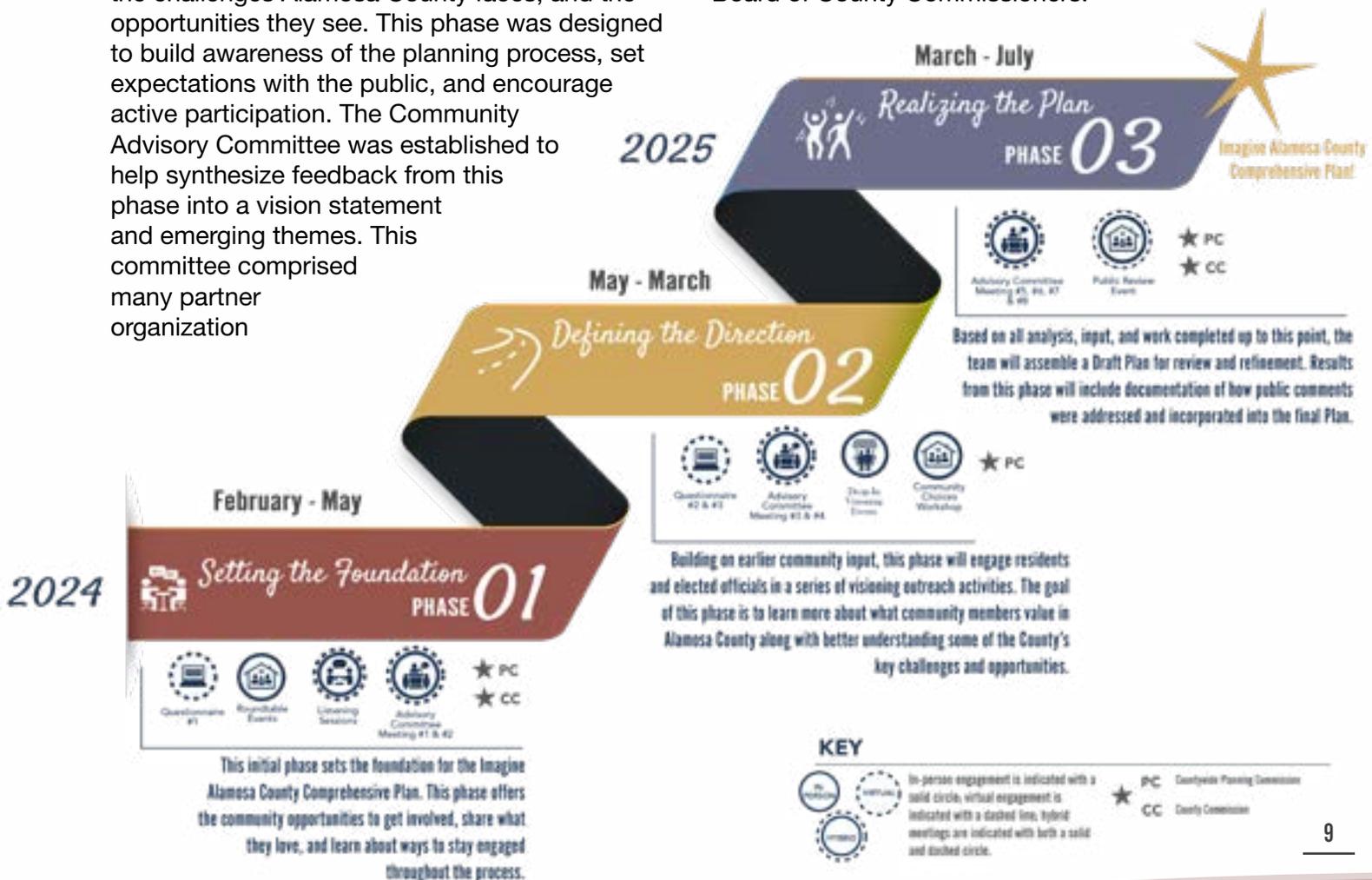
# Engagement Process

Alamosa County engaged with community members in three Phases: Setting the Foundation, Defining the Direction, and Realizing the Plan. Each outreach effort was designed to be interactive, distinct, and engaging, helping to spark interest and avoid engagement fatigue. Every phase of the plan provided meaningful opportunities for the community to give feedback. Most notable was Alamosa County’s partnership with Alamosa High School students, who helped facilitate the process by gathering diverse feedback and providing ideas that influenced the final Comprehensive Plan goals and strategies.

**Phase 1: Setting the Foundation** launched in early March 2024 and focused on meeting people in a variety of settings, including pop-up events, one-on-one interviews, and roundtable conversations. These engagements explored what residents love about Alamosa, the challenges Alamosa County faces, and the opportunities they see. This phase was designed to build awareness of the planning process, set expectations with the public, and encourage active participation. The Community Advisory Committee was established to help synthesize feedback from this phase into a vision statement and emerging themes. This committee comprised many partner organization

perspectives and local community leaders and served as a sounding board through the entire process.

**Phase 2: Defining the Direction** spanned from early May 2024 to the end of March 2025. This year long phase was the most robust. Two major workshop series, “Visions and Values” and “Choices and Priorities,” included public workshops, community-led events, and questionnaires. Special outreach to the Hispanic and Latino community endeavored to ensure their voices were included. A standout feature was the year-long collaboration with all the students in the government classes at Alamosa High School. They contributed ideas to the draft goals, strategies, and future land use plan, helped refine the final public questionnaire, and presented their research addressing key issues to fellow students, community members, and the Board of County Commissioners.





*Summerfest Pop-Up Activity*



*Alamosa High School Presentations*



*Community Advisory Committee Meeting*

**Phase 3: Realizing the Plan**, targeted outreach to focus on feedback from those most engaged with the proposed strategies. This outreach included focused conversations with community leaders in agriculture, housing, outdoor recreation, tourism, economic development, and water. This phase was a culmination of all the efforts and feedback from the community in prior phases. The draft of the final plan was then available for public review from June 18th to July 2nd, the draft plan had 443 views and 7 comments. The Planning Commission (PC) had an adoption hearing on July 16th. The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) had an adoption hearing on July 23rd.

## What We Heard

Ongoing, inclusive engagement throughout the process led to creation of the themes, goals, strategies, and future land use plan that reflect the community values of Alamosa County. Key concepts from the process were organized into four plan themes centered around the community vision, each paired with a clear statement of intent and actionable goals and strategies. This structure provides the flexibility needed to adapt to change over time, without compromising the community's shared vision. That adaptability is essential for long-term success and effective implementation.

# Community Voices

To ensure broad representation and a diversity of perspectives, outreach emphasized historically underrepresented groups (Hispanic and Latino residents and those under the age of 18). Additionally, all materials were created to be American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and available in both English and Spanish.

## Hispanic and Latino Representation

Alamosa County contains a diverse racial makeup with almost half of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latino. To engage this vital yet historically underrepresented segment of the community in comprehensive planning efforts, Alamosa County organized and facilitated a variety of events. Alamosa County was present at the Cinco de Mayo Celebration, intercepted community members at the Tienda El Quetzal Maya Q'anjob'al, facilitated an all-Spanish speaking event at the Tierra Nueva Apartment Complex, and worked with the high school students to administer project questionnaires to those identifying as Hispanic and Latino. Spanish-language focus groups and online questionnaires were key tools in reaching this population.

## Alamosa High School Engagement

Community members under the age of 18 are often underrepresented in planning efforts. Yet, for a plan to envision the future, the future population needs to be heard. That's why engaging with Alamosa High School students was a crucial part of the Imagine Alamosa process. Their involvement wasn't symbolic, it was essential. Over 200 students participated in a dozen in-person events and helped in the planning process from the beginning. Through classroom discussions, questionnaires, and presentations, they shared their perspectives on what Alamosa needs, both now and in the future.

The students initially helped administer the first questionnaire to their family, neighbors, and friends, and they helped refine and administer the final questionnaire #3. Students were responsible for facilitating a majority of questionnaire #1 and

**“I learned that our county has potential to be far more than they are now, that even highschoolers have a say and power to change a community, and that extreme thought went behind making specific goals.”**

**- Alamosa High School Student**

#3 responses. Their insights directly shaped the future land use map to incorporate unique ideas like walking and biking loops, community gathering spaces, affordable housing options, and the necessity of planning for climate uncertainty and preserving water resources. They also addressed topics like homelessness, wildlife habitat preservation and sustainability, youth job opportunities, and transportation gaps. After a semester researching these topics, in December 2024 they presented their findings to community members and County leaders. Their role in developing this plan helps ensure that Imagine Alamosa grows alongside them, as they step into their roles as the future employees, employers, leaders, and community members of Alamosa County.

## Targeted Conversations

In the final phase, Alamosa County held discussions with focus groups that aligned with each of the Imagine Alamosa's plan themes. These groups were carefully organized to hear from people that work within the areas addressed by the proposed strategies. These focus groups assisted in refining goals into actionable strategies and identifying potential partnerships for implementation.

## Growing Water Smart Working Group

In 2022, the Sonoran Institute hosted a Growing Water Smart workshop at Adams State University that brought together key decision makers on water and land use planning from across the San Luis Valley to collaborate on approaches to sustainable water use. Following this workshop, the San Luis Valley Council of Governments and elected officials across the region worked together to establish 1041 regulations restricting water projects that seek to export water from the San Luis Valley to outside the Rio Grande Basin. During the workshop, representatives of the City and County of Alamosa, Division of Water Resources and SLV Great Outdoors! formed an Alamosa Growing Water Smart working group that explored the availability of water and the impacts of land use decisions on water. The working group emerged with key understandings of the local needs, including collaboration between the city and the county and the necessity of integrating water considerations in forthcoming comprehensive planning efforts. This experience supported the county's understanding of changing water conditions since the adoption of our 2008 Master Plan and motivated the process to update that plan and create this Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan. The overall integration of water in the planning process resulted in strategies and considerations related to water conservation, efficiency, and reuse. This plan is based on an understanding of where water is physically and legally available, and seeks to include an evaluation of the quality of that water.

## Committees

The Board of County Commissioners, Planning Commission, and Community Advisory Committee (CAC) were actively involved throughout the planning process. These groups participated in multiple workshops involved at key points.

The CAC included residents, business owners, and community members from across diverse industries and perspectives in Alamosa County. This group played three major roles: advising the planning team on local issues and values; spreading awareness about the project; and

gathering input by serving as liaisons to their networks. Over the course of the project, the group met eight times to refine key concepts and advance the creation of the Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan.

## Water Integration

Water is the critical cross-cutting element that influences all aspects of the Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan. Quality and quantity of physically and legally available water determines land use, agriculture, housing, environmental health, and economic development. In an arid region like Alamosa County, water is a vital and limited resource that affects every aspect of planning—from agriculture and housing to ecosystem health and economic development. Careful stewardship and conservation are essential to ensure long-term water availability and community resilience in the face of drought and climate variability.

The Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan is in direct response to the changing availability and quality of water in Alamosa County. Since the 2008 Master Plan, water will have tremendous impacts on economic growth, housing development, and the increase in residents.

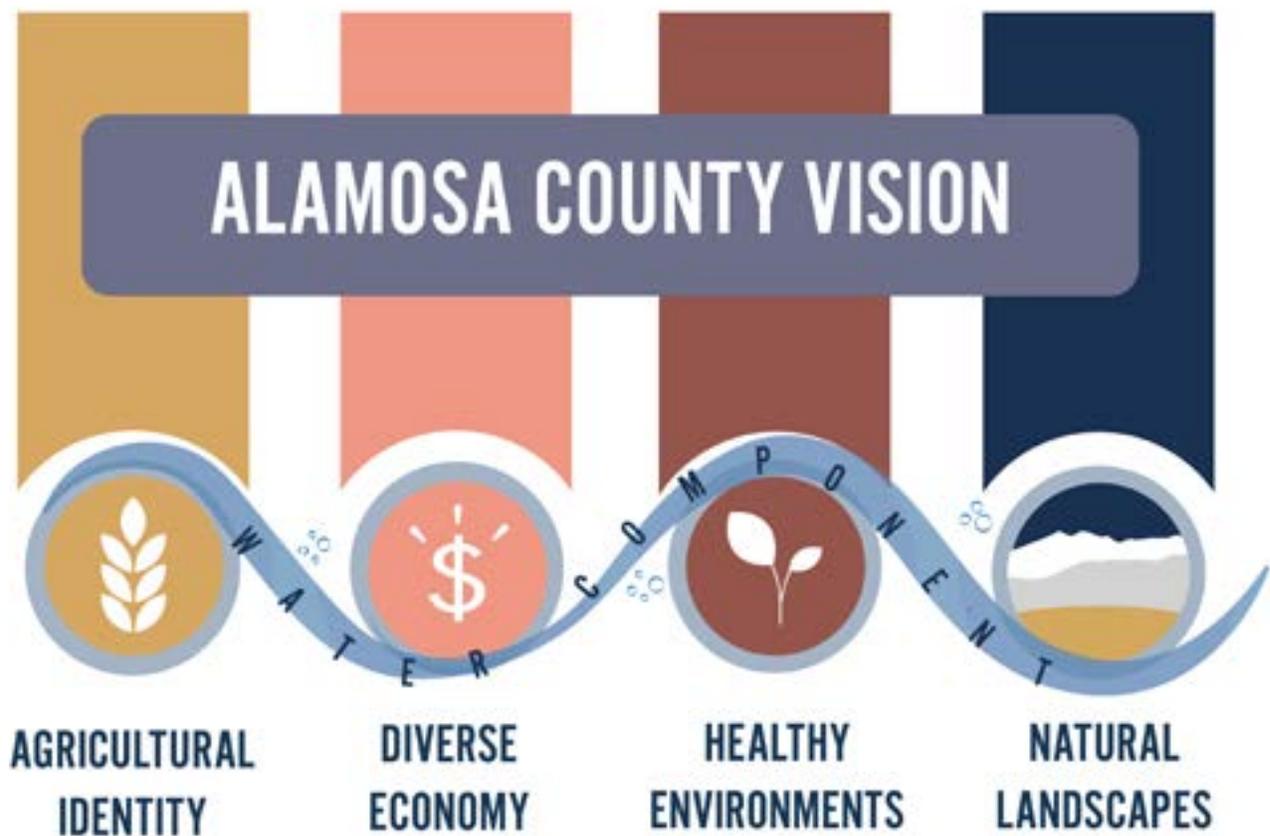
Imagine Alamosa contains water related discussion in all sections that takes into consideration legal and physical water availability. This plan explores the issues that are most important to the residents of Alamosa County, and focuses on water as a determinant of growth.

Additionally, Colorado State statute 30-28-106(3)(a.5)(II), requires communities to plan for water conservation in their Comprehensive Plans. Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan goes far beyond state minimum requirements and puts water upfront and center as a way to represent the significance of water in the livelihood and sustainability of this community.

# Visioning

The visioning stage in the planning process was crucial, as the vision statement forms the foundation of the plan framework. Four prominent themes emerged based on the conversations with Alamosa County residents, shaping the vision statement. Together, the vision statement and themes enable the plan to be resilient and adaptable, growing with the community over time. Imagine Alamosa is built around this community-driven vision statement that reflects the community’s values, voices, and identity.

***“Alamosa County envisions a flourishing community by balancing its agricultural identity with a diverse economy, healthy environments, and natural landscapes.”***



# Creating Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan...



**COLORADO FARM BREWERY WORKSHOP**



**SUMMERFEST ON THE RIO**

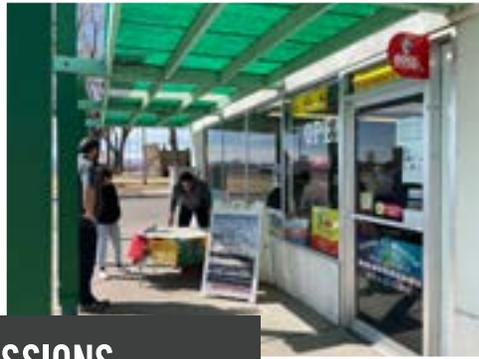


**CINCO DE MAYO**

**ALAMOSA HIGH SCHOOL GAMES**

**OKTOBRUFEST**





**DROP IN SESSIONS**



**ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS**



**AGRICULTURAL TOURS WITH BOCC**



**FIRST FRIDAYS**



**AGRICULTURAL FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**



# *Chapter Three*

## **Agricultural Identity**



**VISION:** As Alamosa County grows and changes, it remains important to preserve Alamosa County's agricultural roots.



# Overview

The San Luis Valley region fosters an environment ripe for agricultural abundance. As the relatively flat basin between San Juan and Sangre de Cristo Mountain ranges, the land receives most of its moisture from snow melt from the surrounding mountain peaks. The region is primarily known for its potato, barley, and alfalfa yields and also explores new or specialty crops like quinoa and hemp.

As of 2022, Alamosa County stands as a testament to the continued legacy of agrarian pursuits, with:

- 262 Farms across 141,342 acres of farmland
- 539 Acres per farm on average
- 4 Centennial ranches, each owned by a single family for 100 years or longer

The total market value of products sold in 2022 reached an impressive \$112,412,000, culminating in a net income of \$41,388,000 directly benefiting farms. Notably, the category of “vegetables,” including potatoes, emerges as the top revenue generator among crops. Almost a third of all farms in Alamosa County report their sales values exceeding \$100,000 annually, exemplifying the enduring vitality of local agriculture.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to providing economic benefits in Alamosa County, the agricultural character is just as important to the look and feel that residents love. The community overwhelmingly appreciates the open vistas that the farmed quarter sections (160-acre tracts) provide and the friendly neighborhood culture that is often inherent with agricultural communities. Preserving agriculture as a core aspect of Alamosa County’s identity is vital for future planning. Strategic land use—such as protecting prime agricultural lands as outlined in the Future Land Use Plan in Chapter 7—can help sustain the economic and social benefits of farming and ranching in the region. Additionally, providing flexibility for agricultural producers to adapt to climate challenges and market fluctuations is key to supporting and maintaining legacy farming operations.

# Key Considerations

**Promote regenerative and balanced agricultural practices.** Alamosa County farmers are most familiar with cultivation practices and farming methods that encourage the restoration of soil health and increase biodiversity. Continuation of these practices will maintain long-term productivity.

**Expand the variety of agribusiness opportunities.** Diversification and flexibility are key to sustaining agricultural identity in Alamosa County. Allowing agricultural ventures that combine farming with tourism, energy production, and farming innovation will be instrumental in preserving the economic resiliency and agricultural character of Alamosa County.

**Prioritize family farms and support small scale producers.** As farming as a livelihood shifts, whether from employment retention or environmental constraints, small farming operations will be the most vulnerable. Alamosa County will explore supportive policies and programs that help small-scale and family-run farms thrive.

**Responsibly manage water use.** Water availability is the most limiting aspect of the future of farming and ranching in Alamosa County. The voluntary establishment of irrigation and conservation strategies will ensure sustainable water use in farming.

**Support local food systems through farm-to-table restaurants, produce stands, and markets.** Strengthen the local economy and reduce food miles by working directly with organizations such as the SLV Food Coalition to promote direct connections between farms and consumers.

**Explore opportunities to integrate agritourism with local food productions.** This approach can promote the county’s agricultural identity while channeling tourism dollars and business development into a growing niche that celebrates local farming, food systems, and rural heritage.

<sup>1</sup> 2022 Census of Agriculture, USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service

## Water Considerations

Water management is essential for the future of agriculture in Alamosa County due to the region's arid climate and limited precipitation. Farming in the region relies entirely on irrigation, making efficient use of all water resources a top priority. Declining aquifer levels from decades of groundwater pumping challenge long-term water availability. Local and state regulations and policies, including those of the State Engineer's Office and Colorado Division of Water Resources Division 3, Rio Grande Water Conservation District, San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District, and local irrigation ditch companies, require careful planning by producers to ensure compliance and avoid restrictions on water use.

Effective water management also supports crop viability by helping farmers adapt to changing water supplies and invest in efficient technologies.

As climate change brings more variability in weather patterns, proactive strategies are key to building resilience. Responsible water use by all water users in Alamosa County and across the SLV is critical to preserving agricultural productivity, economic stability, and the rural character of Alamosa County.

### Water related strategies:

- Continue supporting the valley-wide effort to restrict export of water resources outside the Rio Grand Basin.
- Determine Alamosa County's role in restoring watershed functions through public education and watershed restoration projects.
- Consider creating a drought management preparedness program.

# Goals and Strategies

**GOAL 1. Working and Prime Agriculture Lands:** Ensure the long-term viability and productivity of Alamosa County’s working and prime agricultural lands by prioritizing their preservation and fostering policies that promote agriculture as a cornerstone of the local economy and heritage.

**Strategy 1.1.** Educate and inform the community about the Right to Farm and Ranch Resolution passed in 2000.

**Strategy 1.2.** Allow or incentivize clustered residential development that concentrates housing in one area while preserving the majority of the land for agricultural use.

**Strategy 1.3.** Explore mechanisms for shared ownership or management of preserved farmland by subdivision residents.

**Strategy 1.4.** Explore policies that require a portion of the water dedicated to new development to continue to be used for agricultural purposes.

**GOAL 2. Resilient Agriculture and Resource Management:** Encourage practices to maintain soil health, improve water management, and adapt to climate change.

**Strategy 2.1.** Expand the educational resources for water management, value, capacity, and efficiency in Alamosa County.

**Strategy 2.2.** Explore flexible zoning regulations to protect farms from risks that redefine landscapes and threaten farming practices.

**Strategy 2.3.** Educate landowners on groundwater conservation easements which limit groundwater pumping to reduce water use while benefiting the farmers and the natural landscape.

**Strategy 2.4.** Explore policies that maximize water services without developing new well systems or changing agricultural rights.

**Strategy 2.5.** Support a local composting program.

### **GOAL 3. Innovative Agricultural Practices: Encourage innovative agricultural industries.**

- Strategy 3.1.** Streamline permitting processes for greenhouses and innovative farming projects.
- Strategy 3.2.** Encourage co-ops or other shared resource business models to reduce costs for individual farmers.
- Strategy 3.3.** Support producer workshops and outreach programs to demonstrate the benefits and feasibility of innovative agricultural practices and the study of how water moves within agricultural systems.

### **GOAL 4. Family Farms and Local Food Production: Strengthen family farms and multi-generational farming.**

- Strategy 4.1.** Promote local food production and processing with smaller scale facilities.
- Strategy 4.2.** Explore policies to encourage neighborhood farms and gardens as an integral part of new development.
- Strategy 4.3.** Update policies and remove regulatory barriers to innovative on-farm housing options for laborers, both temporary and permanent.

**GOAL 5. Economic Diversification and Resilience:** Encourage diversification and agricultural markets and alternative revenue streams to capitalize on value-added products and solar energy projects to stabilize the economy.

**Strategy 5.1.** Encourage development of railroad and trucking models that balance exports of agricultural goods with imports of needed resources to enhance reliable transportation networks.

**Strategy 5.2.** Encourage complementary uses for supplemental on-farm income, like agrivoltaics that combine farming or ranching with solar energy production.

**Strategy 5.3.** Consider policies that encourage the manufacturing and/or processing of agricultural products grown in Alamosa County and in the greater region.

**GOAL 6. Community Collaboration and Cultural Celebration:** Celebrate a culture of local food and agricultural identity through public events, markets, and collaborative farming efforts.

**Strategy 6.1.** Support programs and organizations that foster collaboration and opportunities between farmers and local consumers through information sharing and education.

**Strategy 6.2.** Encourage agritourism opportunities that supplement farming by focusing on value-added services, shared experiences, and farm and ranch based educational opportunities.

**Strategy 6.3.** Support local programs that recognize and celebrate the nationally recognized food production taking place locally.

**Strategy 6.4.** Support diverse mobility options to farmers' market or other agricultural events to promote equitable access to local food systems and to strengthen the connection to Alamosa County's farming identity.

## Value-added Agriculture

The process of increasing the economic value of an agricultural product by altering its raw form, packaging, or enhancing it in some way before it is sold. For example, potato chip factory, distilling rye into whiskey, or other specialty products that can be sold at a premium.



# Land Uses that Support Agricultural Identity

The following example land uses work toward preserving the agricultural identity in Alamosa County and will be reflected in the built environment.

## Most Desirable Uses

- Farming/agricultural production and processing
- Farm and produce stands
- Employee/workforce housing on farms
- Livestock grazing/rangeland
- Agricultural equipment sales and repair
- Commercial greenhouses
- Agritourism corridors or scenic byways

## Supporting Uses

- Warehousing and storage
- On-site retail sale of produce
- Animal processing
- Personal greenhouses
- Outdoor recreation facilities
- Multi-use trail networks
- Solar development
- Breweries/distilleries/vineyards
- Agritourism activities
- Agrivoltaics

## Other Appropriate Uses

- Outdoor recreation outfitters
- Campgrounds
- Farm stays/short-term rentals
- Indoor recreation facilities

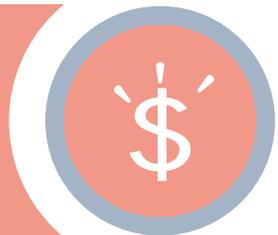


# *Chapter Four*

## **Diverse Economy**



**VISION:** Creating a diverse and resilient economy will sustain Alamosa County for generations.





## Overview

Alamosa County's longstanding history as an agriculture-based economy remains true today. However, Alamosa County has taken significant steps to diversify its economic strength by actively expanding into renewable energy development and tourism. The Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan considers economic diversity as prioritizing the preservation of an agricultural community, strategically encouraging renewable energy development and supporting recreation and tourism as a viable industry.

Agricultural production will remain a high priority in the economic vitality of Alamosa County. In 2022, the gross domestic product (GDP) for agricultural products was \$29.1 million. This has decreased annually since 2008, similar to national trends, while production in other industries has increased. Agriculture in Alamosa County is likely to evolve, and Alamosa County aims to support farmers and ranchers by providing flexibility to adapt to challenges such as limited water resources and labor shortages.

Since 2008, Alamosa County prioritized leadership in renewable energy development, resulting in six operating utility scale solar farms with more currently in the permitting process. Alamosa County is currently leading a valley-wide effort to increase transmission infrastructure, which will provide opportunities for further solar generation. Solar development remains a priority in Alamosa, however, future development of renewable energy production should be strategically planned and located.

The travel and tourism industry brought in \$14.4 million to Alamosa County businesses in 2022, generating about \$3 million in local taxes and \$2.1 million in State taxes. While there is steady growth in visitor numbers, the impact is minimal compared to other Colorado resort communities. There are plenty of opportunities for Alamosa County to continue to grow the recreational economy; however, it is essential that tourism and recreation are carefully managed to support Alamosa County's long-term ecological, economic, and social resilience and quality of life.

The future of economic opportunity in Alamosa is reflective of the community values with a broad understanding of the need to remain resilient and diverse. Enhancing Alamosa's current strengths such as agriculture, solar energy development, and outdoor recreation, is a key component to the Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan.

# Key Considerations

**Prioritize job creation and growth across industries throughout Alamosa County.** While Alamosa County provides strong opportunities in some sectors, other sectors lack such stable employment opportunities, particularly those that attract younger generations.

**Capture visitor dollars across Alamosa County.** Tourism dollars often pass through Alamosa County without fully benefiting the smaller community hubs such as Mosca and the entrance to the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. Current infrastructure and attractions may not fully capture potential visitor spending.

**Balance the tourism economy with the needs of the community.** Tourism plays a major economic role in the State of Colorado. However, when unchecked, it can conflict directly with community needs. Seasonal surges in visitors can strain resources and infrastructure. This requires that Alamosa County collaborate with organizations such as Visit Alamosa and the National Park Service to balance visitation seasonally.

**Increase access to essential healthcare services while creating new healthcare jobs.** Alamosa County provides healthcare services to the entire SLV region. Alamosa County could capitalize on this service to create new healthcare jobs that have higher pay than other sectors in the San Luis Valley.

**Invest in transportation infrastructure that supports the economy of the county.** Rail, air, and freight trucking infrastructure is foundational to economic vitality. The goods produced in Alamosa County require different types of transport. The county already has many of these services, however special attention to their functionality and how they move people is essential to stimulate job creation and enhance regional competitiveness.

**Provide mobility options for both residents and visitors.** As Alamosa County's population continues to age, it is essential to offer alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel for reaching key destinations. Expanding transportation options—such as a National Park shuttle or a local circulator—not only allows tourists to access high-activity areas while reducing traffic congestion and lowering greenhouse gas emissions, but also provides residents with a safe, convenient, and affordable way to navigate Alamosa and connect with key destinations in their own community

**Foster cultural vibrancy through a variety of entertainment, retail, dining, art, and community options.** These community services are limited in many parts of Alamosa County and an opportunity to enhance these offerings should focus on local businesses and services such as dining options, gathering spaces, and opportunities to experience the arts.

**Support the interconnectedness of childcare access and economic resilience.** Access to childcare is essential for economic resilience in Alamosa County. It allows for residents to participate fully in the workforce, boosts productivity, and can support local businesses. This is especially true in the areas outside of the City of Alamosa, such as Mosca, Hooper, and Waverly, where childcare services are very limited.

## Water Considerations

The availability of high-quality water plays a critical role in shaping the future of Alamosa County's economy, particularly as it evolves into a more diverse system that supports renewable energy and tourism. Approximately 99% of water used in the San Luis Valley is for agriculture, which remains a cornerstone of economic vitality. The agricultural community is actively working to reduce consumption to remain competitive and adaptable. Other economic sectors must support these efforts and reduce consumption as well.

Water availability influences the viability and placement of new uses such as renewable energy production. The growing tourism and recreation economy depend on the health of natural landscapes, many of which are supported by wetlands, rivers, and riparian zones that require careful water management. Attractions such as the Rio Grande corridor, state and federally protected wildlife areas, and mountain landscapes are sustained by balanced hydrologic systems that draw visitors seeking outdoor experiences.

As Alamosa County plans for a resilient economic future, integrating water management across agriculture, renewable energy, recreation, and industrial uses ensures long-term viability, reduces resource conflicts, and protects the environmental qualities that residents and visitors value.

### Water related strategies:

- Use a place-based approach to identify locations that can accommodate water dependent industries such as manufacturing, hospitals, and other health care facilities.
- Work with community organizations to enhance water related recreational opportunities such as boating the Rio Grande, fishing, wildlife watching, and more.
- Coordinate with the City of Alamosa on river revitalization and trail projects reconnecting the community and visitors with the Rio Grande.
- Establish a Water Availability Overlay Zone that identifies areas within Alamosa that can support new and denser development.
- Continue to be an active partner with community events or festivals that highlight water resources.
- Require re-vegetation for solar installations.

# Goals and Strategies

**GOAL 1. Cultural Sensitivity and Respect:** Foster an environment that respects and bolsters the traditions, customs, and lifestyles of the local residents.

**Strategy 1.1.** Collaborate with Visit Alamosa, the City of Alamosa, the Chamber of Commerce, and others on the creation of a tourism master plan.

**Strategy 1.2.** Visit Alamosa will work with farmers to establish County-wide farm tours.

**Strategy 1.3.** Support economic development efforts to attract youth-oriented businesses, services, and entertainment.

**GOAL 2. Economic Prosperity and Job Opportunities:** Promote commerce that provides products and services for locals in addition to jobs that align salary growth with the cost of living.

**Strategy 2.1.** Partner with local economic development organizations to attract businesses and industries that offer high-paying jobs (i.e., Jobs that pay more than the average median income).

**Strategy 2.2.** Cultivate workforce training and workforce housing partnerships with Adams State University and Trinidad State College to retain local talent and workforce and provide a pathway to jobs for teens.

**GOAL 3. Economic Diversity and Resiliency:** Pursue a balanced and diverse economy that keeps money made in the County within the County.

**Strategy 3.1.** Support economic development efforts that attract businesses and industries that diversify products and services.

**Strategy 3.2.** Encourage eco-tourism businesses (solar tours, off-the-grid lodging, wildlife tours, etc.)

**Strategy 3.3.** Encourage new industries in appropriate locations.

**Strategy 3.4.** Continue to promote solar and renewable energy developments in the appropriate locations.

**Strategy 3.5.** Support and expand the utilization of the Regional Airport.

**GOAL 4. Water Conscious Development:** Manage development consistent with current and future water availability.

- Strategy 4.1.** Require water users in new developments to demonstrate a plan for meeting long-term water demands.
- Strategy 4.2.** Encourage developers and water providers to identify opportunities to consolidate individual wells into community water systems
- Strategy 4.3.** Encourage developers to identify opportunities to consolidate individual septic systems into community sewer systems
- Strategy 4.4.** Consider water management strategies such as Aquifer Storage and Recovery and possible aquifer recharge for community systems or on a regional scale.
- Strategy 4.5.** Work with State and Federal agencies, local community groups, and water providers (i.e. East Alamosa Water & Sanitation District and the City of Alamosa) to provide education on water use, water conservation, and water quality goals.

# Land Uses that Support a Diverse Economy

The following land uses provide different levels of support for creating economic resiliency in Alamosa County. These uses should be reflected in the future land use categories and the built environment.

## Most Desirable Uses

- Breweries/Distilleries/Vineyards
- Retail stores
- Farm and produce stands
- Indoor recreation facilities
- Outdoor recreation facilities
- Transportation facilities
- Commercial greenhouses
- Schools
- Small-scale industrial uses (cottage industries)
- Restaurants
- Agritourism corridors or scenic byways
- Childcare services

## Supporting Uses

- Campgrounds
- Lumberyard/sawmill
- Research and development facilities
- Storage facilities
- Agricultural equipment sales and repair
- Community centers
- Auto sales and repair
- Large box/department stores
- Wholesale businesses
- Farming/agricultural production and processing
- Motels and hotels

## Other Appropriate Uses

- Offices
- Animal processing
- Larger-scale industrial (manufacturing)
- Short-term rentals
- Gas stations/convenience stores
- Large-scale utilities
- Mineral/resource extraction
- Concrete/asphalt plants



# *Chapter Five*

## Healthy Environments



**VISION:** A healthy environment for a community promotes the physical, mental, and social well-being of its residents.



# Overview

This Healthy Environments section outlines a holistic approach to strategies that create a healthy environment for Alamosa County residents through housing, transportation, access to services, education, food access, open space and recreation access, and mixed-land uses. Thoughtful investments in this infrastructure and these services while considering water availability, air quality, and natural resource protection will enhance opportunities for all residents to live and thrive in Alamosa County throughout all stages of life.

Community health is often reflective of the local “Social Determinants of Health”, which are the factors that shape people’s health outcomes based on the conditions in which they are born, grow, live, and work. They are rooted in social, economic, and environmental factors and have a significant impact on individuals’ health and well-being. The key social determinates are Economic Stability, Social and Community Context, Education and Literacy, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Access to Healthcare Services. Fostering community health requires a holistic approach to both planning and public health that incorporates the way different parts of community systems interact and influence each other. A well-planned built environment is essential for promoting a healthy community. Factors which impact people’s health in Alamosa County, such as affordable housing, transportation options, walkability, education and employment access, air and water quality, parks and open space, and access to amenities and services are all influenced by planning policies.

Access to quality and affordable housing is a foundational element of health, since inadequate or unstable housing can contribute to stress, chronic health conditions, and other adverse health outcomes. Alamosa County has a lower median housing cost when compared to the rest of Colorado, which offers some affordability advantages. However, with higher-than-average poverty rates, a significant portion of renters and homeowners are cost-burdened, paying more than 30 percent of their household income on housing costs. This impacts financial stability and threatens a household’s overall well-being. Alamosa County’s aging housing stock, largely

consisting of older single-family homes with a notable share of mobile and manufactured housing, requires ongoing investment in new development and maintenance to ensure safe and stable living conditions for Alamosa County residents. Encouraging more mixed-use development adjacent to Alamosa and within Mosca that co-locates different types of uses together, such as housing and retail, can promote walkability, foster social connections, and save taxpayer money through more efficient use of infrastructure resources.

Transportation options also affect residents’ abilities to access healthcare, employment, and essential services. While most people rely on personal vehicles, for some households limited access to multiple vehicles, particularly among renters, can make mobility more difficult. Expanding regional transit options—along with vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure that connects where people live to jobs, amenities, and services—can significantly improve access to healthcare and other essential resources.

Providing a range of mobility options for both community members and visitors is essential to fostering a healthy, resilient, and inclusive Alamosa County. As the population continues to age in place, offering safe, reliable alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel becomes increasingly important.

Emergency services are another critical component of a healthy environment. Alamosa County has two fire departments, a sheriff’s office, an ambulance service, and one major regional medical center with an emergency room. However, some County residents live more than 20 miles or 30 minutes from the hospital, so ensuring a broad distribution of emergency services with enhanced response times can improve accessibility for residents in outlying areas, reinforcing community safety and well-being.

The following goals and strategies honor the inherent connections between the built environment and public health outcomes to help facilitate a healthy and resilient future for Alamosa County.

# Key Considerations

**Conserve and manage Alamosa County's water resources.** Water is a fundamental element for creating a healthy environment in Alamosa County. Water resources face ongoing stress from agricultural and residential uses. Conservation and management efforts are becoming increasingly critical in planning for the future of Alamosa County.

**Increase access to affordable housing.** Aligned with national trends, affordable housing is in short supply. Rising costs and limited inventory make it difficult for people to find stable housing, directly impacting Alamosa County's health and economy. While many local programs are working towards providing all types of housing, Alamosa County will have a role to play in ensuring sustainable housing for current and future residents.

**Attract industries that work to preserve natural resources.** Economic development often lacks alignment with conservation priorities. Industries that align with natural resource preservation are important to the community.

**Balance the expansion of recreation with conservation efforts.** While not overwhelming yet, recreational growth can increase pressure on natural areas. The expansion of use on public lands may call for stronger conservation efforts and measures.

**Increase access to essential services like behavioral health and healthcare.** Physical access to healthcare and behavioral health services in Alamosa County is greater than neighboring counties in the San Luis Valley. Continued enhancement of this strength will be essential in the future, especially in regard to financial access to these services.

**Ensure clean air and water free from pollutants.** During dry and windy seasons, both air and water quality are vulnerable to pollutants. Limited monitoring and protection threaten long-term environmental and community health.

**Increase availability of fresh and nutritious foods.** Although food production is predominant in the region, fresh and nutritious food is not readily available.

**The complex nature of food distribution systems impacts community health and food security.** Alamosa County's role may be limited in increasing the availability of locally produced food; however, the county can support and partner with organizations working in this area.

**Create quality schools and job opportunities.** The education to stable job pathway is unevenly distributed as career opportunities vary widely across Alamosa County. Special attention should be paid to the feedback provided by the younger generations on the types of opportunities they want to see, in an effort to keep and attract talented individuals and provide options for students to reinvest in the community. Cultivating partnerships with Adams State University and Trinidad State College is one of the strongest prospects for school to job pathways.

**Implement safety, mobility, and connectivity improvements through increased pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.** Pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is sparse or disconnected. While Alamosa County may not have a substantial role in developing walkable and bikeable neighborhoods, the support of partnerships to create connectivity and promote multi-modal transportation options is appropriate.

**Expand sustainable and equitable transportation options to improve regional mobility and access.** Transportation plays a vital role in shaping access to jobs, education, healthcare, and recreation. In a rural county like Alamosa, limited mobility options can isolate residents and restrict opportunity, particularly for older adults, youth, and those without access to a personal vehicle. Investing in regional transit services, trail networks, safe biking and walking infrastructure, and low-emission transportation systems will support equitable access, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and foster healthier, more connected communities. A resilient transportation network will also support economic development while preserving the region's rural character and natural resources.

## Water Considerations

In the arid San Luis Valley, healthy environments require adequate water. Conscious management of this resource in Alamosa County influences several social determinants of health, particularly those related to environmental quality, economic stability, and neighborhood infrastructure. Clean and reliable water is essential for public health, supporting everything from safe drinking water and sanitation to agricultural productivity and food security. In a region where agriculture is a major economic driver, responsible water management ensures economic stability for farmers and workers, which in turn affects household financial health and access to basic needs.

Water availability also shapes housing and development patterns—limiting or enabling growth in areas where infrastructure can support safe living conditions and community services. Water supports green spaces, parks, and recreational areas, which promote physical activity and mental well-being. As Alamosa County works to improve transportation, housing, and emergency services, access to water must be a key consideration to ensure these systems are sustainable and equitable.

Ultimately, integrating water management into broader planning efforts helps create a more resilient, connected, and healthy community for all residents.

### Water related strategies:

- Require planned unit developments to include water efficiency standards, alternative water use, or watershed protection efforts.
- Consider commercial landscape and site design standards that include best management practices for low impact development, including naturalized detention for rainwater and runoff and green infrastructure design.
- Educate developers on the benefits and cost saving potential of water-smart appliances and waterwise landscaping.
- Promote compact development adjacent to the City of Alamosa and within Mosca to provide more water efficient land use patterns by allowing cluster and conservation subdivisions by right.

# Goals and Strategies

## **GOAL 1. Affordable and Sustainable Housing: Promote affordable and sustainable housing.**

- Strategy 1.1.** Explore flexible and inclusive housing policies that accommodate diverse needs.
- Strategy 1.2.** Allow diverse housing types, including manufactured homes and manufactured home parks, tiny homes on permanent and temporary foundations, and cottage housing developments.
- Strategy 1.3.** Explore public-private partnerships with affordable housing developers to build and rehabilitate attainable and transitional housing.
- Strategy 1.4.** Partner with local employers and universities and colleges on workforce housing development projects.
- Strategy 1.5.** Support land use planning that places housing, services, and jobs closer together to naturally reduce travel distances.
- Strategy 1.6.** Promote energy and water-efficient homes and outdoor landscapes.

## **GOAL 2. Accessible Transportation Options for all Communities: Consider transportation infrastructure that reduces reliance on vehicle use and makes the community more inviting and sustainable.**

- Strategy 2.1.** Explore a local micro-transit service to offer convenient, accessible, and short-distance travel options in Alamosa County.
- Strategy 2.2.** Explore the feasibility of a visitor shuttle to popular tourism destinations.
- Strategy 2.3.** Explore the feasibility of a bike/trail loop system that creates regional connections via biking and walking.
- Strategy 2.4.** Streamline permitting for electric vehicle charging facilities throughout Alamosa County.
- Strategy 2.5.** Coordinate with transit providers to connect Alamosa County with neighboring communities and essential services.
- Strategy 2.6.** Partner with the City of Alamosa to conduct a transportation equity audit to evaluate how well the transportation systems serves older adults, low-income households, people with disabilities, and non-drivers to inform future investments that close access gaps.

**GOAL 3. Sustainable Infrastructure Development:** Encourage where feasible in public transportation, utilities, and renewable energy systems that support the community and can adapt to accommodate tourism.

- Strategy 3.1.** Promote renewable energy production and storage, encourage continued solar development at all scales, and pursue designation as a SOLSmart community.
- Strategy 3.2.** Manage renewable energy development to benefit the residents of Alamosa County.
- Strategy 3.3.** Explore incorporating low impact development (alternative stormwater management principles) into regulations.
- Strategy 3.4.** Pursue a data-driven approach to road maintenance and paving.
- Strategy 3.5.** Develop Capital Improvement Plans to coordinate the location, timing, and financing of infrastructure investments.
- Strategy 3.6.** Invest in rural road maintenance and multimodal access to ensure agricultural goods can be efficiently transported to local and regional markets, reducing spoilage, costs, and barriers to economic participation.

**GOAL 4. Access to Education and Employment:** Enhance access to workforce training and economic development.

- Strategy 4.1.** Support the development and utilization of spaces that support educational facilities, training centers, and employment hubs.
- Strategy 4.2.** Explore recruitment, retention, and workforce readiness opportunities to bolster Alamosa County's economic role in the San Luis Valley.
- Strategy 4.3.** Continue to engage local students with real-world experiences and service-learning opportunities in Alamosa County.

**GOAL 5. Community-Oriented Spaces and Mixed-Use Development:** Encourage growth that balances a mix of community-oriented land uses with smart and intentional development.

- Strategy 5.1.** Explore mixed-use areas where residential, commercial, and recreational spaces coexist.
- Strategy 5.2.** Encourage future growth of higher densities and mixed use developments adjacent to the City of Alamosa.
- Strategy 5.3.** Support additional recreational destinations.
- Strategy 5.4.** Encourage parks and open space areas around multifamily developments and in major subdivisions.
- Strategy 5.5.** Promote transit services, e-bike/bike routes, and scenic driving corridors with local farms, ranches, and food producers to create agritourism loops that boost visitation and connect tourists directly with local agriculture.

**GOAL 6. Public Health and Social Services:** Promote a comprehensive and diverse approach to community planning that supports attaining the full potential for health and well-being for all.

- Strategy 6.1.** Encourage green spaces, community gardens, parks, and trails, especially along the Rio Grande.
- Strategy 6.2.** Explore programs that support access to healthcare services for all community members including veterans, immigrants, older adults, youth populations, people with disabilities, etc.
- Strategy 6.3.** Consider policies that foster health by working with the Public Health Department to address strategies in the San Luis Valley Public Health Improvement Plan.
- Strategy 6.4.** Consider policies that foster access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities.
- Strategy 6.5.** Collaborate with local governments and community entities to explore programs, policies, and resources that address mental health and social support.
- Strategy 6.6.** Consider policies that help Alamosa County endure natural hazards by implementing strategies in San Luis Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan.

**GOAL 7. Parks and Open Spaces:** Promote parks and open spaces to provide accessible recreational opportunities, protect natural habitats, and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

- Strategy 7.1.** Consider creating a County Parks & Open Space Department to oversee parks and open space acquisition and management.
- Strategy 7.2.** Explore creation of a Trails and Open Space Plan to evaluate lands with potential conservation values and provide guidance on where and how to preserve open spaces in the County.
- Strategy 7.3.** Support the construction of new indoor and year-round recreation and sports facilities.
- Strategy 7.4.** Encourage and support the development of green spaces, neighborhood gardens, parks, and trails, especially along the Rio Grande.
- Strategy 7.5.** Partner with the City and community organizations to embrace the Rio Grande as a resource and maximize the recreation and community benefits.
- Strategy 7.6.** Collaborate on the creation of a new regional trail along the Closed Basin Canal to connect to the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve.

**GOAL 8. Improved Air Quality:** Promote reduction of dust and other particulate matter by resilient land use practices.

- Strategy 8.1.** Promote practices that do not contribute to poor air quality, such as conscious timing for plowing and tilling farmlands.
- Strategy 8.2.** Create a notification program where Alamosa County provides prompt public notification when the air quality in Alamosa exceeds or is expected to exceed an unhealthy level.
- Strategy 8.3.** Encourage control measures to limit dust from construction and site disturbance, such as watering or revegetation.
- Strategy 8.4.** Consider requirements that major subdivisions and planned unit developments have paved roads.
- Strategy 8.5.** Educate the community about the importance of native plants and water-efficient landscaping design.

# LAND USES THAT SUPPORT HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

The following land uses provide different levels of support for creating healthy environments in Alamosa County. These uses should be reflected in the future land use categories and the built environment.

## Most Desirable Uses

- Hospital and medical centers
- Parks
- Community centers
- Indoor recreation facilities
- Outdoor recreation facilities
- Schools (private and public)

## Supporting Uses

- Daycares
- Solar energy development
- Museums and libraries
- Personal greenhouses
- Multi-household buildings
- Commercial greenhouses

## Other Appropriate Uses

- Townhomes
- Transportation hubs
- Duplex/triplex homes
- Mixed-use buildings
- Manufactured homes



# *Chapter Six*

## **Natural Landscapes**



**VISION:** With open fields, rocky mountains, and rivers, Alamosa County's breathtaking natural landscapes are an important community asset and attraction.



# Overview

Whether it be for open scenic vistas or the biologically rich riparian corridor along the Rio Grande, the natural environment is highly valued in Alamosa County. Alamosa County has many scenic and natural destinations, including the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, a starkly varied and remarkable landscape where towering sand dunes meet snow-capped peaks and visitors can hike the dunes and sled down their sandy slopes. Another beloved destination is the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge, a sanctuary for the diverse wildlife that inhabits its wetlands and meadows. The Blanca Wetlands offer prime habitat to view hundreds of species of migratory birds such as Sandhill Cranes and myriad waterfowl. For those seeking high-altitude adventures, the Sangre de Cristo Mountains offer scenic vistas, hiking, and camping. The San Luis Lakes, Higel, and Playa Blanca State Wildlife Areas offer wildlife related recreation for those who enjoy birdwatching, hiking, hunting, and fishing.

Alamosa County is home to over 19 natural attractions including a variety of lakes, wetlands, forests, mountain peaks, and waterfalls. Preserving these natural amenities is a fundamental element in the Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan.

The community identified the natural landscapes as a top reason why they love to live in Alamosa County. Preserving the natural landscapes includes maintaining uninterrupted scenic views, preserving and restoring significantly biodiverse areas for wildlife habitat, and limiting encroachment of development within the riparian corridor along the Rio Grande.

# Key Considerations

**Strategize place-based development to preserve landscapes and open space.** Without careful planning, growth can impact Alamosa County’s rural and natural character. Development patterns should highlight and protect the most valued natural landscapes and open spaces in Alamosa County.

**Maintain natural open spaces as a primary asset of Alamosa County.** Natural open spaces remain some of Alamosa County’s most valued assets. Residents and visitors appreciate the wide open landscapes and natural beauty of Alamosa County.

**Protect viewsheds, clean air, and dark skies.** Open viewsheds, clean air, and dark skies are under growing pressure from development. Light pollution, dust, and other environmental changes may be the negative impacts of unmanaged growth.

**Preserve wildlife habitats.** Wildlife habitats face fragmentation and disturbance by existing development patterns and roadways. Expanding development and recreation can disrupt local ecosystems without proper safeguards. These safeguards are unique to each project and may require different techniques in distinct areas throughout Alamosa County.

**Connect all communities to outdoor amenities like parks and trails.** Historically, Alamosa County has had a very limited role in parks and recreation development. There is interest from the community for access to parks, trails, and other recreational opportunities beyond those areas directly adjacent to the City of Alamosa. Understanding the gaps in connectivity and addressing limited recreation and wellness opportunities is important moving forward.

**Reduce litter and pollution.** Litter and localized pollution not only affect natural areas but also developed parts of Alamosa County. Cleanup and prevention efforts can improve the natural environment along with community placemaking and pride.

## Water Considerations

Wetlands, meadows, riparian corridors, and forest ecosystems rely on sustainable water sources to support diverse wildlife populations, including migratory birds and native species. Careful water management ensures these habitats remain viable for future generations, protecting biodiversity and enhancing recreational opportunities like fishing, birdwatching, and hiking. It also supports the scenic beauty of the landscape, such as snow covered mountain vistas and flowing river corridors, which the community cherishes and seeks to preserve.

Managing water use responsibly helps limit over-extraction and contamination, safeguarding both surface and groundwater systems that feed into these sensitive natural areas.

### Water related strategies:

- Support the conservation of water for habitat and aquifer sustainability by working with organizations like Colorado Open Lands, on groundwater easements.
- Protect the Rio Grande riparian corridor by limiting storm water runoff and other pollution risks from adjacent properties.

## Goals and Strategies

**GOAL 1. Water Conservation and Management:** Prioritize the sustainable management of water resources, including rivers, streams, and watersheds, to ensure long-term availability for communities, agriculture, and wildlife.

**Strategy 1.1.** Limit the types of development and uses allowed in floodplains, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas within Alamosa County.

**Strategy 1.2.** Support the protection and restoration of wetlands.

**Strategy 1.3.** Consider regulations to ensure that all subdivisions can achieve water sustainability and water quality goals.

**GOAL 2. Conservation of Scenic Views and Dark Skies:** Protect dark skies, open spaces, and viewsheds, recognizing their value in maintaining natural beauty and rural tranquility, minimizing pollution for future generations, and contributing to the local way of life and economy.

**Strategy 2.1.** Consider dark sky regulations.

**Strategy 2.2.** Preserve views of unique or distinctive natural features from scenic travel corridors by strategically orienting buildings and limiting height.

**Strategy 2.3.** Prioritize natural open space preservation for both active and passive recreation.

**Strategy 2.4.** Encourage the continuance of large-tract agricultural operations near the Rio Grande.

**Strategy 2.5.** Revise subdivision regulations to minimize “barren” lots due to “household use only” well limitations and consider requiring minimum augmentation to provide capacity for landscaping and trees.

**GOAL 3. Balancing Public Access and Conservation for Outdoor Recreation:** Support responsible public access to natural resources for recreational activities such as fishing, foraging, hiking, riding, wildlife viewing, and hunting, while respecting conservation goals.

**Strategy 3.1.** Work with Visit Alamosa, Great Sand Dunes National Park, the National Wildlife Refuges, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to educate residents and visitors about the impacts of active and passive recreation on the natural environment.

**Strategy 3.2.** Promote educational stewardship programs that address tourism impacts such as “Do Colorado Right” and “Leave No Trace”.

**Strategy 3.3.** Work collaboratively with water providers, federal agencies, and state agencies to protect watersheds, surface water and groundwater from contamination and meet or exceed established water quality standards.

**Strategy 3.4.** Collaborate with Visit Alamosa, Great Sand Dunes National Park, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to implement seasonal shuttles, carpool incentives, or park-and-ride options to reduce vehicle traffic, emissions, and congestion at high-use recreation sites.

**Strategy 3.5.** Support the development of multi-use trails, bike racks, wayfinding signage, and pedestrian-friendly routes.

**Strategy 3.6.** Consider speed reduction measures, wildlife crossings, and interpretive signage to protect habitats and reduce the ecological footprint of roadways that pass through or near conservation lands.

**GOAL 4. Intentional Growth and Development:** Guide new population growth and development to areas with available infrastructure and access to services, in a manner that ensures natural areas remain intact for managed recreation and habitat preservation.

**Strategy 4.1.** Consider promoting clustered and conservation subdivisions in areas with high conservation values.

**Strategy 4.2.** Consider resource protection standards to buffer development from floodplains and riparian areas.

**Strategy 4.3.** Provide information and education on the benefits of planting species that support native pollinators and wildlife.

**Strategy 4.4.** Establish an Energy Overlay that identifies areas where future utility scale solar farms are preferred in order to reduce future conflict with other types of development.

**GOAL 5. Managing Visitor Impact:** Collaborate with partners to prevent overcrowding and degradation of natural sites.

**Strategy 5.1.** Work with Visit Alamosa to thoughtfully market areas in Alamosa County that can withstand greater visitation and use during different times, including investing in data tools to better understand visitor numbers.

**Strategy 5.2.** Encourage visitors to visit in shoulder seasons.

## LAND USES THAT SUPPORT NATURAL LANDSCAPES

The following land uses provide different levels of support for preserving Alamosa County’s natural landscapes. These uses should be reflected in the future land use categories and the built environment.

### Most Desirable Uses

- Trails for walking, hiking, and biking
- Parks
- Outdoor recreation facilities
- Agriculture

### Supporting Uses

- Campgrounds
- Personal greenhouses
- Agritourism activities
- Single household homes on large lots

### Other Appropriate Uses

- Solar energy development
- Indoor recreation facilities
- Small-scale commercial



# *Chapter Seven*

## **Future Land Use Framework**



The Future Land Use framework in this chapter outlines a vision for how the unincorporated areas of Alamosa County could develop over time to reflect the community desires and priorities detailed in the preceding chapters. This vision is shaped by Alamosa County’s distinct geographies and informed by community input, local values, and long-term planning goals.

The accompanying future land use map and the eleven land use categories serve as a tool for County officials, developers, and residents. Together, they offer guidance on the type, scale, and character of development that aligns with Alamosa County’s aspirations for the future. These

categories are not prescriptive zoning regulations but are intended to provide a flexible framework to support thoughtful decision-making.

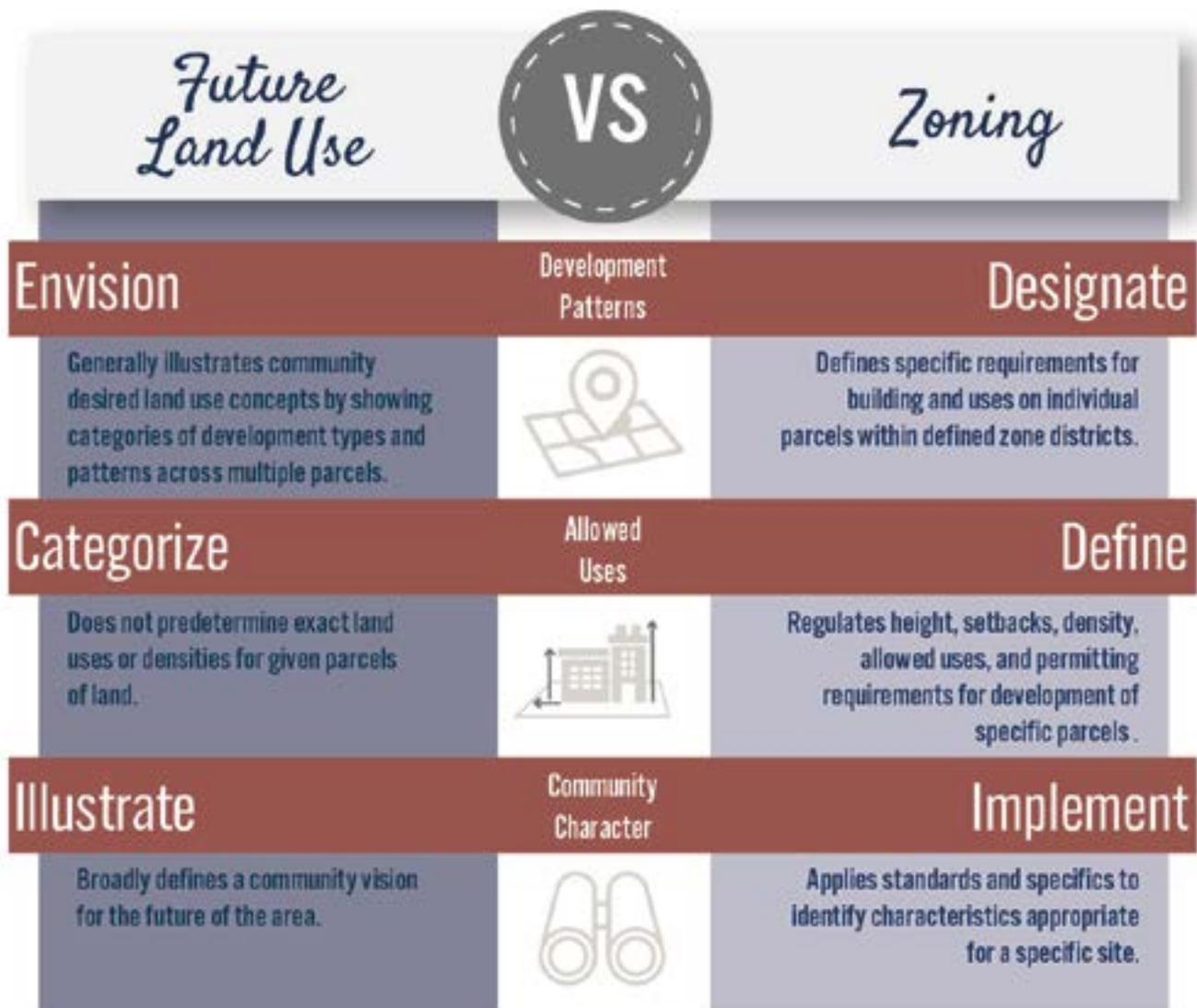
The land use categories and their mapped boundaries reflect the outcomes of meaningful engagement with community members, County staff, elected officials, and partner organizations. While the map presents a geographic vision for future development, the boundaries are intentionally adaptable—allowing for context-sensitive transitions between neighboring development patterns and accommodating individual projects that support Alamosa County’s broader goals.

# Relationship Between Land Use and Zoning

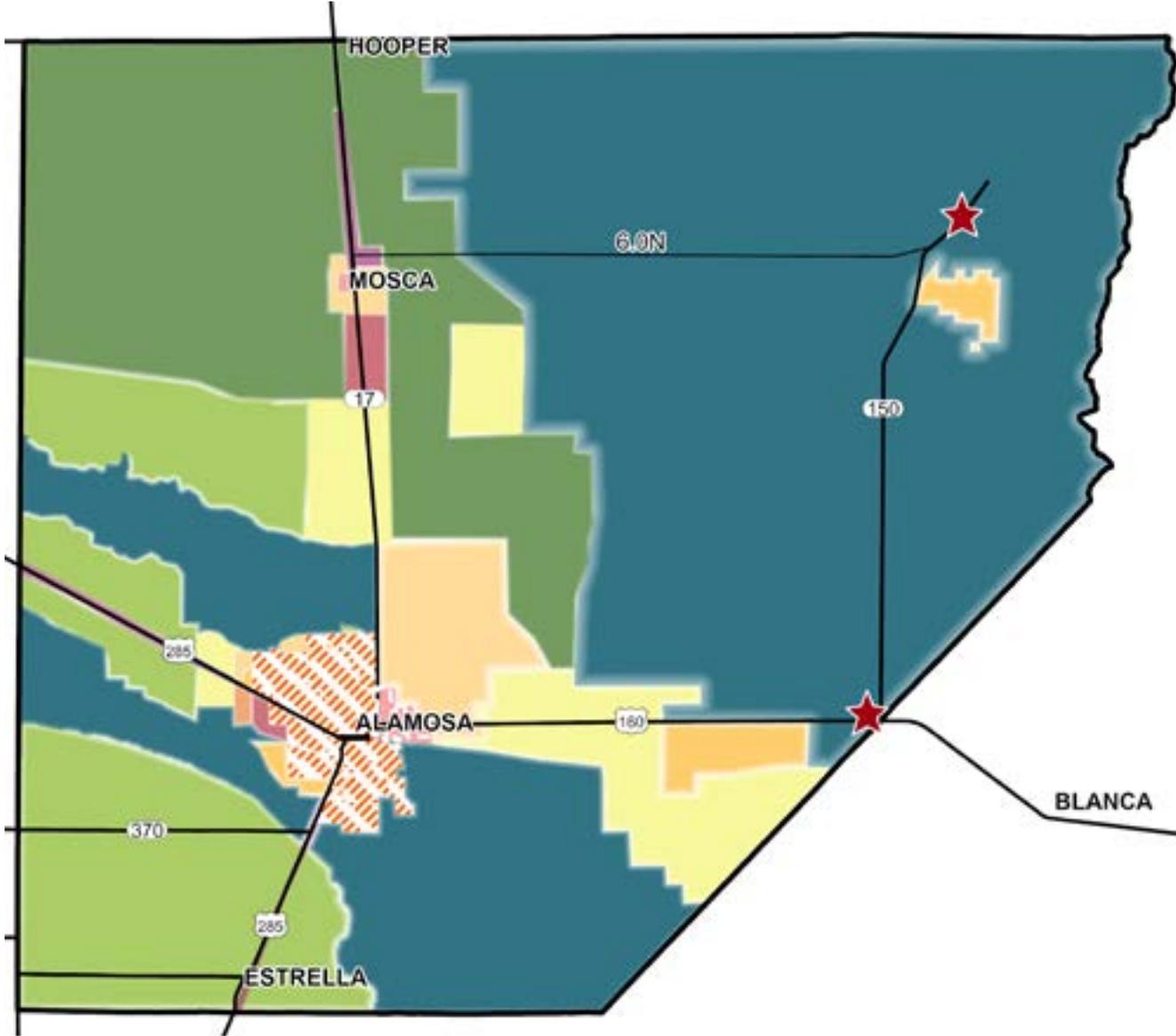
The Future Land Use Map, along with the associated land use categories and broader goals of the Comprehensive Plan, serves as a guiding vision for how Alamosa County intends to grow and develop over time. While this map is not regulatory, it plays an important role in informing decisions about rezoning, subdivisions, and other land use changes by illustrating the desired development pattern, character, and density across Alamosa County. It provides a tool for the Planning Commission to evaluate individual project proposals and direct development to sensible locations.

In contrast, zoning is established by ordinance and further defined in the Alamosa County Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) and is legally binding. Zoning districts define the specific uses allowed on a property and include detailed requirements such as building height, lot density, setbacks, and site design parameters.

The future land uses in this section provide a long-term vision, while zoning governs current land use and development. Some existing zoning does not fully align with this future land use map, signaling an intention for Alamosa County to change the existing patterns and zoning regulations to better reflect Alamosa County’s future land use goals and reduce potential conflicts between land uses.



**Figure 1. County-Wide Future Land Use Map**



- |                                                                                     |                                  |                                                                                     |                            |                                                                                       |                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|  | Highway Commercial               |  | Rural Density Residential  |  | Natural Resources                |
|  | Traditional Commercial           |  | Suburban Rural Density     |  | Agriculture & Rural Preservation |
|  | Traditional Commercial Potential |  | Medium Density Residential |  | Prime Agriculture                |
|  | Industrial                       |  | Small Lot Residential      |  | Alamosa City & Growth Area       |
|  | Neighborhood Mixed Use           |                                                                                     |                            |                                                                                       |                                  |

# Future Land Use Categories

These future land use categories are broad and forward looking examples of appropriate levels and types of development across Alamosa County. The descriptions and locations of these uses are based upon existing development patterns, community input, infrastructure and water availability, and geographic and environmental constraints. These general categories are a guide for future land use decisions to help reach the goals outlined in this Comprehensive Plan.

CATEGORY	ABBR.	GENERAL DENSITY	DESCRIPTION
Rural Density Residential	RDR	1 unit/10+ acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parcels of 10 acres or larger.</li> <li>• Includes agricultural, rural businesses, and residential areas. It is also appropriate for conservation subdivisions.</li> <li>• Development includes small-scale agriculture-related businesses and hobby farms.</li> <li>• Commercial, non-agricultural development that supports agricultural operations and rural lifestyles are appropriate, such as feed shops, equipment repair, hardware, and farm supply stores.</li> </ul>
Suburban Rural Density Residential	SRDR	1 unit/1 acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-family housing on parcels of 1 acre or larger.</li> <li>• Typical developments within this category include unpaved driveways and streets and separate garages and outbuildings.</li> <li>• Most appropriate adjacent to the City of Alamosa or in areas with water availability.</li> </ul>
Medium Density Residential	MDR	5-15 units/1 acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for multiple dwelling units per acre</li> <li>• Provides for a variety of housing options including smaller lots, townhomes/condos, and complexes like apartments and assisted living.</li> <li>• Developments within this land use category may also include public uses, schools, parks, and offices on parcels less than ten acres.</li> <li>• Most appropriate near Mosca, East Alamosa, West Hwy 160, or in planned unit developments where central sewer or water services exist.</li> <li>• Density ranges in this category depend on the availability of water, sewer, and similar factors.</li> </ul>

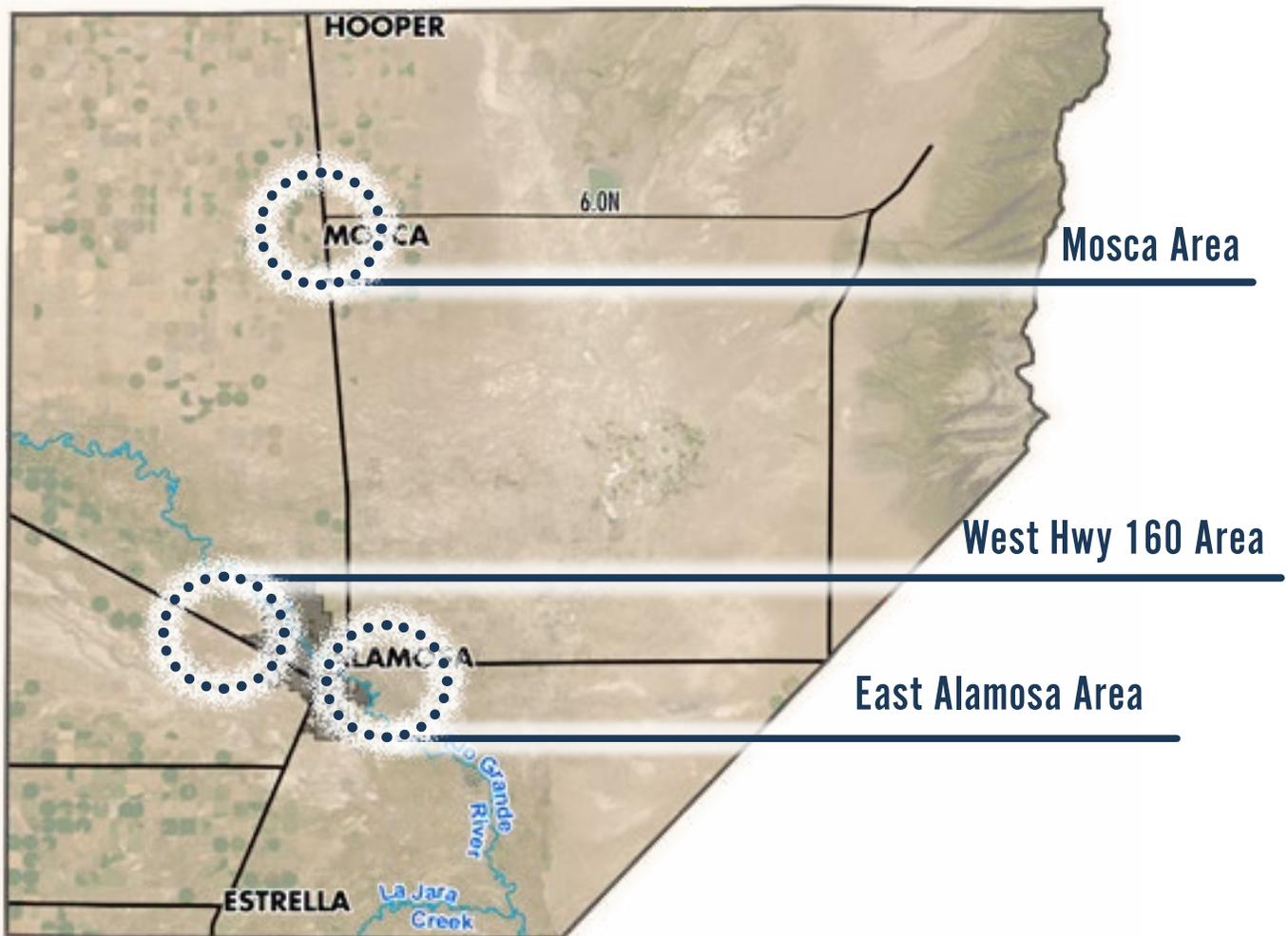
CATEGORY	ABBR.	GENERAL DENSITY	DESCRIPTION
Small Lot Residential	SLR	20-30 units/1 acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum of 30 dwelling units per acre. Allows for consolidated development of small residences, including factory-built, manufactured, and tiny homes.</li> <li>• Development characteristics include community amenities such as gardens, parks, and shared community spaces.</li> <li>• Centralized water and sewage systems are required for this type of this development.</li> </ul>
Neighborhood Mixed Use	NMX	5-15 du/1 acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended for medium density residential development and appropriate-scale commercial uses, predominantly businesses established to serve the neighborhood and community.</li> <li>• Uses may include restaurants, hardware stores, small-scale overnight lodging, grocery stores, laundromat, salons, and offices.</li> <li>• Most appropriate in East Alamosa and Mosca.</li> <li>• Centralized water and sewage systems are required for this type of development.</li> </ul>
Traditional Commercial	TC	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended for low-intensity commercial activities that primarily serve the needs of the local population.</li> <li>• Designed to support local small-scale businesses while preserving the rural character and limiting urban-like and big-box development.</li> <li>• Uses may include small retail stores, farm stands or markets, rural lodging, restaurants, and cafes.</li> </ul>
Highway Commercial	HC	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended to accommodate high-volume vehicle-oriented commercial businesses and services.</li> <li>• Includes commercial uses that access onto an arterial road or to US Hwy 160 and 285 and CO Hwy 150 and 17 and are separated from residential uses by landscaped buffers.</li> <li>• Envisioned to complement community gateways.</li> </ul>

CATEGORY	ABBR.	GENERAL DENSITY	DESCRIPTION
Industrial	IND	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended to provide locations for large-scale industries supporting agricultural uses such as manufacturing, offices, and industrial support for agricultural uses.</li> <li>• Developments should be separated from residential development, schools, community activity, and park areas by other uses and physical separation buffers.</li> </ul>
Agriculture and Rural Preservation	ARP	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typical parcel size greater than 35 acres.</li> <li>• Includes small to large-scale agricultural uses.</li> <li>• Includes rangeland and various agriculture and supporting uses on both irrigated and non-irrigated properties.</li> </ul>
Prime Agriculture	PA	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies areas with limited development on properties typically of 100 + acres for prioritizing functional agriculture.</li> <li>• Applies to productive agricultural uses with prime soils and topography for agricultural production.</li> <li>• Includes structures and the transitions area between large scale agricultural developments.</li> <li>• Limited residential development is appropriate in these areas as a supplementary use to agricultural production.</li> </ul>
Natural Resource Open Space	NR	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes public and private conserved lands for resource conservation, forestry, ranching, public access and recreation such as Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and National Forest lands.</li> <li>• Allows for outdoor recreation, watershed protection, wetlands, resource uses (grazing and forestry), natural resources and conservation easements not associated with agricultural operations.</li> </ul>

# Focus Areas

The Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan recognizes the distinct characteristics of different areas within Alamosa County. Future growth will be guided by several key factors, including geography, environmental conditions, water availability, transportation networks, and utility infrastructure. As a result, some areas will be more suitable for development than others, warranting more detailed guidance in the updated Comprehensive Plan.

The following focus areas have been identified for more detailed analysis of the feasibility of growth based on future capacity. Three areas- Mosca, East Alamosa, and West Highway 160- are illustrated through detailed map insets and concept scenarios to allow the users of this plan to visualize potential future build-out. These sections encompass specific visions and strategies for these areas which may not be as applicable to other locations in the county.





# Alamosa City Three-Mile Plan Area

## Annexation areas for the City of Alamosa

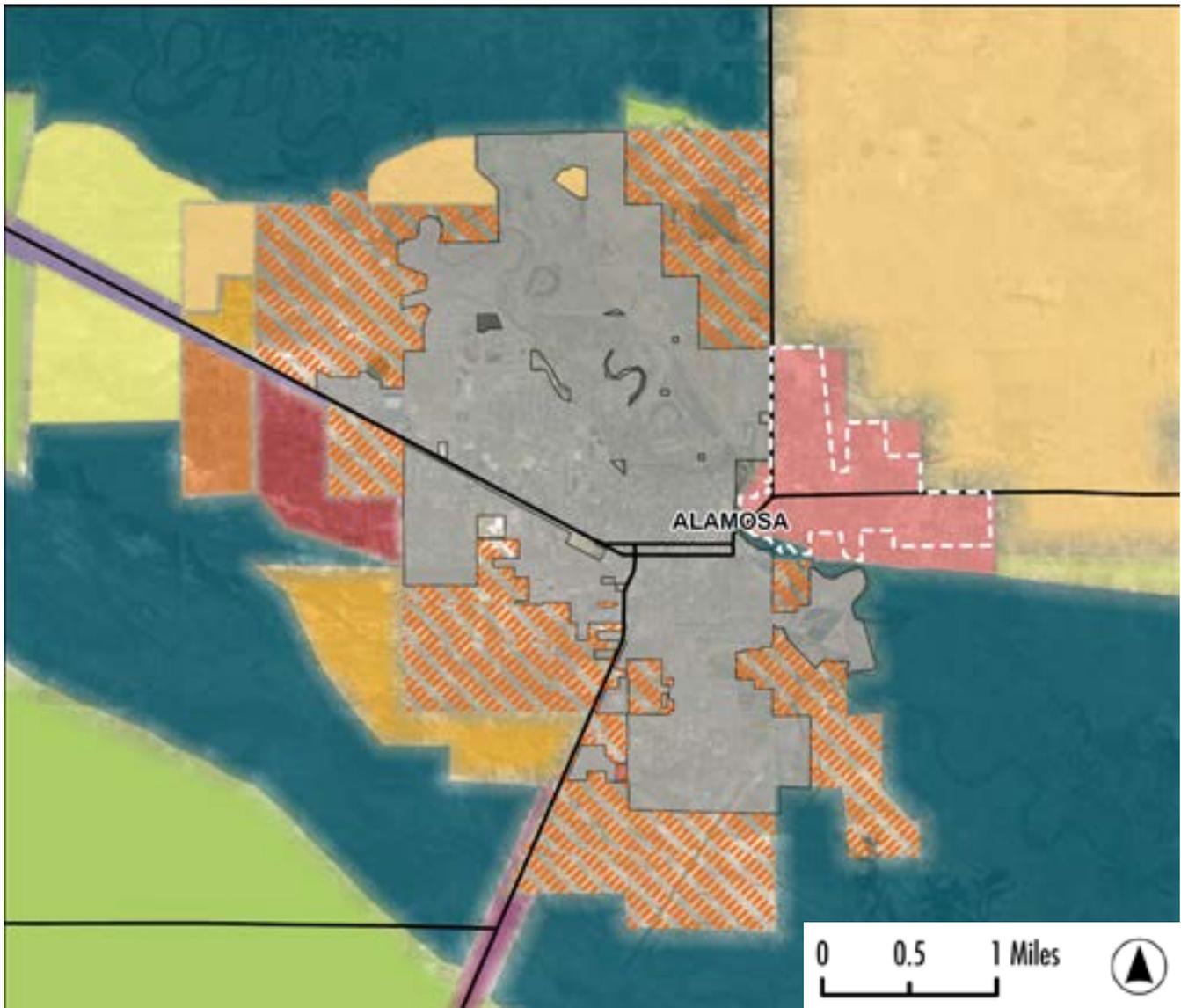
The City of Alamosa is required by state statute to prepare and update a Three-Mile Plan to show where the City intends to annex and expand its current boundaries. Alamosa County's Future Land Use Map is generally congruent with these areas and the Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan makes recommendations for future land use outside of the perimeters of the Three-Mile Plan Area.

The City of Alamosa identified parcels outside current city boundaries for potential annexation and designated specific future land uses through the Three-mile plan. These areas generally reflect existing land uses or those of adjacent parcels. Alamosa County will collaborate with the City of Alamosa when reviewing future development proposals within these areas and will carefully consider the city's growth plan and annexation potential.

## Other Considerations for the Three-Mile Plan Area:

- » Work collaboratively with the City of Alamosa on planning within the growth area boundaries as identified in the City of Alamosa's Three-Mile Plan.
- » Establish an intergovernmental planning agreement for potential annexation parcels that require applicants to work with the City and County on proposals for future development.

**Figure 2. County Planning Adjacent to the Alamosa City Limits**



- |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Alamosa City Boundary                             |  Traditional Commercial |  Rural Density Residential  |
|  Alamosa City Growth Area                          |  Highway Commercial     |  Suburban Rural Density     |
|  East Alamosa Water & Sanitation District Boundary |  Industrial             |  Medium Density Residential |
|  Natural Resources                                 |  Neighborhood Mixed Use |  Small Lot Residential      |
|  Prime Agriculture                                 |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                  |

# Focus Area: East Alamosa

East Alamosa is unincorporated county land east of the Rio Grande and adjacent to the city boundaries. This area looks and feels like the city and is the most densely developed area in the county. It benefits from water and sewer connections provided by the East Alamosa Water and Sanitation District (EAWSD) and supports a more urban-style of development. While the district currently has capacity for additional service connections, not every property in the district is fully served with both water and sewer due to infrastructure development needs. The county and the district expect to see additional development pressure in East Alamosa and the Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan visualizes both new development and redevelopment over the next two decades, highlighting the need for improved and expanded infrastructure.

East Alamosa has the highest potential for a mixed-use development pattern that combines neighborhood scale commercial businesses with variable levels of residential densities. This area is most suitable for multifamily household developments like townhomes and apartments, as well as senior living facilities. Highway focused commercial development is likely to expand along US 160, provided it can be supported by water and sewer infrastructure. The county should also expand allowances for home-based businesses and live-work arrangements and encourage service-related businesses that benefit the neighborhood residents, like grocery stores, laundromats, salons, and small shops.

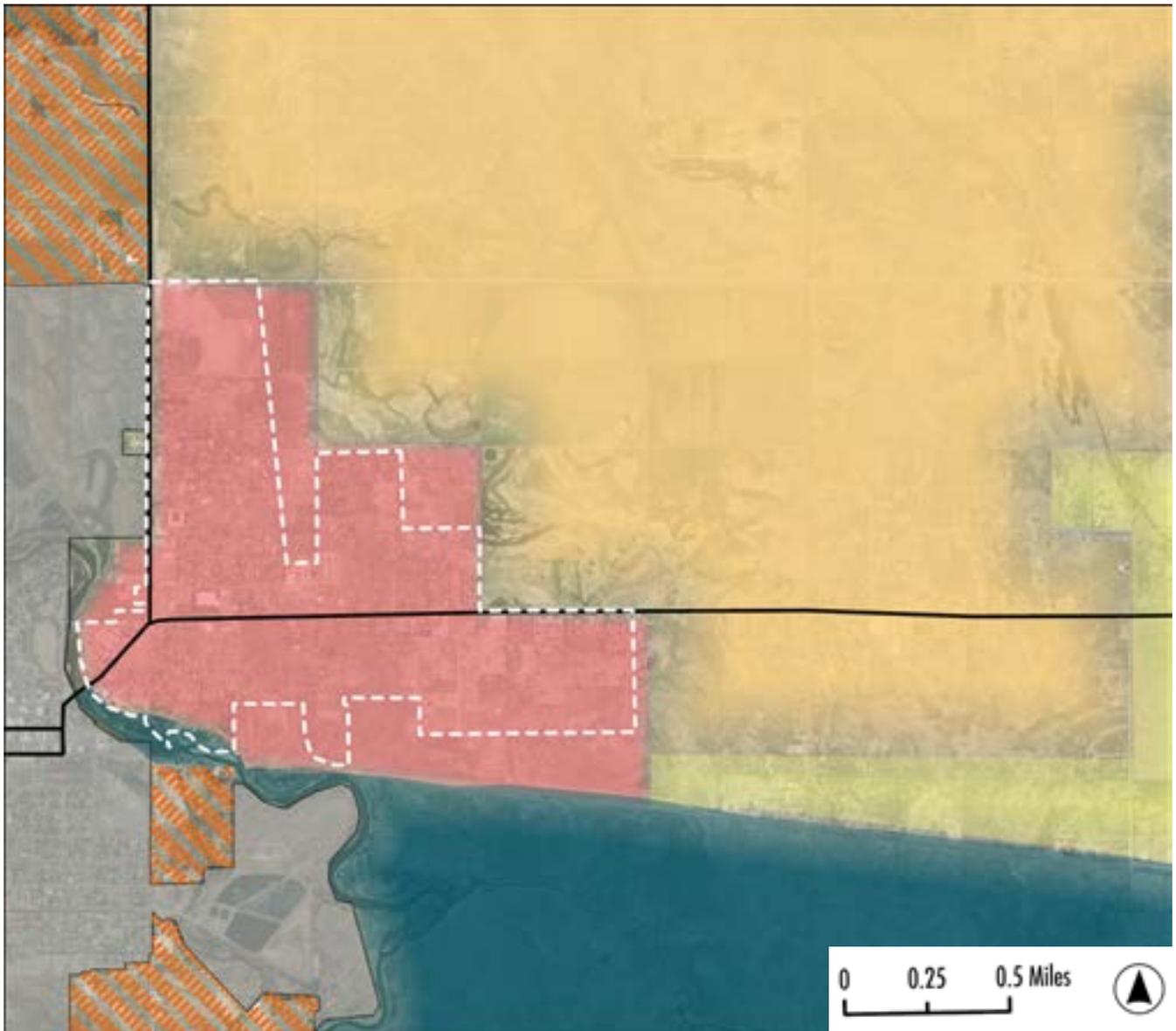
## Land uses appropriate in this area include:

- Commercial businesses that serve the neighborhood such as personal services, small retail and offices.
- Due to the infrastructure, this is the most likely area of Alamosa County to include higher density residential development such as small apartment buildings, duplexes, townhomes, etc.
- A transition to medium and larger suburban lots further away from the City of Alamosa boundaries.
- Cluster development could be appropriate in this area. It would require more suburban and large lot subdivisions to cluster their allotted density on smaller lots thereby preserving larger tracts of open space.

## Other Considerations for the East Alamosa Area:

- » Work with EAWSD to identify the current level of service and growth potential, and the ability to expand the district boundaries to include additional development to the north and east.
- » Revise clustered development standards to encourage the preservation of common open space and local parks.
- » Encourage safe and walkable developments as part of site design and approval in East Alamosa.
- » Provide zoning allowances that encourage mixed use structures like commercial businesses on ground floor, and apartments on second floors.
- » Improve Sunrise Park and embrace it as a community amenity in East Alamosa.
- » Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between East Alamosa and the City of Alamosa. Work with CDOT to create safe crossings, sidewalks, bike lanes, and trail linkages along major corridors such as Highway 160 to connect residents with jobs, schools, and services.

**Figure 3. East Alamosa Future Land Use Map**

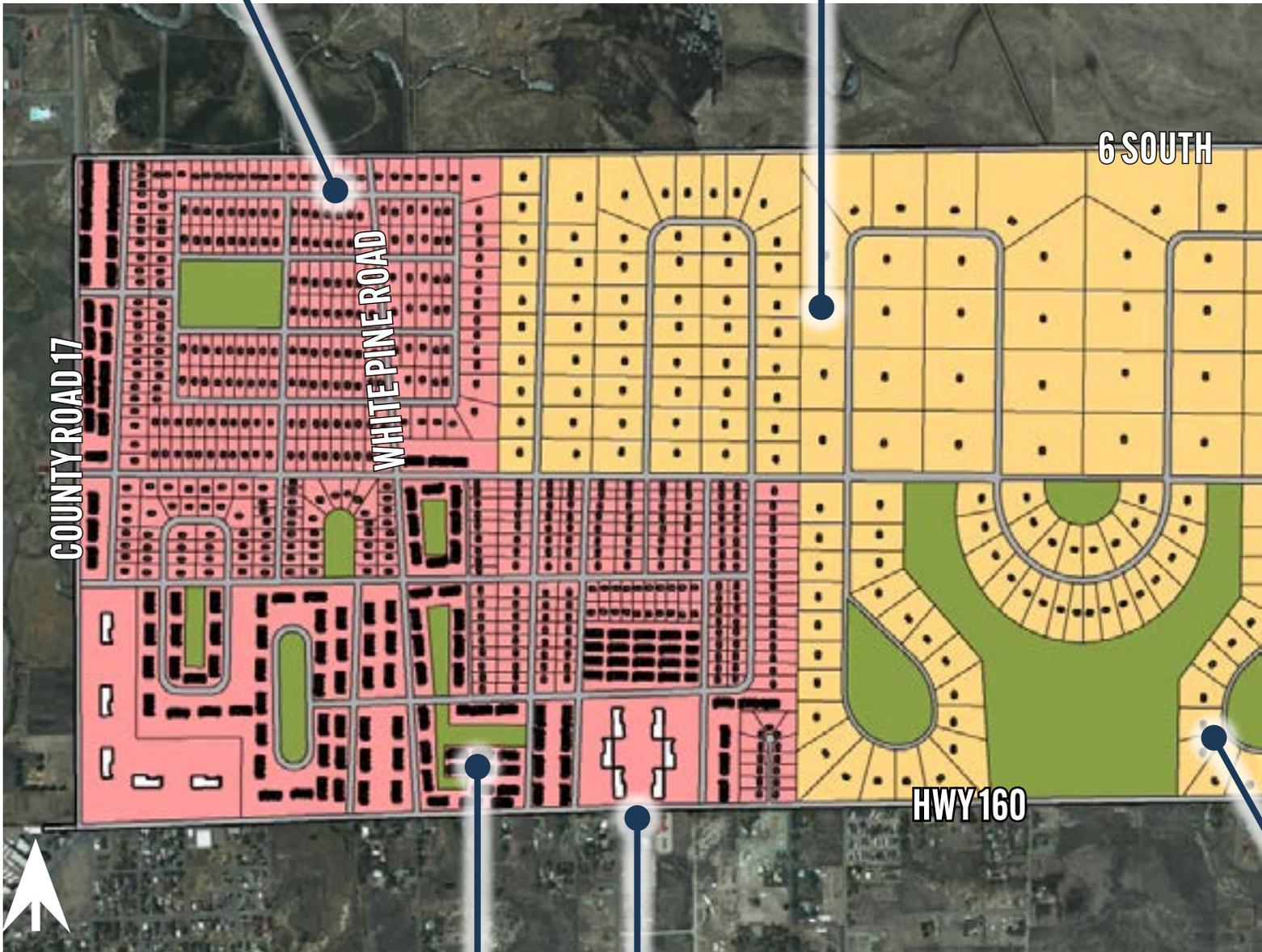


- |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Neighborhood Mixed Use |  Rural Density Residential |  East Alamosa Water & Sanitation District Boundary |
|  Industrial             |  Suburban Rural Density    |  Alamosa City Boundary                             |
|  Natural Resources      |                                                                                                               |  Alamosa City Growth Area                          |

# East Alamosa Land Use Concept

Smaller lot single household residential

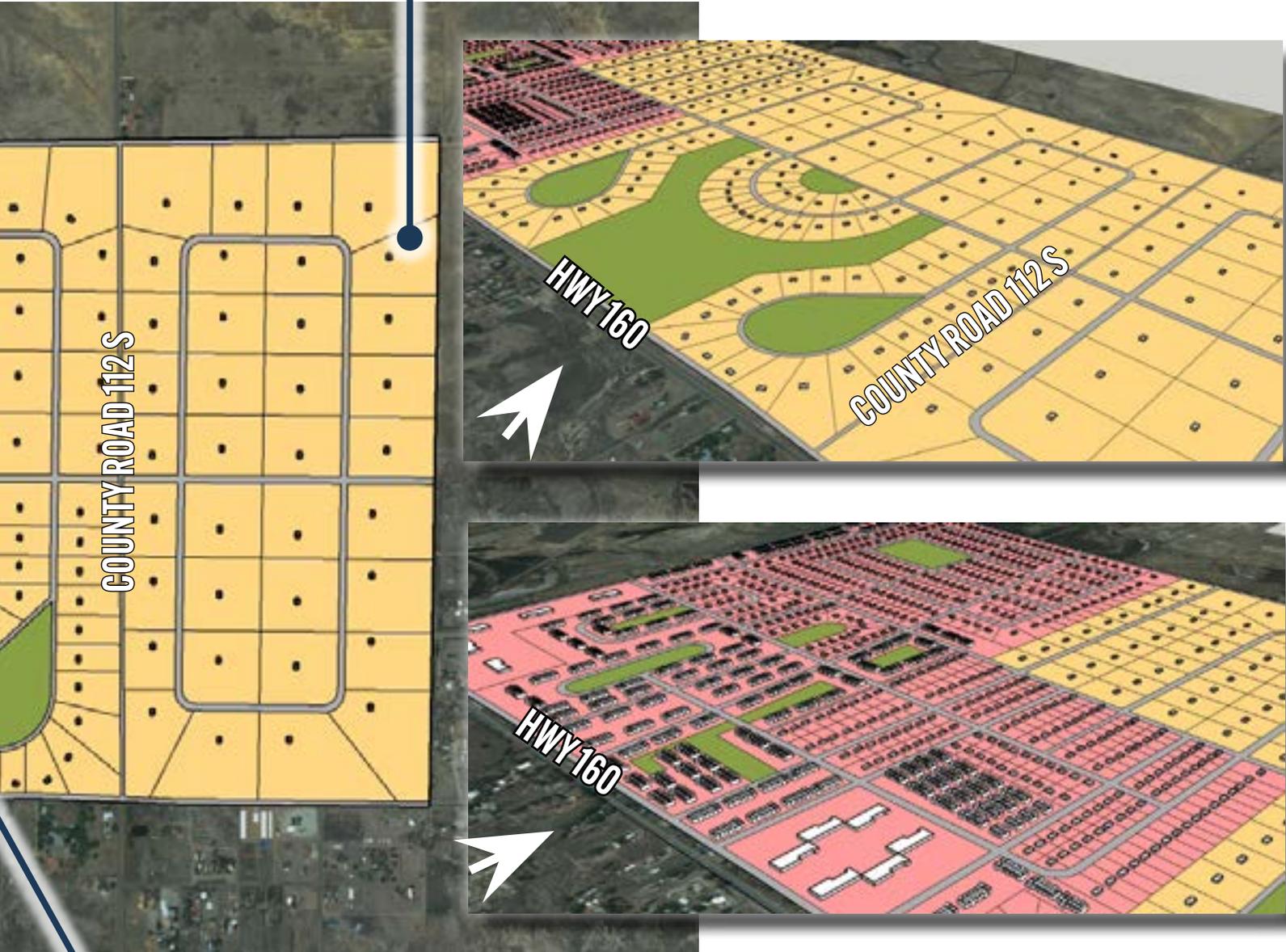
Transitional residential density from smaller to larger lot sizes



Town home or small apartment style developments

Commercial style development

Medium to larger lot residential development



Clustered development example with single household residential lots and preserved open space

# Focus Area: West Hwy 160

Just west of the City of Alamosa’s identified growth area is one of the more developed areas in unincorporated Alamosa County. It is one of the few places within Alamosa County where industrial uses are appropriate. Additionally, the feasibility of well augmentation makes this area one of the most appropriate for higher density residential development. Future development is visualized as being corridor centric with industrial and highway commercial along US Hwy 160/285, the main thoroughfare from the City of Alamosa west towards Monte Vista. This development is expected to replicate current trends in this area, with a special focus on preserving the highest density of single housing units, typically seen as manufactured or tiny homes. This is a key defining factor of the West Hwy 160 area.

A limitation to development in this area is the railroad, which parallels the highway. Limited railroad crossings restrict access to many of the properties to the south of US Hwy 160. While developments that require frequent visitation may not be suitable, small manufacturing and other services with low daily trips are appropriate.

## Land uses appropriate in this area include:

- A scale of residential uses from small lot, most suitable for manufactured or tiny homes, to larger lots, up to 10 acres. The smaller lots should be evaluated based on suitability of centralized water systems, whereas the larger lots may still be able to receive permits for domestic wells.
- This area is identified as most suitable on this side of the highway for larger-scale commercial services such as big box retail stores.
- Appropriate uses within highway commercial include quick-service food (i.e. drive-thru dining), sit-down restaurants, convenience food, and other services that are compatible to frequent vehicular traffic.

## Other Considerations for the West Hwy 160 area:

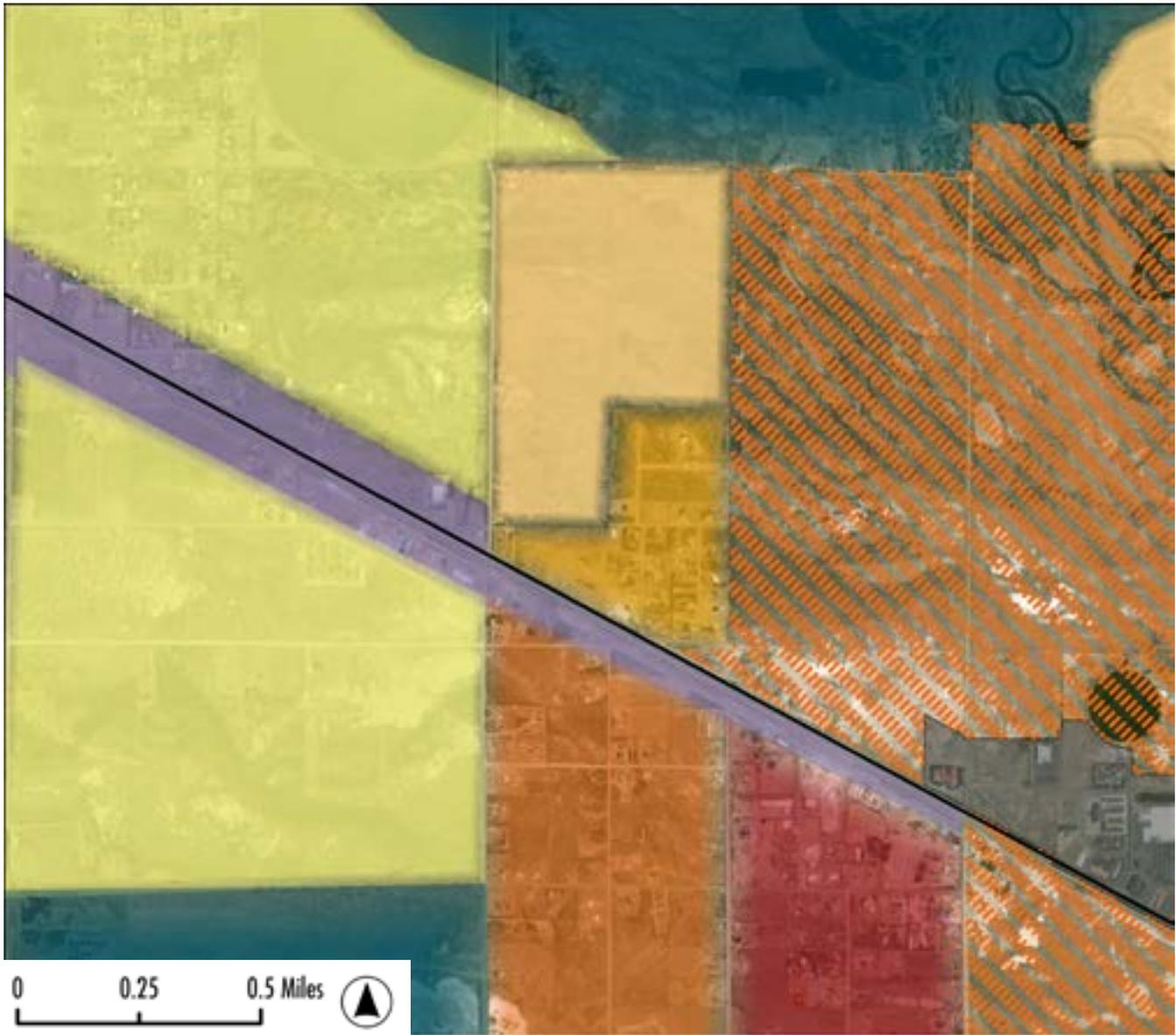
- » Preserve land for uses that are at risk of diminishing, such as industrial uses and manufactured homes.
- » Implement more rigorous regulations for industrial zones to preserve land for new and expanding opportunities that support economic growth and job creation in Alamosa County.
- » Preserve areas that historically provide naturally occurring affordable housing, such as mobile home parks, and protect residents from displacement due to redevelopment.
- » Improve Sunset Park and embrace it as a community benefit for west Alamosa County.

## Tiny Home Developments

Tiny homes are structures that are small, efficiently designed homes, typically 400 square feet or less.

They prioritize affordability and simplicity through design. These homes are typically built off-site and transferred to a permanent foundation. They are now regulated by the Colorado Division of Housing similar to other factory-built homes.

**Figure 4. West Hwy 160 Future Land Use Map**



- |                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Rural Density Residential          |  Traditional Commercial |  Alamosa City Boundary    |
|  Suburban Rural Density Residential |  Industrial             |  Alamosa City Growth Area |
|  Medium Density Residential         |  Natural Resources      |                                                                                                                |
|  Small Lot Residential              |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                |

# West Hwy 160 Land Use Concept

Larger lot residential development

Industrial uses along US HWY 160 and parallel to the railroad

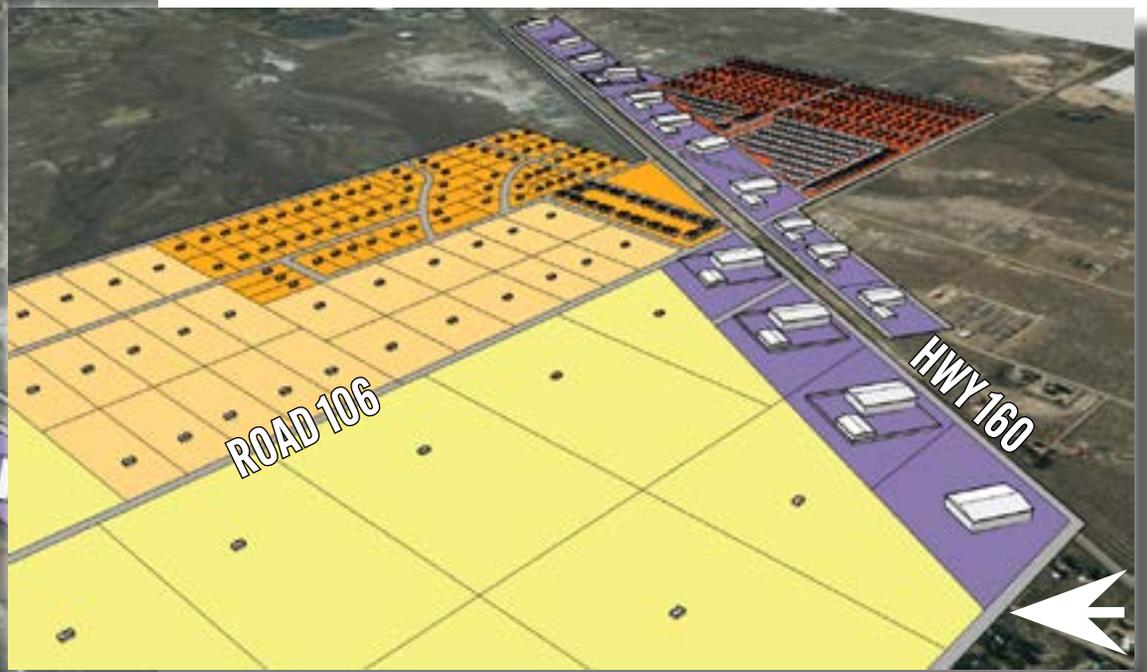
Small to medium lot residential development aligned with the city of Alamosa's 3-mile plan

Small lot residential with a variety of housing types including Cottage Courts, duplexes, Manufactured Home Parks, and single household homes with accessory units



Suburban style residential development as a transition from more intense residential to rural type development

ent



# Focus Area: Mosca

Mosca is an unincorporated township in northern Alamosa County. Since 2008, infrastructure improvements and commercial developments that serve locals and visitors have occurred. In 2018, Alamosa County replaced a failing community septic system with the Mosca Wastewater System. The construction of the new system was funded through the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and the United States Department of Agriculture. Alamosa County manages and maintains the system with over 50 accounts and offers subsidized connections to the system to incentivize new development and system expansion. The Mosca Wastewater System has excess capacity for service within the existing district boundaries, making Mosca suitable for continued infill and greenfield development.

Mosca is well situated to provide neighborhood commercial services to the rural residents in the San Luis Valley and to visitors as well. The driving distance south to Alamosa, north to Salida, or west to Monte Vista or Del Norte are not prohibitively long, meaning that commuters will likely continue to live in or near Mosca. With close proximity to renewable energy developments and easy access to the Sand Dunes National Park, Mosca is uniquely situated for future non-residential development as well.

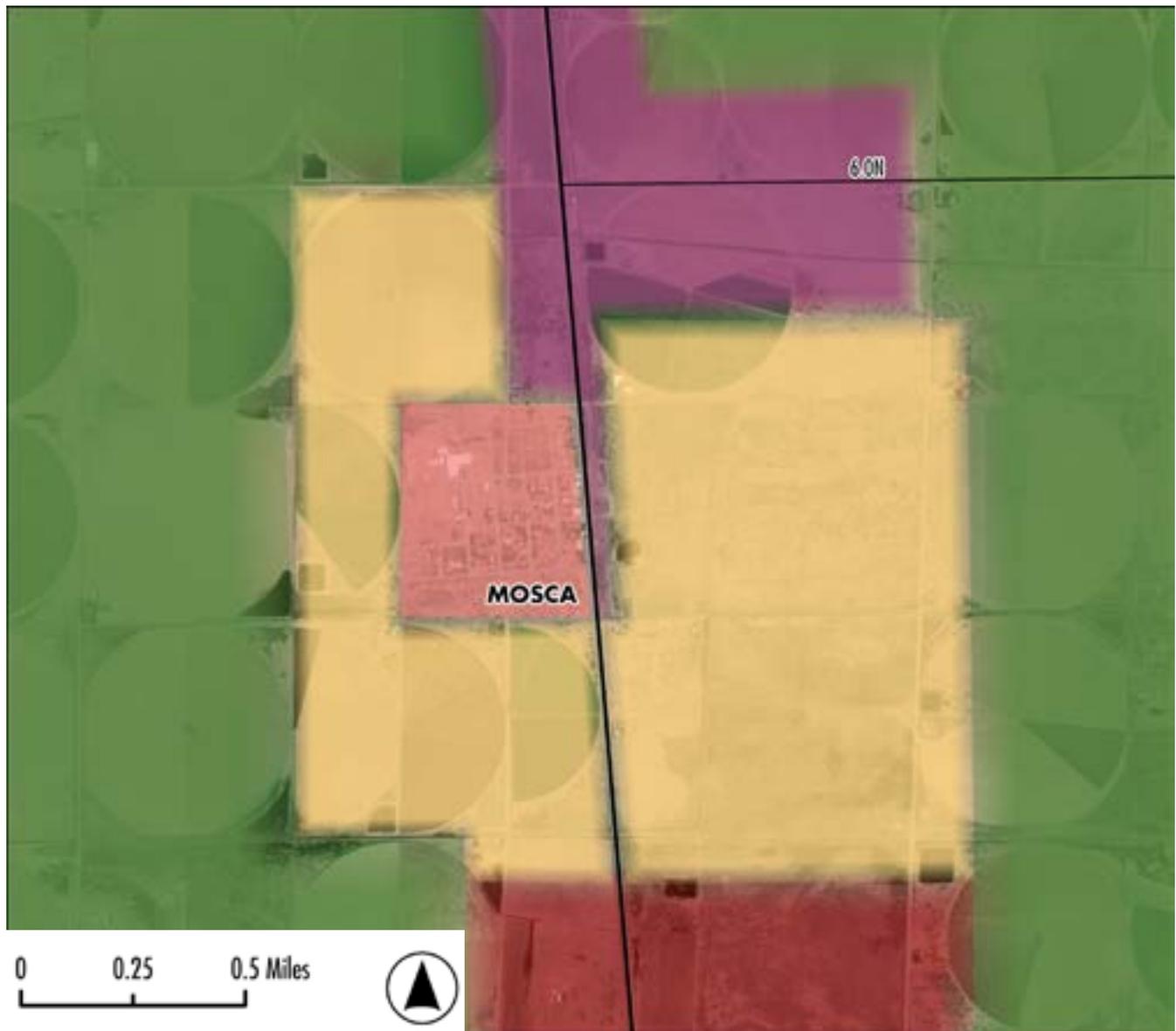
## Land uses appropriate in this area include:

- Within the mixed use area, small-scale commercial uses such as restaurants, coffee shops, breweries/distilleries, general stores, bed & breakfasts, hardware stores, recreation provides (guide services), etc.
- Along the highway corridor, uses such as gas stations/general stores, auto shops, and similar services that are appropriate along a busy arterial road.
- Small and medium-lot residential, including duplex units, cottage courts, and townhomes.

## Other Considerations for the Mosca Area:

- » Invest in infrastructure improvements in Mosca to provide services for current and future development.
- » Expand the wastewater treatment services across Highway 17 to allow for development that creates a corridor and sense of community entering the Mosca area.
- » Capture visitor spending in Mosca as the gateway community to the Great Sand Dunes National Park by allowing commercial uses within Mosca that cater to visitation.
- » Embrace Mosca's historic character and rural agricultural roots through placemaking and revitalization of abandoned buildings, specifically along 3rd Ave.
- » Allow for farmers markets and community events that connect people with local products and provide a sense of community through gathering.
- » Allow flexibility of land uses near Mosca on currently operating agricultural lands.
- » Allow for pivot corner development and agricultural lot divisions.
- » Monitor water quality, and educate residents about potential water quality issues and the benefits of testing.
- » Explore the feasibility of a seasonal shuttle or transit link between Mosca and Great Sand Dunes National Park.
- » Encourage installation of Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure within Mosca.
- » Improve roadway safety and access through traffic calming and pedestrian crossing enhancements. Install crosswalks, lighting, and wayfinding signage (as appropriate).

Figure 5. Mosca Future Land Use Map

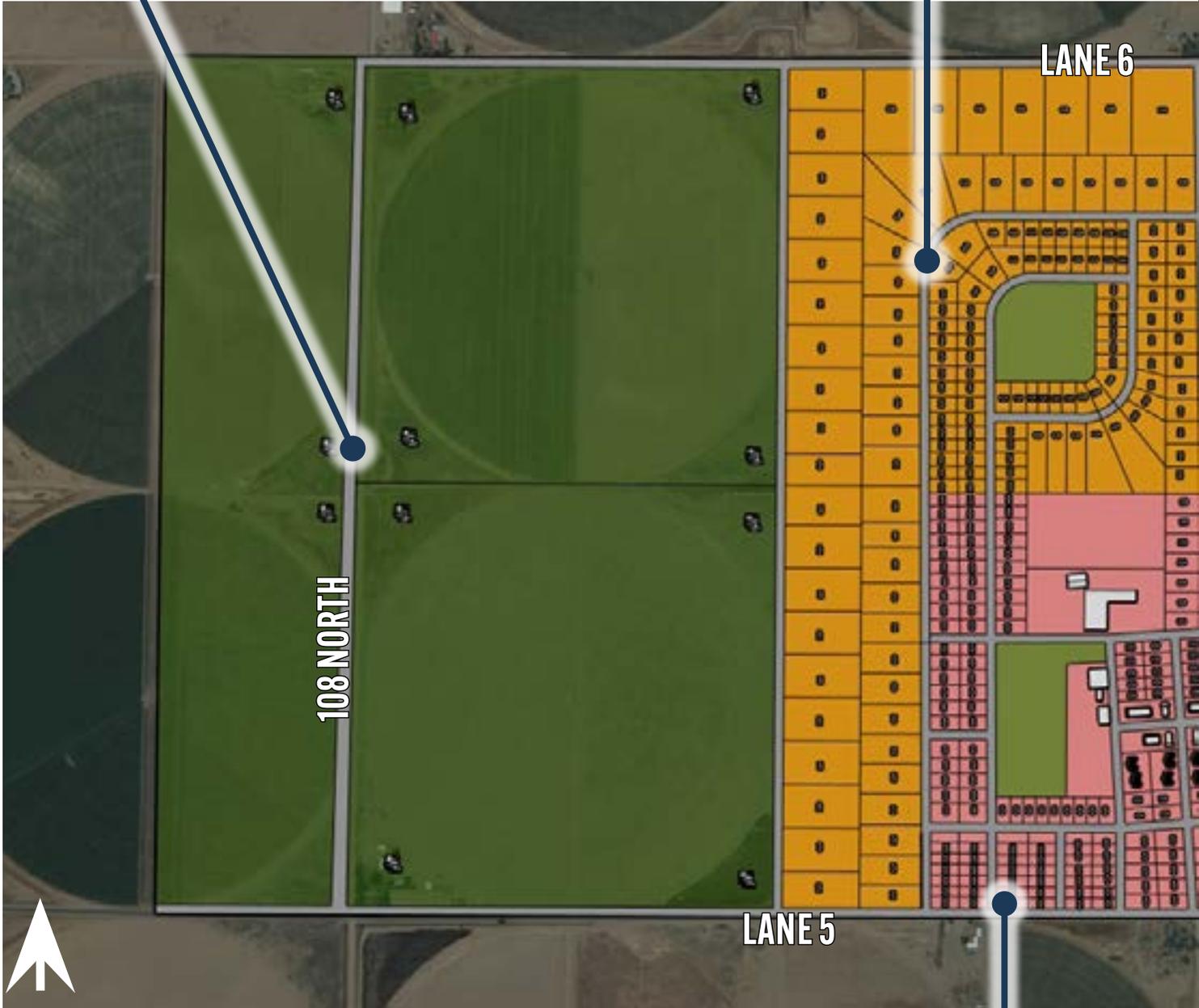


- |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Highway Commercial     |  Suburban Rural Density Residential |
|  Traditional Commercial |  Agriculture & Rural Preservation   |
|  Neighborhood Mixed Use |                                                                                                                        |

# Mosca Land Use Concept

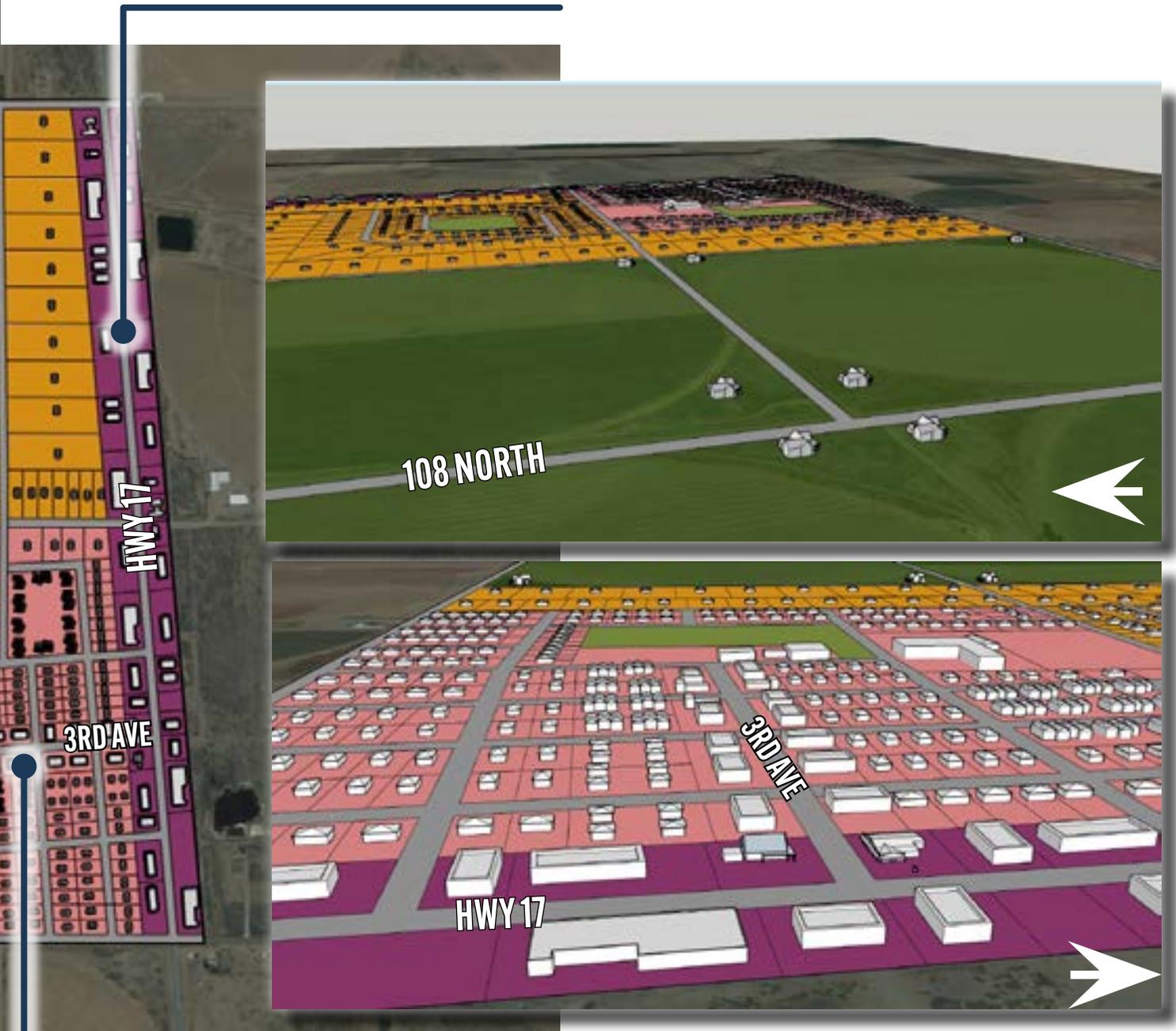
Pivot corner development primarily for single Family Homes

Medium size residential lots as transition from mosca central to agriculture



Small lot residential with a variety of housing types including Cottage Courts, duplexes, and single family homes with accessory units

Highway commercial corridor with services such as gas stations, auto shops, general stores, etc.



Small-scale commercial corridor along 3rd avenue creating a central core or main street for mosca residents and visitors

# Water Availability Overlay

Development in Alamosa County over the next 20 years will be dependent upon water availability and quality. Alamosa County has faced ongoing challenges in balancing water use with environmental conditions and legal obligations. Water availability varies throughout Alamosa County, from centralized community systems in the City of Alamosa and unincorporated East Alamosa, to individual wells. The complicated nature of water availability has and will continue to guide growth, and it has the potential to change the community character if gone unmanaged.

This water availability overlay attempts to identify areas within Alamosa County where the quality and quantity of water is sufficient to support varied types of high quality development, including residential and entrepreneurial commercial activity. If water distribution through individual wells continues as common practice in Alamosa County, the water availability overlay will be the guide to more intense development patterns such as commercial uses, hotels, multi-household homes, and single household subdivisions on smaller lots. Additionally, the farms that do not hold senior water rights and are not within the availability zones will be faced with challenges threatening future operations adding pressure for farmland conversion to other uses.

The water availability overlay considers recharge pits owned and managed by San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District (SLWCD) and depletions to the Rio Grande. Lands within a three-mile radius of these recharge pits have the ability to receive augmentation, therefore are more prime for development than those currently outside.

Other key players in water management within Alamosa County include the East Alamosa Water and Sanitation District, Subdistricts 1, 2, and 6, and all parts of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District (RGWCD). The RGWCD is a designated District within the boundaries of the Rio Grande Basin that manages water use by implementing measures to reduce groundwater pumping to help stabilize the aquifers.

## Aquifer Depletion

After decades of over-pumping, the groundwater levels are declining requiring aggressive conservation and augmentation efforts.

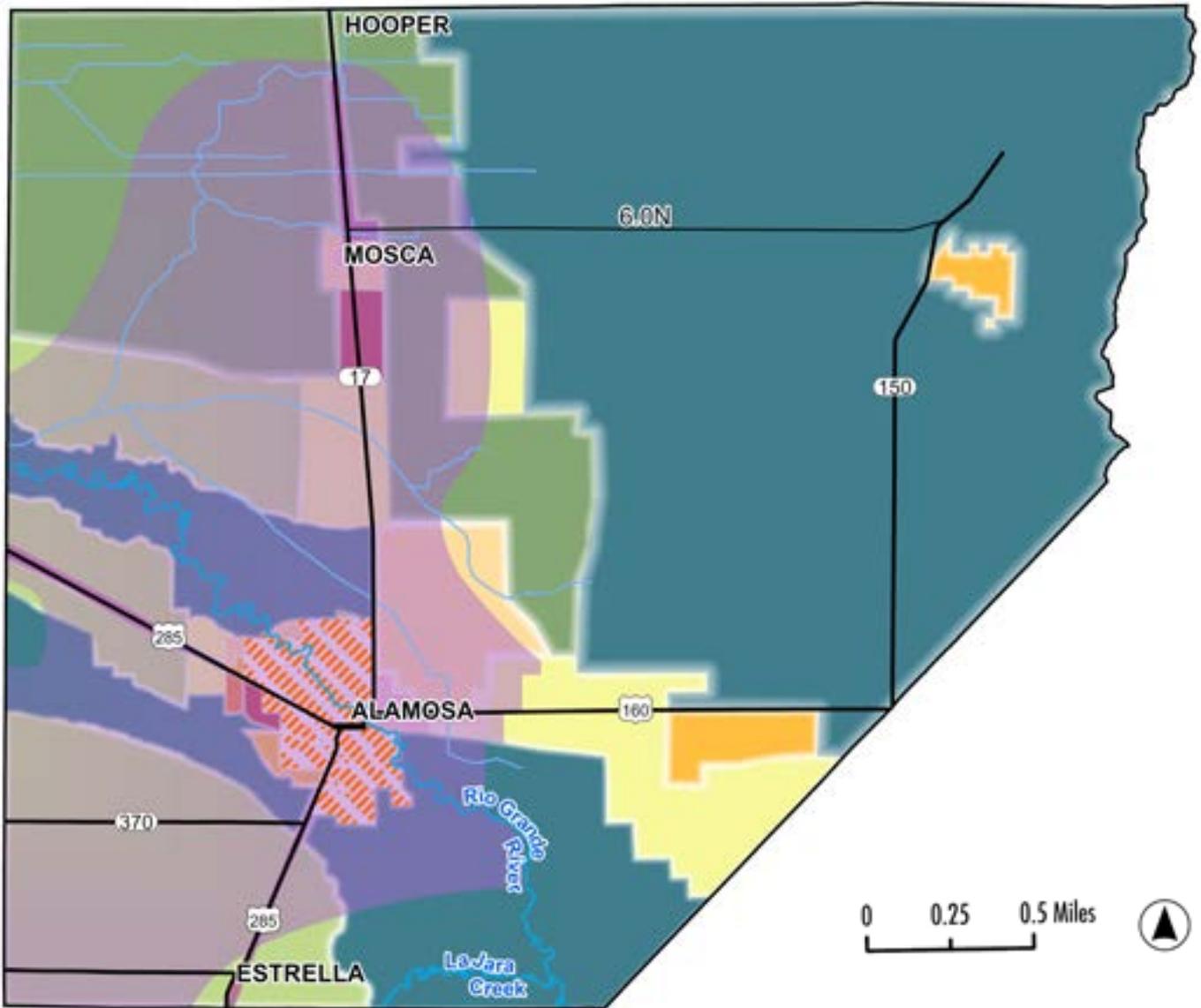
## Legal Compliance

The Rio Grande Compact requires deliveries to downstream states which adds pressure to manage local water use.

## Recent Development

To encourage water conservation, Subdistrict 1 (RGWCD) increased groundwater pumping fees from \$150 to \$500 per acre feet. This increase aims to reduce overuse and the funds will be used for management initiatives.

**Figure 6. Water Availability Overlay**





## Water Quality

In the San Luis Valley, groundwater plays a vital role in supporting the region's drinking water supply and its predominantly agricultural economy. In Alamosa County, the majority of residents outside city limits rely on private wells that draw from both the confined and unconfined aquifers for their drinking water. These wells often do not require routine monitoring or testing for contaminants (Smith et al.), creating potential risk for public health in the county.

The unique geological and geochemical characteristics of aquifers in the San Luis Valley contribute to elevated concentrations of arsenic, a naturally occurring element that can leach into groundwater. Based on data from Colorado State University, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, who modeled the probability of arsenic levels exceeding safe drinking water thresholds at various depths, areas of particular high risk of arsenic contamination are concentrated in the Southeastern part of the Alamosa County and north of U.S Highway 285 along the Rio Grande. Moderate risk of well contamination was also identified in the northeastern and southwestern portions of the county, as well as along Highway 17 around Mosca. Throughout the county, these regions – as well as deeper wells – may present a greater risk of arsenic exposure, and greater need for targeting monitoring and mitigation efforts by the county.

Given the potential health impacts of arsenic exposure – including increased risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease – the county should take strategic and proactive steps to protect residents. Next steps can include more careful review and approval of new well applications, increasing public awareness and outreach, and investing in monitoring, mitigation, and treatment strategies for the long-term safety of Alamosa County residents and water sources.

Citation: Smith, R., Lopez, A. M., Honeyman, A. S., Carney, D., Fendorf, S., Lombard, M. A., Gribble, M. O., & James, K. A. (n.d.). Leveraging satellite and geological data to estimate 3-dimensional groundwater arsenic concentrations in the San Luis Valley, Colorado [Unpublished manuscript]. Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Colorado State University.

## Other Water Considerations:

- » Encourage property owners with new domestic wells to conduct water quality monitoring prior to consumption.
- » Centralized community water systems should be required in high-density developments.
- » Explore the feasibility of establishing a centralized water system in Mosca.
- » Continue discussions with East Alamosa Water & Sanitation District on expanding the service boundary area to serve additional properties.
- » Future applications for major subdivisions should be limited to the areas identified within the Water Availability Overlay.

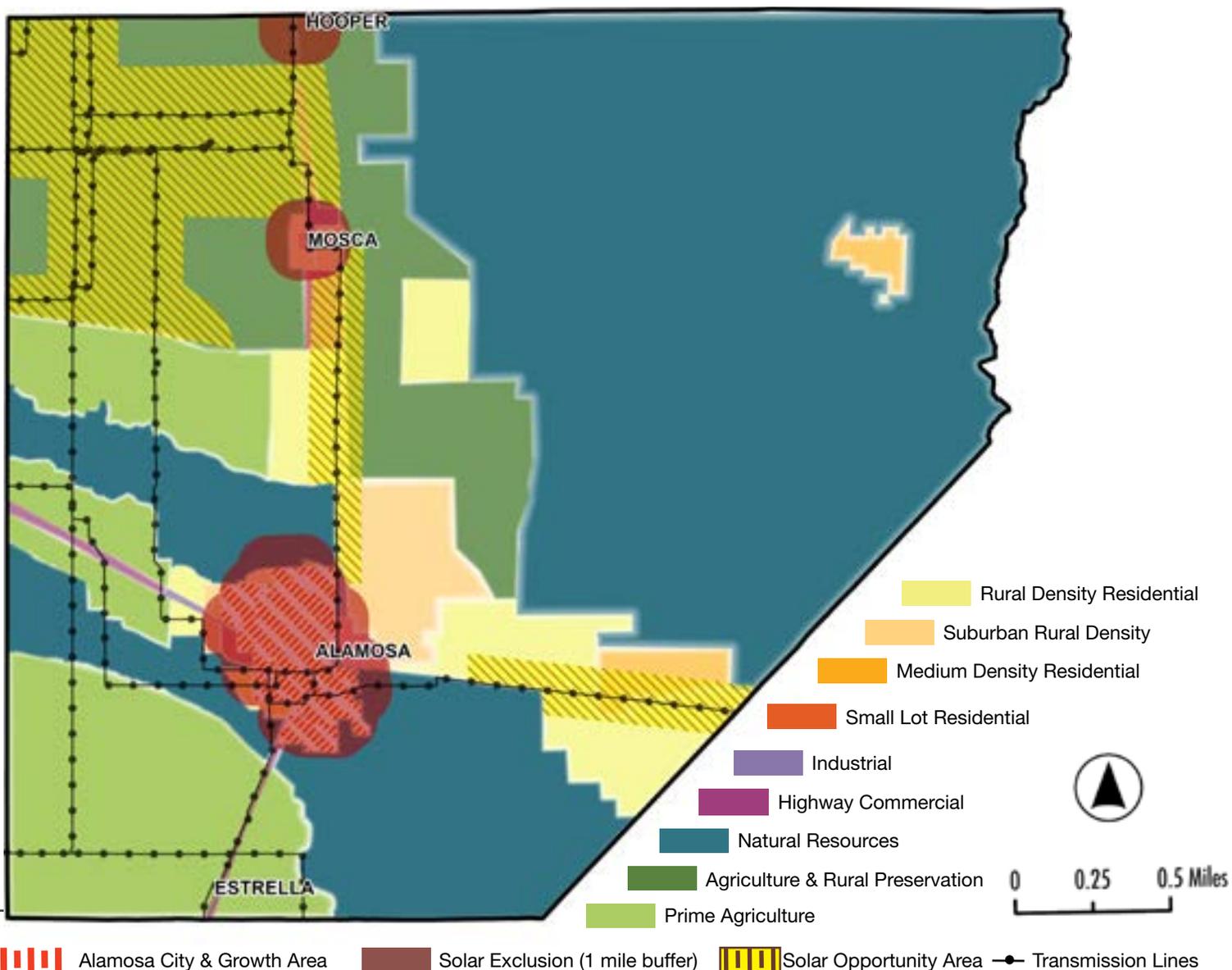


# Energy Overlay

Since 2008, Alamosa County has positioned itself as a community that is supportive of solar development. Over the past 15 years, the county has attracted significant investment in photovoltaic solar energy production and is now recognized as a statewide leader. While renewable energy remains a welcomed and appropriate land use, future development requires a strategic approach to siting in order to align with broader land use and community goals.

This energy overlay designates areas within Alamosa County where utility scale renewable energy projects are most appropriate. The map below is based on a variety of factors, including existing electric transmission lines, future land uses categories identified in this comprehensive plan, water availability, resource protections and industry needs. Identifying such areas helps manage the growth of solar and other energy developments while also balancing the preservation of agricultural land and natural landscapes. Following thorough analysis of multiple factors, this map gives generalized place-based guidance – an approach that provides predictability for developers and assists in strategic siting decisions.

**Figure 7. Energy Overlay**



## Solar Siting Considerations:

When siting a solar development the following critical issues need to be considered:

**Site access, easements, right-of-ways, and other encumbrances.** These include Colorado Natural Heritage Program Potential Conservation Areas (PCA) and Network of Conservation Areas (NCA), and Conservation Easements on private land. In Alamosa County and the SLV, National Wildlife Refuges, State Wildlife Areas, and other areas of high habitat value and management should be avoided. Additionally, proximity to existing high voltage transmission interconnection is important to consider in solar siting.

**Wildlife, special status species, migratory birds, and important habitats.** These include federally listed, candidate, and proposed species and designated critical habitats, Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC), bald and golden eagles, raptor species and documented raptor nests, prairie dog colonies, big game High Priority Habitats (HPH) and movement corridors.

**Abandoned agricultural lands and brownfields.** Development can focus around re-use and restoration opportunities on areas that are previously disturbed farm and ranch lands and on designated brownfields.

**Floodplains, wetlands, and surface waterbodies.** Areas with floodplains and designated flood zones, wetlands, and other surface waterbodies are not appropriate for large scale solar projects.

**Historic and cultural resources.** Areas with archeological, tribal, historical, or other cultural significance are not appropriate for large scale solar projects.

**Visual/aesthetic resources.** Visual impacts cannot be completely mitigated, however some best practices include glint and glare assessments, screening collectors, color treated solar collectors and support structures, and more.

## Other Solar Development Considerations:

Distributed or Community Scale Solar Development. This scale of development relies on local distribution networks, which are much more widespread throughout the county than transmission lines. Solar sites that occupy less than 40 acres and generate less than 10 Megawatts can provide direct benefits to neighboring residents and should be facilitated through a simpler and quicker permitting process than a 1041 permit for utility scale projects.

Revegetation and conservation of farm land. Careful planning and vegetation management combined with limited water use can enhance all solar development projects and avoid creating sources of windblown dust. This is of particular concern on converted farmland that previously was irrigated, and should be a requirement of all solar developments. Property owners and developers should work with the Rio Grande Water Conservation District to inactivate wells to avoid abandonment by the Office of the State Engineer.

Agrioltaics and Ecovoltaics. Combining grazing and niche farming with solar production can enhance farm income, reduce on-farm electricity costs, reduce water use, provide increased forage and cropping options, improve animal and soil health, increase habitat biodiversity, support pollinators, reduce groundwater pumping near community wells, and create new farm opportunities while integrating renewable energy and environmental conservation.



# *Chapter Eight*

## Implementation



The Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan is designed to guide decisions made by elected officials and County staff related to development, public services, and land use throughout Alamosa County. Although the plan outlines a vision for the next 10 to 20 years, it is intended to be a flexible, living document that responds to shifting priorities, new concepts, and emerging trends. Adaptive management that considers water, economic conditions, and climate uncertainty is essential to maintain alignment with the community vision as conditions evolve over time. Achieving the goals of the plan will require collaboration among

County leaders, staff, community members, and other partners.

This chapter outlines how the plan will be implemented, managed, and periodically amended. Adopting the plan is just the initial step—realizing the plan goals and strategies involves a long-term, ongoing effort. Continued progress will depend on community support and the availability of financial resources and other assistance programs.

This chapter outlines a structured, iterative process for making decisions and adjusting strategies over time based on new information, changing conditions, and observed outcomes. It acknowledges that not all outcomes can be predicted in advance and builds in mechanisms for learning, feedback, and course correction. The following programmatic elements have been divided into six categories covering regulatory updates, partnerships, new studies, programs, capital projects and funding opportunities.

## Regulatory Updates

**WHY IT MATTERS: The Land Use & Development Code is the most powerful tool for shaping land use, protecting resources, and implementing the plan's vision, goals, and strategies. As conditions evolve, ordinances and regulations must be revised to align with community goals and ensure effectiveness.**

Where the Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan is a high-level guiding document, the Alamosa County Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) is the regulatory document that implements that plan. The LUDC establishes procedures and regulations for development including allowed uses, site planning, and other detailed design criteria. Implementation of and alignment with the plan's vision, goals, and strategies will be key considerations during review of future development proposals.

While there is a desire for flexibility and the ability to respond to high-quality projects and changing market demands, there is also a responsibility to focus on the community vision and values captured in this comprehensive plan, to preserve Alamosa County's agricultural roots, create a diverse and resilient economy that can sustain for generations, foster a healthy environment that promotes the physical, mental, and social well-being of its residents, and protect our natural landscapes as an important community asset and attraction. As projects are reviewed and competing issues arise, it will be the responsibility of the approving authority to balance these needs and meet the vision of this plan.

### Development Application Review

During the review of development applications, 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 LUDC requirements:

- Does the proposed development generally advance the vision and goals contained in the plan?
- Will the proposed development strengthen the character of the area by:
  - » Preserving Alamosa County's agricultural roots;
  - » Creating a diverse and resilient economy that can sustain Alamosa County for generations;
  - » Fostering a healthy environment for a community that promotes the physical, mental, and social well-being of its residents; and
  - » Protecting Alamosa County's natural landscapes as an important community asset and attraction?

## Land Use Development Code Updates

The current LUDC was adopted in July 2009 with revisions completed through 2024. Regular code updates are necessary to stay current with development trends and a changing legal landscape. Alamosa County will need to continue revising the LUDC to achieve the goals and strategies outlined in Chapters 3 through 7. The scope of future updates might include:

- Zoning map and category revisions to support desired land use patterns that align with the Future Land Use Plan and Map
- Subdivision regulation updates to ensure right sized residential subdivisions and encourage cluster development
- Incorporation of water availability criteria for new development
- Lot size standard revisions to accommodate a variety of housing types
- Updates to road access and connectivity requirements to ensure connectivity and hierarchy
- Updating special use standards and processes as appropriate
- Incorporation of environmental and natural resource protections such as sensitive land buffers
- Development of dark sky lighting regulations
- Updates to 1041 Permits review standards and procedures such as changing the waiver process to allow administrative approval

Progress can be tracked through a specific code amendment recommendation idea list with status (e.g. drafted, adopted) updated as codes are revised.



**Table 1. Strategies for Regulatory Changes**

THEME	STRATEGIES FOR REGULATORY CHANGES
AGRICULTURAL IDENTITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore flexible zoning regulations to protect farms from risks that redefine landscapes and threaten farming practices.</li> <li>• Explore policies that maximize water services without developing new well systems or changing agricultural rights.</li> <li>• Streamline permitting processes for greenhouses and innovative farming projects.</li> <li>• Promote local food production and processing with smaller scale facilities.</li> <li>• Explore policies to encourage neighborhood farms and gardens as an integral part of new development.</li> <li>• Encourage complementary uses for supplemental on-farm income, like agrivoltaics that combine farming or ranching with solar energy production.</li> <li>• Allow or incentivize clustered residential development that concentrates housing in one area while preserving the majority of the land for agricultural use.</li> <li>• Explore policies that require a portion of the water dedicated to new development to continue to be used for agricultural purposes.</li> <li>• Update policies and remove regulatory barriers to innovative on-farm housing options for laborers, both temporary and permanent.</li> <li>• Consider policies that encourage the manufacturing and/or processing of agricultural products grown in Alamosa County and in the greater region.</li> </ul>
DIVERSE ECONOMY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage new industries are in appropriate locations.</li> <li>• Require water users in new developments to demonstrate a plan for meeting long-term water demands.</li> <li>• Establish a Water Availability Overlay Zone that identifies areas within Alamosa that can support new and denser development.</li> <li>• Continue to promote solar and renewable energy developments in the appropriate locations.</li> <li>• Use a place-based approach to identify locations that can accommodate water dependent industries such as, manufacturing, hospitals, and other health care facilities.</li> <li>• Require re-vegetation for solar installations.</li> </ul>

- Explore flexible and inclusive housing policies that accommodate diverse needs.
- Allow diverse housing types, including manufactured homes and manufactured home parks, tiny homes on permanent and temporary foundations, and cottage housing developments.
- Support land use planning that places housing, services, and jobs closer together to naturally reduce travel distances.
- Streamline permitting for electric vehicle charging facilities throughout Alamosa County.
- Promote renewable energy production and storage, encourage continued solar development at all scales, and pursue designation as a SOLSmart community.
- Manage renewable energy development to benefit the residents of Alamosa County.
- Explore incorporating low impact development (alternative stormwater management principles) into regulations.
- Support the development and utilization of spaces that support educational facilities, training centers, and employment hubs.
- Explore mixed-use areas where residential, commercial, and recreational spaces coexist.
- Encourage future growth of higher densities and mixed use developments adjacent to the City of Alamosa.
- Encourage parks and open space areas around multifamily developments and in major subdivisions.
- Encourage green spaces, community gardens, parks, and trails, especially along the Rio Grande.
- Consider policies that foster health by working with the Public Health Department to address strategies in the San Luis Valley Public Health Improvement Plan.
- Consider policies that foster access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities.
- Encourage and support the development of green spaces, neighborhood gardens, parks, and trails, especially along the Rio Grande.
- Encourage control measures to limit dust from construction and site disturbance, such as watering or revegetation.
- Consider requirements that major subdivisions and planned unit developments have paved roads.

- Require planned unit developments to include water efficiency standards, alternative water use or watershed protection efforts.
- Consider commercial landscape and site design standards that include best management practices for low impact development, including naturalized detention for rainwater and run off and green infrastructure design.
- Promote compact development adjacent to the City of Alamosa and within Mosca to provide more water efficient land use patterns by allowing cluster and conservation subdivisions by right.

- Limit the types of development and uses allowed in floodplains, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas within Alamosa County.
- Consider regulations to ensure that all subdivisions can achieve water sustainability and water quality goals.
- Consider dark sky regulations.
- Preserve views of unique or distinctive natural features from scenic travel corridors by strategically orienting buildings and limiting height. Prioritize natural open space preservation for both active and passive recreation.
- Encourage the continuance of large-tract agricultural operations near the Rio Grande.
- Revise subdivision regulations to minimize “barren” lots due to “household use only” well limitations and consider requiring minimum augmentation to provide capacity for landscaping and trees.
- Consider promoting clustered and conservation subdivisions in areas with high conservation values.
- Consider resource protection standards to buffer development from floodplains and riparian areas.
- Provide information and education on the benefits of planting species that support native pollinators and wildlife.
- Establish and Energy Overlay that identifies areas where future utility scale solar farms are the preferred in order to reduce future conflict with other types of development.

# Partnerships

**WHY IT MATTERS:** No single agency or department can achieve the plan's vision alone. Strong partnerships with regional and local governments, nonprofits, businesses, and residents make it possible to share resources, build capacity, and act on challenges in real-time.

Residents and organizations in Alamosa County and the San Luis Valley are active, connected, and interested in collaboration. By working together to protect and enhance their communities, these cross-sector groups contribute significantly to the overall resilience of the Valley and will be integral to realizing this comprehensive plan.

Many of the goals and strategies call for partnerships, including innovating agricultural practices, increasing economic diversity and resiliency, promoting public health and social services, and balancing public access and conservation for outdoor recreation. While not an exhaustive list, this section details likely partners that can help Alamosa County implement the goals and strategies for each of the four main plan elements.

Any formal partnerships between Alamosa County and another entity should be accompanied by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) to formalize timelines, contributions, reporting, and project outcomes. Other regional partnerships may not necessarily require a formal MOU or contract to work together to implement plan ideas. Open lines of communication should be fostered with regional groups likely to be active in the plan's implementation.



**Table 2. Potential Partnerships**

THEME	PARTNERSHIPS	THEME	PARTNERSHIPS
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">AGRICULTURAL IDENTITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colorado State University (CSU) Extension - SLV Office</li> <li>• San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition</li> <li>• Valley Roots Food Hub</li> <li>• Rio Grande Farm Park</li> <li>• USDA NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service)</li> <li>• Mosca Hooper Conservation District</li> <li>• Colorado Department of Natural Resources and Colorado Parks and Wildlife</li> <li>• Ditch Companies</li> <li>• Clubs like Future Farmers of America/ 4-H</li> <li>• Farmers and ranchers associations</li> <li>• Colorado Water Conservation Board</li> <li>• Rio Grande Water Conservation District</li> <li>• SLV Water Conservation District</li> </ul>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLV Housing Coalition</li> <li>• SLV Public Health Partnership</li> <li>• SLV Immigrant Resource Center</li> <li>• Private developers/builders</li> <li>• Local employers</li> <li>• Adams State University</li> <li>• Trinidad State College</li> <li>• La Puente</li> <li>• East Alamosa Water &amp; Sanitation District</li> <li>• SLV Habitat for Humanity</li> <li>• Energy Resource Center</li> <li>• Colorado Department of Public Health &amp; Environment</li> <li>• Colorado Housing and Finance Authority</li> <li>• Colorado Department of Local Affairs</li> <li>• Colorado Department of Transportation</li> <li>• Mountain Valley Transit</li> </ul>
	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">DIVERSE ECONOMY</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit Alamosa</li> <li>• Alamosa County Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Local employers and businesses</li> <li>• Private developers/builders</li> <li>• City of Alamosa and Town of Hooper</li> <li>• SLV Development Resources Group and Council of Governments</li> <li>• San Luis Valley Small Business Development Center</li> <li>• SLV Regional Airport</li> <li>• Adams State University</li> <li>• Trinidad State College</li> <li>• Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium</li> <li>• Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT)</li> <li>• Colorado Department of Labor and Employment</li> <li>• Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA)</li> </ul>

# New Studies or Plans

**WHY IT MATTERS:** Conditions in Alamosa County—such as water, public health, economic trends, and climate—will continue to evolve. Regular studies and planning efforts allow Alamosa County to gather data, identify emerging challenges, and proactively adjust strategies.

Other plans, studies, design manuals, and similar guidance can provide more relevant, timely, and specific information than the data provided in this plan. Imagine Alamosa specifically highlights the following studies or plans:

- Tourism Master Plan
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Rio Grande Master Plan
- Trails and Open Space Plan
- Road Development and Maintenance Plan
- Alamosa County Transportation Master Plan
- Alamosa County Climate Risk Assessment
- Transportation Equity Audit

Progress on these new studies or plans can be tracked by updating a table as new plans are drafted and adopted. Each new plan or study should connect directly to one or more of the goals or strategies outlined in this plan. If a new plan or study provides significant new information that clarifies or adjusts the strategic vision of Alamosa County, this Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan should be amended as discussed in this chapter

# Programs

**WHY IT MATTERS:** Programs translate policy into action—whether through education, incentives, technical assistance, or direct service delivery. These tools should be flexible with the ability to be scaled or adapted over time as needs change.

Some of the programmatic strategies that the Plan calls for are the celebration of local food production, large-scale composting, drought management preparedness, a local micro-transit service, and air quality notification. Some programs may be initiated and managed directly by Alamosa County, but many will be led by community partners and groups with support from Alamosa County.

# Capital Projects

**WHY IT MATTERS:** Infrastructure and other capital investments have long lifespans and lasting impacts. Making smart, forward-looking capital decisions and adjusting them based on new data helps Alamosa County respond to change while building for resilience, sustainability, and community well-being.

Some of the strategies to achieve plan goals involve capital investments for physical, tangible infrastructure and facility improvements. These include new regional trails, road maintenance and upgrades, community gardens along the Rio Grande, and new parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities.

A Capital Improvement plan that coordinates the location, timing, and financing of infrastructure investments would help identify and prioritize plan-aligned projects.

# Funding

**WHY IT MATTERS:** Implementation depends on Alamosa County's ability to secure and allocate financial resources. Adaptive strategies ensure Alamosa County can pivot to new priorities and leverage new funding and financing opportunities.

When possible, funding for the various initiatives called for in the plan should come from existing revenue sources, such as Alamosa County General Fund, Public Health Fund, Community Development Fund, and Local Marketing District Fund. Federal, state, and local grant opportunities that support plan implementation strategies should be monitored by county staff and connected to plan goals and strategies. Given the recent availability of Proposition 123 funding and other housing-related funding resources from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), Alamosa County could consider completing a Proposition 123 Local Government Affordable Housing Commitment in order to qualify for additional State funding for housing initiatives.

Additional State funding resources include Colorado Water Plan Grants, Colorado Watershed Restoration Grants, DOLA Energy Impact Assistance Fund Grants, DOLA Rural Economic Development Initiative Program, State Office of Economic Development Programs and Funding, DNR Water Efficiency Grant Program, Colorado Department of Agriculture ACRE3 Grants (for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects), and Drought Management Planning Grants. Additional DOLA grant opportunities that might fund plan initiatives are available via the DOLA Local Community Funding Guide.

# Amendment and Review Process

## Periodic Review

The goals, strategies, and future land use recommendations contained in this plan are intended to be flexible and adapt to changing conditions throughout the long-term planning horizon. This 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 will continue to provide the foundation for decision-making.

Some examples of potential situations that might warrant updates to the plan include:

- Economic shifts, such as the growth of a new major industry in Alamosa County or greatly changed visitation to the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve
- Unexpectedly high rates of population growth or loss beyond current projections
- Major changes to the City of Alamosa annexation plans
- Unsatisfactory results in current development patterns
- Changes in general farming practices, agricultural markets, or water availability.
- Suggestions for changes by interested individuals or groups.
- Changes in State and Federal legislation.





## Amendment Process

The Alamosa County Planning Commission may initiate either major or administrative amendments to the plan. The Planning Commission members must hear and act upon major amendments, with approval from the Board of County Commissioners and notice requirements for a public hearing met for a full hearing. Staff may process administrative amendments without formal action by the Planning Commission.

### Major Amendments

Major amendments have a substantive effect on the goals, strategies, and land uses identified in this comprehensive 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 thematic elements as new information becomes available.
- Revising goals and strategies to reflect changing community values.
- Changing future land use categories or the future land use maps.

### Major Amendment Criteria

Substantial changes in the plan will meet the following criteria:

- Conformance to the basic purpose and spirit of the plan;
- Contribution to the common welfare and public good rather than a furtherance of private individual or group interests; and
- Based upon adequate study of the full implications for the change and after compliance with public notice requirements of state statute and county regulations.

In compliance with Colorado State statute C.R.S. 30-28-106, major amendments must also consider:

- The applicable housing needs assessments published pursuant to sections 24-32-3702 (1)(b), 24-32-3703, and 24-32-3704;
- The statewide strategic growth report created pursuant to section 24-32-3707;
- The natural land and agricultural opportunities report published pursuant to section 24-32-3708; and
- The Colorado water plan adopted pursuant to section 37-60-106.3.

### Administrative Amendments

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 the City of Alamosa.
- Map updates to show updated information, e.g., roads, hydrologic conditions, hazards, wildlife, and other similar data. Future land use categories cannot be changed by these updates.
- Minor clarifying changes to future land use designations.
- Incorporation of the results of studies, reports, data, and information.
- Graphic updates.
- Typographical errors and omissions.

