Park County Strategic Master Plan 2025

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Vision Statement

Park County is committed to our community embracing responsible growth, protecting open spaces, natural vistas, and critical wildlife corridors, while preserving its rural quality of life, resiliency, and economic sustainability, ensuring that our resources and heritage are preserved for future generations.

Chapter 1- Introduction

The Strategic Master Plan is a community-led document, shaped by the community's vision and priorities for the county's future. It is a roadmap to address the needs and challenges that the county is facing to better prepare it for the future, while guiding land-use decisions and development. This plan is presently aligned with county boards, department plans and regional plans, but as laws change the plan will need to be updated. This advisory document does not create or change regulations but provides direction for county priorities and informs potential updates to Land Use Regulations as part of strategic planning.

Park County, Colorado, spans 2,211 square miles of high-altitude grasslands and dramatic mountain ranges, with elevations ranging from 7,000 to over 14,000 feet making high-altitude living a reality for every resident. At its heart lies South Park, an expansive mountain basin encircled by towering peaks. For centuries, this land was home to the Indigenous Ute peoples before attracting trappers, ranchers, and miners. Today, Park County is home to multigenerational ranchers, retirees, and families who seek a quiet, rural lifestyle. The county's unspoiled terrain supports abundant wildlife, with critical corridors for elk, deer, moose, and antelope. Scenic mountain passes offer sweeping views, trails, and access to stunning valleys. The headwaters of the South Platte River are located in Park County.

Park County has two incorporated towns, Alma and Fairplay, with Fairplay serving as the county seat, and several unincorporated communities: Como, Jefferson, Guffey, Hartsel, Lake George, Shawnee, Grant and Bailey. Since the 2016 plan, the conditions in Park County have shifted considerably. Park County's natural beauty and isolation are both assets and challenges. Residents, from ranchers to newcomers, are dedicated to protecting wildlife corridors and preserving the county's natural rural character. As the population grows, balancing these values with the need for housing, infrastructure, and economic development is critical. Thoughtful planning can ensure growth benefits the entire community while preserving its unique character.

1.1 Purpose

The Strategic Master Plan is guided and informed by the goals and priorities established in plans adopted by county boards and commissions, state, federal and local partner organizations, and other collaborative efforts of previous and ongoing planning work. The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing, disseminating, and adopting this advisory document and ensuring it evolves with the county's needs (CRS 30-28-106). By incorporating state statute requirements, it addresses goals and strategies for critical areas including recreation, tourism, transportation, land use, economic development, affordable housing, environmental protection, parks and open space, natural and cultural resources, hazards, capital improvements, water conservation, governance, sustainability, energy, and design. It is an advisory document that informs land use code and regulatory updates to align with the goals of the Strategic Master Plan. The Strategic Master Plan establishes clear objectives based on community input and serves as a framework for governance, updating land use regulations, resource allocation, planning and promotes policies that protect health, safety, and welfare. This comprehensive framework guides decision-making, preserves wild areas and prepares Park County for future challenges. By clarifying current issues, defining community goals, and outlining pathways to achieve them, the plan serves as a living document that remains adaptable as conditions change.

At the time this Strategic Master Plan was drafted and adopted, the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) had not developed official guidance for the Strategic Growth element described in C.R.S. Section 30-28-106(3)(a.5)(III). Thus, the elements of a strategic growth strategy may not be articulated in the way later suggested by DOLA. However, the Planning Commission has adopted goals and strategies that are consistent with "Strategic Growth" as required. The Planning Commission has intentionally avoided redundancy in the Strategic Master Plan to make it more public- and user-friendly. Rather than include an element labelled "Strategic Growth," the Planning Commission has interspersed strategies for strategic growth throughout the Strategic Master Plan. Themes of strategic growth like development around Rural Centers, clustered development, centralized and shared water and wastewater infrastructure, consolidation of undevelopable lots, building workforce, affordable and senior housing around existing infrastructure and near public transportation, and financial sustainability are specifically included in the following Goals:

- **G1 – Improve Roads and Transportation Connectivity**
- **G2 – Expand Housing Access & Affordability**
- **G5 – Water/Wastewater: Conservation and Preservation**
- **G7 – Protect Natural Landscapes**

To capture localized input, Park County was divided into distinct communities. A structured outreach strategy was developed to encourage participation from as many residents as possible. A three-phase outreach strategy ensured broad input. The first phase focused on informal discussions, surveys, and interviews to shape an understanding of community priorities. An extensive online survey was crafted and distributed. The online survey received 826 responses, representing 4.5% of the county's population. Phase two focused on gathering community feedback through workshops and public discussions. The final phase involved the planning commission and integrating the community input into a final draft. The planning commission revised the document in several work sessions. This draft was presented to the community, providing residents with the opportunity to review the draft and provide feedback. The planning commission conducted public hearings to receive public comments before adopting. The document was adopted on April 17, 2025 by Resolution 2025-04-01 and then referred to the Board of County Commissioners.

1.2 County-Wide Survey

Demographically, the 826 survey results mirrored Park County's aging population profile, with most participants aged 65 or older. Employment varied among respondents: 39.61% worked full-time, 32.08% were retired, and 15.92% were self-employed. Community engagement was strong, with residents actively participating in private gatherings, local dining, and events, and over 80% of respondents reported feeling a sense of safety. Homeownership was prevalent, with 34.2% owning their primary residence and 9.6% owning a second home. While 71% of homeowners found housing affordable, 60% of renters did not, and affordable housing emerged as a recurring concern in workshops, underscoring the need for more balanced options. Employment data showed that the largest group worked full-time, comprising 39.61% of respondents, with many of these individuals employed in government, education, or construction. Retirees formed a substantial 32.08% of respondents, with retirement income as a key source of livelihood. Additionally, 15.92% were self-employed, a notable segment that reflects Park County's entrepreneurial side. In terms of commuting,

31.96% of respondents indicated that they did not commute, while significant numbers work from home (18.35%).

Aging in place is an important focus, where a significant portion of the population over 65 (currently representing 19% of residents) will require greater service levels, including transportation and supportive housing, within the next decade. When asked about future living expectations, 49.82% indicated they would try to stay in Park County as long as possible, living independently. Meanwhile, 26.73% anticipated moving closer to urban centers, healthcare facilities, or family as their needs change. Preferences for aging in place varied, with 7.17% interested in assisted living services, 4.62% consider building an additional housing unit for support, and smaller percentages looking to relocate within Park County to areas with accessible services or to downsize into manageable homes. Only 3.52% planned to rely on local neighbors and county services, indicating that while there is a strong desire to remain in the community, additional support options will be essential to address the changing needs of Park County's older residents.

The survey also revealed priorities for community improvement. Roadway safety topped the list, with 70.84% identifying it as a key concern, followed by affordable groceries (55.16%) and healthcare services (53.71%). Other important areas included law enforcement (40.95%), economic opportunities (38.88%), recreational facilities (33.05%), environmental sustainability (30.50%), and education (27.70%). Services for seniors, public transportation, and community water/sewer systems were also noted as areas in need of attention, reflecting residents' desire for broader support services.

Family structure in households varied, with the largest group being couples without children, comprising 47.9% of respondents. This was followed by those living alone, who made up 13.9% of respondents. Families with children represented a smaller portion, only 1.6% of survey participants. Homeownership emerged as a dominant trend, with 34.2% of respondents owning their homes, while renting was notably rare, reported by just 0.9%. Additionally, 9.6% reported owning a second home in Park County. Perceptions of housing affordability revealed distinct divides: 71% of homeowners felt that housing in the area was affordable, while 60% of renters disagreed. Interestingly, second-home owners had the highest affordability satisfaction, with 81% finding Park County extremely affordable. Affordable housing surfaced repeatedly as a significant issue during workshops, indicating a broader community concern. This insight points to a need for balanced housing solutions that accommodate a range of affordability levels. Despite many people wanting no oversight for building codes and zoning, overwhelmingly insurance emerged as another pressing issue. The majority encountered difficulties in obtaining insurance.

Building community connections, 55.53% of respondents relied on friends or in-home private gatherings. Local restaurants, bars, or coffee shops also served as key community hubs, drawing 52.25% of respondents, followed closely by community events, which attracted 36.94%. Family gatherings were also important for 35.84% of participants, and school, church, or nonprofit groups engaged nearly 20%. Notably, 7.53% expressed a preference for solitude, indicating a segment of the population that values independence and privacy. Most respondents reported feeling safe in their community, with 49.70% feeling very safe and 31.35% feeling somewhat safe. Only a small proportion felt neutral (9.11%) or somewhat unsafe (4.62%), and very few reported feeling unsafe (1.94%). In other demographic insights, females made up a slightly larger share of respondents at 52.25%, compared to

39.25% male representation. 14% of respondents were veterans, and 13.37% reported having a disability, signaling a need for consideration of accessibility and support services within the community.

Park County residents demonstrate a strong connection to preserving the county's natural character, with a focus on habitat protection, scenic views, and maintaining open range. Although only a portion of residents actively engage in agriculture, 41.12% have no connection to agriculture, 25.55% grow food, and 23.11% hunt or fish with a widespread interest in safeguarding the natural environment. The majority prioritize wildlife corridors, advocacy for measures like conservation easements, wildlife overpasses, and restrictions on development in high-priority habitats. Additionally, residents value rural mountain character and community isolation, favor locally owned businesses over chains, and support efforts to mitigate light pollution and protect dark skies, recognizing these as assets for both residents and ecotourism.

Park County residents have diverse views on land use rights in residential zones. A significant portion (31.71%) supports the right to add a secondary housing unit, like a guest house, on residential property. However, 19.68% of respondents favor this only if it's not used for short-term rentals, while 13.97% prefer residential zones remain single-family only. Another 13.12% think such additions should be approved on a case-by-case basis through public hearings, and 9.6% believe only larger properties (5+ acres) should permit additional units. For home-based businesses, many residents (50%) believe they should operate freely if noise is controlled, with 38.2% supporting businesses with 2-3 employees on-site. Nearly one-third (33.33%) feel expanding businesses should relocate to commercial spaces, though smaller-scale operations and limited customer visits (3-5 per day) are generally acceptable. Regarding specific uses in residential zones, residents show strong support for activities like raising chickens (53.83%) and establishing daycare services (52.73%). Conversely, only 9.84% want to restrict residential zones exclusively to housing. Activities seen as disruptive, like music venues or large commercial ventures, face strong opposition, with many preferring residential areas to remain quiet, low-impact spaces focused on resident welfare.

Park County residents prioritize creating a welcoming environment for tourism and economic development by focusing on natural and cultural preservation and enhancing visitor experiences. Key priorities include expanding and linking hiking and biking trails, improving signage, and developing both summer and winter activities to encourage year-round visits. Many residents see potential in promoting local heritage through events, festivals, and markets for local food producers, as well as supporting the arts and small businesses to diversify the economy. Beautifying town centers and enhancing public spaces are also popular ideas to make Park County's communities more attractive to visitors, with hopes that more travelers will stop to explore rather than just pass through. Additionally, there is interest in establishing Park County as an international dark skies community to attract stargazing and nature-focused tourism.

In terms of infrastructure, residents emphasize the need for road improvements, clean water access, and travel safety, especially in frequently visited areas. Suggestions for more restaurants, lodging options, affordable employee housing, and family-friendly activities, such as recreation centers and youth programs. Many believe that a balanced approach can help Park County's economy flourish while preserving its natural beauty and unique character.

An extremely surprising result was the priority placed on road maintenance by respondents, despite the area's traditional tax-averse stance. In response to the county's funding limitations, residents were asked about potential funding solutions for road improvements. Some of the most supported options included a hospitality tax (43.5%), a water tax on resources removed from the county (36.94%), and a voter-approved 1% tax increase dedicated to roads (29.77%). Interestingly, 27.34% of respondents expressed a desire for improved roads but expected the funding to come from external sources such as state or federal grants, rather than local taxes or fees. Other suggestions, such as a local sales tax, De-Brucing (to allow greater funding flexibility for roads and emergency services), and bonds, were also considered, although with less consensus. Lower support was shown for options like turning some county roads over to HOAs for private maintenance (12.76%) and toll roads (8.87%). When asked about additional services they would support through slight increases in property or sales tax, road maintenance emerged as a top priority with 63.9% of respondents in favor. This community feedback is a strong indicator that road maintenance, despite the typical tax opposition, is an urgent concern for residents who recognize its importance in supporting safe and reliable infrastructure within Park County.

1.3 Plans Referenced
A. Advisory Board on the Environment (ABE)
B. Land and Water Trust Fund
C. South Park National Heritage Management Plan
D. Park County Broadband Initiative Decommissioned in 2024
E. Tourism Board: Formed in 2024 to oversee the new Short-term rental tax

County Department Plans
A. Park County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020 Update
B. Park County Community Health Assessment 2023
C. Park County Public Works
D. Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2009

Regional Plans
A. CDOT Statewide Transportation Plan 2045
B. Colorado Water Plan 2023
C. Outside 285 - 2021 Master plan
D. Groundwater Quality Compilation Study

1.4 Demographics
This summary overview of demographic and economic trends gives a baseline for where Park County finds itself at the time of this 2025 Strategic Master Plan Update. The most recent American Community Survey data available at the time dates to 2022 for most topics, and where possible, is compared with the 2013 data, which was used in the demographic analyses in the 2016 Strategic Plan.

The demographic data in this section is found in the 2024 Census Bureau information and Park County Census Profile.

1.4.1 Demographic Trends

Park County, Colorado, is a rural community with a population of 18,316 (2024). As evidenced by the graph below, it has seen steady growth, but this growth has been modest compared to other areas of the state.

Park County: Historic Population 1870-2020
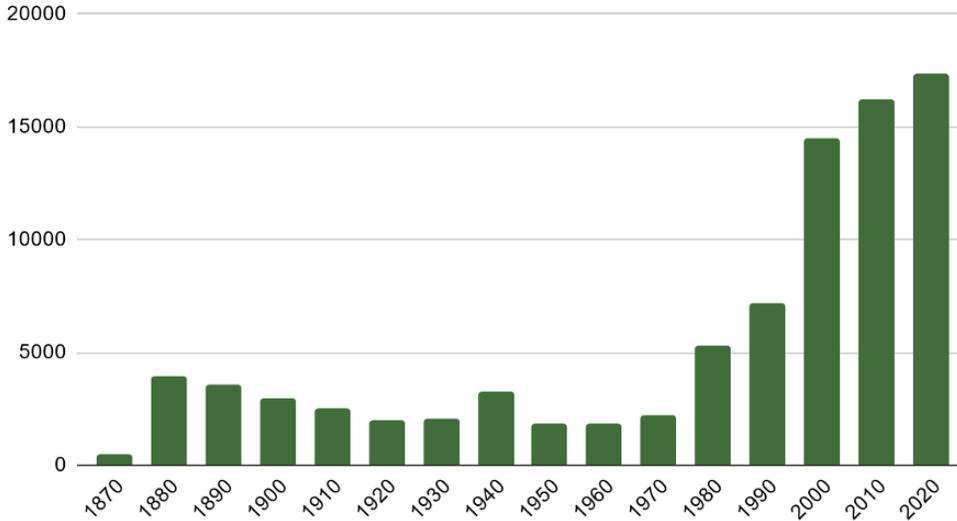
In 2022, Park County 's population had the following characteristics:

Age
- Median Age: 51.3 years (2022)
- Gender Distribution: 46.6% Female and 53.4% Male
- Household Size: Average of 2.27 people per household
- Under 5 years: 3.4%
- Under 18 years: 14.9%
- Between 18-64 years: 63.2%
- 65 years and over: 22.0%

Race and Ethnicity
- White: 91.7%
- Black or African American: 0.5%
- American Indian and Alaska Native: 0.9%
- Asian: 0.6%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 0%
- Two or More Races: 5.0%
- Hispanic or Latino: 6.7%
- White (non-Hispanic): 87.8%

Population Characteristics
- Veterans (pop. over 18): 1,575 (10.5%)

- Foreign-Born Persons (2018-2022): 1.7%
- Disability (under 65): 6.9%
- Uninsured (health insurance) 7%
- Households (2018-2022): 7,688
- Persons per household: 2.27
- Household stability: 90.4% of residents lived in the same home as the previous year.
- Non-English Language Spoken at Home: 3.1%

Educational Attainment
- Less than high school graduate – 2.7%
- High school graduate (including equivalency) - 20.1%
- Some college or associate's degree – 38.4%
- Bachelor's degree - 26.0%
- Graduate or professional degree -12.8%

1.4.2 Housing Trends
The county has a total of 14,740 housing units. The median value of owner-occupied homes is $458,600, and the median gross rent is $1,788. Stability in housing is notable, with 90.4% of residents living in the same house as the previous year.

1.4.3 Retirement and the Aging Population
Across the county the population increased for people over 65 from 7.5% in 2000 to 22.8% in 2023. As nearby population centers (Denver/ Colorado Springs and Summit County) become more and more expensive, Park County's population will grow, and as people see the County as a place to retire, the elderly population is expanding. Planning for the interests and needs of the County's aging population are changing, with age making solitary rural living more difficult and highlighting the need for improved collective community infrastructure.

1.4.4 Workforce
Employment Sectors
Park County's major employment sectors are in education, health, and social assistance, followed by professional, scientific and management jobs and construction. The largest employer in the county is the Park County Government. Since 2013, there has been a shift toward a greater portion of jobs in management. This trend has been seen in all surrounding counties, with the portion of jobs in sales and office occupations declining most significantly. The largest 2022 non-government employer in Park County included educational, health and social assistance services at approx. 14% of jobs with professional and technical services being approximately 13% of jobs.

Employment and Businesses
Labor & Employment data in 2022 indicates that 58.8% of Park County residents were employed. The median travel time to work is 38.2 minutes. The county labor force grew from 13,602 in 2013 to 15,294 in 2022.

Median Household Income and Education
Park County saw median household incomes increase by 38% between 2013 and 2022, which was average compared to surrounding counties. Park County exhibits high educational attainment. 97.6% of adults hold at least a high school diploma, 35.5% of adults hold a bachelor's degree or higher, the median household income is $85,019, and the per capita income is $48,221. The poverty rate is relatively low at 8.2%.

Age/Gender Distribution and Workforce
Compared to the state of Colorado, generally, Park County has an age distribution that skews strongly toward a more elderly population. The median age in 2022 is 50.2 years.

Park County has a greater portion of its workforce in the 55-64 age range than in the 25-34 age range; at the state level, the opposite is true.

Park County's workforce grew, however the proportion of the population participating in the workforce fell from 70% to 58% between 2013 and 2022, losing seven percentage points since 2017. Compared to nearby and similar counties, Park County experienced the greatest decline in the percentage of its population in the workforce; a decline of over 11%.

When comparing the percentage of men and women in and out of the workforce in Park County in each age range, we find that in almost every age range people of both genders participate in the workforce at a slightly higher rate than in the state. The exception is that males over 65 in Park County are slightly less likely to participate in the workforce, and there is no difference among females age 55-64.

The portion of people who are either under 18 or over 65 approximates the portion of the people who are outside of the workforce. When there is a large percentage of the population out of the workforce, it can be difficult to allocate labor and funding to provide adequate services.

Working from Home and Commuting
Park County is largely a commuter community, with 84% of residents in the workforce working outside the County, and with 53% commuting outside the county for work (compared with 67% in 2013), often to higher-wage areas like Denver or Summit County. This is reflected in an underrepresentation of local commercial, retail and business activities. About 21% of the workforce commutes into Park County from other areas. The portion of the workforce working remotely has increased from 11% in 2013 to 20% in 2022. Households with a computer: 96.7%. Households with broadband Internet: 89.3%.

For those that don't commute and who work at home from 2013 to 2022, the rate has risen from 11% to 20%. Likely in response to increased working hours from home, the mean travel time to work has also dropped across Park County to 38.2 minutes.

Job Change and Net Migration - Park County
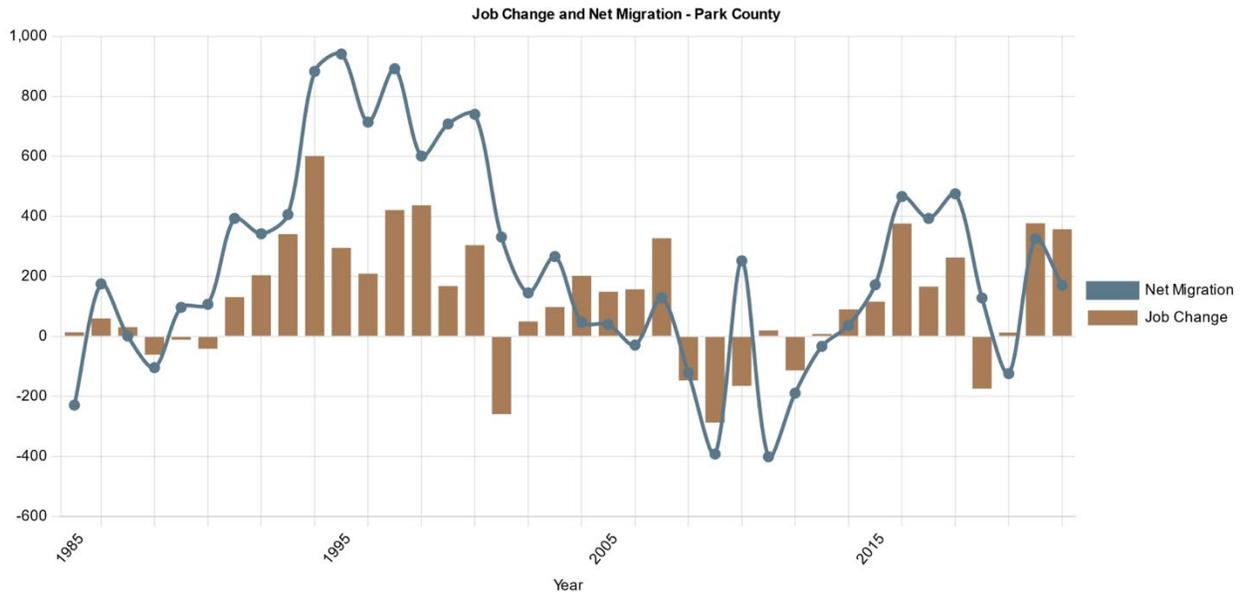
US Bureau of Economic Analysis, Migration Data and Visualization by Colorado State Demography Office. Print date: April 29, 2024

Migration into Park County and Job Growth

Park County has generally experienced job growth rates that track those within Colorado. Compared with the state of Colorado, net in-migration tended to outpace job growth. Park County has an imbalance in the number of people who commute into the County or who live and work in the County, and those who commute out of the County for work.

2021-Census Bureau: On The Map	Size of Workforce	# of Jobs in County Area	Net Outflow	% of workforce working outside Area	% of workforce living and working in area
Park County	6577	2464	-4,113	84%	16%
Greater Bailey	4185	1122	-3,063	89.2%	10.8%
Rural Alma/Fairplay	921	886	-35	77.1%	22.9%
Rural North	670	122	-548	92.7%	7.3%
Rural South	801	334	-467	91.6%	8.4%

1.4.5 Poverty & Assistance

The percentage of residents receiving income from Social Security and retirement income has risen by 6.9% and 10.5%, respectively, since 2013, while the percentage of households with earnings fell by 8.6%. Meanwhile, the percentage of households receiving SNAP or food stamp benefits has declined and is only slightly higher than the percentage of people in poverty, suggesting that most eligible residents access these benefits.

2022 Poverty Rate in Park County	
All families	2.8%
Families with children under 18	6.0%
Married Couples	1.9%
Married Couples with children under 18	4.0%
Female household with no spouse	16.20%
Female household with no spouse with children under 18 years	29.8%
All people	6.80%
• Under 5 years	6.0%
• 5 to 17 years	10.9%
• 18 to 64 years	6.8%
• 65 years and over	4.8%

Childcare services and targeted assistance programs are critical to improving outcomes for these families. Expanding access to childcare can help create opportunities and reduce poverty for single-parent households, which remain particularly vulnerable.

Poverty Characteristics by County Area							
S0802 - 2022	Park County	NW Bailey	Pine Junction/Crow Hill	East, Southeast Bailey	Rural Alma/ Fairplay	Rural North	Rural South
Median earnings (dollars)	$54,755	$67,539	$54,874	$59,273	$44,663	$55,000	$59,737
Below 100 % of the poverty level	3.00%	0.00%	1.90%	0.70%	8.00%	1.20%	4.90%
100 to 149 % of the poverty level	3.10%	0.00%	3.30%	1.60%	4.90%	3.60%	3.90%
At or above 150 % of the poverty level	93.90%	100.00%	94.80%	97.60%	87.10%	95.20%	91.20%

Chapter 2 - Countywide Goals and Strategies

The Strategic Master Plan provides guidance and strategies for the role of the incorporated towns and unincorporated communities (Rural Centers) in providing essential services, housing, and social gathering spaces that allow residents to avoid traveling for those activities. By encouraging growth and diversification of activities in these centers, the character of the outlying areas can be maintained. It will encourage the continuation of historical settlement patterns that meet local needs while protecting the surrounding natural landscapes. The goals and strategies emerged directly from community surveys, public meetings, and resident feedback and not prioritized. These goals have shaped the Strategic Master Plan. Goals (G) and Strategies (S)

G1: Improve Roads and Transportation Connectivity

Existing Road Conditions and Issues

Park County's transportation network includes 1600 miles of county-maintained roads, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) roads, and privately owned roads. US 285, US 24, and CO 9 are managed by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and serve as critical corridors for local commuters, emergency services, and economic activity. Significant seasonal traffic, severe congestion, safety hazards, and increased roadway wear results in strain on infrastructure, raises maintenance costs and impacts county resources. Public Works has made significant strides in addressing these concerns by securing grants and increased advocacy on key transportation boards and ensuring Park County's needs are considered in broader infrastructure planning efforts. The 2024 Park County Community Survey reaffirmed that roads are currently the number one priority residents. Respondents stated that they were willing to pay for road improvements; a shift from previous years. This growing demand for action on roads presents an opportunity for the county to pursue funding mechanisms that align with community priorities while ensuring financial feasibility.

One of the biggest challenges stems from over platting, where land was subdivided decades ago without consideration for long-term infrastructure needs. This resulted in a large grid of roads that far exceeds the number of developed structures, making maintenance unsustainable. Many of these roads serve rural subdivisions and isolated properties, yet the county lacks the funding to maintain them at the level residents expect. Rural Centers experience congestion, dangerous intersections, and a lack of pedestrian infrastructure, highlighting the need for long-term planning and prioritization. Most of Park County's roads are unpaved, with high traffic, requiring continuous maintenance. Paved roads are also in poor condition, with failing Pavement Condition Index (PCI) scores indicating the need for resurfacing and structural upgrades.

The survey results indicate strong public support for road investment, providing an opportunity to align funding mechanisms with community priorities. By continuing to build upon recent successes, secure diversified funding, and prioritize key infrastructure projects, Park County can ensure a safer, more connected, and financially sustainable transportation network for both residents and visitors.

S1.1 Develop Safe, and Well-Maintained Road Network
A. Create a data-driven long-range plan for prioritizing road maintenance and improvements based on traffic volumes, surface types, level of buildout and viability of subdivisions, access to communities and public facilities, routes that serve as alternatives to highways (cutoff roads, highway closure detours) and dangerous intersections and other hazards.
B. Implement a road depreciation and traffic analysis model (PCI) to forecast maintenance needs.
C. Encourage private road maintenance agreements where county maintenance and plowing is not feasible.
D. Establish an annual road maintenance schedule and communicate it each year to improve transparency and expectations.
E. Conditional or Temporary Use Permits for projects that significantly increase traffic should include impact fees to contribute to road maintenance costs.
F. Leverage Land Use Planning to Support Transportation Goals.

S1.2 Reduce Vehicle vs. Wildlife Collisions
Reduce vehicle-wildlife collisions through targeted mitigation strategies with CDOT/CPW. Identify and prioritize key areas for crossings using GIS-based mapping. Secure state and federal wildlife mitigation funding, including grants from the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP).

S1.3 Advocate for State Highway Improvements
A. Continued collaboration with CDOT to improve Highways 285, 9, and 24, advocating for shoulder widening and passing lanes, intersection redesigns and traffic signal improvements, safety corridor enhancements, including pedestrian crossings and sidewalks, proper lighting and expanded winter maintenance coordination.
B. Implement traffic-calming measures in high-risk areas, including speed reduction zones, improved signage, and enhanced law enforcement presence.
C. Explore alternative highway routes and new bypass roads to alleviate congestion and improve emergency response times.
D. Maintain recreation destination roads and historic/scenic driving tour routes.

S1.4 Strengthen Local Road and Bridge Design Standards
A. Public Works should update Road and Bridge Design Guidelines to ensure that road cuts and buried lines within the ROW are not vulnerable to erosion and do not negatively impact quality of roads and add standards for making repairs to unpaved roads. Prioritize maintenance that serves the highest number of residents and critical services.
B. Adopt construction and maintenance techniques that improve the durability and environmental sustainability of roads and explore public-private partnerships for less-traveled routes with stipulations for ongoing maintenance.
C. Invest in continued education and training for the Road and Bridge Department.

S1.5 Improve Community Engagement
Involve residents, businesses, and stakeholders in road maintenance and investment decisions.
A. Strengthening partnerships with CDOT and other agencies
B. Educate residents about snow plow schedules and set realistic expectations for winter storm response times.

C. Educate residents about funding mechanisms for public and privately-owned subdivision road maintenance.

S1.6 Protect the County from Future Road and Long-Term Maintenance Liabilities
Require new subdivisions to ensure self-sustaining financial responsibility for new subdivision roads. Encourage neighborhoods to form Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) or Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) for road improvements. A LID is a government-administered financing tool created to fund specific infrastructure improvements.

S1.7 Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure
Expand Non-Motorized Travel Options in Key Communities. Develop sidewalks, crosswalks, and multi-use pathways. Integrate pedestrian and bike-friendly designs into future road and highway projects, including safe shoulders. Establish Safe Routes to Schools programs to provide children with safe walking and biking paths in areas where it is feasible.

S1.8 Increase Public Transportation Options
Expand Transit Services with Summit Stage and Bustang Outrider services to provide more frequent routes to Summit, Jefferson, Teller, Chaffee and Fremont Counties. Establish local shuttle services connecting rural communities to schools, healthcare facilities, and business districts and encourage transit companies. Develop park-and-ride facilities, encourage carpooling.

S1.9 Establish Diverse and Sustainable Funding for Roads
Road and bridge maintenance in Park County requires diversified funding strategies that are beyond traditional tax-based revenue sources and TABOR constraints. This strategy includes leveraging local tax initiatives, impact fees, private-sector partnerships, and user-based revenue models to create a stable, long-term funding structure for road maintenance and improvements.

Funding Possibilities for Roads
   A. County Mill Levy Increases
   B. Hospitality and Tourism Taxes
   C. Development Impact Fees
   D. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)
   E. Debrucing Under TABOR
   F. Recreational Access Fees
   G. Toll Roads for High-Traffic Corridors
   H. Special Assessments (Maintenance Fees on Benefiting Properties)
   I. Vehicle Registration Surcharges
   J. PILT Funds
   K. South Park Heritage Funds

G2: Expand Housing Access & Affordability

The county is experiencing pressures in the housing market similar to the state and country. Key issues include increase in housing cost and a housing shortage in surrounding mountain counties. Demographic shifts and workforce needs affect the regional labor force, business development, and talent attraction. Housing influences daily life, shaping connections to community, work, family, and nature. It also determines commute lengths for both workers and schoolchildren. Infrastructure constraints still limit development in more rural areas, particularly in the Hartsel area, where many of the county's 20,000 vacant lots remain undeveloped. The median value of owner-occupied homes is $458,600 and the median gross rent is $1,788. Addressing affordability and attainability with the need to expand rental and transitional housing, while targeting infrastructure investments in feasible areas remain key priorities for Park County's future housing strategy.

Park County AMI DOLA income/affordability guidelines by Area Median Income (AMI) and household size (2022) Maximum allowable Household Income for Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance Program								
AMI	1 person	2 people	3 people	4 people	5 people	6 people	7 people	8 people
30%	$24,650	$28,150	$31,650	$35,150	$38,000	$40,800	$43,600	$46,630
50%	$41,050	$46,900	$52,750	$58,600	$63,300	$68,000	$72,700	$77,400
80%	$62,600	$71,550	$80,500	$89,400	$96,600	$103,750	$110,900	$118,050

Affordability by tenancy					
With Mortgage		Without Mortgage		Paying Rent	
Number of units	4,492		2,358		632
		Less than 10.0 percent	47.50%		
		10.0 to 14.9 percent	22.40%	Less than 15.0 percent	12.30%
Less than 20.0 percent	39.90%	15.0 to 19.9 percent	6.50%	15.0 to 19.9 percent	8.20%

20.0 to 24.9 percent	14.90%	20.0 to 24.9 percent	10.30%	20.0 to 24.9 percent	16.60%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	12.70%	25.0 to 29.9 percent	6.00%	25.0 to 29.9 percent	14.10%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	11.20%	30.0 to 34.9 percent	1.60%	30.0 to 34.9 percent	7.00%
35.0 percent or more	21.30%	35.0 percent or more	5.80%	35.0 percent or more	41.80%
Percent Paying over 30%	32.50%		7.40%		48.80%
Number paying over 30%	1,458		174		308
Source: DP04					

Household Characteristics								
# Bdrms	# Houses	% of total	# People / household	# of households	% of total	Household Characteristics	# of people	% of total
0	17	0.20%	1-person household	1,640	21.30%	Householder 65 years and over	1,442	18.80%
1	420	5.50%	2-person household	4,236	55.10%	Householder living alone	1,640	29.60%
2 - 3	5,920	77.00%	3-person household	829	10.80%	Family households	5,409	70.40%
4 +	1,331	17.30%	4+ person household	983	12.80%	Nonfamily households	2,279	21.30%
Source: American Community Survey, Table DP04								

Park County
Vacant Properties

0   2.5   5 mi

Grant

Kenosha Pass

Jefferson

Shawnee

Bailey

Como

Alma

Fairplay

Tarryall

Wilkerson Pass

Hartsel

Antero Junction

Guffey
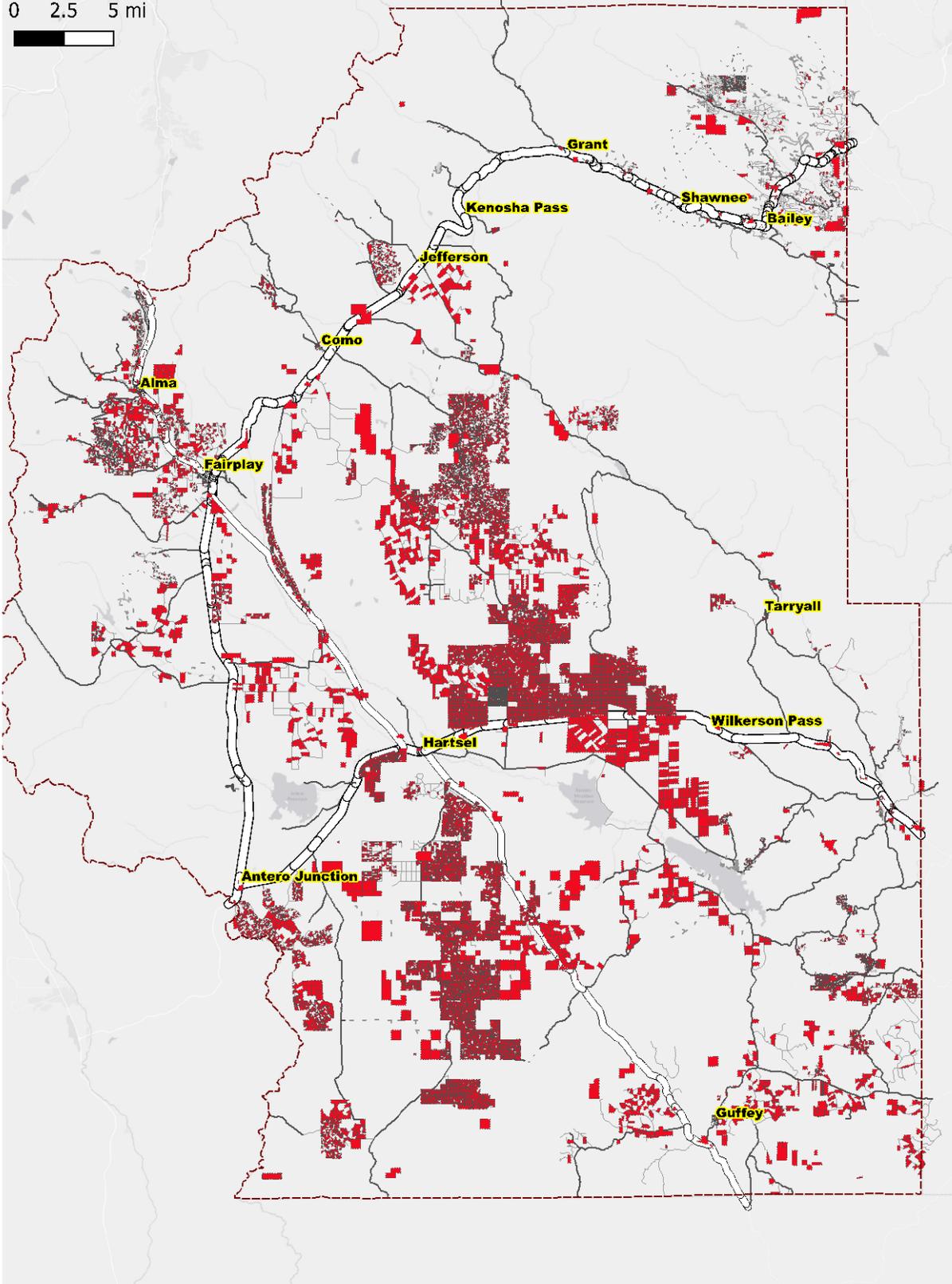
S2.1 Identify County-Owned Land for Affordable Housing
Identify and assess publicly owned parcels for potential affordable housing development, prioritizing land near existing infrastructure and services.

S2.2 Establish a Land Bank program for Future Affordable Housing
A. Affordable housing programs use land banking techniques to acquire and hold land for future development. Independent non-profit land banks are Community-driven organizations with flexibility in responding to local housing challenges, acquiring land through donations, and tax-delinquent property purchases.
B. Amend land use code to require developers to contribute to a land bank through dedication of land or fee in lieu as part of a development project.
C. Consider donating existing county owned land to the land bank.

S2.3 Transferable Development Rights (TDR) Program
Establish, implement and provide incentives for a formal countywide TDR program to protect open spaces and redirect development to infrastructure-served areas. Provide incentives to encourage participation in the program.

S2.4 Encourage adaptive reuse for affordable housing
Convert underutilized or vacant buildings into affordable housing units through redevelopment incentives and zoning adjustments.

S2.5 Create a TIF District
Workforce housing can significantly boost Park County's economy. When located in village centers, it enhances the vibrancy and attractiveness of these areas, increases the tax base, and supports local businesses by providing both a workforce and a customer base. Over time, housing investments can yield positive economic returns. A proven way to finance large upfront costs, such as underground infrastructure installation, is through Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) Districts. These districts use the increased tax revenue generated by property value growth to pay for initial investments while also creating a revenue stream for future improvements.

S2.6 Establish a Housing Fund for Infrastructure and Workforce Housing
A. Dedicate funding sources to subsidize affordable housing infrastructure costs and fees through taxes, fees, or grants. Leverage funding to support infrastructure improvements, including shared water and septic systems, particularly in areas with limited access to municipal utilities.
B. Tap fee waivers could be offered as incentives for affordable housing development.
C. Explore sales tax and impact fees sharing between adjacent counties.
D. Explore Potential Revenue Sources from Short-term rental tax, tax on luxury or second homes, document recording fees, State and federal funding sources (e.g., CDBG funds), and inclusionary zoning policy with a fee-in-lieu option.

One of the challenges in Colorado, and Park County specifically, is how to create a rural housing strategy that reduces the cost of building and enables village-oriented development by allowing for smaller lots or additional dwelling units. Water access and cost are critical factors influencing housing

development in Park County. The availability of water limits housing density, drives up development costs, and shapes land-use policies. Because water is essential but scarce, strategies for residential and commercial development must navigate a complex web of regulations and water rights.

S2.7 Incentives for Developers

Develop an expedited Development Review process and reduce permitting fees. Fast-track affordable housing projects. Streamline acquisition or repurposing of commercial properties for residential use. Encourage sub-metering in affordable housing developments, allowing residents to control their utility costs.

S2.8 Establish a Local Housing Authority

A housing authority provides consistent oversight and support for affordable housing initiatives. Collaborate with the Towns of Alma and Fairplay to establish a housing authority. Interregional collaborations can manage deed-restricted units, secure funding, and ensure long-term housing affordability. Public engagement helps to ensure community support and input on housing strategies. Regular assessments of housing needs ensure policies that remain effective and responsive to demographic and economic changes.

Affordability by Workforce Segment

Census data from 2022 (Table DP04) provides insight into the number of households within different housing cost brackets. At first glance, the data suggests there are sufficient affordable units for lower-income households, while a deficit exists at higher-income brackets. This shortage at higher income levels implies that many high-income households are occupying units that cost significantly less than 30% of their income.

Source DP04 2022	Example Occupations		7688	6863 total	
HH Income Income Bracket	1-worker households	2-worker households	# of households	Affordable Units in each income bracket*	Surplus / Deficit
< $15k	Lifeguard, ski patrol	2 part-time workers	327	486	159
$15 - 25k		1 full-time, 1 part-time worker	538	1226	688
$25 - 35k	Cashier, Food prep, Childcare provider	1 full-time, 1 part-time	616	721	105

$35 - 50k	Retail, bus driver, firefighter	Lifeguard, ski patrol, food prep	621	877	256
$50 - 75k	Teacher, medical tech, postman, police	Cleaner, cashier, substitute teacher	1076	1629	553
$75 - 100k	Engineer, architect, accountant	Retailer, Ranch hand	1128	964	-164
$100 - 150k	Manager, vet, dentist, lawyer	Welder, paramedic, electrician	1622	964	-658
$150k +	Chief Executive	Professor, therapist, architect	1760	652	-1108
*does not include numbers of units affordable to lower income brackets					

S2.9 Streamline Zoning & Permitting for Diverse Housing Types

A. Revise zoning and permitting processes to allow for increased housing diversity, making it easier to build and incentivizing accessory dwelling units (ADUs), duplexes, multi-family, transitional and rental housing.
B. Encourage flexible lot development standards to accommodate varying housing needs.
C. Clarify that ADUs must remain under the same ownership as the primary dwelling, while duplexes/triplexes can have multiple owners.

Type of Occupied Units: Park County Housing Inventory

Types of Houses	Occupied Units	%
Single Family Home	7,091	92.20%
Single Family with ADU	78	1.00%
2 apartments	43	0.60%
3 or 4 apartments	7	0.10%
5 to 9 apartments	99	1.30%
10 or more apartments	0	0.00%
Mobile home or other type of housing	370	4.80%

S2.10 Implement Inclusionary Zoning Policies

In larger developments, a portion of the sales cost of market-rate units pays for the reduced sales price and deed restrictions on the below-market-rate units. Require a percentage of units in new developments to be affordable by established definition. Ensure inclusionary zoning policies balance affordability with financial viability. Align with House Bill Inclusionary zoning ordinance (House Bill 21-1117).

S2.11 Adapt Unbuilt subdivisions for Sustainable Development

Encourage lot consolidations and land conservation that creates more viable residential development sites and patterns. Adapt land use regulations to encourage redevelopment of platted subdivision lots under consolidated ownership for better road access, conservation areas, and lower, more reasonable densities. Consider tax incentives for such consolidations.

S2.12 Encourage Housing Near Economic Centers

Prioritize workforce housing, including rentals, near commercial centers. Offer tax incentives for employer-sponsored workforce housing projects. Permit mixed-use developments within designated residential zones. Adjust zoning regulations to allow increased density near commercial centers. Expand mixed-use zoning opportunities in rural centers. Implement a workforce housing overlay zone near employment centers. Designate specific areas for workforce housing development to ensure housing availability near major job centers and reduce commute times.

Vacant and developed residential parcels within one and two-miles of village centers				
NAME	Vacant 1-mile	Residential 1-mile	Vacant 2-miles	Residential 2-miles
Fairplay	387	440	539	679
Alma	168	271	333	470
Jefferson	12	21	139	195
Antero Junction	11	9	125	118
Guffey	106	59	124	87
Hartsel	16	16	112	21
Como	99	65	102	67
Tarryall	50	46	91	91
Bailey	26	127	69	706
Lake George	42	112	49	129
Grant	6	23	13	42
Shawnee	8	59	11	117

Number of parcels by parcel size						
	<1 acres	1-5 acres	5-20 acres	20-35 acres	35-100 acres	100+ acres
40,486 parcels (including Alma and Fairplay)	12,920 31.9%	17,767 43.9%	12,260 30.3%	566 1.4%	3,190 7.9%	1,234 3.1%
39,396 parcels in unincorporated County, excluding incorporated towns, state and federal lands	7,714 19.6%	17,695 44.9%	9,022 22.9%	590 1.5%	3,182 8.1%	1,193 3%

S2.13 Land Use & Building Code Changes

Make Housing a Use by Right in some cases: Permit affordable housing in residential zones to simplify approvals (ADU's/ Duplexes etc). Allow Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) to integrate affordable housing units. Allow smaller Square Footage Units to increase housing density and affordability. Lower parking minimums for affordable housing projects to reduce costs.

S2.14 Housing for Seniors & Workforce Housing

A. Encourage new residential developments to allocate a percentage of units for seniors, including single-level homes and ADA-compliant units.
B. Provide tax incentives and fee reductions for age-friendly housing.
C. Encourage supportive housing near rural centers.
D. Establish requirements for age-friendly housing in developments.
E. Propose a special sales tax, use tax and/or a Development Impact Fee for new construction which funds would be dedicated to affordable workforce housing initiatives, including land acquisition, new home construction, and the purchase of existing homes for workforce housing.

S2.15 Develop Deed-Restricted Workforce Housing

Work with local non-profits and collaborate with the Town of Alma and the Town Of Fairplay to create programs to ensure housing remains affordable for local workers long-term. Use deed restrictions to prevent speculative price increases and rent increases and ensure units remain within the reach of low- and moderate-income households.

S2.16 Expand Public-Private Partnerships and Collaborative Development

Collaborate with developers, businesses, and nonprofits to create mixed-income housing developments and workforce housing solutions.

S2.17 Support Cooperative and Community-Oriented Housing Models

Facilitate cooperative and collaborative housing models to promote long-term affordability, efficient land use, and stronger community ties, while reducing infrastructure costs for property owners and the County. These models emphasize shared ownership, decision-making, and resource allocation to support affordability, sustainability, and social cohesion. A collaborative development strategy

allows multiple owners to transfer development rights to a single property, enabling clustered, multi-unit development rather than isolated homes. This approach reduces costs through shared infrastructure, including walls, roofs, wells, septic systems, roads, and utilities. Deeds for all involved parcels must reflect the transfer of development rights and ownership structure, which could take the form of shared wall agreements or smaller consolidated lots.

A. Encourage Cooperative Housing- (Co-ops). Support cooperative housing models where residents collectively own and manage the property through a cooperative association, fostering affordability and community cohesion. Encourage Cooperative Housing for Seniors & Veterans- Promote senior-focused cooperative housing that enables aging in place without reliance on government-funded institutions.
B. Encourage Community Land Trusts (CLTs). A non-profit owns the land, leasing it to homeowners under long-term agreements to ensure long-term affordability.
C. Allow Cohousing Communities- small housing clusters with private cottages and a shared community center for meals and social activities.
D. Encourage intergenerational Agricultural Cooperative Housing- Housing developments centered around shared farms, often integrating food production into community life.
E. Incentives for Worker-Owned Housing- Businesses or worker cooperatives provide housing for employees, ensuring workforce stability in rural areas. Fire and water districts that have their own tax structure could utilize this model to create housing for emergency workers.
F. Explore shared equity homeownership models to provide sustainable housing opportunities.
G. Cluster development is a land-use planning strategy that concentrates housing in specific areas while preserving surrounding open space, reducing infrastructure costs, and maintaining rural character.

S2.18 Incentivize Alternative Building Techniques
Promote and allow for the use of locally sourced materials and alternative techniques to reduce construction costs and support regional economies.

S2.19 Rental Assistance Program
Establish a locally funded rental assistance program to help lower-income households—especially seniors—remain in their homes despite rising costs. Collaboration with state and federal programs can extend these resources.

S2.20 Update and Enforce Short-Term Rental Ordinance
The number one problem with short-term rentals is enforcement of the ordinance. All short-term rentals are required to be licensed. Continue to refine strategies and impact through Short-Term Rental Ordinance through Community Engagement and additional impact studies for both economic and for quality-of-life standards.

According to data on AirDNA.co, the short-term rental industry in Park County is approximately $22 million a year, with the industry taking place in over 1,300 homes. Short-term rentals support the County's tourist industry with around a quarter-million nights of lodging booked per year.

Short-Term Rentals in Park County					
Area	Number of STRs	Average price per night	Occupancy Rate	Percent whole house	Annual area revenue
Fairplay	487	$295	53%	98%	$3.5 million
Bailey	235	$235	62%	94%	$3.6 million
Alma	212	$336	56%	95%	$4 million
Jefferson	101	$269	51%	100%	$2.6 million
Hartsel	100	$199	48%	97%	$2.1 million
Lake George	87	$210	40%	86%	$1.6 million
Como	67	$242	53%	100%	$2.6 million
Guffey	34	$189	56%	100%	$1.7 million
TOTAL	1323	$247	52%	96%	21.7

While this brings people into the County, many of the places where they might spend money on shopping or entertainment within the County have experienced challenges in hiring labor that can afford local rents. According to the county-wide survey, short-term rentals are not strongly opposed to use in residential neighborhoods. 40% of respondents said they support allowing properties to be used as short-term rentals in residential zones. Only 20% of survey respondents stated that they support additional dwelling units only if they are not used as short-term rentals, while 86% of people support allowing additional dwelling units in at least some conditions.

S2.21 Incentivize Long-Term Rentals in Seasonal Second Homes
While seasonal homes bring investment and tourism, their part-time occupancy can create quieter neighborhoods in the off-season. Many remain vacant during the winter months, reducing business traffic in local shops as well as opportunities for community connections and limiting active spaces for families, children, and the county's growing aging population.

S2.22 Allow Tiny Home Developments
Amend land use regulations to allow for tiny home developments. Allow for minimum standards and define the minimum building standards that encourage efficient design.

S2.23 Non-conforming Properties
Encourage bringing existing non-conforming property into compliance, improve source of potable water that does not include the hauling of water for new subdivisions. Discourage non-conforming use of property for residential occupancy of existing parcels.

G3: Support Emergency Services & Disaster Preparedness

Park County's emergency response services are critical lifelines in a vast and rugged rural environment. Unlike urban areas with centralized emergency services, Park County's fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) are spread across multiple districts, each responsible for large, often remote territories. Emergency response is complicated by limited infrastructure, long travel distances, and severe weather conditions, all of which contribute to extended response times. There are no hospitals or full-time medical providers in Park County, meaning that the majority of ambulance calls involve transporting patients to medical facilities in neighboring counties. This places a significant burden on EMS providers, requiring long-distance patient transfers that leave areas without coverage while ambulances are in transit.

Strengthening wildfire mitigation programs, supporting mutual aid agreements, and expanding training for volunteers and dispatch personnel will further enhance the county's ability to prevent and respond effectively to emergencies.

S3.1 Support Existing Emergency Services

A. Support the continued cooperation that exists among fire districts, state and federal fire protection agencies, and local governments and strengthen these partnerships to increase the regional capacity to prepare for and mitigate hazards and respond to emergencies.
B. Support dispatch operations, broadband, and radio communications for emergency responders. Implement real-time emergency mapping and GIS tracking to improve situational awareness during disasters, aiding emergency response coordination.
C. Improve evacuation planning and emergency preparedness training for residents.
D. Prepare for mental health, crisis response and victim support services.

S3.2 Increase Community Preparedness and Volunteer Training

A. Develop fire-adapted community initiatives that provide localized wildfire preparedness resources, including evacuation planning and defensible space strategies. Implement wildfire mitigation policies and expand fuel reduction programs.
B. Launch public education campaigns on emergency preparedness, emphasizing evacuation routes, go-bag preparedness, and communication protocols during disasters.
C. Develop a countywide Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan to address wildfire, flooding, winter storms, and hazardous material risks, ensuring alignment with FEMA and Colorado DHSEM requirements.
D. Establish pre-positioned emergency supply caches at strategic locations to ensure access to critical equipment, food, water, and medical supplies in remote areas.
E. Create a Disaster Recovery Task Force to plan long-term community recovery efforts following major disasters.
F. Secure funding for hazard mitigation projects, including wildfire fuel reduction, floodplain management, and infrastructure hardening.

S3.3 Improve Emergency Infrastructure and Technology

A. Improve interoperability radio systems, GPS-enabled dispatch tools, and broadband infrastructure for emergency response coordination.

B. Develop a backup power and emergency generator plan for essential services, ensuring continuity during prolonged power outages.

G4: Strengthen Community Health & Essential Services

Many Park County residents lack access to medical care, grocery stores, childcare, and essential services. The county's rugged terrain and dispersed population create challenges for infrastructure, transportation, and healthcare access. Addressing these gaps is critical to improving livability, supporting families. The aging population further highlights the necessity of enhanced senior healthcare, transportation, and in-home support services.

S4.1 Work with Public Health and Nonprofits to Improve Senior Healthcare
A. Expand in-home care services and transportation assistance for seniors through ridesharing, community shuttles and expanded med ride options.
B. Work with nonprofits to increase funding for Meals on Wheels and nutrition programs. Use County Owned Community Centers for senior/ community center lunch options
C. Support community-led programs that combat social isolation and provide senior companionship.

S4.2 Strengthen Healthcare and Pharmacy Access
A. Use land use tools to support healthcare infrastructure expansion and improvements.
B. Encourage localized Health Care District initiatives.

S4.3 Enhance Services for Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Victims
A. Advocate for state and federal funding and training for mental health crisis intervention and victim support services.
B. Expand Telehealth Services
C. Establish crisis response teams and peer support networks to provide immediate mental health assistance.
D. Enhance Access to Victim Support Services by increasing funding for domestic violence, sexual assault support programs and partner with regional organizations to provide additional shelter space and counseling.

S4.4 Expand Grocery and Retail Food Access
A. Incentivize grocery store development including small and large chains and pop-up grocers through tax breaks and grants.
B. Develop a Food Hub Model to distribute locally grown food to retailers and restaurants.

S4.5 Strengthen Local Food Production
A. Encourage the development of community gardens, school gardens, and greenhouse rural agriculture programs, and readapt marijuana grow facilities for food production.
B. Establish Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA).
C. Promote Education and Local Food Culture-including foraging and wild game use.

D. Use Community Centers to Offer Cooking & Nutrition Workshops.
E. Encourage Agricultural Zoning & Land Use Policies that promote small-scale farming

S4.6 Improve Food Security
A. The expansion of local food banks and food pantries and community fridges.
B. Advocate for State & Federal Food Assistance Programs.
C. Encourage the creation of Local Food Access Grants & Funding Programs.

S4.7 Expand Childcare Availability
Provide financial incentives, zoning reforms, and partnerships by working with nonprofits, childcare providers and home-based childcare businesses to increase childcare facilities.

S4.8 Expand Youth Services and Educational Outreach
A. Provide support services and learning resources for school families.
B. Work with libraries and nonprofits to develop youth engagement programs.
C. Expand youth mentorship programs.
D. Invest in recreational and social activities for young people.
E. Create a youth advisory board to ensure young residents have a voice in local government.

S4.9 Expand Support for Vulnerable Populations
Improve access to veteran support programs. Strengthen youth protective services and expand local housing assistance programs.

S4.10 Improve and Develop Public Parks, Playgrounds and Placemaking
Expand parks, trails, and playgrounds that are accessible, safe, inclusive and family-friendly. Create gathering spaces that strengthens cultural identity and supports economic and social activity.

S4.11 Integrate Public Art and Placemaking Features
Commission local artists to create murals, sculptures, and interactive installations that tell the stories of Park County's history and communities.

S4.12 Revitalize Rural Centers
Improve streetscapes with lighting, pedestrian walkways, benches, planters, water features and landscaping. Encourage mixed-use development that integrates retail, dining, and gathering spaces.

S4.13 Rebuild Community Connections
A. Establish and communicate regular informative events at county community centers.
B. Strengthen, repurpose and maintain multi-use community centers for community hubs, meeting spaces, childcare and other types of community programming.

S4.14 Expand and Strengthen County-Run Public Libraries
A. Increase access through high-speed internet connectivity, computer availability, digital resources and mobile or satellite library services.
B. Improve library facilities to support flexible, multi-use community spaces.

C. Enhance lifelong learning programs for youth, adults and job seekers.
D. Sustainable funding and community involvement for Library and Public Space.

G5: Water/Wastewater: Conservation and Preservation

Water availability is the single most significant factor shaping Park County's future. The county's high-altitude location, reliance on groundwater, and increasing pressure from development require a proactive and strategic approach to managing water resources. The demand for residential, agricultural, and commercial water use expands, Park County faces critical decisions about infrastructure investment, conservation policies, and long-term water security. Most residents rely on private wells and septic systems, limiting compact development and increasing the risk of groundwater depletion. High drilling costs, inconsistent well yields, and declining groundwater quality pose significant risks to residents. Septic system density is also increasing, which could lead to groundwater contamination. Without strategic investment, these challenges will continue to limit economic development, housing, and long-term sustainability.

The County has acquired water rights and has a decreed augmentation plan for its road and bridge department operations. The County owns and operates the following water resources:

- 5 AF from the Lone Rock Ranch on Deer Creek.
- Storage of 5 AF in the James Tingle Reservoir.
- Storage of up to 20 AF in Spinney Mountain Reservoir.
- Agreement for short-term or as-available paid storage in Montgomery Reservoir with Colorado Springs Utilities.

The Colorado Water Plan discusses preserving water in the headwaters communities for use in supporting water projects in rural areas such as the county that have had agricultural water rights transferred for use in urban areas. The Plan states that: "Thoughtful solutions should consider strategies for developing partnerships and meeting a variety of headwaters community, local, and regional needs simultaneously, especially when water supply projects serve communities outside of where water supplies originate." It also finds that "The potential impacts of existing and additional water development on headwater streams and communities as well as downstream water users are being scrutinized more than ever. Collaborative approaches to new water development that balance risk, emphasize conservation, and provide multiple benefits will be essential."

Goals of the County that are consistent with the state water plan and conservation are as follows:
1. Closing the County's own water supply gap;
2. Encouraging water conservation both for in-County use and in 1041 permit applications for water projects;
3. Encouraging multi-purpose projects that help the County meet its Master Plan goals.

Park County also serves as a crucial source of water for the state's Front Range. Concerns about local water depletion led to the establishment of the Park County Land & Water Trust Fund, The South Platte and Arkansas Rivers are over-appropriated, meaning there are more water rights than available water.

Headwater Authority of the South Platte (HASP): Oversees the Upper South Platte Water Conservancy District (USPWCD) and Center of Colorado Water Conservancy District (CCWCD), serving all of Park County. Some notable entities working in water in the County are:

- Upper South Platte Water Conservancy District (USPWCD): Manages water resources within the Upper South Platte Basin, covering Fairplay, Alma, Como, Jefferson, and parts of Bailey.
- Center of Colorado Water Conservancy District (CCWCD): Works to preserve local water resources in Hartsel, Guffey, and South Park.
- Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District: Covers the Arkansas watershed, though Guffey is not currently part of this district.
- Private Augmentation Companies: Some subdivisions require augmentation purchases from private companies such as Bar Star Water Company (Indian Mountain) and Saddle Mountain Mutual Water Company.

S5.1 Strengthening Water Rights and Local Water Control

A. Secure permanent water rights owned or developed by the County to support local growth and business and prevent external sales.
B. Work with water conservancy districts to retain water resources within the county.
C. Encourage local ownership of augmentation plans to reduce reliance on external districts.
D. Support the Land & Water Trust Fund to prevent water rights from being sold.
E. Recommend adopting water regulations to incorporate policies stemming from the Colorado Water Plan, including supporting projects with multiple beneficiaries that increase County water supplies as a "headwaters community" to meet expected growth in water demand.
F. Incorporate water saving strategies into regulations and development of new land use projects.
G. New special development projects under Park County code should be amended to include direction to applicants to meet the guidance set forth in the Colorado Water Plan to give consideration to multiple purposes including how special development projects should help meet the County's policies for water conservation, addressing the water supply gap in the County, and facilitating multiple beneficiaries of such projects.

S5.2 Encourage Shared Water Systems

Work with communities to establish Water and Sanitation Districts. Explore the provisions of water stations and develop community water systems in rural centers as an alternative to individual wells. Leverage federal grants (USDA Rural Development, Drinking Water SRF) for infrastructure funding. Retaining Local Water Resources- Support the water conservancy districts in the maintenance and acquisition of water rights within the county. Develop Shared Well and Aquifer Storage Programs. Encourage cooperative well systems and aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) projects. Leverage Federal and State Grants. Apply for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) grants, and Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) funding. Expand Public-Private Partnerships. Collaborate with regional utilities and private investors for water system upgrades.

S5.3 Promoting Water Preservation and Conservation

Incorporate water conservation measures in all new development projects, public facilities, and major renovations within Park County to reduce overall water demand, enhance efficiency, and promote

sustainable resource use. Create a countywide educational campaign on well maintenance, household water efficiency, and best practices for conservation.

S5.4 Improve Wastewater Management
    A. Support shared wastewater treatment facilities to allow for more compact development.
    B. Encourage modern septic technologies for improved water quality.
    C. Establish a septic system inspection and maintenance program to prevent contamination.
    D. Investigate alternative wastewater solutions such as composting toilets.
    E. Facilitate Creation of Recreational Vehicle (RV) Waste Disposal dump stations

S5.5 Enhancing Groundwater Protection & Aquifer Recharge
    A. Develop aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) programs to retain excess water.
    B. Implement streamflow augmentation projects to stabilize water supplies.
    C. Expand watercourse protection measures to prevent erosion and sedimentation.
    D. Support beaver reintroduction projects for natural watershed restoration.

S5.6 Climate & Drought Preparedness
Create a Drought Contingency Plan with emergency conservation measures. Require on-site water storage for all new developments (e.g., fire suppression storage). Work with state agencies to monitor and predict climate impacts on water resources. Promote Xeriscaping.

S5.7 Riparian and Watershed Protection
    A. Regulate activities that pose risks to surface and groundwater resources.
    B. Improve Watercourse Protection Measures.
    C. Support protection of sensitive riparian areas with fencing types such as buck-and-rail.
    D. Riverbank Restoration and Sediment Control.
    E. Replace outdated infrastructure.
    F. Support the work of the Land and Water Trust Fund.
    G. Introduce aquifer recharge projects to ensure long-term groundwater stability.
    H. Support projects that enhance streamflow management and improve water quality.
    I. Support reintroduction of beaver to suitable habitat within their historical range.

S5.8 Regional & Statewide Collaboration
    A. Partner with Denver Water & Front Range utilities to negotiate long-term agreements.
    B. Work with the South Platte Basin Roundtable to secure watershed protection grants.
    C. Coordinate with state agencies to improve water law flexibility for rural communities.
    D. Engage with Western Resource Advocates for technical support on conservation efforts.

S5.9 Strategic Funding & Investment
    A. Apply for DOLA grants to finance small-scale water systems.
    B. Utilize the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) for system upgrades.
    C. Seek Water SMART Grants for conservation and storage improvement projects.

G6: Improve Decentralized Infrastructure Systems

Park County's existing infrastructure reflects its vast rural landscape, the majority of residents rely on decentralized systems, with private wells, septic systems, and off-grid energy solutions. Only a small fraction of the population has access to municipal utilities, and many depend on alternative power sources such as solar, propane, and wood for heating. The region faces significant infrastructure challenges, including aging electric grids and limited broadband access. Expanding infrastructure is often cost-prohibitive.

Future planning efforts should focus on integrating renewable energy solutions, improving broadband connectivity, and strategically placing electric vehicle charging stations to support both residents and visitors. Ensuring infrastructure development aligns with wildlife conservation and environmental sustainability will be critical. With continued investment in decentralized energy systems, community-driven microgrids, and innovative broadband solutions, Park County can build a more sustainable and connected future.

S6.1 Strengthen Energy Grid Modernization
    A. Create a Renewable Energy Incentive Program.
    B. Facilitate Bulk Purchase Programs for Off-Grid Residents.
    C. Support Microgrids & Shared Renewable Projects.
    D. Advocate for State and Federal Grid Expansion Grants.
    E. Develop an Energy Plan to assess vulnerabilities and opportunities for grid modernization.
    F. Collaborate with utility providers to modernize transmission infrastructure.
    G. Partner with the private sector to develop public-private energy pilot projects.
    H. Expand community awareness on renewable energy and off-grid options.

S6.2. Improve Broadband, Fiber, & Satellite Internet Access
    A. Create a Broadband Expansion Zone Map and Identify coverage gaps.
    B. Attract Internet Service Providers with Incentives for Rural Expansion.
    C. Seek funding for and support public-private broadband partnerships.

S6.3. Strengthen Funding & Public-Private Collaboration
    A. Establish a Rural Infrastructure Investment Fund.
    B. Secure State & Federal Matching Grants for Rural Areas.
    C. Leverage Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) for Infrastructure.
    D. Advocate for State Policy Changes.
    E. Create Special Taxing Districts or Municipal Bonds for Broadband & Infrastructure.

G7: Protect Natural Landscapes and Resources

The community overwhelmingly values protecting wildlife migration routes, maintaining public access to nature, hunting grounds, conserving forests, agricultural lands, wetlands, and sensitive ecosystems. Survey results show strong support for conservation efforts and the need for wildlife advocacy. Safeguarding these natural areas is essential to sustaining healthy wildlife populations and preserving

the county's unique landscapes. Conservation strategies guide responsible development while ensuring these natural resources remain intact for future generations.

S7.1 Strengthening Conservation Partnerships

Develop formal agreements with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), the U.S. Forest Service, and the Land and Water Trust to secure funding and long-term conservation commitments.

S7.2 Protect Wildlife Habitat & Wildlife Corridors

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) provides critical data through Species Activity Mapping (SAMS) and habitat overlays to guide development and minimize impacts on wildlife. Park County's 1041 regulations outline the process for creating such maps, though no publicly available reference map currently exists. Coordination with CPW can help ensure low-impact development in sensitive areas, encouraging lot consolidations and habitat conservation while generally discouraging new development in areas with significant wildlife presence.

S7.3 Preserve Park County's Open Vistas and Views

The visual appeal of development, both in small towns and as it appears on the landscape, impacts people's sense of place and appreciation for nature. The 2001 Plan includes a Visual Priority Map to guide scenic protection priorities; continued use of this map is encouraged.

S7.4 Protect and Preserve Wetlands

Wetlands are one of Park County's most valuable natural resources, playing a crucial role in fire protection, rural sustainability, and water security. These high-altitude wetland ecosystems store water, regulate local hydrology, and provide natural firebreaks—critical benefits in an era of increasing droughts, wildfires, and unpredictable weather. For Park County's rural residents, wetlands provide long-term water storage that supports agriculture, livestock, and private well systems. Unlike reservoirs or irrigation ditches that can dry up, wetlands naturally store and slowly release water, helping maintain groundwater levels.

S7.5 Preserve Agricultural Traditions

Preserving ranchlands is about more than safeguarding open space; it protects a way of life. Organizations such as the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust and the Park County Land & Water Trust play a crucial role in keeping historic properties productive while also conserving wildlife corridors and water quality. Colorado's Right-to-Farm and Ranch designation reinforces the state's commitment to agriculture, ensuring ranchers' rights and addressing challenges such as Colorado's open-range laws, which place the burden of keeping livestock off private property on landowners rather than ranchers. At the same time, Park County must address the environmental challenges associated with ranching. Decades of overgrazing, invasive species, and habitat fragmentation have weakened ecosystems. Rotational grazing, which mimics natural bison herd movement, can help grasses recover, improve soil health, and reduce erosion. Restoring native grasses and wildflowers enhances soil fertility, stabilizes landscapes, and supports diverse wildlife and pollinators.

S7.6 Expand Economic Opportunities Through Agritourism

Develop and promote ranch stays, farm-to-table events, and heritage festivals. Encourage business diversification on agricultural lands, including fishing access, guided hunting, and ranch retreats. Support public-private partnerships for agritourism and historical tourism initiatives. Establish incentives for agritourism businesses, including infrastructure improvements and marketing support. Facilitate educational agritourism experiences, such as farm tours and workshops on sustainable high-altitude farming.

S7.7 Sustain Agricultural Lands and Water Resources

Preserve agricultural heritage, support working lands, and promote land and water management.
- A. Protect agricultural lands through zoning and conservation easements.
- B. Use the Land and Water Trust Fund to identify conservation opportunities.
- C. Facilitate voluntary land and water conservation efforts.
- D. Combine agricultural land conservation with historic site preservation.
- E. Allow agricultural uses in large-lot subdivisions through lot consolidations.
- F. Encourage transitions to livestock grazing where compatible with nearby residential areas.

S7.8 Support Agricultural Succession Planning

Expand mentorship programs that connect experienced ranchers with young and beginning farmers. Collaborate with schools and universities to offer agriculture-focused education and vocational training programs.

S7.9 Balance Growth with Conservation Priorities

- A. Encourage low-impact development techniques to minimize environmental disruption.
- B. Implement Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs to direct growth.
- C. Promote conservation subdivisions that preserve agricultural use.
- D. Mitigate development impacts on wildlife corridors and scenic landscapes.

S7.10 Increase Public Awareness and Community Engagement

- A. Develop public outreach campaigns on agricultural sustainability and historic preservation.
- B. Expand educational programs for sustainable high-altitude agriculture.
- C. Host annual heritage and agritourism events to promote traditions.
- D. Establish an agriculture and cultural advisory board.

S7.11 Preserve Mineral Resource Areas

Preserve mining heritage, support working mines, and promote sustainable mining land and mineral management.
- A. Protect mineral resource areas through zoning.
- B. Mineral resource areas are designated as areas of state interest and must be protected and administered in such a manner as to permit the extraction and exploration of minerals.
- C. Develop and adopt a Mineral Resources Overlay for a future land use map designating and protecting land containing mineral resources of long-term significance.

G8: Expand Recreation & Tourism

With world-class trails, pristine reservoirs, and historic communities, the county has the foundation to become a premier outdoor destination while maintaining its rural character. To support sustainable recreation and tourism, Park County should invest in infrastructure that enhances accessibility and supports local businesses. Sustainable tourism development will require strategic investments to protect the County's natural resources from overuse, support local businesses and the economy and mitigate negative impacts on Park County residents.

S8.1 Improve Trail Systems
Improve trail Connectivity, enhance trailhead Infrastructure and support equestrian, hiking, and off-road recreation.

S8.2 Develop a Unified Tourism Identity
Develop a marketing campaign highlighting outdoor adventure, heritage tourism, and cultural events. Promote the county's identity through businesses, visitor centers, and statewide partnerships. Emphasize local voices and storytelling to share Park County's history and traditions. Develop interactive online resources for recreation, lodging, and travel information.

S8.3 Enhance Visitor Information & Experience
    A. Improve signage on major highways and scenic byways.
    B. Create online and printed visitor guides.
    C. Develop interactive historical and ecological interpretive sites.

S8.4 Expand and Diversify Lodging & Camping Options
Increase Lodging Availability and Diversity in the expansion of campgrounds.

S8.5 Encourage Growth in Outdoor Recreation & Hospitality
Provide resources and incentives for local entrepreneurs in outfitting, guiding, and experience-based tourism. Foster partnerships with small businesses to offer locally made outdoor gear, farm-to-table dining, and artisanal products. Develop a rural business incubator for startups in recreation, tourism, and hospitality.

S8.6 Strengthen Cultural and Heritage Tourism
Expand festivals, live music events, and arts programming in historic town centers. Restore and repurpose historic structures as cultural hubs, museums, or event spaces. Develop heritage trails, self-guided tours of mining towns, Indigenous history, and pioneer sites.

S8.7 Promote Sustainable Water-Based Tourism
    A. Improve public access to reservoirs and rivers.
    B. Support businesses offering guided fly fishing, rafting, and canoeing experiences.

S8.8 Strengthen Winter Recreation & Year-Round Tourism
    A. Develop and maintain cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and fat-biking trails.
    B. Identify locations for backcountry skiing and snowmobiling routes.

C. Explore potential for a ski area or winter recreation hub.
D. Improve winter trailhead access with parking, plowed roads, and warming huts.
E. Support businesses offering winter recreation rentals and guided tours.
F. Promote winter adventure tourism as a key component of Park County's brand.

S8.9 Pursue EV Charging to Increase Tourism
Encourage EV Charging at Existing Businesses and Secure funding for EV Infrastructure.

G9: Develop a Diverse Economy & Support Local Business

Historically, the county has thrived on mining, ranching, and agriculture, but as these industries have declined or transformed, the economic base has shifted toward construction, tourism, and small businesses. Today, the county government remains the largest employer, and a significant portion of the workforce commutes to neighboring counties or works remotely, highlighting a critical economic imbalance. The county's reliance on seasonal tourism and construction leaves gaps in employment opportunities and economic stability, reinforcing the need for diversification. Park County faces challenges in sustaining an economy that meets the needs of its residents. The lack of essential services forces residents to spend their income outside the county, weakening local businesses and reducing potential tax revenues. Housing attainability and workforce availability further compound the problem, as local businesses struggle to attract and retain employees.

To address these challenges, Park County should encourage the implementation of strategies that foster economic diversification, support locally owned businesses, and create opportunities for sustainable growth. With most jobs and shopping taking place outside Park County, sales tax revenue is disproportionately low, making the county heavily dependent on property taxes. The imbalance between local employment opportunities and population needs makes it harder to attract essential workers. Residents commuting elsewhere for work also tend to shop outside the county, further limiting local economic activity. One of the biggest challenges for businesses in Park County is finding and retaining local workers. Housing insecurity has made it difficult for businesses to retain workers in lower wage jobs.

S9.1 Expanding Amenities Through Market-Driven Solutions
Economic development strategy prioritizes the expansion of essential services and amenities to support residents while allowing private businesses to drive solutions. Facilitating through land use regulation and policy the development of medical services, childcare, recreational opportunities, elder care, and retail amenities will help strengthen the local economy, reduce dependency on neighboring counties, and improve overall quality of life.

S9.2 Healthcare & Essential Services
A. Encourage the development of consistent and high-quality medical services, mobile medical services and telehealth partnerships to expand access to care.
B. Use zoning to allow the development of assisted living and elder care facilities.
C. Streamline the permitting process for medical businesses to reduce barriers to entry.

D. Allow mixed-use zoning to incorporate medical facilities within community centers, business districts and existing businesses.

S9.3 Expanding Childcare & Youth Services
Support private investment in childcare centers, encourage in-home daycare businesses, summer/after-school programs and attract family-oriented businesses. Incentivize mixed-use developments that include childcare services near employment hubs.

S9.4 Expanding Grocery & Retail Access
Ensure that land use zones allow grocery stores and fresh food markets, small and independent grocers, mobile grocery trucks and food co-ops in varied zones, as appropriate.

S9.5 Encouraging Elderly-Friendly Amenities & Services
Encourage and promote private investment in independent and assisted senior living communities and elder care services, develop private fitness and wellness centers. Promote business-friendly policies for medical transport, senior home care, meal delivery and pharmacy delivery services. Draft land use regulations that support independent and assisted living senior communities and elder care and wellness facilities.

S9.6 Support for Small Businesses & Entrepreneurship
A. Simplify business licensing and permitting.
B. Expand and diversify primary jobs in Park County.
C. Encourage mixed-use zoning to allow businesses.
D. Promote "buy local" campaigns to support small businesses.
E. Provide technical assistance and funding opportunities for startups.
F. Support efforts of local nonprofits to develop business support and training services.

S9.7 Business Support & Training
A. Strengthen access to funding for business expansion and training.
B. Promote business-to-business networking and collaborative marketing.
C. Expand training and mentorship programs for small businesses and startups.

S9.8 Tourism & Recreation Economy
A. Define county role in marketing and developing tourist attractions and services.
B. Collect and analyze baseline data on the existing visitor market.
C. Create a multi-year strategic marketing plan to attract target visitor markets.

S9.9 Expand Allowable Home-Based Business
Review and update land use regulations regarding home occupations.

S9.10 Film, Media & the Arts Economy

A. Develop a film-friendly permitting process.
B. Partner with the Colorado Film Office to increase visibility and attract productions.

C. Provide incentives for documentary films focused on rural communities and conservation.

S9.11 Sustainable Growth & Economic Strength
Foster economic development meets local needs without overburdening infrastructure. Develop a sustainability task force.

S9.12 County-Owned Land & Community Development
Conduct an inventory of all county-owned properties to determine potential for community use such as the repurposing of county-owned land for housing, business, or recreational purposes. Establish a leasing program for local businesses and nonprofits to use public land for community projects. Develop housing projects on surplus county land to support local workforce retention.

G10: Improve Governance & Land Use Planning
S10.1 Strengthen Code Enforcement & Compliance
A. Establish a sustainable funding strategy to support increased enforcement capacity, including potential fees, grants, or dedicated revenue streams.
B. Strengthen code enforcement programs to address illegal construction, unpermitted land use, nuisance properties, and short-term rental compliance.
C. Improve geographic reach and consistency of enforcement across all communities, including rural and remote areas.
D. Develop clear reporting mechanisms for code violations to allow residents to report issues easily while improving tracking and resolution timelines.
E. Implement progressive enforcement measures, including warning systems, mediation options, and other administrative enforcement opportunities.
F. Hire More Code Enforcement Officers & Provide regular training for enforcement officers to ensure fair, knowledgeable, and consistent application of zoning, building codes, and other regulations.

S10.2 Improve Communication & Public Outreach
A. Evaluate and improve county information systems to ensure timely, efficient, and accessible communication of key updates, policies, and decisions.
B. Increase outreach to rural areas by offering more Open House meetings with County Commissioners, Planning Commission, Development Services, Public Works, and other departments.
C. Develop customized outreach approaches for second homeowners, part-time residents, and seasonal visitors.
D. Enhance digital access to county documents, meetings, enforcement actions, and public service updates.
E. Improve public notification systems for county meetings, road maintenance schedules, emergency updates, and development changes.
F. Increase and publicize opportunities for citizen involvement in governance through advisory committees, surveys, and interactive public meetings.

S10.3 Increase Intergovernmental Coordination

A. Strengthen coordination with the Towns of Fairplay and Alma to align policies, infrastructure planning, and development standards.
B. Ensure that municipal and county comprehensive plans are used as guiding documents to promote consistency in decision-making.
C. Improve collaboration on shared concerns such as land use in three-mile areas, right-of-way management, municipal watersheds, and economic development.
D. Develop a structured intergovernmental agreement (IGA) process to ensure clear roles, responsibilities, and coordination on enforcement and planning.
E. Regularly review state and regional regulations to ensure Park County remains in compliance and can advocate for beneficial policy changes.

S10.4 Enhance Transparency & Public Trust

A. Improve public access to governance information, including clear online and in-person access to county policies, budgets, and enforcement actions.
B. Establish performance benchmarks for county services, including enforcement, permitting, and public engagement, with regular public reporting.
C. Develop training and guidance materials for residents, businesses, and property owners on county regulations and compliance expectations.
D. Increase public engagement in governance through participatory budgeting initiatives, interactive planning sessions, and transparency measures.
E. Strengthen ethics policies and conflict-of-interest guidelines to maintain fair and transparent governance.
F. Develop Simplified Checklists and timelines to manage expectations for residents and builders in Park County for Development Services.

Chapter 3 – Subareas of Park County

All of the county-wide goals and strategies apply to the subareas in addition to the specific strategies in the Rural Centers below. [Click here to view a map of the subareas](#).

3.1 Guffey | Lake George | Tarryall | Hartsel Subarea

Guffey

Guffey, located at 8,658 feet above sea level, is a small but distinct community in Park County. Originally platted as the Town of Freshwater in 1894, its post office was established in 1896. During this time the peak population of Guffey was 8,000 people. Today, Guffey has 93 vacant parcels and approximately 70 residents. In the Guffey area, there are over 1,500 people according to Census data.

Guffey retains its Western-style character with a library, community center, Fire Station that houses the Southern Park County Fire Protection District. A strong sense of independence defines Guffey's residents, with many expressing a desire to maintain the town's existing character. Residents value their town's unique identity and favor minimal development, with concerns primarily focused on infrastructure limitations, water and septic systems, and affordable housing for workers. Guffey is a stopping point on the Transamerica Bicycle trail.

Guffey has long attracted those seeking an independent, alternative lifestyle. Its remote setting near Agate and Saddle Mountains makes it a destination for outdoor enthusiasts, while its history includes the 1907 discovery of Colorado's largest meteorite, now housed at the American Museum of Natural History.

Guffey Strategies

Economic Development & Tourism
- A. Support Local Businesses – Encourage and assist in the development of small, locally owned businesses that contribute to the town's character and economy.
- B. Promote Tourism through Signage – Improve wayfinding and signage along Highway 9 to highlight Guffey, local businesses, and nearby destinations.
- C. Expand Lodging Options – Support small-scale lodging, such as bed and breakfasts, to accommodate visitors while maintaining the town's rural charm.
- D. Enhance Community Events – Leverage annual events like Guffey Days to drive tourism and boost local business growth.
- E. Strategic Rezoning for Essential Services – Rezone the area around the intersection of Highway 9 and CR 102 to allow for businesses that meet traveler needs (e.g., a gas station) without increasing traffic congestion in the town center.
- F. Discourage National Chains – Maintain Guffey's local character by encouraging independent businesses and limiting corporate franchises.

Infrastructure & Land Use
- A. Address Water Availability Challenges – Join the Upper Arkansas Water Augmentation Plan to provide cost-effective water solutions for new parcels.

B. Develop a Recycling Center – Establish a local recycling facility to promote sustainability and waste reduction.
C. Strengthen Code Enforcement – Improve enforcement of regulations related to trash management, septic systems, and unauthorized structures to maintain community health and safety.

Public Services & Quality of Life
A. Expand Mobile Services for Seniors & Residents in need.
B. Create a simple chores assistance service (e.g., changing light bulbs, moving heavy objects).

Environmental Stewardship & Fire Mitigation
A. Manage Outdoor Recreation Impacts – Implement policies and outreach programs to mitigate fire risks and protect local resources from increased outdoor activity.

Lake George

At 7,992 feet, Lake George is a high-altitude community with deep ties to nature, independence, and a history of mining and ranching. Originally platted in 1910 and replatted in 1945 for Highway 24, many people use and rely on the local library for community. The County runs a community center. 55% of residents are over 65, living on retirement income, valuing their way of life, and advocating for wildlife conservation, with 65% opposing development in key habitats. Lake George lacks essential services, forcing residents to travel for healthcare, groceries, and gas, with 62% prioritizing local healthcare options. Economic growth is vital, with 48% supporting job creation, while road safety remains a top concern (69%). Preserving wildlife and expanding trail networks (52%) are key priorities, ensuring Lake George maintains its unique character.

Lake George Strategies
Wildlife & Environmental Protection
A. Install wildlife fencing along the highway and discourage development in critical wildlife habitats and moose migration routes.
B. Implement better management of off-highway vehicle (OHV) use in natural areas to mitigate environmental damage.
C. Address long-term "boondocking" by RVs on National Forest land to reduce wildfire hazards.

Infrastructure & Connectivity
A. Improve address mapping to prevent parties from arriving at incorrect locations.
B. Expand broadband internet to support home-based businesses.
C. Restore the former trail connecting the library and park via a tunnel under the highway.
D. Improve pedestrian access throughout Lake George and reduce walking along Highway 24.
E. Increase parking and public access along the lake and river.

Economic Development & Local Services
A. Introduce a mobile meat processor during hunting season.
B. Encourage small-scale businesses, support low-impact industries and local food production.

Community Services & Senior Support
   A. Expand ride-sharing programs to improve transportation options.
   B. Provide home repair assistance for seniors.

Recreation & Public Spaces
   A. Develop and connect trail systems to enhance pedestrian and recreational access.
   B. Repurpose historic buildings for community use.
   C. Provide programs and spaces for youth engagement.

Education & Regional Coordination
   A. Explore partnerships to improve local school options and vocational training.
   B. Strengthen ties with Teller County to address shared challenges, including school capacity and economic development.

Tarryall

Tarryall, in eastern Park County, Colorado, sits at 8,700 feet along Tarryall Creek, between Lake George and Jefferson at the eastern edge of South Park. Tarryall remains a quiet remnant of the past, a gateway to outdoor adventures where anglers, hikers, and campers explore its untamed landscapes, merging history with the enduring beauty of the Colorado wilderness.

Hartsel (Includes Antero Junction and Trout Creek Pass)

Hartsel was established with a post office in 1872, and the town was originally platted in 1909. Today, Hartsel occupies only a quarter of its original platted townsite. The town was designed with a large central park and 47 blocks of 50' x 180' lots, with a commercial strip of 25' x 150' lots along what is now Highway 24. A central public square was also included in the layout. Hartsel serves as a hub for a broad rural area, including Antero Junction, and Badger Creek Ranch.

There are over 600 homes within 10-miles of Hartsel, that does not include the numerous nonconforming unpermitted structures that are both inhabited and abandoned. The region surrounding Hartsel is best characterized by the immense number of vacant lots in the surrounding subdivisions. Many parcels lack utilities and remain undeveloped. Many residents want to maintain Park County's wild, undeveloped nature. Since the 1950s, over 20,000 lots have been platted across the county, with nearly half in Hartsel. Many of these lots sit in critical wildlife habitats, identified in the 2024 CPW assessment. Without proactive planning, unchecked growth could replace natural landscapes with fragmented suburban sprawl. Within the Hartsel Subarea, there are 16,000 vacant parcels. The biggest challenge is the lack of a centralized water and sewer system. Most homes rely on individual wells and septic systems, which are unsustainable given the geology and water constraints. High radon levels and poor water quality raise further health concerns. Without infrastructure investment, future growth will mirror existing rural sprawl.

Hartsel residents generally support commercial growth and the expansion of local services like a grocery store. However, they oppose suburban-style residential sprawl in surrounding subdivisions, preferring to preserve open space. Concerns have been raised about informal housing, crime, and social challenges in rural areas. Hartsel envisions becoming an incorporated town with the

infrastructure needed to support sustainable growth. A primary goal is establishing a collective water and sewer system, with a public potable water source.

Antero Junction & Trout Creek Pass
Antero Junction and Trout Creek Pass serve as key transit corridors connecting Park and Chaffee counties via U.S. Highways 285 and 24. At approximately 9,000 feet, these high-altitude areas face harsh winters, strong winds, and limited services, requiring self-sufficiency from residents. Proximity to Antero Reservoir and public lands offers outdoor recreation, while many residents commute to Buena Vista. Challenges include infrastructure limitations and balancing growth with the region's remote character.

Hartsel Strategies
Infrastructure and Development
    A. Establish a shared water and sewer system to enable sustainable growth and avoid further reliance on individual wells and septic systems.
    B. Develop wastewater solutions, including a dump station for RV and camper residents, to alleviate sanitation issues and support future infrastructure development.
    C. Encourage lot consolidations in Pike-San Isabel Village and surrounding subdivisions.
    D. Allow for collaborative development rights to better manage land use and infrastructure planning.

Community and Economic Development
    A. Attract diverse essential businesses such as a grocery store, medical clinic, and farm supply store.
    B. Install EV charging stations, with a connected nature trail for visitors to enjoy while waiting.
    C. Promote world-class fishing areas and capitalize on outdoor recreation assets.
    D. Develop a local museum to showcase local area history and attract cultural tourism.
    E. Improve tourist signage and highway pull-outs.
    F. Encourage gravel bicycling tourism along CR 53 and CR 15.

Housing and Land Use
    A. Address illegal and abandoned housing issues by improving enforcement and providing alternative housing solutions.
    B. Develop affordable and workforce housing to accommodate service workers, including fire department staff.
    C. Promote managed private camping as an alternative land use, allowing landowners to lease lots for camping while removing development rights.
    D. Establish seasonal camping overlay zones to provide regulated, revenue-generating infrastructure for temporary housing and recreation.

Public Spaces and Amenities
    A. Improve public spaces by developing community parks, trails, and gathering spaces.
    B. Utilize county-owned lots strategically for community benefits and infrastructure improvements.

C. Develop a vision for the town center, ensuring compact, walkable development with mixed-use zoning.

3.2 Como | Jefferson Subarea

Como

At 9,796 feet above sea level at the base of Boreas Pass, Como is a historic railroad and mining settlement. Today, restoration efforts continue on key landmarks such as the Railway Hotel and historic water tank. While residents support preserving the town's historical charm and wildlife habitats, they also recognize the need for strategic growth, such as clustering new development near historic centers while being cautious of over development. Recreational opportunities like hiking and biking trails are priorities. Economically, the community seeks more local businesses to reduce reliance on larger cities while maintaining Como's rural character. The high cost of living presents challenges for younger generations hoping to settle in the area, and addressing issues like housing, infrastructure, and services will be crucial for the town's future.

Jefferson

At the western base of Kenosha Pass Jefferson is a small unincorporated community. It was established in 1879 with the arrival of the Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad and was initially a supply center for surrounding ranches. Today, Jefferson remains a rural crossroads, supporting travelers and nearby subdivisions with essential services. The town's rich history is reflected in its well-preserved landmarks, including the Jefferson School, the 1936 Community Building, and the Jefferson Depot. Local grants and restoration efforts continue to sustain these cultural assets, reinforcing Jefferson's heritage identity. Jefferson faces infrastructure challenges, particularly the lack of safe pedestrian crossings on Highway 285. Thoughtful planning is needed to balance growth and conservation, ensuring Jefferson retains its historic charm, environmental integrity, and quality of life.

Como and Jefferson Strategies

Signage, Visibility and Pedestrian Safety
A. Install directional signage along Highway 285 to improve visibility and access to Como, and place wayfinding signs that highlight key attractions, services, and businesses. Develop sidewalks and designated pedestrian pathways to separate foot traffic from vehicle access.
B. Work with CDOT to evaluate, enhance, and implement traffic calming measures to improve pedestrian crosswalk visibility and safety.

Historic Preservation
A. Establish a revitalization program for dilapidated buildings, including incentives for rehabilitation and grants or low-interest loans.
B. Partner with the Land and Water Trust and Historic Preservation groups to restore and repurpose key historic structures.

Wildlife Advocacy

A. Integrate wildlife corridor protections into land-use planning to ensure sustainable development.
B. Partner with conservation organizations to enhance eco-tourism and promote responsible recreation.

Tourism Management
A. Develop a sustainable tourism plan to balance recreation growth with local resource capacity.
B. Implement visitor education initiatives on responsible outdoor recreation and land stewardship.

Subarea Center Development
A. Position Como as a subarea hub by leveraging its access via County Road 15 to serve nearby subdivisions.

Development & Housing
A. Encourage new housing and business development near historic town centers to preserve open space and reduce infrastructure costs.
B. Work with developers to ensure affordability and workforce housing, and cluster development options.
C. Encourage developers to adopt low-impact design principles to preserve natural landscapes and scenic vistas.

Local Business Growth
A. Attract, offer incentives, and tax breaks for essential services such as grocery stores, retail shops, and small businesses to enhance convenience and job creation.
B. Develop a business incubator program to support local entrepreneurs and artisans.

Trail Expansion & Outdoor Recreation
A. Expand and improve recreational trail systems that are promoted through marketing and wayfinding initiatives.
B. Secure funding for multi-use trail connections between Como, Jefferson, and surrounding areas.

3.3 Fairplay | Alma Subarea

The Fairplay and Alma subarea represents the unincorporated area outside of the two towns. The area is the historical and cultural heart of Park County. Alma, located just north of Fairplay along State Highway 9, is the highest incorporated Town in the United States. Alma and Fairplay together form a subarea defined by high-altitude living, rural traditions, and modern growth challenges and opportunities. Soaring housing prices in neighboring Summit County have impacts as workers seek more affordable housing The Summit Stage Transit System connects Fairplay and Alma to Summit County, highlighting the relationship between this part of the county and the labor market in Summit County.

Fairplay and Alma have a distinctly different community identity than towns in Summit County. Park County should remain committed to collaborating with the towns of Fairplay and Alma to address

shared challenges such as housing affordability, infrastructure capacity, and sustainable growth. This collaboration aims to alleviate shared issues while respecting the autonomy and leadership of Fairplay and Alma.

Alma

Alma, a high-altitude incorporated town at 10,522 feet with a population of 296, is known for its mining heritage and historic sites like the Nolo-North London Mine. The town provides municipal water and wastewater, Park County and the Town of Alma can collaborate to explore housing initiatives, including the possible use of county-owned land. At the Alma Town Hall meeting, residents discussed road safety, infrastructure maintenance, and financial challenges, highlighting concerns over the 65-mph speed limit on Highway 9, which has led to multiple fatalities. Additionally, the cost of housing for workers and families was a significant issue, as well as the cost of upgrading historic residences to meet modern codes. Residents also emphasized the need for better wildlife signage and increased collaboration with homeowner associations for road maintenance. Economic development discussions focused on building a local economy that aligns with Alma's identity, balancing growth with environmental stewardship and community values.

Fairplay

At 9,953 feet above sea level, Fairplay, the county seat of Park County serves as a central hub for the County's commerce and services. With a history rooted in the 1859's, Fairplay has maintained its mining and ranching heritage while evolving into a tourism and local commerce center, anchored by attractions like South Park City. Fairplay is one of only three areas in Park County, along with Alma and Bailey, that have collective municipal water and wastewater systems. The entire county is serviced with either natural gas or propane. These infrastructure advantages position Fairplay as a focal point for sustainable growth. Recent investments, such as upgrades to the Beaver Creek Water Treatment Plant, ensure that the town is well-prepared to meet future housing and service demands. Workshop participants emphasized balancing growth with conservation by promoting lot consolidation, strengthening land use regulations, and expanding conservation easements to protect open spaces and wildlife corridors. Priorities included completing the four-lane expansion of Highway 285, improving essential services like healthcare and grocery stores, and attracting young families through affordable housing and expanded recreational opportunities. Concerns over schools, and healthcare access were also raised, alongside support for enhanced code enforcement and senior services. The multi-use path connecting Fairplay and Alma improves regional mobility and recreation, while conservation partnerships can help preserve the county's natural beauty and wildlife corridors.

Fairplay and Alma Strategies

Housing and Community Development
   A. Collaborate with Alma and Fairplay to develop affordable housing for service workers and families.
   B. Incentivize lot consolidation in steep mining areas to reduce sprawl and protect rural character.

Infrastructure and Transportation
   A. Advocate for federal funding, grants, and tax strategies to improve roads, housing, and conservation.
   B. Expand Highway 285 with pedestrian safety features.

C. Improve property maintenance and reduce blight through stronger code enforcement.
D. Coordinate planning efforts within the 3-mile planning area.

Recreation and Tourism
    A. Expand public trails for hiking, biking, and off-roading.
    B. Install signage for tourist destinations, public lands, trailheads (e.g. Paris Mine), and wildlife crossings along Highway 9.
    C. Connect and enhance recreational infrastructure.

Environmental Sustainability and Safety
    A. Provide education and support for short-term rental owners on bear-proof trash management.
    B. Improve wildfire mitigation efforts for high-risk homes.

Governance and Collaboration
    A. Engage residents and collaborate with the Town of Fairplay for community input.
    B. Foster intergovernmental collaboration between the County and the Towns of Alma and Fairplay to share resources and advocate for common goals.

3.4 Bailey | Grant and Shawnee | Pine Junction Subarea

Bailey
The largest unincorporated community in Park County, at 7,739 feet above sea level, Bailey is situated along Highway 285 in the scenic Platte Canyon, surrounded by steep hillsides and National Forest land. Downtown Bailey, located at the base of Crow Hill, serves as a hub for jobs and services, with additional commercial activity at the top of Crow Hill, including a public library. Residents cite a lack of basic amenities, poor water quality, lack of reliable infrastructure and the difficulty of completing errands locally as barriers to economic sustainability. Most residents live northeast of downtown in subdivisions with acre-sized parcels that lack sidewalks, trails, or practical pedestrian access to town, making them entirely vehicle-dependent. The separation of residential areas from businesses and services, combined with the area's steep topography, limits infrastructure improvements and the potential for new housing near downtown. Traffic congestion along Highway 285 creates additional accessibility challenges. Bailey's location along a major highway, natural beauty, and local businesses provide a strong foundation for revitalization. With strategic investment in housing, pedestrian infrastructure, and essential services, Bailey could transform into a more family based and self-sufficient community.

Grant and Shawnee
Small unincorporated communities along 285 that both sit right above 8,000 feet above sea level. Both have a large retirement population and access to nature. Shawnee has a Post Office and localized central water system.

Pine Junction
8,448 feet above sea level

Pine Junction is a small, unincorporated community that straddles the border of Park and Jefferson Counties at the junction of U.S. Route 285 and Jefferson County Road 126, which heads into the Pine Valley area. A small area along the county line is zoned Rural Center Mixed Use and hosts a few local businesses.

Bailey Subarea Strategies

Pedestrian Infrastructure
   A. Implement pedestrian safety improvements such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and safe walking and biking routes, connecting businesses, trails, and community spaces

Essential Services and Amenities
   A. Encourage the establishment of a local grocery store, expand access to healthcare services and improve broadband and cellular service coverage and reliability

Recreation and Open Space
   A. Encourage a recreation center for all ages, expand public parks, playgrounds, and open spaces and establish a network of trails linking common community spaces.

Housing and Infrastructure
   A. Increase workforce housing, senior living options, and multi-family developments.
   B. Expand water, power, and wastewater infrastructure.
   C. Encourage local mass transportation service.

Limited Land for Growth
   A. Identify and assess available land for development.
   B. Encourage creative land-use solutions for downtown expansion.
   C. Promote infill development and mixed-use projects in areas with existing infrastructure.

Connectivity and Transportation
   A. Implement traffic management solutions to ease congestion and enhance safety measures on Highway 285.

Water and Utility Concerns
   A. Address water quality issues through testing and infrastructure improvements.
   B. Secure funding for enhanced water, power, and wastewater services.

Economic Growth and Downtown Revitalization
   A. Partner with local and state organizations to promote business development and a pedestrian-friendly downtown with improvements such as public art and signage to attract travelers and encourage local spending and businesses that serve both residents and visitors.
   B. Improve broadband infrastructure to support local economic growth.
   C. Promote mixed-use development at the top of Crow Hill.

Recreation and Tourism
    A. Develop Bailey as a destination for outdoor recreation and tourism.
    B. Improve access to trails, parks, open spaces and associated parking.
    C. Secure conservation easements and expand public open space for recreation and tourism.

Traffic and Safety Improvements
    A. Partner with CDOT to create safe crossing areas, reduce speed limits, congestion and implement traffic calming measures on Highway 285.
    B. Study the feasibility of an access road parallel to Highway 285.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A

[County-wide Survey Results](#)

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