

# CHAPTER 1 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUMMARY

This Plan Summary is a narrative overview of the comprehensive plan. The summary does not contain all of the details and policies in this comprehensive plan and is meant as a starting point to direct the reader to the chapters. In order to gain a full understanding of the policy direction contained in this plan, it is necessary to read the main body of the plan.

## PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that provides a vision for the future and sets out specific goals, policies, and land use planning that specify how to achieve this vision. The plan provides direction for decisions about economic development, land use and development, and core infrastructure such as water, recreation, public facilities and emergency services, and it aligns partnerships with other organizations to implement this plan.

The citizens of Limon provided the policy direction articulated in the Comprehensive Plan through an extensive and broad-based public process and regular meetings with town staff and leadership. This is the community's document and it can be used to protect the unique qualities that continue to attract new residents and visitors to Limon while articulating strategies that will make it an even better place to live, work and visit. The Comprehensive Plan will also serve as a guide to property owners and developers to help them understand the vision of the community, set the general guidance for desired development patterns and to make informed land use decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan is not regulatory and does not change existing regulations, nor does it create new regulations. It is an advisory strategic planning document that recommends and provides general guidance for economic development, infrastructure and asset development, and charts a direction for changes to the Land Use and Development Code as a component of this strategic plan. The Comprehensive Plan is written to provide general policy direction while also providing enough detail to set priorities and guide decision-making.

The main body of the Comprehensive Plan charts goals and strategies and gives guidance for future land use that aligns these key planning elements. The main body of the plan includes:

- Chapter 1 Plan Summary
- Chapter 2 Economic Development
- Chapter 3 In Town Future Land Use
- Chapter 4 Housing



- Chapter 5 Infrastructure and Core Services
- Chapter 6 Tourism and the Visitor Economy
- Chapter 7 Community Services

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Achieving a sustainable future requires simultaneous and ongoing planning with implementation that aligns economic-growth strategies with infrastructure/asset planning and with future land use. It demands a coordinated strategy for expanding and diversifying the economic base and creating jobs locally that will attract new residents and retain the people who live in Limon today. The town is working hard to overcome the challenges it faces and take full advantage of its assets. The town has made efforts to address these challenges, and this document outlines the next steps moving toward a more successful Limon.

Diversifying and expanding the base of businesses and organizations that generate wealth and local employment is critically important for Limon's future sustainability. Growing the local economy and ensuring the economic sustainability of Limon will require leadership and the capacity generated by forming partnerships and working together.

The goals in the Comprehensive Plan seek to build more local employment, attract new primary industries to Limon, improve the quality of life and entice more interchange visitors to explore Limon.

### **EXPAND LIMON'S ROLE AS A REGIONAL CENTER.**

Limon is an established regional center with no other full service town for more than 70 miles. The population in Limon accounts for a third of the total population in Lincoln County, yet 75% of retail sales in Lincoln County originate in Limon. Limon currently provides groceries, health services, auto services, restaurants and some specialty retail. During the Vision Event residents identified primary jobs and retail businesses serving day to day needs as the two areas in need of improvement in the town. Residents are traveling or using the internet to purchase clothing, personal care goods, general merchandise, and electronics. The retail demand that is being met by businesses outside of Limon could be an opportunity to expand retail markets in Limon to serve more day to day needs of the Limon regional residents. By marketing Limon as a regional center, working with building owners to get vacant buildings occupied, investing in infrastructure, and developing commercial land with highway access and water and sewer infrastructure, the town can increase the services it offers as a regional center. The success of Limon as a regional center will bring in more revenues and provide more local jobs and increase Limon's economic sustainability.



## **ATTRACT NEW PRIMARY INDUSTRIES TO LIMON.**

Building the local economy is of key importance to the residents of Limon. By growing the economy Limon ensures its future as a successful, sustainable town. Primary industries such as agriculture, manufacturing and energy sell goods and services outside of local boundaries, injecting money into the local economy ensuring that non-primary economic activity like retail can occur. In recent years Limon has made a strong effort to increase its appeal as a location for primary industries. The town partnered with the Ports-to-Plains Alliance which advocates a four-lane alternative trade route from Mexico to Canada. The town also received Foreign Trade Zone status which offers deferral, reduction or elimination of customs tariffs on imported goods depending on whether the goods are sold to the U.S. market, combined with U.S. products or exported outside the U.S. after import. These efforts along with Limon's location at the intersection of an interstate, four major highways and its proximity to the Front Range economy mean that Limon is also well positioned for interstate and international commerce.

Attracting new primary industries to Limon is highly supported by town residents. All participants at the vision workshop supported development of new industry in Limon and industrial expansion on the periphery of town. 19% of respondents indicated some support for new base industry development while 81% strongly supported base industry development in the town. 15% could live with industrial development on the outskirts of town while 85% supported increased industrial activity on the edges of town.

The previous efforts by the town have established the base for attracting primary industries. This Comprehensive Plan outlines the next steps for successfully bringing new industries to the town.

## **ENTICE INTERCHANGE VISITORS AND LODGING GUESTS TO EXPLORE LIMON.**

Limon has a wealth of potential customers at the east and west I-70 interchanges that can bring additional business to Limon. There were over 80,000 overnight stays in Limon in 2014. Though the customers are there, the town has struggled to get interchange visitors and lodging guests to explore beyond the interchanges and venture in and around town. Limon has an opportunity to market its assets to interchange visitors and lodging guests. Participants at the Vision Event identified a need for consistency, better signage, and visual clues from the interchanges to downtown and attractions throughout town such as the golf course. Additionally there is a need for marketing the assets Limon's Downtown has to offer to interchange visitors.

## **PROMOTE COMMUNITY ASSETS.**

Limon has a strong set of community assets and the community works hard to provide residents with a high quality of life. Limon has a number of strengths which can help attract new businesses and new residents. The town has a brand new K-12 school building and excellent graduation rates higher than both neighboring counties and the state



average. The town also offers competitive tax rates. The town needs to take advantage of these assets and market them to potential businesses looking to locate in Limon. To successfully attract a new business or industry to Limon there needs to be more than just a market for the business, there also needs to be a high quality of life that entices a business's owner and employees to want to live in the town.

## IN TOWN FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Plan is a geographic and thematic representation of the direction for physical planning. This critical component of the Comprehensive Plan is a tool to help the community arrive at a future of its own making. The Future Land Use Plan is advisory in nature, laying the foundation for making changes to zoning in the future, but it is neither zoning nor a zoning map. The Future Land Use Plan does not restrict existing or vested uses.

Future Land Use Plan designations set the general direction for the development of land in the future. Together, the Future Land Use Plan designations and map provide an additional layer of detail and clarity to guide implementation of the goals and strategies contained in Chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7. The following approach guided the development of the Future Land Use Plan:

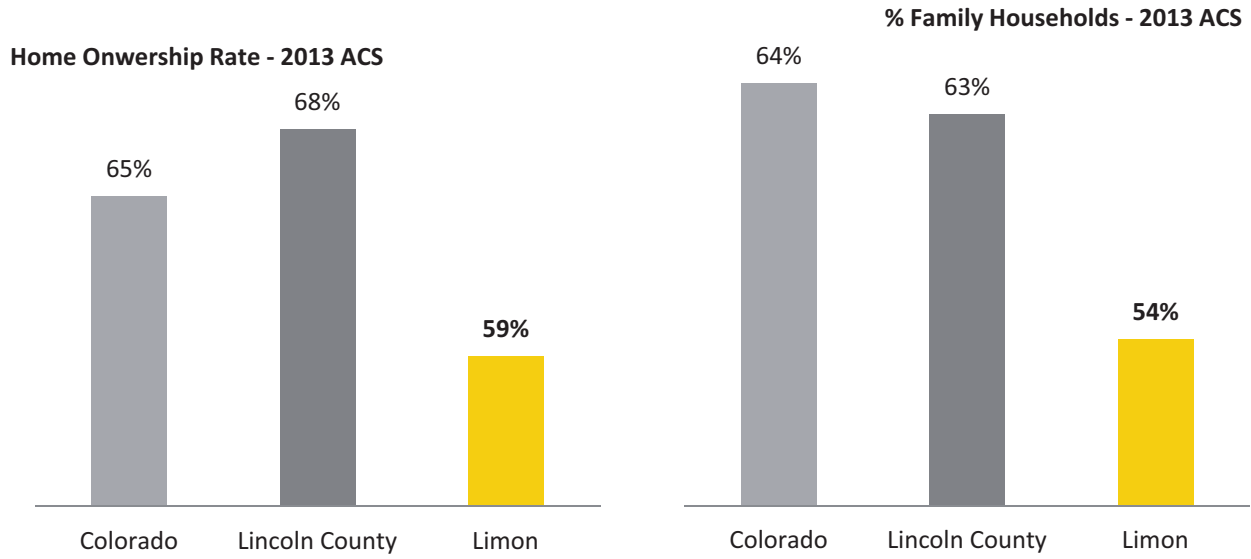
- Enhancing downtown Limon as the historic center of commerce, civic life, and celebrations and maintaining its historic character during redevelopment and future development.
- Maintaining the historic, developed neighborhoods with no significant changes to the already established patterns.
- Encouraging infill in areas with established development patterns with both residential and commercial development.
- Increasing flexibility to allow mixed residential and commercial use in areas that can accommodate multiple uses, such as dwelling units that are accessory to a commercial use and low impact home-based businesses.
- Focusing commercial development where there is easy highway and pedestrian and bike access.
- Promoting recreation in Limon through the use and development of lands suitable to recreation opportunities.

Chapter 3 – Future Land Use Plan combines these elements into a map with property-specific designations that synthesize all of these elements.



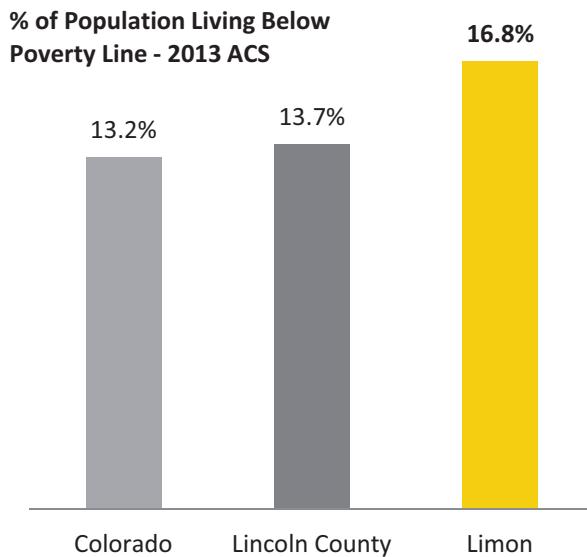
## HOUSING

The current housing options in Limon pose a challenge for growing the economy. The economy and housing are closely linked. Anyone considering locating their business or expanding their business in Limon evaluates the availability, affordability, and quality of housing. Through analysis of census data and town input at the Community Vision Event it is clear that there is demand for a wider variety of housing options.



Home ownership in Limon is low compared to Lincoln County and the state. A lack of quality housing on the market is a major factor deterring potential buyers. Limon also has a lower percentage of family households (households containing two or more related people) than the county or the state with 54% of households family households. This presents an almost even split between family and non-family households. Limon’s low rate of family households contributes to a low average household size of 2.05. These conditions require a variety of housing types appropriate for families, single individuals, and retirees.

16.8% of the population in Limon live below the poverty line, 3% higher than the county and state. Additionally 30% of the population are cost-burdened by monthly housing payments. In other words, 30% of households in Limon are paying 30% or more of their monthly income on housing costs including rent or mortgages. The high rate of cost-burdened households and nearly 17% of the population living below



the poverty line signal a need for more affordable housing options.

The combined demand for more affordable, varied, and quality housing options requires a strategic approach to growing the housing opportunities in Limon. This includes renovating and improving existing housing and building new housing of varied density and type. Efforts to accomplish this will require tax incentives; possible zoning and code adjustments; infrastructure cost sharing between the town and developers, working with regional, state and federal housing entities; and working with developers, mortgage lenders, and non-profits.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND CORE SERVICES

Investing in infrastructure and core services will result in a positive economic impact in two ways, by providing the resources necessary to support commerce and by offering amenities which improve the quality of life of those living in Limon. Maintaining the fiscal soundness of the town in current and future economic cycles is of utmost importance for achieving community goals and maintaining health and quality of life. Infrastructure investments need to be planned out, funded, and implemented according to priority. Basic infrastructure components such as recreational amenities, trails, sidewalks, and emergency medical services (EMS) are fundamental components of day-to-day health and quality of life.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

Limon offers a number of recreation assets including two softball fields, one baseball field, an outdoor swimming pool, four community parks, the golf course, and a natural area and trail. The town recreation program offers classes, youth and adult league sports, youth and senior trips, and open gym nights at the high school gym.

Maintaining and enhancing existing recreation assets and building new assets will increase the recreational appeal of Limon. Top priorities identified by residents are improving the existing parks and sports fields; building an indoor recreation center; renovating the pool; and developing trails and pathways around and throughout town linking schools, neighborhoods, the east and west interchanges, the golf course and downtown. The continued development of town recreation assets appeals to locals who want more recreation opportunities and to entrepreneurs who take quality of life into consideration when deciding where to locate their business.

## ECONOMIC INVESTMENTS

Limon has taken steps to enhance its status as a desirable place to locate a business through a partnership with the Ports-to-Plains Alliance, Foreign Trade Zone designation, and providing tax incentives. By continuing to make additional investments aimed at creating primary jobs the town is investing in the future of Limon. Investments in high



speed internet and cell phone infrastructure, streetscapes, signage, and contributions to the Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation (LCEDC) will all boost Limon's identity as a business friendly town.

## **WATER AND SEWER**

Limon provides water and sewer services to local residents and businesses. In order to continue to provide these services, make capital improvements, and adhere to regulations, the town must maintain fiscally sound water and sewer funds and anticipate future needs such as providing water and sewer to future developments. To do this it is necessary for the town to stay up to date on regulations and laws, maintain a well trained staff, and charge appropriate monthly fees.

## **EMS/FIRE**

Limon Ambulance Service, a department of the town, covers a large area and still manages to have an average response time of 8 minutes and 7 seconds, lower than the target 9 minutes. This service is an integral part of ensuring a safe community. The continued support and funding of the Limon Ambulance Service and continued coordination of the ambulance service with hospitals, clinics and the Limon Area Fire Protection District are essential for the safety and health of the region. By presenting up to date, efficient emergency services, Limon shows its residents they have chosen the right community.

## **TOURISM AND THE VISITOR ECONOMY**

The visitor economy is critical and deserves its own chapter. Limon has a huge opportunity when it comes to the visitor economy. Limon hotels and motels accommodated an estimated 80,000 overnight visitors in 2014 yet only a fraction of those who stay the night venture downtown. In addition to the overnight visitors, Interstate 70 between the east and west interchanges has 11,000 annual average daily trips. With the customers readily available the town needs to take the next step and entice them to go downtown to eat, shop, and explore. The largest challenges to accomplishing this are the lack of visual clues linking the interchanges to downtown and interchange visitor's general lack of knowledge about the great opportunities and assets just down the road. Visual clues, signage, marketing, kiosks and improved access to downtown from the interchanges to downtown will entice more visitors to explore Limon.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Limon has a wealth of local organizations and non-profits working to build a better Limon. These groups are an asset to the town, and can be utilized to accomplish the goals and vision set forth in this Comprehensive Plan. As part of the Comprehensive Plan a special workshop was held with these local groups to identify needs, desires and common



challenges. One of the key observations made by participants was that a lack of open communication is limiting the effectiveness of groups. Many non-profits and organizations are independently working on overlapping issues and could seriously improve success through cooperation. These challenges signal a need for an improved system of communication between local groups and between local groups and the town. Community service organizations and non-profits want better communication, additional funding, and more working together to accomplish community goals. Local non-profits and organizations strive for more public engagement and volunteerism-especially from the youth, who are the future of the community.

