



Board Summary Report

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Ceila Rethamel, Acting Director, Public Works and Development Department

Prepared By:
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Subject:
Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Approve Strasburg 2050: Strasburg Subarea Plan

Purpose and Request:

Arapahoe County proposes to amend the 2018 Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan to approve and include Strasburg 2050: Strasburg Subarea Plan, which is an update of the 2002 Strasburg Plan.

The updated draft Strasburg 2050: Strasburg Subarea Plan (the "Plan"), with its vision, goals, policies, and strategies, is intended to be used by staff, County officials, property owners, and developers to help frame public and private investment decisions in the Strasburg area over the next 25 years.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: Sustainable Growth and Infrastructure - Implement smart growth policies to align housing, transportation, open spaces and economic development.

Background and Discussion: Strasburg is a community of about 4,700 people located in both Arapahoe and Adams County with East Colfax Avenue being the common boundary. The current Strasburg Plan was approved by Adams and Arapahoe County Planning Commissions in 2002 and incorporated by reference into each of the county's comprehensive plans.

The 2002 plan was intended to guide growth and development decisions in the Strasburg area for about 20 years, to 2022. Its focus was on regulating growth, limiting sprawl, and developing a new town center (in Adams County) consisting of retail, office, and housing that would bring jobs and services. The plan anticipated that Strasburg's population would grow to 10,000-12,000 residents by 2020. This level of growth and development was not realized.

The Advancing Adams Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2022 identified a need to update the Strasburg Plan, which had reached its intended 20-year lifespan. In 2024, the Adams County Community and Economic Development Department approached Arapahoe County with a project to update the plan. Adams County would lead the planning outreach effort, and Arapahoe County would provide support.

The overall key objectives of the plan update project were to:

- create a community-based vision for Strasburg over the next 25 years
- build upon Strasburg's existing assets and to identify opportunities for improvement
- provide feasible growth projections;
- review and update Strasburg's future land use map;
- provide a set of realistic and achievable goals, policies, and actions; and
- create an implementation matrix.

To guide the project, Adams County formed a Community Steering Committee made up of 12 individuals of varying backgrounds, each from the Strasburg area and included representatives from the Strasburg School District, I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership (I-70 REAP), the Parks and Recreation District, Comanche Crossing Museum, private residents, and business owners. Also formed was a technical advisory committee of people with special expertise about the Strasburg community. Both committees met on a bi-monthly basis to help advise the direction of the plan.

The first step in the process was to gather background data about Strasburg. This included an assessment of existing conditions, a demographic analysis, and a review of the 2002 plan's goals. It also involved gathering initial community input which was achieved through two surveys: the first was a community-wide survey and the second, was a survey of business owners or representatives. Results were presented at open house events held in November and December 2024.

The surveys, as well as comments made during the open houses formed the basis for the new, updated Strasburg Plan's vision statement and seven guiding principles which are summarized as follows:

- Enhance Strasburg's small-town character and sense of place;
- Promote a safe community;
- Steward development intentionally;
- Support and promote local businesses;
- Maintain and improve roads and develop safe mobility options;
- Foster a strong sense of community and honor the community's shared heritage;
- Actively involve residents in decision making and ensure that all voices are heard.

The vision statement and guiding principles influenced the goals, policies, and strategies in all five sections of the Plan: Land Use and Housing; East Colfax Avenue Design; Transportation and Mobility; Economic Development; and Cultural and Historical Resources.

Strasburg 2050 differs from the 2002 plan due to its foundation in extensive community input. The updated Plan has expanded goals, policies, and strategies, which reflect themes or specific suggestions from the community. A new addition is the Plan's Implementation Matrix that identifies all of the strategies and assigns responsibilities, a general timeframe for action, and potential funding sources.

The draft Plan underwent several reviews leading up to this adoption process. In late August 2025 the draft was posted on the Adams County project website (with links from Arapahoe County's webpage) opening the official four-week public comment period. Arapahoe County staff reviewed the draft Plan with the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners during study sessions on December 2, 2025, and on January 13, 2026, respectively. The adoption draft Plan incorporated relevant comments and suggestions from the public review as well as those from the Commission

and Board study sessions. In particular, during its January study session, the Board of County Commissioners requested revisions to the Implementation Matrix to include additional partnerships responsible for implementing certain elements of the Plan.

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map is a fundamental element of the updated Strasburg Subarea Plan. It is the visual representation of the Plan's goals, policies, and strategies related to growth, land use, and desired development patterns and will be used by County staff and officials, property owners, developers, and others to help guide policy, investment, and development decisions over the life of the Plan.

Early in the plan update process, staff and the Community Steering Committee reviewed the 2002 Future Land Use Map and land use definitions. Discussions focused on the community's needs and desires, existing land uses, assumptions regarding water availability and supply, and prioritizing development in those areas already served by infrastructure. The outcome of these discussions is an updated Future Land Use Map that concentrates the bulk of new residential growth in Adams County.

The Arapahoe County portion of the updated Map includes the nine land use categories from the 2002 map with updated definitions. Two land use categories have been added: "Railroad", to identify the rail corridor; and, "Recreation Commercial", which has been applied to the KOA campground properties, the Comanche Crossing Museum, and a property at the eastern end of the project area along Highway 36 that includes a scale model train track and several railroad-themed buildings. Additional refinements were made in the downtown (the original platted townsite) area to change the 2002 classification from "Commercial" to "Mixed Use" which better reflects the current mix of land uses.

Public Comment and Community Outreach

The opportunity for public participation in the development of the updated Strasburg Subarea Plan was extensive. Outreach efforts are detailed in Appendix A and summarized in this report.

Adams County began the plan update process by conducting two surveys. The first was an online community-wide survey available on the Adams County project website beginning in the fall of 2024. People living or owning property within the Strasburg 80136 zip code were notified of the survey via postcard. Flyers about the survey were also posted at area businesses. In all, 262 people participated. The second was a survey targeting business owners and representatives. Fourteen owners completed the survey which Adams and Arapahoe county staff collected in person.

Additional public input was obtained at outreach events. Adams County staff hosted booths at annual Hometown Days celebrations in 2024 and 2025, and Open Houses at the local TBK Bank on November 20 and December 2, 2024. An additional Open House was held on August 19, 2025, to gather input about proposed design improvements along East Colfax Avenue. About 80 people attended the open houses in 2024, and about 30 attended the 2025 open house. Input received from the open house events as well as from the two surveys formed the basis of the Plan's vision statement, as well as its goals and policies.

Adams County staff developed a project website and utilized social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) to provide information about the plan update process, encourage involvement, and to inform people about events. Arapahoe County also created a project website which included links to the

primary Adams County site. Two hundred and twenty-three subscribers signed up for and received regular project updates and invitations to outreach events through the Adams County website alone.

In late August 2025, the draft Plan was posted on the Adams County website for a four week-long public comment period ending September 29, 2025. Links to this website were also included on Arapahoe County's project webpage. During this formal comment period, on September 9 and 10, 2025, staff hosted "Coffee with Planners" sessions at two local coffee shops where people from the community could drop in and share their thoughts and comments about the draft Plan. Eight people attended these events and others provided their comments via email. Following the formal comment period, staff from both counties met internally to consider all of the public comments and make amendments to the draft Plan as needed. In Arapahoe County, one comment from a property owner resulted in amendments to the draft Future Land Use Map.

Finally, in advance of the public hearings, the draft Plan was distributed to 23 referral agencies and entities. Three agencies, Arapahoe County Public Health, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), and Colorado Department of Transportation, submitted comments and one agency, the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Department submitted a "no comment" response. Comments received from CPW necessitated a text change or clarification to the Plan (LUH strategy 1.3.1) which has been incorporated into the adoption draft.

The Arapahoe County Planning Commission held a public hearing on June 16, 2026, and unanimously moved to adopt the Strasburg Subarea Plan as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and to submit the Plan to the Board of County Commissioners for approval. The vote was 7 to 0. No members of the public commented on the proposed plan.

The Board of County Commissioners' hearing regarding the Strasburg 2050: Subarea Plan was duly noticed in newspapers of general circulation including the I-70 Scout on June 24, 2026, and the Littleton Independent, Englewood Herald, and Centennial Citizen on June 25, 2026. Staff referred the proposed amendment to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs on May 5, 2026, as required by Colorado Revised Statutes.

Alternatives: The Board of County Commissioners has alternatives that include the following:

1. Approve the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment as recommended by staff or with changes.
2. Continue to a date certain for more information.
3. Deny the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact at this time. Projects identified in the Strasburg Subarea Plan's Implementation Matrix may require future County funding, but each will be addressed by the Board of County Commissioners on a project by project basis, as required.

Alignment with Strategic Implementation Strategies: The attached framework helps Arapahoe County institutionalize values-based, transparent decision-making, documenting how we make decisions and carry out actions to achieve the County's strategic plan.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to incorporate by reference Strasburg 2050: Strasburg Subarea Plan.

Concurrence: Strasburg 2050: Strasburg Subarea Plan was developed in partnership with the Adams County Community and Economic Development Department and with the assistance of a Community Steering Committee which was comprised of local representatives including the Strasburg School District, Strasburg Parks and Recreation District, the I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership (REAP), Comanche Crossing Museum, residents, business owners, and others. The Plan was unanimously approved by the Adams County Planning Commission on June 11, 2026, and the Arapahoe County Planning Commission on June 16, 2026.