

TOWN OF SILVER CLIFF MASTER PLAN



Vision

A vibrant resident and business friendly community that maintains its small-town atmosphere and honors its heritage and the valley's natural beauty.

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INTRODUCTION

The Silver Cliff Master Plan contains Goals that will be used by the Board of Trustees/Planning Commission as a guide in making land use decisions. The Plan provides realistic Goals, effective objectives, and specific strategies for implementation of a future land use plan, and is intended to be used frequently by residents, land owners, project applicants and town officials. Some of the Goals and objectives of the Plan were derived from a citizen's survey, public meetings and a Town Hall Open House. Results of these surveys listed the following priorities that need to be addressed by the town board: Road Maintenance, Community Pride, Zoning, Park/Recreation, Growth, Business District/Town Plaza.

While the Plan is an official document, it represents the community's vision of its future development and, therefore, must be amended and revised as need arises over the years.

The Planning Process

The Master Plan must be adapted as times change. Before its adoption, the plan was reviewed by town officials and residents. A Public meeting was held to adopt the revisions. After adoption of the Master Plan, the Town of Silver Cliff will use adopted zoning ordinances to reinforce and complement the overall plan.

Use of the Plan and Implementation

The Master Plan contains major topic areas that are presented with descriptive text, supporting statistical information and guiding Goals.

The Plan Goals should be used to guide residents, land owners, project applicants and elected and appointed officials toward achieving the Goals of the community.

Action plans are important to the implementation of this Master Plan. Action plans are brief descriptions of initiatives to be undertaken by the Town within a certain time frame. The action plans are not intended to be inclusive of every possible use of the plan, but rather a clear outline of desired accomplishments. By converting Goals to a program of actions, implementation of the entire plan is facilitated.

At the end of each chapter is an Implementation section which includes a list of actions for each topic area. Each action is organized into a timeframe for initiation: short-term (one to three years), mid-term (three to five years) and long-term (five years and beyond). The Town Board should consult the Implementation section when preparing its annual budget, and when reviewing its progress at meeting identify Goals and objectives.

The Implementation section should be updated on an annual basis as specific actions are achieved and new strategies are identified. GOALS within each of the topic chapters should also be reviewed on an annual basis and revised with changing circumstances, as appropriate. The entire document should be considered for public review and update no later than five years from its adoption.

Plan Direction

The Plan Direction should be used in conjunction with the GOALS found in each Chapter to help direct growth and community development activity. The Plan Direction is intended to guide future land use decisions.

While the preferred direction is not regulatory, any changes to the Silver Cliff Zoning Map should be consistent with the Plan Direction.

Land Use Categories

Agriculture (A1): This district is designed to protect and preserve the agricultural industry of the Town of Silver Cliff, and to protect the rural property owners from encroachment by undesirable land uses.

Business (B1): This district is designated to accommodate businesses. Businesses include office, retail, low impact services, light manufacturing and light industrial.

Urban Residential (R3): This district is designed to accommodate permanent residential development for year-round living to a density of fifteen (15) to thirty (30) persons per gross acre in single, two-unit, and three-to-six-unit dwelling structures.

Manufactured Home Residential (R4): This district is designed to allow for the accommodation of permanent residential and office development to a density of fifteen (15) to forty (40) persons per gross acre in single-family mobile homes and single-business mobile offices.

Recreational Vehicle Temporary Lodging District (R4A)

Description of District: This district is designed to allow for the accommodation of temporary residential lodging in traveling vehicles typically used for vacation and camping and requiring vehicle licensing. This includes travel trailers, motor homes, pop-up campers, truck campers and other camping vehicles.

Urban Residential with Subsurface Mining (R5): This district is designed to accommodate permanent residential development for year-round living as adopted in the International Code Council.

Growth and Development

Silver Cliff is a small statutory mountain town located in the Wet Mountain Valley in Custer County, Colorado. It is situated along State Highway 96, near the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains at an elevation of 7,982 feet. It is primarily residential, comprised of modest, mostly single-family homes and agriculture and ranch land. While rich in mining history, few families remain from those days. The people are “small town” friendly and neighborly.

Growth must be accommodated in a manner that protects and enhances the quality of life for residents while protecting the environment. Care should be taken to protect wildlife, safeguard productive agricultural ranch land, conserve natural resources, guarantee clean air and water, and sustain varied open spaces without deterring future development needed for economic stability and sustainability.

GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **Goal G1**

The Town should work with the Custer County and Town of Westcliffe Planning Commissions and adjacent property owners to rezone property adjacent to Silver Cliff consistent with the Silver Cliff Plan Direction and the Custer County and Town of Westcliffe Comprehensive Plans.

Accomplishments: IN 2016 Developed a Rezoning Committee that works with the Planning Commission to help research land use needs and/or zoning changes.

- **Goal G-2**
Land should be annexed only if the specific parcel is within a designated future growth area of the town and its development will provide a positive tax return to the town.
 Accomplishment: In 2018 Silver Cliff annexed 5.264 acres along the Westcliffe boundary line. This acreage is in the B1 zone, one of the areas has already been used for a Dollar General store. This will help with the sales tax and property tax revenue of Silver Cliff. The other land is now a big enough lot to build a business on that could also help with revenue for Silver Cliff.
- **Goal G-3**
The Town should work with land owners in the State Hwy 96 corridor to develop a specific Corridor Improvement Plan that encourages site improvements and includes the use of design techniques to create a sense of arrival and continuity along the highway.
 Accomplishment: With the Pride Code adoption in 2011 it has given Silver Cliff a way to enforce property clean up not just along the Highway corridor but throughout the town. Silver Cliff works closely with CDOT on any issues along the corridor that we can partner up and get resolved. Frontier Pathways goes through Silver Cliff and has brought some challenges that we work with CDOT on as well. This will be an on-going relationship.
- **Goal G-4**
The Town should establish highway corridor standards to address landscaping, signage, and setbacks.
 Accomplishments: Silver Cliff works with CDOT to follow their guidelines.
- **Goal G-5**
The Town should work with business owners to develop a Business Improvement Master Plan that guides the redevelopment, attraction and retention of businesses.
 Accomplishment: Silver Cliff Planning Commission is working on this goal with the Rezoning Committee.
- **Goal G6**
The Town should encourage the preservation and renovation of historic structures.
- **Goal G-7**
The Town should consider commercial architectural design guidelines that promote building design of consistent scale, continuity, texture and western or mining themes.
- **Goal G-8**
Contiguous growth and in-fill development should be encouraged. Availability of water and water quality should be a prerequisite for new growth.
 Accomplishment: Silver Cliff works closely with Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District on any development.
- **Goal G-9**
The Town of Silver Cliff should cooperate with the Town of Westcliffe and Custer County on interjurisdictional planning and/or development activities.

ACTIONS:

1. Initiate an annual process of reviewing the Master Plan GOALS.
 Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years

- 2.** Initiate the process of updating the Master Plan in its entirety every five years.
Time-frame: Long-term: 5+ years
- 3.** Initiate discussions with the State Office of Business Development concerning programs and incentives to attract commercial uses within the State Hwy 96 Main Street corridor.
Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years
- 4.** Meet with business owners and prepare an Economic Development Plan.
Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years
- 5.** Work with the Custer County Economic Development Corporation and perform studies to determine social and economic needs of the community.
Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years
- 6.** Prepare architectural design guidelines for the highway corridor.
Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years

COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND IDENTITY

Silver Cliff was incorporated in February 1879 and is a small statutory mountain town located in the Wet Mountain Valley in Custer County, Colorado.

Custer County was established in March 1877 from the southern portion of Fremont County. The Wet Mountain Valley began in 1870 when Carl Herman Reinhold Wulsten brought a colony of more than 100 German families from Chicago, Ill., to settle in the lush Wet Mountain Valley. The town of Ula was the first county seat, lasting only a few months until Rosita was voted the county seat. Some years later, citizens voted to move the county seat to Silver Cliff where it remained until 1928 when it was moved to Westcliffe.

Silver Cliff came into being when silver was found in 1878 on a sheer cliff beside the present location of the town. Thousands came running. Dugouts and tents were everywhere. Buildings from all over the Wet Mountain Valley were dismantled and carried to this newest boom town. By 1880 the census showed 5,087 persons made their home in Silver Cliff. It is estimated that by 1881 there were 8,000-10,000 people living here. It was the third ranked city in Colorado in population and wealth.

Irresponsible speculation, mine mismanagement and the disappointment of the Denver and Rio Grande railroad terminus so far from the mines, as well as other problems plagued Silver Cliff. Finally, with the Silver crash in 1893, Silver Cliff became little more than a deserted outskirts of the more rurally-oriented Westcliffe.

In 1987 Silver Cliff lost its individual zip code due to the United States Postal Services need to consolidate facilities. Since then Silver Cliff has been working diligently to create and promote an identity to call its own.

Pride and identity are manifested in the two "Welcome to Silver Cliff" signs. The east sign depicts the mining days with a mine tibble and ore cart and the west sign has the town logo of the miner and donkey and states that we are a Dark Skies Community.

The Town museum boasts a significant collection of mining tools, ore samples, lamps, as well as other county memorabilia from the late 1800's. You can see the old post office, barber shop, items from the B-29 Plane that crashed in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, household items, Lew Sing's laundry business, and ranching equipment along other interesting items.

In recent years, more pride is being exhibited in the town by the way in which property owners are tending their yards and renovating homes.

The Town is especially proud of its park which boasts two baseball fields, one with night lighting, brick dugouts, horseshoe pits, basketball and volleyball courts, two picnic areas with BBQ grills, playground-equipment, skateboard park, multi-purpose skating rink, pickleball courts and a Commemorative. The Commemorative is a flag and brick wall memorial site for all the county residents. You can purchase plaques to have mounted on the wall and/or a bench with a plaque for added seating.

The 'Cliffs and the Wet Mountain Valley are known for their beautiful mountain vistas and big skies, but not much is known about our world-class dark night skies. However in 2015, Silver Cliff and Westcliffe were recognized by the International Dark-Sky Association as the ninth Dark Sky Community in the world, seven of which are in the United States, the 'Cliffs being the first in Colorado and with an elevation of almost 7900 feet, the nearest to the heavens.

Since 1998, Dark Skies of the Wet Mountain Valley, a 501(c) 3 non-profit, has been working to reduce local light pollution and create public awareness of a valuable and irreplaceable part of our Western heritage. Those who worked tirelessly to obtain this designation realized that *our* night sky is a precious natural resource to be preserved for residents and visitors alike - for many years to come. It's wonderful to think that we have the ability to enjoy and appreciate the same night sky that the original settlers of the area observed. Our clear night sky is as much a part of our heritage as the ranches and riparian areas which are preserved below them. From The Bluff Park one can view the heavens from the newly dedicated Smokey Jack Observatory with its 14" computer-automated telescope. Besides the public star parties, plans are underway to allow members of the public to reserve the Smokey Jack Observatory for private viewing sessions under the supervision of volunteer guides.

GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **Goal CC/I - 1**

The Town should continue to promote community pride.

Accomplishment: The Pride Code gives the Town guidelines that promote community pride.

- **Goal CC/I - 2**

The Town should encourage property clean-up and rubbish removal.

Accomplishment: The Town hosts a Clean-Up Day where residents can put items out for free pick up one day a year. The Pride Code also addresses these issues.

- **Goal CC/I - 3**

The Town should encourage recycling of appliances, furniture, automobiles, etc.

Accomplishment: The Town hosts a Clean-Up Day where residents can put items out for free pick up one day a year.

- **Goal CC/I - 4**

The Town should find creative ways of addressing the lack of it's individual zip code and identity.

Accomplishment: The Town has been working with the United State Postal Service to do all we can to make sure that our residents get their mail. The postal service has performed a preferred last line audit for all addresses they deliver to in Silver Cliff, they also make sure that Silver Cliff is listed when zip code 81252 is searched.

ACTIONS:

1. Continue the annual Clean-up Day, working jointly with the town of Westcliffe and the County.
Time-frame: On-going
2. Continue to support the County/Towns Recycling Center.
Time-frame: On-going
3. Continue Senior Assistance Programs within our community.
Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years
4. Continue with street sign maintenance.
Time-frame: On-going
5. Continue enforcement of the Silver Cliff Pride Code and all other ordinances that enforce property clean-up.
Time-frame: On-going

HOUSING

It is the intent of this Plan to support and promote a variety of housing opportunities for existing and future residents of the area, while maintaining the environmental quality and rural atmosphere of the community. Silver Cliff citizens have identified the following issues facing our town: unclear zoning codes coupled with restrictions on business zoning, lack of affordable housing, and general unsightly appearance of many locations. Affordable Housing continues to be a concern for the town. The town continues to work with the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Government Housing Department, Custer County Economic Development Corporation, and the Attainable Housing Committee to develop strategies and identify plans that address the shortfall in housing.

GOALS:

- **Goal H-1**
Maintain and develop quality residential neighborhoods by encouraging design characteristics that create and preserve the small-town atmosphere.
- **Goal H-2**
The Town should promote the preservation and enhancement of its existing neighborhoods.
- **Goal H-3**
The Town should identify and continue to encourage programs that assist low-income homeowners in making necessary repairs to their homes.
- **Goal H-4**
The Town should identify and encourage programs which help renters become homeowners who take pride in ownership and therefore maintain their homes.
- **Goal H-5**
The Town should welcome new development consistent with the community character and image.
- **Goal H-6**
The Town should continue development of attainable housing policies and programs that will offer expanded housing opportunities for low and moderate-income households by working with the private sector, non-profit groups and community organizations.
- **Goal H-7**
The Town should re-examine plans, zoning regulations, review processes and impact fees and initiate amendments to each if they impede the development of attainable housing.
- **Goal H-8**
The Town should encourage residential growth and development on vacant platted lots within Silver Cliff's boundary.

ACTIONS:

1. Enforce all housing codes and ordinances which are intended to protect the quality of residential environments.
Time-frame: On-going

2. Research funding resources and distribute information that assists homeowners.
Time-frame: On-going
3. Continue support of the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Government Rehabilitation Housing Program and the Custer County Attainable Housing Committee.
Time-frame: On-going

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Silver Cliff's economic base has improved over the years due to increased sales tax revenues from new and existing retail businesses. Approximately 40% of Silver Cliff's budget each year is derived from sales tax revenues.

The Town believes that it would be beneficial to develop a plan for the Town Center to help attract retail and service sector businesses. The design for redevelopment should make the Town Center area a unique place to attract visitors from a wide area. Industrial businesses should be limited to companies that are environmentally clean, provide jobs and are small to medium sized.

Silver Cliff comprises a total of 9,390 acres. Approximately 193 acres, or 2%, are zoned for commercial, 334 acres are zoned residential, 8,114 acres are zoned for agricultural use and the remaining 749 are residential acres in Silver Cliff Ranch. With an increasing trend towards "working-at-home", Silver Cliff allows home occupations. About one-third of businesses located in Silver Cliff are service-related and do not generate sales tax revenues, however, do provide jobs to residents of Custer County. In 2016 the unemployment rate in Silver Cliff was 3.60% and the average annual wage was \$26,901.00, well below the state average of \$68,685.00.

GOALS:

- **Goal ED-1**
The Town focuses on recruiting businesses and industries that find Silver Cliff a viable location, will improve the tax base, and will offer employment opportunities to citizens.
- **Goal ED-2**
The Town should encourage development of a Town Center with the intent of revitalizing this area as a multi-use, pedestrian-oriented center for governmental, service, financial, retail and entertainment facilities.
- **Goal ED-3**
The Town continues to encourage the development and expansion of existing and new small locally owned and operated businesses.
- **Goal ED-4**
The Town should investigate opportunities to provide additional convenient services to tourists traveling the State Hwy 96 corridor.
- **Goal ED-5**
The Town should encourage small to medium sized light industrial businesses that are environmentally clean and provide jobs. In addition, the Town should encourage the location of these businesses to be off State Hwy 96.

ACTIONS:

1. Silver Cliff's Rezoning Committee will continue to research the current zoning and make recommendation to the Planning Commission for any changes that would aide future economic growth.
Time-frame: On-going
2. Initiate discussions with Custer County Chamber of Commerce and Custer County Economic Development Corporation on ways to improve, expand and develop local business opportunities, and create an Economic Development Plan.
Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years
3. Study the feasibility and economic impact of the creation of an Industrial Park within the town limits.
Time-frame: Mid-term: 3-5 years
4. The Town should pursue avenues to promote economic development such as Urban Renewal Districts, Special Improvement Districts, Business Improvement Districts, Downtown Development Authorities, Revolving Loan Funds, Enhanced Sales Tax Incentives and local incentives.
Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years
5. The Town should consider partnering with higher learning institutions such as CSU or CU for assistance with planning projects.
Time-frame: On going

SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

A review of Silver Cliff's services and infrastructure, and the Town's funding sources, is important for understanding current conditions and future development potential. Five major services and infrastructure components are: utilities, public safety, community facilities, recreation and education. While not all these components are controlled by the Town, each has an impact on the community's capacity to accommodate future growth and improvement.

GOALS:

- **Goal SI-1**
All new development should be connected to Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District. Prior to connection, a statement of the impact of proposed development on existing water supply and sewer capacity may be required.
- **Goal SI-2**
The Town should use the comprehensive drainage study to assist with decisions regarding new development, the improvement of sub surface water quality, and future road projects.
- **Goal SI-3**
During land development, natural drainage courses should be retained as much as possible. Where necessary, a drainage system designed by a professional engineer may be required.
- **Goal SI-4**
The Town should research ways to improve the town's Insurance Class Rating.
- **Goal SI-5**
The Town will continue to improve the Silver Cliff Cemetery's appearance and operation.
- **Goal SI-6**
The Town should develop a Capital Improvements Program identifying projects and prioritizing funding for infrastructure needs.

ACTIONS:

1. Continue discussions with Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District and Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District on improving availability of service to town properties.
Time-frame: On-going
2. Continue with an Intergovernmental Agreement with Custer County Sheriff Department for law enforcement services.
Time-frame: On-going
3. Work with the Wet Mountain Valley Fire Protection District to improve the town's Insurance Class Rating.
Time-frame: On-going

4. Prepare and adopt a Capital Improvement Program and pursue ways to fund major capital improvements.
Time-frame: Short-term, Mid-term: 3-5 years
5. Continue working with the Comprehensive Drainage Study done by Crabtree Engineering.
Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years
6. Research costs and grant possibilities for improvements for the town hall, museum, cemetery and town park. Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Town Hall

The Silver Cliff Town Hall was constructed in 1977 and includes the Custer County Senior Citizen facility. It is located on State Hwy 96 at 612 E Main Street and functions as the municipal administrative offices. It is staffed by a Town Clerk/Treasurer and Building and Zoning Official. Monthly Town Board meetings are held the first Monday of each month, and Planning Commission meetings on the third Wednesday of each month at the Town Hall.

A 3,200 sq. ft. town maintenance shop is located north of the Silver Cliff Town Park on a portion of four acres owned by the town. The address is 1011 Butler Street.

Senior Center

The Custer County Senior Citizen Center is in the downstairs level of the Town Hall at 612 E Main Street in Silver Cliff. The Senior Center serves nutritious meals three times a week, runs a “Meals on Wheels” program and hosts a variety of social and education activities. The Center operates with its own Board and budget. For more information call 719-783-9508.

Silver Cliff Museum

The Silver Cliff Museum, constructed in 1879 and listed on the State Historic Register, was originally the Silver Cliff Fire House and Town Hall. It is owned and operated by the Town. It is located next to the current town hall at 610 E Main Street (State Hwy 96, also known as Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway). It currently houses memorabilia and artifacts that depict the history of Silver Cliff Mining and history of the County. The museum is open on weekends Memorial Day through Labor Day and operates on donations. Private tours can be arranged.

For more information on the museum, call the Silver Cliff Town Hall at 719-783-2615.

Silver Cliff Cemetery

The Silver Cliff Cemetery was created in the early 1880’s and is located about one-half mile south of State Hwy 96 on Mill Street. It is owned and operated by the Town. The cemetery is famous for it’s unexplained “dancing blue lights” seen on occasion and featured in the August 1969 *National Geographic Magazine*, Volume 136, No. 2. The cemetery is currently about 40% occupied with plots still available.

For more information on the cemetery, call the Silver Cliff Town Hall at 719-783-2615.

UTILITIES

Water and Sanitation

Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District serves the needs of supplying fresh water and the processing of sewage material for the properties of Silver Cliff and Westcliffe that fall within the RMWSD boundaries. Properties outside this boundary are serviced with well permits and septic systems obtained through the proper authorities.

LP Gas

Local companies provide propane gas to Silver Cliff residents as do other companies from surrounding areas. No natural gas is available.

Telephone

CenturyLink provides Silver Cliff's telephone service. Cellular services seem to be the preference for most residents.

Electric

Black Hills Energy and Sangre de Cristo Rural Electric Association provide electricity to Silver Cliff. The majority is serviced by Black Hills Energy.

Internet

CenturyLink provides DSL internet services through their phone lines. Secom and Hilltop provide wireless internet connectivity.

EDUCATION

C-1 School District serves the majority of Custer County's students. Other Silver Cliff students may be home-schooled.

C-1 Consolidated School is located on Main Street in Westcliffe.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement for the Town of Silver Cliff is provided by the Custer County Sheriff's Department through an Intergovernmental Agreement. Law enforcement along with code enforcement are provided through the department. The Sheriff serves as the Fire Marshal and the department is in control of the following services to Silver Cliff, Westcliffe and Custer County.

Custer County Sheriff's Posse serves as an extension of the Sheriff's Office providing a public service to the citizens and organizations within Custer County. One of the Posse's purposes is to assist the Sheriff's Office in providing security, traffic control and presence at community functions, festivals and activities.

Custer County Search and Rescue, Inc. (CCSAR) is a non-profit 501c(3) organization and is an all-volunteer team dedicated to providing search, rescue, emergency response, and outdoor safety education to the citizens of Custer County, Colorado. They are dispatched by the Custer County Sheriff's Office and respond to approximately 30 calls per year, ranging from overdue hikers to lost mushroom hunters to technical rescues. They also aid other counties that request help for search & rescue missions.

Custer County Office of Emergency Management is the county's center for all-hazard emergency preparation, prevention, response, and recovery.

Enhanced 911 Emergency Services are funded by a state-mandated charge added to each telephone. The personnel, training and operating budget are managed by Custer County Emergency Services, an organization made up of representatives from the fire district, hospital district, Silver Cliff, Westcliffe and Custer County.

Fire Protection

The Wet Mountain Fire Protection District provides fire protection to Silver Cliff. The district covers 611.45 square miles, making it one of the largest in Colorado. This is a special district run by a 5-man Board and funded by property taxes, inspection fees, interest and fund raising. This all-volunteer fire department has 28 firefighters, a women's auxiliary, and a photographer. The department has a total of 16 pieces of fire-fighting equipment that range from brush trucks to Class A pumpers, with water capacities that range from 250 to 3000 gallons. Compressed-air foam (CAFS) is available on three trucks and foam alone is available on two additional units. There are two trucks dedicated to rescue services and 2 4-wheel ATV's. These are divided among five stations; Rosita, Hillside, Lake DeWeese, Boneyard and the main station located in Westcliffe.

A formal mutual aid agreement exists with Deer Mountain Fire, Canon City FPD, Western Fremont County Fire, Rye Fire Department, Beulah Fire, Upper Huerfano Fire, Wetmore Fire, Florence Fire and others.

The Average response time in the town areas of Silver Cliff and Westcliffe range between eight to ten minutes. The Department implemented a paid shift system that helps assure that one or two firefighters are available for rapid response. Silver Cliff currently has an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of 8 which is used to determine insurance costs based on fire protection capability. The lower the rating, the lower the insurance costs.

Health Services

The Custer County Medical Clinic is operated by the Custer County Hospital District, a special district formed in 1988. In 1998, Custer County residents approved a \$500,000 bond issue to be used in conjunction with over \$800,000 in cash and in-kind donations to build a new, state-of-the-art medical facility.

The clinic is located at 704 Edwards St., Westcliffe. Custer County Medical Center provides comprehensive family practice, acute care, acute care stabilization for EMS transport, physical therapy, mental health, optometry, laboratory, x-ray and patient education.

Custer County Emergency Medical Services provides 24/7/365 basic and advance life support services. The ambulance facility is located at the Custer County Medical Clinic and houses three ambulances. Personnel include paramedics, intermediate and basic EMT's.

County Health Nurse

The County Health Nurse works out of the Custer County Medical Clinic. The Health Nurse is a county program that is independent of the Medical Clinic, but for practical purposes shares space and supplies. The Health Nurse offers well child care including immunizations, development screenings, health promotion/disease prevention and health care resources for those in need.

TRANSPORTATION

Silver Cliff's circulation and local mobility are accomplished through a network of streets and alleys. Due to the proximity of houses and businesses constructed along the south side of Highway 96, sidewalks are limited in Silver Cliff, however, a pedestrian/bike path lane exists along the north side of Highway 96 through the town.

Roads

Silver Cliff has a total of 19.84 miles of streets, of which 5.95 miles are arterial and collector streets, and 13.89 miles are local streets. Arterial streets are those which permit the relatively rapid and unimpeded movement of large volumes of traffic from one part of the community to another. Silver Cliff's arterial streets include State Highway (SH) 96 (Main Street), Hermit Lane and County Road 255. Highway 96, also the Frontier Pathways National Scenic Byway is the main entrance into Silver Cliff from the east, and main thoroughfare to the cities of Pueblo and Canon City (both approx. 50 miles away). SH 96 is also the entrance into Silver Cliff from the west, beginning at the junction of SH 69 in the neighboring town of Westcliffe. SH 69 intersects SH 96 in Westcliffe going either north to SH 50 at Texas Creek or south to Walsenburg (60 miles).

Collector streets are those which collect traffic from local streets and carry it to arterial streets or to local traffic generators such as neighborhood shopping and schools. Collector streets include the principal entrance streets to a residential development, those streets linking adjacent developments, and those streets providing circulation within such developments. Collector Streets in Silver Cliff include Bunker Hill Road and Knickerbocker Road in Silver Cliff Ranch, First Street, Ohio Street, Mill Street and French Street.

Local streets are those used primarily for direct access to properties abutting the right-of-way. Local streets carry traffic having an origin or destination within the development and do not carry through traffic. The majority of Silver Cliff's streets have 66' right-of-way widths, except Silver Cliff Ranch roads and County Rd. 255 which are 60' wide; and Hermit Lane which boasts a 100' right-of-way.

All platted alleys are 16' wide, however, many have been encroached upon by structures constructed in the late 1800's.

Most of Silver Cliff's streets are graveled streets except for Ohio, French and First Streets, Granada Court, Hermit Lane and County Rd. 255 which are either paved or chip-sealed. These streets are maintained by the Silver Cliff Public Works. Services include gravelling, grading, snow plowing, and street sign maintenance.

Silver Cliff, Westcliffe and Custer County have adopted an Off-Highway Vehicle Ordinance allowing certain off highway vehicles to use town streets and county roads.

Other Transportation

Airport: The Silver West Airport, located nine miles south of Westcliffe off SH69, provides general aviation services, including hanger rental, tie downs, and fueling. It has a 7,000-foot-long, 54-foot-wide paved runway and is operated by the Custer County Board of Commissioners and the Airport Advisory Board. Currently, no chartered aircraft is available at the airport. Passenger air service is provided in Pueblo, Colorado Spring and Denver.

Transit: Currently the only transit service available is the Wet Mountain Rotary Van Service. Volunteer rotary members transport area seniors and/or disabled residents three days a week to Florence, Canon

City, Pueblo and Colorado Springs for medical appointments and limited shopping excursions. There are no fees, but donations are greatly appreciated.

GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **Goal T-1**

The Town should promote transportation options including walking and bicycle paths that are safe and compatible with Silver Cliff's small-town atmosphere.

Accomplishment: Through a GOCO grant and the partnership with Westcliffe the Park to Park Trail was designed and installed. Another partnership with Westcliffe was the Hermit Lane drainage project that has a path along the north side.

Silver Cliff is working with the Trails For All a non-profit organization to develop and implement a trails master plan.

- **Goal T-2**

The Town should maintain all roads so that they are safe for travel at the legal speed limit but no higher.

Accomplishment: Yearly maintenance is performed on streets as weather, budget and equipment allow. All Silver Cliff streets have a speed limit of 25 mph unless otherwise posted.

- **Goal T-3**

The Town should identify streets with signs in a consistent manner.

Accomplishment: Old street signs are being replaced each year. The number of replacements depends on the budget and the cost of the signs.

- **Goal T-4**

The Town should consider adopting a street improvement plan that will prioritize the maintenance and improvements of the streets.

- **Goal T-5**

The Town should review the feasibility of sidewalks in the Town Center.

ACTIONS:

1. Prepare and adopt a Street Improvement Plan that includes bicycle paths.
Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years
2. Investigate the possibility of replacing street signs and financing for the same.
Time-frame: Short-term: On-going.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic resources should be preserved to provide links to the area's past. Silver Cliff identifies closely with the mining and ranching heritage of the region. Silver Cliff came into being when silver was found on a sheer cliff beside the present location of the town. Thousands came running, dugouts and tents were everywhere. Buildings from all over the Wet Mountain Valley were dismantled and carried to this newest boom town. As people poured in, some began planning the physical growth of the town. First steps were taken on September 10, 1878, when Cliff and Mill Streets were measured off so that the post office and the Horn Silver Saloon could be built. Incorporation papers were signed in February 1879 and the town held its first election. The town site of Silver Cliff was patented on December 8, 1879. It was estimated in June 1880, by census count, that 5,087 people made Silver Cliff their home. In 1882, the mining boom was over, many mines closed; by 1885 the Town defaulted on its bonds and increased taxes forced residents to move on to neighboring Westcliffe.

GOALS:

- **Goal HR - 1**
Development should integrate historically significant structures or sites into site design and development plans.
- **Goal HR - 2**
An updated inventory of the town's historic resources should be completed. This inventory should then be assessed to determine what structures or sites are important to preserve.
- **Goal HR - 3**
The town should expand the cultural and historic opportunities available to residents of and visitors to Silver Cliff.
- **Goal HR - 4**
The town should cooperate with the Community Library, Schools, and other County Historic agencies to explore programs to provide education of Silver Cliff's history.
- **Goal HR -5**
The town should encourage Silver Cliff historic property owners to list their properties with the State/National Historic Registry.
- **Goal HR-6**
The town should encourage the preservation and renovation of historic structures.

ACTIONS:

1. Continue to pursue grants for the Silver Cliff Museum.
Time-frame: On-going
2. Prepare a Historic Building Inventory for buildings in Silver Cliff.
Time-frame: Complete – Silver Cliff, Westcliffe and Custer County have published a piece “Then and Now” with historic building and other history.

3. Initiate meetings with property owners of historic buildings in Silver Cliff to discuss listing and improving their properties.
Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years
4. Initiate discussions with Custer County and the Town of Westcliffe on the feasibility of creating a Historic District within our community.
Time-frame: Mid-term: 3-5 years
5. Initiate discussions to establish a “working” mine in conjunction with the Silver Cliff Museum and mining theme of Silver Cliff.
Time-frame: Long-term: Silver Cliff is in an Exploration Contract with Viscount Mining Company. They are doing an exploration project in Silver Cliff and Custer County.

LAND USE, ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Silver Cliff located in the west central portion of Custer County, Colorado at an elevation of 7,982 feet above sea level. Surrounding Silver Cliff is the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range to the west, and the Wet Mountains to the east.

GOALS:

- **Goal EN - 1**
Natural vegetation should be protected whenever possible, unless within an area with moderate to high wildfire risk.
- **Goal EN - 2**
All development sites should be revegetated after completion of construction. Erosion control measures should be implemented during construction and maintained until revegetation is complete.
- **Goal EN - 3**
The Town should consider that any future gravel or aggregate mining should be setback and screened for major roads and residential development. Traffic and dust generated by gravel/aggregate operations should not impact residential areas.
- **Goal EN - 4**
Annexation and subdivision of productive agricultural land should not be encouraged.
- **Goal EN - 5**
Riparian vegetation should be preserved wherever possible using clustering or other techniques.
- **Goal EN - 6**
The natural topography should be retained to the greatest extent possible, and excessive cut and fills to convert steep slopes to buildable sites should be discouraged.
- **Goal EN - 7**
Natural drainage ways should be maintained in a natural state, with culverts permitted as necessary. Unless required for construction, vegetation should not be removed in flood plains. Areas of vegetation removed for construction should be reclaimed for new vegetation where possible.
- **Goal EN - 8**
The surface and ground waters should be protected to the standards as set forth by Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District.
- **Goal EN - 9**
Development within significant wildlife areas should be maintained at a relatively low density. Clustering is encouraged in these areas to minimize impacts on wildlife habitat.

ACTIONS:

1. Prepare and adopt a Land Use Code that includes Subdivision Regulations and updated Zoning Regulations that are consistent with statutory requirements and compatible with the goals and actions of the Master Plan.
Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years
2. In 2017 Silver Cliff formed a Rezoning Committee to conduct a review of the current zoning map and use codes, it reports to the Planning Commission.

ENVIRONMENT

Population Cycles

Silver Cliff is primarily a residential community with most of its commercial businesses providing services to the community. Latest figures from the State Demographer show that Silver Cliff's 2016 population is 607.

Climate

Silver Cliff's climate is semi-arid to arid with low humidity, little precipitation and mild winds. In an average year there is a total of 14-17 inches of precipitation including 88" of snow. Average daily high temperatures are in the high 80's during the summer months and in the 30's during the winter. With 345 days of sunshine each year and with the low humidity, even the winter weather is pleasant most of the time in spite of temperatures that frequently are below freezing.

Drainage

In 1987, Silver Cliff in conjunction with the Town of Westcliffe, had a Master Drainage Plan developed by students of the University of Colorado at Boulder, Civil Engineering Department. This Master Drainage Plan was accepted by the Board of Trustees of Silver Cliff on July 6, 1987. The Master Drainage Plan is a planning tool that should be used as a guide for the future development of Silver Cliff. It is not intended to be regulatory in nature but should be used as guidance information for decision making and management within the Town of Silver Cliff.

In 2010 Silver Cliff and Westcliffe partnered in a drainage project on Hermit Lane and identified issues along Highway 96 that need to be addressed in the next phase of improvements.

GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Goal HZ - 1

The town should update and adopt the 1987 Master Drainage Plan.

Accomplishments: Drainage Plan revised in the 2010 Crabtree Hermit Lane project.

Goal HZ - 2

The town should consider capital improvement projects and budget for future drainage and related street improvements using the "Major Drainage Improvement Priority List", "Culvert Design Summaries" and "Drainage Cost Analysis" sections of the Master Drainage Plan to help prioritize.

ACTIONS:

1. Work with Westcliffe to update and adopt a new Master Drainage Plan.

Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years

2. Identify and map flood-prone areas within Silver Cliff.

Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years

3. Silver Cliff signed an Emergency Operations Plan agreement with the Custer County Emergency Services in 2017 this agreement will be updated yearly.

Time frame – reviewed updated yearly.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Water Resources

Water resources are limited by what can be provided by the Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District. In the outlying Silver Cliff Ranch area, wells provide water to its residents.

According to Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District's Annual Water Quality Report, water supplied to Silver Cliff meets the state's quality standards providing a safe and dependable supply of drinking water.

Agricultural Resources

The land in Silver Cliff provides good resources for grazing livestock, limited only by water availability.

Wildlife

The Silver Cliff area is abundant in wildlife species due to its proximity to several mountain ranges and plains. Deer and antelope can be seen within the town limits and elk viewed in surrounding Custer County areas. There are no reports of threatened or endangered species being within the Silver Cliff town limits.

Soils

Soils in the Silver Cliff area are primarily a deep, well drained, sandy/loam mixture supporting native vegetation, grasses and shrubs.

Silver Cliff's soil is well suited for use as home sites, residential development, playgrounds and recreational activities.

Geology/Mineral Resources

With Silver Cliff being incorporated in 1879 as a booming mining town, rocks and mineral resources are plentiful. Although, no mining operations are currently in operation, Silver Cliff once produced much silver and some gold.

Silver Cliff's primary geological base is considered to be of alluvium nature, sediment deposited by flowing water.

Currently Viscount Mining is doing an exploration project within Silver Cliff's town limits, on Silver Cliff owned property known as Silver Cliff Pit and north into property in Custer County.

Forestry Resources

Most of Silver Cliff is not heavily forested, and no forestry operations are located within Silver Cliff. Silver Cliff Ranch, the town's eastern boundary, supports significant pine tree and aspen growth.

Location and Topography

Silver Cliff, Colorado, lies at an elevation ranging from 7,982 down town to 8,500 ft. in the Silver Cliff Ranch area. Elevations in the Wet Mountains to the east reach approximately 10,000 feet while the Sangre de Cristo Range to the west exceed the 14,000-foot elevation.

Silver Cliff is located in portions of Sections 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 34, and 35, Township 22 South, Range 72 West; and Sections 7, 17, 18, and 19, Township 22 South, Range 71 West of the Sixth Principal Meridian, encompassing 9,075 acres.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Public and private undeveloped land is essential to maintaining the mountain community character. As growth occurs, additional open space will be required to meet the residents' future needs for passive and active recreation. Parks, open space and recreation facilities also preserve unique natural features, provide gateways to communities, and enhance the image of the community. Parks help to reinforce a sense of community by providing places for community members to gather and interact.

Securing the land necessary to preserve the open feeling characteristic of this mountain community will require increased coordination between public agencies and private citizens. It is important to consider the provision of parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities as a community responsibility and to develop shared, multi-purpose facilities that serve a broad range of users. Providing diverse recreational opportunities will enhance the quality of life of residents.

GOALS:

- **Goal OSR - 1**
As much open space as possible should be secured before it is developed, provided future maintenance can be ensured. The Town should encourage the following three methods that could be used to increase the amount of undeveloped land: public acquisition, management agreements between owners, and private dedication of land.
- **Goal OSR - 2**
The town should require developers to provide for open space in their development plan.
- **Goal OSR - 3**
The town should encourage the owners of privately owned open space to preserve its rural character, maintain its visual and scenic quality, protect its wildlife habitat, use it as a buffer between existing and future developments and use it to provide open land or parks within future developments.
- **Goal OSR - 4**
All parks and recreation facilities should be developed in conformance with town, state, and national safety and accessibility standards.
- **Goal OSR - 5**
The town should cooperate with and encourage additional indoor recreational facilities.
- **Goal OSR - 6**
The town should continue developing recreational facilities at the town park and in town that are consistent with the needs of the community, but not duplicate efforts by other local entities.
- **Goal OSR - 7**
Silver Cliff should support opportunities to develop a community trail network, linking residential, commercial and recreational areas.

ACTIONS:

1. Continue to pursue grants for obtaining open space and park improvements.
Time-frame: Short-term: 1-3 years
2. Continue improving the Silver Cliff Community Park.
Time-frame: On-going
3. Keep communications open and cooperate with other local entities and organizations to prevent duplication of recreational facilities.
Time-frame: On-going
4. Work with the appropriate entities and encourage the development of a community trail network, linking residential, commercial, and recreational areas.
Time-frame: On-going

OPEN SPACE

Silver Cliff has the Zebulon Pike Triangle that with kiosks show the history of his travels. It is located on County Road 255 and Highway 96.

Silver Cliff has built a Commemorative Wall at the Silver Cliff Community Park, it hosts an American Flag, Colorado Flag and the POW flag in front of a brick wall where brass plaques for loved ones can be mounted. There are areas for benches to be mounted. Contact Silver Cliff 719-783-2615 for more information.

RECREATION

Silver Cliff Town Park

The Silver Cliff Community Park is located at 1099 Fourth Street. A land trade in 1985 with Custer County provided this spectacular site for this 8-acre park. Through funding from Great Outdoors Colorado, local donations and hundreds of volunteer hours, park facilities include a baseball field and a lighted softball field with brick dug-outs, batting cage, basketball court, sand volleyball court, three horseshoe pits, two picnic pavilions, playground equipment, concession stand/announcer booth, skatepark, multi-purpose skating rink, pickleball and restrooms. Future plans include improvements to the skateboard park, additional picnic area, disc golf and additional restroom facilities.

Trails

The Park to Park Trail that travels from the Silver Cliff Community Park to Westcliffe Memorial Park. With the drainage project along Hermit Lane another trail was put in on the northside of the drainage. The Trails for All is working with Silver Cliff to develop a multi-use trail to Silver Cliff Ranch and a loop trail to encircle Silver Cliff and Westcliffe proper.