

STRASBURG PLAN

Amendment to the Adams County and Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plans

May 14, 2002
Adams County, Colorado
Arapahoe County, Colorado

Vision

- Maintain the small town character.
- Maintain the agricultural character.
- Plan for a population of 10,000 to 12,000 people in 2020.
- Designate an urban growth area of no more than two square miles as close as possible to the existing community.
- Provide jobs, shopping, health care and the other services necessary so people do not have to commute to the metro area.
- Provide generous amounts of public and private open space.
- Support the schools and other community facilities and organizations.
- Provide a new activity center and enhance existing “main street.”
- Encourage commercial, office and industrial development that is appropriate to the small town atmosphere and provides jobs and services for area residents.
- Provide a logical network of sidewalks and trails that supports the desired land use patterns of the community.
- Provide high quality transportation facilities, utilities and other essential services in a fiscally responsible manner.

Need for a Plan

Development Pressure

Strasburg, a small, unincorporated community about 40 miles east of downtown Denver, is poised for development. The settlement has been a farming center and home to a few hundred commuters willing to brave the hour-long drive from employment centers in metropolitan Denver. With the opening of Denver International Airport just 15 miles west of Strasburg and the expansion of suburban development in the metropolitan area, Strasburg has become more attractive to people looking for the amenities of a small rural town. That trend has not gone unnoticed by developers, who are planning large-scale developments in Strasburg and its neighboring towns of Bennett and Byers. Clearly, the time has come for the community to have a new master plan to guide new development.

Since the Strasburg community straddles the Adams and Arapahoe County line, the two Counties joined with the residents and landowners in the area to prepare a sub-area plan. Planning staff from the two Counties began working with the community in the spring of 2001 and completed the project in 2002. After some deliberation by the Counties' respective Planning staff, as well as some public input, a 16 square mile Planning Area surrounding Strasburg was determined to be the area of focus for the Strasburg Sub-Area Plan. The Planning Area contains 12 square miles in Adams County and 4 square miles in Arapahoe County

Growth Boundary

Although the Counties and the residents had recognized the need for a plan, the impetus to start the planning process resulted from the necessity to address the need for improved sewer treatment services and to adopt an "urban growth area." In 1997, the consortium of cities and Counties in the Denver metropolitan area, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), adopted an urban growth boundary for the metropolitan area. At first, Strasburg and some of the other rural towns on the fringe of the metropolitan area were not included because they were not viewed as part of the metropolitan area. A few years later, it became clear that many of these, here-to-fore designated rural settlements were attracting urban development. Furthermore, Strasburg and other settlements in Counties that belong to DRCOG were part of the Denver Regional planning process and were subject to the requirements of that process. Hence, when a new metropolitan district was formed and applied for a permit to construct a new sewer treatment plant, it was discovered that Strasburg was not eligible for a new sewer treatment plant because it was not included in the urban growth boundary.

An expansion of the existing permit for sewer treatment was finally approved with the expectation that Adams and Arapahoe County would complete the plan for Strasburg, as recognized by both Counties in their recently completed countywide plans.

Description of Strasburg

Strasburg was first settled in 1875 after completion of a major railroad line linking the east and west coasts. The settlement was named after John Strasburg, the section foreman who was responsible for constructing a rail siding that gave the settlement access to the railroad. Colorado Highways 36 and 40, and ultimately Interstate 70, have given Strasburg excellent highway access as well. The community has and continues to serve as a business and service center for the surrounding ranchers and farmers.

In addition to its agrarian role, the area gradually began to take on the role as a rural bedroom community in the 1950's. In 1958, several community residents and landowners decided that they needed a water and sewer system to provide services for existing homes and businesses and for new development. Instead of incorporating, they chose to create a water and sewer district. The Strasburg Water and Sanitation District offered tax-exempt status and the organizational structure necessary to build a public water and sewer system, but it did not require the community to take on the responsibility of providing municipal services such as police protection and road maintenance. The Counties retained the responsibility for providing those services. At about the same time Interstate 70 was constructed, providing better automobile access to the Denver Metropolitan Area to the west. The first hardy commuters began to move out to Strasburg and surrounding areas from Denver.

With a water and sewer system in place, Strasburg began to grow at a modest pace. In the 1970's and 80's, rural residential subdivisions in Arapahoe County joined similar development in Adams County, and Strasburg began to be ringed by 2 ½ and 5-acre home sites. The community now includes a total of nearly 3200 people, as many as 700 people in the community with another 2500 people in the surrounding area.

Projected Population With Activity Center					
Land Use Category	Acres	# DU/Acre	Total Units	People/HH	Total
Agriculture – 19 Acres	1061.7		56	3.278	183
Agriculture – 35 Acres	1704.0		49	3.278	160
Estate Residential	4455.6	0.4	1782	3.278	5842
Residential	597.7	4	2391	2.533	6056
*Activity Center	50.8	4	203.2		
	R-1-C		101.6	2.533	257
	R3		101.6	2.216	225
Total Projected Population:					12723

**Activity Center: assumes that 1/3 of development will be for residential units split equally between R-1-C and R3.*

Even though Strasburg is not an incorporated town, it provides all the amenities of a vibrant, small town community:

- Main street supports a post office, two banks, a grocery store, hardware store, several restaurants, and various other small shops and offices.
- The entire area including the four additional towns of Watkins, Bennett, Byers and Deer Trail have a healthy local media including a newspaper and radio station located in Strasburg.
- The school district, park and recreation district, volunteer fire district and water and sewer districts are all centers of community activity as well as providers of essential services.
- The churches, as well as a number of community organizations formed around both town and agricultural concerns, are centers of community activity and debate.
- The I-70 Chamber and REAP (I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership) are the economic development organizations that serve Strasburg and four other towns (Watkins, Bennett, Byers and Deer Trail) along I-70.

Goals and Policies

The goals, policies and strategies set forth in the Strasburg Plan are in addition to the general plan policies of the Adams County 1999 Comprehensive Plan and the 2001 Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan.

GENERAL

Goal: Maintain the small town, agricultural character.

Policy: Plan for a population of 10,000 to 12,000 in 2020 in the planning area as shown on the Strasburg future land use plan.

Policy: Designate an urban growth area of no more than two square miles as close as possible to the existing community, as per the Denver Regional Council of Governments.

Policy: Adams County shall limit estate residential development to the area generally between Wolf Creek and Comanche Creek and between SH 36 and 48th Avenue.

Policy: For areas outside the designated Urban Growth Boundary that are within the Planning Area, Arapahoe County will limit development to low densities in accordance with existing County zoning and discourage higher densities, other than for cluster residential development.

Policy: Plan for a balanced community within the planning area that is approximately 70% residential and 30% commercial and industrial, with additional land devoted to community facilities and a generous amount of open space.

Policy: Create zoning districts in Arapahoe County with criteria that would allow for residential and non-residential development in a small-town setting.

HOUSING

Goal: New housing should be high quality, be offered in a variety of price ranges and types, and contribute to the small town, rural character.

Policy: Evaluate residential development applications based on their contribution to high quality design, variety in type and price range and the small town, rural character of the community.

Policy: If residential market conditions change, Arapahoe County may look at the possibility of adding residential land use to the “Low Intensity Mixed Use” category in the next 3 to 5 years.

NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Encourage retail, commercial, office and industrial development that is appropriate to the small town atmosphere, enhances the activity center and existing business areas and provides jobs and services for area residents.

Policy: Concentrate higher density housing, shopping, community facilities and active parks near the center of the community and as close as possible to existing Colfax Avenue.

Policy: The land use review process must address the impact of development on the historic Colfax Avenue.

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Goal: Given facilities and sewer constraints, ensure that adequate facilities and services, including utilities, schools, parks, public safety, and other necessary facilities and services are available at the time of development.

Policy: Approvals for land use applications shall be subject to proof that water, sewer and other utilities are adequate or will be provided prior to development. Where sewer service is provided by septic systems, system management shall be designated to an entity such as a homeowner association or special district, where applicable.

Policy: Approvals for land use applications shall be subject to proof that adequate capacity is available in schools, parks, fire and emergency protection, police protection, transportation and other services and facilities or will be provided prior to development.

Policy: Approval of Title 32 Districts shall be subject to proof that no other responsible service provider exists and that there is a demand for the proposed service based on approved development permits.

Policy: A cemetery will be provided in an appropriate location that will serve the needs of the Strasburg community.

Future Land Use Plan

Future Land Use Plan

Goals and Policies

OPEN SPACE

Goal: Provide a generous amount of public and private open space to support the recreational needs of local residents and business people, wildlife habitat, the small town, rural character and continued agricultural production in the area.

Policy: Require developers to dedicate land for and construct a logical network of sidewalks and trails for pedestrians, bicycles, and horses. Trails shall be provided in 200-foot buffers along arterials within the planning area and additionally as needed. The trails should connect neighborhoods with schools, the town center and “main street” and parks as well as providing for recreation.

Policy: Dedication of public lands and conservation easements for public and private lands will be required as part of the development review process to preserve agricultural and park lands designated in the land use plan

Policy: Dedication of land or conservation easements along drainage ways beyond the 100-year floodplain will be required to preserve wildlife.

Policy: Property adjacent to the railroad in Arapahoe County shall be used to create a buffer from other land uses. The buffer will be along the southern border of the Low Intensity Mixed Use land-use category. The buffer must meet the definition of Open Space contained in this Plan.

Policy: Adams County is currently undergoing a study of the Comanche Creek and Wolf Creek floodplains and developing a drainage master plan for Comanche Creek from Colfax Avenue to 26th Avenue. The expected completion of the study is in early 2003, at which time, the Strasburg Plan will be updated to appropriately reflect the more accurately designated floodplain areas.

ENVIRONMENT

Goal: Environmental quality shall be a factor that is taken into account with new development.

Policy: Relate development scale to water resources and water quality.

Policy: Encourage the maintenance and improvement of surface, ground and storm water quality as new development occurs.

Policy: Consider groundwater recharge as a way to ensure that water resources are not depleted.

Policy: Encourage the maintenance of the wastewater management strategy in the Eastern Adams Regional Wastewater Utility Plan and its consistency with the *Metro Vision Clean Water Plan*.

Policy: Support the management and maintenance of on-site waste treatment systems to protect water quality and not adversely affect water resources.

Policy: Encourage the maintenance and improvement of environmental quality, such as air quality, as new development occurs

TRANSPORTATION

In keeping with the vision of the Strasburg Plan, a balance between maintaining the small town character and the ability to provide adequate circulation for new commercial and residential development is an important issue. Public meetings and correspondence with CDOT and DRCOG yielded several issues of concern.

Goals and Policies

Goal: Ensure that the transportation system supports planned land uses and provides options for pedestrians, bicycles, horses and other modes of travel in addition to automobiles.

Policy: Adams County will require developers to dedicate and construct transportation facilities and pay transportation impact fees according to countywide standards. In addition, require dedication of an extra 200 foot buffer on both sides of arterials, to accommodate native landscaping, sidewalks and/ or bike paths on the north and east side of the arterial, and equestrian paths on the south and west sides of the arterials.

Policy: In Adams County, collector roadways will require 80 feet of ROW. Arterial roadways throughout the planning area are designated section line arterials and will require 80 feet of ROW.

Policy: In Adams County, Piggott Mile Road and Headlight Mile Road will require 140 of ROW to ensure adequate future north/south connections outside the planning area. The additional ROW required for Piggott Mile Road and Headlight Mile Road will be subtracted from the dedicated 200 foot buffer set aside for native landscaping, sidewalks and/ or bike paths.

Policy: Direct access to arterial roadways will not be permitted unless explicitly allowed by the zoning regulations.

Policy: Require joint access roadway(s) throughout the activity center and encourage joint access roadway(s) throughout 35-acre developments.

Policy: The Counties will work cooperatively with the Department of Transportation to ensure development addresses and mitigates the impacts to state highway/ County road intersections.

Policy: Consider corridor preservation or ROW needs in the planning area to preserve the functional integrity of the larger County roadway systems and recreational corridors.

As development warrants, potential improvement strategies will be identified to implement the circulation element policies and provide solutions to identified issues of concern.

Outlined Public and Agency Issues of Concern:

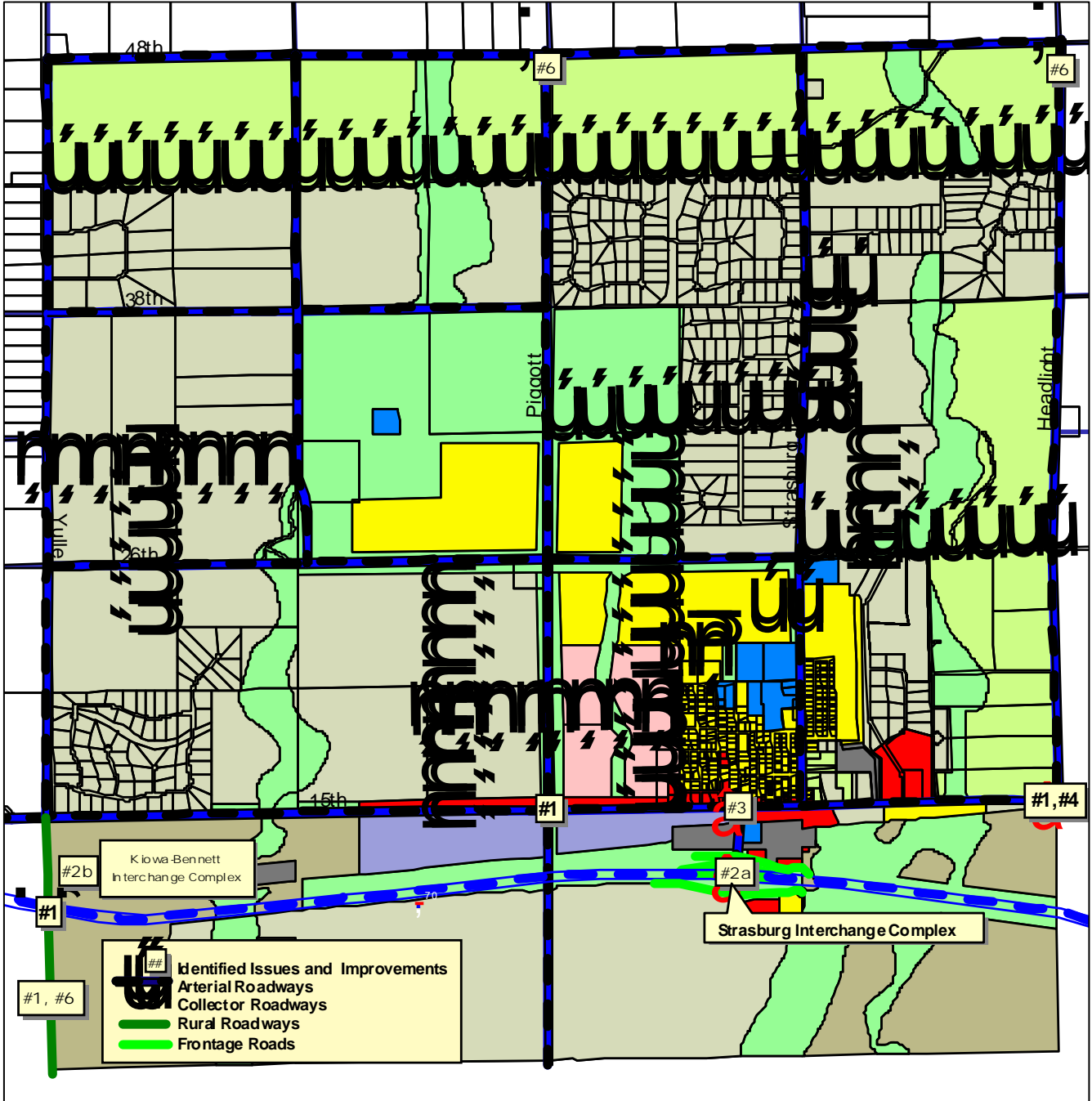
1. Limited north/south connectivity between the Adams and Arapahoe County portions of Strasburg due to I-70 interstate constraints
2. Operational problems along the I-70 corridor
 - a. Conflict points caused by the frontage roads being too close to the highway exit ramps at the Strasburg interchange
 - b. Limited access at the Kiowa-Bennett interchange complex – travelers must go to the Strasburg interchange via Colfax to access eastbound I-70
3. CDOT development criteria along Colfax Avenue
4. Future safety and operational problems at Headlight Mile Road and Colfax Avenue
5. Provide adequate circulation throughout the planning area.
6. Provide adequate road facilities for development outside the planning area

Listed below are the improvement strategies addressing the above issues of concern. The numbers located in the shaded boxes to the left of the outlined improvement strategies, and on the circulation map on the proceeding page, reference the outline numbers for the *Public and Agency Issues of Concern listed above*.

Outlined Improvement Strategies

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 3,4,6 | Work with CDOT and the Union Pacific Railroad to coordinate plans for the Strasburg area. |
| 6 | Extension of Yulle Mile Road north to address the lack of north/south connectivity |
| 1,2,5,6 | Improve I-70 interchange at either the Kiowa-Bennett or Strasburg complex. |
| 1,2 | Feasibility study of an additional I-70 interchange complex at Yulle Mile Road or Headlight Mile Road and/ or an overpass at Piggott Mile Road. |
| 6 | Require 140 foot ROW along Headlight Mile Road and Piggott Mile Road in Adams County. |
| 5 | Pursue joint access roadway agreements between developments and throughout the activity center. |
| 5 | Collector roadways in the immediate vicinity of the activity center shall be constructed with running turn lanes to provide adequate circulation and turning movements. |

Circulation Plan



The circulation plan map shows the ultimate roadway classification and depicts a series of collector streets throughout the planning area. Appropriately classified roadways ensure adequate traffic circulation.

The collector road facilities depicted indicate the need for future development to construct collectors for access onto the arterials. The actual alignment of collector roadways is to be determined at the time of development.

Definitions

Land Use Category	Characteristics and Uses	Purpose
<u>Agriculture-35 Acres</u>	Agricultural production and non-urban uses. Minimum lot size is 35 acres.	Preserves rural agricultural areas.
<u>Agriculture-19 Acres</u>	Agricultural production and non-urban uses. Minimum lot size is 19 acres	Preserves rural agricultural areas.
<u>Activity Center</u>	Town center includes retail, office public buildings, apartments and townhomes and town square.	Provide a higher intensity retail and service in a pedestrian oriented town center. Attract new businesses.
<u>Business/Commercial</u>	Retail and office uses.	Serve surrounding areas and attract new businesses that will provide services and employment.
<u>Estate Residential</u>	Rural estate housing at a density of no greater than 1 unit per 2.5 acres and limited compatible uses such as neighborhood commercial, schools and parks.	Meet some of the demand for rural residential housing in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner.
<u>Industrial</u>	Manufacturing, warehouses and distribution.	Attract industrial businesses and employment opportunities.
<u>Low Intensity Mixed Use</u>	Light industrial, office and retail uses in either planned unit development or straight zoning requests.	Attract businesses and employment opportunities.
<u>Open Space and Parks</u>	Public and private open space and parks to be retained in agriculture or active or passive parks and trails.	Retain and shape the small town, rural character. Support agriculture and provide recreation opportunities and wildlife habitat.
<u>Public</u>	Public buildings and facilities.	Provide adequate space for public and community facilities.
<u>Residential</u>	Single and multi-family housing and limited, neighborhood commercial uses.	Provide areas for a variety of housing types and price ranges.
<u>Urban Growth Boundary</u>	Residential development of one or more units per acre and commercial, office and industrial development.	Area with-in which urban use will be allowed and encourage compact development. Ensure that urban development does not occur in rural areas.
<u>Urban</u>	May include industrial, commercial/retail, or residential development of at least one unit per acre	Area with physical characteristics, levels of service, and land uses typically associated with more dense population.
<u>Rural</u>	May include agriculture and residential development less than one unit per acre	Area with physical characteristics, levels of service, and land uses typically associated with less dense population.
<u>Cluster</u>	Residential, agriculture, open space and/or natural resource protection areas	Development design technique, which concentrates building on a portion of a site to leave the remainder undeveloped.
<u>Planning Area</u>	Area included within the Strasburg Plan that is approximately 16 square miles.	Strasburg area of influence and base for analyzing the distribution of land uses.
<u>DRCOG</u>		Denver Regional Council of Governments

Land Use Distribution

Land Use Distribution				
Land Use Category	Previous		Plan	
	Acreage	Percentage	Acreage	Percentage
Agriculture – 19 Acres	0	0.00%	1061.70	10.43%
Agriculture – 20 Acres	939	9.25%	0	0.00%
Agriculture – 35 Acres	6,385	62.93%	1704.00	16.74%
Activity Center	0	0.00%	154.10	1.51%
Business/Commercial	104	1.03%	129.50	1.27%
Estate Residential	2,316	22.83%	4455.60	43.77%
Industrial	79	0.78%	67.80	0.67%
Low Intensity Mixed Use	0	0.00%	150.40	1.48%
ROW	0	0.00%	335.80	3.30%
Open Space and Parks	46	0.45%	1457.80	14.32%
Public	0	0.00%	65.60	0.64%
Residential	277	2.73%	597.70	5.87%
Planning Area	10,146	100%	10,180	100%
Urban Growth Boundary	460	4.5%	1144.9	11.25%
<div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 20px; height: 10px; display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"></div> = Land Use within Urban Growth Boundary				

Use of the Strasburg Plan

Adams and Arapahoe Counties adopted this plan as an amendment to their countywide comprehensive plans. As an amendment to the Adams and Arapahoe County comprehensive plans, the Strasburg Plan, is an official public document that guides land use, capital facilities and growth and development decisions made by both Counties. All the provisions of the countywide plans and other applicable regulations will continue to apply in the Strasburg area. The Strasburg Plan map will replace the relevant portions of the countywide future land use plan (Adams County) and comprehensive land use plan (Arapahoe County) maps. The narrative, goals and policies will be added to the Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan, which did not have a specific section on Strasburg. The narrative, goals and policies will replace the Chapter V, Section G on Strasburg that was included in the Adams County comprehensive plan. In both cases the countywide goals, policies and strategies will continue to apply in Strasburg as they do throughout the remainder of the county.

The process for amending the Strasburg Plan is the same as the process followed in each respective county for amending its comprehensive plan. In general, changes should be consistent with the goals, policies and strategies of the countywide plan and the Strasburg Plan.

Planning Process

County staff completed the plan with substantial input from Strasburg area residents, property owners, and community organizations. Four well-publicized public meetings were held. In addition, county planners met with the Strasburg Community Council, and a larger Strasburg Plan Committee that included additional volunteers and representatives of community agencies and groups. In addition, both Counties followed their standard public hearing process in adopting the Strasburg Plan as an amendment to their Comprehensive Plan. That process included holding at least one public hearing, notifying affected property owners, and providing notice in local and countywide newspapers.

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