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MEMORANDUM

To:	Advancing Adams County Comprehensive Plan Team
From:	Jessica Garrow, Nicole Rebeck-Stout, Callie New
Date:	May 14, 2021
Project Name:	Advancing Adams
Project #:	6403
Subject:	Advancing Adams Comprehensive Plan Scenario Planning Framework

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Phase 2 of Advancing Adams includes the creation, analysis, and community feedback on three growth scenarios. The following framework is provided to offer an overview of the Scenario Planning process, including outlining a process for refining our geographic focus, identifying the three growth models that will be applied in the three scenarios, and an initial list of performance measures that may be considered. This framework proposes a high amount of coordination in the development and analysis of the three growth scenarios, ensuring that, for instance, transportation networks considered will be analyzed accordingly in the Comprehensive Plan, and, vice versa, land uses proposed in the Comprehensive Plan will work with/be analyzed in the TMP. We have also incorporated the three engagement windows and topics we propose to explore with the community for you to consider as you review the framework.

The intent of this memo is to vet our process and methodology with you prior to beginning the scenario work, so that we may agree on the approach before we dive into draft frameworks. The intent is to also begin coordination across the three plans. Review of this memo is anticipated to take 2-3 hours.

The following step-by-step framework is proposed for this initial conversation. There are three key things we hope you will focus on as you review this document: areas of stability and change (Step 1), performance measures (Step 6), and how goals and tradeoffs are expressed to the public (Step 7). These three topics are anticipated to be a main part of the Milestone Meeting on May 26th to ensure these inputs are discussed and refined with the larger Adams County staff team. Based on input and feedback from that meeting, we will begin developing the scenarios. We request any feedback on these topics by May 21st so it can be incorporated into that Milestone Meeting presentation.

1. Identify Areas of Stability / Areas of Change

Areas of stability and areas of change provides an easy way for community members to identify areas where growth should be accommodated and areas that should be left alone. Areas of stability can communicate what elements are being protected and why it is important, while areas of change can communicate what types of development, activity, or quality of life is being supported. Below are examples that are relevant in Adams County based on the work completed in Phase 1. Additional refinement is anticipated in the Milestone Meeting. Also included below is an example of the type of feedback that could be requested in Engagement Window 1.

Areas of Stability – places to be protected or avoided from development

Examples:

- Existing "legacy" neighborhoods (i.e., 100% single family neighborhoods; mobile home parks)

- Affordable housing (formally deed restricted, or free-market housing that

serves 100% of area median income or lower)
- Open space, parks, and protected lands
- Wildlife corridors
- Prime habitat and natural amenities
- Sensitive soils
- Prime agriculture land
- Wetlands/riparian areas/flood zones

- Cultural landscapes
- Historically significant structures or areas
- Areas with drinking water risk
- Airport overlay areas
- Proposed scenic byway area along Riverdale Road

Areas of Change – best places to accommodate growth

Examples:
- Remediation / superfund sites
- Opportunity zones
- DRCOG centers with buffer to capture more unincorporated area
- Areas with low density, older building stock using census tract data
- Areas within 1 mile of bus/transit service.
- Vacant land
- Census tracts with blend of housing types with older housing stocks
- Areas with high level of recent land sale transactions
- Areas with (1) rising rental rates, (2) decreasing market capitalization rate,

- (3) low vacancy rates / high occupancy rates
- Areas of county with significantly slower increasing property values in comparison with other areas.
- Areas zoned for agriculture that do not contain prime farmland soils
- Unincorporated areas located within 1 mile of municipal area boundaries.
- Areas considered well-served from the 20-Minute Community analysis, meeting six or more criteria.
- Corridor subareas

Engagement Window 1 – June 5 (Brighton Summer Fest):
Example: Adams County is projected to grow by 220,000 by the year 2040! Help us identify areas that should not change, and areas that could develop more densely to accommodate growth. What types of housing do you think our communities need? What types of transportation do you use today and hope to use in the future? How can growth and development be sustainable and be resilient to climate change? Where is there a greater need for parks, open space and trails?

2. **Define and quantify areas of focus**

This step will break the County into manageable pieces based on natural breaks such as transportation infrastructure, organizing the County into different priorities that go beyond a zoning map. The Adams County Transects from Phase 1 will be integrated as possible. We will quantify areas of change acreages within each geographic area to understand land availability in relation to growth expectations. Once the geographies to be studied and mapped are defined, the scenario work within each will begin.

The three geographies we will use will divide the county from west to east. These geographies are consistent with outreach efforts:
- West Adams County (County border to Brighton)
- Central Adams County (Platte River to Imboden Road)
- Rural (Imboden Road to County border)

3. Identify 3 growth models

Here we will identify the growth policies that the County desires to evaluate through scenarios. We will develop three unique land use, transportation, and open space scenarios that proactively plan the population projections that are anticipated by the year 2040. Each scenario will identify and allocate space for Adams County's future households. The ways in which growth will be absorbed will vary between each scenario, and we will work with Adams County staff to determine how much growth may be allocated to municipalities versus unincorporated areas in each scenario. The overarching Value Lenses of equity, sustainability, and livability will be incorporated.

Examples:
- Business as usual: existing zoning (it is important to note that this scenario might not be able to accommodate the projected population growth or the growth will result in widespread sprawl, but we will learn that though the process)
- Many smaller centers strategically located throughout county
- Fewer larger/denser centers strategically located throughout county

The assumptions in the three scenarios will be applied to each geography while being mindful of context, however we anticipate that some densities, land uses, and transportation patterns will make more sense in some areas of the County than others. The purpose of the scenarios is to vision and receive feedback from the public; this is an opportunity to test big ideas that may seem unfeasible given current cultural, political, or economic climates.

4. How will these growth models be applied in each plan?

Land use, transportation, and parks and open space priorities will vary in each scenario. The SWOT analysis from Phase 1 will be integrated to address challenges or opportunities that have been identified. Themes / goals / policies will be applied where relevant. Elements proposed in each of the three plans' scenarios will be coordinated and integrated throughout, ensuring that, for instance, transportation networks considered in Scenario 1 will be analyzed accordingly in the Comprehensive Plan. Below are some examples of how different topics could be expressed in the growth models outlined in section 3. Additional refinement is anticipated in the Milestone Meeting. Also included below is an example of the type of feedback that could be requested in Engagement Window 2.

Example:

	Business as Usual	Many small nodes	Fewer large nodes	Theme / Goal / Policy
Housing Priorities	Growth predominantly accommodated through construction of new single-family homes expanding east and north.	Medium density scattered throughout the County, targeting multimodal stations and key corridors or intersections within Areas of Change.	High density in a few strategic nodes, targeting western Adams County, multimodal stations, and key corridors or intersections within Areas of Change.	Areas of Change: Accommodate projected housing growth in the County in a way that supports equity, sustainability and livability. Areas of Consistency: Ensure preservation of existing housing stock

				that provides attainable housing options.
Transportation Priorities	Primarily auto-centric corridors with some investment in enhanced transit, biking, and walking. Land use is less supportive of multimodal transportation options.	Slightly higher transit service levels, with focus on improved coverage at multimodal hubs and on-demand service area. Investment in bicycle and pedestrian amenities through lower cost bike routes and wayfinding.	Focus on improved transit frequency rather than coverage. Significant investment in first and last mile connections to multimodal hubs including designated bike lanes and trails. Designated multimodal spine corridors with heavy investment. Higher threshold for tradeoffs to vehicle efficiency.	Areas of Change: Accommodate growth in travel demand and more multimodal transportation preferences in a way that supports equity, sustainability, and livability. Areas of Consistency: Continue to ensure driving is an efficient and convenient option.
Parks, Open Space, and Trails Priorities	Parks -Parks provided in ratio to growing population, maintain level of service in proximity to residential addresses. Open Space -Open Space acquisitions and acreages maintain existing level of service in ratio to growing population (how much open space, what types). Trails -Emphasis on connecting to existing trails and completing identified future trail priorities.	Parks -Focus on existing regional park expansion and new regional parks to provide access opportunities for a greater geographical spread. -Emphasize neighborhood parks. Open Space -Open Space acquisitions focus on river corridors and prime wildlife habitat. Trails -Emphasis on connecting to regional trails and spreading recreation trail provisions to neighborhoods with fewer trail miles (such as the eastern portion of the county).	Parks -Provide community parks and urban parks in relationship to dense residential and underserved populations. Open Space -Open Space acquisitions focused on large acreages where growth pressures occur that aren't high density land uses (i.e. center of the County). -Open Space acquisitions focus on recreation valued lands and agricultural lands. Trails -Emphasis on connecting to multimodal hubs and community parks. -Focus new trail connections and	Areas of Change: Accommodate parks, open space and trails in the County in a way that supports equity, sustainability and livability. Areas of Consistency: Maintain a standard of provision for existing levels of service in relationship to where population growth occurs.

			enhance existing trails in urban areas to serve higher density areas.	
Sustainability Priorities	Development pressures further stress broad areas of natural resources; preservation is limited to available land. Buildings become more efficient over time, but no concentrated effort on sustainable development.	Development pressures selectively stress distributed areas while preserving others. More compact and efficient design is encouraged and node development offers potential for more sustainable design.	Development pressures and preservation pressures are applied with concentrated focus; greater potential for connected and significant natural resource preservation. Dense development encourages more efficient use of space and potential for more sustainable and less energy consuming designs.	Areas of Change: Accommodate natural resources preservation, innovative uses that are community supportive, encourage equity and reduce and adapt to climate impacts. Areas of Consistency: Increase connectivity over time, provide additional options to support more sustainable lifestyles.

Questions for Adams County: Do these examples for how different policies would be articulated in the different growth models resonate with you? Does the Areas of Change and Consistency make sense in these scenarios?

5. **Apply these assumptions to scenarios through mapping.**

The three growth scenarios will be mapped to show how different priorities, goals, and policies result in different development futures. We are opting for a diagrammatic view of scenarios rather than a detailed land use map to avoid site specific concerns at neighborhood or block levels.

Example: one large node versus many small nodes
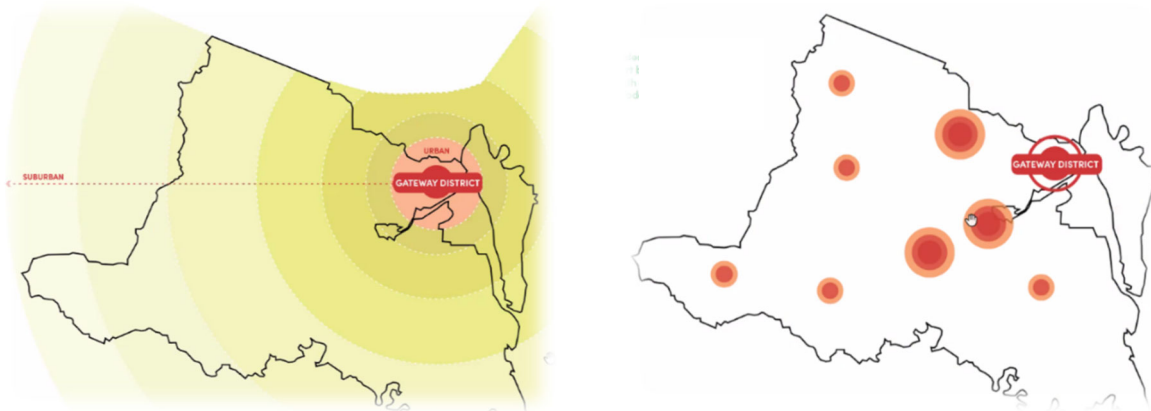
6. Evaluate and communicate the impacts of each scenario using performance measures.

This work will help communicate how well each scenario does in supporting Plan goals and provides an opportunity to review tradeoffs associated with each growth model. A mix of GIS- and Excel-based analyses will be provided. Tools may include Esri Urban Tool. Below are some example performance measures that could be used to evaluate the success of the different growth scenarios in meeting Adams County's goals. The specific performance measures should be determined prior to development of the scenarios. These will be further refined as part of the Milestone Meeting in May.

Example performance measures:

Built Environment and Connections	Percentage of population living within proximity of urban centers with 20-minute drive to all basic needs and necessary services including schools, libraries, health care/hospitals, community venues/recreation centers, parks, fire rescue and healthful retail food outlets
Built Environment and Connections	Percentage of population (or demographic segment of population) living within 1/2 mile of a bus line or 1-mile of rail station.
Built Environment and Connections	Percentage of population living within 1/2 mile of a low-stress bicycle facility
Built Environment and Connections	Achieved density versus preserved open space
Community and Housing	Number of Transit Oriented Development nodes with multi-family housing or job centered development
Community and Housing	Percentage of population with housing insecurity utilizing indicators for home value by census tract versus household income by census tract. Ratio of renters to owners.
Community and Housing	Variety of unit types.
Natural Environment	Percentage of County residents within a 10-minute walk of risk indicators: violent crime locations, vehicular fatality locations and superfund/brownfield/heavy industrial land use.
Natural Environment	Percentage of flood risk and wildfire risk areas protected from traditional development

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Natural Environment	Provision of parks and open space per population (level of service).
Natural Environment	Acres of land conserved with high quality habitat, agricultural soils, surface waters, and diverse ecosystems.
Natural Environment	Lands held in conservation easements.
Natural Environment	Conservation of urban tree canopy
Economic Development	Infrastructure service areas in locations with planned growth.
Economic Development	Daytime versus evening population.
Economic Development	Diversity of jobs.
Cultural Heritage	Percentage of agricultural land conserved.

Questions for Adams County: Do these performance measure examples reflect your expectations for this planning efforts? Are there any other performance measures you know need to be included that are not already listed above? We have found communicating scale bars rather than specific numbers can be advantageous when communicating with the public – does this resonate with you?

7. Engage community on scenarios preferences

Scenarios will be vetted through public engagement window #1 using map-based activities and preference surveys. We will use goals or values to communicate different growth models

Example: Scenario performance in various plan goal / value: transit and bicycle access, affordability, preservation of agricultural land and open space, balances natural and built environment, cost to service and maintain, etc.

Ultimately, feedback from the community will help the project team refine concepts, policies, and elements of each scenario that should be carried forward for the Preferred Land Use Map. This will be the main topic of engagement in Engagement Window 3.
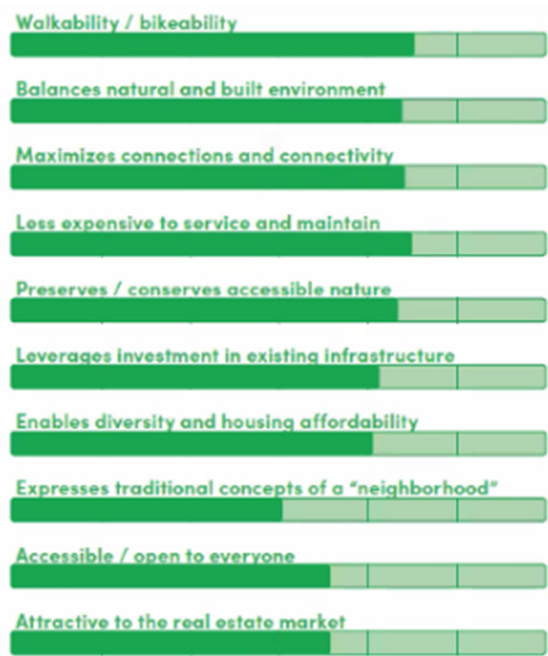
Engagement Window 3 – August
Engagement window 3 will occur after the preferred scenario has been identified. Some potential topics to explore with the community might be prioritization, implementation, or strategies.