



STRATEGIC PLAN

Adopted May 2019

GILPIN COUNTY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page #	Title
1	Cover Page
2	Table of Contents
3	Letter from Commissioners
4	History of Gilpin County
5 – 6	Today's Economy
7	Demographics
8	Map of Gilpin County
9	Overview and Approach
10	Outcomes
11	Strategy at a Glance
12	Mission and Values
13	Areas of Focus
14	Financial Sustainability
15	Long Range Planning
16	Workforce Engagement
17	Goals
18	Objectives and Strategies
19	Implementation Plan

LETTER FROM COMMISSIONERS



Commissioners Office

Ron Engels
Commissioner, District 1

Linda Isenhart
Commissioner, District 2

Gail Watson
Commissioner, District 3

Abel Montoya
County Manager

Gilpin County Courthouse
P.O. Box 366
203 Eureka Street
Central City, CO 80427

303.582.5214
303.582.5440 fax

Web Site
www.gilpincounty.org

Kevin Armstrong
Sheriff

Zane Laubhan
Coroner

Mary Lorenz
Treasurer

Sahari McCormick
Clerk and Recorder

Anne Schafer
Assessor

May 2019

Message from Gilpin County Elected Officials and Department Directors

It is our pleasure to present the Gilpin County Strategic Plan for 2020 - 2025. This plan reflects the input of government partners, the appointed staff and elected officials in Gilpin County, and the Gilpin County Commissioners. The effort represents the first Countywide issues-based strategic plan in our County's history.

The community Vision, Mission and Values provide the foundation for the plan's three key priority areas: Financial Sustainability, Long Range Planning, and Workforce Engagement. The Senior Leadership Team and Gilpin County Commissioners developed the strategic Goals and Objectives in each priority area through an extensive series of feedback and meetings, local and national trends, and information provided by experts. Our strong commitment to protect and support our lifestyle underlies every strategic objective. These Objectives will guide the work we do to create prosperity and an enhanced quality of life in Gilpin County.

The Strategic Plan is a tool that clearly captures the most important priorities and will direct the development of our budget and resource allocation. We are confident that this year's planning process will lead to a comprehensive and responsive budget that balances the diverse needs of our community through its emphasis on accountability, partnership, innovation, and efficiency.

We want to convey our appreciation to the residents and stake holders who provided their time and input to the process, to the Senior Leadership Team for their commitment, and to the partners and agencies throughout Gilpin County who will continue to work on this plan.

Sincerely,

Linda Isenhart
Chair

Gail Watson
Commissioner

Ron Engels
Commissioner

Board of County Commissioners on behalf of all the elected officials, appointed officials and department directors of Gilpin County.



HISTORY OF GILPIN COUNTY



Native Americans

Gilpin County has been occupied with human settlements for the last 11,000 years. The Ute Indian tribe lived in the Colorado Rocky Mountains as early as the fifteenth century, reaching the central Rockies by about the seventeenth century. They lived a nomadic hunter-gatherer life, following game such as deer, elk and buffalo into the high country during the summer and camping at the base of the foothills during the winter. They gathered berries, nuts, roots, and other dietary plants for food. After contact with early Spanish explorers to the south, the Utes incorporated horses into their culture, making hunting and traveling easier. They lived in temporary or mobile dwellings such as wickiups and tipis.

Mining The United States acquired the Gilpin County area as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, and by the 1820s fur trappers were plying the headwaters and streams of the high country for beaver and other pelts. Permanent settlement of the Gilpin County area began during the Colorado Gold Rush of 1859. Early miners practiced placer mining—panning for loose gold—in streams and creeks, pulling out \$241,918 worth of gold by 1867. They also engaged in hydraulic mining, which uses high-pressure water hoses to blast away hillsides of gold-containing gravel and washes it down into a sluice. However, the real money lay not in surface gold but in deep, gold-bearing quartz veins, many of which were also discovered in the spring of 1859.

The towns of Central City, which formed below the Gregory District, and Black Hawk, located less than a mile farther down the gulch, supplied miners with equipment, food, and entertainment. Reflecting the enormous scale of the gold rush, Central City had 10,000 residents within two months of its founding in 1859. Black Hawk, with more flat land and an ample water supply to power ore-crushing stamp mills, became an early hub for Gilpin County gold shipments. The town of Black Hawk is said to have gotten its name from the famous Indian Sauk leader of the same name.

Central City and Black Hawk prospered in the 1860s and 1870s and became known as the “richest square mile on earth.” Around 1877, for instance, a rich silver vein was found north of Black Hawk at Silver Hill. As in Denver, wealth from mining led to cultural developments. Residents raised funds to build the Central City Opera House, which opened in 1878, along with four other theaters.

The railroads brought an influx of newcomers and visitors to Gilpin County, leading to the construction of hotels and other amenities. One early hotel was the Teller House in Central City, built in 1872. It was a popular stopping place for many travelers, and its history included a visit from President Ulysses S. Grant in 1873.

Twentieth Century

In 1903 David Moffat organized the Denver, Northwestern & Pacific Railway (DN&P). He planned to create a direct route from Denver to Salt Lake City over the Colorado Rockies, beginning with a standard gauge line over Rollins Pass. The first phase of the line stretched through Gilpin County, running north of Black Hawk and Central City to the Continental Divide at the county’s western edge. Though Moffat did not finish the line before his death, his partners continued the line to Craig and it eventually reached Utah in the 1930s through a series of constructions and mergers. The most populated settlement along the Moffat Road was Lincoln Hills. During the early twentieth century, mining declined in Gilpin County and in 1920 Black Hawk’s population hit a low; only one mill remained in operation. A spike in the price of gold in the 1930s brought a brief resurgence in placer mining, but overall the area languished during the Great Depression. The Central City Opera House was restored in 1932, providing a much needed tourism boost during lean times. In the 1960’s the Central City-Black Hawk National Historic District was established to preserve and celebrate the cities’ nineteenth-century buildings.



TODAY'S ECONOMY



The county encompasses about 150 square miles of mountainous terrain that ranges in elevation from 6,960 feet to 13,294 feet. The county was named for the first territorial governor, William Gilpin.

Gilpin County has a population of just over 6,000, with most residents living in the unincorporated areas of the county. Its two main cities are Central City (population 700), the county seat, and Black Hawk (population 115). Together, these cities form the Central City and Black Hawk National Historic District, renowned for its mining history. The county also includes the small communities of Rollinsville and Russell Gulch, as well as the ghost town of Nevadaville. Colorado State Highway 119 is the major north-south thoroughfare, winding through the mountains from Rollinsville to Black Hawk and continuing south to its junction with US Highway 6 in Clear Creek Canyon. State Highway 46, also known as Golden Gate Canyon Road, proceeds east from Highway 119 just north of Black Hawk and runs west from the Jefferson County border. Highway 72, also known as Coal Creek Canyon, runs through the very north end of the county to the community of Wondervu.

The main economic driver for Gilpin County is the limited stakes gaming industry which attracts visitors from all around the state and tourists from all across the US as well as other countries.

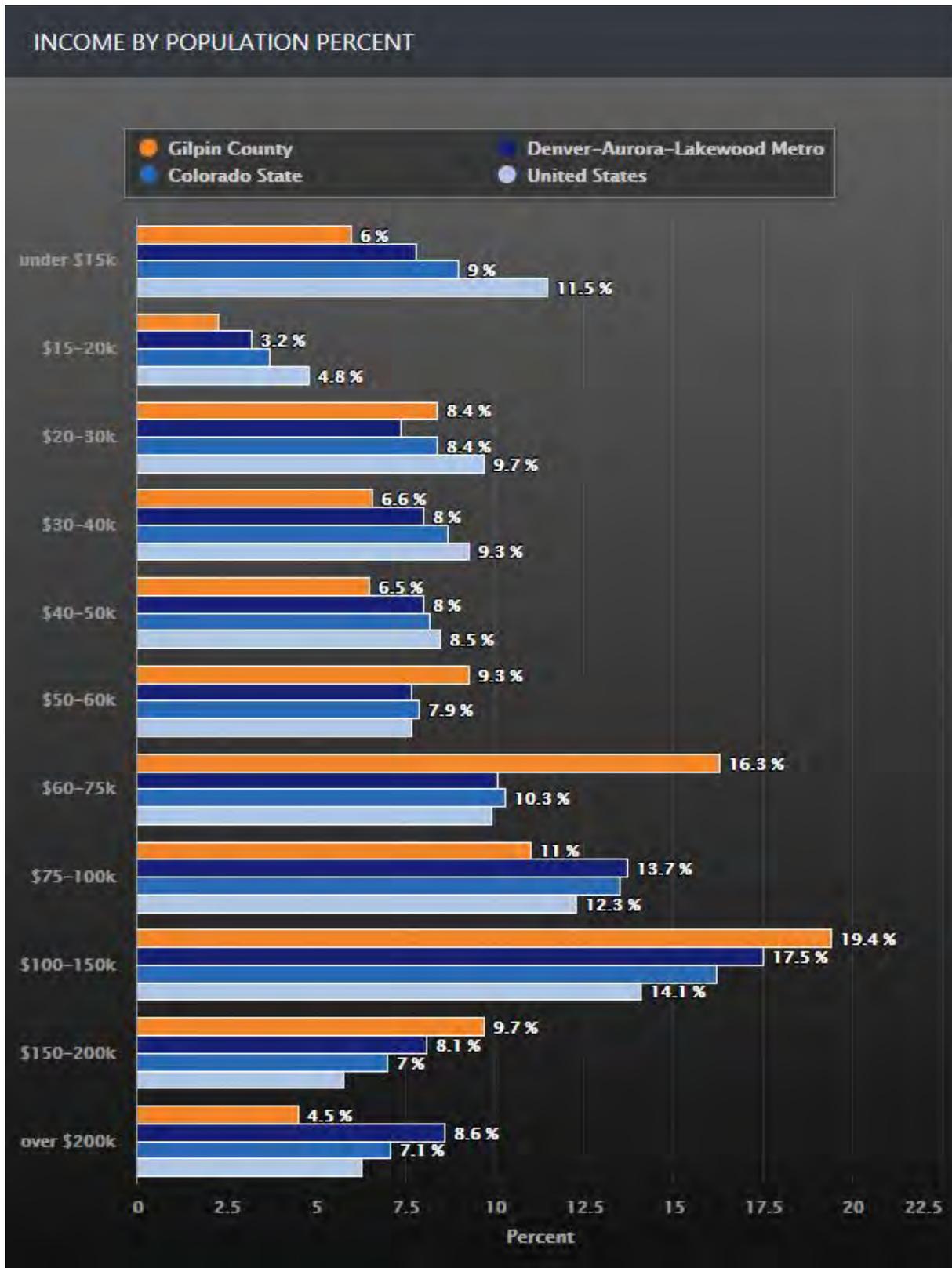
Gilpin County currently has no County approved sales tax. Residents pay 2.9% Colorado State Sales Tax and those residents who live within City limits also pay the appropriate City Sales Tax. Income Tax rates in the county average 4.6%, the same as the average US Income Tax.

The unemployment rate in Gilpin County is 2.7%, which is lower than the US average of 3.9% and Colorado's unemployment rate of 3.5%. The job market in Gilpin County increased by 2.8% over the last year recorded. Future job growth over the next twenty years is estimated to be 24.6% on average, or approximately 1100 new jobs. (Source: <http://landuseexplorer.drcog.org/>)

The average income of a Gilpin County resident is \$37,375 a year while the US average is \$28,555 a year. The Median household income in Gilpin County is \$65,851 a year, well above the US average of \$53,482 a year.

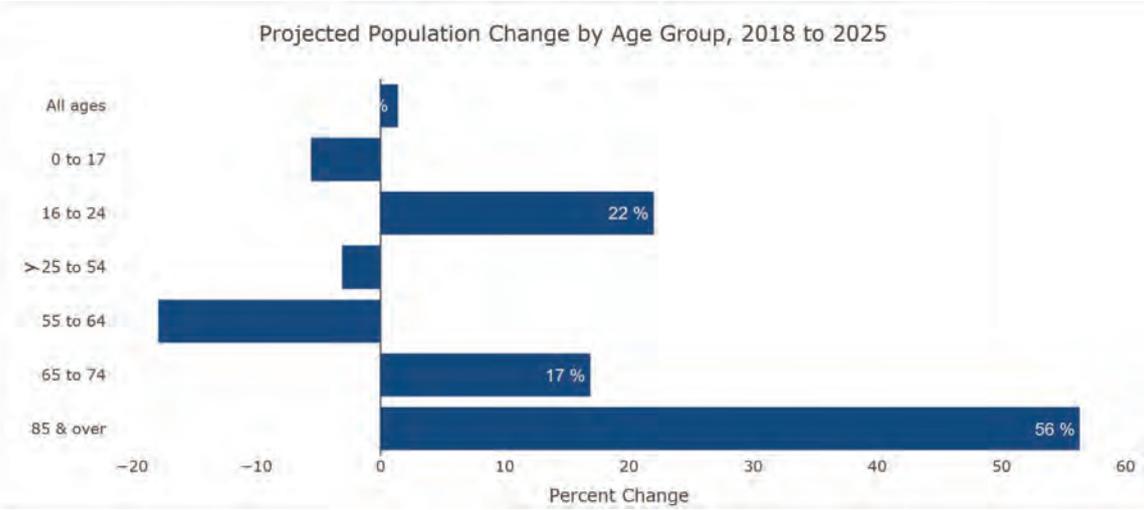
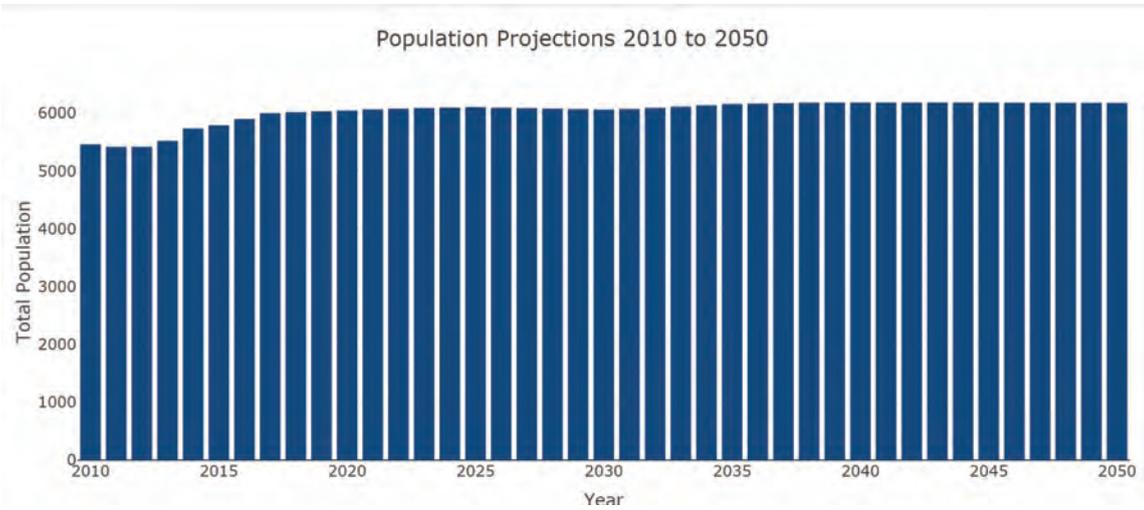


TODAY'S ECONOMY



Source: <https://www.bestplaces.net/economy/county/colorado/gilpin>

DEMOGRAPHICS



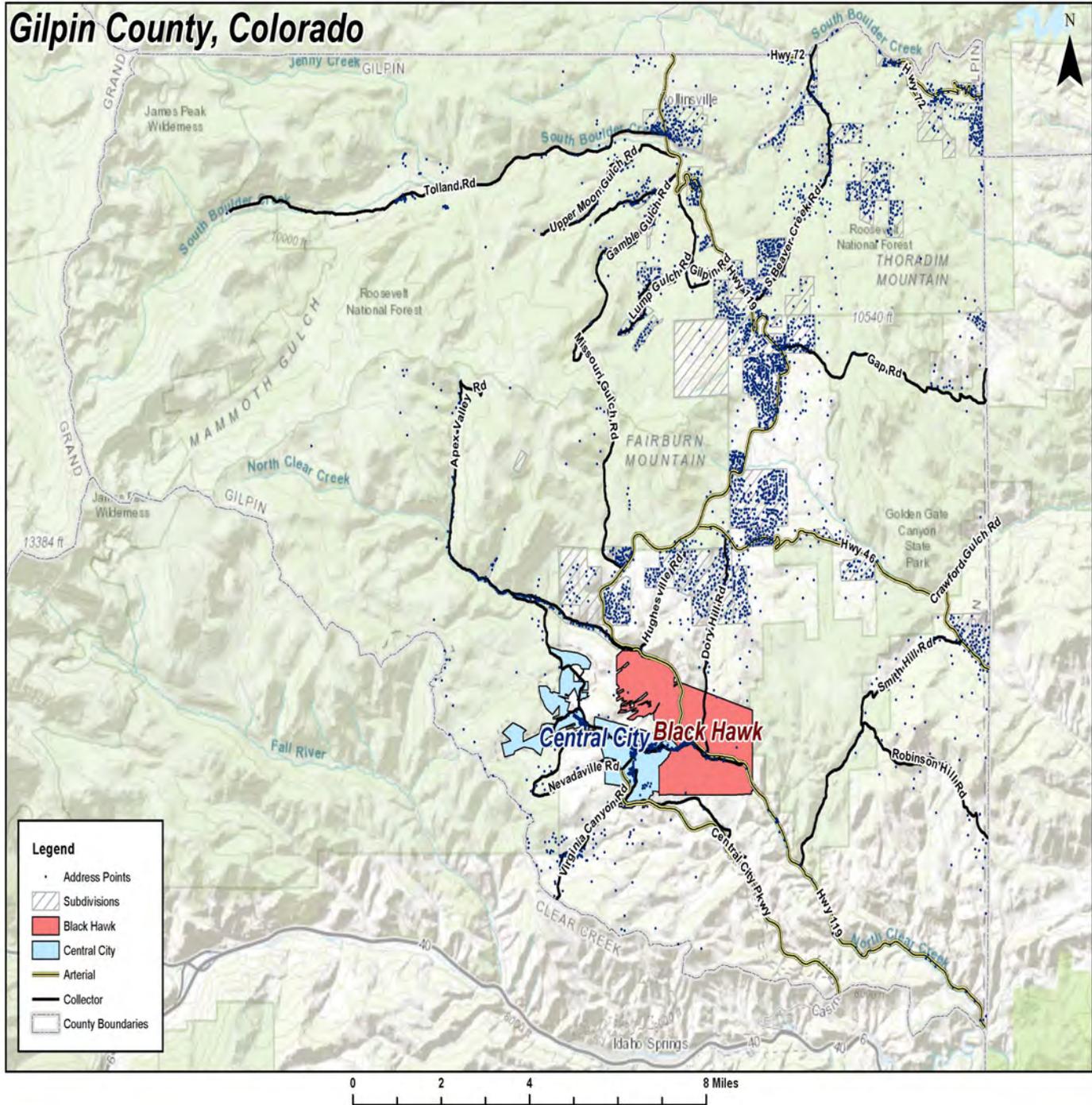
Source: <https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/>

Gilpin County has a total population of just under 6,000 with an aging population moving in from areas around the state of Colorado as well as from other areas as a prime retirement location. The main industry is gaming, and the jobs that result from the gaming industry are the main source of employment. Many of those jobs are commuter based, with workers traveling from the Denver Metro area. This creates a strong need for regional transportation alternatives.

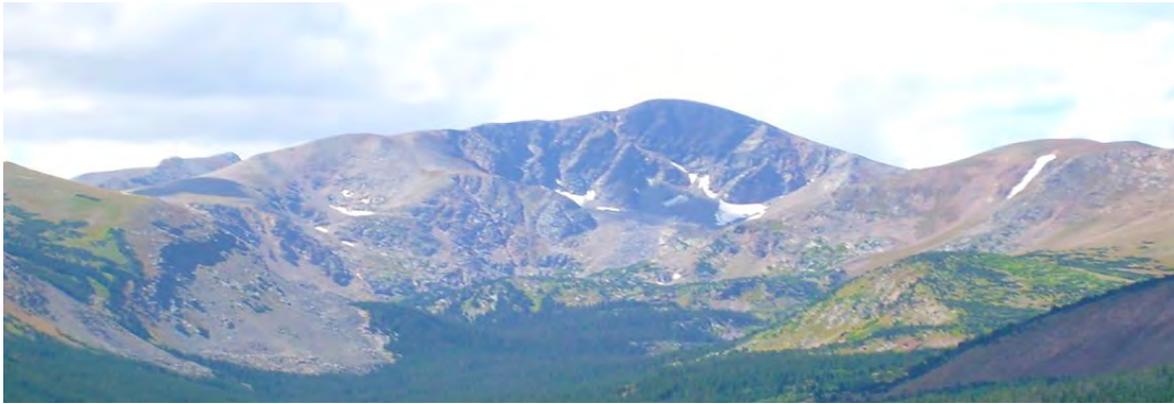
The demographic trends in Gilpin County mirror that of the state of Colorado, including a rise in housing prices. However, new housing starts in the county do not reflect a growth trend. It appears that homes are being purchased as retirement homes or second homes.

It is likely that tourism may be a source of potential revenue for the county in the future. The gaming industry and the Rocky Mountains attract visitors from various locales. There are currently more options for overnight stays for travelers due to the increase in casino expansions that include hotels and eating establishments.

MAP OF GILPIN COUNTY



OVERVIEW AND APPROACH



Gilpin County used a process to develop this Strategic Plan utilizing historical data, current economic data, feedback from partners and staff, and a concentrated series of meetings to discuss the most important issues facing the County in coming years.

During the development of this Strategic Plan, Gilpin County reached out to both employees and partners within the community to ask for thoughts, ideas and feedback. Over 140 employees completed an on-line survey, and 25 in person, phone and email interviews took place with special districts, cities, and other public agencies.

That process included reviewing the following plans and data:

- 2018 Work Plan
- Adopted 2019 Budget
- 2020 - 2040 Preliminary Needs Assessment
- 2018 Gilpin County Abstract
- 2019 Gilpin County Abstract
- Demographic Data, Gilpin County
- Revenue and Expense Projections
- DRCOG Demographic Projections
- DOLA Demographic Projections
- Black Hawk Demographic Information
- Central City Demographic Information

OUTCOMES



The outcomes created by the strategic process allowed partners, employees and the leadership of Gilpin County to:

- Align work around a common mission
- Build realistic strategies to accomplish that mission
- Implement core values across the organization
- Agree on Key Performance Indicators (KPI) as measurements of success
- Create a new culture moving forward
- Enhance relationships (internally and externally), with teamwork and communication
- Agree on realistic expectations for the future
- Approve an Implementation Plan moving forward

This plan, along with the Quality of Life survey, and our long-range planning efforts will help define the vision for the county.