

An aerial photograph of a golf course with several hot air balloons floating in the sky. The golf course is green with winding paths and a few buildings. The hot air balloons are in various colors, including red, yellow, and blue. The sky is a clear, light blue.

ELEVATE ERIE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

DECEMBER 1, 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Demographic Trends.....	1
Snapshot of Trends	1
Context.....	1
Issues and Opportunities.....	10
Land Use and Development Patterns.....	11
Snapshot of Trends	11
Context.....	11
Policy Analysis of Existing Plans and Initiatives.....	38
Issues and Opportunities.....	40
Health and Social Capital.....	41
Snapshot of Trends	41
Context.....	41
Health Indicators	42
Social and Institutional Equity	51
Issues and Opportunities.....	60
Housing Trends	61
Snapshot of Trends	61
Context.....	61
Policy Analysis of Existing Plans and Initiatives.....	69
Issues and Opportunities.....	70
Natural Resources and the Environment	72
Snapshot of Trends.....	72
Context.....	72
Policy Analysis of Existing Plans and Initiatives.....	91
Issues and Opportunities.....	93
Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails	94
Snapshot of Trends	94
Context.....	94
Policy Summary of Existing Plans and Studies	102
Issues and Opportunities.....	104
Public Facilities, Services, and Education.....	105
Snapshot of Trends	105
Context.....	105

Water Supply and Distribution..... 106
Wastewater Utilities.....107
Energy Utilities..... 110
Broadband/Data......111
Solid Waste......111
Public Safety..... 116
Policy Analysis of Existing Plans and Initiatives.....117
Issues and Opportunities......119

ELEVATE ERIE COMP PLAN

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Demographic Trends

Snapshot of Trends



Population Growth: Erie experienced rapid population growth in the past 10 years, nearly doubling in number.



Median Income: The median income in Erie is significantly higher than in Boulder and Weld counties.



Household Size: Erie is primarily made up of families and has a larger average household size than surrounding communities.



Home Ownership: Erie has a nearly 90% homeownership rate, which is significantly higher than in surrounding communities.



Race/Ethnicity: Erie's population is predominantly White, although there is a greater percentage of Asian residents (5.5%) compared to Boulder and Weld counties.

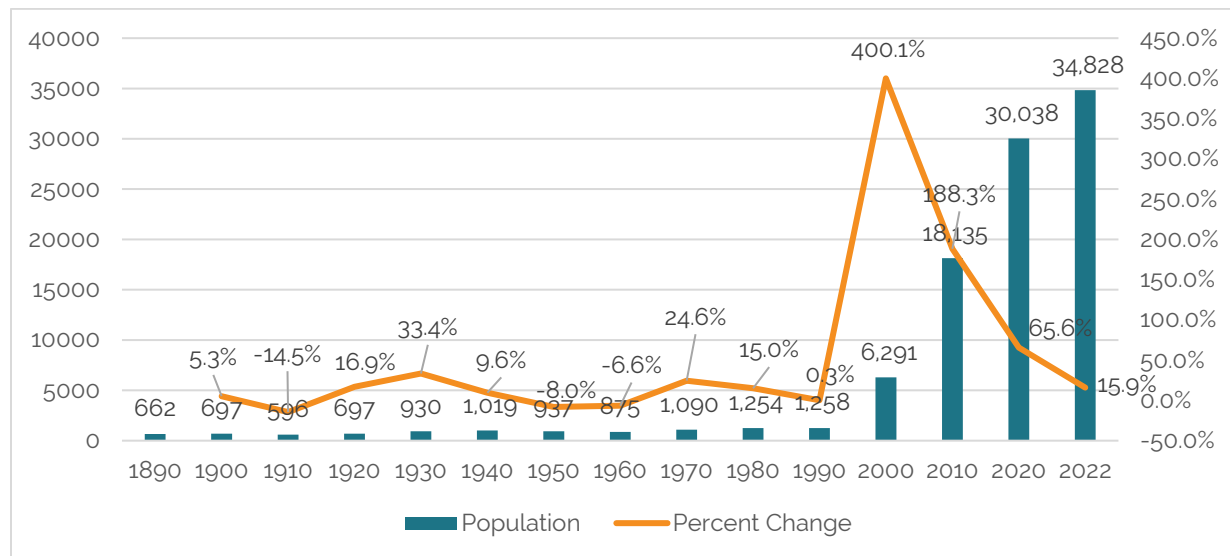
Context

Historic and Current Population Trends

The Town began as Coal Park, eventually becoming Erie, an incorporated small mining town in 1874. Between 1950 and 1990, the Town grew slowly from 937 to 1,258 people, representing an average of less than 1% growth annually. The 1990s kicked off a period of rapid growth for the Town, with a 400% increase between 1990 and 2000 to a population of 6,291. The population tripled between 2000 and 2010 and doubled again after 2010. Erie's Planning & Development Department estimated a population of 34,828 at the end of 2022.

Demographic Trends

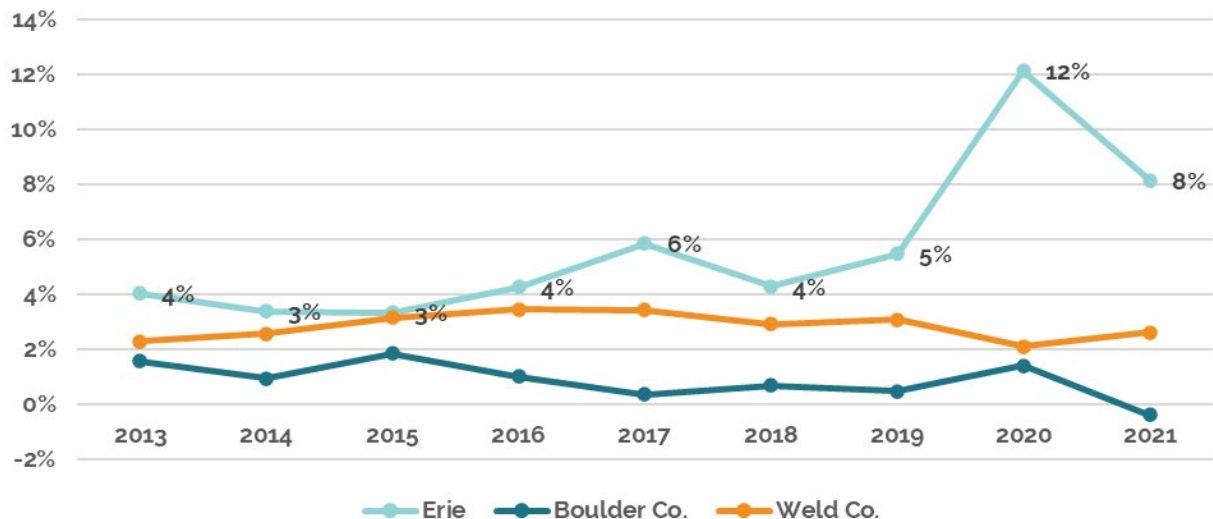
Figure 1: Town of Erie Historic Population



Source: US Census and Town of Erie

Over the past decade, Erie grew significantly faster than Boulder and Weld counties, which will be referred to as Erie's home counties throughout this document. While both home counties have experienced steady growth, Figure 2 indicates significantly higher rates in Erie.

Figure 2: Annual Population Growth, Erie, Boulder and Weld counties

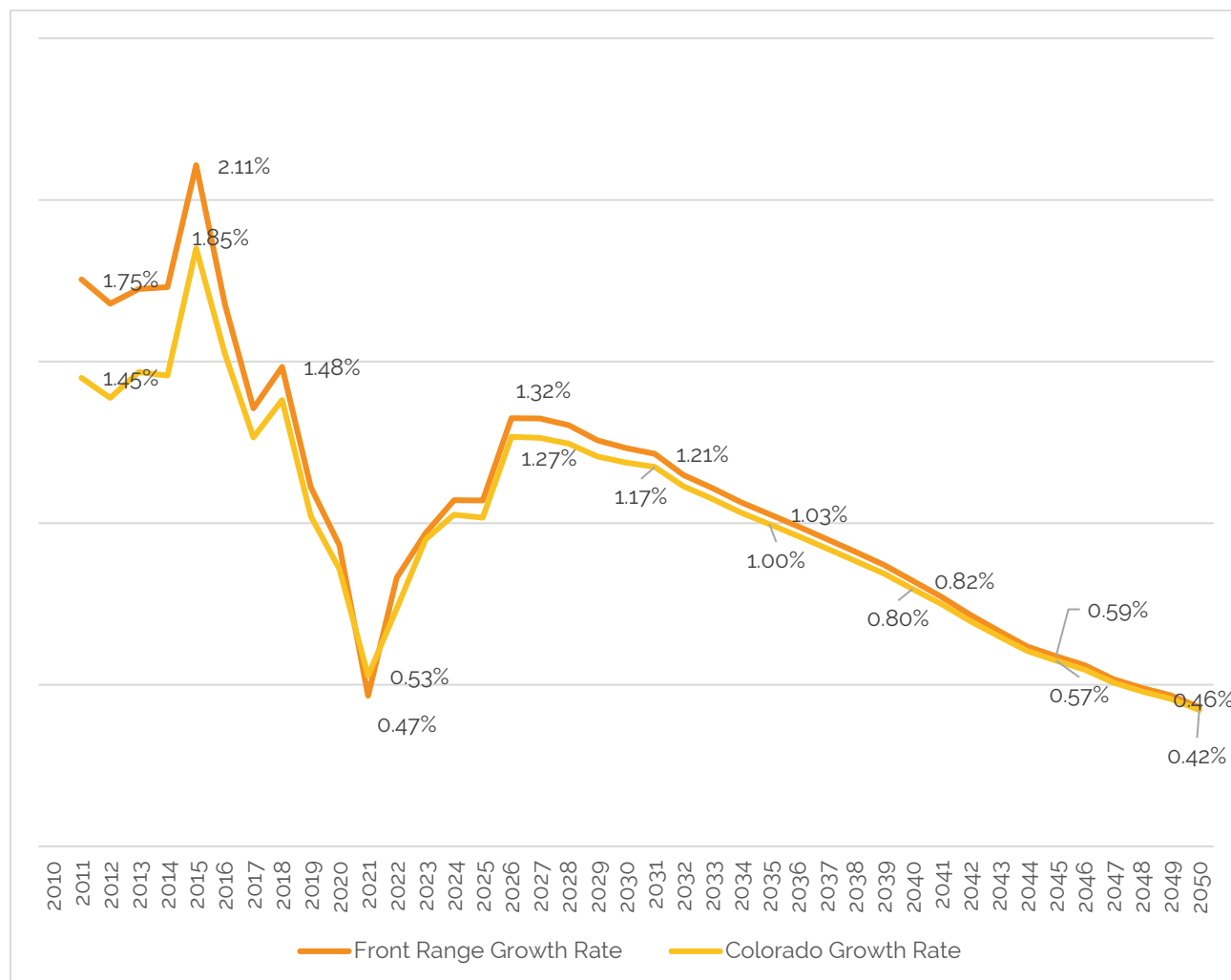


Source: ACS 5-Yr. Estimates, 2021

Erie is in the Front Range, a region of urban populations along the eastern face of the Rocky Mountains that is made up of 12 counties (Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, Larimer, Pueblo, Teller, and Weld counties). The Front Range is large, measuring 16,323 square miles. The Front Range has been experiencing the most growth in the state due to its proximity to industry, availability of jobs, and recreation opportunities. Historic and projected growth rates for the state and Front Range show the Front Range region tracking slightly above the state's growth rate.

Demographic Trends

Figure 3: State and Front Range Historic and Projected Growth Rates



Source: Colorado State Demographer's Office

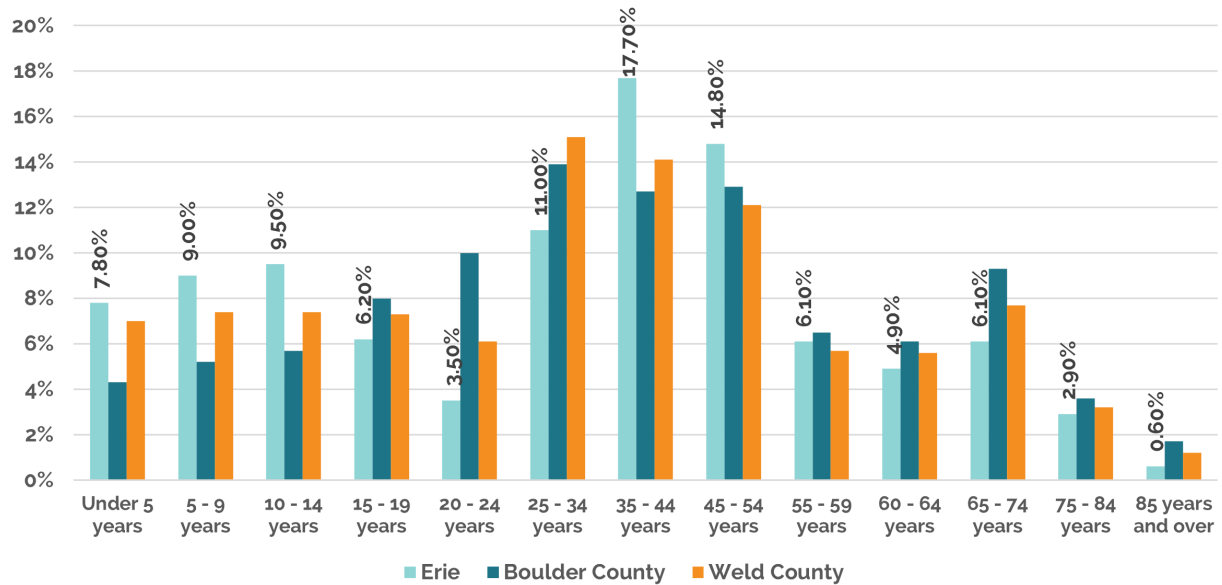
Based on Colorado State Demographer population projections, both Colorado and the Front Range will experience annual growth rates of about 1% from 2020 to 2035. Erie has projected an annual growth rate of 3.3% over the next 5 years. Erie will experience more rapid growth than both the rest of the state and the Front Range, which will drive demand for housing and services. The State Demographer's Office predicts a slowing of growth after 2035, through 2050 for the state and Front Range region.

Age and Household Characteristics

Erie's households tend to be larger, with young children, and are predominantly married households. Erie's population is slightly older than its home counties (Boulder County 37.2, Weld County 35.7), at a median age of 38.3 years old. However, Erie does have a more pronounced family presence, with 28.2% of its population under 18 years old (ESRI Business Analyst). Erie's average household size is 3.00, with married couples representing nearly 70% of households, further reflecting the community's large population of families.

Demographic Trends

Figure 3. Age Distribution, Erie, Boulder and Weld counties

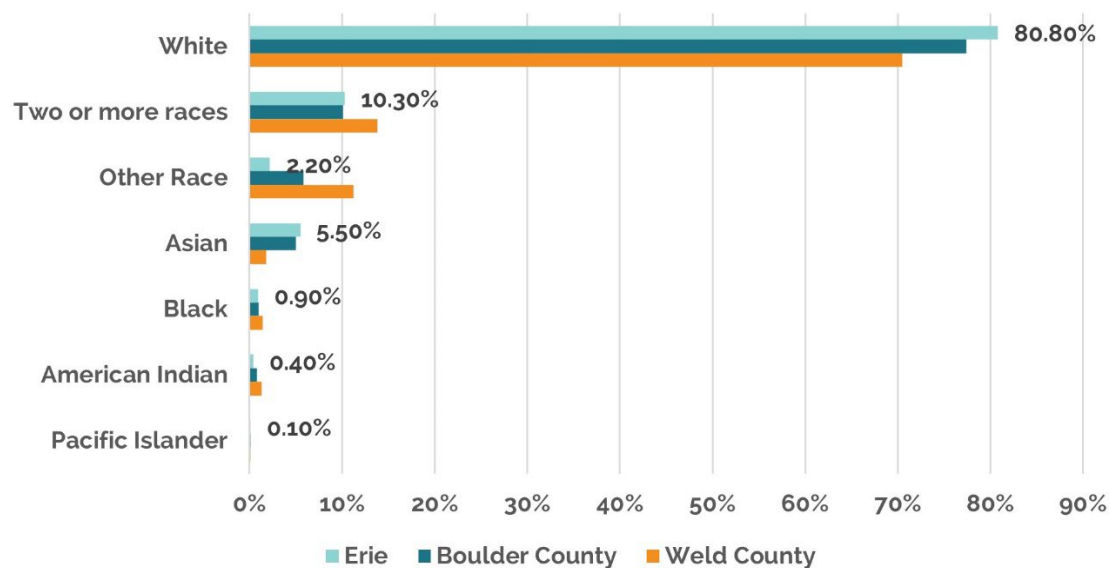


Source: 2021 ACS 5-Yr. Estimates

Race and Ethnicity

Erie's population is mainly White, at a higher proportion than that of its home counties. However, Erie does have a higher percentage of Asian residents. Erie's population of two or more races is similar to Boulder and Weld counties. Hispanic or Latino residents make up 9% of the community, compared to 14% and 30% in Boulder and Weld counties respectively, according to 2021 American Community Survey population estimates.

Figure 4. Race Distributions Erie, Boulder and Weld counties



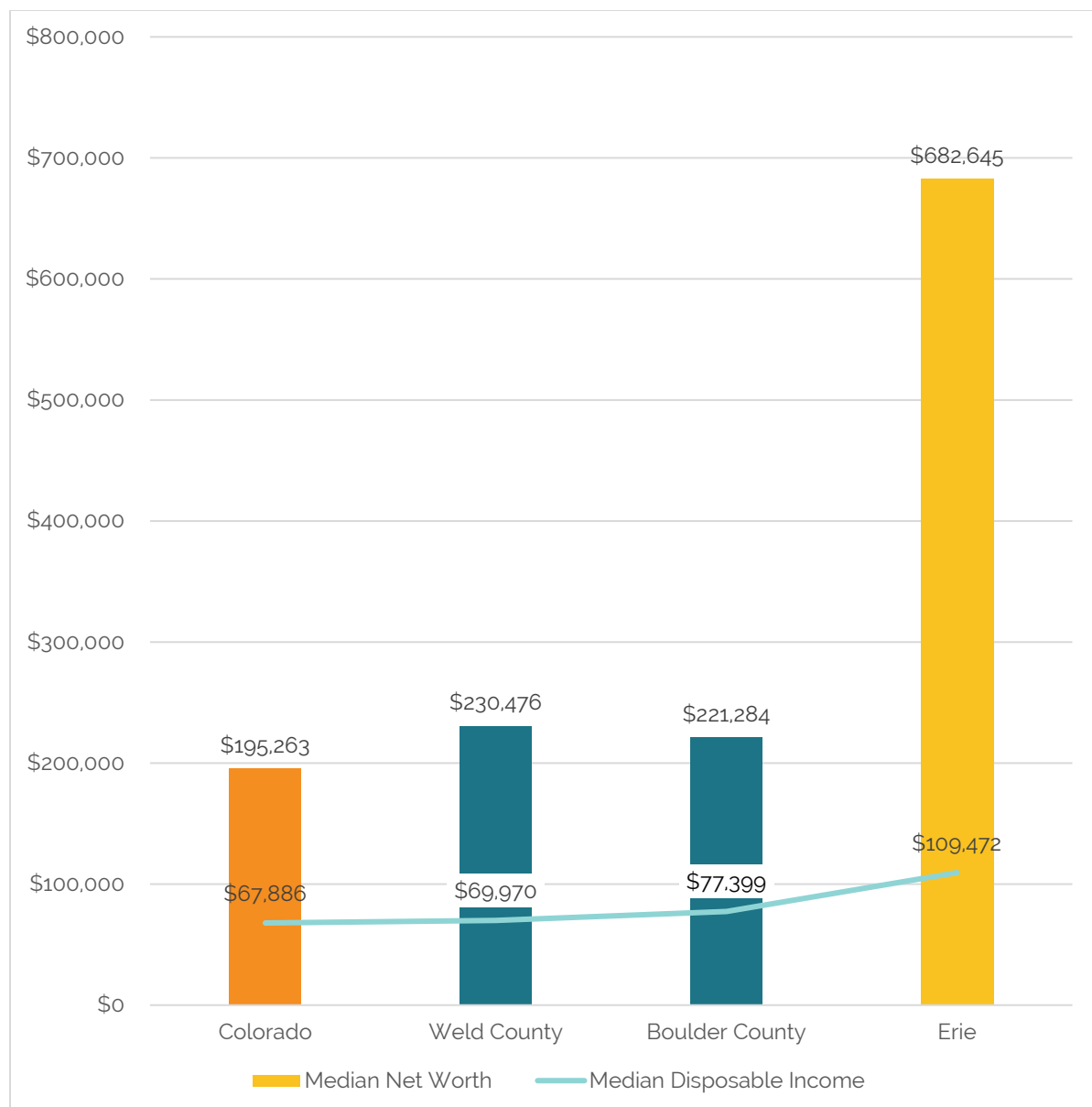
Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Demographic Trends

Household Income and Home Ownership

The median household income for Erie is \$145,786 (ESRI, ACS), which is between its home counties, whose median household incomes are \$144,100 (Boulder) and \$109,300 (Weld), for a household size of four (Housing and Urban Development, HUD). Workers in Erie tend to have primary employment jobs, typically with higher education requirements and pay which contributes to its higher household income (ESRI Business Analyst). Erie's median net worth far exceeds that of its home counties and the state, as shown in the figure below (ESRI Business Analyst). This translates to much higher median disposable income present within the Town.

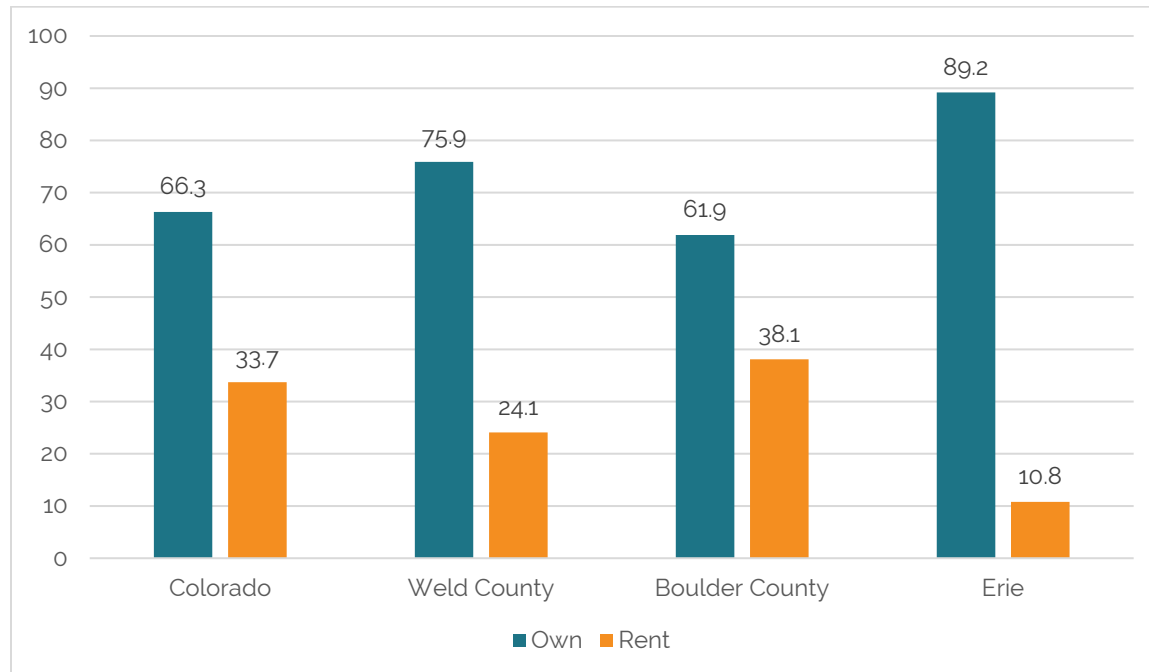
Figure 4: Median Net Worth and Median Disposable Income



Demographic Trends

Erie also has a higher percentage of homeowners than its home counties, at 89.2%. In comparison, younger populations, and the presence of universities in Boulder and Weld counties contribute to higher renter rates (2021 5-Year ACS).

Figure 5: Percent Ownership and Renter



Educational Attainment

Erie has high levels of educational attainment, with 67% possessing a bachelor's degree or higher (ESRI Business Analyst Online). This is on par with Boulder County's educational attainment, and more than twice that of Weld County, see figure below.

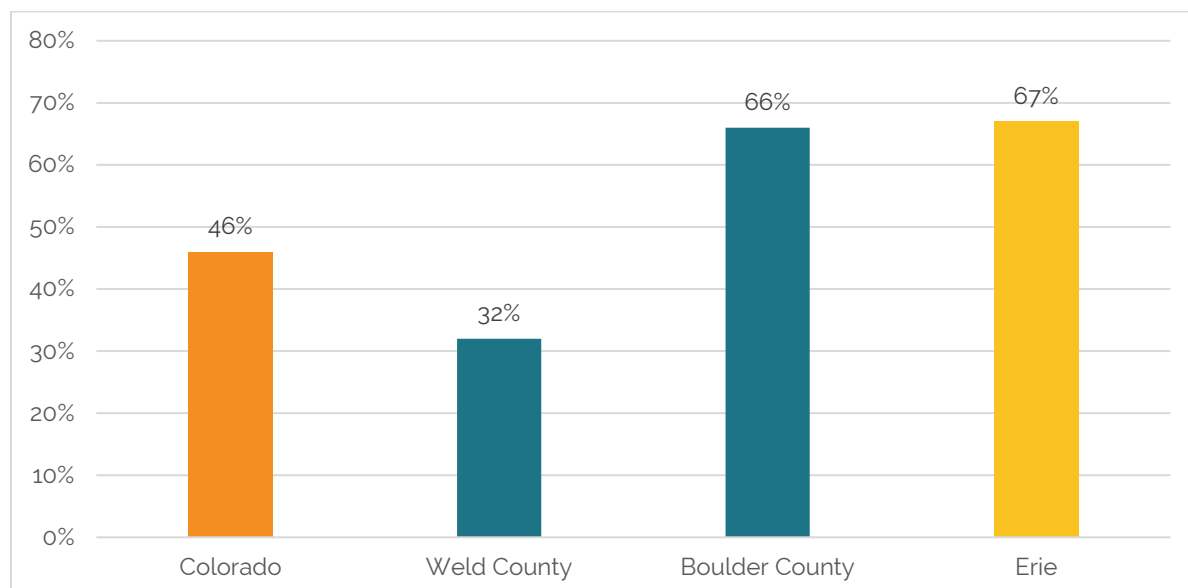


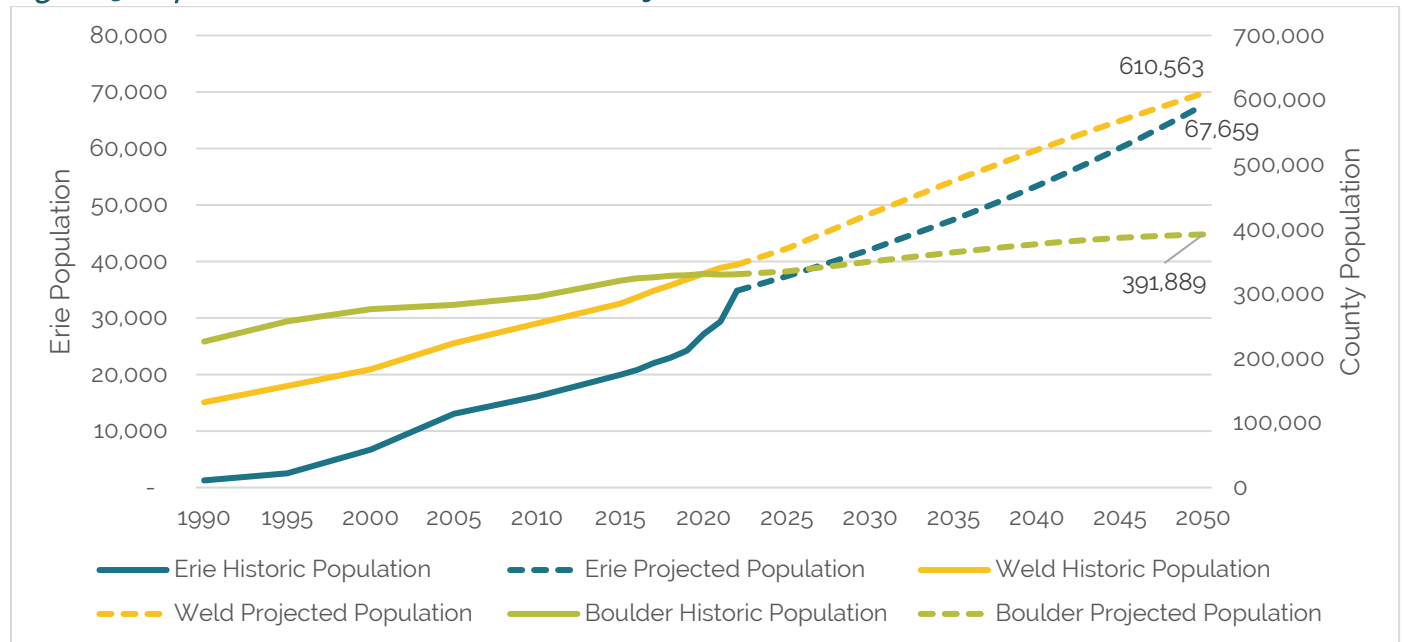
Figure 6: Bachelor's Degree or Above

Demographic Trends

Demographic Trends and Projections

Historically, growth in Erie has been much greater in the Weld County part of the Town than Boulder County. This is largely due to the availability of developable land. The Land Use Existing Conditions section contains more information on development patterns and availability of developable land. Growth rates in Weld County have more closely matched Erie's total growth patterns since 2010 based on Colorado State Demographer data. The figure below shows that the Weld County area of Erie is the main driver of population growth in the area into the future.

Figure 5. Population Growth, Historic and Projected



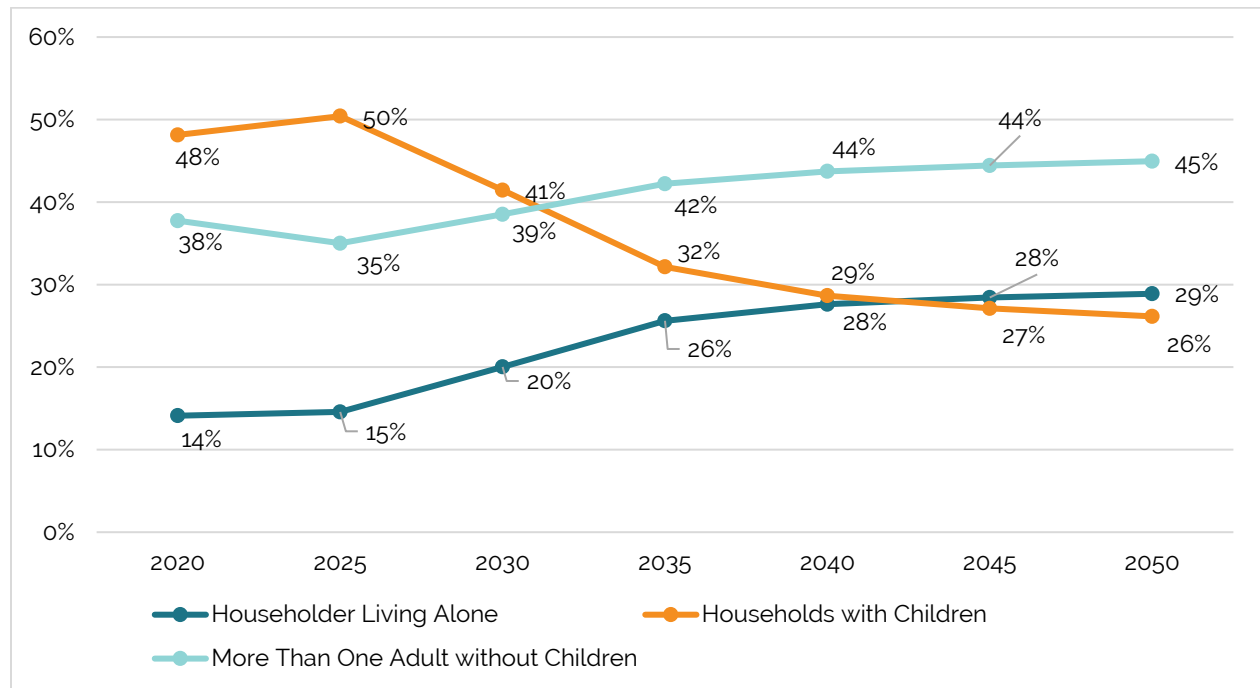
Source: Colorado State Demographer

Demographic Trends

Household Composition Projections

Through 2050 Erie's household composition is projected to change with a decline in households with children after 2025 and increases in householder living alone and households without children, see figure below. These changes will impact housing and service needs, as well as shopping habits and recreational desires.

Figure 7: Erie Household Composition Projections

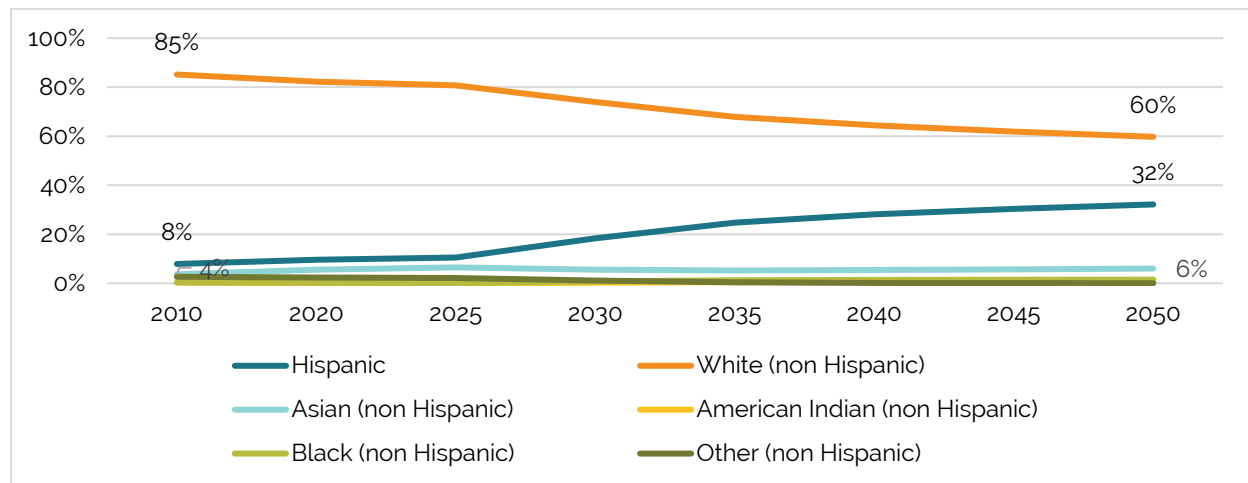


Race and Ethnicity Distribution Projections

The following figure illustrates race and ethnicity projections through 2050. This projection is based on both Boulder and Weld county projections from the State Demographer. The decrease in White and increase in Hispanic shown in the figure aligns with national trends and projections. Black and American Indian are projected to remain relatively flat through 2050.

Demographic Trends

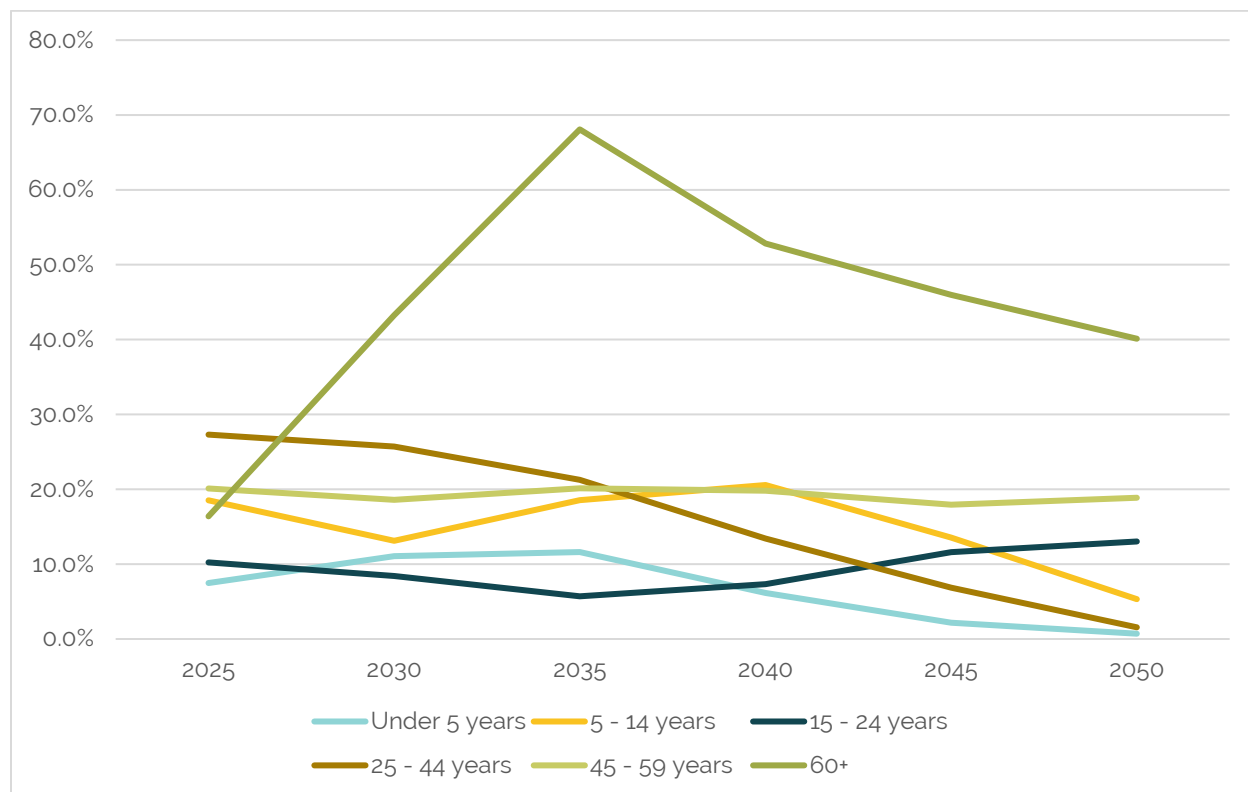
Figure 8: Race and Ethnicity Distribution Projection for Erie



Projected Age Distribution

Through 2050 Erie will see an increase in the middle age group (age 35 to 54), a decrease in children and a decrease in young adults (age 20 to 34). By 2035 those 60 and older are predicted to increase significantly, almost tripling by 2040. These projections are based on the State Demographer's forecasts for an average age distribution for Boulder and Weld counties.

Figure 9: Erie Projected Age Distribution through 2050



Demographic Trends

Issues and Opportunities

The first phases of the Comprehensive Plan process focused on initial public outreach and data analysis. The following list of demographic and growth-related issues and opportunities summarizes the outcomes of the existing conditions data, supported by feedback from the public, community leaders, staff, and stakeholders.

Issues

- Erie's demographic mix is largely White, wealthy, and highly educated indicating a homogeneous population. This can be a challenge to attracting and retaining a more diverse population.
- Changing household composition over the next 30 years, such as a decrease in children, increase in single householder, and households without children will impact housing type and service needs.

Opportunities

- Continued regional population growth can bring more jobs and retailers to the area.
- Creation of a greater mix of housing types to match the change in household composition, serving a greater diversity of incomes and lifestyles.
- Changes to Planning Area boundary to better reflect growth trends and vision.
- High educational attainment and incomes can help attract employers and retailers.

ELEVATE ERIE COMP PLAN

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Land Use and Development Patterns

Snapshot of Trends



Historic Roots go deep in Erie. The mining industry was critical to early Erie's development, and it remained a part of life in Erie through the 1970s. The mining industry has since been commemorated by the community to help tell the story of the Town. Prior to European settlement the Town and surrounding areas were home to indigenous peoples.



Pattern of Growth: Erie's historic Downtown remains largely intact. Development over the last 30 years looks different in Erie because of rapid annexation, and planned developments.



Changing Context: The proliferation of new residential uses in Erie have given the Town an environment that is more suburban than rural in identity.



Policy: Erie has layers of policy that protect certain community characteristics, from building design to protection of natural or historic features.

Context

Regional Context

The Town of Erie is located approximately 25 miles north of Denver, west of Interstate 25, Figure 1. It sits on the Colorado Piedmont, a geologic region characterized by gently rolling plains at an elevation of around 5,000 feet above sea level. The area is known for its expansive views of the Rocky Mountains to the west, providing a picturesque backdrop. The Town is in both Boulder County on the west and Weld County on the east, primarily separated by County Line Road. The Town is bordered by Lafayette and Broomfield to the south and west, and Frederick and Dacono to the east, shown in Figure 2.

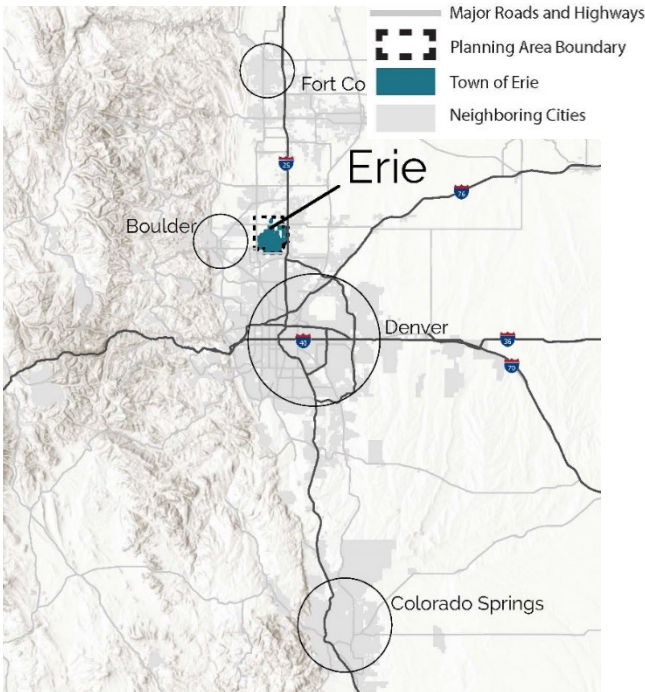
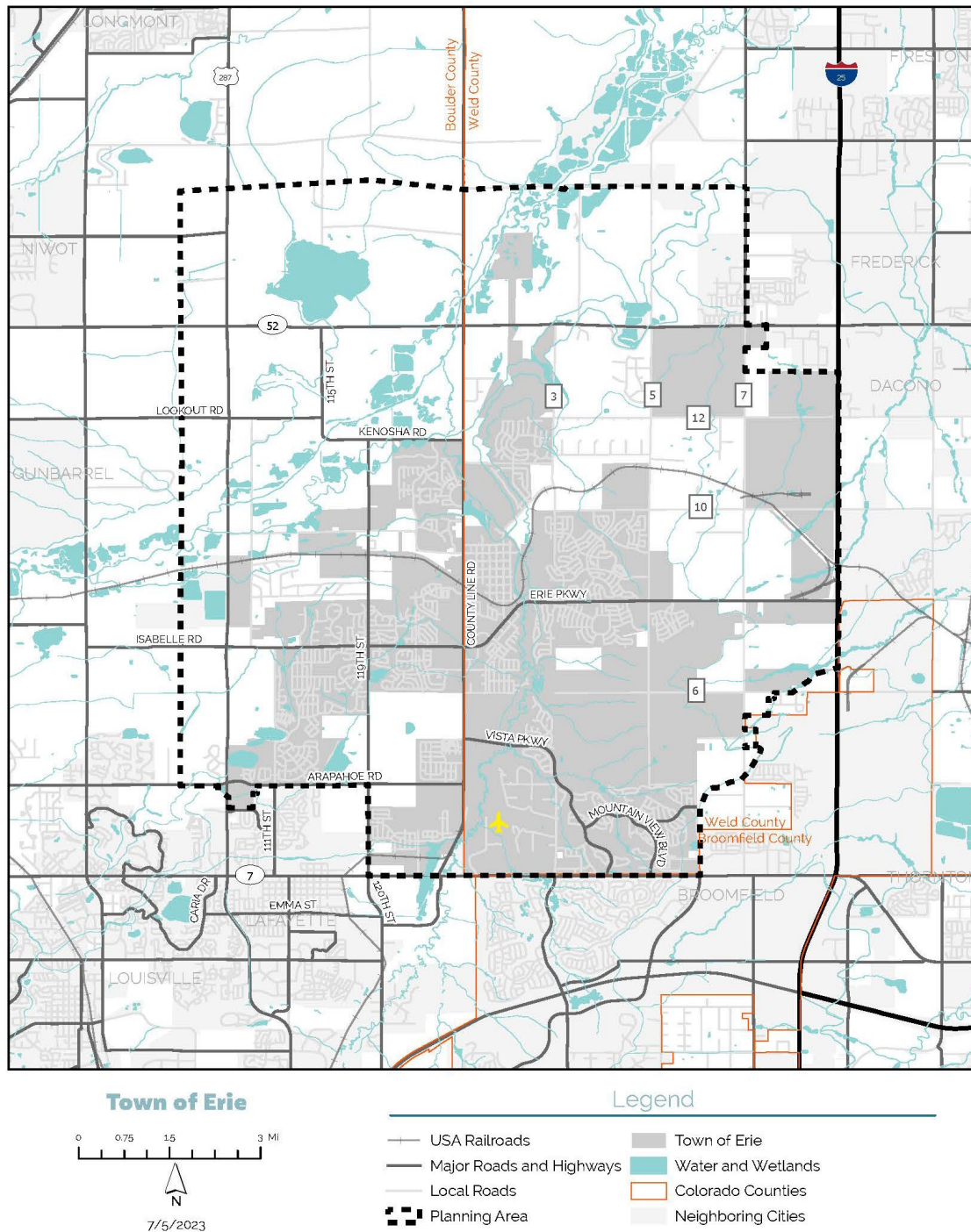


Figure 10: Regional Context Map

Land Use and Development Patterns

Figure 2. Town of Erie, Planning Area, and Surrounds Map



Planning Area

The Town's Planning Area extends beyond the current Town boundary (Figure 2), encompassing 48 square miles. Today, 19.84 square miles or 42% of the Planning Area is currently annexed into the Town. The undeveloped areas surrounding the Town are composed primarily of protected open space, and agricultural uses, however, increasingly residential, and commercial uses are being introduced, particularly as surrounding

Land Use and Development Patterns

communities continue to grow in population. Boulder County has been preserving open space and agricultural areas to maintain separation of various communities. This includes protecting floodplain corridors along Boulder Creek in the northwest of Erie's planning area. Weld County has also prioritized preserving agricultural uses; however, some growth along the I-25 corridor has begun to spur commercial and residential development in adjacent areas such as Frederick, Firestone, and Dacono.

Erie looks vastly different than it did 50 years ago due to rapid population growth outward from Old Town. In the 1960s, Erie incorporated approximately 250 acres into the Town. Old Town was the full extent of Erie until the late 1970s when the Erie Airpark Subdivision was built. In 1995, Erie was home to approximately 1,500 people, however that changed in late 1990's with a wave of population growth as the Denver and Boulder metro populations continued to grow outward and development pressures pushed further north from Denver along the I-25 corridor. As this growth occurred Erie became a desirable place to live. Growth continues with more than 34,000 Erie residents as of 2022.

Figure 3 on the next page shows a map of structures by year built, with the bright red color representing the most recent construction. Most of Erie's construction has occurred since the year 2000. The exception to this is within the Downtown and Old Town areas, see Figure 2 to the right. Most of the construction in Downtown and Old Town occurred in the late 1800s to 1950, with some occurring from 1971 to 1990. There have been a handful of newly constructed buildings in and around Briggs Street, as well as the new park building at Coal Creek Park, additions to Erie Middle School, and the church off Cheesman and County Line Road.

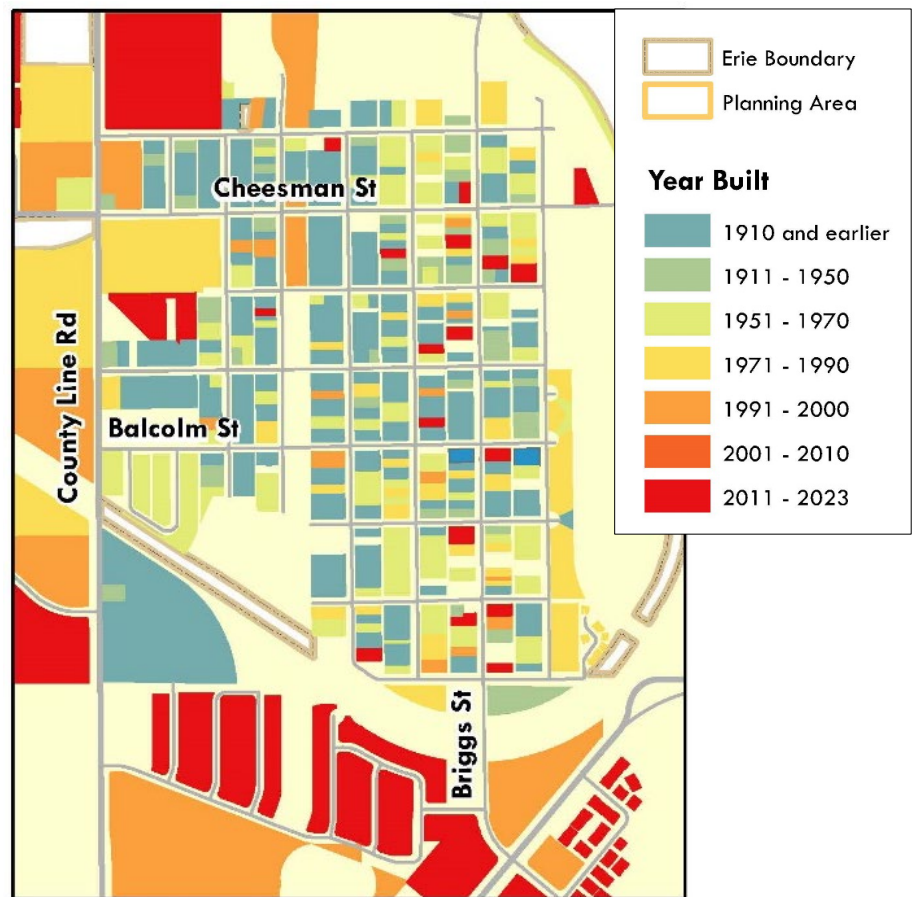


Figure 11: Old Town, Map of Structures by Year Built

Land Use and Development Patterns

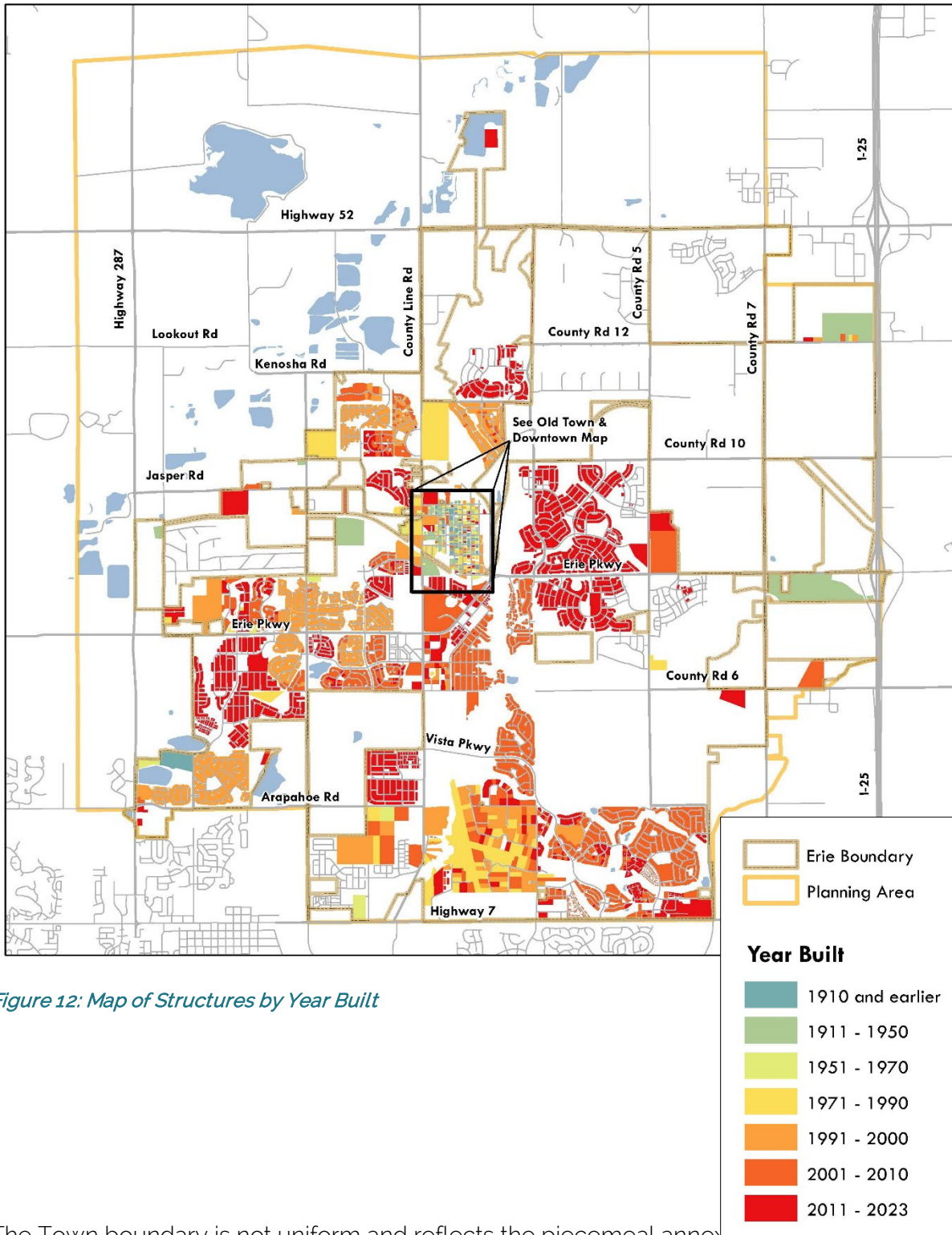


Figure 12: Map of Structures by Year Built

The Town boundary is not uniform and reflects the piecemeal annexation of property as the town has developed and annexed into the Town over time. There are many enclaves of unincorporated parcels surrounded by properties within the Town. Figure 4 illustrates the annexation history of Erie. The Town's legal boundary largely extends to the southern and eastern limits of the Planning Area but does not extend to the northern or western limits. The northern and western parts of the Planning Area are bisected by the Boulder Creek and

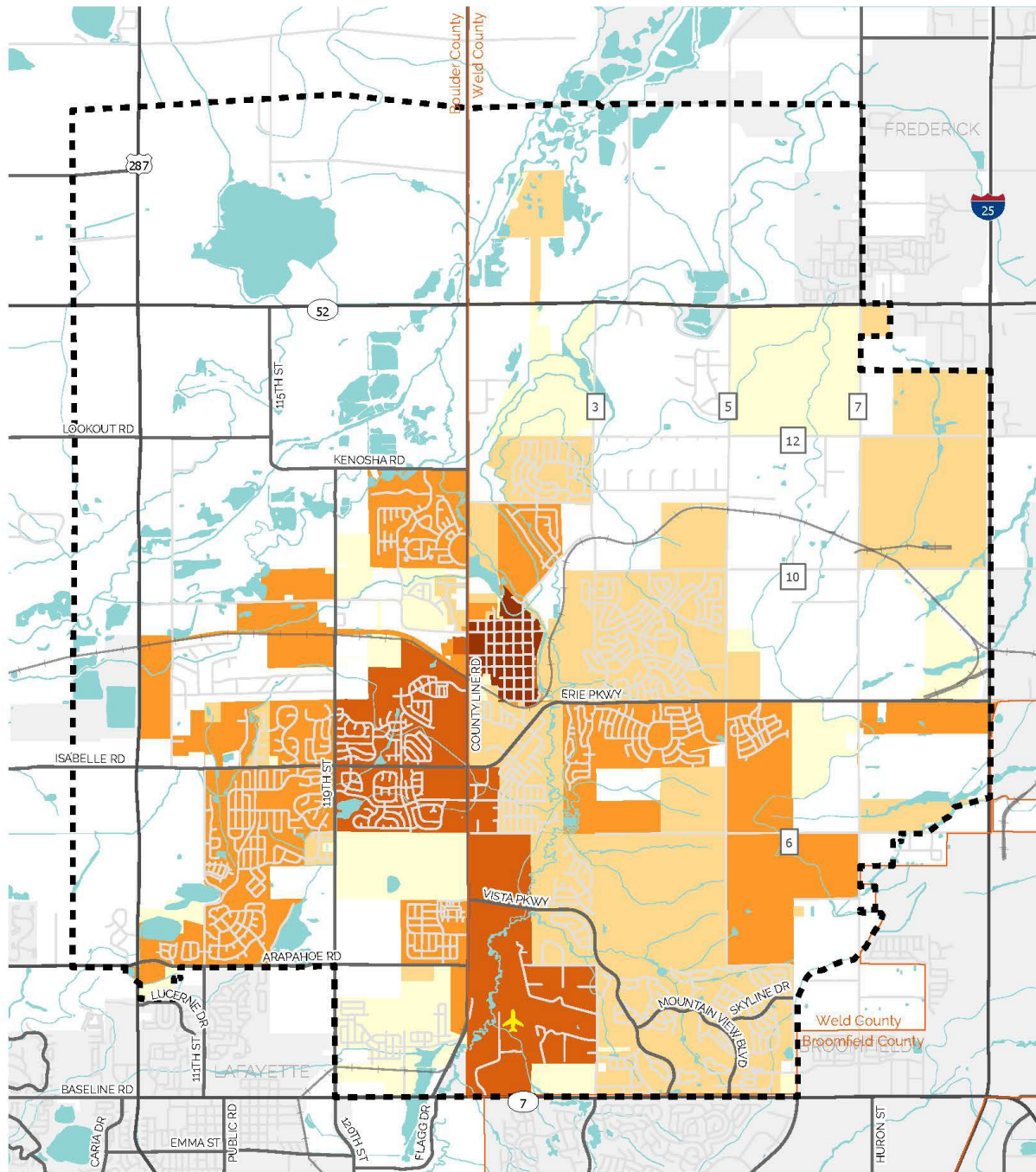
Land Use and Development Patterns

limited by Boulder Open Space properties. Boulder Creek's floodplain is broad, making the area less easily developed. Areas within the Town boundary are generally more developed than those in the planning area except for some large tracts on the eastern edge near the I-25 corridor which have not developed yet due to lack of utilities. Areas outside of the Town boundary, within the Planning Area, are mostly agricultural, rural residential, and oil and gas (within Weld County).

The late 1990s saw the first wave of suburban development in conjunction with growth in the region. These residential developments took hold in the western and northern portions of the Town. This included a retail node at Highway 287 and Arapahoe Road, with Arapahoe Ridge Marketplace built in 1999, now anchored by Safeway. Residential development continued to accelerate in the early 2000s in the southern portions Erie near Vista Ridge, with retail developing just south of Old Town on Erie Parkway. The 2010s saw development east of Old Town and the development of an additional retail at Weld County Road 7 (WCR 7) and Sheridan Parkway.

Today Old Town Erie has limited connections to the north, west, and south. While some multimodal pathways connect, Old Town is buffered by Coal Creek to the east, an abandoned railroad on the south, Sullivan Ditch to the North and County Line Road on the west. In 2007, Erie Parkway reconfigured County Road 8 (C.R. 8) to circumvent most vehicular traffic away from Old Town.

Land Use and Development Patterns



History of Annexation



7/5/2023

Legend

- USA Railroads
- Major Roads and Highways
- Colorado Counties
- Planning Area
- Water and Wetlands
- Neighboring Cities
- Year of Annexation
- Original Plat
- 1961 - 1979
- 1980 - 1998
- 1999 - 2009
- 2010 - 2022

Figure 13: History of Annexation Map

Land Use and Development Patterns

History

Before Colorado was inhabited by European settlers it was home to native peoples starting with the Paleoindians during the Ice Age, followed by Ancestral Puebloans and Fremont people around 2,000 years ago. By 1500 AD the Ute people called the Front Range home. In the early 1800s the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, having been pushed out of their homeland of the Upper Midwest, arrived in the Front Range.



Figure 14: Ute Policeman with family. Source: History Colorado, Photographed by H. S. Poley, circa 1892-1901.

The area that became the Town of Erie was included in the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1851. However, the Treaty was almost immediately broken as European immigrants came to the area in search of mineral wealth and settled natives' land. The Colorado gold rush of 1858-1859 drove growth of new settlements and tensions with native peoples escalated as resources became scarcer. The government also failed to provide the promised annuities to tribes leading to battles for hunting grounds and resources. These tensions escalated in the Sand Creek Massacre on November 29, 1864, when a village of 500 Cheyenne and Arapaho were attacked by Union troops. Ultimately, around 150 native peoples were killed in the massacre.

Erie was originally called Coal Park with settlers living along Coal Creek. The Town was first platted in 1871 and incorporated in 1874. The first commercial coal mine, Briggs Mine, came to the Town in 1871. The Briggs Mine brought an inflow of immigrant miners and merchants. Additional mines emerged through the late 1800s. Union Pacific railroad established a spur in Erie to transport the coal being mined. By 1873 Erie had more than 100 homes, and by 1877 had a population of 600. Services, merchants, saloons, and hotels occupied Briggs Street. By the 1960s most of the coal mines in Erie were closed due to dropping demand, with the last closing in 1978.



Figure 15: Boulder Valley Miners. Source: Erie Historical Society.

The Erie Historical Society and the Historic Preservation Advisory Board preserve the many historic buildings and sites found in Erie that were constructed after Native habitation. Old Town Erie is home to many of these sites, particularly within the commercial Downtown core centered on Briggs Street. The surrounding Old Town residential neighborhood has rich architectural fabric. Some of these homes have been nominated as local historic landmarks. Additionally, two buildings, one located in Old Town, the other along Jasper Road, are listed

Land Use and Development Patterns

on the National Register of Historic Places. These are the Wise Homestead Complex and the Lincoln School (now Town Hall). The Wise Homestead Museum in Erie keeps historical markers of the presence of Native people in the Boulder Valley in addition to preserving the Wise Family homestead. The Erie Historical Society has kept a record of European immigrant settlement in the community for many years.

While the Ute first discovered oil in the area in 1902 the McKenzie Well (Boulder County) started producing in what is now known as the Denver-Julesburg basin. In 1970 the Wattenberg Gas Field was discovered. The field covers more than 2,000 square miles and the entirety of Erie's Planning Area. The Wattenberg field was one of the first where hydraulic fracturing was performed. Most of the current gas production in Erie occurs in Weld County, largely due to Boulder County policies.

Key Areas and Corridors

The proximity to larger communities and employment hubs like Boulder and Denver has made Erie a popular place to live, and the existing land use is reflective of those suburban patterns. The existing land uses reflect a mix that is generally consistent with suburban style growth, including residential and areas of open space for recreation. Commercial nodes with service and retail uses are along major roadways. Erie has several key corridors and areas including the following, as illustrated in Figure 7:

- **Downtown Erie:** The heart of Erie, this area encompasses the historic downtown district along Briggs Street and contains a variety of commercial uses such as shops and restaurants. Downtown is surrounded by the historic Old Town neighborhood.
- **Interstate 25:** This highway runs north-south along the eastern boundary of the Town, connecting Erie to cities in the wider region including Fort Collins and Denver. Currently the land adjacent to the interstate within Erie is a mixture of agricultural and industrial uses, including oil and gas, but are discussed further in the Current and Planned Development section below.
- **County Line Road:** This road runs north-south through the Town and divides the Town between Boulder and Weld counties. Commercial uses can be found at the intersections of Jay/Cheeseman and Erie Parkway. County Line Road is a major connecting arterial between various neighborhoods and adjacent towns, particularly to the north, as it ends at State Highway 7.
- **Erie Parkway:** This major arterial road (formerly County Road 8) runs east-west through the Town, connecting Interstate 25 west to Hwy 287. It serves as a important transportation corridor and features a mix of commercial, residential, and open space uses along its route.
- **Erie Town Center:** Found at the intersection of County Line Road and Erie Parkway, Erie Town Center is a major node and is expected to be the primary commercial area in the center of the Town. Currently the northeast corner is occupied by a community park and community center and the southeast corner is occupied by commercial and service uses. The southwest and northwest corners are currently undeveloped but are planned as mixed-use developments with a mix of housing types.
- **US Highway 287:** Running north-south along the Town's western planning boundary, Hwy 287 serves as a primary transportation route, connecting the town with neighboring communities such as Longmont, Lafayette, and Broomfield. Along this corridor within the Planning Area uses are predominately Open Space and larger

Land Use and Development Patterns

agricultural holdings or residential estates. Within the Town's boundary are shopping centers and service-oriented businesses at the intersection of Arapahoe Road.

- **Baseline Road (Highway 7):** This east-west roadway is the boundary between the Town and Broomfield. Within Erie, the northern side of Highway 7 contains a variety of uses including attached residential and several commercial areas with a variety of retail and services. The largest of these commercial areas is found at the intersection of Sheridan Parkway. The entrance to Erie Airport is off Highway 7. This could become an important gateway as the airport continues to develop.

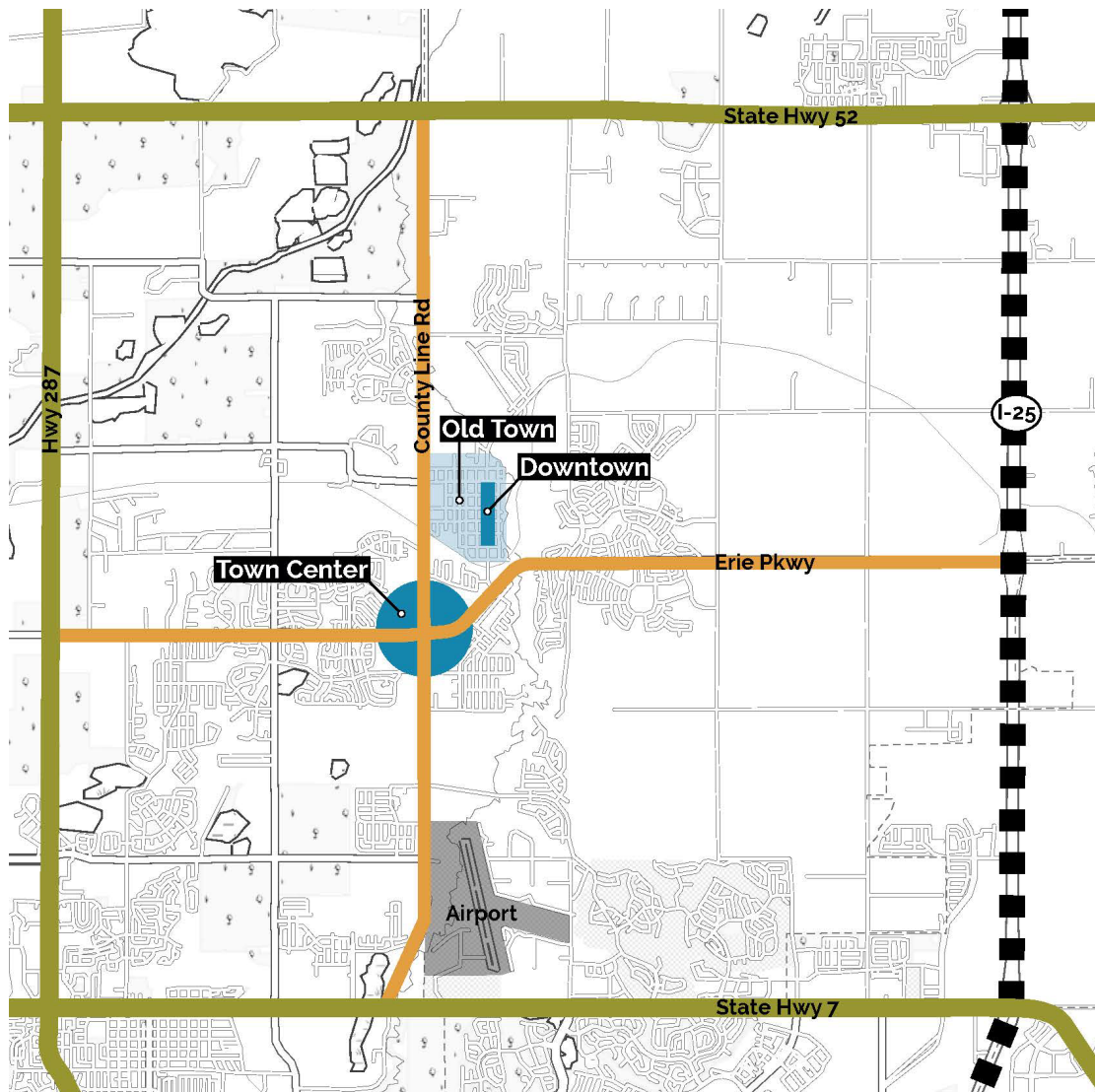


Figure 16: Key Areas and Corridors

Land Use and Development Patterns

Constraints to Development

There are existing physical limitations and land management factors influencing how Erie has and can be developed. These include floodplains of the two major creeks running through town, past and present extractive land uses, lands preserved by conservation easements, and existing and closed landfills. This section explores in more detail each of these, and the impacts on Erie's current and future land uses.

Boulder Creek runs through the northwest portion of the Town's Planning Area, while Coal Creek bisects Erie north to south and joins with Boulder Creek just outside the Town's northern boundary. Boulder Creek's floodplain is quite wide, spanning over 4,000 feet, severely limiting the developability of land. Coal Creek's floodplain is narrower, and some of it is in platted Open Space. Figure 8 illustrates the creeks and their floodplains.

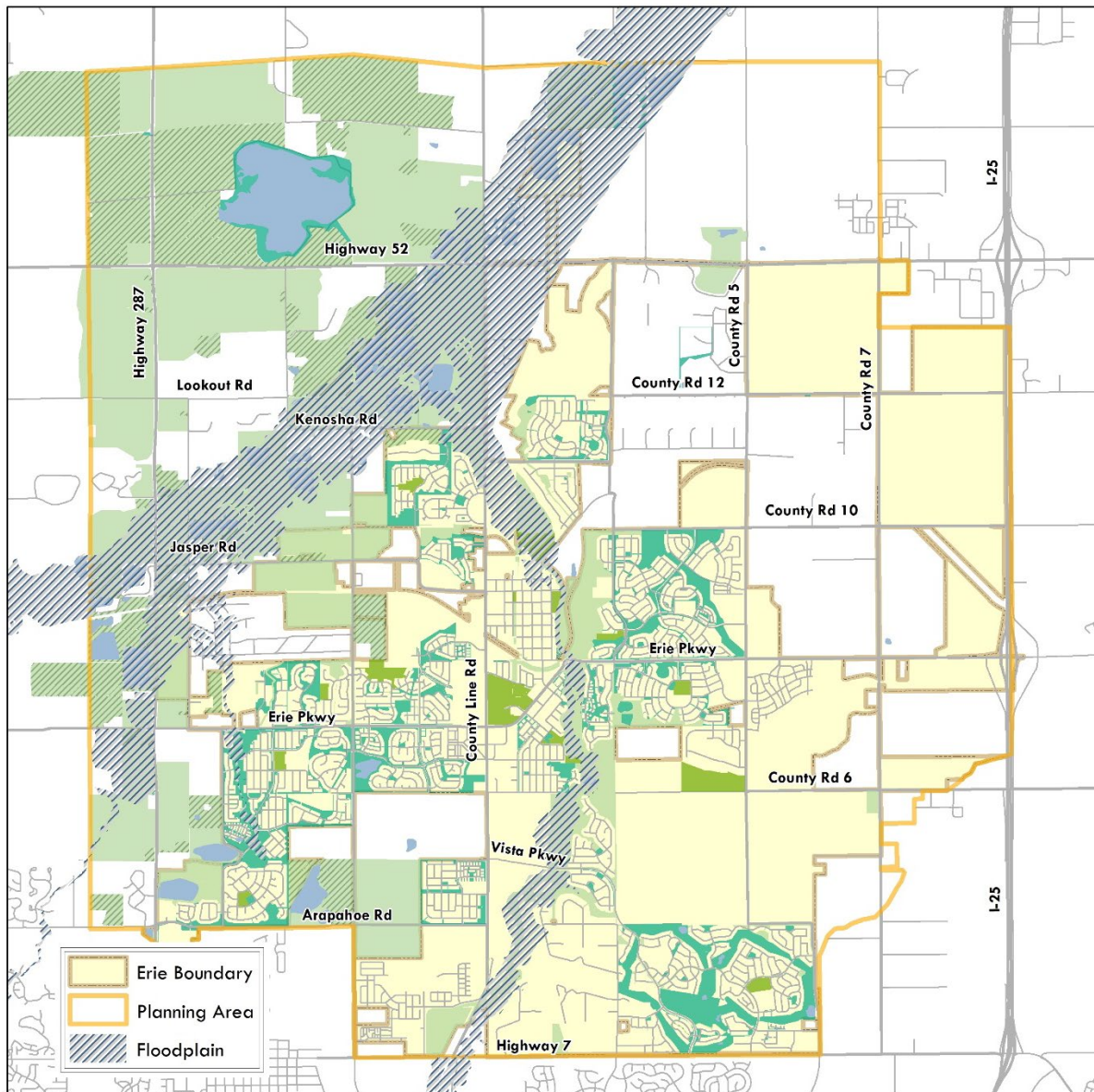


Figure 17: Floodplain Map

Land Use and Development Patterns

Erie's legacy and continuation of extractive practices affects how we plan for Erie's future. Though mining for coal has long ended, abandoned mines and shafts persist underground throughout the Town. This abandoned mining infrastructure has varying depths and can impact construction. The shallowest mines are in Old Town. In the past there were issues with sinkholes in some of these shallowly mined areas. Bedrock fault lines are also present throughout the Town. Figure 9 illustrates the abandoned mines in Town, it is estimated that 27% of Erie is undermined.

All proposed developments receive review by the Colorado Geological Survey, which gives recommendations regarding expansive bedrock and soils, abandoned mine infrastructure, and mine subsidence risk. These recommendations could include something as simple as limitations on foundation lengths to more extreme cases where no development should occur due to high subsidence potential. This is the case at the northeast corner of County Line Road and Erie Parkway, which is maintained as Open Space with no structures or programmed uses.

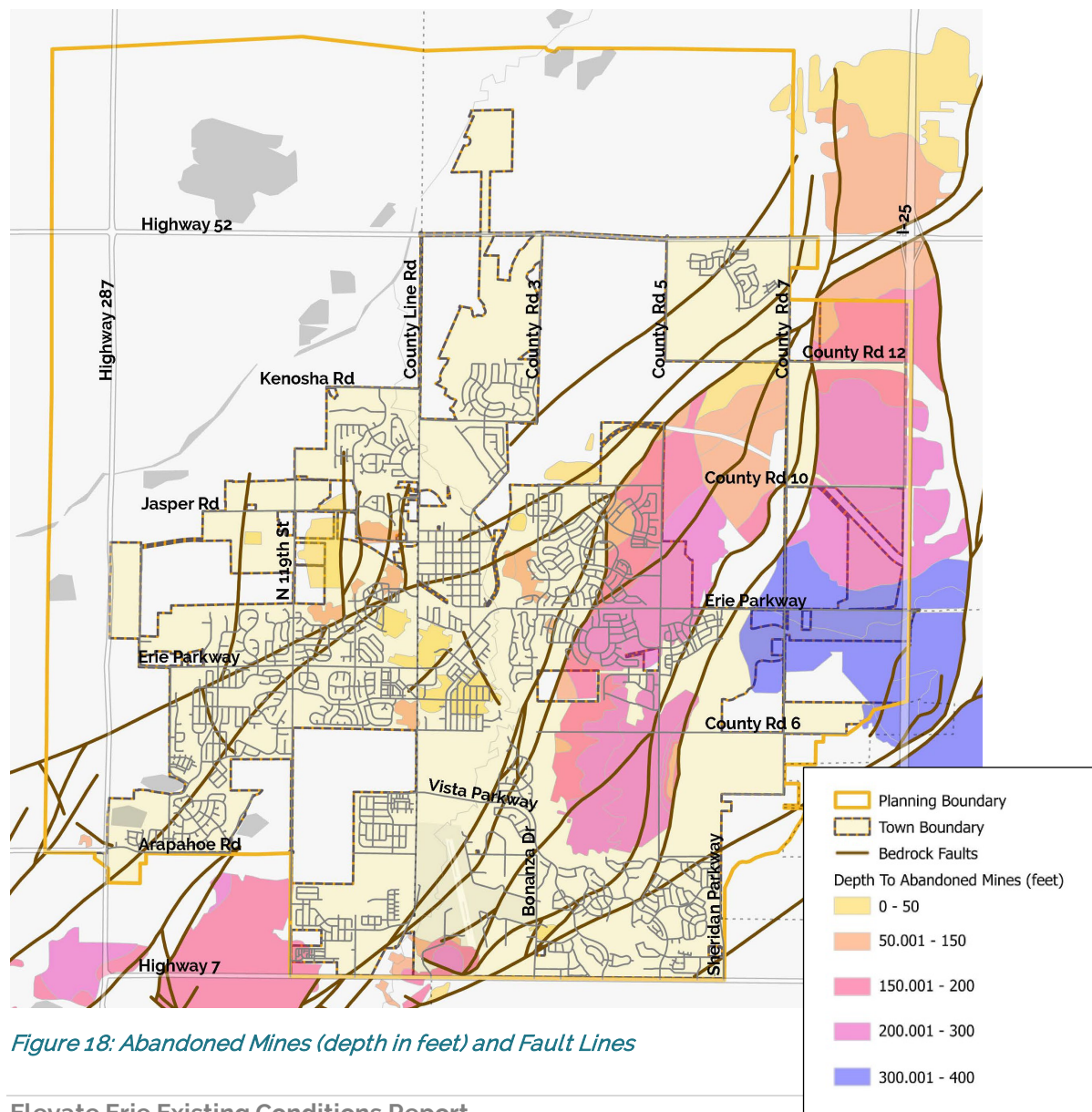


Figure 18: Abandoned Mines (depth in feet) and Fault Lines

Land Use and Development Patterns

An estimated 97 wells are producing within the Town's Planning Area, while 61 are shut-in (meaning it is still capable of producing, but is not currently), and one is temporarily abandoned. There are 37 drilling wells in the Town's Planning Area, none are within the Town's boundary, and all are in Weld County. The continued extraction of oil and gas impacts air quality in Erie and has health implications for those living nearby. The Town passed new oil and gas regulations in 2021. These regulations require any residential lot, structures that are to be occupied, parks, sports fields, and playground to be 2,000 feet from planned, yet-to-be-completed oil and gas facilities. Additionally, these same uses must be 500 feet from existing, active oil and gas facilities. Active is defined as producing, shut-in, or temporarily abandoned. It is estimated that 60 plugged and abandoned wells exist within the Planning Area. Plugged and Abandoned wells can be a source of methane leaks, depending on when and how the wells were plugged. The Town's regulations require at least 150 feet setback from plugged and abandoned wells, this can be reduced to a setback no smaller than 50 feet by 100 feet if certain conditions are met. Residential lots must be a minimum of 30 feet from flowline, gathering line or pipeline easements. No occupiable structures can be within 50 feet of the centerline of these lines. Figure 10 illustrates oil and gas infrastructure in the Planning Area.

Land Use and Development Patterns

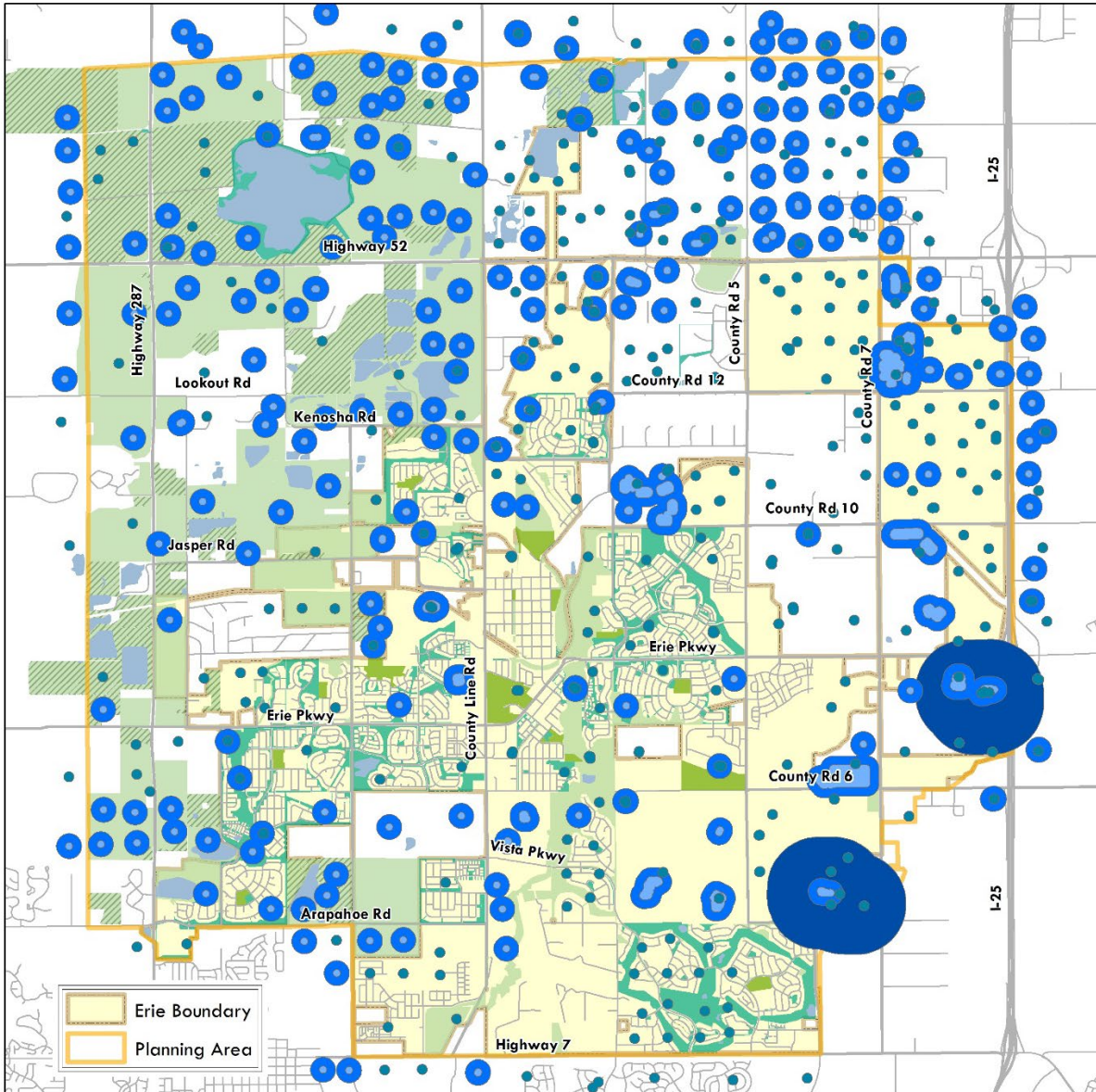


Figure 19: Oil and Gas Infrastructure, various setbacks shown.

Much of the land in the northwest portion of Erie's Planning Area is publicly owned Open Space. Some of these Open Spaces are additionally protected by conservation easements, which restrict how the land can be used. Some are for preservation of open space while others allow farming. If the land is sold the conservation easement stays with the land, precluding any other uses than what is allowed by the agreement. While it appears that there is potentially developable land in the northwest portion of the Planning Area, more than 4,000 acres are not developable and is publicly owned Open Space as illustrated in Figure 11

Land Use and Development Patterns

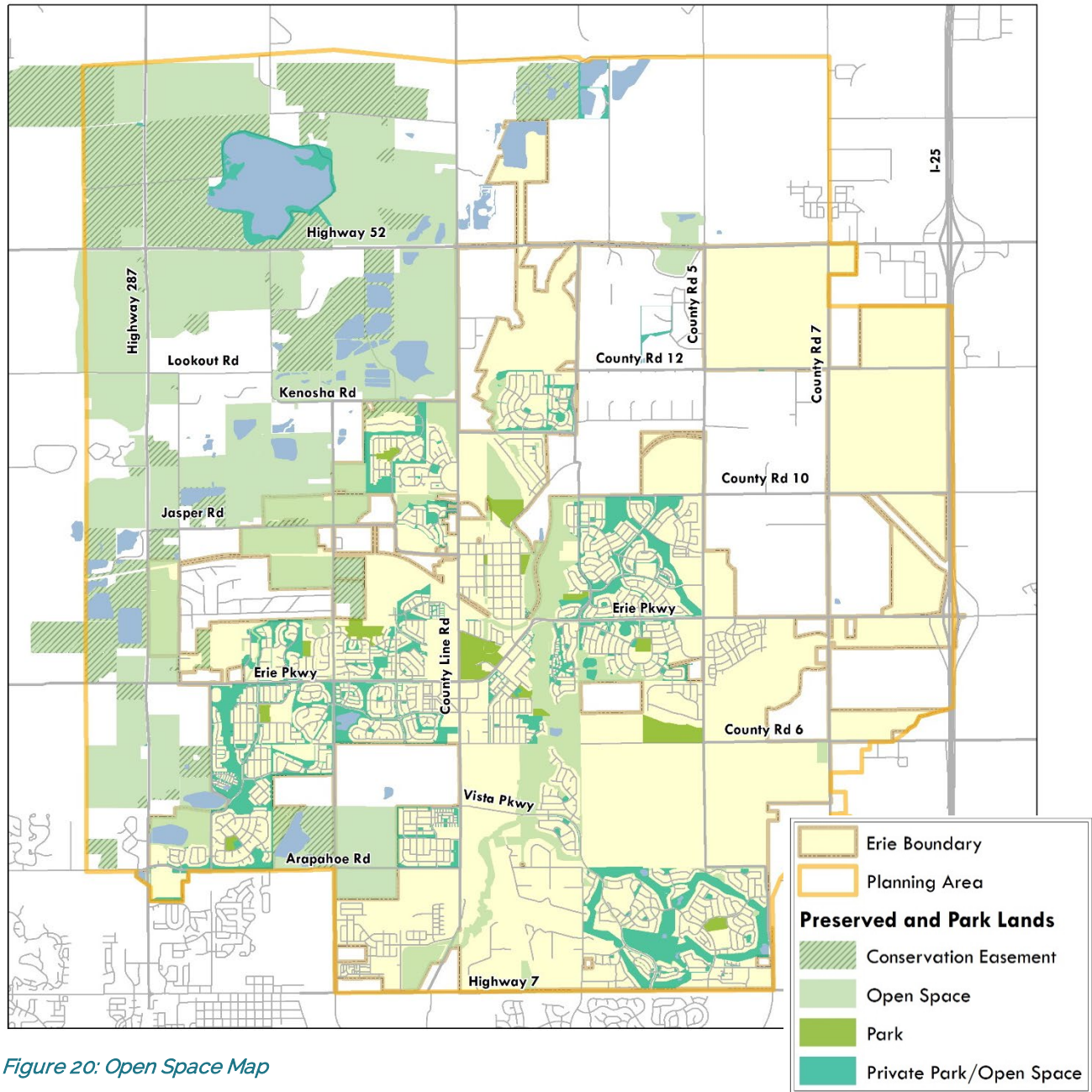


Figure 20: Open Space Map

Erie has a long history with waste disposal uses starting with the Erie Landfill in 1964 off County Roads 5 and 6. This landfill had no liner, a history of accepting chemical waste, and poor record keeping. Open burning of trash and chemicals was an ongoing issue at the Erie Landfill. Columbine Landfill was opened in 1979 (later renamed to Laidlaw South), adjacent to Erie Landfill which was abandoned and uncovered from 1979 to 1983 (see Figure 11). The proper closure of the Erie Landfill was finally completed in 1988. The Laidlaw North Landfill, located across County Road 6 and to the north from the Erie Landfill opened in 1985 and only accepted municipal waste. Laidlaw North and South eventually became Denver Regional Landfill, both of which are now closed with a Closure/Post Closure plan in place.

Land Use and Development Patterns

The Front Range Landfill opened in 1996 and is located southeast of the intersection of County Road 5 and 6. Front Range Landfill's permitted footprint is 326 acres, which is within the Town's boundary. Another 160 acres owned by Front Range Landfill is in unincorporated Weld County, adjacent to the permitted acres. The landfill is expected to operate through 2051. The Front Range Landfill has a closure plan detailing how it will be capped, what will be planted, how landfill gas will be removed, and how ongoing maintenance will occur. Figure 12 illustrates closed landfills shaded in orange and open landfills shaded in blue.

Once a landfill is closed and the Post Closure Plan timeframe has expired, limited uses can occur on the land. For example, trees are typically not permitted as their roots can penetrate the landfill cover. Passive uses such as seeding with native plants to establish habitat for native animals is one of the least intensive uses for a former landfill. There are some examples of solar farms being installed, while others have added trails for public use. Many factors play into what can be done with a landfill post closure such as steepness of the terrain, cover type, access, and how much settling has occurred or will occur.

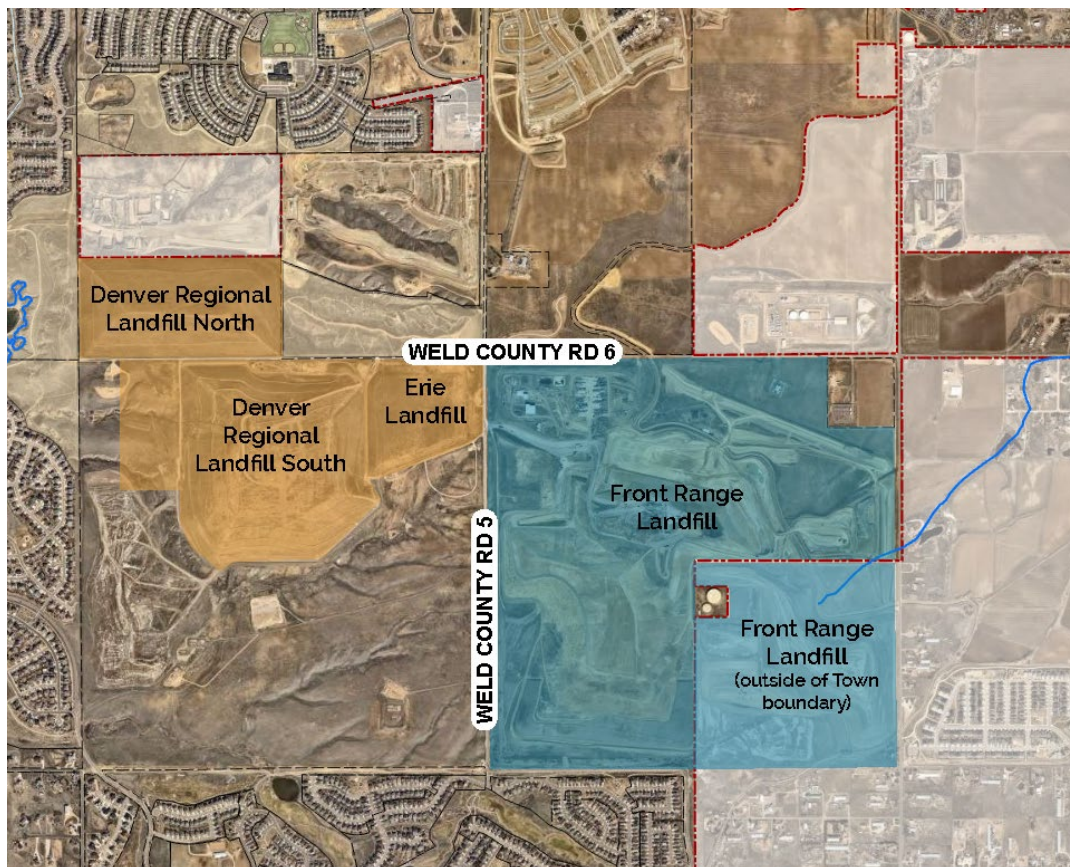


Figure 21: Landfills

Floodplains, open space, conservation easements, and existing and closed landfills limit the developability of remaining land within Erie's Planning Area and will inform the Future Land Use Map designations. These constraints make up 33% of Town boundaries and 49% of the Planning Area, as shown in the figure below.

Land Use and Development Patterns

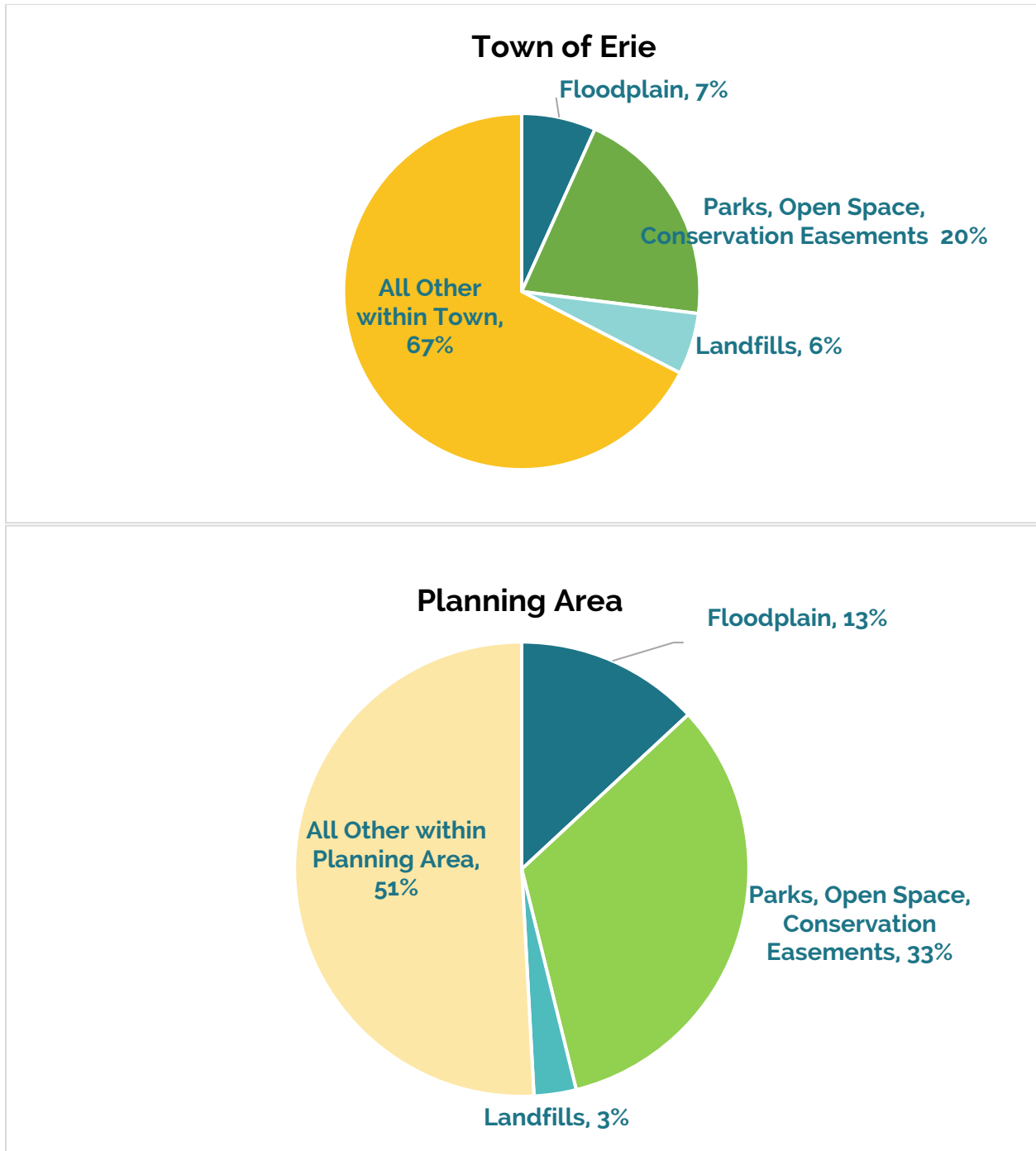


Figure 22: Constraints to Development

Land Use and Development Patterns

Existing Land Use and Development Patterns

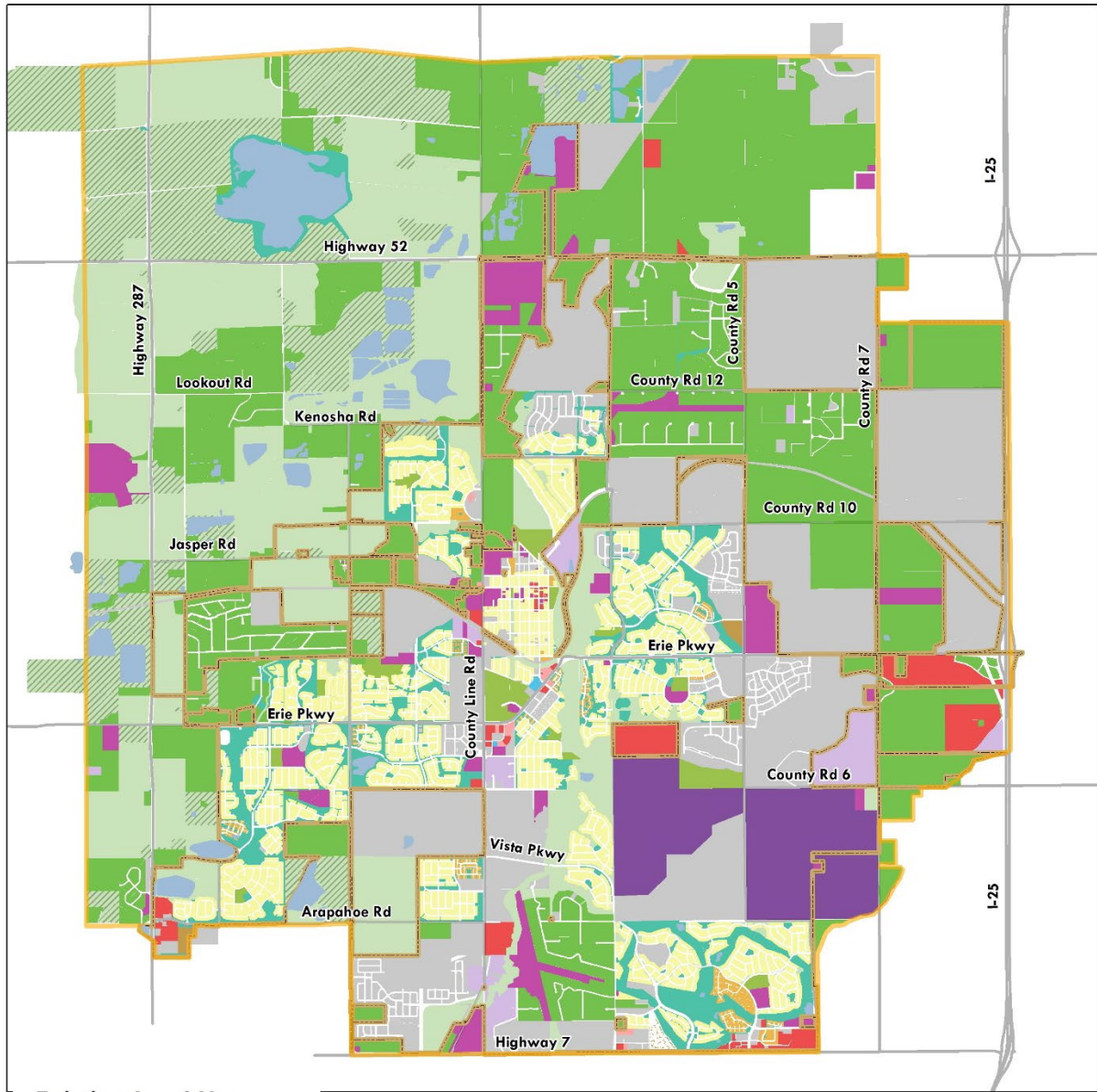
Examining Erie's existing land uses reveals development patterns arising from past and current policies and regulations. As is typical for most American cities and towns, Erie's land uses tend to be separated and grouped by similarities. Newer residential subdivisions are made up of twisting, curvilinear roads, with minimal connectivity to other types of uses, or other residential developments. Commercial uses tend to be located at intersections, or within the perimeter of larger planned developments and adjacent to major regional throughfares. Figure 14 illustrates the existing land uses within the Town and Planning Area. Larger commercial properties are concentrated on the periphery of Erie, at Arapahoe and 287, and along Highway 7. Emerging clusters at Erie Parkway and County Line Road provide smaller commercial developments. This results in an autocentric development pattern, where cars are necessary to get daily needs, and travel by foot or with assistive devices can be challenging.

The exception to this development pattern is Downtown and surrounding Old Town. The development pattern found within this area is made up of easily traversable blocks, about 400 feet in length, laid out in a grid pattern. There are instances of small, typically service oriented, commercial uses mixed within residential blocks, typically at corners or other areas of transition. Within Old Town residential densities and types range from single-family detached to townhome or condo, duplexes, and small apartment buildings. Coal Creek and Coal Miner parks, along with the Coal Creek Trail provide recreation opportunities, as well as multimodal connections to other parts of town.

Figures 15 and 16 provide a breakdown of land uses by percentage of land area within the Planning Area, and the Town boundaries. Within Erie's Planning Area the largest land use is Parks, Open Space and Conservation Easements, at 35% (15.4 square miles). This is due to the large amount of public Open Space land within Boulder County. Outside of vacant land at 36%, the largest category of land use within the Town's boundaries is Parks, Open Space or Conservation Easements at 23%, followed closely by Residential at 19%. Many of these Park or Open Space uses are a part of the residential neighborhoods that have been constructed in Erie over the past 20 years, as Erie's development regulations require Park and Open Space dedications. Erie's land use mix is heavily weighted towards residential and the associated parks and open space uses.

With only 2% of both the Planning Area and Town boundary as Commercial or Office Erie has a very small retail base, indicating ample opportunities to serve unmet needs within the Town. This is backed by data and feedback from outreach. Erie's 2023 Community Profile identified a 72.1% retail leakage, with notable gaps in food and beverage retailers (\$82M), food and beverage restaurants (\$70M), and general merchandise retailers (\$51M). The first phase of Community Engagement identified grocery, restaurant, and entertainment options, along with employment opportunities as a high priority. Additionally, the 2023 Community Survey conducted by Polco and National Research Center found that 9 in 10 respondents placed importance on cultivating a community with a strong economy and additional employment opportunities. The 2022 Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA) found that employment was an area in need of improvement within the Town.

Land Use and Development Patterns



Existing Land Uses

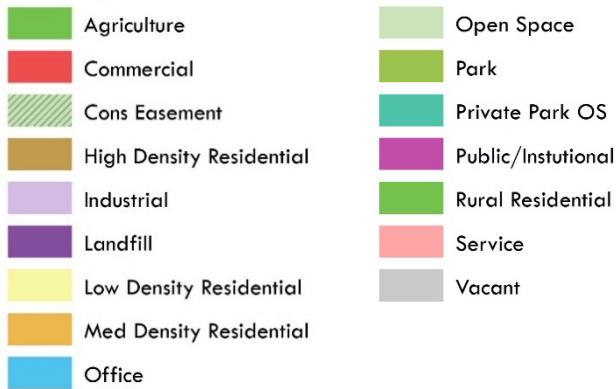


Figure 23: Existing Land Use

Land Use and Development Patterns

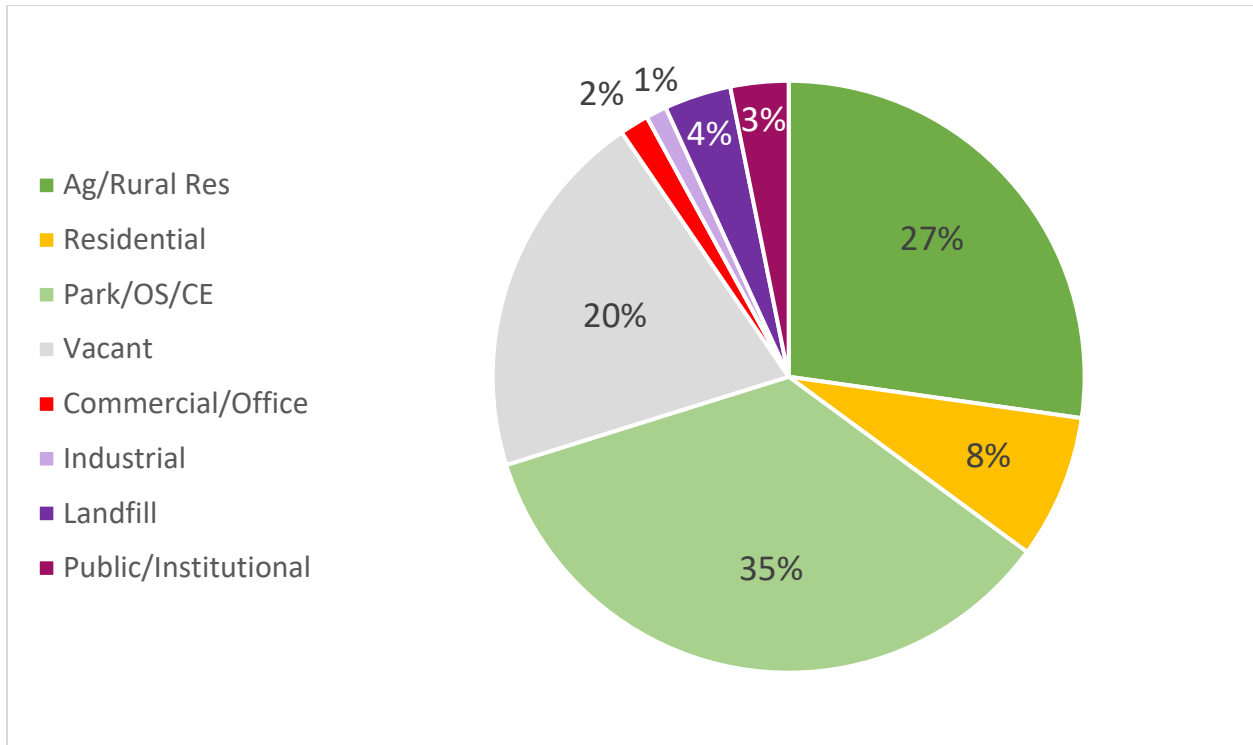


Figure 24: Existing Land Use Mix within Planning Area

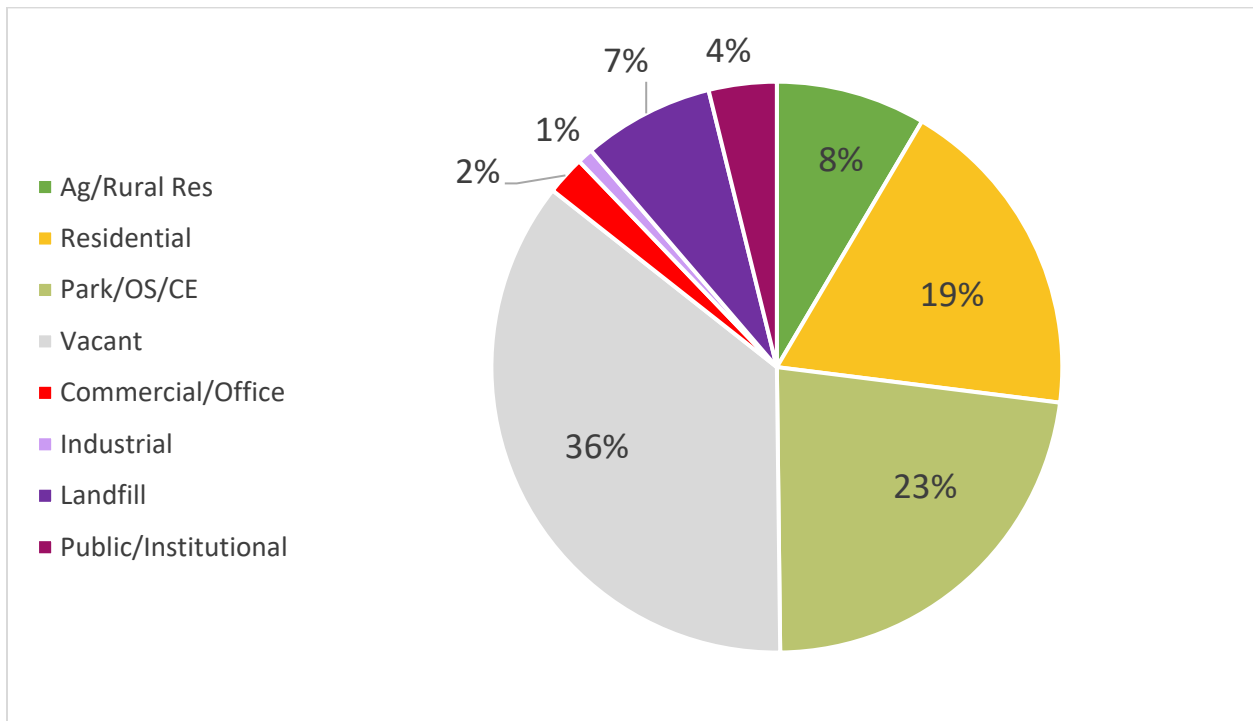


Figure 25: Existing Land Use Mix within Town of Erie

Land Use and Development Patterns

Current and Planned Development

Erie has many development projects in various stages of development. For the purposes of this analysis the stages of development have been divided into Under Construction, Entitled, or Planned. Under construction includes projects which have active building permits. Entitled means the project has acquired at least one land development approval (zoning, preliminary plat, etc.) The Planned category represents those projects which have filed one or more land development applications, but do not yet have any approvals. These categories of development contain various housing types – from single family detached, to single family attached (townhome, duplex, condo) and multifamily (apartments). Figure 13 illustrates the Entitled and Planned categories of development.

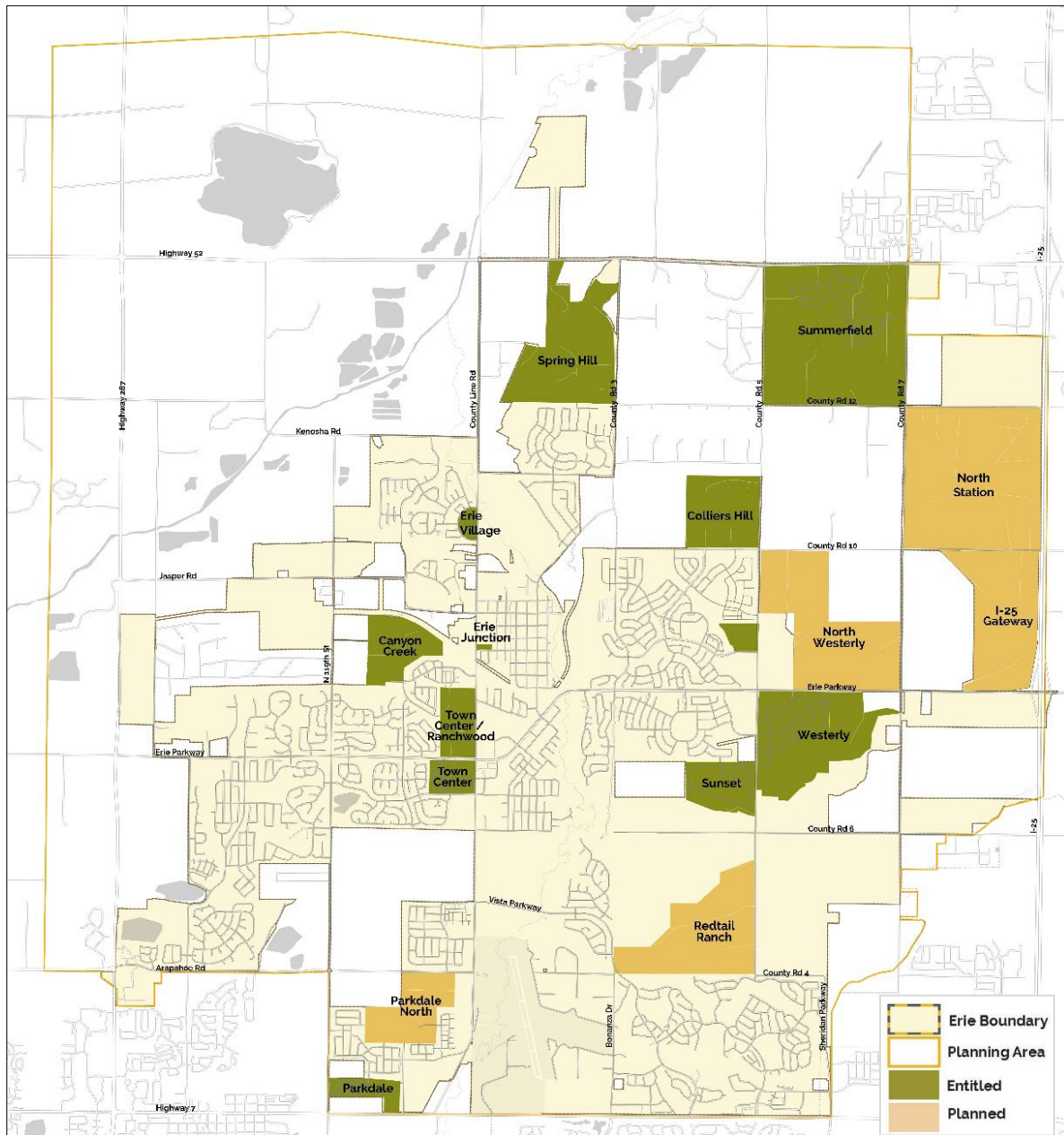


Figure 26: Entitled and Planned Developments, August 2023

Land Use and Development Patterns

As of June 2023, 2,627 residential units, and 2,476 square feet of commercial/office are under construction. This includes neighborhoods such as Parkdale, Colliers Hill, and Westerly. Erie Town Center, also under construction, sits at the intersection of County Line Road and Erie Parkway, southwest of Old Town. This is a major node in the center of town and when completed will contain a mix of commercial, residential, and civic uses. New commercial, office, and services are located at the southeastern corner, including fast food, dental offices, a pharmacy, gym, early childhood education center, and other personal services. Across County Line Road infrastructure is being installed in preparation for new commercial uses and a variety of housing types behind it, to include apartments (206 units) and 250 townhomes.

The Entitled category includes developments such as Spring Hill, Summerfield, Lafferty, Canyon Creek 7 and 8. The entitled category represents 4,981 residential units and 130,000 square feet of commercial/office.

Developments like Redtail Ranch, Parkdale North, and North Westerly are all currently in various stages of the land development review process and are not yet entitled and approved but are considered 'Planned'. More than 9,000 residential units and more than 4 million square feet of commercial/office are in the planned category. I-25 Erie Gateway is another Planned development, located on 1,280 acres of land at the northwest corner of I-25 and Erie Parkway. North Station along I-25 (part of I-25 Erie Gateway) will bring new commercial and residential uses to the area. I-25 Erie Gateway at full buildout will provide retail and employment center of regional significance at Erie's eastern gateway and cater to the Northern Colorado marketplace. The Town is in the process of developing a detailed Planned Development (PD) for the I-25 Erie Gateway.

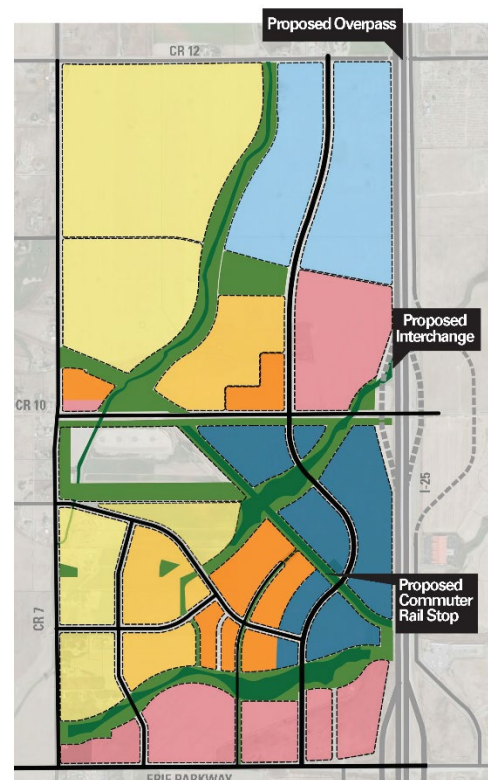


Figure 27: Location of I-25 Erie Gateway, from Developers Guidebook by Design Workshop

Land Use and Development Patterns

Developable Land

Most of Erie's development has occurred in the last 30 years. These newer neighborhoods and commercial areas are generally considered stable as they meet current market conditions and building standards. Figure 19 illustrates the land within our Planning Boundary that has development potential, in two categories – Planned and Unplanned. Planned means some sort of land development application has been made, but full approvals have not yet been granted. Unplanned means this land is largely vacant, or agricultural in use and has development potential in the future. Within the Town's Planning Boundary there are 9.2 square miles of developable land (this includes both planned and unplanned). This equates to 20% of the Planning Area. Within the Town boundary there are 6.2 square miles (30%) of developable land. The following figure and table illustrate the breakout developable land.

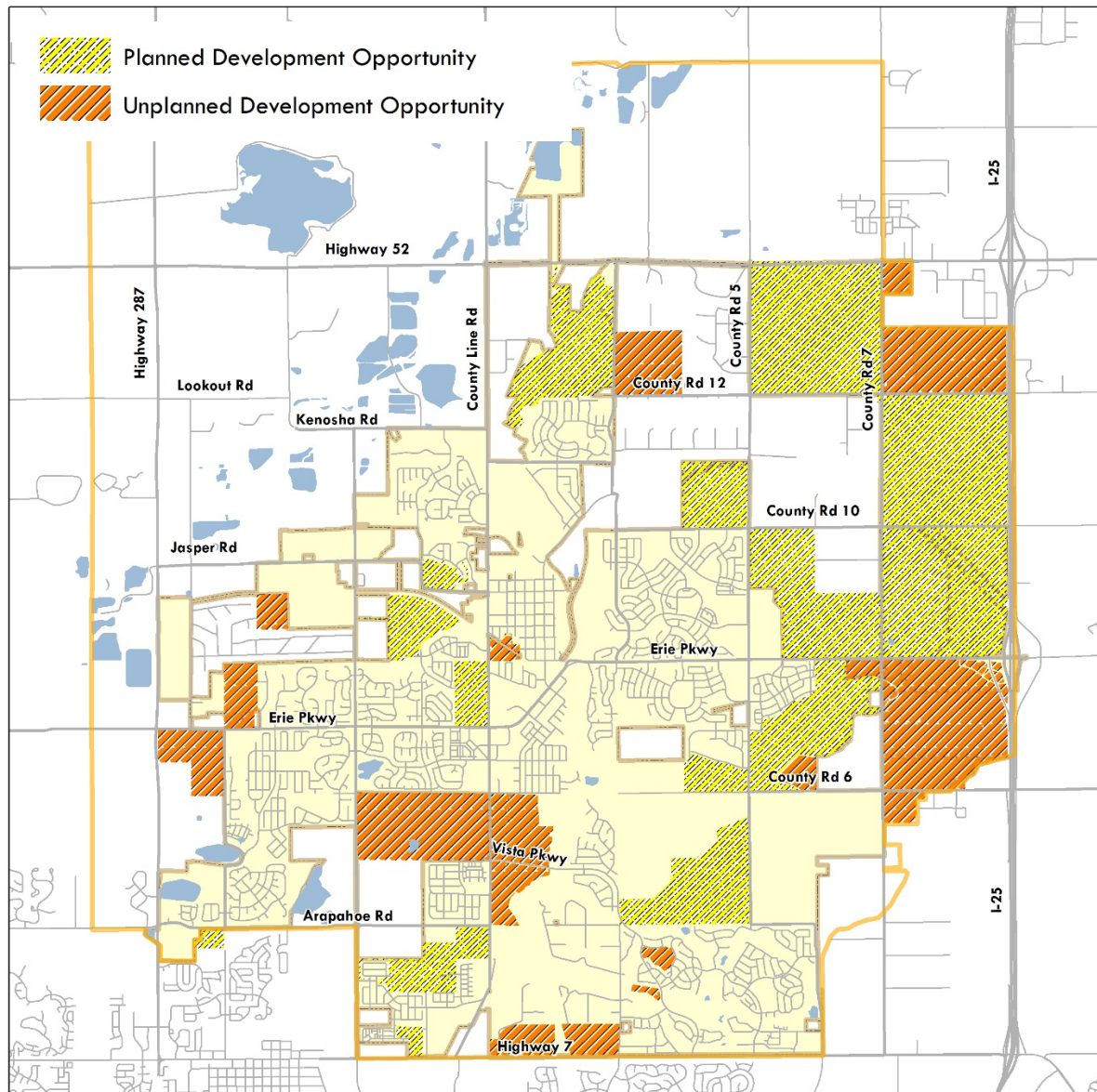


Figure 28: Development Opportunities

Land Use and Development Patterns

	Town Boundary		Planning Area	
	Square Miles / Acres	Percent of Area	Square Miles / Acres	Percent of Area
Planned	4.7 / 3,008	23%	5.9 / 3,776	13%
Unplanned	1.5 / 960	7%	3.3 / 2,112	7%
TOTAL	6.2	30%	9.2	20%

Table 1: Developable Area

Current Zoning

Erie has 27 zoning districts divided into the following major categories: Residential districts, Commercial districts, Industrial districts, Mixed-use zone districts, Other districts, Overlay districts, and Inactive districts.

District Type	Abbreviation	District Name	Density / Intensity
Residential	RR	Rural Residential	1 dwelling unit per 2 acres
	ER	Estate Residential	0.5 to 1 dwelling unit per acre
	SR	Suburban Residential	1 to 3 dwelling units per acre
	LR	Low-Density Residential	3 to 5 dwelling units per acre
	MR	Medium-Density Residential	5 to 10 dwelling units per acre
	HR	High-Density Residential	10 to 25 dwelling units per acre
	OTR	Old Town Residential	5 to 10 dwelling units per acre
Commercial	CC	Community Commercial	Community oriented retail and services (banks, pharmacies, restaurants, dentist, grocers, hardware store, pet store, etc.) Max Height: 45 feet/3 stories
	RC	Regional Commercial	Shopping centers, Big-box retail, Gas Stations, Hotels, Restaurants Max Height: 45 feet
	B	Business	Office, R&D Max Height: 45 feet/3 stories
Industrial	LI	Light Industrial	Warehousing, Limited Outdoor Sales and Storage Max Height: 40 feet / 3 stories
	I	Industrial	Heavy Vehicle Repair, Car Wash, Storage Yard, Self-Storage, Light Manufacturing
	HI	Heavy Industrial	Truck Yard, Wholesale Distribution Center, Oil and Gas Operations (with Special Permit), Indoor Shooting Range
Mixed-Use	DT	Downtown District	Small-scale office, residential and retail Minimum lot size: 3,750 sf Max Height: 45 feet / 3 stories; 35 for residential only
	NMU	Neighborhood Mixed-Use	Compact, neighborhood serving commercial Max Height: 35 feet (within Old Town); 45 feet / 3 stories (outside of Old Town)

Land Use and Development Patterns

District Type	Abbreviation	District Name	Density / Intensity
	CMU	Community Mixed-Use	Commercial, recreational, institutional, and services supporting the community at large; Medium and high density residential Max Height: 45 feet / 3 stories
Other Districts	AG/OS	Agricultural/Open Space	Conservation, Agricultural Production, Passive and Active Recreation Max Height: 40 feet
	AGH	Agricultural Holding	Maintains existing agricultural uses until property redevelops
	AP	Airport	Taxiways, Hangars, Heliport, Helistop Max Height: 35 feet / 3 stories
	PLI	Public Land and Institutions	Schools, Nursing Homes, Group Homes, Cemetery, Community Center, Library, Park, Open Space, Community Garden Max Height: 45 feet / 3 stories
	PD	Planned Development	Varies
Overlay Districts	APO	Airport Overlay	Limits incompatible uses near the airport
	FPO	Floodplain Overlay	Limits development in floodplain
Inactive Districts	RP-1	Rural Preservation 1	1 dwelling unit per 17.5 acres
	RP-2	Rural Preservation-2	1 dwelling unit per 5 acres
	RP-3	Rural Preservation-3	1 dwelling unit per 5 acres
	PUD	Planned Unit Development Overlay	Varies

Table 2: Zoning Districts and Density/Intensity

Since the 1990s many Planned Developments (PDs) and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) have been approved in Erie. More than 60% of the land in Erie is zoned either PUD (20.01%) or PD (44.44%). These are typically used when unique characteristics of the site make conformance with the Unified Development Code not feasible, and the project includes a significant public benefit. Some include more density and mixing of uses, while others are predominantly single-family detached subdivision developments. The PUD district has been largely phased out in favor of the PD district. While expansion of PUD districts is allowed, it is very limited in size and scope.

Examining the base districts, or equivalents, of Erie's PUDs and PDs reveals a more complete picture of existing entitlements and land uses. The base districts within PUDs are mostly residential at 91%, followed by Agricultural/Open Space at 6%. Very little commercial is found within PUDs at 1.5%.

Land Use and Development Patterns

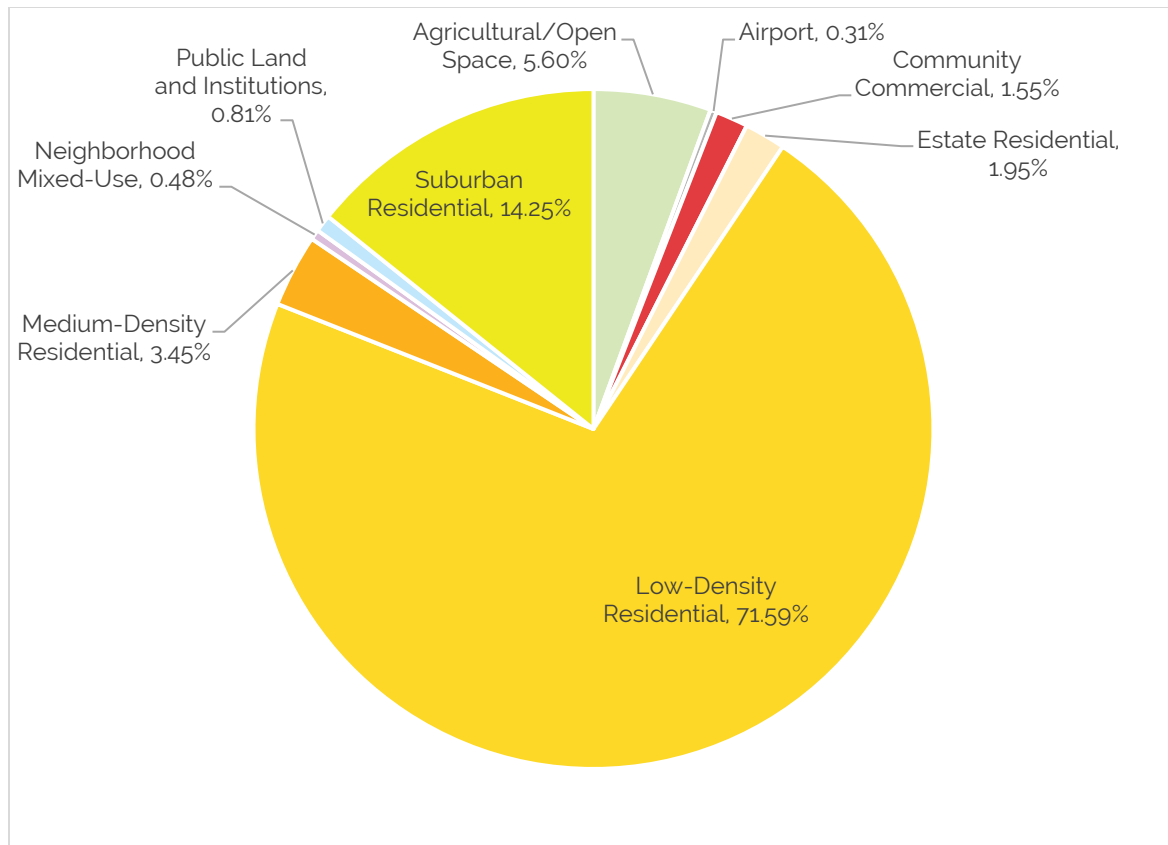


Figure 29: PUD Base Districts

Planned Developments (PD) are the successor of PUDs, effectively replacing them when PUDs were made inactive in 2022. Analyzing the base districts of PDs reveals more diversity than those found in PUDs. While still the majority residential (61%), Industrial (11%) and Commercial (12%) are also present. The largest commercial district is Regional Commercial at 5%, which is evident in recent PDs such as Nine Mile at Arapahoe and 287, with larger, big box and regional draw retail and services.

Figure 21 illustrates the breakdown of equivalent districts for planning areas within Planned Developments. While over half (51.3%) of PD districts are low density residential, PDs do contain higher density districts of High-Density Residential (max 25 du/acre) and Medium-Density Residential (max 10 du/acre). No High-Density Residential (HDR) districts are within PUDs, nor are any individual parcels zoned HDR within the Town. PDs have 13% Agricultural/Open Space, over double that of PUDs. Eleven percent of PDs are Heavy Industrial, Heavy Industrial tends to include more noxious and disruptive uses such as Truck Yards, Oil and Gas Operations (with Special Permit), and Heavy Vehicle Repair.

Land Use and Development Patterns

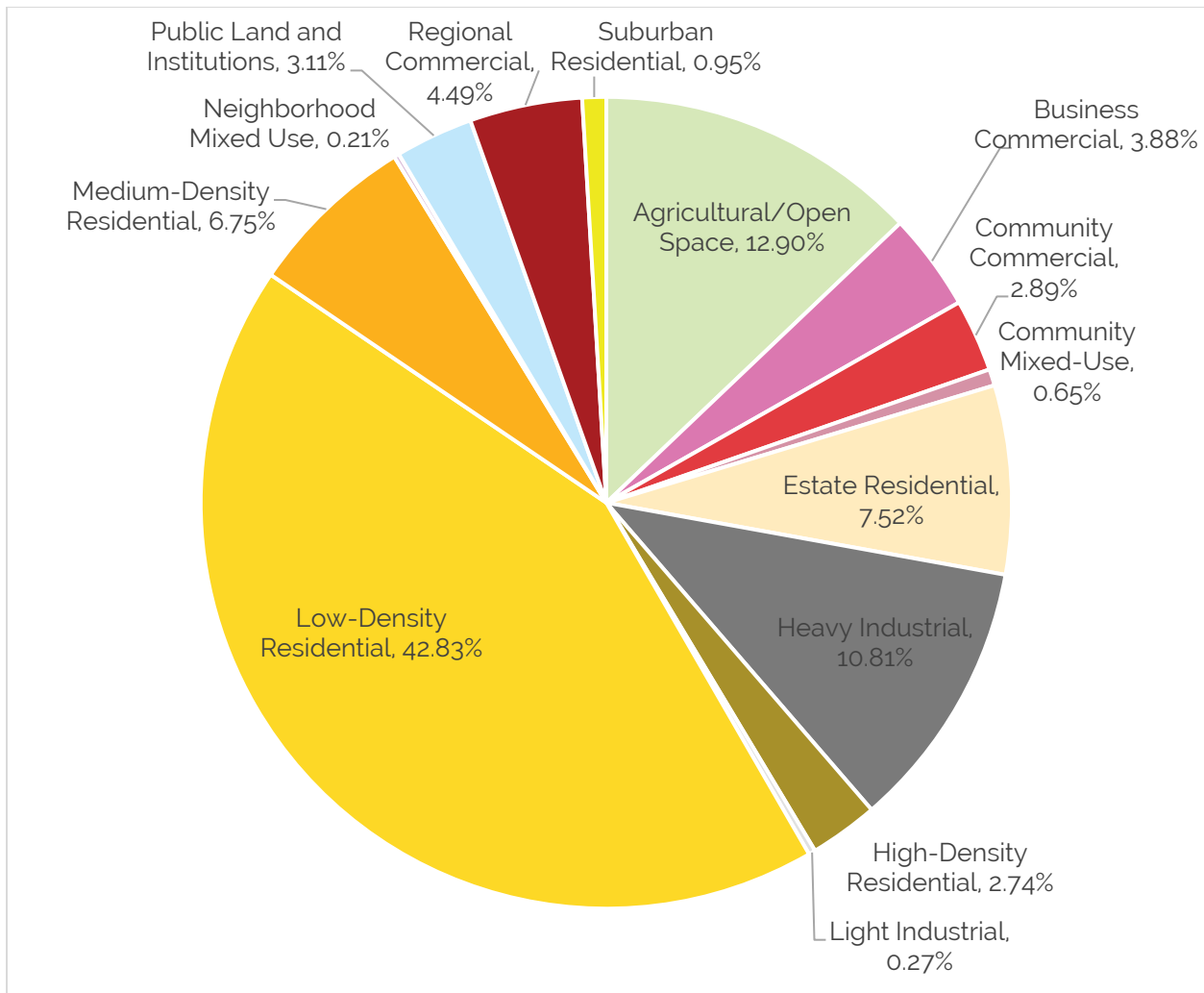


Figure 30: Planned Development Equivalent Zoning Districts

Figure 22 illustrates the Town's zoning as of October 2023. From the map it is easy to see the lack of commercially zoned properties, along with the abundance of Planned Developments and Planned Unit Developments.

Land Use and Development Patterns

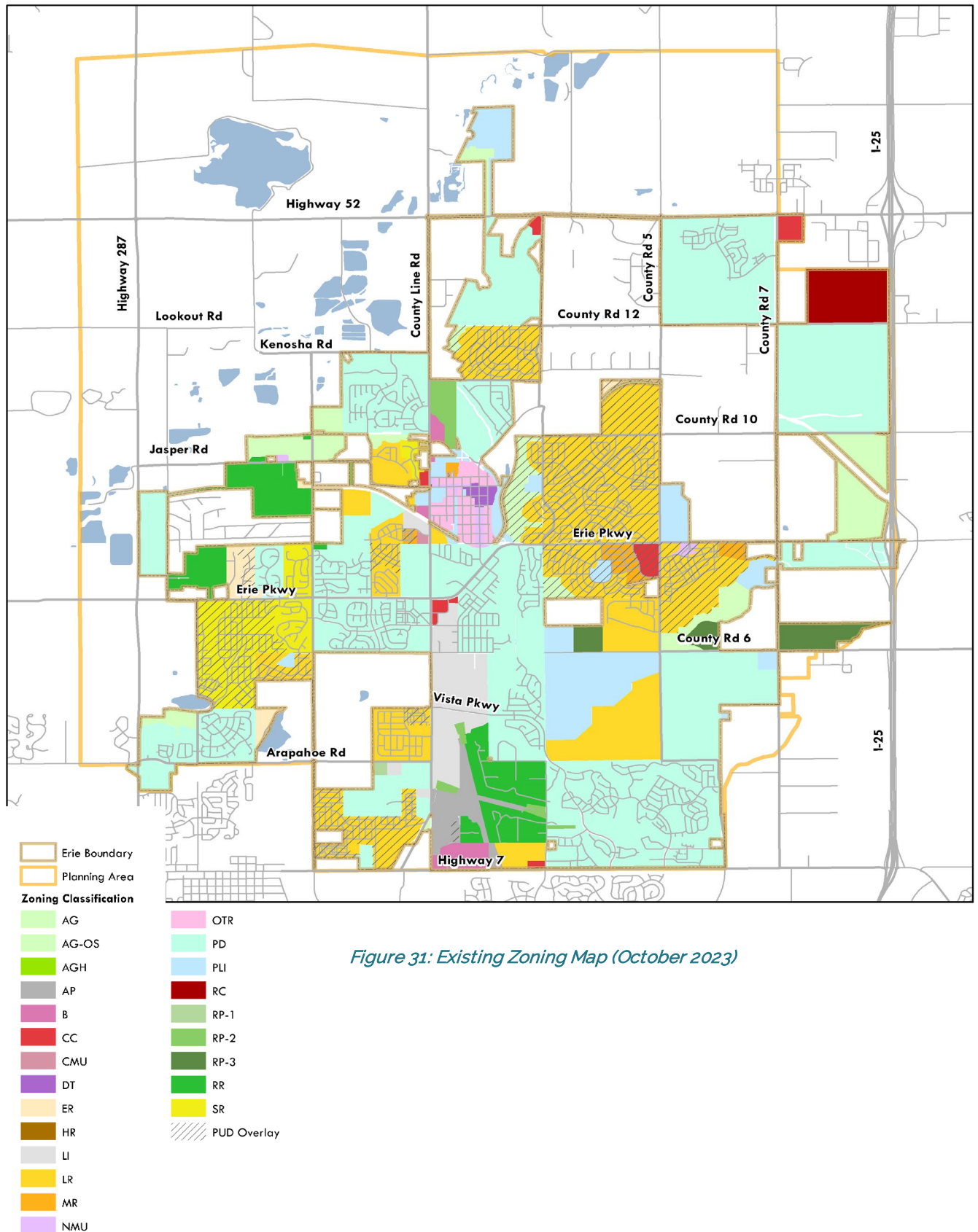


Figure 31: Existing Zoning Map (October 2023)

Land Use and Development Patterns

Policy Analysis of Existing Plans and Initiatives

This report includes an overview of recent Town plans and studies that are relevant to the ongoing development and implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Through the integration of these recent plans and studies, the Town can build upon existing knowledge and leverage the expertise of those who contributed to these initiatives.

The following plans, studies, and surveys are summarized below:

- Historic Preservation Master Plan (2017)
- Downtown Redevelopment Framework Plan
- I-25 Erie Gateway Developer Book
- Erie Town Center Master Plan
- Unified Development Code, Design Standards

Historic Preservation Master Plan

The Town of Erie completed a Historic Preservation Master Plan in 2017, which was then revised in March of 2020. This plan highlights the role historic preservation should play in the identity, character, and quality of life for Erie. The plan calls for the Town's identity as a historic mining town to be further strengthened through additional research, community engagement, and public and private preservation efforts. While much of the plan centers around the historic Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, it also identifies several mines, farms, homesteads, and Mount Pleasant Cemetery as potential historic resources. In 2021, the Town established the Historic Preservation Advisory Board (Ordinance No.5 -2021) that advises the Town Board of Trustees on preservation initiatives.

Downtown Redevelopment Framework Plan

The Downtown Redevelopment Framework Plan was adopted in 2016. Much of this plan is now out of date and references the current Comprehensive Plan. Some of the recommended projects in the plan have been completed, but most have not, as conditions have changed. Further, the retail and housing landscape has extensively changed post-Covid. Downtown will likely need new planning efforts. The Comprehensive Plan can strengthen and support a vibrant Downtown through land use designations and policy recommendations.

I-25 Erie Gateway Developer Book

The I-25 Erie Gateway Developer Book outlines the vision for the I-25 Gateway area on the northeast side of Town. The document contains a general description of the land uses envisioned for the area, along with trails and proposed RTD commuter rail. The Town is currently working with consultants to refine the vision for the area and codify it through a Planned Development. (PD).

Erie Town Center

The Erie Town Center plan recommends prioritizing walkability, encouraging diverse land uses, implementing sustainable design practices, preserving natural and historic features, and fostering community engagement. These recommendations aim to create an inviting, sustainable, and vibrant community hub that meets the needs of residents and promotes economic growth. The focus on walkability and diverse land uses promotes an active and

Land Use and Development Patterns

lively environment, while sustainable design practices address environmental concerns. Development is underway at Erie Town Center.

Unified Development Code: Design Standards

Chapter 6 of Erie's code contains development design standards for new residential, commercial, and mixed-use development, aviation, manufacturing and light industrial development, among others. The design standards establish regulations for massing, façade, building orientation, and materials, among others. In the 2023 Community Survey done by Polco/NRC 53% of respondents rated the overall design or layout of residential and commercial areas as excellent or good. While this indicates many respondents feel Erie's community design is acceptable improvements can be made.

Residential design standards require a mix of housing types and/or housing type variations based on the development's parcel size. This is a newer regulation meant to diversify the housing stock. Housing types are defined in code as; duplex, stacked tri-plex/quad-plex, townhouse, apartment, live-work, and single-family detached. As developers have designed and platted new developments, these diversification requirements are often left to the final stages. Further, single-family detached with either access (alley or front-loaded) or lot size variations count towards a housing type variation. This has resulted in single-family detached the predominant new construction type, despite the aims of the regulation.

Commercial and mixed-use design standards are broken out into standards for commercial zoning districts in Downtown and Old Town, versus commercial zoning districts outside of those. These regulations outline standards for building orientation, massing and façade, roofs, building materials and colors. Many of the newer commercial developments within the Town are in Planned Developments or Planned Unit Developments, which may not have the same standards. This can create a lack of consistency between Planned Developments, and areas without. Aviation, manufacturing, and light industrial design standards in Chapter 6 apply to structures in aviation, manufacturing and light industrial use categories in Chapter 3, not particular zoning districts. These standards are very similar to those for commercial and mixed-use, except for massing and ground floor treatment, which are not included.

Development Design Standards

A Development Design Standards document went into effect on Feb. 18, 2022, which includes design standards for new residential development. This document is referenced in the UDC and applies to single-family detached, duplex, and attached dwellings of three or more. The document contains both Standards and Guidelines. Standards are regulations and must be met, while development is expected to address the Guidelines. The inclusion of both Standards and Guidelines in the document can be confusing for applicants. Further, regulations should generally be contained within the UDC because it is codified, and all regulations can easily be found in one place.

Block Regulations

The Development Design Standards allow blocks of 50 feet or more in width to be up to 1,200 feet in length, while an average of 600 feet is required overall. 1,200 feet long blocks result in urban forms designed for automobiles, not people. While the standards also require blocks over 900 feet in length to have pedestrian ways and crosswalks, pedestrians and cyclists are still placed in points of conflict with blocks over 400 feet long. Additionally, long

Land Use and Development Patterns

blocks encourage drivers to speed, resulting in a development pattern that is inhospitable environment for people outside of cars.

Issues and Opportunities

The following list of land use-related issues and opportunities summarizes the outcomes of the existing conditions data, supported by feedback from the public, community leaders, staff, and stakeholders.

Issues

Erie has 72% retail leakage, indicating a large unsatisfied demand for goods.

Very little office or light industrial (Research and Development) land uses means a high number of commuters leaving daily for jobs and low number of employment opportunities within the Town.

Land use mix is heavily weighted towards residential and associated open space, which drives up development costs, and operational costs for the Town.

Availability of utilities, assemblage of parcels, and proximity to oil and gas may limit remaining developable land.

Rapid growth within the Planning Area creates challenges with timing and buildout of infrastructure.

Opportunities

I-25 Erie Gateway and other large developments on the east side of Town can bring more diverse housing, retail, and employment opportunities.

Added population growth will support more retail and vibrant places like Downtown, Old Town, and Town Center.

Economic Market Analysis identifies industry clustering in Professional/Technical/Scientific, and Healthcare/Social Assistance sectors, which are less affected by hybrid/remote work and could be potential employment uses to strengthen Erie's jobs base.

As Erie grows, we will need more opportunities for recreation and cultural amenities.

Updates to special area plans, regulations, and guidelines to reflect the vision and goals of the new Comprehensive Plan.

ELEVATE ERIE COMP PLAN

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Health and Social Capital

Snapshot of Trends



Health by the Numbers: Erie has a lower rate of diseases like asthma and diabetes compared to the state average but has a higher rate of obesity. Just over 4% of community members are uninsured, which is low compared to state (7.88%) and national (8.77%) averages¹.



Economic Stability: Erie's residents tend to be highly educated, White, and have primary employment jobs. Erie has a high median income and home value, and low poverty rate. These characteristics contribute to an imbalance in access to opportunities and quality of life.



Social and Community factors:

Erie's diversity index is 47 (out of 100). Representing a largely homogenous population.

Only 3% of Erie households do not have internet access.

Only 2% of Erie households are on Food Stamps/SNAP benefits.



Institutional and built environment factors:

Historically, zoning codes, restrictive covenants and other land use controls were used across the country to prohibit access for non-White residents.

The Town maintains spaces and programming that provides areas for social and community connection. Some events held in Town are centered on European settler history such as the Town's mining history. More recently established events have included other cultures and folks such as Juneteenth, Pride, Hispanic Heritage Month.

Context

Erie residents tend to have positive health outcomes compared to other communities throughout Colorado. This is largely due to Erie's population being highly educated, holding jobs, with high rates of pay and benefits. There are portions of Erie's population without access to health benefits or items that contribute to health and social capital such as transportation, opportunity, and community. This section examines the intersection of health, social and physical environments, behaviors, and socio-economic factors.

¹ American Community Survey 5-Year, 2021. No Health Insurance

Health Indicators

Many factors contribute to health including not only individual choice, but also social, economic, genetic, institutional, and geographic elements. Health indicators are characteristics of a population that can be measured and used to describe an aspect of the population's health. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) identifies health indicators based on the BARHII Framework, a public health framework for reducing health inequities. The CDPHE Health Indicators are organized by several topic areas, as seen in the tables below. These CDPHE Health Indicators are available at the county and larger regional level, not by town or city. Indicators for Erie from sources other than CDPHE are included in the write-up below each table.

Table 3: CDPHE Social and Institutional Equity Indicators

TOPIC	HEALTH INDICATOR
Social Equity	Race and Ethnicity Population by Sex and Age Group Adults who identify as Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual
Institutional Equity	Linguistically isolated households Population enrolled in school (K-12) Total population Living in Group Quarters

Erie's population is overwhelmingly White and wealthy. This can be isolating for those who do not identify or fit within those categories. Cultural, social, or economic differences can create a diminished sense of belonging. Sense of belonging is an important contributor to physical and mental health and helps us manage stress². High income households can invest more resources in children's development and schooling, leading to higher academic achievement and ultimately widening income disparities³. See the Demographics Existing Condition section for more information on Erie's characteristics.

2.2% of Erie residents speak a language other than English and do not speak English proficiently. This can lead to difficulty in completing day-to-day tasks, finding employment and housing, and in seeking health care.⁴

In 2021, Erie kids aged 3+ enrolled in K-12 school total 32%, above the state (25.2%), Boulder County (30.4%), and Weld County (28.17%).⁵ This data includes those enrolled in any type of public or private education program. Private schools in this case can include homeschooling.

The US Census defines Group Quarters as a place where people live or stay, in a group living arrangement, that is owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and /or services for residents⁶. There are no people within Erie living in Group Quarters.⁷

Table 4: CDPHE Living Conditions Indicators

TOPIC	HEALTH INDICATOR
-------	------------------

² ["Is having a sense of belonging important?"](#), Mayo Health System

³ ["The Widening Income Achievement Gap"](#) Vol. 70, No. 8, EL Magazine

⁴ Esri (2023, 2028), ACS (2017-2021), Esri-Data Axle (2023)

⁵ American Community Survey 5-Year, 2021, Population 3+ Enrolled in School

⁶ United States Census, [Glossary](#)

⁷ ESRI, Business Analyst Online, 2020 Census

Health and Social Capital

Physical Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults who tested their homes for radon Owner-occupied housing units Renter-occupied housing units Renter occupied housing units with gross rent > 50% of household income in the past year Total housing units built before 1960 Working population that commutes by mode other than driving Rate of fast-food restaurants Rate of healthy food outlets
Social Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family households headed by a single adult High school students who were bullied on school property in the last year Child maltreatment rate (per 1,000 children) Adult violent crime rate (per 100,000 adults) Juvenile violent crime rate (per 100,000 juveniles)
Economic and Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households with an adult 60+ years old that received food stamps in the past year Households with children that received food stamps in the past year Owner-occupied housing units with mortgage status >50% of household income in the past year Public school students eligible for free and reduced lunch (K-12) Total number of households that received food stamps in past year Work-related hospitalizations rate Unemployment rate
Service Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population aged 25+ years that completed high school graduation, GED, or alternative Population aged 25+ years that completed an associate or bachelor's degree Population aged 25+ years that completed a master's, professional school, or doctorate's degree Children eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid or CHP+ Working-age adults eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid Adults who have 1+ regular health care providers Adults without health insurance coverage Children without health insurance coverage

Physical Environment

Erie's housing is overwhelmingly owner-occupied at 85.9%. Renter occupied housing makes up only 14.1% of Erie's housing market.⁸ According to American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates (2017-2021), 52.6% of renters pay 35% more of their income towards rent. Thirty-five percent or more is the highest category by which the data is broken out by ACS.

There are 241 housing units in Erie built before 1960. See the Land Use and Development Pattern section for more information on housing and the year built. More information on housing can be found in the Housing Existing Conditions section.

⁸ American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2017-2021), US Census

Health and Social Capital

Erie's working population overwhelmingly commutes by single occupancy vehicle (SOV), 21% commute by means other than driving. More on commuting can be found in the Transportation Safety and Accessibility section of this report.

Social Environment

Family households headed by a single adult in Erie make up 11.25% of family households. These are mostly females in head of household roles at 7.34%.⁹

Economic and Work Environment

Erie's owner-occupied housing units with mortgage of 35% or more of their income make up only 17% of owner-occupied housing. This is well below that of the renter's cost burden in the Town.

Erie's current population is heavily weighted towards children, those aged under 18 make up over one-quarter of the population. The United States Department of Agriculture sets Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs) to be used by schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to determine eligibility for free and reduced meals. For the 22/23 school year children in households with incomes below 130% of the poverty level for free meals, and below 185% of the poverty level for reduced price meals.

The chart below illustrates, by school that serves Erie, the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch. In 2022 Colorado voters passed a measure to make school lunches free for all pre-K through 12th grade students. The measure took effect for the 23/24 school year.

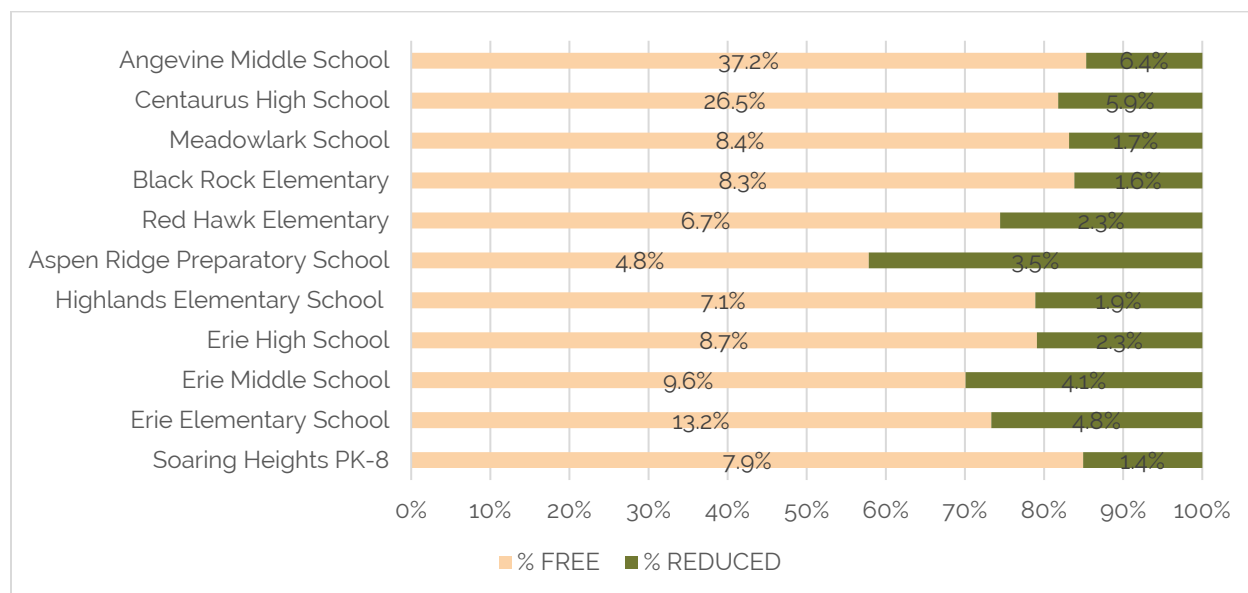


Figure 32: Free and Reduced Lunch 22/23 School Year

154 (1.56%) households in Erie received food stamps in 2021.¹⁰ This is well below that of the state (7.37%) and Boulder (5.27%) and Weld (7.58%) counties.

⁹ 2020 Census

¹⁰ American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2017-2021), US Census

Health and Social Capital

Erie's unemployment rate is in line with that of the state at 2.8%. This is below that of Boulder County at 3.2%, and slightly above Weld County (2.7%).

Service Environment

Erie's population is highly educated with 38% having a bachelor's degree, and nearly 30% have a graduate or professional degree. Figure 2 below shows Erie in comparison to the state, Boulder, and Weld Counties.

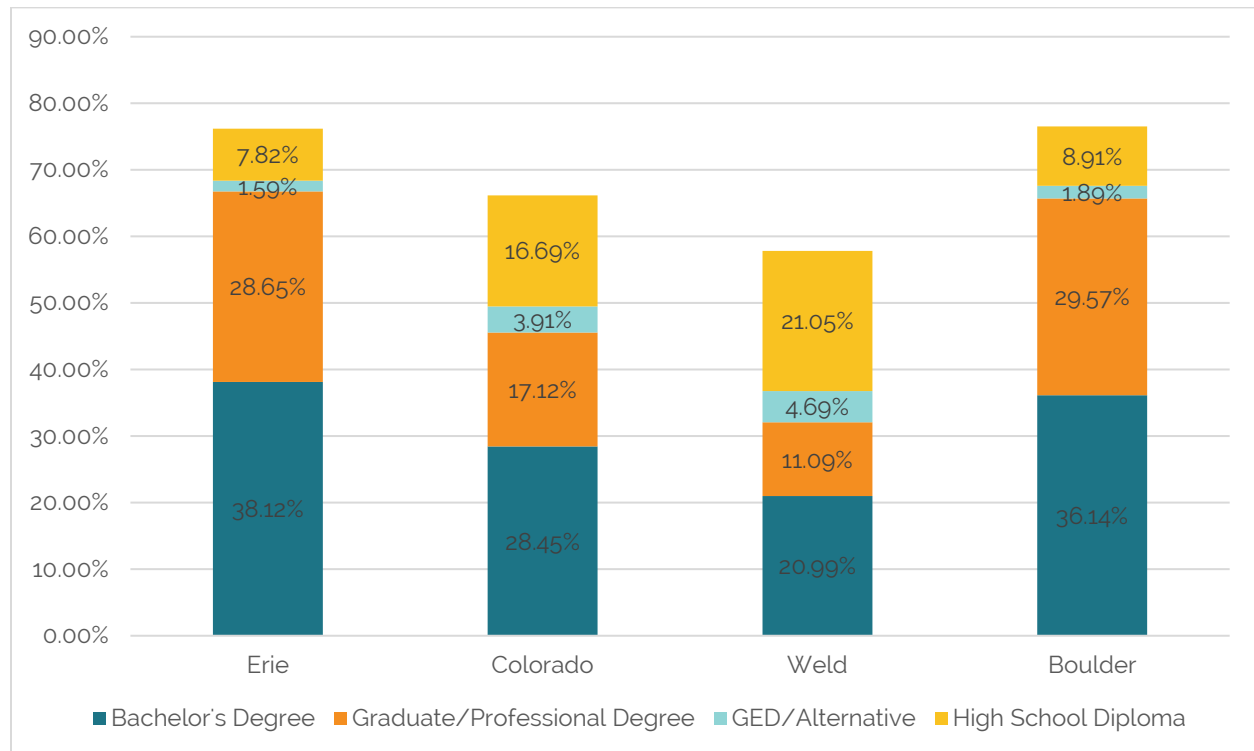


Figure 33: 2023 Educational Attainment of Population aged 25+ years, ESRI Business Analyst Online

Very few Erie residents are without health coverage (4% adults; 0.1% children), and the majority (43.2%) of that health coverage comes from employer-provided plans. Erie residents spend more on medical care than their home counties. This is largely due to access to health coverage, care, and disposable income. Very few (4%) of Erie's households are below the poverty level, while Boulder (11%) and Weld (9%) counties have more than double that of Erie.

Health and Social Capital

Table 5: CDPHE Health Behavior Indicators

TOPIC	HEALTH INDICATOR
Tobacco	<p>Adults who currently smoke cigarettes</p> <p>Adults who currently use e-cigarettes</p> <p>High school students who currently use cigarettes</p> <p>High school students who used electronic vapor products 1+ times in the past month</p> <p>Women who smoked during the third trimester of their pregnancy</p>
Physical Activity & Nutrition	<p>Adults who meet current CDC physical activity guidelines</p> <p>High school student who were physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes/day for the past 7 days</p> <p>Adults who eat fruit 1+ times per day</p> <p>Adults who eat vegetables 1+ times per day</p> <p>High school student who eat vegetables 1+ times per day</p> <p>Percent of women who breastfed for 9 weeks or longer</p>
Substance Use	<p>Adults who are heavy drinkers</p> <p>Adults who reported binge drinking 1+ times in the past month</p> <p>Adults who used marijuana 1+ times in the past month</p> <p>Fatal crashes involving a driver/motorcyclist with a BAC of .08 and above</p> <p>High school students who reported binge drinking 1+ times in the past month</p> <p>High school students who used marijuana 1+ times in the past month</p> <p>Women who drank alcohol during the third trimester of their pregnancy</p>
Preventative Care	<p>Adult females who had a pap smear within the last 3 years</p> <p>Females aged 40+ years who had a mammogram within last 2 years</p> <p>Adults aged 65+ who have ever had a pneumonia shot</p> <p>Adults aged 65+ who have had a flu shot in the last year</p> <p>Adults who visited the dentist for any reason in the past year</p> <p>Adults who have ever lost any teeth due to decay or periodontal disease</p> <p>Adults who have had a cholesterol screening within the past 5 years</p> <p>Adults who have had their cholesterol screen and were told by a health care provider that they had high cholesterol</p> <p>Rate of dentists (per 100,000 population)</p> <p>Vaccine Compliance Rate</p>
Sexual Behavior	<p>Sexually active adults using an effective method of birth control to prevent pregnancy</p> <p>Sexually active high school students using an effective method of birth control to prevent pregnancy</p> <p>Unintended pregnancies resulting in live births</p>

Health and Social Capital

Table 6: CDPHE Disease and Injury Indicators

TOPIC	HEALTH INDICATOR
Communicable Disease	Rate of new acute hepatitis B cases Rate of new chronic hepatitis B cases Rate of new acute hepatitis C cases Rate of new Chlamydia cases Rate of new Gonorrhea cases Vaccine preventable disease rate Senior influenza hospitalization rate Foodborne illness frequency
Chronic Disease	Age-adjusted rate of mental health diagnosed hospitalizations High school students who felt sad almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row, resulting in them stopping some usual activities during the past year Women who experienced postpartum depression Women who had health care professional tell them about next steps if they experienced postpartum depressive symptoms Average number of days in the last month where adults' mental health was not good Average number of days in the last month where adults' poor physical or mental health prevented them from doing usual activities
Injury	Suicide deaths ever treated for a mental health problem Age-adjusted rate of motor vehicle accident injuries Age-adjusted rate of suicide hospitalizations Age-adjusted rate of suicide deaths

Erie's specific health behavior, disease, and injury data is not currently available.

Table 7: CDPHE Mortality Indicators

TOPIC	HEALTH INDICATOR
Mortality	Rate for leading cause of years of potential life lost (per 100,000 population) Rate for leading cause of death (per 100,000 population)
Birth	Overall birth rate Rate of infant deaths per 1,000 live births Rate of live births born to women (aged 15-17 years) per 1,000 women

Erie's birth rate in 2021 was 3.9%, this is one percent below the state, slightly above Boulder County (3.6%), and below Weld County (6.1%), see Figure 3¹¹. Erie is unique in that no teen pregnancies have occurred since 2010, when detail birth data became available via the US Census. This further demonstrates a high access to medical care.

¹¹ American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, 2021

Health and Social Capital

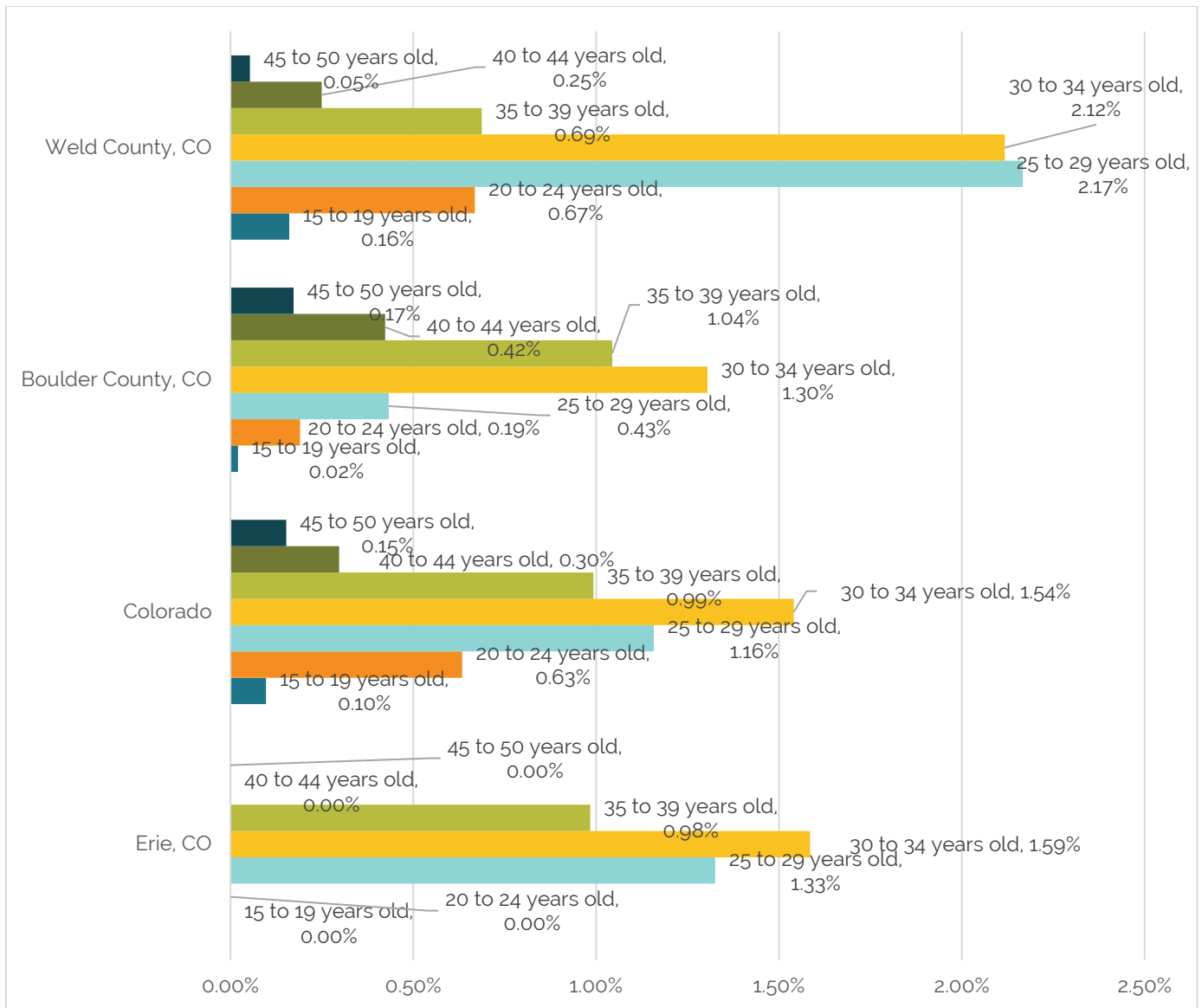


Figure 34: 2021 Birth Rates, by Area and Age Group

Erie's birth rate has been declining since 2016 when it peaked at 6.7%, see Figure 4.¹²

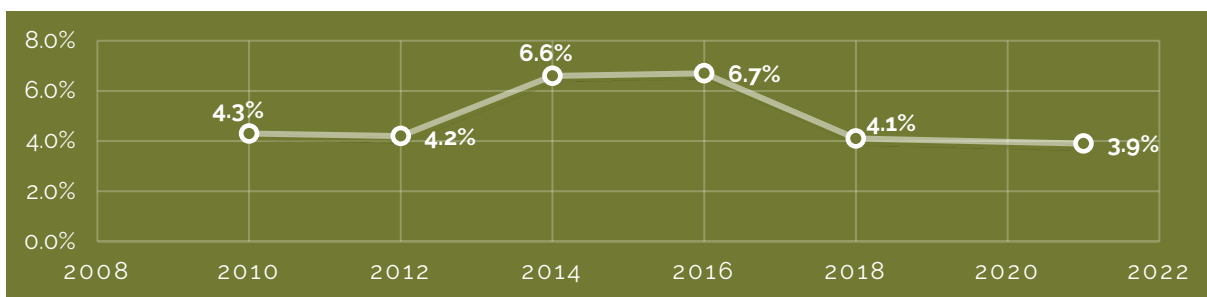


Figure 35: Erie's Birth Rate 2010 to 2021

¹² American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2021

Health and Social Capital

Socioeconomic Factors

Erie's population tends to be highly educated, white, middle-aged, and hold high paying jobs. This results in a very low poverty rate when compared to Erie's home counties and the state. These socio-economic factors contribute to a relatively high level of health for most Erie residents.

Table 8: Comparison of Select Socio-Economic Factors

	Erie	Boulder County	Weld County	Colorado
Median Income (2023)	\$145,786	\$97,612	\$88,463	\$85,656
Bachelor's Degree or higher (2023)	66.7%	65.71%	32.08%	45.57%
Unemployment rate (2023)	2.8%	3.2%	2.7%	2.8%
Adult Population without health coverage (2021)	3.43%	4.15%	7.43%	6.70%
Households Below Poverty Level (2021)	3.69%	11.2%	9.04%	9.56%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst Online (year of data noted in parentheses)

Social Vulnerability

The Geospatial Research, Analysis & Services Program (GRASP) at Centers for Disease Control (CDC) developed a Social Vulnerability Index based on census data regarding 16 social factors such as poverty, vehicle access, and housing. These factors are grouped into four main themes – Socioeconomic Status, Household Characteristics, Racial and Ethnic Status, and Housing Type/Transportation. The index is expressed at a census tract level. Erie's overall Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) ranges from Low-Medium to Medium High, as seen in Figure 4. The census tracts with the most social vulnerability tend to be on the Weld County side of Town, and the highest index value (0.4633) is found in the census tract that encompasses Old Town. Since 2010 the SVI for this tract has increased 33%. This is due to socioeconomic and household characteristics such as the following:

Socioeconomic Status	Below 150% Poverty Unemployed Housing Cost Burden No High School Diploma No Health Insurance
Household Characteristics	Aged 65 and Older Aged 17 & Younger Civilian with a Disability Single-Parent Households English Language Proficiency

Health and Social Capital

Being socially vulnerable can make recovery from disasters more challenging. Those that are considered socially vulnerable are more likely to need support in times of crises due to income, access to healthcare, lack of transportation, or other factors.

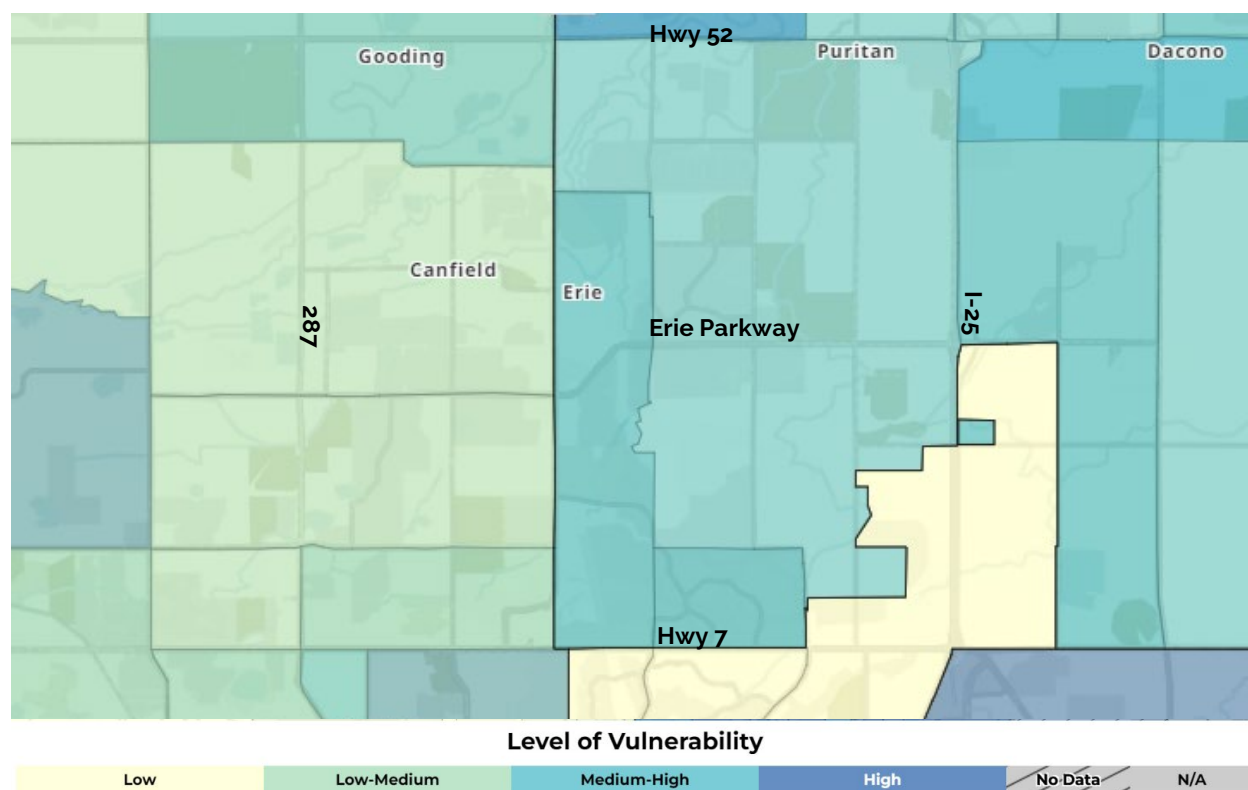


Figure 36: Social Vulnerability Index, by Census Tract, 2020 (GRASP, CDC)

Vulnerable Populations

When assessing at-risk populations, a variety of factors are examined, such as access to transportation, disability, health coverage, poverty, and language isolation. Only 2% of households in Erie do not have a vehicle, indicating an ease of getting to daily needs, goods, and services. This also indicates a low barrier to employment as most households can get to and from work easily. 15% of households in Erie have at least one person with a disability; this is below Boulder (24%) and Weld (17%) counties. Erie's population estimates show those aged over 60 making up 15% of the population by 2050.

Erie High School (St Vrain Valley School District) has a high graduation rate and has seen a 3% increase in graduates since 2020, see Figure 6. Centaurus High School (Boulder Valley School District) class of 2022 lags behind Erie High by 6%, which is in line with the state rate (92.4%). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the US average adjusted cohort graduation rate for public high schools was 87% (19/20 school year), the highest since measuring began in 2010.

Health and Social Capital

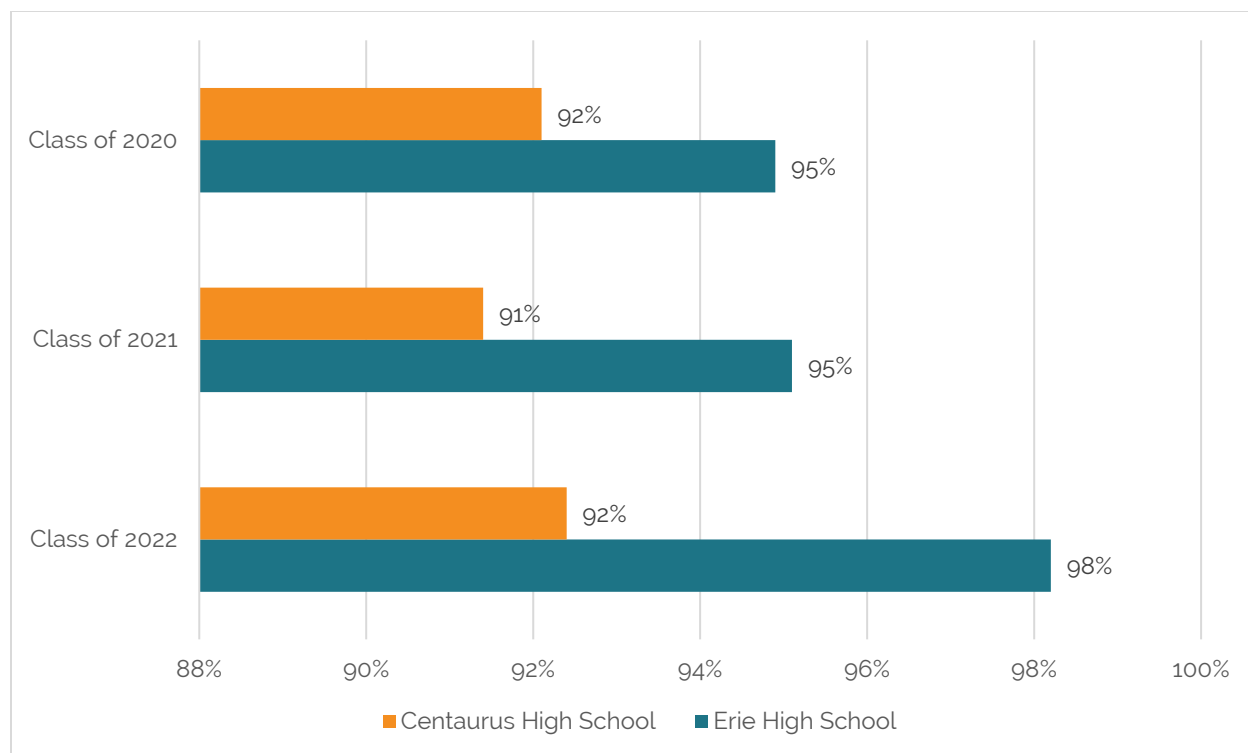


Figure 37: Graduation Rates, 2020, 2021 and 2022

Social and Institutional Equity

Disproportionally Impacted Communities

Low-income residents and communities of color are disproportionately affected by pollution, resource extraction, and disruptive land uses due to being historically underrepresented in government or shut out of decision-making processes altogether¹³. Environmental justice issues are those that disproportionately affect low-income communities and communities of color. The combined environmental and social effects can contribute to health disparities and reduce quality of life for affected populations. On July 2, 2021, Governor Polis signed the Environmental Justice Act (HB21-1266) into law and on May 4, 2023, the legislature passed House Bill 23-1233 to standardize the definition of disproportionately impacted community as:

- **Low-income communities:** Census block groups where more than 40% of households are at or below 200% of the federal poverty line.
- **Communities of color:** Census block groups where more than 40% of the population identify as anything other than non-Hispanic White.
- **Housing cost-burdened communities:** Census block groups where more than 50% of households spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs like rent or mortgage payments.
- **Linguistically isolated communities:** Census block groups where more than 20% of the population live in households where all adults speak a language other than English and speak English less than very well.

¹³ Centers for Disease Control, CORE Health Equity Science Intervention Strategy

Health and Social Capital

- **Historically marginalized communities:** Communities with a history of environmental racism created through redlining or anti-Black, anti-Hispanic, anti-immigrant, or anti-Indigenous laws, policies, or practices that continue to experience present-day environmental health disparities.
- **Cumulatively impacted communities:** Communities where multiple factors, including socioeconomic stressors, vulnerable populations, disproportionate environmental burdens, vulnerability to environmental degradation or climate change, and lack of public participation may act cumulatively to affect health and the environment and may contribute to persistent environmental health disparities. Cumulatively impacted communities can be presumptively identified in one of two ways:
 - They are in a census block group with a Colorado EnviroScreen score above the 80th percentile; or
 - They are in a census tract that the federal Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool identifies as disadvantaged.
- **Tribal lands:** The Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Reservations.
- **Mobile Home Communities:** Areas that meet the Department of Local Affairs' definition of a Mobile Home Park.

According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) [EnviroScreen tool](#), the Old Town area is a disproportionately impacted community, at the census block group level for more than one category (56% of the population is low income and 40.2% of the population are People of Color), as seen in the figure below. The EnviroScreen score is a combination of five components – environmental exposures, environmental effects, climate vulnerability, sensitive population, and demographics. The score goes from 0 to 100, with 100 being the highest burden. The EnviroScreen percentile for this area is 63.4, meaning the burden is higher than 63.4% of census block groups in the state.

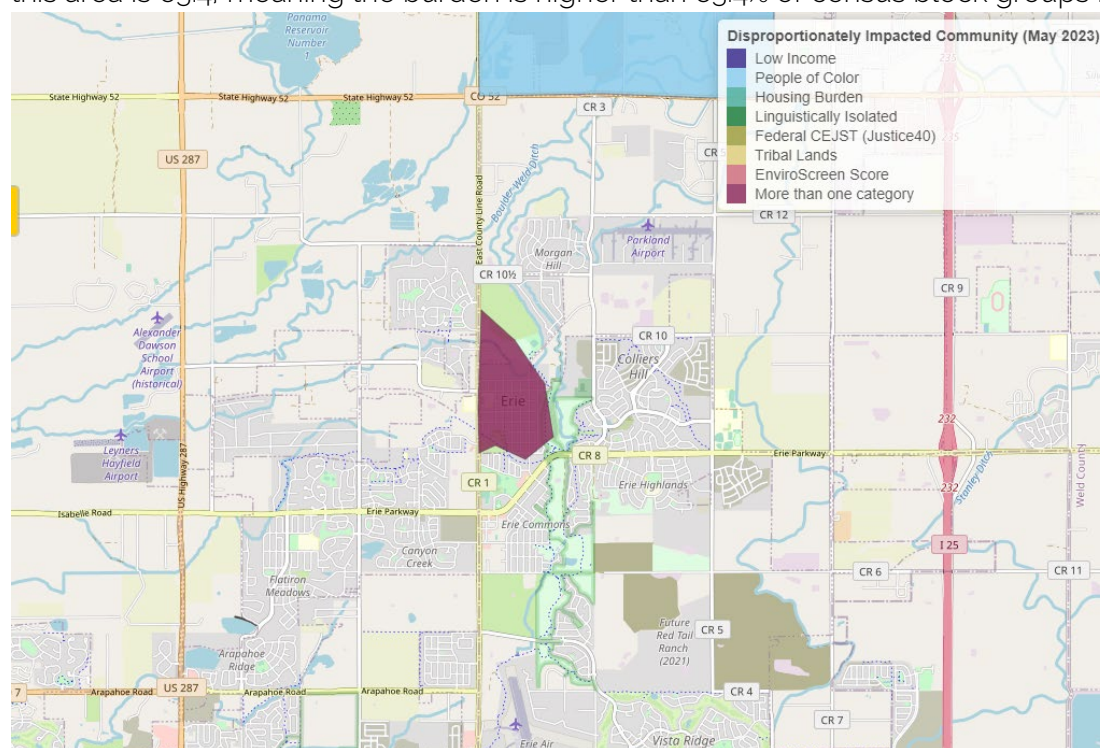


Figure 38: EnviroScreen Disproportionately Impacted Community (May 2023)

Health and Social Capital

2023 Community Survey Disparities

The Town contracted with POLCO/National Research Center this year to conduct a statistically significant survey of residents on a myriad of issues. Of particular interest is the disaggregated data showing that quality of life responses has disparities across race, income, and housing status, as illustrated in the following figures. Overall quality of life ratings, and sense of community are higher for those in the \$150,000+ income brackets, homeowners, and whites.

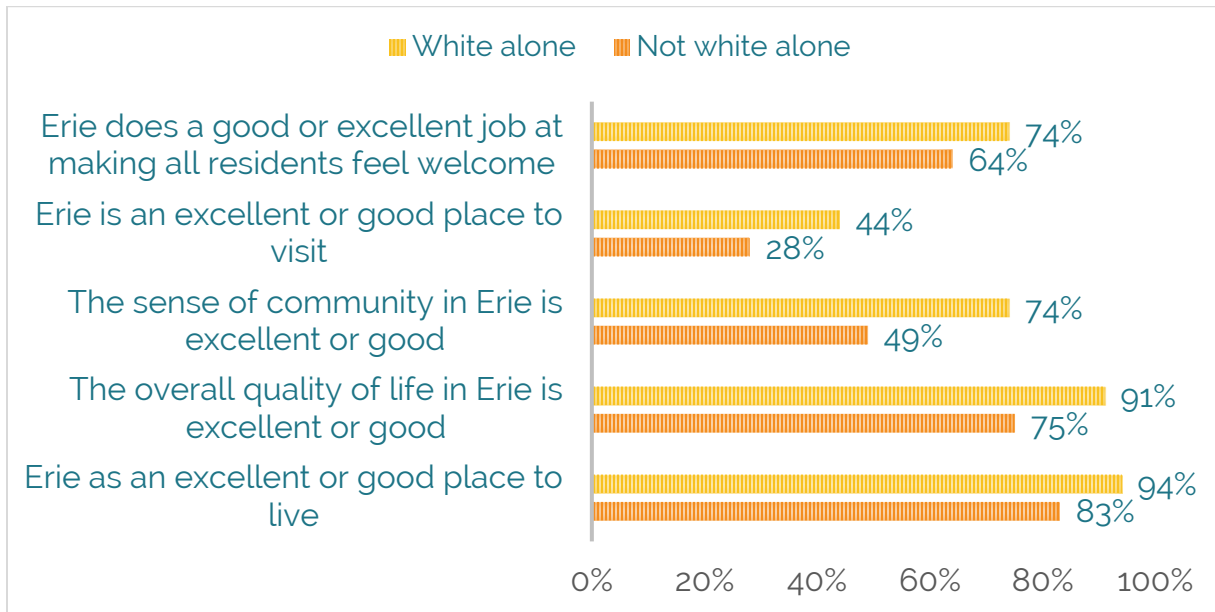


Figure 39: 2023 Community Survey Results, by White and Non-White

There was a wide disparity between homeowners' and renters' responses regarding quality-of-life questions, see Figure 19.

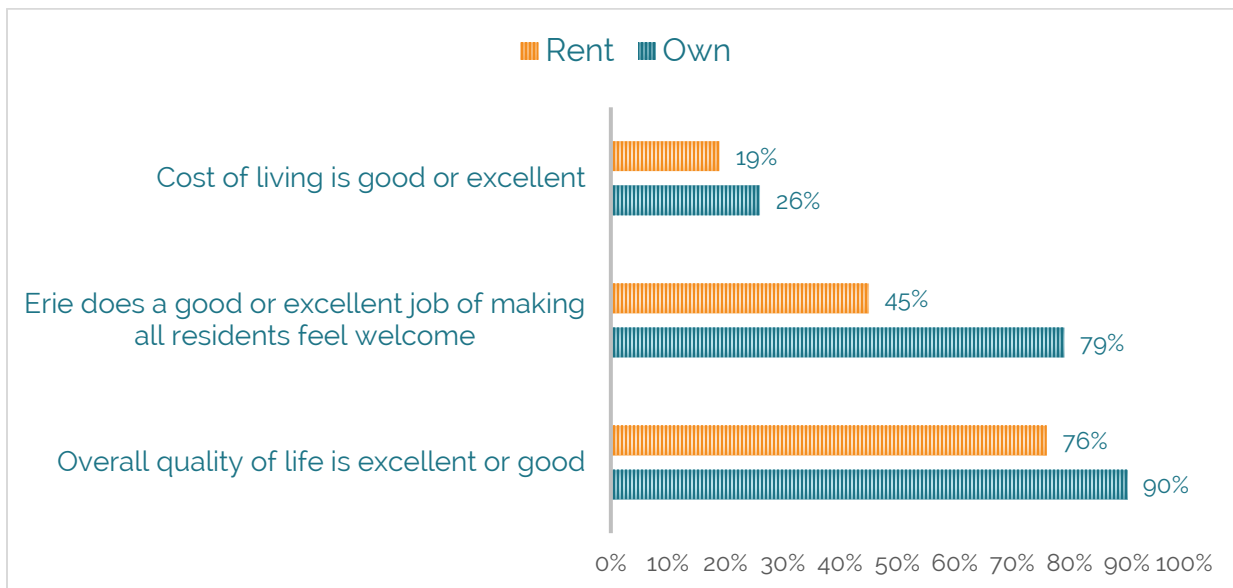


Figure 40: 2023 Community Survey Results, by Household Status

Health and Social Capital

Housing and Transportation Costs

One benchmark for affordability is housing plus transportation (H+T) costs. This metric should be no more than 45% to be considered affordable. 86% of Erie residents have an H+T cost that is 45% or higher. 76% have H+T cost of 54% or higher¹⁴. This is largely due to the amount spent on housing, as shown in Figure 9.

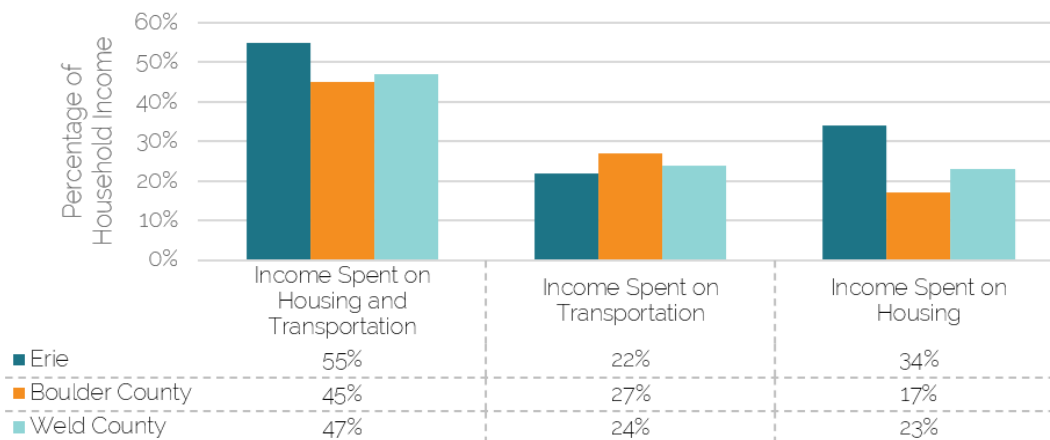


Figure 41: H+T Costs for Erie, Boulder and Weld Counties

Transportation Safety and Accessibility

Most of Erie's current traffic occurs on major roadways such as Erie Parkway, County Line Road, and state highways such as US-287, SH-7, and SH-52. The intersections with the highest number of crashes are Weld County Road 7 and Erie Parkway, Weld County Road 5 and Erie Parkway, and Weld County Road 7 & Highway 52. The corridors with the highest number of crashes are Erie Parkway, Weld County Line Road 7, and CO-52. Five of the seven bicyclist-involved crashes have occurred on or near Erie Parkway while pedestrian-involved crashes are more dispersed throughout the Town. Many locations where a high number of crashes have occurred are near key destinations with vulnerable travelers such as schools, community centers, and grocery stores, as seen Figure 15.

¹⁴ Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), H+T Index

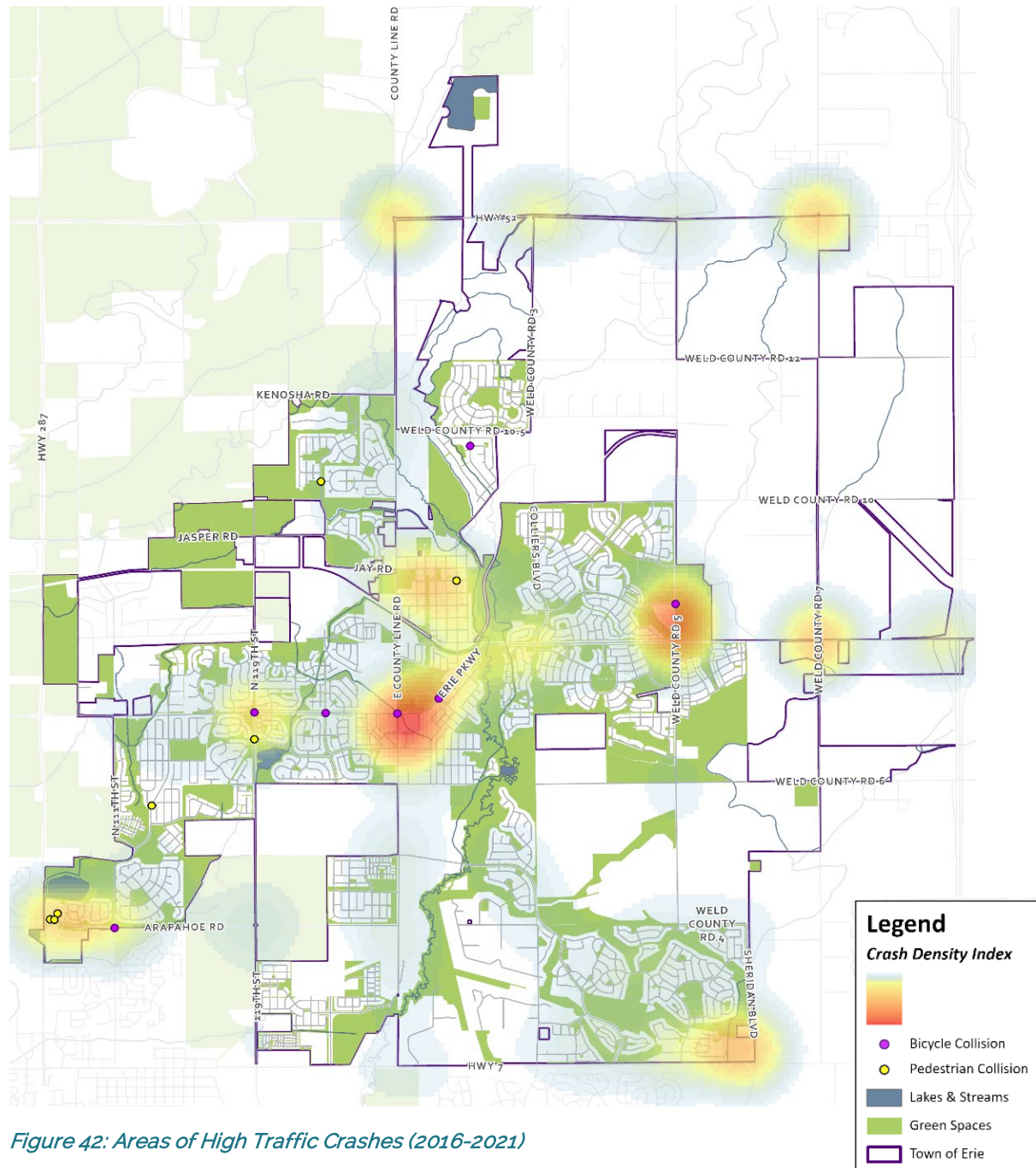


Figure 42: Areas of High Traffic Crashes (2016-2021)

The [Mobility and Access for All Ages and Abilities report](#) showed a moderate demand for transit for the portion of Erie within Boulder County (site of the study). The report’s Transit Need Index is based on cumulative density of older adults, youth, low-income, and people with disabilities. By 2028 it is projected that Erie’s population over aged over 65 will make up 14% of the total population, and those aged 50 and over will be 33%. Older Americans are more likely to have a disability. According to 2021 ACS (American Community Survey, Census), 46% aged 75 and older and 24% age 65 to 74 reports having a disability.

Access to Goods and Services

Erie’s current transit system includes both traditional fixed-route public transit and human services transit. Operators in Erie include Regional Transportation District (RTD), Via Mobility

Health and Social Capital

Services, and the Town of Erie Day Trip Bus. RTD's only fixed route service that operates in Erie is the JUMP route—traveling to Erie Community Center. As seen in Figure 17, the JUMP route originates in Downtown Boulder. This route has 30-minute headways in peak times, hour headways in off-peak, no mid-day weekday service, and no Sunday service.

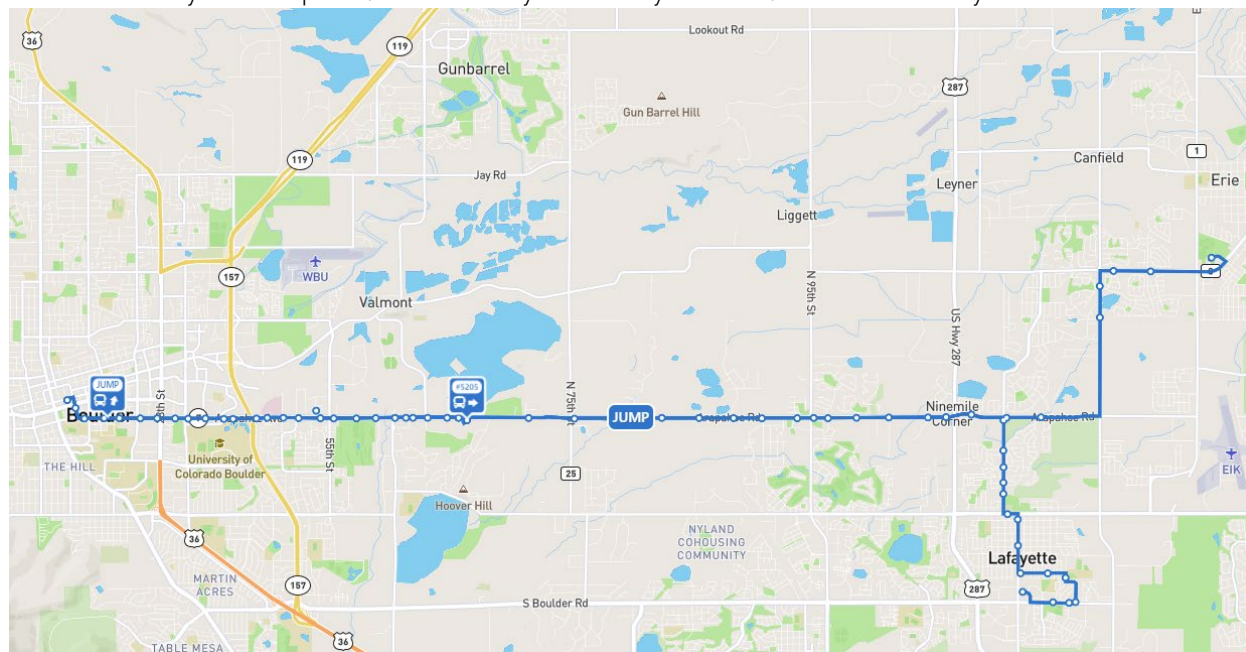


Figure 43: RTD JUMP Route

Some areas of Town are not in the RTD service area. This is largely due to the patchwork pattern of RTD annexations. RTD was founded in 1969, which included all of Boulder County. As Erie grew into Boulder County these properties were automatically annexed into RTD, while Weld County properties remained unannexed. In 1994 RTD adopted an annexation policy extending automatic annexations to newly annexed properties within cities/towns that are partially within RTD. Properties within Town boundaries that were annexed prior to this policy have remained outside of RTD's service boundary. These are four main areas, as shown in Figure 17, Old Town, Airport, Erie Highlands/Westerly, and Gateway south. This lack of cohesion in the service area creates issues when pursuing funding, as well as limiting continuity of service throughout the Town's boundaries.

Lack of transit options affects those who can't or don't drive the most. According to responses from a youth survey conducted by Town Staff more than one-quarter (28%) of respondents want to see buses as a mobility option in Erie. These responses were collected at two events in the summer of 2023. The survey was geared towards those aged 11 to 21. The 'North Metro Commuter Survey, Erie Commuters and Residents' by smart commute shows the majority (79.1%) of commuters travel by single occupancy vehicle (SOV), and only 0.3% use transit. Without reliable transit options, residents are forced to rely more on SOV for trips. This contributes to more vehicles on the road in Town, and contributes to emissions, as only 5%

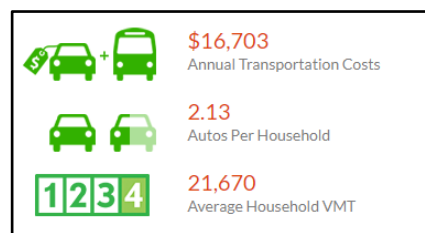


Figure 44: Erie Transportation Snapshot, Center of Neighborhood Technology (CNT)

Health and Social Capital

drive a zero-emitting vehicle.¹⁵ Erie's annual transportation costs are \$16,703 with average household vehicle miles traveled (VMT) of 21,670.

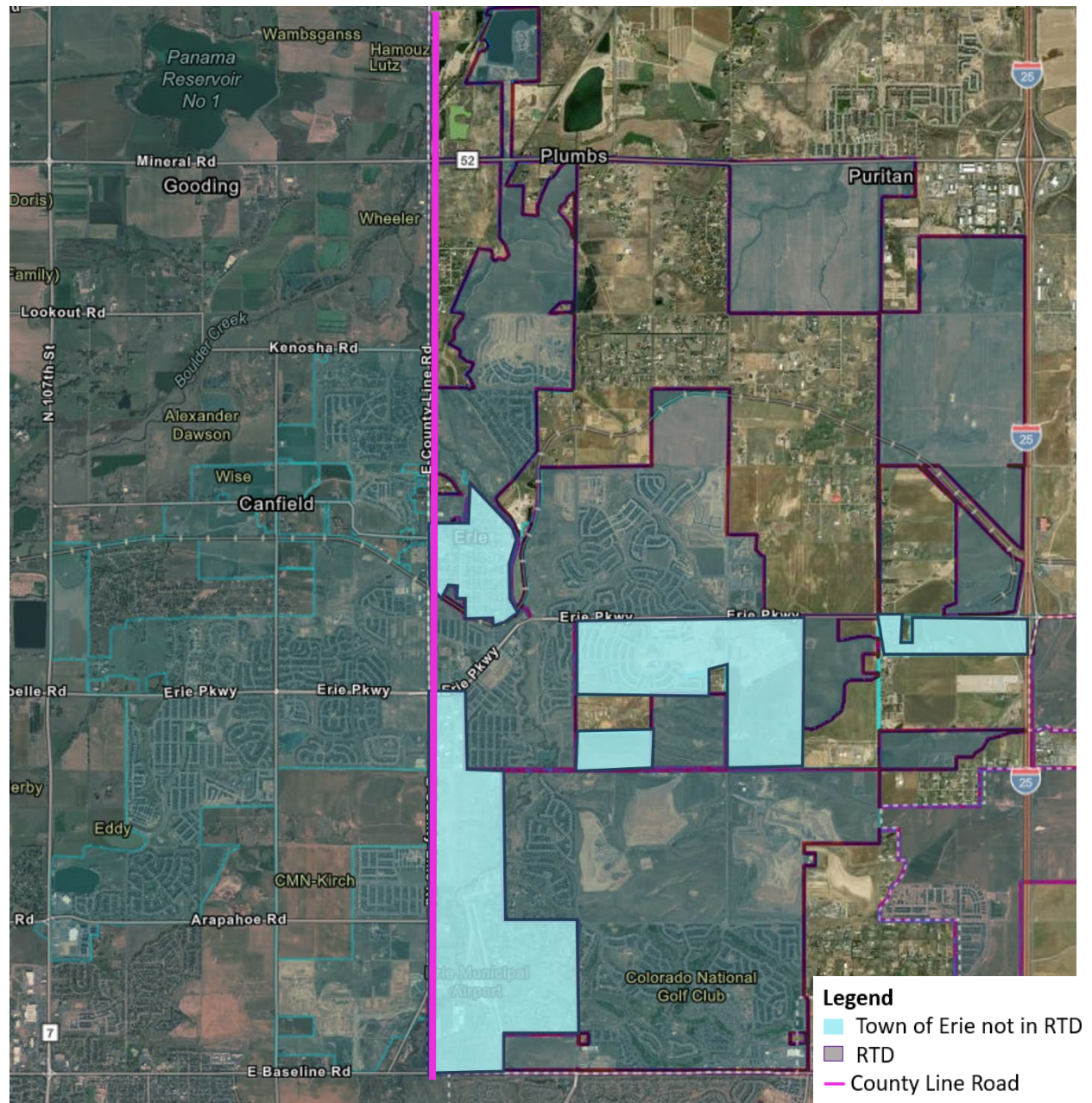


Figure 45: Areas of Erie not in Regional Transportation District (RTD)

¹⁵ North Metro Commuter Survey, smart commute, 2022.

Health and Social Capital

Erie's relatively low zero-emission vehicle use, high SOV use, lack of compact development and walkability, and limited transit options contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. These emissions contribute to climate change. There are several climate-related hazards that threaten the health of socially vulnerable people such as heat and respiratory illnesses. Figure 19 illustrates Erie's annual greenhouse gas emissions from household automobile use, compared to surrounding communities¹⁶. Erie has the highest greenhouse gas emissions from cars, followed closely by Brighton, while Boulder is the lowest, thanks to robust transit.

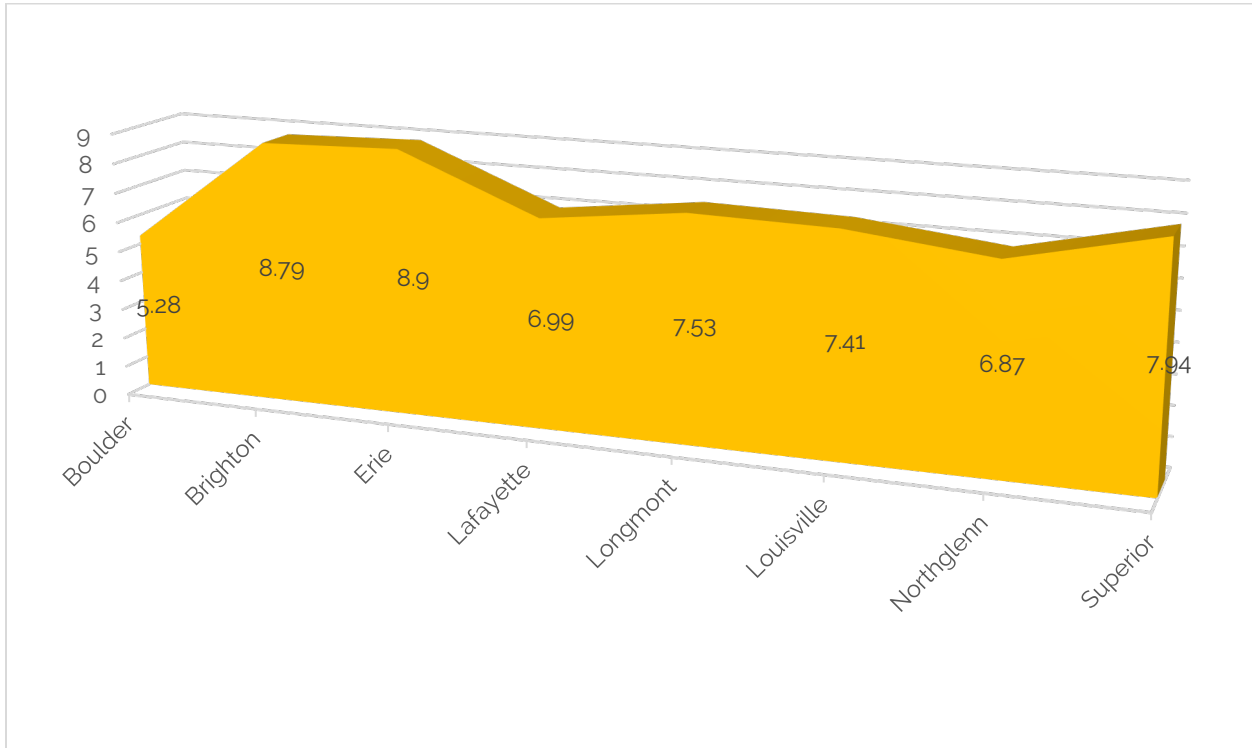


Figure 46: Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Automobiles, per Household (tonnes)

Health and Social Capital

Employment Efficiency

Very few employees live and work in Erie, the majority (95%) live in Town but are employed elsewhere¹⁷. Erie has a low Job Access Score, meaning most workers have poor access to jobs, and there is a lack of employment variety. This creates traffic issues and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. This also contributes to Erie's sales tax and retail spending leakages, as workers often buy goods and services near their jobs instead of in the Town.

Erie commuters travel longer than the state and national averages.

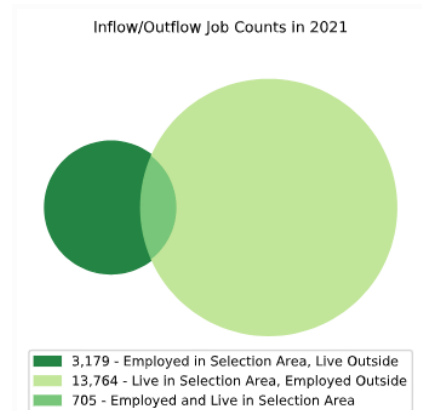


Figure 47: Employment Efficiency (All Jobs), 2021, U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD

¹⁷ Employment Efficiency (All Jobs), 2021, U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD

Health and Social Capital

Issues and Opportunities

The first phases of the Comprehensive Plan process focused on initial public outreach and data analysis. The following list of health and social capital-related issues and opportunities summarizes the outcomes of the existing conditions data, supported by feedback from the public, community leaders, staff, and stakeholders.

Issues

- High cost of housing relative to the high median income results in significant financial burdens for both homeowners and renters.
- Approximately 96% of the community must use a car to reach a grocery store which leads to increased time in a car and transportation costs for everyday needs.
- Erie has a higher than recommended Housing + Transportation cost, which burdens low- and moderate-income households the most.
- There are stark differences in quality-of-life responses in the 2023 Community Survey between white and non-white residents, and people who rent and homeowners.
- The Town's obesity rate is higher than the state average, which can contribute to other health issues and higher mortality rates.
- Erie's longer commute times can contribute to negative physical and mental health outcomes, such as sedentary lifestyles, less time with family and friends, and less time for exercise.

Opportunities

- Transit and other transportation options to lessen VMT, time spent in cars, carbon emissions, and transportation costs.
- Creating "complete" neighborhoods with a mix of uses and daily needs within walking distance, including Old Town and other new neighborhoods.
- Improvements to quality of life for non-white residents, mobile home residents, and renters.
- Diverse housing types and price points that give opportunities to people of different backgrounds, ages, and income levels.
- Gathering data to better understand why some folks may not feel as welcome and how the government and community can work together to address.
- Arts and cultural opportunities that represent and connect with a variety residents.

ELEVATE ERIE COMP PLAN

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Housing Trends

Snapshot of Trends









Market Conditions: As of 2021, 89% of Erie's housing units were estimated to be single detached houses and less than 750 housing units contained two or more units.



Rental Units and Affordability: Renter households earning less than \$75,000 can afford approximately 3% of the Town's housing stock.



Cost of Housing: The 2021 median home price was \$565,500 and more than 58% of the owner-occupied housing stock is valued at more than \$500,000.

 <p>10,085 Total Housing Units</p>	 <p>\$565,500 Median Home Value</p>	 <p>\$2,564 Median Gross Rent</p>
 <p>3,324 New Units Built since 2010</p>	 <p>97% Of Housing Units are Occupied</p>	 <p>86% Of Housing is Owner Occupied</p>

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Town of Erie 2022 Population Estimates

Context

The availability and affordability of housing within a community affects the ability of new residents to move within the Town, and existing residents to remain. Housing is tied to economic and demographic trends. Erie's median household income (\$140,409) and median net worth (\$682,645) is higher than its home counties and the state. See the Demographics section for more details on these figures. Housing market changes due to growth within the Front Range coupled with the disruptions and high-demand caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in higher home prices for the region. These conditions combined with increased mortgage interest rates have made home ownership for many in the region unattainable. Further, some of those that bought into the market a few years ago could not afford to purchase their current house if they were looking to buy now. These conditions have led to a low number of listings and contributing to demand for housing.

Erie has very little rental housing available, and what is available tends to be expensive. Median gross rent in Erie is \$2,564. There are very few studio or one-bedroom rentals. All

Housing Trends

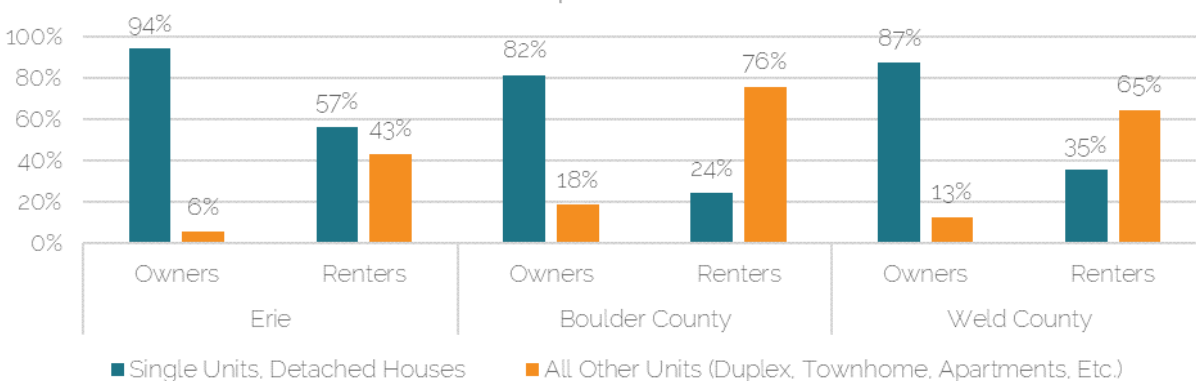
these factors preclude those just starting out, working class, service, and retail workers from living in Erie. This creates a lack of local workforce and can inhibit retail and services from locating in the Town. Feedback about Erie's lack of retail and service options has been consistently received during engagement efforts for the plan.

Please note that unless otherwise stated, the data used in this snapshot are from the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates prepared by the US Census. Some data from the Colorado State Demographer and the recently completed Erie Housing Needs Assessment were used to supplement the 2021 ACS data, where noted. The US Census 2021 ACS 5-year estimates were chosen as the basis for this snapshot because while the State Demographer provides general housing data and trends for Erie, the 2021 ACS 5-year estimates provide additional detailed data regarding housing typologies and demographics. Additionally, the Erie Housing Needs Assessment uses six months of data from the first quarter of 2022 for median single-family home prices, whereas the 2021 ACS 5-year estimates are based on entire years' worth of data. It should be noted that the ACS data are estimates and numbers may vary slightly from the state demographer data.

Housing Characteristics

Detached, single-family housing characterizes the majority of Erie's existing housing stock. According to the 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 89% of homes fell into this category. Furthermore, 94% of homeowners and 57% of renters live in single unit, detached houses in Erie. In comparison, most renters in Boulder and Weld counties live in attached or multifamily housing, such as duplexes, townhomes, or apartments. The graph below highlights the prominence of single unit, detached housing in Erie.

Figure 48 Distribution of Occupied Housing Units by Type and Ownership/Rental Status



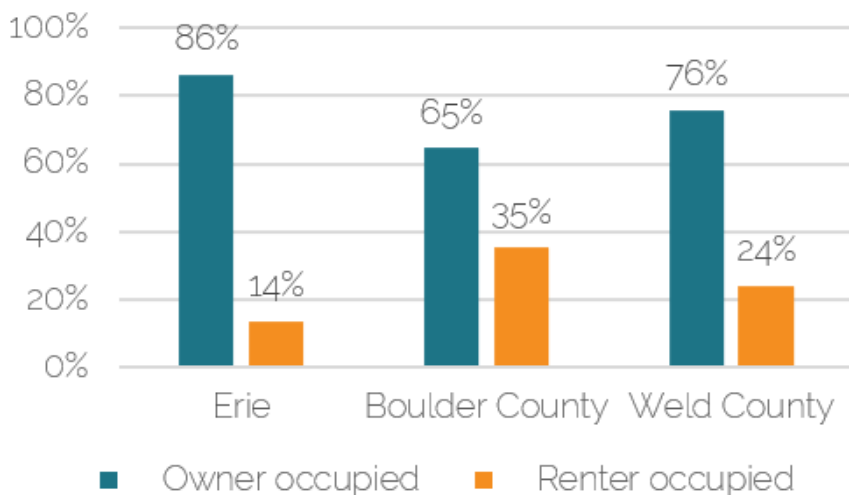
Source: 2021 ACS 5-year Estimates

This housing type dominance will likely change, as Town code adopted in January of 2022 now requires a mix of housing types in residential developments based on total acreage, for projects over 40 acres. This has resulted in many newer developments waiting until the final stages of development to incorporate housing types different from single-family detached.

High rates of occupancy and ownership also define Erie's housing market. According to 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 97% of housing units in Erie were occupied. While high housing occupancy can be found in both Boulder and Weld counties, Erie's occupancy rate is the highest, which has likely contributed to the Town's high cost of housing.

Figure 49. Owner vs. Renter Occupied

Housing Trends



Owner occupancy rates are also higher in Erie compared to surrounding communities. Of occupied housing, 86% are owner-occupied and 14% are renter-occupied. In comparison, 65% of units in Boulder County are owner-occupied and 76% of units are owner-occupied in Weld County.

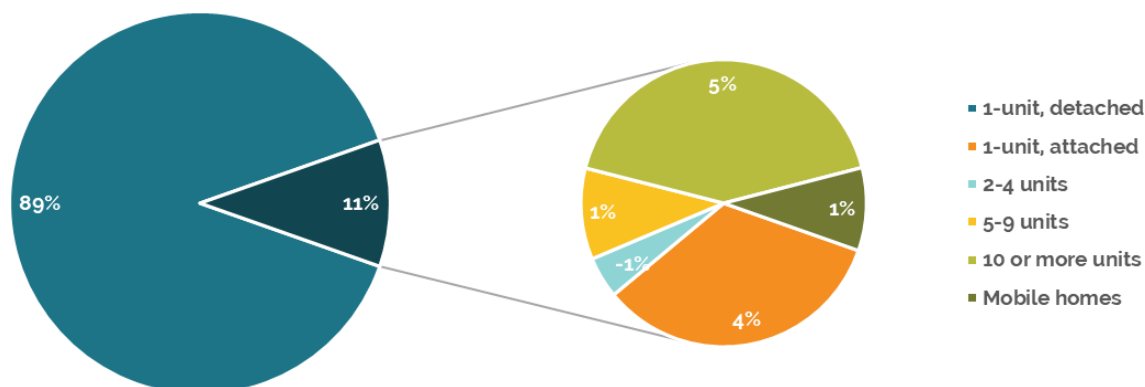
Boulder's high rate of renter occupancy is due to The University of Colorado at Boulder.

Although Erie's vacancy rate remains low, indicating the Town's strong housing market, the vacancy rate has remained stable despite the growth in the Town's overall number of housing units. The increased number of housing units and stable vacancy rate indicate a strong demand for housing in Erie. If this trend of increased housing stock and stable vacancy rates continues, Erie may continue to experience a tight housing market with high home prices which are unattainable for local workers. Similarly, regional population growth and tight housing markets in other Front Range communities influence Erie's housing market.

Housing Types and Household Size

A majority (89%) of Erie's housing stock is classified as single-unit detached housing. This is above Erie's home counties at 60% for Boulder and 74% for Weld. Developments of 10 or more units make up the second highest segment of housing at 4.5%. This highlights the disparity between Erie's significant presence of single-unit detached housing and the community's lack of other housing types, including single-unit attached housing, like townhomes and paired homes. This lack of variety limits some demographic groups from living in Erie, as single-family detached homes are the most expensive to produce, and therefore buy or rent.

Figure 50: Erie's Distribution of Housing Types

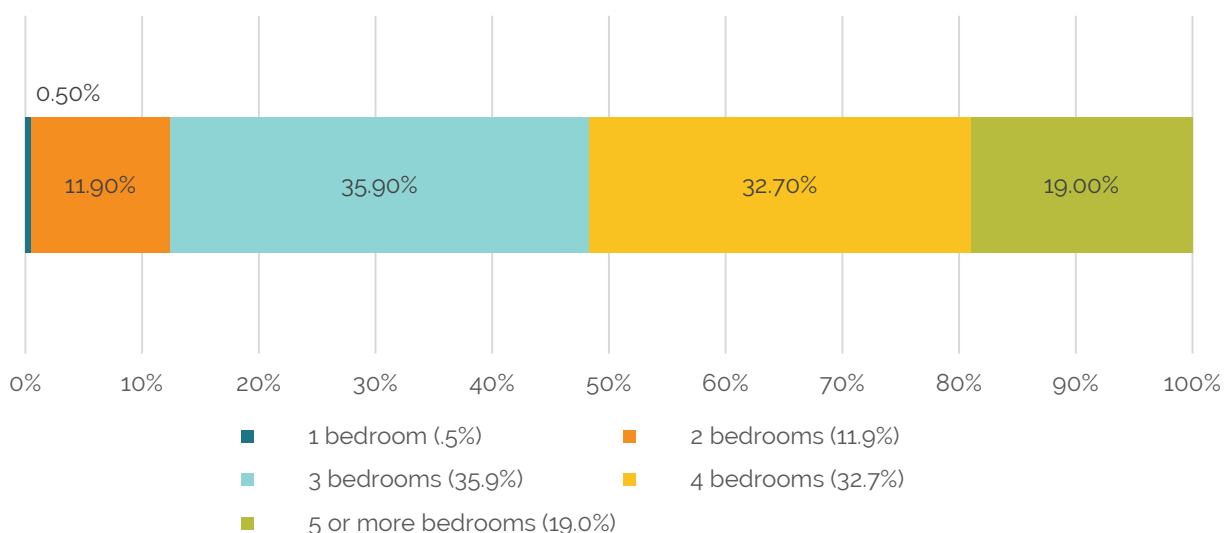


Housing Trends

Homes with 3- and 4-bedrooms make up most of Erie's housing stock at nearly 36% and 33% respectively. Nearly 19% of Erie's housing stock is 5-bedroom homes. This housing profile of predominantly large, single-unit detached homes lends itself to larger and/or higher-income families. Census estimates show that the average household size in Erie of 3.00 persons. This is higher than that in Boulder or Weld counties, at 2.41 persons and 2.84 persons respectively. While Planning & Development Department estimates show 2.99 average household size for single-family, and 2.1 average household size for multifamily (apartments, condos).

As emphasized in Erie's 2023 Housing Needs Assessment, detached single-unit dwellings are the largest and most expensive housing type. Detached single-unit dwellings are also the most expensive for a municipality to provide water, sewer, and transit services. Detached single-unit dwellings have been noted as the most land-intensive development pattern and can transform a community from a walkable community into a car-oriented community.

Figure 51: Number of Bedrooms in Erie (across all housing types)



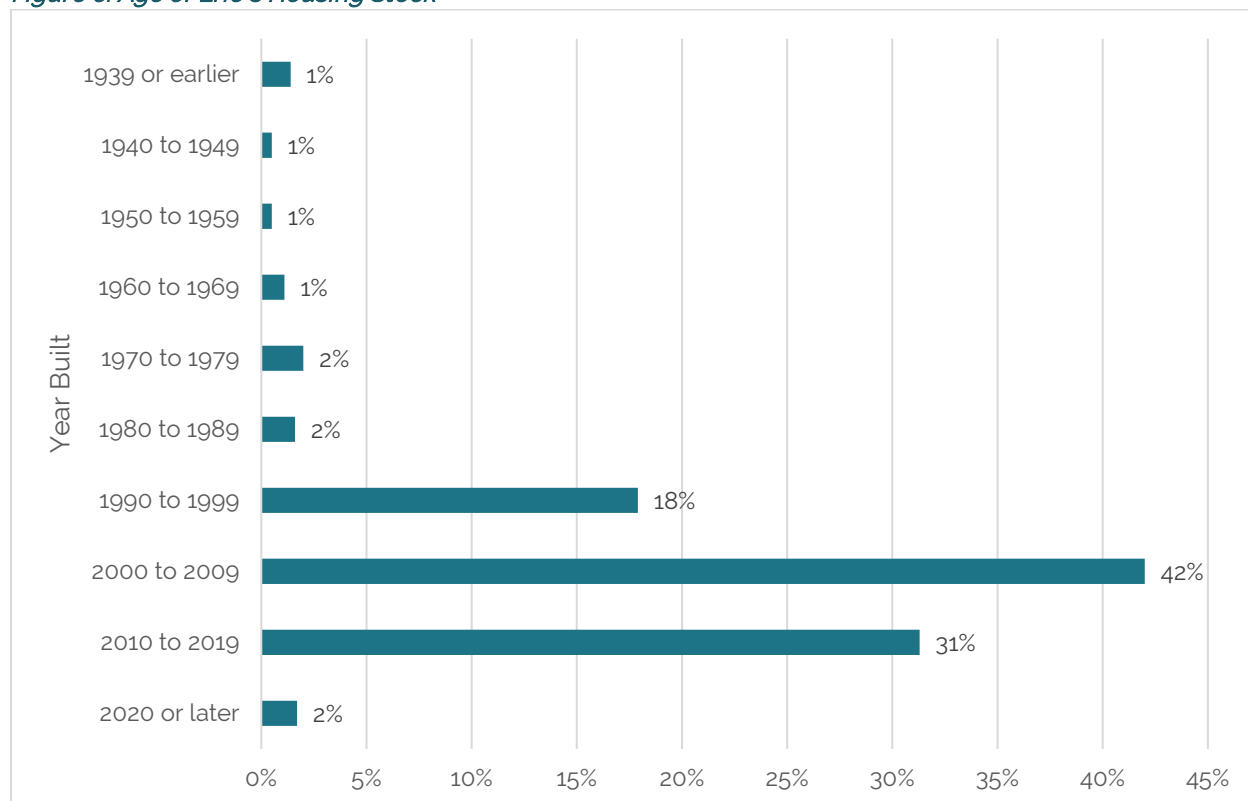
Erie's primarily single-unit detached home inventory is due to recent residential growth. Most of Erie's housing was built after 1990, with more than 3,000 units—or 33% of the Town's housing stock, being built after 2010.

"The newness of Erie's housing stocks and its relative lack of rental units mean that potential new residents of Erie who want to be homeowners but have annual household incomes of less than \$150,000, or who do not want to be homeowners at all, will find very limited choice."

-Erie Housing Needs Assessment and Affordable Housing Strategy

Housing Trends

Figure 6. Age of Erie's Housing Stock



Housing Cost and Affordability

Median home value in Erie is above that of Weld County, and the state, while slightly below Boulder County (see Figure 4). Additionally, the Erie Housing Needs Assessment analyzed the single-unit detached units' sales price and found an increase in the single-unit detached median sales price from \$685,000 in the first six months of 2021 to \$808,000 in the first six months of 2022.

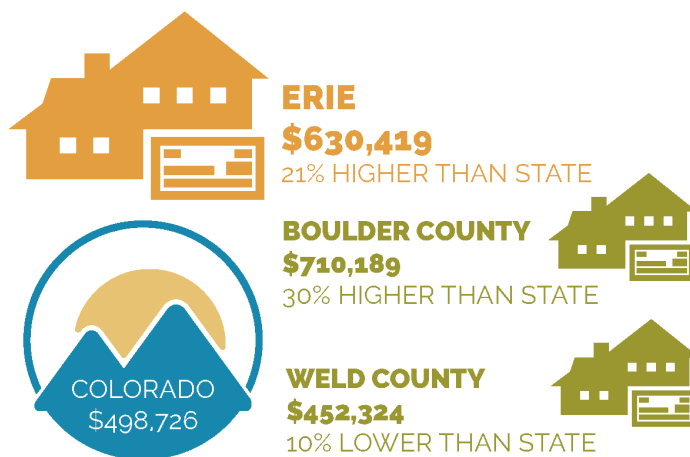


Figure 52: Median Home Value (ESRI Business Analyst)

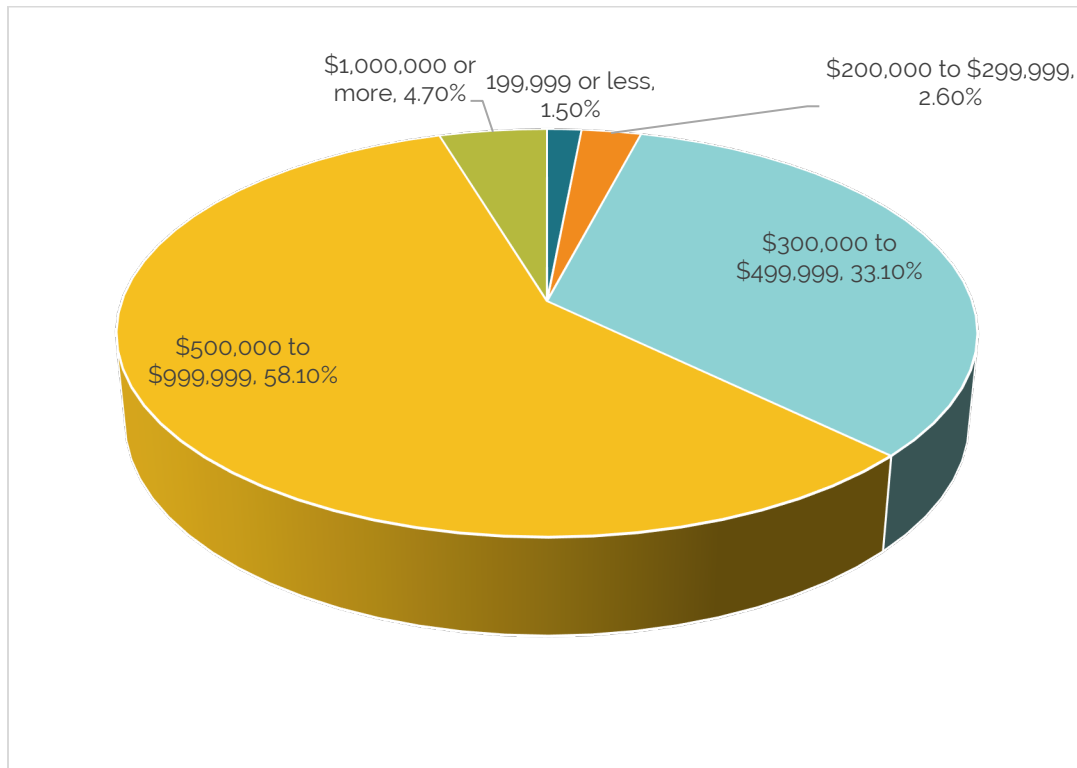
Erie's Housing Needs Assessment found that compared to Weld County, Boulder County, and Broomfield County, Erie has a higher owner-occupancy rate and the lowest proportion of housing affordable to households earning less than \$75,000 annually. Renter households with incomes of less than \$75,000 can only afford about 3% of the housing within Erie. Looking at the larger region, renter households making \$75,000 can expect to afford about 25% of the housing units, indicating a significant lack of units affordable to those households within the Town and region.

More than 58% of the owner-occupied housing stock in Erie is valued at more than \$500,000 and an additional 33% of the housing stock is valued between \$300,000 and \$499,999. Given

Housing Trends

the median home price of \$630,419 in Erie a household would need to make \$189,125 per year to afford to purchase. Given the Erie median income of \$140,409, the average household in Erie can only comfortably afford a home at a maximum price of \$491,431. This means that well over half of the housing stock in Erie is unaffordable to a household earning the median household income.

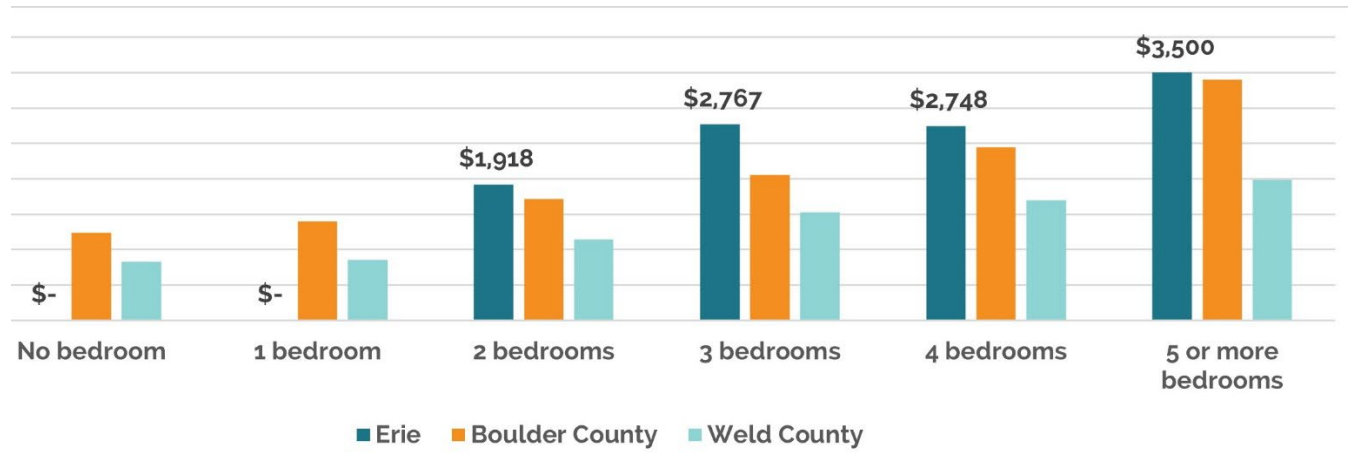
Figure 7. Value of Owner-Occupied Housing in Erie



Monthly median rent in Erie is \$2,564, with 40% of renters paying \$2,500-\$3,000 and 15% paying \$3,000 or more a month. As shown in Figure 5, median rent across all unit sizes (data not available for studio or 1-bedroom units) is higher in Erie than in Boulder and Weld counties, further highlighting challenges renters face in Erie. This high cost of housing for both renters and purchasing options in Erie means there is little housing that is affordable to the local workforce. This makes it difficult to attract and retain residents. High housing costs are noted as a major factor in relocation and general household stressors, especially for minority and low-income households.

Housing Trends

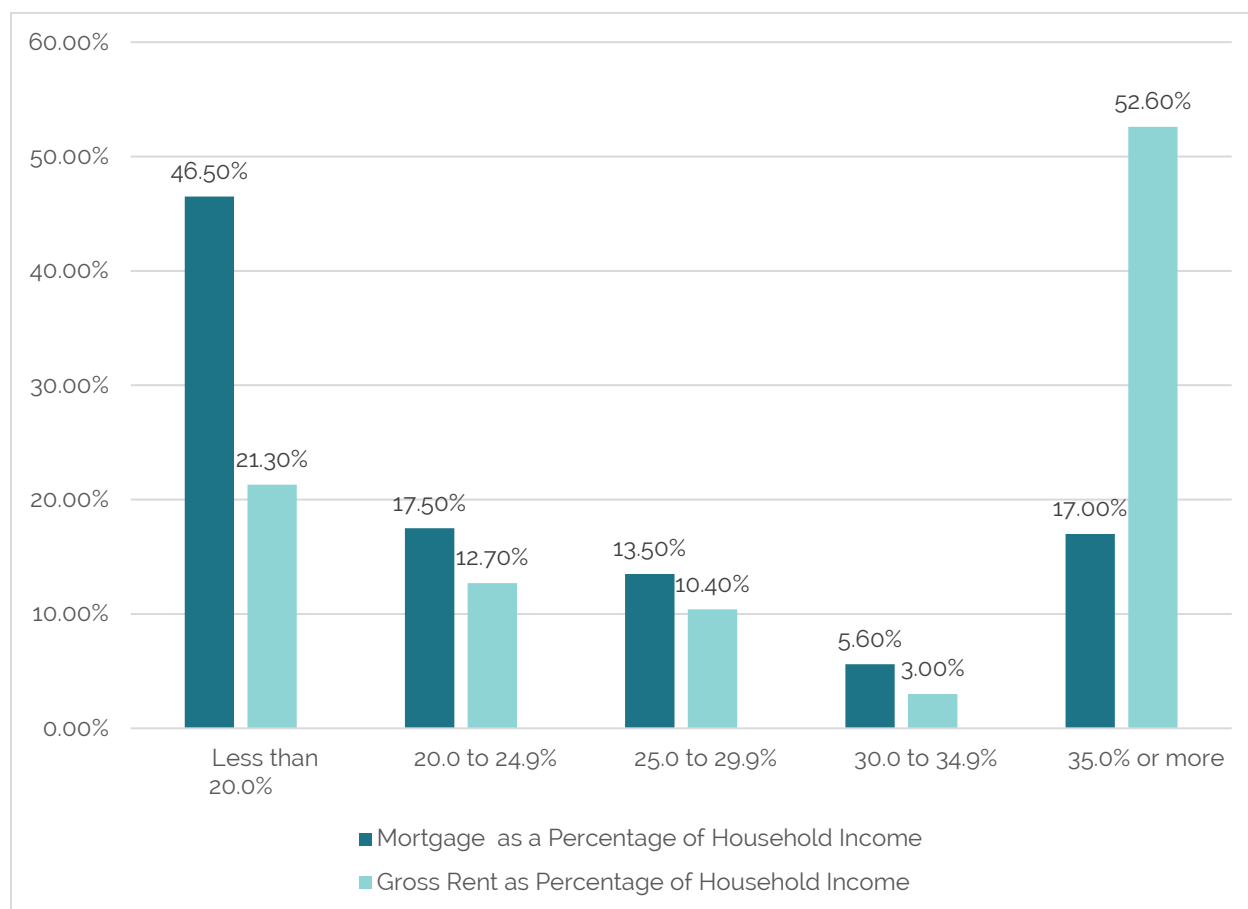
Figure 53: Median Gross Rent by Number of Bedrooms



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses a threshold of 30% of household income as the basis for what households could pay on rent or mortgage payments before being "cost burdened." Households paying more than 30% of their income on housing will have insufficient income for other essential expenses such as food, transportation, childcare, and healthcare. In Erie, 56% of households in rental units are cost burdened, while 23% of owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage are cost burdened, according to 2021 ACS 5-year estimates, and illustrated below.

Housing Trends

Figure 54: Housing Expense by Percent of Household Income, Erie



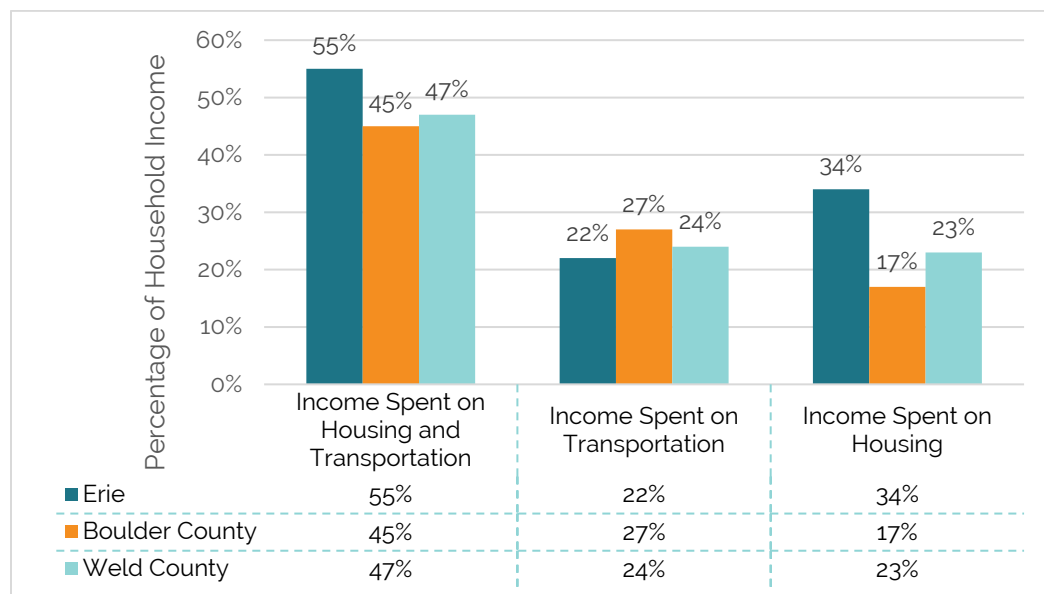
Another method to gauge housing affordability in a community is the Housing and Transportation Affordability Index (H+T Index), which was developed by the Center for Neighborhood Technology. The H+T Index uses regional data to understand the cost of housing and transportation for a typical household in a community and defines an affordability threshold of 45% of household income spent on housing and transportation costs. Above this threshold a household's housing and transportation costs are considered unaffordable.

The H+T Index reports a regional typical household median income of \$74,150, 1.32 commuters per household, and an average household size of 2.85 persons¹⁸. The Index shows that a typical household in Erie spends 55% of their income on housing and transportation costs – 34% on housing and 22% on transportation costs – meaning housing and transportation are unaffordable to many Erie residents. The Index notes low job access, car-dependence with very limited or no access to public transportation, and very low density and limited walkability as key factors in high transportation costs in Erie. H+T Indexes in Boulder and Weld Counties are slightly lower at 45% and 47% respectively.

¹⁸ Median household income and median household size differ from the Erie 2021 ACS 5-year estimates.

Housing Trends

Figure 10. Housing + Transportation Index



Policy Analysis of Existing Plans and Initiatives

This report includes an overview of recent Town plans and studies that are relevant to the ongoing development and implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Through the integration of these recent plans and studies, the Town can build upon existing knowledge and leverage the expertise of those who contributed to these initiatives.

2015 Erie Comprehensive Plan

Much of Erie's land was designated in the 2015 Future Land Use Map as "rural residential" or "low density residential." These designations have maximum dwelling unit per acre allowances at 2 DU/acre and 6 DU/acre respectively. Medium and high-density residential land uses are sparsely located along major transportation corridors on the Land Use Map and lack density, as the allowance is only 20 DU/acre.

Comprehensive Plan goals and policies are not being met, specifically the following from Housing and Neighborhoods section:

- HN Goal #3 Mix of Housing Types: Plan for a range of neighborhoods and housing types that can accommodate the diverse housing needs of all residents.
 - HN Policy 3.1 – Mix of Housing Types and Densities: The Town will encourage the incorporation of a mixture of housing types with varied price ranges, lot sizes, lot configurations, and densities, to attempt to meet the needs of all segments of the community. In addition, the Town will encourage the use of a mix of builders for larger developments and the incorporation of efficiency standards and clustering, where appropriate.
 - HN Policy 3.2 – Maintain and encourage housing that meets the diverse needs of residents: There is growing concern about the availability of attainable housing for low and moderate-income families in Erie. The Town will work with the private sector and non-profit agencies to ensure that sites that are

Housing Trends

potentially suitable for housing are available within the Planning Area to achieve a variety of price points. This should include sites at a variety of scales to accommodate both small infill projects and larger redevelopment or green field projects. In addition, the Town will encourage innovative design in housing by considering financial incentives and other mechanisms to reduce development costs, such as:

- Varied lot sizes (including small lots)
- Varied lot configurations
- Clustering
- Mix of builders
- Efficiency standards

Unified Development Code

Erie's Unified Development Code (UDC) requires a mix of residential unit types for new subdivisions (10-6-7). However, clear percentages of each type required are not provided, nor is the timing of variety regulated. This has resulted in developers leaving the housing variety requirement until the late or final stages of a development. The UDC also treats manufactured/mobile homes differently than other single family detached homes, by requiring that they be located within mobile home parks. This conflicts with HUD's Fair Housing law. Many manufactured homes are in Old Town, some outside of mobile home parks. This issue is being addressed in a code update prior to the completion of the Comprehensive Plan.

Development Design Standards

The Development Design Standards document is referenced in the code but exists separate from the codified regulations. The document contains phrases that act as regulations, and mixes guidelines with requirements. This is confusing and can be difficult to administer. Generally, if something is a regulation it should be contained within the municipal code as this is adopted by the legislative body.

This document has standards broken out into two categories – Single-family detached and Duplex, and Multi-family and Townhome. The document provides a list of principles for residential housing in Erie, one of which is 'Erie Character'. Defined as "Residential developments should create a sense of place contributing to the small-town feel." This definition is vague and subjective. The document regulates blocks, frontages, adjacency to parks and open spaces, access, circulation and parking, grading, and retaining walls, screening, building orientation, and architectural character.

Architectural Standards

The architectural standards within the Development Design Standards Document prohibit the use of many materials utilized in manufactured homes, or more affordable housing. These include vinyl siding, EFIS, and metal siding. Additionally, 12" minimum roof overhangs are required and are not typically found in manufactured or modular housing.

Issues and Opportunities

The first phases of the Comprehensive Plan process focused on initial public outreach and data analysis. The following list of housing-related issues and opportunities summarizes the

Housing Trends

outcomes of the existing conditions data, supported by feedback from the public, community leaders, staff, and stakeholders.

Issues

- More than half of people who rent in Erie are burdened by housing costs.
- Most existing housing types in Erie are single-family detached or attached which tend to be the most expensive, and limit choice for those with non-traditional household composition.
- Erie's housing stock tends to be newer, constructed in the last 20 years, limiting the amount of naturally occurring affordable housing.
- In general, housing within Erie is unreachable for those making less than \$150,000 a year.
- High development costs make it difficult to create affordable housing.
- Existing naturally affordable housing in Old Town is threatened, and residents risk displacement for larger, more expensive homes.
- By 2040 there will be nearly 200% increase in those aged 65 to 84. If current housing trends continue there will be a lack of options for aging in place.
- Architectural standards impact housing affordability.

Opportunities

- Increase Old Town's (naturally occurring affordable housing) access to goods and services.
- Participation in Proposition 123 and eligibility for funding for affordable housing projects.
- Partnering with others in the region on housing affordability strategies.
- Creation of ownership housing options that is aligned with all incomes, facilitating building of intergenerational wealth.
- Market demand shows a desire for alternatives to single-family detached.
- Erie has an opportunity to focus residential development on smaller and more diverse types across a broader price range to expand the community's housing portfolio and thereby attracting residents of diverse backgrounds.

ELEVATE ERIE COMP PLAN

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Natural Resources and the Environment

Snapshot of Trends



Drought: Climate change is making drought more frequent and severe.



Residential Water Use accounts for more than 75% of total treated water use in Erie.



Wildfire: Erie has moderate wildfire danger, which can be made worse in periods of drought.



Flood Plain: More than 13% of Erie's Planning Area –or 3,880 acres of land– is designated 100-year floodplain.

Context

The Town of Erie is in Boulder Valley, an area that is rich in natural resources and is surrounded by stunning mountains, open space, and wildlife. The Town has implemented several measures to protect its natural resources, including resource management practices and air and water quality monitoring. Several active oil and gas facilities exist within the Planning Area, mainly within Weld County.

Resource Management

The Town of Erie has taken proactive steps to safeguard its natural resources through the implementation of several resource management practices. The Town's commitment to resource management is an effort to balance development with the preservation of natural assets. Erie requires open space designations, preservation of the urban forest, and water conservation measures. These efforts not only benefit the current residents but also contribute to the long-term resilience and livability of the Town for future generations.

Open Space

Recognizing the value of open space and its contribution to the well-being of residents, the Town has regulations requiring new residential development to designate areas as open space. Developers are required to provide at least 17 acres of open space land per 1,000 residents unless an alternate dedication requirement is approved by the Town Council. These protected open spaces must be permanently maintained in a natural or agricultural state and may sometimes include passive recreational experiences (typically trails). These dedicated open spaces may also serve as habitats for wildlife that support biodiversity within the region. While these open space requirements do have benefits to wildlife and natural resources, they ultimately drive up the cost of residential development by requiring more land. This cost is usually passed on to the homebuyer or renter.

Tree Canopy

Erie is a 'Tree City USA', a designation bestowed by the Arbor Day Foundation to municipalities that implement community forestry programs and manage public tree resources. The Town has had this designation since 1999, a clear outcome of the value placed on trees and canopy coverage throughout the Town. The Tree Advisory Board promotes a robust tree planting and preservation program to help build and maintain the tree canopy, as well as advises the Town Council on community forestry. This program aims to

Natural Resources and the Environment

prevent unnecessary tree removal, promote the sustainable management of trees, and increase the number of trees in public spaces and parks.

By implementing regulations and guidelines, the Town ensures that trees are properly cared for and protected during construction projects, minimizing the loss of this valuable green infrastructure. This proactive approach helps mitigate the urban heat island effect, store carbon, improve air quality, and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the Town.

Water Resources and Conservation

Erie is located in the South Platte River Basin, an area that is projected to experience water scarcity by 2050, according to Erie's [Water Efficiency Plan](#). The South Platte River Basin serves approximately 70% of Colorado's population along the Front Range, supporting agricultural, industrial, and residential uses. The basin's population is expected to double in size (between 1.9 and 2.6 million) by 2050¹⁹ and will challenge water supplies. Erie has a stake in the Northern Integrated Water Supply Plan (NISP), which would provide up to 6,500 acre-feet of water resources to Erie. The Town is also a stakeholder in the Chimney Hollow/Windy Gap Firming project which will provide firm yield for its 20 shares of Windy Gap water and is currently developing a water supply on Boulder Creek. These projects combined are intended to provide supply for the Town's future build out.

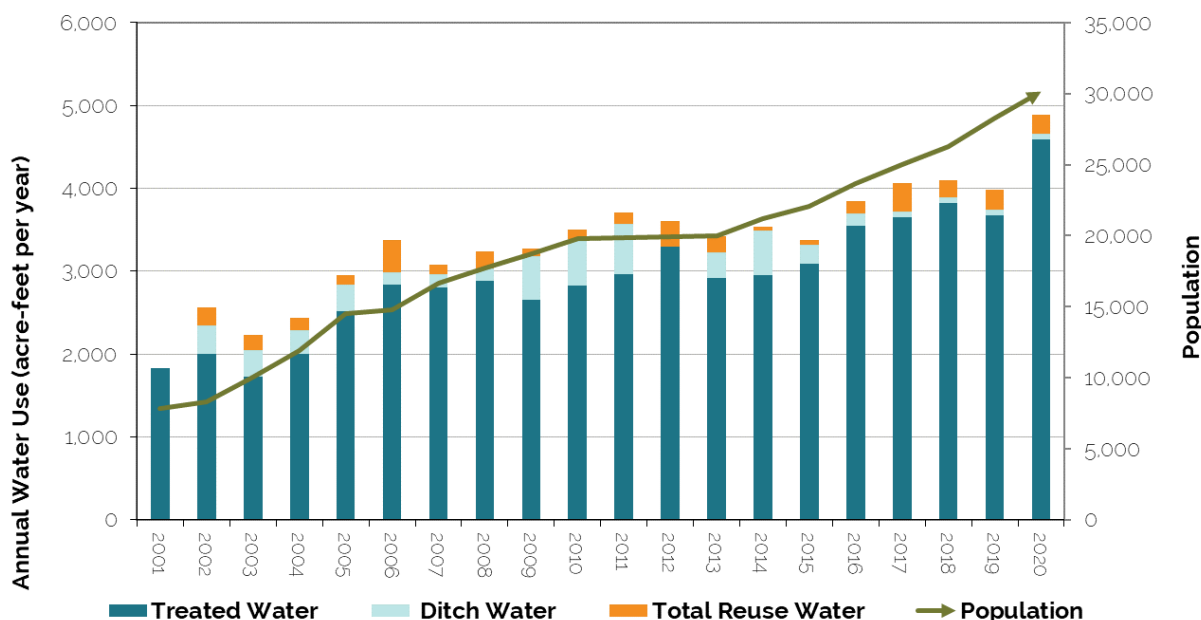
Erie's agricultural community has traditionally relied on irrigation for crop production, however with population growth and development of agricultural areas in recent decades, demand for treated water has grown and ditch water demand has fallen, see Figure 1. Residential water demand accounts for over 75% of Erie's water usage. Since 2016 Erie has seen over a 60% increase in the use of Reuse Water. Currently, Erie receives most of its drinking water through the Colorado-Big Thompson (CBT) and Windy Gap Projects. However, growth in the state of Colorado will stress water supplies in the future for many communities, including Erie.

Recognizing the importance of preserving its water resources, the Town has implemented a comprehensive water conservation program and has water efficiency practices in place that prioritize water conservation through public education, water dedication requirements for developers, incentives for water-efficient appliances, and the promotion of water-saving techniques like xeriscaping (a landscaping method that reduces water consumption), and a turf replacement rebate program. Continued efforts to encourage conservation through public education and further refinements to codes will be critical to helping reduce water demand in new and existing development. By prioritizing water conservation, Erie ensures the long-term sustainability of its water supply, reduces strain on local ecosystems, and minimizes the need for costly water infrastructure expansions.

¹⁹ South Platte River Basin Roundtable, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Department of Natural Resources, June 26, 2023, <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/about-us/basin-roundtables/south-platte-basin-roundtable>

Natural Resources and the Environment

Figure 55: Historical Water Demands and Population



Source: Town of Erie Drought and Water Supply Shortage Plan 2021

Sensitive Natural Areas

Erie's natural areas are places with natural resources such as wildlife habitat and corridors, native prairie and plant diversity, aquatic habitats and wetlands, significant topographic features, and scenic views that potentially offer opportunities to preserve, enhance, and recognize Erie's natural assets. Erie is home to special status wildlife species. The following table lists species that could or do occur within Erie, along with their state and federal status²⁰.

Table g: Special Status Wildlife Species

Common Name (Scientific Name)	State Wildlife Action Plan Priority Tier	Federal Status	State Status
Fish			
Plains topminnow (<i>Fundulus sciadicus</i>)	1	--	--
Common shiner (<i>Luxilus cornutus</i>)	1	--	State Threatened
Amphibians			
Northern leopard frog (<i>Lithobates pipiens</i>)	1	--	Special Concern
Reptiles			
Milksnake (<i>Lampropeltis Triangulum</i>)	2	--	--

²⁰ Town of Erie Open Space Management Plan, Great Ecology, et. al, 2019; Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan.

Natural Resources and the Environment

Common Name (<i>Scientific Name</i>)	State Wildlife Action Plan Priority Tier	Federal Status	State Status
Common gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>)	2	--	Special Concern
Birds			
Burrowing owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	1	--	State Threatened
American bittern (<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>)	2	--	--
Swainson's hawk (<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>)	2	--	--
Mountain plover (<i>Charadrius montanus</i>)	1	--	Special Concern
Northern harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>)	2	--	--
Bobolink (<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>)	2	--	--
Prairie falcon (<i>Falco mexicanus</i>)	2	--	--
Bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	2	--	Special Concern
Loggerhead shrike (<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>)	2	--	--
Lazuli bunting (<i>Passerina amoena</i>)	2	--	--
American white pelican (<i>Pelecanus erythrorhincus</i>)	2	--	--
Mammals			
Black-tailed prairie dog (<i>Cynomys ludovicianus</i>)	2	Not Warranted	Special Concern
Hoary bat (<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>)	2	--	--
Little brown myotis (<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>)	1	Petitioned	--
Olive-backed pocket mouse (<i>Perognathus fasciatus</i>)	1	--	--
Preble's meadow jumping mouse (<i>Zapus hudsonius preblei</i>)	1	Listed Threatened	State Threatened

Natural Resources and the Environment

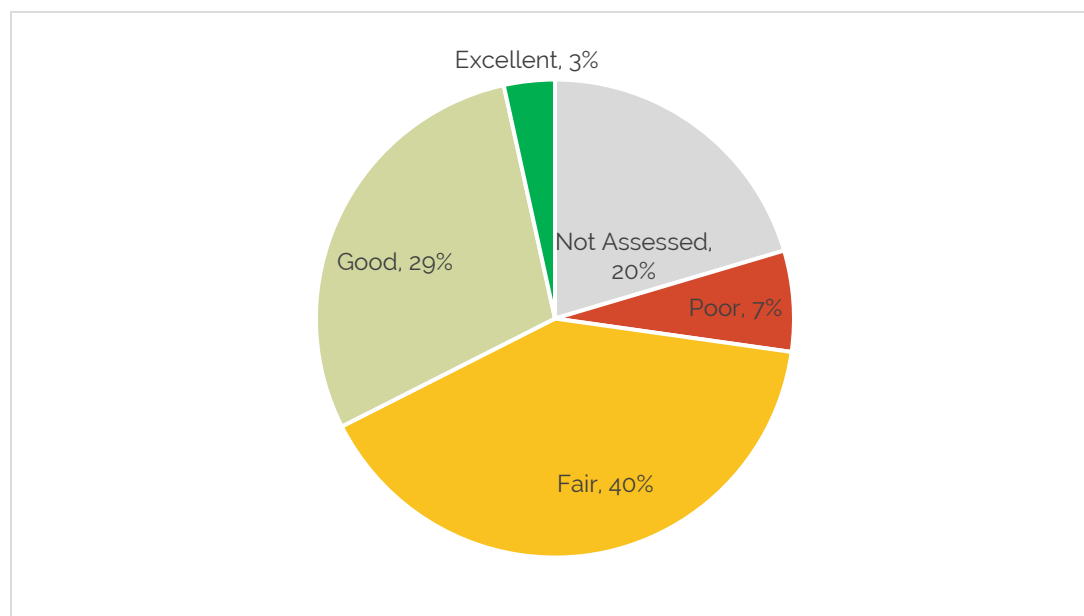
Table 10: Special Status Plant Species with Ranges within the Town of Erie

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status
Colorado butterfly plant	<i>Gaura neomexicana</i> var. <i>coloradensis</i>	Federally Threatened	Critically Endangered
Ute ladies'-tresses	<i>Spiranthes diluvialis</i>	Federally Threatened	Endangered or Threatened; Species of Greatest Conservation Need
Western prairie fringed orchid	<i>Platanthera praeclara</i>	Federally Threatened	--

Preserving and managing natural areas in the Town of Erie is crucial for maintaining biodiversity, ecosystem services, and the overall health of the environment. Management efforts include habitat maintenance or restoration, invasive species control, strategic mowing, installation of structural habitat elements, and public education to ensure the long-term protection of these valuable natural resources.

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the habitat quality of open spaces within the Town. Categories range from 'Not Assessed', to 'Poor', 'Fair', 'Good', and 'Excellent'. Most of Erie's Open Space is rated as Fair (40%; 513 acres), followed by Good (29%; 369 acres). Only 3% (44 acres) of Erie's Open Space is rated Excellent, while 7% (87 acres) is Poor. Poor habitat is typically made up of non-native plants. The habitat areas rated as Excellent tend to be near or within riparian areas. Protecting and enhancing habitat within Erie's open spaces are important for wildlife habitat as well as eco-system benefits they provide.

Figure 56: Town of Erie Open Space Habitat Ratings



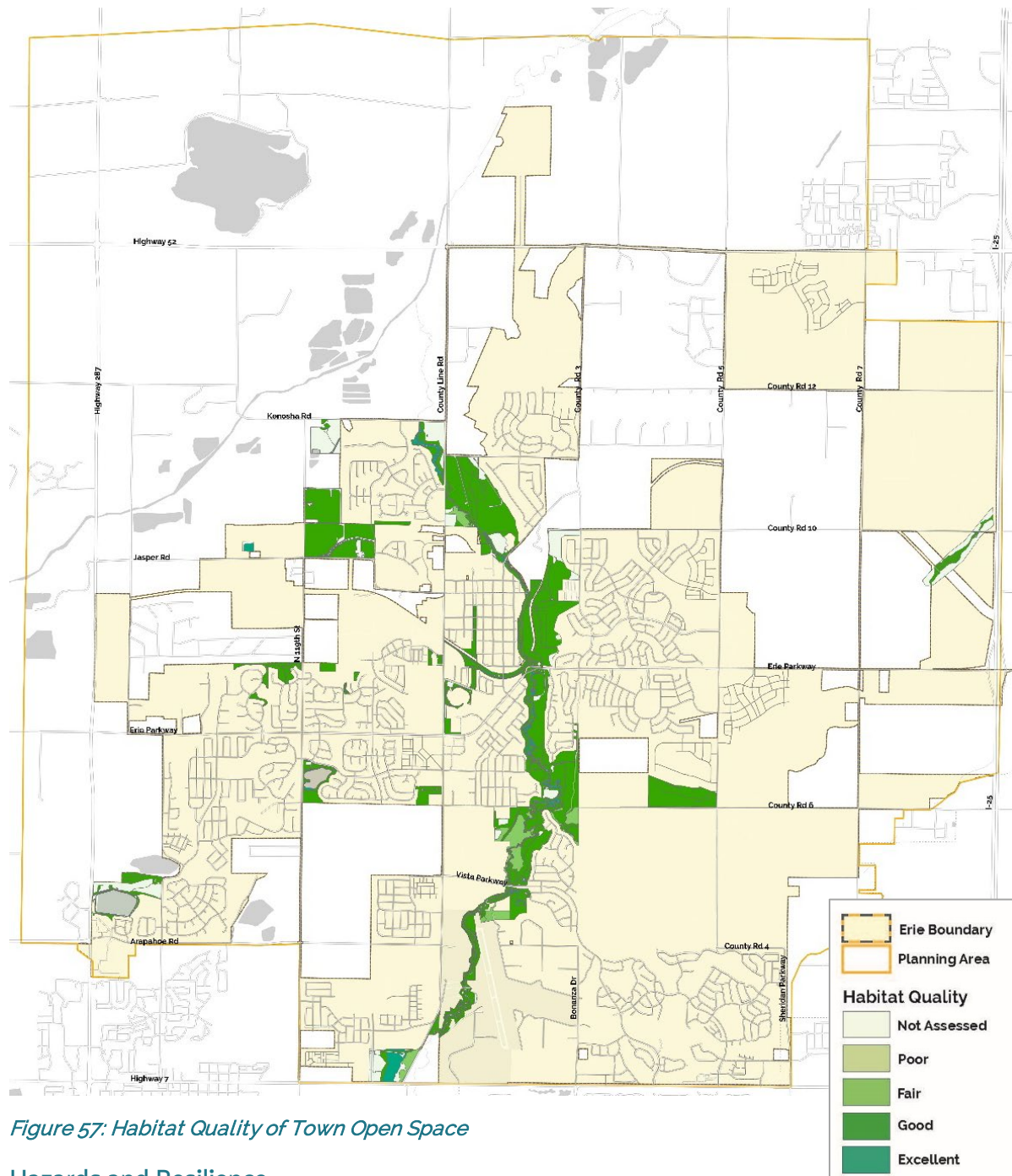


Figure 57: Habitat Quality of Town Open Space

Hazards and Resilience

The Town of Erie is susceptible to several hazards, natural and otherwise. Its location near the Rocky Mountains and semi-arid climate leaves the community vulnerable to floods, droughts, and wildfires. Additionally, the region is rich in mineral, oil, and gas resources, with extractive practices dating back to the 1800s. The Town is included in both the [Boulder County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) and the [Weld County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#).

Flooding

Several waterways cross through Erie's planning area, including Coal Creek, Boulder Creek, St. Vrain Creek, Little Dry Creek, and nine ditches. Due to the proximity to the Rocky Mountains, these waterways can all pose flooding risks and are susceptible to flash flooding

Natural Resources and the Environment

when experiencing heavy rainstorms or rapid snowpack melt events. In the northwest areas of Town, there are several low-lying areas that increase the potential for flooding. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has designated 3,880 acres, or 13% of Erie's Planning Area, as being in the 100-year floodplain, as shown on Figure 1. This means that there is a 1% chance of flooding in those areas in any given year. Much of the floodplain around Coal Creek is designated open space. And most of the Boulder Creek floodplain is zoned for agricultural uses by Boulder and Weld counties or protected as Boulder County Open Space.

To address the risk of flooding, Erie has implemented stormwater management programs, floodplain mapping and regulations, and emergency response plans. The Town also participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which provides insurance to homeowners and businesses in flood-prone areas. The Town is utilizing the Coal Creek Channel Restoration Conceptual Design Report (2018) as a reference for future planning and restoration projects in the Coal Creek corridor. There are many areas within Erie that the Coal Creek corridor is incised and unstable. Additionally, there are road crossings that are undersized and subject to overtopping during flooding events. The Town is proactively addressing these issues identified in the Coal Creek Channel Restoration Report through capital improvement projects and as funding is available.

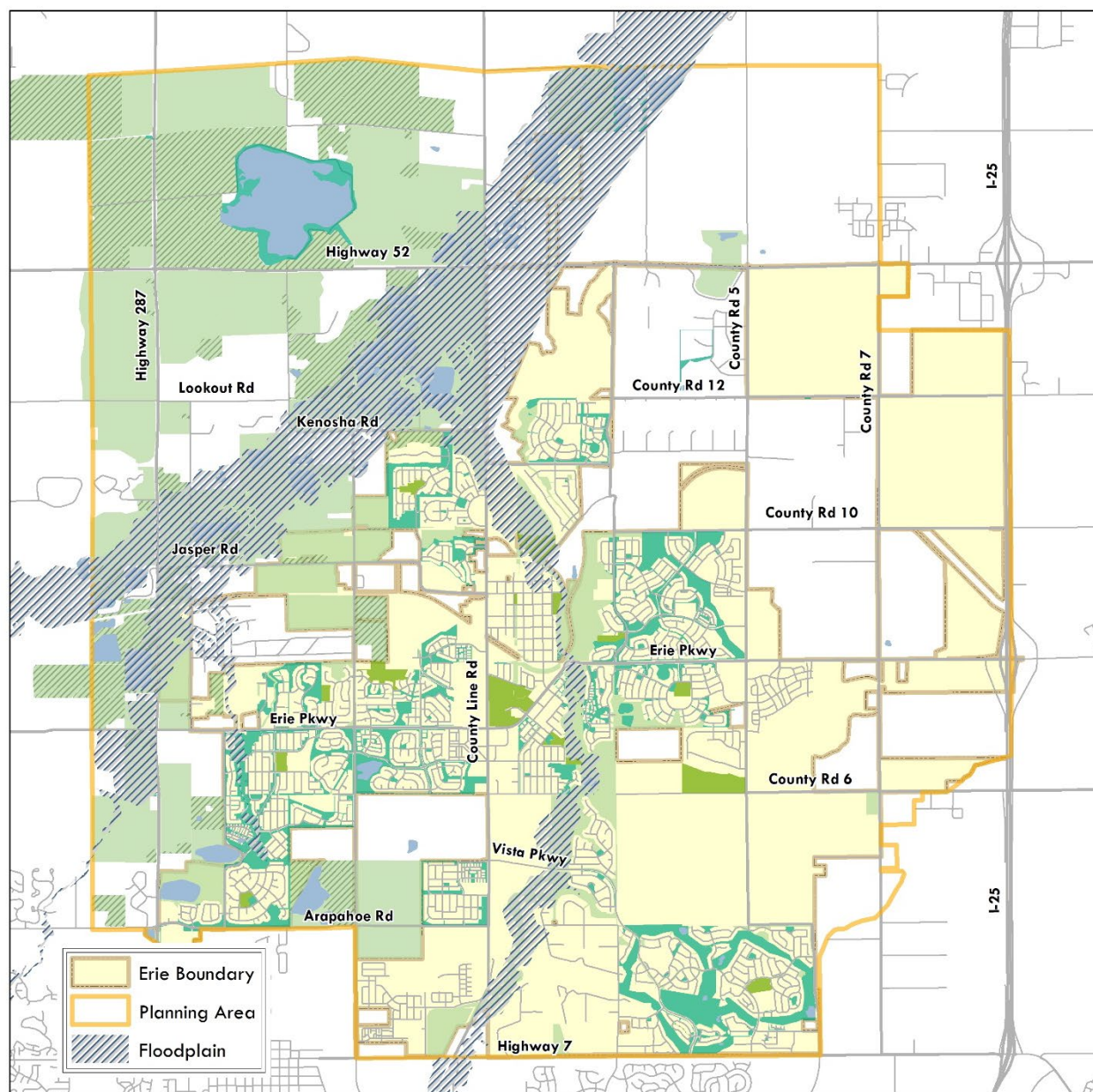


Figure 58: Floodplain Map

Drought

Drought is a persistent and recurring hazard to the region. The Town is in a semi-arid climate and water resources can become strained during such periods of drought. Additionally, climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of droughts in the region. The Colorado River Basin, which supplies water to Erie and much of the western United States, has experienced prolonged drought conditions in recent years.

To address the risk of drought, Erie has implemented several water conservation measures, including preparing a [Drought and Water Shortage Plan](#) in 2021, which includes specific actions to be taken at various stages of drought. The Town has also invested in water storage and reuse projects to ensure a more reliable supply during times of drought. As part of Erie's

Natural Resources and the Environment

water conservation program, the Town offers rebates for water-efficient fixtures and appliances. While drought is a persistent risk in Erie and the surrounding region, proactive planning and conservation efforts can help to minimize the impact on the community. Erie employs one of the regions strongest tiered rate structures, which seeks to encourage wise water use and respect for the limited resource.

Wildfire

The risk of wildfire is a concern for Erie and the surrounding region, particularly during dry periods. Erie is located near areas of high wildfire potential due to a combination of factors: its semi-arid climate, the presence of vegetation that can fuel fires, and the proximity to forests and grasslands. The [Colorado State Forest Service](#) has identified areas in Erie as moderate wildfire risk.

Erie's position in the grasslands leaves it vulnerable for wildfire, which can spread more quickly in grasslands than in forested areas., Erie has implemented several measures to address the risk of wildfire such as the adoption of the 2021 International Building Code (IBC) and 2021 International Fire Code (IFC). The 2021 IBC requires fire resistant construction of exterior walls when equal to or less than a minimum prescribed distance to adjacent property line, and requires residential fire suppression (sprinklers), both of which can slow the spread of wildfire once it enters an urbanized area. An extended grace period was provided for compliance to the adopted 2021 IBC code that will end Sept. 30, 2023. The 2021 IFC regulates open burning, fireworks, and supports the residential sprinkler requirements. The Town could require or incentivize additional Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) measures in areas of Town adjacent to grasslands to further reduce risk. The Town also has an Open Space Wildfire Mitigation Program for Town-maintained open space, that is informed by best practices and guidelines in the Boulder County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The Town's Emergency Operations Plan (administered by Erie Police Department) is in place to respond quickly and effectively to wildfire.

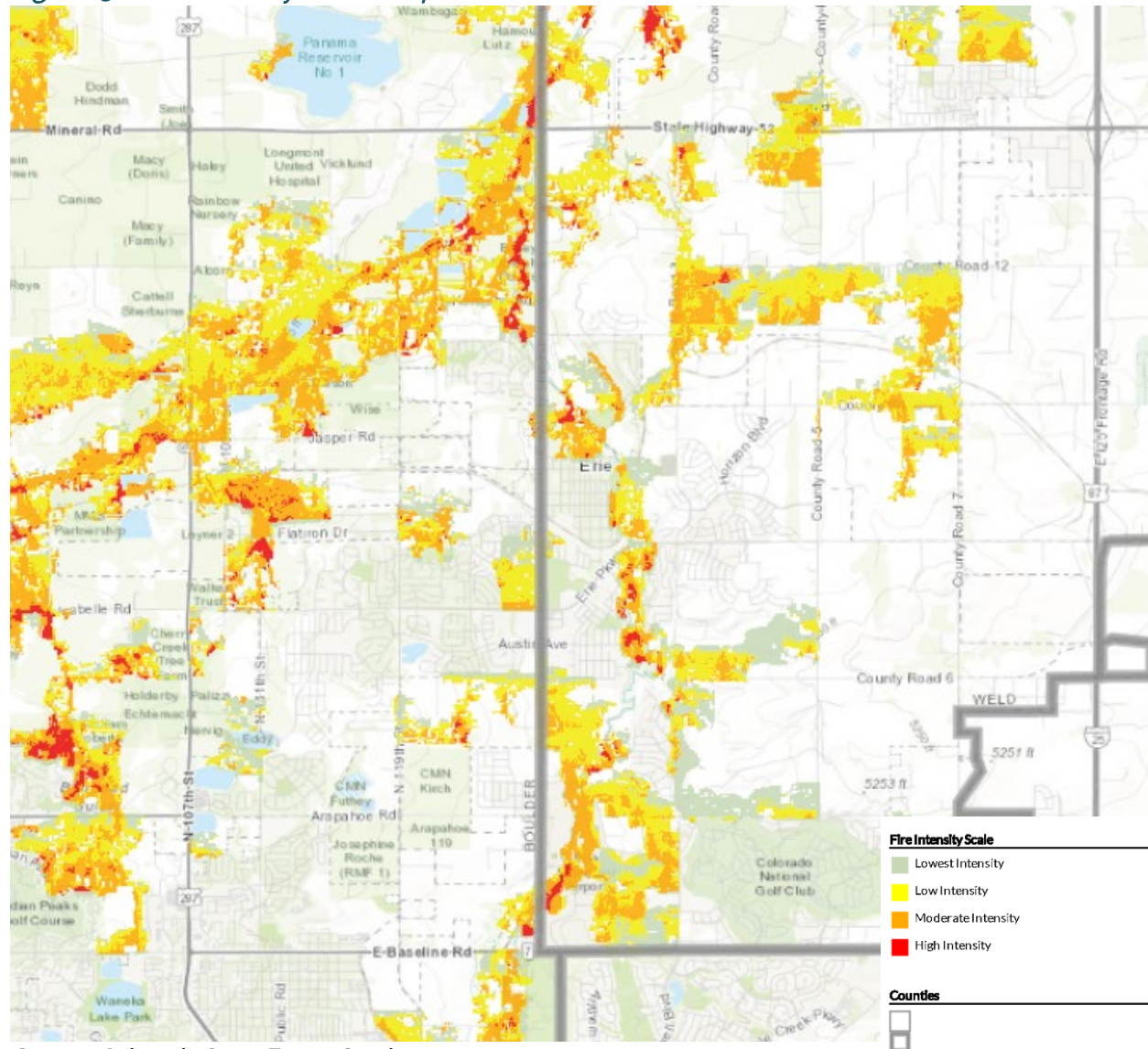
The map on the following page shows the potential fire intensity by orders of magnitude. Fire Intensity Scale (FIS) specifically identifies areas where significant fuel hazards and associated dangerous fire behavior potential exist. The FIS has five classes, where the order of magnitude between each is ten-fold.

1. **Class 1, Lowest Intensity:** Very small, discontinuous flames, usually less than 1 foot in length; very low rate of spread; no spotting. Fires are typically easy to suppress by firefighters with basic training and non-specialized equipment.
2. **Class 2, Low-Moderate:** Small flames, usually less than two feet long; small amount of very short-range spotting possible. Fires are easy to suppress by trained firefighters with protective equipment and specialized tools.
3. **Class 3, Moderate:** Flames up to 8 feet in length; short-range spotting is possible. Trained firefighters will find these fires difficult to suppress without support from aircraft or engines, but dozer and plows are generally effective. Increasing potential for harm or damage to life and property.
4. **Class 4, Moderate-High:** Large Flames, up to 30 feet in length; short-range spotting common; medium range spotting possible. Direct attack by trained firefighters, engines, and dozers is generally ineffective, indirect attack may be effective. Significant potential for harm or damage to life and property.

Natural Resources and the Environment

5. **Class 5, Highest Intensity:** Very large flames up to 150 feet in length; profuse short-range spotting, frequent long-range spotting; strong fire-induced winds. Indirect attack marginally effective at the head of the fire. Great potential for harm or damage to life and property

Figure 3. Fire Intensity Scale Map



Source: Colorado State Forest Service

Oil and Gas Facilities

The Town of Erie is in an area that is rich in oil and gas resources. There are several oil and gas facilities located in and around Erie, including drilling rigs, wells, pipelines, and storage tanks. While these facilities provide economic benefits to the area, they can also pose potential environmental risks including air quality issues, soil contamination, and water pollution.

At the time of this report in 2023 there were three proposed new wells, 13 existing wells, and five reported spills to date. The breakdown of oil-related events for the last five years is shown in Table 3. An interactive map can be found [here](#).

Natural Resources and the Environment

Table 11: Oil and Gas Facilities in Erie

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Plug and Abandonment	4	N/A	38	5	67
Maintenance	N/A	13	73	17	17
New Wells	3	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Well Pad Sites	13	13	13	13	14
Spill Reports	5	8	6	1	4

In 2019 Governor Polis signed a bill giving local governments power to regulate future oil and gas development within their boundaries. New oil and gas facilities within the Town must be in an area zoned Heavy Industrial and provide a series of reports and monitoring plans. In 2021, the Board of Trustees passed new regulations requiring any residential lot, structures that are to be occupied, parks, sports fields, and playgrounds to be 2,000 feet from planned, yet-to-be-completed oil and gas facilities. Additionally, these same uses must be 500 feet from existing active oil and gas facilities.

Erie's Air Quality Monitoring Network and forward looking infrared (FLIR) camera footage have documented hydrocarbon and volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions which are directly attributable to oil and gas operations. Additionally, operators of facilities in Erie self-report emissions of greenhouse gasses, ozone precursors, and various VOCs for every one of the ~120 active well locations and associated equipment in the Town of Erie (as well as the ~290 wells within 2,000 ft of the municipal boundary). These gases in isolation pose relatively low risk to personal health, but more study is required when individuals are exposed to multiple gasses consistently. The figure on the following page illustrates active wells within the Planning Area Boundary, with associated buffers shown.

Natural Resources and the Environment

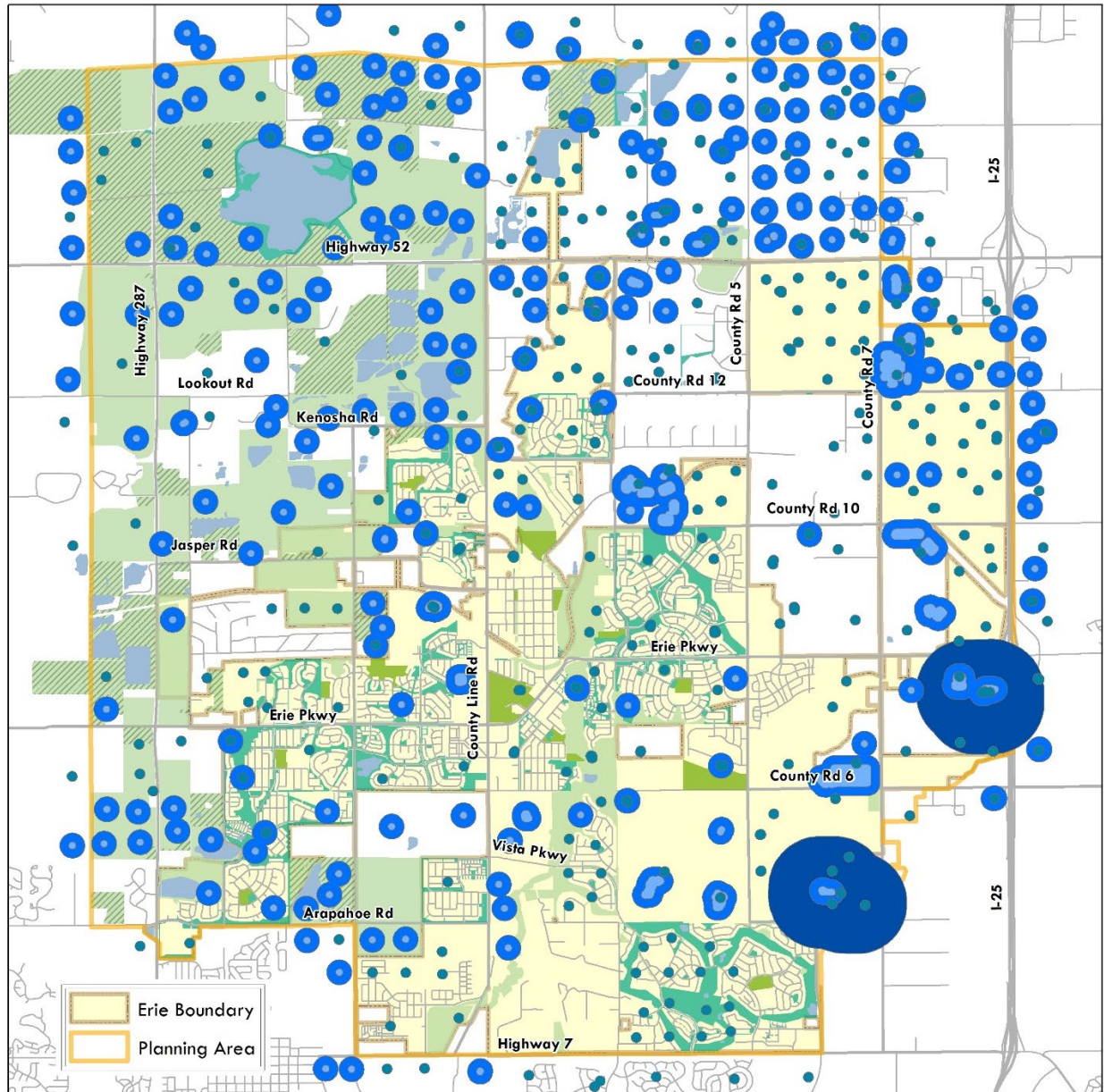


Figure 59: Oil and Gas Sites with Buffers

Erie residents are more likely to live in proximity to active oil and gas operations than residents in Louisville, Lafayette, or Longmont, particularly Erie residents that live in Weld County. Oil and gas operations can pose environmental hazards such as air and water pollution. Figure 7 illustrates the proximity to oil and gas indicator as identified by EnviroScreen. The eastern side of Erie is in the 99th percentile for proximity to oil and gas.

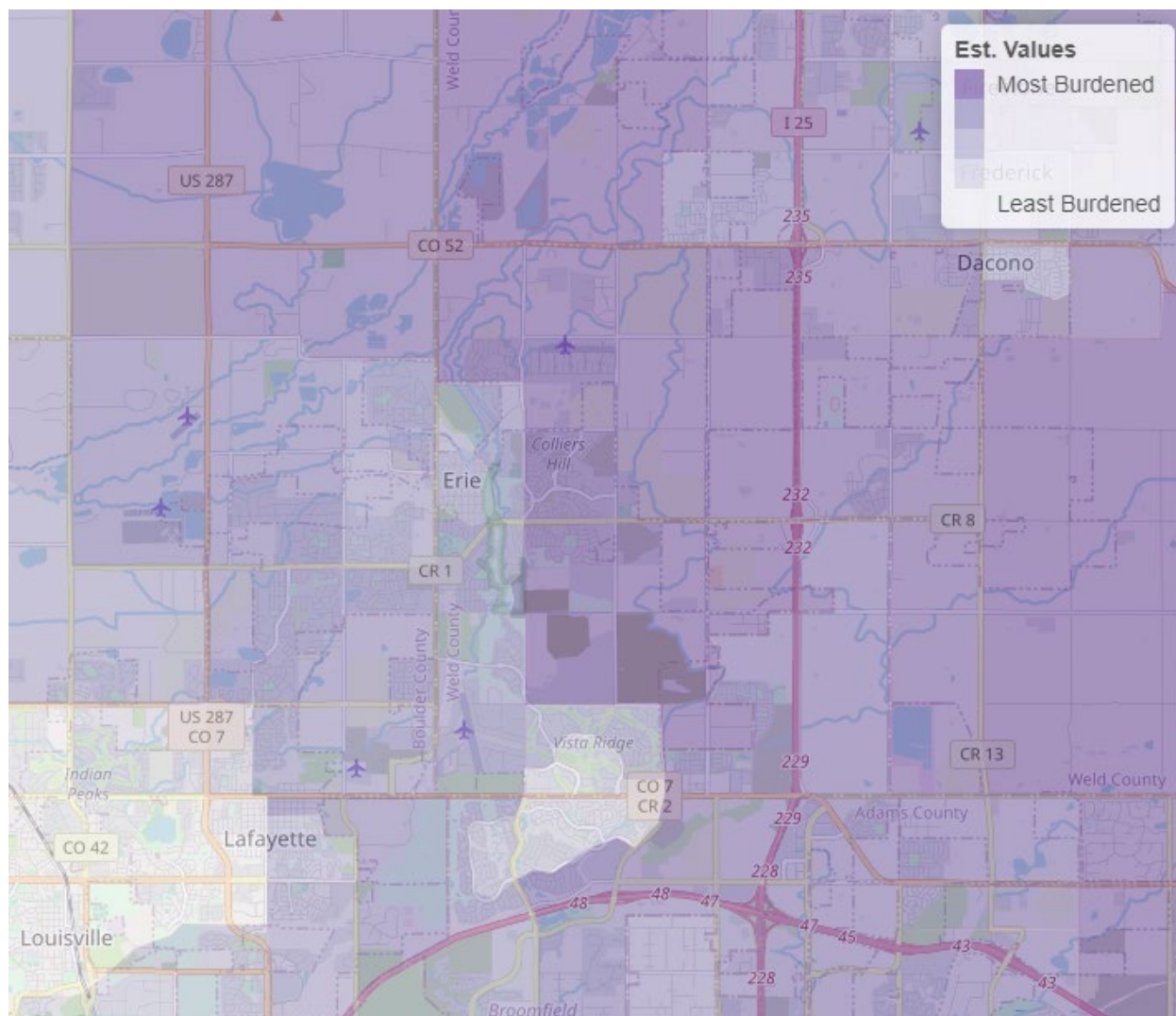


Figure 60: EnviroScreen Proximity to Oil and Gas

Climate Change and Urban Heat Island Effect

Urban heat island is a phenomenon where developed areas experience higher temperatures compared to undeveloped areas due to buildings and roads absorbing and retaining more heat from the sun than vegetation. For example, the Town's impervious surfaces such as roads and parking lots absorb and retain heat.

The urban heat island effect has various impacts on both the environment and human health. Some key impacts include:

- **Poor air quality:** the combination of high temperatures, stagnant air, and pollutant emissions from vehicles and other sources can lead to the formation of ground-level ozone and other harmful air pollutants.
- **Energy consumption:** higher temperatures result in increased demand for cooling systems, which leads to higher electricity demands, associated greenhouse gas emissions, and higher energy costs.
- **Public health:** heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke, become more prevalent during extreme heat events and can be particularly risky for

Natural Resources and the Environment

vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions.

To mitigate the urban heat island effect Erie has implemented several measures including:

- Three tree planting programs.
 - Residential tree rebate
 - HOA tree cost share
 - School and non-profit tree cost share
- Adopting the Energy Conservation Code (IECC), a green building code, requiring new buildings to meet certain energy efficiency standards.
- Partnering with energy providers to offer rebates for energy-efficient building upgrades or using renewable energy.
- Turf replacement program that provides rebates to homeowners who replace turf grass with low water landscaping. This replacement landscaping not only uses less water but can also keep the area cooler.

Requiring parking areas that are over the minimum number of spaces to be constructed of pervious paving. Permeable paving allows water to drain through and reduces pavement temperature and can reflect heat better than asphalt paving.

Air Quality

Erie is one of few communities in the region that have landfills within the Town boundary, particularly with residential neighborhoods within one-quarter of a mile. Landfills make up 6% of the Town's land area, or 768 acres. The Erie Landfill opened in 1964 at the southwest corner of County Road 5 and 6. This landfill had no liner and a history of accepting chemical and other hazardous wastes. The Erie Landfill was properly closed in 1988. Denver Regional Landfill, located to the north and south of CR6 is closed with a Closure/Post Closure plan in place. The Front Range Landfill is operational at the southeast intersection of County Road 5 and 6. The permitted area for the Front Range Landfill is 326 acres. Another 160 acres owned by the Front Range Landfill is adjacent to the permitted area, but outside of the Town's boundaries. This landfill is expected to remain in operation through 2051. Figure 8 illustrates the location of these landfills, with orange shading for those that are closed, and blue for those that are operational.

Federal regulations govern modern landfills and require on-site environmental monitoring systems and reporting. Additionally, the Town has four air quality monitors around the landfills to track any hazardous releases.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified the North Front Range as currently in a nonattainment area for 8-hour ozone levels.²¹ This may continue with additional emissions from increased vehicle traffic as the region continues to grow, and if Erie continues to lack adequate jobs and affordable housing.

²¹ **Nonattainment Areas for Criteria Pollutants (Green Book), Environmental Protection Agency, May 31, 2023,** <https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/ancl.html>

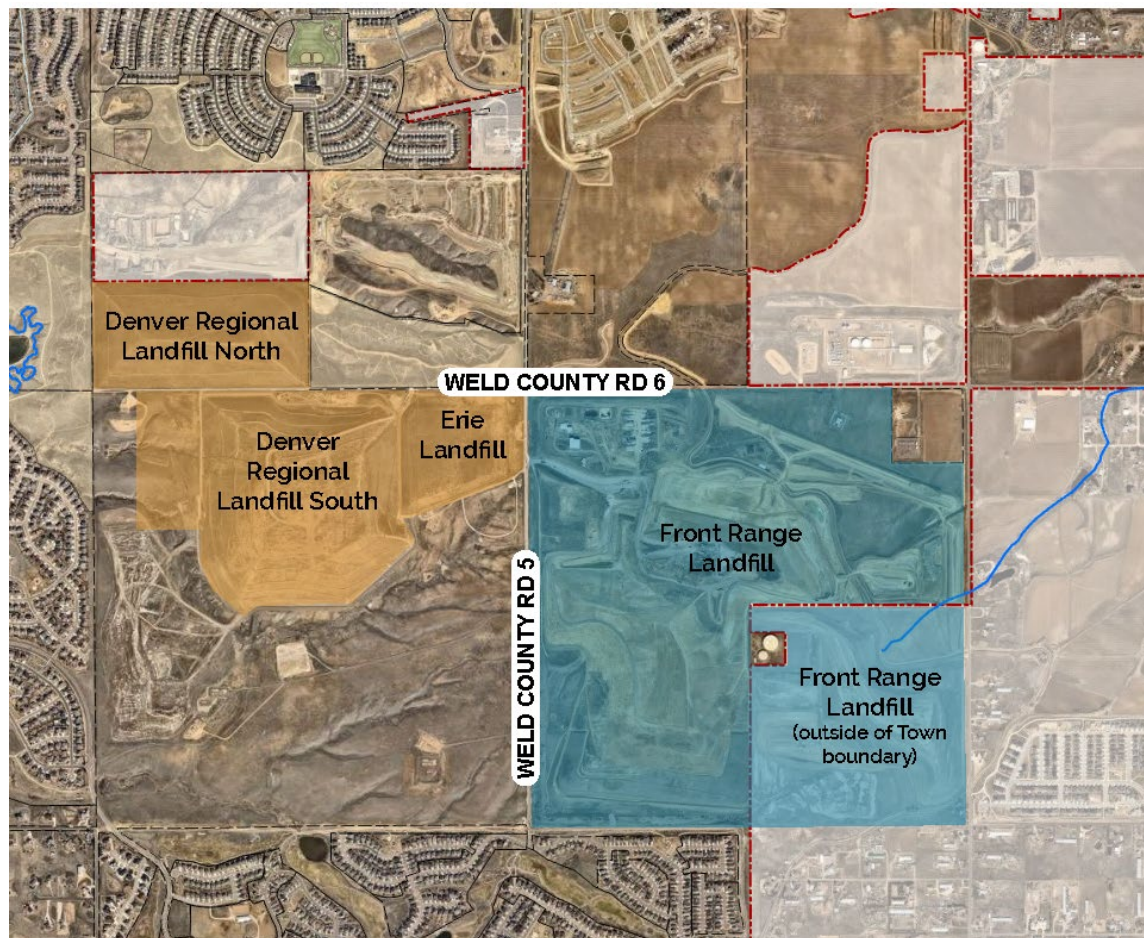


Figure 61: Landfills

The existence of oil and gas facilities poses a risk of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The Town has implemented several measures to protect air quality, including the installation of 11 real-time air monitoring stations. These stations measure total Volatile Organic Compounds (TVOC), Particulate Matter (PM), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and meteorological data. Real-time monitoring, event and quarterly reports can be viewed [here](#). This real-time monitoring can help to quickly identify source contributions to air quality issues, such as oil and gas leaks, or other discharges. The quarter one report for this year found that the weekly VOC measurements across all monitoring sites were below the CDPHE's published chronic health guideline values. Recent quarterly reports have shown elevated methane near the landfill, above typical Front Range ambient methane concentrations. According to EPA's AirTox Screen (2019) the Denver Regional/Front Range Landfill has the highest and most diverse facility emissions, see Figure 6.

Natural Resources and the Environment

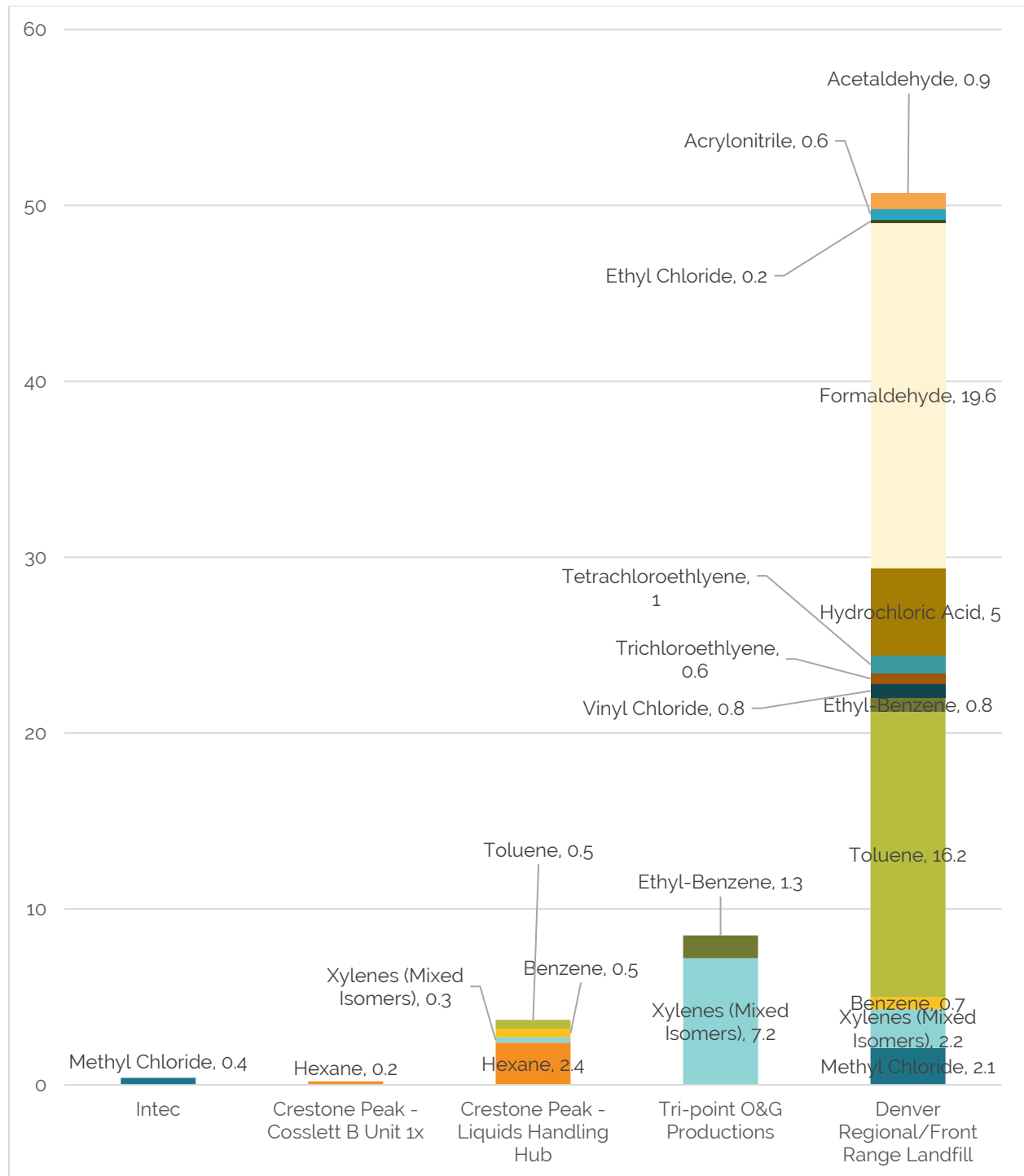


Figure 62: AirTox Screen Facility Emissions (expressed in tons)

The Town has implemented programs to address air quality through providing charging stations for electric vehicles, offering electric lawn mower vouchers to replace gas-powered mowers, and promoting renewable energy through rebates and net metering programs with energy providers. The Town was honored with the Clean Air Champions award from the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) in 2021 as a direct outcome of implementing the following measures to mitigate impacts to air quality: Installing 25 publicly available electric vehicle charging stations by 2025; installing 11 air quality monitoring stations.

Natural Resources and the Environment

Water Quality

The Town is within the South Platte regulatory basin. The South Platte basin covers 22,000 square miles, extending from the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains all the way to Colorado's eastern border with Kansas. The state assesses water quality every 5 years which is then reported to the EPA in accordance with the Clean Water Act. Colorado has identified five categories of uses for rivers and streams. These are Aquatic Life, Recreation, Water Supply, Agriculture, and Wetlands. Each use is assessed on level of support, as follows:

- **Category 1** – Fully Supporting
- **Category 3a** – Not Assessed
- **Category 3b** – Insufficient Data/Information
- **Categories 4 & 5** – Not Supporting

Category 5 is also called 303(d) and means the waterbody is considered impaired, or not meeting water quality standards. When a waterbody is impaired, the EPA requires jurisdictions to set Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) for the waterbody. TMDL sets the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed in a waterbody and is the first step in restoring the waterbody's quality to standards.

Most streams within the South Platte regulatory basin are within attainment standards and nearly 20% are found to be not supporting one or more uses. Within Erie's Planning Area both Coal Creek and Boulder Creek are considered impaired (see Figure 10) for Aquatic Life, Recreational, and Water Supply uses, and are found to fully support only Agricultural uses²². When more than one pollutant is associated with the impairment of a single waterbody, the waterbody will remain listed as Impaired until TMDLs for all pollutants have been defined and approved by the EPA. A TMDL has been established for Aquatic Life for Boulder Creek for Ammonia. The table below details the pollutants contributing to non-attainment status by beneficial use and creek location.

Table 12: Identified Pollutants for Segments of Boulder and Coal Creeks

Location	Beneficial Use		
	<i>Aquatic Life</i>	<i>Recreational</i>	<i>Water Supply</i>
Coal Creek from Rock Creek to Boulder Creek	Selenium	E. Coli	Manganese
Boulder Creek from 107 th to Coal Creek	Ammonia*	E. Coli	Arsenic

*TMDL has been established.

²² Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report, Colorado Water Quality Control Division, 2022.

Natural Resources and the Environment

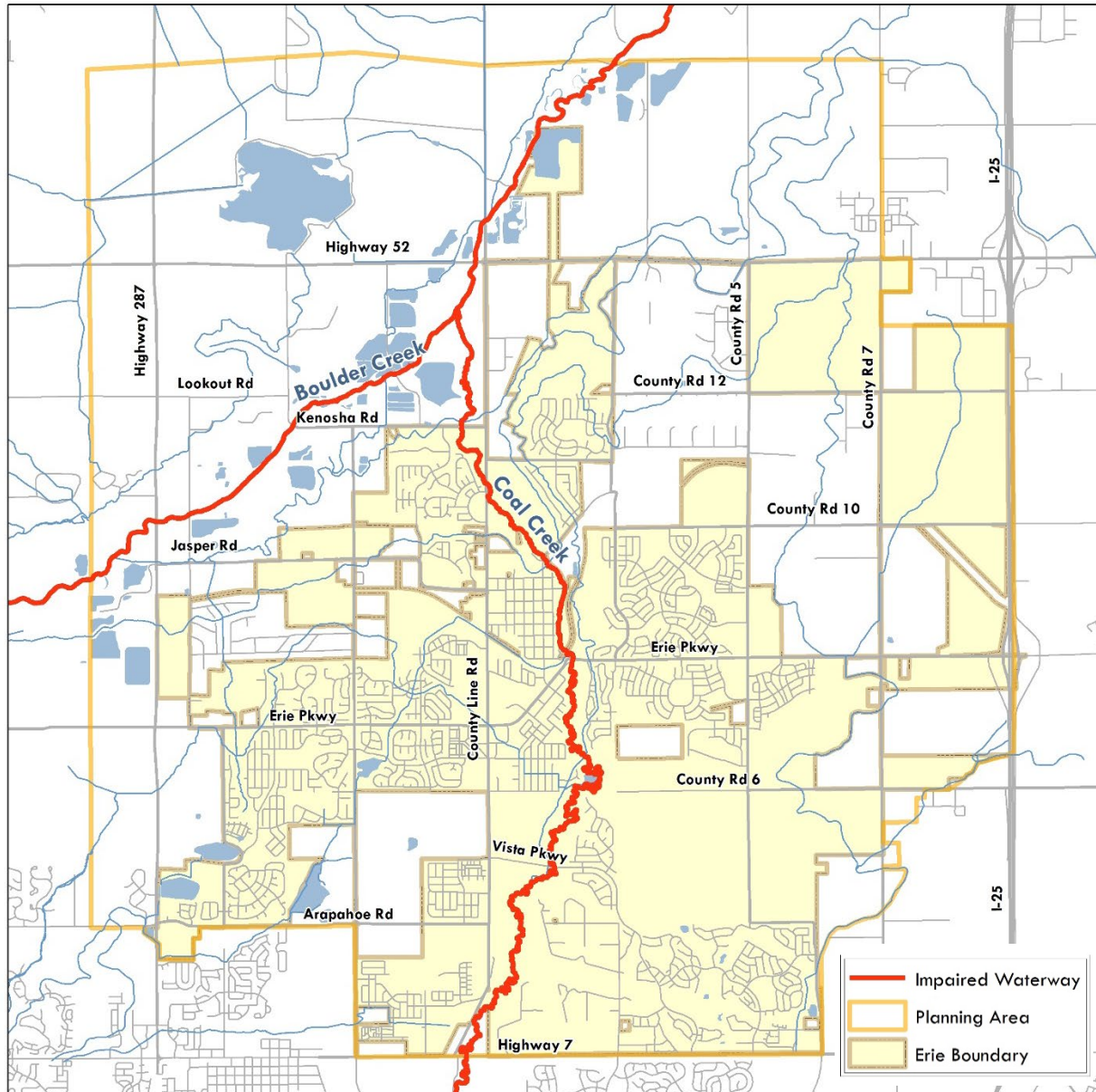


Figure 63: Impaired Waterbodies

Erie's drinking water mainly comes from surface water sources such as Colorado-Big Thompson Project (C-BT), Boulder Reservoir, and South Boulder Canyon Ditch. C-BT is operated by the Bureau of Reclamation and Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District (NCWCD) and is the largest transmountain water diversion project in Colorado. The C-BT project provides water for more than 30 cities and towns as well as agricultural and industrial users across the front range. Erie is also participating in the Windy Gap Firming Project which delivers river water to Lake Granby and eventually to Front Range communities. The table below details Erie's permanent water sources.

Natural Resources and the Environment

Table 2. Permanent Water Sources

Water Right	No. of Shares or Units Owned	Average Annual Yield (AF)	Dry Year Annual Yield (AF)
CBT	7,382	5,167	7,382
Windy Gap Project	20	1,260	1,000
Erie Reservoir	239	239	71.7
Thomas Reservoir	148	148	0
Leyner Cottonwood Ditch	392.5	211.95	82.4
South Boulder Canyon Ditch	205	594.5	0
Erie Coal Creek Ditch and Reservoir Co.	98	480.2	54.9
FRICO- Marshall Lake Div.	8.24	32.96	4.12
Lower Boulder Ditch Co. Preferred Shares	2	80	50
Baseline Reservoir Co.	1.33		
Total	8,496.07	8,133	8,645

As a part of the Town's planning for drinking water supplies a Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) has been created. The SWPP identifies a Source Water Protection Area (SWPA), seen outlined in purple in Figure 11. SWPA is required by the EPA under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Town has installed water monitoring stations within the defined SWPA. There are no known water quality issues for Erie's drinking water supply sources.

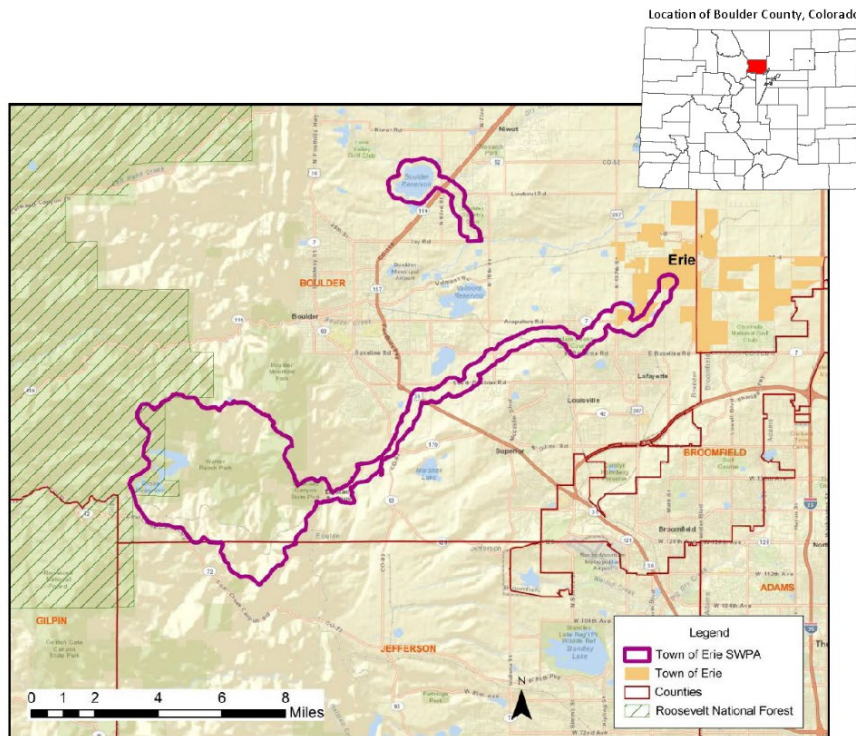


Figure 64: Source Water Protection Plan, Colorado Rural Water Association, 2013

Natural Resources and the Environment

Policy Analysis of Existing Plans and Initiatives

This report includes an overview of recent Town plans and studies that are relevant to the ongoing development and implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Through the integration of these recent plans and studies, the Town can build upon existing knowledge and leverage the expertise of those who contributed to these initiatives.

The following plans, studies, and surveys are summarized below:

- [Natural Areas Inventory \(2007\)](#)
- [Coal Creek Conceptual Design Report \(2018\)](#)
- [Non-Potable Water Master Plan \(2020\)](#)
- [Drought & Water Supply Shortage Plan \(2021\)](#)
- [Erie Water Efficiency Plan \(2021\)](#)
- [Natural and Scenic Resources Protection Regulations](#)
- [Town of Erie Open Space Management Plan \(2019\)](#)

Natural Areas Inventory (2007)

The Natural Areas Inventory identifies significant natural assets including vegetation, wildlife, wetlands, and water resources and a plan for their preservation and management. These areas provide important habitat for wildlife and contribute to the ecological health of the region. However, the report also highlights several management issues that threaten these areas, such as invasive species, fragmentation, and human disturbance. To address these issues, the report recommends continuing to acquire land for conservation, implementing natural area management plans, and implementing ecological restoration projects to address habitat degradation and invasive species. Since 2007, the Town has worked on accomplishing these recommendations, however there are opportunities for additional open space and natural area planning in the comprehensive planning process.

Coal Creek Conceptual Design Report (2018)

The Coal Creek Conceptual Design Report presents an analysis and conceptual design for the restoration and enhancement of the Coal Creek corridor. The report provides a series of policy recommendations aimed at improving the ecological health, recreational opportunities, and overall quality of the Coal Creek area including, restoration of riparian vegetation, enhancement of aquatic habitat, implementation of stormwater management practices, and establishment of public access points and trails along the creek. The Town is utilizing this plan as a reference for future planning and restoration projects in the Coal Creek corridor.

Drought & Water Supply Shortage Plan (2021)

The Drought and Water Supply Shortage Plan provides a detailed assessment of the Town's water supply and outlines a set of strategies for managing water shortages and drought conditions. The plan includes a series of policy recommendations, including water conservation measures, the development of alternative water supplies, and the implementation of drought contingency plans. The policy recommendations in the plan are aimed at reducing the Town's reliance on traditional sources of water, such as surface water and groundwater, and promoting the use of alternative sources, including recycled water and rainwater harvesting. The plan also recognizes the importance of community

Natural Resources and the Environment

engagement and public education in promoting water conservation and managing drought conditions.

The Drought and Water Supply Shortage Plan provides a comprehensive and effective strategy for managing water shortages and drought conditions in Erie. It will be important to integrate and strengthen this approach to water resources in the comprehensive plan and town-wide land use planning.

Erie Water Efficiency Plan (2021)

The Water Efficiency Plan was put into place in 2021 and presents a comprehensive analysis of water use in Erie, including historical trends, current usage patterns, and future projections, and identifies a series of goals and strategies for improving water efficiency and sustainability. The plan highlights the importance of water conservation in Erie, given the challenges posed by climate change and population growth. It proposes a range of policy recommendations, including improvements to water distribution and management systems, the implementation of water-efficient technologies and practices, and public education and outreach programs to promote water conservation. While the policies and initiatives proposed in the Erie Water Efficiency Plan are effective in promoting water conservation and sustainability in the town, including this approach in the comprehensive plan and the town's approach to land use planning is important.

Town Council Priorities (2023)

In the 2023 Community Survey, respondents were asked to rank a set of 14 possible priorities by how much they wanted the Town to focus on each topic for the next two years. To the right are priorities relevant to natural resources, with expanded definitions. Ranked from highest to lowest are the priorities:

1. Managing Growth (72%)
2. Fiscal Responsibility (71%)
3. Protect Natural Resources (65%)
4. Environmental Quality/Safety (59%)
5. Small Town Feel (49%)
6. Prosperous Economy (48%)
7. Attractive Community (44%)
8. Infrastructure Maintenance (41%)
9. More Public Transit (30%)
10. More Recreational Opportunities (30%)
11. Prioritize Public Safety (29%)
12. Address DEI Issues (29%)
13. Arts, Culture and Entertainment (23%)
14. Effective Governance (20%)

#3. Protecting natural resources, open spaces, and trails. Preserving natural spaces and connecting them with easily accessible trails to allow residents to connect with nature. Be thoughtful with water allocation and the expenditure of energy. Invest in the education and use of renewable energy sources.

#4. Protecting environmental quality of the community. Consciously protecting our air, water, and land through thoughtful policy and planning. Designing infrastructure to support non-motorized transportation. Investing or divesting in resources with the ultimate goal of responsibly caring for our community.

Natural and Scenic Resources Protection Regulations

The Town's municipal code outlines several standards for natural and scenic resources, such as water courses, ditches, native and specimen tree, and vegetation protection. These regulations come into effect at the time of site plan or preliminary plat.

Natural Resources and the Environment

Town of Erie Open Space Management Plan (2019)

The Open Space Management Plan (OSMP) provides guidance for sustainable open space management practices for Town maintained open spaces. These management practices can be customized based on site specifics, budgetary or staffing considerations, equipment availability, and community input.

Issues and Opportunities

The first phases of the Comprehensive Plan process focused on initial public outreach and data analysis. The following list of natural resources and environment-related issues and opportunities summarizes the outcomes of the existing conditions data, supported by feedback from the public, community leaders, staff, and stakeholders.

Issues

- The Town and surrounding region are experiencing the impacts of climate change, such as increased frequency and severity of drought, flooding, and wildfire events.
- Both Coal and Boulder creeks are listed as impaired waterbodies, meaning they do not meet federal water quality standards for some identified uses which will require the development of management approaches to address specific pollutants, and could impact future wastewater discharge permits.
- Erie residents in Weld County are more likely to live in proximity to oil and gas operations or a landfill than those who live in other towns in the area. These uses contribute to air and water pollution.

Opportunities

- Maintaining and improving coordination between neighboring counties and communities to address regional natural resource needs and hazards.
- Continue water conservation measures such as greywater reuse standards as well as utilize more ditch shares for irrigation.
- Nature-based solutions such as stream restoration and green infrastructure to stormwater, flooding, and other natural hazards.
- Post-closure plans for landfills that include public benefits such as solar farms or recreational spaces.
- Implement effective waste reduction management practices, including recycling, composting, and waste reduction strategies.

ELEVATE ERIE COMP PLAN

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails

Snapshot of Trends



Parks and Open Space: Erie has a strong portfolio of parks and open space with more than 1,500 acres



Community: The Erie Community Center sees more than 200,000 visitors annually.



HOA-Managed Sites: Erie has 30 HOA-managed pocket parks.



Trails: Erie maintains 70+ miles of trails, connecting Erie to surrounding communities.

Context

The Town of Erie has a substantial repertoire of parks, open spaces, and trails. In addition to the parks and open spaces maintained by the Town, there are also 64 independent homeowner associations (HOAs) and metropolitan districts that own and maintain hundreds of acres of park land, open space, right of way, and private recreation amenities. HOAs and metropolitan districts play an important role alongside the Town in maintaining the aesthetic and functionality of much of the infrastructure within the community. It is the combination of these efforts that allows the community to enjoy high quality programs and activities, recreational amenities, trails, parks, and open spaces.

The Town also owns and maintains other amenities including a thriving tree canopy and public recreation facilities such as an 18-hole disc golf course, singletrack bike trails, a pollinator garden, a historic farm site, and a dog park. Erie maintains 1,306 acres of land that is made up of 13 parks and 16 open spaces. In total, there are nearly 130 miles of natural and paved trails and routes throughout the community that are managed by either the Town, Weld or Boulder counties, HOAs, or metro districts.

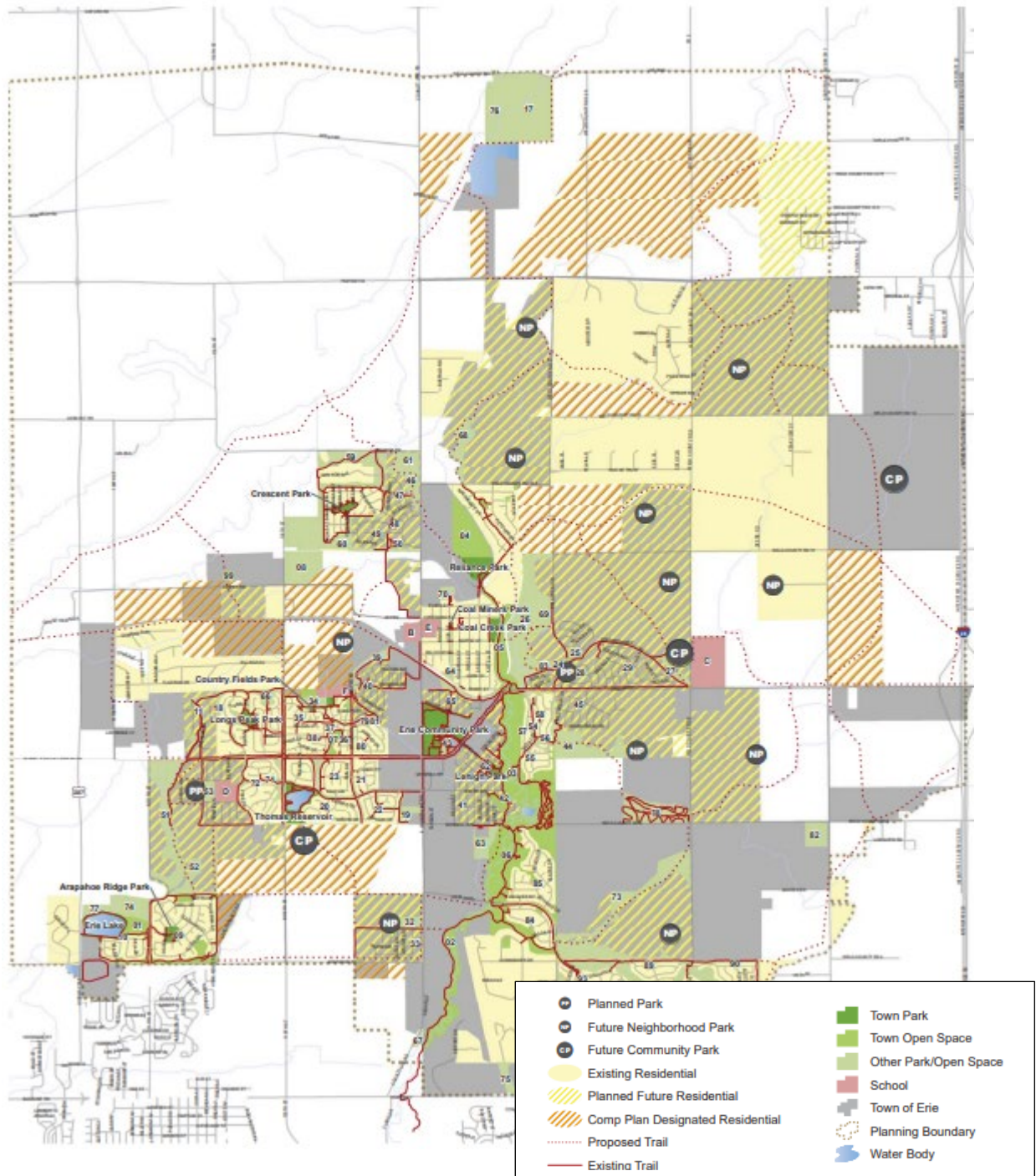
The construction of Coal Creek Park, two neighborhood parks in Colliers Hill, Morgan Hill Neighborhood Park, and Compass Neighborhood Park are currently underway or will begin within the next few years. The Town has also proposed several Spine Trails that will help connect the community internally and throughout the region. These trails were proposed in the 2016 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan (PROST Plan) and was updated in 2019. Several Spine Trails have already been implemented including Coal Creek Trail. The Town is also in the process of completing a wayfinding plan for the trail network. These projects are financed through the Town's general fund, developer funds, the Parks Improvement Impact Fund, Conservation Trust Funds, the Tree Impact Fund, bonds, and awards. The most recent awards came from Great Outdoors Colorado, the Energy Impact Assistance Fund, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the State Historical Fund.

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails

The Erie Parks & Recreation Department is nationally accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), administered by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Nationally, the Department received the 2013 Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Parks and Recreation Management. The Department also won additional awards from the State in 2017, 2019, and 2020 for programming, innovation, park design and development, and young professionals of the year. The Department has been the recipient of more than \$1 million in grant funding for parks and recreation projects over the last two years and has \$15 million in new park construction in progress. Erie residents see a \$362.39 per capita investment in parks as compared to \$294.70 in Fort Collins. Over the next 5–10 years, the Department anticipates acquiring an additional 100 acres of developed park and open space land.

The Department aims to improve sustainability by reducing the burden of maintaining several decentralized parks and focus rather on several larger amenity rich parks, as is reflected in the 2016 PROST Plan. Figure 1 shown below is from the 2016 PROST Plan and shows that planned parks trend toward neighborhood and community parks. Many of these parks are also connected via proposed trails.

Figure 65: Future Parks and Facilities (2016 PROST Plan)



Inventory of Existing Facilities

Erie has a wide range of parks, open space, recreational facilities, trails, and community centers. The following section further explores existing facilities.

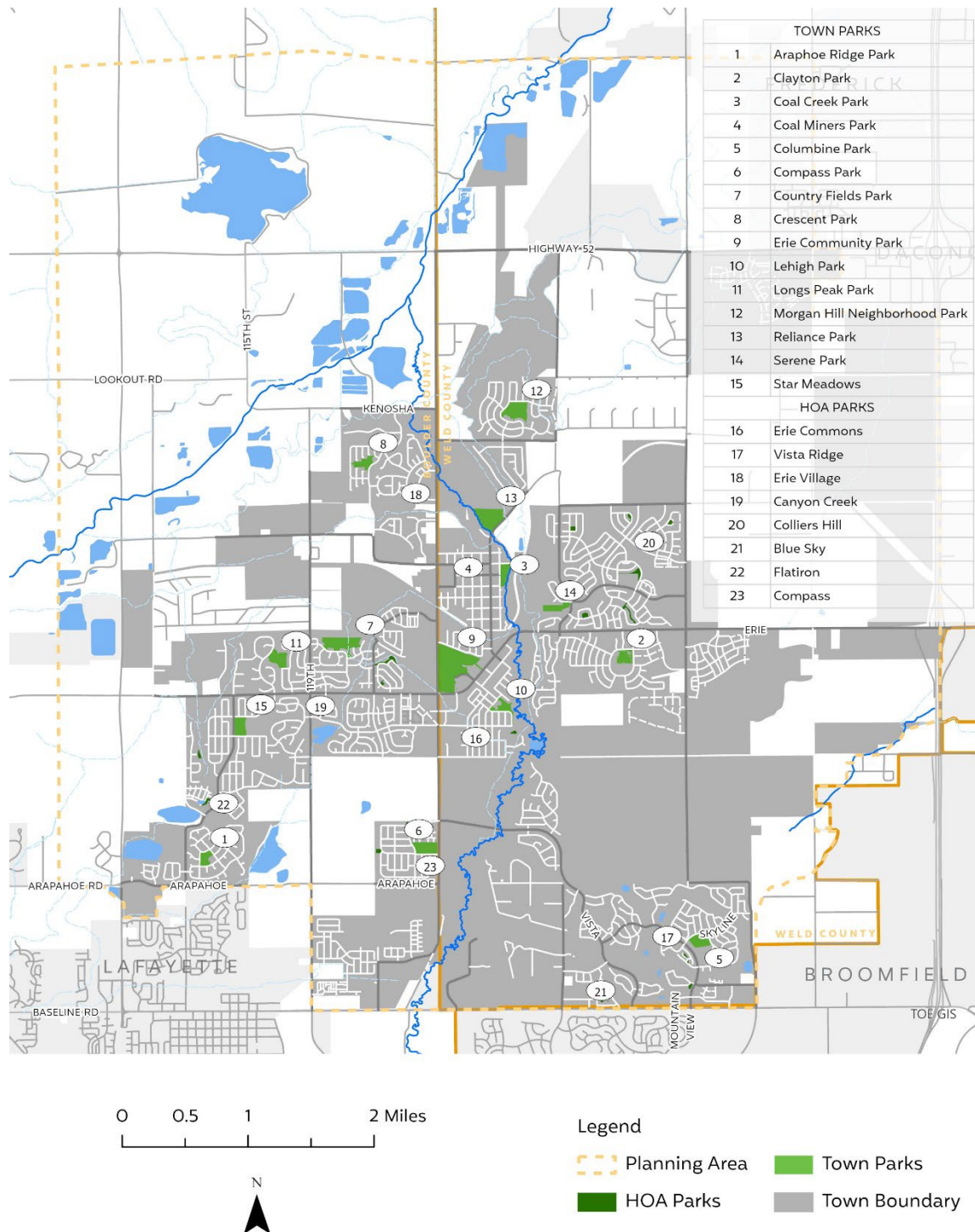
Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails

Developed Parks

Figure 2 highlights the 13 parks (163 acres) that Erie owns and maintains. Several additional parks are owned and maintained by HOAs with amenities, such as pools and clubhouses that are restricted to HOA use. However, the 10 HOA parks labeled in Figure 2 allow access to the public. In total, there are more than 30 individual HOA parks found throughout the community.

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails

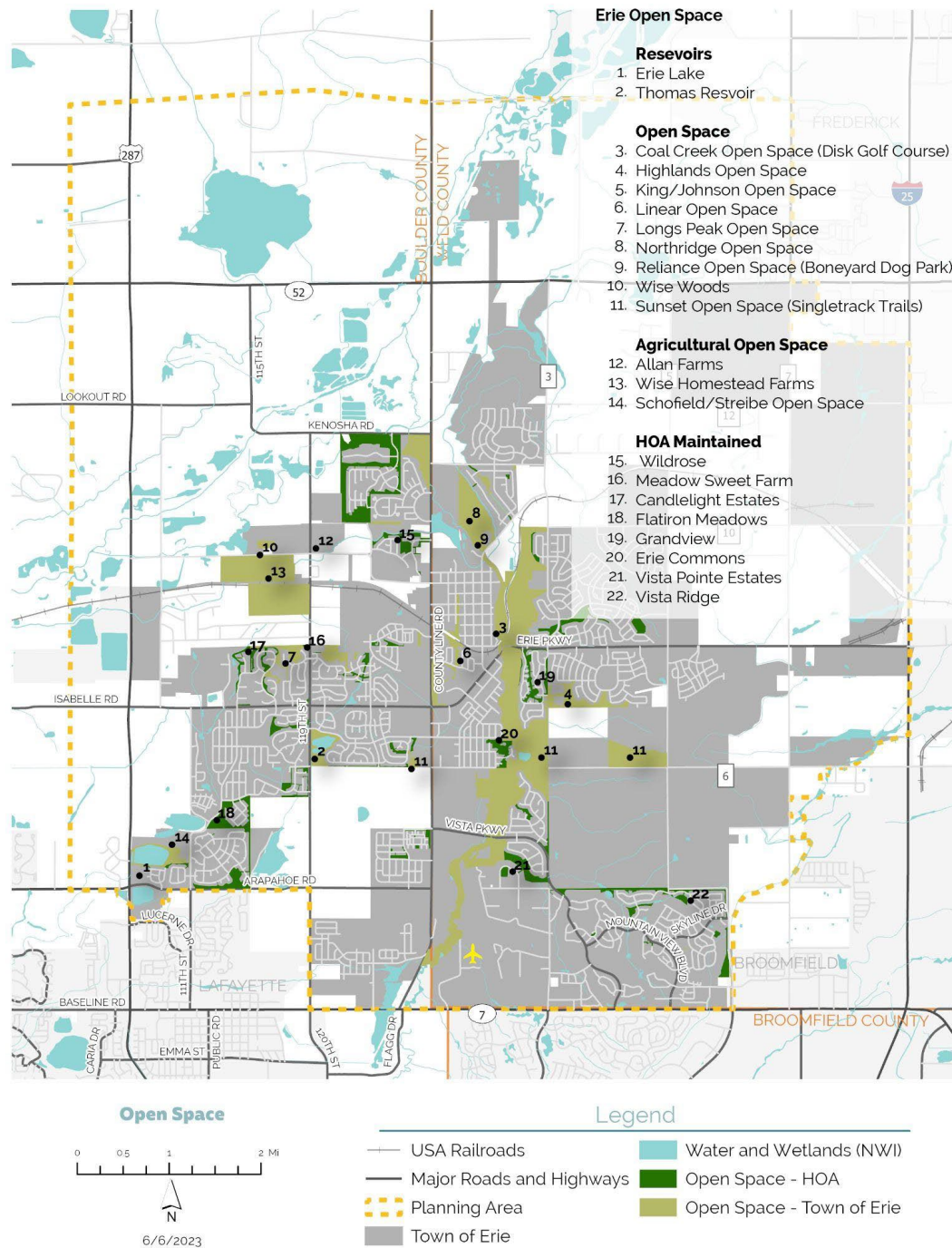
Figure 66: Town and HOA Parks



Open Space Assets

The Town of Erie supports a wide array of open space assets with more than 1,143 acres. Not only does the open space help create a sense of place, but it provides ample opportunities for education, passive, and active recreation, and creates natural buffers between neighborhoods and the differentiating land uses of adjacent properties. The map below shows the distribution of open space maintained by Erie and HOAs across the community.

Figure 67: Town and HOA Open Space



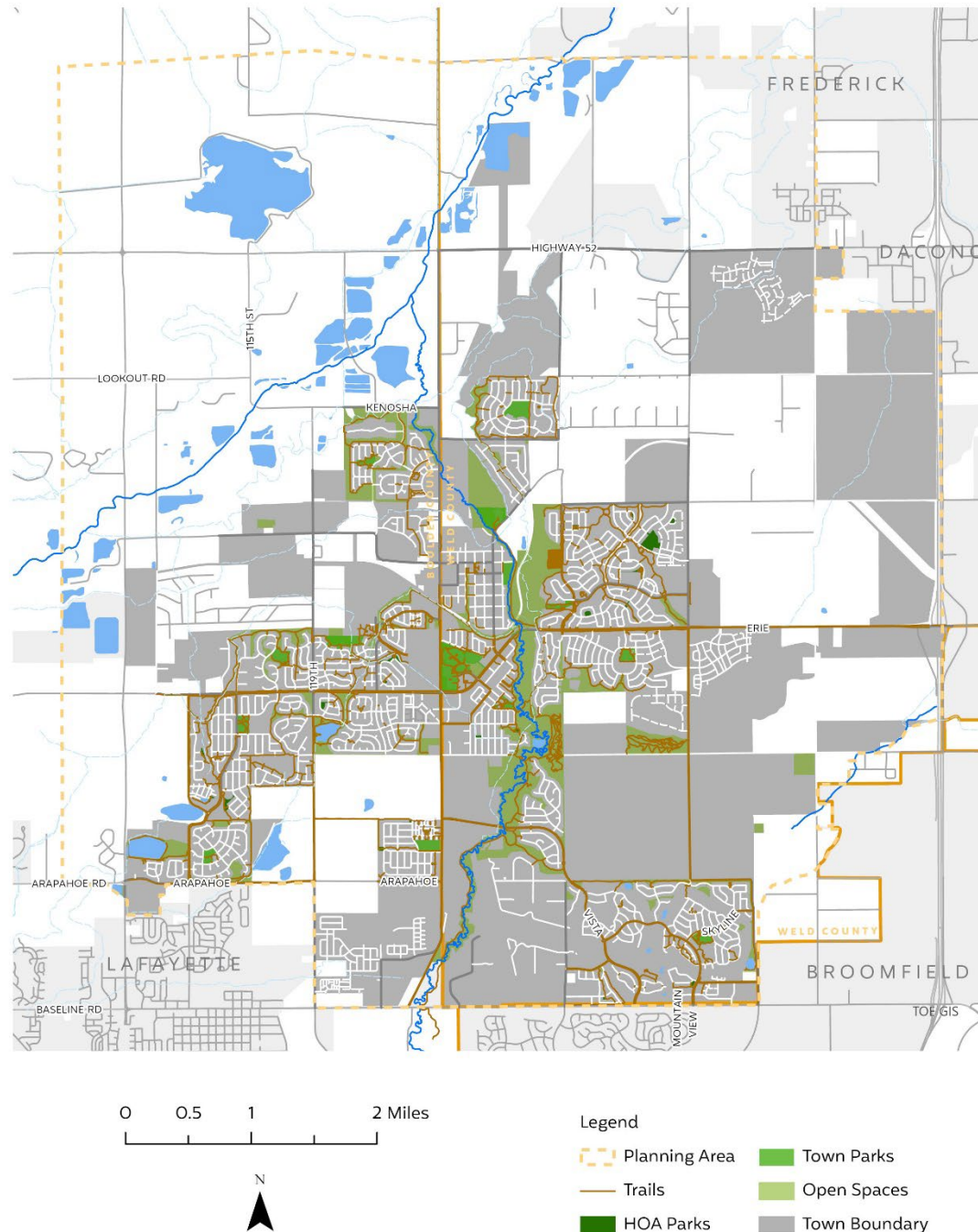
Trails

Erie boasts more than 70 miles of multi-use trails, with an additional 30 miles being maintained by HOAs and metropolitan districts. One of the main trail networks in Erie, the Coal Creek Trail, connects the town with multiple communities to the south, before connecting to a section of the trail that is managed by Boulder County. There is a healthy mix

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails

of bike lanes, concrete separated trails, and single-track mountain bike trails found within the community.

Figure 68: Parks, Open Space, and Trail Network



There is a great deal of interest within the community for the Town to continue to connect open space, parks, and other amenities with trails, as well as creating regional active transportation opportunities such as the Boulder to Erie Regional Trail (BERT). The BERT was featured in the 2020 Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan and the 2020 Boulder County

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails

Transportation Master Plan. The BERT Master Plan is scheduled to be completed in Winter 2023-24.

Recreation Facilities

The Erie Community Center (ECC) first opened in January 2008 and on average sees more than 200,000²³ visitors annually with 70,000 participating in one of the many programs and amenities that are offered. A few of the programs and amenities include the Columbine Lounge for active adults, individual and group fitness programs, a full-court gymnasium equipped with basketball and volleyball nets, indoor pool with lazy river and hot tub, racquetball courts, and several meeting rooms. Due to its success and alignment with community needs, the ECC is experiencing overcrowding and capacity issues.

The Erie Ice Rink is a seasonal outdoor amenity, currently located at Coal Creek Park. The ice rink is available for drop-in skate, hockey, and private reservations.

Parks and Trails Accessibility

According to the 2023 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Infrastructure and Funding Analysis, it is estimated that 75% of Erie community members have walkable access to a park or trail. This analysis includes one-half mile walking distance to Town parks and open spaces in addition to a 0.25-mile walking distance to HOA pocket parks, and trail access points.

Future Projects and Areas of Interest

Erie is constantly considering additions to its portfolio of parks and open space by collaborating with the Erie Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) and the Parks & Recreation Department. This is to ensure that when significant and influential properties become available, the Town knows and can consider the option of purchasing the land outright or acquiring a conservation easement. The Town has a land acquisition priorities list that guides purchasing as land and funding becomes available. Erie's Unified Development Code requires developers to set aside a portion of development for open space and trails.

As the community continues to grow within the planning area, it is highly likely that the greatest contributor of land for future open space will fall within Weld County. The northeast segment of the Town's planning area contains many acres of land that is not suitable for high intensity development that through evaluation and analysis might be beneficial to consider for the use of public open space.

Some of the future parks, recreation, trails, and open space facilities and resources include the following:

- Construction of approximately 59 acres of neighborhoods parks in six neighborhoods
- Schofield Farm Open Space and Trailhead
- Improvements to Coal Creek Trail
- Town Center Civic Space Community trail connection from Erie Highlands to Westerly through the Sunset Open Space
- Renovation and minor expansion of the Erie Community Center
- Parks and Trails Wayfinding Signage

²³ This is the average visitation in non-COVID- 19 year (2016-2019, 2022)

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails

Policy Summary of Existing Plans and Studies

Through the integration of recent plans and studies, the Town can build upon existing knowledge and leverage the expertise of those who contributed to these past initiatives. The following plans, studies, and surveys are summarized below:

- [2015 Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [2016 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan](#)
- [2018 Transportation Plan](#)
- [2019 Open Space Management Plan](#)
- [2019 Sustainability Master Plan](#)
- [2021 Facilities Master Plan](#)
- 2022 Parks and Rec Ballot Measure Survey
- 2023 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Infrastructure and Funding Analysis

2015 Comprehensive Plan

The 2015 Comprehensive Plan was an update to the previous plan that was done in 2005. With exponential growth between this time, Erie needed a guidance tool to provide future growth awareness and oversight for housing, transportation and mobility, parks and recreation, natural resources and environment, land use, and various other areas. While the 2015 Comprehensive Plan is being updated, acknowledgment of the past processes and predictions can help shape the future and success of the new update.

2016 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan

The 2016 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (PROST) Master Plan identifies numerous goals related to construction and enhancement of facilities, along with funding, administration, and awareness. The following goals can be found within the PROST Master Plan.

- **Parks:** ensure quality design, maintenance, and relevancy with local needs.
- **Recreation:** meet community needs, and program demands, explore partnerships and relationships with school districts, promote awareness, and capital improvements to the Erie Community Center.
- **Open Space:** provide high value open space and enhanced land management.
- **Trails:** connect parks, recreation, open space, neighborhoods and activity centers, regional trail access and connectivity, and minimizing impacts on sensitive natural areas.

With this plan becoming outdated, the Comprehensive Plan update can help establish a revised high-level policy direction regarding parks, recreation, open space, and trails.

2018 Transportation Plan

The 2018 Transportation Plan addresses all modes of transportation including but not limited to bicycle, pedestrian, and automotive. The plan also assists staff and policy makers with guidance in reviewing development proposals and implementing transportation improvements. As the projects within the plan reflect Erie's growth through 2040, this plan provides relevant context to the Comprehensive plan Update.

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails

2019 Open Space Management Plan

The 2019 Open Space Management Plan provides guidance for managing Erie's open spaces. Key topics of the plan include the following:

- Vegetation: native plants, protecting special-status plants, weak management, and pollinator habitats.
- Wildlife: habitat restoration and connectivity, pest management, special-status wildlife, public education, and management plans for coyotes and prairie dogs.
- Water Bodies: shoreline restoration and erosion control, invasive aquatic plants, water quality management, limiting fertilizers, vegetation buffer management, and large-scale stream restoration of Coal Creek.
- Natural Disaster Mitigation: flood and wildfire management.
- Public Infrastructure: public safety on open space sites, enhanced passive recreation opportunities, preventing hazardous items and activities, and clean and inviting spaces.
- Reclaimed Oil and Gas: maintaining plugged and abandoned wells, reclamation activities, invasive plant management, soil remediation, and using native plants for revegetation.

2019 Sustainability Master Plan

The Sustainability Master Plan recommends mode-shift strategies that require multimodal connectivity and transit-oriented development principles at all new commercial developments. These strategies are to address first and last mile connections, and develop multilingual wayfinding signage on trails, roads, and paths to support greater use of alternative forms of transportation. The Sustainability Master Plan's approach is relevant for long-term policy decisions that can be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan update.

2021 Facilities Master Plan

The Facilities Master Plan recommends \$70 million in renovation and minor expansion of existing Community Center to address key deficiencies such as space issues, roof leaks, and concrete repairs at the pool. This analysis helped inform this Existing Conditions Report but does not necessarily provide insight on long-term facility needs to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

2022 Parks and Rec Ballot Measure Survey

In 2004 and then again in 2014, the Town of Erie voters passed the Trails, Natural Areas, and Community Character (TNACC) ballot measure. This authorized a 4.0 mill property tax to fund the purchase of natural areas and open space, create and connect trails, preserve wildlife habitats, protect natural areas around creeks, and conserve scenic landscapes. The TNACC Fund currently generates approximately \$2.0 million per year and will sunset and expire in 2024. In the 2022 survey of registered voters, after being informed of the benefits, 65% of respondents would vote "yes" to renew and increase the tax to 5.0 mills to generate an additional \$2.5M annually. This passage can be attributed to the 78% approval rating of the Parks and Recreation department as seen through the 2022 survey.

2023 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Infrastructure and Funding Analysis

The Infrastructure and Funding Analysis was completed in 2023 to understand the parks, recreation, and open space funding gaps to support the maintenance and operations required to maintain the desired level of service. Included in the report is a current inventory

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails

of facilities, major maintenance and life cycle replacement needs, timeline for future facilities, operational costs, and funding sources. The analysis provides updated information about parks, recreation, and open space infrastructure that informs where future priorities can be strengthened or reinforced in the Comprehensive Plan.

Issues and Opportunities

The first phases of the Comprehensive Plan process focused on initial public outreach and data analysis. The following list of parks, recreation, trails, and open-space related issues and opportunities summarizes the outcomes of the existing conditions data.

Issues

- Open space in existing neighborhoods acts as buffers between development and impedes connectivity.
- Preservation of open space increases housing costs.
- While there are several new parks planned, there are not adequate funds to construct soon.
- As park facilities grow, space for staff and equipment storage is challenging.
- Gaps in the regional trail system and lack of connectivity from certain neighborhoods.
- Need for second recreation center, senior, and youth services.
- There are some parks owned by The Town that HOAs maintain. Deferred maintenance has become an issue in recent years.

Opportunities

- Parks, open space, and trail networks in Erie are some of the biggest assets in Erie. This highlights the potential for strong community support for continued investments in parks and open space resources.
- Improve safety of trail systems through enhanced design and connectivity.
- Open Space and Trails Advisory Board land acquisition priority map.
- Diverse funding and revenue sources.
- Ensuring continued access for developing areas and increasing offerings for areas with few parks.

ELEVATE ERIE COMP PLAN

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Public Facilities, Services, and Education

Snapshot of Trends



Public Facilities: Expansions are needed for municipal facilities to meet current and future needs. Priorities include expansion and renovation of Town Hall, along with modifications to the Police Station, Leon A. Wurl Service Center, and the Erie Community Center. The Town is also planning to build a new recreation center. The Airport Terminal building is well past the end-of-life and needs to be replaced.



Education: Erie has seven public schools, serving youth K-12 across two school districts: Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley. Enrollment has steadily increased as the student population grows, stressing the capacities of the existing facilities. Major renovations, totaling more than \$80 million, are in progress to expand and enhance existing buildings.



Public Services: Services like water treatment and streets maintenance will need to expand to meet demands of future development. The Town is committed to ensuring that new infrastructure will be more sustainable and meet the goals identified in Erie's 2019 Sustainability Plan. Future improvements include an expansion of the existing wastewater treatment plant, a new North Water Treatment Facility, alongside other necessary service investments to provide quality public services to all community members of Erie.



Cultural Amenities & Events: There is potential for Erie to expand current cultural amenities and events. Today, the Erie Community Center serves as a hub along with Briggs Street downtown, and the newly completed Coal Creek Park.

Context

Given Erie's growth over the past few decades, expansion and maintenance of public facilities, infrastructure, and services have become a top priority for the Town. Today, the Town is preparing for utility and infrastructure expansion, new schools, cohesive water and land planning, and improvements to community facilities.

Public services in Erie include two school districts, emergency response, water, wastewater, and solid waste services. Erie operates all services through a lens of sustainability, as noted in the 2019 Sustainability Plan, which includes provisions for energy use, and solid waste management (trash, recycling, and composting).

For solid waste, the Town heavily prioritizes recycling and composting, working with partners like Eco-Cycle to drive the community toward a Zero Waste goal. The Recycling Center in

Public Facilities, Services, and Education

Erie also accepts yard waste year-round. By 2026, Erie's composting goals could divert 12,000 tons of waste per year. Currently, Erie does not provide its own waste disposal service to the residents, although there has recently been a push toward consolidated hauling to a single private contract to reduce trips and emissions associated with waste disposal. Doing so could also likely reduce costs for users.

The US Postal Service in Old Town Erie is unique in that all customers in the Old Town area are required to have PO boxes to receive their mail and packages. This is due to the Town being designated a rural route by the US Postal Service. This issue is not something that the Comprehensive Plan can address but was brought up by Old Town residents several times during engagement.

Water Supply and Distribution

The Town operates and maintains its own potable water system. Potable water is stored at two locations, one is at the water treatment facility site which includes two clearwells which provide water by gravity to Zone 2, and a pump station which provides water for Zones 3 and 4A. The other location is at a tank site north of Vista Ridge which includes two storage tanks which provides water by gravity to Zone 3 and a pump station which provides water to Zone 4B. The distribution system is divided into three main pressure zones, based on service elevation. Recent upgrades include a new gravity connection to Zone 2 and a new pumped connection from the water treatment facility to the tank site. Other system upgrades include water meter replacements, planned through 2028 at a forecasted total cost of \$3.2M.

The Town's single water treatment facility, the Lynn Morgan Water Treatment Facility (WTF), operated by Erie's Water Treatment Division, was built in 1999 and expanded in 2001, 2005, 2009, and 2020. The WTF has a peak capacity of 18.9 MGD (million gallons per day), with a firm capacity of 16.65 MGD,

which is the WTF's operating capacity when its largest treatment unit is not in service. In addition to the WTF, the Water Treatment Division operates and maintains the pre-treatment facility, pump stations, interconnects, water storage facilities, and local reservoirs.

The North Integrated Supply Project (NISP) is a collaborative effort with many Front Range communities including Erie, to construct two off-channel reservoirs, Glad Reservoir (northwest of Fort Collins) and Galeton Reservoir (east of Ault), to meet future water demands. This project is estimated at \$9.1M through 2024 in the Town's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) plan. The Chimney Hollow/Windy Gap Firming project is currently under construction and will firm up the Town's existing Windy Gap shares. This project has

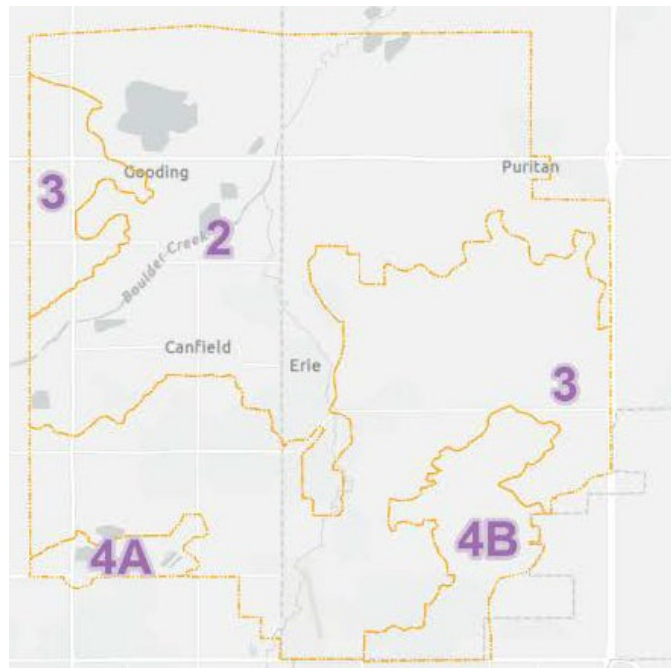


Figure 69: Water Zones

Public Facilities, Services, and Education

been allocated in the CIP through 2028, at a total of \$11.3M. Funds for these projects come from the Water Enterprise Fund.

Wastewater Utilities

There are 15 sanitary sewer basins within the Town's service area. Not all of these are fully served. Erie has one water reclamation facility, the North Water Reclamation Facility (NWRf). The old South Water Reclamation Facility was taken offline in 2011. Since that time the Town has decommissioned the facility, and demoed the treatment basins. The recycling center is currently located at the old South Water Reclamation Facility.

The NWRf was upgraded in 2023 and has a current maximum monthly influent flow of 3.03 MGD and a peak hour influent flow of 5.6 MGD and upgraded its biosolids handling to Athermal Thermophillic Aerobic Digestion (ATAD) and is now producing a true Class A biosolid. Class A biosolids are dewatered and heated sewage sludge that meets the US EPA guidelines for land applications without restrictions.

NWRf discharges its treated effluent to Boulder Creek, a water body that supports agriculture and aquatic life. Currently, the NWRf is meeting effluent standards for the state of Colorado. However, newer CDPHE regulations like Regulation 85 and 31 address nutrient loading more strictly than past limitations and could impact discharges in the future. The NWRf's service area compared to Erie's Planning Area is shown in the map below. Currently, the NWRf only serves parts of the Planning Area. The Town's wastewater collection system is not yet fully built out. As such, there are large areas in the northern and eastern Planning Area that do not yet have service from Town utilities. The North Front Range Water Quality Planning Association (NFRWQPA) oversees the Town's 208 plan for sewer service. (<https://nfrwqpa.colorado.gov/>) Gaps in the NWRf service area limit development to residences served by septic and wells, which require larger minimum lot sizes and setbacks. Future connections to residential areas with septic systems would not challenge build-out capacities and would allow residences on well and septic to have access to quality infrastructure.

The Town's wastewater collection system is relatively new, made up of more than 590,000 feet of mostly PVC pipe, according to the 2020 [Wastewater Collection System Master Plan](#). Like most wastewater systems, Erie's collection system is gravity-based, meaning that collection pipes rely on slope and size to properly convey flow. Most of the collection system has adequate capacity for ultimate build-out conditions modeled in the Wastewater Collection System Master Plan. To determine capacity, loads (existing residential lots), and flows (existing commercial and other non-residential uses) were modeled, along with category flows from land use designations in the Comprehensive Plan for not yet developed areas. The plan did find a few instances of issues with slope or capacity, particularly if full build-out conditions occur. The Public Works department is aware of these and will begin a Wastewater System Master Plan update after the Comprehensive Plan is complete.

Future development (planned and unplanned, see Land Use and Development Patterns section) will require the construction of interceptors along I-25 and Highway 52, as well as Weld County Roads 5 and 7. Significant land planning activity is currently happening in these areas, including residential, mixed-use, schools, and employment uses. Figure 2 illustrates Erie's sanitary sewer basins, collection system pipes, trunk lines, and some planned improvements. Orange lines show places of marginal capacity at full build-out, while red

Public Facilities, Services, and Education

lines show inadequate capacity. The Wastewater Master Plan identifies several capital improvements, in two categories of improvements, Capacity and Development Driven. These identified projects have been incorporated into the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) where applicable, see Table 2.

Item	Type of Improvement	Trigger for Project Initiation	Identified CIP year/priority
West Side Interceptor Capacity Improvements – replacement & upsizing	Capacity	Developments upstream of Arapahoe Ridge and Flatiron Meadows	2023 to 2026 (as identified in WWMP)
Canyon Creek Interceptor Capacity Improvements – replacement & upsizing	Capacity	Development upstream of Canyon Creek	2023 to 2026 (as identified in WWMP)
South Coal Creek Interceptor – new pipelines	Development Driven	Parkdale, Fuller, or Sierra Vista developments	Partially complete; will occur with development
Highway 52 Interceptor – from NRWf along Hwy 52 to WCR 7	Development Driven	Developments along Highway 52	Will occur with development, 2023 through 2028
Interstate Interceptor – from Hwy 52 & WCR 7 along I-25 to WCR 6	Development Driven	Development along I-25	Will occur with development, 2024 / 2025
*WCR 5 Interceptor – from Hwy 52 along WCR 5 to south of WCR 10	Development Driven	Development along WCR 5	Will occur with development
*WCR 7 Interceptor – from Hwy 52 along WCR 7 to WCR 10	Development Driven	Development along WCR 7	Will occur with development

Table 13: Identified Improvements, Wastewater Master Plan (2020)

*may be constructed in phases depending on location and timing of developments.

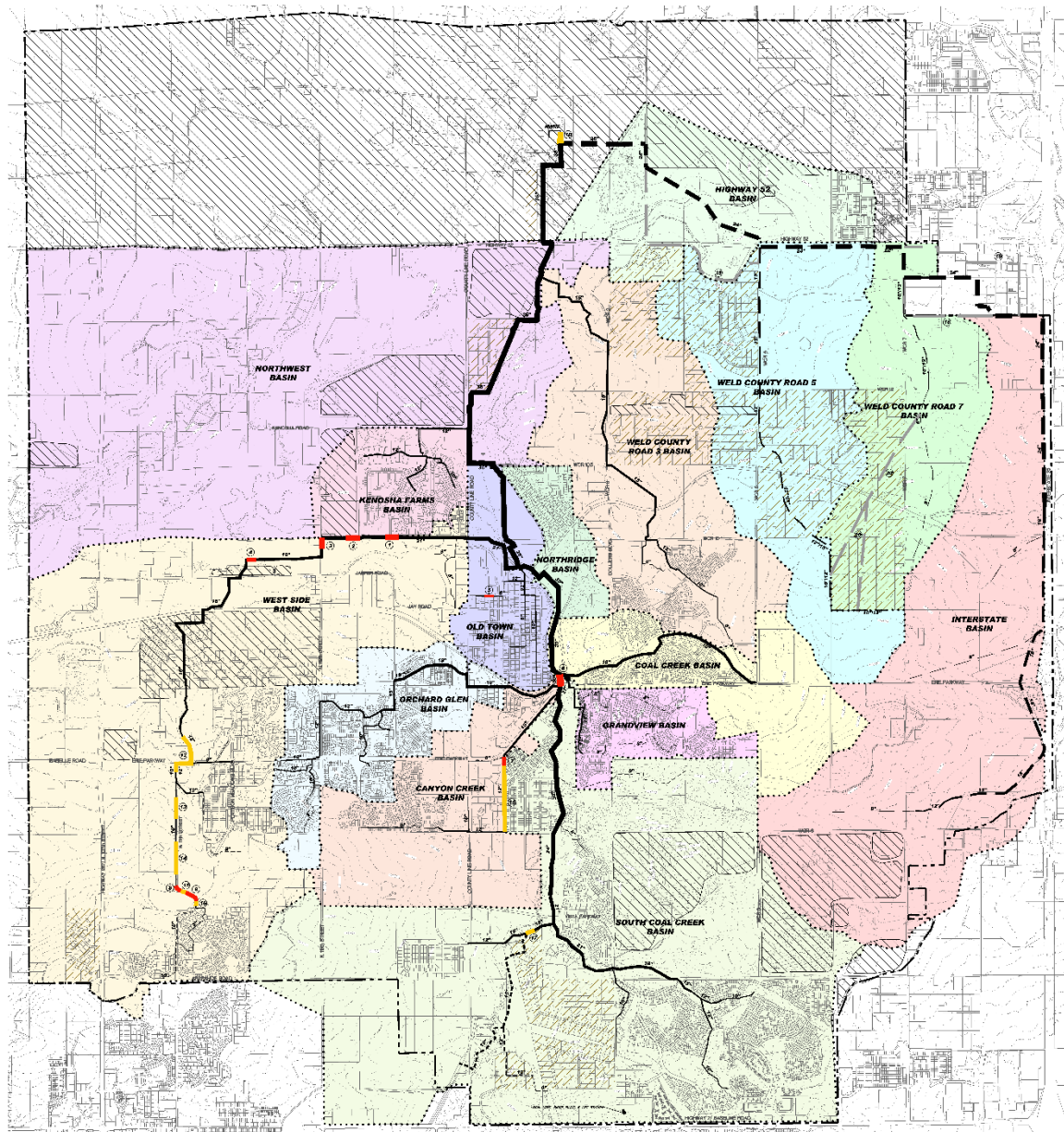


Figure 70: Wastewater Collection System and Sanitary Basins

Source: Town of Erie Wastewater Collection Systems Master Plan 2020

LEGEND

<p>--- 20' CONTOUR --- 10' CONTOUR</p> <p>--- UTIL CORRIDOR --- STREET HIGHWAY</p> <p>COLLECTION SYSTEM PIPES</p> <p>8" 10" 12" 15" 18" 21" 24" 30" 36"</p> <p>--- EXISTING TRUNK SEWER --- PLANNED DEVELOPMENT TRUNK SEWER --- ULTIMATE TRUNK SEWER</p> <p>--- ALTERNATIVE ROUTE</p> <p>--- MARGINAL CAPACITY AT ULTIMATE BUILD-OUT, $\text{CDS} \leq 0.5$ FOR 512" PIPES, $\text{CDS} \leq 0.7$ FOR LARGER PIPES --- INADEQUATE CAPACITY AT ULTIMATE BUILD-OUT, $\text{CDS} > 0.53$</p> <p>MAP NUMBERS</p> <p>① ② PIPES WITH ADVERSE OR FLAT SLOPES ③ ④ PRESSURIZED PIPES ⑤ ⑥ PIPES WITH MARGINAL CAPACITY ⑦ ⑧ HWY 52/ I25 INTERCEPTOR ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENTS ⑨ WCR 5/7 INTERCEPTORS ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT</p>	<p>SANITARY BASINS</p> <p>..... SANITARY BASIN LIMITS</p> <p>--- CANYON CREEK --- COAL CREEK --- GRANDVIEW --- HIGHWAY 52 --- INTERSTATE --- KENOSHA FARMS --- NORTHEDGE --- NORTHWEST --- OLD TOWN --- ORCHARD GLEN --- SOUTH COAL CREEK --- WELD COUNTY ROAD 3 --- WELD COUNTY ROAD 5 --- WELD COUNTY ROAD 7 --- WEST SIDE</p>
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Public Facilities, Services, and Education

Energy Utilities

Electric and natural gas services in Erie are provided by Xcel Energy and United Power, with Black Hills Energy also providing natural gas. Xcel's service area spans eight states, while United Power is a member-owned cooperative serving 900 square miles along the north-central Front Range. Providing power to new developments and ensuring future capacity has recently become a dialogue between Town leadership and private energy providers. Residential land uses utilize the most electricity (79%) and natural gas (90%)²⁴ indicating a strong area for renewable energy expansion. As the Town and the region continue to grow, impacts on power needs and capacity will need to be proactively planned.

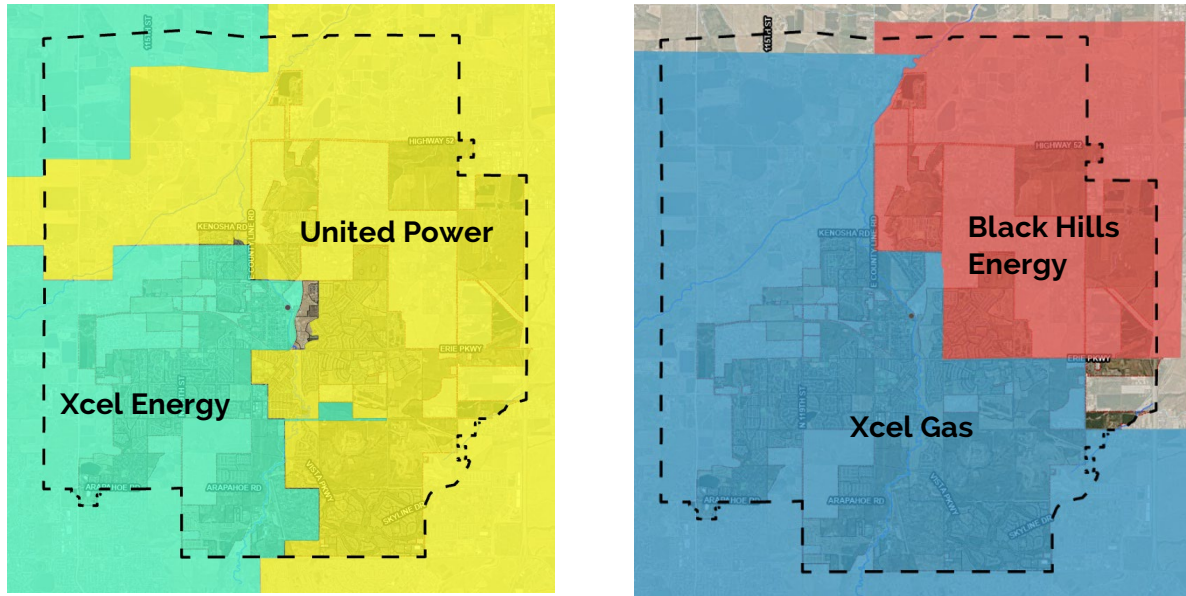


Figure 71: Energy Provider Service Areas

Xcel Energy's mix is 42% renewable (total portfolio) in Colorado, while United Power's is 33%. Erie's Sustainability Plan focuses on increasing renewable/alternative energy sources to the community. The Town's Sustainability Plan sets a goal of sourcing 20% of residential electricity use from renewable sources by 2025. The Town is planning in the 2024 budget year to outfit the North Water Reclamation Facility (NWRf) with solar, and plans to install more with each facility expansion, to eventually meet all the facilities annual power needs. A solar power project is also planned at the Police Department Headquarters building. The Town has planned for Urban Renewal Authority (URA) fund to be utilized in 2025 to underground overhead lines in Downtown. This will not only help with visual appearance but will also provide a more stable power source to Downtown businesses during inclement weather.

²⁴ "Erie 2021 Energy Action Plan 2.0", <https://www.erieco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15368/Energy-Action-Plan-Erie-20?bidId=>

Public Facilities, Services, and Education

Broadband/Data

The main broadband provider in Erie is Xfinity. In the 2023 Erie Community Survey, 51% of respondents indicated that the affordable, high-speed internet in Erie could be improved. The Town has recently franchised with Allo Communications, a fiber internet service that began its installation in October 2022 with a “fiber hut,” which is a small building that houses back-up systems and serves as the beginning point of a fiber network. Allo’s fiber hut is located near Lynn Morgan Water Treatment Plant. Allo’s services will provide Erie with 2.3 Gigabit speed internet and support businesses and residential areas. A new, high-speed fiber network will not only enhance the community’s internet access but could also help attract new employers and retail/service companies.

Solid Waste

The Front Range Landfill, located within Town boundaries, services most of the northern Front Range, Erie included. Waste Connections is the owner of the Front Range Landfill. In previous years, Erie was serviced by both the Front Range Landfill and the adjacent Denver Regional Landfill. After 30 years of service, the Denver Regional Landfill South stopped accepting waste and went into the closure process in December 2020. The Denver Regional Landfill North is closed. [Erie's 2018 Transportation Master Plan](#) does not have any dedicated truck routes through the community, although garbage trucks frequently use Weld County Road 5 from State Highway 52, Erie Parkway or Highway 7 make deliveries to the landfills.

Figure 3 illustrates the closed landfills shaded orange, and active landfills in blue. The Front Range Landfill is currently set to accept solid waste for the next 20-25 years under the current permit and approved filling plan. Once the landfills are closed, new land use options are limited but could include open space, bike park, solar farms, or landfill-to-gas energy programs, which turn methane captured from landfills into an energy source.

Public Facilities, Services, and Education

Erie does not manage residential waste collection services. Neighborhoods have multiple waste disposal providers that privately contract with individuals and Homeowner Associations (HOAs) to offer trash, recycling, and composting services. Erie also has a Town-owned recycling and disposal center that accepts single-stream recycling and yard waste

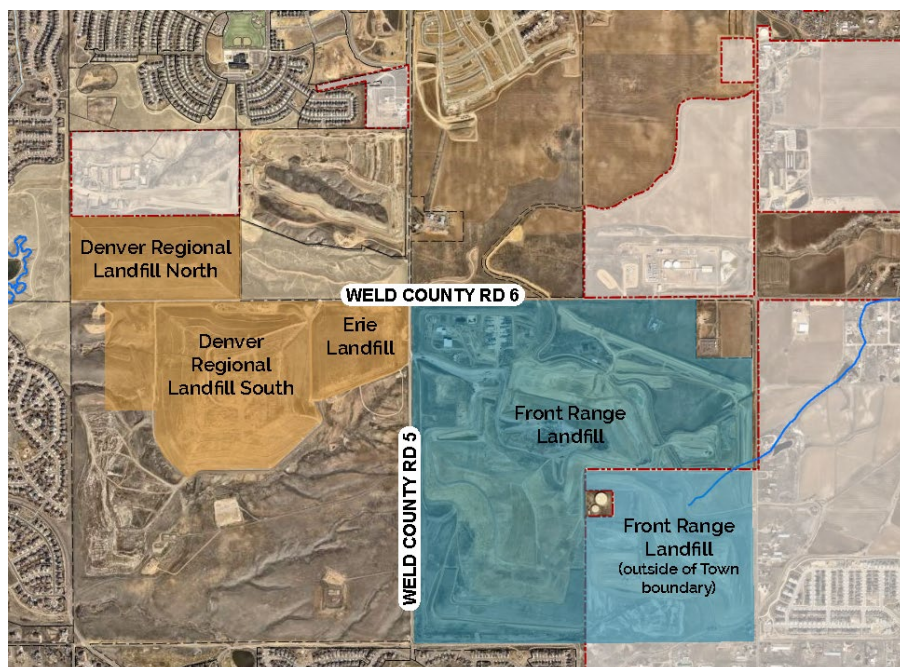


Figure 72: Landfills

located at 1000 Briggs Street in the now decommissioned water treatment facility. The Sustainability Master Plan identified needed improvements to the facility, that are planned for Capital Improvements in 2024 and 2025. Improved waste diversion practices and programs are outlined in the Sustainability Master Plan as areas of focus for the future, including adding composting to Town services.

The Town of Erie contracts with the State of Colorado and Boulder and Weld counties to provide residents with a place to dispose of household hazardous waste. Erie residents, regardless of which county they live in, can use both facilities.

Education

Erie is part of two school districts: St. Vrain Valley School District (SVVSD) and Boulder Valley School District (BVSD). Each of these districts is made up of multiple schools, spanning from Pre-K to high school. Seven schools from SVVSD and one from BVSD are in the Town of Erie. In 2022, SVVSD served 31,670 students²⁵ and BVSD served more than 27,000 students²⁶. Each district has a handful of public charter schools. Private and early childhood schools are also located in the Town. SVVSD allocated and spent \$63.3 million from the \$260 million 2016 Bond in Erie schools to address capacity concerns, security, and educational improvements, along with other physical improvements. This included the new PK-8 Soaring Heights facility, a large addition to the existing High School, and other building additions, ADA improvements and repairs.

The Town has Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) with both school districts that require developers to dedicate land and provide utilities to the districts when developing new residential subdivisions. There are select cases where the school district accepts a fee-in-lieu

²⁵ St. Vrain Valley Schools October 2022/2023 Enrollment Report, [SVVSD.org](https://www.svvsd.org)

²⁶ Boulder Valley School District 2022-23 School Profile Report; Summary and school-level report on enrollment trends, [SchoolProfiles2022.pdf \(finalsite.net\)](https://www.bvpsd.net/SchoolProfiles2022.pdf)

Public Facilities, Services, and Education

for land dedications. These IGAs ensure that as the Town grows there are development-ready parcels within neighborhoods for schools. SVVSD and BVSD have open transfer policies which allow students to transfer between schools in the district. The open transfer policy can complicate long term school planning as students transfer within the district. The SVVSD district covers 411 square miles and serves more than 33,000 students, while BVSD covers 500 square miles and serves over 31,000 students.

Town of Erie Planning and Public Works staff regularly meet with SVVSD leaders to proactively plan for upcoming projects and to discuss trends and data. A primary source of enrollment growth for Erie has been from the elementary level, indicating a future need for larger facilities at middle and high school levels. Enrollment in SVVSD has increased over the past few years, while BVSD has entered a leveling and gradual decline, although the BVSD schools that serve Erie are growing due to the Town's young family population. Schools in both districts are already meeting and are expected to exceed capacity in the next few years. BVSD is planning a new elementary within Erie to address capacity issues, while projecting enough capacity in upper grades. SVVSD is planning new elementary, and middle within Erie's planning boundary and high school serving Erie but located in Fredrick. Nearly 40% of respondents from Vision and Values survey (phase 1 engagement) were "extremely concerned" about school capacity²⁷. SVVSD has a Bond issue planned for 2024 that would create a new elementary and high school serving Erie.

²⁷ Your Vision & Values Survey Results, <https://erieco.us/17862/widgets/60982/documents/40264>

Public Facilities, Services, and Education

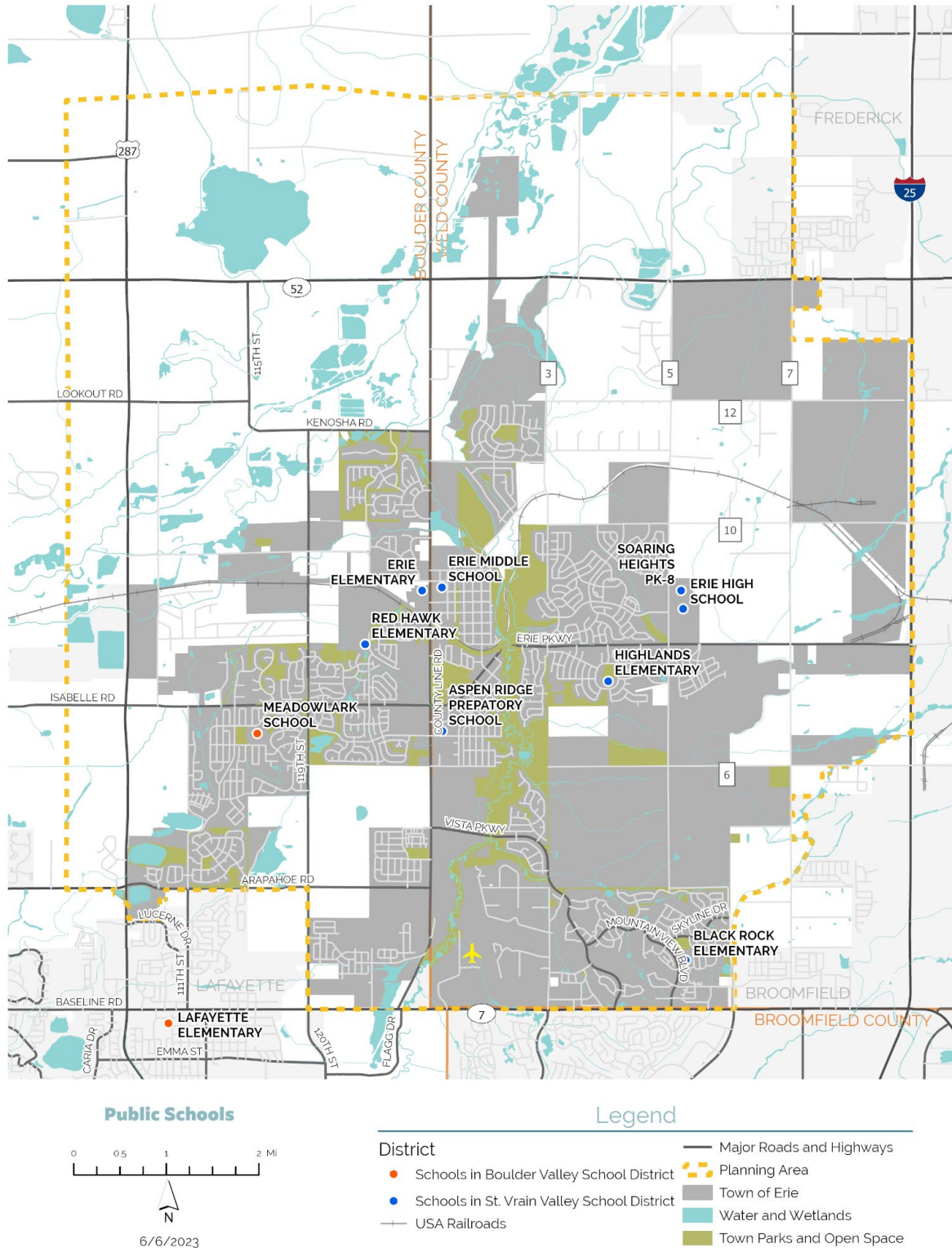


Figure 73: Public School Sites

No higher education institutions are currently located in the Town of Erie, however, the University of Colorado at Boulder, Colorado State University, and the University of Northern

Public Facilities, Services, and Education

Colorado (UNC) are within commuting distance. Multiple community colleges are available in nearby cities, such as Front Range Community College (in Longmont and Westminster) and Aims Community College (in Fort Lupton).

Cultural and Community Facilities

Erie has several cultural and community hubs, such as the Erie Community Center (ECC), Coal Creek Park (near Downtown), Historic Downtown, and Library. A planned second recreation center will focus on offering additional recreation programs. In the 2023 Erie Community Survey, the Town scored 40% on "overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts," a six-point decline from the previous 2021 Community Survey.

Additionally, there are several organizations committed to historic preservation, including the Historic Preservation Advisory Board and the Erie Historical Society. Throughout Erie, there are many parks and other spaces that act as gathering spaces and are further described in the Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space section of this report.

The High Plains Library District (HPLD) serves more than 245,959 residents of Weld and other surrounding counties, covering an area of almost 4,000 square miles. The HPLD serves communities through 14 physical locations, including member libraries, branch locations, public computer centers, and bookmobile services. One of these libraries is the Erie Community Library, located just off Erie Parkway, adjacent to the Erie Community Center. This facility is not operated or maintained by the Town.

The Pierce Street House, located at 625 Pierce Street, is home to the Sustainability division of Public Works. The house is office space for Town staff, and a demonstration structure (by appointment) with solar panels, a heat pump, and on-street EV charging station. Additionally, programming and events will be held by the Sustainability division at the Pierce Street House with information on weatherization programs, grants, rebates, and other sustainability activities.

A Public Art Program was initiated in March 2022 after the Board of Trustees and staff analyzed results from the 2021 Community Survey which indicated dissatisfaction from the residents with Erie having little to no public art compared to surrounding municipalities. This group of 10 residents with art or public art backgrounds were assembled to select potential locations for a public art installation, as well as provide a recommendation to the Board of Trustees on selecting an artist's piece for Erie's first public art installation. Additionally, the Parks and Recreation department recently embarked on a Public Art and Placemaking Plan with the help of a consultant. This plan will outline best practices, processes, and maintenance for public art.

There are opportunities for investments in cultural facilities, as noted in Erie's 2020 Town Center Plan and identified through responses to the 2023 Community Survey. A separate effort led by Erie's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Economic Development Departments, with the assistance of a consultant – UPLift Collaborative and other subject matter experts, explored the feasibility of launching a BIPOC-focused business incubator in Erie. This started with primary and secondary research including:

- Document and case study review

Public Facilities, Services, and Education

- Review of 2021 and 2023 Erie Community Surveys
- Erie Business Landscape and Industry Audit
- Best Practices and Peer Research
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Business Owner Interviews

This led to a Gaming Workshop in which stakeholders were given five Incubator Scenarios to investigate and ultimately led to the choice of the "Erie Impact Lab". This is envisioned as an innovative business incubator and multicultural center with retail, restaurant, and flex space; in-person and virtual business training programs; and networking events and mentoring programs. The objective of the incubator is to remove barriers for entrepreneurs and help BIPOC-owned businesses in the area thrive.

The project team is seeking an operating partner to launch and operate the program, as well as help with final site selection. The targeted move-in and launch of Erie Impact Lab in 2025. The long-term vision for Erie Impact Lab is to systematize racial equity in the provision of government services and eliminate longstanding racial disparities in income and generational wealth.

Public Safety

Fire

The Town of Erie receives fire protection and emergency medical services from Mountain View Fire Rescue (MVFR), with two fire station locations in Erie. Mountain View Fire Rescue serves multiple communities in the region, including Dacono, Mead, Niwot, Superior, and Eldorado Springs. As of February 2022, MVFR has an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 2 or 3, depending on proximity (within 1000 ft.) to fire hydrants. ISO ratings can affect insurance premiums for homeowners. 1 is the best possible rating while 10 means a fire department did not meet ISO minimum standards. Mountain View Fire Rescue is a referral agency on all land use applications for the Town. Additionally, Town staff are working with MVFR on the development of new street sections as a part of the Transportation Mobility Plan (TMP) update.

Police

Erie has a municipal police department with a patrol area of 48 square miles. The department is made up of 46 state-certified officers, 10 staff, and 21 volunteers. One Police Chief, one Deputy Police Chief, and two Commanders oversee all operations. According to their [2022 Annual Report](#), Erie's Police Department responded to more than 16,500 calls in 2022. Top service requests the Police receive are Animal Complaints, Welfare Checks, Suspicious Incidents, Alarms and Parking/Traffic. The Police Department is expected to double by 2045, which will require improvements to and expansion of the Erie Police Station and Municipal Court Building. These costs are estimated at around \$33 million.

The Erie Police Department's [2023 Strategic Plan](#) outlines three goals: safety and crime prevention, community, and efficiency and effectiveness. Each goal has objectives with attainable and measurable performance standards. New objectives outlined for 2023 include the unmanned aerial systems (UAS) program, victim services program, and K-9 unit.

Public Facilities, Services, and Education

Emergency Operations Plan

Erie's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) outlines roles, responsibilities, and protocols in the face of hazards or disasters with the main goal of protecting life and property. The EOP establishes the structure for a coordinated response to various types of natural, technological, and manmade emergencies, disasters, or terrorist attacks. The EOP meets the state and federal requirements for local emergency management plans and programs. The plan does not address long-term reconstruction, redevelopment, or mitigation. The Erie Police Department also offers periodic training on preparedness to the public. Erie's EOP acknowledges the EOPs of Boulder and Weld counties, incorporating applicable aspects from each.

Most incidents which occur in the Town of Erie are handled by field incident command and there is no need for the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) to be activated. There are other incidents where a TOC activation is appropriate, even though an incident command system is not needed in the field. Significant events which affect either Boulder or Weld counties will likely require a field incident command, the activation of the Erie TOC and a county EOC activation.

Erie is also listed in the Boulder County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, including the portion of Erie within Weld County. This plan is approved by FEMA and identifies the hazards, evaluates the risks, and outlines a strategy to reduce or eliminate that risk. This plan allows agencies to apply for pre-disaster and post disaster mitigation funds.

Policy Analysis of Existing Plans and Initiatives

This report includes an overview of recent Town plans and studies that are relevant to the ongoing development and implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Through the integration of these recent plans and studies, the Town can build upon existing knowledge and leverage the expertise of those who contributed to these initiatives.

The following plans, studies, and surveys are summarized below:

- [Non-Potable Water Master Plan](#) (2020)
- [Wastewater Utility Plan](#) (2020)
- [Wastewater Collection Systems Master Plan](#) (2020)
- [Drought & Water Supply Shortage Plan](#) (2021)
- [Facilities Master Plan](#) (2021)
- [Erie Water Efficiency Plan](#) (2021)
- [Outfall Systems Plan East of Coal Creek](#) (2020)
- [Outfall Systems Plan West of Coal Creek](#) (2014)

Non-Potable Water Master Plan Update (2020)

This plan addresses water rights implications of reusing treated wastewater as a feasible alternative for Erie. It identifies potential irrigable areas and provides technical guidance for build-out and operating the utility with a focus on regional non-potable water facilities. Recommendations include improvements to the Commons Irrigation Pond, completion of Colliers Crossing 16-inch water main linking to storage tank and pump station, opportunity to work with developers to complete the West Line to serve western developments, replacement of the Coal Creek Crossing water main, along with installation of pumps and

Public Facilities, Services, and Education

tanks in other locations. The report provides a technical analysis of the feasibility of the system and recommends additional measures to continue the analysis. This plan is updated every five years.

Wastewater Collection System Master Plan (2020)

The 2020 Wastewater Collection System Plan identifies key capacity and development driven water collection system improvements needed in Erie. Capacity improvements include updates that would address pipe sizes and slopes and development driven improvements include new sewer extensions and interceptors, along with upgrades and improvements needed to meet projected flow increases in the next 20 years due to development. This master plan will be updated after the Comprehensive Plan is updated to reflect accurate future land uses.

Wastewater Utility Plan (2020)

The 2020 Wastewater Utility Plan identified key wastewater utility improvements that were necessary for future demands. These improvements have been made, see section on Wastewater Utilities earlier in this report.

Drought and Water Supply Shortage Plan (2021)

This plan prepares Erie for future drought and provides a framework to respond to water shortages. The framework focuses on resiliency, coordination and communication with water providers, equity, and stewardship, capitalizing on beneficial opportunities and providing a flexible framework for improvements. The plan recognizes that continued acquisition of suppliers will be needed to meet long-term needs. The plan is updated every seven years, which will incorporate monitoring reports capturing drought indices, customer water demands, and drought mitigation measures.

Facilities Plan (2021)

The Facilities Plan identifies inefficiencies in space usage and functionality, space deficiencies, and long-term maintenance needs for each Town facility. This analysis projects needs through 2045 and is a tool for the Town Council to use to make long-term decisions regarding the continued use of the existing facilities. The plan includes four core facility recommendations:

1. Town Hall expansion and renovation (starting winter 2023).
2. Modifications to Erie Police Station and Municipal Court Building.
3. Leon A. Wurl Service Center remodeling and renovation.
4. Modifications to current Erie Community Center and construction of a new Erie Recreation Center.

Erie Water Efficiency Plan (2021)

The 2021 Erie Water Efficiency Plan calls for achieving 10% water savings in the next 10 years, maximizing water reuse, and minimizing water waste, innovating with new direct installation technologies, and monitoring water demand. The plan also highlights a need to approach land and water planning more holistically, with an emphasis on water dedication, tap fees and incentives, along with more education and training for both staff and the broader community.

Public Facilities, Services, and Education

Outfall Systems Plans (2014 and 2020)

These reports provide watershed descriptions, updated hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, identification of any potential drainage, stability, and water quality issues within the study area and recommended improvements to alleviate these issues. The plans outline recommended improvements for stormwater structures and improvements.

Issues and Opportunities

The first phases of the Comprehensive Plan process focused on initial public outreach and data analysis. The following list of facilities and services-related issues and opportunities summarizes the outcomes of the existing conditions data, supported by feedback from the public, community leaders, staff, and stakeholders.

Issues

- The community has multiple waste disposal providers that privately contract with community members and HOAs to offer trash, recycling, and composting services. This decentralized approach to waste service can put some residents at a disadvantage and increases truck traffic on roads.
- The Airport Terminal building is past end-of-life and needs replacing.
- Schools in Erie are nearing or have already met capacity.
- The wastewater treatment plant and collection system will need expansion to address growth areas.
- Lack of defined truck routes through Erie can create road maintenance issues.

Opportunities

- Utilize the public's interest in environmental quality to expand its renewable energy portfolio and work with energy partners to provide more renewable alternatives, particularly within Town projects and facilities.
- Improve waste diversion practices and programs, including adding composting to services offered.
- Continue and expand investment in public art and community spaces.
- Proactive identification of additional water resources, supply firming and augmentation.
- Explore options for pressure flow wastewater systems.
- Continue planning with school districts to proactively address current and future needs, such as middle and high school expansions.
- Landfill closure plans that are beneficial to the community in meaningful ways.
- Proactively work with energy providers to increase capacity, and plan for renewable sources.