

2005
CITY OF IDAHO SPRINGS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Developed by the Idaho Springs Planning Commission

Bill Mehrer, Chairman, Don Mitchell, Don Reimer,
Craig Tessem, Cynthia Olson, and Treva Bridjette.

Adopted by the Idaho Springs City Council:

Dennis Lunbery, Mayor
William Macy
Cynthia Olson
Rick Adams
Delores Munchiando
Nancy Jeffrey
Annette Boyer

Planning Commission Staff:

Cindy Condon and Jerry Smith

IT IS THE DUTY OF THE COMMISSION TO MAKE AND ADOPT A MASTER PLAN FOR THE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MUNICIPALITY, INCLUDING ANY AREAS OUTSIDE OF ITS BOUNDARIES, SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE GOVERNMENTAL BODY HAVING JURISDICTION THEREOF, WHICH IN THE COMMISSION'S JUDGEMENT BEAR RELATION TO THE PLANNING OF SUCH MUNICIPALITY.....

Colorado Revised Statutes 31-23-206 "Master Plan"

Selected elements of a Master Plan:

- Location, character and extent of transportation systems.
- Location of public places and facilities, culturally or historical sites, open space, trails, squares, parks, and public ways.
- Location and extent of public utilities whether publicly or privately owned or operated. Projected need for such facilities
- Location and extent of water supply and adequacy of water quality including collection and distribution systems.
- Zoning Plan and development regulations
- General character, location and extent of community centers, housing developments, whether public or private, location of residential neighborhoods, and sufficient lands for future development for housing and projected economic and other needs of current and anticipated residents of the municipality.
- Projections of population growth and housing needs.
- Consideration of environmental and natural feature constraints,

Special element: (5)- A master plan adopted in accordance with the requirements of subsection (4) of this section, shall contain a recreational and tourism uses element pursuant to which the municipality shall indicate how it intends to provide for recreational and tourism needs of residents of the municipality and visitors to the municipality, through delineated areas dedicated to, without limitation, hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, skiing, cross country skiing, rafting, fishing, boating, hunting, and shooting, or any other form of sports or recreational activity, as applicable, and commercial facilities supporting such uses.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

In 1859, George Jackson, a prospector out hunting, trekked into the area which later became the City of Idaho Springs. Legend has it that he saw, what he believed to be a smoke from an Indian camp and investigated. He found no fire, but instead natural hot springs. While exploring the nearby area he discovered what he believed to be rocks containing gold. This all occurred near the confluence of two creeks, which later were named Clear Creek and Chicago Creek. Returning to the area a few months later, with several colleagues, George proceeded to pan for placer gold and found over \$1,500 worth in the first week. Soon word got out and the area became known as “Jackson’s Diggin’s.” Eventually, the community grew as more and more miners arrived and the name changed to Idaho Springs. The City was named after Chief Idahoe, a legendary Indian leader and the hot springs which first attracted Jackson’s attention.

For a number of years, mining was an important part of the local economy. Mining brought the railroads, wagon roads and commerce to the new city. With the approach of the 20th Century, the number of mines and active claims began to shrink as the easy to mine ores played out. A few large mining companies started to monopolize mining in the area. A population which had once approached 7,000 began to drop. The decline in precious mineral mining and population continued through the first half of the 20th Century. Most of the mines had closed down by the end of World War II.

Since the middle of the 20th Century, the City has experienced minor swings in population based upon economic cycles associated with mining and tourism. First the construction of Highways 6/40 started the expansion of automobile tourism, which has been the mainstay of the local economy for half a century. Later, the construction of I70 brought both opportunities and challenges. I70’s location and ability to move people to and from more distant areas quickly enhanced the development of mountain resort communities, first as ski resorts and more recently as year round destinations. It also shortened day travel time from the Denver metro area to both mountain communities and to western Colorado counties such as Garfield, Mesa, and Pitkin.

The advent of the interstate system changed how people travel by automobile. No longer do highways pass through smaller communities, but instead, pass by them with access and egress ramps allowing travelers to stop for food, rest, and gas, only to get back on the interstate to continue their trip to their destination area. A spontaneous stop at interesting sites or businesses is less than it once was. As travel practices changed, so did service marketing, which can lead to degradation of central business districts if a community does not take steps to counter the process.

With the substantial growth of the area since World War II, metropolitan suburbia has moved further westward. Early development occurred near Lookout Mountain, expanded to Evergreen, Bergen Park, Genesee and El Rancho. It is continuing to move westward into Clear Creek County at Floyd Hill and west of Evergreen. Increasingly these areas have attracted relatively affluent families who commute to the metro area while living in the mountains. This same pattern is emerging in Clear Creek County and is expected to

continue.

To the west of the City, winter resort development occurred and grew rapidly. As the ski industry developed so did resort communities. With competition for limited land occurring, costs of housing skyrocketed. Service workers and support services started to locate in less costly communities and began commuting to and from the resort areas. With the maturation of the industry, attention began to focus on expanding tourism marketing to a year round audience to support the large investments being made in the resort areas. This shift in focus and metro area growth both contributed to large numbers of mountain town visitors traveling to and from the Denver area, either from the airport or from their metro area homes to winter and summer recreation sites via the interstate.

During this same period, the population and physical growth of Idaho Springs has been relatively stable. Significant growth has occurred in unincorporated Clear Creek County in areas west of Evergreen, at Floyd Hill and Saddleback and in the Downieville Lawson area. The routing of I70 through Idaho Springs took about 1/3 of the easily developable land in the City and reserved it for transportation purposes rather than commercial or residential development. It displaced many homes, businesses, and historical structures in the City and reconfigured the manner in which the traveling public views the City. Where earlier routes went through the community, I70 now presents a situation where high speed traffic flows by the various districts of the City with a back yard, back door view of both residential and commercial properties. The rapidity with which the interstate system was developed, as a strategic defense initiative, as part of the Cold War, caused little attention to be paid to visual, noise, air and water quality issues as traffic loads increased. This lack of attention led to a degradation of life quality in many areas affected by interstate development.

More recently, the advent of the gaming industry in Blackhawk and Central City have impacted Idaho Springs. Service economy employment has created pressures on available affordable housing stock in and near the City. The 7 day work week and extended late night hours associated with gaming related recreation has changed the more traditional work force involvement both in community and family matters as more parents are away from home during non traditional hours. The maturation of the gaming industry and the market share competition between the gaming towns, including the construction of the Central City Parkway, have and will continue to affect Idaho Springs.

IDAHO SPRINGS IN THE 21st CENTURY:

Idaho Springs is poised to serve as a service industry center. Its location, less than 30 miles from the metro area, allows for day travel to and from Denver. The gaming towns are a few minutes away via the Parkway. Mountain resort communities are within commuting distance. Thousands of vehicles pass by the City with its 4 interstate exchanges each day. Tourism and tourism support industries will continue to be the mainstay of the local economy. Idaho Springs has some unique assets. It maintains a historical character in terms of mining and historic architecture in the central business district. This exists in a state with relatively little in the way of historic assets. The City

is located near two other towns which retain heritage assets, Central City and Georgetown. Heritage tourism is starting to emerge as an increasingly viable segment of the tourism economy. Idaho Springs is located near a scenic by way, easily accessible from the metro area. It is one of the closest get away places for the urban populations in Denver and Jefferson counties. The City, also, has and controls water supply, storage, treatment, and distribution systems. It also has adequate wastewater collection and treatments systems with excess capacity. Combined, these two systems have sufficient resource availability to shape development patterns in eastern Clear Creek County. By focusing on how the economic forces, infrastructure investment, and application of assets interplay, this plan can shape the future of Idaho Springs through 2020.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS:

Since the 1950's the percentage of Clear Creek County's population living in unincorporated areas has substantially increased, while the percentage of the county's population living in Idaho Springs has been reduced from a high of almost 54% to less than 25% in 2005. Such a marked change has resulted in demands for county services which outstrips revenues. The City will work with the County Commissioners and with other municipalities in the county to encourage urban density development to occur in/near existing municipalities and their service areas. The City will encourage the county to develop smart growth policies to discourage significant population increases in unincorporated areas unless adequate provisions are made for public safety, roads, fire protection, and educational services.

Growth projections for Idaho Springs vary considerably depending upon the source. Recent estimates project the City's growth capacity at anywhere from 3,000 to a high of 3,800. The City views these estimates, to be more realistic due to recent annexations, but, perhaps overly optimistic in terms of timing. The City has adequate water supply and treatment capacity to meet these projected needs. The City also has adequate wastewater treatment capacity. The City will need to secure appropriate financing for collection and distribution systems. Similarly, the school district has adequate capacity in the local elementary, middle school, and high school to serve any reasonable area growth projection.

POPULATION AND GROWTH RATE:

Year	Population	Annual Growth Rate	Regional Growth Rate	Avg. HH#
1980	2,077			2.5
1990	1,834	-1.2%	1.9%	2.41
2000	1,889	0.3%	2.6%	2.25
2003	1,854	-0.7%	2.0%	2.25

Data suggests population growth has been stagnant, with a reduction in number of families with children, living in the City. Assumption is some second home retiree impact may be occurring.

Area	2000	2003
Entire county	9,367	9,654
Idaho Springs	1,889	1,854
Empire	400	399
Georgetown	1,088	1,125
Silver Plume	202	208
Unincorporated areas	5,787	6,024

During this 3 year period, 237 of the 282 person growth occurred in the unincorporated county. This accounted for 84% of the population increase. Presumably, much of this

occurred in the increasingly suburban areas in the eastern portion of the county

AGE CHARACTERISTICS: The median age in Idaho Springs is estimated at 38.7 compared to 34.1 for the region and 34.3 for the state. The percentage of the City's population over 65 is 9.5% , compared to a regional 8.8%. This appears to affirm that the number of families with school age children is lower in the City than in surrounding areas.

Economic Profile:

Economies do not follow jurisdictional boundaries. Idaho Springs' economy is regional in nature and is shaped by the metro area economy and that of the central mountain area. The state demographer's office reports a 28.39% population increase in Clear Creek County over the past 15 years. They project an increase from the current population of just under 10,000 to 17,000 by 2030. Most of this growth, if recent trends continue, will be outside of current municipal boundaries. For growth to be served, there will need to be a proliferation of service districts or an expansion of existing providers' service territories.

The Clear Creek Economic Development Corporation, in a recent report, indicated the county's residents have a per capita income level well above the national average. Recent per capita income increases appear to be slightly higher than the state average. Total personal income, which includes net earnings, including dividends, interest and rental income ranks right in the middle of Colorado's counties.

As might be expected in a service focused economy, the CCEDC reports that "Retail trade is a major component of the County's employment, income, and sales tax. It is noted, however, that major sales leakage occurs, both from county residents spending their disposable income outside of Clear Creek County.." It is also noted that our dollar receipts from per capita sales are substantially less than the regional average. The City believes it is unlikely that significant changes in spending patterns will occur during the planning period and that major purchases will continue to be made in the metro area.

Business Profile: Retail Trade and Services account for 56% of the employment activity within the City. Government (state, federal and local) account for another 21%. Other economic sectors, including, but not by way of limitation, mining, real estate, construction, communications, public utilities, manufacturing, finance, insurance, and miscellaneous activities account for the remaining 23%. Implications are that ¾ of the existing employment base can be substantially affected by impacts related to government policy and short term economic condition changes which affect consumer discretionary spending patterns.

The CCEDC is concerned about the likely negative consequences which would result from a 15 year construction period related to I70 capacity expansion. Of particular concern is the impact on commuter traffic involving residents who live in Clear Creek County but work in other counties. They estimate that commuting workers account for 30% of the employment and income base for the county. They express concern that any economic loss associated with major construction delays will be compounded by higher gasoline prices and could result in less visitation. Increased commuting costs, both in time and dollars, also could cause existing residents to relocate to communities closer to their work location.

By virtue of being a stopover location rather than a destination area for most visitors, our tourism economy can be significantly affected by changes in "convenience" factors. If

traffic delays become prevalent, folks may drive by the City, rather than take the time to stop and further delay getting to their destination. Day visitors may opt for easier to get to activities, rather than fight the traffic.

If the concerns expressed by the CCEDC are found to be accurate, it will affect sales tax revenues for the City and make it difficult to maintain existing service levels. The council will need to review the degree to which its revenue streams will be subject to fluctuation and plan accordingly. Establishing and maintaining appropriate balance between the various revenue sources can lessen the negative impacts associated with an over dependence upon sales tax for essential city operations,.

The City:

Beginning at the east and moving to the west, the various areas of the City are characterized as follows:

The I-70 interchange at Hidden Valley will be dominated by highway traffic related uses both on the Central City Parkway and through traffic on Interstate 70. This area was annexed, along with adjoining properties to the north, south and west in late 2004. To some extent the development of the area is constrained by lack of infrastructure, water and sewer main lines, an inadequate roadway with County Road 314, and uncertainties relating to changes to Interstate 70, the twin tunnels, and the effects of the Parkway. It is anticipated that highway service commercial related activities will occur near the interchange at Hidden Valley, rural multiple family residential develop will occur off of the Interstate interchange, and existing commercial areas nearer to the central body of Idaho Springs will maintain their existing uses. The City should focus attention on collaborative planning with the County, and the Colorado Department of Transportation related to how C.R. 314 can be improved to meet traffic demands which currently exist when I-70 traffic is blocked and as a heavy use detour route when expansion of the Twin Tunnels is undertaken. Alternatives exist which may add commercial tax base enhancement to the City were CR 314 relocated from its present location south of the tunnels.

Further to the west and off of the 241 I-70 interchange lies the area commonly referred to as the "East End". This commercial community consists largely of highway service commercial areas including retail, food and beverage, and lodging establishments. Its configuration developed along what had previously been the US 6-40 corridor. The quality of development in the area ranges considerably from recent development of some lodging facilities and redevelopment of some food service establishments to outdated structures in need of revitalization . The area also includes some mobile home residential units which are closely packed together in clusters. While the area meets the community's needs for sales tax generation, jobs, and lower cost housing, the area is underutilized related to its potential land values. The area does include, on its western end the City's principal grocery store, pharmacy, and liquor outlet. It should be noted that substantial portions of the East End and Hidden Valley areas contain property devoted to community recreational uses. Were relocation of some of these facilities possible, the result might well be substantial increases in property, sales and use taxes. The East End configuration is primarily oriented towards the automobile for access and egress. Parking and pedestrian pathways and passage are inadequate. On a long term basis, encouragement should be given to business along Clear Creek enhancing their orientation to the creek front as an amenity for residents and visitors to the community. Facilitating pedestrian ease of movement from the East End to other areas of the

community should be enhanced.

Further to the west, extending from the Y in the 6/40 corridor to the Historic area, lies a mix of residential and commercial properties. A dominating feature of the entryway is the Heritage Museum and Visitor Center. To some extent, the Visitor Center is hidden behind the tennis courts and is not as visible to travelers from the west as it is to the East. The City should consider the merits of maintaining the tennis courts, at this location, along with alternative uses for the area where the courts are located. This location would be suitable for day parking for visitors and possibly night parking for residents. The existing log building housing the radio station is consistent with the “historic” attributes of the entry area and should be encouraged to maintain the character of the Y. Appropriate signage, directing traffic to the historic district, the Hot Springs, and Virginia Canyon Road should be considered for this area.

Beginning at 17th Avenue and extending west to 13th, the area commonly referred to as the Historic District dominates. To the north of the commercial area, much of the residential and commercial buildings have a historic flavor even though they are not located in the historic district itself. The district contains a substantial number of visitor and resident oriented service and retail businesses. Substantial investment has gone into streetscape enhancement, off street parking, and collaboration in historic development and preservation. On the western end of this portion of the community, access/egress from I-70 at the exit brings and takes traffic to and from the Town. The entryway detracts from the historic nature of the area. Consideration should be given to enhancing the nature of the entryway to encourage traffic to do more than stop and go after services are received. Changes in the footprint of I-70 may impact properties owned by the school district and used for football and transportation needs. The City should be anticipating this and be prepared to react if and when the opportunity presents itself. The area under district ownership could serve either as residential, commercial, or mixed use development.

The area to the west of the 240 I-70 interchange is primarily residential in nature with isolated commercial properties. Additional commercial incursion into this area should be discouraged, with the possible exception of property near the I-70 interchange. Signage along the Colorado Blvd. route should be developed to orient traffic to the business district, to public parking, and to the East End commercial area and the Historic Museum and Visitor Center.

Immediately to the North of the City lies a large area recently annexed and zoned for park and recreational use. Since its annexation, little has been done to develop the area. The City has limited financial resources for application to large area recreational development. Discretionary spending related to outdoor recreation, by the City will focus on completing trail systems for bicyclists and hikers, connecting the east end to the central business district, and developing creek side improvements throughout the City.

Some consideration should be given to reviewing existing recreational assets to assure they adequately meet standards for public use and are appropriately located given changes which have and will be occurring in the City since their original development within the City.

Near term strategies:

1. Develop a collaborative strategy with Clear Creek County related to improving CR 314. Strategy to focus on developing the road to serve as detour route for I-70 during closures and tunnel reconstruction. Seek state funding for the project through the state portion of gaming revenues. For this to occur CDOT will need to collaborate with the County and Idaho Springs. Water and Sewer main lines should be laid under any new construction with stub access to developable properties within the corridor. Explore alternative financing strategies such as special improvement district.
2. Focus an effort on I-70 corridor planning. Goals to minimize I-70 expansion damage to the City, particularly the historical district through active involvement in PEIS, EIS processes and mitigation advocacy when decisions are made as to improvement action.
4. Develop a strategy for infrastructure extension to Hidden Valley area and develop appropriate subdivision regulations for condominium, town home type developments. Energize the Subregional Planning Commission and adopt development plan and major street plans for Central City Parkway and Hidden Valley related properties in Clear Creek County and Idaho Springs.
5. Take actions to encourage East End properties to enhance pedestrian movement and creek corridor improvements. Develop a plan and seek financing to assist in redevelopment of blighted properties in the area, without dislocating residents from Idaho Springs.
7. Refrain from encouraging additional significant annexations until development progress in Hidden Valley and Bristlecone areas occurs.
8. Continue to encourage and support improvements to Colorado Boulevard and ensure that city infrastructure improvements are made while reconstruction of Colorado Boulevard occurs.
10. Monitor the status of the City's water and wastewater utility funds to ensure that adequate revenues are generated to address debt service, operational and maintenance expenses. Adjust rates to ensure solvency on a regular basis (not less than biannually).

VISION STATEMENT

This plan includes policies and actions to be taken to direct how Idaho Springs will evolve over the next 15 years. It will shape the City's physical, economic, social, and cultural development and will affect its citizens and property owners in how they live and work. It includes both specific actions and less specific applications of policy. The plan envisions, an Idaho Springs, in 20220 which will look something like this:

1. The City will have grown both in size and population. Areas annexed prior to adoption of this plan will have been substantially developed. The Bristlecone Pines and Hidden Valley areas will boast a mixture of single family and multi family homes. Limited commercial development will have occurred near the Hidden Valley, I70 and Central City Parkway interchange.
2. The bottleneck occurring at the Twin Tunnels will have been resolved. Improvements to CR 314 will have been accomplished and it will have been annexed to the City. It will remain an important access point to the Parkway for Idaho Springs residents and will often serve as an alternative route for I70 during periods of congestion.
3. Substantial changes will have occurred in the east end business district through redevelopment of commercial properties and the conversion of some residential areas to commercial and mixed use development.
4. The City will be actively involved, either through annexation or through agreements related to the provision of water or water augmentation and wastewater services with commercial and higher density residential development occurring in the Floyd Hill area.
5. The Historic Business District will be viable as a commercial center and will increasingly plan a role in bringing special events to the community. Redevelopment of the existing football field into mixed use residential and commercial development will have occurred. Closer linkages between Idaho Springs, Central City and Georgetown, based upon promotion of Heritage Tourism will have emerged.
6. The availability of lower cost, higher speed digital technology will, to a limited extent, have made it possible for more individuals and small businesses to operate in the City and for individuals to telecommute via the internet rather than commute by vehicle on the interstate.
7. Some gentrification of the community will have occurred with the retirement of baby boomers with resulting in sizable transfer payment income moving out of urban centers into nearby mountain communities. This will include increasing numbers of partial year residents, which will present issues related to community financing of public services.
8. Idaho Springs' workforce activities will continue to be dominated by employment in the metro area, gaming communities, and in mountain resort communities. Commuting time and absence from the City during working and commuting hours will contribute to

social issues which will need to be addressed.

9. The City's 3 mile planning area will approach the Jefferson County line on the east and the Dumont Downieville area on the west. The footprint of Idaho Springs will be somewhat serpentine in nature, and will extend along the I70 corridor with growth nodes bulging near the Interstate interchanges.

10. The City will continue to be dependent upon sales tax revenues, which are volatile depending upon economic and national and international conditions. Its primary economy will be service related industry with key components of governmental and quasi governmental and summer and winter tourism sectors.

11. The City will have addressed most of its infrastructure issues associated with water infiltration into wastewater lines. Capital issues surrounding service extensions will be under thoughtful review. On going operational and maintenance issues will continue to exist.

12. City and unincorporated county interests will, at times, come into conflict, as the county explores options available to it to finance county services to residents living in unincorporated communities. A key issue will be the extent to which the County seeks to develop a commercial tax base and business interest in unincorporated areas. As this issue magnifies, municipalities in the county will begin to work more collaboratively.

Economic Development Implementation:

The City of Idaho Springs, will during the life of this Comprehensive Plan undertake the following initiatives::

1. Continue to enhance and expand historic preservation efforts: The City will continue its efforts at maintaining a strong historical district in the central business area. Efforts will be undertaken to familiarize business and residential property owners in the district with state tax credits which are available through historic preservation and enterprise zone programs. The “partnership” entered into by the City and Historical Society should be monitored, on a long term basis, to assess the benefits accruing to both partners. The City will collaborate with the Society’s part time staff and with existing county economic and tourism development staff to ensure that a coordinated and holistic effort is made to preserve and promote the historic elements of the City. The City will collaborate with the proposed community development corporation to implement a “Main Street” type program through the entire City commercial zoning areas. The City will continue efforts to ensure that any I-70 expansion does not adversely effect the historic nature of the central business district. Any new development in or near the historic district should be encouraged to support the esthetics of the area. The City will review its existing sign code for the historic district, update it, and enforce adopted standards uniformly.

2. East end business district. The City will assess whether property owners in the east end wish to become involved in a redevelopment effort for this area. If the City determines that such an effort is appropriate and welcome, it will plan and implement a multi year comprehensive redevelopment effort focusing on the following: 1. Tax based enhancement associated with redevelopment of commercial properties and enhancements to the area improving pedestrian movement, appropriate off street parking, creek front enhancement on the southern bank of Clear Creek, and collaborative efforts of businesses. 2. Redevelopment or replacement of declining residential properties in the East end district with replacment housing being provided as redevelopment occurs. Conversion of some housing stock to commercial property to be encouraged on a spot locational basis. The City will seek support of various state and federal funding sources to ensure that any redevelopment which occurs involves infrastructure, housing, and existing business support. Sign Code to be reviewed, updated, and enforced.. Current sign code enforcement is lax.

If change is desired, the City will likely need to take the role of a stimulus to such change. The area is ripe for use of enterprise zone tax credits and supportive redevelopment efforts. Direction and commitment from business owners and the council should be given with a 10 year goal of substantial revitalization of this area of the City..

3. Enterprise zone- Efforts related to the Colorado Enterprise Zone will be taken in three areas: 1. Expansion of the Idaho Springs existing enterprise Zone boundary to Hidden Valley. It currently ends at the west Twin Tunnels entry. 2. Identification of projects which should become eligible for enterprise zone community development tax credits and application to the Colorado Economic Development Commission for approval of tax

credit status. 3. Request and secure active involvement of appropriate local and state economic development programs in informing local businesses as available benefits offered through the enterprise zone program. Such efforts to include familiarization of local accounting firms with enterprise zone programs. The City will submit applications for the first series of local enterprise zone development projects which would qualify for tax credits of up to 25% of the contribution, during the summer of 2005.. The City will secure the aid of the county economic development organization, the Rifle based zone administrator, and the state enterprise zone administrative staff in establishing a managed local enterprise zone effort..

4. Hidden Valley- I-70 interchange. With the annexation of this area into the City, the City will determine the extent to which it will proactively become involved in stimulating development, both residential and commercial. This area will be a focus for activity over the next 10 years, particularly when expansion of the Twin Tunnels occurs. The creation of the development plan for the area covered by the Intergovernmental agreement with Central City and Clear Creek County, along with the major street plan for the area south of the county line will be accomplished no later than 2005. The City will work with the County to annex CR 314, subject to transitional operational and maintenance support for the road until such time as it can be brought up to City standards. The City and County will initiate discussions with CDOT to identify appropriate financial resources to reconfigure and finance improvements to CR 314 which are needed to deal with existing traffic and with detoured traffic when tunnel chokepoint work begins related to I70 enhancement.

5. Signage designed to direct vehicular traffic into the central business district should be designed and installed near major access points and along Colorado Blvd. Overall street signage improvements should be implemented over a phased period, beginning near the central business district and moving first to the east, then to the west. Awareness of the Heritage Museum and Visitor Center should be enhanced.

6. Consideration should be given to allow access to Area 28 by hikers and mountain bikers. While development of finished trails and facilities in Area 28 is unlikely to occur during the short term, specific initiatives to be undertaken by volunteer groups with private funds can be allowed. The City should complete full development of the trails project currently underway, and expand it to provide access/egress from commercial areas before undertaking additional park and recreational initiatives of a significant nature. Enhancement of the banks and abutting properties along Clear Creek in the east end may hold potential for esthetic, recreational and economic development benefits if an east end revitalization effort is undertaken.

7. The development of affordable housing initiatives for seniors and families has significant potential in the City of Idaho Springs. Such development can create short term jobs during construction, support local retail and services and add to the population base of a community. The City will encourage the development of expertise in publicly/privately financed housing development focusing on properties within the City and explore opportunities that such programs might offer.

8. The City recognizes the opportunities which exist should the school district sell the transportation facility and athletic field will be prepared to work with the district and potential purchasers on alternative uses of the site(s).. With their adjacency to the downtown area and the interstate these properties are appropriate for in fill commercial and/or residential development.

9. Community development/business development activities in Clear Creek County and Idaho Springs are, fragmented, with various organizations being created and changing from time to time as a result of dissatisfaction with decisions/activities being undertaken. The proliferation of organizations, without collaboration and cooperation has the potential to become a hindrance in achieving a stable economic development program. The City will make long term decisions related to the efforts it will support and stick with them to allow sufficient time for them to achieve success. (5-10 years). The City should avoid, whenever practical, taking actions which are inconsistent with its overall objectives.

10. The City will explore whether other recreational providers would have an interest in the development of area 28. (State Parks, private interests, collaborative public interests) The City lacks the resources base to effectively develop the full parcel to it's full potential and would have difficulty in operating and maintaining it, if substantial public use were to occur. The City will proceed with individual development projects in Area 28, only if initial capital investment and realistic operational and maintenance revenue streams are identified and committed.

Parks and Recreation:

As might be expected in a tourism oriented community, located along a mountain interstate highway, Idaho Springs has an abundance of public parks and recreational venues. The quantity of developed parks and recreational areas exceeds national standards for a community of Idaho Springs size and population. With expansion of recreational opportunities both for residential use and to attract community visitors, the City needs to consider the extent to which expanded facilities can be operated and properly maintained.

Swimming and water recreation are more than adequate with creek activities, and the availability of private hot springs pools, and indoor public swimming at the recreation center.

Ball fields have been developed by the Recreation District and have adequate capacity for the community. If expansion is desired it will be a function of the Recreation District rather than the City.

Adequate court and specialty recreational areas have been developed at multiple locations within the city.

A large expanse of open space, north of the City, was given to the City by the county. Current plans call for the phased development of hiking and mountain biking trails through the property. The property is referred to as Area 28. It presents both opportunities and challenges to the City. There are myriad opportunities for recreational use of various types. The challenges will be in securing the appropriate financing, both for development and operations/maintenance expenses. The City should proceed with cautious development of Area 28 while enlisting the support of collaborative organizations and agencies which will share in addressing both initial and on going costs of recreational amenities.

A trails system for hikers and bicyclists is in the process of being built and will connect with trails in the unincorporated area of the County. The City will commit a portion of its conservation trust fund receipts to improving and enhancing its internal trail system so it can serve both as a recreational amenity as a means of enhancing community economic development by linking trails to economic centers.

Citizens Park, in the Historic Business District, will be enhanced to serve as a focal point for community events with improvements to sound and electrical systems and the development of portable or permanent staging for community events.

The City will explore the feasibility of enhancing the creek front areas in the east end through various grant programs targeted at redevelopment of lands impacted by mine waste products.

The City will encourage collaborative development of multi purpose and multi agency

recreational facilities as a cost effective service to city and county residents. Likely partners to include the county, the recreation district, and the school district.

Sufficient meeting space exists in the Heritage Museum and Visitor Center to adequately serve as a community center for most community events. The City should discourage efforts to establish competitive facilities for public and private meeting facilities.

An abundance of public and private outdoor recreational activities are available to city residents within short distances of the City. Skiing, rafting, fishing, and hunting activities are readily available to residents. Federal lands constitute a significant portion of the county's total land area. Open space is abundant. Given this, the city will consider how its park and recreation investments can serve both community needs for recreation while developing visitor friendly amenities which can enhance the city's economic position and help businesses succeed. From an overall planning standpoint the city is space constrained, land put into tax exempt park and recreational use is removed from tax rolls. Opportunities exist, particularly in the east end to enter into public and private partnerships to develop trail and creek front amenities which can serve both public and private interests. Targeted investment can serve both business and community needs. The City will proactively seek to involve the county and the recreation district in developing holistic recreational systems.

Community Facilities

Schools: The City's residents are served by public elementary and middle schools located in Idaho Springs and by a new high school located on Floyd Hill. All 3 schools have substantial capacity to serve increases in enrollment. Indeed, the district is encouraging enrollment increases as district revenues are limited. The City will monitor the district's decision making and will advocate for maintaining existing programs at the 3 schools serving the City's residents. The elementary school has inadequate drainage which periodically presents problems at the local library. The affected parties will be encouraged to address these issues.

The City will monitor the situation pertaining to the continued use of the transportation facility and football field. If, at some point, the district decides to relocate activities from either site, the City will work with the district to ensure the bus facility remains in the City and will work with the district to maximize its benefits from any sale or transfer of the football field property. The City will encourage appropriate commercial, residential or mixed use development which is compatible with the nearby historic business district and adjoining residential properties. Enhancement of this entryway to the City corridor is highly desirable.

Public Offices: The City will encourage county, state, federal and local district offices to invest in various types of offices and service centers in Idaho Springs. As the mid point between population centers in the county, and with good I70 access the City is an appropriate location for such services. The various jurisdictions, including the City, should consider how administrative office and service function location can be supportive of development and redevelopment efforts.

Affordable Housing and Housing Rehabilitation: Numerous public and private programs exist which can assist with the development of new housing and redevelopment of existing housing in communities. In mountain communities, with limited available property for easy building, housing costs exceed the norms associated with affordability. The City will work with appropriate non profit and for profit housing developers in an effort to enhance work force housing within the City. The City will encourage continuing efforts to develop a more active comprehensive affordable housing development effort within the Idaho Springs and Clear Creek County. Such effort to include first time home buyer assistance programs, rental assistance efforts, specialized services for senior and disabled persons.

Historic properties and Heritage Museum and Visitor Center: In 2004, the City entered into a partnership agreement with the Historic Society wherein the partners established joint ownership of a number of historic properties within the City. The City will continue to work with the Historic Society, under the partnership agreement, to operate, maintain, and improve the various properties and to continue efforts to operate and maintain a visitor welcoming and retention efforts operating out of the Heritage Museum and Visitor Center. The City will continue to support the partnership through its formative years and explore various appropriate means of developing external financing

support for Partnership activities.

Community Services

As a municipality, the City of Idaho Springs is responsible for basic public services such as governmental administration, public works, water and wastewater system operations, police and municipal court, building inspections, planning and community development. Two entities, the City and the Recreation District share responsibilities for various park and community recreation services. Emergency Medical Services and Fire Protection are provided by county wide service districts or authorities. The City does not provide and does not intend to provide health care, social services, or active family intervention or mental health services. Solid waste collection is performed by private contractors or by individual home owners.

The City is dependent upon various grant programs for substantial portions of its public works, police capital equipment and utility systems capital needs. It is somewhat at risk if these funding sources cease to exist.

The City will develop a planned Capital Improvement Program for public works, utilities, and police department and will dedicate a portion of each year's budget towards it 's identified capital needs in an effort to lessen dependency upon outside funding sources for essential community programs.

Environmental Issues

There are a myriad of environmental issues which the City will deal with in its development. The following are among the more important issues related to city planning considerations:

Storm water Drainage: The city will ensure that storm water drainage is taken into account and is mitigated with new development. As opportunities present themselves, the City will seek to mitigate existing and historical drainage problems which threaten property damage.

Ridgeline Protection: The City will adopt policies restricting ridge line development along view corridors in new developments, within the city limits ,through the creation of appropriate building and development regulations.

Fire Protection: The City will encourage defensible space design in new developments in areas subject to wild fire. The City will encourage multiple access and egress routes for new development where financially feasible and will ensure that new development occurs in such a manner as to allow for emergency services access and egress.

Noise Abatement: The City will establish standards for noise abatement in the historic business district and in other areas of the city which can be adversely affected by noise reverberation due to topographic or geological conditions. Of principal concern are areas impacted by high traffic volume, particularly truck traffic.

Mine Waste/Hazardous Materials/Air Quality: The City lacks the staff expertise and funding capacity to deal with environmental issues of this type. The City will encourage the active involvement of state and federal agencies to ensure the city's population is protected from adverse effects of environmental contamination. The City will ensure that adequate dust suppression techniques are employed during construction periods and along non paved roadways in or near the residential and commercial areas.

Floodplain/Wetlands: The City will discourage inappropriate development or intrusion into floodplains and wetlands without adequate mitigation. To the extent possible, the city will encourage the enhancement of creek fronts and wetland areas through public and private investment. The City will work towards increasing recreational use of Clear Creek for rafting and other recreational purposes by improving access and egress facilities in collaboration with public and private rafting interests.

UTILITY SYSTEMS

Water System: The City has sufficient water rights, both in terms of quantities and types to meet any reasonable expected growth forecasts. The City has sufficient rights to consider sales to extraterritorial users, either from direct sales to users or wholesale to other providers, or through augmentation agreements. The City will develop, during the planning period, a specific strategy and plan for capitalizing upon its water assets. The City also has adequate storage in its reservoir and storage systems. Water treatment plant capacities and capabilities have recently been upgraded and are adequate to address current needs, with normal operational and maintenance issues to be expected. The City's water rights related to Chicago and Soda Creek flows into Clear Creek.

Distribution systems within the City will continue to require replacement of aging water mains and service lines, as well as examination and inventorying of line capacities and conditions to assure adequate flow for water delivery, both for consumption and fire flow needs. A significant issue appears to exist between Colorado Boulevard and the Wastewater Treatment plant which affects a portion of the Hidden Valley annexation area. Undersized lines likely were installed which will limit water flow to the Wastewater Treatment Plant and potential development properties. Interim alternatives for fire flow should be considered until such time as the line chokepoints can be addressed. Such alternatives may include securing access to storage ponds and/or the construction of man made storage tanks. The Town will apply early water tap and plant investment fees towards the costs of correcting the preexisting system choke points and require development to pay for appropriate sizing of distribution lines which will be needed for new development.

Wastewater Collection and Treatment System: Treatment Plant issues have generally been addressed. On going assessment of operational issues and maintenance needs will be continued through the planning period. The City will continue to identify and correct infiltration issues with collection lines in an effort to reduce loads on the wastewater treatment plant.

User Rates: The City increased its utility rates in 2005 and will continue monitoring revenues, operational and debt service expenses and reserves to ensure sufficient cost coverage. The solution to maintaining a stable rate system is to increase sales through growth of both residential and commercial customers, either within the City or near it. If the user base does not grow, existing user rates will need to be increased to address rising utility system costs. Increasingly stringent national water quality standards and the passing on of state regulatory costs to local utility systems, as a result of state budget constraints, will continue to drive utility system costs higher, even with the same volume of product.

Stormwater System: Due to its topography, the City is affected by significant drainage basins. With the limited land mass of the City, homes, businesses, and streets are often affected by storm drainage problems. The City will continue to address the design and construction of incremental improvements to its stormwater system as its revenues allow.

Areas of the City desiring more rapid solutions to defined drainages should be encouraged to explore alternative means of financing improvements which benefit identified properties.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES:

Several key transportation issues are or will emerge during the 15 year life of this plan. The order and magnitude of the major impacts are such that, for planning purposes, this element of the comprehensive plan will focus on system backbone and , to some extent, will not address the more modest issues.

I70 Reconfiguration:

Whatever decisions are made in the I70 reconfiguration and modalities will be of serious consequence to Idaho Springs. If rail alternatives are accepted, it will result in fewer travelers to and from resort communities, stopping in Idaho Springs to spend time and money. They will move directly to and from destination areas. The footprint of a rail/highway corridor may be smaller and of less consequence to the living environment of the City. If roadway lane expansion is the outcome of the planning, more intrusion into the City's central land mass or stacking of lanes likely will occur with detrimental impact to historical, cultural, commercial and residential areas. The City will focus on the following I70 elements during the planning period:

1. Attempt to influence CDOT decision making to result in less disruptive and damaging alternatives, preferably resulting in chokepoint mitigation while holding open alternative modes of transport.
2. Seek CDOT and County collaboration on improving CR 314 and annexation of CR 314 into the City , to serve as an immediate route for City and I70 traffic to connect to the Central City Parkway, and to serve as an alternative route for existing I70 traffic when congestion occurs related to volume, tunnel traffic construction, and accidents along the interstate corridor. Seek to accomplish the design and construction of the improvements to CR 314 as soon as possible. Negotiate with the County on the acceptance, by the City, of CR 314, subject to maintenance agreements until such time as the roadway can be brought up to City standards.
3. Prepare plans, in consultation with CDOT, for the use of CR 314 as a bypass route during Twin Tunnels expansion related construction. Explore the feasibility of rerouting of portions of CR 314 to allow for the conversion of existing R.O.W. to commercial use and tax base enhancement.
4. Maintain and enhance the viability of the 4 I70 interchanges within the City limits of Idaho Springs. Enhance the entry ways esthetically and promote private investment in higher and better commercial use development at these community portals.
5. Continue and renew emphasis on enhancing the visual image of the City from I70 vantage points.
6. COLORADO BOULEVARD is the I70 business access route through the City. It is currently being reconstructed by CDOT on a phased basis. The City will take

advantage of the opportunity to replace infrastructure under the roadway during its rebuilding. The City will explore opportunities to enhance pedestrian traffic movement in affected areas. Directional and identification signage improvements will also be emphasized during and after the roadway reconstruction.

7. VIRGINIA CANYON has served as a year around access route to Central City. Substantial investments have been made by the City and County to enhance and improve the road to accommodate increases in traffic. The area presents major drainage issues. Current levels of local government investment in this area should be reviewed in light of the new access to gaming communities via the Parkway, while maintaining sufficient service quality to accommodate summer tourism traffic.

8. CENTRAL CITY PARKWAY opened in the fall of 2004. Idaho Springs annexed areas near the Parkway-I70 interchange to protect its commercial base. It also annexed areas between Hidden Valley and the City along CR 314. Development of these areas is proceeding slower than expected due to the lack of a required development plan pursuant to an intergovernmental planning agreement and, also, due to issues surrounding the financing of water and wastewater lines. The City will push to have the development plan approved as soon as possible. The City will work with development interests to explore means of financing the needed utility extensions.

9. PUBLIC TRANSIT was included in earlier editions of the City's comprehensive plan. Little resulted and there appears not to be sufficient interest in proceeding with major transit initiatives. The City will remain open to assisting interested groups in such issues as van pooling, special population transport, and accommodation of tour busses and vans with parking and turn around points. The City does not plan to be proactive in seeking inclusion in the RTD service district.

10. TRAILS development, both hiking and biking continues to be of interest to the City and both residents and visitors. Trails can serve both recreational and economic development purposes. They can be designed to bring people to areas or to remove them from areas. Trail location decisions have consequences. The City will have active participation on trails planning and development committees to promote multi purpose trails which provide recreational and economic benefits. The City will work to have trail heads established which can accommodate user parking without reducing parking availability for other visitor traffic in commercial areas. The City will work with volunteer groups to plan, develop and maintain trail systems. The City will recognize and budget for trail maintenance. A plan for a phased development of City components of a county wide trail system will be created with regular allocations of funding from the City's Conservation Trust Fund used for trail enhancement purposes. An emphasis will be established for Creek front trail development in the east end district, as part of the redevelopment of that area.

11. SIGNAGE is an important part of both the City's transportation and community business development systems. Recent reviews of signage within the City limits indicated a lack of uniformity and clarity in directional signage. Improvements of

directional and informational signage can occur on a phased basis as funding allows. The City will identify starting point(s) and improve such signage on a continuing basis with annual incremental funding.

Promotional signage for businesses within Idaho Springs is somewhat controversial. The City has an adopted sign code with varying standards and authority based upon whether the business is in the historic district or not. Existing codes have not been effectively enforced and there are significant numbers of businesses with signs in violation of the City Code. The City will review its code and modify it if appropriate and begin a process to ensure the code is enforced, both with new and existing businesses. Attempts to ensure conformity with the code are often met with concerns over selective and targeted enforcement.

The City will during the life of this plan finance and install monument signage at a minimum of two major entryways to the City.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ISSUES:

Planning needs to take into account how one jurisdiction may affect another with decisions it makes. Collaboration and cooperation of various governmental units is generally seen as desirable and of benefit to all parties.

Key jurisdictions with whom Idaho Springs needs to interact are: the State of Colorado, particularly the departments of transportation and public health and environment. Clear Creek County, through its planning processes and policies, particularly as they related to unincorporated areas near the City's boundaries, the Clear Creek County School District, the County Fire Authority, the Park and Recreation District, Central City, and to a lesser extent Blackhawk and Gilpin County.

INTERSTATE 70-CR 314 The City should focus its attention, first, on matters of joint interest with the County and CDOT, centering chiefly on I-70 related issues. These include, but not by way of limitation, discussions related to the Twin Tunnels area, changes in configuration of I70 through the City, changes to interstate exchanges in the City, accommodation of and evolution of the Parkway/Hidden Valley interchange area, and the resolution of issues surrounding CR 314.

At the time of this writing, responses have been sent to CDOT related to PEIS comments. It should be noted that the Twin Tunnels chokepoint issue is identified in most alternatives and is generally supported by the City and County. The City will work with the County and CDOT to develop a plan for bringing CR 314 to City standards, to install underground water and sewer lines and to prepare the road/street to accommodate rerouting of I70 traffic during tunnel reconfiguration. In addition, the road/street will serve as an alternative route to the Parkway from Idaho Springs and will serve as an alternative route during congestion periods on the interstate. The City will initiate contact with the County to discuss annexation issues and interim financing and will jointly initiate contact with CDOT to push the discussion forward and identify appropriate financing mechanisms, including gaming revenues which accrue to the state, special improvement district mechanisms, and developer contributions.

FLOYD HILL Both commercial and residential development pressures will increase on Floyd Hill properties during the life of this plan. Factors constraining development focus on public utility systems. A small wastewater plant was built to serve the high school. It has the potential to be expanded to serve commercial and residential development. A special district was created to build and operate the plant. When private interests opted out of the financing of the plant, the school district and county proceeded to finance it. Water issues will be a significant constraint to development.

Floyd Hill is close enough to the City's current boundaries to be considered part of its long range planning. It is likely the City will be approached either to provide direct water service or provide augmentation water to a service provider. The City will discuss

whether it can and is willing to entertain such requests, either with annexation or on an extra territorial basis with premium pricing. The City can also conclude it will not provide water to the area.

Similarly, the wastewater plant currently operates with contracted service operators. The City will explore, with the School District and special district whether a mutually advantageous situation might exist wherein the City could contract to operate the plant as a satellite facility.

CLEAR CREEK COUNTY The County has adopted a Master Plan to establish policies related to how the County will evolve in the future. Their plan is supportive of directing urban density growth to existing municipalities and community centers. Key elements of the county plan which relate to Idaho Springs are:

Recognition of the potential for serpentine development along the I70, US 40 and 6 corridors and the need to promote the continuation of buffers between various growth centers.

Recognition of the desirability of using trails and open space development as a strategic means of fostering community and economic development. Recognition of the need to coordinate the county's activities in these areas with those of the various municipalities, the park and recreation district, and state and federal agencies, including Great Outdoors Colorado.

Recognition on a county wide basis of the lack of appropriate mid range housing for working families, both in the unincorporated county and within the various municipalities. Additionally, recognition of the age and condition of substantial numbers of housing units which are substandard in terms of quality and utility. The county's plan view the lack of appropriate mid range housing as a detriment to local economic development. It was noted that 90% of the existing housing in Idaho Springs was built prior to 1978. Over 1/3 of the county's residents pay a disproportionate share of their personal income for housing.

Recognition of the existence of student enrollment capacity at all the public schools in the county. Substantial population growth and enrollment increases can occur without creating large capital investment needs. More importantly, population and enrollment increases are essential to maintaining the long term viability of the school district.

The County has identified 40 acres of potential commercial development in the Floyd Hill area. Should this occur, a substantial tax and employment base will exist to the east of the City of Idaho Springs. Such development has the potential to adversely affect the City's interests. The City will work with the County and with Floyd Hill interests to minimize to the extent possible, adverse impacts of such development. The City will be strategic in terms of providing water resources to the Floyd Hill area to

ensure that development is consistent with the City's interests.

SUBREGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION The City, Clear Creek County and Central City have entered into an intergovernmental agreement related to planning for gaming impacts areas north of I70. The Commission has had varying success in fulfilling the purposes of the agreement in a timely manner. Discussion is underway related to the possibilities of entering into new agreements for planning in the area, which would replace the existing agreement. The City will prior to considering new agreements, ensure that the requirements of the existing agreement have been fulfilled. These requirements include the adoption of a development plan for the planning area and the creation of a major street plan for the planning area, which includes both property in Idaho Springs and unincorporated Clear Creek County. Although not a party to the agreement, Gilpin County is an active participant in the Subregional Planning Commission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Planning Commission Duty Statement	1
Historical Perspective	2
Demographics/Population Issues	5
Economic Profile	7
The City	9
Vision Statement	13
Economic Development Implementation	15
Parks and Recreation	18
Community Facilities	20
Community Services	22
Environmental Issues	23
Utility Systems	24
Transportation Issues	26
Capital Improvements Planning	29
Intergovernmental Issues	31
Appendices	
City Zoning Map	i
City 3 Mile Planning Area	ii