

Comprehensive Plan

Town of Hillrose

March 22, 1999

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Introduction

The Town of Hillrose Comprehensive Plan was developed by the Planning and Zoning Board members with input from the Board of Trustees and approved by the Board of Trustees. The process of developing the plan was open to the public and citizen input was solicited through the Town newsletter articles, press coverage, open houses and public hearings.

The general purpose of the plan is to guide land use and development decision making by the town officials to promote the health and welfare of the community. The Comprehensive Plan is a long range planning tool. This current Comprehensive plan projects 20 years into the future and features several distinct elements relating to land use, community facilities and growth that all work together toward maintaining and enhancing the Hillrose community.

Colorado State Law requires that cities have a comprehensive plan to provide for planned and orderly development within Colorado and a balancing of basic human needs of a changing population with legitimate environmental concerns. Colorado Revised Statutes 1973, 31-23-202 and 31-23-206, as amended, to make and adapt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, including territory outside its corporate boundaries.

Location

The Town of Hillrose is located in the north east corner of Morgan County along U S Highway 6. This area is predominately farming and ranching agriculture based in the fertile South Platte River valley.

Area for Planning

The Town of Hillrose Planning Area includes the corporate boundaries of the Town of Hillrose and additional three mile area Urban Planning Area outside the corporate boundary.

Contents of the Comprehensive Plan

This plan discusses Hillrose's history and current status and addresses eight specific elements of community development:

Town Growth: This element of the plan addresses growth within the city and expansion of city boundaries to accommodate future growth.

Urban Design: This portion of the plan focuses on quality of our physical environment.

Housing: This section of the plan addresses matters relating to the supply and demand of housing, housing diversity and the quality of residential neighborhoods.

Transportation: This element of the plan deals with traffic circulation, pedestrian safety, alternative modes of transportation, and rail traffic.

Economic Development: This section of the plan addresses what type of economy we would like to see in Hillrose and discusses how to reach these goals.

Public Improvements: This portion of the plan focuses on how to provide for, and finance public services such as water, sewer, fire and general municipal services.

Parks and Recreation: This element focuses on park facilities and providing the recreation

opportunities desired by Hillrose residents.

Environmental: This section of the plan identifies key environmental issues in the community and how they should be addressed.

Modification of the Comprehensive Plan

This Comprehensive Plan is for Twenty years, but it will be periodically reviewed and updated to actively reflect the community needs.

Hillrose History:

Hillrose was Morgan County's third incorporated town and is still its smallest.

Springing up along the second railroad line constructed in this part of the South Platte Valley, the Burlington, Chicago and Quincy Railroad deemed it necessary to build a connecting spur from Union to Brush to serve the large ranches as a shipping center. Many small farms were made possible by irrigation, no doubt spurred by the 1882 beginning of the Lower Platte & Beaver Canal delivering water to the fertile valley making this an excellent location for a town.

The land for the Town was donated by Mrs. Katherine Emerson to the Lincoln Land Co. with two restrictions: half of the land was to be donated for the town, for streets and parks and the Town and its streets were to be named for her children. Her married daughter Rose Hill was the Town's namesake but there was already a Rosehill in Colorado so she reversed the order of the names and Hillrose was born. The first streets in town were named after her children: Catherine, Marietta, Dana, Rose and Charles and main street was named Emerson Street.

By 1916 Hillrose had a new school, its third, a doctor, pharmacy, lumber yard, bank, blacksmith, drayage (freight company), hotels, restaurant, post office, mercantile, churches, telephone system, carpenter, alfalfa mill, pickle factory, harness maker, barbers, groceries, creamery, churches, pool hall and even a town band. Incorporated in 1919, Hillrose continued a steady growth until automobile travel made the larger cities more attractive for businesses and Hillrose began its peak then low cycles.

Current Demographics:

Hillrose's current population is approximately 280 people. Based on current information from the Town and the State Demographers Office we offer the following information:

Population: 280

Households: 98

Families: 88 Persons per family: 3.27

Average Education Level: High School

Average Age: 34.6 Percent of population over 65 years old: 11.2

Percent of population under 18: 50

Ethnic Mix: Predominately white and Hispanic

Number Employed: 54 Number Self Employed (non farm): 15

Number of Farm Self Employed: 0 Number on Social Security: 18

Number with Retirement Income: 7 Number on Public Assistance: 12

Median Household Income: \$18,750 Per Capita Income: \$8,561

Residents below poverty line: 31 Families below poverty level: 49

Housing Units: 98

Currently Hillrose is described as a small rural community with great opportunity for growth. Most of our inhabitants work out of town in Brush and Fort Morgan or on surrounding farms. It is a quiet peaceful town with most residences on average sized lots and that are carefully maintained. There are two churches, two service organizations, one 4-H Club, two parks and the area surrounding Hillrose abounds with recreation areas that provide numerous outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, boating, camping, etc. One retail convenience type store with a Laundromat, one bar with food service, grain elevator, welding service, automobile repair service and insurance agency are the businesses remaining in or immediately adjacent to town.

Goals, Policies and Strategies

Growth of the Town:

For the purposes of this Plan, growth was projected at a 30% rate for population and housing units and a 50% rate for industrial and commercial. However given the volatile history of growth in Northeastern Colorado in the late 1990's it has been hard to predict.

In the past Hillrose has shown high growth followed by times of decline. While we are currently experiencing a growth period we believe that the community will continue to grow at a more moderate rate and will not repeat the decline previously seen in the 1980's.

Hillrose currently has two platted housing developments with lots available. Each development offers a different perspective. The Hillrose Estates development is consistent with the "normal" lot and block structure in the other additions in Hillrose while the Beaver Creek Subdivision lots are larger rural estate residential acreage's.

With the existing locations of the railroad and Highway 6 creating somewhat of a barrier for our existing utilities of water and sewer we foresee any new annexation housing growth being to the immediate south or east of the existing Town limits into what is currently zoned agricultural use in Morgan County.

The Town currently owns several lots on Emerson Street (the main street) that are zoned commercial for additional commercial growth. The lots that were originally included in the Town then deannexed in 1921 laying west of the railroad and Highway 6 and to the north of our existing Waste Water Treatment Facility would be our intended industrial growth area. Along with the properties between the Highway and the railroad.

Goal 1: Encourage and accommodate growth in locations that allow efficient extensions of the Town's infrastructure.

Policy 1-1: The Town shall consider annexation of properties contiguous to the Town limits where it is consistent with the goals, policies and strategies of this Comprehensive Plan.

Strategies:

- Maintain accurate records of infrastructure capacities and locations.
- Encourage utilizing available land within the Town limits before expanding Town boundaries.
- In general, discourage flagpole annexations and leapfrog development.
- Annexation of enclaves shall be encouraged consistent with applicable policies and regulations.
- The Town shall consider using special districts to finance public improvements in existing developments requesting annexation so long as the special district is controlled by the Town.

Policy 1-2: Ensure that development in the Hillrose planning area is guided toward the Town.

Strategies:

- Cooperate with Morgan County and surrounding municipalities to develop and intergovernmental agreement that recognizes the plans of all jurisdictions.
- Actively review and comment on proposed development within the Hillrose planning area.
- Develop an incentive program to encourage desirable land uses to locate within the Town of Hillrose.

Goal 2: Ensure that areas proposed for annexation are compatible with existing uses and neighborhoods.

Policy 2-1: Annexation requests will be reviewed to assure compatibility with existing neighborhoods.

Strategies:

- Develop the process to include review of the proposed use, street patterns, and other factors which may impact an existing neighborhood during the annexation review process.
- Include mitigation actions, such as installation of landscape buffers, with approval of annexation requests where appropriate to ensure compatibility.
- Discourage annexations that would negatively impact existing neighborhoods.

Urban Design:

The Town of Hillrose has a rural small town character that consists of residential areas, tree lined streets and small locally owned businesses.

Goal 3: Preserve and enhance Hillrose's small town, rural character.

Policy 3-1: Promote quality design standard for new development and redevelopment.

Strategies:

- Review subdivision regulations and update development standards regularly.
- Develop guide lines which may include street layout, sidewalks, access criteria and alleyways.
- Periodic review of Town Ordinances regarding to weed control, automobile and vehicle storage and dilapidated structures.
- Encourage planting of suitable trees.

Policy 3-2: Support redevelopment within existing Town limits.

Strategies:

- Evaluate redevelopment potential within the existing Town limits in the context of the Comprehensive Plan guidelines and zoning regulations
- Investigate public and private funding opportunities for redevelopment projects.

Policy 3-3: Support the Town's Business Districts

Strategies:

- Investigate grant potential, formation of special districts, etc. to fund streetscapes and building improvements.
- Cooperate with business districts regarding traffic, utility service and parking issues.
- Review zoning regulations relative to mixed uses and other issues which could assist in keeping the downtown area viable.

Policy 3-4: Enhance the aesthetic image of Hillrose by improving the appearance of entryways and major street corridors.

Strategies:

- Prepare design guidelines for key entryways and corridors
- Develop mechanisms for implementing design guidelines such as identification of funding sources and development standards.

Policy 3-5: Encourage the preservation, rehabilitation, maintenance and continued use of historic buildings and landmarks.

Strategies:

- Identify funding sources to help utilize and maintain historic buildings.
- Facilitate renovation of historic buildings through the flexible application of zoning and building codes.

Goal 4: Encourage and promote a compatible and functional system of land uses.

Policy 4-1: Promote compatible and diversified land use through zoning and design standards.

Strategies:

- Review and update zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Encourage location of shopping, services, recreation and education opportunities within walking distance of residential areas.
- Ensure compatibility between adjacent land uses and densities.

Housing:

Hillrose has a wide variety of housing that serves several income levels and lifestyles. From mobile homes in the mobile home park to older traditional residential neighborhoods to new homes to acreage's, owner occupied and rentals. There are currently 24 traditional lots available and 9 estate residential lots available for sale. Both developments are within the current city limits giving Hillrose adequate potential housing.

Goal 5: Maintain and enhance quality residential environments in Hillrose

Policy 5-1: Preserve Hillrose's existing neighborhoods as quality living environments.

Strategies:

- Encourage the preservation and renovation of housing in Hillrose's older neighborhoods.
- Identify and encourage programs to assist low income homeowners in making necessary repairs to their homes.
- Maintain the infrastructure in residential neighborhoods.
- Enforce all housing codes and ordinances enacted to protect the quality of residential neighborhoods.
- Research means to control dilapidated buildings.

Policy 5-2: Promote high quality new residential neighborhoods.

Strategies:

- Review and revise design standards as needed to encourage development of high quality new housing developments.

Policy 5-3: Protect existing and new residential development from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

Strategies:

- Review zoning designations to ensure that adjacent uses do not detract from residential developments.
- Require the use of buffer zones, landscaping, berming and other design techniques to help improve and maintain the integrity of different land uses.

Goal 6: Promote the construction of new housing in Hillrose to accommodate growth and better meet the demand for housing in the Town.

Policy 6-1: Encourage Town and private sector partnerships to facilitate new residential development.

Strategies:

- The Town may consider incentives, as needed, to encourage desirable housing development.
- Monitor the housing market on a regular basis to determine if programs should be started to help promote new residential development.
- Ensure that the Town's infrastructure can support new residential development.

Goal 7: Achieve a mix of housing types and densities in order to meet the diverse needs of the citizens.

Policy 7-1: Apply flexible standards to undeveloped residential land to allow a range of residential development.

Strategies:

- Identify what types of housing are needed in Hillrose and utilize this information with reviewing zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Encourage a variety of residential densities in neighborhood designs.
- Encourage Planned Unit Development (PUD) which allows a diversity of housing types to be developed in the same area while maintaining high quality living environments.

Policy 7-2: Support efforts to develop moderate income and special needs housing in Hillrose.

Strategies:

- Consider utilizing flexible zoning standards and financial incentives to encourage private development of moderate-income housing.

Transportation:

The well maintained transportation system will be vital to ensure that current levels of mobility are maintained in the future as Hillrose grows and develops.

Existing streets need to be maintained and monitored to make sure they can handle the growth in traffic volumes. Newly developing areas need to be designed to facilitate proper circulation patterns.

Goal 8: Provide and maintain a roadway network which meets the access and circulation needs for the community in a safe, economical and efficient manner.

Policy 8-1: Maintain and improve the current condition of roadways with the Town.

Strategies:

- Emphasize a preventative maintenance schedule to maintain ride quality and street longevity.
- Complete selective improvements to Hillrose roadways.
- Encourage new and expanded partnerships with the State and County to encourage that their roads within Hillrose are properly maintained.

Policy 8-2: Ensure a balance between land uses served and the transportation system to maintain and enhance existing levels of mobility.

Strategies:

- Coordinate improvements to the transportation system with development.
- Identify means to improve safety and circulation in the vicinity of major traffic generators.

Policy 8-3: Maintain a roadway classification system of arterial, collectors, and local streets that promotes appropriate levels of access and traffic volumes.

Strategies:

- Review and make appropriate modifications to existing street standards.
- Identify future roadway corridors and ensure that sufficient right of way is acquired.

Policy 8-4: Establish appropriate traffic speed and intersection controls on Town streets that promotes circulation, traffic safety and roadway classifications.

Strategies:

- Determine streets and intersections where traffic control changes could improve hazardous situations, or enhance circulation without promoting speeding.
- Review traffic controls on streets that are not functioning according to their roadway classifications.
- Coordinate traffic control at and near railroad crossings to improve safety and reduce congestion and delay.

Goal 9: Develop a Downtown parking and circulation plan to support and enhance the viability of downtown Hillrose.

Policy 9-1: Maximize the amount of parking with walking distance of downtown Hillrose.

Strategies:

- Estimate parking demand levels for the downtown area and develop strategies for providing additional parking.
- Investigate existing turn restrictions in downtown area on circulation and safety.

Policy 9-2: Encourage and enhance public transportation services for seniors, the disabled, and others who rely on such services.

Strategies:

- Support and expand existing services providing mobility to Hillrose residents.

Economic Development:

Hillrose has a history of booms and busts in the economy of the Town. Beginning as a primarily agriculture town that provided services for the surrounding farmers and ranchers, Hillrose has evolved today to a bedroom community to Brush and Fort Morgan to the west and Sterling to the east.

We currently have a Ditch Company Office, a bar and grill and a convenience store with sandwiches and a laundromat in the downtown business section of Town. We also have an elevator between the railroad tracks and Highway 6. A automotive repair shop has just opened in the old School shop building and there is a Mexican food restaurant planning to open in the summer of 1999.

Economic diversification would be welcomed but it is hard to predict what businesses would thrive in our area so close to other larger entities within easy driving distance.

We are active participants in the Morgan County Economic Development Corp. and they include Hillrose information in the packets that they send out to prospective clients. Hillrose will support efforts to being in new businesses that would create jobs, provide shopping opportunities and strengthen the area.

Goal 11: Develop a diversified and stable economic base that provides Hillrose residents with a variety of job opportunities.

Policy 11-1: Create and maintain a business environment that encourages existing businesses and industries to remain in Hillrose, grow, and continue to be successful while providing benefits to the Town and its citizens.

Strategies:

- Pursue efforts to develop mutually beneficial and cooperative relationships between the Town and existing businesses and industries.

Policy 11-2: Continue efforts to attract desirable businesses and industries to Hillrose.

Strategies:

- Support any efforts of Morgan County Economic Development Corp. that provides information and promotes Hillrose to potential investors.
- Maintain the Town's infrastructure and utility capabilities to ensure that new businesses and industries have readily available services.
- Support private efforts to prepare buildable sites for new businesses and industries.
- Emphasize maintenance and improvement of amenities that make Hillrose a desirable place to live and do business.
- Consider development impacts on quality of life, i.e. public safety, housing, education, utility services, etc. when recruiting new businesses.

Goal 12: Achieve an adequate mix of commercial development that meets the needs of Hillrose citizens and does not excessively impact the Town's transportation system.

Policy 12-1: Support and promote the commercial area as a retail and service center.

Strategies:

- Enhance the appearance of the downtown area and usage through historic preservation, signage, and design features.
- Support efforts to diversify businesses located in the downtown area.

- Address parking and circulation issues in the downtown area to ensure convenient access for customers.
- Investigate means to fund downtown parking, streetscape, and building improvements.

Policy 12-2: As the Town grows, plan neighborhood commercial areas which are both convenient and compatible with new neighborhoods.

Strategies:

- Develop design guidelines to ensure that stores blend in with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Create zoning regulations to control the types of businesses allowed in neighborhood commercial areas.

Public Improvements

Municipal public improvements include any capital facility owned, operated and maintained by the Town. These facilities allow basic town services such as water, sewer, streets and drainage to be provided to Hillrose residents.

Public improvement needs may be generated by existing system deficiencies, changes in Town goals regarding types and locations of desired development, or by growth. Growth in undeveloped or underutilized areas may require new facilities to be installed and expansion of existing facilities.

The primary issue revolving around public improvements is who pays for the cost of the improvements to accommodate growth. Should new development pay to “buy in” to the existing capacity of public infrastructure?

Hillrose currently operates under a philosophy that requires new development to pay for buying into the existing infrastructures for water and sewer. New development is also required to pay for the water and sewer lines to the area. And when new land is annexed to the Town the property owners must transfer all water rights to the Town. This basic philosophy is flexible though, and the Town may adjust its policies to encourage desirable development.

Goal 13: Provide public improvements that are designed and installed to deliver required service in a timely manner.

Policy 13-1: Begin and annually review five year capital improvement program.

Strategies:

- The Town will be responsible for funding public improvements necessitated by obsolescence, changes in Town goals or to meet long-standing needs in the Town infrastructure.
- Developers are primarily responsible for public improvement needs generated by growth. In times of rapid growth, development fees may be established to help pay for facilities other than water and sewer systems.
- Property owners of enclaves or existing development being considered for annexation are responsible for improving their infrastructure to Town standards as part of the annexation process.

Policy 13-2: Ensure a high standard of water and sewer service to all areas of the Town.

Strategies:

- New water and sewer service shall be provided only to properties within the Town limits except as otherwise approved by the Board.
- Water and sewer services within Hillrose shall only be provided by the Town.

Policy 13-3: Plan for extension of Town infrastructure into City growth areas.

Strategies:

- Develop a master plan for major system improvements to service growing areas.

Parks and Recreation

Our society needs and requires open space and a variety of recreation facilities. Everyone seems to have a different interest and our Town must serve a broad range of users. It is important that the community facilities be developed to provide these diversified recreational opportunities.

Goal 14: Provide adequate parks and recreation facilities to serve the recreation needs of the residents.

Policy 14-1: Neighborhood and community parks should be developed or improved to serve the present and future needs of the residents.

Strategies:

- Facilities should be designed to meet the recreational needs of the park's service area.
- Provide 2 acres of neighborhood park for every 500 residents. These parks should have a 1/4 mile service radius. Features at these parks may include playgrounds, picnic areas, sport courts and open play areas.
- Evaluate existing recreational demands and facilities located within the local area. Upgrade and/or add facilities to meet unmet recreational needs.

Policy 14-2: Park and recreational facilities should provide for outdoor recreation opportunities for the community.

Strategies:

- Encourage cooperation between the Town, School District and other community organizations to allow for joint use of facilities.

Policy 14-3: Develop and utilize open space areas for recreation.

Strategies:

- Develop site design criteria and review procedures that provide open space requirement for new development.

Goal 15: Develop a comprehensive trail network linking parks, recreational facilities and other community facilities.

Policy 15-1: Utilize drainage ways and irrigation ditches as trail routes through the community.

Strategies:

- Coordinate trails design with the design of drainage ways.
- Develop cooperative agreements with ditch companies regarding joint use of ditch right of ways for trails.

Cultural, Historic, Educational and Human Services

Community well being and quality of life are addressed in this section. Hillrose has a rich history and a strong base of community volunteers and organizations that makes Hillrose a great place to live.

Goal 17: Provide Hillrose residents with a variety of cultural and special events opportunities.

Policy 17-1: Promote community events.

Strategies:

- Provide Town support for community sponsored events
- Encourage community involvement in Town sponsored events.

Goal 18: Support community educational opportunities.

Policy 18-1: Establish Town and School district partnerships that lower costs of delivering programs.

Strategies:

- Encourage the joint use of Town and School facilities.

Policy 18-2: Provide support for the East Morgan County Library District.

Strategies:

- Encourage cooperation between the Town and Library Distract regarding library operations and projects.

Goal 19: Encourage human services and volunteer activities in the community.

Policy 19-1: Recognize the importance of care facilities and service groups to the community.

Strategies:

- Encourage cooperation between the Town and care facilities and service groups regarding operations and projects.

Policy 19-2: Recognize the importance of local foundations to the community.

Strategies:

- Continue to recognize local foundation support for community services and projects.

Environmental

The quality of living of Hillrose residents is directly tied to the environment of our area. The Town and its citizens must recognize that what we do has a direct impact on our surrounding environment. The Town must directly take steps to both improve and protect the environmental quality and resources of the Town and surrounding areas. It is also important that the Town encourage environmentally sound practices by all who live and work in Hillrose.

Goal 20: Protect the environmental quality and resources of the Town of Hillrose and surrounding areas.

Policy 20-1: Pursue measures aimed at protecting and improving the environmental quality and resources of the Town and surrounding areas.

Strategies:

- Encourage cooperation between the Town and industries to ensure compliance with pollution standards.
- Actively monitor development, water rights and other activities that may affect the Town's water field.
- Protect sensitive areas like prime agricultural land, wetlands and wildlife habitats as the Town grows.

Goal 21: Encourage environmentally sound methods of using and disposing solid and hazardous waste.

Policy 21-1: Develop programs that encourage residents to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Strategies:

- Continue to encourage the use and advertise the existing drop off locations for recyclables and pursue options for increasing recycling.
- Continue to educate residents about ways to reduce, reuse and recycle their solid waste.
- Continue programs that encourage composting and mulching of green yard waste.

Policy 21-2: Develop programs that encourage the proper use and disposal of hazardous waste.

Strategies:

- Support and expand the County's efforts to provide information to residents that explains the proper use and disposal of common household hazardous wastes.
- Support coordinated efforts in Morgan County to establish a drop off location for household hazardous wastes.