

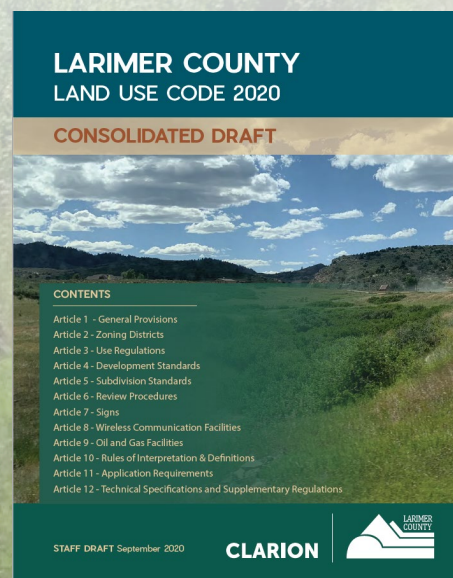
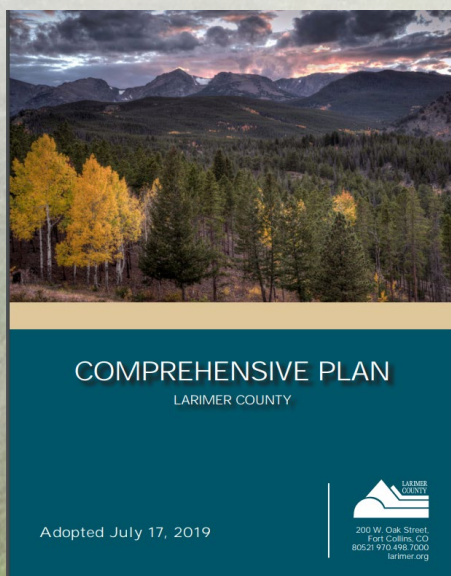
Background

Larimer County is updating its Land Use Code (“the Code”), which addresses how property is used and developed, and how development applications are reviewed. The current Land Use Code was adopted in 2000, with various amendments over the years. However, the Code has not been comprehensively updated for 30 years.

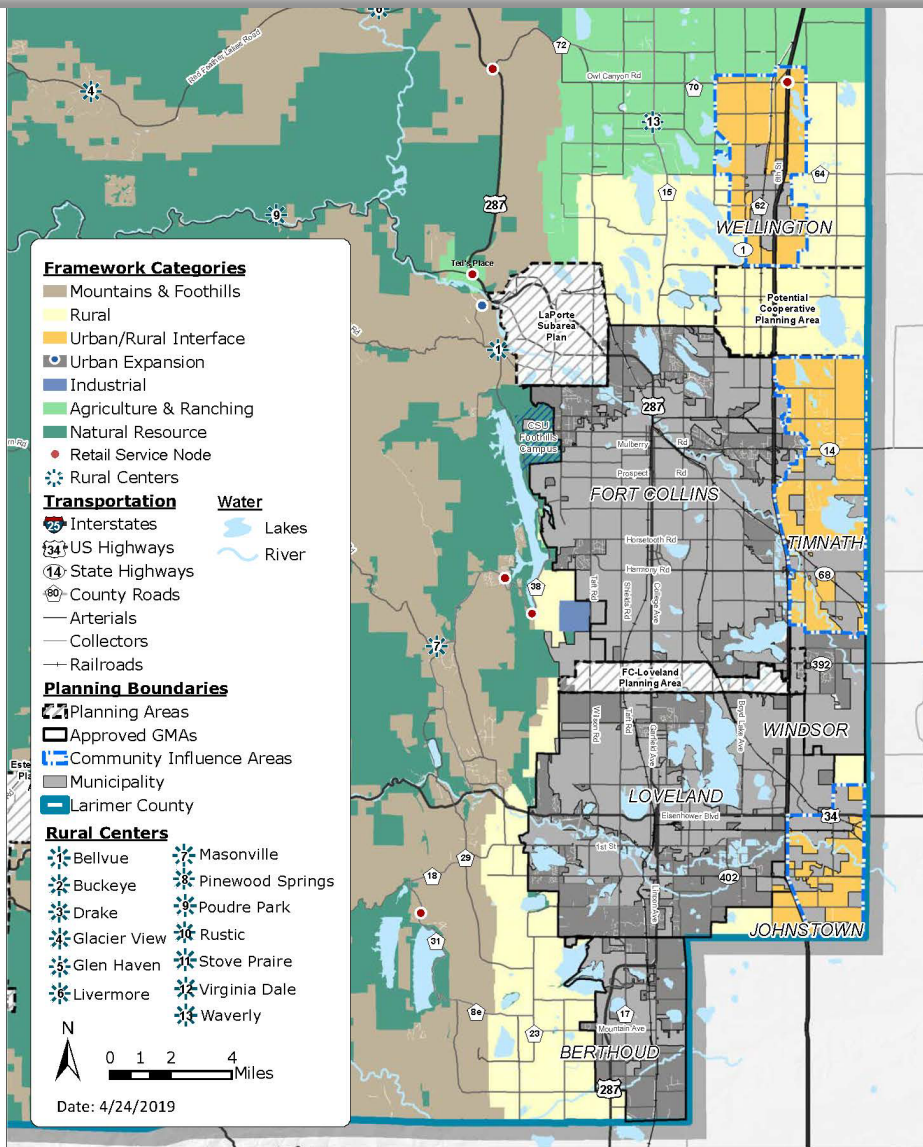
The Land Use Code 2020 project is intended to accomplish several goals:

- ✓ Implement the Larimer County Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Plan, Open Lands Plan, and other relevant plans;
- ✓ Update the zoning districts to align with the framework categories identified in the Comprehensive Plan (mountain and foothill, rural/agriculture, and urban);
- ✓ Update the standards and procedures for clarity, efficiency, and compliance;
- ✓ Establish standards that differentiate between urban and rural development;
- ✓ Introduce flexible tools and improve user-friendliness, including new graphics;
- ✓ Update procedures to support a fair, predictable, and efficient development review process; and
- ✓ Refine regulatory practices to address recovery efforts after unforeseen events.

The Land Use Code 2020 project does not involve updates to adopted County plans or the Building Code.



Implementing the Comprehensive Plan: Character Areas



The Larimer County Comprehensive Plan includes a Framework Map with nine development patterns that guide future land use decisions (see map, left). The Framework map and categories answer the following essential questions:

- Where should we live, work, play, and grow food?
- Where should we invest in infrastructure?
- Where and how should we protect and conserve watersheds, wildlife habitat, viewsheds, hazardous areas, and other resources?
- What type of County do we want to become?

To align with the Plan’s Framework categories, the Code is organized around four major “Character Areas”:

- Conservation & Agriculture
- Rural
- Mixed Center
- Urban

The table below indicates how the Framework categories and proposed character areas align.

Larimer County Comprehensive Plan Framework Category									
Character Area	Urban Expansion	Urban/Rural Interface	Rural Center	Retail Services	Industrial	Rural	Agriculture & Ranch	Mountain & Foothills	Natural Resources
Conservation and Agriculture		❖				❖	❖	❖	❖
Rural		❖				❖	❖	❖	
Mixed Center		❖	❖	❖					
Urban	❖	❖			❖				



BIG IDEAS

- Expand the County’s zoning toolbox so that appropriate development may be built by-right (not subject to a more detailed level of review and approval by elected officials)
- Introduce new potential zoning districts to implement the Comprehensive Plan
- Ensure allowed uses and development standards align with the purpose of each zoning district



WHY DOES THE CODE ADDRESS THIS?

- Zoning districts are the main tool used to implement the framework categories established in the Comprehensive Plan
- Zoning districts provide the framework for future land use decisions and a basis to determine whether proposed uses are appropriate.



WHAT IS NOT CHANGING

- ☑ Existing zoning designations – no rezonings will occur as a direct result of Phase 1 of the Code update
- ☑ Growth Management Area boundaries and existing intergovernmental agreements
- ☑ Current standards for the Floodplain, Growth Management Area, and Cooperative Planning Area overlay districts



WHAT IS NEW?

1 Proposed Zoning Districts Tailored By Character Areas

Larimer County Comprehensive Plan Framework Categories

Character Area	Urban Expansion	Urban/Rural Interface	Rural Center	Retail Services	Industrial	Rural	Agriculture & Ranch	Mountain & Foothills	Natural Resources	Zoning Districts
Conservation and Agriculture						■	■	■	■	NR, A, FO, ACE
Rural		■				■	■	■		RR-1, RR-2, O
Mixed Center		■	■	■						IR, RC, CF
Urban/GMA	■	■			■					UR-1, UR-2, UR-3, MR, MHP, MU-N, MU-C, CC, CN, CD, IL, IH, AP



WHAT IS NEW?

2 New List of Zoning Districts

- New districts implement the Comprehensive Plan and provide more agriculture options
- Consolidated existing districts based on similarities

Base Zoning Districts
Conservation and Agricultural
NR Natural Resources
A Agriculture
FO Forestry
ACE Agricultural Commercial Enterprise
Rural
RR-1 Rural Residential
RR-2 Rural Residential
O Open
Mixed Center
IR Interface Residential
RC Rural Commercial
CF Community Facilities

Urban
UR-1 Urban Residential
UR-2 Urban Residential
UR-3 Urban Residential
MR Multifamily Residential
MHP Manufactured Housing Park
MU-N Mixed Use Neighborhood
MU-C Mixed Use Commercial
CC Commercial Corridor
CN Commercial Neighborhood
CD Commercial Destination
IL Industrial Light
IH Industrial Heavy
AP Airport
Planned Development
PD Planned Development
RPD Rural Planned Development

Overlay Zoning Districts
FP-O Floodplain Overlay
GMA Growth Management Area
CPA Cooperative Planning Area
AG-O Agricultural Overlay

3 Updated Dimensional Standards

- ✓ Some minimum lot, minimum setback, and maximum height standards adjusted to better distinguish between zoning districts
- ✓ Distinctions in minimum lot size requirements based on public water and sewer vs. well or septic system adjusted to only apply in districts with a significant amount of properties on well or septic systems

Table 2-4: Mixed Center Districts - Lot and Building Standards

Zoning Districts	IR	RC	CF
Lot Standards (Minimum)			
Lot area if well/septic	2 acres	5,000 sq. ft.	10,000 sq. ft.
Lot area if public water/sewer	21,780 sq. ft. ⁸⁵		
Setbacks (Minimum) [1]			
Front (ft)	20	15	20
Side (ft)	25	7	15
Rear (ft)	25	15	20
Height (Maximum) [2]			
Building height (ft)	40	45	40

NOTES

[1] Additional setback standards may apply; see §2.8.4.

[2] Height exceptions may apply; see §2.8.5.

5 Simplified O-Open District

- Refined intent with a clear residential focus, while still allowing other compatible rural uses
- Intended to minimize ongoing confusion associated with current standards
- Increase level of predictability for what types of uses and developments can be established

Phase 2 Topics:

- Agriculture overlay district
- Mapping and applying the new districts

Land Use Regulations



BIG IDEAS

- Use regulations apply to specific land uses and activities to ensure compatibility with neighboring properties
- Enhance the use regulations by:
 - Improve the organization and clarity of the use table
 - Define all land uses
 - Making the use regulations more user-friendly
- Clarify accessory use standards to better distinguish between accessory and primary uses



WHY DOES THE CODE ADDRESS THIS?

- All land uses are not appropriate for every property. The Code helps identify the land uses that are most compatible with the character and physical environment of specific areas.
- Certain land uses require a higher level of scrutiny (public hearings and approval from elected officials) based on the size, location or nature of the activity.
- Use-specific standards prevent and mitigate potential noise, odor, and visual impacts of certain activities.



WHAT IS NOT CHANGING

- ☑ Existing land uses (activities, businesses, etc.) including designated nonconforming uses
- ☑ Many currently identified land use types and associated standards and definitions with some consolidation to simplify the Code



WHAT IS NEW?

1 New Uses, Use-Specific Standards, and Definitions



Some expanded housing options such as single-family attached, live/work, and co-housing units



Additional agricultural uses (See Agriculture Fact Sheet for more information)



New uses that are missing from the current Code such as microbreweries, indoor recreation facilities, commercial kennels and assembly uses



New standards and definitions for new uses (e.g. community garden, co-housing, and outdoor recreation facility) to mitigate negative impacts

2 Enhanced Accessory and Temporary Use Standards



Clarify which zoning districts allow various sizes/intensities of accessory uses



New criteria to review accessory uses that have grown into principal uses



Separate new use tables for accessory and temporary uses



WHAT IS NEW?

4 Two Tables – Rural and Urban

Table 3-1: Table of Allowed Uses – Rural

R = Permitted Use SP = Site Plan Review AS = Administrative Special Review S = Special Review
 AC = Accessory T = Temporary Blank Cell = Prohibited use * = Use-Specific Standards Apply

CHARACTER AREA	CONSERVATION & AGRICULTURE				RURAL			MIXED CENTER			Use-Specific Standards
District	NR	A	FO	ACE	RR-1	RR-2	O	IR	RC	CF	

- Organized by character area (informed by the Framework categories in the Comprehensive Plan)

Table 3-2: Table of Allowed Uses – Urban

R = Permitted Use SP = Site Plan Review AS = Administrative Special Review S = Special Review
 AC = Accessory T = Temporary Blank Cell = Prohibited use * = Use-Specific Standards Apply

CHARACTER AREA	URBAN											Use-Specific Standards	
District	UR-1	UR-2	UR-3	MR	MH	MU-N	MU-C	CC	CN	CD	IL		IH

- Allows for an easy distinction between areas outside of (rural) and within (urban) adopted Growth Management Areas.

5 User-Friendly Tables

Use permissions listed for easy reference and updated to reflect new procedures

New use categories and subcategories organized by intensity

New thresholds (based on size, location of the activity, etc.) to determine level of review and/or additional standards required

Table 3-1: Table of Allowed Uses – Rural

R = Permitted Use SP = Site Plan Review AS = Administrative Special Review S = Special Review
 AC = Accessory T = Temporary Blank Cell = Prohibited use * = Use-Specific Standards Apply

	Conservation and Agricultural				Rural			Mixed Center			Use-Specific Standards	
Proposed	NR	A	FO	ACE	RR-1	RR-2	O	IR	RC	CF		
PUBLIC, CIVIC & INSTITUTIONAL USES												
Parks and Open Lands												3.3.4.C
Natural Resources & Wildlife Area	R*	R*	R*	R*	R*	R*	R*				R*	
Park or Playground	R*	R*	R*	R*	R*	R*	R*	R*	R*	R*	R*	
COMMERCIAL USES												
Agriculture & Animal Uses												
Garden Supply Center		S	S	SP	S	S	S	S	S	SP		
Kennel, Commercial												
Indoor Only		AS	AS	SP	AS	AS		AS	SP			
Outdoor Animal Use Area		S	S	AS	S	S		S	AS			
Pet Animal Service Facility		AS	AS	SP	AS	AS		AS	SP			
Recreation & Entertainment												
Campground		S*	S*	SP*	S*	S*		S*	S*	SP*		3.3.5.C

Cross-reference to use-specific standards with asterisks indicating additional standards apply



BIG IDEAS

- Development standards set minimum requirements for each part of the physical environment (land, utilities, buildings) that form a development.
- New context-based standards move away a “one-size-fits-all” approach
- Specific standards apply to a project based on its location and size
- “Larimer County coordinates planning processes and land division patterns to attain efficient and responsible growth that maintains compatibility with adjacent areas, sensitive environmental areas, and promotes a sense of community.” (*Larimer County Comprehensive Plan*, p.40)



WHY DOES THE CODE ADDRESS THIS?

- Development standards affect the quality of development from protection of sensitive and natural areas to design of the site to building design and other specific site features. The Code includes these standards
 - To protect Larimer County’s life safety, public health, and unique sense of place and character.
 - To stabilize and enhance property values and ensure predictability and fairness in the development process.



WHAT IS NOT CHANGING

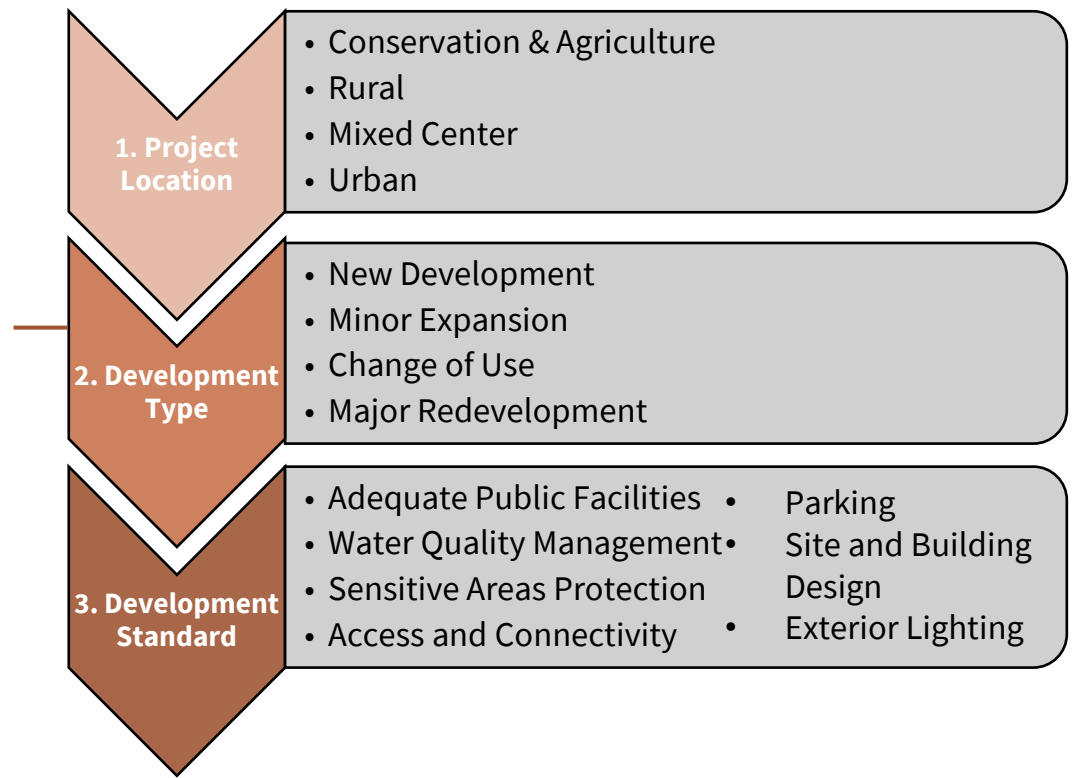
- ☑ Current standards for adequate public facilities, environmental resources (hazards, wetlands, wildlife, wildfire, wastewater, commercial mineral deposits), off-street parking and loading, and landscaping.
- ☑ Established developments are not subject to new standards in the Code unless the property owners choose to redevelop the property
- ☑ Technical engineering, landscaping, and construction specifications



WHAT IS NEW?

Thresholds identify when **proposed development changes on a site** are sufficiently impactful that some or all of the site should be brought into compliance with some or all development standards. **This applies to new development only.**

1 Applicability by Development Type and Character Area





WHAT IS NEW?

2 Tailored by Character Area

- Modified standards to encourage context-sensitive design for new development
- See Exterior Lighting example below



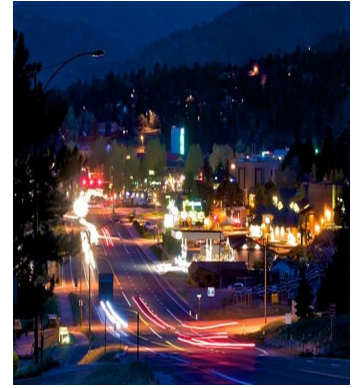
Conservation & Agriculture



Rural



Mixed Center



Urban/GMAs

- Basic standards apply
- Focused on: glare, limiting light trespass, and safety

- Additional standards apply
- Focused on: safety, reducing brightness and limiting light trespass

3 Standards for Urban & Mixed Center Areas: Connectivity & Circulation



Driveway requirements to ensure safe ingress and egress and meet engineering standards



Street connectivity requirements for adequate internal circulation and connections between development sites



Basic sidewalk, trail, and bike lane standards to improve pedestrian and bicycle travel

4 Standards for Urban Districts & GMAs: Building Design



Limited building orientation and compatibility standards for residential development



General building orientation, scale, and massing controls for nonresidential/mixed-use development

5 Consolidated Supplemental Materials



Detailed technical standards (e.g., water quality requirements) and application requirements removed from Code and relocated to a future technical supplement to the Code.

Phase 2 Topics:

- Off-street parking and loading
- Landscaping, Buffering, and Screening
- Sign Code



BIG IDEAS

- Update the Code to accommodate and support **changing agricultural practices** and trends.
- Recognize **different sizes and types of agriculture** with a tailored approach to zoning districts, use regulations, and development standards.
- “Protection of important farmlands provides many benefits, ranging from protecting the quality of our soil and food supply to maintaining community identity and separation.” (*Larimer County Comprehensive Plan, p. 14*)



WHY DOES THE CODE ADDRESS THIS?

- Agriculture in Larimer County has been a staple of the community since its inception and is an important part of the County’s history.
- The Code allows for and encourages a wide range of agricultural activity across rural and urban zoning districts.
- Use-specific and general development standards prevent and mitigate potential noise, odor, and visual impacts of new agricultural activities.



WHAT IS NOT CHANGING

- ☑ Continuing to allow for a wide range of agricultural uses and activities
- ☑ Current principal and accessory agricultural uses carried forward with minor or no changes
- ☑ Right-to-Farm policy



WHAT IS NEW?

1

Conservation & Agricultural Zoning Districts



NR

Natural Resources

Maintain the character of natural areas, public lands, and open lands.



FO

Forestry

Conserve forest resources and protect the natural environment.



A

Agriculture

Encourage agricultural cultivation and production activities.



ACE

Agricultural Commercial Enterprise




Promote commercial and industrial uses that support agricultural operations.



WHAT IS NEW?

2 Expanding the Definition of "Farm"

- Not limited to three acres
- No industry-specific exceptions

			
Category	FARM	URBAN FARM	HOBBY FARM
Uses	Full range of ag uses, multiple primary uses	Full range of ag uses, at scale with site	Limited range of ag uses to mitigate impacts to neighbors

3 Addressing Urban Agriculture

- ☑ Expanded allowances for smaller-scale agricultural activities on properties in the Growth Management Areas (GMA)
- ☑ New uses and/or use definitions for urban agriculture such as:
 - Urban Agricultural Operation
 - Community Garden
 - Apiary and backyard chickens

4 More Flexible Allowances for Uses



Multiple principal uses allowed on a property



Use-specific standards for new development and limited existing uses (e.g., feed lots and equestrian operations) to mitigate impacts on neighboring properties



Specific zoning district allowances for all accessory agricultural uses (e.g., agritourism and value-added agricultural processing)

— New subcategories in Use Tables (e.g., animal agriculture)

For more information, refer to the Use Regulations Fact Sheet.

4 Updated Conservation Development and Rural Land Use Plan Standards

For more information, refer to the Land Division Fact Sheet.

Phase 2 Topics:

- Urban agriculture
- Livestock and poultry classification
- Density transfers
- Agriculture overlay district
- Expanded options for agricultural labor housing

Development Review Procedures



BIG IDEAS

- Improve the organization and clarity of review procedures to support predictable and timely application review.
- “Facilitate open, inclusive and respectful public participation and engagement with all community members in proactive planning projects and the development review process to foster better decision-making and an informed community.” (*Larimer County Comprehensive Plan*, p. 31)



WHY DOES THE CODE ADDRESS THIS?

- Procedures guide how applications for development projects are accepted, reviewed, and acted upon by staff and local officials
- Well-written regulations make it easy for staff, the development community, and elected official to know exactly what is required for approval of applications and help ensure consistent administration over time



WHAT IS NOT CHANGING

- Authority of Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners
- Current procedures for: code amendments, appeals, zoning variances, sketch plan, special review, and locations and extent
- Required submittal materials and option for informal project inquiries



WHAT IS NEW?

1 Summary of Development Review Procedures

- A snapshot of all review procedures, review and decision-making authorities, and public notice requirements

Table 6-1: Development Review Procedures Summary

Application Type	Section Reference	Sketch Plan Required?	Decision-Making Bodies			
			Director	Planning Commission	BCC	BOA
Site Development Procedures						
Site plan review	6.4.1	No	D [1]		<A>	
Administrative special review	6.4.3	No	D [1]		<A>	
Special review	6.4.2	Yes	R	<R>	<D>	
Location and extent	6.4.4	Yes	R	<D>		
1041 review	6.4.5	Yes	R	<R>	<D>	
Land Division Procedures						
Administrative subdivision	6.5.3	Yes	D [1]		<A>	
Subdivision concept plan	6.5.4	Yes	R	<R>	<D>	
Preliminary plat	6.5.5	Yes	R	<R>	<D>	
Final plat	6.5.6	No	D		<A>	

R = Review & Recommendation D = Review & Decision
A = Appeal <> = Public Hearing

Development Review Procedures



WHAT IS NEW?

2 Common Review Procedures

- Same flowchart used for every application type to ensure consistency
- Eliminates the need to amend multiple sections of the development regulations if a standard procedure is revised



3 Simplified Site Plan Review

Current Procedures:

General Site Plan

Public Site Plan

New Procedures:

Site Plan

Administrative Special Review

- Removes subjective review criteria and focuses on ensuring compliance with the Code's development standards
- Revises applicability requirements to allow smaller projects to be approved faster
- Maintains exemptions for certain projects such as single-family dwellings and accessory structures

4 Minor Modification

- Replaces current administrative zoning variance procedure
- Expands the list of eligible modification types

5 Administrative Special Review

- Consolidates current Public Site Plan and Minor Special Review procedures
- Allows the Community Development Director to administratively approve application



BIG IDEAS

- Land division includes all processes by which a parcel of land is divided into multiple lots.
- Simplify and consolidate the current subdivision procedures and align with character areas.
- “Larimer County coordinates planning processes and land division patterns to attain efficient and responsible growth that maintains compatibility with adjacent areas, sensitive environmental areas, and promotes a sense of community.” (*Comprehensive Plan*, p. 40)



WHY DOES THE CODE ADDRESS THIS?

- Ensure development is designed to avoid, eliminate, or mitigate potential effects of natural hazards and other hazardous site conditions
- Encourage development that sets aside open space and maintains agricultural land
- Protect Larimer County’s life safety, public health, and ensure public facilities are available to serve development.



WHAT IS NOT CHANGING

- ☑ Current subdivision standards for site layout, lot and block standards, and street access standards
- ☑ Current residual land and/or common area use plans
- ☑ Current dedication of land and fee-in-lieu standards and easement and utility standards



WHAT IS NEW?

1 Streamlined Subdivision Procedures

Administrative Subdivision

Allows for the creation of small subdivisions (no more than two new lots)

Minor Plat Amendment

Allows for administrative review and Director approval of minor changes to approved plats

Final Plat

Allows for final approval by the Director without a public hearing

2 Revised Subdivision Standards

Rural Land Use Plan

- Updated to establish a process based on standard subdivision layout and review requirements
- Available in the Conservation & Agriculture and Rural character areas

Conservation Development

Expanded to include three types of development:

- **Rural** – large acreages with active agricultural uses
- **Open Space** – smaller residential lots with conserved open space and environmentally sensitive lands
- **Limited-Term** – Portion of larger development parcel preserved while awaiting future development

This graphic summarizes the process of determining the appropriate land division process(es) for any parcel in Larimer County.

