



Development Services Department

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 12, 2026

TO: Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)

FROM: Development Services Department (DSD)

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan

CC: Greg Rast

ATTACHMENTS: None

Respectfully, DSD is asking the BOCC for guidance prior to issuing a Request for Proposal related to a new comprehensive plan. DSD wants to make sure that the scope is right sized by considering some of the work that has already been accomplished and work that can be done in-house by our staff. Certain considerations include previous public input efforts and balancing our staff's workload between clearing land use cases and working on a new comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan is a vital policy document for the County and clarity between the BOCC's intent and scope of work is key to the success of land use decisions for years to come.

There are three recent public input efforts that impact on our current decision making and could influence a new comprehensive plan. The 2030 plan began a public participation campaign in fall of 2019. The outreach was accomplished through a combination of surveys, workshops, open houses, direct emails and comments. Second, the recent feedback DSD sought for the land division code also included a website for receiving comments, surveys, emails and an open house. Finally, the recent hearings on Areas of Impact included extensive public testimony related to future growth of the County with respect to Cities. While the 2030 Comprehensive Plan feedback was from 6 years ago, the land division effort was about a specific issue and the Area of Impact hearing related to City growth, all this information does relate to the overall tenor of how land use is viewed throughout the County. New public outreach could be targeted to specific projects mentioned later in this memo.

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There are actionable steps DSD can take to overwrite the current plan while adding to public input that has already occurred. The 2030 land use map is mostly comprised of Agriculture/High Intensity Agriculture. DSD should work with stakeholders to identify areas for commercial development in the unincorporated county. The County is blessed with major roads and highways that provide opportune locations for commercial or industrial projects. A well-rounded land use map could encourage further commercial and industrial development.

Another approach is sub-area plans. For example, the 2030 plan discussed agricultural tourism. Canyon County is home to many wineries in a concentrated region that might benefit from a customized zoning code. DSD could solicit specific feedback from winery owners and residents in the winery area to implement their vision. This is just one example of a sub-area plan concept.

The recent areas of impact realignment is an opportunity to discuss how the County can support City goals where appropriate. Staff could solicit specific feedback from cities and residents about AOI areas to direct growth to regions with City services that would support more intense development.

In fall of 2025, the BOCC directed staff to stop efforts on the implementation of the 2030 plan and pursue a new plan. Since that date, DSD has been gathering information and discussing approaches to this effort. Our recommendation for the BOCC is a series of concrete actions, noted earlier in this memo, that will effectively overwrite the current comprehensive plan. Our purpose for this memo and our overall discussion is to create a scope for the new plan that uses County resources wisely. We appreciate your feedback on the following decision points:

1. The Local Land Use Planning Act requires that the Comprehensive Plan include the following components: Property Rights, Population, School Facilities and Transportation, Economic Development, Land Use, Natural Resources, Hazardous Areas, Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities, Transportation, Recreation, Special Areas or Sites, Housing, Community Design, Agriculture, Implementation, National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors, and Public Airport Facilities. Most of the concerns relayed to staff regarding the current comprehensive plan center around the Future Land Use Map and the associated Land Use and Community Design Chapter.
 - a. Does the Board of County Commissioners support a Comprehensive Planning process that focuses on the **Future Land Use Map and Land Use and Community Design chapter**, with minimal data updates to other plan components?
2. **Public involvement** forms the basis for policy decisions in the Comprehensive Plan. Does the Board of County Commissioners support a public involvement process that builds upon recent involvement received for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Area of Impact hearings, and the administrative land division survey and open house? Under this approach, public involvement would be tailored to specific areas and implementation and would maintain the sentiment if not the exact verbiage of the 2030 vision that has been consistently affirmed through past and recent public involvement efforts: “Ensuring the quality of life for Canyon County residents by preserving our agricultural heritage and planning for a smart growth future through physical and fiscal management”.
3. **Specific Area Plans** would allow for a more nuanced approach to the comprehensive plan that could recognize unique areas of the county where a blanket agricultural designation is not appropriate. The 2030 Comprehensive Plan suggests the following overlays: Scenic Byway and Historic Preservation Overlay, Agritourism Overlay, Intensive Agricultural Overlay, Wildfire Risk Overlay, Airport Overlay, and Parks and Recreation Overlay. The plan also highlights special

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areas and sites in the county, including Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District, Map Rock Petroglyphs Historic District, Snake River Canyon Scenic Byway, and Sunnyslope American Viticultural Area. The plan also envisions a concept for agricultural designations with smaller parcel sizes of 5 and 20 acres. The overlays and special designations have not all been mapped, and the details of what is desired for each of these overlays or areas have not (in most cases) been vetted with the public, stakeholders, or elected officials.

- a. Does the Board of County Commissioners support formalizing specific area plans and overlays within the new comprehensive plan, and if so, what areas and overlays are initially of interest? While many of the above-mentioned overlays have distinct boundaries, the agricultural areas (Intensive Agriculture, AC-5 and AC-20) have either been applied broadly or have not been geographically identified. If specific agricultural designations are desired, what data or approach should be used to map the areas (soil and slope maps, existing parcel sizes, public involvement)?
4. **Implementation plans** are largely lacking from the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. DSD intends to develop implementation plans alongside any changes to the comprehensive plan, with concurrent code updates related to specific areas and overlays being submitted shortly after plan adoption.
5. **Staff capacity and budget:** the plan scope and related code updates will require significant staff effort and consultant services. DSD does have internal skills and talent that can be devoted to developing a comprehensive plan, particularly in the form of data updates, maps, and public involvement. However, applications will continue to be submitted, and current planning cases could experience increased backlog. Discussion around priorities, budget, and staff capacity will help in formulating a consultant scope of work for the upcoming RFP.

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