





## CHAPTER 4. OUR CHARACTER LOOK AND FEEL

People make a lot of initial decisions based on the appearance of how we and our things look. These decisions based on appearance play into our personal pride, our individual likes, and dislikes, and ultimately help us to have more confidence and ease about ourselves and the places we choose to live.

The “character” of a place, sometimes called its design, is what defines its visual appeal (look) and experiential quality (feel). This chapter in Calhan’s Comprehensive Plan articulates the Calhan Community’s collective expression of how Calhan ought to look and feel in hopes to attract new people to Town. Understanding our shared vision for Calhan’s preferred character and sense of place can be further divided into private and public realms.

## The Private Realm

The Public and Private Realm distinctions are universal understandings and are not specifics in our Town code as of today. The Private Realm is everything, land and improvements, which are privately owned. As a statutory Town, Calhan has a legislative right to express what should be allowed to occur within private property (land use or function) and how the built environment should be designed and built (character or form). Typically design standards of a Town code provide guidance on block layout, building mass and articulation, materials and colors, landscaping and buffering, decks, fencing, and screening.

## The Public Realm

The Public Realm is everything, land and improvements, which are collectively owned, maintained, and freely accessible among the community, including gateways, signage and monumentation, streets and connections, parks and plazas, public buildings, and other areas intended for public use and interaction. These spaces should be designed to protect and facilitate public safety while fostering the freedom of community engagement, commerce, and civic discourse. Often, the consistency of design and design elements in the public realm allows a community the best opportunity to directly shape the overall character of the Town.

## Our Private Realm

### PLACES FOR LIVING

The Town of Calhan is comprised of three distinct residential neighborhoods, including two original neighborhoods divided by US 24 that date back to the late 1880s before the incorporation of the Town in 1919, and a more recent subdivision built between 1985 and 2015. Example pictures and description help to express Calhan's current residential character on the following pages.

### Calhan North

This neighborhood is an original neighborhood of Calhan located north of US 24 with fifty-four single-family residential lots that vary in size from 18,000 to 34,000 square feet. The housing stock varies in age, dating back to 1898 and as new as 2023. Home types range from 2 bed/1baths to 4 bed/2 bath. Thirty percent (30%) of the homes are manufactured/modular homes, and the range of assessed value of each lot and home at the time of the writing of this plan was between \$120,000 and \$484,000 dollars.

### Calhan South

"South" is the older original neighborhood of Calhan located south of US 24 with 138 slightly smaller single-family residential lots that vary in size from 11,000 to almost 13,000 square feet. The housing stock varies in age, dating back to 1889 and as new as 2022. Home types range from 3 bed/1bath to 4 bed/2 bath. Fifteen percent (15%) of the homes are manufactured/ modular homes, and the range of assessed value of each lot and home at the time of the writing of this plan was between \$114,000 and \$565,000 dollars.

### Southridge

Southridge is Calhan's newest single-family residential neighborhood. Pushing 30 years of age in 2025, Southridge is located south of 10th Street along both sides of Monument Street southeast of Calhan South. The subdivision is more contemporary, comprised of forty residential lots that vary in size. Majority of the lots are around 9,000 square feet with a few larger square footage offerings. The housing stock is as old as 1985 and as new as 2015. Most home types are 3-4 bed and 2-3 bath with a mix of single and two stories. The larger-lot homes offer more beds and baths. The range of assessed value of each lot and home at the time of the writing of this plan was between \$332,000 and \$850,000 dollars.

## OTHER RESIDENTIAL OPTIONS SENIOR LIVING

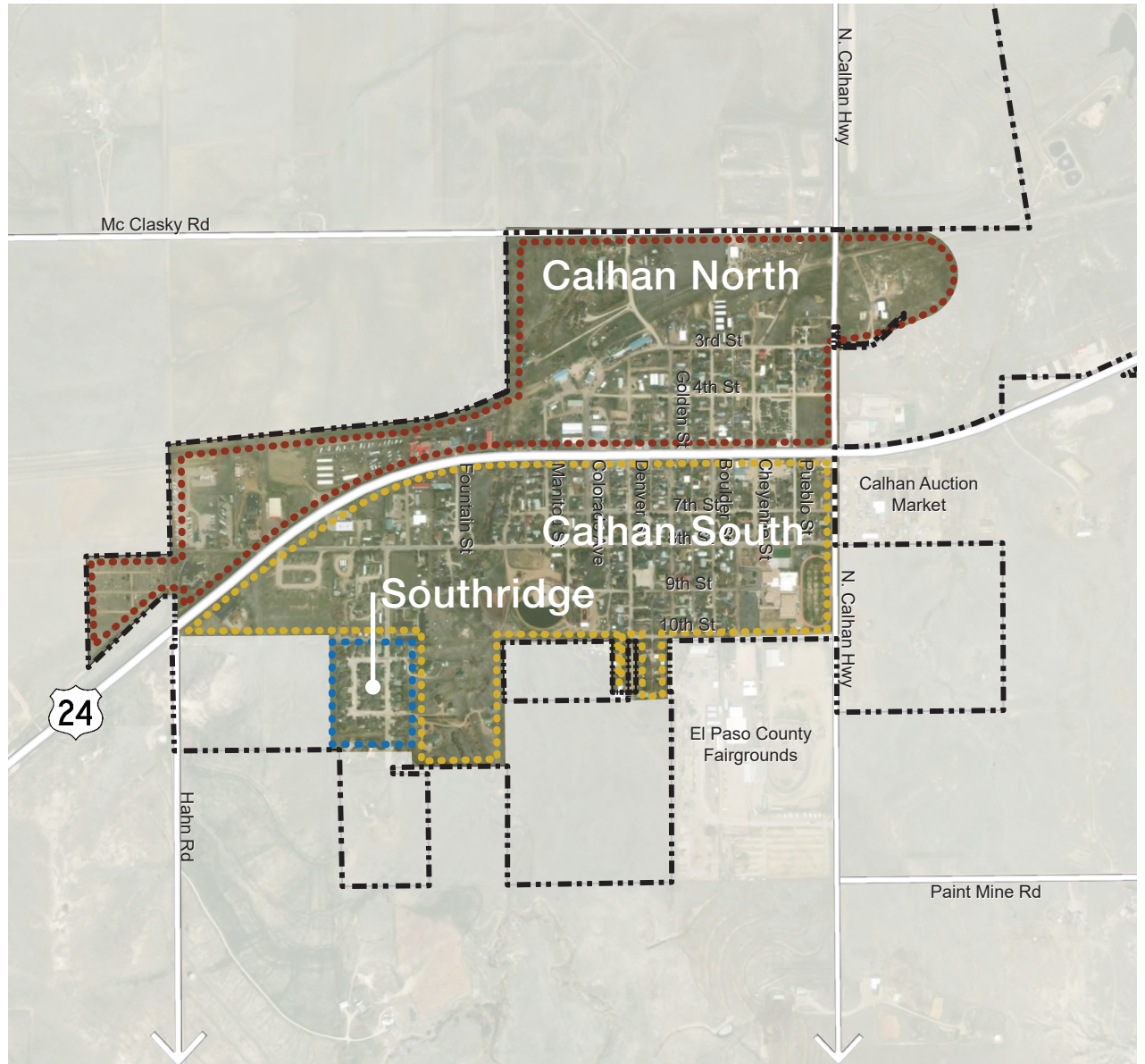
Silvercrest Villas – Housing Authority of the Town of Calhan is in Calhan North between Cheyenne and Pueblo streets north of US 24 and south of 4th Street. Housing Authority of the Town of Calhan is an unincorporated nonprofit association and is the landlord/owner of Silvercrest Villas an apartment complex for seniors 62 years of age or older, along with disabled persons over 55 years of age. This is an independent living facility that features 20 1 bedroom/1 bath units. At the time of this writing, this senior living option is at risk of closing. Should that occur the only “Age-in-place” option for Calhan residents would no longer be available.

## Multifamily

Nine multifamily lots are scattered about Town offering a total of forty residential units ranging from 1-3 bedrooms and 1-2 bathrooms per unit. Unit square footages range between 750 and 1,800 square feet.

## Mobile and Manufactured Housing Parks

North of the Southridge neighborhood and in the northwest commercial district north of US 24, Calhan offers two mobile home parks of about thirty-six lots that contain approximately fifty-two mobile home units for sale and spaces for leasing. Mobile homes provide individuals with a cost-effective housing solution that can be leveraged as people save for a down payment on more permanent housing.



## Desired Features of New Homes

- **“Open concept layouts:** Spacious living areas with integrated kitchen, dining, and family room spaces.”
- **“Mountain-inspired design:** Exteriors with elements like stone accents, wood detailing, and large windows to capitalize on views.”
- **“Smart home technology:** Integrated systems for lighting, thermostats, security, and appliances.”
- **“Luxury finishes:** High-end kitchen appliances, upgraded flooring, and custom lighting.“
- **“Outdoor living spaces:** large patios, decks, and covered porches with outdoor kitchens”
- **“Variety of housing options:** Single-family homes, Townhomes, and condominiums to suit different lifestyles.“
- **“Sustainability features:** Energy-efficient appliances, solar panel readiness, and increased insulation.”

## The Future of Housing in Calhan

Calhan’s existing housing stock is diverse and offers a choice in size, price, type, and style. But the community also knows that the housing market and technology are ever-changing. Considering that the newest neighborhood is already 30 years old now, the Calhan community recognizes that if they want to attract their top desired target market of young and middle-aged families to Town, growth will need to include some further diversification of residential. But what is it that today’s home buyers in the post-COVID era are looking for here in the greater El Paso County region?

## CALHAN’S DESIRED RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

For Calhan, the mix of offerings includes new choices in both single-family and multifamily housing. The pictures shown on the following pages were used in a visual preference survey presented to the community for response. They represent initial reactions to type, look, and feel. They do not represent a strict interpretation of the desired character but offer visual guidance to what the community is open to accepting as new housing choice offerings for residential development are contemplated in the future.

## Single Family Residential



During Community Workshops we indicated new ranch homes with street-facing garages and large-lot residential homes are the most highly preferred housing among our community members. Two-story homes of both alley-loaded and street-facing garages were also considered desirable. Three-story homes with street-facing garages came in third place.

## Multifamily Residential



Calhan knows the cost of housing is going up, and offering housing choices in multifamily is becoming more important to attract young people and families. For Calhan, single-story duplexes are most highly preferred, followed by two-story duplexes and multi-plex (3,4,+unit) buildings. Three-story multiplex buildings with a strong “Colorado” architectural style came in third place with very little desire for units that were more modern in look and feel.

# Manufactured Housing



As of the date of this plan, manufactured housing is not a prohibited housing type and is allowed on residential lots throughout Calhan. In general, allowing manufactured homes to be built adjacent to existing residential homes in established and new residential neighborhoods can potentially negatively impact the property values of neighboring homes and neighborhoods.

Both manufactured housing as a single-family housing option, and mobile-home parks in multifamily housing were presented as housing choices in the visual preference survey, both receiving the least number of favorable responses. To ensure Calhan continues to provide broad choices in housing but also protects the investments of established neighborhoods, the Town may want to consider policies to limit the use of manufactured housing for designated areas of Town like the Town's existing mobile/manufactured home parks.

## HOUSING (HG) PRIORITY #1 – PROVIDE A BALANCED AND DIVERSE HOUSING SUPPLY THAT IS WELL-DESIGNED, WELL-MAINTAINED, AND AVAILABLE TO ALL CITIZENS THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY

Who calls Calhan home defines the character and identity of our Town. The Town's potential for growth and development represents an opportunity to diversify housing and employment options. Expanding the variety of housing options and price points can assist in retaining those already living within our community as their housing needs may change, attracting new residents, and supporting new and existing employers in attracting their workforce.

New development should generally be compatible with adjacent development. Compatibility can take many forms and does not indicate a new development will be a replica of existing neighborhoods. For example, because one single-family neighborhood exists, it does not guarantee all future development in the area will be similar single-family homes.

Future development should respond to adjacent context. Residential land use should be given the necessary flexibility to accommodate the evolving needs of our community and our target market. Our community identified young / middle-aged families and young professionals -trades/ laborers as our target markets of growth to attract and plan for.

Whether a young professional, looking to establish roots, or a middle-aged family looking for a residence that meets their financial, physical and social needs, our community should strive to provide a smart variety of attainable and desirable housing options. The current gaps in housing options can have negative impacts on our efforts to diversify Calhan's economy. Strategically locating different densities of housing can focus development where cost-effective infrastructure improvements can be made available in an efficient manner.



**Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve HG Priority#1:**

1. Promote the development of a mix of housing types in identified areas.
2. Preserve and develop neighborhoods with a mix of housing types.

Engaging developers who believe in connecting with local people and neighboring businesses can be an opportunity to add value to our community. To ensure transparency and build relationships with community members, an open, honest dialogue needs to take place. Interactions between developers, our Town staff and community provide developers an opportunity to gain new insights that can help shape a project and save time and money in the long run. Actively working to build and strengthen local relationships creates trust and respect among all parties. By meeting our residents, keeping the community in mind when designing, and minimizing disturbances, developers can leave lasting impressions as good neighbors within the community.

**Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve HE Priority#1:**

3. Preserve the character of rural and environmentally sensitive areas.
4. Support aging-in-place housing options to meet residents' needs through all stages of life.
5. Promote best practices for all proposed residential development and ensure consistent enforcement of Town Code

Support organic growth and discourage leapfrog development. Explore impact fees and a parkland dedication ordinance to ensure all existing and future residents have access to green spaces. Consistently enforce the Town Code to ensure our Community's health, welfare and safety are protected. Encourage residential developments to retain and integrate environmental features into their ultimate design.

**Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve HE Priority#1:**

6. Locate attainable housing that provides convenient access to goods, services, and employment
7. Encourage economic and residential development that caters to the needs of young and middle-aged families

Our Community's housing needs are linked to our economic development goals. For our community to succeed in attracting our target markets of young / middle-age families and young professional / trades laborers, an adequate supply of housing must be in reasonable proximity to employment and community facilities. Offering a variety of housing options and price points attracts new residents and retains existing members of the community as their housing needs evolve (age in place). This creates a housing environment supporting existing / new employers in attracting the needed workforce to contribute to a thriving economy and successful community.





## Our Private Realm Con.

### PLACES FOR WORKING, SHOPPING AND DINING

#### Existing Commercial areas

Colorado Avenue and US 24, also known as 5th Street, are the original corridors that Calhan has most utilized for organizing commercial, retail, office, and industrial uses throughout the Town's history. Today, these corridors still function this way, along with some additional auto-related and other general commercial activity occurring along Yoder Street (Calhan Highway) along the eastern edge of Town. In short, Calhan essentially offers three types of commercial land use areas, including main street, general, and highway commercial. Example pictures below offer a visual sampling of Calhan's current commercial character, which strongly influences the overall impression of the Town.

## Colorado Avenue - Main Street Commercial Character



## US 24 - Highway Commercial Character



## Yoder/Calhan Highway - General Commercial Character



## AN ECONOMY IN DECLINE

2016 was the last update to Calhan's Comprehensive Plan. In that plan writeup Colorado Avenue and 5th Street were able to boast a variety of businesses including, a mix of: **goods** (hardware store, grocery store, pet and livestock feed stores, liquor store, convenience stores, gun shop, regional livestock auction house, automotive parts and repair stores), **services** (medical clinic, insurance firm, bank, post office, library, newspaper office), **food and lodging** (bar, two restaurants, hotel), and a handful of entertainment services (video store, and a bowling center).

In the past 10 years, much of that variety has dwindled with the closing of the hardware store, a five-and-dime, the bowling alley, the hotel, one of the feed stores, and most recently, a Family Dollar along Bijou Street. As for restaurants, multiple attempts have been made to help local businesses establish a presence, but most attempts have struggled to succeed.

## FUTURE OF BUSINESS

There is anticipation for new growth knocking at the Town’s doorstep, and it often contemplates more residential development. What is great about housing is that the people who buy it often have or need jobs. Community members throughout the planning process for Calhan have expressed a strong need for a new economic development strategy focused on bringing more jobs and businesses to Town. Specifically, the community has expressed a desire to attract young professionals, tradespeople, and laborers as the second most important target market. But what kinds of businesses could we support, need, want, and what should the spaces where they will work look like?

## CALHAN’S IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

A simple, often-used statistical tool for understanding a Town’s existing economic performance is called a location quotient (LQ). In simplest terms, the LQ of a place can give a community a sense of what industries are active within the community and whether those activities are being imported into or exported out of the community. This is determined by comparing the concentration of an industry or occupation in a smaller location to a larger region on average and presented as a ratio based on the number 1.

An LQ greater than 1 typically indicates an industry is producing more than is consumed locally, suggesting it is an export industry. Conversely, an LQ less than 1 suggests the region is importing more than it produces in that industry. Please see the Location Quotient table for Calhan comparing the communities’ industries to those of El Paso County, the State of Colorado, and the USA.

Calhan’s top employment sectors include Construction (18.3%), Retail Trade (16.5%), Education Services, Health Care and Social Assistance (15.9%), and Public Administration (13.4%), making up more than 64 percent of the workforce in Calhan. The table has been organized to reflect Calhan’s employment industry breakdown from greatest to least.

Calhan’s biggest export industries include agriculture, construction, public administration, retail trade, and other services except public administration (e.g., repair, maintenance, laundry, religious and civic organizations). Industries with an LQ of 1.25 or greater were considered strong export industries for the Town.

NAICS Industry Category	Calhan Employment %	Location Quotient		
		EPC	CO	USA
Construction	18.30%	2.65	2.32	2.65
Retail trade	16.50%	1.53	1.67	1.56
Educational services, health care and social assistance	15.90%	0.67	0.73	0.68
Public administration	13.40%	2.03	2.79	2.91
Other services, except public administration	7.30%	1.28	1.49	1.52
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	6.70%	0.43	0.42	0.52
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	5.50%	7.85	2.89	3.44
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.50%	1.25	1.08	0.92
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4.90%	0.65	0.71	0.74
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	2.40%	0.27	0.25	0.27
Manufacturing	2.40%	0.43	0.36	0.24
Wholesale trade	1.20%	1.20	0.63	0.60
Information	0.00%	-	-	-

(2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, US Census.gov)

## ATTRACTING A NEW WORKFORCE AND INDUSTRY

Calhan’s highest imported industries include Arts, Entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services; Manufacturing; and Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services. The industries with an LQ of less than 0.50 are highlighted and are considered the strongest imported industries and should be considered opportunity indicators with a high enough demand to suggest the development of local businesses might be supported.

Thriving communities typically aim to have multiple industries with a LQ greater than 1.0, because it means that the area is not too reliant on any one industry. For Calhan, its highest imported industries may offer the lowest-hanging fruit for creating more local jobs.

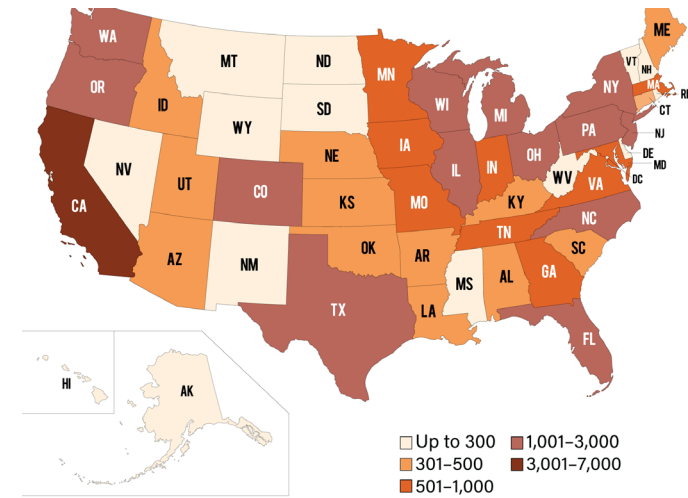
Approximately 11 percent of Calhan’s land use is commercial, retail, office, or industrial. Vacant buildings do exist in Town, but the available building stock is older requiring repair and renovation that may limit the building stock’s ability to attract the kinds of businesses that may want to employ the young professionals, tradespeople, and laborers that Calhan has identified as their target market workforce.

## MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing jobs are generally considered skilled trades, requiring specialized knowledge, training, and direct skills. While some manufacturing roles may involve general labor tasks, many, especially those involving precision work or complex machinery, fall squarely under the skilled trades category. Looking at the industry regionally, manufacturing is very established in Colorado with room to grow according to the USDA. (Source: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-markets-prices/processing-marketing/food-and-beverage-manufacturing>).

With Calhan’s LQ for manufacturing at 0.24 and the Town’s prominent location along US 24 between Colorado Springs and Limon, a strong local business opportunity in manufacturing may exist to broaden the Town’s economic development offerings. Calhan’s unique positioning with surrounding ranching and farming may offer ideal manufacturing opportunities for: meat processing, dairy, bakery (e.g., tortillas), animal food, grain and oils, and even beverages. If Calhan could establish manufacturing in Town, attracting strong local tradespeople and laborers target market could be achieved.

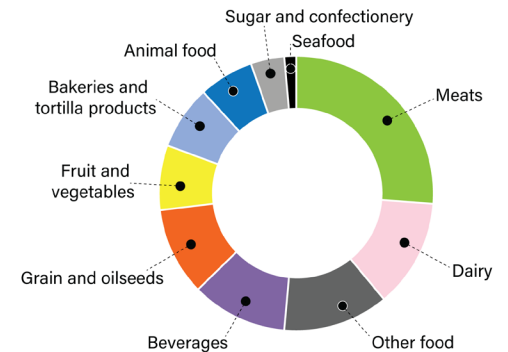
## Number of Food and Beverage Manufacturing Established, 2022



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 County Business Patterns; data as of June 2024.

## Components of food and beverage manufacturing: Sales, values of shipments, or revenue by industry, 2021

Meat processing (26 percent) and dairy product manufacturing (13 percent) are the largest components of the food sector’s sales



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2021 Annual Survey of Manufactures; data as of December 2022.

## DINING, SHOPPING, AND HANGING OUT

If we look at the list of amenities and services community members want to see in Town and compare them to the greatest importing industries it is evident that Calhan residents most likely travel out of Town to spend money (lost sales tax dollars) on the things not available in Town, like arts, entertainment, recreation, and restaurants.

Dining and shopping jobs are generally considered service jobs, not necessarily professional, trades, or labor, but the Community's low LQ for entertainment, arts, and food suggests there is an opportunity to grow this industry in Calhan.

## CALHAN'S DESIRED COMMERCIAL CHARACTER

If Calhan could attract new businesses that follow residential rooftops, what would the community want the expanded commercial aspect of the Town to look like? The pictures shown on the following pages were used in a visual preference survey presented to the community for response. These pictures represent initial reactions to type, look, and feel. They do not represent a strict interpretation of the desired character but offer visual guidance to what the community is open to seeing, as new choice offerings for **commercial, office, restaurant, retail, and industrial development** are contemplated for Calhan in the future.



## Mixed Commercial, Business and Industrial Park



Calhan community members' impressions of possible commercial properties are broad and welcoming. They are sensitive to scale and most prefer single-story business park development to offer places for businesses that would draw in young professionals. Manufacturing A-frame type warehouse architecture, residential neighborhood office conversions, and light industrial warehouse development all received similar interest. The three-story adaptive reuse building received a few votes of interest. The least desired building type was the modern three-story adaptive corporate office building.

## Mixed Retail, Restaurant Commercial



The community has a strong desire to cater to the Town's existing main street and highway commercial character. Highway convenience, and walkable/bikeable retail commercial development types received the strongest support. Arterial strip commercial, and auto-oriented drive through restaurants shared second place, while big-box retail, a mixed character and use example received very little support.



## JOBS AND ECONOMY (JE) PRIORITY #1 - NURTURE A RESILIENT ECONOMY THAT CONTRIBUTES TO A STRONG, VIBRANT COMMUNITY

Expanding and diversifying the types of businesses in our community increases employment opportunities, generates additional tax revenues, diversifies the economic base, and improves the quality of life for residents. Bringing new employers to our community will create a multiplier effect and add other jobs and income. To attract new businesses, our community must provide a competitive and attractive environment. Marketing and promotion are used extensively to promote the positive business climate, environment and services available for targeted firms.



### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve JE Priority#1:

8. Utilize economic opportunity zones to support new business development
9. Strengthen the economy with a skilled workforce and targeted investment
10. Encourage the development of commercial and industrial districts in under served areas

Our Town's business climate is the cornerstone of building and maintaining our Community's economy. There are three components to our Community's business climate:

- Retention and expansion of existing businesses
- Entrepreneurial development
- Business attraction

All are important to our Community's healthy business climate and diversified business base. To support these components, we need to:

- Promote the availability of fiber-optic lines and the availability of suitable industrial and manufacturing sites in and around the Town
- Evaluate various incentive packages to attract commercial developments to desired areas within the Town
- Identify those target industries we can attract to our community which will support a more diverse local economy resilient to the ebbs and flows of any one industry
- Review and update our existing zoning code to ensure it can adapt to new uses and technologies
- Explore strategic investments in infrastructure, use of incentives, and annexation to attract target industries

### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve JE Priority#1:

11. Recruit new businesses and spur the development of growing sectors
12. Support efforts to recruit, train, and retain a skilled workforce

Characteristics of new and small businesses include the willingness and ability to innovate and respond quickly to rapid changes in the market, strong ties to the community and less willingness to relocate, and high profit margins if successful. Small business development diversifies the economic base and creates new jobs but also provides stability to the economic base. Small firms can respond quickly and easily to remain competitive in economic downturns. Many successful economic development strategies, which bring new dollars into a community, are the result of public-private partnerships that focus on serving growing sectors in the economy, and which bring in both individual and institutional dollars. Work with local business and economic development groups to develop a business recruitment and retention strategy for the Town.







## Our Public Realm

The Public Realm and how it is designed is a Community's most direct way to express a shared character and aesthetic because it involves the creation and maintenance of all the shared public property in Town including: streets and connections, parks and plazas, trails and open spaces, gateways and public art.

Calhan's public realm has experienced years of delayed maintenance, and that erosive burden impacts the Community's ability to pull itself out of a cycle of decline back into healthy growth.

Improving and maintaining an attractive public realm will require the Calhan community to cultivate partnerships among all community stakeholders to actively contribute in a commitment of shared resources. The Town and its citizens, private landowners, the development community, the school district, local business, the county and state agencies will all need to come together to ensure Calhan can reach its Vision.

This Plan effort signifies an inflection point in time where the community recognizes it has been in a cycle of decline in the recent past, and now with this comprehensive effort has collectively come together to seek an action-oriented strategy to redirect the community towards purposeful growth.

## “WHAT IF WE” IDEAS

During the planning process, various “What if we did this?” Ideas were presented to attending community members during a Community Workshop hosted in Town at the local Methodist church. With food in hand community members had the opportunity to watch a 25-minute self-read presentation covering all the ideas and then were welcomed to walk around the room and re-review the ideas on large presentation boards. The community members were asked to envision a new future and weigh in on a new vision, character imagery, as well as the “what if” ideas and then organize their preferences in order based on expressed priority. These “what if” ideas are illustrated on the adjacent page.



# WHAT IF WE

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- *Fix Our **Local Streets***
- *Improve the **Town Infrastructure** By Allowing for New Development*
- *Build a Regional **Recreation Center***
- *Implement **Main Street** Streetscape Improvements*
- *Pursue Programming to **Share Resources** with the School District and Other Entities in Town*
- *Create New Gateway **Signage / Monumentation** for the Town of Calhan*
- *Provide **Green Connections** Through New Development and Connect to the Town's Current Trail System*
- *Build a New Recycled **Water Utility***
- *Creation of a Regional **Multi-Use Trail** and Network Through Town*
- *Install **Roundabouts** at Either End of the Town on Highway 24*

## MANAGING FOR SENSIBLE GROWTH

**WHAT IF.....** Calhan was approached by an interested party, a developer, to annex a piece of adjacent land large enough to seek services for and build a 400-unit development in Town? What would be the potential impact and how would such an idea be accomplished?

## INFRASTRUCTURE, ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION (IRT) PRIORITY #1 - LOCAL STREETS, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND DEVELOPMENT GROWTH (FIX THE ROADS)

Our local roads really need help, our water and sewer infrastructure is aging underneath and, our street pavement is cracking. To fix our streets now, we will be tearing them up again to fix failing pipes below. For some time, we have relied on the strategy of deferred maintenance and now are stuck with a costly infrastructure problem that we cannot afford to fix. As a result, our Community's worn public realm appearance is affecting our ability to thrive.

The development community wants to bring a significant amount of housing to the area. It's possible that encroaching growth could more than double the Town's size within a decade. This challenge is an opportunity because it brings restorative financial resources into play. If Calhan allowed for some growth through annexation and development of neighborhoods, the influx of financial resources could help to expedite needed upgrades as well as generate revenue through taxes and fees to help fund street resurfacing around Town.

### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve IRT Priority#1:

17. Modernize Town infrastructure to incorporate a greater diversity of utilities and position Calhan for future growth

Infrastructure, provided by both the Town and private business, is the support system needed for producing and delivering goods and services. Smart investments and upgrades to our infrastructure is an effort which positively impacts all of us in one way or another.

### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve IRT Priority#1:

18. Evaluate, review compliance or potentially re-rate capacity at Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP)
19. Increase the size of the main interceptor to WWTP prior to roadway improvements
20. Add redundant supply to and from Hahn Storage Tank and WWTP
21. Build additional water storage capacity and booster pumps to serve future annexations
22. Erect additional wells to pump the maximum amount of legally allowed water for Calhan

Before any significant development can occur in Calhan, the community needs to ensure we are prepared to handle any increase in sewer and water services. This is not only a matter of condition due to the age of the current system but also its capacity. For example the water demands of different types of new businesses can vary and some, such as beverage manufacturing, may be in excess of current capacities. During 2023 and 2024, the Town, in collaboration with a local landowner, increased the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) landholding from approximately 10 acres to a platted 46+ acre site, identified as Lot 1, Town of Calhan Treatment Facility Filing No. 1. Quadrupling the size of the Town's wastewater treatment facility is a foundational win, putting in place a key infrastructure component that will be necessary should the Town decide to allow for growth in the future.



## Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve IRT Priority#1:

23. Adopt a Stormwater Manual
24. Prioritize defective areas per televised pipe segments
25. Up-size pipe segments where flow capacity is limited
26. Design culvert approaches to prevent clogging
27. Replace culverts and improve channels to increase capacity along the creek beds
28. Roadway cross-section improvements
29. Paved Roadways with improved cross-sections will help prevent roadway erosion
30. Seek opportunities to partner with development interests to help improve the Town's aging infrastructure
31. Foster partnerships with the private sector to pool resources to bring street improvements, a rec center and more amenities to Town
116. Promote sustainable best practices in development and infrastructure, including the use of renewable energy, water conservation, and green building techniques.

Strategically coordinate proposed growth/land use with the future placement of utilities, roads, and other infrastructure between the involved public and private stakeholders. Create and/or update functional plans for streets, water, wastewater, recreation and other community infrastructure to provide the basis for capital improvement programming. Consider adoption of adequacy standards to require property owners/developers demonstrate adequate facilities exist to support a proposed project, considering both existing and programmed infrastructure.

Direct growth to areas with provisions for adequate utility service. Explore alternatives in which new development can pay its fair share of the costs of community improvements and facilities that are necessary to serve the development.

Promote the balanced and intelligent extension and maintenance of utilities and infrastructure. Leverage the ability to provide services (such as electricity, sewer and water) to accomplish Plan goals and objectives. Continue to evaluate infrastructure expansion needs through the analysis of development patterns.

- For this Plan effort, HR Green built a model of the Town's existing sewer system and have determined the existing system can handle approximately 185 more single-family equivalent (SFE) homes based on the size of the existing interceptor to the WWTP.
- In 2024, state water rights attorneys retained by the Town determined that Calhan's 'paper rights' are approximately 580 acre-feet per year, sufficient to support up to 1,160 SFE units. However, current infrastructure restricts access to only 300 acre-feet, which supports the existing 330 homes and allows for only 270 more SFE's, should additional residential be approved to be built within the Town. To unlock the potential for yet an additional 560 SFES, based on remaining water paper rights, new wells will be required to draw the necessary water to support such expansion.

## Development Growth is Perpetual

*In Colorado, development impact is resolved by those who create the impact for an existing community. Calhan's existing sewer interceptor has a capacity to handle 185 more SFE's, and the existing wells in Town can only pump enough water to support 270 more SFE's, If a developer wanted and were approved to build 400 homes in Calhan, that developer would need to pay for the necessary improvements to accommodate the remaining 215 homes that need sewer service and the other 130 that would still need service to fresh water. Having a developer pay for such improvements would mean a windfall for the Town, but what would be the real impact? New development will impact existing mains for water and sewer along 8th Street and throughout Town. Once capacities are reached in the existing infrastructure, expansion of the 8th Street mains infrastructure will be necessary. Future development will also require construction of a second main most likely built along the county road, McClasky Road. When that expansion is necessary, it will open up the surrounding land for more growth to the north and south of Town.*

*As infrastructure is updated and different local roadways are deemed "clear" from necessary future upgrades, there will be opportunities to improve the character of Calhan's local streets and public realm. Cobbling of resources will be needed, our Town will need to be resourceful and actively build good partnerships the development community.*

### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve IRT Priority#1:

#### 32. Initiate a Capital Improvements Plan

A Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) for the Town would outline the financing, location, and timing for capital improvement projects over several years. A CIP would help our community anticipate needs rather than just reacting to problems in the moment. The forward planning encompassed in capital planning allocates time for community leaders to assemble the necessary resources gradually in a responsible manner as opposed to all at once.

**What if . . .** as we improve our roads and add sidewalks, we could also add parking, bury our electrical lines to improve our resilience to harsh weather, and landscaping for beautification, and add bulb-outs for traffic calming and improve our pedestrian routes through Town?

### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve IRT Priority#1:

33. Leverage PPRTA (Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority) Funding [ (PPACG) 2050 and LRTP 2050] to improve multimodal connections for Yoder Street/Calhan Highway and McClasky Road Bridge Replacement and roadway upgrades to Major Collector with future northern growth.

Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority and the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) is developing a 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan LRTP 2050 that has set aside funding to reconstruct Yoder Street, and provide a necessary bridge replacement along El Paso County's McClasky Road.

Sidewalks continue to play an important role in the life of our community. They are the conduits for pedestrian movement and access throughout the transportation network of our Town. Sidewalks are a key part of connectivity and promoting walking. In the role of public spaces, they act as the front steps to the community, enhancing our streets socially and economically. Investment in our sidewalk network to be safe, accessible, and well maintained demonstrates a commitment to enhancing public health and safety, and maximizing our social capital.

### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve IRT Priority#1:

34. Consider bike trails or sidewalk connections all the way to Paint Mines
35. Explore a Town-wide multimodal connection that ties Main Street to Paint Mines Road
36. With funding, look to create connections between Hwy 24 and Paint Mines Road
37. Encourage trail connections between Town and park
38. Engage El Paso County Parks for grant efforts to establish a regional trail system associated with Rock Island Regional Trail, and a North Calhan Highway Route Connection to Paint Mines.
39. Contemplate a sidewalk network for the areas north of Hwy 24
40. Explore investing in modest additions to make new sidewalks and bike connections near destinations south of Hwy 24 including the public school, the county fair and events complex

## Like to Haves.....

The world is always improving and ever changing and technology and design are no different, but they all come with a cost in dollars and resources. As Calhan pursues the implementation of IRT Priority #1 - Local Streets, Infrastructure, and Development Growth, other potential “like-to-haves” should be considered so that the Town can best efficiently leverage the timing of every short-term opportunity for long-term gains.

17. Modernize Town infrastructure to incorporate a greater diversity of utilities and position Calhan for future growth

The Town has expanded its land acreage utilized for sanitation and the wastewater system. This comes with new opportunities for broadening Calhan's offerings of the Town's water/wastewater utility, such as “purple pipe” or recycled water. Many communities are implementing recycled water systems that redirect grey water from sinks and drains throughout Town for non-potable purposes like irrigating landscapes. This helps to bring cost down on treatment and allows “used” water to be re purposed before being treated again.



**Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve IRT Priority#1:**

- 41. Prioritize Colorado Ave and Cheyenne Ave as key pedestrian travel paths for new/improved sidewalks with any future development north of US 24
- 42. Ensure key roads (Yoder, School Street, and 8th Street) have sidewalks to facilitate safe pedestrian mobility to school, the library, and parks
- 43. Leverage the opportunity to improve the standard of quality in access and spacing of bike and sidewalk connections with new development west of Town to ensure safer and more attractive connections to the rest of Town to the east
- 44. Any new roads that are developed due to growth should include bike and ped functions to support the network – especially for westside development and 8th street

The Colorado Department of Transportation awarded the Town of Calhan a series of sidewalk improvement grants in 2024-2025, with the most recent estimated total at \$640,000. These grants will include various sidewalk installations and renovations throughout the Town, as well as ADA ramps on US 24. The sidewalks are anticipated to reflect CDOT’s 5’ standard walk to help improve pedestrian connectivity and enhance the Town’s local and highway street character.

**WHAT IF . . .** a roundabout solution could reduce accidents, resolve access conflicts, calm traffic, create a safer pedestrian environment, and improve the Town’s appearance as visible gateways for Calhan at both 8th Street and Yoder/Calhan Hwy?

**INFRASTRUCTURE, ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION (IRT) PRIORITY #2 -US 24 IS A CENTRAL SPINE IN OUR TRAFFIC SYSTEM**

US 24 serves as one of the main travel routes to eastern Colorado and beyond for the growing cities around the front range through the core of Calhan. This gateway to our Town can serve as a driver of commerce and economic resiliency in partnership with CDOT. By embracing US 24 as a component of our Town’s character and integrating it into our future decisions we can benefit from the positive aspects (example: more people spending money in Town) and plan to mitigate the concerns (example: safety of crossings for pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles).

US 24 is a CDOT highway. State highways are tough to change almost impossible, but good ideas that make sense can happen even in Calhan. US 24 is our connection to the region and all of the USA. As the spine of Town, it can also be an unsafe zone for crashes and crossing on foot. 8th Street and US 24 on the western end of Town is a six-point intersection caused by the crossings of 8th Street and Crystola Street over US 24. At this intersection four legs of local roads designed for less than 25 mile per hour speeds are abruptly bifurcated by a 55 mile per hour state highway. The intersection experiences multiple automotive crashes a year.

The Yoder/Calhan Highway and US 24 intersection is located on the eastern end of Town and is also very unsafe with a high accident count due to poor visibility, unclear road edges or markings and a easterly crest in roadway creating precarious situations with speeding traffic approaching Town.

**Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve IRT Priority#2:**

- 45. Consider opening conversations with CDOT about Bustang services to Limon maybe even to Burlington along US 24
- 46. Mix of residential and non-residential occurring along and near US 24 that is pedestrian, and bike oriented with automotive accommodating infrastructure.
- 47. Avoid skewed multi-road intersections (8th and Hwy 24)
- 48. Monitor E Central Front Range TPR’s US 24 Installation of fiber optics and ITS devices between Colorado Springs and Limon: the benefits of the project include Freight and Safety



**INFRASTRUCTURE, ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION (IRT) PRIORITY #3 -OUR TRANSPORTATION NETWORK WILL NEED TO EXPAND AS OUR COMMUNITY GROWS. WE SHOULD CAPITALIZE ON POSITIVE ASPECTS AND MITIGATE THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES.**

In 2025, at the intersection of Yoder/Calhan Highway and US 24, a flashing beacon light was installed above the stop sign for northbound traffic along Yoder/Calhan Highway by CDOT. The intent of the light installation is to provide a relatively low-cost solution to help mitigate traffic conflicts at the intersection due to poor sight angles of the state highway. If new development comes to Calhan requesting to build as many as 400 homes, that will create a significant increase in traffic along US 24. When the Town engages in future residential development discussions, the Town should seek opportunities to broker partnerships with developers, regional agencies, El Paso County and Colorado Department of Transportation.

**Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve IRT Priority#3:**

- 49. Create a Management Plan to prioritize program maintenance and improvements
- 50. When a new development is considered in Calhan, take the time to review and compare street and road-related codes of Chapter 6 Article 4 6.04 and Chapter 16 Traffic with similar communities like Limon or Idaho Springs for any additional street-related codes that may be needed to better refine the Town's code and put the Town into a better position as growth may continue into the future.
- 51. Examine the implications of the northside growth for traffic and travel patterns
- 52. Growth potential north, south and west. El Paso County envisions growth occurring further east on the US 24 Corridor.
- 53. In the short term proactively identify north side network plans for accessing new development

**Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve IRT Priority#3:**

- 54. Consider a Southside Arterial connection
- 55. Utilize anticipated traffic impacts of new development to reimagine/improve street and block design to better serve pedestrians and cyclists
- 56. Continue to support Envida Moves – private ride service so the community has an alternative transportation option for those who do not or cannot drive.
- 57. Design new roads to manage access points with adequate spacing, safety and visibility
- 58. Engage El Paso County to prioritize the EPC Major Transportation Corridor Plans identified projects for N Calhan Hwy US 24 Paint Mine Rd, 0.6 miles, 2 lanes Rural Minor Collector \$7.1 million, and Rural County Road upgrades: Two-lane paved rural County roads by adding needed turn lanes and shoulders and improving alignments and drainage to bring them up to the county road standards.



## **BROADBAND AND FIBER (BF) PRIORITY #1 – BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE TO PROVIDE OUR COMMUNITY WITH ACCESSIBLE, RELIABLE AND AFFORDABLE BROADBAND**

Calhan is on the verge of receiving comprehensive broadband Internet service thanks to partnerships with Conexon, MVEA (Mountain View Electric Association), El Paso County, and CDOT. This crucial infrastructure development aims to bring the entire community online, unlocking significant economic opportunities. The introduction of broadband has the potential to drive job creation, increase property values, stimulate new business formation, and reduce unemployment in the area.

Suggested next steps for Calhan include implementing right-of-way permitting as a revenue source, and ensuring careful oversight through required inspections of the installation process to minimize disruption to other Town projects. Financial resources and programs that come from other agencies are finite and built work is permanent. If Calhan plays a more active role in partnering with these groups, we may be able to influence how these planned improvements are designed and implemented, and help us more quickly achieve our vision.

### **Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve BF Priority#1:**

59. Incorporate Broadband planning and implementation into overall strategic plan for the Community.
60. Enable economic development and local entrepreneurial e-commerce businesses by creating a broadband supported Economic Development Strategy
61. Bolster local neighborhood and home security with infrastructure that supports systems like Ring and Google Home.
62. Implement “Fiber Friendly” policies to develop broadband currency to facilitate private sector deployment.
63. Seek in kind trades with El Paso County to solve and avoid complications with TABOR law.
64. Establish ROW Permitting process to help facilitate broadband installation roll-out process in Town
65. Require Inspection services during installation process to ensure installation occurs to code and corresponds with other ROW work occurring in the Town.
66. Coordinate with MVEA and Conexon to advocate for earlier installation of broadband through Calhan with Fully BEAD Grant dollars
67. Collaborate with County to leverage fiber installation into the El Paso County Fairgrounds via 8th Street allowing for additional conduits be laid for anticipated growth.

### **Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve BF Priority#1:**

68. Foster new sales tax dollar revenue streams from online purchasing
111. Develop a collaborative strategy with El Paso County and private broadband providers to secure funding and implement broadband expansion to the Fairgrounds and surrounding areas via US 24 and 8th Street.



# Colorado Avenue Transformation



**What if....** we could transform Colorado Avenue into a Main Street Activity Hub? What if we could do all the things listed here?

- Widened our sidewalks and added bulb-outs so pedestrians had more room?
- Added street trees, seating, and trash receptacles for comfort and rest?
- Illuminated the space with streetlights, and festoon lighting to extend the time people use the space during the day and night?
- Activated the street with banners, festivals, vendors, and food trucks to entice people to stop and spend?
- Enjoyed our main street and once a month closed the street and had a Friday or Saturday night hang out with music, food, and games to stay and hang out?
- Celebrated even in the cold months during the Holidays to bring people together?
- Could use a small circle, bulb-outs, and landscaping on Colorado Ave. at US 24 to slow traffic, improve appearances, entice passersby to stop and explore, and create a safer crossing environment for bikes and pedestrians?

## Colorado Avenue – Activated and a Place to Gather



## OUR COMMERCIAL DISTRICT'S STORY SO FAR

For the past century, Colorado Avenue and 5th Street have served as Calhan's commercial district and main street. Over time, as transportation evolved from rail to cars, the focus of Calhan's commercial district pivoted. Initially, the commercial district was centered on Colorado Avenue, a very walkable, human-scaled main street that benefited from the Rock Island Depot just beyond the Street's northern apex. Now, the commercial district is more associated with 5th Street, also known as US 24, and the mix of businesses and the commercial engine of the Town have shifted to car-oriented highway commercial.

The completion of US 24 through Calhan in the late 1920s forced a fundamental shift in moving people, goods, and services. Pushing cars through the middle of Town created a barrier to north-south walkability and severed Colorado Avenue in half, disrupting the Street's original design and function for people. Over time, the railroad to the north proved obsolete, and by the early 1970s, the north end of Colorado Avenue changed from a rail-based front door gateway to a backdoor abandoned rail yard, and the flow of people from the north end of the street ceased.

All these shifts in the activity of people transformed Colorado Avenue into north and south side streets, and consequently, it is no longer perceived as a central place or destination for people in Calhan but more as off-street parking lots for what remains of business and civic uses. The result is that existing businesses struggle, and many have gone away, leaving behind vacant buildings and lots.

## JOBS AND ECONOMY (JE) PRIORITY #1 - COLORADO AVENUE CALHAN'S MAIN STREET

All across the USA, in every community, large and small, you can easily bet there is a main street somewhere in Town, and it is most likely the most historic part of the community. Main streets are so important because they can serve many roles in economics, transportation, and local culture merely because they are human scaled.

Main streets are typically walkable, and businesses often utilize every square inch of the street edge for storefronts with shared-walled buildings. Get enough diverse mix of businesses and services along both sides of the street, and you have created an entrepreneurial hub and destination where people want to stop, spend their time and money, and gather with other people in the stores and businesses, and on the street. If we break everything down, a thriving main street combines a physical place, the spirit of passionate, caring, and industrious people, and the investment, creation, and growth of financial resources through commerce that all work together to create a resilient economy and vibrant community.





## Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve JE Priority #1:

### 13. Re-Imagining Colorado Avenue

Streets are public spaces owned by the people. Calhan's second largest land holding in Town is the public right of way at 14% of the Town. We say we want to repave all our streets, but what if we took that collective cost and focused it on revitalizing our main street first in a way that catalyzed business growth, sales tax dollars, and community identity?

There is a lot that can be done in 75 feet of public right of way with a block length of 400 feet. That is literally 30,000 square feet. Consider that Colorado Avenue is actually two blocks long when combining both blocks on either side of US 24 and now the space to work with is 60,000 square feet of public space with the potential to have 1,600 linear feet of commercial frontage. What if we re-imagined Colorado Avenue as it was originally intended as the public square and communal heart of Calhan, providing a main street and a civic center for the community? What if we prioritized people when thinking about the design, operation, and management of Colorado Avenue and made the car less important?

## Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve JE Priority #1:

### 14. Building Blocks: Calhan's Main Street Gems

Main streets are often the best specimens of historic preservation, and it has a lot to do with how a community celebrates buildings of the past and finds new purpose for each remaining gem through restoration and activation. For Calhan, there is a solid base of historic building stock to bring Colorado Avenue back to life.



### Rock Island Depot

Calhan's Rock Island Railroad depot sits north of Colorado Avenue off 3rd Street along a dirt road between 3rd and Golden Street behind the grain elevator on a two-acre parcel in the same location. Built in 1906, this depot may be the only remaining Rock Island Railroad Depot still intact and standing on its original site. The one-story depot was built according to a common Rock Island depot plan designed with a waiting room, ticket office, freight storage area, and a pot belly coal stove. The building, about 24 by 64 feet, originally had wood clapboard siding and windows facing the train tracks in the passenger waiting area. Station personnel viewed passing trains from a bay window. Recently, attempts have been made to convert the property into a railroad museum to showcase the Rock Island Railroad. There are three historic rail cars on site and the property is privately owned.



El Dorado Building (the Old Bank Building) – Adaptive Reuse

In 2014, the Farmers State Bank of Calhan, originally located at the corner of Colorado Avenue and Bank Street, decided to relocate from that space on Colorado Avenue and constructed a new bank building on the western edge of Town, situated on the northern side of US 24, adjacent to the Town cemetery. This relocation created an opportunity for redevelopment to occur with the old building by the new owner and tenant, improving the facade of the old bank building and updating the interior to meet current building codes. The exterior remains much the same, with only a few graphic embellishments along the building’s stucco columns and glass facades along Colorado Avenue and Bank Street. The building is actively used but the specific use is unclear.



Calhan Motor Co. Building – Renovation and Character Preservation

During the coronavirus pandemic, the Calhan Motor Co. building, located at 420 Colorado Avenue, underwent renovation and refurbishment, and now stands as a historically significant architectural jewel on the Town’s main street. Although the future intended uses of the vacant space are unclear, the resulting character of the architectural shell building creates a strong precedent for future design standards for Calhan’s “main street” along Colorado Avenue.

Woolsey’s Food Center

Calhan’s grocery store is a historic retail anchor that has existed since 1920. It has served generation after generation of Calhan residents and continues to sustain as a prominent fixture along Colorado Avenue for the Town.



Eastern Plains Community Pantry

At the northern end of the street just before veering right onto 3rd Street toward the Depot stands the Eastern Plains Community Pantry. With its awning-covered porch front, this building adds character and homage to the Town’s pioneering beginnings and currently serves as a quaint focal point at the northern end of the street providing a sense of enclosure and an edge of the street activated by patrons who come for community support, food, life necessities and other resources.

Other significant buildings and lots exist along Colorado Avenue, including 3 vacant buildings on the east side of the street, 2 prominent vacant/underutilized corner lots on US 24 with high visibility, and 7 additional interior vacant/underutilized lots north and south of the highway intersection.

**What if . . .** Colorado Avenue improvements bring more interest and development? When Communities invest in themselves people notice and pretty soon.

- New interest and businesses come and fill vacant buildings
- Infill development takes advantage of vacant lots and builds new places
- More Infill development arrives because we love our Street

### Our Main Street is What Our People Make of It

The alliance of local clergy, Town government, businesses, civic organizations and concerned citizens that are the backbone of Eastern Plains Community Pantry (EPCP) non-profit, should provide an inspiration for local business leaders and entrepreneurs that our community can organize around an idea for the collective good. As a small 501(c)3 that started just over 10 years ago, the EPCP provides a series of services including commodities distributions, senior food boxes, emergency food, clothing, small household appliances, and social service support to address any other needs a family or an individual may have. The pantry is supported strictly through donations and grants from within the Pikes Peak Region. Most donations are small and come from our local community. All staff and the Board of Directors are volunteers.

According to the Dallas-based non-profit, Better Block, science has shown that when we prioritize people over cars and build social infrastructure, the positive outcomes result in:

- People spend more time in public spaces,
- Social networks strengthen,
- Crime goes down,
- Older and sick people become more connected,
- Trust rises,
- Civic participation skyrockets,
- Small and local business opportunities arise, and
- Automotive emissions decrease.

### Ideas for Inspiration

If we really want Calhan to thrive again, our biggest ROI (return on investment) will most likely rely on how we think about our main street. Ultimately, we will need our people to come together and organize around bringing life back to our Colorado Avenue. Below are some concepts to ponder and organize community members around to spark interest and catalyze action.

### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve JE Priority #1:

#### 15. Make Calhan “stickier”, attracting and holding guests for longer stays

This implies the need for improved signage, parking, landscape, and building standards. US 24 is a year-round commercial and retail driver producing sales tax and supporting the fiscal wellbeing of the community. This corridor is an opportunity to provide retail that is attractive to pass-by travelers and communicates our Town is an interesting place, suitable for exploration.

### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve JE Priority #1:

#### 16. Quick-Wins for Fostering Interest and an Economic Development Start-Up

Calhan will need to find the social capacity through volunteers, much like how the Pantry was organized, to build an effective economic development strategy that garners community interests, markets existing assets as opportunities, and leverages ongoing events to activate Calhan’s commercial spaces. The following are some low-investment high-return strategies to get the economic development ball rolling.

- Buzz Generating Events. Utilize the success of the Town’s most vibrant events like Summerfest by staging them in the most visible locations in Town like Colorado Avenue. The Park has proven a good space for vendors and facilities, bathrooms, shelters, playground but is it the most visible location to attract visitors?
- Large Public Art Installations. Inviting a local artist to do an installation strategically located so it can be a centerpiece to draw attention and a backdrop for live events and gatherings.
- Historic Walking Tours and Reenactments. Recreate Colorado Avenue as it was back in days before US 24. Have a “Rock Island Days” event to celebrate Main Street’s historic buildings and create program that educate the community about Calhan’s past and get excited to contribute to the Community’s future.

- Large Print Marketing Signage for Economic Development. Use temporary storefront and window treatments (e.g., “this space is not empty, it’s full of opportunity!” posters) to highlight opportunities on the street.
- Open House Property Tours. Organize and host periodic open house-style property tours for prospective businesses, entrepreneurs, and investors to tour available properties and spaces.
- First-Friday’s Pop-up Market. Work with property owners and agents to rethink and adapt or retrofit appropriate sites for pop-up shops, kiosks or other shared space or co-working arrangements.
- Networking Mixers. Host small-scale events, entertainment, and networking mixers at opportunity sites along Main Street.
- Local Economic Development Workshops. Host a workshop to share hints and tips for building owners to prepare and fill spaces, including examples of funding sources, technical assistance, and commercial leasing practices and options.
- Co-working Spaces. Consider activating empty building spaces by offering limited-term or rent-reduced space to startup businesses and entrepreneurs as an incentive to work on Main Street.
- Market the El Paso County Fair Traffic. Draw visitors of the El Paso County Fair Downtown for specific events so our businesses get more exposure. Encourage local businesses to offer discounts or vouchers to fair attendees with Fair tickets to draw them to Main Street. Engage local sports leagues to compete in Town if the facilities and space are available and then encourage people to stay and eat on Main Street.
- Relocate Existing Businesses to Optimize Character and create the Critical Mass to energize Main Street In 2014, Farmers State Bank of Calhan’s moved from main street resulting in the construction of a new bank building on the western edge of Town, situated on the northern side of US 24, adjacent to the Town cemetery. The FSB’s decision to develop a new building elsewhere in Town created opportunities for reshaping the Town’s appearance and character. Building a new facility on the western edge altered the experience for travelers coming through Town from the west, essentially reshaping the Town’s western gateway and creating new opportunities for changing the face of Calhan. What if other local businesses relocated onto Main Street like a local real estate agent, or the business community worked together to relocate auto-oriented commercials elsewhere on 5th Street or over to Yoder? What if an artist shop came to Colorado Avenue or a barbershop or salon?

## The Power of Ten

*People are attracted to places where there are lots of things to do. In their article *Placemaking Main Street into a Destination Downtown*, Gary Toth and Fred Kent of Project for Public Spaces describe a mapping process to engage community stakeholders to collectively analyze their public spaces and specifically main streets to understand where a Community’s most important commercial space is under-performing.*

*The writers encourage community members to identify the best, worst, and highest opportunity places and help them figure out how to make substantive physical and social connections between existing spaces and think of the main street as a network of destinations. Some key strategies provided include:*

- *Walking and Street Audits*
- *Wish Lists of Desired Change*
- *LQC strategies (Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper)*

*Involving the community in the actual creation of such studies brings the main street to life in the minds of participants in a way a basic traffic study cannot and the experience of working together helps to cultivate real community buy-in. (Source: *Placemaking Main Street into a Destination Downtown* written by Gary Toth and Fred Kent of Project for Public Spaces, Dec 3, 2014).*



## **FUNDING PROGRAMS FOR ORGANIZING, PLANNING AND BUILDING**

DOLA – Main Street Program. The State Department of Local Affairs has a very strong main street program ready to provide Colorado communities with technical assistance and funding to support vibrant downtown and enhance local character.

CDOT - Revitalizing Main Streets (RMS). The Colorado Department of Transportation’s Revitalizing Main Streets Grant Program is intended to help communities across the state implement transportation-related projects that improve safety and yield long-term benefits to community main streets. When defining a main street, CDOT aims to support areas in or adjacent to community-focused downtown where people work, dine, and shop. These routes help form a specific region’s identity and act as the major economic hub in many Towns and cities across Colorado. Revitalizing Main Streets provides two separate grant opportunities to support local communities as they find innovative ways to reuse public spaces and help businesses reopen safely while improving multimodal safety and accessibility along urban arterials.

USDA Rural Development Programs. The Colorado Division of United States Department of Agriculture has over 30 different loan and grant programs for assisting rural communities throughout the State from infrastructure support to community facilities development, to entrepreneur programs, even cooperative organization establishment programs.

## **Pikes Peak Enterprise Zone - Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program Overview**

The Colorado Legislature created the Colorado Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program (C.R.S. Title 39, Article 30) to promote a business-friendly environment in economically distressed areas by offering state income tax credits that incentivize businesses to locate and develop in – and nonprofit organizations to assist with the needs of – these communities. Taxpayers investing in Enterprise Zones can earn a Colorado income tax credit by planning and executing specific economic development activities. Only taxpayers engaged in business activities that are legal under both state and federal law are eligible to claim EZ income tax credits.

## **OTHER NON-PROFIT SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS AND OPEN-SOURCE RESOURCES**

Main Street America™ has been helping to revitalize older and historic commercial districts since the late 1970s. Today, it is a movement consisting of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street America is a program of the nonprofit National Main Street Center, Inc., a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Project for Public Spaces is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build strong communities. Since its founding in 1975, PPS has worked in more than 3,500 communities in 52 countries and all 50 U.S. states. Today, PPS is the central hub of the global placemaking movement, connecting people to ideas, resources, expertise, and partners who see place as the key to addressing our greatest challenges.

Navigating Main Streets as Places: A People-First Transportation Toolkit, is an open-source toolkit provided by Project for Public Spaces and Main Street America, to provide empowered communities with guidance to help position their unique main streets for growth and new purpose. Pages 74 and 75 offer a good case study to model for implementation “This section focuses on low-cost, low-risk, short-term interventions that will influence the life and livelihood of our Main Streets.”

Better Block. Better Block Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that educates, equips, and empowers communities and their leaders to reshape and reactivate built environments to promote the growth of healthy and vibrant neighborhoods. These are fun temporary measures for the activation of the offer on their website. <https://www.betterblock.org/recipes-1>





**What if....**Our Town could be more efficient, able to negotiate for our Vision and have more capacity to get things done?

### **CHARACTER & DESIGN, PUBLIC SERVICES PARTNERSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE (CPG) PRIORITY #1 -TOOLS IN GOVERNANCE FOR INFLUENCING AND MANAGING GROWTH**

Calhan has existed for over 130 years. The last big boom of development in Town occurred over the last 40 years with the Southridge residential development on the southeast side of Town which occurred during the first 30 years of that run. Over the past decade, 2014-2024, Calhan has only issued 440 building permits. 391 (89%) of those permits were for minor building projects valued at less than \$10,000. The remaining 49 permits allowed for the building of 4 new homes, 2 commercial buildings, 9 accessory buildings, 11 remodel/rebuilds and 5 solar installations. That is less than 4 permits issued per year on average.

In 2024, the Town was approached with a proposal asking for the Town to consider annexing a 92-acre site and building 450 homes that would increase the Calhan community by almost 140%. Intense growth such as this could have the ability to disrupt the way of life we enjoy in our Town.

Powers of a Statutory Town in Colorado In IRT Priority #1 we acknowledge the opportunity a new development like this can bring to Town to help Calhan be revitalized with updates to our various public realm infrastructure (water, sewer, and roadways). In CPG Priority #1 we need to proactively exercise our local governmental rights and powers as a statutory Town of Colorado to protect our Community's collective vision.

Calhan is an incorporated statutory Town within El Paso County, Colorado with a Mayor and Board of Trustees government. Statutory municipalities are granted **planning** and **zoning** powers that allow Calhan the ability to divide the Town into districts and regulate the location and use of buildings, structures, and land for trade, industry, and other purposes (C.R.S. 31-23-301).

Historically, location decisions about what uses are allowed have been addressed site-by-site, without much consistency due to a lack of established criteria. Therefore, governance has played a less significant role in land development and the Town's overall layout and organization of land uses.

The Town Code development standards include a universal minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet and have a choice of four land use types: residential, multifamily, commercial, and industrial use, each with its own set of unique development restrictions. A zoning code does exist, but it does not include any districts associated with a Town land use map and the only uses addressed include a prohibition of marijuana-based land uses, a prohibition of camping on public land, and limitations for both on private land.

With development interests asking to more than double our Town, CPG Priority #1 recognizes recent successes we have already accomplished in our Town code and highlights the next set of regulatory adjustments we should implement to empower our local government to be good stewards with tools of negotiation to influence growth that supports our community vision.

### Key Planning Tools for Negotiation and Partnership

In 1987, the Colorado legislature, through senate bill 45 required that a municipality adopt an annexation master plan for the three-mile area (or three-mile plan, as they are commonly known) before the completion of any annexation (C.R.S. 31-12-105(e)). How does this align with our Comprehensive Plan? In a nutshell, combining Colorado Regulatory Statute and Town of Calhan Code,

- Before an annexation can occur, a three-mile plan for a municipality must be in place (C.R.S. 31-12-105(e)).
- To achieve approval of an annexation into Calhan, the Annexation Agreement must include an agreed upon zoning classification (Section 15.11.030); and
- To zone an area to be annexed the chosen zoning should be consistent with the Town of Calhan’s Comprehensive Plan (Section 15.11.050.D).
- Section 15.11.040 - Proposed Zoning, states . . . “The proposed zoning for the area to be annexed shall be included in the annexation agreement, and final annexation of the property may be made contingent on the subsequent adoption of zoning.”

## Recent Successes

### **Code Updates for Water Rights and Annexations**

*In 2024 update to Town code to clarify water rights and annexation development policy, review criteria and processes, as well as private and public improvement agreement requirements and permitting procedures.*

### **Subdivision Improvement Agreements and Required Surety**

*With the intent to protect the Town financially from any development that would not be able to complete their public improvements, Code was updated mid-year in 2024 with a required subdivision improvement agreement that the Town may require as a condition of approval of a subdivision plat.*

### **Streamlined Development Review Processes**

*In anticipation of completion of this comprehensive plan effort, new pre-application forms, Annexation and Subdivisions Checklists, were created in 2024 and 2025 to help clarify and streamline development application processes for the development community to ensure clarity in expectations regarding completeness checks, compliance reviews, proposal notices, and planning and development committee and board of trustees approval processes and scheduling.*

### **School Impact Fees**

*On November 12, 2024, a new school impact fee added to the Town’s Impact Fee Schedule, requiring a \$2,724 impact fee to be collected at the time of permitting for any new single-family home built within the Town of Calhan.*

*These updates position the Town to be better prepared in protecting the Community’s future interests through transparency, accountability, and standardization of the process.*

## Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve CPG Priority #1:

### 69. Consider Annexation Agreements Town Code (Section 15.11) as a tool to facilitate negotiations

Per the Town code (Section 15.11.020) an annexation agreement will be required in any annexation proposal to help facilitate negotiations addressing the timing and requirements of any development that would be approved with the annexation.

Most agreements will require:

- Assigning all rights, title and interest in any water rights associated with the property and in all water located beneath the property to be annexed to the Town.
- A dedication of sufficient land and rights-of-way to the Town for required public streets and alleys.
- A dedication of sufficient and unobstructed rights-of-way for utility easements and storm drainage to serve the proposed development.
- A dedication of land or a fee-in-line for the value of land and improvements to be used for public purposes such as schools and/or parks.
- Payment of utility development fees and tap fees.
- Providing connection with such improvements to existing Town systems and/or the dedication of such improvements to the Town shall be at the Town's convenience; and
- Constructing all roads, utilities, and other improvements at the applicant's sole expense and according to the requirements, standards, and

## Annexation Agreement and Zoning for New Developments

*Calhan is a community of 330+ households and we have maintained that scale of community for at least a generation. We are accustomed to sharing our public resources and amenities amongst our current community size for a long time. We are also relatively small when considering we are the 246th most populous community out of 482 in Colorado. (2020 United State Decennial Census).*

*Allowing new development to be built without at least comparable shared amenities places an undue burden on the Town. It forces existing amenities to serve more people, which reduces the individual benefit for current residents and risks making the new development inadequate for its own community.*

*It stands to reason then, that if we are to consider welcoming the impact of development that proposes to more than double the scale of our Town, we will want to ensure that any development of such magnitude will contribute to the community by bringing with it certain resources and amenities that will allow the new community addition to sustain and if possible, improve upon our current level of services and overall quality of life.*

*Within the Town Code, and specifically the updated article on Annexation, we know key standards have been included as tools for negotiation. Specifically, Section 15.11.050 - Standards for Annexation states,*

*“In considering a petition for annexation, the Board of Trustees shall make findings of facts and conclusions on the following standards for annexation: A. The property to be annexed is a reasonable and logical extension of the Town, and compatible with the goals and intents of the Town Comprehensive Plan”. . . “H. Any additional considerations the Board of Trustees deems relevant.”*



## Zoning: A Local Tool for Land Use Control

When community members were asked, “Which would you avoid?” about their preferences regarding land use as something that occurs adjacent to other land uses, Only 14% of votes cast reveal that the community is comfortable with allowing adjacent land uses to occur randomly and organically from lot to lot.

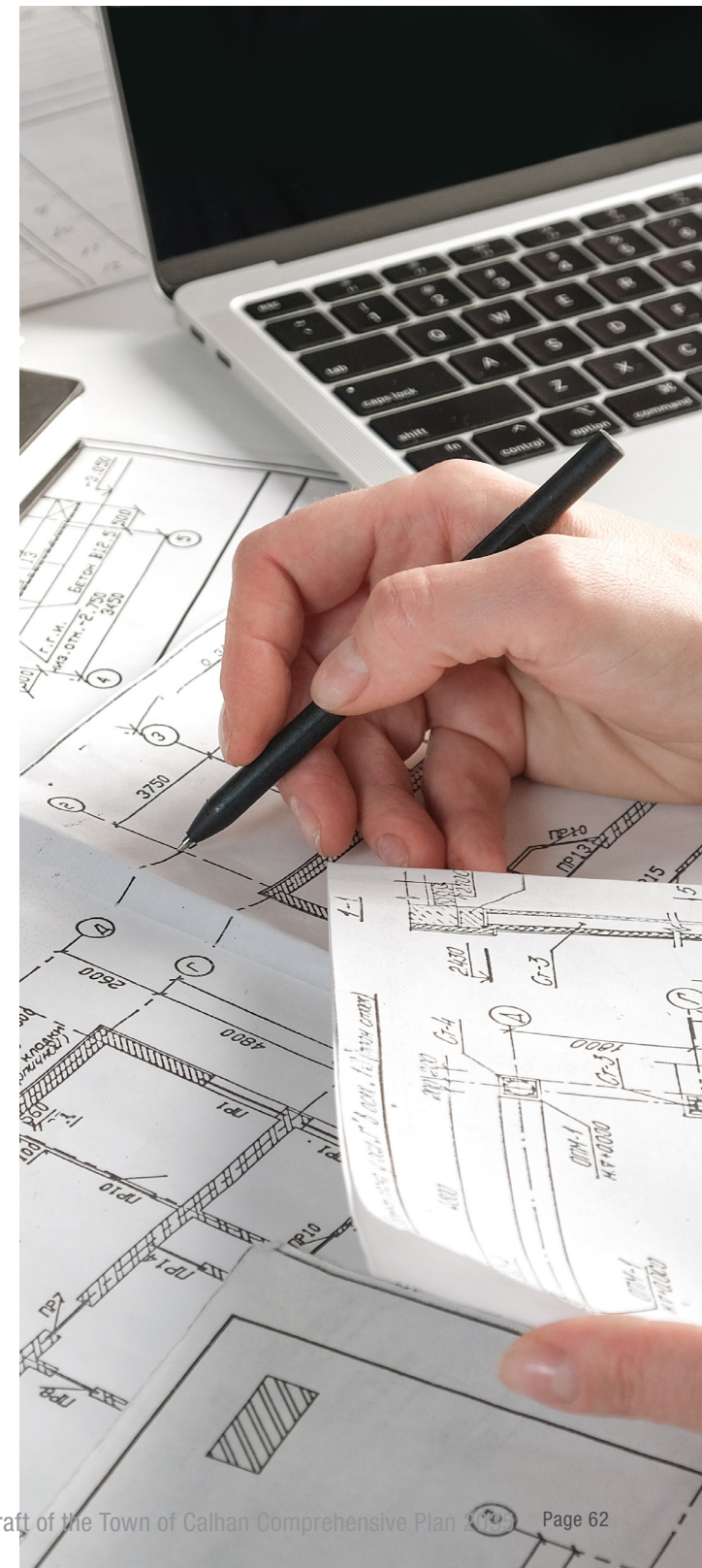
Instead, 85% of votes revealed that most of the Calhan community would favor establishing and regulating a certain level of land use control at the local level. This is why the State gave statutory Towns the planning power for zoning. But what is zoning?

### Key points about what zoning is:

- Separation of incompatible uses: The main goal is to prevent conflicting land uses, such as separating industrial areas from residential neighborhoods.
- Property value protection: Zoning can help preserve property values within a neighborhood by maintaining compatible land uses.
- Community planning: Zoning helps to plan and manage Town/urban growth by ensuring a cohesive and orderly development pattern.
- Land use control: Zoning dictates what land-use-specific structures can be built on a parcel of land based on the designated zone.

In truth, Calhan does have a zoning code, but we do not have any zoning classifications for residential, multifamily, commercial, or industrial land uses. Our development standards address these land uses, but they are not tied to a zoning map, or even a land use map. Instead, the development standards-based land uses are aligned with our subdivision standards. In essence the Town has one zone district with minimum lot sizes of 7,500 square feet and a choice of residential, multifamily, commercial, and industrial land use. If someone wanted to tear down a residential home and build a warehouse in the middle of a residential street, there is not much in code that Administration, Planning and Development Committee, or the Board of Trustees could point to that would restrict such action.

The 7,500 square foot minimum lot size presents another limitation with our current Code. While this standard was historically sufficient for Town layouts one hundred years ago, development patterns have significantly evolved over the past century due to escalating costs associated with land, materials, entitlement processes, professional services, and construction. The development community addresses these rising costs by transferring them to individual lot prices, thereby impacting housing and commercial real estate values. Consequently, the potential yield of saleable units becomes a critical factor in ensuring a development’s financial viability.



## Planned Unit Developments (PUD) A Zoning Solution Where There is No Zoning

With the approval of this Plan, comes the approval of the Town's Future Land Use Map and Three-Mile Plan, which is essentially our Community's long-range concept plan of how we would like to see Calhan be built out overtime (see chapter 5).

This Plan does not include a zoning map nor a zoning code update. Those planning tools are typically developed following the adoption of the comprehensive plan and are based on the future land use map approved with the plan. Developing a full zoning code and map takes additional resources and time that may not occur before Calhan receives an application for annexation.

To allow our community to remain open to business as we further refine our zoning code, PUD (Planned Unit Development) Zoning is a recognized zoning classification by statute that we can easily adopt through ordinance as an amendment to our existing zoning code. Doing this builds upon the recent success of policy change we have accomplished over the past year and further protects and positions us to strategically facilitate our Plan's vision to fruition.

## Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve CPG Priority #1:

### 70. Establish a PUD Zoning Category

Planned Unit Development (PUD) Zoning is a zoning designation offering flexibility in land use and development standards compared to traditional zoning districts. The most common reasons for considering PUD Zoning include:

- Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map Goals Incorporation. Without an adopted zoning map, PUD zoning is the most flexible regulatory land use tool for a Town to use in collaborating with interested parties seeking annexation and development approval. Allowing PUD Zoning gives the development community a way to acknowledge and incorporate as much of the vision of the Comprehensive Plan as possible, considering market trends and demand.
- Design Flexibility in Lot Layout and Standards. PUD zoning often allows for a unified site design comprised of clustered buildings, a mix of housing types, and broader considerations with the land use mix (residential, recreational, multifamily, commercial, etc.) and organized based on the master plan of the site that takes into account a Town's comprehensive plan vision.
- More Common Open Spaces: The provision of common open space (i.e. parks, plazas, pocket parks, green corridors, etc.) are a key characteristic of PUDs that helps development to meet park land dedication requirements of a municipality while organizing the land so that the open space is best used to achieve optimal enjoyment of residents, other occupants and the broader municipality.

- Density Increases: PUDs sometimes facilitate trade-offs that can provide for a greater level of amenities for the municipality's benefit while allowing for a higher density (more housing units) development in certain areas.
- Site Plan Review: The approval process for a PUD will involve a detailed site plan review where Town staff and regional review partners will have significant input on the development's overall nature and design.
- Custom Regulations: Each approved PUD essentially becomes its own specific zoning district with regulations tailored to the project, often written by the applicant, and approved by the local governing body (e.g., Board of Trustees). This allows for maximum flexibility and ensures that development proceeds as proposed.

Other examples of potential elements in a PUD can include, a mix of single-family homes, Townhouses, and apartments, commercial areas such as small retail shops or restaurants integrated within the residential areas along key commercial corridors, recreational facilities like community centers, pools, or parks, and protection of potentially hazardous natural features or open spaces (i.e. floodways) that ought not be developed but utilize to enhance the natural landscape that the development is built upon.

## LIKE TO HAVES.....

What If we ask new development to contribute to our parks, open space, and recreational amenities. What if we could ask the development community to contribute to our public character, brand, and aesthetic? Communities need green space and parks for setting, passive recreation and trail connections, fields for active recreation, and all of it needs water. A larger population with younger people also needs to be active with places to go and things to do on foot and without a car.

### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve CPG Priority #1:

#### 83. Plan for a Local Recreation Center with Regional Benefit

Calhan's last major Comprehensive Plan effort occurred in 2002 – over 20 years ago. Back then our community dreamed of building and opening a 20,000 square foot pool house facility to be located at the southeast corner of 8th and Bijou next to the Town park and ballfields. Conceptual drawings included a site plan, architectural drawings, landscape designs, and a preliminary cost estimate of around \$2 million. The Town campaigned for this, and a collection took place to gather financial support from the community. Due to several challenges with private support and administrative turnover, the project was never able to get off the ground. Within this Comprehensive Plan effort, the idea of bringing a recreation center to fruition has come back and, in survey responses, was considered the third most important initiative to pursue after fixing our infrastructure and improving our roads.

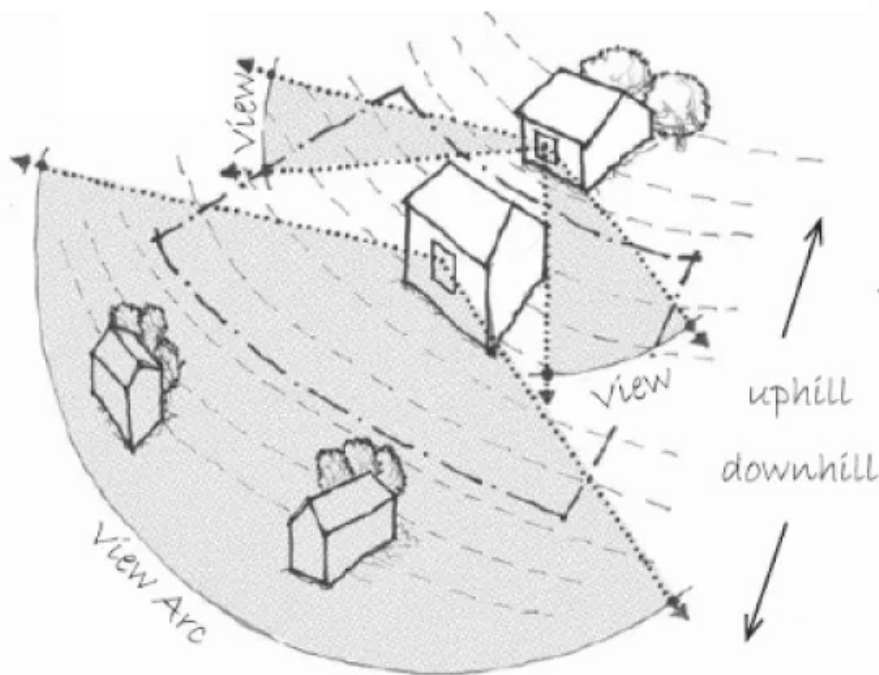
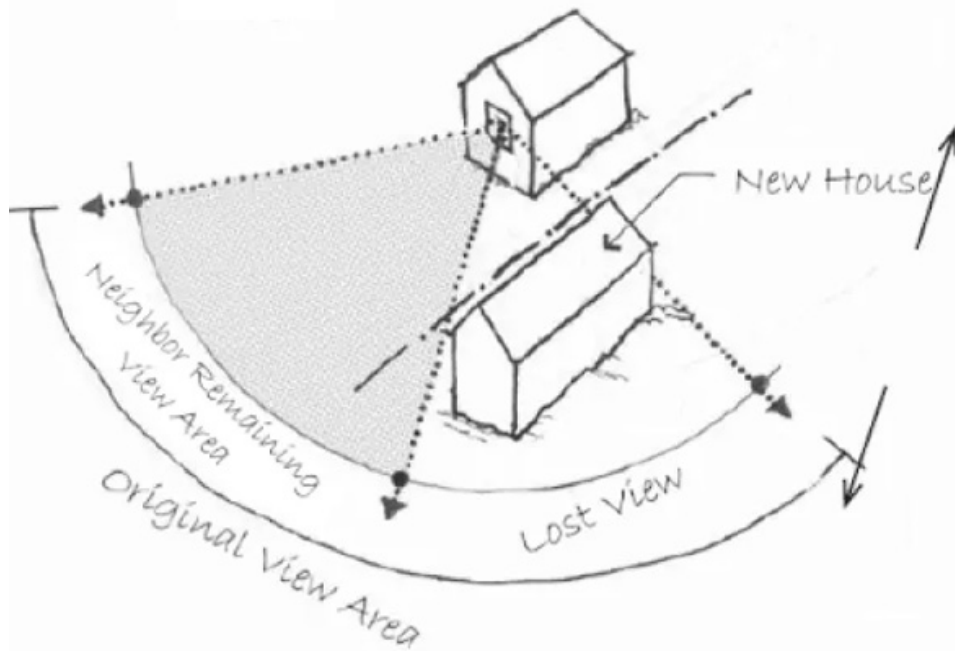
Looking at the Limon Pool and Rec center for inspiration, the Town is hopeful that a regional recreation center for the eastern plains of El Paso County could be located in Calhan as the County's rural center through the help of strong partnerships with the development community (asks of within an annexation agreement or approved PUD) and the County seeking support of El Paso Parks and Recreation.

### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve CPG Priority #1:

#### 96. Build physical improvements in signage and monumentation to help refresh and re-brand the Town's public facing appearance

Here is Calhan's most recent gateway experience. In late Summer 2024, the Welcome to Calhan sign was damaged beyond repair. Instead of replacing it with the same, Community members were asked, "What if we did something different?" Community members were shown various character driven examples from archways to monumentation signage, wall murals, and even Calhan's current sign. Many declined to comment. 27% of the those who commented were happy with Calhan's current monument sign but the remaining 72% expressed interest in re-envisioning Calhan's public appearance regarding our Town gateway image. This item along with the ideas related to US 24 in IRT Priority #1 can all be a part of negotiations with the development community when discussing specific details of an annexation agreement and/or a PUD application.





**OTHER PLANNING TOOLS TO CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE:**

**Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve CPG Priority #1:**

- 97. Set expectations for development regarding Town character, style, and feel for architecture and landscape with Design Guidelines and Topic Specific Master Plans
- 115. Establish noise limit standards in the Town Code, including standards for residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

In time as a community grows, the scale of planning within a particular topic can require its own master plan. Many communities have master plans for parks and open space, transportation, affordable housing, even pedestrian and bicycle networks. For Calhan, the most pressing are master plans for our infrastructure. A model of the Town’s existing sewer and stormwater are built and ready to be used to test proposed development scenarios, but a higher-level plan that takes the findings of this comprehensive plan effort further to bring our next version of sewer and water will be required.

Communities will sometimes develop design guidelines to further explain how the community would like for development to look and function within the community. They provide a more detailed layer of guidance than the broader character-based goals and policies found in the comprehensive plan and help to translate the Community’s vision for it’s physical character into specific design elements.

## CHARACTER & DESIGN, PUBLIC SERVICES PARTNERSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE (CPG) PRIORITY #2: STAFFING FOR GROWTH, RELATIONSHIPS AND CLEAR GOVERNANCE

Calhan has a lot to do over the next 10 years, and it is more than we have had to do over the past century. If the Town embraces growth, it is going to need to consider reciprocal growth among the Town administration and staff to be able to handle the influx of responsibilities and facilitation of municipal tasks that will be necessary for effectively growing the Town.

Towns are created and incorporated to provide essential shared services that are then managed by local government on behalf of the incorporated Town's residents. Incorporation grants a Town or area the ability to have its own elected officials, manage local finances, and implement policies specific to its needs. This allows for greater autonomy and control over community development, public safety, and the delivery of services like police, fire protection, and utilities.

### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve CPG Priority #2:

#### 99. Build Town Staff Capacity for Significant Growth

Calhan has a Town staff of nine people, including a Town clerk, office administrator, public works director, two public works staff, a police chief, and three officers on the police force. Some people in the community believe that the Town's government is too big.

When ratios of population size to Town staff size are compared across the eight incorporated municipalities in El Paso County, however, Calhan is the third smallest incorporated Town with a population of 762 in the 2020 Census, while having the sixth lowest ratio of Town employees to citizens 1:108, compared to its contemporaries. ((2020 United State Decennial Census)

Green Mountain Falls has a very similar population of 729 citizens but has a Town staff of 11 with a ratio of 1:66. Palmer Lake has a population 3.45 times larger than Calhan at 2,636, but they have a staff of 40, 5.71 times larger Town staff but a similar ratio to Green Mountain Falls also at 1:66. Limon in Lincoln County is the size of community Calhan is most likely to grow to in size over the next 10 years. Their ratio is 1:48.

In Priority #1, growth is a necessary strategy that Calhan needs to embrace so that the Town can get ahead of many years of deferred maintenance and repair of our aging infrastructure and shared services. Most current development opportunities suggest Calhan could more than double in size over the next decade, possibly averaging as many as 45 homes per year by 2035. Over the past decade, Calhan has been used to only processing, on average, 4 building permits per year. Increasing the trend of growth in Calhan by 10 times over a year or two that will last for the next 10 will most likely create a difficult challenge for the Town staff, and there is a high probability that the work required in entitlements, land development, utilities, construction, and code enforcement will overextend the Town's current staff of 7 by asking them to handle more responsibilities than they should be expected to do in their respective roles.



## Rounding out the Team

If our Calhan community members want to have a complete community with the kind of thoughtful growth that the community has asked for that occurs in an orderly and effective manner, the Board of Trustees may need to augment the current staff bench by hiring a few additional key roles to ensure the Town has adequate staff capacity to run the Town effectively, efficiently, and with sound governance.

The legislative and corporate authority of statutory Towns in Colorado is vested in a board of trustees that consists of a mayor and up to six trustees. According to the statute the board of trustees is required to appoint:

- A Town clerk (custodian of municipal records),
- A Town treasurer (accountable for managing the Town budget),
- A Town attorney (legal strategy and compliance advisor), and may appoint,
- A Town administrator (oversee staff and the daily operations of the Town).

Currently, Calhan's mayor and six trustees are elected community volunteers. In their appointments, they have appointed a Town clerk who is also the treasurer, a public works director, and a police chief, but there is no appointed Town administrator. The clerk has an office administrative assistant for customer service, record keeping, and event coordination for the Town. The police chief has three officers who help with day-to-day law enforcement. All three of Calhan's executive appointees report directly to the Board and are independent of each other. Each has a particular role and capacity for which they serve Calhan.

It is common for smaller Towns to have clerks who also take other roles like Town treasurer. Town clerks are the official custodians of records and meeting management, elections, licenses, permits, public information, and compliance. When the role includes treasurer duties, those responsibilities expand to comprehensive financial record keeping, budget and payroll administration, and cash and banking management.

Public works directors traditionally focus on infrastructure maintenance and capital projects, public services and safety oversight, budget, contracts, building code compliance, and future utility planning and management. They lead their staff and act as public liaisons for their responsibilities as public works director.

A police chief's primary role is to provide adequate law enforcement. To do so requires the chief to provide ongoing community relations and crime prevention with the public, coordinate emergency response measures, ensure investigation oversight, and enforce legal compliance. Back of house, the chief oversees their department operations, manages the department budget and policies, administers personnel supervision and training, and serves as a liaison to adjacent agencies and the public.

The Town does have an attorney on retainer to assist on a case-by-case basis, along with planning and engineering services through a third-party contract.

With an anticipated growing workload and evolving needs of the Town expressed in this Plan, the Calhan Board of Trustees may finally be facing a reality where a Town administrator might be needed to ensure Calhan can sustain clear and effective governance while we grow.



## What If.....

*Calhan Police and the County Sheriff's office renegotiate agency agreements to allow the Calhan police force to focus more on local needs and expand their capacity for Code enforcement?*

*Working with the Calhan Police Chief and the County Sheriff, a Town Administrator could collaborate with both agencies and explore a revised division of labor, where the Sheriff's office might potentially reduce the distance and number of calls requiring local assistance from Calhan Police, perhaps even assume some additional responsibility for certain calls within Calhan.*

*The goal would be to formalize this understanding through a new intergovernmental agreement, freeing up Calhan Police resources to dedicate more time and personnel to enforcing Town codes related to property maintenance and nuisances. Such a focused effort will contribute to a cleaner, more appealing environment for residents. Over time, through continuous monitoring, the effectiveness of this partnership could be adjusted as needed to ensure Calhan's code enforcement needs are effectively met.*

### Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve CPG Priority #2:

101. Elevate Town appearance and consider staffing capacity and code enforcement to help correct existing visual nuisances of blight and junk in the public realm
102. Examine/Establish formal Inter-Governmental Agreements with El Paso County and Calhan to improve shared public safety resources (Police, Fire, EMS, Rescue), and to help local resources be reallocated to increase staff capacity for covering code enforcement in Town over the next 12 months.
103. Improve the effectiveness of public safety through enhanced inter-agency coordination via Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs), strategic funding allocations, data-driven planning initiatives, and rigorous code compliance enforcement.

Calhan's Police Department and the El Paso County Sheriff's Rural Enforcement and Outreach Unit, located outside of Calhan, have a strong relationship supporting each other throughout the eastern El Paso County area. Sometimes, this means Town police receive calls for backup further out in the County and get pulled away from Town. For some in Town, the preferred focus of Town police ought to be Town specific. A good example of where that local need exists is in code enforcement.



## Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve CPG Priority #2:

### 100. Secure a Town Administrator for Calhan

In a small Town, the Town administrator often wears many hats and serves as a crucial linchpin for the efficient operation of the municipality. Due to limited staffing, their role tends to be broad and hands-on. For Calhan, the traditional responsibilities of this role have been shared by the Public Works Director and the Town Clerk/Treasurer for many years. This has worked for Calhan and our staff does an amazing job keeping our community going. That said, a changing focus to embrace growth for the betterment of the Town so that it can harness change to thrive as the next best version of Calhan will bring challenges in the form of:

- Addressing a larger population's daily needs,
- An increase in the frequency of project review and processing, and
- An expansion in volume of each existing service for Town staff, creating a greater demand for administrative support.

If a Town administrator were to join Calhan's administrative team, that dedicated person could help alleviate added pressure, allowing the Town Clerk and Public Works Director to focus on their core duties and potentially enhance overall Town efficiency, community engagement, and responsiveness to residents and our other partnering stakeholders.

Section 2.07 and 2.07.010 of the Town code regarding the role of a Town Administrator states, ". . .the Town Administrator shall be the chief administrative officer of the Town." Among other duties listed in the Code, here are some strategic roles a Town Administrator could offer Calhan to relieve the other executive roles in Town and expand administrative capacity:

- **Management and Coordination:** The Administrator would act as the Chief Administrative Officer, and their key coordination efforts would be primarily focused on partnering with the department executives and contracted professionals. They would ensure these entities are working together towards the Town's goals and that communication flows effectively between them. Direct staff supervision would mostly remain under department executives, maintaining more direct management within their areas.
- **Financial Oversight and Resource Development:** While the Town Clerk/Treasurer would continue to handle detailed financial record-keeping, budget administration, and cash management, the Administrator would focus on the overall financial health of the Town, long-term financial planning, and actively pursue and manage significant grants that span multiple departments. They would work closely with the Clerk/Treasurer to ensure sound fiscal practices.
- **Project and Risk Management:** The Administrator would likely oversee major Town-wide projects, coordinating the efforts of the Public Works Director,

Planner, and potentially the Police Chief. Risk management would become a more collaborative effort, with each department head responsible for identifying and mitigating risks within their area, while the Administrator maintains an overall perspective and works with the Town Attorney on legal risks and insurance.

- **Personnel and Legal Compliance:** Human Resources functions would likely be shared. The Administrator might still handle high-level personnel policy and benefits administration, but the department heads (especially Police Chief and Public Works Director) would manage hiring, training, and day-to-day supervision within their departments, ensuring compliance with relevant laws. The contracted Town Attorney would handle all legal matters and compliance issues, advising the Administrator and other departments as needed.
- **Economic Development Leadership and External Relations:** The Administrator could take a leading role in attracting businesses and promoting economic growth, serving as the primary point of contact for potential developers and crafting the Town's economic development strategy. They also oversee the Town's overall public relations, with the Clerk's office potentially handling routine inquiries. The contracted Planner provides expertise in land use, zoning, and development regulations to support the Administrator's economic development goals.

- **Administrative Support Functions:** The need for the Administrator to provide direct code enforcement support would likely decrease significantly, as this function could potentially be housed within the Public Works Department (related to building codes and infrastructure) or possibly the Police Department (for certain nuisance violations). The Town Clerk’s office would handle the core administrative tasks like records management, meeting administration, and licensing.

**POTENTIAL INITIATIVES FOR A TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO CHAMPION**

In this structure, the Town Administrator transitions towards a more strategic and oversight role, delegating significant operational and specialized tasks to the dedicated staff and contracted professionals. They become more of a facilitator, coordinator, and strategic planner, ensuring all parts of the Town government are working in concert towards the overall vision and goals.

**Town and Gown Relationship**

A vital component of a thriving Calhan is a strong and collaborative relationship between the Town and Calhan School District. By working together, we can enhance opportunities for our residents, maximize the use of our resources, and address shared community needs more effectively. The Town of Calhan recognizes the Calhan School District has taken strategic steps recently to further advance the district’s mission to:

1. To offer students unlimited opportunities to succeed in a safe environment, and

2. To ensure that students understand the value of learning by offering education that matters.

Both parts of this mission can be seen in the district’s most recent successes, including the opening of the new Career and Technology Education Facility and the District’s strategic acquisition of the Frontier Charter Academy.

**Calhan High School CTE Career and Technical Education Facility**

In November 2022, Calhan voters approved a \$7.5 million bond to expand Calhan High School with a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Facility that represents a significant investment in our students’ futures and the local workforce. This state-of-the-art center provides valuable training in skilled trades, agriculture, and family and consumer sciences, highlighting diverse and well-paid career paths available right here in our region. The Town can support this success by raising community awareness of the facility and exploring potential future opportunities for community access to its resources, further integrating the school’s capabilities with the needs of our residents.



**Frontier Charter Academy – Special Needs Campus**

Frontier Charter Academy initially opened in 2001 as a charter school under Calhan School District RJ-1 and later transitioned to state authorization in 2010. By 2018, the academy was voluntarily closed due to a lack of enrolled students and was purchased by the Pikes Peak Board of Cooperative Education Services (PPBOCES) representing the Calhan, Simla, Peyton, Ellicott, Elbert, Miami Yoder, Edison, Hanover, and Fremont school districts. In 2023, the Calhan School District took over ownership of the property, while PPBOCES continues to utilize the space to serve many high-needs special education students for all BOCES member schools east of Colorado Springs. This innovative collaboration between PPBOCES and Calhan School District demonstrates a commitment to resourceful partnerships. This arrangement benefits students across multiple districts and allows for efficient use of resources. Calhan School District and PPBOCES’s successful model of inter-agency cooperation displays our Community’s dedication to both our local students and our commitment to regional collaboration.





**Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve CPG Priority #2:**

105. Kindle new beginnings with long established organizations in Town and revisit ways to share resources for the community

Strengthening the relationship between the Town and School Districts allows us to build trust and opportunities to nurture our children into the workforce and find ways to share resources to improve Calhan’s overall quality of life for everyone in Town.

To build upon the district’s successes and foster a more robust “Town and gown” relationship, the Town Administrator could champion a focused effort centered on enhanced communication, shared initiatives, and mutual respect that could involve:

- Establishing regular dialogue and a joint committee with school officials to ensure open communication and identify opportunities for collaboration,
- Explore opportunities for projects that allow for shared use of facilities, such as responsible community access to the High School’s recreational areas outside of school hours,
- Support student volunteerism in Town initiatives, fostering civic engagement and a stronger sense of community connection.

**Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve CPG Priority #2:**

109. Continue to coordinate with local and regional (County) agencies to provide well-managed, high-quality community facilities and services, including parks, libraries, and public transportation.

110. Coordinate with agencies to improve existing community facilities, services, and infrastructure to enhance quality of life

Parks can greatly enhance school programs by providing engaging, real-world learning experiences, promoting physical and mental health, and fostering a sense of community. They offer unique opportunities for hands-on learning, experiential education, and place-based learning, which can make educational concepts more relatable and memorable for students. Not all schools or districts have enough appropriate outdoor space to support the scale of outdoor learning that they would need to be able to accommodate all their classes and programs. The parks and other outdoor public spaces in our community could greatly increase the options and allow districts to take outdoor learning to a scale our students and schools desire.

Ultimately, by actively engaging with Calhan High School, celebrating its achievements, and pursuing joint initiatives, we can create a more vibrant, resourceful, and connected Calhan for all residents. This collaborative vision will ensure that the success of our High School directly contributes to the strength and prosperity of our entire community.

**WHAT IF. . . .** Calhan had a regional bike trail network to Paint Mines, Ramah State Park, Ramah, Simla, and even Peyton?

**Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve CPG Priority #2:**

- 91. Promote and support future planning for a trail system that interconnects with regional and public land system trails

Biking is a big deal. Many do it for recreation, and some “die-hards” bike- even commute - to work this way. El Paso County sees opportunities for regional trails along the HWY 24 corridor.

Building off the momentum of recent CDBG money for additional trails throughout Calhan and Extending the Rock Island Regional Trail through Calhan aligns with regional transportation and bike plans, offering potential access to resources like wayfinding and additional ADA support. Collaborative efforts with regional tourism bureaus and other partners to market this expanded trail system would also enhance Calhan’s recreation offerings and contribute to the county’s tourism goals.

A Town Administrator could proactively drive Calhan’s participation in regional efforts to enhance recreational opportunities, capitalize on the growing demand for outdoor activities, and leverage unique assets like the Rock Island Right-of-Way to benefit the community and the broader region.



**What if. . .** we as a community had the appetite to tax ourselves for a brief time to get long-term gains on some of these initiatives?

Often when a Town is experiencing significant growth where there is a lot of active development, a dedicated Code Enforcement Officer can become necessary to:

- Enforce local ordinances related to land use and zoning, building codes, property maintenance, nuisance control, and other community standards,
- Respond to complaints about potential violations,
- Conduct inspections, and
- Issue notices of violation and follow up on compliance.

To help utilize Calhan’s police force locally and enhance Calhan’s code enforcement capabilities, a strategic shift in shared responsibilities and support with the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office.

**Key Action Items from the Implementation Matrix (Ch. 6) to Achieve CPG Priority #2:**

**98. Campaigning Community Support through fiscal mechanisms such as bonding, fees, rate increases**

This is a longer-term exploratory task that will specifically delve into the concept of a potential temporary, dedicated funding source to finance significant long-term community improvements. This task involves thoroughly analyzing various funding mechanisms, including short-term dedicated taxes, bond measures, and adjustments to existing fees and rates (water and sewer). Recognizing the Calhan Community’s diverse perspectives on these options (as indicated by the responses below to the willingness survey that was a part of the winter community workshop), any exploration of these ideas will prioritize further open dialogue and clear communication with the community, along with robust community engagement to understand residents’ perspectives on these options, their priorities for investment, and their willingness to support different approaches.

**Willingness Survey**

Which of the following rate increases are you not willing to consider?

- 22% Increase in Sales Tax
- 20% Raising Property Taxes – GO Bond
- 19% Raising Water Fee
- 16% Raising Sewer Fee
- 12% I am okay with any of these.
- 11% I won’t consider any of these.

Source: December 2024 Community Workshop

As the Town pursues the implementation of the Plan’s various strategies and action items, A Town administrator could provide the needed extra support to investigate the feasibility and potential impact of options such as a short-term sales tax increase or a General Obligation (G.O.) Bond, alongside analyzing the potential of adjustments to water and sewer fees to help bring the Community’s collective vision to reality. The goal in this initiative will be to identify a financially sound and supported path to invest in Calhan’s future, moving beyond the limitations of relying solely on development and existing sales tax revenue.



**NOW ENROLLING!!**  
St. Paul Lutheran  
447-3708

**CALHAN CHURCHES  
WELCOME YOU**

CALHAN	ST. PAUL
ASSEMBLY OF GOD	ST. MICHAEL'S
WORLD METHODIST	ELK COUNTRY
LUTHERAN	ELK COUNTRY CHURCH
ST. MARK HOLY	PLEASE COME
TRINITY	AND WELCOME
ORTHODOX	WITH US

**WELCOME TO**  
**Calhan**