

MASTER PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF WESTCLIFFE



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VISION

By 2030, the Town of Westcliffe will be ranked as one of the desirable small towns to live and work in Southern Colorado (South of I-70, west of I-25).

MISSION

The Town's mission is to:

- Provide and maintain safe pedestrian walkways, roads, parking areas, broadband, and public spaces, including parks and trails.
- Collaborate with Black Hills Energy and the Round Mountain Water and Sewer District to ensure reliable and affordable water, sewer, and electric power infrastructure.
- Partner with the County and the Wet Mountain Fire District to safeguard the health, welfare, and safety of residents and visitors.

Promote the economic development, growth, and vitality of the Town.

CORE VALUES (FROM OUR STRATEGIC PLAN)

- To create a town where people can live and raise their families in a healthy, safe, stimulating, and culturally rich environment.
- To preserve and honor the best of our historical heritage.
- To promote a thriving, diverse, and sustainable business environment.

To foster a town government that is responsive to citizens' needs, practices fiscal responsibility, ensures sound and effective management, and maintains a clear vision for the future.

PLAN EXECUTION

In this Plan, we aim to present a cohesive, comprehensive, and well-directed strategy that, once approved by the Board of Trustees, will guide our Town in shaping its future in alignment with our vision and mission statement.

To ensure we stay on track with our goals, the Planning Commission will implement a detailed calendar outlining projected target dates ranked by priority. This calendar will hold responsible individuals accountable for ensuring the completion of each goal.

The Planning Commission will review the Plan quarterly to update goals, refine objectives, and identify unique opportunities. They will then present their recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

This Plan will also clearly define the roles and responsibilities of those tasked with executing the stated objectives within the desired timeframe.

While this Plan is dedicated to ensuring the long-term well-being of the Town, it will remain adaptable to unique opportunities, such as unexpected revenue sources or extraordinary developments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“You can’t really know where you are going until you know where you have been.”

– Maya Angelou

The Town of Westcliffe is one of Colorado’s hidden gems. Nestled in the Wet Mountain Valley of south-central Colorado and framed by the majestic Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the Wet Mountain (Sierra Mojada) Range, Westcliffe boasts an extraordinary natural setting, a strong sense of community, and a range of civic amenities. These qualities have made it one of southern Colorado’s most desirable places to visit and live.

The history of Westcliffe and its neighboring town, Silver Cliff, are closely intertwined. The Valley’s mining boom began in 1872, but the discovery of silver in 1878 in what would become Silver Cliff set the stage for the incorporation of both towns. Silver Cliff was officially incorporated in 1879, and by 1880 its population exceeded 8,000 as it campaigned to become the capital of Colorado.

The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad capitalized on the mining boom by building a narrow-gauge rail line to the area in 1881. However, as new rail lines also served as real estate ventures, the line terminated west of Silver Cliff, in what would eventually become Westcliffe. When mining production in the Valley peaked in 1884 and mines began to close, Westcliffe, as the rail line’s terminus, became the economic center of the Valley. The main economic driver shifted from mining to cattle ranching, and the Town of Westcliffe was incorporated in 1887.

In 1889, the narrow-gauge rail line was destroyed by flooding and was replaced with a standard-gauge line in 1901. Around this time, much of modern-day Westcliffe was platted by the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. In 1929, Westcliffe became the official seat of Custer County. However, in 1938, the standard-gauge rail line closed due to the economic challenges of the Great Depression, leaving the Valley isolated. The community’s population declined and agriculture became its primary industry until the paving of SH96 in 1964, which greatly improved vehicle access to the Front Range and revitalized the area.

Beginning in the 1990s, both the County and Town experienced significant population growth, fueled by a relatively low cost of living and the Baby Boomer generation’s “Retirement Boom.”

Table 1: Westcliffe Historic Census Population (skewed by ebb and flow of a seasonal second home population that displaces our full-time population and bid up home prices).

1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
192	256	232	388	333	429	390	306	243	324	312	417	568	437

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2010,2020

Note: The share of homes not occupied in Westcliffe is relatively high (27%) compared to the State (9%), but much lower than the unincorporated county (51%).

- This is due to the area’s attractiveness as a weekend or vacation getaway.
- Of homes not occupied in the Cliffs, the largest share falls into the category of those “used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use” followed by those for rent or sale.
- Westcliffe only allows 10 STR’s outside of the downtown district.

Source: 2022 Housing Needs Assessment

Today, the Town is uniquely positioned to achieve its 2030 Vision by building on its many strengths and civic amenities. Key elements of the 2024 Plan include:

- Attracting a younger demographic by marketing the Town to remote tech and professional workers.
 - Enhancing the Town's walkability.
 - Greening streets with more trees, walkways, and landscaping.
 - Transforming the Main Street core into a pedestrian-friendly central public space.
 - Collaborating with developers to create a higher-density, mixed-use plan for the vacant land between Lowe's Market and the Summit and Cliff Parks.
 - Promoting housing affordability by encouraging higher-density infill development on existing vacant lots and allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in single-family residential areas.
 - Partnering with developers to establish an affordable, higher-density residential area south of Hermit Park, which currently lacks water and sewer services.
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GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS

I. Health, Safety, and Welfare

A. Objective: Avoid development in environmentally sensitive, constrained, or hazardous areas.

Timeline: Ongoing

Actions:

1. Avoid development in flood-prone areas. If development is unavoidable or redevelopment is necessary, all construction must follow Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidelines to prevent flood damage. Proposals within flood-prone areas must include flood protection plans.
2. All future commercial development must consider and incorporate best practices for accessibility.
3. Encourage development that preserves non-developable open lands and protects natural and scenic resources.

B. Objective: Protect the rural, small Western town character of Westcliffe.

Goal: Protect the rural community character of Westcliffe through appropriate land use activities.

Actions:

1. Be open to opportunities for expansion in agricultural zones while preserving views and community boundaries. **Timeline:** Ongoing
2. Protect the land between Bluff Park and Grape Creek as agricultural or open space. The Town should consider acquiring these parcels for conservation easement with Colorado Open Lands if they become available for sale.

C. Objective: Enhance beautification and climate resilience through green plantings to provide shade and promote cleaner air.

Goal: Establish incentives for citizens and businesses to plant greenery in Town-owned rights-of-way (ROW).

Actions:

1. Create a tree planting/greenery grant program. Grantees must purchase trees from a list developed with the help of the Garden Club. Trees must be planted in Town ROW, with optional commemorative plaques. The program should be cost-share, with a focus on trees between sidewalks and curbs.
Timeline: Ongoing
2. Prioritize planting drought-resistant perennials, and consider xeriscapes where appropriate. **Timeline:** Ongoing
3. When planning sidewalk ROWs, plant deciduous trees on the south side of streets to provide shade in the summer and allow sunlight to melt snow and ice in the winter. **Timeline:** Ongoing

D. Objective: Promote the health and welfare of residents and visitors by upgrading all Town parks.

Goals:

1. Encourage and develop green spaces and recreational opportunities for visitors and residents.
2. Maintain and improve the Town's park system.
3. Collaborate with the County and the Town of Silver Cliff to support the development of a regional indoor recreational center.

Actions:

4. Continue improving Town parks to create more shade and enhance connection with nature.
5. Redesign and integrate Hermit and Memorial Park complexes.
6. Acquire land between Bluff Park and Grape Creek for park and trail development, if available.
7. Enhance and expand Town trails along Chloride Gulch to connect to Silver Cliff. Focus on trails on Town-owned land or ROW, and private land if it becomes available. Partner with organizations like Trails for All for grant assistance.
8. Consider maintenance costs and water conservation in park designs.
9. Work with the Westcliffe Park Advisory Committee to develop a community trail network linking residential, commercial, and recreational areas. **Timeline:** Mid-term

II. Economic Development

A. Objective: Direct development to vacant parcels within existing town boundaries, maintain a compact town form, increase the Town's footprint of property zoned Multi-family, promote ADUs in existing residential areas, and ensure fiscally responsible growth in future annexations.

Goals:

1. All annexations shall comply with Section 31-12 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, ensuring a community of interest between the Town and the area proposed for annexation.

2. A fiscal impact report shall be submitted with any annexation petition, detailing how fiscal impacts will be offset.
3. Developers shall bear the direct costs of services and infrastructure for annexations. Lands needed for public purposes (e.g., parks, trails, schools) must be dedicated to the Town or another public entity.
Actions:
4. Prepare and adopt a Three-Mile Area Plan, including land between Lake DeWeese Road and CO HW 69 to Rangeview Industrial Park. **Timeline:** Short-term
5. Adopt ADU and Tiny Home codes. **Timeline:** Short-term (ADU ordinance has passed)
6. Rezone the six blocks south of Hermit Lane to multi-family. **Timeline:** Short-term (Town-owned blocks have been rezoned).
7. Rezone vacant lots in Vivienda Parque to multi-family residential. **Timeline:** Short-term
8. Establish a new commercial district in Vivienda Parque. **Timeline:** Short-term
9. Evaluate vacant residential lots for multi-family zoning. **Timeline:** Mid-term
10. Extend the Core Commercial District west to Adams Boulevard. **Timeline:** Short-term
11. Prepare a model annexation agreement that includes clauses for fiscal impact studies, infrastructure improvements, and land dedications. **Timeline:** Mid-term
12. Developers shall bear the costs of services and infrastructure; improvements must meet Town design standards, with performance surety.

B. Objective: Zone land in line with the Master Plan and its Land Use and Zoning Map, considering market needs and opportunities.

Goals:

1. Periodically review and update the Land Use Code to align with the Master Plan, particularly for affordable housing policies. Support ADUs and higher-density development, especially in South Westcliffe and the Adams Subdivision.
2. Update the Land Use and Zoning Map to reflect market needs and opportunities.
Actions:
3. Review and revise the Land Use Code to eliminate or revise policies that increase housing costs.
Timeline: Ongoing
4. Reduce the 20-foot setback in the Core Commercial District to 5 feet, while maintaining parking requirements. **Timeline:** Short-term
5. Change side yard setbacks in Residential SF to 3 feet, front/rear yards to 5 feet, allowing for parking. For multi-family, change side yard to 5 feet, front 10 feet, and rear 5 feet, with or without an alley.
Timeline: Short-term

III. Infrastructure

A. Objective: Provide a safe, accessible, and efficient sidewalk, bike, and trail system.

Goals:

1. Maintain and improve the sidewalk, bike, and trail network with available funding.

2. Improve Walkability and Bikeability scores.
3. Evaluate existing road ROWs to improve walkability, bikeability, safety, and reduce road paving costs.
4. Explore public transportation links to Denver, DEN, and other towns, including petitioning to join the Bustang network.

Actions:

5. Prepare and adopt a Major Street Plan in compliance with Section 31-23-212 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. **Timeline:** Mid-term
6. Improve sidewalk and street crossing safety at key locations. **Timeline:** Short-term

B. Objective: Develop a comprehensive Flood Control and Drainage Plan.

Goal: Prioritize flood control and drainage improvements through an annual capital improvement program.

Actions:

1. Prepare a road, curb, and gutter drainage improvement plan that aligns with accessibility, walkability, and bikeability improvements.
 2. Work the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to develop FEMA compliant 100-year and 500-year floodplain mapping.
 3. Leverage existing drainage systems, like Chloride Gulch, for flood control.
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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Master Plan (hereinafter referred to as "the Plan") has been prepared in accordance with state statutes that authorize the Town of Westcliffe's Planning Commission to develop a comprehensive plan for its physical development. Pursuant to C.R.S. 31-23-207, the purpose of the Town Master Plan is to provide "guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the municipality and its environs."

More specifically, the Plan serves the following purposes:

- To address community issues and concerns.
- To guide development in a way that aligns with the natural characteristics of the land, the capacity of public services and facilities, and the existing built environment.
- To provide a policy framework for updating zoning, subdivision regulations, and related ordinances within the Town's Land Use Code.
- To offer guidance in preparing the Town's capital improvement program.
- To address regional concerns requiring interjurisdictional coordination.
- To serve as a community database and as supporting documentation for securing grants related to community development activities.

ABOUT THE PLAN

The Town's original Master Plan was completed in November 2000 and updated in August 2017. The 2024 Plan represents the second review and update and will integrate the September 2020 Strategic Plan and Master Plan into a single, unified document.

USE OF THE PLAN

The Plan provides a Vision and addresses key issues facing the Town of Westcliffe. It sets direction, policies, and actions for Town development and should be consulted by Town staff, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Trustees when considering development proposals, subdivision and zoning regulations, intergovernmental issues, annual budgets, and when reviewing progress toward achieving the Plan's goals. It should also serve as a guide for residents, landowners, and project applicants regarding land planning objectives.

While the Plan is an advisory document, it serves as the guiding reference for regulatory measures, including updates to the Land Use Code and recommendations for project reviews. The Plan should be used alongside the Town Land Use Code and Zoning Map to direct the appropriate location, character, type, and intensity of new development and rezoning activities.

The Plan also acts as the guiding document for future intergovernmental agreements, capital improvement programming, and detailed studies and programs. Additionally, it should be used as supporting documentation for state and federal grant applications.

The Plan should be reviewed quarterly to assess progress and identify new strategies. Policies should also be reviewed quarterly and revised as circumstances change. The entire document should be made available for public review and updated every five years.

KEY METRICS TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION

Several questions arise regarding how to achieve our Vision:

- What are the living and working factors that make a town like Westcliffe a desirable destination?
- What amenities and features appeal to the younger demographic we aim to attract?
- How do we currently rank against these factors, and how can we improve?

After reviewing organizations that assess the livability of towns, the Planning Commission developed and ranked the following criteria to evaluate how well we currently align with our stated vision.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER TOWNS

How do our demographics compare with 25 other small and mid-sized towns in Southern Colorado? What are

Towns	Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2020 Town Profiles					Source: GreatSchools.com (out of 10)				Source: Realtor.com
	(west of I25, south of I70)	Population	Median Age	Employment Rate	Median HH Income	Educational Bachelors+	Schools Elementary	Middle	High	Median Home Price
1	Alamosa	9,806	29.7	59.8%	\$50,239	28.0%	5	5	6	\$270,000
2	Basalt	3,984	46.2	73.5%	\$103,049	56.1%	7	4	6	\$1,400,000
3	Buena Vista	2,855	33.3	68.5%	\$58,168	37.6%	4	7	8	\$810,000
4	Carbondale	6,434	42.0	77.7%	\$92,083	57.1%	3	7	6	\$1,800,000
5	Crawford	403	42.9	64.1%	\$55,375	16.2%				\$328,000
6	Cortez	8,766	37.9	51.4%	\$55,962	31.1%	5	5	4	\$282,500
7	Crested Butte	1,639	41.5	72.5%	\$67,625	75.0%	9	8	8	\$829,000
8	Del Norte	1,458	43.8	55.3%	\$40,756	20.2%		5	5	\$261,000
9	Delta	9,035	43.4	45.7%	\$45,950	18.1%	4	6	5	\$353,000
10	Monte Vista	4,247	38.2	56.1%	\$51,071	30.1%	5	6	4	\$153,000
11	Durango	19,071	36.6	65.9%	\$76,177	58.7%	8	8	7	\$750,000
12	Fairplay	724	37.4	81.0%	\$80,179	24.2%	7	8	5	\$567,900
13	Florence	3,822	44.6	58.1%	\$58,167	21.8%				\$310,000
14	Ouray	898	50.3	57.0%	\$68,750	54.4%			7	\$424,000
15	Gunnison	6,560	24.9	74.1%	\$63,229	55.9%	3	5	6	\$587,000
16	La Veta	862	65.3	43.8%	\$48,297	31.2%		6	6	\$351,000
17	Lake City	432	54.9	51.4%	\$57,548	40.9%				\$306,000
18	Leadville	2,633	38.0	87.2%	\$80,100	57.9%		3	4	\$512,500
19	Mancos	1,196	46.5	61.1%	\$63,185	43.2%			5	\$344,000
20	Montrose	20,191	48.7	49.9%	\$60,132	31.7%	7	5	5	\$486,900
21	Pagosa Springs	1,577	34.2	62.2%	\$32,500	21.7%	6	4	5	\$592,500
22	Paonia	1,447	38.9	54.3%	\$54,643	38.1%	7	4	10	\$408,500
23	South Fork	510	59.3	40.5%	\$70,804	38.9%				\$114,300
24	Salida	5,666	44.3	59.1%	\$63,775	46.2%	9	5	6	\$520,000
25	Silverton	622	45.4	64.8%	\$64,000	37.9%			10	\$658,000
	Median	2,633	43	59.8%	\$60,132	37.9%				\$424,000
	Westcliffe	435	47.4	59.6%	\$52,500	37.8%	4	3	3	\$449,000
	Silver Cliff	609	38.9	43.6%	\$35,583	14.2%	4	3	3	\$304,000
	The "Cliffs"	1,044	42.4	50.3%	\$42,632	24.0%	4	3	3	
							Blank cells indicate no scores available			

some of our weaknesses?

SWOT ANALYSIS

As part of our assessment of the Town's current state, the Master Plan Team conducted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats workshop on January 23, 2024. There is a strong correlation between the findings of the ranked Living & Working Metrics shown above and the SWOT analysis shown below. One weakness is the Town's Walkability and Bike Ability.

STRENGTHS				WEAKNESSES			
5.00	Small Town Friendly Community & Feel			5.00	Available Workforce		
5.00	Dark Skies Community			5.00	Attainable Housing		
5.00	Low Crime Rate			5.00	Through Traffic (SH69)		
4.75	Mountain Viewscapes			4.80	Drainage (flooding)		
4.60	Healthy Environment (air, water, weather)			4.80	Lack of Water/Sewer Lines		
4.60	Rich History			4.75	Broadband Cost & Availability		
4.50	Valley Strong, Non-profits			4.60	Lack of Restaurants		
4.25	Outdoor Recreation Choices			4.60	Lack of Land for Growth		
4.25	Town Parks			4.50	School Ratings & Performance		
4.00	Library			4.40	Lack of Lower Cost Shopping (people buy staples "down the hill")		
4.00	Wet Mountain Valley Location			4.20	Lack of Forward Thinking to Protect Past & Present		
4.00	Little or No Traffic			4.20	Walkability		
3.40	Arts & Music Culture			4.17	Seasonal Tourism		
3.00	Gym & Public Pool			4.00	High Median Age		
2.40	Rodeo			3.80	Political Antagonism		
2.00	Abundance of Worship Choices			3.60	Bike Pathways		
				3.40	Three Different Governments (duplication of costs)		
				3.25	Significant Seasonal (non voting) Population		
				3.00	Lack of Snowfall		
				2.00	Minimal Public Transportation		
OPPORTUNITIES				THREATS			
4.80	Attract a Younger Demographic			5.00	Losing Town Trees		
4.60	A More Pedestrian Friendly Environment			5.00	Lack of Adequate Funding/Revenue		
4.40	Recruit Remote Workers			5.00	Water/Sewer Availability		
4.20	Increase Tourism			4.60	Temporary Loss of Adams Blvd Sewage Lift Station		
4.20	Community (public) Art Projects			4.00	Nearby Forest Fire		
4.20	Entry for 1st Time Home Owners			4.00	School Distric Leadership		
4.20	Connected Trails Town to Town			3.80	Folks who Move from Elsewhere Trying to Impose their Values		
4.20	Allow for ADU's			3.60	Losing Historic Buildings		
4.00	Park Along Grape Creek			3.40	High Wind Events		
4.00	Improve 200 Block of Main St for Users			3.40	Main St. Fire		
3.60	Attractive Signs Entering Town on SH69 & SH96			3.00	Front Range Architecture Spoiling our Historical Feel		
3.20	Business District & Higher Density Housing South of Town			2.80	Losing Valley Agriculture		
3.20	Close 200 Block of Main St during Tourist Season			2.80	Small Mindedness		
2.80	Summit Park Music Pavillion			2.40	Flooding		
2.80	Require & Assist Owners in Using Historic Paint Colors			2.40	Air Quality from Near & Distant Wildfires		
	Plant more Trees, GreenStreets			2.20	Increased Crime with Population Growth		
					Climate Change		

Source: Planning Commission Member Assessment - 2024

WORKFORCE HOUSING, HOUSING CHOICE AND THE 2022 HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The 2022 Housing Needs Assessment for the "Cliffs" highlighted the urgent need for action to address affordability and housing options in our two towns. Key findings from the assessment include:

- Local businesses are urgently seeking solutions due to the severity of the issue.
- 80% of our households consist of only one or two people.
- The rental vacancy rate is zero.
- Without younger workers moving to the area, the local economy will be negatively affected.
- 65% of residents cannot afford the average-priced home. (This figure has increased to approximately 80% since the March 2022 publication of the Assessment.)

- 82% of all existing homes are single-family homes. A more diverse, higher-density housing stock is needed to provide greater choice for residents and lower the per-unit cost of housing.
- Although 90% of households in the 'Cliffs have three or fewer people, only 63% of homes are two bedrooms or less. Additionally, most homes sold since 2017 have had three or more bedrooms, highlighting the need for more one- and two-bedroom housing to better suit the area's households, which include downsizing seniors, singles, and couples relocating for work or settling in the community.
- Over 70% of jobs in Custer County are located in the Cliffs, with approximately 90% of those jobs in Westcliffe.
- The immediate focus should be on building at least 40 to 50 rental units affordable to households earning 100% AMI or below.

The situation has worsened since the publication of the assessment in March 2022:

- In 2023, the School District made four offers for teaching positions, but all four applicants had to decline due to a lack of suitable and affordable housing in the area.
- Local business owners continue to struggle with attracting and retaining staff.
- Our sheriff deputies, paramedics, and EMTs are still unable to find affordable and suitable housing.
- According to CHF, the majority of Custer County renters are paying above 30% AMI, with a zero-vacancy rate.
- 140 people recently signed a petition supporting the construction of affordable workforce rental housing.

To address its housing crisis, the Town of Westcliffe should consider workforce housing projects on Town-owned land, rezone undeveloped land for multi-family 1- and 2-bedroom projects, and adopt an ADU ordinance to encourage affordable 1-bedroom rentals in existing single-family residential areas.

WALKABILITY

Walkability is not only an important criterion for attracting a younger demographic to the Town, but also an important for the safety, health, and wellbeing of our existing residents.

BIKE ABILITY

Bike Ability is especially important for the Gen-Z, Millennial and Gen X demographic.

	Walkability Score	Bikeability Score
Main Street	56	41
Old Westcliffe	51	41
Adams Subdivision	40	32
South Westcliffe	39	34
Mission Plaza	27	26
Shadow Ridge	5	20

Bike Score	Description
90-100	Biker's Paradise Daily errands can be accomplished on a bike.
70-89	Very Bikeable Biking is convenient for most trips.
50-69	Bikeable Some bike infrastructure.
0-49	Somewhat Bikeable Minimal bike infrastructure.

Source: Walkscore.com

MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT – UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

Closing down Main Street (2nd to 3rd) and viewing it an important outdoor venue has the potential of improving the economic vitality of the Town, especially for Main Street merchants and restaurants.

The Town should consider closing down Main Street for events that will bring foot traffic and revenue to Main Street business owners. Examples include:

- Car Show
- Music on Main (concerts)
- Christmas on Main
- Fourth of July & Music Event
- Valley Strong Community Dinner
- Trunk or Treat for Halloween

- Art Show(s)
- Sidewalk sale

Close once per month for event

WINTER TOURISM - UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

Westcliffe is currently a three-season town, with a major opportunity to expand attractions into the winter season. Transforming Westcliffe into a four-season town will encourage people to live here year-round. Currently, ~25% of homes in Westcliffe and Silver Cliff are unoccupied vacation homes during the off-season, and local businesses, including restaurants, struggle due to the lack of a sufficient year-round population to support our local merchants. To address this economic dead period, the Town should collaborate with the County, Silver Cliff, and the Tourism Board to develop events for the winter and holiday seasons. The goal is to attract winter tourism, as outlined in the ideas below.

Winter Tourism (from Thanksgiving to January 2)

- Christmas Parade
- Christmas markets, with Santa Claus (including photo opportunities, gifts, and costume contests)
- Tree lighting ceremony
- Holiday decorations along Main Street, including storefronts, with decorative lighting
- Sledding area at the north end of the Bluff (consider investing in a snow machine). This could be located on the north side of the parking lot, where there is an easement currently used for sledding, though some improvements are needed for safety.
- Street closure with propane heaters, fireplaces, mulled wine, hot chocolate, and s'mores
- Snow sculpture contest
- New Year's Eve celebration on the Bluff, featuring a drone light show

TOWN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Westcliffe currently has five parks and 11.83 acres of open space (not including sidewalk to street areas). In order to increase quality of life, the Town should consider using its open spaces to improve aesthetics more effectively.

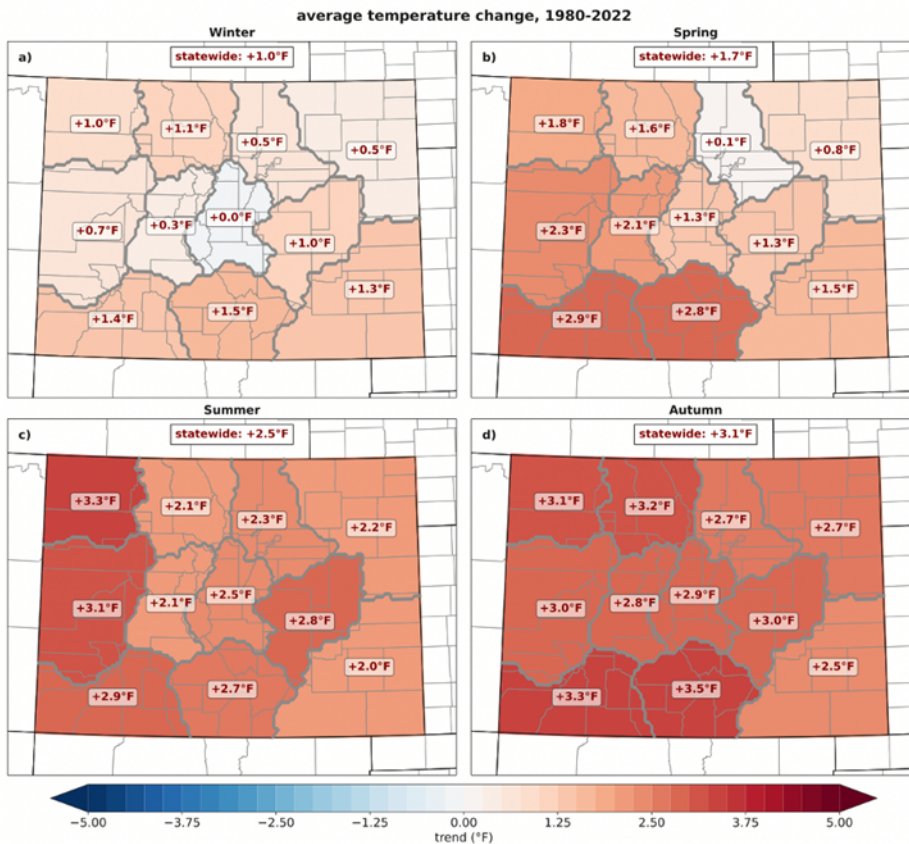
FUTURE PROJECTS RANKED IN PRIORITY FROM 1(highest)-5(lowest)

- 1-Pavilion at Summit Park.
- 1-Water and Sewer lines for the six blocks south of Hermit Road.
- 2 Amphitheater at the Bluff -
- 2- Greening our extra wide streets with more trees, walkways, and landscaping.
- 2-New Shop for employees
- 3-Walkability in town, sidewalk infrastructure. **Connection to Adams Subdivision, Mission Plaza - infrastructure (list out roads)**
- 4-Trailway along chloride gulch, unnamed gulch, with greening efforts

- 4-Public Transportation to and from Westcliffe.
- 4-Chloride Gulch disc golf course. Fence addition, trail? -
- 5- Explore Broadband Initiatives

CLIMATE CHANGE

According to the 2024 Colorado Climate Assessment Report, Colorado is warming faster than the U.S. Average and south-central Colorado is warming faster than the State average.



The Town of Westcliffe can expect a warmer and drier climate. This will increase the heat island effect adjacent to our Town roads which represent a large percentage of our land area.

The Town should consider planting shade trees in the landscape strips to mitigate the impact of warming. Street infrastructure should encourage flow to these areas and also plant native trees to mitigate further drought. Parks and open areas should also be included.

ROUND MOUNTAIN WATER & WASTEWATER TAPS

After lifting the wastewater moratorium, the 'Cliffs are now focused on growth. Silver Cliff is in the process of developing a new town center, and the Town of Westcliffe is actively working to expand its multi-family housing zones. This increased development may drive the need for greater wastewater treatment capacity. Round Mountain currently requires an additional tap for detached ADUs, however they are considering a more feasible policy.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The most effective way our Town can assist our school district is to provide workforce housing and create a robust ADU ordinance to increase affordable rental housing choice in the Town.

According to the below graph, matriculation rates are on the decrease and show a decrease in overall test score rates. In order for the Town to grow and attract families with children, we need affordable housing choices and high performing schools to retain and grow our youthful population.
(insert matriculation rate graph)

HEALTH, SAFETY AND DEVELOPMENT

-Recommended Land Use and Zoning Map-

AGRICULTURAL

This district is intended to protect and preserve the agricultural industry within the Town of Westcliffe while safeguarding rural property owners from encroachment by urban land uses. Previously known as the A-1 Agriculture District, it has now been renamed.

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DWELLINGS)

This district is designed to accommodate a maximum of two permanent residential dwellings, either attached(duplex) or detached. The primary dwelling must have a minimum size of 550 square feet, while the secondary dwelling must have a minimum size of 400 square feet and cannot exceed the size of the primary residence. This Town should consider amending this district to allow building on a single 25-foot wide lot. This district is intended to maintain areas of low to medium-density development, primarily for single-family and two-family dwelling units.

MULTIFAMILY

This district is designed to allow for permanent multi-family dwelling units to a density of six (6) dwelling units per minimum lot area. This District is designed to accommodate work force housing, affordable housing, senior housing, and veteran housing. The Town of Westcliffe recognizes its small footprint and is designing this district to allow for more one- and two-bedroom housing units and higher density growth in the Town. This zoning designation ideally includes all lots South of Hafford Avenue and several TBD undeveloped infill properties throughout the Town.

MOBILE HOME DISTRICT

This district is designed to allow for permanent residential mobile home development to a minimum density of twelve (12) dwelling units per acre.

CORE COMMERCIAL

The core commercial category is intended for retail sales, offices, and services in the Main Street District and vicinity to accommodate businesses that ordinarily serve the permanent residents of the area and that are pedestrian oriented. This district allows for dwelling units above, below or behind businesses, in accordance with current building code.

HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL

This category is intended for highway commercial uses along the SH 69 or SH 96 corridors to accommodate businesses that ordinarily serve customers arriving for a specific service by automobile.

HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

This district is intended to provide a location for a variety of employment opportunities such as manufacturing, warehousing and distributing, indoor and outdoor storage and a wide range of industrial operations. Locations for this zone require good access to major arterial streets and adequate water, sewer and power.

PUD PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

This district is designed to provide flexibility in the development of large sites for residential and mixed use development, and to promote the unified development and use of such sites while protecting environmental and ecological assets.

SPECIAL DISTRICT

The parks and open space category is intended for passive and active recreational uses, such as parks and trails.

COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (CD-1)

This District is designed to give a zoning designation for businesses not on Main Street or in the Core Commercial District.

The Land Use and Zoning Map should be used in conjunction with the directions, policies, and actions of the Plan to guide development in Westcliffe. The Land Use and Zoning Map is regulatory, any changes should be consistent with the land use categories shown on the Land Use and Zoning Map.

[Add Map of Existing Zoning]

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Current accomplishments

- Jess Price Park was upgraded to include a pavilion with a covered stage for outdoor events.
- More Sidewalks with improved Walkability and Storm Drainage.
- The Main Street Façade annual grant program was renewed, allowing storefronts to improve their appeal.
- Roadway improvements
- Improved Parking for Bluff Park
- Paving Parking Lot Behind Jess Price Park w/ EV Chargers
- Management of Bluff Park has been turned over to the Town
- An agreement has been entered to improve signage at the Bluff Park and Sangre de Cristo Memorial
- BOT approved WPAC plan for Memorial and Hermit Park upgrades

APPENDIX A: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Master Plan: Is prepared in accordance with state statutes that authorize the Town of Westcliffe Planning Commission to develop a master plan for its physical development. Per C.R.S. 31-23-207, the purpose for the Town of Westcliffe Master Plan is "guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the municipality and its environs".

Capital Improvement: (CIP), is a short-range plan, usually four to ten years, which Plan identifies capital projects and equipment purchases, provides a planning schedule and identifies options for financing the plan.

Actions: Measures to implement the Master Plan and ultimately achieve a desired goal. Each action includes a timeframe for completion: short-term (one to two years); midterm (three to five years); long term (beyond five years), and on-going.

Goals: The broad objectives to be achieved by the Master Plan.

Polices: Guidelines for decision-making.

Planned Unit Development: (PUD) A project or subdivision that consists of common property and improvements that are owned and maintained by an owner's association for the benefit and use of the individual units within the project.

Subdivision: The division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels, sites or lots for the purpose, whether immediate or future.

LUC: Land Use Code

CAFS: Compressed-air foam

CR: County Road

FPD: Fire Protection District

ISO: Insurance Service Office

RMWSD: Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District

SH: State Highway

WMFPD: Wet Mountain Fire Protection District

APPENDIX B: Additional Information

Location and Geography

Westcliffe, Colorado, lies at an elevation ranging from 7,800 to 7,900 feet in the Wet Mountain Valley, a northwest-southeast trending area between the Wet Mountains to the east and the Sangre de Cristo Range to the west. The Valley is 4th high elevation park or valley in Colorado. The Sangre de Cristo range was formed by the same geologic forces that formed the Grand Tetons in Wyoming and rise abruptly from the valley floor to elevations exceeding 14,000 feet. The much older Wet Mountain range include foothills and rises gently to around 10,000 feet.

The Wet Mountains are largely composed of Precambrian (1,700-1,800 million years old) metamorphic felsic and hornblende gneisses that were derived from volcanic rocks. The younger Sangre de Cristo Range consists of the Permian and Pennsylvanian (248-323 million years old) Sangre de Cristo Formation (arkosic conglomerate, sandstone, and siltstone).

The land surface in the majority of the Wet Mountain Valley beneath and surrounding Westcliffe is composed of unconsolidated Pleistocene (1.8 million years old) gravel and alluvium deposits. Older, Tertiary deposits in the area include the Sante Fe Formation, comprised of siltstone, sandstone, and conglomerates from the Miocene era, and lava deposits from the earlier Oligocene era. These intra-ash flow quartz latitic lavas are present to the immediate east of Westcliffe; Silver Cliff lies atop a volcanic deposit.

The Valley aquifer is 4,000 feet deep and is estimated to hold 1.2-million acre-feet of water.

Soils

Three soil units exist in Westcliffe: the Feltonia sandy loam, the Silver Cliff gravelly sandy loam, and the Coutis sandy loam. The soil unit underlying the majority of Westcliffe is the Feltonia sandy loam. This deep, well-drained soil has moderate permeability and low available water capacity.

Also deep and well drained, the Silver Cliff gravelly sandy loam soil is found along Grape Creek and Chloride Gulch. The permeability of the Silver Cliff gravelly sandy loam soil is moderately rapid, and the available water capacity is low. Located in the drainageways and foot slopes near the intersection of Grape Creek and Chloride Gulch, the Coutis sandy loam soil has moderately rapid permeability, and moderate available water capacity.

Of the three soil types in Westcliffe, the Feltonia sandy loam that is found throughout Westcliffe is the best suited for development. Only those soil units found along the drainageways (the Silver Cliff gravelly sandy loam and the Coutis sandy loam) are not well suited for development. In particular, the Coutis sandy loam is subject to ponding or flooding. Surface runoff for all three soil types is medium, creating a moderate to high erosion hazard.

Vegetation

The native vegetation in the area is mainly needle and thread, western wheatgrass, mountain muhly, and Arizona fescue linked to the Feltonia sandy loam soil. As the native lands deteriorate, blue grama, gray housebrush, rabbitbrush, sleepygrass, silmstem muhly, and snakeweed increase. Suitable grasses for seeding include intermediate wheatgrass, pubescent wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, and Arizona fescue.

Numerous non-native species are also found in Westcliffe, particularly within established neighborhoods. Typical trees include honey locust, blue spruce, Aspen and cottonwoods; shrubs include lilac, creeping junipers, and honeysuckle.

Drainages and Floodplains

Mountain streams from the Sangre de Cristo and the Wet Mountains drain into the Wet Mountain Valley where they join Grape Creek. Grape Creek flows northwest from Westcliffe and then northeast through the DeWeese Reservoir, joining the Arkansas River at Canon City. Chloride Gulch, located just north of Westcliffe, is the major drainageway for the town and flows to the west into Grape Creek.

The Wet Mountain Valley receives substantial moisture from intense thunderstorms in the late spring and summer months. As a result, Grape Creek, Chloride Gulch, and the low-lying areas in the southwest part of Westcliffe are vulnerable to flooding.

According to a drainage study prepared in 1996, flooding occurs on an average of once every two years (a two-year storm event) because the existing storm water drainage system is inadequate to manage the flows generated by the intense storm events.

The source of flooding originates on the east side of Westcliffe as well as in Silver Cliff, just east of the Westcliffe town limits. Within Westcliffe, the existing drainage structures that are supposed to divert flow from the south side of Main Street to the north side and then into Chloride Gulch are inadequate. Consequently, storm water encroaches onto the street rather than staying in the swales, creating flooding problems in the business and residential areas.

In consideration of financial constraints, the drainage report identified a design solution to manage a 25-year storm event. Because the majority of runoff reaching the southwestern areas of Westcliffe originates in Silver Cliff, the drainage report recommends diverting as much flow as possible to Chloride Gulch before it reaches Westcliffe. Installation of two new 24" culverts and catch basins on Main Street West of Seventh St. draining to Chloride Gulch should relieve Main St. by 50% during an average storm and as much as 90% during a severe storm.

Federal Emergency Management Agency flood insurance maps are not available to determine 100-year floodways and floodplains in Westcliffe. However, additional development within Chloride Gulch is not recommended in order to minimize increases in downstream flood elevation, potential life or safety hazards, and property damage.

Water Quality

Westcliffe is located in the Arkansas headwater watershed, which has a water quality ranking of "3" on a scale of "1" to "6," signifying less serious water quality problems and a low vulnerability to toxic pollutants.

The municipal water in Westcliffe is drawn from three wells in the intermontane trough of the Wet Mountain Valley, a terraced alluvium aquifer. Westcliffe's water is currently in compliance of state water quality standards. However, the use of individual septic tanks outside within and adjacent to Westcliffe boundaries could potentially affect future water quality within town limits.

Dark Skies

The Town of Westcliffe adopted a Dark Skies friendly community. All street lights are hooded so that there is limited light pollution created.

The 'Cliffs and the Wet Mountain Valley are known for their beautiful mountain vistas and big skies, but not much is known about our world-class dark night skies. In 2016 Silver Cliff and Westcliffe were recognized by the International Dark-Sky Association as the ninth Dark Sky Community in the world, seven of which are in the United States, the 'Cliffs being the first in Colorado and with an elevation of almost 7900 feet, the nearest to the heavens.

Since 1998. Dark Skies of the Wet Mountain Valley, a 501(c) 3 non-profit, has been working to reduce local light pollution and create public awareness of a valuable and irreplaceable part of our Western heritage. Those who worked tirelessly to obtain this designation realized that our night sky is a precious natural resource to be preserved for residents and visitors alike - for many years to come. It's wonderful to think that we have the ability to enjoy and appreciate the same night sky that the original settlers of the area observed. Our clear night sky is as much a part of our heritage as the ranches and riparian areas which are preserved below them from the Bluff Park one can view the heavens from the newly dedicated Smokey Jack Observatory with its 14" computer-automated telescope. Besides the public star parties, People can reserve the Smokey Jack Observatory for private viewing sessions under the direction of volunteer guides.

Air Quality

The Environmental Protection Agency currently monitors air quality at the Custer County Road and Bridge Department in Westcliffe. The air quality in Westcliffe is excellent and meets state air quality guidelines. Non-point sources of air pollution, which are not regulated by the state, can contribute to air quality problems. Fugitive dust from gravel and dirt roads and alleys is the chief non-point air quality problem. Westcliffe is subject to wind gusts of up to 110 miles per hour. Air Quality is subject to local and non-local fires during the fire season.

Climate and Climate Change

The climate within Westcliffe and the surrounding area fluctuates due to the area's varied terrain and altitudes. Temperatures are characteristic of a high altitude, dry continental climate. The average January temperature is 22 degrees Fahrenheit and for July it is 63.4 degrees Fahrenheit, with low humidity. The average annual precipitation is 16 inches, and annual snowfall is 80 inches.

Wilderness and Wildlife

The Sangre de Cristo mountains are designated Wilderness Area with hundreds of miles of hiking trails, biking, and 4-wheel drive opportunities.

Both our Valley and mountain ranges are rich in wildlife with abundant herds of elk, deer, and pronghorn antelope, fish in our lakes, streams and rivers, and a healthy variety of raptors, and waterfowl cruising our skies.

Wildlife Habitat

The Colorado Division of Wildlife lists 73 species of birds and 38 mammal species found in Custer County. Federally listed threatened or endangered species in the county include the American peregrine falcon, bald eagle, greenback cutthroat trout, meadow jumping mouse, Mexican spotted owl, southwestern willow flycatcher, and whooping crane. No threatened or endangered species, or areas of potential high or very high wildlife impact, currently exist within Westcliffe.

Community Infrastructure

Transportation

Regional and local circulation is accomplished primarily through a network of state, county, and local roads. Via paved road, Westcliffe is located 133 miles from Alamosa, 44 miles from Canon City, 75 miles from Colorado Springs, 150 miles from Denver, 56 miles from Pueblo, 50 miles from Salida, and 60 miles from Walsenburg. A small airport also serves the region.

In 2009 the Colorado Department of Transportation identified 10.29 miles of arterial, collector, and local roads in Westcliffe. Public and private streets and alleys account for 18 percent of the town's land area.

Arterial Roads

Arterial roads are designed to move traffic through town. Westcliffe's arterial roads are characterized by having right-of-way widths of 80 feet. Principal arterial roads in Westcliffe include:

State Highway 69 and State Highway 96

From US 50 at Texas Creek, State Highway (SH) 69 enters Westcliffe from the north, turns east into Main Street, and then turns south on 6th Street, continuing to Walsenburg. SH 96, a national scenic byway, begins at the junction of SH 69 at Main Street and 6th Street, extending east through Silver Cliff over Hardscrabble Pass to Wetmore and Pueblo.

Westcliffe's collector roads are characterized by having right-of-way widths of 80 feet. Major collector roads in Westcliffe include:

- Main Street
- 6th Street
- Hermit Road
- Lake DeWeese Road

Main Street and 6th Street are also portions of SH 69, although they principally serve to collect traffic from surrounding neighborhoods and businesses. The increase in truck traffic onto Main Street and 6th Street has raised noise and safety concerns from local residents and business owners. Intersecting at 6th Street, Hermit Road provides access to the west, exiting Westcliffe as County Road (CR) 160. East of 6th Street, Hermit Road

becomes Hermit Lane, providing access into the Vivienda Parque subdivision. Lake DeWeese Road extends north where SH 69 curves on the north side of Westcliffe and quickly becomes CR 241.

Local Roads

The Town of Westcliffe was platted in 1887 with “streets and avenues 80 feet wide, alleys 20 feet wide.” The boundaries for the original plat were Grape Creek to the west, Mill Gulch to the north, the “west line of the corporate limit of Silver Cliff” to the east, and what is now Lincoln Avenue to the south. More recently, the majority of local streets are platted with 60-foot-wide rights-of-way.

Alleys still transect many of the local streets within the original platted area, with the exception of Silver Cliff Avenue, which is now called Main Street. Several of the alleys off Main Street have been purchased or claimed by adjacent property owners and are now either covered by structures or used for access to private parking lots.

Road maintenance consists of asphalt repairs, chipseal, dust control, snow removal and sanding, sign upgrades, alley grading, and general right-of-way maintenance. The Town of Westcliffe owns its two maintenance shops.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks in Westcliffe are characterized by their variety in location and type. Detached, concrete sidewalks are found in the older residential sections of Westcliffe, along both sides of 2nd Street south to Hermit Road. Moving east, detached sidewalks are found along portions of 3rd and 4th Streets (primarily north of Edwards); 5th Street has very little sidewalk. Sidewalks on Main Street consist of various widths and materials, from narrow dirt paths to attached concrete sections to improved brick streetscape areas. Sidewalks on Rosita Avenue consist of improved drainage, and ADA crossings. The Town installed sidewalks along Rosita to Adams Boulevard to Main Street in order to improve Walkability in the Town. Sidewalks on Powell are also being installed to connect Town trails and homes to businesses on Main Street. Future endeavors of the Town include: a crosswalk on O block of Main Street, Green Streets, and using RMS grants to improve walkability to all homes to businesses. Sidewalk, curb, gutter, and drainage improvement along SHW 69.

Airport

The Silver West Airport, located nine miles south of Westcliffe off SH 69, provides general aviation services, including hanger rental, tie downs, and fueling. The airport, which is operated by the Custer County Advisory Board, has a 7,000-foot-long, 40-foot- wide paved runway. Currently, only chartered aircraft is available at the airport. Passenger air service is provided in Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Denver, with connections worldwide.

Transit

While transit services are limited, the Wet Mountain Rotary Van Service operates the vans to transport Westcliffe area residents to Florence, Canon City, and Pueblo, primarily for medical appointments. Rides are available on a demand/response basis. The service operates four vehicles with accommodations for the handicapped, there are no fees, donations are accepted. Due to recent events the Van Services are facing problems and their services in the future are unclear. The Rotary Van service is a non-profit organization.

Public transportation exists from Salida (50 miles away) to Union Station in Denver.

Utilities

Utilities consist of water, wastewater, propane, electricity, solid waste, and telecommunications. Utility providers are entities separate from the Town of Westcliffe.

Water

Westcliffe is situated within the Arkansas Headwater Watershed, which has a water quality ranking of "3" on a scale of 1 to 6. This ranking indicates relatively minor water quality issues and a low susceptibility to toxic pollutants. The town's municipal water is sourced from two wells located in the intermontane trough of the Wet Mountain Valley, a terraced alluvial aquifer. Currently, Westcliffe's water complies with state water quality standards. However, the use of individual septic tanks within and near the town boundaries could potentially impact water quality in the future.

The Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District (RMWSD) serves an area of approximately 6,345 acres, which includes the towns of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff.

Water for the community is supplied by two wells: the Hermit (or Smith) Well and the Gallery Well, both located south of the town. Before distribution, the water is disinfected with a small amount of chlorine. A major upgrade to the Smith Well is nearing completion. This project will more than double its pumping capacity while reducing energy costs by over 50%.

Treated water is pumped from the wells through the distribution system to two steel storage tanks with a combined potable water capacity of 450,000 gallons. Both the 200,000 -gallon and 250,000-gallon tanks are located north of Silver Cliff. Water flows by gravity from each storage tank back into the distribution system consisting of three-inch, four-inch, six-inch, and eight-inch water pipes.

The current system is a combination of the existing water systems of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff, installed as early as the 1880's that were upgraded and connected by RMWSD in 1974. The distribution system includes six pressure reducing valves and approximately 78 fire hydrants within Westcliffe.

All residences and businesses within Westcliffe are connected to the water system by the use of water meters, with the exception of a few "grandfathered" properties that are still using individual wells.

The RMWSD currently serves 700 residential and commercial customers. RMWSD has sufficient water rights and water pumping capability to meet the increased demands of population growth well into the future.

Wastewater

The RMWSD also provides wastewater service within its service area. The wastewater system in Westcliffe, constructed in 1975, consists of six-inch to 10-inch gravity collection lines that terminate at a lift station located on Adams Boulevard that pumps collected wastewater via a four-inch force main to a Class D treatment facility. The wastewater treatment plant, located on a 10-acre site at SH 69 and Adams Boulevard, consists of two aerated ponds and a polishing pond. Wastewater effluent is either applied to an adjacent 40-acre site or chlorinated and discharged to filter beds.

RMWSD is completing the process of acquiring Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) approval for a major upgrade of the existing treatment system that will provide over twice the treatment capacity once installed.

Propane

Natural gas is not available in Westcliffe, the majority of homes in Westcliffe are served by propane. The Town of Westcliffe has numerous suppliers for propane in Town.

Electricity

Black Hills Energy provides electric power to the approximately 600 customers in Westcliffe. The electricity arrives via a 69-kilovolt line from Canon City to the Skinner substation in Silver Cliff. Power is then distributed by a grid system to Westcliffe. The current distribution system is capable of supplying an area 15 times the size of Westcliffe with electric power. The majority of power lines are above ground, although all new utility lines must be buried per requirements of the Town of Westcliffe's subdivision regulations adopted in 1998. Black Hills Energy also maintains the town's streetlights.

Given funding it is the Town's desire to change all electric lines from poles to underground infrastructure.

Solid Waste

Solid waste disposal service in Westcliffe is provided by Oak Disposal and P Bar O Disposal private hauling companies. The refuse is transported to the Custer County Landfill, "the cleanest landfill in the state," opened in 1994 on land located south of Westcliffe on CR 328 (Rosita Road. The Towns of Silver Cliff and Westcliffe sponsor an annual town clean-up day).

Recycling

The Town of Westcliffe recycles glass bottles, mixed paper, corrugated cardboard, aluminum and/or steel cans by utilizing either the Custer County Joanie Liebman Recycling Center at the County Landfill, the two County operated drop-off sites (one being in Silver Cliff and the other being in Westcliffe) and the High Country Recycling (HCR) Big Blue glass recycling collection container at Altitude Community Fitness.

The Town of Westcliffe also encourages the local businesses, agencies, residents, licensed liquor establishments, and authorized public events to recycle the above-mentioned recyclables. A partnership between the Town of Westcliffe and HCR allows for the placement of their recycling collection barrels next to each of the town's trash bins on Main Street from Spring thru to late fall with HCR being responsible for barrel management and monitoring. Free copies of the HCR recycling information brochure are always available for the taking at the Westcliffe Town Hall.

Telecommunications

The telecommunications infrastructure in Westcliffe is owned by CenturyLink, which provides approximately 2,400 access lines to the town. There numerous other ISPs in the valleys.

Emergency Services

Emergency services consist of law enforcement, search and rescue, fire protection, and medical services. Emergency service providers are entities separate from the Town of Westcliffe.

Law Enforcement

The Custer County Sheriff's Department Office provides law enforcement services to Westcliffe through a service contract with the Town of Westcliffe. The Sheriff's Department Office is located at 702 Rosita Avenue adjacent to the County Courthouse in Westcliffe. Custer County Search and Rescue provides assistance in locating lost or injured individuals in the Custer County area. The Search and Rescue building is located just east of the Sheriff's office at 710 Rosita Ave. in Westcliffe. The Search and Rescue team is comprised of volunteers – they include an ATV team, horse team, rock team, ground pounders, and office personnel. Search equipment includes four vehicles, a mobile command trailer, various radio equipment to allow remote relay towers for communications interoperability, and rock-climbing rescue equipment. Our Search and Rescue team has assisted Fremont, Teller, Pueblo, Huerfano, Saguache, Alamosa and Costilla counties in various missions.

Fire Protection

The Wet Mountain Fire Protection District (WMFPD) is a combination organization that provides fire suppression, fire prevention, hazardous material response, specialty rescue, and public education services to a Fire District comprising over 611 square miles. Fire apparatus includes 18 pieces of equipment that range from brush trucks to Class A pumpers, with water capacities that range from 250 to 3000 gallons. Compressed-air foam (CAFS) is available on five trucks and foam alone is available on two additional units. The department has two trucks dedicated to rescue services.

A formal mutual aid agreement exists with Deer Mountain Fire, Cañon City FPD, Western Fremont County Fire, Rye Fire Department, Beulah Fire, Upper Huerfano Fire, Wetmore Fire, Florence Fire, and others. The average response time in the town areas of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff ranges between eight and ten minutes. The Department implemented a paid shift system that helps assure that one or two firefighters are available for rapid response. The town of Westcliffe itself currently has an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of "5/6", which is used to determine insurance costs based on fire protection capability. The lower the rating, the lower the cost of insurance.

Medical

The Custer County Clinic is operated by Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center in Salida Colorado. The clinic is located at 704 Edwards St., Westcliffe. Custer County Medical Center provides comprehensive family practice, acute care, acute care stabilization for EMS transport, physical therapy, optometry, Orthopedics specialty, GYN specialty and Cardiac specialty services laboratory, x-ray and patient education. The clinic is staffed with 2 Physicians and 1 Nurse Practitioner and is open 5 days a week from 8:00am to 5:00pm. To schedule an appointment, please call 719-783-2380. Same day visits are often available.

Community Facilities

Westcliffe's community facilities include the town hall, the County Courthouse, the West Custer County Library, the Westcliffe Community Building, the old school house and All Aboard Westcliffe.

Town Hall

The Westcliffe town hall, Patterson Hall, is located at 1000 Main Street. The town hall serves as the municipal administrative office and is staffed by a Town Manager, Building and Zoning Official and a Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

The Elected Board of Trustees and appointed Planning Commission each conduct monthly meetings at the town hall.

Courthouse

The Custer County Courthouse is located at 205 6th Street. The courthouse contains numerous Custer County administrative offices, a Colorado State University Cooperative Extension office, human service functions, and the combined courts. The elected County Commissioners, the appointed Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Adjustment each conduct monthly meetings at the County Courthouse.

Public Library

The West Custer County Library District offers a local collection of around 12,000 items plus e-book and e-audio book downloads and more than 1.3 million books and movies for loan through a shared catalog with other Colorado libraries. The Community Room is available for community use both for group rental and as a quiet work space when it is not reserved. Events and classes for all ages are offered throughout the year, including a summer reading program for children and teens, several monthly events for teens and adults, a winter adult reading program, a weekly playgroup, and a monthly interactive learning series for early elementary students. The library sponsors three book clubs, a writers' group, a Scrabble group and local author events. True broadband is available through Wi-Fi and 10 public computers and laptops, and library staff provide one-on-one computer training by appointment. A number of online research and educational resources are available through the library's website. The library houses a central archive to assist in historical research of the area, much of which is available online for easier public access.

Other Community Buildings

The Westcliffe Community Building, located at 207 Main Street adjacent to the library, was donated to the Town of Westcliffe approximately 55 years ago. Operated by the West Custer County Library, and with a seating capacity of approximately 50 persons, the building is used for monthly meetings by various community groups.

The Historic "Westcliff" Schoolhouse, located at 320 South 4th Street. During the summer the school serves as community center for individuals and organizations as well as a museum open to the public by request. Two most prominent activities are the Annual Book Fair in August and the Older Schoolhouse Quilters Quilt show Labor Day weekend.

All Aboard Westcliffe, a community organization dedicated to the preservation of Westcliffe's railroad heritage. The interpretative center was designed as a replica of an historic depot and features information about the area's railroad history, and includes a 40-seat video theater with additional adjacent seating and a snack bar. The Heritage center is available for meetings and catered functions.

Educational Facilities

Educational facilities in Westcliffe include the Westcliffe Consolidated School and the Custer County Pre-School.

Custer County Public Schools

The Westcliffe Consolidated School, operated by Custer County School District C- I, is located at 709 Main Street and provides kindergarten through grade 12 education. Currently, all grades are located under one roof with an elementary school wing and a high school wing.

MAJOR LAND USE INFLUENCES

Adjacent Land Use

While "rural Westcliffe" is a local term for the unincorporated area bringing Westcliffe to the north, south, and west, the incorporated Town of Silver Cliff lies to the east of Westcliffe. Rural Westcliffe and Silver Cliff both influence land use patterns in Westcliffe.

Unincorporated Vicinity

The rural area outside of Westcliffe generally west of Grape Creek. The Grape Creek Zoning District is located in the Wet Mountain Valley, west of Westcliffe, State Highway (SH) 69 and Grape Creek. The Grape Creek Zoning District is generally a rich alluvial environment dominated by agricultural land uses, including irrigated lands, meadow hay lands, and grazing lands along the Grape Creek drainage. The Grape Creek Zoning District is intended to have a low population density and to remain agricultural in character, with a minimum lot size of 80 acres. Special consideration is being given to original parcels described by the aliquot method. Few subdivisions exist in the Grape Creek District.

Unincorporated areas generally east of Grape Creek are within the Foothills zoning district. The Foothills Zoning District is located in portions of the Wet Mountain Valley and the Wet Mountains, and is generally a sagebrush-covered environment with patented mining claims and approved residential subdivisions of 5 acres or more. The largest subdivision is Silver Cliff Heights, located in the northern portion of the Foothills District. Over 30 subdivisions in the Foothills Zoning District are platted with lots of at least 35 acres in size. Of these, the following 35 acre subdivisions, originally in the Foothills Zoning District, have been rezoned to Zoning District II: Bull Domingo Ranch, Centennial Ranch, portions of the Woods at Buck Mountain, Gem Mountain and McKinley Mountain.

Silver Cliff

Incorporated in 1879, Silver Cliff is the eastern gateway to Westcliffe via SH 96. Although its population is similar in size to Westcliffe's, Silver Cliff has an incorporated land area of 11.5 square miles, most of which is agricultural or undeveloped land extending south and east of Silver Cliff's existing urban area.

Silver Cliff contains five zoning districts that describe the town's existing land use: Agricultural, Urban Residential, Mobile Home Residential, Business, and Urban Residential with Subsurface Mining. Numerous mining claims still exist on Round Mountain and the agricultural lands in the eastern portions of Silver Cliff.

The majority of Silver Cliff's western edge shares a boundary with the eastern edge of Westcliffe. Zoning along this boundary between the two communities is relatively compatible, although each town has separate subdivision regulations that result in distinct land use differences.

Open Lands and Trails

There is a Park to Park Trail starting at Memorial Park going east to the Silver Cliff Park. The Park Master plan identifies future trails to go north of Bluff Park, alongside of Chloride gulch, and then into Silver Cliff. Westcliffe and dedicated open space are principally limited to 11.83 acres of drainage basins, almost 200,000 acres of public lands exist in Custer County. The U.S. Forest Service manages 85 percent of the public lands located in the county. The boundaries of the San Isabel National Forest are as close as seven miles west of Westcliffe in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and 16 miles east of town in the Wet Mountains, offering access to public lands via numerous public trails.

Within Westcliffe, almost 104 acres of private land is zoned agricultural, providing open views to the Sangre de Cristo range (see Appendix A). While a portion of agricultural land lies along Grape Creek and is relatively unsuited for development due to poor access and/or soil conditions, other areas currently zoned as agricultural are suitable for development.

The Colorado Open Lands is a nationally accredited 501(c) 3 non-profit, non-political conservation organization working with landowners to protect their land and water in Custer, Fremont, Pueblo, and Huerfano Counties

Town Parks

Westcliffe has four existing developed parks. A fifth park site, undeveloped, is located on Jerry Drive and is large enough to accommodate playground equipment.

Jess Price Memorial Park is a small park, owned and maintained by the Town of Westcliffe, located on Main Street at the corner of 4th Street. The park is landscaped with benches, and there is a public restroom adjacent to the park. Jess Price Park consists of a stage for bands and art, seating areas for people to gather, and is a gathering area for local organizations like the Farmers Market to help bring business to Main Street.

Memorial Park, located north of Hermit Street between 3rd and 4th streets, covers an entire town block. The park is fenced and has a baseball diamond, two picnic shelters, and a restroom. New playground equipment has also been installed recently. Memorial Park is owned and maintained by the Town of Westcliffe.

Hermit Park is immediately southeast of Memorial Park that has a multipurpose playing field, tennis court, a picnic pavilion and parking area.

Summit Park is a small area located at the west end of Westcliffe on Adams Blvd. adjoining the Bluff area. The park is used for events and viewing the area. There is a Westcliffe Parks Advisory Committee (WPAC). The WPAC is currently reviewing all parks in the Town to plan, grow, and develop new designs for all parks in the Town of Westcliffe. Observatory at the west end of the Summit Park donated by Dark Skies, Inc. known as the Smokey Jack Observatory.

Bluff Park area of about 10 acres is owned by the Town, to preserve it as a public park with open views across the valley forever. The amphitheater has been upgraded with plans to include a covered stage at the north end of the park.

Regional recreational facilities are available within a short drive from Westcliffe. Five miles north of Westcliffe is DeWeese Reservoir, a Colorado state wildlife area with camping and fishing.

Pocket Park was developed by private, public partners: Cliffs' Action Revitalization Team, Town of Westcliffe, Rebecca's Fund and private individuals- Willie Britt and Cathy Snow, and David Music transforming an alley into a multiuser park.

Residential

Currently, 111 acres of land within Westcliffe are developed for residential purposes at an average density of 5.1 persons per acre. With 206 acres of vacant land zoned for future residential development, anticipated population increases can be accommodated at the same average density within Westcliffe town limits for the next 20 years (see Appendix A). Currently there are six blocks south of Hermit Road that are undeveloped. These 6 blocks could be used for higher density housing.

Commercial

Commercial land accounts for 59 acres in Westcliffe. The majority of commercial activities are in the Main Street corridor, either on Main Street between 2nd Street and 6th Street or along 2nd Street between Rosita Avenue and North Avenue. Commercial uses are dominated by numerous retail trades, several real estate offices, financial institutions, and lodging facilities.

The leading source of income for the Town of Westcliffe is derived from the tax on retail sales. The total sales tax revenues for Westcliffe in 2023 is anticipated to be approximately \$1,263,491, or 70 percent of the total revenues. Westcliffe does not have a lodging tax.

Several vacant parcels west of 2nd Street to Adams Boulevard are available for commercial activities. More significant, however, is the amount of available vacant land zoned for commercial uses east of 6th Street/SH 69 and south of Main Street.

There are five (5) planned unit developments (PUDs)-Adams Filing 1 & 2, Mission Plaza Filing 1 & 2, Nordyke Commercial Park, Sangre View Park and Shadow Ridge. In two subdivisions, Columbine Park and Demense Conquistador, while portions of these PUDs may be used for either residential, industrial, or other purposes, land remains available for commercial use.

Industrial

Industrial uses, primarily office warehouse, light manufacturing and outdoor storage, cover 5 acres. These developments are located in the Rodeo Park, Sangre View Park, and Nordyke Commercial Park subdivisions.

The Rodeo Park subdivision, located on the north end of Westcliffe off of SH 69/Lake DeWeese Road, and the Nordyke Commercial Park, located near the southern tip of Westcliffe off of SH 69, have several vacant

parcels that are zoned for industrial uses. At build-out, these subdivisions could collectively accommodate almost three times the amount of industrial development that currently exists within Westcliffe.

Historic Buildings

Westcliffe has six structures that are designated as historic on either the Colorado State Historic Register or the National Historic Register.

- Denver and Rio Grande Engine House West end of Rosita Avenue
State Register 12/08/1993, 5CR221

Constructed in 1900-01, the Denver and Rio Grande engine house served the Westcliffe terminus of the branch line from Texas Creek. The engine house, depot (Miller House) and section house (Hanssen House) are all that remain of the Texas Creek branch of the Denver and Rio Grande railroad line. Few historic engine houses of any type survive in Colorado, and engine houses were not commonly built on branch lines. This example of a single-stall, branch-line engine house is particularly rare.

- Hope Lutheran Church 310 3rd Street
National Register 01/31/1978, 5CR55

Designed and built in 1917 by its pastor, the church houses one of the oldest Lutheran congregations in Colorado. The ornamental concrete block building has a 96 - foot tower visible for miles. An elaborately carved altar with a gothic arch and 11 ornate spires was also the work of the pastor. Fourteen stained glass windows illuminate the simple interior.

- National Hotel/Wolff Building 201 2nd Street
National Register 11/05/1987, 5CR5

This 1887 two-story brick building has a quarry-faced stone front with arched windows trimmed in contrasting tooled and dressed stone. This example of a small 19th century Victorian commercial building has a sophistication of design not usually found in the small mountain communities of Colorado. It was Westcliffe's first hotel and is the only remaining stone front building in Westcliffe.

- Mercier House 215 S. 6th
Street State Register 06/12/1996, 5CR261

The Mercier House, built in 1898, is significant as an example of the residential work of Archie Scherer, an early Westcliffe stonemason. Scherer, who was known for his skillful use of local fieldstone and for his attention to detail, also built the Westcliffe Jail and the Westcliffe School.

- Westcliffe Jail 116 2nd Street
National Register 02/03/1993, 5CR218

This small one-story building was constructed in 1888 of locally collected fieldstone. The building served as an incarceration facility until the mid – 1920's.

- Westcliff School 304 4th Street
National Register 07/27/1989, 5CR29

Built in 1891 of local fieldstone, this rural schoolhouse functioned as a school until 1953. The building has an unusual flat-topped gable roof.

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