

## Vision 2050 Workgroup Memo

**TO:** Vision 2050 Workgroup  
**FROM:** Staff and Project Team  
**DATE:** November 13, 2024  
**RE:** Meeting Background and Key Discussion Items

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**SUMMARY:** In advance of the November 13th Vision 2050 Workgroup meeting, this memo includes an overview of work done to date since the last Workgroup meeting in September and background information with key discussion topics for each agenda item. Please review in advance of the meeting.

- Vision 2050 Project Update and Status Report
- Workgroup role and working agreements
- Comprehensive Plan Open House Summary and Key Takeaways
- Energy Code Update
- FAR/Net Parcel Key Themes and Takeaways

### **PROJECT UPDATE AND STATUS REPORT**

Since our prior Workgroup meeting, staff and project team have been working actively on the Comprehensive Plan update, and technical analysis for future code updates.

#### Comprehensive Plan Update

- Following the September Workgroup meeting presentation of Existing Conditions and an overview of the Comprehensive Plan framework, similar updates were provided to the P&Z and the BOCC on September 17th.
- Vision 2050 Stakeholder and Community Open House hosted on October 30th. Included public launch and community education of Vision 2050, focusing on the Comprehensive Plan Update and CGAC recommendations. Included both stakeholder breakouts and community open house.
- Staff are working with a Water consultant to address new water requirements for the Comp Plan Update per state statutes. Updates will be shared in future Workgroup Comp Plan meetings in 2025.
- Closed out Community Values survey.

#### Technical Analysis & Code Updates

- FAR/Net Parcel technical analysis drafted and Focus Group convened. Final Recommendations to Workgroup in January.
- TDR/GMQS technical analysis is underway. Workshop with P&Z on October 15. Focus Group scheduled for November 19th.
- Energy Code Update is scheduled for 2025 to increase baseline standards for the 2030 NetZero goal. Staff hosted a Focus Group on September 18th and presented proposed changes to BOCC at a work session on October 8th. A follow-up work session is scheduled with BOCC on January 14, 2025.

Targeting Q1 Energy Code adoption.

- Employee Housing Impact Fee methodology update. In progress. Update includes reexamining the employee generation for construction, redevelopment and operations and maintenance. Initial draft anticipated in Q1 2025.
- Greenhouse Gas Inventory Update. Regional (Pitkin County, Aspen, Snowmass and Basalt) GHG Inventory Update from 2019/2020 in progress. Anticipate completion in January.
- Transportation, Climate and Economic Intensity Studies are currently being scoped with analysis to begin in 2025.

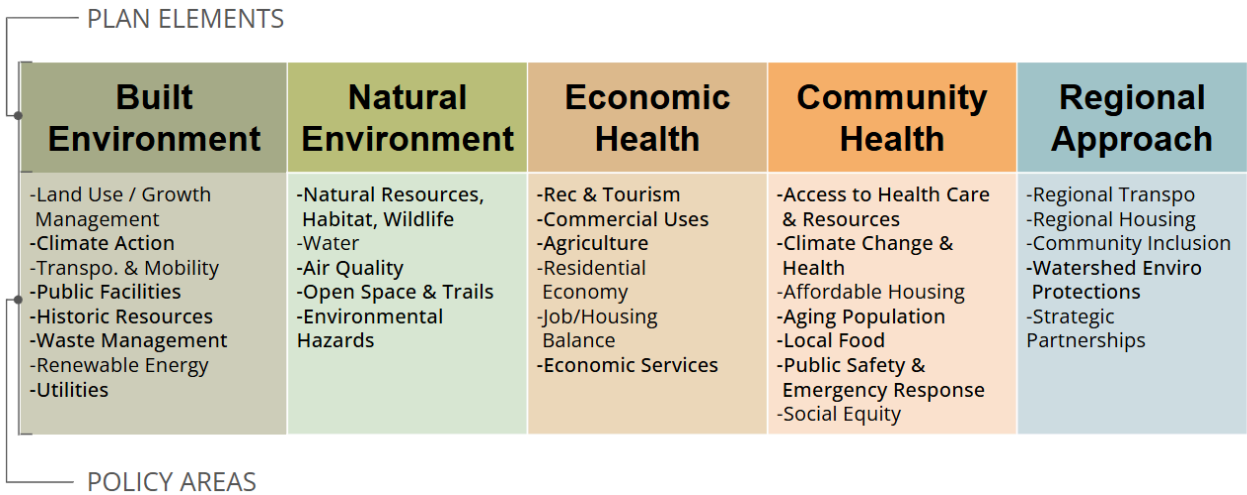
## **WORKGROUP ROLE & EXPECTATIONS**

The purpose of the Vision 2050 Workgroup is to serve as a “community proxy” providing input and feedback back to staff as we work to implement the recommendations of the CGAC and more; including the Comprehensive Plan update and developing and drafting land use and building code changes. Staff will be leaning on this Workgroup and each member to provide feedback based on both individual and community perspectives as elements are brought forward. We will be seeking input on how recommendations align or conflict with, or diverge from, the CGAC recommendations as well as Caucus Area Master Plans and other relevant plans. The goal is to leverage the experience and community expertise from the Workgroup to ensure that the final Comp Plan Update and code amendments brought forward to P&Z/BOCC are representative of the diverse perspectives in our community.

**Key Discussion Items:** What questions does the Workgroup have for staff and project team about their role?

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY AND KEY TAKEAWAYS**

The existing Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2003 and consists of common themes from Caucus Master Plans adopted at the time, such as preserving rural character and the natural environment. While many of the themes remain, additional state requirements, changes in our community, and updated Caucus Master Plans necessitate a more substantial update. In addition, to implement many of the CGAC recommendations, additional changes and updates are needed in the Comprehensive Plan to set the groundwork for code amendments (additional background information on the Comprehensive Plan is attached). On October 30th, the Vision 2050 team held a Comprehensive Plan Open House to kick off the next phase updating the County’s Comprehensive Plan and launching a public education campaign about the Community Growth Advisory Committee. The objective for the Open House and stakeholder engagement was to check in with the community about the five plan elements and discuss the policy themes that the updated Comp Plan will be addressing.



As an initial touchpoint with the development community, community partners, and residents, County staff hosted several topically themed Breakout Sessions before the Community Open House. These Breakout Sessions included discussions on the Built Environment, Natural Environment, and Economic and Community Health.

Overarching themes across all the stakeholder breakout sessions:

- Overall agreement with goals from the CGAC and affirmed some of the assumptions of the areas that need to change/ be updated to meet goals of 2050.
- Focus growth in the County; Housing beyond the UGB is going to be necessary, but how, where and the level will need to be carefully considered in tandem with the other values (i.e. wildlife, rural preservation, existing developed areas).
- Need for future infrastructure planning to address implications for water and sewer service and roads/intersections, location of transit stops, first and last mile connections to transit.
- Prioritizing rural preservation is a long-standing community value and is consistently supported by Caucus Master Plans.
- Restrictions versus incentives are important to explore when drafting policies and regulations.
- The many strengths of the valley’s economy creates opportunities, challenges and disparities across public and private sectors for diversifying a sustainable, year-round economy and workforce.
- The high cost of living in the valley creates an inherently temporary feeling for the majority of the County’s workforce and a sense of being one life change away from “survival mode” and displacement
- Need for regional coordination. One jurisdiction cannot do it all from transportation to housing to climate, and will require a unified valley-wide collaboration.

In the evening, after the breakout sessions, the Vision 2050 team hosted a Community Open House. The intent of this meeting was to educate the public about the Community Growth Advisory Committee (CGAC) recommendations that led to the Vision 2050 project, and provide information on existing conditions and project timeline.

Feedback from Open House participants primarily focused on the placement of growth in the County, affordable housing, incentivizing sustainable development, and balancing community needs moving toward 2050. Participants focused on the inherent tradeoffs at play in the planning process as well as were looking for more specific information to respond to.

### Comprehensive Plan Next Steps

During the next several months, the Long Range Team will be incorporating the feedback received from the Open House alongside current community plans, Caucus Master Plans and the CGAC Recommendations to begin drafting policy language within each of the Plan Elements of the Comp Plan. Staff anticipates reviewing the draft policy language as the focus for the January Workgroup meeting. The next phase of community engagement will focus on the draft language following discussions with the Workgroup in January.

**Key Discussion Items:** What questions does the Workgroup have about the feedback from the Stakeholder Meeting and Community Open House?

## **BUILDING / ENERGY CODE UPDATE**

### **Getting Closer to Net Zero Goal**

In 2024, the Building Department has been looking at how to “ratchet” down the Energy Code incrementally to meet the 2030 Net Zero goal. To inform this work, the Building Department reached out to the design and construction community, as well as peer communities, on various strategies to support the climate action goals and take incremental steps to advance towards the 2030 goal.

In early August, an energy code survey was distributed to professionals in the design/build sector to gather insights on the future direction of the county’s energy code. The results of this survey informed the Building Department’s plans for a focus group and stakeholder engagement session. That session took place on September 18th at the Pitkin County Library and was attended by 29 industry professionals. Following the Focus Group, discussions with BOCC and emerging recommendations from the State, staff have developed the following recommended changes to the Energy Code, targeting Q1 code adoptions.

1. Creation of Tiers to incentivize smaller development (see table below)
2. Creation of more stringent requirements for larger development
3. Lowering of baseline HERS ERI score from 60 to 50 & reducing the post renewable HERS ERI requirement for larger homes to incrementally meet NetZero standards.
4. Requiring Battery Energy Storage with Solar PV
5. Addressing Existing Buildings - requiring assessments for additions/alterations above 1000 sq ft

<b>Current</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>
All Homes	0-3,250 SF	3,251-5,750 sf	5,751-9,250 sf
NA	100% electric	Installing Fossil Fuel Systems	Installing Fossil Fuel Systems
HERS ERI of 60/30	HERS ERI of 50	HERS ERI of 50/15	HERS ERI of 50/0
200 MMBTU/yr exterior energy budget	Limited Exterior Energy Consumption (Exemption for: up to 1000 watts of heat tape and 1 pre packaged hot tub)	200 MMBTU/yr exterior energy budget	200 MMBTU/yr exterior energy budget
Renewable Energy and Battery Storage if space available	No renewable energy/ battery storage required	Renewable Energy and Battery Storage Required	Renewable Energy and Battery Storage Required

### **1. Reduce Initial HERS Energy Rating Index (ERI) Score**

Currently, all new homes in Pitkin County must achieve an initial HERS ERI of 60. The initial ERI score is the threshold a home must achieve before the installation of renewable energy. This score serves as a safeguard to maintain the integrity of the home's thermal envelope in case the renewable energy systems are ever removed. There have been discussions about lowering this requirement to an ERI of 50 for all homes in Pitkin County. An ERI of 50 is 5% better than the minimum standards set by the 2021 IECC. This aligns with CGAC recommendations of increasing the baseline of standards for building performance.

### **2. Incentivizing Smaller Development**

In reviewing responses to the energy code survey, a clear theme emerged: there should be incentives for smaller development rather than increasing construction costs through requirements for renewable energy, battery storage, and stricter building standards. The CGAC recommendations also acknowledged these concerns. The committee proposed a tiered system categorizing developments by house square footage, with the first tier set at 0-3,250 square feet.

### **3. Energy Assessment for Additions/Alterations**

According to the Pitkin County Building Code, large additions and alterations are defined as those 1,000 square feet or larger. The first step to address the remodel/addition impact for building efficiency is to understand the efficacy of the remodel or addition. Recommended changes include all additions or alterations 1,000 square feet or larger undergo an energy rating assessment before construction to evaluate the current status of the home, followed by another assessment after the addition is completed. This would

help document improvements and guide homeowners in planning future upgrades to enhance the existing building.

Staff will present final recommendations for BOCC consideration at a work session on January 14, 2025.

### **Key Discussion Items**

- Are these proposed changes aligned with the recommendations of CGAC for Performance Standards?

### **FAR/ NET PARCEL**

Based on recommendations from the CGAC, the Vision 2050 Project Team initiated a technical analysis to inform recommendations to overhauling the County's FAR/Net Parcel application in the Land Use Code. The analysis included case study research on peer counties both in and outside Colorado and the tools they are implementing in their land use codes respective to floor area and net parcel calculations. On October 16, 2024 the Vision 2050 Project Team hosted a Focus Group to solicit feedback on the CGAC recommendations related to FAR /Net Parcel. This conversation was informed by initial feedback from the June 4, 2024 staff work session and allowed the Project Team to hear from code practitioners about their experiences working within the current code requirements and considerations for unintended consequences of proposed code changes. Participants were asked for feedback related to the following:

- How well is the current county process related to FAR and Net Parcel Area working?
- What calculations are confusing when you are calculating parcel area and allowed floor area?
- CGAC Recommendation: Square footage is calculated based on slope reduction, setbacks from water, wetlands, floodplain, wildlife habitat, etc.
  - What opportunities or issues do you foresee with changing the net parcel calculation?
  - Are there any "site constraints" that should or should not be included in a calculation of net parcel area because they are so frequently seen, are difficult to understand, etc?
  - Should the county's existing "slope anomaly" language be utilized in a potential adjustment related to net parcel area calculations?
- CGAC Recommendation: Implement a FAR sliding scale to remaining unregulated zone district parcels, regardless of whether the parcel is conforming. The report suggests a sliding scale for Floor Area be applied county-wide, with AR-2 as a starting point, and the overall house cap remaining in place.
  - Do you foresee any issues with AR-2 being used as the starting point for FAR and developing a ratio / method that correlates FAR to site specific constraints?
- What should the County take into consideration for changes to FAR and Net Parcel calculations as it relates to the anticipated creation of non-conformities through code changes?
- Given the goal of decreasing overall energy use in buildings, should exemptions / requirements for mechanical areas be changed?

### **FAR/Net Parcel Key Themes and Takeaways**

Participants were generally supportive of CGAC Recommendations but raised some concerns over the

introduction of a sliding scale and how that may bring additional complexity to the code, increase application review times, impacts to previously approved PUDs, increase costs of surveys for large parcels and create more non-conforming parcels throughout the County. The role of floor area exemptions was discussed at length, with participants split on whether exemptions should remain in place. Planning staff was also mixed on this issue as the application of exemptions has grown increasingly complex through the review process and more specifically for redevelopment applications. Participants felt that the exemptions should be revisited as part of this process in an effort to streamline the application process and review. Some participants were concerned about potential changes to mechanical and crawl spaces as home systems have gotten more complex and the requirements for sustainable development through the Building Code will continue to require updates to battery systems and potentially increase the amount of space needed to house these systems.

### **Attachments**

- [Attachment 1: Vision 2050 Stakeholder and Open House Summary](#)
- [Attachment 2: Vision 2050 Open House Boards](#)
- [Attachment 3: FAR / Net Parcel Study Executive Summary](#)
- Background Resource: [Comprehensive Plan Background May 2024](#)