



Appendices



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Appendix A. Acronyms and Glossary of Terms

Acronyms

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

BOCC: Board of County Commissioners

CAC: Community Advisory Committee

DOLA: Department of Local Affairs

DU: Dwelling Unit

FLUM: Future Land Use Map

LUDC: Land Use and Development Code

PC: Planning Commission

SLV: San Luis Valley

Glossary of Terms

Agritourism: Enjoying activities related to agriculture that connect visitors and consumers with cultural heritage, natural resource, or culinary experiences. Such activities include farm tours or stays, vegetable picking, rodeos or livestock interactions.

Agrivoltaics: Using the same land for farming, ranching, and solar energy production.

Annexation: When a city expands its boundaries to include adjacent land. The City of Alamosa has adopted a 3-Mile Plan that discusses annexation.

Compact Development: Building homes and businesses close together to save space and make walking or biking easier.

Conservation Easements: Legal agreements to protect land from being developed, keeping it natural for farming, ranching, or water preservation.

Conservation Subdivisions: Neighborhoods designed to protect natural areas and open spaces.

Clustered Residential Development: Grouping homes close together to leave more open space for nature or recreation.

Dark Sky Regulations: Rules that promote thoughtful outdoor lighting that protects nighttime stargazing and nurtures health, wildlife, culture, and discovery.

Ecovoltaics: Using the land to make solar energy and help nature at the same time.

Energy Overlay Zone: Areas with special rules that encourage utility scale renewable energy production, like solar farms and battery storage.

Flexible Zoning: Zoning rules that allow different types of buildings and uses in the same area.

Food Miles: The distance food travels from where it's grown to where it's eaten.

Inclusive Housing: Housing that is affordable and accessible to people of all income levels and abilities.

Low Impact Development: Building in ways that protect the environment, like using rain gardens to manage stormwater.

Micro-Transit: Small, flexible transportation services like shuttles or vans that can be called on-demand.

Mixed-Use: Combining homes, shops, and offices in the same area to make neighborhoods more vibrant.

Pivot Corners: Corners of farm fields watered by center-pivot irrigation systems, often unfarmed or used for other purposes.

Riparian Corridor: Land along rivers and streams that provides ecological benefits for wildlife and water quality.

Rural Lodging: Smaller scale accommodations with a unique country feel, including farm stays, Bed & Breakfasts, country inns or cabins, and camping or glamping sites.

Scenic Travel Corridors: Roads or paths with beautiful views that are protected and enhanced.

Streamside Overlay Zone: Areas with special rules for building near streams and other riparian corridors to protect water quality and wildlife habitats.

Vertically Integrated Farming Models: Combining different stages of farming, such as production, processing, and marketing, in one business unit or farm. It also includes expanding symbiotic relationships and integrating technologies like hydroponics or aquaponics.

Viewshed: The area visible from a specific location, often protected for its scenic value.

Water Availability Overlay Zone: Areas with special rules to ensure there is enough water for new and existing developments.

Watershed Protection: Efforts to keep the land around rivers and streams healthy to protect water quality.

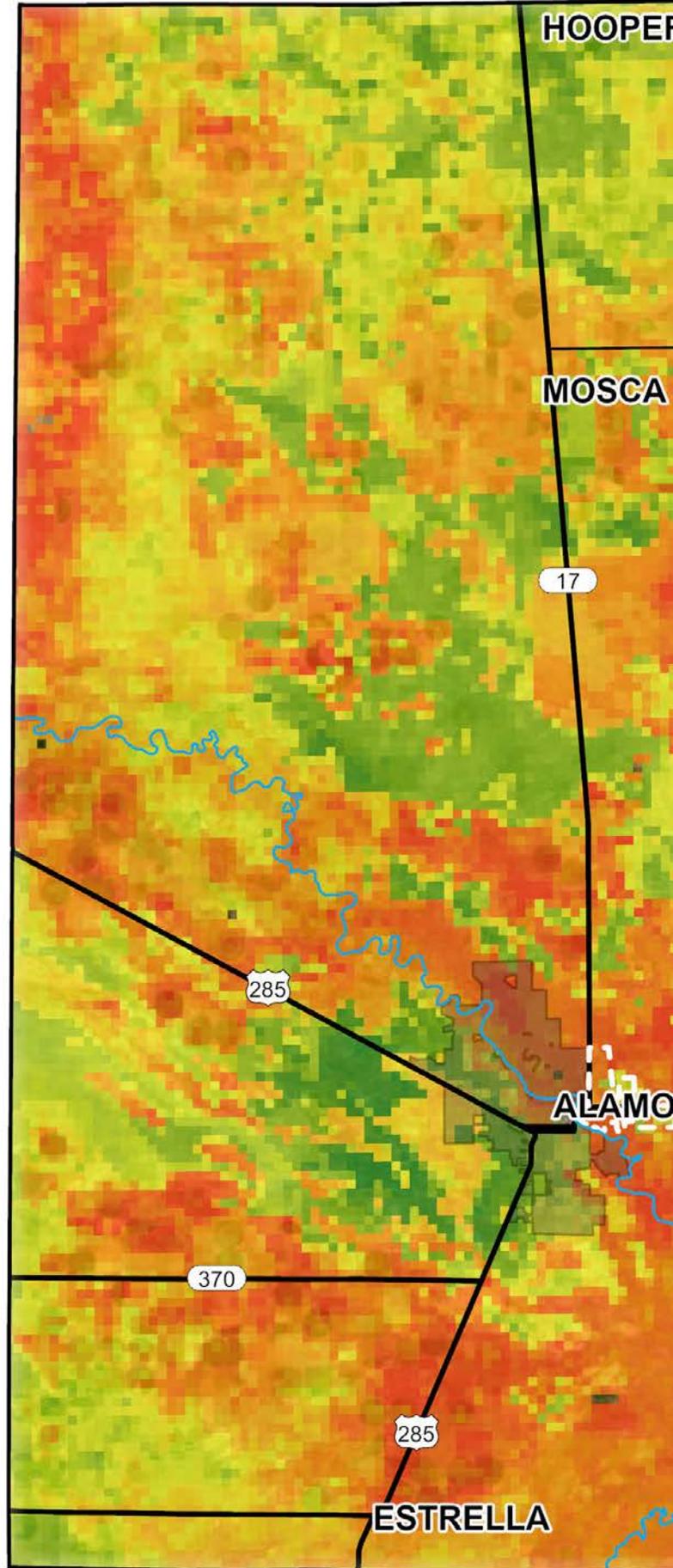
Appendix B. Water Quality Information

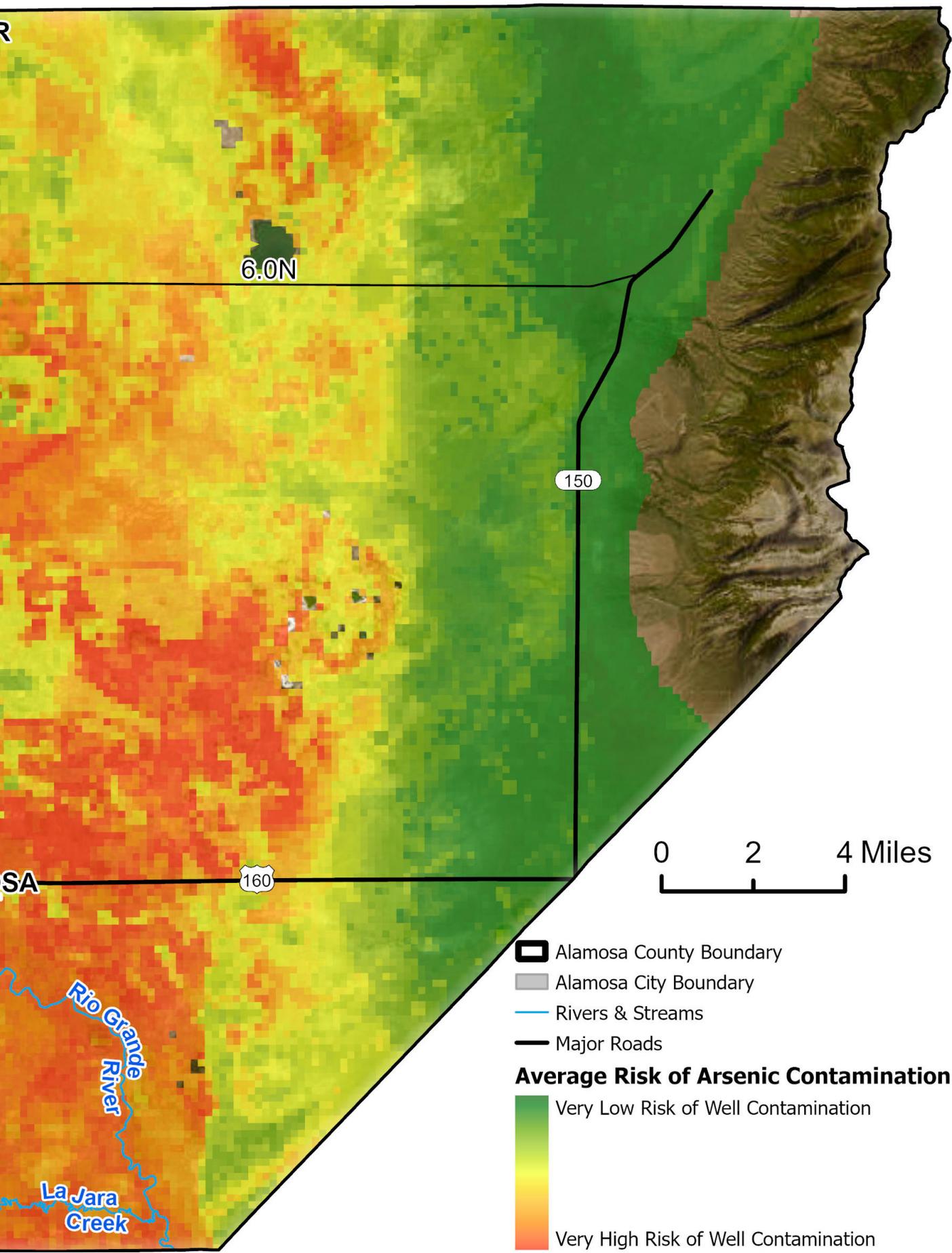
Figure 1. Water quality Map - Average Risk of Arsenic Contamination

The Water Quality Studies by the Colorado School of Public Health and University of Colorado, have identified prominent metals within water in Alamosa County. These include arsenic, cadmium and uranium, which can impact the health of those exposed.

The Water Quality Map on this page specifically identifies areas of arsenic concentration within Alamosa County. The levels of concentration were determined by various well testing sites. The areas in red are those that may have higher levels of arsenic within water, while the areas in green, may be less concentrated with arsenic in wells.

The following pages give an overview of the metals most commonly found within the county. Several mitigation strategies and details outlining the consequences of long-term exposure are included.





-  Alamosa County Boundary
-  Alamosa City Boundary
-  Rivers & Streams
-  Major Roads

Average Risk of Arsenic Contamination

-  Very Low Risk of Well Contamination
-  Very High Risk of Well Contamination

General Information on Heavy Metals

What are heavy metals?

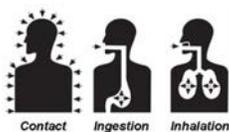
Heavy metals are naturally occurring elements that can be found in the Earth's crust. These metals are released during human activities such as mining or industrial production but can also be released naturally from processes like soil erosion or volcanic eruptions. Each heavy metal is unique in its chemical properties, main exposure route, and health effects.



Exposure to heavy metals

The largest concern for public exposure to heavy metals is from living in close proximity to hazardous waste sites. Heavy metals can be released into soil, air, and water from these sites, which can then lead to the possibility of exposure. Depending on the metal, there are different primary routes of exposure. Be sure to educate yourself on possible sources of heavy metals in your area and take the necessary precautions to mitigate exposure.

Occupational exposure to heavy metals can occur for people who work in mining, waste disposal, or other industries that make products containing heavy metals. If you work in one of these fields, always wear the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) to minimize exposure risk. Your employer should have detailed procedures for how to handle the metal, what to do in case of an accident, and other precautions you can take to keep yourself and your family safe.



Heavy metals can enter the body through **skin contact**, **ingestion** of contaminated food or water, or **inhalation** of polluted air.



Workers who interact with heavy metals can be at increased risk of exposure. Always **wear protective equipment** when handling hazardous materials.



Children are more vulnerable to heavy metal exposure. Even **small doses can have negative health effects**.

How do I reduce my exposure?

Reducing exposure to heavy metals is dependent on the specific heavy metal and how it most commonly enters the environment and our bodies. See below for some protective actions you can take based on routes of exposure.

Airborne Exposure

- This type of exposure is more common for workers who interact with metals.
- Wearing protective equipment like a respirator, extra layers of clothing, or gloves can reduce the risk of exposure from inhaling metals or allowing them to absorb through the skin.
- Examples: lead and cadmium can be released into the air during smelting, battery manufacturing, and welding.

Foodborne Exposure

- Depending on the heavy metal, different foods will carry a higher risk of contamination. For example, heavy metals that accumulate in soil will likely transfer to root vegetables, while heavy metals that dissolve in water could transfer to seafood.
- The best way to mitigate foodborne exposure to heavy metals is to eat a balanced diet and stay informed on local fishing advisories if you plan on eating self-caught seafood.
- Examples: mercury accumulates in certain types of seafood and arsenic can be absorbed into rice products through contaminated soil and water.

Waterborne Exposure

- If using well water, get your water tested for heavy metals. Certain metals can dissolve from surrounding rock and soil into your water source.
- Some homes, typically those built before 1988, have lead pipes that can allow the metal to leach into drinking water. If you suspect your home has lead pipes, be sure to get drinking water tested.
- Use a water filter specifically designed to remove the heavy metal of interest.
- Examples: lead from pipes and arsenic leaching from rocks and soil into groundwater.

Additional resources

<https://www.epa.gov/privatewells/potential-well-water-contaminants-and-their-impacts>

<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/protect-your-tap-quick-check-lead-0>

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Arsenic

What is arsenic

Arsenic is a naturally occurring metal in the Earth's crust that can be found in soil, rocks, and minerals. Arsenic can leach out of these materials into water, and it can be picked up as wind-blown dust to enter the air. Pure arsenic is a solid, steel gray material. However, arsenic typically combines with other elements in the environment to form organic or inorganic arsenic. These forms of arsenic are tasteless, odorless white powders, making it difficult to detect exposure without proper testing.



Exposure to arsenic

Everyone is exposed to some level of arsenic since it is ubiquitous in our environment. This is typically a small amount of arsenic that will enter your body as a result of eating, drinking, and breathing. Of these three exposure routes, food is typically the largest contributor to arsenic exposure. Dietary sources of arsenic include seafood, rice/cereal, mushrooms, and poultry. For certain communities, there are elevated levels of arsenic in soil. Children may be particularly vulnerable to arsenic exposure in these areas since they play outside and may accidentally ingest soil containing arsenic. If you work in an industry which uses arsenic during production, such as copper or lead smelting, wood treatment, or pesticide application, you may be exposed to higher levels of arsenic through dust or smoke.

Ingesting arsenic can cause irritation of the intestines and stomach resulting in nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. It can also lead to fatigue, abnormal heartbeat, bruising, and a “pins and needles” sensation in the hands and feet. The amount of arsenic needed to cause these symptoms is about 100-10,000 times higher than what is found in most U.S. drinking water. Inhaling arsenic can lead to sore throat, irritated lungs, and skin changes such as dark patches or corns/warts. The level of arsenic needed to cause these symptoms is likely above 100($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) for a brief period. Inhaling arsenic may increase the risk of lung cancer, but this has mostly been seen in workers exposed to arsenic on the job or residents who live near smelters or waste sites that contain arsenic.



The most common route of exposure for arsenic is **ingesting** foods containing high levels of the metal.



Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea can occur from ingesting arsenic.



Children can be exposed to arsenic in soil during playtime. Make sure to have **kids wash their hands** after playing outside.

How do I reduce my exposure?

Eating a diverse diet can help mitigate arsenic exposure from food. If you use well water for drinking and cooking, be sure to get your well tested for arsenic. The EPA's Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for arsenic in drinking water is 10 ppb. If your household relies on groundwater from a privately owned well which exceeds the MCL, be sure to find an alternative source for water. If your community has high levels of arsenic in the water or soil, you can limit exposure by using thick groundcover or a lawn. Discourage children from eating soil when playing outside, and always have them wash their hands after playtime or before meals. You can also use air filters in the home and frequently wipe down surfaces to reduce exposure from dust.

If you are exposed to arsenic at your job, you could carry it home on your clothes, body, hair, or tools. Whenever possible, shower and change clothes before coming home to reduce the risk of bringing arsenic back with you. Areas such as the San Luis Valley may experience high concentrations of arsenic in the drinking water and soil due to geologic factors. Using a reverse osmosis water filter can be a highly effective way to prevent consumption of elevated levels of arsenic in drinking water while constant monitoring of well water sources can also be used to reduce exposure.

Additional resources

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp2.pdf>

Cadmium

What is cadmium

Cadmium is a metal found in the Earth's crust, typically released into the environment as a byproduct of zinc, lead, or copper mining. In its pure form, cadmium is a soft silvery-white solid. Cadmium is used in many consumer products, including batteries, pigments, platings, plastic stabilizers, alloys, and photovoltaic devices. Cadmium can exist in air, soil, and water depending on what other ions it bonds with.



Exposure to cadmium

The primary source of cadmium exposure for non-smokers is through food. Leafy greens, potatoes, grains, peanuts, soybeans, and sunflower seeds contain the highest levels of cadmium, around 0.05-0.12 mg cadmium/kg. For smokers, cadmium accumulates in tobacco leaves and is a major source of exposure. The burden of cadmium in body tissues roughly doubles for smokers compared to non-smokers. For people who live near an industry that uses cadmium, it is possible to be exposed via air or water. Exposure from these modes of exposure is not a concern for the public. Occupational exposure to cadmium is possible during processes like smelting or electroplating. Workers can inhale cadmium from dust or fumes, or ingest cadmium that is transferred to hands, food, or cigarettes.

Ingestion of high amounts of cadmium has been shown to cause nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramping, and diarrhea. The dose needed to cause this reaction in adults has not been measured. In children, a dose of 13mg/L has been shown to cause similar gastrointestinal distress symptoms. Chronic exposure to cadmium can lead to a build-up of the metal in the kidneys. High doses over an extended period can lead to kidney dysfunction, though the exact dose needed to cause these effects is not established. For workers, long-term cadmium exposure has been associated with lung damage, kidney disease, and osteoporosis.

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Ingestion

The most common route of exposure to cadmium is through **ingesting food** that contains small amounts of the metal.



Cadmium accumulates in tobacco leaves and can build up in the body of those who smoke.



If you work in an industry that uses cadmium, be sure to **change clothes before leaving your job** to avoid bringing metal exposure home with you.

How do I reduce my exposure?

For the general population, proper handling and disposal of cadmium products can reduce the risk of exposure. Nickel-cadmium batteries should be recycled whenever possible and should not be left around the house for children to play with or accidentally swallow. Local fishing advisories should be checked before catching and eating local seafood or playing in waterways. Cigarette smokers should be aware of the amount of cadmium stored in tobacco leaves that ends up in the blood. If possible, reduce or eliminate cigarette smoking.

Workers who interact with cadmium should wear proper protective equipment and follow guidelines on how to handle and dispose of the metal. Engineering controls to reduce cadmium exposure in the workplace should be implemented by upper management. To limit bringing cadmium into the home, showering and changing clothes after work can protect workers and their families. In the San Luis Valley (SLV), the presence of cadmium is influenced by the region's unique geological formation along the continental divide and historic volcanic activity. Human activities, including mining, can introduce or mobilize uranium in the environment, which may infiltrate local water resources, such as private wells, or disperse in the air. Consistent monitoring and testing of private wells can help detect elevated levels of cadmium before adverse health effects are experienced.

Additional resources

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp5.pdf>

Lead

What is lead?

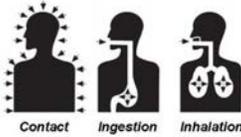
Lead is a naturally occurring element that can be found in ore deposits. It is solid at room temperature and is a dark gray color. The primary way that lead enters the environment is from human activity. For example, the historical use of lead in gasoline, paints, and other products like pipes, batteries, ammunition, and cosmetics.



Exposure to lead

The general public can be exposed to lead in air, food, water, soil, or dust. Lead can be ingested, inhaled, or absorbed via the skin. For adults, elevated lead levels are typically due to occupational hazards, with industries such as construction, mining, and manufacturing posing greater risks. Besides occupational exposures, individuals may encounter lead from sources like lead-based paint, contaminated soil, or lead pipes that supply drinking water. Children are at a higher risk for exposure as they tend to play outdoors in the dirt, engage in more hand-mouth behavior, and can inhale lead-containing dust since they are close to the ground.

Adverse health effects due to lead have been observed in every organ system in the body. Even low-level exposure to lead over time (blood lead levels $\leq 5 \mu\text{g/dL}$) can harm the kidneys, heart, blood, immune and reproductive systems. Of high concern are the neurological and developmental effects on babies and children, as lead can pass through the placenta, and these can be lifelong impairments. It has now been established that there is no safe level of lead in blood, especially for children. Signs of lead poisoning in children include issues with learning and memory, dexterity, changes in hearing and visual thresholds, hyperactivity, irritability, and impulsivity.



Lead can be ingested, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin.

Think about your own life experience to understand which route of exposure poses the most risk.

There is no safe level of lead in blood, especially for young children. Ask your doctor if your child should be tested for lead at their next visit.

Lead can affect every organ of the body. Be aware of the signs and symptoms of lead poisoning and get tested if you think you may have been exposed.

How do I reduce my exposure?

If you live in an older home, it may contain lead paint. Have your home tested by a certified lead inspector to understand what your risk level is. If paint is peeling or chipping away, avoid picking at or disturbing the surface as this can release small lead particles into the air. To avoid exposure from paint, be sure to wet mop, wipe down surfaces frequently, and consider using a HEPA air filter. To fully remove the risk of exposure from paint, you may need to cover the paint with a special kind of primer called an encapsulant. Your home may also have lead pipes that can allow lead into your drinking water. If this is the case, be sure to use a water filter for any cooking or drinking. Children can reduce their lead exposure by washing their hands after playing outside, and taking shoes off when they enter the house as this can allow lead-contaminated soil into the home.

In the San Luis Valley (SLV), lead exposure risks are also influenced by the region's unique geologic formations and historic mining activities, which may increase lead levels in local soil and groundwater. Regular testing of soil and private well water can help residents monitor potential lead exposure from these environmental sources.

Additional resources

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp13.pdf>

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Uranium

What is Uranium?

Uranium is a naturally occurring radioactive heavy metal that is more abundant in the Earth's crust than gold. It has a silvery-white appearance, is dense, and malleable. Trace amounts of uranium are present in soil, rock, and water across the globe; however, its presence is nearly impossible to detect without laboratory analysis. The health risks when exposed to Uranium are twofold as uranium poses biological toxicity and radiological dangers, with drinking water contamination being a common exposure pathway worldwide.



Exposure to Uranium

People are exposed to uranium in occupational settings like mining, nuclear power plants, or military facilities where uranium is handled or processed. In community settings, the primary route of exposure is through the ingestion of contaminated drinking water and food. Uranium is naturally present in trace amounts in soil, water, and air, but people living near uranium mining sites or nuclear facilities may have increased exposure. Natural processes, such as erosion, and human activities like mining, can introduce uranium into the environment. Inhalation of uranium dust is also a concern in some workplaces where uranium is disturbed.

The health effects of uranium exposure depend on the form and solubility of the uranium compound. Uranium on its own is not very soluble, making it less easily absorbed by the body, while more soluble compounds are more likely to be absorbed. Once absorbed, uranium tends to accumulate in the bones, liver, and kidneys, with about 66% of it stored in the bones. Toxicologic effects are primarily related to renal and pulmonary damage due to uranium's chemical toxicity. Research in animals has also shown potential neurobehavioral changes and decreased fertility, though more studies are needed to confirm these effects in humans. Uranium's radioactive decay into radon is also of concern, as radon exposure is associated with an increased risk of lung cancer.

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The most common way that people are exposed to uranium is through **ingesting** root crops or water.



Kidney damage can occur with exposure to uranium.



Uranium miners are at exceedingly high risk of multiple health risks due to frequent exposure to uranium.

How do I reduce my exposure?

Root crops such as potatoes, parsnips, turnips, and sweet potatoes contribute the highest amounts of uranium to our diet. Thoroughly washing these produce items should help eliminate uranium from the nearby soil. The amount of uranium in these foods is directly associated with the soil in which they are grown. Consider discarding the outer portion of root crops grown in soil with known uranium contamination. Similarly, the amount of uranium contained in drinking water is directly associated with its source environment. Uranium can be removed from drinking water with various types of filters. Reverse osmosis filters are commonly used and can remove 95-98% of uranium from drinking water.

Additional resources

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/csem/uranium/docs/uranium.pdf>

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Appendix C. Goals and Strategies

THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA
AGRICULTURAL IDENTITY	Goal #1 Working and Prime Agriculture Land:	Educate and inform the community about the Right to Farm and Ranch Resolution passed in 2000.					
	Ensure the long-term viability and productivity of Alamosa County’s working and prime agricultural lands by prioritizing their preservation and fostering policies that promote agriculture as a cornerstone of the local economy and heritage.	Allow or incentivize clustered residential development that concentrates housing in one area while preserving the majority of the land for agricultural use.					
		Explore mechanisms for shared ownership or management of preserved farmland by subdivision residents.					
		Explore policies that require a portion of the water dedicated to new development to continue to be used for agricultural purposes.					
	Goal #2 Resilient Agriculture and Resource Management:	Expand the educational resources for water management, value, capacity, and efficiency in Alamosa County.					
	Encourage practices to maintain soil health, improve water management, and adapt to climate change.	Explore flexible zoning regulations to protect farms from risks that redefine landscapes and threaten farming practices.					
		Educate landowners on groundwater conservation easements which limit groundwater pumping to reduce water use while benefiting the farmers and the natural landscape.					
		Explore policies that maximize water services without developing new well systems or changing agricultural rights.					
		Support a local composting program.					

KEY				
RC: Regulatory Changes	CP: Capital Projects	S/P: New Studies/Plans	PR: Programs	PA: Partnerships

THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA
AGRICULTURAL IDENTITY	Goal #3 Innovative Agricultural Practices:	Streamline permitting processes for greenhouses and innovative farming projects.					
	Encourage innovative agricultural industries.	Encourage co-ops or other shared resource business models to reduce costs for individual farmers.					
		Support producer workshops and outreach programs to demonstrate the benefits and feasibility of innovative agricultural practices and the study of how water moves within agricultural systems.					
	Goal #4 Family Farms and Local Food Production:	Promote local food production and processing with smaller scale facilities.					
	Strengthen family farms and multi-generational farming.	Explore policies to encourage neighborhood farms and gardens as an integral part of new development.					
		Update policies and remove regulatory barriers to innovative on-farm housing options for laborers, both temporary and permanent.					
	Goal #5 Economic Diversification and Resilience:	Encourage development of railroad and trucking models that balance exports of agricultural goods with imports of needed resources to enhance reliable transportation networks.					
	Encourage diversification and agricultural markets and alternative revenue streams to capitalize on value-added products and solar energy projects to stabilize the economy.	Encourage complementary uses for supplemental on-farm income, like agrivoltaics that combine farming or ranching with solar energy production.					
		Consider policies that encourage the manufacturing and/or processing of agricultural products grown in Alamosa County and in the greater region.					

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THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA
AGRICULTURAL IDENTITY	Goal #6 Community Collaboration and Cultural Celebration:	Support programs and organizations that foster collaboration and opportunities between farmers and local consumers through information sharing and education.					
	Celebrate a culture of local food and agricultural identity through public events, markets, and collaborative farming efforts.	Encourage agritourism opportunities that supplement farming by focusing on value-added services, shared experiences, and farm and ranch based educational opportunities.					
		Support local programs that recognize and celebrate the nationally recognized food production taking place locally.					
		Support diverse mobility options to farmers' market or other agricultural events to promote equitable access to local food systems and to strengthen the connection to Alamosa County's farming identity.					
	Water Considerations	Continue supporting the valley-wide effort to restrict export of water resources outside the Rio Grand Basin.					
	Determine Alamosa County's role in restoring watershed functions through public education and watershed restoration projects.						
	Consider creating a drought management preparedness program.						
	Goal #1 Cultural Sensitivity and Respect:	Collaborate with Visit Alamosa, the City of Alamosa, the Chamber of Commerce, and others on the creation of a tourism master plan.					
DIVERSE ECONOMY	Foster an environment that respects and bolsters the traditions, customs, and lifestyles of the local residents.	Visit Alamosa will work with farmers to establish County-wide farm tours.					
		Support economic development efforts to attract youth-oriented businesses, services, and entertainment.					

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THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA	
DIVERSE ECONOMY	Goal #2 Economic Prosperity and Job Opportunities: Promote commerce that provides products and services for locals in addition to jobs that align salary growth with the cost of living.	Partner with local economic development organizations to attract businesses and industries that offer high-paying jobs (i.e., Jobs that pay more than the average median income).						
		Cultivate workforce training and workforce housing partnerships with Adams State University and Trinidad State College to retain local talent and workforce and provide a pathway to jobs for teens.						
	Goal #3 Economic Diversity and Resiliency: Pursue a balanced and diverse economy that keeps money made in the County within the County.	Support economic development efforts that attract businesses and industries that diversify products and services.						
		Encourage eco-tourism businesses (solar tours, off-the-grid lodging, wildlife tours, etc.)						
		Encourage new industries in appropriate locations.						
		Continue to promote solar and renewable energy developments in the appropriate locations.						
		Support and expand the utilization of the Regional Airport.						
	Goal #4 Water Conscious Development: Manage development consistent with current and future water availability.	Require water users in new developments to demonstrate a plan for meeting long-term water demands.						
		Encourage developers and water providers to identify opportunities to consolidate individual wells into community water systems						
		Encourage developers to identify opportunities to consolidate individual septic systems into community sewer systems						

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THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA
DIVERSE ECONOMY	Goal #4 Water Conscious Development:	Consider water management strategies such as Aquifer Storage and Recovery and possible aquifer recharge for community systems or on a regional scale.					
	Manage development consistent with current and future water availability.	Work with State and Federal agencies, local community groups, and water providers (i.e. East Alamosa Water & Sanitation District and the City of Alamosa) to provide education on water use, water conservation, and water quality goals.					
	Water Considerations	Use a place-based approach to identify locations that can accommodate water dependent industries such as, manufacturing, hospitals, and other health care facilities.					
		Work with community organizations to enhance water related recreational opportunities such as boating the Rio Grande, fishing, wildlife watching, and more.					
		Coordinate with City of Alamosa on river revitalization projects reconnecting the community and visitors with the Rio Grande.					
		Establish a Water Availability Overlay Zone that identifies areas within Alamosa that can support new and denser development.					
		Continue to be an active partner with community events or festivals that highlight water resources, such as the Monte Viste Crane Festival.					
		Require re-vegetation for solar installations.					

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THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA
HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS	Goal #1 Affordable and Sustainable Housing:	Explore flexible and inclusive housing policies that accommodate diverse needs.					
	Promote affordable and sustainable housing.	Allow diverse housing types, including manufactured homes and manufactured home parks, tiny homes on permanent and temporary foundations, and cottage housing developments.					
		Explore public-private partnerships with affordable housing developers to build and rehabilitate attainable and transitional housing.					
		Partner with local employers and universities and colleges on workforce housing development projects.					
		Support land use planning that places housing, services, and jobs closer together to naturally reduce travel distances.					
		Promote energy and water-efficient homes and outdoor landscapes.					
	Goal #2 Accessible Transportation Options for all Communities:	Explore a local micro-transit service to offer convenient, accessible, and short-distance travel options in Alamosa County.					
	Consider transportation infrastructure that reduces reliance on vehicle use and makes the community more inviting and sustainable.	Explore the feasibility of a visitor shuttle to popular tourism destinations.					
		Explore the feasibility of a bike/trail loop system that creates regional connections via biking and walking.					

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THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA
HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS		Streamline permitting for electric vehicle charging facilities throughout Alamosa County.					
		Coordinate with transit providers to connect Alamosa County with neighboring communities and essential services.					
		Partner with the City of Alamosa to conduct a transportation equity audit to evaluate how well the transportation systems serves older adults, low-income households, people with disabilities, and non-drivers to inform future investments that close access gaps.					
	Goal #3 Sustainable Infrastructure Development:	Promote renewable energy production and storage, encourage continued solar development at all scales, and pursue designation as a SOLSmart community.					
	Encourage where feasible in public transportation, utilities, and renewable energy systems that support the community and can adapt to accommodate tourism.	Manage renewable energy development to benefit the residents of Alamosa County.					
		Explore incorporating low impact development (alternative stormwater management principles) into regulations.					
		Pursue a data-driven approach to road maintenance and paving.					
		Develop Capital Improvement Plans to coordinate the location, timing, and financing of infrastructure investments.					
		Invest in rural road maintenance and multimodal access to ensure agricultural goods can be efficiently transported to local and regional markets, reducing spoilage, costs, and barriers to economic participation.					

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THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA
HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS	Goal #4 Access to Education and Employment:	Support the development and utilization of spaces that support educational facilities, training centers, and employment hubs.	■				
	Enhance access to workforce training and economic development.	Explore recruitment, retention, and workforce readiness opportunities to bolster Alamosa County's economic role in the San Luis Valley.					■
		Continue to engage local students with real-world experiences and service-learning opportunities in Alamosa County.					■
	Goal #5 Community-Oriented Spaces and Mixed-Use Development:	Explore mixed-use areas where residential, commercial, and recreational spaces coexist.	■				
	Encourage growth that balances a mix of community-oriented land uses with smart and intentional development.	Encourage future growth of higher densities and mixed use developments adjacent to the City of Alamosa.	■				
		Support additional recreational destinations.					■
		Encourage parks and open space areas around multifamily developments and in major subdivisions.	■				
		Promote transit services, e-bike/bike routes, and scenic driving corridors with local farms, ranches, and food producers to create agritourism loops that boost visitation and connect tourists directly with local agriculture.					■
							■
							■

KEY				
RC: Regulatory Changes	CP: Capital Projects	S/P: New Studies/Plans	PR: Programs	PA: Partnerships

THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA	
HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS	Goal #6 Public Health and Social Services:	Encourage green spaces, community gardens, parks, and trails, especially along the Rio Grande.						
	Promote a comprehensive and diverse approach to community planning that promotes attaining the full potential for health and well-being for all.	Explore programs that support access to healthcare services for all community members including veterans, immigrants, older adults, youth populations, people with disabilities, etc.						
		Consider policies that foster health by working with the Public Health Department to address strategies in the San Luis Valley Public Health Improvement Plan.						
		Consider policies that foster access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities.						
		Collaborate with local governments and community entities to explore programs, policies, and resources that address mental health and social support.						
		Consider policies that help Alamosa County endure natural hazards by implementing strategies in San Luis Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan						
		Goal #7 Parks and Open Spaces:	Consider creating a County Parks & Open Space Department to oversee parks and open space acquisition and management.					
	Promote parks and open spaces to provide accessible recreational opportunities, protect natural habitats, and enhance the quality of life for all residents.	Explore creation of a Trails and Open Space Plan to evaluate lands with potential conservation values and provide guidance on where and how to preserve open spaces in the County.						
		Support the construction of new indoor and year-round recreation and sports facilities.						
		Encourage and support the development of green spaces, neighborhood gardens, parks, and trails, especially along the Rio Grande.						
		Partner with the City and community organizations to embrace the Rio Grande as a resource and maximize the recreation and community benefits.						
	KEY							
	RC: Regulatory Changes	CP: Capital Projects	S/P: New Studies/Plans	PR: Programs	PA: Partnerships			

THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA
HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT		Collaborate on the creation of a new regional trail along the Closed Basin Canal to connect to the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve.					
	Goal #8 Improved Air Quality:	Promote practices that do not contribute to poor air quality, such as conscious timing for plowing and tilling farmlands.					
	Promote reduction of dust and other particulate matter by resilient land use practices.	Create a notification program where Alamosa County provides prompt public notification when the air quality in Alamosa exceeds or is expected to exceed an unhealthy level.					
		Encourage control measures to limit dust from construction and site disturbance, such as watering or re-vegetation.					
		Consider requirements that major subdivisions and planned unit developments have paved roads.					
		Educate the community about the importance of native plants and water-efficient landscaping design.					
	Water Considerations	Require planned unit developments to include water efficiency standards, alternative water use or watershed protection efforts.					
		Consider commercial landscape and site design standards that include best management practices for low impact development, including naturalized detention for rainwater and run off and green infrastructure design.					
		Educate developers on the benefits and cost saving potential of water-smart appliance and waterwise landscaping.					
		Promote compact development adjacent to the City of Alamosa and within Mosca to provide more water efficient land use patterns by allowing cluster and conservation subdivisions by right.					

KEY				
RC: Regulatory Changes	CP: Capital Projects	S/P: New Studies/Plans	PR: Programs	PA: Partnerships

THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA
NATURAL LANDSCAPES	Goal #1 Water Conservation and Management: Prioritize the sustainable management of water resources, including rivers, streams, and watersheds, to ensure long-term availability for communities, agriculture, and wildlife.	Limit the types of development and uses allowed in floodplains, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas within Alamosa County.					
		Support the protection and restoration of wetlands.					
		Consider regulations to ensure that all subdivisions can achieve water sustainability and water quality goals.					
	Goal # 2 Conservation of Scenic Views and Dark Skies: Protect dark skies, open spaces, and viewsheds, recognizing their value in maintaining natural beauty and rural tranquility, minimizing pollution for future generations, and contributing to the local way of life and economy.	Consider dark sky regulations.					
		Preserve views of unique or distinctive natural features from scenic travel corridors by strategically orienting buildings and limiting height.					
		Prioritize natural open space preservation for both active and passive recreation.					
		Encourage the continuance of large-tract agricultural operations near the Rio Grande.					
		Revise subdivision regulations to minimize “barren” lots due to "household use only" well limitations and consider requiring minimum augmentation to provide capacity for landscaping and trees.					

KEY				
RC: Regulatory Changes	CP: Capital Projects	S/P: New Studies/Plans	PR: Programs	PA: Partnerships

THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA
NATURAL LANDSCAPES	Goal #3 Balancing Public Access and Conservation for Outdoor Recreation:	Work with Visit Alamosa, Great Sand Dunes National Park, the National Wildlife Refuges, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to educate residents and visitors about the impacts of active and passive recreation on the natural environment.					
	Support responsible public access to natural resources for recreational activities such as fishing, foraging, hiking, riding, and hunting, while respecting conservation goals.	Promote educational stewardship programs that address tourism impacts such as “Do Colorado Right” and “Leave No Trace”.					
		Work collaboratively with water providers, federal agencies, and state agencies to protect watersheds, surface water and groundwater from contamination and meet or exceed established water quality standards.					
		Collaborate with Visit Alamosa, Great Sand Dunes National Park, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to implement seasonal shuttles, carpool incentives, or park-and-ride options to reduce vehicle traffic, emissions, and congestion at high-use recreation sites.					
		Support the development of multi-use trails, bike racks, wayfinding signage, and pedestrian-friendly routes.					
		Consider speed reduction measures, wildlife crossings, and interpretive signage to protect habitats and reduce the ecological footprint of roadways that pass through or near conservation lands.					

KEY				
RC: Regulatory Changes	CP: Capital Projects	S/P: New Studies/Plans	PR: Programs	PA: Partnerships

THEME	GOALS	STRATEGIES	RC	CP	S/P	PR	PA	
NATURAL LANDSCAPES	Goal #4 Intentional Growth and Development: Guide new population growth and development to areas with available infrastructure and access to services, in a manner that ensures natural areas remain intact for managed recreation and habitat preservation.	Consider promoting clustered and conservation subdivisions in areas with high conservation values.						
		Consider resource protection standards to buffer development from floodplains and riparian areas.						
		Provide information and education on the benefits of planting species that support native pollinators and wildlife.						
		Establish an Energy Overlay that identifies areas where future utility scale solar farms are preferred in order to reduce future conflict with other types of development.						
	Goal #5 Managing Visitor Impact: Collaborate with partners to prevent overcrowding and degradation of natural sites.	Work with Visit Alamosa to thoughtfully market areas in Alamosa County that can withstand greater visitation and use during different times, including investing in data tools to better understand visitor numbers.						
		Encourage visitors to visit in shoulder seasons						
	Water Considerations	Support the conservation of water for habitat and aquifer sustainability by working with organizations like Colorado Open Lands, on groundwater conservation easements.						
		Protect the Rio Grande riparian corridor by limiting storm water runoff and other pollution risks from adjacent properties.						

KEY				
RC: Regulatory Changes	CP: Capital Projects	S/P: New Studies/Plans	PR: Programs	PA: Partnerships

Appendix D. Figures

Figure 1. County-Wide Future Land Use Map

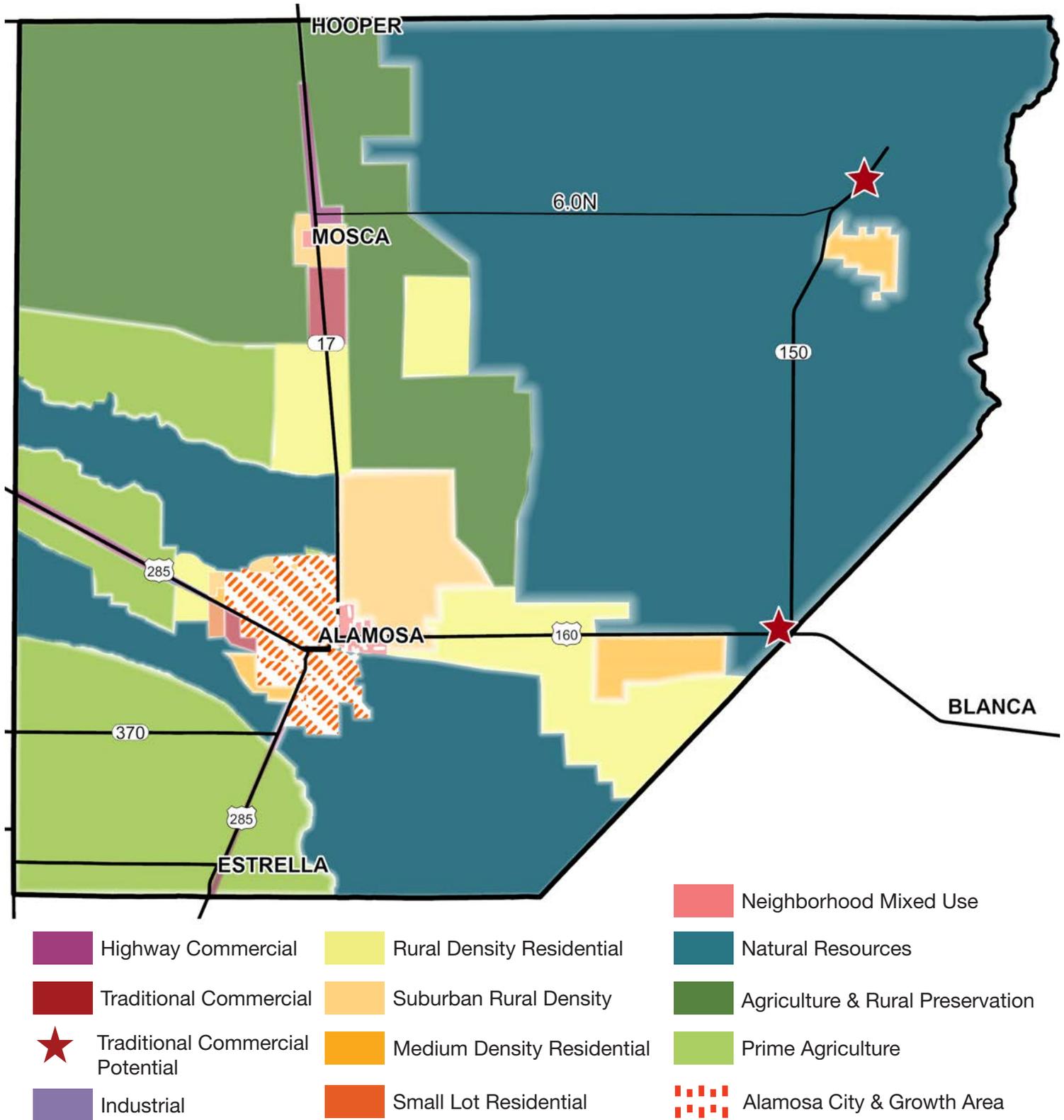
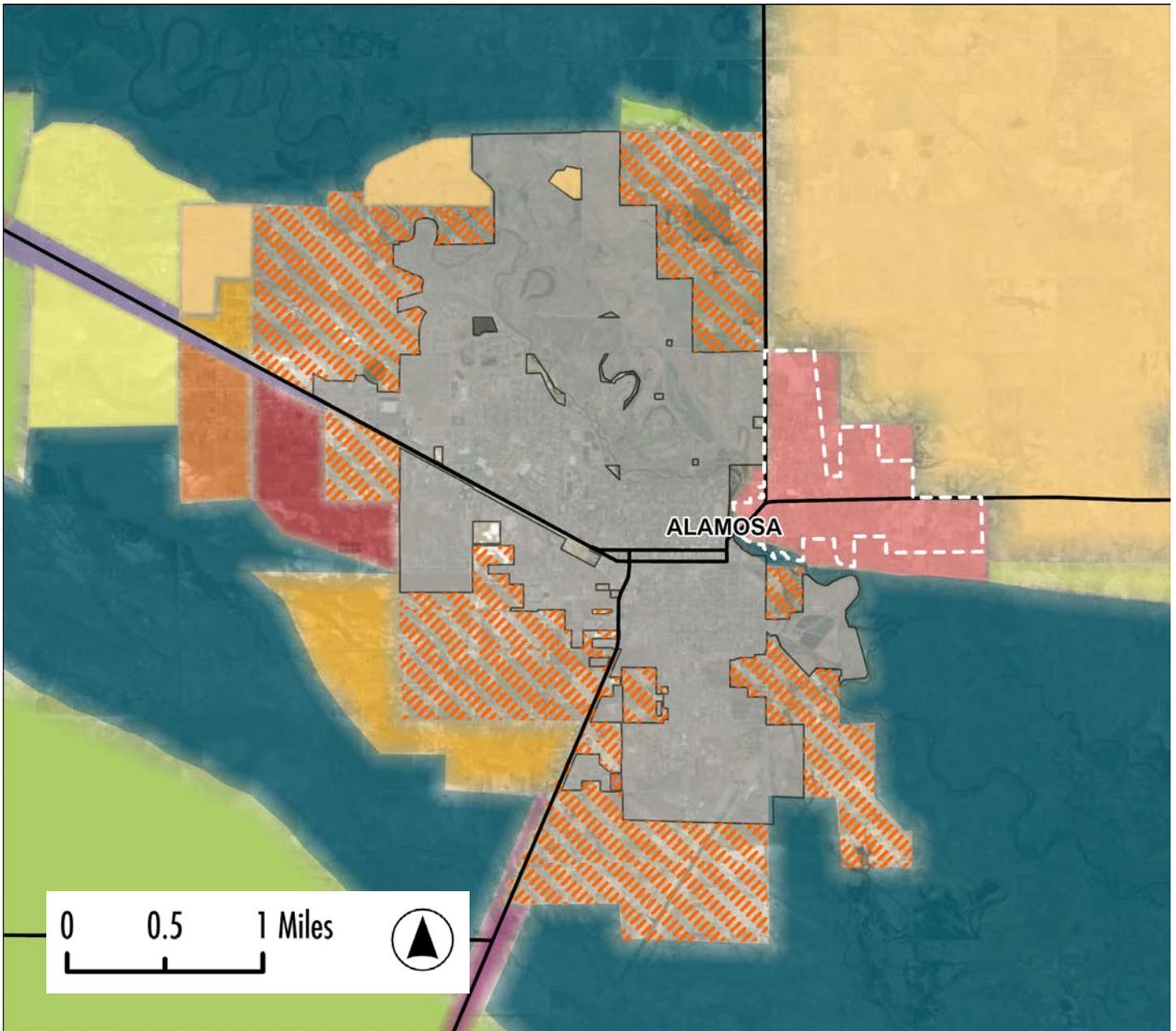
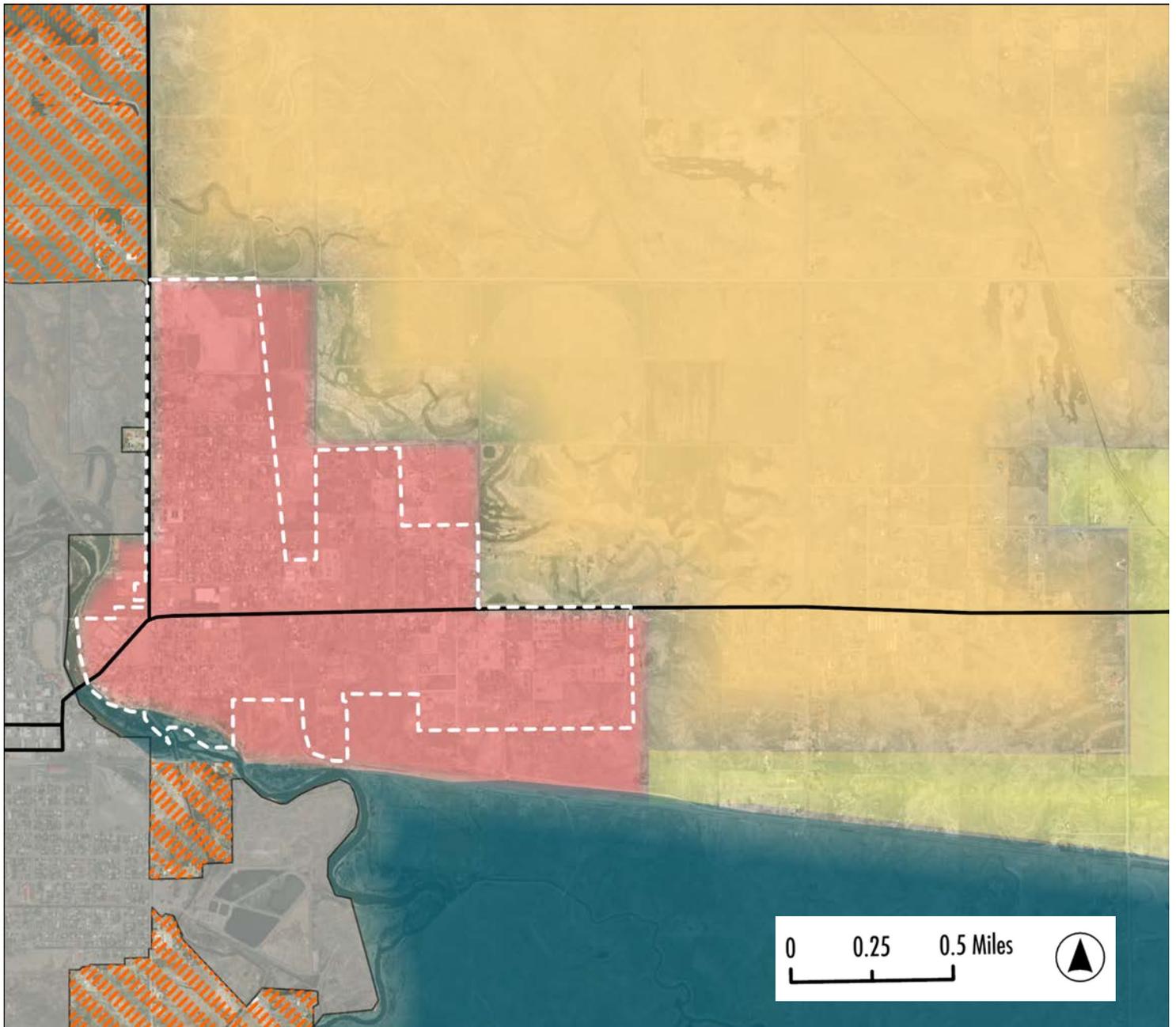


Figure 2. County Planning Adjacent to Alamosa City Limits



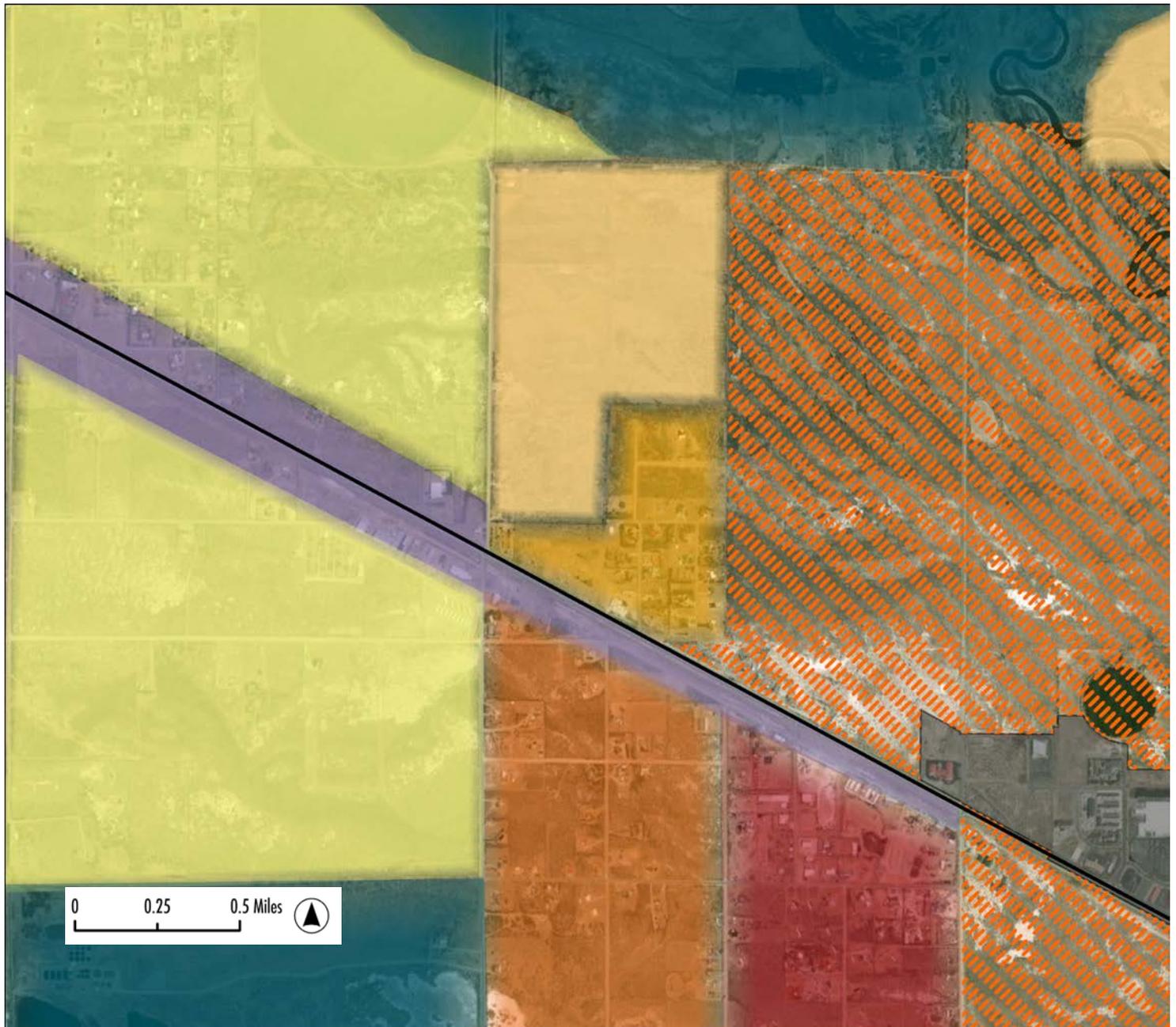
- | | | |
|---|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Alamosa City Boundary | Traditional Commercial | Rural Density Residential |
| Alamosa City Growth Area | Highway Commercial | Suburban Rural Density |
| East Alamosa Water & Sanitation District Boundary | Industrial | Medium Density Residential |
| Natural Resources | Neighborhood Mixed Use | Small Lot Residential |
| Prime Agriculture | | |

Figure 3. East Alamosa Future Land Use Map



- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  Neighborhood Mixed Use |  Rural Density Residential |  East Alamosa Water & Sanitation District Boundary |
|  Industrial |  Suburban Rural Density |  Alamosa City Boundary |
|  Natural Resources | |  Alamosa City Growth Area |

Figure 4. West Hwy 160 Future Land Use Map



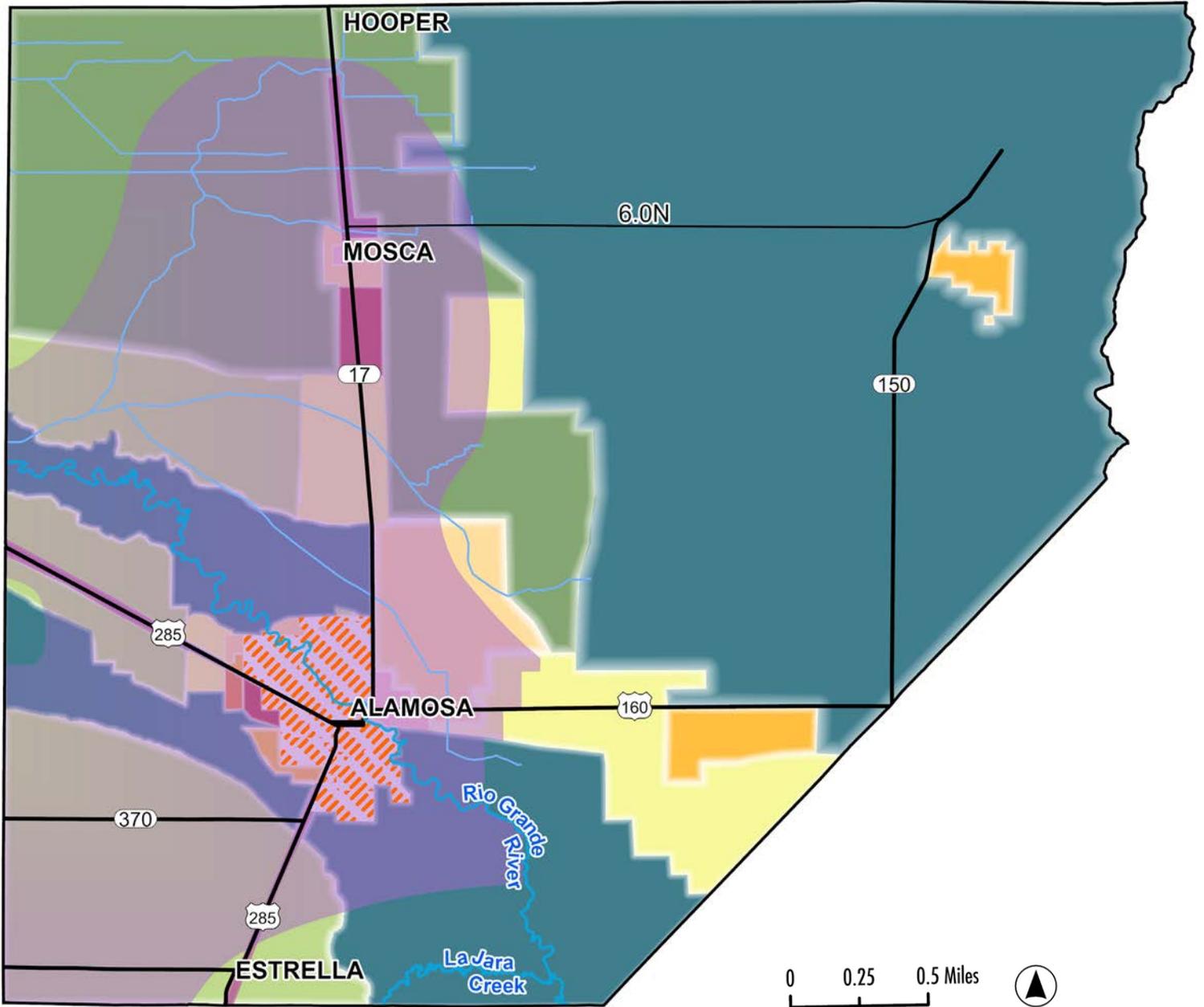
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|  Rural Density Residential |  Traditional Commercial |  Alamosa City Boundary |
|  Suburban Rural Density Residential |  Industrial |  Alamosa City Growth Area |
|  Medium Density Residential |  Natural Resources | |
|  Small Lot Residential | | |

Figure 5. Mosca Future Land Use Map



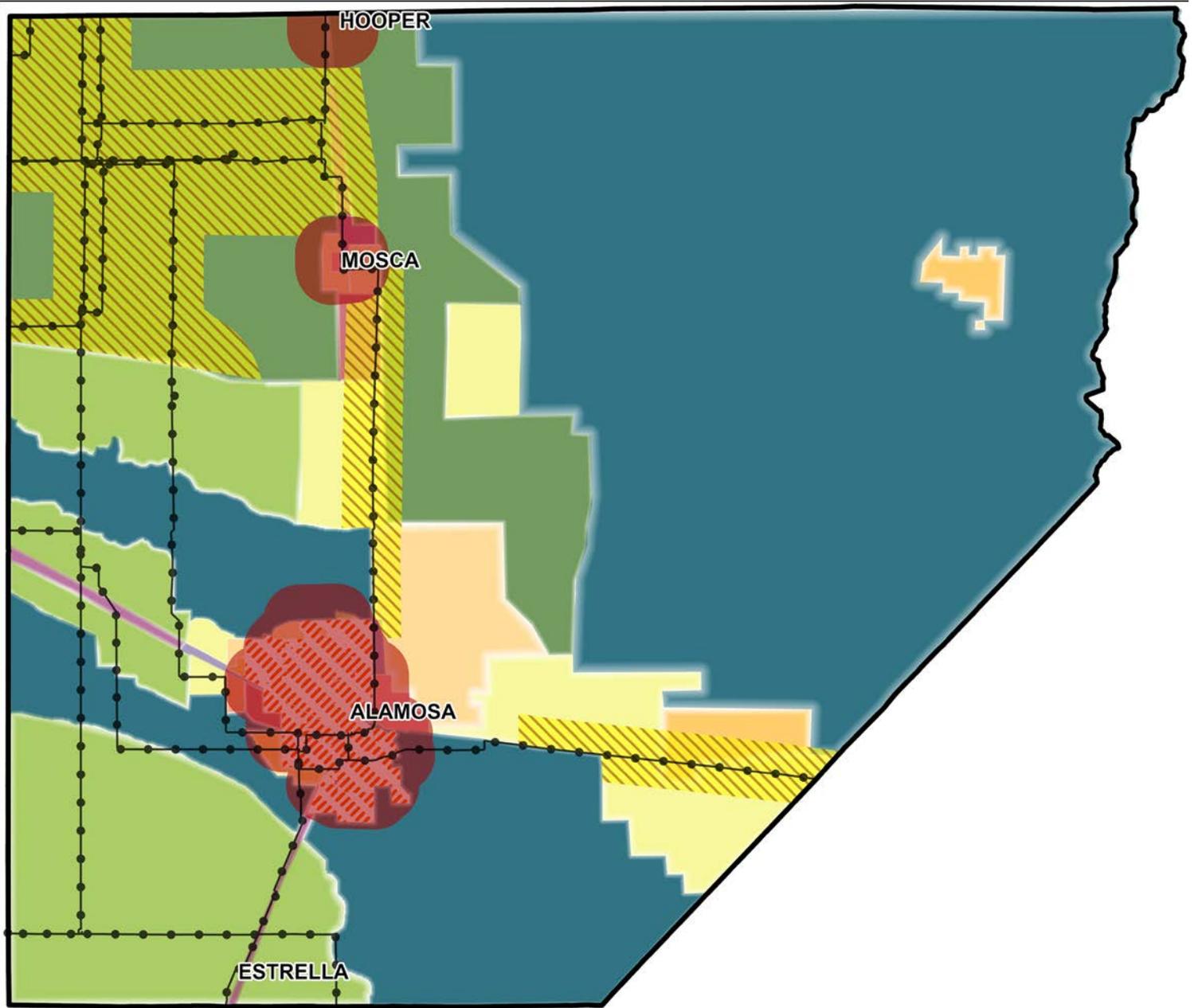
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|--|--|
|  Highway Commercial |  Suburban Rural Density Residential |
|  Traditional Commercial |  Agriculture & Rural Preservation |
|  Neighborhood Mixed Use | |

Figure 6. Water Availability Overlay



- | | | |
|---|--|--|
|  Water Augmentation Area |  Alamosa City & Growth Area |  Canals & Rivers |
|  Rural Density Residential |  Natural Resources |  Highway Commercial |
|  Suburban Rural Density |  Agriculture & Rural Preservation |  Neighborhood Mixed Use |
|  Medium Density Residential |  Prime Agriculture | |

Figure 7. Energy Overlay



0 0.25 0.5 Miles



- | | | |
|--|--|---|
|  Rural Density Residential |  Highway Commercial |  Alamosa City & Growth Area |
|  Suburban Rural Density |  Natural Resources |  Solar Exclusion (1 mile buffer) |
|  Medium Density Residential |  Agriculture & Rural Preservation |  Solar Opportunity Area |
|  Small Lot Residential |  Prime Agriculture |  Transmission Lines |
|  Industrial | | |

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Comprehensive Plan Update Appendix E. Existing Conditions Snapshot



May 2025



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Introduction

What is Imagine Alamosa?

Imagine Alamosa County is an update to the County's Comprehensive Plan. The last Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2008. Over the last 16 years, Alamosa has changed. This plan update plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of the Alamosa community by providing a structured framework for thoughtful development and growth. The Comprehensive Plan considers topics such as housing, land use, infrastructure, water, economics, and resiliency.

What is this report?

This detailed snapshot of current conditions in the community set the stage for future goals and policies. This analysis examines the topics and elements that the Comprehensive Plan addresses such as demographics, environmental

factors, economic conditions, and more will influence the development of the plan update. The data found in this report is a snapshot in time, using the most recent, accurate data available at the time of analysis. Understanding Alamosa County's current conditions allows for planners to identify trends, assess challenges, and recognize areas for potential opportunities. Ultimately, this snapshot lays the foundation for informed decision-making to ensure that the resulting Comprehensive Plan is realistic and responsive to the needs of Alamosa County.

The following sections use US Census Data, 2018-2022 & 2005-2010 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates and the State of Colorado Demographer data points unless otherwise noted in the text or figures.

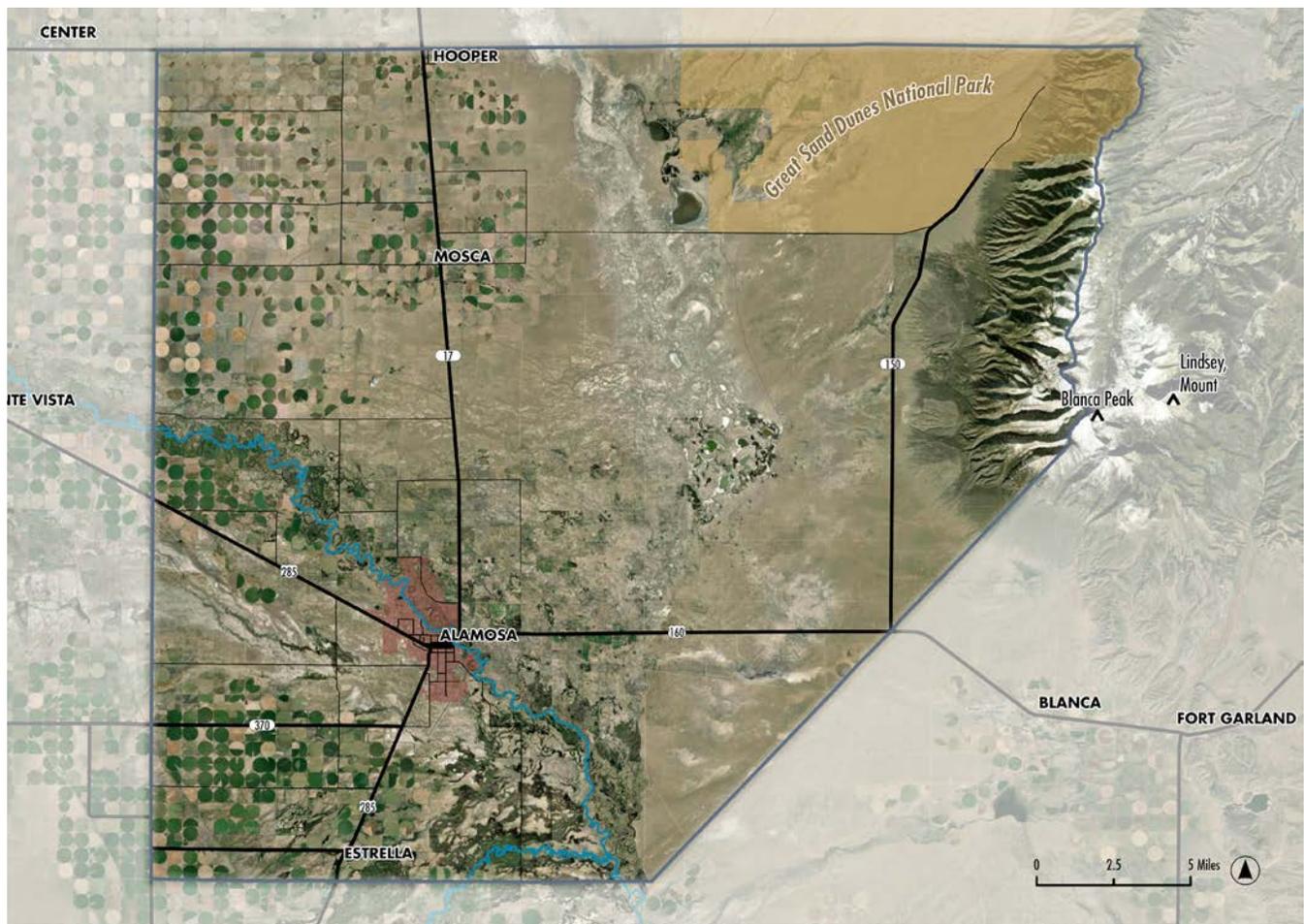


Figure 01. Map of Alamosa County

Regional Context

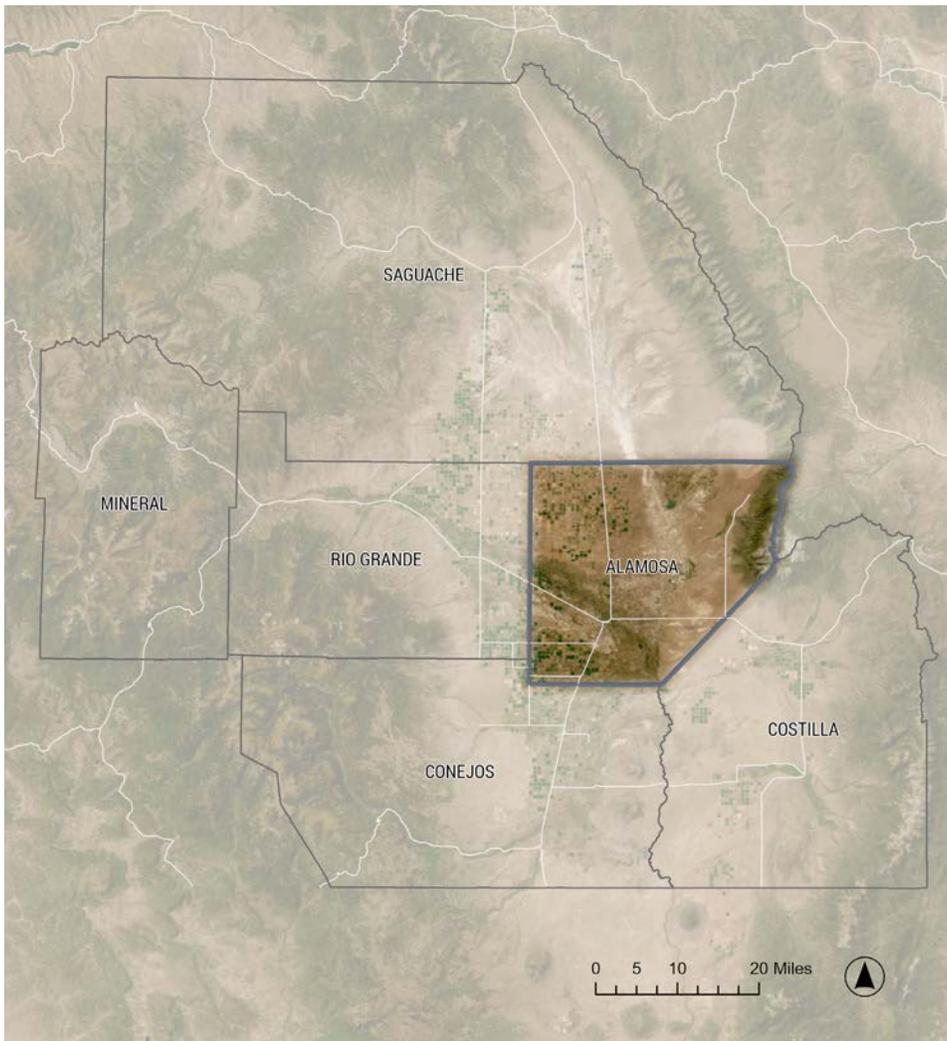
Alamosa County is one of six counties that lie within the San Luis Valley (SLV), which also includes Costilla, Conejos, Rio Grande, Mineral, and Saguache counties. The SLV is an expansive, flat valley, home to the headwaters of the Rio Grande River, Sangre Cristo Mountain Range, and the Great Sand Dunes National Park.

Alamosa County is the most populated of the six counties with one third of all SLV households residing in the City of Alamosa. The County provides many services for the Valley including the only Trauma 3 Emergency Room. Tourism is an

important industry in Alamosa County, drawing over 600,000 visitors a year to its outdoor recreation opportunities and cultural attractions. Alamosa's context in the SLV is characterized by its natural beauty, cultural diversity, and agricultural importance.

Many community initiatives that affect Alamosa County are planned on a regional basis, recognizing the interconnectedness of the San Luis Valley community. Elements such as transportation and health are addressed through a regional lens and are incorporated in this snapshot.

San Luis Valley



Early History

The area was originally inhabited by various Native American tribes, including the Ute, Apache, and Navajo peoples. These tribes lived off the land, hunting game, gathering plants, and practicing agriculture in the fertile valley.

1500s

In the 16th century, Spanish explorers began to venture into the region, seeking trade routes and resources. They encountered the indigenous peoples and established missions in the area, bringing with them European diseases that devastated native populations.

1800s

By the 19th century, the territory of Colorado, including what is now Alamosa County, was part of the Spanish Empire, then later became Mexican territory following the Mexican War of Independence.

Figure 02. Map of San Luis Valley

History and Culture

Alamosa County has a rich and diverse history. The area was originally inhabited by Ute, Navajo, and Apache. Spanish colonizers arrived in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, leaving a lasting cultural influence on the region. The County was officially established on March 8th, 1913, and named after the Spanish word “alamosa,” meaning “grove of cottonwood trees.” This reflects the lush riparian landscapes along the Rio Grande, which flows through the County. The arrival of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad in the late 19th century was pivotal for Alamosa,

transforming it into a key transportation and commercial hub for the San Luis Valley. Agriculture, particularly potato farming and cattle ranching, has historically been the backbone of Alamosa County’s economy. In recent years, the County has also become known for its natural beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities, with the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve located in the northeast corner of Alamosa County. This blend of historical richness and natural splendor makes Alamosa County a unique and fascinating part of Colorado’s heritage.

1913

Alamosa County itself was established on March 8, 1913, carved out of neighboring Costilla County. It was named after the City of Alamosa, which had become a prominent center of commerce and government in the region.



1900s

The San Luis Valley attracted settlers for its fertile land and abundant water supply from the Rio Grande and its tributaries.

1848

In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded the land to the United States, and settlers began to arrive in the region.



1950

In the late 19th century, the area experienced a boom in agriculture, particularly potato farming, which remains a significant industry to this day.



1921

Adams State University, located in the City of Alamosa, Colorado, was founded in 1921 as Adams State Normal School. It was established to train teachers for rural schools in the San Luis Valley region.



1932

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve was established as a national monument on March 17, 1932, by President Herbert Hoover to protect the unique and ecologically significant sand dunes.

Present Day

In more recent times, Alamosa County has seen diversification in its economy, with tourism playing an increasingly important role. The county’s natural beauty, including the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, attracts visitors from around the world. Overall, Alamosa County’s history is characterized by the coexistence of Native American cultures, Spanish exploration, American settlement, and economic development, all of which have shaped the region into what it is today.

2004

Later, on September 13, 2004, the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve was re-designated by an act of Congress. This change expanded the protected area and allowed for the conservation of additional ecosystems surrounding the dunes.

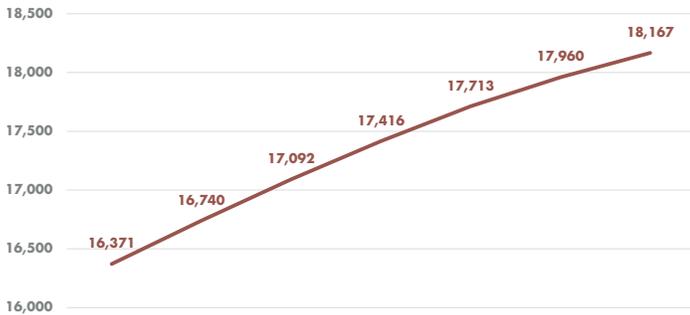
Late 1900s

Throughout the 20th century, Alamosa County continued to grow, with agriculture remaining a cornerstone of its economy. The county also became a transportation hub, served by railroads and later highways, facilitating trade and commerce.

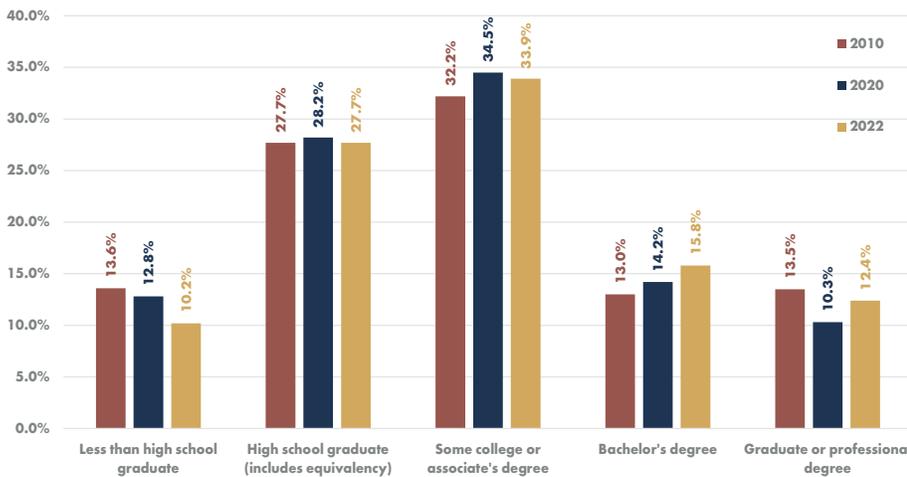
Source; Sangre De Cristo National Heritage Site

Population Demographics

Population Projections



Educational Attainment



Net Migration



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010, 2020 and 2022 5-Year Estimates

Since 2008, Alamosa County has been slowly but steadily growing from 15,346 residents in 2008 to 16,592 residents in 2022. Between 2021 and 2022, population growth started to stabilize with little change in the County's population. By 2050, the population is projected to increase by just under 1.7%. The County is projected to have minimal but steady population growth over the next several decades, with the most growth expected to occur before the end of 2025.

In 2010, the largest age demographic was residents 45 to 54 years old. The largest age demographic in 2022 shifted to 25 to 34 years old, with the average resident being around 32 years old since 2010. Notably, in 2022, the largest shift in age demographics was among residents 65 to 74 years old, which saw an increase of 632 residents since 2010.

This reflects an aging population that will need continued support through planning efforts.

In 2022, nearly 34% of residents 25 years of age and older in Alamosa County attained some college education or an associate degree. There has been a general upturn since 2010 in the number of residents earning their bachelor's and graduate or professional degrees. Relatedly, there has been a decline in the number of residents who have less than a high school education.

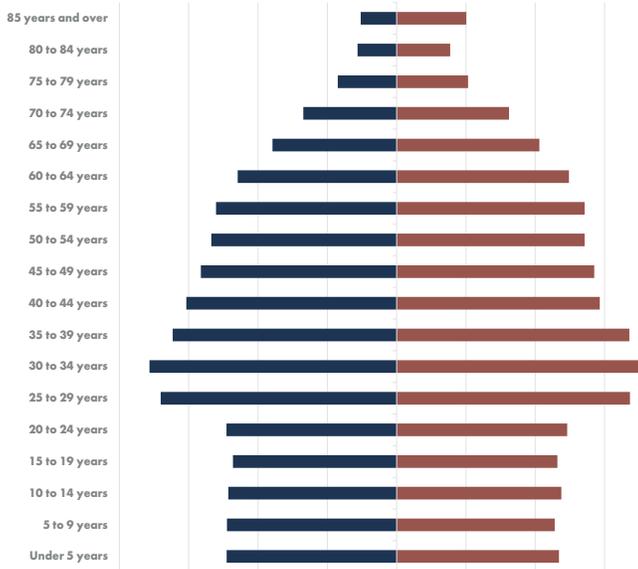
This trend may reflect a desire in Alamosa County for more job opportunities that compensate for or fund higher education.

Between 2010 and 2020, Alamosa County experienced fluctuating migration numbers with significant influxes of people in 2010 and leading up to 2020 in particular. After 2020, migration dropped to nearly zero, likely reflecting restrictions taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic. Migration since has been on the rise but is anticipated to plateau or slightly decrease starting in 2025.

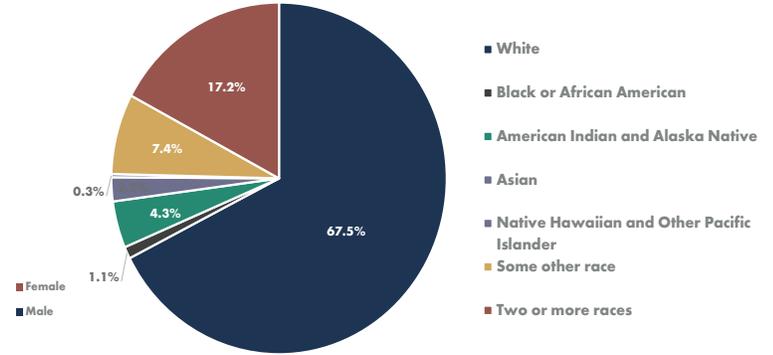
By the Numbers

- 16,575** Residents in 2022
- 32.2 years** Median age
- 15.8%** Residents 25+ years old with a Bachelor's degree or higher

Age



Race



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates

The County is home to a variety of racial backgrounds, with a majority of residents identifying as white. Over the years, the County has become more diverse with more residents identifying as belonging to two or more races, as well as an increase in nearly every population group except those identifying as white alone. The County additionally has a prominent Hispanic culture, with just under half of the County identifying as being ethnically Hispanic.

The most population-dense areas of the County are adjacent to Alamosa City, with the Southwest area being home to most people in Alamosa County. This concentration of residents is aligned with trends throughout rural communities, meaning that where community services are prevalent, population density is greater (see section Community Services, pg. 18 for a map of community services).

By the Numbers

48%

residents identify as being of Hispanic or Latino origin

13.1%

increase in populations identifying as a race other than white alone

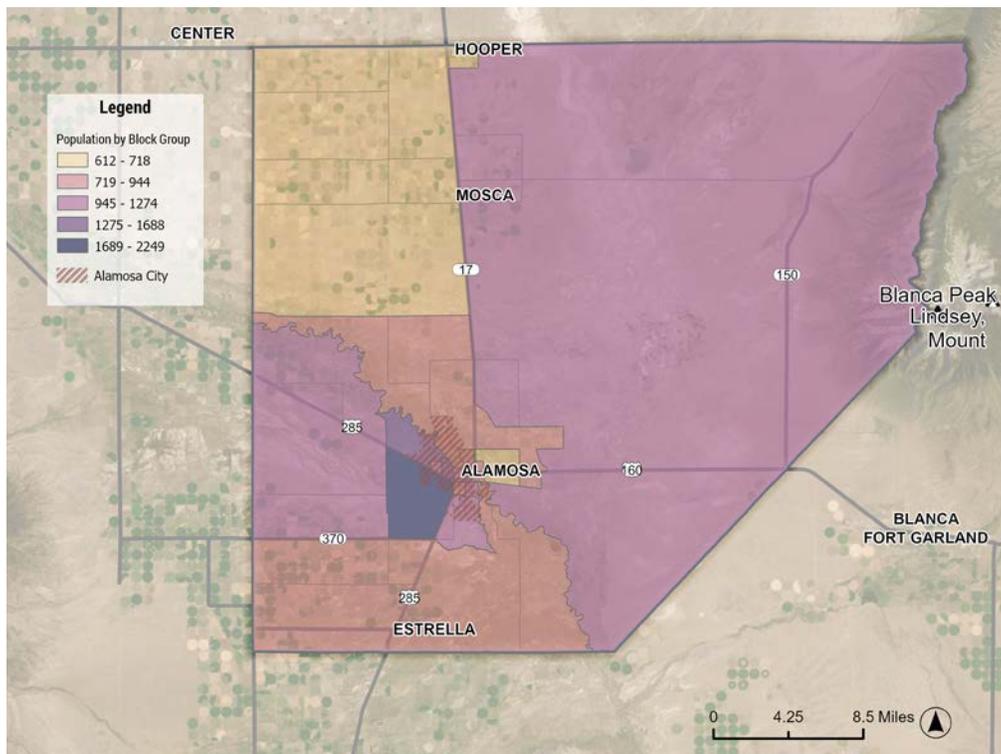


Figure 03. Population density by block group

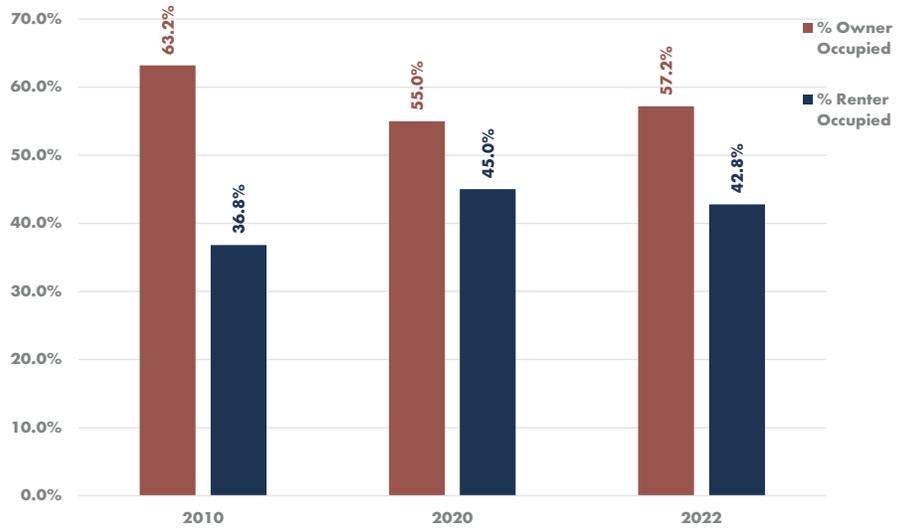
Housing

Homeownership in the County has been on the decline since 2010, with a slight increase in 2022 when compared to previous years. Similarly, the amount of renter-occupied housing has risen since 2010, with a slight downturn in 2022, reflecting the increase in homeownership. Alamosa County has a lower median housing cost for both homeowners and renters, offering more affordable housing than the state's average. Median gross rent in 2022 was \$815 in Alamosa County compared to the \$1,646 median rent for the State of Colorado. For mortgage payers, median monthly housing costs were \$1,241 for Alamosa County residents compared to \$2,098 as the state's monthly median housing cost. The County's median housing costs for both homes and rental units did not exceed \$1,500 in monthly costs in 2022, making Alamosa County a favorable location for future homeowners and renters alike.

Although the County appears to be more affordable than the State, there is still a need for additional housing units at all price points according to the San Luis Valley Housing Coalition Housing Assessment completed in 2022. This assessment indicates that those that make over \$45,400 can afford to purchase a home* within the median home value range and those that make more than \$28,400 can afford the median rent in the County. The assessment found that homes over \$300,000 were oversupplied while those under the median home value are under stocked. In 2019, 46% of households renting in Alamosa County were cost burdened and 22% of owner-occupied households were cost burdened. 'Cost burdened' means that over 30% of their household income was spent on housing including rent/mortgage, utilities, taxes, and insurance.

*Note: the assessment was completed in 2022 which does not account for increased mortgage rates.

Homeownership



Household Income (2ppl)	% Area Median Income (AMI)	Max Rent	Max Purchase Price
\$0 - \$28,400	<50%	\$710	\$125,200
\$28,401 - \$45,400	50.1% - 80%	\$1,278	\$200,400
\$45,401 - \$68,200	80.1% - 120%	\$1,704	\$300,600
\$68,201 - \$113,600	120.1% - 200%	\$2,840	\$500,900
>\$113,600	>200%		

Figure 04. Maximum rental and purchase prices by household income in Alamosa County.

*Note: Max purchase price assumes 30-year mortgage at 5.5% with 5% down and 20% of the parment covering taxes, HOA, PMI, and insurance

By the Numbers

24
average household size

\$1,241
median monthly housing cost owner-occupied units with a mortgage

57%
of residents are homeowners

\$218,600
median home value

\$815
median gross rent

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates, HUD, SLV Housing Coalition 2022

Housing Trends

Housing development since the 2008 Comprehensive Plan has been slow. The largest increase was in single household development with an 8% increase in units since 2008. The total increase of housing in the County was roughly 11% which is less than the state housing increase of 16%, according to the Construction Coverage analysis of Census Bureau data.

Mobile and manufactured homes make up a significant part of the current housing stock in Alamosa County. The majority of these homes are 16+ years old and will need to be considered for rehabilitation in the near future. The San Luis Valley Housing Coalition has identified that the repairs of these homes often exceed the home's value, creating a difficult situation for the homeowner.

The San Luis Valley Housing Coalition 2022 Housing Study identified the need for 1,885 new units to sustain job growth in the Valley. Of those units, 817 need to be within Alamosa County (with the responsibility being that of both the County and the City of Alamosa) available for rent. Additionally, the Coalition identified the need for 5-10 units to be built (or rehabilitated) in the Mosca/Hooper area. Within the action plan, tools such as land use regulations to promote housing choices and construction of housing that locals can afford are recommended.

Housing Type	New (2009-current)	Old (<2008)	% Change
Mobile/Manufactured home	4	543	.5%
Duplex/Triplex	0	6	0%
Multi-Household (4-8 units)	0	1	0%
Single Household	151	1,633	8%

Figure 05. Housing Type by year built and percent change since the 2008 Master Plan

Homes Built in Alamosa County

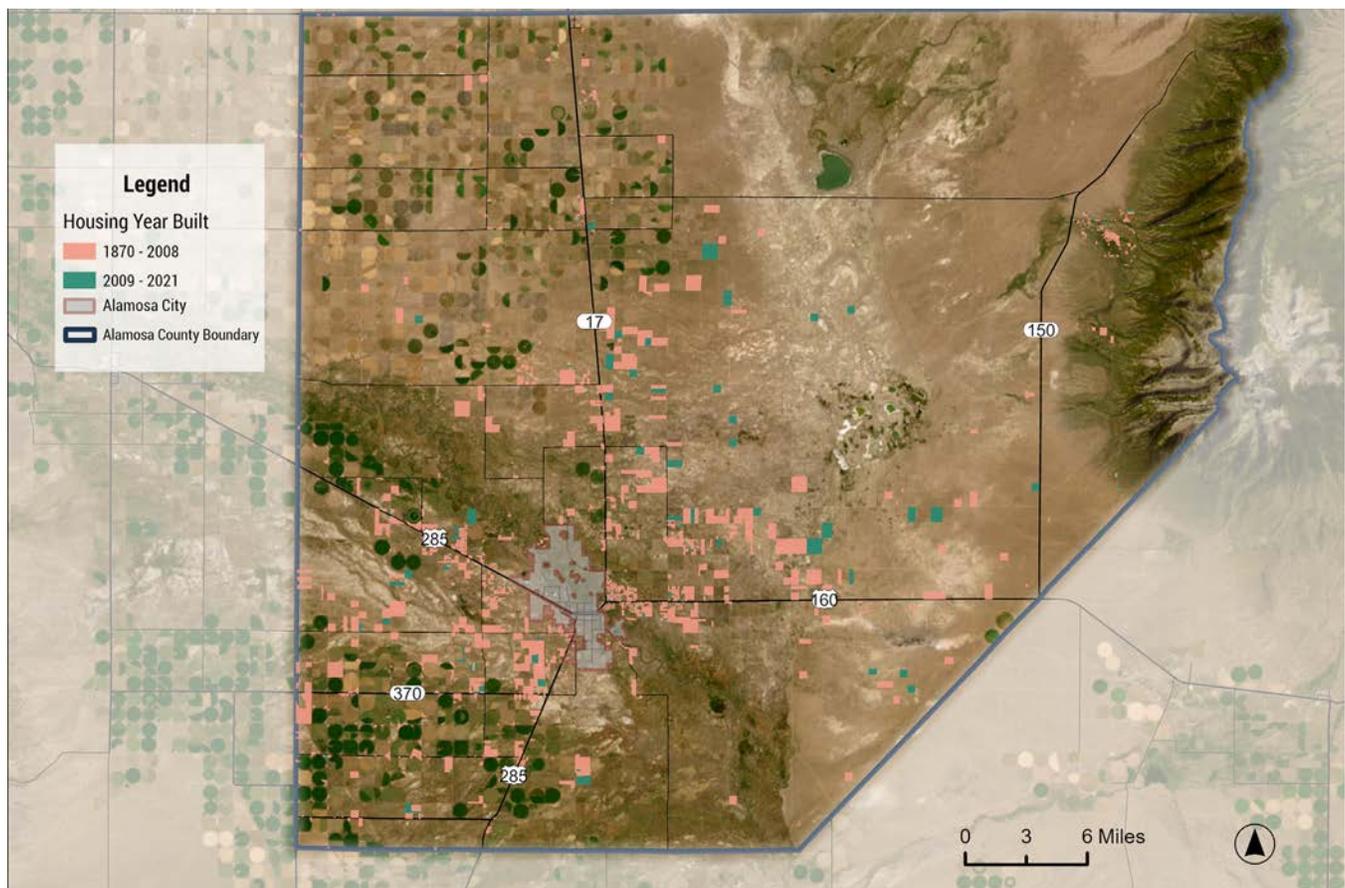


Figure 06. Homes built in Alamosa County prior to 2008 and after 2009 by parcel.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates. San Luis Valley Housing Coalition Housing Assessment 2022

Income

In 2022, a majority of Alamosa County residents made between \$25,000 and \$49,999 annually. Since 2010, there has been a steady increase in the number of residents earning within the \$50,000 annual income bracket and brackets above. The median income for the County is currently \$52,271.

The percentage of the population living below the poverty line in Alamosa County has decreased from 21% to 15.5% since 2008, reflecting a steady increase in residents exiting poverty and entering higher income brackets. The County poverty rate has been consistently and significantly higher than State poverty levels since 2008; this decrease in County poverty rates over time is doing a better job of slowly closing the gap than at the Statewide level.

By the Numbers

\$52,271

median household income in 2022

\$74,983

mean household income in 2022

15.5%

poverty rate in 2022

38%

of adults in San Luis Valley worry about affording monthly housing costs, 10% more than Colorado residents

The 2022 San Luis Valley Housing Coalition Assessment reports that those making **over \$45,400** can afford to purchase a home within the median home value range and those that make **more than \$28,400** can afford the median rent in the County.

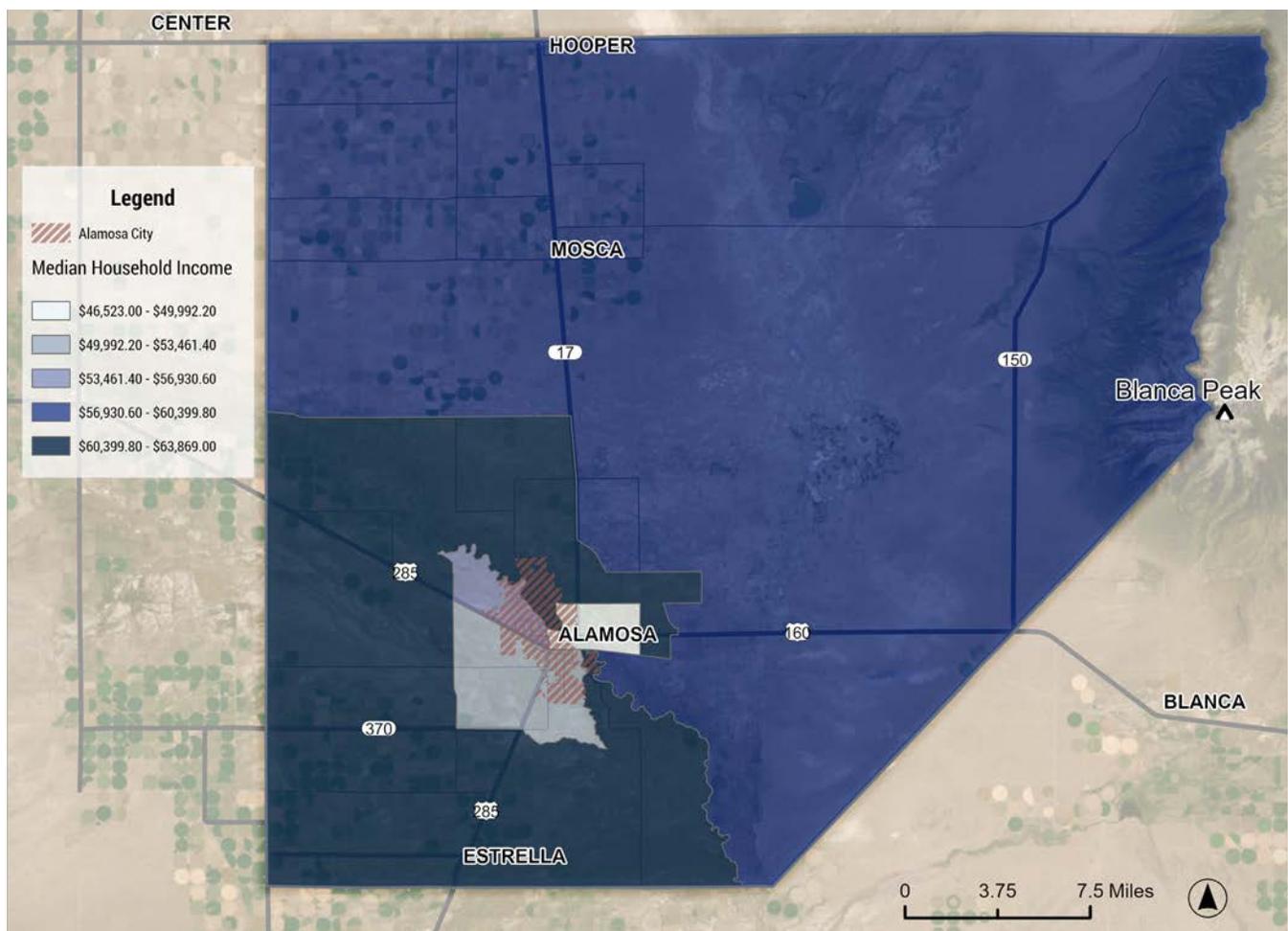
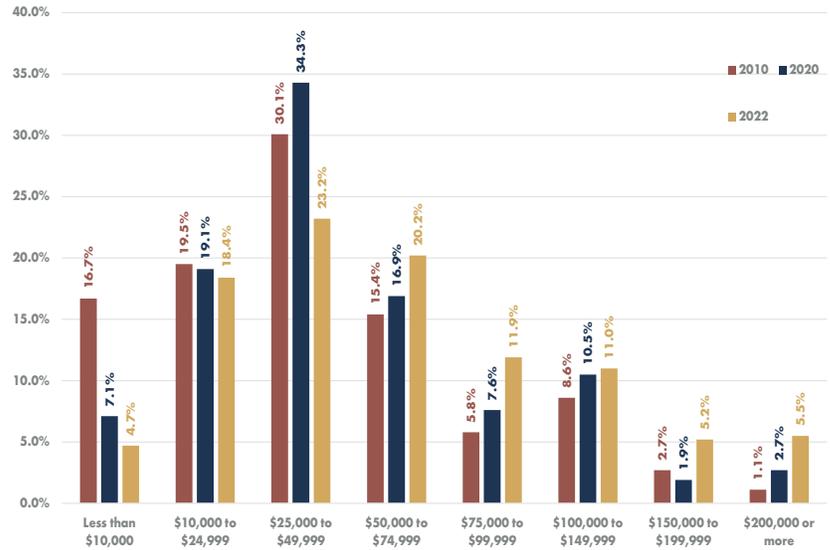


Figure 07. Median Household Income by Census Tract

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010, 2020 and 2022 5-Year Estimates

Median Household Income

The lowest median household income in Alamosa County is in East Alamosa. The highest median household income is in the southwest portion of the County. Overall household income in the County has increased in the ranges of \$50K-\$200K+ and decreased for households earning less than \$50K. This trend indicates that wages have risen for Alamosa residents.



Community Health

Community health is often reflective of the local “Social Determinants of Health” (SDOH) which are the settings that shape people’s health outcomes base on the conditions in which they are born, grow, live, and work. They are rooted in social, economic, and environmental factors and have a significant impact on individuals’ health and well-being. The key social determinates are Economic Stability, Social and Community Context, Education and Literacy, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Access to Healthcare Services. This means monitoring community health will require a systems thinking approach that monitors several aspects, also understood as a holistic approach to analysis that focuses on the way different parts of a system interact and how they influence one another. The primary characteristics that should be monitored in the County to indicate community health are:

- ✓ High School Graduation Rates
- ✓ Water Quality
- ✓ Healthcare
- ✓ Access to Open & Green Space
- ✓ Voter Turnout

- Education Access and Quality
- Healthcare Access and Quality
- Neighborhood and Built Environment
- Social and Community Context

By the Numbers

63%
in labor force (16 years and over)

25%
of households have received Stamp/SNAP benefits in the last 12 months

79%
Alamosa High School Graduation Rate

91.6%
have health insurance coverage (16 years and older)

Source: San Luis Valley Community Health Assessment 2023

Community Health Assessment

In 2023, the San Luis Valley (SLV) Public Health Department conducted a Community Health Assessment, revealing critical health challenges facing the region. The foremost issues were substance use and misuse, mental health concerns, poverty, and transportation barriers.

Substance Use and Misuse

The assessment showed that 3% of SLV residents engaged in heavy alcohol use, which is less than the state average of 7%. Similarly, SLV's binge drinking rate was 11%, lower than the state's 19%. However, a concerning trend was noted among high school students: one in three reported drinking alcohol in the past month, and over 55% had experimented with vaping tobacco or marijuana.

The most prominent substance misuse issue was the high overdose rate. SLV's overdose hospitalization rate exceeded 100 per 100,000 people, significantly higher than the state's rate of 80 per 100,000. The assessment highlighted the stigma surrounding substance misuse and the utilization of harm reduction services, such as syringe exchange programs. This stigma poses a significant barrier to seeking help. The report identified a handful of key supportive measures to mitigate substance abuse. They are as follows:

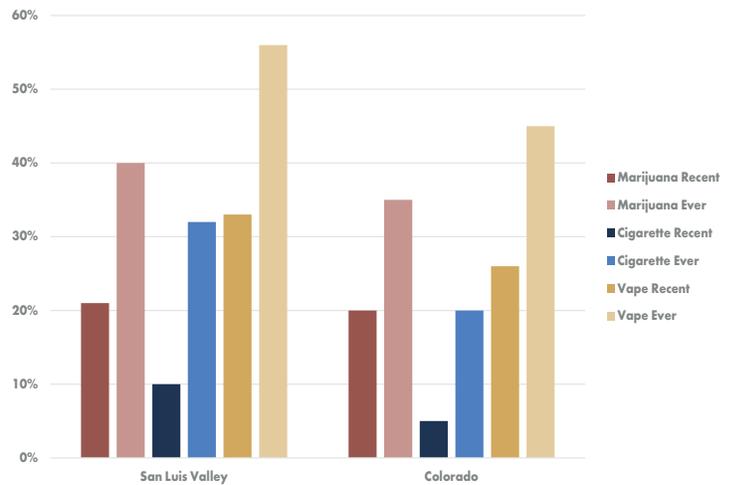
Mental Health

The County's mental health, especially among youth populations, is a growing priority as more students are reporting bullying and harassment. Of all high school students in SLV, 20% report being bullied at school, and 14 percent report online harassment in the last year. Alamosa County has a higher rate of hospitalizations due to mental health diagnosis than the State average. The following needs were identified in the Community Health Assessment:

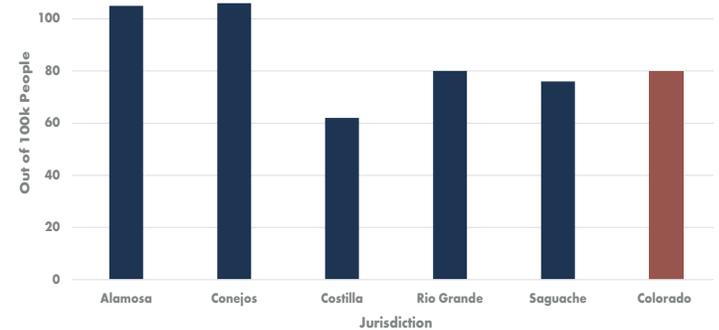
- Local inpatient services
- Increased services to support needs in jail
- Decreased turnover in providers
- Improved communication by behavioral health

Alamosa County contains the only Level 3 Trauma Center in SLV. The average distance to the nearest hospital for rural Americans in 10.5 miles. In some locations in Alamosa County, this distance is more than 20 miles.

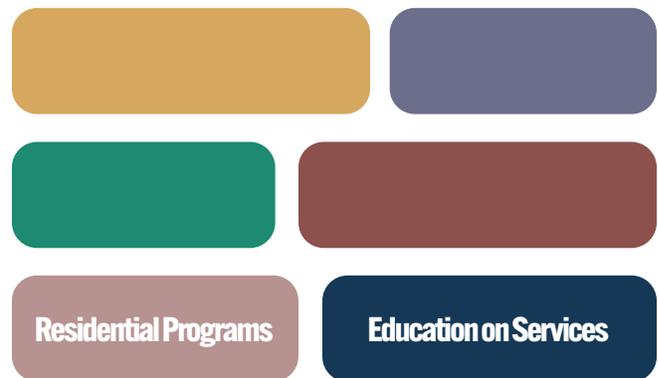
Substance Use



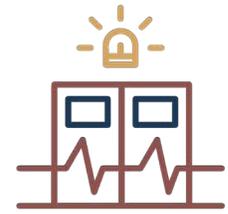
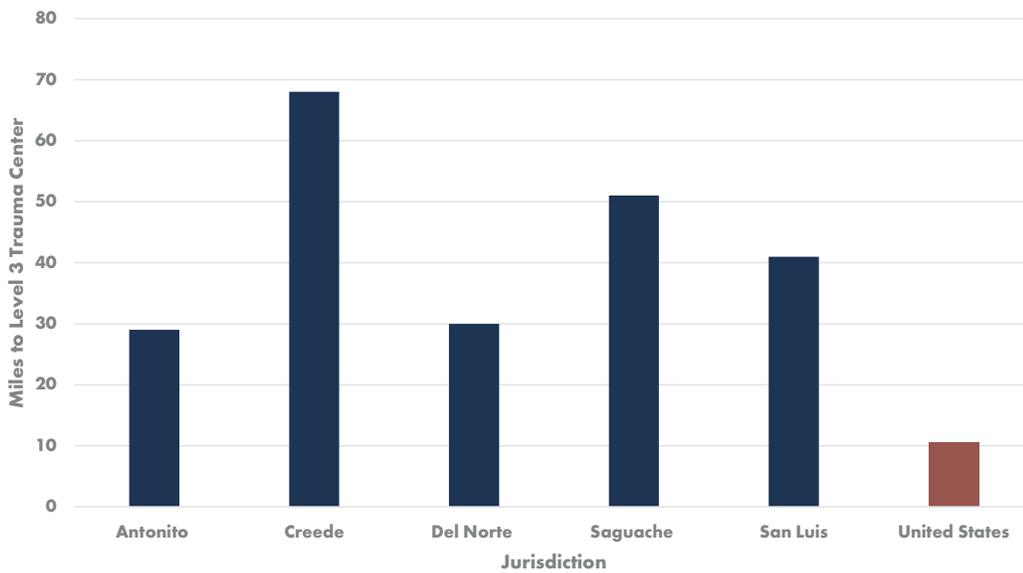
Overdose



Source: San Luis Valley Community Health Assessment 2023.
 Note: Although summarized on a regional scale, the majority of respondents were from Alamosa County and therefore are more reflective of Alamosa County than other Regional Assessments



Emergency Care Accessibility



Poverty

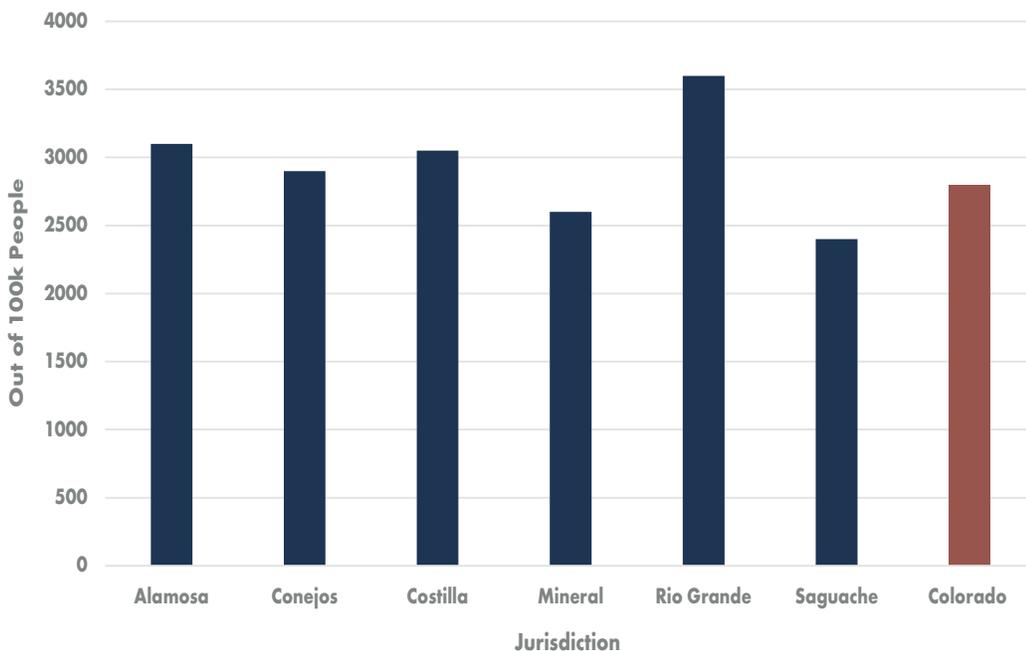
The percentage of Alamosa County residents below the poverty level is over 5% higher than the State average. Two in ten children in the SLV live in poverty.

By the Numbers

2 in 10
children live
in poverty

54%
of Alamosa residents are low
to moderate income

Mental Health Hospitalization



Source: San Luis Valley Community Health Assessment 2023

Transportation

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of the current transportation landscape in Alamosa County, examining a broad spectrum of factors that influence how residents and visitors move within and through the area. The demographic context for the County is established, with a particular focus for population groups that may be reliant on alternative forms of transit, other than a personal vehicle. It is important to understand transportation in Alamosa County to provide a clearer picture for the accessibility, usability, and needs within the transportation system.

Transportation in Alamosa has historically been planned and coordinated on a regional scale. The San Luis Valley Transit Plan was completed in 2022 and outlines a phased approach to creating more transportation options that connect the Valley. Information regarding housing and transportation affordability, commuting patterns and trends, and multimodal facilities and transportation networks was inventoried. Together, these elements provide a comprehensive understanding of how Alamosa residents move, serving as a critical tool to make informed decisions aimed at enhancing mobility, accessibility, and quality of life for all Alamosa County community members.

Transportation and Housing Affordability (H+T)

The H+T Affordability Index presents information about the often-overlooked expenditures that come with driving and owning a vehicle. The H+T Index measure defines affordability as both housing and transportation costs totaling no more than 45 percent of household income. Residents of Alamosa County, on average, spend 56 percent of their income on housing and transportation, more than 11 percent higher than what is considered affordable. Community members on average spend 27 percent of their total income on housing, and 29 percent on transportation costs. When looking at annual costs for just transportation, typically residents of the County spend \$10,879 on an annual basis.

By the Numbers

\$10,879

is the average annual amount a household spends on transportation

43%

of renter-occupied homes have access to only one vehicle

79%

of people who travel to work drive alone

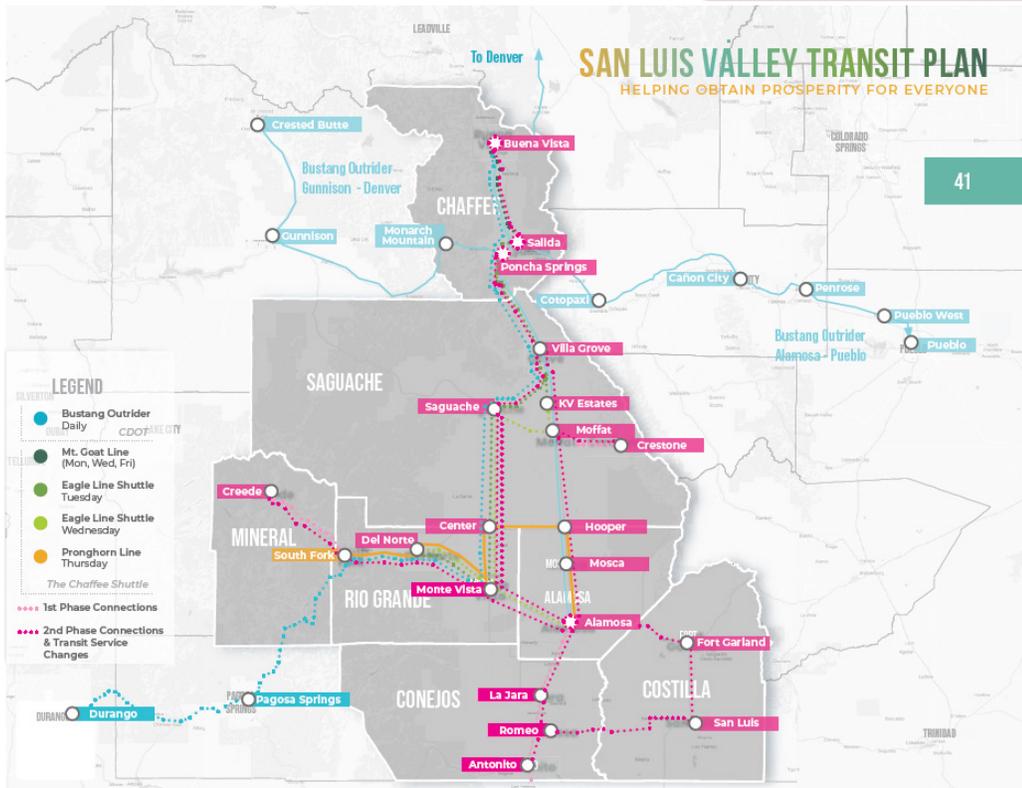


Figure 08. Excerpt from SLV Transit Plan. 2nd Phase Expanding Coverage + Increased Frequency

Source: San Luis Valley Transportation Plan 2022.

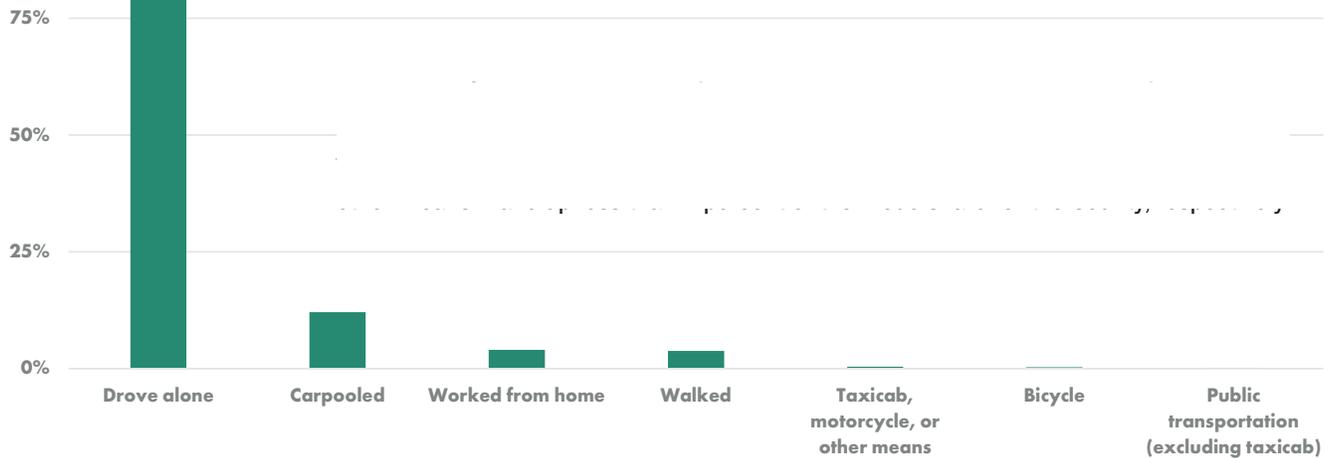
Demographic Context

Demographic characteristics are important to understand who may rely on different forms of transportation to reach destinations and services in order to build more equitable and safe communities. It is critical to understand transportation user behaviors and how the system can be adjusted and expanded to better meet the needs of those who live, work, and recreate in Alamosa County.



Historically Underserved & Overburdened Community	Why it Matters
65+ Adults: Older adults represent 14.5 percent of the population in the County.	Focusing improvements for mobility options to support more aging in place and active older adult lifestyles is critical. Access to and convenience of different modes beyond single-occupancy vehicles alongside existing infrastructure and proximity to essential services and recreational destinations are important for older residents.
Youth <18: Almost a quarter (24 percent) of the population in the County is under the age of 18	Ensuring children and young adults have access to safe modes of transportation to reach schools, community facilities, and social/recreational destinations is vital in developing a transportation system that values and prioritizes the safety and well-being of their youngest residents.
People with Disabilities: Disabled people make up 15 percent of the population in Alamosa County.	Creating a transportation system that is accessible, connected, and reliable is vital to ensuring that mobility solutions are inclusive to people of all abilities. Disabilities can include a vision or hearing impairment, a cognitive or learning disability, a mobility or physical impairment, or other type of disability.
BIPOC Communities: People of color make up more than half (51 percent) of Alamosa County residents.	Nationally, communities of Color, which includes people who identify as Black and/or African American, non-white Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, American Indian or Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or mixed race have historically been underserved by transportation systems and have often been overburdened with the negative consequences of higher pollution and emissions, inadequate and lacking infrastructure, and disinvestment. Creating an inclusive transportation system entails convenient and affordable access to housing, jobs, medical services, education, grocery shopping, and social/recreational activities.
Low-Income Communities: The percentage of people who live below the federal poverty line in Alamosa County is 15.5 percent .	Affordability of transportation plays a significant role in ensuring everyone has freedom of mobility and the means to connect to employment, education, essential services, shopping, and recreational destinations. Low-income populations include people whose median household income is below federal poverty guidelines. Understanding the transportation gaps and needs that exist for some community members who may not have reliable access to a vehicle, disposable income, or flexibility in time is vital for developing more responsive transportation networks.
No Vehicle Households: Of owner-occupied households, 22 percent have access to only one vehicle and 2 percent do not have access to any vehicle. Of renter households, 43 percent have access to just one vehicle, and 12 percent do not have access to any vehicle.	Information about vehicle accessibility provides a snapshot of how people are traveling and identifies where other modes of transportation may be used at higher frequencies. Zero-vehicle households can encompass a variety of groups, including households that cannot afford a vehicle, choose not to have a vehicle, or have a disability that makes driving inaccessible. It is also critical to understand the nuances between vehicle ownership and household characteristics. The data show that most owner-occupied households have access to at least one vehicle; however, renter-occupied households demonstrate a much higher rate of zero-vehicle ownership.
Limited English Proficiency (LEP): 2 percent of households in Alamosa County identify as having LEP and being most comfortable in another language.	Populations with LEP and proficiency in another language are important to consider in this analysis to understand existing communication barriers within the transportation system, improve system usage, and ensure access to mobility options to reach critical resources and services. By addressing the needs of LEP populations, transportation systems become safer, more accessible, and better suited to serve diverse communities.

Mode Share



Bicycle Facilities

CDOT has created a high-demand bike corridor map to guide resource allocation for statewide bicycling improvements. Alamosa County has three major corridors highlighted within the statewide corridor mapping: the entirety of US 160 (within the County boundaries), segments of US 285, and Route 370A .

Electric Vehicle Charging Station

Alamosa is part of the Colorado Energy Office’s fast charging EV corridor project, with seven charging stations mostly located in central Alamosa, near 6th Street, Alamosa Public Library, and the Hampton Inn Hotel.

Transportation Facilities

Streets serve two key functions: access and mobility, each designed based on adjacent land use, transportation modes, and connectivity. Functional classification describes a street’s role, guiding access management, corridor preservation, and

design standards. CDOT’s Online Transportation Information System (OTIS) provides data on roadway facilities, including Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts, functional classification, speed limits, and Scenic Byway designation.

Public Transport

Intercity Bus Service: The Alamosa-Pueblo Outrider route is the only intercity bus service route, provided by the CDOT through the county. The Alamosa-Pueblo Outrider route connects the San Luis Valley region with the Central Front Range and Pueblo Area. In addition to two stops in Alamosa, there are three intermediate stops on this route in the valley.

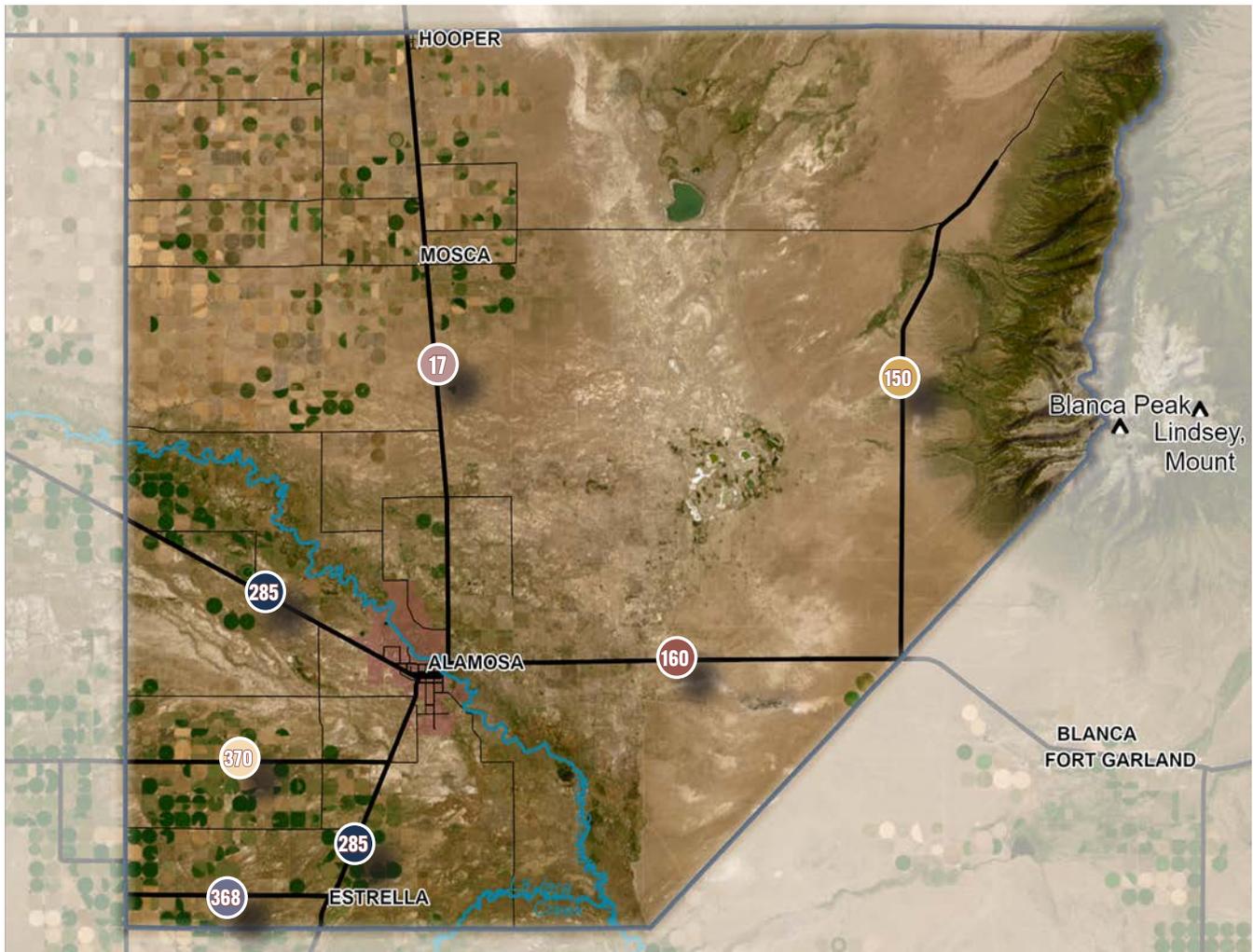
Commuter Bus Service: Commuter bus service is operated by Mountain Valley Transit, formally known as the Chaffee Shuttle. Mountain Valley Transit provides fixed-route, on-demand, and door-to-door services in the Arkansas Valley and San Luis Valley regions.

Commuter Bus Service

Provider	Span of Service	Fares	Types of Service
Bustang Outrider (Alamosa to Pueblo)	Monday - Sunday (5:45am - 7:10pm)	\$2 - \$31*	Fixed-Route Bus
Mountain Valley Transit (Antonito to Alamosa)	Monday & Friday (7:40am - 2:18pm)	Fare free; donations encouraged	Fixed-Route Bus; On-Demand
Mountain Valley Transit (Creede to Alamosa)	Thursdays (7:45am - 3:25pm)	Fare free; donations encouraged	Fixed-Route Bus; On-Demand
Mountain Valley Transit (KV Estates to Alamosa)	Wednesdays (7:45am - 4:00pm)	Fare free; donations encouraged	Fixed-Route Bus; On-Demand
Mountain Valley Transit (Saguache to Alamosa)	Fridays (5:45am - 2:10pm)	Fare free; donations encouraged	Fixed-Route Bus; On-Demand

* Discounted fares are also available on the Bustang Outrider website

Source: CDOT OTIS, 2024, U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2018-2022).



Major Roads

Facility	AADT Range	Functional Classification	Speed Limit
State Highway 17	1,900 - 4,800	3 - Principal Arterial	45 MPH - 65 MPH
US 160	5,100 - 23,000	3 - Principal Arterial	25 MPH - 65 MPH
State Highway 150	1,200 - 1,600	5 - Major Collector	30 MPH - 65 MPH
State Highway 370	520 - 620	5 - Major Collector	65 MPH
US 285	5,700 - 14,000	3 - Principal Arterial	25 MPH - 65 MPH
State Highway 368	330 - 870	4 - Minor Arterial 5 - Major Collector	35 MPH - 65 MPH

Human Services Transportation

Numerous human services agencies offer transportation in Alamosa County, ranging from local to regional service. Service days, times, and eligibility criteria vary, depending on resources and client needs. Eligibility factors include age, disability, veteran status, Medicaid enrollment, or residency in a senior center/facility. Services may include on-demand, pass-based, or voucher-based options, with some agencies outsourcing transportation through contracts with other providers.

General Aviation

The San Luis Valley Regional Airport is a public general aviation airport located two miles south of Alamosa City in Alamosa County. For the first time since its participation in the Essential Air Service (EAS) program with Boutique Air, the airport has achieved 10,000 enplanements, thereby earning classification as a non-hub primary airport.

Community Services

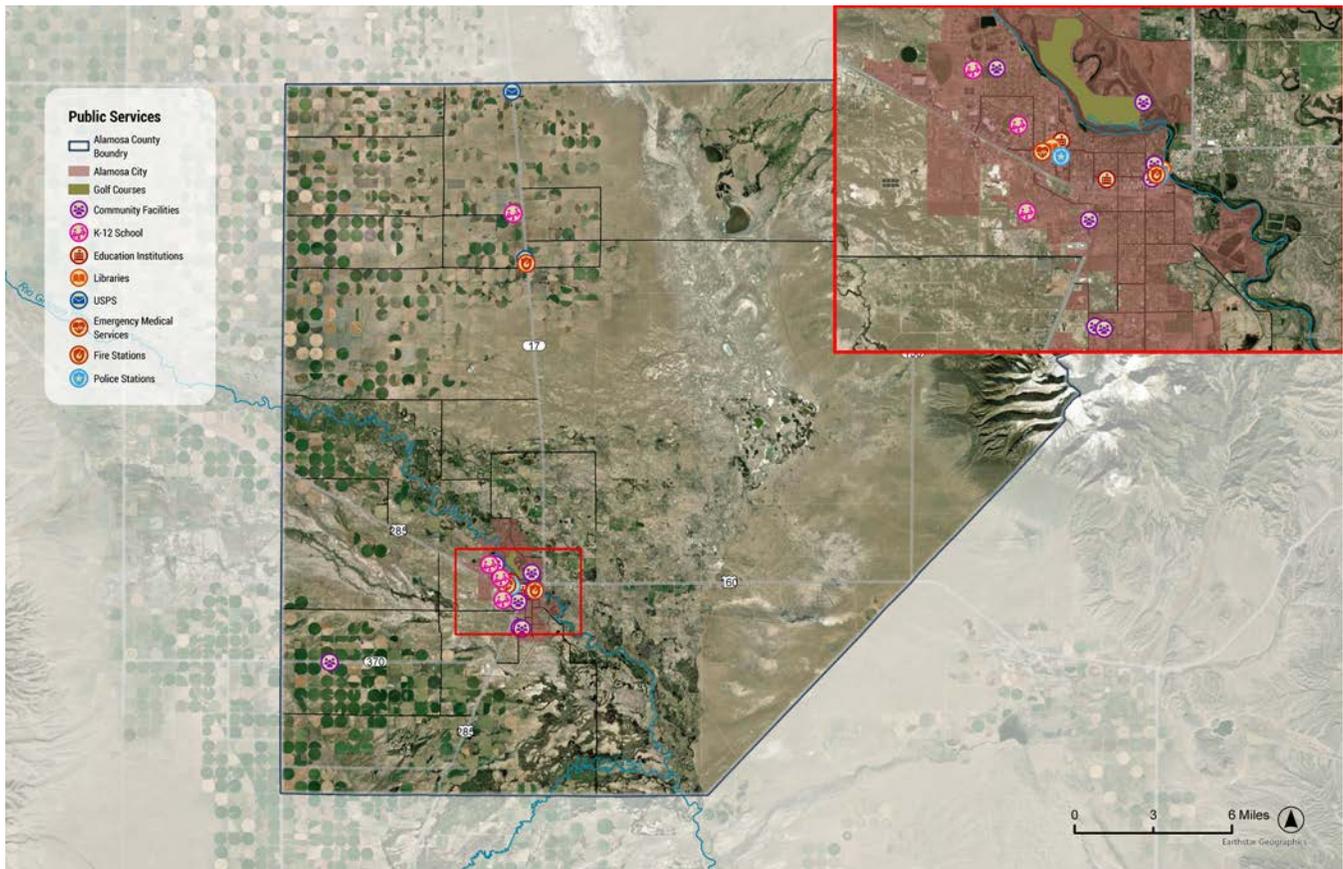


Figure 09. Community services in Alamosa County

Since 2008, the public services available to residents of Alamosa County have remained constant. A majority of public resources and services are concentrated in and around the City of Alamosa. This region also has just three USPS locations, one located in the City of Alamosa, one located in Hooper, and one in Mosca. The County houses an array of community facilities, most being for recreational and physical activity opportunities. Some community attractions include the Alamosa Family Recreation Center, the Waverly Youth and Community Center, the Boys and Girls Club, the Carrol Park ice skating rink, the Blanca Vista Dog Park and the San Luis Valley Museum. The area could benefit from a larger variety of community facilities which would encourage a greater level of engagement from local residents.

Schools

There are two school districts in Alamosa County: Alamosa School District and Sangre de Cristo School District. Both Districts have k-12 schools with the majority of students enrolled in Alamosa School District.

Emergency Services

The County has two fire departments, the Sheriff's Office, and one major regional medical center with an emergency room. In the future, a better distribution of emergency services throughout the county would ensure accessibility to more residents.

Community services such as schools, police, fire and EMS are concentrated within Alamosa City boundaries. There are a few outliers that are near Mosca including a fire station and k-12 School.

It is important to understand the distribution of services when considering future land uses and infrastructure. The capacity of an area to handle homes, commercial businesses, and more should take into account the types of facilities that exist and need to be introduced to an area to ensure health, safety, and welfare of the community.

Economy

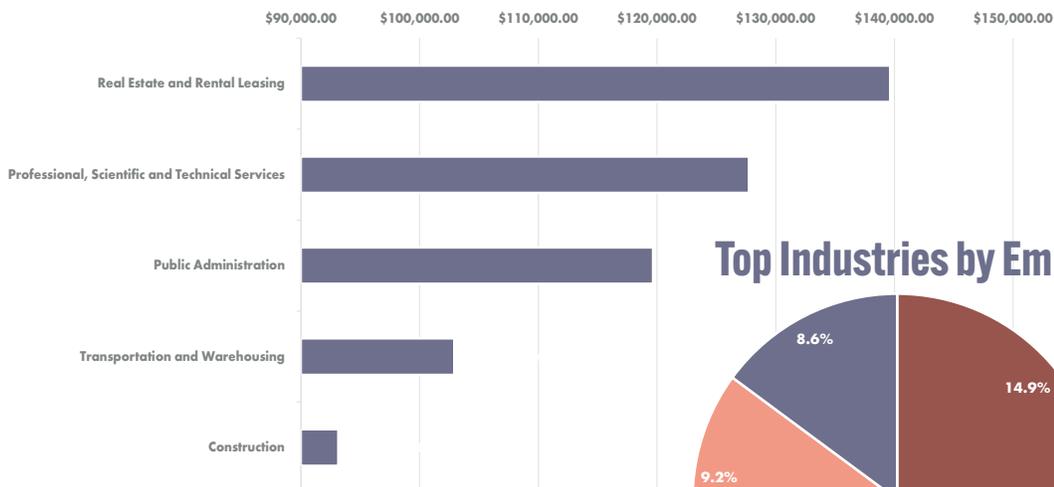
Top Industries by Employment in Alamosa County

The history of Alamosa County has uniquely shaped its existing industries, weaving its heritage into its present day economic landscape. The County has been anchored by Adams State University since 1921, when it was established as Adams Normal School. After reaching University status in 2012, the institution has served to both employ and cultivate a skilled workforce. The County's identity as a remarkable recreation and tourism destination is evident in the Accommodation and Food Service industry being the third largest in Alamosa County. Further, still rooted in its agricultural heritage, Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting is still among the most prominent industries in the County. With the rise of tourism, facilitated by the breathtaking natural beauty of the region, accommodation and food services have flourished, catering to visitors from far and wide. In 2022, the travel industry earned the County \$14.4 million dollars, generating \$3 million in local taxes and \$2.1 million in State taxes, exhibiting the growing economic prosperity that tourism is driving for the County.

Industry	Employees
Educational Services	1,116
Health Care and Social Services	1,093
Accommodation and Food Services	764
Retail Trade	688
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	641
Public Administration	514
Construction	469
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	349
Finance and Infrastructure	323
Transportation and Warehousing	323
Manufacturing	203
Wholesale Trade	183
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	142
Admin and Support and Waste Management	110
Real Estate and Rental Leasing	101
Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction	79
Information	51
Utilities	43
Other Industries	297

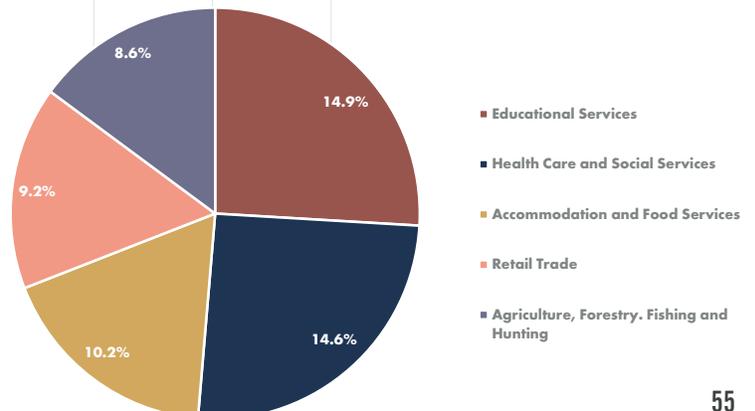
Figure 10. Top industry employers in Alamosa County

Top Industries by Income in Alamosa County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021 5-Year Estimates; 2022 Census of Agriculture

Top Industries by Employment



Agriculture

The San Luis Valley Region has a unique blend of topography, fostering an environment ripe for agricultural abundance. Its flat intermountain land is irrigated by snow from surrounding mountain peaks. The SLV is primarily known for its potato yields and also boasts harvests quinoa.

As of 2022, Alamosa County stands as a testament to the continued legacy of agrarian pursuits, with 262 farms spanning a total expanse of 141,342 acres. With an average farm size of approximately 539 acres, the County pulses with agricultural activity. A total market value of products sold reached an impressive \$112,412,000, culminating in a net income of \$41,388,000 going to farms in 2022. Agriculture remains firmly rooted as an economic cornerstone, with 93% of all sales stemming from crops, while the remaining 7% comes from animal husbandry. Notably, the category of “vegetables,” including melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes, emerges as the top revenue generator among crops. Almost a third of all farms in the County report their sales values exceeding \$100,000, exemplifying the enduring vitality of local agriculture.

Tourism

In 2022, the region’s tourism economy saw significant growth, reflected in the hospitality sector’s robust performance during the tourist season. A key indicator of this success was the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, which recorded its highest-ever annual visitor count at over 590,000 despite ongoing pandemic challenges. Additionally, lodging tax receipts in Alamosa County, the region’s economic hub, rose by 8% compared to the previous year, as reported by the Alamosa County Marketing District.



Source: Visit Alamosa, 2024; 2022 Census of Agriculture County Profile; Colorado State Demographer

Environment

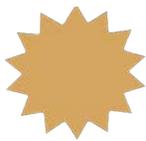
Alamosa County sits at around 7,500 feet, in the plains of Colorado. Nestled in the San Luis Valley, the climate and environment is varied. This semi-arid county experiences cold winters and warm summers. The most predominant environmental factors include above average sunny days and often time extreme wind.

In the last fully recorded year, weather varied widely. The beginning of the year saw snowy days which shifted to warmer and drier weather, causing wildfire risk in early

spring. Spring also saw a surprise snowfall just to the east of the County. Summer months were warm with monsoons that bled into early fall until the weather cooled. Early winter was characterized by some unseasonably warm days followed by a notable cold snap, especially east of the County.

In 2022 there was:

Climate



350+ Days of Sunshine



23.6 Inches of Snowfall



9.97 Inches of Rainfall



An average wind speed of 7.5 mph with gusts up to 80 mph

Environmental Hazards



34% weeks that some population was in severe drought



4 days where PM10 (particulate matter) exceeded acceptable levels



Minor community flooding risk



0% of land was moderate to high risk of harm from wildfire



1 day of extreme heat (at or above 90 degrees Fahrenheit)

Source: Colorado Health Institute 2022 County Profile, Colorado Department of Health Air Quality 2022

Natural and Scenic Resources

Alamosa County has many scenic and natural destinations that beckon adventurers and nature lovers alike. Among its gems is the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, a starkly different but remarkable landscape where towering sand dunes meet snow-capped peaks, creating a stunning contrast against the clear blue sky. Visitors can hike the dunes, sled down their sandy slopes, or marvel at the surreal beauty of this unique geological phenomenon.

Another beloved destination in Alamosa County is the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge, a sanctuary for the diverse wildlife that inhabits its wetlands, forests, and meadows. The Blanca Wetlands offer prime grounds for spotting migratory birds such as sandhill cranes and waterfowl, while nature enthusiasts can explore the tranquil trails that wind

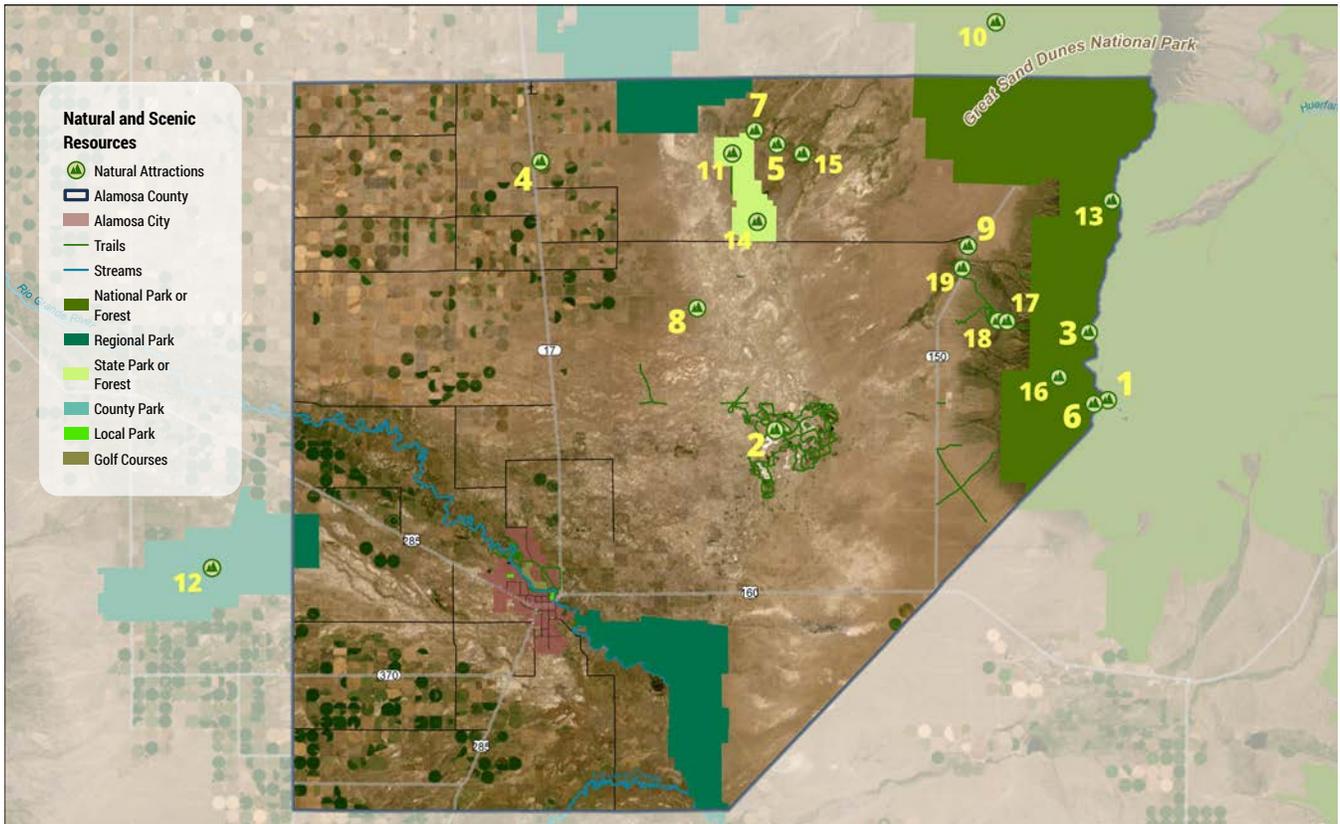
through the marshes and woodlands. For those seeking high-altitude adventures, the Sangre de Cristo Mountains offer scenic vistas, hiking, and camping as connections to the natural world.

Trails

San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLVGO) is the primary organization that plans, designs, and builds outdoor resources such as trails in SLV and Alamosa County.

Dark Sky Conservation

The Sangre de Cristo Dark Sky Reserve initiative is underway to receive recognition of a dark sky place by the International Dark Sky Association. If certified, it will encompass the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness, Rio Grande and San Isabel National Forests. It includes parts of eight counties in south central Colorado including Alamosa County.



Attractions

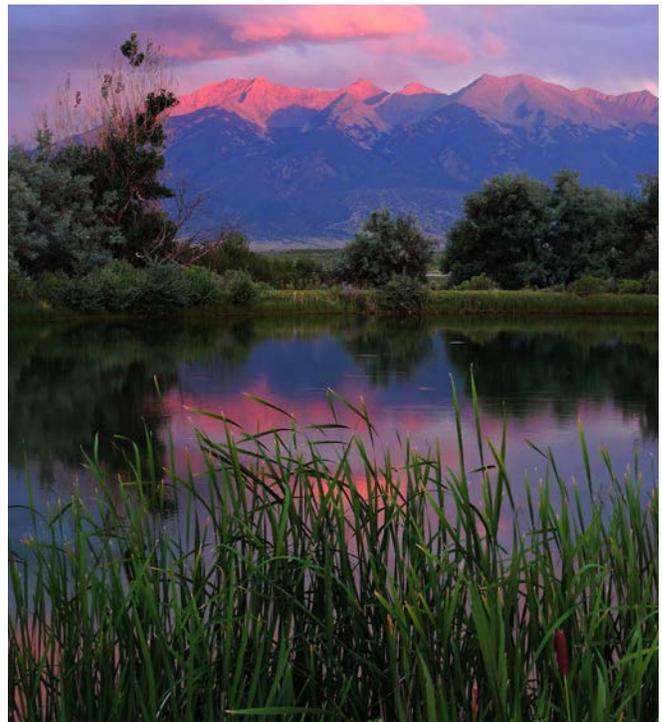
- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Blanca Peak | 8. Duneview Campground | 14. San Luis Lake |
| 2. Blanca Wetlands | 9. Eden Campground | 15. San Luis State Wildlife Area |
| 3. California Peak | 10. Great Sand Dunes National Park | 16. Twin Peaks |
| 4. Colorado Gators Reptile Park | 11. Head Lake | 17. Zapata Falls |
| 5. Cotton Lake | 12. Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge | 18. Zapata Falls Campground |
| 6. Crater Lake | 13. North Zapata Ridge | 19. Zapata Ranch Preserve |
| 7. Dollar Lake | | |

The Great Sand Dunes

The Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve is renowned for its awe-inspiring natural spectacle of towering sand dunes set against a backdrop of rugged mountain peaks. These dunes, some reaching heights of over 750 feet, are among the tallest in North America. Formed by wind-blown sands from the surrounding San Luis Valley, they create a mesmerizing landscape that captivates visitors from around the world. Designated as a national park in 2004, the Great Sand Dunes attract nature enthusiasts, photographers, and adventure seekers, offering opportunities for hiking, sandboarding, sledding. Stargazing is also a popular activity thanks to the park's designation as an International Dark Sky Park. The park also features diverse ecosystems, including alpine tundra, wetlands, forests, and grasslands, supporting a wide array of plant and animal species. Moreover, the park holds cultural significance for indigenous communities, with evidence of human habitation dating back over 11,000 years. The dunes have served as a sacred site and a place of spiritual importance for various Native American tribes, adding another layer of richness to this remarkable natural wonder.

The Blanca Wetlands

The Blanca Wetlands stand as a precious ecological gem, brimming with biodiversity and ecological uniqueness. Nestled amidst the rugged terrain of the San Luis Valley, these wetlands represent a vital habitat for a number of plant and animal species, many of which are rare or endangered. Characterized by a mosaic of marshes, ponds, and riparian corridors, the Blanca Wetlands provide critical breeding grounds and stopover sites for migratory birds, including waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds. Moreover, the wetlands support a rich assemblage of aquatic life, from amphibians and fish to invertebrates, forming the foundation of a complex and interconnected ecosystem. The protection of the Blanca Wetlands is imperative for several compelling reasons. Firstly, these wetlands serve as natural filters, purifying water and improving water quality for downstream communities and agricultural lands. Additionally, they play a crucial role in flood mitigation, absorbing excess water during periods of high precipitation and reducing the risk of flooding in surrounding areas. Furthermore, the Blanca Wetlands contribute to Alamosa County's resilience in the face of climate change, serving as carbon sinks and helping to mitigate the impacts of global warming. Beyond their ecological functions, the wetlands offer invaluable recreational and educational opportunities for residents



and visitors, fostering a deeper appreciation for the natural world and inspiring stewardship efforts. By safeguarding the Blanca Wetlands, we not only preserve a unique and irreplaceable ecosystem but also ensure the well-being of present and future generations.

Source: National Park Service 2024; Bureau of Land Management 2024

Habitat Conservation Map

The map represents the best estimate of the primary areas that are required to support the long-term survival of targeted species and biodiversity. The level of biodiversity is shown in the gradient under Potential Conservation Areas.

The Network Conservation Areas (shown in green) are connected by either an area that encompasses potential conservation areas that share similar species or natural communities and ecological processes. They are determined by the same repeating pattern (i.e. species) and mostly intact, or lightly fragmented. They are also highlighted if an

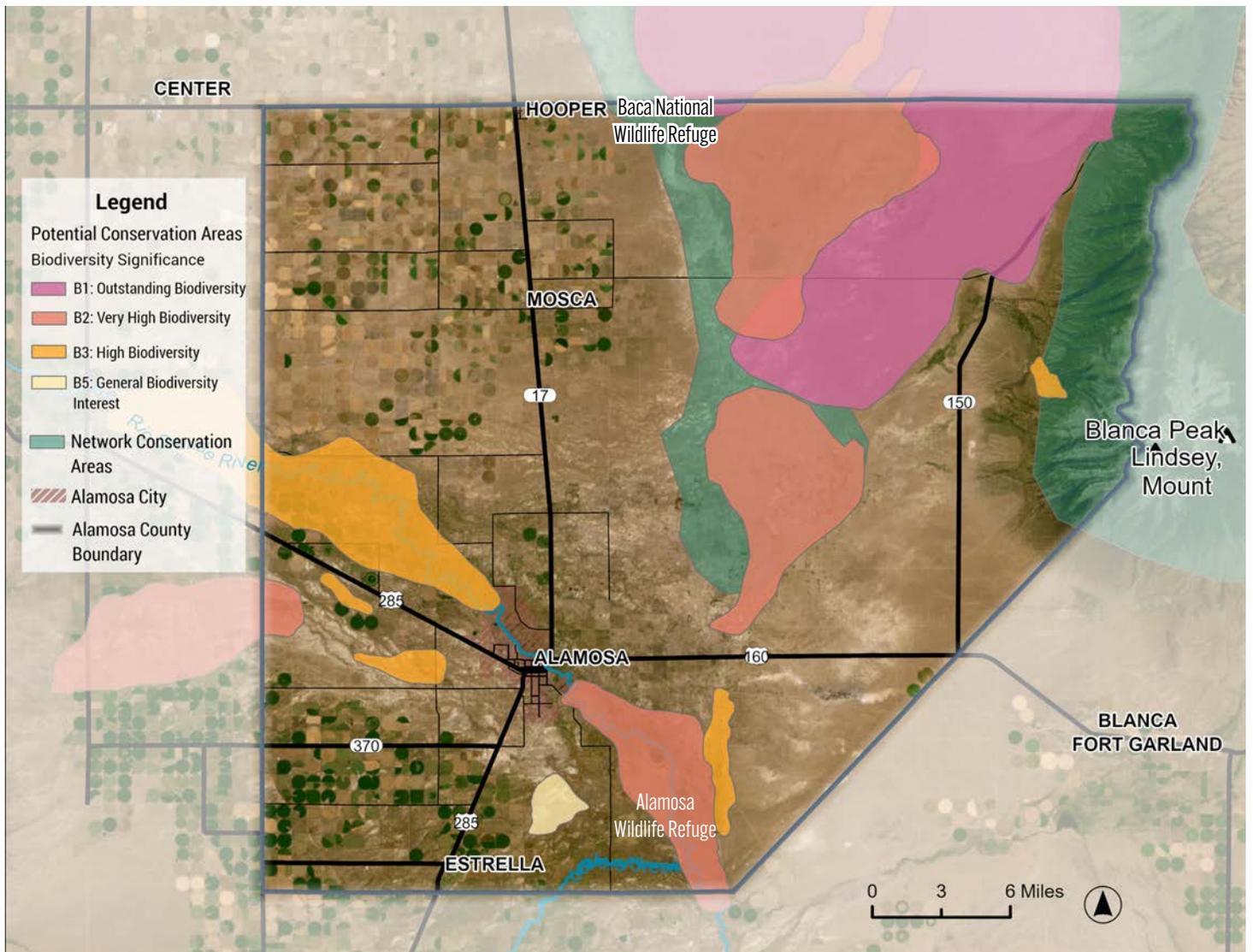
area is mostly intact, or lightly fragmented landscapes that support wide-range species and large scale disturbances.

Considerations in development patterns may be influenced by areas with habitat significance. These areas may require different intensities of conservation depending on the habitat.

Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge

The refuge was established in 1963 to provide protection for migratory birds and resident wildlife. The refuge conserves and enhances various habitats in over 12,000 acres in Alamosa County.

Conservation Areas (Networks and Potential)



Source: Colorado Natural Heritage Program, 2022 Statewide Potential & Networks of Conservation Areas.

Water

Water is of high importance in Alamosa County due to the arid climate and agricultural dependence. The County economics and culture are directly linked to agricultural output and production which relies heavily on water for irrigation. The management and availability of water are intricately linked to the livelihoods of many Alamosa County residents.

Water Districts

Surface water and groundwater in Alamosa County is administered by the Division of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Engineer. However, within Alamosa County there are five primary water conservation, water conservancy, or water and sanitation districts:

1. Rio Grande Water Conservation District
2. San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District
3. Mosca – Hooper Conservation District
4. City of Alamosa
5. East Alamosa Water and Sanitation District

By the Numbers

5
Primary water conservation and/or water and sanitation districts in Alamosa County

~5,330
wells in Alamosa County (combined number of confined and unconfined)

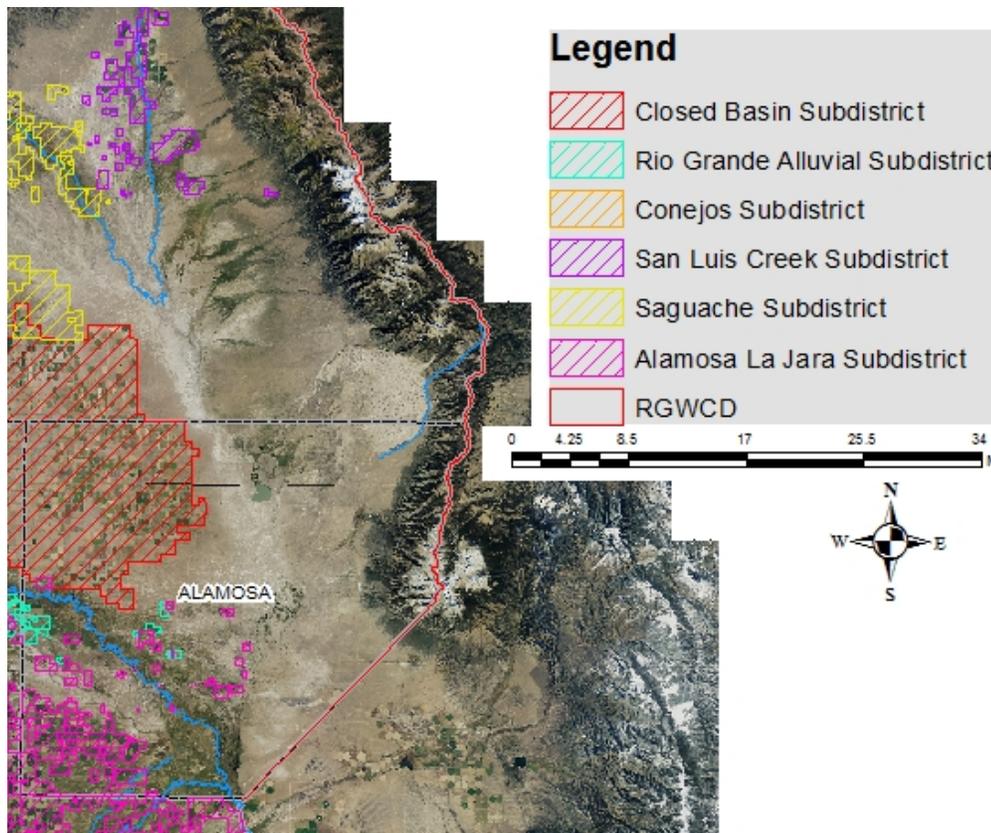


Figure 11. Rio Grande Water Conservation District Subdistricts, RGWCD

Groundwater Wells in Alamosa County

Groundwater withdrawals in Alamosa County come from the confined and unconfined aquifers. Within Alamosa County there are approximately 2,400 Confined aquifer wells and 2,930 Unconfined aquifer wells. Within each of these aquifer categories there are exempt and non-exempt well permits which are further divided into beneficial use categories. A summary of these wells are provided in Figures 37 and 36 below. Maps of the total number of exempt and non-exempt wells within the Confined and Unconfined aquifers are shown on figures below.

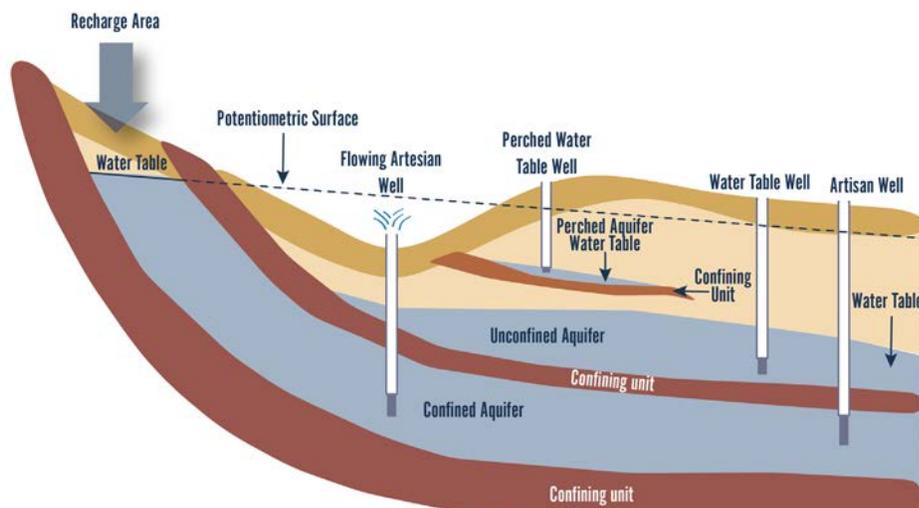
Exempt Wells		
Use	Number of Wells per Aquifer	
	Confined	Unconfined
Domestic	1,383	892
HUO	229	262
Commercial	25	30
Fire	2	8
Stock	0	1
Other	21	130
Total	1,844	1,250

Figure 12. Exempt Wells

It is important to differentiate between non-exempt and exempt wells because exempt wells are not subject to the rules regulating the use and augmentation of groundwater in Alamosa County. Additionally, under the statutes and rules, non-exempt well withdrawals of Confined aquifer groundwater must maintain sustainability requirements as defined in the statutes and rules (maintain water levels and pressures that were observed between 1978 and 2000).

Non-Exempt Wells		
Use	Number of Wells per Aquifer	
	Confined	Unconfined
Domestic	83	137
HUO	22	96
Commercial	37	74
Irrigation	350	1,235
Augmentation	0	1
Fire	0	2
Industrial	5	3
Stock	23	4
Municipal	7	0
Other	21	130
Total	548	1678

Figure 13. Non-Exempt Wells



Source: Modified after Harlan and others, 1989

Figure 14. Water Table Cross Section with well types

Water Regulations

The administration of surface water and the State's required compliance with the Rio Grande Compact has remained the same over the last 14 years, however water regulations have changed in Alamosa County since the previous 2008 Comprehensive Plan. The State is first required to meet its compact allocations and to do so by curtailing surface water diversions within Alamosa and other Counties within the Rio Grande Valley. However, surface water diverters are impacted by groundwater withdrawals either from the Unconfined aquifer or the Confined aquifer to varying degrees as both are hydraulically connected to the surface streams. As a result, the State has developed the Rio Grande Decision Support System groundwater model (RGDSS Model) to evaluate and quantify the impacts of groundwater pumping on the surface streams.

Regulatory Changes

Groundwater withdrawals increased significantly during the drought of 2002 to 2005, as farmers relied on their wells rather than the surface diversion for crop needs. This overdraft of the aquifers resulted in new legislation passed by the Colorado Legislature (House Bill 04-222) and the new rules promulgated by the Division of Water Resources.

1. The "Rules Governing New Withdrawals of Groundwater in Water Division Affecting the Rate or Direction of Movement of Water in the Confined Aquifer System" ("Confined Aquifer New Use Rules")
2. The "Rule Governing the Measurement of Groundwater Diversions Located in Water Division, the Rio Grande Basin" ("Measurement Rules")

Source: Colorado Division of Water Resources

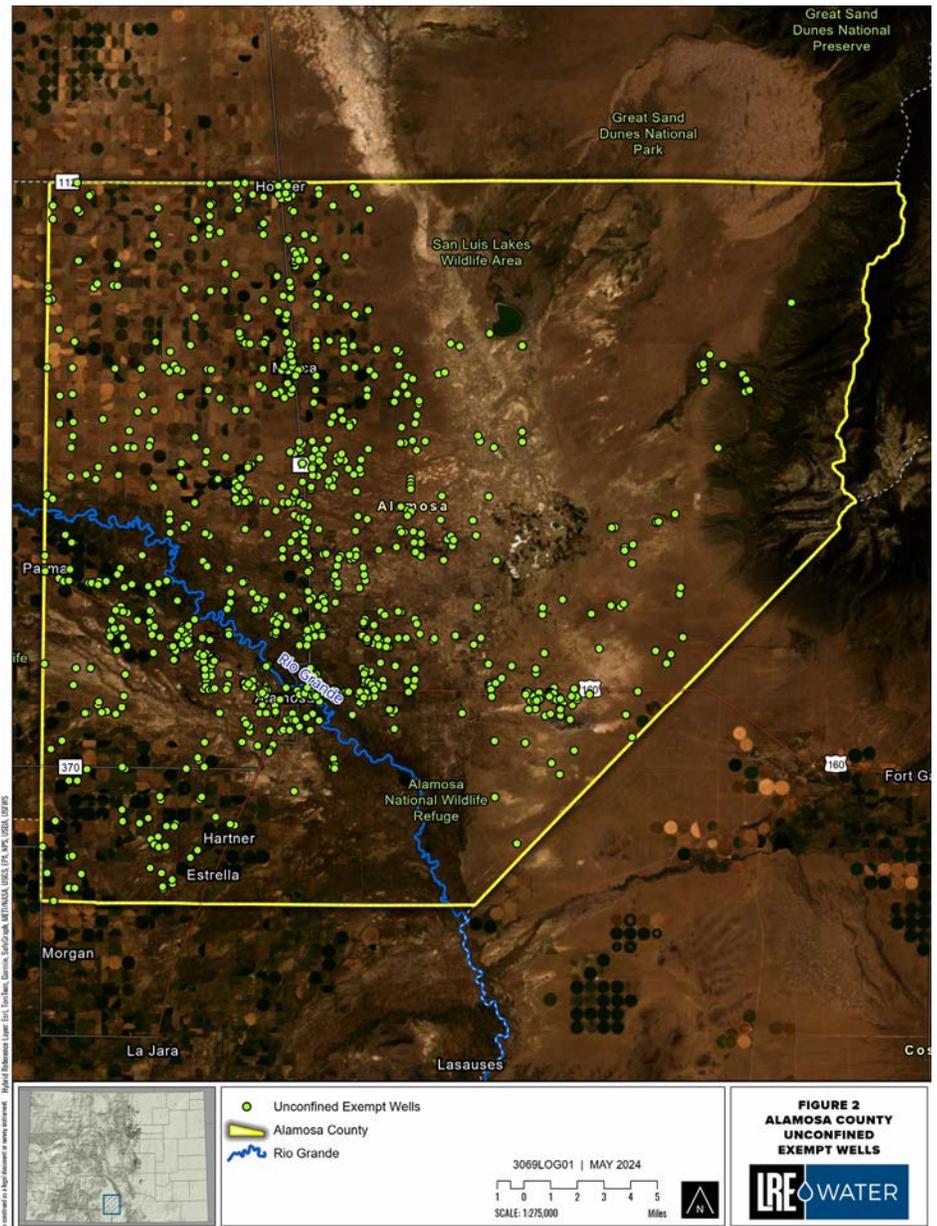


Figure 15. Unconfined Exempt Wells

The Confined Aquifer New Use Rules required any new withdrawals from the confined aquifer would require a one-for-one retirement of an existing water right in the Confined Aquifer to offset. Moreover, the new withdrawal can not cause fluctuations in artesian pressure to fall outside the ranges that occurred during 1978 and 2000. During this rule making, DWR also developed the RGDSS Model to assist in the analysis and impact of groundwater water pumping in the Rio Grande Basin. The Measurement Rules were enacted to assist in the continued development and reliability of the RGDSS Model by requiring all wells that pump more than 50 gallons per minute or wells that require to be metered by a permit or decree to be fitted with a totalizing flow meter.

Subsequent to these two sets of rules DWR then adopted the Groundwater and Irrigation Season Rules for Division 3 in 2015 after a significant study period and input from the public.

These rules are the next step in DWR’s systematic approach to integrated administration of surface and groundwater in the Rio Grande Basin. Moreover, the Groundwater and Irrigation Season Rules for Division 3 are mandated by House Bill 04-222 which added paragraphs to C.R.S. 37-92-501. The Groundwater and Irrigation Season Rules for Division 3 require all withdrawals of groundwater (either Confined or Unconfined) to only occur if the withdrawals are subject to an augmentation plan decreed by Water Court, are specifically excluded (i.e. small use wells), are a part of a Groundwater Management Plan for an approved Subdistrict or subject to a substitute water supply plan issued by the State Engineer.

RGWCD has established six (6) Subdistricts within the Rio Grande Valley approved by DWR. A portion of three of these Subdistricts incorporate lands within Alamosa County.

- Closed Basin Subdistrict (Subdistrict 1)
- Rio Grande Alluvial Subdistrict (Subdistrict 2)
- Alamosa La Jara Subdistrict (Subdistrict 6)

Each Subdistrict has a Groundwater Management Plan and annually must submit to the State Engineer an Annual Replacement Plan (ARP). Each Subdistrict charges its members a fee to acquire water rights to replace depletions caused by its members wells, manage the withdrawal of groundwater (both Confined and Unconfined) and manage the sustainability of the Confined aquifer. These Subdistricts regulate non-exempt wells (wells that are administered in priority) and not exempt wells which can be issued in each Subdistrict and the County pursuant to C.R.S. 37-92-602.¹ Within the statute there are criteria that will allow the issuance of exempt wells (i.e. property greater than 35 acres in size, subdivisions in existence prior to 1972, division of land by the County not considered a subdivision, etc.). These exempt wells are not subject to the rules listed herein for the regulation of groundwater withdrawals within Alamosa County.

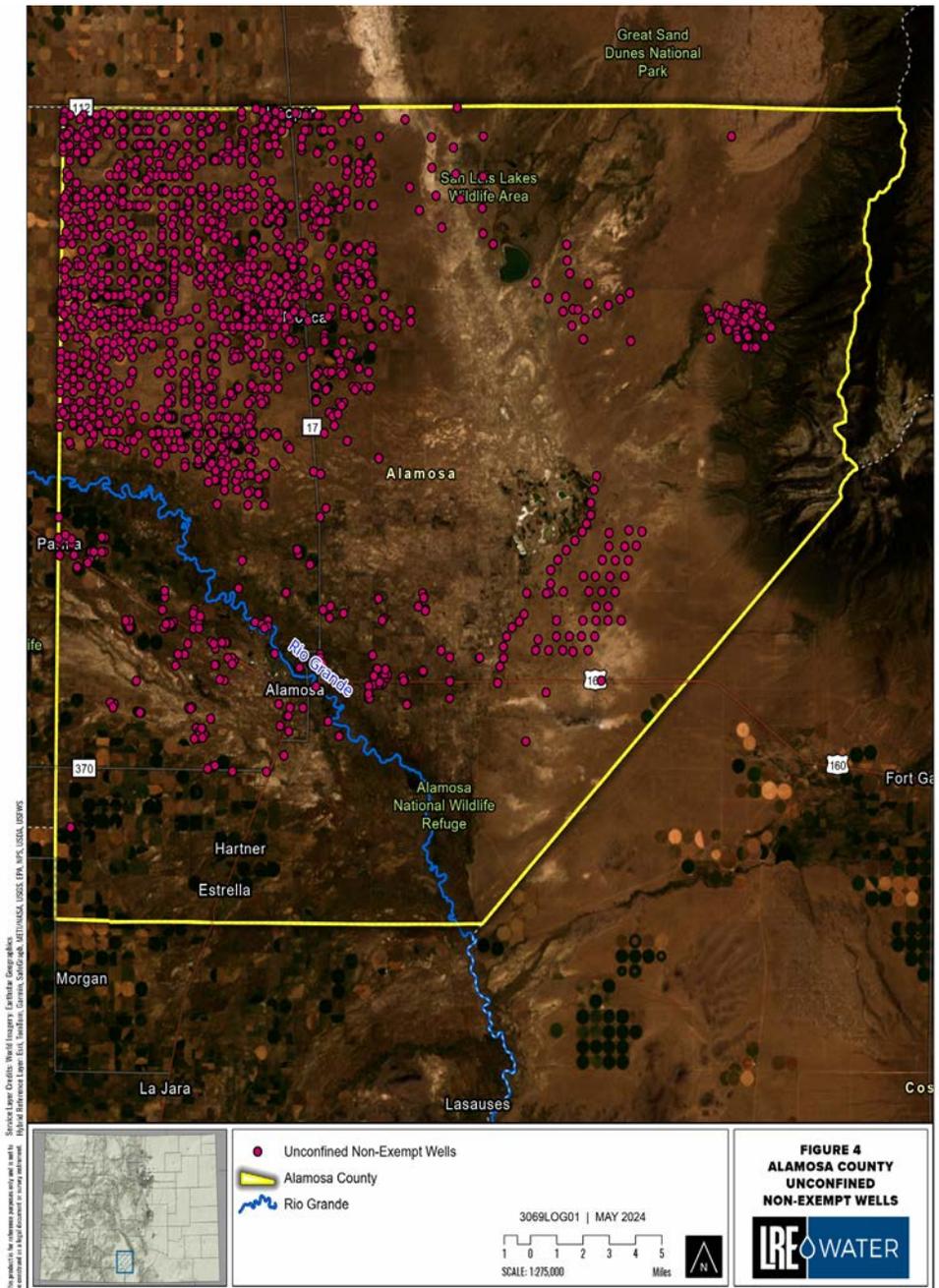


Figure 16. Unconfined Non-exempt wells

¹ These exempt wells (meaning exempt from the priority system) can be issued for full domestic (three single family dwellings, domestic animals and one acre of lawn and garden irrigation), household use only (use in the house only), commercial drinking and sanitation not to exceed 0.3 acre feet per year of withdrawal, firefighting, stock and monitoring.

Transition of Irrigated Lands to Other Beneficial Uses

Since the passing of the legislation mentioned earlier and the passage and adoption of the rules, irrigated lands supplied by wells have most likely decreased within the County and such lands may be changed to another beneficial use. Figure 41 is a map of the irrigated lands obtained by the DWR for the 2022 irrigation year.

Review of the 2022 irrigated land data did not identify any dried-up irrigated acres in Alamosa County. The likely reason for this is that DWR identifies irrigated lands that have been fallowed or dried-up when a change in water right or other water matter occurs whereby these lands cannot be irrigated. DWR does not track irrigated lands that are simply not irrigated year over year due to (i) reduced groundwater production; or (ii) lack of augmentation water to replace the well's depletions. This poses a challenge to determine the amount of irrigated lands that have not been irrigated or fallowed since 2018. While this is a challenge, this data also demonstrates that virtually no changes of water rights involving irrigated lands have occurred in Alamosa County between 2018 and 2022.

Nevertheless, if the owners of these fallow or non-irrigated lands desire to put these lands to another purpose (i.e. residential development), the irrigation well(s) will need to go through a change of water right and be included in a Subdistrict or augmentation plan. If the property owner desires a new well for this new purpose, an exempt well permit (small use well) may be available if certain statutory criteria are met. Any new non-exempt well will need to be a part of a Subdistrict or an approved augmentation plan. Moreover, if the new well is Confined Aquifer well, the water owner will not only have to be a part of a Subdistrict or have an approved augmentation plan but will also need to retire an existing Confined Aquifer well and be subject to sustainability requirements in the Confined Aquifer.

While the transition of irrigated lands for another purpose is possible, ensuring water for the new purpose will be critical in the County evaluation and approval of the new purpose.

Source: Colorado Division of Water Resources

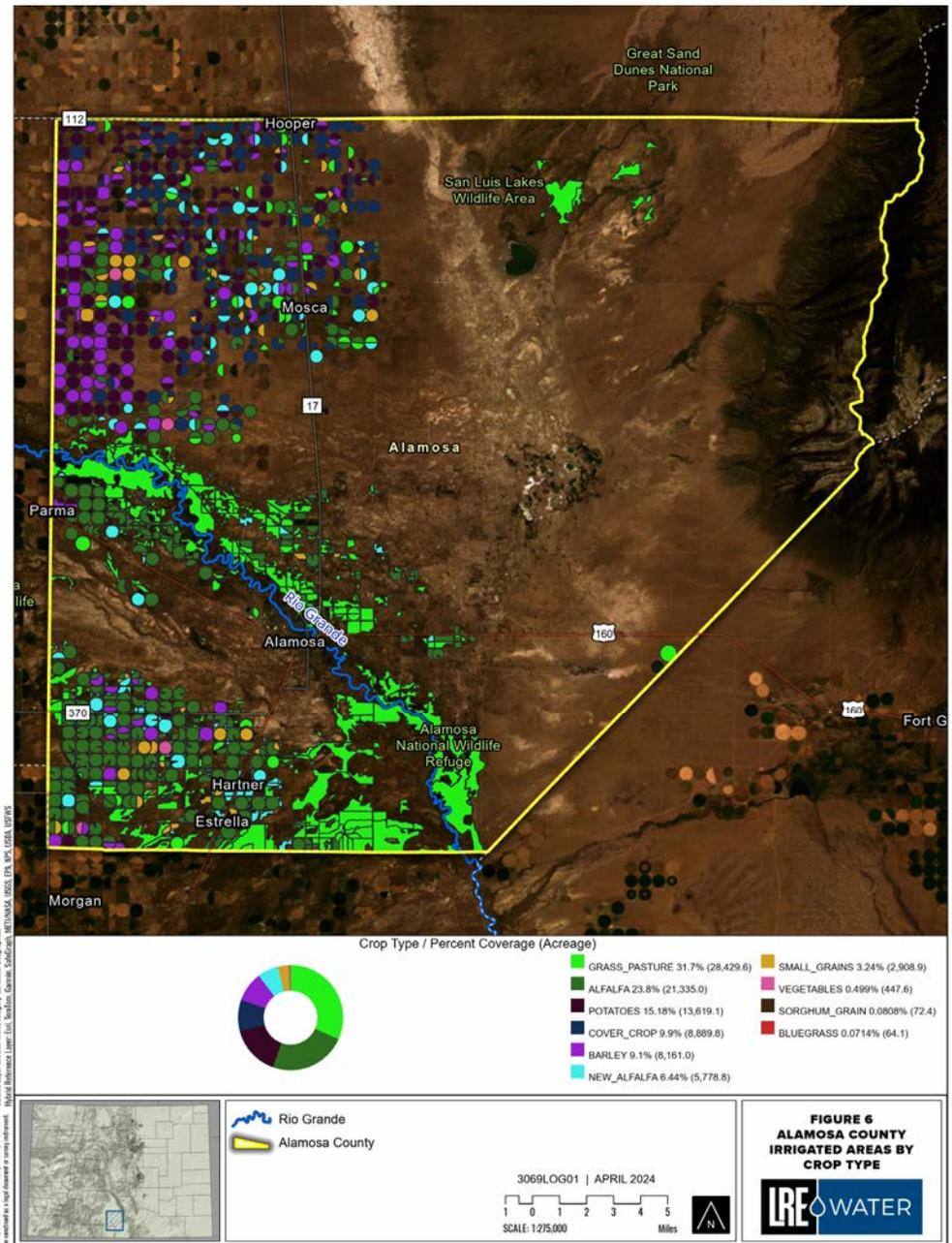


Figure 11. Irrigated areas by crop type

Land Use and Zoning

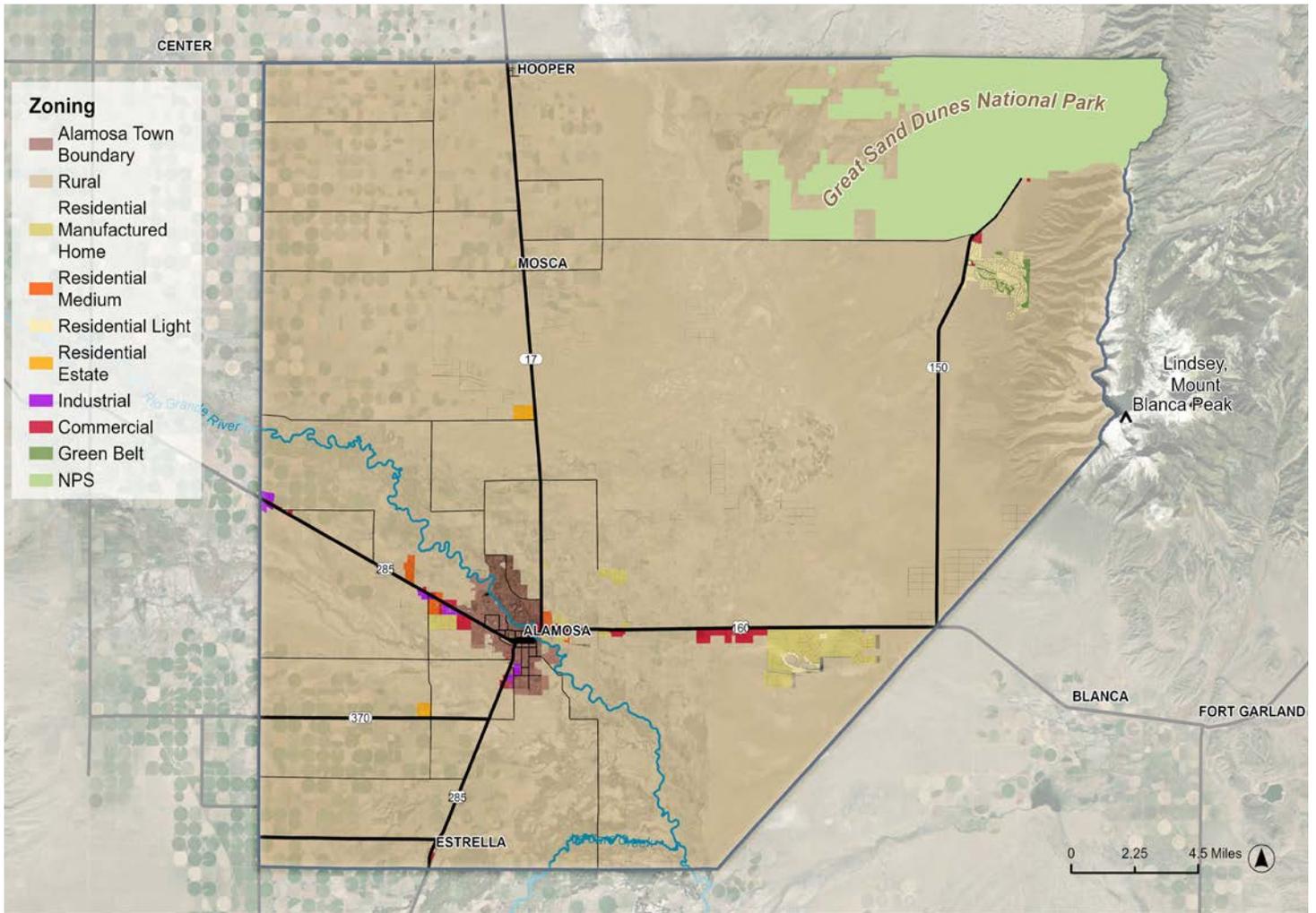


Figure 18. Alamosa County Adopted Zoning Map



By the Numbers

98%

Unincorporated Alamosa County is zoned Rural Residential

102

Building permits were issued in 2022

Alamosa County spans 462,909 acres of land, delineated into eight zone districts: Rural Residential, Residential Manufactured Home, Residential Medium, Residential Light, Residential Estate, Industrial, Commercial, and Green Belt.

Alamosa City and Hooper make up for 5,264 acres of the total acreage of the County. Incorporated cities are not under County land use jurisdiction. Rural Residential zoned land dominates the rest of County Land at 98% total acreage, however land uses are not exclusive to rural residential. Land uses within this zone include, agriculture, residential, solar, commercial and more. The remaining 2% of the County Land includes a mix of the seven additional Zone Districts.

Land Use vs. Zoning

Land use describes how the land is being utilized for different activities, such as residential, commercial, agricultural, and recreational purposes. Whereas Zoning is the regulatory tool used to determine what types of Land Uses are most appropriate and where. When evaluating the different land uses in Alamosa, it is clear that the zoning doesn't reflect the trends of development and uses that have taken place since the 2008 Comprehensive Plan.

Historically, land use in Alamosa County has been driven by water availability. The Southwestern corner of the County contains ample groundwater, requiring little augmentation. Whereas, the Northwest corner has very little groundwater.

The greatest discrepancies between zoning and land use exist in the Mosca area, where zoning designates Mobile Home Park with commercial immediately adjacent to the highway. In reality, this area primarily contains single family homes with a few commercial businesses.

Additionally, the Northwest corner of the County has seen development of large solar fields in recent years although the properties are designated Rural.

Future Land Use

In 2008, the County developed a "conceptual Land Use Plan". The land uses of the County were determined based on the County Assessor Office. The Land Use categories have been generalized for the purpose of this snapshot.



 Commercial Vacant Land	 Warehouse/Storage	 Residential	 Agriculture
 Commercial	 Community Services	 Duplex & Triplex	
 Vacant Land	 Special Use	 Mobile Home	

Figure 19. Focused Land Uses in Mosca Area (excerpt from the County-wide Land use Map)

Agriculture

The prosperity of agriculture is dependent on many factors. The most defining are water availability, land value, and social factors. In Alamosa County, agriculture and water are intrinsically connected. As water supply becomes questionable, a transition of agricultural lands to less water-dependent uses is expected.

Approximately 45% of the total land in Alamosa County is being used for agricultural purposes. These uses include crop production, dryland grazing, ranching, and more. Not all properties contain water intensive agricultural uses (i.e. dry grazing), however the majority of agriculture operators have some level of essential water usage. A small handful of agriculture properties have transitioned to solar array

fields or CREP lands (conservation reserve enhancement program), where property owners retire their wells and transition their fields to low-water usage crops in exchange for monetary compensation.

Solar

Alamosa County has been a leader in solar development for the last 15 years, currently producing approximately 135 mega watts of solar contributing to the grid operated by Xcel Energy. As a strategic goal in the 2008 Master Plan, the County has welcomed solar development through permits predominantly in areas that have a history of agricultural production in the Rural Residential zone district. Today, there are over 1,000 acres of solar panel arrays in Alamosa County.

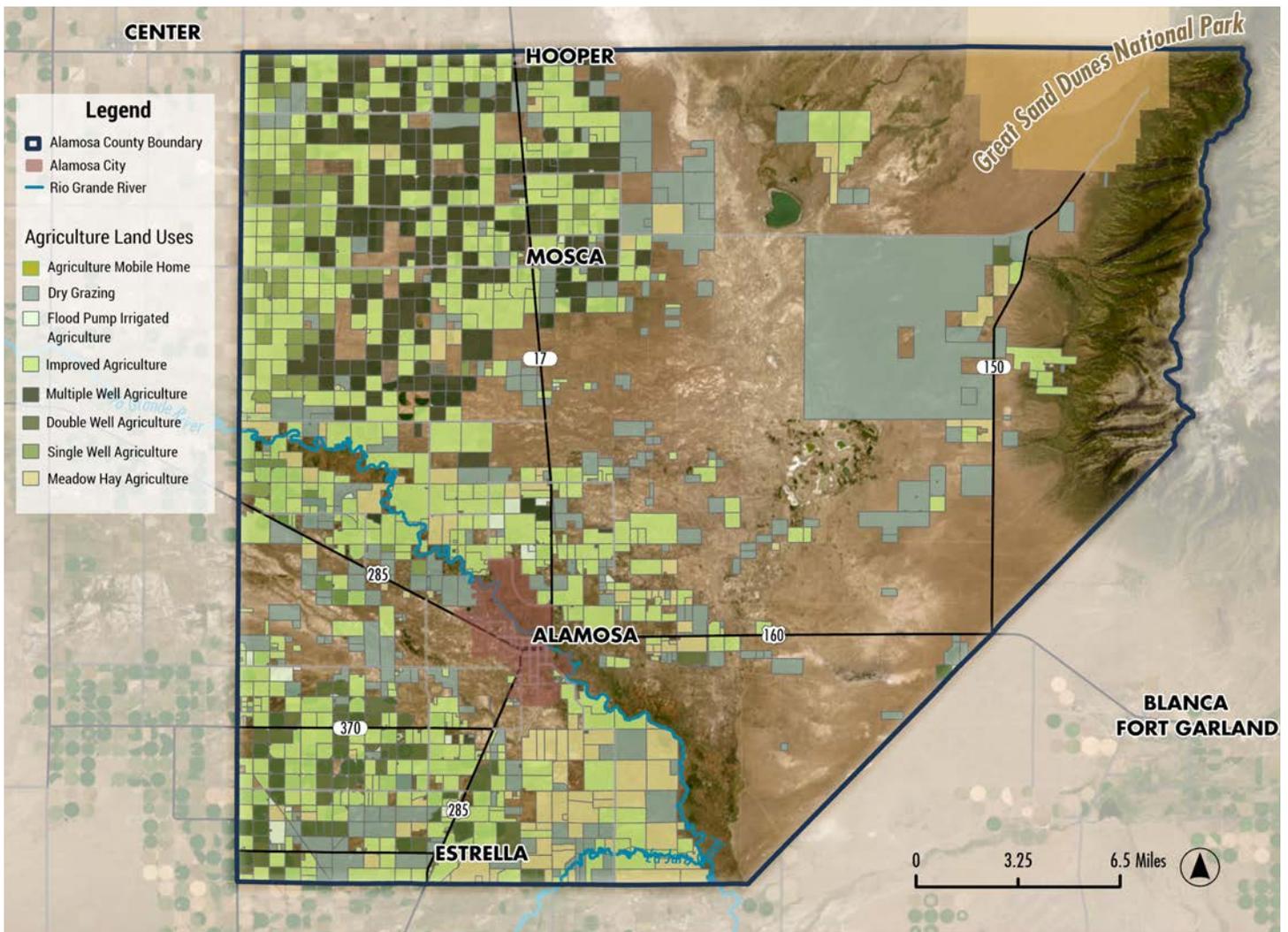


Figure 20. Agricultural Land Uses

Source: Alamosa County Assessors Office, Land Use Classifications based on property assessment.

Key Takeaways

The County has land use challenges to address.

- The existing zoning map is not reflective of actual land use or development patterns.
- Agriculture remains one of the most predominant uses in the County.
- A large portion of land in Alamosa County is managed by State and Federal agencies.

Water access and management is complex and will dictate the County's future.

- Alamosa County is fairly economically diverse, but increasing water scarcity will make emerging markets more essential to the economic viability of the County. The County will need to consider unique land use management, such as transitioning agriculture land uses to other uses, in order to maintain economic health.
- Water availability and cost, land ownership and the natural environment are all variables that will affect how and where development happens in the future.

Most community amenities are concentrated in the City of Alamosa.

- Only a handful of services are available to the more rural regions of the County.
- This is especially important for medical and safety services.

Social determinants of health are especially important to the quality of life for Alamosa residents.

- Alamosa County has a higher rate of substance abuse and mental health crises than the State on average.

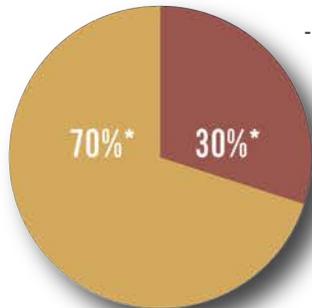
A majority of housing was developed before 2008, the County will need to contend with an aging housing stock.

- Alamosa County will need to devise a plan for managing aging homes. This can include restoration efforts and the addition of new housing stock.



Appendix F. Community Engagement Summary

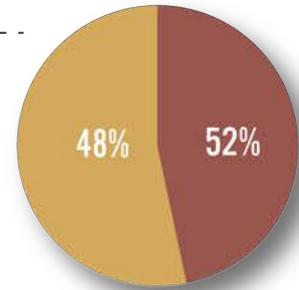
ALAMOSA COUNTY
QUESTIONNAIRE #1-3 RESULTS



HISPANIC OR LATINOS ORIGIN

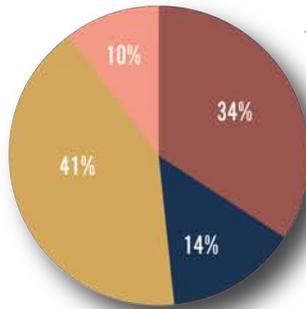
- Hispanic or Latino
- Not Hispanic or Latino

ALAMOSA COUNTY
DEMOGRAPHICS

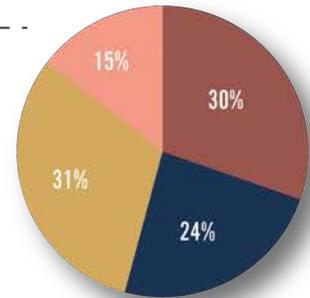


*Average Hispanic or Latino Population Results

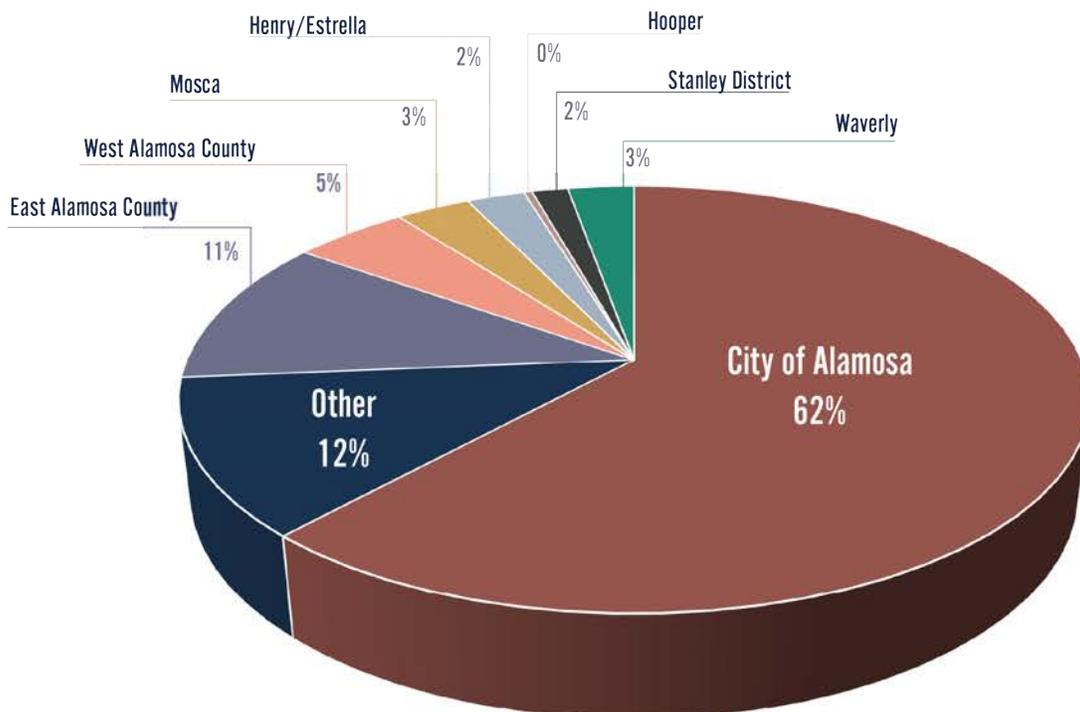
AGE



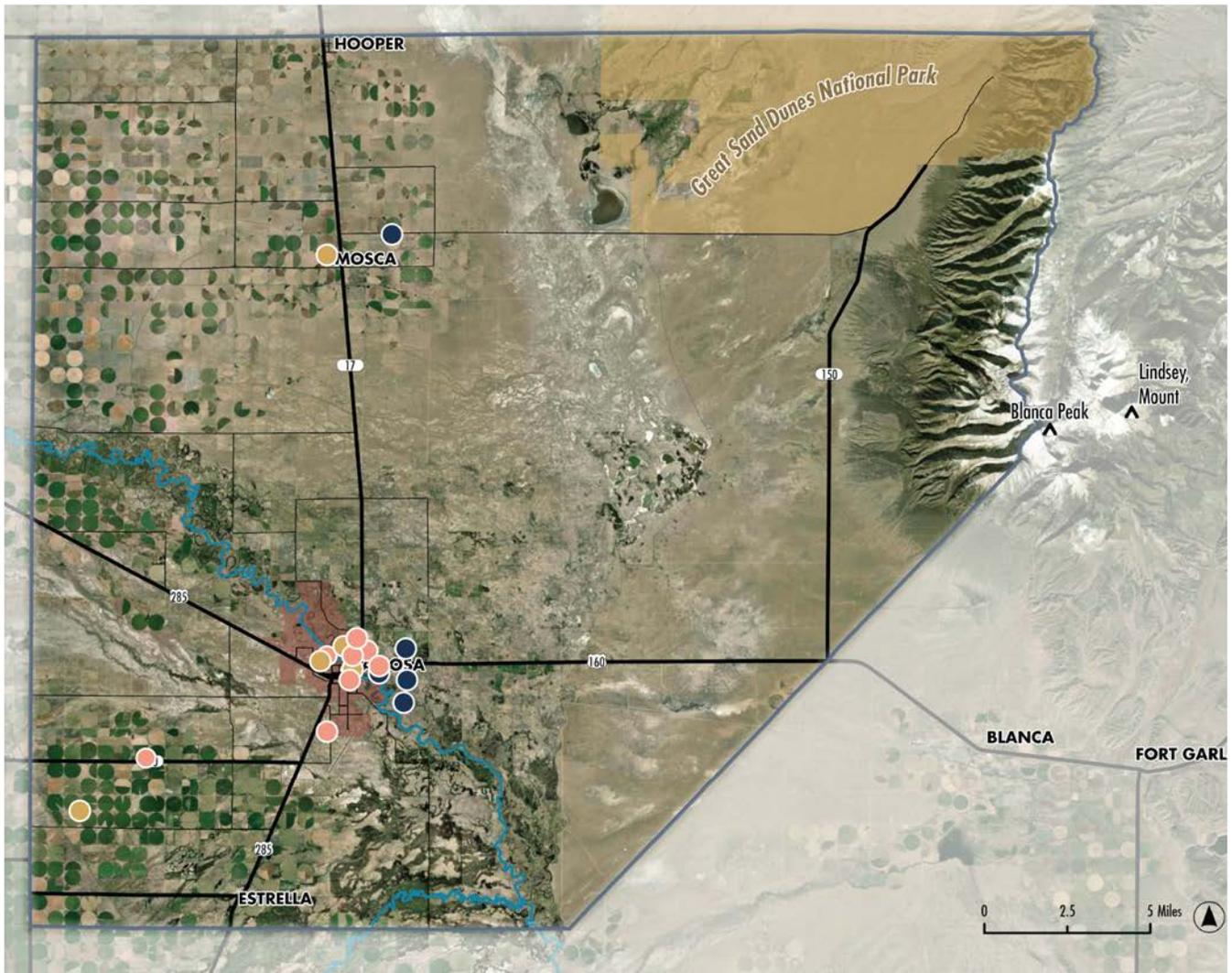
- Under 20 years
- 20 to 34 years
- 35-65 years
- 65+ years



QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY RESIDENCE



*Among the participants who chose "other" are those who either live outside the county and travel there for work or have identified specific neighborhoods within the county that were not listed as an option (e.g. Fort Garland).



- Drop-in Events**
 - Spare Keg Brewerks
 - The Pit Stop (Mosca)
 - Tienda El Quetzal
 - The Friar's Fork and Sanctuary
 - Cinco de Mayo/First Fridays
- Rountable Events & Focus Groups**
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - City Hall
 - County Offices
 - Depot
 - East Alamosa Offices
 - Juanitos
 - San Luis Valley Federal Bank
 - Waverly Community Center
- Workshops**
 - Alamosa High School
 - Cole Park
 - Dune Distillery
 - Farm Brewery
 - Knee Knockers

Among the respondents to the first questionnaire, 34% identified as “Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin.” It is a priority of the Comprehensive plan process to reach as much of Alamosa County as possible and reflect the demographics of the community. Therefore, as a response to the demographics of the questionnaire results, outreach efforts were organized for intentional engagement of all demographic groups including those of the Hispanic/Latino population and 65+ age groups.

Phase 1 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

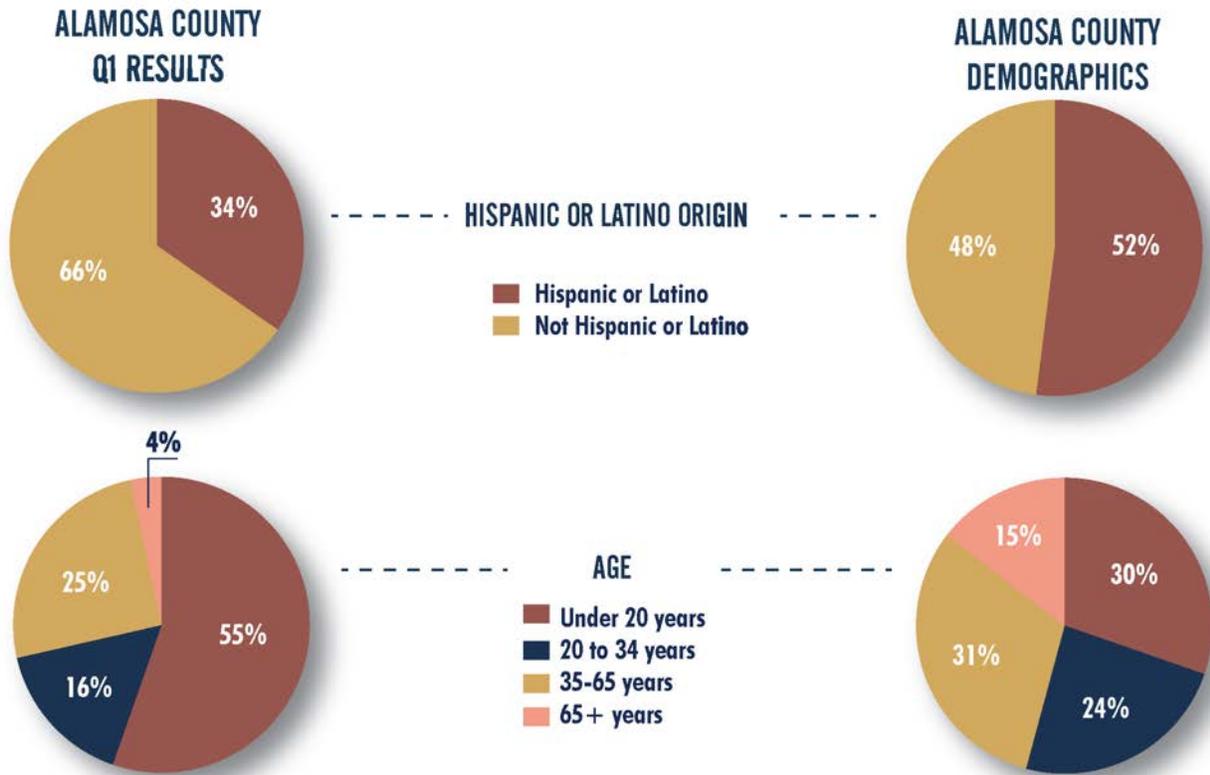
The following is a snapshot of the demographics and key findings collected from respondents of the first questionnaire in Alamosa County Comprehensive Plan's update. The demographics are compared with overall County demographic data with those who chose "prefer not to say" removed from the charts to provide a one-to-one comparison.

What do you love about Alamosa County? (top three)

1. Family and Community Ties
2. Natural Beauty and Scenery
3. Small Town Feel

What are Alamosa County's opportunities and big ideas for the future? (top three)

1. Enhance Youth Environment
2. More support for local businesses
3. Increase job opportunities



Among the respondents to the first questionnaire, 34% identified as "Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin." It is a priority of the Comprehensive plan process to reach as much of Alamosa County as possible and reflect the demographics of the community. Therefore, as a response to the demographics of the questionnaire results, outreach efforts were organized for intentional engagement of all demographic groups including those of the Hispanic/Latino population and 65+ age groups.



OVERVIEW

This summary consists of all public engagement completed throughout Phase 1: Setting the Foundation segment of the Imagine Alamosa County Comprehensive Plan process. This phase focused on getting the word out to the community through visual messaging using a variety of tools, events, and locations throughout the County. The data represented in this summary provides a baseline for the rest of the project phases by helping identify which groups will need more targeted engagement opportunities in the future and where efforts can be refocused to hear underrepresented groups.

Community Context Goals

1. To inform the community of the Comprehensive Plan effort.
2. To establish a recognizable brand and message.
3. To identify key locations for materials that can provide consistent visibility for the project.
4. To establish which groups will need more targeted engagement opportunities throughout the rest of the project.
5. To establish a database of interested community members, organizations, and community groups. To establish and identify ways to enhance the public process.

The Setting the Foundation Summary consists of the following sections:

- How Have We Been Reaching the Alamosa County Community?
- Summary of Key Themes
- What's Next for Public Engagement?

HOW DID WE REACH THE COMMUNITY?

Alamosa County has identified a comprehensive strategy to connect with its residents, employing a variety of methods to facilitate engagement. These methods include individual interviews, roundtable conversations, participation in community events, social media campaigns, distributing fliers, leveraging community advocates, focus groups, and launching a dedicated project website. Such

an approach enabled the project team to collect preliminary insights regarding what makes Alamosa County unique, and the community’s challenges and opportunities. The overarching goal of this initiative was to communicate effectively with the community, with plans to expand this outreach in subsequent phases.

Table 1. Phase 1 Events

ENGAGEMENT	DATES	DETAILS
Roundtable Events	March 11th-14th 2024	Community members, business owners, planning commissioners, non-profit organizations, business owners, interest groups and more were invited to participate in one-on-one or small group conversations to gather preliminary feedback to inform the Comprehensive Plan. Participants were given the chance to share their perspectives on challenges and opportunities in Alamosa County.
Listening Sessions	March 15th-April 15th	One on one listening sessions were facilitated online with various community members. These sessions were available to the public to participate and share their ideas about the future of Alamosa County.
Advisory Committee Meeting #1	March 12th 2024	Various individuals from local organizations, departments and other affiliations in the Alamosa County community were invited to participate in the Advisory Committee. This committee is anticipated to host another 7 meetings through the end of 2024 and is made up of 9 AC Members. The Advisory Committee will be a primary source of information spreading throughout the community. Members will act as advocates for the Plan.
Planning Commission (PC) and Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Meeting	March 13th 2024	While in person, the project team gave an update to the BCC and PC on the project process, and what was heard so far during the kick off week.

ENGAGEMENT	DATES	DETAILS
Drop-In Events	March 11th-14th 2024 & May 3rd 2024	<p>Drop In Events occurred throughout the County at various local businesses and community events to inform community members about the comprehensive plan and encourage them to provide feedback. These events were aimed at receiving additional feedback from community members in a more casual and comfortable setting by engaging locals at places that they already frequent. The events were held at the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-In Listening Session: Spare Keg Brewerks, March 11th 5-7pm • Drop-In Listening Session: The Pit Stop (Mosca), March 12th 7:30-8:30am • Drop-In Listening Session: Tienda El Quetzal, March 12th, 2-4pm • Drop-In Listening Session: The Friar’s Fork and Sanctuary, March 14th 8-11am • Cinco de Mayo/First Fridays: Alamosa, May 3rd
Online and In Person Marketing		<p>Spreading the word about the Comprehensive Plan effort was a critical part of Phase 1. The following methods were used to inform the community about Imagine Alamosa and ways that they could be involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alamosa Citizen Podcast • Social Media (Instagram, Facebook) • County Website and event calendar • Project Website • Newspaper Ads • Radio Ads
Focus Groups	May 14th	<p>Towards the end of the phase two focus groups were facilitated to gather feedback from specific groups. The Growing Water Smart (GWS) group convened for the first time and an agriculture specific focus group was held to discuss water, agriculture preservation, and the future of agriculture in the County.</p>

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES

The following section is a high-level executive summary of key themes gathered from community interviews, drop-in event conversations, roundtable events, questionnaire results and kick off week feedback.

1. AGRICULTURE

- Agriculture is the cultural and economic backbone of Alamosa County.
- Addressing sustainability challenges, such as water scarcity, is important to the community for sustainable agriculture.
- Opportunities exist to improve the culture of agriculture through education, behavior of visitors, and public policy.
- Transition of agriculture lands is important to consider in the Comprehensive Plan. Water is directly tied to agricultural viability and agricultural practices influence water availability within the shallow aquifers.

2. HOUSING

- There is a recognized need for a wider variety of housing types to accommodate the various population groups.
- Affordable housing is a critical issue, with comments highlighting the need for economically viable options for single-person homes, apartments, and mixed-use housing.
- Increasing homelessness exacerbated by affordability issues, drugs, policing, and employment challenges.
- Encouragement for innovative housing solutions, such as incentives for the reuse of suburban housing and the integration of community facilities to support aging in place.

- The importance of ADUs and tiny homes as viable options for expanding housing availability, including allowing RVs on properties for additional living spaces.
- Housing availability and types of housing may be different throughout the County. What is appropriate around the City of Alamosa may not be appropriate in the northern part of the County.
- Housing for agricultural workers will be essential to the sustainability of agricultural operations.

3. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

- There is a desire for improved park and trail maintenance to create safer and healthier spaces for all users.
- Improved destination marketing for public lands, focusing on multi-use spaces and cultural venues.
- Desire for green, vibrant spaces that cater to various needs and uses.
- Increased heritage tourism coordination with national heritage areas and outdoor revitalization projects.
- Development of diverse recreation options such as fitness trails, nature trails, designated bike lanes, and community pool facilities.
- Alamosa's scenic vistas are very important to the community. This includes agriculture fields, the views of Mount Blanca, and the Sand Dunes. Preservation of these views is very important.
- Wildlife habitat is important when considering future development in the County.

4. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Development of communities and facilities catering to the 55+ demographic to promote health in the aging population.
- Development of facilities catering to the under 20 population.
- The desire to establish Alamosa County as a legacy place, valued by current and future generations.
- Utilization of social media platforms like “Everything SLV” to enhance communication and engage the community in health and wellness initiatives.
- The creation and maintenance of positive spaces such as parks and trails to promote physical activity and mental well-being.
- Health and Safety is top of mind for Alamosa residents. Including drug issues, poverty, and support for the unhoused population.

5. SUSTAINABILITY

- Dark sky preservation: Emphasize the importance of implementing and enforcing codes to maintain dark skies.
- Xeriscaping: Promote water-wise landscaping through incentives or “credits” to encourage adoption among residents.
- Waste management: Specifically address the need for accessible RV waste dumping sites, suggesting a need for better infrastructure and communication on available services.
- Acknowledge challenges in diversifying water language and education, implying a gap in public understanding and engagement with water sustainability issues.
- Community members voice support for furthering the development of renewable energy in the Valley.

6. LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

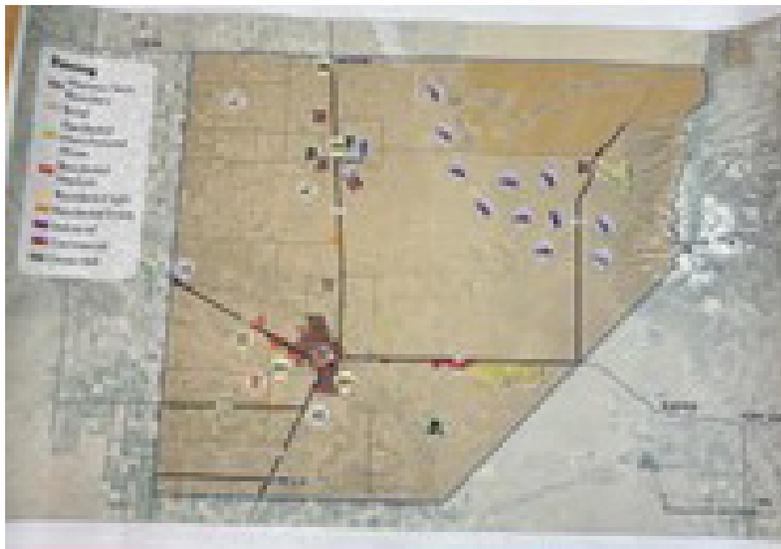
- Desire for conservation efforts that balance working lands with commercial development.
- Development of a comprehensive trail system around the valley and connecting to the city, enhancing outdoor activities like biking.
- Suggestions for more events near rivers and in downtown areas, emphasizing nature, activity-based recreation, and local commerce.
- Mtn Valley Transit and the expansion of local bus services.
- Improved infrastructure for water resources and mapping features to support sustainable land use and development.
- Concerns over traffic crossings and the effectiveness of signage to facilitate easier and safer navigation.
- A mix of land uses (commercial, multi-household, single-household, mixed use etc.) may be considered in the Mosca area.

7. ECONOMICS

- Opportunities to create economic growth through connections and networking with diverse cultures and places.
- Emphasis on showcasing local culture and history, value-added agriculture, and unique attractions like river and train tourism.
- The need for more diverse shopping options, including lumber, bedding, and clothing stores.
- Agritourism and heritage tourism, including coordination with the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area, are seen as vital.
- River and train tourism are identified as unique opportunities.
- A balanced approach to development, seeking to preserve essential characteristics of Alamosa while fostering growth.

8. WATER

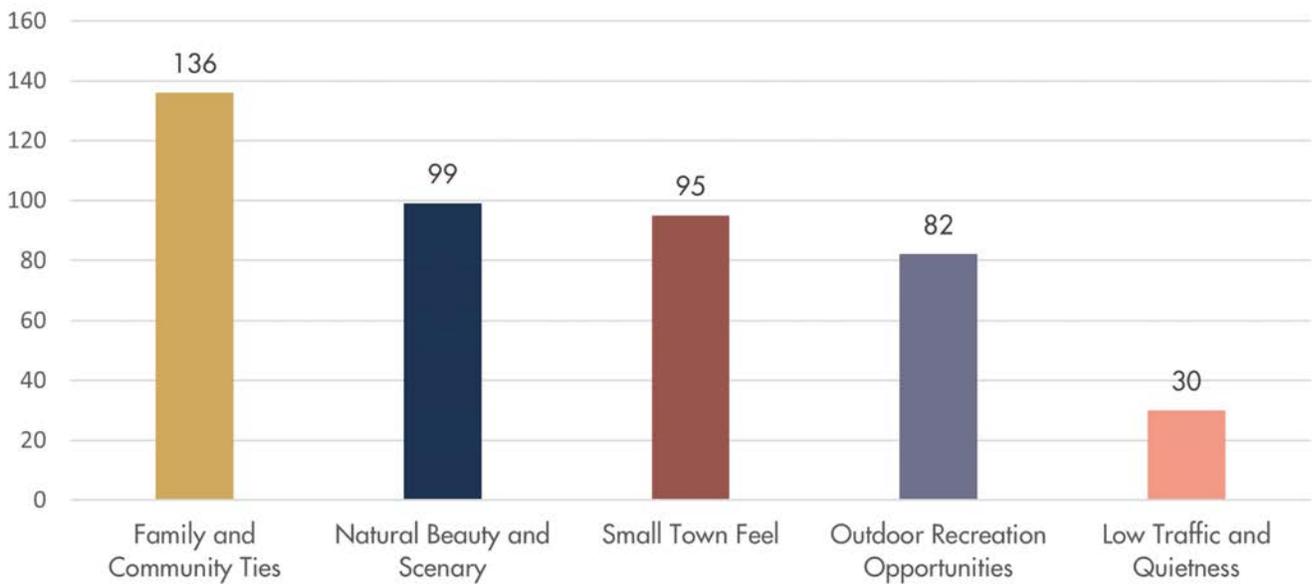
- The need for preservation, high-quality , and the development of fair and adequate water infrastructure.
- Need for monitoring, transparency, and education on water management.
- Emphasis on keeping water within the valley to support local needs.
- Need to improve the connection between water availability and agriculture as drought exacerbating issues are increasing.
- Future land uses should consider the level of impact they may have on water in the valley. (i.e. prohibit certain “heavy-use” land uses)



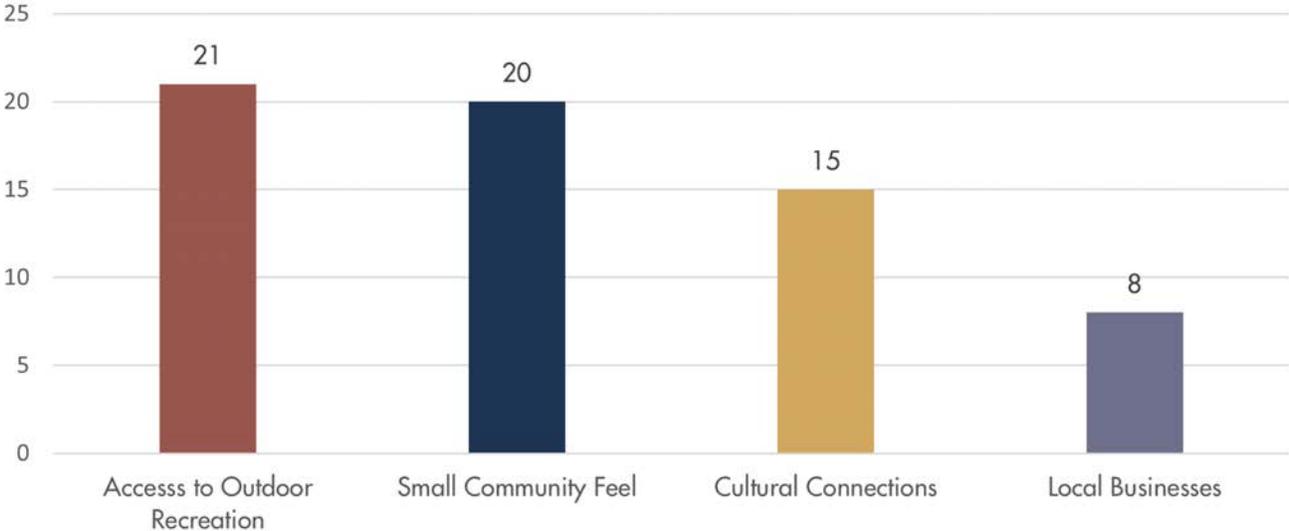
WHAT DID THE QUESTIONNAIRE REVEAL?

The community was asked several questions through an online questionnaire and facilitated by Alamosa High School 11th and 12th grade students. Questions were focused on asking what makes Alamosa County a great place to live today, while looking at improvements that can improve life for all community members in the future. 366 people responded to the questionnaire. The key findings from the questionnaire are summarized in the following section.

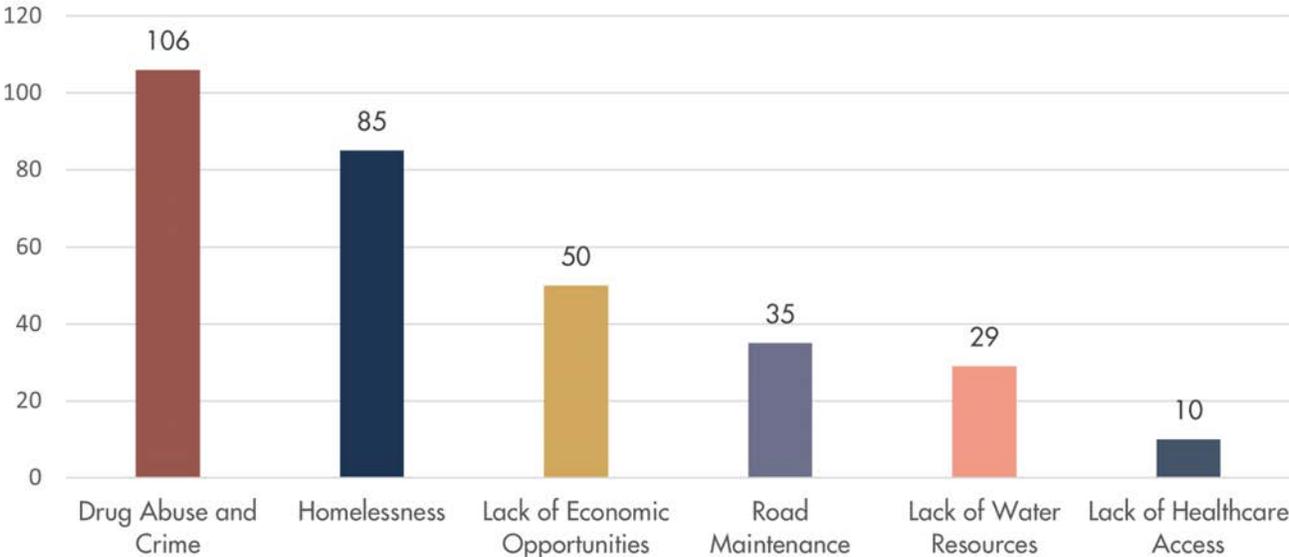
What do you *love* about Alamosa County?



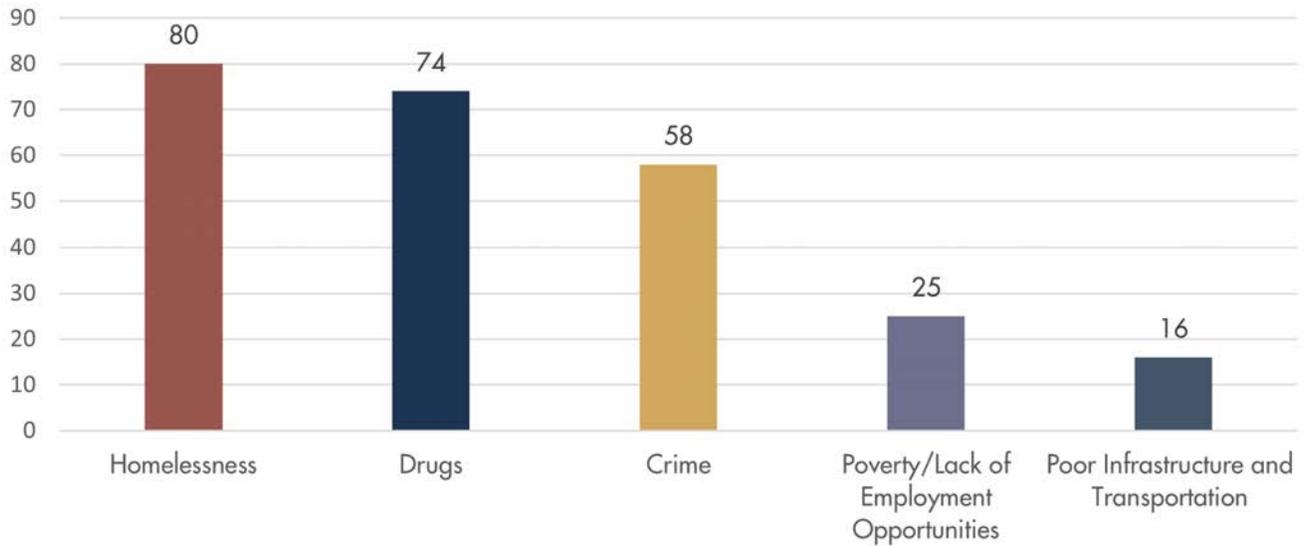
What are the *top reasons* you choose to live or spend time in Alamosa County?



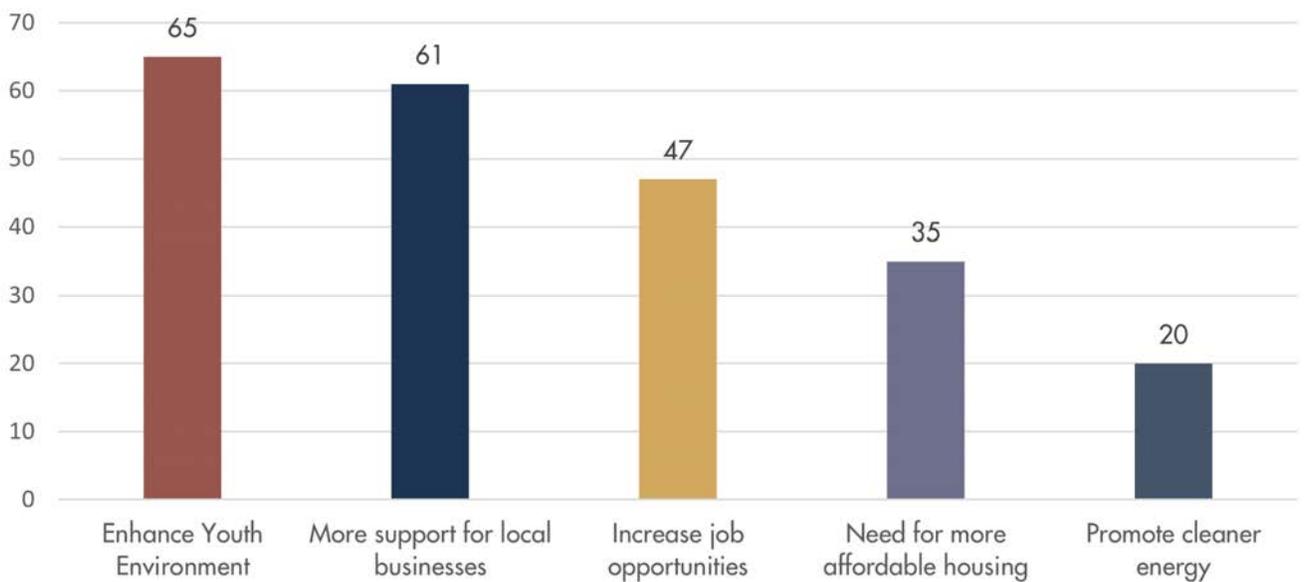
What are the *top issues* facing the rural areas of Alamosa County?



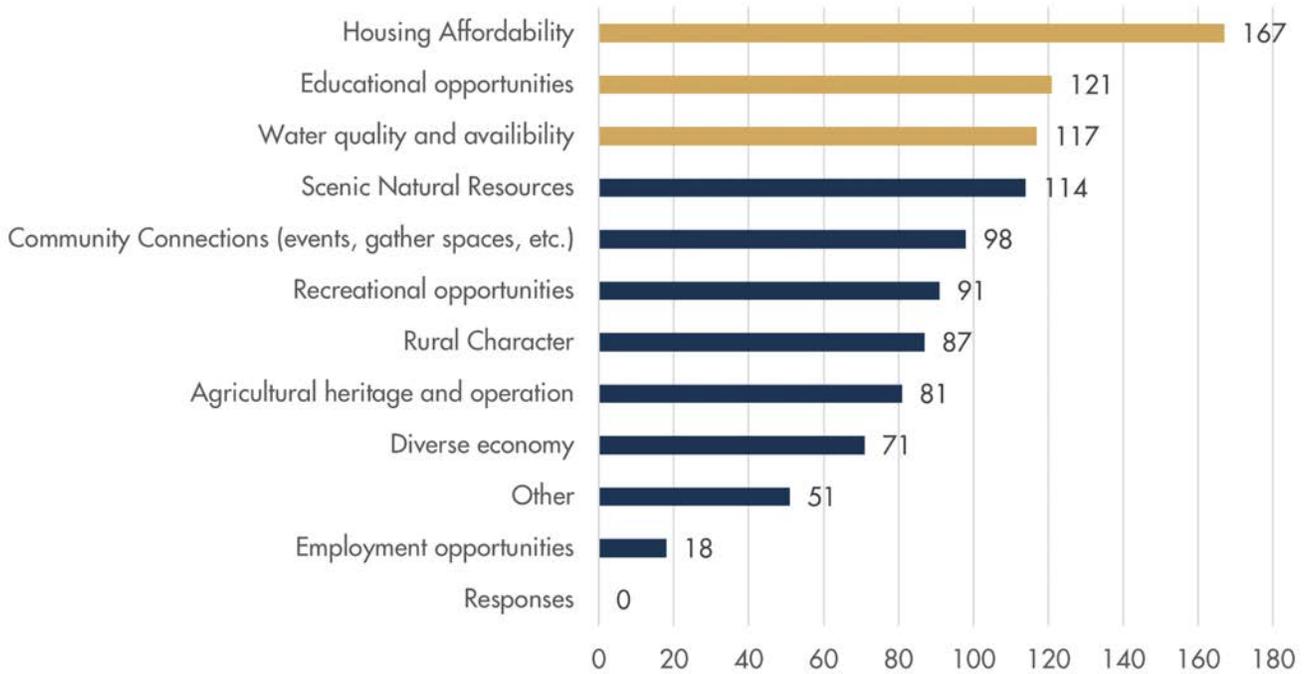
What are the *top issues* facing the area right around the City of Alamosa? Count



What and where are Alamosa's *opportunities and big ideas* for the future?



What are the most important *aspects* of Alamosa to protect?



What word(s) describe your aspirational vision for Alamosa's future?



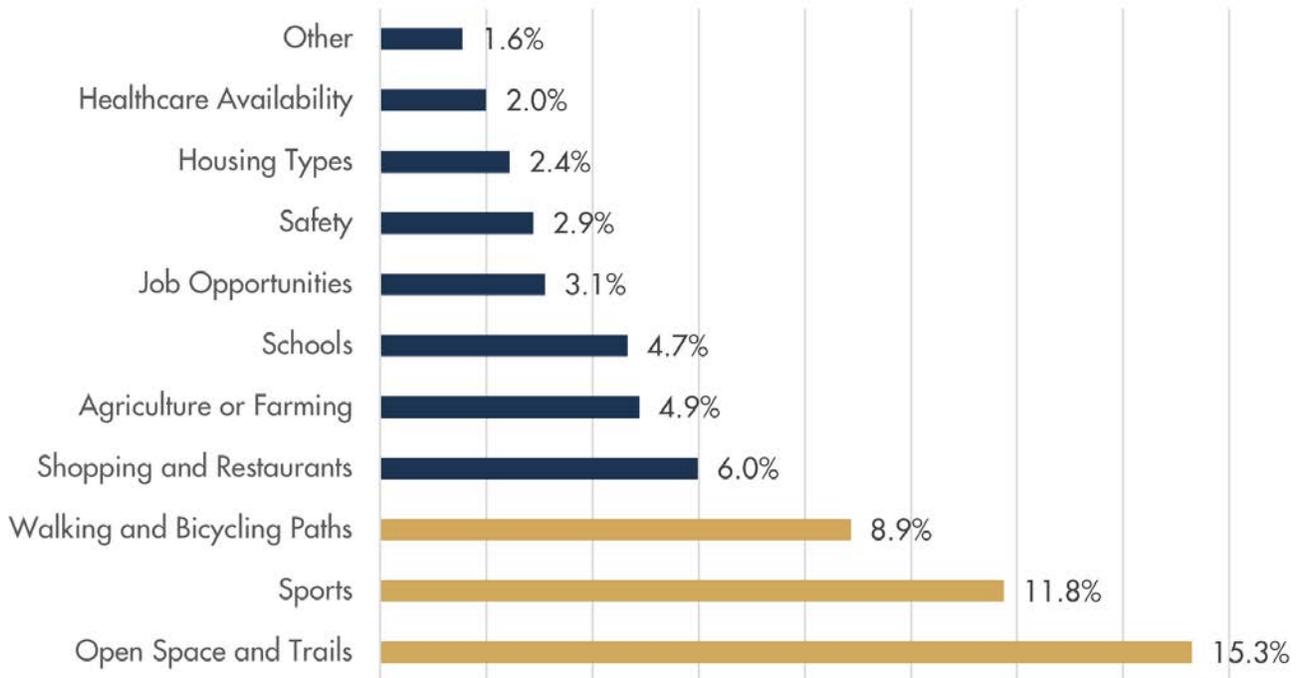
HIGH SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the online questionnaire, Alamosa High School students engaged in public outreach efforts to connect with younger demographic groups. The project team presented 11th and 12th grade government classes and conducted a visioning activity to learn more about their perspectives on loved aspects of Alamosa and areas of improvement. This approach allowed the team to interact with high school students in a more personal and engaging manner, fostering a deeper understanding of their interests and concerns. By involving this demographic group, diverse viewpoints and unique perspective are identified that might not have surfaced solely through online surveys.

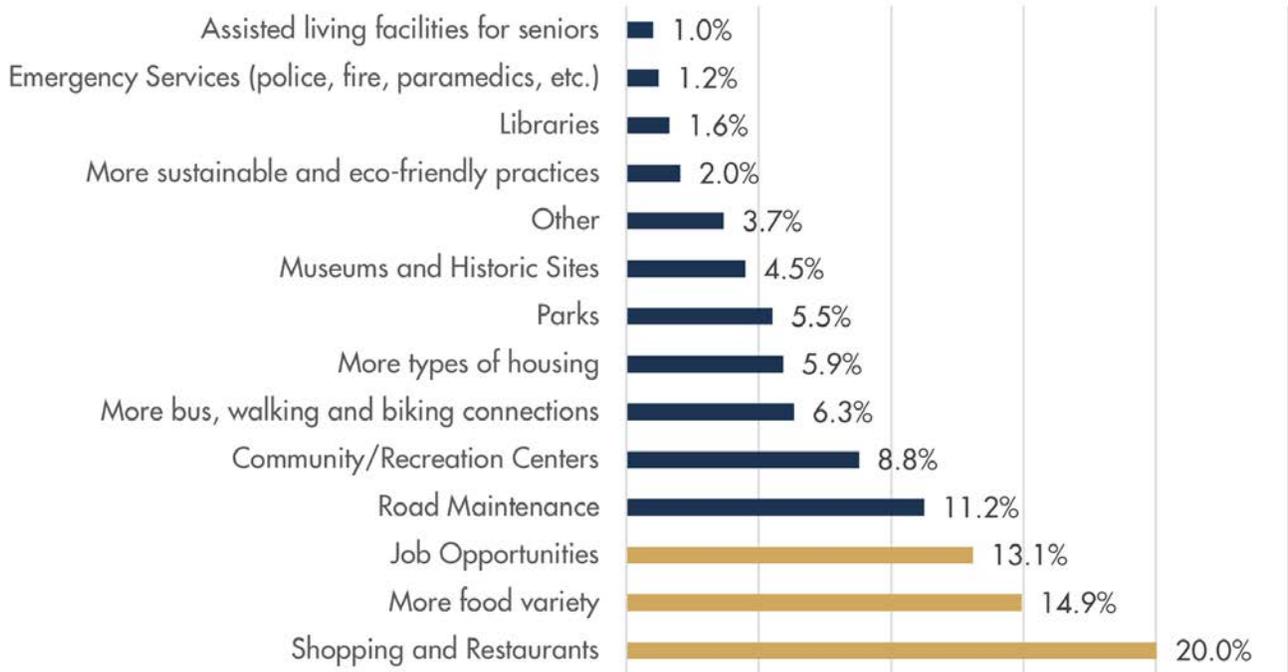
Based on student responses, the following are the most important aspects of Alamosa County that need to be considered for future planning efforts:

- Expanding retail and dining options
- Increasing entertainment choices beyond school or home
- Creating job opportunities across various fields
- Developing more gathering places and open spaces, such as trails, parks, and malls
- Organizing more community events and emphasizing the town’s culture
- Enhancing infrastructure and transportation options

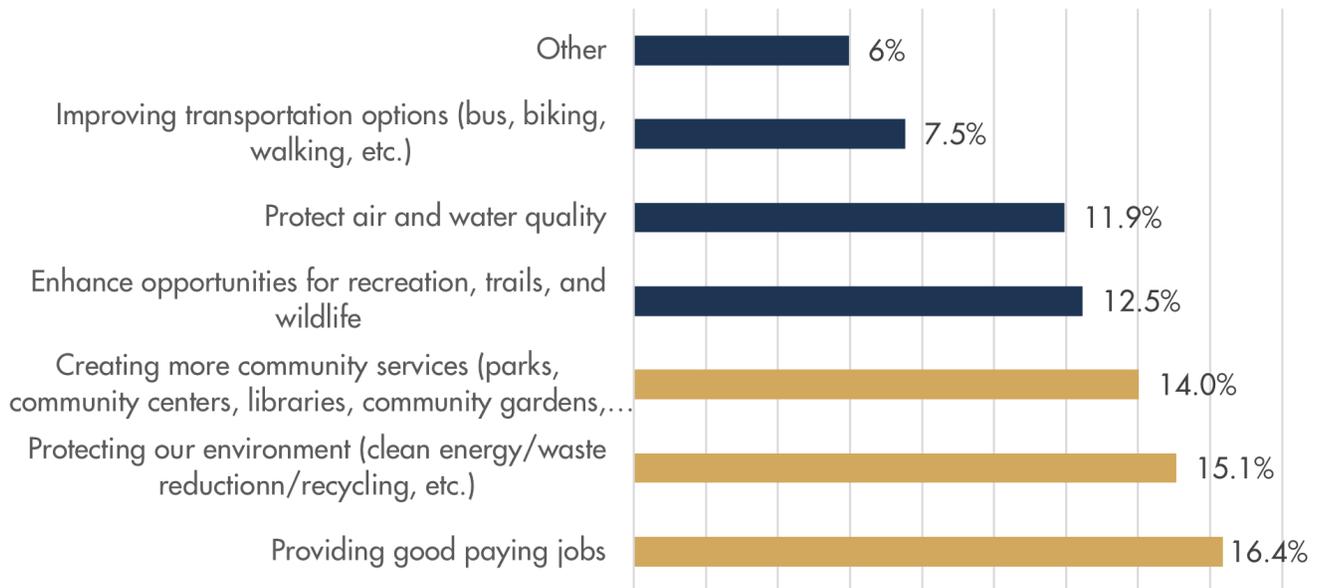
What do you love most about your community?



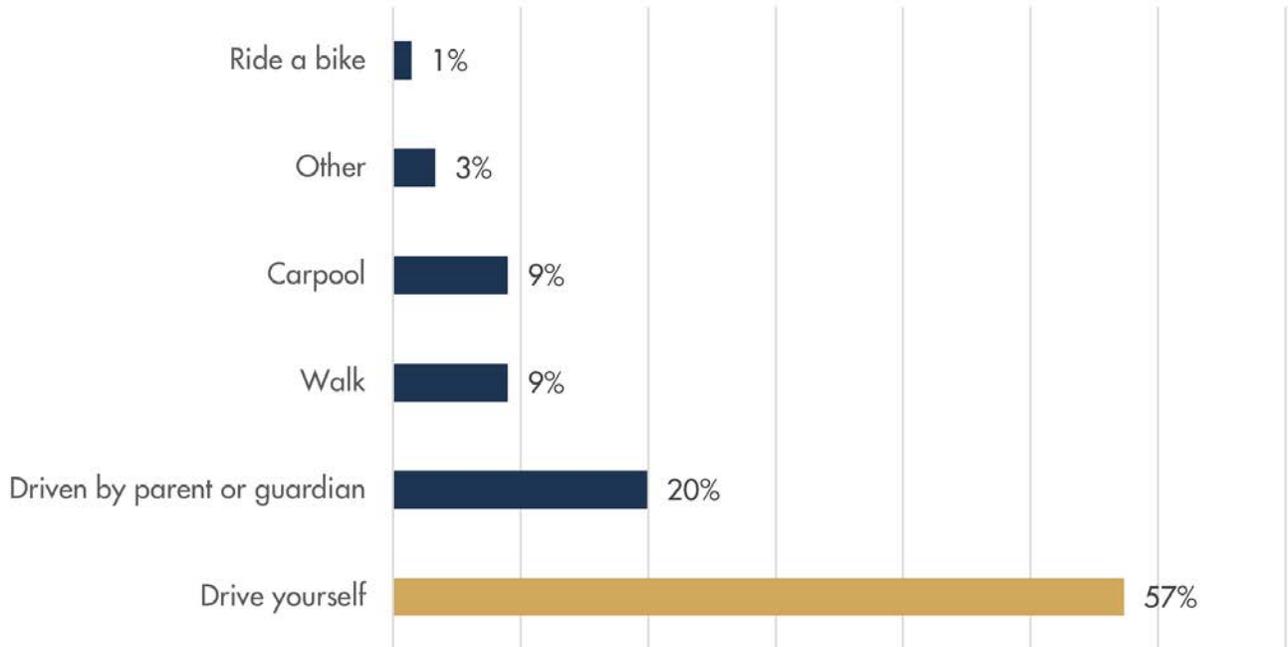
What would make your community better?



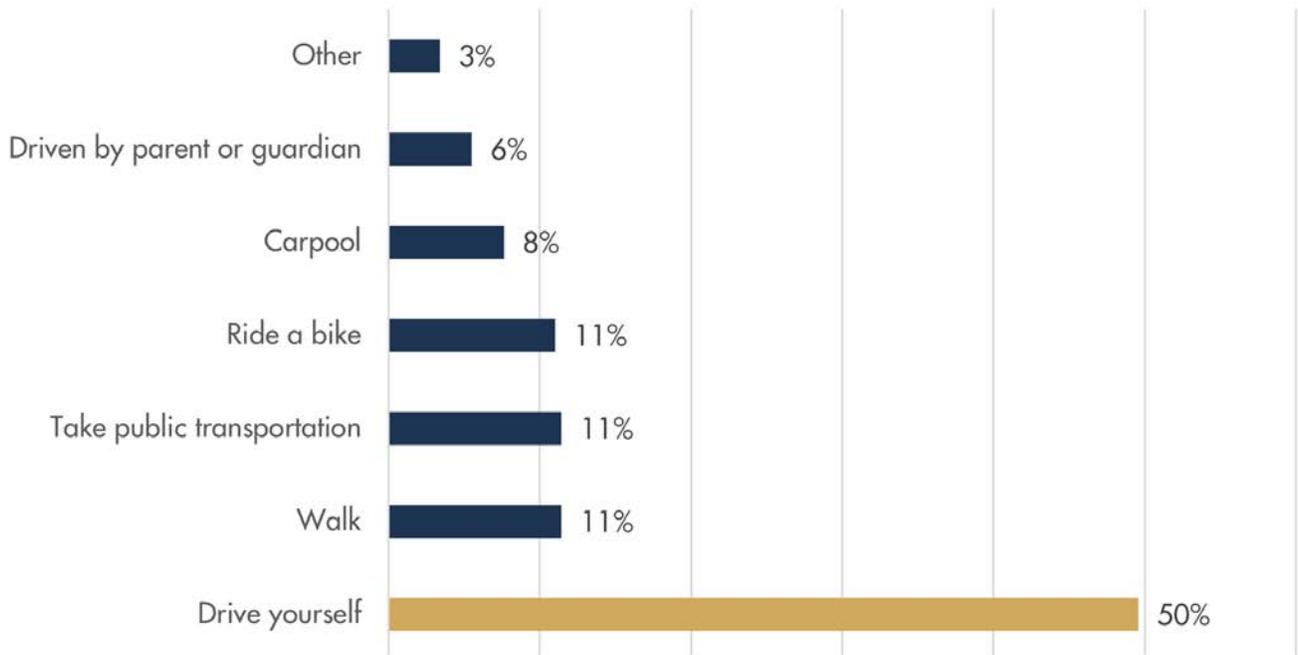
What should Alamosa County Government focus on or prioritize?



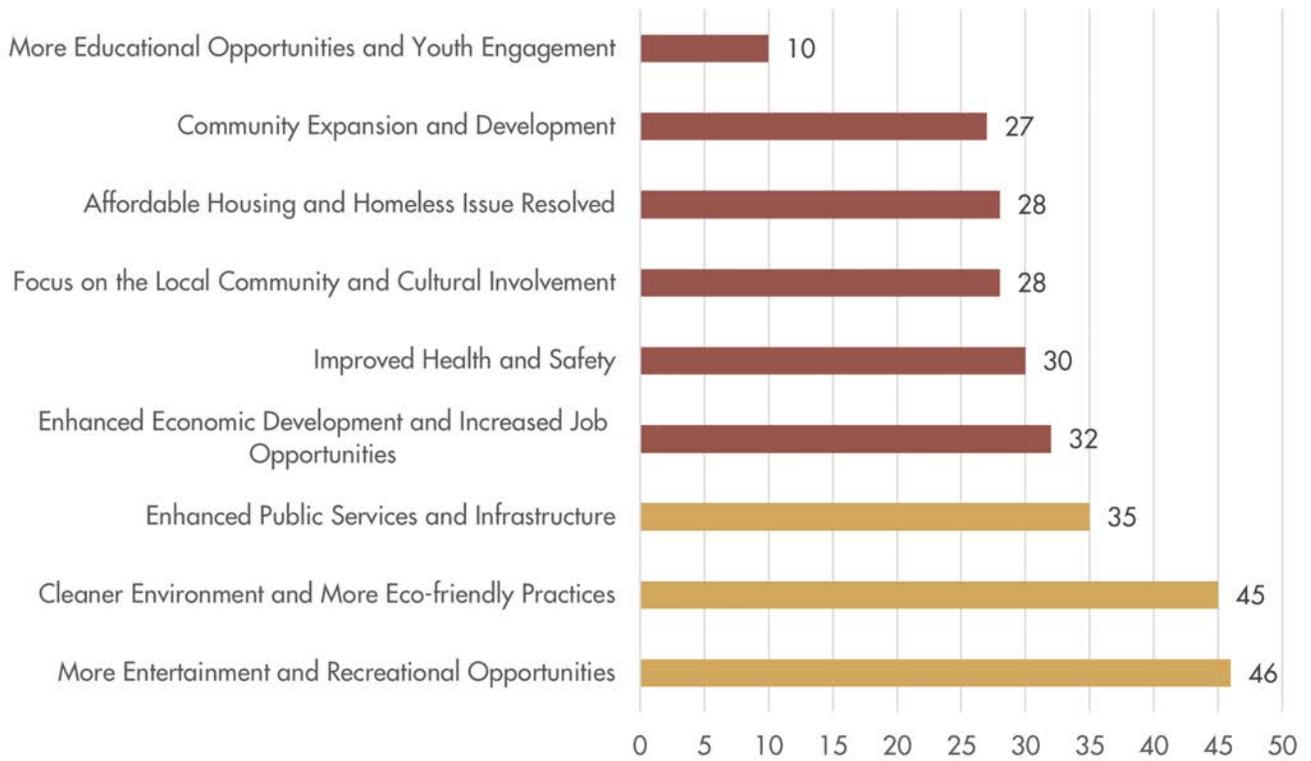
How do you currently get around your community?



How do you want to get around your community?



Describe the future you hope to see in Alamosa County...



LISTENING SESSIONS & ROUNDTABLE EVENTS

The following is an overview of some of the public engagement responses received during the Kickoff Week. The following paragraphs do not represent every comment received in the interviews but are meant to be a high-level overview of the recurring themes expressed by multiple community members.

What do you love most about Alamosa? What are Alamosa's strongest assets?

- During the interview process, interviewees highlighted that Alamosa's most loved and strongest assets are tied to its natural environment and the vibrant, close-knit community.
- The Rio Grande River serves as a central feature, offering not just water resources but potential for community enhancement through trails and bridges. There's a shared sentiment among many residents to protect and leverage this resource for the benefit of all, reflecting a desire for greater connectivity and accessibility to the river.
- Additionally, Alamosa's location at the foothills and gateway to the Sangre De Cristo Mountains underscores its appeal, with abundant BLM land, wetlands, and wildlife refuges nearby.
- Residents value the slower pace, small-town atmosphere, and neighborly connections that define Alamosa.
- There is an emphasis on local businesses and collaborative entrepreneurship underscoring the potential for economic growth while preserving the area's unique charm.
- Interviewees highlight Alamosa's remote yet accessible location, offering recreational opportunities like sand dunes, hiking, and biking.

What does a successful future for the County look like, and what is not being done that needs to be done to achieve that successful future?

- Interviewees expressed a strong emphasis on community engagement and involvement, focusing on the importance of facilitating opportunities for the public to be involved and stay connected.
- Ensuring housing, employment, and community activities to attract young people and encourage them to stay in Alamosa County.
- Emphasis on the need for strategic development, while reflecting community values and priorities. This includes bringing in leadership and job opportunities in the agriculture sector and improving outdoor recreation.
- There are several infrastructure challenges, particularly in rural areas, and that maintaining roads and services is difficult due to limited resources.
- Overall, a successful future for the County should proactively take into account growth, community-oriented decision making, and strategic alignment of new development with local values and needs.

What is the biggest opportunity for the County? What are your big ideas?

- Potential for enhancing existing infrastructure and key community assets without comprising their existing character and value.
- Development of trails to connect the city with the San Luis Valley, potentially implementing protected bikeways or walkways across the river to enhance accessibility.
- Initiatives that promote County wide health equity, regenerative agriculture, and infrastructure/recreation enhancements in order to enhance the quality of life for residents and for visitors.
- Job creation, particularly within the outdoor and environmental sectors, potentially through partnerships with land management agencies such as National Parks and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). S
- Incorporation of sustainable practices in order to preserve and improve existing historical assets while mitigating negative impacts on natural resources, notably water.
- These responses collectively outline a vision for community growth and improvement, highlighting the importance of preserving local heritage while embracing modern advancements and sustainable practices to enhance the quality of life within the County.

What needs to be retained in Alamosa as change occurs?

From the interviews, participants highlighted several aspects of Alamosa County that need to be retained as changes and growth occur. These include the following:

1. **Rural Areas/Agricultural Character:** The importance of retaining Alamosa's rural agricultural heritage is emphasized. It's crucial to support farmers and ranchers by providing them with necessary resources to continue their operations with the addition of preserving the natural scenery and exploring recreation opportunities.
2. **Respect and Inclusivity:** There is a concern about ensuring respect for all community members, including the elderly and younger generations, who might otherwise be marginalized or overlooked during changes.
3. **Community Character and Heritage:** Retaining the unique character, heritage, and culture of the community is essential. There's a recognition that certain aspects like arts and culture are receding and need to be preserved.
4. **Balanced Development for Residents and Visitors:** It's important that the attractions which draw people to Alamosa also benefit its residents. This involves the message that the County is portraying as well as providing to its residents, prioritizing local businesses, and ensuring community amenities and services.
5. **Preservation of Natural Resources:** The need to protect natural resources such as wildlife corridors, open spaces, and agricultural lands, scenic vistas, particularly with concerns about aquifers drying up in the coming years.

What is your overall vision or future aspiration for the County?

From the interviews, participants highlighted several key aspects that should be addressed in the overall vision or aspiration for the future of Alamosa County. These include:

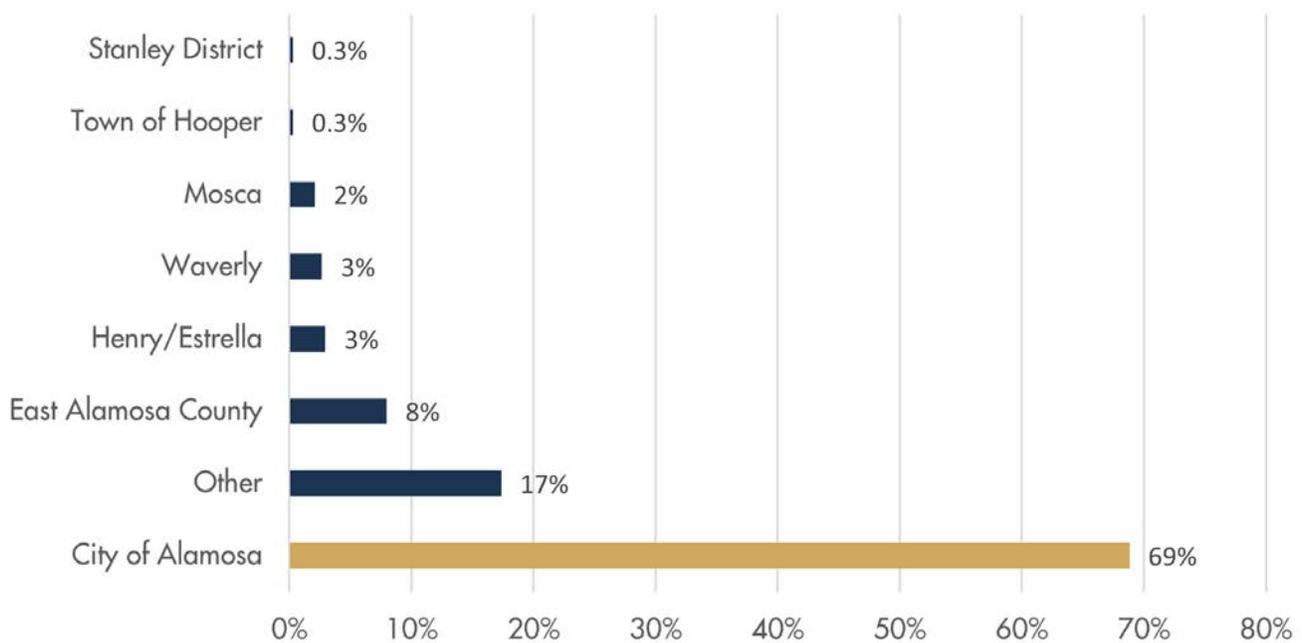
- **Community Engagement and Involvement:** Emphasizing the importance of facilitating engagement within the community. Highlighting why it's crucial for individuals to stay involved and connected, ensuring everyone can find their place within the community.
- **Opportunities for Youth:** Ensuring there are opportunities for young people to remain in the county, including employment, housing, and recreational activities. Additionally, addressing the needs for a family-oriented community and preparing to support an aging population.
- **Cultural Resource Advancement:** Focusing on advancing the community through its cultural resources. Acknowledging the significance of cultural diversity and the need to empower individuals.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** Advocating for collaborative efforts, such as joint initiatives like SLVGO, and providing opportunities for community involvement and quality of life improvements.

WHO DID WE HEAR FROM?

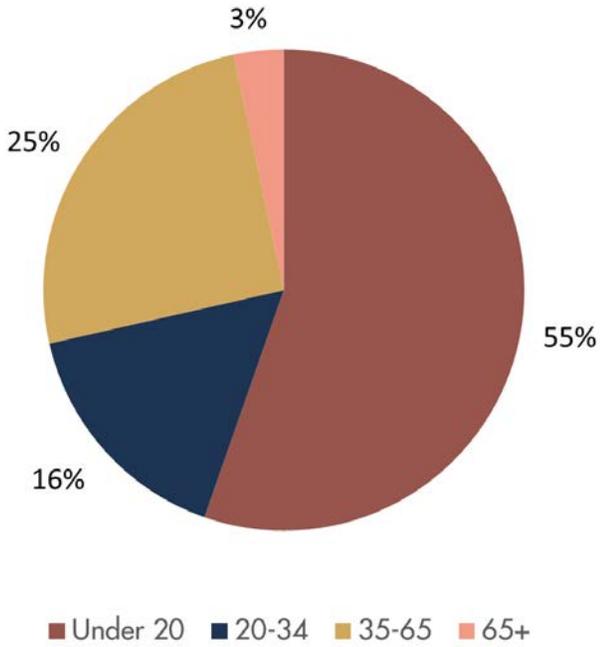
Out of the 366 responses to the questionnaire and the High School Visioning activity the following demographic information was received. It is important to note that all questions were optional and not all respondents chose to give their information. A majority of participants live in the City of Alamosa and among the participants who chose “other” are those who either live outside the county and travel there for work or have identified specific neighborhoods within the county that were not listed as an option (e.g. West Alamosa County).

A majority of participants live in the City of Alamosa and among the participants who chose “other” are those who either live outside the county and travel there for work or have identified specific neighborhoods within the county that were not listed as an option (e.g. West Alamosa County).

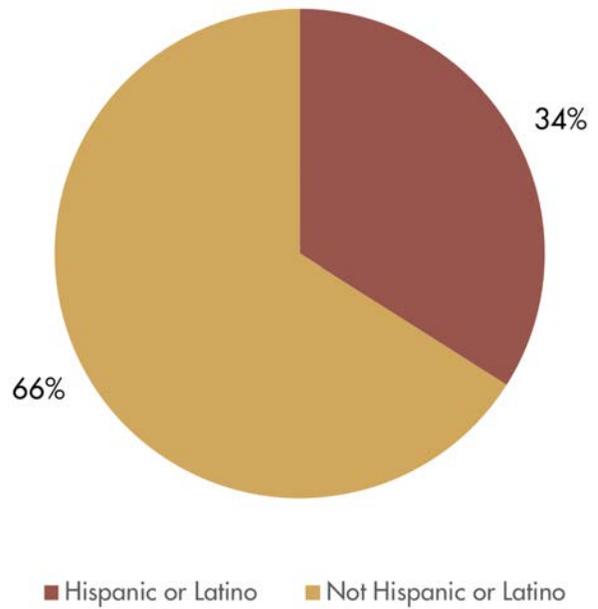
Where in Alamosa County do you live in?



What is your Age?

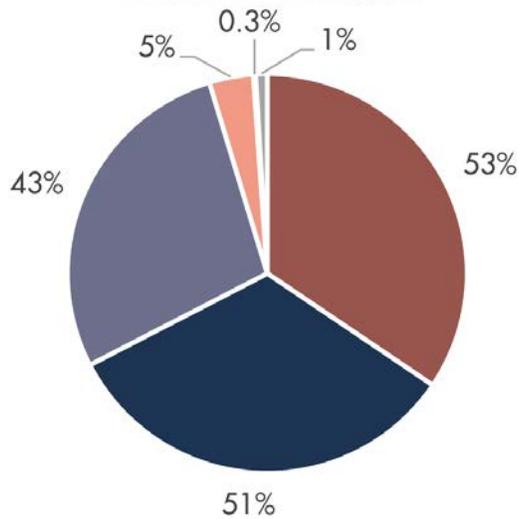


Are you Hispanic or Latino?



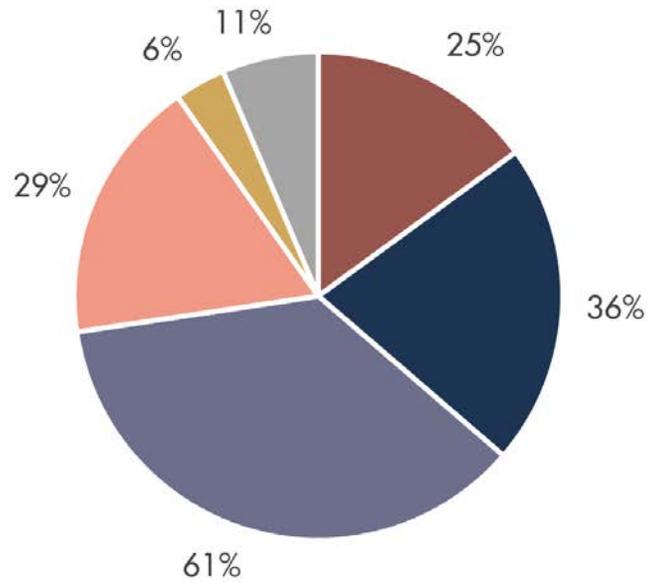
What is your relationship with Alamosa County?

(Select all that apply)



- I live here
- I work here
- I am part of an organization or board
- I own a business here
- I go to school here
- Other

Do you represent any of the following? (select all that apply)



- English as a second language or Latino/Hispanic Community
- Student
- Retired
- Households with young children
- Households with aging adults/seniors
- Housing renter

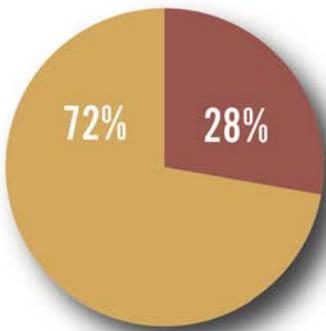
Phase 2 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The following is a snapshot of the demographics collected during the second and third questionnaire in Alamosa County Comprehensive Plan update from May to March 2025. The demographics are compared with overall County demographic data with those who chose “prefer not to say” removed from the charts to provide a one-to-one comparison.

For Questionnaire #2, participants and stakeholders identified the Vision Themes, some of the goals and the Vision Statement as “Alamosa County envisions a flourishing community by balancing its agricultural identity with a diverse economy, healthy environments, and natural landscapes.”

For Questionnaire #3, participants were overall supportive of both the Vision Theme’s Goals and Ideas. On average, 92% of participants were supportive of the Vision Theme Goals and all of the Idea questions had the high levels of support (scaled at 8 through 10) at the highest percentage.

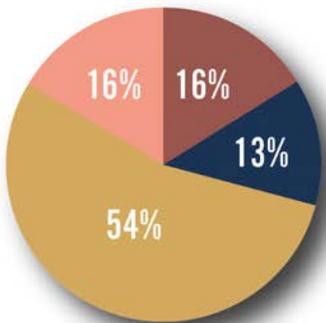
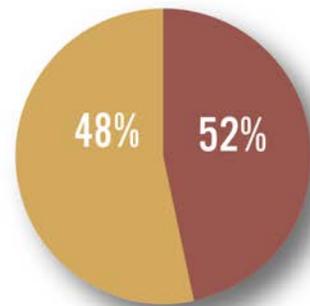
ALAMOSA COUNTY
Q2 & Q3 RESULTS



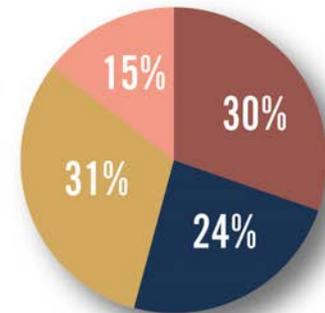
-- HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN --

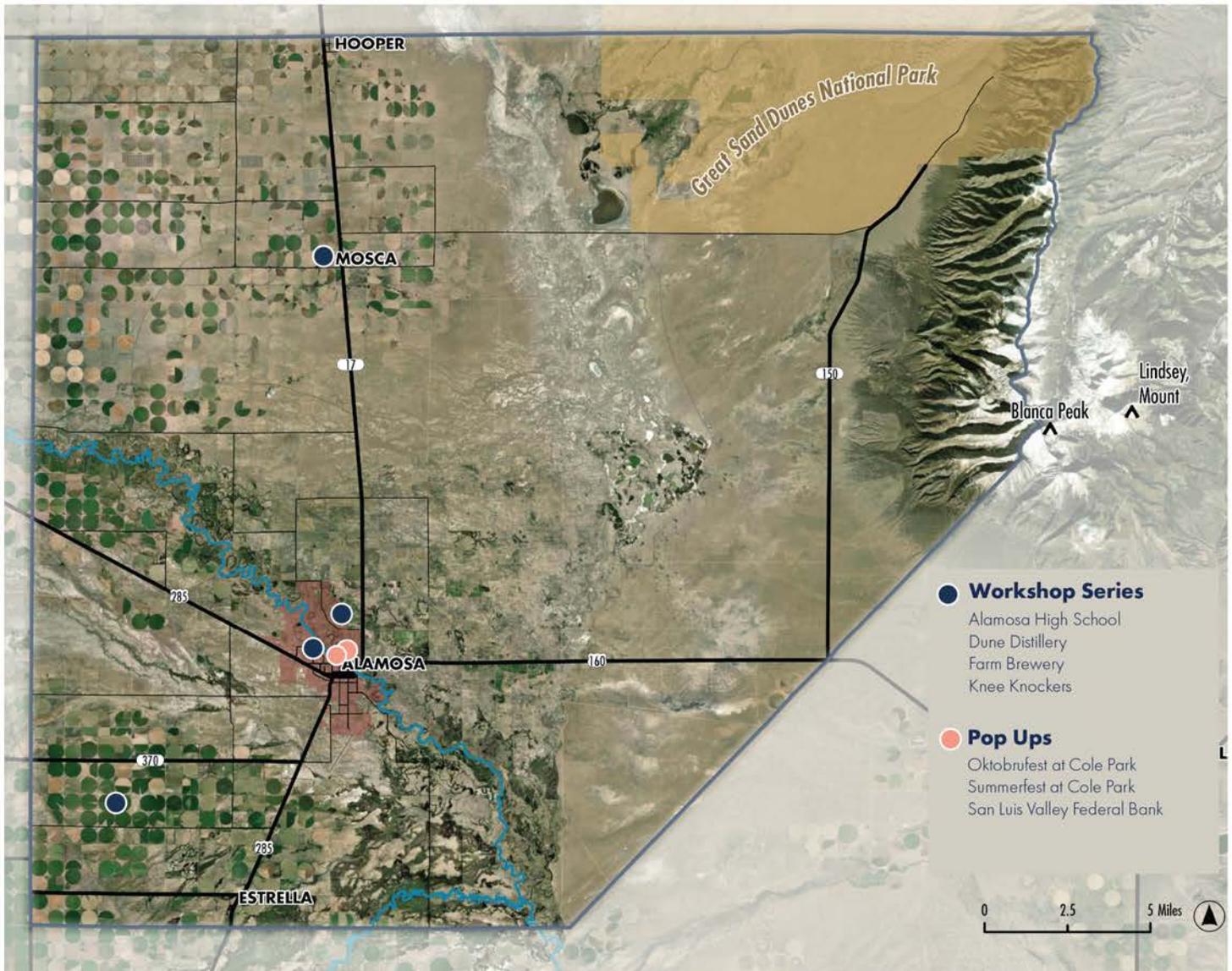


ALAMOSA COUNTY
DEMOGRAPHICS



----- AGE -----





ONLINE AND IN PERSON ENGAGEMENT

655

QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANTS

1,338

IN PERSON COMMENTS

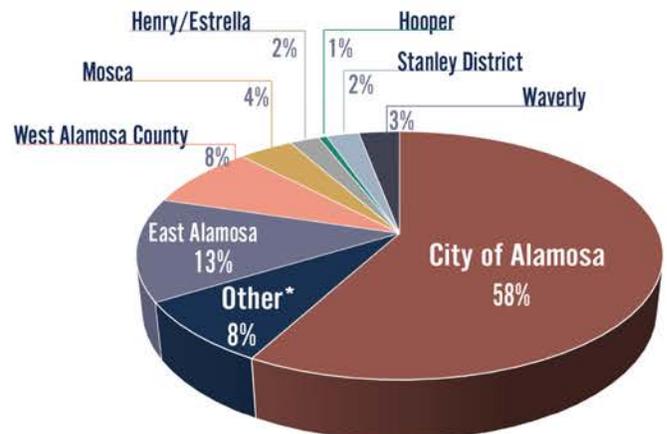
11,086

TOTAL WEBSITE VISITS

99 +

PROJECT SUBSCRIBERS FOR UPDATES

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY RESIDENCE



*Among the participants who chose "other" are those who either live outside the county and travel there for work or have identified specific neighborhoods within the county that were not listed as an option (e.g. Fort Garland).

OVERVIEW

This summary consists of all public engagement completed through Phase 2: Setting the Foundation of Imagine Alamosa County Comprehensive Plan process. This phase focused on establishing the community vision and defining the direction of the plan update. The data represented in this summary provides an understanding of who engaged in the process and where future engagement opportunities could be more targeted to reach other community groups and underrepresented groups.

Phase 2 Engagement Goals

1. Establish the County Vision.
2. To gather feedback on Future Land Use categories, determine where those categories are most suitable in Alamosa County, and inform the Future Land Use Map using the feedback.
3. To continue to engage community members that are underrepresented such as the Hispanic and Latino population.
4. To identify types of development that community members want to see in Alamosa County.
5. To understand how important preserving agricultural land and identity.
6. To envision how Alamosa County can be more accessible and environmentally friendly, especially in regard to transportation.
7. To understand how to maintain the balance of character and environment of Alamosa County with commercial development.
8. To identify objectives and strategies that enhance and embody the goals that were identified from Phase One

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The second phase built on engagement efforts from the first phase of the project. The engagement methods included workshops at Alamosa High School, community events, social media campaigns, distributing fliers and mailers, engaging community advocates, focus groups, and two questionnaires. Phase 2 engagement goals included enhanced representation from Alamosa residents that identify as Hispanic or Latino. To reach this community, the project team facilitated a Spanish speaking focus group.

Table 2. Phase 2 Events

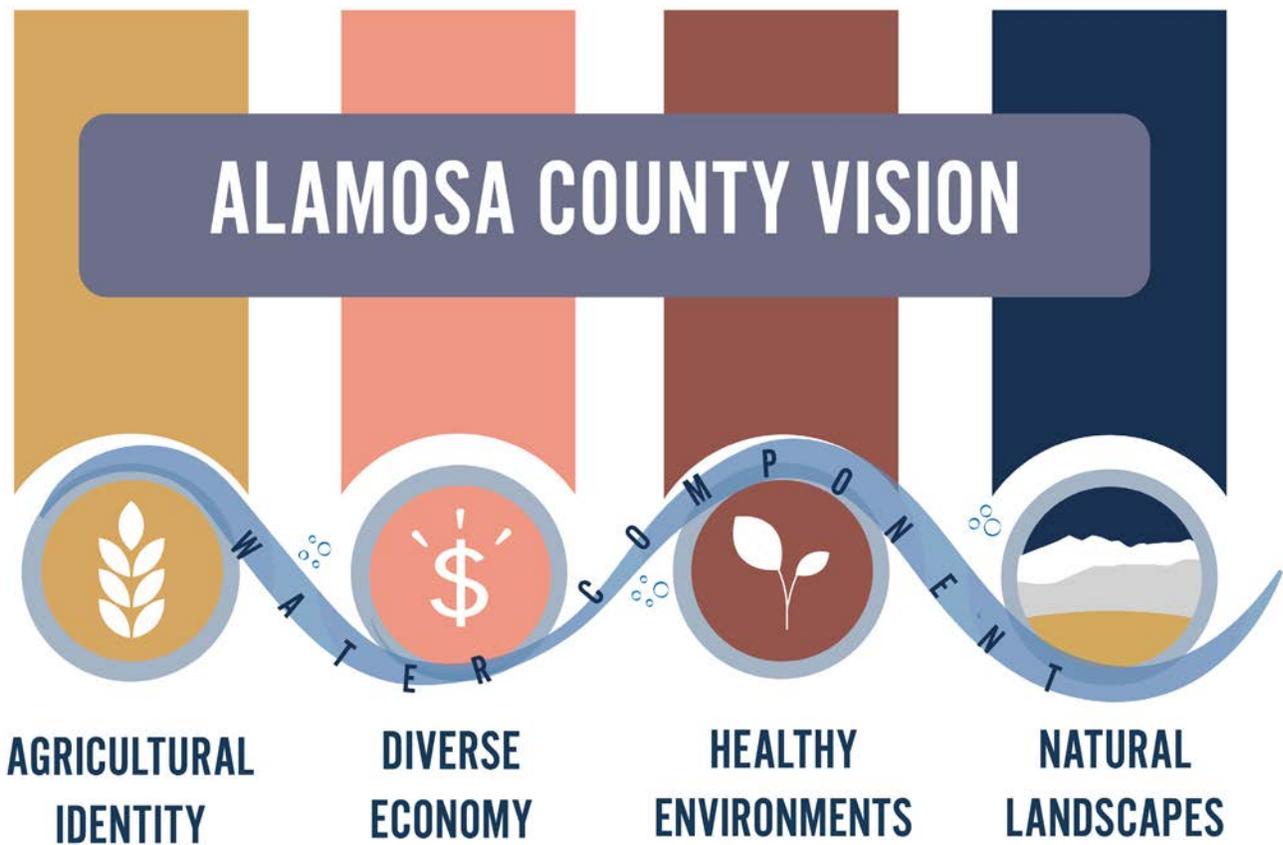
ENGAGEMENT	DATES	DETAILS
Advisory Committee Meeting #2-5	Apr. 16, 2024 July 9, 2024 Oct. 25, 2024 Jan. 30, 2025	<p>Various individuals from local organizations, departments and other affiliations in the Alamosa County community participated in the Advisory Committee Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #2: Discuss the emerging themes from phase 1 (listening sessions, focus groups, Alamosa High school engagement, and questionnaire# 1) • #3: Workshop the vision statement • #4: Advisory Committee’s own Choices and Priorities Workshop • #5: Review the feedback received from the Choices and Priorities Workshop including the Future Land Use Map
SummerFest on the Rio Event	Jun. 1, 2024 Jun. 2, 2024	Project Team participated in SummerFest (an annual festival in Alamosa) with a booth and posters explaining the process and to gather feedback on vision themes statements.
Planning Commission (PC) and Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Meeting	Aug. 14, 2024	The project team gave an update to the BCC and PC on the Phase 1 Engagement Summary and questionnaire results and what more to expect in Phase 2.
Alamosa High school Engagement	Aug. 19, 2024 Sep. 27, 2024 Oct. 23, 2024 Oct. 24, 2024 Dec. 11, 2024 Jan. 27, 2025 Jan. 28, 2024 Jan. 30, 2024	<p>An ongoing partnership with the same Alamosa High School students from the first phase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce phase 2 • Provide feedback on Visioning questionnaire • Choices and Priorities Workshop activities • High School students presented on topics within their assigned theme as a separate assignment from their teacher, Sarah • Provide feedback on Choices and Priorities questionnaire
Questionnaire #2	Sep. 28, 2024	Launch of Visioning questionnaire

ENGAGEMENT	DATES	DETAILS
Oktobrufest	Sep. 28, 2024	Participation in Oktobrufest (an annual festival in Alamosa) with a booth and posters explaining the process and gather feedback on vision statements for the four categories and goals.
Choices & Priorities Workshop	Oct. 22, 2024 Oct. 23, 2024 Oct. 24, 2024	Using the information gathered from questionnaires #1 and #2, this workshop will help further define the vision themes, goals, and introduce the ideas. In addition to the poster activity, a map activity was also completed where people would mark up a map where they think future land uses are appropriate in Alamosa.
Spanish Engagement Focus Group	Sep. 27, 2024	This workshop was a part of the Choices and Priorities Workshop, it was oriented towards the Hispanic, Latino or Spanish speaking community to ensure that they are represented.
Questionnaire #3	Jan. 31, 2024	Launch of Choices and Priorities questionnaire

SUMMARY OF RESULTING VISION

The following section presents the Vision Statements along with their corresponding draft goals and ideas, with water quality and use management integrated throughout. These elements were refined based on input from previous public workshops, committee meetings, Alamosa High School engagement, and community members.

“Alamosa County envisions a flourishing community by balancing its agricultural identity with a diverse economy, healthy environments, and natural landscapes.”



AGRICULTURAL IDENTITY

As the County grows and changes, it remains important to preserve Alamosa County's agricultural roots.

1. **Community Collaboration and Cultural Celebration:** Celebrate a culture of local food and agriculture identity through public events, markets, and collaborative farming efforts.
2. **Resilient Agriculture and Resource Management:** Foster widespread adoption of regenerative, organic, and permaculture practices to maintain soil health, improve water management, and adapt to climate change.
3. **Innovative Agricultural Practices:** Develop small-scale agricultural industries focused on greenhouse technology, vertically integrated models, and agricultural hydrology to reduce water use, extend growing seasons, and enhance plant resilience.
4. **Family Farms and Local Food Production:** Strengthen family farms and multi-generational farming by providing economic and community support.
5. **Economic Diversification and Resilience:** Encourage a shift toward niche agricultural markets and alternative revenue streams to capitalize on solar energy, value-added products, and artisanal farming to stabilize the economy.
6. **Working and Prime Agriculture Lands:** Ensure the long-term viability and productivity of Alamosa County's working and prime agricultural lands by prioritizing their preservation and fostering policies that promote agriculture as a cornerstone of the local economy and heritage.

DIVERSE ECONOMY

Creating a diverse and resilient economy can sustain Alamosa County for generations.

1. **Cultural Sensitivity and Respect:** Foster an environment that respects and bolsters the traditions, customs, and lifestyles of the local residents.
2. **Economic Prosperity and Job Opportunities:** Promote commerce that provides products and services for locals in addition to jobs that align salary growth with the cost of living.
3. **Economic Prosperity and Job Opportunities:** Pursue a balanced and diverse circular economy that is more durable, less susceptible to the swings of any single industry, and keeps money made in the County within the County.
4. **Water Conscious Development:** Manage development consistent with current and future water availability.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

A healthy environment promotes the physical, mental, and social well-being of its residents and quality of life.

1. **Affordable and Sustainable Housing:** Ensure access to affordable and sustainable housing for all, including young adults and retirees.
2. **Accessible Transportation Options for all Communities:** Prioritize transportation infrastructure that reduces reliance on vehicle use and makes the community more inviting and sustainable.
3. **Sustainable Infrastructure Development:** Invest in public transportation, utilities, renewable energy systems, and environmentally sensitive lodging options that support the community and can adapt to accommodate tourism.
4. **Access to Education and Employment:** Optimize land use to enhance access to workforce training, address systemic barriers, and promote inclusive opportunities for lifelong learning and economic development.
5. **Community-Oriented Spaces and Mixed-Use Development:** Encourage growth that balances a mix of community-oriented land uses with smart and sustainable development.
6. **Public Health and Social Services:** Promote a comprehensive and diverse approach to community planning that promotes attaining the full potential for health and well-being for all.

NATURAL LANDSCAPES

With open vistas surrounded by the Rocky Mountains and fed by the Rio Grande, Alamosa County's breathtaking natural landscapes are important community assets and attractions.

1. **Water Conservation and Management:** Prioritize the sustainable management of water resources, including rivers, streams, and watersheds, to ensure long-term availability for communities, agriculture, and wildlife.
2. **Conservation of Scenic Views and Dark Skies:** Protect dark skies, open spaces, and viewsheds, recognizing their value in maintaining natural beauty, rural tranquility, minimizing pollution for future generations, and contribution to local way of life and economy.
3. **Balancing Public Access and Conservation for Outdoor Recreation:** Support responsible public access to natural resources for recreational activities such as fishing, foraging, hiking, riding, and hunting, while respecting conservation goals.
4. **Intentional Growth and Development:** Guide new population growth and development to areas with available infrastructure and access to services, in a manner that ensures natural areas remain intact for managed recreation and habitat preservation.
5. **Managing Visitor Impact:** Manage visitor numbers in sensitive areas to prevent overcrowding and degradation of natural sites.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The community participated in two questionnaires, both of which were available on the project website as well as distributed and facilitated by 11th and 12th grade students from Alamosa High School. While the events were open to the public, the students played a key role in helping to gather responses and engage participants.

VISIONING QUESTIONNAIRE (#2)

See Appendix F. Vision Plan for the full set of results!

The Vision Questionnaire was the second of three public questionnaires during the Comprehensive Plan Update. The Visioning Questionnaire contained four open-ended questions in addition to demographic questions. The participants were asked to describe the future of agriculture in Alamosa County, what natural resources are key to preserving, what quality of life in Alamosa County looks like, and what Alamosa County should be in 20 years.

The Vision Questionnaire replicated the questions asked during in-person events at Summerfest on the Rio. In addition to over 1,500 in-person comments, there were 410 responses to the online questionnaire.

Choices and Priorities Questionnaire (#3)

This is a high-level summary of the questionnaire results, organized into three sections: Vision Themes and Goals, Ideas, and Land Uses.

The final questionnaire was the most robust of the three aiming to gather feedback on the goals, ideas, and land uses that will help shape the plan. The questionnaire was built around the vision themes asking respondents what level of support they have for the draft goals and ideas.

The questionnaire was built to allow participants to take a shortened version of the questionnaire, by first asking their support for the vision theme's goals followed by the option to indicate their level of support for the ideas connected to agricultural identity, diverse economy, healthy environments, and natural landscapes. The questions were built on a scale of 0 to 10, 0 being Very Unsupportive, 5 being Neutral, and 10 being Very Supportive.

In total there were 610 responses, with 53% completing the full survey and 47% completing part of the survey. Overall, participants were supportive of the goals and ideas.

Lowest and Highest Support for Goals

The Vision Theme with the lowest level of support was Healthy Environments, receiving 80% support for Goal #2: Accessible Transportation Options for All Communities. Despite this, Healthy Environments received the most feedback, with 160 respondents choosing to provide feedback. This suggests that while overall support was still strong, there was more diverse opinions or concerns.

The Vision Theme with the highest level of support was Agricultural Identity, receiving 98% support for Goal #1 Community Collaboration and Cultural Celebration. This near unanimous support highlights how strongly valued Alamosa's Agricultural roots are.

VISION THEMES AND GOALS

At least 124+ participants provided additional feedback for each vision theme. The questionnaire results indicate a strong overall consensus, with an average of 92% “Very Supportive” rating. Conversely, the average for “Very Unsupportive” responses was just 8% with individual “Very Unsupportive” ranging from 2.5% to 19.3%. This suggests that while the majority of respondents were in agreement, there was some variation in opinions on specific topics. Those that did not support the Vision Theme Goals had concerns about the following:

- **Environmental Concern:** There is support for environmental stewardship but dark sky initiatives and renewable energy are seen as impractical or detrimental and could impact public safety. Feedback indicates that there is the need for education and information around these topics should the County pursue a dark sky initiative.
- **Tourism Concern:** There is concern that increased tourism will lead to overcrowding, trespassing, and environmental damage. This indicates that collaboration with the City and Visit Alamosa is important when promoting tourism opportunities within the County.
- **Safety and Security:** Public safety and crime rates are significant concerns, indicating that coordination with community partners is essential.
- **Community Growth and Property Rights:** Feedback indicates that the County should focus on preserving its way of life while respecting private property rights and ensuring new policies don’t restrict development or opportunity for local residents.

IDEAS

All proposed ideas had a majority of supportive votes, than opposition votes.

Agricultural Identity

Agricultural Identity emerged as the Vision Theme with the strongest consensus and widespread support across the community.

- “Grow the next generation of farmers through programming such as 4H, Future Farmers of America (FFA), and succession planning.”
 - » 75% of respondents were supportive, reflecting strong enthusiasm for investing in agricultural education and youth engagement.
- “Provide mechanisms for shared ownership or management of preserved farmland by subdivision residents.”
 - » This ideas had the lowest level of support with only 49% of respondents showing support, 33% neutral and 19% of in opposition. This reflects a hesitation with shared ownership and subdivision.

Diverse Economy

Diverse economy received the second-highest level of consensus and broad support from the community.

- “Cultivate workforce training and workforce housing partnerships with Adams State University and Trinidad State College to retain local talent and provide a pathway to jobs for teens.”
 - » This ideas had the highest level of support, with 72% of respondents in support and only 4% of respondents in opposition.
 - » This idea, developed by Alamosa High School students, resonated strongly across both younger and older demographics, highlighting broad community interest in local job opportunities and youth retention.

- “Work with farmers and Visit Alamosa to establish County-wide farm tours.”
 - » This idea was least supported of the Economic ideas, with only 48% of respondents indicating support. This suggests more hesitation or uncertainty around this ideas. Of respondents, 9% outright oppose this idea.
- “Promote economic investments in Mosca, Hooper, Waverly, and near the entrance to the Great Sand Dunes.”
 - » This was also a less supported idea, receiving support from 50% of respondents and opposed by 9.5%, reflecting concerns around tourism, growth, and potential overcrowding in these areas.

Healthy Environments

Healthy Environments emerged as the most controversial of the Vision Themes, with the most ideas falling below 50% of respondents’ support, indicating more varied opinions within the community.

- “Implement programs that support access to healthcare services for all community members, including veterans, immigrants, older adults, youth, and people with disabilities.”
 - » This was the most supported idea, with 72% of respondents in support. This lines up with what we heard throughout the process—equitable access to healthcare came up in just about every public forum in some way.
- “Explore the feasibility of a visitor shuttle.”
 - » This idea received the lowest number of votes in support at 45% of respondents. Of the respondents, 13% were in opposition. This aligns with ongoing concerns about overcrowding and the perceived need for more thoughtful solutions.

- “Regulate outdoor open burning, wood stoves, and other smoke-producing devices to limit their use on high pollution days.”
 - » This was the least supported idea with 26% of respondents in opposition. This indicates a need for continued discussion on how to effectively manage air quality concerns within the community.

Natural Landscape

Natural Landscapes emerged as the second most controversial of the Vision Themes, reflecting a more divided response from the community.

- “Provide information and education on the benefits of planting species that support native pollinators and wildlife.”
 - » This idea received the largest percentage of respondents in support, with 75%, showing strong enthusiasm for community education and environmental stewardship as it is a big concern for Alamosa’s future.
- “Work with Visit Alamosa to thoughtfully market areas in Alamosa County that can withstand greater visitation and use during different times, including investing in data tools to better understand visitor numbers.”
 - » With 47% of respondents showing support for this idea, it was the least supported, suggesting more cautious attitudes around tourism and growth.
- “Designate areas or no-build zones where future utility-scale solar farms are the primary use to reduce future conflict with other types of development.”
 - » This idea had the highest percentage of opposition with 16% of participants, indicating some concern or hesitation around how large-scale solar development is integrated into the landscape.

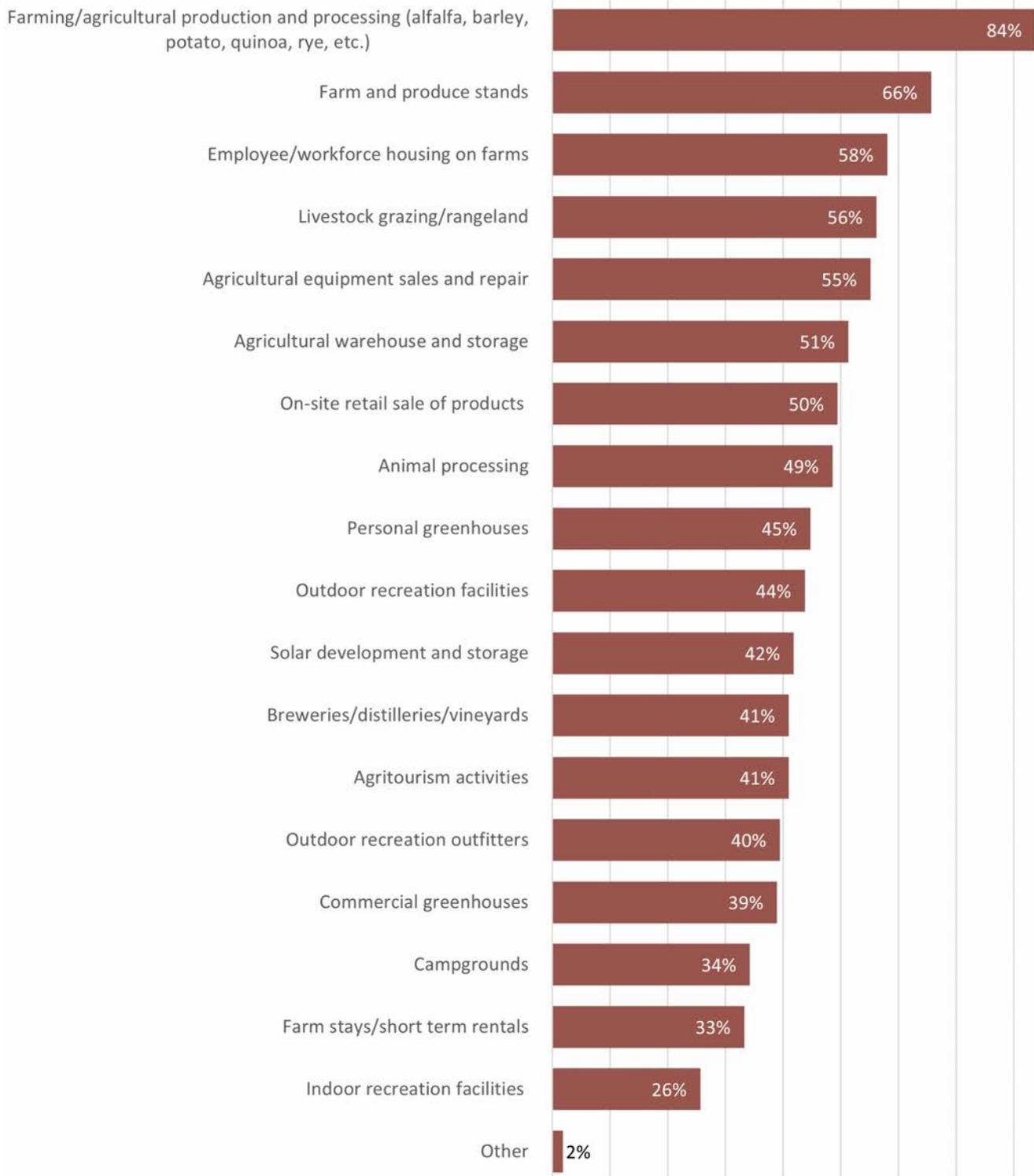
LAND USES

Participants were asked what types of land uses best support the selected vision themes and if there were any specific restrictions that should be applied to certain land uses. Participants' comments align with the goal's ideas. The summarized restrictions are below:

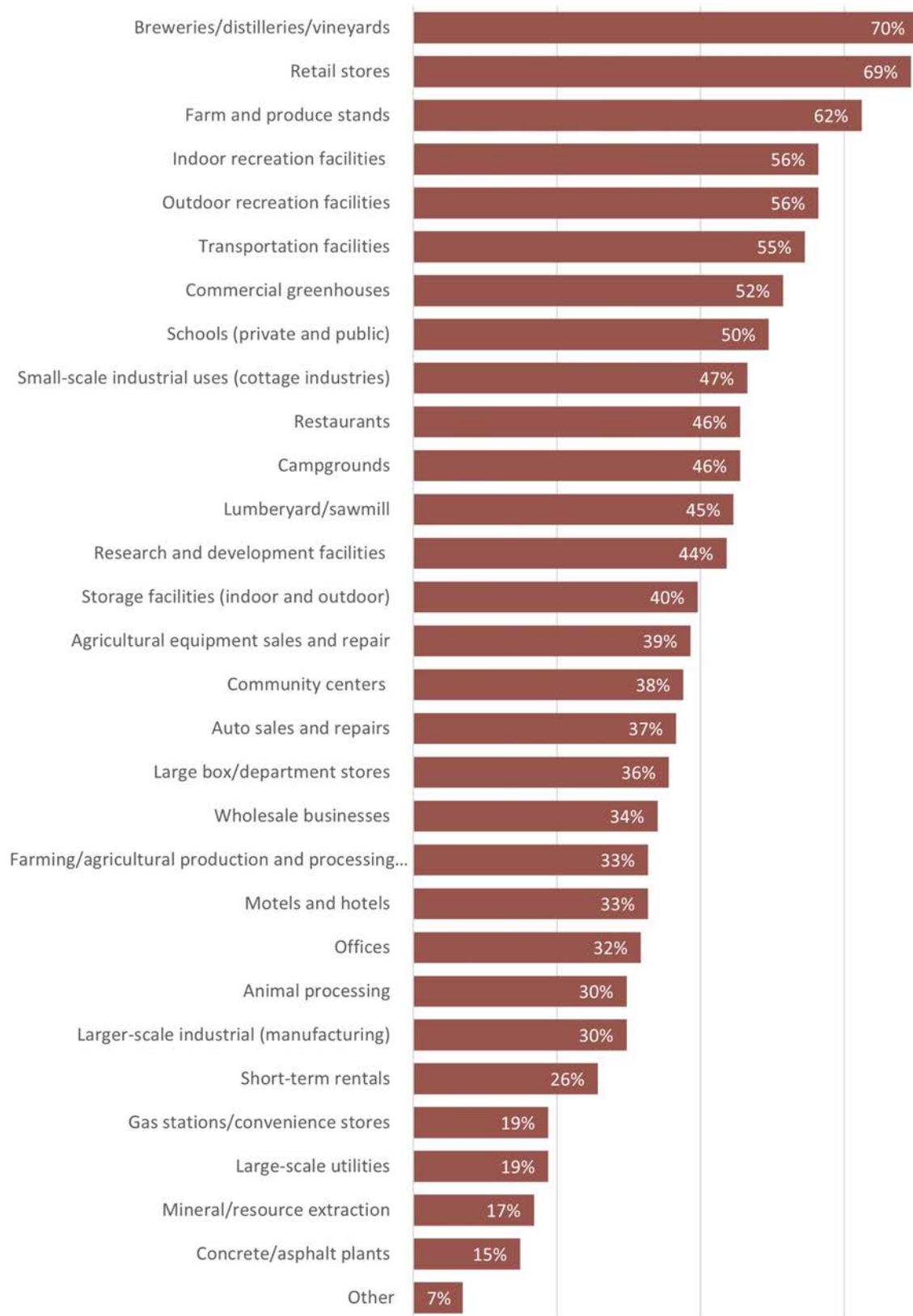
- **Sustainable Development and Resource Management:** Promote sustainable construction, water usage practices, and conservation efforts in agriculture and development.
- **Land Preservation & Agricultural Protection:** Protect agricultural land from development, encourage land trusts, and restrict harmful farming practices near residential areas.
- **Housing & Community Development:** Prioritize affordable housing for residents, set restrictions on short-term rentals, and better regulate new residential developments.
- **Environmental & Aesthetic Concerns:** Address environmental impacts of development, protect the natural beauty, and prioritize sustainable landscaping and green spaces.
- **Economic & Local Investment:** Support local businesses, minimize foreign and out-of-state investment, and establish requirements for large-scale commercial developments.
- **Regulations & Zoning:** Maintain zoning integrity, regulate land use, and enforce laws on waste disposal and property maintenance.
- **Community Engagement & Development:** Involve local citizens in planning decisions and ensure balanced growth that benefits the community without over-commercialization.
- **General Restrictions & Future Planning:** Minimize large-scale developments, particularly solar farms and non-residential uses, to prevent over-exploitation of land.



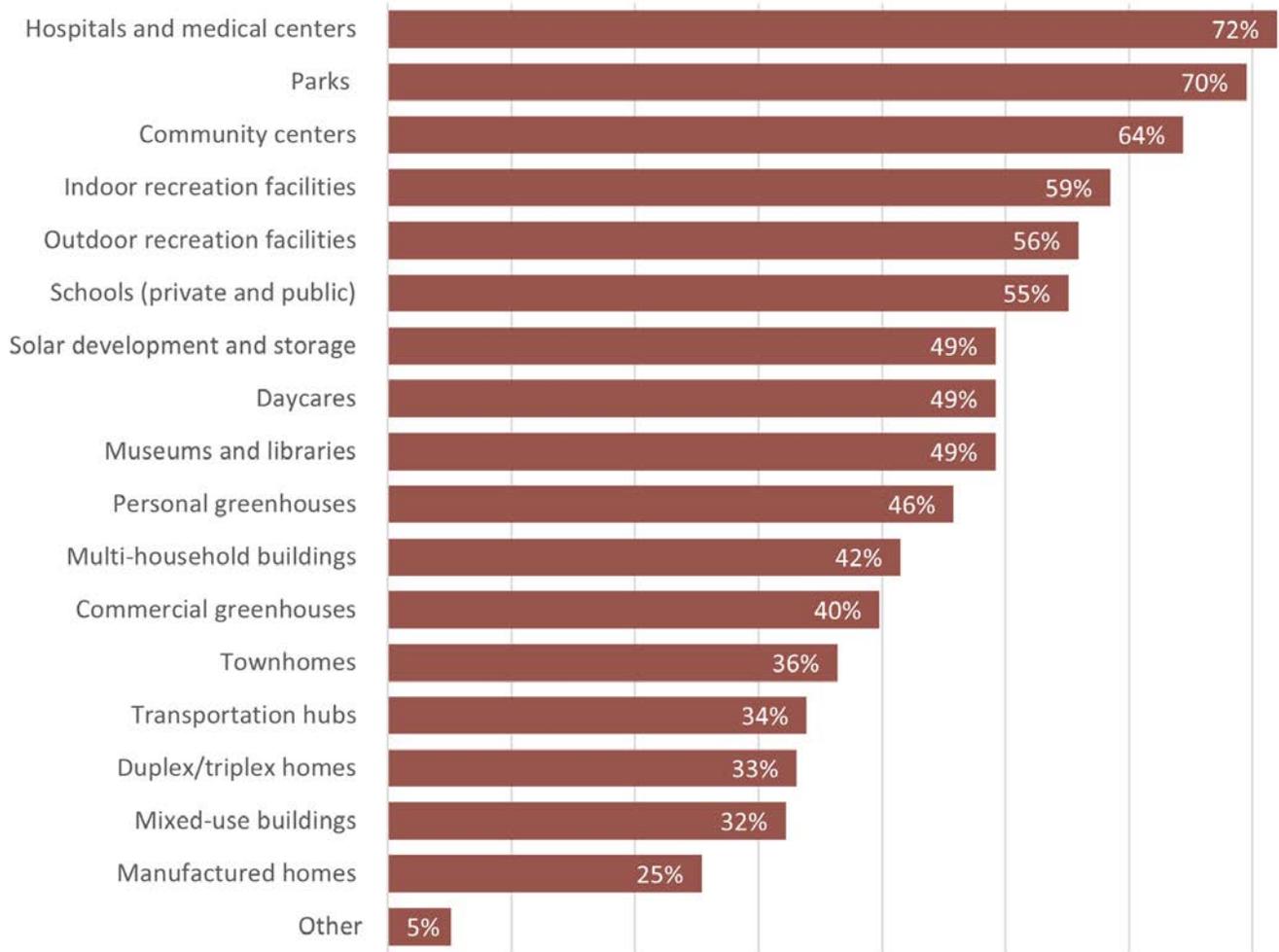
Agricultural Identity



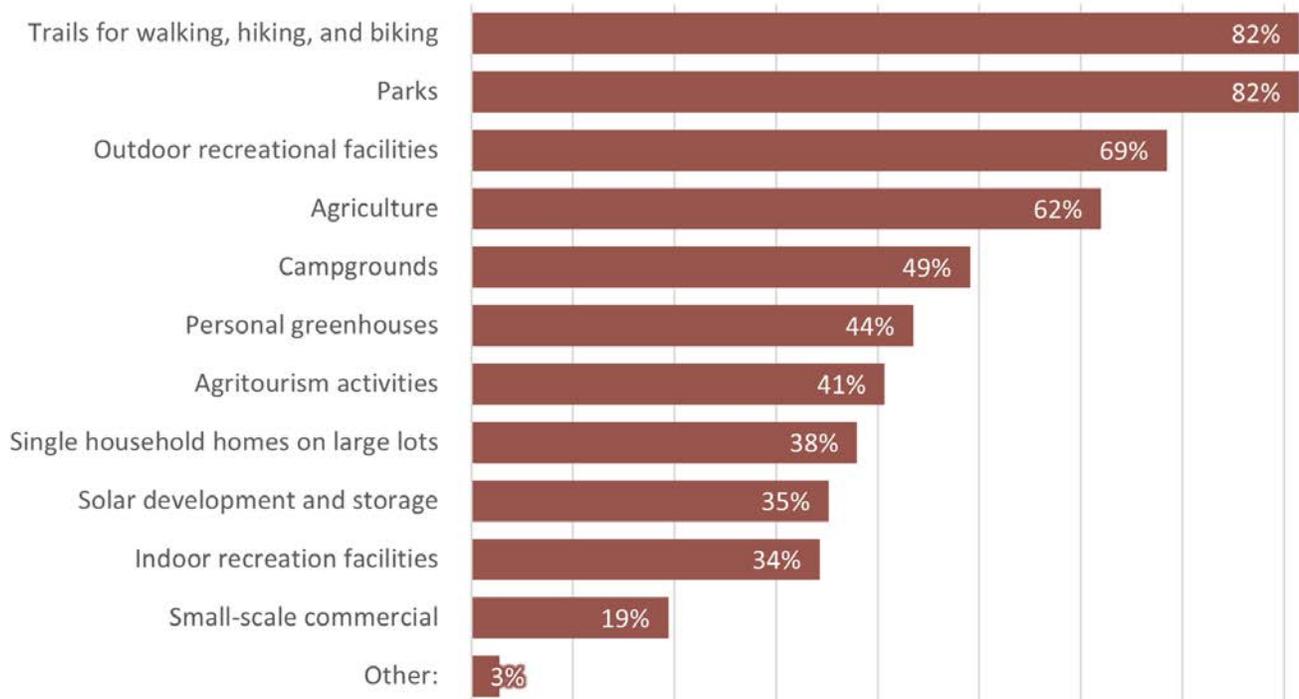
Diverse Economy



Healthy Environments



Natural Landscapes



HIGH SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Following Phase 1, and the facilitation of first online questionnaire by Alamosa High School Students, the project team continued to engage with the 11th and 12th grade government classes. Throughout Phase 2, the project team visited the high school to facilitated workshops and activities which kept the students plugged into the process. The High School Students self-selected into topic groups in which they researched, interviewed experts, and established ideas for the County to include in the comprehensive planning process.

These groups included:

- Housing
- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Natural Resource Preservation
- Health and Safety

Towards the end of the fall semester, the high school students presented to the Project Team, County Planning Commission, and Board of County Commissioners on their selected topic. Some of the ideas presented were incorporated into Questionnaire #3.

The engagement of the high school students throughout the year provided many benefits to both the students and Imagine Alamosa planning process. The following are some of the benefits of this engagement process:

- Allowed the team to build a rapport with the same high school students
- Fostered a deeper understanding of the high school students interests and concerns
- Gathered diverse viewpoints and unique perspectives that would otherwise be underrepresented
- Provided better access for students to engage with the community and envision the future of Alamosa
- Provided real life examples of what they were learning in their government classes



CHOICES & PRIORITIES WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Over the span of three days and two activities, the Choices & Priorities Workshop engaged with approximately 50 people in-person. Utilizing feedback from the Visioning Questionnaire (#2) the project team further defined the Vision Themes with associated goals and ideas that exemplify how the goals should be achieved. The focus of the workshops was to gather public feedback on whether they support the goals, how the County should achieve the goals, and if there were any missing goals or ideas.

In addition to the goals activity, there was a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) mapping activity. Each person(s) had an opportunity to create a map using transparent sheets of plastic and pre-defined land use categories by the project team. The mapping feedback was compiled and then georeferenced into ArcGIS Pro, ensuring that all maps were incorporated.

The results of the poster activity then helped form the Choices and Priorities online questionnaire. The results of the mapping activity helped form the FLUM, that will be further refined in Phase 3.

The emerging themes from both the Choices and Priorities poster and map activity are summarized below:

- FLUM needs to consider unique land use categories near Mosca and the City of Alamosa
- Additional commercial hubs near the Great Sand Dunes Natural Parks, intersection of Highway 160 and 150.



SPANISH ENGAGEMENT FOCUS GROUP

To help ensure a more inclusive representation of the Hispanic and Latino community in Phase 2, a dedicated Spanish Focus Group was held as part of the Choices and Priorities Workshop.

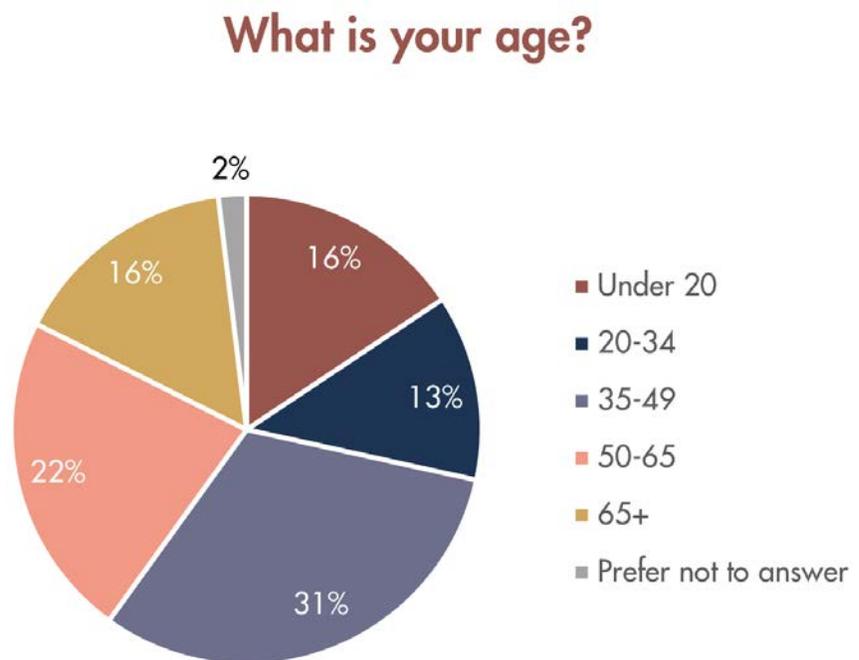
Around 15 people showed up and more than half of them engaged in the activity and stopped to talk; kids also participated and brought in more kids and their families. The emerging themes are summarized below:

- Preserve rural character of the county by capping building height at 3 stories
- Improve and address housing affordability, public safety, quality healthcare, homelessness, school and job options and opportunities.
- Increase the quality amount of parks, green spaces, and bicycle and pedestrian trails in and around the City.
- Streamline the process for new businesses

Overall, there are places in the county that have room for growth and improvement, but preserve the landscape, natural resources, and rural character as much as possible. For Phase 3, another Spanish Engagement Focus Group should be scheduled for later in the evening or over the weekend.

WHO DID WE HEAR FROM IN PHASE 2?

The highest group of participants were 34 to 49, then 50 to 65, and then a tie between 65+ and under 20. Alamosa High School helped engage with a younger demographic to ensure a higher turnout.

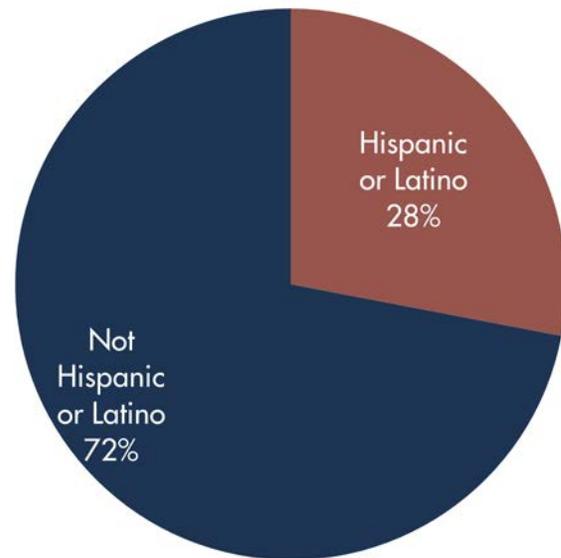


Phase 2 had a more targeted effort to engage with the Hispanic and Latino community in the Choices and Priorities Workshop. These targeted efforts are not reflected in the questionnaire responses however in person events were facilitated and demographics were not collected.

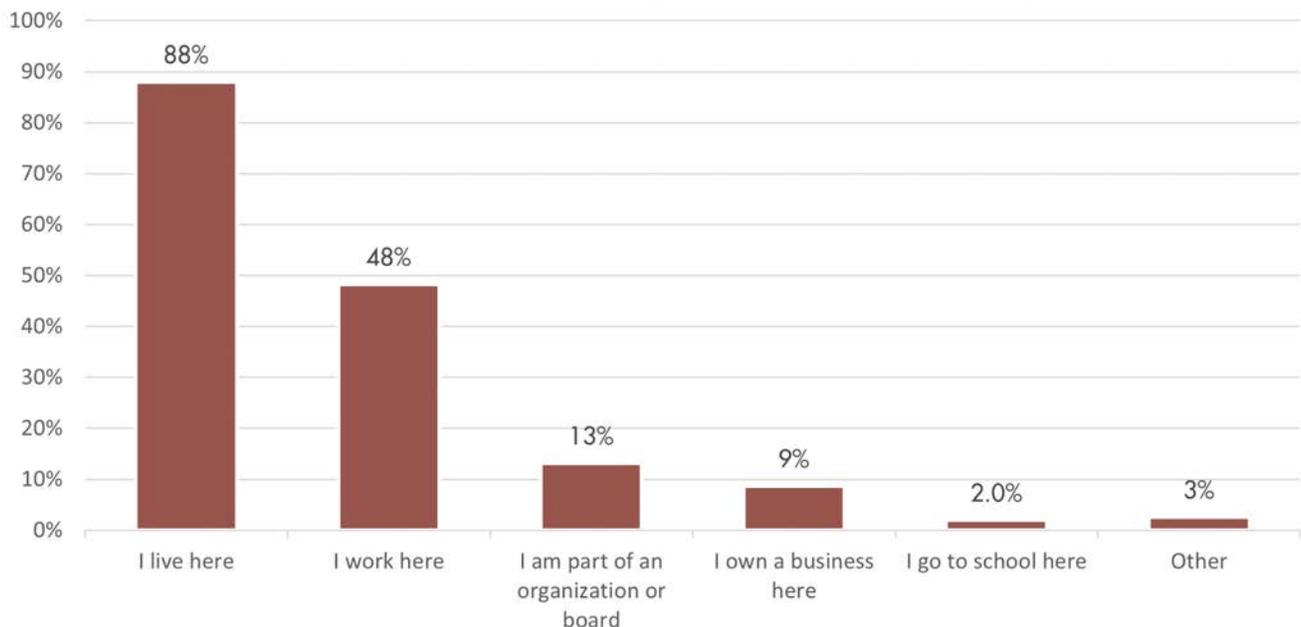
Majority of the population live (88%) and work (48%) in Alamosa County. This question was not asked in the Visioning questionnaire (#2).

In the Choices and Priorities Questionnaire (#3), the project team realized they needed to add additional residences. In both questionnaires, above 55% of the participants reside in the City of Alamosa. In the Visioning Questionnaire (#2) more respondents resided in West Alamosa than East Alamosa while in the Choices and Priorities Questionnaire(#3), more resided in East Alamosa than West Alamosa.

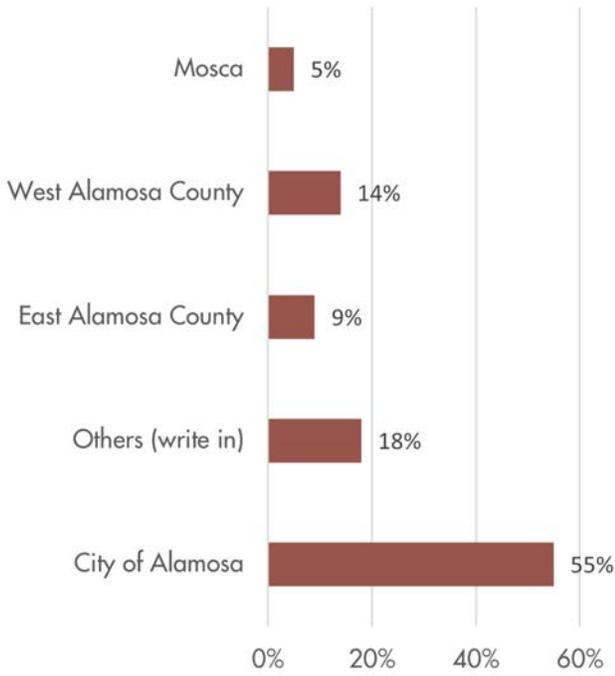
Are you Hispanic or Latino?



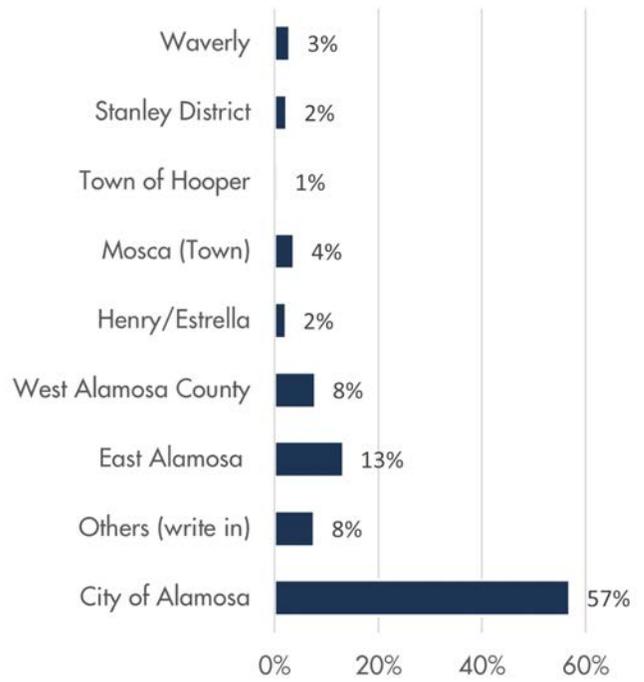
What is your relationship with Alamosa County?



Questionnaire #2: What is your primary residence?



Questionnaire #3: What is your primary residence?



Phase 3 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

This summary consists of all public engagement completed throughout Phase 3: Drafting the Plan segment of the Imagine Alamosa County Comprehensive Plan process. Phase 3 is the shortest of all the phases, running from late May to July. During this phase, public engagement is centered on the review and refinement of proposed goals and strategies through structured focus groups. Additionally, the draft plan undergoes a comprehensive review, refinement, and approval process facilitated through online public review and formal committee meetings.

Phase 3 Engagement Goals

1. Establish the Draft County Vision Plan.
2. To gather feedback on the Future Land Use Plan, determine if the identified categories and land uses are still applicable.
3. To engage community members who will be directly impacted by the strategies implemented.
4. To celebrate the process of creating the Imagine Alamosa Vision Plan.

Engagement By the Numbers

5 Emails

75+ Participants

7 Emails Sent

7 Comments

15,959 Total Website Views

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Throughout Phases 1 and 2, the priority was to identify underrepresented voices and engage them through targeted outreach efforts. This commitment continued into Phase 3, where the focus shifted to in-depth focus groups as the primary method of public engagement, demonstrating a deeper, more inclusive approach to community involvement.

FOCUS GROUPS

Five separate email newsletters were sent out to promote the Agriculture, Housing, and Outdoor Recreation and Tourism focus groups. Each focus group, including those held at Alamosa High School and Adams State University—lasted two hours and began with a brief presentation outlining the process so far and introducing the upcoming activity. The presentation included targeted questions related to boards and map exercise. Participants reviewed boards displaying one of the four vision themes, their associated goals and strategies, and the future land use plan and scenarios. While each group focused primarily on its assigned topic (e.g., Agriculture with Agricultural Identity), participants also had the opportunity to review the other vision themes, as these could influence their focus areas as well. To ensure everyone could contribute—whether attending in person or engaging at their convenience—an online version of the focus group boards was also made available. Overall, participants expressed support for the goals, strategies, and future land use plan.

Table 3. Phase 3 Events

ENGAGEMENT	DATES	DETAILS
Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #6 and #7	April 10th, 2025 April 20th, 2025	Various individuals from local organizations, departments and other affiliations in the Alamosa County community participated in the Advisory Committee Meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #6: Focus group session with posters of the strategies, future land use plan, and scenarios • #7: Review of the draft plan
Planning Commission (PC) and Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) Meeting	April 9th, 2025 July 2nd- July 23rd, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project team gave an update to the BOCC and PC on Phase 3 of the draft plan process. • PC and BOCC’s time to review before final adoption on July 23rd, 2025
Agriculture Focus Group	April 8th, 2025	Various individuals from the agriculture community including farmers to refine the goals and strategies that directly impact them.
Housing Focus Group	April 8th, 2025	Various individuals from local organizations, government departments, and developers to refine the goals and strategies that directly impact them.
Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Focus Group	April 7th, 2025	Various individuals from the local organizations, government departments, and businesses to refine the goals and strategies that directly impact them.
Alamosa High School	April 9th, 2025	Students had the opportunity to refine the strategies and goals and reflect on the planning process.
Adam’s State University	April 9th, 2025	
Public Review	June 18th-July 2nd, 2025	Online public review.

Agriculture Focus Group

The Agriculture Focus Group brought together 15 participants –farmers, producers, property owners, and others—who were directly impacted by the strategies and land uses that support and strengthen the region’s Agriculture Identity.

Housing Focus Group

The Housing Focus Group brought together 25 representatives from higher education, healthcare, local government and economic development, nonprofits and community services, youth and family services, housing and development, and finance. Their focus was on strategies and land uses that promote Healthy Environments and address housing-related challenges.

Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Focus Group

The Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Focus Group brought together 23 representatives from public lands and natural resources agencies, local government and community organizations, education and youth programs, environmental advocacy groups, and outdoor recreation businesses. Their group focused on strategies and land uses that support a Diverse Economy and preserve Natural Landscapes.

Alamosa High School

One final student engagement took place while the project team was in Alamosa County for the other focus groups. During this session, students had the opportunity to revisit and refine the vision theme associated with their topic, building on the work from Phase 2. To conclude this over a year-long partnership, the students reflected on their experience by answering two key questions:

1. What did you learn from this process?
2. What are you most excited about for the future of Alamosa County?

Their responses were featured in the final plan, capturing the value of youth perspectives and emphasizing the importance of engaging younger generations in shaping their future. Check out the student answers!

PUBLIC PLAN REVIEW

The draft plan was made available for public review from June 18th to July 2nd, during which seven comments were submitted. Feedback was collected using Konveio, an interactive platform embedded within the Imagine Alamosa website. To ensure broad community awareness, the project team distributed fliers and sent out two email newsletters to invite and remind residents to review the draft plan.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All the committees (CAC, PC, and BOCC) convened during the focus group series to participate in their own tailored version of the workshop series. They also had the opportunity to refine the draft plan before it was brought to the public. Following the public review period, the PC and BOCC reviewed the draft plan. The Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan was adopted on July 23, 2025, by a unanimous vote. This adoption marks the conclusion of the public engagement process and reinforces the vital role of community input in shaping the future of Alamosa County.

Vision Plan

Appendix G. Vision Plan
IMAGINE ALAMOSA COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



JULY 2024

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“

In 20 years, Alamosa County will be...

... a bold, vibrant expression of what it means to be a prosperous agricultural 21st Century Community.

... a place young people want to come back to or stay.

Old people can comfortably afford to live out their last years here, and families can affordably raise their children.

... one of the strongest resilient rural counties in Colorado and a model for sustainable environments in a rural market. Its population will slightly increase. The overall quality of life will continue to be a best bet for retirees and those seeking small town life.

... A thriving rural community for diverse people of all ages, with economic and cultural opportunities, access to nature for all, contributing to the health and vitality of the entire San Luis Valley and beyond.

... a community supported by working agriculture that allows families to make a living and contribute to the local economy while also supporting a unique outdoor recreation culture anchored by the Rio Grande River, a patchwork of state and federal protected lands near the Great Sand Dunes National Park.

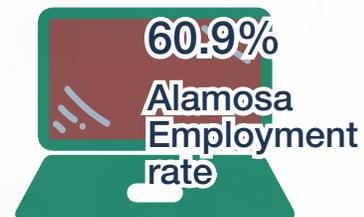
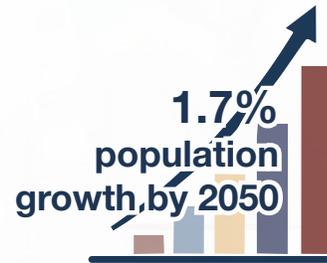
”

INTRODUCTION

Imagine Alamosa County is an update to the County's Comprehensive Plan. Alamosa County adopted its most recent Comprehensive Plan sixteen years ago, in 2008. Alamosa County has changed and evolved over the last sixteen years and anticipates more development and growth in the coming decades. This Plan will create a framework for how Alamosa County grows and develops while keeping in mind the unique elements that make Alamosa County special.

Through initial opportunities for public engagement, the community participated in surveys, workshops, meetings, and interviews and several important themes emerged. We have focused this community feedback into themes to create a unified Vision Statement for all of Alamosa County. This Vision Statement encompasses the values, history, and goals of the people of Alamosa County.

Our community-led Statement will guide the further development of the Imagine Alamosa County Comprehensive Plan.



A comprehensive plan is built for the community, by the community!





WHY DO WE VISION?

Alamosa County is the most populated of the six counties in the San Luis Valley. Like many communities in the west with rich natural amenities, each year Alamosa County welcomes more tourists and is experiencing modest population growth. While it remains a small community, it is important to plan for thoughtful development that accounts for the residents' needs.

HOW YOU RESPONDED

As part of developing the Vision Statement, Imagine Alamosa County hosted drop-in style events at five community locations, and met with community members at Roundtable Events and focus groups in Alamosa County. These in-person events allowed community members to learn about the Alamosa County Comprehensive Plan and share their ideas for the Vision. In addition to in-person events, online questionnaires allowed people to provide feedback from their phone or computer. Community members could receive updates by subscribing to an email newsletter or through the project website.



410
QUESTIONNAIRE
PARTICIPANTS

1,512
IN PERSON COMMENTS

6,788
WEBSITE VISITS TO DATE

75+
PROJECT SUBSCRIBERS

From dozens of conversations and thousands of comments, four prominent themes emerged to shape the County's Vision Statement:

Theme 1: Agricultural Identity

Theme 2: Diverse Economy

Theme 3: Healthy Environments

Theme 4: Natural Landscapes



WHY WE *love*

BORN AND RAISED HERE • SMALL TOWN FEEL • SIMPLE LIFE • CUTE • CONVENIENCE, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION • FAMILY AND FRIENDS • THE MOUNTAIN VIEW SCENERY • THE WEATHER • NATURAL BEAUTY • SMALL TOWN • HISTORY AND CULTURE • TRAILS AND SAND DUNES • THE ACTIVITIES • THE ENVIRONMENT • THE AMAZING COLORS • BEING IN THE COUNTRY • PARKS AND NATURE AREAS • THE FOOD • SPENDING TIME WITH FRIENDS • EASY TO GET TO PLACES • SO MUCH SUNSHINE • GOOD PLACE TO START A FAMILY • RURAL AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY • GOOD PEOPLE • CULTURAL DIVERSITY • COMMUNITY THAT EVERYONE KNOWS • RIO GRANDE WALK • VARIETY OF PEOPLE • WELCOMING • LONG ROADS • NICE LOCAL SHOPS • OPEN FIELDS • WILDLIFE • SMALL BUT HAS NECESSITIES • AFFORDABLE RENT • SMALL SIZE, QUIET • FRESH AIR • ACCESS TO OUTDOORS • BEST PLACE IN THE VALLEY • NATIONAL PARKS • DIVERSITY • JOB OPPORTUNITIES • SOCIAL GATHERINGS • CAR SHOWS • ACCESS TO LAKES AND RIVERS FOR FISHING • SAND DUNES • COMMUNITY SPIRIT • OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES AND FESTIVITIES • AGRICULTURE • CITY-LIKE SMALL GARDENS • GOING OUT • MOUNT BLANCA • OPEN • DARK SKIES AT NIGHT • ZAPATA FALLS • THE FESTIVALS • CALM SOCIETY • LIGHT TRAFFIC

ALAMOSA COUNTY

• COMFORTING • SKIING • EASY TO RAISE KIDS IN • SPLASH LAND • SPORTS
• BIKING • CONNECTIONS TO FAMILY • THE VIEWS • LOTS OF WALKING TRAILS
• GOLF COURSE • EASY CONNECTIONS • FARMERS MARKET • RECREATIONAL
ACTIVITIES • SMALL POPULATION • NICE FOLKS • TRAILS AREN'T CROWDED •
SCHOOLS • SHORT COMMUTE • PEACEFUL • RESTAURANTS • THE HEART OF
SAN LUIS VALLEY • REAL CONNECTIONS WITH OWNERS AND EMPLOYEES AT
FANTASTIC LOCAL SHOPS • STRONG IDENTITY • GROWTH MINDED, BUT GROWTH
MODERATE • FAMILY RECREATION CENTERS • DOWNTOWN • EVERYONE KNOWS
YOUR NAME • ITS THE LIFEBLOOD OF SAN LUIS VALLEY COMMUNITIES • FORWARD
THINKING • CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES • RURAL FEEL • GROWING SLOWLY •
GREAT CAMPING • SMALL ENOUGH TO TRULY BE INVOLVED • COMPLEX AND
RICH HISTORY • GEOLOGY • LANDSCAPE • DIVERSITY OF LIFE EXPERIENCES
AND VIEWPOINTS • PEOPLE COME TOGETHER WHEN IT MATTERS • WIDE OPEN
SPACE • BLUE SKIES • CLEAN AIR • PRIVACY • SENSE OF COMMUNITY BETWEEN
SAN LUIS VALLEY AGENCIES • FRIENDLY AND CARING NEIGHBORS • CAN SEE
THE STARS • OPPORTUNITY ABOUNDS • KNOWING MY NEIGHBORS NAMES •
CELEBRATIONS • RANCHING AND FARMING • EDUCATION • MY FAMILY HISTORY

IMAGINE ALAMOSA COUNTY VISION STATEMENT

*Alamosa County envisions
a flourishing community
by balancing its
agricultural identity with a
diverse economy,
healthy environments, and
natural landscapes.*



1 AGRICULTURAL IDENTITY

As the County grows and changes, it remains important to preserve Alamosa County's agricultural roots.

- Promote regenerative and balanced agricultural practices
- Responsibly manage agricultural water use
- Prioritize small and family farms
- Expand the presence of agribusiness types (agritourism, agrivoltaics, etc.)
- Support local food systems through farm-to-table restaurants, produce stands, and markets



2 DIVERSE ECONOMY

Creating a diverse and resilient economy can sustain Alamosa County for generations.

- Prioritize job growth and creation across industries throughout the County
- Foster vibrancy through a variety of retail, entertainment, dining, art, and community centers
- Create a County that attracts and retains its workforce
- Increase access to essential healthcare service while creating new healthcare jobs
- Balance the tourism economy with the needs of the community



3 HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

A healthy environment for a community promotes the physical, mental, and social well-being of its residents.

- Attract industries that work to preserve natural resources
- Balance the expansion of recreation with conservation efforts
- Ensure clean air and water quality is free from pollutants
- Conserve and manage the County's water resources
- Increase access to affordable housing
- Implement safety, mobility, and connectivity through pedestrian and cycling infrastructure
- Increase access to essential services like behavioral health and healthcare
- Increase availability of fresh and nutritious foods
- Create quality schools and job opportunities



4 NATURAL LANDSCAPES

With open fields, rocky mountains, and rivers, Alamosa County's breathtaking natural landscapes are an important community asset and attraction.

- Maintain natural open spaces as a primary asset of Alamosa County
- Strategize development to preserve landscapes and open space
- Protect viewsheds, clean air, and dark skies
- Connect all communities to outdoor amenities like parks and trails
- Reduce litter and pollution
- Preserve wildlife habitats



WHAT'S NEXT

Community Visions the Foundation.

The community vision establishes the foundation of the Imagine Alamosa Comprehensive Plan update and provides thoughtful ideas developed by residents and stakeholders that have shared their desires for Alamosa County.

As technological innovations cause agricultural practices to shift, and more people seek the solitude of the San Luis Valley, Alamosa County must be prepared to shape the community it desires. The vision can only be achieved through a commitment to strong goals, policies, and strategic implementation. A new Comprehensive Plan that reflects the vision is necessary to responsibly plan for growth and to prepare for variability in a changing region.

Next Step, Goal and Policy Development.

The next step is to establish the Plan's policies and projects based on the foundation provided in the Vision Plan. Strategies will evolve by thoughtful and deliberate collaboration to address a combination of small and large projects, programs, and partnerships.

Put Your Mark on Imagine Alamosa.

As the process moves forward, it is essential that the community remains involved. Make your thoughts heard! Engage with the project through online opportunities, in-person events, public meetings, and questionnaires.



Visit www.imaginealamosa.com to
get involved and stay involved!