



Arapahoe County

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Board Summary Report

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Bryan Weimer, Director, Public Works and Development Department

Prepared By:

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Presenter: Gretchen Ricehill, Project Specialist/Planner; Loretta Daniel, Long Range Planning Program Manager, Public Works and Development Department

Subject:

Strasburg Subarea Plan Update

Purpose and Request:

The purpose of this study session is to provide an overview of the planning process for updating the 2002 Strasburg Plan. The update project was initiated and led by a planning team from Adams County with input and participation from Arapahoe County Public Works and Development staff. The updated Plan, which was written and designed by Adams County planning staff, provides an amended vision for the future of Strasburg as well as reevaluating land use, transportation and roadway improvements, and economic development strategies, among other topics. The updated Strasburg Subarea Plan will provide guidance to staff and County officials on a range of policy topics 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: The current Strasburg Plan was adopted by the Arapahoe County Planning Commission on May 14, 2002, and incorporated by reference into the 2003 and 2018 Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plans. The current Strasburg Plan contains 11 vision statements and a series of goals and policies that were intended to guide growth and development decisions in the community for about 20 years.

After the 2002 Plan was adopted, the County created the Strasburg Business and Commercial Zoning Overlay district (SBC-O) which covered the original town site between Colfax Avenue and the railroad right-of-way to the south. This zoning overlay was created to address a problem with the County's standard zoning districts which did not allow for the eclectic mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses or the area's unique site characteristics of minimal building setbacks, lack of off-street parking, and minimal site landscaping. The SBC-O allowed the existing mix of uses to continue or expand and encouraged any new development to maintain the district's overall character by establishing certain development and design standards.

In 2009, Arapahoe County conducted a community survey and gathered valuable information on how residents felt about a variety of topics including transportation, recreation and open space, community facilities, among other things. No update to the 2002 Strasburg Plan occurred as a result of this survey since it was determined that the Plan adequately addressed the community's goals at that time.

The process of updating the Strasburg Plan consisted of the following four phases:

Phase 1 - Existing Conditions Analysis: In summer 2024, Adams and Arapahoe county staff gathered background information about Strasburg and assessed progress implementing goals from the 2002 Plan. A steering committee, made up of community representatives, was formed to guide and inform the project. Arapahoe County established a project webpage that gave general information about the plan development process and provided a link to the principal project website hosted by Adams County.

Population was one of the key background elements that the project team studied for the plan update. In 2002, Strasburg's population was 3,200 people residing within the planning area which was roughly bounded by E. 48th Avenue on the north in Adams County and E. 6th Avenue on the south in Arapahoe County; and from Yulle Road on the west to Headlight Road on the east. By 2020, the Plan estimated a population of 10,000 people. Clearly, that level of growth has not occurred. Using two data sources, Strasburg's 2020 population is estimated to be between 4,300 and 4,600 residents. The updated Plan estimates growth to be slow, mirroring growth estimates for the entire region. By 2050, the population within the Strasburg planning area is estimated to be between 6,889 and 7,761.

Phase 2 - Ideas and Options: Adams County staff conducted two surveys in Fall and Winter 2024. The first was a general community-wide survey and the second was a survey for business owners. Additional public input was obtained at outreach efforts during the annual Strasburg Hometown Days celebration. Input received from these events formed the basis of the Plan's vision statement, and many of its goals and policies.

Phase 3 - Draft Plan Development. Adams and Arapahoe county staff held meetings with the project steering committee to discuss important emerging themes and to update the Future Land Use map. In addition, results of the community survey and emerging themes were presented at two open houses, which were well attended by area residents and property owners. An additional outreach event was held with business and property owners along Colfax Avenue to discuss plan recommendations for the E. Colfax corridor. Throughout the project, a Technical Advisory Committee, made up of representatives from the school district, Colorado Department of Transportation, parks and recreation district, and others met as needed to discuss various topics that required specific expertise. By late August 2025, the draft plan was posted on the Adams County website and additional public comments were encouraged through September 29, 2025.

Phase 4 - Approval Process. Comments received during the open houses, outreach events, and during the formal public comment period will be incorporated into the adoption draft of the Plan.

Both Adams and Arapahoe county began the approval process by conducting study sessions before their respective Planning Commissions and Board of County Commissioners. Timing for the formal adoption of the 2050 Strasburg Subarea Plan will be coordinated between the two counties and is tentatively scheduled for early spring 2026.

The Strasburg Subarea Plan is organized into three main parts:

Part 1: An Introduction explains the purpose of the Plan, identifies related plans, explains the community engagement process, provides a brief history, and discusses the area's demographic profile and growth projections.

Part 2: The Strasburg Plan 2050 forms the body of the Plan. It is divided into five sections described below. A brief introduction provides the Plan's vision statement and seven overarching guiding principles which form the basis of the goals, policies, and strategies of each section.

Each of the five sections includes a discussion of existing conditions, a summary of what was heard from the community survey and open house events, and, in the case of the Economic Development section, the results of a Neighborhood Economic Development Strategy report which was prepared specifically for Strasburg and this plan update. This background information was then distilled in each section into a series of topic-specific goals, policies, and strategies.

- *Section 1: Land Use and Housing.* This section identifies the physical conditions that can influence development. A future land use map is included in this section which lists 11 land use categories for those parcels in unincorporated Arapahoe County.

- *Section 2: East Colfax Avenue Design.* This section addresses the challenges of Colfax Avenue being a state highway and the boundary between Adams and Arapahoe counties. Based on public comments, this section promotes improvements to the Colfax corridor including widened sidewalks, street lighting, and inclusion of public amenities.

- *Section 3: Transportation and Mobility.* This section addresses safety and mobility as well as roadway, trail, wayfinding, and other transportation network improvements.

- *Section 4: Economic Development.* The goals, policies, and strategies of this section were developed following preparation of the Neighborhood Economic Development Strategy and outreach to the business community. Strategic priorities include downtown revitalization, business attraction and growth, strengthened partnerships, and expanded business support services.

- *Section 5: Cultural and Historical Resources.* Recognizing that the history of Strasburg contributes to the community's uniqueness, this section identifies policies and strategies that increase the awareness of Strasburg's heritage and supports the Comanche Crossing Museum's continued efforts to preserve the area's history.

Part 3: The Implementation Matrix repeats the policies and strategies from the previous sections and includes responsibility, general timing (ongoing, short-, and long-term), whether the action is a capital expenditure, and potential funding sources.

Next Steps:

Comments from the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners of both counties will be incorporated into a revised draft Plan. The public hearings for approval of the Plan are tentatively scheduled for spring 2026.

Alternatives: The BOCC could propose alternative or additional ideas for goals, policies, or strategies.

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact at this time. Projects identified in the Implementation Matrix of the Plan may require future funding.

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

Staff Recommendation: No staff recommendation. This study session is for information and to provide the draft Strasburg Subarea Plan for the BOCC's review.

Concurrence: Representatives from the Strasburg Parks and Recreation District; Strasburg School District 31J; Strasburg Fire; Adams County Parks, Open Space and Cultural Arts; CORE Electric; Eastern Adams County Metro District; and Colorado Department of Transportation served on the Technical Advisory Committee. The Community Steering Committee included representatives from I-70 REAP, the Comanche Crossing Museum, business representatives, and community leaders.