



# ELBERT COUNTY, CO

— ECONOMIC —  
DEVELOPMENT

# Strategic Plan



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Prepared by Better City, LLC December, 2022



# Process

July

Analyze Data



This plan is Elbert County’s first stand-alone economic development strategy. In 2021, Elbert County (County) established an Economic Development Department (ECEDD) to unify the County’s economic development efforts. In 2022 the ECEDD created an economic development-focused website, reinvigorated the Elbert County Economic Development Council, and hired Better City LLC to facilitate this economic development strategic plan.

August - September

Obtain Community Input



The planning process was from June through November 2022. Input included:

- 34 individual interviews
- 3 area-specific focus groups
  - Elizabeth Area
  - Kiowa Area
  - Business Owners
  - (a combined total of 16 participants)
- 2 youth focus groups
  - Elbert High School (12 participants)
  - Elizabeth High School (14 participants)

September

Identify Strategies



- Analysis of socio-demographic and economic data
- Market research to guide project recommendations
- Review of 18 prior studies and plans (see [Appendix A](#))
- 310 responses in the community survey (see [Appendix B](#))

October

Draft Strategic Plan



Many topics were discussed and analyzed as a part of the planning process—the word cloud shows topics discussed in interviews with size based on frequency of occurrence; and strategic focal points were selected from among these to keep the strategic plan concise and facilitate implementation.



The data analysis and community input were used to identify the objectives and strategies presented in this plan.

November

Edit Plan per Local Feedback



Note: Because a Housing Needs Assessment for Elbert County was conducted concurrently with this economic development strategic plan - to prevent duplication, housing (workforce, senior, affordability, etc) is not addressed herein.

# Summary of Strategies

The Elbert County Economic Development Strategic Plan provides recommendations for Elbert County, with implementation led by the County's Economic Development Department. The ECEDD is tasked with supporting business and facilitating economic vitality for the community—consistent with the character of the County. Following is an overview of the Plan's recommendations.

## Objectives

## Strategies

### Community Character



#### 1. Strengthen Rural Identity

- Identify and articulate what makes Elbert County unique.
- Promote Elbert County's rural identity.
- Develop community assets, venues, events, and programs.
- Secure funding to implement projects.
- Advocate for land use regulations.

### Fiscal Stability



#### 2. Facilitate Commercial Development

- Support development projects.
- Make the development process predictable and streamlined.
- Create a short brochure for water study findings.
- Create a program to support residents' future water needs.

#### 3. Recruit Businesses

- Assist developers and businesses apply to applicable Federal and State incentive programs.
- Develop an incentive package and process.
- Inventory potential commercial sites.
- Identify recruitment targets.
- Conduct outreach to recruitment targets.

### Local Economy



#### 4. Support Local Businesses

- Create and send an annual business questionnaire.
- Provide businesses expansion / retention assistance.
- Host annual roundtable with business service providers.
- Facilitate additional business services as needed.
- Create a "how-to start a new business" brochure.
- Provide marketing support for businesses who align with the County's rural identity.



To ensure the vision of Elbert County as a rural community is sustained into the future, economic development initiatives must focus both on preserving and enhancing the rural lifestyle for the entire community. An overview of the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats of the County’s rural aspects are presented below.

Rural Aspects	Strengths & Opportunities	Weaknesses & Threats
Low Traffic, Low Light Pollution, Wide Views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elbert County has a County-wide population density of approximately 15 people per square mile</li> <li><a href="#">Master Plan Housing Section</a> promotes ‘Conservation Communities’ with 50% open space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only 2% of land is owned by local government (County and towns combined)—which makes providing open space a challenge</li> <li>Traffic caused by commuters (<a href="#">88% of those who live in Elbert County work outside the County</a>)</li> </ul>
Ability to Homestead* or Ranch/ Farm  <small>*see definition on <a href="#">page 6</a></small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSU extension office provides Agriculture, Horticulture, &amp; 4H</li> <li>Farmers market hosted at Casey Jones Park</li> <li>Elbert County Agricultural Alliance teaches homesteading skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farm employment in Elbert County has been flat over the past 20 years (<a href="#">79 in 2001 to 78 in 2021</a>)</li> <li>Not all community members who desire to homestead have the knowledge and experience to succeed at homesteading</li> </ul>
Small-town Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents report that most community members are friendly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anticipated residential growth creates possibility for culture-shift</li> </ul>
Access to Open Spaces for Outdoor Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas in the county where scenic resources stand out include Ridge Road, Peaceful Valley, Elbert Road, and the forested areas along State Highway 86</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only 2% of land is owned by local government (County and towns combined), so many community members travel to neighboring counties for outdoor experiences</li> </ul>
Rural Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main Street in Elizabeth, select buildings in other towns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial areas lack a cohesive design</li> </ul>
Cowboy Culture/Old-West Vibe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elbert County Fair, the Elizabeth Stampede</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of public space to ride horses</li> <li>Small variety of events</li> </ul>
Access to Equestrian Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The County is ranked <a href="#">eighth in Colorado for horse ownership</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of horse trails and places to ride</li> </ul>



# Community Character



Elbert County residents love the County – what it is, what it isn't, and the lifestyle it provides. Elbert County is a unique place among the Front Range communities; and there is a strong sentiment that the quality of life should be preserved and strengthened. In the community survey, “low traffic, low light pollution, & wide views” was ranked as a top priority for remaining a rural community, followed by “ability to homestead or ranch/farm” and “small-town culture (connectivity to neighbors)”.

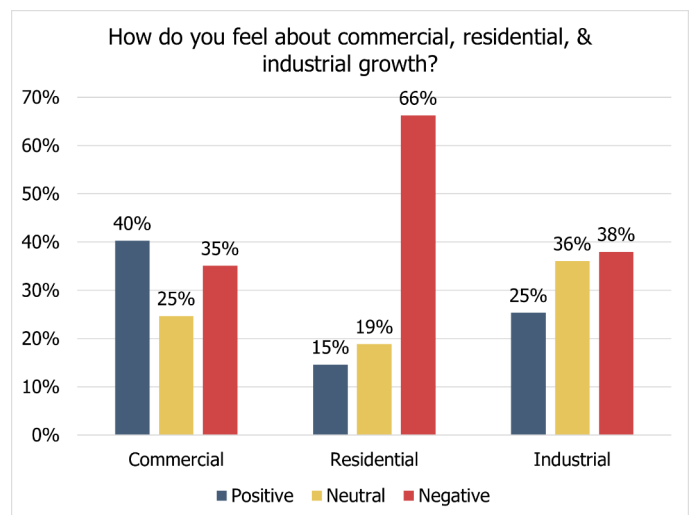
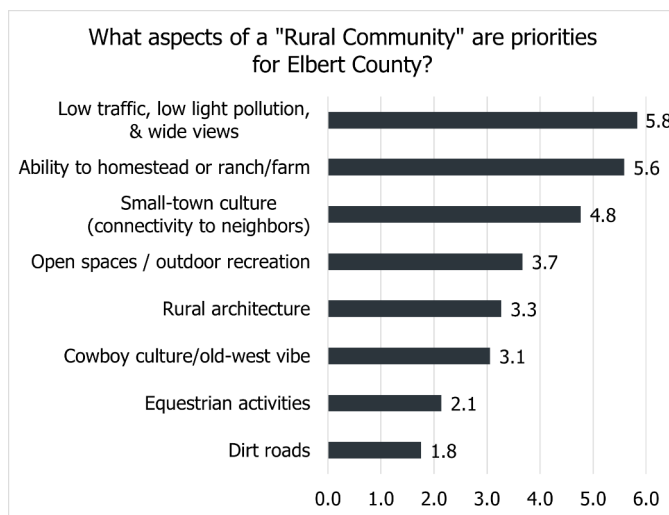
## Definition of Homestead

The term “homestead,” as used in this plan, refers to a lifestyle of seeking self-sufficiency—generally through growing a garden and/or raising chickens or other livestock. Homestead applies to both large- and small-scale efforts to live somewhat off-the-land.

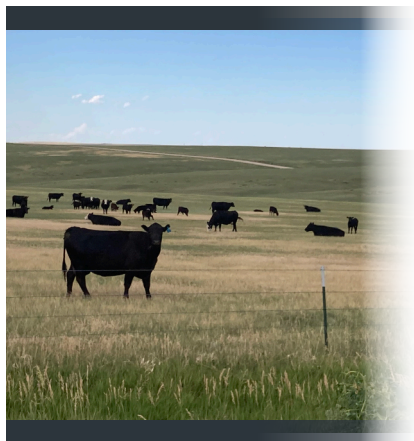
Economic development should preserve and enhance attributes that make the County special—specifically the County’s identity as a rural community.

Community members are concerned about how the anticipated residential growth will affect the rural character of the County; however, survey respondents feel mostly positive towards commercial growth (see charts below).

## Elbert County Economic Development Plan Survey Responses



### Appendix B: Survey Results



## Why Vision is Important

An engaging, inspiring, authentic, shared vision guides economic development activities and ensures that they preserve and enhance the lifestyle valued by residents of Elbert County. The vision guides the development of policies and initiatives to preserve the elements that make the County special; and the vision encourages new investment that amplifies the quality of life valued by County residents.

A community with a clear vision of who they are can communicate their strengths—which in turn strengthens local assets and attitudes.



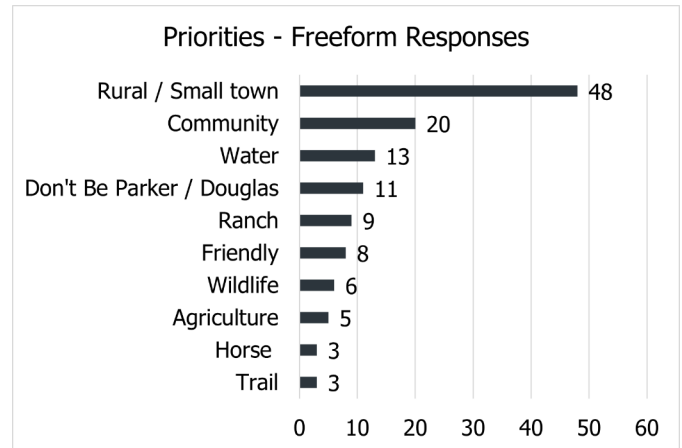
## Elbert County's Authentic Vision

“The County remains rooted in its Western heritage evidenced by a primarily agricultural economy, long-distance views, open lands, and rural character of the communities” (Comp Plan, 2018).

Elbert County's vision should be an authentic reflection of what the community considers itself to be, now and in the future. Participants in the planning process consistently described the County as a “rural community”.

Community input regarding what is great about Elbert County centered on the attitude and culture of country living and homesteading. Select comments from community members include:

## Elbert County Economic Development Plan Survey Responses



[Appendix B: Survey Results](#) – Topics mentioned in freeform responses to the question “Are there other aspects of a “Rural Community” that should be on the priority list above?” (Priority list included Rural Aspect topics shown on the table on [Page 5](#))

“It's time to 're-think' our overall strategy for how Elbert County is seen in Colorado. Colorado is not just Denver and Boulder...We need to decide if we are just a bedroom community/ county for Denver/ Colorado Springs or if we are a viable community in our own right.”

“Be creative with developers. WE should set the new development lifestyle...larger lots, more privacy layouts. Instead of community swimming pools and gyms, how about community barns and stables to reinforce rural lifestyles. There are many ways to support, even encourage, balanced rural development.”

“I love the small-town feel, and the ability to get to the city should I need to go to the big box stores. I love the mom-and-pop shops and the history of this area. The small-town feel, and people are genuine and always willing to lend a helping hand.”

## Making the Vision Reality

The ECEDD plays a key role in promoting the policies, programs, developments, and businesses that align with the community's specific vision of itself as a rural community. As demonstrated in the comments and rankings from the community survey, this means finding ways to ensure that country living aesthetics and lifestyle are available to residents of Elbert County—now and into the future.

County residents want to live in a rural community—not just hold on to the nostalgic memory of a ranching and farming past—but as an intentionally-developed long-term reality. While the County generally looks ‘rural’, actual access to outdoor activities and participation in rural lifestyle events is largely limited to those individuals who live on ranches/ranchettes. The long-term preservation of the rural nature of the County will largely depend on how accessible it is for community members to participate in the country living motif.

# Strategy 1: Strengthen Rural Identity

The way a community looks, its buildings, public structures and ambiance drive the outside perceptions of its identity. When the structures and businesses present a unifying or dominant idea or theme—they provide a set of expectations to both residents and visitors on what it means to be in Elbert County.

**Strategy:** Facilitate upgrading and/or creating additional assets and events that support the County's rural identity.

## Façade Grant Program

An incentive program that encourages property owners and businesses to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings. The program provides a financial incentives such as a matching grant or loan, a tax incentive, and/or design assistance, to improve the façades within a designated area.

Design assistance enables and helps ensure that building modifications comply with design guidelines developed specifically to enhance buildings in the target area.

### Program Checklist

- Purpose statement
- Defined target area
- Eligibility criteria – who may participate and under what terms
- Eligible project – list or description of eligible (and ineligible) activities
- Application
- Selection process
- Program funding – usually obtained from a combination of sources, including federal and state grants, and/or municipal revenue

## Tasks

### 1. Identify and articulate what makes Elbert County unique.

- Create concept board with images and keywords showcasing the desired look of the built environment.
- Obtain feedback and approval from County Commissioners and Town Mayors and Boards.
- Share with business and developers to promote creative and synergistic façades.
- Designate historic identity zones.
  - Selecting key commercial areas to support by enhancing façades and developing buildings that contribute to the rural-themed landscape.
  - Work with each community to identify what their historic identity zone should look like. Create design standards specific to each zone.
  - Explore adoption of 'form based' code carve-out in select areas to support the communities' desire for new development to match the rest of the community—similar historical architecture styles. (See [Appendix C](#) for information on form-based code.)
  - Explore use of placemaking via a repetitive element throughout the zone (such as decorative lampposts, stylized signage, or thematic element such as hitching posts).
- Establish a façade grant program to incentivize and enable property owners to update their façades to adhere to the design standards specific to the historic identity zones they are located in.



Town of Elizabeth, Facebook

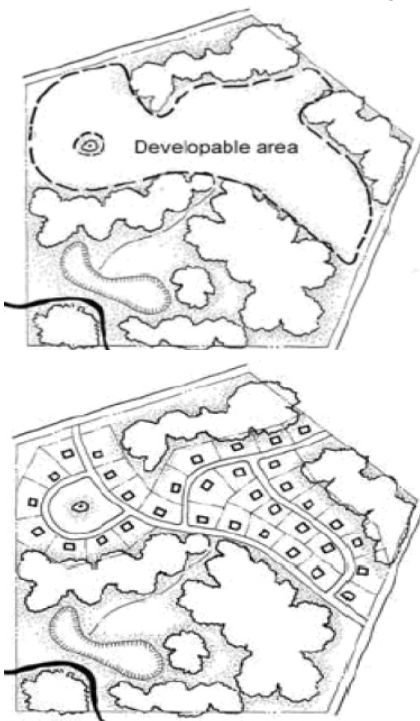


## Lodging Tax

Per § 30-11-107.5, a county board of commissioners may levy a lodging tax for the purpose of advertising and marketing local tourism (required use for at least 10% of lodging tax revenue) and facilitating and enhancing visitor experiences.

Passing a lodging tax creates a funding source for community projects and addressing visitor impacts as needed. The funds can be used to support the County's efforts to strengthen the rural identity of Elbert County through marketing. Passing the lodging tax before a hotel is recruited enables hoteliers to calculate the tax in their proforma and reduces push-back against passing the tax.

### Example Layout of Conservation Community



[Elbert County Master Plan Housing Section, 2009 Update, Page 8](#)

## 2. Promote Elbert County's rural identity.

- Send a regular newsletter with information on events, economic development projects, and local businesses.
- When appropriate include surveys or opportunities for recipients to respond or provide input.
- Share information via social media and local news to ensure community is informed about projects. Host community forums as needed.

## 3. Develop community assets, venues, events, and programs.

- Enhance and develop assets that support the County's rural identity.
  - Identify partners for each project (see [Page 10](#)), and coordinate regular meetings to move projects forward.
  - Create a plan for each project, including description, budget and funding plan, timeline, specific tasks, and partner roles and responsibilities. (See [Appendix D](#) for list of potential partners and resources.)

## 4. Secure funding to implement projects.

- Pass a lodging tax and earmark the funds for promoting Elbert County's brand and supporting events that contribute to the County's strategic vision.
- Pursue grants to fund (1) the façade grant program, (2) the placemaking elements for each historic identity zone, and (3) projects listed on [Page 10](#). Compile a list of grants for which each project qualifies, (see [Appendix D](#)) and apply for selected grants.
- Contact Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) [in Colorado](#) to discuss projects and learn about options to use CDFI funding for projects within the eastern half of the County.

## 5. Advocate for land use regulations.

- County residents feel that the community benefits from open spaces and limited residential sprawl. To ensure the future development of Elbert County adheres to the best practices identified in the [Elbert County Master Plan Housing, 2009 Update](#), the use of the Conservation Community—a development style “characterized by large amounts of common open space and clustered, compact lots” (pg. 4)—needs to be codified at a more regulatory level to ensure that new developments adhere to the Conservation Community criteria.
- Advocate that the Board of County Commissioners adopt land-use regulations that limit the potential for Conventional Residential Developments and that require developers to use the Conservation Community regulations into County code—ensuring these regulations will be followed with future developments.

# Recommended Projects

The projects below provide an initial direction. Enhancing the County's rural identity through developing assets, events, and programs is intended to be flexible and opportunistic—enabling the ECEDD to support projects that are championed by partner organizations or community members, and for which there are opportunities to obtain necessary funding.



Elbert County Fair



Elizabeth Chamber

## Assets

- **Coworking Space:** Attract or develop a remote work coworking space to reduce commuter traffic and allow residents to spend more time in the County.
- **Fairground Improvements:** Upgrade the RV campground, and explore the possibility of purchasing the adjacent fishing pond and providing access to the pond.
- **Casey Jones Park:** Expand the Casey Jones Park trail.
- **Trails:** Develop trails for horses, walking, biking, and/or motorbikes/ATVs. The [Town of Elizabeth 2040 Transportation Plan](#) states there is interest in improving equestrian trails (page 33), and feedback from this Economic Development Strategic Plan indicated that motorbike/ATV trails are also needed.
- **Campgrounds:** Facilitate public access to camping site(s).

## Events

- **New Community Events:** Identify stories or unique events related to local history, and create a festival to commemorate local history. Host festival(s) in [strategic location\(s\)](#) to support community assets, small businesses, and green space.
- **Farmer's Market:** Strengthen farmer's market through promotion and facilitation of additional vendors and attractions that include and attract more participants.
- **Equestrian Events:** Host junior rodeos or other events that make reoccurring and frequent use of fairground and other facilities.
- **Casey Jones Park Rodeo Grounds & Evans Park:** Develop tournaments or events that consistently utilize the rodeo grounds and the Prickly Pines Disc Golf Course.

## Programs

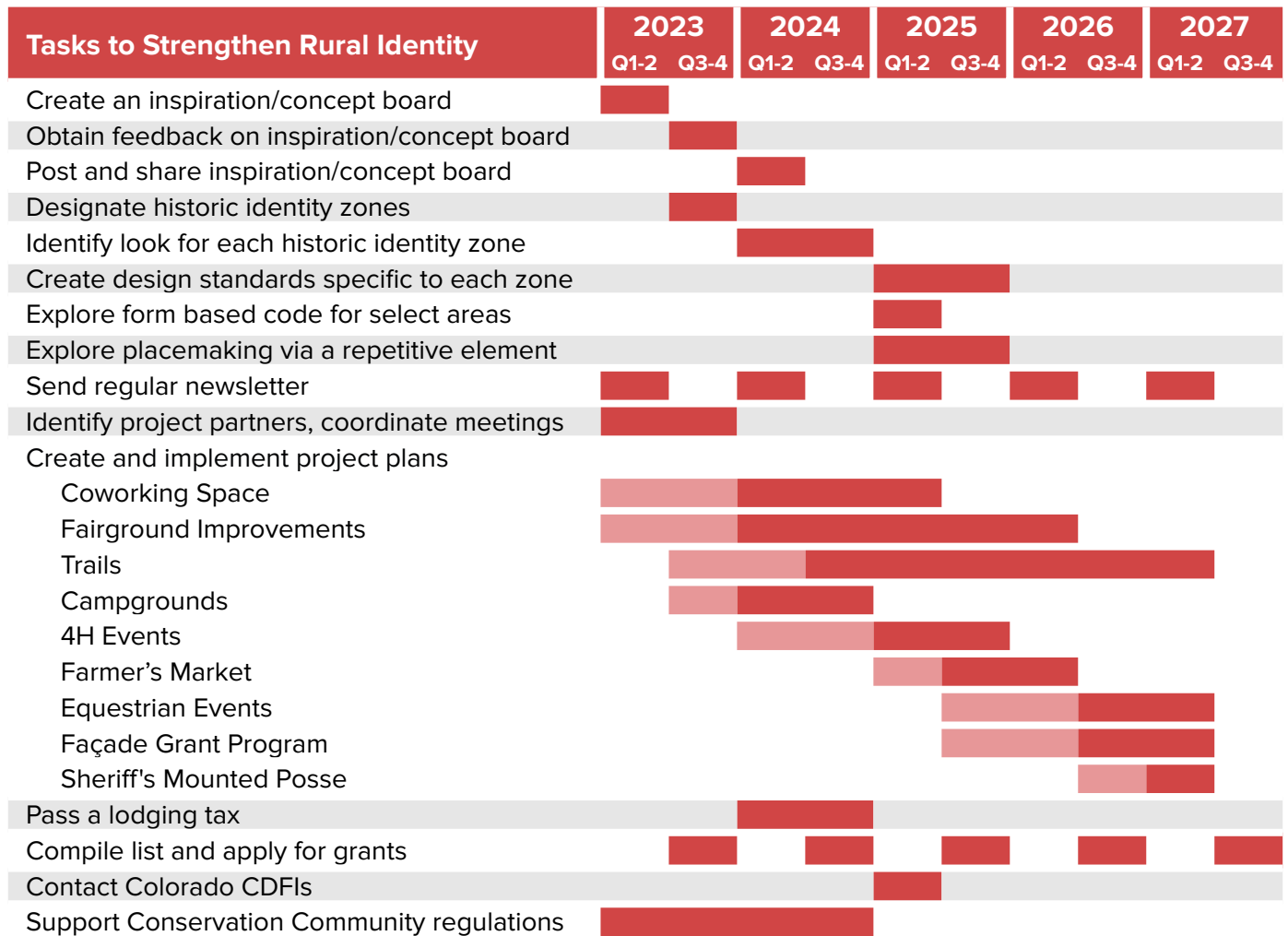
- **Façade Program:** Establish a façade grant program to incentivize and enable property owners historic identity zones to update their façades to adhere to design standards.
- **Homesteading Resources:** Coordinate with the [CSU Elbert County Extension Office](#) and [Elbert County Agricultural Alliance](#) to provide resources to support residents' efforts to grow gardens and raise livestock on their land.
- **Sheriff's Mounted Posse:** Have the [Sheriff's Posse](#) ride in parades and at community events. These community volunteers assist in search and rescue and other extra capacity roles can be included in civic events to 'nod' to the old west and community volunteerism.



# Strategy 1 Implementation Timeline

The recommended implementation timeline follows. The recommendations will be implemented based on the priorities of the Board of County Commissioners and the Elbert County Economic Development Department. Note, there are more recommendations than the ECEDD anticipates completing within the 5-year timeframe—this is intentional as it provides a variety of options to pursue as opportunities arise. Flexible recommendations enable Elbert County to benefit from changing market opportunities.

The ECEDD will make annual adjustments to the timeline and targets—as these should guide implementation efforts according to progress made, current opportunities, and the ECEDD’s capacity.



- █ Create project plans
- █ Implement project plans

**Goal**

Increase the physical assets and events that will strengthen the rural identity of the County.

**Target**

- Have 4 community asset projects underway by 2025
- Complete 2 community asset projects by 2026

# Fiscal Stability



Elbert County’s population grew almost 13% from 2010 to 2020 (from 23,086 to 26,062)—and the County’s population is expected to grow by 27% from 2020 to 2030 (to 33,091). The population growth across the Front Range creates market demand for residential growth in Elbert County due to its proximity to neighboring economic centers. The increase in residential population is driven by the market; however, the ECEDD can support simultaneous commercial growth to ensure the County’s fiscal position is healthy.

The County’s expenses increased 38% from 2010 to 2020—and the County’s expenses are expected to increase to approximately \$54.5 million in 2030 (inflation calculation based on extrapolated expenses per capita from 2020, with the addition of an estimated 3% annual inflation).

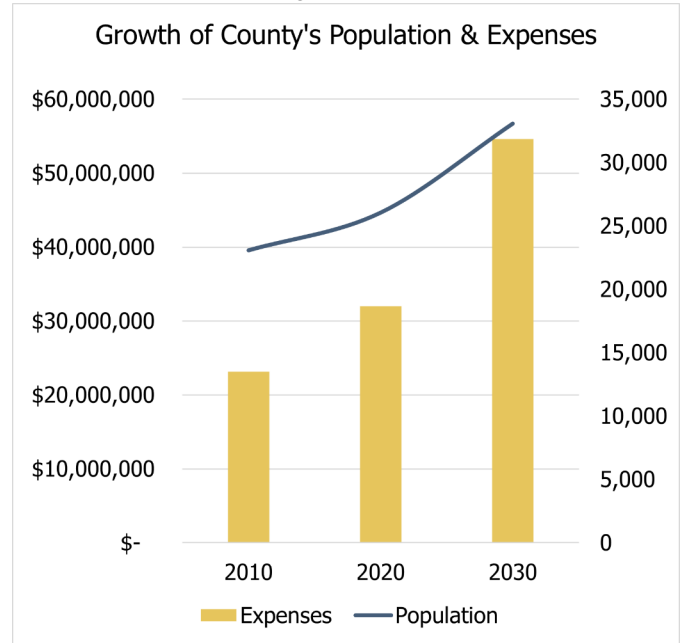
Elbert County provides a wide range of services common to counties in Colorado, including law enforcement and public safety, property assessment, treasury and taxes, recording, planning, etc. To fund the personnel and programs required by Colorado statutes, the County’s revenue must keep pace with both inflation and increase in residents.

According to the Economic Development & Recovery Research (2021) by PUMA, out of eight Colorado counties of similar size, “Elbert County’s taxable residential property base is disproportionately high (91% of the combined residential, commercial, and industrial property values). Since commercial property is taxed at a higher rate (29%) than residential property (7%), the addition of new commercial properties can significantly contribute to the County’s property tax base. Example: \$10 million worth of commercial property has the potential to generate \$81,357 in tax revenue for Elbert County, whereas \$10 million in residential property value would only generate \$20,059.

## Projected Need for Commercial Development

If the County’s expenses increase to \$54.5 million, and assuming average household sizes stay the same, the appreciation of residential and commercial remains the same (it was 48% from 2010 to 2020), and that property taxes continue to represent 50% of County revenue (Elbert County’s tax revenue accounted for 50% of its total revenue in 2020), then the County needs an additional \$124 million in new commercial development by 2030 (see table).

## Elbert County Economic Development Plan Survey Responses



Item	Amount	Source or Calculation
2020 Property Taxes	\$12,695,871	County's 2020 Financial Statements
Commercial Assessment %	29%	2020 PUMA Study
Residential Assessment %	7%	2020 PUMA Study
2020 Commercial Property Taxes	\$250,000	2020 PUMA Study
2020 Residential Property Taxes	\$12,445,871	Total Property Taxes minus Commercial Taxes
Projected increase in property valuations	1.48	Based on the 2010-2020 increase
2030 Projected Residential Property Taxes	\$23,387,789	2020 Residential Taxes divided by current residents (26,062), multiplied by projected future residents (33,091), multiplied by the projected increase in valuations
2030 Projected Commercial Property Taxes - current properties	\$370,000	2020 Commercial Taxes multiplied by the projected increase in valuations
Projected 2030 expenses covered by property taxes (50%)	\$27,297,094	Projected expenses (\$54,594,188) divided by 2
Incremental Commercial Property Taxes required	\$3,539,305	Expenses minus 2030 Projected Commercial and Residential Property Taxes
MIL	0.09842	Commercial Mill Levy
Needed Commercial Development	<b>\$124,004,283</b>	Future Com. Needed divided by the Commercial Assessment %, then divided by the MIL



# Strategy 2: Facilitate Commercial Development

To provide essential public services, the County will need to attract and support the development of commercial properties. Two major challenges that deter commercial development in Elbert County are the permitting process and concern over water availability. These challenges must be addressed to facilitate the needed commercial development in the County.

## Development Challenges Due to the Permitting Process

According to developers, local businesses, and residents, the permitting process in Elbert County and its municipalities is time consuming, unpredictable, and costly. Specific challenges include:

- Mixed messages about requirements
- Slow review for approvals and long wait time for redlines
- Old and contradictory codes create legal challenges
- Lack of clarity on the fees and their purposes

Discussions with staff involved in the development process provided further insights:

- Limited “permitted uses” create complexity
- Business owners can be unaware of the full process—causing surprise delays and expenses when they learn of the variety of permits needed, along with other project requirements such as code analysis, architectural, etc.
- Staff turnover results in lack of institutional knowledge, so when a complicated or unusual case occurs, they cannot reference what was done “last time” for a similar issue
- The outdated code has conflicts (note, there are some code updates underway)
- There are various permits and fees for each step of the land use process
- There is a lack of clarity on the internal process for moving an approval from one department to another before returning it to the applicant
- Political involvement slows down the process, it would be faster if there were more administrative control over approvals

A complicated and lengthy development process puts the County at a disadvantage—as developers will consider the complexity and timeline of a potential project when determining its feasibility. A streamlined commercial development process can benefit the efforts to attract commercial developments and new businesses to the County.



## Development Challenges Due to Water Availability

The impact of development on water availability is a concern of the community, primarily due to:

- A lack of clear understanding regarding the County’s long-term water availability. The [2018 Rural Water Supply Study](#) is lengthy and technical—therefore does not serve as a clear reference to help residents understand the water availability.
- Wells that were drilled only as deep as needed to hit water risk running dry based on neighboring water use. New drilling is required to reach the full depth of the underlying aquifer and ensure long-term water availability to the individual well. (New permits from the state recommend that people drill to the bottom of their aquifer—so this is primarily an issue for old wells.)

The County requires developers to have three times as much water available to support new developments ([300-year rule](#)) versus the amount required by the state (a 100-year rule). The County’s 300-year rule requirements represent proactive conservancy because the water supply is entirely supplied by aquifers. Additionally, a recent development ([Independence](#)) has taken water sustainability a step further by including a water reuse plan which enables them to draw less new water from the aquifer to serve the development’s homes and landscapes.

A U.S. geological survey is underway, and the final groundwater trend analysis report is expected in 2024. An upcoming project is the creation of a County-wide Water Master Plan (a grant application is pending to partially fund this project). Major points of focus for this plan include conservation and working with developers; and the plan will provide policy recommendations to guide decision making.

By proactively addressing and mitigating residents’ general concerns related to water, the County can reduce the concerns over water availability, thereby reducing the community pushback that can hinder or deter commercial development.

**Strategy:** Assist businesses and commercial developers to navigate hurdles and facilitate new commercial development. Simplify the permitting process, and develop a program that addresses residents’ concerns regarding water availability.

### Process

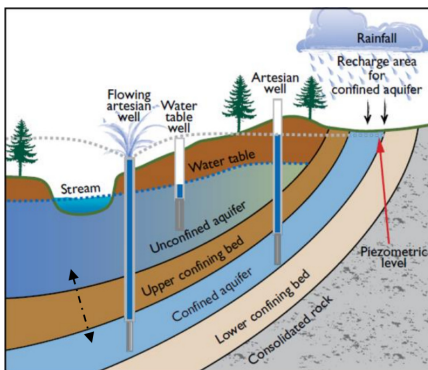
#### 1. Support development projects.

- Coordinate with the County and towns’ planning departments to know what projects are proposed and how projects are progressing.
- Communicate with businesses and commercial developers throughout the project and help troubleshoot challenges as they arise.

#### 2. Make the development process predictable and streamlined.

- Advocate to make the permitting process more administrative. For example: allow administrative approval for simple site plans (with reports to the governing boards); and create a process for approvals to accelerate the transition from one step to the next within the various municipal departments.

**Denver Basin Aquifers  
Diagram Showing Levels**



[Update on Groundwater-Level Elevations in the Denver Basin Bedrock Aquifers of Elbert County, Colorado, 2021-2024 \(2022\)](#)

## Process Map

Include the following:

- A checklist of all required documents, plans, and certificates (including code analysis, architectural, state required documents, etc.)
- A checklist of all required meetings (including pre-application and pre-construction meetings)
- A flowchart that lists every step, department, and role that makes up the permit process.

Example Process Maps

- [Bend, OR](#)
- [Guadalupe, CA](#)
- [Hillsborough County, FL](#)
- [Montana Guide](#)
- [San Francisco, CA \(see pages 37-39\)](#)
- [Washington Auditor's Lessons Learned](#)

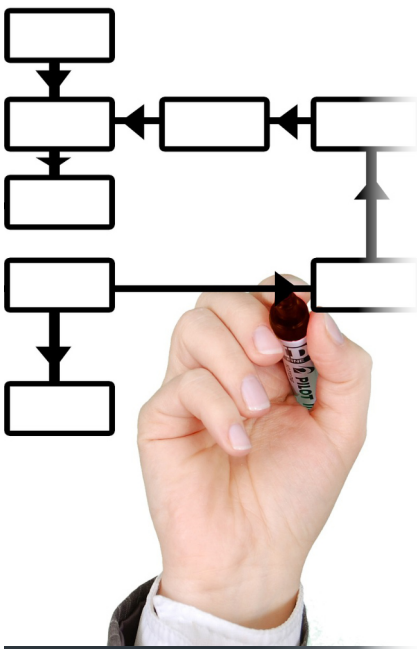
- Hire a consultant to analyze the planning/building department process and identify potential code adjustments and procedural adjustments that would simplify and streamline the process and follow best practices. Consultant scope of work should include:
  - Establish an expected timeline, with turn-around times for each step of the process.
  - Compile a comprehensive fee schedule to provide permit applicants.
  - Create a process-map to provide to permit applicants (see box on left).
- Distribute the process map via: Websites (of the County, towns, ECEDD, and planning departments), Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Development Center, and automated email to business license applicants.

### 3. Create a short brochure of water study findings.

- Present the 2018 and 2023 study findings regarding water availability with the County. Provide clear explanations to help prevent unnecessary fears over the impact of development.

### 4. Create a program to support residents' future water needs.

- Explore the possibility of creating a revolving loan fund or grant program that can help ensure residents water needs are met—whether deepening wells to appropriate depth or enabling conservation / improved efficiency for residents' water sources.
- Identify potential experts (include a water engineer, state specialist, and local representatives) and invite them to participate in an action committee to address water shortage issues faced by residents with inadequate well depth.
- Task the group with considering potential solutions related to inadequate well depth and other water-related concerns, such as:
  - Are there issues with water rights and deeper well levels?
  - Is it fiscally responsible to deepen a well, or are there alternative approaches which should be considered in lieu of or addition to well deepening (such as water reuse systems)?
  - If a well deepening revolving loan fund or grant program is set up, what are the best-practices and requirements that should be put into place with that program?
- Task the group with structuring the program.
- Lead efforts to fund the program (see [Appendix D](#) for potential funding sources).





# Strategy 3: Recruit Businesses

## Primary Site Criteria

- Proximity to clients, measured by:
  - Population density
  - Household income
  - Demographics

## Other Considerations

- Daytime population
- Tourism visitation
- Existing mix of nearby businesses or anchor tenants
- Vehicle and pedestrian traffic
- Information on past openings and closings of businesses
- Level of concurrent investment in area
- Availability of financial incentives
- Availability of business assistance
- Market opportunities

Growth in commercial enterprises of all kinds will benefit the County financially, but of particular importance is the strategic attraction of businesses that meet the needs of the community and enhance the quality of life.

When residents were asked which new businesses and amenities should be priorities for recruitment efforts, medical and retail ranked highest (see [Appendix B](#)).

## Target Businesses

The recommended list of target businesses is based on residents' prioritization and market opportunity analysis. The ECEDD will pursue and support a variety of recruitment opportunities as they present themselves—with special effort to recruit from the target business types on the table below.

Business recruitment is often limited to those businesses whose site selection criteria aligns with the proximity to clients and other considerations relevant to their business (see box on left.)

Business Types by Location	Elizabeth	Kiowa	Simla	Agate
Urgent Care & Medical Care	X	X		
Small-Scale Grocer & Household Goods		X	X	
Truck Stop				X
Hotel	X	X		
Coworking Space	X	X		
Light Industrial Manufacturing		X	X	X
Retail	X	X		

## Incentives

Economic development incentive programs provide various forms of financial and nonfinancial support to help promote real estate projects and business growth. There are three primary reasons why a local government provides incentives:

- To attract or retain firms in a specific sector, industry, or technology to develop or sustain competitive advantage. Using an incentive to attract a major employer in a high-growth export industry could deliver notable spillover benefits to other businesses and workers that support those industries.
- To spur physical revitalization of distressed neighborhoods. Used primarily in slower growth markets with struggling economies and lots of empty or underutilized land. Incentivizing a developer or firm to fill that vacancy is a win-win: The firm gets a tax benefit to spur market activity in a community in which there is little, and the community's tax base expands—providing new revenue to the local government from a dormant asset.
- To correct market failures such as the private sector's underinvestment in job training or research and development. Instruments such as job training tax credits, workforce development grants, or research and development tax credits nudge companies to make investments that enhance the public good.

Incentives are a mechanism to “fill gaps” in the capital stack caused by development impediments that raise costs. For example, if local development costs are higher than can be covered by the market rate of rents, incentives can help reduce operating expenses or development costs, which frees up cash to support debt service obligations and meet required return thresholds—enabling the project to commence.

Any incentive program should be targeted (only applicable to firms/developments that provide spillover benefits to the community), deliver meaningful return on investment (provide greater benefits to the community than the cost of the incentive), and follow the “but for” rule (that the project would not have occurred “but for” the assistance of the incentive).

The ECEDD should ensure incentives policies align with broader economic objectives, embrace public transparency and rigorous evaluation, and only target firms that advance broad-based opportunity.

Elbert County already provides zone-based incentives (within the Economic Development Zone, Enterprise Zone, and Foreign Trade Zone-Subzone Option), as well as assisting businesses with obtaining state-wide incentives available through the [Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade](#). Additional incentives that could be used to support business recruitment efforts include:

- Technical assistance including market and feasibility analysis, business plan development, and navigating governmental regulations
- Tax Increment Financing
- Expedited development review and approval schedules
- Assistance with public infrastructure requirements
- Assistance with applications for Federal or State programs
- Façade Grant Program

**Strategy:** Conduct targeted outreach to recruit developers and businesses to bring new commercial enterprises to the County.

### Urban Renewal Authority

An attorney can assist with defining the project area, providing blight justification, developing area plan, coordinating with property owners to gain consent, negotiating participation among taxing entities, composing the Statement of Blight, and assisting the County and towns through the process of passing the resolution and developing a plan for the district.

Note, it is recommended that the Urban Renewal Authority creation process begin 12 to 18 months in advance of the anticipated investment.

### Process

#### 1. Assist developers and businesses apply to applicable Federal and State incentive programs.

#### 2. Develop an incentive package and process.

- Assist towns in Elbert County to create their own incentive policies or programs or create a County-wide economic development incentive program. Ensure that the program follows best practices and only incentivizes targeted firms who deliver meaningful return on investment and follow the “but for” rule.
- Work with towns to set up an Urban Renewal Authority to enable [Tax Increment Financing](#) (see box on left).

#### 3. Inventory potential commercial sites.

- Compile information for listed properties, including photos, sales and rent per square foot, floor plan, zoning and building code conditions or restrictions, and contact information for broker or property owner.

## Steps for Target Outreach

### **Urgent Care & Medical Care:**

Coordinate with developers who are building health care facilities in the County to help keep the process moving forward. Network with healthcare service providers in the region to keep abreast of market shifts in healthcare.

### **Small-Scale Grocer & Household Goods:**

See if the Simla Food Store is interested in expanding. Determine if another small-scale grocer & household goods store would also benefit the community.

### **Truck Stop:**

Conduct outreach to regional truck stop brands and the Colorado Motor Carrier's Association to ascertain their interest in putting a truck stop in Elbert County.

### **Hotel:**

Support regular and reoccurring events that increase visitation to the County—as enhancing visitation is critical to attracting a hotel (see Strategy 1). Create a target list of upper midscale limited-service lodging brands and conduct recruitment outreach.

### **Coworking Space:**

Contact coworking brands, invite them to consider a location in Elbert County.

### **Light Industrial Manufacturing:**

Ensure available land is properly listed. Connect with industry groups listed on [Page 26](#) to network with firms needing a location.

- If there is unlisted vacant commercial property in key commercial areas, contact the owner and learn more about its availability and owners' plans for the sites. (Note, as of November 2022, commercial properties in the County listed as available on CoStar included 4 for lease and 24 for sale (21 of which were land).

## 4. Identify recruitment targets.

- Select targets based on what the community wants and needs, and on the market opportunities in Elbert County (see [pages 19-27](#)).
- Determine what mix of chain stores and independent brands suits the County (see [Appendix E](#)).
- Create a list of potential businesses within the following categories:
  - **Priority Targets**
    - Urgent Care & Medical Care
    - Small-Scale Grocer & Household Goods
    - Truck Stop
    - Hotel
    - Coworking Space
    - Light Industrial Manufacturing
    - Meat Processing Plant
  - **Secondary Targets**
    - Child Care
    - Warehousing and distribution
    - IT or Tech Campus along Highway 86
    - Value-Added Agriculture
    - Maker space
    - Restaurants & Retailers
- Identify if the potential businesses are likely to be interested in locating in Elbert County.
  - Check whether the demographics of their existing locations are like Elbert County's demographics.
  - Visit their website—some companies publish their location criteria.

## 5. Conduct outreach to recruitment targets.

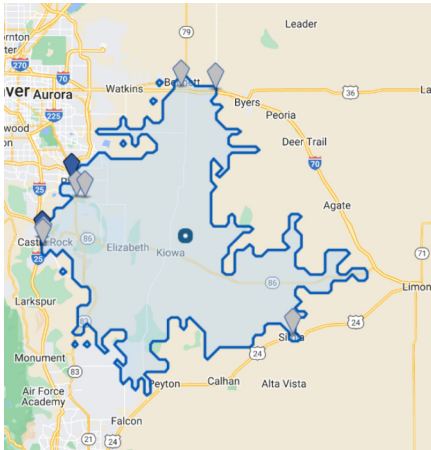
- Send an email that provides a compelling reason for the business to locate in Elbert County.
  - For a chain store, check for online forms to contact the real estate development team.
  - For independent brands email the owner or CEO.
- If the business is interested in the County:
  - Identify potential locations.
  - Provide any requested market data.
  - Connect businesses to property owners and brokers.
  - Facilitate site visits.
  - Conduct follow-up.
- Attend conferences to network with appropriate business types (such as the International Council of Shopping Centers conference).



# Urgent Care & Medical Care

There is only one primary care physician in Elbert County, and only eight medical facilities within an hour drive from Kiowa, the County Seat. The community has a strong desire for local medical facilities, with medical ranked as the number one priority needed for Elbert County by survey respondents.

## Medical Care Facilities within 1-hour Drive of Kiowa



[CoStar Property Search](#)

According to the [2022 Elbert County Community Health Assessment](#), Elbert County is the most populous county in the state of Colorado without a hospital within its borders. The vital healthcare needs of Elbert County residents include access to healthcare, mental health providers and resources, and health services for seniors. 93.9% of Elbert County residents have health insurance, yet only 60% of residents feel they could easily access healthcare.

Usually, developers build a healthcare facility and then recruit the service provider, but it is possible to outsource it to a talent sourcing firm, such as [OPYS](#) or [Vituity](#).

## Rural Health Clinic

The [Rural Health Clinic](#) (RHC) program is intended to increase access to primary care services for patients in rural communities. RHCs can be public, nonprofit, or for-profit healthcare facilities. The main advantage of RHC status is enhanced reimbursement rates for providing Medicare and Medicaid services.

To receive certification, RHC's must be in rural, underserved areas; and use a team approach of physicians working with non-physician providers such as nurse practitioners (NP), physician assistants (PA), and certified nurse midwives (CNM) to provide services. The eastern half of Elbert County is designated as a [Medically Underserved Area by the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment](#).

## Suggested Locations

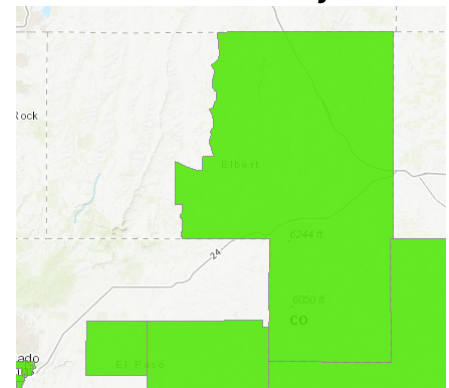
The County anticipates that health care providers would best be suited to a location near the heavily populated portions of Elbert County, in the western side of the County near Elizabeth and Kiowa—although a clinic would be welcome to locate anywhere that suits their demographic requirements.

# Small-Scale Grocer & Household Goods

Elbert County is mostly a bedroom community—with limited employment and shopping options within the County. Simla, located on Highway 24, has one local grocer (the Simla Food Store), and is approximately a 25-minute drive from the Dollar General and Food-Mart in Limon, and a 15-minute drive from the Woolsey’s Food Center in Calhan. It would enhance quality of life for community members to be able to shop for basic food and household necessities without having to drive a large distance.

The USDA’s Food Access Research Atlas (FARA) categorizes the eastern half of Elbert County as an area with “low-access” to healthy food. FARA measures distance to large grocery stores—where most households purchase their fruits and vegetables. (Small stores were excluded due to the inconsistent data on what foods they carry.)

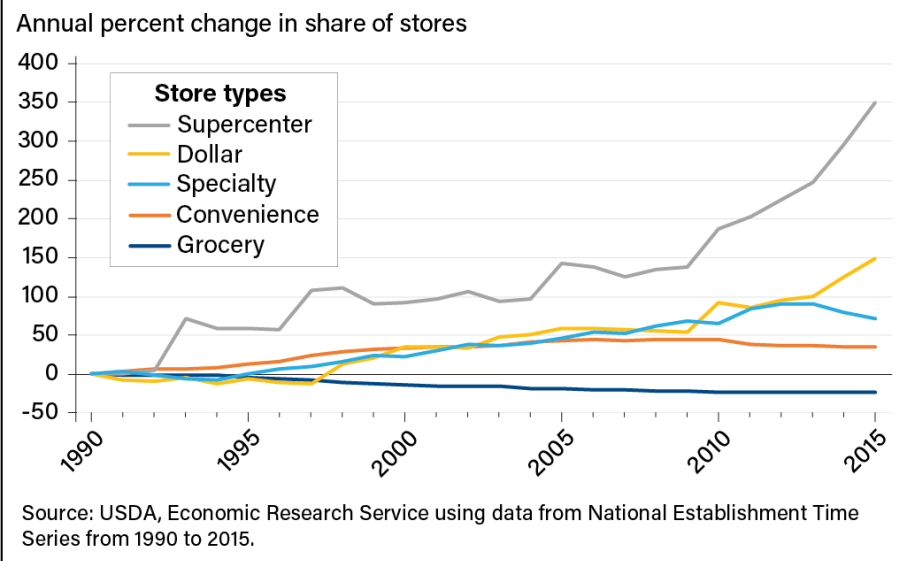
**Areas Categorized as “Low Access” for Healthy Food**



[USDA Food Access Research Atlas](#)

Simla may benefit from a small-scale grocer and household goods store, and based on [the growth patterns of chain stores in rural areas](#), a dollar store (such as a Dollar General) is the most likely to locate in Simla. There are a handful of Dollar General locations in the region, with two located along Highway 24 to the west (15-minute drive) and east (25-minute drive) of Simla. Dollar General is an example of the type of store likely to open in Simla since Dollar General is growing rapidly and target their store expansion at rural communities—[three-quarters of Dollar General outlets are in communities of 20,000 or fewer people](#). King Soopers also has a [strong presence in the region](#), and although less likely to locate in a rural area it would be worth it to reach out to them to learn site selection parameters.

**Dollar stores and supercenters had the greatest percentage growth in rural nonmetro counties from 1990 to 2015**



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from National Establishment Time Series from 1990 to 2015.

[USDA, Rural Counties Losing Share of Grocery Stores, Gaining Other Types of Food Retailers](#)

Consideration should be given to what specific stores are selected for recruitment to fill this need. In general, any retailer who provides some variety of products that are otherwise unavailable would be looked on favorably. As an alternative to a store where both groceries and household goods are available under one roof—the business attraction efforts could focus solely on stores that provide household goods, and business expansion services could be offered to the Simla Food Store.

There are [many nonprofit organizations working to combat lack of access to healthy food](#) in Colorado. These organizations can be excellent resources and advocates for increasing food security in rural areas.

# Truck Stop

Interstate 70 and Highway 24 run through the northeast and southeast parts of Elbert County, respectively, providing a potential opportunity for the development of a commercial trucking fuel station.

With easy off highway accessibility and high commercial traffic count, Agate and Simla would be prime locations for a commercial trucking fuel station.

Route 0700, Interstate 70 past Agate has an AADT of 370, with 30 Single Unit Trucks and 9 Combination Trucks. Route 070A, Interstate 70 between Agate and Limon has an AADT of 12,000, with 250 Single Unit Trucks and 4,000 Combination Trucks.

Route 024G, Highway 24 past Simla has an AADT of 4,000, with 180 Single Unit Trucks and 420 Combination Trucks.

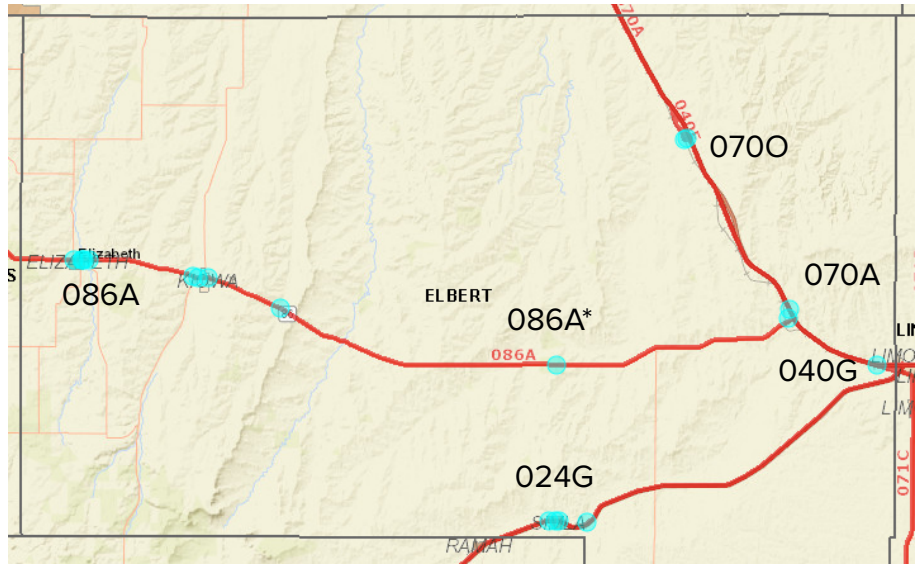
Proximity to other major truck stops with 50+ pumps are:

- ATM (Flying J Travel Center) (19.9 Miles)
- Loves Travel Shop (36.4 Miles)
- Seibert Travel Stop (65.2 Miles)
- Watkins Truck and Auto Plaza (45.2)

The truck stop brands most prevalent in the area include:

- Love's (12)
- Pilot Flying J (5)
- Tomahawk (2)
- TA Petro (2)
- Other (13)

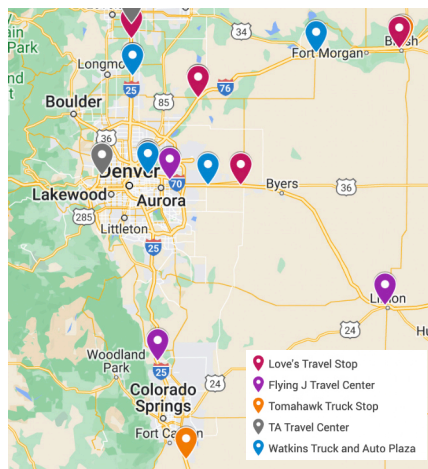
## Traffic Count Stations in Elbert County



[Colorado Online Transportation Information System](#)

Route	AADT	AADT Truck	Location
024G	4000	600	ON SH 24 CARIBOU ST E/O SIOUX AVE SIMLA
040G	110	10	ON SH 40 SE/O I-70 LIMON
070A	12000	4250	ON I-70 NW/O SH 86
0700	370	39	ON SH 70 SPUR MAIN ST W/O I-70
086A	12000	450	ON SH 86 KIOWA AVE E/O CR 13 ELIZABETH
086A*	910	100	ON SH 86 E/O CR 125

## Truck Stops in Area



Google Maps

\*Note that although Route 086A through Elizabeth has a lot of truck traffic, as the route continues east across the County the AADT for all vehicles and trucks drops considerably, therefore trucks in that area are likely coming to Elizabeth from the west and then returning from the same direction they came, making Elizabeth and Kiowa less likely locations for a truck stop.



## Opportunities for Various Types of Truck Stops

An important challenge to consider is [which alternative fuel](#) will gain the most market share? Each Alternative Fuel has their own process, yet for Truckers, an alternative fuel source needs to be generalized and implemented across the country for standardization.

For example, while hydrogen fueling locations have increased in select markets—primarily California—the hydrogen fuel market is low

right now, as of August 1, 2021, there were only 11,016 fuel cell vehicles in America, compared to over 270 million gasoline cars. However, the global hydrogen market is expected to grow from [160 billion to 263.5 billion by 2027](#), fueled by a growing demand for Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles. It is important to be aware of the variety of alternate fuels, as any new fueling station needs to be either compatible with, or geared towards, the fueling station needs of tomorrow.

Batteries may soon have sufficient range to complete [up to 375 miles per charge](#), leading to a decrease in gasoline truck stops.

## Electric Stations

The challenge of electric stations is that the rollout must be done industry wide. It is impossible to rely on just one or two stations within a region.

Both companies and governments are shifting towards electric trucking. [Many major companies](#) are adopting electric vehicles, including Amazon, Best Buy, FedEx, and IKEA, each with their own targets for positive climate impacts. Nearly 20 states—including Colorado—participated in an action plan striving for [100% electric medium and heavy-duty vehicle sales by 2050](#).

“We believe 50% of our sales will be electric by 2030, that’s 50% by 2030 and by 2040, 100%.”  
– [Navistar CEO Mathias Carlbaum](#)

Electric Trucks have a [13% per mile lower total cost of ownership](#), with a net savings of \$200,000 over the lifetime of the electric truck.

## Additional Services Offered at Truck Stops

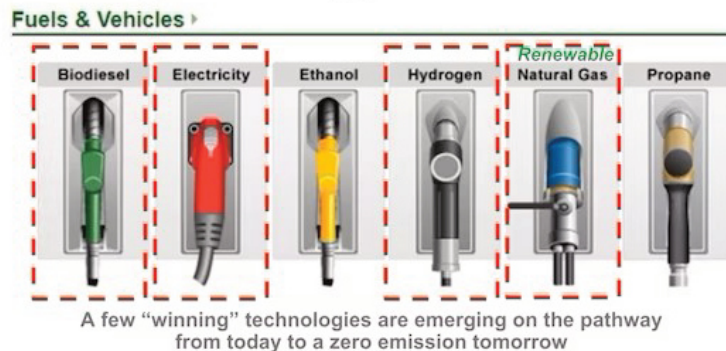
Because of the charge up time at electric stations, truckers will be [staying longer](#) at electric stations than other stations, even if they recharge less often. This is expected to change drivers’ experiences at truck stops; and truck stops will want to offer additional services, such as:

- Wi-Fi
- Laundry
- Drivers Lounge
- Abundant Food Options
- Barber shop
- Movie theater
- Workout rooms
- Game rooms
- Chiropractor or massage services
- ATM
- Tire Shop

## Alternative Energy Fuels



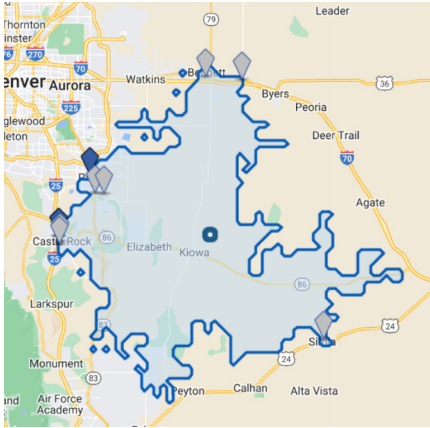
Alternative Energy Fuels: Several Options Available –  
But all have challenges from vehicle supply side and infrastructure side



[Commercial Carrier Journal, How to build a future-proof truck stop or freight facility in 2021](#)

# Hotel

## Hotel within 1-hour Drive of Kiowa



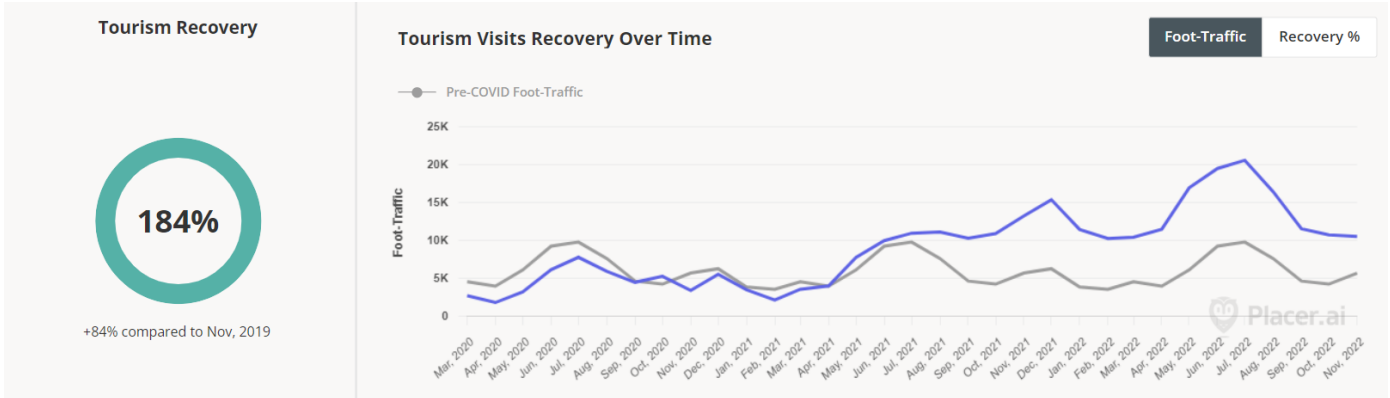
[CoStar Property Search](#)

There are only two motels in Elbert County—the Coach-Lite Motel and Western Lodge Motel in Simla—and there are only eleven hotels within an hour drive from Kiowa, the County Seat.

A Hotel Feasibility Study conducted in 2018 for the Town of Elizabeth found that the market was not strong enough to support a hotel—due to the seasonal demand exclusive to summer. The study concluded that the market conditions would be more favorable to a hotel as the community continued to develop activities, events, and festivals, and add new attractions to support visitation in the summer plus the spring and fall.

Elbert County’s population is growing rapidly—from 23,086 in 2010 to 26,062 in 2020, and visitation has increased 222% since pre-COVID-19 levels ([+122% in September 2022 compared to September 2019](#)). This visitation data shows higher visitation in the spring and fall months of 2022 than the summer peak visitation of 2019.

## Elbert County 2019 vs 2022 Year-Over-Year Comparison of Tourism Visits



[Placer.ai, Domestic Tourism Recovery: Elbert County, Colorado](#)

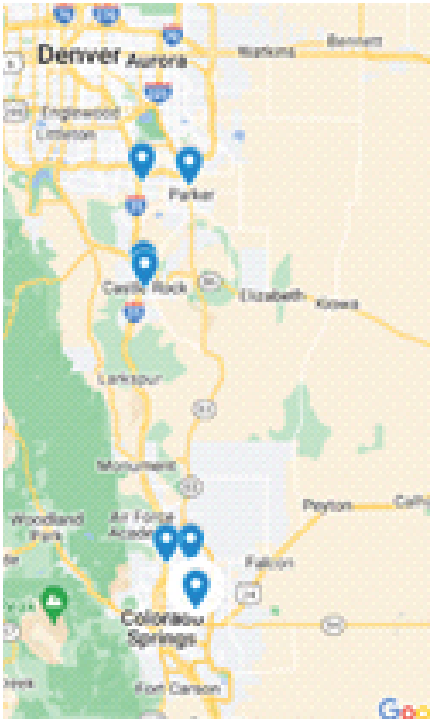
Events and activities that draw visitors to Elbert County include community events such as the Elbert County Fair (July – August), the Elizabeth Stampede (June), and the 4th of July Fair hosted by the Elbert County Museum. There are also private events such as weddings, and private venues such as the [Messer Arena and Event Center](#) and [The Patch](#) that bring people to Elbert County.

The 2018 Hotel Feasibility Study recommended that when visitation and demand increases, Elizabeth pursue upper midscale limited-service lodging brands.

# Coworking Space

The first coworking spaces opened in [2002 and 2005](#) with the goal of providing a space that offered the freedom of working independently with the structure and community of working with others. Early coworking spaces were geared towards serving architects, consultants, startups, and freelancers.

## Coworking Spaces in Area



Google Maps

While working from home increased in popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic, many employees still prefer to work in the office. Of workers whose jobs can be done from home who choose to go into their workplace, [61% say they feel more productive and 21% say they don't have the proper space or resources at home](#). The number of coworking spaces increased from 19 thousand in 2019 to 23 thousand in 2021—and is anticipated to reach almost [42 thousand by 2024](#).

A wide variety of companies provide coworking spaces, from major franchises with branches in numerous cities (such as Impact Hub, WeWork, and Industrious) to independent businesses with 5-10 locations that dominate market share within a single region, to one-off locations.

The reduction of traffic was a topic frequently brought up in interviews, and in the community survey “Low Traffic, Low Light Pollution, Wide Views” ranked as the top priority. Since 88% of those who live in Elbert County work outside the County, attracting a Coworking Space is a priority for the County because it will enable many residents to work from a local office—thereby reducing the traffic caused by commuting.

The closest coworking spaces to Elbert County are in Parker, Castle Rock, and Colorado Springs. Craft Coworking in Castle Rock is the closest space to Elbert County, approximately a 21-minute drive from Elizabeth.





## Types of Coworking Spaces

Coworking space can provide open work areas where people can collaborate and interact while working, dedicated desk space, or private office space. Coworking space amenities generally include powerful Wi-Fi, conference rooms, copy machines, printers, fax machines, coffee, tea, snacks, events, concierge services, exercise facilities, mail services, safety and security, dedicated desks, and private office spaces.

Desks or offices are generally available for walk-in use or leased membership for a month or year. Major types of coworking membership plans, and the [average monthly price](#) in the U.S. for each type, include:

- Hot Desk or Floating Desk – Access to a coworking space during business hours without a fixed workstation (Avg \$195/month)
- Dedicated Desk – A customer is designated a specific office space within a shared office (Avg \$387/month)
- Private Office – A private office and access to shared amenities (Varies, can be up to \$150-\$200/SF)
- Weekender Coworking – Enable workers to come in on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and in the evening. Great for people developing side-hustles but are not using that for their fulltime job (Avg \$99/month)
- Virtual Office – Allows members to put that address as the address of their office. No guaranteed office space, but members can use meeting rooms to collaborate and socialize (Varies, from \$50 to \$200+)
- Community Plan – Allows access to the digital community, discounts on room rentals, and 1 in person day a month (Varies, generally over \$45)
- Day Pass – Access to all amenities in the coworking space for a day (Varies, generally \$45-\$55/day)

## Coworking Brands in Colorado

- [Creative Density](#)
- [Niche Workspaces](#)
- [Shift Workspaces](#)
- [Industry](#)
- [Premier Workspaces](#)
- [Candy Factory Coworking](#)
- [Enterprise Coworking](#)
- [Firmspace](#)
- [Industrious Denver](#)
- [Modworks](#)
- [neu.works](#)
- [Serendipity Labs](#)
- [Spaces](#)
- [Thrive Workplace](#)
- [Tradecraft Industries](#)
- [WorkAbility](#)
- [Expansive](#)
- [WeWork](#)
- [Galvanize Inc.](#)
- [Office Evolution](#)
- [Regus](#)
- [Craft Coworking](#)
- [The Village Workspace](#)
- [The Enclave](#)
- [Workstyle](#)
- [My Buddies Coworking](#)
- [Front Range Co-Working](#)
- [New Altitude](#)
- [Epicentral Coworking](#)

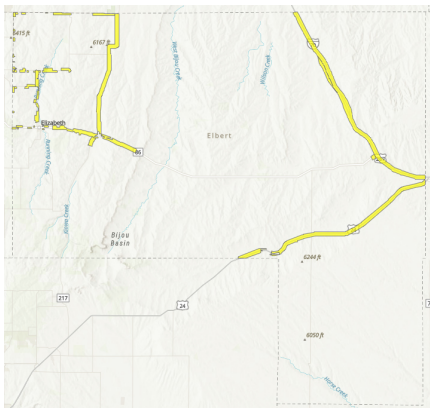
# Light Industrial Manufacturing

Light industrial manufacturing is an industry-type that includes a wide variety of manufacturing businesses—such as those that produce value-added food products, accessories, paper goods, leather goods, textiles and clothing, household appliances, and electronic devices. Businesses are generally categorized as light industrial when they are (1) less capital-income intensive, (2) produce products for end users rather than as intermediates for use of other industries (generally smaller consumer goods), and (3) their facilities have less environmental impact than those associated with heavy industry.

Many light industrial manufacturers can set up shop in small spaces designed for general commercial use, often needing very little renovation or adaptation. Where light industry does pose some environmental risk, such as a woodworking shop or a metal-plating operation, a minimum of special equipment is often sufficient to ameliorate the impact. Light manufacturing generally does not create and emit fumes, gases, smokes, vapours, vibrations, noise, glare, or other factors which are regarded as nuisances which would cause adverse effects to the users of adjacent land.

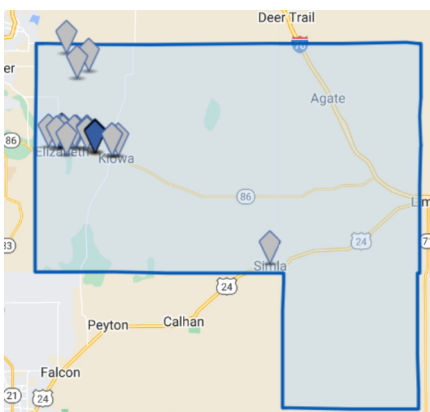
According to 2014 data from the Manufacturing Institute, [over 75 percent of manufacturing businesses in the U.S. had fewer than 20 employees](#). Communities will benefit from strategies that include these small manufacturing businesses in local small business programming and placement efforts.

## Economic Development Zone



[Economic Development Zone Overlay](#)

## Industrial Properties



[CoStar](#)

## Opportunity for Light Industrial Manufacturing

In the County's Economic Development Zone (EDZ), landowners do not need to rezone to change from Ag to Commercial. There is a streamlined process where property owners submit site plans for approval, and the site plans receive an administrative review and approval from the Board of County Commissioners. There is no review by the Planning Commission.

If a property is not currently in the EDZ and it is along a major roadway, then the property owner can apply to be included in the EDZ.

Properties in the EDZ are in an excellent position for light industrial manufacturing use. According to CoStar, there are currently 22 industrial properties in Elbert County, one of which is a flex-space.

## Property Availability

Light industrial manufacturing business owners are likely to look for locations by contacting a real estate agent or searching online on LoopNet or a similar real estate listing site. (Link to LoopNet listings available on the [Elbert County Economic Development Website – Available Property](#).)

Before connecting with manufacturers, the ECEDD should connect with owners of property in the EDZ to inquire whether they are interested in selling or leasing land for industrial use. Assist these property owners connect with local real estate brokers to list their property so that it is available for consideration by manufacturing firms who are searching for a location.

## Finding Light Industrial Manufacturers

It can be challenging to find, connect, and support small scale manufacturers. Often these businesses begin as small operations within the business owner's garage or personal property—and when they are ready to increase their scale, they do not typically go through the site selection process used by large heavy manufacturing firms.

Recommendations for identifying and connecting with light industrial manufacturers to recruit to Elbert County include the following:

- Build a database of small-scale manufacturing business owners already located in the County by reviewing business license lists. Note any that are located in a garage or on residential property, as these may have future need to expand into industrial space.
- Reach out to local light industrial manufacturers to understand their location and expansion needs. Are there challenges with identifying or leasing appropriate scaled locations in Elbert County?
- Identify local, small production businesses through local fairs, markets, ethnic and religious institutions, and by hosting informal networking events in target neighborhoods.
- Identify existing light industrial manufacturing companies already established in Colorado. Potential sources for information include the [Colorado Biz Made in Colorado](#) business list, or the [2023 Colorado Manufacturers Directory® & Colorado Manufacturing Industry Database](#).
- Connect with the industry groups listed below to identify if they have members or networks whom are interested in learning about location opportunities in Elbert County.
- Consider creating a Garage-to-Storefront program (such as the one in [Gresham Oregon](#)) to encourage and facilitate local businesses to grow into commercial space.

## Industry Groups

- [Colorado Advanced Manufacturing Association](#)
- [Manufacturer's Edge](#)
- [Colorado Technology Association](#)
- [Women in Manufacturing Colorado](#)
- [American Council of Engineering Companies of Colorado](#)
- [Rocky Mountain Mechanical Contractors Association](#)
- [Rocky Mountain Tooling & Machining Association](#)





# Meat Processing Plant

Elbert County's economic base is historically rooted in cattle ranching and farming. The most recent [Census of Agriculture, 2017, reported that Elbert County](#) ranked 17 out of 62 counties in Colorado for its cattle sales—and these sales represent 71% of the market value of all agricultural products sold in Elbert County.

There are [four domestic livestock processing plants in Elbert County](#): Elizabeth Locker Plant (Elizabeth), Rustic Cuts (Elizabeth), Dave's Custom Cutting (Kiowa), and Simla Frozen Food Lockers (Simla).

95% of small-scale food animal operations report that the farthest distance they travel to slaughter facilities is [90 miles or less](#). Proximity to a slaughter facility can affect the economic viability and marketing decisions of small-scale operations and may represent significant barriers to sustainability. Considering that [93% of farms in Elbert County are small-scale](#) (meaning they have gross annual farm sales less than \$499,999), increasing local capacity for meat processing provides additional support to an important segment of the local economy.

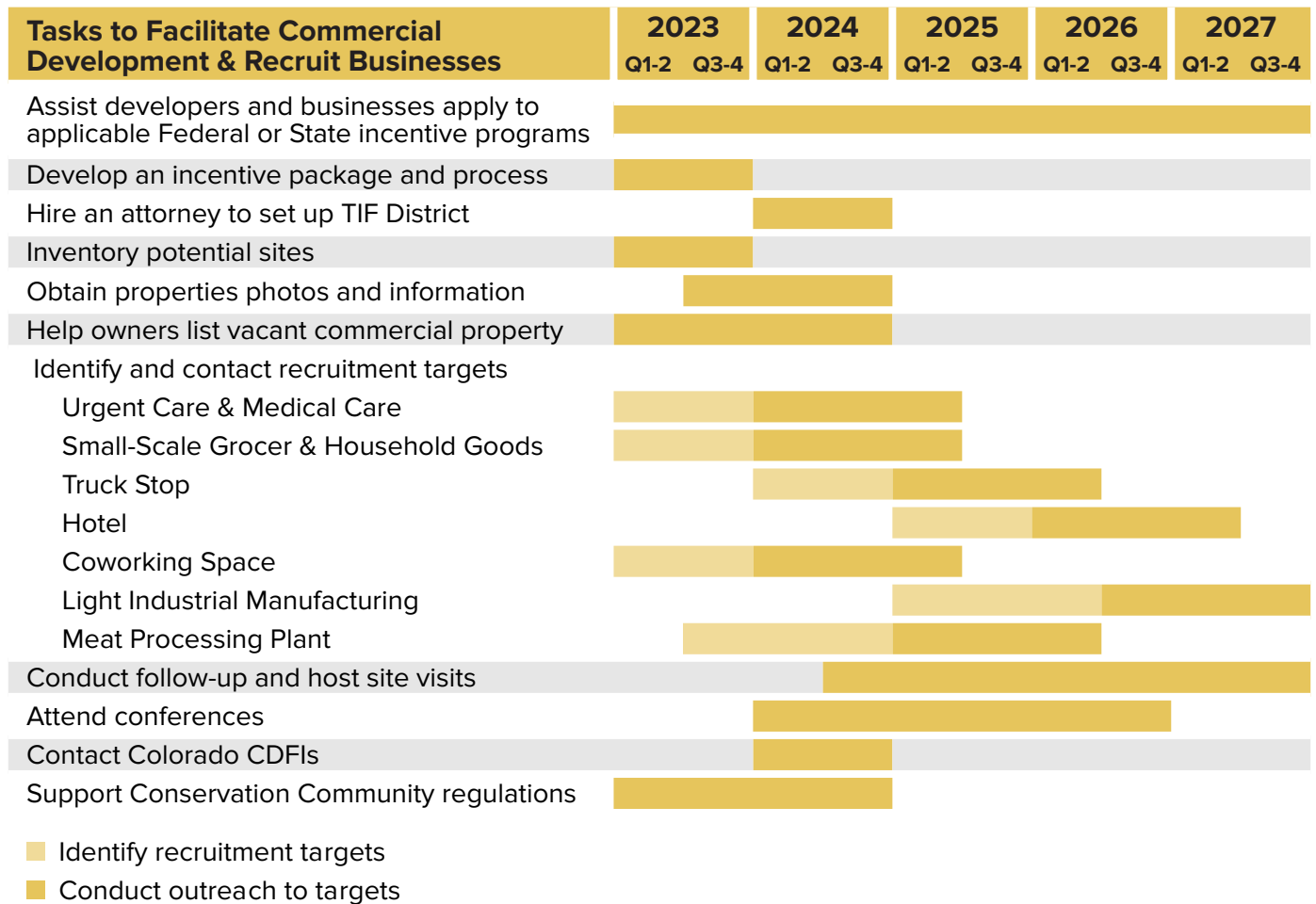
Processors offer critical supply chain infrastructure which creates and retains wealth in rural communities. Ranchers in Elbert County reported that there is a bottleneck in processing beef, and according to a [2020 CSU survey](#), meat processing facilities statewide reported operating at or very near capacity for much of the year. A backlog at processing plants [negatively impacts small-scale ranchers](#).

1. Explore the possibility of increasing local meat processing capabilities by assisting the existing local processing plants to increase their production capability through expansion or new technology. This requires outreach to the owners of the processing plants to determine their interest in expansion and what approach for increasing their capabilities would appeal to them.
  - Integrating automation into processing systems is one approach to improve productivity. According to [Automation in the Global Meat Industry](#) “For an industry driven by the challenges of a tightening labor pool and ever more complex processing operations, increased automation is not only welcomed but also needed.” However, the [machinery](#) required for automation is expensive and would need to address the specific bottlenecks of the local meat processing plants. The ECEDD could assist in researching options for machinery to fill needs, and explore whether there are any state or federal programs that could assist these processing plants with purchasing the appropriate machinery.
  - Connect local processing plants to Colorado Association of Meat Processors and/or Colorado State University's meat science program to provide direct technical assistance for growing their operations.
  - Ensure adequate funding and use of Colorado's value-added development grants to support business development needs for processors.
  - [If needed](#), coordinate with Colorado Dept of Public Health and Environment to develop and deploy scale-relevant guidance for environmental compliance efforts of meat processing including composting/disposal of waste water, offal, etc.
2. If the existing local meat processing plants are not interested or able to expand, recruit an additional processing plant to locate in the County.
  - Elbert County provides access to both ranchers and a qualified employee base—making the area prime for growth in the meat processing industry.
  - Conduct feasibility study for additional processing plant—consider funding study via a [United States Department of Agriculture Local Food Promotion Program Planning Grant](#) or collaborating with [CSU to conduct the study](#).

# Strategy 2 & 3 Implementation Timeline

The recommended implementation timeline follows. The recommendations will be implemented based on the priorities of the Board of County Commissioners and the Elbert County Economic Development Department. Note, there are more recommendations than the ECEDD anticipates completing within the 5-year timeframe—this is intentional as it provides a variety of options to pursue as opportunities arise. Flexible recommendations enable Elbert County to benefit from changing market opportunities.

The ECEDD will make annual adjustments to the timeline and targets—as these should guide implementation efforts according to progress made, current opportunities, and the ECEDD’s capacity.



**Goal**

Increase the percentage of commercial property in the County.

**Target**

- \$24 million in new commercial properties by 2026
- Another \$100 million in new commercial properties by 2030

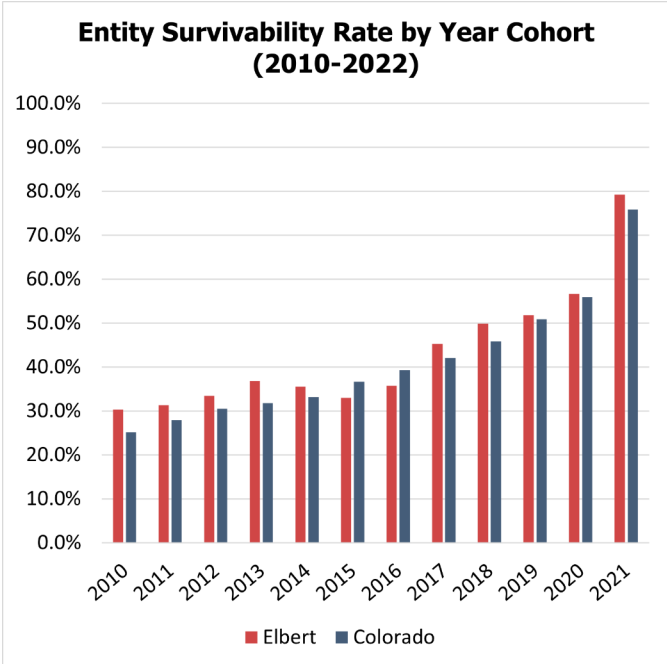
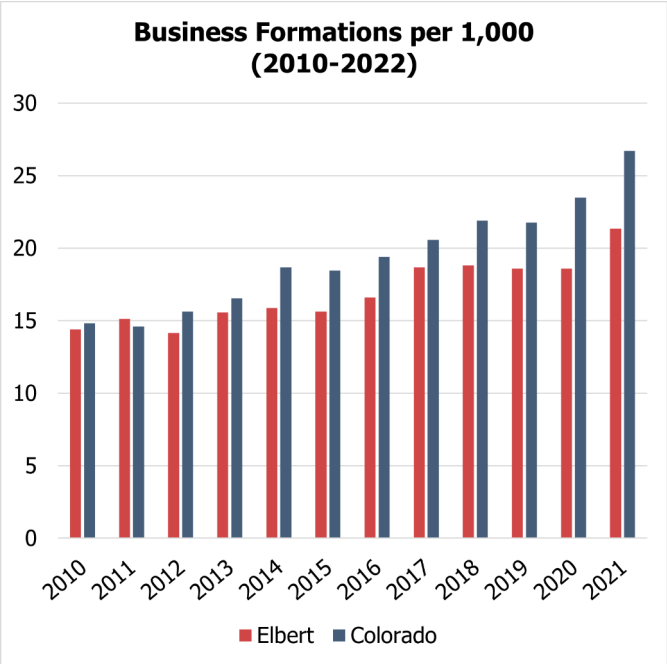
# Local Economy



The businesses that comprise the local economy contribute to local wealth creation, opportunities, and prosperity. According to data from the [Colorado Information Marketplace](#), Elbert County has a lower rate of business formation than the state average (from 2010 to 2021, only in 2011 did Elbert County have higher rate of business formation), indicating a lower rate of entrepreneurship in the County than in the state overall. This gap has increased over time and the disparity was largest in 2021.

Despite a lower rate of business formations, businesses that are started in the county tend to do better than in the state as a whole. The Entity Survivability Rate Chart shows the percentage of total businesses started in a given year that are still in “good standing.” For example, of all the businesses that were formed in Elbert County in 2010, approximately 30% were in good standing as of July 2022. Between 2010 and 2020, Elbert County’s average survivability rate was 1.8 percentage points higher in Elbert County than for the state as a whole. Of the years sampled, only two-year cohorts had lower survivability rates compared to the state (2015 and 2016).

**Elbert County & Colorado State Business Data**



[Colorado Department of State](#)

A major role of economic development is providing support to local businesses to help businesses prosper so that they can provide goods, services, and local jobs.

A majority ([80% of jobs](#)) are created by businesses that start up or are already present in each state—making existing local businesses a key asset to economic growth. However, according to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), [about 50% of small businesses fail in their first five years](#) of operation. Often this is because entrepreneurs are more skilled at providing their product than they are at running a business. Local governments and community-based organizations can provide programs and support to help startup businesses succeed and grow.



# Strategy 4: Support Businesses

The ECEDD assists with expansion and retention of local businesses. This common economic development strategy is typically less costly and time intensive than recruiting new businesses—since [up to 80% of job growth](#) in any community is generated by the businesses already located there and not by attraction efforts.

The ECEDD's primary focus is on supporting business expansion. However, the ECEDD will also provide retention services as needed. Businesses selected for expansion services include those that are second stage companies whose services or products align with the County's vision.

## Second-Stage Companies

Second-stage companies are businesses that have advanced beyond the startup phase but haven't reached maturity. In terms of job creation and tax contributions, "the expansion of businesses and operations, not new operations, has the greater impact in most communities over time" (Gordon 2001), and second-stage companies are generally best primed for growth. The County can facilitate their growth by providing customized information to address their strategic issues. As high-value members of the local business ecosystem, the ECEDD's assistance should systematically assist these businesses to be agile, adaptive, and globally competitive.

## Alignment with County Vision

Strategic positioning is supported by a cohort of businesses that all share a similar motif—regardless of differences in their specific services or products. The objective is to create a business community that shares a common theme—which then creates a reputation for the region.

Businesses who align with the desired strategic outcomes for the County (see Strategy 1) should be selected for additional support. These efforts are intended to enhance the business ecosystem that in turn supports the strategic positioning efforts of the County. Ideally the business expansion services will provide economic impact on both the increased employment and revenue to the existing local business, as well as position the County to attract additional businesses that align with the County's vision. For example, helping an event business expand also increases visitation and supports the recruitment of a hotel; or helping a business that services the agricultural industry also supports the continuation of agricultural activities.

## Selection Criteria

Potential factors to consider as companies are selected for support include:

- Multiplier/Ripple Effects—does this company create direct, indirect, and induced jobs?
- Local Ownership—does this company retain funds in the local economy?
- Investment—does this company plan to invest in commercial property upgrades, workforce, etc. that provide additional benefits to the County?
- Growth—is this company poised to grow?
- Existing Benefit—does this company already provide good benefit to the County in terms of existing employment?
- Geography—is this company located in an area that needs to be bolstered?
- Quality of Life—does this company directly or indirectly contribute to quality of life within the community?

## Small Business Support Network

There are multiple organizations that provide business support services in Elbert County; however, not all businesses are aware of the support available to them. Elbert County Economic Development ECEDD's role in supporting local businesses is network facilitator, provider of centralized information, and advocate.

As network facilitator, the ECEDD will prevent duplicative investments of time and resources into local business support services by providing leadership to service providers. This includes identifying how well-connected service providers are with the business community and ensuring service providers are positioned to support each other in serving local businesses.

**Strategy:** Provide a wide range of support as a business navigates the process of opening, from helping the community understand what the business will contribute to the community, to helping the business navigate the permitting process, to connecting the business with other service providers and ensure they have the support they need to thrive. Provide expansion services, and retention services when needed, to a few businesses each year.

**ELBERT  
COUNTY, CO**

**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**



### Process

#### 1. Create and send annual business questionnaire.

- Collect information to guide the selection of businesses for expansion (or retention) assistance.
  - What support would be needed?
  - What are the businesses' plans regarding expansion, closure, or relocation?
  - Are there missing B2B components which could find ready customers within the county? (e.g., printing, bookkeeping, metal powder-coating, etc.)

#### 2. Provide business expansion and retention assistance.

- Select 2-3 businesses to assist for expansion or retention each year.
- Conduct site visits to selected businesses and meet with owners to identify their specific needs.
- Create support plan for each business that includes: objective(s), timeline for assistance (approximate start and end dates), and what assistance will be provided.
- Assist businesses according to support plan.

#### 3. Host annual roundtable with business service providers.

- Network local organizations that provide business support services to increase their efficacy.
- Participants include the Workforce Center, Small Business Development Center, Chamber of Commerce, Elbert County Agricultural Alliance, and Economic Development Council.
- Recommended agenda includes brief presentations by each service provider on what services they provide, and discussion regarding best practices for connecting with the business community. (Optional: invite select businesses to attend and share their needs.)



#### 4. Facilitate additional business services as needed.

- Based on information obtained from service providers and local businesses, identify if there are any gaps in services or unique needs from the business community.
- Research programs and organizations that have already created a system for providing the needed services.
  - [CO.STARTERS®](#) provides a 10-week program to launch a local cohort of entrepreneurial businesses.
  - [Economic Gardening®](#) provides strategic consulting to assist select local businesses with expansion.
- Contract with any selected programs to provide their services to businesses in Elbert County.
- Promote programs to local businesses who would benefit from them and ensure that local service providers are aware of the new resources so that they can direct the businesses whom they assist to utilize these new services.

#### 5. Create a “how-to start a new business” brochure.

- The brochure should provide information on:
  - Local and state regulatory requirements for starting a business (include a link to the [Colorado Business Resource Book](#); permitting process map, fee list, and timeline; and business licensing process map and fee list).
  - Resources and technical assistance available to businesses (include Services list and contact information for service providers).
- Ensure the appropriate departments at the County and towns, the SBDC, and the Chamber of Commerce know about—and provide input on—the brochure.
- Provide additional information, advocacy, and customized support to new businesses as needed.



#### 6. Provide marketing support for businesses who align with the County’s rural identity.

- Identify local businesses who align with the County’s rural identity and support co-branding and marketing of these businesses.
- Coordinate with Chamber of Commerce to identify businesses to promote. Consider event venues, experiential businesses (such as dude ranches and agritourism businesses), destination retail, and events.
- Coordinate with selected businesses to identify what type of promotional support would be beneficial.





# Strategy 4 Implementation Timeline

The recommended implementation timeline follows. The recommendations will be implemented based on the priorities of the Board of County Commissioners and the Elbert County Economic Development Department. Note, there are more recommendations than the ECEDD anticipates completing within the 5-year timeframe—this is intentional as it provides a variety of options to pursue as opportunities arise. Flexible recommendations enable Elbert County to benefit from changing market opportunities.

The ECEDD will make annual adjustments to the timeline and targets—as these should guide implementation efforts according to progress made, current opportunities, and the ECEDD’s capacity.

Tasks to Support Businesses	2023		2024		2025		2026		2027		
	Q1-2	Q3-4	Q1-2	Q3-4	Q1-2	Q3-4	Q1-2	Q3-4	Q1-2	Q3-4	
Create and send business questionnaire	■		■		■		■		■		
Select businesses to assist	■		■		■		■		■		
Conduct site visits and identify specific expansion or retention needs		■		■		■		■		■	
Create individual business support plans		■		■		■		■		■	
Assist businesses according to support plan			■								
Host annual roundtable with service providers		■		■		■		■		■	
Create “how-to start a new business” brochure	■										
Identify County’s ‘rural identity’ businesses		■									
Run a co-branding marketing campaign					■						

**Goal**

Increase the number of jobs and businesses in the County.

**Target**

- Add 20 new jobs by 2025
- Add 5 new businesses by 2026

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Prior Plans Reviewed

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### County Documents & Plans

- Elbert County Strategic Plan 2018-2027
- Elbert County Master Plan – Housing Section (2009)
- Elbert County Comprehensive Plan (2018) by Design Workshop
- Elbert County Rural Water Supply Study (2018) by Forsgren Associates
- Elbert County Zoning Regulations (2019)
- Elbert County Annual Financial Report (2020)
- Elbert County Transportation Master Plan (2021)
- Economic Development & Recovery Research (2021) by PUMA
- 2020 Update of Development Impact Fees (2021) by Raftelis
- Elbert County Community Health Assessment (2022) by OMNI Institute
- Update on Groundwater-Level Elevations in the Denver Basin Bedrock Aquifers of Elbert County, Colorado, 2021-2024 (2022) by USGS

### Town Documents & Plans

- Town of Kiowa Economic Development Master Plan (2018)
- Town of Kiowa Economic & Market Analysis (2018)
- Town of Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan (2019)
- Town of Elizabeth Water & Sewer Master Plan (2020)
- Town of Elizabeth 2040 Transportation Plan (2020)

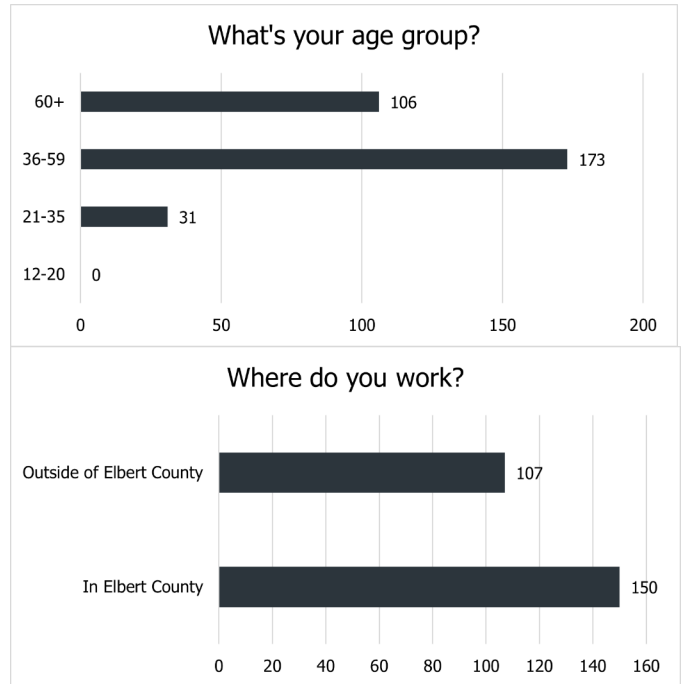
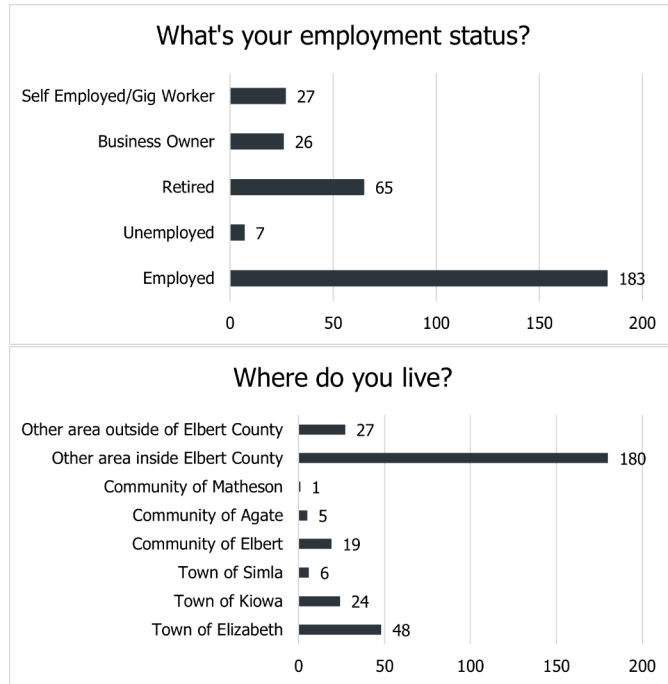
### Other Documents & Plans

- 2021-2025 East Central Council of Governments Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2021)
- Fiscal Impact Study 1,012-Acre Independence Community (2016) by THK Associates
- Hotel Feasibility Study (2018) by Robert S. Benton & Associates

# Appendix B: Survey Results

## Survey Respondents

310 community members participated in the survey, most of whom were ages 36-59 (55%), employed (59%), live in the unincorporated County (58%), and work in the County (58%).

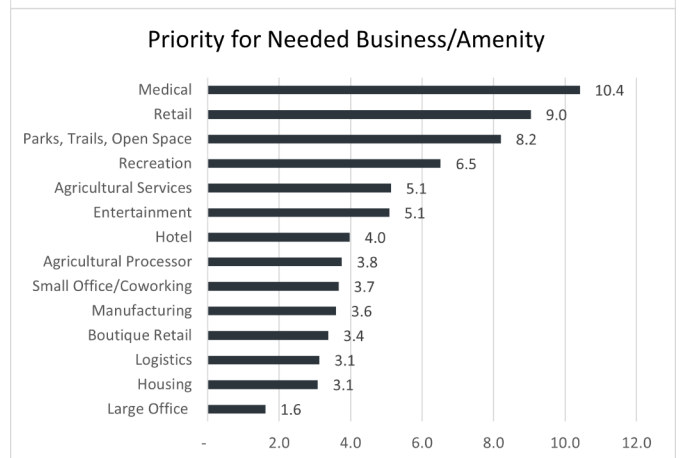
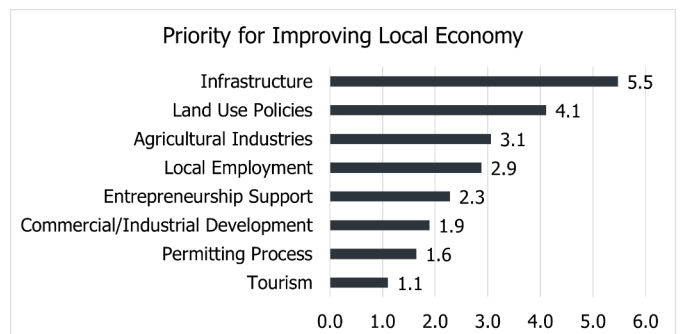
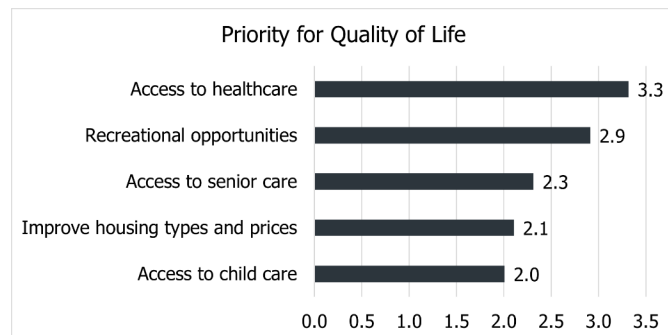


## Economic Development Priorities

“Improve infrastructure” was ranked as top priority for improving the local economy, followed by “improve policies related to land use and development”.

“Improve access to healthcare” was ranked as top priority for improving quality of life, followed by “improve recreational opportunities”.

“Medical” was ranked as top business/amenity needed, followed by “retail”.





#### Noteworthy comments regarding supporting entrepreneurs:

- “An easy process for bringing a business online. Shorter lead times for paperwork.”
- “Events like the Elbert County marketplace and farmers markets and stampede are great ways to bring together local businesses.”
- “Need a co-working or small office rental type space that has high speed internet access.”
- “A place for job postings. Website, ad in the paper, or pin board at the library.”
- “Access to small business forums or local markets featuring local businesses”
- “Local meat and produce markets for visitors or people driving through.”
- “Know the shopping hours of your customers, be open at those hours.”
- “Some sort of directory of local businesses we can support with our spending.”
- “Education on all services and businesses within our community to encourage business to business referrals and partnerships.”
- “Have more events that will bring in more visitors. Love the music in the park in Kiowa/Elizabeth area. Make the county fair more fun for visitors to attend. I think we lose a lot of people to the Adams County fair because there is more to do. Have more events at the fairgrounds. Show people outside of Elbert County how beautiful our county is.”
- “Elbert Co. Ag Alliance has been very supportive of my small business, so county support of them would be good. SBDC is also very helpful. County could help small business find ways to advertise and participate in local events.”
- “Make it easier to get building permits and encourage businesses.”
- “Develop a pathway to help encourage and support small business, especially when created by locals. A guide on how to move through the government process and better outreach from the chamber of commerce. Create non-chamber member get togethers to promote connectivity.”
- “You do a great job with community gatherings. I would love to see more run and sponsored by a community business organization.”
- “Information is power...Elbert County should get out routine information to the public about what it takes and the steps necessary for starting up a business.”

#### Noteworthy comments regarding supporting the next generation:

- “Limit "investors" or companies from buying and selling houses. There are no starter homes when they get bought up and flipped. There are few jobs in Elbert County that would even pay enough to buy anything for sale unless you just work remote. Affordable homes do not need to be high density.”
- “I think Elbert County has plenty of opportunity for entry level youth jobs. We need the next level up in jobs. To keep them here. How can you keep them here when they can't make a living wage. How does anybody working in the county afford a house here anymore.”
- “More retail and light industry can provide opportunities to remain in the county to live and work.”
- “Bring sustainable and interesting jobs to the county (for educated and less educated people).”
- “The 4-H Program and FFA are two excellent programs for developing a strong work ethic. Businesses could offer training programs. Schools could work with local businesses to offer training. Workshops in trades like welding, auto mechanics, shop, culinary, etc.”

#### Noteworthy comments regarding supporting the aging demographic:

- “A nice quality independent to full skilled nursing senior complex with shuttle services.”
- “Easily accessible system for senior transportation, senior centers in each community, access to home health care, and food/medicine delivery-possibly an actual pharmacy with delivery would be helpful.”
- “Need all types of age in place services – none exist on a supportable scale. Senior care should be a priority considering the size of the demographic. The county could also be a consolidator of Rural Eldercare for other counties and grow business services and commercial properties in this way.”
- “Medical for everyone is in short supply not just seniors. In closer neighborhoods a visiting

nurse for example can attend to several patients in a day.”

- “Build a senior living center/community center that is focused on country living. Expansive garden where they still can get the assistance they need while maintaining more of a country lifestyle.”
- “Partner with a county that’s performing well with all things senior and model their footprint for basic guidance.”

Noteworthy comments regarding things the survey did not ask about specifically:

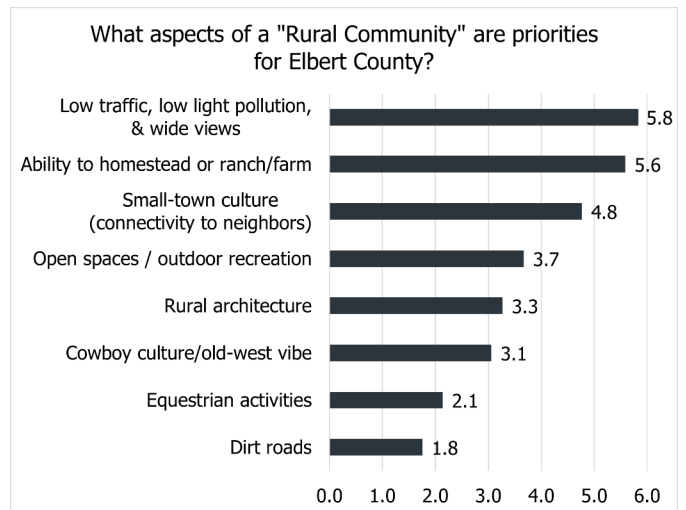
- “Water - what is the counties long term plan? Economic development without a long term, replenishing, sustainable water supply should not be discussed.”
- “Utilizing local churches to bring people together and facilitate community connections.”
- “Residential development per several in-state and national studies does not support itself in rural areas. Means those already here subsidize it and I'm square against that. Business/commercial development does.”
- “Economic development will be encouraged when predictability of the process is high.”
- “It's time to 're-think' our overall strategy for how Elbert County is seen in Colorado. Colorado is not just Denver and Boulder. We need to invest in other mediums for getting the message out. We need to decide if we are just a bedroom community/county for Denver/C-Springs or if we are a viable community in our own right. Additional channels should be explored for getting the word out about who we are.”
- “There are many things working in the county to improve the economics of the county one thing is we need to maintain a strong agricultural background, or all will be lost. We need to keep new ranchers interested. I am in ranching, and it is impossible to find help that wants to work for little money. It's a world issue not just a county issue. We must solve this as a county and move forward.”
- “More emphasis on the types of neighborhoods...the architecture and layout of neighborhoods has more to do with the rural feel of the county than anything else.”
- “Improved communication in the county. I didn't know there was an Economic Development website or a local newspaper with local news. Is there some kind of collaboration effort between local agencies and business to share info and services that is shared with the community?”
- “Make a true equestrian community. Build equestrian/walking trails that crisscross the entire community to include Town of Elizabeth and make it a mecca for Equestrian lifestyle. This would make Elizabeth and all surrounding areas unique. i.e., Take your horse downtown thru trails and have lunch!”

## Vision

“Low traffic, low light pollution, & wide views” was ranked as top priority as an aspect of a ‘rural community,’ followed by “ability to homestead or ranch/farm” and “small-town culture (connectivity to neighbors)”.

Respondents were asked what “other aspects of a “Rural Community” should be on the priority list, and 152 provided comments, including:

- 55 comments regarding the density of housing—expressing how community members do not want to become a suburban community with small lots (many pointing to neighbors such as Douglas, Castle Rock, and Parker of examples of what they do not want Elbert County to become). Noteworthy comments:

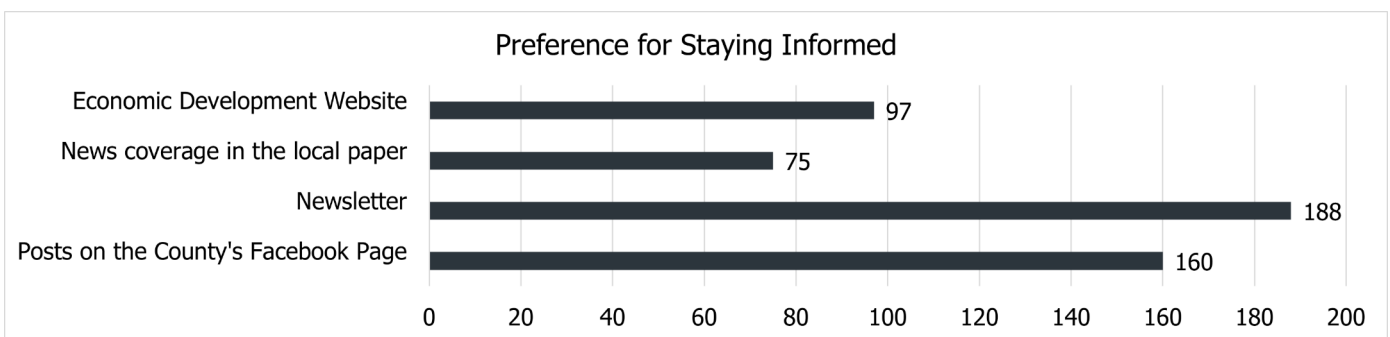
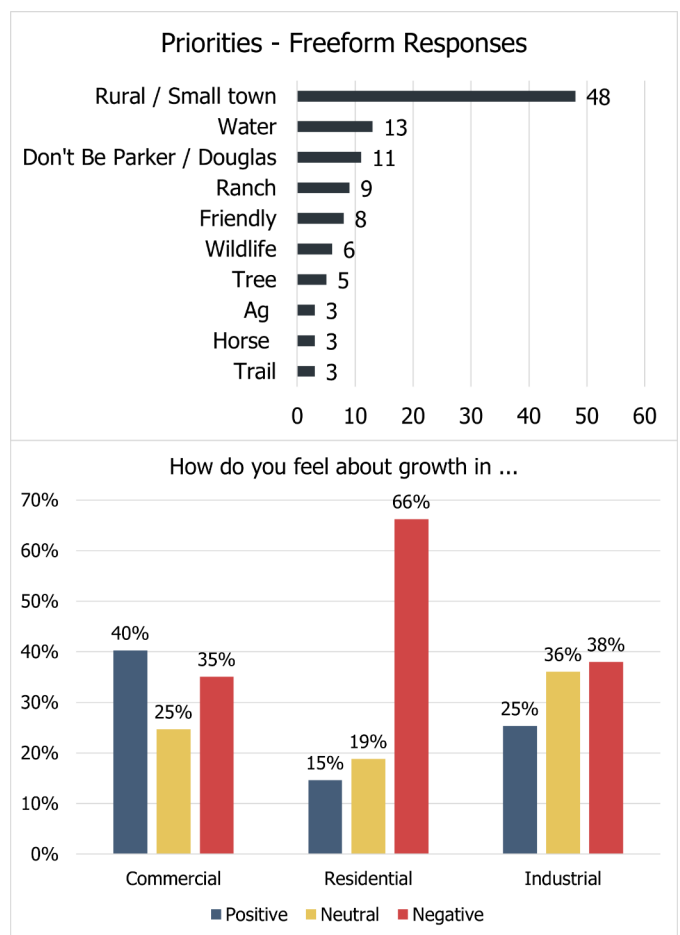


- “Be creative with developers. WE should set the new development lifestyle not the high-density developers. larger lots, more privacy layouts. Instead of community swimming pools and gyms, how about community barns and stables to reinforce rural lifestyles. There are many ways to support, even encourage, balanced rural development.”
- “Rural vibe and wide-open spaces.”
- 31 comments regarding the small-town feel, friendly community members, safety, and small businesses. Noteworthy comments:
  - “I love the small-town feel, and the ability to get to the city should I need to go to the big box stores. I love the mom-and-pop shops and the history of this area. The small-town feel, and people are genuine and always willing to lend a helping hand.”
  - “I like supporting small mom and pop type of businesses where we know one another.”
  - “Friendly people, low crime, feel safe, no crowds.”
  - “Networking, Judeo-Christian values, Great sheriff and police department, community events.”
  - “Family values – politeness and hard work.”
- 13 comments regarding agriculture. Noteworthy comments:
  - “Support for local ranch and farmers, at the same time providing recreational opportunities.”
  - “Eliminate HOA's that do not support 4-H with farm animals.”
- 10 comments regarding water. Noteworthy comments:
  - “With all of the housing growth Water usage is a huge concern.”
  - “I'm very concerned about running out of water with all of the developments.”

There was a mix of positive, neutral, and negative feelings towards different types of growth, with most respondents feeling positive to commercial growth, neutral to industrial growth, and negative to residential growth.

### Post Survey Follow-Up

Many respondents expressed interest in receiving updates via a newsletter, and 169 provided email addresses to sign-up for the newsletter.



# Appendix C: About Form-Based Code

Form-based code (FBC) is a tool to facilitate commercial development that conforms to a specific look and simultaneously opening a select commercial area to a wider variety of uses. Further description of form-based code is provided below, to facilitate discussions with the County and towns in determining whether FBC would benefit commercial centers in Elbert County.

Euclidean Zoning divides developments based on uses, such as residential, commercial, industrial, etc. This zoning is standard practice across America and enables municipalities to avoid many negative effects of placing incompatible uses next to each other (such as industrial noise in a residential neighborhood). An issue with Euclidian Zoning is that it allows for large variations in design, so the built environment is not restricted to a cohesive style. Specifying that a zone is for 'mixed-use' development will not necessarily fulfill the vision of what the community desires in the area when development is complete. To address this dilemma, many municipalities use a hybrid zoning code to carve out a section of the community where form-based code zoning applies.

Form-based code regulates design elements rather than use. Therefore, it will specify the size, style, and placement of buildings (one-story, 1,000 SF) instead of the use (industrial).

FBC Zoning is more prescriptive than Euclidean Zoning (which specifies the use, minimums or maximums in height, setback, etc.) and requires specific ranges for height, bulk, setbacks, and minute design details like signage, landscaping, and architectural ornamentation. These requirements define the physical character of development. FBC Zoning is a tool to ensure developments contribute to a vibrant mixed-use walkable commercial core.

Benefits of form-based codes include:

- Form-based codes are often easier to follow than conventional codes and ultimately more comprehensive, providing municipalities and potential developers with a system that is transparent and predictable.
- The need for review by a discretionary body such as a planning commission or design review board is often eliminated.
- Form-based codes typically—but not always—reduce regulation of what uses are allowed within buildings, expanding the potential market for new development

Form-based code zoning ensures that new developments accommodate the variety of uses desired for the area while supporting the lifestyles, social interactions, and visual appeal which make an area vibrant. FBC zoning specifies building types, development regulations for configuration and features, street types and parking, and other features. This enables the community to “brand” the desired areas with a specific look and feel, which improves the area’s ability to attract businesses and visitors.

## Examples of Form Based Code Regulations



[Downtown Antioch FBC by The Lakota Group and S.B. Friedman & Co](#)



# Appendix D:

## Potential Partners & Resources

### Resources for Placemaking

- USDA – [Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge](#)
- USDA – [Community Facilities Grant Program](#)
- [National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations](#)
- [GOCO Grant Programs](#)
- [Colorado State Outdoor Recreation Grant](#)
- Colorado Department of Transportation – [Revitalizing Main Streets Grant](#)
- Lodging Tax (see [Page 9](#))
- Private Foundations – Use site such as [Grant Gopher](#) to find grants. Private grants are often limited to nonprofit applicants, so the ECEDD would need to partner with local organizations to pursue these funds.

### Resources for Business Support

- USDA – [Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program](#)
- USDA – [Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program](#)

### Resources for Water Program

- USDA – [Revolving Funds for Financing Water and Wastewater Projects](#)
  - **Summary:** A program to help communities expand and improve water or wastewater systems using short-term loans provided to subgrant recipients.
- USDA – [Rural Decentralized Water Systems Grant Program](#)
  - **Summary:** a program that helps qualified nonprofits create a revolving loan fund to increase access to clean, reliable water and septic systems for rural households.
- RCAC – [Household Water Well & Septic System Loan/Grant Program](#)
  - **Summary:** Low interest rate loan/grant program to assist households in the refurbishing or construction of a household water well or septic system.

- CDPHE – [State Revolving Fund Loan](#)
  - Water can be publicly or privately owned, but for public use water
- CDPHE – [Small Community Water and Wastewater Grants](#)
  - **Summary:** For the planning, design, and construction of public water systems or domestic wastewater treatment works of unincorporated areas with a population of 5,000 maximum. For communities with financial need, as determined by DOLA.
- Colorado Water Conservation Board – [Water Project Loan Program](#)

### Potential Partners for Placemaking

- Façade Program & Events
  - [Elbert County Historical Society](#)
  - [Elizabeth Main Street Program](#)
- Homestead
  - [Elbert County Agricultural Alliance](#)
  - [CSU Elbert County Extension Office](#)
  - [Elizabeth Farmers' Market](#)
  - [Elbert County Marketplace](#)
  - [Colorado Farm Bureau](#)
  - [Colorado Livestock Association](#)
- Trails
  - [Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office](#)
  - [Great Outdoors Colorado](#)
  - [Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado](#)
  - [Colorado Off Highway Vehicle Coalition](#)
  - [Trails Preservation Alliance](#)
  - [Colorado Mountain Bike Coalition](#)
- Equestrian
  - [Douglas-Elbert County Horse Council](#)
  - [Colorado Horse Council](#)

# Appendix E:

## Chain Stores vs Independent Stores

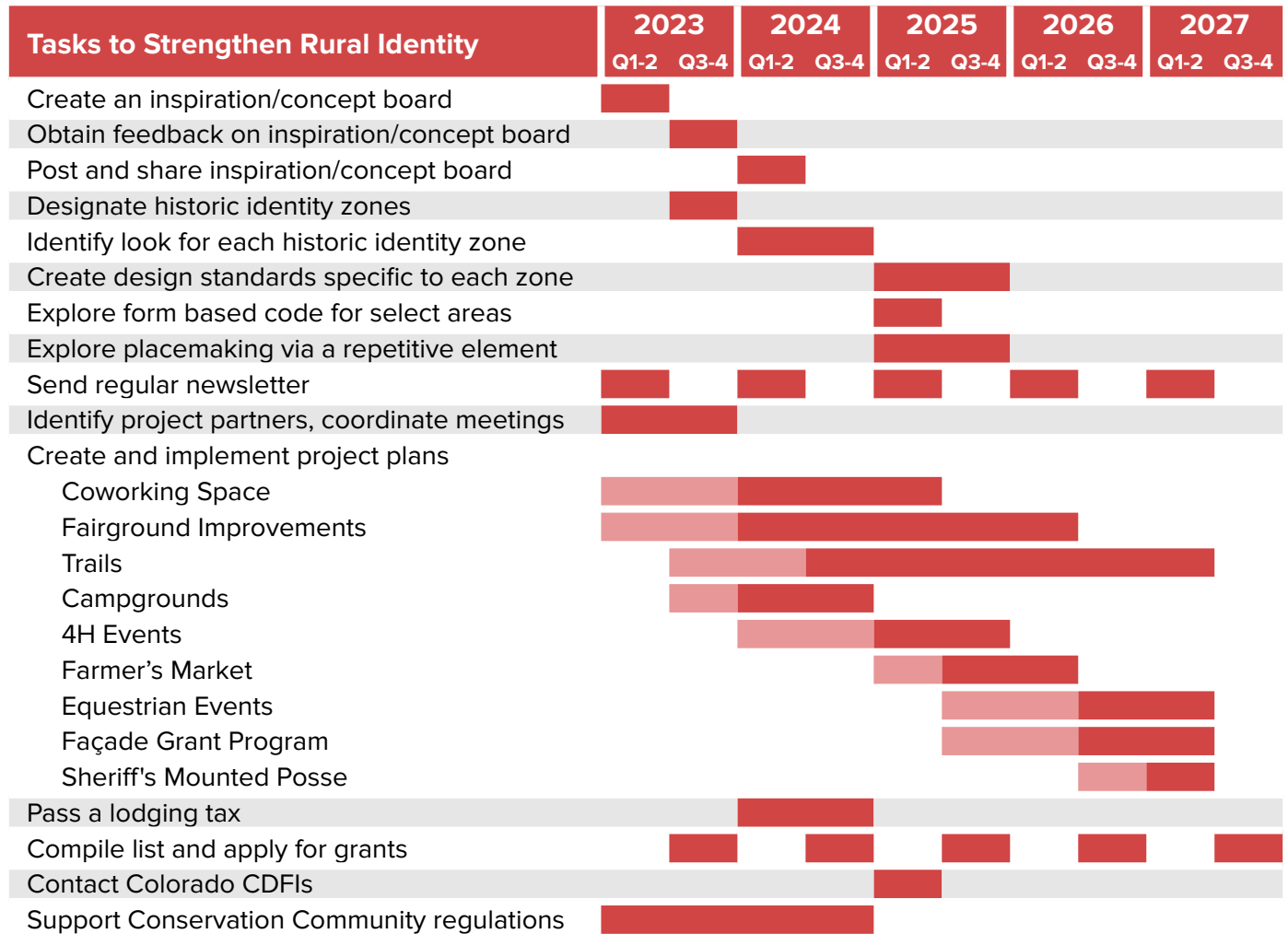
Before conducting business recruitment, it is important to determine what mix of chain stores and independent brands suits the County. Some mixture of both is often ideal—but varies based on the specific business or community needs.

Pros & Cons	Chain Stores	Independent Brands
<b>Contact for recruitment?</b>	Real estate department or development officer.	Owner.
<b>Likelihood for recruitment?</b>	Criteria is often predetermined, and they will consider the location if the market aligns with their criteria.	Determination for location based on unknown factors, often including the personal preferences of the owner.
<b>Contribute to appeal of the area?</b>	Makes community similar to neighbors, however, provides a predictable quality of goods and services.	Provides a unique experience to patrons and a differentiator for the community.
<b>Likely to grow within community?</b>	No	Yes
<b>Likely to fail?</b>	Varies, but established systems and size of capital reserves can contribute to longevity and resiliency.	Varies, but small businesses have a high failure rate, so there is an increased likelihood of future turnover.
<b>Use of commercial space?</b>	Tend to require large square footage.	Tend to require smaller square footage.
<b>Contribution to local economy?</b>	Contribute less to the local economy as most revenue leaves the community.	If the owner lives in the community, revenue stays within the local economy. Independent brands also contribute more to local charitable causes than chains on average.

# Appendix F: Implementation Timeline

The recommended implementation timeline follows. The recommendations will be implemented based on the priorities of the Board of County Commissioners and the Elbert County Economic Development Department. Note, there are more recommendations than the ECEDD anticipates completing within the 5-year timeframe—this is intentional as it provides a variety of options to pursue as opportunities arise. Flexible recommendations enable Elbert County to benefit from changing market opportunities.

The ECEDD will make annual adjustments to the timeline and targets—as these should guide implementation efforts according to progress made, current opportunities, and the ECEDD’s capacity.



- █ Create project plans
- █ Implement project plans

Tasks to Facilitate Commercial Development & Recruit Businesses	2023		2024		2025		2026		2027	
	Q1-2	Q3-4	Q1-2	Q3-4	Q1-2	Q3-4	Q1-2	Q3-4	Q1-2	Q3-4
Assist developers and businesses apply to applicable Federal or State incentive programs	[Yellow bar]									
Develop an incentive package and process	[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]							
Hire an attorney to set up TIF District	[Grey bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]					
Inventory potential sites	[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]							
Obtain properties photos and information	[Grey bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]					
Help owners list vacant commercial property	[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]							
Identify and contact recruitment targets	[Grey bar]									
Urgent Care & Medical Care	[Yellow bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]					
Small-Scale Grocer & Household Goods	[Yellow bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]					
Truck Stop	[Grey bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]			
Hotel	[Grey bar]		[Grey bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]	
Coworking Space	[Yellow bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]					
Light Industrial Manufacturing	[Grey bar]		[Grey bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]	
Meat Processing Plant	[Grey bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]			
Conduct follow-up and host site visits	[Grey bar]		[Yellow bar]							
Attend conferences	[Grey bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]			
Contact Colorado CDFIs	[Grey bar]		[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]					
Support Conservation Community regulations	[Yellow bar]		[Grey bar]							

■ Identify recruitment targets  
■ Conduct outreach to targets

Tasks to Support Businesses	2023		2024		2025		2026		2027	
	Q1-2	Q3-4	Q1-2	Q3-4	Q1-2	Q3-4	Q1-2	Q3-4	Q1-2	Q3-4
Create and send business questionnaire	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]
Select businesses to assist	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]
Conduct site visits and identify specific expansion or retention needs	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]
Create individual business support plans	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]
Assist businesses according to support plan	[Grey bar]		[Dark Blue bar]							
Host annual roundtable with service providers	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Dark Blue bar]	[Grey bar]
Create "how-to start a new business" brochure	[Dark Blue bar]		[Grey bar]							
Identify County's 'rural identity' businesses	[Grey bar]		[Dark Blue bar]		[Grey bar]					
Run a co-branding marketing campaign	[Grey bar]		[Grey bar]		[Dark Blue bar]		[Grey bar]			