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CHERAW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
August, 1975, 1st Draft

Prepared by the Lower Arkansas
Valley Council of Governments in
cooperation with the Colorado
Division of Planning.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR
CHERAW, COLORADO

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INTRODUCTION

The community of Cheraw is located 10 miles north of La Junta and has a population of approximately 135. Operating within the community is a cafe, a pump company and a post office. The following information is designed to serve both as a community profile and as an indicator of what areas the community should be concerned with.

WATER

Cheraw's water supply comes from two wells within the community (see map for location), and the water is treated by a chlorination process. The main lines are 6" in diameter; galvanized steel pipe was originally used but plastic lines are now used when breakage occurs. Up until this winter the Farmland Turkey Plant relied on Cheraw's water system. The strain on the communities water system was quite heavy and a shortage of water is sometimes experienced by the residents. The Farmland Turkey Plant now relies on its own water supply (a well) at the rate of 150,000 gallons per day. The effects of this are that the residents of Cheraw no longer experience a shortage of water, but the town is losing the revenue it earlier received from selling of water to the plant.

There are 25 taps outside the city limits of Cheraw, and the rate for these residents is \$6.75/1st 1,000 gallons and 50¢ for each additional 1,000 gallons. Water is also sold to farms at the rate of \$1.75 per 1,000 gallons.

| | 1st 1,000 gal. | ea. add. 1,000 gal. |
|-------------|----------------|---------------------|
| In town | \$4.50 | \$.35 |
| Out of town | \$6.75 | \$.50 |
| Farmers | \$1.75 | |

Because of its location in relation to La Junta, the community of Cheraw may receive some growth and consequently should know the capacity of its existing water system. The town should make an attempt to find out how many people can be served before the water supply is in danger so they don't accidentally over-expand. They should also investigate the possibility and expense of increasing their water supply.

SEWER

A. Septic Tanks

Disposal of sewage is in the form of septic tanks in Cheraw. There has been some problem with this system in the past and consideration has been given to the construction of a public sewage system. A grant has already been applied for to construct such a system. The biggest problem with septic tanks is in the area near Cheraw Lake in the south part of the community. When the lake reaches a certain level, the water will not drain properly.

B. Farmland Turkey Plant

Solid waste from the turkey plant is buried while the liquid waste (such as blood) is dumped into Cheraw Lake. The lake has an extremely unpleasant odor which is at least partially due to its use by the Turkey Plant as a dumping ground for certain waste materials.

CIRCULATION

Streets, for the most part, are messy and in poor condition. Curbs and gutters are almost non-existent, which adds to the unorganized and unkempt appearance of the streets.

The original paving of most of the streets in Cheraw does not seem to have been done very well as the sides do not have even borders and most streets are a combination of dirt, asphalt, and gravel.

The town of Cheraw should seriously consider at least resurfacing the streets and, if possible, putting in curbing. It seems that when a definite border is determined (as by a curb), property owners tend to maintain their property to that point, but are prone to let weeds grow and junk accumulate when no such border is determined. If this holds true in Cheraw, installing curbing would be a means of cleaning up an area which is now unkempt, which would definitely make the community more attractive.

ANNEXATION

The town of Cheraw has not adapted an annexation policy and consequently the Town Council does not have specified guidelines to help them determine whether or not they should annex certain pieces of land. Such a policy should spell out the responsibilities of the developer as well as the responsibilities of the town. It is recommended that Cheraw adopt such a policy as soon as possible.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The business district in Cheraw includes a cafe, a post office, a pump and supply company, a gameroom for youth (now closed)*, and three vacant buildings.

The cafe serves the local ranchers and farmers at various times during the day, giving them a chance to get together.

There is no direct mail service to the houses and post office boxes serve as the distribution system. There are four different size boxes, the number and cost of each size is as follows:

| <u>BOX SIZE</u> | <u>COST</u> | | <u>NUMBER OF BOXES</u> |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| | <u>SEMI-ANNUAL</u> | <u>ANNUAL</u> | |
| 1 | \$2.50 | \$5.00 | 60 |
| 2 | \$3.00 | \$6.00 | 94 |
| 3 | \$4.00 | \$8.00 | 19 |
| 4 | \$6.00 | \$12.00 | 5 |

The pump and supply company sells and services pumps and serves a regional area.

*See Community Facilities, C. 3 Gameroom

A. PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Cheraw has no police department but receives protection from the La Junta Police Department. Cheraw has a volunteer fire department and two trucks which they bought from the La Junta Fire Department.

B. SCHOOL SYSTEM

1. Facilities:

- a. Elementary School (K-6) -- This school was built in 1921. According to the superintendent of schools this building is inadequate because of its age and its size. A \$350,000 bond issue was attempted to construct a new school but it was defeated (250 total votes, lost by 25).
- b. High School (7-12) -- The high school was constructed in 1960 because the old high school burned down. The cost was \$285,000; \$139,000 of which was financed through a bond issue and the remainder through the fire insurance from the old school.

Under the existing conditions this facility is not crowded, however, courses need to be added to the curriculum which would mean additional teachers, and there is no space for the expansion of staff members.

- c. Transportation -- The school system has five busses (one of which is kept in reserve) and two vans used for busing students to vocational programs in La Junta. Approximately 80% of the students are bussed and 12 miles is the farthest distance any student travels. According to the superintendent of schools, they are in good shape as far as transportation goes.

d. Outdoor Facilities -- Within the school yard is an unlit ball field, a combination tennis court/basketball court, play equipment, and a lit football field.

2. Staff, Students, and Programs -- The following chart shows the number of students and teachers, and the student/teacher ratio, in the two schools:

| | <u>Number of Students</u> | <u>Number of Teachers</u> | <u>Student/Teacher Ratio</u> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Elementary (K-6) | 134 | 7 | 1:19 |
| High School (7-12) | 133 | 10* | 1:13 |

*of these 10, one is a P.E. teacher and one is a music teacher, both of whom also teach at the elementary level.

The high school offers only the basic courses and according to the superintendent of schools, you just don't get the "frills" in a small school like you do in a large school. The "frills" he was speaking of are things like foreign language, art, advanced math, and vocational training such as auto mechanics. The question whether these things are to be considered as "frills", or whether everyone should have the opportunity to be exposed to them. A strong argument could certainly be made for the latter. These students are at a disadvantage if they enter college and are pitted against students who have had such opportunities, and if these students do not enter college they are at a disadvantage because they may never again have the chance to be exposed to such "frills".

It is strongly recommended that the Cheraw residents give very serious consideration to the possibility of consolidating

their high school with the La Junta High School. Because a new elementary school is needed anyway, it would be an ideal opportunity for the elementary school to take over the existing high school and would alleviate the problem of space and worn-out facilities.

Cheraw residents should give their children the opportunity to take a foreign language, and if they excel in math, to take advanced math courses, to gain some basic training in art and develop any talents they might have in this field, etc.

C. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Cheraw is very limited in terms of the recreational facilities it provides and does not always take advantage of potential facilities.

1. Park -- There is an area between the railroad tracks and Railroad Avenue which the residents of Cheraw call a park but do not use as such (see map). This area is a well maintained grassy area with some shade trees but absolutely no park equipment (such as picnic tables, grills, or play equipment). If some picnic equipment were installed, it is very possible that this area might be better utilized.
2. School Grounds -- Even though there is some recreational equipment available at the school, it is not heavily used in the summer. This may be due to any of several reasons, for example, the location of the school (far northeast corner of town), or the fact that the play area is asphalt and consequently very hot, or perhaps because of the lack of maintenance in this area during the summer months.

It is possible that this area could be used during the summer by involving children in various activities in a summer recreation program.

3. Gameroom -- On Grand Avenue there is a building with recreational equipment (such as pinball machines) but is now closed. Considering the lack of recreational facilities within Cheraw, it is surprising to see this facility closed. The community should take advantage of every available form of recreation and this is one of them; this facility should definitely be made use of!
4. Summer Recreation Program -- There is a summer recreation program, sponsored by the Lions Club, which busses Cheraw children to the La Junta pool for swimming. This is the first year that this service has been provided and should be continued in the future.
5. Abandoned Grain Elevator -- On the north side of Grand Avenue, along the railroad tracks, there is an old grain elevator which is no longer in use. Children sometimes use this building to play around and they also climb inside this building. This is a very dangerous form of recreation and the elevator should at least be boarded up if not torn down.
6. Civic Center -- A community center, housing such things as the fire department, a public meeting hall, the Town Clerk's office, a library, a police office (if Cheraw grows), etc., would be a definite asset for Cheraw. A possible location for such a structure is east of First Street, just north of

Grand Avenue. This area is large enough to allow for parking and is near the proposed residential expansion area. It is recommended that the town of Cheraw attempt to construct such a facility (see map for location).

INDUSTRY

The Farmland Turkey Plant, located within Cheraw, is by far the largest employment base in the community. The plant employs approximately 175 people, approximately 20 of which are from Cheraw. The town of Cheraw should be cautious not to allow any other industry to locate in this area unless they have made provisions to dispose of their sewage in an acceptable manner.

CIRCULATION

Highway 109 now runs through the middle of Cheraw, in front of the business district. It would be advantageous for the town of Cheraw if a northwest bypass were constructed. This would coordinate well with the proposed residential expansion area and would eliminate the split in the community caused by the existing highway. It is recommended that Cheraw support a bypass.

EXPANSION

As was mentioned earlier, it is possible that the community of Cheraw might grow due to its proximity in relation to La Junta.

- A. Detractions -- Although the residents of Cheraw either ignore, or perhaps no longer perceive it, Cheraw Lake is a definite problem. The odor which is continuously emitted from the lake is extremely unpleasant, especially to one who is not use to living with this condition. The lake is a real detraction in terms of people moving to Cheraw. The town of Cheraw should do everything in its power to clean up the lake to make the community more attractive and more liveable.
- B. Expansion of Residential Areas -- The land south of Randall Avenue has been subdivided and annexed to the town of Cheraw. It is strongly recommended however, that this land not be developed (see map). The southern part of town already has a septic tank problem and if the lake were cleaned up and made suitable for recreation, it would be undesirable to have houses this close to it.

A more desirable area for residential growth is north of Lake View Avenue (see map). Development in this area would be away from the lake and near school facilities.

- C. Expansion of the Business District -- It is recommended that any new business coming into Cheraw locate along Grand Avenue, with the objective of filling in some of the vacancies in this area. This would be an even better location for businesses if Highway 109 were not running right in front of the businesses. (see next section)