



Boulder County Comprehensive Plan
**ELDORADO SPRINGS
TOWNSITE PLAN**

Introduction, Purpose, Principal Issues,
Objective and Goals

R*espect the eclectic, historic, and
unique nature of Eldorado Springs
while allowing incremental changes
that maintain the important
characteristics of the townsite.*

Introduction

The Eldorado Springs townsite is located on Colorado State Highway 170, also known as Eldorado Springs Drive. This study area mostly consists of former townsite lots as well as parcels formally included in the Local Improvement District (or “LID”). The combination of LID parcels and townsite lots creates an area generally considered to encapsulate the community of Eldorado Springs (see Exhibit 1, below).

Eldorado Springs was originally platted as a townsite in 1904 (see Exhibit 2, below). This platted area actually contains several plats: Moffat Lakes, First Addition to Moffat Lakes, Second Addition to Moffat Lakes, and Barbers Addition to Moffat Lakes. Based on Article 9-102(D)(2) of the Boulder County Land Use Code, the former townsite is not recognized as a subdivision but is officially considered “unsubdivided land in unincorporated Boulder County.”

Eldorado Springs Local Improvement District (LID)

The LID was established in 2003 for the purpose of creating a funding mechanism for the wastewater processing system that will replace the existing individual septic systems that serve properties in Eldorado Springs. The LID will also allow for additional wastewater service capacity in the Eldorado Springs townsite.



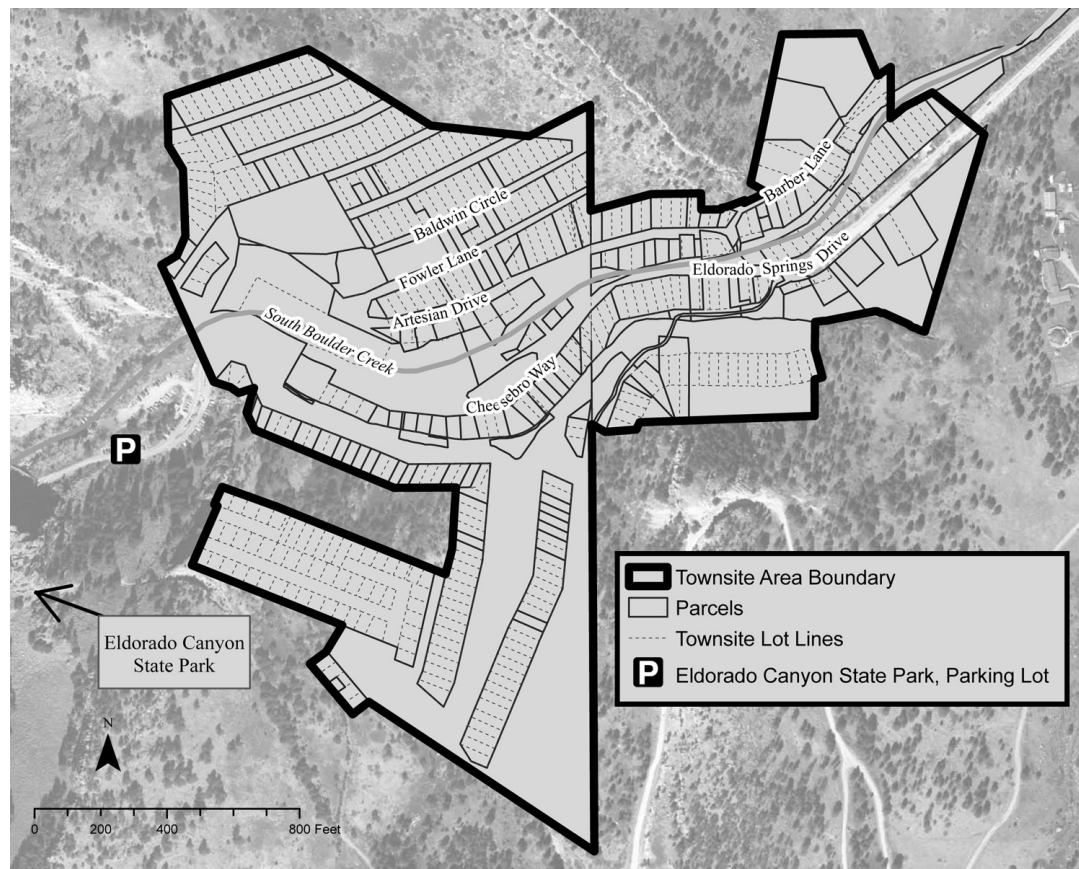


Exhibit 1: The Eldorado Sprints Townsite Planning Area.

The Eldorado Springs Townsite Plan

Purpose

The purpose of the Eldorado Springs Townsite Plan is to support the existing eclectic and, in some cases, historic character of development in the townsite while providing the appropriate channels for future change.

History and Existing Conditions

Originally, the settlement flourished as the popular Eldorado Springs Resort, which opened in 1905 as a recreation destination for swimming, fishing, and other social activities. The resort included overnight accommodations in the main hotel as well as alternatives such as private

cottages- some of which still exist today and are used as vacation homes or year-round residences. In the past, most of the residences were occupied by renters; however, in recent years, this has shifted to owner-occupied primary residences. Many of the structures, yards, and roadways are smaller than that which is typical in unincorporated Boulder County.

Unlike most townsites in Boulder County, Eldorado Springs has evolved into a townsite with predominantly year-round (i.e., full-time) residents. This densely populated area, filled with homes ascending the canyon walls, gradually narrows heading west and forms the gateway to the popular Eldorado Canyon State Park.

Factors such as the process of development and redevelopment over the years, the individuality of ownership,

economics, available materials, and lot size have resulted in a varied architectural style where each house is different.

The neighborhood character that is predominant in Eldorado Springs is an eclectic mix of architectural styles, sizes, and lot coverages. The canyon landscape is steep on both sides and South Boulder Creek runs through the center of the community. Eldorado Springs is surrounded by city- and state-owned lands. Most homes exist on small parcels lining the terraced street levels, although some larger parcels exist on the outskirts of the community. Some homes are sited directly adjacent to the creek. A few homes are located across elevated irrigation ditches and are accessed via footbridges and footpaths (these parcels also lack vehicular access or onsite parking). The townsite portion of Eldorado Springs Drive is a quarter-mile section of road between the end of State Highway 170 and Eldorado Canyon State Park and is lined on both sides with some homes and businesses. In addition to the single-family homes found

throughout the townsite there are also some manufactured homes, multi-family homes, and commercial structures / uses. In the past, commercial businesses existed in various locations throughout the townsite.

Many parcels consist of multiple townsite lots combined into one larger piece of land; however, some properties consist of as little as one single townsite lot. These can be small, such as 30 feet by 101 feet (3,030 square feet in area) or smaller. Due to imperfect surveying techniques available in the past, the inherent difficulties involved in accurately assessing boundary lines for varied topography, and contemporary surveying interpretations of original platting, it is common for residences to extend beyond their property lines into either an adjacent parcel or the roadway. Most homes do not meet the current required setbacks. Many of the existing structures were built before 1954 when Zoning Regulations for Boulder County included specific requirements for Eldorado Springs, which was, at the time, in the "Transitional" zone.

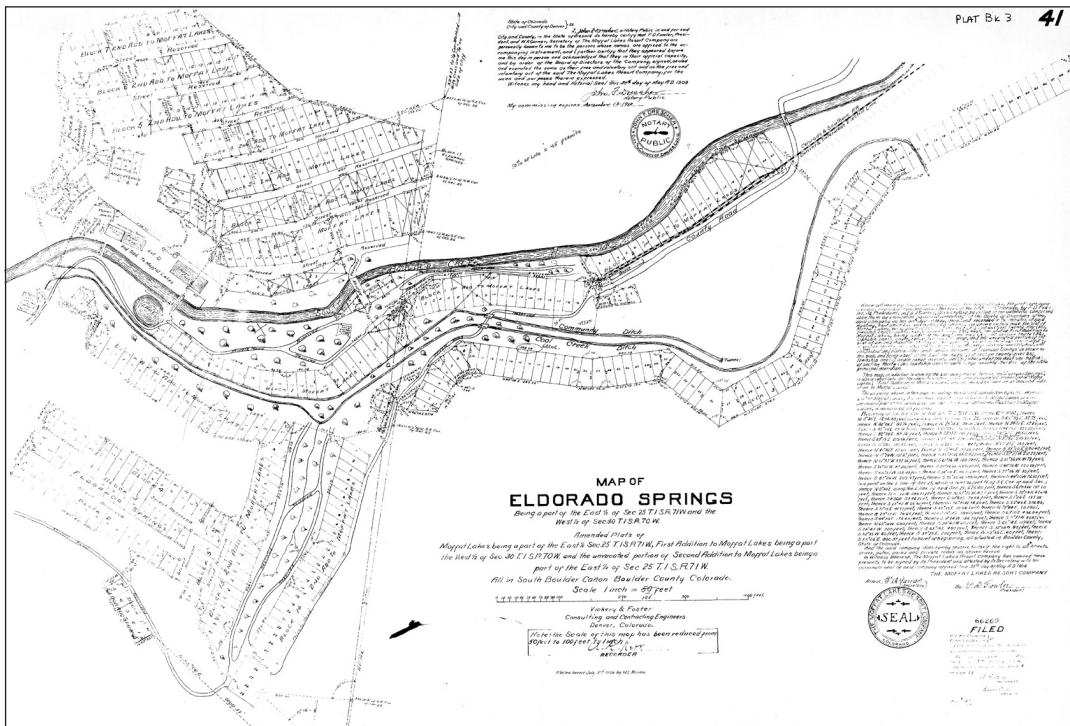


Exhibit 2: 1908 Plat of the Eldorado Springs Townsite.

Principal Issues

The following issues were identified regarding land use and the existing zoning regulations in Eldorado Springs:

- **Inadequate zoning regulations**

The regulations for the various existing zoning districts in the townsite are varied and do not always match the existing development pattern. Setbacks are an example of the incompatibility of current zoning requirements with the existing development. New regulations should recognize the existing conditions and attempt to revise the Land Use review process requirements for minor changes that would be considered typical in the townsite.

- **Compatibility and visual character**

The possibility for development or re-development within the townsite represents the potential for changes to the community character. These changes could include parcel size, house size, or total replacement of existing structures. Eldorado Springs developed over many years in an eclectic architectural style, so any future development should recognize this and support the legacy of that character.

- **Commercial development**

Commercial uses have traditionally existed throughout the townsite. The scale and intensity of new businesses should be consistent with the character of the community and compatible with surrounding land uses. The Eldorado Springs resort complex, pool and resort landscape features are valued by the community.

- **Eldorado Canyon State Park**

Eldorado Springs is the gateway community for Eldorado Canyon State Park, which hosts over 200,000 visitors per year. This 1,392-acre preserve offers outdoor recreational opportunities as well as educational/interpretive programs. A portion of the State Park- the lower canyon- was once part of the Eldorado Springs resort and used for recreational activities. Future planning for the townsite should consider the special circumstances (i.e., the potential for impacts) of being a gateway community.

- **South Boulder Creek**

South Boulder Creek is valued as a central feature and natural asset of the community. Future planning for the townsite should protect and enhance in-stream flows, preserve aquatic and riparian habitat, provide for erosion control, and address encroachment issues.

- **Ownership and Maintenance of Roads**

The rights-of-way in Eldorado Springs are privately-owned and not maintained by Boulder County. Concerns exist regarding the lack of both on-street parking and parking on privately-owned parcels, the ongoing maintenance of roads, drainage, and the existence of structural trespass into these rights-of-way.

- **Diverse Housing Types and Social Sustainability**

The diversity of housing types is a valued aspect of the community in Eldorado Springs. Future planning for the townsite should allow residents to maintain, replace or create dwellings that support socioeconomically-diverse populations.

Objective and Goals for Eldorado Springs

Objective

The following goals attempt to define what should happen in the future to protect the character of the Eldorado Springs Townsite.

Goals

1. Respect the eclectic, historic, and unique nature of Eldorado Springs while allowing incremental changes that maintain the important characteristics of the townsite.
2. Encourage and actively solicit meaningful and significant public participation by residents in the development of any future plans and regulations affecting Eldorado Springs.
3. Collaborate with Colorado State Parks and City & County agencies to find ways to address the impacts of park and open space visitors on the Eldorado Springs community.
4. Explore options for safe and adequate roads and rights-of-way for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, while maintaining the character of the community.
5. Create and maintain regulations that reflect and respect the development, density, and scale of the current community, while allowing some flexibility for future change.
6. Balance the scope of land use review processes with the potential impacts of a given proposal.
7. Emphasize the role of public comment in Land Use review dockets and retain the length of referral response periods.
8. Establish context-specific structure size, height, and parcel combination limitations.
9. Respect the existing development pattern when establishing required setbacks.
10. Encourage the rehabilitation, reconfiguration, and addition to existing residences rather than total replacement with new structures, where practicable.
11. Allow an appropriate mix of uses to serve or accommodate local residents, and investigate economic development opportunities (for example, commercial opportunities related to Eldorado Canyon State Park visitation).
12. Encourage a broad socioeconomic population by allowing for a variety of housing options throughout the townsite.
13. Protect and restore the ecological health of South Boulder Creek.