



**Town of Palmer Lake  
2022 Community Master Plan**

**Adopted October \_\_\_\_, 2022**



THIS PAGE IS FOR THE INSERTION OF THE RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE  
COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN



## Acknowledgments

Community Matters Institute would like to acknowledge the tremendous support and guidance from the appointed Advisory Team, Planning Commission, Board of Trustees, and Town staff.

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Susan Miner and Karen Stuth initiated the Master Plan process with a series of neighborhood meetings in 2021. Karen Stuth developed the community-wide survey and assisted in community outreach.

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The Planning Commission would also like to thank the more than 400 respondents to the communitywide survey and the participants in the early neighborhood meetings.



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## CHAPTER 1: PLAN SUMMARY

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

The Palmer Lake Planning Commission determined the 1993 Comprehensive Plan, as amended in 2003 and 2013, should be updated to ensure that the community was adequately prepared to manage change in Town and the surrounding area. The Town recognized that citizen involvement was critical to the success of the Plan. Neighborhood meetings and reconnaissance interviews helped identify thematic areas requiring attention.

The Board of Trustees appointed an Advisory Team, comprised of Town residents representing different community interests, to provide direction and guidance starting in January 2022. From late spring through September 2022, the Town Planning Commission and Advisory Team held a series of workshops to further the development of the Plan. This working group reviewed and commented on the entire contents of the Community Master Plan. In addition, a series of meetings and open forums were held to obtain input on the Plan as it developed. A joint Board of Trustee and Planning Commission workshop was held in late September to review the Plan. Two open houses were held in October. The Advisory Team members assisted the Planning Commission through the Plan adoption process and public hearings.

### HOW TO USE THIS COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN

The idea behind planning is a simple one. People in a community can guide decisions, development, and growth in the place where they live. A Community Master Plan is only one tool used by a community to guide decision-making.

### PLAN DISTRIBUTION AND USE

- The Plan should be used by the Palmer Lake Town Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, and Town staff to determine annual work programs and budgets.



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- The Plan should be used to guide decision-making. Community character, fiscal impacts, infrastructure, land use, and environmental quality are many of the items addressed in this Community Master Plan.
- The Plan should be reviewed on an annual basis by the Town Board, Planning Commission, and Town staff. The Planning Commission may amend the Community Master Plan as needed due to changing conditions, a policy change, or at the request of the public.
- The Town should alert community service groups, local agencies, and businesses that the Plan is available to aid in their short and long-term goal setting and investment decisions.
- The Plan should prove useful to Palmer Lake residents, the real estate community, private property owners, and developers' representatives. The Plan provides information, policies, and guidance on several community topics, including land use, community character, public services and facilities, and environmental quality.
- The Plan should be made available to all prospective businesses, employers, and those wishing to relocate to the Palmer Lake area. It will help them understand community desires.

### **USING THE PLAN TO REVIEW NEW DEVELOPMENT**

A review of any land use application is a two-step process.

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#### **STEP 1: FINDING OF SUBSTANTIAL COMPLIANCE WITH THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

Property owners wishing to zone or rezone their property should review the Future Land Use Plan map to determine the likelihood of a favorable response to such a request. If the request mirrors the Future Land Use Plan and map, and complies with the Master Plan, the zoning change may be granted.

If the development proposal or request does not substantially conform to the Community Master Plan, the request may be denied.



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## **STEP 2: FINDING OF CONSISTENCY WITH THE ADOPTED COMMUNITY GOALS AND GUIDING OBJECTIVES**

Chapter 4 outlines the overall community goals and the guiding objectives that serve to guide day-to-day decision-making and provide strategic direction to the Town Board of Trustees, the Planning Commission, and staff. Objectives also seek to balance the rights of the individual with the interests of the community at large.

### **LEGAL STATUS**

The Community Master Plan is a framework and guide for accomplishing community intentions. It states goals and recommends courses of action for future growth and development of land, public facilities, services, and environmental stewardship. This Community Master Plan is intended to be used by the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees and Planning Commission as a guide to determine if land use changes are in keeping with the overall pattern of development desired by the Town and its citizens. As specified by Colorado law, the Plan sets forth the Planning Commission's recommendation as to the most desirable use of land from the community's perspective.

Colorado case law further provides that adopted Master Plans, also referred to a Comprehensive Plans, are advisory only. Zoning provides the means for giving legal effect to the plan's goals and policies. Colorado Revised Statutes [C.R.S. § 31- 23-303] state that zoning regulations "shall be made in accordance with a Comprehensive Plan." Recent legislation provides communities with a mechanism to make the Community Master Plan more than advisory. However, the Town of Palmer Lake has determined that the Plan shall be advisory only; and as provided for in State Statute, shall be further implemented by amending the Town's zoning ordinance. [C.R.S- 31-23-206]



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CRS 31-23-206. MASTER PLAN.

“THE MASTER PLAN OF A MUNICIPALITY SHALL CONSTITUTE AN ADVISORY DOCUMENT TO GUIDE LAND DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS UNLESS THE PLAN, OR ANY PART OF THE PLAN, IS MADE ENFORCEABLE THROUGH THE MUNICIPALITY'S ZONING, SUBDIVISION, OR OTHER LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE PROCEDURES GOVERNING REGULATIONS”.

Those submitting a development application to the Town of Palmer Lake shall be advised that the entire Community Master Plan is referred to in assessing the merits of an application.

All development applications shall be reviewed to determine their overall CONFORMANCE WITH THIS COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN.

## PLANS ADOPTED BY REFERENCE

As provided for in C.R.S. 29-20-105, the following plans are hereby incorporated as a part of the Palmer Lake 2022 Community Master Plan. These plans and studies are resource documents that may aid in decision-making.

- 2019 Glen Park Master Plan
- 2019 Palmer Lake Fire Rescue Agency Assessment
- 2022 Water System Preliminary Engineering Report (Study by GMS Consulting Engineers or GMS)
- The El Paso County Engineering Criteria Manual (ECM)
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District – 2018 Wastewater Outfall Study (by GMS)

In addition to the adopted Community Master Plan, the Town of Palmer Lake Planning Commission and Board of Trustees may refer to any of the above-adopted plans to guide decision-making.



## WHAT DO THE CITIZENS OF PALMER LAKE WANT FOR THEIR TOWN?

Neighborhood meetings held in July of 2020 and again in 2021, a communitywide survey with over four hundred respondents, confidential reconnaissance interviews, and the results of a community engagement mapping exercise were summarized into a finite set of overall goals and guiding objectives. Community Matters Institute (CMI) conducted interviews with all Planning Commissioners and all but two of the Board of Trustees. In addition, early workshops with the Town Department heads and the Advisory Team provided input on the issues and values important to the community's citizens.

The purpose of the initial community engagement exercises helped determine the issues and interests most important to the community for the update of the 1993 Palmer Lake Master Plan, as amended. The following stakeholders were involved:

- Neighborhood residents
- Longtime residents including those that have previously worked for or served on Town Boards
- Residents with children in the local schools
- Area residents active in historic preservation and culture
- Local restaurant owners
- Historical Society
- Parks Commission
- Awake the Lake members
- Palmer Lake Economic Development Group (PLEDG) representatives
- Planning Commission
- Board of Trustees

### Definition of a Stakeholder

A stakeholder is a person who has an interest in the outcome of the process because they live, work, or have any other type of investment in the community. They have a stake in the outcome of the Planning Process and overall health of the community.



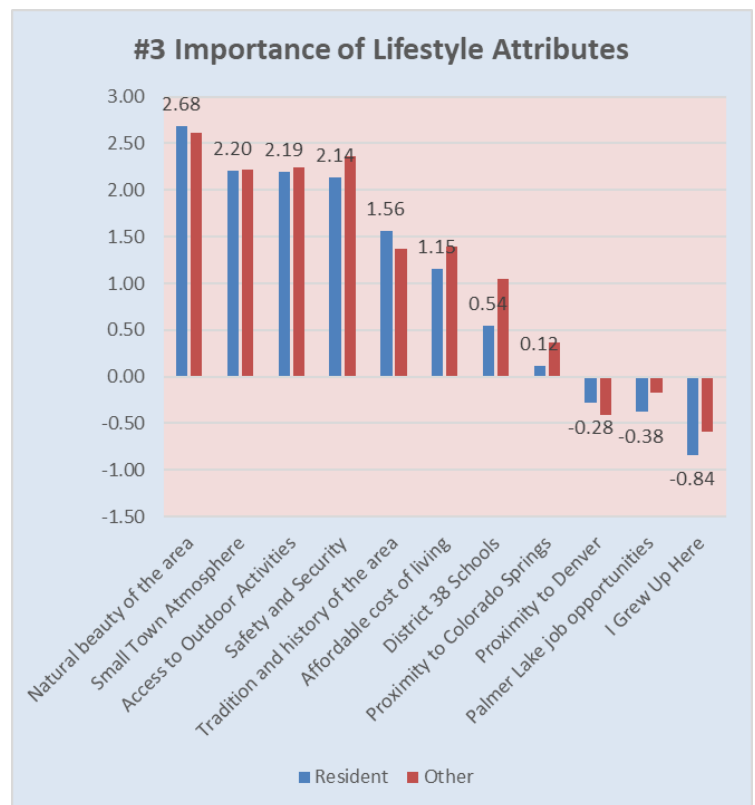
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- Town staff
- Representatives of the Palmer Lake Sanitation District
- Newer residents
- Residents that live just outside of the Town limits but consider Palmer Lake their community
- Art interests
- Representative of the development community
- Non-residents that own businesses in the Town
- Town residents that own businesses in the Town
- Retirees

### COMMUNITY SURVEY

There were over 400 responses to the survey. For most of the opinion questions in the survey, the confidence interval is about  $\pm 0.12$  for a 95% confidence level. A 95% confidence level means that if you could sample the entire 2636 residents of Palmer Lake, 19 out of 20 times the result would be within the confidence interval of the result found in the survey.

In all cases, the respondents were asked to give their opinion on the importance (or their satisfaction) of the attributes described. These were scaled from plus 3 to minus 3 (3 to -3). Plus three (+3) indicated extremely important, plus one indicated very important, zero indicated neither important nor unimportant, minus one was very unimportant, and minus three indicated extremely unimportant.





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A more detailed summary of the findings from the Community Survey can be found on the Town Website.<sup>1</sup> The Town website includes the actual survey, a compilation of written responses to the survey, and a cross-tabulation analysis of the results by neighborhood<sup>2</sup>.

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### KEY FINDINGS

Key findings from the communitywide survey are as follows:

- Survey respondents tend to stay in Palmer Lake. 51% of the respondents have lived in Palmer Lake for more than 10 years.
- 10% of the respondents were single and 78% were married.
- Lifestyle attributes were very important. The natural beauty of the area, small town atmosphere, and access to outdoor activities were highly rated.
- The question regarding the Importance of Future Planning “How important are the following to future development of residential and industrial or retail areas in Palmer Lake?” reinforced a recurrent theme - ‘we like things just the way they are.’ Respondents were not in favor of multi-family development or mixed-use occupancy.

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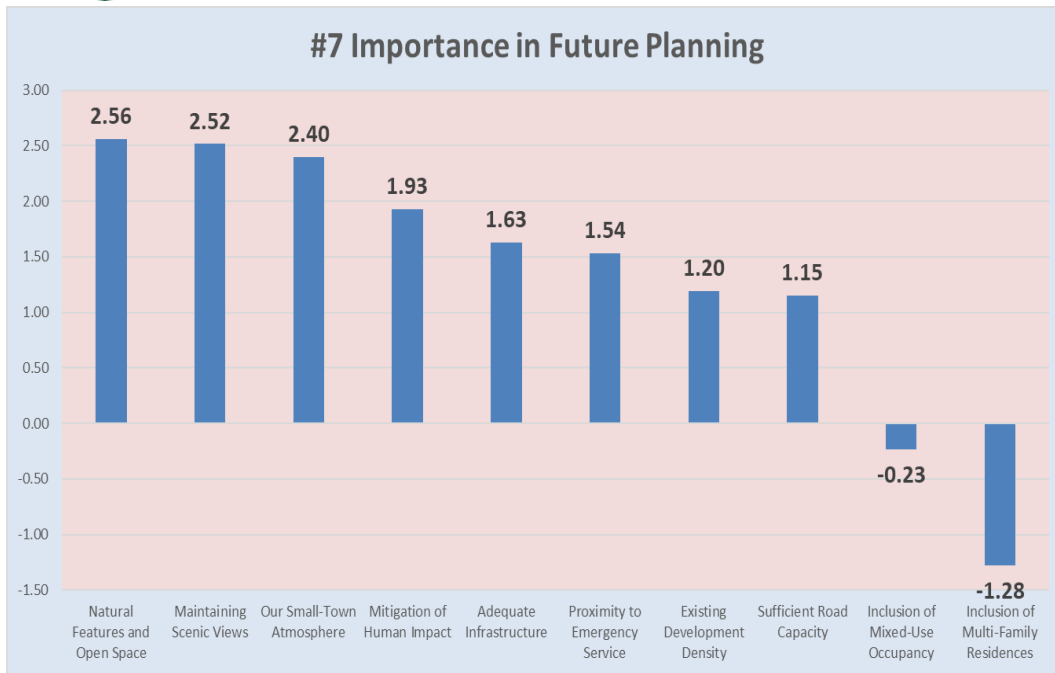
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/bc-pc/page/master-plan-> see Master Plan Survey Results. The graphs reflect the actual survey language.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/bc-pc/page/master-plan->  
[https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning\\_commission/page/7180/powerpoint\\_workshop\\_3-14-2022\\_1\\_pm\\_final.pdf](https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning_commission/page/7180/powerpoint_workshop_3-14-2022_1_pm_final.pdf)





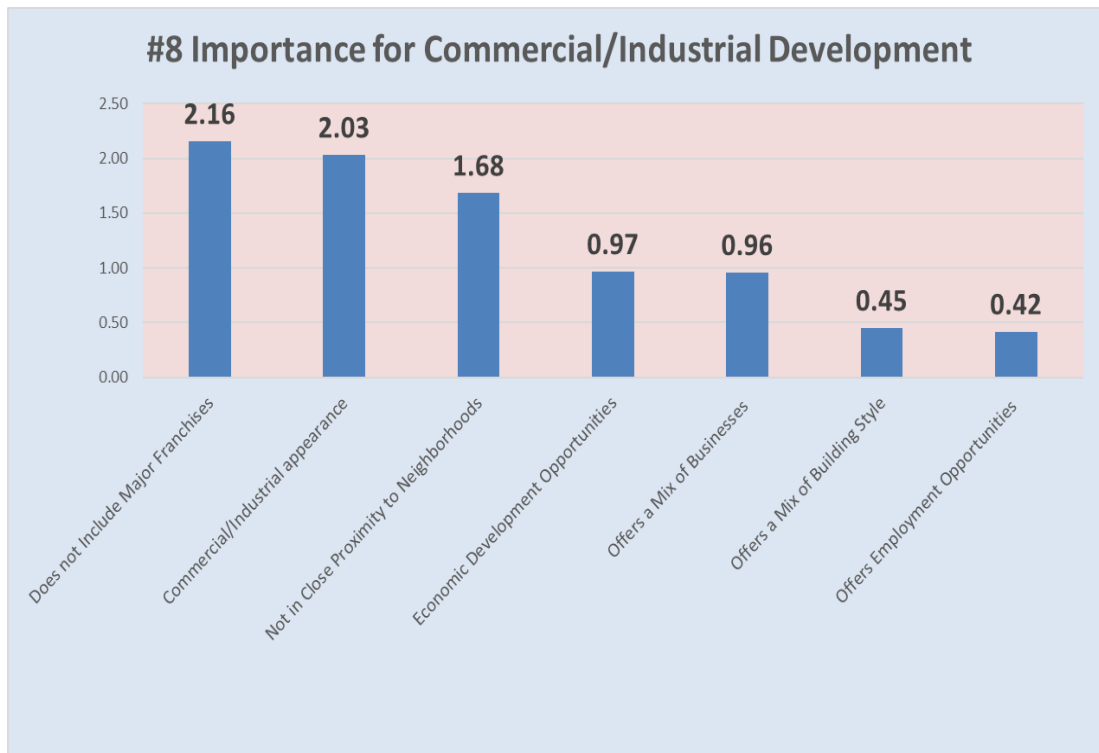
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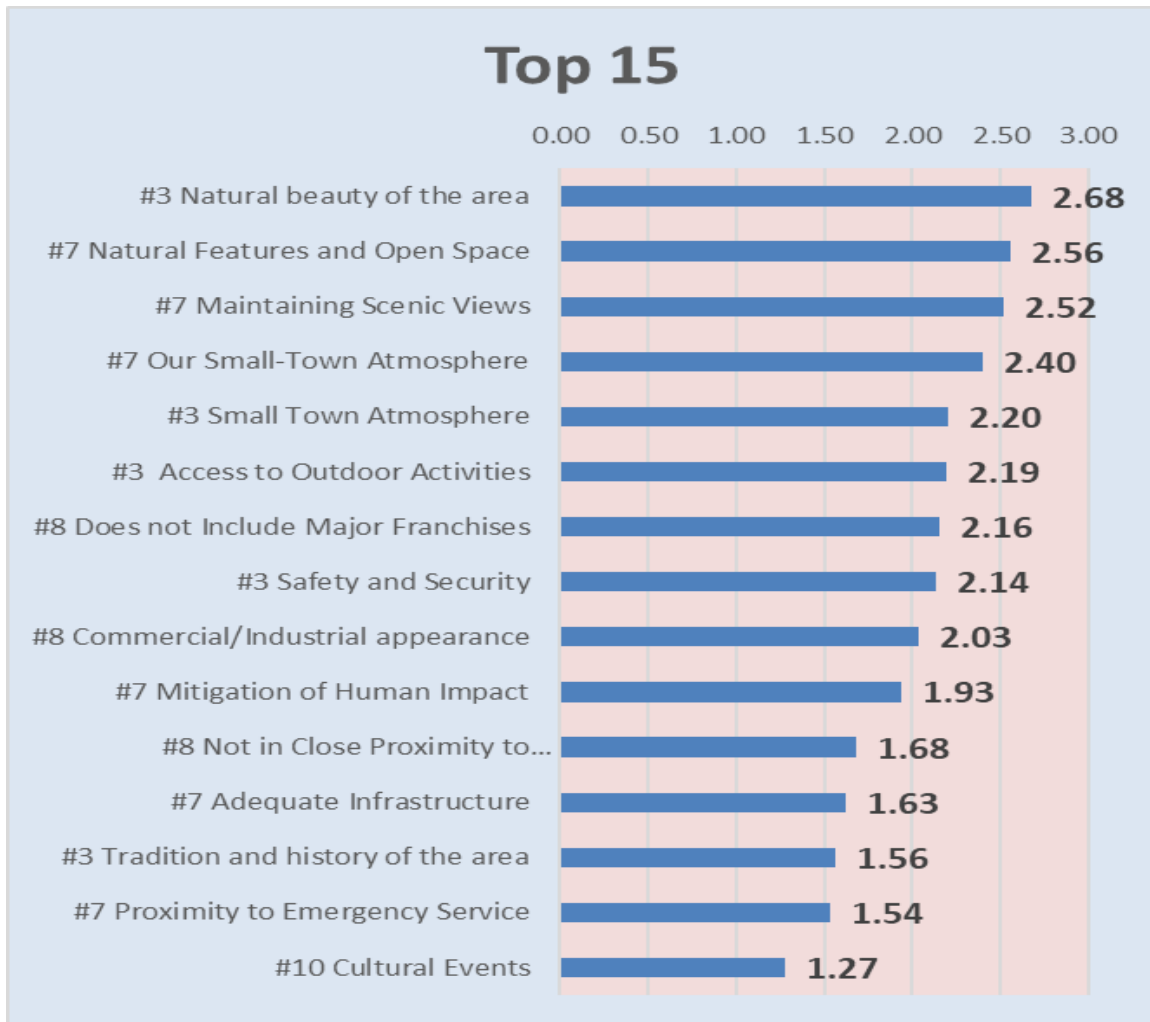
Respondents were asked about the importance of specific factors for commercial and industrial development: *“Please rate each of the following factors according to their importance for commercial/industrial development in Palmer Lake.”* The respondents are not in favor of franchise businesses and care about the appearance of commercial and industrial development. They also do not want commercial or industrial development close to neighborhoods.





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The overall ranking of the most important attributes of place from the survey results is noted below.





## COMMUNITY VISION

- *Palmer Lake is a beautiful, recreationally diverse small front-range community that cherishes the natural environment around us, providing access to trails, lakes, and parks in our area.*
- *We are proud of the traditions and events that contribute to the history of Palmer Lake and want to encourage continued community events in the future.*
- *Through economic development and land use regulations, we want to maintain harmony with the natural beauty of Palmer Lake, an affordable cost of living, and local access to goods and services.*
- *We want to improve the safety and economic viability of our downtown area along Highway 105, such as through the addition of sidewalks and improved parking.*
- *We strive to excel in the management of our impact on our natural environment, particularly where that environment creates challenges.*
- *We strive to update and enforce our land use codes to reflect the residential feel of our small mountain community - we discourage high-density housing, full-service hotels, and franchises.*

These vision elements are the central, key concepts that provide examples of what the community envisions for its near-term future. These elements are general and provide citizens, newcomers, area residents, business owners, and visitors with a 'snapshot' of how citizens in the area wish to see the community manage community change.

The community vision and elements are furthered through the establishment of community goals and guiding objectives found in Chapter 4.



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**Vision Element # 1:** Actively support and preserve Palmer Lake’s heritage.

Concepts include:

- Revitalize the ‘downtown’ Lake area with the focal point being the new pedestrian bridge, core restaurants, and retail businesses to provide a unique shopping area, dining, and meeting place for citizens of Palmer Lake, area residents, and visitors to Palmer Lake.
- Significant features within the Town such as the Lake, Monument Creek, flood plains, wetlands, reservoirs, historic buildings, and cultural landmarks should be preserved and enhanced. These features are the cultural framework that makes Palmer Lake unique.



**Vision Element # 2:** Retain the rural, small-town atmosphere of Palmer Lake.

Concepts include:

- Preserve open lands located outside of the current Town boundary by working with other entities to encourage development that retains the



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rural character through the preservation of open space and respects the scale of existing developed areas.

- Respect the historic lot pattern within the Town to ensure that the size and scale of development is in keeping with the small-town character. The Town is comprised of smaller lots in the old town residential area and large lots as you move from the downtown core.

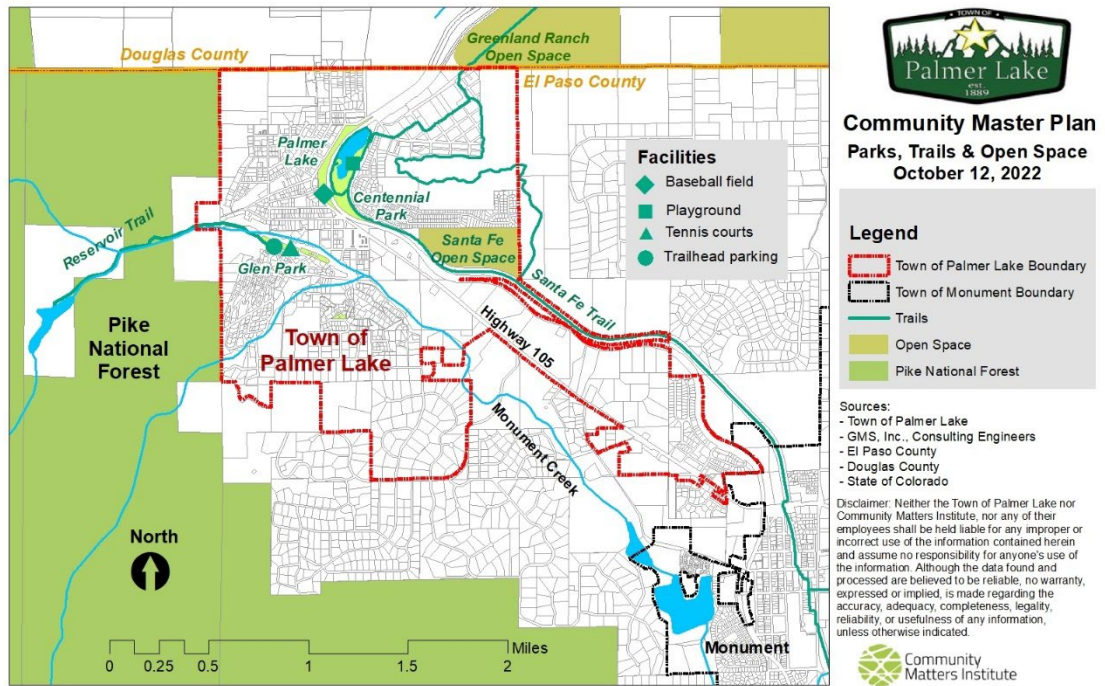
**Vision # 3:** Foster community pride and establish a strong sense of place by enhancing the appearance, image, and identity of Palmer Lake, with special attention to the scenic Highway 105 corridor.

Concepts include:

- Create design standards for commercial development that reinforce a distinctive identity for the Town and for new development along this important corridor that reinforces the existing character of Palmer Lake.
- Retain the scenic, rural character of the Highway 105 corridor which consists of large areas of open space and campus-like development that is setback from Highway 105. The current setbacks from the highway are between 100 and 300 feet.
- Ensure development is appropriately sited and is complementary in size and scale, given sometimes challenging land characteristics (i.e., steep slopes, flood-prone, expansive soils, landslides, rockfall, and wildfire hazards).



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**Vision Element # 4:** Preserve and enhance lands suitable for active and passive recreational uses and preserve a sense of openness in the area.

Concepts include:

- Preserve and enhance creek corridors through the addition of trails, seating areas, and wildlife viewing areas.
- Utilize environmentally constrained lands for both active and passive recreational park areas and open space.
- Protect the hillsides that are not suitable for building due to steep slopes and lack of access.
- Identify and protect wildlife corridors.
- Continue to enhance area trails.





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**Vision Element # 5:** Ensure equitable water and sewer service throughout the Town.

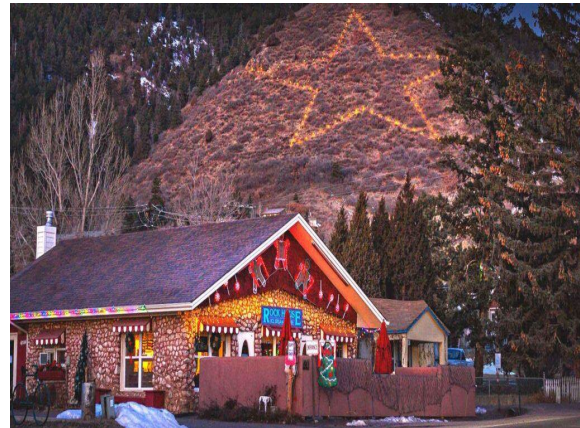
Concepts include:

- Continue to plan and improve the water system that serves the community.
- Work with the Palmer Lake Sanitation District to maintain and support improvements to the sanitation system and areas within the adopted Three-Mile Plan.
- Enforce the State requirement that a property must connect to water and sewer if the property is within 400 feet of a service line.
- Continue efforts to secure and improve water availability.
- Restructure the water billing to enhance conservation.
- Enforce the Town Code that states water taps must be used within a year.

**Vision Element #6:** Work to enhance the Town's tax base, allowing the Town to invest in public facilities and amenities desired by residents.

Concepts include:

- Seek a balance of commercial, mixed-use, and cottage industries to broaden and secure the Town's tax base.
- Attract quality businesses that meet the everyday convenience needs of residents and positively add to the community.
- Create land use standards and zoning districts that aid in attracting quality revenue-producing uses into the community.







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**Vision Element # 7:** Strive for an efficient, safe, continuous, and connected multi-modal transportation system.

Concepts include:

- Carefully consider the impacts of new development, both in Town and on the outskirts of Town, on the integrity and carrying capacity of the roadway system.
- Work with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and El Paso County to improve the safety of the Highway 105 corridor with special attention to pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Vision Element # 8:** Continue to enhance communication between the Town, residents, and surrounding governmental bodies.

Concepts include:

- Encourage community participation in Town government matters.
- Continue to utilize the Town's website and Town newsletter to encourage openness and transparency in government.

**Vision Element # 9:** Encourage small business development that supports the everyday needs of Town residents.

Concepts include:

- Encourage new retail and restaurant businesses that have both day and evening activities.
- Continue to work with businesses and residents, as well as with the Palmer Lake Economic Development Group (PLEDG) and the Monument Satellite Office of the Small Business Development Center, to identify and pursue opportunities to bring a wider range of basic goods and services into the community (e.g., a gas station, small grocery store, drugstore, and local bank).

**Vision Element # 10:** Ensure development within the Town of Palmer Lake enhances the quality of life, provides a positive impact on the Town's tax base, and does not adversely affect community services or the natural environment.

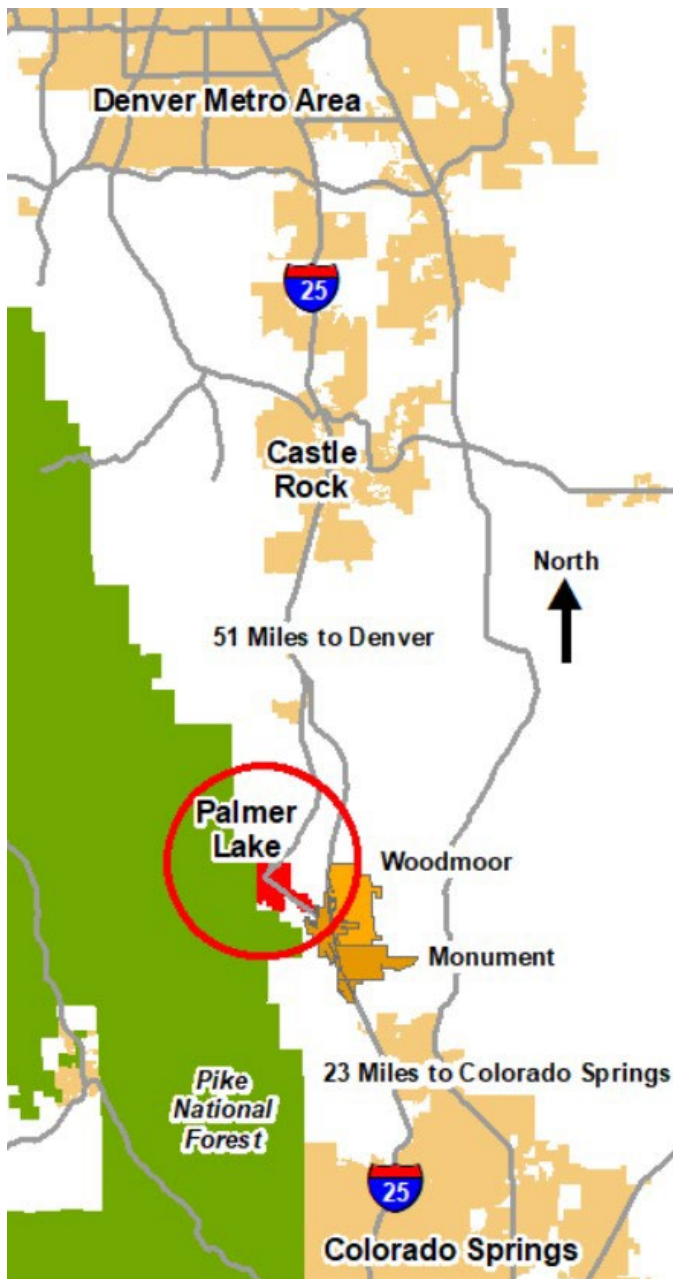
Concepts include:

- Provide for the logical extension of needed infrastructure.
- Revise and update the Town's zoning ordinance to better reflect the types of uses outlined in this Community Master Plan.



## CHAPTER 2: THE PALMER LAKE COMMUNITY

### REGIONAL OVERVIEW: THE TRI-LAKES REGION



#### LOCATION

Palmer Lake sits along the Colorado Front Range, just west of the Interstate 25 (I-25) corridor, where the Palmer Divide and the Great Plains meet the Rocky Mountains. Palmer Lake is 23 miles from downtown Colorado Springs, 35 miles to the Colorado Springs Airport, and about 51 miles from downtown Denver as shown on the vicinity map.

At the north edge of El Paso County, Palmer Lake is part of both the Pikes Peak Region, which consists of El Paso County and Teller County to the West. Palmer Lake is also part of the Tri-Lakes Region named for the lakes in Monument, Woodmoor and Palmer Lake. Several large features, like Ben Lomond Mountain in Palmer Lake, exist just to the east of the foothills.

Many refer to the area as quintessential Colorado:



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geographically varied, scenically breathtaking, and richly diverse in culture, history, and sense of community.

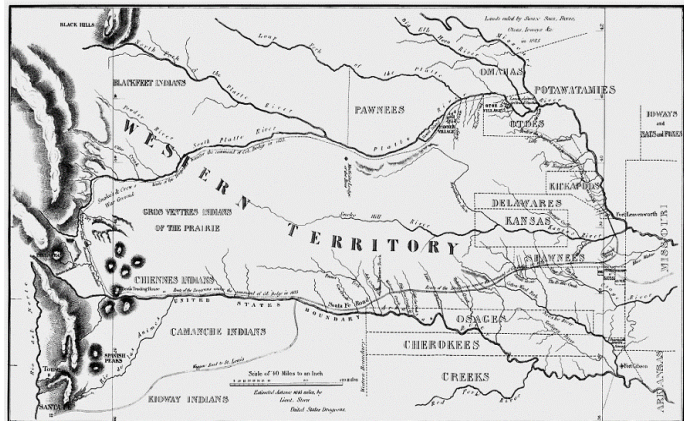
The region has a semi-arid climate with low humidity as well as some moderate and semi-humid areas. With the Palmer Divide's elevation of 7,300 feet, the weather is similar to the foothills, with cooler summers and colder winters than the metropolitan areas to the north and the south, with more rain and snow.

Forests cover the foothills, nearby mountains, and a significant portion of the plains in the Tri-Lakes area. Tree varieties include ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and mixed conifers. Grasslands cover the ranchlands of the plains. The region has a variety of wildlife including the greenback cutthroat trout, Mexican spotted owl, black bear, and pronghorn. The endangered Preble's meadow jumping mouse has its habitat along streams and creeks.

### **HISTORY AND HERITAGE**

The Palmer Lake area has a diverse and anecdotally rich history.

The region was first inhabited by Indigenous people about 10,000 years ago, and more recently by the Mountain Ute tribe in the west and the Arapahoe, Kiowa, Sioux, and Cheyenne in the east.



In 1820, Major Stephen Long, for whom Longs Peak is named, led an expedition to find the sources of the Platte River, the Arkansas River, and the Red River. Major Long did not see the potential of the area for development.



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On July 26, 1835, Colonel Henry Dodge wrote in his journal, at Palmer Lake, he noted “Upon the summit level (of the Palmer Divide) there is a lake about half a mile long and four or five hundred yards wide. The small streams on one side of this run into the Platte, and on the other into the Arkansas.”

Members of the Dodge expedition passing through Palmer Lake included First Lieutenant Jefferson Davis, who later became the

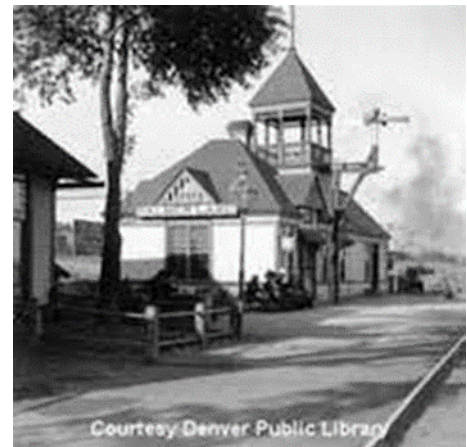


President of the Confederacy, two future governors of California, three future major generals in the Union Army during the Civil War, and a son of early American folk hero Danial Boone.

Lieutenant John Fremont’s 1843 expedition also passed through the region, and his more glowing descriptions helped to encourage settlement.

Following the Homestead Act in the 1860s, ranches and farms began to appear along the county line between El Paso and Douglas counties.

In 1871, shortly after the American Civil War, General William J. Palmer, a civil war Medal of Honor recipient, began building the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad with partners. By 1872 the railroad operated on the west side of the Lake. Originally called Divide, over time the station name changed to Loch Katrine, then Palermo, and finally Palmer Lake in November 1883. In 1887 the Santa Fe Railroad from Pueblo reached Palmer Lake on its way to Denver, adding its own mainline and station on the east side of the Lake. Today, the Palmer Lake rail



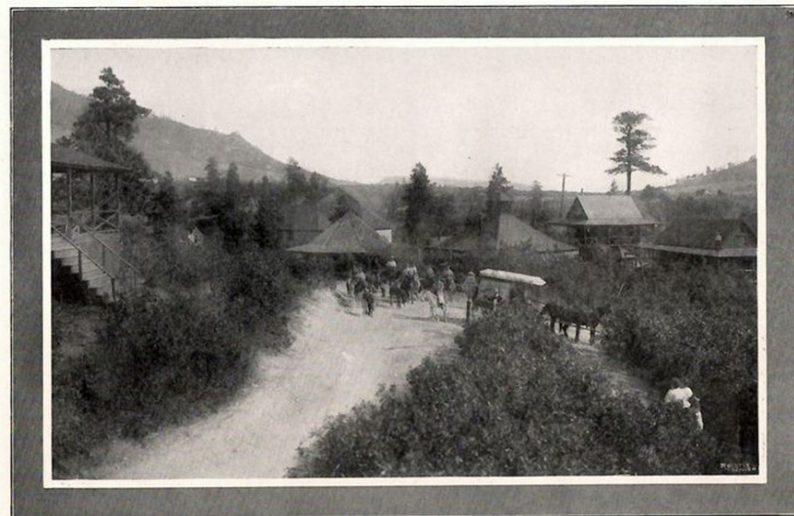


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station is no longer an active stop, although Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and Union Pacific (UP) railroads share an active mainline track through Palmer Lake.

The lake was one of the few natural water sources in the area, and the railway companies needed the water for their steam engines to chug up and down the Divide, but rail also provided new opportunities. By 1894, more than 20,000 acres were being cultivated in the Palmer Lake and Monument area. In 1901, winter ice was harvested and transported by rail to the north and south, an operation that continued for over 40 years until warmer winters reduced ice production.

The railway offered fares of just \$1.00 for a round trip from Denver to Palmer Lake, and as a result brought tourists. Palmer Lake became a



In Glen Park.

popular tourist destination for Denver residents to escape the summer heat. There was boating, fishing, and other outdoor activities. Denver groups and clubs organized outings to Palmer Lake as fundraisers. The railway cooperated by discounting fares and giving a portion of each ticket to the clubs.

Tourist facilities, such as the Glen House and a restaurant opened in 1884, followed by a general store in 1886. 1887 saw the first season of the Rocky Mountain Chautauqua, a popular nationwide adult education and entertainment movement that brought education and culture, as well as tourists, to resort communities. Participants, sometimes whole families, arrived by train, and stayed for nights – even weeks – in tents, tent cabins, and local hotels, enjoying a wholesome summer camp-like experience. Palmer Lake’s Chautauqua opened 11 years before Boulder’s, but the latter’s city’s support, extensive



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infrastructure, and a move toward automobile summer trips contributed to the end of Palmer Lake's Chautauqua in 1910.



Visiting the area in 1882, dental surgeon Dr. William Finley Thompson saw the potential for a health resort and vacation community. In 1882 and 1883, he purchased 320 acres east of the Lake and additional land west of the Lake. He named the east side Loch Katrine and the west side the Glenside Addition. Palmer Lake was incorporated in 1889. The citizens elected six trustees and Dr. Thompson as the first mayor.

To lift the community's spirits during the Great Depression, Lucretia Vaile began the Yule Log Hunt in 1934, and 1935 saw the lighting of the "Star of Bethlehem" on Sundance Mountain. The star has been lit every December since, and on special occasions. In 2013, the Palmer Lake Star was listed on the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties. The star stands as a definitive local landmark and a monument to community identity and civic pride.



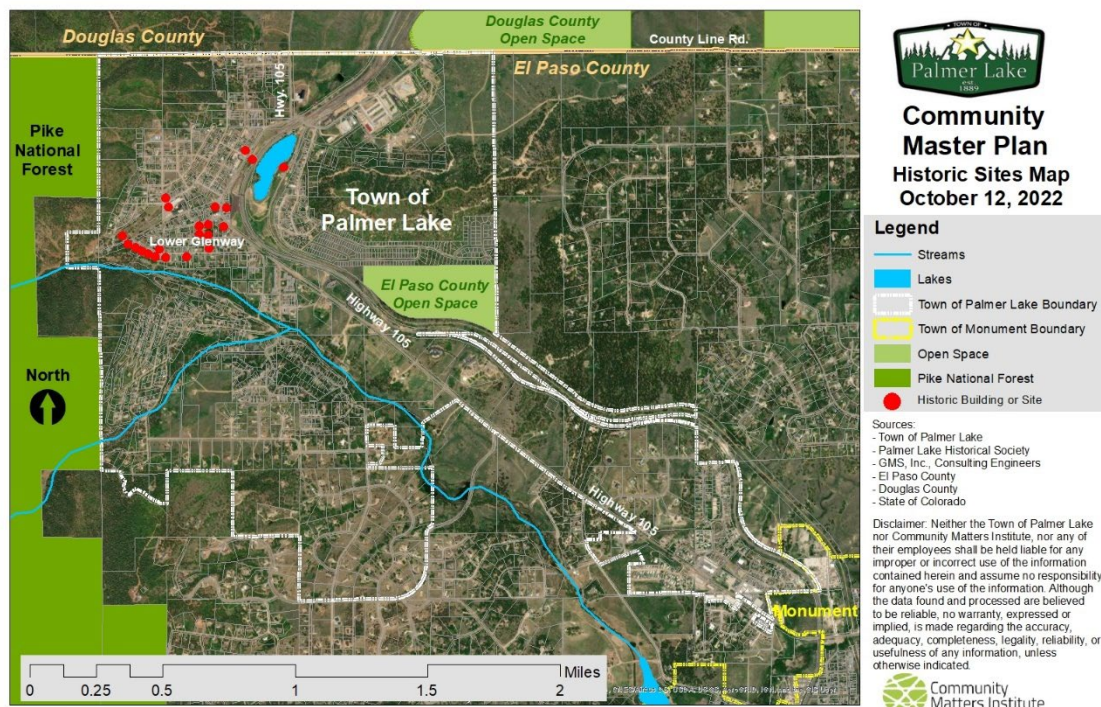


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The local economy stabilized during the later 1930s with previous visitors returning to build or buy summer homes but became depressed in the 1940s when the principal highway in the area moved farther East, causing many Palmer Lake businesses to close or move.

The plans for the Air Force Academy in the 1950s drew new residents to Palmer Lake and the Tri-Lakes region. By the 1960s, Palmer Lake was a predominantly residential area. Continued growth in Colorado Springs spurred additional housing development in the region. Today, housing construction and expansion of traffic capacity on I-25 continue into the third decade of the twenty-first century.

As the population grew, so did the demand for community facilities and services. Palmer Lake still uses its original town hall, built in 1914. It is a fine example of Craftsman-style architecture. A new school was built in the 1930s. 1937 saw the first volunteer fire department with an operating firehouse by spring 1938.



In the 1950s, the Town leased the reservoirs and water rights from the Denver & Rio Grande Western (D&RGW) railroad. Since then, work on the reservoirs and the repair and replacement of other water infrastructure continues. While the Tri-Lakes region and unincorporated El Paso County rely primarily on groundwater



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and shallow wells for water supply, Palmer Lake relies on storage provided by a town-owned water system. Long-range planning includes the possible extension of regional water service to the southeast end of the community. Sewer service in this part of the Tri-Lakes region is provided by the Palmer Lake Sanitation District which was formed in 1970.

The Palmer Lake Historical Society was organized in 1956 and now operates a museum. The 1960s introduced street lighting and the dedication of a new post office.

Arthur Bradley donated Sundance Mountain, the site of the illuminated star, to the Town in 1966. The Board of Trustees approved the introduction of cable television in 1981. The Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts had its beginnings in the summer of 1998. Local artists gathered and created an arts center for the Tri-Lakes area in one of its oldest buildings. With a generous gift from a donor and the stipulation that the Arts Center be self-supporting, the Kaiser-Frazer<sup>3</sup> building, a former livery stable, factory, and vehicle repair facility, was transformed into the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts.

Today Palmer Lake is a car-dependent community. It is easily accessible from both Highway 105 and Interstate 25 (I-25) which is three miles east of Palmer Lake's downtown core via County Line Road. I-25 is the major north-south route that serves the Colorado Front Range. Widening of I-25 has been completed in El Paso County and is nearing completion to the north in Douglas County. Other roads linking Palmer Lake to its surroundings include County Line Road (to I-25 and further east), Spruce Mountain Road (north to I-25 via Larkspur), and Highway 105 (north to Castle Rock and I-25 via Perry Park).

The separate main lines of the BNSF and UP railroads in Douglas County merge at Palmer Lake into a single mainline track. The State of Colorado operates the commuter Bustang bus service along I-25, with a park-n-ride facility in Woodmoor just north of Highway 105 on the east side of I-25.

The 2020 Census Bureau reported that no one in Palmer Lake used public transportation to get to work. 78% drove to work alone, while 7.2% drove in a small carpool. 10.3% work from home, while another 3.4% were able to walk to work. Among the people who did not work from home, one-third reached their

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<sup>3</sup> Kaiser-Frazer was a short-lived, post-war automobile company that was owned by the father and Grandfather of former Denver Broncos owner Edgar Kaiser Jr. The building was used to restore Kaiser-Frazer cars.





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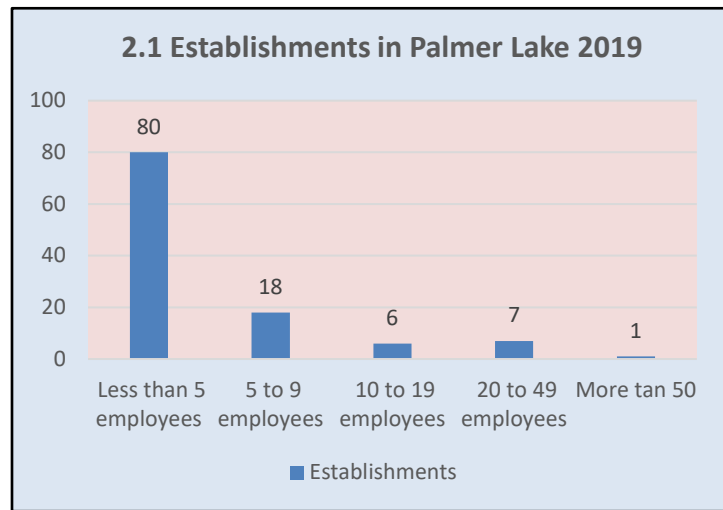
employment destination in less than 15 minutes and another third took more than 30 minutes.

## ECONOMY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

### ECONOMY<sup>4</sup>

Historically Palmer Lake was an agricultural community. Potatoes were a large crop until a potato blight hit in 1895. Farming and ranching fell into decline.

Today, U.S. census data shows agriculture plays no part in the Town's current economy. The economic base of the region is military, defense, aerospace, software/information technology, and tourism, and is also a retirement hub.



Transportation and utilities and public administration have been the fastest growing industry segments over the last 10 years for Palmer Lake residents, while manufacturing and information sciences have seen the steepest decline.

In 2019, there were 112 established businesses in Palmer Lake. Most, 71%, were small with fewer than five employees and only eight had more than 20 employees as shown in Figure 2.1. The average size was just 5.4 employees per establishment.

<sup>4</sup> Almost all data for Palmer Lake, except population, is from the ACS 5-year estimates as the 2020 Decennial census data is not available. Population data is from US Census Bureau American Community Survey, five-year estimate, 2020 (ACSST5Y2020) Table S2403 "Industry by Sex for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over."



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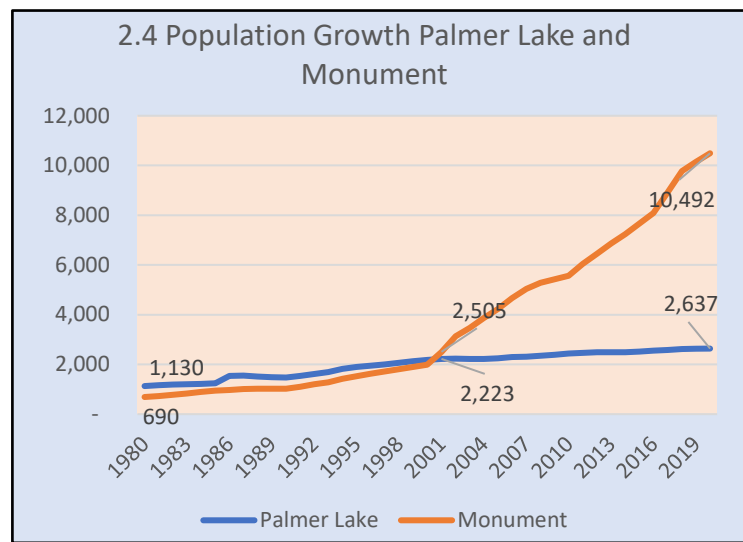
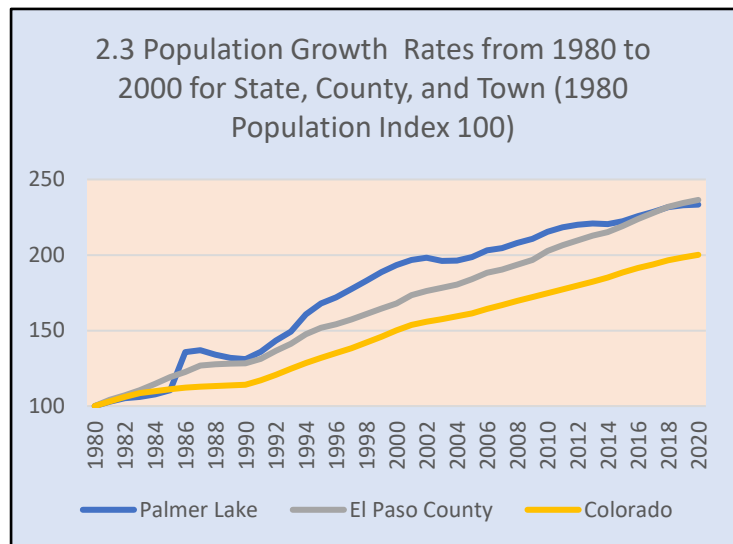
These businesses employed 613 people. About one in three of the Town's labor force has local employment opportunities. The average annual income of these employees was about \$42,250.

Over half of the establishments were in three industries: construction, professional services, or other services not including public administration. Nine enterprises engaged in tourism (accommodations and food services), and seven each in retail, manufacturing, and real estate as shown in Figure 2.2.

### DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>5</sup>

Between 1980 and 2020, Colorado doubled its population to 5,782,914. El Paso County and the Town of Palmer Lake experienced slightly faster population growth (2.3 times the 1980 population as shown in Figure 2.3) with the County reaching a population of 731,641 and the Town reaching 2,636.

Over these 40 years, the Town grew at a compounded rate of 2.14% annually. However, since 2000 the Town growth rate has averaged only 0.94% per year. This slowdown in growth partially explains why the Census Bureau overestimated the Town's



<sup>5</sup> From the ACS 5-year estimates.

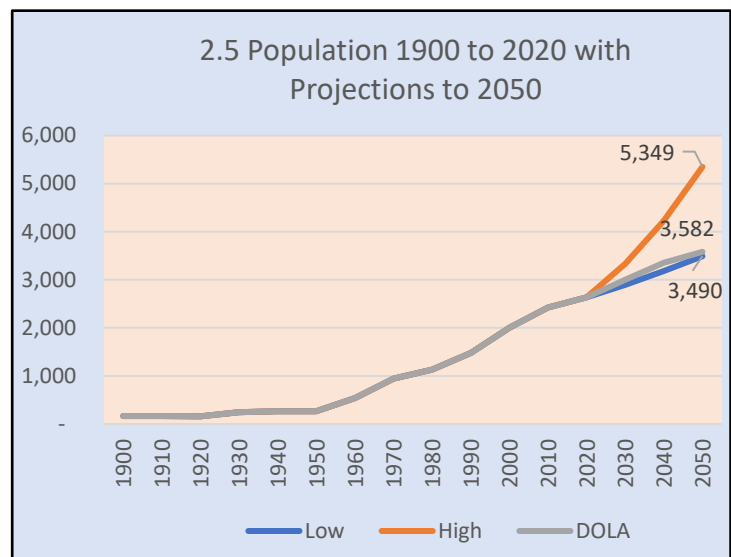


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population by over 460 people in 2019.<sup>6</sup>

In 1980, the neighboring Town of Monument had a smaller population than Palmer Lake. Monument has become one of the fastest-growing communities in the State of Colorado, in both population and geographic area. In 2001, the population of Monument exceeded the population of Palmer Lake, by 2020 Monument had grown to nearly four times that of Palmer Lake, as shown in Figure 2.4.

The State of Colorado does not make population projections for communities as small as Palmer Lake. The Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) has made projections for 2050 for El Paso County. Palmer Lake has tracked very closely to the El Paso County growth rates. CMI applied these rates to Palmer Lake to ensure that the DOLA population estimate was reasonable. CMI also made its projections for Palmer



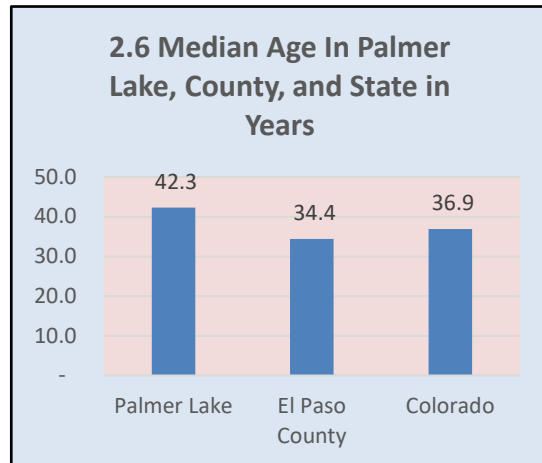
Lake's population through the year 2050, based on its historic growth rates over the last 40 years (high) and last 20 years (low). Figure 2.5, created by CMI, shows the DOLA-derived estimate (in gray) is slightly higher than the lower bound of the CMI projection for Palmer Lake.

<sup>6</sup> The actual population recorded by the 2020 decennial census of 2,636 was outside the margin of error given for the 2019 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) of 3,104 plus or minus 215. While 5-year ACS is the best available data for small towns between decennial censuses, it can have significant errors, as demonstrated in this instance, and must be used with caution.



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Based on Census data<sup>7</sup>, the Palmer Lake population is older and wealthier than the average for the state. The median age of Palmer Lake residents is almost six years older than the state and eight years older than the median age of El Paso County residents, as shown in Figure 2.6. As a result of the older age, 80.1% of the residents of Palmer Lake are of voting age versus just 73% in the state and county.



The median household income in Palmer Lake, at \$92,333, is about 30% higher than in El Paso County. A higher mean household income of \$98,100 suggests that Palmer Lake has a few very high-income households. Family households average about 16% higher income than non-family households with a mean family income approaching \$116,000.

Forty-two percent (42%) of Palmer Lake's workforce worked in industries that averaged more than \$65,000 a year in pay, and 43% of the workforce worked in industries that averaged less than \$30,000 per year in pay, with half of those earning less than \$15,000 per year.

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

CMI created a community profile for Palmer Lake using 2020 decennial census data, when available, and otherwise used the American Community Survey (ACS) – five-year estimates. The 2020 census data is more accurate but does not match exactly with the ACS estimates. The biggest discrepancy noted is that the ACS data overestimated the population of Palmer Lake by 26% (3335 vs 2636). As a result, there are discrepancies, such as a greater population under 'Place of Residence' 1 Year Ago, which is based on the ACS, and the first item, 'Population', which is based on the 2020 decennial census. The profile is a useful summary for visitors, potential residents, and investors.

<sup>7</sup> See Community Profile on the following pages.



## Palmer Lake, Colorado Community Profile

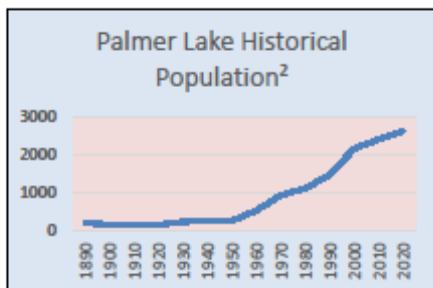
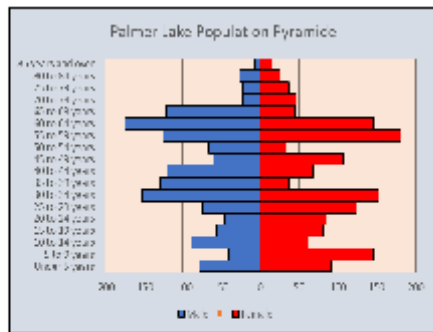
(2020 Data)

### Population<sup>3</sup>

	Palmer Lake	El Paso County
<b>Total</b>	2,636	730,396
<b>Male</b>	1,282	369,358
<b>Female</b>	1,353	361,038

### Age of Population<sup>1</sup>

	Palmer Lake	El Paso County
<b>Median Age</b>	42.3 years	34.43 years



### Income<sup>1</sup>

	Palmer Lake	El Paso County
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$92,333	\$71,517
<b>Mean Household Income</b>	\$98,099	\$92,028
<b>Median Family Income</b>	\$106,138	\$84,078
<b>Mean Family Income</b>	\$115,758	\$106,563
<b>Per capita income</b>	\$39,989	\$35,177

### Education<sup>1</sup>

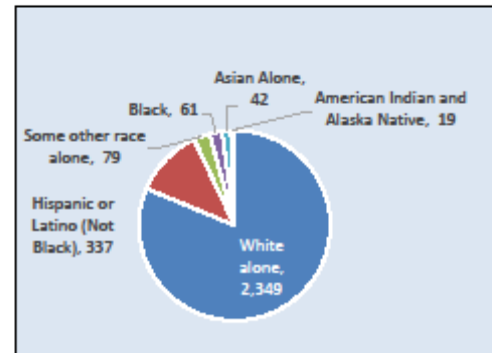
#### Educational Attainment Population 25 years or older

	Palmer Lake	El Paso County
Less than high school	116 9.2%	28,436 7.5%
High school	252 19.9%	85,376 22.7%
Some college or Associate's	393 31.0%	131,432 34.9%
Bachelor's Degree	319 25.2%	115,581 21.9%
Graduate or professional	187 14.8%	49,774 13.2%

### School Enrollment<sup>1</sup>

	Palmer Lake	El Paso County
Nursery school	12	9,777
Kindergarten	0	8,683
Elementary School	179	70,334
High School (9-12)	107	34,717
College or grad school	182	47,912

### Race and Ethnicity (Palmer Lake)<sup>1</sup>



### Place of Residence 1 Year Ago<sup>1</sup>

	Palmer Lake	El Paso County
Same dwelling	2,121	554,323
Elsewhere in County	497	77,796
Elsewhere in State	527	16,464
Different State	190	47,173
Abroad	0	6,191



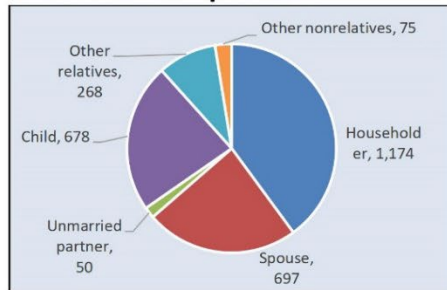
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**Palmer Lake, Colorado Community Profile**  
 (2020 Data)

**Households<sup>3</sup>**

	Palmer Lake	El Paso County
<b>Population</b>	2,636	730,396
In households	2,636	712,515
In group quarters	0	17,881
Total households	1,072	266,425
Family households	668	184,557
Living alone	106	30
65 years and older	44	7,515
Average household size	2.46	2.67
Average family size	2.90	3.15

**Household Composition<sup>1</sup>**



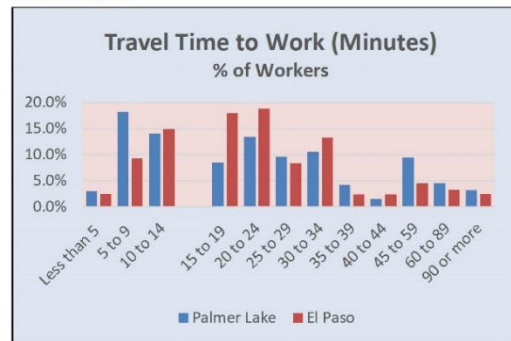
**Housing Supply<sup>1</sup>**

	Palmer Lake	El Paso County
Total housing units	1,241	276,538
Occupied	1,174	262,780
Owner	1,087	171,408
Renter	87	89,445
Vacant	67	13,758
Homeowner Vacancy	5.0%	1.1%
Rental Vacancy Rate	15.5%	3.4%
Median value	\$329,700	\$300,200

**Labor Force<sup>1</sup>**

	Palmer Lake	El Paso County
Civilian labor force	1,907	349,459
Employed	1,778	328,734
Unemployed	129	20,725
Unemployment Rate	6.76%	5.93%
Armed Forces	7	30,429

**Commute<sup>1</sup>**



**Occupation<sup>1</sup>**

	Palmer Lake	El Paso County
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	634	141,199
Service occupations	377	58,125
Sales and office occupations	377	70,280
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	203	27,910
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	187	31,220

**Data Disclaimer:** The data in this profile are compiled from multiple sources and are intended for informational purposes only. Community Matters Institute (CMI) assumes no responsibility or legal liability for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information in this profile.

**Data Sources:** <sup>1</sup>2020 data from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5 year estimates.

<sup>2</sup>Historical records Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) in 2022.

<sup>3</sup>2020 Decennial Survey. (This data does not exactly match source 1.)





## TOWN REVENUES AND EXPENSES

The Town financially operates predominantly with two Funds, the General Fund and the Water Fund (also known as the Enterprise Fund). The General Fund supports the majority of services for the Town including police, fire, roads, parks, and administration. The Water Fund supports the Town's water supply, distribution system and back-office systems.

The General Fund is supported by revenue from taxes (property, use, sales, etc.), permits, and fees (business licenses, franchise fees, court fines, etc.).

The Water Fund is stand alone and self-sustaining. Revenue is from tap fees and water billings. These revenue sources support general administrative (water infrastructure, water treatment, staff, and debt service), operations (maintenance of the water system) and capital improvements.

Grants are sought at every level (federal, state, and local) to help supplement community projects, capital improvements and infrastructure needs. The Town continually considers opportunities to maintain and improve the levels of services without negatively impacting the budget and simultaneously enhancing the quality of life in Palmer Lake.

The Town's fiscal year is 1 January though 31 December. At the beginning of the third quarter, the Town staff conducts a call for budget inputs from all departments for both Funds. The data is consolidated into a baseline draft budget which is then distributed to the Board of Trustees for review and comment. At that point, the Board and the department heads meet to clarify questions and set budget priorities for the following year. A draft is then presented to the public for comment. Any necessary modifications are incorporated into the draft budget which is then submitted to the Board for final review and adoption during the second week of December.

In consideration of how Palmer Lake manages overall finances, on an annual basis the budget addresses what is needed for administrative and operations for each individual fund. At that time, all revenue sources are analyzed to insure proper and adequate taxes, permits, fees and billing rates are imposed and collected; and in instances of oversights or errors, corrective actions are taken, as well as the need to realign rates and fees, as necessary. Consideration is given to maintenance projects to be included within each annual budget, in order to minimize delayed maintenance, if unaddressed may evolve into



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unnecessary capital expenditures. However, In the case of infrastructure requiring capital improvements, other financial instruments may be sought out, including, but not limited to, grant and federal flow-down funding for infrastructure. As a final option, bonds may be considered.







## CHAPTER 3: LAND AND SERVICING CONSIDERATIONS

### OVERVIEW

This chapter outlines:

- How is land currently used in Palmer Lake?
- How is land currently zoned?
- How much land is currently used for parks, open space recreation, and trails, and how much open space can be found within Town limits and just beyond Town limits?
- What land is suitable for development versus lands that are constrained due to steep slopes, unstable slopes, flood-prone, expansive soils, or severe wildfire risk?
- What infrastructure is available in different parts of the Town?
- How to capitalize on traffic counts along the Highway 105 corridor?
- How much new development is possible given current lot sizes and zoning?

An evaluation of the land uses that exist within the Town, the characteristics of this land, and what type of infrastructure is available is critical to the formulation of this Community Master Plan and serves to inform the Future Land Use Plan<sup>8</sup>.

The information in this Chapter provides the starting point to create the Future Land Use Plan and the basis for the formulation of workable land use regulations to protect existing uses. This will also serve to encourage additional desired economic expansion within the Town through the development of

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<sup>8</sup> The Future Land Use Plan is designed to guide new growth, taking a balanced approach to land use that accommodates future growth while limiting impacts to existing neighborhoods and conserving open space areas that reflect the rural heritage of the community. The Future Land Use Plan takes into consideration key development influences such as market conditions, the existing roadway network, rail corridors, and environmental features. Land use designations guide the location, character, and use of future development. This Plan can be found in Chapter 5.



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complementary land uses, which then inform changes to the Town's existing land use regulations.



## **EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING**

### **EXISTING LAND USE MAP**

The Palmer Lake Existing Land Use Map identifies current land uses within the Town. Land use categories include:

- A – Agricultural-Ranch
- MH - Mobile Home
- SF - Single-Family Housing
- MF - Multi-family including attached residential units such as attached townhomes and duplexes.
- B - Business
- Inst – Institutions, including religious facilities
- M - Industrial or manufacturing
- W - Warehouse
- P - Public property, including schools
- PR - Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
- V - Vacant Land



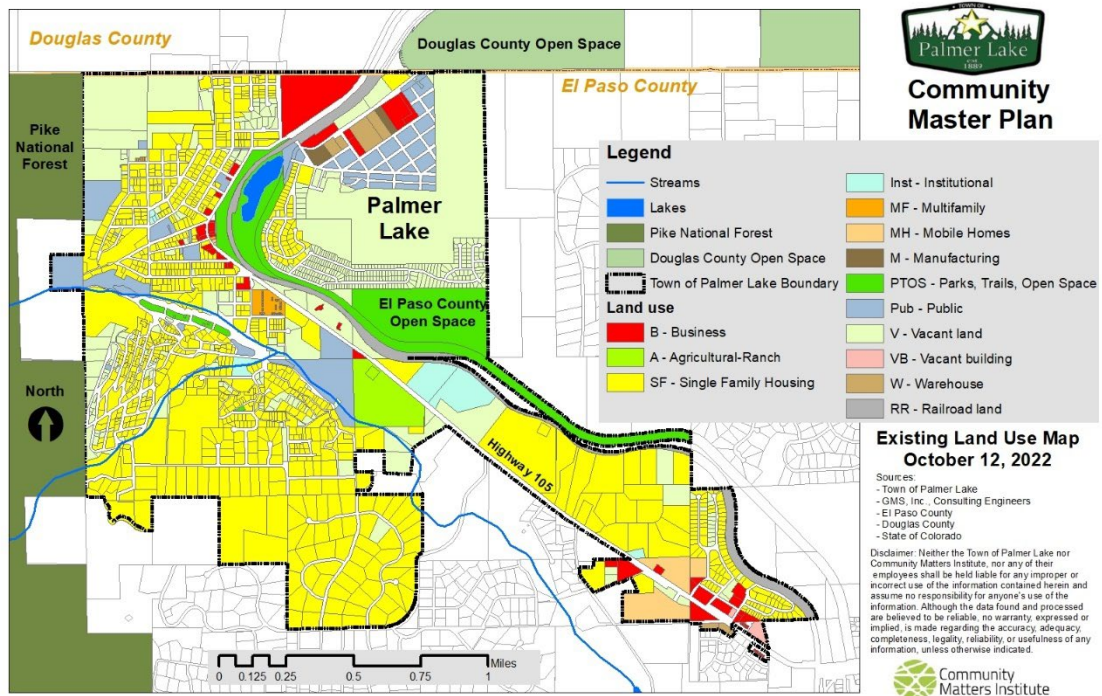
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The existing land use map provides a graphic depiction of how land is currently used in the Town. It was developed using satellite imagery, El Paso County Assessor’s records, and an on-the-ground visual field check by the appointed Master Plan advisors.

### GIS MAPPING

Land use mapping is important in determining the maximum capacity for the build-out of the community, potential impacts that might result from increases in density allowed under current zoning regulations, and potential land use compatibility issues.

Mapping existing land use conditions helps to establish a framework and understanding of how the community can manage change.



An important part of this Plan’s development is the creation of over 100 GIS layers of information. The map database was created in ArcView GIS.<sup>9,10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.esri.com/en-us/landing-page/product/2019/arcgis-online/overview>

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix F: GIS Data



## Existing Land Uses and Density

The use and density of the Town vary from one section of Town to another. The character and feel of the Town are cohesive since the Town is primarily comprised of low-density single-family homes and an abundance of open space.

Under current zoning, the overall residential density could reach 1.4 dwelling units (DUs) per acre (total land area zoned residential divided by total number of households). It is expected that the Town will maintain its rural nature under current zoning, except for approval of any Planned Unit Development (PUD).<sup>11</sup>

Existing PUD zoned properties in the Town are approximately 32% vacant land, 17% residential, and 28% mixed and other uses<sup>12</sup>. The existing Town Code requires that a PUD is “consistent with the goals and objectives and comprehensive plan of the Town of Palmer Lake”, “be innovative, achieve a compatible land use relationship with the surrounding areas, preserve the unique, natural, scenic, historical, and cultural features of a site, encourage energy efficiency and conservation of energy and natural resources, and provide for usable open space and recreational areas in new developments.” The Town Code also requires 30% open space dedication and a 50-foot setback from Highway 105.

### Palmer Lake Residential Densities

Agricultural Ranch  
Residential = 1 dwelling unit (DU) per 5 acres or more

Large lot= 1 DU per 1- 5 acres

Low density= 1 DU per ¼ acre

Medium density= 4-8 DUs per acre

High density= 9-14 DUs per

<sup>11</sup> The density range is derived from the Existing Land Use Map and Zoning Map.

<sup>12</sup> Other uses include religious uses, a convalescent hospital, and a gymnasium.



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## OVERVIEW OF CURRENT RESIDENTIAL DENSITY<sup>13</sup>

**Residential Density.** Examples of current residential density in already developed areas are as follows:

- 4-8 units per acre in the Old Town core residential area (5,000 and 10,000 square foot lots).
- One dwelling unit per five acres in Pioneer Preserve.
- There is one development--the townhomes on the east end of the Town core--that has a density of 7.26 DUs per acre. This development includes common open space.<sup>14</sup>



Density ranges in Palmer Lake are far lower than that of other Colorado municipalities and United States (US) land use definitions of density ranges<sup>15</sup>. The above definition of density is unique to Palmer Lake. This Master Plan defines high density, of which there are no areas in either the current Zoning Regulations for Palmer Lake or Future Land Use Plan, as no more than 9-14

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<sup>13</sup> Densities were calculated based on the CMI GIS database including the El Paso County parcel data, the neighborhood boundaries map, and the existing land use map.

<sup>14</sup> Townhome development is 303,000 sq. ft. There are 54 townhomes or 7.26 DUs per acre based on the El Paso County parcel database.

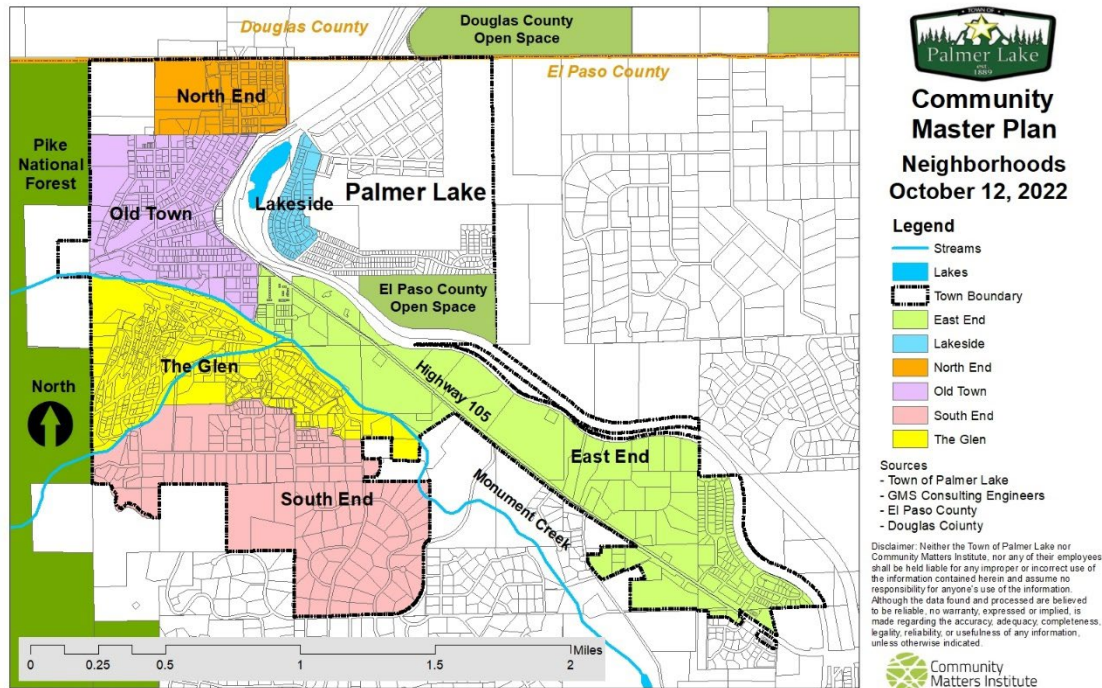
<sup>15</sup> Community Matters Institute



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dwelling units (DUs) per acre, whereas high density is typically defined as 16-25 DUs per acre comprised of multi-story multi-family housing.<sup>16</sup>

The following map illustrates all defined neighborhoods and was developed by the Advisory Team for this Plan.



### **OVERVIEW OF NON-RESIDENTIAL AREAS (ALL C ZONES AND M-1)**

Much of the land that is zoned for non-residential land uses, including the downtown core and east end commercial C-2 zone, is currently conditionally used as residential.

**Main Street Downtown Core (zoned CC).** The downtown core is 31.5 acres located adjacent to the west side of Highway 105, and adjacent to the Lake. Over 18 acres of the downtown core are currently conditionally used as residential.

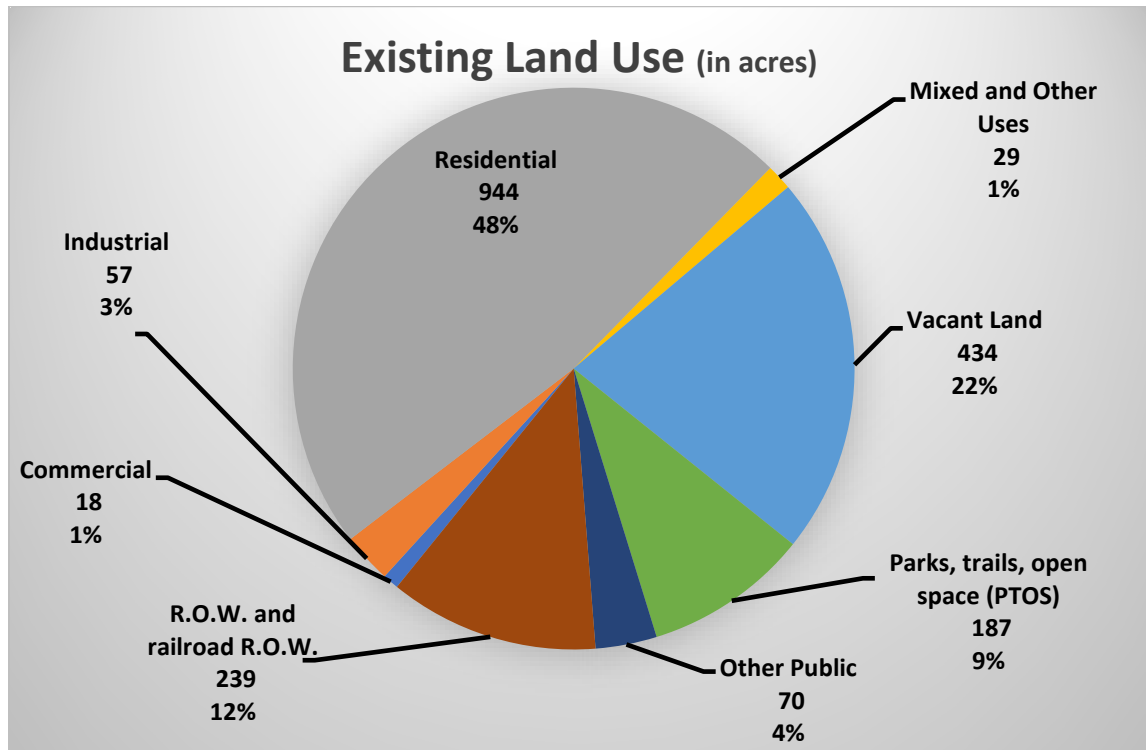
<sup>16</sup> To understand what density looks like please view the following link:  
<https://www.columbus.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=79904> or  
<https://www.bozeman.net/home/showdocument?id=3242>



**East End Village Mixed-Use Center (zoned C2).** The east end mixed-use commercial node includes the area that is currently zoned C-2. It includes two mobile home parks and several industrial uses. The area within the Town is approximately 62.4 acres of which 35.1 acres are currently residential land use with 7.5 acres of vacant land. Only 5.2 acres of this is presently used as commercial. 14.5 acres are used as industrial.

**North End Business/ Industrial Center with Retail Node (zoned M-1 & C-1).** The North End Business and Industrial Center includes a suggested 20-acre retail node encompassing about 87 acres. Thirty-nine (39) acres are currently in industrial use including the 25-acre parcel adjacent to Spruce Mountain Road, 14.35 acres are vacant, and 2.6 acres are currently residential dwellings.

**Vacant Land.** Of the 1,978 acres of land within the Town of Palmer Lake, 434 acres are currently vacant.<sup>17</sup>



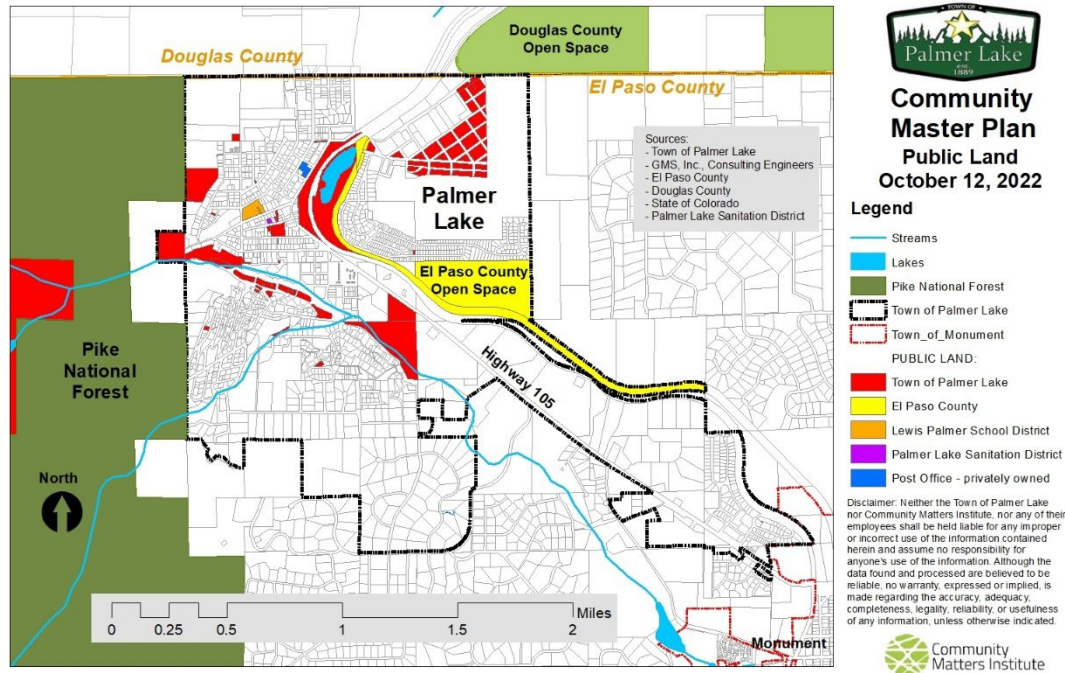
**Public Land.** Within the Town limits, 496 acres are owned by public entities or considered right-of-way (ROW) including railroad ROW. These areas include:

<sup>17</sup> Vacant land was calculated based on the El Paso County Assessor's parcel data.



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- Town of Palmer Lake (Town Hall complex & Public Works Facilities, parks, and other Town-owned lands)
- El Paso County
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District
- Lewis-Palmer School District
- Pikes Peak Library District
- US Post Office (rented property)



## ZONING

The Palmer Lake Official Zoning Map establishes zone districts throughout the Town. These districts prescribe uses allowed within each established zone, either by right or with a conditional use permit. Each zone district prescribes standards that must be met for new land uses to be consistent with existing uses in surrounding areas.

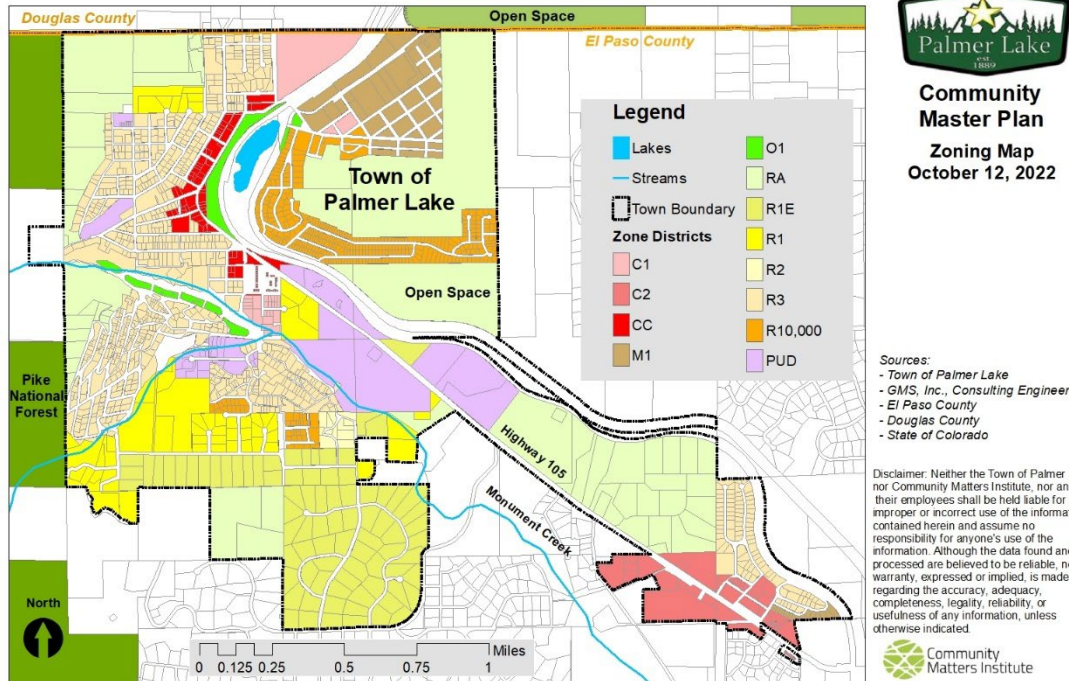
In addition to regulating uses, zoning codes also regulate height, density, setbacks, open space, parking, signage, lighting levels, and landscape requirements. The zoning map identifies areas where compatible land uses can locate. State Statute further states zoning regulations in statutory municipalities





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must “be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan” in compliance with C.R.S. § 31-23-303(1)<sup>18</sup>.



## PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS

The Town has a total of 167 acres<sup>19</sup> of parks, open spaces, and trails. This equates to approximately 63.4 acres of open space and developed parks per 1,000 residents compared to the Urban Land Institute standards of 10 acres per 1,000 residents. Parks and natural open spaces are located throughout the Town. In the core area of the Town, the Lake, Sante Fe Open Space<sup>20</sup>, and Santa Fe Trail are maintained regularly and provide programmed activities.

In the rural areas of the Town, areas south of the downtown core that are accessed from Highway 105, mostly privately-owned open land exists typically

<sup>18</sup> Colorado Land Planning and Development Law, Ninth Edition

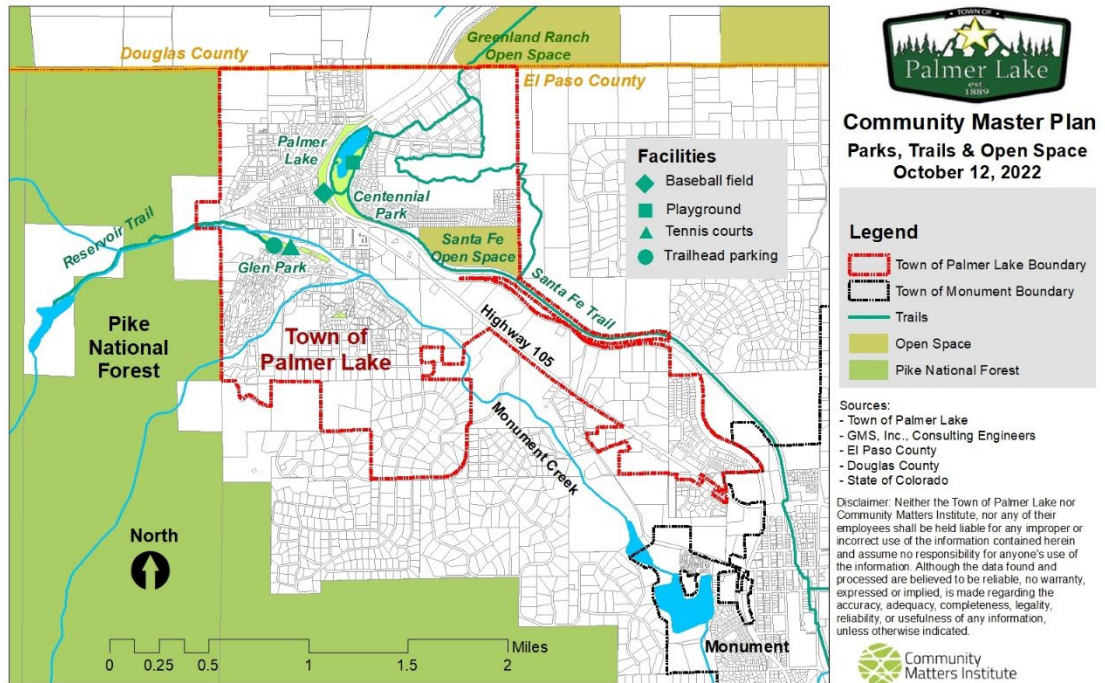
<sup>19</sup> This figure includes all parks that is open to the public, regardless of which public entity owns the park. It also includes the Sante Fe Trail corridor in Palmer Lake and any trails that are within a public park. It does not include the Reservoir Trail since this is a service road, nor does it include informal trails throughout the community.

<sup>20</sup> The Sante Fe Open Space is owned by El Paso County. Maps that reference ownership show this open space by ownership not name.



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without any formally constructed park. Open space exists because of larger lot sizes, land ownership patterns, topography, and natural features. These open areas are not formally maintained and typically do not provide programmed recreational activities. Properties in these areas of Town are large enough to allow for agricultural and/or equestrian activities.



Trails are the predominant non-motorized means of getting from one place to another in Palmer Lake. There are few sidewalks and an often-voiced need for dedicated bike lanes and paths.

Recreational trails are a vital component of the parks and recreation and transportation systems of the Town. The 14-mile Santa Fe Trail follows the abandoned Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way. The gravel surface regional trail generally follows a straight and level course for the first 6.5 miles beginning at Palmer Lake. Trailheads are located at Palmer Lake, Third Street in the Town of Monument, and Baptist Road. Other trail access points are located at Highway 105 in Monument, Northgate Road, and Ice Lake at the Air Force Academy.

Another popular trail in Palmer Lake is the Palmer Lake Reservoir Trail which is an access road leading to two reservoirs. This trail traverses Glen Park. Glen



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Park is approximately a 24-acre park located along the North Monument Creek Greenbelt in the Glen Park neighborhood of Palmer Lake. The park is classified as a community rustic park and is comprised of five distinct, individual parcels/use areas linked together by the surrounding vacated roadways, all owned and managed by the Town of Palmer Lake and the Parks Commission. Each use area is unique and varies in the level of development and types of facilities it contains. Glen Park features both developed facilities and natural areas providing visitors with a variety of recreational and natural experiences in one easily accessible location. While Glen Park has well-used facilities, some of the most popular features at the park are the relatively undeveloped Creekside Trail along North Monument Creek, the playground area, the trail to the reservoirs, the Glen Park Woods Walk loop trail within Glen Park which is approximately a half mile long, the tennis courts, the picnic tables, and the natural areas, especially behind and west of the tennis courts.

In addition to providing recreational opportunities, the park provides valuable habitats for birds, fish, and wildlife. Glen Park is bordered by North Monument Creek on the north side of Lovers Lane (north of the creek is private property). Creekside Trail runs west to east just within the Town boundary and on the south side of the creek); west to the Pike National Forest along Walnut Avenue and extends farther west of Walnut Avenue to encompass the Reservoir Trailhead area. The park also offers convenient connections to the Creekside Trail and the Reservoir Trail systems.<sup>21</sup>

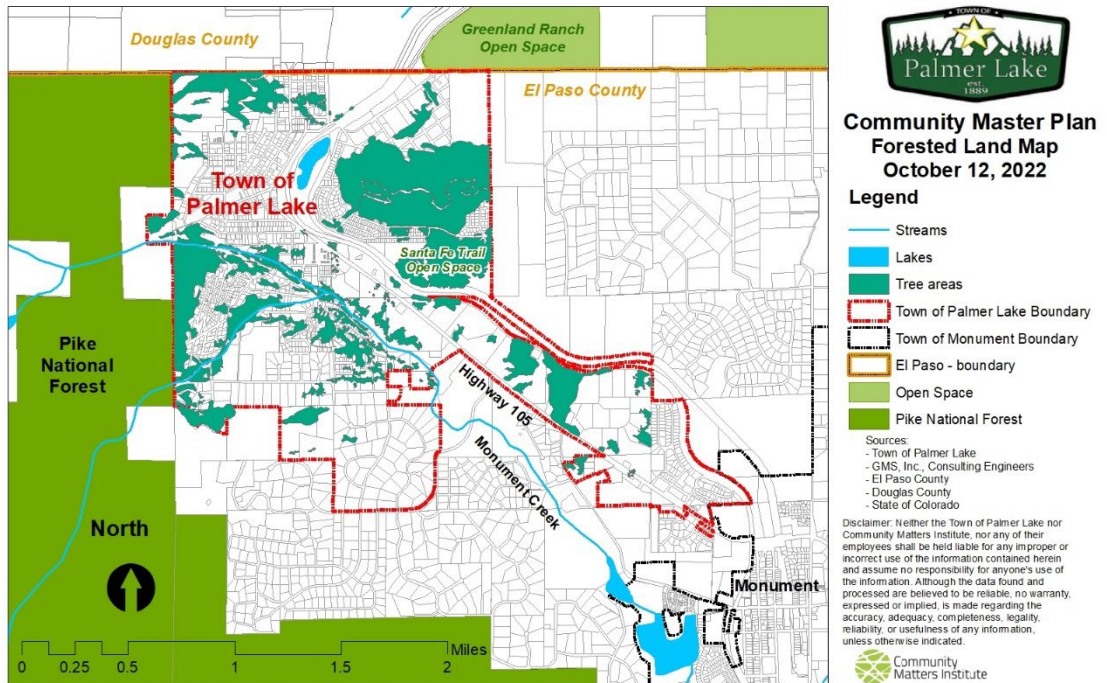
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<sup>21</sup> The above information is verbatim from the adopted 2019 Glen Park Master Plan.



## FORESTED LAND

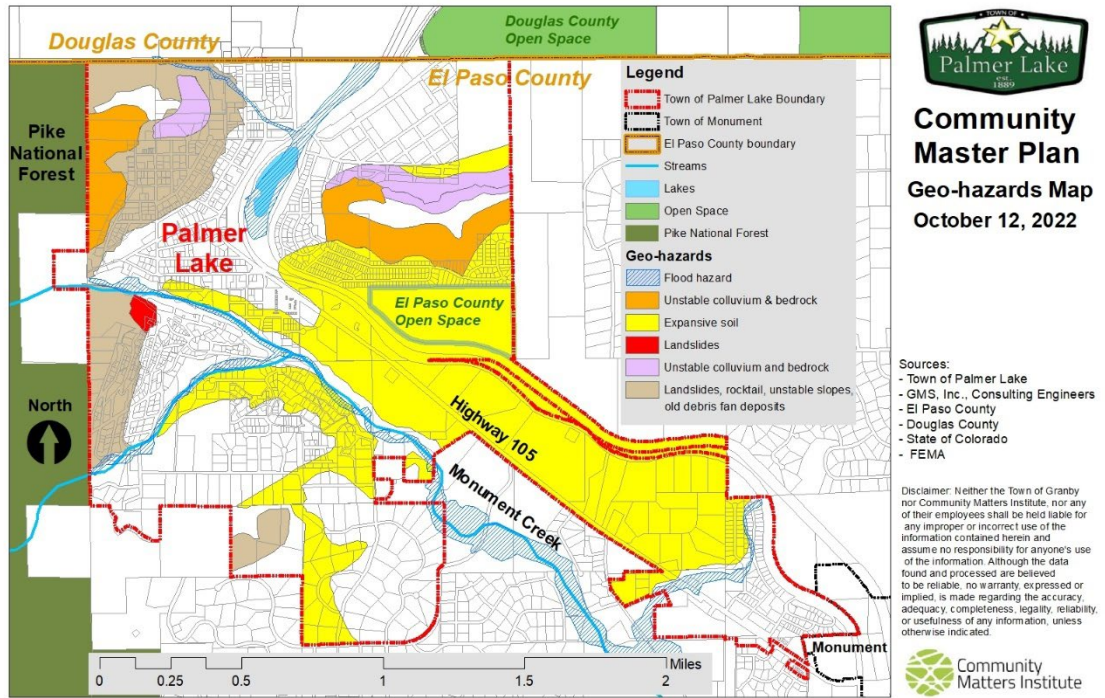
The Town has substantial forested areas within the Town boundary. These areas are illustrated on the following map. These forested lands promote habitats for wildlife, microclimates, and aesthetic benefits for those people who live and/or work in the Town, and it enhances the image and property values of the community.





## DEVELOPMENT SUITABILITY AND CONSTRAINTS

Palmer Lake has an attractive natural setting that includes significant water features, designated open space, and the Pikes National Forest. Water features include the Town lake next to the downtown core, reservoirs to the west in Pike National Forest, as well as Monument Creek and North Monument Creek. In addition to the forest to the west and south, much of the Town is tree-covered. There are dramatic views because of the varied topography that includes the foothills of the Front Range, Ben Lomond Mountain, and Palmer Ridge, plateaus to the south and east, and rolling terrain along County Line Road.

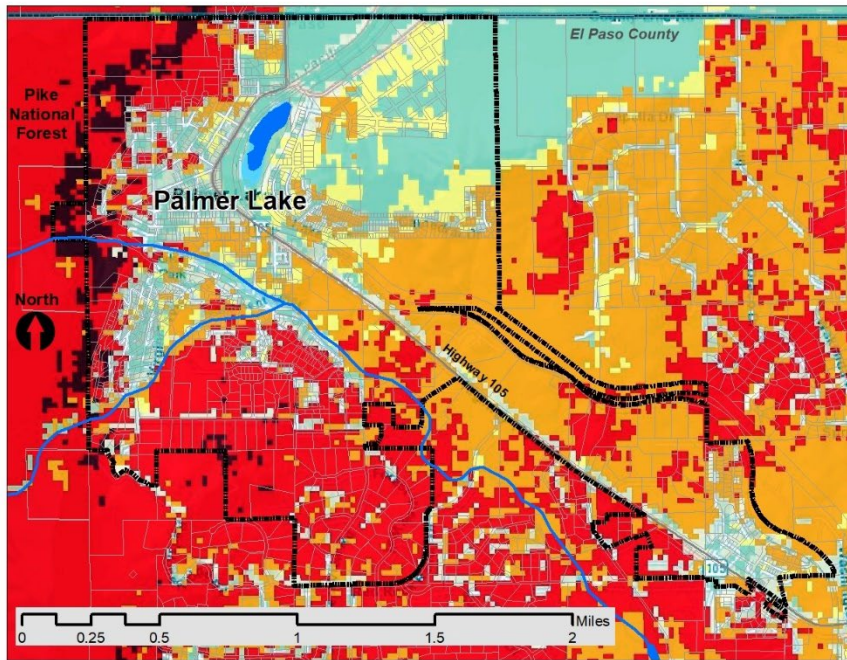


Various development constraints are shown on the following maps. The geo hazards map includes expansive soils, floodplains, landslides, rockfall, steep and unstable slopes, and old debris fan deposits. The second hazards map shows severe wildfire hazards<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> From Colorado Forest Service 20220 [https://climate.colorado.gov/colorado-wildfire-risk-public-viewer\\_](https://climate.colorado.gov/colorado-wildfire-risk-public-viewer_)



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**Community  
Master Plan  
Wildfire Risk Map  
October 12, 2022**

**Legend**

- Streams
- Lakes
- ▭ Town of Palmer Lake

**Wildfire Risk**

- Lowest Risk
- Low Risk
- Moderate Risk
- High Risk
- Highest Risk

- Sources:
- Town of Palmer Lake
  - GMS, Inc., Consulting Engineers
  - El Paso County
  - Douglas County
  - Colorado Forest Service

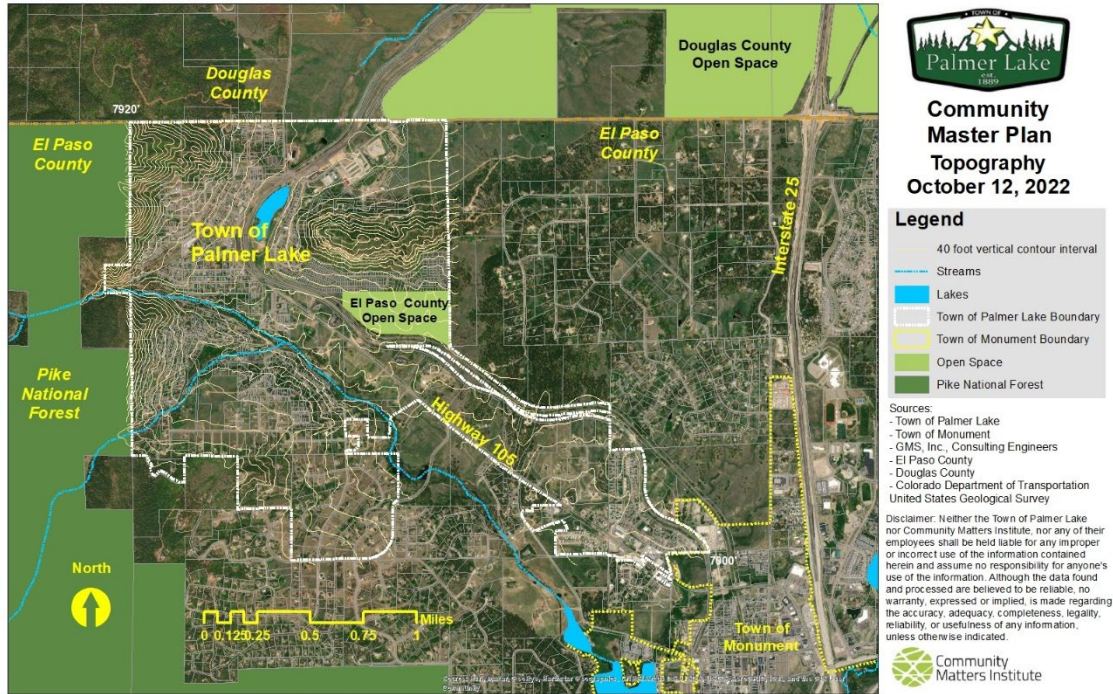
Disclaimer: Neither the Town of Palmer Lake nor Community Matters Institute, nor any of their employees shall be held liable for any improper or incorrect use of the information contained herein and assume no responsibility for anyone's use of the information. Although the data found and processed are believed to be reliable, no warranty, expressed or implied, is made regarding the accuracy, adequacy, completeness, legality, reliability, or usefulness of any information, unless otherwise indicated.





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The topography map shows the varied terrain. The Town has an adopted Hillside Ordinance that limits development on steeper slopes. The steeper the ground the greater the percentage of land that must remain in a natural state.





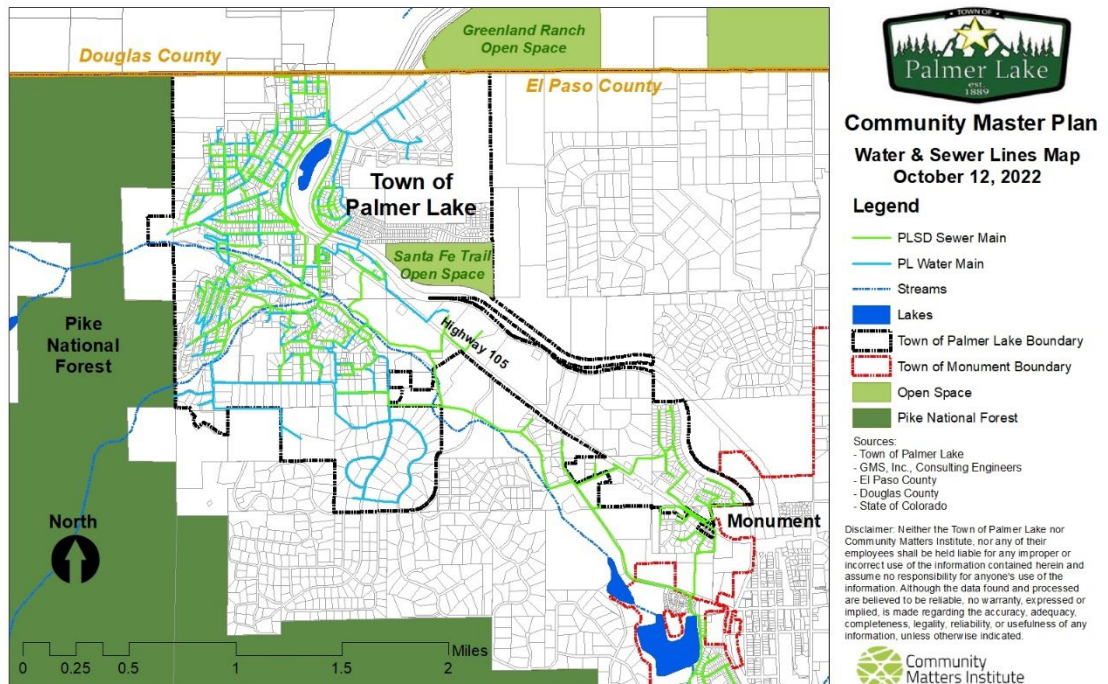
## INFRASTRUCTURE

### WATER

The Town of Palmer Lake has both surface water and groundwater rights. The Town has relatively senior surface water rights for both water diversion and water storage. The Town also has decreed water rights to the four Denver Basin aquifers underlying the corporate limits of the Town. Palmer Lake has experienced a dramatic increase in water demands over the last few decades. Much of this is associated with the burgeoning growth of Colorado’s Front Range communities particularly both Douglas and El Paso counties which draw from many of the same aquifers used by Palmer Lake.

Water is primarily provided through a centralized system although there are some areas of Town where individual wells are permitted if the building is not within 400 feet of a water line. State statute requires that any structure within 400 feet of a water line must connect to the centralized water system.

The Town’s 2022 adopted fee schedule, found on the Town’s website, notes that the current fees for a water tap and required meter are \$21,218 and \$650, respectively. Water billing is based on meter size and water usage rate.







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## **SURFACE WATER RIGHTS<sup>23</sup>**

Surface water rights can include multiple types of structures including ditches, springs, pipelines, reservoirs, and pumping systems. These types of structures represent the various components of surface water rights for diversions, transport, and storage.

Surface water rights available to the Town's water system consist of the following:

- Anchor Ditch No. 1 for 0.89 cubic feet per second (cfs), being decreed for domestic use. This ditch right is augmented under Water Court Case 87CW069 using non-tributary groundwater sources.
- Anchor Ditch No. 1 for 0.89 cfs decreed for railroad and industrial use. The Town leases this water right for filling Palmer Lake and is not available for use in the Town's domestic water system.
- Monument Ditch for 2.74 cfs right for irrigation use. This right is also not available for the Town's domestic water system.
- Palmer Lake Water System right for 2.19 cfs. This pipeline structure right is decreed for municipal use and is augmented by Water Court Case 87CW069 using non-tributary groundwater.
- Glen Park Reservoir for a storage right of 147.5-acre feet (AF). This storage right is decreed for municipal use. Any out-of-priority usage is augmented under Water Court Case 87CW069 using non-tributary groundwater.
- Palmer Lake Exchange Right is decreed for all beneficial usage. All out-of-priority diversions are augmented under Water Court Decree 87CW069. Augmentation is limited to using non-tributary Denver aquifer wells up to 3.08 cfs and 426 AF per year and using non-tributary Arapahoe aquifer and Laramie-Fox Hills aquifer wells up to 3.08 cfs and 426 AF per year. <sup>24</sup>

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## **GROUND WATER**

Currently, the Town has a total groundwater right of 3,529.3 AF per year. A tabulation of the Town's water rights from the Division of Water Resources (DWR) is available on the Town's website.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The water rights, ground water and residential well information is verbatim from the GMS Water Resources Evaluation. No change has been made to this report.

<sup>24</sup>[www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/board\\_of\\_trustees/meeting/packets/5745/water\\_resources\\_evaluation\\_04052021.pdf](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/board_of_trustees/meeting/packets/5745/water_resources_evaluation_04052021.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> See 2021 GMS study [water\\_resources\\_evaluation\\_04052021.pdf](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/board_of_trustees/meeting/packets/5745/water_resources_evaluation_04052021.pdf)



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## **RESIDENTIAL WELLS<sup>26</sup>**

The Town has allowed individual property owners within the Town limits to install individual water wells into the Denver Basin aquifers, utilizing the Town's groundwater rights in certain areas of the Town where there is currently limited water infrastructure. These individual private wells within the Town reduce the Town's overall groundwater rights.

To protect the Town's groundwater rights, the Town has implemented the following guidelines.

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## **RESIDENTIAL WATER WELL GUIDELINES<sup>27</sup>**

1. All requests for residential wells shall be limited to the Dawson aquifer.
2. The Denver, Arapahoe, and Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers will be reserved for use by the Town unless other arrangements are made with the Town.
3. Anyone considering the use of a private well shall obtain a Town application form that will accompany the well's permit application to the Division of Water Resources.
4. The application form must be submitted with building plans similar to those required when purchasing a tap for the distribution system.
5. The application for a well permit is like that of a water service tap application to the distribution system. The fee was set at \$20,000 in 2021. In the case of a well permit, \$15,000 may be waived to cover the cost to drill and equip a Dawson aquifer well, thus, requiring payment of a tap into the Town's water supply in the amount of \$5,000. This rate is subject to change over time, just like tap fees.
6. Each private residential well permit granted, based upon its location within the Town limits, is authorized based on the Division of Water Resources data and measured by the annual acre-feet of water used.
7. The Town utilizes the 100-year depletion rule instead of the 300-year depletion rule implemented by El Paso County and some of the area water providers. This is less restrictive and consistent with previous Town approvals.

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<sup>26</sup> GMS, 2021, Residential Well Guidelines, Water Evaluation Report

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*



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8. Each single-family residential unit shall be allocated 1/3 acre-foot of water per year (108,617 gallons or approximately 9,050 gallons per month). This is consistent with the Division of Water Resources standard for a residential well permit.
9. Based upon the data provided by the Division of Water Resources, the annual appropriation per acre, the thickness of the aquifer, and the porosity of the material in the aquifer, the minimum lot size can be determined for the 1/3-acre-foot allocation.
10. In those areas where the lot size is smaller than the calculated minimum lot size, the annual water use limit could be prorated accordingly. For example, the Suncrest Road area allows for a minimum lot size of 0.34 acres. If the existing lot size is 0.25 acres, the allowed water usage would be reduced to 0.245 acre-feet per year or approximately 79,865 gallons per year. If the lot size is larger than 0.34 acres, the yearly allocation would remain at the 1/3 acre-foot per year unless the parcel was significantly larger than the minimum lot size required, and other arrangements are made and approved by the Town.
11. All wells would be limited to a pumping limit of 15 gallons per minute.
12. All new wells are required to have meters installed. In addition, all existing wells within Town limits are required to have meters. Meters will be read on an annual basis and submitted to the Town. If water usage exceeds the allocated amount for that property, the Town will establish a rate per 1,000 gallons to be assessed for the water over the allocated amount. If the usage equals or is less than the allocated amount, no additional charges will be assessed.

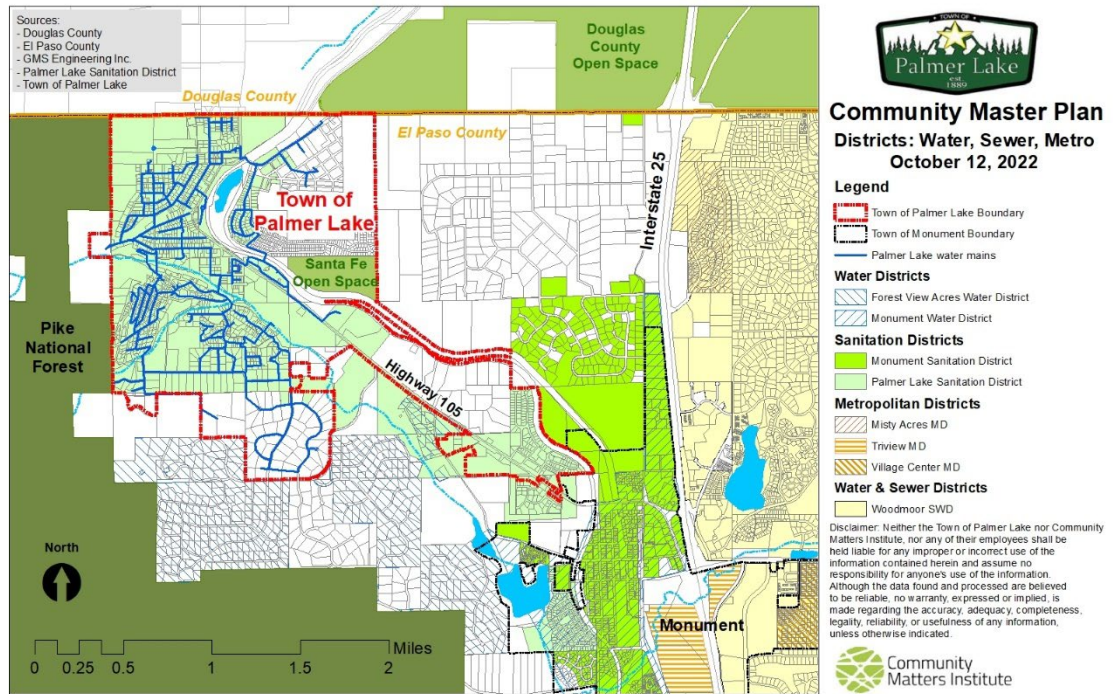
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## **SEWER**

Sewer, often referred to as wastewater service, is provided by the Palmer Lake Sanitation District (PLSD), a quasi-municipal corporation, and is governed under provisions of the Colorado Special District Act. PLSD was established on October 29th, 1971. PLSD's service area is shown on the following map of Water, Sewer, and Metro Districts in northern El Paso County. PLSD has no mill levy. Rates and fees can be found on the PLSD website. (<http://www.plsd.org/>).



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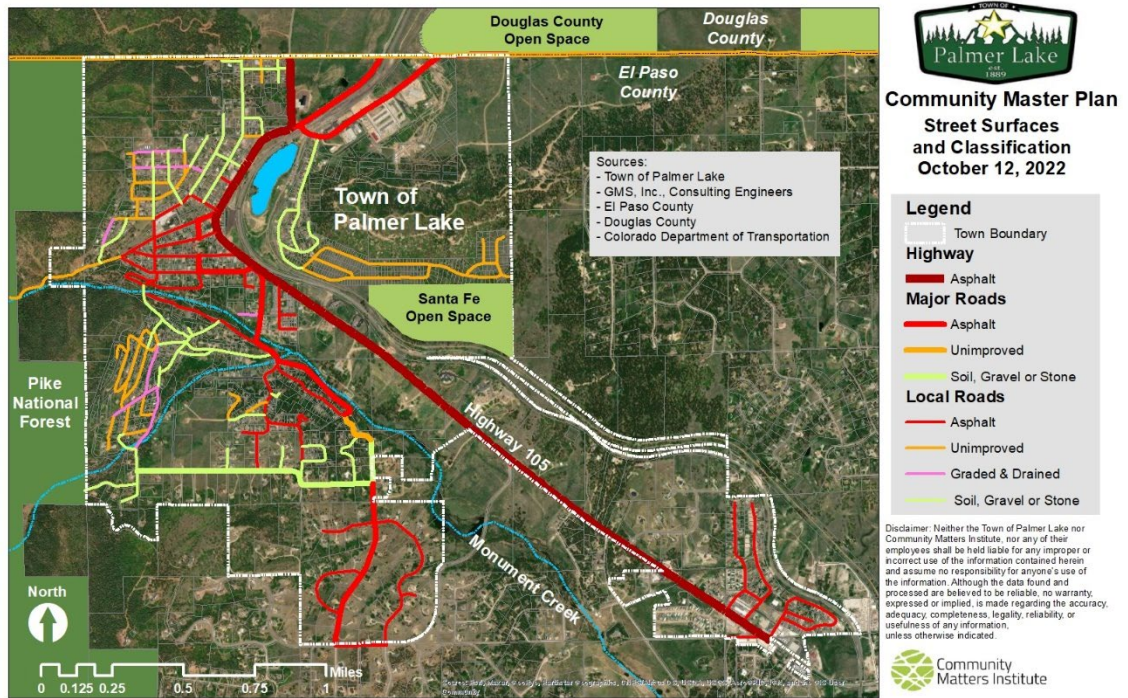
## STREETS

The Town’s Street system is illustrated on the following map. The Street map shows the general road classification of each road within the Town as well as the surface condition (asphalt, unimproved, graded and drained, soil, gravel, or stone).<sup>28</sup> Note that a stated objective in this Plan is *“Develop Road standards that address drainage and impervious surface. Not all areas of Town should have paved roads due to the difficulty in maintaining roads where drainage or slope is a consideration.”*

<sup>28</sup> The information on surface material comes from the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The information from CDOT does not distinguish between actual asphalt and asphalt millings.



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## STORMWATER

Palmer Lake like many other cities and towns throughout Colorado is regulated by the Colorado Department of Health and the Environment. The Water Quality Control Division regulates stormwater discharges from cities and towns through a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit. In 2021, the Town of Palmer Lake implemented its new MS4 program. The new MS4 program includes:

- A Stormwater Education and Outreach Strategy
- A new Illicit Discharge Ordinance and Response Procedures
- Construction Oversight Requirements and Criteria
- New Design Criteria and Agreements for Permanent Stormwater Management
- New Standard Operation Procedures and Runoff Control Plan for the Town’s maintenance yard

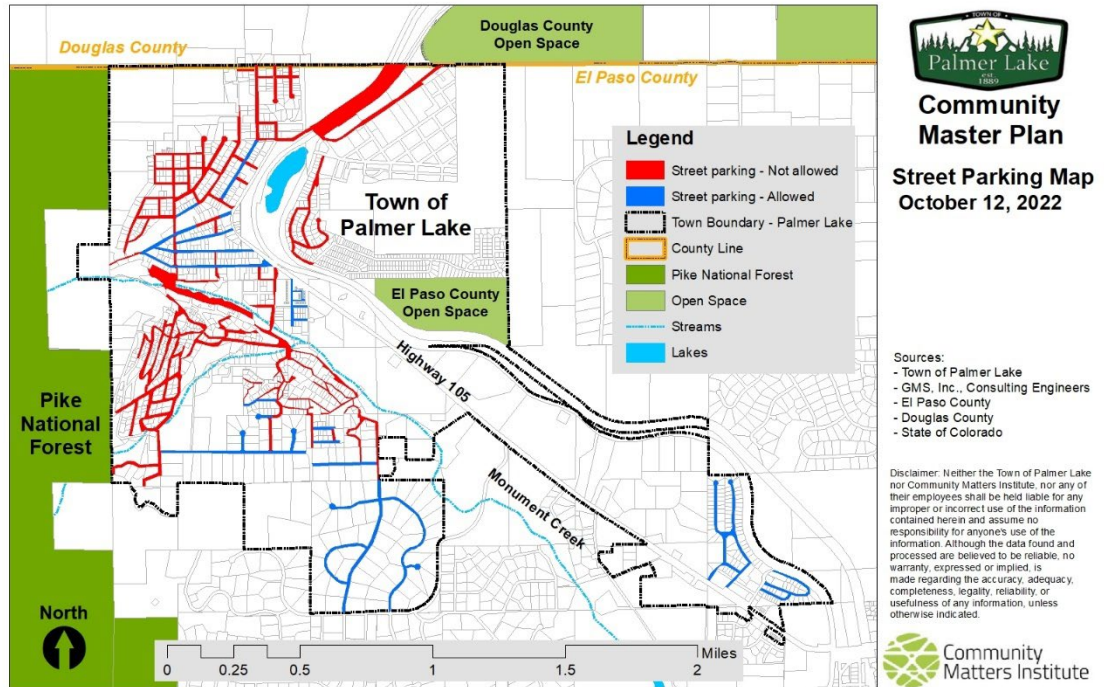
A full description of the MS4 program can be found on the Town’s website<sup>29</sup>.

29

[https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/public\\_works/page/6245/tp\\_ms4\\_program\\_desription\\_document\\_version1\\_1.17.21\\_1.pdf](https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/public_works/page/6245/tp_ms4_program_desription_document_version1_1.17.21_1.pdf)



## PARKING



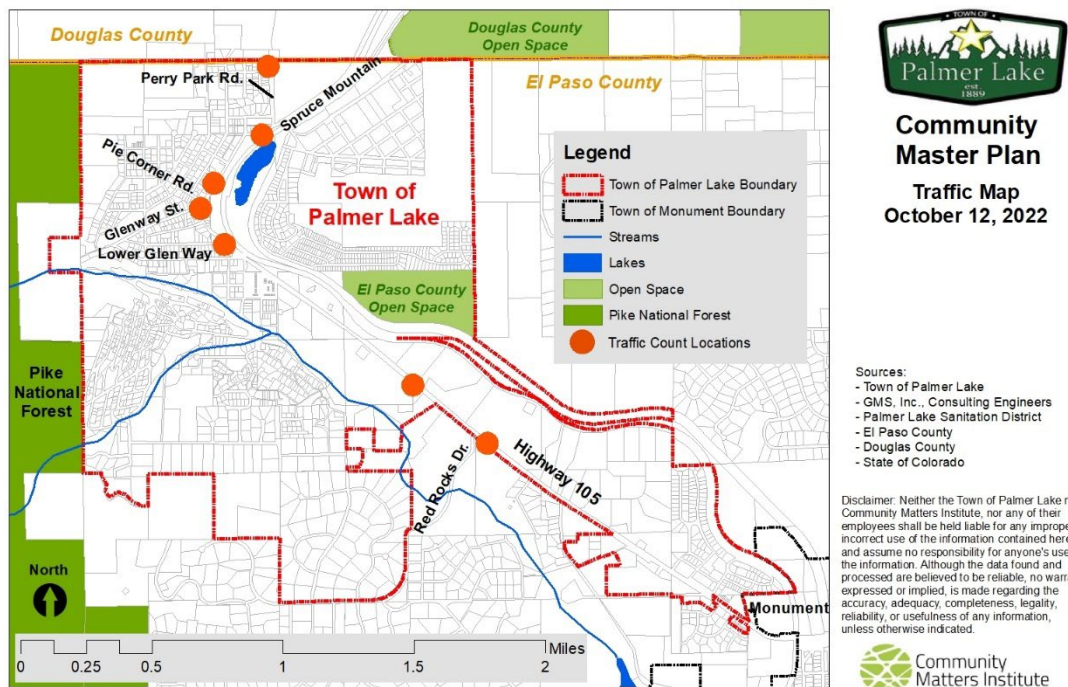
Availability of parking particularly in the downtown core became an issue during the Coronavirus 2019 pandemic (COVID-19).

The Town, as a response, implemented an On-street Parking Program as shown on the Street Parking Map created by GMS, the Town’s Engineer. GMS should work with Town staff to update this map to show all streets in Town to ensure adequate access for fire, police, and snow plowing. In addition, in 2021, the Town implemented a parking fee for use of the trailhead parking area.



## THE HIGHWAY 105 CORRIDOR

The Highway 105 corridor is along a state highway which is an original 1920s highway. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is responsible for the maintenance of the highway including snow plowing. CDOT also is the state agency that grants access to the highway. Any change in land use that is projected to increase traffic counts by more than 20% is required to obtain an access permit from the Access Control Manager for CDOT Region 2. CDOT has three levels of access permits based on the size of the anticipated development. Level 1 permits are for single-family residential/agricultural permits, Level 2 permits are for commercial property permits and those with more than 20 vehicular trips per day without roadway improvements, and Level 3 permits are for commercial property permits and larger-scale development which often require roadway improvements. For larger developments, CDOT requires a professional traffic engineering firm to provide a Traffic Impact Study that identifies daily and peak hour traffic volumes, the type of vehicle use, and possibly intersection performance.



The width of Highway 105 through Palmer Lake varies from about 35 feet in and around Glenway Street to a width of 80 feet near Red Rocks Ranch Drive. The



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following information is from measuring the parcel layer of El Paso County GIS data:

- From the west edge of the park around Palmer Lake (50 feet at that point).
- Then going northwest to Glenway Street (45 feet at that point); and.
- The narrowest section is at Middle Glenway Street (35 feet).

The current traffic volumes (2021 data) and projected 2042 traffic volumes for locations along this important corridor in Palmer Lake are summarized in the following table. This data shows that the volumes are highest close to Palmer Lake’s southern border and lowest at the north end of the community. Annual average daily traffic volumes (AADT) are relatively low and do not support franchise businesses. For example, a Starbucks requires 25,000 AADT when locating a new store. Small convenience stores typically require between 5,000 and 15,000 AADT.

<b>PALMER LAKE HIGHWAY 105</b>				
<b>ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT) 2021 AND 2042</b>				
CDOT Segment Description	UPDATE YEAR	AADT 2021	ADDT 2042	AADT TRUCKS 2021/2042
105A SE of Red Rocks Drive	2021	8200	10094	60/74
105A NW of Red Rocks Drive	2021	6700	8318	70/87
105A Lower Glenway Street	2021	5100	6332	40/50
105A Glenway Street	2021	5400	6704	40/50
105A Pie Corner Road	2021	4400	5601	30/38
105A Spruce Mountain Road	2021	3700	4904	60/80
105A Perry Part Rd north of Spruce Mountain	2021	2200	2870	30/39

\*Source: CDOT Traffic Data Explorer (<https://dtdapps.coloradodot.info> › otis › TrafficData).

These numbers were recently updated in July 2022. 2020 traffic counts CDOT relied on County data from 2018 to calculate the traffic for some segments. The 2020 traffic counts showed a significantly higher volume of truck traffic. It is assumed this was due to major lane improvements along I-25.





## BUILD-OUT POTENTIAL

This section outlines how much development could occur given the current zoning classifications, household size, and existing lots without further subdivision.

CMI developed build-out estimates for residentially zoned properties, commercial, industrial, and approved PUDs. These estimates were also provided and reviewed by GMS, the Town Engineer, to ensure consistency with GMS build-out estimates for infrastructure improvements.

Residential and non-residential build-out estimates assist in planning for adequate infrastructure and inform the Future Land Use Plan as well as needed amendments to the Town's land use regulations.

The build-out estimate includes the following.

- Residential land, non-residential land, non-residential building footprints, and existing non-residential building total gross square feet on existing lots based on the Existing Land Use Map and County Assessor's data.
- Vacant residential land and non-residential land already zoned as currently platted. The estimate did not assume rezoning or further subdivision. Further subdivision of vacant property may increase the potential number of dwelling units on a property.
- The amount of building area that could be added on the vacant non-residential land using the following ratios of building area to land area: 0.25 for commercial and 0.5 for industrial.<sup>30</sup>
- Number of new dwelling units that could be added to the vacant residential land based on the existing zoning and recorded subdivision plats.
- Additional population is based on the number of new dwelling units and the 2020 American Community Survey estimates of 2.5 persons per household in Palmer Lake.<sup>31</sup>
- The online parcel information is from the El Paso County Assessor's Office online database.

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<sup>30</sup> These ratios are simple calculations of building area available after considering parking requirements on a site.

<sup>31</sup> American Community Survey (ACS) 2020-5 year estimates.



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- The Palmer Lake Official Zoning Map.
- In a few cases, information on individual properties was checked using online aerial photos which are actually satellite photos, and the online website Instant Google Street View.

### **BUILD-OUT ESTIMATION METHODOLOGY**

- The build-out estimate does not include the further subdivision of land parcels.
- The non-residential information was grouped into the following categories of how the property is being used:
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Residential
  - Other (public, institutional, and parks and open space)
  - Vacant
- The parcel size and zoning for each vacant parcel were classified as either residential or non-residential and verified with Assessor's database. If the Assessor's database showed a building on a property that had previously been shown as vacant on the Existing Land Use Map, the property was put into the same categories noted above.
- The parcel size, building footprint, and building gross floor area for each non-residential parcel in the current C1, C2, CC, M1, and PUD zone districts were taken from the online Assessor parcel data.
- The land area of each block<sup>32</sup> zoned residential was taken from the Palmer Lake zoning map.
- The amount of existing residential land was based on the residential block area adjusted for vacant land or other uses found within each block.
- Potential development on vacant land zoned PUD was based on how the Assessor categorized the land – commercial or residential. If the property is assessed as residential, the potential density was calculated at four dwelling units per gross acre of land area.

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<sup>32</sup> A "block," in geographical terms, refers to the area of land between streets as documented on the Town's Official Zoning Map.



**SUMMARY TABLE OF ESTIMATED BUILD-OUT**

The estimate of the population with the build-out of current properties of 3,664 is consistent with the statistical estimates made in Chapter 2 of 3,490 as a lower bound and 5,349 as an upper bound. It is close to the lower bound. The upper bound could only be reached with additional subdivision or annexation.

<b>Palmer Lake Potential Development and Population Projections*</b>							
	2022 Estimate (acres)	Potential Increase	Total Build-out		2020 Estimate	Potential Increase	Total Build-out
Units	Acres			Residential	Number		
				Other	Sq. Ft.		
Residential	944	370	1,314	Dwellings	1,241	418	1,659
				Population	2,636	1,028	3,664
Commercial	18	36	54	Sq. Ft.	115,571	387,844	503,415
Industrial*	57	14	71	Sq. Ft.	238,000	312,565	550,565

\*Based on Current Zoning and Existing Parcels and Plats  
 Source: Community Matters Institute, 2022



## ESTIMATED RESIDENTIAL BUILD-OUT BY ZONE DISTRICT

The current distribution of land uses in acres of all residential zone districts is as follows:

RESIDENTIAL ZONES:								
Zone District	Total Acres	Commercial Acres	Industrial Acres	Residential Acres	Mixed /Other	Vacant Acres	PTOS	Other Public
R1	123	4	0	90	0	30	0	0
R1E	203	0	0	198	0	5	0	0
R2	9	0	0	9	0	0	0	0
R3	265	0	0	224	1	29	8	4
RA	640	0	0	320	0	249	60	10
R10000	81	0	0	26	0	55	0	0
Subtotal (AC):	1321	4	0	867	1	368	68	14
Share (%):	100.0%	0.3%	0.0%	65.6%	0.1%	27.9%	5.2%	1.0%

Source: Community Matters Institute, 2022

The current distribution of zoned land, including vacant land in each zone district, if developed would yield an additional 418 homes. This does not assume any subdivision of existing lots that could occur nor the addition of recommended accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to increase the availability of attainable housing on existing lots in the downtown core and perhaps on larger lots throughout town. ADUs are perhaps the best option to increase the availability of rental housing and provide additional housing options.

## ESTIMATED NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILD-OUT BY ZONE DISTRICT

Non-residential development is critical to the overall fiscal health of smaller communities in Colorado. While Colorado municipalities tend to focus on sales tax revenue, which is often a major tax revenue generator, the following revenue sources should not be overlooked.<sup>33</sup>

There are three other sources of revenue that non-residential development provides to the Town of Palmer Lake.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 5- Tax Revenue Considerations



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The first is property tax revenue. Commercial development, including office and industrial uses, is assessed at 29% while residential development is currently assessed at 7.15 % and is predicted to drop under 7% in Colorado in 2023.

In addition to property tax, consumer use tax must be paid by Colorado businesses (as well as individuals) for purchases that did not include Colorado sales tax or when inventory acquired at wholesale is used by the business instead of being sold to customers.

The State’s consumer use tax rate is the same as the State’s sales tax rate: 2.9%. Palmer Lake’s use tax is the same as Palmer Lake’s sales tax - 2.0%. The Town collects 100% of the 2.0% use tax on the purchase value, the same as for the municipal sales tax rate.

The third source of revenue is the Colorado business personal property tax. This tax is a levy on personal property used by a business or organization to generate revenue, including short-term rental properties.

The current distribution of land uses in all nonresidential zone districts is as follows:

<b>Nonresidential zones (Acres)</b>								
Zone District	Total	Commercial	Industrial	Residential	Mixed / Other	Vacant	PTOS	Other Public
C1	75	0	27	4	0	7	37	0
C2	62	5	15	35	0	8	0	0
CC	31	4	1	18	0	5	0	4
M1	66	5	14	3	0	14	0	31
PUD	99	1	0	17	28	32	0	21
O-1	83	0	0	0	0	0	83	0
Subtotal	418	15	57	77	28	65	119	56
Share (%):	100.0%	3.5%	13.6%	18.4%	6.8%	15.6%	28.6%	13.4%

Source: Community Matters Institute, 2022



## CHAPTER 4: GUIDING COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### VISION STATEMENT

*Palmer Lake is a beautiful, recreationally diverse small front-range community that cherishes the natural environment around us, providing access to trails, lakes, and parks in our area.*

*We are proud of the traditions and events that contribute to the history of Palmer Lake and want to encourage continued community events in the future.*

*Through economic development and land use regulations, we want to maintain harmony with the natural beauty of Palmer Lake, an affordable cost of living, and local access to goods and services.*

*We want to improve the safety and economic viability of our downtown area along Highway 105, such as through the addition of sidewalks and improved parking.*

*We strive to excel in the management of our impact on our natural environment, particularly where that environment creates challenges.*

*We strive to update and enforce our land use codes to reflect the residential feel of our small mountain community - we discourage high-density housing, full-service hotels, and franchises.*

### COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The **Guiding Community Goals** outlined below are the community goals that provide direction for the Town's decision-makers. They address and summarize the concerns and desires of Palmer Lake residents, businesses, and property owners.

The **Guiding Objectives** provide general direction for the Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, and Town staff regarding public investments, community planning, and land use. Policies state the desired direction for the Town of Palmer Lake. Policies should guide both the Town Board and Planning Commission's actions. The policies should be reviewed annually by both the Trustees and Planning Commission to ensure they continue to embody the desires of the Town.



## COMMUNITY CHARACTER (CC)

***Community Goals CC-1: RURAL CHARACTER. Protect the rural character and unencumbered views toward the foothills and mountains.***

**Guiding Objective CC-1.1:** Encourage site design and development standards that protect and preserve the character of the natural landscape.

**Guiding Objective CC-1.2:** Protect the environmental and visual quality of all surface waters and parks.

**Guiding Objective CC-1.3:** Preserve the panoramic views of the mountains and strongly discourage development on open ridge tops and maintain the natural character of the community.

***Community Goals CC-2: SMALL TOWN. Maintain the small-town look and feel of Palmer Lake by ensuring that new development and redevelopment projects respect the historic character, size, and scale.***

***Community Goals CC-3: SENSE OF PLACE. Protect and enhance areas that make Palmer Lake a special place and define its image.***

**Guiding Objective CC-3.1:** Preserve the rural residential atmosphere that includes walking to community amenities, with sidewalks and curbs only in designated non-residential areas such as the downtown core.

**Guiding Objective CC-3.2:** Create and maintain entryways with well-designed signs and landscaping at all entrances to the Town to create a strong visual impression and community.

**Guiding Objective CC-3.3:** Continue to invest and improve the heart of the community, defined as the downtown corridor along Highway 105 and the Palmer Lake Recreation Area.

**Guiding Objective CC-3.4:** Enforce nuisance regulations regarding weeds, debris, fire mitigation, dark skies objectives, and dust control.



**Community Goals CC-4: TRADITIONS. Actively support and preserve Palmer Lake traditions.**

**Community Goals CC-5: IDENTITY. Develop and foster Palmer Lake's unique identity and image.**

**Guiding Objective CC-5.1:** Continue to enhance Palmer Lake's physical setting, history, and role in the Tri-Lakes region.

**Guiding Objective CC-5.2:** Develop local design and development standards that ensure new development and redevelopment are harmonious in a visual and physical sense with the Town's desired image, particularly along Highway 105 which includes large open areas, stands of trees, and views of the mountains.

**Guiding Objective CC-5.3:** Develop clear and consistent public wayfinding signs to provide visual continuity, minimize visual hazards, and help direct visitors to their destination.

**Guiding Objective CC-5.4:** Create a community brand that clearly and distinctly expresses the values cherished by residents and what Palmer Lake is all about.

**Guiding Objective CC-5.5:** Develop a new resident information packet covering items such as town government, events, wildlife awareness, fire awareness, and volunteer opportunities.



**Community Goals CC-6: NEIGHBORHOODS. Protect and enhance the viability of established neighborhoods.**

**Guiding Objective CC-6.1:** Maintain and build upon the distinct identities of Palmer Lake's unique residential neighborhoods.

**Guiding Objective CC-6.2:** Respect and preserve the different land attributes in each neighborhood and establish infrastructure standards, particularly road standards, appropriate to each neighborhood.





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**Guiding Objective CC-6.3:** Share with El Paso County the Town’s adopted Three-Mile Plan and Future Land Use Plan to ensure that the density of residential neighborhoods in the adjacent unincorporated areas of the County remains significantly lower than the in-town neighborhoods.

**Guiding Objective CC-6.4:** Any adjacent properties requesting centralized services must be annexed first.

**Guiding Objective CC-6.5:** Prohibit the intrusion of incompatible uses in residential neighborhood zones.

***Community Goals CC-7: HERITAGE. Preserve historic, cultural, and natural landmarks.***

**Guiding Objective CC-7.1:** Foster the community’s interest and support for historic preservation and an inventory of local resources that are relevant to Palmer Lake’s history.

**Guiding Objective CC-7.2:** Preserve and enhance significant features within the Town including the lake, reservoirs, creeks, floodplain, historic places, and significant architectural features.

**Guiding Objective CC-7.3:** Support the work of the Palmer Lake Historical Society to further the distinct identity of Palmer Lake.

## **ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY (ED)**

***Community Goals ED-1: APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT. Support economic development efforts that enhance a sense of community, are compatible with surrounding land uses, are sensitive to the natural landscape, and are consistent with community expectations concerning the preservation of the area’s quality of life.***

**Guiding Objective ED-1.1:** Plan sufficient and well-defined on and off-street parking to support local retail, restaurant, and commercial uses in the downtown core area.

**Guiding Objective ED-1.2:** Work with local economic development resources to evaluate the benefit of creating business incubators and co-working spaces to support local businesses.

***Community Goals ED-2: COMMERCIAL CONVENIENCES. Promote the successful development of convenience retail and service establishments that will meet the needs of Palmer Lake residents.***



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**Guiding Objective ED-2.1:** Identify and pursue opportunities to bring a wider range of basic goods and services into the community (e.g., gas station, small grocer, hardware store, drugstore, etc.).

**Guiding Objective ED-2.2:** Discourage the development of any big box or large franchise businesses as these options are already available directly outside of the Town limits.

**Guiding Objective ED-2.3:** Strive to promote compact commercial uses within the existing downtown core while preserving the areas that remain open and rural to the southeast of the downtown core along Highway 105.

***Community Goals ED-3: DOWNTOWN CORE. Preserve and enhance Palmer Lake's downtown core area.***

**Guiding Objective ED-3.1:** Encourage new downtown uses that will have both day and evening activities.

**Guiding Objective ED-3.2:** Increase the economic vitality of the downtown core by promoting and supporting the expansion of mixed-use development such as service, retail, arts and entertainment, and cultural opportunities.



**Guiding Objective ED-3.3:** Work to retain existing businesses across all sectors and help them adapt and expand.

**Guiding Objective ED-3.4:** Promote the development of small specialty retail shops that can capitalize on the Town's outdoor activities relating to our proximity to trails and natural resources.

***Community Goals ED-4: ARTS AND CULTURE. Continue to promote diverse arts and cultural experiences that enhance the quality of life and support the local economy.***

**Guiding Objective ED-4.1:** Support efforts by local groups to sponsor events and other activities that encourage visiting and shopping.

**Guiding Objective ED-4.2:** Work with local artists and sponsors to create art in public places.



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**Guiding Objective ED-4.3:** Collaborate with schools and art organizations to promote educational opportunities.

**Guiding Objective ED-4.4:** Formalize procedures and policies for review and approval of art and cultural events (set-up, parking, restrooms, recycling, and cleanup) to facilitate the efficient permitting and execution of events while minimizing the impacts on Town facilities and adjacent neighborhoods.

**Guiding Objective ED-4.5:** Market Palmer Lake as an attractive location for artists and entrepreneurs to start businesses related to arts, outdoor recreation, and well-being.

***Community Goals ED-5: FINANCE. Work to enhance the Town's tax base, allowing the Town to invest in public facilities and services, maintain roads, and retain a professional Town staff.***

**Guiding Objective ED-5.1:** Research and examine all reasonable sources of revenue available to and controlled by the Town.

**Guiding Objective ED-5.2:** Develop and update a five-year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to address needed improvements of community-provided infrastructure and facilities. Present the CIP annually at a scheduled Trustee meeting.

**Guiding Objective ED-5.3:** Collaborate with local, state, and federal programs to seek funding and support for arts and cultural programs, outdoors, dining, and history.

**Guiding Objective ED-5.4:** Ensure that all expenses are reasonable and commensurate with their benefits and have a letter/memo of justification.

**Guiding Objective ED-5.5:** Make use of Town owned land as a major asset that can be used for long-term revenue generation. Pursue lease options, potential sale, or joint use of these assets.

**Guiding Objective ED-5.6:** Continuously and systematically seek grants to offset the full cost of needed studies, plans, and improvements. Given a limited administrative staff, seek the help of a volunteer to track and apply for grants.

**Guiding Objective ED-5.7:** Review the Town's Fee Schedule on an annual basis to ensure the fees are in line with other jurisdictions in the region.



**Guiding Objective ED-5.8:** Consider adding additional fees (e.g., parking) where applicable to cover the costs of providing public services and facilities.

## GOVERNANCE AND ENGAGEMENT (GE)

### ***Community Goals GE-1: ENGAGEMENT. Continue to support a culture of community engagement.***

**Guiding Objective GE-1.1:** Actively engage the community through the use of a commissioner-based organization where each Trustee has assigned areas of responsibility including but not limited to police, fire, roads, Town Code, economic development, parks, etc.

**Guiding Objective GE-1.2:** Continue to support and promote the high level of community involvement in Palmer Lake. Examples include the Historical Society, Palmer Lake Economic Development Group, Awake the Lake, the Restaurant Group, and Arts Group as well as area organizations such as the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce and members of the various special districts and metro districts that serve the area.

**Guiding Objective GE-1.3:** Promote a range of events and fun-filled activities that provide opportunities for residents and those that have a stake in Palmer Lake to interact with each other.

### ***Community Goals GE-2: COLLABORATION. Foster collaboration between Town, volunteer groups, and community organizations.***

**Guiding Objective GE-2.1:** The Board of Trustees working with Town staff should convene an annual series of meetings with local groups and organizations to share and support ideas and initiatives.

**Guiding Objective GE-2.2:** Practice civil discourse at all meetings and community engagement events. The basic rule of civil discourse is to be respectful and don't make it personal. Community dialogue is about enhancing the understanding of issues, opportunities, and resources. (Chairpersons of all Town meetings should read this as part of the opening remarks.)

**Guiding Objective GE-2.3:** Seek/research, share, and analyze new information collectively, and through joint problem-solving workshops.

### ***Community Goals GE-3: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION. Work collaboratively with area governments and districts***



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Town of Monument  
El Paso County  
Palmer Lake Sanitation District  
Special and Metro Districts  
Pike Peaks Area Council of Government (PPACOG)  
State government  
US Forest Service

**Guiding Objective** GE-3.1: Enhance communication and collaboration with agencies and governments that have an impact on growth and development in the Palmer Lake designated Three-Mile Planning Area.

**Guiding Objective** GE-3.2: Provide better and more frequent communication between the Town and other jurisdictions including the multiple special districts in the area and the following governments: Monument, Larkspur, Colorado Springs, and El Paso County.

**Guiding Objective** GE-3.3: When implementing community projects and initiatives, clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Town, other units of government in the area including all special and metropolitan districts, and other civic and not-for-profit organizations.

***Community Goals GE-4: LEADERSHIP. Cultivate and support leaders from diverse backgrounds with diverse perspectives.***

**Guiding Objective** GE-4.1: Maintain a balanced representation and selection of officials between those that have lived in the Town for years to decades and with new residents.

**Guiding Objective** GE-4.2: Support and enhance credible, valuable information moving between the Town government and residents, stakeholders, and institutions.

**Guiding Objective** GE-4.3: Ensure that the community, as well as those that have stepped forward to serve, clearly understand the roles and responsibilities of all Boards, Commissions, and Town staff.

## MANAGE AND PLAN FOR GROWTH (LU)

***Community Goals LU-1: MANAGE GROWTH. Manage how and where growth occurs.***

**Guiding Objective** LU-1.1: When needed to implement aspects of the Plan, enter into Intergovernmental Agreements.

**Guiding Objective** LU-1.2: Maintain a regional perspective on the growth and development of the Town and the defined Three-Mile planning area



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through active participation by assigned trustees/residents/staff in regional planning groups, and activities that address area-wide issues.

**Guiding Objective LU-1.3:** Ensure that new development does not create a negative fiscal impact on the Town. The costs of servicing new residential developments should not be borne by existing residents.

***Community Goals LU-2: ANNEXATION. Ensure responsible and logical extensions of the Town boundaries so that Palmer Lake can control and maintain compatibility between area communities.***

**Guiding Objective LU-2.1:** Encourage strategic annexations if the benefits (e.g., increased revenue) of such annexations outweigh the costs (e.g., additional burdens to services including police, fire, water, sewer, roads, etc.) and enable the Town to manage growth.

**Guiding Objective LU-2.2:** Establish clear annexation policies and procedures to include the C.R.S. § 31-12-105 mandated Three-Mile plan Map.

**Guiding Objective LU-2.3:** Base the approval of annexation proposals on a cost-benefit analysis. An increased tax base should not be the sole determinant but should be a major objective in ensuring services and facilities desired by Palmer Lake citizens are financially supported and achieve stated land use standards and policies.

**Guiding Objective LU-2.4:** Evaluate each annexation showing the specific benefits and associated income, relative to the specific costs, and make the final analysis available to the public prior to the final annexation decision.

**Guiding Objective LU-2.5:** Require that concept plans accompany all annexation petitions greater than five acres in size or any project that involves more than one use.

***Community Goals LU-3: DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS. The Town of Palmer Lake should, on a scheduled basis, update its land use regulations and the Town's public works manual as a means of improving the design, siting, and maintenance of all land development – whether residential or commercial.***

**Guiding Objective LU-3.1:** The Town's development regulations should provide for a wider array of land use types to meet changing needs and help ensure the fiscal sustainability of the community.



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**Guiding Objective LU-3.2:** Revise zoning and subdivision regulations to be consistent with the Community Goals and Objectives established in this Community Master Plan.

**Guiding Objective LU-3.3:** Update the official zoning map when zone changes are granted, land is annexed, or with Community Master Plan amendments.

***Community Goals LU-4: LAND USE COMPATIBILITY. Ensure compatibility between different land uses while protecting the natural environment and characteristics of places cherished by residents.***

**Guiding Objective LU-4.1:** Provide transitions between dissimilar land uses such as through the use of landscaped buffers, native plantings, and berms.

**Guiding Objective LU-4.2:** Carefully consider land uses of differing types and densities and develop transitional zones or increased setbacks between different land uses. This can address the impacts of different uses such as industrial, office, or commercial uses located adjacent to an established residential subdivision, and/or differing residential densities. This should also be considered for all development adjacent to Highway 105 except the downtown core.

**Guiding Objective LU-4.3:** Preserve natural environmental features, particularly flood-prone lands, forested lands, steep hillsides and ridgelines, stream corridors and drainage ways, and view corridors.

**Guiding Objective LU-4.4:** Ensure that the siting, development, and construction of new housing developments are non-tract, safe, prevent changes in the historic drainage pattern, encourage interactive neighborhoods, and complement the distinct character of existing neighborhoods.

***Community Goals LU-5: INFILL DEVELOPMENT. Promote growth from the inside out by encouraging infill development on vacant land and the defined Urban Services Area with strong consideration for surrounding properties.***

**Guiding Objective LU-5.1:** Consider a wider array of land use types on vacant land that is surrounded by built lots to meet community needs and help ensure the fiscal sustainability of the community.

**Guiding Objective LU-5.2:** Develop a subarea plan for the Highway 105 corridor.



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**Guiding Objective LU-5.3:** Recognize that not all vacant lands in the Town limits are suitable for development.

**Guiding Objective LU-5.4:** To avoid future confusion regarding lots with no access, educate potential buyers that many of the platted streets have not been built due to steep grades and the difficulty of constructing a road to the Town's adopted standards.

**Guiding Objective LU-5.5:** Consider the use of land conservation easements for land that is used for agricultural purposes. These lands are critical to the feeling of openness coveted by area residents.

***Community Goals LU-6: QUALITY OF NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT. Any non-residential development or redevelopment site, whether public or private, should be reviewed with attention to siting, orientation, scale, mix and compatibility of uses, and relationship to community amenities to make development harmonious with the Town and surrounding areas.***

**Guiding Objective LU-6.1:** New commercial development or redevelopment projects should strive to increase pedestrian activity and provide open natural areas and sufficient landscaping, as well as seating and shelter for pedestrians.

**Guiding Objective LU-6.2:** Encourage the use of plazas, landscaped areas, parkways, open space, and landscaped buffer areas within all new or redeveloped commercial or industrial sites.

**Guiding Objective LU-6.3:** Ensure that new development or redevelopment that occurs within the Town makes both vehicular and pedestrian connections that are safe, and functional and serve to reduce the need for private automobiles.

**Guiding Objective LU-6.4:** Establish safe passage where none exists and widen existing multimodal trails, particularly along Highway 105.

**Guiding Objective LU-6.5:** Update the land use regulations to include building and site design with attention to how well the development meets the following criteria:

- Minimizes visibility, noise, or other impacts on adjacent premises.
- Avoids unnecessary damage to the natural environment evidenced by minimizing cut and fill and vegetation removal.
- Preserves views and vistas from public ways and other properties.





***Community Goals LU-7: Scale and Size of Residential Dwellings. Palmer Lake's small-town character is due in part to the historic size and scale of primarily single-family non-tract homes. Smaller lots are in the Old Town Core and Glenn, with larger lots and homes as you move from the core of the community. New residential development should maintain this historic pattern.***

**Guiding Objective LU-7.1:** To provide for additional housing and additional long-term rental options, allow for accessory dwelling units including carriage houses, secondary suites, and mother-in-law units. These units can be internal to the primary residence, attached, or detached.

**Guiding Objective LU-7.2:** Higher-density multi-family housing, especially stacked units, is strongly discouraged.

**Guiding Objective LU-7.3:** Any residential development denser than two units on one lot can be approved with input from adjacent residential property owners.

**Guiding Objective LU-7.4:** To preserve the cherished small town rural character, new housing development projects should be non-tract single-family and other than large lot residential development and rural agricultural properties<sup>34</sup> should preserve, to the extent practical, the stands of trees, especially those identified on the Forested Land map.



<sup>34</sup> These properties are zoned Rural Agricultural as of 2022 and are noted as Agricultural Ranch on the Future Land Use Map.



## **PARKS, TRAILS, OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, AND TOURISM<sup>35</sup> (PTO)**

***Community Goals PTO-1: CONNECTIVITY. Provide a coordinated and continuous system of parks, trails, sidewalks, and bike paths that serves the present and future needs of Palmer Lake residents.***

**Guiding Objective PTO-1.1:** Improve access, connections, and circulation to address areas of congestion and minimize conflicts between park and trail users, and residents.

**Guiding Objective PTO-1.2:** Work with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), El Paso County, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), and the Federal Recreational Trails Program to develop a continuous non-motorized system of trails, bike paths, adequate sidewalks, and paths throughout the Town of Palmer Lake with a strong connection to regional trails. A path from the downtown core, paralleling Highway 105 to the Trailhead access point in Monument is one example of a needed path that will increase safety.

**Guiding Objective PTO-1.3:** Inventory current and desired land available for parks and open space, prioritize areas best suited as parks or preserved natural areas, and provide connectivity to area amenities. Recognize that certain open space areas should not be used for recreation but left alone as wildlife habitats. Areas most suitable for park development should be near residential areas and should not disrupt sensitive wildlife areas. Areas that do not meet these criteria should be preserved as natural areas.

***Community Goals PTO-2: PRESERVATION. Preserve and enhance lands and trails suitable for active and passive recreational uses and preserve the natural wildlife corridors that add to the sense of openness in the area.***

**Guiding Objective PTO-2.1:** Advocate and plan for sufficient recreational amenities and prevent loss of recreational amenities.

**Guiding Objective PTO-2.2:** Continue to support and fund the Palmer Lake Parks Commission to ensure the responsible stewardship of Palmer Lake parks, trails, and natural areas.

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<sup>35</sup> State Statute requires the inclusion of tourism and recreation in a comprehensive plan.



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**Guiding Objective** PTO-2.3: Ensure that Palmer Lake parks, trails, and cherished natural areas are well-maintained, safe, and meet the current and future needs of the citizens.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-2.4: Enhance and support current amenities while looking toward future needs.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-2.5: Both recreation and conservation are needed to sustain Palmer Lake's quality of life. Both are beneficial for local economic well-being, personal health, and for sustaining the area's natural resources. This mutual need exists because outdoor recreation helps people understand the importance of maintaining healthy and intact ecosystems. That understanding builds support for natural resource protection and stewardship. In turn, conservation protects the land, water, and wild places upon which outdoor recreation depends.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-2.6: Evaluate wildlife habitat to inform potential parks and trail improvements that might lessen the human impact on wildlife in the area.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-2.7: Address community safety concerns such as the condition and maintenance of park facilities and equipment.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-2.8: Erect information, educational, and interpretive signs at key points throughout the Palmer Lake parks and trail system. Informational signs should address general rules and regulations including access hours, use of pet waste stations, preventing overuse, and leaving no trace behind.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-2.9: Identify and protect the endangered Preble Jumping Mouse habitat which occurs along streams and riparian areas. These areas cannot be used for trails or recreational areas.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-2.10: Focus land conservation efforts on valued areas, including those that are components of the community's visual character, biological and ecological resources, Community Master Plan vision, and trail connectivity.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-2.11: Preserve agricultural lands in and around the Town by developing a system of incentives to include easements and land dedication with particular attention to lands along Highway 105. Look to local, state, and federal programs for assistance.



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**Guiding Objective** PTO-2.12: Preserve open lands located outside of Palmer Lake Town boundary by working with other entities to ensure they are developed at a low density or preserved as parkland or open space.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-2.14: Balance the development of new facilities with the preservation of existing natural areas.

***Community Goals PTO-3: EXPANSION. Provide a diverse system of developed parkland, open space, natural areas, trail systems, and facilities that capitalize on unique Town assets including Palmer Lake Recreational Area, Glen Park, Creekside Trail, Centennial Park, the Santa Fe Trail, and the Reservoir Trail.***

**Guiding Objective** PTO-3.1: Support the Palmer Lake Parks Department and Parks Commission's vision of providing premier Town parks and recreation facilities on the Colorado Front Range while enhancing the quality of life for residents and adding value to Town visitors' experiences within the historical, small-town atmosphere.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-3.2: Improve communication and collaboration among area governments regarding the preservation and enhancement of parks and trails.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-3.3: Create a realistic list of potential open space and park improvements.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-3.4: Ensure that there is adequate parking for those wishing to utilize Palmer Lake's many recreational amenities.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-3.5: Support summertime and after-school programs that involve youth in the many outdoor activities that the community has to offer.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-3.6: Encourage linkages between downtown and all local trails.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-3.7: Support the dedication of logical pedestrian and bicycle trail connections as part of any new subdivision or multi-lot development on already platted land.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-3.8: Provide incentives for private land dedications and/or easements for the development of non-motorized trails.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-3.9: Continue to work with El Paso County and Douglas County to support efforts to develop a multiple county-wide,



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multimodal, and non-motorized plan for bicycle and pedestrian trails.  
Where possible, provide separate corridors for different uses.

***Community Goals PTO-4: FUNDING. Secure public and private outside funding sources and partners to provide for park and trail development needs.***

**Guiding Objective** PTO-4.1: Seek and secure additional funding for all aspects of operations, as current funding is inadequate to accomplish all that is needed and desired by area residents.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-4.2: Set priorities and adopt a multi-year plan with funding sources identified to implement improvements to existing amenities.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-4.3: Identify and implement creative acquisition strategies, including conservation partnerships, easements, licenses, and leases.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-4.4: Develop an endowment/estate dedication plan as a planned giving program for public promotion.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-4.5: Seek funding to improve and acquire additional lands for the parks, open space, and trails system.

***Community Goals PTO-5: COMMUNITY EVENTS. Continue to promote and utilize unique community events to bring visitors into Town for the day.***

**Guiding Objective** PTO-5.1: Promote special community events.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-5.2: Coordinate special events with local businesses and artists to encourage people to stay in Town to eat and shop.

***Community Goals PTO-6: Develop tourist amenities that serve both the visitor and Palmer Lake citizens.***

**Guiding Objective** PTO-6.1: Capitalize on the multiple tourism and recreational draws that bring visitors to Palmer Lake.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-6.2: Ensure that the downtown core provides parking and wayfinding signs to make the area easy to navigate, particularly during special events.

**Guiding Objective** PTO-6.3: Seek grant funding to develop comprehensive signage, wayfinding, and lighting plan to build and maintain the Town brand.



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**Guiding Objective** PTO-6.4: Because there is community support to do so, charge for parking during special events. Funds collected should be earmarked to expand and improve parking opportunities in the downtown core.

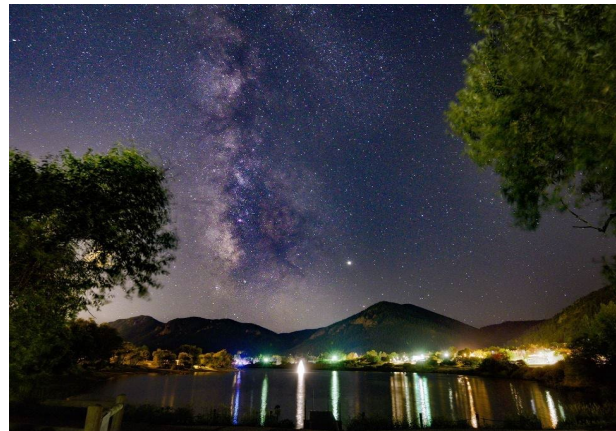
**Guiding Objective** PTO-6.5: Utilize Town-owned historic buildings such as Town Hall and the museum for community gatherings and public spaces. Explore acquiring and improving historic properties as part of an overall tourism strategy.

## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND PROTECTION (EQP)

### ***Community Goals EQP-1: DARK SKIES. Protect the night sky.***

**Guiding Objective** EQP-1.1: To reduce skyglow, glare, spill light, and over-lighting, light should be directed toward the intended target. Eliminate light spills over the property line.

**Guiding Objective** EQP-1.2: Enforce and update the dark skies lighting ordinance (Ordinance 20 of 2018) that protects the night sky and includes provisions for IES<sup>36</sup> full cutoff fixtures that limit the total amount of light that can be emitted from any property.



### ***Community Goals EQP-2: WILDLIFE. Identify and protect wildlife, natural habitat, and wildlife movement corridors.***

**Guiding Objective** EQP-2.1: Support the peaceful co-existence of humans and wildlife through education and awareness of potential wildlife conflicts.

**Guiding Objective** EQP-2.2: Discourage activities that may attract wildlife to areas with a high potential for human-wildlife conflicts.

**Guiding Objective** EQP-2.3: Continue to post information regarding the presence and potential for wildlife encounters, with specific attention to trails and natural habitats.

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<sup>36</sup> IES refers to the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America.



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**Guiding Objective EQP-2.4:** Work with CDOT, El Paso County, the Town of Monument, CPW, and the US Forest Service to ensure that transportation corridors such as Highway 105 are designed and improved to accommodate wildlife movement.

**Guiding Objective EQP-2.5:** New development or redevelopment should be planned in ways that limit impacts on natural areas and wildlife.

**Guiding Objective EQP-2.6:** Ensure that new development acknowledges, respects, and incorporates existing environmental constraints and opportunities so that Palmer Lake's natural and manmade environment is preserved and enhanced. This includes utilizing the flood plain and other environmentally constrained lands for open space, preserving, where possible, critical view corridors, and making necessary linkages to the regional trail system with special emphasis on the Santa Fe Regional Trail which is part of the American Discovery Trail.

***Community Goals EQP-3: DRAINAGE. Plan and manage the integrity of the drainage basins within the Town and minimize long-term system-wide environmental impacts.***

**Guiding Objective EQP-3.1:** Promote the use of natural or naturalistic drainage approaches that allow dual recreational usage and serve as both functional and aesthetic elements within developments. Strongly discourage concrete ditches and other impervious materials.

**Guiding Objective EQP-3.2:** Incorporate retention and detention facilities to reduce soil erosion, channel degradation, and flooding.

**Guiding Objective EQP-3.3:** Discourage construction practices that significantly alter historic and engineered drainageways, destroy natural vegetation, or result in erosion.

**Guiding Objective EQP-3.4:** Promote the use of low-impact development systems and practices for the stormwater collection, storage, and diversion systems to reduce the amount of sediment and pollutants entering area water bodies and streams.

**Guiding Objective EQP-3.5:** Amend the Town's zoning ordinance to reduce or limit the amount of impervious surface allowed on any lot with particular attention to areas with steep slopes or other geologic hazards.

**Guiding Objective EQP-3.6:** Develop green space to promote water conservation by incorporating xeriscaping principles that promote our native grassland/foothills ecosystem evident in the surrounding hills.



***Community Goals EQP-4: FIRE MITIGATION. Cut the risk severe wildfire poses to human life, water, critical infrastructure, homes, wildlife habitat, and recreation assets through hazard mitigation and education.***

**Guiding Objective** EQP-4.1: In 2017 the Palmer Lake Fire Department identified areas that are most vulnerable to high fire hazards. Update this map annually and post it on the Town's website.

**Guiding Objective** EQP-4.2: Work with the Fire Department to develop defensible space along the western and southern edges of the Town and any other areas recommended by the Fire Chief.

**Guiding Objective** EQP-4.3: Work with El Paso County and the Department of Local Affairs' Hazard Mitigation team to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

**Guiding Objective** EQP-4.4: Continue to partner with the Colorado State Forest Service, the Northern El Paso Coalition of Community Organizations, Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Emergency Preparedness Group, and El Paso County Office of Emergency Management to educate property owners about how to protect homes, businesses, and properties from wildfires.

**Guiding Objective** EQP-4.5: Work with the Parks Department, Parks Commission, and Fire Department to develop educational materials on fire-wise landscaping.

**Guiding Objective** EQP-4.6: Continue to support the slash/mulch program that is co-sponsored by the El Paso County Environmental Division, Colorado State Forest Service, and the Black Forest Fire Department.

**Guiding Objective** EQP-4.7: Owners should address fire mitigation per the direction of the Fire Chief or their property insurance company.

***Community Goals EQP-5: GEOLOGIC HAZARDS. Proactively plan for and mitigate all areas with potential geologic hazards.***

**Guiding Objective** EQP-5.1: Utilize slope stabilization, erosion controls, and stormwater management best practices in all areas with steep slopes to reduce the risks of erosion, landslides, and other geological hazards.

**Guiding Objective** EQP-5.2: When necessary, consult with the Colorado Geological Survey on any development activity that covers five acres or more before approving any zoning change, subdivision, or building permit application per Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S. 31-23-225).





## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM (TS)

### ***Community Goals TS-1: SAFE AND EFFICIENT. Provide a safe, efficient, continuous, and connected transportation system.***

**Guiding Objective TS-1.1:** Develop a Three-Mile Street Plan that can be used as an overall guide for prioritizing transportation deficiencies and ensuring necessary right-of-way is acquired to provide connectivity between existing developed areas, undeveloped areas, and lands that are suitable for annexation.

**Guiding Objective TS-1.2:** Work with CDOT to increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety along the Highway 105 Corridor. Safety measures include adequate sidewalks through the downtown core and separated or marked bike lanes along Highway 105.

**Guiding Objective TS-1.3:** Review the adopted Public Works manual when new streets and driveways are proposed.

**Guiding Objective TS-1.4:** Ensure that the dedication of additional roadway rights-of-way accompanies any annexation proposal, Planned Development, or subdivision application to ensure connectivity between areas of the Town.

**Guiding Objective TS-1.5:** Ensure all neighborhoods have adequate ingress and egress in case of fire or other emergencies.

**Guiding Objective TS-1.6:** Establish pedestrian routes that can be used by children traveling to and from school to minimize hazards due to vehicular and train traffic. CDOT's Safe Routes to School is a reliable source of educational materials and funding.

**Guiding Objective TS-1.7:** Improve and add, as necessary, traffic controls to ensure pedestrian safety.

**Guiding Objective TS-1.8:** Decrease the number of curb cuts by controlling access along Highway 105.

**Guiding Objective TS-1.9:** Discourage development if the roads that access the development cannot accommodate the additional traffic without degrading the current level of service (LOS).

**Guiding Objective TS-1.10:** Develop Road standards that address drainage and impervious surfaces. Not all areas of Town should have paved roads due to the difficulty in maintaining roads where drainage or slope is a consideration.



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**Guiding Objective** TS-1.11: Work with CDOT to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists along Highway 105.

***Community Goals TS-2: APPEARANCE AND MULTIMODAL. Ensure that the transportation system is aesthetically appealing and multimodal.***

**Guiding Objective** TS-2.1: As Highway 105 is the ‘front door’ to Palmer Lake, ensure that the street cross-section fits with the character of Palmer Lake through the addition of pedestrian amenities and the development of two gateway features at each edge of the Town.

**Guiding Objective** TS-2.2: Promote biking and walking as viable forms of transportation and recreation by developing a comprehensive path and trail system that connects neighborhoods with small-scale retail shopping, restaurants, parks and recreation, schools, and the transportation systems of adjacent jurisdictions.

**Guiding Objective** TS-2.3: Update street standards to ensure there are adequate sidewalks or trails within residential and commercial developments. These sidewalks or trails should include shade trees and be designed for winter conditions to enhance the comfort of the pedestrian and reduce the apparent roadway width (which will cause drivers to slow down).

**Guiding Objective** TS-2.4: Ensure that alternative modes of transportation are convenient by increasing both inter-community and intra-county alternative modes such as the Santa Fe Trail.

**Guiding Objective** TS-2.5: Improve multi-modal connectivity between the east and west side of the Town.

**Guiding Objective** TS-2.6: Use drainage ways and creek corridors as recreational amenities for cyclists and pedestrians.

**Guiding Objective** TS-2.7: Promote transportation alternatives to single occupancy cars.

**Guiding Objective** TS-2.8: Investigate the opportunities for obtaining federal, state, PPACOG, and county funds for transportation improvements that incorporate non-vehicular modes of travel.

***Community Goals TS-3: ADEQUATE PARKING. Ensure parking is adequate and efficiently designed.***

**Guiding Objective** TS-3.1: Update the Town’s parking regulations to ensure that the number of spaces required for each use is adequate to



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meet appropriate parking ratios for all uses. Consider alternatives to providing surface parking on-site such as an in-lieu of parking fee, shared use, credit for improved on-street parking spaces, credit for tuck-under parking, and possible credits for promoting bicycle parking such as bike racks and motorized scooter use.

**Guiding Objective TS-3.2:** Allow downtown core area businesses to meet parking requirements through a variety of means including payment of an in-lieu of parking fee, remote parking within one-quarter mile of the establishments, credits for improved on-street parking spaces, and parking reductions for joint use.

**Guiding Objective TS-3.3:** Seek funding to improve and redesign the parking layout to provide the appropriate number of spaces along the downtown core between Highway 105 and the railroad right-of-way (ROW).

***Community Goals TS- 4: RAILROAD CORRIDOR. Ensure that the railroad corridor is safe and adverse impacts on adjoining properties are mitigated.***

**Guiding Objective TS-4.1:** Work with the Railroads to install noise attenuation and visual screening along sections of the railroad corridor through Palmer Lake. Use landscaping, landscape berms, fencing, additional insulation, or alternative methods to mitigate adverse impacts.

**Guiding Objective TS-4.2:** Ensure safety along railroads by requiring adequate setbacks and limiting the types of land uses that can locate near the rail ROW.

**Guiding Objective TS-4.3:** Upgrade railroad crossings so they are visible and can accommodate cars, bicycles, pedestrians, and handicapped persons where appropriate.

## UTILITIES SERVICES AND FACILITIES (USF)

***Community Goals USF-1: EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF SERVICES. Through collaboration with area service providers, plan and equitably provide the citizens of Palmer Lake with the highest level of public services they are willing to support.***

**Guiding Objective USF-1.1:** Ensure that revenues generated from new development will offset the cost of providing community services to that development.



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**Guiding Objective** USF-1.2: Encourage cooperation between the Parks Commission, Parks Department, and the School District to maximize the use of recreational facilities.

**Guiding Objective** USF-1.3: Continue support of and participation in crime prevention activities, such as the Neighborhood Watch Program.

**Guiding Objective** USF-1.4: Encourage the consolidation of emergency services to avoid duplication of efforts, equipment, and administrative costs.

**Guiding Objective** USF-1.5: Work to minimize the number of special districts that operate in the Town and on the fringes of the Town by encouraging and facilitating the consolidation of special districts.

**Guiding Objective** USF-1.6: Cooperate with other local units of government, including special districts, to plan for wastewater treatment on a regional scale.

**Guiding Objective** USF-1.7: Plan now for future water and sewer plant expansion and, if necessary, institute a program for the financing of this expansion.

**Guiding Objective** USF-1.8: Continue to seek new and reliable water resources to be used to satisfy demands for future direct supply and augmentation.

**Guiding Objective** USF-1.9: New development should be encouraged to locate adjacent to existing development to ensure the logical extension of water and wastewater facilities.

***Community Goals USF-2: INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING. Upon completion of this Community Master Plan, the Water Study, Drainage Study, and the Palmer Lake Sanitation District's recent wastewater plan, initiate the development of a five-year capital improvements program as a first step in addressing needed improvement and expansion of the current water, sewer, and stormwater systems.***

**Guiding Objective** USF-2.1: Continue to implement the Town's user pay philosophy for the provision of public facilities and services, including roads, water, sewer, and drainage, and continue to review the cost of taps and fees for all services.

**Guiding Objective** USF-2.2: Continue to make improvements to the Town's water, road, and drainage systems.



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**Guiding Objective** USF-2.3: Continue to cooperate with the Palmer Lake Sanitation District and stay current on the number of taps that are available for new development.

**Guiding Objective** USF-2.4: Plan and implement a system-wide approach to drainage and flood control.

**Guiding Objective** USF-2.5: Engage in efforts to provide a regional solution to the provision of needed infrastructure improvements.

**Guiding Objective** USF-2.6: Work with the area service providers to move all overhead wiring underground.

***Community Goals USF-3: WATER. Plan for the enhancement of Palmer Lake's long-term water supply while respecting the environmental constraints of the resource.***

**Guiding Objective** USF-3.1: The Town has a significant amount of water rights that have not yet been developed. The development of those water rights in conjunction with managing the Town's existing water supply and partnering with neighboring entities will aid in the Town meeting the demands of future development pressure.

**Guiding Objective** USF-3.2: Plan and develop Town water resources in direct proportion to projected future demand levels. The Town should continue its policy of providing water on a "first-come, first-serve" basis with an expiration date if taps are not used within a specified period of time.

**Guiding Objective** USF-3.3: Augment the Town's water resources through the procurement of supplemental water, use of conservation measures, and additional reservoir storage.

**Guiding Objective** USF-3.4: Correlate water demand to proposed land use when evaluating potential annexation areas.

**Guiding Objective** USF-3.5: All new development should demonstrate sustainable water services at the time of platting.

**Guiding Objective** USF-3.6: Discourage development that cannot provide proof of a dependable and adequate water supply as defined by both quality and quantity.

**Guiding Objective** USF-3.7: Continue to improve water quality.



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**Guiding Objective USF-3.8:** Continue to promote water conservation and follow the recommendations of the Water Conservation Plan developed for the Town of Palmer Lake, Monument, and the Tri-View Metropolitan District.

**Guiding Objective USF-3.9:** Continue to educate residents and property owners about water shortages, emergency water shortage restrictions, and ways to further reduce water demand. Consider the following:

- Enforce and update the existing landscape waterwise ordinance (Ordinance 9 of 2021) to further reduce water demand.
- Promote the use of low water use fixtures.
- Continue to work with Colorado Springs Utilities to test and replace water meters.
- Continue to monitor high water bills.
- Consider a new water fee structure that aims to enhance water conservation.

**Guiding Objective USF-3.10:** Evaluate the fiscal impact and benefits of establishing a real estate transfer fee (documentary fee) or assessment at the time of annexation that would be placed in a planning and engineering fund for developing additional water sources with area water suppliers.

**Guiding Objective USF-3.11:** Due to the number of private wells that have been drilled within the Town limits and the extraction of water from the Town's water supply, consider enacting a policy whereby the usage is determined, metered, and reported so the Town can accurately report water usage and quantify the amount of augmentation required.

***Community Goals USF-4: WASTEWATER. Since wastewater treatment is provided and available from the Palmer Lake Sanitation District (PLSD), strive to eliminate all on-site sewage disposal systems.***

**Guiding Objective USF-4.1:** Continue to enforce and monitor the requirement to connect to centralized service if a service line that serves the Palmer Lake area is within 400 feet of a property as required by CRS 30-20-416. Evaluate increasing the distance to connect from a service line to centralized services.

**Guiding Objective USF-4.2:** Identify site locations and specific standards for future services and utilities necessary to serve the designated Urban Services Area.



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**Guiding Objective** USF-4.3: Work with area sanitation districts to discuss the consolidation or coordination of facilities and services to reduce costs and improve efficiencies.

**Guiding Objective** USF-4.4: Gravity systems, whether sanitary sewer or storm drainage, should have precedence over other systems in design and construction.

***Community Goals SF-5: SHALLOW UTILITIES. Provide and coordinate the provision of shallow utilities (Gas, electric, telephone, cable, and internet) that are needed and are commensurate with local needs.***

**Guiding Objective** USF-5.1: To enhance the next generation of businesses, the Town should work with local businesses and home-based businesses to identify opportunities to develop smart technologies for the area, including better broadband internet services.

**Guiding Objective** USF-5.2: Divisions of land should be designed to accommodate the continuation of roads, shallow utilities, drainage facilities, trails, and pedestrian access onto the adjacent property unless there is sufficient justification for an alternative design.

**Guiding Objective** USF-5.3: Shallow utilities, including but not limited to electrical, telephone, cable TV, and fiber optic lines, are preferred for underground installation at locations compatible with other utilities, storm drains, and future roadway construction.

**Guiding Objective** USF-5.4: Improve Internet connectivity.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY (PHS)**

***Community Goals PHS-1: LAW ENFORCEMENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICES. Provide law enforcement and emergency services at a level commensurate with local needs and circumstances.***

**Guiding Objective** PHS-1.1: Continue to provide and promote a 'safe' community through citizen surveillance, a basic technique of neighborhood and commercial security.

**Guiding Objective** PHS-1.2: Develop a capital improvements plan in conjunction with the Fire Department for the Town's law enforcement and emergency services.

**Guiding Objective** PHS-1.3: Secure adequate ambulance services for the community.



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**Guiding Objective PHS-1.4:** Continue the established mutual-aid agreements and other cooperative efforts among fire protection and emergency service districts, municipalities, and other entities to provide more affordable and efficient services.

***Community Goals PHS-2: SEVERE WEATHER. Prepare structures and community members for severe weather and natural hazards, including wildfires, floods, and severe storms.***

**Guiding Objective PHS-2.1:** Encourage wildfire mitigation activities on private property.

**Guiding Objective PHS-2.2:** Routinely refresh and practice emergency response protocols.

**Guiding Objective PHS-2.3:** Support and pursue community partnerships that improve emergency communication.

**Guiding Objective PHS-2.4:** Involve community members in preparedness planning and activities, emphasizing shelter-in-place options and neighborhood-level communications and responses.

**Guiding Objective PHS-2.5:** Update the list of critical facilities within the Town and the three-mile planning area. Document the known risks/hazards for each and develop strategies for maintaining continued operations and/or improving resiliency (e.g., renewable energy and storage facilities).

**Guiding Objective PHS-2.6:** Conduct an annual community emergency preparedness training and educational campaign in coordination with other local and regional service providers.

***Community Goals PHS-3: MAINTAIN CURRENT LEVELS OF SERVICE. Preserve the functional integrity of key Town police and fire staff positions and their associated community facilities.***

**Guiding Objective PHS-3.1:** Closely monitor future development in the community and collaboratively plan long-term improvements to key community facilities and services.

**Guiding Objective PHS-3.2:** During the annual budgeting process, work to ensure that professional staff positions in both the Police Department and Fire Departments be maintained.





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**Guiding Objective PHS -3.3:** Encourage Town Departments to develop SMART goals. (Smart: Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.)

**Guiding Objective PHS-3.4:** Work with State, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACOG), and County funding agencies to procure funding for Public Safety capital needs (replacement apparatus and firehouse).

**Guiding Objective PHS-3.5:** Schedule at least one work session per year prior to the annual budget preparation with the Board of Trustees, Fire Department, and Police Department to assess their needs and address any gaps in service provision.

**Guiding Objective PHS-3.6:** In coordination with Pikes Peak Regional Building Department, continue to update building codes to comply with best practices for fire protection. Building codes are only applicable for anything for which a building permit is required.

**Guiding Objective PHS-3.7:** Secure sustainable funding to continue to provide improved police and fire protection.





# CHAPTER 5: OUR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

## OVERVIEW

There are two important components to this Chapter:

- The Future Land Use Plan and Map
- The Three-Mile Plan

The Future Land Use Plan creates a framework. It indicates the uses that the community envisions for different areas of the Town. This will inform the update to the Town’s existing land use regulations which includes both zoning and subdivision. The Future Land Use Plan Map does ***not replace the Town’s Official Zoning Map nor change any existing zoning within the Town.***

Unlike a zoning ordinance, this plan describes how the community envisions certain areas developing.

Difference Between Zoning and Land Use Maps	
Future Land Use Map	Official Zoning Map
Preferred future use and character of the land	The basis for applying different land use regulations and development standards to different areas of the community (zones)
Shows generalized development patterns	Zone and site-specific
Guides zoning change requests, variances, and conditional uses	Zoning changes reference Community Master Plan and Future Land Use Plan
Respects and enhances desired existing land use	Community Master Plan may be amended by applicants or the Town to reflect a new direction enabling a change in zoning designation
Acknowledges planning priorities involving housing, economic development, downtown core, infrastructure, parks, trails, open spaces, and public facilities.	Zoning and subdivision regulations largely direct development outcomes



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This Future Land Use map is conceptual in nature, and the exact boundaries of desired land uses may be adjusted based on platting requirements. These land use categories should also be applied to the area in the designated Three-Mile Plan.

The Three-Mile Plan is required by State Statute<sup>37</sup>. As a precondition to the final adoption of an annexation ordinance within the three-mile area outside of the present municipal boundaries, the municipality must have a plan in place for that area, like a comprehensive or master plan. The statute does not require that the Three-Mile plan be adopted before submission of an annexation petition; instead, it must be in place "prior to completion of any annexation within the three-mile area."

### **THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

The Future Land Use Plan and Map represent a synthesis of the current trends and conditions, and most importantly describes the type of development residents of Palmer Lake envision for the Town and defined Three-Mile area. The Future Land Use Plan complements the community goals and guiding objectives for growth and development.

- (1) The Future Land Use Map and Plan describes the setting, type of uses desired, and character of desired development. Availability of infrastructure is also noted.
- (2) The Future Land Use Map and Plan recognizes and respects existing land uses, to avoid creating non-conforming land uses.
- (3) The Future Land Use Map and Plan considers the natural character of the land, appropriate uses, and infrastructures such as roads, water, sewer, and drainage. These considerations are important to any development.
- (4) The Plan includes three (3) community-oriented commercial nodes: the Main Street Downtown Core, East End Mixed Use Village Center, and North End Business/Industrial Center. These nodes may include residential uses as an accessory use, to either the building or the commercial node. They are also intended to serve the existing residential neighborhoods and visitors to the Town as well as the

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<sup>37</sup> See Appendix C.



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surrounding communities of Larkspur, Monument, and the Woodmoor area. The Main Street Downtown Core is both a community gathering point as well as a regional attraction given the Lake, arts center, and cluster of existing dining and entertainment destinations.

- (5) Three retail nodes are envisioned along County Line Road. These nodes may benefit from recent improvements to the bridge at I-25 and County Line Road. In addition, new high-density housing is planned for this intersection.<sup>38</sup>

The Future Land Use Plan ensures a balance of residential and non-residential development, necessary to maintain the fiscal health of communities across the State of Colorado given the State's property tax structure and the benefit of sales tax revenue to Colorado municipalities.

### **PROPERTY TAX REVENUE CONSIDERATIONS**

Property tax revenue is another consideration when creating a Future Land Use Plan. The following estimates are derived from the El Paso County Assessor's property tax database for the Town of Palmer Lake. This is an approximation since all the properties paying Palmer Lake property tax are not fully identified. It also does not include business personal property tax which, depending on the land use, can provide a significant revenue stream for Colorado communities.

Overall residential uses accounted for 88.7% of the market value but only 71.6% of the assessed value and hence 71.6% of the property tax revenue. Commercial uses accounted for only 6.6% of the market value but 21.8% of the assessed value and property tax revenue.

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<sup>38</sup> From Town of Monument Website Development Applications September 2022: <https://monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com/?l=c00ab628a2e6ec11a37c000c29a59557&d=ee376e3ba2e6ec11a37c000c29a59557>- Monument Ridge East and West: "Anticipated development will be single and Multifamily residential on the east side of I-25 consisting of single-family homes and townhomes and/or paired patio homes.



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Assessor Classification	Market Value (\$)	Assessed Value (\$)	% Market Value	% Assessed Value
Residential	404,675,319	28,114,020	88.7%	71.6%
Commercial	30,026,245	8,546,740	6.6%	21.8%
Vacant Land	9,018,864	2,615,070	2.0%	6.7%
Tax Exempt	12,665,346	0	2.8%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>456,385,774</b>	<b>39,275,830</b>		

Source: Community Matters Institute calculations based on El Paso County Assessors Data, August 2022

Further detail is presented in the following table.

Type	Market Value (\$)	Assessed Value (\$)	% AV Cat.	% AV All
<b>COMMERCIAL &amp; INDUSTRIAL</b>				
Warehouse/Storage	11,425,051	3,313,250	38.8%	8.4%
Special Purpose	8,707,925	2,525,300	29.5%	6.4%
Merchandising	3,726,956	1,080,790	12.6%	2.8%
Manufacturing/Processing	1,984,291	575,450	6.7%	1.5%
Offices	1,715,738	497,560	5.8%	1.3%
Miscellaneous	1,423,681	252,200	3.0%	0.6%
Industrial Condominiums	1,036,007	300,450	3.5%	0.8%
Forest Land	6,596	1,740	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total Commercial</b>	<b>30,026,245</b>	<b>8,546,740</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>21.8%</b>
<b>VACANT</b>				
Vacant Residential Lots	5,872,575	1,702,650	65.1%	4.3%
Vacant Commercial Lots	1,649,830	478,460	18.3%	1.2%
Vacant Code 100 At Present Worth	645,322	187,140	7.2%	0.5%
Vacant Land = 1 And < 5 Acres	629,900	182,660	7.0%	0.5%
Vacant Land Less Than 1 Acre	221,237	64,160	2.5%	0.2%
<b>Total Vacant</b>	<b>9,018,864</b>	<b>2,615,070</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>				
Single-Family Res.	385,555,356	26,796,130	95.3%	68.2%
Condominium	13,815,511	960,250	3.4%	2.4%
Multi-units	2,442,472	166,090	0.6%	0.4%
Mobile Home Parks	1,470,228	102,180	0.4%	0.3%
Special_Purpose	1,277,318	81,420	0.3%	0.2%



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Res Land at Res Rate	114,434	7,950	0.0%	0.0%
Total Residential	04,675,319	28,114,020	100.0%	71.6%
TAX-EXEMPT				
Tax-Exempt	12,665,346	0	100.0%	0.0%
Total All	456,385,774	39,275,830		

Source: Community Matters Institute calculations based on El Paso County Assessors Data, August 2022; categories reflect Assessor classifications.

The detailed table shows that warehousing and storage were large revenue contributors. ‘Special purpose’ in the commercial property tax category was largely what the Assessor categorizes as a convalescent hospital that had over \$6 million in market value. The other major special-purpose commercial establishments were restaurants and one gymnasium. Together these two categories accounted for over two-thirds of the commercial assessed value.

Among the vacant land categories, residential vacant land also accounted for about two-thirds of the total vacant land assessment, but vacant land revenue was just 6.7% of total revenue.

In the residential category, single-family homes accounted for over 95% of the total assessed value of residential properties, and two-thirds of the Town’s assessed value.

In El Paso County, residential uses represent 61% of the tax base, commercial and industrial is 27%, and vacant land is 4%.

The above values only account for about 86% of the Town’s assessed value, and therefore, are the best estimates derived from the data readily available from the El Paso assessor's office. Note that business personal property tax makes up about 4% of the taxes in El Paso County.



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Using this available data and calculating a step-up for the unavailable data, the property tax revenue streams are outlined in the following table. \$968,000 is approximately what the El Paso assessor's office said it paid out to Palmer Lake. The property tax has two components, General Property Tax at 11.238 mills and the Fire Mill Levy Property Tax at 10.000 mills for a total of 22.238 mills.

<b>Palmer Lake Estimated Property Tax Sources 2022</b>			
Classification	Market Value	Assessed Value	Property Tax Revenue
Residential	\$470,006,178	\$28,114,020	\$597,085.56
Commercial	\$34,873,688	\$9,926,527	\$210,819.59
Vacant Land	\$10,474,871	\$3,037,247	\$64,505.06
Tax Exempt	\$14,710,042	\$ -	\$-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$530,064,778</b>	<b>\$45,616,527</b>	<b>\$968,803.81</b>

Source: Community Matters Institute calculations based on El Paso County Assessors Data, August 2022



## FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The map, along with the text descriptions in this section, indicates the use that is expected to predominate in areas where land is undeveloped or, in previously developed areas, the plan reinforces what is already developed and will likely remain unchanged. Some minor transitions in use can occur through the redevelopment of previously built sites, “infill” construction on a vacant parcel amid existing built sites or repurposing of an existing structure for another use without significant site changes.

***AS NEW DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ARE SUBMITTED, IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE BETWEEN RESIDENTIAL AND NON-RESIDENTIAL USES TO MAINTAIN THE OVERALL FISCAL HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY. PROPERTY TAXATION RATES FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL USE IS 29% OF ASSESSED VALUE AND HAS THE ADDED BENEFIT OF POTENTIAL SALES TAX AND REAL PROPERTY TAX REVENUE VS. THE CURRENT ASSESSMENT RATE OF 7.15 % FOR RESIDENTIAL USE.***

## FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS & DEFINITIONS

The Future Land Use Plan for the Town of Palmer Lake and its designated Growth Area contains the following land use designation.

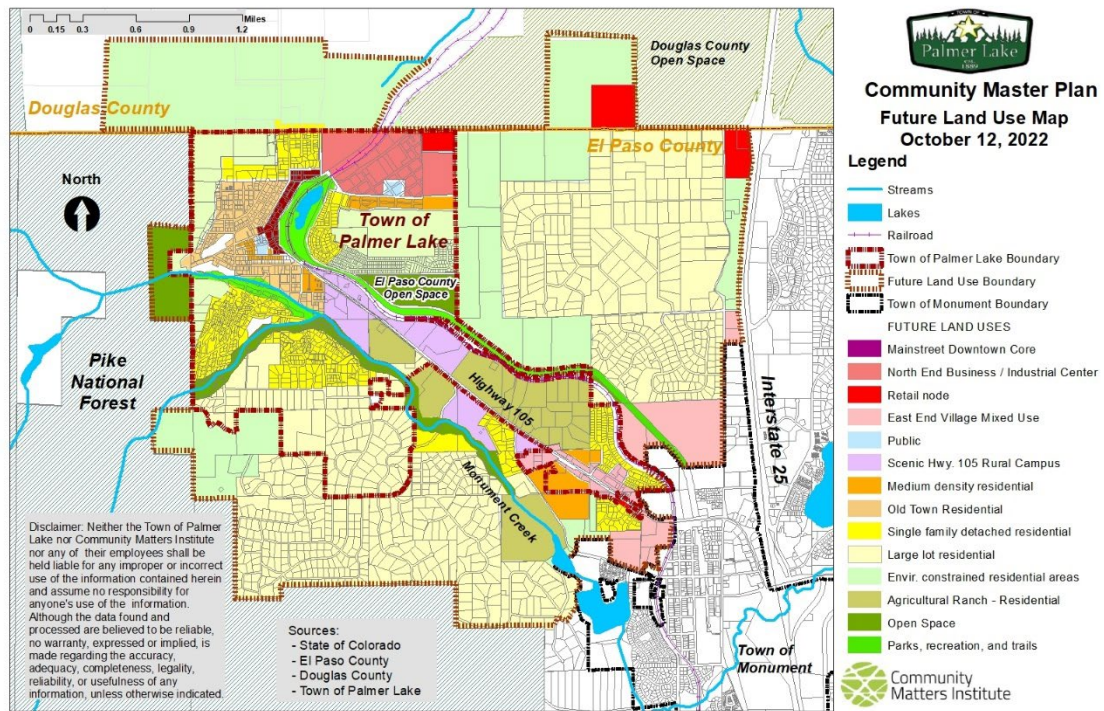
- Main Street Downtown Core
- Retail Nodes
- North End Business/ Industrial Center
- East End Village Mixed-Use Commercial Center
- Scenic 105 Rural Campus Corridor
- Environmentally Constrained Residential Areas
- Agriculture- Ranch Residential





# Palmer Lake Community Master Plan-**FINAL PUBLIC HEARING** **version 5.0 October 24**

- Large Lot Residential
- Single-Family Detached Residential
- Residential Old Town
- Medium Density Residential
- Parks And Recreations, Trails, And Open Space
- Public



## MAIN STREET DOWNTOWN CORE

### Setting

This area is known for its rich history and natural features. This area comprises the current CC zone district and is a mix of restaurants, the art center, and retail establishments along Highway 105 with primarily residential or offices and professional services on the secondary streets. The Lake is also a multi-use regional attraction with many planned events.



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Main Street is centrally located for serving the community and provides a regional attraction for shopping, entertainment, culture, arts, and public gatherings and events. This area should include improvements to make rich and enjoyable public spaces. A diversity of housing types at various price points are integrated with restaurants, bars, retail stores, offices, coffee shops, and civic services. Within the commercial area, residential units may consist of live/work dwellings, loft housing, and other similar uses and should be accessory uses to the principal commercial use and not occupy ground floor space.

The purpose of this mixed-use area is to ensure that the majority of the small individual-owned businesses and service establishments remain and continue to prosper on what has historically been viewed as Palmer Lake's Main Street. This area is easily accessible from both the north and south given its location on Highway 105. Office and residential uses above retail establishments are encouraged in this area, but the residential use should not comprise more than 40% of the lot or development site, and thus should be considered an accessory use to the principal non-residential use. This area also serves as a community gathering point. It is both a drive-to as well as a walk-to destination.

### **Uses and Character**

Attributes of development include preservation of the existing character and scale of development, redevelopment with a focus on walkability, and infill. The Town should consider adopting design standards for Main Street buildings. Renovation of older buildings is encouraged. A mix of uses is appropriate for the area currently zoned CC. Residential neighborhoods should provide a mix of housing opportunities for residents as well as those that work in the area. This area should continue to be highly connected to surrounding neighborhoods through a safe, welcoming, pedestrian-oriented environment including sidewalks, bike lanes, and streetscape improvements along Highway 105.

### **Infrastructure**

The Main Street Downtown Core is served with centralized services including water and sewer and public parking. Storm drainage will need to be addressed if there are any planned improvements to Highway 105.



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## **RETAIL NODES**

### **Setting**

These designated new retail nodes are located along County Line Road and as development increases along the I-25 corridor, increased traffic counts are anticipated allowing the development of new retail stand along centers that will not detract from the small-town character of the Town.

### **Uses and Character**

These sales tax-generating retail nodes should be located within the Town limits or lands that are eligible for annexation. This type of retail development can generate a high number of vehicle trips and can serve the residents of the area as well as the traveling public. These retail nodes are located within three miles of I-25 and will benefit from planned higher-density housing developments along the I-25 corridor. Possible uses include new farm and ranch supply centers such as Murdoch's, which is also now a home supply store, or an animal feed store to serve northern El Paso County and southern Douglas County.

### **Infrastructure**

As noted in the adopted El Paso County Master Plan, "East-west connections are critical to the overall quality of life for residents."<sup>39</sup> Future improvements to County Line Road will provide another means of access to downtown Palmer Lake and the recommended retail nodes along this corridor. Centralized services should be considered for this emerging corridor.

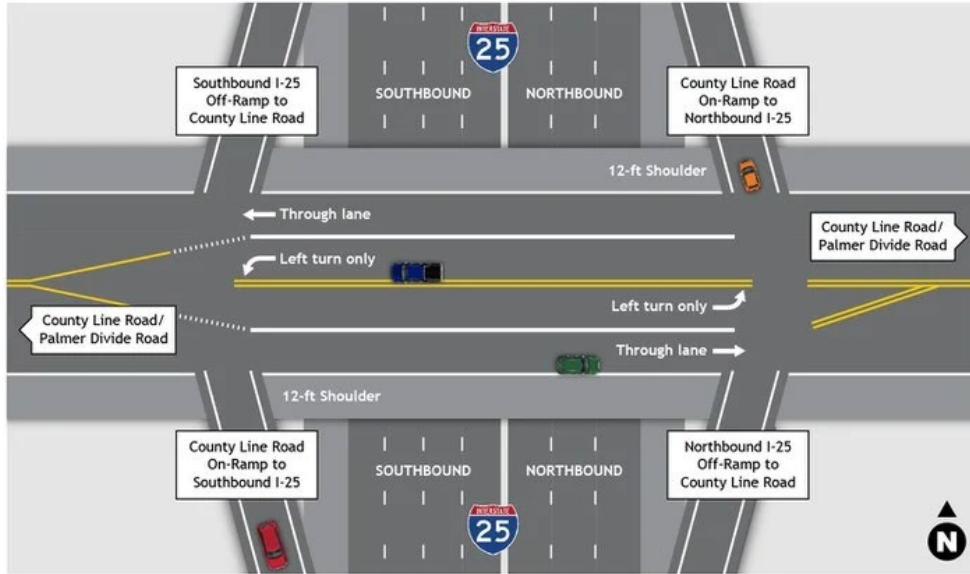
The construction of bridge improvements on County Line Road and I-25 should be completed in November of 2022 and will also provide easier access to properties west of I-25 along County Line Road.

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<sup>39</sup> Refer to the adopted El Paso County Master Plan 2021-06-04\_ADOPTED\_Your\_EI\_Paso\_Master\_Plan\_LQ.pdf



### County Line Road Bridge Final Alignment



The I-25 South Gap project is increasing safety and mobility along I-25 between Monument and Castle Rock. The County Line Road bridge is one of five structures being replaced by the project.



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## **NORTH END BUSINESS/ INDUSTRIAL CENTER**

### **Setting**

The North End Business/Industrial Center is an existing industrial center located just south of the Douglas County line.

### **Uses and Character**

The existing industrial park contains successful light industrial businesses and the Town's shop facilities. These industrial uses help pay for the services provided by the Town: they provide property tax revenue, some sales tax revenue, and business personal property tax that is often significant.

Uses for the Business/Industrial Center may include contractor trades, art fabrication, live/work developments, and higher density attainable housing on the south edge of the area where the terrain is too steep for normal business development but not for housing. This area is also appropriate for small office or incubator space that does not require high visibility from well-traveled streets but may have a retail component as an accessory use.

### **Infrastructure**

Only a portion of this area is within the Palmer Lake Sanitation District. There are water mains that serve this land use category. This area is also the northernmost business area in the Pikes Peak region. The traffic counts in this area are quite low, but the area could support a grocery store/gas station on County Line Road as well as specialty destination retail.

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## **EAST END VILLAGE MIXED-USE COMMERCIAL CENTER**

### **Setting**

The East End Village Mixed-Use Commercial Center is currently zoned C-2. It includes both commercial and industrial uses, as well as mobile home parks on both sides of Highway 105. The area is approximately 62.4 acres of which 35.1 acres are currently classified as residential. Only 5.2 acres of this is currently used as commercial. 14.5 acres are used as industrial and the remaining 7.5 acres is vacant land.



## **Uses and Character**

This area is envisioned as a commercial center that provides goods and services for the surrounding neighborhoods and is a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use node that strives to integrate two or more land uses, such as residential, commercial, and office on one lot or within a subdivision, with a defined pedestrian orientation. The commercial area should include well-planned attractive clusters or nodes of commercial development that complement each other.

The East End Village Mixed Use Commercial Center node accommodates easy access to goods and services by foot or by car. The emphasis is placed on the ability to walk or drive and park to access several complementary service and retail uses with limited shared access points off Highway 105. The development contains pedestrian connections and amenities that are complementary to surrounding neighborhoods and open spaces, thereby promoting one-stop shopping in a pedestrian environment.

## **Infrastructure**

This area is within the Palmer Lake Sanitation District but there are no water mains. Much of the area is currently served by individual wells and septic. Traffic counts are highest in this area. For this area to fully develop and create an additional community-friendly economic development magnet, water lines would need to be extended to this area. Given the current pattern of lots, parking areas should be clustered and screened from view with low walls and landscaped berms.

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## **SCENIC HIGHWAY 105 RURAL CAMPUS CORRIDOR**

### **Setting**

Land uses in this area currently include several campus-like low-density clustered developments that are setback from Highway 105 and have limited access to Highway 105. Examples include Elephant Rock, the Mission Training International Center, the Royal Oak Barn, and Recovery Village. These existing uses contribute significantly to the Town's property tax base. The area includes several forested areas and panoramic views of the foothills and mountains.



## **Uses and Character**

The Highway 105 scenic corridor is envisioned as an area with lower density campus-like development. This land use category intends to allow development that maintains the rural quality and character of the area by preserving tree-covered areas and significant views. Any new development should be substantially set back from the Highway to mirror current development that is setback between 100 feet and 300 feet along this portion of Highway 105. Development should be clustered to facilitate the conservation of open space. The current ratio of open space/open lands in this corridor is approximately 66%. Fencing or gating of properties is strongly discouraged since the existing character of the corridor is open and parking areas are screened from view. Access is managed by CDOT to a minimum separation of one access point every quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of a mile. Shared access points are strongly encouraged. Any access onto Highway 105 requires an access permit from the CDOT Region 2 Access Control Manager.

## **Infrastructure**

A portion of this area is within the Palmer Lake Sanitation District, but there are only a few service lines. Anything other than large lot residential development should be served by both water and sewer which would also provide additional economies of scale to serve the East End Mixed Use Village Center.

Water lines and water service is not available and any development in this area should be serviced by centralized water and not wells.

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## **ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSTRAINED RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

### **Setting**

These are areas of Town that are difficult to develop or represent characteristics of the Town and surrounding area that are highly valued. This land use category includes areas that have steep slopes, extensive forested areas, or areas that are difficult to serve or access. Currently, the Town requires that lots with slopes of over 16% must retain at least 50% in their natural state, and the percentage of lands that must be left in their natural state increases to 85% of the lot area as the slope increases. Some of these land areas show old, platted roads; however, these roads have never been built and there is no water or sewer



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service to these sites, making the development potential severely limited and extremely expensive. Development just east of the current Town boundaries have larger lots and some have steep slopes averaging 20%.

### **Uses and Character**

The environmentally constrained residential areas are not suitable for development except for single-family homes on larger lots that are more than five (5) acres. Unlike the agricultural-ranch residential land use designation, the steep slopes and forested areas may require lots that are substantially larger than five (5) acres. The size of the lot will be determined by the hillside ordinance.

### **Infrastructure**

There is no infrastructure in the areas designated as environmentally constrained.

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## **AGRICULTURE-RANCH RESIDENTIAL**

### **Setting**

Existing areas in Town and out of Town are zoned rural agricultural (RA) or used for agricultural purposes.

### **Uses and Character**

This land use designation supports existing agricultural uses. Lots are comprised primarily of open lands that are five (5) acres or larger. Husbandry of domesticated farm or ranch animals is permitted by zoning ordinances, County regulations per the El Paso County Land Development Code (LDC), or State Law. Accessory structures and uses that assist in the production of value-added agricultural-related services or products are encouraged.

### **Infrastructure**

Centralized services are not necessary for agricultural areas and lots in excess of five acres. None of these areas are currently on public water or sewer.





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## **LARGE LOT RESIDENTIAL**

### **Setting**

Existing areas in the Town and out of Town that are currently between one (1) to five (5) acres in size and are not served with public water or sewer services.

### **Uses and Character**

This land use classification includes neighborhoods with large lots with a predominantly rural character and includes areas that are difficult to serve by gravity sanitary sewer. Land parcels designated as large lot residential include existing subdivisions within the Three-Mile Plan. This land use classification respects lands that are already platted within the County and developed, and no change in use is suggested. The Plan envisions that these lands remain as platted larger lots.

### **Infrastructure**

Some areas are served by public water and sanitation, other areas are served with only public sanitation, and still, others are not served with any infrastructure.

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## **SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED RESIDENTIAL**

### **Setting**

Scattered throughout the Town and along Town boundaries, to the southeast, as shown on the Future Land Use Map, these are the areas that are noted as 'yellow' on the Existing Land Use Map. These properties range in size (5,000 square feet to 5 acres).

### **Uses and Character**

This category is established to reflect areas in the community that are currently developed as single-family detached residential homes and the Future Land Use Map recommends no change to these developed areas. This land use designation is designed to preserve existing stable, well-established neighborhoods. The lots should continue to be of sufficient size to allow for off-street parking. This category also reinforces the community's desire to strongly



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discourage tract home subdivisions. This residential category allows for a range of housing choices. Residential density should be at least one dwelling unit per 1/8 acre. Residences in the single-family category are generally characterized by a mix of compatibly designed detached single-family houses, sufficient landscaping, and usable open space.

### **Infrastructure**

Some areas are served by public water and sanitation, while other areas are served with only public sanitation.

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## **RESIDENTIAL OLD TOWN**

### **Setting**

This is the area surrounding the Main Street Downtown Core and was called 'Downtown Transitional' in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan amendment. "This area is primarily medium density residential housing supportive of and compatible with the downtown core."<sup>40</sup>

### **Uses and Character**

The Old Town Residential land use category has an average density of between 4- 8 DUs per acre but no smaller than 1 DU per 1/8 acre. In addition to single-family homes, this area can accommodate either attached or detached ADUs, including carriage



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<sup>40</sup> Page 55, Town of Palmer Lake Comprehensive Plan amendment.



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houses, duplexes, and townhomes of not more than four units to create additional attainable housing.

### **Infrastructure**

All areas of Residential Old Town are served by public water and sanitation.

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## **MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**

### **Setting**

This land use category reflects existing areas in Town with lots that are between 5,000 and 10,000 sq. feet as well as areas that complement the non-residential land use nodes.<sup>41</sup>

### **Uses and Character**

This category is established and shown on the Future Land Use Plan to provide areas in the community where slightly higher-density residential development could be supported. Like the Old Town residential area, this residential category, with a range of 4 to 8 units per acre includes single-family detached and attached units such as townhomes, carriage houses, and attached dwelling units that are two, three, four, or five units per building.

### **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure is needed in some places. Some areas have water but no centralized sewer. At the east end of Town, there are sewer but no water lines. Centralized service should be required to serve these areas.

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## **PARKS AND RECREATION, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE**

### **Setting**

Existing park, recreational facilities, and open spaces are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

### **Uses and Character**

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<sup>41</sup> This category does not include the currently developed townhomes that are zoned CC and have a density of 7.26 DUs per acre.



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All parks, recreational facilities, trails, and open space should be near residential neighborhoods, schools, or cultural facilities, and within walking distance of major destinations such as the downtown core. New trail linkages and parks should take advantage of aligning or linking with the Old Santa Fe Trail, area trails, and Glen Park.

### **Infrastructure**

Sanitation and hydration stations should be provided.

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## **PUBLIC**

### **Setting**

Public is all land owned by public entities. It includes the Town Green as described in the 2013 Amended Comprehensive Plan. This is the location of the current Town Hall and related public facilities, as well as the Town's Maintenance facilities located in the North End Business/Industrial Center which is appropriate for this area of town.

### **Uses and Character**

The Town Green contains the Town Hall, Town Offices, library, police, and fire station. "Creating activity in the Town Green area is an excellent way to generate interest and civic spirit. The scheduling of public activities and events helps reinforce a historic precedent for active utilization of the Town Green.

### **Infrastructure**

The areas are serviced by public water and sanitation.



## TOURISM

Visitors play an important role in the overall financial health of the Town. The newly formed not-for-profit Palmer Lake Economic Development Group (PLEDG) <sup>42</sup> serves to promote all “things” Palmer Lake. The following text is from the PLEDG published brochure.

Palmer Lake is brimming with everything that is best about Colorado life.

Highlights of what makes Palmer Lake “almost heaven” include the following:

- Access to outdoor activities and natural areas, including the proximity to the Pike National Forest.
- Local dining in an uncrowded atmosphere where you can truly unwind.
- A rich history that is documented and presented by the Palmer Lake Historical Society and through photography around the downtown core.
- Beautiful art created by the many local artists.
- Access to local hospitality provided by many short term rentals.

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<sup>42</sup> The PLEDG website outlines in detail the four pillars of the economic development and tourism opportunities for the Town of Palmer Lake- Palmer Lake Economic Development Group (PLEDG) [www.palmerlakecolorado.org](http://www.palmerlakecolorado.org).



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- Many local annual events and gatherings throughout the year.

PLEDG efforts are founded on four pillars: Art, History, Dining, and the Outdoors. The PLEDG website, with a focus on economic development, includes efforts to promote tourism in Palmer Lake. In addition to PLEDG, the following websites also promote tourism in the area:

**ACCESS OUR UNPARALLELED NATURAL BEAUTY**

**THERE'S SO MUCH MORE!**

Visit our website to plan your trip to beautiful Palmer Lake! Check out our Events calendar, find a short-term rental on our website, sample our restaurants, and immerse yourself in our history. Peruse the work of local artists featured in our shops around town. Hike, bike, or just soak up

**VISIT BEAUTIFUL PALMER LAKE**

**COLLECT OUR ARTISTIC TREASURES**

Palmer Lake is known for its one-of-a-kind, eclectic art in all forms of creative expression. Supported by an actively growing community of artists, Palmer Lake is set to become an essential creative district along the Colorado Front Range and a growing destination spot for art lovers and cultural seekers alike.

**STEP BACK IN TIME**

No visit to Palmer Lake would be complete without a visit to the Lucretia Vaile Historical Museum, which offers a view into the 'wild west' origins of our lovely mountain community. Step back in history as you take a walking tour, participate in one of our many history-based events, including the Palmer Lake Yule Log Hunt, and soak up the ambience of our town and its many historical buildings.

**EAT LIKE A LOCAL**

Palmer Lake features a variety of acclaimed eateries! Choose from rustic Italian cuisine, New Mexico-style Southwestern dining, French crepes and coffee, award-winning wings and steaks, small plates and local brews, or freshly made sandwiches and ice cream. Soak up the atmosphere of a busy pub, or savor authentic Mexican street tacos.

Come and enjoy a memorable meal today.

- Area Visitor Info [www.visitcos.com/things-to-do/outdoors/parks-trails/palmer-lake-recreation...](http://www.visitcos.com/things-to-do/outdoors/parks-trails/palmer-lake-recreation...)
- Awake Palmer Lake [www.awakepalmerlake.org](http://www.awakepalmerlake.org)



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- Palmer Lake Historical Society and Museum [www.palmerdividehistory.org](http://www.palmerdividehistory.org)
- Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts [www.trilakesarts.org](http://www.trilakesarts.org)
- Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce [www.trilakeschamber.com](http://www.trilakeschamber.com)





## THREE-MILE PLAN

The purpose of this subsection of the Master Plan is to satisfy the requirements of Section 31-12-105(1) (e), C.R.S. This statute limits municipal annexations to no more than “three miles in any direction from any point of such municipal boundary in any one year.” Contiguity as required by Section 31-12-104(1)(a), C.R.S. may be achieved by annexing a platted street or alley, a public or private right-of-way, a public or private transportation right-of-way or area, or a lake, reservoir, stream, or other natural or artificial waterway. The three-mile limit may be exceeded if it would divide a property held in identical ownership if at least 50% of the property is within the three-mile limit.

Palmer Lake’s Three-Mile area boundary is intended to promote a regional approach to planning, particularly concerning the availability of centralized services.

This boundary meets the statutory requirement of having a "plan in place" for the area outside the municipality -- a required precondition to any annexation [C.R.S. § 31-12-105]. The planning area intends to ensure that development within the Town’s recognized annexation plan boundary is reviewed to determine future eligibility for annexation and to ensure it connects to existing development logically.

Colorado law also requires counties to inform municipalities of any development planned within two miles of a municipality’s corporate boundary. This established Three-Mile Plan allows the Town or its citizens to comment on new development on its periphery and fosters an intergovernmental approach to addressing growth where services might be shared, and regional and local plans respected.

The adoption of the Three-Mile Plan does not imply that all land within the area shown on the Three-Mile Plan map will or should be annexed. Palmer Lake's Three-Mile Plan defines areas adjacent to but outside of Palmer Lake, that Palmer Lake would consider annexing if able to provide centralized services, especially in cases where another jurisdiction could not. The Three-Mile Plan is land that is likely to be subject to increased development pressure and does not need to encompass all three miles. The Palmer Lake Three-Mile Plan does not extend three miles in all directions because the Town of Monument is adjacent to Palmer Lake’s southern municipal limits and the Pike National Forest borders Palmer Lake’s western boundary.





## STATUTORY REQUIREMENT FOR THE THREE-MILE PLAN

The information required for a Three-Mile Plan is relatively simple and follows much of the same information outlined in the C.R.S for a ‘master plan’, which was recently updated as of August 10, 2022. “*The plan must generally describe the proposed location, character, and extent of the following and be updated at least annually*<sup>43</sup>.

1. *Subways, and bridges:* There are none within the designated area.
2. *Waterways, and waterfronts:* The Environmental Hazards Map identifies lakes, streams, flood plain, and groundwater recharge areas.
3. *Parkways, playgrounds, squares, parks:* The Parks, Trails, and Open Space Map shows existing parks, recreational facilities, trails, open spaces, and national forest within the Three-Mile Plan area.
4. *Aviation fields:* There are none within the designated area.
5. *Other public ways, grounds, and open spaces:* These are shown on the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Map and include the Greenland Open Space Area along County Line Road in Douglas County.
6. *Public utilities:* Public utilities include common carriers that provide electric, gas, water, sanitation, telecommunication, internet, and cable. The Town of Palmer Lake and the area included in Palmer Lake’s Three-Mile Plan are served by the following entities:
  - Electric Core Electric Cooperative (CORE) District 3 except for a portion of land adjacent to I-25.
  - Natural Gas: Black Hills Energy.
  - Water: Provided by the Town of Palmer Lake unless on private residential wells.
  - Sanitation: Sewer is provided by Palmer Lake Sanitation District (PLSD) or private septic.
  - Other Special and Metropolitan districts in the Three-Mile planning area: A variety of districts provide water and/or

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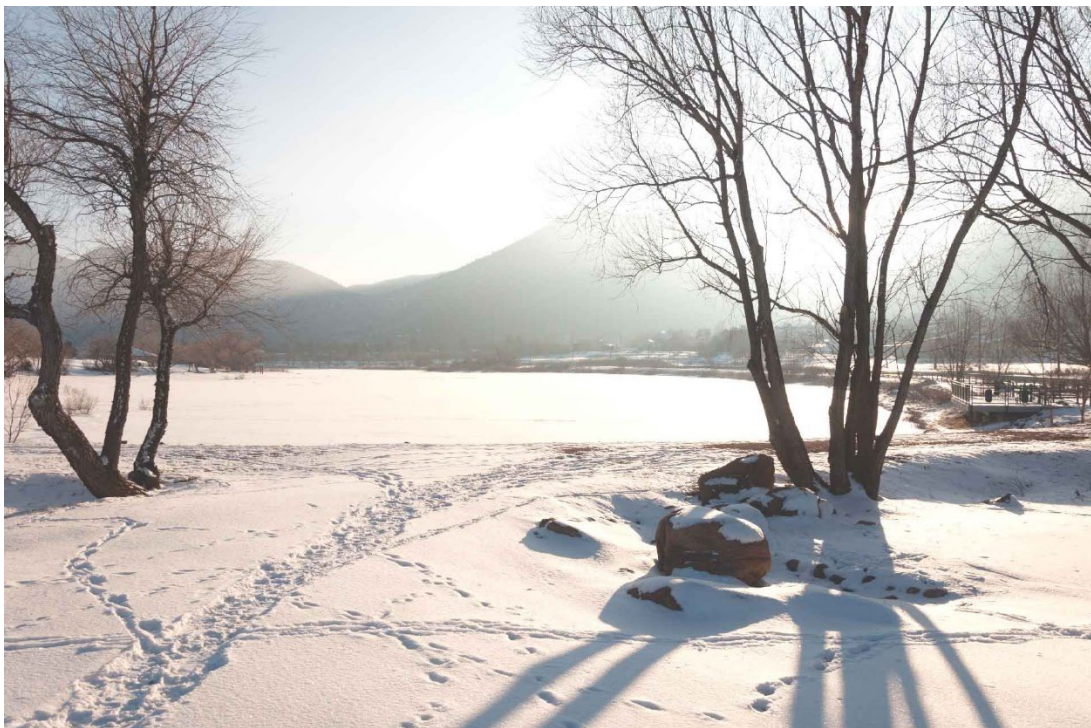
<sup>43</sup> *Italicized text* is from C.R.S. 31-23-206.**Master plan.** (Effective until August 10, 2022)



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sanitary sewer service can be found on the Community Master Plan Map titled Districts: Water, Sewer, & Metro. Existing water and sewer lines within the Town can be found on the map entitled Water and Sewer Lines.

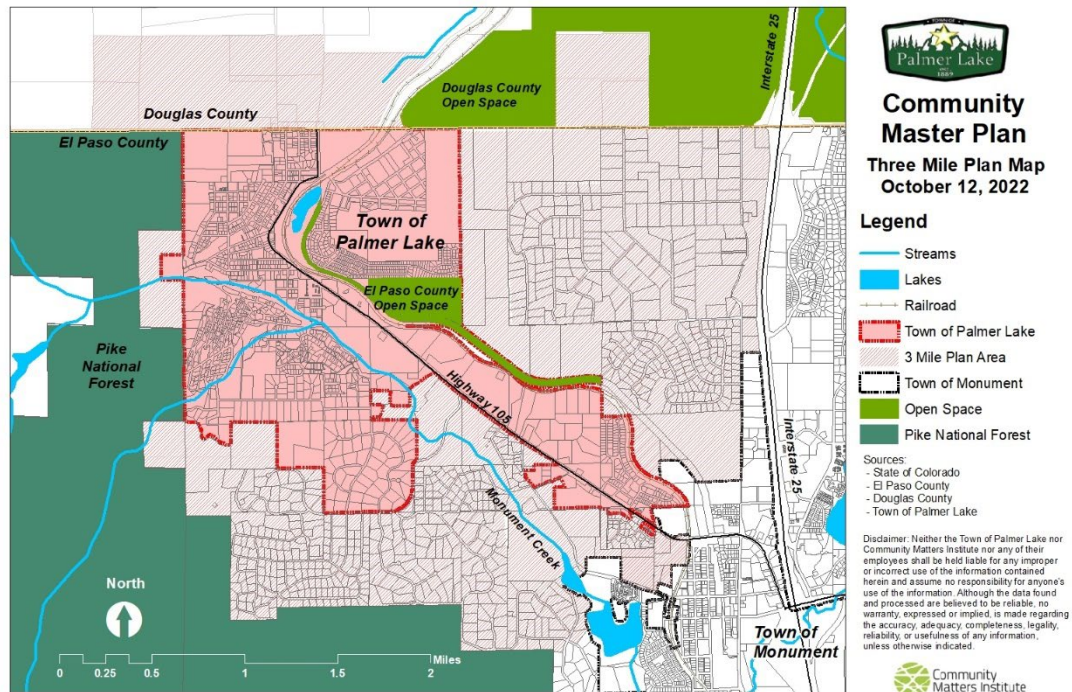
- Cable and Internet: Services are available through Comcast/Xfinity, force Broadband, and Century Link.
7. Terminals for water, light, sanitation, transportation, and power to be provided by the municipality [not such utilities provided by others]. See above.





## THREE-MILE PLAN: ANNEXATION CONSIDERATIONS

The Three Mile Plan Area Map indicates areas that are considered eligible for annexation.



## POLICIES TO ENSURE REGIONAL LAND USE & UTILITY COORDINATION

- 1) The Town of Palmer Lake’s Three-Mile boundary illustrates lands that the Town of Palmer Lake is willing to consider for annexation if approached by a property owner.
- 2) The Town of Palmer Lake will work with the Town of Monument, El Paso County, and Douglas County to enter into Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) specifically outlining Palmer Lake's intentions and preferences for the development of those areas within the Palmer Lake growth area boundary. Each IGA should outline what areas of northern El Paso County require urban levels of service and should consider



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entering into a “binding annexation agreement” to prevent the proliferation of new special or metropolitan districts.

- 3) The Town of Palmer Lake requires that any new subdivision or single lot development adhere to the 2022 Community Master Plan as a condition of annexation.
- 4) Metropolitan and special districts within the Three-Mile Area boundary are allowed only as a financing tool of last resort. The Town wants to minimize the proliferation of these districts so that when annexation does occur, there are no additional independent districts within the Town limits or Three-Mile Plan boundary. To this end, the Town will work with the county to adopt regulations that ensure independent infrastructure systems connect to the Town’s infrastructure system.
- 5) All land within the officially recognized Palmer Lake Three-Mile Area will be considered for annexation into the Town of Palmer Lake if the applicant can demonstrate a net economic benefit to the Town and current Palmer Lake residents.
- 6) Land that is eligible for annexation into the Town of Palmer Lake and is of a density that requires centralized services will be discouraged from developing within the unincorporated portion of the County. If the Town cannot serve the proposed development at the time a land development application is submitted the applicant should be required to enter into a pre-annexation agreement with the Town of Palmer Lake.
- 7) The Town of Palmer Lake in cooperation with El Paso County should formally recognize and adopt an IGA that provides further clarity about growth within Palmer Lake’s Three-Mile planning area.



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## ANNEXATION GUIDELINES

The following Annexation Guidelines will help the Town of Palmer Lake consider new annexations. The Planning Commission and Town Board of Trustees could consider referring to the Colorado Municipal League's (CML)" Annexation in Colorado Handbook" 1991 Edition, as amended, or the recent summary of annexation law from CML<sup>44</sup> to include:

- 1) Does the Annexation meet all the requirements of the Colorado Municipal Annexation Act and its amendments along with the adopted Town of Palmer Lake criteria? Is the land proposed for annexation contiguous to other lands in the Town that is already receiving Town services?
- 2) Is there an accurate map of the proposed annexation that includes all street rights of way and connections to the existing street system, location of current and proposed boundaries, location of utilities that the annexation will connect to, proposed land uses, and zoning requests?
- 3) Has the applicant substantially adhered to the Town of Palmer Lake's adopted Community Master Plan?
- 4) Has the applicant prepared a thorough annexation impact report for parcels over ten acres in size that meets the requirements of C.R.S. 31-12-108.5?
- 5) Has Town staff prepared a list of benefits and liabilities the proposed annexation would provide for the Town of Palmer Lake (qualitative analysis)?
- 6) Are the financial benefits and costs to the taxpayers of the Town of Palmer Lake and the annexing area clearly defined? What are the near-term fiscal benefits before vertical development? What are the long-term fiscal benefits of build-out? (The quantitative analysis should include but not be limited to the impact on the Town's General Fund, operational funds such as the Water Fund, as well as any Capital Funds.)

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<sup>44</sup> [https://www.cml.org/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/events/annual-conference/conference-presentations/annexation-in-colorado.pdf?sfvrsn=6efd6133\\_2](https://www.cml.org/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/events/annual-conference/conference-presentations/annexation-in-colorado.pdf?sfvrsn=6efd6133_2)



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- 7) How will the area be serviced? Does the annexation clearly indicate the following:
  - a. Public water and sanitation line capacity
  - b. Public wastewater treatment capacity
  - c. Public water treatment capacity
  - d. Public raw water capacity and water supply as required by El Paso County and the State of Colorado
  - e. Minimum acceptable water pressure
  - f. Avoidance of flood-prone areas
- 8) Does the land use application provide for the type and variety of land uses that are consistent with the recommended overall land use patterns as depicted on the Palmer Lake Future Land Use Plan?
- 9) Is there an annexation agreement that satisfactorily addresses land use, transportation, and servicing requirements?
- 10) Does the residential annexation request include public land dedication requirements so that adequate open space, parkland, and public facility sites (schools, police, fire, and maintenance) are secured?
- 11) Is there an acceptable draft annexation agreement or pre-annexation agreement that strives to minimize the short- and long-term costs of providing community services and facilities for the sole benefit of the annexed area?
- 12) How much development can ultimately occur if the land is annexed to the Town?



## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY SURVEY

Reference the Town of Palmer Lake's website at:

<https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/bc-pc/page/master-plan-> See Master Plan Survey.



## **APPENDIX B: ACRONYMS**

### **Acronyms**

AADT – Annual Average Daily Traffic

ACS – American Community Survey

ADU – accessory dwelling unit

AF – acre-feet

CDOT – Colorado Department of Transportation

CMI – Community Matters Institute, the Master Plan consultant

CML – Colorado Municipal League

CPW – Colorado Parks and Wildlife

CRS – Colorado Revised Statutes

CWPP – Colorado Wildlife Protection Plan

DIA – Denver International Airport

DOLA – Colorado Department of Local Affairs

DU – Dwelling Unit

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management

GMS – the Town's consulting engineering firm

GOCO – Great Outdoors Colorado

IGA – Intergovernmental Agreement

MS4 - Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System

PLEDG – Palmer Lake Economic Development Group

PLSD – Palmer Lake Sanitation District

PPACG - Pike Peaks Area Council of Government





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PUD – Planned Unit Development

ROW – right-of-way

RR - railroad





## APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Accessory Use:** Accessory uses are subordinate in size and scale to the permitted principal structure or use, located on the same lot.

**Agricultural Land** - Land that is being used for agricultural activities.

**Character** - Those attributes, qualities, and features that make up and distinguish an area and give such an area a sense of purpose, function, definition, and uniqueness.

**Clustered Development** - Cluster development is development to protect environmental features by allowing more open space and protecting the rural character. Under this scheme, structures are built closer together on a part of the land rather than spread evenly on large lots over the whole development.

**Density (Gross)** - The ratio of dwelling units per acre utilizing the full acreage of the parcel or entire development site without subtracting areas dedicated to public or private roads, schools, parks, or similar public use and open space areas or hazard areas.

**Density (Net)** - "Density, net" means the average number of accommodation and/or dwelling units or gross commercial building floor area per acre, except (less) all land areas dedicated for public or private joint use for the entire development area such as streets, parking, drives, recreation facilities (covered and/or impervious surfaces), and open space. Net density for subparcels of a development is to be calculated to the midpoint of adjacent public and private streets and/or contiguous open spaces that provide a boundary to the subparcel.

**Duplex** - A structure containing two attached dwelling units, each of which has direct access to the outside.

**DOLA**- Colorado Department of Local Affairs.

**Dwelling unit (DU)** - A single unit providing complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation.



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**Dwelling unit, multi-family** - Dwelling, multifamily means three or more dwelling units where each unit is attached to other units by party walls, and where habitable spaces of different units are arranged side by side, or in a stacked configuration.

**Dwelling unit, single-family** - Dwelling, single-family means a structure containing one dwelling unit.

**Floodplain or Flood hazard Area** - An area that has been designated by the Colorado Water Conservation Board as susceptible to flooding. *Source: 2 Code of Colorado Regulations 408-1, Rule 2: Authority.* The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is responsible for mapping the flood prone areas and any change to the flood plain or change to the flood plain requires a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) or a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR).

**Land Use Regulations** - The Palmer Lake Zoning (Chapter 17 of the Municipal Code) and Subdivision Ordinance (Chapter 16).

**Major Street Plan** – Long-term, a conceptual plan that is used to identify and preserve future transportation routes as development occurs, particularly during the annexation and subdivision process. The intent is to establish a concept to guide future development.

**Statutory Municipality** – Statutory towns are governed by a body called the “board of trustees,” while statutory cities are governed by a “city council.” State law requires the town board to appoint or provide for the election of certain officers, including a clerk, treasurer, and town attorney.

**Neighborhood** – A geographical area, the focus of which is residential uses, but also may include a mixture of activities that people need to live. A *neighborhood* may include a diversity of housing types, schools, parks, shopping and jobs, and a civic component.

**Open Space** – Any land or water area with its surface open to the sky, which serves specific uses of providing park and recreation opportunities, conserving natural areas, wildlife habitat, agricultural areas, and environmental resources, structuring urban development form, and protecting areas of agricultural, archeological, or historical significance.



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**Three-Mile Planning Area Boundary** - The area surrounding the Town that will be considered for possible annexation as required by Colorado statute.

**Townhome or Townhouse** - A single structure consisting of three or more dwelling units having one or more walls abutting another dwelling and designed to have all exits open directly to the outside.





## Appendix D: BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ANNEXATION

### ANNEXATION CAN TAKE PLACE IN THREE WAYS

1. Landowner petition signed by more than 50% of the landowners [Colo. Const. Art. II Sec30(1)(b)] owning more than 50% of the land C.R.S. 31-12-107(1). The petition is a contractual relationship that can be memorialized in an agreement.)
2. Annexation election, in which only landowners and registered electors in the area may vote. [ Colo. Const. Art. II Sec. 30(1)(b); C.R.S. 31-12-107(2).] Note: a few municipalities require an election for all annexations.
3. Unilateral annexation by a municipality of an enclave or municipally owned land: C.R.S. 31-12-106. [Palmer Lake could annex the small parcel at the south end of the Town.]

**“Landowner”** means the owner in fee of the surface estate, not the owner of the mineral estate if severed. C.R.S. 31-12-103(6).

### ONE-SIXTH BOUNDARY CONTIGUITY

1. One-sixth boundary contiguity must exist between municipality and property to be annexed: C.R.S. 31-12-104(1)(a).
2. Configuration of the parcel to be annexed is not relevant to review.
3. Roads, water bodies, and most government lands may be “skipped over” for purposes of establishing the required contiguity.
4. Existence of contiguity satisfies the "community of interest" requirement of C.R.S. 31-12-104(1)(b).
5. Prior noncontiguous annexations render subsequent annexations relying upon those annexations void ab initio. C.R.S. 31-12-104(2).
6. Establishing eligibility:
  - Series/simultaneous annexation of streets, rights-of-way, etc. permitted: C.R.S. 31-12-104(1)(a); 105(1)(e).



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- No division of property held in "identical ownership," without landowner consent unless separated by a "dedicated street, road or other public way"
- Written consent is also required to annex 20 acres or more in identical ownership valued in excess of \$200,000. C.R.S. 31-12-105(1) (a & b).
- No annexation of property for which annexation proceedings have been initiated by another municipality. C.R.S. 31-12-105(1)(c).
- No annexation which will detach property from a school district without the written consent of the district. C.R.S. 31-12-105(1)(d).
- No annexation to expand municipal boundaries greater than three miles in "any one year." C.R.S. 31-12-105(1)(e)(I).
- Three-Mile plan required. C.R.S. 31-12-105(1)(e)(I).
- Flagpole annexations must permit annexation of abutting property "under the same or substantially similar terms and conditions." C.R.S. 31-12-105(1)(e)(II).
- If annexing a portion of a street or alley, must annex the entire width. C.R.S. 31-12-105(1)(f).
- Annexation shall not deny reasonable access to landowners, easement owners, or franchise owners adjoining a platted street or alley that has been annexed and is not bounded on both sides by the municipality. C.R.S. 31-12-105(1)(g).
- Power of attorney not sufficient for annexation election. C.R.S. 31-12-105(1) (h).
- Most annexations have unique and greater requirements for providing public notice.

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### **ANNEXATION IMPACT REPORT**

- Required for annexations over 10 acres, unless waived by the board of county commissioners. C.R.S. 31-12-108.5.
- Some statutory towns that we have worked with have adopted a 5-acre requirement.
- Often, the County does not respond to the notice it is sent.



## THREE-MILE PLAN

1. No annexation may have the effect of extending a municipal boundary more than three miles in any one year. [See, Town of Berthoud v. Town of Johnstown, 983 P.2d 174 (Colo.App.1999)] “Year” is defined as a “calendar year.” [C.R.S. 2-4-107]
2. As a precondition to the final adoption of an annexation ordinance within the three-mile area outside of the present municipal boundaries, the municipality must have in place a plan for that area, like a comprehensive or master plan.
3. The statute does not require that the Three-Mile plan be adopted before submission of an annexation petition; instead, it must be in place "prior to completion of any annexation within the three-mile area. . ."; thus, prior to final action on the annexation ordinance and recording with the clerk and recorder under C.R.S. 31-12-113(2).

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## ANNEXATION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Unlike zoning and subdivision applications, a petition for annexation is not a quasi-judicial matter for the municipality. The municipality does not have to approve an annexation.
2. As shown on the attached Planning Area map, Monument is at your southern border.<sup>45</sup>
  - a. Several citizens and Palmer Lake Trustees and Planning Commissioners have voiced concern about Monument simply annexing Palmer Lake. Legally this would be extremely difficult to do because it requires a 2/3rd vote of the people to dissolve the municipality.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> The Monument website does show the adopted Three- Mile Plan; as well as all annexations from 2003- 2017.

<sup>46</sup> State law outlines the process for how a home rule or statutory city may discontinue its incorporation. The proceedings for discontinuance of incorporation begin when a petition for discontinuance is filed with the district court of the county where the municipality exists. The petition must be signed by at least 25 percent of the registered electors of the municipality. Upon verification of the petition, the court will notify the



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- b. Look at possible strategic annexations that would prevent Monument from growing further north along lands that Palmer Lake could annex.
3. Larkspur's Planning Area boundary extends to the County line. It is unlikely that Larkspur would annex across the county line during the lifespan of this Master Plan. However, be mindful that in 1983, the Monument Comprehensive Plan envisioned NO development east of I-25. Open Space acquisitions also make further annexation to the south unlikely.
4. There are many areas within the Three-Mile area that are not eligible for annexation. This includes the Town of Monument and Pike National Forest.
5. Flagpole Annexations. If there is a fiscal benefit, nearby municipalities including those that are more than three miles away might consider a flagpole annexation.
  - a. "...not less than one-sixth of the perimeter of the area proposed to be annexed is contiguous with the annexing municipality."
  - b. C.R.S. 31-12-104(1)(a). • C.R.S. 31-12-104(1)(a) was amended in 1987 to confirm as legitimate the longstanding practice of annexing one or more parcels in a series, considered simultaneously, to annex property that, taken as a whole, does not have the requisite one-sixth contiguity.
  - c. Within the defined Three-Mile area, the contiguity required by Section 31-12-104(1)(a) may be achieved by annexing a platted street or alley, a public or private right of way, a public or private transportation right-of-way or area (i.e., the RR ROW, or a lake, reservoir, stream, or other natural or artificial waterways."
  - d. C.R.S. 31-12-105(1)(e). Often a street is used to serve as the "pole" to reach, and thus annex, the desirable "flag" of property.

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electors of the municipality of a vote at the next regular election on whether or not to discontinue the incorporation of the municipality. At least two-thirds of the electorate must vote to discontinue incorporation.





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However, it is required that the municipality also annex the “pole,” and offer annexation to any properties abutting the pole.

- e. In Palmer Lake, both 105 and the RR ROW could serve as a means to annex property that has a clear fiscal benefit. This could be accomplished by any of the area municipalities. (See Planning Area map.)
6. Annexation agreements are critical.
    - a. An annexation agreement is a contract.
    - b. Example developer/annexor obligations: dedicate and improve roads, install water and sewer lines, pay fees for water rights and transmission.
    - c. Example municipal obligations: provide water and sanitary sewer service.
  7. Fiscal benefits are analyzed at the time a petition is filed.



## APPENDIX E: AN ESTIMATE OF EXISTING AVERAGE BUILDING SETBACK ALONG SCENIC 105 CORRIDOR

Following is an estimate of the average setback of a primary structure from the edge of the right-of-way. This estimate does not include vacant properties and does not include a property where the primary structure is a house.

- Blue – indicates selected parcels that are not vacant, and the primary structure is not a house.
- Red – indicates the Town boundary.
- Southside includes the two adjoining Town properties referred to as Elephant Rock, which is counted as one property.

The average existing setback in selected parcels is 200 feet.





## APPENDIX F: GIS DATA BASE

A geographic information system (GIS) computer program was used to create most of the maps in the Plan. This appendix includes information on the maps and GIS files used to make the maps.

**List of maps.** The Table of Contents of the Plan includes a list of the maps in the Plan. All the maps in the plan were created using GIS, except for the Western Territory map.

**Types of files.** GIS includes the following types of files.

- **MXD.** This is the file that contains a map. The MXD file connects to other files which together create the map. A map may include half dozen to several dozen SHP files.
- **SHP.** These files contain most of the different types of information shown on the map, such as the shapes of property parcels or the route of a stream. SHP files frequently are referred to as map “layers.” Maps may also include background images, such as satellite photos or topographic maps, that GIS refers to as “basemaps.”
- **DBF file.** These are database files that contain text or numerical information for the features shown by the SHP files on the map. For example, the database for properties might include information on the size, owner, or zoning of the property. A DBF file that contains a dozen types of information or “fields” could be used to create a different map for each type of information. The GIS program can modify the information in the DBF file or add new categories of information to the DBF file.
- **Other files.** The folder containing an SHP file also includes other types of files that relate to the operation of the program. Usually nothing needs to be done with these other files.

**Coordinates.** GIS maps use geographical coordinates to ensure that each different SHP file of information is properly located on a map with respect to other SHP files that may come from another organization, such as the state or federal government. When a SHP file is added to a map (the MXD file), the GIS program has a procedure for adjusting the new SHP file to match the coordinate system already being used by the map. The maps in this Plan use the coordinate system for the parcel SHP file of El Paso County.



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**SHP layers.** The following layers were collected or created for the maps in this Plan.

- Palmer Lake files
  - Boundary
  - Condominium property
  - Environmental constraints
  - Future land use
  - Neighborhoods
  - Open space
  - Public land
  - Railroad land
  - Roads – local
  - Roads – major
  - Roads - highway
  - Trails
- GMS files. GMS, the Town’s consulting engineer, provided the following files. Palmer Lake Sanitation District (PLSD) granted the Town permission to use PLSD files for this Plan.
  - PLSD sewer mains
  - PLSD manholes
  - Palmer Lake water mains
  - Palmer Lake hydrants
  - PLSD topography
  - Palmer Lake zoning
  - Palmer Lake parking/no parking areas
- Monument files
  - Annexation plan
  - Future land use



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- Land use
- Town boundary
- Water service area
- El Paso County files
  - Boundary
  - Conservation districts
  - DOT road centerlines
  - EPC parcel data
  - Fire districts
  - Highways
  - Land use
  - Metropolitan districts
  - Municipal boundaries
  - Parcels
  - Pike National Forest
  - Public land
  - Railroads
  - Sanitation & water districts
  - Section lines
  - Special improvement districts
  - Townships
  - Trails
  - Unincorporated towns
  - Water districts
  - Zoning area (unincorporated areas)
- Douglas County files



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- Addresses
- Boundary
- Lakes
- Land use
- Municipalities
- Open space
- Parcels
- Parks
- PLSS quarter section
- PLSS township
- Railroads
- Recreation
- Riparian conservation zones
- Road centerlines
- Section lines
- Streams
- Subdivisions
- Survey control monuments
- Tax authorities
- Trails
- Water & sanitation districts
- Water providers
- Water wells
- Watershed
- Zoning
- State of Colorado files
  - Cities



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- County boundaries
- Lakes
- Roads – local
- Roads – major
- Roads – highway
- Streams
- Wildfire Risk (basemap rather than a SHP file)
- United States files
  - Floodplain (FEMA)
  - Pike National Forest