



# Creede 2025-2026 Strategic Planning Tool



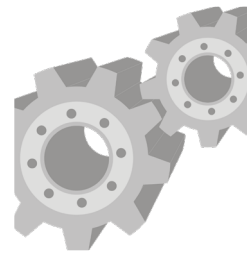
**#1 CAPITAL  
IMPROVEMENT &  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

**#2 BUDGET &  
FISCAL STABILITY**



**#3 PUBLIC  
ENGAGEMENT  
& TRUST**

**#4 STAFF &  
ADMINISTRATION**



**#5 QUALITY OF  
LIFE**

Strategic Priority Planning Work Session October 10, 2025

Strategic Planning Tool Prepared by DOLA Field Services Team



**COLORADO**  
Department of Local Affairs  
Division of Local Government

## STATEMENT OF INTENTION

This Strategic Plan is our shared commitment to keep Creede “The Last Great Place — a community grounded in beauty, civility, and resilience. It reflects our determination to face challenges openly, plan responsibly, and work together for the good of all who call Creede home.”

Through this plan, we commit to maintaining essential services, strengthening infrastructure and finances, and fostering trust and connection among residents, staff, and leadership.

Our intention is simple: to protect what makes Creede extraordinary while building a stable, vibrant, and welcoming future for generations to come.

## HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

A strategic planning document is only useful if you use it. **While each community and elected body is different, and approaches these processes differently, there are key components in this document that, if used to guide the City through decision-making processes, should help align community, organization and department reach specific goals.**

Effective governance requires foresight, alignment, and adaptability. This Strategic Planning Tool is designed to guide board and staff through a structured, results-oriented approach to policy development, program implementation, and long-term planning. Elected officials and staff should use this tool as a continuous cycle of planning, execution, and refinement. It is most effective when embedded into regular operational processes, enabling departments to remain agile in response to emerging challenges and opportunities.

It is recommended that staff review this document and update progress made quarterly. The City Council should then review and update the document as well at a work session. During decision making, this tool should be used to ensure the City is staying transparent and implementing the priorities that have been established. The document should also be used during the budget process to inform decisions and create key performance indicators.

## **CREEDE’S MISSION:**

**To protect Creede as The Last Great Place — an authentic, resilient, and connected community we’re proud to call home**

## **COUNCIL VISION:**

**A stable and welcoming mountain community where residents and visitors alike find beauty, safety, and belonging through stewardship, responsibility, and thoughtful progress.**

## **CORE VALUES:**

**Integrity - Ethical, accountable, transparent, honest.**

**Community - People-first decision making, kindness and respect.**

**Stewardship - Protecting Creede’s beauty, heritage, and character.**

**Resilience - Face, adapt, and persevere through challenges.**

**Pride - Love for and stewardship of Creede’s authenticity.**

# PRIORITY #1 - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

## Why this matters:

Creede's infrastructure is at a critical juncture. Sewer compliance, aging water systems, and outdated facilities limit growth, safety, and quality of life. Strategic investment is essential for lifting the moratorium, ensuring regulatory compliance, and supporting long-term prosperity.

## Key Goals:

- **Achieve CDPHE sewer compliance and lift the moratorium.**
- **Modernize water and sewer infrastructure citywide.**
- **Create a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).**
- **Secure funding for key capital projects and facilities.**
- **Improve connectivity and aesthetics through sidewalks, trails, and Main Street revitalization.**

## HOW we will get there:

TASK	TIMELINE	LEAD
Finalize and implement sewer compliance order action plan.		
Replace ~75% of aging sewer and water distribution lines.		
Complete water meter installation citywide.		
Develop a 10-year Capital Improvement Plan with project timelines and cost estimates.		
Develop and CIP capitalization strategy incorporating rate structure, sales tax income, and grant and loan opportunities for infrastructure upgrades.		
Construct new Public Works building (short-term temporary facility + long-term structure).		
Complete Virginia Christensen Multiuse Facility master plan.		
Plan and fund sidewalks/trails connecting downtown to Hargraves Park and neighborhoods.		
Plan future City Hall improvements (siding, meeting space, long-term relocation).		
Continue Main Street improvements and financial sustainability planning.		



## INSIGHTS

- Infrastructure stability and sustainability inextricably linked to fiscal stability – always consider together.
- Public engagement is MISSION CRITICAL for each project, early, often, and connected to funding mechanisms.
- Short-term pragmatism can demonstrate progress, implement interim solutions, and help Creede get “unstuck.”

# PRIORITY #2 - BUDGET AND FISCAL STABILITY

## Why this matters:

Creede's financial health determines its ability to deliver services, maintain infrastructure, and plan for the future. A transparent, forward-thinking approach to budgeting and revenue diversification will build trust and stability.

## Key Goals:

- **Strengthen financial planning and compliance.**
- **Reduce dependency on external professional services.**
- **Develop diversified, stable revenue streams.**
- **Improve transparency and understanding of city finances.**

## HOW we will get there:

TASK	TIMELINE	LEAD
Create a 5-year financial plan linked to the CIP.		
Review and update expenditure policy and approval authority.		
Conduct professional needs analysis to optimize staffing and service contracts.		
Explore short-term lodging regulation and potential lodging tax implementation.		
Align water/sewer rates with sustainability goals and affordability.		
Reduce legal and professional service costs through training and internal capacity.		
Develop a larger training and professional development budget.		
Foster public education and engagement around the budget, to expand understanding of fiscal priorities and constraints.		



## INSIGHTS

- Noting philosophical divide on spending. Use as a financial strategy to balance stewardship and progress.
  - Capacity-building emphasis. Investing in people, local expertise, and self-sufficiency.
- Need for financial education. Implement orientation and financial transparency tools for decision-makers.
- Tourism economy reality: Budget must include a measured approach to maximizing tourism-based revenue.

# PRIORITY #3 – PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND TRUST

## Why this matters:

Community trust, transparency, and collaboration are essential for Creede’s success. Rebuilding civic pride and participation ensures that decisions reflect the whole community and reduce conflict.

## Key Goals:

- **Increase transparency and trust between the City and citizens.**
- **Improve communication and public outreach.**
- **Strengthen civic participation through advisory boards and community partnerships.**
- **Model respect, unity, and kindness in public discourse.**

TASK	TIMELINE	LEAD
Continue and expand advisory boards (Parks, P&Z, etc.).		
Support beautification efforts (water wise flower gardens, adopt a pot, seasonal enhancements, etc.)		
Create a Public Engagement Plan with regular outreach (e.g., “Coffee with Council,” newsletters, social media updates).		
Offer public tours or open houses for major capital projects.		
Review Code of Conduct & Code of Ethics, update and re-adopt.		
Develop consistent messaging around progress, priorities, and successes.		
Host community listening sessions and town halls in accessible venues.		
Coordinate Event Organizer Communication		
Work to end adversarial legal actions with residents/businesses through mediation and communication.		



## INSIGHTS

- Topic centered healing and civility as central goals — this is as much about emotional repair as communication.
  - Rebuilding trust through behavior, not just outreach. Keep consistent fairness, tone, and follow-through.
- Apathy and re-engagement: Community doesn’t just want information; it wants to feel invited. The plan should encourage creative participation (pop-up meetings, community events, informal engagement).
- Internal culture matters too. Staff and board behavior sets the tone for community engagement and project support.

# PRIORITY #4 - STAFF & ADMINISTRATION

## Why this matters:

Effective governance depends on stable, professional, and well-trained staff and leadership. Investing in administrative systems, training, and long-term leadership ensures continuity and confidence.

## Key Goals:

- **Improve internal capacity, professionalism, and stability.**
- **Codify and clarify municipal code for consistent enforcement.**
- **Strengthen relationships with county and regional partners.**
- **Complete the city manager transition process with long-term stability.**

## HOW we will get there:

TASK	TIMELINE	LEAD
Complete codification and modernization of the Municipal Code.		
Reinstate the Planning & Zoning Commission and initiate comprehensive planning.		
Expand financial management training and software to move bookkeeping and accounting in-house.		
Continue close collaboration with the Sheriff's Office and maintain IGA.		
Develop staff retention strategies: wages, benefits, training, recognition and succession.		
Celebrate staff and volunteer accomplishments publicly & individually.		
Develop liaison program: Operational communication one on one		
Outline contingency plan for interim city manager tenure and transition timeline.		
Encourage board longevity and consistency through mentoring and orientation.		



- Emphasis on permanence and stability: be explicit that stable leadership is a strategic goal.
- Organizational need for institutional memory and less turnover-driven disruption for board and staff.
  - Professionalism a high priority. Working towards being competent, modern, and credible.
- Benefits and morale are mission critical, and priority indicates that employee well-being should be part of Creede's resilience strategy.
- Use planning and policy as foundations. Across-the-board desire for clarity and predictability in local government processes.

# PRIORITY #5 - PRESERVING AND IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE IN CREEDE

## Why this matters:

Creede's identity as "The Last Great Place" depends on maintaining its livability, affordability, and year-round vitality. Investing in recreation, housing, and community amenities enhances resident satisfaction and economic resilience.

## Key Goals:

- Improve livability and affordability for year-round residents.
- Expand recreation and cultural opportunities.
- Support workforce and affordable housing.
- Strengthen community identity and pride.

## HOW we will get there:

TASK	TIMELINE	LEAD
Advance Virginia Christensen Multiuse Facility improvements.		
Explore partnerships for workforce and affordable housing development.		
Maintain neighborhoods by regulating short-term rentals.		
Review and update senior lunch and community service agreements.		
Support youth programs and recreation (e.g., trails, sports, events).		
Explore and coordinate with Chamber winter tourism opportunities (sled races, snowmobile events, snow sculpture competitions).		
Maintain community branding and pride: "Creede – The Last Great Place."		
Assess and plan for smart growth and population targets.		



## INSIGHTS

- Year-round vitality is a huge factor here – big opportunity and measurable outcome, cognizant of economic vulnerability.
- Balance between preservation and progress, aka Creede's perpetual tension. Protect character while adapting.
  - Big youth and family focus shows powerful indicators of desired demographic stability.
- Identity and pride are integral to all aspects of this priority, along with the whole plan. Love for Creede and celebration of identity is the anchor to community engagement, organizational culture, staff morale, and seeing strategic planning and stewardship through.