

CITIZEN ACTION ALERT

From Chaffee United

www.chaffeeunited.org

Updated July 13, 2016

What's Happening? The County Is Proposing Changes to the Code

Land use planning is incredibly important. It determines what type of development happens in what locations and determines what our community will look like in the future. It is administered through regulatory policies in the Comprehensive Plan and in the Land Use Development Code. The Comprehensive Plan is the visionary document that sets high level policy direction and guides decision making for development, housing, economics, transportation, open space, and more. The land use development code is the regulatory framework that implements land development policies including zoning and subdivision regulations.

Why Does This Matter?

Four of these proposed changes have major implications for the future of Chaffee County that demand a more inclusive community dialogue to ensure these decisions made are consistent with the desires of County residents. These proposed changes alter policy goals stated in our Comprehensive Plan, the Citizen's Roundtable Recommendations, the Scenic Byways and Heritage Plan, and even the intent statements of the development code itself. These are significant decisions about the role of our local government and how it chooses to manage growth and development, not simple clarifications or process improvements.

Land use planning has a long contentious history in Chaffee County. Our Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2001 and the cause of much conflict. The Land Use Development Code was only updated in 2014, thirteen years after the Comprehensive Plan. To get the current

A Citizen's Alternative Response

The land use code Section 4.4.2 permits land use code amendments to be initiated by the Board of County Commissioners, the Planning Commission, the Director, or a member of the general public. A group of community members who participated in the development of the current development code and Roundtable process submitted formal

Planning Commissioners are volunteers selected by the Board of County Commissioners to oversee land use related issues. As one of their tasks, updating the code is a completely reasonable task. Language in a code may need clarification, processes may need to be made more efficient, or perhaps the requirements are not achieving the intended policy goals. We all want a clear and efficient land development code!

At the April 26, 2016 work session, the Planning Commission proposed five changes to the development code that would remove resource protection standards and increase the zoning density of the county.

development code adopted, it required a complex community engagement process that tried to represent the multiple stakeholder perspectives present in the county: real estate and development, water interests, recreationist, ranchers and agriculturalist, historical preservationist, our neighboring municipalities, and growth management advocates. The current code reflects a great deal of dialogue and collaboration to reach agreement. (For the full history of county planning, read this County [resolution](#).)

A more inclusive public engagement process and evidence based decision making should be required in any cases where substantial policy decisions are being made that have long term implications for County residents.

alternatives to the options proposed by the planning commission. The **Citizen's Alternative Proposal** can be read [here](#). This memo also includes a full summary of the current code and the Planning Commission changes. A summary chart of proposals is below.

	Planning Commission Proposal	Citizens Alternative Proposal
1	Remove open space dedication requirement for all subdivisions.	Maintain current dedication requirement and add in lieu of fee option.
2	Remove visual analysis requirement for all developments.	Maintain visual resource protection standards but clarify where necessary and make the need for the visual analysis more specific.
3	Increase the permitted density for Rural Recreation and Recreational zones from 1 dwelling unit/5 acres to 1 dwelling/2 acres.	Maintain current allowable densities for traditional subdivisions to maintain an incentive for development pattern that protects rural character.
4	Increase the maximum allowable density in the Residential zone from 2 dwelling unit/1 acre to 4 dwelling units/1 acre.	Assess where higher densities in Residential zone can be achieved and are most appropriate in three mile area around towns and cities consistent with desired regional growth plan. Designate future growth areas with appropriate high densities based on infrastructure and land suitability.

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What Can You Do?

- Help us educate the community!** Share information about this issue with your friends through social media or email.
- Attend the Public Hearing!** Attend the Planning & Zoning Commission Public Hearing **Tuesday, August 30th at 6 p.m.** to express your opinion about the decisions proposed by the P&Z for **open space options and visual resource protection**. The agenda will be uploaded as soon as it is available. This public hearing is the **ONLY** opportunity to make a public comment formally to the Planning Commission before they vote and forward their recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for their September 13th meeting.
- Write a letter!** If you cannot attend the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, please submit a written comment. You can send an email to Dan Swallow, Director of Development, who will forward to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Alternatively, you may submit an email to chaffeeunited@gmail.com **no later than August 24th** and we will submit to County for you.
- Vote for better governance!** Talk to all the candidates running for County Commissioner about County growth management and how they will approach these and other issues in the future. This election is a huge opportunity to improve how local decisions are made. Vote for more transparency, participatory decision making, and accountability!

To Submit a Public Comment PRIOR to the Public Hearing:

1. Address the letter to all the Planning Commissioners including:

- Mike Allen, Chair
- Karin Adams, Vice-Chair
- Rick Shovald
- Rob Treat
- Tracy Vandaveer
- Bruce Cogan
- Dan McCabe

2. Include the Development Director, Dan Swallow as a CC on the letter and send to him via email. It is probably a good idea to include Patty Baldwin on the email too. They will forward to the Planning Commission. Feel free to include the Board of County Commissioner for your District as well. If you don't know who that is, see this list [here](#). Emails are:

- Dan Swallow, Director of Development dswallow@chaffeecounty.org
- Patty Baldwin, Administrative Assistant pbaldwin@chaffeecounty.org

3. Include in your letter:

- Where you live in Chaffee County
- Your interest in these issues
- What course of action you recommend and how the public ought to be involved

4. If you want, feel free to post and share your letter on the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/chaffeeunited>

For more information and background materials visit www.chaffeeunited.com Current Issues