



Pitkin County Vision 2050

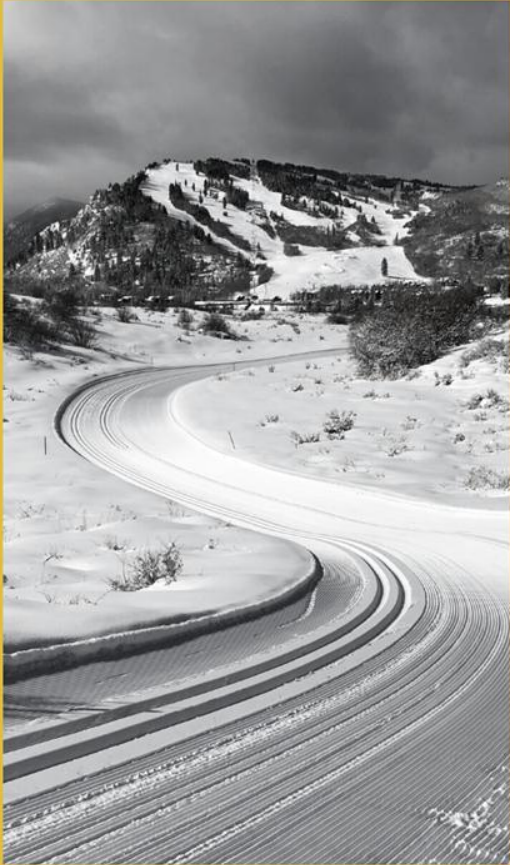
Workgroup Meeting
June 4, 2025

Meeting Purpose & Agenda Review

- Evaluating why water resources, infrastructure, and related services are critical to aligning community values with land use policies.
- Exploring water availability as a key community priority and enabling/limiting factor for development and intensity.
- Previewing the Natural and Built Environment sections of the draft Comprehensive Plan.

Agenda Review

- Introductions
- CGAC Recommendations and Community Values
- Water/Land Use Analysis
- Land Use Patterns
 - ◆ Enabling and Limiting Factors
- Key Findings and Considerations
- Discussion
- Comprehensive Plan Policies
- Next Steps



CGAC / Master Plan Recommendations and Community Values

Community Growth Advisory Committee (CGAC)

Recommendations - Rural Preservation

Rural/Wild Preservation

Maintaining our rural lifestyle and protecting our wild lands are values essential to most residents of Pitkin County. Traffic, development in remote areas, air pollution, and houses so large they function more as commercial enterprises than they do as homes all threaten the peaceful, rural sense of community cherished by county residents.

- Preservation of our exceptional quality of life requires intentional, smart, and sustainable planning to manage growth, define what smart growth means, and steward the same sense of place for future generations.
- We want to maintain the rural character and open lands that define our community.

Community Growth Advisory Committee (CGAC)

Recommendations - Water

CGAC recognized water use as a critical component of our community's values and recommended a better understanding of water availability and usage as a means for code changes for housing, development standards (i.e. landscaping), outdoor energy use and tiering options.

Specific recommendations included:

- Update site constraint standards to include ecological biodiversity, **watershed protection**, wildlife habitat, and wildfire prevention, establish water standards to ensure less water use and limit water-based exterior amenities (e.g. pools, spas, and exterior ponds).

Community Growth Advisory Committee (CGAC)

Recommendations - Housing

*“The **growth we do want** as a community, that meets our community values, is **more affordable and middle [market] housing**...we want to grow the community that will participate in our community and create policies and a Land Use Code that creates an environment **to ensure we maintain the fabric of our community and this ‘Middle Economy.’**”*

Caucus Master Plans

Rural Preservation and Water Stewardship as Common Themes

Rural Preservation

- *Preserve agricultural/ranch lands, open space, rural lands and our rural way of life*
- *Conserve natural resources, including wildlife habitat, scenic quality, air quality and water quality and quantity*

Watershed Stewardship:

- *Maintain in-stream flows*
- *Maintain & monitor water quality & quantity*
- *Prioritize water conservation (native landscape, irrigation best practices)*
- *Support healthy wetlands, riparian ecosystems, river wildlife habitat*
- *Respect and protect water rights*

Existing Land Use Policies Regarding Rural Preservation and Water Resources

1-60-70, 1-60-290: Rural Preservation When proposing future development outside of Urban Growth Boundaries, the following elements should be considered:

- **Preservation of the natural, rural scenery and natural landmarks** for the benefit of its residents and the continued viability of its resort economy.
- Support land uses that are compatible with the ecosystem of wildlife habitats and do not pose immediate, long term or potential detrimental impacts to such habitats. Preserve, restore and perpetuate native wildlife and plant diversity by maintaining sufficient habitat.

Existing Land Use Policies Regarding Rural Preservation and Water Resources

1-60-280: Water Resources & Aquatic/Riparian/Wetland Areas

- **Preserve and protect water resources**, including surface and groundwater recognizing the semi-arid character and significant transmountain and transbasin diversions;
- **Protect wetlands and riparian ecosystems**, to maintain the overall balance of ecological systems;
- **Protect citizens' rights to permanently protected minimum stream flows.**

Building on Climate, Traffic & Economic Intensity

What questions do you have about water availability:

- *As an enabling factor for development?*
- *As a limiting factor for sprawl?*
- *As a proxy for other limiting factors?*
(transportation, electric grid, hazard mitigation, emergency services, etc.)



Water/Land Use Analysis

Brendle Group

Water/Land Use Analysis Overview

Brendle Group Pitkin County Water Conditions Report

- Analyzing Current & future water demands to establish baseline for water supply to inform water policy direction in Comp Plan & future code amendments
- Supports required water supply element in Comp Plan per [SB24-174](#)

→ ***Today: Water/Land Use Analysis with a Focus on Infrastructure and Development***

- ◆ ***Factors Enabling and Limiting Water Reliability for development outside the UGBs***
- ◆ ***Considerations for Water Management: Reliability vs Availability***

Approach

Water Provider Survey

- Sent to all Water Systems in Pitkin County
- Systems that responded provide water to 69% of the County

State and Local Data

- Local Water Plans
- Colorado Decision Support System
- Land Use Data

Modeling and Analysis

- Current Demands
- Future (2050) Demands
- Water Planning Considerations

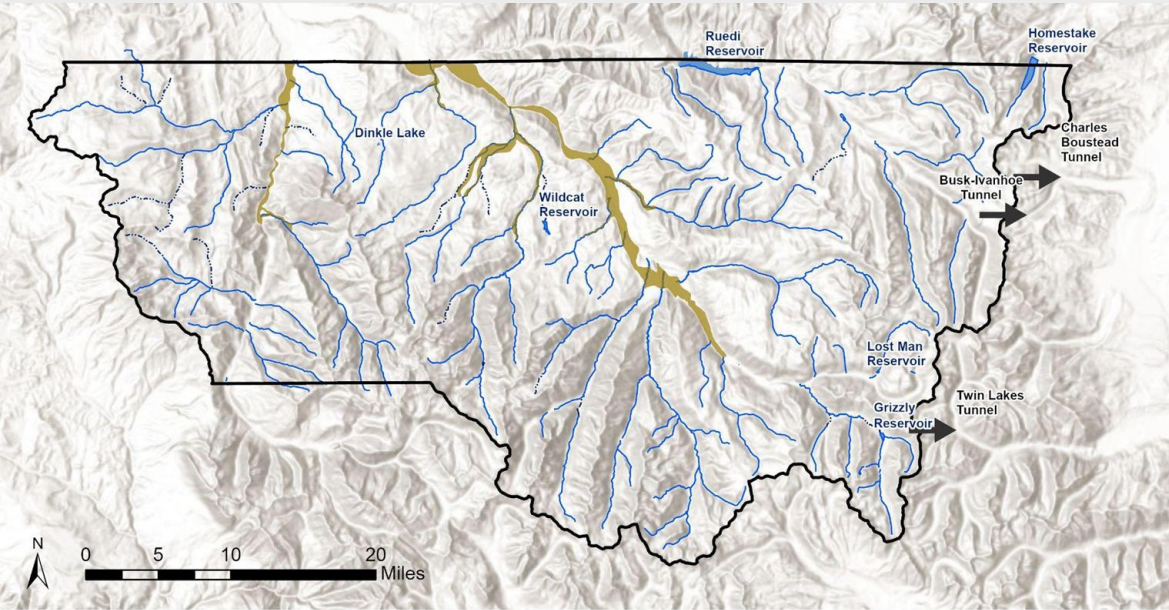
Water in CO & Pitkin County

- In Colorado, water is sourced from either surface water and tributary groundwater or nontributary groundwater
- Located in the Colorado River Basin
- One of the largest watersheds in Colorado
- Water in the Colorado River Basin is overallocated

Colorado Major River Basins



Water in Pitkin County



Surface Water and Tributary Groundwater

- Provides 99% of Pitkin County's water
- Three transmountain diversions
 - ~**40%** of Pitkin County's waters are diverted each year

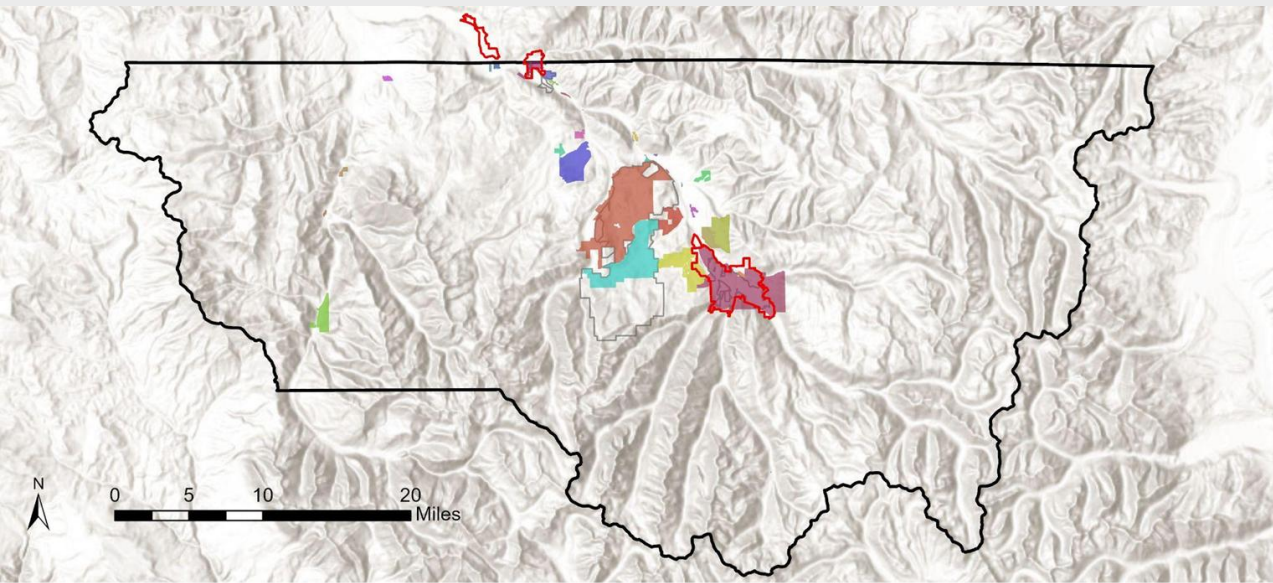


Legend

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pitkin County Boundary | Rivers and Creeks |
| Reservoirs, Lakes, and Ponds | continuous |
| Colorado River Alluvial Aquifer | intermittent |
| | Transmountain Diversions |



Public Water Systems



- **31 Public Water Systems** provide ongoing service
- **Cover only 2% of County's total land area**
- **Provide water to 70% of the population**
- **28 of 31 providers located outside of UGBs**

Legend



Pitkin County Boundary	Compass	Pitkin Green	Swiss Village Tracts
Urban Growth Boundary	Crystal River Country Estates	Pitkin Iron Condo	Town of Basalt Water Service Area
Pitkin County Cities	Gateway Metropolitan District	Prince Creek Water System	W/J Ranch Metropolitan District
Public Water Systems	Holland Hills Metropolitan District	Redstone Water & Sanitation District	Water View Condominium Association
Aspen Village Metro District	KK Water Association	Rivers Bend Condo Association	West Ranch
Avalanche Associates Sub	Lazy Glen Subdivision	Roaring Fork Club PUD	White Horse Springs Water & Sanitation District
Brush Creek Metropolitan District	Lazy O Ranch PUD	Roaring Fork Mobile Home Park	Wildcat Ranch
Buttermilk Metropolitan District	Little Elk Creek Village Subdivision	Snowmass Water & Sanitation District	Wildwood School
Catto Center at Toklat	Orchard Estates	Starwood Water District	Woody Creek Metro District
City of Aspen Water Service Area	Phillips Mobile Home Park		



Pitkin County Exempt & Non-Exempt Wells

Exempt Wells (62%)

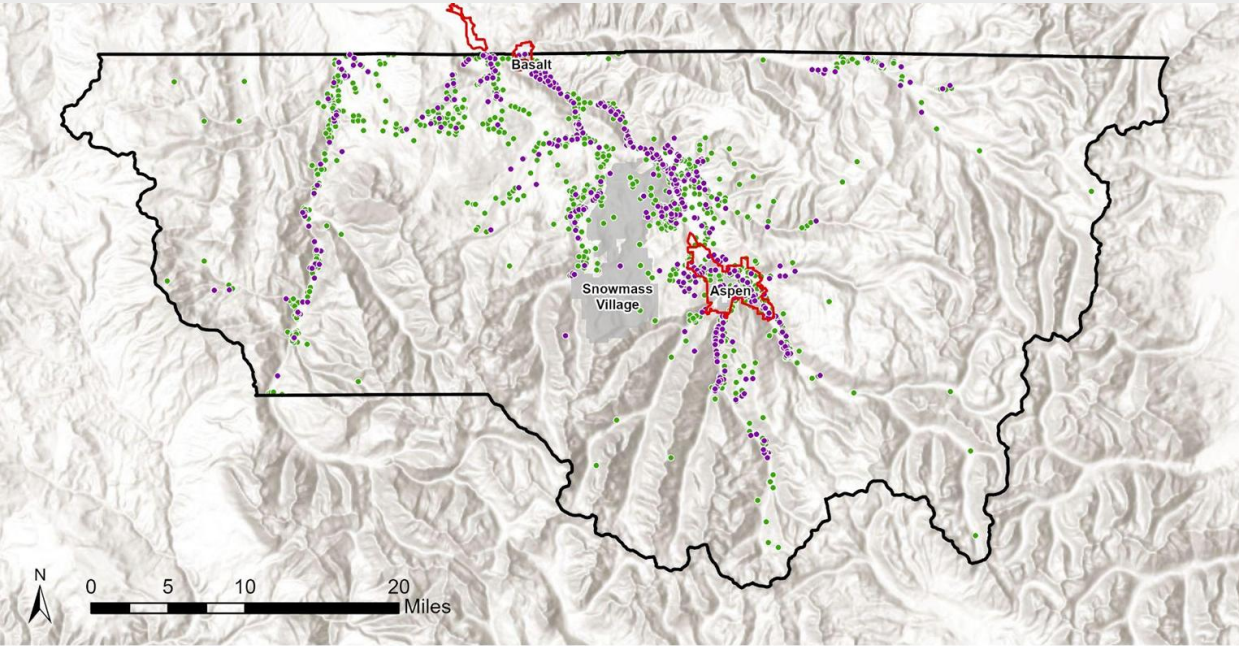
- Small scale applications (e.g., domestic, household use)
- Exempt from many administrative requirements
- For rural areas where other supplies are not available

VS

Non-exempt Wells (38%)

- Larger scale applications (e.g., sub-division, municipality)
- More complex permitting process
- Requires augmentation plan and more complex regulatory compliance

Wells



- ~2,300 well permits in Pitkin County
- Provide water to 30% of population
- 73% of permitted for domestic or household uses
- 62% are “exempt” wells that require a less robust permitting process



Legend

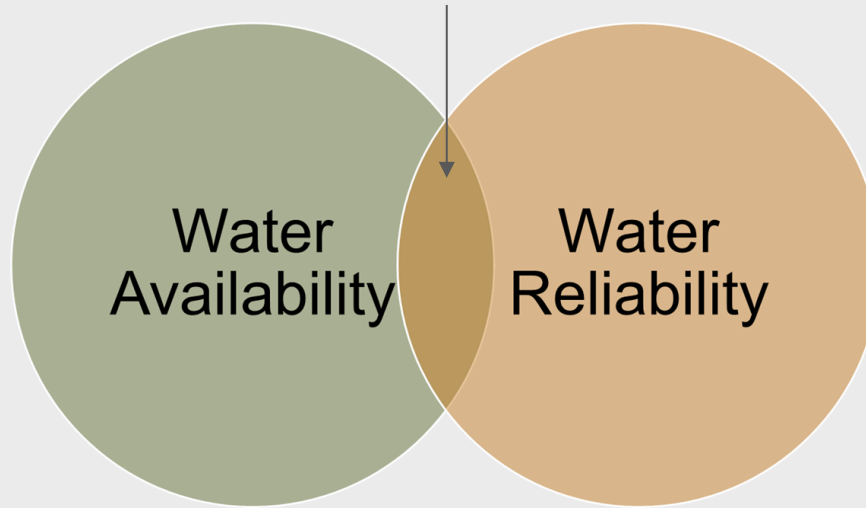
- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Pitkin County Boundary | Exempt Wells |
| Urban Growth Boundary | Non-Exempt Wells |
| Pitkin County Cities | |



Water Management

Sustainable Water Management

Is water *physically and legally* available for beneficial use?



Is *high-quality* water consistently available for beneficial use?



Examples of Water Reliability

Less Reliable

- One source of supply
- Junior, conditional water rights
- Dependent on augmentation plans
- No storage
- No connections to other systems
- Aging infrastructure (e.g., high water loss, risk of shut offs)

More Reliable

- Multiple sources of supply and/or back up systems
- Senior, absolute water rights
- Adequate storage for demand shifts and emergencies
- Interconnectedness
- Modern and adequate infrastructure (e.g., low water loss)

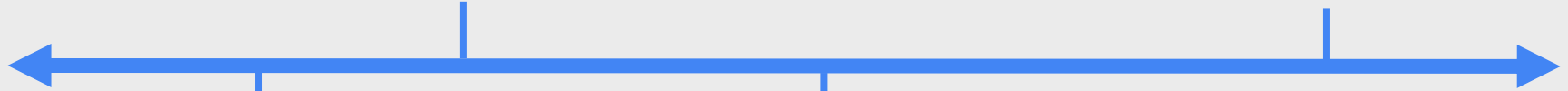
Factors Enabling Water Reliability for New Development

Limiting

Enabling

Connection to *new public water system*

Connection to *existing public water system* dependent on senior water rights with adequate infrastructure



Installation of an *exempt well*

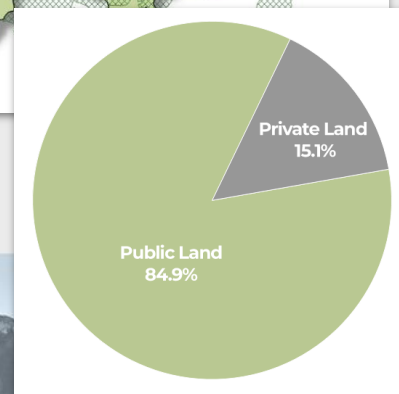
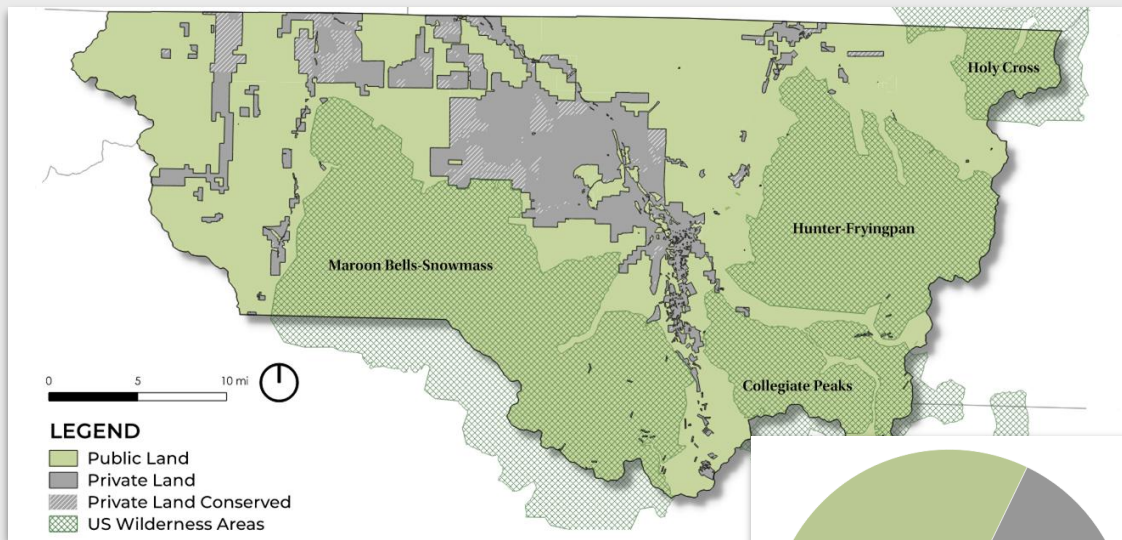
Connection to *existing public water system* dependent on more junior or augmented water rights with potentially aging infrastructure



Land Use Patterns: *Urban/Rural* *Continuum*

Enabling & Limiting Factors Affecting Location of Development

- *Physical Constraints*
- *Commitment to protect natural environment and public lands*
- *15% Private Lands*
(one quarter of which have conservation easements)



Pitkin County Rural/Urban Continuum



REMOTE

RURAL

TRANSITION

SEMI-URBAN

URBAN

RESORT
RECREATION

DECREASES

BUILT ENVIRONMENT
*Level of density & development
Access to utilities,
transportation, roads, job
centers, commerce, services*

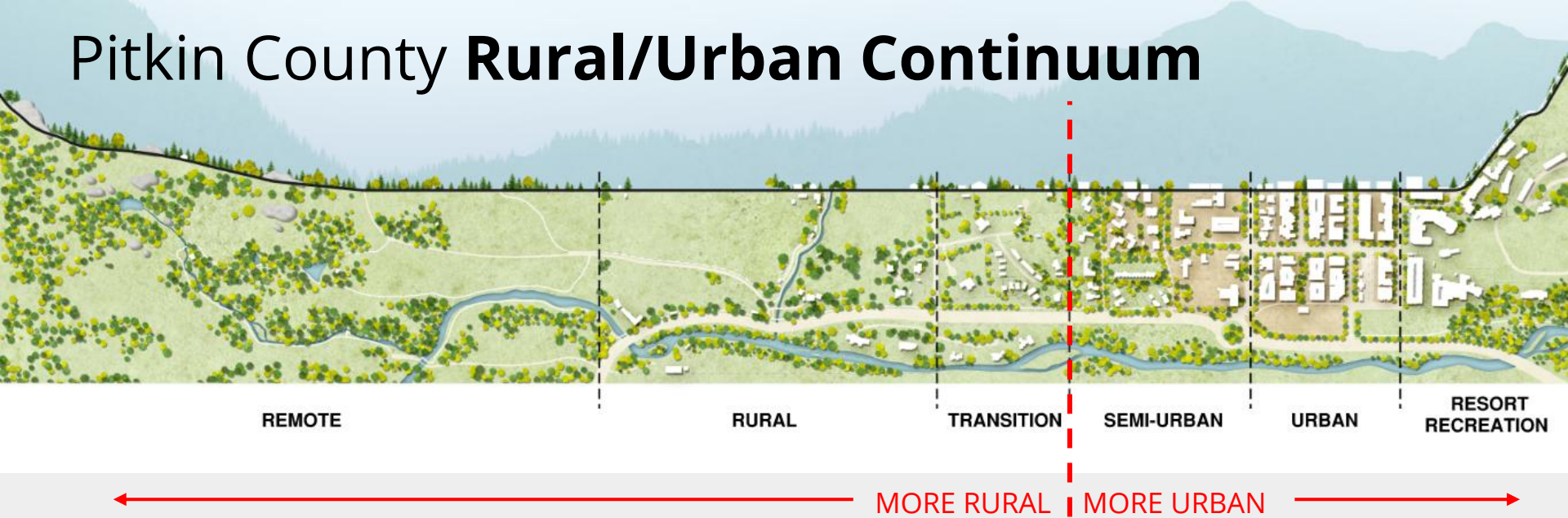
INCREASES

INCREASES

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
*Public lands & open space
Rural & agricultural lands
Wildlife habitat & migration*

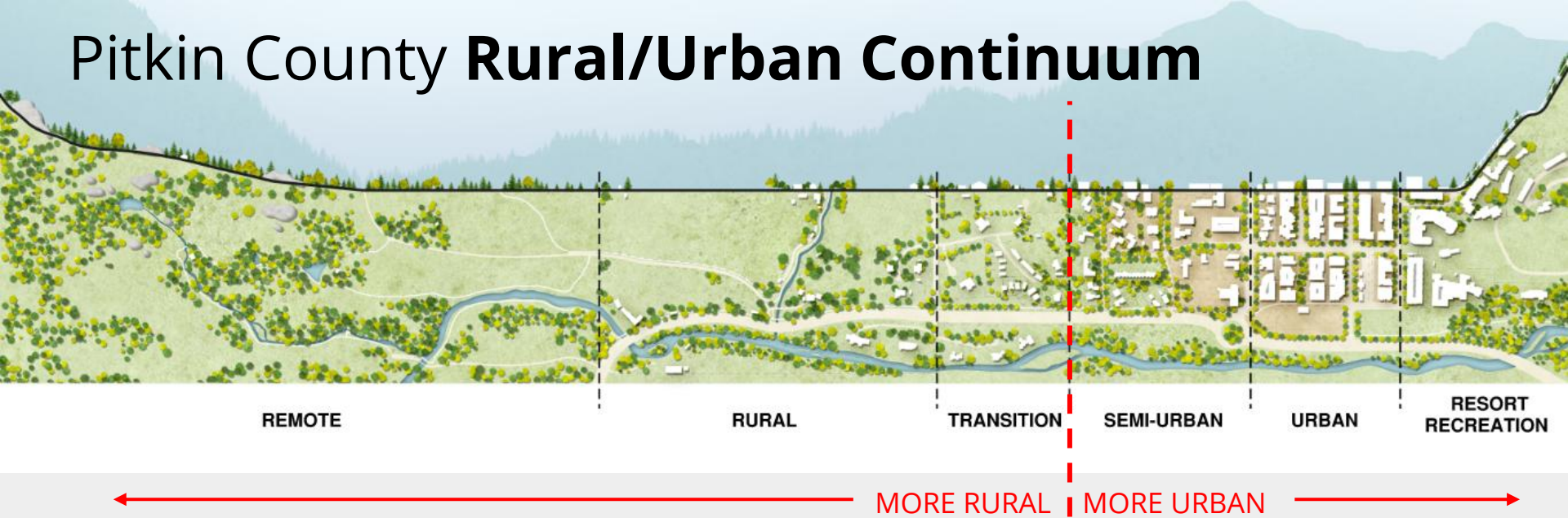
DECREASES

Pitkin County Rural/Urban Continuum



- Community infrastructure and services have been ***built to assume economic activity, jobs, and development are located in urban areas***
- We are now understanding and quantifying the ***disproportionate impacts of large-scale residential development activity and intensity occurring in rural areas***
- We recognize that this ***level of intensity in rural areas is not aligned*** with our community values or the intention of our existing land use policies.

Pitkin County Rural/Urban Continuum



- Land use policy updates intend to address ***where distinct uses take place in order to align our land use patterns with community values*** and community infrastructure and services.
- The CGAC provides guidance as to where development is appropriate and ***location criteria must consider “the right context of zoning, hazard mitigation, and sufficient infrastructure.”***



Key Findings & Workgroup Discussion

Key Findings & Considerations

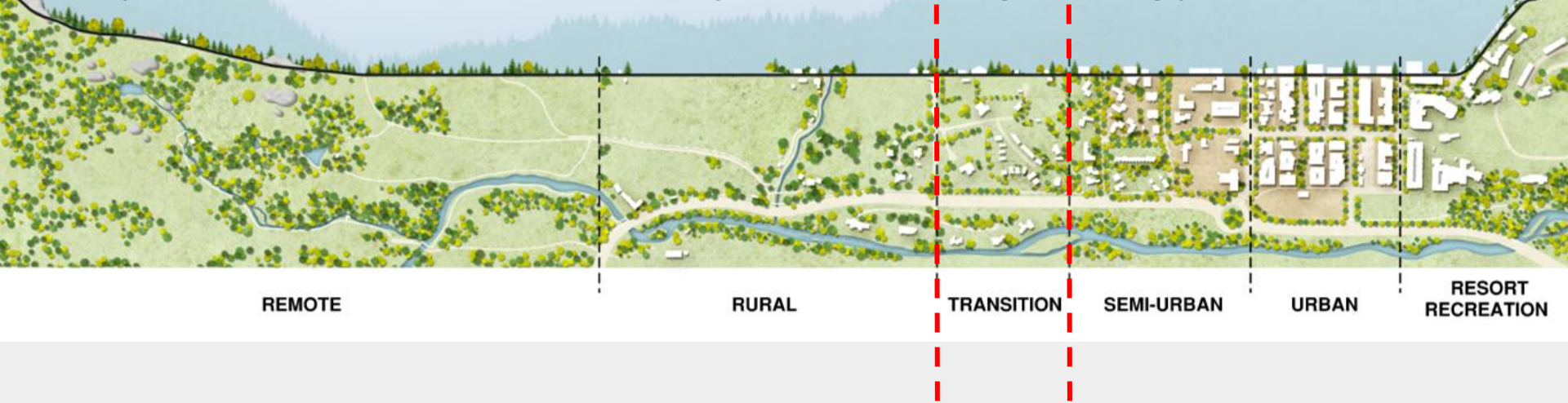
1. Align Community Values With Land Use Patterns
1. Caucus and CGAC Recommendations Are Foundation For Policy Direction
1. Prioritize Density/Development Within The UGBs
1. Proximity To Existing Water Service District Is Most Enabling/Limiting
2. Balance Values of Rural Preservation, Water Reliability and Growth/Intensity We Want

Development Along the Rural/Urban Continuum

What questions do you have about water availability:

- *As an enabling factor for development?*
- *As a limiting factor for sprawl?*
- *As a proxy for other limiting factors?*
(transportation, electric grid, hazard mitigation, emergency services, etc.)

Aligning Community Values and Land Use Pathways: *What questions do you have about water availability as an enabling/limiting factor?*



REMOTE

RURAL

TRANSITION

SEMI-URBAN

URBAN

RESORT RECREATION

Limiting

- *Limited or absent water infrastructure*
- *Limited access to transportation*
- *High presence of hazards and wildlife habitat*

Enabling

- *Access to infrastructure (existing water providers)*
- *Proximity to transportation/transit*
- *Avoids hazard areas and wildlife habitat*

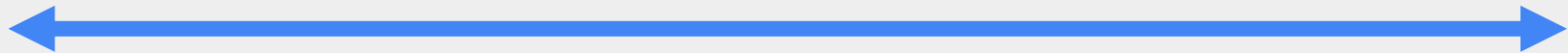
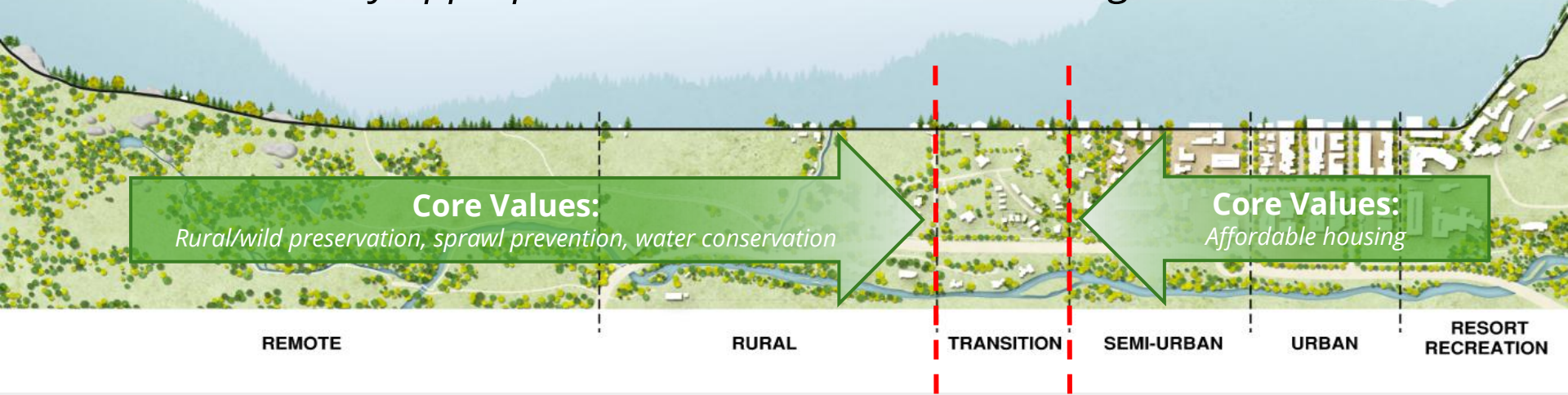
Development Along the Rural/Urban Continuum

Based on intensity studies, Caucus and CGAC priorities, where on the Rural/Urban Continuum is intensity appropriate?

- *How should we manage intensity (e.g., redistribute, relocate, refocus, reduce)?*
- *How can we use our Land Use tools to manage & mitigate intensity (e.g., density, Caretaker/Employee Dwelling Units, TDRs, etc.)?*

Aligning Community Values and Land Use:

Where is intensity appropriate and how should we manage it?



Limiting

- Limited or absent water infrastructure
- Limited access to transportation
- High presence of hazards and wildlife habitat

Enabling

- Access to infrastructure (existing water providers)
- Proximity to transportation/transit
- Avoids hazard areas and wildlife habitat



Vision 2050 Comprehensive Plan: Natural & Built Environment

Comprehensive Plan Table of Contents *Overview*

- 01** **Introduction**
Vision & Values
- 02** **Existing Conditions**
Community Profile & Engagement Summary
- 03** **Natural Environment**
Goal, Measures of Success, Policies
- 04** **Built Environment**
Goal, Measures of Success, Policies
- 05** **Community & Economic Health**
Goal, Measures of Success, Policies
- 06** **Regional Approach**
Goal, Measures of Success, Policies
- 07** **Implementation Plan**
Priority Actions: 5-10-20 year
- 08** **Appendix**
Figures, Charts, Data

Draft Policy *Regulate Development to Protect Groundwater*

PLAN ELEMENT	POLICY AREA	DRAFT - POLICY STATEMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
Natural Environment	<i>Water Quality/Quantity</i>	<p>Regulate Development to Protect Groundwater: <i>Develop and deploy increased groundwater adequacy requirements for new development and redevelopment to ensure a renewable and sustainable physical water supply.</i></p>	<p><i>Land Use Code Amendments</i></p> <p><i>(Well pump tests, well meters, groundwater zoning overlay)</i></p>	<p>Bold Climate Action, Rural Preservation</p> <p><i>Success Measure: Ensure the quality, quantity, and dependability of water resources are protected and conserved, including minimum streamflows, surface and groundwater.</i></p>

Draft Policy *Affordable Housing Strategies*

PLAN ELEMENT	POLICY AREA	DRAFT - POLICY STATEMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
Built Environment	<i>Land Use - Land Use Patterns</i>	Intensity Reduction in Rural Areas <i>Facilitate rural preservation and a reduction in traffic and greenhouse gas emissions by implementing land use regulations to reduce the development intensity and activity of uses as distance from urban areas, infrastructure and services increases.</i>	<i>Land Use Code Amendments</i>	Rural Preservation Success Measure: <i>Accommodate development in a way that supports community quality of life, economic sustainability, transportation and climate action goals.</i>

Expanding the CGAC Outcomes Table

Land Use/Building Code Tools

Model Scenario Components	Intensity	Water	Quality of Life Outcomes (Goals & Values)					
	Economic, Climate, Transportation	Availability & Reliability	Climate		Balanced Economy		Community Character	
			Reduction of GHG emissions by 90% by 2050	Residential net zero by 2030	Workforce/housing imbalance	Pacing of development	Rural/wild preservation	Rural traffic & highway congestion
Floor Area Ratio			✓ ✓		✓		✓	✓
Square Footage Cap (8,000 - 10,000)			✓ ✓		✓		✓	✓
Tiering System			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Performance Standards			✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓				
Development Standards			✓ ✓	✓ ✓			✓	
GMQS			✓		✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓
Square Footage Quota System			✓ ✓			✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
TDRs			✓			✓	✓ ✓	✓
Expanded TDR Concept			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zoning Overlay/Rural Area			✓		✓	✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Administrative Policies			✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓	✓
Affordable Housing Solutions			✓	✓	✓ ✓	✓	✓	✓ ✓
Mitigation/Impact Fees			✓	✓	✓			✓
Redevelopment			✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓	✓	✓ ✓



What's Next

- July 22 P&Z/Workgroup
 - Summer Comprehensive Plan Outreach Activities
-

Anticipated Project Schedule

- **June:**
 - 6/17 P&Z work session
- **July:**
 - 7/22 Workgroup/P&Z - presentation of draft Comprehensive Plan
 - Kickoff for public engagement
- **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
- **Fall/Winter**
 - Comprehensive Plan Adoption Process with P&Z, followed by BOCC

Thank You!

