

**PARK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT**

Planning Commission Meeting Date: April 17, 2025

**To:** Planning Commissioners

**Date:** April 16, 2025

**Prepared by:** Jennie Gannon, Planner III

**Subject:** 2025 Park County Strategic Master Plan

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**BACKGROUND**

Per Colorado Revised Statute (CRS) Section 30-28-106 every County must have a Strategic Master Plan (SMP) made and adopted by the County Planning Commission. The Strategic Master Plan is an advisory document that outlines the County’s objectives and goals for the physical development of the County. It will serve as a guiding resource for land use decisions, capital improvements and regional collaboration, and will provide a foundation for updating land use regulations. Park County’s first SMP was adopted in 2001 and updated in 2016. Recognizing that another update was required to address the significant changes and emerging challenges in the County since 2016, the County obtained a grant from the Department of Local Affairs which could be used for the evaluation and revision of the Strategic Master Plan and Land Use Regulations. An Invitation for Bid for the project was posted in January, 2024.

The County received three bids and all were interviewed. The bids were presented to the Board of County Commissioners in March of 2024 and the contract was awarded to Electra Johnson Design & Planning, LLC (EJD+P). A steering committee made up of staff from the Planning Department, Public Works, Public Relations, Human Services, and County Management, was assembled and met several times with the consultants to devise a plan for community outreach. Over 65 stakeholders were interviewed including fire departments and other emergency services, schools, County department heads, Chambers of Commerce, utilities, various businesses, and non-profit organizations. A 33-question survey was distributed online and at several community events. Concurrently, the consultants and staff members hosted community workshops in Guffey, Alma, Fairplay, Hartsel, Lake George, Jefferson and Bailey between July and September of 2024. These workshops were set up for small group discussions around several different topics related directly to the requirements of the Strategic Master Plan and ranged in size from approximately 10 to 45 participants. From all of this input, the Consultants drafted a Strategic Master Plan for Park County that took in the concerns and the ideas for the future given by the Park County public, addressed the issues, and suggested many ways forward for the County.

The Steering Committee was given the first half of the draft in December 2024 and it was presented to the Planning Commission for the first time on January 8, 2025. The complete draft was presented on February 12, 2025. On February 19, EJD+P met with both the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. At this point, the DOLA grant had been fully paid out and it was decided that the Planning Commission would take on the revisions needed and the finalization of the SMP. After four more work sessions, the Planning Commission has finished the final draft and has presented it twice in public meetings that were noticed in The Flume and on the Park County Website. The final draft has been reviewed by Park County legal counsel for compliance with the Colorado Revised Statutes.

This is the first public hearing for adoption of the 2025 Park County Strategic Master Plan. This hearing has been noticed per regulations in The Flume, two weeks prior to the hearing, and on the Park County Website. Pursuant to C.R.S. §24-32-3209 all adjacent Counties, Fairplay and Alma, the incorporated towns within

Park County, and Blue River, the only municipality within three miles of the Park County border, were emailed notice of this hearing and a copy of the final draft of the SMP on April 10, 2025.

## **STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN**

The 2025 SMP is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the Plan and the Demographics of Park County. Chapter 2 lists the Countywide Goals and Strategies which meet the requirements of C.R.S. §30-28-106 and are made up of unmet goals from the 2016 SMP as well as new goals built from the concerns the public voiced during the outreach in 2024. This SMP identifies nine important goals, and possible strategies for meeting them, for the County to consider:

- G1. Improve Roads and Transportation Connectivity.
- G2. Expand Housing Access and Affordability.
- G3. Support Emergency Services and Disaster Preparedness.
- G4. Strengthen Community Health and Essential Services.
- G5. Water/Wastewater: Conservation and Preservation.
- G6. Improve Decentralized Infrastructure Systems.
- G7. Protect Natural Landscapes and Resources.
- G8. Expand Recreation and Tourism
- G9. Develop a Diverse Economy and Support Local Business
- G10. Improve Governance and Land Use Planning

Chapter 3 describes the Subareas/Rural Centers of Park County. Each of the four subareas has its own character, mostly described by its environment, its rural centers and its people, and each of the four is very different from the others. The four Subareas are broken out as:

- Guffey/Lake George/Tarryall/Hartsel
- Como/Jefferson
- Fairplay/Alma (unincorporated areas)
- Bailey/Grant and Shawnee/Pine Junction

The Countywide Goals and Strategies apply to these subareas, but specific strategies are provided for each, based on what was heard at the community workshops and mentioned in the survey.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Planning staff received 5 written comments from the public recommending amendments to the Strategic Master Plan. These have been given to all members of the Planning Commission and attached to the online agenda for public view.

*“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.” – Vision Statement, 2025 Park County Strategic Master Plan*