2.01 COMMUNITY PROFILES

EL PASO COUNTY

El Paso County encompasses more than 2,158 square miles – slightly more than twice the area of the state of Rhode Island – and is the most populous county in the State of Colorado. The western portion of El Paso County is extremely mountainous while the eastern part is prairie land where dairy cows and beef cattle are the main source of ranchers’ income. The altitude ranges from about 5,095 feet on the southern border at Black Squirrel Creek to 14,115 feet on the summit of Pikes Peak. Primary communities and their year of incorporation in this county include:

- City of Colorado Springs (1871)
- City of Fountain (1900)
- City of Manitou Springs (1888)
- Town of Calhan (1919)
- Town of Ellicott (1897)
- Town of Green Mountain Falls (1880)
- Town of Monument (1879)
- Town of Palmer Lake (1889)
- Town of Ramah (1927)

PUEBLO COUNTY

Pueblo County encompasses approximately 2,397 square miles, has a population of 160,852, a population density of 67.08 people per square mile, and topography that ranges from farms in riparian land along the Arkansas River to rangeland, forests, and mountains. Located at the confluence of the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek, Pueblo has been an important crossroads for transportation and trading for more than 150 years. Pueblo is international, multiracial, and multicultural with a well-established Hispanic community that encompasses more than 40 percent of the population. The City of Pueblo is the county seat and most populous city in Pueblo County, serving as the economic hub of southeastern Colorado. As one of the largest steel-producing cities in the United States, Pueblo is sometimes referred to as the “Steel City.” Pueblo’s economy is bolstered by education, healthcare services, and high-profile employers such as Colorado State University (CSU) Pueblo, Vestas Wind Systems, Mission Foods, and Professional Bull Riders, Inc. Military convoys and transportation of supplies and equipment travel throughout the region as well. Active and retired military personnel live in Pueblo County and commute to the Colorado Springs area to access the installations and services there, and they have a shared interest in maintenance of Interstate 25. Primary communities and their year of incorporation in this county include:

- Avondale (1892)
- Beulah (1876)
- City of Pueblo (1885)
- Colorado City Metropolitan District (1866)
- Pueblo West Metropolitan District (1969)
- Town of Boone (1956)
- Town of Rye (1937)

TELLER COUNTY

Teller County was carved out of El Paso County in 1899 from the western slope of Pikes Peak. The county has a population of 23,472 people with a median age of 49.5 and a median household income of $63,723. Cripple Creek is the county seat, and Woodland Park is the most populous city. Compared to other counties, Teller County has a high number of mining jobs with one of the
largest gold mines in the country in Victor and Cripple Creek. Tourism, recreation, and gaming are primary economic drivers. Primary communities and their year of incorporation in this county include:

- City of Cripple Creek (1892)
- City of Victor (1894)
- City of Woodland Park (1891)
- Divide (1889)

**FREMONT COUNTY**

Fremont County encompasses more than 1,534 square miles and has a population of 6,824 with a density of 31 persons per square mile. The economy of Fremont County specializes in public administration including correctional institutions; mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; and real estate. Fremont County is home to 13 prisons generating more than half of the jobs in the area. The Colorado Department of Corrections operates nine facilities, including the oldest prison in the state, the Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility, which is in the county seat of Cañon City. The four federal prisons include the United States Penitentiary Administrative Maximum Facility (ADX), also known as “Supermax,” the highest-security prison in the United States. Primary communities and their year of incorporation in this county include:

- City of Cañon City (1872)
- City of Florence (1887)
- Town of Brookside (1913)
- Penrose (1860)
- Town of Coal Creek (1882)
- Town of Rockvale (1886)
- Town of Williamsburg (1888)

## 2.02 HISTORY

Various economic and cultural forces have driven development over time throughout the region. Many of the communities within this region share a common heritage beginning with military expeditions sent to the area in the 1800s. Many communities and economic enterprises were founded by former military officers. The history of military operations and community interaction within the Pikes Peak region, particularly since World War II, provides important context for this Joint Land Use Study (JLUS).

**TIMELINE OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC, COMMUNITY, AND MILITARY DEVELOPMENT**

### The 1700s

The Arkansas River was the northernmost extension of Spain and Mexico. The area saw an influx of French fur trappers in the late 1700s.

### The Early 1800s

In 1806, Lt. Zebulon Pike explored the area along the Arkansas River basin. From his camp in the Florence area, Pike attempted to summit the “great peak,” which would eventually become his namesake, Pikes Peak. In 1820, the second U.S. military expedition into Colorado, led by Major Stephen Long, explored the Front Range, primarily between what is now Rocky Mountain National Park and Colorado Springs.

### The Mid-1800s

During the 1850s, activity began to pick up in the area. Sawmills were founded in the Black Forest area to provide materials for construction of the Kansas Pacific, Denver & Rio Grande, and New Orleans Railroad lines. In 1842, a small settlement on the Arkansas River called “El Pueblo” was established, and in 1854 it was attacked by a Ute Indian war party, becoming the site of the Fort Pueblo Massacre. Despite the loss of 15 lives, the
area continued to draw people because of its prime location at the junction of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas. In 1858, Cañon City was platted, sparked by the Pikes Peak Gold Rush. Several ore smelters were built in the city following the discovery of gold at Cripple Creek in 1890. In 1859, Fountain was built as a railroad shipping center for local ranches and farms. In that same year, Colorado City was founded. It was envisioned that the town would be a major supply hub, via Ute Pass, for the gold mines in South Park (now Park County) and along the Blue River. Colorado City served as the El Paso County seat until 1873 and processed much of the gold from Cripple Creek and Victor at the Golden Cycle Mill.

Originally known as the Colorado Volunteer Militia, the Colorado National Guard was founded in 1860, sixteen years prior to Colorado being recognized as a state. In 1865, the area now within the Town of Monument was homesteaded. General William Jackson Palmer, a Civil War Medal of Honor recipient, first visited the Pikes Peak area in 1869.

The Late 1800s
In 1870, General Palmer founded the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad and bought land along the route to create Colorado Springs, which was founded in 1871.

Pueblo formally became a town within the Colorado Territory in 1870. During the 1870s the establishment of the Crystola area began. In 1872 Colorado Springs was incorporated and was planned according to the “Palmer Pattern of Responsibility.” Palmer’s pattern included schools, libraries, churches, parks, and a college. Citizens of “good moral character and strict temperance habits” were sought. Manitou Springs was also founded that year by Palmer and Dr. William Bell. Manitou Springs was intended to be a scenic health resort. The town was incorporated in 1876, the same year Colorado was recognized as a state.

Henry Childs built a house in the Crystola area in 1876. His wife was involved in mysticism and, through a medium, announced that the area was rich in gold. This event started a “gold rush,” but gold was never actually found.

In 1881, oil was discovered near Florence, spurring growth in the area. Florence incorporated as a town in 1887. Palmer constructed the first Bessemer furnace south of the Arkansas River in 1881. This area became the Town of Bessemer to house steel mill workers when it was platted in 1886. The Pueblo area now had four distinct cities. Pueblo capitalized on its location to function as the regional smelting hub. By the 1890s, Pueblo was becoming the largest city in Colorado, and became known as the “Pittsburgh of the West.” Also, in 1881, the Town of Palmer Lake was platted and served as a vital stop for Palmer’s railroad because of its lake, crucial as a water supply for train engines.

The ranching area known now as Green Mountain Falls was bought by W.J. Foster and established in 1887 as a summer resort. This same year also witnessed the founding of “Manitou Park,” which was incorporated as Woodland Park in 1891.

In 1888, land within the newly platted Town of Falcon was advertised in the Colorado Springs Gazette. The Falcon Land & Town Company, part of the Chicago Rock Island Railroad, began selling lots to newcomers. The railroad brought more people to the area. In 1887, the first crude road to the summit of Pikes Peak was built, which drew many tourists to the Cascade area, including Katharine Lee Bates, famous for writing the poem that became “America the Beautiful.”

The community of Chipita Park opened a hotel via the Ute Pass Land and Water Company in 1890 and became a draw for tourists. This year also marked the discovery of gold in Cripple Creek. The Divide area, at the summit of Ute Pass (9,165 feet), was the primary access point to Cripple Creek.

The Early 1900s
By 1900, Colorado Springs was the wealthiest city per capita in the United States. The Town of
Fountain, named for Fountain Creek, was formally incorporated that year. In 1903, the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I), the largest steel mill in Pueblo, was bought by the Rockefeller family and Jay Gould. They modernized the plant and built schools and hospitals in the region. Italians and southern Europeans immigrated in waves and established many ethnic neighborhoods in Pueblo. In 1921, a massively destructive flood swept through Pueblo, resulting in a change of course of the Arkansas River by a half mile. This is the current course of the river. The flood destroyed communities along the river, put the business district under water, and washed away the bridges across the Arkansas.

During the 1900s Spencer Penrose organized the Beaver Land and Irrigation Company and began buying water rights along the creek. By 1907 he began building Schaeffer Dam and Lake McNeil. Spencer also planned a 722-acre town to be named Fremont. The town never fully developed and is now the area known as Penrose, known for its fruit orchards, melons, apples, pumpkins, and other produce.

In 1917, Colorado City was annexed into the City of Colorado Springs. Spencer Penrose developed The Broadmoor resort in 1918. Penrose bought property on the northern part of Cheyenne Mountain and built the Cheyenne Mountain Highway in 1925. In 1926, Mr. Penrose built the Cheyenne Lodge at the top of Cheyenne Mountain and established the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo.

The Mid-1900s

In 1942, Camp Carson was established following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The City of Colorado Springs bought the land and donated it to the War Department. Camp Carson was named for the legendary Army Scout General Christopher “Kit” Carson, who explored much of the area in the 1800s. Camp Carson was built to hold 35,173 enlisted men, 1,818 officers, and 592 nurses. During World War II, Camp Carson trained over 100,000 soldiers and housed approximately 9,000 prisoners of war.

Camp Carson was renamed Fort Carson in 1954. Also known as the “Mountain Post,” it is made up of approximately 140,000 acres. An additional 237,000 acres, known as the Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site (not included in this study), was purchased in 1983.

The Colorado Springs Army Air Base was established in 1942 in support of Lowry Air Field in Denver and Camp Carson. It was renamed Peterson Army Air Base (Peterson Field) for World War II Army Air Forces 1st Lieutenant Edward J. Peterson, Jr. a Colorado native. The Pueblo Army Depot was established in 1942 to store munitions, ordnance, and military equipment returning from the various campaigns in World War II. In 1952, the first shipment of chemical weapons was received from Rocky Mountain Arsenal in Denver. Currently, the Pueblo Army Depot (not included in this study) is processing the dismantling and destruction of these chemical weapons and is expected to complete these operations and close in 2022.

The U.S. Air Force was established in 1947 as a separate military service branch. In 1948, the Air Force appointed a board headed by Dwight D. Eisenhower and Robert L. Stearns to study the existing military academies and potential options for an Air Force Academy. In 1950, Congress passed the bill establishing the Air Force Academy, and the Secretary of the Air Force appointed a commission to recommend a location for it. After traveling 21,000 miles and considering hundreds of sites all over the country, the commission recommended Colorado Springs as its first choice. The State of Colorado contributed $1 million (equivalent to over $10 million today) to the purchase of the 18,500-acre ranch located northwest of the city limits. The United States Air Force Academy (AFA) was established in 1954, and
construction was completed in 1959. The academy operated out of Lowry Air Force Base in Denver from 1955-58 while the present-day site was under construction.

At the height of the Cold War in the late 1950s, the idea of a hardened command and control center was conceptualized as a defense against long-range Soviet bombers. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers supervised the excavation of Cheyenne Mountain and the construction of an operational center within the granite mountain. The Cheyenne Mountain facility became fully operational as North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Combat Operations Center on February 6, 1967.

The installation came to house elements of the NORAD, U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), Air Force Space Command (AFSPC), and U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). Under what became known as the Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center (CMOC), several centers supported the NORAD missions of aerospace warning, aerospace control, and warning of ballistic missile or air attacks against North America.

The Late 1900s
In 1978, the United States Olympic Committee created an Olympic Training Center at the site of what was Ent Air Force Base.

By the mid-1970s, the Air Force’s national satellite operations facility at Sunnyvale, California, had become surrounded by commercial and residential development, creating security concerns and allowing no room for mission expansion. Because of this, the Air Force developed plans to merge Air Force space operations at a Consolidated Space Operations Center and to house an operations support center for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). In 1979, the DoD approved plans for the development of an installation (Falcon Air Force Station [AFS]) to support these missions.

During the 1980s, housing construction began within the Gleneagle area south of the AFA, marking the beginning of significant development along the Interstate 25 corridor in what is now northern Colorado Springs and Monument. Falcon AFS opened in 1985. Colorado Springs was home to U.S. Space Command from 1985 to 2002. In 1988, the City of Colorado Springs extended its eastern city limits to encompass the 30,000 acres known as Banning Lewis Ranch (BLR). This area located approximately 3.5 miles west of Falcon AFS was master planned to house up to 175,000 residents.

AFSPC activated the Space Battle Lab at Falcon AFB in 1997. The following year, Falcon AFB was renamed Schriever AFB in honor of Gen. Bernard A. Schriever, known as the father of the Air Force space and missile program.

The 2000s
NORAD’s focus and facilities evolved to meet the threats of the 21st century. On July 28, 2006, the Cheyenne Mountain Directorate was re-designated as the Cheyenne Mountain Division, with the mission to assist in establishing an integrated NORAD and USNORTHCOM Command Center within the headquarters building at Peterson AFB.

On the 50th anniversary of the NORAD agreement in 2008, the Command Center located within Cheyenne Mountain was officially re-designated as the NORAD and USNORTHCOM Alternate Command Center.

Cheyenne Mountain AFS is owned and operated by AFSPC, specifically the 21st Space Wing housed at Peterson AFB. Several missions are based inside the Cheyenne Mountain, including NORAD and
USNORTHCOM’s Alternate Command Center and training site for crew qualification along with USSTRATCOM’s Missile Warning Center.

Extensive development, both residential and commercial, continued in the region until the recession hit in 2008. The owners of BLR declared bankruptcy in 2010, and development ceased for several years. The region has largely recovered from the recession, and the housing market has exploded once again. As this region has become one of the fastest-growing in the country, agricultural land adjacent to many of the military installations continues to be developed.