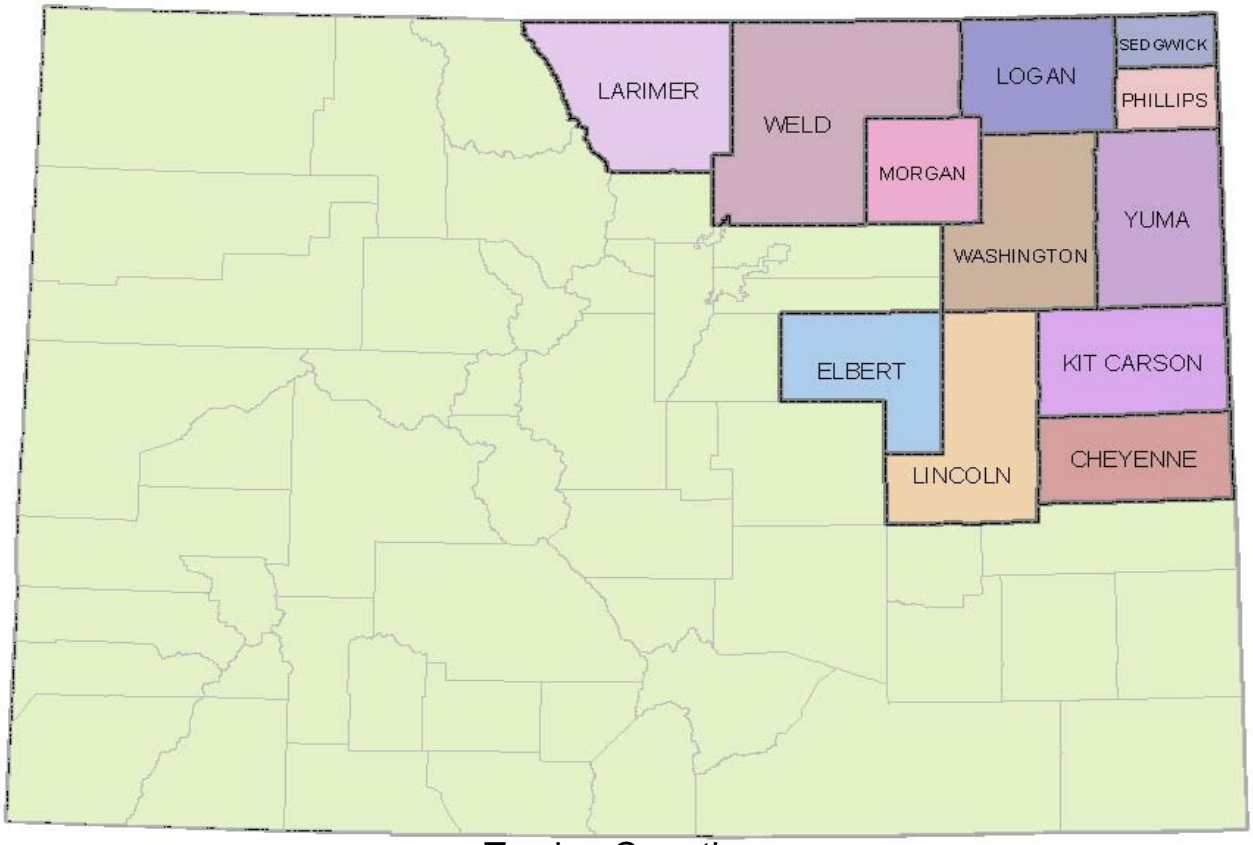
# NORTHEAST COLORADO
## HOUSING ROUNDTABLES

# North East Plains Round Table




Twelve Counties

**Urban Area**

Larimer ,Weld, Western Morgan :

7193 Square Miles

**Rural Area**

Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Logan, E. Morgan; Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, NE Weld :

17,029 Square Miles

1. Bounded on the north by Interstate 80, Interstate 70 on the south, and with Interstate 76 providing a link to Interstate 25, the region has excellent interstate truck service.

- Burlington Northern-Santa Fe and Union Pacific provide rail service throughout the region.

- These carriers provide interconnections to the West Coast, the Midwest and Gulf Coast markets as well as international markets

- The Western part of the region is less than one hour's drive from Denver International Airport.

# Estimated County Population 2003

(State Demographer's Office)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Cheyenne** = | 2,052 (lost 8% in 3 years) |
| **Elbert** = | 22,254 (gained 12% in 3 years) |
| **Kit Carson** = | 7,911 (lost 1.2% in 3 years) |
| **Larimer** = | 266,610 (gained 6% in 3 years) |
| **Lincoln** = | 5,881 (lost 3.4% in 3 years) |
| **Logan** = | 20,928 (gained 1.7% in 3 years) |
| **Phillips** = | 4,511 (gained 0.7% in 3 years) |
| **Sedgwick** = | 2,683 (lost 2.3% in 3 years) |
| **Washington** = | 4,813 (lost 2.3% in 3 years) |
| **Weld** = | 211,272 (gained 16.8% in 3 years) |
| **Yuma** = | 9,799 (lost 0.4% in 3 years) |

Our communities represent 10 counties in northeastern Colorado, outside of Larimer and Weld. The total population of these 10 counties is 101,164. The average family household income ranges from $26, 950 to $41, 550. Housing costs will range in the neighborhood of $301. to as high as $655. Average home prices also vary ranging from $64,370 to $131,600. The rental/buying power of a family ranges from $83,000. in most communities to $147,000.

Source: Colorado Demography Office

Source: HUD 2004 Income Limits.

The Economy of this rural region is based on agriculture or agri-business including Weld county which accounted for ¼ of gross receipts for all farms in Colorado. There are areas that have tried to diversify with correctional facilities and light industry or manufacturing.

More people are retiring to small, eastern plains communities, which gives these towns an opportunity to market themselves as a good place to retire. The aging population will have an impact on the employment opportunities.

There is a need to understand the employee population, that will be moving/or commuting to these communities as a result of new jobs, for data on trends and projected needs for the region.

There is a population that lives in the rural towns and commutes to the urban areas to work. Since the majority of their time is spent where they work, they do not necessarily support the community.

Our region has housing in all categories of the Housing Continuum, but they are at scattered sites throughout the region and not accessible to everyone.

A housing needs assessment or market study for the region is needed to look at rural housing needs. The area is large and although the major economic factor is agriculture, there is diversity amongst communities and diversity in the needs of the individual communities.

Although the economy is based on Agriculture, there is a lack of available farm labor housing for this workforce. A recent study completed this spring for Southern Weld County indicates a net demand for 949 beds.

Self-Help Housing , Fort Morgan

Wray - Renotta

Plazas del Sol & Milagro, Weld Co.

# Water IS a Key Issue for the Northeastern Plains

**Municipalities are giving directives on water, i.e.**

"Bring Water Rights to the table as a condition of development."

- Adds $20,000 to the cost of single family home just for water
- Cost of Water – Affects what you can do for affordable housing
- Water rights purchased in a dry year may include downstream water (Nebraska and Kansas)

**Agriculture selling water rights to cities or private developers**

- How can OUR communities thrive if the water goes elsewhere?

**Recommendation to Blue Ribbon Panel from the Northeast Roundtables regarding <u>Water</u>:**

(1) Examine statewide water issues and how those issues impact growth and affordable housing.

(2) Assemble this information and the effects on development in different parts of the state as a resource guide.

## Regulatory Barriers - Land Cost Issues

It is difficult to find affordable parcels on which to develop.

Curb, gutter, sidewalks, streets and other infrastructure add to the cost of producing affordable housing.

- Many larger communities utilize impact fees to pay for infrastructure, but do not waive these fees for affordable units.
- Small towns can't absorb the costs of infrastructure.

**Recommendations to Blue Ribbon Panel from the Northeast Roundtables regarding Regulatory Barriers - <u>Land Cost</u> at <u>local (jurisdictional) level</u>:**

(1) Encourage local governments to create as much zoning flexibility as possible;

(2) Encourage local jurisdictions to reduce/waive fees;

(3) Encourage local jurisdictions to donate land to affordable housing;

(4) Encourage local governments to use incentives to create affordable housing rather than mandating a percentage (%) of units (inclusionary zoning).

## Regulatory Barriers - Process

**Flexibility** is a key issue for the Northeast area across all funding sectors (Federal, State and Local Government) because inflexibility adds to project costs.

**Multiple applications** with different formats for different funders are required for the same project.

**Multiple reports** with different formats are then required by the various funders for the same project.

**Time** through the process is a big factor at all levels of government.

## Recommendations to Blue Ribbon Panel from the Northeast Roundtables regarding Regulatory Barriers,

## Process:

(1) Promote increased flexibility at federal, state and local levels – (Regulations should be flexible enough to fit "common sense" situations)

Examples:

(a) The affordability period is too long at DOH;
(b) Create a "universal" application form for housing funding;
(c) Reporting requirements/forms need to be simplified across all funders as much as possible, i.e. "universal" reporting?;
(d) Local governments should expedite affordable housing projects that meet locally established criteria.

# Funding Sources for Housing Development

- In the rural areas, the funding of housing developments comes from:

  USDA Rural Development

  Statewide Home and CDBG

  LIHTC

  Federal Home Loan Bank

  City and County funds where available

  CHFA loans

  Statewide and local charitable foundation grants

  Individual and corporate donations

As in other parts of the state, the challenge is to fund development of housing that households at 40% or less of median income can afford.

## Financial Barriers

No single source can fund an entire project. Putting together funding with multiple criteria and reporting schedules creates additional costs and time issues.

**Federal** Level: -

- There aren't enough Section 8 Vouchers to address the needs.

- The eviction process needs to be more flexible.

**State** Level: - There's not enough funding for affordable housing.

**Local**: - Small towns can't afford the cost of new infrastructure for housing. (Their recourse is to require the project to pay for the infrastructure up front, impose impact fees, or to reject new projects that require additional infrastructure. An "infrastructure bank" could assist small towns in dealing with this issue).

## Recommendations to Blue Ribbon Panel from the Northeast Roundtables regarding Regulatory Barriers,

## Financial Issues:

(1) Assist in creation of a state "infrastructure bank" that can be accessed by small local governments to build the infrastructure needed by affordable housing;

(2) Encourage incentives for affordable housing;

(3) Increase funding for Section 8 or find a way to supplement Section 8 through Trust fund or other funding;

(4) Increase housing line item to DOH through Legislature;

(5) Support the changes to the TABOR Amendment.

(6) Support and the flexibility to rehab existing housing to preserve the affordable housing stock

(7) Coordinated process for multi-funded projects between funders.

# Manufactured Housing

## Manufactured Housing

Acceptance of Manufactured Homes is an issue – especially in municipalities.

Everyone is not on the same page with definitions of manufactured housing. By having different definitions, it is easier for municipalities to apply restrictive zoning by size or use.

Pressures to redevelop or "flip" mobile home park properties for higher end homes. This is an issue that needs to be discussed/addressed.

No flexibility in being able to bring mobile homes up to safety codes through rewiring, insulation, etc.

## Recommendations to Blue Ribbon Panel from the Northeast Roundtables regarding <u>Manufactured Housing</u>:

(1) Get everyone on the same page with definitions of manufactured housing. With different definitions, it is easier for municipalities to apply restrictive zoning by size or use;

(2) Discuss or address solutions to the problem of "flipping" mobile home parks to high end housing;

(3) Promote flexibility in being able to bring mobile homes up to safety codes through rewiring, insulation, etc.