



# LINCOLN COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2000





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## KEY PLANNING ELEMENTS

### Introduction

The Lincoln County Commissioners, the Land Use board, serving as the Planning Commission, and a Citizens Advisory Committee, have prepared this Comprehensive Plan according to Colorado Statute 30-28-106, 1973, as amended.

This plan, with any accompanying maps, plats, charts, or descriptive and explanatory matter, sets forth the general goals and strategies for the use and development of land in the unincorporated areas of Lincoln County. In addition, this plan includes various goals and strategies for the provision of public services throughout the County.

### The Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan identifies specific principles, policies and strategies that are intended to provide guidance and direction for existing and future land use. In addition, the Plan sets forth the general mission of the County and its various departments. The basic documents used by Lincoln County to carry out the policies and strategies of this Plan are the Zoning Resolution, the Land Subdivision Regulations and the County Budget.

### The Zoning Resolution

The Lincoln County Zoning Resolution is a separate regulatory document. It defines land use permit application procedures, identifies responsibilities, and defines standards and regulations pertaining to various land uses as well as non-conformance and enforcement procedures.

### Land Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision is the process by which land is divided or combined into parcels appropriate for development. The regulations, required by the Colorado Revised Statutes, provide the Board of County Commissioners authority to review and approve the plans for creating building lots or parcels, less than 35 acres, and related streets and other public rights-of-way. The County Subdivision Regulations include design standards for streets, sidewalks, lot sizes, easements, driveways, sanitary sewer, water supply and storm drainage.

### The Setting

Lincoln County is located in east central Colorado upon the western edge of the nation's Great Plains. The County contains 2,586 square miles or approximately 1,655,000 acres. Shaped like a reverse letter "L", the County is 71 miles from north to south, 30 miles east to west across the narrow portion of the "L" and 48 miles from east to west in the wider portion of the "L".

### How the Plan Addresses the Impact of Change

New development results in the need to provide new and expanded services. New development can also result in conflicting land uses. The Comprehensive Plan recommends where new development should be located and where it can best be served. The Plan promotes sound economic development while preserving the quality of life so many Lincoln County residents have come to enjoy.





## LAND USE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The following describes the recommended future land use categories depicted on the Land Use Plan Map (see Land Use Plan Map, page 22).

### General Agriculture

The **General Agricultural Area** is the predominant land use area in the County at the present time and will be well into the future. This area includes all agriculture uses including crop and livestock production, processing and storage. Some uses, such as concentrated animal feeding operations may be subject to further review and permitting by the County or State of Colorado. Intensive non-agricultural uses are discouraged in this area. Rural residential and limited commercial and industrial development may occur in this area subject to the Lincoln County Zoning Resolution. (See the Rural Design Development Overlay in the Resolution)

### Municipal Planning Influence Area

The **Municipal Planning Influence Area** is an area that generally extends three miles around each incorporated municipality in the County. Land uses and related activities that occur within this area are likely to have an impact, positive or negative, on the adjacent town. Therefore, the County shall refer all land use changes in the area to the affected municipality for its review and comment. The County should give full consideration to such comments and require appropriate mitigation measures to limit undesirable impacts on the town/city.

This area is also intended to serve as a buffer area between intensive agricultural activities and more intense residential and commercial/industrial uses within each town or community. Lower intensity agricultural uses such as general crop production and open grazing are generally encouraged in this area. The Land Use Board and the Board of County Commissioners, in accordance with the Rural Design Development Overlay District may consider rural residential and limited commercial/industrial uses in these areas. More intensive agricultural activities, such as Confined Animal Feeding Operations are discouraged.

### Future Town Growth Area

The **Future Town Growth Area**, if established by a town, identifies those areas around a community that may be suitable for annexation and development in the future. (These growth areas also include existing incorporated areas of each municipality.) Most non-agricultural uses are encouraged to locate within the Town or City Growth Areas. If non-agricultural development does occur in these Growth Areas, it should be served by municipal services, such as water, sewer, streets, etc. Public services may be extended as determined by each respective town board.

### Drainageway Buffers

Future Land Use Plan map depicts general corridors along perennial and intermittent drainageways. These corridors do not suggest actual 100-year floodplain boundaries. However, if development is proposed near these corridors, appropriate analysis and care should be undertaken to protect the corridors.

### State Lands

Trust lands owned by the State of Colorado, most leased to farmers and ranchers for crop production and grazing.

### State Wildlife Areas

Wildlife and recreation areas owned and maintained by the Colorado Division of Wildlife.



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

### **Agriculture and Rural Development**

- Maintain and enhance the viability of the County's agricultural resources, economy and lifestyle.

### **Municipal Growth and Development**

- Encourage and accommodate new residential, commercial and industrial development, while ensuring such development occurs in an orderly and responsible manner.

### **Residential Development**

- Encourage and accommodate a mix of quality residential housing types, densities and affordability.

### **Commercial and Industrial Development**

- Encourage the support and retention of existing businesses while promoting the expansion and diversification of the commercial and industrial economic base.

### **Economic Development**

- Retain existing businesses and attract new businesses that will serve the needs of residents, strengthen the local tax base and provide a wide range of employment opportunities.

### **General Services**

- Encourage the provision and maintenance of an adequate system of public services and facilities that will serve existing and future development.

### **Environment and Natural Resources**

- Protect and enhance Lincoln County's natural resources, features and amenities.

### **Local Governance**

- Provide necessary county government services to Lincoln County constituents in the most cost-effective manner.
- Improve intra-departmental communications and cooperation.
- Participate in regional government to ensure that Lincoln County's needs are heard and respected and to coordinate efforts to address issues that do not follow jurisdictional boundaries (e.g. water quality, air quality, telecommunications, and transportation decisions).

## INTRODUCTION





## INTRODUCTION

### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORIZATION

The Lincoln County Commissioners, the Land Use board, serving as the Planning Commission, and a Citizens Advisory Committee, have prepared this Comprehensive Plan according to Colorado Statute 30-28-106, 1973, as amended.

This plan, with any accompanying maps, plats, charts, or descriptive and explanatory matter, sets forth the general goals and strategies for the use and development of land in the unincorporated areas of Lincoln County. In addition, this plan includes various goals and strategies for the provision of public services throughout the County.

A comprehensive plan, as allowed by statute, may refer to any of the following items:

1. General location, character, and extent of streets, roads, viaducts, bridges, parkways, playgrounds, forests, reservations, parks, airports, and other public ways, grounds, places and spaces;
2. The general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, for water, light, power, sanitation, transportation, communication, heat, and other purposes;
3. The acceptance, widening, removal, extension, relocation, narrowing, vacation, abandonment, or change of use of any of the foregoing public ways, grounds, places, spaces, buildings, properties, utilities, or terminals;
4. The general character, location, and extent of community centers, townsites, housing developments, whether public or private, and urban conservation or redevelopment areas;
5. The general character, location, and extent of forests, agricultural areas, flood control areas, and open development areas for purposes of conservation, food and water supply, sanitary and drainage facilities, flood control, or the protection of urban development; and
6. A land classification and utilization program.



## **HOW THE PLAN WAS PREPARED**

In March 1999, the Lincoln County Commissioners retained Community Matters, Inc., a professional planning consulting firm, to help prepare a County Comprehensive Plan.

The process consisted of three phases. The first phase was the creation of a planning database, including information about the County's physical resources, its social, economic and governmental structure and its assets.

The second phase of the planning process focused on community input. Community Matters conducted a series of individual interviews with a cross-section of residents throughout the County. The consultant also met with citizens in various informal gatherings to solicit input. In April 1999, the County Commissioners appointed a group of citizen advisors to guide the planning process. This Citizen Advisory Committee met periodically to determine specific concerns to be addressed, discuss important issues and develop a framework of policies and strategies for the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, Community Matters met with a technical advisory group of county department heads, staff members and various local experts in the fields of agriculture, water resources, social services, solid waste management, transportation, communications and other technical fields to gather more specific information.

The final phase consisted of drafting, amending and redrafting policies and strategies. The Citizen and Technical Advisory Committees met again with the consultants to review revised drafts. On June 12, 2000, a meeting was held in Hugo to present the Plan to the general public. Comments made at the public meeting led to minor amendments to the Plan document. On June 20, the Lincoln County Land Use Board held a public hearing to review the Plan and take testimony from the public. The Land Use Board voted 7-1 recommending the Board of County Commissioners adopt the Plan. On June 30, 2000, the Board unanimously approved adoption of the Plan.

## **HOW THE PLAN CAN BE USED**

The general purpose of this comprehensive plan is to provide guidance to decision-makers, residents and landowners on how to accomplish responsible growth and development throughout Lincoln County. The overall intent of the plan is to promote the health, safety and general welfare of all residents.



The plan is intended to serve as a guide, not just for the Board of County Commissioners and the Planning Commission, but for other county elected officials, appointed boards and commissions, department heads and staff.

The plan should be used whenever the county considers applications for development permits, proposed subdivisions, and variances. In addition, the plan can provide guidance to the County Commissioners and others when considering matters of public investment, capital improvements, and annual budgets.

Just as important, the comprehensive plan can serve as a tool to help all county residents in identifying, monitoring and managing programs and activities that influence the quality of life in Lincoln County

### **CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

It is important to emphasize that although the Comprehensive Plan is an important planning tool, the Planning Commission or County Commissioners are not legally bound to make decisions in conformance with it. The Plan is an advisory document, which, by its nature, does not impose zoning or land use permit restrictions. The Colorado Supreme Court has, on several occasions, recognized and emphasized the distinction between the advisory nature of comprehensive planning on the one hand, and the regulatory, binding nature of zoning on the other.

In one of the Court's leading decisions, *Theobald v. Board of County Commissioners of Summit County*, 644 P.2d 992 (Colo. 1982), the Court found that *"conceptually, a master plan is a guide to development rather than an instrument to control land use...on the other hand, it is the task of the legislative body charged with zoning to individually apply the broad planning policies to specific property, consistent with the public interest, and with notions of due process and equal protection."*

In other words, decisions made by the County Commissioners and others, regarding specific permit applications, do not necessarily have to be in conformance with the Plan. Because conditions and circumstances change over time, the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to maintain flexibility, as long as the intent of the Plan is adhered to. The citizens of the County, and those doing business in the County, should expect and deserve predictability. Therefore, it is the intent of the Board of County Commissioners to respect the spirit of the plan.



## **HOW DIFFERENT PLANNING DOCUMENTS RELATE**

### **The Comprehensive Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan identifies specific principles, policies and strategies that are intended to provide guidance and direction for existing and future land use. In addition, the Plan sets forth the general mission of the County and its various departments. The basic documents used by Lincoln County to carry out the policies and strategies of this Plan are the Zoning Resolution, the Land Subdivision Regulations and the County Budget.

### **The Zoning Resolution**

The Zoning Resolution is a regulatory document. It defines land use permit application procedures, identifies responsibilities, and defines standards and regulations pertaining to various land uses as well as non-conformance and enforcement procedures.

### **Land Subdivision Regulations**

Subdivision is the process by which land is divided or combined into parcels appropriate for development. For a variety of reasons, the public has a strong interest in how that is done. First, since developed land is bought and sold more often than raw undeveloped land, it is important that the location of the boundaries of each parcel is clearly defined, and the possibility for future mistakes in the legal description is minimized. Second, it is important that each lot offered for sale is large enough (or not too large) and adequately shaped for its intended use, and that it have access to the public road system. Third, the layout of lots offered for sale needs to make adequate provision for required parks, street rights-of-way, storm drainage areas, and utilities. By requiring landowners to prepare an official map of their land identifying the size and location of sites offered for sale and identifying the boundaries of each parcel for the public record, and by providing that the local government review, approve, and record that map in the public records, all of these interests can be achieved.

The Lincoln County Subdivision Regulations establish rules, regulations and standards governing the subdivision of land within the County. The regulations, required by the Colorado Revised Statutes, provide the Board of County Commissioners authority to review and approve the plans for creating building lots or parcels, less than 35 acres, and related streets and other public rights-of-way. The Regulations include design



standards for streets, sidewalks, lot sizes, easements, driveways, sanitary sewer, water supply and storm drainage.

### **The County Budget**

The County Budget sets forth the County's annual commitment to programs and policies. Much of the business that the County conducts is done pursuant to state or federal mandates, such as social service or health programs. However, there are some items in each budget for which the Commissioners and other elected officials have discretion. The Comprehensive Plan can serve as a guide to the Commissioners and those elected officials when deciding whether or not to fund particular programs.

## PROFILE OF LINCOLN COUNTY



## PROFILE OF LINCOLN COUNTY

### HISTORY

In The History of Lincoln County, Colorado, Laura Solze Claggett wrote:

*“Before this was known as Lincoln County by the white man the Indians (Cheyenne, Arapahoe and others) roamed the prairie that would eventually become home to many.*



*The tracks of the Kansas Pacific Railroad first reached this area on May 13, 1870. It was to be an important link between Kansas City and the Denver Pacific Railroad. The line would also continue to Wyoming where the tracks would join the Transcontinental Railroad.*

*The towns that began "popping" up along the route of the "Iron Horse" included Hugo, Genoa, Arriba, Limon and Boyero.*

*When the State of Colorado was first formed, present-day Lincoln County was incorporated into Elbert County.*

*With the passage of Senate Bill 106 of the 7th General Assembly of the State of Colorado on April 1 1889, Lincoln County was forced out of parts of Elbert and Bent Counties. Also formed by the same bill were Cheyenne, Kit Carson, Kiowa and Prowers Counties. All were allowed approximately the same number of square miles for a tax base. Lincoln was given 2,593 square miles in the shape of a reverse "L".*

*In the election of 1889 a total of 228 votes were cast to determine Hugo as the new county seat.”*

During the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, each of the towns in Lincoln thrived. Each had schools serving kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Businesses catered to residents and the surrounding farmers and ranchers. By 1930, the County’s population reached 7,850 people.

The decades to follow marked a steady decline not only in population, but in the local economies as well. Just like many other communities in Eastern Colorado, advancements in transportation made it easier to travel farther for goods and services. The growth of the Denver and Colorado Springs metropolitan areas began to tug on local economies and labor forces. When





Interstate 70 was constructed travelers no longer passed through the towns. Eventually, Arriba and Genoa each lost their schools. Businesses closed and many residents moved away. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the County's population declined each decade from 1950 to 1990. Nevertheless, each of the incorporated communities has survived.

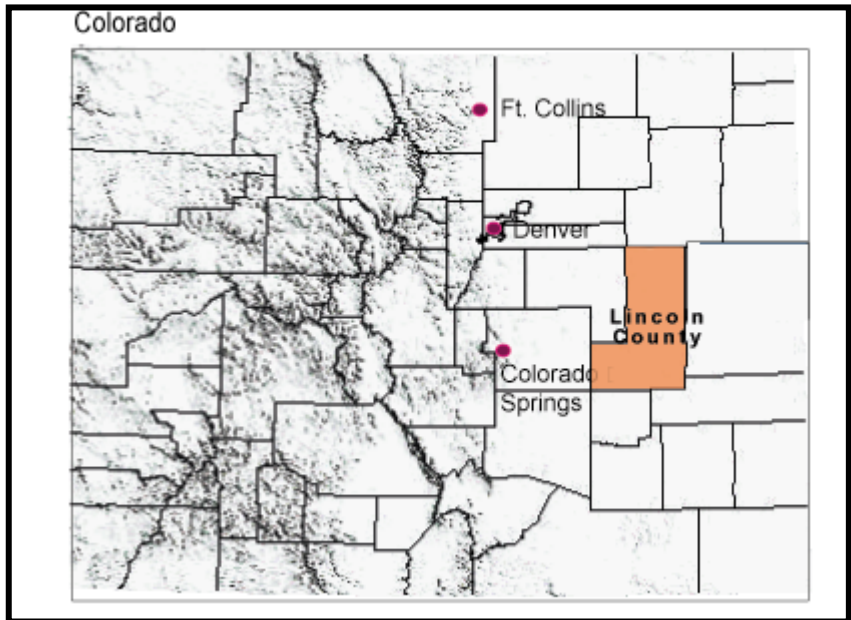
**THE SETTING**

Lincoln County is located in east central Colorado upon the western edge of the nation's Great Plains. The County contains 2,586 square miles or approximately 1,655,000 acres. Shaped like a reverse letter "L", the County is 71 miles from north to south, 30 miles east to west across the narrow portion of the "L" and 48 miles from east to west in the wider portion of the "L".

As the crow flies, Hugo, the county seat, lies approximately 90 miles from the center of the Denver metropolitan area and nearly 80 miles from downtown Colorado Springs. The Kansas state line is approximately 60 miles to the east. Neighboring counties include Washington County to the north, Kit Carson and Cheyenne Counties to the east, Kiowa and Crowley Counties to the south and El Paso and Elbert Counties to the west.

The major population settlements are in the incorporated towns of Arriba, Genoa, Hugo and Limon; as well as the unincorporated community of Karval.

Major transportation routes include Interstate 70/U.S. 24 which crosses the county east to west and U.S. Highway 40/287 which extends from Limon southeasterly along the Big Sandy through Hugo and then into Cheyenne County. State Highway 71 (North/South) and State Highway 94 (East/West) are other important secondary transportation corridors.



**LAND FORMS AND CLIMATE**





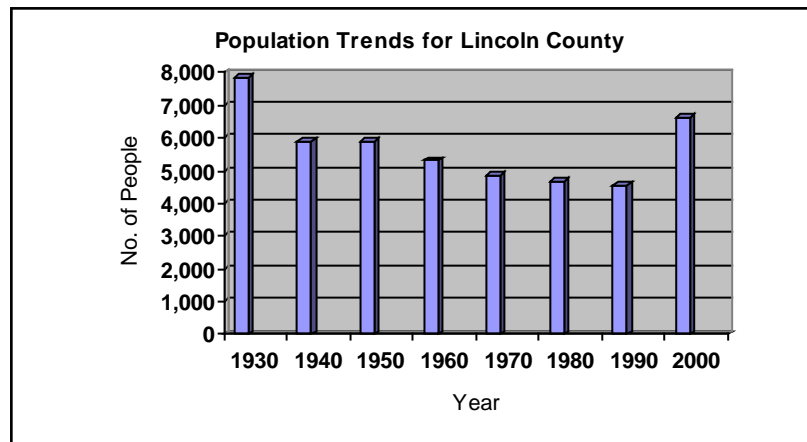
The 2,586 square miles is mostly gently rolling prairie, with several streams and creeks forming small valleys. Many of these streams are intermittent with water running only during the times of highest rain and snowfall. The most notable creek is the Big Sandy Creek that originates in El Paso County to the southwest. The Big Sandy flows southeasterly, through Limon and Hugo, into Cheyenne County, and eventually into the Arkansas River. Elevations range from approximately 5,900 feet along the western edge of the county to approximately 4,600 feet on the southeastern corner.



Grasses dominate the natural vegetation, with some wooded areas along the major drainage courses, ponds and reservoirs. The mean annual precipitation is approximately 12 inches.

### THE PEOPLE

The population of Lincoln County peaked in the 1930's when its residents numbered 7,850. By 1940 however, the number had dropped to 5,882 and steadily decreased for several decades. In 1990, the population had declined to 4,529 people.



Sources: US Census 1930-1990, Colorado Division of Local Government

The decade of the 1990's marked a dramatic increase in population. The State of Colorado's Department of Local Affairs estimated that by the Year 2000, the county's population was 6,631 people. It should be noted, however, that this figure includes approximately 950 prisoners. Such a population would rank Lincoln County 44th out of the 63 counties in Colorado. The increase from 1990 to the 2000 estimate constitutes a 46 percent increase, or an average annual growth rate of almost 5 percent in the past decade. However, when the prisoner population is discounted, the population increase is closer to 25 percent for the decade, or approximately 2.5 percent per year. Much of the new growth during the 1990's can be attributed to the opening of the Colorado State Correctional Facility south of Limon in 1991.

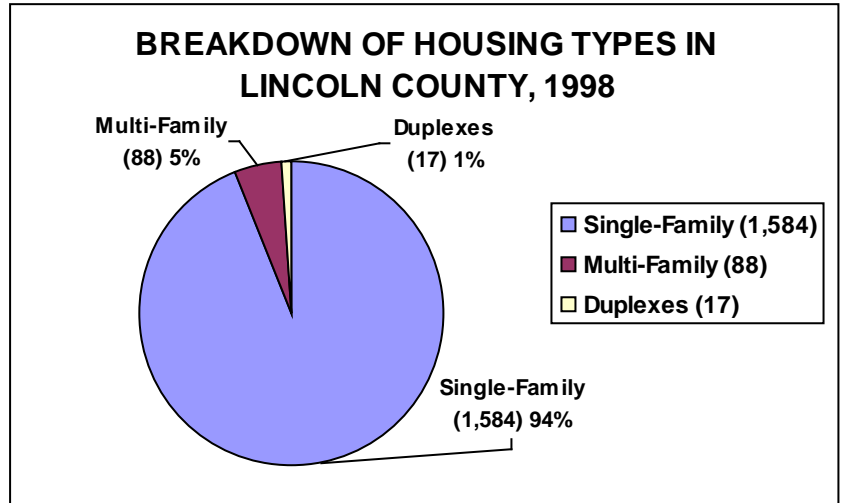
In 1990, Lincoln County's population was relatively older than the population statewide. According to the 1990 Census, the median age in Lincoln County was almost 37 years old compared to a median age of 32 for all of Colorado.



The majority of the County's population is white. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that in 1997, 89.7% of the population was white, 7.3% Hispanic and less than 3% African American, Native American or Asian/Pacific Islanders. As with age, these population characteristics are also affected by the prison population at the Limon Correctional Facility.

**HOUSING**

In 1998, Lincoln County had a total of 1,689 housing units. The overwhelming majority, 1,584, are single-family units. Eighty-eight of the



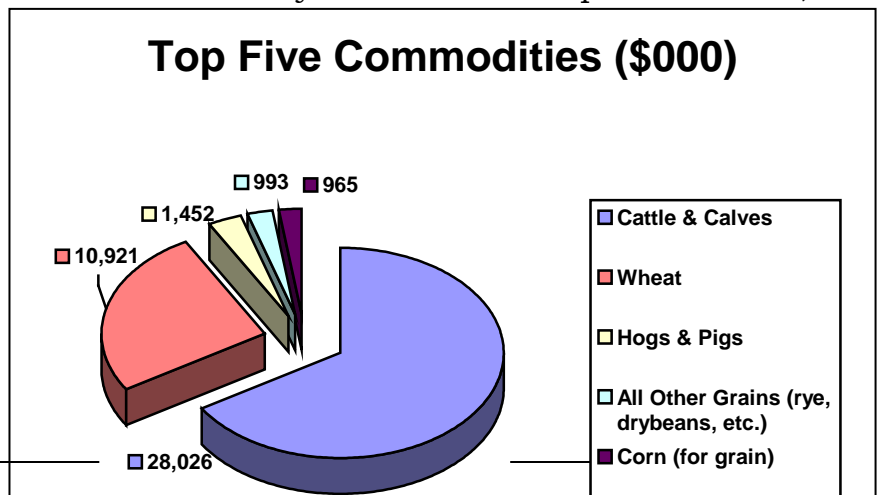
Source: Lincoln County and Community Matters, Inc.

dwelling units are multi-family and only 1%, or 17, are duplexes. Between 1988 and 1998 building permits were issued for a total of 104 new homes in unincorporated Lincoln County. The majority of the permits issued – 61 of the 104 – were for mobile or manufactured homes. In Limon, 138 permits were issued for the construction of new homes. Again the majority–107 of the 134– were for mobile or manufactured homes. This number is inflated due to the construction that occurred subsequent to the 1990 tornado. In the Town of Hugo, 51 permits were issued. Thirty of the 51 permits issued were for mobile or manufactured homes.

**ECONOMY**

Lincoln County's economy, like its culture and lifestyle, is comprised of the agricultural sector and the non-agricultural sector. For decades, agriculture was the foundation of Lincoln County's economic livelihood and remains an important element of the overall economy. In the last couple of decades, the tourist and commercial traffic along Interstate 70 has expanded retail sales, services and lodging.

The agricultural sector is based on the farms and





ranches that not only produce crops and livestock, but also depend on local suppliers for goods and services. Of the 1,655,000 acres in Lincoln County, 1,648,000 acres were devoted to farming and ranching in 1997. That same year the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated there were 467 farms and ranches in the county with an average farm size of nearly 3,530 acres. Individuals or families owned 386 of these farms, partnerships or corporations held 74, and 7 farms were held in an alternative form of ownership. Indicative of the fact that many farmers and ranchers must depend on other forms of principal income, 138 of the 386 farms were operated by those who declared other occupations as their primary source of income.

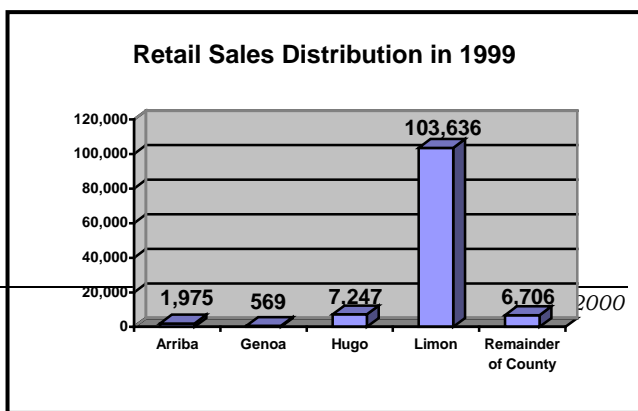
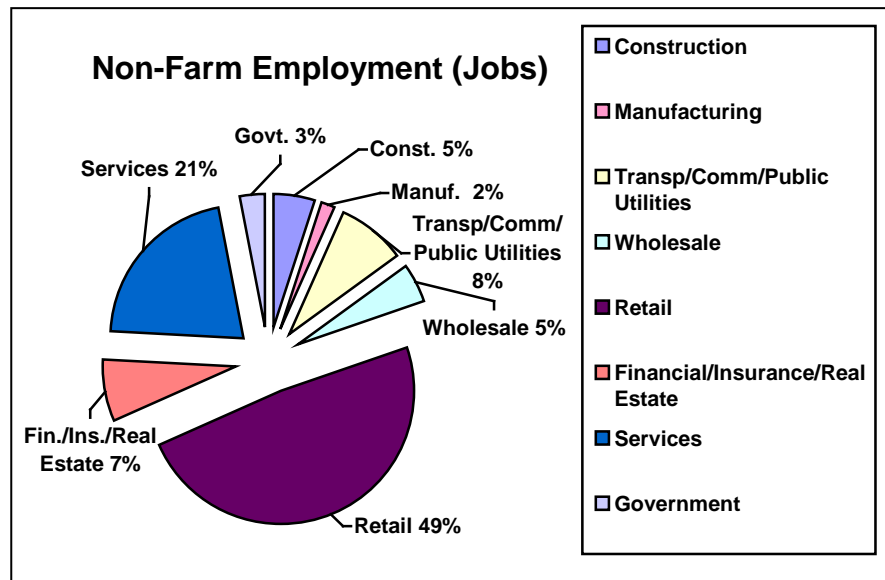
The market value of agricultural products sold in 1997 was \$44,773,000. The value of livestock sales accounted for 67 percent, or approximately \$30 million, of the total value. The primary livestock inventories include cattle and calves, sheep and lambs, and hogs and pigs. Crop sales, valued at nearly \$15 million, accounted for the remaining 33 percent. Crops produced in Lincoln County consist primarily of wheat, hay, corn, sorghum, and sunflower seeds.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture estimated that farms, ranches and agricultural related businesses contributed \$64 million in sales to Lincoln County's economy in 1992. Agri-business employed 506 people in 1992 and resulted in \$26 million in income.

The non-farm sector of Lincoln County's economy includes retail; government services; general services (including lodging, health and personal services); financial services;

transportation, communication and public utilities; wholesale trade; construction; agri-business and manufacturing. In 1997, these industries employed 1,894 people at an average wage of \$22,393.

Retail sales are another indicator of the strength of the local economy. The Colorado







Department of Revenue reports that in 1993 retail sales throughout the County were valued at \$99.7 million. Sales dipped in 1994 to \$97.47 million, but began to rise again in 1995 to \$101.7 million. By 1999, retail sales had risen to over \$120 million. The distribution of these sales throughout the County reveals the importance, and relative strength, of each municipality to the local economy. In 1999, 86 percent of all retail sales occurred in the Town of Limon. That same year, 6 percent of the total sales occurred in Hugo, 1.6 percent in Arriba, less than 1 percent in Genoa, and approximately 5.5 percent in the remaining unincorporated portion of the County. While the numbers suggest that Limon businesses generate an overwhelming majority of sales in the County, businesses in the other municipalities provide necessary services to their customers.

With a reasonably strong economy, 2,631 workers were employed in 1999, resulting in an unemployment rate of 1.5 percent.



### EDUCATION

In Lincoln County, the education attainment levels are similar to other counties in the region. The State Department of Local Affairs estimated nearly 36% of the population have a high school diploma, and 20% have attended college. Those with Bachelors Degrees account for nearly 10% of the population, and those with post-graduate degrees approximately 3%.

	<b>No High School Diploma</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Some College</b>	<b>Associates Degree</b>	<b>Bachelors Degree</b>	<b>Post Graduate Degree</b>
<b>Lincoln County</b>	25.5%	35.9%	20%	5.7%	9.7%	3.2%
<b>Region 5</b>	21.3%	35.2%	19.8%	7.3%	12.2%	4.3%
<b>Colorado</b>	15.6%	26.5%	24%	6.9%	18%	9%

Source: Colorado Division of Local Government

Seven public school districts serve Lincoln County:

- Arriba-Flagler (CSD20)
- Crowley (RE1J)
- Edison (54JT)



- Genoa-Hugo School District (C113)
- Karval School District (RE23)
- Limon School District (RE4J)
- Miami-Yoder (JT60)

The Limon, Genoa-Hugo, Karval and Arriba-Flagler school districts accommodate the majority of Lincoln County students. The size of each district and their respective enrollments in 1998 are shown in the table below.

<b>1998 Enrollment</b>	<b>Size of District (Sq. Miles)</b>	<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>Jr./Sr. High School</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Arriba-Flagler</b>	728	159	102	261
<b>Genoa-Hugo</b>	290	137	171	308
<b>Karval</b>	751	51	46	97
<b>Limon</b>	248	303	345	648

Source: Colorado Department of Education

Morgan Community College operates an off-campus center located in Limon. The College provides students with the opportunity to earn Associate of Arts Degrees, Associate of Science Degrees and certificates in specific programs. In 1999, twenty-three high school students from Genoa-Hugo are enrolled at the college, 45 high school students from Limon, and 50 adults in continuing education from Lincoln County.

## **LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT**

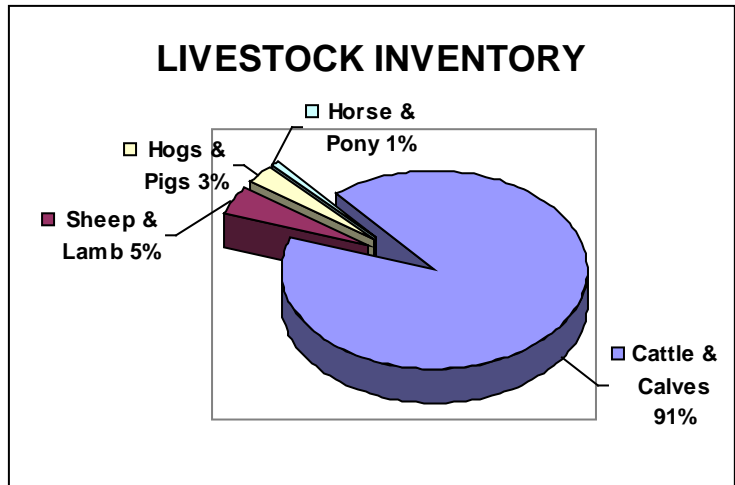




# LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

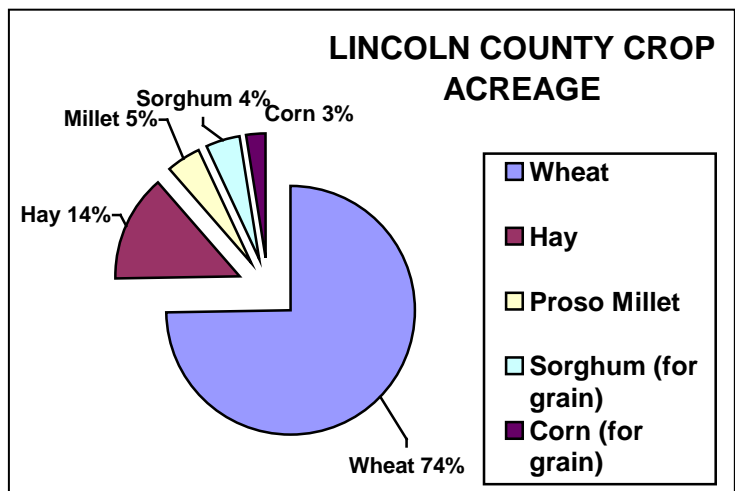
## EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS

Farms and ranches occupy over 99 percent of Lincoln County’s landscape. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s 1997 *Census of Agriculture* estimated that of the 1,655,000 acres in Lincoln County 1,648,000 acres were dedicated to farming and ranching. The remaining acreage includes non-farm residential, commercial, industrial and public uses.



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 1997

Although data was missing for 1997, the 1992 *Census of Agriculture* indicates that of all the land in agricultural use, 72 percent was used as pastureland and 28 percent as cropland. The pastureland supported the raising of livestock including cattle, sheep and swine. Major crops harvested in the County include wheat, hay, millet, sorghum and corn. Irrigated land was limited to only 4,500 acres in 1997, according to the *Census*. The average size of a farm or ranch in Lincoln County in 1997 was 3,530 acres.



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 1997

Colorado State Lands play an important role in Lincoln County’s land use pattern. The Existing Land Use Map on Page 15 reveals a “checkerboard” pattern of State Lands. State trust lands were given to

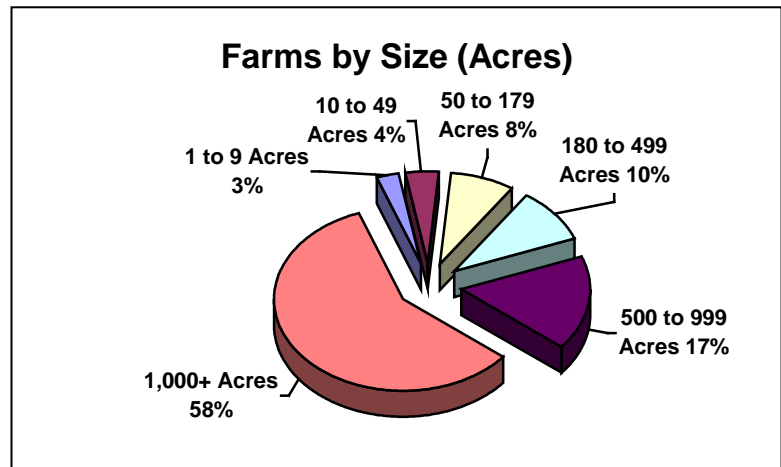


# **Insert 11x17 Existing Land Use Map**



the State of Colorado by the federal government in 1876. Most State lands in Lincoln County are leased to farmers and ranchers for crop production and grazing. Proceeds from these leases are used to support eight different state trusts, the largest of which benefits elementary and secondary education in the State of Colorado.

State lands are not “public” in the same way that lands owned by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are. According to the Colorado State Land Board, “unless a local or state agency or a private individual has come forward and offered to pay for the right to have recreational use of a particular piece of state trust land—and taken responsibility for managing that recreation—the land is just as off-limits to the public as a piece of private land.”



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 1997

### CHARACTERISTICS OF CHANGE

Rural America is always changing. Although Lincoln County is not facing the same tremendous growth pressures that its neighbors to the west are, changes are occurring. Changes in agricultural economics and operations have resulted in larger farms and ranches and fewer farmers and ranchers.

In some communities, fewer farms and ranches mean fewer families that shop for local goods and services. Fewer families also mean fewer school children. Some communities like Arriba and Genoa have seen significant declines in the number of businesses in town. Both Arriba and Genoa have lost their schools. In the last decade, some new housing units have been built in Arriba, Genoa and Hugo. Some of these new homes were built for new residents; others replaced existing units. Just like many of the communities in eastern Colorado, change is often marked by aging populations and declining local economies. Rather than land changing to more intense activities, some towns see the inventory of vacant lands and buildings increasing each year. The challenge of change for these communities is one of survival.



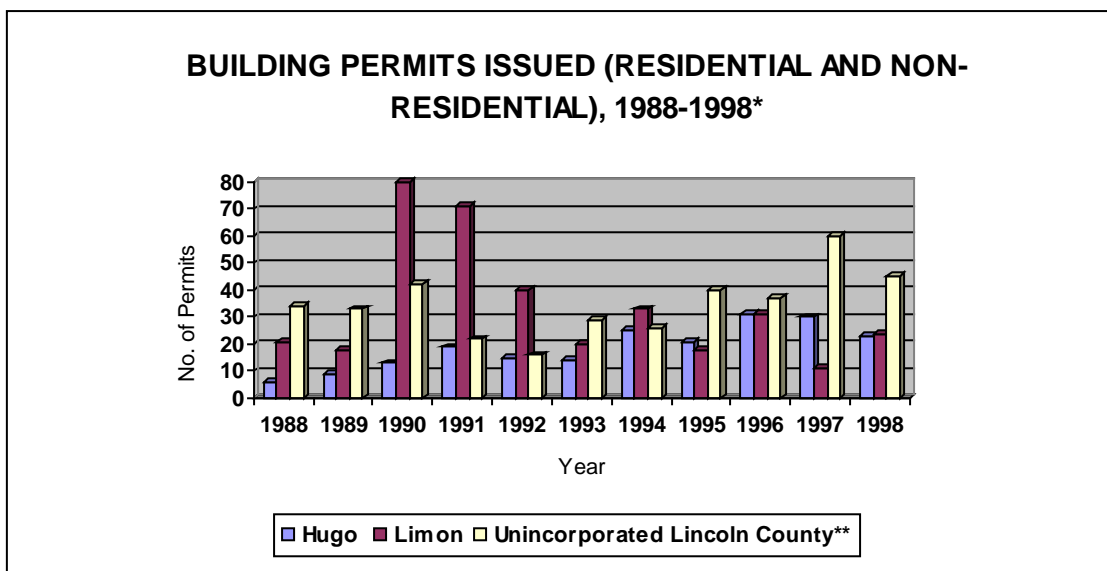
For other communities, like Limon, new industries move to town, resulting in new jobs, a demand for more housing, which in turn results in a demand for more private and public goods and services. This kind of change has been prompted by successful economic development efforts, such as the location of the new State Correctional Facility south of Limon.

A third characteristic of change in Lincoln County is the desire for lifestyle changes. As is happening throughout rural America, some people are moving to Lincoln County to “get away from it all”. The desire for wide-open spaces, quietness and fresh, clean air, prompts many to “escape” to country. With relatively low land costs, some find that they can buy several acres of land for the same price as a small urban lot.



This kind of change is occurring throughout a large part of neighboring Elbert County and is moving into Lincoln County, particularly in the area know as the “Lower L”.

One indicator of change is the number of building permits that have been issued in the county in the last few years. Currently, only Lincoln County, Hugo and Limon require and keep records of building permits.



Source: Lincoln County Administrator and Community Matters, Inc.

\*This represents all building permits issued including homes, mobile homes, home additions, agricultural buildings, garages/shops, commercial buildings, public/semi-public, misc.

\*\*The Towns of Genoa and Arriba do not issue building permits.



In the case of Limon, an extraordinarily high number of building permits was issued in 1990 and 1991. This was primarily due to the reconstruction necessary after the 1990 tornado. However, the remainder of the period shows a steady demand for new buildings, to serve and increase in demand for new housing and businesses, as well as improvements to existing structures.

## **THE IMPACT OF LAND USE CHANGES**

### **Demand for Services**

New development results in the need to provide new and expanded services. Throughout the County, where new residents and businesses move in, the demand for services is likely to increase. If the development occurs within the incorporated towns, the towns must provide most of the services, including street access and maintenance, water and sewer, and parks and recreation programs. Yet, even in the incorporated communities, new development can affect County services including health services, law enforcement, courts, solid waste disposal and general administration. When new development occurs outside incorporated areas, the County must also provide additional road maintenance and law enforcement, in addition to other general services.

### **Conflicting Land Uses**

New development can also result in conflicting land uses. Non-agricultural development, such as residential subdivisions, commercial or industrial uses can intrude on rural agricultural areas. Normal farming practices are often in conflict with the expectations of newer and more “urban” residents. This Plan attempts to minimize intrusion of non-agricultural development into agricultural areas. On the other hand, some intensive agricultural uses can have profound impacts on existing residents and businesses. Confined animal feeding operations, including hog farms and large cattle feedlots can have significant impacts on the quality of life and the environment. The Plan and related County zoning regulations attempt to minimize such conflicts.



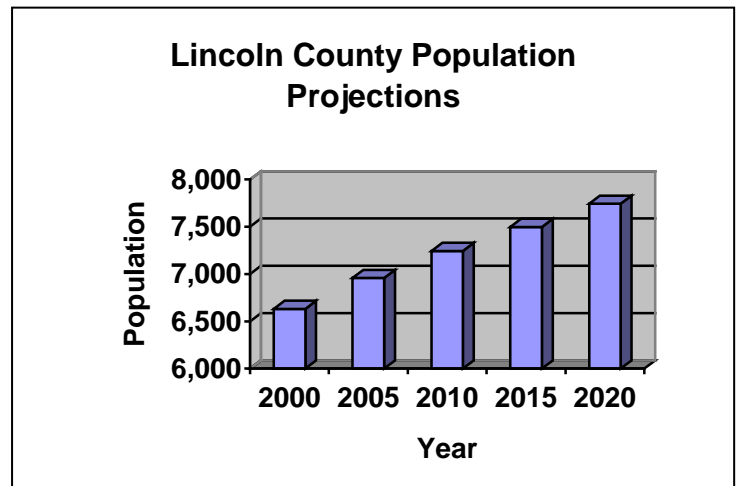


### Promoting Development

Good planning is not just about avoiding the potential negative impacts of development. It should also respect private property rights and balance them with the need to protect and promote the health, safety and welfare of all County residents. A plan should accommodate new development and promote opportunities for new businesses, jobs, housing and services. This Plan recommends where new development should be located and where it can best be served. The Plan promotes sound economic development while preserving the quality of life so many Lincoln County residents have come to enjoy.

### GROWTH PROJECTIONS

Decision-makers in both private business and government agencies often depend on projections to help them anticipate and prepare for the future. Two factors often used to estimate growth are population and jobs. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs has made population projections for Lincoln County to the Year 2020.



The Department projects the population will increase from an estimated 6,631 people in 2000 to 7,743 in 2020. This represents a gain of 1,112 people or almost 17 percent over the 2000 estimated population. On an annual basis, this would be equivalent to eight-tenths of one percent per year.

Regarding jobs, the State of Colorado has projected a similar growth rate in jobs in Lincoln County. There were an estimated 2,782 jobs in 2000. This number is expected to increase to 3,167 jobs in 2015. Such a

projection suggests a 13.8 percent increase in 15 years, or an annual increase of nine-tenths of one percent.



Projections, by their nature, are only estimates. There are a number of variables that will, in the end, affect actual growth. Some of these variables are:





- The strength and diversity of the local economy;
- The overall economic health of the Eastern Colorado Plains Region, including the agricultural economy;
- The County's ability to maintain a competitive labor force;
- The "purchasing power" of existing and new residents for goods, services and housing;
- The average age of the future population;
- Birth and death rates of the population;
- The ability of the County and its communities to attract and retain retail and professional services;
- The ability to maintain an effective transportation network, especially roads and highways;
- The ability to improve and maintain a state of the art telecommunications network;
- The amount and type of development that the private sector considers viable and invests in;
- The quantity and quality of the groundwater supply;
- The future expansion of major employers, including the State Correctional Facility;
- The nature of development in neighboring counties, especially El Paso and Elbert, and the degree of "spill-over" into Lincoln County.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LAND USE PLAN MAP AND THE LAND USE CATEGORIES**

The following describes the recommended future land use categories depicted on the Land Use Plan Map on Page 22.

### **General Agriculture**

The **General Agricultural Area** is the predominant land use area in the County at the present time and will be well into the future. This area includes all agriculture uses including crop and livestock production, processing and storage. Some uses, such as concentrated animal feeding operations may be subject to further review and permitting by the County or State of Colorado. Intensive non-agricultural uses are discouraged in this area. Rural residential and limited commercial and industrial development may occur in this area subject to the Lincoln County Zoning Resolution. (See Rural Design Development Overlay)





### **Municipal Planning Influence Area**

The **Municipal Planning Influence Area** is an area that generally extends three miles around each incorporated municipality in the County. Land uses and related activities that occur within this area are likely to have an impact, positive or negative, on the adjacent town. Therefore, the County shall refer all land use changes in the area to the affected municipality for its review and comment. The County should give full consideration to such comments and require appropriate mitigation measures to limit undesirable impacts on the town/city.

This area is also intended to serve as a buffer area between intensive agricultural activities and more intense residential and commercial/industrial uses within each town or community. Lower intensity agricultural uses such as general crop production and open grazing are generally encouraged in this area. The Land Use Board and the Board of County Commissioners, in accordance with the Rural Design Development Overlay District may consider rural residential and limited commercial/industrial uses in these areas. More intensive agricultural activities, such as Confined Animal Feeding Operations are discouraged.

### **Future Town Growth Area**

The **Future Town Growth Area**, if established by a town, identifies those areas around a community that may be suitable for annexation and development in the future. (See an illustrative example of the Planning Influence Area and the Town Growth Area on Page 23. These growth areas also include existing incorporated areas of each municipality. Most non-agricultural uses are encouraged to locate within the Town or City Growth Areas. If non-agricultural development does occur in these Growth Areas, it should be served by municipal services, such as water, sewer, streets, etc. Public services may be extended as determined by each respective town board.

### **Drainageway Buffers**

Future Land Use Plan map depicts general corridors along perennial and intermittent drainageways. These corridors do not suggest actual 100-year floodplain boundaries. However, if development is proposed near these corridors, appropriate analysis and care should be undertaken to protect the corridors.

### **State Lands**

Trust lands owned by the State of Colorado, most leased to farmers and ranchers for crop production and grazing.

### **State Wildlife Areas**

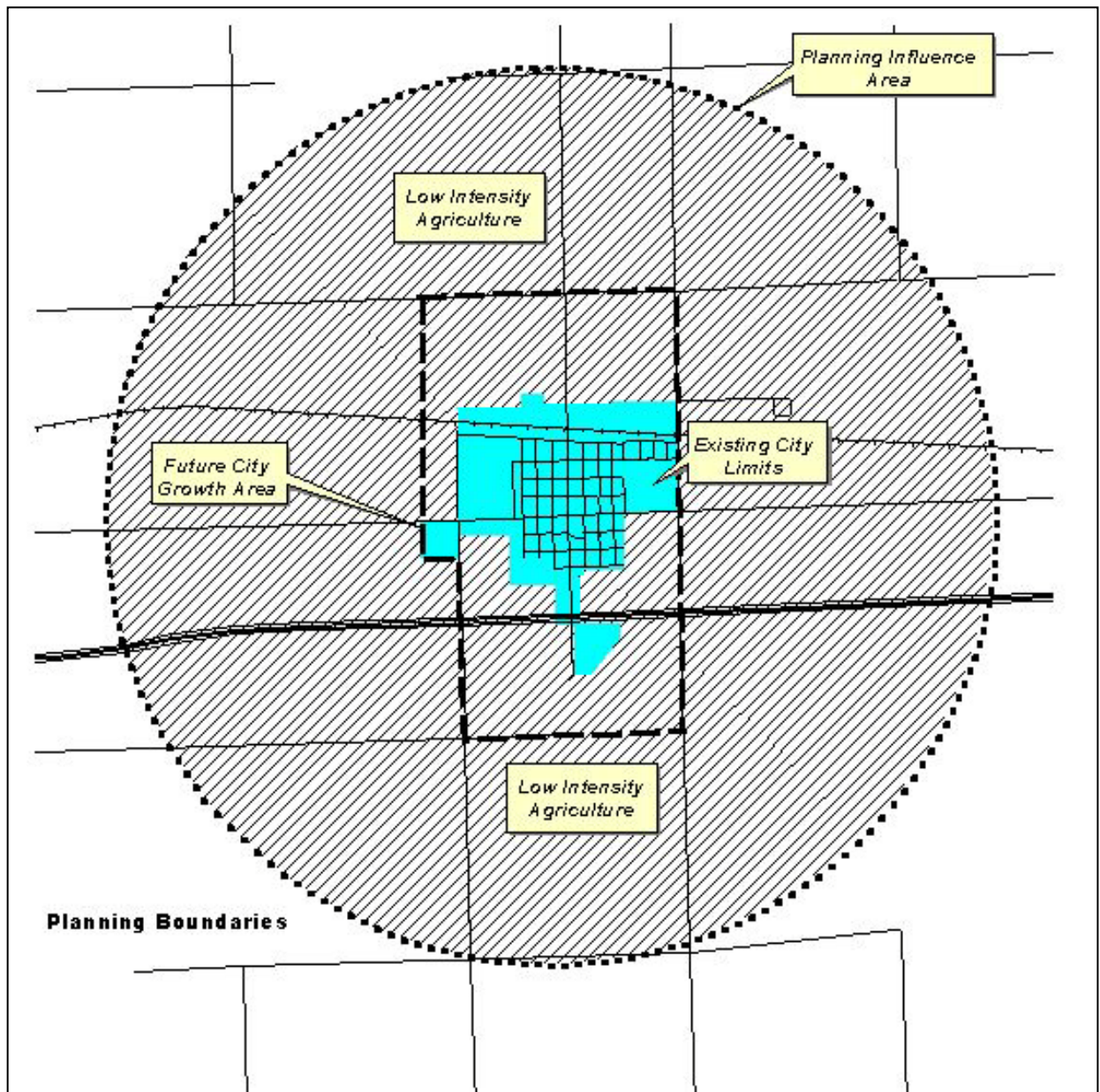
Wildlife and recreation areas owned and maintained by the Colorado Division of Wildlife.



**Insert 11x17 Land Use Map Here.**



## ILLUSTRATION OF PLANNING AREAS AROUND MUNICIPALITIES





## **LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

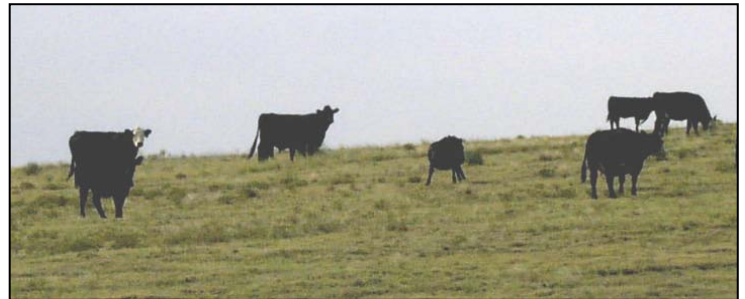
### **Agriculture and Rural Development**

#### **Goal**

**Maintain and enhance the viability of the County's agricultural resources, economy and lifestyle.**

#### **Strategies**

1. Maintain the integrity of agricultural areas throughout the County, by minimizing the intrusion of non-agricultural uses into agricultural areas.
2. Work closely with and support agencies and organizations that provide political, technical and financial support to the agricultural industry to promote sound agricultural practices. These include, but are not limited to, the Colorado State University's Extension Service, Soil Conservation Districts, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Farm Bureau, Farmers Union, the Cattlemen's Association, the Wheat Growers Association, Pork Producers and Wool Growers.



3. Consider the adoption of a "right to farm and ranch" policy that asserts the County's commitment to all new and existing agricultural operations and helps protect farmers and ranchers from nuisance lawsuits when they operate in a non-negligent manner.
4. Work with local chambers of commerce and actively pursue industry that supports the local agricultural economy.
5. Encourage efforts to improve the marketing of local agricultural products.



6. Encourage most non-agricultural land uses, including non-farm residential, commercial and industrial, to locate within existing municipalities or their identified growth areas where public services are available. Some proposed industrial and commercial uses might be good for the local economy; however, they may be so intense that they overwhelm the quality of life in a small town. The Land Use Board, the County Commissioners and the respective municipalities should carefully consider locating such uses where they can benefit from available access and utilities, but at the same time minimize impacts on the existing community and surrounding agricultural areas.
7. Encourage development patterns that foster agricultural land uses and protect the area's rural character.
8. Allow agricultural businesses related to ranching, livestock production and farming to locate outside of municipalities or their Town Growth Areas.
9. Promote a healthy agricultural community by supporting efforts to strengthen the agricultural economic base.
10. Adopt and publish a Lincoln County "Code of the West" that informs citizens, both new and old, about the nature of living in a rural area. (See Appendix)
11. Work with landowners to preserve and enhance significant agricultural land and natural resource areas.
12. Establish buffer zones between intensive agricultural uses, such as confined animal feeding operations (CAFO's), and non-agricultural uses.
13. For intensive agricultural uses, such as CAFO's, the County will require compliance with all applicable state and local regulations.
14. Intensive agricultural uses should be located in areas that will minimize the impacts of ground and surface water contamination, odor, noise, pests, lighting, dust, and unsightly buildings.







## Goal

**Accommodate limited rural residential development, outside of incorporated towns, in a manner that minimizes impacts on agriculture and the County's natural resources.**

## Strategies

1. Require new development in rural areas to be designed in such a manner that maintains the open character of rural areas and protects agricultural uses and environmentally sensitive lands.
2. Discourage development from locating within major drainage corridors.
3. Encourage structures to be located on the least fertile and least environmentally sensitive lands.
4. Adopt land use regulations with policies, standards and procedures that promote the clustering of residential development. The policies, standards and procedures should address site planning criteria, minimum open space requirements, methods of preserving open space and a density bonus system for rewarding good design.



## Municipal Growth and Development

### Goal

**Encourage and accommodate new residential, commercial and industrial development, while ensuring such development occurs in an orderly and responsible manner.**





## Strategies

1. Residential, commercial and industrial uses should be located where the impacts of the development can be avoided or minimized.
2. Most residential, commercial and industrial uses should be located within existing towns where municipal services are available.
3. Some commercial and industrial uses may be so large and intense, that the best way to minimize impacts on existing communities is to locate them outside existing town limits. The County and the respective town(s) should consider locating such large-scale uses in areas where impacts can be minimized. Annexation by the appropriate town is encouraged in order to assure the adequate provision of public services.



4. The County encourages each incorporated town to identify future Town Growth Areas (TGA's). These areas should be within existing municipal boundaries, or future annexation areas, and are deemed suitable for new development. Such development areas should be based on each town's ability to provide new development with water, sewer, local streets and other municipal services.
5. The conversion of land outside a Town Growth Area from agriculture to residential, commercial or industrial should be allowed only if adequate services can be provided and impacts minimized, pursuant to the County Land Use Resolution.
6. If a municipality establishes a Town Growth Area, the County will negotiate an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the respective town. Such agreement should establish how land planning and development would be coordinated and processed, as well as how, and under what circumstances, services will be extended.
7. Each Town is encouraged to adopt a policy that requires new development to occur in areas contiguous to existing development, thereby avoiding inefficient "leap-frog" development patterns.
8. If a municipality approves development or public facilities that extend into agricultural areas, the negative impacts on existing





agriculture should be considered and minimized through appropriate measures adopted by the municipality.

## Residential Development

### Goal

**Encourage and accommodate a mix of quality residential housing types, densities and affordability.**

### Strategies

1. Welcome builders and contractors who want to build quality housing in Lincoln County and its incorporated municipalities.
2. The County encourages and supports private initiatives to provide quality and affordable housing throughout the County.
3. To protect residential subdivisions, new non-residential development should construct buffer areas between incompatible uses, using landscaping buffers, berming, fencing and other site design techniques.
4. Administer building code standards and a permit process and assure that they are applied uniformly throughout the County.
5. New residential subdivisions should be located in close proximity to commercial services and community facilities, such as shopping, schools, and recreational facilities.
6. Exemptions from subdivision regulations for parcels less than 35 acres is generally discouraged.
7. Residential development in the unincorporated area of the County may be approved if it meets the criteria established in the County's Zoning Resolution.





8. Residential development on parcels less than 5 acres is encouraged to be on public water and sewer. Individual domestic wells and Individual Sewage Disposal Systems are discouraged on residential lots less than 5 acres.
9. The County supports the provision of housing that serves both the disadvantaged and the disabled, including affordable housing, housing for the elderly and assisted living.
10. New residential development should not be approved until adequate public services, e.g. water, sewer and street access are either in place, or guaranteed by the developer to be provided, prior to occupancy.

## Commercial and Industrial Development

### Goal

**Encourage the support and retention of existing businesses while promoting the expansion and diversification of the commercial and industrial economic base.**

### Strategies

1. Encourage new commercial and industrial development to locate within existing towns where adequate public services can be provided.
2. Each municipality is encouraged to identify areas suitable for new commercial and industrial development.
3. Endorse programs that support the improvement and retention of existing businesses throughout the County.
4. Promote the expansion of commercial uses that will serve the existing and future population.
5. Encourage new commercial and industrial development that will provide a variety of skilled employment opportunities, including jobs that pay above minimum wage.





6. The County and each Town should adopt and administer reasonable regulations that will help minimize the impacts of new commercial and industrial development on existing development.

## Economic Development

### Goal

**Retain existing businesses and attract new businesses that will serve the needs of residents, strengthen the local tax base and provide a wide range of employment opportunities.**

### Strategies

1. The County should adopt and administer reasonable land use regulations that are protective of the public health, safety and welfare, and yet accommodate and promote viable businesses.
2. Work closely with each of incorporated towns, the local chambers of commerce, the State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs, the State Economic Development Commission, the Eastern Colorado Council of Governments, the Resource Conservation District and other public and private organizations to actively pursue economic development.
3. Support programs that assist rural communities with development and that foster sustainable rural communities, such as enterprise zones, incentives and credits for rural businesses and rural economic development councils.
4. Support appropriate staffing and funding of the local agency of the Colorado State University Cooperative Extension program.
5. Continue to support the "School to Career Program" at the middle and high school grade levels.
6. Support continuing educational programs, forums and classes, in which the skills obtained might enhance local industries and potential industries. Ensure that these educational opportunities are available during the day and at night and to persons of all abilities and income levels.



7. Encourage and support small businesses in the community to increase convenience, to minimize the 'leakage' of consumer dollars to other business areas, and to provide more employment opportunities in the County.
8. Work with businesses and residents to identify and pursue opportunities to bring new businesses in to the County that offer a wider range of basic goods and services.
9. Strive to keep lines of communication open with the business community.
10. The County supports a strong partnership between the County, the towns, the state and private business and industry in the design and implementation of economic development incentives and programs.

## PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES



## PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

### Issues

Residents of Lincoln County are dependent on a number of local public services and related facilities. As the County's population changes, increasing in some areas and decreasing in others, the demand for these services changes as well. Because many government services and facilities are expensive, and funding is limited, the proper allocation, maintenance and expansion of services are important.



In addition to the provision and maintenance of roads and bridges (see Transportation Chapter), the primary services provided by Lincoln County include sheriff and jail facilities, court facilities and services, health and human services, and solid waste disposal. The municipal governments of Arriba, Genoa, Hugo and Limon and Special Districts also provide many local "urban" services including water and sewer, police, fire protection, education and parks and recreation. Mountain View Electric Association, Inc., K.C. Electric and the Southeast Colorado Power Association provide electricity throughout the County. Peoples Natural Gas provides natural gas to customers in the County. Telephone service is provided by US West/Qwest, the Eastern Slope Rural Telephone Association, and the El Paso County Telephone Company.

Even though the County is not responsible for many of the local services and facilities, land use decisions the County makes affect these services.

### GENERAL SERVICES

#### Goal

**Encourage the provision and maintenance of an adequate system of public services and facilities that will serve existing and future development.**





## Strategies

1. New development should only be approved when and if adequate public services and facilities are in place or can be improved to meet the new demand.
2. New development should not overburden existing services and facilities at the detriment of existing residents.
3. New development should pay its “fair share” of the extension or installation of new services and facilities.
4. Development that will require higher levels of “urban” services, such as water and sewer, police and fire protection, is encourage to locate within the municipalities that provide such services.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Lincoln County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement in Lincoln County. In 2000, the Department's law enforcement staff included the Sheriff and four deputies. The County Sheriff's Department maintains the County Jail in Hugo. The jail has the capacity to hold 35 inmates. Police departments in Hugo and Limon provide municipal police protection.



## Strategies

1. Ensure that reasonable law enforcement protection services and response times are maintained.
2. New development proposals should be evaluated for adequate service, including access for emergency vehicles and reasonable response times.
3. The County encourages community groups and new development to participate in crime prevention programs such as Neighborhood Watch and Operation I.D.





## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

1. The County supports state reimbursement for all locally administered state public and environmental health programs.
2. The County encourages the State of Colorado to adequately fund local public health programs.
3. The County opposes new local public and environmental health mandates without adequate funding.
4. The County opposes shifting responsibility and liability from the private sector, or other levels of government, to county government.
5. The County supports a stable, long-term funding source for statewide poison control information services.
6. The County advocates 100 percent reimbursement from the state to the county to administer the food stamp, Medicaid and other adult assistance programs.
7. The County supports effective child support enforcement practices and holding parents responsible for the support of their minor children.
8. The County recognizes that the primary responsibility for children lies with parents and that governmental intervention is only appropriate in those circumstances where the physical, mental or emotional health of the child or the safety of the community is threatened.
9. The County supports the rights of children to reside in a safe environment and to be free from physical, mental and emotional harm and that all actions taken are in the best interests of the child.

## **LANDFILLS AND WASTE DISPOSAL**

1. Landfills shall be managed to assure the following minimal operating principles are achieved:
  - Maintain or develop adequate visual buffers, with natural landscape features.





- Minimize disturbance of groundcover on the landfill at all times.
  - Develop and implement a site reclamation plan.
  - Implement site design and operation procedures to accommodate reuse of the site.
  - Inform all operators of their responsibility for methane, hazards, odor, noise, dust, and litter from on site or off-site, safety and security.
  
  - Assure that only wastes approved for a given landfill are accepted at such landfill.
2. The County will coordinate and oversee the placement of any landfills or other proposed disposal sites. Any sites that are not environmentally sound shall be avoided.
  3. Proposed landfills must meet the following minimum criteria:
    - Contamination of surface and groundwater through natural drainage, flooding or infiltration shall be avoided.
    - Landfill locations and operations must be compatible with surrounding land uses.
    - Adequate buffer areas should be established.
    - Any geologic hazards shall be avoided.
    - Adequate vehicular access must be provided.
    - Access routes to the landfill shall not pass through residential neighborhoods.
  4. Landfills should be designed as state-of-the-art facilities that provide multiple levels of protection to assure long-term isolation of waste from the environment.
  5. All efforts should be made to site landfills in areas where adjoining land uses will not be negatively impacted.
  6. All new landfill applications shall conform to all applicable federal, state and local rules and regulations.
  7. The County should evaluate the pattern of where waste is generated and how it is transported to the existing County Landfill. Transfer stations should be considered in areas where trash pickup service is inadequate.



## SERVICES PROVIDED BY OTHERS

### FIRE PROTECTION

Fire protection is provided by volunteer fire departments of Genoa, Hugo, Karval, Limon, the Northeast Lincoln Fire District and the Tri-County Fire District.

#### Strategies

1. The County will continue to work with each of the providers of fire protection to assure that adequate services are provided throughout the County.
2. New development should only be approved when adequate fire protection can be substantiated.
3. The County should coordinate with the various fire departments and fire districts and support their efforts to provide cost-effective fire protection for all residents and businesses.
4. The County encourages coordination between the various fire department and fire protection districts in such areas as service calls, communication, equipment and training.
5. Both existing and new development is expected to assure adequate water quantity and pressure for fire protection.
6. Higher intensity land uses, such as high density residential, commercial or industrial, should be located in areas where a public water delivery system is in place.

### WATER AND SANITATION

Throughout the majority of unincorporated Lincoln County, potable water is provided by individual wells. Sanitary sewer service is limited to individual sewage disposal systems, or septic systems. The installation and maintenance of these systems are the responsibility of individual homeowners or businesses.

Public water and sewer facilities are provided by the incorporated Towns of Arriba, Genoa, Hugo and Limon. Generally these services are limited



to the incorporated jurisdiction of each town. However, in the case of Limon, the Town does serve the unincorporated area “South Limon”. The unincorporated community of Karval has a public water delivery system and individual septic systems for sewage disposal.

**Strategies**

- 1. Well permits shall be acquired prior to development in the unincorporated area of the County, unless an agreement is in place to acquire service from a public system.
- 2. Individual sewage disposal systems must be designed and installed, according to State and County health regulations, unless sewer service is available through a public system.

**PARKS AND RECREATION**

Various local municipalities provide Parks and recreation facilities and services.

In addition, the Colorado Division of Wildlife maintains State Wildlife Areas (SWA’s) near Karval and Hugo. The Karval SWA includes 235 acres of land and surface water. Hunting is permitted in season at Karval, limited to deer, rabbit, scaled quail, dove, and waterfowl. Fishing and limited boating is permitted in the warm water reservoir. Camping and wildlife observations are also accommodated. The Hugo SWA consists of two tracts. The Kinney Lake tract includes approximately 320 acres and the Klingsmith tract encompasses 2,240 acres. Hunting of deer, antelope, rabbit, dove and waterfowl is permitted in season. Warm water fishing is available at both sites. Boating on the Kinney Lake is limited to craft propelled by hand, air or electric motor. Boating is not allowed on the Klingsmith Lakes.

**Strategies**

- 1. Encourage the location of park, recreation and open space areas in floodplain, wetlands and non-productive agricultural areas.
- 2. Cooperate with local, state and federal agencies to identify, conserve, and protect fish and wildlife habitat areas.





3. The private sector, non-county agencies and other governmental jurisdictions are encouraged to participate in open space preservation.
4. The County should encourage a balanced and readily accessible program of recreation and facilities for all ages, income levels and cultural backgrounds with special emphasis on programs and facilities for youth.
5. Each municipality in the County is encouraged to provide adequate park and recreation facilities to existing and future residents.
6. The County will support efforts of each municipality in acquiring state or federal grants for park and recreation programs and improvements.
7. New development is encouraged to preserve prominent landscape features such as streams, drainage-ways, lakes, ridges, meadows and tree stands and incorporate these features into a private or public open space network.



## EDUCATION

Primary and secondary education in Lincoln County is provided by seven independent public school districts. These include:

- Arriba-Flagler (CSD20)
- Crowley (RE1J)
- Edison (54JT)
- Genoa-Hugo School District (C113)
- Karval School District (RE23)
- Limon School District (RE4J)
- Miami-Yoder (JT60)



The majority of school-aged students from Lincoln County attend Limon, Genoa-Hugo, Arriba-Flagler, and Karval schools.

Morgan Community College operates an off-campus center located in Limon. The College provides students with the opportunity to earn





Associate of Arts Degrees, Associate of Science Degrees and certificates in specific programs.

While Lincoln County does not provide educational services, it can and should be supportive of general school programs.

**Strategies**

1. The County and each municipality should require measures to ensure that adequate public educational facilities are provided concurrent with new development. These measures could include dedicated school sites, cash-in-lieu of sites or innovative school agreements to facilitate financing of school construction.



2. Efforts to establish public and private higher-education facilities in the County, including academic institutions, vocational-technical schools, and continuing education programs in the County are encouraged.

**COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES**

The quality of life for many residents, and the continued success of economic development efforts, is dependent on maintaining a state-of-the-art telecommunications network. Telecommunications services are provided by a number of private companies. Although the County is not responsible for the provision of these services, it encourages the provision of quality service to all residents and businesses.

**Strategies**

1. The County supports efforts to upgrade communication systems throughout the County.
2. Support the implementation of the goals and strategies outlined in “A Strategic Telecommunications Plan for Eastern Colorado, March 2000”.
3. The County will work with municipalities, private organizations and public agencies to promote the extension of “state of the art” communication systems, including high speed Internet access, to all





users in the County.

4. The County will continually assess the existing telephone and electrical services to all residents of Lincoln County and urge phone and electric companies to continue to maintain a high level of service.
5. The County supports the expansion of cellular communication systems throughout the County.
6. The County should monitor the effectiveness of the National Weather Service storm warning system and promote improvements, as necessary. The County should assist in notifying and educating all County residents about the availability of this warning system.



## TRANSPORTATION



## TRANSPORTATION

The transportation network in Lincoln County consists of a series of highways, roads and streets; an airport and freight rail.

### THE ROAD NETWORK

The Colorado Department of Transportation, Lincoln County and each incorporated municipality manage a vast network of highways and roads. The network consists of Interstate 70, arterials, collectors and local roads.

**Interstate 70** serves a multi-state region and is designed to carry the highest volumes of traffic at the highest speeds. To accommodate these volumes and speeds, an interstate freeway has wide traffic lanes and access is restricted to a limited number of interchanges. Thirty miles of Interstate 70, crosses the county along an east-west alignment, carrying both passenger and freight traffic. In 1996, the average annual daily traffic on I-70 was approximately 7500 vehicles. Traffic volumes are higher in the summer months during the tourist season, and lower during the non-tourist months.

**U.S. 40/287** is the major north-south arterial through the County. This highway carries an average annual daily traffic volume of nearly 2200 vehicles.

**Other Arterial Roads** connect major communities throughout the region. Arterials carry the highest traffic volumes and the longest trips. Arterials are typically composed of two to four through lanes, with passing and turn lanes. Access to abutting land is subordinate to the provision of travel service and therefore some access control is desirable. In addition the U.S.40/287, key arterials in the County include U.S. Highway 24 and State Highways 71 and 94.

**Collector Roads** serve a similar purpose as arterials, but are more limited. Collectors carry traffic from one portion of the County to another and connect local streets and roads to arterials. Access onto a collector road is more frequent. Many of the county roads serve as collectors throughout the County.

**Local Streets** provide direct access to adjacent land and access to the higher classified roads. Local streets offer the





lowest level of mobility. Through traffic is deliberately discouraged. Most local streets are owned and maintained by the various municipalities in the County.

**COUNTY ROADS**

Lincoln County maintains approximately 1,460 miles of county roads. Most of these roads are all weather surfaced. The predominant surfacing is gravel, with a few miles of paved or oiled County Roads. Lincoln County, like most rural counties in the region and the state, is faced with the challenge of provided county road access in sparsely populated areas. The high cost of surfacing and maintenance requires the County to rely primarily on gravel-surfaced roads. While some residents may prefer paved or oiled roads, the cost of providing such surfaces is not economical and cannot be supported by the County’s limited tax base

**LIMON AIRPORT**

The only publicly maintained airport in the County is located just northeast of Limon. The airport lies at an elevation of 5365 feet (1635 m) and has a 4,700-foot by 60-foot concrete runway. The airport is owned and managed by the Town of Limon.



**FREIGHT RAIL**

Two freight railroads serve Lincoln County. The Union Pacific operates its Salina mainline connecting Denver to points east in Kansas. In 1996, UP carried 3.35 million gross tons of freight between Denver and Limon and 2.64 million gross tons between Limon and the Kansas border. The line serves many of the grain shippers throughout Eastern Colorado.



The Kyle Railroad is a short-line railroad carrying grain and merchandise from Limon, Genoa and Arriba into Kansas City and Wichita. Operating over the former Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company line, the Kyle Railroad provides service 5 days per week on average. Approximately 80 percent of its carloads (5,000 to 8,000 carloads per year) carry grain.



## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

The Outback Express is a part time public transit service offered by the East Central Council of Governments. The transit system provides service throughout Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson and Lincoln counties as well as limited service to Denver and Colorado Springs for medical and essential shopping purposes. The service is funded by a combination of federal grants, local government support and minimal fares.



### **Transportation Strategies**

1. The County should aggressively encourage the Colorado Department of Transportation to plan for and fund improvements to the entire segment of Interstate 70 through the County. In particular, improvements from Limon to the eastern county line should be promoted and adopted as part of the state highway improvement program.
2. The U.S. 40/287 corridor is essential to the movement of goods and services through Lincoln County. The County will continue to work with the Colorado State Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to assure that the corridor remains a key element in the regional transportation network.
3. Colorado Highways 71 and 94 are critical to the road network in the region. The County should encourage the Colorado Department of Transportation to fund improvements to these two corridors.
4. The County should strive to maintain, and improve where necessary, its County road network.
5. All weather road surfaces shall be provided throughout the system. However, due to the high cost of pavement, the County will attempt to provide the most cost-effective surfacing and maintenance program as possible. In most areas, surfacing will be limited to gravel. Paved or oiled roads will only be provided where traffic volumes and patterns warrant them.





6. Developments that create the need for road improvements are expected to bear the cost of such improvements.
7. If new development creates off-site impacts on the County road network, the County may require mitigation of those impacts, e.g. widening or resurfacing.
8. The County should discourage development in areas where significant traffic impacts will occur to already overburdened highways or roads, until provisions are made for necessary improvements.
9. In areas of intense development, the County should consolidate and limit access points along major County Roads.
10. The County supports the concept of a major north-south transportation corridor that will connect ports along the Gulf of Mexico to producers and shippers throughout the Central and Northern Great Plains.
11. The County should continue to aggressively seek and obtain its share of state and federal road funds.
12. The County should work with property owners to develop “living” snow fences or windbreaks where conditions exist that might create road hazards because of blowing snow.
13. Airports and traffic pattern airspace should be maintained and upgraded as a vital part of the County transportation system.
14. Land around the Limon Airport should be developed in a manner compatible with the airport. Uses that might benefit from air service are encouraged around the airport. Uses that might conflict with airport operations should be prohibited. (See the Airport Overlay District in the County Zoning Resolution)
15. The County supports the efforts of the Colorado Department of Transportation to maintain freight rail service throughout eastern Colorado.
16. The County will continue to support, as necessary, the efforts of other organizations to provide cost-effective public transit services to County residents.



## **NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**



## NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### Overall Goal

**Protect and enhance Lincoln County's natural resources, features and amenities.**

### General Strategies

1. Adopt land use regulations that will require an applicant to evaluate a project's impact on the environment and compliance with applicable drainage, noise, visual, air, and water quality standards.
2. Cooperate with federal and state agencies to ensure compliance with existing environmental standards and regulations.
3. Lincoln County encourages the establishment of appropriate health related standards for emissions and discharges based on sound scientific data and the use of risk/cost-benefit and economic impact analyses.
4. Work with landowners, state and federal agencies, and various non-profit organizations to preserve and protect significant natural areas such as wetlands, drainage ways, wildlife habitat and groundwater recharge areas.
5. Promote and support programs aimed at reducing noxious weeds in an environmentally sound manner and in conformance with state regulations.



### WATER QUANTITY AND QUALITY



Groundwater is critical to life in Lincoln County. Water for domestic, commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses comes from reservoirs beneath the land surface referred to as aquifers. Individual wells and municipal wells pump water from these aquifers to serve residents, farmers, ranchers and other businesses.

In Lincoln County, these aquifers occur in unconsolidated formations composed of sand and gravel, cobbles, or



loose earth or soil material. Most of the groundwater underlying Lincoln County occurs in sporadic and undefined alluvial aquifers that lie below major streams and drainage-ways, e.g. the Big Sandy. The very northeastern corner of Lincoln County lies atop the Ogallala High Plains Aquifer, from which some irrigation water is pumped. In the Far Western edge of the County, a portion of the Laramie-Fox Hills Aquifer lies beneath the surface.

Ground water is part of the earth's water cycle, beginning with rain and snow falling on the surface. Runoff from this precipitation goes into lakes and streams. Some of the water that seeps into the ground is used by plants for transpiration or evaporates from the soil surface. The remaining water, called recharge water, drains down through the soil to the saturated zone, where water fills all the spaces between soil particles and rocks. (Footnote source: J.E. Watson, Ground Water: The Hidden Resource)

Because groundwater is essential to the quality of life in Lincoln County, sound management and protection of this resource is critical. Groundwater is vulnerable to human activity on the surface.

Depletion of the aquifer can occur when more water is drawn out of an aquifer and consumed than is entering or recharging the aquifer. This causes a lowering of the water table, making ground water more difficult and expensive to obtain. Pollution of ground water occurs when undesirable substances dissolve in the water at the land surface and are carried down, or leached, to the aquifer with the percolating water. (Watson) Many activities on the surface involve the use and disposal of chemicals and by-products that are potential pollutants. Sound management practices on the land surface are essential to preventing pollution of this scarce resource.

## Strategies

1. Discourage the transfer of groundwater and/or surface water from Lincoln County for uses outside the County. (Note: This is not meant to discourage or prohibit a farmer from pumping irrigation water from a well located in Lincoln County for irrigation of contiguous land in an adjacent County.)
2. Require new development to submit a statement and plan of projected water use for all new residential, commercial and industrial activities.



3. New development that results in wasteful water consumption is discouraged.
4. The County should support the efforts of water district in protecting and managing water resources in the County.
5. Discourage development that is dependent on groundwater from locating in areas where water availability cannot be adequately demonstrated.
6. Approve new land development only if it can be determined that such uses will not contaminate groundwater supplies.
7. Promote sound management practices around municipal wellheads to assure that contamination of water supply is avoided.
8. Encourage the use of drought resistant plant materials and native species in landscaping.
9. Support the efforts of various regulatory agencies in the sound management of chemical use and disposal.

**VISUAL RESOURCES**

Lincoln County’s landscape is defined by its large open spaces, rolling hills and gentle valleys. Stands of trees occur in places along many of the drainage-ways. Historically, growth and related land use changes have not significantly threatened these resources. With continued care, development in the future can be compatible with the landscape.



**Strategies**

1. Protect the County’s natural drainage ways by discouraging development along perennial and seasonal watercourses. Particularly important are the drainage ways of the Big Sandy, Arikaree, Rush Creek, Adobe Creek, and Horse Creek.





2. Limit the scattering of development across the landscape by encouraging clustering of buildings in the agricultural and rural areas.
3. In transition areas, between lower and higher intensity uses, new development should incorporate measures to ensure that the more intensive uses are not visually obtrusive to the lower density uses.
4. Minimize site disturbance (overlot grading, cuts and fills) during the construction process.
5. During the development and construction process, efforts should be made to preserve existing stands of trees and shrubs, large expanses of prairie grasses and unique types of vegetation and landforms.

## **FLOODPLAINS**

### **Strategies**

1. Discourage development within identified 100-year floodplains and those areas known to be prone to flooding, unless such development is associated with crop production, wildlife management or non-polluting recreational activities.
2. Encourage landowners and developers to maintain drainage-ways as open space corridors; thereby avoiding the potential destruction of improvements and at the same time maintaining riparian wildlife habitat.



## **AIR QUALITY**

### **Strategies**

1. Standards established by the Colorado Department of Health and the Environment are considered minimum standards for the County. Clean, non-polluting industries are encouraged to locate in Lincoln County.



2. Excessive dust and other pollutants resulting from agriculture, construction, mining and similar activities shall be controlled.

## **NOISE**

### **Strategies**

1. Land uses that generate significantly higher levels of noise than the surrounding areas may be considered incompatible, unless actions are taken that effectively mitigate noise levels.
2. Noise mitigation measures, including increased building setbacks, earthen berms, solid walls, and landscaping are encouraged.

## **WILDLIFE**

Lincoln County recognizes that wildlife is critical to counties, the State of Colorado and the nation. Wildlife resources, in addition to their inherent values, provide crucial economic benefits to all citizens.

### **Strategies**

1. Support efforts of the Colorado Wildlife Commission and the Colorado Division of Wildlife to manage species appropriately with due consideration of cost-benefit and economic impacts.
2. Promote wise management of predatory animals.
3. Lincoln County supports efforts to amend the Endangered Species Act in order to improve flexibility under the Act. The County urges consideration of sound science, cost-benefit and economic impact analyses when proposing species for listing.
4. Lincoln County supports proactive and creative efforts, considering all potential impacts and subject to local government involvement and approval, to restore, reintroduce or relocate endangered species.
5. Preserve and protect wildlife habitat from the impacts of development.







6. New development should be located and designed in a manner that preserves critical habitat, including wetlands, riparian areas, trees and vegetation and migration corridors.
7. Support the continued operation and maintenance of the Karval and Hugo State Wildlife Areas and the related hunting, fishing and wildlife observation activities that occur.

## **MINERAL RESOURCES**

### **Strategies**

1. Conserve lands that provide valuable natural mineral deposits for potential future use, in accordance with Colorado law.
2. The County shall allow the orderly and reasonable extraction of mineral resource deposits in the County.
3. All aggregate mining activities shall conform to the rules and regulations of the State of Colorado.
4. Minimize the impacts of surface mining on surrounding land uses, roads and highways.
5. Minimize hazardous conditions related to mining activities and the mining site.
6. All mining sites shall be reclaimed in a timely manner pursuant to the guidelines of the State Mined Land Reclamation Board.
7. Allow oil and gas exploration and production in a manner that minimizes impacts on surface uses and the environment.
8. Coordinate and cooperate with the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission to promote and permit the wise use of oil and gas resources.



## LOCAL GOVERNANCE



## LOCAL GOVERNANCE

### COLORADO COUNTY STRUCTURE

Traditionally counties have been considered to be a subdivision of state government existing to administer state programs at a local level. As an administrative branch of government, counties do not have a court system of their own. They possess no inherent legislative powers and may exercise only those delegated to them by the General Assembly. Article XIV of the Colorado Constitution also establishes the organization and structure of non-home rule counties.

### COUNTY GOVERNMENT ELECTED OFFICIALS

#### **Board of County Commissioners**

The Board of County Commissioners serves as both the administrative and the policy-making bodies for the County. While, generally, boards have only those powers specifically conferred by the state General Assembly, courts have held that they have such implied powers as may be necessary to carry out their specified powers. Constitutionally, the board also sits as the County Board of Equalization. The Board also fills all vacancies in County offices other than those for County Commissioner. All powers of the County, as a legal entity, are exercised by the Board of County Commissioners and not by its individual members.

#### **County Clerk and Recorder**

By state constitution, the Clerk and Recorder is required to be the Recorder of Deeds and the Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners. By law, the Clerk and Recorder is responsible for carrying out certain state functions. The Clerk is the agent of the state Department of





Revenue and, among other duties, is charged with the responsibility of administering state laws relating to motor vehicles, certification of automobile titles, and motor vehicle registration. The Clerk is also responsible for administering all primary, general, and special elections held in the county, and for registration of voters, publication of notice of elections, appointment of election judges, and printing and distribution of ballots. The Clerk and Recorder also issues marriage licenses, maintains records and books for the Board of Commissioners, collects a multitude of license fees and charges required by the state and maintains property records.

### **County Assessor**

The County Assessor values real and certain types of personal property for "ad valorem" taxation purposes. The County Assessor maintains property ownership records, produces a yearly tax roll and a yearly abstract of assessments and certification of valuation to taxing entities.

### **County Treasurer**

The Treasurer of each county is responsible for the receipt, custody and disbursement of county funds. The Treasurer is the Public Trustee, except in first and second-class counties. The Treasurer collects some state taxes and all property taxes - including those for other units of local government. The Treasurer collects and disburses school funds belonging to school districts located within the county. The Treasurer sends notices of and collects all property taxes for all local governments and disburses receipts for each after charging a statutory collection fee. The Treasurer conducts sales of property for delinquent taxes.



### **County Sheriff**

The County Sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer of the county, responsible for maintaining the peace and enforcing state criminal laws. The Sheriff must attend court and is required to serve and execute processes, subpoenas, writs and orders as directed by the court. The Sheriff operates the county jail, and must maintain and feed prisoners. The Sheriff is also fire warden for prairie or forest fires in the county. Finally, the Sheriff performs certain functions in connection with sales of real and personal property to satisfy debt or tax liens.



## County Coroner

A Coroner is elected for the term of four years. Candidates for the position are encouraged by the General Assembly to possess knowledge and experience in the medical-legal investigation of death. It is also the intent of the General Assembly that those individuals holding this office participate in programs designed to develop and enhance their qualifications in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities associated with the office. The Coroner may declare an individual dead if he finds the individual has sustained irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory function.

## County Attorney

The Colorado Constitution states that the County Attorney may be elected or appointed. Statutes state that the county attorney shall be appointed. The county attorney advises other county officers on all legal matters and is required to represent the state in certain types of juvenile and mental health proceedings.

## Goal

**Provide necessary county government services to Lincoln County constituents in the most cost-effective manner.**

## Strategies

1. Lincoln County elected officials oppose “unfunded and underfunded mandates” from the state or federal government.
2. The County strongly supports the provision of adequate state funding for any future state-imposed mandates upon local government, including the need for technology improvements necessary to fulfill these mandates.
3. Lincoln County supports regulatory and legislative efforts that enable volunteer organizations to continue to provide services to their communities.





**Goal**

**Strive for a balance between the interests of the general public and the rights of individuals and property owners.**

**Strategies**

1. When regulations are necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of Lincoln County residents, ensure that they are fair, the least intrusive as possible, and that property owners are not left without a reasonable economic use of their land.
2. Ensure that well publicized public meetings are held and that all adjacent landowners within 500 feet of the subject property receive written notice (sent via U.S. Mail, first-class) when considering a request for a rezoning or any other significant land use change.
3. Streamline the development review process to ensure property owners receive final decisions regarding their development or land use applications as soon as possible.
4. On an annual basis, review the provisions of the County’s Zoning Resolution to determine if any changes or revisions are necessary.
5. Prepare a guidebook and / or workbook to accompany the Zoning Resolution that explains the review process and the general requirements of the resolution to make the process more user-friendly.

**Goal**

**Improve intra-departmental communications and cooperation.**

**Strategies**

Continue to hold regular department head meetings to share information, to provide more opportunities to work together on issues of common concern, and to avoid the duplication of tasks.







## Goal

**Participate in regional government to ensure that Lincoln County's needs are heard and respected and to coordinate efforts to address issues that do not follow jurisdictional boundaries (e.g. water quality, air quality, telecommunications, and transportation decisions).**

## Strategies

1. Be an active participant in region-wide transportation planning efforts, the East Central Council of Governments, and other regional agencies.
2. Explore establishing intergovernmental agreements with the County's municipalities to ensure compliance with this Plan's goals and policies as well as to ensure the municipality's growth and development policies are respected.
3. Continue cooperative efforts and/or use of IGA's with other counties to address issues of common concern.

**NOTES**



**NOTES**



**NOTES**

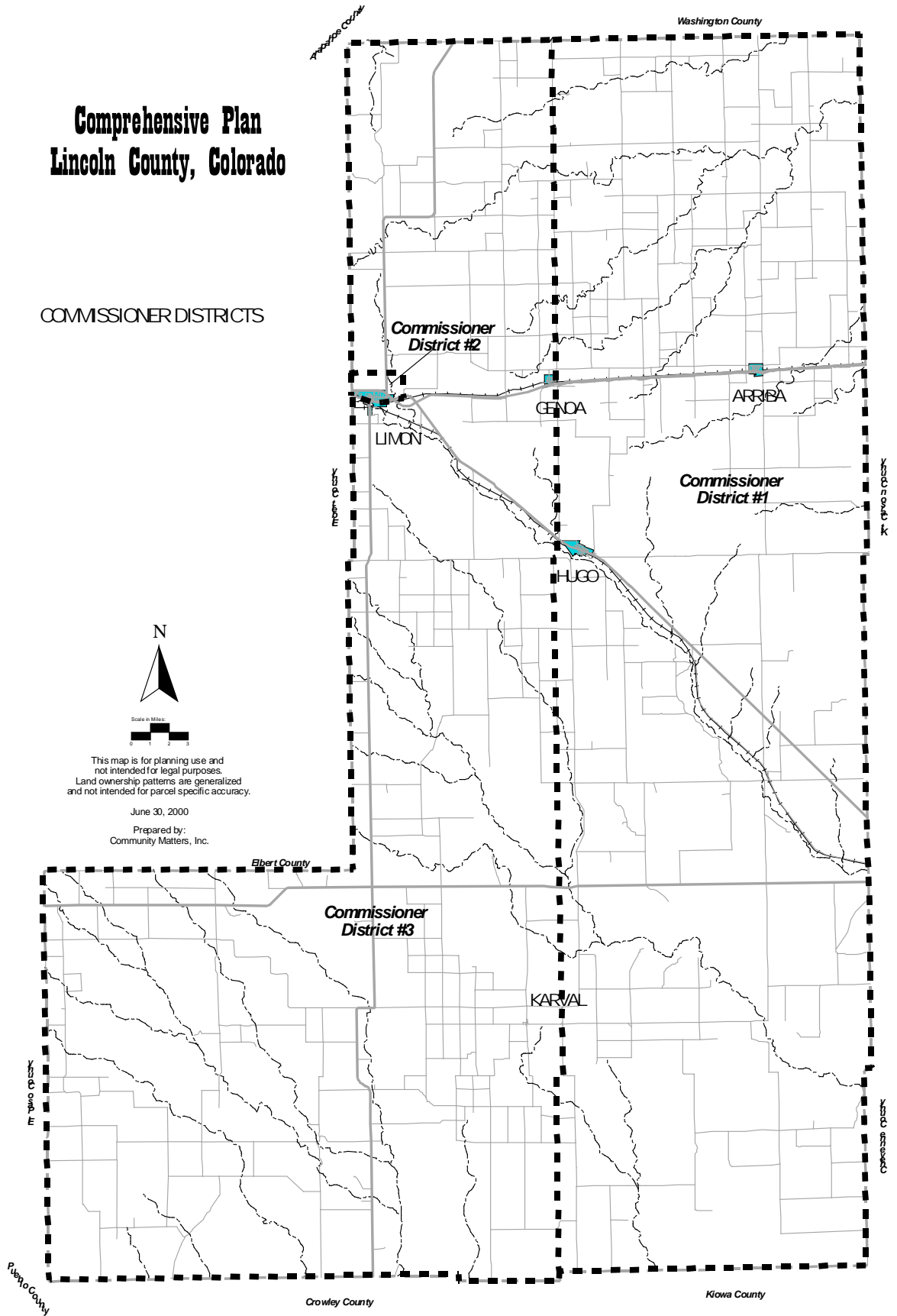


## APPENDIX

Commissioner Districts Map  
Commissioner Road Districts Map  
Fire Protection Districts Map  
School Districts Map

# Comprehensive Plan Lincoln County, Colorado

## COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS

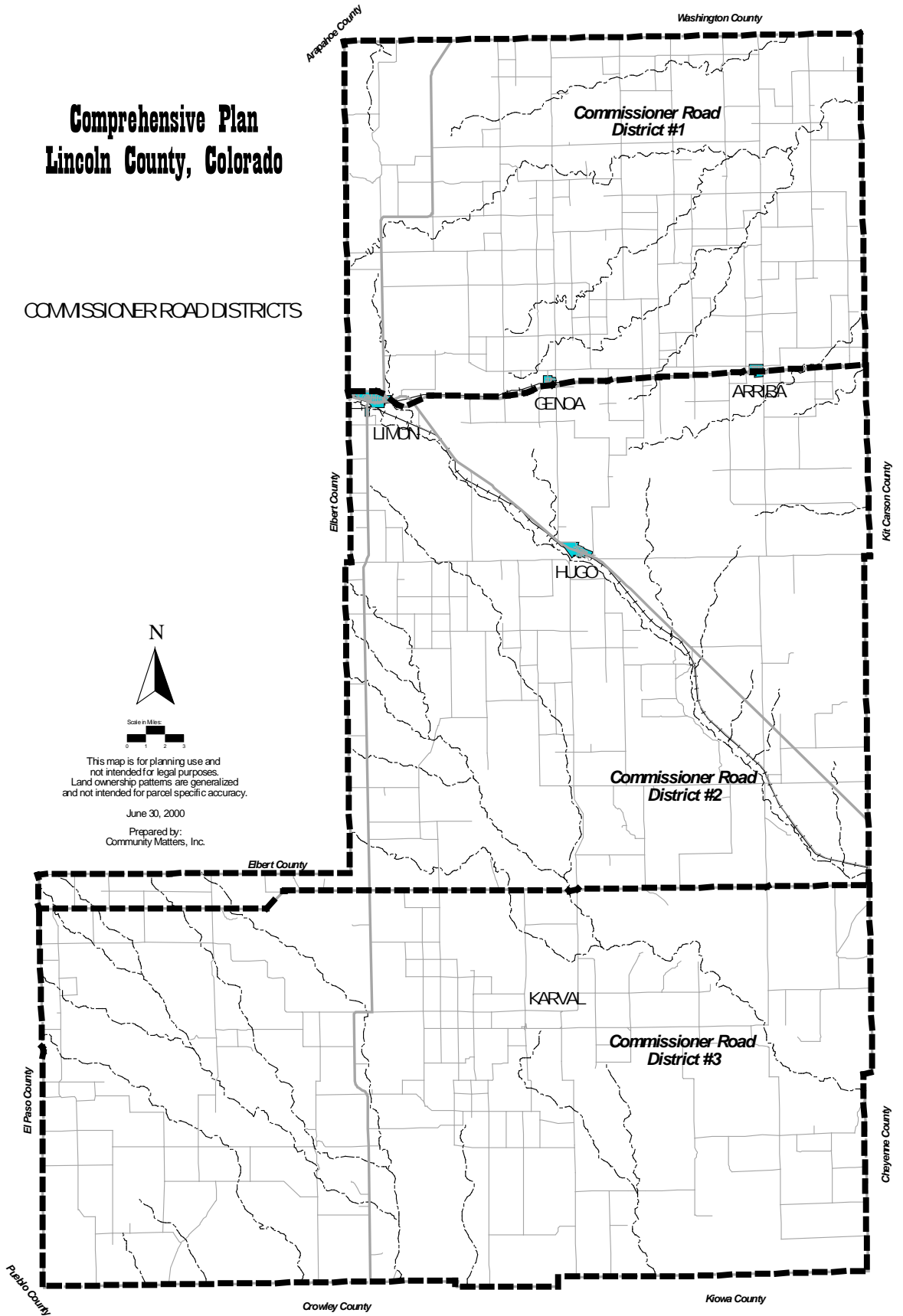






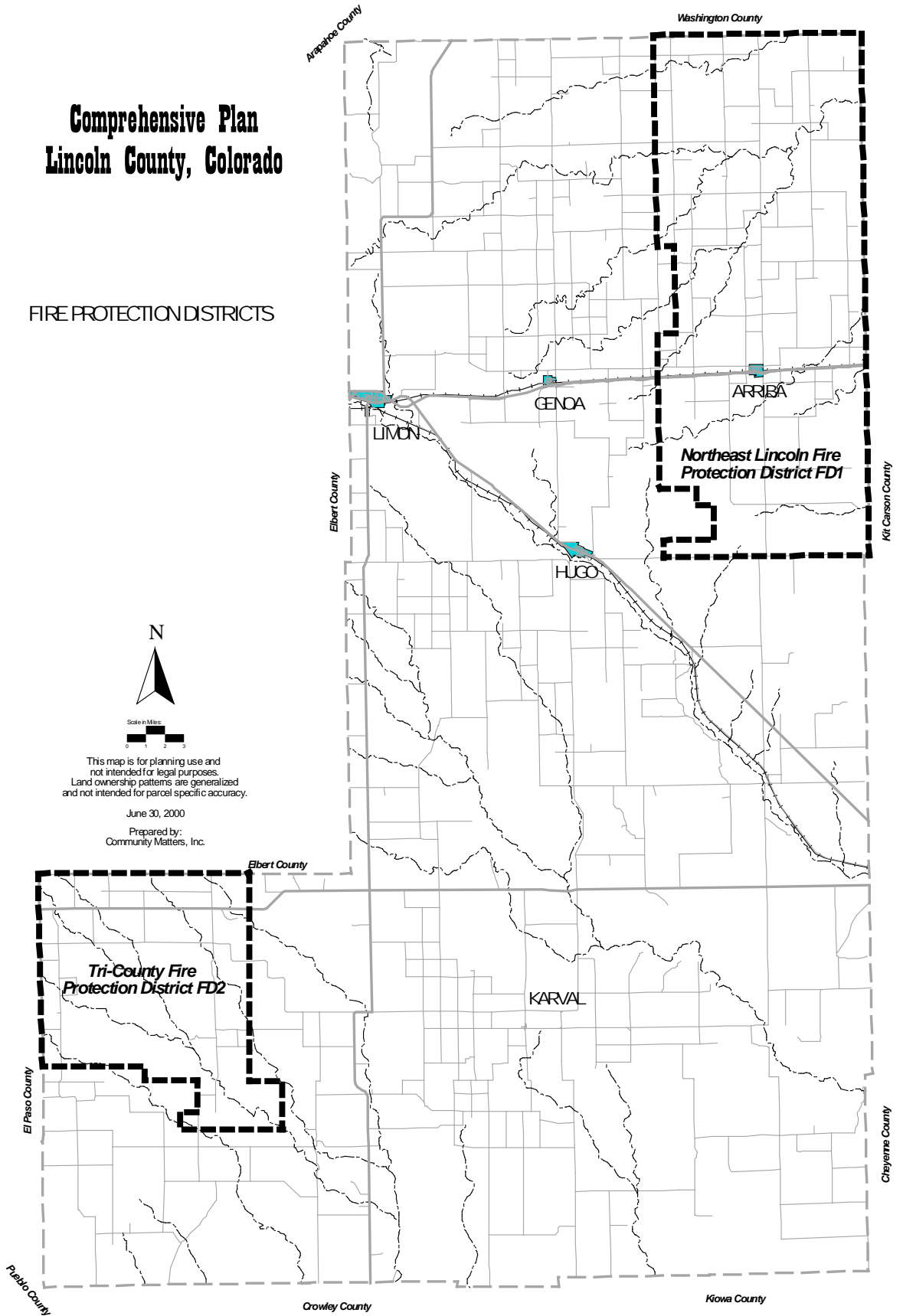
# Comprehensive Plan Lincoln County, Colorado

## COMMISSIONER ROAD DISTRICTS



# Comprehensive Plan Lincoln County, Colorado

## FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICTS



# Comprehensive Plan Lincoln County, Colorado

## SCHOOL DISTRICTS

