

Vision 2050 Workgroup Memo

TO: Vision 2050 Workgroup
FROM: Staff and Project Team
DATE: May 7, 2025
RE: Intensity in Pitkin County

SUMMARY: The primary purpose of the May Workgroup meeting is to review and discuss climate, economic, and transportation intensity in Pitkin County. In response to the CGAC recommendations, the Vision 2050 project team has conducted analyses to define, measure and understand how the residential economy of large homes in unincorporated Pitkin County contributes to a feeling of greater intensity, which is misaligned with the community's values and desired quality of life goals and outcomes.

In preparation for the discussion with the Workgroup, the project team has developed a Draft White Paper that begins to define what intensity means for our community and how this can inform our policies and future code changes as part of Vision 2050. The project team, joined by subconsultant teams REG, RPI Consulting, Kimley-Horn, EPS, RRC and Spirit Environmental, will facilitate a discussion with the Workgroup, informed by the White Paper, on what intensity means for the County and how these studies can inform Comprehensive Plan policies and future code amendments.

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT: Land use decisions greatly impact the built environment and lived experience of the Pitkin County community. Through the CGAC process, several areas of concern were raised relating to quality of life: pacing of development, rural/wild preservation, rural traffic and highway congestion, a sustainable economy, and workforce and housing imbalances. In response, one of the primary objectives of Vision 2050 was to complete additional analyses to contextualize assumptions and preliminary data studies from the CGAC with County goals and values, specifically looking at climate, economic and transportation intensity in unincorporated Pitkin County. These studies have been tasked with answering the following questions:

- Defining Intensity associated with the residential home economy in unincorporated Pitkin County,
- Identifying metrics or proxies for quantifying these impacts,
- Establishing baselines and documenting an initial understanding of key drivers and relationships
- Sharing Key Findings

This information is addressed in a Draft White Paper that summarizes the work to understand Intensity in Pitkin County (*Attachment A: DRAFT Intensity Studies White Paper*). As identified in

the CGAC Report, the draft analysis focuses on economic intensity, transportation intensity, and climate intensity. As these studies are nearing completion, the meeting and the Draft White Paper provide an opportunity for the Workgroup to review, discuss, and provide feedback at this key milestone before the initial Comprehensive Plan draft is completed.

MEETING FOCUS: In a workshop format, the Vision 2050 team will review the initial Intensity Study findings, with data experts from the subconsultant team available to answer the Workgroup's questions. The meeting will focus on a discussion with the Workgroup on the definitions of Intensity, Intensity and Growth considerations in Pitkin County, and how this analysis should impact policy directions in the Comprehensive Plan and subsequent code amendments. A core value of the Vision 2050 process, evident in the CGAC Recommendations Report and in past Workgroup discussions, is the need and desire to take bold action to address impacts, including on climate, transportation, housing, and the economy.

In preparation for the meeting, please review the Draft Intensity White Paper attached to this memo and consider the following questions:

- What clarifications would be helpful? What questions do you have about the Draft Intensity White Paper?
- Do the findings track with your lived experience? What is missing or surprising from the analysis and key take aways?
- The analysis illustrates there is an increase in the intensity of activities related to large-scale rural residential development in Pitkin County from a transportation, climate, and economic perspective. This indicates that managing and addressing intensity is just as important as managing growth.
 - Given the outsized impact this development has, are there policies and strategies to mitigate it more appropriately (relocating, refocusing, redistributing, or reducing)? For example, is intensity appropriate in all parts of our county? If not, where can and should we focus intensity to preserve our rural lands?
 - Knowing that much of the County's workforce lives outside the county and commutes long distances, might affordable housing options in the County mitigate intensity and support a more balanced economy?
 - Given the relationship between home size and intensity, what code updates and strategies beyond mitigation fees might lessen economic, climate and transportation intensity? Where can the county be most effective in bending the intensity curves?
- The CGAC Recommendations Report identified many tools to address these intensities. Are there any other other ideas these findings spark?

GENERAL PROJECT UPDATE: All aspects of the Vision 2050 project continue to move forward. The Comprehensive Plan drafting is nearing completion and the document is anticipated to be discussed at the upcoming June Workgroup meeting before being shared for public review in August. Anticipated Comprehensive Plan milestones are detailed below:

- May:
 - 5/7 Workgroup discussion on Intensity Studies
 - 5/20 BOCC discussion on housing and water
 - 5/20 P&Z discussion on Intensity Studies, housing and water
 - Finalization of Summer Engagement Program
- June:
 - 6/4 Discussion of Comprehensive Plan with Workgroup
 - Sharing of completed Data Analysis, including Intensity Studies
- July:
 - BOCC/P&Z discussion on Comprehensive Plan
 - Kickoff for public engagement
 - Finalize Intensity White Paper
- August:
 - Broad Community Engagement on Comprehensive Plan
 - Targeted discussions with Caucuses, Community, Partners and Stakeholders
- September:
 - Broad Community Engagement on Comprehensive Plan
 - Finalization of Comprehensive Plan
- Late Fall/Winter
 - Comprehensive Plan Adoption Process with P&Z, followed by BOCC

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - Draft Intensity Studies White Paper